



How they used to look: the first issues of the three incarnations of the *Journal of Liberal History*

Letter to the Editor

Liberal Party Council

As David Steel says in his letter in issue 99 (summer 2018) the *Journal* is a respected organ of accurate history. As such he cannot be allowed, unchallenged, to describe the Liberal Party Council as ‘perpetually chaotic’.

The Party Council was an important part of the Liberal Party constitution. It comprised some 250 members and its membership was democratically representative of all sections of

the entire party. It met three (or possibly four!) times a year, and was always well attended. As well as policy and administrative matters, one of its most important functions was the opportunity of the membership to question – and challenge – our MPs, which it did most regularly and quite effectively.

I suspect it is this aspect which inspires Steel to describe it as ‘chaotic’. For example, I do recall on numerous occasions expressing, along with

other members, my disagreement with him on a range of matters, much to his annoyance. These exchanges, in a constitutional democratic organ of the party, were (and still are) a fundamental part of the Liberal approach to politics.

Disappointing and disagreeable for David Steel the Party Council may well have been, but chaotic, never.

John Smithson

Think history

Can you spare some time to help the History Group?

The Liberal Democrat History Group undertakes a wide range of activities – publishing this *Journal* and our Liberal history books and booklets, organising regular speaker meetings, maintaining the Liberal history website and providing assistance with research.

We’d like to do more, but our activities are limited by the number of people involved in running the Group. We would be enormously grateful for help with:

- Improving our website.
- Helping with our presence at Liberal Democrat conferences.
- Organising our meeting programme.
- Publicising our activities, through both social media and more traditional means.
- Running the organisation.

If you’d like to be involved in any of these activities, or anything else, contact the Editor, **Duncan Brack** (journal@liberalhistory.org.uk) – we would love to hear from you.

