

newsforum

The London Forum working to protect and improve the quality of life in London



The London Forum of
Amenity and Civic Societies
Founded 1988
www.londonforum.org.uk

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The Civic Trust

Collapse of the Civic Trust

Will a Phoenix rise from the ashes?

by **Peter Eversden**, Chairman of the London Forum

In this issue we comment on the collapse of the Civic Trust earlier this year and make constructive suggestions for the future of a new national body through a 'Civic Society Initiative' (CSI) to represent and support civic societies.

Tony Aldous devotes the Spotlight column to the new initiative. **Bill Tyler**, London Forum Vice President and former Trustee of the Civic Trust gives an overview of the Trust's formation and history. **Michael Hammerson**, London Forum executive committee member, who has worked at the Trust on a voluntary basis for ten years, gives an insider's view. Both he and **Peter Eversden**, Chairman of the London Forum suggest how the new organisation might work.

We publish again the report of the **Survey of our members** for those who missed our open event about it. Its findings indicate the needs of London Civic Societies, and should inform those working on the CSI.

Our national organisation, the Civic Trust, helped to establish the London Forum of Amenity & Civic Societies as one of the regional associations of England's civic societies twenty-one years ago. The Civic Trust went into administration in April 2009 after it was unable to deal with the financial implications of a loss of a major Government contract and a reduction in project income from local authorities as the recession deepened.

London Forum hosted a meeting of regional chairmen and welcomed the initiative of some ex-trustees of the Civic Trust with

support from CPRE, RIBA and the National Trust to form a new national civic organisation.

There is general agreement that the community movement needs representation and influence at regional and Government levels and guidance for its work in the light of changes in policies, law and opportunities.

The London Forum hopes that the Civic Society Initiative, that is exploring the work of societies and their future needs, will establish how such national influence, networking, lobbying and support can be achieved.

Requirements for a new organisation

A new organisation has to be more focussed on the needs of regional associations and their members than the Civic Trust appeared to be in recent years.

It has to be slim and low cost, drawing on the expertise and voluntary effort that can be harnessed from within civic and amenity societies. The Civic Trust income from membership fees was about £65,000 annually. It was estimated that the kind of support and representation regions and societies were seeking from it would cost more than twice that amount.

Financing a national civic movement will remain a problem until the members of existing societies and of the public at large are convinced of the value of subscribing to it. The Civic Trust came into existence 50 years ago when resident and civic societies were established already. It never had direct access to the members of those societies and individual membership was very low. That situation will continue in the short term.

The workplan of the Civic Society

Initiative (CSI) has been notified to our members and a well attended open meeting was held with its leader, Tony Burton, on 28th July. At that event, Tony sought information from society representatives for the first stage of his study up to September on 'Where does the civic society movement fit in the 21st century?'

Many people attending were irritated at the method of collecting details of what their societies are doing now, what they had achieved, what they thought they should be doing in five years time and what would give the civic movement a better reputation.

A lot of that in London is known already from our Newsforum Spotlight and other articles on members, 'Around the Societies' summaries, open meeting discussions, our Achievement reviews and Media awards.

Tony Burton has been told of our concerns about the approach he took. There were echoes of the Civic Trust agenda for the 'modernisation' of civic societies with which the London Forum and its members had been critical.

However, it is necessary that Tony and his colleagues in the CSI Steering Group are clear on what people in civic, community and 'Friends of' groups have to tackle now and how they work with local government and develop initiatives. That will help their needs to be understood and their importance championed.

In London I believe our mission is clear. It is to work to improve the quality of life and facilities in places people live, work and take leisure. That embraces partnerships, planning, development control, regeneration,

public realm improvement, conservation, infrastructure improvements, transport, economic development, skills generation, publications, civic pride and projects.

Further stages of consultation

It will be interesting to see what the CSI concludes from its Open Forum meetings held around the country and for the London Forum to discuss with Tony and others the implications and the differences for those of us working as volunteers in the capital.

It is natural that regional associations like the London Forum and their members want to move on soon to the second stage of the CSI workplan this Autumn - "What does the civic society movement need to be successful?." For that, the CSI will launch a structured on-line questionnaire to which I hope all societies will contribute.

There are some concerns about the influence during Stages 1 and 2 of the 'Stakeholders' from whom CSI is seeking views. Some may be local authorities and developers whose views are diametrically opposed to ours.

Stage 3 of the process is the consideration towards the end of this year of options and funding for the organisation and support of the civic society movement.

A second meeting of regional association chairmen hosted by West Midlands concluded that the steering group of the CSI must be open in its research, deliberations, preparation of its recommendations and decision making.

Early next year it will have to be clear how the steering group members will be replaced by elected trustees to ensure the success and viability of any new national organisation. Its coverage of countries and parts of the UK has to be decided.

Meanwhile, the CSI has commenced a new Civic Matters publication available by email and on-line to provide information to civic and amenity groups on what is new and about consultations to be considered.

London Forum will complement that, as before with its own e-bulletins about the GLA and other matters affecting life in London.

I welcome your views on what you want the role and activities be to of the London Forum and of any new national organisation representing and supporting us all. ■

A new organisation has to be more focussed on the needs of regional associations and their members than the Civic Trust appeared to be in recent years

London Forum Survey

We enclose with this issue the results of the London Forum Survey as a pull-out supplement. We thank Moira Forrester for her work in compiling it.

If you would like more hard copies please send an SAE to London Forum, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ. Mark your envelope LF Survey

For a PDF version please email the membership secretary, Haydn Mylchreest, details on the back page.

Bulletins by e-mail

London Forum issues e-bulletins to members as updates when required.

Please forward them to those on your committees and to your own members when you can.

If you do not receive such bulletins, please advise us of an email address for future ones.

See our contact details on the back page. ■

What the CSI should do

The CSI should investigate how a national organisation can influence policy and practice and support members in

- Developing local democracy, representation, active citizens, civic pride and community cohesion;
- Participating in Local Area Agreement success and the building of the outcomes;
- Engagement in spatial planning and development of links between community strategies and core strategies;
- Exploiting local authority 'engagement' and communication with their 'empowered' residents;
- Achieving improved participation in development control and the use of community infrastructure levies;
- Working towards sustainable development of successful town centres and integrated communities;
- The creation, protection and maintenance of public amenity space and facilities;
- Seeking urban design excellence and public realm improvements, with heritage protection;
- Seeking ways of improving the quality of life of communities through lobbying Government departments, select committees and development agencies, in conjunction with regional associations and other national amenity organisations, for better legislation and decisions related to planning, the third sector, conservation, education and skills, deprivation, integration, justice, the environment, transport, etc.

A UK civic organisation should explain all changes in Government policy that amend the way processes work in which communities are involved, then train/guide them for their participation.

We seek a continuation and expansion of the work that Michael Hammerson has been doing in a voluntary capacity for the Civic Trust on responding to Government consultation documents and proposals, developing policy, lobbying organisations and departments on issues affecting the work of societies and representing the civic movement on national amenity, heritage and other groups' committees and events. ■

The Civic Trust – R.I.P

by Bill Tyler

The notorious demolition in the mid-1950's of the famed Doric-style arch fronting Euston Station, to be replaced by the then British Rail's new head office designed by Richard Seifert, was the catalyst for MP Duncan Sandys, son-in-law of Winston Churchill, to gather a group of the great and good of the land to form a new organisation dedicated to securing high standards of urban planning and design. As Minister of Housing, Sandys had instigated the Clean Air Act of 1954 and the Green Belt Act of 1955 that widened the protection of land around cities and towns other than London, which had had its own Green Belt from before World War II.

The Civic Trust was formally established in 1959 with Sandys as its President and eight other Trustees; they included the Archbishop of Canterbury, Herbert Morrison and Sir Herbert Manzoni, City Engineer for Birmingham. The twenty-eight Patrons included The Lord Mayor of London, Viscount Esher, The Earl of Euston, The Duke of Wellington, Sir Thomas Sopwith and Sir Simon Marks – of M&S – and the Presidents of the RA, RIBA, RICS, ICE, IME and RTPI. There is an apocryphal story that an invitation to a certain peer was mis-delivered and, much to Duncan Sandys's surprise, a reply was received from Archbishop Fisher saying that he would be delighted to serve as a Trustee but had no idea why he had been chosen!

Early schemes promoted by the CT Trustees, under the auspices of already established civic societies, local authorities and in one instance a paint manufacturer, were the facelifts of Hampstead High Street and Magdalen Street, Norwich. Later schemes were at Worksop and Halifax. As the building boom of the late '50s and early '60s threatened the fabric of more and more towns and cities, the number of amenity groups trying to protect their localities increased substantially and, seeking a national voice, they found their champion in the Civic Trust. It became almost de rigueur for societies to register with the CT and, in response to the growing clamour, the bones of a parliamentary bill, to be proposed by Duncan Sandys, were fleshed out by Peter Robshaw at the CT. In 1967 the Civic Amenities Act became law, establishing the principle of Conservation Areas and special protection for specific building features.

The number of amenity groups trying to protect their localities increased substantially and, seeking a national voice, they found their champion in the Civic Trust

This act, almost entirely superseded now by later legislation, was instrumental in securing the retention of the character and appearance of swathes of London, as well as of other towns, cities and villages.

With its small nucleus of skilled staff and well-connected and persuasive trustees, the CT produced its 'Heritage Outlook' magazine, research papers and publications covering such topics as the impact of heavy lorries in towns, traffic and townscape and streetscape design and it was closely involved in the seminal 'Tomorrow's Towns' and the Shop Front Security manual. To secure its place in the public conscious, the CT established its famed annual Design Awards and the important Environment Week under the sponsorship of large commercial companies. It ran the 'Open House' initiative through funding from central government and the EU and, again with funding from central government, established its respected Regeneration Unit to promote and implement schemes of renewal for areas of urban deprivation. The importance of urban parks and open spaces and their contribution to residential amenity was underscored by the inception of the 'Green Flag Awards'.

At one time there were over nine hundred registered amenity societies but producing barely enough income to cover the cost of providing its model constitution to societies, publishing newsletters and Urban Focus magazine, offering limited advice on planning issues, arranging a collective insurance scheme or of maintaining a library resource centre. Although 'registered' with the Trust, societies played no part in running it nor had any say in its campaigning activities and this came to the fore around 1987/8 when, in making representations to a Minister, the CT was asked "And who, exactly, do you represent?" To counter this, the Trust helped establish the Local Amenity Societies Advisory Committee (LASAC), to

run as a parallel organisation to provide the Trust with feedback directly from societies, and it also encouraged societies to form their own regional bodies; thus the London Forum of Civic and Amenity Societies was born. LASAC and the CT held a national conference in 1989 on the future of the civic society movement, the outcome of which was the formation of the National Council of Civic Trust Societies (NCCTS) consisting of 21 members elected on a regional basis.

Eventually the CT constitution was amended to permit the appointment of four trustees from the NCCTS, and an entirely new individual membership was introduced to generate additional income. Although offering a number of benefits, this outsourced scheme was poorly run and had to be closed. The Trust increasingly was relying on commercial sponsorship and government funds for its projects but Trustees also sought societies' views, which were of overwhelming rejection, on a per capita subscription of £1, this to produce an income stream in the region of £250,000. More successful was the introduction of a scheme of corporate membership for architects, surveyors, local authorities and commercial companies, but the need to generate income from sponsored or funded projects remained essential.

Alongside the NCCTS, from a pool of society expertise, the CT drew a panel of town planners and architects, one of whom was an ex-planning inspector, to consider and respond to central government on planning legislation and regulations affecting the built environment. This Planning & Heritage Group ran successfully for several years but the administrative costs could no longer be found in surplus monies from the CT's major sponsored/grant-aided projects and the group was wound down. This was also the fate of the NCCTS, which for some time had managed to continue to operate through its own funding efforts. The CT then arranged quarterly meetings of some of its Trustees and staff with Regional Association Chairmen.

Almost entirely reliant on externally funded programmes, and with reduced income from fewer registered societies, the CT existed on a knife-edge: the loss of the Green Flag programme and the failure to attract new sponsorship proved fatal. ■

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Helping a Phoenix to rise from its ashes

Michael Hammerson worked as a volunteer for the Civic Trust for its last ten years, effectively acting as its Policy Officer. Over that period he wrote nearly 150 responses for the Trust to a range of planning and environment-related Government Consultations. Here he gives an insider's view of the problems that led to its collapse and offers ideas for its renewal.

The sudden collapse of the Civic Trust in April was a real shock. The Trust introduced Conservation Areas in 1966; it saved not only areas like Piccadilly Circus and Covent Garden, but historic towns like York and Chester, from the bulldozer. It was the national voice which gave 1,000 civic societies across the country credibility as a movement and advice in defending their local environments from the worst excesses of 'modernisation'.

When the Trust's Policy Officer left in 1999, there was no intention to replace him, leaving the unthinkable prospect that there would be no more input into Government policymaking. Having previously been working with him as a volunteer, I stepped, by default, into his shoes and became its de facto Policy officer – though still, for the full ten years, as a volunteer. My aim, during my ten years with the Trust, was to promote it as the voice of the public on planning issues, and the Civic Societies as a powerful and tolerably united national voice.

I worked in particular on Government consultations on changes to law and guidance on planning, development, and the environment, averaging one response a month. Encouragingly, in later years, Government departments indeed began to recognise the Trust as the voice of the community sector, and the increasing number of invitations I had from Government to sit on various workshops, stakeholder groups, etc., suggests that the Trust's "policy section" was starting to have some small effect.

Civic Society views ignored

Sadly, I was also witness to how the Trust increasingly lost its way during that time, weakening its civic society focus and relying too much on tendering for a small number of government projects which, when the recession came, was its downfall.

This dangerous reliance on Government contracts was rightly criticised by the Civic Societies; but they, too, were not blameless. On too many occasions our appeals to the Societies, through the Regional Associations and the Trust's newsletter, for help or co-operation on issues which were critical to the core remit of the Societies and the Trust, brought dismayingly little response. As just one example, I am not aware of any Societies (except my own) who responded to our appeals to them to lobby their MPs to vote against the disastrous Planning Bill.

It was the national voice which gave 1,000 civic societies across the country credibility as a movement and advice in defending their local environments

A last bastion of civic independence

Nevertheless, there has been huge expression of support for its renewal from the Societies, so it is quite clear that it is needed. It was the only national voice for the civic societies, and was still regarded by many fellow organisations as some sort of last bastion of civic independence. The Civic Trust's name still carried a cachet far above its capacity to deliver in recent years; I was surprised to find this, time and again, and the expressions of shock from all these groups with which we had worked was all the greater when it died. It seems that we punched too far above our weight for our own good!

The dismay was such, indeed, that the environmental lobby was galvanised into helping a Phoenix to rise from its ashes. The recent launch of the Civic Societies Initiative showed that, unlike many organisations, the various national environmental bodies recognise their vital symbiotic relationship, and the National Trust, the North of England Civic Trust (a separate body), the Council for the Protection of Rural England and the Royal Institution of British Architects have committed money and support in kind to ensure a future for the civic society movement, and a voice and a champion for them. Tony Burton, Director of Strategy and External Affairs for the National Trust, has been seconded for a year to head the campaign and find out from the civic societies what they want the new body to be and do.

Former President Griff Rhys-Jones is backing it to the hilt. In his speech at the launch, he warned that the assault on our urban environment is under way, with the planning process being weakened in the name of progress, and the historic environment and good design thrown out of the window in the panic to address the

economic crisis. He said that there is more need than ever for a national body to fight it and to represent the current mood and aspirations of the grass roots. It was more urgent than ever for people to join their civic societies. He launched an appeal to raise the £50,000 the initiative needs for its first year.

Ideas for the future

A new Board of Trustees will need to be appointed and it is to be hoped that the candidates come from those who want a return to the movement's roots and the trust's original aims and ideals.

One of the issues I was continually trying to impress on the Trust (as attested by my four large files titled "Civic Society proposals and initiatives never responded to by management") was the urgency of actively promoting the Civic Society movement as a focus for helping national and local government to address the major issue of "community cohesion" - using the Societies' skills, experience and interests to bring together all elements of a community to tackle issues relating to the local environment, surely of interest to all sectors. Those same skills could also be used to provide training and mentoring for local schools, young people and others needing it, and to take a lead in alerting the wider community to all the problems which the societies have been trying to tackle for years; this could involve co-operation with such bodies as the Prince's Trust. It is, to some extent, what some societies have already been doing, and what the Civic Trust should have been helping the rest to do: to raise their profile with government, the media and the public. Instead, the Trust's no doubt well-meant drive to "modernise" the Civic Societies antagonised many because it was introspective rather than outward-looking.

A credible national Civic Society movement, with as strong a voice and leadership as possible, is absolutely critical. It must focus on what the Societies long wanted the Trust to do rather than what management thought it should do. Otherwise, the Societies, however strong or capable individually, will rapidly become marginalised as an effective force, and eventually ignored, unable to respond effectively to the perennial accusations of being middle-class 'nimbys' or 'the usual suspects'.

How will it be funded?

This is the fundamental issue. It is reckoned that an income of quarter of a million pounds is needed to provide an effective membership service and campaigning arm, the professional and political expertise to scrutinise government legislation and make direct representations at high level, and an advice, training and helpdesk programme. The money from civic society subscriptions came nowhere near this; it was basically just enough to fund one or two people.

Bodies such as the CPRE, RSPB, National Trust and Friends of the Earth have a national, regional and local structure – but their membership is based on individual subscriptions. The Civic Trust's income of £50-300 a year from 700 Civic Societies was hopelessly inadequate – a Catch-22 situation built into it from its very beginning which inevitably led to its dependence on grants from Government departments and fees from local authorities for 'BizFizz', 'High Street UK', Green and Purple Flag projects and regeneration consultancy, all completely irrelevant to most civic societies; only Heritage Open Days gave them any annual "showcase".

How different the story would have been if each of the 200,000 civic society members nationwide had paid as little as £5-10 each to join as individuals! But the Trust's appeals to the membership to persuade their members to do just that produced such a small response that membership expectations of a gold-plated service for pence must be cited as a contributory cause of its fall. That support in turn failed to materialise because the Civic Trust came to tell the Societies what was good for them, and failed to find out what they wanted. This vicious circle caused its downfall.

Societies must unite in support

The Societies must now shake off their lethargy (and, let it be admitted, in too many cases, parochialism) and give their full support to what, it is clear from Tony Burton's recent workshops around the Country, is needed – a focussed body geared to representing them at a national level, with sufficient funding for the staff to provide what they want, free from the constraints of dependence on government contract funding for initiatives which were not at the core remit of the movement. It is

critical that the societies give it their full and active support in the expectation that it will fulfil the purpose that the Civic Trust was meant to have done.

Every civic society has been asked to support the Civic Societies Initiative appeal; one has even given £5,000. The real test, however, will be how a new "Trust" will be permanently funded. A membership scheme as outlined above would make an enormous difference and, critically, would demonstrate the commitment of the Societies to support a real national voice for those of us who are angered at the damage done, in recent years, to our town planning system and at the weasel words of Governments which promise 'community engagement' and 'devolution to the local level', while actually weakening town planning to the level where 'engagement' is meaningless.

The need of full support of the Societies, in both skills, and through understanding that they and their members must pay realistic subscriptions, cannot be over-stated. Many of us are individual members of the CPRE and National Trust and do not hesitate to pay £25 and £70 a year for what we believe are worthwhile causes. Why, for all these years, have we reacted with horror at the thought of doing the same for the Civic Trust? Certainly, the Civic Trust lost its way in its efforts to get core funding which diverted it from its real remit; but the Societies played their own substantial part in its demise, by detaching themselves from it and believing that they could go it alone, rather than proactively seeking changes in both direction and management. ■

Where to find information

Information about the new Initiative

can be found at

www.civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk.

An excellent article by Griff Rhys Jones in the Sunday Times of June 7, arguing the need for a new body to fight on, can be accessed on

www.civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk/news_31196.html

A credible national Civic Society movement, with as strong a voice and leadership as possible, is absolutely critical. It must focus on what the Societies want it to do rather than what management thought it should do.

Financial help needed

£5 from 200,000 people would produce £1 million

For those of you who would like to contribute financially, cheques should be payable to:

The Civic Society Initiative,
and addressed to
The Civic Society Initiative,
Unit 101,
The Tea Factory,
82 Wood Street
Liverpool, L1 4DQ.

It would help to judge where support is coming from, if you mention to which Society you belong.

The Civic Trust archive

What will happen to the archive?

The Civic Trust archive is a very important social history archive, charting the efforts of the civic societies to transform the post-war urban environment. Its destruction would be a major loss. A particularly serious loss would be the huge archive of civic society newsletters, which is a unique record of this movement, in many cases covering the work of groups which no longer exist. ■

Spotlight on the Civic Society Initiative

Our chance for an effective national voice – a once in a lifetime opportunity

by **Tony Aldous**

News of the demise of the Civic Trust came as a shock to amenity societies – but a mild one. The initial reaction of most of us was, I guess, akin to hearing of the death of an old and respected acquaintance with whom one had rather lost touch. Nice old boy, but he'd had a good innings: among voluntary organisations, 51 going on 52 must be reckoned quite a good age.

But then came the thought: What, if anything, can we put in its place? And here some hard questioning began. For the Civic Trust, founded by Duncan Sandys in 1957, was never "our" organisation. Amenity societies were not "members" of the Trust but "registered" with it. They had, at least until recently, little discernable influence over policies and priorities determined by a director and nationally appointed trustees, including such figures at the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The great early days

It was (the normal thing in the 1950s) a top-down organisation, which played an invaluable role on the national stage, but what local activists were doing was not central to its activities. In the 1980s when I was working at the Trust, we had great projects on hand and believed in them passionately – outstandingly the Regeneration Unit, with a staff of perhaps a dozen, demonstrating on the ground attractive and viable conservation alternatives to clear and rebuild. They had a whole floor at the top of 17 Carlton House Terrace. Somewhere below in a distinctly cramped office was the two person team that "looked after" civic societies. Arthur Percival – inspirational, dynamic, entrepreneurial – did his (very good) best within the limits set, but "societies" were distinctly a sideshow.

A lesson learned

But the lesson has been learned. The Civic Society Initiative, launched at the beginning of June by Griff Rhys Jones, is not about setting up a Civic Trust mark 2. It is not, for the moment, setting up anything. It is designed simply to find out over the next 12 months what kind of a national voice amenity societies in England want and – equally crucial – are prepared to support.

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Tony Burton, at 45 a veteran campaigner, is the Initiative's director. A geographer and town planner who lives in Mitcham, he earned his campaigning spurs with the CPRE with whom he spent 13 years before moving to the National Trust in 2001. It is the National Trust which is paying his salary for a year; the CPRE which is supplying office space in its premises in Southwark. We hope that his support team will include our own Michael Hammerson, previously a volunteer with the Civic Trust and effectively its policy officer for the past eight years; and Ian Harvey, based in Liverpool, who was the Civic Trust staff member concerned with societies and was made redundant when it went into administration. The Royal Institute of British Architects is giving him office space in Liverpool. The North of England Civic Trust is providing the legal "home" to host the Initiative, employ its staff and manage its bank account

Support from national bodies

The way in which these three national bodies – National Trust, CPRE, RIBA – together with the NECT, have thrown their weight behind the Initiative shows their awareness that a big hole has opened up in the environmental battleground and needs to be filled. "It's proof of the movement's importance that it is so relevant to those organisations." But sensibly they are not being prescriptive about how the gap is filled. That is for England's amenity societies to decide. (England's, because Scotland and Wales have for decades had their own civic trusts).

Tony Burton is emphatic that the amenity society movement has great potential, but "is underperforming at the moment". It needs both to function better as a network, and "needs a bigger voice," he says. And he believes now is a good moment to build on the amenity society movement and what we may call "civic activism" generally.

"Recent political convulsions have shown that people increasingly want to take control of their lives," he believes.

What model for the future

I asked him whether the CPRE model – county branches and a national conference influencing nationally promoted policies and campaigns – is a possible model for a Civic Trust replacement. He has an open mind but is clearly sceptical. That was an early 20thC answer. We are in a different world. We need a 21stC answer. And indeed, though a romantic attachment to familiar places has been a staple of the civic society movement, it has been at its most successful when matched by pragmatism and positive thinking. Nostalgia would not be a good recipe for the design of a new national body for our movement.

So where do we go from here? Burton's brief is to find out what the amenity society movement wants and what it will support. That may well not include activities like the Civic Trust's regeneration unit and what followed – the trust moved from setting up exemplar projects to bidding competitively for government funds, which is where it came unstuck. What it might well do is to encourage and support grass-roots projects by its member societies, promote their work nationally, and facilitate more active networking.

So Tony will be travelling round England to find out what the locals want – meeting not just regional federations, including London Forum (though their role is crucial) but individual civic societies and a wide range of local organisations involved in battling for better local environments. Though London Forum was founded, 21 years ago, with Civic Trust backing, it always insisted on its membership being open to societies not registered with the trust. That notion of a broad church is certainly one that the Civic Society Initiative has adopted.

How should societies respond

So how to respond? Your society should join the debate, perhaps linking with neighbouring societies to arrange a meeting with Tony Burton to discuss what they want and what it would be reasonable to expect from a new national umbrella body. Letters, emails and phone calls in support have been flooding in. But there's

more. Even with generous support from the national bodies, the Burton "find out what you want" exercise needs money. Our London societies aren't rich – like London Forum, many of them run on a shoestring. But they can afford something. So can individuals. Writing this Spotlight might be considered my contribution, but I can do more – which is why I'm posting my modest cash contribution - £50 – to Tony this afternoon.

This is the amenity societies' big opportunity. If we muff it, it's unlikely to come again. Speak up and (let me be thoroughly vulgar) cough up! ■



Griff Rhys Jones and Tony Burton at the Civic Society Initiative launch at the beginning of June

Contacts

Information on the Initiative's progress can be found on its website

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Business leaders divided over Heathrow third runway

Earlier this year the British Chamber of Commerce urged the Conservative party to reverse its opposition to the building of the third runway at Heathrow, claiming that a study they had carried out demonstrated financial benefits.

Business leaders voice opposition

However in a letter to The Times in May, over a dozen business leaders countered this declaring that

"many individuals in the business community do not believe that the rationale put forward for the third runway at Heathrow is sufficient to justify the Government's recent decision."

They stated that

"In a recent independent survey of small and large businesses (Continental Research, November 2008), 95 per cent of businesses — said a third runway would make little or no difference to them," and that "the business case for the third runway simply does not stack up."

Most notably they recognised that

"the quality of life impact is too important to ignore." and that "millions of people in the UK oppose the new runway. They are our customers and our colleagues. The business community must take account of the strongly held views of those living in the broader community in which we operate."

They concluded that

"Alternatives to a third runway have not yet been adequately explored" and that "the Government must reforecast all the growth assumptions made by BAA, the owner, and the airlines to take account of the significant recent falls in passenger volumes as a result of economic decline and fuel-price volatility."

Their stance contrasts surprisingly with the findings of the parliamentary transport select committee, issued in July, which, in recommending the third runway, yet again shows the government ignoring the welfare of the citizens they purport to represent.

Flavour of the month

The infantilisation of British politics continues. In January Katherine Kerswell, newly appointed chief executive of Northamptonshire County Council told her staff: "I want you to think about 'taste the

Recent economic data throws doubt

Recent economic data throws doubt on any possibility of it happening. The downturn has reduced demand for air travel and all of BAA's London airports reported a reduction in passenger numbers: the number of travellers using BAA airports has been falling for the last 12 months.

Losses at BAA's London airports more than tripled to £545 million in the first six months and the company's enormous debts on its London airports increased by 3.2 per cent to about £9.6 billion.

The airlines themselves have all suffered falling passenger numbers. British Airways reported record losses this year: £401 million pre-tax loss for the year to March 31, and £148 million in July. It is reducing capacity by 3.5 per cent this summer, increasing to 5 per cent in the winter to cope with the drop in demand, and expects to ground 22 aircraft from its fleet. The company revealed that it too has huge debts. Net debt has risen by £1.1 billion to £2.4 billion. Its credit rating has been downgraded by Moodys twice this year and its debt has been lowered to junk bond status. Martin Broughton, BA Chairman, told a shareholders' meeting in July that BA was: "in the biggest crisis the aviation industry has ever known and it continues".

The aviation industry is set to face additional costs when it enters the European Union's Emissions Trading Scheme in 2012. So even if they persist in trying to press ahead with the third runway, how on earth will it be funded?

Conservatives re-state opposition

The Conservatives meanwhile have again re-stated that they would scrap the plan. On July 23rd The Times reported that Teresa Villiers, the Shadow Transport Secretary re-affirmed that: "Under a Conservative government there will be no third runway at Heathrow." ■

strawberry' as a message. That strawberry flavour will be the flavour of Northamptonshire CC." [I am not making this up!- Ed]. The suggestion was part of a 10-minute message on the council's restructuring plans, published in a video on YouTube. ■

News from the Mayor and GLA

Issues of concern to Londoners

The London Plan Review

A full review of the London Plan, the strategic London-wide context within which boroughs must set their detailed local planning policies, last amended in February 2008, is underway. It sets out an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital over the next 20-25 years.

A scoping report was issued for consultation in May 2009 of the Integrated Impact Assessment and key issues for the London Plan. It will also consider health, equalities, and community safety. Draft alterations have been published for consultation.

Some areas under consideration:

Crossrail: use of planning obligations to allow contributions towards the funding of Crossrail to be raised from developments; proposals to introduce a business rates supplement (BRS) from April 2010 to finance £4.1 billion of the GLA's agreed contribution towards the £15.9 billion project. Consultation responses by Thursday 22nd October 2009.

London View Management Plan

The Draft Revised London View Management Plan SPG, published in June, for public consultation, seeks to strengthen protection of designated views and safeguard the setting of London's World Heritage Sites. It is a key component of the Mayor's strategy to preserve London's character and built heritage, outlining the policy framework for managing the impact of development on key panoramas, river prospects and townscape views. The London Plan will identify places where tall buildings are appropriate, and increase the weight to be given to local context and character in considering proposals for them.

Co-operation in Thames Gateway boroughs

The Mayor is concerned that the Thames Gateway Executive is failing to adequately coordinate development of the Thames Gateway and will meet with the head of the Thames Gateway Executive to gauge progress and set milestones.

Help for small independent retailers

Enable councils to secure a proportion of affordable units for small independent retailers in developments and encourage boroughs to use, where possible, Section 106 agreements to secure affordable retail space.

Useful website addresses

The Outer London Commission website:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/olc/>

The Mayor & Assembly Press releases

<http://www.london.gov.uk/media/centre/>

The London Plan:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan/>

Discourage development on back gardens

(lacking in the present London Plan) and to protect the capital's open spaces.

The end of the bendy buses

Transport for London (TfL) plans to remove the entire fleet of 396 bendy buses from the London bus fleet before the end of 2011. Fifteen new 12m single deck buses have replaced the nine bendy buses on route 507 Waterloo to Victoria, and will run more frequently than their predecessors. They are greener, meeting the very high EEV environmental standard (Enhanced Environmentally Friendly Vehicles). Although there are more buses on the route, using single decks means carbon dioxide emissions will be cut by almost 6 per cent, emissions of oxides of nitrogen by almost 24 per cent and particulate matter emissions by just over 29 per cent.

Housing budgets: the Mayor seeks legal advice

Boris Johnson has attacked government plans to divert money from the "Decent Homes" programme to improve council stock in London. The new government policy, *Building Britain's Future*, claimed to increase new social homes to be built. Closer examination revealed that the figure was actually lower than previous targets and that money was to be diverted away from London to the regions.

In a letter to John Healey, Minister of State for Communities and Local Government, the Mayor expressed concern that the funding being diverted to other regions is largely being paid for by raiding budgets set aside to upgrade over 100,000 of London's poorest quality social homes:

London has been short changed. It is wrong that the capital, with overwhelmingly the greatest national housing need, is the only

region seeing its share of funds cut. With almost 48,000 households living in temporary housing, London will see its share of the new funding for new homes reduced by a third while the North East, with just 300 households in temporary housing, will see its share double I believe that by ignoring London's elected representatives, and in particular, riding roughshod over the powers devolved to the Mayor of London in the GLA Act and Housing and Regeneration Act, the Government may have acted outside its remit. I am seeking advice on whether these decisions are open to legal challenge.

In another recent move, government has declared a rent reduction for council tenants which will also affect housing repair budgets

New London Housing Design Guide

The public consultation draft of the new Housing Strategy sets new minimum standards to improve the quality of all new publicly funded homes built in the capital from 2011.

There are six key areas of design, including new minimum internal space standards. These will have an implication for his target number of new homes and land use, and may invalidate the recent second Housing Capacity Study. Developer Crispin Kelly said the new standards could result in 20 per cent fewer homes being built.

The public consultation closes on September 30, and the final statutory strategy will be published later this year, following submission to the Secretary of State. The draft London Housing Design Guide and the draft London Housing Strategy can be downloaded from:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/publications/2009/07/housing-design.jsp>

<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/housing/strategy/index.jsp>

Third deputy mayor quits

Ian Clement the £127,000-a-year deputy mayor for external relations was forced to quit in June over an expenses scandal involving misuse of a corporate credit card. It is the fifth senior resignation from Mayor Johnson's administration. Mr Clement's duties will be split among the remaining three deputy mayors, (there were five), Sir Simon Milton, Richard Barnes and Kit Malthouse, and communications chief Guto Harri and policy chief, Anthony Browne. ■

The Outer London Commission

Peter Eversden is seeking feedback from people living or working in the Outer London Boroughs

One of the Mayor's concerns is that the outer boroughs are disconnected from the London Plan. He has established the Outer London Commission (OLC), a small, highly experienced and focused body, to advise on the unique needs of London's suburbs, and explore how different parts of Outer London can better realise their economic potential and play a full part in the city's economic success. It will look broadly at other factors which affect economic performance over the next 20 years.

It is chaired by William McKee CBE, who has a long career in the public and private sectors and is advised on architecture and design by Sir Terry Farrell. It includes representatives of business, the boroughs, the development industry and London Forum Chairman, Peter Eversden, represents the voluntary sector on it.

The Commission works closely with the GLA, TfL and LDA, especially in carrying out technical research, which is being 'mainstreamed' into their contributions to the Economic Development, Transport and Spatial Development Strategies. It has had meetings with London First, and borough and business people in various areas of London during the summer and autumn.

It aims to influence the content of the London Plan but the execution of that regional plan is largely in the hands of local authorities. Many boroughs in London are late in the preparation of their Core Strategies and Local Development Framework content. Several of the masterplans for areas of Opportunity, Intensification and Renewal are incomplete or need revision to relate better to the implications of the current recession and to the recent housing capacity study.

London Forum members will need to examine and comment on all the Mayor's new strategies. Some of the Mayor's changed policies will cause revision of borough strategies, so the change/consult/examine processes will carry on locally. Your comments will help to achieve suitable policies in the complete re-write of the London Plan over the next two years

The Commission's interim report was published this summer in time to feed in to the review of the London Plan. It is intended that summaries of the work will be brought together into the Commission's main report to be submitted this autumn. ■

British Museum Proposals for modernist extension thrown out

Conservation groups across Camden supported the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee (BCAAC) and London Forum member, Camden Civic Society (CCS), in opposing the British Museum proposals for a £130m five-storey addition designed by Lord Rogers. Other objectors included the Georgian Group, Save Britain's Heritage and the Ancient Monuments Society.

The proposed extension, with three basement levels for a special exhibition gallery, conservation laboratories, offices and collection storage rooms, was to be shoe-horned between historic buildings in a manner that would cause direct extensive damage to their architectural integrity, amenity and setting. It was to be as tall as the existing Museum buildings, and in many places only 2 m away, or 5 m away from the rear of houses on the east side of Bedford Square.

The Museum's interiors, would have been badly affected, especially Sir Robert Smirke's Arched Room (1839), an astonishing triple-height library room, perfectly preserved, and the North Stair of J.J. Burnet's King Edward VII building, one of the grandest stairs in any London interior. The proposals would have blocked daylight and sunlight from the North Galleries and staircase, cut off views of the exteriors of these buildings and obscured views from inside them.

Three new openings for access to the new wing would have been punched through the base of the magnificent North elevation of Smirke's Great Court, designed in 1823 and restored as recently as 2000, with a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Such openings were without any architectural or historical precedent.

Two houses on Montague Place, would have been demolished to accommodate a flank elevation of one of the "pavilions" of the new extension, in materials alien to the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Dismay at English Heritage stance

To everyone's astonishment and dismay the proposals were supported by English Heritage who gave as one of their reasons "A desire to promote modern architecture". BCAAC and CCS

commented: "Whether it is ever appropriate for EH to do this is a large question: we can find no relevant policies in the official documents reproduced on your website but have observed a marked tendency in recent years for English Heritage to "support" prominent new buildings commissioned by large institutions and designed by fashionable architects." They accused English Heritage of not abiding by its statutory obligation "to secure the preservation of ancient monuments and historic buildings situated in England" (section 32 of the National Heritage Act 1983).

BCAAC and CCS pointed out that Trustees had misunderstood the planning law, believing that the Museum would not be allowed to use the Round Reading Room as an exhibition space beyond 2012. But the temporary permission granted by Camden Council in July 2008, was on the basis that no further applications for an extension would be submitted. The Museum is free to make a new application for a change of use for the Reading Room for use as an exhibition space, or for some other use.

Despite the support of English Heritage, and a recommendation for approval by Camden's own planning officers, the strong local campaign persuaded Councillors to reject the proposals by a majority of five votes to four at Camden council's planning committee in July, on the grounds that the scheme was an "overdevelopment" and that its benefit in terms of additional exhibition space would be outweighed by damage to parts of the original museum.

The Museum is determined to pursue the project. British Museum Chairman Niall FitzGerald said it would be a "catastrophe" if the museum failed to create a new exhibitions space. So they may now go to appeal which would result in a public inquiry; or they may go back to the drawing board, to create a smaller proposal.

But the project may also fall victim to spending cuts by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which had pledged £22.5 million towards the £130 million project. The museum had already received two-thirds of the funding but had about £8 million still due. ■

Round the Societies

A round up of news from our member societies.

By **Haydn Mylchreest**

The value of newsforum

We received this encouraging feedback from David Bieda of **Seven Dials**: "I was walking through the Dials two weeks ago and there was a family with kids looking at the Dials just by one of the time plaques. I pointed it out to them and it turned out they were visiting due to the newsforum article!"

Bee keeping in Dulwich

If you are contemplating looking after a hive or two of bees, an article in the **Dulwich Society** newsletter for Summer 2009 is of interest. The writer keeps bees in Dulwich and describes the activities of the bees in their normal condition. A healthy hive can apparently yield 60 pounds of honey that is surplus to the needs of the bees themselves. The present problem caused by the Varroa mite is the most recent threat to the bee colony, but there are others which have not gone away. There are several highly contagious diseases that damage the developing brood and there is a legal requirement to notify the authorities if these diseases are found. In the past hives would have been automatically destroyed but now there is some scope for treatment if the infection is not too severe. Some birds eat bees and woodpeckers can be very destructive in winter; this year the author found a number of holes drilled through the wall of a hive by a woodpecker; the hole was just big enough for a bee to crawl through and the woodpecker picked them off as they emerged. It is becoming difficult to keep bees but they play an important role in providing much of our own food.

The US Embassy at Nine Elms

Battersea Society reports that the US Embassy has now submitted outline planning applications to Wandsworth Borough Council for their new building at Nine Elms. The centre piece of the development will be another tower.

Redevelopment of Clapham Junction

Wandsworth Society reports that the application to redevelop the Clapham Junction station site was withdrawn by the developer when it became known shortly before the Committee was due to consider the proposals in April that the officers were recommending a refusal. However it emerged that their reason was not so much the 42-storey tower blocks which the Society considers to be totally out of character with the area, but the lack of affordable housing in the proposals.

The Olympic Games, Greenwich

One good thing that has come of the proposals to use Greenwich Park for the Olympic Games is the proposed redevelopment/regeneration of Cutty Sark Gardens. **Greenwich Society** informs readers that this is top of the legacy list because that would transform the entrance to Greenwich and the World Heritage Site from the river. The Society was pleased that Greenwich Council has won money to refurbish the Greenwich and Woolwich foot tunnels beneath the Thames both of which are over 100 years old. It is hoped this work will be completed before the 2012 Games.

Public inquiry at Crystal Palace

Bromley approved the London Development Agency application to build 180 apartments in Crystal Palace Park. This sale of parkland for housing sets a dangerous precedent. **The Crystal Palace Community Association** is appealing to the Mayor to stand by his promise to protect London's green spaces. The Government Office for London called in the application and a public enquiry is now taking place.

Scandal in South Kensington

The **Knightsbridge Association** newsletter reported in June that due to the recession, the Mayor has cut back on some station improvements and funding for step free access at South Kensington has been withdrawn. The Association thinks it is a scandal that, in spite of South Kensington being one of the busiest underground stations in London and the main point of arrival for visitors to the Museums and Royal Albert Hall, there is still no way of accessing the platforms without having to negotiate two sets of stairs.

Some interesting local history

Amwell Society discovered that in 1892 Dadabhai Naoroji was the first Asian to be elected to the House of Commons. A Liberal MP, he lost his Central Finchley seat to the Conservatives in their landslide in 1895. Born in Bombay in 1825, he died there in 1917 after a successful career as an academic (a professor of mathematics & natural philosophy), and then in the commercial and political worlds. He was one of the founders of the Indian National Congress and became its president in 1906. Naoroji Street in WC1 is named after him and a blue plaque was unveiled there in May this year.

Another blue plaque marks the home of antiquarian John Thorpe 1715 – 1792, in **Bexley Village** High Street. Highly valued by serious Kentish historians and genealogists, he devoted his life to sorting the work of his father who used his professional income as a physician to gather and transcribe Anglo-Saxon, Norman and Mediaeval Charters and deeds, and employed a staff of officials to work on the Rochester Cathedral Archives.

The Spring edition of the Journal of the **Crystal Palace Foundation** drew attention to a book Views and Reviews published in 1895 with an entry about Crystal Palace at Sydenham giving information about the structure built to house the famous 1851 Exhibition.

Issue 318 of the **Clapham Society** tells readers that Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the internet, attended Emmanuel School in Clapham and that he is rated joint first in a list of the 100 greatest living geniuses. Not many people knew that!

BT stopped in its tracks at Muswell Hill

The Times reported that **Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association** have halted BT's super-fast broadband trial. John Crompton, treasurer of the Association, said that the cabinets, which, at 1.8 meters tall are higher than most garden walls, block pavements for pedestrians and are unsightly. He pointed out that technology is meant to be getting smaller. There was also some local concern that BT installed the cabinets before getting planning permission. BT is working to reduce the size of the cabinets. ■

newsbriefs

Key issues of interest and concern to note.

Planning for the Historic Environment PPS15

This new planning guidance to protect Heritage has been published for consultation by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It sets the ground rules for development plans and decisions on all planning applications. Important new directions in policy include emphasis on the value of heritage which isn't protected by listing, conservation areas or National Park designations. It takes a precautionary approach to development which amounts to a "presumption in favour of conservation" that is greater the more significant the heritage asset.

It recognises that

- *Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide an emotional meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place.*

Local authorities should :

- *ensure that they either maintain or have access to a historic environment record;*
- *seek the views of the local community where the asset may have a historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic significance to the local community*

However, a number of unanswered questions will need to be addressed if the final PPS is to be effective. The new approach will demand more skilled and expert local authority staff at a time when many local authorities are shedding Conservation Officers. Local authorities have struggled for years to develop and maintain the historic environment records that will underpin the new approach. It is unclear how the new PPS will integrate with transport and highway decisions which can be among the most damaging for heritage assets. Details of the draft PPS15 and the draft English Heritage practice guide can be downloaded from

www.communities.gov.uk/news/planningandbuilding/1295768

World Class Places

The publication World Class Places - the Government's strategy for improving quality of place contains more well-worn government-speak about the "need to do more to engage people in making decisions about where they live, and empower them to shape places for themselves. Local people know best what they want from their local area". However there is also the ominous statement: "As a Government we will do everything in our power not only to support the construction industry through the downturn but to maintain and improve standards of development and the public realm."

Endorsed by CABE, English Heritage, the Environment Agency, HLF, Homes and Communities Agency and Natural England, World Class Places can be found at

www.communities.gov.uk/news/planningandbuilding/1229641

21st Century High Streets

The British Retail Consortium has published a report 21st century High Streets which puts character and local heritage centre stage in the fight back against economic recession. It recognises that "Town centres need good design, making the most of heritage features or natural surroundings to create a unique sense of place."

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill

More government-speak surfaces in this Bill which introduces duties on local government to "promote" local democracy and economic development, and devolves greater power to local government and communities, with proposals for strengthening petitioning within local democracy.

Open Space Strategies best practice guidance

The final version of practical guidance to local authorities on how to prepare, deliver, monitor and review an open space strategy is now available. It is a joint publication of the GLA and CABE Space.

Download it from:

www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/publications/1232092 or

www.cabe.org.uk/files/open-space-strategies-leaflet.pdf

Publicity for planning applications

The Government is consulting on proposals to replace requirements to publicise applications in local newspapers with a requirement to make them available online for 21 days. This would be in addition to a site notice and/or notification of neighbours. Research suggests that relatively few people find out about applications through the local newspaper.

Digital Britain

The Government's Digital Britain report, published last month, proclaiming that every British home and business will have a minimum 2MB broadband link, seems to be no more than wishful thinking. Leaving aside the lack of a suitable high-capacity fibre-optic cable infrastructure, high electricity prices are forcing developers to build the infrastructure needed for these plans abroad, potentially undermining UK competitiveness. Outsourcing Britain's data and processing needs to other countries would mean that UK companies could miss lucrative opportunities to build, equip and service these facilities.

Heritage Open Days taken over by English Heritage

Following the collapse of the Civic Trust, English Heritage has taken ownership of Heritage Open Days, guaranteeing that it will take place this year. English Heritage previously helped the Civic Trust to fund and operate Heritage Open Days. For more information about this year's Heritage Open Day's during the second weekend in September visit <http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/>

Local Authority Constitutional Changes

The idea of directly elected Mayors has already been rejected by the electorate, but the Local Government Act 2007 is now requiring councils to abandon the present system of a Council Leader elected by council members annually, and choose either a Leader, or a Mayor, who will be empowered for a four year term, and would appoint the members of the Executive Cabinet Committee and decide on its size. The new system will further weaken local democratic accountability by concentrating power into the hands of one person. Councils are supposed to be consulting their electorates on this. ■

London Forum 21st Birthday, AGM and Walter Bor Media Awards

London Forum AGM & 21 Birthday Celebration

The London Forum's AGM 2009

will be held on

20th OCTOBER at 5.30pm for 5.45pm start at

The Gallery

70 Cowcross Street, EC1

It will be followed there by a

Special Party

Celebrating 21 Years of The London Forum

6.30 till 9pm

to mark our coming of age.

And where better than in our home since 1988 when Alan Baxter invited us to join his lively and distinguished band of lodgers.

We hope your society will be represented to share this exciting and important occasion with us. There will be food and drink, and we have a wonderful guest list of the great and the good, friends and guests.

It is a great opportunity to promote the Forum and its achievements over 21 years and to say thank you to Alan Baxter, a philanthropist who believes in the city as place where priority is given to people and their needs. He has put this into practice by providing a place where engineers, artists, architects, conservationists and visionaries can meet and nurture the vitality of its human life.

Many of you responded generously to our 10th birthday appeal and a donation towards this event would be much appreciated.

You should be receiving your personal invitations by mid-September and we do hope you will join us to mark the occasion. ■

For information about the London Forum contact:

www.londonforum.org.uk

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Registered Charity Number 1093134

Walter Bor Media Award 2009

The biennial **Walter Bor Media Awards** are made in honour of our Founder President, the late Walter Bor. As an architect and past president of the Royal Town Planning Institute, Walter was keenly aware of the value of communication and the importance of promotion of a point of view. He encouraged societies to use the media, in whatever form, to bring their activities and success stories to the attention of as wide a public as possible.

- How well does your society communicate with the public?
- Can you impress the press?
- Is the success of your web site measured by the hits it gets or does it languish unvisited?

With the approval and support of the Bor family the London Forum launches the 2009 awards in the following categories:

• Newsletters • Printed Publications • Web sites • Media Impact

Entries should consist of current material (January 2008 – September 2009) Letters have been sent to all members with all the details and entry forms.

Entries should be sent to:

Haydn Mylchreest, London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies,
70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ,
by Friday 25th September 2009,
and marked on the outside "Walter Bor Media Awards 2009".
So please don't hesitate to enter for the 2009 Awards.
Do make sure your entry is received in time.

The panel will be chaired by Peter Murray, curator of New London Architecture at the Building Centre, Chairman of WordSearch, and publisher.

Award Ceremony

**Wednesday 25th November 2009, 6.00pm
at The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street.**

Award Certificates will be presented and all entries will be on display, giving members an opportunity to meet and compare notes, and share their experiences convivially. So please note the date in your diary. ■

newsforum

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Member societies are encouraged to use London Forum news in their own newsletters.

While the London Forum is concerned that the views written in articles are relevant and honestly held by the contributor, the opinions stated by individuals may not necessarily be held by the London Forum Executive, who are not in a position to vouch for their factual accuracy.