

## Chapter 11: Final Scenes

Joe's death was not the only one noted by grandad in 1918. On 19 November 1918, he noted that "*Mr John Smith died*".<sup>1</sup> Also, on 30 December 1918, grandad noted that Mr W Smith committed suicide by cutting his throat and, the next day, Cyril Smith came to live with John. John had a younger brother called Cyril and his father was called William. So, I put together a story in my head that it was John's father who had committed suicide and, as a result, Cyril had gone to live with John and Olive.<sup>2</sup> However, this story is, at best, only partially true. It may have been John's brother, Cyril, who went to live with John and Olive. He was 23 at this point and, at the end of 1919 he married Jane Stanbury in Tynemouth and, by 1921, was living with her at 42 Welbeck Street.

However, it was not John and Cyril's father, William, who died, not least because he was living with John and Olive in the 1920s!! In addition, there was no William Smith whose death was registered in quarter one of 1919 in Basford. However, there were two Walter Smiths, one aged 55 and the other aged 69. Based on an article in the [Mansfield Reporter](#) of 3 January 1919, it seems it was the former who had committed suicide. Apparently, he was troubled and depressed about the war and, in particular, the involvement of his only son, Bertie<sup>3</sup>, in it. As far as I can see, there is no connection between Walter Smith's death one day and Cyril Smith moving in with John and Olive the next.

Grandad always had an interest in politics although he did not speak particularly openly about his affiliations. What he was clear about, and this is something that was transmitted to me through my parents, was the democratic responsibility to vote. On 14 December 1918, he noted that there was a parliamentary election. He noted the results for each candidate as Sir Charles Seeley<sup>4</sup>, Lib 4,500; Geo H Spencer, Lab 11,000; and Capt H H Whaites<sup>5</sup>, Coalition 4,000.

The constituency that grandad voted in was [Broxtowe](#)<sup>6</sup>. In this constituency, Labour's candidate, [George Spencer, won handsomely](#) with 11,150 votes. The Liberal candidate, Sir Charles Seely came second with 4,681 votes with the National Democratic (coalition) candidate, Herbert Whaite, third with 4,374 votes. George Spencer won three further election victories and continued to represent the constituency until 1929. Although Sir Charles Seely had previously been a Member of Parliament, he did not stand again for Parliament after this defeat.

From [other sources](#), it is clear that the governing coalition led by Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, sent letters of endorsement to candidates who supported the coalition government. These were known as "*coalition coupons*" and this became the "*coupon election*". Coalition candidates won a total of 523 seats. Labour won 57 seats and non-coalition Liberals only 36. It was the first general election held on a single day and it was also the first general election in which women were able to stand as candidates and in which all men over 21 and all women over 30 could vote. It was also noted for

Image Source: [Find My Past](#)

The first enquiry was on the body of Walter Smith, aged 55, colliery banksmen, of 1, Morley-street, Kirkby.

The widow stated that deceased got up at 4.45 a.m. on Monday, and when she went down stairs soon after 5 o'clock, she found him lying on the scullery floor with his throat cut and a razor in his hand. She went out and fetched a neighbour, Mr. Wilbourn, and Dr. Waller was sent for. Her husband, said the witness, had been very low and miserable since the war started, and the fact that their only son had to go into the army troubled him. There had been nothing else the matter. He had been off work for five weeks owing to his depressed condition, but intended starting again soon. He had talked very little lately. Some years ago he was in an asylum.

Edward Wilbourn, grocer, a neighbour, spoke to being called to the house soon after five and finding deceased lying unconscious on the scullery floor. His throat was cut, and a razor was on the sink-stone. Dr. Waller attended the deceased, who died soon afterwards. Witness knew deceased intimately, and described him as a very quiet man. He was troubled about his son being at the war.

*News article concerning the inquest into the suicide of Walter Smith in 1919*

<sup>1</sup> Given that John Smith is a common name, I have not been able to pin down if this is any of the John Smiths mentioned in grandad's diary. It seems that only one adult John Smith died in Basford that quarter. He was a 70-year old coal miner who lived in Prospect Street. As far as I know, he was not related to grandad's brother-in-law John William Smith.

<sup>2</sup> If this Cyril was John's brother, he would have been 23 at this point.

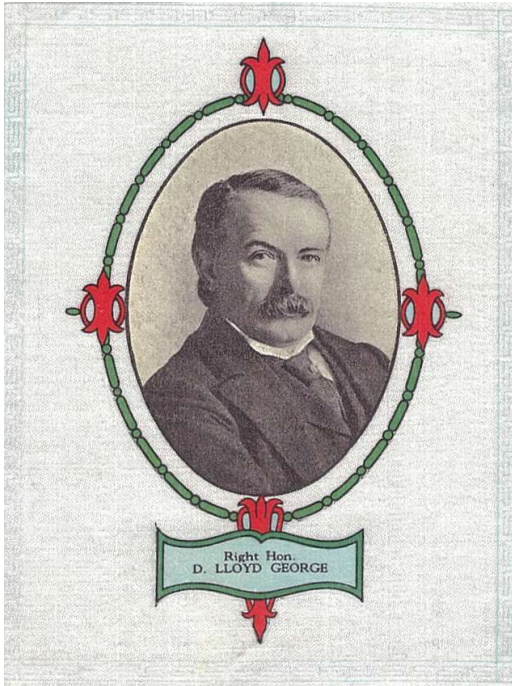
<sup>3</sup> It seems that Bertie survived the war. Based on the 1939 Register, he was married to Dot, living in Bourne Avenue and working as a fish salesman. Indeed, this suicide happened just after the war had ended but perhaps Bertie had not yet been released from the army.

<sup>4</sup> A misspelling of Seely.

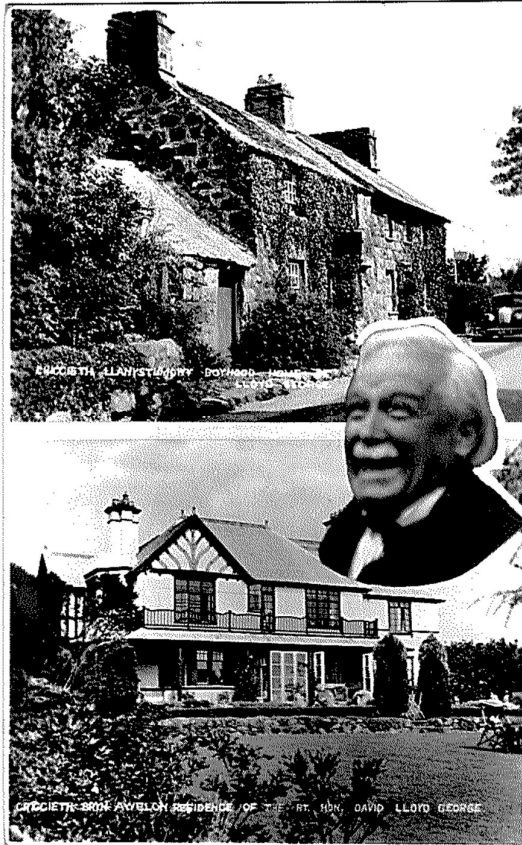
<sup>5</sup> A misspelling of Whaite.

<sup>6</sup> Represented since 2019 by Darren Henry.

dramatic results in Ireland with Sinn Fein winning 73 seats and the Irish Parliamentary Party only seven. The result of this was that a breakaway government was formed which declared Irish independence. This led to the Irish War of Independence and this was the last UK general election to cover the entire island of Ireland.



*Above – silk card of David Lloyd George*  
*Right – 1946 picture postcard of*  
*Llanystumdwy the boyhood home of*  
*David Lloyd George*





### THE VOTER'S NIGHTMARE.

Above – 1918 Punch cartoon which shows the choices facing voters in the general election of that year  
Overleaf – 1918 article in *The Sphere* about the general election



## THE GENERAL ELECTION: *Some Prominent Men in the Political World.*



THE RIGHT HON. A. J.  
BATHURST

[illegible]East Campus of  
Middlesex

Member of the House of Representatives 1955-1961, and Chairman of the Subcommittee on the Constitution, 1955-1961. He was also a member of the House of Representatives in 1962-1963.



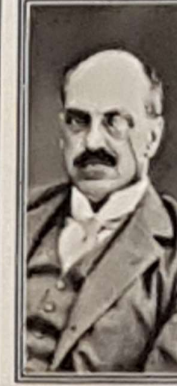
The Right Hon. Walter  
Long

Development of Plans for the Civil  
war since 1918. From 1918-19  
during Mr. Asquith's Coalition  
Ministry, he was responsible  
for the Local Government Board,  
a position which he had also held  
from 1904-5



The Right Hon.  
Winston Churchill

Minister of Maritime. He was  
elected First Lord of the  
Admiralty in 1881, and has  
been President of the Board  
since. He is a member of the  
Maritime Committee of the  
House of Commons.



THE RIGHT HON.  
E. B. MONTAGU, P.C.

Secretary of State for India, the  
Indian Union Secretary of State  
for India, to which was added a  
new member, Financial Secretary  
to the Treasury. Mr. Manning  
was made a Privy Counsellor  
the past year.

### THE AFTER-WAR ELECTION— SOME OF ITS EXCEPTIONAL FEATURES

The General Election, which after considerable discussion was finally decided upon by the existing Government, is to be held to-day (Saturday). The cause of this election, you find—

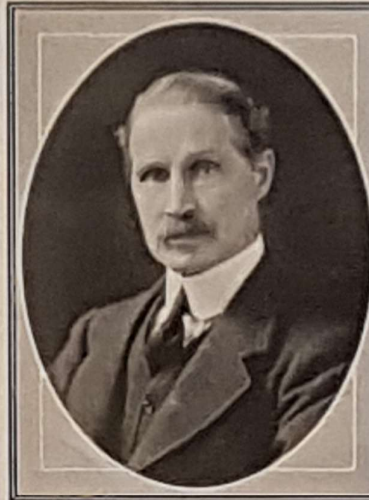
Nominations - Wednesday, December 8  
 Polling - Saturday, December 10  
 Counting of Votes - Saturday, Dec. 20  
 New Parliament to meet - January 21

The rest of the notes issued are as follows:—

"Witness by the advice of our Council we have ordered a Parliament to be holden at Westminster on the 23 day of January, and thenceforward from thenceforth and thenceforward we charged you that, before of the time and place of election being first duly given, you do cause elections to be made according to law of a member to serve in Parliament for the Parliamentary Borough of \_\_\_\_\_ and that you do cause the name of such member whom we charged, whether he be present or absent, to be certified to us in our Chancery without delay.

Special arrangements were made with regard to absent voters in order that soldiers, sailors, prisoners of war, and men at large might be able to vote.

This is the first general election in which women have taken a part, and the country is anxious to witness the results from those constituencies where women are standing as parliamentary candidates.



The Right Hon. A. Bruce Law

Chairman of the Estimates and Leader of the House of Commons from 1911. From 1911-13 he was Leader of the Opposition, and in the latter year he was Secretary of State for the Colonies under Mr. Asquith's Ministry. He is a member of the War Cabinet and a Privy Counsellor.

FROM THE JOINT MANIFESTO  
OF MR. LLOYD GEORGE  
AND MR. BONAR LAW

"The *unhappy* content of every German must be, and must be, the condition of the great mass of the people who live by manual labor. The constant agony of our workers, displayed on all the fronts of action opened out by the war, in the trenches, in the mines, in the air, in land, sea, and factory, has left us an unforgettable mark on the heart and mind of the nation. The agony of the fronts of the *unhappy* must be to find on land and sea, and in the mines, and in the factory, the same suffering of the people, which during the war has fallen on every man, woman, and upon which the well-being of the nation so largely depends.

Larger opportunities for education, improved material conditions and the progress of the degrading standards of employment; a proper adaptation to postwar conditions of the experience which during the war we have gained in regard to the traffic in drink—these are among the conditions of social harmony which we should earnestly endeavor to promote.

"It will be the fundamental object of the Coalition to promote the unity and development of our Empire and of the nations of which it is composed; to preserve for those the position and influence and authority which they have gained by their sacrifices and efforts in the cause of human liberty and progress; and to bring about such conditions of living for the inhabitants of the British Isles as will secure liberty and opportunity for all."



The Right Hon. J.  
A. Smith, F.C.

Mr. Amoswell became a Free-  
mason in 1880. From 1887-  
he was Chairman of the Ex-  
tension and Open House of the  
Irish Museum. He was suc-  
ceeded by Mr. Lloyd George.



The Right Hon.  
Albert Stanley

President of the Board of Trade. He has been Vice-President of the National Association of Manufacturers since 1929, and was elected in 1934. He was formerly General Manager of American Electric Industries.



The Right Hon. H. A. Fisher

President of the Board of Education. He has represented the United Nations at Stockholm since 1946. He was a member of the World Commission on the Pacific, Bureau of Labor, 1947-50.



The Right Hon. Charles Lytton

Minister in Charge of Economic  
Structuring since 1970. From 1960  
to 1968 Dr. Azzam was Foreign  
Ministry Secretary at the Office  
of Ministers, and was head  
of the Ministry of Agriculture in 1969.



The Right Hon. G. N.  
Barnard, Esq.

He is the Labour member for the Manchester University of Science, and was made a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1904. He is a member of the New Labour Party.