

BALSALL HEATH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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NIPPY TIMES AT THE CARNIVAL



Thousands of people came to the Carnival on 2nd July and had a very enjoyable time. We led the procession around the nearby streets, finally ending up at Pickwick Park where "Nippy's Tea Room" offered tea, cake and a chair to those in need! A good time had by all and many thanks to the large number of History Society members who worked and supported throughout the day.



COOKING AT KUSHI

Our first Balsall Eat paid a visit to Kushi on the Moseley Road. The restaurant has won Master Chef Award (1995 – 1996), the European Silver Award (1995 – 1996) and Hot Stuff Chef of the Year / Birmingham Council Food Hygiene. Owner and Head Chef Mohammed Ali Haydor is passionate about his work. The restaurant is unique in having a healthy eating section of the menu as well as the traditional range of dishes. Not content with publishing a book, "Authentic Balti Curry: Restaurant Recipes Revealed", he now runs a cookery course to pass on his skills to those eager to cook at home.



Following our meal Ali kindly showed us around his kitchen and answered questions: "This is the kitchen where I teach, we do various dishes. The first one I do it and then I let you do the second one. At the end of the night you can take them home or share among your friends. We run classes on Mondays and you need to book in - a seven week course.

More than anything else Indian cookery is about knowing the spice. The amount, the quantity to be added for each different dishes.

The same spice, making a different quantity gives you different flavours. If I cook a Chicken Korma or a Chicken Masala they are like day and night. Basically the same spice but its how you mix it. I roast and grind the spices from fresh, I don't buy powder. This is before I start all the cooking. The reason is, if you buy the powder, some of the companies roast at eighty degrees temperature and some do 110 degrees. Some of them do sixty degrees. So there is a lot of differential on the roasting basis and it all depends how you roast your spice, and also the grinding.

I have been doing this since 1975 and previous to that I did all the washing up. I came from India with my parents. I went to school and college, high school in West Bromwich. That was 1969 and I then moved to a lot of places. I went to Ireland as well, I was at Belfast University. From there I did my degree and came back to Scotland and worked for offshore oil. Then I got kicked out from the job. I was the only asian guy and not good enough so I said ok and p*** off to you. I had been in Ireland and pushed around so many times so I decided that's enough and just forget about it. I am going to do something that I enjoy – cooking.

I was in Scotland – Aberdeen. I got married in Bangladesh and came to Aberdeen. There was a very little amount of Asian people and my wife got lonely so I had to really move so I moved off to Birmingham. I opened this restaurant in 1992. One time I was very busy but last couple of years I was not here, other things, but I am back in again.

I feel I should teach somebody something. I should teach what I know. Everything here is my own. I don't get anyone else to do this. I prepare and cook everything. That's what I enjoy, mixing and so on. Bits of that, bits of this. Two or three years ago people started coming and saying will you teach me, will you teach me, and at that time I was teaching at South Birmingham College. First year I was doing it my way and then the second year they wanted me to do it their way and... (shakes head). In restaurants you can tell the

difference straight away when they change chef. Each cook has his own style and own way. If you employ somebody to do the job for you I think it is best to leave him and say look I employed you for this profession and you do the best of your knowledge and please my customer. If you see that your customer is not pleased then tell your chef that's not how we want it. The hours are very long (cooking) and very unsocial but if you like it then you do it. Don't like it then no point coming in. I come in at lunchtime to do preparing – a one man job.

**LOOKING BACK
HAYNES**

JOHN

Just a reminder that we are in the procession for this event. We are also running a tea tent and a display of photographs from last year's carnival.

**NEXT MEETING: 29TH SEPTEMBER
ABC**

EASY AS

Mary Bodfish, who chairs and is literally the voice of the Smethwick History Society, visits to talk