

- 85 PRG, 28 Feb. 1920, p. 2.
 86 PRG, 28 Feb. 1920, p. 3.
 87 *Forward*, 6 Mar. 1920, p. 1.
 88 PRG, 28 Feb. 1920, p. 2.
 89 PRG, 20 Mar. 1920.
 90 *Forward*, 6 Mar. 1920, p. 4.
 91 Firth, 'Return of Mr Asquith', p. 542
 92 G. R. Searle, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration, 1886–1929* (Macmillan, 1992).
 93 Wilson, *Downfall*, pp. 209, 213 and 214.
 94 Keith Middlemas and John Barnes, *Baldwin: A Biography* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969).
 95 Asquith and Biggar were the only candidates in Paisley in 1922, with turnout again high, at 78%, and Asquith's majority reduced to 316. In 1923 there were four candidates, turnout 77.1%, Asquith 9,723 votes and majority 1,746 over Biggar (7,977) with Conservative Shaw respectable third only 119 votes further back (7,758) while second Socialist (Cormack for ILP) polled 3,685. In 1924 on a turnout of 84.1% (highest since Dec 1906) E. R. Mitchell won the seat for Lab (17,057) with majority of 2,228 over Asquith, the only other candidate (14,829).
 96 I. G. C. Hutchinson, 'Scottish Unionism between the two world wars', p. 84 in Catriona Macdonald (ed.), *Unionist Scotland 1800–1997* (John Donald, 1998).
 97 Stuart R. Ball, 'Asquith's decline and the general election of 1918', *Scottish Historical Review*, 61 (1982).
 98 *Ibid.*, p. 44.
 99 J. G. Swift MacNeill, 'The ethics and philosophy of by-elections', *Fortnightly Review*, 107 (1920).
 100 PRG Index 1919–1923.
 101 Liberal Association Minute Book 1922–1947, 13 Mar. 1923 and 21 Mar. 1924.
 102 *Ibid.*, 4 June 1924.
 103 A. G. Gardiner, 'Asquith', *The Nineteenth Century and After*, 112 (1932).
 104 Firth, 'Return of Mr Asquith', p. 543.

Letters to the Editor

The Birmingham caucus

I read with great pleasure Ian Cawood's article in *Journal of Liberal History* 105 (winter 2019–20) on the role of the Liberal 'caucus' in the 1868 general election in Birmingham. I have a personal interest in the subject, as the strategist William Harris was, in addition to being the 'father of the caucus', my own great-great-grandfather.

I have just one heirloom that has come down to me, but it may be of

interest to some of your readers. It is a gold pocket-watch, inscribed: 'Presented to Mr William Harris in appreciation of his services as Honorary Secretary of the Liberal Committee in the Birmingham Election. 1867.'

The Birmingham Liberal Association had been founded early in 1865, on the initiative of Harris, George Dixon and John Jaffray. One of its achievements was to see Dixon elected to Parliament in a by-election in July 1867 – a success in which Harris was clearly perceived as having played a significant backstage role. Following his election, Dixon stood down as secretary of the BLA, to be replaced by Harris, who therefore took prime responsibility for devising the new party machinery, afterwards known as the caucus, which – as Dr Cawood explains – brought the Birmingham Liberals a resounding victory in the general election of November 1868.

Oliver Harris

Anarchism and Liberalism

I am in the process of studying the influence of anarchism (particularly the anarchist philosophy of Piotr Kropotkin) on liberalism, both in and out of the party, since the 1880s.

The focus of my PhD thesis is on New Liberalism and the period of 1886–1930 but my broader research brings me to look at groups such as the Young Liberals in the 1960s and 1970s and anything else that crops up.

Generally I look at anarchist influences on liberal approaches to specific policy areas such as land reform, anti-imperialism, pacifism, progressive evolutionary arguments and more broadly within the social sciences of sociology, town planning and anthropology.

I was wondering if you could publish this to see if anyone would like to write to me with their personal experiences in this regard, or relevant historical information they might have. While I am particularly interested in Kropotkin, I am also quite interested in the influence and distribution of all anarchist writers into Liberal networks. I have done a lot of the basic reading but I am approaching this topic as a historian of anarchism, so there are always a few gaps in my knowledge of liberalism.

Please could anyone who is interested email me at shaunjpitt@gmail.com.

Shaun Pitt

