

BALSALL HEATH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

SWEET FREEDOM

THE CHURCH CENTRE

Sweet Freedom, the drama dealing with the slave trade, made a welcome return on the 17th November. The audience at the Church Centre were treated to the shorter one hour version of the play which was edited by Val so that it can be performed in schools or smaller venues. It has to be said that the play is still going down extremely well. The audience were most vocal in their compliments afterwards and it felt very good "on stage" too. Peter Churchill was present to accompany the songs on piano and they were a particular highlight. The production itself was much enhanced by the return of Ian Edwards who handled projections and organised a willing band of volunteers to sort out the set and electrics beforehand. A big thank you to all and last but not least the cast who gave it their all. Audience member Ms J. Lloyd said, "It was thought provoking and informative and very well performed". You can't argue with her can you?

We are looking at putting Sweet Freedom on again after Christmas and meanwhile pre-production work continues on the new play which might possibly be called "Life's Rich Pageant".



SMALL HEATH ALLIANCE

COME ON YOU HEATHANS!

Birmingham City FC started life back in 1875 on waste ground in Arthur Street. At that time they were called Small Heath Alliance, reflecting the team's origins. In their first game they played Holte Wanderers of Aston and drew 1 – 1. This match was noteworthy for Holte fielding 12 men by mistake! Once Small Heath noticed they hastily recruited a 12th man too. At the end of the first season Small Heath realised they need a proper ground and arrangements were made to move to Muntz Street near the tram depot. So for the 1876-77 season they moved temporarily to Balsall Heath but where did they play? This is, so far, unknown for certain. Birmingham City do not have any records of that era left as they were destroyed in a fire. I am hoping that newspapers of the time might give the answer – when I can get into Birmingham Central Library! It is said they played "off Ladypool Road" and a popular suggestion is the race track which was on the site of Runcorn Road. Val Hart thinks this unlikely and has suggested the cricket ground at Pickwick Park, which does seem far more practical. After their season here they went to Muntz Street and eventually changed their name to Birmingham City FC, and moved to their current home of St. Andrews.

On 5th December the Balsall Eat group visited Adil's – the self proclaimed home of the Balti. There are a few theories as to the origin of the term "Balti" but the most popular is that it derives from the Urdu/ Hindu word for the pot in which the food is cooked. Adils say that it was their chef who, in 1977, was the first to cook food in balti dishes which are then taken direct to the table from the cooker. There are one or two other claimants as well – Al Faisals and Imrans for a start – but there is no doubt that Balti cuisine spread out from our very own Balti Triangle, no matter who was the very first.

Adils is certainly a very "traditional" restaurant indeed, complete with menus underneath glass table tops! A good time was had by all and we will be "Eating" out again in the new year. Adils can be found online at <http://www.adilbalti.co.uk/>



MARY STREET**TRAMS**

Kay Wilton who lives in Mary Street visited the Print Works exhibition.

Her brother Glynn works at the Crich Tramway Museum and he sent her two photographs of a tram on Mary Street, taken circa 1948 he says.

Here is the first one; next one next month.



VICTORIAN CLASSROOM**SCHOOL FEEDBACK**

We recently had a visit from Colebourne School. It got off to an exciting start as their bus driver chose to come under Clifton Road bridge with a double decker! After this dramatic interlude things settled down and we had a most enjoyable day. Teacher Sairah Din wrote to Bron recently:-
"I just wanted to say thank you for a fantastic day. We had a brilliant time, it was probably the best trip we have been on. Every single child enjoyed it and said they wanted to come back again. A lot of it was to do with you and your staff. You made us feel so welcome".

NEXT MEETING: 26TH JANUARY**THE CADBURY STORY**

Alan Thornton visits to give this talk. A Balsall Heath link for the firm comes with Sir Paul Cadbury who was patron of the Balsall Heath Community Association.