

A SHORT HISTORY OF POLITICAL VIRGINITY

The Social Democratic Party was launched on 26 March 1981, and just under seven years later merged with the Liberals to form today's Liberal Democrats.

For most of its existence, the SDP published a regular newspaper, the *Social Democrat*. One of the paper's regular cartoonists, Chris Radley, has kindly made the originals available for reproduction in this issue of the *Journal of Liberal History*.

Accordingly, this is a special issue on the story of the SDP – the 'political virgins', as many of them were. Four selections of cartoons, together with accompanying commentary, form the core of the issue, but there is much more: a biography of David Owen, analyses of the Darlington by-election and of the organisational innovations of the SDP, an interview with

Chris Radley, book reviews, and a comprehensive bibliography and chronology for students of the SDP.

The original cartoon drawings themselves – including many not reproduced in this *Journal* – will be on display at London's Gallery 33 (near London Bridge) throughout July 2003. Bill Rodgers, one of the SDP's founding 'Gang of Four', will open the exhibition at a special showing for Liberal Democrats on Tuesday 1 July (6.00–9.00pm).

Full details of the exhibition and of how you can purchase the cartoon originals (*Journal* readers benefit from a 10% discount!) are on the separate order form included with this *Journal*. For exhibition details, you can also contact Maria Linforth-Hall, Gallery Administrator, Gallery 33, 33 Swan Street, London SE11 1DF.

New subscription rates for the Journal

Subscription rates for the *Journal* will be increasing from the new subscription year, starting in September 2003. This is the first rise for four years; it is necessitated by the increasing costs of producing what is on average a much larger publication than hitherto.

An annual subscription to the *Journal of Liberal History* will cost £15.00 (£7.50 unwaged rate) for individuals and £25.00 for institutions. This includes membership of the History Group unless you inform us otherwise.

Rates for overseas subscribers are £20.00 for individuals and £30.00 for institutions; special three-year rates are available for £55.00 (individuals) and £85.00 (institutions) total.

Standing order forms are available on request – for contact details, see the page opposite.

The Alliance gets to grips with tactical voting ('Social Democrat', 19 June 1987)

