

# ISLINGTON *news*

*The Journal of the Islington Society*

## Mary Cosh 1919-2019



The passing of Mary Cosh just before Christmas brought to an end our last link with the Society's early days. Although I have known Mary for over twenty years, she has never been other than the elder statesperson of the Islington Society. In the 1960s, she was its Secretary; in the 1970s, she played a significant part in saving the Aggie from demolition; and in the Noughties she led the protest outside the P & O buildings in York Way, King's Cross when its owners were proposing a wholly inappropriate development. What particularly irked Mary was that they had obtained the support of English Heritage, which is supposed to exist to protect our heritage, and that they had persuaded English Heritage to launch its annual report from the buildings. Although the assembled dignitaries had no compunction about crossing a picket line, Chris Smith insisted that Mary and her compatriots be allowed to continue their lobby over the substantial breakfast that was on offer to invited guests. Mary never lost her appetite, and not just for a fight.

She had persuaded then Councillor Robin Mabey to take a look at the Royal Agricultural Hall before it was condemned by the planning committee of which he was chair. Once he did so he was able to see its potential. As a later council leader said when it celebrated its Silver anniversary, it showed that there are major sites where there is a better option for Borough residents than simply affordable housing.

In the sixties along with Cllr. Harry Brack she rescued Gibson Square from the clutches of London Underground. The folly and surrounding gardens are a testament to its escape from the greater folly of

an unsightly ventilation shaft over the newly built Victoria line.

Mary's greatest fame lay in her extensive publications, mainly though not exclusively on matters Islington, where she spent the second half of her life. Her *History of Islington* (2005) is the piece de resistance. Although there had been a couple of short histories written in the 1970s, the last comprehensive History of Islington had been written in 1811. The only concession to subsequent events in a 1980 reprint was an incomplete list of street name changes. Her other Islington books are more localised - walks around Clerkenwell and other parts of the Borough, the Squares of Islington (almost none of them are square) and, with Martin King who predeceased her, the story of 53, Cross Street.

Mary maintained an active life almost to the end. She was as miffed as the Duke of Edinburgh to lose her driving licence - in her case at the age of 96 - and she would attend visits organised by the Society with as little support as possible, delaying the advent of a zimmer or a wheelchair for as long as possible. She spoke lucidly about her life at the 100th birthday party organised for her last March.

Mary was born in the Bristol area and in a tragic coincidence, lost her mother at an early age, the victim of a road traffic accident. The coincidence is that the same fate befell Harley Sherlock's mother. She did not particularly enjoy school, or her early career in the civil service, but World War II compelled the country to invite women to undertake more interesting roles hitherto reserved for men. In Mary's case this was as a telegraphist in Egypt with the Women's Royal Naval Service. After the war she studied English Literature at Oxford and worked freelance for The Times, the Times Literary Supplement and the Catholic Herald. She was a familiar figure at the Museum of the Order of St. John and Local History Centre, both in Clerkenwell.

Mary had been researching further updates to her 2005 History, but the pace of change and the competition from alternative media to books did not offer an obvious date to which a second edition might be targeted.

You do not get to three figures without someone at the non-strikers end. In the last three years she received wonderful support from her live-in carer, Jonathan Garcia.

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## **Islington Society News**

### **Annual General Meeting**

The A.G.M. was attended by over 40 members and the formal business was speedily concluded with no changes in personnel.

The highlight of the evening was a talk by Christian Wolmar on Crossrail. To most members outside the "transport mafia", the sheer scale of the project was something of an eye-opener. Christian confirmed the idea first mooted in these columns, that there will be a second edition of his book, *The Story of Crossrail*, when the line finally opens, and that it will detail why the optimism that abided when the first edition went to press proved misplaced.

Advance Notice can be given of the next Annual General Meeting, which is to be held in the Town Hall on November 10th.

### **Annual Dinner**

The date for this event has also been fixed, for Tuesday October 20th. Further details next time.

The 2019 Dinner took place as the last edition of *Islington News* was at the press. The venue, the Rosemary Branch public house, proved popular because the room was of the optimal size for our numbers, although regrettably there was no level access. It is difficult to meet this criterion, particularly having regard to the fact that price may also be a barrier to access for members.

### **Regents Wharf**

Malcolm Tucker and Emma Smith spoke to members at a Town Hall meeting on January 21st following the successful campaign to resist a proposal for over-development reported on the front page of the last issue of *Islington News*.

Worryingly, it emerged that the residents had had to learn the ways of planning committees and appeals, and the appropriate jargon, from scratch. With councils having lost so much of their central government funding in the past ten years, resources for non-statutory functions are scarce and that includes free advice to third parties.

Even more worrying, it had taken until the second day of the appeal to ascertain the true height of the proposed construction. Plans which are ambiguous to that extent should never be

accepted as worthy of consideration, and the clock should not start until satisfactory drawings have been submitted. A post meeting update is reported on page 3.

### **The Iron in Islington**

This event will be taking place shortly after you receive this edition of the News. It is a joint event with Arch. & Hist. on the third Wednesday in February: David Gibson is the speaker.

### **Holy Trinity Trilogy**

To mark the historical work by volunteers and an exhibition at the Islington History Centre, three talks about Holy Trinity, Cloudesley Square are taking place at the Town Hall. On March 25th, the talk will be on the history of the Square and its church; on April 22nd the focus will be the current Cloudesley Square project; and finally on May 13th there is a look forward and a reflection on the process and lessons to be learned from it.

Work is commencing on repair of the south aisle as we go to press.

### **Other events**

The new Environment Director, Keith Townsend has been invited to speak, and a visit to City North is also planned. These events may take place before the next edition of *Islington News*.

### **Islington Society at Sixty**

The Society will be marking its sixtieth birthday later in the year, when there will be a further celebration of the life of Mary Cosh who was a member for the first 59 of those years.

### **Bill Manley Memorial Pub Crawl**

The 2020 pub crawl will for the fourth time in the last six years be held in the North of the Borough. It will commence at the Swimmer, formerly the Grafton Arms, and progress to the Owl & Hitchhiker, formerly the Half Moon amongst other names. The Landseer, formerly the Stanley Arms, follows and then we hope to enter the London Borough of Camden for a keenly awaited venue, yet to be publicly announced but consistent with the other three. We are NOT supporting the Bee at Ambridge.

### Next Newsletter

Copy date for our next newsletter is May 31st 2020. The views expressed in the journal are not necessarily those of the chair, the editor, or the Society's adopted policy.

### Communication with Members

The Society increasingly depends on e-mail to communicate events and activities to members. As a consequence, it is now prohibitively expensive and cumbersome to use the post to alert those who do not use e-mail to events which are sometimes organised at short notice. Regrettably some members are therefore missing out on activities in which they are interested. The newsletter is still mailed to all members, but its appearance three times a year doesn't solve the problem. If you are not receiving e-mails from the Society and can do so, please send a message to Peter Kilborn ([pkilborn@aol.com](mailto:pkilborn@aol.com)).

### *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 are listed on page 5.

## Developers present new proposals for Regent's Wharf

The developer of the Regents Wharf site off All Saint's Street has presented new proposals to Islington Council for its redevelopment. Their original proposals were rejected by the council and again at an appeal hearing in June 2019. The Inspector was concerned that the scheme would adversely affect the heritage value of the locally listed buildings on the site and would harm the character of the Regent's Canal West Conservation Area. He was also concerned at the loss of light for residents in neighbouring Ice Wharf.

The new scheme addressed the Inspectors conclusions. The height and mass of the development was reduced and intrusive dormer windows on the canal frontage of the local listed buildings were abandoned. The Islington Society gave evidence at the appeal expressing its concern about these issues and believed the new scheme did not go far enough in reducing the height and bulk

of the structures behind and above the locally listed buildings. It submitted a formal objection to these proposals.

In particular the society referred to the Conservation Area Guidelines which say: Canal and basin façades have a particular architectural character which can easily be diminished or spoilt by inappropriate new development. The Islington Society believed that the developers proposals breached this guideline.

In response to these objections, and those from Historic England and the Design Review Panel, the developers have submitted yet another set of plans and drawings. The deadline for comments on these latest revisions is February 17th. The Planning Committee is due to consider the application on March 2nd.

## Boundary Commission latest

The final report on Islington's boundaries has been published, setting out revised boundaries which will apply from the 2022 local elections. Any by-election in the meantime would be fought on existing boundaries. The Prime Minister has revived the idea of changes to Parliamentary boundaries, but has dropped David Cameron's proposal to reduce the number of seats and it is now proposed that that will stay the same. The Government recently won many of the seats that were regarded as over-represented.

The Society remains disappointed at the process used by the Boundary Commission in fixing the number of councillors before revising the

projected population figures on which the boundaries would be drawn. We share the council's view that the projections are flawed, but if this is correct and the present rules for triggering a review are still in place when the Holloway Prison site is developed, there will be an early opportunity for further change. However, the Society will need to overcome a difference of principle. It believes natural boundaries should be respected as far as possible, whereas the Boundary Commission priority is equalising numbers. In a place like Islington, the number of people in any acre can alter significantly in a very short space of time.

## The Mary Cosh landmarks

Three developments in Islington have been cited as having been influenced by Mary Cosh. In reverse order, the most recent is the Bravington Block at King's Cross, sometimes known as the P & O block on account of its then ownership. It in fact comprises three blocks on the Islington side of York Way, and the Lighthouse Block in Camden which was redeveloped at a later date. The original plans, strongly supported by the then council leader, were for the three Islington blocks and would have seen all evidence of their previous heritage destroyed. The revised plans won a Geoffrey Gribble award and the development is widely regarded as a success.

Prior to that came the Aggie. Its history has been well documented, most notably by Alec Forshaw in the *Building that Lived Twice*, published by the Business Design Centre to mark its Silver Jubilee.

Probably the least well documented is Gibson Square. There are histories of the Victoria Line, mainly concerned with its long gestation period. It was built during the period of Central Government control, first proposed in 1943, authorised in 1962 and completed in 1971. As well as delays and cost over-runs that seem to be associated with every major scheme, there were cost cutting measures which eliminated some of the planned second points of access. This limited its

effectiveness: too many stations were reached from the southern end which exacerbated overcrowding.

However, the use of Automated Train Operation, the longer distances between stations, and the subsequent upgrading of the signalling has enabled the Victoria line to move more people per peak hour than any other railway in Britain. A consequence of the more efficient spacing of stations was a requirement for numerous ventilation shafts along the route. London transport had acquired the whole of Gibson Square for excavation and one of these shafts. This was pre-gentrification: someone ruefully told me how they missed out on purchasing one of the houses for the princely sum of £1000 in 1969. And that was after LT had relented on its plan to leave an eyesore ventilation shaft amidst an abandoned brownfield site, conceding to Mary's arguments for the provision of a garden and an edifice which baffles visitors and even residents to this day.

The ventilation shaft underwent refurbishment six years ago, the last of thirteen to be so treated. There are still calls for a station there: King's Cross to Highbury is the longest stretch between stations of any tube line partly or wholly in zone 1. However, the lines cross over around there, so the cost would be high quite apart from the difficulty of maintaining the wonderful headway.

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### *Books from our President and late 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

## London Plan: Mayor resists attack on MOL

The Mayor has responded to the Inspectors' comments on his London Plan following their examination in public. He has accepted that the housing targets for small sites are unrealistic and that the figures for each Borough should be revised down. The target is still well in excess of anything that has been achieved since Council House building ground to a halt in 1980. Islington had a relatively small target, having so little unused space, and is not affected by the change.

The Mayor has however defended his right to protect Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and the

Green Belt. The Inspectors had argued that this was contrary to National Planning Guidelines in the NPPF. Within the Amenity Society movement there are conflicting views on the Green Belt but there is strong support for Metropolitan Open Land. This is likely to be the subject of a future London Forum open meeting.

The Secretary of State is now in receipt of both the Inspectors' report and the Mayor's response. The next response will be his. It will need to be made before the end of March, or it will be delayed until after the Mayoral elections.

## Multi-tasking in the theatre

Who now remembers when stage hands were on hand to move the furniture?

As costs escalate, theatres have continued to look for cost savings that would enable them to survive. In the case of Opera and Operetta, the cost of a large chorus has come under scrutiny. Both the Rosemary Branch and the King's Head have put on Gilbert & Sullivan productions in which the chorus parts were taken by the principal singers. As well as saving costs, this overcomes the problem of acting in a restricted space. The King's Head even

managed to combine two principal roles in Ruddigore.

In April, the King's Head will go a step further with its production of *Iolanthe*. Unlike Ruddigore, the men's chorus in *Iolanthe* is central to the plot. In the days of D'Oyle Carte, when almost all the G & S Operas would feature in the course of a tour, *Iolanthe* was seen as the highlight of the tour for the men's chorus. How will the King's Head production make out without one? You will have to go along to find out.

## CURRENT OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President : Lord Smith of Finsbury

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

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

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

## A walk along Holloway Road. From Manor Gardens to Archway Tavern

*In the Summer issue of Islington News, Andrew Clayton began a walk up Holloway Road. This third article concludes the walk with a well earned drink.*

Manor Gardens is a good place to start, because it has such historical significance to the Borough of Islington. Near the corner with Holloway Road on the north side is a war memorial arch, all that survives of the casualty department of the Royal Northern Hospital, designed in 1923 by Percy Adams. Behind the iron gates, on Portland stone slabs on either side of the arch, are inscribed the names of the 1,207 Islingtonians who died in the First World War. This touching survival was once locally listed by Islington but Heritage England have now given it a national grade II listing. It was preserved when the hospital was closed in 1992 and the rear part of the site redeveloped.



*Islington War Memorial, Manor Gardens*

Further along on the left are the buildings of the Manor Gardens Centre, founded in 1913 as the North Islington Welfare Centre and School for Mothers. Two pairs of 1860s villas form the wings of the building and are Heritage England grade II listed. The space between them was sensitively filled in in the 1920s to form the Centre as it stands today. There is an excellent book by Andrew Turton, published by the Centre, which outlines the history of the first hundred years of one of the great achievements of early 20<sup>th</sup> century philanthropy.

Opposite is the Beaux Arts building, an enormous ten storey Edwardian Baroque pile which dominates everything in the street. It was built for the Post Office as the centre of its money order business and has now been converted into flats. Cherry and Pevsner say it was built. “on a harsh and barely comprehensible scale”. In spite of this it has been locally listed

by Islington. It’s the sort of building which bullies its way to recognition.

Return to Holloway Road and turn right towards the junction with Landseer Road. On the corner is the locally listed frontage of the Crown public house, one of the best pub exteriors in north Islington, an 1890s-1910s Arts and Crafts design. It stands out because of the high quality of its glazing, which is largely intact. The pattern is consistent on both frontages, with two or three mullions and four transoms per window. The glass is mottled with coloured panes. The frontages are topped off with a fascia which curves round the street corner. This is a very fine pub frontage of an unusual and high-quality design.

Further up the road on the right is Kingsdown Road, built in the 1860s, which is in marked contrast to the humbler streets around it. No. 1 Kingsdown Road is double fronted, with elaborate Italianate stone and stucco external decoration and a fine front entrance. Most of the houses on the north side of the road are locally listed, all surprisingly grand and with ambitious detailing.



number 1, Kingsdown Road

Further up the hill one of the most familiar landmarks at the top end of Holloway Road. St. John's Church, Heritage England Grade II listed, was built by Sir Charles Barry in 1826-28 with Church Commissioners money. It was one of a group of Islington churches designed at the same time by Barry, among them Holy Trinity Cloudesley Square which is currently being restored. All were intended to provide places of worship for new communities as London stretched northwards. Barry designed the interiors as plain Georgian style preaching halls, with galleries. But religious fashion quickly changed and all the surviving interiors are much altered. Barry also designed the former school next door. There are some fine slightly later villas next door in Pemberton Gardens.

On the other side of Holloway Road is a pair of locally listed shopfronts, Nos. 734 & 736, now a single kitchen showroom. They are of a standard late Victorian or Edwardian type, with strong pilasters and capitals with fascia and cornice above. It was restored in 1996 but retains the basic structure of its façade, including the glazing bars on the front door and the tiling in the door recess. A shop with this frontage is known to have been in existence in 1906 and probably well before that. The shop was known as Silvers Corner after Stanley Silver who ran a business there for about 35 years, ending in 1996. He was a well-known local figure, making children's toys and board games from a workshop in No. 734. He was known as Mr. Bubbles, and as Kojak, because of his bald head.

On the same side of the road, further towards Archway, is St. Gabriel's Roman Catholic Church. This is uncompromisingly Modernist in style, built in 1967 by Gerrard Goalen. There are not many examples of Islington Modernism on the Local List, so this is an important inclusion. It is rectangular with curved corners, circular projections and a very solid appearance. It is mainly of dark brick with a concrete and translucent glass porch. Above is a belfry

with three bells, topped by a metal cross. It is worth looking inside if it is open, for its elegantly and un-fussily handled interior (Cherry and Pevsner).

To the north, on the same side of the road, is No. 4-6 Elthorne Road, now Bellside House. This was originally built in the early 1900s as Batavia Mills, an important reminder of Islington's industrial past. It was owned by Betts & Co., which manufactured thin foils of lead and tin for packaging tea and chocolates, and making metallic capsules. It was an important employer in the area, second only to the hospital with 900 employees at its peak. Its name is reflected in the high-quality ironwork, which outlines an elaborate letter B.



4-6 Elthorne Road, the former Batavia Mills.

Back on the Holloway Road the end of the walk comes into view. The Archway Tavern was built in 1886 by JG Ensor, architect for Watney's brewery. Its Renaissance revival eclectic style was much favoured by late Victorian brewers and it has a commanding position on Navigation Square looking down Holloway Road. Compared to the earliest known photograph of the building, from 1904, its frontage has survived relatively unscathed and it looks much better with a new open paved area to the front. You might be lucky enough to get a restorative drink there; it has re-opened as a pub, though its licensing hours are still restricted.

*References: The Buildings of England, London 4 North, Cherry and Pevsner*

*Manor Gardens Centre 1913-2013 Andrew Turton*

*Historic England listing details:*

"<http://www.historicengland.org.uk>"

*Volunteer surveys, Islington Local List project, by the author and by others, for which many thanks.*

## Patsy Bradbury (1940-2019)

Patsy Bradbury had a long and unique position in the annals of Islington Council. She became Islington's youngest Mayor (a record she still holds) in 1972 and, remaining in the politics of the borough, went on to become the Mayoress of Islington in 2015 as the Consort of Richard Greening.

Patricia Anne Bradbury was born on 26th November 1940 in Edgware. She was the second of six children. The family soon moved to Stanmore where her parents ran a hardware store and later moved to Harrow on the Hill in 1964. Patsy went to Manchester University to study medicine, but did not like the clinical side of medicine and couldn't get along with human cadaver dissection.

The sixties were Patsy's formative years. She enjoyed travelling around Europe in a sports car with her then boyfriend - picture her whizzing around like Audrey Hepburn in *Roman Holiday* - and began breeding Siamese cats. The change to her life came in 1971 when Labour won all the seats on Islington Borough Council, coming from ten in 1968 to 60 seats in a landslide. This was a time when there were also 10 aldermen, 5 of whom Conservatives. The impact of the 1971 Islington Council election was considerable and Patsy was a primary player from the beginning. When Patsy was Mayor of the Borough - very unusual as she was a thirty year old newly elected councillor - she was funny, vivacious and energetic when most of her immediate successors were aged, right wing and for the most part very boring. One of her legendary actions to discover a large bust of Lenin that had been unceremoniously dumped in the Town Hall basement. On investigation she discovered it had been presented after the war by the grateful municipality of Leningrad for the support and assistance sent by the people of Islington during and after the epic 900 day siege of the city by the Nazis and their allies. As the "cold war" set in and the old guard right wing consolidated its grip in the Labour Party, the bust was removed from pride-of-place and slung into the limbo of the Town Hall basement. Patsy wanted it reinstated in the lobby but the reactionaries still had enough clout to stop her having any cash for a ceremony - so she rang the Soviet Embassy and invited the Ambassador to come as the "guest of honour". Adding as an afterthought that "We

haven't got any money for drink, so could you bring some with you". Said diplomat arrived with unfeasibly large amounts of "Russian Champagne" which everyone drank. In those days it was not as widely known about Russian's proclivities for sinking gallons of alcohol but everyone watched in slight amazement as the honoured guests got truly wasted on their own drinks. Over the years the pendulum of Labour politics showed how left or right the council currently was. In good years Lenin was proudly placed in the building, in years of reaction he was hidden, given away or returned to the basement.

Where Patsy excelled was as a great conspirator and organiser. As Mayor she established the Christmas Day Pensioners party which continued for almost forty years. She was an early convert to the campaign to save the Aggie. And she was also an absolute fountain of fascinating gossip. One always knew that a conversation with Patsy would be at minimum interesting and at best very exciting. She steered the Fabian Society through the turbulent 1980-82 period. Patsy was a constant mainstay of the society throughout the next 24 years and chaired quite a few meetings of the Society (mainly peaceful affairs, though not always so given the nature of Islington politics).

In 2004, Patsy spoke inspiringly to a Fabian Society meeting about the launch of the Islington MS Group, having being diagnosed herself in the 1970s.

Patsy was a familiar member of the Islington Society Crowd, attending every annual dinner and many other events

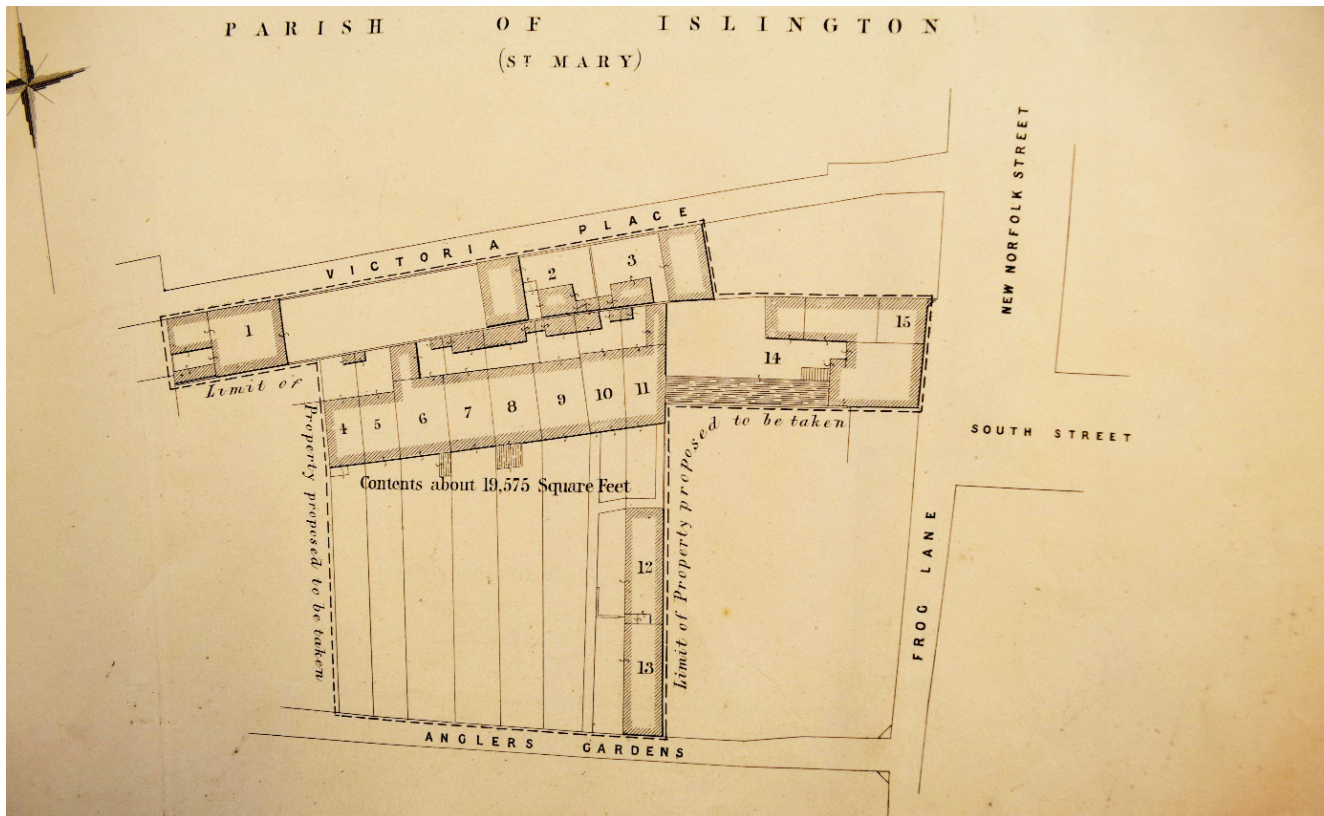
We will all miss Patsy - she was a "one-off" but underneath everything a good socialist and great campaigner. DG

[with contributions from her nieces Eleanor and Elizabeth, George Taylor, Derek Sawyer, and Keith Veness]



## The Story of a Piece of Land: Anglers' Gardens 1612-2006

In another two part series, Oliver Bradbury explores this corner of Islington where the New North Academy now resides. Part II covers the last sesquicentennium.



E.R. Robson's *School Board for London. Plans of Sites. Session 1872-3.* shows the 15 plots that would make up the one school site

An impressive 'Queen Anne' movement primary school, the 1873 design was published in E.R. Robson's *School Architecture* (1874), and opened in 1875. Once the school was built this is reflected in the census for 1881 with now only 8 houses in Anglers' Gardens. Anglers' Gardens was probably last used as a street name in 1890 ('Board school, Anglers gardens (caretakers house)') and from 1882 it had been completely transformed from the once bucolic and Georgian to something hard-edged, late Victorian and very urban by the Metropolitan Board of Works. This must have been a period of fascinating transformation as the Board was 'rebuilding Anglers Gardens' and land was offered for sale for 'erecting Artizans Dwelling houses' (St. Mary Islington Minute Book, 1882-83). At some date between 1882 and 1890 the remaining and probably oldest houses seen in Matthews' 1839-1842 views of Anglers' Gardens, and about seven houses in adjacent Halton Place too, were therefore demolished and replaced with 15 brick tenements (Pickering Street Dwellings, Nos. 22-42D, and Dibden Street Dwellings, Nos. 10B-13D). The building of the Victorian school must have been the turning point in changing the topographical grain from village-like to city tenements.

*Yearly School Reports* covering 1876 to 1930 reveal just how poor this area had become; for in 1893: 'This school is in a difficult neighbourhood, the inhabitants being so poor The

fight for bread is very severe'. The Dwellings even feature in Charles Booth's *Inquiry into Life and Labour in London* (1886-1903) and were codified as being: 'Very poor, casual. Chronic want.' The *Inquiry* Notebook entry of 1897 observed: 'has [...] 4 storied buildings [...] on the NE side they are flush with the pavement but have railings on the S.West side. These back on to Dibden St. & are 4 storied yellow brick & unrelieved. At the south end of the St. are some 2 st. cottages. No trouble to the Police.'

Less than a 100 years old, by 1891 (census) Anglers' Gardens was gone as a name and this would explain why Anglers' Gardens School was renamed Popham Road School in 1895 (then Charles Lamb Primary c. 1949, then New North etc.). In terms of the new street name, the 1883-1890 tenements were in what had become an extension of existing Pickering Street growing from west to east; that is

continuing with a new No. 22 onwards and judging by 1966 and 1968 photographs the Dwellings looked to be solid and quite well-maintained. They survived until 1970-71 to be replaced by Dibden Street Triangle in 1972-74. Ironically and not by intention, the leafy triangle would be closer to Anglers' Gardens than the all-brick and cobblestoned Pickering Street!



Charles Lamb Primary School: view from south-east, 1972

By the late 1950s, to use modern parlance, Charles Lamb had become a 'failing school', with a Ministry of Education Report by H.M. Inspectors, inspecting on 2-4 July 1962, having little good to find: 'Then there is the two-storeyed, Victorian building which they [229 children] occupy. This has few inviting features to offer children of today. In particular, there is little outdoor playing space, and the halls are small; these limitations are a serious handicap especially for children who have to be brought up in a neighbourhood of this character [deprived]. But these old premises are well kept and one or two

of the teachers have made their classrooms look attractive and appealing. Although there is a useful range of equipment and books the children need more appropriate apparatus for learning mathematics and additional reference books for the kind of topics in history, geography and nature study they are likely to engage in.'

Ten years later, the Victorian section of the school described above was demolished by 1972 and the buildings that now housed the school dating from 1913-14 and flat-roofed Modernist buildings on additional land acquired by Compulsory Purchase Order in 1961, but not built upon until 1972, were demolished in turn in 2005. The then-named New North Community School, planned from 2004 and built by 2006, comprised a new three storey primary school and a school site manager's house, together with a new part four/part five storey residential block containing 59 affordable housing units and 62 private sales units built on former playground. This author happens to live in one of the 'private sales units', thus explaining his interest in Anglers' Gardens.

Acknowledgements: thanks to Bef Yigezu and Julie Melrose of Islington Local History Centre.

### *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

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## Transport News Round-up

### Crossrail update

The central section of Crossrail will open in the Summer of 2021 according to the latest announcement from the Crossrail team. Confusingly, this came only a week after a report that it would happen by the Autumn of 2021. These seasonal dates are beloved of civil servants because there is as much dispute as to when they begin and end as there is over the starting date of the decade.

The complete opening, whereby trains will run from Reading to Shenfield and Abbey Wood, is now promised in 2022. The opening of the Central Section is the planned date for rebranding as the Elizabeth Line. The Queen has not yet been booked but one thing is certain: Prince Harry will not be deputising for her if she is unable to cut the tape herself.

### Bus services to bounce back?

Is the large majority for a government led by a man who likes building model buses for relaxation the prelude to a revival in bus services across the country?

Following the rejection of the Leeds Trolleybus scheme, after years of preparatory work, Leeds has pledged to increase bus usage by 50% and has invested in a fleet of modern buses. But so far, the decline in bus use has not been arrested there. For many years London bucked the trend but bus use has been in decline here since 2011 and TfL now expects that to continue until the Elizabeth line attains its full potential.

London Travelwatch is surveying its bus users panel to ascertain why the decline has happened. Delays to routes caused by congestion have been made worse by the loss of bus lanes to accommodate cycling. The reduction in peak fares, and abolition of the zone 2-6 travelcard have made price less of a factor in zone 1 when choosing between bus and tube, which is where bus usage has dropped most. And shortening of bus routes has hit the least well-off hardest.

### Investing in transport infrastructure

The mood music surrounding the new government is that there will be more investment in transport albeit with an emphasis on the north and Midlands. Greater devolution to the regions could though include a greater role for TfL over the Metro services within London which are operated by various franchises. Rebalancing the economy towards the North would seem to indicate a delay to Crossrail2, but a greater emphasis on renewal of existing lines

could strengthen the campaign for resignalling of the Piccadilly line. Resignalling of the Victoria line was achieved relatively painlessly (some businesses suffered disproportionately because planned closures were fitted around Football fixtures rather than their needs) and it has provided a significant increase in capacity where it was badly needed at a far lower cost than new infrastructure.

New infrastructure like the Bakerloo line extension on the other hand might be funded locally if the direct beneficiaries can be identified and taxed. TfL is exploring this option.

### Overground timetable improvements

The arrival of more class 710 units, this time for the Watford Junction line, has freed up some of the class 378 trains and they are providing an improved service on the North London line. The publicity for the new timetable, which took effect from December 15th, highlighted the greater frequency during the day but for this user the biggest plus has been the removal of an irritating gap of 22 minutes in the late evening which always seemed to coincide with arrival at one of their stations.

### Rowena to Champion the Environment

With apologies for dreadful Sun style heading, another consequence of the recent General Election is that Rowena Champion, councillor for Barnsbury Ward, has taken over responsibility for the environment portfolio. The Islington Society committee has welcomed this news.

### South Tottenham - Barking closure

The catastrophic derailment of a freight train on Friday January 24th resulted in closure of the line from Gospel Oak east of South Tottenham for an estimated two weeks. More than two miles of track had to be relaid. Journey times are extended by an hour and then passengers may have to reclaim the additional cost of being diverted into zone 1.

### Great Northern weekend closures

Planned closures are taking place on the Great Northern service every late evening and weekend until May, depriving Drayton Park and Essex Road of all services. The loss of the Friday evening service will be keenly felt by contributors to the 24 hour economy. Trains serving the Old Street area on Friday nights were as popular as those in the morning peak.

### HS2

The final version of the Oakervee report is in the hands of government and we have been promised a decision this month.

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. Fuller details of events are given on page 2. Meetings at the Town Hall except where stated otherwise.*

Wed. February 19th: The Iron in Islington (joint meeting with IA & HS).

Wed. March 25th: Holy Trinity Cloudesley Square: History.

Wed. April 22nd: the Cloudesley Square Project: Tales.

w/b May 10th: Keith Townsend, Environment director, LBI.

Wed. May 13th: Cloudesley Square: Process & Lessons. (date not confirmed)

June: Visit to City North, Finsbury Park

Fri. June 19th: Bill Manley Memorial Pub Crawl

Tues. October 20th: Annual Dinner

Tues. November 10th: A.G.M.

The Committee meets on the third Thursday of most months (not April).

### **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.

February 19th: joint meeting with the Islington Society, see above.

March 18th: Islington Tunnel - speaker Lester Hillman.

April 15th, May 20th, June 17th tba.

#### **Friends of Regents Canal**

Various events to mark the bicentenary of the canal which occurs on August 1st. See web-site, <http://friendsofregentscanal.org/events/Regents-200.html>

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

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

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

[www.kingsheadtheatre.com](http://www.kingsheadtheatre.com) Also, see page 5.

#### **London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies**

020 7993 5754

All meetings at The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street,

usually at 6.15 p.m. for 6.30-8.45..

March 25th

May 13th

June 9th

June 24th

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

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

Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Sundays & Wednesdays

The Museum & Local History Centre reopens after stock-taking on Thursday February 13th

#### **Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art,**

39a Canonbury Square

[www.estorickcollection.com](http://www.estorickcollection.com)

Opening hours Wed. to Sat. 11 a.m.- 6 p.m., Sunday 12 noon-5 p.m. Late evening events to 9 p.m. every first Thursday of the month.

Until April 11th: Tullio Crali: A Futurist Life

#### **Almeida Theatre,**

Almeida Street, N.1 0207 359 4404

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

#### **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

[www.rosemarybranchtheatre.co.uk/events](http://www.rosemarybranchtheatre.co.uk/events)

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

North Road/ Hampstead Lane, N.6 0208 340 3488 7.30 p.m. except Sundays 4 p.m.

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

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

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

#### **Park Theatre**

Clifton Terrace, Finsbury Park. 0207 870 6876

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

Productions at two auditoria (Park200 & Park90) Mon.-Sat evenings 7.30; matinées 3 p.m. Thurs. & Sat.