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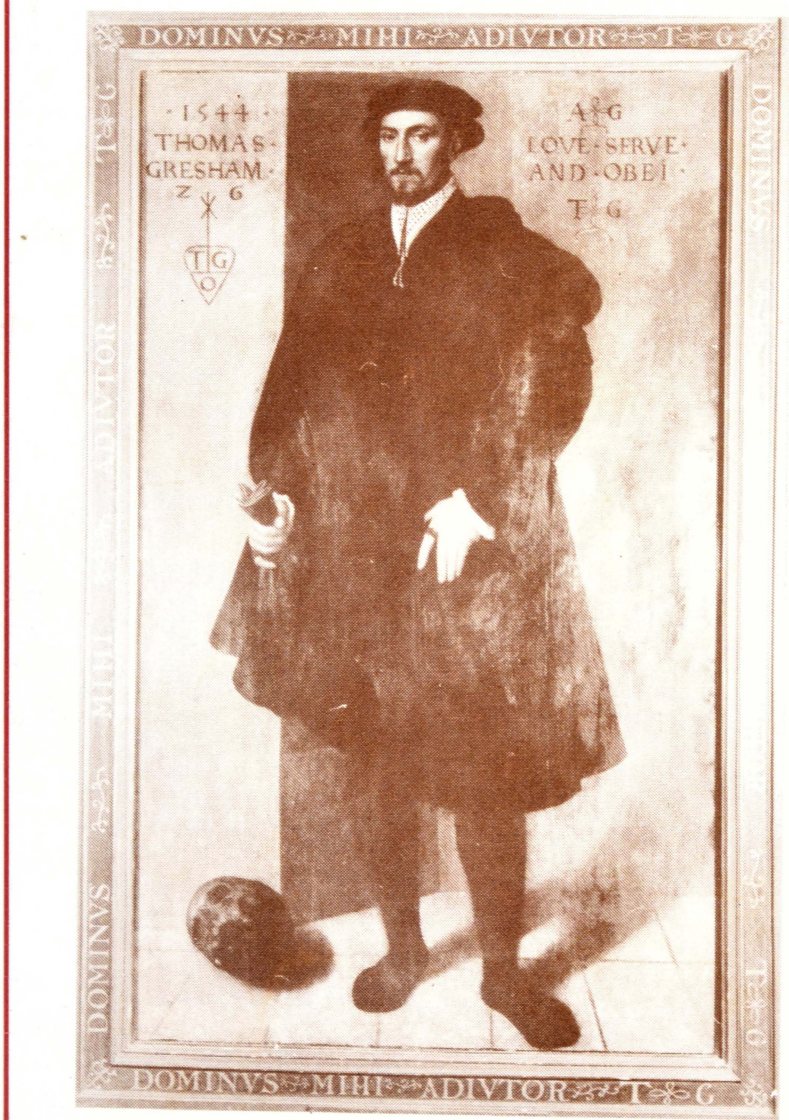

THOMAS GRESHAM

1544

THE YEAR BOOK OF THE SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF HISTORY

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HISTORY TEACHING REVIEW

YEAR BOOK

EDITOR: ANDREW HUNT

VOLUME 7 1993

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Editorial

ANDREW HUNT

Year Books for two or three years now have had themes generally connected to some of the 'processes' of history teaching. This is obviously a reasonable way of tackling what should go into the contents, since the classroom teachers who largely make up the membership of SATH, want to feel that their subscriptions are going towards increasing their useful understanding of some of the areas that they will come into contact with when teaching. To that end, Year Books have recently concentrated on *Urbanisation and Change* (1992), *Scotland's Cultural Identity* (1991) and *Revised Higher History* (1990).

These themes seem to have been well received and it has helped re-affirm the increasingly close *entente* (between the contributors, generally at university level, and the consumers, generally at school level) over what areas of on-going research and interest will have a ready audience amongst the teachers in schools. Almost all universities and bodies of higher education now seem to be more interested in close contact with what is going on at school level, and helping with information, advice, training or study techniques etc., to prepare the ablest pupils to get the best out of their senior years, or helping teachers to give it to them. This can only be applauded; at one time only the odd few at university level seemed to have any idea what teaching history in a secondary school was like, but the descent from the Ivory towers has now become a visible and effective influence on senior secondary school teaching. It's heartening (and flattering), as Editor of the Year Book, to receive letters from history specialists in universities, asking if their present research is any use to SATH members, if they were to write up an article. It's a compliment to them, it's also a compliment to SATH members; courtesy alone would forbid me to turn down such offers!

In a round about way, this brings me to the theme for the present volume of the Year Book. I suggest we can get carried away with the functional, process-based approach to history. It can be all very well but we risk losing sight of one of the important end messages of history; that it is still about telling a story about people. It was this thought that prompted the theme of this year's edition; I would approach contributors to feel free to indulge themselves; to offer something, just from their own interest, on a historical figure. There were to be no editorial instructions on ensuring its 'usefulness in the classroom', no key ideas or meeting requirements for Grade Related Criteria, nor even a time-frame for when these people should have lived. My only request was to bring out something of interest in this person's life; write good biography and remind us what history is about. I suppose that could be quite an intimidating task and I am happy to acknowledge with thanks, the contributions that are printed in this Year Book, they come from all over the country. Some of them have a nice touch of iconoclasm and together they show that there is room in history for study of the little and the big person. They remind us that no-one's contribution to history is forgotten because, somewhere, in some dusty study, a historian is waiting for the chance to raise the meek or topple the mighty, or just throw a bit of light on what was a shady corner. If we remember these elements as important parts of the study of history, alongside the great 'core skills' that are thrown at us every day (or we throw at pupils?) then this Year Book will have made its contribution to historical debate.

Squabbling While London Burned :

Archibald Sinclair, Max Beaverbrook and the Air War, 1940 - 1942

From May 1940 to June 1941 Britain was on her own against the might of Germany. It was, according to J. B. Priestly, a time when "the British were at their best". Whilst true for the people as a whole, the cooperative spirit of wartime should not be allowed to obscure cases of individual malfeasance. Even at the very top, within Winston Churchill's cabinet, ministers failed to act their best.

In order to understand the way government worked during the war, it is essential to take into account Churchill's idiosyncratic leadership style. His consuming interest in military affairs meant that the autonomy of his ministers was severely limited; few were allowed any significant say in the strategic direction of the war. Nor was there any orderly network of consultation between echelons of power. *Ad hoc* advisers competed with ministers and civil servants for the Prime Minister's attention. 'Insiders' clashed violently with 'outsiders', clashes which Churchill frequently encouraged and usually enjoyed. Suspicion, animosity and intrigue were rife while petty jealousies had a profound effect upon grand policy.

Take for instance the wartime career of Sir Archibald Sinclair, the wealthy Scottish landowner who was leader of the Liberal Party. Sinclair had been close friends with Churchill since 1910 and had been a valuable confidant during the dark days after the Dardanelles fiasco, after which Churchill had taken a paternalistic interest in the younger man's budding parliamentary career. When Churchill formed his coalition government in May 1940 he happily gave the Air Ministry to his old friend. It was a post commensurate in status with the forlorn but still important Liberal party.

Sinclair's integrity, civility and sense of honour set him apart in an age dominated by opportunists, cynics and thugs. But within the Cabinet those thugs saw his virtues as a sign of weakness. No one, it was presumed, could be so upright and still hope to be powerful. Consequently, as one observer remarked, 'the bullying . . . of Archibald Sinclair, was tremendous'. Churchill treated Sinclair with 'half-serious levity . . . he used to bully . . . poor old Archie . . . [and] jump down his throat every time he opened his mouth'. The big problem for Sinclair was that he could not escape his past relationship with Churchill — once his protege he could never be his equal. [1]

The pressure upon Sinclair was intense; he had constantly to watch over his shoulder for those malevolently inclined towards the Air Ministry. Among those so inclined was Churchill. Upon taking office, he told Lord Beaverbrook of his concern that 'the Air Ministry do not make enough of the deliveries with which they are supplied'. The statement reveals Churchill's lack of trust, not necessarily in Sinclair, but more fundamentally in the Air Marshalls who would advise him. During the Great War, Churchill had learned to be suspicious of military men. Munitions problems in that war had been solved when armaments production was wrested from the War Office and given to a civilian Minister of Munitions. In an attempt to reproduce this success, Churchill created the Ministry of Aircraft Production and put at its head his pal Lord (Max) Beaverbrook. [2]

According to Sir John Colville, a Downing Street private secretary, 'Beaverbrook the Minister of Aircraft Production was still Beaverbrook the press magnate . . . he attached supreme importance to the number of aircraft he could produce; as he formerly did to the number of *Daily Express* he could sell . . . "circulation" had always been his primary objective'. The nature of his responsibilities gave him an automatic advantage

over Sinclair, an advantage compounded by his extraordinary capacity for self-promotion. If he wanted the Cabinet to take his side, he had only to refer to the impressive production figures which were naturally emotive in time of war. The figures were impressive, but few examined the cost of achieving them or whether the right type of aeroplanes were actually being produced.[3]

Sir Arthur Tedder, who worked with Beaverbrook at the MAP until November 1940, admitted that 'in the first four weeks or more, [he] did a fine job in keeping everbody up to a higher pitch of energy'. As for the remainder of his regime, 'that is a very different story'. He recalled with horror 'devious' methods employed solely to increase production figures without regard for their potential damage. For instance, Beaverbrook had decreed that 'all research and development which could not produce results in the front line in a month was to stop, research and development staff were to be absorbed into production or disposed of'. Tedder accepted that this might have been necessary in the short term, but continuing the policy meant 'delaying developments of which the Service is in urgent need'. In fact, it was Beaverbrook's 'definite and declared policy . . . to pay no attention to the Service's requirements as stated by the Air Ministry . . . the MAP should be the judge as to what the Service should get'.[4]

Tedder also complained of 'mutual distrust, friction and confusion' and of an 'utterly unnecessary strain . . . placed on the staff'. The administration of the MAP was 'based on force and fear, threats are the very essence of its direction'. Beaverbrook considered disharmony advantageous; it was necessary to rattle a few individuals in order to get the job done. The proof of the pudding, he often claimed, lay in the production figures. Sinclair rejected the idea that an efficient force could be built upon fear. The Air Minister's duty, as he saw it, was to respect the advice of RAF 'experts' and to defend their interests against the likes of Beaverbrook. Relations between the two ministers were therefore aggravated by this basic disagreement over the extent to which the Air Marshalls could be trusted. Beaverbrook, wrote Colville, thought that 'the Air Ministry was a rotten Ministry, Sir Archibald Sinclair a thoroughly bad Minister, who was hoodwinked by his subordinates'.[5]

The row between the two ministers was 'already sprouting within a fortnight of Churchill taking over'. At times it descended to sheer farce — proof that the crisis of war does not inspire all men to bring their egos under control. This was a prizefight between two very different boxers. Beaverbrook had all the flash, he threw all the best punches, he even had the referee (Churchill) on his side. But his temperament was unstable and his stamina unreliable. In contrast, Sinclair was the dogged, unexciting tactician with the remarkable ability to absorb punches.[6]

Beaverbrook assumed that he could easily dominate the urbane Sinclair; this assumption led him to conduct piratical raids upon the Air Ministry. He immediately sought to expand his Ministry at the expense of Sinclair's. On 10th June, in typical terse fashion, he demanded that the Atlantic Ferry Pools — which carried equipment and supplies used by the MAP — by definition should belong to him. Sinclair rejected this logic, adding — with intentional irony — that he was 'sorry that we are not in agreement about the methods because I am quite sure that there is no difference between us about the objects to be aimed at'.[7]

Undaunted, Beaverbrook resumed his piracy on the following day, demanding other parts of the Air Ministry. An exasperated Sinclair wrote on 15 June:

> Please believe me when I tell you that I have looked forward to working with you closely and loyally from the first moment that we entered our respective offices. I have frequently expressed to you and to other people my gratitude for what you have done as MAP. I respect fully your rights and authority in your sphere . . . all I ask is that you give equal respect to mine in my own sphere. I

am still most anxious to obliterate any misunderstanding between us and to work with you in loyal friendship.

Having failed to cow Sinclair, Beaverbrook went into a tantrum and submitted his resignation. It was, he told Churchill, 'now imperative that the Ministry of Aircraft Production should pass into the keeping of a man in touch and sympathy with the Air Ministry and the Air Marshalls'. He hoped his successor would enjoy 'that measure of support which had been denied to me'. Churchill refused to accept the resignation, promising instead to investigate the line of demarcation between the two ministries and 'to assuage the unfortunate differences which had arisen'. Beaverbrook agreed for the moment to remain but, after referring to a catalogue of grievances against Sinclair, concluded that 'The breach . . . between the Air Ministry and myself cannot be healed, although I have made many efforts'.[8]

Sinclair tried to mend fences on 1 July. In the interests of harmony, he reaffirmed his intention to 'consider any proposals which you might make to me for the adjustment of the relations between our two Ministries'. But the letter had no effect. Beaverbrook was not interested in establishing a harmonious relationship, nor did he seriously desire a resolution of the boundaries between the two Ministries. Had he wanted either he would have accepted Sinclair's genuine efforts to resolve the dispute, not to mention those of the War Cabinet. What he really wanted was power; he meant to control the Air Ministry by reducing it to insignificance. He wanted to impose his will upon Sinclair. The fact that these goals may not have been in the best interests of the war effort was irrelevant. What mattered was that the conflict was intoxicating, and the more Sinclair resisted, the more inebriated Beaverbrook became.[9]

The raids therefore continued. On 10 July Beaverbrook demanded the surrender of 'all those positions of the Air Ministry now engaged on the production of aircraft . . . That is all I ask and I cannot understand why it is not given to me at once. When Sinclair baulked, Beaverbrook again took his complaints to Churchill. He was quick to do this because he knew that he could find a sympathetic ear. What Sinclair was doing — namely protecting the morale of the RAF by defending its interests — never impressed Churchill nearly as much as Beaverbrook's magnificent production figures. On one occasion Beaverbrook began a letter to the Prime Minister by referring to the impressive achievements of the MAP, before complaining that since May, Sinclair had sent 720 aeroplanes out of the country. 'Nobody knows the troubles I've seen', he concluded. A sympathetic Churchill replied: 'I do'.[10]

On 23 July the Cabinet tried to clarify the line of demarcation by ruling that aircraft in production would remain under the jurisdiction of the MAP until formally transferred to the Air Ministry. But a clash of personalities could not be resolved by simplistic formulae, as both Ministers realised. The following month Beaverbrook announced that he wished to be 'the sole and only authority determining what constitutes surplus stock' The Air Ministry was extremely reluctant to grant him this power, on the grounds that he could not be trusted with spares. Common sense dictated that spares be used for repairs, so that slightly damaged craft could be quickly returned to service. Beaverbrook's ego dictated otherwise. He used them to produce new aircraft, thus increasing production figures, but in the process reducing the effective fighting force. Oblivious to the issue at stake, Churchill directed Sinclair to 'see that [Beaverbrook's] wishes were met fully and immediately in the matter of these spares. I really could not endure another bickering over this, considering the gravity of the situation'.[11]

On 1 October Beaverbrook told Sinclair that 'The Air Staff should at last come to the conclusion that the Aircraft Ministry is a ministry of equal importance with the Air Ministry. Until they do come to that conclusion you are going to make a lot of trouble'. A fresh demand followed. 'Please consent at once', Beaverbrook added, 'It will save a lot of

trouble.' Sinclair replied with characteristic patience that he would 'look very carefully and objectively' into the request, but stressed that 'the case for it must be clearly proved before this Ministry is compelled to undergo another amputation!' Argument raged for a number of weeks. Both men offered evidence which the other did not accept. It was all a colossal waste of time.[12]

Behind the incessant arguing lay a difference of opinion over the air war. In contrast to Sinclair, Beaverbrook did not believe that the war c could be won by bombing German cities. He therefore objected to the amount of effort devoted to this purpose. He wanted the RAF to assume a defensive role, in other words to protect British cities, aerodromes and shipping until the Americans entered the war. Strategic issues were not technically Beaverbrook's responsibility. His role was to supply the aircraft needed by the RAF. But because he refused to be constrained by this role, and because he did not trust the judgement of the Air Marshalls or of Sinclair, the RAF did not always get what it wanted.

This problem was nowhere more serious than in the supply of training aircraft. Beaverbrook was always reluctant to devote valuable labour and materials to producing trainers, machines which did not show up in the production figures of combat aircraft and where in any case 'recklessly squandered' by the RAF. (He apparently never understood the very basic point that inexperienced pilots tended more often to crash). Sinclair tried repeatedly to convince him that no quantity of combat aircraft was sufficient to defeat the Germans if trainers were not also readily available. Beaverbrook stubbornly refused to consider the possibility that a redirection of production priorities was essential. He simply repeated *ad infinitum* that the problem rested not with the supply of trainers but with the use made of them. The shortage was Sinclair's fault: he shipped too many abroad, he did not protect the factories and he did nothing about the intolerable high number of training crashes.

Beaverbrook, astonishingly as it seems, considered himself the innocent victim of a cruel, unyielding Air Ministry. He expected Sinclair always to give way; when he did not, he felt victimised. Sinclair's calmess also infuriated him — he preferred flaming rows, which he was more likely to win. Unable to get the better of Sinclair — a man he persistently underestimated — he turned in frustration to even greater deviousness. He spread tall tales of Sinclair's incompetence and made a weapon of indiscretion. Harcourt Johnstone, a friend and colleague of both men, reacted angrily to Beaverbrook's attack upon Sinclair at a dinner party:

> I . . . deeply disapprove of the way you spoke at dinner last night about Archie. What you think decent to say in front of your officials is your affair, but Archie is my friend and, more than that, I have every reason to believe that he is a loyal, hard-working and efficient Secretary of State for Air.

Beaverbrook ignored the rebuke and went on with his campaign. On 2 December 1940 he suggested to Churchill that the Air Ministry had actually declined under Sinclair. Referring to the 'indignation meetings' he had had with Sinclair when Chamberlain was still Prime Minister, he wrote: 'I supplied the figures in those days and he gave me the ideas. We both thought the Air Ministry was badly run — but, perhaps we knew less then than now'. On another occasion he forwarded to Churchill a letter he had received from a colleague. A note was attached: 'You must think this is a letter from Sir Archibald Sinclair, for it is five pages long. But every page is worth reading. And that is the difference'.[13]

In one of his many letter of resignation, Beaverbrook wrote: 'When the reservoir was empty, I was a genius. Now that the reservoir has some water in it, I am an inspired brigand. If ever the water slops over, I will be a bloody anarchist', Whether inspired or not, his brigandage carried with it enormous costs and untold anguish. Beaverbrook

spent a great deal of time devising ways of undermining the Air Ministry; the Air Ministry spent a great deal of time defending itself against Beaverbrook. By the end of the year Churchill was beginning to tire of the incessant quarrelling, though he remained tolerant of Beaverbrook himself. Confronted with yet another threat of resignation, he urged his friend not to let 'trifles' or 'petty vexations' obscure the 'vast scale of events'. On 15 December 1940 he wrote:

> the Air Ministry . . . regard you as a merciless critic, and even enemy. They resent having M.A.P. functions carved out of their show, and I have no doubt they pour out their detraction by every channel open. I am definitely of the opinion that it is more in the public interest that there should be sharp criticism and counter-criticism between the two departments, than that they should be handing each other out ceremonious bouquets. One must therefore accept the stimulating and disagreeable conditions of warfare.

Criticism may have been healthy; childish vendettas were not. It is impossible to accept that the tension between the two ministries was conducive to efficiency. Whether or not Churchill believed what he wrote is impossible to tell; he may simply have been trying to soothe Beaverbrook's childish temper. If that was his aim, he did not succeed. Beaverbrook genuinely felt victimised, yet here was Churchill, satisfied with the *status quo,* calling the conflict mere 'trifles'. He wanted an ally, not an umpire. Feeling even more persecuted, he intensified his attacks upon Sinclair.[14]

In December 1940 Beaverbrook proposed sending 60 Hurricanes to Canada — a remarkable volte-face. 'Perhaps you will object', he wrote sarcastically to Sinclair. 'So let us begin the argument amicably, agreeably and with every intention to resolve our difficulties'. Sinclair objected but only on the grounds that the decision was rightfully his. Since the transfer was justified, he graciously approved it. Frustrated at being denied a fight, Beaverbrook put forth further demands and conditions designed specifically to annoy Sinclair. 'I refuse to be provoked into a controversy with you over this issue', Sinclair wrote in exasperation, 'I don't want to fight you, I want to help you to fight the Germans'. Sinclair offered a compromise. ' Mysuggestion is made with the desire to meet your wishes and to make for smooth working between us'. Not interested on conciliation, Beaverbrook refused the offer and took the matter to Churchill. The latter's patience was growing thin;

> I think it would be a great pity to bring this before the Cabinet. I could not support you, and everyone else would vote against you having a privilege or a monopoly. I do not see how it can be any satisfaction to you to put yourself or me in this position. On the merits I cannot feel you are right, and with anyone else but you I should long ago have settled it by a stroke of the pen.

Sinclair, too, was losing his patience. It is regrettable, if understandable, that he momentarily descended to Beaverbrook's level when on 28 February he blamed heavy losses in a bombing raid on the fact that the MAP had been slow to fit new Marconi radio sets to the bombers. Beaverbrook replied that he was 'taking steps to see that every ounce of drive and energy is made use of in weighing the scale in favour of your desires', adding, sarcastically, that 'We are conscious of too many shortcomings and too much laxness on our part to make any complaint about the fault of others'.[15]

Amid all the ill-humour an extraordinary degree of civility, even warmth, was maintained. This must have surprised Beaverbrook who would have seen others react to his rascality with bitter vindictiveness. Sinclair, in contrast, remained polite, considerate and accommodating. When Beaverbrook was laid low by an asthma attack, he was quick to express sympathy. Beaverbrook replied;

> Very many thanks for your cheerful and encouraging letter about my asthma and the production of this Ministry.

In the old days I used to get very angry; that manufactured adrenalin for my system — that kept down asthma.

Now I am such a benign old gentleman I do not make adrenalin any more.

In consequence you and my other friends who are compelled to deal with me, all have an easy time while I suffer — from asthma.

Examples like this, though infrequent, demonstrate that the friction between the two ministers never turned into animosity. But friction was nevertheless the norm. During this period Beaverbrook frequently included in his appeals to Churchill a running score of requests made to the Air Ministry which had been refused — the point being to show how unreasonable Sinclair was being. That the requests themselves might have been unreasonable was apparently not an issue.[16]

In early 1941 Beaverbrook's attitude suddenly changed. Annoyance at being unable to crush Sinclair, nagging ill health and a feeling that his work at the MAP was complete combined to produce a now genuine determination to resign. By this time Churchill had also begun to realise that the incessant acrimony was counter-productive. Thus, a letter of resignation submitted at the end of April was accepted. The MAP went to Moore Brabazon, Beaverbrook's choice, but not his clone. He later wrote:

> When I arrived at the MAP, for some reason, no doubt tied up with personalities, etc., things were not going too well. The Air Ministry and the MAP were scarcely on speaking terms, so to speak, and as our sole reason for existing was to supply the RAF with planes, this struck me as rather ridiculous. We were there to express the desires of the Air Ministry.

From such a simple understanding did harmony result. Conflict between the two Ministries never recurred, which naturally makes one wonder whether it was ever necessary. After April 1941 Sinclair could concentrate upon defeating Hitler, a far more predictable adversary than Beaverbrook.[17]

Beaverbrook and Sinclair remained, ever after, surprisingly good friends. When, in July 1941, Sinclair was made a Knight of the Thistle, Beaverbrook wrote that it was, 'a splendid distinction which you have richly earned'. He added that he had been fortunate ' to work closely with you over the months . . . I have to give you my personal thanks for countless acts of forbearance and kindness'. On the occasion of Beaverbrook's trip to Washington in February 1942, Sinclair wrote: ' Your visit will be timely, but it must not be prolonged. I would never have believed a year ago that I should have felt so unhappy at your going!' Away from the vortex, Beaverbrook was able to view more rationally his conflict with the Air Ministry. On 16 February 1942, he actually went so far as to apologise (in his own way) to the Under Secretary of State Harold Balfour for his actions, explaining that 'I had a difficult job cutting my Ministry out of the ribs of the Air Ministry. I was surrounded by those who would betray me. Injustice was done to you in the pursuit of efficiency'.[18]

George Steward[26] described Beaverbrook as ' 25% thug, 15% crook and the remainder a combination of genius and real goodness of heart'. When the various aspects of his personality came into conflict, peculiar behaviour resulted. For instance, on the eve of his departure for Washington he wrote to Sinclair:

> When I was at the Aircraft Ministry, the whole job seemed to me to require an attitude of independence to the Air Ministry, which, I am afraid, was carried too far.
>
> There never was a moment when I ceased to admire and praise your character and independence of viewpoint.
>
> In fact, if you had been a man of a little less character, you would have been

> easier to ward off and to beat down when you began to resist the reasonable demands of the Aircraft Ministry for some of the departments.
>
> I am bound to say you still have these departments at the Air Ministry. I hope you will finish the war in your present job. I never heard a murmur — I never even saw a look of uncertainty or doubt in the days when Ministers were being beheaded at the rate of 12 to 25 each morning.

One should not be misled by the generosity of this letter. At precisely the same time that it was written, Beaverbrook was again attempting to persuade Churchill to sack Sinclair on grounds of incompetence.[19]

Beaverbrook's rascality continued long after he ceased to work closely with Sinclair. While touring an RAF base in April 1944 Sinclair was given a few pounds of sausages. It was common practice for airmen to keep pigs in order to supplement meagre rations and make economical use of the base's refuse — a practice encouraged by Sinclair. Unfortunately it was against the law, since unregistered livestock were technically black market. Sinclair was too polite to refuse the gift but in accepting it technically made himself an accessory to a crime. Upon hearing of the illicit bangers, Beaverbrook pressed for Sinclair to be prosecuted and threatened to expose the incident in his newspapers. Embarrassment was averted when it was discovered that Queen Mary, on an earlier tour, had also received a consignment of porcine contraband. Since it obviously would not do to prosecute the Queen's mother, Sinclair escaped punishment.

Sinclair stayed at the Air Ministry till the defeat of Germany. Beaverbrook shifted from post to post, bringing both brilliance and turbulence with him wherever he went. This denouement perhaps reflects each man's character: the honest, dogged and dutiful Sinclair and the mercurial, impulsive, untrustworthy Beaverbrook. Sinclair so immersed himself in his wartime duties that he lost his personal once-firm hold upon his constituency in Caithness and Sutherland and was consequently defeated in 1945. Exhausted from the war years, he never revived his political career. A series of strokes left him progressively debilitated and he spent the last ten years of his life in a semi-comatose state.

On every birthday, a telegram from his old nemisis arrived. 'You are one of the unremembered heroes of the war. No man acted with more balance, with more judgement or greater restraint than yourself', Beaverbrook wrote in 1961. The following year he sent a similar note to Sinclair's wife Marigold:

> This is a message to Archie which I ask you to read to him. He did so much over five years and worried so greatly on account of the boys who lost their lives that it is no wonder that he is now a war casualty.[20]

But one should resist sentimental endings. Despite appearances, this is not a story about heroes. It is impossible to believe that the Beaverbrook - Sinclair rivalry was beneficial to the war effort. That it was allowed to continue was the fault of Churchill. Yet this was only one of the many instances in which personal feelings clouded Churchill's judgement. The Whitehall pecking order had a more profound effect upon the shaping of war policy than any strategic or tactical considerations. That politicians should behave like petulant boys in peacetime is only to be expected. But surely the emergency of war should motivate them to act like statesmen. That, sadly, is a naive expectation.

NOTES

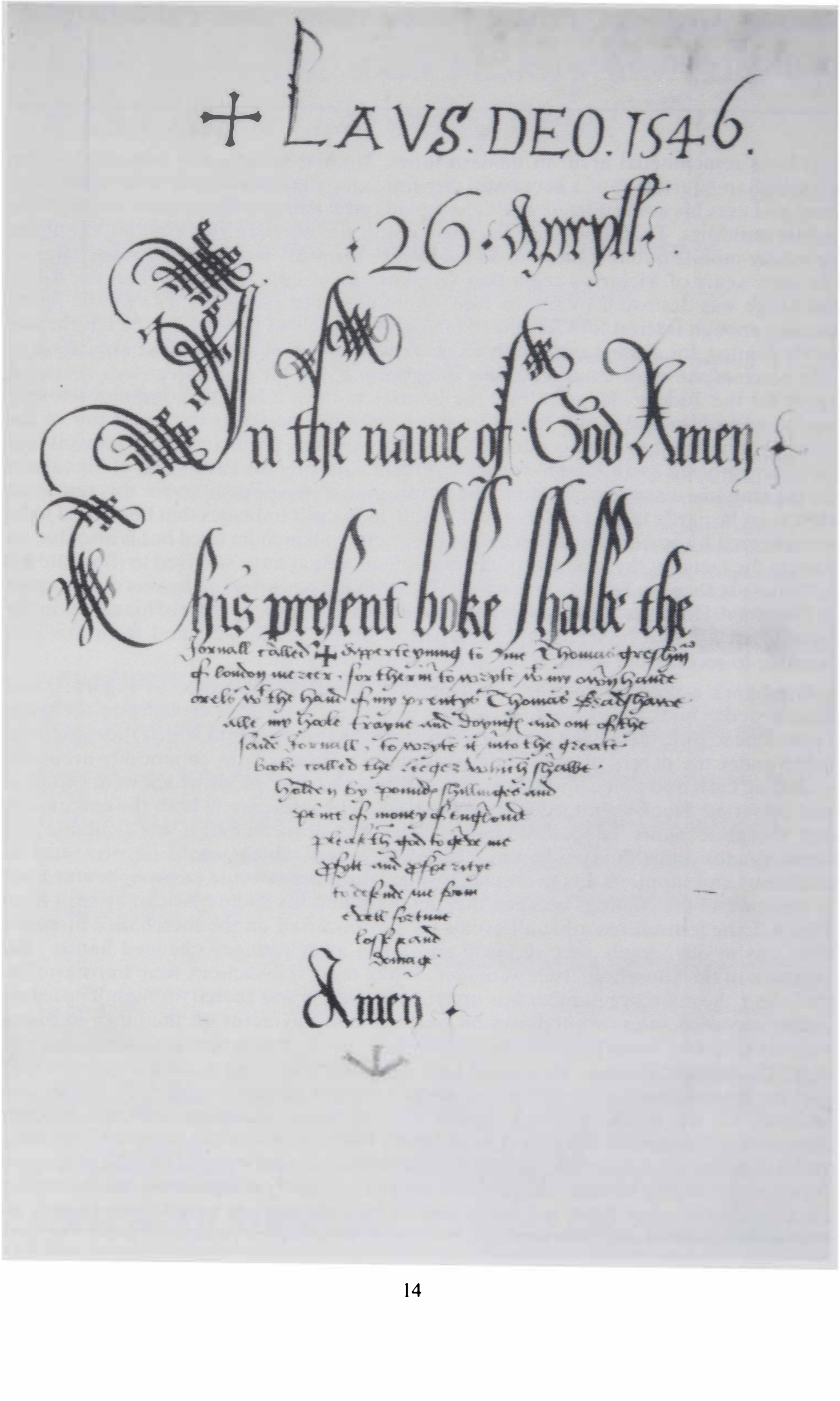
1. J. Colville, **The Churchillians**, 174. R. Boothby, **Recollections of a Rebel**, 169. J. Wheeler-Bennett, **Action This day**, 105, 195. Interview with L. J. Dunnett.
2. Churchill to Beaverbrook, 25 May 1940. Beaverbrook Papers.
3. Colville, 75.
4. A. Tedder, **With Prejudice**, 14 - 16.
5. Tedder, **With Prejudice**, 14 - 16. Colville, 75.
6. Wheeler-Bennett, 50
7. Beaverbrook to Sinclair, 10 June 1940; Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 11 June 1940; Beaverbrook Papers.
8. Beaverbrook to Sinclair, 11 June 1940; Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 12, 15 June 1940; Beaverbrook to Churchill, 30 June, 1 July 1940; Churchill to Beaverbrook, 1 June 1940; Beaverbrook Papers.
9. Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 1 July 1940, Beaverbrook papers.
10. Beaverbrook to C. Newall, 10 July 1940; Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 4 Aug. 1940; Beaverbrook to Churchill, 2 Sept. 1940, Churchill to Beaverbrook, 3 Sept. 1940; Beaverbrook Papers.
11. Beaverbrook to Churchill, 26 Sept. 1940; Churchill to Sinclair, 26 Sept. 1940; Beaverbrook Papers.
12. Beaverbrook to Sinclair 1, 5 Oct. 1940; Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 8 Oct. 1940; Beaverbrook Papers.
13. A. J. P. Taylor, **Beaverbrook**, 433 - 4. Beaverbrook to Churchill, 2 Dec. 1940, 10 Jan. 1941; Beaverbrook Papers.
14. Beaverbrook to Churchill, 2 Dec. 1940; Churchill to Beaverbrook, 15 Dec. 1940, 7 Jan. 1941; Beaverbrook Papers.
15. Beaverbrook to Sinclair, 27 Dec. 1940, 24 Jan., 1 March 1941; Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 5 Jan., 28 Feb. 1941; Churchill to Beaverbrook, Feb. 1941; Beaverbrook Papers.
16. Beaverbrook to Sinclair, 13 Feb., 8 March 1941; Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 9 March 1941; Beaverbrook Papers.
17. K. Young, **Churchill and Beaverbrook**, 185.
18. Beaverbrook to Sinclair, 12 July 1941; Sinclair to Beaverbrook, 21 Feb. 1942; Beaverbrook to H. Balfour, 16 Feb. 1942; Beaverbrook Papers.
19. Beaverbrook to Sinclair, 24 Feb. 1942; Beaverbrook to Churchill, 17 Feb. 1942; Beaverbrook Papers. Taylor, 434.
20. Beaverbrook to Sinclair, 18 Oct. 1961; Beaverbrook to Marigold Sinclair, 21 Oct. 1962; Beaverbrook Papers.

Thomas Gresham, Private Person rather than Public Figure

Dr JENNIFER NEWMAN

If he is remembered at all in modern times, Thomas Gresham is perceived as the Elizabethan equivalent of a successful city financier who operates at an international level and uses his accumulated wealth to provide educational endowments and notable public buildings. That this figure fits closely with the popular Victorian notion of the upwardly-mobile public figure *a la Samuel Smiles* is hardly surprising because it was in the early years of Victoria's reign that Gresham was 'rediscovered'. When the Royal Exchange was destroyed by fire in 1838, its founder was reinstated as a public figure causing enough interest for Gresham College, which he had endowed, to be rebuilt and newly funded, for a street in the City to be named after him and for the publication to take place of the most comprehensive biography of his life and career as a financial agent for the Tudors[1]. He even had the honour to have a law of economics wrongly attributed to him and is still found in many reference books as the originator of the concept of bad money driving out good[2]. Despite so much publicity it is significant that he is remembered as an *Elizabethan* state servant, ignoring the early years of his career; for the man has disappeared behind the public image[3]. Responsibility for this restricted view must be partly taken by Gresham himself, as his will indicates that he wanted to be remembered by posterity as a benefactor of the city in which he lived but is also due, in part, to the fact that the majority of the documents which have survived to illustrate his activities are those in State Papers which deal with the period when he was crown agent in Flanders[4]. However one valuable source remains for the early years of his career in the form of an account book covering the period from 1546 to 1552 and from this it is possible to reconstruct some of the details of his daily life[5].

Gresham's account book, the frontispiece of which is illustrated in Figure 1, is a journal or day book which would have been written up daily from a rough book or notes. From time to time the entries would be transferred to the ledger in which they would be listed under the names of individual customers or suppliers, in commodity accounts, including cash and plate, and in voyage accounts showing goods which were exported and imported. Stock keeping could be undertaken by reference to both the commodity and voyage accounts. The journal had a legal significance in that it was available as a check on the individual reckonings from the ledger which would be presented to customers and suppliers. In the event of dispute, the journal would be brought into court as evidence of the dealings between the merchant and his clients. As can be seen from Figure 2, the journal recorded all events as they occurred on the merchant's premises from day to day: goods were received and taken away[6]; money changed hands[7]; the expenses of the household itself were met[8]. When these transactions were transferred to the ledger, the reference number was noted and the entry was scored through. The ledger entries recorded sales or purchases on one side and payments on the other so that a balance could be made periodically and carried over to a new account. When this was done, the relevant items in the journal had to be scored through a second time showing that the transaction was complete. Gresham's journal contains some 6500 entries and analysis of so much material would be extremely daunting without modern computerised database techniques. In the early 1980s, with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council, a computer system was set up to handle merchant account books and customs records[9]. As part of a project, currently in operation, all the entries from Gresham's day book are being loaded into the system which uses Ingres, an extremely powerful database package, to handle the complex process of retrieving data


+ LAVS. DEO. 1546.

26 Aprill.

In the name of God Amen

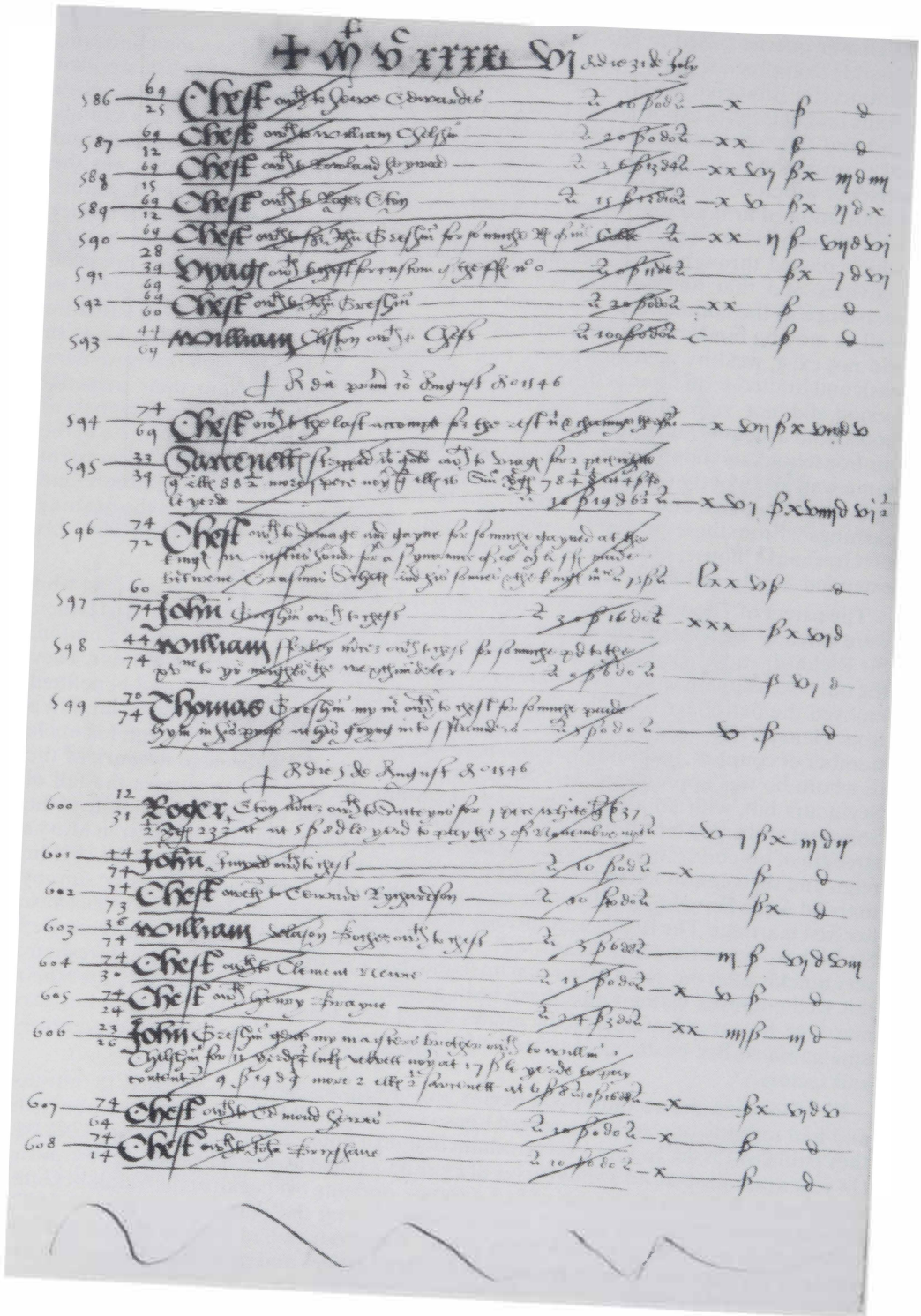
This present boke shalbe the
Jornall called + apperteynyng to me Thomas Gresham
of London mercer. for therin to wryte wt my own hande
orels wt the hand of my prentys Thomas Bradshawe
all my hole trayne and doynge and out of the
saide Jornall, to wryte it into the greate
booke called the Leger which shalbe
holden by pounds shillinges and
pence of money of England
pleaseth god to geve me
helth and prosperitye
to defende me from
evell fortune
losse and
domage

Amen

to answer queries posed by the project[10]. This work is still in progress but it is already possible to appreciate the scale on which Thomas Gresham operated as a merchant and commercial financier. As a mercer, he dealt largely in cloth, buying English woollen cloths and kerseys to export to the Low Countries. In addition he also exported English lead and tin to the continent. Financed partly by these exports, but also using funds taken up on the exchange, Gresham was able to buy silks such as velvet, satin, taffeta and sarsenet which commanded a ready market in London. His other speciality was the importation of armour and weaponry which are designated 'harness' in the accounts. Even though his turnover in trade was considerable, it is clear that the amount of money which passed through his hands was much larger that that required for his trading activities and that he was involved, with other merchants, in providing financial assistance to the commercial community in London and other centres in England as well as moving funds on the international market. At a time when a banking structure did not exist, wealthy merchants were playing an essential role by providing loans in cash and limited-term finance through bills of exchange. Merchants in the early modern period did not view their business records as being separate from their personal household accounts and Gresham's journal, therefore, treats him and other members of his household and family as though they were debtors or creditors of the business in the same way as any other individual. There is also an interesting multi-purpose account known as 'Damage and Gayne' which can be loosely interpreted as expenditure and earnings[11]. From these entries it is possible to gain an intriguing insight into the running of Gresham's household and the support networks which he established with his extended family, fellow merchants and friends.

The career of Thomas Gresham is no rags to riches story. He came from a family who were already well established as merchants and servants of the crown. His father, Sir Richard, and uncle, Sir John Gresham, were successively Lord Mayors of London, the only occasion on which two members of the same family had such an honour. They enjoyed the patronage of such powerful men as Wolsey and Cromwell and benefitted from Henry VIII's need to raise funds by being allowed to purchase monastic land in a number of counties, including Fountains Abbey lands in Yorkshire. Through his uncle to whom he was apprenticed, Gresham was drawn into the patronage network of the Seymours but, with an ability typical of his family, he was able to survive the fall of Somerset and enjoy Northumberland's support. Perhaps the most telling example of the strength of his connections is shown by the fact that he did not fall from favour in Mary's reign and then continued in service for Elizabeth until 1574 when he retired. In 1544 he married Anne Ferneley, widow of the mercer, William Read, who had two young sons by her first marriage. The Reads were already closely associated with the Greshams because Sir Richard was a trustee of Read's will. As was common at this period, Anne remarried very quickly after the death of her first husband. For a young man like Thomas Gresham, this well-endowed woman must have been an extremely attractive bride for, after their marriage, he not only managed the estates which were held in trust for her sons but also amalgamated her husband's business with his own and took over Read's apprentices and factors.

By 1546 when the account book begins, the Greshams had been married 18 months and had recently moved into a rented house in Basinghall Street for the lease of which they paid £66.13s.4d. In July 1548 Gresham bought a house from the crown for £47.12.0d. (14 year's purchase on an annual value of £3.8s.0d.). It had formerly been a chantry and is described as being in the parish of St. Laurence, opening over against the Yeldhall Gate. Gresham was frequently absent from London during the period from 1546 to 1552, making trips to Antwerp several times a year. He also travelled to Norfolk and Suffolk regularly to check on the management of the Read estates and probably also visiting his family's properties there and his wife accompanied him on at least one occasion. The



household which Anne managed varied in size depending on the requirements of business but it could consist of her husband, her young son, William, Thomas Bradshaw, her husband's apprentice, John Elliot, his journeyman or factor as well as personal and household servants. In 1547 Edmund Hogan and William Bindloss joined the household and Bradshaw was promoted to travelling the country for part of the year in the same manner as Elliot. Anne's elder son, Richard, was away from home boarding with Ralph Ratcliffe who was paid £10 per annum for his tuition and keep. He came to London on visits from time to time but there is no indication whether he had regular holidays. In 1547 Anne gave birth to the only live child the couple seem to have had, their son, Richard, who was surely named after his grandfather. It seems possible that Richard was born around March 1547 and that the birth was not an easy one for three separate payments are recorded in that month to different physicians. A nurse was found for the little boy and in May his father provided three yards of silk saye to be made up as clothing for him. During 1546 Anne apparently had her father, William Ferneley, living with her while Gresham was abroad for it was he who paid for the lease of the Basinghall Street house and for a long list of furniture which was required in the new house[12]. Included in the purchases were several cupboards and presses for different rooms, a bedstead for the garret and another 'over the hall', table, a 'fote puffe', a mouldingboard and a chimney-back. A large quantity of wood (logs, ballets and faggots) and coal was also bought and some equipment for the shop. The couple already possessed plate to the value of £65.1s.3d. which was used by the family. Household expenses amounted to between £150 and £175 a year in which was included most of the food consumed, small purchases and servants' wages. Only the wages paid to Gresham's personal servants are recorded individually in the account book and they earned £2 per annum, with board and lodgings provided. Much of their work was concerned with the business and they clearly travelled on their own a considerable amount on behalf of their master, with expenses being regularly refunded to them or money advanced for journeys.

Some food was not included in Anne Gresham's household budget: for example meat was bought from William Delason, the butcher, and the bill, amounting to approximately £30 per annum, was paid annually or semi-annually from the business expenditure account. Some special foodstuffs were bought or imported by Gresham for the household — these included wine, fish such as sturgeon, boxes of comfits and biscuits. A few household items were also bought in London or Antwerp such as andirons for the fireplace, a mirror, nails, feathers and knives and occasionally supplies arrived from the Read estates — poultry, candles and firewood — for which the cost of carriage was paid from the expenditure account.

Besides housing and feeding their dependents, the Greshams also clothed them. A variety of pieces of cloth were taken from the stock in the shop to be made into clothes for Gresham, his apprentices and servants. Anne Gresham had her own account detailing her consumption of cloth. The portrait of Gresham shown here (Figure 3) and the later one, which can be seen in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, reinforces the evidence of the account book that he generally dressed in black. His day clothes were made from satin or lightweight woollens such as kersey, trimmed with velvet or satin and lined with silk saye or satin. His caps were also made of black satin or velvet and his hose were made of woollen cloth, lined with satin. Even his nightgown was black and was made from camlet. Anne too wore mostly black: her gowns were made of grosgaine or worsted taking five to seven yards each and were trimmed with velvet. She also had a frock made of fresado. Both she and her husband used linens from the shop for their clothing, presumably for underwear, shifts and shirts. The apprentices and journeymen too were provided with cloth from the shop for coats, gowns and jerkins but in this case they were not always black for John Elliot had a jerkin made of tawney satin. The cloth from the shop would be made up for the household by a tailor, hosier or capper depending on the


DOMINVS MIHI ADIVTOR T G
1544
THOMAS
GRESHAM
A G
LOVE SERVE
AND OBEI
T G

garments concerned and the services of an embroiderer were also required on occasion. Buttons and silk thread were itemised in the tailor's account in addition to his charges. Small pieces of cloth were sometimes used for repairing garments and this may well have been done by the women of the household. Shoes and boots were also bought from the shoemaker, who also repaired shoes. Quite a number of pairs were frequently bought at one time: Gresham generally had four to six pairs made each year and in 1547 he paid £1.6s.11d. for 5 pairs of shoes for himself, 7 for Edmund Hogan, 6 for Thomas Bradshaw, 6 for John Elliot, 6 for William Bendloss and 6 pairs for Robert Berney, his factor in Antwerp, at 9d. each. He was even given 1d. off the price, perhaps for buying in bulk. There is no mention of shoes for Anne though black velvet for slippers was taken from stock and this could have been for her.

Other details of the life style enjoyed by Thomas and Anne Gresham are somewhat sketchy but a few fine details can be added to the picture. The type of amusements in which the family indulged is extremely difficult to establish. They appear to have had minstrels to play at the Christmas period of 1547 and Thomas at least attended the celebrations when his uncle was Lord Mayor in 1547/8. The pastime in which Gresham most frequently indulged was gaming, usually playing dice, but on one occasion a game called bank notes, and advances of money for this purpose and the settling of debts are noted fairly regularly. The debts were at the level of £1–2 each but these could have been in addition to money he already had in his purse. However this should not be seen as an absolute indicator of his success as a gambler for his winnings presumably went into his own pocket and he may have been a more astute operator than the evidence suggests. Whether his wife was similarly addicted to games of chance cannot be deduced but her expenses show her most frequent amusement was attending the christenings of the children of her friends. As they lived in the City of London, the Greshams would be in close proximity to the homes of other members of their family and their friends and business associates. Gresham kept several horses for his own and his household's use. Payments are recorded for regular purchases of horses, some from as far away as Cornwall from whence they were transported by ship. As they became older several were sold, mostly to William Delason, the butcher. The animals appear to have been stabled near the London houses with hay and 'horse meat' being provided for them, but they were occasionally kept elsewhere and the cost of grazing was noted. In addition from time to time they required the services of the blacksmith and horse leech. Though he kept his own animals, on long journeys or on his return from sea voyages Gresham and his journeymen often hired horses. A typical cost was 1s. per day per horse.

Apart from being the head of a large household, Thomas Gresham was also a member of a prosperous extended family all of whom seem to have been mutually supportive. Many of his relatives had individual accounts in his journal and were supplied with cloth and imported wares. Some items are entered as sales but others were gifts, perhaps for special occasions or just out of affection. When his sister, Christiana, married Sir John Thynne in 1548 he gave her a gold ring set with a ruby and valued at £13.6s.8d. He supplied the Thynnes with a wide range of cloths and household goods such as coverlets, andirons and silver plate in the form of eight bowls and a basin and ewer. Plate was sold by weight, with silver costing 5s. 3d. an ounce and was regarded as an alternative form of coin because of its convertibility. Thynne apparently had expensive tastes as the items mentioned above cost him £35.3s.6d. and £24. 18s. 9d. respectively and, on another occasion, he bought a diamond for the large sum of £25. Gresham's step-mother and sister, Elizabeth, received presents of cloth as did his brother, sister-in-law and their daughter — usually velvet or damask in varying lengths — and he frequently imported wine and sturgeon for his uncle and father. As well as exchanging gifts, the men of the Gresham family also provided each other with financial assistance whenever they needed it. It is not possible to say that these were always loans as Thomas Gresham may

have been acting on behalf of his relatives and certainly often paid bills for them as they did for him. The picture which emerges is of a close-knit family who worked together for the benefit of all. Also included in Gresham's family network were his wife's relations. William Ferneley frequently received payments from his son-in-law and, on his side, acted for Gresham when he was abroad. Anne's sister Jane, married Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper and this provided Gresham with another patron at court and the usual gifts of cloth were also made to this couple. The relationship was later reinforced when Gresham's illegitimate daughter, Anne, married Nathaniel Bacon, the son of Nicholas and Jane.

In his distribution of gifts outside his household and family Gresham preserved a series of distinctions. The giving of presents to outsiders is shown in the accounts partly as his personal responsibility and partly as a charge on the business. This divergence may not always have been intended, however, because the distribution varies according to who is keeping the accounts at the time. Be that as it may, other patterns emerge very clearly. He did not give any gifts to his fellow mercers or customers in London though he did lend them money and carry out services for them. Those recipients of presents who were his social equal lived at a distance from the capital and were predominantly involved with him in financial affairs or as suppliers of the woollen cloth he exported. In all these cases, the gifts were pieces of imported silks mostly in lengths of 3 - 4 yards. When he made exceptions to this rule, it was in the case of men with whom he had regular dealings over an extended period and who could be of considerable service to him. William Clifton, the Customer at Dover, had a long association with Gresham. Clifton paid customs dues for him on his imported silks and, in return, Gresham sent him and his wife presents of cloth and even four silver bowls worth £17.11s.9d. When Gresham was in Antwerp he always stayed with the Schetz family, who were wealthy financiers. In 1546 Melchior Schetz, one of the sons of the family, came to England and Gresham assisted him in many ways which included providing him and his servants with money and giving him a horse. He also had velvet coats, lined with silk, made as presents for both Melchior and Balthazar Schetz. Gifts received by the Greshams would not normally be entered in the account book but there is one exception again involving the Schetz family. In October 1546 Erasmus Schetz and his sons sent two silver gilt bowls with covers to Anne Gresham and, for some reason, these were entered as earnings by the business. They must have been handsome pieces as they weighed 84 ounces and, at 6s.8d. an ounce, cost £28.

Though pieces of cloth made an acceptable present to social equals, money was only given to those who were socially inferior. These persons included servants of Gresham's friends and clients, craftsmen who provided services for him, such as the tailor or scrivener, and the low level employees of the customs house and dockyards — the searchers, porters and waiters. Small pieces of cloth could also be presented to these individuals and were large enough to make a cap or give them the luxury of satin or velvet trimmings on a coat or gown. Tips or rewards were handed out when a servant had made a journey or done a special service on behalf of his master and the gesture was no doubt duly reported at home. Payments to the customs staff were made at festivals such as Christmas or New Year when a lump sum of a few shillings was handed over to be shared among them. Occasional largesse came their way or was given to a servant because he was getting married or upon the marriage of his daughter and here the amount could be quite generous amounting to 10s. or more.

From the small pieces of evidence available in Thomas Gresham's journal, it can be seen that he and his household enjoyed a comfortable style of life. This was made possible from the proceeds of a healthy business as an importer and exporter of cloth and metalwares to which his employees also made a contribution in the form of their labour. Another source of income was the profits of the financial dealings in which he

was involved with his relatives and fellow merchants. Even at this early stage of his career Gresham was beginning to invest in land but his income from this source was quite small. The Morehall estate brought in an annual rent of £8.13s.4d. considerably less than that from Bradham and Beccles, the two estates which he managed for his step-sons. From the earnings of the Read lands he had to pay legacies to the children of William Read's brothers and sisters and, of course, Richard and William's expenses would also be met. However, any balance, together with the cash they inherited from their father, was at his disposal for investment until the boys reached their majority. One of the pleasures of this type of detailed analysis of early modern merchant account books such as Gresham's journal, is the access it gives to the minutae of the owner's private and professional life. In the case of Thomas Gresham such work also provides a welcome counterbalance to the traditional image of the servant of the Tudor monarchs by allowing a glimpse of a successful but fallible human being.

Acknowledgements

The two pages from Sir Thomas Gresham's day book are reproduced courtesy of the Mercers' Company and the portrait of Sir Thomas Gresham, 1544, School of Holbein, is reproduced courtesy of the Joint Grand Gresham Committee.

References.

1. In his will Gresham directed that, after the death of his wife, his house in Bishopsgate should be converted into a college for which he endowed seven lectureships at a salary of £50 per annum. He also desired that eight almshouses should be built behind his house to accommodate needy persons who would receive a pension of £6.13s.4d. a year. The income from the Royal Exchange, which he had built, was to go to the City of London and his trustees, the City Corporation and the Mercers' Company, were to use part of the income to pay for the upkeep and expenses of Gresham College and the almshouses. In 1768 the College was pulled down and the site sold for development, the lectures being moved to a room in the Royal Exchange. It was reopened in 1843 and in 1845 Gresham Street was created. In 1839 J. W. Burgon's *Life and Times of Sir Thomas Gresham* was published, part of the study having been presented in 1836 as the winning essay for a competition funded by the Lord Mayor.
2. See, for example, H. D. Macleod, *Elements of Political Economy* (London, 1858) and *The Dictionary of National Biography*.
3. S. T. Bindoff refers to Gresham as 'a great Elizabethan' in his Neale Lecture in English History, *The Fame of Sir Thomas Gresham* (London, 1973). The references given in this lecture include much of the twentieth-century research on Gresham as a financier and also publications which fit him into the wider background of his time.
4. These are to be found at the Public Record Office, Kew, but are also available in published form in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic* for the reigns of the Tudor monarchs whom he served.
5. Gresham was probably born in 1519 so he was 27 when the accounts book was started. It is in the possession of the Mercers' Company and can be consulted in the archive at Mercers' Hall, London. All the details given in the following pages are taken from these accounts but are not referenced individually, except where entries are shown in Figure 2. The author will be happy to supply further information.
6. Item 600 shows that on 5 August 1546 Roger Eton bought 1 piece of white satin containing 37.5 yards at 5s.8d. a yard and is to pay £6.13s.2d. on 5 November 1546. In item 595, on 1 August 1546, Gresham received from a voyage 2 pieces of sarsenet striped with gold measuring 88.5 ells and one piece of black (noy) sarsenet measuring 16 ells. This gave 78.375 yards at 4s.4d. the yard, costing £18.19s.6½d. Spelling in this period was extremely flexible and can vary from line to line in the account book. Short forms of words and names are frequently used with a superscript to indicate that this had been done (for example in item 599, the fourth word is master). Clarity is not helped by the fact that the entries could be written by Gresham himself or any of his apprentices so the script varies from time to time.
7. References to 'chest' refer to cash. In item 586, on 31 July 1546 Hugh (Hewe) Edwards paid £10 while in item 593 of the same date. William Clifton received £100. This second entry could either mean that Clifton was owed £100 and was being repaid, or that Gresham was making him a loan of that amount. Often, but not always, an entry relating to a loan would include the phrase 'for so much prest him'.
8. For example, in item 599 on 1 August 1546 Gresham has been advanced £5 'for so much paide hym in his purse at his goyng into Fflanders'.
9. Between 1982 and 1984, the ESRC (SSRC as it was at that time) funded an investigation into the The Anglo-Netherlands Bill Market and English Export Finance, 1440–1740 (ref. H8205/1 and B/0023/002/1).
10. Thanks to the generosity of the ESRC, the system is currently being used for research on England and the International Economy, 1544–1561 (ref. R – 000232851).
11. See entry 596 of Figure 2. This records the commission of £75 paid to Gresham by the king for arranging a loan of £1,000 Flemish from Erasmus Schetz and his sons.
12. Anne's mother may well have been in London too but she is not mentioned in the account book.

"Signer and framer" : Creator of the American System of Government JAMES WILSON, 1742 - 1798

Dr. GRAHAM WATSON

James Wilson, ' Jamie the Caledonian', lawyer and statesman, businessman and judge, was the multi-talented eighteenth-century immigrant from Scotland who signed the Declaration of American Independence, helped formulate the United States' Constitution and become the first Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Largely forgotten today because of the intense historical light shone on contemporaries such as Jefferson and Washington, Wilson was a character of such mixed talents and fortunes as to render him less than attractive to historians. Too often remembered for his greed and financial misfortunes or for his reluctant support of political change, Wilson was the Scotsman 'on the make' who provided so much ammunition to his political enemies as to obscure the very substantial legal, philosophical and political contributions which he made to the establishment of an effective government for the new United States of America. The memory of his early death as a judge fleeing his many creditors has to be balanced against the weight and depth of thought revealed in support of his conservative/nationalist approach to the problems of the early American Republic. Undoubtedly learned and open to the accusation of lacking principles, Wilson was a complex individual in an age of multiple opportunities, political, legal and financial. Wilson's lack of complete success in financial adventures, his basic conservatism, and his disdain for mass popularity placed him on the same plane as his fellow Scot, Alexander Hamilton. Not given a platform and a position similar to that of Hamilton by George Washington, Wilson's political and economic ideas did not catch the imagination of contemporaries and of historians. Although he made a solid, thoughtful and worthy contribution to the debates on the nature of democratic government, he lacked Hamilton's charisma and high profile. In an age of ' immortals' such as Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton and Madison, he did not register in popular imagination. In a later age he could be compared to John C. Calhoun in the nineteenth-century, or to Robert Taft or Adlai Stevenson a century later. His conservatism placed him on the 'wrong side' in an age remembered for the patriotic ' Spirit of '76'. His unprepossessing appearance and opportunist character combined with an obsession with money have obscured the value of his contribution to the creation of a political and legal system for the United States in the years after 1776.

Born at Carskedo near St. Andrews in 1742, Wilson sampled the ' delights' of the universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow and Edinburgh: he studied very briefly at each. Then in 1765 he abandoned his planned career as an accountant, turned his back on his Calvinist family and cultural background and, for reasons never explained by him, emigrated to the American colonies. Graduating from the College of Philadelphia in 1766 (another brief stay — must have been a quick learner!), he began the study of law in that city in the office of John Dickinson; later one of the ablest of American conservatives during the struggle with Britain. After two years in Philadelphia, financial and romantic interests took him westwards, firstly to Reading and then to Carlisle. In these moves he reflected the interests of the prosperous German farmers and then of the Scotch-Irish settlers of the frontier: neither group were ardent supporters of the British crown. Reflecting the views of his clients and neighbours, Wilson addressed

the question of the nature of the British Empire. Were all components of that empire subject to the wishes of Parliament in London, or were they co-equal and united only by loyalty to the crown? In his pamphlet "Considerations on the Nature and Extent of the Legislative Authority of the British Parliament" he argued that the fact of an individual's emigration from Britain to the colonies was not a reason for loss of political rights. He argued in favour of representative government as the only effective and acceptable form of government for each colony. He observed that

> *'it was repugnant that they (the colonies) should be bound by the legislative authority of the parliament of Great Britain.'*

He went on in this vein with the comment that

> *'All the different members of the British empire are distinct states, independent of each other, but connected under the same sovereign.'*

This pamphlet covered the same ground and offered the same arguments as that written by Thomas Jefferson: both offered advice to the delegates of the Continental Congress which met in 1774. The later greater fame of Jefferson ensured a more enduring place for his work rather than that of James Wilson. In his pamphlet Wilson took up the Lockean idea of 'the pursuit of happiness' which became such a feature of Jefferson's draft of the Declaration of Independence. In this respect Wilson reflected the ideas of Frances Hutcheson and the Scottish Enlightenment:

> *'All men are, by nature, equal and free: no one has a right to any authority over another without his consent: all lawful government is founded on the consent of those who are subject to it: such consent was given with a view to ensure and to increase the happiness of the governed, above what they could enjoy in an independent and unconnected state of nature. The consequence is, that the happiness of the society is the first law of every government.'*

Wilson's radicalism did not survive beyond the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The debates in the Continental Congress over the future government of the United States, and the simultaneous upsurge of radicalism in his home state of Pennsylvania, brought out a more cautious approach to post-independence problems. Wilson was one of many conservatives anxious to restrain the more radical patriots who were exploiting the break with Britain to challenge the established order. As a lawyer from Carlisle, Wilson would be expected to reflect the radical resentment against elitist rule in Philadelphia but the opposite occurred and was symbolised by his move to take up permanent residence in the city in 1778. Always a theoretical supporter of popular participation in politics, the desire for stability and order were uppermost in his thoughts. Radicalism, as many found out, did not provide the security and stability necessary for financial gain. Even in the midst of the war against Britain, Wilson continued to speculate and invest and to seek public office from which he could gain financially. The internal political struggle in Pennsylvania between the radicals of the frontier: under-represented, egalitarian, and distrustful of authority, and the conservative elite of the 'City of Brotherly Love' was more acute than in any other state. The result was the most radical of all the new state constitutions. Power was concentrated in a unicameral state legislature. A twelve man committee was to be elected annually to exercise the executive powers allocated to a governor in the other states. Wilson was appalled at the prospect of political instability in Pennsylvania and campaigned long and hard for a more conservative form of government for his state. Until that was achieved in 1790, Wilson's career followed the twin tracks of seeking stability in Pennsylvania and a quest for a more powerful and more stable federal government for the United States: a federal government whose enlarged powers would enable it to bypass and frustrate the economic and financial policies of radical state governments. Hence Wilson's energetic advocacy of the United States Constitution in 1787 and of the Pennsylvanian Constitution in 1790.

JAMES WILSON, 1742–1798

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Opposition to radicalism was not without its hazards. Never bashful in proclaiming his views, his predeliction for study and the courtroom was interrupted in October 1779 when the radical propensity for street politics resulted in rioting on the streets of Philadelphia. Radicals, aided by militiamen, attacked his house — 'Fort Wilson' — accusing the inmates of loyalism (i.e. sympathy with Britain). He and his friends had to be rescued by soldiers. Wilson found it healthier to seek a temporary home in Annapolis, Maryland. In 1787 when Pennsylvania ratified the United States Constitution, the radical anti-federalist mob in Carlisle set upon Wilson: he narrowly missed martyrdom in the cause of American conservatism. Such incidents never shook his advocacy of the theoretical powers of the 'people' in American democracy.

Wilson's relative unpopularity did not prevent him representing his state in Congress. Energy and industry were characteristic of his work prior to his removal from office, under radical pressure, and in his later terms, 1782, and 1785 – 87. Busy with business interests, his most consistent and lasting contribution was his ultimately successful support for the removal of the western territories from the competing jurisdictions of rival states to that of the federal government. He envisaged the eventual admission to the Union, of states created out of these territories: again, as in other areas, he was overshadowed by the public and historical acclaim accorded to Thomas Jefferson. In advocating tax powers for the federal government and in his suggestions that representation in the federal government be based on the whole people rather than on the states, his nationalist and cosmopolitan views developed along with an increased frustration at the inability of governments to provide stability in the economic troubles which engulfed the United States after the peace treaty was signed in 1783.

Later Benjamin Rush would comment :

> *'He (Wilson) spoke often in Congress, and his eloquence was of the most commanding kind. He reasoned, declaimed and persuaded according to circumstances with equal effort. Not a word ever fell from his lips out of time, or out of place, nor could a word be taken from or added to his speeches without injuring them. He rendered great and essential services to his country in every stage of the Revolution.'*

Wilson's financial dealings, especially in western lands, as president of the Illinois and Wabash Company (among others), and his support for Robert Morris' hoped for Bank of North America, added to his awareness of the deficiencies of the federal government's powers under the Articles of Confederation. He welcomed the decision to call a convention at Philadelphia in 1787 to 'revise' the Articles.

At this meeting he was to be one of the most able and ardent advocates of the nationalist cause; matching that of James Madison but without the extreme views of Alexander Hamilton. Wilson played a major role in the conception of a document which totally replaced the existing popular but deficient form of government for the nation. Overshadowed in popular and historical imagination by James Madison who had the advantage of chronicling the proceedings, Wilson was the equal of Madison in the vigour and persistence which he brought to the discussions. He made one-hundred and sixty-eight speeches during the four months of the convention in support of the nationalist cause. Using his home as a base for the management of the nationalists his endless cajoling propelled the convention in the direction of a much stronger federal government than that envisaged originally. At times, however, his enthusiasm for the nationalist cause led to a degree of political blindness, especially in his support for representation of each state in accordance with its population size in both houses of Congress. His Pennsylvanian background made him less than sympathetic to the views of the smaller states. Luckily most of his fellow nationalists in this conservative gathering realised the need to generate widespread popular support for the new constitution and were less doctrinaire than Wilson. Tactics apart, Wilson's contribution to the work of the convention was a combination of enthusiastic advocate of proposals favourable to the larger states and as a pivotal and influential draftsman of the phraseology of the constitution: in the second task he was more realistic.

A supporter of the Virginia Plan by which the nationalists seized the initiative at the start of the convention, Wilson advocated a bicameral legislature: no doubt with memories of the unicameral legislature of Pennsylvania in mind. He was forced to accept the 'Great Compromise' in July by which the upper house — the Senate — would be composed of two senators from every state, regardless of size. His was mollified by the allocation of the power of taxation solely to the House of Representatives. Dismay at the radical control of the Pennsylvania assembly underlay Wilson's support for the separation of powers of the federal government into three separate but equal branches: the legislative, executive and judicial. He agreed with Madison on the need to separate individuals into restricted roles with one branch and, in particular, he successfully argued against the Senate's control over the election of the president. In turn, he had to accept the Senate's role in ratifying all other appointments as well as treaties with other nations. His suspicion of the state legislatures led him to oppose any role for them in the selection of the president, but he had to accept their part in the election of senators. For a conservative, this hostility to the powers of the states generated a strong plea for the direct popular election of the president by the entire electorate. That proposal was unacceptable to the smaller states and Wilson accepted the need for an electoral college which simultaneously operated through the states but bypassed the state legislatures.

Wilson's facility with the pen brought about his selection to the Committee of Detail which, during July and August, put all the various decisions and resolutions into a draft constitution. As with Jefferson in 1776, Wilson was allowed by the committee —

after some self-advertisement — to take up the burden of drafting the document. In so doing, not only did many of the familiar phrases of the constitution emerge, many of which implied a larger role for the federal government, but decisions emerged in three major areas of the constitution. Wilson ennumerated the restrictions which would be placed on the areas of responsibility left to the states; the areas in which the Congresss could legislate were spelt out in such a manner as to encourage future enlargement; and the issue of slavery was raised but left to the full convention for further deliberation.

The constitution was a collection of compromises which satisfied all but three of those available for signature in September 1787. Too ill to speak for himself, the aging Ben Franklin asked Wilson to read his speech in which he said that whatever the faults of the document, the need for political stability and for international respect brought about his reluctant recommendation that the document be ratified by each state in the special conventions to be organised for that purpose. Nine of the thirteen states would have to ratify to make the new constitution operational and Wilson worked hard to ensure early ratification by Pennsylvania. During the winter of 1787 - 88 Wilson worked hard for ratification by the 'Keystone State', without which the United States would have been weak and incomplete. The geographic position and population of the state rendered its support vital to the Federalist cause. In this cause Wilson played a key role, although, once more overshadowed by the debates in Virginia with Patrick Henry's famous speech, and those in New York with the publication of the 'Federalist' by Hamilton, Madison and John Jay. For one who was never modest this must have been galling for Wilson. Of the talented Pennsylvanian delegation at Philadelphia, only Wilson was elected to the ratification convention which was held in the same city in November and December 1787. His major contribution was made on October 6th during the election campaign for the convention. Favourably regarded as 'measured eloquence' the speech made no difference to the debates in the convention which was split on strict party lines. Wilson decried the objections to the new constitution as 'unsubstantiated fabrications' and refuted suggestions that the reduction in the powers of the state governments, the lack of a bill of rights and the provision for a standing army were harmful to democracy. Federalists less obtuse than Wilson conceded the need for a bill of rights to win the support in other states. In Pennsylvania the strict party vote of 46 for and 23 against ratification sparked off disturbances across the state and made Wilson to object of much hostility. This was reflected bitterly;

> *'As for Simmons and the Caledonian (Wilson), their eyes were turned green; and General Tommy, Benny and Bobby were also unclean; Bob seemed to hold guineas and Jamie (Wilson again) to beg; but old Harry had hold of the man with the one leg.'*

The early ratification by Pennsylvania switched attention and imagination to the battles in Virginia and New York during 1788; Wilson's efforts were overshadowed once more.

The references to green in the eyes of the Caledonian and to Jamie begging for more money illustrated the degree of public knowledge about the materialism and financial avarice which all too often balanced and spoilt Wilson's political wisdom. In the late eighteenth-century most individuals combined a variety of careers and interests. Wilson's contemporaries, including Washington and Jefferson had business interests which involved financial difficulties and conflicts of interest but Americans prefer to ignore the frequent links between the financial and public lives of so many of their leaders. Wilson's inability to disguise that connection is a key not only to the extent of contemporary criticism but also to historical indifference to his valuable contributions to the construction of an American republic.

As a jurist, James Wilson offered important arguments in favour of a more distinctly American legal system. From his early practice of law in Reading and Carlisle where

the bulk of the work involved land purchase and speculation, Wilson's move to Philadelphia created the opportunity for work in the field of commercial law. He advised Robert Morris on the incorporation of the Bank of Pennsylvania, and defended the interests of his state in commercial disputes with other states. He was held in such high regard by his fellow lawyers that he was appointed to the chair of law at the College of Philadelphia in 1789. In this post, and during his service on the Supreme Court from 1791 until his death, he challenged the basic assumptions of English legal thinking (as any Scot should do!) as propounded by Blackstone. He suggested that laws should be made with the consent of those who obey them: laws could not be imposed from above by a sovereign. His legal views were based more on his experience in America than on his Scottish background. Critics have suggested that he had 'no real influence on American jurisprudence' but, again, it would seem that he has been left in the shadow of contemporaries. He upheld the right of judicial review of legislation, provided such reviews were rare. He provided arguments in favour of implied powers for government, even before 1787, as in his arguments in favour of the establishment of the Bank of North America (a battle lost to the state radicals). Such arguments were taken up by Hamilton in his spectacular political battle of 1791 in favour of the establishment of the Bank of the United States. Jurists have given greater weight to views and decisions enunciated by Chief Justice John Marshall (1800 - 1835) which were foreshadowed by Wilson's own pronouncements. Wilson was not bashful in pestering George Washington for the post of Chief Justice but was passed over in favour of John Jay and offered the consolation prize of the first Associate Justice. Considerations of geographic and political balance combined with Washington's unhappiness at Wilson's financial irresponsibility combined to deny him the supreme legal post. He was passed over for promotion in 1795 when Jay left the bench to undertake a diplomatic mission to Britain. Salt was rubbed in the wound when Washington's choice of a replacement for Jay, John Rutledge failed to obtain confirmation by the Senate, and Washington turned to Oliver Ellsworth of Connecticut instead of Wilson. By that stage in his career, Wilson's energy and dedication to the law was marred by increasingly frequent calls for his impeachment on the grounds of his many business failures.

Wilson could not abstain from any and every opportunity to make money, and that, together with his conservatism and personal immodesty when seeking public office, brought about his downfall and early death. Wilson caught the speculative bug when resident in Carlisle and remained infected for the rest of his life. Many of his contemporaries had similar indulgences but the scale and the lack of success of Wilson's financial dealings created a massive cloud over his public career. A persistent schemer, and investor, especially in western lands but also in manufacturing such as the iron mills on the banks of the Delaware river, he became president of the Illinois and Wabash Company and was hurt badly when the speculative bubble burst in 1795 over the Yazoo Company's purchases. This not uncommon fate for many land speculators was aggravated in Wilson's case both by the frequency with which his plans foundered in a sea of debt and by the rather too obvious use of his position on the Supreme Court to influence judgements in favour of land speculators. This did much to tarnish his contemporary image. The widespread popular dislike of financiers was enhanced by the departure from public office of Alexander Hamilton and the subsequent decline of the Federalist party under the onslaught of the less than forgiving Jeffersonians. Wilson's failings were exposed by the lack of a sympathetic political climate. The 'political correctness' of the Jeffersonians and the empathy for Jefferson evident in most accounts of the period hastened Wilson towards historical oblivion. The equally talented and equally flawed Hamilton has retained an historical respectability buttressed by his high office and by the absence of the financial pecadillos which so characterised Wilson's life.

Seeking refuge from his creditors and critics in the house of fellow justice James Iredell, Wilson's mental health broke and he died at Edenton, North Carolina, of 'a violent nervous fever' on 21st August 1798 while evading a claim from Pierce Butler of South Carolina (and a fellow framer of the Constitution) for the sum of $197,000.

Overshadowed by more charismatic contemporaries, and unable to disguise his conservatism and his greed, Wilson has been forgotten. As one of the very few who both signed the Declaration of Independence and drafted the United States Constitution — SIGNER AND FRAMER, James Wilson deserves to be remembered for his positive contributions to the creation of the American political system.

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The intersection of politics and business : a biographical exploration of 'the Eric Geddes type', 1915 - 1937

Dr. KEITH GRIEVES

In 1941 Winston Churchill threatened the War Office with a Lloyd Georgian subterfuge in the quest for 'new blood' in the organisation of the war effort. His 'Action this Day' minute of 22 August 1941 noted, 'If you do not give me your very best man, and one thoroughly capable of doing the work, I will look for a civilian of the Eric Geddes type, and have him invested with the necessary military rank'.[1] In September 1916 Lloyd George, as Secretary of State for War, made Eric Geddes, general manager designate of the North Eastern Railway and a 'leading hustler' at the Ministry of Munitions, a major-general and sent him to France to investigate and rectify the transport crisis on the Western Front. In 1917 Geddes was sent to the Admiralty with the rank of Vice-Admiral to improve naval shipbuilding output. By the end of the year he was First Lord of the Admiralty and poised to reorganise the naval staff along 'business lines' by the systematic review of existing procedures and the arrival of North Eastern Railway staff to improve the efficiency of this department of state. In the emerging conditions of total war, managers were sought from the business world to supervise the enlargement of the state's role as principal producer and consumer of goods in the war economy. The blurring of civil and military spheres ensued and was symbolised by the use Lloyd George made of energetic organisers, co-opted by the state after 1915, who were given military rank when necessary to facilitate their work in the total war effort. This process was observed by Winston Churchill in the years 1916 - 18. His memory of Sir Eric Geddes as the prime example of Lloyd George's indirect method of challenging existing and outmoded administrative structures was sufficiently positive for Churchill to threaten the War Office in 1941 with a similar 'man for the job' approach.

In his *War Memoirs* Lloyd George wrote of Geddes, 'He turned out to be one of the most remarkable men which the state called to its aid in this anxious hour for Britain and her Empire. He will appear again and again in my story of the War'.[2] On the death of Sir Eric Geddes in 1937, Lloyd George's *Tribute* drew attention to his energy, drive and mastery of details and noted again that he was 'one of the most remarkable products of the Great War'.[3] The appointment of Geddes as First Lord of the Admiralty was a striking example of the way in which the pressures of managing the British war effort led Lloyd George, as Prime Minister, to employ new methods of recruitment to high (de-politicised) office. However, Geddes was not so well equipped for ministerial office as he was for the supervision of shell-filling in 1915 and military railway construction in 1916. The problems he encountered in political life after 1917 provide an insight into the difficulties an 'outsider' faced in Whitehall and Westminster as the 'return to normalcy' gathered pace. This article will consider Eric Geddes's place in the political world in the years of war and peace and highlight the usefulness of the biographical approach in elucidating the significant historical theme of the relationship between politics and business in the aftermath of the Great War. In many ways he affronted the norms of party political activity and drew criticism from politicians distrustful of the level of state activity which stemmed from the mobilisation of the nation's manpower and material resources. Although decisive, interventionist, managerial methods were appropriate political tools in the conduct of the war effort in 1917 - 18, the derision accorded to 'supermen' in the post-war years reflected the resolve of British conservatism to 'return to 1914' and to halt the 'corporatist' consequences of the war. Consequently,

businessmen-in-government were casualties of the Great War and their awkward intrusion into political life was over by 1922. Geddes's limited political contacts after the end of Lloyd George's premiership and his insistent commitment to business interests, notably Dunlop Rubber Company[4] and Imperial Airways Limited, provided evidence of the general distancing of private enterprise from government which pervaded the inter-war years.

Eric Campbell Geddes was born in Agra, India in 1875. His father was a civil engineer who retired to Edinburgh in 1880. Among the seven schools which Geddes attended in ten years were Edinburgh Academy, George Watson's College, Oxford Military College (in preparation for Woolwich and the Royal Engineers) and Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh where the Headmaster was a family friend. In revolt from formative influences which were interpreted by his brother Auckland (Lord) Geddes as 'predominantly Mackay-Gordon' this 'Highland rebel' left Edinburgh in 1892 to find work in the United States.[5] An eventful two and a half years later he returned to the family home with experience of being hired and fired, — of railroads, timber, office and bar work, — chastened and with no clear thoughts of his future career direction. In 1895 he left Scotland for India where he managed forestry lands in the Himalayan foot-hills and implemented light railway schemes to transport logs. He returned to Britain in 1904, having married four years earlier, and obtained through his family's contacts a 'subordinate' position with the North Eastern Railway. Seven years later he had obtained agreement that he would become General Manager on the incumbent's retirement in 1916. Geddes's post-school experiences and eventual commitment to railway management were unusual to say the least and set him apart from contemporary public schoolboys who took well-regulated paths into the old and new (industrial) professions.

In retrospect he described his youth as a fruitful if directionless and bruising experience. A summary of his early life might lie in his firm conviction, 'The man who thinks he can get on by influence is of little use to himself or his employer'.[6] His reflections in the BBC radio series 'Rungs of the Ladder' in 1928 emphasised the necessity to recognise the opportunities and constraints embodied in the phrase, 'Aren't we all sellers in this active modern world'.[7] This observation emerged from a substantial understanding of the centrality of the market place in industrial economies tempered by an attachment to the dignity of labour, despite his later reputation as a prime figure in socialist demonology. In a revealing exchange of correspondence with Mrs Agnes Ferguson on the best course of action for her seventeen year old public schoolboy in 1915, in the interval until his eighteenth birthday and therefore an army commission, Geddes advised that he should work in Woolwich Arsenal. He noted, 'As you know, I began my life with labour work and it is a good way to begin. It gives you a knowledge and sympathy with the point of view of the working man, the value of which cannot be exaggerated at the present time and during the lifetime of a boy just starting'.[8] Geddes's awareness of the machine shop as a workplace and of large scale industrial activity, as exemplified by the variety of regional economic interests — rail and sea travel, passenger and commercial, dock and workshop, production and marketing — which constituted the North Eastern Railway and made him a prime candidate for organising munitions work. A. Kaye Butterworth, General Manager of the North Eastern Railway, remarked, 'Certainly the exuberant vitality which distinguished Geddes in his prime is rare enough and is seldom accompanied by acute mental activity and clear judgement, as it was in his case. His energy and power of concentrating upon important matters, to the exclusion of the unessentials, marked him out as an ideal executive for big business'.[9] This frequently remarked upon elemental force, alongside 'knowledge of organisation and no prejudices in favour of existing methods,'[10] identified Geddes as an organiser with the ability to establish relevant information flow via statistic, supervisory control

Sir Eric Geddes, taken about 1910 – 12.

via directorates and the modification of economic activity via weekly review procedures.

This managerial expertise impressed Lord Riddell, Field-Marshal Sir Douglas-Haig[11] and, of course, Lloyd George. They recognised the challenges of total war but many politicians and administrators did not comprehend the changes necessitated by mass industrialised attritional warfare. Of the situation Geddes faced on arrival at GHQ in France to enquire into the supply 'bottlenecks' he later noted, 'They had no programmes, they had no statistics, they were short of material, short of foresight, short of progress, short of labour and imagination and they never pushed the railheads far enough forward'.[12] Geddes drew the conclusion that the issues were considered in 'pennyworths' and that a more general realisation was needed that the war effort required almost as much attention to the 'handmaids' of war — munitions and movement — as to the use of manpower. In some exasperation he informed Lloyd George in August 1918, 'And we still go on as if the only genius or ability we have is that possessed by the remainder of the officer class of our little regular army'.[13]

At this stage Geddes argued forcibly for an Inter-Allied Transport Council which would mark the full embrace of total war management, as priority imports of vital war materials to Britain, France and Italy were matched to available shipping capacity. One step in this direction was taken in the supply of French equipment for American divisions on the Western Front. However, Geddes's dream of becoming Inspector-General of Transportation and Shipping Controller was not politically feasible despite Lord Derby's recommendation, 'Now I know of no man except Geddes who could do this. He is persona grata with everybody. His position in this country with the railway people, with the War Office and Admiralty is wonderful, as everybody likes him and the French also like and respect him'.[14] While Geddes was persona grata 'with the railway people' the same enthusiasm for expert control by men of business was far from evident in ante-bellum Whitehall departments where the niceties of conventionial wisdom confronted the radical unorthodoxies of the new ministers empowered by Lloyd George.

As First Lord of the Admiralty and, after August 1919, Minister of Transport, Geddes became embroiled in a series of controversies which reflected his lack of parliamentary perspective and the unwillingness of well-established politicians to recognise ministers with personal, rather than party, loyalties. After four months of bitter public debate originating in the dismissal of the First Sea Lord Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, Geddes told Lloyd George in March 1918, 'You, I know, realise that I am feeling my position personally, infinitely more than probably would have been the case had I gone through the hardening process of some years in Politics'.[15] In order to establish the point that the decision taken to dismiss Jellicoe on 24 December 1917 had been the subject of much thought and not been hastily taken, as suggested in newspaper attacks, Geddes wished to refer to a meeting of 26 October at Downing Street as evidence of the careful way in which the decision was reached. The participants of the meeting were unhelpful. Sir Edward Carson, former First Lord of the Admiralty, concluded 'So far as my recollection goes no such meeting ever took place, but Sir Eric Geddes seems to be under the impression that it did'.[16] His predecessor, A. J. Balfour, regarded the situation as a 'most tiresome mess'. Both politicians were infuriated by Geddes's emphasis on the significance of the meeting. He informed Lloyd George, who could not remember the meeting though his private secretaries had records of it, 'it is essential that my bona fides and veracity in this case should be established as far as they possibly can'.[17]

Beaverbrook later observed of Geddes, 'He was a man of remarkable ability, though too forceful and determined to make a real success of public life'.[18] During 1918 Geddes was absent from the Admiralty for long visits to theatres of war and the United States.

Sir Eric Geddes with Queen Mary at a naval art exhibition in 1918 when he was First Lord of the Admiralty.

By kind permission of the Imperial War Museum.

The papers of senior naval officers record misunderstood conversations which stemmed from their expectations of *noblesse oblige* behaviour from the First Lord of the Admiralty and Geddes's technocratic defensiveness and innocence of high politics. With reluctance he became Conservative M.P. for Cambridge in 1917 and regularly sought support and advice from Andrew Bonar Law for his early appearances in the House of Commons. With much deference reflected in an uncharacteristic awkwardness of phrasing, Geddes told Bonar Law in November 1917, 'I am afraid I have on occasion seriously taxed your patience, but you will, I hope, realise, that I have not been unmindful of your goodness to me'.[19]

Alongside matters of parliamentary etiquette Geddes remained anxious about intrusive behaviour from ministerial colleagues, which most frequently stemmed from Winston Churchill's abiding and, sometimes, marauding interest in the navy. On Bonar Law's intervention to clarify the status of Churchill's conversation with Admiral Sims, U.S. Navy, on the torpedo threat, which followed Geddes's protestations, Churchill remarked, 'In ten years of official and nearly twenty years of Parliamentary life, this is the first time I have seen such a point raised in discussing the relations of Ministers of the Crown'.[20] In their robust defence of Admiralty interests and munitions priorities Geddes and Churchill were too alike in many ways to sustain a stable working relationship in 1918 and the Minister of Munitions had the advantage, as he forcibly noted, of membership of the House of Commons since 1900. In 1934 Geddes visited Churchill at Chartwell and in a note which followed their renewal of contact he drew attention to a fond remembrance of a 'militant cooperation'.[21] Both were men of 'push and go' and Churchill took Geddes's organisational abilities seriously. Both owed their ministerial roles in 1918 to their special relationship with Lloyd George and Churchill was less anxious than militant Conservatives to disparage the retention of businessmen in government after the war.

Despite the notable achievement of the Railways Act in 1921, which effectively brought the immediate post-war transport policy to a culminating point, Geddes's continuing presence in government drew bitter reaction from Lord Birkenhead, J. C. C. Davidson, Stanley Baldwin and anyone else who demanded that the starting point for political debate should be the 'Tory temperament' of the House of Commons.[22] Ignorance of Conservative opinion became a telling argument against the survival of Lloyd George's coterie of 'supermen' of whom Geddes was the last survivor until his resignation from politics in August 1921.[23] The restoration of party political perspectives became an important indicator of peacetime conditions. However, the development of total war conditions in 1917 – 18 had led Geddes to remain available for executive tasks during the ensuing period of adjustment when homes 'fit for heroes' were expected to be built using wartime regulations and administrative methods.

In this expectation Geddes had not unreasonably commented in November 1919, 'I do not mind making a speech of an hour on Transport to a Chamber of Commerce, but I do not want to start making political speeches at political meetings, and therefore I think that the suggestion that the speech should be arranged under the auspices of the local Chamber of Commerce is a good one'.[24] This reply to a party whip assumed that his powers of organisation more than compensated for his 'disabilities as a speaker'. It was in this transitional context that Lloyd George and Geddes could 'chaff' each other about their respective credentials as a Liberal and a Conservative.[25] In 1927 Geddes wrote a sympathetic note to Lloyd George on the publication of the ultra conservative text *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson. His Life and Diaries.* In rich ironic vein Lloyd George drew attention to the many supportive letters he had received, 'some of them from thorough old Tory die-hards like yourself'.[26] The reassertion of Conservative political supremacy in 1921 – 22 included a rancorous hostility to achievements borne out of the dislocation of war by improvising ministers on extended secondment from industry. In microcosm

Geddes's post-war ministerial work illuminated the rapidity with which Cuncliffe economic othodoxy and political normalcy rendered superfluous the notion of an active State solving the problems of peace.

The fragments of surviving correspondence which shed light on Geddes's retreat from political life reveal a 'superman' driven by peripheral political involvement which was only activated after 1922 by occasional bouts of nostalgia and commercial issues. On the departure of Lord Milner from the government in January 1921, Geddes wrote 'I cannot forget how much I owe you for your goodness to myself when I was at the Admiralty and you were at the War Office. I know how happy you must be to have shaken off the tiresome and thankless shackles of Office. At the no very distant future I hope to be in the same position myself and then perhaps we may sometimes meet'.[27] Milner's proconsul record and interest in patriotic labour placed him at much the same distance from the Conservative Party as Geddes.

Similarly, the distance of Arthur Lee from party political norms drew a sympathy from Geddes and with Lloyd George created an 'outside' triumvirate which met occasionally after 1922. Ruth Lee recorded on 24 May 1924 'At the end of the evening, Lloyd George said to Geddes and Arthur: 'The time may come when the country will need us three again and we may be working together once more'.[28] This unlikely suggestion derived from the 'hustling' excitement of their collaboration at the Ministry of Munitions in 1915 and reflected their continuing interest in State paternalism, albeit chastened by the much-publicised anti waste campaigns. The Lees had 'real affection' for Geddes. Alongside Lloyd George they provided the political presence at the memorial service for Geddes at St. Columba's (Church of Scotland), Pont Street, London on 28 June 1937.[29]

Lloyd George and Geddes derived pleasure from each other's company as reflected by the periodic journeys between Churt and Albourne Place, Hassocks. In 1919 their social meetings had included the singing of songs from the countries of their birth. Lord Riddell had noted, 'The delight of Eric Geddes when rendering Harry Lauder's songs is a wonderful thing to see'.[30] Later their correspondence included discussion of tyres for Lloyd George's newly-acquired tractors on which Geddes, as Chairman of Dunlop Rubber Company, obligingly advised and reference to the retention of the McKenna duties on imported goods in 1930 which Lloyd George continued to avoid supporting, observed as he was by the sceptical rump of Liberalism.

Lloyd George reproached post-war governments for failing to requisition Geddes's services in the transport sphere. However, as Chairman of Imperial Airways Limited from 1924 he gained an opportunity to promote 'air-mindedness' in the pioneering stage of commercial air travel while typifying the informal network and distancing arrangement between government and business. As a 'recognised expert on transport questions' Geddes was appointed Chairman of the government's 'chosen instrument' for commercial air policy by the Secretary of State for Air, Samuel Hoare.[31] Alongside his work at Dunlop, where the company was reorganised following massive financial failures in 1920, Geddes poured much of his enthusiasm into Imperial Airways and any residual yearning for a public role. His policy was the 'steady, conservative building up of the Company',[32] as the unified provider of imperial trunk routes in a determined series of bids to forestall the localisation of air fleets, as typified by the growth of QANTAS.

Geddes shared the view, expressed by Samuel Hoare and Alan Cobham among others, that the development of 'air sense' would have a civilising effect on international relations as technology made long journeys feasible. Following his visit to Australia in 1929 the Governor-General Lord Stonehaven was enthused by Geddes's projects for future air travel. He wrote, 'Geddes's new four-engined 40-passenger planes hold out

prospects of wonderful journeys in the not too distant future'.[33] In 1932 - 33 Geddes inspected each Imperial Airways station on the London - Capetown air route and made a range of recommendations from improving light refreshments on the 'Imperia', in this flying hotel age, to the search for agreement with the Union of South Africa Government on the provision of feeder routes. In this sphere of commercial activity his interventionist pro-active chairmanship reflected a ready acknowledgement of the potential of civil aviation. His understanding of the modern age, particularly with regard to the economic implications of technological change, was an important impetus to the gradual development of British air transport prior to the onset of self-supporting market conditions which could cope with the problem of obsolescence.

In September 1928 Geddes chartered a Short Calcutta flying boat for a pleasure cruise from the Marine Air Port at Southampton to the Scottish Isles to publicise the new era in travel. There were daily reports on the progress of the 'aerial yacht' in national newspapers. It landed alongside Lord Inchcape's yacht at Ballantrae where the party of ' Flying Knights' visited Glenapp Castle. It proceeded to Ardtaraig, Loch Striven where Irvine Geddes, Managing Director of the Orient Line, was the host. Subsequently the party flew over the Scottish Isles, Loch Lomond and the Firth of Clyde and ended the cruise at Liverpool.[34] The cost of the charter, including twenty per cent profit on direct flying costs, was £182.11.10. The minutes of the Director's meeting at Imperial Airways agreed that the charge should be made ' although it was felt that the publicity value of the flight was greatly in excess of the cost'.[35] Geddes's contribution to the promotion of airsense developed rapidly in the following five years. In 1929 he remarked to Hoare, ' Whatever reputation I may have had for economy has been tested to breaking point in the administration of Imperial Airways'.[36]

His appeal for ' liberality' of funds became a constant theme in negotiations with the Air Ministry as the conception of an Empire Air Mail Service became a reality. An experimental scheme to Australia began in 1934 and in the following year his plans for an Atlantic Air Service were aired with the prospect in view that ' London would become the Clapham Junction of the air mail world'.[37] At this stage conservatism of action was no longer an appropriate description of Geddes's promotion of air travel. As an 'urging force' his relish for the Empire Mail Service Fleet, under construction at Rochester in 1936, was comparable to the quest for an efficient land transport infrastructure in 1919 and the establishment of National Shell-Filling Factories in 1915. It was apposite that in his last letter to Lloyd George, in March 1936, Geddes drew attention to the huge size of flying boats under construction and urged his former political chief to participate in the parliamentary debate on the Air Navigation Bill.

Auckland (Lord) Geddes reflected on his brother's physical decline in the mid 1930s, ' The trees were blotting out his view of the wood, and it was clear by 1935 that his life's end was not far off'.[38] In the Air Ministry it was noted in October 1934 that Geddes 'goes out seldom now',[39] although in December 1935 he presided over the annual St. Andrews Day Feast of the Royal Scottish Corporation in London.[40] He recalled the early history of ' The Scots Box' in the mid seventeenth century. He also highlighted the relationship of the charity's financial security (and support of 400 pensioners) to Scottish ' prideand efficiency'. Although difficult to document in detail, Geddes's association with family lore and Scottish national identity provided a point of reference for this representative of capital who refused a hereditary peerage which, in the context of his times, was clearly his due. Suggestions within the Air Ministry in 1934 concerning the granting of the GCMG were probably blocked at the Colonial Office. His visit to Lord Inchcape in 1928 and Field Marshal Lord Haig's admiration of Geddes were but two indications of the significance which should be attached to his Scottish origin rather than the search for national traits in character so beloved of biographers in the early twentieth century.

Of course all work in biography must be cautious in relation to the enormity of detail of past lives and the political, economic, social and cultural themes which are touched by personalities. Geddes did not leave a collection of private papers. Consequently, he is approached through documentation of official, business and relevant private papers. The gulf between the surviving source material and the variety of actions, decisions, events, attitudes and beliefs which might be associated with Sir Eric Geddes is profound. The traces of the past which exist in relation to his life cannot by themselves reconstitute in detail his main commitments across the pre-war, war and post-war phases, let alone convey the nuances of meaning which exist in any life. Consequently, thinking about biography and its possibilities provides a salutary reminder of the provisional nature of History and of its existence primarily as an interpretive rather than an objective discourse. The finite amount of source material on an individual alongside the present-minded context of the study allows the *construction* of History which relates to the past and signifies *aspects* of personalities and issues through the themes which structure an account.

In the biographical mode the existence of a past/History dichotomy is often explicit and compounded by the complexity of relating a life to an era. In large measure this article has sought to review Geddes's engagement with politics in the light of the impact of the Great War on British society. His participation in the organisation of the war effort, and its aftermath, reflected the test of War in Whitehall and the home front and the restricted opportunities for the reconstruction of civil society and its governing institutions after 1918. In this way Geddes's work indicated significant change at a late stage in the higher conduct of the war and, subsequently, the reassertion of political continuities which quickly marginalised this ' leadinghustler' and in doing so provided evidence of a dominant belief that the consequences of war were to be actively diminished to the greatest possible extent. Consequently the pillars of economic liberalism, property rights, sectional interests and liberty were quickly re-established and Geddes's wide ranging transport portfolio was succes'sfully nullified. This central theme has allowed a discussion of a life in the context of his time, with a vivid example emerging of the declining fortunes of temporary politicians who abided by the rhetoric of the Coupon election.

After the disappointments of the immediate post war years it is clear that Geddes's experience as a businessman in government provided relevant experience for his wide ranging ambassadorial, negotiating and publicist roles as Chairman of Imperial Airways. In this arena there was much room for an energetic urging force to initiate new developments and, in this respect, the contribution of Geddes to his times was significant. However, the impact of a person on the era in which they lived is more difficult to judge than the pressures of the context on the life under consideration. Overall, the life of Sir Eric Geddes remains of the greatest significance because he touched political, military, technological and social dimensions of a society which had undergone the traumatic experience of sustained attritional warfare. Although the relationship of an individual to a historical era will often remain problematic, consideration of the human condition in past societies will require treatments of lives in depth if some sense is to made of the generalities which are employed in the discussion of the past.

NOTES

For permission to quote copyright material I am grateful to the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office and the Clerk of the Records at the House of Lords Record Office.

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Warts and All? Species of Business Biography: Their Merits and Perils

Dr. DAVID J. JEREMY

I.

In Britain we live at a time when instrumentality and utility are at a premium. Nowhere is this more evident than in business. The typical senior manager's reading probably does not extend much beyond *The Financial Times,* his own company's internal reports, stockbrokers' analyses, published reports and accounts of rival and target companies, and job advertisements.[1] All are current, of course. In business today in Britain, history is in much less demand than ethics. Why try to read the numerous multi-volume company histories when it is all water under the bridge? More to the point of this paper, why bother with the biographies of people in business? Other people's lives are unique. To explore them can have little other than occasional inspirational, cautionary or escapist value. If we have to turn to history, far more useful would seem to be analyses of the economic determinants of change, or sociological accounts of mass behaviour, or the political scientists' studies of voting patterns and pressure group activity.

This short paper takes an unfashionable, contrary view, that there is a great deal to be gained from a study of past business activity and of the lives of those at the helm in particular. It is predicated on two assumptions. The first is that individuals are as important as collectivities. This has religious and moral foundations which do not need to be rehearsed. Unless you are a fatalist, there is also empirical, real-world experience to support the premise. The second is that business leaders (chairmen, managing directors, partners and senior partners, general managers: whatever they are called, those who determine the strategic and tactical operations of capitalist enterprises) individually and collectively play crucial roles in ways that affect all of us to varying degrees.

The nature of the impact of the past upon business leaders and their influence upon the continuing development of the British economy and society can be seen in three ways. Professor Donald Coleman, a distinguished economic and company historian, observed one linkage in a public lecture given at the London School of Economics in 1986.[2] He stated it in the form of three propositions: that the British economy has been in relative decline (compared to our international competitors) for the past hundred years; that the business company is the most important organisation in the economy; that present business decisions are necessarily taken with some awareness of the past. In short, one way of improving our economic and business performance as a 21st century economy is to improve the quality of our business decisions and how they are made. To do this, as our Japanese competitors so clearly realise, we must provide those making business decisions with the best available understanding of the past as it relates to their current decisions. This does not mean that we should expect business leaders to become historians. It does mean that their advisors should have access to historical data of a much higher quality than the self-glorifying and self-deceiving public relations blurbs with which too many chief executives are fed.

A second reason why individuals have been and continue to be especially important in British business, and why the past intrudes so much into their business decision-making, is the persistence of what Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., doyen of western business historians, has called personal capitalism.[3] Until the 1960s and compared to the USA or Germany, relatively few private enterprises in Britain were administered by extensive

managerial hierarchies. The exceptions (before the nationalised industries of the 1940s) were the railway companies, ICI, Unilever, Dunlop, Anglo-Persian Oil (later BP) and a few others. Typical was the family firm, owned and managed by members of the founding family who retained their powers by bringing in a few salaried managers or by forming federations of such firms. Examples of the former were businesses like Cadburys, Rowntrees, Courtaulds, Pilkington; of the latter, Imperial Tobacco, the Calico Printers' Association, the Bleachers' Association. As the Cadbury, Pilkington, McAlpine, Sainsbury, Weston, Rothschild and Kleinwort clans (to name just a few) attest, personal capitalism continues to flourish in Britain. Any understanding, from inside or outside, of these businesses hinges upon an understanding of the people at the top, to an extent unapproached by a wholly bureaucratic structure like the civil service. As sociologists have found, cultures and organisations have ways of persisting. In the family firm the values of the founding generation are readily and powerfully transmitted to the next generation through the family and its child-rearing mechanisms. All the more important therefore, in industries and economies dominated by family firms, is an appreciation of the individuals, past or present, who have shaped or are shaping the family firm.

There is a third reason why the past impacts particularly hard upon business in modern Britain, affording a further reason for reading or writing biographies of business leaders. It stems from Mrs Thatcher's enterprise society of the 1980s. In areas of economic growth a number of large businesses mushroomed and with them a string of founding entrepreneurs came to glamour or grief.[4] Names readily spring to mind like Laura Ashley, Richard Branson (Virgin Atlantic), Sophie Mirman (Sock Shop), Anita Roddick (Body Shop), Alan Sugar (Amstrad). As recent firm founders they have been broadly responsible for choosing the market strategies, organisational structures, technologies, plant locations, manning levels, consumer awareness and environmental considerations pursued by their businesses. In a particular way, too, they have shaped the company cultures in which their thousands of employees have worked and from which their customers have to a degree received some generally-shared values. The individual personalities and characters of these business leaders need to be understood if we are to evaluate the economically and culturally influential organisations they are creating. Historical biography, rather than the pyschologist's report, is one of the more appropriate tools with which to assemble and communicate this sort of understanding.

II.

If it is important to have biographies of decision-makers in business, what kinds of business biography are available and, in reading or imitating them, what are their strengths or weaknesses? First, we may attempt to define a business biography. Having just seen that much business in modern Britain is family-firm business, it follows that there is often a fine line between the business biography and the company history. Prefacing his magisterial history of ICI, the late Dr William J. Reader wrote, "The backbone of my narrative is the intricate diplomacy of the international chemical industry — in this volume, between 1870 and 1926 — and what I conceive myself to be writing is political history, dealing with the interplay of men and events, rather than economic or social history, concerned with the description and analysis of impersonal forces and conditions".[5] In that work as well as his other company histories, like those of Metal Box or Bowater, Reader displayed the conviction that business was really about the personalities and power struggles of principal characters and interest groups before it was about market forces and economic matters.[6] His former mentor, the late Professor Charles Wilson, leaned in the same direction. Wilson's study of W H Smith, the

newspaper, book and stationery retailer, owned by a family partnership until 1948 (when the premature death of the owner precipitated the Revenue's demand for £6 million in death duties and forced the firm to become a public company to raise capital) inevitably focuses heavily upon those heads of the Smith family who for four generations ran the business.[7] Yet these are not business biographies in the sense of being biographies of business men or women. Their scope is defined by the business, rather than the lives of the individuals or families engaged in the business. A rough definition of business biography, therefore, is any study of people in business the limits of which are the lives or activities of those individuals or groups, not their businesses.

Within the genus of business biography there are at least six species: the single, the one-generation, the cross-generation, the collective, the dictionary and the autobiography. (The taxonomy is no more than rule-of-thumb). What follows is a description of these classes, with examples and a short discussion of the merits and hazards of each.

1. *The Single Business Biography*

Confined to one individual, these biographies span a range of variant types. At one extreme they may be written with independence and scholarship. This is best guaranteed, of course, if the subject is no longer alive. Richard Davenport-Hines' prize-winning biography of Dudley Docker, the wheeler-dealer Midland industrialist ascendant during the First World War and renowned for his vision of a businessmen's government, is a fine example of this sort.[8] In the same genre is the series edited by Neil McKendrick (with long diverting introductions by the general editor)[9] and the more recent 'Business and Society' volumes edited by Alex J. Robertson.[10] At the other extreme there is the authorised biography of the living subject. Joe Haines' biography of Robert Maxwell is a recent example notably because of the way in which events have exposed its true worth. In the Preface the author reported a number of facts which must now look more than a trifling embarrassing: the archive he drew upon was assembled by Robert Maxwell's wife; there was no time to go through all the business records of Pergamon Press; it took just six months to write. In the text Haines comments on the famous judgement of the Board of Trade inspectors in 1971 (that Maxwell was "not in our opinion a person who can be relied on to exercise proper stewardship of a publicly-quoted company"): "The Department of Trade inquiry into the affairs of Leasco was a perversion of justice".[11] Some are clearly ghosted and have particularly propagandist aims in view. Few, like the biography of Ernest Saunders, ostensibly by his son, can have been written while the subject was awaiting trial on charges of theft and conspiracy. In between the independently-written business biography and the elbow-guided variety is that which claims independence but is largely uncritical of its subject. David Thomas' account of Alan Sugar claims to be "an independent account of the Amstrad chairman and his company" but his gently-glowing biography has also been caught out by the passage of time (so far). "It made a good story for the media to bracket Sugar with a host of former Thatcherite business stars who had fallen or stumbled by the end of the 1980s: George Davies of Next, Tony Berry of Blue Arrow, the Saatchi brothers, Sir Phil Harris of Harris Queensway, Sir Terence Conran of Storehouse, the group which takes in Habitat . . . and Alan Sugar of Amstrad. Yet there were two major differences between him and many of his supposed companions in grief. First, he was still in full control of his company as the 1990s began. Second, there were signs that the immediate crisis facing Amstrad — the high level of stocks — was responding to treatment".[12] That was the biographer's verdict in 1990. By 1992 the story was very different (with Amstrad reporting unprecedented losses, Amstrad shares falling to 27p from a peak of 220p, and shareholders refusing to let Sugar buy the business back on the cheap).

The advantages of the one-person business biography lie in the detail possible, the probing of motivation, the close searching for links which will establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the subject and what happens in his/her business. If the independence and integrity of a scholarly author are guaranteed, with judgements carefully weighed, evidence documented and the usual scholarly apparatus printed as well as the text of the biography, then we have the best possible sort of business biography. Unfortunately it seems that this is most likely for individuals who have run their business course. For living and active business people the exercise runs the risk of being caught out by events. The hiring of journalists, rather than scholars, to write the biography is presumably preferred because they will provide a much more readable account in a shorter period of time. Scholars by their training are likely to be less gullible than high-speed journalists. While this may seem advantageous to the prospective subject, the merit is illusory: a Cromwellian "wart and all" portrait carries far more credibility than a touched-up photograph. If hagiography looms on one hand with a living subject, a libel suit threatens on the other. Suppression of publication is the (frustrating or ignominious) exit from the latter situation.

2. *The One – Generation Business Biography*

As already noted, business in twentieth century Britain has been distinguished by family capitalism. More useful in understanding British business than the individual person business biography will, at times, be the single family business biography. This can be in differing forms. One may be confined to a single generation, if that was the limit of the family's involvement in business. A very good example of this is the Philipps family, written up by Professor Peter Davies.[13] Starting life as one of the six sons and eleven children of a financially-strained member of the lower aristocracy, and a clergyman to boot, scarcely heralded the beginning of a tycoon's career. Yet three of the sons did indeed become wealthy businessmen and peers, one the mogul of a shipping empire of 40 companies and nearly 60,000 employees at its height. This was Owen Cosby Philipps, Baron Kylsant, a slow learner in his youth (making up for this later), whose Royal Mail Group collapsed in 1930 – 31 with Kylsant going to prison for issuing a false prospectus, and shareholders in the Group's constituent companies losing between £50 million and £70 million at 1931 prices.[14] What is so fascinating in Davies' account is the role of chance. Through the unlikely event of an exploding barge of gunpowder on the Regent's Canal, a wealthy financier has to seek convalescence on the Continent only to die in mysterious circumstances on the return Channel crossing. He left a wealthy heiress whose fortune of £100,000 came into the hands of the oldest Philipps son, John (later Viscount St Davids), when he married her. John used his newly-acquired wealth to set up his brothers and himself in business, relying thereafter on wits and expanding market opportunities in shipping and finance. The potential and problems of this kind of business biography are best bracketed with the next sort.

3. *The Cross – Generation Business Biography*

More common than a family confined to business for one generation has been the family in business for several generations, in Britain but also elsewhere as numerous historical studies and Thomas Mann's classic novel *Buddenbrooks* (1902) remind us. While Mann's plot runs across four generations of a Hanseatic merchant dynasty, Professor Peter Payne of Aberdeen University suspects that two generations was more typical in Britain.[15] Several examples of business biographies over two or more generations spring to mind. Besides the late Professor Checkland's study of the Gladstones[16] and Dr Mary Rose's analysis of the rise and decline of Gregs the cotton

manufacturers of Quarry Bank Mill,[17] there is Dr Kirby's account of the Peases[18] and Duff Hart-Davis's equally absorbing account of the Berry family.[19] Chance played a crucial role in the case of the Peases, but while the Philipps brothers found a ladder, the Peases got a snake. Again death and an heiress entered the turn of events, with a fortune-hunting peer persuading an heiress to withdraw her inheritance from the family firm, leaving the Peases' Darlington Bank insolvent and the Quaker head of the firm with no moral option but to resign. The Berry family, proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* for two generations, demonstrated how persistent, and eventually inappropriate, the influence of a powerful business owner could be: with the head of the second generation (Lord Hartwell) augmenting the paternalism and distance from the work force cultivated by his father (Viscount Camrose). Despite his economics degree from Oxford, Hartwell made the mistake of allowing his editorial role to swamp his managerial one: "I was always terribly shocked when other people ran their newspapers like biscuit factories, just to make money," he once said.[20]

What can be said in favour of generational business biographies? They are frequently closer to what happened in family firms than single person biographies. They allow interesting contrasts between branches and generations in one family. On the other hand, they are likely to require far more digging for evidence than a one-person study. And they can pose delicate problems in dealing with members or decendants of different branches of a clan.

4. *Collective Biography*

This has been defined in a classic article by Professor Lawrence Stone as "The investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives".[21] Taking an elite like a group of business leaders it is possible to discover how their social origins may (or may not, more often the case) have changed over time and social mobility apparently increased. In this country Professor Charlotte Erickson's work on the leaders of the steel and hosiery industry pioneered this kind of business biography.[22] It is also possible to explore links between social groups, as I have tried to do with business leaders and lay leaderships of the Protestant denominations of Christianity in twentieth century Britain.[23] There are several other possibilities with this kind of business biography but they all require searching a wide range of sources for lower returns on the same effort as a single biography might need. Almost certainly they will demand the use of computerised techniques. More positively, they are just the sort of exercise that can be applied to understand the development and workings of the local business community.[24]

5. *The Dictionary*

Two government-funded projects in the 1980s produced two weighty biographical dictionaries of business leaders active in the period 1860 - 1960 approximately: the *Dictionary of Business Biography* covering the UK except Scotland[25]; and the *Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography*.[26] They differ primarily in methods by which individuals were selected for inclusion. Whereas the *DBB* invited specialist historians to nominate subjects to fill industry quotas (calculated from rough industry shares of gross domestic product), the *DSBB* more rigorously chose heads of largest firms in major industries at benchmark dates across the century. Together the two projects assembled about 1,700 biographies, some running to 3,000 words in length. A concise dictionary of business leaders is due to appear shortly.[27] Apart from their utility as reference works, these volumes are valuable in offering a foundation of data for collective biographies of business leaders. Inevitably there are omissions from the two large collections but some

future sponsor may make supplementary volumes possible. The other limitation on these biographies is length. Up to 3,000 words was clearly adequate for some individual business people, but too little for many who had not yet received book-length treatment.

6. *The Autobiography*

Perhaps as never before, the 1970s and 1980s has seen a growing number of autobiographies by men and women who have headed businesses in Britain, chiefly during the Thatcher years. What is more they have represented all kinds of business activity: Sir John Harvey-Jones from the largest manufacturing and multinational enterprise in the economy (ICI)[28]; Lord Robens and Sir Peter Parker from nationalised industries (coal and railways)[29]; Sir Michael Edwardes who turned round British Leyland in the early 1980s[30]; Sir Peter Thomson, architect of the most successful management-worker buy-out (National Freight Corporation)[31]; the self-made Lord Forte, whose hotel chain is the largest in the UK[32]; Lord Sieff, member of one of the two families who created Marks & Spencer[33]; Anita Roddick, the environmentally-sensitive cosmetic manufacturer and retailer[34]; two businessmen in government, Lord Young of Graffham and Peter Walker[35]; and a man who made and lost a business empire, George Davies of Next.[36] All have the obvious merits of any autobiography (eg the actor's own view; rich detail; the language and anecdotes that involuntarily betray individual character and personality); and its usual shortcomings (eg too narrowly focused; one sided;). However, in this short article it is impossible to do them justice. Suffice it to say that if, on one hand, they pre-empt the professional business biographer, on the other hand they afford material which would otherwise be inaccessible.

III

What conclusions can be reached from this canter over patches of a large terrain? Some derive from the nature of biography as an historical form of research and writing. Through biography, as in no other way apart from film, we may capture as far as it is possible to do, character and personality — the mix of broadly identifiable but precisely undefinable qualities that separate one individual from another. We may also be able to trace the nature and extent of the impact of character and personality over the political and social and economic and physical environment, or conversely how they have been shaped by it. In other words, unquantifiable, qualitative elements, not least the roles of personality and chance, may be described and their strength and direction detected in the process of change which, it is claimed, is the essence of history. On the other hand, with the techniques of collective biography, we have the means of assembling and analysing a certain amount of quantifiable biographical data which can be very revealing with respect to networks and social mobility. In preparing any biography there are difficulties beyond gathering the evidence and writing it up. The central one must be resolving the conflicting requirements of simultaneously achieving empathy and closeness to the subject whilst preserving the distance and judgement needed to avoid caricature and hagiography. In the case of living subjects this tension must be most difficult to handle.

What can we conclude about business biography in particular? This paper has argued that a study of business leaders is essential to an understanding of business in twentieth century Britain. It also contends that both individual and generational biographies of people in business are needed in view of the enormous influence of firm founders (or their forceful successors) in shaping company culture which is arguably more enduring

in Britain than formal structures and boardroom strategies. Thirdly, this paper has pointed to collective biography as a heuristic tool for understanding business leadership across the economy or throughout a business community and over time. There are some major hazards, apart from libel suits. One is the danger of hero-worship in an age when people in business in Britain are receiving long-overdue social recognition. Another is the likelihood of neglecting the political, economic or social circumstances and contexts of the individual or generation in business; without a careful piecing together of evidence it will be all too easy to make cause-and-effect connections that simply did not exist but seem to have done in hindsight. A third hazard related largely to living subjects, is the likelihood of being overtaken by the tide of events; in the business world, subject to greater uncertainty than many another sphere, this is a special danger. Prerequisites for writing business biography must be empathy with the subject; familiarity with the historical background; knowledge of the technicalities of business. Some of the most successful business biographies, in my judgement, have been those written either by imaginative business historians like Davenport-Hines or by able writers who possess business skills and have been in proximity to their subjects like Hart-Davis or the accountant Roy Coad, the biographer of Sir John Laing.[37] Perhaps more high-quality business biography will help to raise the status and quality of business in our society, not just by glamorising tycoonery but by holding up the mirror to our business leaders, improving our understanding of what business leadership is about, and inducing in our captains of industry greater integrity and responsibility than some have displayed in the recent past.

FOOTNOTES

1. It would be of some interest to have a true picture, from a statistically reliable survey of senior managers' reading habits.
2. Donald Coleman, 'The Uses and Abuses of Business History' *Business History* vol. 29 no. 2 (1987), p. 147.
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The Early Career of Benjamin Disraeli : A Fresh Interpretation

Dr. JANE RIDLEY

Disraeli has been well-served by his biographers. Monypenny and Buckle's six-volume *Life* published between 1910 and 1920, is a classic of official biography, an enterprise which well deserved the fat and princely fee of £20,000 offered by Lord Rothschild on behalf of the Beaconsfield Trustees. Robert Blake's magisterial *Disraeli* is also a classic of its kind, a book that many of today's historians can still remember staying up all night to read when it was published shortly before their finals in 1966. It may reasonably be asked whether a new biography of Disraeli is needed. How will your book differ from Blake? What will it add? were the first questions publishers asked. Now that the first part, the Young Disraeli, is nearly written, I can say that it differs very significantly from Blake.

In the first place, there is the matter of sources. Both Blake and Monypenny before him based their accounts of Disraeli's early years largely on the editions of Disraeli's letters to his family published by Disraeli's brother Ralph soon after Disraeli's death. Disraeli's letters to his sister Sarah are a prime biographical source, but in Ralph's edition they were bowdlerised, shortened and scrambled. In 1982 the Toronto University Disraeli Project published the first two volumes of their edition of Disraeli's letters. To date, four volumes of the Toronto edition have appeared, covering Disraeli's life to 1847, when he was 43. Toronto renders previous accounts of Disraeli's early career obsolete. The publication of the correct and complete text of Disraeli's letters to Sarah, for example, makes it possible to reconstruct the exact chronology of Disraeli's early career, something which previous biographers, working with Ralph Disraeli's muddled and inaccurate edition, were quite unable to do. In addition, Toronto has tracked down and published hitherto unknown letters. New material has come to light about Disraeli's debts and mistresses, and important early political writings have been discovered. The Toronto Project even unearthed a new Disraeli novel, *Hartlebury*, published pseudonymously in 1834.

The publication of new material was sufficient reason by itself to justify a new study of Disraeli's early career. As the work proceeded, however, it became clear that it diverged substantially from the interpretation of Disraeli's youth presented by Blake.

Blake's biography is well controlled, well-written, and often shrewd in its judgements. It is, however, very much a book of its time; even Blake's warm pages are chilled by the bleak winds of 1960's Revisionism. For Blake, Disraeli was essentially a practical politician — a man without a distinctive Tory philosophy. ' He believed passionately in the greatness of England — not in itself a Tory monopoly. But he also believed no less deeply that England's greatness depended upon the ascendancy of the landed class. All the rest was "leather and prunella".' The so-called ' philosophy' which Disraeli expounded as a member of Young England and in opposition to Peel had little effect on his actions, according to Blake: his actual policy as a Conservative leader after 1846 was essentially Peelite. Indeed, Blake maintains that 'it is very hard to discern any consistent purpose in his political activities from 1832 to 1846, beyond an unrelenting though by no means unerring determination to get to the top'.Blake's Disraeli emerges as a skilled political pragmatist whose priorities were not very different from Gladstone's. The Tory

' philosophy' that Disraeli professed was (a) a cover for his ambition and (b) inoperative, in the sense that it did not affect his policy.

Blake was right to expose the Conservative party-political myth that Disraeli first expounded and later implemented the principles of One Nation Conservatism. But in throwing out the bathwater he perhaps threw out the baby too. He was excessively dismissive of Disraeli's ideas. Moreover, his preoccupation with Disraeli the political leader led him to take a somewhat lop-sided view of Disraeli's youth and early career. Far more attention deserves to be paid to Disraeli's early novels, to his Romanticism, and his early political writing and speeches.

The more one considers Disraeli's early career, the more baffling his success becomes. Not only was he an outsider, a Jew baptised a Christian, the grandson of an Italian Jewish immigrant who had a humble business importing straw bonnets of Leghorn chip. But the chief obstacles in the way of Disraeli's success turn out to have been self-created, the consequences of his own rashness and intemperance. Before he was twenty-one he lost a fortune he did not possess speculating in South American mining stock in the bubble of 1826. Until his marriage thirteen years later he lived mainly on credit. The result was a legacy of debt, which grew at giddy rates of compound interest, and an ever-widening net of creditors. Like a drug addict, he learned to dissimulate and lie to his creditors; sheriffs' officers pursued him, he almost certainly spent time inside a sponging house, and at one point, in 1837, he came perilously close to bankruptcy. His only source of income was writing novels; but though he published eight novels, abundant political journalism and an epic poem before he was thirty-five, only two of his books sold — *Vivian Grey,* as hot and hurried a sketch as ever was penned, which he dashed off when he was twenty-one, and *Henrietta Temple,* an overheated romance. Though *Vivian Grey* brought a precocious notoriety, it also brought powerful enemies: Disraeli's indiscreet caricature of the drunken publisher John Murray lost him his only friend and potential patron in public life, banished him from the influential pages of the Tory *Quarterly Review* and earned him the lasting suspicion of such *eminence grises* as J. W. Croker.

Scandal dogged him. Ringletted and scented, overdressed in velvet coat and fancy pantaloons, his gorgeously embroidered waistcoat criss-crossed with chains, flashing rings worn outside his gloves, Disraeli was a dandy and a gigolo. Driven by debt, he made love to the wives of his creditors, older women with whom he conducted a number of adulterous triangular affairs. His most notorious liaison, with Henrietta Sykes, brought access to the Tory Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, with whom she shared her bed. The drawing rooms of Buckinghamshire buzzed with disapproval when Disraeli brought not only Henrietta but also Lyndhurst to his parents' home at Bradenham; London was aghast when poor Henrietta was publicly exposed by her husband, Sir Francis Sykes, who found her in bed with the painter Maclise, and in the subsequent divorce case, Disraeli was charged with making off with several thousand pounds of Sir Francis Sykes' money.

It is of course questionable whether the scandals and debts of Disraeli's youth are properly the subject-matter of a political biography; sex and shopping are arguably the province of the historical novelist, better dealt with in a fictional account such as Maurice Edelman's *Disraeli in Love* (1972). Perhaps it's a woman's view, but I am convinced that the biographer's conventional distinction between a politician's public and private lives is an artificial one, and that the one cannot be understood without the other. In Disraeli's case, the sex and shopping of his youth raises a very real biographical question: how in spite of it all he not only survived, but emerged by 1846 as a leader of his political generation.

There are several ways in which that question could be answered. One might point, for example, to his marriage. Mary Anne Evans whom Disraeli married in 1839 was twelve

years older than him, the widow of Wyndham Lewis, a partner in the Dowlais ironworks and silent Tory MP, who had brought Disraeli in as his co-member for Maidstone two years before. Mary Anne's capital was protected by a trust, but marriage brought Disraeli an assured income, and a house in fashionable Mayfair as well as a seat in Parliament. His debts were partially settled, and Disraeli mortgaged the property outside the trust, often without his wife's knowledge — while Mary Anne was away in the country, Disraeli wrote affectionate letters lamenting her absence, at the very moment that, unbeknownst to dearest MA, surveyors were tramping round the house valueing its contents from attic to basement. More important, marriage brought respectability and emotional stability; scandal no longer tarnished Disraeli's name — even Gladstone acknowledged Disraeli's devotion as a husband in his speech at the time of his rival's death. Yet the marriage was not all sweetness and light. Mary Anne was jealous of Disraeli's sister Sarah, to whom he was almost abnormally close. His letters tell of Mary Anne's bouts of sleeplessness and hysterical tearfulness, and though it's unlikely that he was unfaithful, he found emotional fulfilment in close friendships with younger men — George Smythe, Henry Lennox, Monty Corry.

In order to explain Disraeli's success we need to probe deeper, to look beyond his marriage, to his extraordinary self-confidence, his sense of his own genius and destiny. This had its roots in his childhood, in his relationship with his father, Isaac. His relationship with his mother, Maria, was strained and distant, which may partly explain his ambivalent sexuality; it was Isaac who educated him, and Isaac who, quietly confident of his son's abilities, gently steered him towards a political career. Thanks to James Ogden's somewhat underrated biography, Isaac has emerged as a more substantial figure than the genial and bumbling man of letters and antiquary usually depicted by Disraeli's biographers. In particular, Ogden points to Isaac's role as a chronicler and analyst of Romanticism. In his *Essay on the Literary Character,* Isaac explored and analysed the pathology of literary genius. The idea of genius — of innate, extraordinary ability, which manifest itself in extreme youth — was a product of the Romantic movement which Issac's books helped to promote. We can only speculate how far Isaac's concept of genius informed his son's upbringing. Certainly, Disraeli's early youth seemed to fit the template of genius as defined by his father — the solitary childhood, the miserable schooldays (Disraeli's brief career at a Unitarian school was disfigured by schoolboy bullying, probably on account of his Jewishness), and, not least, the lack of parental understanding, in Disraeli's case what he saw as his mother's failure to appreciate him.

It was through Isaac too that Disraeli came into contact with the literary geniuses of the day. Isaac was a member of John Murray's circle, a friend of Southey. He knew and greatly admired Byron, and though Disraeli never met Byron, his youth was dominated by the Byron myth. The Byronic hero who, like Don Juan, triumphs over polite society and the great world despite his cynical scorn for its conventions made a lasting impression on the young Disraeli.

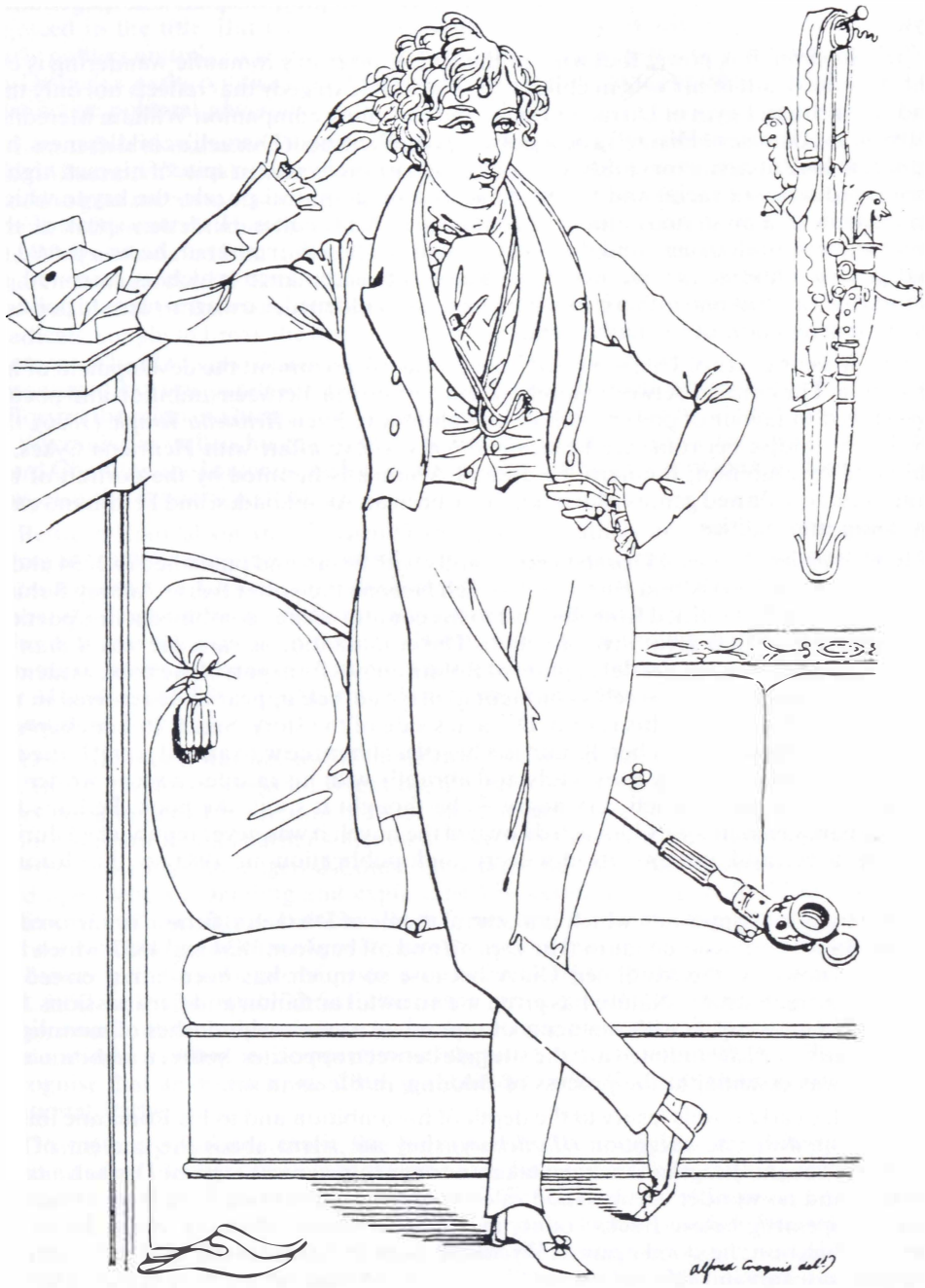
This brings me to Disraeli's early novels. As Paul Smith pointed out in an illuminating paper on ' Disraeli's Politics' (T.R.H.S. 1987) historians have been too hasty in their dismissal of Disraeli's early novels. They have noted Disraeli's low sales and hostile reviews and, on the strength of this and the eccentric or frivolous subject-matter and indulgent style, awarded the early novels gamma marks. Even John Vincent, in his 1990 study of Disraeli's thought, found little to admire in the early novels. Yet, as Daniel Schwartz suggested in his perceptive literary criticism of *Disraeli's Fiction* (1979), the novels, particularly the early ones, are a prime biographical source.

Take *Vivian Grey,* which was published anonymously in two parts, in 1826 and 1827. The first part is a thinly disguised account of Disraeli's recent adventures with Murray

and Lockhart over the ill-fated *Representative* newspaper which the precocious twenty-year-old Disraeli promoted as a rival to *The Times*; the novel has been well trawled by biographers, and it is generally recognised as a very early example of a new form, the political novel. The sequel *Vivian Grey* Part Two, which describes the hero's picaresque adventures on his travels through Germany, is usually dismissed, in Gladstone's phrase, as trash — delta. It is shapeless, formless, rambling, almost incoherent at times. Yet these qualities in themselves are evidence of the twenty-two-year-old Disraeli's state of mind, reduced to near-breakdown by catastrophic speculative losses, the fiasco of the *Representative*, and the initial applause for *Vivian Grey* Part One turning to virulent anti-Semitic abuse when the identity of its author became known. Acutely depressed, he was quite unable to structure his material, let alone plan his own life: very few letters exist from this period, and *Vivian Grey* Part Two is the most telling evidence we have of Disraeli's depression.

In *Vivian Grey* Part One the eponymous hero, who is of course Disraeli, controlled and manipulated events, playing Puss in Boots to John Murray's Marquess of Carabas; in Part Two, by contrast, Vivian is the passive creature of circumstance — things happen to him, he no longer makes them happen, and as a character he dwindles to insignificance. The dwindling of Vivian partly reflects Disraeli's diminished self-esteem, but Disraeli was also bored with Vivian. His imagination was captured and engaged by the character of Beckendorff, a Minister, sprung from the people, who lives an eccentric topsy-turvy existence in solitude on his remote estate. A kind of Metternich, a master of realpolitik, Beckendorff rules through the aristocracy ('a Minister who has sprung from the people will always conciliate the aristocracy') and through women — 'as a man he despises them, but as a statesman he values them as the most precious of political instruments'. That Beckendorff is a fantasy figure, Disraeli's ideal self, is made plain in a key exchange between him and Vivian. When Vivian confesses that he has become a fatalist, Beckendorff briskly retorts that a man's fate is in his own hands — the philosophy with which Vivian had started in life, and which of course remained Disraeli's conviction. It is as if an art of transference has taken place, and Disraeli's ideal self has shifted from Vivian to Beckendorff, with whom he plainly identifies.

A rather similar pattern is discernible in *Contarini Fleming*, written five years later in 1832. This novel, which Disraeli preferred to call the Psychological Romance, was his favourite; he called it 'the perfection of English prose'. *Contarini* was conceived and begun in Egypt in 1831, when Disraeli was on the homeward leg of his Middle Eastern tour; the novel was completed after his return to England, which he found in the grip of the Reform Bill crisis. The book is a study of the poetic character, the Bildungsroman of Contarini Fleming who, like the early Vivian Grey, is closely based on Disraeli. The pure, flowing prose is a reflection, not just of Disraeli's greater maturity and assurance as a writer, but also of his renewed sense of purpose: his year of eastern travel had eventually cured him of his depression. There remained the question of what he should do, and from a biographical point of view, that is really the central theme of *Contarini Fleming*. In *Vivian Grey* Part Two, Disraeli's predicament is expressed in terms of a choice between two antithetical philosophies, fatalism and free will; in *Contarini*, the choice is between literature and politics, romance and power, Disraeli's two conflicting ambitions. Contarini's romantic childhood is modelled closely on Disraeli's, and, like Disraeli, he leaves the North on a romantic quest for his Venetian ancestors and the mystery of the east. Contarini's Romanticism is counterbalanced by the character of his father, a Minister in a Northern Court. A man who has risen entirely through his own talents, he is the political pupil of Metternich and an exponent of free will. 'Proud in his own energies, and conscious that he owed everything to his own dexterity, he believed all to depend upon the influence of individual character.' He is another version of Beckendorff, the earlier power figure, but, unlike Beckendorff, Contarini's father



Benjamin Disraeli (1833)
by Daniel Maclise

actually *looks* like Disraeli — the aquiline nose, the grey, deep-set and penetrating eye.

In *Contarini,* it is power that wins in the end. Contarini's romantic wandering is cut short by the death of his wife in childbirth — a double tragedy that reflects not only the sudden death in Egypt of Disraeli's friend and travelling companion William Meredith, but also the demise of Disraeli's own prospect of fatherhood. Disraeli's childlessness, his apparent lack of desire for children in an age of patriarchy and in spite of his own highly developed sense of racial and family pride, is a biographical puzzle, the key to which seems to lie in a mysterious illness he contacted in his twenties. His letters speak of 'the great enemy', of dizziness and digitalis; though his health recovered, he was forced to accept that children would never be his — an acceptance which is mirrored in Contarini's grief at his stillborn son. Bereaved and saddened, Contarini turns to politics, to the regeneration of his native land.

The power figures of Disraeli's early novels clearly document the development of his ambition. The conflict between ambition and depression, between ambition and poetry, is resolved in favour of power, politics and ambition. Even *Henrietta Temple* (1836), the torrid and indiscreet romance he wrote about his love affair with Henrietta Sykes, is coloured by ambition; the hero, Ferdinand Armine, is haunted by the portrait of his grandfather, a flawed genius who might have been an Alcibidiades, and Ferdinand ends by going into politics.

In *Hartlebury,* the novel Disraeli wrote jointly with Sarah and published in 1834 under the pseudonym Cherry and Fair Star, Disraeli *becomes* the power figure. Aubrey Bohun, the hero, recently returned from the East to his country estate, 'combined a fine poetical temperament, with a great love of action. The combination is rare. He was a man of genius.' Needless to say, the description of Bohun comes from part of the book written by Disraeli. In *Hartlebury* Disraeli's conflicting images of self appear to be resolved in the character of Bohun, but this is only Disraeli's side of the story. Sarah, in her chapters, hints at a darker side — for her, Bohun is a heartless libertine with an evil secret buried in his Eastern past; the book ends oddly and abruptly with his murder, a scene written by Sarah which made Disraeli very angry — he thought it spoilt the book. Perhaps the ending partly explains why Disraeli disowned the novel; it was never republished during his life time, and we owe its discovery and publication in 1983 to the Toronto project.

The struggle of opposites, which is a central theme of Disraeli's fiction, is mirrored in his life. In the confessional journal he kept on and off between 1834 and 1837, which has become known as the Mutilated Diary because so much has been either erased or excised, Disraeli wrote: 'Nature has given me an awful ambition and fiery passions. My life has been a struggle with moments of rapture — a storm with dashes of moonlight. Love, poetry . . .' Life imitated art: the struggle between opposites, between ambition and passion, was essential to the process of Bildung, in life as in art.

Disraeli's early novels testify to the depth of his ambition and to his Romantic image of self, but with one exception *(Hartlebury)* they are silent about the content of his political thought. Biographers have taken a somewhat cynical view of Disraeli's early politics, and no wonder. Disraeli contested High Wycombe twice in 1832 as a Radical, briefly appearing before Bucks county as a Tory after his defeat for Wycombe in the General Election; he stood again at Wycombe as an Independent in 1834; he contested Taunton as a Tory in 1835, and eventually got in for Maidstone as a Tory in 1837. He was, as Greville sourly commented, 'a mighty impartial personage', and Lord Blake has deplored the 'ink expended by pious Conservatives seeking to discern a consistent creed running through Disraeli's effusions' before 1837: Disraeli's early political career was, in Blake's view, a record of inconsistency and opportunism.

I disagree. Of course, opportunism played a part. Disraeli was an adventurer, and he rejoiced in the title. But I want to take issue with the view which explains Disraeli's early politics entirely in terms of self-advancement. There *was* a consistency, a pattern, to Disraeli's early politics.I might even be so bold as to claim that he developed a distinctive political *philosophy*.

I want first to examine Disraeli's shift from Radical to Tory between 1833 and 1835. The influence of Lord Lyndhurst was no doubt significant in persuading Disraeli that he stood to gain more from joining the Tories than the Radicals. Yet there was always a Tory streak in Disraeli's Radicalism. At Wycombe in 1832 he was the only candidate opposing the Whigs, which led him to form an alliance of Tories and Radicals, explaining to Tory audiences that Radical demands such as annual parliaments and the ballot were in fact the traditional programme of the eighteenth-century Tory country party who, like the Radicals, sought to break the grip of the boroughmongers by strengthening the popular element. The Radicals Disraeli admired were not Utilitarians, whom he consistently disparaged, but aristocrats like Durham or Sir Francis Burdett, who described himself as a Tory of the reign of Queen Anne. Much later, Disraeli claimed that his 1832 campaign at Wycombe, as well as his intervention in the county election as a Tory, was directed by Lord Chandos, the leader of the Bucks Tories who, as the author of the Chandos Clause, was also the farmers' friend.

Between Radicalism and Toryism Disraeli was genuinely ambivalent. 'My mind,' he wrote in 1834. 'is a continental mind. It is a revolutionary mind.' Yet the early novels show a distinctive Toryism. Both the *Young Duke* and *Vivian Grey* Part One teach lessons about the importance of conforming to conventional morality: in both novels heroes who defy the rules suffer in the end. Byron-worshipper though he was, Disraeli was unable to follow his hero in championing Greek independence, and his Grand Tour of the Middle East (1830 - 1) confirmed him in his admiration of the Ottoman Empire, the traditional Tory ally.

Disraeli himself was well aware of the charge of inconsistency. He could hardly fail to be. In 1832, when he stood for Bucks county, he was howled down with cries of Radical Tory, Mountebank Orator; and in 1835, when he stood as a Tory at Taunton, O'Connell, whose support he had earlier solicited at Wycombe, accused him of being a lying Jew. Disraeli not only challenged O'Connell to a duel; he also issued a stream of pamphlets and open letters defending and explaining his record. In *What is He?* (1833) Disraeli defended his oscillation between Radicalism and Toryism by postulating a choice between the two principles of government, aristocracy and democracy. 1832, he argued, had destroyed the principle of aristocracy by breaking the power of the House of Lords, but 1832 failed to establish an alternative principle of government. To be strong, government must always advance to the democratic principle. 'A Tory and a Radical, I understand; a Whig, a democratic aristocrat, I cannot comprehend.' Tories must recognise that aristocracy was dead, and coalesce with Radicals to form a democratic National Party.

Disraeli's argument is driven, like his novels, by the struggle of opposites. In fact the method of reasoning is dialectical. The thesis is aristocracy or old Toryism, the antithesis is 1832 or the Whig democratic aristocrat; the synthesis is Radical Toryism, a democratic National party. Logic, however, was not the only factor pushing Disraeli towards Radical Toryism. Disraeli's antipathy towards the Whigs — a point on which no one could accuse him of inconsistency — led him to the same conclusions. He had initially supported 1832, but his enthusiasm rapidly cooled as a result of his exposure to the newly-enfranchised £10 householders of Wycombe. Disraeli's extravagant hustings oratory earned him the rapturous applause of the mob ('The fact is,' he concluded characteristically, 'no people relish eloquence of the highest order so much as the

lowest mob'), but he was hated by the new voters of 1832 — the sectarian oligarchy of Wycombe High Street, mean-hearted, snub-nosed and tight-fisted, who during the election dined in their back parlours for fear of having their windows broken by the mob. These men Disraeli dubbed the Low Whigs, the new constituency of 1832, narrow-minded tyrants of small town politics, the real cause of Manchester massacres, 'men who, though they think they are only snuffing the candle in their own miserable hard-hearted parlours, are in fact lighting the torch of every incendiary in the kingdom.' The only way to destroy this barbarising power, as Disraeli explained in *Hartlebury*, was 'to expand the Whig constituency into a national constituency'. A national constituency; but a Tory system of government. 'It is the fashion now "to go along with the people",' — *Hartlebury* again — 'But I think the people ought to be led, ought to have ideas given them by those whom nature and education have qualified to govern states and regulate the conduct of mankind.'

Disraeli developed his criticism of the Whig aristocracy of 1832 in a series of open letters he wrote in 1835, after the Taunton by-election, replying to a pamphleteer who accused him of gross political apostasy, which have been wrongly neglected by biographers. 'I could not comprehend,' he wrote, 'how the conduct of the government which had just formed a new constituency, in which a preponderating influence was given to a sectarian minority, could be in harmony with the feelings of the people.' The people versus the constituency: it was a crucial distinction. Disraeli now made the startling claim that 'the Tory party is the real democratic party of this country'; it was the Tories who had changed, not him: the Tories now realised that the more popular the constituency, the stronger they will become. Here, in outline, was the case for Tory Democracy and 1867.

Of course, there were problems with this argument. In the first place, it implied that the constituency *ought* to represent the people: as one of Disraeli's Tory critics pointed out, the argument led straight to universal suffrage. It was not a position calculated to endear him to the Tory party of the 1830s. Secondly after his election for the notoriously corrupt borough of Maidstone in 1837, Disraeli's enthusiasm for a national constituency cooled; and in 1841 the Tories at length won an election on the 1832 franchise, apparently demolishing the argument about the Whig constituency.

Difficulties with the electoral argument forced Disraeli to develop a second line of defence, an argument from history. This historical case first appears in the *Vindication of the English Constitution*, the pamphlet he wrote for Lyndhurst in 1835, the prime purpose of which was to vindicate the assertiveness of Lyndhurst and the Tory peers in the House of Lords after 1832. His defence of the peers hinged on a denial that the House of Commons represented the people, and he went on to argue that the Whigs, in spite of their support for civil and religious liberty, did not represent the people either. On the contrary, the Whigs were a narrow aristocratic oligarchy who had seized power in 1714, reduced the Hanoverians to the situation of a Venetian Doge, and maintained themselves in power through an alliance with Nonconformists hostile to the Church. But 'the republican model of the House of Russell was Venice; of their plebeian allies, Geneva'. The Whig cry of civil and religious liberty therefore merely meant 'a doge and no bishops'. Hence the paradox that the Tories, in spite of their servile creed of Divine Right, passive obedience and non-resistance, were in fact supported by nine-tenths of the nation. The Tories supported the great national institutions — the Crown, the Church, the Universities, the municipal corporations — which the Whigs threatened to destroy: the Tory party, claimed Disraeli, 'is the national party; it is the real democratic party of England'.

Of course, you could argue that Disraeli's argument for Tory Democracy was mere rhetoric, a cloak for his opportunism, and that he himself did not really believe it. At the

very least, however, it must be conceded that Disraeli's shift from Radical to Tory forced him to define his ideas in a way that few of his political contemporaries did. I have tried to argue, furthermore, that Disraeli's Tory Radicalism represented an affective synthesis — a real attempt to resolve the conflict between his Tory instincts and his revolutionary mind, between aristocracy and democracy; and that just as the struggle of opposites was the motor that drove his novels, so too was it the dynamic of his political thought. Disraeli, in my book, was first and foremost a man of ideas: or, as he himself put it, a man of imagination.

There remains the question of consistency, which in turn relates to a second question: were Disraeli's ideas inoperative or did they actually guide his actions? Perhaps the best way to answer these questions is to glance at Disraeli's behaviour between 1841 and 1846. It is usually argued that Disraeli would neither have led Young England nor overthrown Peel's Government if he had received office in 1841. During the debates of 1846, Peel himself accused Disraeli of asking for office in 1841 and though Disraeli publicly denied the charge, the evidence supports Peel. The surprising thing, however, is not that Peel refused Disraeli office, but that Disraeli considered that he had a claim to it. The speeches that Disraeli made in Parliament between 1837 and 1841 could hardly have been further removed from Peel's cautious Conservatism. Most striking was the 1839 speech on Chartism, in which Disraeli blamed the Chartist movement on 1832, which created a monarchy of the middle classes, who passed the New Poor Law, to which the Tories consented, and which was the cause of Chartism. Though I disapprove of the Charter, he declared, I sympathise with the Chartists. The speech is dramatised in *Sybil,* where Disraeli explains that the purpose of this 'crotchety' but 'most really democratic speech' was to warn the aristocracy that, if they wished for a time to retain their political power, they could only do so by securing for the people greater social felicity.

As someone remarks in *Sybil,* 'Peel does not like crotchety men'; it is easy to see why Peel declined to give Disraeli office. Conversely, in 1844, when Disraeli attacked Peel for his neglect of the Condition of England question, he was taking a line that was consistent not only with what he had said over Chartism, but also with the arguments about democratic Toryism which he made ten years before. Indeed, one of Disraeli's aims in *Sybil,* which he wrote in 1844 - 5, was to defend his own consistency, and that of Young England, by setting a novel about the Two Nations of the 1840s in the context of his own speech about the Chartist rising of 1839.

Young England emerged in opposition to Peel under Disraeli's leadership in the summer of 1843. Much has been made of the medievalism and the Anglo-Catholic elements of Young England, which has been seen as the political counterpart of the Oxford Movement. But this was the contribution of Lord John Manners, with which Disraeli was never fully in sympathy. As Smythe pointed out, 'Dizzy's attachment to moderate Oxfordism is something like Bonaparte's to moderate Mahomedanism'. Rather, Young England for Disraeli represented an attempt to restore the true principles of Toryism, which Peel had deserted. In *Coningsby* and also in *Sybil* he sought to prove that Peel's 'Conservatism' was the creed of a shallow, time-serving generation, an attempt to construct a party without principles, an aberration from the true national Toryism which Bolingbroke had expounded, which Shelburne and the Younger Pitt had implemented, and which Canning had fleetingly attempted to restore.

Coningsby is about a quest for principles and for faith — about what the younger generation should believe. Toryism is one answer. But the faith that emerges most strikingly is Disraeli's belief in his own Jewishness, and indeed in his own ego. By far the most vivid figure in the book — far more alive than Coningsby himself, who is of course based on George Smythe — is Sidonia: mysterious, wise, powerful, part-Eastern, Jewish. The conflicting images of self which had driven Disraeli's earlier fiction are resolved in

the character of Sidonia; perhaps the key to that resolution lies in Disraeli's acknowledgement, and indeed celebration, of his own Jewishness.

'Action is not for me,' says Sidonia, 'I am of that faith that the Apostles professed before they followed their Master.' Two years after he wrote those words, Disraeli destroyed Peel's leadership, his brilliantly cruel speeches effectively exploiting the divisions in the party over the Corn Laws. The breaking of Peel is a turning-point in Disraeli's career, as well as in the history of the Conservative party; I hope I have said enough to suggest that it represented something more than the brilliant exploitation of opportunity by an unscrupulous adventurer.

Note :

Source references for this article, which were very extensive, have been omitted. The author will be happy to supply details on request.

Reviews

Marlborough

J. R. JONES Cambridge University Press, 1993, 246 pages Paperback £8.95

It is ironic that the name of John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, means so little to most people nowadays, for it could be argued that his military genius was responsible for laying the foundations of Britain's pre-eminence in European and world affairs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As a figure of national importance, he is easily comparable to his later, more popular, compatriots, Nelson and Wellington. In this new biography, J. R. Jones attempts to redress the balance by giving equal weight both to his military and to his diplomatic talents.

He argues that the eighteenth century, like our own century, was an anti-heroic age and that Marlborough's reputation has suffered, accordingly, in comparison with the national heroes of the Romantic and Victorian eras. Jones believes it is now time to re-assess the achievements of Marlborough so that he can be restored to his rightful place in the pantheon of Great Britons. To a large extent he succeeds, but by eschewing almost every detail of Marlborough's personal life and character, Jones is never able to elicit our full sympathies — and surely a 'hero' is never merely the sum of his achievements? To attain heroic stature in the popular imagination, one must engage on a more personal level. It is not just the actions which inspire the public, but also the force of a commanding (and often contradictory) character. Jones fails on this account, but as he admits, it is difficult to penetrate Marlborough's inner feelings because he was an intensely private and modest man whose consummate skill in diplomacy was based on the art of self-effacement. Nevertheless, it is a pity that Jones does not manage to connect more intimately with his subject's personality.

This biography is, however, an excellent summation of Marlborough's career and his significance — more critical than Winston Churchill's adulatory account, but still more positive than many of the earlier studies. Jones's central thesis is that John Churchill owed his rise to power and influence to his skills as a courtier rather than as a soldier. Hailing from an obscure family of provincial gentry, his father was able to find him a place at the court of James II and there he took advantage of every opportunity until he was given command of the allied armies in the Low Countries in 1702–11. Without his courtly talents and his mastery of the art of diplomacy, Churchill would probably never have risen further than the rank of a regimental officer. His affable, persuasive manner helped gain the confidence and the trust of monarchs, political leaders and officers, both at home and abroad among his continental allies.

Jones charts Churchill's growing disaffection for James II and emphasises the key role played by army officers in conspiring to prevent James from halting William of Orange's invasion in 1688. He also highlights the important part played by Churchill himself in encouraging these military defections. He argues, therefore, that Churchill had a central role in the accession of William and Mary to the throne and thus ensured his prominent position at the new court, as well as securing the foundations of a family dynasty through a grateful monarch who rewarded his efforts by creating him Earl of Marlborough in 1689. In this context, it can be seen that Marlborough's occasional contact with the exiled Stuarts was merely a type of insurance policy, entered into by many astute politicians of the day, in case the wheel of royal fortune should change again, as it had so often over the past century. Marlborough, however, never gave any serious consideration to these Jacobite offers during the War of the Spanish Succession.

It was in that war that Marlborough's reputation was made and Jones emphasises that he achieved his greatest success not only through his military campaigning, but also by his extremely sensitive handling of Britain's allies. The forging of the alliance against France, and the sustenance of it, was of paramount significance for Britain's rise as a great power. Marlborough's own blazing self-belief, his pursuit of new military tactics, his diplomatic skills and his ability to foster friendly relations with a range of heterogeneous princes and kings, ensured Britain's success in the wars and her commanding presence in Europe thereafter. Marlborough was able to maintain this alliance for eight years in the face of extreme difficulties constantly hindered by his Dutch allies who continued to trade with, and provide finance for, the French! His success was

also based on his ability to launch an offensive strategy using a very mobile army which forced the French into battle. This is shown superbly in his forced marches before Schellenberg in 1704 and Oudenarde in 1708. Marlborough always ensured his army was properly supplied, fed and paid, and he was noted for his eminent fairness as a military commander. All these qualities, allied with his superb intelligence-gathering network, ensured a series of stunning victories.

Why then did his career end in failure? Jones has very little patience with Marlborough's wife, Sarah, and her increasingly fractious relationship with Queen Anne is seen as one reason for her husband's fall from grace. More importantly, Marlborough's demise at court can be attributed to a more general disregard for the jealousy he generated; preoccupied with European affairs, he neglected to maintain domestic allies. In the war itself Marlborough discovered that, after 1709, he had little chance of winning it by one great victory and the lustre of his success seemed to grow dimmer with the years.

Jones does not dwell on his downfall, but prefers to stress Marlborough's lasting importance and influence (extending even to that of his descendant Winston Churchill whose formation of the alliance in World War II was directly influenced by Marlborough). His book is lucidly and concisely written and provides a comprehensive over-view of a brilliant career. Jones's emphasis on diplomacy also highlights a significant dimension of a life which is normally viewed primarily in its military context.

IAIN R. SCOTT.

Contending with Hitler. Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich.

DAVID CLAY LARGE Cambridge University Press, 1991, 197 pages £27.95

In this volume of twelve essays by an international team of historians, the important and well-worn theme of the history of the German resistance to the Third Reich is considered on the limited basis of published secondary sources. A number of contributions do not even contain footnote references. Instead of new material, the reader is offered critical reappraisals of celebrated cases of resistance, such as the Kreisau Circle and the July Plot of 1944, along with analyses of the resistance mounted by various social groups, particularly women, younger people, workers and Jews. Moreover, the late former West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, draws on his personal experience to discuss the Social Democratic opposition in Germany and abroad. The many weaknesses and limited achievements of the resistance are generally, though not always convincingly outlined. Thus, Detlev J. K. Peukert's piece on the working class is historiographically outdated and makes some palpably erroneous assertions, the most notable of which is that from the late 1930s German youth 'showed a growing tendency to distance themselves from the government and its ideals'. The most sensible and stimulating thoughts in a volume of uneven quality are provided by Martin Broszat's 'A Social and Historical Typology of the German Opposition to Hitler', Hans Mommsen's 'The Political Legacy of the German Resistance' and Charles Maier's 'The German Resistance in Comparative Perspective'. All of these understand the wider dimensions of their specific themes.

While few original insights are to be found in this work, it does represent an introductory distillation of recent scholarship which undergraduates and general readers will welcome. It is difficult to resist the feeling, however, that the extent of German resistance is in serious danger of being blown out of proper perspective. The depressing fact is that as a result of prewar domestic and foreign policy successes and a series of spectacular military conquests prior to Stalingrad, Hitler and his regime enjoyed considerable popularity among almost all sections of German society.

PETER D. STACHURA.

Joseph Chamberlain

DUNCAN WATTS Hodder and Stoughton, 1992, 144 pages Paperback £3.99

There can be no denying the importance of Joseph Chamberlain as a personality in 19th and early 20th Century British political history. For those who believe that history is created by 'Great Men', Joseph Chamberlain must provide an ideal role model. He was a key figure in the evolution of both the Liberal and Conservative Parties and in any study of the changing nature of British politics his life and career must be an essential study. In this present age of party politics Chamberlain would have been an enigma; a supporter of causes rather than factions he would clearly have found difficulty with the discipline of the modern parties.

In studying his life and career it is inevitable that insight into the major issues and developments of the day will be gained. Chamberlain was prominent in the development of the role of local government and in the Irish Home Rule and Tariff Reform issues. Thus Duncan Watts clearly deals with a character and issues of major importance in this volume from the *Personalities and Powers* series.

There are obvious difficulties in writing a biography of as prominent a character as Chamberlain in such an abbreviated form. It is extremely difficult to do justice to both the man and the issues and it is a criticism of this work that it does at times fall between the two tasks without completely satisfying either objective fully.

However, that criticism apart this is a book that will prove a useful acquisition for any school History department both as a general reference work on the period or as a possible source for research for either extended essays or dissertations.

The style of presentation, with its chapters subdivided by headings was, I found, distracting for those wishing to gain an overall impression of Joseph Chamberlain, the man, but it does make the book more practical for those who wish to use it more for reference purposes. There is an excellent variety of sources used which will help to develop source handling skills for both Higher and CSYS pupils. All in all this is a worthwhile purchase for any History department.

J. A. HARLEY.

Memoirs of War 1914 - 18 : Marc Bloch (Translated and with an introduction by Carole Fink)

Cambridge University Press, 1993 180 pages Paperback £9.95

This book is something of a hybrid. On the one hand it is the recollections of a non-commissioned officer serving with the French Army in the first six months of the Great War. On the other hand it contains an extended essay on the intellectual development of one of the most eminent historians of the century. It is not an exciting read on either count.

As a memoir of war, Bloch's account certainly has some intrinsic interest. The memoirs are well illustrated with contemporary photographs and maps of emplacements, although this means that there are only sixty seven pages of written text. Bloch describes and explains what it was like to live through the earliest phase of the First World War, but his account never comes alive. Compared to other accounts of the conflict, Bloch's lacks passion — the reader's emotions are rarely engaged. Where a would-be novelist or journalist would have a feeling for what would grab the attention of a reader, the already established academic historian takes a more detached approach. Bloch goes into great detail on dates, places and military units, weighs carefully the evidence that comes to hand on a given situation and is transparently honest about his own role: admirable qualities in a scholarly account of the war. But Bloch's is a battlefield memoir and as such fails to convey vividly the **experience** of war. This is to cast no slur on Bloch's war record: he was patently a brave soldier who never asked of others what he was not prepared to do himself.

Carole Fink's essay on Bloch the scholar will probably appeal to only a limited audience. As the co-founder of the influential journal *Annales*, Bloch has an important place in the development of twentieth-century historiography, but his intellectual development would appear to be a topic beyond the scope of any pre-university history course. For those with a particular interest in the nature of history and the development of historical studies in the twentieth century, Carole Fink's Introduction to the *Memoirs* does present a concise overview of Bloch's life and thought.

L. H. MacLACHLAN.

Neville Chamberlain; A Study in Failure?

PETER NEVILLE Hodder and Stoughton, 1992, 124 pages Paperback £3.99

Despite the passing of the years Neville Chamberlain continues to excite and generate controversy. During a visit to Czechoslovakia in 1990, Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister, felt obliged to apologise to the Czech President for the "national shame" of Munich. John Major, Margaret Thatcher's successor, came to an opposite conclusion a year later. John Major acknowledged Chamberlain as one of his political heroes, and a great twentieth century social reformer. John Major continued that "I do not think he (Chamberlain) was as naive about Hitler as some people now claim".

Peter Neville's book divides Chamberlain's political career into two distinct components. In domestic affairs Chamberlain was a noted reformer in such areas as local government finance and as Minister of Health. However, it is his policy towards Hitler which has determined many attitudes towards Chamberlain as a politician. Peter Neville puts into context Chamberlain's policy of appeasement. By appeasement Chamberlain meant to conciliate and listen to one's opponent in an attempt to meet grievances. It was only after the Second World War that the term appeasement began to have such unpleasant overtones of cowardice and surrender. The policy of appeasement in the 1930s was born out of several factors. These included Chamberlain's hatred of war stemming from the horrors of trench warfare during the Great War. The fear of Japan's growing power in the Far East led to a reluctance to undertake extensive European commitments. Moreover, Britain's Empire further moved horizons away from the European theatre. American isolationism and suspicions of Stalin further weakened the desire to become over-involved in Europe. Chamberlain's desire for social reform in Britain meant that domestic policy in the early 1930s took precedence over foreign policy. The playing out of crises involving Czechoslovakia and Poland is described alongside the failure of appeasement in September 1939 with the Declaration of War against Germany.

In addition to analysing Chamberlain's domestic and foreign policies, Peter Neville's book includes useful timelines, glossaries and tables. Questions are included at the end of each chapter but the emphasis is very much on knowledge and understanding. These questions would have to be supplemented by examples taken from past examination papers. Inevitably in a book of 124 pages, on a subject so rich in material as Chamberlain, some passages tend towards the anecdotal but this is a very useful book especially in the context of Revised Higher History where it would be a valuable resource for the topic, 'Appeasement and the Road to War.' Earlier chapters of the book on domestic policies would be helpful for Option C, Section A, Britain 1850s - 1979.

PETER HILLIS.

Lloyd George CHRIS WRIGLEY

Blackwell *(Historical Association Studies)*, 1992, 170 pages £19.95 Hbk (£6.95 Pbk)

Lloyd George remains one of the enduringly fascinating figures of twentieth century British politics. He is a classic example of the outsider who succeeded in politics; others being Disraeli, Ramsay MacDonald and perhaps John Major.

Professor Wrigley's short study benefits from the considerable volume of recent research and presents a concise and rounded account of the life of the "Welsh Wizard". The importance of Lloyd George's origins is shown in the importance attached by him to specifically Welsh causes such as Dis-establishment and Home Rule.

Although too advanced for use by School pupils; it gives a good overview for teachers of the British section of the Revised Higher. There are chapters on Lloyd George's evolution from nineteenth century Radicalism to the New Liberalism, his role in the great reforming government of 1906 - 1914, his part in wartime coalition politics culminating in his Premiership, the failure and successes of his peacetime coalition of 1918 - 22, and a particularly absorbing account of his years in opposition.

A sensible path is followed, arriving at a balanced and thoughtful assessment of the man. Lloyd George's alleged deviousness is shown both as a strength and a weakness. A strength because, according to Wrigley, he always had a clear end in view (e.g. his extensive consultations over National Insurance) but a weakness because it made him many political enemies, not least among his own party. As the author says, *he failed to realise just how damaging his means were to his reputation.* This was especially true of his Irish policies and his attempts to destroy the Asquithians, for which he was never forgiven. Yet his achievements — helping lay the foundation of the Welfare State, his War leadership and his early embrace of Keynesianism surely dwarf these criticisms.

This is an excellent study in the *Blackwell Historical Association* series which could be a useful addition to departmental bookshelves in its paperback edition.

DAVID G. ARMSTRONG.

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