

## THE DAVID LLOYD GEORGE STATUE APPEAL TRUST, 1995–2007

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### *Abstract*

This article examines the anxiety which emerged during the late 1990s to secure a major open-air statue for David Lloyd George in central London, a striking omission which Lloyd George fans were most desirous of eliminating. Three Lloyd George statues already existed – at Caernarfon (1921), Cardiff (1960) and within the Palace of Westminster (1963). The article looks at the subsequent setting up of the Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust in 1997, its activities, prominent activists and their individual contributions, and the long, difficult campaign to raise the most substantial sum of money, almost £400,000, necessary to finance the ambitious project. This eventually came to fruition, rather later than planned, with the unveiling of the impressive monument by Charles, Prince of Wales at a high-profile ceremony at Parliament Square on 25 October 2007. Some attention is then given to reactions to the ceremony itself and its significance.

David Lloyd George died at Tŷ Newydd, Llanystumdwy near Criccieth on 26 March 1945 at the age of eighty-two. To mark the half-centenary of his death in March 1995, his acclaimed biographer John Grigg, who was at the time preparing his fourth contribution in the multi-volume work, wrote a reflective article, one of a series, in the *Daily Telegraph*,

Churchill bulks far greater than Lloyd George in the public imagination. Why is this? The most obvious reason is that Churchill led in the more recent war which is still within the personal recollection of every old-age pensioner. [...] In the Palace of Westminster statues of Lloyd George and Churchill stand on either side of the arch leading into the Commons chamber: so there at least the equivalence of the two men is recognized. In Parliament Square a statue of Churchill looks southward across Westminster Bridge, but there is no outdoor statue of Lloyd George anywhere in London. Surely this is rather a large gap which ought to be filled.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Grigg, 'The wizard of World War One', *Daily Telegraph*, 26 March 1995. For other articles in the same series expressing contrasting viewpoints, see Roy Jenkins, 'Welshman who threw wide open the door of no. 10', *Daily Telegraph*, 25 March 1995; and Gwynfor Evans, 'How Lloyd George hurt Wales', *Daily Telegraph*, 29 March 1995.

A little later Grigg, who clearly felt strongly about this striking absence, had communicated with another prominent Lloyd George devotee, the Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos,

I was talking yesterday to Owen Lloyd-George [the third Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor] about the most regrettable absence of an open-air statue of his grandfather anywhere in London [...] and he said you felt strongly about it too. If action is to be taken to fill the gap, it occurs to me that a suitable target date would be 1998 – the eightieth anniversary of victory in the Great War, and the ninetieth of Old age pensions.<sup>2</sup>

Grigg was convinced that two other prominent politicians highly likely to support such a worthy initiative were Paddy Ashdown and Michael Heseltine, both of whom were considered to be avid fans of Lloyd George.<sup>3</sup> All were aware that three impressive Lloyd George statues already existed – one in the Castle Square, Caernarfon, unveiled in August 1921 during Lloyd George's post-war premiership;<sup>4</sup> one in the Cathays Park, Cardiff, unveiled by the Prime Minister Harold MacMillan in July 1960; and an indoor statue within the Houses of Parliament, unveiled by Sir Alec Douglas-Hume in December 1963.

Lord Cledwyn was strongly supportive, but felt that Lord Roy Jenkins and Lord Whitelaw would be the most likely politicians to lend credence and weight to their campaign.<sup>5</sup> Grigg, who felt strongly that Lord Cledwyn would be the best individual to launch and head the campaign, responded,

I'm delighted to know that Roy Jenkins will support the Lloyd George statue project – handsome of him considering that there is no outdoor statue of Asquith either! – and I suppose Whitelaw's support will help us in some quarters. [...] I am sure the inviting should be done by you. [...] You can count on me to give all the help and support I can, but in a suitable humble capacity.<sup>6</sup>

Lord Cledwyn, motivated to proceed with a cause which clearly lay very close to his heart, duly began a round of consultations with potentially interested bodies

<sup>2</sup> 'John Grigg to the Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos, 7 April 1995', National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW), David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1, (copy).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. See Nicholas Budgen, 'Is Hezza Lloyd George?', *The Times*, 14 July 1995: 'Hezza has demonstrated that Lloyd George is his hero by the display in his office of the fine 1927 portrait of the Welsh Wizard by Sir William Orpen, owned by the National Portrait Gallery.'

<sup>4</sup> On the context of the unveiling of the 1921 statue at Caernarfon, see Emyr Price, *Lloyd George a'r Eisteddfod Genedlaethol a Phrifwyliau Bangor a Chaernarfon* (Caernarfon: Gwasg y Bwthyn, 2005), pp. 60-69.

<sup>5</sup> 'Lord Cledwyn to Grigg, 3 May 1995', NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1, (copy).

<sup>6</sup> 'Grigg to Lord Cledwyn, 6 May 1995', NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1, (copy).

including the Westminster City Council, the Department of National Heritage, the Royal Fine Arts Commission, the Royal Parks Agency, and English Heritage. He felt convinced that Parliament Square, originally considered as far back as 1955 as an appropriate venue for a statue of Lloyd George,<sup>7</sup> would be by far the most suitable location for an open-air monument to commemorate Lloyd George, rather than, as some suggested, the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square which had lain vacant ever since the square was laid out back in the 1830s.<sup>8</sup> At this point only Lord Cledwyn, Grigg, the Earl Lloyd-George, and Viscount Tenby, also Lloyd George's grandson, were involved in the discussions, but Michael Heseltine was soon won over to support the campaign too and readily agreed to broach the matter with a number of parliamentary colleagues.<sup>9</sup>

Early in the new year – 1996 – Lord Cledwyn, much encouraged by the positive response which he had received, turned to a serious consideration of the more practical aspects of the project including its potential cost and the choice of the most suitable sculptor. In this connection he sought the advice of Lord Gowrie, the chairman of the Arts Council, who agreed that a statue of Lloyd George in Parliament Square was indeed 'long overdue', and encouraged Lord Cledwyn to seek the advice of the Royal Society of British Sculptors for recommendations concerning the choice of sculptor.<sup>10</sup> At the end of July, Lord Cledwyn circulated the following communication in the hope of attracting some financial support for the ambitious project about to take off:

As yet there is no outdoor statue in London of David Lloyd George. Inside the Palace of Westminster a statue of him flanks, with one of Winston Churchill, the arch leading into the Commons chamber. But no statue of him accompanies that of Churchill in Parliament Square, or has yet been erected on any other outdoor site in London. This seems quite wrong because most people would agree that Lloyd George's contribution to British history in the present century is comparable only with Churchill's.

There are now plans to repair this omission, and it is intended that they should come to fruition in 1998 which will be a most significant double anniversary. In 1908 Lloyd George put Old Age Pensions on the Statute Book as the first of a series of measures which entitle him to be regarded as the founder of our modern Welfare State. In 1918

<sup>7</sup> See the reports in *The Times*, 25 March 1955; the *Manchester Guardian*, 25 March 1955; and the *Daily Telegraph*, 29 March 1955. These moves had been inspired by the recent tenth anniversary of the death of Lloyd George and an announcement in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill that, in keeping with the ten year rule, 'a memorial should be erected to [Lloyd George] within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster'.

<sup>8</sup> Simon Jenkins, 'A salute for Trafalgar Square', *The Times*, 29 April 1995.

<sup>9</sup> 'Lord Cledwyn to Michael Heseltine, 29 November 1995 ('Private and Confidential')', NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1, (copy).

<sup>10</sup> David Lewis Jones, 'The Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust' (unpublished typescript memorandum), no. 3.

the First World War ended in total victory for the Allied cause with Lloyd George almost universally acknowledged as the British Leader who had done most to make such a victory possible. In peace he was one of the country's greatest reformers. In war, he was – like Pitt and Churchill – a 'pilot who weathered the storm'.<sup>11</sup>

And at this point Philomena Davidson Davis, the Managing Director of the Sculpture Company, became a freelance sculpture consultant to the project and, together with John Grigg and Lord Tenby, joined a small informal committee chaired by Lord Cledwyn to advance the project as quickly as possible. Appeals were made to a number of organizations and interested individuals in the hope of raising an initial sum of some £20,000 to finance the task of selecting the most suitable sculptor and to set up a fund-raising machinery for the funding of the entire project for, 'There is no time to be lost if the 1998 target is to be met'.<sup>12</sup>

By the end of the year Lord Cledwyn had formalized the committee which was set up to work on the project by recruiting Lord Aberdare, John Grigg, Alan Beith MP, Lord Hooson, Earl Lloyd-George, Viscount Tenby, and W. Emrys Evans who had agreed to act as the campaign's treasurer. Its first meeting was held on 12 December 1996, following which David Lewis Jones, the highly regarded Librarian of the House of Lords and a prominent London Welshman, agreed to take on the position of secretary.<sup>13</sup> At this point it was rather naively believed that the total costs of the project would amount to some £90,000-£100,000 to achieve 'a statue that will be worthy of the great man' in Parliament Square.<sup>14</sup> And at this juncture, in an attempt to attract public support and the substantial levels of funding necessary, the campaign moved into the public domain and was noted in the popular press: 'For more than thirty years Parliament Square has been dominated by the glowering statue of Sir Winston Churchill. If Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos gets his way, the Grand Old Man will soon face competition. Lord Cledwyn is chairing a cross-party parliamentary committee to erect a statue of David Lloyd George. For this it will

<sup>11</sup> 'Circular appeal drafted by Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos, 25 July 1996', NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1.

<sup>12</sup> 'W. Emrys Evans to Sir Julian Hodge, 30 July 1996', NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1, (copy).

<sup>13</sup> David Lewis Jones, 'The Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust' (unpublished typescript memorandum), nos. 6 and 7. On D. L. Jones, see J. Graham Jones, 'JONES, DAVID LEWIS (1945-2010), Librarian of the House of Lords', in *Dictionary of Welsh Biography on-line* <<https://biography.wales/article/s8-JONE-LEW-1945>> [accessed 25 January 2019], and the helpful obituaries in *The Times*, 5 November 2010; and *Western Mail*, 20 October 2010. Jones's obituary notice in *The Times*, 5 November 2010, recorded that, 'He served as secretary to the David Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust to erect a statue to David Lloyd George on Parliament Square. This proved more of a challenge than he had bargained for, and his relief at the eventual unveiling of the statue in 2007 was palpable'.

<sup>14</sup> 'Minutes of the Lloyd George Statue Committee, 5 December 1996', NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1; 'W. Emrys Evans to Lord Cledwyn, 9 December 1996', NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1, (copy); 'Circular letter from Lord Cledwyn to members of the committee, 18 December 1996', NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1.

need to raise £100,000.<sup>15</sup> Again Michael Heseltine was mentioned as the most likely supporter of the new initiative, one who it was hoped would make a substantial personal donation to the cause for ‘He worships Lloyd George whose portrait he carts around to each successive ministerial office’.<sup>16</sup> Not all observers were readily supportive of the campaign. The chairman of the National Liberal Club wrote thus in the national press:

As a traditional Liberal (and chair of the National Liberal Club) I would certainly support this project, but a prior claimant to such a distinction of recognition in Parliament Square is the greatest of all Victorian Prime Ministers William Ewart Gladstone. The centenary of Gladstone’s death is approaching: May 19 1998. The project need not be costly. There is an acceptable statue of the Grand Old Man languishing inappropriately in the Strand between St Clement Danes and Australia House. These days it is largely obscured by a jungle of traffic lights and signs.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, early hopes that the work of the campaign might proceed in association with the Lloyd George Memorial Appeal Fund were soon dashed as the ambit of activities of the latter body was confined to the parish of Llanystumdwy. The officers consequently sought charitable status for the committee, which, with most valuable advice and assistance readily rendered by Lord Prys-Davies, another fervid Lloyd George supporter, proceeded to draft the necessary trust deed, which was then approved on 8 July 1997. The six trustees were to be Lord Cledwyn, Lord Aberdare, John Grigg, Lord Hooson, W. Emrys Evans, and David Lewis Jones. They then agreed that any money remaining following the financing of the Lloyd George statue should be donated to support the worthy activities of the Lloyd George Museum at Llanystumdwy. The trust deed is dated 2 September 1997, and on 30 September the Charity Commission agreed to grant charitable status to the David Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, at a committee meeting held on 8 July 1997, Lord Aberdare proposed that the Prime Minister and all living former Prime Ministers should be invited to become patrons of the Lloyd George Statue Appeal. The response was mixed. Positive replies were received from Lord Callaghan and Sir Edward Heath, the latter noting enthusiastically, ‘This is an extremely worthy cause and I would be honoured and delighted to become a Patron.’ Baroness Thatcher felt obliged to refuse because of the very large number of similar requests which she currently

<sup>15</sup> ‘Lloyd George eulogy’, *Daily Telegraph*, 14 December 1996.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Tarzan’s last swing’, *Daily Telegraph*, 26 January 1997. For interesting references to Heseltine’s boundless admiration for Lloyd George, see Michael Crick, *Michael Heseltine: A Life* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1997).

<sup>17</sup> ‘Shift Gladstone’, letter from S. W. Bonarfee, London SW1, published in the *Daily Telegraph*, 18 December 1996.

<sup>18</sup> David Lewis Jones, ‘The Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust’ (unpublished typescript memorandum), no. 9.

received, but went on to note that she was ‘in full support of recognising the contribution that David Lloyd George made to the history of our country’, and expressed her readiness to make a financial contribution. John Major agreed to become a patron of the appeal too and anticipated receiving further details of the appeal’s progress soon. The Prime Minister Tony Blair, however, while readily voicing his ‘respect’ for ‘the radical reforms’ which Lloyd George had brought about, felt unable to agree to become a patron because of his government’s role in approving new statues within London – a potential clash of interests. Early in 1998 further patrons were recruited for the appeal, namely Lord (Paddy) Ashdown, Betty Boothroyd, then the Speaker of the House of Commons, and Lord (Roy) Jenkins of Hillhead.<sup>19</sup>

In November 1997, the committee agreed that Ms Philomena Davidson Davis should be authorized to prepare a feasibility study, which was duly completed by the following February, and a Project Steering Committee was then duly established under the chairmanship of Lord Aberdare. Public interest was now in the ascendant, and a number of proposals mooted. The prestigious Caernarfon-based sculptor John Meirion Morris expressed his wish to be considered for the prestigious venture.<sup>20</sup> And Lord Cledwyn also met with the pre-eminent, Welsh artist Sir Kyffin Williams to seek his views on the project and soon elicited the following considered response:

I agree that this is long overdue, but the problem today is that I cannot think of any sculptor who could convey and interpret the vitality and dynamic quality that was so much part of the character of Lloyd George. Ivor Roberts Jones could have done it but, alas, he is no longer with us. I put to you the suggestion that another cast could be made of the Lloyd George statue in Caernarfon by Sir William Goscombe John. This is a fine statue by an artist whose importance becomes increasingly obvious as the years go by. He was also a Welshman who was able to create the likeness while Lloyd George was alive. Any sculptor today would have to resort to photographs. Ivor Roberts Jones could have done this, but I am not sure that any sculptor alive today could manage to work in this way with any great success. I hope I am not being too critical. I understand that new techniques would enable moulds to be taken from the existing statue with considerable ease and could be done by a bronze-casting foundry.<sup>21</sup>

Earl Lloyd-George, too, was attracted by the prospect of simply replicating the Caernarfon statue unveiled in 1921: ‘I am a great admirer of Goscombe John’s work.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> ‘W. Emrys Evans to Lord Cledwyn, 10 February 1997’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Sir Kyffin Williams to Lord Cledwyn, 8 January 1998’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1.

[...] It also depicts [David Lloyd George] at the height of his powers. The scale might however have to be enlarged to bring it into line with the existing statues in Parliament Square.<sup>22</sup> Several members of the committee tended to approve of the rather curious proposal, giving serious attention to the Caernarfon statue and requesting further details from the town clerk of Caernarfon and photographs of the monument. The town clerk ‘kindly provided a rough estimate of 15 feet overall for the plinth and statue. (He pointed out that Lloyd George was a little man.) From the photos it is clear that the plinth is around 55 per cent of the monument: this suggests that it is a life-size statue unlike the Churchill statue which is twice life-size’.<sup>23</sup> Indeed in this connection much attention was also focused on the massive Churchill statue which had occupied pride of place in Parliament Square ever since the autumn of 1973: ‘The statue of Sir Winston Churchill, by Ivor Roberts-Jones, was unveiled on 1 November 1973 by the Queen. The statue stands 12 feet high on a plinth of 8 feet with the single word “Churchill” inscribed on it in large letters. It dwarfs the statues of Disraeli, Smuts, Palmerston and other statesmen in the square and from behind it looks massive. It is a formal statue: there is no cigar and no suggestion of the mischievous sense of humour.’<sup>24</sup> Eventually, after prolonged discussion, members of the committee were persuaded to abandon this proposal largely through the persuasive counsels of Philomena Davidson Davis who impressed upon the members,

The Caernarfon figure of Lloyd George shows him with fist raised. It should be noted that all the figures in Parliament Square are noticeably non aggressive in stance and personality. A noble approach to the features of the portrait figure has traditionally been the one adopted for this site showing the character of the man as a one that exudes knowledge and status and not requiring a dramatic overstatement. A reproduction piece will not carry either the integrity of the original artist’s reputation or indeed that of the artist or artisan who undertakes the enlargement. Its value as a work of art therefore would be questionable.<sup>25</sup>

By this time there was a shock realization by organizers that the potential cost of the ambitious enterprise had come close to trebling their original estimates. ‘I have read the feasibility study with much interest’, wrote Earl Lloyd-George, ‘I have to admit that the overall total of nearly £300,000 seems rather daunting, about three times what the Committee originally envisaged. Do we really need a

<sup>22</sup> ‘Earl Lloyd-George to David Lewis Jones, 5 February 1998’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Note on the Churchill and Lloyd George statues [February 1998]’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Memorandum from Philomena Davidson Davis to David Lewis Jones, 20 February 1998’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1. See also the interesting materials in the NLW, Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos Papers, file 2/1.

media campaign?<sup>26</sup> Fund-raising, therefore, soon became their top priority, and in July it was resolved that a national launch of the appeal should be held at a lunch-time reception hosted by Lord Tordoff. The reception was held at the David Lloyd George Room in the National Liberal Club on 11 November 1998, the eightieth anniversary of the signing of the 1918 Armistice, and Lord Cledwyn took on the role of master of ceremonies.<sup>27</sup> A special brochure was prepared for the high-profile occasion, which proved to be a considerable publicity success but somewhat sluggish in attracting donations towards a fund which now had an overall target of some £400,000. On 28 October, the Welsh Liberal Democrat leader Richard Livsey, who was supported by Plaid Cymru president Dafydd Wigley, had put forward a motion in the House of Commons in the hope of kick-starting support among MPs: ‘A statue is long overdue, and if we can get one up this century, it would certainly be a bonus. It is impossible to say what [Lloyd George’s] greatest achievement was. There were two – introducing pensions and leading this country through World War One.’<sup>28</sup> There was, however, a contrary, minority view which insisted that the ‘Welsh Wizard’ had unnecessarily prolonged the Great War by his abject failure to devise a coherent strategy to ‘defeat the Hun’, an argument advanced by the politician Alan Clark, author of *The Donkeys*, a contentious work which had exposed the alleged amateurism of the generals During the First World War: ‘If they want to put up a statue to a man who was the embodiment of sleaze, Lloyd George is perfect. He took bribes, sold titles and claimed to have rogered someone in the Speaker’s chair. [...] Lloyd George did pretty well, but he didn’t have the nerve to sack Haig and the Somme was just a shambles.’<sup>29</sup> Lloyd George’s biographer John Grigg disagreed virulently, ‘It often seems the more controversial a great man, the longer it takes for him to be properly commemorated and celebrated. [...] I find a remarkable unanimity among people I talk to that a statue of in London is long overdue.’<sup>30</sup> The general consensus was that a total sum of £400,000 needed to be raised so that Lloyd George might at long last be commemorated on par with his old ally Winston Churchill in Parliament Square, and there was an excited air of general anticipation that a ten foot high bronze statue of Lloyd George would now in due course join nine statues of other politicians, among them Oliver Cromwell and Benjamin Disraeli, which dramatically ringed the famous square opposite the Palace of Westminster.<sup>31</sup>

By this time it was generally felt that funds might well be more readily forthcoming if a sculptor could be chosen and a specific design determined for the statue, and it was agreed that Lord Gowrie should be approached as chairman of an

<sup>26</sup> ‘Earl Lloyd-George to David Lewis Jones, 5 February 1998’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/1.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Lord Aberdare to Lord Cledwyn, 30 September 1998’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/2, (copy).

<sup>28</sup> ‘Statue drive to honour Lloyd George’, *Western Mail*, 29 October 1998.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Lloyd George is not PC’, diary column in *The Times*, 26 October 1998.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Boon, ‘Tribute to a great man which is long overdue’, *Western Mail*, 9 November 1998.

<sup>31</sup> Roland Watson, ‘Statesmen launch appeal to honour Lloyd George’, *The Times*, 12 November 1998.

Artist Selection Panel.<sup>32</sup> In mid-February 1999 appeal organizers, seeking ‘an artist of international standing’, invited declarations of interest from sculptors anxious to be considered.<sup>33</sup> A trickle of donations came to hand, including substantial contributions from the University of Wales, Anglesey Aluminium, and McAlpine Partners. Progress was certainly being made. By the autumn, the Sculpture Company had revised its estimate of the cost of the statue alone to upwards of £356,965. In addition, it was realized that the potential costs of the unveiling might be considerable, especially if – as was hoped, and as was indeed to happen – a senior member of the Royal Family were invited to perform the task. It was also resolved that a slate plinth, possibly from Blaenau Ffestiniog, would be a useful adornment for the statue.<sup>34</sup> By the end of October the trust held just £28,433, and Michael Heseltine succeeded Lord Gowrie as Chair of the Artist Selection Panel. The original intention of inviting just a small number of sculptors to consider the commission was revised so that an advertisement was placed in the *Arts Newspaper* and a high-profile lunch, attended by Heseltine and Lord Aberdare, was arranged in the Attlee Room at Westminster on 14 February 2000 in order to attract wider interest.<sup>35</sup> And on 23 May, a black-tie formal dinner was held at the historic Reform Club in Pall Mall, where Lloyd George himself was once a member, in an attempt to drum up greater financial and moral support for the venture, which was still languishing because of the marked paucity of contributions.<sup>36</sup>

Further interest was stimulated at this point as, at this very same time, a group of prominent MPs such as Margaret Beckett and Glenda Jackson, together with the thrusting Liberal Democrats’ women’s group, were involved in a spirited campaign to secure a statue of the legendary Suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst at College Green in London. Their aim was a much more modest sum of some £30,000 for a statue to be made by Ian Walters, who had recently come to fame as the sculptor responsible for impressive statues of Harold Wilson and Nelson Mandela.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, some advocated that, should the plans for a statue of Lloyd George in Parliament Square fall on stony ground, then a vacant plinth on the College Green site might well prove more acceptable. As Philomena Davidson commented, ‘Artists are working on the David Lloyd George project and hopefully we will make a selection in September. Parliament Square is the preferred site with College Green a close second.’<sup>38</sup> Before the end of the year the Parliament Square site had been confirmed

<sup>32</sup> ‘Lord Aberdare to the Earl of Gowrie, 3 February 1999’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/2, (copy).

<sup>33</sup> ‘Sculptor sought for Lloyd George statue’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/2, press release issued by the David Lloyd George Appeal Trust, 14 February 2000.

<sup>34</sup> ‘W. Emrys Evans to Sir Julian Hodge, 24 September 1999’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/3, (copy).

<sup>35</sup> David Lewis Jones, ‘The Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust’ (unpublished typescript memorandum), nos. 17-18. See also the reports in the *Daily Telegraph*, 15 February 2000; the *Financial Times*, 15 February 2000; and the *Western Mail*, 16 February 2000.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Club forum for Lloyd George’, *Western Mail*, 22 April 2000.

<sup>37</sup> ‘Battle of the bronze’, *The Guardian*, 25 May 2000.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

as the preferred choice of the Selection Panel and, out of a total of some sixty submissions, a short list of six possible sculptors had been drawn up by the Artist Selection Panel.<sup>39</sup>

There was considerable public interest and excitement at the prospect of erecting the first outdoor statue of Lloyd George in London. Artistic adviser Philomena Davidson commented, ‘It will be figurative in a contemporary sense. We want to avoid anything mock-Victorian. The piece should have its own presence.’<sup>40</sup> While fervent Lloyd George enthusiast Michael Heseltine commented, ‘It is envisaged that the memorial will stand as a permanent and lasting tribute.’<sup>41</sup> Further interest was stimulated by the on-going plans for a marble statue of Baroness Thatcher to be erected in the Members’ Lobby of the House of Commons to join the large bronze statues already there of former Prime Ministers Clement Attlee, Winston Churchill and Lloyd George – while the Iron Lady was still alive and totally flaunting the conventional ten year rule relating to the erection of such memorials to former politicians.<sup>42</sup>

In May it was announced that Glynn Williams, Professor of Sculpture at the Royal College of Art in London, was the final choice of the selection panel for the Lloyd George memorial. Emotions ran high that the completed statue would join those of General Smuts by Jacob Epstein and Churchill by Ivor Jones Roberts in Parliament Square. Professor Glynn Williams commented, ‘One of the difficulties was to design a contemporary sculpture which recognizes and portrays the likeness of the man so long after he was at the height of his political career, and I am delighted to have been chosen to design and execute this important and permanent memorial.’ Williams had already come to public prominence as the creator of the Henry Purcell memorial in Victoria Street, London and the Gateway of Hands at Chelsea Harbour.<sup>43</sup> Very sadly, at this point the movement was deprived of one of its foremost leaders with the death of Lord Cledwyn at the age of eighty-four. Following this immense loss, it was resolved that the Appeal Committee and the Executive Committee should be merged into a single Executive Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Aberdare, while Lord (Gareth) Williams of Mostyn agreed to join the committee as an additional trustee. Financial contributions still stagnated with no more than £42,610 in the coffers by June, and it was hoped that the Welsh county councils might prove more supportive.<sup>44</sup> A maquette of the statue was

<sup>39</sup> ‘Minutes of the Public Art Advisory Panel, 25 September 2000’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/2; ‘Letter from Michael Heseltine to Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, 29 November 2000’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/2.

<sup>40</sup> *Evening Standard*, 4 January 2001.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Tom Baldwin and Dalya Alberge, ‘Iron lady is turned to stone in Commons’, *The Times*, 17 February 2001; ‘Commons resists Thatcher statue’, *The Guardian*, 14 March 2001; ‘We are a statue: iron lady immortalised in marble’, *The Guardian*, 2 February 2002.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Press release “Sculptor chosen for Lloyd George memorial”, 4 May 2001’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/3.

<sup>44</sup> ‘W. Emrys Evans to G. F. Edwards, Anglesey County Council, Llangefni, 6 June 2001’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/3, (copy).

designed and displayed at the House of Lords on 22 January 2002 in the hope of appealing to wealthy donors, but few responded to the initiative. A further loss during the same month was that of another stalwart, Lloyd George biographer John Grigg, who was taken while writing the fourth volume in his celebrated, multi-volume work to be entitled *War Leader*. Repeated persuasive attempts to secure the services of Lord (Geoffrey) Howe of Aberavon to fill the breach proved unsuccessful. Lord Howe felt that his links with Wales were by now very tenuous and that he was also fully committed as one of the sponsors of the Nelson Mandela memorial in Trafalgar Square.<sup>45</sup>

The campaign moved ahead but slowly. Commented Glynn Williams as he began his task with gusto, ‘My design for the memorial to David Lloyd George is not that of a frozen historical figure, but is the personification of his mellifluous and influential oratory rising from the rocks of the earth and flowering amongst its people.’<sup>46</sup> Attempts to reduce the cost of the statue had also proved somewhat successful. By the spring of 2002, it was hoped that the total cost of the statue itself would be £202,768, while the overall cost of the project was likely to amount to some £287,600. This meant that the substantial sum of some £250,000 still needed to be raised – a steep hill for organizers to climb.<sup>47</sup> By the autumn an ailing Lord Aberdare had resigned as the chairman of the trustees, to be replaced by Lord Williams of Mostyn. The following spring, Lord Newby had assumed the chairmanship of an executive committee charged to raise the necessary funding, and the appeal was broadened out to embrace a wider range of charitable trusts, individuals, and organizations, with which Lloyd George and his family were associated in some way. Even the Prince of Wales was invited to interest himself in the project. Almost £100,000 had been raised in total by this point, sufficient to cover the necessary preliminaries of the project, but substantial funding still needed to be raised.<sup>48</sup>

Public interest was stimulated at this point by the highly contentious decision of the Westminster City Council to block the planned erection, at a potential cost of some £400,000, of a statue to Nelson Mandela in Trafalgar Square; a decision which infuriated London Mayor Ken Livingstone, who claimed that the move was ‘radically insensitive and out of touch with the wishes of most Londoners. [...] I am appalled that an all-white committee sitting at Westminster can dismiss the idea of putting a great international statesman in this prominent place’.<sup>49</sup> But that very

<sup>45</sup> ‘Lord Howe to Lord Aberdare, 18 March 2002’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/3, (copy).

<sup>46</sup> ‘David Lloyd George Memorial – statement by the artist [April-May 2002]’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/3.

<sup>47</sup> ‘David Lewis Jones to Sir Idris Pearce, [April 2002]’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/3, (copy). See also the valuable article by Graham Stewart, ‘Differing fates of British leaders who forged reputations in war’, *The Times*, 27 March 2002, contrasting the long-term reputations of Lloyd George and Churchill.

<sup>48</sup> ‘E-mail from D. L. Jones to Philomena Davis, 10 April 2003’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/4, (copy).

<sup>49</sup> ‘Trafalgar Square plan for Mandela statue blocked by advisers’, *Evening Standard*, [April 2003].

same Westminster City Council Public Art Advisory Panel, of which none other than the formidable Philomena Davidson was a prominent and forthright member, was soon to give the green light to the advancement of the Lloyd George statue proposal, made by Lord Newby, in Parliament Square.<sup>50</sup> Proposals to fill the vacant, fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square were also being avidly discussed at this time, with a plan for Londoners to vote on the issue being devised by Ken Livingston, the Mayor of London, who had also given his blessing to the Lloyd George statue proposal.<sup>51</sup> But the way ahead was certainly not all plain-sailing. In September, the Westminster City Council give the thumbs down to a preliminary sketch of the proposed Lloyd George statue, a council spokesman asserting, ‘We’ve seen the design and it’s too modern. It doesn’t fit in with the other traditional statues.’<sup>52</sup> Organizers decided to appeal against the contentious and unfair decision.<sup>53</sup> At this point, just £17,679 remained in the bank, and very little improvement was witnessed during subsequent months.<sup>54</sup>

In response to the hard-lined attitude of the Westminster Council, Glynn Williams duly set about preparing ‘a new and more traditional design for the statue and plinth’, designing a small maquette for the committee members to examine. Most approved. Earl Lloyd-George ‘thought that the hat and the head were very good and that the sense of movement was excellent’, while Philomena Davidson hailed the revised attempt as ‘an ingenious compromise’ much more likely to prove acceptable. But finance remained the real stumbling-block, and would necessarily impact upon the date of the unveiling of the monument in due course. The year 2005 was considered ideal as it marked sixty years since the death of David Lloyd George in March 1945, while 2006 represented the centenary of his first assuming ministerial office under Asquith in 1906, an occasion which might well be marked by the issue of a special commemorative stamp by the Post Office.<sup>55</sup> In July yet another stalwart supporter was lost with the death, after a long illness, of campaign treasurer W. Emrys Evans at the age of eighty.<sup>56</sup>

In the autumn the Westminster City Council finally gave its approval to the revised design of the statue, and there was a sense of urgency to press ahead, with Lord Morris of Aberavon succeeding the recently deceased Lord Williams of

<sup>50</sup> ‘Londoner’s diary: statue intrigue’, *Evening Standard*, 25 May 2003.

<sup>51</sup> Gabriel Rozenberg, ‘Vote to decide who gets plinth’, *The Times*, 31 May 2003.

<sup>52</sup> *Daily Mail*, 27 August 2003.

<sup>53</sup> ‘Owen Lloyd-George to Lord Newby, 4 September 2003’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/4, (copy).

<sup>54</sup> ‘E-mail from D. L. Jones to Lord Newby, 31 October 2003’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/4; ‘E-mail from Jones to Lord Morris of Aberavon, 23 June 2004’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/4.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Lloyd George statue executive committee minutes, 24 March 2004’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/4.

<sup>56</sup> ‘D. L. Jones to Viscount Tenby, 19 July 2004’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/4, (copy). See the tribute in the *Western Mail*, 19 July 2004, and the full obituary in *The Times*, 13 August 2004.

Mostyn as chairman of the trustees.<sup>57</sup> With the necessity to raise some £250,000 still facing organizers, steps were taken to buoy up the appeal – strengthening both its executive committee and the fund-raising team, and choosing the foundry to be employed.<sup>58</sup> And public interest was maintained, too, by news of the death of Michael Rizello, the sculptor responsible for the design of the Lloyd George statue at Cathays Park, Cardiff, unveiled in 1960; a bronze copy of the head of which was later donated by the sculptor to be displayed in the Reform Club, where both Lloyd George himself and Rizello enjoyed membership.<sup>59</sup> Within weeks, Lloyd George (with 7.33 percent of the votes) had been chosen in third place behind Attlee (8.34 per cent) and Churchill (7.88 percent) in a popular ballot to choose the nation’s best Prime Minister.<sup>60</sup>

Then, in June 2005, the whole situation was totally transformed with the announcement that Stanley Thomas, a prominent Welsh businessman, had made a single donation of £200,000 to swell the campaign coffers: ‘I have been a lifelong admirer of Lloyd George. He was an inspirational and charismatic politician and made an enormous contribution as a great war-time leader.’<sup>61</sup> Thomas handed over the massive cheque to Lord Morris on the site in Parliament Square where the statue was to stand, the grateful recipient proclaiming, ‘This is an exceptional and magnificent gift and we are extremely grateful to Mr Thomas for his generosity. It is a huge boost towards our target of £323,000.’<sup>62</sup> A year later a formal contract was signed between the sculptor and the trustees, with a completion date of 31 May 2007 agreed upon. At that point the hope was expressed that the statue would be unveiled in June 2007.<sup>63</sup> The Earl Lloyd-George commented, ‘It is a pity we can’t have the unveiling on St David’s Day, but obviously the sculptor can’t be hurried.’ He was anxious to have a maquette of the statue for retention by members of the Lloyd George family.<sup>64</sup>

In due course, on 25 October 2007, the statue was unveiled by the Prince of Wales at Parliament Square. In a spectacularly gracious speech, which reached out to the large audience which had assembled, Prince Charles was at his most eloquent:

Though he never forgot his Welsh roots, it is as a national and international statesman that [Lloyd George] will best be remembered. Had he not died during the latter stages of the Second World War, I

<sup>57</sup> ‘Lord Morris to Lord Newby, 22 July 2004’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/4, (copy); ‘Lord Newby to Roger Pincham, 12 October 2004’, Lord Morris to Lord Newby, 22 July 2004, (copy).

<sup>58</sup> ‘Lord Newby to Lord Morris, 30 October 2004’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/5, (copy).

<sup>59</sup> *The Times*, 29 October 2004 for an obituary notice to Michael Rizello.

<sup>60</sup> *The Times*, 1 December 2004.

<sup>61</sup> BBC News website, 22 June 2005 [accessed 5 December 2018].

<sup>62</sup> ‘200,000 donation for Lloyd George statue’, Kendall’s press release, 22 June 2005.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Memorandum “David Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust”, 9 June 2006’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/6.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Earl Lloyd-George to D. L. Jones, 12 June 2006’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/6.

suspect that he would have had a statue somewhat earlier. However we must be grateful to John Grigg and Lord Cledwyn for having the initiative and vision to launch the campaign for this statue when they did. ... Even in the age of the Internet, we need reminders of our political and social heritage. This statue will ensure future generations who visit Parliament Square will be prompted to enquire about what Lloyd George achieved to merit his place here. It is not, however, enough simply to have any statue. To be true to its subject, it must surely capture the dynamism, charisma and sheer force of character which epitomized David Lloyd George. I hope that you will agree with me that Glynn Williams's design truly achieves this aim. It is now therefore the moment to let us all see this splendid new addition to Parliament Square which my wife and I take great pleasure in unveiling.<sup>65</sup>

It was intriguing to observe the Prince's point that the construction of the statue had been rather delayed because of the date of Lloyd George's death in March 1945, the very day the Allied forces had crossed the Rhine towards the end of the Second World War.<sup>66</sup> Intriguingly, another former Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, who had actually unveiled the memorial to Lloyd George in the Cathays Park, Cardiff in 1960, during his own term of office, and was a great admirer over many years, had made the same point when he wrote – in conscious emulation of a famous comment by Talleyrand on the death of Napoleon Bonaparte at Saint Helena in 1815 – that the passing of Lloyd George on 26 March 1945 was, given its timing in the grand scheme of things, 'merely a news item, not an event. [...] Only those who knew of his towering achievements realized that his death was akin to the crashing of great oak in the forest'.<sup>67</sup> But possibly there were other reasons, too, to account for the long delay in the achievement of this memorial to Lloyd George. David Lloyd George throughout his long political career had always been very much an outsider, with little or no respect for English mores and age-old traditions. He had loathed spending time at Balmoral when he was a cabinet minister – 'It reeks of Toryism', he protested vehemently. Nor did he see the necessity to make the journey to kiss hands with King George V at Buckingham Palace when he was dramatically appointed Minister of Munitions at the height of the Great War in June 1915 – 'Couldn't the King send a letter?', he asked rather pointedly. And he was also the first Prime Minister stubbornly to refuse to put in an appearance at the Derby – an age-old tradition in governmental circles.<sup>68</sup> Had all this past been forgotten even in the early years of the twenty-first century?

<sup>65</sup> *David Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust* (London, 2008), no pagination.

<sup>66</sup> Rufus Adams, 'The Unveiling of David Lloyd George's Statue in Parliament Square, London, 25 October 2007', *Transactions of the Caernarfonshire Historical Society*, 69 (2008), 105–6.

<sup>67</sup> Harold Macmillan, *The Past Masters: Politics and Politicians, 1906-39* (London: Macmillans, 1975), p. 78.

<sup>68</sup> Adams, 'The Unveiling of David Lloyd George's Statue', p. 105. See also Rufus Adams, 'The "Wizard" Unveiled: The Unveiling of David Lloyd George's Statue in Parliament Square, London, 25 October 2007', *Cambria*, 11.1 (May-June 2009), 33.

The unveiling ceremony, in spite of the thick drizzle which fell, was an auspicious, joyous occasion in the presence of the Prime Minister Gordon Brown and two former Prime Ministers, Baroness Thatcher and Sir John Major, together with the Conservative Party leader David Cameron. Acting Liberal Democrat leader Sir Vince Cable was also present, as was Chris Huhne, a long-standing Lloyd George fan. 'It's been a long time in the making, but it's there now', commented Professor Glynn Williams in his brief speech. Immediately after the unveiling, guests withdrew to the Central Methodist Hall nearby for a lavish champagne reception attended by the Prince of Wales, the Duchess of Cornwall, Baroness Thatcher, Sir John Major, and the Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor.<sup>69</sup>

The general view amongst the assembled throng at Parliament Square that late October day, when the good and the great forgot their political differences for a brief interlude, was that the talented Professor Glynn Williams had certainly succeed in capturing his subject's overwhelming drive and boundless energy. Particularly captivating was Lloyd George's outstretched left hand which, intriguingly, pointed towards the House of Commons, the scene of so many of his political triumphs over a long period, and the characteristic flowing Tyolean cape which he wore regularly during his later years at Churt. It was agreed that these features gave the statue life and energy. Another feature which attracted approval was the decision to make use of north Wales slate, instead of marble, for the plinth. This was also considered especially appropriate and timely.

But there were some grounds for disapproval too. Although the Royal Welsh bandsmen were present for the unveiling ceremony, not a single word of the Welsh language was uttered over the course of the unveiling ceremony. The Union Jack flew proudly, but there was no sign of the Welsh Dragon. In the media, the event was almost totally ignored. It was not mentioned on any of the news bulletins, not even on the BBC, and scarcely received even a passing mention in the national newspapers, with one striking exception. On the day of the unveiling, the *Daily Telegraph* referred to a communication which it had just received from the Nobel Prize winning playwright Harold Pinter and the well-known, left-wing journalist John Pilger who, claiming to represent 'outraged' anti-war campaigners in the country, condemned the unveiling of the statue as 'utterly disgraceful', given Lloyd George's colonial war record. They attacked the bombing by British war planes of the Middle East during Lloyd George's post-war premiership which, in their view, made 'today's celebration of Lloyd George's legacy highly topical and disgraceful'.<sup>70</sup> It was left to another Lloyd George biographer and enthusiast Kenneth O. Morgan to rush to his defence when he insisted that 'Lloyd George was a great radical and democrat who deserves to be remembered' in this way.<sup>71</sup> There was perhaps a strange aptness in the fact that, fully sixty years after his death, the Prime Minister who had courted much controversy during his lifetime should again become a controversial figure at the unveiling of his memorial.

<sup>69</sup> York Membery, 'A Statue for Lloyd George', *Journal of Liberal History*, 58 (Spring 2008), 34.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Alleyne, 'Pinter leads row over Lloyd George statue', *Daily Telegraph*, 26 October 2007.

<sup>71</sup> Cited in Membery, 'A Statue for Lloyd George', p. 34.

In keeping with their promise, the trustees of the appeal fund donated a cheque for £8,571 to the Friends of the Lloyd George Museum at Llanystumdwy the following summer. It was gratefully received, and the trust's bank account was closed.<sup>72</sup> A little later, on 12 August and in the presence of the sculptor Glynn Williams, a one-foot maquette of the statue was also entrusted to the safekeeping of the museum by Lord Morris of Aberavon on behalf of the Lloyd George statue trustees.<sup>73</sup>

### *Some reflections*

It is of considerable interest to reflect on the circumstances of the unveiling of the four public statues to Lloyd George between 1922 and 2007. When the Lloyd George statue at the Castle Square, Caernarfon, the work of Sir William Goscombe John, was unveiled by W. M. Hughes, himself a native of Llandudno, and the Prime Minister of Australia who had sat alongside Lloyd George in the Imperial War Cabinet during the Great War; David Lloyd George remained the Prime Minister of the post-war Coalition Government – with more than twenty years yet to live. Moreover, Caernarfon was one of the six towns which constituted his somewhat anomalous parliamentary division, the Carnarvon Boroughs, widely considered his personal fiefdom ever since 1890, and which had survived intact the far-reaching re-distribution of parliamentary constituencies in 1918.<sup>74</sup> Although his government, embroiled in an array of both domestic and foreign policy difficulties, was conspicuously running out of steam by this time, and ever likely to collapse in the near future, his position in north Wales, where he was still revered as ‘the man who won the war’ less than three years earlier, remained secure. His early biographers like Harold Spender in 1920 and E. T. Raymond in 1922 were generally supportive and sympathetic.<sup>75</sup>

The tribute of the *Western Mail*, although very much a Conservative paper, to the Prime Minister on this occasion was admirably fair, verging on the fulsome:

It is no blind hero-worship which accords to Mr Lloyd George so large a place in the eyes of his fellow Welshmen, for controversy regarding his policies has been as acute and bitter in Wales as in any

<sup>72</sup> ‘Lord Morris to Emrys Williams, 2 July 2008’, NLW, David Lewis Jones (Lloyd George Appeal) Papers file A/7, (copy).

<sup>73</sup> Hywel Trewyn, ‘Lloyd George comes home’, *Daily Post*, 13 August 2008.

<sup>74</sup> See the reports in the *Manchester Guardian*, 8 August 1921, p. 7; *Yr Herald Cymraeg*, 9 Awst 1921; *Liverpool Daily Post*, 8 August 1921; *North Wales Chronicle*, 12 August 1921; and the *Western Mail*, 8 August 1921, ‘Prime Minister’s column’ (editorial column). See also Emyr Price, *Lloyd George a’r Eisteddfod Genedlaethol a Phrifwyliau Bangor a Chaernarfon*, pp. 67–69. I shall examine this theme in J. Graham Jones, ‘Lloyd George, the 1921 National Eisteddfod and the Goscombe John statue’, *Transactions of the Caernarfonshire Historical Society*, (forthcoming).

<sup>75</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, ‘Lloyd George and the Historians’, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1971), 68.

other place, but the Prime Minister need have no hesitation in regarding the statue at Caernarvon as expressive of the admiration and devotion of the vast majority of the people of the Principality. Mr Lloyd George's position among the statesmen of the world is unique, and that uniqueness is the final and conclusive tribute to his personal power.

Surveying his unique, long period at the heart of government ever since the end of 1905, the columnist continued in rather exaggerated language,

And still there is no sign of staleness or weariness, no craving for rest. To all appearances he possess today the wonderful stamina, resiliency, resource and courage which have distinguished him throughout his Ministerial career: he is till "at the top of his form", and, for aught we know to the contrary, sighing, like Alexander [the Great], for more worlds to conquer. In the darkest days of the war he was as a burning and a shining light; he gave to his fellow countrymen an example of unflinching courage and inexhaustible zeal and endurance which infected the troops at the front as it did the population at home.<sup>76</sup>

Some intensely peace-loving folk tended to be critical of Lloyd George by this point, but overall the tenor of the 1921 National Eisteddfod and the avid public enthusiasm for the unveiling of the statue provided conclusive proof that he remained a popular hero with local people and in eisteddfodic circles. Indeed, even at that time, 'To very few men is accorded the distinction of a statue during their life-time'.<sup>77</sup>

David Lloyd George died at his north Wales home, Tŷ Newydd, Llanystumdwy, on 26 March 1945. Exactly ten years later, almost to the very day, the Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill, who was nearing the point of his own, necessarily enforced, retirement from office, had moved in the House of Commons that a memorial should be erected to his old ally within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster.<sup>78</sup> This was the earliest possible opportunity for the ailing premier to act in connection with securing a statue of Lloyd George, for the practice of the House of Commons prevented by a rule enacted in 1925 the consideration of erecting a memorial to any of its former members until a decade had elapsed since their death. Churchill's gesture in March 1955, considered highly personal in its origins, was at once warmly welcomed as a 'generous and touching' tribute, a clear indication of his 'profound admiration and affection for his leader' during the dark days of the Great War as a close colleague within Asquith's reforming governments in the early years of the century.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> 'Prime Minister's column [editorial column]', *Western Mail*, 8 August 1921.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> 'Lloyd George memorial in the Commons', *The Guardian*, 25 March 1955.

<sup>79</sup> *The Guardian*, 25 March 1955; *Daily Telegraph*, 29 July 1955.

On 8 July 1960, the Cardiff statue of Lloyd George, the product of a fund which had been in existence ever since 1955 under the control of the Western Mail and Echo Ltd and its chief proprietor Viscount Kelmsley, was unveiled by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. More than £6000, in sums large and small, had been donated to the fund by people from each of the political parties and from many of the Welsh local authorities who were empowered to administer funds which had come to hand under the terms of the Welsh Church Acts.

Given the mixed opinions among Welsh people at this time, almost four decades since the unveiling of the Caernarfon statue, concerning Lloyd George's highly contentious Welsh record and contribution to Welsh life and the history of Wales, there were inevitably numerous vocal critics ever prepared to speak out to denigrate the former prime minister and besmirch his record of activity. Lloyd George's popular reputation had plummeted by this time, in part as a result of the publication of influential quasi-biographies such as the volume penned by his long serving (and indeed long suffering) Principal Private Secretary A. J. Sylvester, *The Real Lloyd George* (Cassells, 1947), an incisive analysis from which Lloyd George emerged as little more than, in his later and twilight years, a soured, autocratic, and peevish old man. And in 1960 Lloyd George's elder son Richard, who had been disinherited by his father in his last will and testament fifteen years earlier, also brought out *Lloyd George* (Muller, 1960), a heavily jaundiced work which was venomously critical of his late father's personal life and political record alike. According to his son, Lloyd George seemed to be little more than an unfeeling, self-obsessed libertine.<sup>80</sup> One Cardiff resident spelled out with conviction the nub of the opposition to Lloyd George in Wales:

A statue of David Lloyd George is in course of erection in our capital. Apart from cutting the pillars of state privilege from under the Church of England in Wales, all he did for Wales as such was spend his holidays at Pwllheli. He cynically used a promise of self-government for Wales to keep his party in power at Westminster with Welsh votes – a typical professional politician's trick. Admittedly his party did much for all three countries in Britain by starting the Welfare State. Maybe this deserves recognition – in London or in his home town of Manchester. It seems typical of the Anglophile set who run things in Wales to seize on this Manchester born's somewhat dubious Welsh connections and acclaim a Welsh hero simply because he served England well.

<sup>80</sup> Morgan, 'Lloyd George and the Historians', p. 71. In 1947, Richard Lloyd-George had also penned an idolatrous, biased biography of his mother, whose memory he was so anxious to uphold, under the title *Dame Margaret* (Allen and Unwin).

<sup>81</sup> 'Letters to the editor – Welsh hero', *Western Mail*, 20 June 1960.

MICHAEL TUCKER, Cardiff<sup>81</sup>

Other enemies of Lloyd George, ever anxious to denigrate his record and good name, readily joined in this barrage of criticism: 'It is a matter of regret that a statue of this pompous and autocratic Mancunian should be erected in the capital city of Wales.'<sup>82</sup> Others, predictably more admiring fans, rushed to defend Lloyd George:

I suppose in a democracy we must suffer the little minded and allow them to let off steam by throwing brickbats at the leaders of society. They see no good in anyone; they are all out to find the bad. [...] To denigrate the greatest Welshman of the twentieth century because he was born in Manchester or because, like all Welshmen, he had a bit of a temper is so stupidly silly. [...]

Eddie Williams, Weston Super Mare.<sup>83</sup>

Harold Macmillan, in an impressively eloquent peroration delivered during the unveiling ceremony, pointed up the fact that David Lloyd George was the only Welshman ever to become Prime Minister of the United Kingdom – a fact which remains true to this very day: 'For that reason alone it would be appropriate to have this statue of him here in Cardiff. But he was also a man of rare genius who brought to our political life and to the affairs of this great nation of ours all the imaginative and intuitive qualities of his race.' He proceeded to underline Lloyd George's undoubted qualities of pre-eminent courage and audacity, 'He was a controversial figure to be revered and venerated on the one hand and feared and vilified on the other. But he was by common consent in the first rank among statesmen. No one who heard him speak could ever forget the experience.' Warming to his theme with great gusto, the Prime Minister described Lloyd George's outstanding oratorical powers and declared that he was at his best,

[...] when the odds were heaviest. [...] Perhaps the governing passion in the life of Earl Lloyd-George was a belief in the rights of the individual and the love of small nations. When he was defending his ideals he was prepared to do so alone if necessary. He stood out against the Boer War, and it was at this point that he achieved national fame for the first time. The people of Britain dearly love a fighter. The history of David Lloyd George's public life was certainly a stormy one.

Moving on to consider Lloyd George's period as a premier from 1916, Macmillan declared that his 'leadership' at this crucial time 'gave him an authority equalled

<sup>82</sup> *Western Mail*, 28 June 1960.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

by Chatham and Pitt before him and Churchill after him'. The next theme was his championship of health and unemployment insurance, which laid the foundations of the welfare state developed and extended considerably between 1945 and 1951: 'It is largely due to him that we now have the finest social service system in the world.'<sup>84</sup> The unveiling ceremony and its aftermath were certainly reported fully and very admiringly in both the London and the Cardiff press where the tone adopted was wholly reverential and respectful. And it was proudly pointed out that some 20,000 visitors attended the Lloyd George Museum at Llanystumdwy, an institution well-nigh unique in the United Kingdom, each summer, and as many as 100,000 paid reverential homage at his nearby grave on the banks of the River Dwyfor each year. And there was (ultimately abortive) talk of establishing an agricultural college dedicated to his memory in the same locality.<sup>85</sup> The unveiling of the Cardiff statue of David Lloyd George in 1960, eventually to be the second of four such public memorials, marked an important stage in his rehabilitation, especially within his homeland where his political record was often denigrated at this time. An editorial column in the *Western Mail* admirably summed up the popular mood and prevailing sentiment at this important juncture:

It is clear [...] from correspondence in the *Western Mail* that there still a tiny handful of bigots who sneer at him for not being truly 'Welsh'. Members of this same narrow clique seem all to labour under the delusion that each one of them is the last surviving Welshman. It remains, however, a matter of historical fact that not only served Britain with radical zeal but also served with equal enthusiasm the cause of Welsh nationalism and Welsh Nonconformity. History will rank him as one of Wales's greatest sons.<sup>86</sup>

The Cardiff unveiling in the summer of 1960 also appears to have given a powerful fillip to the campaign for the securing of a further memorial to Lloyd George within the Palace of Westminster. And this statue, the work of the distinguished sculptor Uli Nimptsyh, was eventually unveiled in due course by another Conservative Prime Minister Sir Alec Douglas-Home on 18 December 1963. There was a general feeling at this time that the completed statue 'ha[d] been an unconscionable time growing. It is eight years since Sir Winston moved that the monument should be erected at public expense'.<sup>87</sup> Again not all commentators were favourably impressed by the completed statue:

<sup>84</sup> Cited in *The Times*, 9 July 1960.

<sup>85</sup> *The Times*, 1 June 1959.

<sup>86</sup> *Western Mail*, 8 July 1960.

<sup>87</sup> 'Golden calf', *Daily Telegraph*, 15 December 1963.

Mr Nimptsvh's statue of the late Earl Lloyd-George, unveiled yesterday by the Prime Minister, gives an impression which neither the admirers nor the opponents of the great little Welsh wizard – and often these categories combine – have readily recognized. It has an air of petulance. 'Shut up', it seems to say, 'I'm talking'. The frown on the forehead, the piercing stare, convey the statesman dealing with great issues at a time of crisis, but wholly ignore the impishness, the slightly gnomish twinkle which were so intimate a part of Lloyd George's genius. And what is that forefinger doing? Emphasising a point or summoning the charmed birds from the trees? [...] No one should grudge Lloyd George his place in the Members' Lobby, for his greatness is undeniable. But he was not statuesque and it must be hoped that future statues of the great man will be themselves greater.<sup>88</sup>

The over-harsh criticism, probably rather unjust, predictably provoked an immediate response from Sir Geoffrey Nicholson, the Conservative MP for the Farnham division: 'Sir, – I am sorry that you take such a dim view of the Lloyd George statue which has just been erected in the Members' Lobby in the House of Commons. [...] I think your readers may like to know that the general opinion among MPs is favourable and that members as a whole believe not only that the statue will worthily commemorate one of the two greatest war leaders, but that it will adorn and embellish the Members' Lobby. Mr Nimptsh, the sculptor, is probably the most distinguished artist in that line working in this country to-day, and I hope that this great work of his will not be condemned lightly.'<sup>89</sup> The unveiling of the 1963 statue received but little attention in Wales. Then, on 27 July 1970, a memorial stone to Lloyd George was unveiled at Westminster Abbey.<sup>90</sup>

Through the years thereafter Lloyd George was kept in the forefront of the popular imagination with the publication of a number of scholarly biographies by John Grigg, Bentley B. Gilbert, and Peter Rowland. In the new millennium, further cutting-edge research was underway, which would lead in due course to the publication of substantial, impressive tomes by, among others, John Campbell, Richard Toye, Ffion Hague, Rpy Hattersley, and Travis Crosby. Several television series, including one scripted and presented by the Welsh-born, BBC newsreader Huw Edwards, and a number of individual documentary programmes, helped to perpetuate a renewed awareness of the life and much keenly debated contribution of Lloyd George. A poll of historians conducted on the eve of the millennium, 31 December 1999, placed David Lloyd George as second only to Winston Churchill as the greatest twentieth-century prime minister. In 2001, a new bust of Lloyd George was enthusiastically unveiled in the smoking room of the Reform Club,

<sup>88</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 19 December 1963.

<sup>89</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1963.

<sup>90</sup> 'Frances, the Dowager Countess Lloyd-George of Dwyfor to Jennifer Longford, 28 July 1970', NLW, Frances Stevenson Family Papers file FCF1/2.

which he had once patronized. Lloyd George's reputation had certainly been dramatically rehabilitated both among professional historians and the British public at large, and his long-lost heroic status as one of the foremost makers of the modern world was somewhat re-captured. It was against this background that, as chronicled above, the resources were gradually built up to finance the 2007 statue in Parliament Square.

The sharply conflicting attitudes towards David Lloyd George, his highly contentious record and contribution, both as the founder of the welfare state and as a war leader, continued to rankle throughout the years and, as noted above, to some extent re-surfaced in the wake of the unveiling of the 2007 statue in Parliament Square. Many politicians and public figures of the 2007 era clearly revered the progressive Lloyd George – the politician who secured so many domestic achievements (including his role, as Chancellor of the Exchequer under Asquith, in introducing Old Age Pensions in 1908 and other benefits a little later), and who had in due time evoked warm tributes from the Labour Prime Ministers Harold Wilson and James Callaghan. This was the age of New Labour, after all, a time of significant discussion of, and support for, the welfare state, when Tony Blair's third Labour administration was in power. However, it is interesting to learn that there were critics who questioned whether it was appropriate at such a crucial, frenzied time, when the attitudes of Prime Minister Blair and American President George W. Bush to the Iraq War were being increasingly questioned and under fire, for a statute to be thrown up in honour of a politician so closely associated with an imperial war. (Hence, no doubt, Tony Blair's prickly decision to refuse to contribute to the campaign fund, which was struggling to reach its target at the very time when his own reputation was being publicly besmirched by his support for the Iraq war.) Years earlier, on 5 July 1995, Tony Blair, as a novice New Labour leader, before his election as Prime Minister, had paid fulsome tribute to Lloyd George as a pioneering social reformer and perpetuator of the British progressive tradition. But times had certainly changed by 2007. A rather different Lloyd George emerges here – a much more controversial and contentious figure, whose record and contribution, especially in the field of foreign affairs, gave rise to the mixed reactions recorded above, and which continue to the present and will doubtless preoccupy the future too.