This Booklet
is dedicated to the memory of

Pete Jupp
Professor of British History
Queen’s University, Belfast
and my guide on the history
of the Tory Party before 1830
FOREWORD BY DAVID CAMERON

‘In happy states’, wrote Walter Bagehot, one of the most famous nineteenth century political commentators, ‘the Conservative party must rule upon the whole a much longer time than their adversaries’. That is because such countries are averse to sudden or violent upheavals in long-established institutions and habits of life that left-wing parties seek to inflict upon them. Happy and largely peaceful states like Britain expect change – sometimes quite considerable change – to carry them forward steadily and progressively to success in new sets of circumstances that develop from what has gone before. That gives Conservatives, Bagehot continued, ‘the greatest advantage in making the changes’.

Peel and Disraeli, the great Tory leaders of Bagehot’s day, showed the modern Conservative Party how to reap that advantage by becoming, in Disraeli’s words quoted in this booklet, a standard-bearer for change ‘carried out in deference to the manners, the customs, the laws and the traditions’ of the British people as opposed to change based on ‘abstract principles, and arbitrary and general doctrines’ favoured by the left. All successful Conservative leaders have understood that truth, relating the degree of change to the nation’s demand and need for it – so change was more extensive under Margaret Thatcher as she ended our country’s decline than under, say, Harold Macmillan during the more settled post-war period. But both applied the distinctive British Conservative tradition of progressive change in their time – and I am doing so again today.

This booklet provides a short, snappy account of how our proud Conservative tradition has enabled the Party to govern modern Britain ‘a much longer time than their adversaries’, as Bagehot predicted, and how the changes it has made have affected our country. Conservatives take pride in their history. This useful publication will help us understand our history better.

Alistair Cooke is the nearest thing the Party has got to an official historian, except that he has not written under official Party orders to produce an approved script. He joined the Conservative Research Department some thirty years ago after a period as a university historian, specialising in late nineteenth century party politics. He combines an understanding of the past with a considerable, but not uncritical, affection for the Conservative Party.
THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

The Conservative Party – known officially up to 1830 as the Tory Party – is the oldest political party in the world. (Originally used against its members as a term of abuse, ‘Tory’ is a Gaelic word meaning thief.) A remarkable capacity for change has been, and remains, its chief characteristic. As Britain evolved from monarchical government to democracy, and from intense disputes with a large religious element to purely secular controversies, the Party constantly adapted to change – and frequently led the process of change in national politics. That has been the secret of its success.

THE BEGINNINGS

The origins of the Conservative Party lie way back in the seventeenth century. During the civil wars of the 1640s and 1650s, and again in the last two decades of the century, politicians formed parties in Parliament, first Royalists and Parliamentarians, then (in more permanent form) Tories and Whigs – the former in broad (but not uncritical) support of the monarch, the latter dedicated to curtailing his power.

The Tories had their first taste of success during the so-called Exclusion Crisis of 1679-80 when they defeated Whig attempts to exclude the Catholic brother of Charles II from the line of succession to the throne. The Tories came to be seen above all as the patriotic party, identified closely with the last Protestant Stuart monarch, Queen Anne, during the period of Marlborough’s glorious victories over Louis XIV in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Patriotism is the first, and most deeply rooted, element of the Party’s character.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

For much of the rest of the eighteenth century the Tories were in eclipse as a political force at Westminster, gravely embarrassed by the attachment of some of their number to the Jacobite cause of the exiled Catholic Stuarts up to 1745. During the rest of the century very few elected politicians called themselves Tories.

But Toryism retained lively and substantial support in the country at large. ‘For King and Constitution’ was often the motto of the members of this widespread movement as they battled against their political foes in local disputes, which were not infrequently stoked by the local press. In late Hanoverian England every town of any size had two or more newspapers, firmly pledged to the Tories or their opponents (it has been estimated by historians of the period that up to half the adult population read a newspaper). Under George III, Toryism had a mass following of working men and women, even though they had no vote.
THE YOUNGER PITT AND THE CLIMAX OF TORYISM

A strong Tory revival in Parliament was made possible by Pitt the Younger, the longest-serving of all the Prime Ministers connected with the Party, who held power for over 18 years from 1783, at the start of a period of flux from which our modern two-party system eventually emerged.

Pitt never described himself as a Tory. Nor did his great friend William Wilberforce whose momentous campaign to abolish the slave trade finally achieved success in 1807, the year after Pitt’s death, under the government (the so-called ministry of all the talents) of the latter’s cousin, Lord Grenville. But those like Lord Liverpool (Prime Minister 1812-27), who built up a new Tory Party in the first decades of the nineteenth century, saw themselves as the heirs and successors of these remarkable men (whose lives have been vividly portrayed in William Hague’s recent biographies of them). Above all, they recalled Pitt’s deep pride in his country, and Wilberforce’s unflagging zeal in the cause of humanity.

- Inspired by Adam Smith, Pitt fought narrow commercial interests and opened up free trade, helping to lay the basis of modern prosperity. In one year alone, 1787, he carried nearly 3,000 resolutions through the House of Commons to remodel and lower the excise duties that had impeded freer trade and the expansion of enterprise.

- He was one of the greatest reformers of the public finances, paying off almost all government debt during his peace-time administration before 1793 and reshaping the taxation system often with great ingenuity.

- He reinforced the great vein of patriotism in the Tory tradition, embodying the nation’s resistance to revolutionary France and Napoleon after 1793.

Pitt also taught the Tories to be the pragmatic Party. There was, he said, ‘no wisdom in establishing general rules or principles in government policy’. It is the pragmatism that Pitt implanted that has been the basis of the Party’s successful changes over the succeeding centuries.

After Napoleon’s defeat in 1815 some Tories, the great Duke of Wellington prominent amongst them, were ill-disposed to the idea of further change. But even Wellington quickly came to realise that blanket opposition to change could not form the basis of Tory success.

His government of 1828-30 swept away the discriminatory bars that had prevented Protestant nonconformists from holding political and public office, and carried through Catholic emancipation removing the ban on Catholic MPs. These great reforms represented Toryism at its most constructive.

‘[W]e declare to his Majesty that we know great exertions are wanting, that we are prepared to make them and at all events determined to stand and fall by the laws, liberties and religion of our country’ (House of Commons, 10 November 1797)
But Wellington balked at reform of the electoral system, largely unchanged since medieval times. As a result the Party descended into the first of several acute internal crises – others followed in 1846, 1903, and 1992 – which destroyed its cohesion while they lasted and plunged the Conservatives into a number of serious election defeats.
PEEL AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

From Wellington the Party leadership passed after 1832 (the year of the Great Reform Bill, opposed by the Party, which doubled the electorate to one million) to Sir Robert Peel, the founder of the Metropolitan Police (1829) and one of the Party’s most decisive agents of change.

- He reinterpreted the key elements of the old Tory tradition to create the modern Conservative Party. It was in the 1830s that the term ‘Conservative’ first started to be widely used, though the first Conservative Association had been formed in Gloucester in 1818.

- His Tamworth manifesto of 1834 – the first such document ever produced – set out the basis of moderate, progressive Conservatism. The Party must always be ready, he stressed, to carry out ‘a careful review of institutions, civil and ecclesiastical, undertaken in a friendly temper [to secure] the correction of proved abuses and the redress of grievances’.

- He led the Party’s first great reforming government (1841-6) with free trade at the heart of its policy. Import duties on over 600 commodities were swept away, reducing the tax burden by £2.5 million while still securing a budget surplus as consumption rose.

- Above all, he stressed that the Party must seek to govern in the interests of all the people. Giving it a first taste of the social reform which was to loom so large in its subsequent policies, he brought in the first measures to improve public health and regulate factory hours. The French Prime Minister of the time wrote: ‘What struck me above all in conversation with him was his constant and passionate preoccupation with the state of the working classes in England’.

- An effective Party headquarters was created at the Carlton Club in London with local organisations in many constituencies, bringing the Conservative Party in Parliament into close and systematic association with its supporters in the country for the first time.
Disraeli on two types of change, the first Tory, the second radical: ‘In a progressive country change is constant; and the question is not whether you should resist change which is inevitable, but whether that change should be carried out in deference to the manners, the customs, the laws, and the traditions of a people, or whether it should be carried out in deference to abstract principles, and arbitrary and general doctrines’ (Speech in Edinburgh, 1867)

Like many great reformers Peel aroused strong opposition within his own Party – led by Disraeli who mounted a successful Parliamentary assault on his leader for proposing the repeal of the Corn Laws, which protected the agricultural interest at the expense of the urban, for the latter benefited from the lower food prices that repeal brought.

The bitterly fought controversy split the Party in 1846 and put it in the political wilderness for nearly 30 years. But it was Disraeli himself who eventually made the Party an even more effective political force, pledged to the overall national interest in the Peel tradition, when he took up the baton of change in the 1860s.

- He drew dramatic attention to the yawning gulf in British society between ‘the two nations’ described so vividly in his famous novel Sybil – the rich and the poor. The ‘one nation’ cause, for ever associated with him, inspired the Party over succeeding generations to work to overcome social divisions and class conflict: the Party, he said in a famous phrase in 1872, must seek ‘to elevate the condition of the people’. Disraeli’s vision was of a Party that spoke for the nation as a whole, though he never himself used the term ‘one nation’ (that came in 1924 from Stanley Baldwin who saw himself as Disraeli’s political heir). To its deeply ingrained patriotism, Disraeli added national and social unity as one of the Party’s fundamental purposes – and he placed a new emphasis on the Tories’ traditional attachment to the Crown as the embodiment of unity.

- During a short-lived minority administration, he gave the vote to working men in urban constituencies in 1867 – and went on in his 1874-80 government to pass the largest tranche of social legislation produced by any administration in this period including the 1875 Artisans ‘Dwellings Act, a major step towards slum clearance and town planning, hailed by the then Liberal Joseph Chamberlain who used it to help make Birmingham a model city (which after 1886 became the stronghold of the Liberal Unionist Party, formed by Liberal opponents of Gladstone’s Irish Home Rule scheme, which merged with the Conservatives in 1912 to create today’s Conservative and Unionist Party).
by and large to devise their own solutions to problems, working through voluntary bodies like friendly societies and local institutions. To help them further, he introduced elected county councils in 1888 (the towns already had them).

Acting in the same spirit, his successor Arthur Balfour (who held the for nine years until 1911) put education under the control of local councils in 1902, following Salisbury’s decision in 1891 to make elementary schools free. (Balfour was later to achieve international fame through the 1917 declaration bearing his name that a Jewish homeland would be created in Palestine.) The hostility to the onward march of the state, and the preference for localism, displayed during this period were to resurface in later phases of Conservative change.

EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Under Andrew Bonar Law (leader 1911-21 and again 1922-3) and Austen Chamberlain (1921-2) the Party went through a period of considerable turmoil following a catastrophic election defeat in 1906.

It had three major preoccupations. First, it sought (with eventual success) to overcome the deep internal strains caused by Joseph Chamberlain’s visionary but extremely divisive campaign for tariff reform, launched in 1903 with the aim of uniting the Empire and funding a substantial welfare programme at home, which involved restoring duties on agricultural imports and split the Party into supporters and opponents of returning to protection.

Second, up to the outbreak of war in 1914 it fought tooth and nail against radical measures of constitutional change, including the reduction of the powers of the House of Lords and a Home Rule scheme for Ireland that rode roughshod over the interests of the Unionists in Ulster, and welfare reform (requiring sharp rises in taxation) brought forward by the Liberal government under Asquith.

Third, true to its patriotic instincts, it then entered into coalition with the Liberals to achieve victory over the Kaiser, with Lloyd George and Bonar Law forming an effective partnership until it broke down in 1921, hastening the end of the coalition in 1922 which had a disappointing record of social reform.

During this period the word ‘Conservative’ largely disappeared from the Party’s name. As a result of its long, and ultimately unsuccessful, resistance to Irish Home Rule, it was known as the Unionist Party...
An eloquent man disinclined to hard work, Stanley Baldwin (leader from 1923 to 1937) seems at first sight an unlikely standard-bearer of change, but his record stands comparison with those of the other great reforming leaders. Baldwin set the tone, leaving the implementation of reforms to Neville Chamberlain, the driving force behind them and the founder in 1929 of the Conservative Research Department where his policy work was done. Chamberlain took over the leadership on Baldwin’s retirement, holding it until 1940 when a long period of Conservative predominance (exercised after 1931 through a National government with subordinate allies) came to an end.

The Widows, Orphans and Old Age Pensions Act 1925 introduced the first comprehensive pensions scheme based on compulsory contributions by both employers and employees – interlocked with health insurance (which was itself extended the following year to give universal coverage and laying down that ‘no person genuinely seeking work was to be penalised in respect of arrears of health insurance contributions’).

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Two 1929 general election posters (Conservative Party Archive). Despite the excellence of the posters, the Party lost the election, but was back in power two years later as the predominant partner in a National Government.
Unemployment benefit was made a right for everyone in 1927 subject to simple conditions.

Housing subsidies first introduced by Chamberlain in 1923 stimulated a building programme that by 1934-5 was providing 350,000 houses a year, one third by local councils to replace slums. Rent controls were imposed to protect the less well-off.

A maximum 48-hour week for women and children working in factories was introduced in 1938, along with paid holidays for most families.

The Depressed Areas Act 1934 paved the way for post-war regional policy by providing incentives for firms to move to areas of high unemployment.

The Equal Franchise Act 1928 gave women voting rights on the same terms as men – while other legislation provided full equality in holding and disposing of property.

All this pointed the way to a Tory welfare state in which socialism would play no part. That would have been the theme of Chamberlain’s manifesto for the election he planned to hold in 1940.

The Party’s commitment to social improvement made it reluctant at a time of high unemployment to devote ever increasing resources to defence in the 1930s, in response to Winston Churchill’s demands, though by 1938 Chamberlain had raised defence spending to ‘unprecedented’ levels. The bitter controversy over appeasement tarnished the reputation of Chamberlain, one of the greatest of peace-time Conservative leaders, after the outbreak of war with Hitler in 1939.

The following year Churchill became Prime Minister of a coalition government dedicated to achieving total victory and to creating a new society with opportunity extended more widely than ever before thanks to the provision of free schools for all achieved through the 1944 Education Act, for ever associated with the outstanding Conservative reformer of the next generation, Rab Butler (Britain’s greatest tragedy after 1945 was the failure to implement the Act properly with adequate resources and parity of esteem between the three types of school created by the state). For the rest, with the Conservative Research Department in war-time abeyance, the character of the new society was unduly influenced by the socialist plans of the war-time coalition’s Labour elements.
Harold Macmillan on the rebuilding of the Party after the war: 'In the years that were to follow, a new Conservative Party was to be created, spiritually attuned to the life of the post-war world and the new society' (Tides of Fortune 1945-55 (1969), p 292)

The Party’s landslide defeat at the 1945 election under Churchill (leader from 1940 to 1955) was followed by a fundamental reappraisal of policy. The Party signalled the way it intended to proceed in the post-war world in its Industrial Charter, a key policy document published in 1947, which pledged support for ‘a system of free enterprise, which... reconciles the need for central direction with the encouragement of individual effort’. This set the scene for policies, during the period often described as the post-war consensus, which sought to combine support for individual freedom and responsibility with a larger role for the state in the economy and public services.

During the years 1951-64 when the Conservatives were in government under Churchill (1951-5), Anthony Eden (1955-7), Harold Macmillan (1957-63) and Sir Alec Douglas-Home (1963-4), the Party’s new approach made Britain more prosperous than ever before.

- The standard of living rose by 50 per cent; earnings rose more than twice as fast as prices.
- Education’s share of GNP increased from 3.1 per cent to 4.9 per cent. 7,000 new schools were built. The number of university students rose by half, and new universities were opened. The number of family doctors rose by 20 per cent and nurses by 25 per cent. The first motorways were opened.
- The environment was given a new priority signalled most clearly by the Clean Air Act 1956 which banished London’s smog and transformed other cities.
- And, as a result of perhaps the most distinctive Conservative policy of these years, home ownership rose from some 30 per cent to nearly 50 per cent, as the famous pledge given in 1950 to build 300,000 new homes a year was redeemed by Macmillan as Housing Minister after 1951 – giving substance to the great Tory ideal of a property-owning democracy popularised by Anthony Eden after the war, as did the increase in personal savings from under £200 million to nearly £2,000 million.

On the back of this record the Conservatives became the first Party to win three successive elections with increased majorities (1951, 1955 and 1959) – and Douglas-Home only lost by a whisker in 1964.
The membership of the Party in the post-war period reached some three million as a result of reforms to its organisation which created new opportunities for young people and other constituency members at a time when people tended to work within the main political parties rather than other organisations in order to influence events. Through Butler’s creation, the Conservative Political Centre (CPC) with its constituency-based discussion groups contributing to a ‘two-way movement of ideas’, members were brought into the policy-making process. Then, and later, the Party machine was swift to change in order to improve – exploiting modern publicity and marketing techniques, and in due course investing heavily in information technology.

Abroad, the Party faced up to the implications of the ‘wind of change’, in Macmillan’s famous phrase, which was sweeping through Africa, intensified by the Suez crisis of 1956: nationalist movements, and Britain’s diminished post-war status, made it impossible to sustain a large empire. In its place the European Economic Community became a new sphere of Conservative interest, not least because it had done better in modernising its industries and sustaining economic growth than Britain had. Britain finally became a member under Edward Heath’s premiership of 1970–4 amidst high hopes, but the expansion of the Community’s political and centralising ambitions were to arouse deep tensions within the Party in the years ahead.

Heath was the first leader to be elected (1965) under rules that at first confined the decision to MPs but were subsequently widened (1998) to include Party members.
MARGARET THATCHER: RADICAL MEANS TO CONSERVATIVE ENDS

Margaret Thatcher on the genesis of Thatcherism: ‘The Tory Party... used its period in Opposition (after 1975) to elaborate a new approach to reviving the British economy and nation... My background and experience were not those of a traditional Conservative prime minister, but I was also perhaps less intimidated by the risks of change’ (The Downing Street Years (1993), pp 4 & 10)

Britain in the 1970s was engulfed by severe economic problems: unprecedented levels of inflation, taxation at a peace-time high, and unsustainable levels of public spending in a society disrupted by strikes. The 1979 Conservative election manifesto put it bluntly: ‘this country is faced with its most severe problems since the Second World War’. Never before, Mrs Thatcher wrote later, had the Party fought so clearly on the theme that it was “time for a change” (The Path to Power, (1995), p.440). The nation needed to strike out in a new direction: Mrs Thatcher provided it, implementing more radical policies for change than the Party had ever previously seen, during her government of 1979-90.

- Economic policy was completely recast: controls over pay and prices were swept away, along with exchange controls (to the great benefit of everyone travelling abroad); Labour’s penal tax rates were slashed (with the basic rate of income tax coming down by a quarter to 25p, the lowest level since the 1930s) coupled with a switch to indirect taxes to stimulate enterprise; and public spending was brought under control, taking its share of national income back to the levels of the mid-1960s. By 1990 Britain had had eight years of sustained economic growth – unmatched since the war – averaging over 3 per cent.

- Privatisation rid the nation of much of the heavy burden that had been imposed by loss-making state industries. 29 major companies were returned to profit in the private sector, along with 800,000 jobs, raising £27.5 billion for the public finances.

- A fair balance in industrial relations, and democratic trade unions, were achieved through courageous step by step reforms of trade union law – bringing the number of strikes down to its lowest level for 55 years.

- The property-owning democracy, to which Conservatives had committed themselves after the war, made remarkable progress as a result of greatly increased levels of home, share and pension ownership. Some six million families bought their homes, many as a result of the Right to Buy given to public sector tenants, taking home ownership to 66 per cent. In 1990 nearly a quarter of the adult population owned shares, in large part because of the success of privatisation. In two years (1988-90) alone 3.5 million personal pension plans were taken out.
Living standards rose steadily – with the real take-home pay of the average family man with a wife and two children a third higher by 1990. 27 million people were in work, the highest ever figure, following the longest period of sustained employment growth for some 30 years.

Major reforms took place in the great public services. A start was made in creating parental choice in education, with the introduction of grant-maintained schools free from LEA control – and on tackling unacceptably low standards in too many schools through the introduction of the national curriculum accompanied by published test results. Change was backed by extra resources: spending per pupil rose by 42 per cent in real terms. NHS reforms gave doctors in large practices control over their own funds, and established freedom for patients to travel outside their own area for quicker or better care. Spending on the NHS rose from £7.7 billion to £29.1 billion – 45 per cent ahead of inflation.

The environment rose further up the Party’s agenda – with Mrs Thatcher alerting the world in her 1989 speech at the UN to the overriding need to tackle the problem of global warming, and making the elimination of CFCs the first stage of the campaign to combat it.

And with Britain’s economic recovery through Thatcherism came a restoration of its place on the world’s stage. The strengthening of the Atlantic Alliance personified in the close partnership between Mrs Thatcher and President Reagan played a vital part in ending the Cold War and liberating Eastern Europe from communism. The world watched with admiration as British forces defended the cause of democracy in the South Atlantic, liberating the Falklands Islands in 1982.

**JOHN MAJOR: CONTINUING CHANGE**

John Major led the Party from 1990-7, a period of considerable internal stress and difficulty at the Parliamentary level. But that did not prevent continuing change in important areas of national life.

From 1992 inflation was consistently low and economic growth steady at 2-3 per cent, above the EU average, providing the basis for the increasing prosperity the nation has enjoyed until 2007.

Privatisation proceeded apace, including coal and the railways. By 1997 50 major businesses had been privatised and the state-owned sector of the economy cut by two-thirds since 1979.

Reforms in the public services continued. Ofsted was established to provide rigorous inspection of schools with published reports. Grant-maintained schools were given greater freedom to change their character. One youngster in three found a place at university. All NHS hospitals, community health and ambulance services became NHS trusts. By 1997 NHS spending had risen by over 70 per cent in real terms since 1979.

John Major played a key role at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, committing Britain to bring the emission of greenhouse gases back down to 1990 levels by 2000. An international report in 1995 showed that we were on track to get them 4 to 5 per cent below the target by 2000.

In Northern Ireland John Major began the peace process, steering it onwards undeterred by the inevitable setbacks and creating the circumstances where lasting progress could be made.

The Atlantic Alliance was further strengthened by the 1992 Gulf War. 10,500 troops were provided for the Nato force working for peace in Bosnia.
David Cameron on today's changing Conservative Party: 'We have to change in order for people to trust us... At the heart of what I believe are two simple principles: trusting people and sharing responsibility. I believe that if you trust people and give them more power and control over their lives, they become stronger, and society becomes stronger too. I believe profoundly that we are all in this together... There is such a thing as society, it's just not the same thing as the state... In this modern, compassionate Conservative Party, everyone is invited' (Speech on becoming Conservative leader, 6 December 2005). 'There is a real difference now between the parties, and I believe we are on the winning side of the argument. Labour believe in the wisdom and power of Whitehall. We believe in the wisdom and power of individuals, families and communities... Labour believe in the state. We believe in society' (Speech to Conservative Spring Forum, 15 March 2008)

After its severe defeat at the 1997 election, the Party had to face up to the need for fundamental change within itself in order to acquire a firm basis for recovery in a country that was changing rapidly, not least because of the far-reaching reforms of the Thatcher/Major years. Under three leaders, William Hague (1997-2001), Iain Duncan Smith(2001-3) and Michael Howard (2003-5), discord over European policy was calmed, a new concern for social justice signalled an expansion of policy interests, and the Party as a whole was infused with a new unity of purpose for the 2005 election.

The scale and extent of the change that the Party still needed to make immediately became David Cameron's main theme when he was elected leader in December 2005. A statement of the Party's aims and values entitled Built to Last, endorsed by the Party membership in September 2006, set out eight great objectives for change: to encourage enterprise; to fight social injustice; to meet the great environmental threats of the age; to provide first-class public services; to take a lead in ending global poverty; to protect the country from internal and external threat; to give power to people and communities; and to be an open, meritocratic and forward-looking Party.

And to make all those things possible Britain must have a strong society underpinned by strong families. Such an approach brings together in contemporary form those elements of the Conservative tradition relevant to Britain in the twenty-first century. On that basis the Party is now leading the intellectual debate once again, furnishing the new ideas that Labour is unable to supply.

Six policy groups, bringing together prominent outside experts and leading members of the Party, along with a number of task forces, carried out in 2006-7 the most thorough and detailed re-examination of policy that the Party has ever conducted. A series of policy green papers have followed, and will continue to be produced in 2008-
APPENDIX 1

CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADERS SINCE 1828

Duke of Wellington 1828-1834
Sir Robert Peel 1834 – July 1846
Lord George Bentinck* July 1846 – December 1847
14th Earl of Derby* July 1846 – February 1868
Benjamin Disraeli February 1868 – April 1881
3rd Marguess of Salisbury** May 1881 – July 1902
Arthur Balfour July 1902 – November 1911
Andrew Bonar Law October 1922 – May 1923
Austen Chamberlain March 1921 – October 1922
Stanley Baldwin May 1923 – May 1937
Neville Chamberlain May 1937 – October 1940
Sir Winston Churchill October 1940 – April 1955
Sir Anthony Eden April 1955 – January 1957
Harold Macmillan January 1957 – October 1963
Sir Alec Douglas-Home October 1963 – August 1965
Edward Heath August 1965 – February 1975
Margaret Thatcher February 1975 – November 1990
John Major November 1990 – June 1997
Iain Duncan Smith September 2001 – November 2003
Michael Howard November 2003 – December 2005
David Cameron December 2005 –

* Bentinck and Derby were co-equals in 1846-7: Derby was regarded as being the overall leader after Bentinck’s death.

** Salisbury shared the leadership with Sir Stafford Northcote from 1881 to 1885.

Until 1922 the Party had separate leaders in the Lords and the Commons when it was in opposition though one or other tended to be regarded as the principal Party leader – and is included in the above list as the leader. The title ‘Leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party’ came into existence in October 1922.

Alistair Cooke
Conservative Research Department
August 2008

9, to provide a basis for a programme of wide-ranging change for the future.

At the same time under David Cameron’s leadership the Party has dramatically increased the number of women and people from ethnic minorities selected as Parliamentary candidates in fulfilment of his commitment to ‘changing the face of the Conservative Party by changing the faces of the Conservative Party’ (Leeds, 12 December 2005). Those changed faces are helping to rebuild the Party in places where in the last generation it had almost been extinguished – the inner cities and the great northern constituencies which must be as important to the Party of one nation as any others.

Alistair Cooke
Conservative Research Department
August 2008
**FURTHER READING**

Blake, Robert, *The Conservative Party from Peel to Major* (Fontana, 1997)

Cooke, Alistair (ed.), *The Conservative Party 1680 to the 1990s: Seven Historical Studies* (Conservative Political Centre, 1997)

Cooke, Alistair (with Sir Charles Petrie), *The Carlton Club 1832-2007* (published by the Club, 2007)


**CONSERVATIVE PARTY ARCHIVE**

A wealth of unpublished material on the history of the Party has been deposited in the Conservative Party Archive at the Bodleian Library in Oxford (enquiries: email, jeremy.mcIlwaine@bodley.ox.ac.uk). A detailed guide to the contents of the Archive is available.

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**APPENDIX 2**

**CONSERVATIVES IN GOVERNMENT SINCE 1830**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Prime Minister</th>
<th>Type of Government</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1834 (Nov-Dec)</td>
<td>Duke of Wellington</td>
<td>Con.minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834-5</td>
<td>Sir Robert Peel</td>
<td>Con.minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841-6</td>
<td>Sir Robert Peel</td>
<td>Con.majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852 (Feb-Dec)</td>
<td>14th Earl of Derby</td>
<td>Con.minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858-9</td>
<td>14th Earl of Derby</td>
<td>Con.minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866-8</td>
<td>14th Earl of Derby</td>
<td>Con.minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868 (Feb-Dec)</td>
<td>Benjamin Disraeli</td>
<td>Con.minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874-80</td>
<td>Benjamin Disraeli</td>
<td>Con.majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-6</td>
<td>3rd Marquess of Salisbury</td>
<td>Con.minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886-92</td>
<td>3rd Marquess of Salisbury</td>
<td>Con.majority (with Lib.Unionist support)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-1902</td>
<td>3rd Marquess of Salisbury</td>
<td>Con.majority (with Lib.Unionists in cabinet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902-5</td>
<td>Arthur Balfour</td>
<td>Con.majority (with Lib.Unionists in cabinet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-6</td>
<td>Herbert Asquith (Lib.)</td>
<td>Coalition (Con./Lib.parity)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1916-22</td>
<td>David Lloyd George(Lib.)</td>
<td>Coalition (Con.majority following Lib.split)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922-3</td>
<td>Andrew Bonar Law</td>
<td>Con.majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923-4 (Jan)</td>
<td>Stanley Baldwin</td>
<td>Con.majority</td>
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<tr>
<td>1924 (Nov - 9)</td>
<td>Stanley Baldwin</td>
<td>Con.majority</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931-5</td>
<td>Ramsay MacDonald (Nat.Lab.)</td>
<td>National (with Con.majority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-7</td>
<td>Stanley Baldwin</td>
<td>National (with Con.majority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-40</td>
<td>Neville Chamberlain</td>
<td>National (with Con.majority)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940-5 (May)</td>
<td>Winston Churchill</td>
<td>Coalition (with Con.majority)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945 (May-July)</td>
<td>Winston Churchill</td>
<td>Con.majority</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951-5</td>
<td>Sir Winston Churchill</td>
<td>Con. majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-7</td>
<td>Sir Anthony Eden</td>
<td>Con. majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-63</td>
<td>Harold Macmillan</td>
<td>Con. majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-4</td>
<td>Sir Alec Douglas-Home</td>
<td>Con. majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-4</td>
<td>Edward Heath</td>
<td>Con. majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-90</td>
<td>Margaret Thatcher</td>
<td>Con. majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-7</td>
<td>John Major</td>
<td>Con. majority</td>
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