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# INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



# EVENTS

**30<sup>th</sup> October** Isaiah Berlin Lecture – Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands & Leader of the VVD. 11.30-13.30 NLC. Tickets £20.00 via <http://www.liberal-international.org/site/register.html>

**4<sup>th</sup> November** LIBG executive meeting. Lawrence Robson Room, NLC. 6.30pm

**4<sup>th</sup> November** LIBG Forum on Turkey: The View from Ankara - speakers, Selcuk Guitasli, a journalist based in Brussels who writes for the Zaman Media Group, Ekin Can Genc, International Officer for Turkish Liberal Youth, & Dr Turhan Ozen, of Friends of Turkey.

**7<sup>th</sup> November** The Vinten Debate: Is this Brazil's Century? with Alan Charlton CMG, CVO, previously HM Ambassador at Brasilia and HE Roberto Jaguaribe, current Ambassador of Brazil to the Court of St James's. 6.30pm Royal Society of Arts London Region, One Great George Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 3AA tickets £30.00

**13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November** LYMEC Congress, Bucharest, Roumania.

**28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November** ALDE Congress, Canary Wharf, London

**13<sup>th</sup> January 2014** LIBG executive meeting. Lawrence Robson Room, NLC. 7.00pm

**7<sup>th</sup> July 2014** LIBG AGM

*For bookings & other information please contact the Chair below.*

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NLC= National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE  
Underground: Embankment

Liberal International (British Group)  
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'Egypt and Turkey' by Alfred Webster, from 'Hand, Heart and Soul' by Elizabeth Cumming. We have a lot on Turkey in this issue, but no Egypt.

# From the Chair...

We had a busy Conference in a very wet Glasgow, and it was wonderful to see so many of our Scottish members. The Party's debate on Syria was excellent, but only highlighted how impossible the situation there is. Disease and starvation are adding to the miseries caused by violence and destruction.

Our joint fringe (with Liberal Youth, and ELDG) was on the fascinating subject of "Where next? Who are the enemies of Europe and the World?" The extremely erudite Eastern European expert from Glasgow University, Dr Eamonn Butler to describe the state of Europe now, with lively contributions from LIBG's former chair Dr Julie Smith, Adam Nathan of British Influence, who kindly sponsored this event, and our own new president, Sir Nicholas Harvey.

We hope to continue our partnership with Liberal Youth so we can have many of these informal but informative fora, on a wide variety of subjects. If any members have an idea for one, please tell us.

*Wendy Kyrle-Pope*

## Guatemala Executive

The 191st Liberal International Executive Committee in Antigua, Guatemala, hosted by the governing Partido Patriota, set a remarkable example of the strong presence of Liberal International in Latin America, especially in Central America. It coincided with a Conference on "Rule of Law and Fighting Organised Crime" co-organised with LI cooperating organisations Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty and RELIAL – Red Liberal de America Latina.

The delegates had a unique opportunity to be welcomed by the President of the Republic of Guatemala Otto Perez Molina (of Partido Patriota) at Palacio Nacional de la Cultura in Guatemala City, which also hosts the Presidency of the Republic. He addressed the delegates at the Patio de la Paz where Guatemala's Peace Accords were signed in 1996.

In his opening remarks LI President Hans van Baalen MEP told delegates that "liberal parties are strong in Latin America" and that "in Guatemala we have shown that liberals can deliver outstanding results to hold the highest office". Welcoming the delegates to Guatemala and Latin America, Vice President of the Republic and PP Secretary General Roxana Baldetti underscored that liberals must be courageous in presenting their views and policies which would change to better the world we live in. She praised "the courage of the President of the Republic Otto Perez Molina in announcing that a new approach to tackling drug trafficking is needed on global level". Vice

President Baldetti offered an inspiring insight of the steps the Guatemalan government is taking to help exploited women and children who are coerced into trafficking.

RELIAL President Ricardo Lopez-Murphy emphasised that "we are not only liberals because we defend our ideas, but in Latin America we know the terrible consequences of failing", before underlining that "liberalism is top guarantor for human rights and civil liberties". David Henneberger, stressed the attention that the Friedrich Naumann Foundation pays to the strengthening the rule of law on national and international level, and expressed conviction that the Conference and the EC debates will offer new perspectives on the "war against drugs that is not working".

As part of the Conference, the delegates engaged in substantial debates on the two panels "Fighting Terrorism and Organised Crime: Difficult Times for the Rule of Law" and "New Initiatives on the War on Drugs: Less Bloodshed in the Americas?" Among the prominent speakers were Maria Leissner, Secretary General of the Community of Democracies, Alice Nzomukunda, Former Vice President of Burundi and ALN Vice President, Boris van der Ham, former MP of D66, Hugo Maul, Director of the National Economic Research Centre – Guatemala and David MartínezAmador, research fellow at the Ciminova Project – Mexico.



# Gaza: Trauma, Trials and Natural Gas.

## Colin Green

Revelations from Israeli sources such as 'Breaking the Silence' and 'Physicians for Human Rights-Israel' that the Israeli assaults on Gaza in 2008/9 (Cast Lead) and 2012 (Pillars of Defence) were planned many months ahead pose many questions about the real motives for the seven year siege and these massive attacks on a helpless concentration of impoverished and imprisoned people. We propose asking a few key questions, setting out before you the facts on the ground and then leaving you the reader to draw your own conclusions.

My own interest in this century old conflict between the indigenous population, the Palestinian Arabs, and Jewish and Christian Zionists dates back to my time serving as a junior officer in the Royal Navy in ships operating in the Eastern Mediterranean between 1952 and 1956. Having observed the build up to the Suez War and the preparations for invasion of the Canal Zone, I realised that the Western media presented an entirely distorted picture far from the reality and that the British government was conspiring with Israel and the French to take control of the Sinai Desert and the Suez Canal. Fortunately, my resignation was accepted before the invasion started. Having now worked in Palestine and Israel in the Health Sector for the last 30 years, my scepticism of Western propaganda has been reinforced a thousand fold.

Let us then pose the questions and seek objective answers to:

- Why does the international community and UN allow Israel to blockade and besiege a tiny strip of land called Gaza for near 7 years with absolute impunity?
- Were the asymmetric assaults on Gaza in 2008/9 (Cast Lead) and again in 2012 (Pillars of Defence) an emergency response to Qassam rocket attacks or carefully planned attacks for other more sinister reasons?
- Why is Israel allowed to commit piracy in international waters to prevent ships reaching Gaza?
- Could it all really be about trials of new weapons, testing of new missile defence

systems, field trials of new strategies for control of impoverished and dissident populations and, perhaps most important, control of the immense energy resources found in the Eastern Mediterranean ?

Examine first the demographics obtaining just before the Cast Lead assault. Gaza is a narrow strip of land 45 km long by 5-12 km wide into which were concentrated and imprisoned 1.5 million Palestinians at a density of 4119/km<sup>2</sup>. These were mainly accommodated in 5 cities and 7 large refugee camps with 1.0 million registered as UN refugees. There was about 24 km<sup>2</sup> of potentially productive farmland, the best of it adjacent to the north-eastern border with Israel. The Gazan economy was desperately poor with 80% living below the poverty line, 40% unemployed, 60% food dependent on UNRWA and 59% children. This had been ruled by the freely elected party Hamas for over a year but Israel had them designated a terrorist organisation and described Gaza as a 'hostile entity' soon after those democratic elections.

For six months leading up to the Cast Lead assault, Hamas observed a cease fire until an Israeli incursion into Gaza in November killing six Palestinians predictably triggered a response with Qassam rockets fired into Israel. It should be noted that these home made tokens of resistance to military occupation are hopeless weapons and cannot be aimed specifically at military targets. Fired indiscriminately at a vague area, civilians are the likely victims so their use can be labelled potential war crimes and provide just the excuse needed by the Israeli military to attack on a massive scale. In fact since 2000 the Gaza rockets have killed a total of 22 Israelis and I worked out recently that the rockets killed roughly the same number of Israelis in 10 years that the Israeli motorist kills routinely every 10 days.

The Israeli attack started on December 27<sup>th</sup> 2008 with 3 days of intensive air strikes, carefully planned to coincide with the changeover in USA Presidents. On December 30<sup>th</sup>, a ceasefire resolution 1860 was blocked by the USA in the Security Council after the Israeli Prime Minister telephoned W M Bush to request a veto. The House of Representatives backed the Cast Lead invasion by 390 votes to 5 and the

Senate by a similar margin, hence Congress supported it overwhelmingly.

The 2012 assault was again triggered by rockets fired after the Hamas military chief Ahmed Jabari was assassinated by the Israelis. This man had been working together with the Hamas Deputy Minister Ghazi Hamad, with Egyptian intelligence officials and with the US-Israeli go-between Gershon Baskin (in turn in direct communication with Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak) to work out a peace deal. After weeks of negotiations, it is said that Jabari had a signed peace agreement in his pocket when he was killed and that Baskin was furious that all his efforts to broker that deal had been in vain.

Palestinian casualties in the Cast Lead invasion were appalling. Over 1400 were killed, of which 412 were children and 110 were women. More than 6000 were badly injured with 1855 children and 795 women the victims. From evidence provided by my Norwegian colleagues Mads Gilbert and Eric Fosse working in Gaza at the time and from other subsequent analysis it is thought that only 250 deaths were actual Gazan combatants and the rest were civilians. Both these doctors and Palestinian medical staff reported lesions which they had never seen before and which provided circumstantial evidence that the Israelis had used and tested new weapons as well as white phosphorus in heavily populated civilian areas. Apart from severe burns, there were an abnormally high number of amputations and maiming among the surviving wounded. For example, 150 amputees had to be referred to Egyptian hospitals; in Jabalia refugee camp there were 165 newly disabled patients of whom at least 90 have amputations, some multiple.

These casualties were caused by the full armamentarium of known conventional weapons but the injuries caused strongly suggest that other ordnance was tested and trialled for the first time under war conditions. Some of these described here were definitely used but others are still in doubt. White phosphorous shells contain the chemical impregnated into small strips of felt which scatter over a radius of 100 metres when the shell explodes in mid-air. It is officially used as a smoke screen device and for illumination at night but it is also an incendiary device and was used as such in Gaza on several occasions. Flechette shells contain thousands of darts about 4 cm long which disperse in a widening cone when the shell explodes about a metre from the ground; these darts are ballistically designed to tumble on penetration of the victim and wreak havoc in soft tissues. These were used in 2008/9 but not in the 2012 assault. The Keshet rapid fire automated mortar was tried out to

devastating effect in a crowded street in Jabalia Refugee camp near the Al Fakhoura School in full view of the Israeli troops. Kalanit shells were fired from 120mm tank cannons; these explode in the air, stop and release 6 mini-charges which spray a target with shrapnel from above. Dense inert metal explosives (DIMES) are newly developed ordnance comprising a carbon fibre casing packed with micro-shrapnel of inert metals like tungsten, nickel and cobalt causing a massive implosion within a relatively confined space, supposedly allowing a precise kill without collateral damage over a wide area. Small diameter bombs which glide toward their target under laser direction can be fitted to F16 fighter aircraft and were used in Gaza (1000 were purchased from the USA in early December in readiness for the 2008 attack) and it is thought that they contained dense inert metal shrapnel. However the evidence for the use of DIMES is based on the powdered shrapnel found over the liver surface and other soft tissues as well as the clean cut multiple amputations suffered by so many casualties; it is not definitive. Depleted uranium tipped shells are designed for deep penetration of targets such as tanks and create a high temperature fireball inside; in Gaza they were used to attack large buildings not tanks. Finally although the Israelis have been accused of using thermobaric weapons in Gaza as bunker busters targeting the Egyptian border tunnels, there is no clear evidence for that any more than that they dropped cluster bombs as they had in the 2006 assault on the Lebanon.

This is a supreme example of asymmetric warfare between on the one hand, the most powerful military state in the Middle East and on the other, a besieged concentration camp. To give you an idea of the military might of this prototypic modern warrior state they have at the last count: between 240 and 300 nuclear warheads; huge stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction (yet calling indignantly for the destruction of all in Syria); 620 warplanes including F16 fighters (soon to be replaced with the latest F35 lightning fighters costing \$200 million each and 25 promised by the USA to Israel ahead of all other recipients as they come off the production line) as well as Cobra and Apache helicopters; 6 German built and donated Dolphin Class submarines, some capable of being armed with nuclear warheads and two thought to be currently operational in the Persian Gulf; an unknown number of ballistic missiles capable of delivering a nuclear payload (Jericho1,2); a modern navy of 58 combat surface warships many armed with missiles which regularly exercises with the NATO Fleet in the Mediterranean; 3 squadrons of drones (Hermes, Searcher and Heron), many designed and built in Israel with 100 on order by the UK Government; a highly trained army with 2442

heavy Merkava tanks, 1265 armoured troop carriers and numerous other smaller military vehicles; 2754 pieces of heavy artillery with diabolical ordnance specifically designed to create havoc in civilian populations; and a standing army of 26,000 bolstered by 107,000 conscripts to a total of 133,000 troops (60% bigger than the British Army) which can be rapidly expanded nearly 3-fold in emergency with 400,000 personnel who have been forced to train for mandatory periods each year of their life from 18 up to the age of 40. Think back to the size of that total population of 7.8 million Israelis of which at least 20% are ineligible to join the armed forces because they are regarded as a Fifth Column of Israeli Arabs. How on earth can any group of that tiny number anywhere on the planet provide the men and women of combatant age to man all that hardware as well as the logistical support (generally calculated at 7 x the frontline troops) as well as the economic support for that military machine? No wonder the one million Russian immigrants (many of them economic migrants and practising Orthodox Russian Christians) were so welcome in the 1990s. This is a massive investment in war both in blood and in money.

How much does all this cost? The official Israeli line is that they spend roughly 7% of total GDP (\$265 billion USD) on the military machine (as compared with 4.5% USA and 2.5% UK). This is roughly \$17.3 billion /year added to the \$3.1 billion donated by the USA and the submarines donated by Germany. Once a tiny state like Israel with only 5,920,000 of the population eligible for supporting this war machine is committed to such a massive proportion of its GDP for war then the most natural way to pay for that is through a home grown arms development programme and then arms trade so that expensive weaponry can be sold at huge profit. What is more, that war machine needs to be used to justify its existence otherwise the taxpayer starts questioning where their money is going. The Israeli arms and homeland security industry have made themselves absolutely indispensable to the global arms trade both in hardware weaponry (particularly drones), in IT and cyber warfare expertise and in providing skilled personnel for hire as mercenaries to other states or mega-corporations. Based on their 2012/13 sales (£8 billion) they lie 4<sup>th</sup> in the world league table (UK 3<sup>rd</sup> with £11.5 billion sales) but if you factor in their premier place in the homeland security trade geared to control of internal socio-political conflict and civil disobedience ('war within the people') and their massive arms trade through the global criminal underworld, then they may well rival the USA for top of the league. Just like any other corporate enterprise they want an expanding market which in turn demands

continuous conflict both for marketing and for proof of good value after testing in the field under combat conditions. It is impossible to overstate the importance of this trade to Israel. The military-homeland-security industrial complex is the largest employer in the country, offers the greatest support to the universities (these in turn attracting vast grants from NATO and the EU for 'security research') and the single most important contributor to the GDP (10% for legal arms alone). The boast in all the Israeli arms industry promotional material of the 'tested in combat' tag leads to the suspicion that they need conflict in Gaza, hence their constant refrain that it is a hostile entity.

The big unanswered question now is why the USA and its puppets routinely veto in the Security Council any and every UN resolution criticising Israel (interestingly, the ratio of US to Russian vetoes in the same period of time is 55 to 2). Could their arms manufacturers be so evil as to get the Israeli military to test new weaponry on an impoverished population in a concentration camp called Gaza? In the case of Israel itself, what better way to test your missile defence systems ('Iron Dome' and 'Patriot') than to provoke Gazan resistance fighters to fire off pathetic Quassan rockets and show potential buyers like India how effective the 'Iron Dome' system is? Could it be that the Western Axis and the Israelis want to demonstrate to the world that 1.7 million people can be imprisoned without risking Israeli prison warders' lives simply by snuffing out troublesome dissidents with armed drones and naval siege, no boots on the ground needed, even a model for the next virtual hegemon in which control over huge areas of land can be exercised by small numbers of highly trained personnel? Israel's armoury of weapons of mass destruction serves as the ultimate extension of Western hegemony in the region. That and the corporate needs of the USA-dominated Western Axis military-security-industrial complex in which Israel has made itself indispensable have to be the main reasons for the West's endless and unashamed total support for an immensely powerful warrior state governed by a militarised ethnocracy masquerading as a democracy.

*Prof. Colin Green, Emeritus Professor of Surgery at University College, London, is an expert on trauma and disability, who has worked extensively in Gaza. He spoke at the Lib Dem Friends of Palestine fringe meeting in Glasgow on Monday 16 September 2013.*

# Solid as a Rock

## Graham Watson

On Sunday 1 September I was treated to what many of my constituents must face on a daily basis, a border queue. I got off rather lightly with 90 minutes. Many Gibraltarians who dare to cross the frontier face delays of over four hours. But they are a hardy lot. They survived eighteen years under Franco with the border closed.

The current situation is anomalous on a continent that is now accustomed to open borders. To provide some of the history, Gibraltar joined the EU (although not the Customs Union) with the rest of the United Kingdom. Unrepresented at Westminster, however, its citizens were not given the opportunity to vote in elections to the European Parliament, unlike citizens elsewhere in the UK. In the 1990s Gibraltar resident Denise Matthews took the UK Government to the European Court of Human Rights arguing that she and her fellow Gibraltarians were obliged to abide by EU law but had no say in the framing of the law. Rightly, she won the case; and the European Court instructed Britain to enfranchise the citizens of the Rock in elections to Europe's parliament. With its tiny population, an MEP for Gibraltar was not an option, so the Electoral Commission assessed which of the UK's European constituencies would be the best "fit". Its consultation narrowed the runners down to just London or the South West; the latter was chosen, allowing Gibraltar's citizens to vote in the 2004 European election.

For seven years the Rock's ultra-conservative Chief Minister sought to exclude MEPs from matters concerning Gibraltar. In December 2011, however, the Liberal Party of Gibraltar, our sister party on the Rock, was elected to office in coalition with the Gibraltar Socialist Labour Party (GSLP). At about the same time, a General Election in Spain saw a moderate Socialist government replaced by the nationalist Popular Party, the party of former dictator General Franco.

Since this time, Gibraltar has been harassed by Spain from land and sea. Stringent border delays continue to escalate on the spurious allegation that Gibraltar is a centre for smuggling and money laundering. (In reality Spain, immersed in economic turmoil and a party funding scandal involving the prime minister, seeks to

exploit Britain's - and therefore Gibraltar's - opt out from the EU's Schengen border-free arrangements.) And regular incursions into Gibraltar's waters by Spanish patrol boats are claimed to be justified by the recent designation of a Special Area of Conservation for which the waters are listed as belonging to Spain.

Smoking in Gibraltar is cheap, even by European standards. Tobacconists are prominent, charging 40% less than in the nearby Spanish town of La Linea and over 60% less than on the UK mainland. By the border, bicycles and cars rust in the Mediterranean sun, confiscated by the Guardia Civil. Whilst these provide some evidence of smuggling, the Gibraltar government has been praised by the European Commission for its efforts to stamp it out and Spanish police do not bother to seek the help of Gibraltar's police to deal with the problem, which they do in other areas. Instead, the methods the Spanish are using to curb the problem are nothing short of harassment. Instead of targeting their efforts on suspected smugglers, the Guardia Civil have imposed checks on all those crossing the border. The controls vary in duration and intensity; they are surprisingly light at the time Spanish residents cross the border to go to work in Gibraltar and unjustifiably heavy when, for example, British Royals or government ministers visit the Territory.

Some, including the Gibraltar government, argue that the current stringent checks are a politically motivated response to the sinking of an artificial reef earlier this summer. Large concrete blocks were dropped into a section of Gibraltar's waters to protect the area from overfishing and illegal incursions by Spanish fishermen. Similar reefs have been sunk off Spain's coast for the same purposes of marine ecosystem regeneration. Attempts were made by the Gibraltar Government to hold a dialogue with the fishermen. However tensions have heightened in recent weeks as a result of a collision at sea between the Gibraltar Police and the Spanish Guardia Civil, the firing of shots by the Guardia Civil at a Gibraltar jet-skier and the harassment of ship to ship bunkering operations in the bay.

There has also been a suggestion by the Spanish government to impose a €50 toll on anyone crossing

the border. Such outlandish ideas, as well as being illegal under the treaties, would deeply damage the economies of nearby towns who rely on Gibraltar for economic growth and jobs. Indeed, the current restrictions are widely believed to have hit the economy of La Linea and the surrounding mainland far harder than the economy of Gibraltar itself.

Disputes such as this have historically been resolved on the battlefield. Today, under the blanket of peace that is the European Union, we can use the European Commission and the European Courts of Justice to resolve such disputes. I have been pressing the EU route and I was pleased when the UK government followed my advice and when Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso accepted calls for border monitors.



### ***The Evacuation Monument, Gibraltar.***

During the Second World War most of the civilian population of Gibraltar was evacuated, to considerable hardship.

If border monitors find that the Spanish are in breach of the EU treaties, then action can be taken through the European Court of Justice, leading to big fines. I hope that this big stick will be enough to make the Spanish to stop. I doubt we will soon see the Spanish around the table with Gibraltar to combat smuggling or illegal fishing, but I hope that a resolution to the hours and hours of delays at the border can be found.

Completely removed from Spain, Gibraltar once had to rely on subsidies from the mothership. Now, on its own, it has become a thriving economy with almost full employment. Spain benefits from this prosperity,

through jobs and trade. Nearby towns in the Andalusia region would lose out to further restrictions to the rock. So why doesn't the Spanish government listen?

Perhaps they hope that London, as suggested by Labour's former EU affairs minister Peter Hain, will one day cede sovereignty of the Rock to Madrid. The clear impediment to this is the visceral opposition of Gibraltar's people. Like the Catalans and the Basques, they know the Castilian nationalists all too well.

The worst element in all this is the whipping up of hatred in mainland Spain against Gibraltar. The outrageous language of Spain's foreign minister and some of his Popular Party colleagues has led to anti-Gibraltar graffiti, to Gib-registered cars being torched or vandalised and the emergence of a climate of fear among my constituents. That is why I have redoubled my efforts in Brussels to bring the weight of the EU to bear.

Gibraltar will always have the Liberal Democrats' backing. With the great work that has been done for decades by Simon Hughes MP and others at Westminster and UK Lib Dem MEPs in Brussels and Strasbourg, calm heads can prevail when it comes to the right to self-determination.

***Sir Graham Watson is MEP for South West England & Gibraltar.***

**LIBG Turkey Forum**

## **The View from Ankara**

Monday 4th November: 7.30pm

We are delighted to announce a distinguished line up of speakers, Selcuk Guitasli, a journalist based in Brussels who writes for the Zaman Media Group, Ekin Can Genc, International Officer for Turkish Liberal Youth, and & Dr Turhan Ozen, of Liberal Democrat Friends of Turkey, who will Chair this informal evening, which will describe Turkey, its neighbours and the wider world from a Turkish point of view.

From 7.30pm at the National Liberal Club, Lawrence Robson Room hosted by Liberal International British Group. Cash bar.



Any queries please contact Wendy Kyrle-Pope on [w.kyrle@virgin.net](mailto:w.kyrle@virgin.net)



# Glasgow gleanings

Glasgow conference centre SECC remains the building site that it was when we last visited it in 1995, however it has also developed into a labyrinth that would do Daedalus proud. Beware of Minotaurs (no names).

Not being a voting delegate I paid little attention to the conference chamber, however highlights were Clegg accepting 9 out of 10 Social Liberal Forum amendments in the Economic debate. Unfortunately the remaining amendment was defeated 3 to 2, thus retaining a broadly economic Liberal profile.

Charlie Kennedy was gave one of his best speeches ever in the Europe debate – so passionate that the chair allowed his to over-run and earned him a standing ovation. The votes on the Bedroom Tax and Legal Aid were against the whip, as it were; if the Coalition, let alone the Lib Dems within wanted a ‘Poll Tax’ moment, this is it – ‘silly piece of legislation, we were wrong, scrap it and get on with it’. On Legal Aid only two Parliamentarians supported the government’s line and if Cleggers pays any attention to conference, we are now calling for a review. It has to be said that before any cuts be considered that Labour had consistently failed to increase the budget during their government.

Lynne Featherstone is clearly doing sterling work in her role as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development, focussing in particular of improving the lot of women. An interesting feature of this conference struck me as how being a party of government enables Liberal Democrat MPs scope to develop things in ways they probably weren’t able to as opposition back benchers.

Defence came over as a significant area where Liberal Democrats offer commonsense against the Little Englanders of UKIP and the Conservative party. Setting Trident aside, it is clear that America’s focus on defence is moving away from Europe to the Pacific, and that this makes the increasing cooperation between Britain and France in particular, but also smaller European partners all the more crucial. How the Tories (& UKIP) think they are going to achieve this outside of the EU is unbelievable. One thing is quite clear, that Russian military exercises still envisage operations against the Baltic states (& Estonia has been subjected to a major cyber-attack) and even Poland. Whilst these are exercises rather than serious intent (we hope) they do need a strong

deterrent which can only be provided through the European Union. There is a weakness here in the Tory/UKIP (indeed Labour) game plan which we can exploit. George Potter, of many hats including Liberal Youth, spoke in the Trident debate, to general acclaim – even if the mealy-mouthed Guardian thought he has ‘extracted the piss from outdated deterrence theory with the heartless callousness of youth’. Alas the conference went for Trident-lite.

There is concern that the Liberal Democrats will under-perform in the Euro-Elections. Since our German sister-party the FDP failed to secure a single seat in the elections just after conference; this will impact badly on the ALDE group in Brussels and in turn on the Lib Dem’s finances.

I attended fringe meetings of the Government of Gibraltar (a number of Hastings residents have told me of unpleasant experiences on their holidays in Spain this year; reports of Spanish sabre-rattling to detract from their economic ills have been in the press) the Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine focussed on the testing of weapons and methods of civilian containment by the Israeli armed forces in Gaza. Contributions from their speakers are elsewhere in the magazine. The Friends of Turkey had a full cast - Simon Hughes was engaged in trying to get talks going between north & south Cypriots, the Greek & Turkish governments, immediately after conference. I was unable to attend the fringe of the Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel due to a clash, for which my apologies. The joint fringe of LDEG (Liberal Democrat European Group), LIBG and British Influence is largely covered above under defence. I hope to have full contributions from the speakers in due course, but since some material dates it is unfair to those contributors to delay publication. The Glee Club was one of the best for a long time.

*Stewart Rayment*

## The Syria Debate

The Glasgow conference debated the situation in Syria as an emergency and topical issue on Tuesday 17 September. This meant that no vote was taken, but the Foreign Affairs Team was able to report back on what it had been doing and how it saw the way forward, while at the same time those attending Conference were given an opportunity to express their views.

The debate was opened by Martin Horwood and Lord William Wallace, and summated by Julie Smith. Martin referred to the debate in Parliament following the call by David Cameron and Nick Clegg for

possible British participation in humanitarian intervention, and said that he accepted that the rejection of this by Parliament had reflected the views of the British people. He respected those Lib Dem MPs who had voted against the party line for reasons of principle, and contrasted their reasons with the less respectable ones of some of the Conservative rebels amongst whom a kind of little Englander mentality could be seen. This was exemplified by one MP who had argued that Britain should not be considering intervention in Syria because it had never been a British colony.

Martin called for support for the Russian-American initiative to eliminate Syrian chemical weapons and said that this must be followed by a peace conference and a wider Middle East peace. This includes reaching out to the new government in Iran – a sentiment that was widely shared by other speakers. William Wallace followed Martin by stressing Britain's great commitment to finding a solution to the Syrian crisis. He drew attention to Britain's aid efforts to support refugees and provide food and medicine, as well as support for Syrian civil society.

The speeches from the floor broadly echoed these views, but it was interesting to see how the lessons of Iraq still hang over any discussion of military intervention. Jeremy Hill (Westminster) warned of the unpredictable consequences of any military action, while Cara Jenkinson (Haringey) questioned the need for the rush to vote on the issue in Parliament, and wished that greater consultation with the party had occurred first. On the other hand, Richard Moore (Bexhill and Battle) pointed out how we did not just have the spectre of Iraq before us, but also that of Rwanda.

There was praise for the Russians from Robert Woodthorpe-Browne (Mid-Worcestershire) for persuading Syria to sign the chemical weapons convention. He said we should persuade our own client states, Israel (which has used white phosphorous in Gaza) and Egypt, to do the same. Philip Latham (Hexham) was one of several speakers who drew attention to our moral responsibility to the Syrian people because of our historical involvement in the region. Jonathan Fryer (Tower Hamlets) mentioned the UN commission on Syria, and called on the Russians and Iranians to force the Syrian government to allow it access to the country.

In my view the best speech was from a first timer, Jonathan Brown (Chichester), who has lived in Syria and spoke with passion about the suffering of the civilian population. He fiercely attacked the dithering

of the international community and the strategy void, then called with passion for support for the moderate opposition. There are three, not two, sides to this conflict, he reminded us: the regime, the moderates and the extremists. We are letting the moderates fail, and this is neither right nor in our interest.

**John McHugo**

## **Liberal Democrat Friends of Turkey**

Liberal Democrat Friends of Turkey organised a social reception in cooperation with the Ethnic Minority Liberal Democrats and Liberal International British Group at the party's Autumn Conference.

The social reception took place on 16 September 2013 at Crowne Plaza in Glasgow and offered a unique networking opportunity to the participants. The keynote speakers of the evening were Baroness Sarah Ludford MEP, Simon Hughes MP, and Tom Brake MP, and they shared their experiences of working with LDFoT from European, national and local perspectives. Lib Dem Friends of Turkey also had the company of Baroness Meral Hussein-Ece, Turkish Ambassador Ahmet Ünal Çeviköz and Turkish scholar Ziya Meral as hosts of the evening.

In this fringe event on Monday evening, the speakers explored issues including Turkey's EU membership, relationship between the UK and Turkey, the crucial role of the Turkish community and Turkish language in the UK and the European Union, and resolution of the dispute in Cyprus.

In her opening remarks, Baroness Meral Hussein-Ece emphasised the importance of Turkish community's involvement in politics.

The Turkish Ambassador, Ahmet Ünal Çeviköz highlighted in his speech that the relationship between the UK and Turkey through Lib Dem was developing, *and said: "Lib Dem support to the Turkish membership to the European Union is very valuable to Turkey."*

Tom Brake MP for Carshalton and Wallington expressed his support to encourage the Turkish community to get involved in politically. He further affirmed the importance of Turkish British relationships: *"Turkey is a very industrialised country which the UK wants to develop relationship further with."* He also urged further support to Turkey's EU membership.

Baroness Sarah Ludford MEP for London's initial remarks emphasized the multicultural identity of London: *"In a sense, in London everybody is a minority."*

Baroness Ludford has acknowledged the valuable role of Turkey with regard to reception of Syrian refugees. Her speech has evolved around the future of the EU – Turkey relationship. *She said: "EU and Turkey are destined to be very close partners... there is a great misopportunity not to make Turkish an official language after the accession of the Republic of Cyprus... The role of the Turkish-owned businesses could make in the EU, as well as in its relation with Turkey is very important. That needs to be supported and worked with... In terms of the skills of young Turkish people, it should always be maximized."*

Simon Hughes MP for Bermondsey and Old Southwark's speech touched on the political issues in Cyprus. Mr Hughes MP stated that the Cyprus was the only unresolved serious conflict in the European Union and reiterated the importance of peace talks *"with Cyprus, for Cyprus"*.

Ziya Meral, a London-based Turkish expert and a scholar in Political Science at the University of Cambridge has further emphasized the importance of language *"as a tool for cultural integration and integration."*

### ***About Liberal Democrat Friends of Turkey***

LibDem Friends of Turkey is an organisation, which is dedicated to reaching out to Turkish-speaking community in the UK, and it has organised many successful events with distinguished figures in the Turkish community and the UK since its foundation in 2008. LibDem Friends of Turkey is currently chaired by Turhan Ozen, Liberal Democrat MEP Candidate for London.

For more information, please contact LDFoT at [info@ldfot.org](mailto:info@ldfot.org)

Please have a look at our interviews as well:  
[http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPCMhdgyg\\_ovsN1qaPe7ORw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPCMhdgyg_ovsN1qaPe7ORw)

## **Liberals in Coalition**

Second weekend of October saw Parliamentarians, Ministers and key decision-makers from seven political parties from across Europe gathering in Ljubljana, Slovenia for the best-practice seminar on communication and negotiation strategies organised

by UK Liberal Democrats and hosted by the Slovenian 'Civic List' Party.

The event was part of the multi-year strategic programme led by the Liberal Democrats in Georgia and Moldova, which saw participation of the Liberal Party of Moldova, Republican Party of Georgia, •Our Georgia - Free Democrats Party, as well as Croatian People's Party, Radikale Venstre - Denmark, D66 - Netherlands and Civic List from Slovenia. VVD from Netherlands have also supported the programme.

Main themes of the seminar included sharing best practice experience on coalition negotiations, communication strategy, identifying the voter and maintaining liberal identity. Sir Andrew Stunell – Member of Parliament and a member of the negotiating team for UK Liberal Democrats that negotiated the current coalition agreement with the Conservatives represented the party at the seminar and provided British perspective on coalition negotiations and governance from the point of view of a minority partner.

Mr Gregor Virant, leader of the 'Civic List' Party and current Minister of the Interior in Slovenia welcomed participants in Ljubljana and emphasized the importance of this seminar. In his speech Dr. Virant explained that Civic List is a young party and the only liberal party in current Slovenian government. Being the liberal central element in a Slovenian coalition - a liberal corrector – as Mr. Virant stressed, the Civic List has always been committed in strengthening liberal principles. In difficult times of crisis, when we are facing difficult challenges, it is ever more crucial to share good and bad practice and experiences with other liberal parties. We especially appreciate support from our European sister parties joined in ALDE. It has been invaluable to us.

Dennis Hesselting – former president of the Dutch Young Democrats spoke about liberal identity and maintaining core values – key issues for countries where small liberal parties find themselves in coalition governments.

The project was seen as a great success in the eyes of the participating political parties. Corina Fusu – Member of Parliament from the Liberal Party of Moldova and part of the Party's negotiating team stressed that *"had this seminar been conducted 18 months ago, we would've negotiated completely different coalition. We shall take those lessons on board"*. •The event, led by UK Liberal Democrats, with the support of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation from Georgia and VVD•in Netherlands.

# Landscapes From The History House

## Sarah J Lloyd

The Irish Potato Famine was a formative event in the creation of the Liberal party, being the catalyst which brought Radicals, Whigs and Peelite Conservatives together to forward the cause of Free Trade and cheap bread. The politics of the rest of the century would revolve around Gladstone's attempts to pacify Ireland – that is bring justice to the problems of that part of the then United Kingdom.

The Famine was not limited to Ireland, but had its most profound effects there – the mass emigration that followed was mirrored in the acceleration of the Highland Clearances in Scotland, also hit by famine in those years for instance. Much of Ireland is now empty, yet Tocqueville, before the Famine, wrote of its teeming rural population, the evidence of which still lies in the country – potato ridges on the hillside.

A map of a location reveals significant local features, helping those who move through the territory to avoid becoming lost in hidden conditions and unknown contours. How much more important it might be then, to have some awareness of the profound and significant events that shaped the lives, hearts and minds of a community, the conditions that shaped the emotional and social realities of the past, the contours and inner landscapes of our families and ancestors.

We understand much more now about the effects of repression and trauma, the unspoken resonances of the past on those who are raised in its presence. The children of a generation who experience profound tragedy often re-experience the emotional effects without really knowing why or how. Daily life can lose much of its sparkle when surrounded on all sides by the shadows of unspoken wounds, ungrieved pains and unacknowledged losses.

Unmourned lost objects bind us painfully to the past, the losses that remain long unacknowledged are those that stay embedded deepest in the closed deadened heart, the literally dis-eased body, the troubled psyche, in short, in the denied unconscious. These are the wounds that are transmitted inter-generationally, because these are the uninterrupted patterns that are repeated. The repressed returns, because we continue to live as though the conditions that first created our responses are still here, and in that unexamined

mechanical way of repeating old perceptions, we very often struggle then to be present to the real possibilities of the alive present moment.

The London Irish Centre will be hosting an exhibition in November on this theme. Roscommon was one of the worst hit counties and the old Strokestown demesne now hosts the National Famine Museum in Ireland. The poet Kieran Furey was inspired by this in his collection *The History House*, and in turn inspired the landscape artist Lucy Brennan Shiel.

As Brennan Shiel's paintings and Furey's poems resound and arrive in the heart we come present to the soulful spaces of history, to witnessing, memory and mourning. We must confront complex issues of empathy, belonging and the historical abuse of power. We must attend to these heart voices reaching for other hearts to hear, the soul longing of the unmourned for recognition and healing. Surely too when we witness the ancient roots of violence, we do something to stem the repetition of this violence spreading onwards to other times, locations and contexts that spiral out from previous transgressions with a much older history. Violence is like a virus, it spreads not only through clear acts of war, but through social, cultural and familial pathways too. Through the effects of enforced migration, its affective suckers continue uncoupled and unrooted but ever virulent, whilst the real roots become harder to rationalise and locate as each successive generation inherits the fallout.

The famine of the mid 19th century had a profound impact on the Irish nation, on the Irish landscape, and upon Irish psyches and lives, an impact that was massive and far reaching. Depending on whose statistics one reads, between 500,000 and 2.5 million people perished traumatically between 1845 and 1852 in a seven year period.

The possession of the lands, communities and fecundity of a whole region, like that which happened in Ireland in the mid 19th century, the genocide of a whole generation, of a culture and a cultural identity is unquestionably traumatic and it is difficult to understand why there is such small reference to it in British history teaching. Perhaps this has changed in recent years, but I don't recall being taught anything

about the 'crimes of empire' at school in the 1980s, I heard nothing about the violence extended by the British towards indigenous peoples and lands, the themes I heard were those of conquest and the civilising effect of empire and Christianity.

The paintings and words that are offered here are not in pursuit of the apportioning of political blame, but are gateways for the expression of living meaning. They provide portals through which the excluded can be honoured, reimagined and released. They open up space for old pain to be worked through and in a context of recognition that is restorative not punitive, they stand 'for' the human, not 'against' the enemy.

Brennan Shiel's poetic landscapes have a deep melancholic resonance, she guides our attention to the shared collective violation, to the oppressed and



**"From Blight to Light" Lucy Brennan Shiel**

damaged land. She speaks about her powerful sense of the grief 'in' the land itself, land that had not only all the traumatised dead cast into it, but suddenly no one to care for it or manage it properly. In this way her paintings remind that what is done to others, to lands, to interdependent living systems, is done in the end to everyone, to ourselves, to our children and their children, and to our collective and embedded capacity for intergenerational love and deep nurture, to the soul of justice even. This exhibition is a clear and impassioned call for more awareness of the effects of the genocide on successive generations in Ireland, and by default to all the other lands, cultures and communities similarly treated. But it manages simultaneously to invoke an empowered space and spirit for deep healing.

*Sarah J Lloyd is an artist, writer and body psychotherapist living in the UK. She studied painting at St. Martin's School of Art 1984-88. Qualified from The Entelia Institute of Creative Deep Bodywork in*

*2004. She completed an MA in Social Theory studying with Anthony Elliott and Charles Lemert at Flinders University, South Australia in 2008. She has Irish roots in Cork.*

'Landscapes from the History House' is at the London Irish Centre, Camden Square, London NW1 9XB from the 7<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013. Kieran Furey will be reading his poetry there on the 7<sup>th</sup> along with Leslie Anne Dawes & Alistair Dawes who will perform settings of Irish songs.

[www.londonirishcentre.org/events/exhibition-launch-landscapes-from-the-history-house](http://www.londonirishcentre.org/events/exhibition-launch-landscapes-from-the-history-house)

For further information on the paintings:

[www.brennanshiel.co.uk/historyhouse](http://www.brennanshiel.co.uk/historyhouse)

## **Liberal Party Assembly**

The Liberal Party Assembly in Wolverhampton passed two resolutions of international note this year.

### **End Homophobia and Discrimination in Russia**

The Liberal Party deplores the increasing level of vicious attacks on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Russia

The Liberal Party believes that homophobic designed legislation calling to restrict discussion of LGBT rights and lifestyles gives a public sanction to hostility towards such people.

The Liberal Party requests its officers to write to the Russian Ambassador in terms of the above motion.

### **Syria**

Assembly unequivocally condemns the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Assembly insists that the use of such weapons by any state or faction is met with the strongest possible international response, including, in some circumstance and with the authority of the United Nations, the use of force.

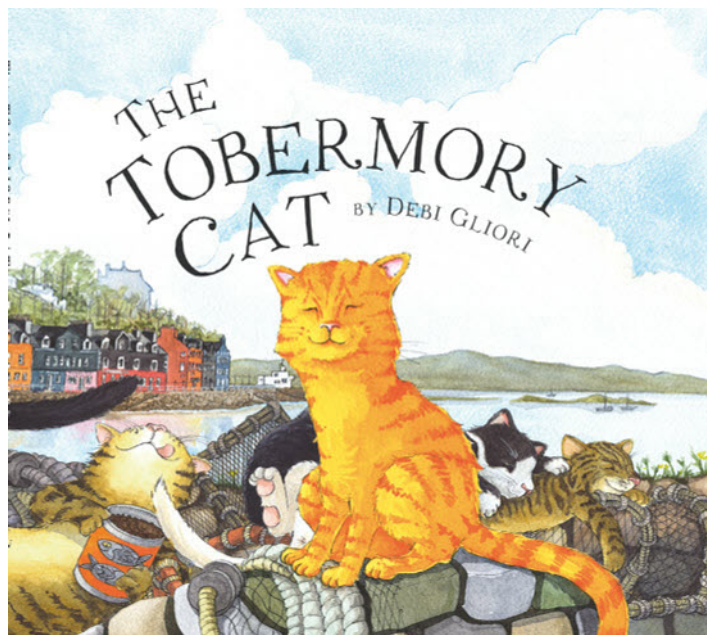
In the circumstances as they relate to Syria, however, assembly congratulates those Members of the House of Commons who voted against the use of force and thereby provided a breathing space to allow a potentially peaceful resolution to the crisis to be implemented.

The 128th Assembly was held on Saturday 5th October 2013 at the Friends' Meeting House, Summerfield Road, Wolverhampton.

**The Tobermory Cat, by Debi Gliori**  
**Birlinn 2012 £5.99**

What's the story in Tobermory? Debi Gliori has a strong track record as a creator of childrens' books. Her *Mr. Bear* has variously won the Red House award and been short-listed for the Kate Greenaway Medal. Reading her *Tobermory Cat*, one can guess at the genesis of the book, to help the tourist trade of a much lived town. The story is not a *Mousehole Cat*, but has its charm. The fiddling connection could have been less obtuse (or developed further?)

Debi Gliori's efforts notwithstanding, a local artist,



Angus Stewart, had developed his own Tobermory Cat – both based somewhat on an actual cat. I would like to think that they can live alongside each and both benefit the local economy; I hope so. After all, Saki brought us a cat called Tobermory a good century before.

**Stewart Rayment**

**Sign of The Times, by Peter Brookes.**  
**The Robson Press, 2013**



President Assad of Syria continues to slaughter his own people.

# Reviews

It was two years ago that Assad wished his countrymen this 'Merry Christmas'. Another collection of Times' cartoonist's work from 2011 on. Incisive as ever, Brookes is not as cruel as, say Steve Bell. But world leaders will still cringe at the exposure of their short comings. The public school ethos of the Rose Garden Coalition resonates in a way British Liberals have not experienced since the days of the Two Davids. Danny Alexander a sea cucumber? What will the brewers come up with next? But you'll have to turn to the book for more of Cleggers...

**Saeed Rahman**



**Hand, Heart and Soul, the Arts and Crafts Movement in Scotland, by Elizabeth Cumming.**  
**Birlinn 2013**

What planet is the SECC on? It was a building site in 1995 and it still is, though now with a maze that would do Dædalus proud. Many a delegate must have pondered that as they sipped tea in the Willow Rooms, Sauchiehall Street. If they didn't, they should, for Glasgow has so much more to offer.

Well, we're back there next year, so you'll need to prepare your ground, and Elizabeth Cumming's book is a fine pointer to the things beyond Mackintosh that you've probably already seen (I'm drawing up my list of places to visit as I write).

I was immediately struck by the political dimension of the book – it is frequently cited that the practitioners of Arts & Craft embraced (usually) Christian Socialist views, though if you examine these, they frequently fit into a libertarian socialist, if not anarchist spectrum (often not too well thought through). Cumming, unsurprisingly, tells us that many of the clients of these architects, artists and artisans were among the Liberal and Radical communities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and beyond. Stewart Carmichael would paint what has been described elsewhere as 'a great patriotic mural... which featured Wallace and Bruce' for the

Dundee Liberal Club. According to the present occupiers of the building, it does not appear to be there now, but is it covered up? Unfortunately nothing more is said of Carmichael in Cumming's book, but his work ranged through landscape, portraiture and religious & historical allegories as an artist, becoming rather more conventional after his flirtation with the Celtic Revival. However, with the aid of I can now bring the mural to you...



HAND, HEART AND SOUL  
THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT  
IN SCOTLAND  
ELIZABETH CUMMING

This alas detracts from the Glasgow quest, so I bring you 'Egypt and Turkey' by Alfred Webster, from the Byzantine Smoke Room of Anderson's Royal Polytechnic Warehouse, 93-99 Argyll Street. I don't know of John Anderson's politics, but he was described as of a 'kind, genial and liberal spirit' in a tribute at the time of the jubilee of his store in 1887. Alas the St. Enoch Shopping Centre now occupies the site, so this is one that we won't be able to see in situ.

Stewart Rayment

**The Cigarette Papers, by Peter Ashley  
Frances Lincoln 2012 £12.99**

Ah here is a book to cheer us all. I've never been inclined to get a snout on myself, but have shared the author's fascination with cigarette packets and cigarette advertising more generally, although it has never had the manufacturer's desired effect on me.

What grey days we live in; even the 1960s seem brighter. Every Wednesday, after school, Peter Hutchings and I used to deliver posters to various shops and households advertising Maldon Town's Saturday fixture. Peter collected cigarette packets and we scoured the streets for a discarded gem. My personal favourite was Sweet Afton.

But I recently came across the unpronounceable De Reszke (res-zeek). This brand was primarily aimed at ladies, implying a nonchalant elegance and had its heyday in the 1930s. I was horrified to read in Ashley's book that the Hun dropped booby trapped tins of De Reszkes from their planes during the Blitz. If you fancy lighting one up, I understand the brand is still made in India.

But as I said, we live in grey days, and with nothing better to do Her Majesty's government was engaged in a UK-wide *Consultation on the standardised packaging of tobacco products*. I found this a rather biased document, oblivious of intellectual property rights amongst other things. Some of the questions were so phrased as to imply my support for the concept – I complained to my MP. The consultation has closed, but do harass your MP; it helps keep them on their toes.

Stewart Rayment



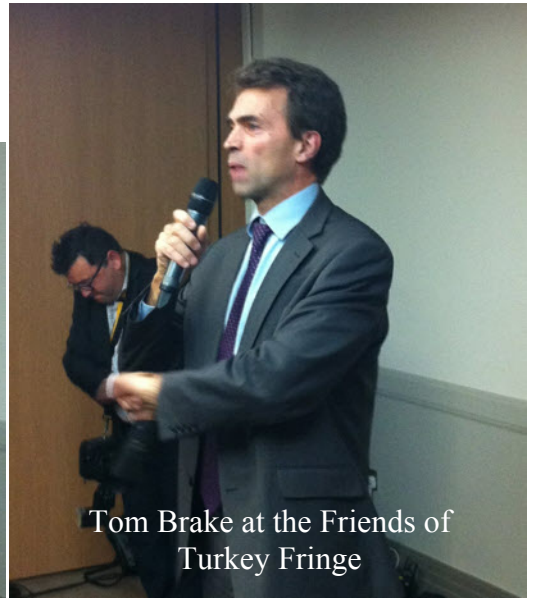
Left to right we have Galgacus, St Columba, Michael Scot, Alexander III, John the Graham, William Wallace (the central figure), Robert the Bruce, Blind Harry, John Knox, Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, Robert Burns, Gladstone and Thomas Carlyle. A female figure symbolising liberty was shown in the foreground laying a wreath at the feet of Wallace.. From *The Scottish Patriot*. May 1904, courtesy of Matthew Jarron



*Nick Harvey at the LIBG Fringe*



*The Turkish Ambassador, Ahmet Ünal Çeviköz*



*Tom Brake at the Friends of Turkey Fringe*



*Fabian Picardo, Chief Minister of Gibraltar*



*Delegates at the Friends of Turkey Fringe*



*Ziya Meral at the LDFoT fringe*

*I've been wi' a few o' mah cronies,  
one or two pals o' my ain...  
a couple o' drinks on a Setterday,  
An' Glesga belongs tae me!*



*Colin Green makes a point to a delegate & Desmond Travers at the Friends of Palestine fringe.*



*Nick Harvey, Julie Smith, Robert Woodthorpe-Brown, Adam Nathan (British Influence in Europe) & Dr. Eamonn Butler (University of Glasgow) at the LIBG/LDEG/British Influence fringe*