

Wetherby

CONFIDENTIAL

Public Opinion Background Note 153
(produced 14th March 1983)

1. Introduction

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study from 2nd to 7th March 1983 and interviewed almost 1,000 electors throughout Great Britain. The study found 42% claiming they would vote Conservative (compared with 44½% in the last pre-Bermondsey study - 17/21 Feb), 28½% Labour (34½% 17/21 Feb), 12% Liberal (9% 17/21 Feb) and 15% Social Democrat (10% 17/21 Feb). The combined level of Alliance support was 27% compared with 19% in the last survey conducted before Bermondsey (17/21 Feb).

Conservative support has fluctuated around the 42% level since early September - it has varied between 40% (29 Sept/4 Oct) to 48% (27 Oct/1 Nov). The 42% claiming they will vote Conservative can be compared with the 43.9% who actually voted Conservative in May 1979. Labour support in the latest study of 28½% has dropped 6 percentage points since the last survey conducted before their defeat in Bermondsey. The results of this latest study can be compared to the General Election when 36.9% of those voting supported Labour candidates. The combined level of Liberal/Social Democrat support of 27% in the latest study is the highest since late Oct when Gallup found a similar level of support for the Alliance. Support for them has increased 8 percentage points since the last survey conducted before Bermondsey.

We have not had any surveys in Darlington over the last week, but several surveys including one by NOP are likely to be published within the next week.

The two tables overleaf show the trend of support for the main parties nationally since September 1982 - the first shows support when 'don't knows' are excluded (the 'conventional' way of presenting opinion research findings) and the second shows the figures when don't knows are included. In the latest study Gallup found 8% of respondents who did not give a voting intention or claimed they did not know how they would vote.

NOTE

This introduction was produced before the MORI poll was published in the Evening Standard on 14th March 1983. This poll conducted between March 3rd and 9th found 41% claiming they would vote Conservative, (42% in our Gallup study conducted 2/7 March), 30% Alliance (27% in our Gallup study conducted 2/7 March) and 27% for Labour (28½% in our Gallup study conducted 2/7 March). MORI found the Alliance in second place to us - our Gallup survey found Labour in second place.

Full details are given in section 4 of this note - Published Polls.

Voting Intention(unprompted question, excluding
don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> DEMOCRAT	<u>OTH</u>	<u>LEAD</u> Con over Lab	<u>LIBERAL & SOCIAL</u> DEMOCRAT
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<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>							
1/6 Sept	43.5	28.5	8.0	17.0+	3.0	+15.0	25.0
8/13 Sept	44.0	30.5	8.5	14.5+	2.5	+13.5**	23.0
15/21 Sept	42.0	33.0	8.0	15.0+	2.0	+9.0	23.0
22/27 Sept	43.0	29.5	12.5	13.0+	2.0	+13.5	25.5
29 Sept/4 Oct	40.0	31.5	13.5	13.0+	2.0	+8.5	26.5
6/11 Oct	42.5	32.0	10.5	13.0+	2.0	+10.5	23.5
13/18 Oct	43.0	31.0	9.0	13.5+	3.5	+12.0	22.5
20/25 Oct	40.5	29.0	12.0	15.0+	3.5	+11.5**	27.0
27 Oct/1 Nov	48.0	31.0	8.5	11.0+	1.5	+17.0	19.5
3/10 Nov	44.0	33.0	9.0	12.0+	2.0	+11.0	21.0
10/15 Nov	42.0	35.0	8.0	13.0+	2.0	+7.0**	21.0
17/22 Nov	41.5	33.0	9.0	14.0+	2.5	+8.5	23.0
24/29 Nov	46.5	32.0	7.5	11.5+	2.5	+14.5	19.0
1/6 Dec	43.0	35.0	9.0	11.0+	2.0	+8.0	20.0
8/13 Dec	41.0	34.5	9.0	13.0+	2.5	+6.5**	22.0
<u>1983</u>							
7/11 Jan	44.0	33.0	10.5	11.0+	1.5	+11.0	21.5
12/17 Jan	44.0	31.5	11.5	11.0+	2.0	+12.5**	22.5
18/25 Jan	47.5	30.5	9.0	11.0+	2.0	+17.0	20.0
27/31 Jan	45.0	31.0	10.0	12.0+	2.0	+14.0	22.0
2/7 Feb	43.0	30.0	11.0	13.0+	3.0	+13.0	24.0
9/14 Feb	43.5	32.5	10.5	11.5+	2.0	+11.0**	22.0
17/21 Feb	44.5	34.5	9.0	10.0+	2.0	+10.0	19.0
24/28 Feb	42.0	29.0	10.0	17.0+	2.0	+13.0	27.0
2/7 March	42.0	28.5	12.0	15.0+	2.5	+13.5	27.0

* First Gallup Post-Election Survey, ** Published Polls, + includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance.

VOTING INTENTION

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(unprompted question, including
don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTH</u>	<u>DON'T</u> <u>KNOW</u>	<u>LEAD</u> Con over Lab	<u>LIBERAL</u> & <u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>								
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	-	+7.0	13.8
<u>1982</u>								
1/6 Sept	39.0	26.0	7.0	15.0	3.0	10.0	+13.0	22.0
8/13 Sept	40.0	28.0	8.0	13.0	2.0	8.0	+12.0**	21.0
15/21 Sept	38.0	29.0	7.0	12.0	2.0	11.0	+9.0	19.0
22/27 Sept	39.0	27.0	12.0	12.0	2.0	9.0	+12.0	24.0
29th Sept/4th Oct	37.0	29.0	12.0	12.0	2.0	8.0	+8.0	24.0
6/11 Oct	38.0	29.0	10.0	12.0	1.0	10.0	+9.0	22.0
13/18 Oct	39.0	28.0	8.0	13.0	3.0	9.0	+11.0	21.0
20/25 Oct	37.0	27.0	11.0	13.0	4.0	8.0	+10.0**	24.0
27 Oct/1 Nov	44.0	28.0	8.0	10.0	1.0	8.0	+16.0	18.0
3/10 Nov	41.0	31.0	8.0	11.0	2.0	8.0	+10.0	19.0
10/15 Nov	38.0	31.0	7.0	12.0	2.0	10.0	+7.0**	19.0
17/22 Nov	41.0	29.0	11.0	9.0	1.0	9.0	+12.0	20.0
24/29 Nov	41.0	29.0	7.0	10.0	2.0	11.0	+12.0	17.0
1/6 Dec	39.0	32.0	8.0	10.0	1.0	9.0	+7.0	18.0
8/13 Dec	37.0	31.0	8.0	11.0	3.0	10.0	+6.0**	19.0
<u>1983</u>								
7/11 Jan	39.5	29.5	9.5	9.5	1.5	10.5	+10.0	19.0
12/17 Jan	40.0	29.0	10.0	10.0	1.0	9.0	+11.0	20.0
18/25 Jan	43.0	28.0	8.0	10.0	1.0	10.0	+15.0	18.0
27/31 Jan	40.0	28.0	9.0	11.0	2.0	10.0	+12.0	20.0
2/7 Feb	39.0	27.0	10.0	12.0	2.0	9.0	+12.0	22.0
9/14 Feb	40.0	30.0	10.0	10.0	1.0	8.0	+10.0	20.0
17/21 Feb	41.0	31.0	8.0	9.0	1.0	9.0	+10.0	17.0
24/28 Feb	38.0	26.0	9.0	16.0	1.0	10.0	+12.0	25.0
2/7 March	39.0	25.0	11.0	14.0	2.0	8.0	+13.0	25.0

** Published polls, + includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance.

2. Government Record

The latest study found an improvement in the popularity of the Government - 43% of respondents claimed to approve of our record to date, 47% disapproved and 10% did not have a view. These findings can be compared with the first study in January which found 43% claiming to approve of our record in government, 44% to disapprove and 13% with no view. Details 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>			
1/6 Sept	41	45	14
8/13 Sept	40	48	13
15/21 Sept	38	49	13
22/27 Sept	38	50	12
29 Sept/4 Oct	36	51	13
6/11 Oct	40	47	13
13/18 Oct	38	48	14
20/25 Oct	40	49	11
27 Oct/1 Nov	42	45	13
3/10 Nov	41	45	15
10/15 Nov	39	48	13
17/22 Nov	39	47	13
24/29 Nov	44	44	13
1/6 Dec	42	47	11
8/13 Dec	37	50	13
<u>1983</u>			
7/11 Jan	43	44	13
12/17 Jan	43	43	14
18/25 Jan	45	43	12
27/31 Jan	41	44	15
2/7 Feb	40	48	12
9/14 Feb	39	49	12
17/21 Feb	41	46	13
24/25 Feb	39	49	12
2/7 March	43	47	10

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest study found a slight improvement in Mrs Thatcher's popularity - 47% claimed to be satisfied with her as Prime Minister - compared with 48% in our first 1983 study. Mr Foot's popularity also improved slightly to 20% claiming that he is a good Leader of the Opposition - he remains the most unpopular leader of any party as found by opinion polls - although his popularity has improved from the nadir reached in mid 1982. Mr Steel's popularity has also improved - 69% thought he is a good leader of the Liberals, 15% that he is not a good leader and 15% did not have view. The electorate remains confused about Mr Jenkins with 35% seeing him as a good leader of the SDP, 34% not as being a good leader and 30% not having a view.

Details of the trend of approval/disapproval for the leaders of the main parties since early September 1982 are shown in the table below:-

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>			<u>Mr Jenkins</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat.</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1982</u>												
1/6 Sept	49	45	6	14	74	12	59	20	21	35	30	35
8/13 Sept	48	47	5	16	74	10	59	21	20	37	32	31
15/21 Sept	46	49	6	14	73	12	62	19	19	33	34	33
22/27 Sept	46	50	4	16	74	11	64	20	16	35	31	34
29 Sept/4 Oct	44	51	5	27	60	13	64	19	17	36	33	31
6/11 Oct	46	48	6	25	62	13	62	22	17	35	33	32
13/18 Oct	45	50	5	23	66	11	56	25	19	34	36	30
20/25 Oct	46	50	4	20	69	12	60	22	18	35	34	31
27 Oct/1Nov	48	48	4	20	66	14	57	24	18	35	37	28
3/10 Nov	48	48	5	23	65	11	58	24	18	34	37	29
10/15 Nov	44	52	5	22	67	12	59	22	19	37	33	30
17/22 Nov	44	51	5	25	63	11	59	20	20	33	36	31
24/29 Nov	48	47	5	18	68	14	57	22	20	31	35	34
1/6 Dec	45	51	5	23	67	10	62	18	19	35	34	31
8/13 Dec	44	53	4	20	69	10	60	23	17	34	34	31
<u>1983</u>												
7/11 Jan	48	47	6	18	68	14	62	20	17	30	33	36
12/17 Jan	49	45	6	17	69	14	62	19	19	30	31	39
18/25 Jan	51	44	5	18	72	10	61	20	19	33	35	31
27/31 Jan	47	48	5	18	70	13	61	19	21	33	35	32
2/7 Feb	46	49	5	15	72	13	60	22	17	31	40	29
9/14 Feb	45	50	5	17	72	11	62	21	17	33	39	28
17/21 Feb	46	49	5	18	71	11	63	18	19	35	36	29
24/28 Feb	45	50	5	17	71	12	66	14	20	37	33	30
2/7 March	47	49	4	20	70	10	69	15	15	35	34	30

4. Published Polls(a) MORI (Scotsman 9th March 1983)

The Scotsman on 9th March included details of a MORI poll conducted in Scotland between February 28th and March 3rd. The study found 26% of the Scottish electorate claiming they would vote Conservative, 39% Labour, 25% Alliance and 10% SNP. Details are shown below:-

Voting Intentions - Scotland

	<u>May 1979</u> <u>Election</u>	<u>Nov</u> <u>1981</u>	<u>April</u> <u>1982</u>	<u>Nov</u> <u>1982</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1983</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	31.4	17	23	27	26
Labour	41.5	36	34	43	39
Alliance	9*	34	25	19	25
SNP	17.3	13	17	11	10
Others	0.8	-	-	-	-

* For Liberal candidates

Labour support in Scotland now stands at 39% compared with 41½% in the May 1979 General Election. MORI found 26% claiming they would vote Conservative - although this is an improvement from the 17% claiming they would vote Conservative in November 1981 it still remains over 5 percentage points less than the 31.4% who voted Conservative in May 1979. Alliance support stands at 25% compared with 9% who voted Liberal in May 1979. SNP support has dropped from 17.3% in May 1979 to 10% in the latest study.

b) MORI (Scotsman 11th March 1983)

The Scotsman on 11th March included details of a MORI poll conducted between February 28th and March 3rd.

MORI asked Scottish respondents 'On balance do you favour or oppose the following - a) Get rid of all nuclear weapons in Britain, even if other countries keep theirs b) allow Cruise missiles to be based in Britain? 32% of respondents claimed to be in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament, 62% against and 6% did not have a view. With regard to Cruise missiles MORI found 34% in favour of basing them in Britain, 51% opposed to their being based in Britain and 15% with no view.

On the issue of devolution for Scotland MORI found:-

For running Scotland as a whole would you like to see:

	<u>March</u> <u>1979</u>	<u>Nov</u> <u>1981</u>	<u>Nov</u> <u>1982</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1983</u>
	%	%	%	%
A completely independent Scottish Assembly separate from England	14	22	22	23
A Scottish Assembly as part of Britain, but with substantial powers	42	47	47	48
No change from the present system	35	26	26	26
Don't Know	9	5	5	2

MORI found 23% in favour of a completely independent Scottish Assembly separate from England, 48% in favour of a Scottish Assembly as part of Britain, but with substantial powers and 26% in favour of no change from the present system.

c) MORI (Evening Standard 14th March 1983)

The Evening Standard on 14th March 1983 included details of a MORI poll conducted between March 3rd and 9th throughout Great Britain. The survey found 41% claiming they would vote Conservative, 30% Alliance, 27% Labour and 2% for 'other' parties. Details of the trend in MORI polls since the start of the year are shown below:-

	<u>MORI Polls</u>		
	<u>Jan</u> <u>1983</u>	<u>Feb</u> <u>1983</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1983</u>
	%	%	%
Conservative	44	45	41
Labour	35	32	27
Alliance	20	21	30
Others	1	2	2
Conservative lead over Labour	9	13	14

MORI also asked respondents 'What are the most important issues facing Britain today?' They found:-

	<u>Dec</u> <u>1982</u>	<u>Jan</u> <u>1983</u>	<u>Feb</u> <u>1983</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1983</u>
	%	%	%	%
Unemployment	83	85	88	84
Defence/Disarmament	25	28	39	39
Prices/Inflation	24	28	26	22
Unions/Strikes	5	6	10	9
Education	6	8	7	8
Law and Order	13	11	7	6

Defence/disarmament has been regarded as the second most important issue to unemployment in both February and March.

KB/153/8

MORI have produced a regional analysis of this latest study which found 32% of electors in the North claiming they will vote Conservative, 40% in the Midlands and 50% in the South. Labour support varies from 20% in the South, to 30% in the Midlands, to 32% in the North. Alliance support varies from 29% in the South, to 28% in the Midlands, to 33% in the North.