

# ISLINGTON *news*

*The Journal of the Islington Society incorporating FOIL folio*

## Islington bids Harley "au revoir"

The Annual Dinner 2013, held at the prestigious venue of Frederick's in Islington High Street, was made more memorable still be the farewell tributes to Harley Sherlock, founder member of the Society. Harley is moving back to his family home of Sanderstead later this Spring.

### Lunch at the Canonbury Tavern

On Sunday, 20th October, about a dozen of Harley's London-based friends came to have lunch or a drink with him at the Canonbury. It was a great occasion, topped by the staff presenting their best customer with some of his favourite local beer: see photograph on page 4, taken by Sara Neill.

### Dinner at Frederick's

A week later, the Islington Society held its annual dinner at Frederick's and decided to use the occasion to say farewell to Harley. David Gibson, who kindly organised it all and had already made a speech at Harley's farewell party in his house in September, asked how many farewell parties a man can have. "Not enough," was my reply.

The result was a splendid evening. Harley didn't know there would be anything about him, so he was surprised and thrilled by it all. First, the menu said there would be a "Presentation to Harley Sherlock, MBE, AA Dipl, MA, FRSA." Then Chris Smith - Lord Smith of Finsbury - made a wonderful speech about everything Harley has done for Islington over the last sixty years. Harley got to know Chris Smith many years ago, when Harley was a co-opted member of Islington Council's Planning Committee, and Chris was a member of the Housing Committee. Chris went on to become MP for Islington South and Finsbury, and he and Harley worked together on many campaigns.

*Inter alia*, Chris said Harley got three things right:

- (1) he knew that architecture is not just about houses: it's about community. Harley thought about the whole picture - buses, people, local shops, pubs (of course) - in a way which was really visionary;
- (2) Harley understood that you can create a dense urban environment without going way up into the

sky. You have the same density in four-storey Georgian squares as you do in Le Corbusier tower blocks;

(3) Harley came up with a very simple, neat, practical idea: when you have two houses on top of each other, you turn the top one upside down. The bottom house has its living quarters on the ground floor and its bedrooms on the first floor. But the top house has its bedrooms on its lower floor, and its living space on the top floor. This means bedrooms are on top of bedrooms, and no one going to bed has to listen to the noise of televisions etc from the other house. This idea is still being carried out.

Chris went on to talk about Harley's activities as a campaigner for Transport 2000, CPRE (The Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England) and as a founder member of the Islington Society. He finished by saying that "Harley has done absolutely everything that anyone could possibly do.

That's why breaking up is so very hard to do." He then presented Harley with a wonderful framed certificate (see photographs, taken by David Trillo), setting out some of Harley's contributions to Islington life.

Harley was pleased as Punch, and touched that such a fuss was made of him, so unexpectedly. Unfortunately, he chose that particular day to be deaf (it doesn't happen very often), so he didn't hear everything which was said. And he didn't feel able to reply; so I made a short speech on his behalf, thanking everyone for being so kind to Harley, and telling them a little story.

Harley asked me to tell the assembled company that he is leaving Islington after sixty years, and his cooker is sixty years old, and his fridge is fifty-five years old, and they are both still working. Perhaps this is taking sustainable living to its logical extreme, but it could be seen in other ways. About twenty years ago, Harley's Canadian cousin (also called Harley) came to visit my parents. The cooker was then a mere forty years old. Canadian Harley was torn between admiration and doubt. "But Harley, if everyone lived as you do, the world economy would collapse!" SJS

## Islington Society News

Catherine West to address Society

The next meeting for all members of the Islington Society will be a talk by Catherine West reflecting on her 3½ years of leading the Council through the most austere times we have known for 80 years. It will take place in the Town Hall Council Chamber on Tuesday February 25th, commencing at 7.30.

Day-time visit to Biffa

Provisionally scheduled for March 20th, we will confirm details at the February meeting and by e-mail.

Visit to Bennett Architects

We hope to make a visit to the newly renovated offices of Rab Bennett's practice in St. John Street, combined with the twice postponed visit to St. John's Gate in April.

Hustings.

Council elections take place on Thursday May 22nd (later in the month than normal to coincide with

European Parliament elections) and we plan to hear from the leaders of the four parties to have returned councillors in the last twenty years. The date for this event is May 6th.

Annual Pub Crawl

This will take place on Friday June 20th and this year starts in Finsbury Square and travels not very far north as we move closer to the goal of 100 different pubs. The event has been held since 1992.

Annual Dinner

Advance notice that this event will this year take place in July. We plan to visit the Honourable Artillery Company, Chiswell Street. More details next time.

Membership Manager Found

The Society is grateful to Peter Kilborn for responding to our request for a membership manager made in the last newsletter. His contact details will appear below.

## *Islington Society: What we do*

- we support conservation planning work to preserve the borough's historic fabric and individual buildings of distinction
- we campaign for a high standard of design in new buildings
- we encourage best practice through awards for good architecture in new or refurbished buildings
- we organise a varied programme of events including talks, walks and site visits
- we campaign for better public transport and priority for people travelling on foot or by bike
- we produce publications that celebrate Islington's history and its social and cultural diversity
- we publish neighbourhood walking trails to foster exploration awareness and pride of place
- we build links between residents, officials and councillors
- we publish a regular newsletter
- we send advisers to Council groups dealing with

development, the environment and transport

- we are represented on the London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies, which takes up cross-borough issues and is a member of Civic Voice

### CURRENT OFFICERS

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## Ironmonger Row Baths win 2013 Design Award

*The 2012 Conservation & Design award was presented by the Society on October 10th, when Alec Forshaw reported on the deliberations of the panel. Here is his speech.*

As always, it is a pleasure to look at good things that have happened, and this year we had a particularly impressive clutch of candidates, across the whole borough, almost from top to toe, from Farringdon to Finsbury Park.

We visited them together, by minibus, on a fine day back in June. On our journey we saw two schemes that we thought were very worthy of commendation.

The first of these was the former National Children's Home at 85 Highbury Park where on a large and sloping site a well designed and thoughtfully detailed new residential complex has been created. The former mansion on the frontage has been kept and converted to flats while behind a series of new terraces has been built which, through its walkways and roadways, connect seamlessly to the surrounding street pattern. The choice of materials, the scale and permeability of development and the quality of landscaping by David Wood Architects seemed admirable.

The second scheme which caught our eye was the Park Theatre in Clifton Terrace, Finsbury Park. Here the architects Hughes Jones Farrell and their clients have worked to a shoe-string budget but have created a wonderfully dynamic, colourful and welcoming building out of former commercial premises, including two innovative performance spaces and an extremely attractive café and foyer at the front. Finsbury Park is a part of the borough that is changing fast, but the Park Theatre is just the sort of addition that will help it move in the right direction, a real asset for the area.

However, despite these and several other stimulating candidates, there was this year one very clear winner. Never before, I think, has the judging panel been so unanimous in its decision. It is extraordinary to remember that little more than a decade ago there were some who considered that St Luke's was such a run-down part of the borough that comprehensive redevelopment was the only answer, including demolishing and rebuilding the old Ironmonger Row Baths.

Perhaps it was the rescue and reuse of the ruined St Luke's Church which began the reversal of fortunes for this historic part of Islington, but now

we have another wonderful project to celebrate in the restoration of Ironmonger Row Baths.

Fortunately the Baths, constructed in 1928, were Grade II listed by English Heritage in November 2006, which put an end to those who wanted to pull it down, but there remained the challenge of how to re-energise what was a much-loved but rather tired community asset.

That challenge has been magnificently met, by the Council as owners, by those who run and fund the recreation and leisure operations in the borough, and by the team of architects and other professionals who were hired to consult, design, specify and supervise the project.

As we stand here I think you will agree that the fusion of old and new has been achieved with enormous skill, imagination and care - a new main entrance and foyer facing south towards the public gardens, a top-lit staircase which brings light flooding into the circulation space, and do look at and admire the choice of materials and details - but alongside these modern interventions there is the sensitive retention of original fittings - the laundry chute, one of the first floor slipper baths, the marble massage slabs in the basement, the wooden spectator seats to the pool. The scheme has also seen the retention of the popular public laundry, a local community hub (very popular I'm told with students!), and the re-invention of the famous Turkish baths as a spa offering extraordinary and wondrous delights.

Great praise must go to the architect Tim Ronalds, but there are I'm sure many others who should also take credit. And finally I have to mention the enthusiasm of the staff who work here and in particular Grant who took the time to show us around. Their obvious pride in the building is a clear testimony to the quality of the finished product. It is something that Islington can be really proud of, and is indeed a most deserved winner of the 2013 Award.

Thank you - to David Gibson for inviting me to organise the panel and the assessment of this years Islington Society Design Award. Thanks - to the excellent team of judges who gave so generously of their time.

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Harley Sherlock receives a presentation at the Canonbury Tavern...



... and at the Islington Society dinner

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**Society publications** [available from the Society at 35, Britannia Row, London, N.1 or from local bookshops]  
*Twentieth Century Buildings in Islington*, by Alec Forshaw, £14.99, photographs by Richard Leoney, ISBN 0-9541490-0-9  
*The Story of Day Flats in and around Islington*, by Andrew Bosi, photographs from C.F. Day Limited and Oliver Craxton, £5, ISBN 0-9541490-1-7  
*An architect in Islington*, by Harley Sherlock, £14.99, ISBN 9-78-0-9541490-2-4

**Books from our President and Vice-Presidents**  
*Suicide of the West*, by Richard Koch & Chris Smith, £14.99 and available on Amazon, ISBN 0-8264 9023-9.  
*A History of Islington*, by Mary Cosh, published by Historical Publications at £18.95, ISBN 0-948667-974  
*53 Cross Street - the biography of an historic house* by Mary Cosh & Martin King, photographs by Pauline Lord, published by the Islington Archaeology & History Society

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## Ashmount School site latest

*The Society has taken an interest in the Ashmount School site which has Borough and London wide significance. The original proposal drawn up by the previous administration at the Town Hall involved the loss of Metropolitan Open Land and the demolition of a much admired 1950s building designed by Cadbury-Brown*



The main benefit of the original proposal was that it provided a site for much needed housing. While there was no chance of building new houses on Metropolitan Open Land (that was when the government was talking about Localism not replacing Planning with Anarchy), there was scope for building a school there. With the demise of Building Schools for the Future, this seemed a rare opportunity to offer primary school education in a twenty-first century building, funded by the capital receipt from the housing.

Unfortunately, although the new building is in place, there is great doubt about its funding. The government's persecution of local education authorities has led to the creation of Free Schools

## Youngs to buy King's Head

The King's Head theatre pub in Upper Street is to be bought by Youngs, the former London pub and brewing company which now brews its beers in Bedfordshire.

The 125 year old pub - there have been other licensed premises on this site for more than 200 years before it was built - became home to Dan Crawford's famous theatre run for so many years on a shoe-string. After his death eight years ago his widow Stephanie Sinclair pledged to continue what claims to be Islington's oldest theatre pub. She is now emigrating to Australia but had always assured the current theatre managers that the future of both

even in areas which have no shortage of school places. One such has been set up and is seemingly able to steal the site from Islington Council taxpayers (it is our money, not that of the elected members or Council officials). The one benefit of this move might have been to preserve the Cadbury-Brown building, which is perfectly functional despite the neglect of the governors of the former school who seem to have been rewarded for their inaction. However, even this is now in doubt as it is reported that the Free School wishes to demolish the building and start again. The existence of a vacant school was the only albeit tenuous justification for this theft from Council tax payers. However, a new building might facilitate the provision of a smaller volume of housing on part of the site.

Although the site issue is unresolved, and a new building is unlikely to appear in time for the mooted September opening, Whitehall Park Free School has appointed Laura Birkett as headteacher. Ms. Birkett has headed a school in Hackney.

The delay in resolving matters has led to the building being squatted. This followed the removal of security personnel by Islington Council. Quite why the taxpayer is expected to fund the protection of a building about to be stolen from them is yet another manifestation of what happens when political dogma overtakes common sense. AB

businesses would be secured. It appears that the deal with Youngs achieves that.

For many years, the King's Head continued to serve real ale in return for real money. The old cash register is still visible behind the bar, but perhaps the death knell was sounded when it became clear that William Hague's campaign to Save the lost Pound referred to the Euro-style decimated pound rather than the one that most pubs lost in 1971.

In October 2010 OperaUpClose came to the King's Head, giving it the name of "London's Little Opera House".

## Culture Secretary on the value of culture

DCMS Secretary of State Maria Miller's major speech on the value of culture at the British Library on 22nd January, was an opportunity to correct the impression she had made during her British Museum speech in April 2013, that 'our focus must be on culture's economic impact.'

Her latest speech made far more allusions to national and individual identity, quality of life and creativity. Greater references were also given to heritage: 'heritage is one of the most universal and accessible forms of culture', and she made a welcome note to planning, 'so it's right that heritage is part of our how we define sustainable development in this country, that local authorities are required to look at the cultural impact - the impact on the historic and built environment as part of any planning

development'.

Not reported on the DCMS web site are the gaps identified by the audience's questions; the huge amount of activity in the voluntary sector and its interdependence with the funded bodies, for example, but most of all it was felt that the speech was light on communicating the value of culture. There is the challenge of getting the message on the value of culture into Local Enterprise Partnerships' work. Most pertinent was the recommendation that Government Ministers should proselytise for culture with the same enthusiasm at home as they do internationally. For a more detailed critique of the speech, check out the extensive tweets #valueofculture.

## New English Heritage Consultation: DCMS open meeting

The DCMS consultation on the new English Heritage model continued with an open meeting on 8th January 2014, attended by about 50 representatives of heritage organisations and trade bodies. A short presentation was followed by a lengthy Q&A session with DCMS and EH officials, which added welcome insights into the proposals. DCMS confirmed the Charity's status as a public corporation and that it would continue to act as 'an owner of last resort'. There was some indication that further financial information on the business case might be made public.

On the 'Historic England' section (which several noted was relatively thin), EH officials confirmed that services were dependent on future funding settlements, but these functions would take priority over grants making it unlikely that previous levels of grants could be restored. The relationship between the National Heritage Protection Plan and Historic England's corporate plan was raised and

here an important point emerged. It seems that the Proposal 'to review the landscape for heritage services and to develop recommendations to ensure that in the future we make the best possible use of the resources available' (para 4.13), will be managed through the NHPP consultation process rather than as a standalone review.

As part of the development work, Government's Major Project Authority (MPA) is reviewing the English Heritage New Model Programme, an exercise that involves taking the views of DCMS, English Heritage, the Cabinet and Treasury, as well as external stakeholders including The Heritage Alliance.

The public consultation finishes on 7th February. If you have difficulty filling it in online, the questions are also set out in a word document on the Heritage Alliance web site for ease of circulating drafts. The Heritage Alliance web site will carry a final response to the EH Consultation.

## Written responses to planning applications: formal notice

London Borough of Islington (LBI) has issued the following notice:

From 1st April 2014, the Council intends to publish on its website all responses received from statutory consultees, amenity groups and other bodies. This publishing will be done without redaction of any information or text.

Whilst most responses received from organisations are now free from personal details and signatures, you should satisfy yourself that any correspondence sent to LBI after the 1st of April does not contain any information that your organisation and employees of your organisation would wish to withhold from public view on their website.

## Government consults on greater flexibility for changes of use

*The London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies made this response to the government proposal for greater flexibility, or anarchy, in planning.*

The London Forum considers that:

- A blanket change in freedoms to change from A1 (shops) and A2 (professional and financial services) to housing is inappropriate in London where there is a London Plan (adopted in July 2011) and almost all Boroughs have a recent Local Plan.

These plans already comply with the requirements of the NPPF in that they identify and designate a network of town centres, show them on their Proposals Map and, in many cases, have mapped these centres showing primary and secondary frontages and listed the addresses. These centres have been incorporated in successive plans, reviewed and amended as necessary after health checks, annual monitoring and review.

The London Forum considers that London Boroughs with up-to-date plans should be supported, but as a matter of policy they should be encouraged in the next revision of the NPPF to review the future use of vacant shops. A blanket approach for the whole country is not appropriate. The London Forum considers that where an up-to-date exists for town centres, including neighbourhood centres, these areas should be exempt from this initiative.

- the existing centres, particularly neighbourhood centres, need all the support they can get. The large difference between housing values and those for shops creates considerable pressures. The Government should be providing the tools to deliver vital and viable town centres and to promote healthy communities by supporting neighbourhood centres - in line with the NPPF paragraphs 69 and 70 and London Plan Policy 7.1 to maintain diverse, strong, secure and accessible neighbourhoods based around neighbourhood centres.

- the London Plan Policy 4.9: Small Shops defined small shops as 80 sq m - a limit of 150 sq m would not limit this proposal to small shops. DCLG should analyse current Valuation Office data for retail uses to see what proportion of shops in London would be included with a limit of 80 sq m, 100, 125 and 150 sq m. London Forum considers that this threshold is not evidence-based, let alone appropriate in London.

- the definition of shop needs to be tied down to its current use, to prevent "salami tactics" whereby other A Use Class uses could make a two stage move

through shops and out of the A Use Class. We are particularly concerned about the impact that this would have on pubs

- a new freedom to change from shops to banks and building societies is not necessary - in many places there is a good choice of providers of these services. We are not aware of any problems that would warrant a countrywide change in the freedoms to change use. This is a policy issue best dealt with through changes to the NPPF.

- the need for more pre-school childcare provision is appreciated, but the London Forum remains unconvinced that the proposed solution is proportionate.

*Question 1:*

*Do you agree there should be permitted development rights, as proposed, for shops (A1) and financial and professional services (A2) to change use to a dwelling house (C3) and to carry out building work connected with the change of use?*

No - this should be unnecessary in London where up-to-date London Plan and Local Plans respond to changes at the local level, through regular monitoring, town centre health checks and changing designations. We consider that decisions to change use where a shop is no longer viable should look first to other town centre uses rather than housing. Housing should not be regarded as the universal default option where the opportunity exists to improve the vitality and viability of existing centres.

*Prior approval criteria:* The London Forum considers that the criteria should be expanded to consider the impact of the proposal on the vision and strategy for the centre and the cumulative impacts - although by then it will be too late!

*Question 2*

*Do you agree there should be permitted development rights for retail units (A1) to change use to banks and building societies?*

No - This is not needed everywhere - the need for choice in banking and building societies is not really an issue. Where is the evidence that would justify a change in national secondary legislation. This is essentially a policy issue that could be dealt with through amending the NPPF.

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## Islington wins Award at London Transport Awards Ceremony, 21st October 2013

The people making a real difference to transport across London were recognised at the 10th annual London Transport Awards in London with the London Borough of Islington picking up the top award of the night for Transport Borough of the Year and Southern Railway picking up public transport operator of the year.

Hosted by Jeremy Vine, the awards saw over 450 transport professionals gather at the prestigious ceremony at the Park Plaza Riverbank Hotel, London.

Transport borough of the year, Islington's commitment to introduce a blanket 20 mph speed limit, the first in London, in the face of considerable opposition the council have demonstrated it is prepared to be bold and to go out on a limb. The Council has also been active in improving the streetscape, particularly in major centres such as Angel and Holloway Road. In addition the borough has done significant work on improving conditions for cyclists through a variety of initiatives - in cycling terms it is considered one of the best.

## Mail Rail to re-open as a tourist attraction

The newly privatised Royal Mail is reported to have approached Islington Council for planning permission to re-open its 6¼ mile underground railway.

The mail railway, which was given parliamentary approval in 1911 and was completed in 1927, linked a number of sorting offices from Paddington (W.2) to Whitechapel (E.1) via W.1, Western Central, Mount Pleasant and the Eastern Central offices at King Edward Street. Its effectiveness was gradually reduced as offices were closed and merged and mail has not been transported across London by this efficient means since 2003.

It is understood that the line would form part of a new £22 million national postal museum centred on Mount Pleasant.

Mount Pleasant is also the current battle ground for a major housing development, which would be partly in Islington and partly in Camden. Housing is desperately needed in both Boroughs, but the present scheme is widely regarded as over-development. It makes little attempt to integrate with the surrounding community, and has little provision of affordable housing: just 12%. The Mayor has called in the decision before the application can be considered by Camden and Islington councils - no localism here!

## Annual Dinner 2013



This year's Annual Dinner for members and guests was held in the Garden Room at Frederick's Restaurant, Camden Passage on Tuesday 29 October. The Dinner proved an outstanding success and attracted 60 members, many more than in recent years. On arrival we were offered a complimentary glass of Prosecco followed by an excellent 3 course fixed menu and coffee at a cost of

£25.00 each. Those with Special Dietary Requirements were able to place separate orders with their bookings. These were well met.

The evening was enlivened by a number of succinct speeches, starting with a Welcome by Christine Lovett, Director of the Angel BID. After the starter course Frank Mcloughlin, Principal of City & Islington College, spoke eloquently about the 20th anniversary of the College. The key speech by Lord Smith of Finsbury, President of the Islington Society, followed the main course and took the form of a valediction of Harley Sherlock and a Presentation to him of an award in token of appreciation as a founder member of the Society and previous Chairman. The Chairman David Gibson closed the Dinner with a brief word of thanks to Frederick's and to the members present. The Committee has already considered possible dates and venues for our 2014 Dinner, see page 2.



## Fire Station closures implemented

The Mayor responded to consultees by relieving two of the threatened fire stations. Those with the greatest real estate value, including Clerkenwell and Kingsland, closed on Thursday, January 9th at 9.30 a.m.

### Clerkenwell

A large crowd of well-wishers turned out at Clerkenwell, Europe's oldest working fire station, including representatives of four political parties, the Campaign to Save Finsbury Health Centre (nearby) and the Islington Society. Speeches from SERTUC, the chair of the Fire Authority, our local M.P. Emily Thornberry and the London Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union preceded tearful scenes as Green Watch came off duty at 9.30. Their last call had been to Oval Road in Camden where another station about to close, Belsize Park, had provided the second fire appliance.

### Service since 1872

A fire and rescue service has been provided from the site at Clerkenwell, which is ideally placed on a major road junction to provide easy access to a maximal number of people and properties, since 1872. If any building could be said to be an Asset of Community Value, this is it. Oh, Captain Shaw!

### False economics

This has to be the worst decision this Mayor has taken. It has achieved a minimal reduction in Council Tax precept, but insurance premiums will rise as a result and insurance provides compensation after the event, not mitigation of the event.

### Kingsland

The station at Kingsland, which serves the east of our Borough, also closed at the same time to a similar demonstration of support. Like Belsize Park, its firefighters will have worked alongside those from Clerkenwell. This station, on the corner of Downham and Kingsland Roads, was until recently surrounded by derelict brownfield sites awaiting redevelopment. It is thanks to the previous Mayor that the East London line has transformed the area so that the site is suddenly worth a lot more in terms of capital receipts. The decision to close so many overlapping stations can only have been taken on the basis of their value as development sites.

## Campaigners warn over rise of London skyscrapers

Independent reports that campaigners are calling for planning rules to be tightened to make it harder for high rise towers to be built across the capital feature recently appeared in two National newspapers.

The Financial Times (subscription) <http://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1228845/http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e9bd2786-875c-11e3-9c5c-00144feab7de.html#ixzz2rgc7su6C> reports that a record number of London skyscrapers are in the pipeline, with "more than 200 towers of at least 20 storeys are either under construction or being planned, of which three-quarters are residential." According to New London Architecture, the figures are unprecedented in the city's history and will "make the skyline look very different". The newspaper says that government sponsored conservation group English Heritage "is calling on the mayor of London, Boris Johnson, to tighten development rules in order to make it harder for such a volume of towers to be built".

High-rise homes were particularly popular with foreign buyers, reflecting London's position as a global city. Peter Murray, chairman of NLA, says "people from overseas who are both buying housing

and investing in London are used to tall buildings, and often express surprise that London is so low rise"

In a linked report, the Telegraph adds that "small and medium-sized businesses are being driven out of London's West End as developers convert office blocks into luxury homes to attract overseas investors". The newspaper quotes the director of commercial property agent DeVono, Adam Landau, saying: "Residential prices are far higher than commercial, so waves of properties have been converted for financial gain".



## English Heritage and Canal & River Trust pilot nationwide heritage project

The Canal & River Trust is partnering with English Heritage on a national pilot project which could significantly improve the way national custodians of heritage, such as the Trust, are able to look after the listed buildings and structures in their care.

This spring, the Trust and English Heritage will run a stakeholder consultation on the draft proposal for a new National Listed Building Consent Order. The Order would be designed to allow the Trust to carry out pre-determined conservation work to masonry hump back bridges and canal locks without having to seek local authority planning consent every single time. As the owner of the third largest collection of listed structures in the UK, a Consent Order would allow

the Trust to carry out canal heritage repairs more quickly and more efficiently.

Works covered by the pilot Canal & River Trust Consent Order are likely to include repair and maintenance works, such as replacing lock gates, rebuilding damaged bridge parapets and carrying out occasional alterations in the interest of public safety. A pre-agreed schedule of works will be prepared as a part of the Consent Order and great care will be taken to detail these in such a way that the special interest of listed locks and bridges are protected.

Further information about the project is available at [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/LBCO](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/LBCO)

## CLA shows how to fund more work to heritage by paying less VAT

Country Land & Business Association is very concerned, like many others in the heritage sector, that heritage suffers greatly since the reversal of the zero rate on alterations to listed buildings in the 2012 budget. It is an anachronism that new-build is usually VAT-free, while work to existing buildings is taxed at the maximum rate. This 20% surcharge adds extra cost and acts as a disincentive, having the overall effect of reducing work to heritage while encouraging demolition and high-carbon, short-life new build.

Many heritage organisations, including the Alliance, support the Cut the VAT campaign for reduced VAT on work to residential buildings ([www.cutthevat.co.uk](http://www.cutthevat.co.uk)), though governments have

shown little enthusiasm so far.

The CLA has been working on a further solution. There are many wholly-legitimate ways of paying less VAT on building work, and CLA Heritage Adviser Jonathan Thompson has written guidance listing more than a dozen of these (see [www.cla.org.uk/buildingvat](http://www.cla.org.uk/buildingvat)), and an accompanying handbook, *Saving VAT on work to heritage and other existing buildings*.

For most projects these suggest substantial potential VAT savings. A key benefit is that these savings can be spent on work to heritage which otherwise would not have happened, generating benefits for contractors, local economies, funding bodies, and of course heritage itself.

## Make the most of English Tourism Week!

Businesses and organisations all over England are invited to get involved in English Tourism Week 2014 (ETW14) from the 29th March - 6th April 2014. This is a chance to showcase the quality and vibrancy of our visitor experiences, alongside the value our industry brings to the nation.

The dedicated ETW14 web site ([www.english tourismweek.co.uk](http://www.english tourismweek.co.uk)) provides you with all the tools and information you need to get involved. Register for the ETW14 brand toolkit to access posters, logos, e-mail and web banners, all designed to aid you in the promotion of your activities and please don't forget to let ETW know

your plans by submitting your events, activities and promotions through their new online submission form.

ETW14 is a great opportunity for you to showcase your tourism products and by organising your own event, activity or promotion. Under the ETW14 campaign you will raise the profile of your business and be adding to the combined efforts of the week to raise awareness with local residents, their visitors and key decision makers.

For further information visit the web site or follow @VisitEnglandBiz and #ETW14 on Twitter for updates and discussion.

## Transport News Round-up

### Tory infighting delays fare increase

In what most of us think of as autumn, the government announced that regulated National Rail fares would rise by 1% above the RPI, rather than RPI +3% as previously announced. On December 4th, the Mayor announced that TfL fares would rise by reference to the RPI alone, except for those fares (travelcards and season tickets) which apply to National Rail services. These were to be increased by 1% more. On December 5th, less than four weeks before the fares were due to change, the Chancellor in his "Autumn statement" announced a further reduction in the increase in National Rail fares. This reduced them to the RPI rate prevailing last July, of 3.1%, still larger than pay increases over the corresponding period but welcome news for commuters nonetheless.

This of course meant that the travelcard fares had to be recalculated, and Oyster readers and ticket machines reprogrammed. On December 23rd TfL announced that the fare increases would be deferred from January 2nd to January 19th. As most annual season tickets are renewed in December just before the rise, the main beneficiaries are the users of weekly tickets. Paper travelcards for zones 1-2 and 1-4 were also available for that period before being phased out to the frustration of transport enthusiasts for whom pay as you go Oyster leads to overcharging.

### More New Buses for London in Islington

Arriva has been advertising for guards to work on the 38 bus which is to be converted to operation by TfL owned New Buses for London later this year. It will be the second route in Islington following the 390 which commenced with the new buses in December 2013.

Somewhat bizarrely, the 8 from Bow to Oxford Circus (currently terminating at Tottenham Court Road due to CrossRail works) is to operate the new buses with just a driver. They have fewer seats than a conventional opo bus, while the lack of any supervision within the bus would seem to lay them open to the problems of crime against the person which contributed to the unpopularity of the bendy-bus among law abiding citizens.

Transport for London has taken to referring to the buses as "New Routemasters". They claimed it was in recognition of common parlance. In fact, it is a precursor to removing real routemasters from the two heritage routes.

### Cycling budget underspend

Although the Mayor uses a bicycle, unlike his predecessor, he continues to attract criticism from cycling organisations. A spate of fatalities to cyclists in the Autumn renewed calls for more safety measures, although the Mayor could justifiably point to a significant increase in the number of people cycling. Worryingly, however, there are reports that yet again Transport for London will fail to spend all the money allocated to cycling measures in 2013/4. The Green Party is pushing for a bigger budget. You can lead a mare to water but you have to make him drink.

### New crossing at Nag's Head

Agreement seems to be near on the provision of a new straight crossing (no sheep pen) across Holloway Road at the Nag's Head. Ever since the people-unfriendly gyratory was introduced in the 1960s, the west side of Holloway Road has been the poor relation. A new crossing would improve footfall for those retailers cut adrift from the main shopping area.

There are also continuing discussions about removal of some or all of the gyratory, which extends from Hillmarton Road all the way to Finsbury Park. If you live half way up Hillmarton Road or Seven Sisters Road there are plenty of buses in one direction only. The same is true of Isledon Road and the northern end of Caledonian and Camden Roads. The 20 mph limit is not self-enforcing because of the lack of on-coming traffic. The whole area could be made far more people friendly and it is difficult to accept an argument that the roads are not wide enough since all that is being sought is a return to the status quo ante. Some campaigners are calling for a more ambitious scheme, incorporating a double roundabout as has been done at the junction at the centre of Poynton in Cheshire.

### Disabled access at Finsbury Park

At long last it has been agreed that the station improvements at Finsbury Park will comply with the intentions of the DDA and include level access to ALL platforms. The re-opening of what are now platforms 1 & 2 has resulted in the loss of cross platform interchange when fast trains arrive on platform 4, and the signage to platforms 1& 2 is inadequate. On-going work has temporarily extended the journey from FCC platforms to the tubes.

**From the Society**

Current officers and What We Do is on page 2

**Future Society events**

*The Society gives reminders by e-mail of meetings about a week before they are held. Please let the Secretary have your e-mail address if you are not on the existing mailing list. Events take place at 7.30, Town Hall, unless stated otherwise.*

February 25th: Catherine West "Leading the Council"

March 20th: Visit to Biffa Waste Management's waste treatment and recycling centre in Bow.

April: Visit to Bennett's Architects and St. John's Gate.

May: Hustings for the local council elections, which take place on May 22nd. Richard Watts, Terry Stacey

June 20th: the Annual Pub Crawl, now in its twenty-third year, commences at 6 p.m. at the Master Gunner, just north of Finsbury Square. All the pubs are on or in view of City Road, until we head off to the Wenlock Arms at the end.

July: The Annual Dinner 2014 for members and guests will be at the HAC, Chiswell Street. An application form will be enclosed with the June Newsletter.

Our monthly Meet the Officers meetings continue at the Marquess Tavern, Canonbury St., on the first Tuesday each month at 9.0 p.m. on Tuesdays 4th March, 1st April, 6th May and June 3rd.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday October 8th.

**The copy date for our next newsletter is June 2nd, 2014.**

**Other Events in or around Islington:****Archaeology & History Society**

(8.0 p.m. Islington Town Hall)

Non-IA&HS members welcome, donation invited. Further information in the web site.

Wednesday 19th February "Print Journalism in the electronic age". Speaker Peter Gruner, Islington Tribune.

Wednesday 19th March "Sir Edward Watkin (1809-1901) Visionary or Lunatic?". Speaker Richard Wallington, Chairman Friends of Union Chapel.

**London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies**

Meetings at 77, Cowcross Street, starts at 6.30 p.m.

March 4th: Community Assets including pubs (speaker, Dale Ingram)

April 11th: topic to be announced

**Islington Museum & Local History Centre**

245, St. John Street. tel. 7-527 2837

Thursday 20th February 6.30 "Cover Story: Joe Orton and Kenneth Halliwell". Speaker Mark Aston, curator.

Exhibition 7th February to 1st March "Kenneth Halliwell's Collage" Opening hours 10 am -5 pm.. Closed Wednesday and Sunday.

**Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, 39a Canonbury Square**

Until Saturday 19th April "Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978), Myth and Mystery. Opening hours Wed. to Sat. 11 am.- 6 pm., Sunday 12 noon-5 pm.

**Almeida Theatre,**

Almeida Street, N.1 0207 359 4404

Monday - Saturday 7.30 pm., Saturday matinée 2.30 pm.

From Saturday 8 February. "1984" New production based on George Orwell's novel.

**Islington University of the Third Age (U3A)**

Thursday 27th February. "Rethinking Islington's health services". Speaker Dr Gillian Greenough.

Thursday 27th March. Foreign affairs "Between the Lines". Speaker Quintin Peel.

Meetings at 10.30 a.m, The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road.

For details and membership [www.IslingtonU3A.org](http://www.IslingtonU3A.org)

**The Garden History Society London Winter Lectures: all 6.30 p.m, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ.**

26th February: Wentworth Castle: A Summary of the Ongoing Restoration, Patrick Eyres, Editor New Arcadian Journal.

12th March: Place-making for the Imagination: Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill, Dr Marion Harney, University of Bath.

26th March: Daffodil Stories, Dr Noel Kingsbury, Garden Designer.

**Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings:**

25th March: 'Condensation and Mould in Buildings - Afternoon Seminar'. Venue as above.