

Appendix M

SOME PRESS REPORTS OF THE BOROUGH ELECTIONS

Extracts from the *Harrow Observer*, Thursday 20 May 1954

THE FIRST BOROUGH ELECTIONS

Little Change: A Labour Nominee Top in Roxeth

As the result of Thursday's elections the first Harrow Borough Council will originally consist of 32 Conservatives and 13 Labour Councillors. At the initial meeting on Monday 15 Aldermen will be elected and, in line with previous agreement, these will be divided proportionately, giving the Conservatives 11 and Labour 4 to make the final constitution: Conservatives 43, Labour 17.

Compared with the previous Council Labour gained two seats — at Harrow Weald and Wealdstone North — and lost one, at Roxbourne. Roxeth with two Conservatives and one Labour Councillor is the only ward with split representation.

Roxeth provided the closest contest of the day. Mr. S.C. Mansell (Labour) achieved something of a personal triumph by topping the poll although his two colleagues were beaten. Here Mr. C.F.H. Gilliard, defeated two years ago, attempted a come-back and failed by only eleven votes. In the neighbouring ward of Roxbourne the Conservatives had a much better majority than the previous year and Mr. A.J. Lovell, its Labour representative for two years, finished at the foot of the poll.

One other member of the last Council was defeated. After having represented Harrow Weald since 1946 Mr. H.R. Sheldrake failed to secure his return by 287 votes. A third member, Mr. F.B. Mason, probably escaped a similar fate by moving to West Harrow from Wealdstone North, where Labour also took over complete representation.

The Charter Mayor, Mr. W.R. Cowen, whom the Conservatives have already announced they will nominate for Mayor, comfortably topped the poll at Kenton

One of the four successful women candidates (five were beaten) Mrs. D.A. Nott Cock had the distinction of having the largest majority of the day — one of 3,133 votes — at Pinner South but her opponent, Mr. H.S. Birkett (ILP) secured only 516 votes, and in fact the Conservative poll there was over 700 down on last year.

The highest vote went to a Labour man, the veteran campaigner, Mr. H.G. Gange, at Wealdstone North. Even so, his majority was under a thousand.

At one time told that he would not be re-adopted, Mr. T.A. Ellement, one of the original members of Harrow Council, vindicated himself by topping the poll at Pinner North. Here the Liberals put up a brave fight and the vote of Mr. F.R. Ree well surpassed four figures with Mr. W.T. Westmore not far behind him. In Headstone the third Liberal, Mr. J.F. Eggleston, did not fare so happily

There are seven newcomers to Council work locally — four Labour and three Conservatives. Successful candidates with the highest number of votes will serve for three years, the next for two, and the third for only one.

Polling took place from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and was generally lighter than in recent years in all but three cases — Stanmore South, Roxbourne and Roxeth — the percentage was well down

The count took place at the Territorial Army Centre, Elmgrove Road, and was completed at about 1.30 a.m. Belmont was the first result to be announced by the returning officer, Mr. D.H. Pritchard, clerk of the Harrow Council. That was at 11.30 p.m. The final result — Wealdstone North — was keenly awaited as at that stage Conservatives and Labour had each gained and lost a seat. The announcement of another Labour gain was greeted with an outburst of cheering.

Thanks to the returning officer and his staff were expressed by Mrs. D.A. Nott Cock and Mr. W.O. Allen.

Liberals Gain A Foothold On Harrow Council

CONSERVATIVE DEFEATED BY 493 AT KENTON

Liberals gained a footing on Harrow Council for the first time, with a spectacular success for Mr. D.F. Joyner, at Kenton, in Thursday's election. More than trebling last year's Liberal vote in the ward, he swept the sitting Councillor, Mrs. E. Morgan, out of office by a majority of 493 in a straight fight.

The Conservative majority there last year was 1,489. This time their vote dropped from 2,159 to 1,473 but Mr. Joyner owed his success no less to the fact that he pushed the percentage poll up from 34.2 to 41.1. This was an exception to the general trend of lighter polling

Conservatives gained compensation by clearing out the last Labour pocket of resistance in Roxeth, though only by the desperately close margin of 20 votes after a recount. Again the displaced Councillor was a woman, Mrs. D.I. Edwards, who won the seat after years of persistence in 1958 and was the Labour agent for the whole of the Borough this year. The [Conservative] majority was 817 in 1960.

The Conservatives also successfully held off the challenge of Central Harrow Residents' Association in the battle of the Joneses at Hill and Greenhill. Mr. W.E. ("late Captain, R.T.R.") Jones got home by 370 votes but Mr. W.H. ("H for Harrow") Jones polled 867 votes to beat the Labour and Liberal nominees.

In addition to Mr. Joyner and Mr. G.E. Williams, the successful Roxeth candidate, there are newcomers to the Council in Mr. O.J. Galley (Stanmore North) who formerly sat on Wembley Council and Middlesex County Council; Mr. F.S. Davies (Queensbury), Mr. H.A. Maun, who switched to Wealdstone South after contesting the North ward for some years and is also a County Councillor, and Mr. D.H.J. Hart (West Harrow).

The Mayor-designate, Cllr. J.T. Macaulay, was safely returned at Pinner South with almost double the majority the Conservatives had last year in a straight fight with a Liberal. Pinner North and Hatch End also showed an increase for the Conservatives. Labour fought both these wards after giving them a rest last year and one of the results was a decreased Liberal vote.

With two Aldermanic vacancies the constitution of the new Council is: Conservative 41, Labour 16, Liberal one. As Labour no longer has almost one-third the number of Councillors the Conservatives will be entitled to nominate both Aldermen. On length of service Cllr. A.E.P.F. MacRae must be in line for one of these vacancies. He is a Kenton Councillor and thus the intriguing possibility of a by-election there arises.

In spite of the recount at Roxeth the complete results were announced at Kodak Hall, Wealdstone, where the count took place, well before 11.30 p.m.

Council Election Shock For The Conservatives

LIBERALS GET MOST VOTES AND GAIN FIVE SEATS

Winning six seats to five each by Conservatives and Labour, the Liberals gained a resounding and unequivocal victory in Thursday's Harrow Council elections. Each of three parties was successful in five wards, the Liberals collecting the extra seat at Roxbourne where Lt-Col. M.T. Wood retired after being elected last year. Altogether their candidates, taking only the highest figures for each party in Roxbourne, polled 25,947 votes to 25,124 by Conservatives and 17,812 by Labour.

With five of the seats gained from the Conservatives they now have a representation of eight although it was only last year than Cllr. D.F. Joyner became their first Councillor. Labour also made one gain from the Conservatives and the new Council will be: Conservative 35 (including 11 Aldermen), Labour 17 (including 4 Aldermen), Liberals 8, all Councillors.

Thus of directly elected representatives the Conservatives now hold only a 24-21 ratio and a similar trend next year would result in their losing control of the Council for the first time even with the help of Aldermen,

none of whom is due to retire until 1964.

Attraction of 'new' voters rather than sensational inroads into the strength of the other two parties was perhaps the most significant feature of the Liberal success. This fresh interest is reflected in the fact that the percentage of the electorate polling was increased in all 15 wards to give an overall figure of 47.1%, as against 36.0% last year.

Labour in fact slightly increased its vote in eleven wards and was down in only two, Harrow Weald and Wealdstone North. Even the Conservatives did better in five wards and lost real volume of support only in two.

The Liberal gains were at Headstone, where Mr. C.F.J. Low was unseated; at West Harrow, formerly represented by Ald. A. O'Loughlin; at Wealdstone South, where Cllr. G.H. Seymour, chairman of the Public Health Committee was displaced, and two at Roxbourne, where none of the candidates was a former member of the Council.

Labour's one gain was in its former stronghold [*sic*] of Roxeth where Mrs. D.I. Edwards avenged her 20-vote defeat of last year by beating Mrs. E. Rivers, who had held the seat since 1953 and was formerly chairman of the Civil Defence Committee. Mrs. Rivers was at the foot of the poll.

The Liberal story did not end with successes, for some of the defeats were almost as remarkable. Almost quadrupling their vote at Wealdstone North they took Labour (Mrs. A.M. Carey, a newcomer to the Council) to 177 votes and would have pushed the Conservatives rather ignominiously to the foot of the poll but for the presence of a Communist, Mr. J. Marshall.

At Belmont they slashed a Conservative majority of 1,001 to a mere 55 after a recount; and they might have taken Hill and Greenhill but for the strong showing of Mr. W.H. Jones, the Central Harrow Residents' Association's nominee, whose calypso-singing sirens attracted 764 votes

By doubling their majority at Kenton as well as winning in three other wards in the constituency, the Liberals had a clear advantage in the Harrow Central Parliamentary constituency

Occasional showers during the day and just before the ballot boxes were closed at 9 p.m. hardly affected the comparative briskness of the polling and the count was expeditiously carried out at the Kodak Hall, Wealdstone, immediately afterwards.

Wealdstone South, at 10.33 p.m., was the first result to be announced. As a Liberal gain it set the pattern of the evening. Labour's win at Roxeth followed close on its heels and the Liberals' greatest minutes of acclamation came between 10.55 and 11 p.m. when the Headstone, Roxbourne and West Harrow results revealed new allegiances. Excitement over the Belmont recount ended at 11.10 and all was over with the announcement of the Pinner North and Hatch End result at 11.20.

As the holder of the biggest majority, 1,238 at Stanmore North, Mr. O.J. Galley proposed the customary vote of thanks to the Town Clerk, Mr. D.H. Pritchard, and his staff for their efficient conduct of the election, and Mr. G.M. Feely, surprise Liberal victor at Wealdstone South, made his civic debut by seconding. The Mayor (Ald. W.O. Allen) presided without being called upon to quell over-exuberation that has been the feature of some recent elections.

Mr. Pritchard told the *Observer* that the Council's offer of polling-day work to pensioners had been successful. "There were many more at work this year than last, both at polling stations and here," he said at the count on Thursday night. "Not one pensioner who applied for the work was refused."

"We Must Try Much Harder"

Commenting on the results of the Harrow Council election, Ald. H.W. Cutler, leader of the Conservative Group on the Council, told the *Observer*:

"The public have exercised their right to tell the Conservative members of the Council that they have not been doing their job well enough and clearly some of us have not done our best. We must try much harder."

Council Election Anti-Climax

CONSERVATIVE AND LABOUR VOTE UP, LIBERAL DOWN

The most momentous and delicately poised Harrow Council election of all time, the Conservative majority hanging perilously in the balance, ended in anti-climax on Thursday. Gains confidently predicted by the Liberals and feared by their opponents did not materialise, and rallying strongly from their 1962 setbacks, the Conservatives just managed to keep control, albeit only by their preponderance of Aldermen.

On the day Conservatives won nine seats, two of them at Stanmore North, Labour five, including a gain from Conservatives at Roxeth, and the Liberals two, including a gain from Conservatives at Kenton. On the Council Conservatives now have a strength of 33 (including 11 Aldermen) as against 18 for Labour (four Aldermen) and nine Liberal Councillors. The Conservatives' majority was reduced from ten to six and the opposition has a 23-22 lead in directly elected representatives.

A repetition of last year with five gains by Liberals and the Labour win at Roxeth would have swung the balance of power but the Conservatives made a recovery almost as startling as the Liberal revival in recent years, and, raising their vote in every ward but one whereas the Liberals lost ground in all but two, had a huge overall majority of votes

Although none of the parties held meetings, Conservatives and Liberals in particular waged an intense pamphlet battle with the Conservatives using the big rate increase at Orpington, where Liberals are in control, as a major theme.

Early copies of a special "Orpington leaflet" released by the Conservatives brought a last-minute rejoinder from the Liberals and this had a far larger circulation than the original.

Good weather kept voting brisk after a quiet start and the number of electors going to the poll was slightly in excess of last year, a percentage of 48.0 as against 47.1

Optimistically jubilant Liberals arriving at the Kodak Hall, Wealdstone, for the count quickly had their ardour dampened, the voting trend back towards the Conservatives being indicated by the first results, announced at about 10.30 p.m.

Queensbury led the way with Labour increasing its 1962 vote by 267 and the Liberal vote falling by 249 to give second place to the Conservatives, who were third last year. Belmont, the next result to be announced, was even more significant. Last year there was a recount as the Conservative scrambled home by 55 votes. This year the Conservative majority was 930, the Liberal vote falling by 573 as their opponents' rose by 302. The result was greeted by faint boos from the gallery but the great tension of the start was already fading. Succeeding results brought no solace to the Liberals at Pinner South, where the Conservatives had conducted an intense canvass, they were 646 votes adrift on last year

Then came Headstone where the Liberals won by 121 last year. To a storm of cheering, the retiring councillor, Mr. N.G. Hines, was returned by a comfortable majority of 778

Labour set up its biggest cheer of the evening as Mr. J.S. Campbell, contesting Roxeth for the first time, brought it back to the fold, with a handsome majority of 590. Yet three years ago Labour had finished bottom

Some solace came at last to the Liberals with the Roxbourne result. Here Mr. E.G. Wilmott was defending and he did it successfully on a poll reduced by over 5% on voting for two seats last year. Although his vote was 95 down his opponent suffered even more and his majority rose by 115, Labour this time pushing Conservatives to the bottom of the poll.

West Harrow, where Liberals had another of their shock wins last year, was held for the Conservatives by Mr. Owen Cock, son of Ald. Mrs. D.A. Nott Cock. Mr. Cock became one of the five new Councillors by turning a 1962 deficit of 229 into a credit of 191. Pinner North and Hatch End gave Mr. C.G. Ellement, who was not present to hear the result as influenza had confined him to bed for several days, the highest vote of the day, 3,793

Liberals had the last word at 11.10 p.m. but even this was rather a muted one. For Mrs. M.M. Haslam, whose gay and friendly personality made her one of the most popular members of the Council, ran Dr. I.M. Roitt desperately close