

It's time the rest of the country was given the attention...

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I lived in London for 22 years. I only intended to stay for three when I arrived, but then things happened and my departure was delayed.

I am, however, glad I left. I do not regret my London years. But London is, it's quite fair to say, unlike anywhere else, and you only really know that when you have both experienced it and seen it from outside.

What's the relevance of this? It is to be found in the fact that London is failing us, badly.

London really does not understand some very basic things. Like food. It's shrink wrapped in London's view. In a few minutes when I will be walking, windblown and wet through a field with my dog, it will be the winter wheat and it's state of progress, or not (some is under water right now).

Despite that reality I will witness just down the lane flooding for much of London is the Thames Barrier. That's naive, and it's a small world view, but both are facts of life in London. Its disconnect from reality does not always deliver a big picture perspective; it allows denial of the truth as life goes on in a bubble.

And it permits a belief in technical solutions, like austerity, that will impact someone else's, of whom there seem to be plenty around in London, none of whom you know. London communities are small and socially insular. That's true to some degree everywhere, of course, but less so.

And this matters. I wrote yesterday about the choice Scotland faces. It's clear that London does not know why Scotland might want to leave. That's as clear as London having little clue that austerity when applied to the environment - with many more cuts to come yet - results in flooding of large areas, a problem that can only get worse.

London is the problem of small scale thinking writ large; of the power of self interest ignoring the issue of community. Of the capital ignoring the nation. Of theory offering

no alternative to practice.

I am not saying the country has all the answers. But London does not seem to know there is other experience on offer. And right now the consequence of that is the creation of new political demands and momentums that London can't apparently even begin to comprehend.

The outcome of all this is far from clear, but it's time the rest of the country was given the attention by London it deserves.

PS Six mallard were on the flooded winter wheat - a perfect breakfast environment for them and a pleasant diversion for me.