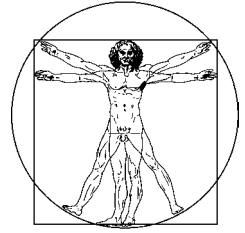


Liberal History



**Liberal Democrat
History Group**

An introductory reading list

The Liberal Democrats draw on a rich heritage of liberal and social democratic traditions stretching back to the seventeenth century. This reading list provides a brief guide to some of the best histories of the party and its predecessors.

General overview

Peace, Reform and Liberation

Robert Ingham and Duncan Brack (eds.) (Biteback, 2011)

A history of Liberal politics in Britain, 1679–2011. The most comprehensive and up-to-date history of the Liberal Party, SDP and Liberal Democrats. If you read only one book, it's this one!

British Liberal Leaders

Duncan Brack, Robert Ingham and Tony Little (eds.) (Biteback, 2015)

Liberal history through biography: the story of the leaders of the Liberal Party, SDP and the Liberal Democrats, from Earl Grey, who led the Whigs through the Great Reform Act of 1832, to Nick Clegg, the first Liberal leader to enter government for more than sixty years.

Mothers of Liberty (Liberal Democrat History Group booklet, second edition, 2017)

The women who built British Liberalism: a booklet of concise biographies, from Mary Wollstonecraft to Shirley Williams.

The Rise and Fall of British Liberalism 1776–1988

Alan Sykes (Addison Wesley Longman, 1997)

From the American Revolution to merger. Was the decline of Liberalism in the twentieth century inevitable?

And if you're looking for something shorter ...

Liberal History (Liberal Democrat History Group booklet, 2017)

Concise history of the Liberal Party, SDP and Liberal Democrats: 350 years in 32 pages. The starting point for Liberal history.

From the beginning to Gladstone

The Whig World

Leslie Mitchell (Hambledon Continuum, 2005)

Political and cultural portrait of the Whigs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain

Jonathan Parry (Yale University Press, 1993)

The successes and crisis of moderate, or Whig, Liberalism from 1830 to 1886.

The Optimists

Ian Bradley (Faber & Faber, 1980)

The ideological perspective of Victorian Liberalism throughout the nineteenth century.

John Stuart Mill: Victorian Firebrand

Richard Reeves (Atlantic Books, 2007)

Outstanding biography of the politician and philosopher voted (by Liberal Democrat conference) the greatest British Liberal.

Gladstone 1809–1898

Colin Matthew (OUP, 1996)

Gladstone dominated Victorian politics and is well served by this single-volume biography from the editor of the Gladstone Diaries.

Zenith and collapse: 1895–1956

The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration, 1886–1929

Geoffrey Searle (second edition, Palgrave, 2001)

From the Third Reform Act to *We Can Conquer Unemployment*, an excellent summary.

Liberal Government and Politics, 1905–1915

Ian Packer (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

The zenith of the Liberal Party: analysis of the record of the great reforming Liberal governments before the Great War.

Asquith

Roy Jenkins (Collins, 1988)

Asquith oversaw the foundation of the welfare state and broke the power of the House of Lords. The elegance of this biography matches the subject.

Lloyd George

Martin Pugh (Longmans, 1988)

The most dynamic, radical and controversial of the Liberal leaders. This is the best short biography.

Coming into Focus

Mark Egan (VDM Verlag, 2009)

The transformation of the Liberal Party, 1945–64: comprehensive treatment of a neglected period.

Towards the sound of gunfire: 1956–

A History of the Liberal Party since 1900

David Dutton (second edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

Elegantly written; the best single-author recent history of the party in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Liberal Lion: Jo Grimond – A Political Life

Peter Barberis (I. B. Tauris, 2005)

A thorough and comprehensive political biography of the most important of the Liberal post-war leaders.

Liberal Party Politics

Vernon Bogdanor (OUP, 1983)

A portrait of the revived party just before it embraced the SDP in the 1980s.

SDP: The Birth, Life and Death of the Social Democratic Party

Ivor Crewe and Anthony King (OUP, 1995)

The title says it all: a comprehensive but highly readable history.

Coalition

David Laws (Biteback, 2016)

The inside story of the Conservative–Liberal Democrat Coalition Government of 2010–15: comprehensive, eye-opening and a great read.

Ideology

An Intelligent Person's Guide to Liberalism

Conrad Russell (Duckworth, 1999)

The evolution of Liberal philosophy from the seventeenth century to the twentieth; elegantly and accessibly written.

The Revival of British Liberalism: From Grimond to Clegg

Tudor Jones (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

A remarkably thorough examination and analysis of Liberal thinking and policy development in the Liberal Party and Liberal Democrats.

Liberal Thinkers (Liberal Democrat History Group booklet, 2014)

Concise biographies of the key thinkers associated with British Liberalism, including John Locke, Adam Smith, Mary Wollstonecraft, Richard Cobden, John Stuart Mill, L. T. Hobhouse, John Maynard Keynes, William Beveridge and many more.

Liberalism (Liberal Democrat History Group booklet, 2015)

Accessible guide to the key ideas underlying Liberal Democrat beliefs, including entries on economics, environmentalism, internationalism and community politics, together with contemporary and historic currents of thought.

Join the Liberal Democrat History Group

The Liberal Democrat History Group promotes the discussion and research of topics relating to the histories of the Liberal Democrats, Liberal Party, and SDP, and of Liberalism. The Group organises discussion meetings and produces the *Journal of Liberal History* and a range of reference books and short booklets.

An annual subscription costs £25 per year (£15 unwaged). To subscribe, to buy any of our publications, and to learn more, see our website at: www.liberalhistory.org.uk.

Published by the Liberal Democrat History Group, 54 Midmoor Road, London SW12 0EN. March 2017.