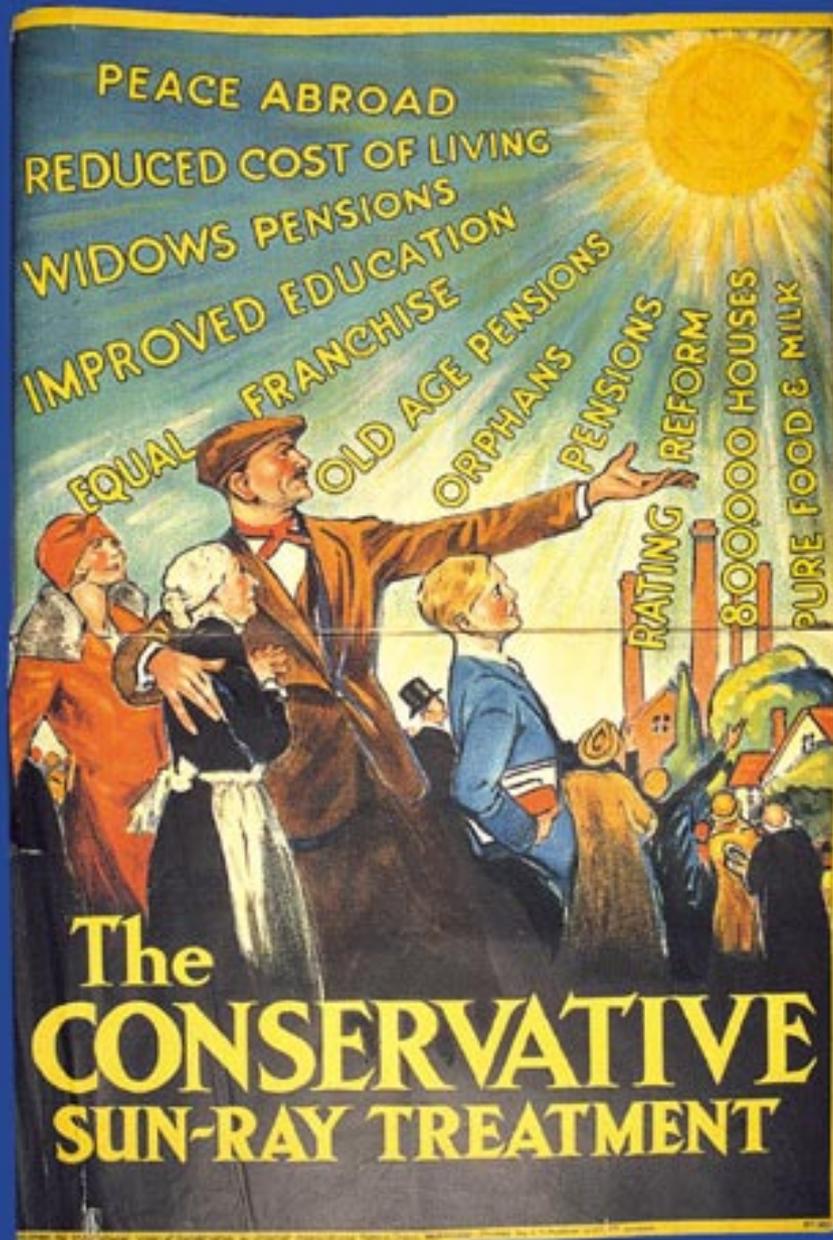


The Conservative
Party Archive



a guide

foreword

I am proud of the Conservative Party's history and traditions.

I am proud that the Conservative Party has been the dominant electoral force of the past hundred years. The twentieth century was a Conservative century.

And I am proud that we are building our new policies on the same principles that have been the bedrock of Conservatism for generations. Conservatives have always stood for freedom, for the rule of law, for safeguarding our national identity and for recognising our obligations to others.

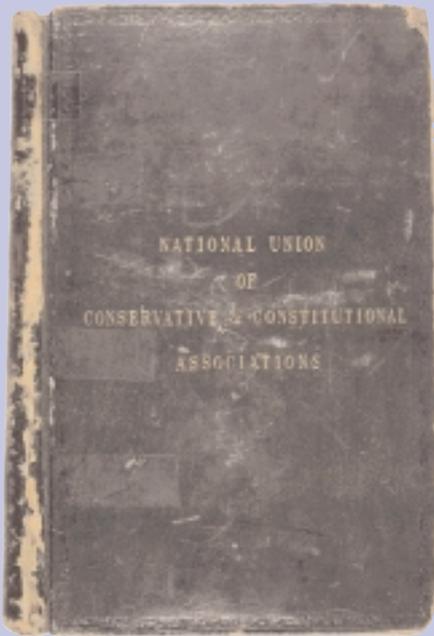
For students of the Conservative Party's past, the Conservative Party Archive is an essential source of reference. Its unrivalled collections of published and private papers give a unique insight into the development of the Party's policies and organisation.

I am delighted that, in recent years, the Archive's trustees have been able to work in partnership with the Bodleian Library. Through the Bodleian's skilled and dedicated staff, the Archive's contents have been conserved and made available to readers from all over the world.

Anyone with an interest in political history will find that this guide gives an excellent introduction to what the Conservative Party Archive has to offer.



Rt Hon William Hague MP



National Union minute book 1867. The oldest item in the Conservative Party Archive



1951 General Election poster

Contents

Introduction	4
Brief history of the Conservative Party	6
Structure of the Conservative Party archive	12
National Union Series, 1867 - present	14
Area Offices Series, 1898 - 1986	15
Conservative Central Office Series, 1936 - present	16
Other collections	20
Library of published and printed material, 1868 - present	22
Access and general information	23
Appendix A - Leaders of the Party	24
Appendix B - Party Chairmen	26

Cover: 1929 General Election Poster

introduction

The Conservative Party Archive (CPA) was established as a source for academic research at the Bodleian Library, Oxford in 1978.¹

Prior to this time Conservative records had long been divided between the Conservative Central Office (CCO) in London and Newcastle University Library. At the Bodleian, the papers were consolidated in, catalogued and administered by an archivist within the Modern Papers section of the Library's Special Collections and Western Manuscripts department.

Following its move to Oxford, CPA was identified as a valuable source for historians interested in twentieth century economic, social and political history. It serves to complement collections held in the Bodleian's Modern Papers section, which has been recognised as one of the four most important collections of modern political papers in Britain.²

The papers located in the Modern Papers section are mainly generated by politicians, public servants (particularly diplomats), journalists and broadcasters and other figures in public life. They date from 1840 to present. In particular the private papers of several Prime Ministers - Benjamin Disraeli (Earl of Beaconsfield), H. H. Asquith (1st Earl of Oxford and Asquith), Clement Attlee (1st Earl Attlee), Harold Macmillan (1st Earl of Stockton), Harold Wilson (Baron Wilson of Rievaulx), James Callaghan (Baron Callaghan) - can be found [here](#) as well as many other

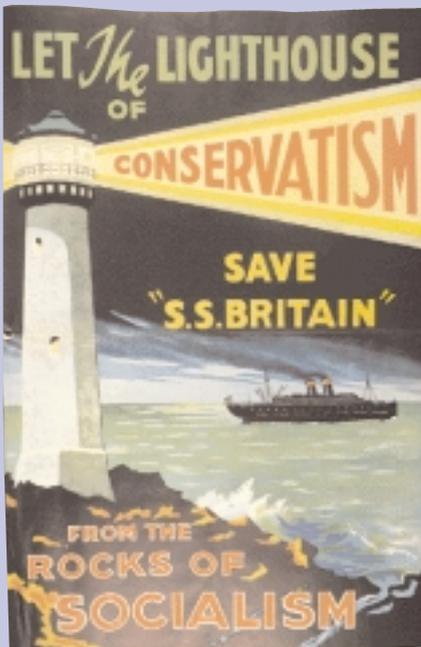
leading figures from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Parties, including the 4th Earl of Clarendon and his wife Lady Clarendon, Lord Kimberley, Lord Bryce, Sir William Harcourt and his son Lewis, Lord Milner, H. A. L. Fisher, Lord Addison, Lord Woolton, Lord George-Brown and Lady Emmet.³

In contrast, CPA does not contain private papers as such; it is the archive of the Party's central organisation. Instead, its papers contain the records that individuals created in the course of their particular roles within Conservative Central Office.

The oldest papers in the archive are located in the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations collection, and date from 1867. Sadly many records were lost during the wars, and a number of moves by Central Office since then have resulted in the destruction of still more, particularly from the period prior to 1939. As a result, the archive predominantly consists of post-Second World War material. Material in CPA is kept up-to-date through periodic transfers from Conservative Central Office

Jill M.D. Spellman
Archivist, Conservative Party Archive
April 2001

Please note: The current archivist would like to thank her predecessors for their contributions to this guide as many of their descriptions of the archive and its holdings have been edited for



1929 General Election poster

Future Acquisitions

The holdings of the Conservative Party Archive increase through regular transfers from Conservative Central Office.

Other unique material demonstrating the role of Conservative Central Office within the Party is welcome.

Please contact The Archivist, The Conservative Party Archive, Bodleian Library, Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BG.

Donations

The Conservative Party Archive relies almost entirely on donations to fund its running costs. All contributions are appreciated and will go towards safeguarding and developing the archive's collections.

Please contact the Secretary to the Trustees, the Director of the Conservative Policy Forum, 32 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HH.

a brief history of the Conservative Party

Stuart Ball, Reader, Department of History, University of Leicester

The Conservative Party has a long history, during which it has passed through many phases and changes.⁴ For significant periods of modern British history it has been the dominant governing party, but it has also suffered divisions, defeats and spells in the political wilderness. The Conservative Party has remained relevant because its programme and outlook have adapted to the changing social and political environment, and it has never been exclusively linked to any one issue or group. Continuity is provided by the fact that the Conservative Party has always stood for social stability and the rights of property.

Origins

The origins of the Conservative Party can be traced to the 'Tory' faction which emerged in the later seventeenth century. This 'Tory Party' established a secure hold on government between 1783 and 1830, first under the Younger Pitt and then Lord Liverpool. However, after Liverpool's retirement in 1827 the unity of the party was destroyed when the Duke of Wellington and Robert Peel, were forced, largely as a result of events in Ireland, to concede full political emancipation to Roman Catholics. The Tory collapse opened the way for a return of the Whigs in the 1830s, and a series of measures including the Great Reform Act of 1832 changed the political scene; in the general election which followed the Act the Tories were reduced to only 180 M.Ps.

It was in the wake of these upheavals that the name 'Conservative' first began to be used, as Peel sought to

rally the opponents of further reform in the mid-1830s. He was successful in drawing support back to the party and became Prime Minister after winning the election of 1841. However, his decision in 1846 to reverse course and repeal the protectionist Corn Laws outraged many of his followers, and the party split from top to bottom.

Disraeli and modern Conservatism

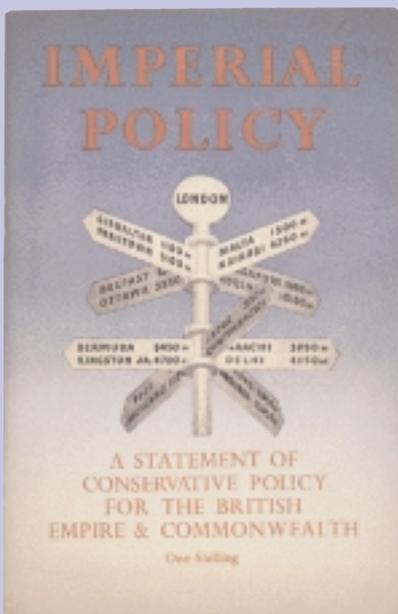
The continuous modern history of the Conservative Party begins with the era of Disraeli, and he has perhaps the strongest amongst the many claims to be regarded as its founding father. In 1866 the collapse of the Whig ministry allowed a minority Conservative administration under the 14th Earl of Derby to tackle the question of extending the franchise. Shaped by Disraeli's adroit tactics in the Commons, the Second Reform Act of 1867 was a bold stroke which sought to protect Conservative interests and restore their credibility as a governing party.

Most of the new voters were in the industrial towns and cities, and it was with the aim of improving Conservative prospects here that Disraeli founded what became the central pillars of the party organisation: the National Union, which began as a modest gathering in 1867, and the Central Office, established in 1870.

Disraeli's government of 1874-1880 was a landmark in Conservative fortunes, and its domestic measures widened its appeal to the urban lower and middle



Poster, Budget Protest League, 1909-10



Policy pamphlet, June 1914

classes. At the same time, Disraeli forged the crucial link between the Conservative Party and patriotic pride in nation and empire. However, economic problems and Gladstone's revival of Liberal spirits led to Conservative defeat in 1880.

Despite this setback, the position of the Conservative Party was becoming much stronger in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. No longer the defender of the landed and aristocratic elite alone, the Conservative Party was becoming a national presence with an appeal to all communities, and it was this combination which led to its first period of dominance, from 1886 to 1906.

Disraeli's successor, the 3rd Marquis of Salisbury, though by temperament deeply pessimistic, was an astute strategist. A section of the Liberal Party, led by Lord Hartington and Joseph Chamberlain, could not accept Gladstone's policy of Home Rule for Ireland and broke away. These Liberal Unionists first gave informal support to Salisbury's government of 1886-1892, and then shared office as a junior partner when Salisbury returned to power in 1895. As a result, from the 1890s to the 1920s, 'Unionist' displaced Conservative as the general term for the Party and its supporters - in Scotland until the 1960s. The Irish question, the Liberal weakness and disunity, and the impact of the Boer War led to substantial Conservative victories in 1895 and 1900.

Defeat and disunity

When Salisbury retired from the Premiership in 1902, the outlook for the Conservatives appeared to be favourable. However, their fortunes swiftly declined under his nephew and successor, Arthur Balfour, and the period from 1902 to 1914 was the worst period of defeat and disunity in the Party's modern history - principally because of divisions over Joseph Chamberlain's programme of pro-Empire tariff reform, which was strongly opposed by a small group of free traders. More seriously, working-class fears that duties on food imports would raise the cost of living made it an electoral liability.

a brief history

The internal divisions which followed caused a purge of the Cabinet in 1903 and did much to cause three successive electoral defeats - the landslide of 1906, which left only 157 Conservative M.Ps, and narrower reverses in January and December 1910. The Party was further divided over resistance to the Liberal government's reform of the House of Lords in 1911, and Balfour finally resigned the leadership.

The defeats also led to organisational reforms, and in 1911 the post of Party Chairman was created to oversee the work of the Central Office. Balfour's unexpected successor, Andrew Bonar Law, restored Party morale with a series of vigorous attacks upon the government and by his support of Ulster during the passage of the Irish Home Rule Bill in 1912-1914.

First World War

The First World War transformed the position of the Conservative Party. As the 'patriotic' party, its advocacy of vigorous prosecution of the war led to increased popularity, and it also benefited from the splits and eventual decline of the Liberal Party. In May 1915 the Conservatives agreed to join a coalition under the Liberal Prime Minister, H.H. Asquith.

In December 1916, concerned over lack of direction in the war, the Conservative leaders supported the supplanting of Asquith by a more energetic and charismatic Liberal, David Lloyd George. The Conservatives had a larger share of office in the

restructured coalition of 1916-1918, and provided most of the back-bench support in the House of Commons.

When victory came in 1918 Lloyd George was at the height of his popularity, and Bonar Law readily agreed that the Coalition should continue in order to tackle the problems of peace-making and reconstruction. However, after economic depression and failures of policy in 1920-1921, the Coalition became increasingly unpopular amongst Conservative M.Ps and local activists. In March 1921 Bonar Law resigned for reasons of health, and Austen Chamberlain became the Conservative leader. His approach was too autocratic and inflexible, and he seemed too closely tied to the discredited Lloyd George. A revolt against the Coalition swelled up from the lower ranks of the party, and Chamberlain was defeated at the meeting of Conservative M.Ps held at the Carlton Club on 19 October 1922. Bonar Law led the victorious rebels, and thus ousted both Chamberlain as Party Leader and Lloyd George as Prime Minister.

Inter-war ascendancy

The fall of the Coalition was the formative event in Conservative politics between the wars. It marked a decision to return to normal party politics, with Labour replacing the Liberals as the main opposition. The events of 1922 also brought to the fore a group of anti-coalitionist junior ministers who dominated the leadership until 1940. Stanley Baldwin was the most important of these, and he replaced the dying Bonar



1929 General Election Poster



1935 General Election Poster

Law as party leader and Prime Minister in May 1923.

Despite leading the Conservatives into an unnecessary defeat in December 1923 and a serious assault upon his position in 1929-1931, Baldwin remained leader until 1937. Standing for honesty, moderation and traditional English values, he attracted widespread popular support. As a result of this and of the Liberal-Labour rivalry, the Conservative Party dominated the inter-war decades. Between 1918 and 1945 they were the largest party in the House of Commons for all but two and a half years.

In the crisis of August 1931 the Conservatives agreed to serve under the former Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, in a National government in which the Conservatives formed by far the largest element. In 1935 Baldwin replaced MacDonald as Prime Minister, and in 1937 he handed on both the Premiership and the Conservative leadership to Neville Chamberlain.

The latter's period as leader was dominated by controversy over the policy of appeasement. Chamberlain exerted a much closer grip over the Party than Baldwin had done, and until the outbreak of war he was strongly supported by the grass-roots and almost all M.P.s. However, he seemed less suited to the demands of wartime, and a revolt of Conservative M.P.s in the Norway debate of 8-9 May 1940 forced his resignation as Prime Minister.

Winston Churchill, an isolated Conservative critic during the 1930s, now became Prime Minister; later in the same year he also succeeded Chamberlain as party leader. Churchill rallied the nation, but even his prestige could not shelter the Conservative Party from popular blame for the failures of the 1930s. This led to its second major electoral defeat of the century in 1945, when it was reduced to only 210 M.P.s.

a brief history

Post - War Consensus

The Conservatives adapted to this setback whilst in opposition during the 1945-1951 Labour governments, and overhauled both organisation and policy. As a result, between the late 1940s and the early 1970s the Conservatives accepted the pillars of the post-war 'consensus': the Welfare State, the public ownership of certain industries, government intervention in economic affairs, and partnership in industry between trade unions and employers. Although Churchill remained rather unenthusiastic, these policies enabled the Conservatives to regain power in 1951 and then to remain in office continuously until 1964.

The key figures in this period were Anthony Eden, who succeeded Churchill in April 1955 but retired after the failed Suez invasion in January 1957; Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister and Conservative leader from 1957 until November 1963; and R.A. Butler. Butler twice seemed on the brink of becoming leader and Prime Minister, but in 1963 Macmillan was instead unexpectedly succeeded by Sir Alec Douglas-Home. Macmillan's sudden resignation was due to ill-health, but since 1961 his ministry had been mired in economic stagnation and public scandal, and by 1963 defeat seemed likely.

Although his aristocratic lineage was an easy target for the meritocratic campaign of Labour, Douglas-Home managed to regain some lost ground and the Conservatives only narrowly lost the general election in 1964.

In August 1965 Douglas-Home stood down, and the first formal party leadership election by a ballot of M.P.s took place; it was also the first change of leadership whilst in opposition since 1911. The victor was Edward Heath, whose lower middle-class background was thought more publicly acceptable than the aristocratic image of Macmillan and Douglas-Home. Heath survived the Party's loss of further seats to Labour in the 1966 election, but never secured the affection of the public or Conservative backbenchers. To general surprise, he won the 1970 election and became Prime Minister.

Despite his personal achievement in taking Britain into the Common market, the failures of the Heath ministry of 1970-1974 have been the catharsis of modern Conservatism. The reversals of policy, the failure to control inflation or contain the trade unions through legislation on industrial relations, and two defeats at the hands of the coal-miners led first to the fall of Heath and second to the rise and development of Thatcherism. After losing the two elections of February and October 1974, Heath was forced to hold a ballot for the Party leadership in February 1975 in which he was defeated by Margaret Thatcher.

The rise of Thatcherism

In opposition during 1975-1979 the new leader developed a radical agenda founded upon the 'free market', rolling back government intervention and leaving as much as possible to individual initiative. This was the core of Thatcherism.



1945 General Election Poster



Edward Heath (Prime Minister) and Sir Alec Douglas-Home (Foreign Secretary) at the Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, October 1973.

Concern over economic decline and the power wielded by the trade unions created a receptive public mood, and Thatcher led the Conservatives to three successive victories in 1979, 1983 and 1987. She was the dominant political personality throughout the 1980s, especially after securing victory in the Falklands war of 1982. She is widely credited with restoring Britain's status as an enterprise-based economy and as a significant influence on the international stage. However, at the end of the decade economic recession, her commitment to the deeply unpopular 'poll tax', and internal disputes over European policy led to Mrs Thatcher's defeat in a leadership ballot in November 1990.

From Major to Hague

The successor to emerge from this contest was the relatively unknown figure of John Major, the candidate thought most able to unify a divided and traumatised party. Major abandoned the 'poll tax' and presented a more 'caring' image, and support for the Conservatives improved enough for him to hold on to a narrow majority in the general election of April 1992. However, this margin was steadily eroded during the following parliament, and by 1997 his administration was clinging on by its fingertips.

The Major government of 1992-1997 was a painful period for the Conservative Party, and opinion poll ratings slumped to record lows following the economic fiasco of 'Black Wednesday' in 1992. The most serious problems were caused by a recession which hit Conservative support in southern England, a collapse of normal party unity over the increasingly contentious issue of Europe, and 'sleaze' - a string of personal scandals involving Conservative ministers and M.Ps. Press hostility and a modernised Labour opposition prevented the Conservatives from recovering when the economic position improved, and on 1 May 1997 they suffered their third and final sweeping defeat of the twentieth century. Only 165 M.Ps survived, and Major at once resigned the leadership; in his place, the Party selected its youngest leader in modern times, William Hague.

Stuart Ball, Reader, Department of History, University of Leicester

The Trustees of the Conservative Party Archive are grateful to Stuart Ball for contributing this brief history, which represents his personal view. It is not an official Conservative Party statement.

structure of the Conservative Party archive

Papers held in CPA have been arranged into the three main areas, reflecting the main sections of the Party: the voluntary section or the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations (NUA); Area files (ARE); and Conservative Central Office (CCO).⁵ The archive also includes other categories such as the Whips Office (WHIP), the 1922 Committee (1922) as well as a library of material published and printed material by the Conservative Party.

In short, the archives is arranged into the following broad sections:

1. NUA
2. ARE
3. CCO
4. Other Collections
5. Library (printed Party literature, press releases, speeches)

A full catalogue of the archive is available in the Modern Papers and John Johnson Reading Room (Room 132) in the New Library. The following brief list of catalogued records will provide an overview of the collection.



National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations Series

1867 to present

The National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations (NUA) was established in 1867.⁶ It was a federation of constituency associations, bringing together the rank and file of the Party in a national organisation. Representatives of the constituencies met at area and national level, and a system of advisory committees was used to convey grass roots opinion to the Party leadership. The National Union expressed opinion and support and, as such, could exert a degree of influence on the Leader and over Party policy. It did not, however, possess any mandatory powers.

The annual Party Conference has traditionally been a National Union function.

In March 1998, when a series of Party reforms were launched, the National Union passed a resolution to suspend its activities. It is succeeded by the National Conservative Convention.

General access conditions apply to this material.



Area Offices Series

1898 - 1986

The Conservative Party's provincial organisation is based on 26 'areas', mostly corresponding to two or three counties.

This structure has been put in place since the 1997 General Election. Prior to this date, the Party's structure was based on eleven larger Areas, such as North Western or Southern, and it is this structure which is reflected in the files held in CPA.

The National Union organisation within each area was headed by the Area Council, comprising MPs, candidates, area officials, representatives from each constituency and constituency agents. The Area Council generally met once a year, and most area business was conducted by the Area Advisory Committee which complemented those at national level and co-ordinated similar advisory committees in individual constituencies. In some areas, in addition to the area structure, there also existed a number of County Divisions or Federations, again with their own committees.

Please note that papers from individual constituency associations are not held in CPA but have been retained by association offices or transferred to local libraries and record offices.⁷

General access conditions apply to this material.

3

Conservative Central Office Series

1936 to present

Conservative Central Office, established in 1870, constitutes the main professional and organisational element of the Party. Initially under overall control of the Chief Whip, by 1911 it had grown sufficiently to warrant the appointment of a Chairman of the Party Organisation. This was, and has almost invariably been, a politician of cabinet or near-cabinet rank, and the deputy and vice-chairmen have generally also been political appointments, though not necessarily MPs.

General access conditions apply to the majority of this material.⁸

Constituency Correspondence

(CCO 1) 1936-1971

This series of files contains correspondence and memoranda with and about individual constituencies.

Perhaps the files of greatest interest are those on by-elections. Other items of note are area agents' reports on constituency organisation and papers for the selection of parliamentary candidates. Many files contain personal information and area agents' private assessments of constituency candidates and officers. Access to such files may therefore be restricted. The earliest date from 1936, but most are from the post-war period.

General access conditions apply.

Area Files

(CCO 2) 1949-69

These files consist of correspondence, memoranda and papers with the Area Offices and Associations.

General access conditions apply.

Outside Organisations

(CCO 3) 1936-78

These files cover Women's, Youth and Outside Organisations. There are files on the Junior Carlton Club, the British

Housewives' League, the Junior Imperial League, the Crusade for World Government, Hansard Society, the Bow Group, the BBC and many others.

General access conditions apply.

Special Subject

(CCO 4) 1921-78

This series consists of subject and personal files. Subjects included are agriculture, constituency finance, defeatism, education, elections, equal pay, imperial policy, industry, legal opinion, party literature, Lord Woolton's Fighting Fund, National Recruiting Fund, nationalisation, party funds, pensions, press, propaganda, publicity, public opinion, speakers, Swinton College, women, youth and many others.

General access conditions apply.

Chairman's Office

(CCO 20) 1940-present

The chairmanship is a central post within the Party organisation, and the Chairman wields considerable authority. The office of the Chairman was created in 1911 and the first incumbent, Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, established the tradition that the post was one of cabinet or near-cabinet rank. Early Chairmen tended to take their papers with them upon relinquishing the post. Consequently, the Steel-Maitland, Davidson, and Woolton papers all contain material relating to their period as Chairmen.

The earliest papers in the collection date from 1940 and consist of miscellaneous correspondence with senior Party politicians. The Chairman was, and is, concerned with almost every aspect of Party organisation, strategy, publicity and, to a lesser extent, policy. There are, therefore, continuing series of correspondence with the Party Leader, other senior Party politicians and the deputy and vice-chairmen. The minutes of the Policy Initiatives and Methods/Tactical Committee are to be found here, as are those of the Chairman's own weekly

meeting with departmental heads dating from 1966. There are interesting files on general elections, Party publicity, Party finance, local government, Europe, marginal seats, by-elections and public opinion research.

Restricted access.

Readers wishing to consult papers from the Chairman's Office of any date must obtain permission from [The Director, Conservative Policy Forum, Conservative Central Office, 32 Smith Square, Westminster, London, SW1P 3HH](#).

Vice Chairmen's Office

(CCO 50-90)

1948-present

The Vice Chairmen are not simply titular posts but carry executive responsibility. There are generally three or four vice chairmen, although the number has occasionally been increased to five. Each has responsibility for a particular aspect of party organisation.

One, commonly an MP, looks after the candidates' list. No papers have yet been received into the archive from this office. Another, a woman, has special responsibility for the women's organisation. Records from this office (CCO 60) date from 1948. They do not, however, relate solely to the women's side of the party but, in view of the Vice Chairmen's senior position within the party organisation, cover a wide range of issues.

General access conditions apply.

General Director's Office

(CCO 120)

1951-63

The post of General Director at CCO was created in February 1931 and arose from that of the Principal Agent, a position that dated back to 1885. The General Director was the full-time professional head of Central Office, answerable directly to the Party Chairman.

Despite the central position of the General Director in the

Party's organisation between 1931 and 1966 few papers have been kept. The collection nevertheless contains much of interest, from files on individual by-elections, to correspondence on broadcasting and politics. The working papers of the Selwyn Lloyd enquiry and the committee set-up to investigate The People's League for the Defence of Freedom, and the Middle Class Alliance, equally provide valuable supplementary information to the final reports.

General access conditions apply.

Conservative Political Centre

(CCO 150)

1945-73

This series comprises of the papers of the Conservative Political Centre (CPC),⁹ the Party's political education body, dating from 1945. The papers are divided into several sections including: minutes of the National Advisory Committee on Political Education (subsequently named the CPC National Advisory Committee), general correspondence and other papers, Contact Programme briefs and discussion papers, publications, and CPC and Party meetings, seminars, schools and courses.

General access conditions apply.

Women's Organisation Department

(CCO 170)

1934-86

The majority of these records are also available on microfilm in the Modern Papers and John Johnson Reading Room (Room 132) and include the Central Women's Advisory Council minutes, the Central Women's Advisory Council Sub-Committees minutes, the Western area's Women's Advisory Council minutes and the National Society of Women Organisers.

General access conditions apply.



Conservative Central Office Series

Public Opinion Research Department

(CCO 180)
1949-83

The Public Opinion Research Department (PORD) was established in 1948, its primary function being to follow and provide information on the trends of public opinion. At election time, PORD produced daily intelligence summaries and reports on reaction to Party broadcasts, as well as following opinion polls published in the press and providing election forecasts.

General access conditions apply.

Chief Organisation Officer/Director of Organisation

(CCO 500)
1942-76

One of the largest units within Central Office is the Organisation Department. This is something of an umbrella body, with sub-sections which have, at various times, included the Industrial, Local Government, Speakers' and Education Departments, the Overseas Bureau, Young Conservatives, Students, Personnel, the Small Business Bureau, and the Organisation and Legal Officer. The various sections of the Organisation Department are numbered from CCO 500 (the Director of Organisation's Office) to CCO 599. Certain departments started as sub-sections of Organisation and graduated to independent status.

Other primary departments, some of which have their own sub-departments, include the General Director's Office, the Publicity Department, Community Affairs, the International Office and Overseas Bureau, the Conservative Political Centre, the Women's Organisation Office, Finance and Resources and the Public Opinion Research Department.

General access conditions apply to most material. Records relating to the Legal Officer and legal cases are closed without permission from [The Director, Conservative Policy Forum](#).

Conservative Central Office, 32 Smith Square, Westminster, London. SW1P 3HH.

Labour/Industrial/Trade Unions Department

(CCO 503)
1947-65

The minutes of the Trade Unionists' National Advisory Committee (TUNAC) date from 1943 and can be found in three bound volumes, dating from 1947-63. The minutes of its predecessor, the National Union Labour Sub-Committee, 1919-35, can be found in the National Union (NUA) series.

General access conditions apply.

Education Department

(CCO 505)
1947-91

The papers of the Education Department include the Conservative and Unionist Teachers' Association (CUTA) and the National Advisory Committee on Education (NACE) minute books. There is also NACE correspondence with Areas, CUTA/NACE correspondence with organisations and individuals, along with a broad range of records addressing such issues as teacher training, immigration and schools and minutes of the Council for Educational Advance.

General access conditions apply.

The Junior Imperial and Constitutional League/The Young Britons/The Young Conservatives

(CCO 506)
1905-Present

The Junior Imperial and Constitutional League was formed in 1906. Its objectives were to create a practical interest in political work and organisation among the youth of the country by organising Junior Associations in each Parliamentary Division

and throughout the Empire, to co-operate with existing Conservative and Unionist Associations in advancing the cause of Imperial unity, upholding constitutional principles, and to further the Conservative and Unionist cause.

The Young Britons Organisation was formed in 1925 as the juvenile branch of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations. The organisation was closed down during the Second World War and was reformed in 1948. It catered for the 6-16 age group, recruiting both boys and girls.

General access conditions apply.

Conservative Overseas Bureau (CCO 507/COB) 1949-73

The Conservative Overseas Bureau began work in 1949, its main concern being informal contacts through visitors to and from Britain and by overseas correspondence. Its purpose was to make the Party's principles and policies better known in both the Commonwealth and foreign countries.

General access conditions apply.

Training and Examination (CCO 509) 1949-64

This limited collection deals with the training and examination of agents through the National Society of Conservative and Unionist Agents'.

General access conditions apply.

Chief Publicity Officer/Director of Publicity (CCO 600)1947-77

The papers of the Director of Information Services/Chief Publicity Officer/Director of Publicity date back to 1947 and include the minutes of the Tactical Committee (1947-51), the

precursor of the Liaison Committee and Policy and Methods Committee. The majority of these records are from the 1960s, although the minute books of the National Advisory Committee on Publicity and Speakers date from 1951-66.

General access conditions apply.

Conservative Research Department (CRD), 1919-Present

The Conservative Research Department was established in November 1929 and rapidly assumed a position of considerable importance in the Party's policy-making process. It advises Party leaders on the formulation of policy, undertakes detailed, long term research on a wide range of issues, services Party committees from the Leader's Consultative Committee (Shadow Cabinet) downwards, provides authoritative briefs to MPs in preparation for Parliamentary debates, plays a major role in the writing of Party publications and vetting of Party publicity, and analyses public opinion trends in order to advise the leadership on electoral strategy. Although its importance fluctuates according to the particular concerns of the Party Leader, it has always been, and remains, one of the central departments in Party organisation.

Since 1979 the Conservative Research Department has been contained, organisationally and physically, within Central Office. Before that, however, it was a separate body, housed separately and, for much of its life, organisationally independent also, with its own chairman and director. For this reason its papers have been catalogued separately from those of Central Office.

CRD files from the inter-war period can be found in CRD 1 (1919-40); subsequent papers are listed as CRD 2 (1941-64), CRD 3 (1965-73), CRD 4 (1974-89), and CRD 5 (1990 to present).

General access conditions apply to this material.



Other collections

1922 Committee

(1922) 1923-Present

This committee was “formed [in 1923] of Conservative Private Members who were elected for the first time in 1922, for the purpose of mutual co-operation and assistance in dealing political and parliamentary questions and in order to enable new Members to take a more active interest and part in parliamentary life...” (CPA, 1922/1) Today every Conservative back-bench MP is a member of the committee. It provides a sounding board of Conservative opinion in the House of Commons, and allows MPs to put forward ideas, views and concerns through a process of dialogue, rather than through confrontation with the leadership. As such, it has been involved in all the major issues of the twentieth century.

Access requires written permission from

[The Chairman, 1922 Committee, House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA.](#)

Advisory Committee on Policy

(ACP) 1946-79

The Advisory Committee on Policy (ACP) lies at the heart of the Conservative Party. From its foundation in 1946 until the 1970s it was the central forum for considering policy, and its deliberations provide an important and revealing insight into the inner workings of Conservative Politics.¹⁰ Its founding father was R. A. Butler, one of the most important figures in the post-war revival and the governments of 1951-64. He remained its chairman until 1965, and under his patronage and influence the ACP became the Party's clearing house for ideas and policies.¹¹ This series is available on microform up until 1964.

General access conditions apply.

Agent Files

(AGENTS) c.1940-c.1986

This series includes material relating to Agents' applications

and personal arrangements for the Agents' Superannuation Fund.

This material is closed.

Candidates' Department

(CAND) c.1940-Present

The Candidates' Department is responsible for overseeing the application of anyone who wishes to be considered for selection as a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Westminster and the European Parliament (excluding Scotland).

The Candidates' Department files on individual candidates are closed unless a reader is researching an official biography and has permission from both the Conservative Central Office and the candidate in question.

Financial Records

(FIN) 1912-1962

All financial records are closed.

Leader's Consultative Committee

(LCC) 1964-Present

This is the most central of policy organs and the supreme decision-making body of the Party. Also known as the Shadow Cabinet, its membership is always by invitation from the Leader. Its secretary is usually the Director of the Conservative Research Department when the Party is in opposition.

The CPA only holds the files of this committee while the Party is in opposition.¹²

General access conditions apply.

Official Group papers

(OG) 1967-74

This has existed under several names, such as the Research Study Group and the Policy Study Group, and was also known as the Chairman's Committee while headed by Iain Macleod as Party Chairman. It is a gathering of MPs and professionals from the Research Department and Central Office, mainly brought together for the purposes of assembling and drafting a manifesto but advising on other matters too. Its secretary usually comes from the Research Department.¹³

General access conditions apply.

Private Papers

CPA includes correspondence of MPs, ministers, shadow ministers and leaders engaged in Party activity and three small collections of private papers: papers of R. A. (later Lord) Butler, 1946-1961, Sir Keith (later Lord) Joseph, 1973-1979, and Sir Michael (later Lord) Fraser, c.1929-c.1937.

Readers wishing to consult items from the Joseph papers must obtain permission from [The Director, Conservative Policy Forum, Conservative Central Office, 32 Smith Square, Westminster, London, SW1P 3HH](#).

Scottish Unionist Members' Committee papers

(SUMC) 1932-64

The Scottish Unionist Members Committee came into being in March 1932 and was open to all Scottish MPs. During the 1930s it met between five and twelve times a year with about twenty MPs attending each meeting.

CPA holds only a small quantity of SUMC material. The majority is held at [The National Library of Scotland, Department of Manuscripts, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EW](#).

General access conditions apply.

Steering Committee papers

(SC) 1963-76

The Steering Committee was, in effect, an inner-cabinet of Ministers meeting together, without their civil servants, to look ahead politically. (In Opposition, this body was an inner Shadow Cabinet). The Steering Committee was first formally constituted in 1957.

General access conditions apply.

Swinton College papers

(S) 1948-80

Swinton College was the third and final Conservative College.¹⁴ Its papers deal in the main with the administration of the college and include correspondence between the Principal and the Governors, various committee meetings, course scholarships, and copies of its published journal.

General access conditions apply.

Whips' Office papers

(WHIP) 1928-1951

The CPA contains only a limited amount of Whips' Office papers. The subjects covered include:- (1930s) electoral reform, General Elections, Party political broadcasts, old age pensions; (1940s) Sir Joseph Ball's proposals for Party re-organisation, food and agriculture, structure of the National Union, trade union vote, Party political broadcasts, National Liberal reflections, civilian clothing, BBC Charter, women and the war effort.

Access to this material requires written permission from [The Chief Whip, Whip's Office- Party in Opposition, House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA](#).



Library of published and printed material 1868 to present

A large number of election posters and election addresses can be found in the CPA.¹⁵ The collection also includes speeches, press releases, transcripts of Party Political Broadcasts, and many Party publications, such as leaflets, pamphlets, campaign guides and journals.

Conservative Party Political Broadcasts are available at the Order line: National Film and Television Archive 21 Stephen Street, London, W1T 1LN. A full catalogue is available at CPA.

Microform and Slide Collections

The following Conservative Party Archive collections are available in the Modern Papers and John Johnson Reading Room (Room 132) in the New Library, on microform.

Pamphlets and Leaflets	1868-1938
Executive Committee Minutes of the National Union of Conservative Associations	1897-1956
Central Council Minutes	1899-1956
Annual Reports of the Executive Committee to the Central Council	1919-1945
Minutes and Reports of the Conservative Party Conferences	1867-1946
British Election Campaign Guides	1885-1974
National Union Gleanings, and successors	1893-1968
Conservative Party Committee Minutes	1909-64
Conference Reports	1947-63
Conservative Agents' Journal	1902-83
Posters	1909-87

access & general information

General Access Conditions

Access to the CPA is restricted to postgraduate and academic researchers. Undergraduate researchers are generally allowed access to microform material only.

For most unpublished material in the CPA a thirty-year rule applies and is as follows for 2001:

* Material dated up to 31 December 1970 is available for research.

* Material from 1 January 1971 to 31 December 1980 can be viewed only with permission from the Conservative Central Office. The researcher must apply in writing to [The Director, Conservative Policy Forum, Conservative Central Office, 32 Smith Square, Westminster, London. SW1P 3HH.](#)

* Material dated after 31 December 1980 is closed.

All published and printed material, including transcripts of speeches, Party political broadcasts or election addresses, General Election posters, and Party publications, is available for research.

Reader's Card

A valid Bodleian Reader's Card is needed to consult material from CPA. To obtain an application form apply in writing to the [Admissions Office, Bodleian Library, Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BG](#) or via e-mail at admissions@bodley.ox.ac.uk.

Information on admission procedure and a copy of the application form are also available at <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/guides/admisfrm.htm>.

Reproduction

Photocopying and photographic facilities are available. Standard copyright and conservation restrictions apply.

Details of reproduction fees are available from the archivist or reading room staff.

Copyright

Permission must be obtained from the Conservative Party for the reproduction of any text or image from the archive or The Conservative Party Archive web page, <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/cpa>.

The researcher must apply in writing to The Director, Conservative Policy Forum, Conservative Central Office, 32 Smith Square, Westminster, London. SW1P 3HH.

Contact Details

Inquiries concerning the CPA collection or access conditions attached to its materials should be made to [The Archivist, The Conservative Party Archive, Bodleian Library, Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BG](#), or by telephone on Oxford (01865) 277181 or by e-mail at modern.papers@bodley.ox.ac.uk.

Location

CPA material is read in the Modern Papers and John Johnson Reading Room (Room 132), in the New Library.

On-line guides and area location maps are available on: <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/guides/wmss/modpol/guide132.htm>

Hours of Opening

The Modern Papers and John Johnson Reading Room (Room 132) is in the New Library. This reading room is open from 9 am to 7 pm Monday to Friday in term and in vacation, and 9 am to 1 pm on Saturdays. There are some restrictions to service after 5pm and on Saturdays. Readers should reserve places in the reading room prior to their visit.

The Library is closed from Christmas Eve until New Year Bank Holiday and from Good Friday to Easter Monday. On May Bank Holidays the Modern Papers and John Johnson Reading Room (Room 132) closes at 5 pm. The whole of the central Bodleian Library is closed on the day of Encaenia.

leaders of the party

The term 'Leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party' was not officially used until October 1922. Before this there was a Leader of the Party in the House of Commons and a Leader in the House of Lords; whichever of these was or had most recently been Prime Minister was recognised to be the actual Leader of the Party.

Leader of the Party	date appointed
Sir Robert Peel	10 Dec. 1834
Lord Stanley	1 July 1846
Benjamin Disraeli	27 Feb. 1868
Sir Stafford Northcote (Leader in the House of Commons only, since 1876)	20 Apr. 1881*
3rd Marquess of Salisbury	23 June 1885
Arthur Balfour	14 July 1902
Andrew Bonar Law (Leader in the House of Commons only)	13 Nov. 1911
Austen Chamberlain (Leader in the House of Commons only)	21 Mar. 1921
Andrew Bonar Law	23 Oct. 1922
Stanley Baldwin	28 May 1923
Neville Chamberlain	31 May 1937
Winston Churchill	9 Oct. 1940
Sir Anthony Eden	21 Apr. 1955
Harold Macmillan	22 Jan. 1957
Sir Alec Douglas-Home	11 Nov. 1963
Edward Heath	2 Aug. 1965
Margaret Thatcher	11 Feb. 1975
John Major	27 Nov. 1990
William Hague	19 June 1997

* There was no clear leader in the period 1881-1885

Margaret Thatcher sets out from home on the morning after her election as Party Leader, 12th February 1975.



party chairmen

The position of Party Chairman was created after the report of the Unionist Organisation Committee in 1911. The dates given below are those from which the appointments took effect.

Chairman of the Party Organisation	date appointed
Arthur Steel-Maitland	26 June 1911
Sir George Younger	1 Jan. 1917
Francis Stanley Jackson	13 Mar. 1923
John Colin Campbell Davidson	4 Nov. 1926
Neville Chamberlain	23 June 1930
1st Baron Stonehaven	14 Apr. 1931
Douglas Hacking	2 Mar. 1936
Thomas Dugdale	6 Mar. 1942
Ralph Assheton	29 Oct. 1944
1st Baron Woolton	1 July 1946
Oliver Poole	1 Nov. 1955
2nd Viscount Hailsham	18 Sep. 1957
R.A. Butler	14 Oct. 1959
Iain Macleod {Joint Chairman 17 Apr. to 21 Oct. 1963}	10 Oct. 1961
1st Baron Poole {Joint Chairman 17 Apr. to 21 Oct. 1963}	17 Apr. 1963
1st Viscount Blakenham	21 Oct. 1963
Edward du Cann	21 Jan. 1965
Anthony Barber	11 Sep. 1967
Peter Thomas	31 July 1970
6th Baron Carrington	7 Apr. 1972
William Whitelaw	11 June 1974
Lord Thorneycroft	27 Feb. 1975
Cecil Parkinson	14 Sep. 1981
John Selwyn Gummer	14 Sep. 1983
Norman Tebbit	2 Sep. 1985
Peter Brooke	2 Nov. 1987
Kenneth Baker	24 July 1989
Christopher Patten	28 Nov. 1990
Sir Norman Fowler	10 May 1992
Jeremy Hanley	20 July 1994
Brian Mawhinney	5 July 1995
Lord Parkinson	20 June 1997
Michael Ancram	9 October 1998

Details of other office-holders in the Conservative Party for the period after 1900 can be found in Appendices I and II of Anthony Seldon and Stuart Ball (eds.), *Conservative Century: The Conservative Party since 1900* (Oxford University Press, 1994), a copy of which may be consulted in the Modern Papers and John Johnson Reading Room (Room 132) in the New Library.



1955 General Election poster

endnotes

1 The Bodleian Library was suggested by Lord Blake, historian of the Conservative Party and, at that time, Provost of The Queen's College, Oxford, and Lady Young, who was in 1978 Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party and an honorary fellow of St. Anne's College, Oxford.

2 Modern Political Papers home page, <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/guides/wmss/modpol/homepage.htm>

3 Ibid.

4 This short history has been contributed by Stuart Ball, Lecturer in History at the University of Leicester. It gives Dr Ball's independent assessment of the Conservative Party's history. It is not an official Party statement.

5 Material in the archive is divided according to the office in which it was maintained and held rather than according to the section or department of the Party from which it originated.

6 Now known as the National Conservative Convention

7 Stuart Ball, Leicester University, compiled a list of pre-1945 regional records that are available along with their current location. For a copy of this list please contact the CPA Archivist.

8 Some restrictions apply.

9 Now known as the Conservative Policy Forum.

10 ACP material up to 1964 is available on microform in the Modern Papers and John Johnson Reading Room (132) in the New Library.

11 Taken from Stuart Ball's introduction to the ACP microfilm series.

12 Ramsden, John. The Making of Conservative Policy. Longman, 1980. p 04.

13 Ramsden, p. 186.

14 Its predecessors were the Philip Stott College and the Bonar Law Memorial College.

15 CPA's extensive collection of posters and election addresses also includes material produced by the Labour and Liberal parties.