

# ISLINGTON *News*

*The Journal of the Islington Society incorporating FOIL folio*

## **Islington and the country back out of step**

The General Election returned both Islington's Labour M.P.s with an increased majority. In the North of the Borough, Jeremy Corbyn's majority of 21,194 was more than the total votes against, and in the South Emily Thornberry surpassed 50% of the total for the first time. The Conservatives were second in both constituencies, with the Green Party a comfortable third in the north but narrowly behind UKIP in fifth place in Islington South & Finsbury.

### **London results also show a swing to Labour**

The Islington result mirrored experience in most other parts of London, heightening interest in the Labour Party process to select a Mayoral candidate which runs concurrently with its leadership election. The pattern was not uniform, however, and a high profile candidate from elsewhere retains a chance of success.

### **Different National picture**

However, the result was very different elsewhere. Against almost every pundit's predictions - even the exit poll predicted a hung parliament - there was enough support for the Tories to give them a small majority. In many seats four parties made small gains at the expense of the Liberal Democrats. The transformation of Scotland to return 56 SNP members was more dramatic than the Liberal decline, but since it replaced one opposition party with another has little impact on who governs at Westminster.

### **Realignment of British politics**

The notion that there would never again be a single party in charge has been completely debunked. Nor is there quite the appetite for Coalition that many pundits supposed, at least not the model with a small centre party choosing to prop up each of the bigger parties in turn and thus being permanently represented on the government benches. It may be that any future coalition involves either Labour and the Green Party, or the Conservatives and UKIP, which would offer a

clearer choice. The Independently minded former Liberal councillor, Greg Foxsmith thinks so - he has joined the Green Party. UKIP have debunked another myth, that Parties have to be united to command popular support.

The election of a single party also postpones the time when a different method of voting might be introduced, better to reflect the proportion of votes cast for each party.

### **Impact on Islington**

The election of a government committed to a further period of austerity led to a statement from the Council Leader Richard Watts warning of the consequences for Islington. The revenue budget which was £350m. in 2010 is likely to be down to £130m. by 2019. Moreover, the enforced sale of social housing now owned by housing associations, and further welfare cuts will drive out the less well off or force them to resort to still further overcrowding.

Policies which play well elsewhere in the country have a totally different impact in inner London, because of the huge disparity in house prices and in demand for housing over supply. It is not difficult to see why the response of the electorate has been so different.

### **Leadership elections**

Three party leaders resigned within 24 hours, so that Peter Moores outlasted them all as England cricket coach. The Labour leadership campaign conducted in the press is focused on what is electable rather than what is the right thing to do. If every party has the same values (and probably no principles) it boils down to which has the most competent team. Someone should point out that, as with stocks and shares, past performance is no guide to the future.

The leadership election is running concurrently with the Party's choice of London Mayoral candidate. Its outcome will be tested rather sooner.

## Islington Society News

### ISLINGTON IN BLOOM

The Islington Society has been accepted as one of the Sponsors of Islington in Bloom 2015. It is an annual competition run by Islington Gardeners and Islington Council to judge the best horticultural displays in the borough. We are sponsoring the category "Best Community Garden", defined as "a garden which is maintained by a group of local people". There are 11 categories for community groups, residents, schools and businesses.

The closing date for entries was 29th May 2015 to be followed by judging in June and July. The judging criteria include appropriate choice of plants, together with their health and maintenance, wild life friendliness and the use of water conservation techniques. The winners of each category will receive certificates, awards and prizes at a ceremony to be held on Tuesday 22nd September at 6.30 in the Assembly Rooms next to the Town Hall. To find out more about Islington in Bloom visit their web-site which can be found 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. Recently Islington came first at London in Bloom and received Gold Awards. At the national level of Britain in Bloom, Islington has represented London and the South East several times and won Silver Gilt awards.

### Annual Pub Crawl

This will take place on Friday June 26th and this year is in the north of the Borough. We start at O'Flynn's, a prominent building on Green Lanes which for many years was the Robinson Crusoe with as much real ale as you would expect on a desert island.

The second pub, also a first for us, will be the Leconfield, also in Green Lanes and on the corner of Leconfield Road. The third pub has been visited before, under a previous name, but

not since its reincarnation as the Dissenting Academy. This pub is on the corner of Newington Green, on Mildmay Park.

The crawl then moves to the Edinburgh Cellars and finally the Alma, both in Newington Green Road.

### Annual Dinner

This event will revert to the Autumn and the date agreed and booked is Tuesday October 20th.

The venue for this year's Annual Dinner is to be the Little Georgia restaurant, 14 Barnsbury Road, occupying the building with the words WHITE CONDUIT HOUSE broadly blazoned in its cornice. This occupies the site and is the descendant of the great eighteenth and early nineteenth century place of sport and entertainment of that name where celebrities of the time such as the poet and playwright Oliver Goldsmith were regulars and quite probably Samuel Johnson too. It was here that cricket was organised by one Thomas Lord who ran the White Conduit Club for his players. In 1784 he acquired a new ground for cricket in Marylebone, which he called Lord's Cricket Ground, and in due course renamed the club the Marylebone Cricket Club - i.e the MCC. But the first game at the new ground was between the Islington Cricket Club (the locals) and the White Conduit Club (the gents)'.

The cost will be £25 per place and cheques can be sent to Robert Coyle at Colman Coyle Solicitors, Wells House, 80 Upper Street, London, N.1 0NU. Please give an e-mail address to which acknowledgement will be sent. You will also receive a booking form listing the choice of starters, mains and desserts. The booking form will be available on our web-site and will be included with the next newsletter, but its despatch will be close to the date of the dinner.

## Archway Gyratory consultation

A workshop was held at the end of May at the Central Methodist Hall, Archway. Following a decision in principle to remove the gyratory - something the Society has been seeking for twenty years, the purpose of this meeting was to explore how the island might be utilised to provide a quality community space.

Although the gyratory scheme is a matter for Transport for London, Islington Council is taking the lead on the use of the space. The meeting was attended by several councillors and officers.

Officers wanted visitors to linger and thereby boost the local economy, and had carried out work to show the extent to which the central area would be overshadowed by Archway Tower on mid-summer's day. But some of those present, including Adrian Betham who was party to the original Islington / Highgate Society proposal drawn up by himself, Harley Sherlock and Maud Heath, were concerned that overshadowing would be far greater for the rest of the year. They also felt that the wind would discourage visitors and that first priority should be measures that mitigated its effects.

The TfL scheme, whilst it made better

provision for cyclists than the 1995 scheme, removed the currently excellent interchange facility for those changing buses as well as those transferring from tube to bus in a northbound direction. Concern was expressed that if the reason for visiting were taken away, footfall could be reduced rather than increased. Alterations suggested by the Better Archway Forum had not been adopted by TfL. An alternative scheme was also put forward by John McBryde with the support of the Campaign for Better Transport.

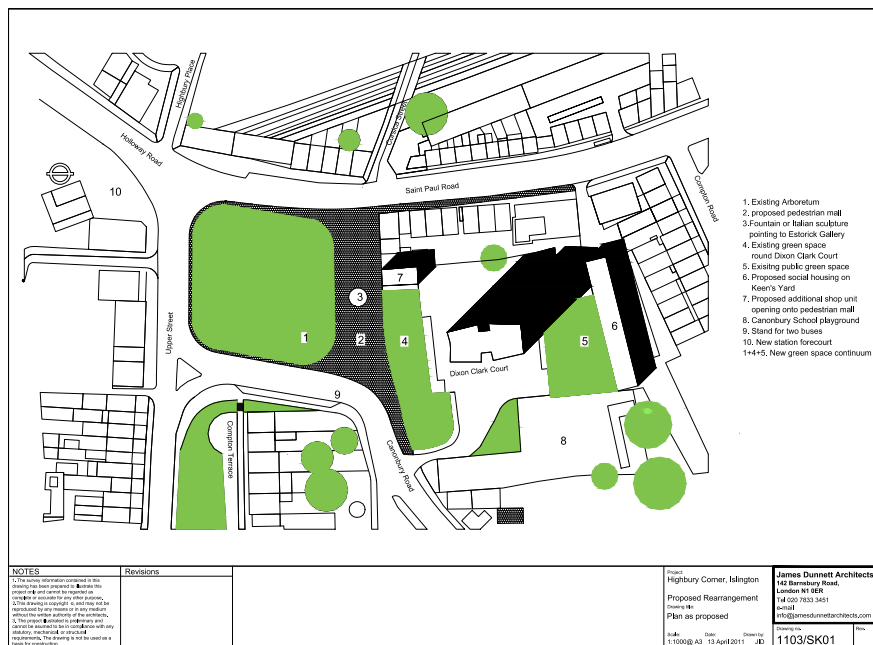
It was suggested that the existing Archway Park was under-used because it does not represent a quality space, in part because the gyratory acts as a barrier to pedestrians. Adrian Betham suggested that a more inviting pedestrian route to the park could lead to it being the quality space that the council was seeking.

The transport issues will be the subject of a further TfL led consultation in August when doubtless the reservations expressed by the Better Archway Forum and others will resurface.

## Highbury Corner: bridge strengthening works in progress

As anyone passing through the area cannot fail to notice, work has commenced on strengthening the road over rail bridge at Highbury Corner, and the long awaited demolition of the temporary Post Office building which has concealed the station entrance for nearly seventy years.

Once the work is complete, it is hoped that the gyratory will be replaced as is happening at Archway. The illustration below was prepared by James Dunnnett and offers one way forward which would respect the needs of public transport users by closing the eastern arm. The Society has not taken a formal position and expects there to be public consultation before any scheme is implemented.



## *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 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 Presidents: Mary Cosh

Chairman: David Gibson,

3P Leroy House, 436, Essex Road, 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



The mews style dwellings in Lonsdale Square

## Piers Gough speaks to the Islington Society

*Piers Gough spoke to a joint meeting of the Islington Society and NETAS on March 25th. James Dunnett reflects on what he said.*

Since the mid 1970s CZWG - Campbell Wilkinson Zogolovitch and Gough, of whom Piers Gough is the most publicly recognized figure - have been *enfants terribles* of British architecture, a reputation they still retain, despite Gough having ascended the summit of the Establishment by becoming the Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy. Nevertheless they have never been quite taken to heart by the Establishment, as is reflected in the fact that they have very few public buildings to their credit. Their work has predominantly been housing for the private sector, and a great deal of that has been built in Islington where they are based - in Clerkenwell, like so many architectural practices now. Indeed there are some who feel they have gone too far in accommodating the values of developers, and their most recently completed project, the Queensland Road housing along the south side of the Emirates Stadium, was nominated last year for Building Design magazine's annual 'Carbuncle Cup'. The nominator complained that 'CZWG seem to be single-handedly trying to decimate Islington'. They were not the 'winner', and a comparison between the housing on the south side of Hornsey Street, by CZWG, and that on the north by Assael Architecture, should convince most people that CZWG are not the ones who should be in line for such an 'award'.

In fact their reputation remains high, as was evident from the large turnout filling the Council Chamber for the talk given on 25th March by Piers Gough entitled 'Home Turf'. The Islington Society had invited participation from NETAS (North East Thames Architectural Society), the local branch of the RIBA, whose London Region publicised the event - so there were many professionals present. The completion of the Queensland Road project seemed an appropriate moment to ask for a survey

of the firm's work in the Borough, which has spanned nearly forty years. The talk given by Gough, who is known as a witty speaker, certainly did not disappoint. He started with an account of the little mews houses in Lonsdale Place off Barnsbury Street, from the late 1970s, where the huge round windows wittily re-interpret the mews format, made doubly quirky by distortion to accommodate an existing tree - which died shortly after. The houses with their sinuous metalwork suggest inspiration from Belgian Art Nouveau of c. 1900. It can be difficult to project such wit from a small scale to a large, and arguably CZWG are not always successful in doing so. It also became apparent that Piers Gough is not personally involved with all the projects built under the name of the practice, and an irreverent personal wit of that kind is especially hard for others successfully to adopt: CZWG's Collins Music Hall development, which of course has yet to come fully 'on stream' and with which Gough was apparently not himself involved (and so did not discuss in his talk), seems not very successfully to transfer motifs from the notorious or 'witty' house in Britton Street of 1987 for Janet Street-Porter, for which Gough was the designer. Would it get planning permission today? - I doubt it.

As masterplanners for developments associated with the Emirates Stadium, CZWG must take some responsibility for less successful outcomes such as what Gough admitted was the 'canyon-like' quality of Hornsey Street. Indeed one might question whether their strength is in urbanism. But I for one enjoy the repeated blue drums of the Queensland Road housing and the sinuous frontage to the street beneath, and hope that finally they get permission to build their little student tower on Hornsey Road.

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**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 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

**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

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## Brian Woodrow

Former Camden councillor Brian Woodrow passed away in May, a few months short of his 80th birthday. He had chaired that council's development control committee for several years, and was familiar to many Islington residents because of his stalwart work over King's Cross. It came to an end in less than satisfactory circumstances.

Speaking at his funeral, his recently retired M.P. Frank Dobson described him as a conservationist who understood the need to conserve not only the buildings but also the people within them. He went on to describe the nonsense that ended Brian's tenure in the chair as the most shameful episode in Camden's fifty year history. Camden Officers (with the connivance of some Labour councillors) referred Brian to the now defunct Standards Committee for daring to reflect the views of his constituents and Camden's own Planning Policy in favour of affordable housing in the proposed King's Cross development. Brian was found innocent by the Standards Board, but by that time the develop at all costs officers had had their way. The incident prompted an unusually caustic comment in this journal ("Borchester Land decision another blow for planning system", Summer 2012).

Brian however would not have agreed with Frank's assessment. Always self-effacing, he made light of the issue even though it clearly took its toll on his health and almost certainly deprived him of the birthday party he was looking forward to later this year. He would have said that the earlier conspiracy to oust the Council's head of legal

services and Deputy Chief Executive, Amanda Kelly, was the most shameful episode and with hindsight it proved to be the prelude to his own difficulties.

Brian Woodrow was by training an architect brought up in the Hampshire town of Bournemouth and trained in Oxford. Comparison might be drawn between his career and that of the late Harry Brack in Islington (also later vindicated for speaking an unpalatable truth). But Brian had a longer spell on his council, reselected and elected in 2006, and before that had established a reputation for conservation, saving the Georgian houses in Calthorpe Street, and Covent Garden from the worst excesses of development at all costs in the 1970s.

In another of five moving tributes, current Councillor Sue Vincent told us he had made her a better councillor. This was a view not confined by party lines. After the dark days of 2006, when the Tories found themselves in charge but bereft of their leader, Conservative Councillor Roger Freeman assumed the chair of the planning committee. He spoke of his gratitude to Brian for his support at that time, as some semblance of democratic control was restored and the myth that the Nolan Report prevented all contact with third party objectors while allowing developers to write their own planning brief was finally debunked.

A celebration of Brian's life will be held on August 28th, two days after what would have been his birthday.

## Pat McCann

A familiar figure in Chapel Market, even after he had retired from his stall, Pat McCann died in March. His funeral at St. Silas with All Saints church attracted a huge congregation, including the former editor of the *Islington Gazette*, Chris Goodall, who made the journey to Islington from Berkshire. The funeral cortège made its way through the market to reach the church.

While not hostile to the Labour group and indeed at various times remarkably supportive to some of its members, he held council officers in some distrust and at one time prosecuted his case by standing for election as a member of the SDP. He felt that officers were unfairly burdening the market traders. They in turn maintained that the charges for pitches in the iconic market were the lowest in

inner London.

Pat also believed there was far too much waste of resources within the council. Large organisations will always be open to criticism that some work is duplicated. In the days before Islington had a scrutiny committee, they hardly needed one as Pat and his fellow trader Robbie Redrupp combed the council's accounts for evidence of profligacy. But whereas Robbie had a flourishing fruit and veg. stall, one felt Pat's was more of a hobby. He sold batteries and other household goods.

His strong but soft-spoken Irish accent added to his charm even when he was advancing an argument you would prefer not to hear. Characters like Pat made visits to the market memorable.

## Transport News Round-up

### More night buses to complement night tube

Transport for London is consulting on proposals to introduce seventeen additional night bus services at weekends. Most are an extension of day time services to 24 hour services in outer London. They are designed to meet the Night tube services. Two routes, in Uxbridge and Newham, are to run 24 hours a day for seven days a week.

The new routes are in part to be paid for by a reduction in frequency of some existing routes which are forecast to lose passengers to the night tube. The N38, which runs every 6 minutes at weekends, will revert to every 7½ minutes as on other days of the week. North Islington will benefit from Friday and Saturday night services on the W3 and W7 routes from Finsbury Park.

### Five car trains on the North London line

Work to extend platforms on the North London line has been completed and five car trains are being introduced. The Remaining four car trains now stop at a different point on the platform which catches out the occasional traveller. By Christmas all the trains will have five cars and this problem will no longer obtain.

### Another addition to the Overground map

From May 31st, the map of London Overground (of which the North London line is part) is further extended as LOROL reaches its second London terminal station, Liverpool Street. Three services from there are to Chesunt, to Enfield via Seven Sisters, and Chingford. The Overground also takes over the Romford to Upminster line, which currently stops in the late evening and does not run on Sundays. Cambridge Heath and London Fields also have something of a Cinderella service and it will be interesting to see what improvements are made and what impact they have on usage. More immediately, the fare structure will be that of TfL rather than Network Rail resulting in savings for many, though not all journeys. Pink readers for those travelling outside zone 1 are being introduced at Hackney Downs, but not Seven Sisters Upminster or Barking where people will continue to be overcharged. The pensioners freedom pass will be valid at all times, including before 9.30 on weekdays.

### New Bus for London

The latest routes to be converted to these buses includes the 73, which has no guards and the back door shut except at stops when half of it opens.

There is now a warning announcement about it opening inwards - all other bus doors open outwards. The 149 route is next.

The most recent deliveries of buses have Euro VI engines, which are cleaner but which have added to the weight of the bus, back to around what it was with the earliest examples of the bus.

### Tube station refurbishment - restricted access

A scheme to introduce gates throughout Finsbury Park station - the largest station where unscrupulous travellers can gain access without a ticket - and simultaneously close the entrance from the W3/W7/210 bus station was planned for April 21st and passengers were being leafleted with details two days before. At the very last minute the proposal was abandoned, and chaos averted.

A refurbishment at Tufnell Park is still being planned which would shut the station for several months from June 8th. TfL explained that it only needed refurbishment every 50 years but have so far not been able to explain how it could have been done fifty years ago with the station kept open and why with all the technology now available it cannot be done the same way now.

### Budget threat

As a reminder that we have not re-elected the same government, there is to be an emergency budget next month. With the NHS and education allegedly protected, there are fears that transport will be adversely affected by the Chancellor's statement.

While the last government pursued some disastrous planning policies, it was far more progressive than its Labour predecessor when it came to transport policy. It understood the difference between public expenditure on benefits, where there is no return, and expenditure investing in transport which returns a better and growing economy. Electrification schemes which should have happened years ago were advanced.

The trouble with transport schemes is that they are rarely completed in one electoral term. The plans worked up during the last term would come to nought if the plug were pulled now, or if they were put on the backburner. On the other hand, a cheaper Metro version of Crossrail2, an HS2 scheme that did not come further into London than Old Oak Common would achieve more for less - if only they were accompanied by planning policies that bring homes, jobs, school and leisure closer together rather than further apart.

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***From the Society***

Current officers and What We Do appears on page 4

**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.*

Friday 26th June 2015 from 6.0 pm: twenty-fourth annual Bill Manley Memorial Pub Crawl from Green Lanes to Newington Green.

Wednesday 15th July 7.0 pm: Talk by SAVE Britain's Heritage's Director Clementine Cecil and Case Worker Mike Fox on London cases at Smithfield, Charterhouse Square and the Strand.

Tuesday 22nd September 6.30 pm: Islington in Bloom 2015 awards and prizes at the Assembly Rooms next to the Town Hall. The Islington Society is one of the Sponsors.

Tuesday 20th October 2015 7.30 pm: Annual Dinner at the Little Georgia restaurant. Booking forms will be sent with the next Newsletter, but please see the notice on page 2.

Thursday 12th November 2015 7.0 pm: AGM followed by Speaker from Amnesty International.

The copy date for our next newsletter is October 5th, 2015.

***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 17th June 2015 Talk "Played in London: A Sporting History" by Simon Inglis. Preceded by the AGM at 7.0 pm.

**London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies**

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

September 15th: topic to be announced

November 24th: Annual General Meeting

**Islington Museum & Local History Centre**

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

until 29 August 2015 Exhibition "Dream to Change

the World:

"The Life and Legacy of John La Rose".

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

Until 28th June 2015 Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920), one of the best known Italian modern painters : "A Unique Artistic Voice".

17th June to 19th July Lino Mannocci: "Shaping the Image".

8th July to 6th September 2015 Exhibition of Paintings by Fausto Pirandello (1899-1975).

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.

until 18th July 2015 "Oresteia" by Aeschylus, a new version.

23th July to 19th September "Bakkhai" by Euripedes, a new version.

**Islington University of the Third Age (U3A)**

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

For details and membership [www.IslingtonU3A.org](http://www.IslingtonU3A.org)

**The Garden History Society London Winter Lectures:** all 6.30pm, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ.

**Islington Cyclists Action Campaign (ICAG)**

Wednesday June 10th: A.G.M at Islington Town Hall, 7.30 p.m followed by Michael Liebreich. His talk 'Thoughts on the future of cities and mobility' will start at about 8.30pm. Michael will talk about the trends he sees in transportation, particularly in cities. He'll touch on changes in the use of cars of all types, delivery traffic and active transport as well as some of the background patterns of urbanisation, air quality and obesity.

Michael is Founder and Chairman of the Advisory Board of Bloomberg New Energy Finance, the world's leading provider of information on clean energy to investors, policy-makers and corporations. He is also a Board Member of TfL, Chairman of St Mark's Hospital Foundation and a former Olympic skier.