

Public Opinion Background Note 96  
(produced 14th July 1985)

1. Introduction

The interviewing for our latest Gallup 'tracking' study was conducted from 3rd to 8th July - largely after the Brecon and Radnor by-election. The survey found 36½% claiming they would vote Conservative, 31% for one of the so-called 'Alliance' parties and 30½% Labour. 'Alliance' support is still lower than the peak level of 33½% reached in May and June.

It is too early to attempt to draw any conclusions with regard to the post-Brecon trend of support for the main parties.

Full details of the trend of support for the main parties since January 1985 showing voting intentions when those respondents not giving details of voting intention are excluded and when they were included as a separate group are shown in the tables in section 2 below:

2. Voting Intention

(a) Voting Intention (excluding don't knows) - all figures are percentages

	Con	Lab	Lib	SDP	Others	Con lead Over Labour	SDP & Liberal	Con lead over Allian Liberal & S
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1985</u>								
3-8 Jan	35.0	35.0	11.0	17.0	2.0	0.0	28.0	+7.0
9-14 Jan	39.0	33.0	9.5	16.0	2.5	+6.0	25.5	+13.5*
16-21 Jan	39.0	34.0	10.0	16.0	1.0	+5.0	26.0	+13.0
23-28 Jan	36.0	32.0	11.0	20.0	1.0	+4.0	31.0	+5.0
30 Jan-4 Feb	34.0	37.0	10.0	17.5	1.5	-3.0	27.5	+6.5
6-11 Feb	35.0	32.0	10.5	21.0	1.5	+3.0	31.5	+3.5*
13-18 Feb	38.0	33.0	10.0	16.5	2.5	+5.0	26.5	+11.5
20-25 Feb	33.5	38.0	10.0	17.0	1.5	-4.5	27.0	+6.5
27 Feb-4 March	35.0	35.0	10.0	18.0	2.0	0.0	28.0	+7.0
6-11 March	37.0	34.0	10.5	17.0	1.5	+3.0	27.5	+10.5
13-18 March	35.0	34.0	12.0	16.0	3.0	+1.0	28.0	+7.0
21-25 March	33.0	39.5	10.0	16.0	1.5	-6.5	26.0	+6.0
27 March - 1 April	38.0	33.0	13.0	15.0	1.0	+5.0	28.0	+10.0
3 - 9 April	37.0	40.0	7.5	13.5	2.0	-3.0	21.0	+16.0
10 - 15 April	36.5	35.5	13.0	13.0	2.0	+1.0	26.0	+11.5
17-22 April	34.0	37.5	12.0	14.0	2.0	-3.5	26.5	+7.5*
24-29 April	33.5	38.0	10.0	16.5	2.0	-4.5	26.5	+7.0
1 - 6 May	31.5	36.0	11.5	18.5	2.5	-4.5	30.0	+1.5
6-13 May	30.5	34.0	11.5	22.0	2.0	-3.5	33.5	-3.0*
15-20 May	31.0	36.5	10.0	21.0	1.5	-5.5	31.0	0.0
23-28 May	29.0	35.0	12.0	21.0	3.0	-6.0	33.0	-4.0
29 May - 3 June	31.0	37.0	13.0	17.0	2.0	-6.0	30.0	+1.0
5-10 June	28.0	36.0	12.0	21.5	2.5	-8.0	33.5	-5.5
12-17 June	34.5	34.5	12.0	18.0	1.0	0.0	30.0	+4.5*
19-24 June	31.0	35.0	13.0	19.0	2.0	-4.0	32.0	-1.0
26 June-1 July	35.0	34.0	12.0	17.0	2.0	+1.0	29.0	+6.0
3-8 July	30.5	36.5	12.0	19.0	2.0	-6.0	31.0	+0.5
<b>10-15 July</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>38.0</b>				<b>-10.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	/.....



(b) Voting Intention (including don't knows)

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>SDP</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Conservative lead over Labour</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1985</u>							
3-8 Jan	33.0	32.0	10.0	16.0	2.0	7.0	+1.0
9-14 Jan	36.0	30.0	9.0	15.0	3.0	8.0	+6.0
16-21 Jan	35.0	31.0	9.0	14.0	1.0	9.0	+4.0
23-28 Jan	33.0	29.0	10.0	18.0	1.0	8.0	+4.0
30 Jan - 4 Feb	31.0	33.0	9.0	16.0	1.0	11.0	-2.0
6-11 Feb	32.0	29.0	9.0	19.0	1.0	9.0	+3.0
13-18 Feb	35.0	30.0	9.0	15.0	2.0	8.0	+5.0
20-25 Feb	31.0	35.0	9.0	15.0	1.0	9.0	-4.0
27 Feb-4 March	32.0	32.0	9.0	16.0	2.0	9.0	0.0
6 - 11 March	34.0	31.0	10.0	15.0	1.0	9.0	+3.0
13-18 March	33.0	32.0	11.0	15.0	3.0	7.0	+1.0
21-25 March	30.0	36.0	9.0	14.0	2.0	8.0	-6.0
27 March-1 April	35.0	30.0	13.0	12.0	1.0	8.0	+5.0
3 - 9 April	34.0	37.0	7.0	12.0	2.0	8.0	-3.0
10 - 15 April	33.0	32.0	12.0	12.0	3.0	9.0	+1.0
17-22 April	31.0	34.0	12.0	13.0	2.0	9.0	-3.0
24-29 April	31.0	35.0	9.0	15.0	2.0	8.0	-4.0
1 - 6 May	29.0	33.0	11.0	17.0	2.0	9.0	-4.0
6-13 May	28.0	31.0	11.0	20.0	2.0	8.0	-3.0
15-20 May	28.0	34.0	9.0	19.0	2.0	8.0	-6.0
23-28 May	27.0	33.0	12.0	19.0	2.0	7.0	-6.0
29 May-3rd June	28.0	33.0	11.0	15.0	2.0	11.0	-5.0
5 - 10 June	26.0	33.0	11.0	20.0	2.0	8.0	-7.0
12 - 17 June	32.0	32.0	11.0	17.0	1.0	7.0	0.0
19-24 June	29.0	32.0	12.0	17.0	3.0	7.0	-3.0
26 June-1 July	32.0	31.0	11.0	16.0	1.0	8.0	+1.0
3-8 July	28.0	33.0	11.0	17.0	1.0	9.0	-5.0

3. Government Record

Gallup found almost no change in the popularity of the government - with 29% claiming to approve of our record to date, 58% to disapprove and 12% with no view. Full details are shown in the table below:

<u>1985</u>	<u>GOVERNMENT RECORD</u>		
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
3-8 Jan (%)	32	53	14
9-14 Jan (%)	33	54	13
16-21 Jan (%)	35	48	16
23-28 Jan (%)	33	54	12
30 Jan - 4 Feb (%)	29	59	12
6-11 Feb (%)	31	55	13
13-18 Feb (%)	33	55	12
20-25 Feb (%)	29	58	13
27 Feb-4 March (%)	34	53	13
6 - 11 March (%)	32	55	13
13-18 March (%)	31	56	13
21-25 March (%)	30	58	12
27 March - 1 April (%)	34	55	11
3 - 9 April (%)	32	57	11
10 -15 April (%)	32	54	14
17-22 April (%)	32	57	11

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	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
24-29 April (%)	31	55	14
1 - 6 May (%)	31	56	13
6-13 May (%)	28	58	14
15-20 May (%)	27	60	13
23-28 May (%)	28	60	12
29 May-3 June (%)	27	59	14
5 - 10 June (%)	26	61	13
12-17 June (%)	31	59	9
19-24 June (%)	28	60	12
26 June-1 July (%)	30	57	12
3-8 July (%)	29	58	12

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Gallup found a fall in Mrs Thatcher's popularity in the latest study - however it remains above the low point reached in mid May. Mr Kinnock's popularity remained unchanged, Mr Steel's popularity improved slightly and Dr Owen's fell slightly. Details are shown in the table below:

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr. Kinnock</u>		<u>Don't Know</u>
	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	
1985						
3-8 Jan (%)	39	57	5	33	48	19
9-14 Jan (%)	40	54	6	36	49	15
16-21 Jan (%)	43	51	6	31	51	18
23-28 Jan (%)	40	56	5	33	52	15
30 Jan to 4 Feb (%)	38	56	6	36	49	15
6-11 Feb (%)	37	57	6	31	54	15
13-18 Feb (%)	40	55	5	31	57	12
20-25 Feb (%)	38	58	4	34	52	14
27 Feb-4 March (%)	40	54	5	31	53	16
6 - 11 March (%)	41	55	4	34	51	15
13-18 March (%)	40	55	5	32	52	16
21-25 March (%)	37	58	5	37	47	6
27 March - 1 April (%)	39	56	5	33	50	16
3-9 April (%)	37	59	4	43	44	13
10-15 April (%)	38	57	6	35	47	18
17-22 April (%)	38	57	5	36	48	16
24-29 April (%)	37	57	6	35	48	16
1 - 6 May (%)	37	58	5	36	49	16
6 - 13 May (%)	36	59	5	38	45	17
15-20 May (%)	32	63	5	36	47	18
23-28 May (%)	35	60	5	35	49	16
29 May-3 June (%)	34	61	5	34	50	16
5 - 10 June (%)	34	61	6	33	49	17
12-17 June (%)	38	56	8	37	51	12
19-24 June (%)	36	59	5	34	51	15
26 June-1 July (%)	40	56	5	37	46	17
3-8 July (%)	36	58	6	37	48	16

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	<u>Mr Steel</u>		<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Dr Owen</u>		<u>Don't Know</u>
	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>		<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1985						
3-8 Jan (%)	56	24	20	50	25	25
9-14 Jan (%)	57	26	17	52	27	21
16-21 Jan (%)	60	24	16	52	22	26
23-28 Jan (%)	57	25	18	55	21	24
30 Jan - 4 Feb (%)	55	28	18	51	25	23
6-11 Feb (%)	57	24	18	55	21	24
13-18 Feb (%)	59	24	17	57	24	20
20-25 Feb (%)	61	23	16	57	22	21
27 Feb-4 March (%)	57	25	19	52	23	25
6 - 11 March (%)	56	27	17	52	25	23
13-18 March (%)	57	27	17	53	23	24
21-25 March (%)	60	23	17	53	21	25
27 March-1 April (%)	64	21	15	54	24	22
3 - 9 April (%)	58	25	17	52	26	22
10-15 April (%)	58	24	18	49	26	25
17-22 April (%)	60	24	17	52	26	22
24-29 April (%)	60	22	18	51	24	25
1 - 6 May (%)	65	20	15	54	22	24
6 - 13 May (%)	64	19	16	56	21	23
15-20 May (%)	60	24	16	51	23	25
23-28 May (%)	65	20	15	52	26	21
29 May-3 June (%)	61	22	17	49	27	24
5 - 10 June (%)	62	22	16	53	25	22
12-17 June (%)	63	22	15	56	23	21
19-24 June (%)	63	21	16	51	25	23
26-June-1 July (%)	62	20	18	52	24	25
3-8 July (%)	64	20	16	50	25	25

### 5. Published Polls

The Daily Telegraph on 11th July 1985 included details of a post-election survey conducted in Brecon and Radnor between 6th and 9th July. The study found one in five of the electors claiming they made up their minds about how to vote in the last few days of the by-election campaign.

This proportion, 16 per cent of the electorate, compares with the 1½ per cent by which the Alliance won the election.

One in two of the people who decided in the last few days voted for the Liberal candidate.

The following table shows when voters for the three main parties finally made up their minds on who to support.

	<u>All voters</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
A long time ago	74	88	82	57
Two or three weeks ago	13	3	8	25
Last few days	12	8	9	18
Can't recall	1	1	0	0



If one looks at the share of votes among the people making up their minds in the last few days the following pattern emerges:

	All voters	Last few days
Alliance	28	53
Labour	27	26
Conservative	22	18
Other	2	3

Gallup also asked its sample to cast their minds back to about four weeks ago and to say what their voting intention was then. These replies are shown below as percentages of the electorate, together with the votes on the day:

	Polling Day	4 weeks ago
Not voting	21	20
Voting:		
Alliance	28	27
Labour	27	27
Conservative	22	18
Other	2	3

The table suggests that there was little movement apart from the late deciders already mentioned. In fact it conceals a significant degree of switching over the four weeks with one in five electors voting other than they had originally intended.

Much of the movement had a cancelling out effect but the following table shows the various shifts that took place:

Polling day:	Con	Lab	Alliance	Other	Non Voting
Con	80	1	3	0	4
Lab	1	84	6	5	8
Alliance	9	2	80	17	10
Other	0	1	0	56	2
Did not vote	10	12	10	22	75