

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 114  
(produced 25th May 1982)

1. Introduction

The interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study was conducted from 12th to 17th May - well before our invasion of the Falkland Islands. The survey found almost no change in the level of Conservative support - up from 41½% (5/10 May) to 42% (12/17 May). Labour support showed a slight increase - up from 28% (5/10 May) to 31% (12/17 May). Alliance support fell further from 29% (5/10 May) to 26% (12/17 May). A MORI poll conducted on Sunday 23rd May after the start of our invasion found 48% claiming they would vote Conservative, 31% Labour and 20% for the Alliance Party. An ORC poll conducted on 21st May found 48% claiming they would vote Conservative, 23% Labour and 15% Alliance. Details of the trend in support for the main parties since the start of the year are shown below:-

VOTING INTENTION  
(unprompted question, excluding don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>LIBERAL AND SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

<u>1979</u>							
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+7.0	13.8
13/16 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	5.0	-9.0	13.0
<u>1982</u>							
6/11 Jan	25.5	30.0	17.0	25.0	2.5	-4.5	42.0
13/18 Jan	27.5	29.5	13.0	26.5	3.5	-2.5**	39.5
20/25 Jan	30.0	27.0	14.0	26.5	2.5	+3.0	40.5
27 Jan/1 Feb	29.0	29.0	15.0	24.0	3.0	0.0	39.0
3/8 Feb	29.0	29.0	15.0	26.0	1.0	0.0	41.0
10/15 Feb	27.5	34.0	14.5	21.5	2.5	-6.5**	35.0
17/22 Feb	26.5	33.5	14.0	22.0	4.0	-7.0	36.0
24 Feb/1 March	31.0	32.5	11.0	22.5	3.0	-1.5	33.5
3/8 March	30.0	33.5	11.5	21.0+	4.0	-3.5	32.5
11/15 March	31.5	33.0	11.5	21.5+	2.5	-1.5**	33.0
17/22 March	34.0	30.0	11.0	21.0+	4.0	+4.0	32.0
24/29 March	32.0	28.0	11.0	27.5+	1.5	+4.0	38.5
31 March/5 April	34.0	27.0	10.0	26.0+	3.0	+7.0	36.0
7/12 April	31.5	29.0	11.0	26.0+	2.5	+2.5**	37.0
13/19 April	31.0	30.0	10.0	26.0+	3.0	+1.0	40.0
21/26 April	31.5	33.0	10.5	24.5+	0.5	-1.5	35.0
28 April/ 3 May	37.0	30.5	11.0	20.0+	1.5	+6.5	31.0
5/10 May	41.5	28.0	9.5	19.5+	1.5	+13.5**	29.0
12/17 May	42.0	31.0	10.0	16.0+	1.0	+11.0	26.0

\* First Gallup post-Election survey

\*\* Published Polls

+ Includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance

2. Government Record

For the first time since it was elected more people approved of the record of the Government than disapproved - 43% approved and 42% disapproved. This can be compared with the situation in mid-February when 22% approved of our record and 66% disapproved. Details of the trend are shown below:-

GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't know</u> %
<u>1979</u>			
13/18 June	34	41	25
<u>1982</u>			
6/11 January	23	65	12
13/18 January	24	65	12
20/25 January	26	62	13
Jan/1 Feb	25	62	13
3/8 Feb	26	63	11
10/15 Feb	24	66	10
17/22 Feb	22	66	13
24 Feb/1 March	23	63	13
3/8 March	24	65	11
11/15 March	29	59	12
17/22 March	28	60	13
24/29 March	29	58	13
31 March/ 5 April	31	57	12
7/12 April	32	56	12
13/19 April	34	54	12
21/26 April	34	55	11
28 April/ 3 May	40	47	13
5/10 May	42	46	12
12/17 May	43	42	15

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Mrs Thatcher's popularity continued to improve and the latest study found for the first time since the election more people being satisfied with Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister than are dissatisfied - 48% satisfied and 47% dissatisfied. Mr Foot's popularity now stands at only 17% of the electorate regarding him as a good leader of the opposition - 71% thought he was not a good leader. Mr Steel's popularity remains almost unchanged. Details of the trend over recent weeks are shown below:-

## POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	Mrs Thatcher			Mr Foot			Mr Steel		
	Sat.	Dis- sat.	Don't Know	Is	Is Not	Don't Know	Is	Is Not	Don't Know
<u>1982</u>									
6/11 January	30	65	5	20	65	14	62	20	18
13/18 January	32	65	4	18	67	16	59	22	19
20/25 January	32	64	4	17	68	15	59	22	19
27 Jan/1 Feb	33	62	5	19	64	17	60	18	22
3/8 Feb	31	65	4	20	63	17	61	20	19
10/15 Feb	29	66	5	19	66	15	59	23	17
17/22 Feb	29	65	5	20	64	16	58	20	21
24 Feb/ 1st March	32	63	5	21	64	15	55	23	22
3/8 March	30	66	4	20	64	16	58	24	18
11/15 March	34	62	4	21	65	14	58	22	10
17/22 March	33	62	5	22	64	14	59	21	20
24/29 March	35	59	6	19	65	15	61	20	19
31 March/ 5 April	37	58	5	20	65	15	60	22	18
7/12 April	35	60	5	23	61	16	63	18	19
13/19 April	36	60	5	28	59	14	63	18	19
21/26 April	37	59	4	26	60	14	66	17	17
28 April/ 3 May	41	53	6	24	65	12	62	20	18
5/10 May	44	51	6	18	71	11	64	20	17
12/17 May	48	47	5	17	71	12	65	18	17

## 4. PUBLISHED POLLS

a) GALLUP (Daily Telegraph 25th May 1982)

The Daily Telegraph on May 25th included details of a GALLUP poll conducted on 22/23rd May in Mitchem & Morden. The survey found the Conservatives having a substantial lead over the other parties. GALLUP found 43½% claiming they would vote Conservative, 33½% Labour, 21½% Alliance and 1½% 'other parties'.

Interest in the By-election is low with only 57% of electors claiming they will definitely vote, and 18% saying they will probably vote.

GALLUP asked respondents to select from a range of nine issues reasons for their voting for a particular party. They found:-

	Total	Con	Lab	Lib/SDP
Cost of living & the economy	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .
Unemployment .. .. .	52	46	59	56
Law and Order .. .. .	45	30	58	54
The Government's handling of the Falklands	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .
Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister	30	44	19	19
Dislike & distrust of other parties	27	30	24	25
Public Transport .. .. .	26	30	20	28
Mr Foot as possible Prime Minister	26	24	29	25
Loyalty to the Party I always support	20	27	12	19
	19	19	27	7

(b) MORI (Panorama May 24th)

Panorama on Monday 24th May included details of a MORI poll on attitudes to the Falkland Island dispute. The survey was conducted after the start of our invasion 80% thought we should have landed troops and 14% that we should not have landed troops. We asked about what we should do now. MORI found 63% thought we should fight to win back the Islands only 33% want an immediate cease fire.

(c) OR (Weekend World 23rd May)

Weekend World on 23rd May included details of a ORC poll on attitudes to the Falkland Island dispute conducted on 21st May - the day our invasion started. ORC found 61% of respondents quite strongly in favour of the Government's policy on the Falklands, 19% neither supporting or opposing our policy & 16% opposing our policy.

At a time when it was not clear whether we had invaded the Islands ORC found 76% of respondents in favour of Britain invading the Falklands - only 20% claimed to be against the idea.

ORC asked respondents 'would you be in favour of the British Government invading the Falkland Islands even if it meant the loss of more British Servicemen's lives - 65% claimed to be in favour of invasion, 36% claimed to be not in favour of invasion.

When ORC asked 'if the British forces succeed in retaking the Falkland Islands what should the British Government do next:-

- a) Hold on to the Falkland Islands indefinitely and keep a large enough British force there to deter a new Argentinian invasion or:-
- b) Hand sovereignty of the Falkland over to Argentina at some point in the future with safeguards for the Islanders.

59% wanted us to hold on to the Falkland Islands indefinitely, 28% hand sovereignty to the Argentinians and 13% did not have a view.

When ORC asked 'following a successful British invasion should the 18,000 British inhabitants of the Falklands have the final say over the British decision concerning the future of the Islands - 72% thought they should and 23% thought they should not.

d) NOP (Daily Mail 26th May 1982)

The Daily Mail on 26th May included the results of a N.O.P. poll conducted in Beaconsfield on May 23/24th. The poll found 60% claiming they will vote Conservative, 28% Alliance and 12% Labour.