

# ISLINGTON *news*

*The Journal of the Islington Society incorporating FOIL folio*

## Time for continuity

*The election results in Islington may represent a blow for common-sense*

### Labour hold Parliamentary seats

At a time when more new M.P.s than ever were being elected to the House of Commons, and the media coverage was heavily biased towards the idea that it was time for change, Islington's sitting M.P.s both enjoyed increased majorities. Until the television debates this had been widely expected, in view of the improved showing of the Tories in each election since 2005, but the surge in support for the Liberals reflected in opinion polls which followed the televised debates had given a boost both to Liberal Democrats and to the printing industry.

In the event, the electorate was good enough to recognise what the press and BBC would not, namely that for all the imperfections of our electoral system it is based on the fact that we do not elect a presidential leader but a representative M.P. The widely differing results across the country suggested that the performance of sitting M.P.s weighed in voters minds, even though some implicated in the expenses fiasco were returned and others (like Susan Kramer) could consider themselves harshly treated. Perhaps the antipathy to bankers extended to former bankers.

We now have what many people consider a misalliance and the promise of a five year fixed term. It is difficult to believe the next election will not come before 2015. Two immediate decisions of the coalition though will be greatly welcomed: abandoning the third runway at Heathrow, and abandoning ID cards.

### Local results scale new heights

If the first past the post system is unfair (and AV would certainly be fairer without destroying the constituency basis of election), how much more is the local election system, where the first three past the post are elected. Either STV within the ward, or electing a third every year other than in GLA/Mayor years, would reduce the risk of wholesale changes every four years. In 2006 three party leaders lost their seats in Camden and Islington. Camden's less

expected return to Labour control may have been assisted by the lack of experience in the last ruling group. No leaders lost this time, but what was remarkable was how close the result was to the kind of outcome STV would be expected to deliver. If voters gave thought to the character of their M.P., even more did the voters of Islington consider their local candidates. The result was that, although the Liberal Democrat group is reduced to 13, they are spread over half the wards, while all but one ward has a majority party councillor.

### Early wins

As with the Con-Lib coalition in Westminster, the Labour group has been able to implement a popular decision, to restore a Borough wide planning committee, which would probably have happened whoever won. Cllr. Klute (one of the councillors with a conspicuous personal vote) is reported to be considering a strengthening of the advisory panels that have given free voluntary support to the development control function of the council.

### No advance for the Green Party

Unlike Westminster, the Green Party made no advance in Islington. In part this was down to a sizable increase in the electorate in their former ward, Highbury West, and thus a dilution of the voting force they had cultivated. A more serious consequence of this demographic change was the inability of the council's administrators to facilitate votes for all who turned up to exercise their democratic right and responsibility. The long queues, (problems were more serious in other parts of the country) should have been foreseen and prevented. Nor should the boundary commission escape without blame. Their obsession with equalising numbers erased logical boundaries and took no account of London's rate of development, so that as soon as the boundaries were drawn the numbers on which they were determined became out of date.

## MINUTES OF THE 49TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2009

*Meeting held on Wednesday December 16th, 2009 at the Town Hall.*

The Chairman Andrew Bosi presided over a well attended meeting.

Committee Members Present: Andrew Bosi, Harley Sherlock, Frances Balfour, Leo Chapman, David Gibson, Kathleen Frenchman, Stan Westwood, Frank Hopkins.

### AGENDA 1: APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from: Chris Smith, Jenni Chan, James Dunnett, Andrew Gardner, Marion Harvey, Mary Cosh, Alan Turner, John Ackers.

### AGENDA 2: MINUTES OF LAST A.G.M.

The Minutes of the 48th A.G.M of 8th October 2008 were accepted and will be signed by the Chairman as being a correct report.

### AGENDA 3: TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT 2008/ 2009

The Chair read his Annual Report which was to be circulated to all members in a future Newsletter, and was adopted. He had told members through the last Newsletter of his intention to stand down, but subsequent discussion led by the Vice Chairman (Alan Turner) had led to the proposal that he remain in post during the Society's 50th year, 2010. David Gibson had undertaken to take on the Chair thereafter. Members endorsed this plan. Kathleen Frenchman objected to the draft report mentioning events that had taken place in Islington that the Society had not discussed or been involved in. David Gibson said that it was up to the Chairman what he chose to include in his report and on a show of hands there were nine members supporting mentioning these events and seven members against.

### AGENDA 4: TO ADOPT THE FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31st December 2008.

The Income and expenditure for the year ending 31st December 2008 is shown on the last page of the Annual Report 2008/ 2009. The report was approved.

### AGENDA 5: TO ELECT THE OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

A list of Members standing for re-election to the Committee 2009/10 was circulated and unanimously accepted. Stan Westwood has taken over from Donald Mitchell as Treasurer and is temporarily acting as Secretary until a new Secretary can be found. Andrew Bosi will remain on the Committee until the 50th Anniversary but will not chair meetings

and will then be replaced by David Gibson as the new Chairman. Maggie Tattersall may offer to join the Committee, David Trillo is considering whether to join the Committee as Secretary. Chris Tattersall has offered to join the Committee as Legal Adviser.

### AGENDA 6: TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

In considering the future of the Islington Society a number of suggestions were made and David Gibson said that there are wider issues in Islington which the Islington Society could be involved in. Richard Heseltine suggested having centralised Planning Committees and bringing back the Conservation Panel. Chris Bulford suggested lobbying at local elections and David Gibson said that we could arrange hustings meetings for April. Some members who are not on the Committee felt that they should be able to have meetings which are not in Pubs.

It was said that the Islington Society had missed out on looking at some large local developments and tower blocks. D.G said that the Society cannot consider all Planning Applications so we need to sort out a definition of 'Borough wide significance.' Someone is needed to sort through all Planning Applications and decide which ones to concentrate on. Andrew Bosi said that we should give more importance to open spaces and to Heritage Buildings. Leo Chapman mentioned the City Road Basin where there is a large open space with two buildings and next door at 259, City Road a 29 storey tower block is proposed. The tower block had been advocated on the basis that it would pay for the open space but in the event the open space had been funded by Central Government Grant. L.C to draft a letter for A.B to send. Chris Ashby said that at the next Committee Meeting the Society should look at proposed developments at Queensland Road and an application for a 25 storey tower in Hornsey Road.

Andrew Bosi said that the declining number of Committee Members was making it more difficult to fill the positions of Officers when someone left the Committee. David Gibson said that everyone on the Committee should have a job. It was generally agreed that the Society needs to organise more events, visits and lectures and needs an Events Secretary to organise this.

Since there were no further items the meeting was declared closed.

*Contents for this issue: see page 7.*

## Mayoral consultation on revised Transport Strategy

*In the last issue we published a summary of the comments of the London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies on the Mayor's proposed spatial development strategy. This time we have the introductory comments in response to the draft transport strategy also published by the Mayor last autumn. The full text is available on request as before.*

### Introduction

The London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies (the 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. It incorporates since the early 1990s the former London Amenity and Transport Association (LATA), which was formed at the time of the London Motorway Box proposals in the mid 1960s and was influential in the development of transport policy in London between 1965 and 1990.

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 inter alia high standards of planning, urban design, housing, services, landscaping, infrastructure and transport;

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.

The London Forum contributed to the "Way to Go!" document in 2009 pressing for, among other things, a more sustainable approach to freight distribution in London, including the designation of break-bulk or consolidation centres and the distribution of goods by more environmentally-friendly smaller vehicles within London - the "London lorry".

### General comments

In the last ten years there have been a number of major developments which should shape any transport strategy for London, especially:

- the need to meet agreed targets for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as part of the Climate Change Strategy ;
- the need to improve air quality;
- recognition that we cannot build our way out of transport problems - especially for roads but within the last 5 years also for rail - and the need to rely to a much greater extent on demand management; and
- the growing financial constraints/realism - the latest Business Plan shows much greater realism -

there is no point in hanging on to projects that will not get funded.

In addition, the Draft Replacement London Plan should be using growth to retrofit the location of development, focusing major trip-generating development in places that are well-served by public transport (e.g. town centres) or places that will be well-served by public transport (e.g. Opportunity Areas) once major transport improvements have been completed. Overall, the goal should be to reduce the need to travel, especially long distances and/or by car.

Given this context, the London Forum is concerned that the draft Mayor's Transport Strategy is a major missed opportunity to move transport planning for a world city into the twenty-first century, embracing the challenges rather than putting them off for another five years. This strategy is an opportunity to start London moving in a different direction.

The London Forum is concerned that these major issues - climate change, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, air quality and demand management - should be a significant influence in shaping the strategy. Instead of being seen as drivers for a new strategy they are treated almost as incidental outcomes of a series of "proposals" which are hoped will contribute to the desired (?) outcomes.

Thus, whilst the London Forum supports many of the individual policies and proposals, we do not consider that the draft Transport Strategy has grasped the challenges, the solutions for which have been put off indefinitely in the hope or belief that technological solutions will deliver the necessary change in outcomes.

While we agree that technological changes should be pursued, we consider they are necessary but not sufficient to deliver the scale of change needed. For example:

- a more concerted effort to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through a package of measures is needed which together will ensure that we reach our target for 2030 and intermediate targets for 2015, 2020, and 2025. This means starting as soon as possible,

having explored more fully which measures will be most effective in delivering our targets for the transport sector. The Draft Transport Strategy appears to have used the backcasting techniques used in the VIBAT Study (Halcrow) to explore the most effective package for London (see Section 5.20 and in particular Figure 58), but relies much too heavily on "improved vehicle efficiency" and defers any consideration of demand management, such as road user charging (see section 5.25 and Figure 63;

- by delaying plans for low emission zones until 2012 the Mayor is failing to tackle the problem of air pollution. The London Forum supports the Campaign for Clean Air in London and urges the Mayor to tackle this issue with greater determination;

- by putting off addressing the need for demand management measures and even abolishing the Western Extension to the Congestion Charging Zone, the London Forum considers that the Mayor appears to be pretending that "business as usual" is still an acceptable approach - we consider it is time for a change. The London Forum supports the development of initiatives for road charging and opposes the abolition of the Western Extension to the Central London Congestion Charging Zone;

- by focusing new travel-generating development in locations that are well-served by public transport it should be possible to reduce the need to travel. The Draft Replacement London Plan does not seek to achieve this and, indeed, is still trying to focus major growth in Opportunity Areas which are not, and will not be, well served by public transport. The Mayor's Transport Strategy needs to support not follow the London Plan.

The bottom line seems to be that the degree of modal shift from the car to public transport, walking and cycling is much slower than is needed to deliver on all the above priorities. The current London Plan (Policy 3C.17) aims to:

- reduce weekday traffic by 15 per cent in Central London where congestion charging applies
- achieve zero growth across the rest of Inner

London

- reduce growth in Outer London by a third, and seek zero growth in Outer London town centres.

The Draft Replacement London Plan Policy 6.12 and the MTS do not aspire to do that. Likewise the Transport 2025 aimed to produce a greater modal shift from car use to public transport by 2025 than that aimed for in the MTS by 2031. The overall impression is that this is a "wait and see" strategy - waiting another four or five years before deciding whether to take action is not an acceptable strategy.

The London Forum considers that the Mayor needs to show some real leadership and start moving London into a much more sustainable pattern of development and provide a more sustainable transport strategy. London should be showing the way for world cities.

Finally, while the London Forum understands the financial constraints in the Business Plan to 2018, it is not clear what improvements, and in which priority, the Mayor wants to achieve for transport in the following thirteen years of the London Plan. The Opportunity Areas, for example, will need increased public transport accessibility and capacity if they are ever to be developed in a sustainable way. The Transport Strategy does not provide anything beyond existing short-term commitments and Crossrail - there is no indication how Opportunity Areas will be made accessible by 2031 or even whether this will be a priority to support the spatial development strategy in the London Plan.

Overall, the London Forum, whilst welcoming some of the individual initiatives, does not consider that the Draft Transport Strategy is sufficiently visionary to deliver its own aims, let alone to provide the leadership role we would all like to see London play. We recognise the uncertainties that a 20-year strategy must face, but consider that the final Transport Strategy needs to be more forthright about the need for change.

### *Islington Society publications*

*Twentieth Century Buildings in Islington*, by Alec Forshaw, £14.99, photographs by Richard Leeney, 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]

## Alan Turner 1928-2010

The Society lost our Vice Chairman in April after a long battle against illness. Alan had masterminded the annual Architecture & Conservation Award under its current guise until March this year - a major commitment to the Society.



Alan Turner had a distinguished career as an architect and town planner, qualifying at Liverpool University. He was one of a group of idealistic young architects who joined the London County Council in the late fifties, when that authority was producing innovative schemes such as that at Roehampton.

In 1968, as a partner in Llewelyn Davies Weeks Forestier-Walker and Bor, he went to work first for a year in Venezuela and then for four years in New York, dealing with new towns, programmes for deprived communities and other development projects.

On his return to the UK he formed the practice of Alan Turner and Associates which undertook work for the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the ODA London and the European Development Fund. Planning projects were commissioned in Angola, Malaysia, the Philippines, India, Curacao and St. Maarten. These usually involved many months abroad, fulfilling but sometimes frustrating work, enduring long hours, unfamiliar climate and intermittent loneliness. A

person of strong convictions and integrity, Alan worked tirelessly on behalf of the deprived, earning the respect of the local teams held, some of whom have remained life-long friends.

When his health precluded work in tropical climates he established an architectural practice in London Docklands. He later spent some years establishing a London branch for an American firm of architects, HLW International. On retirement, Alan became involved with local planning issues in Islington, instigating an annual award for the best architectural scheme in the Borough. Winners have included Regents Quarter and most recently King's Place near King's Cross, the Children's Ward at Moorfields Eye Hospital, and the City & Islington College building in Blackstock Road. Alan had been the Society's Vice-Chair since 2004.

Alan also developed his skills as a painter in his later years, exhibiting with several groups. He and Lucy were married for forty-nine years. LT

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### **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

## National News round-up

### New Government appointments

Conservative Jeremy Hunt is Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport (COMS). Elected MP for South West Surrey in May 2005, he was formerly Shadow Culture Secretary (2007-2010) and Shadow Minister for Disabled People (2005 - 2007). Before his election as M.P. Mr Hunt ran his own educational publishing business, Hotcourses. Commenting on his appointment, Mr Hunt said: "I am very pleased to have been appointed as the new Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport. It is a wonderful moment for me personally, having followed this portfolio for the last two and a half years. Our sectors - particularly creative industries, culture and tourism - are vital elements in the UK's economic recovery. And the successful delivery of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in London gives us a once-in-a-lifetime chance to showcase the country to the world in what will, quite literally (sic), be the greatest show on Earth."

Conservative colleague Caroline Spelman is appointed Secretary of State for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs, and Eric Pickles is appointed Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Chris Huhne, formerly Lib Dem environment spokesman, takes the Department for Energy and Climate Change. The Conservative Francis Maude, who has Cabinet-level responsibility for the third sector, will set out the Coalition Government's policy for funding the sector at a special national conference on 9th June.

The Heritage Alliance has written to Jeremy Hunt welcoming his appointment and reminding him of the commitment he made at its March meeting to inter-Departmental meetings at Ministerial level (DCMS / COMS, DEFRA and CLG) to help co-ordinate heritage policies more effectively. As Chair of The Heritage Alliance and of the Churches Conservation Trust, Lloyd Grossman is also writing to the new Prime Minister alerting him to the value of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme in regenerating rural and urban community life.

John Penrose, Conservative MP for Weston-Super-Mare and newly appointed Minister for Tourism and Heritage, takes on heritage and the built environment. His new portfolio also covers the National Lottery, Royal Parks and Royal Household and Licensing and Gambling. The reason, the press

speculates, is that John Penrose could not be given responsibility for media and the digital economy because of a 'conflict of interest' arising from his marriage to Dido Harding - the managing director of the Talk Talk telecom company. Ed Vaizey, Conservative MP for Wantage and Didcot, who served as shadow culture minister since 2006 up until the election - and was expected to take the heritage brief - retains responsibility for arts, media and libraries, museums and galleries. He takes on additional responsibility for telecoms, broadband and the creative industries working in tandem with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Before being elected to Parliament in 2005, Mr Penrose was a publisher. He was Shadow Business Minister 2009-2010, is Joint Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Further Education & Lifelong Learning and has served on the Work and Pensions Select Committee. Weston Super Mare, famous for its Grand Pier destroyed in 2008 and due to reopen this year, is one of the coastal towns in the CABE programme Sea Change, which aims to drive cultural and creative regeneration and economic growth in seaside resorts.

So, the message to the heritage sector is mixed. The economic value of heritage in tourism is recognised, but - useful as those statistics are - the heritage portfolio covers heritage protection reform, regeneration, education and training, citizenship, social cohesion, volunteering and community engagement. Putting it in a box with tourism does not do justice to its multiple functions and values.

### Coalition's Programme for Government: culture conspicuous in its absence

Last week the Prime Minister and his Deputy launched the Coalition's Programme for Government, setting out their administration's commitments. Finding overt references to heritage and arts issues was about as successful as seeking needles in a haystack, but Heritage Alliance has identified the 'highlights' from the document that the sector will need to keep a watchful eye on...

"We will examine the case for moving to a 'gross profits tax' system for the National Lottery, and reform the National Lottery so that more money goes into sport, the arts and heritage."

"We will take forward the Marine and Coastal Access Act and ensure that its conservation measures are implemented effectively."

"We will create a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system."

"We will promote the radical devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups. This will include a review of local government finance."

"We will rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils, including giving councils new powers to stop 'garden grabbing'."

"In the longer term, we will radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which their inhabitants live, based on the principles set out in the Conservative Party publication *Open Source Planning*."

"We will abolish the unelected Infrastructure Planning Commission and replace it with an efficient and democratically accountable system that provides a fast-track process for major infrastructure projects."

"We will publish and present to Parliament a simple and consolidated national planning framework covering all forms of development and setting out national economic, environmental and social priorities."

"We will maintain the Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and other environmental protections, and create a new designation - similar to SSSIs - to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities."

"We will promote 'Home on the Farm' schemes that encourage farmers to convert existing buildings into affordable housing."

### **New draft planning policies on nature, coast and climate change**

In a flurry of pre-Election announcements two new draft planning policy statements have been published - on the natural environment and climate change - and final planning policies have been published on managing coastal change. Together these new policies represent a significant greening of the planning system which will alter the look and feel of new development for years to come.

### **Changes to planning application publicity**

Important changes to the requirements for publicising planning applications were announced

in March along with some other detailed changes. From 1st October all local planning authorities must make information on planning applications available on their website. The time period for site notices for applications for listed building or conservation consent has also been increased from 7 to 21 days. Among other changes, the time limit for lodging a planning appeal has been reduced to 28 days where there is enforcement action being taken and the Secretary of State no longer has to approve the use of Article 4 Directions removing permitted development rights.

### **High Speed Rail - the lines are drawn**

Civic Voice is taking a close interest in the plans for a new High Speed Rail line from London to Birmingham and beyond. A meeting for the civic societies most affected with the promoters, HS2, is being organised and to highlight the true impacts of the alternatives being put forward. Detailed routes have now been published by the Department for Transport and a vigorous public debate is expected.

### **Cyclists see blue**

The first cycle "superhighways" are being installed in London and are set to have a dramatic impact on the street scene. There are lively arguments about whether this investment will have the impact of increasing cycling for fold but perhaps too little debate over the visual impact of this "gesture engineering".

The growing use of coloured road surfaces generally takes some account of the context and respects environments such as conservation areas. This is not the case for the new cycle superhighways which come in a striking blue. This may set a precedent for investment in other parts of the country.

Civic Voice are asking civic societies in London or elsewhere keen to join forces with others to make representations to let them know.

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## Civic Society Initiative: the launch of Civic Voice

We reported last time on the progress towards forming a replacement for the Civic Trust which went into administration last year. In particular we wrote of two concerns about the ante-natal organisation: that it might be too "top-down" in structure, and that its subscription levels would deter many amenity societies from joining. Those who subscribed in 2009 are still licking their wounds.

Since that report the constitution has been amended and the proposed subscription rates reduced. It is now suggested that the rates should be £1.50 per member in the first year and £2 thereafter, with a cap of £500 and £800. However, it is still the feeling of the Islington Society chairman, along with many counterparts in London, that the proportion of our subscription that should go towards National lobbying should be much smaller, and that an increase in the subscription to the London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies so that it could pay £800 on behalf of its 200 members would be more appropriate. The LFCAS formerly received a grant from the Civic Trust and is already having to raise subscriptions: the Islington Society currently pays £25. Much of the benefit of these subscriptions is the access to others' experience in dealing with analogous issues to those facing us. Making informed representations on our behalf to the Mayor is probably more relevant than lobbying central government, which in any case the Forum is well placed to do.

In advance of the formal launch on April 17th Tony Burton, Director of the Civic Society Initiative, said: "Civic Voice will work to make the places where everyone lives more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive. It will speak up for civic societies and local communities across England. Civic Voice will promote civic pride and combine an effective national body for the civic movement with a strong local voice. Over 920 civic societies have registered with the Civic Society Initiative, which is over 250 more than were registered with the Civic Trust when it closed. We are now asking civic societies and other groups wishing to become full members to pay an annual levy of £1.50 per member with a view to establishing Civic Voice on an independent financial footing."

### Other National groups in the sector

The Joint Committee of National Amenity Societies

has existed for some time. They have a web-site. One of the things it does is to discuss consultation papers and a civic society input is required. Michael Hammerson represented the Civic Trust at its meetings, sometimes with Civic Trust officers also. He is continuing to attend their meetings to represent the CSI.

There is a National Council of Civic Trust Societies (NCCTS), a Charitable Company set up in 1996. Its members were the then elected Civic Society representatives of the regions. Bill Tyler is still one of the trustees.

It embraced the same aims and objectives as those of the Civic Trust, and was formed to access funds for Societies which were not available to the Trust. Although the programmes of work which it undertook were completed many years ago, the changes that have taken place in the Civic Trust since then meant that its existence was overlooked. However, it was never wound up and, although there is very little money remaining, returns have continued to be made annually to Companies' House.

Kevin Trickett, one of the Civic Trust Trustees and the President of the Wakefield Society, set up a National Committee for Civic Societies (NCfCS) for the Civic Trust which met quarterly for regional association chairmen to discuss issues and liaise with several trustees and officers of the Civic Trust. The meetings did not lead to the services that were sought by societies because the Civic Trust did not have the funds to supply them, estimated at £350,000. Several attempts were made to recruit individual Civic Trust members to boost funds but they failed.

There was no point in the NCCTS meeting whilst the NCfCS was operating, although it might have been good if it had done so.

Most regional associations of civic societies do not have membership subscription schemes, lack resources to support their members, do not have regional government and cover too wide an area. The CSI has indicated to them that their existence may not be necessary and that other alliances of societies are likely to emerge on a County/Cities/Rural basis and for those with common issues. Some regional chairmen see the CSI as a necessary facility to support the societies that were in their patch and have offered it full



support. Others want to retain a form of regional role and share our concerns about how the new national organisation is going to raise funds to exist, how it will be run and what it will aim to achieve.

There are more significant issues than Blue Plaques but we will have to wait for the announcement next month of how the new organisation proposes to operate.

## The Peacock Inn, 11, Islington High Street.

*Number one in our series on bygone Inns in Islington.*

There is a London Borough of Islington green plaque at 11, Islington High Street marking the site of the Peacock Inn 1564-1962. The Inn was the first staging point out of London on the Great North Road for Royal Mails and other northbound stagecoaches.

There was great excitement at arrivals and departures from the Peacock and the 'York High-flier', the 'Leeds Union', the 'Rockingham' and the 'Stamford Regent' were among the many stagecoaches arriving and departing.

The Peacock featured in Thomas Hughes' 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' and Charles Dickens also mentioned the Peacock Inn in 'Nicholas Nickleby' and in 'Boots at the Holly Tree Inn.' In 1823 it was captured on canvas in James Pollard's 'North Country Mails at the Peacock Inn Islington,' which was one of five paintings that he exhibited at the Royal Academy.

However with the introduction of the

railways the importance of the Peacock Inn declined. The railways were initially disliked by many people who resented the loss of the excitement of the bugle playing and singing associated with the arriving coaches and one observer at the time wrote 'that rail had superseded road and the swift locomotive has rivalled the 'four-in-hand', but worse than all, the merry twang of the guard's horn has been exchanged for the hideous screech of the steam whistle.'

The Royal Mail and passengers travelling north were now using the new railway stations at Euston, St.Pancras and King's Cross and with the introduction of the omnibus the stagecoach era was over. Many attempts were made to restore the fortunes of the Peacock Inn but with little success and it closed as a pub in 1962. Today it is a Domino's pizza shop. SW



## English Heritage prepares Quinquennial mission statement

English Heritage has been consulting on its strategy for the next five years, due to commence on April 1st, 2010 but delayed by the uncertainty that arises from a General election imminent at that date.

A series of three brainstorming sessions were held in February and March, at which the draft aims were debated among friends. The draft sought to restore an emphasis on the core duty of preserving our heritage which it was felt had been obscured in the quinquennium just ending.

While this was welcomed by many, there was concern that the strategy did not address the how and why questions. Why? is particularly important an era of financial constraint when there are many philistines around who see no value whatsoever in preserving anything. Sustainability will be of greater concern in this economic climate as will the contribution of old buildings to the carbon

footprint.

Following the meetings, English Heritage have revised their draft strategy. The changes are that it is now set more clearly in its wider context; there is recognition of the need to focus on the things other organisations cannot do; in particular, EH should respect the work of others active in public engagement on local issues, to become a better partner, listening more and finding new ways of working with others.

Most valued are the expertise that EH has to offer and its role as a champion for heritage. Few would have envisaged the government we now have at the time the strategy was being written and discussed; let us hope that the result finds favour with Ministers at DCMS. We understand that EH will have to cut its budget by £4.8m. as its share of the cuts to be imposed.

## Islington in Bloom

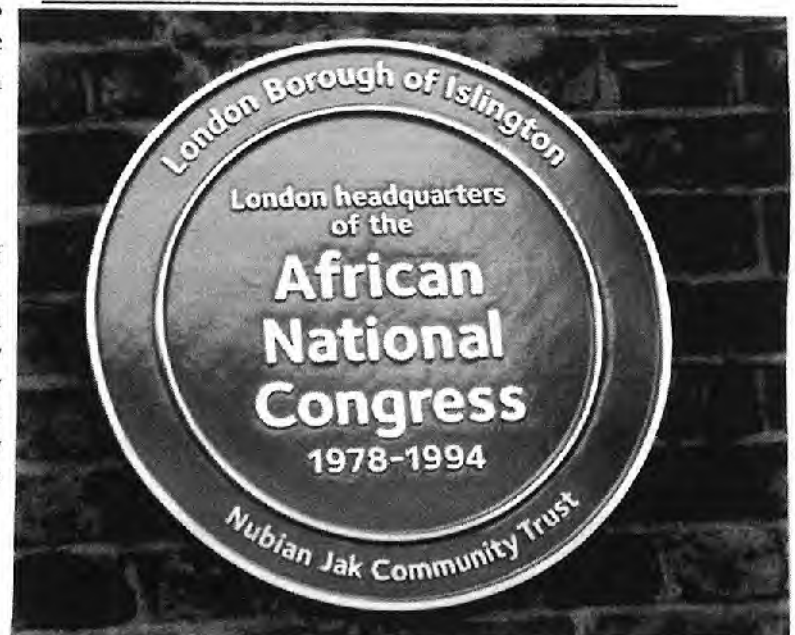
The Islington Society have been accepted as one of the Sponsors of Islington in Bloom 2010; we are sponsors of the category "Best Forgotten Corner". Amongst this year's eleven categories, "Best Blooming Pub, Bar or Restaurant Frontage" attracted your Committee's key interest, only to find that a sponsor from Islington in Bloom 2009 was ahead of us.

The closing date for entries was 28th May, followed by judging in June and July. The judging criteria include appropriate choice of plants, together with their health and maintenance, wildlife friendliness and the use of water conservation

techniques. The winners of each category receive certificates, awards and prizes. For more information visit the website at [www.islington.gov.uk/inbloom](http://www.islington.gov.uk/inbloom).

The Borough of Islington has been successful in previous years' London in Bloom and Britain in Bloom awards. For the last two years Islington has come first at London in Bloom and received Gold Awards. At the national level of Britain in Bloom, Islington represented London and the South East in 2009 and won the Silver Gilt award. Islington is again representing London and the South East in the 2010 Britain in Bloom awards.

Many of us recall the days when the ANC were in Islington, if only for hearing the explosion at 8.30 one morning. Clearly, some recall it better than others. One press report suggested that the building would have been full an hour later with many casualties as a result. In fact, the incident occurred on Sunday morning so that, whatever ill intent the bombers had, mass homicide did not come into it. Islington recently commemorated the site, in White Lion Street, with this plaque.



## Transport News Round-up

### Overground returns to life: East London

The East London line extension, first mooted at the close of Broad Street station in 1986 and authorised after a public enquiry in 1992, finally opened in April 2010 from Dalston to New Cross, West Croydon and Crystal Palace. Phase 2, linking it to the North London line at Canonbury and Highbury & Islington, is due in early 2011.

In the run up to the official opening, services ran until early evening as far south as New Cross. The formal opening on May 23rd, when the new Network Rail timetables took effect, was marked with orange and white balloons at stations and free travel for the first 10,000 customers. This was a month earlier than had at one time been envisaged.

Unfortunately, a last minute change has resulted in the transfer of Shoreditch High Street into zone 1, so that the cost of travel is considerably increased. The whole scheme was devised to encourage people to avoid the congested zone 1, and usage projections were drawn on this basis. The surreptitious way in which this was changed, the anomalies it creates (travel from Dalston Junction more expensive than from Dalston Kingsland), and the fact that the Enquiry approved the scheme after assurances that this would not be done are further grounds for complaint.

### Overground returns to life: North London

A greater feat of engineering timekeeping was achieved when the North London line reopened on June 1st. Some observers expressed grave reservations that this could be achieved given the state of Highbury station just two weeks earlier. Although they may be portrayed as having cried wolf too often, their observations may have prompted LOROL to look for themselves and bring pressure to bear to ensure that the line was indeed handed over.

Posters detail the work that has been done during the blockade. Most noticeable are the removal of the cross-over west of Dalston Kingsland which means that North London trains can no longer access the old platforms at Canonbury, Highbury and Caledonian Road. These will instead become the preserve of the East London line trains. New platforms have been constructed at these three stations and are now in use. There will be step free access by means of lifts although this does not

extend to the Victoria line platforms at Highbury. The frequency is restored to ten minutes in the peaks and fifteen between them (20 minutes evenings). We have not seen the last of the First Replacement buses though, which continue throughout the year on Sundays.

### Overground in North-east London

Not to be outdone, the fifteen minute peak hours service returns to the Barking-Gospel Oak line ahead of the arrival of the much delayed new trains. LOROL is relying on a couple of older train sets cascaded to them from the West Midlands to deliver this service level in the short term.

### Consultation begins on route 73 buses

As expected, Transport for London plans to replace the articulated buses on route 73 when the contract comes up for renewal in November 2011. Unlike the 38, there are no plans for a vastly superior headway between buses, and indeed it is proposed to cut the garage duties from Stoke Newington to Tottenham. In the post privatisation era, Arriva has no divine right to run the service, but whoever runs it will have some dead mileage which most of us would prefer to see put to good public use. Stoke Newington to Stamford Hill is already losing its 349s. When there is no rail service on both the lines east of Gospel Oak, the quickest way back to Islington from the north-east is by changing at Tottenham High Road (because there is no interchange with the 56) but the loss of 73s on this section will seriously worsen waiting times.

### Boris buys out Tubelines

We are promised a more user friendly approach to engineering work on the Northern line following the decision to buy out Tubelines and effectively put an end to Gordon Brown's discredited Private Finance Initiative. Unfortunately, unless Boris reverses his equally disastrous plan to throw away £70m. a year by abolishing the Western Extension of the Congestion Zone, there will be insufficient money to upgrade the Northern line at all.

### Road works update

Completion of Dalston Junction station means that Dalston Lane is back to full working order, but Essex Road/ Upper Street continues to suffer from the measures designed to facilitate bendy bus operation. AB

## *From the Society*

### CURRENT OFFICERS

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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 (see p.7 this issue)

• 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 Civic Voice

### *Future Society events*

#### **Annual Dinner 2010**

2010 is our fiftieth anniversary

Annual Dinner proposed for 21st or 23rd September 2010

50th Anniversary Annual General Meeting: proposed for 12th or 14th October 2010

Our monthly Meet the Officers meetings continue at the Marquess Tavern, Canonbury St., on the first Tuesday each month at 9.0 pm, on Tuesday 6th July. After our summer break we plan to resume at the Canonbury Tavern on Tuesday October 5th. This is because the Marquess now hosts a successful Quiz Night every Tuesday.

#### **Annual Bill Manley Pub Crawl 2010**

The date this year is Friday June 25th. This year we include two new pubs and revisit two old favourites.

6 p.m. The Green, 29 Clerkenwell Green

7.15 p.m. The Crown, 43 Clerkenwell Green

8.30 p.m. Seckforde Arms, 34 Seckforde Street

9.45 p.m. The Peasant, 240 St. John Street

### *Other Events in or around Islington:*

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

16th June 2010 "In the Footsteps of Joseph Grimaldi the Clerkenwell Clown, 1778-1837".

Speaker: David Girt

15th September 2010 "Sir George Radford and the First British Delegation to Budapest". Speaker: Dr. Thomas Lorman

#### **Other Events in Islington:**

20 June 2010 2.00 - 6.00 p.m. Barnsbury Wood Open Day: National Gardens Scheme

Islington in Bloom 2010 June and July 2010 with one category sponsored by the Islington Society

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

7th June - 10th July 2010 Exhibition "Cubitt People's Republic"

#### **Almeida Theatre, Almeida Street, N.1**

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

10th June - 31st July 2010 "Through a Glass Darkly" by Ingmar Bergman. A World premiere.

9th September - 6th November 2010 "House of Games" by David Manet.

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

1st July - 12th September 2010 Naples: "Black and White Photographs" by Johnnie Shand Kydd.