



## Balsall Heath Local History Society

## THE GAZETTE

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### Moseley Art School – Restoration.



The former Moseley School of Art has been given an HLF grant of £1.7million for the restoration and refurbishment of the building. This will transform the Grade II\* listed building in Balsall Heath into a vibrant centre enjoyed and valued by the whole community.

The Arts and Crafts-style building was the first purpose-built art school in the country having been created as a branch of the Birmingham School of Art. Built in the 'Wrenaissance' style to the designs of Birmingham architect W.H.Bidlake, it opened in 1901 and ran as an art school for 76 years. Its alumni include Peter Phillips, one of the preeminent British Pop Artists of our time, and musicians Ali Campbell of UB40 and Christine McVie of Fleetwood Mac

Now, a full National Lottery grant will enable much needed refurbishment and transformation of the building, including a ground floor gallery to exhibit the works of local artists; a permanent display charting the history of the building, and various community-led events and workshops. Flexible space on the first floor will provide office accommodation for local small businesses and "hot desking" for local entrepreneurs. An existing first floor classroom will continue to be used for learning

and will be upgraded so it can also be used for seminars and public meetings.

The planned display of the building's history will showcase the experiences of former Moseley School of Art pupils as well as many local groups from the diverse Balsall Heath community that have met there over the years. This will be set in the context of the development of Balsall Heath as a whole.

At times it seemed the building would not survive. It has been on the Historic England's 'Heritage At Risk' register for the past 20 years and it has only been able to host activities and meetings thanks to the determination of its owners, the Moseley Muslim Community Association, to keep the doors open and the events running for local people while carrying out the much needed maintenance and repairs.

Vanessa Harbar, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, said: "We are delighted to support this project to restore the former Moseley School of Art, helping to secure its future as a creative hub for the community. Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, this project will mean that more people will be able to get involved with, protect, and learn about the exciting heritage right on their doorstep

Campaign body Historic England has already provided £243,000 to enable urgent repairs to the building and its historic façade. Their Heritage at Risk architect, Cristina Gardiner, said: "Repairing this beautiful and important Birmingham building and securing its future will provide the community with a real asset for future generations.

Javed Arain, on behalf of the Moseley Muslim Community Association said,  
" We are delighted to have received grants from HLF and Historic England for the restoration and refurbishment of this important building. This will help us create a hub to meet the diverse needs of the local

community and we hope that the success of this project will be a catalyst for the rejuvenation of the local area.”

Balsall Heath Local History Society are fully involved in this project. We held an excellent exhibition in the building last year and are looking forward to making a positive contribution in the months ahead, particularly in working on displays and looking at ways of engaging the local community. There will be some “Hard Hat Tours” coming up after Easter so watch this space.

## Ghost Signs Walking Tours

We have been asked to advertise the regular monthly “Ghost Signs” walks through Digbeth and the jeweller quarter (2 separate walks) that are being held on a monthly basis. They last for 3 hours each and cost £10.

You can find more details at

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/brums-ghost-signs-6076239007>

They also have a blog and a facebook page.

## The Friends Institute, Moseley Rd.



This Grade 2\* listed building was built in 1899 at the expense of Richard Cadbury to provide room for the for the Society of Friends to run Sunday School classes, clubs and meetings. It included a hall large enough to seat 2000, a café, gymnasium and 37 classrooms. The hall is now used by the New Testament Church of God, but the rest of the building is now being offered out by the City Council.

“The managing Trustees of the charitable trust are reviewing the viability of the property as a going concern and are seeking expressions of interest from external parties to take over the management and development of the whole building. The preference is for the property to be retained as a community facility which fulfils the objects and purposes of the Trust. However alternative or additional uses which are in line with planning guidance, and will ensure the viability of the property will also be considered.”

There is a closing date of March 2nd. 2018

## Next meeting.

### Thursday Feb 22nd

The speaker will be Charles Brecknell on “How to Survive the Great War. The war service of S.N. Menzies, despatch rider and pilot 1914 to 1919.”

7 p.m for a 7.30 start.

St Paul’s Venture, Hertford St.

Visitors and new members always welcome.