Coalition Update: 21-27 June

The Centre; the Centre's relationship with departments

Why Steve Hilton is Thatcher's heir (FT, June 21) ££
Bruce Anderson paints a picture of how David Cameron and Steve Hilton discuss policy. 

Humiliation for Kenneth Clarke as David Cameron orders tougher jail sentences (Telegraph, 22 June)
David Cameron has seized control of the Government’s justice strategy and ordered a return to proper life sentences for the most serious and prolific criminals. The Prime Minister may now face a battle to convince Liberal Democrat colleagues of the merits of the scheme, although Nick Clegg has said he supports the plan. 

Cabinet pair 'at daggers drawn' after bitter bin collection feud (Telegraph, 23 June)
Eric Pickles and Caroline Spelman are no longer on speaking terms after a row over the Government’s waste policy

DEFRA and animal welfare
Victory in the campaign to ban circus animals (Independent, 24 June)
Government concedes defeat after bribes and intimidation fail to deter rebels in both coalition parties
http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/victory-in-the-campaign-to-ban-circus-animals-2302073.html

Could foxes and badgers be next to feel MPs' love? (Independent, 25 June)
Article discussing the coalition parties' views on fox hunting and badger culls
http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/could-foxes-and-badgers-be-next-to-feel-mps-love-2302557.html

Lords reform
Labour delivers blow to Clegg's Lords plans (Independent, 22 June)
Labour vows to oppose

Peers attack 'stonkingly silly' Lords reform bill (Epolitix.com 22 June)
Nick Clegg’s bill was variously described as "palpable nonsense", "fanciful", a "conceptual mess" and a "stonkingly silly" piece of "Cleggery" that risked bringing down the monarchy.
The Conservative Party
The Class of 2010 is reshaping the Tory party for the better *(Telegraph, 25 June)*
The new intake of MPs are pushing David Cameron towards a more robust, more appealing Conservatism, argues Tim Montgomerie
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/8598650/The-Class-of-2010-is-reshaping-the-Tory-party-for-the-better.html

I thought the new intake of Tories would clean up politics. The cruel hounding of Mark Pritchard shows I was wrong *(Mail, 25 June)*
Anonymous Conservative MP takes a view opposite to Montgomerie: hat tip to Conservative Home
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2008199/The-cruel-hounding-Mark-Pritchard-shows-Tories-failed-clean-politics.html#ixzz1QN8awhI

The Conservatives are losing female supporters. Why? *(ConservativeHome, 26 June)*
Women are turning away from the Tories because of the perceived disproportionate impact of 'coalition' policies on women

The Liberal Democrats: policies and philosophies
Lib Dems' tax strategy may fox their rivals *(Guardian, 22 June)*
Both parties at work on their own distinctive policies

The Lib Dems and their eccentric heritage *(Times, 23 June)* ££
Daniel Finkelstein discusses the strange story of Richard Wainwright, Liberal Democrat MP, and how this helps us understand the culture of the Liberal Democrats. 3 points: 1. This is a party that has, on many occasions, come close to extinction. It has grown very tough. Being in government and at 9 per cent looks much more like success to Lib Dems than failure. 2. Identity is very important to the Lib Dems; 3. a belief in the virtue of coalition politics.
http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/danielfinkelstein/article3071739.ece

Nick Clegg calls for public to get shares in bailed-out banks *(Guardian, 23 June)*
Deputy prime minister proposes plan to create 46 million shareholders and allow collective ownership of banks

Liberal Democrats say in leaked email: keep challenging 'bad' NHS plans *(Guardian, 24 June)*
Evan Harris, leader of Lib Dem rebels, vows to keep fighting even after partial Tory climbdown on NHS reforms
Cameron starts to blame Liberal Democrats for likely failure to deliver immigration promise (ConservativeHome, 25 June)

The alchemists of liberalism have left their parties behind (Guardian, 20 June)
Julian Astle argues that Blairites, Camerons and Orange Book Lib Dems have far more in common with each other than with their own members: "What defines these politicians and separates them from their party colleagues, however, is a talent for alchemy, for taking base metals from left and right and turning them into political gold."
http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jun/20/alchemists-of-liberalism-nick-clegg

Liberal traditions and true colours (Guardian, 23 June)
....And the response

Labour
Ed Miliband moves to end shadow cabinet ballot (Guardian, 23 June)
Internal troubles continue: Labour leader wants to be free to appoint members, while quota of posts for women will also be abolished

Miscellaneous
Health Bill facing tight timetable in Parliament (Mark D'Arcy's blog, 22 June)
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-13879494

Suddenly Parliament matters again (Independent, 23 June)
The use of the urgent question has made the Commons as relevant as the Today programme and sometimes more so
http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/steve-richards/steve-richards-suddenly-parliament-matters-again-2301191.html

Middle class face £35,000 bill to help pay for care in their old age (Guardian, 25 June)
Coalition split over new proposals on funding of social care

No wonder the coalition hasn't got many friends in the north (Guardian, 26 June)
The Tories are failing to make headway; the LDs are losing their voters there

Why aren't the Greens doing better? (PoliticalBetting.com, 27 June)
This ought to be a good time for the minor parties, but voters are continuing to switch between the three main parties: four surveys show that for each 2010 Lib Dem vote that's gone Green, roughly two have gone Conservative and about six to Labour.