

ORGANISER PA

By Lawrence Iles

Reading Cooper's wearisomely dull entry in the old *Dictionary of National Biography* on the youngest son of Victorian Prime Minister William Gladstone, one could be forgiven for thinking that Herbert Gladstone's career was one of effortless progression: from Modern History Lecturer at an Oxford college, to Liberal Chief Whip, Home Secretary and first UK Governor-General of the new South African Union, with a fine end as an active Liberal Viscount, staunchly protective of his father's good name. Indeed, the Whig politician Robert Lowe, who supported both of Herbert Gladstone's first two parliamentary candidacies, even thought him future prime ministerial material.¹

HERBERT GLADSTONE



AR EXCELLENCE

STONE (1854 – 1930)

But with this flattering impression, much contemporary and subsequent opinion begs to differ. Pioneering Liberal Party historian Roy Douglas, in an acerbic series of observations, accused Gladstone of being both too ‘high-principled’ and too secretly and cunningly base as regards his 1903 Liberal–Labour pact, which gave Labour its first opportunity to grow.² For his part, the Tory politician Henry Chaplin castigated Gladstone for being a ‘chip off the old block’ in his ability to be ‘casuistical’ in appearing to agree with both sides of an argument simultaneously. Chaplin was not the only contemporary to compare Gladstone unfavourably with his father. Joe Biggar, a leading Irish Nationalist MP, told the Leeds branch of the United Irish League that their local MP would be ‘nothing’ without his father’s name; and Lloyd George once described Gladstone as living proof of the ‘Liberal doctrine that quality and intellect were not hereditary’.³

If nothing else, all these verdicts show that, in Cooper’s own inadequate assessment, Gladstone was a ‘hearty controversialist’. Yet

(Left) Herbert Gladstone in 1906.

neither Herbert Gladstone’s autobiography, *After 30 Years* (1928), nor his official biography, *Herbert Gladstone: A Memoir* (1932), by the former Liberal MP, Sir Charles Mallet, do justice to the subject’s controversial side.⁴

If we go beyond these books and consider his public utterances, faithfully recorded by the newspapers of the day, and the papers of the Leeds Liberal Party for the period 1880–1910 when he sat in the Commons, new light can be shed on the career of this often unfairly maligned figure.

What emerges from using such sources for the first time is a very different politician from his illustrious father. Herbert Gladstone was very much a twentieth-century politician, particularly in terms of his organisational abilities, which helped the Liberal Party achieve its landslide victory in 1906 and a significant, if short-lived, measure of revival in 1923.

Before surveying how Gladstone contributed to these achievements, it is worth considering the impression left by Cooper that, as a result of his name, Gladstone was a shoo-in for all the high offices of state he held. The *Leeds Mercury* in 1880 had welcomed him as their MP

on ‘condition’ that he obtained for the town the ‘eminence’ of national office. Yet in reality his role as Chief Whip nearly twenty years later was his first major post, and his local organiser, Alderman Joseph Henry, had to be persuaded that this office was of any real importance. Fortunately, as Neville Masterman, the biographer of Gladstone’s ill-fated predecessor Tom Ellis, has shown, the office had recently become more important as a result of Ellis’ insistence on both financing it more effectively and extending its consultative role to encompass all kinds of radicals beyond Westminster’s cliquish clubbery. What was lacking, however, was flair and drive and, in terms of repairing this deficiency, Gladstone’s flamboyant determination was to prove ideal.⁵

Out of office, Gladstone had been increasingly frustrated at the very deliberate minimisation of his talents for innovative leadership. He had contemplated leaving Liberal politics altogether, especially after he survived the 1895 general election with a majority of only ninety-seven votes, amid allegations of treating aimed at his wealthy Tory opponent. Before he became

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Chief Whip in 1899, senior Liberals had deliberately overlooked Gladstone for fear of courting the accusation of nepotism.⁶

Gladstone had been an unpaid Junior Lord of the Treasury during his father's second term of office from 1880 to 1885, and in the short-lived 1886 administration he was made Financial Secretary to the War Office, serving as deputy to Campbell-Bannerman as Secretary of State for War. He did slightly better in the 1892 Liberal government, serving as Asquith's Under-Secretary at the Home Office. Nonetheless, sheer administrative hard work was all that was expected here too. To his anger, when he tried to use his own initiative, in favour of the new spirit of social, interventionist Liberalism, his reputation as a hard worker who toed the party line did not help him. The party's Publications Department, under James Bryce, declined to print an article of Gladstone's criticising opposition by the National Liberal Federation to the payment of salaries to MPs. The article was instead published in the far more elite *Albemarle* magazine.⁷

Politically frustrated, and married, in 1902, to a socially conservative, rich, southern English property heiress, it was hardly surprising that, in his later career in the Home Office and as Governor-General of South Africa, Gladstone's progressive outlook was mellowed by the conservative outlook of the British political establishment. He had been taught to obey unimaginatively, even if this was contrary to his progressive principles. Asquith, who privately considered him lazy, wanted Gladstone out of the Home Office when he replaced Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister in 1908, and was glad to install Churchill in his place.

In South Africa his rule was regarded by right-wingers as fair and resolute in his manner of dealing with recalcitrant, anti-British, Dutch residents, and with strikers on the railways. This view was not shared by those on the left, who recalled Gladstone's pro-labour

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and pro-Boer stance in the past. The *New Statesman*, in 1914, critically reviewed all his published official correspondence as Governor-General, which showed that he had vigorously restricted workers' right to strike and other civil liberties. Charles Masterman, initially a protégé of Gladstone's, was attacked from both the left and right in by-elections at the time because of the way in which workers, often immigrants from the UK, were being treated.⁸

Despite the later disappointment of Gladstone's career, in the period when he served as Chief Whip he exerted a good, modernising effect on his father's faction-ridden, old-fashioned party. Trevor Lloyd, in a 1974 survey of Gladstone's fundraising and candidate support activities, has shown that working with very little money (he often had to borrow from, or plead with, his elder brother Henry and the right-wing northern Liberal Barran family) Gladstone kept the party in good shape during a period of considerable political difficulties.⁹

The main controversy affecting the party at that time was Ireland. Indeed, in a 1927 article on the Whips' Office, penned for the *American Political Science Review*, Gladstone claimed that this island's future status was the primary political issue of his lifetime. He blamed Lord Richard Grosvenor, the anti-home rule Liberal Chief Whip of the 1885–86 period for sowing the seeds of partition. While this is more than a little unfair to Grosvenor, the 1927 article sheds some light on Gladstone's attitude towards the issue with which he is now most closely identified.¹⁰

When he first stood, unsuccessfully, for the Commons in Tory Middlesex in 1880, Gladstone had indicated that, 'while no home ruler', dealing with injustice in Ireland was his passion. By the summer of 1885 (August, if his memoirs are to be believed) he was a convinced home ruler and was categorical that he was pushing his father in

the same direction. Indeed, contrary to Cooper, it should now be irrefutably stated that the so-called Hawarden Kite incident (Hawarden Castle being the Gladstones' home), in which the Liberal former premier was 'flown' publicly for the first time as a home ruler, instead of being a supposedly accidental conversation between his youngest son and reporters, was a deliberate act, at least by Herbert Gladstone, if not necessarily his father. As contemporaries realised, ranging from reluctant home rule Whig Lord Granville, with his fulminations against 'the Leeds plotters', to anti-home rule Joseph Chamberlain, this briefing was not in the least bit accidental.¹¹

The Leeds Liberals had long been planning a pre-emptive strike against the domination of the National Liberal Federation by the Chamberlainite Birmingham radicals. The trouble was that, until Irish home rule was thrust into prominence by the new Parnellite Home Rule League, both Leeds radicals like Gladstone and moderates like *Leeds Mercury* editor T. Wemyss-Reid, lacked a credible radical issue with which to discredit Chamberlain and the new municipal socialist radicals, or to gain the allegiance of older laissez-faire radicals like Henry Labouchère and Charles Bradlaugh. This was because Gladstone found much of Chamberlain's NLF programme 'inspiring'.¹² He agreed with its redistributionist focus on aristocratic and capitalist wealth. As late as 1885 Chamberlain himself expressed the view that, were it not for William Gladstone, he would consider Herbert a good radical influence upon the party. In old age, Herbert Gladstone sought to play down some of the more collectivist and economically left-wing implications of his support for home rule. In his memoirs he implies that he shared his father's private hope that the Tories, under the future Liberal defector Lord Carnarvon, might have offered home rule themselves.

This was not what Gladstone or his Leeds Liberal allies intended to achieve at the time. For one thing, Joe Biggar and other Parnellites had done their work so well in swinging the votes of what E. D. Steele has shown to be a huge Irish electorate in Leeds over to Carnarvon-type imagined Tory allies that three out of five Leeds seats went Tory in 1885. Indeed, only with great difficulty did the wealthy West Leeds iron and steel magnate, James Kitson, the future first Lord Airedale, manage to dissuade the pro-Irish Gladstone from opting to fight East Leeds, then, as now, the poorest of the workers' constituencies. A good thing too, as that constituency did indeed temporarily go Tory in 1886, only later to be rescued when Gladstone helped a long time home-ruler, L. Gane, win the seat back.¹³

Ideologically, Gladstone revealed his intentions in a remarkable series of nationwide speeches in 1886, which *The Times* found socially threatening, but which were to become staples of his arguments as Chief Whip, and show his modernising intent for Lib-Labbery. In a speech to 3,000 Liberals in Leeds, he gave two principal reasons why British Liberalism had to support Irish home rule. Firstly, he said that all human history had largely shown that 'wealth, intelligence and education', let alone 'property' in its own right, had been against most political and social reforms for the relief of ordinary people, who were expected, instead, just to know their place. Secondly, he argued that Ireland's grievances were of an 'anti-landlord' nature, and accordingly home rule was in the tradition of the struggle for the Magna Carta. In essence, as his fellow Leeds Liberal MP, the distinguished academic chemist Sir Lyon Playfair, was to put it, the cause of British social Liberalism and Irish nationalism were one. And, sure enough, not only did Gladstone campaign on such lines all over the country in every election from 1886, but he

personally raised £1,000 to enable Henry Labouchère to hold a similar such rally in 1886, when the national party refused to fund it. Gladstone also promised that, if Ireland's woes could be fixed, justly, then the Liberals would be the providers of economic justice for all British working people.

Later, in 1900 and 1906, Gladstone was to agree with the Liberal right that home rule was not necessarily a Liberal priority compared with the preservation of free trade. But he always made clear, as a stalwart for home rule, that some day he expected its delivery as, without it, a great deal of Liberal social reform would never be secure. Indeed, for all of the scoffing from *The Times* that there was no link between Ireland and economic issues in the rest of the country, the right were well aware of the linkage between the two issues.¹⁴

The second big controversy of Gladstone's political career concerned the extent to which the 1906 government was to pursue the social reforms advocated by the New Liberals even though, as Masterman was to admit, Campbell-Bannerman was not much of a social reformer himself. Cooper, in his *DNB* sketch, dismissed many of Gladstone's social reforms as Home Secretary, such as children's courts, as being tinged by too much bureaucratic collectivism. Yet features of today's legal system, from the probation service to effective workers' compensation rights, began with Gladstone. Indeed, while no socialist, Gladstone simply disagreed with his father's Peelite aversion to positive government action.¹⁵

Remarkably, too, he disagreed with many of his wealthy Liberal backers, both at local and national level, even though, as Dr Russell has shown, just twenty of them provided two-thirds of the Leeds Liberals' revenue in the crucial 1906 contest. At local government level, Leeds Liberals were already engaged in pacts against socialists with the local Tories, to Gladstone's annoyance.¹⁶

Gladstone went against the grain of Yorkshire Liberals at this time. As early as the 1890s he was asking his agent, John Mathers, to put aside his aversion to interventionist legislation and survey whether his constituents favoured new shop legislation to enforce a work relief half-day, as the Leeds Co-op stores already did on Wednesdays.¹⁷ Legislation to this effect was placed on the statute book in 1912. As Home Secretary, Gladstone was responsible for the legislation that introduced an eight-hour day for miners, which was unpopular with coal-owners such as the Pease family in Yorkshire. And, earlier, as Under-Secretary at the Home Office he presided over the first major increase in the safety inspectorate for small workshops.

All of this interventionist Liberalism was intentional on Gladstone's part, and long preceded New Liberal theoretical manifestos such as those from Richard Haldane, Ernest Jones or the writings in journals such as the *Contemporary Review* and *Nineteenth Century*. In one of his very first speeches as Liberal candidate for Middlesex, Gladstone had criticised Disraeli's social legislation as being merely 'permissive' and a pale reflection of municipal liberalism. Later, in his sustained efforts to support a specific Liberal-Labour class group of MPs within the Liberals' orbit, Gladstone strongly defended the manner in which many in that group had supported the Salisbury government's social legislation.¹⁸

Gladstone's views on, and conduct of, broader Liberal-Labour relations can now be put in their proper context. As with his semi-collectivist approach to economic questions, Gladstone's Lib-Lab pact of 1903, the secretive nature of which has long been overstated, was publicly presaged in earlier speeches. In a long speech to Liberal constituency agents at a turn-of-the-century Nottingham National Liberal Federation AGM, Gladstone berated the failure of local upper-middle-class Liberal Associations to

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Herbert Gladstone in 1882.

adopt working-class candidates. More privately he bemoaned their equal failure to fund more 'university men ... intellectuals' of poor finances as 'progressive' candidates. He was no doubt thinking of the report from Home Counties Liberal Federation organiser Will Crooks that, in places like Kent, too many middle-class Liberals were just ambitious 'crooks', merely interested in candidacies and party status to further their local professional careers.¹⁹

But how far did Gladstone actually want to go in promoting an independent Labour Party and the emergence of socialism separate from the Liberal Party? In reality, his attitude was not mistakenly over-generous, as Dr Douglas and Jeremy Thorpe allege in Douglas's 1971 book. In 1892, during a by-election campaign in the Barkston Ash constituency, Gladstone made it clear that, in his view, the Liberals, for the foreseeable future, remained the primary legitimate vehicle for working-class progress.²⁰

In Yorkshire, however, Gladstone was faced with the fact that in Leeds's neighbouring city, Bradford, the 'Alfred Illingworth' dynasty was firmly in charge. These Liberals, all employers, were opposed to any Labour representation altogether. Gladstone told Campbell-Bannerman, on seeing the 1906 Yorkshire returns, that he was not surprised when 'Alfred Illingworth Liberalism' was dealt a formidable blow, by the election in the city of the ILP's Fred Jowett, whom Gladstone considered to be a 'really good man'. Jowett had campaigned on a municipal programme of free school meals and medical inspection that the local Illingworth Liberals fought against tooth and nail.²¹

None of this should suggest that Gladstone was totally unconcerned about the growth on his own Leeds patch of separatist socialism, but he took a realistic, even empathetic, view of Labour's development outside the Liberal Party. His West Leeds constituency president, Alderman Joseph Henry, called by Campbell-Bannerman, admirably, the 'Duke of Wellington' for his command of the city's Liberalism, did at this time think in terms of a three-party struggle in the city. He kept the crucial Holbeck ward entirely Liberal until as late as 1908; regularly berated Gladstone for neglecting the poorest West Leeds wards like Wortley where, indeed, Labour did grow; and secured an intellectual, Quaker, left-wing activist Liberal, T. Edmund Harvey, as Gladstone's successor as MP in 1910.

Henry counselled that the Liberals should take the fight to Labour, using real constituency surgery work and evidence of the progressive policies implemented by the government. Gladstone was persuaded to part with a £1,000 debenture to establish a popular, radical Liberal newspaper, the *Leeds Daily News*, to counteract the Harmsworth-owned *Mercury*, which had drifted to the Liberal imperialist right and, later, to

semi-Tory humour and ridicule of working-class people.²²

In a similar vein, Gladstone also sought nationally to control and moderate separatist socialism, not 'snuff it out'. The supposedly secret 1903 pact had been explicitly argued for on these grounds by Gladstone in more than one speech years before. The pact itself was largely negotiated between Gladstone's secretary, Jesse Herbert, and Ramsay Macdonald, who had family links with Gladstone and had once served as private secretary to former Liberal front-bencher Thomas Lough.

Not only was the pact overwhelmingly in the Liberals' favour, as it tapped into nearly £1,000 already given to the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) by the trade union movement, but it concentrated the thirty Labour 'straight fights' against the Tories heavily in Roman Catholic and Anglican working-class Lancashire. In this area, Liberal Associations had, too often, become ineffectual adjuncts of cotton-mill and laissez-faire elites, and Labour candidates could, more credibly than nonconformist Liberals, straddle the divisions over education.

Gladstone was insistent that the LRC do its utmost to curtail rogue, independent socialist candidates from undertaking senseless three-party fights that would only benefit the Tories. Yet, it took all Ramsay Macdonald's personal skills, publicly and privately, to stop Labour left-wingers in Leeds from promoting a candidacy of their own against the Liberal Chief Whip. They were inspired by the knowledge that Gladstone had been working to mount a Liberal challenge against Labour in East Leeds, their best prospect. They probably would have been more intransigent if they had known that Gladstone's two closest advisers, Henry and Kitson, had both been pressing him to push the East Leeds Liberals into fighting both the other parties.

Despite the inevitable opposition of many local Labour and

Liberal Associations, Gladstone pushed through his strategy: and it worked, far better than historians have acknowledged, especially considering that it helped the Liberals bounce back from the general election defeats of 1895 and 1900. Of course, the Liberals were also helped by Joseph Chamberlain's protectionist crusade, which not only alienated free-trade Unionists like Churchill, but destroyed the unity of the Tory and Liberal Unionist parties, except in the West Midlands, where the Chamberlain family continued to keep a tight rein on their otherwise declining party.

Gladstone's approach to party management was more cautious and tactful than that of Chamberlain, and he sought out the fulcrum on which the various elements of the Lib-Lab electorate was balanced. On Irish home rule and anti-socialist Liberalism he veered, as we have seen, to the expedient left. But with the Boer War, he had a more difficult problem, and once again his *DNB* biography is simplistic in the extreme in arguing that Gladstone preserved the party balance by supreme tact, and that, although his sympathies were with Campbell-Bannerman, Gladstone 'preserved a complete neutrality within the party'. In fact, he avoided dispute by steering the party more towards its jingoistic elite right than towards the left. Although he joined the anti-war Liberal League Against Aggression, this body was never as opposed to all forms of British dominion in South Africa as, say, either the ILP or the Liberal Forwards group. He made two particularly controversial statements during the 1900 general election campaign. Firstly, during the course of the election, he admitted that his party could not satisfactorily offer, in the national interest, an alternative government. He appealed to the electorate to vote on domestic issues that were not, he claimed, ones fevered with war emotion. Secondly, Gladstone proclaimed that the party would accept temporary

annexation of the Transvaal. This elicited fierce, but unavailing, protest to Campbell-Bannerman, against this very un-Gladstonian approach, by the ageing ex-Peelite Lord Ripon, who professed himself to be horrified.²³

But while this was indeed contrary to his own radical conscience – he had told Campbell-Bannerman privately that the Tories' excuse for the war, that they were protecting British subjects in the two invaded Boer republics, was completely bogus – he refused to allow the party to debate the Boer War, just cause or not. Instead, he occupied himself with trying to restrain the separatist activities of Liberals associated with the former Prime Minister Lord Rosebery, such as Asquith, Haldane and Grey. He did this in a way which seemed, to Campbell-Bannerman, to endorse the trio's extreme imperialism. His attendance at a dinner for Rosebery in Leeds in 1902 brought howls of wrath from Campbell-Bannerman, to which Gladstone replied that he had thereby kept an eye on Rosebery's wilder impulses. If he had not gone, Rosebery and the Liberal imperialists, rather than the Leeds Liberals, would have taken over the event; and anyway, the Boer War was far too popular with the workers, let alone north Leeds middle-class imperialist MPs like Barran, for such events to be ignored.

But while Campbell-Bannerman's latest biographer argues that all this proves disloyal weakness on Gladstone's part, in fact it was to save Campbell-Bannerman's bacon when he later became Prime Minister. Not only did Gladstone's give-and-take tactic help Campbell-Bannerman retain control of the Liberal machine in the country, he was also able to foil the Relugas plot, in which Asquith, Grey and Haldane tried to push Campbell-Bannerman into the Lords on the eve of his entering 10 Downing Street. Through his long friendship with Asquith, Gladstone was able to act as the negotiating intermediary when the right-wingers

presented their ultimatum. Skilfully, he detached Asquith from the others. It was Gladstone's sheer strength of character which gave the Liberals national coherence by 1906, although some of his own radical ideals were sacrificed as a result.²⁴

But Gladstone's ideas could be fostered in other ways, and the second prong of his strategy was to promote young graduates, often the new semi-collectivist Liberals, into candidacies, so as to develop in the party his own ideals. Even after the First World War, when his views had mellowed, it was the loss of many of these men to Labour that most pained him. A by-no-means untypical case of Gladstone's sponsorship is that of Charles Masterman. A former Cambridge don with limited means from journalism and a sometimes intellectually over-acerbic temperament, Masterman was backed by Gladstone at crucial times of his sometimes hazardous New Liberal career, in particular with financial support when he stood for Dulwich in 1904 and when he faced a challenge from anti-socialist Liberal shopkeepers before being elected for West Ham North in 1906.²⁵

Lamentably, though, for the long-term legacy of the Liberal Party, Gladstone can, and must, be held culpable for not dealing effectively with the women's enfranchisement question. Gladstone, like the twice-married Asquith, did not take women's politics seriously. His wife, and other Gladstone women, preferred to be politically active in the socially elitist, fund-raising Women's National Liberal Association rather than the more radical, pro-suffrage Women's Liberal Federation. The correspondence between Joseph Henry and Gladstone shows the fear strong political women induced in both men, when the suffragettes started systematically to disrupt Gladstone's public meetings.

As Home Secretary, Gladstone was responsible for the policy of force-feeding gaol women suffragettes and publicly defended

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it as humane and harmless. To protests from many Labour and Liberal MPs, Gladstone repeatedly denied any ill-treatment of these brave women. By 1909 only local Women's Liberal Association members were being admitted into his supposedly open constituency meetings.

It seems Gladstone did begin to realise the damage this issue was causing to his party, which led him publicly to suggest to his own senior government colleagues that commitment should be offered in support of women's suffrage. In the face of opposition from Lewis Harcourt and others, however, he meekly retreated.²⁶ It is surely no exaggeration to say that the treatment meted to women by Gladstone and many of his colleagues played into the hands of the Labour Party once women were given the vote after 1918.

On returning from the governor-generalship of South Africa, Gladstone was persuaded out of retirement to help organise and raise funds for the Asquithian Liberal Party. He became their chief national organiser, making public speeches and writing 'first principles' statements of policy for regional papers and the *Liberal Magazine*, against Lloyd George perfidy in Ireland, against pacts with the Tories, and, of course, against any violation of free trade.

He helped more lively spirits like Masterman write on a twice-weekly basis for the Cadbury and Starmer press against the Lloyd George coalition; and he helped recapture all but the Welsh party machine from the Lloyd Georgeites, thus encouraging Lloyd George and Churchill to consider forming their own 'National Liberal' organisation. Gladstone, in return, was attacked by them for being like an 'extinct volcano' in not having any new policy ideas.

However, his last political role was as the Asquithians' conscience, for which he has not, hitherto, been awarded proper credit. In the 1922 general election, the Asquithian Liberals narrowly

but decisively defeated their rival Lloyd Georgeite National Liberals in terms of the numbers of MPs returned. In the 1923 election, the precariously reunited Liberals secured over 100 MPs, a feat never to be repeated by any third party during the rest of the century. But Gladstone's intention of fielding a full slate of candidates in most constituencies in the subsequently disastrous 1924 contest was wretchedly, in his embittered view, frustrated by Lloyd George's refusal to fund the idea. Since Gladstone had persistently criticised the Lloyd George Fund as immoral it is perhaps not surprising that Lloyd George declined to hand it over to Gladstone to spend on a swathe of hopeless candidates.²⁷

With the well now dry for Liberalism, Gladstone returned to his favourite hobby, gardening, in his wife's properties in southern England and at Hawarden. His few remaining political interventions concerned the support he and his wife gave to the League of Nations. He died on 6 March 1930 at home in Hertfordshire.

Herbert Gladstone's place in Liberal politics deserves to be more thoroughly examined, especially given that his papers are all to be found, catalogued, in the British Library. His most major contribution was encapsulated in a remark in the *American Political Science Review* in 1927, that for the Liberals to remain a major party, their leaders needed to keep in touch with ordinary people beyond the Westminster hothouse. His modern detractors should perhaps be asking themselves whether the Liberals would have been able to implement a progressive agenda from 1906 if he had never been Chief Whip.

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are due to Dr E. D. Steele of Leeds University, Neville Masterman of Swansea University College, Brenda Masterman, Lord Healey and Robert Ingham.

- 1 *Leeds Mercury*, 8 April 1880.
- 2 Douglas, R., *History of the Liberal Party* (London, 1971) especially the introduction. Gladstone's skills as a propagandist are, later, justly praised, p. 15.
- 3 *The Times*, 22 September 1900 (Chaplin); *Leeds Mercury*, 11 April 1882 (Biggar); and Rowland, P., *Lloyd George* (London, 1975), p. 581.
- 4 Cooper, W., 'Gladstone, Herbert John', in Weaver, J. (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography 1922-30* (Oxford, 1953 - originally 1935) (hereafter DNB), p. 338; the Gladstone and Mallet books were both published in London; for the Gladstone quote, see British Library, H. Gladstone MSS (hereafter HG MSS), 41, 216, letter to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, 20 January 1900.
- 5 *Leeds Mercury*, editorial, 7 April 1880; HG MSS 46, 036, letter from J. Henry to H. Gladstone, 14 April 1899; Masterman, N., *The Forerunner: Tom Ellis* (London, 1976 - originally published 1972), p. 238.
- 6 Ratcliffe, G., *Sixty Years of It: Being the Story of My Life and Public Career* (London, 1935, privately printed), p. 94 on the 1895 election; Ramm, A. (ed.), *The Political Correspondence of Mr Gladstone and Lord Granville 1876-86*, Vol. 1 (London, 1962), p. 368, letter from Granville to W. Gladstone, 9 May 1882, on nepotism.
- 7 Gladstone, H., 'The Liberal Party and Labour Questions', *The Albemarle Magazine*, February 1892; later that year he gave an interview to the Paris newspaper *Le Gaulois* on his ideal Liberal programme in which both the payment of MPs and the limitation of workers' hours were the main questions to be addressed, after Ireland.
- 8 Anon, 'The South African Strike', *New Statesman*, 13 June 1914, p. 11. The election addresses and speeches of Masterman's opponents at by-elections in 1911 and 1914 include references to how the Liberal government had allowed Gladstone to mistreat the rights of emigrant white subjects of the Empire in labour disputes.
- 9 Lloyd, T., 'The Whip as Paymaster: Herbert Gladstone and Party Organisation', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 89, No. 253, October 1974, pp. 785-811. For further information on Liberal finances at this time see Searle, G., 'The Edwardian Liberal Party and Business', *English Historical Review*, January 1983.
- 10 Gladstone, H., 'The Chief Whip in the British Parliament', *American*

- Political Science Review*, August 1927, pp. 519–28.
- 11 Fitzmaurice, Lord, *The Life of George Leveson Gower, Second Earl Granville (1815–91)*, Vol. 2 (London, 1905) for Granville to Lord Derby, 27 December 1885; and HG MSS, 46,041, T. Wemyss Reid to H. Gladstone, 9 December 1885.
 - 12 *The Times*, 11 October 1900.
 - 13 Steele, E. D., ‘The Irish presence in the north of England 1850–1914’, *Northern History* (1976), pp. 229–32; HG MSS, 46, 041, J. Kitson to H. Gladstone, 21 February 1885.
 - 14 *The Times*, 4 May 1886; Wemyss-Reid, T., *Memoirs and Correspondence of Lyon Playfair* (London, 1899) p. 342; Hind, R., *Henry Labouchere and the Empire 1880–1905* (London, 1972), p. 127.
 - 15 DNB, p. 337.
 - 16 Russell, A., *Liberal Landslide: The general election of 1906* (London, 1973), p. 39.
 - 17 HG MSS, 46,039, J. Mathers to H. Gladstone, 26 September 1889 and 13 September 1891.
 - 18 *The Times* 20 March 1880 and 11 October 1900.
 - 19 Bealey, F., ‘A Note: Negotiations between the Liberal Party and the Labour Representation Committee before the General Election of 1906’, *University of London Institute of Historical Research Bulletin* (1958); *The Times*, 30 March 1900 (Nottingham NLF); Poirier, P., *The Advent of the British Labour Party* (New York, 1958), p. 260, letter from Gladstone to Crooks, 21 March 1905.
 - 20 *The Times*, 11 July 1892.
 - 21 HG MSS, 41,215, H. Gladstone to H. Campbell-Bannerman, 16 January 1906.
 - 22 *Ibid.*, 46, 036, J. Henry to H. Gladstone 25 May 1905, 9 April 1907, and 13 October 1908.
 - 23 DNB, p. 337; nearly all Gladstone’s speeches and published statements during the 1900 election moved the Liberals’ position on the war closer to that of the government – e.g. see *The Times*, 13 October 1900; HG MSS, 43, 543, Ripon to Campbell-Bannerman, 16 September 1900 and Wolf, L., *The Life of the First Marquis of Ripon*, Vol. 2 (London, 1921), p. 28.
 - 24 For more on the Relugas plot see McCready, H., ‘Home Rule and the Liberal Party 1899–1906’, *Irish Historical Studies*, XIII, September 1963, pp. 316–48.
 - 25 See Iles, L., ‘Victories for the Left: The British General Election Debates of 1906 and 1945’, *University of Illinois Urbana Microfilms Series*, MA History dissertation, August 1982, from p. 100 and Iles, L., *A Handlist of the Papers of the Rt Hon. Charles and Lucy Masterman 1873–1977* (Edgbaston, 1987).
 - 26 See Pearson, H., *Labby: the Life and Character of Henry Labouchere* (London, 1945), p. 225; Samuel, H.,

Memoirs (London, 1945), p. 195; Fulford, R., *Votes for Women* (London, 1958); Wingfield-Stratford, E., *The Victorian Aftermath 1901–14* (London, 1933), p. 323; Raeburn, A., *The Militant Suffragettes* (London, 1973); and, for Harcourt’s attitude, see *The Times*, 15 February 1909.

- 27 Much of this section is drawn from the *Liberal Magazine* and *Lloyd George Liberal Magazine* for the era; also useful is Cowling, M., *The Impact of Labour 1920–24* (Cambridge, 1971), which is predictably sympathetic to the more right-wing post-World War One Gladstone.

LETTERS

Election 2005

I would like to follow-up Neil Stockley’s thoughtful report of the History Group meeting ‘Election 2005 in historical perspective’ (*Journal of Liberal History* 50).

First, I should make my own stance, as the 2005 candidate for the Windsor constituency, clear. I believe the last general election was a missed opportunity for our party. We had two unpopular main parties and this was a situation where we, as the third political force, should have come strongly through the middle. Neil’s summary of the Blackpool fringe meeting gives the game away when he reports all the speakers as saying, ‘we had made more than steady progress.’ ‘Steady progress’ in the context of this election, and for a party purportedly on the up, is not good enough.

As he analyses what happened, Neil muses on the intractable problem of why the Liberal Democrats made serious inroads in Labour-held constituencies (up 7.7%) but hardly any impact, in general, in areas which had a sitting Tory MP (up a mere 0.6%). He seeks answers to an electoral conundrum and this letter attempts to help that search by proposing two possible reasons for the disparity.

As we went into the general election many middle-class voters in the ‘blue’ parts of England (such as Windsor) seemed suspicious of our Council Tax policy, whilst others absolutely hated our approach on income tax.

(Incidentally, in historical terms, have the Liberals ever been a high tax party?) These people hated our higher earners’ tax proposal not because they were currently earning £100,000 themselves, but because they intended one day that they would, i.e. they felt we were challenging their aspiration to do better in life.

The second reason we fared badly against the Tories was very clear on the doorsteps. When asked, ‘Who will you be voting for?’ the answer, invariably, was, ‘Not Tony Blair.’ These voters then implemented their strong dislike of the Prime Minister on the day by following the precept of the old Arab proverb – ‘My enemy’s enemy is my friend’. By this light they wanted above all to vote for the party that was most opposed to the leader of New Labour. Since the Lib Dems were seen as ‘neither left nor right’ (or as Neil says, equally damningly, ‘either left or right’) many reluctantly felt they had to vote Tory. However, and this is the point, they weren’t really Tory – and probably still aren’t!

So the message about 2005 from Tory constituencies in the South-East (like Windsor, which has never had anything other than a Conservative MP) is simple. Our tax policies were wrong and we were perceived as too bland in terms of opposing the Prime Minister. By such mischance are great opportunities lost.

Antony Wood