



RESEARCH PAPER 99/78  
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# By-elections since the 1997 general election

This paper gives the results of by-elections held since the 1997 general election. It replaces Research Paper 99/63.

Similar information for earlier by-elections is available in House of Commons Information Office Factsheets 16 (1979 to 1983), 27 (1983 to 1987), 58 (1987 to 1992) and 64 (1992 to 1997). Further information is available in FWS Craig Chronology of British Parliamentary By-elections, 1833-1987 (Parliamentary Research Services 1987).

Richard Cracknell & Bryn Morgan

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Notes: 'turnout' is calculated as the number of valid votes cast (excludes spoilt ballots) as a percentage of the electorate.

'swing' is defined as the average of one party's gain and another's loss in the share of the vote between the 1997 general election and the by- election.

Key: \* indicates a lost deposit (the threshold below which a deposit is lost was reduced from 12½ per cent to 5 per cent of the total votes cast from 10 October 1985)

+ indicates a woman candidate

Sources: General election results — C Rallings and M Thrasher *Britain Votes 6*  
By-election results — returning officers

**Table 1 – Summary of by-election results since 1997****By-election winner, change in share of the vote and swing since 1997 general election**

	<b>Control</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Swing</b>		<i>change in share of vote:</i>			
					<b>Con</b>	<b>Lab</b>	<b>LDem</b>	<b>SNP/PC</b>
Uxbridge	Con hold	J Randall	5.0%	Lab to Con	+7.6%	-2.5%	-5.3%	
Paisley South	Lab hold	D Alexander	11.2%	Lab to SNP	-1.7%	-13.4%	+1.6%	+9.1%
Beckenham	Con hold	J Lait +	2.6%	Con to Lab	-1.2%	+4.0%	+0.2%	
Winchester	LD hold **	M Oaten	19.8%	Con to LDem	-13.6%	-8.8%	+26.0%	
Leeds Central	Lab hold	H Benn	20.5%	Lab to LDem	-1.4%	-21.4%	+19.6%	
Eddisbury	Con hold	S O'Brien	1.1%	Lab to Con	+2.3%	+0.0%	+0.6%	

\*\* general election result (LDem gain from Con) successfully challenged and election re-run.

Percentages may not sum to zero because of candidates from other parties.

The figures given for swing should be used with care as they do not take account of the often complex flows of votes between the parties (swing is defined as the average of one party's gain and another's loss in shares of vote between the 1997 general election and the by-election).

**Table 2**  
**Votes cast at each by-election since the 1997 general election**

Party	By-election candidate	Votes at by-election		Votes at general election	
		Number	%	Number	%
<b>1. Uxbridge - 31 July 1997 (death of Sir Michael Shersby on 8 May 1997)</b>					
Conservative	J Randall	16,288	51.1%	18,095	43.6%
Labour	A Slaughter	12,522	39.3%	17,371	41.8%
Liberal Democrat	K Kerr	1,792	5.6%	4,528	10.9%
Other (8 candidates - see Table 3)		1,265 *	4.0%	1,551 *	3.7%
Majority of winning candidate		3,766	11.8%	724	1.7%
Total poll		31,867		41,545	
Electorate		57,446		57,414	
Turnout		55.5%		72.4%	
<b>Conservative hold</b>					
<b>2. Paisley South - 6 November 1997 (death of Mr Gordon McMaster on 28 July 1997)</b>					
Labour	D Alexander	10,346	44.1%	21,482	57.5%
Scottish National	I Blackford	7,615	32.5%	8,732	23.4%
Liberal Democrat	E McCartin +	2,582	11.0%	3,500	9.4%
Conservative	S Laidlaw +	1,643	7.0%	3,237	8.7%
Other (5 candidates - see Table 3)		1,249 *	5.3%	400 *	1.1%
Majority of winning candidate		2,731	11.7%	12,750	34.1%
Total poll		23,435		37,351	
Electorate		54,573		54,040	
Turnout		42.9%		69.1%	
<b>Labour hold</b>					
<b>3. Beckenham - 20 November 1997 (resignation of Mr Piers Merchant on 21 October 1997)</b>					
Conservative	J Lait +	13,162	41.2%	23,084	42.5%
Labour	R Hughes	11,935	37.4%	18,131	33.4%
Liberal Democrat	R Vetterlein +	5,864	18.4%	9,858	18.1%
Other (5 candidates - see Table 3)		947 *	3.0%	3,277 *	6.0%
Majority of winning candidate		1,227	3.8%	4,953	9.1%
Total poll		31,908		54,350	
Electorate		73,127		73,126	
Turnout		43.6%		74.3%	
<b>Conservative hold</b>					

**Table 2 (continued)**  
**Votes cast at each by-election since the 1997 general election**

Party	By-election candidate	Votes at by-election		Votes at general election	
		Number	%	Number	%
<b>4. Winchester - 20 November 1997 (Election Petition, writ moved on 28 October 1997)</b>					
Liberal Democrat	M Oaten	37,006	68.0%	26,100	42.1%
Conservative	G Malone	15,450	28.4%	26,098	42.1%
Labour	P Davies	944 *	1.7%	6,528	10.5%
Other (5 candidates - see Table 3)		984 *	1.8%	3,328 *	5.4%
Majority of winning candidate		21,556	39.6%	2	0.0%
Total poll		54,384		62,054	
Electorate		79,116		79,272	
Turnout		68.7%		78.3%	

**Liberal Democrat hold (general election result -- LDem gain from Con -- challenged)**

**5. Leeds Central - 10 June 1999 (death of Derek Fatchett on 9 May 1999)**

Labour	H Benn	6,361	48.2%	25,766	69.6%
Liberal Democrat	P Wild	4,068	30.8%	4,164	11.3%
Conservative	E Wild	1,618	12.3%	5,077	13.7%
Other (4 candidates - see Table 3)		1,140 *	8.6%	2,002 *	5.4%
Majority of winning candidate		2,293	17.4%	20,689	55.9%
Total poll		13,187		37,009	
Electorate		67,280		68,309	
Turnout		19.6%		54.2%	

**Labour hold**

**6. Eddisbury - 22 July 1999 (resignation of Alastair Goodlad)**

Conservative	S O'Brien	15,465	44.8%	21,027	42.5%
Labour	M Hanson +	13,859	40.2%	19,842	40.1%
Liberal Democrat	P Roberts	4,757	13.8%	6,540	13.2%
Other (3 candidates - see Table 3)		416 *	1.2%	2,041	4.1%
Majority of winning candidate		1,606	4.7%	1,185	2.4%
Total poll		34,497		49,450	
Electorate		67,086		65,394	
Turnout		51.4%		75.6%	

**Conservative hold**

**Table 3**  
**Votes cast for candidates of minor parties**

All the candidates listed lost their deposits

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. Uxbridge</b>			
D Sutch	Official Monster Raving Loony Party	396	1.2%
J Leonard +	Socialist Party	259	0.8%
F Taylor +	British National Party	205	0.6%
I Anderson	National Democrat	157	0.5%
J McAuley	National Front	110	0.3%
H Middleton	Original Liberal Party	69	0.2%
J Feisenberger	United Kingdom Independence Party	39	0.1%
R Carroll	Emerald Rainbow Islands Dream Ticket Party	30	0.1%
<b>2. Paisley South</b>			
J Deighan	Pro Life Alliance	578	2.5%
F Curran +	Scottish Socialist Alliance - Fighting Corruption	306	1.3%
C McLauchlan	Scottish Independent Labour - Justified and Ancient	155	0.7%
C Herriot	Socialist Labour Party	153	0.7%
K Blair	Natural Law Party	57	0.2%
<b>3. Beckenham</b>			
P Rimmer	Liberal Party	330	1.0%
J McAuley	National Front	267	0.8%
L Mead	New Britain, Referendum	237	0.7%
T Champion	Social Foundation Party	69	0.2%
J Small	Natural Law Party	44	0.1%
<b>4. Winchester</b>			
R Page	Referendum/UK Independence Alliance	521	1.0%
D Sutch	Official Monster Raving Loony Party	316	0.6%
R Huggett	Literal Democrat Mark Here To Win	59	0.1%
R Barry +	Natural Law Party	48	0.1%
R Everest	Euro Conservative	40	0.1%
<b>5. Leeds Central</b>			
D Blackburn	Green Party	478	3.6%
R Northgreaves	UK Independence Party	353	2.7%
C Hill	Left Alliance	258	2.0%
J Fitzgerald	Equal Parenting Campaign	51	0.4%
<b>6. Eddisbury</b>			
A Hope	Official Monster Raving Loony Party	238	0.7%
D Grace +	Natural Law Party	98	0.3%
R Everest	Euro Conservative	80	0.2%