

## PREFACE

This volume of election results continues a study that was commenced in 1977 into the electoral history of the area now covered by the London Borough of Harrow. It is the latest part to be issued and covers the almost completely forgotten era when the County of Middlesex was administered by a 'patchwork' of Urban District Councils, Rural District Councils, Parish Councils and Boards of Guardians. In those times most of present-day Harrow was administered by three principal authorities: Harrow-on-the-Hill Urban District Council, Wealdstone Urban District Council and Hendon Rural District Council. This book looks in detail at elections to those authorities — any elections to the Parish Councils or Boards of Guardians in the area have not been researched.

Because of their nature, the presentation of these election results has demanded a reorganisation of the format employed with some success in the previous volumes. New features that loyal readers may notice are: a lack of Party labels for the period before 1919 (due to the dominance of independents), a reappraisal of the role of the percentage statistic, locating footnotes beneath the specific election to which they refer and a new indexing method. It is hoped that these changes are found to be satisfactory.

One of the most important and colourful men in the civic life of Harrow during the 1894-1933 period was Tommy Charles. He was Chairman of Harrow-on-the-Hill UDC between 1913-20, 1930-31 and 1933-34. His character is neatly illustrated by an incident at the conclusion of the Great War in 1918. Charles called a special Council meeting for 18 November, seven days after the Armistice had been signed. What should have been a moment of triumph for him backfired when he was confined to bed by an attack of influenza. "It is a bitter disappointment not to be present," Charles wrote to his assembled colleagues. "Firstly, I had hoped to take the opportunity to address a few observations to the Citizens of Harrow upon the glorious happenings of the previous week. Secondly — as one of the principal supporters of the policy of 'Darkness for Safety' — I summoned the meeting so that the Council could to some extent renew street lighting as the Hun Air Brigand has been brought to heel."

Another view of Charles can be glimpsed from page 340 of Alan W. Ball's *The Countryside Lies Sleeping 1685-1950* (Riverhill Press, 1981). It shows a cartoon on the subject of the obtrusive gas-holder built by the Gas Light and Coke Company in South Harrow during Charles' second period of chairmanship of the UDC. To 'celebrate' the building of the new gas-holder a "Grand Street Procession" is led by a "a Councillor with Equestrian Tendencies" in top hat and riding breeches. Amusingly, Charles' mount is a rocking-horse!

It is inevitable with a publication of this nature that mistakes and misprints will have occurred. Therefore I will be very pleased to receive corrections or comments from readers.

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