



WHAT THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS BELIEVE

HISTORY

ONE REVOLUTION AND TWO MERGERS

1688

GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

The **WHIGS** saw this as ousting a despotic King to ensure **PARLIAMENT WAS SUPREME**. It created their political tradition of **OPPOSING ABSOLUTE POWER** and **SUPPORTING RELIGIOUS TOLERATION**.

From this later came support for **THE RULE OF LAW** and **EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW**.



1859

WILLIS ROOMS MEETING

WHIGS, RADICALS AND PEELITES (followers of the former Conservative PM) met in London and **COMBINED TO FORM THE LIBERAL PARTY**.



1988

THE MERGER

SDP (formed mainly by ex-Labour figures) and **LIBERAL PARTY** merged to form the **LIBERAL DEMOCRATS**.



PRIORITIES THROUGH THE AGES

MID 19TH CENTURY

THE HARM PRINCIPLE

"The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to **PREVENT HARM TO OTHERS**"
John Stuart Mill & Harriet Taylor in *On Liberty*



LATE 19TH CENTURY

"PEACE, RETRENCHMENT AND REFORM"

William Gladstone's popular trio meant **PEACE** overseas, **ECONOMY** in public spending and political **REFORM**.



EARLY 20TH CENTURY

"WE CAN CONQUER UNEMPLOYMENT"

David Lloyd George's famous slogan was part of a Liberal shift to supporting **GREATER PUBLIC SPENDING** to help the economy and fund a welfare state.



MID 20TH CENTURY

COMMUNITY POLITICS DEVELOPED

A growing emphasis on **WINNING LOCAL ELECTIONS** and **PAVEMENT POLITICS** led to a new political theory about helping people secure power over their own lives.



PARTY'S PHILOSOPHY IN A SENTENCE...

FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE PARTY'S CONSTITUTION

"NO ONE SHALL BE ENSLAVED BY POVERTY, IGNORANCE OR CONFORMITY"

TIM FARRON'S TOP PRIORITIES

"EDUCATION IS MY TOP PRIORITY" - TIM FARRON

GIVE EVERYONE A FAIR START so that people can build their own lives and follow their own dreams.



A HEALTH SERVICE THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF EVERYONE

If the only way to fund **AN NHS THAT MEETS EVERYONE'S PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS**, is to raise taxes, we will do that.



FIGHT TO KEEP BRITAIN AT THE HEART OF EUROPE

British people should be given the right to **VOTE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S NEGOTIATED BREXIT DEAL**.



WANT TO FIND OUT HOW TO TURN BELIEFS INTO POLITICAL POWER?

GET THE BOOK!



101 WAYS TO WIN AN ELECTION

by Ed Maxfield and Mark Pack (Biteback, 2nd edition 2016)

A PRO-EUROPEAN PARTY



The party combines a desire to **DEVOLVE POWER TO THE LOWEST LEVEL POSSIBLE** with a push for **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON ISSUES THAT CROSS NATIONAL BOUNDARIES**.

Under Jo Grimond's leadership the Liberal Party was one of the **FIRST VOICES CALLING FOR BRITAIN TO JOIN THE COMMON MARKET** (the forerunner of the European Union) in the 1960s. Then in the European Referendum of 1975, many pro-European Labour figures cooperated with the Liberals, paving the way for the formation of the SDP and later merger to form the Liberal Democrats.

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC LIBERALS

Balancing **SOCIAL LIBERALISM** and **ECONOMIC LIBERALISM** is at the heart of the party's approach.

SOCIAL LIBERALS

Tend to be most concerned about **INEQUALITY** and promote **DEMOCRACY** to give people more power.



INEQUALITY

ECONOMIC LIBERALS

Tend to be most concerned about an **OVERBEARING STATE** and promote **FREE MARKETS** to give people more power.



OVERBEARING STATE

All **POWER** (be it government, business or other people) can both **PROTECT** and **THREATEN LIBERTY**. Economic and Social Liberals put different emphasis on the **BEST DEFENCES** and the **BIGGEST BULLIES**, as well as on the relative importance of equality of opportunity versus equality of outcome.

CENTRE PARTY OR NOT?

Some see the party as being in the **CENTRE ON A LEFT/RIGHT SPECTRUM**, with Labour and Tories at each end of it.



LIBERAL

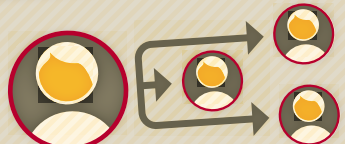
Authoritarian

Others reject this spectrum, and instead see the party at the **LIBERAL END OF A LIBERAL/AUTHORITARIAN SPECTRUM**, with both Labour and Tories at the other end of it.

THE ECONOMIC DILEMMA

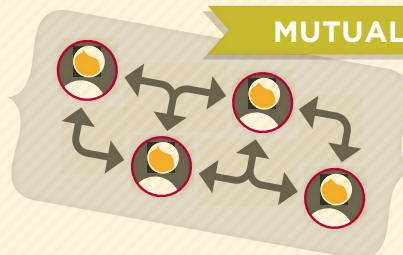
BOSSES VERSUS WORKERS

This viewpoint gives Labour and Tories a **CENTRAL ORGANISING ECONOMIC IDEA**.



MUTUALS & COOPERATIVES

Lib Dems often struggle to find their own distinctive one, looking to **MUTUALS AND COOPERATIVES** to break that struggle.



PUTTING NEW IDEAS ON THE AGENDA

"I AM A LIBERAL AND I AM AGAINST THIS SORT OF THING"

HARRY WILLCOCK



Over the years the party has been central to popularising some previously fringe beliefs which then became mainstream - especially **CIVIL LIBERTIES, PRO-EUROPEANISM, ENVIRONMENTALISM** and **CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**.

Most famously, Harry Willcock triggered the abolition of ID cards with an act of civil disobedience in 1950.