

ISLINGTON *News*

The Journal of the Islington Society incorporating FOIL folio

Islington M.P. elected leader of the Opposition

If a week is a long time in politics, the four months between issues of Islington News seems a life-time. The last issue included passing reference to the dissatisfaction with smoke and mirrors, with messages designed to appeal to a large constituency rather than founded on principles. Within the Labour Party it was more than dissatisfaction. 60% of the electorate supported the man on whom you could have had odds of 200/1 at the start of the campaign, Islington North M.P. Jeremy Corbyn.

Parliamentary Labour Party

It can now be seen that the Parliamentary Labour Party has become increasingly out of step with the Party membership, as decisions including some selection of candidates have increasingly been imposed from the top. Nomination of leadership candidates is the exclusive preserve of MPs, and it was only in the spirit of wanting to promote a debate that would command widespread attention that enough of them agreed to nominate Jeremy Corbyn.

Hustings

They certainly achieved that. Once the hustings commenced, it was clear that Jeremy's sincerity distinguished his campaign. The other three candidates initially responded by attacking his views; when Jeremy did not retaliate in kind, the gap between them widened. Perhaps the biggest spur to Jeremy's campaign (certainly as measured by the number of donations made within 24 hours) was the contribution to the debate of former Islington resident Tony Blair. Blair did not declare any personal interest in Jeremy's stated intention to apologise properly for the illegal war of 2003. For many former party members and now supporters, that was the tipping point at which the grass roots and the top brass parted company.

As the debate continued, other candidates recognised that not being Jeremy was not sufficient to carry the day, but the glimpses of what they stood for were too brief and too late to have any impact.

Media reaction

The result of the election has made news, which sells papers. Much of the media focus has been on the

possibility of Jeremy becoming Prime Minister, and whether the Labour Party's chances are enhanced or reduced. Just as they struggled to understand why he has proved so popular, so they have not adjusted to the change wrought by the fixed term Parliament. The scope for a snap election has gone, and the next time we go to the polls for a General Election will be May 2020. In the meantime, there are two tasks facing Jeremy Corbyn: mounting credible opposition, and maintaining the interest of the young who care little for what people wear or Westminster village gossip. Reforming the structures of the Party to restore democratic control to individual members is the place to start.

How it happened: a clergyman writes

"My last parish was represented by four different members of Parliament, one of whom was/is Jeremy Corbyn. In the many column inches no one seems to have picked up on the fact that Mr. Corbyn has always been assiduous in caring for his constituents. He would go to enormous lengths to follow up any problem with which he was presented - often going the Scriptural *extra mile* when he did not have to do so. Although he has consistently voted on moral issues on what I would see as the wrong way, whenever I have written to him he has taken the trouble to reply carefully detailing his own reasoning. On occasion he would come to Mass and although not a practising Catholic, he is respectful towards people of faith. If I had a vote (I do not) it would probably go for Jeremy Corbyn as someone of integrity, with whom I would have profound disagreements but still feel able to trust."

From Islington's Opposition bench

"CONGRATULATIONS and welcome to Jeremy Corbyn on his election as Leader of the Labour Party.

"Although I stood against Jeremy Corbyn in the general election, the Greens share many values with him and have a common approach to politics. Despite clear differences, e.g. in how we would tackle climate change and electoral reform, we both spoke out against austerity, benefit cuts and nuclear weapons throughout the campaign. [to page 8

Islington Society News

ISLINGTON IN BLOOM

The Islington Society sponsored Islington in Bloom 2015, an annual competition run by Islington Gardeners and Islington Council to judge the best horticultural displays of residents who give up their time and energy to make the Borough a brighter and greener place. From residents who only have a window box to tend, to whole streets getting their hands earthy sprucing up their neighbourhoods, there are prizes for 11 categories such as "Best Tree Pit", "Container Garden", "Forgotten Corner" and "Front Garden". This year the Islington Society sponsored the category "Best Community Garden".

The winners of each category received certificates and prizes at a ceremony held on Tuesday 22nd September at 6.30 in the Assembly Rooms next to the Town Hall. The winners of our sponsored category "Best Community Garden" were:

- 1st - King Henry's Walk Garden
- 2nd - Olden Community Garden
- 3rd - Freightliners Farm

The Chairman, David Gibson, presented the Winners' Certificates for our category, and writes:

"The Mayor, Cllr. Richard Greening, confessed that his favourite was the "Best Tree Pit" category. Gardeners in Ockendon Road won two prizes for their displays. The whole area is enriched by these public flowers in the street tree pits, tended by residents under the guidance of Aida Trabucco. It's well worth a visit in the season, just walk down the street with no need to wait for Open Gardens weekend.

"Islington is justifiably proud of the diverse, often very small, horticultural activity in the Borough. This year, in recognition, it won the "Best Borough" in the London in Bloom Awards, outright, in the teeth of the imposed local authority cuts to services. Islington has for many years been well-represented in these Awards; the Angel Town Centre won the "Best Town Centre under 1 sq.km." award for both 2013 and 2014. This year Islington Gardeners

were Gold Category winners in 'Small City Category' and Arlington Square won 'Best Small Park'".

Annual General Meeting

The speaker following our AGM on November 12th will be Martin Lunnon. He is currently treasurer of the Islington and Hackney Amnesty Group, having been a member of Amnesty International for nearly 25 years, as well as interim chair of Amnesty International UK's LGBT network. He is also a member of the Islington Society. The offices of Amnesty International are in Islington. We have therefore asked Martin to speak about AI's work relevant to Islington both past and present. He will then outline AI's work further afield and how this has changed in nature over the years.

Annual Dinner

There may just be time when you receive this to book a place at the Annual Dinner on Tuesday October 20th at 7.30 p.m.. It takes place at the Little Georgia restaurant, 14 Barnsbury Road, London. N.1, and the cost is £25 per head. You should have received an e-mail or flier inviting you to book with our Treasurer, Robert Coyle. (contact details on page 5).

A report of the event will appear next time.

Events manager

The Society Committee was enlarged when it was agreed to merge the Executive with the Planning Conservation & Transport Committees. With the passage of time the numbers have reduced and the Society is now looking for new members who would take on specific responsibilities. In particular, we badly need someone who could organise and co-ordinate a programme of events. There are usually plenty of ideas, we just need someone who can follow them up - the successful applicant needs to be contactable on the same number and e-mail for significant periods of time.

Parking control consultation

The council recently conducted a wide ranging consultation on parking controls within the Borough. This is the Societies' response. A formal decision will be made in January 2016 but we understand most of the proposals will not proceed.

Introduction

The objectives of the Islington Society are to safeguard the amenities of Islington and to safeguard and improve the quality of life in Islington.

The Islington Society firmly believes that controlled parking as such is commensurate with our objectives and necessary to achieve them but has formed the view that these CPZ proposals would undermine them. We believe that balanced parking controls throughout the Borough are needed, but these proposals do not provide them. They have been badly thought through and do nothing to address the anomalies of the current position, but introduce additional irrational anomalies which make matters worse.

What the Council should be doing is looking at the fundamental issue of cars in urban areas. Making an impact on car ownership and air quality will only come when the cost of car ownership is no longer viable and when other means of transport from public transport, street cars, cycling and walking all make owning a car irrelevant. The Council should stop tinkering with Parking Controls and get back to fundamentals and the drawing board.

Recommendations in detail

1. At present there is a plethora of widely differing hours of control across the Zones, often

with neighbouring but similar streets having different periods of control. This is a historic legacy arising from the establishment of the Zones over a number of years in response each time to consulted residents' parochial concerns and local decision making. Some areas have changed significantly, but the controls have not. The current proposals continue in the same way to address residents' parochial concerns

In other zones, it is evident that changes to the extent that areas of very different character and with very different parking pressures have developed within the same CPZ while zone boundaries have remained unchanged. The current proposals overlay a new set of anomalies piece meal on top of the existing flawed Zone system.

Recommendation 1

The Islington Society rejects these flawed ad hoc proposals and strongly recommends instead a borough-wide review, looking at the current anomalies and coming up with proposals that address all areas in relation to each other, not in isolation, including a review of zone boundaries to remove local anomalies.

2. The proposals have been presented as being good news for car owners. This is however not how they have been received. The evidence in the public



domain is that they have been met with angry opposition not only from the 35% resident car owners but also from non-car owning residents and, crucially, from businesses. On the evidence, nearly all car owners have expressed themselves, on balance, happy with the current controls. On the evidence the 65% non-car owning residents have joined their car owning residents, expressing the view that a 24/7 approach to parking controls will leave them cut off from outside contact.

Recommendation 2

The Islington Society strongly recommends that the proposal be withdrawn and the evidence upon which they have been based be re-assessed by consultation with car-owners and non-car owners alike and with businesses before proposed changes to existing arrangements are put out to consultation.

3. The e-voucher proposal is a good example of how badly these proposals have been thought through. It is not even clear whether non car owning residents will be able to obtain e-vouchers. The proposals raise more questions than answers. Questions that if Council wanted the proposals to be taken seriously should have been thought of and answered in the explanation of the proposals. There are unanswered question about the invasion of residents' and their visitors' privacy, which with Councils record on breach of privacy raises considerable concern.

Recommendation 3

The Islington Society strongly recommends that the Council withdraws these proposals and that the implications of any proposals, for instance the e-voucher arrangements, be fully considered and developed before they are put out to consultation.

4. The introduction of the proposals came with the boast of a "booming economy", but there is no

mention at all of the impact that the proposals would have on businesses. The many types of business making up the booming economy have very clearly spelt out what they think will happen. It must have been obvious in formulating these proposals that they would have an impact on businesses, unless, that is, it was considered and discounted. It is not only regular businesses that will feel the impact; many charitable, social and religious groups meeting in what should be social hours will suffer, too.

Recommendation 4

The Islington Society strongly recommends that the Council withdraws these proposals and that their impact on businesses and other groups be taken into account before they are put out to consultation.

5. Any proposals in this day and age to make car ownership more convenient than other forms of transport in inner London is perverse, especially when air pollution is a recognised killer. There is no mention of air quality in the proposals. Changes to the CPZ hours of parking are not going to make any significant difference to improving the quality of the air.

Recommendation 5

The Islington Society strongly recommends that the Council considers whether air quality will be improved or not by any changes it proposes to parking arrangements around the Borough.

Summary

The unanswered questions raised above and in the press, and the widespread objections to the proposals makes it difficult to know why the proposals have been made.

The Islington Society opposes these proposals and urges that they be withdrawn.

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

Nag's Head crossing agreed

Representatives of the local College, local businesses, Transport for London (TfL), the Islington Society, Ward Councillors, Islington Council, local estate agents and a local charity are exceedingly pleased to see and use the new pedestrian crossing recently installed at the Nag's Head, linking the two sides of Holloway Road for pedestrians, shoppers, eaters, workers, visitors - everyone .

The need for the crossing to unite the two sides and "provide better connectivity between the shops, restaurant and bus stops in the area", as TfL puts it, was stressed by business at the inaugural meeting of the Nag's Head Town Centre Management Group (NHTCMG) in the Odeon's little cinema in late 2004.

The Islington Society has been working with the Group and its energetic Town Centre Manager, Joyce Pollaya, to promote crossing ever since. Now it's there, we're all wondering what took so long; it's so obviously essential and very, very well-used.

It was funded by TfL's £4 billion Road Modernisation Plan. There re also better loading bays and new paving, new cycle parking and seating.

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

CURRENT OFFICERS

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Everyone likes it. Sharon Black, the chair NHTCMG, says: "It is be easier and safer for pedestrians to use shops on both sides the road, and this will lead to a better experience for shoppers and increased trade for shops."

Cllr Asima Shaikh, said: "It's an excellent example of the council, the community, and TfL all coming together to make one of our town centres a better place to live and work."

Unprompted a local resident and Society member, Anita Frizzarin wrote to the *Tribune*: "The new pedestrian crossing at the Nag's Head is certainly to be welcomed by shoppers and users of cafés and restaurants. It doubles the likelihood of people walking into shops, since the big obstacle in the middle of the shopping area (traffic going through) is now easier to overcome. Pedestrians are after all the biggest source of income for businesses in London, so we have to campaign for more of these crossings."

Couldn't have put it better myself. Next time, let's not wait ten years. DG

- 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
- The copy date for our next newsletter is February 1st, 2016.

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Nina Bawden C.B.E.

The latest people's plaque was unveiled in September. A long standing member reports.

My sister, Nina Bawden, was awarded an Islington People's Plaque in 2015. This was unveiled in September at the house in Noel Road she lived in for the last 36 years of her life. Unusually for a writer she wrote for both adults and children, and about half of her books were written while she lived in Islington. Islington scenes and life often formed parts of her books and in her autobiography she wrote movingly about Islington. 'It was and is a lively place. If in some moods I was cast down by the pot-holed pavements and the dirty streets, the yellow foam that streaked the brown canal, the dead cats and the rotten fruit that bobbed against the closed gates of the lock, in others I was enchanted by the friendliness of strangers in this part of the inner city, by the exotic variety of the faces in the streets and shops. And by the beauty of the urban landscape. From our bedroom on the fifth floor we could see a great sweep of sky, the graceful skeletons of yellow cranes, the delicate spires of small City churches, the gold figure of Justice on the Old Bailey, the grey helmet of the dome of St Paul's, the ferocious Barbican tower blocks, rearing up like jagged tooth dinosaurs, the faint stroked, pencil thin, of more cranes, far away at the docks, beyond the gin factory. That was at dawn, in daylight; at night, even the ugliest tower blocks turned into fairy palaces.'

Episodes of family life also found their way into her books. No incident or phrase was safe from Nina's magpie eyes and ears. We would await with trepidation for her next book and sometimes I would complain about some misrepresentation, 'but

it is only a story' she would say. She was skilled at picking up some little family tale. Her children's book *the Peppermint Pig*, a Norfolk story about a pig called Johnny who was brought up by our grandmother as a house pet until, as they say, his time came. The story begins with our great grandmother going shopping. *Old Granny Greengrass had her finger chopped off in the butcher's when she was buying half a leg of lamb. She had pointed to the place where she had wanted her joint to be cut, but then decided she needed a bigger piece and pointed again. Unfortunately, Mr Grumett, the butcher, was already bringing his sharp chopper down. He chopped straight through her finger and it flew like a snapped twig into a pile of sawdust in the corner of the shop. It was hard to tell who was more surprised, Granny Greengrass or the butcher. But she didn't blame him. She said, "I could never make up my mind and stick to it, Mr Grummett. That's always been my trouble. Once you have read this beginning, with not a word out of place, you will not put the book down and that must be every novelist's aim.*

It is difficult to know how Nina's books will fare with the passage of time. *Carrie's War* with the link to the evacuation experience of the war looks likely to have enduring qualities. However, I would not have nominated her for a Plaque if it had not been for what she did after the Potters Bar train accident. She lost her husband, Austen, and was herself badly injured and in constant pain, alleviated by the odd glass of champagne! She could easily have sat back and just said to her excellent lawyer,



'just screw them for all you can get'. But as soon as she understood that the accident had been caused by an appalling failure of maintenance, (the nuts that should have held the points together had been not been re-fitted but were found by the track) she became angry at what she saw was a clear failure of privatisation.

Being evacuated to Wales had radicalised Nina. She went from a comfortable house with a large garden in quiet suburban Ilford to a mining village with a slag heap not far from the kitchen door. She was inspired by hearing Nye Bevan speak and she realised that Mr Jones, the miner she boarded with, was having a very hard life with not much reward so she campaigned for Labour in the 1945 election, and, apart from a brief flirtation with the SDP, remained a Labour supporter all her life.

In *Dear Austen*, her last book, she describes how she began campaigning against privatisation after the accident. *'I suppose, without realising it, I was already moving into crusader mode. I had been sent a definitive lecture given by a superb railway buff and it had fired me into a fine indignation: you had been killed by the lamentable failure of all governments since 1945 to*

take proper responsibility for the country's rail infrastructure and I was going to do what I could to put that negligence right. I had been encouraged in this hubristic intention by various radio and television programmes on which I had been invited to appear and broadcast my opinions without contradiction. An element of agreeable self flattery in this, as you would rightly say, but it may do some good eventually and it has been distracting for me, keeping me balanced on the edge of the Slough of Despond.'

Some good was eventually done as Railtrack was abolished and Network Rail was created and the maintenance of the railways is now done 'in house', and the railways are a little bit safer than they were. Of course many people campaigned for this, notably Louise Christian, Nina's lawyer, but Nina added an elegant voice at a critical moment. She would have been pleased that Louise and the Transport police were present at the unveiling and she would have appreciated that some champagne was imbibed.
RM

CrossRail 2

A few days after we heard that Islington Council had listened to residents' and businesses' protestations about its plans (see page 3) we learn that TfL has done the decent thing, too.

The latest route and 'safeguarding' options were presented to the businesses in the Angel area at a meeting of angel.london (Angel Business Improvement District). The route, threaded past the British Library Basements and avoiding Thames Water's deep Claremont Square Reservoir and recent building developments on Pentonville Road, is now proposed to run between Chapel Street and White Lion Street and directly underneath the Royal Bank of Scotland.

This means that the areas now earmarked for working sites are on the north side of White Lion Street, behind Chapel Market and east of Baron Street and - be praised - The Royal Bank of Scotland building. So, TfL say they now have "no interest" in Islington High Street anywhere south of White Lion Street. The old Underground entrance at the end of Torrens Street will still be used for access for personnel as it has a direct connection to the deep

Angel Station.

These are still the 'safeguarding' proposals, so nothing is fixed, but as was pointed out, the timetable has the "Scheme Design and Appraisal" phase starting now, September 2015, so "not fixed but no change expected".

Two big questions were raised and answers were given.

Given the big projected increase in foot traffic and the difficulty in crossing over the Liverpool road/Upper Street junction already, should there not also be an entrance in White Lion Street? "Not shown on the plans, yet; we're not that stage yet" say TfL.

Where are the 'muck-away' and delivery lorries going to go? "Ah. On CrossRail 1, we started digging the tunnels and building the stations at the same time, so materials for the stations had to be taken out and brought in above ground. Here, we're going to start tunnelling first with the stations following on so the spoil out and deliveries in can use the tunnels". Obvious, really. DG

Brenda Burkill

A long standing member of the Society, Brenda Burkill, has died in Colchester after a short illness. As well as an active supporter of the Bill Manley Memorial Pub Crawl, which she never missed until this year, Brenda was a loyal Friend of the Tower (Theatre). She joined both the Islington Society and the Tower Theatre more than forty years ago, and maintained her membership of both organisations up to her death in August.

After a distinguished career in the civil service, including work on the Festival of Britain, but away from London also in Berlin and Brussels, Brenda retired to Holland-on-Sea. She was actively involved in local groups there, and in the RNLI, the Cats Protection League and Guide Dogs for the Blind. She had an excellent sense of humour, much appreciated on the Pub Crawl. She was fiercely independent and only gave up driving at the age of 92.

Brenda was born in Manchester. Languages were her strongest subject at school and her linguistic ability led to the posting in Berlin as part

of the British contingent to the Allied Control Commission very soon after the end of hostilities. When she returned to England it was to the Central Office of Information (which used to provide formal statements broadcast on the Home Service in the slot now taken by advertisements for future programmes). It was there that she became involved in the preparations for the Festival of Britain, and later for the Coronation and then the British Pavilion at the International Fair in Brussels.

Brenda retired in 1981 but her erudition, her wide ranging interests and her always cheerful disposition sustained her and those who came into contact with her throughout the final third of her life.

The photograph below, with Brenda second from the right, is from the Bill Manley pub crawl in 2001, outside the Islington Tupp.

Kathleen Frenchman

We are sorry to report the death last month of Kathleen Frenchman, who at one time edited this newsletter. A full tribute will appear in a future issue.



[from page 1]" Jeremy's election as the leader of the Labour Party has to be good news for progressive politics. The Labour Party is now led by someone willing to challenge political and economic dogmas. Jeremy's selection, the successes of the SNP and the Green surge of the past year show how many people support alternatives to austerity economics, a head in the sand approach to our environmental crisis, and business-as-usual politics.

"As the only opposition councillor in Islington, I look forward to a more pluralist Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, working with other progressive parties to oppose the government's damaging austerity agenda and to re-engage citizens at all levels of government. This could be the beginning of the end of partisan politics and the flourishing of a people's movement that goes beyond political parties. We must not let this opportunity pass us by."

SAVE addresses the Islington Society

A well-attended meeting on July 15th, chaired by James Dunnett, heard Clementine Cecil, Director, and Mike Fox, Case Worker of SAVE Britain's Heritage describe ongoing campaigns in London:

1) Smithfield General Market

The Public Inquiry had rejected Henderson Global's application to demolish much of the Smithfield General Market and develop the site with office blocks (see Islington Society Newsletter Spring 2015). An alternative plan has just been made public for the London Museum to relocate by 2018 to Smithfield. The move would allow the Museum to welcome a greater number of visitors and to display more of its collection.

2) Farringdon East Station

At issue are Crossrail's plans to develop the new Farringdon Station buildings to a height, bulk and overall design which would be harmful in respect of impact and light spillage. There has been wide spread local opposition, particularly since the site abuts both the Charterhouse Square and Smithfield Conservation Areas. The Planning Committee have deferred the application for Crossrail to address the concerns expressed. Indications are however that Crossrail may appeal against the decision for deferral.

3) 152-158 The Strand

King's College applied for planning permission to demolish several historic buildings to make way for an academic block. Westminster City Council approved the application in April 2015.

This charming group of Georgian and Victorian houses, built some 200 years ago, form a characterful and distinctive frontage along the traditional thoroughfare from St. Paul's Cathedral to Buckingham Palace. Distinguished as "Unlisted Buildings of Merit", the buildings lie within the Strand Conservation area which includes Grade 1 Somerset House and St. Mary Le Grand church. Somerset House, the Courtauld Institute and numerous others objected. SAVE Britain's Heritage launched a petition against the planned demolition which attracted over 9,000 signatures within a few days. The campaign was taken up by the Evening Standard and The Times.

As the result of such an overwhelming response from the public and the Press, King's College withdrew their application.

4) Norton Folgate Site

This site's historic streetscape of diverse trades, industries and warehouses, mainly 4 and 5 storeys high, is located within a Conservation area. British Land applied to demolish 70% of the site and planned instead to build large office blocks rising to 11 and 13 storeys. These proposals, vastly out of scale with the Conservation area, were opposed by the Spitalfield Trust with support from SAVE Britain's Heritage. Tower Hamlet's Planning Committee rejected the application.

The meeting then moved to questions and a broad discussion of the challenge of how to balance both the conservation of London's heritage of vulnerable historic buildings and the City of London's development needs.

SAVE Britain's Heritage was formed 40 years ago (see Events, page 12) to conserve the historic environment and maintains a Register of Buildings at Risk. Its web site is www.savebritainsheritage.org.



Respect for its context – the building's form tapers to fit with view corridors

Office to residential

The following article is reproduced from *Property Week*.

This policy is driven by the Treasury who are hell-bent on having a "quick win" on housing, although, on closer inspection, that has not really materialised. It is estimated that in London the total number of units "allowed" to change use since May 2013 amounts to 19,000 housing units, but only about 300 units have been completed. That means that the policy has created a lot of vacant offices, a high proportion of which were until recently occupied by London businesses.

Does anybody care? Certainly not the Treasury who are single-minded in the pursuit of housing - economic growth is so yesterday! What about BIS? They are now the mouthpiece for the productivity agenda - but are they concerned about the offices to housing fiasco when it comes to the impact of this "policy" on local economies, including town centres, let alone the impact of small firms for whom they allegedly are the champion? And DCLG? They do as they are told, even though they will be the gatekeeper when it comes to approving or not approving the universal panacea - Article 4 Directions.

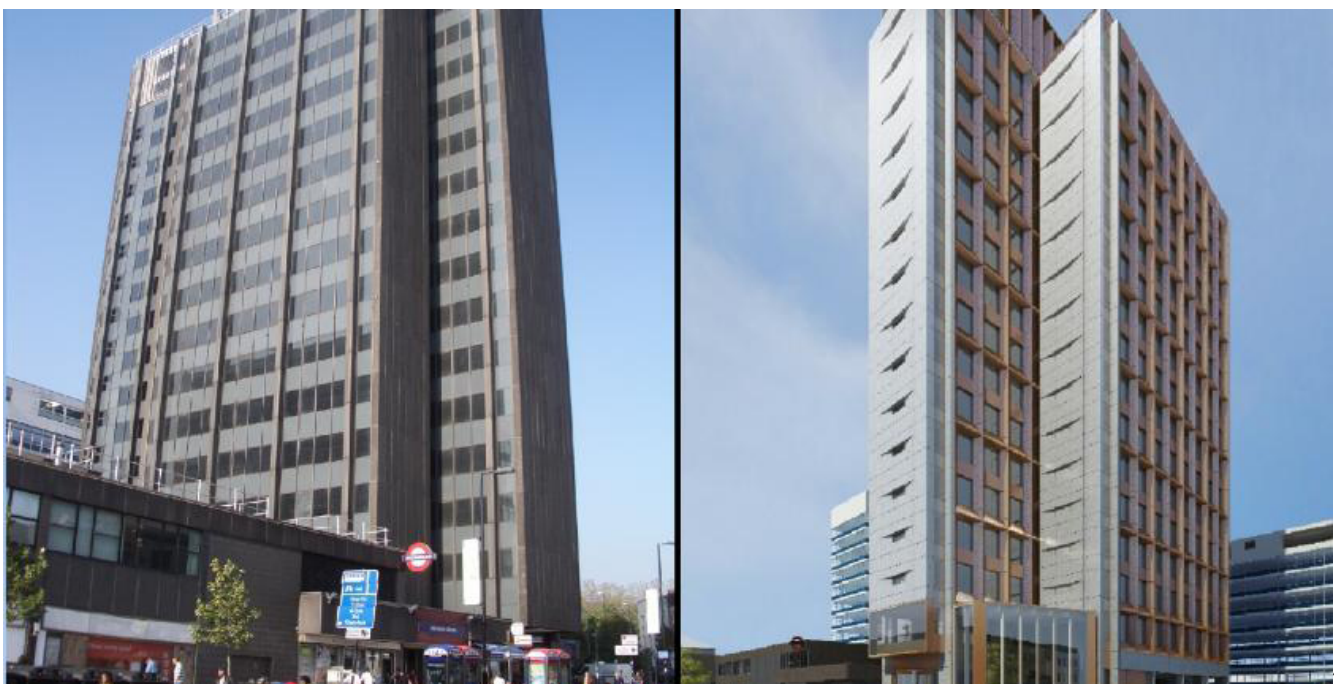
The fact that this is primarily a London problem, because of the convergence of extremely high housing values and, in a number of Boroughs, very low vacancy rates. This means that a high proportion of the proposals that come forward for change of use from offices to housing are, now were, occupied and increasingly small firms are finding themselves homeless and faced with rapidly rising

asking rents. RICS highlighted this problem about six months ago. This needs an update.

Does the Government really believe these decisions should be taken locally rather than imposed top-down? Does the Government really support local plans which are trying to meet "objectively-assessed need" for additional office space, when they cannot even manage the existing level of stock and new sites? There are no sites even in locations that do not comply with the NPPF requirement of being in town centres or close to public transport interchanges, because they are already allocated for housing? And what about focusing offices in town centres, where they are a vital component of economically-successful town centres? It would seem that Greg Clark, in his eagerness to the Treasury/BIS-led imperative to deliver housing, has lost sight of localism, a plan-led approach, successful town centres and even cities, let alone places.

Letting the market cherry-pick the better offices in better locations for conversion (or re-development?) for housing is an irreversible process which strip out employment uses from many London communities. Who is going to speak up for economic growth, business, communities, town centres and localism - clearly none of those who have these in their job description!

The challenge for us all is to get George Osborne to listen.



Transport News Round-up

Electrification of Barking to Gospel Oak

Following the announcement that two major electrification schemes in the north of England are to be "paused" *sine die*, because Network Rail has overstretched itself, there has been much speculation as to whether the much smaller electrification scheme in north London would also be delayed. The appointment of Sir Peter Hendy to Network Rail is a two edged sword because while he is familiar with the benefits far beyond London he also has to be seen not to be favouring London at the expense of the rest of the country.

The most recent intelligence is however more encouraging, with the letting of a contract for the work under which the electrified railway should be operational by June 2017. It is not known how much disruption there will be during the erection of gantries and wires. Would-be users at weekends are well used to disappointment. How the growing number of intending commuters will be transported, given the poverty of road links, remains to be seen.

The pause has been lifted from the two northern schemes.

Modifications to the New Bus for London

Vehicles numbered from LT511, including some but not all of those on route 73, have a modified rear door. It can no longer be left open, which rather defeats the object of the exercise although it reflects the reality that only a handful of routes are operated with a guard. The door opens outwards, not inwards, obviating the need for warning notices. The grab pole that impeded egress when in driver only mode has gone, and the small door pushed back by the guard when in crew operation is replaced by a fixed panel. The changes have slightly reduced the unladen weight of the bus.

In a further change, opening windows are to be installed upstairs. This is a victory for passengers and for common sense. TfL seemed to think that, while it could be liable for accidents to people stupid enough to poke their head through an open aperture or who jump off a moving bus, it could not be held responsible if through no fault of their own a passenger were made ill as a result of excessive air temperature. The saddest thing is that TfL may have been correct in its interpretation of the law.

Finally, new *Enviro* buses will look like NBfL

HS2 unveils new plans for Euston

Having started with a mega scheme for Euston station, and scaled it down as potential costs soared, HS2 has now gone back and beyond with its latest plans for its preferred terminal. They involve demolition of much needed housing, and even more disruption during the prolonged construction period.

Opposition continues to manifest itself. Some merely oppose the final leg of the line, from Old Oak Common to Euston. Lord Berkeley's scheme for a terminus underground, avoiding the demolition, is gaining traction. Others oppose the scheme outright. A Lord's committee has concluded it represents poor value for money. The Chancellor talks of a Northern Powerhouse but the schemes which did most for the north were then paused, while all the evidence of past infrastructure projects into London is that the London economy benefits as a result. Ashford and Grantham are attractive as commuter towns, not as destinations for new industry.

Old Street Roundabout

Transport for London has reported the outcome of the consultation, and plans to proceed with the scheme. They report that 87% of respondents were in favour, and dismiss most of the concerns expressed on behalf of pedestrians and bus users. They do not appear to have addressed the request that a cycle and pedestrian crossing be moved closer to the desire line.

Walking in London

Walking is the mode for 24% of daily trips by Londoners. TfL has been reluctant to give statistics for journeys on foot because the numbers are so large and some of the journeys are so short. However, it is now estimated there are 13.5 million daily journeys on foot in London, taking into account the walking component of composite trips but disregarding walking components of 5 minutes or less. There are projected to be an additional 10 million journeys on foot a day by 2041, the biggest increase being in Inner London. The number of journeys adults make entirely on foot has declined in recent years but not the total mileage

CrossRail 2

Late news concerning the proposed Angel station appears on page 7 of this issue. AB

Society Events

Current officers and What We Do is on page 5

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.

Tuesday 20th October 2015 7.30 p.m.: Annual Dinner at the Little Georgia restaurant. Please see the notice on page 2.

Thursday 12th November 2015 7.0 p.m.: AGM followed by Martin Lunnon from Amnesty International.

Other Events in or around Islington:

Archaeology & History Society (7.30 p.m. Islington Town Hall)

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

Wednesday 21st October 2015: "The Jewish Population of London in 1851". Speaker Petra Laidlaw.

Wednesday 18th November 2015: "Rejecting War". Speaker Bruce Kent.

The Society is celebrating its fortieth birthday on Wednesday, December 16th at Union Chapel, 7.30 p.m.

SAVE

The Heritage pressure group is also celebrating forty years of existence with a party at St. Sepulchre's, Holborn Viaduct, on Thursday October 29th. Admission to the public costs £20.

London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies

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

November 17th: Annual General Meeting

Islington Museum & Local History Centre
245, St. John Street. tel. 7-527 2837

16th October 2015 - 15th January 2016.
Exhibition: "Trade - often copied, never equalled, celebrating 25 years of after-hours clubbing in Islington".

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art,
39a Canonbury Square

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

Until 20th December 2015 "New Research on the Estorick Collection."

15th January - 3rd April 2016 "Giacomo Manzu: Sculpter and Draughtsman."

Almeida Theatre,

Almeida Street, N.1 0207 359 4404

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

Until 14th November 2105 - New version of Euripides' play by Rachel Cuski with Kate Fleetwood in the title role.

Islington University of the Third Age (U3A) Meetings at 10.30 am, The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road: details and membership www.IslingtonU3A.org

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