

Dr Matt Cole

Teaching Fellow

[Department of History \(/schools/historycultures/departments/history/index.aspx\)](/schools/historycultures/departments/history/index.aspx)

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About

I am an historian of modern Britain with a particular interest in twentieth century constitutional and party politics, and local history.

Qualifications

BA, MA, PGCE, PhD

Biography

I studied as an undergraduate and postgraduate at the University of York, and gained my doctorate from the University of Birmingham in 2006. I have taught and researched with the Open University (1990-2001) and for the Hansard Society in association with the London School of Economics (2006-12) as well as teaching at the University of Birmingham since 2000. I have throughout this period worked in 16-19 education and for the BBC as a current affairs commentator.

Teaching

- Deputy Convenor of the MA in West Midlands History
- Supervisor, undergraduate dissertations

Postgraduate supervision

- British Liberal and Liberal Democrat Party history, liberal political thought and modern party politics and constitutional affairs more generally.
- Regional social, economic, political and cultural history of the West Midlands, Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Research

As a Morrell Scholar at the University of York between 1984 and 1987 I examined the relationship between the work of John Stuart Mill and the arguments used to support campaigns to widen the franchise in nineteenth and twentieth-century Britain.

I was awarded a Research Associateship of the Open University between 1998 and 2001 to examine the determinants of British parties' attitudes to constitutional reform, and was awarded the PSA's David Butler Prize in 1998 for research on policy towards electoral reform.

Between 2007 and 2011 the Scurrah Wainwright Trust funded my research into the history of the Liberal Party in the twentieth century, particularly to produce a biography of Richard Wainwright, former MP for the Colne Valley.

My current research continues to focus on recent Liberal Party and Liberal Democrat history, and is also in the field of Birmingham social and cultural history.

In 2014 I was awarded a grant by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd to undertake 'Liberalism in Power', a study of the impact upon their image and fortunes of Liberal Democrat MPs at the 2015 general election of their party's participation in government.

Other activities

- Visiting Fellow, Hansard Society
- Political Analyst, BBC Radio West Midlands
- Editorial Board member, *Journal of Liberal History*
- Regular contributor of papers at conferences of the Political Studies Association, its Elections, Public Opinion and Parties Specialist Group and the British Liberal Political Studies Group.

Publications

Books

- *Political Parties in Britain* (with Helen Deighan), Edinburgh University Press 2012
- *Richard Wainwright, the Liberals and Liberal Democrats*, Manchester University Press 2011

Articles in Journals

- 'Can the Grand Old Duke of York March Back Up Again?: the importance of local government for Liberal Democrats' *Journal of Liberal History* No 83 (Summer 2014) pp.16-23
- 'Discordant Echoes: How Chamberlain's Exceptionalism became Birmingham's Peculiarity', *History West Midlands* No 5 (Summer 2014) pp.43-46
- 'Be careful what you wish for: Lessons of the Lib-Lab Pact for the Lib-Con Coalition', *Journal of Liberal History* No 72 (Autumn 2011) pp.58-63
- 'The Political Starfish: Liberalism in West Yorkshire', *Contemporary British History* (Taylor & Francis) Vol 25 No 1, March 2011, pp.175-88
- "An Out-of-date word": Grimond and the Left', *Journal of Liberal History* No 67, Summer 2010, pp.50-56
- 'Growing without Pains? Explaining Liberal Democrat MPs' Behaviour', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* Vol 11 No 2, May 2009 (Wiley-Blackwells) pp.259-79.
- 'The Yellow Glass Ceiling: the mystery of the disappearing Liberal women MPs', *Journal of Liberal History*, No. 62, Spring 2009 pp.26-35.
- 'Liberalism, Social Justice and John Rawls: the Best of both Worlds', *Talking Politics* Vol 18 No 1 (Politics Association Sept 2005) pp.28-31
- 'Fourth Party, Fifth Column?', *Journal of Liberal History* Issue 43, (Summer 2004) pp.4-13
- 'Party Policy and Electoral Reform', *British Elections and Parties Review* Vol 9 (Ed. Fisher et.al., Frank Cass, 1999) pp.72-86
- 'The Role of the Deposit in Parliamentary Elections', *Parliamentary Affairs* Vol 45 No 1 (OUP, Jan 1992) pp.77-91
- Repeated contributor to other journals including *Modern History Review* and *Politics Review*.

Contributions to edited books

- 'Breaking the Mould (1974-88)', Chapter 9 of *Peace, Reform and Liberation: A History of Liberal Politics in Britain 1679 to 2011*, Ed. Robert Ingham and Duncan Brack, ISBN 978 1 84954 043 8, Biteback publishers (2011) pp.271-305.
- 'Constitutional Reform', chapter in *The Political Thought of the Liberals and Liberal Democrats since 1945*, edited by Kevin Hickson (Manchester University Press 2009) pp.67-83.
- 'Icarus Turns Back: Liberal Democrat Constitutional Policy', *British Party Politics and Ideology after Blair* Ed. Simon Griffiths and Kevin Hickson (Palgrave 2009) pp.155-72.

Other publications

- Four short booklets and a contribution to an edited work on local history topics: *At the Heart of the Game: a History of Edgbaston Priory Club* (Edgbaston Priory 2013); *A History of George Cadbury Hall* (University of Birmingham 2006); 'Blackburn at the Polls' in Alan Duckworth (ed), *Aspects of Blackburn* (Wharnccliffe Press 1999); *Blackburn's Shops* (Landy publishing 1996); *Blackburn's West End* (Landy publishing 1994).

