
ISLINGTON *news*

The Journal of the Islington Society

Covid ~ Episode 4

For much of March and April it appeared that this might be the last time we would need to chronicle the progress of the Covid pandemic. Vaccination was well under way, its effectiveness higher than previously predicted, and new infection rates were plummeting. Islington was consistently below the National rate and often the lowest in London. An end to lockdown was mapped out, supposedly based on data not dates, but the original dates have been maintained even when the data was better than anticipated.

With vaccines so successful, the only threat seemed to come from importing the virus, probably with a new mutant strain, from countries where vaccination lagged behind. And sure enough, just as the first significant relaxation of lockdown was upon us, that is precisely what happened.

Even the Home Secretary, in a rare departure from the official government line, had acknowledged that it had been a mistake not to clamp down on visitors from abroad, so it beggared belief that India was kept from the "red list" when Pakistan and Bangladesh were added to it. Their rates of transmission were well below that in India, and the argument that the type of transmission determined the judgement would be laughable were the consequences not so potentially serious. The Prime Minister's determination to visit his opposite number in India over-rode all other considerations just as his determination that everyone should have good time at Christmas had done four months earlier. Incredibly, it took until June for Heathrow Airport to segregate passengers returning from red zone countries from those back from the green zone.

This was the more regrettable because it followed the great success of the vaccination programme. The delivery of vaccines, overseen by Kate Bingham who learned from the mistakes of Baroness Harding and made use of existing NHS structures, was good, but the political triumph was the decision to buy into various vaccines still being developed last May. An alternative government, particularly one led by

Sir Kier Starmer, would almost certainly have gone in with the EU.

When the Spring edition of Islington News went to press, the main concern was whether the government had been right to delay second jabs in order to speed the delivery of first jabs, against the advice of the manufacturers (the science). For a while this looked sound; there were even reports that the vaccine was more effective if the second dose were delayed. But the arrival of the delta variant, first identified in India, brought a hasty change of heart. The emphasis now is on fully vaccinating everyone over 50 by the end of this month, and on reducing the delay between jabs to eight weeks. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine recently authorised requires only one dose but there is no evidence yet as to its effectiveness against the latest variant.

The Inquiry into what went wrong has been kicked into the long grass of 2022. Its main constructive purpose is to establish lessons for the future, to avoid what went wrong when the next pandemic comes along. The timing of the first lockdown may not after all prove to have been significant. The lack of PPE, the discharge of patients back into care homes without testing for Covid, the delay to the second and third lockdowns and the failure to limit the importation of the virus through a lack of test and trace on arrival and inadequate quarantine remain in the frame. It was something of a relief that the government at last acknowledged the error over travel from India (by deed not word) when Portugal was swiftly moved from the green list of countries to amber. The airline industry took another hit but if this will facilitate further relaxation of restrictions the economy and the mental health of many more people will be the better for it.

By the time this reaches members it should be known whether the final step out of lockdown, or part of it, can go ahead on June 21st. Predictions are rarely wisely made, but the likelihood seems to be that some restrictions will remain in place while there will be a relaxation of others currently in place. AB

Islington Society News

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

The views expressed in the Islington Society's Journal are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Society's adopted policy.

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Available from the Society's Web Site on
IslingtonSociety.org.uk/Publications

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

The Building That Lived Twice - The story of the Royal Agricultural Hall and its rebirth as the Business Design Centre by Alec Forshaw, £14.99, , ISBN 0-9541490-0-9

Caledonian Park and its Surroundings by Caledonian Park Friends Group, £5, ISBN 978-0-954 1490-4-8

An architect in Islington, by Harley Sherlock, £14.99, ISBN 9-78-0-9541490-2-4

Books from our President and late Vice-Presidents
Available from usual sources

Suicide of the West, by Richard Koch & Chris Smith, £14.99, ISBN 0-8264 9023-9.

A History of Islington, by Mary Cosh, published by Historical Publications at £18.95, ISBN 0-948667-974

53 Cross Street - the biography of an historic house by Mary Cosh & Martin King, photographs by Pauline Lord, published by the Islington Archaeology & History Society

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Copy date for our next newsletter is :	3rd October, 2021

Our web site is :www.islingtonsociety.org.uk

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Islington Society urges rejection of developer's Coach House appeal

Sunnyside Road Land has presented its appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against Islington Council's refusal of its proposal for redevelopment on the site of the locally listed coach house on Sunnyside Road, N.19. The Islington Society has asked the Inspector to reject the scheme. The coach house is currently in a poor state, incorporated into a garage and a car wash. The developers propose to restore the locally listed building and build flats on the land adjacent to it. The society approves of the restoration in principle but is concerned that the main block of flats would be too close to the coach house and "overwhelms the setting of the locally listed building." The coach house is within the Whitehall Park Conservation Area and the society believes that the height and bulk of the main block the developers propose mean that it does not comply with the conservation area guidelines.

No 87 Sunnyside Road was the coach house to the Victorian mansion Huntingdon House, on the corner with Hornsey Lane, now demolished. Few of the large villas along Hornsey Lane have survived and the coach house is one of their last remnants. The Islington Society believes it to be a building of high quality in its own right,

as well as being of historical significance because of its links to the families that lived in this part of Islington. High on one wall of the coach house is a plaque with the initials of a member of the Sargant family, which owned the land on which Huntingdon House was built.

The appeal opened on May 26th. Unfortunately, due to the sudden ill health of a Local Planning Authority (LPA) witness, the inquiry has been adjourned. The Inspector is currently awaiting information from the Appellant and LPA on possible resumption dates. However, it is unlikely that the inquiry will resume before October 2021.

AC



50 years for the Hornsey Historical Society

The year 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the Hornsey Historical Society, founded in 1971 by a group of people who wanted to keep local community memories alive. It is now much more than that. It is a research-based society and its regular Bulletin is a high-quality publication with wide-ranging articles which go beyond the recording of local memorabilia. The current Bulletin, No. 62, leads with "Jones for Hornsey", about the 1945 election when a Communist candidate took more than 10,000 votes in the constituency. This was the year when Willie Gallacher was re-elected as the Communist MP for West Fife and Phil Piratin for Stepney and Mile End. Even though Jonah Jones in Hornsey did not win, no other Communist candidate in an English constituency came close to his tally of 10,000 votes and it was seen as a considerable achievement.

Former Metropolitan Boroughs Islington and Hornsey have a great deal in common. One article in the current Bulletin is about the great theatre designer Frank Matcham who designed the Marlborough Theatre in Holloway Road, sadly demolished in the 1960s. After living in Islington,

he spent much of the rest of his life in Hornsey. An article in Bulletin 61 is a history of the Crouch End Lido, which many Islingtonian lovers of open-air swimming will have visited.

The Hornsey Historical Society also publishes more substantial local history studies. For its anniversary year it publishes *The Hornsey Enclosure Act 1813* by David Frith. These enclosures, which took place all over Britain, were highly successful attempts by landowners to make their estates more efficient by depriving the landless of their common rights over local land. The social upheaval they caused was immense, though perhaps less so in Hornsey where much of the land had already been enclosed. The author concludes by quoting E.P Thompson's obloquy: "Enclosure . . . was a plain enough case of class robbery, played according to fair rules of property and law laid down by a Parliament of property owners and lawyers." For those familiar with Highgate, Hornsey and Muswell Hill this book shows how the local landscape developed from open fields and woods at least part of the way to the urban communities we now know. [concluded p.4]

AC

Electing a Mayor

This article first appeared in *Insights*, the bimonthly on line journal of the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies, and was published prior to the May election.

In two of the mega-constituencies which returned a Labour Assembly Member, the Conservative candidate received more first preferences than Sadiq Khan. Whether this means a great deal is doubtful. A voter confident that the ultimate run off will be between the two largest parties can exercise a first preference for any of the smaller party candidates safe in the knowledge that his or her second preference will ultimately count towards the outcome. However, had the Conservatives won those two seats on the Assembly, the make up of the Assembly would have been no different: Labour would have taken two more, and the Conservatives two fewer, of the top-up seats.

The main benefit of the system of election – democracy's answer to Duckworth Lewis – is that it gives place to the more significant minor parties. This time the Greens and the Liberal Democrats, who each gained a seat from UKIP in comparison to the make up of the Assembly in 2016. Elections for a three year term have ensured there will be no new London Plan under consideration before 2024.

The Home Secretary's proposal that in future the Mayor of London should be elected using First Past the Post (FPTP) is seen by many as a retrograde step designed to ensure that the Mayoralty remains exclusive to the two main political parties. In fact FPTP would not have altered the result of any of the five elections so far, assuming people had not changed their vote on account of the voting system.

A proportional system means that more people's votes influence the result, but the present system is far from perfect. In the first preference column the race for second place becomes as important as who leads, which is why the incumbent Mayor is keen to emphasize the two-horse nature of the race.

The system by which GLA members are chosen has been more successful in reflecting the level of support for minority parties with a significant level of support, but Alex Salmond may have exposed a flaw in that too. If the Labour and Conservative Parties were not to contest the "list" seats, but give their support to distinct Socialist and Tory parties respectively, it is possible that they could squeeze out the minority parties in the way Salmond claims he is boosting representation of Independence candidates over Unionists.

The requirements for nomination to be a Mayoral candidate are quite onerous- they require nominations in each of the 33 Boroughs. Some would be candidates have failed to make it, but there are nonetheless 20 declared runners and riders this year.

This gives a ballot paper with forty boxes and a requirement to tick no more than one in each of the columns. It will no doubt be argued that halving this number by reversion to FPTP would simplify matters. Although voting systems may seem arcane or the stuff to excite only political anoraks, Amenity Societies should involve themselves in any public debate. The Mayor has considerable influence over what local councils can do in matters of planning and transport which are central to our *raison d'être*. The Forum has expressed support for road pricing, viable town centres, densification on brownfield sites, protection of heritage and conservation areas, and against the overdevelopment that manifests itself in skyscrapers that spoil the view and foster the wind. Few candidates display much understanding of these issues and of the malign effect of some government policy, or the damage done by calling in an application refused on the basis of a local plan and then allowing it. A couple of candidates have been clear about the benefits of road pricing, but it could be argued that the present system does not offer the choice many voters would like to have. The bigger political parties could fairly be accused of focusing on more immediate electoral considerations, rather than looking for candidates who might transform London for the better and provide a more lasting reason for supporting their party's candidature.

Hornsey Historical Society - concluded from page 3

The Hornsey Enclosure Act 1813 can be obtained from The Hornsey Historical Society, 136 Tottenham Lane, London N8 7EL, or via the website, www.hornseyhistorical.org.uk which also includes details of membership.

Islington Council's Covid-Safe Business Award scheme gives shoppers the confidence to return to the high street

Almost 1,000 high street businesses in Islington have got behind an award scheme that lets them show visitors they're following all Covid-Safe guidelines, in the council's latest move to safely revive its town centres.

After a difficult year, Islington Council is supporting local businesses to reopen and welcome customers inside again in a safe and secure fashion. It is fantastic news for businesses and everyone they employ, but with safety the top priority the council decided to roll out the Covid-Safe Business Award scheme, giving customers the confidence to return to the high street.

Local people can be reassured that all premises displaying the prominent 'We are a Covid-Safe Business' window sticker have been assessed by the council's public protection team as following the current guidance on safety for both customers and staff.

Jan Hart, the council's Director of Public Protection and Regulation, said: "The last 16 months have been the toughest in living memory for the majority of businesses in our high streets, and we have been working extremely hard behind the scenes doing everything we can to support them through the pandemic.

"With lockdown restrictions easing, it is vital that local people know how they can enjoy their local area while still protecting Islington. The window sticker scheme is a great way for the council to continue that support by boosting public confidence in our high streets so they can return to being the thriving - and most importantly safe - hubs of our community.

"These eye-catching signs, already in hundreds of traders' windows, are small but important beacons of reassurance for visitors - a kite mark confirming the business is following all the current guidance on safety. "We have had a fantastic take-up for this scheme among traders so far, and I must thank them too for playing their part in keeping the borough safe.

"I urge any businesses who have not done so already to request a visit from us to advise on safety and help them get accredited too. This is one of many measures we are taking to help bring our high streets and communities back to life safely."

Supporters of the scheme include Joanna Phillips, manager of the Children's Air Ambulance charity shop in Junction Road, Archway, who said: "We have missed our customers during the pandemic closures, and as the safety of our customers is our highest priority, we want to let them know that it is safe to shop

and donate.

"We have installed screens, hand sanitiser stations, social distancing signage and other health and safety measures. We had fantastic support from the local community before the lockdowns and I thank them for that. My hope now is that it will continue now that we have reopened."

Pas Bertolino, of Stasi Barbers & Academy in Junction Road, said: "We welcome the scheme, which will help give residents the confidence to return to their high streets and support local businesses."

Esther Phelpotts, shop manager at Crisis in Stroud Green Road, Finsbury Park, added: "We are really happy to have completed the Covid-secure premises check. People's health must be put first, and this provides assurances that shops and businesses are getting it right."

Georgina Black, of Pretty Shiny Shop in Stroud Green Road, said: "I've worked very hard from the beginning of the pandemic to adapt and provide a safe place to shop. It has been a hard year for everyone and I really want to get our high street back to being busy again, so it's great to have this bright yellow sign as a little beacon beckoning you into my lovely, safe shop to have a browse."

The Covid-Safe Business Award scheme is one of several ways the council has supported local businesses and helped to protect jobs since the first national lockdown last March. Since the first UK lockdown at the end of March 2020, the council has:

- * awarded approximately £110m in business grants with funding from Government to businesses;
- * made more than 15,000 visits to businesses to ensure compliance with current safety guidance;
- * dispatched 5,000 'Welcome Back' packs of floor stickers and social distancing posters;
- * issued 138 pavement licences to hospitality businesses to support their reopening.

The council has also introduced a new online business directory, My Virtual Islington, to help businesses promote themselves for free and enable residents to find independent shops, cafés, pubs, restaurants, markets and services wherever they are.

Anyone with concerns that a business is not operating within the Government's safety guidelines should e-mail commercial.envh@islington.gov.uk

New River Notes



The New River Canonbury' postcard, 1912

I have recently purchased this postcard of The New River, Canonbury. What surprised me was just how bleak The New River was in 1912 compared to the rather lush nature trail known as the New River Walk, with the odd resident turtle, that we appreciate today. Nearest the camera, this particular stretch has the backs of Nos. 38, 39 and 40 Alwyne Road (c. 1847-49) that back on to The New River when seen here from Canonbury Grove, with the distinctive kink or bend in the river in the background. The postcard shows just how dour this area was in 1912 three hundred years after The New River (1609-1613) had been formed and decades before gentrification. This was a period when these quite grand Victorian houses were split up into multiple occupation, a mere 63 years after being built. No. 39 Alwyne Road, with the rear ground floor bow, even seems to be unoccupied with windows blocked-up. In the distant right can be seen the former late 16th century octagonal garden house from Old Canonbury House at No. 7 Alwyne Road.

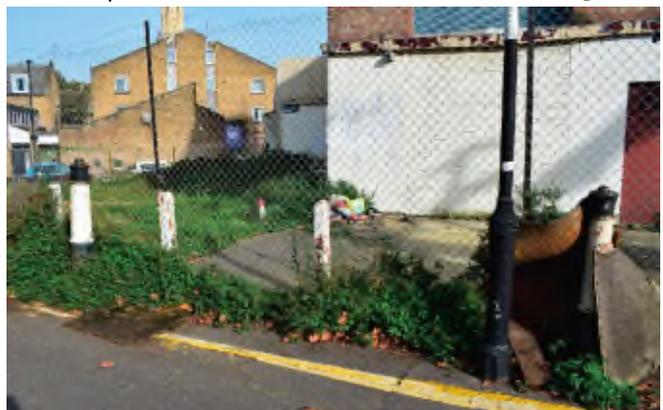


Comparison view in 2020

Only a short walk further down The New River in the opposite direction is Astey's Row and something that occasionally catches my eye:



Along what is now Astey's Row and what was formerly The New River are a couple of intriguing cast-iron bollards. On one it says 'B. Blake 1822'. Here are the two together:



They are Grade II Listed (on 24 May 1989): '(East side) Pair of bollards to west of Mecca Bingo. Cast iron and of cannon type.' What do they signify? The List description ventured: 'Probably associated with the realignment of the New River in 1823.' Or could they mark the position of a former bridge crossing The New River more or less at this location? Before the neo-Egyptian cinema on the Essex Road/River Place was built they were next to four semi-detached villas, which might have been Canonbury Cottages from 1824-1870 (after then incorporated in Astey's Row in 1879-1880 and re-numbered throughout).

Presumably such a bridge, requiring a fair span over The New River and certainly wider than a brook, was cast-iron and perhaps B. Blake was the foundry maker?



Position of former bridge over The New River in 1871

Unlike Canonbury Grove, this section of The New River was enclosed in pipes in 1892-93 when the area was built over and it seems these elegant bollards once connected with the River were left alone to line Astey's Row. By 1956 the pipes had been removed and Vanstone's of Much Hadham, landscape gardeners, had been commissioned to lay out the ornamental gardens at the southern end of Astey's Row as a continuation of the New River Walk. Generally speaking, metal bollards are used to mark the entrance to a bridge and interestingly there is another bollard similar to the right one in the above picture at the end of Halton Cross Street where it meets Astey's Row, which, again, was a crossing over The New River and where it went

underground (I don't know when culverted but the case by 1754 (1754 map)) as it entered central Islington. It is one of a cluster of five bollards here; three of these are Victorian; one recent and a final one, next to the library, that is the same as the nearest one of the two on Astey's Row. The Halton Cross Street bollard is unlisted and presumably overlooked during the 1989 listing programme:



David Harter

Members will be sorry to learn of the death of David Harter, the popular community solicitor whose practice (Harter & Loveless) was based in Caledonian Road, close to the tunnel in which HS1 was eventually conveyed to St. Pancras. David represented Islington council in the protracted negotiations over the tunnel, including two years in Select Committees of the Commons and Lords. A fuller tribute appears on the Aitken Harter web-site.

Tony Eastlake

The community around Essex Road was shocked to learn of the murder of Tony Eastlake. Tony was popular in the community as the flower seller outside Essex Road station for more than two decades. His

murder close to the stall, in broad daylight on a Saturday afternoon, brought renewed calls for action to be taken to tackle knife crime. Most of the victims have been much younger. A 21 year-old has been arrested in connection with the murder.

Michael Raab

Another well-known figure in Essex Road has also died. Michael Raab founded the well-known bakery which still bears his name. He and his brother bought the shop in 1979 when there were two other bakeries nearby.

Yvonne Connolly

The first black headteacher in England, Yvonne Connolly, has died. She became head of Ringcross School in 1968 and was known to later generations for her work in the local inspectorate.

A walk from Ray Street to Tabernacle Street

This walk takes us through Clerkenwell to South Shoreditch. These pavements are well trodden by guided tours but by following the locally listed buildings we can see some of the less well-known corners.

We start at a pub, in Ray Street, just off Farringdon Road. The former Coach & Horses, now **The Coach**, is a fine 1897 neo-Baroque public house, decorated outside with the fanciful motifs popular at the time. At roof level is a cartouche with the pub's original name, a challenge to later attempts to change it. The ground floor frontage is impressive, with marble pilasters and wooden fluted columns.



The Coach (& Horses) Ray Street

Round the corner in Crawford Passage is one of Islington's early street bollards. Real cannon were used in the late 1700s and early 1800s, particularly after the Battle of Waterloo. When the supply ran out, imitations were cast, often with a "cannon ball" projecting from the muzzle. The imitations were usually hollow castings but the best are quite convincing.

Cross Farringdon Road, up Pear Tree Court and turn right into Clerkenwell Close. This still follows the old medieval street line; on the left was St. Mary's nunnery and the parish church. After the Dissolution, the nunnery was replaced by the grand Newcastle House, while the old medieval parish church gradually crumbled away. In 1792 it too was replaced with the grade II listed **St. James's Church**, by the local architect and developer, James Carr. He also redeveloped the Newcastle House site with a row of six terraced houses. Demolition was planned after WWII but two of them, Nos. 47 and 48, were saved and substantially rebuilt in 1991. The original local listing was in 1970 but the later rebuilding has reproduced the façades with some precision.

Clerkenwell Close still retains much of its atmosphere, though its mix of ducal palaces and artisan workshops have long gone. The locally listed **Challoner House**, a heavily restored Victorian commercial building, is on the site of the mansion of that name which stood opposite Newcastle House.



47 & 48 Clerkenwell Close

Leave Clerkenwell Close with **The Three Kings** pub on your right, part of the medieval street pattern as it winds round St James's church. There has been a pub on this site since the mid-1700s but the current structure was built in 1871. for the east London brewer Mann, Crossman and Paulin. The architect was Robert C James. The tiled exterior was added in the 1930s and is an important survival in its own right.

Turn left into Clerkenwell Green, left into Sekforde Street and then right into Hayward's Place. The road narrows as you cross Woodbridge Street and you come to a terrace of small artisan dwellings on the right-hand side. They are dated 1834 on No. 3 but Nos. 5 and 6 were rebuilt after World War II bomb damage, which destroyed the other side of the alleyway. They were lived in by distillery workers at No. 201 **St. John's Street**, built in 1828 by John Blyth. There are few other examples of artisan housing of this date in Clerkenwell and they are an important survival.

When you emerge through the archway onto St. John Street, turn right towards Clerkenwell Road. Before you reach the junction turn right into Albemarle Way and a terrace of late Victorian shopfronts, of which Nos. 3, 4,5, and 8 are locally listed. They have an unusual arrangement of mullions and transoms which divide the display windows. Their brackets and facias are intact, with timber stallrisers below. In spite of adjustments over the years, the original historic shopfronts remain largely intact.

At the corner with Clerkenwell Road is No. 84, a striking and distinctive wedge-shaped building. It was built in 1879 for Edward Culver who was a gold chain maker and jeweller. The Clerkenwell Road frontage displays the name "**The Printworks**" and between 1894 and 1915 it may have been used for that purpose. In the 19th century Clerkenwell was the home of many thriving jewellery businesses and this building housed at least one of them.

Printing was another important industry in Clerkenwell in the 19th century and this building has links with that industry too. It is a particularly distinctive Clerkenwell industrial building.

Walk eastwards along Clerkenwell Road. After it becomes Old Street turn right onto Honduras Street and you come to a former London board school, dated 1888 on the pediment facing Honduras Street. The London School Board built some 400 schools in its thirty or so years of existence between 1870 and 1904. E. R. Robson was appointed its architect in 1871 and remained there until 1884, when T. J. Bailey took over. Robson established the design style which the Board was to follow, Arts & Crafts, with Queen Anne and Baroque references. This school refers back to that style, with its grand pedimented gable end on Baltic Street East and Baroque details on the separate Boys, Girls and Infants doorways on the other side of the building. At the corner of Baltic Street East and Golden Lane is a well preserved 1870s warehouse. It has varied and original window detailing on the upper stories capped by a heavy cornice. It retains its hoist and crane bay on Baltic Street East with external machinery intact. The ground floor and access bays have been modernised but do not spoil the overall effect.



115 Golden Lane

Turn right onto Golden Lane, left onto Fortune Street and then into Errol Street. No. 12 is a former school, designed by W.H. Boney a north London architect who lived in Highgate and designed the former Highgate Methodist Church, now the Jackson's Lane Community Centre. The north elevation is particularly fine, with stepped first floor windows, a single gable, and date and dedication plaques. It is an important memorial to the early years of the Leysian Mission for which it was built. This was founded in 1886 by old boys of the Leys School in Cambridge. It started in Whitecross Street, then moved to No. 12 Errol Street in 1890, where it provided

The information in this walk is based on the efforts of the volunteers who worked on the project to revise Islington's list of locally significant buildings. This work is now complete and has been submitted to the Council. Artillery Arms and Three Kings references from "Clerkenwell & Islington Pubs", Johnny Horner, Amberley.

facilities for Sunday schools, Boys Brigades and a Girls Parlour. It quickly outgrew Errol Street and moved in 1904 to City Road. No. 12 Errol Street is now the headquarters of the Royal Statistical Society.

Round the corner in Bunhill Row we come to the **Artillery Arms**. There has been a pub on this site since the 1830s, but this building dates from later than that, when it was renamed the Artillery Arms in the 1850s. The name derives from the Royal Artillery Company, which is based nearby. The pub frontage retains most of its original features and is an important landmark by Bunhill Fields cemetery. These days it is a civilised, welcoming pub. But it wasn't always like that. Until the sport was banned the pub was a centre for rat baiting, in which a dog was put in a confined space with a large number of rats. The sport lay in how many rats the dog could kill and how long it took. Punters bet on the outcome. A terrier called Tiny managed two hundred in an hour on two occasions, in 1847 and 1848. The landlord had storage space behind the pub for around 6000 live rats at a time.

Walk through Bunhill Fields and cross City Road into Epworth Street and then Tabernacle Street. This was the centre of the furniture trade which dominated this part of south Shoreditch between around 1860 and 1945. Every stage of the process took place here, from woodyard to showroom, often on the same site. No. 41 Tabernacle Street is an attractive example. It has a showroom on the ground floor, with manufacturing space and storage above. It retains the architectural detail in its windows and brick work, and particularly in the showroom exterior on the ground floor.



41 Tabernacle Street

The **Windmill** is a prominent public house on a corner site between Tabernacle Street and Epworth Street. Its late Victorian pub frontage is intact, with granite stallrisers, multipaned leaded glass windows, panelled doors, pilasters and its original street signage. It is a fine old pub built to serve workers in the furniture trade. It provides a florid contrast to the austere classicism of the Victorian and Edwardian warehouses nearby.

A Foreign Field

This article penned by member William Morton first appeared in the on line magazine The Shaw Sheet (www.shawsheet.com) and is reproduced by kind permission of Shaw Sheet Publications Ltd.

Islington Council put up signs in the borough's streets at the time of the commemoration of the centenary of the end of the First World War giving the names of those whose had lived in each street and had been killed in the War. The signs are not as grim as the memorials you see in French villages with the names of numerous members of the same family on them but they are sobering enough. There is the sheer number of deaths. One sign, admittedly in a long road, has 24 names on it. There are the brothers both killed at the age of 21 in 1917 and 1918 respectively. Nearly every theatre of the war is represented with men killed in Greece, Turkey and Iraq as well as France and Belgium.

A striking number, particularly younger men, were killed in the summer and autumn of 2018, presumably the result of the final Allied offensive which ended the War and began on 8th August with the battle of Amiens. One cannot help thinking, perhaps somewhat illogically, what bad luck it was on those who died in October and November. Only a few more days and they would have survived. Perhaps for this reason, the death of somebody named on the sign in my own road has particularly caught my attention. Not only did Albert Strasman die, aged 29, of wounds on Armistice Day, 11th November 1918, but this occurred in Russia. How did that come about?

In 1918, the Allies (Britain, Canada, America, Australia, France and Italy) despatched a force to Russia to intervene on behalf of those opposing the Bolsheviks. It landed in Archangel in northern Russia in August 1918. One of the units in it was the 2/10th battalion of the Royal Scots with which Private Strasman was serving. How Strasman, a total Londoner, ended up in the Royal Scots is not clear but presumably such switching between regiments was common. Previously, he had been with the West Kents and the Queens Own Hussars. It is possible that he had been in the army since the War began but I have not been able to verify this. The 2/10th were a second-line battalion and not intended for active service overseas with many men listed as only suitable for garrison duties. It had spent virtually the whole time since

its formation in 1914 on coastal defence duties around Berwick on Tweed. It was also a cyclist battalion and part of the Army Cyclist Corps. It sounds odd to modern ears but bicycle infantry were used throughout the War with infantry divisions often having cyclist companies. Complete units of the Corps were not sent overseas. Instead, groups of men were detached. With that background, it is remarkable that the battalion was selected for the Russian expedition but manpower must have been short, particularly given the major offensive in France at the time.

On the force's arrival in Archangel, the Royal Scots, supported by gunboats, were sent south following the line of the Dvina river. Their first contact with the Bolsheviks occurred on 6th September. On 11th November, they were fiercely attacked by the Bolsheviks, who were only beaten back by the Royal Scots, with support from Canadian artillery, after they had suffered heavy losses. The battalion's losses were 19 dead and 34 wounded. The fierceness of the fighting is indicated by the fact that 3 Military Crosses, 2 Distinguished Service Crosses and 3 Military Medals were awarded to men who had taken part. It is not definite that Strasman was killed in this action. He may have been wounded in an unsuccessful attack the battalion had made at the end of October and then died of his wounds on 11th November.

There is an Allied Cemetery at Archangel and Strasman is commemorated there. The memorial covers those who died during the campaign and were buried elsewhere. It seems likely that Strasman was buried on the banks of the Dvina - a considerable distance from Archangel - in a foreign field and a long way from Islington.

The Allies realised in 1919 that they were achieving nothing in northern Russia and all British units were withdrawn from Archangel by the end of September 1919.

WM

Transport News Round-up

Public transport post Covid

In the debate about Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and the lack of consultation it is easy to forget the circumstances in which government funding for these schemes was made available. People were being told to avoid public transport unless its use was essential, partly so that key workers could reach their place of work while exercising social distancing throughout their journey. Public opinion surveys suggested a majority of people would be reluctant to return to public transport, even if a vaccine were available, and there was a genuine fear that roads would be congested with private cars and air quality reduced to a level not suffered for twenty years.

Despite what looked like an effective campaign in St. Peter's Ward, the independent candidate opposing LTNs gained little support and the Green Party improved its share of the vote. The same may not be true in outer London where fewer people are dependent on public transport, fewer buses run and commuting distances discourage the use of cycling and walking to work.

Early results of monitoring LTNs in Islington are encouraging for those of us who like clean air and walking. The problems in Islington stem from deficiencies in the main roads. Highbury Corner is a total disaster for bus users, cyclists, private cars and pedestrians alike. The long standing gyratory from Hillmarton Road to Finsbury Park station encourages speeding and reduces options for driving along main roads. The Archway scheme is also a disaster for bus users, although the main losers are people living in Haringey.

There should be scope to tidy up the LTN schemes. Finding the funds to deal with the main roads will be more difficult. Members are encouraged to respond to the consultations that will be held with constructive suggestions for improvement.

The problem of restoring faith in public transport will be more difficult. Opinions change with circumstances: people furious at the government mistakes over Covid at the start were mollified once the vaccine roll out proved so successful, but there must be a danger that the Treasury will blink first and demand cuts in services before people return to trains in particular for leisure use, thereby arresting any improved level of confidence in them. Demand for commuter services is most unlikely to return to pre-Covid levels. The biggest danger here is that demand will peak around Wednesdays, so that the demand for rolling stock does not go down, but revenue is reduced as people swap season tickets for the new flexible fares. Fares could be made higher on Wednesdays, but the fare structure with daily and weekly

capping limits the scope for this. A better solution would be if office workers had a more varied schedule of home working, taking different days in the office from week to week. This would also optimise use of office space.

The introduction of flexible fares for two day a week commuters is far from straightforward. The great success of the Travelcard introduced by the GLC in 1981 was, firstly, that it facilitated journeys best made by a combination of bus and rail, and secondly, that it made supplementary journeys free at the point of use, meaning there was no travel cost associated with theatre going or dining out. This last point undoubtedly benefited the leisure and hospitality sectors of the economy as well as making optimal use of public transport. It is inefficient to have large numbers of buses and trains sitting idle for most of the day along with their drivers. It is as yet unclear how new fares will work in London.

The financial settlement

The temporary bail out agreement, previously agreed to March and then extended to May 18th because of purdah, was then further extended by ten days. The next press release was identical save for the lack of a new deadline. The latest sticking plaster agreement came on June 1st. This one runs until December 11th. The "temporary" restrictions on the Freedom Pass, and the temporary uplift in congestion charge both remain; the government has vetoed paying over Vehicle Excise Duty and the proposed boundary charge; there is to be another RPI + 1% increase in fares next year, and the government continues to demand driverless trains even though there is no money to implement them and no certainty they could be safely introduced. Even the agreement to funds for the repair of Hammersmith Bridge is clouded by uncertainty. The government wants the Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham to pay a share which it has no money to meet.

Apart from the lack of any certainty for longer term planning, the intervention of central government into matters which should be the province of the Mayor is another blow to local democracy. Even if you take the view that the incumbent is ineffective, he has just been re-elected with a clear majority. England already has the least respect for subsidiarity of any Western democracy. The announcement about fares suggests that the government is already set on raising National fares by the same amount next year. Many economists would argue that this is the wrong response to the post-pandemic fear of public transport, when the government is supposedly committed to addressing climate change which can only be done by achieving modal shift to more sustainable means of transport.

Technical Consultation on Permitted Development Rights

Submission by London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies

This is an abridged version of the response to government made at the beginning of June 2021.

1. *proposed minor technical changes*

The addition of wine bars in Class AA is welcomed.

The existence now of two Schedules to the Use Classes Order is an unnecessary and confusing change. The Class AA and Class AB limitations and conditions are barely sufficient to avoid harm to a locality by using permitted development rights for building upwards and should be strengthened by community representation to MHCLG if unsuitable developments occur.

2. *Change of Use from casino, betting office, pay day loan shop and hot food takeaway to the Commercial Business and Service use class.*

The loss of those facilities would not be serious in communities and changing some of them may be beneficial. However, para. 18 states that there would be no limitations or conditions. We do not think that is acceptable because a new Service use class could result in noise and other unacceptable disturbance for adjoining or nearby premises in use as homes or for other purposes.

A different use class could result in noise and other unacceptable disturbance for adjoining or nearby premises in use as homes or for other purposes.

Some the proposed changes would change the character or appearance of a conservation area, producing "dead" shopfronts and a reduction of activity, which would reduce the vitality of a shopping area in a town centre and local centres.

We agree that Hot food takeaways should have rights to change use to restaurants and cafés. We agree that A1, A2. betting offices, payday loan shops and casinos should be able to change use to restaurants, but subject to a size limit of 150 sq.m. We agree that A2, Betting offices and payday loan shops should be able to change use to restaurants. We agree that betting offices and payday loan shops should be able to change use to A2. We agree that change of use from retail (A1) or A2, or betting offices or payday loan shops to a mix of that use with up to two flats

3. *Flats above (mixed use) premises in the Commercial, Business and Service use class.*

In main town centres, floors above ground floor may be more appropriate for former B1 uses, as well as housing. The proposal appears to allow homes in two flats to be converted to Commercial, Business Service use. The Government appears to be seeking more dwellings in town centres so why should existing ones be lost? This is

a irrational and confusing suggestion.

6. *Former D2 Assembly and leisure use class*

These uses like casinos should be sui generis and, therefore, require planning consent for change of use. Local authorities should remain in charge of such changes through planning applications because there may be adequate assembly and leisure facilities already.

8. *Laundrettes.*

Paragraph 19 states "Laundrettes can be a valued local service in some areas. It is therefore proposed to continue to all for prior approval of the impact of change of use on the adequate provision of such local services." London Forum agrees with that, especially in more deprived areas, where housing costs are high and/or there is not sufficient space for a washing machine or a space for drying clothes. Laundrettes are a vital local service in inner city areas, especially in London. The harm to equalities far outweighs any benefits from additional office or housing needs in the locality.

12. *Local Community (F2) use class* Uses in the Local Community (F2) use class need protection or, as the NPPF para 92(c) indicates, local planning authorities need to "guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs."

14. *Temporary change of use*

Temporary/pop-up uses can be a good alternative use of use of land and buildings, but with the proviso that it will revert to its previous use. There should be a size limit.

17. *Further comments not otherwise covered.*

Permitted development changes and the grouping of many use classes reduces the local authority's ability to control changes and achieve the outcomes necessary based on local circumstances and needs.

Therefore, all changes should be able to be considered against NPPF policies for sustainability and the supply of facilities, services, social infrastructure requirements and the type of homes to meet local needs. The Government seems to be moving away from those standards by these Use Class and permitted development policies which can cause harm.