



Green Party
South-West Area
Newsletter

June

1989

County Election Fallout

"For the first time Greens are a major force....."

Bristol Evening Post

"The single talking point was the emergence of the Greens as a real political force Exeter and county-wide".

Exeter Express and Echo

Hang on. Can this be us they're talking about? Bumbling old Green Party that we know and love - a major political force? No, there's no escape. As the truth emerged on the evening of May 4th, it became clear that it wasn't just a few isolated good results - we had a genuine Green surge, a real political sea-change on our hands. The red roses had greenfly, and the salad days were over.

Nationally: A mean of 8.7% in the record number of county divisions fought. We beat Labour in 14% of them, the SLD in 35%, and the SDP in 61% of the divisions where we fought them.

By the time you read this rushed newsletter we should be getting an idea of our support in the Euro-elections, and there should be no doubt in anyone's mind - especially the old grey media boys who delight in gripping us off - that we've arrived. A quote from the Mail on Sunday "Newsnight will just have to get a bigger table"

Avon

Probably the most outstanding results came from here. Take Bristol West Parliamentary constituency, where all divisions were fought with a mean of 14.4%. Watch out green Willie....

Remarkable results from Clifton (19.2%) beating SLD and Labour, and Ashley (19.7%) beating Tory and SLD. In Bath Gavin Withers got 23% (2/4), and best of all in Woodspring Tom Leimdorfer got 1253 votes, 27%, ousting the SLD from second place.

Geoff Collard writes:

The final tally was that Greens stood in 62 wards out of a total of 76 in Avon, and the press coverage we got only confirms what we've always believed: the more candidates you stand (even if they're 'paper' candidates) the more seriously you're taken. The Bristol Evening Post described us as a 'major force in county politics' - and

that was before election day and our good results. It was purely on the basis of numbers of candidates. And of course this must have a knock-on effect in the mind of the general public, encouraging them to take us seriously on polling day.

For me, even more amazing than Tom Leimdorfer's result was Alastair Sawday's result in Clifton, where he also came second to the Tories in a ward where we've always been last and the Libs/Alliance have always been strong challengers. Rob Lindsay came second behind Labour in Ashley - again, a result we couldn't have predicted. It of course must be said, though, that they all put in a fair amount of hard work - but it pays off as Gavin Withers' 23% in Bath South-East proved.

Wansdyke is a local party younger than most, yet they managed to stand 4 candidates out of a maximum of 6 - a great effort, even the more so since they came third in three out of those four seats, beating the Democrats in two and Labour in one.

Well done everyone, and let's hope our Euro results are as good!

Full Results (Total 24250, 7.5% of all votes) with apologies for errors

Bath (mean 11.68%, cf 1988 mean 6.23%)

Pete Hardman : 8.0 %, 3/4, bt SLD

Chris Drake : 11.6 %, 4/4

Duncan McCanlis : 8.4 %, 4/4

Colin French : 7.6 %, 4/4

Gavin Withers : 22.4 %, 2/4, bt Lab(9.2%) & SLD(16.3%)

Tim Morgan : 8.9 %, 4/4

Jill Hiron : 4.9 %, 4/4

Bristol East

Graham Davy : 4.6 %, 5/5

Andy Moore : 5.4 %, 4/4

Christine Glover : 7.7 %, 4/4 (just 3 votes behind SLD)

Martin Turnbull : 2.7 %, 4/4

John Forth : 5.9 %, 3/5, bt SLD & Comm.

Sue Ball : 3.5 %, 4/4

Bristol NW

Lucinda Hersey : 6 %, 3/3

Amanda Pitt : 4 %, 4/4

Gundula Dorey : 4.4 %, 4/4

Bill Fishlock : 4.7 %, 4/4

Emma Bullard : 9.1 %, 3/3

Peter Scott : 3.7 %, 4/4

David Watson : 8.2 %, 4/4

Bristol S (mean 5.4%)

Roger Martin : 5.2 %, 4/4

Hazel Armstrong : 3.2 %, 5/5

Martin Pitt : 2.8 %, 4/4

Dorothy Tayler : 5 %, 4/4

Ian Davis : 5.5 %, 4/4

Robert Postlethwaite : 7.1 %, 4/4

Renda Hussain : 3.8 %, 4/4

Glen Vowles : 10.7 %, 3/5, bt SLD & Comm.

Kingswood

Ray Thomas : 6.9 %, 3/4, bt SLD

Christine Stones : 4.7 %, 5/5 (162 votes to SLD-165, SDP-168 !)

Leonard Jeffreys : 4.9 %, 4/4

Cameron Adams : 3.7 %, 4/4

Sharon Davis : 6.1 %, 4/4

Bristol West (mean 14.4 % , all divisions contested)

Ashley - Robert Lindsay : 19.7 % , 2/4 , bt Con (15.3%) , SLD(9.3%)

Bishopston - Justin Qinnell : 8.5 % , 4/4

Cabot - Alan Clarke : 14.4 % , 4/4

Clifton - Alastair Sawday : 19.1 % , 2/5 , bt Lab(18%) , SLD(17.5%) , SDP(2.7%)

Cotham - Geoff Collard : 18.6 % , 3/4 , bt SLD (14.1%)

Henleaze - Steve Hall : 10.1 % , 4/5 , bt SDP (4.7%)

Redland - Celia Leegwater : 14.5 % , 3/4 , bt SLD (14.1%)

Stoke Bishop - Candia Gillett : 10.7 % , 4/4

Northavon (mean 6.78 %)

Jeremy Thorp : 5 % , 4/4

Alan Pinder : 7.7 % , 4/4

Betty Iles : 6.4 % , 4/4

Judy Thomas : 8 % , 4/4

Wansdyke (mean 9.3%)

Bathavon - Diana Francis : 12.1 % , 3/4 , bt Lab (9.5%)

Chew Valley - Claudia Rowse : 8.9 % , 4/4

Midsomer Norton - Helen Jones : 7 % , 3/4 , bt SLD (6.2%)

Radstock - Mike Boulton : 9.2 % , 3/4 , bt SLD(6.8%)

Woodspring (mean 14.25%)

Clevedon - Brian Chislett : 18 % , 2/3 , bt Lab(10.1%)

Combe - Colin Timberlake : 13.8 % , 3/4 , bt SLD(10.6%)

Gordano - Paul Glendell : 11.5 % , 4/4

Nailsea - Bob Wilson : 14.6 % , 4/4

Portishead - John Hayden : 5.8 % , 4/4

Priory - Rita Ward : 11.9 % , 4/4

Weston E - Raymond Sumpler : 16.4 % , 3/3

Weston N - Allan Reeves : 18.9 % , 3/3

Weston S - Rosemary Daley : 11.4 % , 3/3

Weston W - Joanne Maddison : 11.8 % , 4/4

Winscombe - Tom Leimdorfer : 26.2 % , 2/4 , bt SLD(17.7%) , Lab(6%)

Worle - Frank Palmer : 11.1 % , 4/4

Yatton - Rosemary Knifton : 13.8 % , 3/4 , bt Lab (9.9%)

Cornwall

No county candidates here.

Devon

13 000 Devonians voted Green this time - a sizeable chunk of the total of more than 200 000 nationally.

Steve Potter writes :

"The County Council elections were a great success for the Green Party locally. Although overhauling some of the major parties was nice, the best thing about the results is that we can go into the elections telling voters that we can be elected - the first time that we have been able to say this."

Outstanding results from Teignbridge Bovey, where Alan Jackson had 40 % against a Tory, Torrington Rural, where Catherine Simmons beat Labour with 30 % , at Ottery St Mary where Phil Foggitt beat both SDP and Labour with 22% , and Northam Rural, where Susan Marsh had 19 % to beat Labour.

Viv Rosser from East Devon points out : " We gained 4623 votes in E. Devon, or 10.5 % of all votes cast. With PR this would have earned us a county seat. We got 1000 votes more than Labour who we beat five times, and we received four times as many votes as the SDP ! The Green Party is now the third largest party in East Devon, although we did lose votes to other parties (I've been told this personally by voters) when the divisions became marginal and the Lib/Con vote was fairly close. We did not however let the Tories in where the Liberals lost their seats, because the Tories increased their votes considerably."

Full Results (apologies for errors):

East Devon

Exmouth Withycombe - Viv Rosser : 5.2 %, 4/4
Axminster Rural - Alan Toothill : 9.3 %, 3/4, bt Lab.
Sidmouth & Budleigh - Anne Michel : 12.3 %, 3/5 bt Lab & Lord Sutch.
Ottery St Mary Rural - Phil Foggit : 22 %, 2/4 bt SDP & Lab
Honiton Rural - Dr James Tanner : 7.2 %, 4/5 bt Ind.
Exmouth Lypstone - David Hill : 7.6 %, 5/5.
Exmouth Littleham - Duncan Hulin : 9.8%, 4/5 bt SDP
Sidmouth Rural - Sharon Keen : 13.9 %, 3/5, bt Lab & Looney
Clyst Vale - Martin Stoolman : 12 %, 3/3.
Seaton Rural - Roger Damon : 6.9 %, 3/4, bt Lab.

Exeter

Derek Blackmore : 8.3 %, 4/4.
Andrew Leigh-Dugmore : 5.9 %, 4/4
Elizabeth Culpeper : 8.3 %, 4/4
Karen Vail : 6.6 %, 4/4
Keith Morris : 11.1 %, 4/4
Suzanne Dunstan : 5 %, 4/4
Ray Vail : 10.6 %, 4/4
Steve Potter : 15 %, 3/4, bt Lab
Andrew Bainborough : 9.5 %, 3/4, bt SDP

Plymouth

Peter Boon : 11.2 %, 4/4
Geoff Grinrod : 9.5 %, 4/4
Arthur Watson : 5.7 %, 4/4.
Steve Shaw : 5.9 %, 4/4

South Molton - Patricia Ingram : 7.6 %, 3/4 bt Lab by 8 votes.
Bovey - Alan Jackson : 40 %, 2/2
Newton Abbott W - Denise Jarrett : 8.3 %, 4/5, bt SLD
Northam Rural - Susan Marsh : 18.8 %, 3/4, bt Lab
Torrington Rural - Catherine Simmons : 30.2 %, 2/3, bt Lab

Dorset

Best result here was in Lytchett, near Poole, where Town Councillor Judy Basevi polled 18 % to beat SLD and Lab.

Parkstone - Roger Eede : 10.3 %, 3/3
Alderney - Denis Holloway : 12.4 %, 3/3
Broadstone - David French : 8.4 %, 3/3
Corfe Mullen - Tom Stinson : 7.5 %, 4/4
Lytchett - Judy Basevi : 18 %, 2/4, bt SLD & Lab
Dorchester - Jamie McMillan : 14 %, 4/4

Gloucestershire

No county candidates here

Somerset

Spaxton - Richard Lee : 28 %, 2/2

Wiltshire

Great results from Salisbury, where they seem to be beating Labour even without a leaflet!

Salisbury (mean 11 %)

Beneton - Rose Perry : 3.9 %, 4/4
St Mark - Barbara Hickman : 5.6 %, 4/4
ST Martin - Stuart Fyfe : 4.4 %, 6/6
Downton - Sherwood Elcock : 22 %, 2/3, bt Lab (17.5%)

Idmiston - Mark Pafford : 19.3 %, 2/3, bt Lab (18.2%)
Tisbury - Deborah Davies : 11 %, 4/4

Swindon

Louisa Haywood : 5.8 %, 4/4
Bill Hughes : 15.5 %, 3/4, bt SLD (6.1%)
Halina Polak : 5.4 %, 4/5, bt Loony
Rob Stredder : 3.9 %, 4/4
Steve Thompson : 5.3 %, 4/4 District by election imminent

Pewsham - Ned Barham : 11.1 %, 3/4 bt Lab
Marlborough - Jo Ripley : 5.3 %, 4/4 (Town by election)

Not our area, but spare a thought for Jim Hackett who got 26 % for Lambourn, and was promptly set upon by Tory thugs at the Hungerford count. Funny place that.

Letter

The County council elections were a great success. For the first time we really had something to celebrate at the count! We've received excellent press coverage and can now go forth into next years City/District elections confident of success.

However the move from marginal party to taking real power may need readjustment within the Green Party. To gain council seats we need to get votes from those people who regard themselves as not very political but 'concerned'. And to do this we must get over a "credibility gap" which we have with many people.

Our policies are right, canvassing responses show that. Now our vote has increased dramatically it is easier to refute the 'Green vote is a wasted vote' argument. So the real hurdle, I feel, is our presentation. As a poor party we have often produced poor quality leaflets. This must change. We must out-Saatchi the Tories! Also personal appearance is important. Wearing a suit may not win votes but arriving on the doorstep looking scruffy only reinforces peoples' stereotypes of us.

If we get it right the next two or three years could be exciting. It's too good a chance to miss.

Steve Potter, Secretary, Exeter GP, 11 Mansfield Road, Exeter.

PS A belated thank you from Exter GP to Duncan McCanlis and all those who organised the media workshop on 12th March. The advice given was invaluable and we are looking into running a similar day in Exeter.

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Please let the editor know of any errors /omissions !