

---

# THE ISLINGTON SOCIETY

---

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2000/1

If it were a privilege to chair the Society last year, how much more so this, the Society's fortieth.

The Ogilvy-Webb lecture given by Tony Travers was the high point of our anniversary. Despite atrocious weather in the wettest year of our existence, the Tower Theatre where the Society was born was packed for an excellent occasion. Tony's understanding of London government is second to none, and I was equally pleased with the quality of the discussion which followed from members' questions.

**Members are requested to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Society, on Wednesday, May 2nd at 7.30 p.m. in the Town Hall Islington, for the transaction of the undermentioned business.**

- 1. To receive apologies.**
  - 2. To adopt the minutes of the A.G.M. 3rd May 2000.**
  - 3. To receive the Annual report 2000/1.**
  - 4. To adopt the financial report to 31st December, 2000.**
  - 5. To agree the levels of subscription.**
  - 6. To elect the officers of the Society.**
- (A full list will be provided at the meeting).
- 7. To consider any other relevant business.**

This will be followed **at 8 p.m.** with a talk by **Peter Hendy, Director London Bus & River Services.**

The development of Amenity Societies has been rather patchy. Like breweries, after the late Victorian

enthusiasm there was a long interval before more new ones were established, as the delights of real ale were rediscovered. The Islington Society is part of that real ale wave, which coincided with the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London and its aftermath. We were fortunate in that Islington survived as a Borough name. As there was no flourishing Finsbury or Clerkenwell Society we had first claim on the whole of the new Borough.

Despite this advantage, our membership around the "Islington village" fails to be matched elsewhere in the Borough. The Executive Committee is clear that we should broaden our membership, notwithstanding the extra work that might arise. We exist "to encourage the promotion and safeguarding of the amenities of Islington". We seek to represent the informed views of Islington. Our views will carry greater weight if we have informed more of Islington and if we reflect more of its richly diverse people's interests.

It is also clearly the case that our events are better supported when a reminder letter goes out just beforehand. The Newsletter's strength is its appeal to the Librarian in us. We keep it on the bookshelf, we dip in to it from time to time, but we do not use it to fill our personal diary! Sometimes events cannot be organised in time for the newsletter deadlines, or have to be changed after it has gone to press.

We are therefore embarking on a three-fold membership drive. We seek new members, more participatory members (i.e. greater attendance at our events), and ultimately more active members. We just about break even at our current level of activity. However, increasing subscriptions to pay for greater activity could exclude existing and potential members. We are therefore recommending no increase to the

A.G.M., but we are asking those who are able to pay to make donations commensurate with their disposable income.

As you will have seen with the last Newsletter, we are asking members to recruit a friend or acquaintance. We sent out a copy of the existing membership form for this purpose.

One of the problems has been that, because the Society has no permanent base, the membership forms have to give the address of one of our members. I am very grateful to Frank Hopkins who drew the short straw when the last reprint happened and has agreed to continue to deal with the completed forms. Members must have been confused by the appearance of different names at various times. I am pleased to report that, thanks to the generous support of Britannia Studios in Britannia Row, we now have a base from which to work and to which all membership forms can be sent irrespective of who in the Society deals with them.

As hinted at above, we will communicate with you every month that there is an event. This will mean more stuffing sessions: if any member would be willing to do this occasionally, please contact me. Stuffing envelopes is relatively painless (anaesthetic often provided on request). It is usually done in the early evening, though this can be adjusted to suit the participants.

The other means of active participation is through the two committees of the Society. Nominations should be made in advance to the Secretary, Donald Mitchell. All the existing members whose three year term is completed have been renominated, though some would willingly give place to more energetic, hard-working successors, if such can be found. I am grateful to those who give so much time to the Society: Donald our Secretary, Adam Bower as Treasurer (whose report follows this) and Kathleen Frenchman, who for six weeks of the year is a full-time unpaid editor of the newsletter.

#### *Events in 2000/1*

In addition to Tony Travers' excellent talk, we heard from John Huntley, Penny Tuerk, Derek Turner, David Gibson & Alec

Forshaw, and Paul Moore/ Meg Hillier. We are extremely lucky to have John Huntley and his archive of early motion film in Islington. Penny Tuerk spoke at a joint meeting with Arch & Hist; the history of the Tower Theatre in Islington was a splendid apéritif to our main event there. Derek Turner set the scene in a different way, updating us on the new London government as the Traffic Director transmogrified into the less grand but more influential Director of Streets Management.

David & Alec trailed the new Awards regime that the Society will be running. The Geoffrey Gribble Award ended with the old century at the wish of his family. The last award went to the new Sadlers Wells. This year's awards will be our first event after the summer break, in September.

This year's dinner attracted 42 members and guests. We were able to take over the Sultan Ahmet restaurant and many people welcomed the space to move around between courses. This is an event which we can more easily take around the Borough, and we are looking at the north-west for next year.

The Bill Manley Memorial Pub Crawl again attracted a cheerful band, and our Christmas Social in the Artillery Arms was well received by the regular clientele. Thanks to Sarah Carson without whom our musical endeavours would fall flat.

#### *The year ahead*

Work has progressed on our two publications planned last year: the Islington Trails, and the History of Day Flats. Our new President and founder member, Harley Sherlock, has again shewn us the way with a book about Sanderstead, its village and its cricket team. Published by the Bourne Society, "Villagers-five Shillings" is of course available from the author. In addition, following the sudden demise of Discover Islington, we have taken on responsibility for publishing Alec Forshaw's Twentieth Century Buildings of Islington. The loss of Discover Islington, and to a lesser extent the Islington Festival, has strengthened our resolve to grow to fill the gap for a champion for Islington. The information centre which preceded the

public information office at D.I. was of course led by the Angel Improvement Trust, now part of the Society.

It has been a traumatic year for Ambridge, with which in many ways Islington is twinned. You will not have to walk through disinfectant to the A.G.M., but our visit to Freightliners Farm had to be postponed. Subject to the script-writers at MAFF, we hope to rearrange this visit for June 12th. Our regular June event will be this year's "Open House", on **June 27th**. Last year under David Gibson's leadership and in conjunction with the mayor, we had an Open house week. This year we have decided to try three visits in a single evening, ending at the Royal Statistical Society whose building is celebrating its centenary. Provided no election campaign is in flow, Chris Smith will speak to us on a non-political topic on **July 11th**. The Bill Manley Pub Crawl this year commences at **The Crown** in Cloudesley Road, at 6 p.m. on **July 13th**. This year we will be reversing the route of the very first tour of pubs, led by Bill himself. Sadly one or two of the original venues have also gone, but we will end where the first Tour began, at the **Marquess Tavern**.

#### *Planning, Conservation, Transport*

Three matters have dominated this year's agenda. The impact of congestion charging, considered briefly by the relevant council committee, has been to the fore in two of our public meetings and at meetings of the Sustainable Transport Round Table. Our concern is that it should work primarily to reduce congestion, and that measures are put in place to stop rat-running and, worse, commuter parking, in the area just outside the congestion charging zone.

The second matter is the proposed P & O development at King's Cross. After months of consultation, this went to the Planning Committee in February and was roundly condemned by almost everyone who spoke in a two hour debate. A decision was deferred, so the debate will be resumed. It raises serious issues both of industrial heritage and of community development on a human scale: building on what and who is here *versus* maximising profit.

The third is of course the Arsenal

stadium. Here the issues are less clear cut because there are environmental arguments against losing Arsenal from the locality as well as those which are made against the proposals being developed. The re-siting of the refuse facility, and its possible enhancement, raise further issues. It is clear to me that the related transport issues are of the greatest concern where the stadium is concerned, and that the original proposals from Arsenal's advisers fell far short of what is acceptable. This will occupy us in the months to come.

More generally, we are concerned at any loss of green space or of provision for employment within the Borough where this is contrary to the adopted U.D.P. - in other words, the Council's own policies. We have raised these concerns with the Chair of Planning. We have sent detailed comments on the Mayor's Transport strategy: copy available on request.

#### *Our A.G.M. speaker*

Detailed concerns about our bus services have been raised at the last two A.G.M.s and I am pleased, firstly, that the Mayor has done something about them by appointing someone interested in running bus services instead of running them down. I am still more pleased that Peter Hendy has agreed to share his ideas with us. Having been on the receiving end of the dead hand of cost savings at any price, running one of the operating companies, he has ideas for making the franchises passenger friendly. His views on Countdown may surprise you as well. The bus must lead the revolution back to public transport. As everyone relies on the bus, either directly or to free the road of others' cars for their own use, I hope Peter will attract a large audience and some stimulating debate. Because Peter is likely to provoke much discussion, the A.G.M. will start promptly at 7.30 and I will be asking all members to keep their contributions brief.

#### *Annual Accounts*

Our annual accounts appear on the back of this report. You will see that we have survived the year with a small deficit thanks to more careful control of printing and distribution costs- despite one additional mailing for the Anniversary. **Andrew Bosi**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**  
**for the YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2000**

	£	<u>2000</u>	£	<u>1999</u>	£
Subscriptions Donations & Events	5,388			6,884	
Interest receivable	<u>63</u>			<u>14</u>	
		5,451			6,898
Printing and Distribution Costs	2,429			4,140	
Meeting Expenses	1,906			1,261	
Miscellaneous Expenses	1,118			635	
Donations to other groups	<u>123</u>			<u>140</u>	
		<u>5,576</u>			<u>6,176</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus		(125)			722

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 2000**

		<u>2000</u>		<u>1999</u>
<u>Cash at Bank</u>	6,904		2,049	
Less: Received in advance	<u>4,980</u>		---	
		<u>1,924</u>		<u>2,049</u>
<u>Accumulated Funds</u>				
Balance brought forward	2,049		1,327	
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	<u>(125)</u>		<u>722</u>	
		<u>1,924</u>		<u>2,049</u>

(Signed) A. R. Bower, Hon. Treasurer

**Hon. Auditor's Report to Members of the Society**

I have audited the above accounts and, in my opinion, they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Society as at the 31st December 2000 and of the Deficit for the year then ended.

28th March, 2001

(Sgnd.) Raymond Harris, FSCA, FAPA,  
77, St. Paul's Road, London, N.1 2LT