

# ISLINGTON *news*

*The Journal of the ISLINGTON SOCIETY incorporating FOIL folio*

## KINGS CROSS RAILWAY LANDS

Perception is everything in the property world. So the King's Cross Railway Lands are now to be known as 'King's Cross Central' says Argent St. George, the developer-in-charge – a formula they successfully deployed on the old DHSS building at the Elephant and Castle which they converted into luxury flats and renamed 'Metro Central Heights'. *writes James Dunnett*

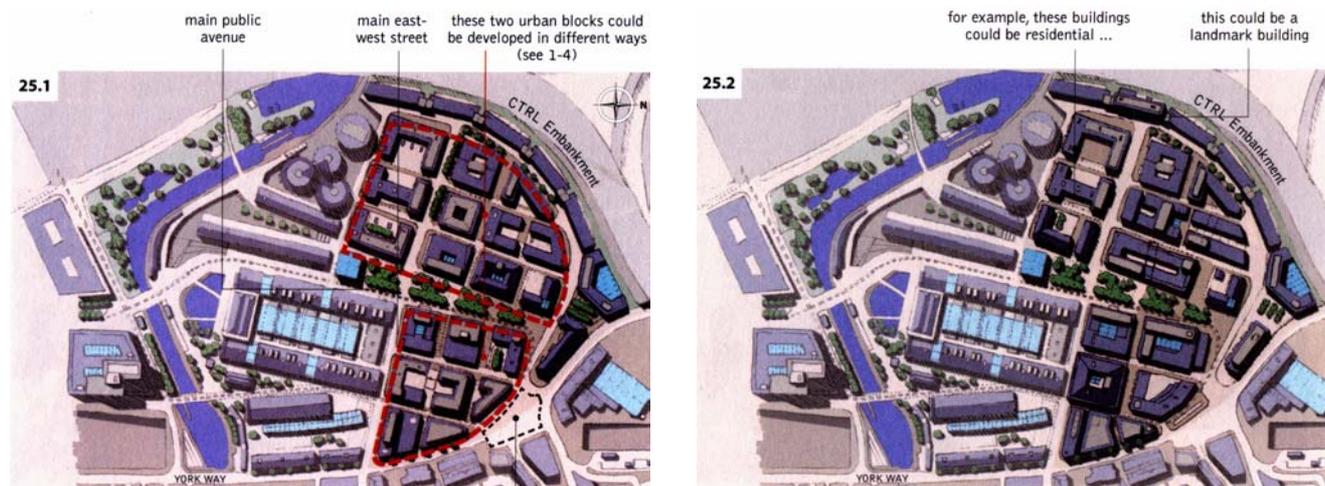
That was the 'St. George' arm. The 'Argent' arm was responsible for the admired Brindleyplace development in the centre of Birmingham, and it was undoubtedly on the basis of that project that they were selected for King's Cross.

The sketches in Argent St. George's newly published 'third consultation document' – a development scheme in embryo – are distinctly reminiscent of Brindleyplace, and indeed A.St.G were offering at the Kings Cross Railway Lands Group AGM on 4 November to ferry coach-loads up to Birmingham to see Brindleyplace (their solicitude and patience with the 'consultation process' are remarkable). There is the same picturesque approach, the same dense land cover around quite tight urban spaces, and both sites have industrial relics including a canal. The architects of the 'consultation document' scheme – Allies & Morrison and Porphyrios Associates – both

had major roles in Birmingham. It has to be admitted that Brindleyplace is quite a success, in picturesque terms. Every building is designed by a different architect, ensuring variety, and they are clustered tightly round a central traffic-free square of a 'traditional' pattern. The same quality comes across in the sketches for King's Cross.

An important difference is that King's Cross is nearly four times as large. The time scale forecast is immense: the first planning application is expected to be submitted this summer, with outline consent hoped for in 2004. Channel Tunnel trains would start running in 2007, and only then – the railway works complete - would development for humans start, lasting 10-20 years depending on the economic climate. Will a formula that works for the compact almost entirely commercial development at Birmingham work so well over a much larger area involving considerable amounts of housing?

*Illustrations of how the Northern Area might be developed*



THE  
ISLINGTON SOCIETY

*KING'S CROSS RAILWAY LANDS continued from front page*

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The quality of outlook becomes even more important from a residential than an office building, and the high density and relatively treeless environment may be less tolerable. A strong tapering axis is proposed running north east from opposite the Camley Street Natural Park (the only significant green space that is to remain, and not in A.St.G's site), but as one questioner pointed out at the AGM, the real 'desire line' should be north west towards Camden – but the CTRL embankment blocks it: the milling crowds may not be drawn through the site, as shown on the sketches, only in order to reach the northern section of York Way.

Apparently one response to the consultation received by A. St. G so far has been that 'the absence of an 11-a-side football pitch is an insult to the residents of Somers Town'. This is surely getting to the nub of the matter. The important question, not open for discussion, is whether the northern part of the site should be regarded as a development site at all, and whether it should not, as agreed

*Computer image of the new entrance to St Pancras Station*



by the Islington Society ten years ago, be mainly used to meet the serious shortfall in public open space and playing fields in the area. It is worth remembering the long-running and successful battle to preserve Barnsbury Wood as open space with which the Society was involved twenty-five years ago, first against the developers and then the Council, who wished to treat it as a housing development site. It would in fact be possible, as I tried to show in my own scheme for the railway lands, to combine a considerable amount of development with retaining substantial areas of open space. But the site is now classified as 'brownfield' land, falling within the new mandatory high urban-density guidelines (however calculated), imposed for the best of reasons...

Meanwhile the block-like mass of the new St. Pancras train-shed (larger in area than the original to which it is to be abutted), for which preparations are under way, is not promising. It was designed by Foster Associates, from whom something more exciting might have been expected, and whose masterplan for the Railway Lands a dozen years ago was at least focussed on a central, somewhat restricted, green space. The draft proposals for a new Kings Cross/St.Pancras joint concourse on the site of the Great Northern Hotel, presented at the KXRLG AGM by Robin Lovell of Railtrack, deservedly received a pasting.

*James Dunnett*

ISLINGTON *news*

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*Suggestions for topics to be covered and articles to be considered may be sent to the Society at this address. Local organisations are asked to send notification of activities and events they would like to be listed.*

*Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society.*

## Planning in Islington

In the last edition of your Newsletter, Harley Sherlock lamented the passing of Islington Council's Planning Committee and its replacement with area based committees. He also commented on the abolition of the Conservation Advisory Committee and how, during our recent Audit Commission Best Value Inspection, he and others who met the inspectors agreed that users of the planning service usually received a fair hearing.

I am pleased to say that the Audit Commission concluded that we provide a good 2 star service and that our prospects for improvement are promising. Interestingly, the inspectors in their comments, reflected concerns about the passing of the Planning Committee and the abolition of the Conservation Advisory Committee. Thank you to Harley and other users of planning who gave up their time to meet the inspectors.

So what has experience of the new committee structure been to date, and what are our plans for re-engaging with Islington's conservation lobby?

Planning decisions that are not made by officers under delegated powers are now determined by one of 4 area committees. This amounts to around 10% of all decisions. Some real pluses of this new arrangement are that more Councillors now engage in the planning process and that

decisions are now seen to be made within the community rather than more remotely at the Town Hall.

As part of this devolution of decision making, officers have been keen to emphasise that planning decisions must be made in accordance with our planning policies as set out in the Council's Unitary Development Plan (the UDP). The planning process is about striking balance between protecting the amenities of local residents and businesses and providing some certainty for new development proposals (whatever their scale).

We have maintained the Conservation Advisory Panel, the group of local residents and representatives of local amenity societies that comment on planning proposals and will re-constitute the panel as a Conservation *and* Design Panel in the new municipal year. This reflects the new structure of the planning division, whereby with have integrated design officers with our conservation officers so as to strengthen our design input on development schemes. The new panel will automatically include representatives of the Islington Society, the North East Thames Architects Society and the Chamber of Commerce. The balance of the panel will be made up of representatives of bona fide local amenity groups on a rotating basis.

We will also be talking with the chairs of the area planning committees about establishing links with the amenity societies located within their respective areas. It is hoped that this will further enrich the committees themselves and the decision making process.

As regards the Conservation Advisory Committee itself, the Council's Head of Communications and Consultation, Kate Roe, is currently undertaking a review of all of the borough level panels and groups that existed prior to the inception of the area committees. As part of this review Kate will examine which of these groups should be reconstituted and how they should relate to the area committee structure. I know Kate appreciates the valuable role that the Committee has played in the past and will look to see how it can continue to play that role.



Graham Loveland  
Assistant Director (Planning)

### MEMBERSHIP

*The Islington Society works to safeguard and improve the quality of life for everyone who lives, works or has an interest in Islington*

Annual subscription rates are:

Full members : £8 Couple/family membership : £10 Voluntary organisations : £15 Corporate/Business membership : £20

The Society is a member of the Civic Trust and a registered charity no. 261143

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## Conservation Area Grant Schemes

*Mike Bruce and Lance Penman of Islington Council's Conservation Initiatives section explain the workings of HERS schemes in the borough*

Grant schemes to enhance Conservation Areas in Islington have existed for around ten years. They were funded by English Heritage at first but then became Partnership Schemes (CAPS). Under this arrangement the funders were English Heritage (the Heritage Lottery Fund- HLF), the Council (LBI) and the building owners. This approach continues in the successor schemes, known as Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes (HERS).

The Council has five current schemes: Keystone Crescent, Caledonian Road (2), Chapel Market and Newington Green. Bids for next Spring are for Holloway Road and a second Chapel Market phase.

The impact these schemes have can be judged by the changed appearance of the Keystone Crescent Conservation Area, where grants have been available for seven years. Many buildings, particularly along Caledonian Road, have had their cheap aluminium shop fronts replaced with timber traditional design, often based on old photographs showing original details. Above the shops, windows have been repaired or replaced to their

original pattern, restoring architectural details around windows and missing cornices. Render and paint has been removed from front façades. Nearly 70 properties have been treated in this way.

In the Keystone scheme, £1.1m. came from EH/HLF/LBI. £92,000 came from the King's Cross Partnership and £35,000. from P & O under a section 106 planning agreement. In total about £1.3m. of public money and £½m. private contributions have been invested. This may not seem much, and apportioning it property by property takes a lot of staff time. Great attention has to go to getting work properly specified (by outside architects) and executed to a high accurate standard.

Progress at Chapel Market, started in April 2000, has also been good, but most areas need two schemes (six years work) to make a significant impact.

### Newington Green HERS

The Newington Green HERS has £450,000 from HLF/LBI over three years. Other funds will be invested in the Green, for environmental improvement and highways work. Funds for these are provided by the Transport for London budget, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, LBI Greenspace, and Groundwork Safe Routes to School.

The scheme had final approval in July this year and initial contact has now been made with most properties facing the Conservation Area. Many owners, some working collectively, have appointed architects to prepare detailed applications. The scheme has also appointed the Building Exploratory to carry out an historical and photographic survey of the area, working closely with Newington Green School. They will be producing a leaflet with information about the buildings and history of the green, and a CD with all the data collected.

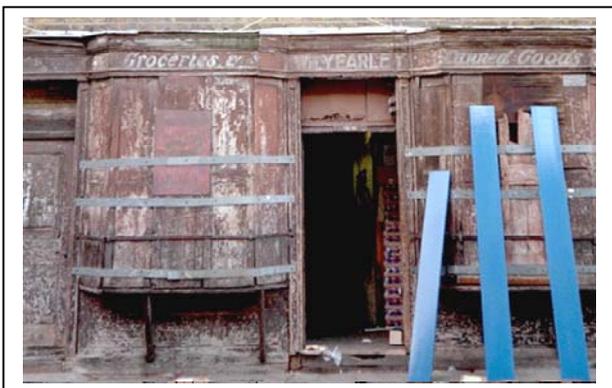
### Other improvements

As well as enhancing property, the grant schemes can be used for streetscape improvements. The Council seeks alternative sources of funding for these because of their higher cost. In Caledonian Road it is hoped to repave some of the broad shopfronts in the original uniform York stone paving, replacing the mish-mash of surfaces chosen by past owners.

### Chapel Market HERS

The Chapel Market HERS is funded with a total of £½m. over three years. Now in the last year of this phase, £177, 000 has been spent, mainly on building repair.

Several of the grant aided schemes are at or close to completion, including the top floor windows of 19 Chapel Street, the



## The Draft London Plan

roof and parapet of 97 Chapel St. and the shopfront of 31-33 Baron Street. Two shopfronts are currently under repair and two more due to start after Easter. Negotiations are under way for work to start in a further four locations. These include five shopfronts with late 18th Century houses behind, listed Grade II, in Penton Street. The scheme has also funded a new shopfront design guide.

Plans for Godson Street include York stone paving and new lighting. Two-thirds of the £90,000 cost will come from HERS and the remainder from the developer of properties facing the car-free street.

A six or seven year programme has significant impact on the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Some building owners have been sufficiently encouraged to improve buildings at their own expense, avoiding some of the conditions of grant aided work. These include maintaining the new appearance: any further changes require LBI permission. It would not be good use of public money if any future owner were free of such commitment.

So far the Council has recognised the good value offered by the schemes and has managed to find its own contributions from capital resources. Long may this continue.

*The Islington Society has responded to the Mayor's draft London Plan*

The draft London Plan was published for consultation in July last year. In drawing up our comments on the Plan, we had the benefit of exchanging early drafts with Islington Council, CPRE, Transport 2000, Capital Transport Campaign, Friends of the Earth, the Pedestrians' Association (Living Streets) and the London Cycling Campaign.

Our response centred on three themes:

- I. *Minimising the need to travel without reducing access to work, leisure, etc.*
- II. *Densities*
- III. *World city and wealth creation versus 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 lead 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 attention to other parts of the draft where alternative wording would better reflect them. The response was drawn together by our Executive Committee and finalised at a meeting of the Planning Conservation & Transport Committee.

Earlier, we were one of only thirteen organisations to respond to a separate consultation by Islington Council. The Council was particularly concerned about the boundary between the Greater London Assembly and Borough responsibilities. We support the principle of subsidiarity, citing White City as an example where London-wide intervention would have been desirable.

We suggested that, had the Arsenal stadium plans included a shopping centre that would have affected neighbouring boroughs, it would have been appropriate for the Mayor / GLA to intervene. We felt it important that the national agenda should not be allowed to swamp more local considerations, and in our response to the Mayor we criticised his failure to make the London case against unbridled airport expansion.

The Mayor's team now has to sift through all the responses. The definitive London Plan should then be published by the end of this year.

*Andrew Bosi*

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**ISLINGTON**

## Islington and the Strategic Railway

"If God had intended us to fly, he would never have given us the railways"

**Chris Austin**, the Strategic Rail Authority's Executive Director for Corporate Affairs, outlined its plans for freight, for the development of local and long distance passenger services and set out clearly who does what in the new rail industry

*Passengers are looking for better value, Government wants to see performance restored and more people are looking to use the railway. Expectations are high; can the railway deliver?*

Andrew Bosi Reports

The North London Railway Company which ran trains across Islington until grouping in 1923 owned only 14 miles of track but had operating rights over 50 miles. At the turn of the last century, 585,000 people came through Broad Street every day, more than Euston and Paddington combined. Electric trams, trolleybuses and tube lines attracted so many passengers away that by 1963 the line was recommended for closure. In 1979 the number of passengers using Broad Street was down to 3½ thousand. The turning point was the electrification of the then freight route from Dalston to Woolwich, sponsored by the last Greater London Council. The line is now seriously overcrowded, but this growth in passengers is a National trend. Freight ton-miles, after declining from the 50s to the 90s, is also on the rise, buoyed by the positive approach of English Welsh & Scottish Railways (EWS). Train miles are up 21% since 1994/5. Cheap Advance Purchase tickets have made railways accessible to people who could not previously afford them. EU directives on hours of work for HGV drivers has stimulated growth in freight traffic.

The Transport Act 2000 established the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA). It exists to secure the development of the railways, to promote their use by passengers and freight, and to develop an integrated transport system. Planning major upgrades involved working with local and regional planning authorities as the need to tie in transport projects with land use is at last acknowledged. Championing passengers' interests is another aspect of the SRAs work. They sponsor the Regional Passenger Committee and eight of the nine regional committees, LTUC under the Transport for London (TfL) umbrella being the exception. The private sector will deliver the service and the performance standards. As much as possible profit will replace treasury subsidy, and the financial risk will be taken by the private sector.

The SRA was attempting to confront three current issues: performance, punctuality & reliability; rising costs; and the need to deliver to National expectations. The increase in numbers of trains had led to the drop in reliability, currently 83% having exceeded 90 prior to Hatfield. The new trains have appeared where capacity existed, not where they could be most easily filled, but the resulting mix of fast and slow passenger trains and freight was a "dog's breakfast". Hence the consultation on the unfortunately named Capacity Utilisation Policy (my CUP runneth over) which should lead to a new timetable in May 2004. Once the best use is made of the infrastructure we have, a case can more strongly be made to government for resources to meet growth. Happily the next capital spending review is due the year before an election.

The problem of rising costs came as the SRA is reviewing fare structures. 40% of fares are regulated, i.e. controlled by them. Very low Advance Purchase fares masked substantial increases in other unregulated fares which overall had risen much as in the BR era. The consultation paper had effectively ruled out continuing with below inflation fare increases: in any case, TfL was increasing travelcards in line with inflation. Escalating costs were a worry: the West Coast Main Line upgrade was exceptional, but TPWS (the train protection warning system) and other safety issues, the cost of meeting the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act, EU directives on Automatic Train Protection, wage costs ahead of inflation, the cost of managing contracts, working out who should carry which risk with so many parties to any arrangement - all these applied throughout the network.

Meeting expectations might mean dropping heavy rail schemes for light rail/bus improvements. In Islington, there was the need to reduce overcrowding on the NLL and upgrade Highbury & Islington station. Money existed for small projects to improve interchange and increase modal use: Highbury station could qualify. {the chair has written to one of the councillors present to pursue this}. Passenger information and communications had to have higher priority; this too meant the North London Line. Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) was not yet an Strategic Rail Authority responsibility, but its building made Thameslink 2000 (which is) essential. Apart from CTRL, new lines in the next ten years were likely to be limited to short stretches of track linking existing lines.

## Developments at King's Cross

Although almost all of the King's Cross Railway Lands are in Camden, they are close enough to the border to be seen in Islington. Commendably, developers have been appointed well ahead of completion of the railway works. Even more commendably, the developer has embarked on an impressive consultation programme with local residents and has produced some preliminary documents that say all the right things.

The developer, Argent St. George, won the contract on the back of their successful development of Brindleyplace in Birmingham. There they made optimal use of what was left of the area's heritage, adding modern buildings of a kind Birmingham needed. They plan at King's Cross to follow the successful formula of three contrasting architects to combine best use of old buildings

with contrasting styles of new. Apart from a link with James Brindley, however, there is not much similarity with King's Cross, which is more than three times the size.

Through the King's Cross Railway Lands Group, the Society was alerted to worrying rumours that the direction the plans were beginning to take departed from the *Principles for a Human City* and the *Parameters for Regeneration* the developers themselves had set.

In particular, it was rumoured that the Great Northern Hotel was not thought worthy of retention. Its protection was one of many reasons for opposing the original discredited Low Level International station scheme. Unfortunately, ownership has passed from people anxious to keep a thriving business to those happy to close for five years. Breakfast off the sleeper from

Edinburgh, a decent pint of ale and a snack before the train up north, and a centrally placed suite of meeting rooms - all have been deprived to the King's Cross community.

The Society, working with our neighbours the Camden Civic Society, has raised with Camden Council our concern for the Great Northern Hotel. In an encouraging reply from their Director of Environment (and Islington resident Peter Bishop), it seems that Camden too has documented its wish for respect for the area's heritage, and for consultation with both the local community and the neighbouring borough.

All concerned are preparing for the long game: development cannot start until the railway works are substantially complete, and those still have funding hurdles to cross.

AB

## Changes to Postal Services

Pillar boxes in North London no longer give collection times other than the last each day. Almost certainly fewer collections are being made. Worst of all, there is now no means of determining whether the last collection has in fact been made.

The consumer watchdog Postwatch has been trying to persuade Consignia to introduce tabs with the day of the next collection, where previously the number of the next collection was shown. This simple means of informing users is meeting resistance.

A second change is the planned closure of sub-post offices in urban areas. Previously, closures have been unplanned, dictated by the prevailing mood when a franchise comes up for renewal. Now they are to be planned by reference to the proximity of the nearest alternative. Unfortunately, if the loss of a sub-post office makes a shop unviable, resulting in attempts to convert to residential, but the Post Office criteria are met, there seems to be no mechanism for taking account of the social need. We are taking this up with our MPs.

More worryingly still, changes in the administration of benefits, including pensions, is expected to reduce revenue to Post Office counters by over 30% from April 2003. This can only renew the pressure for more Post Office closures. At the very least, it has given rise to speculation in the press about the future of the two Crown offices in Upper Street. One is the elegant building adjoining the site being sold by Royal Mail, with poor disabled access. The other is a temporary building which has good access but poor visual amenity.

AB

## Johannesburg & Sustainable Development

**Baroness Sarah Ludford** spoke to the *Islington Society*  
28 November 2002

There has been a tendency to dismiss the Earth Summit held last summer in Johannesburg, South Africa as an outright failure. It was derided by some commentators as a costly and wasteful junket, where some 60,000 delegates did little more than produce hot air. It is true the EU's goal of a plan of action for sustainable development was not achieved, and only a handful of specific targets agreed.

Yet its results, while not half as impressive as hoped in agreeing an effective and concrete strategy to tackle global poverty while safeguarding the environment, were more substantial than some give credit for. Considering that the EU was the only engine of progress, it can at least be proud of its role.

One heartening by-product of the Johannesburg summit was the announcement by Russia and Canada that they are moving to ratify the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, which would bring it into force. But the UN is saying, rightly, that there should be no more international jamborees until governments fulfil such existing commitments.

Global poverty is a truly massive problem, and inequality continues to rise alarmingly. The assets of the world's richest three billionaires are greater than the combined Gross National Product of 600 million people in the least developed countries. A fifth of the developing world's population goes hungry every night, a quarter lacks access to safe drinking water, and a third lives in abject poverty. Environmental degradation is both a cause and consequence of distress.

Under difficult circumstances key agreements were reached in Johannesburg. The most significant and unambiguous success of the summit was the setting of a target to halve the number of people in the world lacking basic sanitation by the year 2015 - currently about 2.4 billion people. With over 30,000 people dying each day from water-related diseases, this pledge - if implemented - will make a huge difference

to billions of the world's poorest.

Johannesburg also produced other, albeit smaller successes. EU-led calls to halt over-fishing, curb the production of dangerous chemicals and halt the loss of biodiversity were agreed in principle, though some say earlier commitments were weakened. The need for multinational companies to accept responsibility for their sometimes destructive activities is now firmly on the world's agenda.

But the greatest disappointment was the failure to include targets for renewable energy from sun, wind and water that the EU had called for. The instructions to the United States' negotiating team were to avoid any strong commitment on the environment, especially any on renewable energy that would curb the oil business in order to cut global warming.

But even without global agreements, there is plenty that we in Britain and Europe can do by ourselves to further sustainable development. For a start the EU should begin to reform its disgraceful Common Agricultural Policy. There can be no genuine free or fair trade so long as we in Europe continue to rig the competition by heavily subsidising our farmers, penalising imports from poorer countries and flooding their markets with our hugely subsidised agricultural exports. Is it right that the average cow in the EU receives a \$2.20 daily handout from Brussels when many human beings live on less than \$1? It is high time that the huge wall of agricultural duties and subsidies protecting Fortress Europe (and the US) is brought tumbling down.

Europe must continue to take a positive lead and maintain the moral high ground. The UK's current performance on sustainability lacks ambition so we, together with our EU partners should implement the tough targets and measures on renewable energy, over-consumption and biodiversity that were defeated at Johannesburg, regardless of the lack of a worldwide agreement. This would send a clear message that Europe is prepared to put its money where its mouth is.



"With its use of strong coloured and highly sculptured render Rick Mather's new technology centre for UNL is arguably the most stunning contribution to Islington's architecture in the 1990's and a brilliant counterfoil to the greyness of the 1966 tower. The jagged projections into the view up and down Holloway Road also take the eye away from the UNL annexe on the corner of Hornsey Road."

It may come as a surprise that the majority of Islington's residents live in 20th Century buildings and most of the borough's institutions and places of work or entertainment date from this period. Alec Forshaw's book, published by the Islington Society, reveals their range and richness and tells their remarkable story

### **20th Century Buildings in Islington**

Alec Forshaw | photographs by Richard Leeny

200pp. 210 x 210 ISBN 0-9541490-0-9

at £14.99 (inc. post & packing)

available from bookshops or from The Islington Society

## Three Churches in Islington

*Andrew Bosi reflects on the Society's main summer event, "Three Churches : Free Churches."*

Islington's myriad of church buildings continue to give definition to our streetscape. We are fortunate in being the first, and to date only, Borough to have our non-conformist churches, including those used by the Roman Catholic church chronicled by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments of England.

It therefore seemed logical to devote an evening to three of Islington's churches. Representing the established church was Canon Dr. Graham Kings of St. Mary's Islington. The parish church of Islington, it gave its boundaries to our Borough when it was created towards the end of the 19th Century. Although a long established parish, its 1754 building has a contemporary look having been substantially rebuilt after war damage, in 1956. As Islington expanded northwards with the coming of the railways, St. Mary's spawned new parishes. The division of the spoils between the continuing St. Mary's and the new St. Mary Magdalene's was the source of some tension in the 1840s.

St. Mary's has been home to the famous, none more so than the Rev. David Sheppard, recently retired Bishop of Liverpool. David has been promoting his recent

book on the cricket grounds of Sussex this year, but it was his first book that Graham Kings brought to the Islington Society meeting. It gives a poignant reminder of the poverty that existed in now fashionable Islington prior to gentrification, and which still persists elsewhere in the borough today. The role of the church was perhaps more clear cut in the days when people routinely put "C of E" on forms asking their religion.

The Catholic church was represented by Father Antony Conlon, whose term as parish priest of St. Joseph's Bunhill Row culminated in its centenary last year. An understated church in the basement of a building designed for a school as well as a chapel of ease served from St. Mary Moorfields, the 100 year old St. Joseph's replaced an 1856 building. The parish has been characterised by an absence of wealth, but not a poverty of spirit. The scenes that greeted the Catholic bishop at the establishment of the parish following emancipation, related from contemporaneous records, were comparable to those which are now reserved for the return of successful football teams to the Town Hall.

In the time of persecution, Catholics had relied on local hostels for accommodation at which to say Mass. The choice of

Whitbread's Brewery in Chiswell Street for the celebration of the church's centenary, as well as being a practical solution to the lack of space in St. Joseph's, was thus a reminder of the parish's antecedents.

Lack of space is not a problem for the third of our churches. Union Chapel is representative of many of our non-conformist churches and chapels in being larger than its congregation needs with consequent problems of maintenance. It is unique in other ways - as the Time Out venue of the year, as the monument to the work of James Cubitt, and in pioneering a design fit for purpose. Before Union Chapel, places of non-conformist worship (including its own predecessor of 1806) were modelled on Anglican and Catholic churches with their emphasis on hierarchy and their scope for processions and other ceremonies. Congregational tradition, with its emphasis on congregational rather than choir-led singing and on preaching the word of God, produced a building in which the Thomas Earp pulpit and its inhabitant are visible and audible from every pew.

Its long-standing minister of the Victorian period was Thomas Allon. The building as a whole could be regarded as a memorial of him; one window is specifically so dedicated. AB



**Rotherfield Street** is punctuated by no fewer than five **Day blocks**. The house at number 124 is surrounded on both sides. Apart from the (lack of) cars, and the street lamp, the scene is little changed today. Further east on the next street corner another identical Day block stands. Those on the south side have pitched rooves.

For thousands of Islington residents, a Day flat was the first step on the property ladder. Between 1956 and 1972 around a hundred of these blocks were built. Andrew Bosi's eccentric book, published by the Islington Society, traces their development, and the changes that have taken place since they were built. Each block is listed alphabetically with a brief description.

### **The story of Day Flats in and around Islington**

32pp. 148 x 210

at £5.00 each (inc. post & packing)

available from the author or from The Islington Society

## Estorick Collection Swap

At the end of last year the Estorick's permanent collection was temporarily on loan to the Palazzo Ducale in Genoa. This enabled the Estorick to open all six of its galleries for an exhibition of Italian decorative and propaganda arts of the 20s & 30s called *Under Mussolini*. The works were drawn from Genoa's Mitchell Wolfson Jr Collection that focuses on historical and political imagery, as well as on the evolution of modern applied arts in Italy.

The exhibition brought together fine examples of furniture, glassware, ceramics, painting, sculpture and graphic design. It also sketched in the political history from Mussolini's March on Rome in 1922 to his ignominious end in 1945, providing a context for the objects, which in turn illustrate the history. In contrast to the totalitarian examples of Germany and the Soviet Union in the 30s, one of the striking features of the exhibition was the variety and creativity of the artists. It was a time of turbulence, political oppression and colonial war, but also a time of modernisation, economic development and image building.

Craftsmen and designers were looking to local traditions, but also to the English arts & crafts movement, to Art Deco trends and even Nordic design. The influence of the Futurists is clearly seen in depictions of speed and flight, as well as in fascist images. The Romanità movement in the 30s was a cult of the splendour of classical Rome, but at the same time the Rationalist movement in architecture and design was thriving and even producing "International Style" buildings for the Fascist Party.

Aeroplanes, which were very much a symbol of Italy's modernisation, as well as links to the outside world and machines of colonial war, inevitably feature in the exhibition. Those who enjoyed the Estorick's Planespotters exhibition earlier in the year, came back for more. The "aeropaintings" of the late 30s are an exaltation of flight.

Renato di Bosso's painting, *In Flight above the Colonial Village* (1938) *right*, brings together a

number of strands in the exhibition. Here is a fine aerial view of a planned modernist rural settlement for Italians in North Africa. It's a reminder of the heritage of some good modern architecture left behind by the brief Italian Empire. It's also a reminder of the national striving for modernisation, economic development, and status in the world. Some of these efforts were admirable, some lasting, some misguided, and some horribly wrong.

*Bob O'Dell*



*In Flight above the Colonial Village*  
Renato di Bosso : 1938

The Estorick permanent collection reopened in January this year.

Horse&Dog, coming next, features a film by Boyd Webb, commissioned by the Estorick Collection, complemented by an exhibition of Webb's photographs.  
24 April - 25 May 2003

The Estorick Collection,  
39a Canonbury Square, N1 tel 020 7704 9522  
Open Wednesday to Saturday 11.00-18.00  
Sunday 12.00-17.00  
[www.estorickcollection.com](http://www.estorickcollection.com)

## Health Walks in Islington

In July 2002 Islington & Camden jointly launched an invigorating new walking scheme. The aim of the scheme is to develop regular, organised walks in both boroughs. It's all part of a national health initiative called "Walking the Way to Health" and funded by the Countryside Agency and the British Heart Foundation. The main aim is to improve the health of people at risk of coronary heart disease and other related diseases by encouraging people to walk more regularly.

Walking is the perfect exercise. It's gentle, it doesn't require any special equipment or clothing, can be done anywhere and, best of all, it doesn't cost anything. Joining an organised walk is also a great way of meeting people. The walks are gentle and suitable for everyone, regardless of your age or how fit you are.

As part of the initiative, Emma Charlton has been appointed as a Walking Co-ordinator for Camden & Islington. Her job is to assist community groups and individuals who'd like to set up organised walks in their local area. Initially the aim is to develop walks especially for older people. The walks can be in parks, along the canal, to

places of interest or anywhere else people want to walk – the choice is yours!

Emma is also organising training for anyone who is interested in leading the walks. The training is for one day, free, and covers all you need to know about how to be a successful Walk Leader. Walk Leading is voluntary, with a small payment per walk to cover expenses. It's a great way of really getting involved in your local community and helping people to get fit and enjoy themselves.

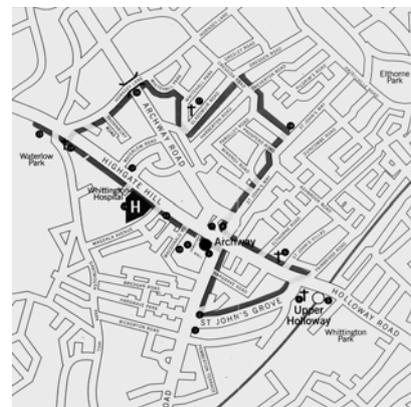
If you'd like to find out more about Walking the Way to Health, if you're interested in walking regularly in your area, if you'd like to find out more about becoming a Walk Leader, or if you'd like Emma to talk to your community group about walking, get in touch with her.

**Emma Charlton**

*Greenspace Division, Clocktower  
36 North Road, London N7 9TU  
tel 020 7527 2626  
emma.charlton@islington.gov.uk*

All six of The Islington Society's walking trails can be downloaded from Islington Council's web site.

[www.islington.gov.uk](http://www.islington.gov.uk)  
by typing "walks" in the search box



*This is a hilly walk with the reward of good views and pleasant, tree-lined residential streets. If you take a bus to the top of Highgate Hill, the rest of the trail is mostly downhill. Despite traffic noise, the shops and cafés along Junction Road and Holloway Road are worth exploring*

Extract from walking trail no. 2  
*Archway to Whitehall Park*

With the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund Awards for All, the Society has produced six walking trails through the borough. They are

1. Angel to Essex Road
2. Archway to Whitehall Park
3. Highbury to Finsbury Park
4. Canonbury to Newington Gn
5. Tufnell Park to Nag's Head
6. Finsbury Park to Crouch Hill

The Trail leaflets are **free**

*Contact*

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35 Britannia Row, London N1 8QH  
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## Edinburgh : The Golden Age MARY COSH

*Edinburgh: The Golden Age* is a major contribution to the literature on the Scottish Enlightenment. Based on an astonishingly wide range of sources, it covers the social and literary history of the city from around 1760 to 1832, the year in which Sir Walter Scott died.

The development of Edinburgh into one of the great intellectual centres of Europe is paralleled in the story of the growth of the city as architects such as

James Craig and Robert Adam reflected the confidence of a new age in the wide and imposing thoroughfares of the New Town.

Mary Cosh's use of contemporary materials, both well-known and obscure, presents a valuable and intriguing picture of how Edinburgh and its inhabitants were seen at the time by visitors and of how notable local figures saw their own city.

Mary Cosh has published a number of highly regarded books, including the familiar *Squares of Islington*. She is preparing a new history of Islington.

**Edinburgh: The Golden Age**

1120pp. hbk. ISBN 0-85976571-7  
£40 (inc. post & packing)  
available from bookshops or direct from the publisher: t. 0131 667 7799  
Published by Birlinn Limited

## Coming Events

29 April 2003

Annual General Meeting followed by  
Leisha Fullick  
"Islington across two millennia"  
7.30 *Islington Town hall*

10 June 2003

Stephen Twigg, MP  
Talking about Education  
7.30 *Islington Town hall*

13 June 2003

The annual  
Bill Manley Memorial Pub Crawl  
6.00 start at *The Seckforde Arms, Seckforde Street*

23 July 2003

Inside Islington Churches  
The first of a new series of church crawls visits  
Cross Street Baptist Church, St.James Prebend Street  
Our Lady of Czestochowa, St.John the Evengelist  
7.00 start at *St.Mary's, Upper Street*

## Events Planned

Dates to be confirmed : Watch for announcements

May

Open house visits evening

June

Architectural Awards Presentation

September

Exploration of Newington Green  
Joint event with the Hackney Society

October

Congestion Charge Revisited 9 months on

## Other Events

Don't forget the regular, informal

"Meet the President" evenings at the Marquess Tavern  
9 pm on the first Tuesday of every month; 3 June,  
1 July, 5 August, 2 September, 7 October, 4 November, 2 December

What do we offer Members?

### The Islington Society

- supports conservation planning work to preserve the borough's historic fabric and individual buildings of distinction
- campaigns for a high standard of design in new buildings
- organises a varied programme of events including talks, walks and site visits
- campaigns for better public transport and for priority for people on foot, bike & public transport
- produces publications that celebrate Islington's architectural history and its social & cultural diversity
- publishes neighbourhood walking trails to encourage exploration, awareness and pride of place
- builds links between residents, officials and councillors
- publishes a newsletter three times a year

What else do we do?

### The Islington Society

- sends representatives to advise the Council groups that deal with development, the environment and transport
- encourages best practice through awards for the best architecture in the borough in new or refurbished buildings
- is represented on the London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies, which takes up cross-borough issues of concern
- is a member of the Civic Trust

35 Britannia Row, London N1 8QH  
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