March 2021 issue #14

PhoenixNews

Hackney in early photographs

I recently came across an archived post from a now defunct community forum, showing some photos of Hackney from the 1920s and 30s, among them this picture of Dalston Lane (below left) and a steam train on Walthamstow marshes (below right). The photos were found by Ken Jacobs, a former postman who discovered the glass negatives being thrown out in Chatsworth Road during his walk one day. You can find the full article here.

Sadiq Khan's homes for Londoners

London mayor Sadiq Khan has announced a new initiative supporting what he calls truly affordable new homes in London - with £4.8 billion from government, this is an attempt to tackle the housing crisis in London. Sadiq's aim is for half of new homes built to be genuinely affordable, taking into account social rent and London Living rent based on average incomes in the capital. His record on providing housing has not always lived up to promises made but surely this is a step in the right direction. In order to be considered for this scheme, you have to register, something I thought may be a good idea for Phoenix members whose short life housing is nearing its end. You can sign up here.

The Conservative candidate Shaun Bailey in the upcoming mayoral election (6th May) is promising to scrap the Ultra Low Emission Zone extension to the North and South Circular, which I believe will bring a lot of votes his way. Bailey claims the proposed charge for travellling within the zone could cost up to £4,550 per year for Londoners without compliant vehicles - for example people with vans who work in London and for whom a new, compliant vehicle is a substantial cost. This means that Londoners who should be voting Labour will be penalised for living in London by the left.
There is a tension here between taking a step in the right direction towards a greener London and an unfair tax onodinary Londoners who can't necessarily afford a new vehicle.

Its unclear what implications on Sadiq's new, fairer housing scheme a Tory mayor would have, but very interesting to consider both sides, particularly as many of Shaun Bailey's election promises are what we might typically expect from a candidate on the left.

ARTWORK (ABOVE) + THOUGHTS FROM GRAHAM WRIGHT

While we are in lockdown in Springtime there is much that Londoners can do in clearing up shabby Town by repainting doorways, clearing out rubbish areas and replanting plants, trees and bushes etc. This helps us all feel good, innovate ideas and meet new people. It also helps us breakdown the selfishness, reservedness and loneliness in being in a city. We need many such schemes to organise us into a community of helpful people. We have lost a lot of people in the pandemic, now is the time to engage in projects to refresh our humanity.

As for articles much could be done if residents were encouraged to do gardening from the councils. Free parking is badly needed. Solar panels and power walls could make the air more healthy. What are we going to do about Electric Vehicles and power points? What do you think?

G.H.J. Wright

- thanks to Graham for this. If any one has any thoughts to follow up on his ideas, please be in touch.
After walking past the well established community gardens on an estate on Shirbutt Street (near me in Poplar), I found this website on community food gardens in Tower Hamlets which might be hepful to some members

YOU CAN HEAR ANDREW CORAM'S PLAYLIST TOP TRACKS 14 HERE

CELEBRATIONS IN MARCH

MONDAY 8TH MARCH was International Womens Day, celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. This was overshadowed by the sad death of Sarah Everard which amongst other things, highlighted the work still to be done in regards to womens' safety

17TH MARCH was St Patrick's Day, why not celebrate with a Black Velvet? Fill glasses halfway with Guinness and top slowly with champagne or sparkling wine. Drink while listening to this Irish Traditional and Folk special from NTS.

20TH MARCH was the Spring Equinox and also Nowruz or Persian New Year. Sprouting seeds are traditionally grown for the Nowruz table to symbolise the dawning of new growth.

Poplar Bakehouse at Poplar Union

is currently open for takeaway which means you can pick up one of their amazing chocolate babkas (see right). You can also order fresh seasonal fruit and veg, eggs and dairy online to collect in person. There is the option to order in small quantities which means it is quite affordable - and the vegetables I ordered were all delicious and fresh.

I think this is a brilliant local amenity in Poplar - the cafe has got better and better since it opened a few years ago, the staff are really friendly and they also have a great programme of community events, in person and online.

DEVELOPMENT: ARCHITECTS FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

ASH (Architects for Social Housing) was set up in 2015 to respond architecturally to London's housing crisis. I thought they were a noteworthy organisation as they offer advice and expertise to residents of social housing including cooperatives exploring a regeneration process. Here is a link to a design project they worked on with Brixton Housing Cooperative.
Their website is definitelty worth a look in general.

CALL FOR CONTRIBRUTIONS

All contributions to the newsletter should be sent to emmajrock@hotmail.com
Please be in touch with anything you would like to see included in next month's newsletter, including candidates for interview, stories of lockdown, ideas for development, recipes, news, art + music

Thanks,
Emma xxx