

Public Opinion Background Note 105
(produced 15th September 1985)

1. Introduction

Over the last week we have had the results from three opinion polls giving voting intention - two published (Marplan in the Guardian and Harris on Weekend World) and our private unpublished Gallup study. Details of the results of these three surveys are shown below:-

	<u>Marplan</u> <u>Guardian</u> 12 Sept '85	<u>Harris</u> <u>Weekend World</u> 15 Sept '85	<u>Gallup</u> <u>Unpublished</u>
<u>Fieldwork</u>	29 Aug- 3 Sept	5-7 Sept	4-9 Sept
	%	%	%
Conservative	30	35	26.5
Labour	34	36	36.5
'Alliance'	35	26	35
Others	1	3	2

All three surveys agree on the general level of Labour support at around the 35% level - their support has fluctuated around this level since the start of the year. They do not agree on the level of Conservative or 'Alliance' support - Conservative support varies from 26.5% in our unpublished Gallup study to 35% in the Harris study, and 'Alliance' support varies from 26% in the Harris study to 35% in both the Marplan and Gallup studies. It would appear that it is the Harris study that is out of line and that it has over-estimated the level of Conservative support. However, we will need to await the results of further studies which will hopefully disprove this pessimistic conclusion. The results from our latest Gallup study are in line with the broad trend found by Gallup since late July with Conservative support fluctuating from week to week but remaining below 30%. Full details of the trend of support for the main parties in our Gallup surveys since the start of the year are shown in the tables in Section 2 below:-

2. Voting Intention

(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>Over Labour</u> %	<u>SDP &</u> <u>Liberal</u> %	<u>Con lead</u> <u>over Alliance</u> <u>Liberal & SDP</u> %
<u>1985</u>								
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*

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 Allian Liberal & S</u> %
1985								
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
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
21-26 Aug	29.5	35.5	13.0	20.0	2.0	-6.0	33.0	-3.5
28 Aug-2 Sep	27.0	36.5	14.0	21.0	1.5	-9.5	35.0	-8.0
4-9 Sept	26.5	36.5	13.0	22.0	2.0	-10.0	35.0	-8.5

(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> %
1985							
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

(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>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1985							
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
21-26 Aug	27.0	32.0	12.0	18.0	2.0	10.0	-5.0
28 Aug - 2 Sep	26.0	34.0	13.0	20.0	1.0	6.0	-8.0
4 - 9 Sep	24.0	33.0	12.0	19.0	2.0	9.0	-9.0

3. Government Record

Gallup found no change in the latest study in the proportion of the electorate claiming to approve of our record in Government to date - 27% claimed to approve, 60% disapproved and 13% did not have a view. Details are shown in the table below:-

	<u>GOVERNMENT RECORD</u>		
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
1985			
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

GOVERNMENT RECORD (cont.)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
31 July - 5 Aug (%)	25	61	14
7-12 August (%)	23	65	12
14-19 August (%)	24	65	11
21-26 August (%)	27	59	13
28 Aug-2 Sep (%)	27	63	10
4-9 Sep (%)	27	60	13

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

For the third survey running, Gallup found no significant change in Mrs. Thatcher's popularity - 34% claimed to be satisfied with Mrs. Thatcher as Prime Minister, 60% dissatisfied and 6% did not have a view. Mrs. Thatcher's popularity has fluctuated around the 33%/34% level in the last three surveys. Mr. Kinnock's popularity fell slightly - down to 35% regarding him as a good leader. Mr. Steel's popularity also fell slightly but it remains higher than at the start of the year. Dr. Owen's popularity remained almost unchanged and not far from the level at the start of the year.

	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Mrs Thatcher Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Mr. Kinnock 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
21-26 Aug (%)	34	60	5	37	46	17
28 Aug-2 Sep (%)	33	63	4	37	47	16
4-9 Sep (%)	34	60	6	35	50	15

	<u>Mr. Steel</u>			<u>Dr. Owen</u>		
	<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>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
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
21-26 Aug (%)	65	18	17	53	25	22
28 Aug-2 Sep (%)	64	20	15	55	23	21
4-9 Sep (%)	61	23	16	54	24	23

5. Published Polls

Full details from the 'Weekend World' Harris poll (conducted 5-7 September) will be included in Public Opinion Background Note 106.