Speeches that changed Britain
Oratory in Birmingham
By Andrew Reekes

It is striking how many nationally significant speeches have been made in Birmingham over the past two hundred years. This book looks at ten episodes when a speech in Birmingham challenged the rest of the country to embrace change and reform. More than any other city it represents Britain's provincial voice across the period. The book reflects the importance of oratory in making a political argument. It may in a soundbite era be a dying art but these speeches fulfil the first requirement of successful rhetoric, that it be a reasoned argument to persuade its audience.