

# HOW DID THE EMP

**Andrew S. Thompson looks at three case studies to examine the impact of imperialism on democracy and liberalism in Britain between 1865 and 1920.<sup>1</sup>**

For a century or more, the empire has been blamed for debasing British politics. The experience of governing the colonies is said to have imported attitudes and values into Britain that were inimical to the growth of a modern democracy. Liberals have been at the forefront of such criticisms.



The cartoonist David Low created the pompous reactionary and ultranationalistic Colonel Blimp, originally for the *Evening Standard*.

At the start of the twentieth century, the New Liberal intellectual, J. A. Hobson, railed against the fact that the south of England was 'richly sprinkled' with a class of retired colonial soldiers and officials, 'men openly contemptuous of democracy, devoted to material luxury, social display, and the shallower arts of intellectual life ... the wealthier among them discover political ambitions,

introducing into our Houses of Parliament the coarsest and most selfish spirit of "Imperialism"'.<sup>2</sup>

Thirty or so years later, yet in a similar vein, the New Zealand-born political cartoonist, David Low (1891–1963), took great delight in deriding the xenophobic and racist, if by then ultimately irrelevant and futile, attitudes of that archetypal imperialist, Colonel Blimp.<sup>3</sup> Jose Harris's study of later-Victorian and Edwardian political culture ploughs a similar furrow:

# IRE STRIKE BACK?

Imperial visions injected a powerful strain of hierarchy, militarism, 'frontier mentality', administrative rationality, and masculine civic virtue into British political culture, at a time when domestic political forces were running in quite the opposite direction towards egalitarianism, 'progressivism', consumerism, popular democracy, feminism and women's rights.<sup>4</sup>

Is it fair, then, to characterise imperialist ideology as essentially anti-democratic? Clearly this is a big question that could be tackled in a variety of ways. Here the focus will be on the domestic political repercussions of three well-known episodes of colonial oppression and settler rapacity: the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica (1865), the Anglo-Indian protest against Lord Ripon's Ilbert Bill (1883) and the Amritsar massacre at Jallianwala Bagh (1919). Surely in times of colonial crisis there was a strong temptation to drop any pretence at inclusiveness, liberalism and tolerance, and to rally behind those who were prepared to 'save the Empire' by upholding and defending racial privileges and, if necessary, by a show of armed force?

## Governor Eyre

Take the Governor Eyre controversy, an event that brought to the forefront of British politics the nature of colonial rule and the relationship between white settlers and black subjects. Eyre responded swiftly and brutally to the march of several hundred angry, land-

hungry blacks on the courthouse of the small town of Morant Bay in Jamaica. During a month-long period of martial law, people were shot, hanged and flogged, and many houses were razed.<sup>5</sup> Jamaica's white planters praised Eyre for his handling of the crisis. But the severity of the measures that he had taken left the British government with little choice but to suspend this Australian explorer turned colonial official, and to set up a Royal Commission to enquire into his conduct.

Opinion in the country, meanwhile, was deeply divided.<sup>6</sup> The Victorian intelligentsia, in particular, were at sixes and sevens as to whether the Jamaican Governor had acted responsibly or not. A Jamaica Committee, led by John Stuart Mill, and backed by such luminaries as John Bright, Charles Darwin, Frederic Harrison, Thomas Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, organised a campaign to prosecute Eyre privately, while an Eyre Defence Committee, supported by Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Alfred Tennyson, Charles Kingsley and Charles Dickens, established a fund to pay his legal expenses.

Though the Jamaica Committee set out to mobilise 'gentlemanly opinion', Eyre's critics also comprised many people of more modest means. From the outset, abolitionist, missionary and dissenting groups – known collectively as 'Exeter Hall' – had not only bombarded the Colonial Office with petitions and memorials, but staged numerous mass meetings. Eyre's figure was even

burnt in effigy by a large gathering of working-class radicals at Clerkenwell Green in London.

Eyre's supporters included clergymen, peers and members of the armed forces. Their case was made at a welcome home dinner, in the pamphlet and periodical press and at various provincial societies. They raised a significant sum of money (rumoured to be over £10,000) on Eyre's behalf.

Some scholars have taken this episode as proof of a marked hardening of racial attitudes in mid-Victorian Britain. The view of black people as inherently inferior to whites is said to have gained a much wider currency as a result of the Eyre controversy.<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere I question this interpretation, arguing that working-class racial attitudes do not fit comfortably into the 'boxes' to which they have often been assigned.<sup>8</sup> Here it needs to be emphasised that even though the Jamaica Committee's four legal actions failed, Eyre was nonetheless forced into premature retirement, turned down for several government posts, and deprived of the patronage and perks to which other ex-governors had grown accustomed. Even the debate on Eyre's legal expenses in 1872 was enough to bring his opponents out of the woodwork and previous passions back to the boil.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, martial law continued to be invoked in the face of future colonial disturbances, and a string of other massacres was to litter Britain's twentieth-century imperial record. Yet, in a sense, this is to miss the point. In 1865, many of Eyre's opponents,

**Surely in times of colonial crisis there was a strong temptation to drop any pretence at inclusiveness, liberalism and tolerance, and to rally behind those who were prepared to 'save the Empire'?**

## HOW DID THE EMPIRE STRIKE BACK?

especially Liberals, perceived a risk of authoritarian and arbitrary methods of government seeping back from colony to mother country – this was why the debate focused as much (or more) on the uses and abuses of martial law as on rival theories of race. At a time when many people in Britain were agitating for a further extension of the franchise, the prospect of West Indian methods of repression being adopted at home was all the more alarming. Such anxieties may well have weighed with the British government when it decided to replace the old regime of rule by the planter class with a more direct form of government from London. Though this looks like a throwback to the past, the decision actually held out some hope for black Jamaicans in so far as it curbed the powers of the island's 'plantocracy'. In the words of Niall Ferguson, 'the liberalism of the centre' had prevailed over 'the racism of the periphery'.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, in the years that followed, the cry of 'democracy in danger' continued to have considerable political purchase during moments of colonial crisis.<sup>11</sup>

### The Ilbert Bill

The determination and skill with which Anglo-Indians mobilised metropolitan opinion against the Ilbert bill (1883–84) may seem a more straightforward example of imperialists riding roughshod over the principle of racial equality (enshrined in the royal proclamation of 1858).<sup>12</sup> Lord Ripon,<sup>13</sup> Viceroy of India from 1880 to 1884, was responsible for introducing a raft of liberal reforms, including those to promote local self-government. These were attacked by his Tory opponents as a 'policy of sentiment', but Ripon returned to England to provide a vigorous defence of his policies at the National Liberal Club in February 1885.

The Ilbert bill needs to be set in this context. It was a statutory amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code whereby Indian judges and magistrates in country areas (the *Mofussil*) would be given

'The Jamaica Question' (*Punch*, 23 December 1865). White planter: 'Am not I a man and brother too, Mr Stiggins?'



'The Anglo-Indian Mutiny – A bad example to the elephant!' (*Punch*, 15 December 1883)



the power to try British offenders in criminal cases. It became the focus of a 'White Mutiny' – a heady cocktail of racial and sexual fears, which fed on memories of 1857, and engulfed India's community of English businessmen, planters and professionals. A European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association was formed. It staged protest meetings, threatened boycotts and even tried to get army volunteers to resign.

Crucially, it was well-connected to the British press. As Chandrika Kaul shows, several London newspapers and reviews clubbed together to stop the liberal Viceroy in his tracks: 'the anti-bill papers did not simply articulate [Anglo-Indian] grievances, but provided a focus which heightened the entire agitation movement'.<sup>14</sup> Chief among these were *The Times*, the *Telegraph*, the *Morning Post*, the *Standard*, and the *Spectator*. Much of their information was derived from the Anglo-Indian press – by the 1880s, telegraphic communication had slashed the time taken for Indian news to reach Britain. *The Times* spearheaded the anti-bill agitation; it relied on advice from its correspondent, J. C. Macgregor, a Calcutta barrister who was thoroughly opposed to the measure.<sup>15</sup> It was argued that indigenous Indians were incapable of shouldering the responsibility the bill entailed; that British prestige would be irreparably damaged; that Europeans (especially planter families) would be increasingly harassed; and that there was simply no necessity for change.

In the end, the Anglo-Indian 'jingo', as Ripon called them, got their way. The Ilbert bill was emasculated: Europeans were to have the right to be tried by juries at least half of whose members were themselves European. Although the distinction between Indian and British district magistrates and session judges was abolished, the difficulty of empanelling such a jury, and the costs and delays of transferring cases to the high courts, made it very difficult to secure a conviction. Yet

victory had not been achieved without a fight. Several pro-bill newspapers – the *Daily News*, the *Echo*, *Reynolds' News*, the *Weekly Times*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Contemporary Review* – had rallied round Ripon. They argued for the importance of a more sympathetic and sensitive approach on the part of the Government of India to the 'native population'. They affirmed the ability of Indians to participate more fully in the administration. They also reported on the meetings that were organised by John Bright and other Liberal MPs to back the bill. Ripon's resolve was certainly stiffened by these expressions of support.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, the anti-bill agitation was very much a press affair. Only a handful of Tory MPs raised the matter at Westminster, and the response from the Tory party caucus was likewise lacklustre.<sup>17</sup> In so far as opinion in the rest of the country was caught up in the Ilbert bill controversy there is no evidence to suggest that it sided with Anglo-India. Even the emissary sent by the Defence Association – F.T. Atkins – to arouse British engineering and railway employees against the bill proved a complete failure: 'at his most important meeting in Edinburgh, a motion was carried unanimously against him'.<sup>18</sup>

To a large extent, Ripon had himself to blame for what happened in 1883–84. Not only was he too far ahead of Anglo-Indian opinion, he had failed to properly brief his cabinet colleagues on the details of the bill, to take sufficient care in its drafting, or to have it properly debated in parliament – the latter, in particular, 'created a political vacuum' for the pro-bill press to exploit.<sup>19</sup> In Ripon's defence, he was not the only person to have underestimated the strength of Anglo-Indian feeling. Charles Hobhouse had twenty-six years of ICS experience but wrongly predicted that the racial passions aroused by the bill were 'so much froth' and would soon subside once it became law.<sup>20</sup> Other pro-bill periodicals, how-

**1883 was not so much a crossroads in the history of the Raj, whereby colour-blind justice was rejected in favour of a racially segregated colonial state, as a poorly judged and badly timed, albeit well-intentioned, reform.**

ever, showed greater perspicacity, regretting that Ripon had thrust the measure on Anglo-India at a moment when he was engaged 'in the gigantic and difficult task of introducing local government reform'.<sup>21</sup> There were also those who supported the liberalisation of municipal government but opposed the Ilbert bill because they felt that it would do more harm than good, not least because only a handful of anglicised Indian civil servants – the so-called 'Bengali Babus' – allegedly stood to gain.<sup>22</sup> Understood in this way, 1883 was not so much a crossroads in the history of the Raj, whereby colour-blind justice was rejected in favour of a racially segregated colonial state, as a poorly judged and badly timed, albeit well-intentioned, reform.

#### Amritsar

The British reaction to the massacre of an unarmed crowd, gathered in the Punjab city of Amritsar on 13 April 1919, adds further weight to my argument. The irascible Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer had issued a proclamation banning such meetings. He ordered his men to fire on a crowd of some 20,000 people without any warning, or without first demanding that it disperse. The firing continued for a full ten minutes. Official figures recorded 379 deaths and over 1,200 wounded. Indian estimates were much higher. The British government moved quickly to disavow Dyer's actions and he was forced to resign. Again Anglo-Indian opinion was inflamed, and sections of the metropolitan press, a minority of MPs and a majority of peers protested against Dyer's 'punishment'. By discharging his duty and teaching the 'rebels' a lesson, Dyer, they argued, had 'saved India', only to be abandoned by craven and cowardly politicians at Westminster.<sup>23</sup> A defence (or 'Scapegoat') fund was set up by the editor of the *Morning Post* newspaper, Howell Gwynne; almost £15,000 was collected within a few weeks.

## HOW DID THE EMPIRE STRIKE BACK?

The wider political context for the defence of Dyer is the build up of 'diehard' Tory sentiment during the years 1919–22. Diehardism drew strength from the hardships of the post-war depression, and from antipathy to Lloyd George, but home affairs were not at the core of its creed. Much more fundamental was the notion of imperial weakness – the feeling that the British Empire might be living on borrowed time.<sup>24</sup> Diehards believed Britain to have 'providentially sanctioned imperial obligations',<sup>25</sup> and insisted that challenges to colonial authority had to be resisted, whether in Ireland, Egypt or India. Their finest hour may have been the removal from office of the well-known Indian sympathiser and Liberal politician, Edwin Montagu (1879–1924), author of the 1917 declaration that the goal of British policy in India was the 'increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration', and architect of the 1919 constitutional reforms. Montagu was replaced as Secretary of State for India by the Conservative, Viscount Peel, who lost no time in pouring cold water on a scheme for the Indianisation of the army. Montagu's Jewish antecedents, and his rather tactless remarks in the House of Commons on 8 July 1920, had incensed 'diehard' MPs and left them bayoneting for his blood.<sup>26</sup>

But just how powerful was the public demonstration of support for Dyer? His defenders were a somewhat disparate group, made up of Anglo-Indians, military members of the army council, Ulster Unionists (led by Sir Edward Carson), and a few right-wing newspapers. The Dyer fund drew donations from a wider range of people, but the manual workers and schoolchildren who parted with their pennies were predominantly Anglo-Indian. Working-class opinion in Britain was on the whole far less sympathetic. For example, the well-attended Labour Party conference at Scarborough in 1920 passed a resolution denouncing the 'cruel and barbarous actions'

of British officers in the Punjab, and called for the repeal of all repressive legislation: there was a real fear of labour unrest at home meeting with similar treatment.<sup>27</sup> As the progressive newspaper, the *Manchester Guardian*, commented immediately after the debate in the Commons: 'General Dyer's more thorough supporters by no means intend to stop at India ... After India, Ireland. After Ireland, British workmen on strike.'<sup>28</sup>

Other elements of the anti-Dyer camp, which included many senior politicians (Asquith, Bonar Law, Churchill) and *The Times*, took their stand on the British government's obligation to maintain a single standard of justice across the British Empire,<sup>29</sup> while Churchill went so far as to call this 'the most frightful of all spectacles, the strength of civilisation without its mercy'. There is a real danger therefore of inflating the importance of the xenophobia and racialism that characterised many of the pro-Dyer utterances in 1919–20. Diehardism was a minority, if passionately held, view. Ranged against it was a phalanx of much more liberal and progressive sentiment.

During the Morant Bay uprising, the Ilbert bill controversy, and the Amritsar uprising the Empire did indeed strike back on the British political scene. For Liberals such as J. A. Hobson, and for many historians and political commentators who share Hobson's perspective, such episodes provide further proof of imperialism's tendency to debase and corrupt British public life. Yet even when it involved the sanctioning of martial law and the use of armed force, there is little evidence to suggest that colonial rule constituted a serious or sustained threat to liberal and progressive values or to widening political participation in Britain.

On the contrary, as this essay suggests, the domestic political effects of arbitrary and authoritarian rule in the colonies were as likely to run in the opposite direction – namely, to galvanise 'liberal' opinion to defend the virtues of a

parliamentary system of government and the necessity of a free press. In the fashioning of a more democratic political culture, therefore, the Empire arguably proved as much of a friend as a foe.

*Dr Andrew Thompson is a Senior Lecturer in modern British history at the University of Leeds, where he is also pro-Dean for Learning & Teaching in the Arts faculty. He is currently writing a book on imperialism's impact on Britain from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.*

- 1 This essay is drawn from a more extensive analysis of the political repercussions of imperialism in my new book, *The Empire Strikes Back: Imperialism's impact on Britain from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day* (Longmans, forthcoming). I am grateful to Richard Grayson and Richard Whiting for their comments.
- 2 J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (1938 edition), p. 151.
- 3 M. Bryant (ed.), *The Complete Colonel Blimp* (1991).
- 4 Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: a social history of Britain, 1870–1914* (1993), p. 6.
- 5 G. Hueman, 'The British West Indies' in A. Porter (ed.), *Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford, 1999), Vol. III, pp. 486–87; D. Judd, *Empire: The British imperial experience from 1765 to the present* (1996), pp. 82–83.
- 6 C. Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (1971), pp. 82–108; B. Semmel, *The Governor Eyre Controversy* (1962), chs. 1, 3, 4, 6; G. B. Workman, *The Reactions of Nineteenth-Century English Literary Men to the Governor Eyre Controversy* (University of Leeds Ph.D., 1973).
- 7 Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes*, pp. 102–06; C. Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and colony in the English imagination* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 25, 424; D. A. Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English attitudes to the Negro in the mid-nineteenth century* (Leicester, 1978), pp. 12, 200.
- 8 Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back*, ch. 3.
- 9 G. Dutton, *The Hero as Murderer* (1967), p. 390.
- 10 N. Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain made the modern world* (2003), p. 195.
- 11 M. Taylor, 'Imperium et Libertas? Rethinking the Radical Critique of Imperialism during the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (1991), pp. 1–18.
- 12 Sir Courtenay Ilbert (1841–1924), who brought forward the legislation, was the law member of the Viceroy's council (1882–86). He subsequently became the Clerk of the House of

**In the fashioning of a more democratic political culture, the Empire arguably proved as much of a friend as a foe.**

- Commons (1902–21).
- 13 George Frederick Robinson (1827–1909), 1st Marquis of Ripon, went on to lead the Liberal Party in the House of Lords, 1905–08.
  - 14 C. Kaul, 'England and India: the Ilbert Bill, 1883: a case study of the metropolitan press', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* (1993), pp. 413–36. Quote from p. 435.
  - 15 S. Gopal, *The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, 1880–1884* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 151–52.
  - 16 A. Denholm, *Lord Ripon, 1827–1909: A political biography* (1982), p. 156; J. L. Sturgis, *John Bright and the Empire* (1969), pp. 74–75.
  - 17 There was a single National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations pamphlet issued on the Ilbert bill (Lord Ripon's Policy in India, 1883), while the party's campaign guide described the bill as a 'misguided' but nevertheless 'innocuous' measure: *NUCCA Campaign Guide* (1885), p. 18.
  - 18 L. Wolf, *Life of the First Marquess of Ripon*, Vol. II (1921), pp. 128, 141. Atkins also asked the Secretary of the TUC for support, but was again rebuffed: Gopal, *The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon*, p. 155.
  - 19 Gopal, *The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon*, pp. 136–37, 150–51, 153–54; Kaul, 'England and India', p. 418.
  - 20 C. Hobhouse, 'Plain facts in India Policy', *Macmillan's Magazine* (October 1883), pp. 465–73. See also W. Summer, 'Mr Ilbert's Bill', *British Quarterly Review* (October 1883), pp. 432–41.
  - 21 'India and Our Colonial Empire', *Westminster Review* (April 1883), pp. 610–14.
  - 22 J. Goldsmid, 'Questions of the day in India', *The Nineteenth Century* (May 1883), pp. 740–58.
  - 23 For Dyer's supporters, see D. Sayer, 'British Reaction to the Amritsar Massacre, 1919–20', *Past and Present* (1991), pp. 149–50, 157–63.
  - 24 K. Morgan, *Consensus and Disunity: The Lloyd George Coalition Government, 1918–22* (Oxford, 1979), ch. 10; A. S. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British politics* (Longman, 2000), pp. 163–65.
  - 25 G. Studdart-Kennedy, 'The Christian Imperialism of the Diehard Defenders of the Raj, 1926–35', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (1990), pp. 342–35.
  - 26 Sir W. Sutherland to D. Lloyd George, 9/7/1920, copy in M. Gilbert (ed.), *Winston. S. Churchill*, Vol. IV [Companion, Part 2, Documents], pp. 1140–41.
  - 27 Sayer, 'British Reaction', p. 152.
  - 28 'Unionist Revolt', *Manchester Guardian*, 9/7/1920, pp. 6–7.
  - 29 H. Fein, *Imperial Crime and Punishment: The massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and British judgement, 1919–1920* (Honolulu, 1977), pp. 138–44.

## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

If you can help any of the individuals listed below with sources, contacts, or any other information — or if you know anyone who can — please pass on details to them. Details of other research projects in progress should be sent to the Editor (see page 3) for inclusion here.

### Cornish Methodism and Cornish political identity, 1918–1960s.

Researching the relationship through oral history. *Kayleigh Milden*, *J* of *Cornish Studies*, Hayne Corfe Centre, Sunningdale, Truro TR1 3ND; [KMSMilden@aol.com](mailto:KMSMilden@aol.com).

**History of the Liberal Party.** Roy Douglas (author of *The History of the Liberal Party 1895–1970* and a dozen or so other historical books) is working on a new book about the Liberal Party and its history. This will trace events from the rather indeterminate 19th century date when the party came into existence to a point as close as possible to the present. He believes that the story requires attention to be given not only to the glamorous deeds of major politicians but also to such mundane matters as party organisation and finance. ideas, please! *Roy Douglas*, 26 Downs Road, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 1AA; 01737 552 888.

**Hon H. G. Beaumont (MP for Eastbourne 1906–10).** Any information welcome – especially from anyone having access to material about the history of Liberalism in Eastbourne – particularly on his political views (he stood as a Radical). *Tim Beaumont*, 40 Elms Road, London SW4 9EX.

**Letters of Richard Cobden (1804–65).** Knowledge of the whereabouts of any letters written by Cobden in private hands, autograph collections, and obscure locations in the UK and abroad for a complete edition of his letters. *Dr A. Howe*, Department of International History, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE; [a.howe@lse.ac.uk](mailto:a.howe@lse.ac.uk). (For further details of the Cobden Letters Project, see [www.lse.ac.uk/collections/cobdenLetters/](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/cobdenLetters/)).

**Liberal foreign policy in the 1930s.** Focussing particularly on Liberal anti-appeasers. *Michael Kelly*, 12 Collinbridge Road, Whitewell, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim BT36 7SN; [mmjkelly@msn.com](mailto:mmjkelly@msn.com).

**Liberal Party and the wartime coalition 1940–45.** Sources, particularly on Sinclair as Air Minister, and on Harcourt Johnstone, Dingle Foot, Lord Sherwood and Sir Geoffrey Maunders (Sinclair's PPS) particularly welcome. *Ian Hunter*, 9 Defoe Avenue, Kew, Richmond TW9 4DL; [ian.hunter@curtishunter.co.uk](mailto:ian.hunter@curtishunter.co.uk).

**Liberal policy towards Austria-Hungary, 1905–16.** *Andrew Gardner*, 17 Upper Ramsey Walk, Canonbury, London N1 2RP; [agardner@ssees.ac.uk](mailto:agardner@ssees.ac.uk).

**Liberals and the local government of London 1919–39.** *Chris Fox*, 173 Worpleston Road, Guildford GU2 6XD; [christopher.fox7@virgin.net](mailto:christopher.fox7@virgin.net).

**Political life and times of Josiah Wedgwood MP.** Study of the political life of this radical MP, hoping to shed light on the question of why the Labour Party replaced the Liberals as the primary popular representatives of radicalism in the 1920s. *Paul Mulvey*, 112 Richmond Avenue, London N1 0LS; [paulmulvey@yahoo.com](mailto:paulmulvey@yahoo.com).

### Recruitment of Liberals into the Conservative Party, 1906–1935.

Aims to suggest reasons for defections of individuals and develop an understanding of changes in electoral alignment. Sources include personal papers and newspapers; suggestions about how to get hold of the papers of more obscure Liberal defectors welcome. *H* Street, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 1DQ; [N.M.Cott@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:N.M.Cott@ncl.ac.uk).

**SDP in Central Essex.** Contact with anyone who had dealings with the area, and in particular as many former SDP members of the area as possible, with a view to asking them to take part in a short questionnaire. Official documents from merger onwards regarding the demise of the local SDP branches and integration with the Liberals would also be appreciated. *Elizabeth Wood*, The Seasons, Park Wood, Doddinghurst, Brentwood, Essex CM15 0SN; [Lizawsea@aol.com](mailto:Lizawsea@aol.com).

**Student radicalism at Warwick University.** Particularity the files affair in 1970. Interested in talking to anybody who has information about Liberal Students at Warwick in the period 1965–70 and their role in campus politics. *Ian Bradshaw*, History Department, University of Warwick, CV4 7AL; [I.Bradshaw@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:I.Bradshaw@warwick.ac.uk)

### Welsh Liberal Tradition – A History of the Liberal Party in Wales 1868–2003.

Research spans thirteen decades of Liberal history in Wales but concentrates on the post-1966 formation of the Welsh Federal Party. Any memories and information concerning the post-1966 era or even before welcomed. The research is to be published in book form by Welsh Academic Press. *Dr Russell Deacon*, Centre for Humanities, University of Wales Institute Cardiff, Cyncoed Campus, Cardiff CF23 6XD; [rdeacon@uwic.ac.uk](mailto:rdeacon@uwic.ac.uk).