

ISLINGTON *news*

The Journal of the Islington Society incorporating FOIL folio

Boundary commission proposals published

The coalition government is committed to reducing the number of M.P.s to save £12m. a year, and is hell bent on doing this by applying strict limits on the variation in number of constituents each M.P. represents. Consequently, the proposals of the boundary commission have produced some awkward arrangements, such as seats divided by major rivers.

Islington North

In the light of the difficulties faced elsewhere, Islington North emerges relatively unscathed. The present constituency, which Jeremy Corbyn has represented since 1983, remains intact. The current Holloway ward would be added to it. However, "Holloway" is not the ward that centred on London N.7 and remained unaltered throughout the twentieth century. It is only the northern tip of that ward, combined with Hillmarton Ward. Hillmarton has had a chequered history. It was part of Islington South-West in the days when Islington had three M.P.s and Finsbury shared a fourth with Shoreditch. It then formed a part of Islington North, when most of Islington East became Islington Central and the remainder of Islington South-West became part of Islington South and Finsbury. When Central was shared out between North and South, Hillmarton moved back into South. One consequence of this was that the three GLC members, all of whom had lived in their respective constituencies at the time of election, found themselves in Islington South and Finsbury.

Islington South

Having lost a ward to the north, inevitably the south seat faces more significant change. The whole of the City of London is added to the seat, splitting it off from the City of Westminster. Two south Camden wards, King's Cross and Holborn & Covent Garden, would also transfer into the new seat, so that the relatively small area of Holborn, a Borough in its own right until 1965, finds itself split into two constituencies, as of course is the old Borough of St. Pancras.

Holborn & St. Pancras

The seat of Holborn & St. Pancras disappears under the proposals. Currently one of the largest constituencies in the country, following the addition of St. Pancras North, most of it goes

into a new seat of Camden & Regents Park, with wards disappearing in all directions. As well as the two wards joining Islington South & the City, others join with wards in Haringey. Most bizarrely of all, there is a proposed swap of wards with Hampstead & Kilburn.

Next steps

There is now a period of public consultation in which objections to the changes can be considered. However, the scope for objection appears to be limited, and the principle of all seats having a similar number of voters to within 5% of the mean cannot be challenged. There will however be a further Parliamentary scrutiny in the light of the consultation and any amendments it persuades the Boundary Commission to make. It may be that a combination of Tory and Liberal M.P.s likely to lose their seats under the proposals, and the official Opposition of Labour and the other political parties might be sufficient to defeat them. A more likely scenario is that the difficulties in resolving some obvious anomalies, such as the seat divided by an estuary, create fresh anomalies leading to outcry from those who accepted the original plans.

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The copy date for our next newsletter is February 6th.

David Gibson recovering after accident



Members will have been upset to read of David and Mary's road accident in the Islington Tribune. A head on collision in poor weather conditions at night must be an horrendous experience, made worse by being away from home, although we know that they were amongst friends.

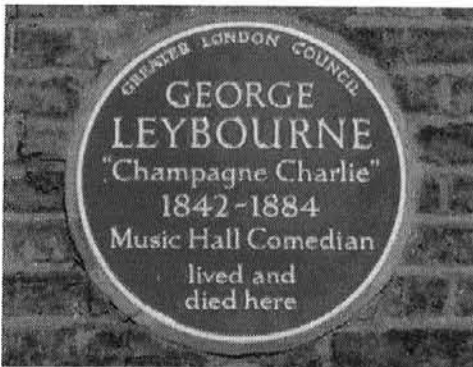
David (pictured with his predecessor as chair) and Mary have now returned to England, and are expected to make a full recovery although in our chairman's case it is likely to take several months. We hope to see David at events before then.

Northview to remain uninterrupted

Councillors have thrown out a scheme to build an additional storey on the 1930s housing estate Northview. The Society had supported local

objectors on the grounds that this proposal would have destroyed the architectural integrity of the buildings.

Plaques in Islington - 11: George Leybourne



George Leybourne 1842 -1884 was one of the most successful Music Hall Stars of the 1860's and was famous for his fine voice and striking appearance. Whilst appearing at Collins Music Hall in Islington in 1865 he met Albert Lee and together they produced the song 'Champagne Charlie.' The song was first performed at 'TheSun' Music Hall in Knightsbridge where he entered in top hat and tails dressed as a swell and waving a bottle of Moet

champagne. The style of Leybourne and his rival Alfred Vance introduced a new genre 'Lion Comique' to the music hall. Leybourne wrote the lyrics for 'The Daring Young Man on a Flying Trapeze' and sang over a hundred different songs.

In 1866 he was commissioned by Moet to write and perform songs promoting champagne. He agreed to drink nothing else in public and he established champagne as a very fashionable drink. His daughter married Albert Chevalier and was the inspiration for Chevalier's famous song 'My Old Dutch.'

Leybourne died in Englefield Road, Islington at the age of 42 and is buried at Abney Park Cemetary in Stoke Newington. His headstone which was erected by Dan Leno and the Grand Order of Water Rats has the epitaph 'God's finger touched him and he slept.' The blue plaque was unveiled in 1970. S.W.

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High Speed 2: London Forum submits evidence

The government's support for High Speed 2 has divided rail enthusiasts. Although many welcome the support for modal shift from air to rail, others are concerned that grand projects are being advanced at the expense of smaller scale schemes targeted at local short distance journeys. The HS2 proposal involves the loss of social housing, as well as areas of countryside. The London Forum submitted these comments.

1. The London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies is an umbrella group for around 200 societies in the capital.

2. Some of our members are directly affected by the proposals for HS2, while most have concerns about the underlying principles.

3. We strongly support sustainable development in London. We recognise the importance of the London economy to the country as a whole. We recognise that there will have to be a modal shift from air to rail if air quality targets are to be achieved and that in particular domestic travel by air is not sustainable.

4. The current London plan foresees growth in the population of London and this has the support of all major political parties. There is also cross party support for the necessary corresponding growth in provision of sufficient residential property to meet this growing demand.

5. This being so, any proposal involving the demolition of significant numbers of dwellings has to be viewed with extreme caution. Similarly, whilst we exist to provide reasoned responses to plans for change and are wary of Nimbysism, the wholesale destruction of communities is not something that can be readily accepted without an overwhelming case for the project. Moreover, it flies in the face of the government's own Localism agenda.

6. To route HS2 into Euston station would cause the demolition of several blocks of social housing and other homes which it would be difficult to replace. Some of London's low wage workers would be moved some distance from their jobs, families and contacts. The local economy would be adversely affected.

7. Whereas HS1 provided a link that did not previously exist, the case for HS2 cannot be held to be clear-cut. It is about reducing journey times rather than creating significant new opportunities for travel by rail. A lot of the cost of HS2 would be for the tunnel into Euston station. Those funds could be better spent enhancing existing commuter services into the capital. The whole case for HS2 is flawed by comparison with the benefits of improving existing rail services into the capital for London's economy, growth and its reputation with businesses.

8. There is negligible domestic air travel between London and Birmingham so the reduction in journey times between these two cities will not achieve significant modal shift. Indeed, the whole approach to air travel is muddled. If HS2 is built at all it should have its London terminus at Old Oak Common where there should be easy transfer or ongoing travel using hybrid rolling stock to CrossRail for Heathrow airport, the Thames valley and stations in London and on to HS1 to Europe. CrossRail's connections through the capital would allow HS2's passengers to take other transport services at interchanges to their destinations, thus spreading the load through the system and avoiding the overloading of services that would happen at Euston station, even with CrossRail 2 which will be needed for London's currently predicted needs.

9. We have already seen expensive projects that reduce the journey time of the train having little effect on the journey time of the person. This arises when the infrastructure at the end of the journey is not upgraded to cope with higher volumes of pedestrian traffic, or when feeder trains and buses are already severely overcrowded.

10. We welcome the increased use of rail as a means of transport, including a greater number of inter-City journeys, but our experience of overcrowding and severe overcrowding is not associated with these journeys. Rather, it is our experience on commuter trains, particularly those into South-east London, though the same is true of Manchester and Leeds. If HS2 ran into Euston station the volume of passengers arriving would overwhelm completely the ongoing transport services from there. The overcrowding on Tube and bus services would be increased. HS2 passengers may find they would experience delays that could reduce the benefit of arriving in London earlier than they would have done on existing rail services. There is a tendency to disregard the disruption that occurs during construction on the basis that the time period is short relative to the resultant asset existing in perpetuity. However, the proposed Euston station would take eight years to develop during which there would be only an off-peak level of service and some days of complete closure of the

station. That would have a serious impact on those commuting into the station to work in London and there will be insufficient capacity on the main line services over those eight years to get workers to their jobs.

11. Therefore, the priority for capital resources on railways must be to upgrade existing lines. Electrification, provided that it is carried out to a standard robust enough to cope with the extreme

weather conditions experienced in this country; improved interchange, so that use of the private car for even a small part of the journey is no longer necessary; and speed improvements to make point to point rail travel attractive will all achieve modal shift and economic growth more effectively than a single high profile project serving a limited market.

12. HS2 is the wrong priority, at the wrong time.

National Planning Policy Framework: progress report

Our last issue was preoccupied with the attack on planning that began with the Chancellor's budget statement. It proved prescient, with the row escalating and the government branding respected bodies like the National Trust as left-wing dogmatists, before the Prime Minister appeared to draw back from the more aggressive stance of some of his colleagues. As with HS2, the focus of the debate has often been the countryside. The London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies has however worked assiduously to put across the adverse impact on the capital that would result, culminating in a meeting of members on September 30th.

Although it was a Friday, nearly forty people attended and there was a full discussion.

Peter Eversden opened by explaining what the Forum had been doing on the draft NPPF; it had put in a submission to the Select Committee, and hoped to be invited to give evidence orally; it was actively preparing a response to the consultation itself, due by 17th October.

Michael Bach then outlined the content and the objectionable features of the draft NPPF. Public criticism of the NPPF had focussed on the countryside; but its implications in urban areas were serious too, though the existence of an adopted London plan should mitigate some of its effects here.

Those present were keen to know how their societies should respond to the consultation, and whether they should make representations to the Select Committee. Among points raised were:-
When would the NPPF be finalised? Answer: probably early in the New Year.

Would the NPPF overrule Westminster's LDF? Plans must be in general conformity with the NPPF.

Lucy Rogers (Just Space) had recently been to a Core Strategy EiP at which the Inspector's first question had been whether it was in conformity with the NPPF. She had argued that this was not necessary since the NPPF had not been adopted yet. Answer: the draft NPPF was a material consideration, and the Government had advised the Inspectorate so to treat it.

Eric Sorensen (Angel Association) opined that the NPPF would not overrule local plans; the regime would continue to be plan-led, and the detail

in local plans would overwhelm the very general NPPF. Answer: there are several things in the NPPF which would change the basis of planning decisions, and the NPPF gave much greater weight to the plusses than to the minusses in reaching decisions on planning applications.

A representative from Hammersmith contrasted Mr Pickles' "Get on and Build" with the claim that this was the greenest government ever. Eric Sorensen noted the strength of the draft NPPF on carbon emissions and on design.

Tony Hillier (Heath and Hampstead) noted the complete failure of the NPPF to mention Metropolitan Open Land. He also wondered what would happen to the reams of useful material in the discarded PPSs. Answer: All this content would go. The NPPF would be followed by guidance, to be provided from outside Government, but would presumably include some of what was now in PPSs.

Richard Buchanan (Woolwich Antiquarians). While the draft NPPF dealt with the heritage, it said nothing about any other cultural assets (eg cinemas and theatres). Answer: this defect had been picked up by the Theatres Trust.

Michael Coupe (London Society). The Government should be made to realise that countries with the stronger planning systems were also those with better economic growth.

Peter Pickering (Finchley Society) feared that the NPPF would be used by council officers to browbeat councillors into approving planning applications to which the public objected.

[concluded on page 6]

former Councillor David Tibbs



It was with great sadness that I learned of the death of David Tibbs, who was a Liberal Democrat councillor for Clerkenwell between 1994 and 1998. David was a genuine Liberal who was probably more comfortable with the then mainstream party than with the group on Islington Council. He came on to the council to improve Islington, not to advance his own political career or that of his colleagues by outright opposition to everything the Labour group said or

former Councillor Chris Calnan

Another former councillor was taken from us prematurely during the summer. Chris Calnan, one of the few effective chairs of housing since Margaret Hodge, and a councillor from 1982-86 and again from 1988-90, died after a battle with cancer.

Chris Calnan represented the other seat associated with the former borough of Finsbury, namely Bunhill, where he and his long standing partner lived. He had in his youth tried his vocation with the Jesuits and perhaps the training he received there stood him in good stead in dealing with the housing department. The council was the poorer

former Councillor Arthur Bell

More recently the death has been announced of Arthur Bell, who unlike his late colleagues enjoyed more than his three score years and ten and indeed was an elected member for most of them, joining the council in 1953 and only standing down in 1998. He represented St. Peter's Ward until 1968 and then Hillmarton (which now forms most of Holloway) from 1971.

Arthur's major contribution to the council was as chair of the Licensing Committee, where he regularly had to confront Pat McCann, Robbie Redrupp and the other market traders. It may be stretching a point to suggest that the late night licences were the glamorous side of the committees

did.

His main contribution to the work of the council came on the Planning committee, where he was an assiduous member, coming on site visits and pre-committee briefings. He also involved himself in Islington Society events, and I well remember the occasion when we might have formed an all-party young fogies group, as the Bill Manley pub crawl entered a hostelry at which William Hague and his wife (who could have represented Plaid for the purpose) were already drinking. David is pictured in full voice with the then chairman.

Outside politics he and his family were strong supporters of Sussex County Cricket Club. He must have been gratified that, after his term on the council, they achieved success on and off the field without compromising the traditions of the Club.

for his loss, by a narrow margin in the only seat split between the two leading parties of 1986, and when the opportunity of a by-election arose two years later he was welcomed back. Unfortunately, his career took him to the Home Office shortly afterwards, and it has always been a matter of regret that he was not around when I joined the Labour group in 1990.

Chris died in Ireland saying his goodbyes to family and friends there. A requiem Mass was celebrated for him in London on September 16th, by his long time friend Fr. Denis Geraghty.

work, but dealing with the market pitches was certainly not a job members were clamouring to undertake.

In "real" life, Arthur was a teacher and so perhaps wisely he steered clear of education when Islington assumed responsibility for it in 1989. He undertook other roles, though, and was Islington's first representative on the London Fire & Civil Defence Authority, formed when the GLC was abolished.

Former Cllr. Gerry Southgate, who led the Labour group in 1978-81 before joining the SDP, also passed away during the summer.

The Ashmount Cockerel



Apart from the statue of Sir Hugh Myddelton on Islington Green, the Ashmount Cockerel is perhaps the best-known piece of public sculpture in Islington. It stands on the front wall of the LCC's Ashmount School on its Hornsey Lane frontage, and was a last-minute afterthought on the part of the architect of the school H.T. 'Jim' Cadbury-Brown, RA (1913-2009).

The school, designed in 1954, is itself a refined exercise in glass-box minimalism, exceptional for its period in the UK, which astutely turns the corner on a steep slope from Hornsey Lane into Ashmount Road. Not only did it adapt to the contours but also to the existing lime trees, which were preserved along the Ashmount Road frontage and may have dictated the position of entrances there, and certainly provided a foil to the crisp cubical shapes of the school. But no such trees survived on the Hornsey Lane frontage, and it may perhaps be a feeling that some kind of foil was required that led the architect at a late stage to commission a work of sculpture - for which there was no budget.

He was at the time a part-time tutor in the sculpture department of the Royal College of Art - teaching sculptors, as an architect, how to conceive sculptures for architectural settings. He had been in charge of placing sculptures and designing their settings - and much else - at the Festival of Britain in

1951, and so knew well the leading younger sculptors of the time, including Henry Moore (for whom he did some architectural work), and Barbara Hepworth. But these were already too expensive, since he would be paying for the sculpture out of his own pocket. He appointed one of his students - John Willats, whilst persuading the main contractor, Fairweathers, to supply the material for the armature from scraps left on site.

John Willats, who died in 2006, was to make something of a reputation for himself as a theorist. He started studying just drawing at the RCA (having originally been an engineering student), only later moving on to sculpture. One of his best known writings is called 'Making Sense of Children's Drawings', and his last 'Ambiguity in Drawing', and a major theoretical work - *Art and Representation - New Principles in the Analysis of Pictures* - was published by Princeton University Press in 1997. At about the same time he won the commission for a millennium sculpture for his former home town Bradford upon Avon, for a sculpture of a Mill Girl, which is now in situ. So his career was a remarkable combination of theory and practice.

The Cockerel, however, betrays no feeling of theoretical dryness. On the contrary, it is a vigorous almost alarming and combative image of a cockerel apparently in fighting mode, a stark contrast indeed to the cool grids of the architecture behind, one might say almost Surrealist in feel. Considering its haphazard construction it has - dare one say it? - survived remarkably well. Will it continue to do so? The school was turned down for national listing about eight years ago and the sculpture - the subject of a separate listing nomination by the Twentieth Century Society supported by the Public Monuments Society - four years ago. As a result both - though 'locally listed' - face an uncertain future with the construction of a new school going on apace on Metropolitan Open Land nearby. One does wonder sometimes why those of us bother who try to protect good twentieth century work. JD

NPPF [concluded from page 4] In summing up, Peter Eversden and Michael Bach pressed Societies to respond to the consultation, and to lobby their MPs. The Forum would be circulating fuller guidance to member societies in good time. Besides the NPPF itself, the Government had published an 'Impact Assessment' (downloadable from the DCLG website) with a set of questions; this was an attempt to justify parts of the draft NPPF, and it would be useful if Societies could respond to it also.

Transport News Round-up

Boris' Chutzpa finds its limits

Even Boris Johnson stopped short of a fanfare and photo opportunity to mark the latest developments of London's public transport system. On Saturday, June 4th, the grandly titled Dalston bus station at last opened its security fencing to admit a lone single-decker bus route, the 488, which provides those of us on the east of Islington with a direct link to Bromley-by-Bow for the first time in living memory.

The benefits we are now seeing were all instigated under the previous Mayor, with the support of all mainstream parties in the Assembly. This bus station, however, was supposed to open more than a year ago. When the 488 was out to tender, companies bidding to run it were asked to submit a schedule for the route to be extended from its previous western terminus of Clapton to Dalston with effect from January 2010. The huge delay has not just affected the bus service. The pedestrian entrance to Dalston Junction station from Kingsland Road has also been blocked by security fencing.

Let us hope that this provides the filip to this section of the East London line.

In September, an even longer wait came to an end with the opening of the Docklands Light Railway extension which runs from Stratford International to Beckton via the former north London lines. This track runs parallel to the Jubilee line between Stratford and Canning Town, but with additional stations at Stratford High Street, Abbey Road and Star Lane. There was no formal announcement of the opening, which had been anticipated two years ago, possibly because of fears that once again any planned deadline could not be met. The delays were because the new signalling system was so sophisticated it conflicted with that in use on parallel heavy rail lines in Stratford.

North London line returns on Sundays

Another long awaited development has been the return of Sunday services on the North London line. This was achieved on May 22nd. The service level has at last been improved and it will be a pleasure to take the train to Hampstead Heath without the levels of overcrowding normally associated with peak hour services. The service on weekdays is much improved and for the first time we have a turn up and go service along the lines of those on tube lines. This is a triumph for Transport

for London, since it would never have happened had the lines remained outside its control.

The only disappointment is the relatively late start and early finish on Sundays. I recall taking a train from Canonbury at 8.50 a.m.: the earliest now is 9.27. This is despite the excellent research a few years ago into possible adjustment of weekend start and finish times on the tube. It showed a surprising demand for services on early Sunday mornings when early nursing shifts met later than late night revellers returning home. Probably of more interest these days is the last train, which now leaves Stratford at 10 p.m. The replacement bus service ran until 11.30. The Barking-Gospel Oak line supporters have been more successful in protecting late night services, so that it would be possible to reach Highbury from Stratford after 10 o'clock, travelling via Barking and Blackhorse Road - a bizarre option, but worth knowing all the same.

Hope rises for Lea Bridge station

Lea Bridge station closed in 1985 but for several years before it had been a ghost station with only one train a day. This was the means by which BR could avoid a formal closure inquiry. The line from Stratford to Seven Sisters lost patronage when the Victoria line opened. However, regeneration of east London and the reversal of decline in use of public transport services has created a strong case for Lea Bridge to be re-opened with a regular railway service throughout the day. It would run on existing track towards Tottenham Hale rather than Seven Sisters. The aftermath of the August riots is that money is likely to be targeted at areas of unrest, and this link would serve Enfield as well as Tottenham.

Bus service changes

The 73 converted to double-decker buses on September 3rd, using a mixture of hybrid buses and conventional low-floor double decker buses. The frequency is improved to compensate for the lesser capacity, but buses no longer run north of Stoke Newington in service to the garage. Only three routes remain operated with articulated buses.

The next change in Islington will be to the 38, which is expected to receive the new low-floor routemaster buses some time between now and the Mayoral election day on May 3rd next year. AB

From the Society

Current officers are listed on page 2

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 Civic Voice

Future Society events

Wednesday November 9th, Annual Dinner, Spaghi Restaurant, 6 Archway Close, London, N.19.
Further details and booking form enclosed with this issue.

January 17th, 2012 at Islington Town Hall:
Talk by Lesley Seary, recently appointed chief executive of L.B. Islington, with her view of current issues affecting the Borough.

Our monthly Meet the Officers meetings continue at the Canonbury Tavern, Canonbury Place on the first Tuesday each month at 9.0 p.m., on Tuesdays 1st November, 6th December, 3rd January 2012, 7th February.

Other Events in or around Islington:
Archaeology & History Society (8.0 p.m. Islington Town Hall)

19th October, 2011. Islington's Green Plaque scheme. Speaker: Allie Dillon, Islington Local History Centre.

16th November, 2011. "Wells and Brimtoy - toymakers of Islington. Speaker: Chris Rule, resident of Islington and member of the Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society committee.

14th December, 2011 "Scotland Yard's first cases" Speaker Joan Lock.

from the first Sunday in August, the chairman of the Society is leading a monthly guided tour of Union Chapel. The tour will be free, donations to the Chapel restoration fund welcome.

Islington Mayor fundraising dinner

Thursday 1st December, 256 Upper Street at 7 for 7.30. Tickets £25, see flyer inserted with this issue.

Islington Museum & Local History Centre

Exhibition: Malicious Damage: The crimes of Joe Orton and Kenneth Helliwell
13th October - 21st January, 2012

free talk: Kenneth Williams, Joe Orton and the debacle of Felicity's 21st birthday,
November 17th, 6.30 p.m.

free talk: Malicious Collage: The art of Joe Orton and Kenneth Helliwell, December 1st, 6.30 p.m.

guided walks from Angel tube station:
Writers & Artists in Islington (Cost £6, cons. £5)
October 18th; November 12th; December 8th;
January 15th, 2012, all at 11 a.m.

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art,

39a Canonbury Square
Until 18th December, 2011 Exhibition "The Poster King" - Posters by Edward McKnight Kauffer created during 1920s-1930s for London Underground and Shell.

Almeida Theatre,

Almeida Street, N1 0207 359 4404
Monday-Saturday 7.30 p.m., Saturday matinee 3.0 p.m.

Until 5th November, 2011 "My City" by Stephen Poliakov, World Premiere

10th November, 2011 - 14th January, 2012 "Reasons to be Pretty" by Neil LaBute, World Premiere.