

perhaps be more appropriately applied to the Eighth Duke of Devonshire who, as Marquess of Hartington, was the leading Whig in Gladstone's second administration and never entirely shed his Liberal sensibilities.

Yet, having offered that caveat, it is fair to conclude by saying that Dr Kerry

has made a useful addition to scholarship on late nineteenth and early twentieth-century British politics and colonial administration.

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Letters to the Editor

Elections in Glasgow

May I add two important footnotes to David Hanson's research on the curious 1874 Liberal election leaflet ('Vote for Mr Crum and one other Liberal', *Journal of Liberal History* 102 (spring 2019))?

First, Hanson concludes that if the Glasgow Liberals had sorted out agreement on candidates earlier, the outcome could have been different – 'divided parties lose elections'. He is wrong, as he is imposing the logic of uninominal first-past-the-post elections on this three-member constituency.

Glasgow then (1868–85) voted by a crude form of proportional representation, whereby each voter had two votes for three seats, so offering one seat to a minority party with at least a third of the total vote. At the 1868 and 1880 elections, the Liberals had more than two-thirds of the vote and took all three Glasgow seats. But in 1874, the Liberal share dropped below 65 per cent, so a Tory won one seat. It made no actual difference to the outcome that the Liberal vote was spread over five candidates.

Secondly, the 1874 election was a transitional one for the interplay between candidate choice and party choice. Before the 1872 Ballot Act, as the votes cast were added up in public during polling day(s), it was easy to distinguish between front-runners and also-rans. Hence people voting later in the day could choose between candidates with a real chance and not cast a wasted vote – a crude form of what we now call tactical voting.

This meant that a contest between candidates of the same party could go to the poll, with the weaker candidate

withdrawing in favour of the stronger after the first hour or two of voting. That reduced the need for parties to fix agreement in advance, especially in strongly Liberal urban constituencies, where the party would win anyway.

All that changed when, with the secret ballot, there was no longer a certain way of knowing how the votes were piling up. However, old habits died hard, so in 1874 there were still several cases of rival Liberal candidates fighting it out on polling day. By 1880 there were few such cases and from 1885, with general use of the uninominal constituency, they became extremely rare.

Thus among the ten London constituencies, no less than four had Liberal candidates in excess of the two places available in 1868 (that did not cost the party any seats at all); three still had excess Liberal candidates in 1874 (which arguably helped the Tories to win a seat in each of Southwark and Tower Hamlets) but – perhaps after that warning – there was only one such case in 1880.

A final thought: did the introduction of the secret ballot reduce effective democracy in Britain by giving the political parties this incentive to restrict choice? In many other European countries, the right of voters to choose between candidates of the same political hue was retained via the two-ballot system (and later, when list systems appeared, by the right to alter the list). The second ballot was a Radical demand in Britain in the 1880s, but support for it faded as party dominance grew.

Michael Steed

Welsh Liberal Party 1966–70

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- 40 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Elfyn Morris to John Gibbs, dated 21 June 1966. Just to note, Deacon states that the meeting was held on the 11 June 1966.
- 41 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Elfyn Morris Jones to Gruffydd Evans (chairman of the Liberal Party Executive), 26 July 1966.
- 42 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Hooson to Major Parry Brown, 10 June 1966.
- 43 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Elfyn Morris to John Gibbs, 21 June 1966.
- 44 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Michael Meadowcroft to Hooson, 22 Mar. 1967.
- 45 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter to Mary Murphy from Hooson, 10 Feb. 1967.
- 46 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Bob Morgan to Hooson, 1 Nov. 1967.
- 47 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter to Bob Morgan from Hooson, 9 Nov. 1967.
- 48 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter to Peter Jacobs from Hooson, 24 Nov. 1967.
- 49 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Hooson to Elfyn Morris, 1 July 1966.
- 50 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Hooson to Mary Murphy, 13 Oct. 1966.
- 51 Steve Belzak, 'Swinging in the '60s to the Liberals: Mary Murphy and the Pontypridd Urban District Council', *Journal of Liberal History*, 68 (Autumn 2010), p. 30.
- 52 Deacon, *Welsh Liberals*, p. 150; in 1959, Lord Ogmore defected from Labour to the Liberal Party as he was disillusioned with the party's stance on nationalisation and felt the Conservatives could only be beaten by an anti-socialist alternative.
- 53 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Murphy to Hooson, 12 July 1967.
- 54 Deacon, *Welsh Liberals*, p. 177.
- 55 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Jones to Hooson, 2 July 1967.
- 56 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Box 45, letter from Rhys Gerran Lloyd to Emlyn Thomas, 11 Feb. 1969. The initial letter, from Thomas, does not appear to be in the archive.
- 57 Deacon, *Welsh Liberals*, p. 167.
- 58 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Hooson to Mr Watson of Basingstoke, 22 Feb. 1967.
- 59 Jones, *Welsh Elections*, p. 114.
- 60 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Hooson to Pratap Chitnis, 24 Oct. 1967.
- 61 Edwards, 'Political Change in North West Wales', p. 242.
- 62 NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Hooson to Lloyd Morris, 5 Jan. 1967.
- 63 Peter Joyce, *Realignment of the Left? A History of the Relationship between the Liberal Democrat and Labour Parties* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 129.
- 64 David Roberts, 'The Strange Death of Liberal Wales' in John Osmond, *The National*