

ISLINGTON *news*

The Journal of the Islington Society incorporating FOIL folio

www.islington society.org.uk

The Islington Society moves into the twenty-first century at last

Web-site launched

The Society is pleased to announce the launch of its web-site, address above. All members are invited to look at it and make proposals for its improvement or enhancement. If you do not have a computer at home, the internet can be accessed free of charge to members of Islington Libraries (for up to an hour each day).

50th birthday party

We are hoping to make the dinner date of March 23rd a free party for all members. Details were not available as the newsletter went to press, however, please do not discard the inserts without reading them!

Rejuvenation

The rejuvenation of the Society has started with the appointment of an events organiser, Maggie Tattersall. At the A.G.M., Andrew Bosi agreed to remain in the chair until later this year and David Gibson assented to becoming chair elect and to chair committee meetings in the interim. Other changes to the committee are afoot and should be reported in future newsletters.

Working with other Islington groups

At the Annual General Meeting, the need to forge closer links with business and amenity groups was raised. Coincidentally, following some joint working in the fight to prevent an overdevelopment of 85, Canonbury Road, the idea of amenity societies working together has been taken forward. A meeting hosted by the Duncan Terrace Association on January 26th drew support from 22 societies and associations across Islington. It has led to the formation of an e-mail group. There was widespread agreement that all the groups experienced similar problems with various council departments, TfL or the Health service in the context of their own locality and that pooling

experience of past battles would help in future ones.

Minutes of the A.G.M.

We plan to publish the minutes of the A.G.M. in the next newsletter. This issue includes the chairman's report to it which as the opening paragraph explains could not be circulated in advance of the meeting this year. Despite the proximity to Christmas, the meeting was well attended as members were seized of the fact that it was potentially a defining moment in the Society's history.

Broadening the Society's horizons

The A.G.M. debated whether the annual report should include the Chairman's musings on events in Islington in which the Society had not been directly involved. Not only did members vote to do so, it was also felt that the Society should seek to involve itself in a wider range of Islington activities. Limited human resources inevitably mean that there is concentration on those issues on which committed individuals are most keenly interested, which have in recent years been planning conservation and transport.

Responding to the draft London Plan

Society members, some representing other associations, have been involved in the work of the London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies, who have produced a comprehensive response to the Mayor's London Plan, on which consultation closed on January 12th, and the draft Mayor's Transport strategy. A summary of the first of these is published on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter.

New Year Honours

Congratulations to Mary Gibson, awarded M.B.E. in the New Years Honours list for services to education. Mary is the long standing head of Yerbury School.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2009

Andrew Bosi delivered what is likely to be his penultimate Annual Report to members at the A.G.M. in December.

This year's annual report has proved the most difficult to write in my ten years in the chair of this Society, for which reason it has been delivered orally at the A.G.M. and published in a subsequent newsletter.

For many years the committee has been declining in numbers. To some extent this was necessary. When we merged the Executive Committee with the Planning Transport and Conservation Committee we had more members than the constitution envisaged. Unfortunately, the inability to renew the membership left us short of functional officers.

In particular, we have had no events organiser for some time. The tradition of the chair doing this was only successful for as long as a newish chair had some useful contacts to explore, and eventually the newsletter became a greater priority because it reaches all members. Another difficulty proved to be the creation of the web-site, while the departure of Donald Mitchell to Camden left Stan Westwood nursing two portfolios. At one time I thought I had put in place arrangements which would surmount these difficulties, but it became clear that the committee as currently structured was unable to give the necessary support to incoming volunteers. I therefore felt I was no longer the right person to take the Society forward. I had intended for some time to stand down after the 50th anniversary and I felt this was somewhat self-indulgent and that the Society would be better served by an earlier change.

Following my decision, a number of members expressed the desire that I should stay for the 50th year, while others have come forward to take on the missing roles. I do not intend to chair future meetings of the committee, but it has been put forward that the chair as figurehead need not be the person chairing the meetings. On the basis that David Gibson, chair-elect, is able to commit to the formal role from next Autumn, and to chair meetings in the meantime, I have agreed to stay on as long as this is the wish of the Society members at this A.G.M.

I am more reconciled to this by the offers of assistance from David Trillo and Virginia Low who I am confident will take the Society forward, and by

David Gibson's undertaking to put together a team to organise the 50th anniversary dinner on March 23rd. The Society's thanks are due to Chris Smith, Alan Turner and Stan Westwood for their work behind the scenes and to Jenni Chan who has now accepted the right of veto over the committee to see the web-site into existence.

The year for the Society

The first event of the year was our A.G.M. in October. John Armitt brought us up-to-date on plans for the Olympics which are close to our doorstep and just an Overground train ride away. The transport improvements will be a lasting legacy for us, even though it could be argued that they should have happened anyway, and even though we are currently suffering an absence of trains on Sunday with a complete blockade lasting more than three months planned for next Spring.

The following month we visited the new Academy that has replaced St. Mary Magdelene Primary school as an all-statutory age institution. Older members may recall that all school buildings were "all-age" in the Victorian era, although many were run as two or three schools with head teachers for infants, junior girls and junior boys. The Academy is proving popular in terms of the numbers seeking admission into year 7. At the time of our visit, the secondary age population was limited to years 7 and 8. Year 11 will be reached in 2011. The Principal, Paul Hollingum, gave generously of his time to tell us about the aims of the Academy and to show us round the impressive new building to which the finishing touches were still being applied.

We were happy to support the annual carols in the Marquess Tavern in December. Our Annual Dinner was held at the Peasant opposite the Local History Library and Islington Museum. A power failure proved a blessing in disguise because although it closed the pub for the evening the management rose splendidly to the occasion and as a result we had the upper floor of the building to ourselves. As always, our President gave a most erudite speech and our main worry was how we could cap such an enjoyable event in the 50th year. Thanks are due to James Dunnnett and Mary Cosh for the organisation of this event.

The following month we were blest with superb weather for the Lisa Pontecorvo memorial walk, linking many of the places over which Lisa had had much influence over the years. These were the "P & O" site at King's Cross, the shop fronts of Caledonian Road, the Matilda Street chimney, and of course Edward Square. The event was timed to link with a week of celebration of the Tolpuddle Martyrs whose trial and deportation had been 175 years earlier and for whom Edward Square contains a lasting memorial both of them and of Lisa.

The Bill Manley memorial pub crawl in June took us on a rare visit to the north of the Borough. We visited three excellent establishments. Sadly, the recession and trends in social activity more generally is accounting for as many as fifty pubs a week and Islington is not immune. The closure of another excellent planned venue limited the scope for taking in as many pubs as in past years, but the quality of the Swimmer the North Nineteen and the Landseer was such that a longer stay in each was justified.

In July the sixth annual church crawl took us from Wesley's Chapel to St. Clement's King Square via St. Luke's, so that after redressing the balance towards the north the previous month we did so in the south as far as churches are concerned.

Our joint meeting with the Archaeology & History Society took place last month, November. A pleasingly large audience heard James Dunnett advocate the architectural merits of buildings of the second half of the twentieth century. The meeting made an interesting contrast with that held by the Arch. & Hist the previous month when Cllr. Ruth Polling had spoken on protecting Islington's heritage. Some of the heritage under threat is discussed below.

Architecture & Conservation Award

The third winner of the Award was King's Place off York Way. We have now made the fourth award, to Duncan Terrace Gardens. Unlike past economic down-turns, there has continued to be much activity in the construction industry so that there should be no shortage of candidates for the 2010 award which is available to the best new or restored building completed in 2009. After a break in 2008 when David Gibson filled the breach, Alan Turner resumed the organisation of the judging.

Events in Islington

The hung council, so termed because the controlling Liberal Democrat group has to rely on

the Mayor's casting vote, produced some interesting events this year. One of the Liberals distanced himself somewhat from his colleagues (while maintaining an allegiance to their National party) and in particular supported a Labour group proposal for free school meals for all primary school children. The outcome of the vote had thought to rest with the one Green Party councillor, but in the event the budget containing this provision triumphed by two votes over the Liberal Democrat proposal which would have restricted the Council tax rise to 1.7%.

Having a Green councillor for the first time is of particular interest to the Islington Society with our strong emphasis on the environment. Ignoring any pun about five a day, there may not be a National policy of the Green Party on school meals, but in other respects there were encouraging signs that both parties are showing an increasing awareness of environmental issues in preparing their budget plans. The ruling group appears to have cracked on with tackling climate change more than most councils. Islington has also become the first Borough to impose a blanket 20 m.p.h. limit on residential roads. If anyone doubts the wisdom of this move or thinks the freedom of Toad of Toad Hall should be widely upheld, please refer to the *British Medical Journal* of December 11th, 2009. The BMJ has in the past reminded us that deaths on the road far outweigh the consequences of the various flu pandemics that fill the newspapers for months on end.

Unfortunately, the Council record on sustainable development of public buildings and preservation of open space is less green, and these matters are more likely to impinge on the electorate than climate change.

Three iconic buildings in the Borough have come under threat within the last year. The Lubetkin designed Finsbury Health Centre, which pioneered the polyclinic idea which the government now seeks to further, is deemed unsuitable for use. It was designed to have patient facilities on the ground floor and therefore was DDA compliant nearly sixty years before the DDA was enacted. This is primarily a matter for the health service, but one which the Council should influence. Quite apart from the conservation and sustainability issues, a polyclinic is of little use of patients cannot access it under their own steam, because of its remote location.

The second building, the Sobell Centre, was given to Islington by the generous benefactor whose name it bears. It has been badly neglected; it has no swimming pool, because Hornsey Road baths met that need when it was built, and it has some "wasted" open space that could be used to cram in some residential accommodation which would pay for a new building. Although we are constantly reminded that Islington is the Borough with the least open space, whenever the opportunity comes to build on the little that is left this seems to count for nothing. By far the most scandalous loss of open space however, is the Metropolitan Open Land in the far north of the Borough along Parkland walk. MOL is supposed to carry the same status as the green belt: there are only two bits of it in Islington. This site is being built on because governors of Ashmount School have seemingly neglected their responsibilities to maintain their Cadbury-Brown building of the 1950s, built as two schools and now run as one as discussed earlier. The new school building, with its natural catchment area more in Haringey than Islington, will be built just as its current pupils might be glad of some open space. Fortunately, the economic downturn has put a stop to the plan to demolish the Sobell Centre, at least for now.

Other events in Islington to have made national news include the wave of knife crime among young people across London from which Islington has not escaped. The families of victims receive much publicity but society is slower to recognize that for the families of the perpetrators, life will never be the same again and that they too need support. If the impact on these families were better understood it might serve as a more effective deterrent to the use of knives.

A long running legal case continues to work its way through the courts. This concerns the rights of a council worker in the registrars department to refuse to officiate at civil partnerships. The law has changed since her appointment and there is no question that this form of discrimination would be a bar to future employment. It is therefore a conflict that would be resolved with the passage of time. Prejudice is more easily overcome by gentle persuasion than by open conflict. Unfortunately, there are two conflicting principles in this case: the right to resist what is seen as a fundamental change in terms of employment, and the right to respect different cultures in our multi-cultural society. The latter is not an absolute right: there are other

precedents which support the Council's position.

Perhaps a more serious issue is the fundamental right of an employee to a job description as part of their contract. This seems to be secondary to the parties contesting the case, but it is an unwanted casualty of the Council's success if that is to be the final outcome.

Of more value are the legal cases contesting the rights of heterosexual couples to civil partnerships, where some clarification of the law might result.

Transport issues in Islington

These have been detailed in each newsletter but the headline events have been the continuing engineering work on the North London line, the first new trains with fewer seats but more standing room, and the demise of bendy-buses on route 38. Major roadworks in Hackney, both at Stoke Newington Church Street and Dalston Lane, have not had as much of an adverse effect in Islington as might have been feared and by this time next year we should be seeing the benefits on the trains in terms of higher frequency and the East London Line as far as Dalston.

The Victoria line continues to suffer some weekend closures as its infrastructure is improved, but at least there have been no more of the evening closures that hit some of our small shops. The northern line pattern of service is being simplified to increase frequency at the expense of more people having to change at Camden Town. This has been changed one way and back on numerous occasions and each time London Underground/ Transport for London tells us how much better it is to have higher frequency /reduced need to change (delete as necessary).

We still await progress at Highbury & Islington and plans for a massive overdevelopment on the former Ford's site (85 Canonbury Road) would if unchecked bring to a head the inadequacy of the present arrangements for pedestrians.

There are other planning applications of some concern, mainly because of overdevelopment. These include 2-4 Tufnell Park Road, and the former Cinema/ Bingo Hall in Essex Road. This building is listed because its art deco façade dominates the street scene. The building has been sadly neglected for many years and clearly needs a lot of money spent on it. But an overdevelopment which dwarfs the façade would run wholly counter to the purpose of listing.

Andrew Bosi

Mayor proposes revised Spatial Development Strategy

The Society is indebted to the London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies for a comprehensive response to the Mayor's proposed spatial development strategy, known as "the London Plan". Later in the year, the proposals will be subject to Examination in Public: we hope the LFCAS will be invited to advance our concerns as a formal witness. Set out below is the introduction to their evidence, and a summary of the main points. Members who would like a copy of the comments in full are asked to send an appropriate e-mail address to Andrew Bosi.

Introduction

The London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies (London Forum) is a charity established for 21 years operating as a federation of over 130 community and amenity groups and civic societies in the Greater London area.

London Forum aims to protect and to improve the quality of life and opportunities of people living in, working in, or visiting the area comprising Greater London, in particular by promoting and encouraging:

- (i) high standards of planning, urban design, housing, services, landscaping, infrastructure and transport;
- (ii) the conservation of lands, buildings, open spaces, waterways, amenities, features of historic interest and the individual character of localities, plus improvement to them;
- (iii) a sense of civic pride amongst members of the public and the fostering of community involvement and the capacity to effect necessary change; and
- (iv) the principles and practice of sustainable development and tackling climate change.

In pursuing its objects London Forum promotes and encourages the activities of local amenity societies and acts in a representative capacity on their behalf on amenity and environmental issues affecting Greater London.

London Forum has appeared as a participant at each of the Examination in Public sessions for the initial and amended London Plan versions since 2000.

Summary of the Main Issues

The London Forum strongly supports the general strategy, many of the key changes and most of the policies in the Consultation Draft Replacement Plan.

In reviewing the Draft Replacement Plan, we have considered whether:

- we agree with the proposed strategy and the individual policies within each theme;
- we agree with the wording/content of each policy, in particular whether the revised policy has changed the emphasis or omitted important points which had been agreed in previous iterations of the London Plan; and
- certain issues need expansion, such as to set out how the issue should be dealt with through LDFs where this is not stated.

The London Forum has approached this task as a "critical friend", in the expectation that policies might be revised or extended as a result of these comments. We hope that, after further discussion, a large number of these issues can be resolved in a statement of common ground, leaving only key unresolved issues to be discussed before the Panel.

We have made clear where we agree with the proposed Plan and in doing so would expect to appear at the Examination in Public if those issues were chosen as matters to be discussed at the EiP.

Main Issues

Chapter 2: London's Places

- Inner London - the policy framework is inadequate
- Opportunity Areas and Intensification Areas - need to phase implementation to coincide with improved public transport accessibility and transport capacity
- Town Centres - need more proactive approach to promote town centres and promote redevelopment of retail parks
- Strategic Industrial Land - need to discourage large-scale office development and designate consolidation/break-bulk facilities

Chapter 3: London's People

- Increasing housing supply - intensification, optimisation and phasing
- Optimising housing potential - the policy (3.4) fails to articulate how LDFs should take the density

matrix into local policy

- Housing choice - need to address the specific housing needs of older people, students and key workers (e.g. nurses)
- Affordable housing targets - concern about whether the policy (3.12) is strong enough to realise them
- Social infrastructure - the concept needs to be linked to neighbourhoods
- Healthcare - concern about whether new healthcare facilities will be accessible

Chapter 4: London's Economy

- Offices - location policy for new offices insufficiently clear - need for preferred locations; office floorspace forecast is likely to be exaggerated, needs disaggregation for sub-regions and plan phases; risk that certain Opportunity Areas will grab all the growth
- Industrial land -welcome naming of potential locations for break-bulk/consolidation
- Visitor infrastructure - where will convention centre be?
- Retail and town centre development - concern about fringe of town centre developments

Chapter 5: London's Response to Climate Change

- The Mayor's Transport Strategy does not support the objectives for climate change mitigation and air quality.
- There are risks from flooding and water shortage.

●The retrofit programme will not be as fast or extensive as it needs to be.

●District heating systems have to be pursued for Opportunity Areas but are unlikely to be sufficiently achievable in other areas.

Chapter 6: Transport

- Reducing the need to travel - the location of development, public transport accessibility and capacity
- Western Extension Congestion Zone - opposes abolition
- Transport capacity - capacity crisis before CrossRail
- Freight - consolidation/break-bulk
- Parking standards - need to tighten standards, not relax them, especially for retail and business uses in low public transport accessibility, and avoid relaxation in Outer London

Chapter 7: London's Living Places & Spaces

- Building neighbourhoods - need to recreate walkable communities
- Architecture and Tall Buildings - both should be required to make a positive contribution to London's townscape, views and vistas
- Heritage -needs strengthening
- View Management - more views to be designated
- Metropolitan Open Land - needs greater protection - more than Green Belt
- Blue Ribbon Network - currently marginalised, needs strengthening

Fifty Shilling Tailors, 17, Islington High Street

Number six in our series on bygone shops in Islington

Until the late 1950's the Fifty Shilling Tailors operated from 17, Islington High Street and was part of a large chain of shops started in Yorkshire at the beginning of the 20th Century.

In 1958 the company was sold and renamed John Collier with the memorable and often parodied advertising slogan of 'John Collier, John Collier the window to watch.' The site has since been redeveloped and until recently was occupied by the Abbey National as shown in our photo (opposite) taken in July 2003. The original shop front to the Fifty Shilling Tailors can be clearly seen in the opening shots to the film 'The Angel who pawned her Harp.'(1954)

The film starts at the south end of Islington High Street and passes the famous Peacock Inn (1564-1962), the Fifty Shilling Tailors, the Blue Kettle and the White Lion pub on one corner of White Lion Street with the famous Dunn & Co. traditional gentlemen's outfitters on the other corner. On the other side of Islington High Street it shows the Home & Colonial grocery store which until recently was the Mall antiques arcade and then goes into Upper Street showing the old police station before it was converted into flats and just a glimpse of a cinema next door which is now a filling station. Pure magic for anyone who is a true fan of Islington. SW

Society representations on current issues

The Chairman promised at the AGM that formal representations on behalf of the Society would be more fully reported to members in future. This is what we said about the plans for Ashmount School to be rebuilt on the Parkland Walk.

October 16th, 2009

Mr. Giles Dolphin,
Head of Planning Decisions,
Greater London Authority,
City Hall,
The Queen's Walk,
London S.E.1 2AA

Article 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 determination: Relocation of Ashmount School - Bowlers Community Nursery 81 & 83-85 Crouch Hill; including part of The Parkland Walk & Parking Space Area at Warltersville Mansions, Warltersville Road, Islington, London, N.8. Application Ref. P082526

I am writing regarding the above application that has been given approval by London Borough of Islington North Area Planning Committee, to request that you call in this permission under Article 5.

1. Failure to Demonstrate 'Exceptional Circumstances' - The Appropriate Assessment of Alternative Sites within the LB Islington that would not involve building on Metropolitan Open Land.

The London Plan under Policy 3D.10 'Metropolitan Open Land' affords MOL the same level of protection as to Green Belt under PPG2. The proposed development does not constitute an exception to this protection within PPG2 and so is inappropriate and by definition causes harm. The supporting text from the London Plan states "MOL will be protected as a permanent feature and afforded the same level of protection is the green belt. In order to demonstrate

exceptional circumstances to override this presumption it is necessary to demonstrate that there are no alternative sites available that are not on MOL. Appropriate development should minimise any adverse impact on the open character of MOL through sensitive design and siting and be limited to small scale structures to support outdoor open space uses."

The expert report by Purcell Miller Tritton commissioned by LB Islington demonstrates that an alternative does exist for the future of Ashmount School and therefore there are no special circumstances to over-ride this planning guidance. One of the Committee members argued that it would damage the architectural features of the locally listed existing building, but the requirement to preserve Metropolitan Open Land is stronger than the requirement to preserve a locally listed building in all its detail and refurbishment would in any case secure the continued use of that building.

2. Impact on the Natural and Open Character of MOL - The justification for inappropriate and harmful development of allocated Metropolitan Open Land.

The proposed school development on MOL at Crouch Hill involves the increase in the existing built footprint by 5,300 sq ft. and in addition three areas of upper floor overhang exceeding 2500 sq ft. London Plan Policy 3D.10 states that "Essential facilities for appropriate uses will only be acceptable where they do not have an adverse impact on the openness of MOL." The increase in the developed footprint will have an adverse impact on the openness of the MOL. The openness is further harmed by the increased fencing and barriers to be introduced.



Brian & Nancy Pattenden

Thoughts on the sudden deaths of Nancy and Brian Pattenden from Harley Sherlock, December 2009

It was with great sadness that I learnt of the deaths of Brian and Nancy Pattenden.

In Islington, Nancy was probably the better known of the two, through her work for the borough's "Islington Gardeners": an organisation initiated by the Islington Society, but then run independently, to encourage gardening at all levels - even giving annual awards for Islington's best window boxes.

I remember strong disagreements with Brian on planning issues: particularly on the question of densities. I have always taken the view that one needed at least a hundred dwellings to the hectare (250 to the acre) to support local shops, pubs and primary schools within walking-distance of one's front door. Brian, on the other hand, took the view that, even if we could achieve such a density in four-storey housing (as the Georgians did), it still meant that our streets were too crowded: not so much with people, as with cars. My answer to that was that we didn't need so many cars for our typical journeys within London. And, for long-distance trips out of the capital, there ought to be hire cars as easily available for Londoners as they are for Americans living in Manhattan.

We never persuaded each other of our widely differing views; but that didn't prevent us from being firm friends. And, without Nancy and Brian, Islington will be a sadder place, deprived of two of its citizens who were perpetually active without ever being aggressive. HS

Frances Morrell

It was with great shock that I learned of the death of Frances Morrell, perhaps the highest profile leader of the Inner London Education Authority and a long time resident of Islington.

Like many of the radical thinkers of the 1970s and 1980s, Frances hailed from the north of England. She came to prominence as an adviser to Tony Benn during the Labour government of the 1970s, and represented the old Islington South & Finsbury (when Islington had three Parliamentary seats) on the GLC. In this role she rose to chair the ILEA and continued to do so when for one term only the Education Authority survived the GLC and was directly elected, retaining her seat even though the SDP was taking a majority of south Islington seats on the council.

The ILEA was more than twice the size of the second largest education authority, Birmingham, and it was this rather than any outspoken comments from its leader that turned the Tory government against its continued existence. Yet it was through this size that it was able, under the proactive leadership of Frances, to fund and execute research such as the first Warnock Report, the Thomas Report and the Fish Report which led to much needed reform of education provision across the country. Major repairs and refurbishment of schools could be absorbed into the huge budget but presented a serious problem to small successor authorities like Islington at a time when capital programmes were being cut.

Ironically, if the ILEA had succumbed at the same time as the GLC, Frances would almost certainly have entered Parliament. Four years later, although the desire to improve women's representation was undiminished, it had been joined by a desire to involve the next generation of politicians. Frances dropped out of politics and concentrated instead on promoting the Arts, although when her home street was threatened by traffic from an ill-advised scheme for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, her leadership qualities came to the fore once again and she played a prominent part in the successful campaign to tunnel under Caledonian Road rather than through it.

She is survived by her daughter, Daisy, to whom the Society extends our condolences. AB

Bobby Redrupp

We are also sorry to report the death, at the ripe old age of 88, of Bobby Redrupp, for many years a popular figure "down the chapel". Not a reference this to his parish church of St. Silas and All Saints, but rather the adjoining market where he was a stallholder for seventy years, initially helping his dad at the tender age of eight. His strong sense of community led him to serve as a councillor in the 1960s and 1970s, and for many years after he would confront his successors on the Licensing Committee as chairman of the Chapel Market Stallholders Association.

He is survived by his wife Maisie, daughter Lynda and son Robbie. AB

PPS15: an update

The concerns reported in the last newsletter about the Planning Policy Statement 15, intended to replace the guidance note of the same number, have led to a government rethink. Although the preamble stressed the importance of heritage considerations, there was widespread feeling that the main text would have had the opposite effect. The Minister announced that the present draft would not proceed and an amended version would be put forward for fresh consultation.

On 14 December the Chairs of both the Communities and Local Government (CLG) and Culture Media and Sport (CMS) Parliamentary Committees sent a letter to the Minister for Planning, John Healey MP, calling on him to commit to further consultation on the draft planning policy statement on the historic environment (PPS15). MPs Dr Phyllis Starkey (CLG) and John Whittingdale, (CMS) drafted the letter as a result of overwhelming stakeholder concern about the PPS proposals expressed in correspondence to the Committees during the consultation. A number of heritage sector organisations were forwarded the letter, including The Heritage Alliance, the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), the Association of Preservation Trusts (APT), the Historic Towns Forum, the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies (JCNAS) and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).

The letter highlights recent media reports in which the Planning Minister committed to redrafting the PPS and to clearing up any confusion - particularly on the unclear language of the draft - before publishing the final statement. The Committees urged the Minister to commit to ensuring there will be adequate opportunity for comment on the redrafted policy before it is finalised, to reassure stakeholders and the two Committees that the Government is treating their concerns seriously.

On 22nd January, The Heritage Alliance received a copy of the Minister for Planning's response. In his response, John Healey MP acknowledges the extent of misgivings and explains that discussions have taken place with English Heritage and DCMS as a result.

The Minister also emphasises the importance of considering all views, and as such every one of the near 500 responses to the PPS consultation is to be assessed by the end of January. This assessment will shape the strategy for handling those aspects of the PPS requiring clarification /

alteration; but while this "will certainly require some further consultation with stakeholder organisations", the Minister does not provide further details.

A copy of John Healey's response was attached to a letter from the Clerks of the CLG and CMS Committees addressed to the Heritage Alliance. The letter explains that in light of CLG's plans for further consultation and the limited time available in this late stage of the Parliament, the Committees will take no further action at this time. However, they may reconsider this position should the Committees receive notification of dissatisfaction with the process or result of the next round of consultation.

To view the correspondence, visit this site: www.heritagelink.org.uk/heritage-protection-reform-news

Heritage protection PQs: House of Commons and House of Lords

The importance of the PPS was also emphasised by Parliamentary Questions asked in the both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. On 14 December Caroline Spelman, Conservative Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, asked the Secretary of State for CLG what representations his Department has received from (a) the Royal Town Planning Institute and (b) heritage or conservation groups on the revision of PPS15. Secretary of State, Ian Austin, answered that the Department received nearly 500 responses to the consultation exercise and that one of these was the joint response from the IHBC and Royal Town Planning Institute, while over 50 were from heritage or conservation groups. According to Mr Austin all responses are now being considered, and a summary and analysis will be published before the end of January.

Transcript available at: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmihansrd/cm091214/text/91214w0064.htm#09121533002087

On 3 December Lord Clement-Jones (Liberal Democrat) put two questions to the House of Lords; asking the Government whether planning

legislation reform will be implemented to enable control over partial demolition and development in conservation areas; and what steps they will take to reform planning regulations to close the gaps in heritage protection caused by the 1991 South Lakeland and 1997 Shimizu judgments. The questions were drafted by The Heritage Alliance's Heritage Protection Reform Coordinator, at Lord-Clement Jones' request. In response to the questions Lord McKenzie of Luton, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government & Department for Work and Pensions, said that the Government believes that guidance on conservation areas outlined in the draft PPS15 could go some way

towards addressing the implications of the South Lakeland judgment. In addressing Shimizu, Lord McKenzie cited the overwhelming positive response to the 2007 White Paper proposal that planning permission should be required for the partial demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area. This would involve an amendment to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. It was stated however that the timing of any such changes will be considered alongside other Government priorities.

Transcript available at this web page: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/91203w0003.htm#09120352000551

British Museum plans approved

Press statement from Camden Civic Society

On December 17th 2009 Camden Council's Development Control Committee approved the British Museum's revised extension scheme application by 9 votes to 3.

The Camden Civic Society object strongly to this scheme because of the great harm it will do to the Museum's existing magnificent Grade I listed buildings. We also object to the damage it will do to the setting of other listed buildings and the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

We are very disappointed by the decision but would like to thank the organisations and individuals who fought alongside us. The organisations are first and foremost the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee but also include three "statutory amenity societies" - the Georgian Group, the Twentieth Century Society and the Ancient Monuments Society - and an independent nationwide group, SAVE Britain's Heritage.

Although we accept that the discussion last night was fair, we are very unhappy about the advice that Camden has received, in particular from English Heritage. Together with Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee we have made a second formal complaint to English Heritage about the

Advice to about on both the original and revised British Museum applications.

Together with the Bloomsbury CAAC, we shall also now be asking the Secretary of State, Department of Communities and Local Government, to "call-in" the revised application, that is, to refer it to an Inquiry.

One good result of yesterday's meeting was an agreement that Camden's Scrutiny Committee would look at Camden's relationship with English Heritage and the service EH has been providing to Camden

Camden turned down the Museum's original extension scheme in July. In our opinion, none of Camden's Reasons for Refusal have been met by the revised application.

Following the refusal in July, the Museum made one substantive alteration to its scheme but otherwise did not rethink it. Instead, it appears to have opted to fight a Public Relations battle. Since we have no funds, and on principle are objective and accurate in our campaigning, this was a battle we were not equipped to fight.

Civic Society Initiative: where next for the civic societies?

Over 100 people attended the Civic Society Initiative National Convention in Blackpool on 15 October to review the results of the wide ranging debate that has taken place over the summer on the future of the civic society movement. The findings presented in 'Own the Future' draw together a set of proposals and issues to move things forward.

The survey found overwhelming support for a new national body but one with a very different feel to the Civic Trust. It should, says Own the Future, be federal and grassroots in its culture and governance. The civic societies want the national body to be independent and recognise the need for its core funding to come from the civic societies.

Since then there have been further proposals from those taking the initiative, but it appears that the lessons from the failure of the Civic Trust have not yet been learned. The Islington Society ceased

to subscribe when the Civic Trust sought what we considered to be a disproportionate part of our annual subscription. We felt that the success in creating the London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies meant that we had a body to represent us on matters that extend beyond our borough boundaries, and that through its continued membership of the Civic Trust we had sufficient albeit indirect access to that body.

The Civic Society Initiative takers are again seeking £3 per member which is between 37½ and 60% of our annual income, depending on the proportion of couples in our membership. Soundings within the London Forum indicate that most Societies feel the same way. There is also some concern that the new organisation may be too "top-down" in its relationship with member Societies.

Statutory and non-statutory consultees on planning applications: call for feedback

This Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) consultation seeks feedback on proposals to change the consultation arrangements for statutory and non-statutory consultees on planning applications in England (as opposed to those on listed building consent and conservation area consent, covered by the Penfold Review discussed above). The proposals represent the Government's response to a recommendation of the Killian Pretty Review of the planning application process which stated: "Government should clarify and improve the process for consulting on applications so that it is clearer which organisations need to be consulted, when they must be consulted and why, what response is required, and how the response should be taken into account in the decision by the local planning authority."

It affects English Heritage and The Theatres Trust, among others; but it may have wider impact in that it suggests all comments should be identified as being one of the following three types: 'fundamental concern', 'substantive concern' or a 'material consideration'. These categories, and the adoption of a 21 day consultation period as

standard, could be applied to other types of consultation in the future. Also of interest is the draft code of practice, which includes providing pre-application advice, advice on standard types of application via the consultee's website and committing to providing expert witness support at any subsequent appeal when raising a fundamental concern on an application. The Heritage Alliance, always keen to promote informed participation, found in 2006 that local planning authorities' consultation practices left much to be desired. To ensure that the NGO perspective is taken into account, The Heritage Alliance will use the opportunity to reiterate the recommendations from Making Consultation Matter (2006) www.heritagelink.org.uk/docs/HL_Consultation_06%20FINAL.pdf

The full report is available at <http://tinyurl.com/yd5r4qq>. Any comments should be made to StatCons@communities.gsi.gov.uk by **Friday March 19th**.

Lost London Exhibition

The Lost London Exhibition at Kenwood House shows a selection of photographs taken between 1870 and 1946 of London buildings now demolished. The photographs in black and white are from the English Heritage collection and include several from Islington:

- Terraced housing in King Square, Finsbury taken in 1945
- Aylesbury Place, Clerkenwell taken in 1912 (remains of the Priory of St. John of Jerusalem)
- Bartholomew Close, Smithfield taken in 1909

In addition to photographs, architectural fragments were saved from demolished buildings, which are now in English Heritage's Architectural Study Collection.

Increasing concern during the late 19th century about the destruction of London's heritage led to the decision to take photographs of buildings prior to their demolition. One panel in the exhibition quotes this couplet:

"O! London won't be London long
For 'twill all be pulled down"

The reasons behind such losses are familiar today:

- road widening
- slum clearance
- commercial development
- war damage

The conservation movement emerged from this concern. For founders of the Islington Society in 1960 conservation was, and remains, a key issue. Another couplet in the exhibition gives apt expression to conservation beliefs:

"Go where we may, rest where we will,
Eternal London haunts us still".

The Kenwood House Lost London exhibition will be open until Monday 5 April and is warmly recommended.

A major problem today is the extent to which neglect and lack of maintenance cause buildings to fall into decay and thus make demolition acceptable. A current Islington example is the Sobell Leisure Centre which was highlighted in James Dunnett's recent talk as a building in danger of demolition despite the campaign to restore it.

Shadow Secretary of State still gunning for Heritage Lottery Fund

Speaking at the Royal Society of Arts on 14 January Jeremy Hunt (Conservative Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) promised a golden age for the arts, in his most detailed statement yet on the party's policy. Charlotte Higgins in the Guardian reports him as claiming that a Tory government would work to build a US style culture of philanthropy, by encouraging tax breaks on lifetime giving.

He would introduce a target of five per cent administrative costs for main distributors, singling

out for criticism the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Arts Council England quoting figures of 13% and 11% of grant money on their own administration. Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, remonstrated. The true figure for running costs was 6.9% of grant payments in 2008-9 having reduced them by about 25% in real terms since 2003: "Making sure these projects are well run and effectively monitored delivers great value for money, but it takes expertise, time and investment."

Places of Worship@heritagelink: Manifesto published

Places of Worship @ Heritage Link, the group that brings together faith organisations inside and outside The Heritage Alliance, has published its own Manifesto. It sets out the group's firm conviction of the economic and social benefits that historic places of worship can offer; as POW Development Officer Deborah Jarman says: "Historic places of worship are nationally important landmarks as well as places of history and architectural wonder. The manifesto sets out what is necessary to secure their future." The Manifesto calls for the continuation beyond 2011 of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme; protection of the Heritage Lottery Fund's share of lottery funds; increased partnership working to meet shared objectives; closer working relationships with Local Authorities and greater public awareness of historic places of worship and the risks they face. For a copy of the Manifesto contact placesofworship@heritagelink.org.uk

Capital Kids Cricket

● Recently a special function in the Lord Mayor of Westminster's parlour marked the 20th anniversary of the Capital Kids Cricket. Many believe this charity saved Cricket for children around London.

● The co-founders of the charity in 1989 were William Greaves an Islington resident and Haydn Turner, both Yorkshiremen. They were concerned that the 1980s dogma that competitive sport was bad for children would lead to the demise of team sports in schools. A catastrophic decline during the 1980s left only about two dozen Primary schools out of 769 in London's 16 inner city boroughs still teaching cricket. William Greaves is quoted as saying: "Haydn and I believe very strongly that cricket is a vital educational tool. It teaches children how to learn individual skills within a team commitment, how to respect leadership and honesty".

● After just 20 years' existence Capital Kids Cricket and its supporters have boosted that number to more than 500 Primary schools. The ten-year-olds - both boys and girls - taking part have reached an impressive standard of play. One "old boy", Ravi Bopara started as a nine-year-old in his Newham Primary school and now plays for Essex and for England.

● In 2000 Capital Kids Cricket launched its Secondary Schools Project for Inner London boroughs. This has created new challenges with the need to fund separate programmes for older boys and girls and to find more grass facilities at a time of fast-disappearing playing fields. Capital Kids Cricket hopes that even more London schools will join and thus enable thousands of inner-city children to play cricket. For sport, and above all for the children themselves that will open new opportunities.

William Greaves received the Mayor of Islington's Civic Award 2008 from Councillor Barbara Smith, Mayor for Capital Kids Cricket work for Islington schoolchildren (see picture).

● 194 Primary schools from 18 Inner London boroughs are competing in the British Land Kids Cricket League 2010, organised by Capital Kids. It is the biggest Primary school cricket competition anywhere in Britain. The Islington venue for matches is the Sobell Leisure Centre in Hornsey Road, where the knock-out stage started in February. The finals between 8 teams will be held in the MCC Indoors School at Lord's on 23

March. Canonbury Primary School are current holders of the prestigious title and are optimistic about 2010.

● You can find further information on their website: www.capitalkidscricket.co.uk. Many benefactors provide invaluable financial help which you too can do by joining the ground staff team of the Heavy Rollers Club as shown in the illustration. FH



Transport News Round-up

Overground blockade from February 20th

The long awaited blockade of the north London line through Islington has at last been fixed to start on February 20th and will last until May 31st. During this time there will be no trains through Caledonian Road & Barnsbury, Highbury & Islington and Canonbury and the replacement buses will not call at Cally Road. There is no realistic alternative rail route, although some have suggested that trains might have run from Gospel Oak to South Tottenham on the Barking line and thence to Stratford; or that the work could have been done in two sections. The dates chosen mean that this will be an election issue, certainly in the local elections and almost certainly the General Election too.

CrossRail enabling works - buses diverted

From mid-January buses returning to Islington along Oxford Street were diverted at Oxford Circus. The 73 now serves Great Portland Street while the 390 takes a route not suitable for articulated buses along Newman Street and Goodge Street, cutting off the corner at Tottenham Court Road. The reason for these diversions, which are scheduled to last until November, is a reduction in the carriageway width to allow the repositioning of sewers, pipes and cables necessary to build CrossRail. The repositioned utilities will be better placed to minimise disruption when they require maintenance in future.

Bus fare hike and subsidy cut

Not content with raising most the fares used by those least able to pay, Boris' new business plan shifts subsidy from buses to tube so that there will be a 1½% cut in services by 2012.

So far there have been no major cuts, but the improvements that used to accompany the review of overcrowded routes have dried up. One example is the 214 which runs from Liverpool Street through Old Street to the Angel, King's Cross and ultimately Highgate. TfL admit that it is overcrowded through the Angel whenever there have been delays, but have declined to increase the frequency or reintroduce double-decker buses. However, they have undertaken to keep the route under review if planned developments happen in City Road basin. Plans to extend the 488 to meet the East London line at Dalston also appear to be on hold. As we go to press, there are plans to end the night service on

route 236.

Oyster comes to National rail at last

From the new year, pay as you go Oyster has been available on all National rail services. However, there is not parity with Underground fares, which use the zonal system, and National rail fares, which remain point-to-point, unless you make enough journeys to reach the daily travelcard cap. Consequently, you can reach the cap very quickly on a National rail service! Moreover, the usual leaflet detailing fares had not been published at the start of January, and the only printed information was in leaflets about Oystercards. This does not include full details of fares on National Rail, some of which have been increased significantly even though regulated fares, limited by statute to RPI + 2%, should have been reduced as the relevant RPI figure was -2.4%.

Holders of season tickets are required to obtain a permit to travel beyond the zones of the ticket, which undermines the convenience of PAYG, though not as much as South-West trains have done in failing to provide ticket machines to issue such permits.

Essex Road and Drayton Park were already integrated into full Oystercard use, but members in the north may use Harringay station which was previously outside the scheme.

Sunday engineering signals an end

The Barking-Gospel Oak line is running again on Sundays, something of a relief in the continued absence of the North London line. Recent engineering work has seen an upgrading of the signalling system. As part of this, some of the last "heritage" semaphore signals in London have been removed.

More new buses

Following the revitalisation of the fleet on routes 21 and 38, new buses are appearing in Clerkenwell on route 63. The relet contract for route 56 (Barts- Whipps Cross Hospitals) specifies new vehicles although the vehicle chosen by East London has a less robust appearance than those used by the Go-Ahead and Arriva companies. The Spirit of London bus, bought to replace the victim of July 7th, no longer runs on route 30 which has been switched to operate out of Bow rather than West Ham garage.

AB

From the Society

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What we do

- we support conservation planning work to preserve the borough's historic fabric and individual buildings of distinction
- we campaign for a high standard of design in new buildings
- we encourage best practice through awards for good architecture in new or refurbished buildings
- we organise a varied programme of events including talks, walks and site visits
- we campaign for better public transport and for priority for people travelling on foot or by bike
- we produce publications that celebrate Islington's history and its social and cultural diversity
- we publish neighbourhood walking trails to foster exploration awareness and pride of place
- we build links between residents officials and councillors

- we publish a regular newsletter
- we send advisers to Council groups dealing with development, the environment and transport
- we are represented on the London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies, which takes up cross-borough issues and is a member of the Civic Trust

Society publications

Twentieth Century Buildings in Islington, by Alec Forshaw, £14.99, photographs by Richard Leecy, ISBN 0-9541490-0-9

The Story of Day Flats in and around Islington, by Andrew Bosi, photographs from C.F. Day Limited and Oliver Craxton, £5, ISBN 0-9541490-1-7

An architect in Islington, by Harley Sherlock, £14.99, ISBN 9-78-0-9541490-2-4

[all of the Society's publications are available from the Society at 35, Britannia Row, London, N.1 or from local bookshops]

Books from our President and Vice-Presidents

Suicide of the West, by Richard Koch & Chris Smith, £14.99 and available on Amazon, ISBN 0-8264 9023-9.

A History of Islington, by Mary Cosh, published by Historical Publications at £18.95, ISBN 0-948667-974

53 Cross Street - the biography of an historic house by Mary Cosh & Martin King, photographs by Pauline Lord, published by the Islington Archaeology & History Society

An architect in Islington, by Harley Sherlock, £14.99, ISBN 9-78-0-9541490-2-4

Future Society events

Annual Dinner 2010

2010 is our fiftieth anniversary and the first celebratory event will take place on **Tuesday March 23rd**. We hope to include a flyer with this newsletter giving further details.

Annual Bill Manley Pub Crawl 2010

The date this year is Friday June 25th.

Other Events in or around Islington:

Archaeology & History Society (meetings at 8.0 p.m. in Islington Town Hall)

Wednesday 17th February "The birth and growth of London's fringe theatre". Speaker John Dunne

As previously advised, the March meeting of the Society will not be on the usual Wednesday, but the following *Thursday* night, *March 18th 2010*. Jeremy Corbyn will be speaking on the life of George Lansbury.

Islington Society members who are not members of

Arch & Hist are welcome. There is an opportunity to make a small donation (£1 is suggested) at the bookstall.

Islington Museum, 245 St. John Street, EC1V
Open Monday-Tuesday, Thursday - Saturday 10.0 am - 5.0 pm

20th February until 20th March 2009: "Hugging Trees". Our very own member Avis Saltsman is the artist for this entire exhibition. Her work spans a forty-year career. Avis was a painter and teacher before turning to printmaking in 1981 and she has been printing full time, apart from the occasional campaign, since 1986.

Avis takes inspiration for her work from the natural world, and this can be seen throughout the wide variety of mediums she has used during her career. In the late 1960s she produced a quartet of works based on the elements: Earth, Air Fire and Water. In the 1970s, her home near Kew Gardens informed her practice and she produced four major pieces: Spanish Cork, Oak, Birch and Hothouse.

Since moving to Islington in 1989, Avis has developed many printmaking skills using the hand-printing techniques of silkscreen, etching, and collograph. These works, again inspired by the natural world, include her six unique "Sleeping Birds".

Mayor of Islington's Gala Evening

Islington Town Hall Assembly Hall

Friday, 26th March, 2010 commencing at 7.30 p.m.: price £50. Tickets from Sue Goss at the Town Hall. The Mayor is supporting two charities both based in Islington: the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, and Room2Heal. Marking the degree to which relations have been civilised in the last four years, a Liberal Democrat mayor includes the musical group led by a Labour councillor as the star attraction, after supper.

Almeida Theatre, Almeida Street, N.1

Monday - Saturday 7.30 p.m, Saturday also 3.0 p.m.

12th February - 10th April "Measure for Measure" by William

Shakespeare. Director Michael Attenborough

15th April - 5th June "Ruined", set in the Democratic Republic of Congo, by Lynn Nottage, European premiere

Canal Museum, Wharf Road, N.1

Exhibition until 12th April "Wartime Waterways"

Thursday 1st April 7.30 p.m. Talk "Idle Women" - nickname for canal boatwomen whose badge IW stood for Inland Waterways.

Ecology Centre, Gillespie Park

Sunday 7th March. 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. "Signs of Spring in Gillespie Park".

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, 39a Canonbury Square.

Exhibition until 18th April "On the Move: Visualising Action" - with a particular focus on motion photography.

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