

socialist, more eclectic. Then in 1956 his friend Crosland produced *The Future of Socialism*, which was a clear intellectual break from the left: nationalisation was increasingly seen as largely irrelevant; what mattered was economic competence leading to faster growth financing improving public services, consumer goods for the working class and increasingly liberal, and European, lifestyles. Crosland's work inspired a generation of social democrats, including Jenkins – and also me (I read the book for the first time aged 18 and together with the contemporaneous writings of J. K. Galbraith in the US and the speeches of Jo Grimond, it helped to frame my own approach to politics, on the fault line between Labour and the Liberals).

Jenkins developed this social democratic thinking in his 1959 book, *The Labour Case*, albeit amidst many of the Labour orthodoxies of the time. This book also opened up a new strand of radical reforming liberalism, making the case for abolition of the death penalty, reform of the law on homosexuality, divorce and abortion, humanising immigration, decriminalising suicide and much else.

As the battles within the Labour Party became more bitter – over nationalisation and nuclear weapons – Jenkins discovered the cause that, more than any other, defined him: Europe. Harold Wilson was, however, initially able to bridge the gap between left and right and get Labour into government, after thirteen years' absence, in 1964. Jenkins was (after a delay) given the Home Office, where he embarked upon the purpose of social reform which cemented his reputation as a true liberal.

Jenkins' long goodbye to the Labour Party revolved around disagreements about Europe in the second Wilson government after 1974. A referendum secured Britain's position in the EU but the Labour Party was seriously divided over the issue, as it was over NATO, industrial

relations policy and the austerity measures that followed from the intervention of the IMF. Jenkins embraced exile in the form of chairmanship of the European Commission, a perfect position in which to establish his credentials as a European statesman and to develop serious thinking about Britain's position in Europe.

Brussels was also where Jenkins began to prepare the split from Labour in the form of the SDP and to build bridges to David Steel's Liberals, which later became the SDP–Liberal Alliance and, thence, the Lib Dems. His finest hour was probably the Hillhead by-election in 1982 where he showed courage in taking on a massive challenge in a city with its own distinctive political culture and of which he had no experience. He gambled and won, giving the SDP enormous credibility (having been a councillor in Glasgow and fought the Hillhead seat myself, for Labour, I can attest to the scale of the task he took on).

The Hillhead campaign also helped to defuse the criticism that he was becoming rather grand and aloof. His critics pointed to the fact that he had developed a taste not just for fine wines but for the company of socialites and the seriously rich. He developed a mannered, rather pompous, style of speaking which became something of a liability in TV interviews (though he could be brilliant with live audiences, as I experienced as a candidate in the 1983 election in York).

He was, flaws and all, one of the most important and influential figures in post-war politics. His copious and brilliant biographical writing would, by itself, mark him out for distinction. He did not just write about but gave substance in office to what we mean both by social democracy and liberalism. And he launched a new political party which, in the form of the Lib Dems, I am now privileged to lead. What would, however, have broken his heart would be to see his legacy of Britain as a European nation trashed today by lesser political mortals.

# Liberal Democrat Leadership

In the summer 2014 edition of the *Journal of Liberal History* (issue 83), a special issue on the first twenty-five years of the Liberal Democrats, we included an article on 'Liberal Democrat leadership' by Duncan Brack. The article included a table comparing the performance of the four Liberal Democrat leaders until 2014 in terms of their personal ratings and party ratings in the opinion polls, performance in general, European and local elections and numbers of party members, at the beginning and end of their leaderships.

Although these statistics of course ignore the political context of the leader's period in office, and can mask large swings within the period – and other, non-quantitative, measures of a leader's performance may be just as, if not more, important – these figures do have value in judging the effectiveness of any given leader.

We have therefore reproduced the table in this issue, extended to include the end of Nick Clegg's leadership, and the whole of Tim Farron's leadership. We hope readers find it of interest.

Leadership performance										
	Ashdown (1988–99)		Kennedy (1999–2006)		Campbell (2006–07)		Clegg (2007–15)		Farron (2015–17)	
<i>Personal ratings (net score satisfied minus dissatisfied (per cent) and date)<sup>a</sup></i>										
When elected	-4	Aug 1988	+11	Aug 1999	+5	Mar 2006	-3	Jan 2008	-7	Sept 2015
Highest during leadership	+58	May 1997	+42	June 2001	+6	May 2006	+53	Oct 2010	-1	Dec 2016
Lowest during leadership	-24	July 1989	+8	June 2004	-13	May 2007	-45	Oct 2012, Sept 2014	-19	May 2017
When stood down	+39	July 1999	+20	Aug 2005	-11	Sept 2007	-21	April 2015	-19	May 2017
Range (highest – lowest)	82		34		19		98		18	
<i>Party poll ratings (per cent and date)<sup>b</sup></i>										
When elected	8	July 1988	17	Aug 1999	19	Mar 2006	14	Dec 2007	10	Sept 2015
Highest during leadership	28	July 1993	26	Dec 2004, May 2005	25	Apr 2006	32	Apr 2010	14	Dec 2016
Lowest during leadership	4	June – Aug, Nov 1989	11	Oct 99, July 00, Jan, May 01	11	Oct 2007	6	Feb 2015	6	Feb, Apr, Sept 2016
When stood down	17	Aug 1999	15	Jan 2006	11	Oct 2007	8	May 2015	7	June 2017
<i>Westminster election performance: Liberal Democrat MPs and vote (%)</i>										
MPs when elected	19		46		63 <sup>c</sup>		63		8	
MPs when stood down	46		62		63		8		12	
Highest election vote (% , date)	17.8	1992	22.0	2005	n/a		23.0	2010	7.4	2017
Lowest election vote (% , date)	16.8	1997	18.3	2001	n/a		7.9	2015	n/a	
<i>European election performance: Liberal Democrat MEPs and vote (%)</i>										
MEPs when elected	0		10		12		12		1	
MEPs when stood down	10		12		12		1		1	
Highest election vote (% , date)	16.7	1994	14.9	2004	n/a		13.7	2009	n/a	
Lowest election vote (% , date)	6.4	1989	n/a		n/a		6.6	2014	n/a	
<i>Local election performance: councillors and vote<sup>d,e</sup></i>										
Councillors when elected	3,640		4,485		4,743		4,420		1,810	
Councillors when stood down	4,485		4,743		4,420		1,810		1,803	
Highest election vote (% , date)	27	1994	27	2003, 2004	25	2006	25	2009	18	2017
Lowest election vote (% , date)	17	1990	25	2002	24	2007	11	2014	15	2016
<i>Party membership<sup>f,g</sup></i>										
Membership when elected	80,104		82,827		72,064		64,728		60,500	
Membership when stood down	82,827		~72,000		~64,000		45,455		~102,000 <sup>h</sup>	
Change (per cent)	+3.4		-13.1		-11.2		-29.8		+68.6	

a Ipsos-MORI series on ‘satisfaction with party leaders’. Ratings are given for the nearest available date to the leader’s election or resignation.

b Ipsos-MORI series on ‘voting intention trends’.

c Willie Rennie was elected in the Dunfermline & West Fife by-election during the 2006 leadership election.

d Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, Elections Centre, Plymouth University. For voting figures, years in which local elections coincided with general elections are excluded.

e The total number of councillors has been falling since the mid 1990s, as unitary authorities

have replaced district councils in some areas; from 1994 to 2013, for example, the total number of councillors fell by about 15 per cent.

f Mark Pack. ‘Liberal Democrat membership figures’, <https://www.markpack.org.uk/143767/liberal-democrat-membership-figures/>; Liberal Democrat HQ.

g Ashdown and Farron each announced their intention to resign in advance, and actually stood down on the election of their successor; the membership figures for the end of their period in office and the start of their successor’s are therefore identical. Kennedy, Campbell and Clegg all resigned with immediate effect; the exact membership figures are not

available for those dates (with the exception of Clegg’s), so figures given here are approximate. While we know that membership increased sharply after Clegg’s resignation, in the run-up to the 2015 leadership election, it is not known whether this happened after Kennedy’s resignation in 2006 or Campbell’s in 2007.

h Since no leadership election took place, there is no confirmed party membership total for July 2017. Liberal Democrat Voice reported on 3 May that membership had reached 101,768, and it is likely that it rose further during the general election campaign.