

ISLINGTON *news*

The Journal of the Islington Society incorporating FOIL folio

Election return to 1982

Tiredness overtook many at the count that followed the 1982 local elections with all but one of the seats returned to Labour. Much the same thing happened in 2014, the main difference being that the count started at 9 a.m. the following day rather than within an hour of the polls closing.

Labour landslide

Whereas in 2010 the parties had been close enough for several seats to be shared, this time the swing to Labour gave most of their candidates at least 50% of the vote. Often the battle for second place was keen, with the Green Party standing out in Junction and the Liberal Democrats in Clerkenwell and Canonbury. As in 1982 the Conservative vote was more evenly spread although this time they did not contest every seat.

All eyes on Highbury East

Attention therefore focused on Highbury East, the only ward with no majority party councillor in the last council. Although held by the Liberal Democrats, it was thought to be fertile ground for the Green Party. Over 1500 people voted other than for a slate (three members of one party), and although two Labour candidates emerged with a comfortable lead, the third was vying with Caroline Russell (Green Party) and the Liberal Democrats' Julie Horton for the last place. The Liberal Democrat leader Terry Stacy was not far behind, along with the respected member John Gilbert.

Recount

Inevitably there was a recount but eventually Caroline Russell emerged the winner. Caroline is the former chair of Living Streets, which was founded as the Pedestrians Association. If she is able to pursue the interests of pedestrians in the face of smoothed traffic flow it is to be hoped that the Opposition will prove more constructive than in 1982, which was the start of an acrimonious relationship between parties who were able to cooperate in other parts of the country.

Hail and farewell

Hardworking councillors can generate a personal vote although if there are two hardworking councillors in the ward this can be difficult to discern. By far the largest personal vote went to Cllr. Janet Burgess in Junction Ward. Julie Horton would probably have been re-elected if she had been alone in Highbury East to glean the personal vote. A few former councillors were standing again and of these only Clare Jeapes was successful, returning as a Canonbury councillor after two terms in St. Mary's ward. A number of councillors have stepped down after more than one term: Phil Kelly, Barry Edwards, Wally Burgess, Barbara Sidnell and Catherine West for Labour and for the Liberal Democrats Tracy Ismail, George Allan and Paula Belford as well as the Highbury East members.

What happens next?

Having a council with almost no Opposition - there is no-one to second a counter motion - is thought by many to be unhealthy. However, it will be a different experience to 1982 because there are now "front bench" and back bench councillors with defined roles either to take decisions or to scrutinise them.

Although we are told that the recovery is on the way, many of the cuts to local authority spending are still to be made and the government does not seem inclined to reverse them in support of their contention. There are usually some painless savings that can be made after a period of relative ease, but the options become fewer. This is why the possibility of sharing back-office services with Camden, to achieve an economy of scale, has re-emerged. In 2010 talks were held to have a Chief Executive in charge of both Boroughs. Now the discussions are about merging backroom services such as payroll or human resource management.

Annual Meeting

Theresa Debono has been elected Mayor. The only change to the executive is that Claudia Webbe fills the vacant place previously held by Barbara Sidnell.

Islington Society News

Harley Sherlock

As most members will know, our founder member and Vice-President Harley Sherlock passed away in May and this issue has been slightly delayed to include his obituary and a report of the funeral held in Sanderstead on June 6th.

Bill Manley Pub Crawl

Now in its twenty-third year, the Bill Manley Pub crawl is to be held on June 20th, featuring three pubs for the first time and three old favourites.

Annual Dinner

The Committee has decided to bring forward the annual dinner to the month of July. The Sheriff of Islington has generously assisted us in securing use

Islington Society: 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

of the HAC in the heart of Finsbury.

Annual General Meeting

Advance notice is given of the A.G.M. to be held on October 8th. A formal notice will follow as the date is before the despatch date for the Autumn newsletter.

Recent events

A report of the visit to Bywaters (not a rival organisation as erroneously reported last time) and of the Council Hustings appears elsewhere. It is hoped to organise another visit to the recycling plant as the numbers that can be included on such a visit are restricted.

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

CURRENT OFFICERS

President : Lord Smith of Finsbury

Vice President: Mary Cosh

Chairman: David Gibson,

35, Britannia Row, London, N.1

☎ 020 7-226 2207; e✉mail@dgibarch.com

Secretary: David Trillo

45, Ellington Street, London, N.7

☎ 020 7-607 9325; e✉david@trillo.net

Treasurer: Robert Coyle,

Wells House, Upper Street, London, N.1 2UQ

☎ 020 7-354 3663; e✉ Robert.Coyle@colmancoyle.com

Membership manager: Peter Kilborn

18, Bewdley Street, London, N.1

☎ 020 7-609 8822; e✉pkilborn@aol.com

Newsletter: Andrew Bosi,

The Croft, Wall Street, London, N.1 000

☎ 020 7-354 8514; e✉ AndrewBosi@aol.com

Contents this issue

Council election result	1	Harley Sherlock	6-7
Society News	2	Flexibility for Changes of Use	7
Archway Gyratory update	3	Offices to residential: the reality	8
Government research how to redevelop London	3	Permitted development rights explained	10
Legislative programme for 2014/5	4	Transport Round up	11
English Heritage update	4	Society and other forthcoming events	12
Reports on local events:			
green trees and green plaques	5		

Archway Gyrotory Update

Archway is one of the 33 designated gyrotory systems which will be removed with funding allocated by the GLA for cycling improvements. The budget is £6.5m.

Over 2013 TfL's consulting engineers carried out further work on initial proposals from Islington. However, by failing to consider the needs of all users the consultants' schemes failed to serve even the cyclists supposedly being prioritised. Bikes were kept 'safe' by pushing them to the sides of the motor traffic, while still not offering enough protection at the most dangerous point, i.e. junctions. Extensive areas of shared cycle and pedestrian space at crossings, particularly on downhill routes, caused further concern, not just to cyclists but also to pedestrians/Living Streets.

Meanwhile, the majority users, who are those on public transport, would have seen no improvement at all despite closing the bus stand and rerouting terminating buses. Instead of sending services to points of demand, i.e. northbound to the Whittington Hospital and southbound to Pemberton Gardens next to Upper Holloway station, the suggestion was to stand buses around the existing road network, notably on the northbound carriageway of the Archway Road, installing a new traffic light at the top of the dual carriageway to halt traffic so they could turn back southwards again. Bus stops would remain unaltered, leaving all southbound routes just as inconvenient for passengers as currently.

As final icing on the cake, removing the existing potential to turn right north on to the A1 from St John's Way would irritate both motorists and the residents of Whitehall Park who would fear displaced traffic.

Consultation has now been deferred for a third time, currently scheduled for September 2014, and we understand that matters are now in the hands of LB Islington who have appointed their own consultants to work further on the scheme.

Better Archway has the following criteria for judging any proposals:

- Maintain the steady traffic capacity on the A1 as Holloway Road to the south and Archway Road north of the bridge.
- Enhance traffic hierarchy and reduce traffic displacement.
- Offer safe interchange between buses and bus and tube.
- Reduce empty mileage run by buses.
- Promote safe pedestrian routes on desire lines.
- Provide legible and safe cycle routes.
- Minimise conflict between the different users

TfL has said that

1. A robust assessment is being carried out on the impact to all users
2. The scheme will favour cyclists and pedestrians over cars and vans

If public consultation supports the new proposals - probably by meeting the above criteria - the gyrotory could be removed as soon as this coming Christmas when it is likely that the A1 will need to be closed for work to the Upper Holloway railway bridge. The road bridge will need to be raised to accommodate overhead electric wires.

Eric Pickles announces part-funding for report by Savills

In an article published in the Evening Standard on the 23rd April 2014, Local Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles, announced that The Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] will be part-funding comprehensive research by Savills Estate Agents to consider the best way to redevelop London boroughs, while fully involving local communities in the design and planning process.

This decision to part-fund the report follows the government announcement in the 2014 Treasury Budget of a '£150 million fund to kick start the regeneration of large housing estates through repayable loans, helping to boost housing supply'. According to the proposed two-part report, The

intensification of streetscape and housing supply on brownfield Estate regeneration sites in London, the research will first determine through an empirical study the true optimal real estate solution for publicly owned housing estates, and second, the practical implications and appropriate policy responses.

Although the research will concentrate on London, Pickles suggests that the study could have wider implications for other areas with high housing demand including Brighton, Cambridge and Oxford. The Evening Standard article is available on the DCLG website and a detailed outline of the two research reports on Savills website.

Queen's Speech 2014: Coalition legislative programme announced

The Queen's Speech has unveiled the Coalition Government's legislative programme for the last parliamentary session before the next General Election in 2015. Delivered on Wednesday 4th June, the speech announced the planned introduction of eleven new bills and three draft bills, with some containing legislation affecting the heritage, voluntary and third sector.

The speech introduced legislation which would intend to increase housing supply and home ownership by reforming the planning system. This would enable the development of 'new locally-led garden cities' and also support 'small house building firms'. In the accompanying document to the speech, the Government outlines potential planning system reforms to release land for new homes, including the introduction of a £150 million repayable fund to support up to 10,000 new service plots. It also points to secondary legislation to support the new locally supported garden city in Ebbsfleet, Kent, alongside two further programmes to provide infrastructure support for large-scale, locally supported schemes.

The Infrastructure Bill intends to bolster investment in infrastructure and reform planning law to improve economic competitiveness. Details of the Infrastructure Bill, including legislation on enabling surplus and redundant public sector land and property to be sold more quickly, was

announced the following day by DCLG, DEFRA and the Land Registry.

The Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Bill intends to provide additional protection against negligence claims for volunteers and people who offer to help in an emergency.

The Governance of National Parks (England) and the Broad Bill intends to provide draft legislation for the holding of direct elections to National Parks in England, which could improve local accountability, broaden representation, and address a local democratic deficit.

The Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill intends to give smaller businesses access to public procurement contracts. The Bill also intends to strengthen UK Employment Law by putting tougher penalties on employers who do not crack down on abuse in the National Minimum Wage and zero hours contracts.

The Queen's Speech and accompanying legislation is available on the government website. You can also download a Common Library Standard Note which gathers together announcements from ministers and speculation from commentators on issues that could be included in the Queen's Speech. To see an analysis of how this affects the voluntary sector, The National Council for Voluntary Organisations have also made a summary available online.

Update on Historic England's Corporate Plan

Government approval is expected shortly to confirm the proposal to split English Heritage into two parts - a new charity 'English Heritage' to manage the National Heritage Collection, and the renaming of the heritage protection services as 'Historic England'.

Meanwhile plans for engagement and consultation on Historic England's corporate plan are going ahead. Sector workshops during July and August 2014 will take place to discuss what should be contained in the Historic England corporate plan. Once completed, it is expected that English Heritage will then produce a draft Historic England corporate plan and Historic England's Action Plan which will be published for public consultation in November 2014. Both bodies 'English Heritage' and

'Historic England' are expected to come into being in April 2015.

The Department for Culture Media and Sport consultation on the English Heritage New Model closed on 7th February 2014, with over 600 replies received of which 218 were from organisations. The former Secretary of State, Maria Miller, wrote to all respondents in March 2014 to say that 'nearly two third of those who responded agreed or strongly agreed with our proposals'. DCMS also made a preliminary analysis of consultation responses available in March 2014. Consultation responses from The Heritage Alliance and its members are posted on its web site.

Red Maple Tree planted in honour of Nick Jack

In glorious Spring sunshine on Saturday March 15th, a tree was planted in memory of Nick Jack, tireless campaigner for the environment who died earlier this year at the age of 68. The formal planting was completed by Jeremy Corbyn, M.P., who paid tribute to Nick's work, but as he would be the first to acknowledge most of the real spade work was done by Islington's Green team. Over 80 people including our Vice-President Harley Sherlock attended the event.

The tree has been planted in the Royal Northern Gardens on the site of the Royal Northern Hospital, Manor Gardens, the existence of which is one of Nick's enduring triumphs. When the hospital was closed the plan had been to cram the site with housing. Another of Nick's triumphs is the Arsenal development, which was only made possible by his staunch defence of Islington against the out-of-town Sainsbury's that had been proposed for the land behind Eden Grove. Had it gone ahead, there would have been nowhere suitable to relocate the Waste depot at Ashburton Grove.

Nick was also a leading opponent of the Red

Route as originally conceived by the government of 1990. Although the red lines went ahead the shopkeepers who were alerted by Nick and others were able to secure provision for loading and unloading, and there was far more provision for buses than at first planned. The X43, which missed out most of the stops in Islington, was not a success and eventually replaced by a higher frequency on route 43 which is what had been needed all along. Ironically, it is only now that the frequency of buses on Holloway Road will be back to its pre-1990 level - see transport round up.

The tree planting ceremony was followed by drinks and canapés in the North Library and a speech from Green Party activist Caroline Russell. On display were just a few of the letters and press cuttings Nick generated. The writer well remembers these letters, which were never short and often in Nick's distinctive hand-writing. Somehow the e-mails of later years do not have the same resonance.

Lee Alexander McQueen Commemorated in Aberdeen Road

A green plaque to commemorate Lee Alexander McQueen was unveiled at a simple ceremony in Aberdeen Road on March 21st. In the same week the fashion industry was mourning the premature death of L'Wren Scott.

McQueen was a Fashion Designer born in Lewisham, the youngest of six children. After developing his technical skills as an apprentice in Savile Row he completed an M.A. in Fashion Design at Central St. Martins in 1992. In less than ten

years he became one of the world's most renowned fashion designers, working as chief designer at Givency and founding his own label under the name Alexander McQueen.

McQueen's achievements in fashion earned him four British Designer of the Year awards and he was named International Designer of the Year at the Council of Fashion Designer awards. At the peak of his career he lived at 11 Aberdeen Road from 2001 to 2005. He died in 2010 at the age of 41.

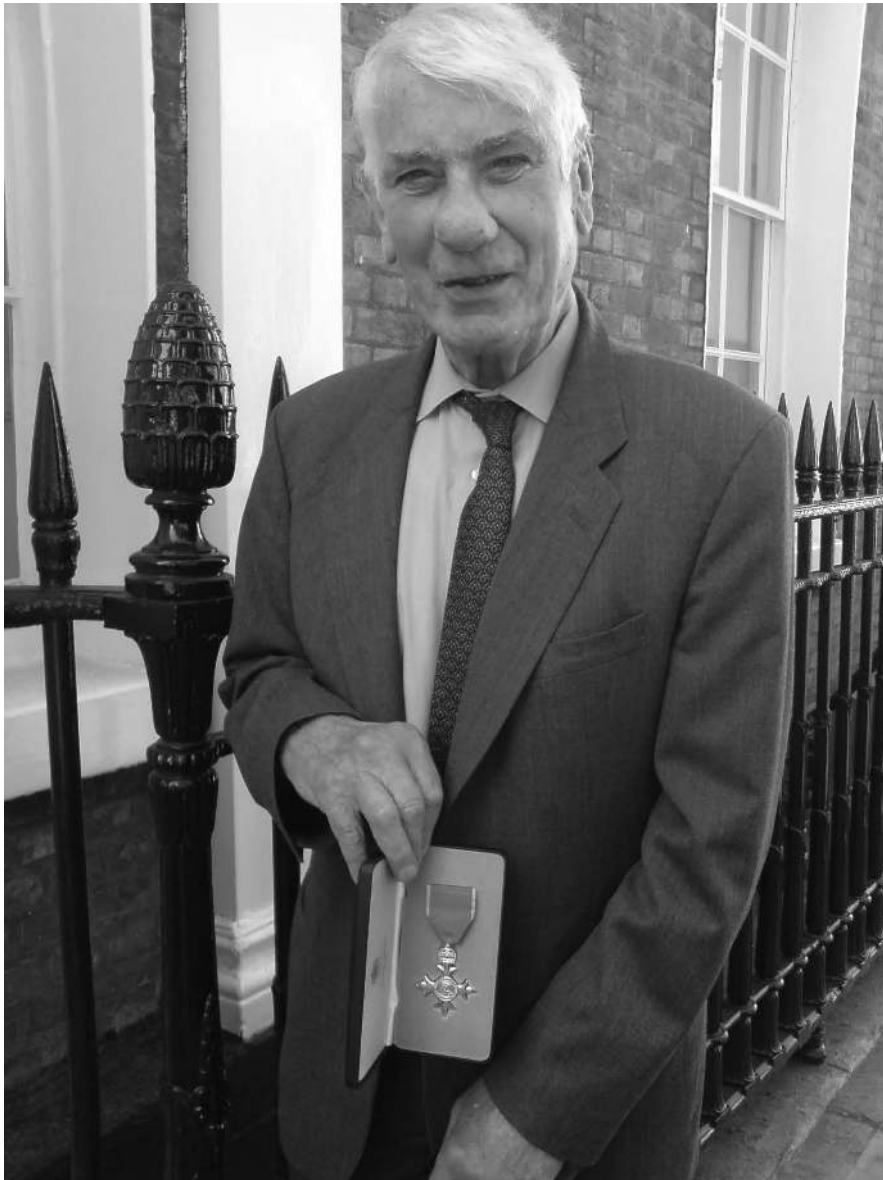
Betty Knight commemorated on Spa Green Estate

Another splendid occasion was held on May 15th, when a People's Green Plaque was unveiled on the Spa Green Estate in memory of Betty Knight, a tenants leader for more than thirty years. The award of People's Plaques is determined by popular support, and it was clear from the turn out for this event that Betty had that in abundance. she also had support from both the major political parties of her era, whose representatives were obliged to adopt a low profile because the event took place in the period of purdah that precedes each election.

The plaque has been placed on the wall of her flat in Tunbridge House, conveniently on the first floor of the building. For those who pass the building along St. John Street, it is at the back of the building. The event was accompanied by music, some excellent food and drink and an excellent cake iced with a suitable inscription and photographed by all with the facility to do so on their portable telephones before the cake was devoured with obvious relish.

Harley Sherlock 1926-1984

The obituary below was penned by one of our founder members.



Harley Sherlock, MBE, AA Dipl, MA, RIBA, FRSA, died in Sanderstead on 14th May 2014, aged 88. He was involved in urban housing in London for most of his working life, and from 1970 he was also actively involved in the related issues of transport and land-use planning.

His architectural practice, Andrews Sherlock & Partners, grew from an experiment in living and working on co-operative lines in the 1950s. Attempts to interest the London Co-operative Society in social housing on the Swedish model failed, but the partners then became, in effect, architect developers. They gained awards and commendations from the Ministry of Housing and from the Civic Trust, which won them work in the public sector on low-rise, high-density housing and on the rehabilitation of nineteenth-century streets.

Mr. Sherlock's interest in transport and planning grew from a realisation that, even when people were benefiting from improved conditions within their homes, the urban environment outside was becoming more hostile than ever, due mainly to the excessive use of the motor car. From 1972 to 1980 he was Chairman of the London Amenity & Transport Association (LATA) and from 1980 to 1985 he was Chairman of Transport 2000 (now

the Campaign for Better Transport), the national campaign for a transport policy that is compatible with a decent environment. Mr. Sherlock served on the Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects from 1982 to 1988. He was Chairman of the Institute's Planning Advisory Group from 1986 to 1988, and Chairman of the Institute's London Region from 1984 to 1986. From 1996 to 2006 he was President of the London branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England: arguing that keeping people in our cities by making them pleasant places to live, was the best way to reduce pressure on the countryside.

Locally, he was Chairman of the Islington Society 1996-99 (and the Society's President 1999-2006). He represented the Society on the Council's Development Control Committee as a co-opted member from 1982 for nearly twenty years. In 1987, Harley was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. In 2003 he was awarded an honorary MA by the London Metropolitan University for services to architecture and planning in Islington and in London generally. And in 2009 he was appointed MBE for services to architecture, conservation, and to the community in Islington.

From his long experience in planning, housing and transport, Mr. Sherlock wrote *Cities Are Good For Us*.

Tributes paid at All Saints Church in Sanderstead



(continued from page 6)

It was published by Harper Collins in 1991: a history of the mess that we have made of our cities, and a search for remedies. He sympathised with the revolt against tower-block housing, but thought its replacement by low-density, suburban-style, car-dependent sprawl had potential for even greater disaster. He saw a modern equivalent of our Georgian streets and squares not only as the best way of reducing the need to travel, but also as the most civilised prospect for a living and working environment worthy of the twenty-first century. With the need for cars drastically reduced, urban streets could once again become proper places rather than mere thoroughfares, and we could all have the necessities and pleasures of life close at hand.

In 2006 he wrote "An Architect in Islington," published by the Islington Society, because it was in Islington that much of his social housing was built - and that was where he lived for most of his life. In 2008 he wrote "A Teenager at War": an account of his memories of living through the Second World War and serving with the army in Palestine and the Sudan in 1946 / 47.

In 2001 he wrote "Villagers - Five Shillings",

a brief history of Sanderstead (near Croydon), as it grew during his childhood in the 1930s, from rural village to London suburb; and the effect of this on its cricket club.

"Villagers" actually illustrates other important aspects of Harley's life. He and Folly were founder members of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA); and Sanderstead Cricket Club, where Harley played for forty years, was one of the few places where it could still be obtained during those bleak years, when most drinkers had succumbed to so-called "keg" beer.

Harley Sherlock's wife, Folly, died in 2005. He is survived by his three children: Patrick, Tom and Sarah Jane. HS

Harley's funeral took place at a well filled All Saints Church, Sanderstead, on Friday June 6th. Tributes were paid by Pat Eastop, whose husband founded the Sanderstead Hockey club which shares the Old Saw Mill with cricket; by Pete Broadbent, now bishop of Willesden, and his son Tom. The celebration of Harley's life continued in the Harley Sherlock Pavilion against the backdrop of Colts cricket, to which the Sherlock Charitable Trust is devoted.

Offices to residential: the reality

This Article first appeared in *Planning Magazine*

If anyone knows about how planning changes can touch peoples' lives in a fundamental way, it's Bianca Koslowski, a businesswoman who provides signing services for deaf people. For the second time in nine months, she faces eviction from her offices to allow for a change of use.

Her plight has come about after both landlords took advantage of a change in planning rules allowing offices to be converted into homes without the need for planning permission. Koslowski's firm, Sign Language Brings Freedom, was one of several small businesses moved out of Whittington House in Islington, north London, last summer after the landlord decided to convert the office building into 39 flats and was granted permission under the prior approval process.

The eviction led to the loss of more than 20 jobs, because the firm had to cease trading due to the costs incurred, says Koslowski. Her new firm, Plethora Signing Services, has now been handed an eviction notice at its new premises just down the road, after her new landlord also received approval under the new rules to turn the offices into 27 flats. As a result of costs incurred from what looks likely to be a second eviction, she says, the new business's future is also in doubt.

The introduction of permitted development rights for office-to-residential conversions has been highly controversial in several areas across London. The new rules were introduced last May, along with a host of other deregulatory measures, including measures to allow larger household extensions. Almost all of the new measures replace the conventional planning application process with what the government describes as a light touch system of consent called prior approval, which limits the areas in which planning authorities can assess schemes.

For a planning application, a proposal is assessed against a host of local and national planning policies. But, under the office-to-residential prior approval process, only flooding, highways and contamination issues are judged.

The London Borough of Islington, along with many other councils in London and the South East, has complained that the prior approval system restricts its control over development and removes its ability to negotiate section 106 planning gain agreements to mitigate the impact of a schemes and

provide affordable housing. Islington and four other boroughs unsuccessfully tried to overturn the change in law in the High Court, losing their legal challenge in December.

In particular, the office conversion rules have resulted in the loss of employment space, they say, and been devastating for small businesses like Koslowski's. But, despite the controversy, the government wants to go further. In April, further new permitted development rights come into force, allowing shops and farm buildings to be converted into homes without making a planning application, as well as other changes of use (see page 10). And more changes could be on the way.

The last Budget document said that the government would review the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO), promising "a three-tier system to decide the appropriate level of permission". Permitted development rights would be for "small-scale changes", it said, "prior approval rights for development requiring consideration of specific issues, and planning permission for the largest scale development". The government said it would also consult on specific change of use measures, including new rights allowing the conversion of warehouses and light industrial structures into homes, though it did not say if these would involve a prior approval process.

Experts are unsure as to whether the three-tier system will involve a greater roll-out of prior approval beyond the measures already proposed. Speaking to Planning, the Department for Communities and Local Government's chief planner Steve Quartermain played down its potential impact, saying the new system would "not really" be a change to the status quo. Richard Lemon, an associate director for planning at real estate firm CBRE, agrees that the three-tier arrangement "is nothing new", but "simply sums up the position we already have".

However, lobby group the British Property Federation (BPF) sees it as potentially resulting in a radical reduction in the number of planning applications going through the system. The BPF has lobbied for the introduction of the three-tier system, or what it calls the "planning pyramid", which it says would benefit both applicants and authorities.

The BPF says the system would speed up the

decision-making process and, by reducing the number of traditional applications, cut the workloads of council planning departments so they can focus on other areas like local plans, infrastructure provision and regeneration. Ghislaine Trehearne, the BPF's assistant director of planning and development, envisages only the very largest or more complex proposals, such as ones needing an environmental impact assessment, needing a full planning application.

Whether or not the BPF's "planning pyramid" emerges from the government's GPDO review, many types of development that would previously have used the traditional application system are now subject to the prior approval process as a result of the measures announced so far. But the controversy this has generated suggests that further roll-out of prior approval might not be plain sailing. Camden is another London borough that unsuccessfully battled the office-to-residential rules in the courts. Ed Watson, its assistant director for regeneration and planning, says that the prior approval system, and in particular the inability it brings to ask developers for planning gain, is causing "increasing concern".

Watson says the council has received 77 prior approval applications for the change of use of offices to housing, with 43 approved. The borough estimates that it has lost more than 20,000 square metres of business floorspace and up to 1,600 jobs due to the rule change. The lost business rates revenue is £2.2 million, Watson claims, adding that the borough has missed out on up to 120 affordable homes. The change is also creating bad feeling in the community about the planning system, Watson adds, because residents feel they have no say.

But what is the picture outside London and the South East? Research by Planning last August showed that the office conversion rules have had far less impact outside with the capital, with London boroughs on average having received four times as many applications as authorities outside the capital. Phil Skill, head of planning at Stroud District Council, says there has been little interest from applicants in any of the new permitted development rules, apart from in the form of some proposals to convert agricultural barns into warehouses that the council refused on highways grounds.

Skill expresses concerns about community consultation: "Parish councils and neighbours have

been disturbed by the lack of consultation, and I fear that this will continue with the new three-tier system," he says. Mike Kiely, president of the Planning Officers Society, says that prior approval applications involve a minimal fee, so their widespread use would also reduce the income of planning departments, affecting resources. Furthermore, the work involved in processing such applications still takes up officers' time, so it is unlikely to "free up armies of planners" as the BPF suggests, he adds.

It's not just local authorities who express concerns about greater use of prior approval. Planning lawyer Duncan Field, a partner at Wragge & Co, says there are "a number of problems" with the process. The key one is inconsistency, he says, because councils can interpret the rules around prior approval differently, including the type of issues to be considered, the amount of information required from applicants and even the decision-making process itself. "If a local authority is politically predisposed against a proposal, it can make the process as difficult as a planning application," he adds.

A further problem, says Field, is that the wider use of prior approval "risks the integrity of the plan-led system and local decision-making" because Whitehall decides which types of development benefits from the streamlined route. This limits the effectiveness of local plan policies, he adds, which cannot be taken into account in a prior approval application.

Lemon warns applicants that the arrangements for prior approval can be complicated, due to the different criteria that must be met for each kind of development. There is still scope for authorities to refuse applications on these grounds, he adds, so approval is far from assured. Lemon notes that the retail-to-residential prior approval process in particular "includes a number of subjective criteria to be satisfied".

But Jonathan Manns, associate director of planning at consultancy Colliers, argues that small-scale home extensions, for example, should not necessarily be subject to the same scrutiny that larger schemes would be. "By introducing a three-tier system, you are ensuring that time spent or scrutiny given to each proposal is proportionate to the impact it's going to have," he adds.

What are permitted development and prior approval?

Permitted development

According to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), permitted development rights are a national grant of planning permission by Parliament, not the local authority, which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Traditionally, they involved small-scale developments, but larger scale changes are increasingly being allowed. The General Permitted Development Order sets out classes of development for which a grant of planning permission is automatically given.

Prior approval

A developer has to seek approval from the local planning authority that specified elements of the development are acceptable before work can proceed, according to the DCLG. The government's new online Planning Practice Guidance describes prior approval as applying "where the principle of the development has already been established". The applicant firstly asks the authority if prior approval is needed. If it is, the proposal is judged against the criteria and prior approval is either granted or refused. If no decision is made in 56 days, prior approval is given.

What the process now covers

What developments have switched to the prior approval process?

From 30th May last year:

- Change of agricultural buildings between 150

square metres and 500 square metres to other uses. Prior approval is required for transport and highways impacts, flooding, contamination and noise.

- Permanent change of any building to use as a state-funded school. Prior approval is required for transport and highways impacts, contamination and noise.

- Change of use from B1(a) offices to C3 residential use. Prior approval is required for transport and highways issues, contamination and flooding.

- Limits for permitted development for householder single storey rear extensions doubled until 30th May 2016.

As of 6th April, prior approval will also apply to:

- Conversion of A1/A2 retail units to residential use. Prior approval is required for design, transport and flood risk considerations. Councils will also be required to assess the impact of the loss of the retail unit and whether there is a reasonable prospect of it being occupied by another retail use.

- Change of agricultural buildings to residential use. Prior approval is required for siting and design.

- Change of use of agricultural buildings to state-funded schools and registered nurseries. Prior approval is required to consider the impact of noise, transport, highways, and contamination."

It almost makes one yearn for Nick Ridley or Charlie Falconer!

Society publications [available from the Society at 35, Britannia Row, London, N.1 or from local bookshops]

Twentieth Century Buildings in Islington, by Alec Forshaw, £14.99, photographs by Richard Leoney, 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

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

Annual Dinner 2014

This year's Annual Dinner for members and guests will be held at the Honorable Artillery Company, Chiswell Street, on July 8th.

Transport News Round-up

More buses for lower Holloway Road

Bus usage is back to the levels of before the 1958 strike, yet the lower part of Holloway Road has been struggling with fewer buses than thirty years ago, when the 104 and the 279 provided two high frequency routes alongside the 43 and the 271, and the route of the 153 was served by the 172.

Transport for London is at last addressing that deficiency with a proposal further to extend the 263 to Highbury Barn. This route from Barnet, which was extended south of Archway to Nag's Head relatively recently, is now proposed to come down to Highbury Corner and then to Highbury Barn, providing a better interchange with eastbound buses at Highbury as well as new links for Highbury itself.

Gospel Oak Barking line to be extended

The railway through Upper Holloway and Crouch Hill is to be extended from Barking to Barking Riverside as part of a scheme to develop new housing. This will follow electrification, which it emerges will involve lowering the track for more than a mile in order to accommodate the overhead wires at no greater height than is utilised now.

The Barking Riverside site has not been developed as quickly as hoped and this is because of its poor transport links. It had been hoped to extend the DLR to meet it, but the Gospel Oak line extension is a much cheaper option. For existing passengers it will mean arriving on the south side of Barking station instead of the north. At least those irritating last minute platform changes, requiring people to cross the station from one side to the other, will become a thing of the past.

Camden Road reprieved and opened up

The new chairman of HS2 Limited (not limited enough, some would say) announced changes to the planned HS2 rail link. The link between HS2 and HS1 at Camden, which would have disrupted the fastest growing railway line in Britain when HS2 is supposed to be about increasing rail capacity, has been dropped. HS1 already has a link to the West Coast Main Line, provided in order to make Paris to Birmingham quicker by rail than by air, but it has never been used. There simply is not the demand. Demand for local services like the North London Line is seemingly insatiable. Five car trains should replace those with four cars from 2015.

The second change is that there is to be no cheapskate solution at Euston. His predecessor scaled down the plans for Euston station and

proposed to drive out some local services to accommodate HS2. This announcement is therefore a good transport decision, though still unsatisfactory. Even the advocates of High Speed 2 acknowledge you cannot expand some infrastructure and ignore other. More travel needs more housing, not less, and nowhere is more acutely imbalanced between supply and demand than Camden. If HS2 happens at all, it has to happen without disturbing housing in Camden. The East Midlands is being fobbed off with a station at Toton. By comparison, Old Oak Common is or will be far better connected to London and would make a far better London station than heavily constrained Euston.

New Bus for London on route 38

At the end of May the 38 was to be converted to operation by the New Bus for London. In the days leading up to this, new buses appeared sometimes with guards and sometimes without. Unfortunately it was decreed at the last minute that ten or more buses should appear in a ghostly black livery (something to do with a Football competition, although you would not know that to look at them) and this delayed the delivery of all vehicles. Rather bizarrely, the buses will only operate in crewed mode as far north as Mildmay Park. When running through Hackney, passengers will have no second crew member and there will inevitably be delays at Mildmay Park when the guards disembark. Clearly the cost of the second crew member is reining back the original scheme and many of the 600 New Buses will operate without a guard at any time, although they are less suitable for one person operation than off the peg buses. More recent deliveries weigh less than the earliest standard hybrid buses (though with lower capacity). The standard hybrids have also shed some pounds and now weigh in at under twelve metric tonnes. Despite the use of lightweight material, the bus stood up remarkably well to impact by a vehicle reportedly travelling at over 100 mph, in a 2.20 a.m. incident on Lea Bridge Road.

Cashless buses now in operation

Folly Sherlock's funeral took place in the last week it was possible to pay a bus conductor in Islington. Harley's funeral took place in the last month it was possible to pay a cash fare to the driver of a London bus. I suspect that a few people of their generation will be distressed to find they cannot pay for their travel. Many more will happily avoid payment. But of course, Peter Hendy always knows best. AB

From the Society

Current officers and What We Do appears on page 2

Future Society events

The Society gives reminders by e-mail of meetings about a week before they are held. Please let the Secretary have your e-mail address if you are not on the existing mailing list. Events take place at 7.30, Town Hall, unless stated otherwise.

June 20th: the Annual Pub Crawl, now in its twenty-third year, commences at 6 p.m. at the Master Gunner, just north of Finsbury Square. Calling on the hour at the Artillery Arms, the Angel, City Road, Ye Olde Fountain, the Three Crowns City Road, and the Wenlock Arms just before 11 p.m.

July 8th: The Annual Dinner 2014 for members and guests will be at the HAC, Chiswell Street. An application form is enclosed.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday October 8th at the Town Hall. Details will be given before the next newsletter is published.

The copy date for our next newsletter is October 2nd 2014.

Other Events in or around Islington:

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

Non-IA&HS members welcome, donation invited. Further information in the web site.

Wednesday 18th June, AGE at 7.30 pm followed by talk: "Samuel Plimsoll, Victorian Whistle Blower: his campaign for sailors and his connection with Islington". Speaker Nicolette Jones, author.

Wednesday 16th July

London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies

Meetings at 77, Cowcross Street, commencing 6.30 p.m.

June 10th: Tall buildings

September 17th: topic to be announced

Islington Museum & Local History Centre

245, St. John Street. tel. 7-527 2837

Thursday 24th July 6.30p.m. "Chimpanzee!" Talk in support of the exhibition detailed below.

Exhibition 20th June to 30th September "Beastly

Islington - animals in the borough through time". Closed Wednesday and Sunday.

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, 39a Canonbury Square

9th July - 7th September "Gerardo Dottori (1884-1977) The Futurist View", one of the pivotal figures of Italian Futurism.

Opening hours Wed. to Sat. 11 a.m.- 6 p.m., Sunday 12 noon-5 p.m.

Almeida Theatre,

Almeida Street, N.1 0207 359 4404

Monday-Saturday 7.30 p.m., Saturday matinée 2.30 p.m.

5th June - 19th July "Mr Burns" by Anna Washburn, European Premiere.

Islington University of the Third Age (U3A)

Thursday 26th June, "Family and/or Career or both? - the dilemma of modern men and women". Speaker Baroness Julia Neuberger.

Thursday 24th July, "The Future of the European Union."

Speaker Lord Anthony Giddens.

Meetings at 10.30 am, The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road.

For details and membership www.IslingtonU3A.org

Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings:

19th June: 'Conservation and Commemoration: a study day exploring the significance and stewardship of the architectural and memorial legacy of the War' War Memorials Trust [Alliance member] and Church Care, The Gallery, 70/77 Cowcross Street, London

28th June: War and Peace: Diplomacy, Espionage and the First World War, The National Archives, London