

PREFACE

This volume continues a study that commenced in 1977 into the electoral history of the area now covered by the London Borough of Harrow. The book covers election results from the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the local administration of the County of Middlesex was covered by a 'patchwork' of Urban District Councils, Rural District Councils, Parish Councils and Boards of Guardians. At that time most of present-day Harrow was governed by three principal authorities: Harrow-on-the-Hill Urban District Council, Wealdstone Urban District Council and Hendon Rural District Council. Results of elections to the latter's Parish Councils have also been compiled and incorporated, while data for elections to the Hendon Union Board of Guardians and Middlesex County Council, where known, are provided in Appendices.

This second edition includes the election results to Kingsbury Urban District Council: a portion of the former council's area was transferred to Harrow following boundary changes in April 1994. The pages covering Kingsbury UDC make fascinating reading, giving a snapshot of what was arguably Britain's most dysfunctional local authority before the outbreak of the Great War.

Because of the nature of the elections from the period 1894 to 1933, the presentation of the data has demanded a reorganisation of the format employed in the volumes for later years. Changes that loyal readers may notice include:

- Suspension of party 'labels' when Independent or non-party candidates dominated.
- Re-appraisal of the role of the 'percentage share of the vote' statistic.
- Footnotes located beneath the specific election to which they refer.
- New indexing methods.

Parish Council results include a new column to record the votes cast at Parish Meetings, whilst the columns for party affiliation and the percentage statistic are excluded. It is hoped that all these modifications are found to be satisfactory.

One of the most eminent 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 indication of Charles' importance — or self-importance — can be glimpsed from page 340 of Alan W. Ball's *The Countryside Lies Sleeping 1685-1950* (Riverhill Press, 1981). It reproduces 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 Councillor with Equestrian Tendencies" in top hat and riding breeches. Amusingly, the artist has drawn a rocking-horse for Charles' mount!

It is inevitable with a publication of this nature that mistakes and misprints will have occurred, although it is hoped that most of these have been eliminated during the preparation of this Second Edition. As always I will be very pleased to receive corrections or comments from readers.

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