

## 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 bank-man, of 1, Morley-street, Kirkby.

The widow stated that the 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.

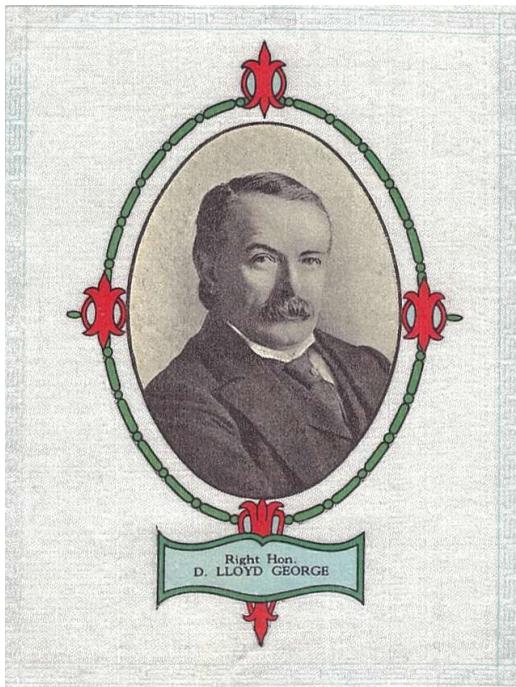
<sup>3</sup> It seems that Bertie survived the war. Based on the 1939 Register, he was married to Dot, living in Bourne Avenue and working as a fish salesman. Indeed, this suicide happened just after the war had ended but perhaps Bertie had not yet been released from the army.

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

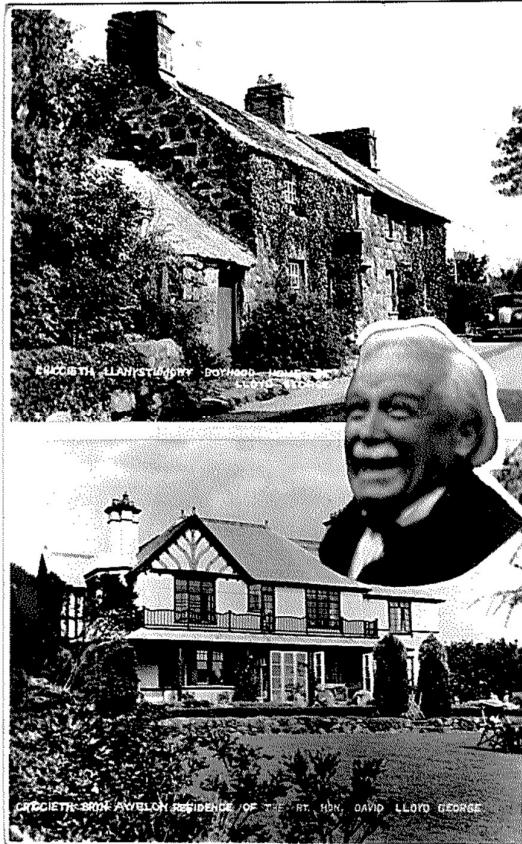
<sup>5</sup> A misspelling of Whaite.

<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. Balfour



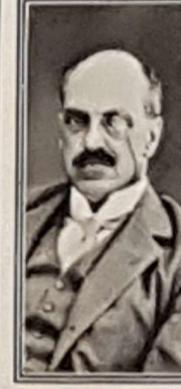
Earl Curzon of Kedleston



The Right Hon. Walter Long



The Right Hon. Winston Churchill



The Right Hon. E. H. Montagu, M.P.

Mr. Balfour has been乞求 for the King of England to be appointed to the office of Lord Privy Seal. He has had the appointment since 1919, and has been a member of the Cabinet since 1918. He was made a member of the War Committee in 1917.

Member of the House of Lords since 1911. He was a member of the Cabinet from 1916 to 1918. He was a member of the War Committee in 1917.

Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1911 to 1918. He was a member of the Cabinet from 1916 to 1918. He was a member of the War Committee in 1917.

Minister of Munitions. He was appointed to the Cabinet in 1916. He was a member of the War Committee in 1917.

Secretary of State for India. He was appointed to the Cabinet in 1916. He was a member of the War Committee in 1917.

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

The General Election, which after two indecisive elections was finally decided upon by the existing Government, is to be held today (Tuesday). The date of this election can thus—

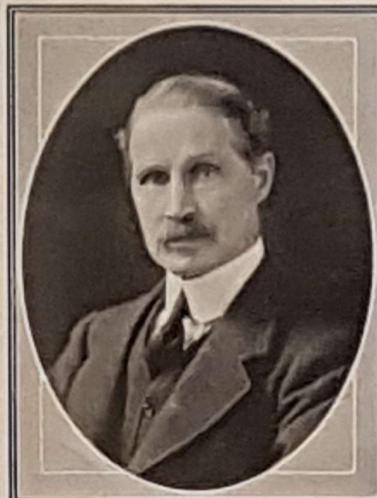
Nomination—Wednesday, December 4  
Polling—Saturday, December 14  
Counting of Votes—Saturday, Dec. 21  
New Parliament to meet—January 21

The cost of the work issued last

“Women by the advice of our Council were asked to order a General election on Wednesday on the 11th day of December, one thousand nine hundred and sixteen. We command you that, notwithstanding 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 when so elected, whether he be present or absent, to be certified to us in our chamber within due time.”

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

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



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

“For the principal concern of every Government is, and must be, the condition of the great mass of the people who live by manual work. The manifold efforts of our workers, displayed on all the works held of action opened out by the war, in the trenches, on the seas, in the air, in field, mine, and factory, has left an imperishable mark on the heart and conscience of the nation. One of the first tasks of the Government will be to deal on broad and comprehensive lines with the housing of the people, which during the war has been an only too pressing, and upon which the well-being of the nation as a whole depends.

“Larger opportunities for education, improved material conditions, and the promotion of the dignifying standards of civilised life, a proper adaptation to peace conditions of the experience which during the war we have gained in regard to the traffic in drugs—these are among the conditions of social security which we shall earnestly endeavour to promote.”

“It will be the fundamental object of the Committee to promote the unity and development of our Empire, and of the members of which it is intended to promote for those the personal and political and authority areas that have gained by their sacrifices and efforts in the cause of human liberty and progress; and at being able to bring such conditions of living for the inhabitants of the British Isles as will secure plenty and opportunity for all.”



The Right Hon. B. B. Asquith, P.C.

Mr. Asquith became a Privy Councillor in 1908. From 1908-9 he was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Labour Party. He was succeeded by Mr. Lloyd George.



The Right Hon. Sir Albert Stanley

President of the Board of Trade from 1911-12. He was a member of the Cabinet from 1916 to 1918. He was a member of the War Committee in 1917.



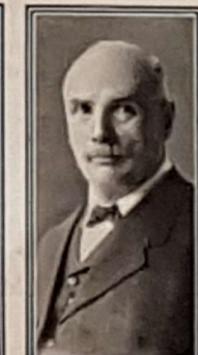
The Right Hon. H. A. Fisher

President of the Board of Education from 1911-12. He was a member of the Cabinet from 1916 to 1918. He was a member of the War Committee in 1917.



The Right Hon. Christopher Addison, M.P., F.C.

Minister of Education from 1911-12. He was a member of the Cabinet from 1916 to 1918. He was a member of the War Committee in 1917.



The Right Hon. D. N. P. Barlow, F.C.

He is the Labour member for the Black Country. He was a member of the Cabinet from 1916 to 1918. He was a member of the War Committee in 1917.