

Public Opinion Background Note 54
Produced 7th September 1984

1. INTRODUCTION

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study from 29th August to 3rd September and they interviewed almost 1,000 electors throughout Great Britain.

The study found a sharp turnaround in support for the Conservatives - from a 2½% Labour lead over the Conservatives in the previous study (conducted 22/27 August) to a 6½% Conservative lead over Labour. The change in trend is so sharp that we will need to wait for subsequent surveys before attempting to draw any firm conclusions.

Details of the trend in support for the main parties since the start of the year are shown in Section 2 below.

2. Voting Intention

The two tables below show voting intention when 'don't knows' have been excluded (the conventional way of presenting opinion research figures) and when don't knows are shown as a separate category.

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

	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>SDP</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Con lead</u>	<u>SDP &</u>	<u>Con lead</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Over</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>over Alliance</u>
						<u>Labour</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Liberal & SDP</u>
						<u>%</u>		<u>%</u>
<u>1984</u>								
0-9 January	41.0	38.0	10.5	10.0	1.0	+3.0	20.0	+21.0
11-16 January	41.5	38.0	9.5	10.0	1.0	+3.5*	19.5	+22.0
18-23 January	40.0	39.5	10.0	8½	2.0	+0.5	18.5	+21.5
25-30 January	41.5	39.0	10.0	9	0.5	+2.5	19.0	+22.5
1-6 February	44.0	39.0	8.0	8	1.0	+5.0	16.0	+28.0
8-13 February	43.0	33.5	11.5	10.0	2.0	+9.5*	21.5	+21.5
15-20 February	39.5	39.5	10.0	10.0	1.0	0.0	20.0	+19.5
22-27 February	38.0	43.0	9.0	10.0	0.0	-5.0	19.0	+19.0
29 Feb - 5 March	39.0	41.0	8.0	10.0	2.0	-2.0	18.0	+21.0
7-12 March	36.0	42.0	11.0	9.0	2.0	-6.0	20.0	+16.0
15-19 March	41.0	38.5	11.0	8.5	1.0	+2.5*	19.5	+19.5
21-26 March	37.0	40.0	11.5	10.5	1.0	-3.0	22.0	+15.0
28 Mar - 2nd April	37.0	40.0	10.5	11.0	1.5	-3.0	21.5	+15.5
4-9 April	37.0	40.5	11.0	10.0	1.5	-3.5	21.0	+16.0
11-16 April	41.0	36.5	10.0	10.5	2.0	+4.5*	20.5	+20.0
18-23 April	38.5	41.0	9.0	9.0	2.5	-2.5	18.0	+20.5
25-30 April	40.0	36.0	11.0	11.0	2.0	+4.0	22.0	+18.0
2-7 May	38.0	37.0	11.5	12.0	1.5	+1.0	23.5	+14.5
10-14 May	38.5	36.5	9.0	14.0	2.0	+2.0*	23.0	+15.5
16-21 May	38.0	38.5	11.0	12.0	0.5	-0.5	23.0	+15.0
23-28 May	38.5	37.0	9.0	13.5	2.0	+1.5	22.5	+16.0
30 May-4 June	35.0	40.0	8.0	15.0	2.0	-5.0	23.0	+13.0
6-11 June	37.5	38.0	7.5	15.5	1.5	-0.5*	23.0	+14.5
13-18 June	38.0	34.0	9.0	16.0	3.0	+4.0	25.0	+13.0
20-25 June	36.0	35.5	10.0	17.0	1.5	+0.5	27.0	+9.0
27 June-2 July	40.0	36.0	8.0	14.0	2.0	+4.0	22.0	+18.0
4-9 July	39.0	35.0	9.0	14.0	3.0	+4.0	23.0	+16.0
11-16 July	37.5	38.5	7.5	14.5	1.5	-1.0*	22.0	+15.5
18-23 July	38.5	38.5	9.5	12.0	1.5	0.0	21.5	+17.0
25-30 July	35.5	41.5	7.5	13.0	2.5	-6.0	20.5	+15.0
1-6 August	38.0	36.5	9.0	14.0	2.5	+1.5	23.0	+15.0
8-13 August	36.0	39.0	9.5	13.0	2.5	-3.0*	22.5	+13.5
15-20 August	38.5	37.5	9.5	12.0	2.5	+1.0	21.0	+17.5
22-27 August	35.5	36.0	11.0	14.0	1.5	-2.5	25.0	+11.5
29 Aug - 3 Sept	41.5	35.0	10.0	11.5	2.0	+6.5	21.5	+20.0

*Published in the Daily Telegraph

(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>1984</u>							
6-9 January	39.0	36.0	9.0	10.0	1.0	6.0	+3.0
11-16 January	39.0	35.0	9.0	9.0	0.0	7.0	+4.0
18-23 January	37.0	37.0	9.0	8.0	2.0	7.0	0.0
25-30 January	38.0	36.0	9.0	8.0	1.0	7.0	+2.0
1-6 February	41.0	36.0	7.0	7.0	2.0	6.0	+5.0
8-13 February	41.0	32.0	11.0	9.0	2.0	6.0	+9.0
15-20 February	36.0	36.0	9.0	9.0	1.0	8.0	0.0
22-27 February	35.0	39.0	8.0	9.0	0.0	8.0	-4.0
29 Feb-5 March	36.0	39.0	8.0	10.0	2.0	6.0	-3.0
7-12 March	33.0	38.0	10.0	9.0	1.0	9.0	-5.0
15-19 March	38.0	36.0	10.0	8.0	1.0	8.0	+2.0
21-26 March	34.5	37.0	10.5	9.5	1.0	7.5	-2.5
28 Mar - 2 April	35.0	38.0	10.0	10.0	1.0	6.0	-3.0
4-9 April	35.0	38.0	10.0	10.0	1.0	6.0	-3.0
11-16 April	38.0	34.0	10.0	9.0	2.0	7.0	+4.0
18-23 April	36.0	38.0	9.0	9.0	2.0	7.0	+2.0
25-30 April	37.0	33.0	10.0	10.0	2.0	8.0	+4.0
2-7 May	35.0	34.0	11.0	12.0	2.0	7.0	+1.0
10-14 May	36.0	35.0	8.0	14.0	2.0	6.0	+1.0
16-21 May	35.0	36.0	10.0	11.0	2.0	6.0	-1.0
23-28 May	36.0	34.0	9.0	13.0	2.0	6.0	+2.0
30 May-4 June	32.0	37.0	7.0	14.0	2.0	8.0	-5.0
6-11 June	35.0	35.0	7.0	11.0	1.0	8.0	0.0
13-18 June	36.0	33.0	8.0	15.0	2.0	5.0	+3.0
20-25 June	34.0	33.0	9.0	16.0	1.0	6.0	+1.0
27 June-2 July	37.0	34.0	7.0	14.0	2.0	7.0	+3.0
4-9 July	36.0	33.0	8.0	13.0	3.0	8.0	+3.0
11-16 July	35.0	36.0	7.0	14.0	2.0	7.0	-1.0
18-23 July	36.0	36.0	9.0	10.0	1.0	7.0	0.0
25-30 July	33.0	39.0	7.0	13.0	2.0	7.0	-6.0
1-6 August	34.5	33.5	8.0	12.0	2.0	10.0	+1.0
8-13 August	33.0	36.0	9.0	12.0	2.0	8.0	-3.0
15-20 August	35.0	34.0	9.0	11.0	2.0	10.0	+1.0
22-27 August	33.0	36.0	10.0	13.0	2.0	6.0	-3.0
29 Aug - 3 Sept	38.0	32.0	9.0	10.0	2.0	8.0	+6.0

3. Government Record

The latest study found no significant change in the popularity of the Government. Details are shown in the table below.

GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>1984</u>			
6-9 January (%)	40	48	12
11-16 January (%)	42	46	12
18-23 January (%)	37	52	12
25-30 January (%)	39	48	13
1-6 February (%)	40	49	11

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
8-13 February (%)	41	45	14
15-20 February (%)	39	48	13
22-27 February (%)	34	52	14
29 Feb - 5 March (%)	35	54	11
7-12 March (%)	33	53	14
15-19 March (%)	41	49	10
21-26 March (%)	36	51	13
28 Mar - 2 April (%)	36	52	12
4-9 April (%)	35	54	11
11-16 April (%)	42	45	13
18-23 April (%)	35	54	11
25-30 April (%)	37	49	14
2-7 May (%)	39	49	12
10-14 May (%)	37	51	11
16-21 May (%)	35	53	12
23-28 May (%)	38	49	13
30 May-4 June (%)	32	55	13
6-11 June (%)	36	53	11
13-18 June (%)	37	51	12
20-25 June (%)	36	55	9
27 June-2 July (%)	37	49	14
4-9 July (%)	35	51	13
11-16 July (%)	36	54	10
18-23 July (%)	34	53	13
25-30 July (%)	33	54	13
1-6 August (%)	33	52	15
8-13 August (%)	34	54	13
15-20 August (%)	36	50	14
22-27 August (%)	36	54	10
29 Aug - 3 Sept (%)	37	57	12

(4) Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest research found a marginal improvement in Mrs. Thatcher's popularity, no change in Mr. Kinnock's popularity and a marginal fall in that of Mr. Steel and Dr. Owen. Details are shown in the table below.

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr. Kinnock</u>		
	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1984</u>						
6-9 January (%)	47	49	5	46	22	31
11-16 January (%)	49	46	5	43	23	34
18-23 January (%)	44	52	4	45	21	34
25-30 January (%)	45	49	6	43	24	33
1-5 February (%)	46	49	4	48	24	28
8-13 February (%)	48	48	5	45	24	30
15-20 February (%)	46	49	5	41	28	31
22-27 February (%)	41	54	5	45	28	27
29 Feb - 5 March (%)	41	55	4	50	26	24
7-12 March (%)	41	54	5	48	24	28
15-19 March (%)	46	52	2	47	27	26
21-26 March (%)	42	52	6	48	25	27
28 Mar - 2 Apr (%)	42	54	5	45	29	26
4-9 April (%)	40	55	5	47	30	24
11-16 April (%)	46	50	5	42	34	24
18-23 April (%)	40	55	5	43	32	25
25-30 April (%)	43	51	6	42	33	24

Mrs Thatcher

Mr. Kinnock

	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1984</u>						
2-7 May (%)	44	50	6	43	36	20
10-14 May (%)	41	54	5	42	32	24
16-21 May (%)	42	54	4	45	30	25
23-28 May (%)	43	51	5	42	36	21
30 May - 4 June (%)	41	55	4	41	36	21
6-11 June (%)	41	54	5	43	36	21
13-18 June (%)	41	54	5	42	40	19
20-25 June (%)	39	58	3	40	40	20
27 June- 2 July (%)	42	52	6	37	41	22
4-9 July (%)	42	54	5	41	40	19
11-16 July (%)	41	55	5	43	37	20
18-23 July (%)	39	55	6	38	41	20
25-30th July (%)	39	55	5	42	38	19
1-6 August (%)	39	57	4	34	42	24
8-13 August (%)	39	56	5	37	44	19
15-20 August (%)	41	54	5	35	45	20
22-27 August (%)	40	55	5	38	42	19
29 Aug - 3 Sept (%)	42	52	6	38	44	18

Mr. Steel

Dr. Owen

	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1984</u>						
6-9 January (%)	62	22	16	48	24	28
11-16 January (%)	59	23	18	45	25	30
18-23 January (%)	63	19	18	49	22	29
25-30 January (%)	60	21	18	44	25	31
1-6 February (%)	57	25	19	43	29	27
8-13 February (%)	61	22	17	45	24	30
15-20 February (%)	63	21	17	45	26	29
22-27 February (%)	65	20	15	46	23	30
29 Feb-5 March (%)	57	24	19	44	27	29
7-12 March (%)	61	21	18	43	27	31
15-19 March (%)	67	18	15	48	23	29
21-26 March (%)	67	19	14	45	25	30
28 Mar-2 April (%)	61	20	19	48	24	28
4-9 April (%)	63	20	17	43	26	31
11-16 April (%)	61	22	17	48	25	27
18-23 April (%)	59	22	19	44	24	32
25-30 April (%)	63	19	19	48	21	30
2-7 May (%)	62	21	17	50	23	27
10-14 May (%)	67	19	15	51	25	24
16-21 May (%)	63	19	18	50	22	28
23-28 May (%)	63	22	15	48	24	28
30 May-4 June (%)	64	20	16	49	25	26
6-11 June (%)	63	23	15	52	22	26
13-18 June (%)	61	23	16	51	24	25
20-25 June (%)	62	21	17	53	25	22
27 June-2 July (%)	61	19	20	50	24	26
4-9 July (%)	57	24	18	50	25	25
11-16 July (%)	61	22	17	52	23	25
18-23 July (%)	58	25	17	52	22	26
25-30 July (%)	56	26	18	49	23	28
1-6 August (%)	57	26	17	48	24	28
8-13 August (%)	55	23	21	50	23	28

	<u>Is Good</u> <u>Leader</u> %	<u>Mr. Steel</u> <u>Is Not Good</u> <u>Leader</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Is Good</u> <u>Leader</u> %	<u>Dr. Owen</u> <u>Is Not Good</u> <u>Leader</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
15-20 August (%)	59	24	17	46	26	27
22-27 August (%)	59	24	18	51	24	25
29 Aug - 3 Sept (%)	58	25	16	50	24	26

5. Published Polls

(a) MORI (Sunday Times 9th September 1984)

The Sunday Times on 9th September 1984 included further details of a MORI poll conducted from 28th to 29th August. Among Alliance supporters 56% claimed to be in favour of a merger between the Liberals and Social Democrats, 34% against and 10% with no view. Contrary to David Owen's anti-merger stand, SDP supporters were less opposed to such a merger than Liberal supporters. Details are shown below:-

	<u>Liberals</u> %	<u>SDP</u> %
Yes, merge	51	52
No, not merge	42	36
Don't know	7	12

Among voters in general one in four said that a merger would make them more likely to vote for the Alliance.