

**Building Social Capital through Community Politics
in an Inner London Borough:
The Labour Party in Battersea, 1908-2008**

Tony BELTON

(Councillor, Wandsworth Borough Council, London)

Penelope J. CORFIELD

(Professor of History, Royal Holloway, University of London)

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■ Introduction

(Chair) Thank you for coming to the seminar organized by the Center for Social Capital Studies at Senshu University. It's my great pleasure to introduce Councillor Tony Belton from the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth in London, and his partner, Professor Penelope Corfield from Royal Holloway, University of London.

Mr. Belton is the leader of the Labour Party in the Wandsworth Borough Council. He is one of the longest serving councillors in London. So a very experienced local politician. He is engaged also in various activities for the local community.

And Professor Corfield is a distinguished historian who is well known not just in Britain but also in Japan. Her research interests are very wide ranging. Her numerous publications include the two books listed in the handout (*The Impact of English Towns 1700-1800*, 1982; *Time and the Shape of History*, 2007). She is also a very able teacher and supervisor. Her former research students at Royal Holloway include Konishi-san and Sugita-san sitting there.

Today, they will give us a talk about the past and present of the activities of the Labour Party in Battersea, a part of Wandsworth, in South London. On our request, they have kindly agreed to refer to the term 'social capital', so that we will be able to get many hints for social capital studies. Of course, we don't have to stick only with social capital. Hopefully we can discuss any point from any angle after the talk. Probably the recent political change in Japan could provide good points for discussion. Before you start, shall we introduce ourselves briefly?

* Editorial note: The presentation given at the seminar of the Center for Social Capital Studies, Senshu University, held on September 15, 2009, Kanda Campus, Senshu University, Tokyo. The text has been edited and slightly updated into written format by P.J.C. from dictation text made at the meeting, with some illustrations from the original Powerpoint display.

† Councillor, Wandsworth Borough Council, London

†† Professor of History, Royal Holloway, University of London

Participants (seating order)

Dr. Takeshi Nagashima (Chair of the seminar, Senshu University). British and Japanese urban history. Project member.

Dr. Kentaro Saito (Kyoto Sangyo University). British economic history.

Prof. Shinichi Takagami (Osaka Sangyo University). British and Irish history.

Prof. Ichiro Michishige (Toyo University). History of commerce and consumption.

Prof. Tadashi Nakano (Waseda University). English urban history.

Prof. Yuichi Marumo (National Graduate Institute of Policy Studies). Defense policy.

Prof. Naoko Sajima (Senshu University). International security. Project member.

Prof. Satoshi Kambara (Senshu University). Social business. Project member.

Dr. Norihiko Arakawa (Gakushuin University). English history.

Prof. Hiroo Harada (Senshu University). Public finance and local governance. The leader of the Project.

Mr. Chang Guan-Ling (Senshu University) Project RA.

Mr. Junichi Yokoyama (Senshu University) Project RA.

Prof. Hiroshi Uchida (Professor Emeritus, Senshu University) History of civil revolutions. Project member.

Prof. Shozo Kuroda (Senshu University). Japanese and British town planning.

Prof. Shunsuke Murakami (Senshu University). History of civil society in Germany and Japan. Project member.

Dr. Takako Sugita (Aoyama Gakuin University). British political history in the mid-19th century.

Dr. Emi Konishi (Senshu University). 18th century British history. Project member.

■ Part I—Historical Context: London’s Electoral History over the Long-Term

(Prof. Corfield) Konnichiwa to everyone. My name is Penny Corfield. And with my partner Tony Belton, we are very happy to be here to join your project. I will give a short historical introduction and then Belton-san will give his expertise as a municipal councillor.

And just to start, we will suggest our thoughts on social capital. But of course since you have this project, we would want to hear your definition very much. But we would view social capital as some way of storing - the idea of capital being to store together some resources. So we would think that *finance capital* is money and banking. *Built capital* is houses and factories. And *social capital* is not just social meetings because these are more casual and flexible. But *social capital* is some way of storing or having some historic memory of social arrangements which allows ideas and experience to be transmitted from generation to generation. So our example is the role of political parties as storing and developing and holding some form of social ideals and organization.

The particular example we are taking is from Battersea, where we live. So it is from our locality. And I am just a humble member of the local political party: we call this a ‘grass root’. I am one of the people who will post the letters and do the simple work. But Tony, Belton-san, is one of the leaders in our local party. So I am giving historical introduction to the framing of his expertise in politics for many years.

My introduction is really just to show one reason that social capital in Britain is quite strong because we have long tradition of involvement in politics at a popular level, especially

in London. This comment is based upon new research from myself and we have a report on this research. Many people think that popular politics in Britain starts only in the 20th century. But this is wrong. Not for the whole country, because in many parts of the country there was no popular voting. But in some places there is a strong tradition of popular involvement. And this was especially so in London.

It led to regular elections and popular electioneering. And therefore some party organization. I am calling this early development 'proto-democracy'. It is not full democracy but it is giving the example of involvement not just by the aristocracy, not just the very wealthy but including the many. It involved men, not women, but many ordinary people, not the very poorest, but the artisans, the craftsman, the merchants, the traders in London. Here is a 1754 painting by Hogarth and he is being satirical. But these are quite poor people that are coming up the steps to vote. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/3] This voter is a soldier who has lost a leg. The voters are coming up, in public, to cast their votes. And there is the man with the electoral register, checking that each one is a valid voter. But very much like voting today, you identify yourself, you vote. But the difference in this case is the experience of open voting. The theory for open voting is that each citizen should be proud to state his vote. And open voting is the earliest form of voting.

I don't know if you know, but Hungary was the last country to stop open voting and it continued open voting until 1938. So there has been a long tradition of open voting. But, as each country democratized, in fact secret voting is brought in to make sure the workers are not intimidated by the factory owners and the peasants in the countryside are not intimidated by the land owners. But we have in the era of open voting a tradition of casting votes in public.

So my story is to say we have 300 years in London area, 300 years of experience of involvement in politics. But you can see in the 18th century, it is for adult males, artisans and traders. But not women, not children, not idiots or madmen, and not the very poor. But perhaps 75% of the adult males are voting. A very high percentage. And just reminding you, in London at this time there are four constituencies: London, Westminster, Middlesex County, and the Borough of Southwark. The technicalities: each one has a different franchise. But the point is that voters must be people of some property, and the idea is that they are free men. That is why they cast their vote openly. They are free citizens. So not the very poor and not women, who are seen as dependents.

A plan of London in 1810 shows the metropolis at the hub of political activity. So London is the exception in Oligarchic Britain. In the time of Oligarchy, London is the exception. Now, in this 1810 map Battersea is not included because at this time Battersea is still open fields. But very soon it is beginning to get population, and this reputation and tradition from London continues and extends. The illustration shows not the great details but the outline figures to indicate the large number of elections between 1700 and 1831. For example, there are 30 general elections. In the city of London, 28 are contested. So in all this period, many, many elections and many by-elections. But the details don't matter now. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/7]

Just to show there is a tradition of elections, not only for parliament, but also for local

office for many posts, including the Bridgmaster of Old London Bridge. So to find the Master of the Bridge, they have an election. Now this is not known. This is our new research to have discovered this. And we found it by looking in the 18th century newspapers. These results are all there in the newspapers. But historians have been studying the landlords and the aristocrats, and they have not seen this. But we are now analyzing these elections, to show that, between 1700 and 1850, over one third of a million Londoners have voted, casting over one million votes. So very many were voters - for example, for each constituency there are two MPs and for the city of London there are four MPs. So there was lots of politics and canvassing, amounting to a political culture of electioneering.

Here is a satire of the process. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/9] This is from 1784. The candidate at the back, raising his hat, is Charles James Fox, who is a noted radical. He is a Hatoyama of the 18th century. Yes, because he is from an aristocratic family, but he is supporting reform. And here is the working class butcher. You see he has a knife at his belt. He is not barefoot, so he is not very poor, but still he is a plebeian man with a rough hat and rough clothes. But look at the famous aristocratic ladies: this one on the right is the Duchess of Devonshire, and she is kissing the butcher, to get his vote. In reality she did not kiss real voters. But Fox is being satirized to show that he is using all the unscrupulous help he can get. Later, Belton-san will tell you about canvassing. And he can tell you if he is kissing his voters.

So there is a long-established culture of electioneering. There is a culture of debate in salons, in workshops, in the coffee houses. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/10] Of course, these are all men, as you can see. And in fact, there is one little dog. But the dog is not voting. But they are meeting, they are drinking coffee, they are discussing politics. So there is a tradition of social involvement among men. And in the 18th century, again new research - from Professor Peter Clark, the urban historian - has found extraordinary numbers of clubs and societies. He does not call this social capital, but he could call this social capital. He is talking about the very thing you are studying. And he calls it an 'associational world', the world of associations. So not just casual meetings but organized groups.

Of course in the towns there are many casual meetings. In the market, in the streets, in ordinary life, but also there is organization. And I think for social capital, the idea of organization is very important. Maybe flexible: these clubs and associations will come, they go, they don't all last forever. But they are storing some capital that can be passed from one group to their successors. Peter Clark has found local societies for every interest group, from sports to philosophy to science. And also identity. There was a club for the 'Ugly Mugs'. This is for men who are ugly. And they would meet, they would drink, and they sang songs about being ugly: '*So nobody loves us, we are ugly men*'. I did look for a picture of these men, but I couldn't find. But any group could make an association and have their own club.

And just to show you, how much this has developed. This is a picture of one of the most famous clubs: it is the Lunar Society in Birmingham. Many scientists of very great fame later, who were not famous at the time, attended here: they are then young men developing their ideas, like Erasmus Darwin; they go to this place to talk with other people. So they are sharing their

ideas. And this is one of the venues. This is quite a grand house you can see, Soho House in Birmingham. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/12] But they met also in much more modest places.

So to show you the example of how much this culture is already developed, this information is from Maidstone, which is the county town of Kent. So not the metropolis. Its population is only about 6,000 in the 1780s. So the adults number perhaps 3,000. And the adult males are 1500 - a very small number of people by modern standards. But they have many, many clubs and societies all in this place. And I haven't listed them all, because I don't have room for all. But they have an agricultural society, a book society, a concert society – indeed many music societies. Most of these societies sing songs together. They drink a lot of beer and they sing together for collective identity. And in these associations, singing together and drinking together is a very important part of generating social capital. In Maidstone, they have a cricket club - the national game of England, which is developed in the 18th century when they have the first rules of cricket. And in Maidstone, they also have dining societies, drinking societies, the Humane Society. This is made to rescue people who fall in the river. They will go and bring them out. It's mainly doctors. They will go and rescue people who are drowning. How they know if they are drowning I don't know. But they walk by the river and, if anyone falls in, they will rescue them. But I think it's mainly scientists discussing the art of resuscitation. And then they have the Kentish Society for Useful Knowledge. That is so very typical of the 18th century and indeed the 19th century. And then they have a society for Trap Ball, which is a local ball game – and card societies. Very many, perhaps 30 or 40 societies in a small center like this. But it is quite difficult to follow the history of these societies. They will be there for a short time. Some will last for a long time. The cricket club is still continuing today, but others come and go. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/13]

So there is flexibility in this system, but there is also building and storing social capital. And it is from this background that the political associations come. In the 18th century, Whig and Tory clubs and in the 19th century established political parties, drawing on this traditional associationalism with a local base, developing into a national federation. And the radical clubs do this in the 1790s; and the Chartists do this in the 1840s. And it is the origin of the Labour Party, from the local labour parties which in 1900 form the national Labour Representation Committee (the ancestor of the Labour party in 1906). And very interesting, to this day, the modern Conservative Party in Britain is not one centralized organization. It is a federation of independent local parties. Very recently David Cameron, the leader of the British Conservatives, said to the local associations, “You must choose more women, more people from different races and ethnic groups.” And some of them replied: “No we will choose. We are an independent party, federated with you. You cannot tell us what to do.” So this tradition of a local base - local social capital - is very important for the British political tradition.

Now it is not so easy to find a picture of these grass-roots local societies in action. So this is from nineteenth-century America. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/15] But it is the same idea. The small room, full of men shouting excitedly. Here someone is so excited - he is standing on the chair. These are reformers who want to have change. But you see they have a secretary who is

taking notes. They have the books with their rules. But also they have glasses. They are drinking. They are talking. They want to change the world. And when we start in politics, we go to meetings in small rooms like this. Then many people are smoking. Nowadays they don't smoke. But this is the classic 'small smoke-filled room' where people meet. Of course, in this picture, they are all men. And note this is America. That is a spittoon. They spit into that, which is not socially acceptable in nineteenth-century Britain. But in American politics they chew tobacco and they spit. Ladies, like Frances Trollope who wrote about the custom, did not like it.

So this is my context; and the context for the interview with Belton-san. This tradition of political association is a very long one in Britain, but especially in London. So the Battersea constituency for parliament is quite a late one in this tradition of 'proto-democracy'. And it's created in 1885. There is its position on the winding River Thames. The old area that I'm talking about in London and Westminster is further east. So we've now come west along the river. So, as the population spreads, they set up a new constituency. The illustration is showing the old boundaries. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/16] In fact, the boundaries are always changing but the principle is the same. Old Battersea in the later nineteenth century is an industrial community. This beautiful painting is by the American painter Whistler, who painted many striking pictures of the Thames. But not many people know this one – it is somewhat exaggerated, but it is of the industrial Thames. Quite probably it is Battersea with many factories by the river, using the river as the basis for these industries. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/17] And here is one of the most famous buildings in all of Battersea – we have already heard about Battersea Power Station but that came later. The factories generated a huge working-class community. And many working class men immediately began to make their own left-wing political associations against the Conservatives, against tradition. And very importantly, the early radicals in Battersea Vestry, even before the borough is created, built their own town hall. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/18]

Look at this, built in 1893 when Battersea is still a parish. But it's a beautiful town hall. It is still there. You must come and see it when you come to London. Now it is Battersea Arts Center, because we have had borough amalgamations and is no longer the political center. But inside there is a beautiful debating chamber where you can go to debate. We have local debates. And this is like the big 19th century town halls like Birmingham, like Liverpool, full of civic pride. So this tradition of association is a very confident tradition: you could say that the Town Hall is the built capital that arises out of- and preserves - the social capital.

In Battersea politics, we start with very famous working class organizer and politician: John Burns. He is from a very, very poor family and he is the first working-class politician to join the cabinet – while Keir Hardie and the other later more famous names were less famous then, because he was made a minister in the cabinet. He is in the Lib-Lab association between the Liberals and Labours. And he is the MP for Battersea, for this area, from 1892 until 1918. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/19]

So the early Labour movement in Battersea first of all is formed from the Lib-Lab alliance. And John Burns has his own political party, the Battersea Labour League. So he makes his own political party. Then, in 1908, the Battersea Labour Party is formed, and this one is affiliated to

the national party. But John Burns has his separate party, and in 1919 he refuses to join the national Labour Party, and in fact the Battersea Labour League then disappears. Most of them join the Labour Party. But Burns has his own independent Labour Party for many years. Again, this was a sign of the independent strength of association and working-class political identity in the area.

And now we are coming to present times. This illustration looks at the 20th century in Battersea/Wandsworth. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/21] For the first 65 years Labour is the dominant party in this area. In the parliament and in the council. Then Battersea, which becomes part of Wandsworth Council, is mainly Labour dominated until 1978. In this period Belton-san is the Labour leader in 1977-8. And then from 1978 to 2008, the last 30 years, Wandsworth is now a Conservative Council with great social change in the area. But in the Battersea constituency, there is still a strong battling between Tory and Labour. So we are in a hub of political debate. So the party organization (until recently) is very strong; and there is a collective *social capital* in the form of local political organisations.

■ Part II: Witness politics

(Prof. Corfield) Now we come to part two. So Belton-san is the witness. He is a Battersea councillor on Wandsworth Borough Council, and has been for many years — 1971 to 2009. He was in power, 1971 to 1978. So he has experience of power. But also in opposition, many years — for 26 of the last 31 years, Labour opposition leader. So this is a very interesting record and I have questions for Belton-san. Why did you first join the Labour Party in the mid-1960s? (Councillor Belton) Konnichiwa. Thank you Corfield-san for that exciting introduction into many years of opposition. But that's not where I started. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/21] As you can see, I was a somewhat younger person at the time, which might be relevant later on. And you may also be able to see some imitation of both the Beatles and George Best - for those of you who like football. So that was some kind of 1970s image. Anyway, to move on.

There are three main reasons why I joined the Labour Party at that time - and it's like describing anyone's political background. It is complex. But the most important person was that lady there, who was my grandmother. And that's a picture of my grandmother and her husband in 1910. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/24 PICTURE ON LEFT] And that child there, aged one, my aunt, is still alive with us today and the family is planning her 100th birthday next year. Well, my grandmother used to tell me stories, as I suppose grandmothers tell most grandchildren stories, but they were very political stories. Because eight years after this picture was taken, in the flu epidemic of 1919 that raged across the world, my grandfather died, leaving my grandmother with this lady and three other children. And that was at a time when there was no such thing as a widow's pension. No family support of any kind. And she's obviously not a poor woman, but they're not affluent either. He is a tram driver and she was a housewife. But she finds herself walking to work from where they lived in Finsbury to Oxford Street, which is about 6 or 7 miles I suppose. Walking to work because she couldn't afford the tram fare. And working through the week to keep these four children alive and well.

And she told a very funny story of when she first got to the vote, which was 1928. A man in a big white car with an open top - modern Britains would know it as a 'Roller', that is a Rolls Royce, often referred to as a Roller. And a rich man came in a Roller to take her to vote. And her neighbour thought that they could not possibly do that because they would be expected to vote Conservative. My grandmother said something like: 'To hell with that, Nell, it's a secret ballot. We will go in the car and come back in the car, but we will vote Labour'. So there's that kind of emotional context to why I joined Labour.

There was a social reason too. I'm not saying grandparents lived in slum housing like that [POWERPOINT SCREEN/24 PICTURE ON RIGHT]. But, funnily enough, when Corfield-san and I first moved into Battersea, we came across some houses like this, built right under the railway arches. In fact that could very well be a part of Battersea. This is two railway arches very close together. And houses built underneath.

So there was emotional and a social context and also an intellectual context in that I was much more attracted to radical European thought than to conservative European thought. The most obvious example I can think of is of Rousseau. For those who know the *Social Contract* (1762), the first line is 'Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains'. That I always thought was a brilliant description of a political position. So I became a Labour councillor.

(Prof. Corfield) So my next question Belton-san, what is it like to be a councillor in a typical working week?

(Councillor Belton) When I started as a councillor in 1971, it was a volunteer job. It was completely unpaid, and I was reading today about ... I've got the name wrong, but it's a name like *chumondai*. I'm sure that's wrong. But I was reading about it Japan. The neighborhood organizations.

(Prof. Corfield) Around the *choume*.

(Prof. Konishi) Like 1-*chome*, 2-*chome*... Maybe *chonai-kai*, that is.

(Councillor Belton) And it says about these neighborhood organizations that the chairs of them are almost invariably a housewife or a retired person because they have the time. But when I started being a councillor, that was true about all councilors in Britain. So it was not as professional as it is now. Nowadays I get paid as Labour opposition leader. I hope I've got my arithmetic right on this, because I don't want you to think I get paid an enormous amount or a trivial amount. But I get paid 7 million yen a year. Does that seem reasonable? It's not high pay, but it's enough to manage on. And the average councillor gets about 1,700,000 yen a year. So it's something that you cannot live on as an average councillor. But it does mean that you're expected to perform at a reasonably professional level.

So here are two elements of being a councillor. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/26] One element (on the L) is the committee agenda. And this is ... not that it matters, I can't read what agenda that is. But it's a committee agenda and there are possibly about 50 pages in the average agenda. And there are committee meetings almost every night of the week. I go to them about twice a week. So you have this committee agenda of 50 pages you have to read through, if you want to do the subject serious worth. And often you have to work afterwards on whatever the results

were, after the meeting. And the second point is shown on the R: the public meeting. In this particular case, I'm speaking at an opening of some sheltered housing in Wandsworth.

(Prof. Corfield) No moustache!

(Councillor Belton) No moustache – it's a much later picture of me. And if we move on: here's me today being the Duke of Devonshire, kissing my electorate. I can assure you and particularly Corfield-san, I did not actually go so far. But there I am canvassing on an estate of social housing in Battersea. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/27] And as a councillor I represent a constituency which has about 12,000 electors. So it's obviously quite difficult getting around to 12,000 people. But I do my best. And in our elections, about 33% of those 12,000 electors will vote - possibly slightly more, 35%. Whereas opposed to that, in a general election, a country-wide election, among the same population, about 66% will vote. So roughly twice as many.

And there are two other parts of being a councillor. One is case work. I am expected to respond to this lady's request for a transfer of housing to a larger property, to find out why she hasn't yet had a transfer, to explain to her why she's not going to get one (which is frequently the case now) or hopefully to succeed in getting her one. And then of course, as a party political operator, there's always the party meetings as well. Meantime, I try to consult with the electorate using modern methods. This illustration isn't exactly the blog I use. It looks a bit different from this. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/28] But it is a Powerpoint interpretation of a blog that I've been using this year. And it's consultation with local voters about what we're going to do with Battersea Power Station, which no longer has a purpose as a power station. It's empty and half derelict. And I actually headed this - I think Corfield-san has translated it from the blog to this presentation. And it was actually headed, *I want to know your views on ...*, or something like that.

So there's communication with the electorate via blogs and also through the local newspaper. A version of this request went into the local newspaper, and the newsletters that I circulate electronically and occasionally by direct mail.

(Prof. Corfield) So Belton-san, you are a busy man. Can you tell us first of all about the period in power? What did Labour achieve in power from 1971-78 in Wandsworth?

(Councillor Belton) That's a very big question. And I could speak about it for a very long time. But – to summarise- we substantially changed the level of services for the elderly and under 5-year-old children, providing day nurseries for the children, as well as home helps and meals-on-wheels for the elderly. We founded the Arts Center in the town hall that you were talking about earlier. But, if we move on, we did a lot of other things. That's another version of me. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/30 FRONT PICTURE and LEFT-HAND PICTURE] We built this low-rise housing. Preparing this, last week in Battersea, it felt very different. Now after two days in Tokyo with houses with nothing under about 50 stories high, it seems very strange. But we built this low-rise housing in Battersea in opposition almost to the high-rise council housing that was built before. We wanted to change it all. We'd have a big job in Tokyo. We wanted to change it all, and in the 1970s we did - it is one of our most successful developments.

We also provided for local industry and built factories. And this doesn't perhaps

seem perhaps very radical to you. It depends on the way that Japanese society is organized. But at the time in Britain, local councils were not thought to have a responsibility for employment. We had a responsibility for public health, for housing, and for education, but we didn't have any responsibility for employment. But this particular group of Labour councillors in the 1970s saw that there was quite a lot of unemployment in the area, mainly because Battersea was changing from the heavily industrialized area (that you've seen pictures of) to much more middle-class areas like this. So lots of the working men needed other places and other types of jobs. So there's one of the factory units [TO RIGHT OF ILLUSTRATION]. And indeed that is me, and the then Mayor, and a Labour minister at the grand opening of this particular unit in 1978.

If we move on, as well as improving the environment in that sense, we took very strong stance on a big transport policy issue. Again very strange saying this in Tokyo, but we took a very strong stance against urban motorways and road-widening lines. I can see from much walking about in Tokyo, that many of the side roads are the traditional width. Many. But you've obviously also knocked down great areas and put in urban motorways. Those of you who know London, will know the Euston Road. But there's very little else. There are very few motorways of any kind in London. And this group of Labour councillors in 1971 were a very important part of stopping London becoming like Tokyo perhaps. Whether this is a good thing or a bad thing is a matter for debate, but clearly London has more traditional physical capital in terms of housing and squares and those kind of things – and we wanted to save those. And we also planned a riverside walk. This is planned, I'm afraid, not exactly achieved right here, with all these very pretty young people. So it's an architect's drawing. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/31] But at the six miles of Battersea (I'm now confusing Battersea with Wandsworth myself. Battersea is a part of Wandsworth) ... of the six miles of Wandsworth river front, about 50% of it, now has a Thames walkway like this.

(Prof. Corfield) Well, Belton-san, after so many activities, in 1978 you lost power and went into opposition. So before we move on, I should ask you what things could or should Labour in the 1970s have done differently?

(Councillor Belton) My first response to that, Corfield-san, is the next slide. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/33] Because difficult it was. But thinking about it - and I'm certain that it is a lesson for Obama-san and maybe for Hatoyama-san, both of those. As you saw from earlier pictures, we were a very young group indeed. I was by no means the youngest in those early pictures, by no means the youngest. Indeed Corfield-san was a councillor with me. Well, I was just 30 when we got onto the council. So all of us wanted to achieve a great deal very quickly. One of those criticisms of youth I suppose — no patience. We all wanted to do everything. So we were building houses, knocking down houses, changing road plans, annoying some people by what we were doing in a radical way, and paying for it. Which means that we put up local taxation rather more than a more sensible group of more mature politicians might have done. So our ambition was almost universal. But we were constrained by our capabilities. I guess the single most important thing that we failed to do was to take a strategic view about the level of change that was possible for any one group, which I think is a position that maybe Obama-san is getting

into with reform of healthcare. Hopefully he can manage it, but there are just so many vested interests that he's trying to tackle, that maybe he can't. And maybe there's the same lesson for Hatoyama. Not that I want to be too negative about that. Because we did achieve a great deal. But there's that very delicate balance between ambition and limits to ambition. And I suppose that's the little bit of social memory that I add to it.

(Prof. Corfield) Well, when you lost power as leader in 1978, you could go home and play football and dig the garden, but instead you remained on the council, and you continued in opposition. And, I may say, many people in our locality are very admiring of Belton-san for continuing. So I would like to ask, why do you persist in opposing a well-entrenched Conservative council which has a huge majority?

(Councillor Belton) And which is in power in a part of London which gets wealthier relative to other parts of the country year by year. So the one thing Wandsworth is unlikely to do is to cease being a Conservative council. Nonetheless, I was still motivated by the original motivations. I do believe the Conservative council is very divisive in some ways. And that its policies are designed very much to assist the affluent in the area and not the less well-off. So I'm not saying I'm automatically right on this. I can well imagine a Conservative counter-argument. But you ask me about my position, that's why I'm still doing it, because I still think their position is divisive.

But it's also true that I like to offer a democratic alternative. I'm looking to Emi Konishi here, because Emi knows I've always said that the complete control of Japan by the Liberal democratic Party — this is without knowing any of the detailed issues whatsoever - but the idea that since 1955 the LDP have been in almost permanent control in Japan always strikes me as unhealthy. A change between parties is a good thing and should always be encouraged. So when asked if I have a view about the Japan Democratic Party - which I don't seriously have - I'd always be in favour of it as a change, to keep the democratic mechanism in working order.

(Prof. Corfield) So, what is the real art of opposition, having now been in opposition for 30 years?

(Councillor Belton) I have put a few items there. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/38] Clearly, when going into the committees, one has to be prepared with the arguments, and prepared for the counter-arguments. So preparation is important. The priorities are important because there is no point in opposing a strong Conservative majority on everything. That just merely means one loses everything. If you prioritize a few major items you might still lose, but you're more likely to gain publicity as a result of it, because you've chosen your priority arguments effectively. But all of that has to be done on the basis of some principles. I don't agree with opposition for its own sake: as in, *the majority party has said that, then we will vote against* – that's not a sensible position. Though if one gets involved in the political world, it's amazing how easy it is just to fall into the trap of *they are doing it, therefore we'll vote against it*. A position, it sounds like the Republicans and Democrats are getting into in the United States today. And, returning to my list, of course you need perseverance. Everyone understands perseverance, tenacity, stamina. Words like that.

(Prof. Corfield) So, I'm now asking a personal question. What is your personal secret to keeping going in local politics for 38 years?

(Councillor Belton) Well, I prepared an answer to that, which is ... but thinking about it: all of those points listed are true for me. But what I really enjoy is the debate, is arguing with the other side. That I find great fun. I really do enjoy that. And of course you have to have good health to keep it going, and for long hours – because, rather like the academic world and journalism from my experience, alcohol is also a very important element of politics. So those are all necessary. And having support.

And we move on to the next slide. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/39] My very small Labour group is there. I hope you can recognize this rather older version of me. There is also my deputy leader, Councillor Cooper. And this particular year 2008/9 - this is the first time the Conservative Party had ever allowed this to happen - they allowed us to choose the mayor. So there is our Labour Mayor. The Mayor in Britain normally (not always, but normally) is a ceremonial post. The Mayor goes around opening school fetes and things like that. Plus my chief whip and my other colleagues. So they are pretty important to keeping going in opposition.

Which leads me to my final point really - and I know almost nothing about Japan's local government structure. But I am aware that in Britain, globalization applied to one country (if you see what I mean) and instant technology mean that it is much more difficult to defend services in your area if they are not competitive with services in another area. So the public will get very annoyed if educational results in your area are not as good as educational results in another area. And, as the public are looking for outputs to be the same, one asks the question: *"Is there a role to have a local version of the inputs? Why not just run everything nationally and hope to get similar results across the board?"* Now, as I understand it in Japan, it is a much more centralized system in the first place. So perhaps you can tell me what you think that a lack of a real local government system (if I'm right in reading that) means in Japan. I am trying to say that there are two conflicts: on the one hand, the conflict between the modern technological centralizing, and on the other hand, people's desire to have some control over their own lives at a relatively local or regional level. So that's my last question to leave to you. [POWERPOINT SCREEN/40] Thank you.

(Prof. Corfield) Thank you. I would now like to just make a short explanation. As part of our social capital within our political party, we decided on the 100th anniversary of the Battersea Labour Party (not John Burn's Battersea Labour League, but the Battersea Labour Party) - we decided to do a very unusual thing — to make a DVD of our history. This is made entirely by local people in Battersea. We have in our local Labour Party a very famous actor with a very strong voice like Lawrence Olivier. His is the first voice you will hear. No other Labour Party has done anything like this. So we are very proud. But it is also part of our expression of community involvement. All the voices here are local people. It runs for an hour. It is part of our finance capital as well as social capital because we are selling copies.

It shows our history and our belief that it is a living history. So in some ways this came from the combination of my interest as a historian and Belton-san's as a councillor for the present

development of this. We do stress that Battersea is changing. So we are not saying we are the same party and everything is perfect. Instead, we are saying that this radical tradition can develop in different ways. The whole DVD runs for one hour and that is far too long for today. So if you would permit, I would just like to show you the opening. And obviously the questions are mainly for Belton-san, but also, if you want, we can comment on how to make a DVD, as a very unusual and difficult thing to do. So can we show just the opening and we'll stop?

(Chair) Sure. This is scripted by you, right?

(Prof. Corfield) But not the music. I didn't write the music. Could you turn the lights down a little bit? Thank you.

■ **DVD** – *Red Battersea: One Hundred Years of Labour 1908-2008* (2008). [Introduction and chapter IV are shown.]

■ **Q&A**

(Prof. Uchida) Very interesting. I enjoyed it. One question. Your report reminded me about the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences that was established in 1857 and ended in 1886. My question is what kind of effectiveness those associations had? Were they successful in establishing social capital in London or the UK?

(Prof. Corfield) Very interesting and difficult to assess the impact of these associations. So I think we can say some percentage will be very successful, some will have only medium life, and some perhaps come and go very rapidly. But the ones that are most successful usually develop some institutions and some linkages, especially associations from one society to another. So a sign of strength is when they start to organize linkages, keeping the local base but linking. A good example of a successful association is anti-slavery, which begins in the early 19th century with 200 local societies. And then they start to associate together. And in this present day, if you google on the computer for anti-slavery, now it is an international movement. If there is social interest and a good cause, it can move from very small local base to an international movement. In the case of political parties, these can come and go. So the Liberal Party in the 19th century was a national party and now smaller, though recovering a bit. And we are wondering what is happening to the British Labour Party. It has come and been very big and now it is in trouble. So all of these societies have no guarantee. Social capital is more fluid. Houses can fall down or banking - we all know money can have problems as well. So there is a flexibility in this. But I would say the sign of strength is when they begin to make associations and survive over time.

(Chair) Do you think the size matters, the size of the association, in making social capital?

(Prof. Corfield) Not absolutely, because many of these clubs and societies are very small. But it is building the networks between ... Belton-san might comment on political organizations. Often the number of activists are quite small, but you can have big impact.

(Chair) I mean, if the association becomes larger, it would be difficult to communicate with each other among its members. So I think there should be a suitable size, not too big, or not too small, maybe.

(Councillor Belton) Surely social capital as related to associations works most effectively when there is a need, so Corfield-san mentioned that in little Maidstone the cricket club still exists, the only one [of the eighteenth-century societies] that still exists of all those clubs. Because cricket itself became such a successful sport across the country. Not so successful now. And the cricket club is probably having difficulties now. They are in many places. But it responded to a need. And Labour - to pursue the analogy - clearly responded to a need at the end of the 19th century and possibly needs to redefine the need in the current non-Trade Union world.

(Prof. Corfield) Yes, and actually some of these Victorian societies, later they changed their name and they develop in different ways. They are still, some are still continuing today. And one I like very much. This is not a secular example, but a religious example. In the early 19th century, a woman called Joanna Southcott announced that she was a prophet of God and she set up her own church. And in her lifetime, it was quite a large church. But after her death it became very small, and later it became a small society. And in the 1990s when I was writing my book on the professions, I wondered if this society still existed. They said it was last heard of in Bedford. And I looked in the address book, there was no reference. But I thought I will try the British Postal Service. So I wrote the name of the society in Bedford and I put it in the letter box, thinking *I will never hear again*. I said I don't want to know how large you are, but I just want to know *do you still exist*. I thought if I asked how large they would be embarrassed because I'm sure it must be very small. And two months later, I got back a small letter with very shaky hand by, I imagine, a very old poor person, not very well-written but saying, "*Yes, we still exist. We have the message from the prophet and when the time is right we will tell the world.*"

So this is still surviving but this is a very, very small association. But for them, it is a secret. They have the secret message. So there is the secret. Sometimes the secret keeps [movements going]. Other times it is the public principle or a shared endeavour, knowledge, sport or whatever - or social and political divisions in society. So politics of some sort will always continue, even if particular parties come and go.

(Prof. Harada) I am interested in the hereditary element when someone wants to be a politician in Britain. For example, if you were a child of a politician, especially of a Labour politician, is it natural for you to become a Labour politician, succeeding your father, like here in Japan?

(Councillor Belton) I don't think it's anything near as strong in Britain as the indications are from what I know of Japan. What I know of Japan is very limited indeed. But the Japanese Times today says that three of the recent Prime Ministers have had grandparents or fathers who were Prime Ministers, something like that. Whereas an equivalent in Britain, in Britain there are two aristocratic families, maybe three aristocratic families, where I don't mean aristocratic as in [smart society], I mean within the Labour Party. There's the Jays, the MP from Battersea, who ... I always forget the relationships (Penny might put me right). A Jay son or daughter is married to Jim Callaghan's son or daughter, and another one of the Jays became the ambassador in Washington. [*Peter Jay, the son of Douglas Jay, one-time cabinet minister and MP for Battersea (1946-83), was British Ambassador in Washington 1977-9; his first wife was Margaret Callaghan, daughter of James Callaghan, Prime Minister 1976-9, and she was also Labour*

leader in the House of Lords, 1998-2001]. And there's the very famous Tony Benn - I mean Tony Benn's very famous in Britain, possibly known here - who was a highly controversial Labour cabinet minister in the 1970s. His son [*Hilary Benn*] is now a Labour cabinet minister. And another son was a Labour councillor in West London.

So they do exist. But I think on the Labour side, less likely than on the Conservative side. If I am very specific about my own experience, actually the most extreme case, there is a family in one of those photographs of a man who is currently the Mayor of Wandsworth today, as of today, and he is one of four people from the same family who have been representing Battersea almost continuously since about 1910. This is a small part of Battersea, one bit or another. But I think that's just his grandfather, father, uncle, and he. And all the indications are that he is the end of the line. I don't think any other members of the family are interested. So the family links are there, but not very strong - no stronger than it would be in the local cricket club or football club or anything else.

(Chair) How do you think about that Tony Blair's father used to be a Conservative politician? Is it exceptional that the son belongs to a party different from his father's?

(Councillor Belton) I've never analyzed that that way. It is very rare. But it is not unique. I'm stuck in my mind. I do know there are other examples. A local colleague of mine - that Corfield-san's just mentioned to me - who is a Labour MP in Middle England, with a Conservative father. But again that would be fairly rare.

(Prof. Sajima) I'm interested in how it is like to be an opposition party, an opposition leader, how to prepare for, how to establish the party politics, and how to make a position towards the next election. It's very relevant to our current political situation in Japan, I think. In the case of the LDP, now Japan's opposition party, it is difficult for them to figure out how to reestablish, or how to orient the definition of party politics, and how to stress their difference in their policies from the DPJ, now the government party. It seems that, in Britain, or in London, the two parties' differences are clear and people know about them. Need not to explain what is Labour and what is Conservative.

(Councillor Belton) That's very interesting and a tough question. That's all right. I think fairly clearly in Britain - and clearly, for historical reasons, the same does not apply in Japan - it's just different. But in Britain the conflict between the rising working class who are becoming more powerful in some ways in the 19th century with trade union movements, the sheer numbers ... the fact that they've got some spending capacity, not a lot, but some, and the conflict between them and the owner classes, reflected across Europe. And obviously most extremely in Russia I suppose in 1917, but it's reflected everywhere. And at various points in Britain's history that's highlighted. 1945 is a particular highlight. *You ruling classes got us into this mess - that is, the war - there may have been lots of other things. But we're now going to create a new world for the people.* So Labour is very strong immediately after the war, and a very distinct difference. And I think there's a historical memory of that distinct difference.

(Prof. Sajima) I know the distinct difference between the two parties.

(Councillor Belton) What I was about to develop is that it is now less because ...

(Prof. Sajima) The third way of the Labour?

(Councillor Belton) It's just now people will say to you commonly on the street: *I think what you're saying, you're all the same. Why should I bother to vote Labour, you're exactly the same as a Conservative.* And I think that in periods of national stability that might be true everywhere. But an economic recession or an exterior threat — exterior threat in Britain's case might be the European common market and whether we're going to really join it or not - might sharpen the political divide again. Does that make sense? So if in Japan, it's currently pretty stable and not much conflict, then I can see there is a problem, and why bother to vote between one party or another. But an external threat will change that at some point or other.

(Prof. Corfield) Yes, it is my comment as historian that especially on the Left, the feeling can expand and contract. It isn't so stable, whereas conservatism is more traditional and often family-based and will continue for a long time. So in Britain, for example the Chartists come and they are quite large in the 1830s/40s and then they go down. And then we have new Unionism and Labour Party in the later 19th century, and it goes down between the wars in the 1930s. And then Attlee and the government after 1945. So it may be always the Left is expanding and contracting.

Now we are in a period of similar change, because the traditional working-class base is not so clear, not so coherent, and not so well organized. And Tony Blair was trying for third way Labour but it didn't quite ... it hasn't quite succeeded partly because of the problems of the war in Iraq. But there were other problems, because of the way it developed in government.

So now, in the Labour movement, broadly, there is big discussion - also as for Hatoyama-san and the Japan Democratic Party - how to make a new identity on the Left. In Britain I think it is more difficult because we actually have a supposedly left-wing government in power. In a way, for Hatoyama, he can say everything that is not the traditional party. But of course this may make the problem that Belton-san mentioned in the 1970s. If you are too ambitious for change, you may alienate people like Obama with plans for healthcare in America and the right wing in the USA are making wild accusations about the implications of his changes. So in some way the Left must press for something new, but at the same time not frightening too many people over too many things. So Belton-san would say, with the experience of what we learned in the 1970s, not to try to change everything all at once, but to try to choose your main thing. So for Hatoyama, I don't know what is the main thing.

(Prof. Sajima) May I ask something relating to the difference? You are a politician in an urban area. But how about the role of Labour Party in rural areas? Do they represent people in rural areas, whose interests might be different from those in urban areas?

(Councillor Belton) Well, one reason - one answer I can give to that is that they don't. There was a map done of Britain in 1948, which showed the spread of constituencies between rural and urban areas. And Labour held a fair number of rural seats. There were probably then more agricultural workers than there are now, and it was immediately after the war. But there's not one now. (We've lost Norfolk Southwest haven't we? [Yes]) There just is not a rural Labour seat at all. And it almost went the other way with the Conservatives, well it did with the

Conservative Party. This is a problem that Britain has. I don't know what the Japanese equivalent is. But there was not a single Conservative MP in Scotland or Wales. There was not a Labour MP for a rural constituency in England. There was a complete divide. So one answer to your question is that the Left has failed in rural areas. As simple as that.

But in English rather more than Welsh or Scottish rural areas, there are very few people of historic Labour, in half of the English countryside, a very high proportion of property is owned by Londoners who have got second houses in the country. And in many ways the countryside has 'hollowed out' as agriculture has become industrialized, but not dependent on a trade-unionised workforce, if that makes sense.

(Prof. Sajima) So many things are arising in my mind, but I should stop here. Thank you very much.

(Prof. Harada) I have one more question. After the establishment of the European Union, maybe political situations have changed. So I think your Labour Party has a need to change. It's maybe a chance to expand your party. So do you have any idea or you have already changed in some way?

(Concillor Belton) First of all, let me say that Europe, I think, is a bigger problem for Britain than most of us understand. The people are quite divided about Europe. But that's just known. I'm not really sure that people ... It is not as an exact parallel, it can't be, but if you imagine the equivalent in East Asia. China is so large, but if you replace Germany for China, and German control of Europe as opposed of Chinese control of Korea and Siberia, and imagine a Britain wanting to get more involved with that as a Japan might do. Everyone, I would think, would be very respectful of China for all kinds of obvious historical reasons, but a bit scared. I think that's true in Britain and Europe. So I think there's a great deal to be played out on that. It's not resolved by any means. Which is only the context of your question.

What is new from that? Well, funnily enough, Europe again might be part of the answer because Europe is challenging many British political and cultural associations. For instance, in having a British constitution, in having the European courts of justice, European human rights. Now of course we have all these things, but they've all developed very historically and based on precedent and social credit if you like. Whereas in much of Europe, the social credit was created - ironically - by British legislators for Germany in particular, at the end of the war. British legislators said, "*Well, if we were starting from scratch, what would a trade union constitution or a political constitution look like?*" And they wrote it out with American power and imposed it on the Germans. But we don't have it. We just wrote it, but we don't have it.

So there may be some arguments there in constitutional terms. There are clearly arguments in Britain that are not played out yet, to deal with ethnicity. One of the people at the conference that Corfield-san is attending comes from Leicester. And she was saying last night that at the time of the next census Leicester will be the first British town to have a majority of non-whites. London has maybe 30%, maybe 25%, something like that. But Leicester will have a majority. Now all those ethnic minority groups without exception have higher rates of unemployment, lower wealth levels, lower rates of economic, educational achievement. There are obviously

tensions there potentially. Fortunately at the moment we have been able to adapt quite well. But there are obviously tensions there.

How the Labour Party responds to that is far too big a question for me. I just pose some of the potential issues for the time being.

(Prof. Murakami) Professor Corfield, you talked about associations in the 1780s. There were associations also in Germany since the end of the 18th century, for example those for singing, and book reading, and then there were gymnastic clubs, too. I think the English tradition of associations of citizens is much older than those in continental countries. I wonder if I am right; there had been associations for temperance led at first by churches before the 1780s, and in the 1830s during the Chartist movements, right?

(Prof. Corfield) Good question with many aspects. Firstly, in history I should say the history of association in Britain is even much earlier than 18th century if we think of medieval Guilds and the churches. But these are usually established by some body, by some institution like the organization of the merchants or the traders. The interesting thing for the 18th-century clubs and societies, these are being established not by institutions but by groups of individuals from the bottom as a grass-root development. But yes, I should say on the second question, are they all drinking alcohol? No. They are not all drinking alcohol. There are also temperance societies, which are trying especially ... temperance societies. For example, there are Chartist temperance clubs because some of the Chartist leaders are saying we cannot help the poor unless the men stop spending all the family money on drink.

(Prof. Sajima) If I could add something my view to that issue, was it related to a policy towards Irish people?

(Prof. Corfield) Yes, it was often said that the respectable working class wanted to live soberly and to save their money and advance. And they disliked the lumpenproletariat - and they might well include the Irish.

And we know also in the 20th-century Labour Party, as well as the trade union movement and the socialist intellectuals from the Fabian Society, there are also people from temperance, from the church, from non-conformist churches. And one reason why Belton-san was saying that in the countryside there used to be stronger Labour tradition. Often this is from the non-conformist churches. Whereas the Church of England tends to be more strongly conservative.

So there is the tradition and the Battersea family, that Belton-san mentioned, with a father, two sons, and the current Mayor all from one family, these are from a family of temperance and also religion. The first one was preaching to the Battersea population. And the current one is the Mayor. He has now changed and he is a Conservative mayor. But at his Mayor-making - there is a ceremony once a year - and at this ceremony there is always some ceremonial, and afterwards some drinking, some reception and some drink. But this Mayor gave us all a little poster saying *Drink is dangerous for you*. But everyone is drinking with one hand and holding this message with the other. So the temperance tradition is a very important component, but never a majority. And much of the bonding, it's not excessive drinking necessarily, but it is the

bonding in many of these social clubs. It's when the houses are poor and there is no radio or television, people go to these clubs for warmth, for sociability, building up a shared memory and tradition. So many of the things that survive on, like drinking songs, especially in Germany for example, the student clubs have long traditions of drinking songs, which they're still singing today. So these are ways of making communities and trying to build a collective memory, just as football fans will shout or chant their songs for their football team, chanting or anything that establishes groups together. So maybe the Labour Party today needs some new songs.

(Councillor Belton) We do have quite a tradition of singing songs but you're right, not many of them are new. We've probably stolen a couple of Dylan Thomas and pretended they were Labour. That's about it.

(Prof. Kuroda) I would like to ask about the prospects of the Battersea Power Station's regeneration plans. How the Conservatives and Labours are thinking about it?

(Councillor Belton) It's so iconic, as our equivalent of the Eiffel Tower, or Big Ben, so everyone knows where that is. But it is falling down. And I sit on the planning committee, and we've now had four major sets of plans to do something with this. The earliest was by one of Mrs. Thatcher's favorite rich men and he wanted to make a great kind of Disney Land out of it, with great big rides and so on. And he went bankrupt. Did he go bankrupt or did he just give up? No, he went bankrupt.

And then there was another big plan. We had Arnold Schwarzenegger and George Clooney over to Britain to open what was going to be a second version, which was going to have been a great big sports center inside it and a concert hall. I mean our Power Station, this is so large by Tokyo standards, I'm not sure what that means. But other power stations in Britain, that people make comparisons with, are in reality a quarter of the size. I mean it is so large. So it could easily have an indoor athletics track - no problem at all. But the money — those 18 million bricks I think someone estimated — the money just in repointing the brickwork, replacing the mortar, is just so great. So that idea collapsed.

And now there's an Irish company that is trying to do things with it. It is surrounded, by the way, by do you know acres? You probably do not know acres. Hectares? I don't know hectares, that's the trouble. But lots. It's surrounded by 50, 100 hectares, so whatever plan comes to fruition, there are bound to be lots of private flats and things of that kind built around it. But why I produced my newsletter: the latest story is that the latest developer now can't get it to work, in the world financial crisis. And the question I asked - if you were able to read it - was "*Is it time to give up? Is it time just to accept the inevitable and just to knock it down and do something else?*" To my knowledge, one Conservative councilor has asked this question and me. And everyone else just assumes it has to stay.

So if I understood your question right, it hasn't become party political at all. Both parties would love to be able to keep it, but one or two of us are beginning to say we can't carry on with this year after year after year of nothing happening.

(Prof. Corfield) But, Belton-san, is there not one distinction? The Conservative Party will only consider a commercial solution by a commercial business and hold these properties for many,

long periods, and there is nothing to make them do something with this. But the Labour Party, at least in principle, would like to see some collective planning, like consulting people locally to see what they would like, because some of these proposals are not popular locally. But they are just suggested by big business. So Labour would like to see some collective planning but I suppose also, since Belton-san is on the finance committee, he would say if the state or if the local government is going to do something, where is the money coming from? It is so large that is the problem. But in principle Labour would like to have some proper planning. The Conservatives are waiting on the market. And some of them are very embarrassed now because they said the market would solve this and the market cannot.

(Prof. Kuroda) I think there are professional town planners in the Battersea ward. How do they think about the redevelopment of the power station?

(Councillor Belton) Ah! I'd forgotten, but you're interested in British and Japanese town planning as comparison.

Corfield-san was right in saying there is a crucial difference in fundamentally how Labour and Conservative would approach it. She was right, but creative in my view, because the money is so big that my experience with the 1970s is like trying to take on too much. I just don't see that happening. But we have proposed that there should be a planning brief for the whole of the area. A view that the community in general should come up with what we would like to have there, and to try and steer the private enterprise towards that objective. In that sense Corfield-san is absolutely right. The Conservatives say leave it to the market and essentially that's their message: leave it to the marketplace.

(Chair) Time is running out. Could you allow me to make a final, short comment? I think that one of the striking differences between local government systems in Britain and Japan, that I gathered from your talk, is the role of mayor. In Japan, the mayor is directly elected by the electorate. But in Britain they are honorary, you said?

(Councillor Belton) Ceremonial, I did actually say, for the most part. Because I might want to come back on what you're saying but carry on.

(Chair) As there are mayors with administrative powers elected directly by local residents, the role of local councillors in Japan could merely be of pressure groups, representing vested interests. In my impression, local politicians are not always working for the community as a whole here. So what I learned from your talk today and what makes me think is the importance of involving local politicians in building social capital in this country.

(Councillor Belton) However that is interesting, because one of the Tony Blair reforms was to introduce elected mayors who as you say exist in Japan and the United States. You could introduce them if you had a local referendum demanding them. And Britain is not very interested. So to date, 10 years later, we have local mayors of the kind you are talking about, elected in three London boroughs out of 32 and in Doncaster, Stoke, Hartlepool, and maybe a couple of others. These are medium-sized - by Japanese standards, I suspect quite small, 100,000 population, maybe 200,000 population, towns in the north. And government has been trying to press the public to have more elected mayors and we are not responding.

And one of the reasons we are not responding is that the local councilors - and I'm certainly one of them - see that having an elected mayor would so undermine our position politically. In Wandsworth's case, instead of having 60 councillors speaking, I said my area was 12,000 people. I have two colleagues representing that area. So 60 councillors all roughly representing 4,000 or 5,000 people, and fighting it out between us about who is going to be the leader. We're going to have a person elected directly. All we can be is a pressure group as you say. A pointless exercise. So we are against that. But that has happened in a few cities in Britain. (Prof. Corfield) I think this is really important for the future of social capital in Britain. It is quite interesting: in some of these places they have a mayor and now there is local pressure not to have a mayor. But the system that Blair-san brought in says you can have a referendum to have one, but not that you can have a referendum not to have one. But now people are asking for such a referendum to stop. And one big famous mayor is the new mayor of London, first Livingstone, and then Johnson. But even in London Labour Party there are reservations, and in London Conservative Parties there are reservations because this is losing the local elements precisely as you say.

(Chair) Thank you very much for your presentation and thank you all for your participation.

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- 8 Powerpoint/16 Battersea constituency boundaries
- 9 Powerpoint/17 Whistler painting of industrial Thames riverside
- 10 Powerpoint/18 Battersea Town Hall 1893)
- 11 Powerpoint/19 Pictures of John Burns, Battersea MP 1892-1918
- 12 Powerpoint/21 Political power in C20 Battersea and Wandsworth
- 13 Powerpoint/22 Councillor Tony Belton in the early 1970s
- 14 Powerpoint/24 (picture on L) Tony Belton's grandparents 1911
- 15 Powerpoint/24 (picture on R) London slums by Gustave Doré
- 16 Powerpoint/26 Visual images of Councillor's tasks showing Committee agenda (L) + Councillor Belton speaking at meeting (R)
- 17 Powerpoint/27 Councillor Tony Belton canvassing in Battersea
- 18 Powerpoint/28 Extract from Councillor Belton's Blog consultation
- 19 Powerpoint/30 Low-rise housing built in Battersea in the 1970s; and Councillor Tony Belton opening some new factory units in 1978

- 20 Powerpoint/31 Architect's drawing of Battersea Power Station and riverside walk
- 21 Powerpoint/33 Multiple question marks
- 22 Powerpoint/38 Belton's notes on how to keep going in politics
- 23 Powerpoint/39 Wandsworth Labour Group of Councillors 2009
- 24 Powerpoint/40 - Belton's question to the meeting

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PRESENTATION TO SENSHU UNIVERSITY
'BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL' RESEARCH PROJECT:

*Building Social Capital
through Community Politics
in an Inner London Borough:
The Labour Party in Battersea,
1908-2008*

By: Councillor Tony Belton
(Wandsworth Borough Council)
and
Prof. Penelope J. Corfield
(Royal Holloway, London University)

1

**Part I - Historical Context:
London's Electoral History
over the Long-Term**

From 1689 onwards, long history
of regular elections and popular
electioneering,
especially in large constituencies with
'free' franchise

2

**'Proto-Democracy'
in the era of open polling**



3

**Eighteenth-Century Electors:
adult males,
artisans and traders**

excluding:
women and children,
'idiots',
the very poor



4

**Large constituencies
in the metropolis:**

City of London – Liverymen (Guilds)
City of Westminster – male ratepayers
County of Middlesex – 40/- freeholders
Borough of Southwark - male ratepayers

5

**a metropolitan hub
of political activity**



London in 1810

6

parliamentary elections

thirty general elections
between 1700 and 1831:

contested in City of London = 28
in City of Westminster = 20
in County of Middlesex = 14
and in Borough of Southwark = 23
as well as many by-elections

7

plus civic and guild elections
for variety of posts
from Lord Mayor of London
to Bridgemaster of Old London Bridge



between 1700-1850
over one third of a million Londoners voted,
casting over one million votes

8

with culture of electioneering



9

and political debates, in salons,
workshops and coffee-houses



10

eighteenth-century clubs and societies

- an associational world
- with local societies for every interest
from sports to philosophy/science

- including 'identity',
such as the Ugly Mugs club
(ugly men who met, drank, and sang
songs about being ugly)

11

For example: the Lunar Society,
meeting monthly
at venues like Soho House,
Handsworth, Birmingham



12

Maidstone in 1780s: pop. c.6000

- *Agricultural Society*
 - *Book Society*
- *Concert + Music Societies*
 - *Cricket Club*
- *Dining and Drinking Societies*
 - *Humane Society*
- *Kentish Society for Useful Knowledge*
 - *Trapball + Card Societies*

Clark, *Clubs and Societies*, p. 135.

13

the origins of political associations

*Whig and Tory clubs in eighteenth century
and political parties in nineteenth century:
drawing on traditional associationalism,
with local base
and national federation*

14



15

Battersea parliamentary constituency created 1885



16

an industrial community



17

the radical vestry built Battersea Town Hall in 1893



18

**John Burns (1858-1943),
Labour MP Battersea 1892-1918**



19

early Labour in Battersea

- Battersea Labour League (1894-1919)
in Lib-Lab alliance
- 1908 Battersea Labour Party formed and
affiliates to national Labour Party
- 1919 Burns refuses to join national Labour
Party; and waning BLL disappears

20

Battersea Labour in C20

1900-65

Labour predominant in Battersea Borough Council +
North Battersea Constituency

1965-78

Battersea becomes part of Wandsworth Council,
mainly Labour dominated

1978-2008

Conservative Council and see-saw between Tory/Labour
in Battersea constituency

21

Part II: Witness politics

Councillor Tony Belton,

Battersea ward Councillor on Wandsworth
Borough Council 1971-2009

in power locally 1971-8

but in opposition 1978-2009 -

for 26 or last 31 years as Labour Opposition Leader

22

**Why did you first join
the Labour Party in the
mid-1960s?**



23

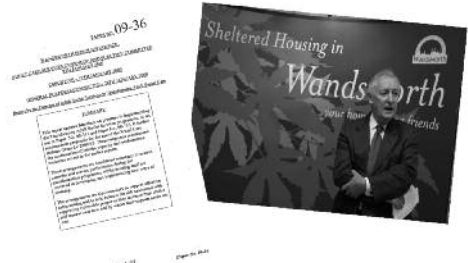


24

What is it like to be a Councillor, in a typical working week?

25

community broker between public and officialdom



26

canvassing the voters



27

Councillor's on-line BLOG [WEB-LOG]



CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL VOTERS ABOUT BATTERSEA POWER STATION

Monday, 31 August 2009 - Posted by Cllr Tony Belton at 17:03

You may have seen the news in the Evening Standard that the company, which owns the derelict Power Station, may go bust. Traditionally most of us have wanted to save this iconic building. But NOW my questions are:-

- * How long can this go on? And given 30 years of failure, can we expect anyone else to love it so passionately?
- * If not, do we have to face the "inevitable", if that is what it is, and accept the demolition of the Power Station?
- * And if so what do we want in its place? If we leave it to unplanned market-place we will get expensive five-side flats that are too costly for most Battersea residents.

What do you think?

28

What did Labour achieve in power from 1971-8 in Wandsworth?

29

low-rise homes, local industrial units, and urban greenery ...



30

as well as improving the environment
- by opposing inner urban motorways
- and launching plans (still being completed)



31

**What things could
or should
Labour in the 1970s
have done differently?**

32



33

**Why do you persist in
opposing a
well-entrenched
Conservative Council
with a huge majority?**

34

*unchecked power for
one
political party
is always dangerous*

35

What is the real art of opposition?

- **Preparation**
- **Priorities**
- **Publicity**
- **Principles**
 - and Perseverance ...

36

**What is your
personal secret
to keep going
in local politics
... for 38 years ...?**

37

- * Enjoying community*
- * Enjoying meetings*
- * Enjoying debate*
- * Having good health*
- * Keeping long hours*
and
- * Having support*

38

**Wandsworth Labour Group of
Councillors, 2006-10**



39

Discussion point:

**Does local government
still have a role today ...
in an era of globalisation
and
instant technology?**

40