
THE ISLINGTON SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2001/2

The year after our XLth might have been anticlimactic, were we not living in Islington. Instead, the borough has seen two major planning decisions. The Society has embarked on a major new activity - publishing - which should ensure that our name is more widely known. We have also taken on paid assistance for the first time in our history.

Last year I reported that we had been given a small office space at 35, Britannia Row for which we are grateful to the generosity of Sharon Brittan of Britannia Row Ltd. This office houses Bob O'Dell, our part-time administrator who puts in more hours than we pay for, our computer donated by Islington Council, and copies of our publications. The office was small before this last addition. One solution is to sell more books and to distribute more leaflets. Please encourage any friends who have not yet done so to purchase Twentieth Century Buildings of Islington or the Story of Day Flats in and Around Islington. If you know of anyone with an empty display rack or a counter that needs cheering up, our free "trails" are just the job. Unlike the intrusive advertisements on Radio Four, our trails are attractive without being "in your face". Containing something for the visitor and the long-term resident, they trace walking routes from Angel to Essex Road, Archway to Whitehall Park, Highbury Corner to Finsbury Park, Canonbury to Newington Green, Tufnell Park to Nag's Head and Finsbury Park to Crouch Hill.

Alec Forshaw's book has been widely acclaimed, both for its content and its twenty-first century design. It has spearheaded something of a boom in Islington publications to which our Vice-President Mary Cosh, the Chapels Society and our sister organisation the Arch & Hist have all contributed.

One of the last of the notable

subjects of Alec's book was the new Sadler's Wells theatre, replacing an earlier building of the same century which had been outgrown by developments in production. The project would almost certainly not have happened but for the dogged determination of Ian Albery, soon to leave the Wells after ten years. Our opportunity to say good-bye comes after the A.G.M., when Ian will tell us of the problems which he had to overcome to secure the building we have today.

Members are requested to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Society, on Wednesday, April 17th 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. 2nd May 2001.**
- 3. To receive the Annual report 2001/2.**
- 4. To adopt the financial report to 31st December, 2001.**
- 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 **Ian Albery, Chief Executive Sadlers Wells Theatre.**

Last year I outlined the need for a membership strategy. Now that Bob O'Dell has his feet under the table (between the boxes) and some material with which to

work, a full-scale membership drive will be central to our activity in 2002/3. As promised last year, each of our events has been preceded by a mailing to members. Although the nature of the event itself determines attendance, it is very clear that a simple postcard is most effective, followed by a letter followed by a prominent notice in the Newsletter. The proposal to keep subscriptions at their current level but invite donations was less universally successful, though one single donation covered the cost of one of the extra mailings.

The Committee will review our approach after the A.G.M. Observations from members are welcomed. We are recommending to the A.G.M. that no change is made in subscription rates this year.

The largest attendance was drawn to our Open House evening. Beginning at 2/4 Clerkenwell Road, we went on to the former St. Luke's Church in Old Street, Bloomberg's in Finsbury Square and The Royal Statistical Society in Errol Street. All are interesting buildings which have undergone or are undergoing transformation to a totally different use. All are a credit to the conservation movement which should be about preservation of the living building. We often hear of the problems of inner cities, particularly for children. They need a vibrant city to provide employment and leisure opportunities in the future. How much better when this is housed in buildings which relate so much of our history as well.

This year's dinner attracted 32 members and guests, all of whom appeared thoroughly to enjoy the good food and informal setting. We have managed in the face of rising prices for this type of event to maintain the tradition of moving around the Borough and avoiding extortionate cost. Thanks to Emma Gowers for finding such a good venue and organising a successful event.

We continue to take our educational role seriously. On **June 19th** we are holding a "Churches evening" at which we will compare and contrast three very different churches of Islington and their associated schools. With faith schools a subject of continuing debate it is timely to consider how they came into being in the first place.

For this event we have not one but three speakers: Father Antony Conlon, Canon Graham Kings, and Dr. Janet Wootton. Fr. Conlon masterminded the marvellous centenary celebrations last year at St. Joseph's, Bunhill Row. Canon Kings, one of our newest members, has presided over the restoration of the gardens at Islington's parish church and is now turning his attention to the bells. Janet hardly needs any introduction, as Minister of the Nationally significant Union Chapel and a leading light in the "Arch & Hist".

In complete contrast, though I think of it as thanksgiving after Mass, two days later we celebrate the life of Bill Manley with our annual pub crawl. We are also celebrating the retention of Clerkenwell Green in public ownership. We will start on the Green, at the Crown, and work our way north east into Hackney, ending with live music at the Wenlock Arms.

We have two important events in September. On the third Wednesday, jointly with the Islington Arch & Hist society, Alec Forshaw will speak about twentieth century buildings in Islington. The following Wednesday, **September 25th**, Chris Austin will speak about the Railways. Chris is Head of PR at the Strategic Rail Authority. The Railways could do with some good publicity and I hope we will get some encouraging news about Highbury Corner, the East London Line, trains to and from Arsenal, Finsbury Park and freight by rail rather than road.

Please support our events. It is the best way of thanking good speakers who give voluntarily of their time. 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. John Newland has moved out of Islington and is unable to re-stand. All other members whose three year term is completed have been renominated. As always, I am grateful to those who give so much time to the Society: Donald our Secretary, Adam Bower as Treasurer (whose report follows this), David my active deputy and Kathleen Frenchman, editor of the newsletter. Harley Sherlock, as ever, has been an active and

influential President on many fronts.

Events in 2001/2

Planning, Conservation, Transport

Three matters have dominated this year's agenda. The impact of congestion charging, combined with construction of the CTRL and the improved Underground station at King's Cross, ensured that traffic in Barnsbury was back as number one. The P & O scheme at King's Cross reached a satisfactory planning conclusion and the next step is to see it and the associated traffic scheme implemented in the form agreed by the Planning Committee.

The third is of course the Arsenal stadium. We find the Government Office attitude to Arsenal at King's Cross misguided. We feel the same about Arsenal's plans for parking provision on the current stadium housing development. We feel more could be done to facilitate the movement of waste from the Lough Road site by rail. Conversely, we believe Arsenal moving out of Islington would be bad for the Borough, in terms of traffic generation as well as the benefits that Arsenal bring. We are not supporting a judicial review, but we are committed to monitoring the detail of the implementation of the public transport support for the new stadium. Arsenal has pledged (in correspondence) to maintain dialogue with us, which we welcome.

Traffic management

Traffic in Barnsbury has been on the agenda for most of the last 35 years. We have had two debates in the course of the last year. One, in the Planning Conservation & Transport Committee concerned the merits of proposals under consideration. The second, in the Executive, concerned the merits of us taking sides and how we should determine which side to take.

The Committees of the Society are not delegates of the membership. It is the job of the Council to ascertain the level of popular support, and then to decide whether there are sufficient grounds for acting against the wishes of the majority. Our role is to test the proposals against the objectives

of the Society - in this case improving our environment. Members can and do influence the Society's thinking in three ways. A few have the time to join the committees. More attend our meetings - we have had excellent debates on Town Centre management, on what Islington offers young people, on congestion charging and (going back to the previous year) on housing and on libraries. Thirdly, we can write to the Newsletter. The editor is keen to expand this side of the Society's principal means of contact with members. Don't just wait for the Vice-Chair to advocate cycling on the pavement (sorry, David, I exaggerate) before you write!

The year ahead

On the domestic front, increasing our membership is now our top priority. Further publications, particularly if they complement this activity, may follow. We are also keen to strengthen our links with neighbouring civic societies. We are of course well represented at the London Forum, where founder Chairman Marion Harvey has moved on to be Vice-President. The government green paper on planning, and our own council's plans for area planning committees and a restructured planning department, all present challenges we could perhaps have done without.

Many of our planned events are detailed elsewhere in this report. Last year the Open House evening attracted the largest attendance of any. David Gibson is working on a similarly engaging mix of places to visit as I write. We hope to repeat the High & I Schools debate in October, which is a better time for the schools than May.

Annual Accounts

Draft annual accounts appear on the back of this report. Comparison with last year is difficult, because a large donation for restricted purposes has transformed a deficit into a surplus. More detail than is given overleaf will be available at the A.G.M.

I hope you will be able to come to the A.G.M. and other forthcoming events.

Andrew Bosi

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
for the YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2001

		<u>2001</u>		<u>2000</u>
	£	£	£	£
Subscriptions Donations & Events	11,533		5,388	
Miscellaneous	108			
Interest receivable	<u>118</u>		<u>63</u>	
		11,759		5,451
Printing and Distribution Costs	2,779		2,429	
Meeting Expenses (note 1)	1,108		1,906	
Miscellaneous Expenses (note 2)	268		1,118	
Donations to other groups	<u>---</u>		<u>123</u>	
		<u>4,155</u>		<u>5,576</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus		7,604		(125)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 2001

		<u>2001</u>		<u>2000</u>
<u>Cash at Bank</u>	10,223		6,904	
Less: Received in advance	<u>(175)</u>		<u>4,980</u>	
		<u>10,348</u>		<u>1,924</u>
<u>Accumulated Funds</u>				
Balance brought forward	1,924		2,049	
Adjustment to prior year accounts	520			
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	<u>7,604</u>		<u>(125)</u>	
<u>Total</u> (note 3)		<u>10,048</u>		<u>1,924</u>

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

Notes.

1. Includes Annual Dinner expenditure £824 (2000: £1100)
2. Comprises £93 on 20th Century Buildings and £175 audit fee.
3. Comprises £746 in unrestricted funds and £9,302 restricted funds. Restricted income received by the charity are accounted for separately as restricted funds and are used for the purposes specified by the donor.