

# ISLINGTON *news*

*The Journal of the Islington Society*

## Mayor's plan to tackle crime

The rise in violent crime, after several years in which knife crime seemed to be reducing, has drawn a response from the London Mayor. He is establishing a Violence Reduction Unit, which he hopes will mirror the success of a similar initiative in Glasgow.

Unsurprisingly, it has attracted criticism from all sides, Tories and Greens on the Assembly and the former chancellor in exile at the Evening Standard. And probably, the Mayor might agree that indeed it is too little, because an affective strategy needs more Police at the sharp end, and more youth provision, and both of these are in decline in the face of continuing austerity.

Charges have been dropped against a suspect in a high profile fatal stabbing in Upper Street last year, due to insufficient evidence. There is not much evidence that prosecutions have any effect in deterring others. The impact on the families of the victims is well documented but the equally damaging impact on the families of the perpetrators remains taboo.

Elections for the Mayor and London Assembly are the next scheduled to take place - no elections are currently planned for 2019. The Tories have selected Shaun Bailey as their candidate and the Labour Party has re-selected Sadiq Khan.

## More ticket office closures?

Arriva, operators of the concession for the London Overground, are proposing to close ticket offices at 51 stations including Caledonian Road & Barnsbury, Canonbury and Dalston Junction. Although TfL would like to operate the Overground as though it were part of the Underground, it is part of the National Network and trains should follow a

published timetable (rather than running early) and stations should offer tickets to anywhere on the network. Even if you order tickets on line and collect them from a machine on a station, you are advised of the ticket office opening times because there is a possibility that the machine will fail in the course of issuing the tickets.

Although new machines regularly replace older ones, they still fail to offer the full range of tickets. When a new coin is introduced it seems to take months before the machines are adapted to accept them. (At one point there were reports of the old pound coin retailing for £1.15). Ticket offices are supplied with a loop which enables people hard of hearing to communicate with staff. This facility is not available elsewhere on the station where ticket office staff will allegedly be redeployed and where ambient noise is greatest.

A short consultation period was due to end on October 11th.

## Valete

We are sorry to have to report the deaths of three former Islington councillors since the last News was published. Michael Boye-Anawomah represented Holloway and Mildmay from 1991 to 2002 and chaired the Environment Committee. A celebration of his life takes place later this month. Gary Doolan represented St. Peter's from 2006 to this year and George Durack Junction Ward 1990-94. Both had been trade union officials and there was standing room only at their funerals last month. George went on to chair the Islington Pensioners Forum for twelve years.

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## Islington Society News

### Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting of the society. It takes place at Islington Town Hall on Tuesday November 13th at 7 p.m. It will be followed by our guest speaker, the longer serving of our two M.P.s, and Leader of the Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn.

### Bill Manley Memorial Pub Crawl

Twenty-six years after Bill Manley led the first Islington Society pub crawl, we were able to locate six pubs new to the itinerary in the King's Cross area when the 2018 crawl took place on June 15th. The notorious Flying Scotsman has been restored to its former glory under the original name, the Scottish Stores. Millers is also an improvement on the Queen's Arms, and The Driver is an upmarket development of the General Picton, albeit with prices to match. The tour ended with a more traditional pub, still rejoicing in its longstanding name, the Thornhill Arms.

### Annual Dinner

By the time you read this, the Annual Dinner should have taken place, also at a part of Islington not previously visited- the Trangallan Restaurant on Newington Green. We will report next time.

### Society publications

[available from the Society at Resource for London, 356 Holloway Rd., London, N.7 or 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

### Next Newsletter

Copy date for our next newsletter is February 3rd, 2019. The views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the chair, the editor, or the Society's adopted policy.

### 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 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
  - we publish a regular newsletter
- Our web site is [www.islingtonsociety.org.uk](http://www.islingtonsociety.org.uk)

### CURRENT OFFICERS

President : Lord Smith of Finsbury

Vice President: Mary Cosh

Chairman: David Gibson, 020 7-226 2207; e-mail@dgibarch.co.uk

Secretary: David Trillo 45, Ellington Street, London, N.7 020 7-607 9325; e-mail david@trillo.net

Treasurer: Robert Coyle, Wells House, Upper Street, London, N.1 2UQ tel.7-354 3663; e-mail robert.coyle@colmancoyle.com

Membership manager: Peter Kilborn 18, Bewdley Street, London, N.1 tel: 020 7-609 8822; e-mail pkilborn@aol.com

Newsletter: Andrew Bosi, The Croft, Wall Street, London, N.1 000 020 7-354 8514; e-mail: AndrewBosi@aol.com

Events Secretary: Andrew Clayton andrew.clayton@blueyonder.co.uk

Society mail: Resource Centre, 356, Holloway Road, London, N.7

## Protecting Islington's Heritage: Locally Listed Buildings

Members may know that the Society has been closely involved in a review of Islington's Locally Listed Buildings. These are buildings which have no statutory protection - they are not listed buildings in the usual sense - but which are regarded as valuable to the community for their architectural or historic merit. In the course of this work, we have become increasingly concerned about the state and status of the List, and whether enough, or any, attention is being paid to it when planning permissions are being considered.

We have written to the Council in the following terms:

"The Society regards Local Listing as an important designation, indicating, as it does, recognition of the value of a number of significant buildings which the community of Islington at large identifies as contributing to the environment, the history and the record of the borough. We are aware from Appeal decisions that the Planning Inspectorate takes this view, too, despite local listing providing no statutory protection.

We are conscious of the continuing process of the revision of the Local List and look forward to its completion.

It has emerged that a number of other significant buildings have been identified by the surveyors and others that are eminently suitable for Local Listing. We regret that there is no provision in the review of the local list for adding buildings to it or even nominating new entries although there is a contrary process for removing entries from the List. Could you let us know why this is and what process should be put in place for expanding the List.

We are aware from stories from the emerging revised Local Listing that several (many, perhaps) of the buildings have been substantially altered or even lost in defiance of the Local

listing. There is a special problem, it seems, with disappearing Locally Listed Shopfronts.

There has been loss of some Locally Listed Buildings in Council ownership and of some significant buildings for which planning permission has been granted for demolition under case officer recommendation.

Whilst we recognise that there is no specific statutory protection for Locally Listed Buildings, we consider that local protection should be strengthened, particularly where the Building is also in a Conservation Area. We have in mind:

- an Article 4 Direction removing any permitted development rights from Locally Listed Buildings in the Borough and/or
- a clear presumption in Council planning policy that Locally Listed buildings will not be demolished or altered without the same scrutiny to which Statutorily Listed Buildings are subjected.

For this purpose, we would ask you to impose a Local Validation Requirement (LVR) that Locally Listed Buildings must be identified, and we recommend that section 13 of the Heritage Statement of the LVR's is extended to include the same requirement for Locally Listed Building Applications as for Listed Building Consent Applications. Ideally, you should ask for a separate 'Locally Listed Building Application' akin to a Listed Building Consent Application with a suffix "LLB" to flag-up applications for proposals to alter a locally Listed Building, although we recognise that there is no statutory requirement or power for you to do so.

More information about the Local List and the current review can be found at [www.islingtonlocallist.org](http://www.islingtonlocallist.org). PK

## Referenda

*In the Spring issue, the editor invited responses to his personal view that referenda have no place in our democracy. These are the views of Kate Calvert, chair of the Archway Better Forum*

"Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others," said Churchill, and a referendum is just one kind of democratic vote.

What the referendum on leaving the EU did offer was an opportunity for all votes to count, which may be one reason for the surprisingly high turnout. But it was a binary choice attempting to address multiple issues, which does not produce outcomes reflecting actual views.

The referendum on changing from the Westminster First Past the Post system was another binary choice, and the alternative offered was not for proportional representation. It seems likely the choice was a deliberate one by the Conservatives, enabled by the Lib-Dems who did not nail down the details of the issue hard enough in advance.

What was offered was the Alternative Vote (AV). If that had been used in 2015 for example it would have given the Conservatives an even larger majority than they got with First Past the Post (analysis by the Electoral Reform Society).

The campaign group Make Votes Matter [www.makevotesmatter.org.uk/mythbusting/](http://www.makevotesmatter.org.uk/mythbusting/) has plenty to say on the subject but, like Andrew Bosi, is not pushing for any more referenda. Instead it is seeking support for proportional representation from Westminster candidates, who would then be empowered to enact legislation without further reference to the electorate.

The Conservatives, currently favoured by FPTP, are of course totally opposed to any change to the voting system. But 70% of Labour party members are in favour, as are at least 70 Labour MPs. Support for PR is already adopted policy for the Lib-Dems, Greens and other smaller opposition parties, leaving Labour the only opposition party which does not endorse this, though John McDonnell [Shadow

Chancellor] is reported among its supporters.

Every UK opinion poll on the subject since May 2015 has found majority support for PR. The latest polling, in from April 2017, found 67% believe seats should match votes and just 12% opposed. After the 2015 election half a million people signed petitions calling for PR and 100,000 signed a Parliamentary petition in April last year, triggering a debate in Parliament.

The experts in referenda are the Swiss, who can demand a binding referendum at federal, cantonal, and municipal level. In many municipalities expenditures exceeding a certain amount of money are subject to an obligatory referendum and they may also consult on issues as simple as the appropriate fines to levy on those who do not poop scoop as required.

At a federal level citizen's initiatives backed by at least 100,000 signatures within 18 months are also subject to a referendum. Often the administration comes up with an alternative, leading to a multiple-choice referendum, the official option generally the one to be approved. Except for major issues, participation is reported around 40-50% which is a lot higher than the UK's 15% turnout for the Police Commissioners, and sometimes better than the UK's local elections (Islington turnout in the 2014 Council elections ranged from Highbury East 44% to Bunhill 34%; this year Highbury East was up to 48.9% with a small decrease in the Borough wide figure).

The issue therefore may be less about the form of voting, and more about whether the results reflect the views of the public. **KC**

## A terrace with a view



I am new to Islington (December 2017) though by curious coincidence where I have ended up aged 45 came with a couple of connections or daily reminders; one personal; the other an interest. Over the dreary flat rooftops above is a pitched roof brick L-shaped block on the left, Finnemore House (1950), where my late friend former Councillor Piers Herbert (1936-2006) ended his days in sadly rather reduced circumstances having once lived in a desirable Arlington Square townhouse of 1849-1851. Piers was Councillor for St. Mary's Ward from 1986-1990 and Acting Chair of the Development and Planning Committee in 1989-1990. A barrister, he had lived at No. 42 Arlington Square from 1978-1993. He never actually encouraged me to visit him at Finnemore House, where he rented a mere landlady's room. Finnemore House is one of five similar blocks on the Cumming Estate (1950 &

1961). On the same road, Britannia Row (as early as 1773), on the right above is a Day Flats block, 31-33 Britannia Row (1963), that one can just see between the trees above the three storey terrace, but to the left of this, hidden by trees, is where Britannia Row Recording Studios (1975-1995) was. So when the trees are bare of leaves, I can see the back of the former bookbinding works building that housed the famous studio.

This studio will mean different things to different people but for me it is synonymous with just one musical outfit: where Joy Division recorded their second and last album, *Closer*, in March 1980 and then when this Manchester band became New Order they recorded their second album as that band, *Power, Corruption & Lies*, in October-November 1982 at Britannia Row.

More famously, during these sessions they also recorded Blue Monday, the biggest selling 12" single of all time. How many locals know that!? I very much wanted to photograph the shell of the studio before it all goes for eventual conversion to flats but alas 'the site has [a] serious asbestos' problem.

Looking at the same view every single day, naturally one becomes curious about one's immediate surroundings; so when was that dreary flat rooftop built? In 1970-74 came Popham Street Estate, but previously on the site of the low rise but very high-density Modernist housing by Andrews, Sherlock & Partners were Victorian slums, idyllically named 'Cottages' but damned by Nikolaus Pevsner writing in 1952 thus: 'Even more gruesome [than adjacent Peabody Square, 1865] perhaps Edinburgh, Cornwall, and Queen's Cottages in Popham Street, in spite of their name a block of fortress-like tenements, with tourelles as their only decoration, and with interior courtyards with open iron staircases and open galleries (1889 by Worley).' The tourelles here were rounded red brick decorative elements with fluting above a tapering base.

It seems extraordinary that the former 'Cottages' immediately facing where I live should be the beneficiary of two books, both memoirs of men that grew up here: J.J. Rawlings' *This Old Shirt of Mine A 1950s Urban Idyll* (2006) and Harry Walters' *Only Bricks and Mortar* (no date, but apparently 1980). Neither books indicate whether any Cottages residents were then rehoused in Sherlock's terraces, though both indicate residents were relocated elsewhere. John Rawlings kindly informs me he is not aware of a continuity of residents on the same site because people were rehoused anyway before demolition.

And hoping to glean local information on the area in 1980-82 I read Michael Butterworth's *The Blue Monday Diaries In the Studio with New Order* (2016), an unexpectedly good read for 'pop' journalism. Evocatively and accurately, Butterworth describes a windswept Britannia Row in the early winter of 1982: 'Britannia Row is the only 'Britannia Row'. The road so named is in Islington, in the north of London, near the Emirates Stadium, off the Essex Road, close to the junction with Canonbury. It is a long, narrow, entry-like street with an unexpected configuration of council flats on one side and industrial units on the other. As I walk down it away from the roar of the main road, struggling with my suitcase, I suddenly feel vulnerable. The Row is like a kind of borderland

where an uneasy truce has been struck. A recent municipal attempt at gentrification has not been able to fully blend the zones, and in the grey of an overcast sky, an air of suspicion and hostility is palpable. Britannia Row Studios, a hi-tech low-rent palace beyond unassuming double-doors, open for business for about seven years, lies in a nondescript three-storey brick-built unit on the left.' (22 October 1982). The studio was in what was St. James Church Hall, itself a section of a greater works building dating from 1915.

Remarkably there are at least five publications on this immediate area: the three memoirs and then for my curiosity in the Popham Street Estate and nearby buildings, Harley Sherlock's *An Architect in Islington* (2006) and Andrew Bosi's *The Story of Day Flats in and around Islington* (2001). Perhaps a future piece here, part II, could be about the opposite direction to where I live; gems like the original Charles Lamb Primary School (1875 etc., demolished 1972); Regency Tibberton Square (1823-28) and Sherlock's more sculptural Popham Street (Road) Stage II (c. 1973-76) etc. Seemingly randomly, it seems I had made an engaging move from Westminster to Islington in 2017. Just hope those skyscrapers messing up the skyline do not continue to proliferate... OB



Britannia Row Recording Studios (1975-1995), Britannia Row, in a former bookbinding works and church hall building (Nos. 35-53) dating from 1915.

## Review of Ward Boundaries triggered

### *Arsenal F.C. to blame yet again*

A review of the ward boundaries within Islington has been triggered and there will be two rounds of consultation next year, the second following recommendations drawn up as a result of considering the first. The review has been triggered because one ward, Highbury West, now has more than 130% of the average per Islington Ward. Highbury West is 31% above average.

This has come about because the last review preceded the conversion of the former Football ground in Highbury to residential use. There have been increases of more than 10% in two other wards and a decline of nearly 20% in Clerkenwell. The latter may reflect a growth in the buy to leave market.

In 1974, when the population was estimated to be 194,280, Islington had sixty-five councillors. By 1993 the population was down to 172,800, of whom 113,052 were eligible to vote. The number of councillors had been reduced to 52, and was further reduced to forty-eight with effect from 2002. The current review is based on an electorate of 151,613

The 2002 changes were supposed to create ward boundaries that reflected local communities, but the obsession with equalising numbers and the decision to have all wards with three councillors undermined this. Canonbury emerged without a primary school - there had been two in Canonbury East and the appropriately named Canonbury school now joined Canonbury station in being located outside the ward of that name.

It is unclear whether the present review precludes a return to a mix of two member and three member seats. It is unlikely that single member seats would be permitted. These have been eradicated from elsewhere in London. If a ward member sits on a quasi-judicial committee it may be desirable for a colleague to make representations on behalf of the local electorate.

What makes this review somewhat untimely is the ongoing threat of changes to parliamentary constituency boundaries. Current proposals would see Mildmay moved from Islington North to Islington South. If a piece of Highbury West were moved into Mildmay to equalise the numbers, there could be two Mildmay wards: Old Mildmay, for the election of MPs and New Mildmay for the council and the Greater London Authority.

## Islington Quiz No.2

What distinction is shared by the Clarendon Hotel and the Jolly Farmers Public House?

Answer : both have taken the names of former pubs which have closed: the Lady Mildmay in Wolsey Road and the De Bevoir Arms in Stamford Street

## Islington Quiz No. 3

What significant policy change was made to the setting of Borough boundaries in 1899?.

### *Books from our President and Vice-President*

*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

## Why office-to-residential permitted development has slowed

*New government figures showing that office-to-residential permitted development applications have fallen by more than a fifth in the past year signify a drying up of attractive redevelopment opportunities, observers say.*

When the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government released its latest planning statistics last week, one figure in particular stood out. In the second quarter of this year, just 511 office-to-residential prior approval applications were submitted, representing a 22 per cent fall on the same period in 2017. Moreover, it was the lowest quarterly figure since the government started collating the metric in April 2014. So, what explains the fall in applications?

Private sector consultants and planning officers both say that, after five years of permitted development (PD) rights allowing such changes of use, there aren't many offices suitable for conversion in the right locations. "The obvious explanation is that it's a limited seam to mine and when they've gone they've gone," said Hugh Ellis, interim chief executive at the Town and Country Planning Association. Or, as Mike Kiely, chair of the Planning Officers Society, put it: "The easy, attractive ones have been done and the supply of sites and buildings is drying up. What's left are in areas that don't interest developers."

On the private sector side of the equation, Jason Lowes, partner in the town planning team at consultancy Rapleys, agreed. "PD right applications have broadly been on a downward trend since the system was introduced and this is likely to be due to a simple reduction in overall stock availability," he said. "As the floodgates opened, a large number of initial applications was always likely, as was the subsequent drop off as the most viable sites began to be converted."

Grant Leggett, director and head of the London business at Boyer Planning, concurred that the primary reason for the decline in numbers is due to diminishing supply of suitable office buildings. But he also pointed to a couple of other factors. Firstly, he said, there has been an increase in the number of councils, particularly on his patch, that are fighting back

against the PD rights by seeking to put in place article 4 directions. "At the start, there were only a handful that did that," he said. "Islington had a go, but since then you're finding them all over the place. We're finding them in Hounslow, there's one in Camden and now Brent is starting to have a go. Everyone is piling in to try to prevent the law from being used at all."

Secondly, in some areas the commercial office market is performing strongly relative to the residential market, thereby making conversions less attractive to developers. "The office market has had a bit of a resurgence recently and ironically that's possibly because of permitted development," said Leggett. "If a load of offices in an area have been converted to housing, it created a supply and demand issue. In certain locations, the value you can get from an office will outstrip the value you can get for residential. It's just pure economics."

Owain Nedin, associate director at consultancy Lichfields, said there are still opportunities for developers. "There will still be a flow of sites, particularly where building owners have been aligning leases to manage vacant possession," he said. "But there are likely to remain fewer sites going forward."

Leggett argued that the situation is pretty much what the government aimed for when it introduced the PD right in the first place, although there have been unintended consequences. "The government's plan was to get rid of all the poor-quality offices and to convert them to residential in order to make better use of the land," he said. "But in some locations, quite a few good offices in important office locations got converted."

It's a view that resonates with Paul Seddon, chief planner at Nottingham City Council and the current president of the Planning Officers Society. Initially, said Seddon, PD rights actually proved useful in repurposing his city's tired office stock. "What's happened in Nottingham is

that we had an oversupply of poor quality, often vacant office floor space," he said. "It was depressing that the market and the office-to-residential conversion route has largely mopped up all of that."

However, the situation has now reached a point where Seddon feels the planning authority needs to wrest back control. "I'm starting to think we now need to start making an article 4 case. It's getting to the point where any more office-to-residential projects are going to be eating into the quality office stock

that we need."

A similar situation can be found in Hounslow, where the council has implemented an article 4 direction spurred on by the green light for expansion at Heathrow Airport. "Since the Heathrow expansion got announced, Hounslow is now facing a massive shortage of office space," said Leggett. "There is more demand for office space, so they've brought in an article 4 to try to prevent losing any more offices."

## Petition for the reduction of VAT on Listed Buildings surpasses 5000

The Listed Property Owners' Club has successfully reached over 6000 signatures on its petition to reduce VAT to 5% on repairs and alterations for listed buildings. With 98% of listed buildings in the UK owned privately, the campaign is continuing to work towards its goal of 10,000 signatures which will ensure a response from the Government.

In answer to a recent Parliamentary question, Treasury stated that the "EU VAT

rules do not allow the introduction of a reduced rate or exemption" while the UK is still in the EU. However, this is contrary to our understanding that a 5% rate can be applied whilst we remain in the EU. The Heritage Alliance fully supports the campaign to reduce VAT on listed buildings and has been working with our Tax Group to help achieve this.

For more information visit the LPCO website: <https://www.lpoc.co.uk/>

## Government funds to overcome barriers to new housing

The Government has announced funding which may this may offer opportunities for the conversion of difficult derelict heritage buildings into new housing.

To achieve the Government's commitment to deliver 300,000 new homes by the mid-2020s, 2 new streams of investment - the Land Assembly Fund and the Small Sites Fund - have been launched.

The £1.9 million is intended to remove barriers such as contamination and complex land ownership to make development less risky and boost house building. This may offer both risks and opportunities for heritage sites and prospective development.

Housing Secretary James Brokenshire MP has also announced a new partnership with Barclays Bank to provide £1 billion of loan finance to help support small and medium sized developers.

The Housing Delivery Fund will support the delivery of new homes, including social housing, retirement living and apartments for rent, whilst also encouraging greater innovation on how housing is delivered such as brownfield land and urban regeneration projects. With support ranging between £5 million and £10 million.

## Transport News Round-up

Short workings have always been part and parcel of the London Bus service, but many of the more distant destinations would disappear if Transport *for* London's latest ideas come to fruition.



### Crossrail delayed

It has been an open secret for some time that, despite repeated protestations that Crossrail was on time and on budget, it was struggling to make the opening date for the central tunnel planned for December 9th. On that date it was to have been rebranded the Elizabeth line. In June Network Rail announced that several timetable improvements across the country planned for December would be deferred until May 2019 and many of us anticipated that Crossrail might be joining them. What we did not anticipate was the announcement, little more than three months ahead of the planned opening, of a delay of more than a year.

As the route was safeguarded back in 1989 another year is a minor blip, but the consequences are serious for Transport *for* London's fragile budget. A leaked document indicated that they were about to propose savage cuts to central bus services on the premise that people would transfer to the Elizabeth Line when it opened. The same cuts are now being put forward for March next year, with the reference to the Elizabeth Line removed.

The delay is principally due to a continuing problem with signalling. The east-west railway will incorporate lines with three different signalling systems. Getting them to sing from the same hymn sheet is as difficult as uniting the cabinet over Brexit. The DLR running along a former stretch of the North London line, parallel with the Jubilee line, was delayed for two years because the signalling system conflicted with that on the Jubilee line and brought its trains to a halt when it was switched on. There is a lot to be said for a man with a flag.

### Barking Gospel Oak crisis

Transport *for* London was so desperate to get the Crossrail scheme running, it put all hands to the pump and may have failed to keep a grasp on the Barking Gospel Oak electrification scheme as a result. It beggars belief that, after a second six month blockade to correct the mistakes of the first, clearance had still not been given for the new rolling stock to operate on the line at the end of September. So while Jeremy Corbyn has been invited to sit at the wheel over a short stretch of the line, the drivers who will have to take the trains in service have still to be trained in their use. Not only are passengers twice inconvenienced by losing their service for months still crammed into two car diesel trains; the lease on the diesel trains has expired and at least

one set has been taken in preparation for its future with West Midlands trains. They will be travelling further than Barking to Gospel Oak and toilets are being fitted prior to their planned introduction, no doubt in a new livery, in December.

There is a serious risk that there will be no trains and yet more rail replacement buses. It is disappointing that the Mayor seems content to give his Assembly member colleagues the over-optimistic prognosis that TfL is feeding to him.

### Bus service cuts

The planned reduction of bus services in London was officially released on September 28th following a leak a month earlier. The main difference, as noted above, is the lack of reference to anticipated modal shift to the Elizabeth line.

The main impact in Islington is a further blow to anyone living near to Highbury Corner. Hard on the heels of losing the bus to Mare Street, Mile End and Canary Wharf are plans to curtail the 4 short of Waterloo and the 19 at Holborn instead of Battersea. Tourists are particularly hit because it is proposed to truncate the 11 as well as the 19, removing the scope for a good sight seeing tour without having to pay the inflated prices that go with an unwanted commentary. Hackney and Lewisham are probably the worst affected Boroughs, although a further cut affecting Islington is the proposal to terminate the 476 at King's Cross rather than providing a route into Euston that obviates the need to cross the Euston Road. The 134 would terminate short of Tottenham Court Road.

The Mayor continues to overplay the benefit of the hopper fare as an excuse to curtail routes. He seems to forget that the majority of passengers do not benefit from the hopper fare. Either they have freedom passes or their work commitments are such that they reach the weekly cap with or without the benefits of the hopper fare. Whether the bus runs on time or not is secondary to the need for the passenger journey time to be more reliable, and waiting twice in the course of a journey will almost certainly add to the time needed and reduce the level of reliability.

The consultation closes on November 8th and members are urged to make their views known.

### Angel back to normal

Work at Kennington station has ended so there is some good news of the Northern line Bank branch on which to conclude.

AB

## 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.*

Annual General Meeting: Islington Town Hall, Tuesday November 13th at 7.0 p.m. The speaker following the A.G.M. will be the M.P. for Islington North, Jeremy Corbyn.

The Committee meets normally on the third Thursday of each month.

### **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.

Meetings are normally held on the third Wednesday of each month, with the exception of August (not at all) and December (subject to proximity to Christmas).

#### **Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings**

SPAB's War, an evening of images and readings exploring the impact of WW1, to be held at St. Botolph's-without-Bishopsgate on Thursday, November 8th. Price £11 to non-members. Further details from [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

#### **Sadler's Wells Theatre, The Peacock and Lilian Baylis Studio**

Rosebery Avenue, E.C.1. Website for details: "[www.sadlerswells.com/whats-on/list](http://www.sadlerswells.com/whats-on/list)."

Events include the Birmingham Royal Ballet (October 30th- November 3rd) Rambert (November 6th-10th) and Swan Lake (December 4th-January 27th).

#### **King's Head Theatre**

Opera: Bizet's "Carmen", February 7th-March 9th; Gilbert & Sullivan's "HMS Pinafore" April 10th-May 11th.

Comedy: "Brexit" October 30th-November 17th.

#### **London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies** 020 7993 5754

All meetings at The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, usually at 6 p.m. for 6.30.

Tuesday October 30th: AGM & speaker t.b.a.

Wednesday November 28th, Tuesday January 15th and an AFTERNOON meeting on Tuesday

February 12th, topics t.b.a.

#### **Islington Museum & Local History Centre**

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

Exhibition: Islington during WW1, October 19th-January 15th, 2019

#### **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. Some evening events.

January 16th- April 7th: Fausto Melotti.

#### **Almeida Theatre,**

Almeida Street, N.1 0207 359 4404

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

October 15th- December 1st: The Wild Duck.

December 10th- February 2nd: The Tragedy of King Richard the Second

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

Monthly Meetings at 10.30 am, The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road: details and membership [www.IslingtonU3A.org](http://www.IslingtonU3A.org).

Islington U3A has about 500 members with many special interest groups, mostly meeting in members' homes.

#### **Rosemary Branch**

2, Shepperton Road, N.1 0207 704 6665

#### **Upstairs at the Gatehouse**

North Road/ Hampstead Lane, N.6 0208 340 3488 7.30 p.m. except Sundays 4 p.m. with additional matinées in Christmas week

December 12th-January 27th Ovation presents "Nice Work if you can get it"

#### **Old Red Lion Theatre**

418, St. John Street, E.C.1 0207 837 7816

[www.oldredliontheatre.co.uk](http://www.oldredliontheatre.co.uk)

October 7th- November 3rd "London Horror Festival"

November 6th-December 1st "Indebted to chance" or "The Recruiting Officer"

#### **Park Theatre**

Clifton Terrace, Finsbury Park. 0207 870 6876

Two auditoria Mon.-Sat evenings 7.30; matinées 3 p.m. Thurs. & Sat.

October 25th- November 24th "Honour" by Joanna Murray-Smith, starring Henry Goodman & Imogen Stubbs