

Beales, Edmond (1803–1881), radical, was born at Newnham, Cambridge, on 3 July 1803, the son of Samuel Pickering Beales, a merchant who acquired local celebrity as a political reformer, and his wife, Martha, daughter of John Curtis. He was educated at Bury St Edmunds grammar school, Eton College, and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was elected to a scholarship; he graduated BA in 1825 and proceeded MA in 1828. Called to the bar at the Middle Temple in 1830, he practised as an equity draftsman and conveyancer. He married Eliza, daughter of James Marshall, manager of the Provincial Bank of Ireland. They had a daughter, Anna Lisa.

For several years he was closely connected with radical groups active in the campaign for American and European democracy. He promoted the earliest demonstration on behalf of the Polish refugees, was a member of the Polish Exiles' Friends Society, and of the Literary Association of the Friends of Poland; was president of the Polish National League, and chairman of the Circassian Committee; a member of the Emancipation Society during the American Civil War, of the Jamaica committeeJamaica committee under John Stuart Mill, and of the Garibaldi welcome committee. It was in connection with Garibaldi's visit to Britain in 1864 that Beales first became known to the general public. He defended the right of people to meet on Primrose Hill, in support of Garibaldi, and a conflict with the police occurred. This experience led him to publish a pamphlet on the right of public meeting, but it was in connection with the domestic democratic movement that Beales became best-known. Following the Garibaldi demonstrations, plans were laid for a national political organization of radical working-class groups. On 17 May 1864 Beales chaired a meeting to organize for the widening of the franchise. On 22 June a great metropolitan reform meeting took place at the Freemasons' Hall, again with Beales in the chair, but the drive for national organization lapsed until 1865. On 27 February that year Beales convened a meeting at St Martin's Hall, which resolved to establish the Reform League, dedicated to securing universal manhood suffrage and the ballot. In March the rules of the league were formally adopted and Beales became president.

The Reform Bill introduced by Earl Russell's government in 1866 was strongly supported by the league, and after its rejection by the House of Commons the league renewed its agitation. Gigantic meetings were held in Trafalgar Square, which the Conservative government tried vainly to suppress. Sir Richard Mayne, the first commissioner of police, issued a notice to the effect that the meeting announced for 2 July 1866 would not be permitted. Beales, however, stated his determination to attend the meeting, and to hold the government responsible for all breaches of the peace. This step led Mayne to withdraw his ban, and the meeting of 69,000 people was held without incident. Yet on 23 July, an immense gathering near the gates of Hyde Park generated a serious confrontation. While Beales and the other leaders were returning from Marble Arch to Trafalgar Square, the mob pushed down the iron railings surrounding the park, and entered in large numbers, only to be driven out eventually by the combined efforts of the military and the police. The following day Beales had an interview with Spencer Walpole, the home secretary, and afterwards went to the park and intimated that no further attempt would be made to hold a

meeting there ‘except only on next Monday afternoon (30 July) at six o'clock, by arrangement with the government’. The mission of the league was virtually at an end when Disraeli's Reform Bill was passed in 1867. Beales resigned the presidency on 10 March 1869, and three days later the league was formally dissolved.

Beales was a revising barrister for Middlesex from 1862 to 1866, when, in consequence of the active part he had taken in political agitation, the lord chief justice, Sir Alexander Cockburn, declined to reappoint him. Beales was an unsuccessful candidate for the Tower Hamlets constituency in 1868. In September 1870 Lord Chancellor Hatherley appointed him judge of the county court circuit no. 35, comprising Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. Beales died at his residence, Osborne House, Bolton Gardens, London, on 26 June 1881.

THOMPSON COOPER, *rev.* MATTHEW LEE

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Likenesses engraving, AM Oxf. [*see illus.*]

Wealth at death £12,191 4s.: administration, 29 July 1881, *CGPLA Eng. & Wales*

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