

PREFACE

This volume continues the series of reprints of books recording the electoral history of Harrow. The period under study in this volume are the twenty years (1934-1954) when Harrow was an Urban District within the County of Middlesex.

The further one goes back in time, the more difficult it becomes to find accurate sources of electoral information. The official election records of the London Borough of Harrow go back to 1948, so a great dependance has been placed on local press reports for this volume. By the time of the publication of the first edition of this book in 1983, most of the Councillors and candidates who feature here had died or could not be traced, thereby excluding another possible source of information.

Some Councillors from the period have roads named after them. Three prominent Labour men are remembered in Coles Crescent (South Harrow), Cullington Close (Kenton) and George Gange Way (Wealdstone); two well-known Conservatives are recalled by Cowen Avenue (South Harrow) and Ellement Close (Pinner); and the Ratepayers get mentioned through Ellen Webb Drive (Wealdstone). Tommy Charles — who has been described to the editor as “the uncrowned King of Harrow” — is remembered through the naming of Charles Crescent (West Harrow).

One man whose name continually crops up in this volume is Frank Clark. He appears to have been a rather mercurial character: he contested elections in four different wards under a number of different political “labels”, such as Civic Centre Opposition Movement, Independent Resident, Official Conservative and Independent Conservative. Clark was elected to the Council three times and resigned from it twice. He also involved himself in the controversial West Harrow ward election of 1939, and was partly responsible for engineering the defeat of the Harrow Parliamentary Bill in 1935-6. Most crucially, his Civic Centre Opposition Movement helped frustrate plans to build new council offices at the Kynaston Court site in Harrow Weald. It was not until 1972 that Harrow was to have a dedicated home when the Civic Centre in Station Road was completed.

It is my hope that this book will prove to be invaluable to local historians and those interested in politics in Harrow. This “Revised Edition” makes a number of presentational improvements on previous editions, as well as exploring in detail the difficulties encountered in discovering accurate electorates for each of the wards at each of the elections. I will be delighted to receive any criticisms, suggestions or corrections that readers may have.

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