

does, however, is – despite all the family and local history and political manoeuvring he includes in the book – to make the case for Campbell-Bannerman as a great politician, a superb prime minister and, unusually, a good man.

The biography is therefore chronological in its structure and takes the reader through Campbell-Bannerman's family background, upbringing, personal life, and political career from his election as MP for Stirling Burghs in a by-election in April 1868 followed in the November by the general election that brought Gladstone to power. Within three years he was a junior minister at the War Office before becoming Chief Secretary for Ireland in Gladstone's second ministry in October 1884 and then joining the cabinet as Secretary for War in February 1886. His ministerial career was, however, inevitably overshadowed by the Irish Question which so dominated Gladstone's third and fourth governments. Waugh not only charts Campbell-Bannerman's progress during these years but also looks at his marriage and his family life – including Campbell-Bannerman and his wife's annual visits to the Bohemian spa of Marienbad – and his relationship with his brother, James, Conservative MP for the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen, and subsequently Solicitor-General for Scotland in the Tory governments of the 1880s. They sat on opposite sides of the Commons for twenty-five years and, in a typical Waugh digression, there follows a list of all the other brothers who have sat in different parties in the Commons at the same time. Such is the charm of this book.

Whilst Campbell-Bannerman is not regarded as a major Liberal figure, despite his triumph in the 1906 general election, there are two political events in his life that are better known: his 'methods of barbarism' speech to the National Reform Union, in which he condemned the concentration camps that characterised the final phase of the Boer War; and his triumph over the Liberal Imperialists, Asquith, Haldane and Grey and their so-called Relugas compact, which meant he rather than Asquith led the party into the 1906 election. Both of these are testimonies to those characteristics of

Campbell-Bannerman which Waugh in this book successfully argues have been overlooked: his decent humanity and his often overlooked – by his contemporaries as much as by posterity – political acumen. Indeed, Waugh devotes his final chapter to an appraisal of Campbell-Bannerman as a man, as a constituency MP, as a minister, as prime minister and as a Scot, collating quotations from various Liberal worthies, Tories and constituents all of whom spoke very favourably about him, his character and his ability.

This biography is therefore a very enjoyable read and a reminder (particularly in the current environment) of what could be achieved by an exceptionally competent but unshowy Liberal leader. It does, as I have written above, appeal to those with eclectic interests and those who like to see connections between

people and events: Waugh does this very well and includes a real wealth of these linkages which are always interesting. This is therefore a good addition to the bookshelf of those fascinated by Liberal history and indeed parliamentary history in general, and a welcome contrast to the now rather dated Wilson biography of Campbell-Bannerman. What it is not, however, is a fully rounded biography; it is hard to find a criticism of Campbell-Bannerman in its pages. He does come across as something of a political saint, and at the end that is perhaps the only criticism from this reviewer.

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## Liberalism and the Gladstone salon

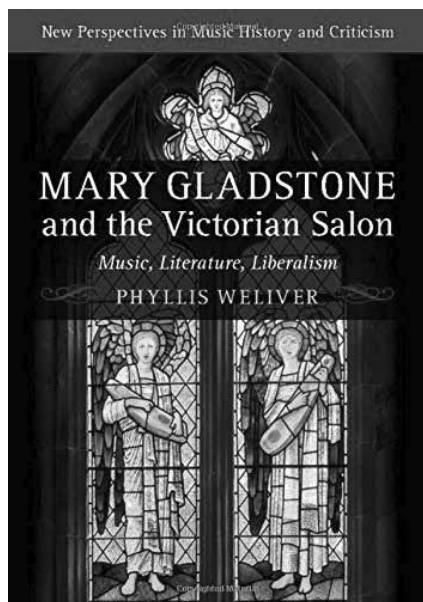
Phyllis Weliver, *Mary Gladstone and the Victorian Salon: Music, Literature, Liberalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Review by **Roger Swift**

**I**N THIS INNOVATIVE and illuminating study, Phyllis Weliver, who is an Associate Professor of English at Saint Louis University, explores the specific role played by Mary Gladstone, the favourite daughter of the great Liberal prime minister William Ewart Gladstone, in late-Victorian salon culture. As Weliver herself acknowledges, this is not a biography of Mary Gladstone, although it tells us much about her life and works; rather, it is an intellectual and cultural study of the ways in which Liberal political ideas were informed by, revealed, and disseminated through Mary's family life and values, friendships, and more especially, through an appreciation of the arts and musical performances which she promoted at the Gladstone salon during the years immediately preceding and following the formation of Gladstone's second ministry of 1880–85.

Born in 1847, Mary was the fifth of William and Catherine Gladstone's eight children and developed a passion for music at an early age, becoming an outstanding pianist who performed before Franz Liszt in 1867 and Arthur Sullivan in 1870. She was also an accomplished violinist and accompanied the virtuoso violinist Joseph Joachim in 1876. When Mary increasingly took over the responsibility of organising the Gladstone salon from her mother in the mid-1870s, she not only developed a reputation within political circles as a notable *salonnière*, displaying a social brightness and a gift for networking in the process, but also ensured that musical performance, as a liberating and elevating experience, became a regular feature of the proceedings.

This study, which builds upon and extends previous publications by Weliver on this subject, comprises two



interconnected sections. The focus of Part 1 lies in intellectual history, and the first four chapters examine, variously, idealist philosophy, culture and the Gladstone family; the passion of Liberalism; the Victorian salon; and music and the Gladstone salon, by reference to the musical elements of Mary's salon hostessing. By contrast, Part 2 explores, through a series of triangulated and critical case-studies: the political elements of music-making and aesthetical criticism with particular reference to Mary Gladstone's life, writing and support for, and association with, the establishment of the Royal College of Music in 1882; Alfred Tennyson's poetical recitations and their impact on William Gladstone's politics, notably in his response to the Eastern Question; and Mary's reading of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, a novel which influenced her life decisions and inspired her contribution to Liberalism.

Within this broader framework, Weliver explores and develops, through Mary Gladstone's various initiatives and activities, the concept of 'lived Liberalism', the idea that Liberalism was not only political but also personal, a moral creed governing a way of life which could be expressed not only through a commitment to human welfare by charitable initiatives and Christian endeavour (as evinced in the contribution made by both Mary and her mother to the work of the Charity Organisation Society and other

philanthropic enterprises) but also through aesthetic qualities, whether in music, poetry or the novel, as the Gladstone salon, and indeed Mary's life and work, epitomised. Here, however, it might have been useful to have considered the extent to which 'lived Liberalism' could be contradistinguished from a concept of 'lived Conservatism', for surely some of the 'Liberal' values which Weliver delineates, and which were essentially Christian and humanist, also permeated Victorian Conservative thought and, indeed, the Tory salon?

As Weliver shows, the Gladstone salon was an invited, at-home conversational gathering of prominent politicians, Anglican clergymen, Oxbridge intellectuals, men of letters, writers, artists, scientists, explorers, publishers, musicians and celebrities – a largely male-dominated social gathering – who discussed a wide range of political, intellectual and cultural issues in the presence of the Grand Old Man himself. The Gladstone salon was held during the parliamentary season either at the Gladstone's London homes at 11 Carlton House Terrace (until 1875) and 4 Carlton Gardens or, during Gladstone's subsequent premierships, at 10 Downing Street; whilst during the parliamentary recess, the Gladstones hosted dinners and soirées at Hawarden Castle. The litany of notable guests who frequently attended these events included John Ruskin, Edward Burne-Jones, Alfred Tennyson, Hubert Parry and Lord Acton. They also included the future Tory prime minister, Arthur Balfour, with whom the Gladstones enjoyed a close friendship and who shared Mary's passion for music. A notable feature of the Gladstone salon was the Thursday Breakfast, held during the London season. As her diaries and letters indicate, Mary Gladstone was primarily responsible for organising the event, issuing invitations to selected guests (who had to be personable, have interesting achievements, and be capable of 'capital talk'), arranging the seating plans (to ensure meaningful and lively conversation), and preparing the post-breakfast entertainment. Normally, between five and fifteen guests, who sometimes included

other members of the Gladstone family and their close relatives, the Lyttletons, would arrive at 10 o'clock in the morning and, while a small group might share one table, a larger group would be split between two. Following a hearty meal accompanied by wine and a convivial conversation lasting for an hour or two, guests would then be treated to a musical performance, a sight-reading of chamber music, or a poetical recitation.

Yet the Thursday Breakfast was more than a social experience and intellectual exercise. In 1876 Gladstone had appointed Mary, who, although not an academic, possessed a shrewd knowledge of Liberal politics and current affairs, as his private secretary (the first female prime ministerial secretary in Britain). She accompanied her father during his famous Midlothian campaign, when he condemned the Bulgarian atrocities and denounced Disraeli's foreign policy. During Gladstone's subsequent premierships, Mary, who shared her father's high church Anglican principles, who possessed strong connections with the Keble College group, and who married the Hawarden curate Harry Drew in 1886, held a particular brief for ecclesiastical affairs and advised and assisted Gladstone in clerical appointments at all levels, championing those candidates who shared her beliefs in aesthetics, idealist philosophy and social theology. These included Edward Benson, appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1882. There was, therefore, a political dimension to Mary's role as a society hostess, for she was regarded by contemporary Liberal politicians as, in Weliver's words, 'a wire puller', someone who 'had Gladstone's ear' and could exert some, albeit 'soft', influence on her father in both private and public spheres prior to his retirement in 1894. This did not, however, extend to the question of women's suffrage, which Gladstone opposed, although Mary lived to see this achieved prior to her death in 1927.

Weliver draws upon an impressive range of primary and secondary sources, including Mary Gladstone's detailed thirteen-volume diary and correspondence, and this fine book,

which is placed firmly in the context of recent historiography, illustrates the ways in which an interdisciplinary study can enhance our understanding of the role and influence of the female hostess in the complex world of elite political culture during the late-Victorian period. As such, it sheds not only new light on the high-Victorian salon, a subject which has received relatively little scholarly attention hitherto, but also on the influence of affluent and privileged women on social change during the late-Victorian period. Moreover, as a welcome addition to the growing body of recent research on members of William Gladstone's family (which includes Ros Aitken's, *The Prime Minister's Son: Stephen Gladstone, Rector of Hawarden*, 2012), Kenneth Brown's *The Unknown Gladstone: The Life of Herbert Gladstone, 1854–1930* (2018) and several of the unpublished papers presented at the Gladstone Conference,

held annually at Gladstone's Library at Hawarden), it also, inter alia, provides additional insights into the personality, politics and private life of William Gladstone himself. In this latter context, Weliver's monograph complements, in many respects, Ruth Clayton Windscheffel's excellent interdisciplinary cultural and intellectual study, *Reading Gladstone* (2008). However, at £78.99 per hardback copy, this important book is probably beyond the purchasing power of both scholars and the general reader, and the publishers should give serious consideration to the production of a paperback edition.

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## Lloyd George and money

Ian Ivatt, *The Financial Affairs of David Lloyd George* (Welsh Academic Press, 2019)

Review by **Vernon Bogdanor**

MUCH HAS BEEN written about Lloyd George's love affairs, but hardly anything on his financial affairs, which were far less successful. He started work at the age of 15 as a trainee solicitor's clerk, earning 15 shillings a week – around £40 in today's money. Elected as the youngest MP in the Commons in 1890, twenty-one years before the payment of MPs, and fifteen years before he could enjoy the salary of a cabinet minister, he had to finance himself even to the extent of providing for his travel expenses between London and his Carnarvon Boroughs constituency. Some money was available from the profits of the family legal firm, and his uncle also gave some help. There were, in addition, fees from occasional journalism. Still, he was for many years in some financial difficulty. In 1907, he was offered an allowance from Liberal

Party funds, but, to his credit, turned it down. 'I am not', he said, 'going to accept charity from the Party'. But at his death in 1945, Lloyd George's estate was worth £139,855 – around £6.5 million in today's money. How did he do it? That is the question which Ian Ivatt, a retired tax accountant, seeks to answer in what is the first serious study of Lloyd George's finances.

Lloyd George loved to exaggerate the poverty of his early circumstances. His uncle, Richard Lloyd, who looked after him following the early death of his father, ran a boot repairing business employing three or four paid assistants, and was actually one of the better off in the small Welsh village of Llanystumdwy, near Criccieth. Lloyd George used to tell the story of how he and his siblings had to share an egg every Sunday, but his brother never remembered 'any such dramatic performance

taking part in any meal of ours'. In this, as in other areas of his life, Lloyd George was a fine romancer. Indeed, it is not too harsh to say that no statement of his should ever be accepted unless corroborated from at least one other source.

In his early years, Lloyd George involved himself in various get-rich-quick schemes, most of which collapsed ignominiously. From 1892, he speculated on gold in Argentina, an enterprise veering on the fraudulent. No gold was discovered, and in the words of Lloyd George's brother, the gold mine turned out 'to be a mere illusion of the Patagonian desert'. The story has been told in greater detail in the first volume of John Grigg's biography. More notorious was the Marconi affair of 1913, in which Lloyd George and other ministers acted disreputably by purchasing shares in the American Marconi Company at a time when the government, as he well knew, was awarding the tender for erecting wireless stations across the empire to the British Marconi Company. The two companies were, admittedly, separate entities, but the British company controlled the American and a rise in the shares of the former, a likely consequence of the government contract, would be likely to have a favourable effect on the shares of the American company. In any case, the chancellor of the exchequer had no business to be

