

Appendix V

SOME PRESS REPORTS OF THE DISTRICT ELECTIONS

Extracts from the *Harrow Observer*, Friday 30 March 1934

NEW HARROW COUNCIL ELECTION

Ward System Leads To Greater Interest

Close Voting And Recounts For South Harrow And Harrow Weald

Polling took place on Saturday in connection with the new Harrow Council, and for the first time the election was carried out on a ward system. The voting indicated that the introduction of the ward system created greater interest. There were some close contests, and in some cases the difference between being elected and defeated was a matter of only three or four votes.

The various Ratepayer Associations in the area played an important part and it is significant that in every ward where they put forward candidates they were successful. Out of 36 members of the new Council, 30 are representatives of Ratepayer Association interests. At Roxeth Labour secured two out of three seats. Mrs. M.E. Webb of Wealdstone has the distinction of being the only lady member of the Council.

The counting of the votes on this occasion took place at the Harrow Technical School, Station Road, presided over by Mr. J. Strachan, Returning Officer, and assisted by Mr. J.B. Willis and Mr. R.J. Bryant, the Deputy Returning Officers.

When Mr. Strachan made known the results of the Roxeth ward it was found that Mr. Coles (Labour) had polled 705 votes and Mr. Munns (Ratepayer) 701. Mr. Munns demanded a recount, and it was agreed that only the votes of Mr. Coles and Mr. Munns should be recounted. Mr. Strachan announced the result of the recount as follows, Coles 704, Munns 696, a difference of eight instead of four. Turning to Mr. Munns he said, "Are you satisfied?" Mr. Munns: "I cannot understand it, but it is the same way. I am satisfied." Mr. Coles intimated that he was also satisfied. Mr. Strachan said subject to his approval he would declare the figures of the recount the correct ones. He could only say that he was sorry for those who were elected (laughter).

The second recount of the evening was in the Harrow Weald ward where Messrs. Mennell, Leigh and Hart, who polled 247, 241 and 236 votes, respectively, asked for a recount to see who should secure the third place. When the figures were made known a second time they were Mennell 246, Leigh 239 and Hart 235. (Mr. Mennell was declared elected.)

Extracts from the *Harrow Observer*, Friday 7 April 1939

FIVE LABOUR VICTORIES. TWO SEATS GAINED

Finance Chairman Defeated At Harrow Weald

Besides returning their three Councillors who sought re-election, the Labour Party gained two additional seats in the Harrow Council elections on Saturday, thus bringing the strength of the Labour personnel up to nine members. Labour also gained the distinction of having the largest majority, Cllr. W.O. Allen polled 2,401 votes in the South Stanmore ward, giving him a majority of 2,105 over his opponent Mr. A.W. Bootle who secured 296 votes, there being three spoilt papers.

The biggest surprise was in the Harrow Weald ward, where Cllr. J.E. Ousey was defeated by Mr. L.S. Woodruff, a Labour nominee who secured a majority of 90 votes. Mr. Ousey had been a member since 1934 and has been Chairman of the Finance Committee for some time. The increase in the Labour vote was remarkable, for in 1936 when Mr. Ousey sought re-election his Labour opponent secured only 295 votes. Mr. Woodruff secured 1,106 votes.

The closest fight was at Roxeth ward, where Cllr. F.A. Coles, the Labour Leader on the Council, retained his

seat with a majority of 28 votes, defeating Mr. W.B. Douglas, the Ratepayer candidate.

The only three way fight was at West Harrow, where there had been a good deal of controversy. Mr. J.A. Turner, the Labour nominee, was returned with a majority of 522. Mr. J.S. Bleasby the official candidate of the West Harrow Ratepayers' Association recorded 907 votes and Cllr. A.C. Andrews, formerly the official candidate of the Association, 719.

At Harrow-on-the-Hill and Greenhill, Mr. K.H. Watkins, the only official Conservative candidate was beaten by Cllr. J. Travers who had a majority of 55 votes. Cllr. D.C. Ellis, the present Chairman of the Council, retained his seat in the Kenton ward.

Extracts from the *Harrow Observer*, Friday 5 April 1946

SEVENTY PER CENT DID NOT VOTE

During the polling which took place in the first Harrow Council elections since 1939, on Saturday, a little more than 29% of the electorate used their votes and 70% did not. Contests took place in eleven of the twelve ward and the result was an equal division of the 18 vacant seats between the Conservative Party, Labour and Ratepayers or Independents - six each. On the new Council there will be 18 Ratepayers or Independent members, 12 Labour and 6 Conservatives.

The count took place at the Kodak Hall, Wealdstone, and when it had been completed in the early hours of Sunday morning a vote of thanks to the Returning Officer, Mr. H. Wells, Clerk to the Council, for the efficient arrangements was proposed by Mr. F.W. Jukes, returned unopposed for Wealdstone North, and seconded by Mr. J.W. Beaumont, who was defeated at Roxeth.

Extracts from the *Harrow Observer*, Thursday 19 May 1949

CONSERVATIVE SUCCESS IN ELEVEN WARDS

Vice-Chairman's Victory At Wealdstone South

The Conservatives consolidated their gains of the past two years at the Harrow Council elections on Saturday and now hold sway by 36 seats to Labour's 9. On the other hand, Labour's losses were less than last year and apart from deposing Mr. J.C. Leigh, Chairman of the Council, at Harrow Weald and winning the three new Queensbury seats, they held Wealdstone North although unsuccessful there last year.

The Conservatives won all three seats in the new Belmont and Roxbourne wards and completed their two year campaign of eliminating Labour from Kenton and Roxeth wards. On balance, they gained two seats from Ratepayer Associations and one from Labour.

The altered boundaries of the Harrow Weald ward played a big part in the defeat of Mr. Leigh and was not altogether unexpected by him — he had earlier assured continuity of service to the community by successfully standing for the County Council. Mr. L.S. Woodruff, the Labour agent for the elections, refought the seat with increasing response each year since [he was beaten in 1947] and this year polled 410 more votes than in 1948, whilst the Conservative vote was 957 down. A Conservative majority of 1,133 last year turned into a defeat by 234.

The Vice-Chairman of the Council, Lt.-Col. W.J.K. Crawforth, was returned with a majority of 643 at Wealdstone South. Mr. Frank Clark's colourful campaign secured him 602 votes (despite no party organisation) and Mr. Crawforth polled 305 more votes than Mr. Edridge did last year. Here the percentage poll was 56.2, the highest of the 15 wards. Mr. W.A.E. Alford, the Labour candidate, polled nearly 600 more votes than last year.

ELECTION BROUGHT NO CHANGE

Close Voting at Roxeth: Two Recounts

Recovering from their setbacks of last year the Conservatives scored heavily in the Harrow Council elections on Saturday and retained 14 of the 19 seats. As a result, the Council remains unchanged, the Conservatives holding 33 seats to Labour's 12.

The sternest struggles were at Roxeth and Roxbourne, where Labour obtained gains last year. The resignation of A.T. Hewett made two seats available [at Roxeth] ... and two recounts were held before Conservative majorities of 52 and 32 were announced. Contesting for the first time, Mrs. E. Rivers led the field with 2,184 votes, 20 more than Mr. J.W.P. Shapland, who successfully sought re-election. Last year the Labour majority was 309. At Roxbourne the margin was a little more comfortable for the Conservatives, Mr. C.G.L. Morley being re-elected with a majority of 127, compared with a Labour majority of 196 last year.

The Labour candidate Mr. Merlyn Rees polled only 689 votes at Pinner North, and Mr. B. Hales did even worse at Headstone, his figure being 635. The intervention of a Liberal and a Communist in the latter ward had no effect, and between them they polled only roughly half as many votes (360).

A former Councillor, Mr. A. O'Loughlin, returns to the Council ... like Mr. J.C. Leigh who increased the majority at Stanmore North by over 300, Mr. O'Loughlin is also a County Councillor.