



Balsall Heath Local History Society

THE GAZETTE

MAY 2018

Tel: 0121 464 1890 Email: valhart1@googlemail.com

Web: balsallheathhistory.co.uk

Facebook: [Balsall Heath Local History Society](https://www.facebook.com/BalsallHeathLocalHistorySociety)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/balsallheathlhs>

The everyday taste of Balsall Heath.

In the April edition of The Gazette, we told you of an on-going project that we have titled Journeys to Balsall Heath. One of the first to be featured by this project is the Harkin Family of Balfour Street. Francis Harkin came to Birmingham from Belfast during the war, here he met and married Daisy Martha Farnell in March 1947. They had three children, Mary Elizabeth, Frank Henry, and a third child, Joseph, who died soon after birth. The project has had substantial support from Mary and Frank (Frankie) in recording the family's experiences of living in Balsall Heath in the 1940s, 50, and 60s.

From quite an extensive collection of memories supplied by Mary (now Mary Eliza Brown), we have assembled a few of those where she reflected on the availability and circumstances of receiving and eating 'delicacies' or otherwise, experienced as she and her brother grew up.

In Mary Street, at the junction with Balfour, Bert Childs and his family ran a newsagent business. Mary remembers that they had a daughter, Barbara and a son, Charles. Frankie Harkin worked as a 'paperboy' for Childs family, and Mary asks, "do you remember Slades the lovely cake shop on Mary St? (Situating between Balfour and Knutsford Street) When my brother did his paper round he had to deliver there, and every Saturday. they gave him a bag of hot jam donuts. You can imagine we couldn't wait for him to come home, his life wasn't worth living if he ate them all first!

Frankie contributes to the food memoirs with a story about his Polish friend, a boy called 'Jeelav'. Whenever he went to his friend's house, Jeelav's mom gave him hot blackcurrant juice to drink. A luxury. Mary relates that she also had a friend, a Sheila Gibbs, who lived on Lincoln St. "When I went there,

her mom gave me a slice of bread & Lard! It was awful, I had never had it before, or since!"



Daisy Harkin (nee Farnell) with Mary & Frankie circa 1949 / 50.

Lincoln Street brought Mary and Frankie another 'taste' of Balsall Heath, by way of a Fish & Chip shop. "Just before they closed, in the evening, they would serve 'scratchings' for 1d a bag. You can imagine us kids used to queue up. If you were lucky you would get a very small piece of fish in your bag! Those were the days".

A second Fish & Chippie Shop was Floyds on Longmore St. It was run by 2 elderly sisters. "In all the years I had to go and queue for my mom on a Friday night, I never saw either of them smile! It was very popular, especially on Fridays, as in those days no Catholic would eat meat on

a Friday. Floyds 'chippie' was next door to the Chocolate Box sweet shop. Which is another story."

The Art School needs you

Some of you may have noticed the Moseley School of Arts is wrapped and hidden away, but changes and restoration are well under way! The finished building will be used for lots of purposes, focusing on the local community and how it can be best served, and will be completed later this year. We are creating a whole oral history record that will capture as many memories and experiences as possible. If anyone would like to contribute their experiences, know someone who would, or volunteer to help us deliver this project, please drop a line to michellebhlhs@gmail.

Vote for us – please.

You still have until the end of June to vote for your local history society at Tesco's. We should get at least £1,000 but with enough votes that could become £4,000.

To vote, get a token from when you pay at the till and post it in the appropriate slot in store.

Other Events

3rd June 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

11th Birmingham Lives History Fair

Safeside

101 Vauxhall Road, Birmingham, B7 4HW

25 stalls of photos and memorabilia including the history society's own and an exhibition of photos from Birmingham's past.

18th June 10a.m. – 4 p.m.

Windrush 70

"Britain Called and We Answered"

Public Service Day

Tally-Ho Conference Centre

Pershore Road

Birmingham B5 5RN

On 22nd June 1948 The Empire Windrush Docked at Tilbury Docks from Jamaica with some 500 British Subjects. A time of reflection and celebration of the contribution of the Windrush Generation with historic and modern displays along with activities.

This is a community event open to everyone

www.windrush70th.co.uk

9th June 9:30 a.m – 4:30 p.m.

The Forgotten Revolutionary Players

Many major figures such as James Watt, Matthew Boulton and Josiah Wedgwood dominate the traditional histories of the Industrial Revolution in the West Midlands.

However, they did not work alone; many other men, women and even children, played significant roles in making the region a global centre of ideas, innovation and manufacture, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

This special event will tell some of the stories of these often overshadowed or ignored forgotten revolutionary players.

The Event will take place in Lecture Room 3 on Floor 1 of the Arts Building, University of Birmingham B15 2TT

Ticket price is £20 for the whole day and includes lunch.

<https://historywm.com/events/special-event-celebrating-forgotten-revolutionary-players-9th-june-2018>

Next meeting.

Thursday June 28th

An evening visit to the Leather Museum, Walsall

Visitors and new members always welcome.