

Public Opinion Background Note 102
(produced 22nd August 1985)

1. Introduction

The interviewing for our latest Gallup 'tracking' study was conducted from 14th to 19th August and they interviewed over 1,000 electors throughout Great Britain. The survey found only marginal changes in the level of support for the parties, when compared with the previous (published) survey conducted from 7th to 12th August. Gallup found 38.5% claiming they would vote Labour, 34% for one of the so-called 'Alliance' parties and 25% for the Conservatives.

These findings are in sharp contrast to the results of a Marplan survey published in the Guardian on 22nd August, conducted from 8th to 12th August, which found 36% claiming they would vote Labour, 31% Conservative, 31% 'Alliance' and 2% for 'other' parties. The Guardian article also included reference to a private Labour MORI poll conducted from 31st July to 7th August which gave Labour 36%, the Conservatives 32% and 'Alliance' 31%.

Opinion polls conducted during August have always been regarded as having a greater margin of error because of the unpredictable effect of electors being away on holiday. We will need to await the results of the first polls conducted in early September before drawing any firm conclusions.

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 Alliance Liberal & SDP
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1985								
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

2. Voting Intention (Cont.)

(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 Over Labour</u> %	<u>SDP & Liberal</u> %	<u>Con lead over Alliance Liberal & SDP</u> %
<u>1985</u>								
3-8 July	30.5	36.5	12.0	19.0	2.0	-6.0	31.0	+0.5
10-15 July	27.5	38.0	12.5	20.0	2.0	-10.5	32.5	-5.0
17-22 July	30.0	30.0	12.5	24.0	3.5	0.0	36.5	-6.5
24-29 July	28.0	34.0	14.5	22.0	1.5	-6.0	36.5	-8.5
31 July-5 Aug	25.0	36.5	12.5	24.0	2.0	-11.5	36.5	-11.5
7-12 Aug	24.0	40.0	13.0	21.0	2.0	-16.0	34.0	-10.0
14-19 Aug	25.0	38.5	11.0	23.0	2.5	-13.5	34.0	-9.0

(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
10-15 July	26.0	35.0	12.0	19.0	2.0	6.0	-9.0
17-22 July	27.0	28.0	11.0	22.0	3.0	8.0	-1.0
24-29 July	25.0	31.0	13.0	20.0	2.0	9.0	-6.0
31 July - 5 Aug	23.0	33.0	11.0	22.0	1.0	9.0	-10.0
7-12 Aug	22.0	37.0	12.0	19.0	2.0	8.0	-15.0
14-19 Aug	23.0	36.0	10.0	21.0	2.0	8.0	-13.0

3. Government Record

Gallup found almost no change from the level of approval for the record of the Government found in the last study - conducted 7th to 12th August. The previous survey found the lowest level of approval since 1981/early 1982. Gallup found 65% claiming to disapprove of the record of the Government, 24% approving and 11% with no view. Details are shown in the table below:-

	<u>GOVERNMENT RECORD</u>		
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>1985</u>			
3-8 Jan(%)	32	53	14
9-14Jan(%)	33	54	13
16-21 Jan(%)	35	48	16
23-28 Jan(%)	33	54	12
30 Jan-4 Feb(%)	29	59	12
6-11Feb (%)	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
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
10-15 July (%)	28	59	13
17 - 22 July(%)	28	60	12
24-29 July (%)	26	61	13
31 July - 5 Aug (%)	25	61	14
7-12 August (%)	23	65	12
14-19 August (%)	24	65	11

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Gallup found almost no change in the popularity of all four leaders covered in this study. Mrs. Thatcher's popularity remained at the lowest level since 1981/early 1982. Details are shown in the table on the following page.

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Mr. Kinnock</u>	
	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>		<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>1985</u>						
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
10-15 July (%)	34	60	5	38	47	15
17 - 22 July (%)	34	61	6	32	52	15
24-29 July (%)	31	63	6	34	49	16
31 July - 5 Aug (%)	32	63	5	36	49	15
7-12 Aug (%)	30	65	5	34	48	18
14-19 Aug (%)	29	66	5	31	52	18

	<u>Mr Steel</u>			<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Dr Owen</u>	
	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>		<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>1985</u>						
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

(Cont.)

	<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>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1985</u>						
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
10-15 July(%)	65	20	15	54	24	22
17-22 July (%)	64	21	15	51	26	23
24-29 July(%)	64	21	14	56	24	20
31 July - 5 Aug(%)	67	18	15	57	20	23
7-12 Aug (%)	63	21	17	54	24	23
14-19 Aug (%)	62	21	17	54	23	23

5. Published Polls

(a) Marplan (Guardian, 22nd August, 1985)

In addition to the standard voting intention question, the Guardian on 22nd August included the results of Marplan's standard question 'Which of the following people would be the best Prime Minister for Britain?'. 26% selected Mrs. Thatcher, 23% Mr. Kinnock, 16% Mr. Steel and 15% Dr. Owen.