

BALSALL HEATH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18



Bringing history to life

Charity Number: 1101945

The Society was founded in 1979 with the aim of promoting interest in our local history. Over the years the Society has achieved considerable success, working with schools and community groups, organising exhibitions and events, collecting resources and producing its own publications. It is important we all feel pride in our area and to value its strengths, both past and present. Local history has a key role to play in underpinning community cohesion.

Websites: <http://www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk/>

<https://www.birminghamhistorytheatre.uk/>



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Society has again been very active since the last Annual Report. We continue to have interesting and talented speakers covering a wide variety of topics. This year they have ranged from Dr Graham Cope's telling of "The Grand Old Duke of York", to Mary Bodfish of the Smethwick Local History Society entertaining us with a comprehensive and humourous history of the "Bodfish" name. I have to express my thanks to Bron Salway for continuing to engage such wonderful entertainers

We have also held some meetings focused on Balsall Heath, when members of our own Society shared their memories of growing up, living, and working here..

The Society was very saddened to learn of the recent death of Dr Anita Halliday MBE, former CEO and founder of St Paul's Trust who was a firm supporter of our aims and objectives.

For the early part of this year I was unable to act as Chairman because of illness, but I wish to thank members of the Committee, particularly Jenny Lloyd, for standing in for me.

Finally I would like to thank you, the members for continuing to support the Society by turning up each month. Please continue to do so. Patrick Baird, Chairman

EVENTS

The year has again been studded with an amazing number of events.

June 25th A Canal Walk, undertaken with the Birmingham History Theatre Company This time it was on a stretch of canal from Bournville to Kings Norton with a variety of historical characters popping up at key points to entertain and delight the audience.

July 1st Moseley Street Fair where we ran two very successful stalls

July 15th. Family Fun Day at Calthorpe Park, where the Society ran a tea tent.

September 9th We took part in a Local History Fair at the Birmingham & Midland Institute

September 9th On the same day we supported Fircroft College in its **Heritage Open Day**, with members of the Society playing the parts of Richard and Elizabeth Cadbury, their children and staff. We were pleased to be visited by Cadbury who agreed to have his photo taken with us. (Pictured on front cover)

October 4th to 8th BALSALL HEATH PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE EXHIBITION.

This was the highlight of our year, held at the former Art School on the Moseley Rd. It explored our proud heritage through photos, maps, displays and artefacts as well as featuring portraits of current Balsall Heathans by Saadia Kiyani and the outline of the Neighbourhood Plan. As part of the exhibition we also held a Cream Tea for older people which was wonderful.

The event attracted several hundred people, some of whom also brought us donations of photographs, artefacts and old St Paul's Church magazines. Visitors also had the chance to dress up and have their photos taken, which was very entertaining.

March 29th to April 25th Journeys Exhibition at Balsall

Heath Library. This was the culmination of the Comic Relief Community Cash grant which funded both this exhibition as well as the one held in October. The project was to piece together a tapestry of memories, pictures and stories, helping us to understand our shared heritage. Many thanks to Jim Fitzpatrick and Michelle Lisa Gayle who did most of the work on this exhibition.



April 22nd Moseley Road Street Festival. The Society had a stall outside the Baths on the Moseley Road, which was closed to traffic for the day. In addition there was a display of artefacts in the Ort gallery and a Dramatic Lecture by Val Hart on the history of the Moseley Road,, illustrated both with slides and members of the Birmingham History Theatre Group re-enacting a number of scenes of historic interest

SCHOOLROOM

The Schoolroom in the old Clifton Junior School sadly closed in July 2017 as St Paul's Trust decided the building was no longer safe to use. It moved to Price's Square, Northfield where it looks very pleasing. A launch of the reshaped Schoolroom was held in January 2018 with a display of our artefacts.



“THE LOST CHILDREN” New Project

This year has also seen the beginnings of a new project on the Middlemore Children's Emigration Homes, “ The Lost Children” , funded by the Heritage Lottery and which will be ongoing for the next two years. Recently, Rowena Lyon was appointed Project Manager and a press launch is due to be held towards the end of August.

NEW PUBLICATION : Sweet Memories

A small working party has been collecting memories and stories about sweets from the past, over the last year. This has now borne fruit in the shape of a new booklet, “Sweet Memories, A Dictionary of Confectionery.” What a treat! Many thanks to William McCabe who has contributed a lot of time and skill to creating this.

ENQUIRIES AND PUBLICITY

Research queries are steady and are usually connected to family history. Shirley Thompson, a local author, used our archives to good effect and her book about her family's life in Brunswick Road has now been published

The Gazette. This newsletter of the Society continues to be widely circulated. It is available via our website and email.

MEETINGS AND TRIPS

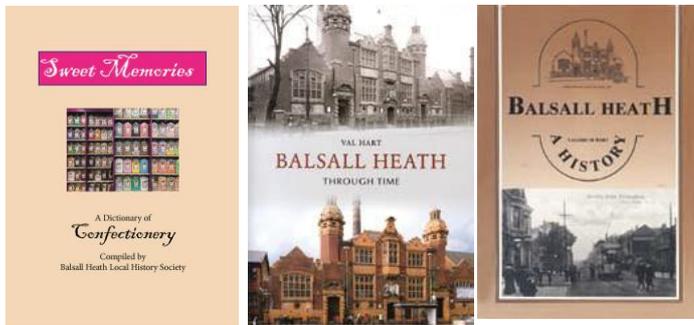
Meetings are held on the last Thursday of every month at 7.00 for 7.30 at St. Paul's Venture, Malvern St, off Clifton Road, Balsall Heath. All are welcome to come along. For details please phone 464 1890 or 1888.

PARTNERSHIPS & FUNDERS

Thanks to those who work in partnership with us: **St. Paul's Community Development Trust. OPNOCS** (Older People's New Opportunities Consortium), **Balsall Heath Library.**

Thanks to our funders, too who enable our work. This year we have had grants from :

- Comic Relief Community Cash, managed by the Heart of England Community Foundation.
- Birmingham City Council Innovation Fund
- The Heritage Lottery Fund



Publications by Balsall Heath Local History Society

Sweet Memories

Price: £1.00 A dictionary of confectionery from times gone by.

Balsall Heath Through Time

Price: £10.00 by Val Hart Then and Now images of Balsall Heath from Victorian times to the present day. Old and current images are contrasted to depict the ebb and flow of life in a richly diverse community.

The Flicks

Price: £1.00 Memories of the old days at the cinemas in Balsall Heath, through contemporary accounts and people's memories.

The Moseley Road Trail

Price: 20p The Development of the Moseley Road from the 1740s. Locations map with historical notes and photographs.

Balsall Heath, A History

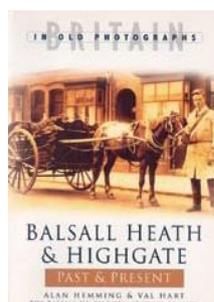
Price: £7.99 by Val Hart Balsall Heath's development from the farmland and heath of the 18th century to the suburbs of the 1930s and 40s.

Brown Paper and Goose Grease

Price: £1.00 A Dictionary of Traditional Remedies, chiefly collected from memories.

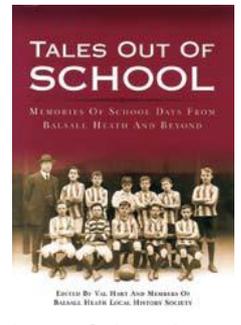
Balsall Heath & Highgate Past & Present

Price: £7.00 Edited by Val Hart and Alan Hemming Fascinating photographs of the area arranged under topics, from long ago as well as some of our more recent pictures.



Tales Out Of School

Price: £5.00 Edited by Val Hart Memories of schooldays by adults from Balsall Heath and beyond, spanning more than a century and five continents. A story of what school really felt like for 120 different people. The happiest days of their lives, or days to forget?



The Gazette

Price: FREE Keep up to date with the History Society via our monthly newsletter. Stories and photographs from the past and present. Available as a hard copy at our monthly meetings or as an email attachment. Contact us to receive it to your email account every month.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2017-2018

President: Richard Albutt

Chair: Patrick Baird

Vice-Chair: Jenny Lloyd

Treasurer: Pat Johnson

Programme Secretary: Bron Salway

Committee Secretary: Val Hart

Committee Members: Margaret Pendry, Diane Stead, Jim Fitzpatrick

Charity Registration Number: 1101945

CONTACT INFORMATION

Balsall Heath Local History Society c/o St Paul's Community Development Trust, St Paul's Centre, 73 Hertford Street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham B12 8NJ

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WEBSITES

www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk

www.birminghamhistorytheatre.com

We can also be found on Facebook and Twitter