

seventy-six Coalition Liberals were unopposed by Conservatives, primarily in Scotland and Wales. Bennett makes no real attempt to quantify the precise impact of such pacts, which are analysed more effectively in the book by Kinnear. And the price of the hardback is outrageous.

Still, although *The 1922 Election Reconsidered* offers little that is

new, it does provide an accessible account for those unfamiliar with the period of a general election whose consequences reverberate even today. ■

Vernon Bogdanor is Professor of Government, King's College, London. His books include *The Strange Survival of Liberal Britain* and *Making the Weather: Six Politicians Who Made Modern Britain*.

Lloyd George had underlined the need for an independent Welsh party in 1896, the year which saw the ignominious collapse of the *Cymru Fydd* movement. It took all of seventy years to come to fruition. The second chapter of this fine study examines in some detail the organisation and finances of the Welsh Liberal Party from 1966 until 1979 and the problems faced in attracting candidates of sufficient calibre, all dubbed rather 'a haphazard affair'. As Emyln Hooson was the only Welsh Liberal MP following Elystan Morgan's capture of Cardiganshire, he was inevitably in a pivotal position, especially during the early years, and he was instrumental in the further reorganisation of the Welsh party in 1972. The role of the party's individual secretaries and organisers, people like Mary Murphy and Emyln Thomas, is given critical scrutiny here. And the tables of financial details included here

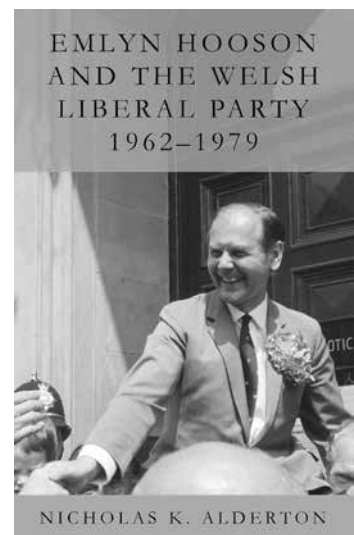
Rigorous analysis of a key Liberal player

Nicholas K. Alderton, *Emlyn Hooson and the Welsh Liberal Party, 1962–1979* (University of Wales Press, 2025)

Review by Dr J. Graham Jones

This substantial, pioneering study, substantially derived from the author's doctoral dissertation begun in 2012, is a major contribution to our understanding of Welsh politics in the twentieth century. During this period, when the Liberal Party was emerging from the doldrums, Emyln Hooson, elected the party's MP for Montgomeryshire in a famous by-election in May 1962, caused by the death of former party leader E. Clement Davies, was the party's most prominent figure in Wales since the death of David Lloyd George in 1945. He was heavily involved in the root-and-branch reorganisation of his party in Wales. This volume needs to be read in close conjunction with Russell Deacon's breakthrough study *The Welsh Liberals* (Cardiff, 2014).

The first section provides a potted history of the Liberal Party in Wales from the end of the First World War until the general election of 1966. The overriding theme is that, while the Liberal Party in Britain declined quite rapidly after 1918, its experience in Wales was a much more 'long, drawn-out affair' as the party leadership nationally saw the party in Wales as 'holding the Liberal flame aloft, while the rest of British Liberalism slipped into a deep slumber'. Only twelve Liberal MPs were elected in the general election of July 1945; seven of these represented Welsh divisions. The Welsh dimension was enhanced by the selection of Clement Davies, veteran of 1929, as 'chairman' of the party by his eleven fellow MPs.



are singularly impressive and helpful.

Welsh political historians are generally in agreement that the WLP came into existence, at least in part, because of the mounting threat posed by Plaid Cymru, which was rapidly gaining ground at this time. In consequence, WLP policies were heavily focused on Wales. Given that each of the main political parties now had distinctive Welsh policies by this time, the Liberals, too, felt impelled to act. *The Heartland* (1965) (dissected here on pp. 147–50) prepared jointly by Emlyn Hooson and Geraint Jenkins, summarised their party's policies for rural Wales (but this proved to be very much in the nature of a one-off publication), while a Welsh Radical Group was set up to advance policy formulation for Wales and made a number of specific suggestions in three distinct 'phases'. The top proposal was that a Rural Development Corporation should be set up. It is argued here that some of these radical proposals were in due course adopted by the Labour governments of 1964–70.

A detailed analysis follows of the all-important policy directorate set up in January 1967 and its 'spokespersons', notably Martin Thomas who became the influential vice-president of the WLP. Policymaking was vigorously stepped up, especially in relation to Wales, and the Government

of Wales Bill 1967 was presented by Emlyn Hooson. Evidence is put forward to illustrate how much the two general elections held during 1974 saw a sharply enhanced presence for the WLP which was able to put up candidates in every Welsh constituency and double its tally of MPs from one to two. The party citadel of Cardiganshire was captured by local farmer Geraint Howells. New figures like Dr Jennifer Lloyd and Gareth Morgan came to the fore.

The final chapter is introduced as 'an unashamed revisionist history of the WLP's electoral fortunes' between 1966 and 1979. Much attention is lavished on the key by-elections held in Wales from 1966. Emlyn Hooson's advocacy of 'Welshness' is pressed strongly here. Every Liberal MP for a Welsh constituency between 1945 and

1983 could speak Welsh. But the party's electoral fortunes, analysed thoroughly here, were very much 'a mixed bag'. At the end of our period, Emlyn Hooson was defeated by his Conservative opponent in the Thatcher-led Tory avalanche which engulfed the country. The overarching conclusion is that, by and large, the Welsh Liberal Party was 'electorally stronger than Plaid [Cymru]'.

The author is now planning to prepare a full biography of Emlyn Hooson as a follow-up project. It will be eagerly awaited by a wide, appreciative readership. ■

Dr J. Graham Jones is Director Emeritus of the Welsh Political Archive at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, and has published widely on the political and psephological history of late nineteenth-century and twentieth-century Wales.

Grey and his critics

David Yates, *Sir Edward Grey's Liberal Critics, 1905–1914* (Austin Macaulay Publishers, 2026)

Review by David Dutton

It was once uncontroversial to suggest that the ending of the Boer War in 1902 initiated a transformation in the fortunes and, more particularly, the coherence of the British Liberal Party. During a decade of division and dispute following the removal of Gladstone's controlling hand, the party had badly splintered into its competing factions. But

the new century soon ushered in a different political climate. Opposition to the Unionist government's Education Act of 1902 made for a good start. But it was Joseph Chamberlain's campaign for tariff reform and the threat it posed to the sacred creed of free trade that saw the fractured Liberals coalesce with remarkable speed and effectiveness.