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## **Welsh Liberal Party 1966-70: New Beginnings and the Challenge of Plaid Cymru<sup>1</sup>**

By the start of the 1960s, the Liberal Party in Wales, (LPW,) stood in the shadows of its former glories. Tracing its roots to the formation of the Welsh National Council in 1887, the Liberal Party had once permeated itself into Welsh life. Although, it might be a gross generalisation to state it, (especially when one remembers that Britain did not enjoy a full and equal franchise until 1928,) but, as the historian K.O. Morgan points out, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Wales was a Liberal country.<sup>1</sup> The dominance of the Liberal Party was unmistakable and can be referenced in the 1906 General Election landslide, when all but one of the 34 seats in Wales took the Liberal whip. In addition, the Liberals were once seen as the nationalist party within Wales, aligning itself with the chapel culture, fighting for home rule and the disestablishment of the Church in Wales.

By the 1950s, this status had been assigned to the history books. The Liberals in Wales, as in the rest of Britain, had been pushed to the margins and were barely hanging on. The First World War, coupled with the in-fighting and splits that had dominated the Liberals from 1916, when David Lloyd George took over as Prime Minister from Asquith; to the three-way split prior to the 1931 General Election, where there were effectively three different Liberal Parties in existence, encompassed a period that saw the Labour Party oust the Liberals as a party of government and consolidate its own position as one of the two main political parties. In Wales, the industrial areas had also succumbed to Labour, eventually pushing the Liberals into rural constituencies and relegating them to third party status.

These splits, along with the Second World War, would have a detrimental effect on the Liberal organisation in Wales; as it diverted the attention of the Liberal leadership away from matters such as its organisation towards the war effort. During the War, party politics had largely been suspended and the lack of electoral activity probably hastened the decline of the local associations. The real test for the Liberal Party in Wales came after the war. The Liberal MP for Montgomeryshire, Clement

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<sup>1</sup> I am very grateful for the advice and encouragement received from Duncan Brack and the reviewers of the Journal.

Davies, who would lead the Liberal Party from 1945 until 1956, spent much of his leadership pre-occupied with keeping Liberalism alive in England and Scotland, with little time to worry about the organisation in Wales.

The full blame cannot be laid entirely at the leaderships feet. Due to the General Election results, Wales was probably a victim of its perceived success. In 1945, seven of the twelve Liberal MPs came from Wales; in 1950 Wales returned five of the nine Liberal MPs, in 1951 three out of the six Liberals came from Wales and this was repeated in 1955.<sup>2</sup> So, in some ways, it is understandable that the Liberals in Wales were left to their own devices whilst bigger issues were being tackled.

However, the 1959 General Election results should have shown how far Welsh Liberalism had fallen, when just two of the six MPs came from Wales.<sup>3</sup> Coupled with this, in 1959 just eight candidates contested Wales' 36 seats, compared to 21 in 1950. These numbers highlight that something fundamental had happened in Wales, that, at a minimum, meant that organisational change was required. The two federations, Northern and Southern, had largely become autonomous of each other, providing no clear strategy, withholding funds and barely fielding candidates at election time. There were also constituencies that had not been fought since the 1930s. Not only that, the declining influence of non-conformism in Wales had robbed the Liberals of their Welsh nationalist identity. This allowed another party, Plaid Cymru, to occupy the nationalist space.

However, Liberalism in Wales was about to gain its champion, one that would look to revitalise the movement and challenge Labour's hegemony. Upon the 1962 death of Clement Davies, the QC Emlyn Hooson became the Liberal MP for Montgomeryshire and one of just two Liberal MPs in Wales, the other being Roderic Bowen. Hooson was also the only one of the two with the drive and desire to effectively change the party; Hooson believed that a revival of the Liberal tradition within Wales could be achieved and that such a revival was needed to defeat the Labour Party.

Part of Hooson's vision for this revival was to create a party that was truly 'Welsh' in its name, outlook and policies. The 1966 formation of the Welsh Liberal Party, (WLP,) was designed to repackage the Liberal Party of Wales into a modern

political outfit. Hooson had to jettison the old structure and bring the North and South Wales Federations under a single organisational structure.

The main aim of this article will be to show that the initial few years of the WLP were, in many ways, quite disappointing for the Liberals. There was no electoral breakthrough in the 1960s and the in-fighting that had troubled the LPW continued into the new party. This, coupled with resignations, a lack of electoral success and strategy showed Hooson's vision was in danger of being compromised.

The article will also draw parallels with Plaid Cymru. The reason for comparing these two parties is that, by the end of the 1960s, they were in the same electoral position, having just one MP. Both were also jostling for third place behind Labour and the Conservatives. Also, both had some similar and overlapping policies and were looking for a breakthrough that would allow them to consolidate their own position. But, the wind would be behind Plaid Cymru's sails; scoring some very impressive electoral successes and rocking both the Labour Party and the WLP's hopes of a revival.

### **Hooson's Election**

Following the March 1962 death of the former Liberal leader, Clement Davies, Emyln Hooson stood in the May by-election for the Montgomeryshire seat. This contest took place just a couple of months after the Liberals achieved a stunning by-election victory in Orpington. There, the candidate, Eric Lubbock, overturned a large Conservative majority which gave some momentum to a perceived mini-Liberal revival within Britain, one that it was hoped Hooson could benefit from.

However, success in the seat was not guaranteed, as Hooson would face a strong opposition from the other parties. Also, there was a general belief that Clement Davies had benefitted from a personal vote and could not be unseated.<sup>4</sup> It is not hard to see how this belief arose because, out of the eight General Elections that Davies fought in the seat between 1929 and 1959, he had only really come close to losing his seat in 1945. His record shows that he stood unopposed twice, (1931 and 1935); faced one other opponent three times, (Conservative in 1945, Labour in 1951 and 1955), and had thrice faced two opponents, (Labour and Conservative candidates in 1929, 1950 and 1959.) However, when one looks more closely at this, in the 1930s Davies was a National Liberal, a break off party from the

Liberals that had aligned itself with the Conservatives. As such, the Conservatives did not place a candidate against him in this decade. This lack of opposition meant Davies was able to establish himself in a seat that was largely rural, small 'c' conservative and largely hostile towards socialism.

By 1942 Davies' political allegiance had seen him realign himself with the Liberal Party and, as already noted, the Conservative's did then place a candidate against him in 1945. In a constituency that has generally been quite conservative, with a small 'c', the candidate took a 43.7 per cent share of the vote. This showed just how precarious the seat could be for Davies and would later become for Hooson.

Indeed, in 1959 the Conservative candidate was viewed as the primary threat to the seat. Davies' ill-health, due to alcoholism, may have been a reason for the entry of the Conservatives. In the event, they polled a respectable second with 31.3 per cent of the vote to Davies' 42.1 per cent, slashing his previous 1955 majority from 8,500 to just 2,794.<sup>5</sup>

Hooson must have known that he potentially faced an uphill battle to retain it for the Liberals. The 1950's had seen the Liberal Party in Wales struggling to survive. For example, the 1951 General Election saw the loss of Emrys Roberts' Merionethshire seat and Megan Lloyd George's Anglesey seat, leaving Wales with just three Liberal MPs. Lloyd George's defection to Labour in 1955, (followed by her subsequent by-election win, in 1957, of the Liberal held Carmarthenshire seat,) seemed to confirm that the Liberals were standing on a precipice within Wales. Losing Montgomeryshire would mean the Liberals would have been left with just one representative in Wales, Ceredigion's Roderic Bowen.

To add to the difficulty, the by-election saw Hooson face a three-pronged attack from Labour, the Conservatives and, for the first time, Plaid Cymru. This was a daunting prospect because, as a generalised rule of thumb stretching back to the 1920s, whenever a Liberal candidate fought a seat against more than one opponent they would either lose the seat or see a dramatic drop in their share of the vote.<sup>6</sup> During the contest, the Conservatives threw all their backing behind their candidate, with some of the big hitters of the day heading to the constituency, but to no avail. Hooson regained much of the ground that had been lost in 1959, obtaining a majority

of 7,549 votes, on 51.3 per cent of votes cast.<sup>7</sup> The Conservative vote dropped by 10 per cent and, despite losing their deposit, Plaid Cymru's candidate appears to have eaten into the Labour Party's share of the vote. (See table 1 & 1a). The retention of the seat gave a much-needed morale boost to the Liberals within Wales and showed that the party still had some signs of life.

**Table 1, 1959 General Election results in Montgomeryshire.**

<b><u>Candidate</u></b>	<b><u>Party</u></b>	<b><u>Votes</u></b>	<b><u>Vote %</u></b>
Clement Davies	Liberal Party	10,970	42.1
F. Leslie Morgan	Conservative	8,176	31.3
D. Caradog Jones	Labour	6,950	26.6
	<i>Majority</i>	<i>2,794</i>	<i>10.8</i>

Source: Jones, Beti, *Welsh Elections 1885-1997*, (Ceredigion, 1999), p106.

**Table 1a: 1962 By-Election results in Montgomeryshire, 15/05/1962.**

<b><u>Candidate</u></b>	<b><u>Party</u></b>	<b><u>Votes</u></b>	<b><u>Vote %</u></b>
Emlyn Hooson	Liberal Party	13,181	51.3
R H Dawson	Conservative	5,632	21.9
T Davies	Labour	5,299	20.6
Islwyn Ffowc Elis	Plaid Cymru	1,594	6.2
	<i>Majority</i>	<i>7,549</i>	<i>29.4</i>

Source: Jones, Beti, *Welsh Elections 1885-1997*, (Ceredigion, 1999), p106.

### **Plaid Cymru and the Parliament for Wales Campaign**

Hooson's retention of Montgomeryshire coincided with an increased amount of electoral activity from Plaid Cymru. Plaid Cymru had been formed in 1925, with Saunders Lewis as its first president from 1926-1939. From its inception, Plaid built a reputation as a pressure group that fought for the Welsh Language and culture. The party wanted to foster an independent nation and attracted people from across the political spectrum. In 1945 Gwynfor Evans was elected as Plaid's president and sought to engage with other political parties to further the aims of the party. Plaid's

image of being a pressure group "...that just happened to put up candidates for election,"<sup>8</sup> began to change in the 1950s.

Initially, Plaid's involvement in the Parliament for Wales campaign saw the party sharing a platform with leading Liberals and members of other political parties. The campaign began at a June 1950 meeting of Undeb Cymru Fydd, (New Wales Union), where they had asked Megan Lloyd George, daughter of David the former Prime Minister, to be the campaign president.<sup>9</sup> Lloyd George had also grown increasingly frustrated at the lack of consideration afforded to Wales within Parliament and saw this as an ideal opportunity to raise the status of Wales. The campaign's aim was to gather a million signatures in support of a Welsh Parliament. The Liberal involvement in the campaign was down to Lloyd-George and Emrys Roberts, two members who were seen to be the most radical within the Liberal Party.<sup>10</sup> This overt-radicalness, coupled with sharing a platform with Labour and Plaid, meant their involvement was treated with suspicion in a party that had become quite conservative. Lloyd George and Roberts lost their seats in 1951. However, Lloyd George continued with her involvement in the campaign, but the Liberal commitment had all but ended. Equally, the Welsh Labour involvement was also small and many within that party were against it on the basis that such issues could divide the working class of Britain, rather than foster a sense of solidarity.<sup>11</sup> Plaid Cymru, including its president Gwynfor Evans, were avid supporters and provided much of the foot work for the campaign. Although it did not achieve its immediate objectives, gathering just 250,000 signatures and failing to pass a Parliament for Wales Bill in 1955, the campaign did place the issue of government representation for Wales on the political map.

### **Plaid Cymru and Tryweryn**

The Parliament for Wales campaign was not the only issue that Plaid was involved with in the 1950s. Arguably, the greatest test for Plaid's claim to be a relevant political voice came with the proposed and subsequent flooding of the Tryweryn Valley to provide drinking water for Liverpool. The plan involved the flooding of a village within the valley, Capel Celyn, resulting in the relocation of its residents. There were fears that Welsh was becoming a dying language, the

destruction of a Welsh speaking community was viewed, by many, as akin to cultural homicide.

Plaid Cymru's leadership certainly viewed the Tryweryn issue in these terms, mounting a campaign that involved demonstrations and passive resistance against the building of a dam. For many within Wales, there was no bigger example of how Welsh voices were able to be silenced than the sight of 35 out of 36 Welsh MPs voting against the Bill that would allow the flooding. All of whom were rendered impotent by the number of English MPs voting for the Bill, which was passed in 1957. The single abstaining Welsh MP, the Conservative for Cardiff North David Llewellyn, who called the Tryweryn scheme 'majestic.'<sup>12</sup> Despite further protests and a sabotage campaign by some fervent Welsh nationalists, the reservoir formally opened in 1965.

Politically, the Parliament for Wales campaign and the flooding of Tryweryn had begun to change the thinking within Plaid. Did they want to be a political party or a pressure group? These events had clear nationalistic implications and provided a higher profile for the party and, in the process, showed that it could tackle the bigger political issues. For Gwynfor Evans, these events showed that it was time to expand the party's electoral work.<sup>13</sup> Although it was not an instant success, Plaid Cymru's Dr Phil Williams pointed to this period as the turning point for Plaid.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, Saunders Lewis' famous 1962 radio lecture entitled 'The Fate of the Language,' was rallying cry to save the Welsh language which, according to the 1961 census, had declined in usage. This inspired the formation of Cymdeithas yr Iaith, (The Welsh Language Society.) The society's formation allowed the language issue, which had become something of a millstone around Plaid's neck, to be hived off and allowed the party to concentrate on its reorganisation.

### **Plaid Cymru's Reorganisation**

In terms of elections, Plaid had noticed some effect. The 1955 General Election saw eleven candidates obtain a 3.1 per cent of the vote.<sup>15</sup> In 1959, at the height of the Tryweryn campaign, the party fielded twenty candidates and took 5.2 per cent of the vote.<sup>16</sup> In contrast to this, the Liberals fielded ten candidates in 1955, gaining 7.3 per cent<sup>17</sup> of the vote and, in 1959, just eight stood and they saw their vote share fall to 5.3 per cent.<sup>18</sup> Just over a thousand votes separated Plaid from the



Liberals. The 1959 General Election shows a clear change in Plaid Cymru's electoral strategy, giving the Liberals a sharp awakening. Nearly everywhere that a Liberal candidate stood in Wales, they faced a Plaid candidate. Despite this, the appeal of Plaid Cymru was still rather limited by the 1960s, even in areas that were traditionally Welsh speaking.<sup>19</sup> Part of this was down to its organisational structures and lack of credible policies.

From the start of the 1960s, with the influx of a new, modernising team at the top of the party, many of whom joined in the wake of the Tryweryn campaign, Plaid began to look at its organisational structures and realised that it was lacking in direction. The reorganisation that took place included encouraging the formation of youth groups and placing more of a focus on community politics, just as the Liberal Party in England had begun to do in this period.<sup>20</sup>

Plaid began to move towards a more centre left position during the 1960s, focusing more on policy issues and the Welsh economy. They lent their support to issues such as a Welsh Transport Board, a Welsh Water Board and a Welsh Power Board. Perhaps the most significant policy formation was Plaid Cymru's *Economic Plan*, which was formulated in the 1960s and finally published in 1970. This report focused on the problems of depopulation, the decline of coal and slate mining, as well as the importance of tourism to the economy of Wales.<sup>21</sup> This was a standout piece of policy formation and has been credited with showing Plaid could match the other parties in terms of policy. The plan reflected the political changes within Plaid and Wales. It also helped to provide the momentum for the political successes of 1974.<sup>22</sup>

Although funds were always an issue, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Plaid found contesting by-elections was a useful way of drumming up publicity and for getting its message across. Out of the twelve by-elections held in Wales between 1951 and 1968, Plaid contested every single one of them, whereas the Liberals contested just half of them.<sup>23</sup> Although an expensive strategy, Plaid could gain more exposure in some quite heated by-election contests than they could at a General Election. In addition, Plaid would find its funds and manpower stretched when contesting General Elections but, in this period, they could target a by-election seat with a concerted campaign.

### **The Liberal Party as the Nationalist Party**

On the surface, the historian Laura McAllister's belief that the decline of the Liberal Party allowed a political space to for a new nationalist party<sup>24</sup>, holds some water. Especially as the Liberals in Wales could lay claim to being the original nationalist party.

By the 1960s, the overtly nationalist aspect of the Liberal Party would appear to have become a relic of its past. After all, the Liberal Party of the nineteenth and early twentieth century had actively sought to reduce the influence of the English state on Wales, aligning itself with the chapel culture and advocating the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Wales and its influence on education. By championing these causes, the Liberal Party was overtly expressing its Welshness. However, the emergence of Plaid Cymru almost coincided with the beginning of the end of the Liberals hegemony in Wales. Although it would take over 30 years for Plaid to make electoral headway, there is no denying that nationalism within Wales was changing and they would take full advantage of it. The Liberals influence of nationalism on the Liberals began to wane as the chapel took on less importance in Welsh life and appeared to be completed with the disestablishment of the Church, which finally occurred in 1920. The nationalism portrayed by the Liberals had not evolved, at least not in the electorates eyes. For nationalists, Plaid's focus on independence and the Welsh language and culture, held more sway than the Liberals past glories.

However, there were instances where the Liberals had remained contemporaneous to Welsh nationalism. For example, one of its longer held policies, that could be seen to overlap somewhat with those of Plaid, was the Liberals commitment to providing home rule to Wales, albeit within a federal UK. The LPW also remained a broader church than most would give it credit for, as there were influential elements that held onto the idea that to be a Liberal was also to be a nationalist. In this vein, Megan Lloyd George had championed an annual Wales Day in Parliament and asserted during the Parliament for Wales campaign, that:

'I am not ashamed to be called a nationalist. I am first and foremost a Welshwoman.'<sup>25</sup>

In addition, the Liberals 1959 General Election manifesto for Wales, entitled *A New Deal for Wales*, set out some quite radical and nationalist proposals. These included the establishment of a Welsh language third television channel, a Welsh Water Board and the establishment of Welsh language secondary and grammar schools. Co-authored by Hooson, Deacon notes that, except for independence, this manifesto was as nationalist as anything produced by Plaid.<sup>26</sup> These proposals would be expanded upon in later manifestos and would be the core of Welsh Liberal policy.

Policy would further overlap in 1965, when Hooson commissioned and published a report, entitled *The Heartland: A Plan for Mid-Wales*, which enshrined three main proposals: to establish a Rural Development Corporation to encourage industry within the existing towns; an overhaul of rural transport, including the building of better roads and rail links between north and south Wales; the expansion of Aberystwyth to 60,000 people within thirty years. This last recommendation was based on Aberystwyth being easily accessible from the north and south, whilst being far enough away from Birmingham to stop it being a satellite of that city.<sup>27</sup> Although the content of the document would be updated and used in manifestos from the 1960s onwards, it did not have the transformative electoral effect Plaid's plan. Following the publication of Hooson's plan, the Labour government published its own plan for Wales, rendering Hooson's plan to be politically redundant. Plaid's *Economic Plan* was published after Labour's and was framed as more of a response to that.

Despite this, the document showed that the Liberals were looking at solutions to problems that were specific to Wales and this was part of Hooson's plan to re-assert the Liberal brand within Wales. He wanted the Liberals to be viewed as a Welsh party, tackling Welsh issues, and not a satellite of the English party. Hooson would have been aware that Plaid Cymru was the main rival to the Liberals and he realised that the party had to offer a distinctly Welsh vision to the voters. The Liberals had to offer a form of nationalism that was different to that of Plaid.

However, whilst in the process of trying to make the LPWs policies different to Plaid Cymru's, there was the odd mishap along the way. Both the 1964 and 1966 General Election manifestos called for a Council for Wales, rather than the Parliament that had been called for in previous manifestos. Hooson had wanted to

separate the policy of the Liberals to those of Plaid. Hooson viewed it as more of a matter of semantics, as the Council would enjoy the same powers as those of the Scottish Parliament, which the Scottish Liberals were calling for.<sup>28</sup> However, the policy was felt to have hampered the electoral chances of the Liberals in those areas where Plaid was deemed to be a threat. The feeling was that Plaid was able to make capital out of the Liberals retreat on a major policy.<sup>29</sup> Hooson, for his part, wanted the Liberals to emphasise the role of Wales within a federal United Kingdom.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Reorganisation of the Liberal Party in Wales**

If the 1959 General Election proved anything, it was that Plaid Cymru had become an electoral threat to the Liberals. However, this was not all down to Plaid challenging the Liberals in their heartlands in the rural north, but, also had a lot to do with the organisational issues within the Liberal Party.

Organisationally, the LPW had become unfit for purpose and it was an area that had been neglected and ignored for decades. This neglect was due to the leadership of the party focusing on keeping the Liberals afloat during the 1940s and 1950s, leaving very little time to focus on Wales. The party in Wales was split into two federations, one in the north and the other in the south, with the Liberal Party in Wales being an umbrella organisation for these federations. A lack of discipline from the centre categorised the workings of the organisation in Wales and it meant that the federations, as well as the local associations, saw themselves as autonomous entities.

When historians write about Wales, particularly in terms of politics, they tend to point out the concept of a north/south divide. This divide is based on different interpretations of what it means to be Welsh and generally runs along language and cultural lines. In simple terms, the south is more anglicised and generally opposes any cultural imposition from the north and the Welsh speaking north is against the Anglicisation of Wales. The North and South Federations were a microcosm of this cultural divide. The northern federation supported a Welsh Liberal Party that was distinct from the English party and the southern federation was largely anglicised and resisted any form of domination from the Welsh speaking north.<sup>31</sup>

The mutual suspicion that existed between the federations, coupled with their relative autonomy, meant they never had a coherent or collaborative electoral

strategy. They often refused to field candidates for local and parliamentary elections, usually citing the lack of finances or suitable candidates.

It is interesting to note that there was a reluctance to party politicise local elections in Wales, a situation that had existed elsewhere but had held on longer within Wales. This may have hampered the Liberal brand. Those who had sympathy with the LPW, often stood as independents.<sup>32</sup> Although not peculiar to the Liberals, as it affected all the parties, its rivals were seeking to influence a change by consciously placing party candidates. The fractious nature of the Liberal organisation in Wales meant it was unable to follow suit.

Even at the constituency level, the local associations would choose their General Election candidates at will and felt able to ignore any concerns from the Liberal Party Organisation.<sup>33</sup> Again, this was not specific to Wales, but, these actions were not conducive to keeping the Liberal brand alive in Wales.

Martin Thomas, from the North Federation, pointed out the trouble that existed with the Federations was that:

Internally, the North Wales Federation is practically functionless...The South Wales Federation is as remote to the North as the Timbuctoo Young Liberals. To the outsider, it resembles a loose scrum between the Lions and the All Blacks: a static heaving mass with most of the action taking place in the middle out of the referee's eye.<sup>34</sup>

When it came to fighting the General Elections during the 1960's, the lack of organisation would be the main concern within the LPW. Hooson's by-election win was a morale boost to the LPW and there were strong expectations for the 1964 General Election. These expectations would not be met and, although, the LPWs overall share of the vote markedly increased, the party would retain just 2 MPs. Ironically, both MPs saw their share of the vote fall with Bowen's seat, once a Liberal stronghold, becoming a Labour/Liberal marginal seat. Elsewhere in Wales, there was no coherent strategy behind the selection of candidates and where they stood.<sup>35</sup> To give one example, two of the former Liberal strongholds in north Wales, Caernarfon and Conwy, were not even contested by the party. In south Wales the executive members of the South Wales Liberal Federation stood in several the key constituencies.<sup>36</sup> This can either be taken as a sign of the inadequacies of the

southern federation to engage in an effective candidate selection process; there were no candidates who would stand as a Liberal or the executives were engaging in a form of political nepotism. Either way, it highlighted that there was a need for change.

The March 1966 General Election saw the LPW hit rock bottom. Bowen, so confident of the Liberal vote within Ceredigion, barely fought for the seat, losing out to Labour by a mere 523 votes.<sup>37</sup> Bowen had neglected his seat for a few years, never truly believing that Labour had a chance of taking the seat. Like Hooson, he was a barrister and had continued with his law career whilst being an MP, giving rise to accusations that he was an absentee MP. His desire to become the Speaker in the House of Commons, following the death of the previous speaker, was met with outright hostility from his parliamentary colleagues. Labour did not want to put a candidate forward, as it would reduce its majority to one MP and the Conservatives did not put anyone forward, as it would have increased the Labour majority. Towards the close of the 1964 parliament, Bowen had become the Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means, deputy speaker in all but name. This meant Bowen was in a neutral non-voting position and had, in effect, propped up an ailing Labour Government and quashed any hope of the Liberals influencing Labour policy.

Bowen's loss was indicative of how far Liberalism in Wales had fallen. Hooson realised that time was not on the LPWs side and looked to reform the party.

Hooson's idea was to reform the LPW, along the lines of that enjoyed by the Scottish Liberal Party. Hooson was impressed by the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the federated Scottish Liberal Party and its ability to raise funds and appeal to the electorate by highlighting its links to Scotland simply through its name.

On 4 June 1966, in Aberystwyth, an Extraordinary meeting of the Executive of the Liberal Party in Wales met to consider the proposals of Hooson's working group on reforming the party.<sup>38</sup> These proposals were that:

- a) The name of the Party be changed to the Welsh Liberal Party (WLP)
- b) A constitution similar to that of the Scottish Liberal Party be adopted

c) The Welsh Liberal Party should become an independent Liberal Party and responsible for organised Liberalism in Wales.

d) The North and South Wales Federations should be abolished.

The majority of delegates at this meeting voted to accept the proposed changes, (with 37 voting for the decision, 14 against and 1 abstention),<sup>39</sup> and recommended them to be adopted at the annual meeting in September 1966. On the 10<sup>th</sup> September 1966, the Welsh Liberal Party came into being.

### **Problems within the WLP**

With 14 votes against, though, it was evident that some members of the Executive were not happy about the proposed changes. Even before this meeting and the formal adoption in September, there were elements within the South Wales Liberal Federation who did not want to accept Hooson's changes. Among them was John Gibbs, the Secretary of the South Wales Federation. Gibbs had anonymously leaked a copy of a North Wales Federation resolution, which endorsed Hooson's plans, to the *Western Mail*. Gibbs alleged that the party had not been briefed about any proposed changes, intimating that it was a plan by the North Wales Federation to impose radical change on the rest of the party.<sup>40</sup> With the item also making the local BBC News, the party was forced to issue a statement that confirmed Hooson's plans.<sup>41</sup>

Linked to this, there was some reluctance for some constituencies in south Wales to affiliate with the WLP. Gibbs' own association in Maesteg did not affiliate with the party until March 1967.<sup>42</sup>

Another local association, this time in Cardiff, had been hit by a scandal precipitated by the resignation and defection of the only Liberal on the city council. The issue played out on the pages of the local press and attracted a fair bit of attention. As it had not affiliated with the WLP, Hooson advocated the disbandment of the City of Cardiff Liberal Party.<sup>43</sup> It would eventually be told to cease using the party name.

The bad press was serious enough, but the loss of some prominent members of the WLP would have had an effect on Hooson's morale. Notable amongst these was Bob Morgan, a member of the Policy Directorate, who left to join the Labour

Party. He viewed the Labour Party as the best hope of opposing the nationalist upsurge in Wales.<sup>44</sup> This was a charge that Hooson opposed; stating his belief that Labour's monolithic hold on South Wales will be destroyed by the nationalists, although he did not believe that nationalism would last.<sup>45</sup> Another prominent resignation was published in the *Western Mail* and read by Hooson on the train to London.<sup>46</sup>

### **III Defined Roles**

Following the founding of the WLP, Hooson had sought to be its President, rather than the General Secretary, as he wanted to give the WLP its political direction rather than its organisational one.<sup>47</sup> In the event, neither role would be Hooson's. The General Secretary role would, in January 1967, be awarded to Mary Murphy, who also held the Chair of the Pontypridd Urban District Council.<sup>48</sup> Although her role has been described as the chair of the new party,<sup>49</sup> it is clear from Hooson's correspondence that the role she had been offered was that of General Secretary. The role of President would eventually go to Lord Ogmores. Why Hooson did not take up one of the roles is not exactly clear, but Ogmores had the pedigree of having been president of the Liberal Party from 1963–64.<sup>50</sup> However, as the founder of the WLP, as well as its only MP, many looked to Hooson as the de-facto leader. Indeed, he was instrumental in setting up both the Steering Committee and the Policy Directive Committee. This led to confusion as to what his actual role was and, in turn, undermined Murphy's role. Not only was Murphy's role ill-defined, so too were the roles within the committees and many of these roles were overlapping.

The overlap in roles caused a lot of confusion. Murphy became the victim of a gossip campaign, ostensibly about her contribution to the annual conference. Many believed she should have had a major hand in the organisation of the conference, despite not being the Conference Secretary. This animosity led to her resignation,<sup>51</sup> just seven months after accepting the role, although she would still be in post in June 1968 when Emlyn Thomas took over as General Secretary.<sup>52</sup> This was preceded by the resignation of the actual Conference Secretary, Leslie Jones, who was quite scathing about Mary's role and her perceived lack of leadership.<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps the most ill-defined role belonged to Emlyn Thomas. The party had acquired significant funding for the post of General Secretary, but Thomas appears



to have been left to his own devices in the Liberals Aberystwyth HQ. Many within the party did not understand or know what his role entailed and there is evidence to show that Thomas was finding it to be a struggle and beyond his capabilities.<sup>54</sup> By the time Thomas left his post in 1970, just prior to the General Election, he left the party with a lot of debt that it just managed to clear before the election.

### **Failing the Electoral Test**

The July 1966 Carmarthen By-Election sent shock waves through the British political establishment. What made it so spectacular was that a prominent Welsh Labour seat should fall so spectacularly to the nationalists, who had come third behind the Liberals in the March 1966 General Election. (See table 2). The Liberals felt the seat was winnable, due to the fact it had previously been a Liberal seat and was held by a very prominent former Liberal. Whether or not, as Deacon claims, the Liberals lost their chance at gaining the seat because the Liberal candidate personally attacked Evans,<sup>55</sup> thus angering many nationalists, the effect was shocking. It showed that Plaid were able to undermine Labours hegemony within Wales and at the expense of the Liberals.

However, by the time of the next by-election, held in the Rhondda West constituency during March 1967, the WLP were able to contest elections under its new banner. This may have been an ideal time to present the party to Wales and gain some much-needed exposure. However, the WLP did not contest the seat and Plaid Cymru put in another exceptional performance, reducing the Labour majority from 16,888 in the General Election to just 2306 in the by-election. (See table 3.) The decision for the WLP not to stand was down to a few issues.

The primary reason was that the WLP's local organisation had not been cultivated for decades. This meant the Steering Committee were reluctant to put forward a candidate unless they were a well-known personality, for fear of losing in a constituency that could not support a candidate. Hooson was scornful of this decision, stating that:

'I think their decision was wrong and all I hope is that we have learnt our lesson.'<sup>56</sup>

Despite Hooson’s scorn, the Steering Committee were quite correct not to field a candidate. The Liberals last contested the seat in 1929, whereas Plaid Cymru had been contesting it since the 1950 General Election. Plaid had an electoral history in this seat, which the WLP simply did not have. The organisation was just not in place at this point and the committee decided to err on the side of caution.

However, Hooson’s condemnation, as well as that of many members, had the desired effect and, in July 1968, the WLP decided to contest the Caerphilly By-Election. Again, this constituency had not been contested by the Liberals since 1929 and was devoid of Liberal activity. This was reflected in the results. The WLP polled last place with just 3.6 per cent of the vote. Plaid’s candidate, Dr Phil Williams, reduced the Labour majority from 21,148 to just 1,874.<sup>57</sup> (See table 4.) Ironically, Hooson’s attitude had changed in the period between the Rhondda West and Caerphilly by-elections, remarking:

**Table 2: The Carmarthen 1966 General Election and By-Election Results**

<b><u>Party</u></b>	<b><u>1966 G. Election-Votes</u></b>	<b><u>% of votes</u></b>	<b><u>1966 By-Election – Votes</u></b>	<b><u>% of votes</u></b>
<b>Labour (Megan Lloyd George / G. Prys Davies)</b>	<b>21,221</b>	<b>46.2</b>	13,743	33.1
Liberal Party (D. Hywel Davies)	11,988	26.1	8,650	20.8
<b>Plaid Cymru (Gwynfor Evans)</b>	7,416	16.1	<b>16,179</b>	<b>39.0</b>
Conservative (Simon Day)	5,338	11.6	2,934	7.1
<i>Majority</i>	<i>9,233</i>	<i>20.1</i>	<i>2,436</i>	<i>5.9</i>

Source: Jones, Beti, *Welsh Elections 1885-1997*, (Ceredigion, 1999), p112 & 114.

“I live in dread of a by-election in the completely barren constituencies. One such is Merthyr Tydfil where S.O. Davies is the Member; he is over 80...I have suggested to the Welsh Young Liberals that they should have a sustained campaign in Merthyr Tydfil as an exercise in reclaiming a derelict constituency.”<sup>58</sup>

The problem for the WLP was that, since the 1950s, Plaid Cymru had become adept at fighting by-elections, putting resources into a constituency that it was unable to match at General Elections. For example, Plaid had spent £600 on its Rhondda by-election campaign, but had only spent £70 on the constituency in the 1966 General Election.<sup>59</sup> The WLP, having just fought two General Elections in as many years, whilst also struggling to clear a £293 debt,<sup>60</sup> could not have hoped to match the spending needed to win or even properly contest these constituencies.

**Table 3: Rhondda West By-Election Results, 09/03/1967.**

<b><u>Party</u></b>	<b><u>1966 G. Election - Votes</u></b>	<b><u>% of Votes</u></b>	<b><u>1966 By- Election - Votes</u></b>	<b><u>% of Votes</u></b>
<b>Labour (Iorwerth Thomas / Alec Jones)</b>	19,060	76.1	12,373	49
Plaid Cymru (H. Victor Davies)	2,172	8.7	10,067	39.9
Conservative (Dr B Sandford-Hill / Gareth Neale)	1,955	7.8	1,075	4.3
Communist (Arthur True)	1,853	7.4	1,723	6.8
<i>Majority</i>	<i>16,888</i>	<i>67.4</i>	<i>2,306</i>	<i>9.1</i>

Source: Jones, Beti, *Welsh Elections 1885-1997*, (Ceredigion, 1999), p112-114.

**Table 4: Caerphilly By-Election Results, 18/07/1968.**

<b><u>Party</u></b>	<b><u>1966 G. Election - Votes</u></b>	<b><u>% of Votes</u></b>	<b><u>1968 By-Election - Votes</u></b>	<b><u>% of Votes</u></b>
<b>Labour (Ness Edwards / Fred Evans)</b>	26,330	74.3	16,148	45.6
Plaid Cymru (John D. Howell / Dr Philip Williams)	3,949	11.1	14,274	40.4
Conservative (Ronald Maddocks / Robert Williams)	5,182	14.6	3,687	10.4
Liberal Party (Peter Sadler)	Not Contested	0	1,257	3.6
<i>Majority</i>	<i>21,148</i>	<i>59.7</i>	<i>1,874</i>	<i>5.2</i>

Source: Jones, Beti, *Welsh Elections 1885-1997*, (Ceredigion, 1999), p112-114.

### **Political Pacts**

Despite the formation of the new party, it is clear that there were a number of issues that showed the WLP was not making an immediate impact. In the face of this, Hooson would be forgiven if he was thinking of working with one of the other political parties.

However, Hooson had been very critical of Jo Grimond's plan of a 'realignment of the Left', which had been mooted prior to the 1964 General Election. It became apparent that what Grimond was ultimately advocating was not just a closer working relationship between the two parties. He had a more radical objective in which the moderate members, (i.e. the more social democratic members not wedded to Clause IV), of the Labour Party left to join the Liberals. They could then form a progressive, non-socialist, political party to challenge the Tories.<sup>61</sup> Hooson opposed the plan on the basis that supporting one of the larger parties would not go down well with the traditional Liberal voter.<sup>62</sup> The conservative nature of both his and Bowen's seats would have been a prevailing factor.

Equally, Hooson was even more critical of a pact, even at the local level, with the Conservatives. He described the Conservatives as vultures, with no real tradition in Wales who were waiting for the nationalists to destroy Labour, in order to pick apart the bones.<sup>63</sup>

However, his reluctance to work with the other parties did not preclude his working with Plaid Cymru. On St. David's Day in 1967, Hooson, seconded by Gwynfor Evans, introduced the *Government for Wales Bill* proposing a Welsh Parliament. Although unsuccessful, it was an example of both parties working together. By Hooson's account, he and Evans got "...on very well together personally..."<sup>64</sup> However, when Laura Grimond, the wife of Jo, suggested that Hooson should seek an alliance with Plaid Cymru, Hooson was scathing in reply:

"I am sure that any kind of deal with the Nats. would be a great mistake. We would be accused of having sought an agreement with Labour, then having failed to obtain it, then sought an agreement with the Nationalists."<sup>65</sup>

### **Welsh Democratic Party**

Despite this, Hooson could not have been unaware of the growing calls from within the WLP to seek a deal with Plaid or that the WLP and Plaid were being viewed as two sides of the same coin. For example, after the Caerphilly by-election, an internal WLP report noted that:

'...The danger that many people who are really Liberals will be inveigled into the Nationalist camp on the assumption that they and we are after the same thing.'<sup>66</sup>

However, Hooson's belief that the role of the Liberal Party was to be the 'radical, non-Socialist party in Britain'<sup>67</sup> was coupled with the understanding that the WLPs main political rivals were Plaid Cymru and not the Labour Party. The Labour Party was too large a presence on the Welsh political scene and it would take a concerted effort to knock it off that perch. Labour could only be seriously challenged, in Hooson's view, by a radical non-socialist political party. However, the by-election successes that Plaid was experiencing seemed to show that they were the beneficiaries from any radical revival within Wales.

It has long been the assumption of historians of the Welsh Liberal Party, that Hooson was being pushed into the direction of a political pact with Plaid, but never

pursued nor seriously considered the possibility of an alliance.<sup>68</sup> However, in correspondence with Geraint Jenkins, the Research Secretary for the WLP, Hooson went further than had previously been thought, stating that:

“I can see great advantages in having a form of alliance with Plaid Cymru, as far as the affairs of Wales are concerned. Lest it be said that I was the difficult man in these matters, I did make tentative approaches through Dewi Powell, with no response whatsoever. I also made a direct approach to Gwynfor Evans with a suggestion that we might put up a joint candidate and eventually form a kind of united front. This was flatly turned down, and the subject has not been raised by him since...

...Personally, I have nothing against the formation of a truly radical Welsh party say, entitled the Welsh Democratic Party. Furthermore, I have nothing against a radical alliance with say Plaid Cymru, fighting 18 seats, and the Liberals fighting 18 seats in Wales.”<sup>69</sup>

It is not overly clear as to why Hooson would make such an overture to Evans, but he does state in his letter that he “...Was far from sanguine about our position, and I think a great deal of re-thinking needs to be done.”<sup>70</sup> The formation of the WLP was less than a year old at this point and the aforementioned lack of political progress may well have been weighing on his mind.

Perhaps, Hooson’s view that the nationalists would erode the influence of the Labour Party allowed him to overlook the WLP’s differences with Plaid in some important areas. Not least of these was Plaid’s socialism and its desire for Welsh independence. However, if Hooson truly believed a Liberal revival was on the cards, then being able to neutralise the influence of Plaid would be a logical step. A political pact with Plaid could have allowed a more prominent Liberal voice to emerge and the nationalist debate could be steered towards federalism rather than independence. Plaid, at this point, was still a broad church and its stated political creed did not reflect the whole of its membership. Also, Hooson would have recognised that there was an overlap in policies and what could be more natural than both of the Welsh nationalist parties working together?

Even as late as 1973, Hooson appears to have seen the benefits of a pact with Plaid. Although, in some correspondence at least, he states that he did not trust

Plaid Cymru at all. But, he believed that any pact would have to see both parties fighting an equal number of seats in Wales.<sup>71</sup> This desire was not to be.

Evans' ambivalence was just as well because in 1974 the direction of the WLP began to change, as did those of Plaid. The election, that year, of Geraint Howells meant the party now had two MPs. Although Plaid had three MPs, the popular vote went to the Liberals. In the October election, the WLP gained 15.5 per cent of the vote compared to Plaid's 10.8 per cent. The WLP had regained their third-place position, which they had lost to Plaid at the 1970 General Election.

Howells' election may have had more to do with the unpopularity of the Conservative and Labour parties, but, it seemed to be a just reward for the hard work of the preceding eight years. Despite the issues highlighted above, in these eight years, the party had done a lot of work in re-establishing the local associations, so much so that in the 1974 General Elections, they were able to contest 31 seats in February and all 36 seats in October. Further to this, in 1976, with Hooson's instrumental role in forming the Lib-Lab Pact, the WLP found itself influencing the Liberal Party once again.

### **Conclusion**

The formation of the Welsh Liberal Party was always going to be a political gamble. Its former incarnation had been allowed to rot through neglect and had no distinctive vision for Wales. It is no wonder that a revitalised Plaid Cymru were able to challenge the Liberals position at the end of the 1950s.

Hooson's aim was to give the WLP a distinctive Welsh vision, which could facilitate a revival of Liberalism in Wales. His plan to update the nationalism of the Welsh Liberals and recapture some of the ground lost to Plaid, was probably too late to succeed. By the time Hooson formed the WLP, Plaid had successfully challenged the Liberals position and were making in-roads into Labour's industrial heartlands in the south. The chance to neutralise the nascent Plaid Cymru had long since passed. Although both parties were in the same electoral position in 1966, the tailwind was behind Plaid, both electorally and in terms of policy.

In some ways, it was fortuitous that Evans turned down Hooson's offer. If Hooson had succeeded in amalgamating Plaid Cymru and the WLP into the 'Welsh

Democratic Party,' a major tradition of the Welsh political landscape would have been lost. During the Liberal Party's barren years, it was Welsh Liberalism that kept the party afloat. The Liberal Party had maintained a presence on the Welsh political landscape since the nineteenth century and to lose that could have consigned the tradition to history.<sup>72</sup> But, on the other hand, if the Liberals were able to influence Plaid internally, or to avoid facing them at election time, it could have benefitted the WLP. Hooson's main barrier to a Liberal revival in the 1960s was not the Labour Party, but Plaid Cymru and the similarity between them.

It is understandable that, in the early years of the WLP, Hooson would be nervous that the project was in danger of failing. But, reversing the years of neglect would take time, certainly longer than the four years between the foundation of the WLP and the 1970 General Election. The 1974 General Elections could, in some ways, be seen as the justifiable reward to such a big political gamble.

Nicholas K. Alderton 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> Morgan, Kenneth O., *Rebirth of a Nation, Wales 1880-1980*, (Oxford, 1982), p52.

<sup>2</sup> Rallings, Colin & Thrasher, Michael, *British Electoral Facts 1832-2006*, (Aldershot, 2007), p38-46.

<sup>3</sup> Rallings, Colin & Thrasher, Michael, *British Electoral Facts 1832-2006*, (Aldershot, 2007), p47-48.

<sup>4</sup> Dr J. Graham Jones, 'Emlyn Hooson (1925-2012)', *Journal of Liberal History* 86 (Spring 2015), p32.

<sup>5</sup> Jones, Beti, *Welsh Elections 1885-1997*, (Talybont, 1999), p101 & 106.

<sup>6</sup> Russell Deacon, 'The Slow Death of Liberal Wales, 1906-1979', *Journal of Liberal History* 49 (Winter 2005-06), p21.

<sup>7</sup> Jones, 1999, p106.

<sup>8</sup> McAllister, Laura, *Plaid Cymru: The Emergence of a Political Party*, (Bridgend, 2001), p96.

<sup>9</sup> Jones, Mervyn, *A Radical Life: The Biography of Megan Lloyd George*, (London, 1991), p233.

<sup>10</sup> Jones, 1991, p233.

<sup>11</sup> Jones, 1991, p233.



- <sup>12</sup> [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1957/nov/05/debate-on-the-address#S5CV0577P0\\_19571105\\_HOC\\_62](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1957/nov/05/debate-on-the-address#S5CV0577P0_19571105_HOC_62). Accessed 09/09/2017.
- <sup>13</sup> McAllister, 2001, p100.
- <sup>14</sup> McAllister, 2001, p112.
- <sup>15</sup> Jones, 1999, p99.
- <sup>16</sup> Jones, 1999, p103.
- <sup>17</sup> Jones, 1999, p99.
- <sup>18</sup> Jones, 1999, p103.
- <sup>19</sup> Edwards, Andrew, *Political Change in North West Wales, 1960-1974*, (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, 2002,) p227.
- <sup>20</sup> Edwards, Andrew, *Plaid Cymru, The Conservatives, and the Decline of the Labour Party in North West Wales, 1960-74*, (Cardiff, 2011), p116.
- <sup>21</sup> Edwards, 2011, p136-137.
- <sup>22</sup> Edwards, 2002, p259.
- <sup>23</sup> Jones, 1999, p102-114.
- <sup>24</sup> McAllister, 2001, p47.
- <sup>25</sup> Jones, 1991, p234.
- <sup>26</sup> Deacon, Russell, *The Welsh Liberals: The History of the Liberal and Liberal Democrat Parties in Wales*, (Cardiff, 2014), p148.
- <sup>27</sup> This information has been gleaned from a draft copy, entitled *The Forgotten Land: A Plan for Mid-Wales by the Welsh Radical Group*. The proposals stated above made it into the finished report.
- <sup>28</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Hooson to Roger Taylor, 6 May 1966.
- <sup>29</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter to Hooson from Roger Taylor, 29 April 1966.
- <sup>30</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Hooson to Roger Taylor, 6 May 1966.
- <sup>31</sup> Russell Deacon, 'The Steady Tapping Breaks the Rock', *Journal of Liberal Democrat History* 22 (Spring 1999), p14.
- <sup>32</sup> Deacon, 2014, p173.
- <sup>33</sup> Deacon, 2014, p161.
- <sup>34</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Memorandum to All Members of the Executive, from Martin Thomas, 28 July 1966.
- <sup>35</sup> Deacon, 2014, p162
- <sup>36</sup> Deacon, 2014, P162.
- <sup>37</sup> Deacon, 2014, p165.
- <sup>38</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Elfyn Morris to John Gibbs, dated 21 June 1966. Just to note, Deacon states that the meeting was held on the 11 June 1966.
- <sup>39</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Elfyn Morris Jones to Gruffydd Evans (Chairman of the Liberal Party Executive), 26 July 1966.
- <sup>40</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Hooson to Major Parry Brown, 10 June 1966.
- <sup>41</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Elfyn Morris to John Gibbs, 21 June 1966.
- <sup>42</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Michael Meadowcroft to Hooson, 22 March 1967.
- <sup>43</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter to Mary Murphy from Hooson, 10 February 1967.
- <sup>44</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Bob Morgan to Hooson, 1 November 1967.
- <sup>45</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter to Bob Morgan from Hooson, 9 November 1967.
- <sup>46</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter to Peter Jacobs from Hooson, 24 November 1967.
- <sup>47</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, letter from Hooson to Elfyn Morris, 1 July 1966.
- <sup>48</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Hooson to Mary Murphy, 13 October 1966.
- <sup>49</sup> Steve Belzak, Swinging in the '60s to the Liberals: Mary Murphy and the Pontypridd Urban District Council, *Journal of Liberal History* 68, (Autumn 2010), p30.
- <sup>50</sup> Deacon, 2014, p150 – in 1959, Lord Ogmores defected from Labour to the Liberal Party as he was disillusioned with the party's stance on nationalisation and felt the Conservatives could only be beaten by an anti-socialist alternative.
- <sup>51</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Murphy to Hooson, 12 July 1967.
- <sup>52</sup> Deacon, 2014, p177.
- <sup>53</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Jones to Hooson, 2 July 1967.
- <sup>54</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, box 45, Letter from Rhys Gerran Lloyd to Emlyn Thomas, 11 February 1969. The initial letter, from Thomas, does not appear to be in the archive.

<sup>55</sup> Deacon, 2014, p167.

<sup>56</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Hooson to Mr Watson of Basingstoke, 22 February 1967.

<sup>57</sup> Jones, 1999, p114.

<sup>58</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Hooson to Pratap Chitnis, 24 October 1967.

<sup>59</sup> Edwards, 2002, p242.

<sup>60</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Hooson to Lloyd Morris, 5 January 1967.

<sup>61</sup> Joyce, Peter, *Realignment of the Left? A History of the Relationship between the Liberal Democrat and Labour Parties*, (Basingstoke, 1999), p129.

<sup>62</sup> David Roberts, *The Strange Death of Liberal Wales* in Osmond, John, *The National Question Again: Welsh Political Identity in the 1980's*, (Dyfed, 1985), p88.

<sup>63</sup> NLW, Mervyn Jones Papers, File 34, Memo from Hooson prior to the Caerphilly By-Election, Undated but 1968.

<sup>64</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Hooson to Geraint Jenkins, 22 November 1967.

<sup>65</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Hooson to Laura Grimond, 27 September 1967.

<sup>66</sup> Jones, J. Graham, *David Lloyd George and Welsh Liberalism*, (Llandysul, 2010), p504.

<sup>67</sup> Hugh Emlyn Hooson in the Dictionary of Welsh Biography, <http://wbo.llgc.org.uk/en/s8-HOOS-EML-1925.html>, accessed 15/11/2014.

<sup>68</sup> Jones, 2010, p503 and Deacon, Russell, *The Slow Death of Liberal Wales 1906-1979*, *Journal of Liberal History*, 49, (Winter 2005-06), p20.

<sup>69</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Hooson to Geraint Jenkins, 22 November 1967.

<sup>70</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Hooson to Geraint Jenkins, 22 November 1967.

<sup>71</sup> NLW, Lord Hooson Papers, Letter from Hooson to Paul Brighton, 24 November 1973.

<sup>72</sup> As I write, this has come to pass with the loss of all the Welsh Liberal Democrat MPs at the 2017 General Election.