ISLINGTON news

The Journal of the ISLINGTON SOCIETY incorporating FOIL folio

BOOKS, books, books



books published by the Islington Society

books by the Society's officers

books about the borough

books to share



Literature is a leading topic in this issue of Islington news, largely because the Islington Society has entered the world of publishing.

First of the press under our own imprint is **20**TH CENTURY BUILDINGS IN ISLINGTON. The text is by Alec Forshaw, and the 180 stunning photographs are by Richard Leeney.

Alex Forshaw, an acknowledged expert on the subject, is head of the borough's conservation team, and has worked in Islington many years. Richard Leeney is an internationally known architectural photographer.

Islington is reputed for its elegant Georgian squares and terraces, and its substantial Victorian residential estates: the diversity and number of its twentieth century buildings, and their range and richness, is likely to come as a surprise.

In fact, most of Islington's institutions and places of work or entertainment date from or were rebuilt during this period, and of course most of Islington's residents live in twentieth century buildings.

The book invites readers to explore for themselves and make their own judgments about the buildings and thw opinions of the author.

OFFICERS OF THE ISLINGTON SOCIETY

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Day flats

Some of the buildings may be familiar, but many are hidden gems, even to people who know Islington well.

20TH CENTURY BUILDINGS IN ISLINGTON is published on 11 October at £12.99: there is to be a launch at Waterstone's bookshop on Islington Green in November.

Chairman Andrew Bosi's THE STORY OF DAY FLATS IN AND AROUND ISLINGTON (£5.00) is also soon to be unveiled. Inquiries: Andrew Bosi 7354 8514.

In the pipeline are six

Islington trails: walks through the borough designed to take in many points of interest, both historical and modern.

president, Our Harley Sherlock, has written delightful history of village cricket, not in Islington, but in Sanderstead, Surrey, the home of his boyhood. Entitled VILLAGERS - FIVE SHILLINGS, the book traces Sanderstead's transformation from agricultural community to a London suburb and its effect on the village cricket club.

ISLINGTON news

The Journal of the ISLINGTON SOCIETY incorporating FOIL folio 7 Barnsbury Square, London N1 1JL

Suggestions of local topics to be covered and articles to be considered for publication in ISLINGTON news may be sent to the Editor at the above address. Local organisations are asked to send notification of activities and events they would like to be listed. Letters to the Editor are welcome.

The journal is published in February, June and October. Items for publication should be received by the 12th day of the previous month: by 12 January for the next issue.



Wartime experiences, architecture, urban development are all part of the tale which is illustrated by Harley's drawings as well as photographs.. There is a foreword by Colin (now Lord) Cowdrey, a member, and great-grandson of a member, of Sanderstead Cricket Club. (£4.50)

Cricket also features, although not exclusively, in A SHORT HISTORY OF NEWINGTON GREEN by Pat Haynes. There is a picture by Thomas Rowlandson of a women's cricket match on the green in 1811.

A surprising number of well-known people have lived in Newington Green including Daniel Defoe, Thomas Cromwell, Grinling Gibbons, John Stuart Mill, and contemporary poet and ubiquitous broadcaster Michael Rosen and his father Alderman Arnold Rosen.

A new Rosen library has recently been opened at Newington Green School where both father and son were pupils and governors.

Equally surprising is the number of interesting buildings, past and present.

The beneficiaries of a local eighteenth century will include *honest sober clergymen* and *decayed families*. (£2.00)





The Engine House at New River Head in 1840. Watercolour by C H Matthews

AN HISTORICAL WALK ALONG THE NEW RIVER has recently been revised by its author, Mary Cosh, our vice-president. It covers the Islington section of the New River and penetrates into Hackney as far as the splendid Castle Pumping Station, idle for ten years but now used as a climbing centre.

Although called a walk the events concerning the New River and its surroundings, details about local buildings and characters, and the illustrations can be very much enjoyed while entirely motionless. (£4.99)

The above three books are available from the Islington Museum Gallery.

SHARE-A-BOOK

Islington Library and Information Service has devised a method of enabling members of the public to contribute to the libraries' stock. Earlier problems of processing gift books have now been overcome.

People are asked to give a paperback book that they have recently bought and enjoyed so that many other Islington residents may enjoy it too. The names of donors will be recorded on a plate in the front of the book, or books, they have given unless they wish to be anonymous.

The scheme was launched with some ceremony at the Town Hall last month. It had been initiated by asking Islington celebrities to support the scheme and give a book, and many of their gifts were on display, as were a

selection of the 100 new books a week which the service has been buying since January – popular paperback fiction.

Distinguished local author Penelope Lively was present to commend the scheme, together with her fellow writer Lisa Appegnanesi.

There is an option to give money so that the library can buy a book from a list of suggested books but Mrs Lively and others thought that this was not ideal as most of the suggested titles are less than high quality.

Books may handed in at any Islington library. Because of the high cost of providing stiff covers and accessioning, classification and cataloguing the library service will have to refuse old text books or any other works which would not be an asset to the libraries.

OTHER LIBRARY DEVELOPMENTS

At the Share-a-Book launch Councillor James Kempton, chair of the education and libraries committee, spoke of a number of initiatives to promote reading. For children there are 'Stories from the Web', Bookstart, Chatterbox and Reading Carnival, while reading groups and author talks are encouraging adults to read more widely.

NEW LIBRARIES

There is to be a new library provided jointly by our library service and City and Islington College. It will be part of a new Lifelong Learning Centre. This is an innovative partnership in shared library services and puts the two bodies in the vanguard of collaborative provision. It is an admirable example of the growing trend of higher education libraries being accessible to public library members.

The new library which will have the latest technology is due to open in 2003. It will be twice the size of the present Arthur Simpson Library which it will replace. Arthur Simpson

users are being asked to name their priorities for the new service.

The Peabody Trust has taken over from the council the Naish Court Estate in the west of the borough and is redeveloping it. The improvements include a new library to replace Lewis Carroll children's library. The new building will be larger than the present one and will offer room for adult as well as children's services.



An impression of the new library at Finsbury Park.

WEST LIBRARY BUILDING

Plans are afoot to bring Beresford Pite's handsome first floor Reading Room in West Library back into public use after more than 15 years. It is likely to be a number more years before this proposal is realised because the project to refurbish the whole building, make it fully accessible, and bring the areas not used by the library service into community use is an expensive one and the money will have to be raised.

The initial version of the project was described in the February 2000 issue of the Islington *news*. This is now to be amended by the architects in the light of opinions expressed by organisations and individuals in the library's catchment area.

All local people will be welcome at a meeting on the evening of 1 November where there will be displays of possible uses of the space; there will also be food and drink and a

creche. It is hoped the library staff will participate.

The event has been funded by the King's Cross Partnership and contributions from five local host organisations.

The West Library Association formed earlier in the year has now appointed volunteer directors and company secretary and applied to become a company limited by guarantee.

Study space, computers, and a coffee bar seem likely to be the most favoured daytime use of the first floor.

The instigator of the scheme, Islington Play Association, is now the main tenant and uses the area as its headquarters office, storeroom, and workshop. It is hoping to find other premises, but has generously agreed to move to the basement if there is funding for the project before it has found a new home.

Inquiries: Antonia Benedek 7700 6198



Harley Sherlock considers Islington's BEST VALUE REVIEW OF PLANNING SERVICES

Behind this less than titillating title lurks a really rather good draft report on Islington's planning services: it reveals a generally more-than-adequate service from an under-resourced office, in a borough thirty per cent of which is made up of conservation areas; and in which there are more listed buildings than in any other borough except the City of Westminster.

No-one, of course, agrees with all the planning decisions made by the council; but it is often forgotten that from the very first Town and Country Planning Act in 1947 central government has always made it clear that there is a presumption in favour of development unless there is an over-riding reason not to allow it. Within its remit Islington Council does better than most to encourage development in the right place and discourage or modify it elsewhere.

The one area where the Council admits failure is on the question of "enforcement". One of the suggestions in the review is that extra enforcement officers might be paid for by charging the villains whose misbehaviour has led to the need for enforcement. If extra resources have to be found by the council, this would be a much better way of finding them than by charging innocent applicants for preplanning application consultation with council officers.

The Best Value review is a statutory duty

imposed by central government, which seems to have a rather warped view of what "best value" actually means; and it calls for at least one of the review's options for improvement to show a reduction in cost.

One of the options put forward in the council's review is to combine "Planning Projects", "Policy Planning" and "Development Control" into two "Service Units": one combining Development Advice and Control and the other combining Forward Planning and Policy. This seems an excellent idea, but not just as a way of saving money which it probably will not do: especially if it is accompanied by the council's long-overdue suggestion that Planning and Transport should be brought together for both "present control" and "future planning".

The council should tell the Government, in no uncertain terms, that it is not just planning officers but also members of the public who think that best value is provided by the best service – not necessarily by the cheapest service. Even the Government must know that planning on the cheap can lead to disasters that often have to be put right later with the aid of central government subsidies. The review of Islington's planning services shows generally competent officers struggling with inadequate resources.

Properly financed, the proposals in the review could benefit us all.

PRIZE ISLINGTON PLAYGROUND

Congratulations to CRUMBLES CASTLE ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND, Bingfield Street, for winning the Whitbread Award for the best adventure playground in London. The prize of £1000 was presented by Islington poet Michael Rosen and was received by Pat Hyppolite, chair of the playground management committee.





Andrew Bosi takes a personal and crit projects in two areas of the borough. T

KING'S CROSS

NEW P & O PROPOSALS

Extensive revisions have been made to the plans for the P & O site described in our Winter/Spring issue. The new proposals are to be considered by Islington planning committee

at its November meeting.

C

The reaction to the public exhibition of new plans indicates that they are likely to receive a far better reception than those of last February. Gone is the hotel out of scale with the listed station building. Gone the attempt to confine residential use almost exclusively to northern-most block (D) – the call for mixed use in the planning brief is now genuinely respected.

Gone too is the disrespect shown to the listed buildings,

and more of them are to be retained.

The meandering and daunting proposed internal route through the buildings has been replaced by an inviting direct route which the developers and the Islington Society hope will be a safe well-used pedestrian thoroughfare at all times of the day.

Traffic issues have proved the most difficult to resolve. The scheme would benefit from an imaginative redevelopment of King's Cross station to make things easier for people on foot.

The restoration of two-way traffic in York Way is welcome. Concerns will still arise as to

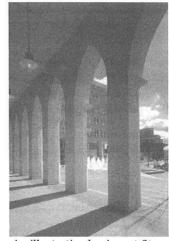
whether the traffic calming planned for Wharfdale Road will be effective and self-enforcing; and whether the council and Transport for London can secure sufficient protection for Copenhagen Street. These matters are likely to lead to the council imposing conditions of approval rather than rejection.

The proposed loss of the chimneys from the roofscape of the lighthouse block (A) is disappointing. Block A is in Camden, so we will urge Islington Council to reflect our concern in the "observations of the neighbouring borough".

KING'S CROSS CENTRAL

The publication of the booklet PRINCIPLES FOR A HUMAN CITY is also encouraging for the long-term development of this corner of our borough. This comes from Argent St George the selected developer for the railway lands, which are predominantly in Camden. The title encapsulates everything that King's Cross

needs. Argent George comes with a worthy reputation stemming from the successful Brindley Place development in Birmingham. advantage on that site was starting with a completely blank sheet of paper. King's Cross represents a more demanding challenge, because there is a resident population which regards it as home.



An illustration by Argent St George of the kind of 'atmosphere' it intends to induce at King's Cross.

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cal view of the revised proposals for important hey will change the face of Islington.

ARSENAL

In September Islington Council received a significant set of revisions to the amended plans for Arsenal's proposed new stadium. The planning application is not confined to the new stadium. It also relates to the old stadium site, and the Lough Road site to which the refuse centre would move.

The traffic and transport issues overlay all three applications.

The latest proposals have been out for consultation until now and will be considered by a special council meeting over two days at the end of November.



Everything around it has been altered but the sparkling stadium remains the same

THE NEW STADIUM

The Islington Society takes the view that a new stadium is overall a good thing for Islington. Moving out would increase the need to travel, and moving further from public transport facilities would increase the amount of travel by car. We accept that to compete at the highest level, and to satisfy the demand for season tickets, a larger stadium than Highbury is needed.

The majority of Islington residents wants Arsenal in the borough.

We are therefore looking at ways in which the stadium can be made more acceptable to the people whose homes and quality of life will be adversely affected by it. Much of the local disquiet relates to the buildings that would surround the stadium. The latest plans show a reduction in height of the proposed Plaza building, from 13 storeys to nine, and of the Queensland Road residential buildings from 16 to 14 storeys. With other revisions there are 50 fewer homes proposed.

These buildings still remain very high by Islington standards. More welcome is the offer of land to extend Gillespie Park, to compensate for adverse environmental impacts elsewhere.

EDEN GROVE/LOUGH ROAD

The second tranche of plans included a very welcome change for everyone interested in traffic and asthma reduction. The waste recycling centre is to be serviced from either end, but not by a through road. This produced a much more efficient centre and saved Arsenal money, so it was a really win-win move. Unfortunately, it does not accommodate rail egress from the centre, at least not along the lines developed by an architect postgraduate student at UNL. Arsenal managers say they have made passive provision for a rail siding: in other words, they are not proposing to build on land essential to its construction. However, the optimal site for a recycling centre with rail egress is not the site chosen.

A further difficulty is that the latest (third tranche) proposals envisages an additional 103 parking spaces on the site.

OLD HIGHBURY STADIUM RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The plans have been modified to meet some of the concerns of existing residents. Most significant is the reduction in height of the planned block to the rear of 169-93 Highbury Hill.

However, Arsenal's consultants seem to be arguing that a low level of car parking elsewhere in the the areas of the three planning applications justifies inflicting more traffic congestion on residents of Highbury.

This argument, akin to offering affordable housing in the Outer Hebrides in lieu, must be resisted.

TRANSPORT ISSUES

As with the P & O plans, transport is crucial to the success of the scheme. To put the principles of reduced traffic into practice, there must be a significant modal shift towards public transport. Arsenal's financial support for a major upgrade of Holloway Road tube station is commendable, but it is essential that London Underground can deliver the improvements in

time. If not, short term funding for enhanced bus services must be insisted upon. The plans include a footbridge over the Holloway Road. Its impact on visual amenity, and the continuing provision for local people to use their local station and to walk at ground level, must be addressed.

Non-football events should be assessed differently for their impact on transport, as well as the potential for noise. Arsenal's consultants have assumed planned improvements in frequency of tube trains, and unplanned improvements to the regularity of services, in their assessments. There are also three pedestrian junctions already heavily used.

There has at last been an acceptance of the part Drayton Park station can play. After offering special trains to Finsbury Park, Arsenal is now accepting that these should go to Drayton Park. If Drayton Park station is upgraded to the necessary safety standards, and if chartered trains are being run through, it is to be hoped that West Anglia Great Northern or their successors can find the marginal cost of keeping the line open to other trains in the evenings, on Saturdays, and even Sundays. This would extend a benefit to Islington residents outside the one mile radius of the new stadium.

Mackenzie Road would have lost through traffic, if only in the short term, by the creation of a through road to its north. Arsenal has accepted this down-side of the win-win described above, and discussions continue about funding traffic calming measures on Mackenzie Road.

It is unrealistic to expect the end-result to be as well received as the P & O plans.

Views on all sides are too entrenched. Nonetheless, it would be fair to say that negotiations have much further to go if the best possible outcome is to be achieved.

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CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK

Work has started on the CTRL at King's Cross, and at Corsica Street. The proliferation of signs (throughout Islington and beyond) directing works traffic to the site and every other motorist away from it is to be commended. Despite this, people are experiencing difficulty in finding the best pedestrian routes around the two main stations. There are so many direction signs put up by different agencies that it is proving difficult to ignore all that do not apply at any one time.

ISLINGTON MUSEUM

Islington Museum's bid for £1.4m lottery money to rescue the derelict Old Public Hall and bring it back into community use was unfortunately unsuccessful. Once again there is a question mark over the museum's future.

Islington Council is now of the opinion that there are better uses for the public hall. It is prepared to continue its present support of the museum service, that is the funding of one post of curator (at present a job share), but would like the museum to move to the Finsbury Library building in St John Street along with the borough's local history collections.

The trustees and friends of the museum consider that Finsbury Library is quite unsuitable, and that the museum's present central position is essential. They are anxious that the Old Public Hall should be made available for genuinely public rather than commercial use; and that it is appropriate for the museum to have a place within this.

The museum activists are aware that this would be a costly project but do not think that a public-private partnership would be the solution.

The three galleries are likely to remain where they are for some time yet.

CARING FOR CANALS

Islington's London Canal Museum, has had impressive (and expensive) improvements made to its ground floor gallery, funded mainly by the Heritage Lottery Fund and London's Waterway Partnership.

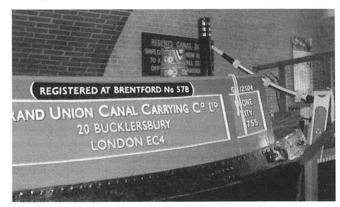
A new brick arch across the middle of the museum frames the rear half of the restored canal boat Coronis. The refitted cabin of the Coronis shows how a family lived in such a small space, and the boatman and his wife can be heard talking.

An interactive presentation tells the story of Carlo Gatti and his ice-house which was the original use of the building. Visitors can also learn how to tie boatmen's knots.

The new look gallery was re-opened in June

by the museum's patron the Princess Royal. Her first visit was in 1992 when the museum first opened.

Inquiries: 7713 0836



Canal boat Coronis.

THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE

Amid much ado about Clerkenwell Green in the last few months Angela Sinclair has renewed the proposal, supported by many people in the borough, that there should be a fountain as a memorial to the International Brigade. Islington is lacking such a memorial although there are many in other parts of the country.

Islington Green would be particularly

appropriate as the archives of the brigade are in the Marx Memorial Library.

The names of these early fighters against fascism in Spain in the 1930s read like a Who's Who of literature, arts and academe of the 1930s

MP Chris Smith has given his support to this proposal.

Inquiries: Angela Sinclair 7359 5976

ISLINGTON ON FOOT

Since its inception in late 1999 Islington's Pedestrians Association has been hammering loudly on the Islington Council's door, and it claims, with justification, to have the council more walking-conscious.

There has been increased attention to pedestrian crossings. In 1999-2000 four existing crossings were improved: in 2000-01 eleven were improved

and a new one installed: in the £1.4m for Road Safety. The current financial year three new crossings are to be installed and ten improved: the bid for next year proposes three new crossings eleven improvements.

In its bids for spending in 2002-03 Islington is asking for £610,000 for Walking, £679,000 for Promoting Bus Use, £1.32m for Streets for People (seven traffic reduction schemes), largest sum is naturally for Highway maintenance £2.982m.

Two "walking audits" to assess facilities for walking are to be carried out in the borough in the near future.

The national Pedestrians Association has wisely recruited Islington's Christine Mabey to be one of its vicechairmen.

EVENTS IN ISLINGTON

A telephone number for inquiries is given at the end of each entry.

'Book' implies there is a charge unless otherwise indicated.

OCTOBER

until 25 Nov SANKOFA. Exhibition of work by British and Ghanaian artists. Islington Museum Gallery. 7354 9442

until 21 Oct LONDON LINK'D AT LAST. Exhibition. London Canal Museum. 7713 0836

Sat 06 INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE. Practical workshop 10am. Book 7354 5162

Wed 10 THE ROAD TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA. Lecture by Mark Hassall. St Andrew's Church, Thornhill Square 7.30pm. 7607 4552

Sat 13 FROM PLUMS TO PIXIE PEARS. Walk to identify food for wildlife in Parkland Walk. Meet Crouch Hill Commuity Centre car park 2pm. 7354 5162

Sat 13+16-20 MISERY by Stephen King. Tower Theatre 7.30pm + Sun 14, 3pm. Book 7226 3633

Wed 17 JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE: A MILLENNIAL PILGRIMAGE TO

JERUSALEM. Lecture by Mark Hassall. St Andrew's Church, Thornhill Square 7.30pm 7607 4552

Sat 20 BLACK HISTORY DAY CRAFT WORKSHOPS for children. Islington Museum Gallery. Book. 7527 3235

Sat 20 FUNGAL FORAY. Walk. Meet Ecology Centre 1pm. 7354 5162

Tue 23-02 Dec THE WATERWAYS ART SHOW. Exhibition. London Canal Museum. 7713 0836

Wed 24 VOLUNTEER WORK DAY in Parkland Walk. 7354 5162 Sat 27+30-Nov 3 A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE by Arthur Miller. Tower Theatre 7.30pm + Sun 28, 3pm. Book 7226 3633

NOVEMBER

Thu 01 A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A LONDON TUG. Lecture by Richard Thomas. London Canal Museum 7 for 7.30pm.

Sat 03 AUTUMN ABLAZE. A walk in Gillespie Park. Ecology Centre 2pm.7354 5162

Sunday 04 VOLUNTEER WORK DAY in Gillespie Park 11am. 7354 5162

Sat 10+13-17 THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LINANE by Martin McDonagh. Tower Theatre 7.30pm + Sun 11, 3pm. Book 7226 3633

Sat 17 WINTER SURVIVAL. Barnsbury Wood 10am. 7354 5162

Sun 18 MEMORIAL SERVICE (for people buried and cremated). Islington Cemetery Chapel, High Road, East Finchley N2.

Sat 24+27-Dec 01 THREE TALL WOMEN by Edward Albee. Tower Theatre 7.30pm + Sun 25, 3pm. Book 7226 3633

DECEMBER

Sun 02 KNOW YOUR THREE B's: BUD, BARK AND BRANCH. Walk in the woods. Ecology Centre 11am. 7354 5162

Wed 05-23 CHRISTMAS CRAFT. Exhibition. Work by local craftspeople and artists for sale. Islington Museum Gallery. 7354 9442

Thu 06 THE SALISBURY AND SOUTHAMPTON CANAL. Lecture by Peter Oates. London Canal Museum. 7 for 7.30pm 7713 0836

Sat 15+18-22 and 27-29 CINDERELLA. Tower Theatre 7.30pm + 15,16,22,23,29, 30, 3pm. Book 7226 3633

JANUARY 2002

Thu 03 EARLY CANAL DEVELOPMENT - IDEAS FROM EUROPE. Lecture by Dr Roger Squires. London Canal Museum 7 for 7.30pm. 7713 0836

FEBRUARY

Thu 07 ANATOMY OF CANALS. Lecture by Dereck Pratt. London Canal Museum 7 for 7.30pm. 7713 0836

We are sad to have to tell you that Jack Harvey, jovial and much-liked husband of our former chairman Marion Harvey, died in mid-August. Jack was an outstanding engineer and well known in local govenment circles. We offer our sympathy and support to Marion

THE——ISLINGTON SOCIETY

Incorporating FOIL FRIENDS OF ISLINGTON LIBRARIES

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP [OR RENEWAL]

The Islington Society was founded in 1960. It works to safeguard and improve the quality of life in Islington. Its special concerns are the built and general environment, libraries, schools, health, and recreation, public transport and priority for pedestrians. New members are welcome.

Existing members who have not yet paid their 2001 subscriptions, due on 1 January, are requested to do so.

| Name[s] | Address |
|--|--|
| | Telephone |
| I/We enclose £8 (individual) £10 (couple of | family)£15 (local organisation)£20 (company) |
| Signature | Date |
| To: Adam Bower, Treasurer, Islington Society, 12 Cloudesley Square, London N1 0HT. | |

THE ISLINGTON SOCIETY CALENDAR

At Islington Town Hall unless otherwise stated

Saturday 13 October at 11.00am FREIGHTLINERS FARM A visit to the urban farm at Paradise Park, Sheringham Road, N7 If you know you will be attending please advise the chairman, 7354 8514. The farm staff would like to know approximate numbers and if any children or young people will be present.

Wednesday 28 November at 7.30pm SOURCES OF ISLINGTON'S FOOD Georgina Dobson, Rural Policy Officer, CPRE, and Sophie Spencer James Ogilvy-Webb Memorial Lecture

XX December at 7.30pm CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENT Inquiries: Andrew Bosi 7354 8514

Wednesday 23 January at 7.30pm WHAT IS A TOWN CENTRE MANAGER? Martin Fletcher Town Centre Manager of the N1 Centre (formerly Parkfield Street development)

Wednesday 13 March at 7.15 for 7.45pm ISLINGTON SOCIETY MEMBERS' DINNER Venue to be advised ← next
event
is at
Freightliners
Farm –
well
worth
a visit
Saturday
13 October

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