

REVIEWS

Lecture this would not have occurred.

A historian, a politician, Chancellor of Oxford University, *bon viveur*. Roy Jenkins is remembered as a man of many talents. In addition, what comes across most vividly throughout this book is what a warm-hearted man he was – someone who nurtured friendships and whose friends appreciated him. This is perhaps best summed up by Sir Crispin Tickell, Jenkins's *chef de cabinet* during his time as President of the European Commission, who writes, 'Throughout, his most conspicuous qualities were wide-ranging intelligence, tolerance,

a sense of history, sympathetic understanding of others, and loyalty to his friends'. Adonis and Thomas say in their Preface (p. viii) that they sought to avoid hagiography in the contributions – and they succeed, just. Yet each of the articles is essentially a memoir about Jenkins by someone who held him at the least in high esteem and in most cases rather more than that. The biography is still avidly awaited but in the meantime this *Retro-spective* serves Jenkins well.

Dr Julie Smith is Deputy Director of the Centre of International Studies, Cambridge University and a Fellow of Robinson College, Cambridge.

ity remains elusive. His personal magnetism, which attracted both intellectual advisers and new recruits in large numbers, is referred to only in passing; so is his whimsical and self-deprecating air, as if he was looking down (from his considerable height) at his audience and wondering why they took him so seriously. Barberis attributes 'the sense of Olympian distance' (p. 157) that Jo sometimes displayed to his growing deafness; but it was evident long before he began to go deaf. It's a pity that there is no photograph of Jo with a group of student Young Liberals. He was at his most appealing with them, ranging widely across political principles and policy choices. The phrase that struck home best for me was: 'Jo ... had a lazy streak ... yet his presence generated electricity.' (p. 103).

The strength of this biography is in its focus on Grimond's political ideas, their origins and evolution. Barberis sums him up as 'an anti-establishment establishment man' (p. 169). From a comfortable Dundee family, he was educated at Eton

'His presence generated electricity'

Peter Barberis: *Liberal Lion. Jo Grimond: A Political Life* (IB Tauris, 2005)

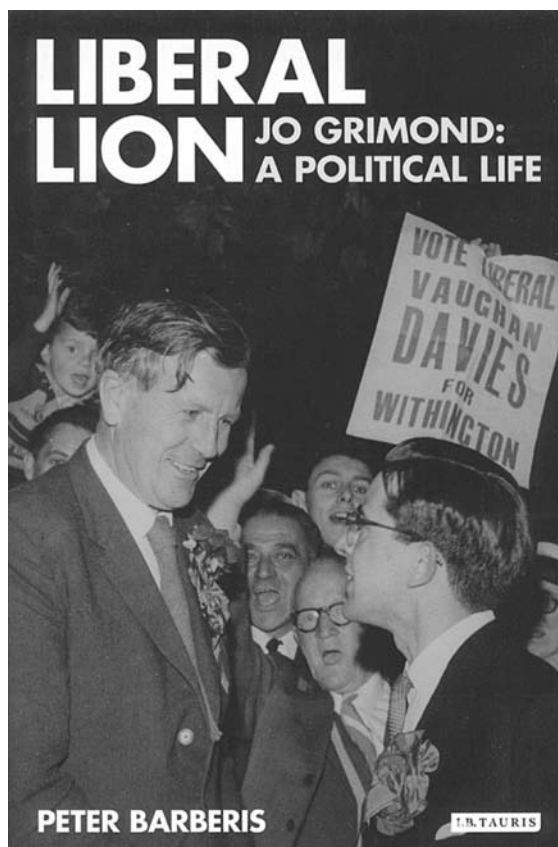
Reviewed by **William Wallace**

A second biography of Jo Grimond in less than five years, from a different (and more sympathetic) angle than Michael McManus, offers a chance to compare interpretations of the politician who, more than anyone else, gave the contemporary Liberal Party its shape – and, in his call for a 'radical realignment of the left', first spelt out the rationale for the alliance with the Social Democrats. Barberis does not credit Grimond with saving the Liberals from extinction, though Clement Davies had saved them from Churchill's embrace only to remain a marginal party, in non-conformist seats. It was Jo who led the party's revival, in terms of policy and political appeal; he was, for example, one of the first politicians to adapt successfully to television.

Barberis underestimates the scale of Grimond's success as party leader. The Liberals gained only twelve seats in the 1996

election, but all had been won against two or more opponents; in 1955 Grimond himself was the only one of the six MPs who had won against a Conservative opponent. Party membership surged to a peak of 300,000 in 1963, bringing in a new generation (myself included) who stayed with the party throughout the ups and downs of the years that followed. He shifted the party from an anti-socialist stance to social liberalism, spelling out coherent themes and policies that held the party together.

This is an academic study: carefully researched, and supported by a wide range of interviews. It even references several PhD theses on the Liberals. (I should admit, for future scholars, that my own thesis contains two quotations from Jo Grimond that I had myself written for him in the 1966 election campaign – but then, as Barberis makes clear, Jo took ideas and drafts from a great many people.) But Jo's personal-



and Oxford. As a young man he walked in the Highlands with Sir Archibald Sinclair, and married into the Asquith family. Yet, Barberis argues, he had already become a convinced Liberal at Oxford, and chose in 1935 to pursue a political career in a declining party because he was a disciple of T.H. Green and John Stuart Mill, modified by A.D. Lindsay's Balliol teaching about public service.

He inherited a party which had almost lost its radical wing, leaving behind a group of anti-socialist libertarians. He shifted it rapidly from economic towards social liberalism, writing extensively himself and drawing on the expertise of some of the best academics in Britain. His themes of active citizenship, community, wider distribution of wealth and power, and constitutional reform, still resonate for Liberal Democrats; so do his doubts on national sovereignty and independent defence (and on independent deterrence). Paddy Ashdown's comment, when setting out on a new cycle of reflective policy-making after the 1987 election and party merger, that 'we have been living too long off the intellectual capital of the Grimond era' (p. 210), recognised how much Jo had shaped the Liberal approach over the previous thirty years.

In his later years, Jo grew increasingly gloomy about the possibility of striking a stable balance between autonomous local communities, enterprise, and an active state. As the 1974–79 Labour government gave in to public sector unions, Jo flirted with the Institute of Economic Affairs, which had been founded by economic liberals who left the party as he had taken control. But he opposed Mrs Thatcher both for her nationalism and her political illiberalism. There were, Barberis, accepts, many 'loose ends' in his political philosophy. But Liberals have to live with the tension among the principles to which they are committed; and Grimond, this book argues, was

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a deeply committed Liberal. 'It was in a way his fortune never to have held ministerial office. Thus he was spared entanglement in the grubby realities of power politics – realities that he would have found uncomfortable if not demeaning ... to remain a man

of integrity, so giving politics a good name.' (p. 214).

Lord Wallace of Saltaire is joint Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords and President of the Liberal Democrat History Group.

Lloyd George and Churchill

Robert Lloyd-George: *David & Winston: How a Friendship Changed History* (John Murray, 2005)

Reviewed by **Dr J. Graham Jones**

In a comparison of Lloyd George and Churchill, it has been said that Churchill was the greater man, but that Lloyd George was more fun. This fascinating book, thoroughly researched and exquisitely written by Lloyd George's great-grandson, tends to confirm this opinion. The author, Robert Lloyd-George, is the son of the present (third) Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor. It takes as its main theme Lloyd George's influence on Churchill's political career and, to some extent, personal and family life. The author has read widely and thoughtfully through a rich array of secondary, and some primary, source materials, and has skilfully woven his findings into a lucid and compelling read. Although Mr Lloyd-George is not a professional historian, his understanding of the intricacies of twentieth century political history is impressive.

Almost all the points at which the careers of the two politicians interact are thoughtfully covered in this comprehensive volume. Political history and personal detail are dextrously brought together within the book. There is new, fascinating material on the 1913 Marconi crisis, the drift towards the outbreak of the First World War, and Lloyd George's central role in propelling Churchill towards

the premiership in May 1940 (though the important role of Liberal MP Clem Davies at this juncture is not recorded at all). We are, however, all too regularly given lengthy quotations from the source materials which the author used in his research. On occasion these are over-long, given that many are taken from printed volumes which are within easy reach of most readers. The most glaring example is Churchill's tribute to Lloyd George in the House of Commons on 28 March 1945, printed on pp. 241–46. If it was considered necessary to reproduce this at such length in the book, it might well have been relegated to an appendix.

The author's writing style is unfailingly succinct and lucid, a real joy to read. This is immediately apparent in the description of Lloyd George at the beginning of the book:

Though only five foot six-and-a-half inches tall, he had a powerful frame and a deep chest. He wore a magnificent moustache and his carefully tended wavy hair was rather longer than was the custom of the time. He had a large and distinctive head, a broad forehead and striking greyish-blue eyes which sparkled with humour one moment and flashed with anger the next. (pp. 3–4).