

# The way things were: 1974 and 2010 compared

[Chris Gilson](#) looks at what campaigning was like in 1974, the last time there was a hung parliament – also a year when there was a second inconclusive election. And he explains how you can help write the history of this year's election.

LSE's huge Library is the national library for the social sciences. [Anna Towson](#) runs the [LSE Archives](#) and got in touch last week to seek the help of Blog readers in continuing their unrivalled [collection of election campaign literature](#). The collection dates back to 1945 and provides a unique insight into the development of the post-war political landscape, and the history of election campaigning.



Looking at the campaign literature from both election campaigns of 1974, in February and in October, shows how the October leaflets often explained why a second election was needed and how the parties could restore 'stability' in government.

From the LSE Archives, we have Ilford North Labour campaign leaflets from 1974 (click each to enlarge):

Contrast Millie Miller's literature with the present PPC's leaflets (images are from the fantastic campaign leaflet resource, [TheStraightChoice.org](#)), Sonia Klein (Labour) and Lee Scott (Conservatives)(click images to enlarge):



The earlier images from 1974 are for the February election that ended up with a hung parliament. Now we also have the following (also from Millie Miller) on the October 1974 election (click to enlarge):

The leaflet talks about how the incumbent minority Labour government has been 'indecisive' and 'vulnerable' to its opponents. It would be interesting to see if candidates in a May 2011 election would be so honest with prospective voters.

In October 1974, in Twickenham, Toby Jessel wanted your vote:

Jessel warns that a vote for Labour is a vote for the nationalisation of industries and the beginning of a 'socialist state'. He also writes off the Liberals and supports the control of public spending, and the building of a new airport in Essex – two things that are arguably [still on the agenda](#) (albeit now across the Thames estuary in Kent) 30 years later.



In October 1974, the Liberal candidate for Marylebone (now Westminster North) Bernard Silver said that *"Both Labour and Conservative have tried and failed. We must unite to beat the economic crisis which threatens us all, and rise above the class struggle perpetuated by this two-party system. Only Liberals can achieve this. One more heave!"*

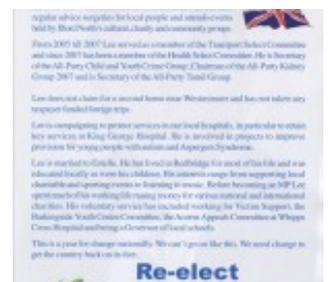
While we don't have a contemporary leaflet for the Lib Dems for Westminster North, the Liberal Democrats material from the nearby Holborn and St Pancras shows the changes in the way that elections 'look' in the last 30 years (click image to enlarge):



Campaigning has of course, kept pace with technology, and leaflets are glossier, more pictorial and have far less text – but the messages seem to be much the same over thirty years later.

Anna is currently collecting local election addresses and publicity materials produced by all the candidates for Parliament in next month's general election.

Sending local leaflets and campaign ephemera in to the LSE Library could not be simpler. Just put everything election-related that comes through your letterbox in an envelope – the Archive can sort out what they want to keep – and send it to the Archive address at:



Freepost RSHB-UHHY-RTSG  
Archives and Rare Books  
LSE Library  
10 Portugal Street  
London WC2A 2HD

To find out more, visit LSE Archives' [Out of the Box blog](#).

No related posts.

### WHY ANOTHER ELECTION ?

The last General Election produced an indecisive result. No Party had a clear majority and P. S. D. G. has been carrying on a minority government which is always vulnerable to the irresponsible tactics of its opponents. The serious problems the country faces demand strong government. The public now has the opportunity to show how it would like a country governed during the difficult years which lie ahead.

#### INTRODUCTORY MESSAGE FROM

*Millie Miller*

A few months ago I sent you my first General Election address. I was greatly encouraged by your wonderful response. I received 35,000 notes but missed among you one by my name. Many people had said they realised that there was a great chance of a Labour gain. Now they know that if any one of our supporters comes out we can not forward to a great victory.

Since last February LABOUR has kept its promises on pensions, prices, mortgages, housing, industrial relations and the Common Market. At the same time the energy of LABOUR'S experienced team of Ministers has kept matters in perspective the crisis which the Tories created last winter. They seemed to be allowed to go on to work out long-term solutions.

In deciding how to vote at this election I beg you to see your own common sense. You will find every kind of experienced promise will be dropped up by the Conservatives, but you can't afford to forget your support for the last three governments or the pathetic Tory record in opposition.

I won't promise a speedily end to inflation. You wouldn't believe me if I said I could end it for a while. You've found that one before. But I do promise, if you elect me, that I will represent you in a constant struggle to improve our society. I intend to fight the election on the principle and justice set out in the LABOUR Party manifesto which I sincerely believe to be the only track for democracy in this country.

ILFORD NORTH IS A KEY MARGINAL SEAT. IT MUST BE WON FOR LABOUR IF WE ARE TO MAKE A PROGRESS GOVERNMENT. THERE IS ONLY ONE EFFECTIVE WAY TO ACHIEVE THIS — BY VOTING LABOUR AT THE COMING ELECTION.



MILLIE MILLER has had long experience in public life as an elected representative, holding high office in local government and in national organisations, both political and social. Her Election Address will shortly be reaching you by post.

#### HOW TO HELP LABOUR WIN IN ILFORD NORTH

Contact your local organisation in:

Albany Road - 33 Netley Road	554 6659
Barking Road - Green Elm	551 1944
Blackburn Road - Blackland Green	500 5363
Chesham - 17 Manor Road	500 5373
Fairlop - 2 Katherine Gardens	500 4332
Hainault - 53 Barrow Rd., Chigwell	509 8833
Bowen Kings - 37 Church Road	509 8833

PLEASE SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR LABOUR AND MILLIE MILLER BY DISPLAYING THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS LEAFLET IN YOUR WINDOW AND BY VOTING LABOUR ON POLLING DAY.

#### GENERAL ELECTION



**Toby Jones**  
Your Conservative Candidate

7 Oct. 1974

#### CONSERVATIVE



CONSERVATIVE

#### VOTE LIBERAL

**PUBLIC MEETING**  
Come AND MEET General Brown — and put your questions to him at  
**St. Mark's Church, Green Lane**  
on Thursday, 2nd October, 1974  
at 8.15 p.m.

**VOTE Liberal**



**VOTE SILVER**

#### OR YOU

**o will deliver**

**a two horse race h**

**r and the team**

**Gordon Brown's Labour politician...**

The Labour party has elected Gordon Brown as its new leader. He is a man who has been granted the right to be heard.

Gordon Brown's Labour politician...

