

REVIEWS

with Bright's imperial scepticism, akin of course to that of Eurosceptics in the face of 'Federal Europe'.

Against the imperial turn, Cash hails Bright as foreseeing a quasi-Anglo-Atlantic free trade area, while he was one of the foremost defenders of the (protectionist) American Union at the time of the Civil War, although his own supposed republican values diminished his political influence and were belied by his later strong rapport with Queen Victoria. Cash finds much to admire in Bright's American legacy and anticipation of the 'civil rights' movement, although oddly, unlike a number of his Liberal contemporaries, Bright never visited the United States.

Finally in this primarily thematic rather than chronological treatment, Cash rightly devotes much attention to foreign policy, for Bright earned his greatest fame as an opponent of the Crimean War, was a largely consistent critic of Palmerstonian and Disraelian adventurism abroad, and was agonisingly to resign office over British military action in Egypt in 1882. Here his views derived not so much from his Quaker religious beliefs but his identification

with the pacific and non-interventionist foreign policy of his great political friend from the anti-Corn Law campaign, Richard Cobden. Both Cobden and Bright are little remembered today, although they were for a century or more yoked together as the leading pillars of early Victorian Liberalism.

Cash's book, timed for the bicentenary of Bright's birth in 1811, will hopefully revive Bright's memory, although it will do little to advance historical scholarship, for it relies heavily on the work of others, is not abreast of the recent literature, and is marred by errors

of fact and questionable judgements. Indeed at times it fails to do its hero as much justice as it might – for example, it was not the Irish Question but Bright's exploitation of the Orsini incident which led to Palmerston's fall from office in 1858. But one is left to wonder whether historians who turn to political life do so any more successfully than politicians who turn to history.

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Cartoons galore

Alan Mumford: *Drawn at the Hustings: General elections 1722–1935 in caricature and cartoon* (Burke's Peerage and Gentry, 2011)

Reviewed by **Dr Roy Douglas**

CARTOONS HAVE long been used to fill otherwise blank pages in books, or to provide light relief, and many history teachers have found that they make past events and personalities more vivid to their students. But there is today a growing recognition by historians that cartoons are an important historical source in their own right, for they cast important light on ideas and public assumptions in the past.

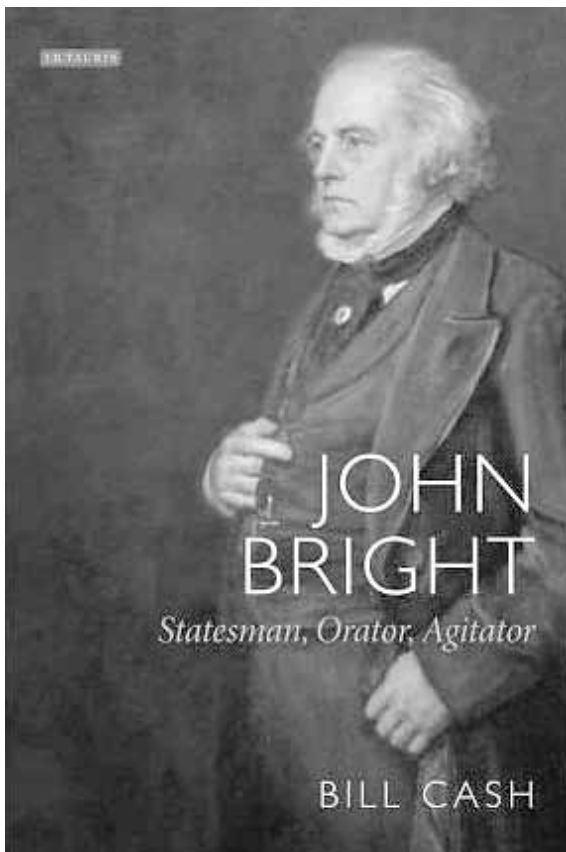
Alan Mumford, the author of this book, has already made a substantial contribution to this development by his cartoon histories of the Labour and Conservative parties which were published by the Political Cartoon Society. His new venture highlights events and personalities associated with general elections over a period of rather more than 200 years. Inevitably, the exploits of Liberals feature largely in the story. The origin of the word 'hustings', used in the title, is dutifully explained.

Some of the cartoon material is familiar. This includes Hogarth's satirical painting of an eighteenth-century election entertainment; Gillray's representation of Pitt as 'a toadstool upon a dunghill'; Tenniel's characterisation of Gladstone at

the height of his powers as 'Pegasus unharnessed' and Spy's caricature of Asquith. Yet a great deal of the material in this book will be unfamiliar to most readers, who will find much to inform as well as much to entertain.

Readers will be interested in a drawing by C. J. Grant, which was produced in 1831, at the height of the 'Reform' debate. It includes what is perhaps the earliest use of the word 'Liberal' as a political designation in a cartoon. Strikingly, the opinions of a 'Liberal' are contrasted not only with those of a 'Tory' but also with those of both a 'Whig' and a 'Radical'.

The drawings range from the lightly satirical to the grim. Just one of the many subjects treated will illustrate that point. W. K. Haselden, in the *Daily Mirror* of 1909, features a suffragette who protests that she has smashed windows, smacked a police inspector's face and knocked his cap off; furthermore, that she has tried to pull a policeman off his horse and has used the whip. 'And yet,' she complains, 'they won't give me the vote!' By contrast, Will Dyson in the *Daily Herald* of 1914 takes a darker view of the suffragette question. He reflects on the fate of



Emily Davison, who had died as the result of a demonstration at the Derby in the previous year. A skeleton in female dress carries a placard, 'Votes for Women'.

Rather surprisingly, Walpole is not much featured, although we have a print of 1740 (for which Walpole seems to have paid), featuring him as 'the English colossus'. Many much more hostile, and occasionally obscene, cartoons of Walpole exist. Although political cartoons had been produced long before Walpole, there is something to be said for the view that it was Walpole himself who – quite inadvertently – gave the political cartoon its real impetus. Other kinds of satire on 'the first Prime Minister' were subjected to legal process, but for practical purposes the cartoon was exempt. Any legal action against the cartoonist would probably go before a London jury. The upshot would almost certainly be a decision in the cartoonist's favour, for Walpole was not loved in London. Once the idea of political cartoons got under way, there was no stopping it.

By contrast, many later politicians are repeatedly featured. Fox and Pitt, Gladstone and Disraeli, Lloyd George and Baldwin, are shown many times, and we have ample sidelights on their careers.

The location in which cartoons appeared is important to the story. Cartoons of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were mostly one-off publications, which sold at a price well beyond the pockets of working people. They might, however, be featured in shop windows, or in pubs and coffee houses. In the 1830s, however, cartoons became prominent in satirical magazines. The prices of (for example) *Figaro in London* (not featured in his book) would have made it accessible at least to skilled artisans. *Punch* first appeared in 1841, and was to remain the leading satirical magazine for well over a century. We are treated to a good deal of material from that source. At first, *Punch* was a really radical publication, deeply critical of poverty and social injustice. *Punch*, in its great days, had very much a mind of its own, and did not hesitate to criticise men of all parties when this seemed appropriate. Only in the twentieth century

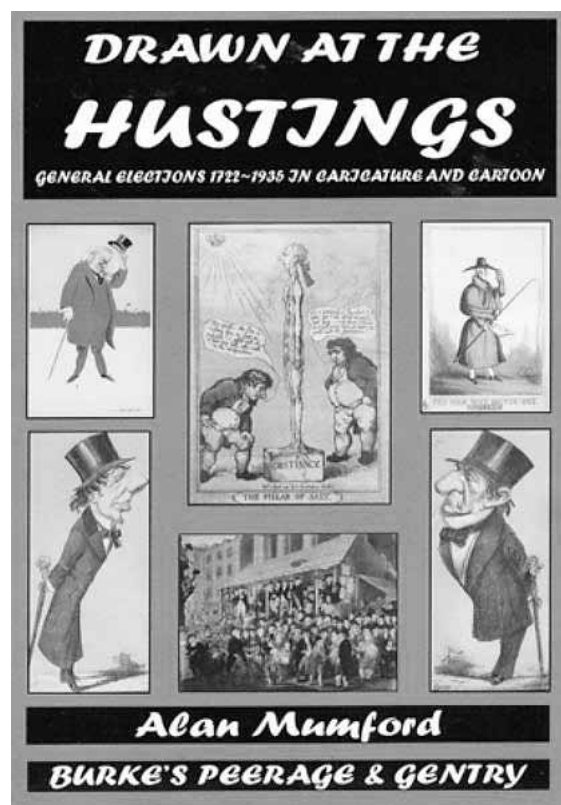
did it become a voice of the establishment, though it never became a party organ. It changed its character again after 1945, but that is outside the purview of the present book.

Punch soon generated rivals, and we see illustrations from two of these. *Judy* was consistently a voice of official Conservative opinion for most of its life, but towards the end, in the early twentieth century, it became more critical – lampooning Conservative Prime Minister Balfour, but extolling Joe Chamberlain. *Fun*, for most of its life, was Liberal, but it eventually broke with Gladstone around the time of his second Irish Home Rule Bill.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, cartoons begin to appear in a few newspapers, but until well after the period of this book the 'quality' press usually avoided them. Liberals were lucky, however, for the very doyen of political cartoonists in the very late nineteenth and early twentieth century was 'FCG' – Sir Francis Carruthers-Gould – who drew for the *Westminster Gazette*. The *Gazette* had a small, but very influential, circulation, mostly in London, and it could be regarded as an authoritative organ of official Liberal opinion.

Some cartoons became so famous that later cartoonists satirised them in a contemporary context. 'The hatch of the season', of January 1906, by AKT, is illustrated in this book. It is not well known, but makes an important point. It shows the new Liberal Prime Minister Campbell-Bannerman as a hen who has just hatched a dangerous-looking chick, the Labour Party. It is based on a cartoon of the 1880s, not illustrated here, where the hen is Gladstone, who is mystified at the duckling Joseph Chamberlain, swimming on the waters of 'Radicalism'.

The author gives much attention in the text to just what happened in the elections, and also to information about the personalities involved. This should make the book easy to follow by readers who are not historians. The most serious blemish in an otherwise very helpful work is that there are a number of factual slips – though these errors do not destroy the value of the book, which provides many



useful sidelights on events and personalities.

Dr Roy Douglas is Emeritus Reader at the University of Surrey, a former Liberal parliamentary candidate, and the author of fifteen books, including The History of the Liberal Party 1895-1970 (1971) and Liberals: The History of the Liberal and Liberal Democrat Parties (2005).

Re-establishing the faith

Continued from page 25

conversion, also secured the backing of his local association. In Bradford South, by contrast, where Herbert Holdsworth delayed until 1938 before opting for the Liberal Nationals, the Liberal Association remained under the control of the mainstream party, though it was significantly weakened by the decision of many prominent activists to put their loyalty to Holdsworth before their commitment to the party under whose colours he had twice been elected. See D. Dutton, 'William Mabane and Huddersfield Politics, 1931-1947: By Any Other Name a Liberal', *Northern History*, xliii, 1 (2006) and D. Dutton, 'Liberal Nationalism and the Decline of the British Liberal Party: Three Case Studies', *Canadian Journal of History*, xliii (2007).