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Journal of Liberal History

For the study of Liberal, SDP & Liberal Democrat history

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Liberals in the House of Lords

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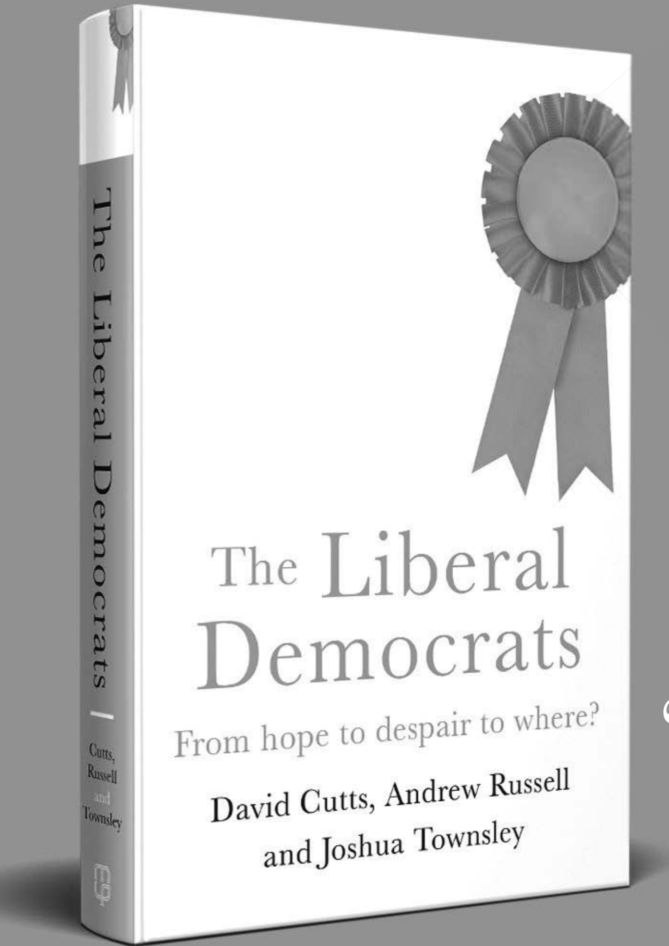
The Liberal Democrats
From hope to despair to where?
David Cutts, Andrew Russell
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The Liberal Democrats
Cutts, Russell and Townsley


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Liberal Democrat History Group

The Liberal Democrat History Group promotes the discussion and research of topics relating to the histories of the Liberal Democrats, Liberal Party, and SDP, and of Liberalism. The Group organises discussion meetings and produces the *Journal of Liberal History* and other occasional publications.

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Liberal History News Winter 2023–24

Editorial

Welcome to the winter 2023–24 edition of the *Journal of Liberal History*. Our regular readers will notice an overhaul of the internal design, using new fonts (Whiteblack and Myriad Pro, for those interested in typography) and a more professional cover design (enormous thanks to Richard Morris for this). Our aim is to make the *Journal* more readable for both print and digital subscribers. We will continue to experiment with the layout for the next few issues until we get it right. Any feedback is very welcome; email me on journal@liberalhistory.org.uk.

Duncan Brack (Editor)

Michael Steed – An Appreciation

Michael Steed was the epitome of intellectual rigour; this, coupled with a remarkable memory for detail, made him a formidable politician. Fortunately for Liberalism, he realised: 'in my late teens that Liberalism, not socialism, must be at the core of a worthwhile and effective radical party', and he never wavered from that view.[1]

Michael had three particular strands to his politics. First was his active commitment to the promotion of his Liberal values, particularly international Liberalism. Second, and more academic, was the development of psephology – the study of electoral processes – in which he was acknowledged to be one of the leading specialists. Third was a deep interest in Liberal history. Two of his specific campaigns were for gay rights and for European integration, but it was his awareness of the instinctive Liberal understanding of the human personality and its need for freedom, coupled with a deep distaste for Tory imperialism, the aggressiveness of the Tory right, and an awareness that on the issue of European integration, 'Labour was easily the most reactionary and protectionist party', that confirmed his commitment to Liberalism.[2]

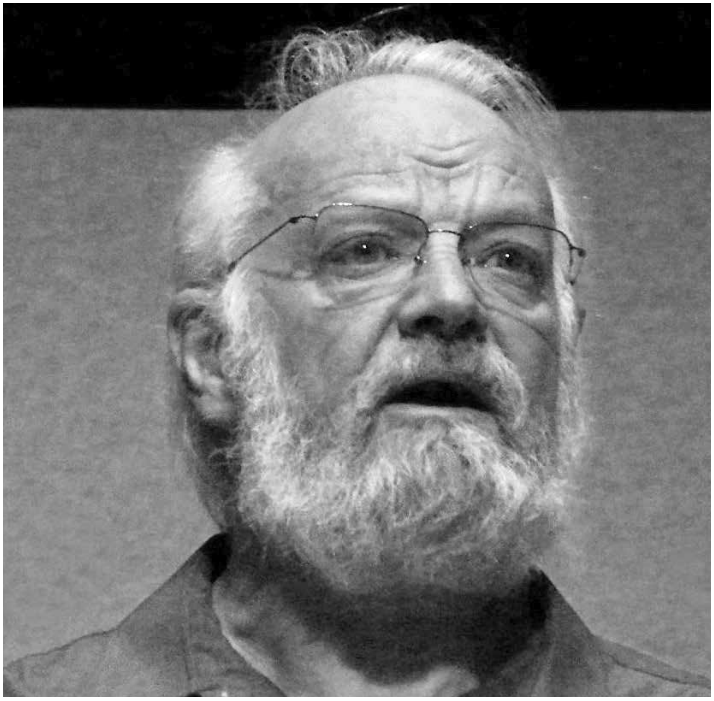
Born on 25 January 1940 into a nominally Conservative family, he discovered his political affinity for himself rather than inheriting it and, somewhat precociously, and bravely, he derived his initial appreciation of Liberalism by reading John Morley's two-volume biography of Gladstone. Even more precociously he re-founded the local Liberal association whilst still at school. Happily this coincided with Jo Grimond becoming the Liberal Party leader, and Steed found Grimond's brand of left radicalism congenial. He admitted to going through a brief socialist phase as part of growing up but became convinced that Liberalism had to be at the heart of progressive and radical politics.[3]

He won a scholarship to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and began by reading economics but switched to geography, which was particularly apposite for his later analyses of voting trends. It was then that he got involved in national politics, having found himself on a delegation to a seminar run by the World Federation of Liberal and Radical Youth. In the time-honoured way of Liberal Party politics this quickly led to him becoming the National Chair of the Union of Liberal Students, with an ex-officio seat on the party's National Executive and the Liberal Party Council. He rapidly became involved in the radical causes that remained with him – and the Liberal Party – thereafter: constitutional reform, European federalism, regional devolution, electoral reform, homosexual equality and anti-apartheid. It was while trying to deliver aid to the victims of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre that he was refused entry into South Africa by the apartheid regime.

Steed was an officer of the National League of Young Liberals during much of the rise of the radical Young Liberal Movement – nicknamed the Red Guard by sections of the press – but he avoided the radical action that enveloped the party in public controversy. His contribution to a Liberal Democrat History Group meeting on this period gave no hint of any personal involvement with the Young Liberals' involvement in direct action, often in conjunction with other left groups, over the Vietnam war, South African apartheid and Rhodesia's white government's Unilateral Declaration of Independence, plus arguing for UK withdrawal from NATO and other targets of a newly radicalised youth culture.[4] On the other side, those broadly defined as the party establishment were outraged at what they saw as vote-losing actions at odds with party policy and the parliamentary process.

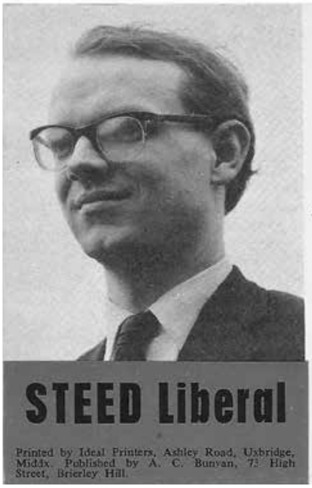
The highly public divisions within the party came to a head at the 1965 Liberal Assembly in Scarborough and dragged on thereafter until, in December 1970, following the disastrous results at that year's general election, the party leader, Jeremy Thorpe, set up a committee under the chairmanship of Stephen Terrell QC, the party's candidate in Eastbourne, to examine the existing relations between the Young Liberal Movement and other sections of the Liberal Party, to take evidence and to make recommendations. Its report's main recommendation was that membership of the party should come only through a constituency party.[5] One of Steed's criticisms of the report was that it was addressed to the party leader, Jeremy Thorpe, rather than to the party. He made a similar point in a speech at the time, saying that the party must shift its attention away from personalities to a wide-ranging debate about ideology, principles and policies.[6]

Even though Michael Steed was the Chair of the Union of Liberal Students during much of this time he was conspicuously absent from what were seen as its excesses, and did not contribute to either of the two seminal Young Liberal publications of the period.[7] In essence he was in the movement but not of it. With his more academic and analytical mind, and being somewhat older than the key leaders of the movement, the party's slightly scurrilous magazine, *Radical Bulletin*, dubbed him 'the venerable Steed'.[8] He commented on the period at a Liberal Democrat History Group seminar in 2010.[9] However, when the Young Liberals were determined to test their policies and tactics out with the electorate, and were the prime movers of the party contesting the Brierley Hill by-election on 24 April 1967, Steed was the obvious choice as candidate. It was a quixotic campaign in a constituency that had not been fought by Liberals since 1950 and which, in fact, was not contested in the following 1970 election. He polled just 7.8 per cent and forfeited his deposit.



Michael Steed speaking at the Gateshead Liberal Democrat conference, March 2012 (Photo: Keith Edkins, CC BY-SA 3.0)

During this period he had been a student of David Butler at Nuffield College, Oxford, but his rapidly increasing commitment to psephological research and analysis led him to abandon his PhD. In 1966 he went from Nuffield to Manchester University as a Lecturer in Government, a post he held until 1987, taking early retirement through ill health. Alongside his commitment to the Liberal Party he developed a reputation as an expert and independent commentator on election results. He contributed the statistical analysis to the definitive Nuffield study on each general election from 1970 to 2005, latterly with John Curtice. He also provided the annual analysis of local elections in *The Economist* from 1968 to 1991. Steed developed an encyclopaedic knowledge of even the smallest local council election, and Vernon Bogdanor recounted that as a



ELECTION COMMUNICATION

BRIERLEY HILL BY-ELECTION
27th April, 1967

With Compliments
from

Michael Steed.

Michael Steed, M.A.(Cantab.), your Liberal Candidate is a 27-year-old university lecturer in the Department of Government at Manchester University.

Michael Steed says *"We want a Revolution"*

I am fighting this by-election as a Liberal because I want to change British politics. As the Tory and Labour Parties become more and more alike, they are losing sight of the real issues, and you, the electorate, are losing your right to choose between policies. The Liberal Party can revolutionise Britain by bringing idealism and principle back into politics.

Abroad the old illusions about Britain's imperial role must go. We would deal firmly with the Smith rebellion in Rhodesia. We would end the Government's disgraceful support for the terrible war in Vietnam. We would take Britain into the Common Market because we believe in European Unity. We would make a real effort to end poverty in the less developed nations.

At home we would bring democracy into industry, sweeping away the conflict between boss and worker. Industry's profits should belong not to the Tory Capitalists, not to the Socialist State, but to those who work in industry. We would move power from Whitehall to the regions and bring Parliament back to life.

We want a revolution in the British political system — nothing less. As **Lloyd George** said: **Revolution I am not afraid of; it is Reaction I am afraid of.** This by-election is your chance to protest at the reactionary way politicians of both big parties run this country.

P.S. If you want to help the Liberal Campaign — or get more details of our policy — please contact me at : 73 High St., Brierley Hill. Tel : 78887

Michael Steed.

graduate student at Nuffield, studying local elections, he (Steed) would scan local newspapaers at breakfast. 'One morning he exclaimed loudly, "Good heavens!" We asked what disaster had occurred. He replied that an independent had won a local by-election at Newbury and that this had not happened since 1905!'[10]

In the course of analysing results he developed a more sophisticated method for calculating the swing between competing parties than that hitherto used by David Butler. The Steed Swing, he argued, coped better with three-party politics than the Butler Swing. He also had a deep awareness of electoral geography and, with John Curtice, was able to show that regional identities, coupled with historical influences, differentially affected national outcomes.

Steed continued to contest elections and he was the Liberal candidate in the more promising Truro constituency at the 1970 general election, but finished third. In 1973 he contested the Manchester Exchange by-election, a previously solid Labour seat with little Liberal activity. Steed polled 36.3 per cent and came a creditable second, the Liberals constructing a community politics campaign from scratch, particularly concentrating on soliciting and dealing with electors' individual problems – a tactic that the successful Labour candidate memorably labelled 'instant compassion'. He then unsuccessfully fought Manchester Central in the February 1974 general election and Burnley in 1983. He also fought Greater Manchester North at the 1979 European Parliament election.

Steed's difficulty as a parliamentary candidate was not uncommon among academics fighting elections in that his warm personality was at times clouded behind his intellectualism. A very different side to Steed's personality was in his bravura singing performances at the party's Glee Club on the last evening of the annual party conference. He also contributed a number of skilful parodies and alternative words to old tunes, many of which are enshrined in the *Liberator Songbook*.[11]

Steed was a prolific pamphleteer and the contributor of chapters to numerous books, but never produced a major book under his own name. It may well have been that, similar to his abandonment of his PhD thesis, confining himself over a long period to a single subject bored him and he preferred to absorb and to utilise a wide range of knowledge.[12] Equally eclectic was his support for a wide range of activism, from international campaigns to regional and local projects. His internationalism, his wide knowledge of European politics and his particular passion for French politics, led him to write a booklet, 'Who's a Liberal in Europe?'[13] This was followed by the chapter, 'The Liberal parties in Italy, France, Germany and the United Kingdom' in a 1982 book,[14] and also, in 1988 a chapter, jointly with Patrick Humphrey, 'Identifying Liberal parties in 1988'.[15]

Steed also took a leading role in the updating of the preamble to the Liberal Party constitution in 1969. In 1976 he devised the system for electing the leader of the Liberal Party by the party membership rather than only by MPs. In 1978 Steed was elected as President of the party, defeating Christopher Mayhew, a former Labour MP and a recent convert to the Liberal Party. In 1983 he contributed the chapter on 'The Electoral Strategy of the Liberal Party' to a book on many aspects of the party.[16]

In 1970 he married Margareta Holmstedt, a Swedish Liberal who was a lecturer at Bradford University. They set up home in Todmorden, the Pennine textile town on the border with Lancashire, and thus roughly halfway between their two universities. Whilst living there he was elected to Todmorden Town Council, serving from 1987 to 1991. They eventually drifted apart, separating in 1990 and divorcing in 2004. Margareta continued on the council and become its mayor 2010–11.

In 1982 I benefited personally from Steed's electoral knowledge and his forensic skills. The Boundary Commission's recommendations for Leeds had produced an unwinnable home constituency which partnered two strong Liberal wards with two very different wards which, though contiguous on the map, had only become part of Leeds at the local government reorganisation of 1974. The problem for the reviewers was that Leeds had eight constituencies but thirty-three wards. Understandably the Boundary Commission sought to combine five of the smaller wards into one constituency as opposed to communities of interest. The Leeds Liberals made a submission opposing the proposals and Steed came to Leeds to present the case before the Inspector. He was formidable, with a vast knowledge of the law and of precedents. In particular he pointed out that it was not obligatory to constrict all a constituency's wards within one local authority and that the Tyne Bridge constituency in the north-east bridged two local authorities. He therefore proposed that the outlying ward of Rothwell on the southern edge of Leeds could be included in a Wakefield constituency. The Commission was persuaded by him and the revised proposals produced the Leeds West constituency which the Liberal Party duly won in 1983.

The Alliance with the SDP from 1981, and the merger with that party in 1988, put Steed at odds with many of his social-liberal colleagues. Whereas most of those colleagues opposed the links with the SDP, he took a different view and though he had reservations, he wrote:

> I was one of those who did not find the actual transition from Liberal Party to Liberal Democrats easy; the merger process was made avoidably painful. But as a Grimondite Liberal, I never had any doubt as to the principle of merger with the SDP. I am a Liberal Democrat today in the hope of some further realignment.[17]

In 1996 he contributed a chapter on 'The Liberal Tradition' to a book of essays. In the course of just twenty pages he sets out a brilliant and succinct essay on the essence of Liberalism.[18]

In 1987 Steed began to suffer a devastating neurological condition, the physical effects of which severely curtailed his activities. The condition proved difficult to diagnose accurately. The illness ebbed and flowed and at times it seemed as if it would be imminently terminal. His mental faculties were unaffected and he remained as effective as ever and, in fact, he continued with many writing and speaking engagements, even though he was for many years confined to a wheelchair. He was commenting on Liberal history matters up to a matter of days before his death. Following his forced retirement from his Manchester lectureship, and finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the steep hills of the Todmorden area, he returned to his native Kent and became active with the Canterbury Liberal Democrats. He was elected to the Canterbury City Council for a single term in 2008.

In 1999 he met Barry Clements, a master carpenter, at a men's social meeting in Whitstable, and they became long-term partners and were formally joined in a civil partnership in 2023. With Barry's solid and constant help they were able to spend time most years in the south of France. Barry survives him, as do his four sisters and his brother, to all of whom he was very close. He died on 3 September 2023.

Michael Meadowcroft

1 Duncan Brack (ed.), *Why I am a Liberal Democrat* (Liberal Democrat Publications, 1996)

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Red Guard versus Old Guard? 'The influence of the Young Liberal movement on the Liberal Party in the 1960s and 1970s', Report by Graham Lippiatt on a Liberal Democrat History Group meeting on 12 March 2012, *Journal of Liberal History* 68, Autumn 2010.

5 Report of the Liberal Commission to the Right Honourable Jeremy Thorpe MP (Chair Stephen Terrell QC), 1st July 1971.

6 *The Guardian*, 15 September 1969.

7 Tony Greaves (ed.), *Blackpool Essays – towards a radical view of society*, Gunfire Publications for the National League of Young Liberals, 1967, and Scarborough Perspectives, ed Bernard Greaves, National League of Young Liberals, 1971.

8 Radical Bulletin is still published as an insert within the long-running (fifty-year-plus) magazine *Liberator*.

9 *Journal of Liberal History* 68, Autumn 2010.

10 Obituary, *The Times*, 16 September 2023.

11 *Liberator Songbook*, editions 1 to 25, *Liberator* Magazine, https://liberatormagazine.org.uk/.

12 For a list of Steed s publications, see his Wikipedia entry (accessed 3 January 2024); a list of his contributions to the *Journal of Liberal History* can be accessed via the Journal's website: https://liberalhistory.org.uk/people/michael-steed/.

13 North West Community Newspapers, Manchester, 1975.

14 R. Morgan and S. Silvestri (eds), *Moderates and Conservatives in Western Europe* (Heinemann Education, 1982).

15 Emil J Kirchener (ed.), *Liberal Parties in Western Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

16 Vernon Bogdanor (ed.), *Liberal Party Politics* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983).

17 Duncan Brack (ed.), *Why I am a Liberal Democrat* (Liberal Democrat Publications, 1996).

18 D. N. MacIver (ed.), *The Liberal Democrats* (Prentice Hall/Wheatsheaf, 1996).

Journal of Liberal History: subscription update

At the end of last year, the print subscription rate for the *Journal of Liberal History* increased – the first rise since 2015. The digital subscription rate did not increase, so the full range of subscriptions is:

- **Print subscription**: a print copy of each *Journal* posted to you: £30 / £20 unwaged
- **Digital subscription**: access to each *Journal* (and the previous nine) online via our website: £25 / £15 unwaged (older issues are freely available to everyone online)
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Most of our subscribers have renewed their subscription and those that subscribe by standing order have updated it. However, several still have to renew. If you fall into this category, you'll find a reminder letter enclosed with this issue. If you don't renew now, we will send you no further issues.

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Any questions? Email our Membership Secretary, Andrew Pinnock, at subscriptions@liberalhistory.org.uk.

Introduction to Liberal history
In our short introductory article series, Tony Little recalls the life and achievements of Millicent Garrett Fawcett, a radical and pioneering feminist best known as the leader of the suffragists, the constitutional campaigners for women's votes.

Millicent Garrett Fawcett, 1847–1929

Born in Aldeburgh on 11 June 1847, Millicent Garret was the eighth of the eleven children born to the businessman Newson Garrett and his wife Louisa, née Dunnell. Her father, a Liberal, encouraged political discussion at home, but Millicent was drawn into political activity mainly through her older sisters Louisa and Elizabeth. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson was the first British woman to qualify as a doctor and one of the first elected to a school board. Visiting Elizabeth in London, the eighteen-year-old Millicent was taken to hear John Stuart Mill speak

Millicent Garrett Fawcett (1847–1929) in 1910 (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

on women's rights, and became a disciple. The next year she helped organise the women's franchise petition linked to Mill's failed amendment to the 1867 Reform Act.

Socialising in London's radical political circles, Millicent met Henry Fawcett (1833–84) and, despite their age difference, married him in 1867. Their only daughter, Philippa, was born a year later. Although blinded in a shooting accident in 1858, Henry Fawcett became professor of economics at Cambridge in 1863 and Liberal MP for Brighton in 1865 and for Hackney after 1874. He was Postmaster-General in Gladstone's second government. With shared interests in walking, rowing and riding, the couple was intellectually and politically well matched. Millicent assisted her husband in a secretarial capacity and he encouraged her political and academic endeavours. The royalties from her books, such as *Political Economy for Beginners*, helped provide for her in her widowhood.

At Cambridge, the couple campaigned for the admission of women to the university, backing Henry Sidgwick's lectures for women and the foundation of Newnham College. Millicent later refused the opportunity to be mistress of Girton but she became a governor of Bedford College, later part of the University of London. She saw the narrow range of occupations open to women as causing their lower pay, and therefore fought for professions to be opened to female entry. She was a founder member of the National Union of Working Women and a council member of the Women's Protective and Provident League, although as a traditional radical she rejected protective legislation for adult workers.

In the same way, Mrs Fawcett favoured equality in moral issues, opposing the 1857 divorce law for requiring a higher standard of proof from wives suing for divorce than from husbands. She opposed the Contagious Diseases Acts (which allowed the forced medical inspection of suspected prostitutes in military towns) but quietly, perhaps because that crusade might have sullied her suffrage work, or perhaps because her sister Elizabeth supported the Acts. She was a founder member of the National Vigilance Association, a moral purity campaign brought to prominence by W. T. Stead's 1885 exposure of the white slave trade, and was concerned about Indian child marriage.

The failure of Mill's 1867 amendment led to more formal and organised lobbying for the women's franchise. Millicent Garret Fawcett was a founding committee member of the London Society for Woman Suffrage in 1867 and, despite her youth, spoke from the platform at its first public meeting. She also spoke at a public meeting in her husband's Brighton constituency, only to face criticism from another MP for her effrontery.

The London pioneers of women's suffrage thought that their fight would be a brief one, rather than the half-century struggle it became. Winning the vote for women householders in Poor Law and school board elections in 1869 reinforced that outlook. Perhaps because of their intellectual and social milieu, they saw their principal roles as the preparation of well-argued propaganda, and ensuring that Parliament debated the case, which occurred regularly throughout the 1870s. A similar body to the London Society was established in Manchester and, in 1871, Jacob Bright suggested that greater coordination between the suffrage groups would enhance their efficiency; a Central Committee for Women's Suffrage was formed under the leadership of Lydia Becker. Millicent Fawcett became a member of the new group and joined its executive in 1881.

The suffragists had hopes for the 1884 Reform Bill, but its passage was blocked by the Lords until the Liberal government agreed to a redistribution of seats. When Gladstone asserted that the bill could not be carried if it included votes for women, support for their amendment faded. Although a minister, Henry Fawcett voted for the amendment. He died later that year, and Millicent never forgave Gladstone for frustrating their campaign and for reprimanding her husband over the episode.

In 1886 Millicent Fawcett broke with the Liberal Party over Irish home rule. In 1888 she was one of the founders of the Women's Liberal Unionist Association though, like many other free traders, she resigned in 1904 after Joseph Chamberlain, the Liberal Unionist leader, embraced tariff reform. While a Unionist, she headed the 1901 official commission sent to investigate Emily Hobhouse's allegations of the maltreatment of families in Boer War concentration camps.

The quarrel within Liberalism spilt over to the franchise movement, with Mrs Fawcett preventing Women's Liberal Federation branches joining the National Society for Women's Suffrage. Nevertheless, following the death of Lydia Becker in 1890, Fawcett became the recognised national leader of the suffrage crusade. Although a competent rather than an inspiring speaker, she had a strong reputation as an organiser. Her efforts to coordinate the various groups resulted in the formation of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) in 1897. This became and remained the biggest of the women's campaign organisations.

Understandably frustrated by their inability to win the vote, in 1903 the Pankhursts, initially part of the Manchester franchise group, established the more aggressive Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), attacking property as a means of creating publicity, separating 'suffragettes' from the 'suffragists' of the NUWSS. Fawcett never condoned militant tactics, but publicly sympathised with the hardships suffered by the suffragettes during their arrest and imprisonment. She also recognised that the publicity generated by the WSPU enhanced recruitment to the NUWSS and strengthened its hand in lobbying.

The 1906 Liberal election victory appeared to offer the best chance yet for success. Between 1906 and 1914 both the NUWSS and WSPU organised their biggest marches, demonstrations and mass parliamentary lobbies. Asquith's procrastination and his failure even to pass the Conciliation Bill, which would have enfranchised female heads of household, provoked further frustrated violence from the WSPU. Fawcett added Asquith to her list of unforgivables and threw the weight of the NUWSS behind the Labour Party, which had endorsed adult suffrage.

For Millicent, during the Great War the franchise took second place to patriotism, despite a significant portion of the NUWSS executive favouring a pacifist line. Although campaigning was in abeyance, towards the end of the war Millicent negotiated with Lloyd George and put her weight behind the 1918 bill which gave the vote to women over thirty.

Following this achievement, Fawcett retired from the presidency of the NUWSS, being succeeded by Eleanor Rathbone. The organisation was superseded by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC) with a broader feminist agenda covering morality, employment and pensions as well as voting qualifications. Despite her increasing age, Millicent remained active in the promotion of higher education for women, for education of Indian girls and on some economic equality issues. But she remained a classical economist to the end, resigning from NUSEC when it added family allowances to its programme.

Dame Millicent, as she became in 1925, was present for the 1928 Commons vote which equalised the franchise for men and women. She died on 5 August 1929.

A principal source for her papers is the Women's Library in London. The official biography is by R. Strachey (1931); a more modern study is D. Rubinstein, *A Different World for Women* (1991). Millicent's memoir, *What I Remember*, was published in 1925; some of her other books, including her short history of the campaign, are available on the internet.

Tony Little is Chair of the Liberal Democrat History Group

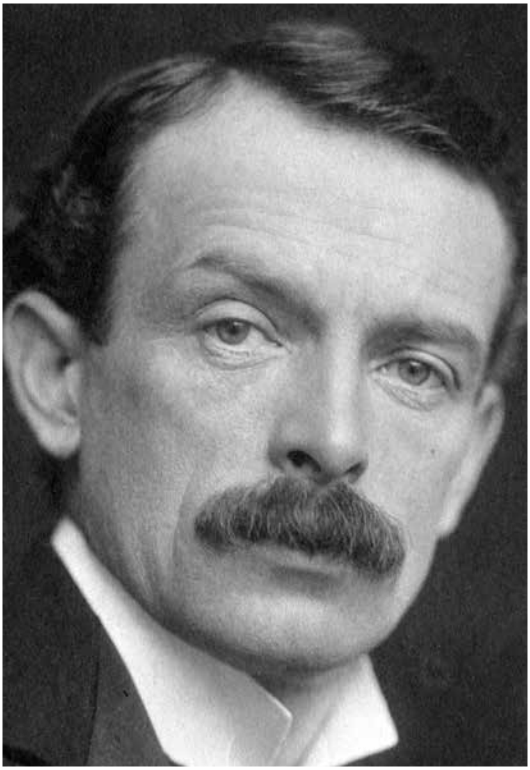
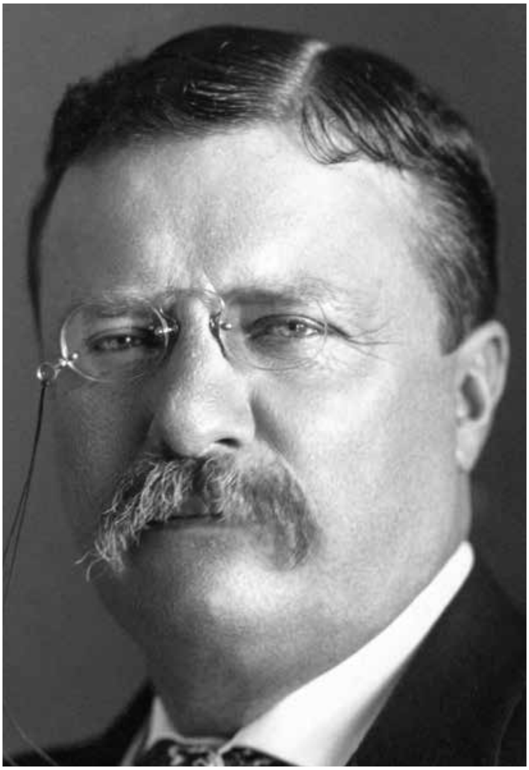
Liberalism across the Atlantic

Kenneth O. Morgan examines the parallels between British and American Liberalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Transatlantic Liberalism: Britain and the United States 1870–1920

In the years after the end of the American civil war in 1865, liberalism in Britain and the United States was separate but equal. An insular or isolationist view has been taken of each. American Progressivism, in states, cities and the nation at large has been taken as a process of self-examination and internal analysis after the excitements of American imperialism and the war with Spain in 1898 and what Richard Hofstadter called 'the psychic crisis' of the 1890s.1 In Britain the reform movements of the dawn of the twentieth century have seemed to be a reaction after the divisions of the South African War. A preoccupation with internal change – constitutional, social and economic – the House of Lords, Irish home rule, disestablishment of the Welsh church, women's suffrage and above all the 'new Liberalism' of social welfare were themes that essentially implied a new focus on domestic issues. Such views are put forward by both British and American historians, neither perhaps being wholly at ease with the internal travails of their contemporaries across the ocean.

Yet these accounts miss out a hugely important dimension. It was captured by the New York *The Forum* in October 1906 when it spoke of the unconscious influence the transatlantic branch of the great English-speaking race exercises on the cis-Atlantic branch and vice versa'.[2] Political commentators like Lyman Abbott and Benjamin Flower commented that American Progressivism after 1900 was part of 'a world-wide reform movement paralleled on each side of the Atlantic. The word 'Progressives' in the Theodore Roosevelt–Woodrow Wilson era in the US was freely applied to British reformers in the Asquith–Lloyd George period by editors and journalists like C.P. Scott in the *Manchester Guardian* and A.G. Gardiner in the *Daily News*. The collaboration between the Liberal and Labour parties down to 1914 was widely referred to as 'a Progressive alliance'. There had been much talk of the links between the Jacksonian Democrats in Washington and British radicals at the time of the Reform Act of 1832. This idea was revived in Liberal Democrat circles at the time of an anti-Conservative mood surrounding the local elections in May 1922. The link was at its closest around the latter decades of the nineteenth century although the two 'Anglo-Saxon' countries drifted apart thereafter, especially through America's rise as a world power shown in the Anglo–American diplomatic conflicts over the boundary between Venezuela and British

British and American liberals: David Lloyd George (1863–1945) in 1902 (© National Portrait Gallery, London) and Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) c.1904

Guiana in 1902-3. Nevertheless, the interaction between British and American reform movements is too persuasive to be brushed aside. The relationship between them was part of the worldwide response by nations old and new to the challenges of urbanization and industrialization, and the brute power of capitalism and inequality.

It is, therefore, highly praiseworthy that this *Journal* in its Winter 2021-22 issue devoted space to a treatment of American Liberalism, the discussion admirably summed up by Neil Stockley. In this debate, Helena Rosenblatt of New York University correctly points out the wider bonds with European Liberalism, German and French as well as British (Swiss and Danish might also be added in relation to local cantonal government and progressive agriculture), while James Traub picked up the story of revived and transformed American Liberalism after the glory days of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and the external pressures of the Cold War. Both discussions are valuable but both tend to leave out the vital Anglo–American dimension. This contribution attempts to put it back.

The basic contours of British Liberalism will be very familiar to readers of this *Journal*. It was the product of two revolutions, the industrial transformation which rebalanced the economy and social order and created the great question of how they would be adapted to the older social order, and of course the 1789 revolution in France which gave new emphasis to ideas of democracy, republicanism and human rights. Public dialogue shifted fundamentally from a debate on the relations of Crown and parliament, as shown in Burke's famous parliamentary motion of 1782, to one of relations between parliament and people. A new tone of social conflict entered following the ''massacre' at Peterloo, in 1819. As Shelley wrote in a powerful poem 'The Masque of Anarchy' (1819), 'We are many, ye are few'. The outcome was the passage of the Reform Act of 1832. Though nowhere near creating a democracy, it was a vital first step. The idea of institutional reform swept into many other areas, the established Church, the law, local government and, more perniciously, the Poor Law Act of 1834, with its ideology of 'less eligibility'.

The miscellaneous supporters of reform turned into a nationwide party in the late 1850s. A central registration body was set up in London to marshal the vote. In deference to English custom, a new social club, the Reform, was formed by ex-Whigs, radicals and Irish representatives in Pall Mall, with a political as well as social and gastronomic roles. The party, when it came into power in 1859 under so unliberal a figure as Lord Palmerston, rapidly expanded in the country as a whole,and especially in the new industrial areas of northern England. Freed by a reduced duty on paper, important newspapers arose to promote the Liberal cause such as the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Leeds Mercury*. They grew in every major city in England and Scotland, while in Wales all the Welsh-language newspapers were Liberal, such as Thomas Gee's *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* in rural Denbigh, with the close links between the press, the nonconformist chapels and soon the elected local authorities over the disestablishment of the Church in Wales.[3] It was a Celtic variation on the historic slogan of Peace, Retrenchment and Reform.

Of course, the Liberal Party was far more than a voting machine. Liberalism was a faith, a creed, a nexus of ethical beliefs which had important social, economic and legal aspects. Both creed and party were, for instance, closely connected with the nonconformist chapels. Following connections built up with the Whigs in the Restoration period, the chapels battled for equal rights and status as entrants into universities (notably Oxford and Cambridge), as magistrates and peers, and for their right to be baptised and buried in parish churchyards. In Wales, Dissenters, following the creed of perhaps three-quarters of the population as shown in a census of 1851, felt themselves to be a second-class citizenry, at odds not only with common democracy but with the very idea of Wales as a nation.

Secondly, Liberalism had a vital economic philosophy, that of free trade, a guarantee not only of manufacturing prosperity but, in the views of Cobden and Bright, of international harmony. Following the eighteenth-century French Encyclopaedists, *philosophes* like Denis Diderot, and later English Philosophical Radicals such as Bentham, Ricardo and John Stuart Mill, a huge blow was struck for liberal free-market principles with the repeal of the Corn Laws under the Peel ministry in 1846. Gladstone, a brilliant young Conservative, became its major recruit and outstanding moral and political force, four times prime minister, popularly christened 'the grand old man' and 'the People's William'.

The answer arrived at by the Liberals was to turn themselves from a basically individualist, free-trade party into a far more collectivist, radical movement, borrowing fundamental ideas of public change from their socialist rivals.

In a different area, Liberalism became a major international force, associated with overseas nationalists (invariably located in England only). Even through such belligerent spokesmen as Palmerston, it backed the liberation of Greeks in the 1820s, Hungarians in the 1840s, Italians in the 1850s and Bulgarians in the 1870s. Nationalist leaders like Mazzini, Garibaldi and Kossuth became popular heroes in Britain. Giuseppe Garibaldi was formally received in the sanctum of the Reform Club when he visited London. Significantly these enthusiasms did not apply to Britain's own conquests. In the Boer War of 1899-1902 leading Liberals were deeply divided and some spoke of their deep disgust with the 'methods of barbarism' employed in near-genocide against Afrikaaner women and children in Kitchener's concentration camps on the veldt.

In fact, nationalism within the United Kingdom proved to be a real problem for the Liberals and their principles, most damagingly so after 1886 when Gladstone first took up the cause of home rule for Ireland. There were major defections from the party, Lord Hartington amongst the Whigs, Joseph Chamberlain, in Birmingham, the leading popular radical in the party. Thereafter, with the First Home Rule Bill failing in the Commons, the Liberals lost their majority in England (save in 1906) and were now increasingly dependent on their strength in Scotland and Wales; both nations spoke in a language that sounded very much like home rule for their nations also. Gladstone, their great unifier in 1868, was now a force for division and disunion.

The most destructive threat of all facing the Liberals was neither libertarian nonconformists nor Liberal imperialists, but the rise of organised labour, skilled and later unskilled. The Liberals, like the US Progressives, were based on professional middle-class groups in urban and suburban areas, and free-trade industrialists in the coal, cotton and shipbuilding industries. Very many working-class electors, popularly known as Lib-Labs, also threw their weight behind Gladstonian Liberals, their power increased by the creation of new working-class constituencies in the redistribution of seats that accompanied the Reform Act of 1884-85 (along with a range of suburban seats where a revived Conservative Party was to flourish). It was very common for coal owners and miners' agents both to be staunch Liberals, as with D.A. Thomas, head of the Cambrian Combine in the Rhondda valleys, and 'Mabon', president of the South Wales Miners, from the late 1880s. But with the growth of frequent industrial conflict and less stable employment in the mines at the dawn of the twentieth century, a growing flood of working-class supporters peeled off from the party, apprehensive of the loss of the right to strike and also of the loss of wider rights for the trade union movement.

In the Edwardian years, major new themes were changing public dialogue. The prosperity of the British economy in the one-time 'workshop of the world' was threatened by foreign competitors in Germany and America. The malign word 'unemployment' entered the language. Politically most damaging was the alliance of mass trade unions with growing local groups of socialists, like Keir Hardie who was elected to parliament for West Ham in 1892 and then Merthyr Tydfil in 1900 during the Boer War. A new workers' party came into being in 1906, winning 29 seats as an independent party at the general election, at which a secret pact was concluded between the Liberal and Labour parties about the decision to fight individual seats. The progressive alliance and the existence of an anti-Tory partnership was now demonstrated, but clearly fundamental questions were being asked of both the class basis and the moral purpose of Liberalism as a political force and an organised party. The old Victorian reform movement would have to change drastically in order to survive and have a viable future.

The answer arrived at by the Liberals was to turn themselves from a basically individualist, free-trade party into a far more collectivist, radical movement, borrowing fundamental ideas of public change from their socialist rivals. This had been long in the making. State collectivist ideas from social theorists like L.T. Hobhouse and the more radical J.A. Hobson (whose economic critique of capitalism attracted the young Lenin), and sociologists like Charles Booth, Seebohm Rowntree and Leo Chiozza Money, public inquiries into poverty, old age, health (stimulated by reports on the poor medical condition of recruits for the Boer War), the poor law and unemployment, together shattered the idea of traditional liberalism. Gladstone's old Victorian liberalism, itemised in the Liberals' Newcastle Programme in 1891, was mutating into a social New Liberalism. Indeed, the roots of this change went deep. Gladstone himself had written an important article in the 1860s, 'Kin beyond the Sea' which foretold a new democratic relationship between the United Kingdom and the rising American republic. These ideas were, to varying degrees, championed by the Liberal governments of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith, and especially by Lloyd George who became Chancellor of the Exchequer and Churchill who became President of the Board of Trade and then Home Secretary, as well as by a wide array of popular newspapers and periodicals. New reforms, such as old age pensions, national health insurance, labour exchanges and children's allowances, changed the very idea of liberalism. There was some reinforcement of reform during the first world war, including votes for women (only those over 30 in the first instance). A generation of New Liberals from Charles Masterman to William Beveridge created the basis for welfare state, a glorious high noon for the Liberal conscience.

There was a brief revival of the New Liberalism during and just after the First World War from Lloyd George's controversial post-war coalition government, with a considerable extension of unemployment insurance, Christopher Addison's Housing Act of 1919 and Fisher's major Education Act in 1918. However, the Liberal Party itself, the main vehicle of reform for three-quarters of a century was split into fragments by the manoeuvres of Lloyd George's coalition. By 1924 it was clear that the Labour Party had become the main party of the left, and the Conservatives the dominant party of government which it remained until well into the twenty-first century. The old Gladstonian liberalism was a casualty of total war. The visionary gleam, the glory and the dream had fled, seemingly for ever.

The flowering of American Progressivism; the British Liberal influence

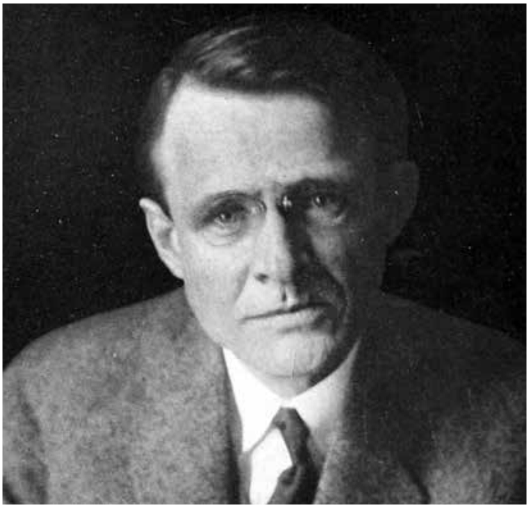
One conclusion that can be drawn from British Liberalism's near-century of dominance is that the influence upon it of reform movements across the Atlantic was relatively slight. This is in some ways surprising because American historians have seen liberalism as the governing idea of the United States.[4] It was a land born free, a view confirmed by the victory of the anti-slavery north in the civil war. In the aftermath of the American revolution, there was strong involvement of a British publicist like Tom Paine with radical developments in the US. There was some talk of political collaboration between reformers in Britain after 1815 and the Jacksonian Democrats in the States shortly afterwards. In the forties and fifties, Cobden and Bright were well known for their links with American liberal movements like anti-slavery: Bright and Abraham Lincoln had an extended wartime correspondence despite Bright's Quaker pacifism. Cobden was popularly known as 'the member for America'.[5] However, the growth of protectionist sentiment and practice by American governments, Democratic and Republican, for example the McKinley tariff of 1891 which did much damage to the British tin-plate and steel industries, led to loud protests from British free-trade liberals who helped to keep their own country on the free-trade path down to the 1930s.

In assessing the links between British and US Liberals when the US Progressive movement began to emerge, it is clear that the influence of US developments on British reform was episodic and often indirect. The constitutional systems of the two countries were too different to make for a consistent relationship. With its unwritten constitutional arrangements based on parliamentary rather than popular sovereignty and tilted towards prerogative powers at the centre, Britain was quite distinct from the sprawling federal procedures of the United States. There was, it is true, much quoting by A.V. Dicey and other British scholars of the systems of the United States during the disputes between the Lords and the Commons over the Parliament Bill in 1909–11 with Conservatives, rather than Liberals, citing the American prevalence for checks and balances and the separation of powers, but the effect of the bill was to diminish considerably the restrictive powers over the Commons of the House of Lords, in any case an undemocratic, unelected body. Conservative calls (backed, amongst others by King George V) for a referendum on legislation as existed in some of the United States, to ward off Irish home rule, led nowhere, as did calls for the election of judges, regarded in both countries as a reactionary force which imperilled the rule of law and impartial judicial scrutiny of legislation. By contrast, there was limited influence on these current controversies from the writings of Bryce, author of a famous academic study of the American Commonwealth, and for a lengthy period a Liberal MP and Cabinet minister. Nor were the US and Britain, with the liberals Asquith and Woodrow Wilson at the heads of their respective administrations, close in international relations, notwithstanding their future alliance during the First World War. The notion of an Anglo-Saxon 'special relationship' was the invention of a far later era, and of Churchillian rhetoric in the Cold War after 1945.

The relationship between liberals in both countries, despite being a theme much neglected by later historians, was powerful and consistent. It was illustrated by the contacts between David Lloyd George and Theodore Roosevelt, president from 1897 and founder of a highly influential, breakaway Progressive party.

On the other hand, the relationship between liberals in both countries, despite being a theme much neglected by later historians, was powerful and consistent. It was illustrated by the contacts between David Lloyd George and Theodore Roosevelt, president from 1897 and founder of a highly influential, breakaway Progressive party. He would run against the sitting Republican president William Taft in the presidential election of 1912, which guaranteed the latter's humiliating defeat. Roosevelt's programme of broad social reform and a forceful foreign and naval policy chimed in with the policy Lloyd George had proposed as the basis for a national coalition government at a Buckingham Palace conference in the summer of 1910.[6] Evidently Roosevelt's leisure interests such as shooting wildlife in Africa did not disturb the Welshman's sensibilities. When Roosevelt died during the Paris peace conference, Lloyd George, strongly backed on this occasion by Clemenceau, lamented the loss of a great international statesman, and deplored the lack of grief displayed by Woodrow Wilson, a greatly inferior man in the view of the two European leaders. Curiously, Lloyd George, the great maker and unmaker of coalitions in Britain, thought Roosevelt made a massive error in breaking with his own party: 'He should never have quarrelled with the machine'.[7]

Lloyd George at this time endorsed Lord Milner's outlook, ominously termed 'nationalist socialism' and, in the rumbustious T.R., he found its perfect embodiment. Like Louis Botha in South Africa, Roosevelt symbolised to Lloyd George the model of virile executive leadership. The Progressives offered Americans of all parties and none a new antidote to the 'robber barons' now dominating the industrial and business scene in the post-Reconstruction era. But they did so by working within the



capitalist order, unlike the agrarian Populists of the south and west who wished to replace the gold standard with 'free silver', a position unacceptable in these pre-Keynesian times to British liberals and one which doomed the Populist champion of radical Democrats to inevitable electoral defeat in 1900 and 1906. Sound money Progressives were far more trustworthy. British Liberals shared many of the targets and used many of the techniques of their US counterparts, notably the prominent role of 'muckraking' journalists. The new ethic coming from across the Atlantic had a widespread effect on American society and in the most unlikely and remote of places. William Allen White, who edited the local *Gazette* in the small town of Emporia in rural Kansas provided regular and highly supportive articles for his readers on the social reforms of the Liberal government after 1906. He wrote emotionally of how he and his wife had tears in their eyes when joining in a march in London on behalf of Lloyd George's 'People's Budget' in 1909. 'We felt we were part of something great and beautiful. We did not know exactly what except that we knew the dog had slipped off his leash and this was the time to howl.'[8]

A new flood of Progressive journalists focused particularly on the urban problems of Europe, in Germany and especially Britain. The best informed of them was Frederic Howe, whose long career spanned working for Tom Johnson in Ohio as a young man in the 1880s to Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s, when he worked with Jerome Frank on the Agricultural Adjustment Act programme. He wrote indefatigably for a wide range of Progressive journals like *The Outlook*, *Arena* and *The Forum* alongside penning a series of powerful and detailed monographs - *The City: the Hope*

American progressives:
Frederic Howe (1867–1940) in 1912
Jane Addams (1860–1935), nd
Robert 'Fighting Bob' LaFollette (1855–1925) after 1905

of Democracy (1905), *The British City: the beginning of Democracy* (1907) and *European Cities at Work* (1913). Also of much interest is Howe's autobiographical *Confessions of a Reformer* (1925). At a time when reformers in Britain and other European countries viewed the rapid growth of the city with hostility and even fear, fanned by crime and disorder, by the unsolved murders of Jack the Ripper and the violence at Sidney Street in the East End of London, Howe regarded the British city as representing 'the high water mark of democracy',[9] contrasting with the elitist power exerted over parliament by the landed gentry. In Britain, cities enjoyed a growing range of freedoms and responsibilities in Howe's view, though he did underestimate the way in which central government was eating away at the resources of local authorities in Britain, a major reason for the new land taxes proposed in Lloyd George's 1909 budget. Even so, whereas American liberals tended to regard their own cities with indifference and even distaste, in Britain the public dynamism of industrial cities like Manchester, Glasgow and Joseph Chamberlain's Birmingham met with the enthusiasm of transatlantic observers like Frederic Howe. The London County Council was widely regarded in America as the greatest and most progressive local authority in the world until the rule of Liberal councillors was terminated by Conservative local election victory in 1907.

Hence, one major policy influence that flowed from British Liberalism to the United States was urban reform, including settlement houses and other methods of coping with the poverty and social inequality of large cities. Toynbee Hall in London's East End became an inspiration not only for young radicals like Clement Attlee but also for important overseas reformers like Jane Addams who visited the Hall in 1888.[10] She then founded Hull House in Chicago, another small, face-to-face community where the poor could be protected and given a sense of moral independence. It was also important, in view of the racial and religious prejudice shown to many immigrants, that they should have the opportunity to wear their traditional style of dress and preserve their own customs and language. The ethic of Hull House was drawn from the American Protestant churches, which attracted many idealistic women like Ethel Starr and Vida Scudder, and later Florence Kelley and Lilian Wald, who carried their social passions into tenement house reform in New York City and other cities.[11] Another important recruit was to be Frances Perkins, Secretary for Labor under Franklin Roosevelt and the first female Cabinet minister during the New Deal.

A different transatlantic borrowing was in adult education where the American socialist historian Charles Beard helped Walter Vrooman to set up Ruskin College, to enable working-class trade unionists to gain degrees. Like several other American radicals, such as Joseph Fels, a philanthropic soap manufacturer, and Dr Stanton Coit, a pillar of the Ethical Church, Beard spent much time in England working intimately with the British labour movement, and Ruskin College flourished in the years down to 1914.

A corollary of the settlement houses was a typically American enthusiasm for civic and local government reform, which Progressives championed. One stronghold was the state of Wisconsin in the mid-West, where Governor, later Senator, 'Fighting Bob' La Follette used links with academics in the new University of Wisconsin in Madison to promote a programme of social and civic reform, aligned with public enterprise – 'the Wisconsin idea' as it was known.[12] Here again, British Liberalism was a strong inspiration, especially as fear grew of how corrupt 'robber barons' were strangling the life and independence of local communities. One very influential book was British urban reformer Albert Shaw's *Municipal Government in Great Britain* (1895). The writings of Shaw went beyond the objectives of the 'civil service reform' championed by E.L. Godkin of the *Nation* and Charles Adams and the affluent 'Genteel Reformers' of the 1870s.[13] More contemporary was Lincoln Steffens's bold exposure of the open graft in cities like St. Louis, which caused a sensation. To Shaw and others, British cities were honest and disinterested while their US counterparts were corrupt and dominated by selfish private interests. One clear consequence was the emergence of reform mayors and other local activists like the Welsh-American 'Golden Rule' Jones in Toledo, Ohio, and Hazen Pingree in Detroit.

The US National Civic Federation focused its attention on the British urban experience. In 1909 the Federation sent a commission of inquiry to investigate British municipal government. It remained incurably optimistic about British city and municipal reform. The success of municipal trading and publicly owned railway systems and gas and electricity services were instances of the great financial success that self-governing municipalities could achieve.[14] Frederic Howe saw British businessmen applying their talents in local government productively in a public-spirited way but then, as Lincoln Steffens wryly observed, 'Howe believed in businessmen'.[15] Reformers heralded the rise of the city planner, 'the man in the grey flannel suit' in the later argot. Like American liberals more generally, Progressives had boundless, perhaps excessive, faith in the enlightenment and humanity released in a free citizenry, detached from American capitalist considerations of economic self-interest.

In addition to social and urban reform, there was a third stream to American Progressivism – direct democracy. Here, however, the British Liberal tradition, with its strong commitment to parliamentary sovereignty, had distinctly less impact. American Progressives believed in direct democracy. The cure for democratic deficiencies was more democracy. Opening up and purifying the American electoral system would, of itself, produce a purer and more effective political society. There were calls for primaries in the selection of candidates, and this soon developed across the nation including in presidential elections. There were calls for more direct voter influence on their authorities in the form of the referendum, the initiative and the recall of officials.[16] Most startling of all for British liberalism, devoted to the rule of law and the political independence of the judiciary ever since the Act of Settlement in 1701, was the call for the direct election of judges. This met with some sympathy in the labour movement where anti-labour decisions by the British high court, on the pattern of the Taff Vale case in 1901, threatened the basic right to strike. But leaders of the Labour Party like Ramsay MacDonald were traditional in their view of the constitution. The political controversies in the United States that pursued Supreme Court judgements in matters involving tariffs and inter-state commerce, followed in more recent times by moral issues such as abortion and the *Roe v. Wade* controversy, ensured that here was an area of constitutional change which British liberals entered with hesitation. Liberal/Liberal Democrat calls for proportional representation were sunk in the British referendum of 2011, and the experience of a Conservative/Liberal Democrat government under David Cameron, which pursued an economically damaging programme of fiscal austerity, did not inspire confidence in such ideas.

Nevertheless, the influence on both the theory and practice of the Progressive movement in America during the years between the Reconstruction and the end of the First World War are an important, even exciting phase of Anglo–American liberalism. The period covered in James Traub's discussion in this Journal was quite different. While its influence on American internal history was centrally important down to the 1960s (as I well recall myself),[17] Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was a national, even nationalist campaign, and had little effect on European reform movements. Roosevelt's deliberate blitzing of the world economic conference in London in the spring of 1933 was a blunt demonstration of going it alone, while the US economy stayed 'over there'. British people of the left did not identify with its principles or its targets; Lloyd George's description in 1933 of his plans for conquering unemployment as a British 'New Deal' did not carry much weight. Indeed it must be admitted that the success of the New Deal in reducing US unemployment until the outbreak of war was limited. Perhaps in Britain only the Gaitskellite wing of the Labour Party in the 1960s came near to embracing US New Deal ideas, at Ditchley Park and elsewhere. Philip Williams's biography has shown how Gaitskell himself felt intuitively close to 'New Dealer Liberals' like Harriman and Rusk, especially if they had been Rhodes scholars at Oxford or active in the English-Speaking Union.[18]

However, there was one great divide between British and American liberals in the early years of the last century apart from the miles of the Atlantic Ocean. When American reformers looked more closely at who their British role models were, a problem emerged. In both countries, not surprisingly, the reformers were professional, middle class, white men (along with distinguished women like Jane Addams and Progressive novelists). They approached the world of labour from the outside; issues of racial discrimination were largely ignored until after the Second World War, as was the legacy of slavery and of empire. After the Versailles treaty and the American refusal to enter the League of Nations, Progressivism in America lost its thrust. The First World War effectively killed off a movement which did not naturally fit in with a climate of nationalist belligerence. Post-war America lapsed into the 'Red Scare', the regime of isolationist mediocrities like President Warren Gamaliel Harding and illiberal fixations like an assault on the teaching of evolution in US schools in the Scopes case in Tennessee. Robert La Follette's presidential campaign in 1924 as an independent 'Progressive' attracted limited support. Britain ended up with mass unemployment and a general strike, and its own version of anti-Bolshevism. Progressive forces in both countries were on the retreat.

In addition to social and urban reform, there was a third stream to American Progressivism – direct democracy. Here, however, the British Liberal tradition, with its strong commitment to parliamentary sovereignty, had distinctly less impact.

But there was in any case a divergence in the respective ideas of democracy. It emerged in the Progressive journal *The Outlook* when it surveyed the personnel of the new Liberal government elected in 1906: eleven graduates of Oxford, five from one college, Balliol. They, in partnership with the English 'public' boarding schools. apparently comprised 'the highest and finest traditions of self-culture not to mention muscular Christianity - an expert golfer, a boxer, cricketer, oarsman, fisherman, footballer and a 'pedestrian'.[19] A bird-watcher (Grey) might have been added to these renaissance men. Walter Hines Page later lavished praise on ministers like Morley, Grey and Lulu Harcourt, for their patrician background. 'For generations English university life has been a preparation for participation in English public life.'[20] David Lloyd George, an outsider brought up in the relatively poor home of a shoemaker in distant Wales, attracted no such enthusiasm. Worse still, American Progressives waxed lyrical at the idea of empire. The periodical *The Outlook* extolled the merits of Minto and Cromer as viceroys of India. The Congress movement was ignored. 'It may be remarked that Great Britain never chooses any but able men for this important post. The British Empire has been, and is, a tremendous force for the advancement of civilisation throughout the world'.[21] General Wood attempted to develop his own idea of an antiseptic Anglo-Saxon utopia when he governed America's newest imperial colony in Cuba after the war with Spain. Indeed, distinguished American scholars like William Leuchtenburg have claimed that the entire Progressive movement was a product of American imperialism with humanitarian additions.[22] Britain was for American Progressives a model like the Roman empire in the Age of the Antonines – rational, ordered and above all clean. Left-wing critics at the time, like Herbert Croly or Lincoln Steffens, condemned such elitist comparisons, as did La Follette in Wisconsin. The gulf between Eastern and Mid-West Progressives hastened their joint decline. British Liberals did not succeed in making America more democratic or tolerant, as McCarthyism was to show. Rather they helped both countries to embody a humanised welfare capitalism in a way that endures to the present time. British influences were an essential backdrop to the later reforms of Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson and Barack Obama. Perhaps herein, not in military or naval hardware, lies the true 'special relationship' between the two nations.

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1 Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (Vintage Books, 1967), pp. 147ff.

2 *The Forum*, October 1906, pp. 176–77

3 Kenneth O. Morgan, *Wales in British Politics, 1868–1922* (University of Wales Press, 1963)

4 e.g., Louis Hartz, *The Tradition of American Liberalism* (1955).

5 Donald Read, *Cobden and Bright* (Edward Arnold, 1957)

6 This document is printed in Sir Charles Petrie (ed.), *Life and Letters of Austen Chamberlain*, vol. II (Cassell, 1940), pp. 131–38

7 David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties* (Gollancz, 1938), pp. 226, 231–32

8 *The Outlook*, 20 November 1909, pp. 605–07

9 Howe, *The British City*.

10 See Kenneth O. Morgan, 'The Legend of Saint Jane', *Dialogue* (Washington D.C., 1976), pp. 107–11. Jane Addams led the singing of 'Onward Christian Soldiers' at the Progressive party convention in 1912. A pacifist, she broke with Roosevelt when he strongly endorsed America going to war against Germany, even though she had accepted the new battleships proposed in the 1912 Progressive manifesto.

11 cf. material in Inez Haynes Irwin Papers (Radcliffe College, Harvard). But American campaigners for women's suffrage rejoiced in the fact that their successful movement did not require the militant methods of the British suffragettes. They viewed the Pankhursts with some reserve. Women voted in some numbers in the presidential election of 1916 and boosted Woodrow Wilson's vote in the decisive far western states.

12 The personal and intellectual link between the state and the university in Madison is symbolized by State Street, connecting the legislature and the university in Madison.

13 See William M. Armstrong (ed.), *The Gilded Age; Letters of E.L. Godkin* (University of New York Press, 1975).

14 See Arthur Mann, *Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age: Social Reform in Boston* (Belknap Press , 1954)

15 Lincoln Steffens, *Autobiography* Vol. I (Harcourt, Brace, 1931), pp. 648. Steffens later became a famous enthusiast for the Soviet Union – 'I have seen the future and it works.'

16 There is a most interesting discussion of these matters in Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Belknap Press, 1998), a pioneering work.

17 In New York during the mid-term elections of 1962, while I was resident in Manhattan, I was struck by the Democrats voicing support, from veterans like Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt and ex-Senator Herbert Lehmann, for their senatorial candidate, Robert Morgenthau, whose father had served prominently in Roosevelt's cabinet in 1933. He lost.

18 Williams, *Hugh Gaitskell* (Cape, 1979).

19 *The Outlook*, 3 December 1905

20 ibid., 25 August 1906

21 Ibid.

22 William Leuchtenburg, 'American Progressives and Imperialism – Progressive and American Foreign Policy (1898–1920)', *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIX.

We are reproducing, in this edition of the *Journal*, an article by Jo Grimond MP which was first published in *Liberator* magazine in October 1970. Introduction by Mark Egan.

Jo Grimond: An Essay on Power

First elected as MP for Orkney & Shetland in 1950, Jo Grimond had led the Liberal Party from 1956 to 1967. Under his tenure the Liberals experienced a significant revival, reversing decades of seemingly irreversible decline. Not only did the party increase its parliamentary representation (a little), by winning the Orpington by-election in 1962 the Liberals showed they had the potential to win seats in areas with little or no previous tradition of support for the party. There was also a dramatic resurgence in local government and in party membership, with Grimond's media-friendly image and fresh perspective inspiring a generation of new recruits to Liberalism.

However, by 1970 the Liberal revival was receding into the distance as the party recovered from an electoral catastrophe as bad as any it had ever suffered. Grimond was returned to Parliament with a comfortable majority but he sat alongside just five colleagues, none of whom had anything approaching a safe seat. Grimond had stood down as party leader after the 1966 election, as Labour's victory with a majority of 98 ended any prospect of a 'realignment of the left' whereby Liberals and likeminded progressives could reshape the British political system. Grimond's successor, Jeremy Thorpe, was a divisive figure who survived an attempt to remove him in 1968 and made little impact with the public before the election in June 1970.

Grimond was an Old Etonian, Oxford-educated and a barrister, and his wife, Laura Bonham Carter, was a granddaughter of Asquith. Despite this background, firmly rooted in the British establishment, his political thinking was genuinely radical, as this article demonstrates. Published shortly after the 1970 election, it does not deal with the party's strategic challenges or the development of 'community politics' as an alternative strategy for securing and exercising power. Instead, it picks up on a number of themes which Grimond developed throughout the 1970s, culminating in his book *The Common Welfare* in 1978. Chief amongst these was his contempt for bureaucracy as an enemy of democracy, stifling new thinking and pursuing its own hidden, self-serving aims under the guise of a democratic mandate. Grimond was also passionate about developing people as rounded citizens, not as units in the economic machine: 'There must be activities and not passivities. They must be things people want to do on their own and not merely the encouragement of activities which the state considers praiseworthy.'

Grimond's prose rambles but is never dull. The ideas come thick and fast and can seem unfocused but they spark fresh thought and new ideas. It is not hard to see how he drew people to the Liberal Party, but the limitations of his approach are clear also. He is long on diagnosis but short on prescription. When he does make a proposal for change it can be perplexing – what exactly would a government-sponsored counter-government do?

Having left the party leadership, Grimond increasingly ploughed his own furrow. At one point he toyed with joining the Scottish Nationalists; he had no truck with community politics, categorising it as simply the mobilisation of grievance; and had little time for Social Democrats, whom he regarded as the principal enthusiasts for government bureaucracy. While Thorpe and, later, David Steel, grappled with the practical problems of increasing Liberal representation in Parliament, Grimond flew a flag for the broad church which the party had become, embracing a wide range of thinking and traditions largely ignored by the other parties. The Liberal Party was never at ease with the 'beard and sandals' label often applied by the media to its activist base, but in many ways the party's acceptance of diversity and debate was a strength which enriched British politics. That was also a part of Jo Grimond's legacy.

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Power to the People

'Power to the People'. It is an old revolutionary slogan. It is the perpetual inarticulate outburst of the people against their rulers. It is a populist, mystical, muddled shout. The people cannot have power. If they could possibly achieve it they would have to surrender it. The people today are not even sure who they are. A hundred and fifty years ago they were the wage-earners, the peasants, the small farmers and the very small shop-keepers. These were the people without power and therefore without the corruption which goes with power. 'We are the people of England and we have not spoken yet.' These were the members of an oppressed class. And it was a class. These were the revolutionary potential who had bitter grievances against their rulers and the ruling system. These were the sleeping giants to be romanticised by all sorts of revolutionaries and reformers from Marx to Belloc. But power can no longer be personified. This 'class' no longer exists. Nor are the modern wielders of power easily identified. They are certainly not the big landlord, nor the bloated capitalist, nor the shareholders of modern industry.

Is 'Power to the People' then a meaningless, purposeless slogan? I think not. But it needs to be re-considered. And foremost in the reconsideration it is important not to refine away its essential truth. It is a slogan of protest. It comes from the discontented. When it is most genuine, it is most incoherent for the very reason that it is the demand of the unorganised. Thus, though it may be led, focused and guided, it cannot be artificially implanted. It requires a certain element of faith and trust.

Populism supposes that certain down-to-earth simple virtues rest in the populace. If this rather mystical attitude can be accepted then it is possible to accept the movements which well up from below. Again the Liberal Party has preached participation for fifty years. Yet when the demand for participation sprang to life it was caught on the hop. It looked to participation in industry on orderly lines based on ownership and board membership. It was taken aback when students began to demand participation in the running of the Universities. We now have some of the leaders of the Labour Party, who have been in the van of cliche-ridden worship of bureaucracy and size for size's sake, talking about participation. This is not power for or from the people. The essential populist feature of power to the people raises three questions which I want briefly to discuss.

Jo Grimond (1913–93)

First, is it in a modern society necessary? Is it compatible with modern technocratic society? The answer is unquestionably 'yes'.

It has sometimes been argued that you must choose between democracy and efficiency. Though it is by co-operation and dialogue between the two that progress can be made.

The great mistakes of our civilisation are made by the bureaucratic mind and I don't only mean the civil service. The worship of size, the colossal waste, the abuse of surplus value, the alienation of industrial society, the gross inefficiency of many professions, notably architects, the faceless battering of the mass media, the insistence of production for production's sake, regardless of the utility of the product or who is to gain from it and the ultimate utter disaster of the communist systems, notably in Russia, bear the print of bureaucracy, of the slavery to technocracy, of what has been called systemic fascism.

The opportunity of objection and protest which is the minimum power which is required to keep any government efficient is too limited in today's world. The institutions of democratic government do not enable a quick enough response to be made to wrong decisions.

So both in the positive direction of active participation in decision making and in the negative field of effective protest we need to strengthen the democracy against the bureaucratic outlook.

What we need democracy for therefore is not so much now to give effect to the will of the majority so that we can avoid civil war; nor is it simply that human beings may be considered to have a right to play some part in their own communities, though both these reasons are still valid. It is that without the participation of an educated, original and active public we shall not get the services we want, we will not get the right decisions on particular matters which affect us and we shall not get the initiatives which make life so attractive.

What we want to ensure is that where there is a desire for democratic participation it is not thwarted. It has been thwarted to some extent in all industrial societies. In Northern Ireland the Catholic minority are a threatened minority within another minority which feel threatened and excluded. Our modern state with all its services fails to enlist the loyalty and enthusiasm of so many of its citizens because it fails to offer them a positive outlet for their political and social energies.

The second question is how far power to the people can be satisfied by better democratic arrangements within the orbit of established government and how far it depends on organised opposition.

It was, and indeed is, one of the great advantages of the party system that it supplied the motive pressure in politics. But can it be said to do so any longer? Only I think to a limited extent. To begin with the growth of democracies has created a new power. Pressures working in secret within the bureaucratic structure of industry. Professional organisations and the civil service looking to the furtherance of their own interests and pursued by men and women who have been indoctrinated by particular training to play particular roles.

What the Conservative and Labour Parties, the Republicans or the Democrats, may decide at their conferences or proclaim in their manifestos meet formidable and undemocratic forces operating outside the parties. Further, fewer people in Britain feel committed to the party ideology. Fewer people feel that they are represented by party representatives right across the whole spectrum of politics. The parties themselves too have fallen under the influence of apparatchiks and retain loyalties more through office and patronage than from political enthusiasm. People interested in politics are interested in this subject, in this issue or that, rather than in orthodox Conservatism, democratic Socialism or Liberalism.

As for action outside the conventional party structure it has been astonishingly successful. The 1970 Springbok cricket tour in England was stopped by a group of people without money and led by a young man of 20 or so. Community projects, art labs, demonstrations, straight community work is quite widespread in the USA and Britain. But two questions remain unanswered. How far can it or should it go without some unifying philosophy and unifying framework? So far it lacks what Mill called that 'centre of resistance round which the moral and social elements may cluster themselves'. Secondly, how is it to be financed? Is it no longer possible for the people to oppose the establishment because the force at the disposal of the establishment is too strong? And, if so, would it be possible to create a counter balance on behalf of the people without it becoming itself orthodox and bureaucratic? For, successful as protest has been considering the obstacles, and enterprising as are the spontaneous projects around us, yet the weight of a faceless industrial system presses heavier and heavier. As we gain greater control over our bodies and environment this process could become quite disastrous. If we can decide what climate we shall have and what children we can breed, as a greater and greater variety of technically sophisticated machines become available. what we choose will become very important. 'The people', that ultimate repository of hope and wisdom may itself disappear. We shall have only people produced for certain purposes and those purposes will be decided by blind bureaucratic forces slavishly serving what is technically possible.

If we are to extend the process of civilisation it seems to me that we must advance in three directions. First, we must educate people to examine, criticise and choose. At present we are in danger of turning out a great many people with skills and expectations. These are inevitably not commensurate with the jobs to be done. So we educate a layer of people whose talents will be wasted because they are not taught to apply them outside the disciplines in which they have been brought up. Secondly, we must have relevant information, put before us in a form which makes choice possible. Thirdly we must accept the normal methods of making a living are boring and exhausting (as they always have been) and attempt to come to terms with this ancient fact in various ways, both by the use of machines for some purposes and the active encouragement of other activities. There must be activities and not passivities. They must be things which people want to do on their own and not merely the encouragement of activities which the state considers praiseworthy.

The third point which concerns me in all these discussions about power to the people is where the individual comes in. It is notorious that a general meeting can be most oppressive towards individuals and small groups. It is not the people but those who can command and sway them who often end by taking the decisions. A feature of all change and improvement is that instead of expanding the privileges of the few or dealing with the deprivation of the many, it creates new problems and desires. It was at one time thought that the savagery of mobs was due to their lack of education. But education has not made the world more rational. It has certainly changed the problem. We are no longer in general in danger from mobs of the French Revolution type. But the irrationality of pressure groups and indeed of the population at large remains notable.

Apart from the desirability of reasserting the democratic outlook and devising institutions which can both be more representative and allow for more radical opposition, there is also the need to enlarge direct participation by the individual.

An obvious way of achieving this is by better distribution of wealth and increasing the amount of money available for the community to spend as it chooses. It is usually considered that in America the pendulum has swung too much in favour of individual affluence and the consumer society. But in Europe this is certainly not the case – and I am doubtful even about the USA. What is true is that there is also a need for an enlargement of expenditure in the public sector. What has happened is that we are having the worst of both worlds. We endure both personal poverty and public indigence.

What I have been saying then, first, is that 'power to the people' is an old demand and one which is constantly reiterated. Today it is a demand for a more open democracy, for more power to those outside the bureaucratic circles. This demand is justified not only on the grounds that participation is valuable and an invaluable human right, but that it is essential for efficiency. It should have its positive and negative side, both are important.

The organisation of wider democracy in modern society poses new problems which need much more examination, including the problem of a counter-government perhaps even supported by the main government.

Thirdly, along with the need for better institutions, we have to look at how individuals without attaching themselves to any institution can increase their power and their scope.

Matt Cole analyses the record of Liberals and Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords since the early twentieth century.

'Like the early Christians in Rome'

Have Liberal Lords been so isolated and powerless?

THE YEAR 1911 marked what appeared to be a decisive achievement in the Liberal tradition's campaign to create a 'popular' Upper House[1] when the Conservative-dominated Lords lost its legislative veto after a two-year constitutional struggle. The 83 Liberal peers showed resilience in leading this battle at it hardest flank, and one triumphant commentator at the time wrote that:

> The prolonged campaign between Lords and Commons was over, and as shrewd observers from the time of James Mill and Macaulay down to Gladstone, Bright and Morley had foreseen, victory was inscribed on the banner of the representatives of the people.[2]

However, the victory over the veto only opened up new challenges and dilemmas which were to hang over Liberal Lords for the next century. From within the government J.M. Robertson acknowledged in 1912 that 'on the theme of the Second Chamber, there is notable diversity of view among Liberals as well as between them and Conservatives'.[3]

Liberals in the House of Lords since then have occupied the distinctive and unenviable position of a weak group in a weakened chamber. Never holding even a fifth of peerages, they suffered the additional burden of representing a party which did not believe in their right to sit, whilst being susceptible to the same outside forces and internal splits as the party generally. Lord Strabolgi joined the group briefly in 1954, finding that 'they liked to feel they were a little persecuted group hanging together. They reminded me of the early Christians in Ancient Rome'.[4] Near the end of the century, and after a lifetime of service to the party, Richard Wainwright refused the prospect of a peerage, nicknaming the Lords 'the crematorium'.[5]

Yet in all but three years since the First World War, Liberal peers have been stronger in numbers and proportionately than the party's MPs,[6] and have brought prestige, ideas and activity which were at times in short supply elsewhere. The role and significance of the Liberals in the House of Lords can be assessed by four themes: membership; activity; identity; and impact outside the House. In all of these areas there is evidence that without its peers, the Liberal Party would have struggled even harder than it actually did in the twentieth century, particularly when it was at its most vulnerable.

Membership

The number of Liberal Peers peaked after 1918, and became perilously low in the 1950s. However, they remained the second largest party group until the 1950s and eventually recovered to their 1911 strength. The key determinants of the size of the group were defections in and out by existing peers; the creation of peerages granted to Liberals, or deaths of Liberal lords; and reforms to the membership of the chamber.

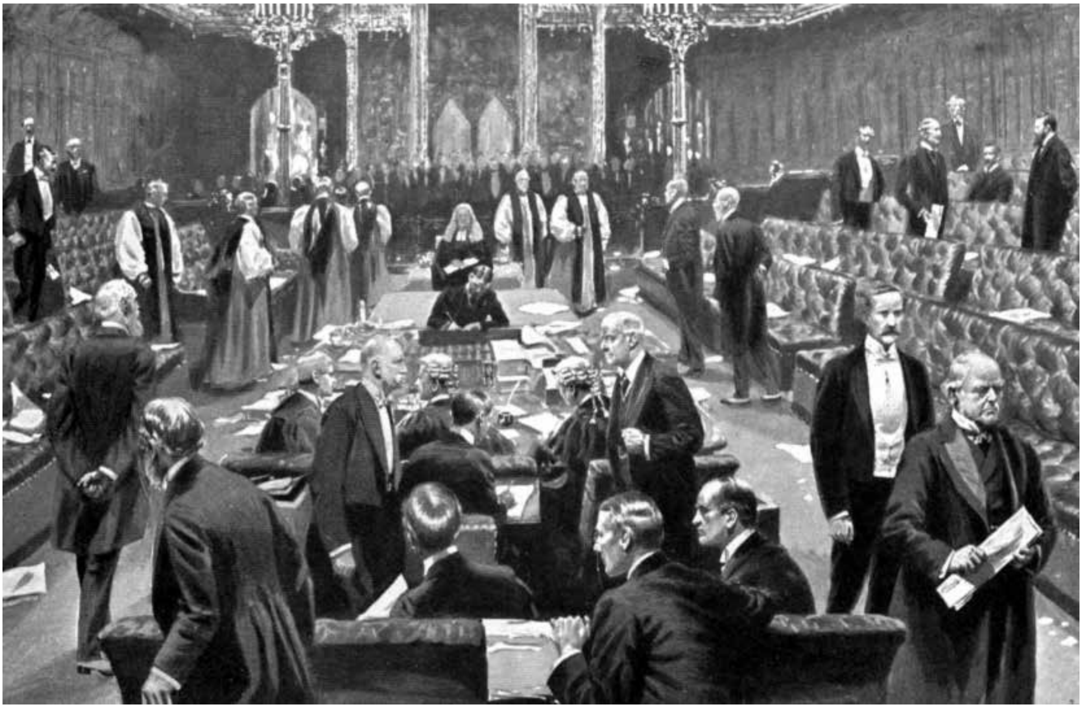
A loud note of caution should be sounded about methodology in assessing the size of the group, especially at its most fragile. Party loyalties are less compelling in the Lords than the Commons, particularly when the very existence of the party was in question.

For example, the designation 'a Liberal' is adopted in *Dod's Parliamentary Companion* of 1945 by 78 peers, although at least five of these were prominent National Liberals. Not so designated at the time on the other hand were Chief Whip Lord Rea, nor Beveridge and Mottistone, both of whom were intimately involved in party campaigns and debates for years.

The fluid nature of Party status was reflected in Lord Kimberley's 1927 *Dod's* entry as 'A Liberal; has supported the Labour movement'. Kimberley had in fact been elected a Labour councillor five years earlier. On receiving his peerage in 1942 Keynes wrote to Samuel that 'I must be regarded, I suppose – and indeed I should like to be – as an Independent. But, in truth, I am still a Liberal, and, if you will agree, I should like to indicate that by sitting on your benches'.[7] Though he acted as a key Liberal organiser for over two decades, Pratap Chitnis sat as a cross-bencher when David Steel secured his place in the Lords in 1977.

Nonetheless, using *Dod's*, modified by party records and other contemporary sources such as HMSO papers, we can observe that the number of Liberal peers fell from its height of 120 (following the notorious generosity of Lloyd

Division in the House of Lords on the 1911 Parliament Bill (*Illustrated London News*, 19 August 1911)



	No. Lib Peers	*% of all Peers*
1910	83	13.3
1920	120	16.8
1930	79	10.5
1939	55	7.0
1945	72	8.8
1950	62	7.3
1960	41	4.5
1968	41	3.9
1984	82	9.6
1998	67	5.9
2009	72	9.9
2020	83	10.9

George) to a low of 41 throughout the 1960s and 1970s.[8] This resulted from waves of desertion and defection to other parties (mostly on the right), and the paucity of new creations of Liberal peers.

In the 1920s the Liberal group in the Lords withered on the vine. Of the thirty-six peers changing their designation away from 'a Liberal' between 1920 and 1927, ten had defected to the Conservatives and their allies; three to Labour (including Asquith's close ally Viscount Haldane and Lord Frank Russell, son of Victorian prime minister John); but ten abandoned any political label, whilst thirteen gave way to successors who did the same. The Party no longer had the clout to rely upon personal or family loyalties. Even Asquith did not describe himself as a Liberal in *Dod's* after he joined the Lords.[9]

The next decade saw defection to other parties growing. The formation of the Liberal Nationals in 1931 drew twenty-three of the Liberal group into an alliance with the Conservatives. It must also have disheartened Liberal peers to see the Labour team in the Lords joined by former Liberal MPs including Christopher Addison (1937), William Wedgwood Benn (1942) and William Jowitt (1945).

The post-war period saw more departures: twenty-nine peers listed as Liberals in 1945 were not designated that way in 1950: twelve abandoned any party description; eight (in addition to those already in the National Liberals) went to the Conservatives. Eleven others followed them later, three more moving to the National Liberals. Twelve more Liberal peers' deaths gave way to non-Liberal successors. In 1962 the 87-year-old Baron Monkswell, who had been in the Lords since 1909 altered his description from 'Liberal' to 'Independent' for his last two years.

New recruits were sparse. Joining the Lords in 1937, Samuel complained that 'in ordinary years the members of Opposition parties have no place in the Honours list'.[10] By 1950 he was pleading to Attlee that 'the ranks of the Liberal Party in the Lords have become very thin, owing to the Party having been so long out of office. Your nominations … do not meet the needs of the existing situation, which has become a matter of urgency."[11]

After the War Archibald Sinclair had to await Churchill's second premiership to join the Lords, and illness prevented him playing the 'important part in the politics of the Liberal Party and in the House of Lords' which Churchill had anticipated.[12] Grantchester was the lone other Liberal new creation before Jo Grimond raised the situation again in his Assembly speech of 1958, complaining that peerages 'are showered on those whom the Prime Minister chooses to honour. The first thing that wants doing is to burst open patronage and privilege by which the Socialists and Tories manipulate our politics and maintain their rigid, out-of-date party structure.'[13] In all, in a period of nearly twenty years after 1945, only six creations out of a total of 181 joined the Liberal benches – mostly not for reasons of service to the Party.

The introduction of life peerages in 1958 benefitted the Liberals little initially. It was not until 1964 that the first such titles were granted in consultation with the Liberal Leader, and the daughter of one of those ennobled, Frank Byers, remembered the challenges Grimond faced:

> In '64 Harold Wilson said 'you can have two'. Harold didn't want Dad. They had been enemies since Oxford, when Harold left the Liberal Party. But Jo quite rightly said 'no, it's got to be Frank' and the other one was Violet. Actually they were only going to give one, but when they discovered Jo was adamant it would be Frank, they gave it to Violet, because by that time she was such a *grand-dame*.[14]

Wilson ennobled five more Liberals by 1970, Heath adding two more the following year, but during this time they created 83 Labour and Conservative Peers. Former Liberal MPs found chances of a peerage scarcer as their numbers increased: three of five who retired or were defeated in the elections of 1959–66 were ennobled; of twelve who left during the 1970s, five received titles; and during the Thatcher drought of 1983–92 numbers outran patronage even further, with 11 departures gaining only three peerages. The SDP had to wait a full four years before its first Peerage was created.[15]

There was limited traffic into the party, mostly from the left. Six peers succeeding chose to take the Liberal whip in the 1950s, including former Liberal MP Lord Elibank, and a further four joined in the 1960s. The most useful converts from Labour were former colonial governor Lord Milverton and former MP and junior minister Baron Ogmore. The Agent's report of the Kendal Liberal Association hoped that 'the coming into the party of Lord Milverton should give us encouragement, and shows that a large body of the electorate are ready to join us if only we show we are capable of becoming a political force in the land'.[16]

The later twentieth century saw fuller infusions of new blood. The formation of the SDP brought forty-one new peers into what David Steel called "an effective Alliance partnership."[17] Though most of the SDP peers did not join the Liberal Democrat group in 1988, it started with sixty-one.[18] Since then, better relations with sitting prime ministers, greater credibility in claiming representation for the Party, and recruiting previously non-party figures boosted the Liberal Democrat benches to the strength of Asquith's leadership. The Blair years, for instance, saw 17 of 28 former MPs enter the Lords, and their wait for elevation was shorter than previously.

The greatest boost to Liberal peers' impact, however, was the House of Lords Act 1999, which, removing most of the overwhelmingly Tory heredity peerages which frustrated Gladstone and Asquith, made Liberal Democrats once more over a tenth of the Lords, and gave them, with crossbench peers, a 'veto' or 'pivotal' role in the Upper House. By 2006 the UCL Constitution Unit could assert that "the third party can no longer be dismissed as peripheral'.[19]

Activity

The position of the party whip in the Lords is notoriously thankless, because members' incentives to participate in the House are weaker than in the Lower House. Most peers had other interests, some abroad. The Duke of Manchester, for instance, made his only appearance in the Upper House during 1953–54, six years after his succession and seven years after his family moved to Kenya. As the party lost office and influence, the stimulus to represent it in the house weakened.

Those speaking regularly from the Liberal benches were thus a minority of the group, at times almost vanishingly small. Figures from the period 1945–62 give evidence of how heavily the Liberal voice in the Lords relied on a tiny band of stalwarts including Beveridge and Ogmore along with group leaders Samuel and Rea:

Despite this dangerous low in activity, however, a string of studies of party work in the Lords showed that the Liberals sat between the

Liberal speakers in the House of Lords, 1945–62			
	Speaking 1 or more times	*Speaking 10 or more times*	*Total number of interventions*
1945–46	26	7	299
1946–47	26	5	235
1947–48	27	6	220
1948–49	24	9	247
1950*	13	2	77
1950–51	16	3	157
1951–52	15	4	112
1952–53	14	5	140
1953–54	21	5	174
1955*	17	1	73
1955–56	18	10	266
1956–57	18	5	167
1957–58	18	5	180
1958–59	14	4	205
1959–60	16	8	308
1960–61	18	5	289
1961–62	16	5	247
** Short session*			
Source: Official Record			

two main parties in terms of the proportion of their peers who attended the House, and that their impact grew over time.

Bromhead showed that during 1951–54 only four Liberals spoke 25 times or more and a further five spoke between ten and 25 times. Nearly half of Labour peers had qualified for the first category, but under a tenth of the more numerous Conservatives.[20] Similarly, the Lords Reform White Paper shows that in 1967–68, 19 of 41 Liberal peers had attended a third of parliamentary days; barely a third of Conservatives had reached this threshold, whereas four out of five Labour Peers had done.[21]

In the 1980s Adonis found that 51 of the Alliance’s 82 Peers attended a third of sessions, and commended them that ‘the assiduity of Alliance Peers is remarkable’, together with Labour being ‘so active in committee that they create an impression of virtual equality with the Conservatives’.[22] The twenty-first century saw the mean attendance rate of Liberal Democrat peers outstrip that of their Labour and Conservative counterparts under both the Blair and Coalition governments.[23]

Identity

Just as they are freer to be inactive, peers have more latitude to be idiosyncratic and disruptive. Liberal lords took advantage of this, but also used their platform to generate and sustain some distinctive Liberal policies at times of weakness for the Party.

Liberal peers stood out from other parties, from Liberal MPs and from each other in both substance and style. To begin with, some enjoyed an isolated and glamorous lifestyle: Reading, Rennell, Manchester and Cowdray were certainly wealthy, and Crewe led the Liberal peers between the wars from his 17th-century Cheshire hall served by 100 staff. In the 1930s, Sherwood facetiously told a heckler who accused him of having lost £1,000 at roulette in Le Touquet:

> This charge against me is most damaging. It illustrates the way in which a politician's reputation can be soiled by innuendo. It was not Le Touquet, it was Monte Carlo, it was not roulette it was baccarat, and it was not £1,000 it was £2,000.[24]

The biographer of Lord Thurso (former party leader Archibald Sinclair) notes his dated response to a party organised by his family:

> Sinclair, who enjoyed himself immensely, nevertheless commented afterwards how surprising it was that almost everyone, even the women, had jobs. The incident demonstrates how different Sinclair's life was from that of his children. Men of his background and generation had vocations – politics, the Church, the Army – but they tended not to have jobs.[25]

These expectations are reflected in Rea's plea to Samuel for some days' grace before succeeding him as Liberal Leader in the Lords in 1955, to seek redeployment from his position in the Foreign Office. Rea explained embarrassedly that he could not relinquish paid employment because of the straitened circumstances in which estate duties and unsuccessful investments had left him upon succession two years earlier.[26] Asked in divorce court, Lord Kimberley could not remember how many bedrooms were in Kimberley Hall, and he sold the property in 1958 with over 4,000 acres because 'all I could think about was getting a new Aston Martin'.[27]

In these years the Liberal lords' annual social was a caviar dinner at the Reform Club with a mock 'Queen's speech',[28] the Duke of Montrose addressed the Lords in full uniform as Commodore RNVR,[29] and the Third Viscount Esher teased a life peer who helped him with his fur-lined coat saying: 'I wear this inside out as a concession to you Labour fellers'.[30] Their exclusive atmosphere – Strabolgi used the terms 'dilettante' and 'smug', and remembered chief whip Amulree's 'debonair way' – was intensified by isolation from the Party's MPs.[31]

The separation of Liberal lords from their party colleagues and even from each other was structural as well as social. As early as 1924 Beauchamp wrote to Buxton that 'the party hardly exists now as an organized unit in the House',[32] and by the 1940s the group's contact with MPs was extremely limited, an issue raised with Samuel by both Reading and Violet Bonham Carter.[33]

Jo Grimond's diary shows only one meeting with a peer (the party treasurer) from the time he became chief whip in 1952 to his assumption of the party leadership in 1956; in the four years after that, Grimond met with his opposite number in the Upper House Lord Rea a mere three times at intervals of 14 months.[34]

This distinct identity was confirmed two decades later when Liberal leader in the Lords Frank Byers rebuked former MP and Party Chairman Richard Wainwright for his criticisms of the Upper House as 'a total travesty and based on your complete inexperience of how the place works' which had left Liberal peers 'absolutely shocked'.[35] Byers took aim at Wainwright again as one of two Liberal MPs who planned to wear T-shirts bearing the slogan 'Electoral Reform Now' to the 1975 Queen's Speech, and chant the slogan after the speech. 'I would take the gravest exception' warned Byers, 'to anyone embarrassing me in front of the Queen in *my house*'.[36]

The Lords' distinctiveness was reflected in policy, too, where individual peers were able to voice sometimes idiosyncratic and reactionary values at odds with party policy and arguably with Liberalism itself in a way which was not always helpful.

Lord Samuel expressed 'dismay' at the spread of homosexuality;[37] Reading insisted on supporting peacetime conscription when the Party had rejected it; and Beveridge used his last speech in the Lords in 1961 to condemn images on television which were 'so disgusting to decent minds, so corrupting to clean minds, that they were a disgrace to the inventors'.[38] Lord Bannerman defied the whip to vote down sanctions against Rhodesia – partly because of his closeness to the Duke of Montrose, who was in the Smith cabinet;[39] and a band of rebels in the Lords led by David Steel resisted the party leadership's call for their replacement by elected representatives in the Lords reform debate of 2007.[40]

More significant than these examples, however, are the occasions when Liberal lords used their platform to develop and promote distinctive Liberal policies, some of which were at length brought into effect.

From 1947 to 1957, Reading, Grantchester and lastly Rea introduced Bills to entrench the powers of Parliament over ministers and individuals *vis-à-vis* the state, unions and corporations, usually winning the support of some peers from other parties. Bromhead argued that the debate over the first of these 'provided the House of Lords with an excellent opportunity to perform its educative function'.[41] Lord Wade similarly promoted legislation for local ombudsmen in the 1960s and Norton later wrote that "on certain issues, Liberals have been in the van of a growing and influential movement favouring change. … A Bill of Rights has been … such [an] issue, especially so in the House of Lords."[42]

This pressure paid dividends in legislation on sex discrimination pioneered by Baroness Seear in the 1970s and extended after work by Lord Byers,[43] and the Human Rights Act of 1998, introduced by Lord Lester and heralded by Baroness Williams as crossing a 'constitutional Rubicon'.[44]

Another Liberal policy promoted successfully through the Lords was devolution – another of the enthusiasms, along with Highlands economic and cultural interests, of Bannerman, but earlier promoted by a previous generation of the Montrose dynasty – the fifth duke, who joined the Liberals in 1936 from the Conservatives via the SNP almost exclusively on this issue.[45]

Liberal Lords have successfully introduced private members' legislation on everything from fisheries to forced marriage and live music since the 1970s.[46] As their numbers grew in the later twentieth century, and under the experienced leadership of Roy Jenkins, the Liberal Democrats were credited by one observer with an effective 'guerilla' campaign in the Upper House, in which they won votes by hiding until the Lords was nearly empty, and launching an 'ambush', populating the chamber.[47] In 2005, Liberal Democrat group leader Lord McNally even brought into question the Salisbury–Addison convention by which the Lords accept the right of a government to proceed with its mandate unimpeded.[48] Amongst other victories, they ended controversial plans for a giant casino in Manchester in 2007.[49]

Sometimes even the dissenting voices in the Lords might be seen as assisting Liberal policy by acting as the Party's conscience, or the voice of its otherwise disenfranchised. Doubtless many would see this as the role of Avebury (formerly Orpington MP Eric Lubbock) in opposing the 'bedroom tax' welfare reforms under the Cameron–Clegg coalition.

Thus the independent spirit of Liberal Peers was more often an asset than a liability. This was especially true at times of the Party's greatest weakness and on policies for which it could gain little sympathy and air time outside the Lords because they were characteristically Liberal. This impact of course relied upon recognition outside the Upper House and the Party as a whole to be most effective.

Impact

Liberal Peers also made a contribution to the Party's fortunes by their liaison with the world outside their House. Though their links with their opposite numbers in the Commons were sometimes tenuous, their work in the wider Party and their public profile could be significant.

Liberal Lords could firstly provide a link between parliament and the party organisation in the country, especially when numbers in the Lower House were limited. Treasurers throughout the period between 1941 and 1962 were Lords Rea, Moynihan, Wimbourne and Grantchester, and for six years after 1977 that position was held by Lord Lloyd of Kilgerran. The party presidency was won in the 1960s by Lords Wade and Beaumont (the latter after serving as party chair) and in the 1980s by Lord Tordoff. Moynihan served again as Chair of the Executive Committee in 1949, as did Lord Henley in 1967.

With MPs tied up defending their own constituencies, peers were often important in a campaigning role, bringing experience and public recognition to the battle. Just prior to entering the Lords, Beveridge was Chairman of the 1945 Campaign Committee, and remembered with pride addressing 154 meetings throughout Great Britain during three months' campaigning, as well as contributing 'a continuous stream of articles, letters, messages to candidates, gramophone records and a national broadcast'.[50] He was the only Liberal to be named by Mass Observation's respondents as an 'outstanding personality' at that election.[51]

Samuel also had a high profile in the 1945 campaign, delivering a more modest 17 speeches, but also a radio broadcast heard by 47 per cent of the population. In 1950 Samuel was heard again by 27 per cent of voters when he made the first of three Liberal broadcasts; and in 1951 he was chosen to be the first British politician to make a party political broadcast on television. Even at the age of 84, Samuel was called upon to make a further television broadcast in the course of the 1955 campaign, when another one was led by his successor as Liberal leader in the Lords, Lord Rea, who had chaired the 1951 Campaign Committee. Lord Byers took over the latter role and made party broadcasts in the 1960s; David Steel's 1979 battlebus itinerary was run by Lord Chitnis; newly-ennobled Chris Rennard was Campaign Director in 2001, and Paddy Ashdown led the campaign of 2015 from the Lords.

With MPs tied up defending their own constituencies, peers were often important in a campaigning role, bringing experience and public recognition to the battle.

Liberal Peers also served in, or were formally consulted by, governments under eight prime ministers after 1911, during wartime coalitions, and in governments led by both main parties. Asquith's peacetime cabinet included nine Liberal lords, amongst whom Crewe, Morley and Grey had served under Gladstone. When Lloyd George created the five-member War Cabinet in 1916 he included Lord Milner, and retained his services in the Conservative-dominated government until 1921. Otherwise the inter-war years saw only Crewe called upon to serve in cabinet briefly as Secretary for War in MacDonald's first National Government, and a decade later Churchill recruited Hugh Seeley, Lord Sherwood to work for party leader Archibald Sinclair as Under-Secretary for Air.

As the Party engaged with government again in the last half-century, Liberal lords' expertise was called upon. A third of the 'Shadow Administration' consulted by Labour ministers in the Lib–Lab Pact of 1977–78 was made up of peers; in the 1980s Alliance supporters even touted crossbencher Lord Scarman as

Lord Chancellor in a future Liberal–SDP government.[52] Lord Holme of Cheltenham joined Tony Blair's Joint Consultative Cabinet Committee on the Constitution ten years later as Lord Jenkins led the government's ill-fated Commission on electoral reform; and Lord Carlile and Lady Neuberger were appointed as advisers to Blair's and Gordon Brown's governments, on anti-terrorism legislation and volunteering respectively. Baroness Williams was also recruited by Brown, who paid tribute to Williams 'whom I admired greatly from across party lines':

> I worked with her before and after I became prime minister on issues from disarmament to Europe, and to be honest tried to persuade her on a number of occasions to rejoin Labour.[53]

Under the Cameron–Clegg coalition Liberal Democrats were needed to answer for the government in the Upper House, where Baroness Northover appeared as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development, Susan Kramer was Minister for Transport, and the Under-Secretary for Wales was Baroness Randerson. As a government whip Lord (William) Wallace answered for other departments. Long-serving former MP Lord (Jim) Wallace served throughout the coalition as Advocate General for Scotland and in 2013 took over from Lord McNally, who had been a Minister of State at the Justice Department, as Deputy Leader of the Lords.

In addition to the celebrated individuals mentioned above, lords from press baron Walter Layton, Appeal Court judge Norman Birkett or Gladwyn Jebb (joint founder of the UN) to Derek Ezra, Professor Ralf Dahrendof, Brian Paddick and Floella Benjamin brought acknowledged expertise and experience to a party starved of office, and were capable of networking in a less partisan way with other parties' peers. In the 1930s, Crewe was consulted by George V about international relations, and Baldwin during the abdication crisis.[54] Today, as for most of the last century, the Liberal municipal, parliamentary and ministerial experience sitting on the red benches far exceeds that on the green – stretching back over fifty years. It is fair to say that without Liberal peers, the Party's profile – and consequently its prospects of survival as a national force – would have been significantly poorer in its darkest hours.

Conclusion

Strabolgi's dismissive description of the Liberal peers in mid-century was the account of a disillusioned if informed sceptic. It is true that at their weakest they were isolated, declining and ill-organised. Yet both in the 1950s, and throughout the last century, Liberal peers lent valuable support to the Party, sometimes relatively unsung. Another, though similarly supercilious, description of the group given a generation later by Simon Winchester, might be more fitting: 'a small but vociferous band'.[55]

By the time Lords reform could be proposed by a Liberal Democrat leader in 2011, the Party's peers united behind it as a century earlier, and it was again the Conservatives who defended the old Upper House. As the issue of reform of the Lords nears the horizon again, it is worth the Liberal Democrats considering what may be lost to the Party as well as gained by democracy in any transition.

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1 This term was used in the preamble to the 1911 Parliament Act as a description of the final intended form the reformed Second Chamber would take; though it seems likely that some Liberals were more eager for this to be realised than others.

2 H. Jones, *Liberalism and the House of Lords: the story of the veto battle 1832–1911* (Methuen 1912) p. 339.

3 J.M. Robertson, MP, *The Meaning of Liberalism* (Methuen 1912) p. 102.

4 Strabolgi, interview, 19 August 2003.

5 Michael Meadowcroft, obituary for Richard Wainwright, *The Guardian* 17 January 2003. For a fuller explanation of Wainwright's view of the Lords, see M. Cole, *Richard Wainwright, the Liberals and Liberal Democrats: Unfinished Business* (Manchester 2011) pp. 210–11.

6 These years were 1923–24 and 1997–99.

7 24 June 1942, cited in R. Harrod,, *The Life of John Maynard Keynes* (Macmillan 1951) p. 537.

8 The lowest estimate came in the LPO Annual Report of 1957, which claimed only 38 Liberal Peers.

9 See his entry as the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, *Dod's* 1927 p. 123.

10 H. Samuel, *Memoirs* (The Cresset Press 1945) p. 266.

11 14 December 1950, Samuel Papers SAM A/130.

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14 Luise Nandy (nee Byers), interview 18 January 2009.

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27 Obituaries, *The Times* 28 May 2002; *The Guardian* 30 May 2002.

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30 L. Brett, *Our Selves Unknown* (Victor Gollancz 1985) p. 155.

31 Strabolgi interview, 19 August 2003.

32 Quoted in D. Waley, *A Liberal Life: Sydney, Earl Buxton 1853–1934* (Newtimber Publications 1999) p. 351.

33 Reading to Samuel, 24 March 1950, Samuel papers SAM A/130 4. Bonham Carter's view is reported in J. Thorpe, op.cit. pp. 132–33.

34 Grimond papers Dep 363 Box 1.

35 Byers to Wainwright 13 June 1973. Cited in M. Cole, *Unfinished Business: Richard Wainwright, the Liberals and Liberal Democrats* (Manchester 2011) p. 210.

36 C. Smith, *Big Cyril: The Autobiography of Cyril Smith* (W.H. Allen 1977) p. 182. The emphasis is Smith's, presumably reporting Byers's.

37 Samuel made these remarks on 4 November 1953. Quoted in B. Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel: A Political Life* (Oxford 1992) p. 397.

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Reports

The Strange Death of Liberal England Revisited

Liberal Democrat History Group evening meeting, 10 July 2023, with Professor Vernon Bogdanor CBE and Professor Richard Toye; chair: Anne Perkins.
Report by Nick Alderton

Back in 2012, when I started my PhD journey, the very first book that I purchased was George Dangerfield's *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, first published in 1935. My first chapter was to assess the link between the collapse of the Liberals in England and the Liberals in Wales. I read it within a few days, it was a hard book to put down. The story just flowed and the plot unravelled like a great whodunnit. However, I noted its contradictions, the ire directed at the key actors, in particular, Lloyd George and the Conservatives. I was struck by the animosity that Dangerfield directed at Lloyd George and the Welsh.

However, as the first book that I had read on the subject, I thought it to be a plausible description of the decline of the Liberal Party and, had I read nothing else on the subject, I very may well have accepted it as the definitive account. In fact Dangerfield's book was the start of a rabbit hole into which any historian of the era must descend. What became obvious was that *The Strange Death of Liberal England* formed the beginning of a debate, and it is a testament to Dangerfield's work or, at least, its effect on the academic and public consciousness, that it took around 30 years for the next major work on the same subject to be published. Trevor Wilson's *The Downfall of the Liberal Party, 1914–35*, published in 1966, identified the cause as the illiberal actions of the Liberals during the First World War. Then came Peter F. Clarke's *Lancashire and the New Liberalism*, Duncan Tanner's *Political Change and the Labour Party*, and a whole host of other articles and books on the English and Welsh Liberals' decline by, among others, Kenneth O. Morgan, Tanner and E.H.H. Green, Russell Deacon and J. Graham Jones.

With each new work, it became obvious that all of these authors were using Dangerfield's work as their jumping-off point. While none of them fully agreed with the arguments in the *Strange Death of Liberal England*, they all acknowledged the debt owed to this work. As a contemporary historian, no matter whether you are looking at the Liberals, the cultural changes of the period, the rise of the Labour Party or the dominance of the Conservative Party, you must acknowledge a debt, make reference to or actively engage with *The Strange Death of Liberal England*. Dangerfield's work looms large and cannot be ignored.

It is in this context that the Liberal Democrat History Group convened a discussion meeting on Dangerfield's work: *The Strange Death of Liberal England* revisited.

The meeting was chaired by the journalist Anne Perkins, who is currently writing a biography of Violet Bonham Carter. The guest speakers were the historians Vernon Bogdanor and Richard Toye. Bogdanor had recently published his own contribution to the debate, *The Strange Survival of Liberal Britain: Politics and Power Before the First World War* (Biteback, 2022) and Toye has published widely on the period, including *Lloyd George and Churchill: Rivals for Greatness* (Pan Books, 2008) and, as co-editor with Julie V. Gottlieb, *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender, and Politics in Britain, 1918–1945* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

Vernon Bogdanor: The strange survival of Liberal Britain

Bogdanor began by issuing two warnings. The first was that he would not be talking about the 'strange death of the Liberal Party, but of a Liberal culture which he (Dangerfield) thought had died in 1914 and I think had not died in 1914'. The second was that the Liberal Party before the First World War was a 'very different animal' to the Liberal Party that emerged after the Second World War, and the Liberal Democrats. He qualified this by stating that the Liberals before the First World War were in favour of single-chambered government, having fought the hereditary House of Lords on issues such as land reform and Lloyd George's 'People's Budget'. He also reminded us that the Liberals were very much in favour of the first-past-the-post electoral system, having won a landslide general election victory in 1906, albeit on a minority of the vote – almost 49 per cent.

Bogdanor set out his case that Liberal Britain was in a state of flux in the pre-World War One era: the Liberals were challenged but not fatally wounded. There were ideological challenges to traditional Gladstonian Liberalism, Joseph Chamberlain was calling for the end of free trade and politics was moving from an aristocratic to a democratic system. Women and trade unions were demanding representation and recognition. A major turning point of the era was that the economy was becoming part of the political debate, in contrast to the previous century, where political debates had been primarily over constitutional and religious issues. The economy and Westminster were no longer seen as separate spheres, where neither could influence the other – as exemplified by William Harcourt's famous remark, 'We're all socialists now'. This newfound focus on the economy opened up the social question and the realisation that social inequalities were no longer 'divinely ordained'; they could be tackled by the state through its management of the economy.

For Bogdanor, Dangerfield's thesis that Liberal England was killed by the inability of the Liberal Party to meet the challenges of labour, the suffragettes or Ireland, was incorrect. Indeed, he argued that these and other issues of the pre-war era had been, largely, resolved. The House of Lords had been dealt with, the trade unions were being incorporated into the state, Ireland was on the way to a solution and the suffrage issue was eventually to be resolved after the war.

The second part of Professor Bogdanor's talk expanded on two of the issues that Dangerfield identified as finishing off Liberal England: women's suffrage – which the Liberals were not managing to settled – and Ireland – which they were on the way to.

On the suffrage question, Bogdanor noted that Britain had claimed to fight the Boer War over a question of democracy. The Uitlanders – British citizens living in the Transvaal – were not given the vote and their grievances could not be dealt with; they were marked with a badge of inferiority. The same argument could be used by women at home, in the land of their birth. Nevertheless, as he pointed out, by the mid-1880s women made up 17 per cent of the local electorate and by the 1890s, 1,500 women were being elected to local government. In fact there was a majority in parliament in favour of women's suffrage, as demonstrated by votes on private member's bills, but the government would not take the issue further. He acknowledged that the misogyny and antipathy of Asquith and others had played a part in delaying the progress of women's suffrage, but it was not the only reason. Other factors in play included the animosity of several prominent women who were openly opposed to women gaining the vote, including Florence Nightingale, Mrs Asquith, Lady Randolph Churchill, the archaeologist Gertrude Bell and, until November 1906, Beatrice Webb.

Although there was a majority in favour of the principle, however, there was disagreement over the terms on which women should be given the vote. Should it be on the same terms as men currently held, which was based on property ownership, or should full adult suffrage be granted? The issue was further complicated by two prominent organisations whose raison d'être was to gain the vote for women. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) and the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) both wanted women to obtain the vote on the same basis as men, but neither wanted full adult suffrage. It was this lack of clarity, from all sides, as to how to progress, coupled with the suffragettes' militancy and a lack of political will that stymied the suffrage cause before the outbreak of the war. In the end women were granted limited suffrage in 1918 and full adult suffrage in 1928.

Bogdanor then moved on to the issue of Ireland and Ulster, noting that this was broadly a success for the Liberals. Before the outbreak of the First World War, the Liberals had accepted that there was no way to force Ulster to be part of an Irish Home Rule Parliament and it therefore had to be given the right to exclude itself. In turn this raised two problems, however: for how long should Ulster exclude itself, and what counted as Ulster? The first was solved when Asquith agreed that Ulster could exclude itself for an unlimited time or until Unionist opinion changed. The second problem was the demographic of the nine counties of Ulster. It was agreed that Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal, with their large Catholic majorities, should join the Dublin Parliament, while Antrim, Derry, Armagh and Downs had large Protestant majorities and should be excluded. But Fermanagh and Tyrone had only small Catholic majorities; both sides could lay claim to these counties.

Bogdanor argued that had the war not intervened, the issue of Fermanagh and Tyrone would have been settled by force, and a civil war could have ensued. However, as war on the continent became ever more likely, the prospect of civil war in Ireland became less so, since Ulster unionists would have had to look to English unionists for support, but in

England, the unionists were worried that any civil war could prevent Britain from entering a continental war, therefore playing into Germany's hands. As Lloyd George asserted, 'Men would die for the Empire but not for Fermanagh and Tyrone'. Bogdanor concluded by pointing out that 'the British parties were actually much closer on Irish matters than appeared or that they were willing to admit. Home Rule on the basis of partitions was a fait accompli and the years of party struggle had produced the materials for settlement by consent.' Bogdanor believed that if the war had not intervened, then a very moderate Dublin Parliament would have been placed on the statute books.

Richard Toye: 'the strange survival of George Dangerfield'

Whereas Bogdanor directly engaged with Dangerfield's arguments, Richard Toye took a different approach, focusing on 'the strange survival of George Dangerfield', and exploring why people are still arguing about a 90-year-old book. He asked that the audience think of his talk as him making notes on how to write a book that will not only survive but will still be debated 100 years after it was written.

Toye noted that Dangerfield was born in 1904 and his recollections of the period about which we was writing were, by his own admission, 'not very helpful.' This opened up Dangerfield to resentment from those who had 'lived it', pointing out that he had been too young to remember the events. However, as Toye pointed out, those who had 'lived it' do not always get it right either. Toye observed that the sources Dangerfield cited were vague, based on published materials and 'private information'; it is not clear what the 'private information' was or if it involved any interviews. Neveretheless, Toye argued that the book should be seen more as an early contribution to the field of contemporary history, a term that was not readily recognised at the time as an academic discipline. The book was reviewed not only in the *Journal of Social Science* but also in the mainstream press, weeklies and quarterly journals, achieving a level of coverage that an academic work would rarely receive today. As Toye points out, Dangerfield was not looking for traditional academic acceptance; R.C.K Ensor's criticism that his book was written like a novel would not have bothered him.

Toye noted that the book is fun to read and is written in an irreverent way, possibly influenced by Margot Asquith's autobiography and J. Maynard Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. Both of them offered blunt portraits of historical figures and did not conform to the norms of how a public figure should write about others. Toye also pointed out, however, that the book's arguments could be incoherent, contradictory and opaque. For example, Dangerfield placed strong emphasis on the years between 1910 and 1914 as the period during which Liberalism died, but he also claimed, at various points, that the Liberal Party was doomed by events varying from the 1906 general election to the Curragh incident in 1914 and the death of Rupert Brook in 1915. Dangerfield undermined his own thesis, not just once but on multiple occasions.

On the issue of Dangerfield's title and what exactly it was that had died, Toye noted that those who argued that Liberalism had survived did not appear to have paid attention to Dangerfield's assertion in the book's preface that the: 'true pre-War Liberalism – supported, as it still was in 1910 by Free Trade, a majority in Parliament, the ten commandments and the illusion of Progress – can never return. It was killed, or it killed itself, in 1913.' Toye explained that all four of these tenets of the old Liberalism had passed and Dangerfield was suggesting that a kind of moral order had died with them. Some of the contemporary reviews of the book made it obvious that Dangerfield's thesis was questioned even when it was first published.

Toye put forward his suggestions on how to write a book that will last for 100 years. It would need a catchy title; the book must be highly readable; and it needs to have a plausible argument – but not one that is uncontentious; it needs to be something that people want to disagree with. Toye argued that Dangerfield's book survived because it proved a foil for historians. 'It gave them something to argue against and sometimes, I think it's fair to say, that historians have argued against a caricatured version of the argument or a simplified version of the argument, as opposed to what Dangerfield actually said himself.' In conclusion, he noted that the work: 'raised important questions, even if it did not get all the answers right'.

Discussion

Following the speakers, it was obvious that the audience had been thoroughly engaged, and many questions were asked. One focused on Campbell-Bannerman's attitude to giving women the vote; Bogdanor responded that he was mildly in favour of it. Another asked if the electoral decline of the Liberals between 1906 and the 1930s was more a reflection of the increased size of the electorate than of other factors. Bogdanor didn't think it was; the Liberals were not putting up enough candidates and the party was seen as divided and unhelpful on women's suffrage. Toye thought it was too late for the Liberals to present themselves as being on the side of women. There were other questions, including whether the Liberals failed because they had lost their nerve and whether Dangerfield should be read as serious history or not.

In concluding this report, it has to be said that by framing their talks in two distinctive ways, the audience was treated to an interesting, entertaining and rounded example of why Dangerfield's book still matters. Almost 90 years after publication, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* still has the power to provoke debate amongst academics and the public alike.

Nicholas Alderton recently graduated with a doctorate in History & Welsh History from Cardiff University. He is currently editing his thesis, *Emlyn Hooson and the Welsh Liberal Party 1962-79*, for publication. **With thanks and acknowledgement to Katheryn Gallant for her preliminary work.**

Reviews

Liberal achievements

What Have the Liberals Ever Done For Us? 350 years of Liberal and Liberal Democrat achievements (Liberal Democrat History Group, 2023)
Review by William Wallace

The English history I was taught as an undergraduate (and it was very English, with few references to Scotland, let alone Ireland) didn't tell me much about the competing traditions of Liberalism, Conservatism and socialism, and very little about the domestic achievements of past British governments. Those who haven't specialised in History will have gathered even less on the threads of our political history that focus on policy rather than leadership. So this 50-page collection of essays on Whig, Liberal and now Liberal Democrat shaping of British policy in a range of fields will be welcome to party members and sympathisers.

When I joined the Liberal Party the sad comment was that the Liberals were full of good ideas, from which the other parties would pinch the best and claim them as their own. Listening to Jeremy Hunt as Chancellor claim credit for the Conservatives for taking so many lower wage earners out of income tax shows that this habit has not disappeared. These essays, however, take us far further back, starting with the vigorous debates on liberty, freedom of speech and diversity during and after the Civil War and the Restoration, the emergence of the authoritarian Tories and the limited-government Whigs. After the 'Glorious Revolution of 1688–89, Andrew Loader explains in the essay on Human Rights, 'this developed into a broader philosophy of accountable government, equality before the law and religious tolerance.' Faced with the corruption of 18th century parliamentary politics, the radical MP John Wilkes introduced the first electoral reform bill into Parliament in 1776. Entrenched opposition from government and peers, and the wars with revolutionary France, meant that fears of public disorder, as well as the skills of the Whig government, carried the first Reform Bill through Parliament in 1832. Tony Little sketches the successive campaigns to extend voting rights and regulate elections, against Conservative resistance that remains today.

There follow contributions on government reform, gender equality, internationalism, the economy, education, welfare, health and the environment, with a Timeline appendix that runs from the Exclusion Crisis in

1678 to the passage of Wendy Chamberlain's Carer's Leave Act in 2023. We are reminded of Harriet Taylor's and John Stuart Mill's shared commitment to equal rights for women, David Steel's achievement in the legalisation of abortion, and the work of many in establishing full gay rights; and of the commitment to international cooperation and law that stretches from Gladstone's campaign for Italians against the Austrian Empire and Bulgarians against the Ottomans to Paddy Ashdown's support for the Bosnians and Charles Kennedy's opposition to the invasion of Iraq.

Few remember the battles Liberals undertook to provide education for all, 'because education is so important to the Liberal belief in individual liberty'. More will be familiar with the Liberal record on health and welfare, from the achievements of the reforming Liberal government before the First World War to the influence leading Liberals exerted over the post-World War Two reforms. Duncan Brack's final contribution details the growing importance of environmental issues in Liberal thinking from the 1970s on, and the real difference Liberals made in government between 2010 and 2015, when energy and environment policies became – according to Nick Clegg – 'the biggest source of disagreement in the coalition'.

Chapters on the economy and on health and welfare note the evolution of Liberal assumptions on the size and role of the state. In the 1850s, when the largest fields for government spending were the army and navy, and one of the largest sources of revenue customs duties, 'Peace, Retrenchment and Reform' went easily together. As Liberal local governments set about improvements in water supply, public health and housing, local taxes rose. 'New' Liberals, from the final years of the 19th century on, accepted the need for more active government and higher national and local spending. I would like to have read a little more about the achievements of Liberals in local government in those decades. What Tories called 'municipal socialism' was in practice social and economic improvement, by local leaders in cooperation with local companies and citizens. At a time when local government is England is close to collapsing, we need to reassert that active government works best when managed as close to those it affects as possible.

Younger and newer party members would also have benefitted from more explicit reference to the difference between economic liberalism and social liberalism – a divide which still marks British politics. Neil Stockley provides an excellent overview of Keynes' contribution to economic policy and planning, but does not mention the libertarian anti-state Liberals who emerged from the authoritarian threats of World War Two, and still inhabited the edges of our party and tradition many years later. Social liberalism and social democracy have blended together, as libertarians have gone off to capture right-wing parties in the UK and the

United States. I would also like to have read more on Liberal experiments with mutuals, co-ownership and profit-sharing, ideas which Jo Grimond and those around him thought central to a modified market system but which we currently neglect. In 50 pages, however, this is a tightly-packed history of Liberal achievements in politics and government, which I warmly recommend.

William Wallace (Lord Wallace of Saltaire) is a member of the *Journal of Liberal History* editorial board. He is currently Liberal Democrat Cabinet Office spokesman in the Lords.

Forgotten Liberal

John Campbell, *Haldane, The Forgotten Statesman Who Shaped Modern Britain* (C. Hurst & Co., 2020)
Review by Tony Paterson

What caused the polymath and philosopher-statesman who had played a key role in preventing an early German victory in the First World War, to be humiliatingly excluded by Prime Minister Herbert Asquith from the new coalition war cabinet in May 1915? It was, after all, the Liberal MP Richard Haldane who, after becoming War Secretary in 1905, had created the Territorial Army (TA) and the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), making Britain ready to send an army overseas when war broke out in August 1914.

Why Haldane was nonetheless ousted from the cabinet in May 1915 is one of many fascinating questions which John Campbell answers with insight and fervour in his magisterial biography. *Haldane*, *The Forgotten Statesman Who Shaped Modern Britain*.

A biographer as devoted to his subject as Campbell is to Haldane risks lapsing into hagiography but, instead, this author hugs his hero so close that the reader emerges almost feeling that Haldane (1856–1928), with his balance of values, evidence-based thinking, and consultation, is still alive, and wishing he was.

In the early chapters, Campbell traces his subject's formidable forebears, including the (unlike Haldane) reactionary Lord Chancellor Lord Eldon, who sat on the Woolsack between 1801 and 1806 and again between 1807 and 1827, and Haldane's patrician Scottish parents, both pious Victorians.

After struggling, in his teens, to fully embrace his parents' Christianity because so much feeling sweeping over Scotland left him hungry for a supporting intellectual foundation for belief, Haldane was spared from alienation by the transformative proposal of his professor of Greek at Edinburgh University, to send him to Göttingen University in Germany for a term.

This began in April 1874. The experience changed Haldane's life – and, arguably, in view of all that he subsequently achieved, ours. Here, in addition to developing a love of Germany (costing him dear in 1915) he met Hermann Lotze, professor of philosophy.

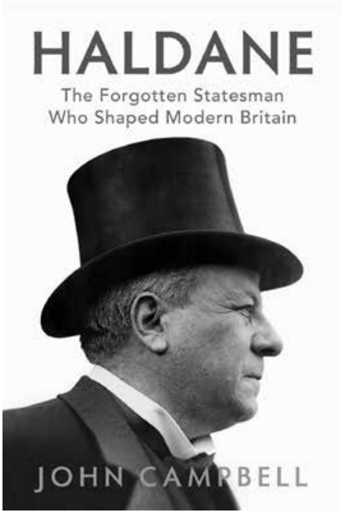
Lotze taught him how he could be reconciled with his evangelical parents, reworking the Christian tradition compatibly with German intellectual trends. Thus emerged the foundations of Haldane's philosophy of life. (Appropriately, \`Lotse' is German for \`pilot' or \`guide').

Lotze's school of philosophy was Idealism. At its heart lay the higher values of life and recognition that intellect and spirit matter supremely. For Haldane, this philosophy was to be approached pragmatically. Educational reform mattered more to him than anything else. For this he would tirelessly evangelise.

Rationalism was the foundation of his way of thinking. His Scottish intellectual background, based on reason, stood him apart from the English empirical tradition of looking for what works. The philosophers who most inspired him, flowing from Rousseau and the Enlightenment, were Fichte, Kant, Hegel and Berkeley.

The essence of Haldane's approach was to identify a problem, research the facts deeply, devise a rational solution and then work tirelessly to turn it into practical policy which he could pursue with influencers to achieve change. He was always ardent to understand the viewpoint of others and integrate the best ideas to produce compromises – as long as his principles (values) were not undermined –which provided a workable solution.

Haldane was exceptionally willing, for a politician, to befriend political opponents, most prominently



Arthur Balfour. He was adept at what Campbell terms 'energising networks': topping up his own mental and physical effort, which were rarely enough on their own to enable him to succeed in his most successful endeavours. This worked nowhere better than in his cross-party labouring in the field of educational reform.

Haldane believed in public service to the nth degree. Modern hedonist practitioners of populist politics would have appalled him. His austere family motto was, simply, 'Suffer'.

Before exploring how his high-minded approach to politics bore fruit for Haldane the politician (a talented lawyer whose parliamentary career as Liberal MP for Haddingtonshire stretched unbroken from 1885 to 1911, when he was elevated to the Lords), Campbell notes the fall from grace of German Idealism, which underwent denigration by other philosophers, especially after the First World War, though the school of Realism had taken root even before.

The leading post-war detractors of Idealism were Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, Wittgenstein and A.J. Ayer. To them, Idealism no longer made sense after that catastrophe, justifying cynicism. Philosophy changed to become an avenue to the sciences in the decades leading up to the Second World War. According to the atheist Ayer, for instance, when we argue about whether a value-judgement is right or wrong, we merely argue about the empirical facts upon which it is based.

What Haldane achieved – and how

Having traced the influences, familial and philosophical, which made Haldane who he was, John Campbell describes his prodigious record of political achievement, and his highly original method.

Campbell's biographical approach is more thematic than chronological. Studying how he achieved what he did rightly interests Campbell as much as narrating his vast range of reforms.

It was as Secretary of State for War, an office he held between 1905 and 1912, that Haldane, created the TA and the BEF, thereby critically helping to avert the early defeat of France in the First World War. A staggering eighty per cent of his 90,000 BEF soldiers were killed or wounded between August and Christmas 1914 but, critically, they successfully helped to blunt Germany's advance into France.

He also tackled the chaotic back-up available to the regular forces: the Militia, the Volunteers and the Yeomanry – rebranding and reorganising them in the teeth of entrenched opposition.

He actually decreased military spending (as the radicals demanded) while boosting the army's capacity to enter the field of combat. Haldane was also the minister responsible for creating the Officers' Training Corps, the Imperial General Staff and the Royal Flying Corps.

Key to his success was his method: consultation as opposed to imposing a plan without making the relevant Generals feel involved.

In a sense Haldane's insistence on putting thinking first brought about his undeserved downfall in May 1915. The rise of British air power was – and by some still is – thought to have been impeded by his ardour for putting deep thought ahead of speed.

The press magnate Lord Northcliffe thought Haldane should have confronted the challenge posed by foreign powers amassing air power by swiftly acquiring some aircraft of our own. In April 1915, Northcliffe led the vitriolic press campaign to exclude Haldane from the newly formed coalition cabinet in part because he hadn't heeded these pleas.

The other factor was the visit the germanophile Haldane had secretly made to Germany, at the cabinet's behest, in 1912 to, allegedly, sell out his home country. In reality, the 'Haldane Mission' had been diplomatic – designed to defuse tensions – but the secrecy with which it was shrouded left many people suspecting, after it became known, that he had been guilty of treachery.

After being ousted from the cabinet, Haldane later achieved rehabilitation in the light of his crucial pre-war reorganisation of the military. Never one to be deflected by prejudice, in 1921 he invited Einstein to visit Britain and stay in his home, which required courage of them both. The theory of relativity had so fascinated Haldane that he had written a book called *The Reign of Relativity*.

Haldane achieved his mother's ambition for him since his childhood by becoming Lord Chancellor in 1912. In office, he laid the foundations for what became the Law of Property Act 1925 and shaped the future of Canada through his transformative presidency of the Privy Council's Judicial Committee.

Later, after despairing of the Liberals over educational reform, Haldane joined the Labour Party and became Lord Chancellor in their first government in January 1924.

Education was his third sphere of high achievement. He campaigned for a massive increase in education based on ability, not wealth. His greatest passion educationally was to reform the universities, reflecting the Scottish tradition of wider educational access than in England.

The University of London , for instance, in 1894, had no teachers and no students! He then co-founded the London School of Economics with Sidney and Beatrice Webb and they achieved a fully fledged University of London in 1898, relying on Haldane's warm relations with the Tory Arthur Balfour, then Leader of the House of Commons.

Perhaps Haldane's greatest educational achievement was – shocked by the damage to British industry resulting from defective technical education and scientific research, while science and business were cross-fertilising ever more closely in Germany – his central role in founding Imperial College.

The transformation Haldane engineered also led to the creation of numerous universities outside London.

Haldane's other forgotten achievements include empowering women in the civil service, creating the Secret Service Bureau (forerunner of today's MI5 and MI6) and advocating the establishment of both the Medical Research Council and a Ministry of Health in his seminal 1918 Machinery of Government review.

Conclusion

Are today's Liberal Democrats forever condemned to the role of Sisyphus, laboriously rolling the stone up the hill in Everest-conquering by-elections, only to see it tantalisingly tumble back down the hill at the next general election?

Haldane saw that abstract principles (values) are vital, though only really useful if scientifically applied to make life better for the many. His revolutionary, pragmatic values-based approach may show how the Liberal Democrats, despite the hostile voting system, can retain the loyalty of their voters at general elections.

Campbell combines a degree of passion for his hero unprecedented in the experience of this reviewer and lover of biographies, with a steely determination to remain objective. The figure who emerges is a towering platonic guardian, vibrantly alive, whose principled thinking still inspires about how governing could be done so much better.

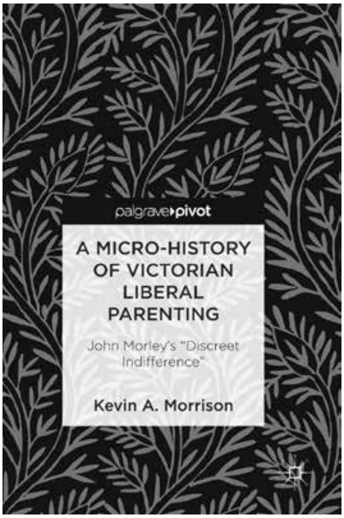
Tony Paterson read law at Oxford University and stood as Liberal candidate for Finchley against Mrs Thatcher in 1979. He is a Richmond Liberal Democrat councillor and national chair of Liberal Democrat Friends of Ukraine.

Liberal parenting

Kevin A. Morrison, *A Micro-History of Victorian Liberal Parenting: John Morley's 'Discreet Indifference'* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)
Review by Ian Packer

This book is part of Palgrave Macmillan's 'Palgrave Pivot' series of works of 25,000–50,000 words, which offers authors the opportunity to publish pieces somewhere between a journal article and a full-length book in length – a series that has the great advantage of allowing writers to explore new ideas in some depth without committing to a lengthy monograph.

Kevin Morrison's book definitely breaks new ground by exploring the concept of 'liberal parenting' in Victorian Britain, through a detailed examination of the practice and ideas of the leading Liberal writer and politician, John Morley. Morley was an important example of the social mobility of the Victorian middle class. He was the son of a doctor in Blackburn, who sent the young man to public school and Oxford, before Morley struck out on his own as a journalist, essayist and biographer. In 1883 he became a Liberal



MP and served in Liberal Cabinets in 1886, 1892–95 and 1905–14. He moved to the Lords in 1908 as Viscount Morley of Blackburn, before retiring from the Cabinet in 1914 over his opposition to British participation in the First World War.

Morley was one of Liberalism's leading intellectuals and his ideas have received much attention, especially his agnosticism, early support for Irish Home Rule, controversial role as Secretary of State for India 1905–10, where he supported political reform but suspended civil liberties, and his opposition to the expansion of State welfare. However, nothing has been written on Morley's attitude to parenting.

In some ways this is an odd omission. Morley famously fell out with his father whilst he was at Oxford. Morley's father was an evangelical Christian and wished his son to become an Anglican priest; when Morley refused and revealed his religious scepticism, his father refused to provide further financial support for the young man. Morley left Oxford early and endured years of economic difficulties in London before finding success as a writer. As Morrison points out, in some of Morley's early writings he criticised parental autocracy and argued in favour of parents 'not governing too much'; instead he suggested they should practice 'discrete indifference', which would allow children to develop autonomy. Morrison argues this not mean that Morley thought parents should not care about their children. Indeed parents should influence children's conduct, making use of children's natural desire to please their parents, and they should certainly inculcate a regard for truth and justice. But parents should also enable children to make their own choices in life, based on independent thought. The link between these ideas and Morley's own experiences is difficult to deny.

Morley never had any children of his own, but he still had the opportunity to practice his philosophy. He married Rose Ayling in 1870 and thereby took on the responsibility to care and provide for Rose's two children, John (known as Johnson) and Florence. Rose's background before she married Morley, and the identity of the father of her two children, have remained a mystery. But Morley took his responsibilities seriously. Johnson at least received some instruction from Morley, who lent him books from his extensive library. Johnson also had a private tutor and attended a day school, before training as a printer, with Morley's support. He later moved to Edinburgh and became a partner in the long-established firm of T. and A. Constable. Florence also received some home education before being placed with a tutor, Marie Souvestre, a liberal intellectual. Morley at least considered whether Florence might benefit from higher education, before deciding against this option.

Johnson and Florence were joined in the Morley household in 1874 by his nephew, Guy, one of the children of Morley's brother who had committed suicide in India when in financial difficulties. Morley pressed to effectively adopt Guy, and paid for him to attend Clifton College, a public school, before supporting Guy's ambition to train as a solicitor. This kind of blended family was not unusual in Victorian Britain, as Morrison points out, and the household was often made even more complicated by the presence of Morley's sister, Grace, and Rose's sister, Ellen.

However, whether Morley felt his parenting had been successful must at least be open to doubt. Guy Morley failed to show any intellectual promise at school and made an early marriage of which his uncle disapproved. The two men do not seem to have been close once Guy left the Morley home. A greater shock to Morley's principles came when Florence announced she wished to become a Roman Catholic nun, eventually enrolling in an order in Dublin. Most disappointing of all for Morley, Johnson was convicted of forgery in 1907 – he had got into debt whilst trying to meet his liabilities as a partner in his firm and had taken desperate measures to try and salvage the situation. Johnson was sentenced to ten years in prison, the case becoming a major embarrassment for the Liberal government of which Morley was a prominent member.

It as at least possible to argue that Morley practised what he preached in regard to the children of whom he had the care. There is no evidence that he tried to compel them to follow in his career footsteps, endorse his ideas, or to join the intellectual world of which he was s o important a part. He at least accepted their choices as adults and did not stand in their way, even when Florence decided to become a nun. While Morley could not endorse Johnson's criminality, he did not abandon his family, providing a home for Johnson's children in 1907–11; Morley may even have played a behind the scenes role in Johnson's early release from prison in 1912. Morley certainly did not replicate the harsh treatment he had received from his own father.

Morrison's book provides a fascinating glimpse of Morley's home life and his family relationships, making good use of the Morley papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; and it is a powerful reminder of the importance of seeing leading politicians in the context of their entire life and experiences. However, the concept of 'liberal parenting' that Morrison seeks to explore is problematic. Morrison does not clearly define what the key elements of 'liberal parenting' were, or how these might have been distinct from 'conservative parenting' or 'socialist parenting'; nor does he compare Morley's parenting with that of other prominent Liberals. This makes it difficult to judge how typical Morley was and whether his attitudes were widely shared amongst Liberals. 'Liberal parenting' may just be the term that Morrison uses to define what Morley did, rather than a distinctive attitude to parenting that was part of living one's life as a Liberal in Victorian Britain. In that sense, this short book should be seen as suggesting further important areas for research, rather than as conclusively demonstrating the significance of 'liberal parenting'.

Ian Packer is Associate Professor in History at the University of Lincoln and the author of *Lloyd George, Liberalism and the Land* (2001) and *Liberal Government and Politics, 1905–15* (2006).

Letters to the Editor

Michael Steed

I last heard from Michael Steed about three years ago when he wrote to me, outraged by the errors in the report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse.

He had been to Rochdale at the time of Cyril Smith's first adoption as Liberal candidate for the 1972 by-election, and knew that the filed police enquiry into him had been since seen by more than one DPP and that they had always agreed that there was insufficient evidence to proceed against Smith. I thanked him for his continued good wishes and commiserated with his declining health. He is a great loss, not just to the Liberal Democrats but to the country.

David Steel (Lord Steel of Aikwood)

Uxbridge

Barry Standen's article on the 1972 Uxbridge by-election brought back memories of that campaign and of the late Ian Stuart. I remember staying with a stalwart called Sid, who had been a councillor for three years when many Liberals were swept wholly unexpectedly on to councils in the 1962 aftermath of the Orpington by-election. I have heard tell that the then local government officer, one Michael Meadowcroft, was rung up more than once to hear the words: 'We've taken control of the council. What do we do now?'

I campaigned for Ian at that by-election delivering thousands of leaflets called 'Impact' because Ian didn't like the name Focus. It rained most of the time. Barrie didn't mention that many of us went to the Labour candidate Manuela Sykes' election meetings and pointedly took off our coats and turned them inside out (turncoat), as she had done to Hugh Foot when he deserted the Liberals for Labour. She was not happy.

Barrie is not correct in his tale about the candidate being hung upside down from a railway bridge to paste up election posters. It was his youngest son being held by his older brothers!

Incidentally, Ian had discovered by accident that a mixture of glue and size brushed on to *both* sides of a poster made it almost impossible to remove. Those posters, albeit somewhat faded, remained on the bridge for many years.

Mick Taylor

A Liberal Democrat History Group evening meeting

The 1847 Financial Crisis and the Irish Famine

The Irish famine of the 1840s remains the worst humanitarian crisis in the UK's history. Within six years of the arrival of the potato blight in Ireland in 1845, more than a quarter of its people had died or emigrated. Lord John Russell's Whig government's response to the crisis has been widely criticised – but in reality their options were highly limited by the concurrent financial crisis and their lack of a parliamentary majority.

Speakers: **Dr Charles Read** (Faculty of History, University of Cambridge and author of *The Great Famine in Ireland and Britain's Financial Crisis* (2022)) and **Liam Kennedy** (Emeritus Professor of History at Queen's University, Belfast). Chair: **Baroness Kramer**.

7.00pm, Monday 29 January, following the AGM of the History Group at 6.30pm.
Violet Bonham Carter Room, National Liberal Club, London SW1A 2HE.

*Those unable to attend in person will be able to view the meeting via Zoom. Please register for online access via the History Group website (*https://liberalhistory.org.uk/events/*). For those attending in person, there is no need to register.*

A Liberal Democrat History Group fringe meeting

Greening Liberalism

The history of Liberal and Liberal Democrat environmental thinking

How and when did environmental policy become important to British political parties, and to the Liberal Party, SDP and Liberal Democrats in particular?

Speakers: **Professor Neil Carter** (York University) and **Baroness Parminter**. Chair: **Keith Melton** (Green Liberal Democrats).

8.15pm, Friday 15 March
Meeting Room 4, Novotel York Centre, Fishergate, York YO10 4FD.

This is a fringe meeting at the Liberal Democrats' spring conference. You do not need to be registered for the conference to attend the meeting.