
THE ISLINGTON SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2002/3

After four years of relative stability in the officer ranks, it is perhaps inevitable that at this year's A.G.M. some changes are proposed. Steve Barnett and Adam Bower have had to stand down as chair of planning, conservation & transport, and treasurer respectively, though both remain on our committee. Donald Mitchell has taken the reins of treasurer and generously agreed to put his name forward for this hardest to fill post. I am most grateful to him, and to Adam and Steve for their sterling work over the last four years.

One of the sources of pressure of time has proved to be the existence of two committees. Although it has ensured that issues of the day have had a good airing, on at least two occasions something has come to our notice just before the "wrong" committee was due to meet. Rather than take chair's action alone I have raised the issue at the meeting that happened to fall at the right time. Unfortunately members of the appropriate committee are not party to that discussion and have felt their role on that committee devalued as a result. Other members whose input would be valued at both committees can only afford to give time to one of them.

We have therefore agreed to remerge the two committees. The new body will be known simply as the Islington Society Committee. I am delighted to report that the team of David Peel and Frances Balfour who have been secretary and minutes secretary of the P C & T have agreed to continue their role for the new committee.

We have been less successful in finding suitable arrangements for the editorship following Kathleen's decision to stand down last summer. Kathleen Frenchman brought a professional training to the task of editor, which involved the difficult task of pinning down busy people to write to deadline in a form and format that was understandable. I

know from letters and chance meetings in the street that members value the newsletter most of all. The programme of events may attract new members, and provides in my view a much needed focus in Islington, but it competes with many business and social activities and a relatively small proportion of members are able to come. A newsletter reaches everyone. In view of the time since the last newsletter, we have agreed to expand this annual report. I hope you enjoy the content.

Members are requested to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Society, on Tuesday, April 29th 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. 17th April 2002.**
 - 3. To receive the Annual report 2002/3.**
 - 4. To adopt the financial report to 31st December, 2002.**
 - 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 **Leisha Fullick, former Chief Executive, Islington council: Islington across two millennia.**

Last year Bob O'Dell joined us on a part-time basis as a result of a grant we received at the dissolution of Discover Islington. Bob's work on the six trail leaflets has been widely acclaimed - another publication which reminds people of the existence of their local amenity society. I am pleased to report that Bob has agreed to join the Committee in a voluntary capacity, and to continue to deal with the promotion of the trails and our other publications, notably Alec Forshaw's book on twentieth century buildings. David Gibson has continued to support this work, and to represent the Society on the Angel Town Centre Management Board.

Our President and founder member, Harley Sherlock, continues to raise our profile with an energy that belies his years. The newly established monthly opportunities to "Meet the President" at the Marquess Tavern - normally the first Tuesday of every month - provide another forum in which to raise matters that members think the Society should be pursuing. When we take a stand on anything there will inevitably be one or two members who disagree. But unless we speak out and open up debate, we may as well not exist. It is important to ensure that an Islington wide view is heard when the interests of the borough as a whole conflict with those of a small part of it. Our aim is to express what we perceive to be the Islington wide view in a way that respects differing individual opinions.

The need for an Islington-wide view has never been greater. Under changes to local government promoted by central government and taken further in Islington by the use of Area Committees to consider planning applications, it is harder than ever for the public to be engaged in matters of local concern. One of our sister organisations in London is carrying out a review of how the changes in local government have affected public involvement. There was no doubt, listening to the then Minister who spoke to the Fabian Society last year, that there are those in the government who are convinced that public involvement slows down the planning process and hampers regeneration. I share the

frustration at not getting the railway projects London badly needs, but if it were my garden that needed to be cut in half or my street that needed to accommodate a ventilation shaft, I would want and expect the chance to object and explore whether any alternative could be found. The Amwell Society can tell you how that process can benefit both "sides" (although the scheme in question, Thameslink 2000, has many hurdles still in its path). In other instances, like the quest for more air travel, the case simply has not been made for expansion, despite a Messianic belief in it within government.

Events in 2002/3

One issue on which members' views were fairly unanimous was the planning application for the P & O site on the eastern (Islington) side of York Way, opposite King's Cross station. Thanks to the tireless efforts of one of our members, the original disastrous scheme was thrown out and a much better one put forward by the developers and approved. We firmly believe the approved scheme is in the better interests of the developer as well as the local community. Indeed, their managing director said as much recently to the King's Cross Community Forum. One hopes that those who supported the original plan as an improvement on the dereliction that had blighted the site for so long can acknowledge this.

The Arsenal Football stadium is more contentious. It is probably fair to say that the Society's membership does not mirror that of the populace of Islington as a whole in its enthusiasm for Arsenal. The main issue for us has to be minimising the distance people need to travel and specifically the vehicle miles. This means a higher proportion of a larger number must travel by sustainable means - public transport or on foot or by bike, to a place close to where they live. I don't believe the Islington Society can influence whether a scheme like this goes ahead, but we can influence the detail if it does. It is on the detail that most residents' concerns rest.

I was reminded recently that the re-siting of the waste disposal facilities are of concern to members, again on both sides of the

argument. Having the facility is important, just as not having an increase in refuse lorries on residential roads. The Lough Road site is ideally placed, next to a railway and it is a matter of great regret that there is not the foresight to invest in rail and so take full advantage.

Planning

Another major planning issue concerns the King's Cross Railway Lands. Although almost all in Camden, they affect Islington roads, Islington views and together with P & O, the Lough Road development, and new Arsenal stadium a sweep of new development in the Borough. Mixed in to this are plans for a tram linking Waterloo and St. Pancras. At issue is the route that the tram might take at the St Pancras end. It could be through the railway Lands, or as most locals would prefer around them and up York Way. The tram might enter the Vale Royal Estate, or it might go on to the Nag's Head. Or the other branch, planned for Euston to Camden Town, might extend to Nag's Head. Or the motoring lobby might ensure none of it ever happens.

I have spent so much time over the last fifteen years discussing planned transport infrastructure schemes that never seem to leave the drawing board, that I wonder if this part of the report has become something of a turn-off. If so, apologies, but occasionally something does happen. Phase I of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link is not far from completion, only six months behind schedule.

More locally, modest improvements at Highbury Corner and Newington Green seem likely to happen soon. The former is thanks to Living Streets, probably forever better known as the Pedestrians Association, together with Groundwork Camden & Islington. Newington Green has been championed by another of our members, Anna Berent. Neither scheme is quite as radical as the Society would like, but each will be welcome nonetheless.

The libraries have undergone great change in the last year. There is fierce debate among users about the changes. The loss of the Arthur Simpson library was keenly felt and contested in the area it serves. The building, like most of our libraries, is attractive to look

at but unwelcoming to those with poor mobility. The new library in Finsbury Park serves a different catchment area although also one which embraces the people of three Boroughs. The refurbished Finsbury library provides a single focus for local history close to the London Metropolitan Archive which can only be good. The loss of books and periodicals is of concern to many. The former reflects customer preference, the latter economics, but there are those who believe customer preference needs to be challenged. There is something to be said for encouraging the reading habit, and for adults setting children an example.

A "section 106" agreement (this is the jargon for planning gain) means that the Lewis Carroll children's library will have a new building. One of the things we were consulted about over the year was the council's policy on section 106 community benefits. Generally speaking, we are happy that they are now closely related to the development that gives rise to them. The old arrangement of a pool of money was not satisfactory. It led to lasting mistrust: people in Finsbury being convinced the money spent on building Archway Pool should properly have been invested in the part of the Borough that is now within the congestion charge zone.

Congestion charge

The congestion charge was one of many subjects on which we were consulted by the Mayor, GLA or TfL. The Society has for many years seen the need to reduce traffic as essential to our environment. There are better ways of achieving this, but none of them are legally permitted. We therefore welcomed the principle and are delighted that it has begun so well. We stressed that we wanted it to reduce traffic, thereby improving bus services instantly, rather than raising revenue with which to improve buses and tubes at a later date.

We had some concerns. Initially the mayor seemed keen on sticking with the same zone over a long period. We were worried that this would make commuting to the boundary popular and might also encourage rat running in the part of the Borough just outside the

zone. We are pleased that the Mayor is now looking to expand the zone in due course. At our Congestion Charge debate, both Eric Ollerenshaw (Conservative A.M.) and Jenny Jones (Green A.M.) expressed support for a London-wide zone. The present zone perimeter is a natural boundary, and apart from the North and South Circular Roads, there are no other logical boundaries until the M25 which approximates to but does not replicate the boundary of Greater London.

In the event, traffic has been so reduced that the boundary road has so far had sufficient capacity for those who wish to avoid the charge by driving around London. This is ideal because it means there is no call for rat-running.

Another concern was the minor but irritating anomaly that arises where the one-way system moves the boundary line. We pointed out that, having extended the residents discount zone in some places it seemed illogical not to do so in all, and specifically at King's Cross and the triangle inside Goswell Road and City Road.

More seriously, we have concerns about the exemption for Powered Two Wheelers. Although they are less greedy in the road space they occupy per person, they are not environmentally friendly. We are worried that greater numbers of them could lead to more road traffic accidents. Congestion charging should be a positive for road safety.

The real plus has been the improvement to bus services. Elsewhere I have listed the changes that apply to Islington. The London-wide bus map is no longer available, except commercially, so I hope that this will be useful. Many of the improvements relate to times when the congestion charge does not apply. The 24/7 service gives the lie to the claim that public transport does not cater for those who work unsocial hours.

From the start of this month the Freedom pass is available at all hours of the day. We imagine that most users will wish to avoid the crush hour, but this will be of great benefit where hospital appointments are set at an early hour. We hope the mayor's acquisition of the tube will not mean the end of

bus improvements.

Mayor's London Plan

The second most important action of the mayor in 2002/3 was the publication of his draft London Plan. At the time of writing the examination in public is being held with our views represented through the London Forum of Amenity Societies.

Our response centred on three themes:

I. Minimising the need to travel without reducing access to work, leisure, etc.

II. Densities

III. Global city and wealth creation v. the needs of Londoners.

The first of these is we believe fundamental to breaking out of the present cycle in which growth continues unabated without the public transport infrastructure to support past levels of economic activity, let alone the new increased levels.

The second point covered a wide range. We support much of what is in the draft; higher densities linked to good design, limits on parking associated with new development, protection of green space, tall buildings limited to clusters, and the need to provide accommodation with a spare room. But there is potential for conflict between these objectives, and the Plan needs to be clearer to prevent one or more of the objectives being squeezed by the others.

This led directly to the third strand, but here we were more critical, feeling there is too much emphasis on the World City and not enough on the needs of existing Londoners. The Plan should be less favourably disposed to development.

As well as these main themes, we also made specific comments on the proposals for new transport infrastructure and for encouraging greater use of public transport for both freight and passenger movements.

Our approach was to pick out the references that support our views, and to call to attention other parts of the draft where alternative wording would better reflect them. The response was drawn together by our Executive and finalised at a meeting of the Planning Conservation & Transport Committee.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE ISLINGTON SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 2002/3

At the risk of perpetuating the idea that you see the same people at every Islington group, we plan to publicise the activities of other voluntary groups in the borough. Here Adrian Williams writes about ICAG- the Islington Cyclists Action Group.

The local branch of the London Cycling Campaign (LCC) is called Islington Cyclists' Action Group (ICAG). It has retained its name because it was formed in the 1970's before the LCC. It currently has a membership of over 500 LCC members in Islington. A few years ago an e-mail list was set up - it has about 150 subscribers at present which includes people from surrounding boroughs who retain an interest in Islington.

The group meets regularly to discuss local issues relating to cycling. Our liaison with the Council had become rather poor but latterly has greatly improved with the appointment of a cycling project facilitator. Although the post is only for six months, since September we have met with the Council on a monthly basis and for the first time in many years have had significant input into the Borough Spending Plan, the council's bid to Transport for London (TfL) for money for transport related schemes.

Unfortunately schemes produced to help the cyclist are frequently criticised by other people who object to cyclists riding on pavements, without lights at night, ignoring red lights etc. Sadly all this acts as a diversion from the real problem which is that there are too many cars in London! ICAG promotes safe and responsible cycling and it is hoped that the introduction of Police Community Support Officers in Islington will exert a some deterrent effect by issuing fixed penalty notices for offences. Some education is needed first because the Met Police have so neglected basic patrol and road safety functions that most cyclists now don't know the laws relating to riding on the roads. Last year the Council's Road Safety Unit restarted cycling training for the borough's schools, aimed at Year 6 (final year primary or top junior) children. We are very supportive of this and any scheme to get people to start cycling. If you have children at an Islington school, or know people who do, or are some how involved in local schools, please encourage them to take up the training & other cycle related initiatives. Please contact us for details.

Complaining about cycling on the pavement also misses the point that ICAG tries to keep cyclists on the road. We would welcome greater dialogue with Living Streets (formerly the Pedestrians Association) and rarely do we support joint use of paths. Cyclists can be the victims of crime and have been targeted by local delinquent youths over the winter and had

various "missiles" thrown at them and panniers stolen by moped riders.

Last year the LCC and TfL produced a set of cycle guides showing cycle routes all over London, along with other information. They are available free from the LCC website www.lcc.org.uk or by phoning London Travel Information (7222 1234). Map 10 covers inner London including the south of Islington and map 5 covers north Islington.

The impact of congestion charging is unknown at the time of writing. A few more people might try cycling but the general problems of fear of traffic, bad weather, lack of carrying capacity and the perception that only fit young men can use bicycles easily are the background factors that mislead people to think that cycling in inner London is difficult. The basic problems are more that road surfaces are deteriorating and secure storage at home or work requires thought and more public provision.

Congestion charging will probably lead more people to try motorised two-wheelers: no congestion charge and free parking (if you can find it). Insurance costs are high because the risks are high. Powered two-wheelers (PTWs) have the highest accident rates and cause disproportionate injury to pedestrians and pedal cyclists. In general pedal cyclists don't want them in bus lanes because PTWs are thought to overtake too close and too fast, nor should they use the cyclists' advanced stop lines at junctions.

For those who enjoy rural cycling the Little Green Ride is an easy-paced ride of around 30 miles in the Hertfordshire countryside with a pub lunch. It takes place every other Sunday and meets at Finsbury Park Station 9.45 a.m.; for more details contact Sue on 020 7-729 5409.

ICAG runs a self help bike workshop at Sunnyside Ecology Gardens, N.19 each month (for more details contact Gavin on 020 7-607 1950 or Gavin@gkillip.fsnet.co.uk) and usually has a stall at the Gillespie Park Festival. If you want a presence at a local summer festival do get in touch and we may be able arrange a Dr. Bike (free check) service and an obstacle course. The cyclists' breakfast by the Colebrooke Row junction with City Road has become an annual feature of Bike Week, which this year runs from 14th to 22nd June. For further information on ICAG contact Alison Dines on 020 7226 5427 or icag_lcc@yahoo.co.uk

St. Joseph's, Bunhill Row, London, E.C.1

This is an edited version of the talk given by Father Antony Conlon to the Society last June

From the reign of Elizabeth I to that of George II, Catholics in this country were denied the right to public places of worship. The only exceptions were the few embassy chapels in London. They and the private houses of a relatively small number of Catholic gentry located around the country were the only places where Mass could lawfully be said. There was little provision for Catholic education. Wealthy families sometimes sent their children abroad to be educated. For the vast majority of Catholics this was not an option. Other restrictions included a bar on holding public office or military commission which entailed the Oath of Supremacy. Over a two hundred year period Catholics sank from being the majority religion of this nation to being a remnant. This was the situation in the mid-1700s. The fact that so many professions were closed to them, led many many aristocratic and upwardly mobile Catholics into trade and business. They developed the habit of going about their business in a quiet and unobtrusive manner, taking care to avoid drawing attention to themselves or their religious affiliation. Avoiding the expense of living at court or a political career, many became rich as a result. When the time came for greater emancipation and freedom they were in a good position to take advantage.

By the closing decades of the eighteenth century, the political and social climate in England allowed a relaxation in the laws against Catholics to be considered opportune. In the 1770s around 400 priests served a Catholic population of about 70,000. Most chapels were still in private homes and a few discreetly in towns where the level of acceptance was high. In other places, Catholic landlords of taverns not infrequently provided venues for the celebration of Mass and as meeting places for social gatherings. Although there were several bishops in charge of large areas of the country, the laity had considerable influence. Two major shifts in the social and religious scene would bring enormous change. First was the flight of thousands of French priests to England, following the French Revolution; second was the immigration of thousands of Irish Catholics. They mostly came to the cities. Places like London that had previously held few Catholics per head of population began to show a huge increase. Both bishops and the wealthier and more philanthropic members of the laity were anxious to provide for the education and spiritual needs of this influx.

From the 1790s St. Mary Moorfields served as a centre and pro-Cathedral for all of the London area. St. Joseph's Bunhill Row had its origin from two taverns in the neighbourhood of St. Luke's Anglican parish. The first, the Rising Sun in Golden Lane had an Irish Catholic landlord in the 1770s. He proved a great source of support and encouragement to many. Mass may have been offered within his premises. In 1797 the Associated Catholic Charities was formed by poor Catholics. They met in a tavern called the Mariners Arms. Each subscribed a penny a week for the education of poor Catholic children. By 1815 they had raised enough for the site of the present St. Joseph's to be purchased. Previously they had acquired a chapel in Whitecross Street. It closed in 1823 when the focus switched to the Lamb's Passage site. An orphanage and asylum was built and registered at 3-4, Lamb's Passage, known as the "Orphan Asylum and East Division Schools". This building provided a refuge, education and a place of worship for the many poor Catholics now in the neighbourhood. In 1849 the then spiritual head of the Catholic community in London, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Wiseman came on a pastoral visitation. An account of that visit was published in "The Tablet" of 19th May, 1849.

Last Sunday there was a scene worthy of the most Catholic countries, and which even reminded us of Apostolic times, when the devout Christians followed SS Peter & Paul, and pressed them on every side in order to touch the hem of their garments or merely apply their handkerchiefs to their bodies, believing that virtue emanated from the very touch of the Church in her rulers and holy members. It had been announced to the people that the [Arch]Bishop would preach to them on that evening; therefore for some time before his arrival the streets for a considerable distance were lined by the poor Catholics anxious to receive him with due honour. When at last his carriage made its appearance they all advanced to meet him with lighted torches, and scattered laurels before him. With the greatest difficulty the Bishop made his way to the altar, owing to the crowd in the classroom which holds at least 1,200 persons. The crowd however was so great outside as well as within that the Bishop was not satisfied with merely addressing them from the platform in the schoolroom. With great difficulty he got out into the court, and ascended a table and spoke again in the open air in

about the same terms. Never was a more imposing or touching benediction given. A multitude of 1,500 people, all entering heart and soul into the solemnity of the great act, was a scene never to be forgotten. After Benediction, the bishop made his way through the crowd as best he could, many laying hold of his hands, some seizing his feet to kiss them, others almost tearing the cassock off his back.

The congregation always consisted of poor people. By 1854 Mass attendance numbered 3,000 with a Catholic population twice that number. A new church, built for 700, had classrooms included within the structure. This church was solemnly opened on December 6th, 1856. Cardinal Wiseman presided, and the Bishop of Southwark sang the Mass. Both Wiseman and his successor Cardinal Manning took great interest in the parish. In 1880 Manning conferred on Fr. David Twomey, parish priest from 1855 to 1887, the title of Missionary Rector.

By the 1890s the resident population in the city had sharply declined. The site of the old St. Mary Moorfields in Finsbury Square was sold and a new church built on the present Eldon Street site. The church at Bunhill Row was replaced by a school with a chapel in its basement, and the parish administered from St. Mary Moorfields. A pastoral letter from Cardinal Vaughan (June 8th, 1901) mentions the building of the school at a cost of £10,000. The fact that this was published to be read in every church and chapel in the Diocese is an indication of the importance placed on the building at the time.

In 1923 Cardinal Bourne decided to restore St. Joseph's as a parish in its own right. He recognised the separate and special identity of the parish. As a mark of his personal interest he presided at the induction of the new Rector, Fr. Joseph Irwin. During the eleven years of his stewardship both parish and school flourished. Records show that in a single month in 1927 there were no fewer than 117 baptisms. Pageants, processions and social events were regular and welcome features in the yearly calendar. Non-Catholic neighbours and friends of the parishioners would line the streets to watch on these occasions. I have received a number of letters and spoken to individuals who still remember these years and speak fondly of the community spirit that characterised those times. But after the departure of Fr. Irwin the parish again reverted to the jurisdiction of St. Mary Moorfields. The Second World War caused the evacuation of the school to Norfolk. In the blitz, many adjacent buildings were destroyed. St. Joseph's lost three of its nineteenth century stained glass windows, but the building itself was not seriously damaged. There was some doubt about re-opening after the war

but the school did reopen in 1945.

In 1959, the parish again achieved its independence from St. Mary Moorfields and a new rector was appointed. Unfortunately, the turbulence and trends of the sixties were not suited to a man of his temperament and despite an overall increase in the population, numbers attending Mass at St. Joseph's and the school fell dramatically. Falling rolls meant failure and closure. The school was closed in 1976, to the despair of the parishioners who felt unable to mount a sufficient challenge at the time. The move of SS Peter & Paul Primary school from Amwell Street to within the St. Joseph's parish boundary at Compton Street only partly compensated for their loss. The new school would still be considered part of the Amwell Street parish and give precedence to its children. Stripped of its school and then its remaining assets when the school building was leased to the *Catholic Herald* in 1980, the parish struggled on for the next twenty years subsisting on the goodwill of a small but dedicated number of its parishioners and occasionally on the generosity of individual donors. In 1993 a new arched gateway to the church gave it better street profile and the interior underwent major restoration. This work was supervised by a local Islington architect and received much praise at the time, both locally and in magazines dedicated to church building. A bare stripped interior gave way to a visually inspiring place of worship. It was intimate without being informal and more elegant than grand in its decoration. The 1990s were years of growth and recovery of lost ground in many areas. Both income and participation were rising steadily.

In 2001 the centenary of the present church was commemorated in significant style with a full Pontifical Mass celebrated by Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor. Due to the large numbers present, Mass and the lunch following were held at the Brewery in Chiswell Street, a building of similar age to the parish itself, and a reminder of its beginnings. The Mayor of Islington was present on that occasion. The video recording of the event shows the parish community at its best, and allowing for the fact that a quarter of it comprised invited guests, the congregation was remarkable for being drawn from people of every age, continent and walk of life. Almost a whole year on, the parishioners still live in the glow of that day and continue to look forward, the signs to the contrary notwithstanding, to a future for a parish and a church that has nurtured and educated thousands in its history and still tries to provide a daily focus for prayer and reflection to the residents of the many housing estates on the southern tip of Islington, and on the edge of the great commercial capital of the City.

Forthcoming events (Islington Society events in bold)

- April 30th Organ recital, Victoria Hay, Union Chapel, 7.30 p.m.
May 6th Meet the President, 9 p.m. Marquess Tavern
May 10th Cycling: A Capital Solution, Church House Westminster, 10 a.m. (details from LCC)
t.b.c. Open House evening/ building awards
May 20th A Night on the Tiles - sponsored Pub walk for Union Chapel (from 5.15, Marquess Tavern)
May 21st Organ recital, Union Chapel (Richard Baker), 7.30 p.m.
May 21st Annual General Meeting of the Arch. & Hist. Society, Museum, 8 p.m.
June 10th Stephen Twigg, M.P. on education
June 12th King's Cross Development Forum, Camden Irish Centre, 7 p.m.
**June 13th Bill Manley Memorial Pub Crawl, starting Seckforde Arms 6 p.m. and six "new" venues
incl. O'Hanlons 8.15 p.m. and the Red Lion 9.45 p.m.**
June 18th Organ recital, Union Chapel (Adrian Gunning), 7.30 p.m.
June 18th Arch. & Hist Society monthly meeting
July 1st Meet the President, 9 p.m. Marquess Tavern
**July 23rd Church Crawl - St. Mary's Islington, Cross Street Baptist Church, S. James, Our Lady of
Czestochowa, S. John Evangelist, Duncan Terrace.**
July 30th Organ recital, Union Chapel (Edward Kemp-Luck), 7.30 p.m.
August 5th Meet the President, 9 p.m. Marquess Tavern

Changes to Bus Routes in Islington April 2002-March 2003

New routes

- 205 Paddington-King's Cross-Angel-Old Street-Aldgate
390 new number for northern section of route 10, Archway-King's X- Marble Arch
393 Hillmarton Road-Nag's Head-Highbury Corner-Highbury New Park-Stoke Newington-Clapton
394 Angel (Tolpuddle Street)-City Road-Hoxton (BLUE Hoppa bus - LT passes valid)
476 Northumberland Park-Stoke Newington then via 73 route - Euston

Enhanced frequencies

- 4 Archway-Tufnell Park-Finsbury Park-Highbury-Angel-(not Sunday) Waterloo
17 Archway-Holloway Road(Nag's Head)-King's Cross-London Bridge
19 Finsbury Park-Highbury-Bloomsbury-Knightsbridge-Battersea Bridge
30 Hackney Wick- Highbury-King's Cross-Marylebone Road-Marble Arch
38 Clapton Pond-Essex Road-Bloomsbury-Piccadilly-Victoria
55 Oxford Circus-Clerkenwell Road-Old Street-Leyton Green
56 Smithfield-Goswell Road-Essex Road-Whipps Cross
63 King's Cross-Mount Pleasant-Elephant & Castle-Honor Oak Park
76 Tottenham-Kingsland High Street-Englefield Road-Hoxton-Waterloo
141 Wood Green-Green Lanes-Newington Green-Southgate Road-London Bridge
243 Wood Green-Dalston-Old Street-Clerkenwell-High Holborn-Waterloo
259 King's Cross-Caledonian Road-Finsbury Park-Edmonton Green
277 Highbury Corner-Canary Wharf-Leamouth now seven days a week

Extended routes

- 141 Wood Green-Moorgate, extended to London Bridge
274 Angel-Market Road-Zoo-Marble Arch, extended to Lancaster Gate

New Night Buses

- N10 (old route 10, i.e. Hammersmith-Archway); N76 (Northumberland Park-Waterloo);
N214; N271; N274; N277 (as corresponding day-time routes).

Local Campaigns

I reported last year on our discussion of the Barnsbury traffic conundrum. I encouraged members to write to us and one or two did so. What is common ground is that there will always be more than one view among members and there will always be articulate members putting those views forward. Our role is not to count heads, but to try to analyse the situation dispassionately. Our view should not be seen as 350 votes, like a trade union at the Labour Party conference. Councillors must make the decisions and take responsibility for them. Our role is to advance informed arguments to assist them to do the best thing for Islington.

Also last year, I reported on the successful outcome of a campaign over the nature of a significant development at King's Cross to the east of the station: the P & O site. Eventually the developers put forward a scheme which carried general support and which is now being built. This was reached through establishing a dialogue with developers in which the integrity of the campaigners was maintained. Permission has now been granted for redevelopment of the bit of the P & O site which is in Camden (the Lighthouse block). This includes a compromise which is less popular. Some of the roofscape is retained, but not five of the eight chimney stacks. P & O say a lighter structure is needed to make the building usable.

The success on the Islington side was largely due to a small group of local people working actively and assiduously. A similar local campaign based around the Anderson's Yard group persuaded the Council to support a scheme under which it was hoped that Shakespeare's Rose theatre set would come to the site. This was less clear-cut because it was achieved in exchange for two concessions: that the normal requirement for affordable housing as part of the associated development would be waived, and the private housing would be built to one storey higher than would otherwise have been allowed.

In January this year it became apparent that the Rose theatre set was unlikely to feature

in the development. Some members felt that since Shakespeare had no great link with Islington, this was of no great consequence and that the important thing was that the performing arts would return to the site of Collins Music Hall. However, there was no doubt that this was a departure from the scheme councillors had anticipated when they gave their approval, and that a change of this kind had wider implications for the Borough as a whole. The councillors have not used this issue for scoring cheap party points about Peter Mandelson, nor or they taking an unreasonable approach to a developer (either too cosy or too hostile); they are seeking the best deal for Islington.

The year in retrospect

Ian Albery launched the Society's year with a fascinating talk about the long and ultimately successful campaign to rebuild Sadler's Wells theatre. In June we were able to contrast the histories of three churches in Islington: Union Chapel, St. Mary's Islington and St. Joseph's Bunhill Row (see the supplement). In September, we were privileged to hear from Chris Austin of the Strategic Rail Authority and the Ogilvy-Webb lecture was given by Baroness Sarah Ludford, one of our ten MEPs and perhaps the only one many readers can name. A couple of months ago I noticed "The Best of Joyce Grenfell" showing in Hertford at £10 admission, so you could have recouped your membership at a stroke on January 22nd when we were entertained by the Mayor of Islington, Margot Dunn. Despite the worst night's weather of the winter, the congestion charge debate referred to above was well attended. We are grateful to Jennette Arnold and Dave Wetzel for leading the charge from their different perspectives, to Jenny Jones for her vision, to Eric Ollerenshaw for his robust opposition without losing credibility, and to Bridget Fox for a Borough perspective.

The Annual Dinner was a magnificent success thanks to the efforts of Emma Gowers and some unexpected additional publicity. After a long search for a venue that would not exclude members on grounds of cost, it was unfortunate that this came at the expense of

excluding those who are wheelchair bound. In the event we were only able to squeeze everyone in thanks to last minute cancellations. We will look for a bigger fully accessible venue next year. I am mystified as to why when restaurants and pubs are broadly competitive with the rest of the country, formal sit down meals are so much more expensive in Inner London.

The year ahead

Our programme of events commences straight after the A.G.M. with a talk from Leisha Fullick. Leisha occupied the hot seat of Chief Executive of Islington Council as political control changed hands and as its modus operandi was restructured in a major way. Less visible were the changes in culture which Leisha sought to bring about. The debate about democracy and interest in local affairs goes on and this will be a chance to explore the extent if any to which interest is being revived. The three churches debate last year demonstrated how keenly the role of churches in education is debated. It was good to hear the Christian case for state schools from Janet Wootton, reminding us that the issues are not clear cut even from that perspective. In June (on **June 10th** to be precise) Stephen Twigg joins us. A full list of forthcoming events appears in the Supplement.

Future direction

From time to time issues are raised about the Society which in the context of Gulf War may seem trivial but which clearly carry underlying principles of deep concern. One such is whether in the twenty-first century we should commence the formal dinner with grace.

The policy I have adopted is to continue those traditions which have been established. Traditions take years to establish and moments to destroy. Grace signifies the point at which we think everyone has arrived, or that we have squeezed in the last possible person, and informs guests and staff that it is time for orders to be taken. However, I am aware that not all members are Christians or indeed hold any religious persuasion, and that the saying of grace however phrased is based

on a belief in some form of deity. We have to accept that Christianity underlies much of what we do, from the way the date is worked out to the way everything comes to a halt on December 25th, to the inconvenience of those who want to travel to a place of worship on that day. Equally, we need to ensure that the Society is welcoming to all sectors of the Islington community. So I am calling for members' views, either in writing or at the A.G.M.

It is now some time since we turned our attention to Islington shops. In the 1980s the Islington Improvement Trust campaigned with some success for the reuse of the top floors in Upper Street. In the 1990s the Red Route came and many traditional shops disappeared, either because of greater enforcement of long-held traffic restrictions or because as restaurants moved in market forces moved rents upwards.

One of our new corporate members is keen that the Society should mount a campaign to prevent the loss of those useful small shops that still remain. As well as being useful, they retain for their neighbourhood a distinctive character as more and more town centres become dominated by the same big chains of coffee bars. Again, I would welcome members' thoughts.

Time will not permit a lengthy report from me at the A.G.M. which is my excuse for a lengthy report in print. The agenda item "Report from the Chair" will be for members to respond to what is written here.

Annual Accounts

Draft annual accounts appear on the back of this report. Comparison with last year is again difficult, because a large donation for restricted purposes in 2001 was spent in 2002. The figures do not reflect the Society's publishing account which is not administered through the Society account. 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

THE ISLINGTON SOCIETY

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL

The Islington Society was founded in 1960. It works to safeguard and improve the quality of life in Islington. Its special concerns are the built and general environment, libraries, schools, health, and recreation, public transport and priority for pedestrians. New members are welcome.

Subscription rates: Full member £8 per annum

Couple/family member £10 p.a.

Voluntary organisation £15 p.a.

Corporate/business membership £20 p.a.

please tick box

Name(s)

Address

Telephone

e-mail

I enclose a subscription of £

I wish to set up a standing order for membership of the Islington Society

OR

Bank

Sort code --

Address

Please pay the sum of £ on (date)

to Lloyds Trustee Savings Bank, 31, Holloway Road, London, N.7 8JU

Sort code 30-94-21

for the credit of the ISLINGTON SOCIETY account number 00072707

and thereafter make payments on 1st January each YEAR until further notice

My account number is

The name of my account is

Signed

Address

Date

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
for the YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2002

		<u>2002</u>		<u>2001</u>
	£	£	£	£
Subscriptions Donations & Events	3,400		11,533	
Miscellaneous	38		108	
Interest receivable	<u>10</u>		<u>118</u>	
		3,448		11,759
Printing and Distribution Costs	1,142		2,779	
Meeting Expenses (note 1)	991		1,108	
Development (note 2)	8,649		---	
Miscellaneous Expenses (note 3)	27		268	
Donations to other groups	<u>136</u>		<u>---</u>	
		<u>(10,945)</u>		<u>4,155</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus		(7,497)		7,604

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 2002

		<u>2002</u>		<u>2001</u>
<u>Cash at Bank</u>	10,238		10,223	
Less: Received in advance	(190)		(175)	
		<u>10,048</u>		<u>10,348</u>
<u>Accumulated Funds</u>				
Balance brought forward	10,048		1,924	
Adjustment to prior year accounts	(25)		520	
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	<u>(7,497)</u>		<u>7,604</u>	
<u>Total</u>		<u>3,526</u>		<u>10,048</u> <u>924</u>

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

- Notes.** 1. Includes Annual Dinner expenditure £776 (2001: £824)
2. Drawn from the restricted funds of £9,302 reported in last year's accounts.
3. Comprises net cost of V.A.T. in the calendar year 2002.