

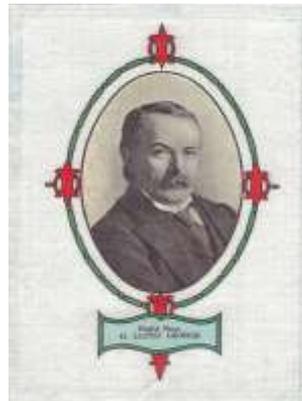
## Chapter 11: Final Scenes

Joe's death was not the only tragedy to affect the Parkin family in 1918. On 19 November 1918, "Mr John Smith died".<sup>1</sup> On 30 December 1918, Mr W Smith committed suicide by cutting his throat. The next day, Cyril Smith came to live with John. John had a younger brother called Cyril and his father was called William. So, I had assumed that it was John's father who had committed suicide and, as a result, Cyril had gone to live with John and Olive.<sup>2</sup> But, it may not be the case that the person who died was John's father as, in the twenties, there was a William Smith living with John and Olive and I wondered if this would have been John's father. In addition, I presume his death would have been registered in Q1 1919 and there was no William Smith who died that quarter in Basford. There were two Walter Smiths though and one of these was buried on 1 January 1919. He was 55 years old, described as a banksman and he died in Morley Street in Kirkby in Ashfield.

Grandad always had an interest in politics although he did not speak particularly openly about his affiliations. What he was clear about, and this is something that was transmitted to me through my parents, was the democratic responsibility to vote. On 14 December 1918, he noted that there was a parliamentary election. He noted the results for each candidate as Sir Charles Seeley<sup>3</sup>, Lib 4,500; Geo H Spencer, Lab 11,000; and Capt H H Whaites<sup>4</sup>, Coalition 4,000.

From [other sources](#), it is clear that governing coalition led by Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, sent letters of endorsement to candidates who supported the coalition government. These were known as "coalition coupons" and this became the "coupon election". Coalition candidates won a total of 523 seats. Labour won 57 seats and non-coalition Liberals only 36. It was the first general election held on a single day and it was also the first general election in which women were able to stand as candidates and in which all men over 21 and all women over 30 could vote. It was also noted for dramatic results in Ireland with Sinn Fein winning 73 seats and the Irish Parliamentary Party only seven. The result of this was that a breakaway government was formed which declared Irish independence. This led to the Irish War of Independence and this was the last UK general election to cover the entire island of Ireland.

In grandad's constituency of [Broxtowe](#)<sup>5</sup>, Labour's candidate, [George Spencer](#), [won handsomely](#) with 11,159 votes. The Liberal candidate, Sir Charles Seely came second with 4,681 votes with the National Democratic (coalition) candidate, Herbert Whaite, third with 4,374 votes. George Spencer won three further election victories and continued to represent the constituency until 1929. Although Sir Charles Seely had previously been a Member of Parliament, he did not stand again for Parliament after this defeat.



*Top – silk card of David Lloyd George  
Above – 1946 picture postcard of  
Llanystumdwy the boyhood home of  
David Lloyd George*

<sup>1</sup> It is pretty tricky trying to pin down how two John Smith's relate to each other as the name is so common!

<sup>2</sup> If this Cyril was John's brother, he would have been 23 at this point.

<sup>3</sup> A misspelling of Seely.

<sup>4</sup> A misspelling of Whaite.

<sup>5</sup> Represented since 2019 by Darren Henry.



THE VOTER'S NIGHTMARE.

Above - 1918 Punch cartoon which shows the choices facing voters in the general election of that year  
Overleaf - 1918 article in The Sphere about the 1918 general election

# THE GENERAL ELECTION : Some Prominent Men in the Political World.



The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour

Mr. Balfour has been Conservative Secretary for the King of London to Parliament since 1905. He was Prime Minister from 1905 to 1906 and again from 1917 to 1919. He was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1919 to 1921.



Earl Curzon of Kedleston

Member of the House of Lords since 1903. Lord Curzon was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1919 to 1921. He was also Secretary of State for India from 1905 to 1909.



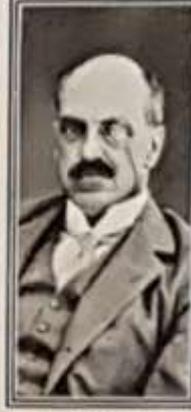
The Right Hon. Walter Long

Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1912 to 1915. He was also Secretary of State for India from 1905 to 1909. He was a member of the House of Commons from 1885 to 1912.



The Right Hon. Winston Churchill

Member of Parliament. He was Secretary of State for War from 1915 to 1918. He was also Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1905 to 1909.



The Right Hon. E. S. Montagu, P.C.

Secretary of State for India. He was also Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1905 to 1909. He was a member of the House of Commons from 1885 to 1912.

## THE AFTERWAR ELECTION—SOME OF ITS EXCEPTIONAL FEATURES

The General Election, which, after a protracted discussion was finally decided upon by the existing Government, is to be held to-day (Thursday). The date of this election is as follows:—  
Nominations: Wednesday, December 4  
Polling: Saturday, December 14  
Counting of Votes: December 15  
New Parliament to meet: January 21

The seat of the nation stood in a lull. ...  
...  
Special arrangements were made with regard to the election in order that soldiers, sailors, prisoners of war, and men on leave might be able to vote.



The Right Hon. A. Bonar Law

Chairman of the Executive and Leader of the House of Commons from 1911. From 1912 to 1915 he was Leader of the Opposition, and in the interim he was Secretary of State for the Colonies under Mr. Asquith's Ministry. He is a member of the War Cabinet and a Privy Councillor.

## FROM THE JOINT MANIFESTO OF MR. LEYD GEORGE AND MR. BONAR LAW

The principal reason of every Government is, and must be, the welfare of the great mass of the people who live by honest toil. The essential spirit of any nation, displayed in all the noblest acts of action approved by the will of the nation, is the sense, in the act, of duty, honor, and loyalty, but not of selfishness, such as the least and commonest of the nation. One of the first tasks of the Government will be to deal on broad and comprehensive lines with the welfare of the people which during the war has fallen in many ways, and upon which the well-being of the nation so largely depends.



The Right Hon. H. G. Asquith, P.C.

Mr. Asquith became Prime Minister in 1905. From 1905 to 1908 he was Chairman of the Privy Council and then the office of Prime Minister. He was succeeded by Mr. Lloyd George.



The Right Hon. Sir Albert Stanley

President of the Board of Trade. He has been Chairman of the Railway Commission since 1915, and was Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1912 to 1915.



The Right Hon. H. A. Fisher

President of the Board of Education. He was Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1912 to 1915. He was a member of the House of Commons from 1885 to 1912.



The Right Hon. Christopher Addison, M.P., P.C.

Minister in Charge of Pensions, and Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1912 to 1915. He was a member of the House of Commons from 1885 to 1912.



The Right Hon. G. B. Barnett, P.C.

He is the Liberal member for the Blackburn Division. He was Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1912 to 1915. He was a member of the House of Commons from 1885 to 1912.