

HOCKLEY FLYOVER (AREA 5)

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I approached the flyover from the city centre on the northern side of the road. The character of the A41 is obviously different on each side of the flyover. On the south there are reminders of the Soho area's historical past whilst on the north buildings are utilitarian post-WWII units. Presumably that side of the road was cleared to make way for the building of the present road layout. Half way along and at the lowest natural point there are a series of underpasses to cross from one side to the other, but it was notable that locals preferred to use the road itself as a crossing point rather than venture into the subways that have a fearsome reputation. They mark the edges of two rival gang territories.

As we crossed from north to south there was a figure in the open centre of the underpasses scanning the area and a car slowed to walking speed and the driver seemed to be looking at what we were up to. Paranoia on my part, maybe, but lives have been lost and destroyed for being on the wrong side of Hockley Flyover. Once you cross at the mid-point the streetside architecture becomes reversed, the buildings on the south are now newer than on the north side that seems to be dominated by fast food outlets in humble C19th terraces in contrast to the grand building encountered earlier.

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