



CHRIS SUTTON: St. Paul's Trust, Hertford St, Balsall Heath, B12 8NJ.
Tel: 0121 464 1890 Email: chris.sutton@stpaulstrust.org.uk
Web: balsallheathhistory.co.uk & www.digitalbalsallheath.org.uk
Facebook: Balsall Heath Local History Society

The Balsall Heath Local History Society was founded in 1979 with the aim of promoting interest in our local history. We feel pride in our area and value its strengths – past and present. To meet our aims we work with local schools and community groups organising exhibitions and events. We have also produced several publications. We are a registered charity and rely on grants and donations to achieve our aims. For more information on our work, or to volunteer and help please contact us.

MEMORY LANE WAS A RIOT!



“A wonderfully entertaining and enjoyable production”

WEEKEND WARRIORS: Chris, Derek and Raj go on the warpath

The Birmingham History Theatre company production “Memory Lane” delighted audiences over three performances in March at St Paul’s Trust. It was inspired by the successful Ladypool Road trail which we put on last year. This was a walking trail along the road stopping for historic interludes showcasing the rich heritage of the road through hundreds of years. Val Hart worked on an adaption of that trail for the stage with the central framework being herself as a speaker giving a talk on Ladypool Road. This certainly fooled some audience members who thought they were coming purely for a talk!

Punctuating and illustrating Val’s talk were a series of dramatized episodes from the history of the road going back to its days as Ladypool Lane. There were also four specially created filmed inserts, photo slide illustrations and even wind machines for the grand finale tornado recreation! On top of that there were two great songs from Peter Churchill and the reliable support of Ian Edwards on lights. All three audiences were enthusiastic and following such a great reception we can announce that “Memory Lane” is to return to St. Paul’s on Friday 18th July and Saturday 19th July.
(All pictures on this page by Jake Stewart)

BEWARE THE IDES OF MARCH

There was no issue of this newsletter in March due to my unexpectedly booking into Solihull and Heartlands hospitals! Thanks to all who sent their best wishes.



Thankfully normal service is now resumed! The picture is me as the Inspector of Nuisances from the Balsall Heath Board of Health, during the “Memory Lane” stage show.

CANAL WALK IN JUNE

Recent years have seen several historical canal walks undertaken by the History Society and their comrades in costume The Birmingham History Theatre Company. The next is set for **Sunday 22nd June** and will be on the **Birmingham to Worcester Canal**.

There will be the usual songs and historic interludes, with Cadbury’s a certainty to be featured. We are hoping to have the canal boat along for the less able walkers. You are welcome to come along and spend a Sunday with us

HORSE POWER!

Jim Fitzpatrick reins supreme



A GIRL CAN DREAM

Sue Rose tells Polly Hackett how it is





BALSALL BEAT From Harbury Road

Dave Wakeling recently toured the UK with his band The English Beat. Back in the late 70's and 80's The Beat had several big records in the charts including the smash hit single "Mirror In The Bathroom". As a multi-racial band much of their repertoire reflected the tension of the times, singing about unity, unemployment and politics.



One single in particular, "Stand Down Margaret", became a focus for dissent against the Thatcher government.

Although the six-piece joined the likes of The Specials and Madness in the early 80s Two Tone movement, differing decisions on how to move forward saw them eventually split. Dave established a new band in the USA with fellow singer Ranking Roger while guitarist Andy Cox and bass player David Steele remained in the UK, forming Fine Young Cannibals.

Dave told the Birmingham Post: "I just like to walk around the city when I come home. I remember growing up in Harbury Road and we were right at the back of the cricket ground. We used to sneak into games and managed to see three international games for free. I dream of that street a lot. It is now a really happy place for me. I was never very keen on the weather... but there is something about Birmingham. I like that gallows sense of humour, and a lot of my song-writing came out of that lovely raised eyebrow of Birmingham irony."

Talking to Uncut magazine Dave recalled the night that led to the first recording of "Mirror In The Bathroom". The band were booked to play at Aston University as support to Radio One DJ John Peel. The band played their 45 minute set after which Peel announced that he loved their music and would swap his £300 fee for their £100 fee if they played their set again! "We did and we took him out for a balti on the Ladypool Road in Balsall Heath. We were dead chuffed and he offered us a radio session, which is where we first recorded "Mirror In The Bathroom".

Next Meeting:
Thursday 22nd May
7:30

The Venture
(Malvern Street by the
farm)

Members' Evening

The Annual General Meeting is here again! After the official duties of the evening we will be having a final review of the Diamond Balsall Heath project. This created an archive of memories inspired by objects from the past.

IT'S NOT CRICKET

Many will be surprised to learn that the original home of Moseley Rugby Club lies not in Reddings Road but here in Balsall Heath – and in more than one location.



When a group of young Havelock Cricket Club members decided, in October 1873, to form a rugby football club their first problem was finding somewhere to play. The obvious solution would have been to use the cricket club's ground in Trafalgar Road, Moseley. However, the cricketers probably did not like the idea of having their turf churned up during the winter. A field was obtained in St. Paul's Road, Balsall Heath though where exactly this was situated is uncertain. At that time the Pickwick Cricket Club's ground was in St. Paul's Road but they would probably not have welcomed the footballers for the same reason as their colleagues at Havelock. Contemporary maps show another field adjacent to Pickwick's ground, which may well have been where the Havelock Football Club took up residence. This field was situated close to the modern junction between St. Paul's Road and Woodfield Road next to the railway embankment. This is not on the same spot as the more recently created Pickwick Park! In most accounts of the club's history this first ground is referred to as St. Paul's Road, Camp Hill even though it is actually in Balsall Heath and is some distance from Camp Hill. Confusion may have arisen because the local nearby railway station was called Camp Hill & Balsall Heath.

Havelock Football Club remained in St. Paul's Road for the whole of the 1873/74 season. The club's first captain was S.H. Deakin who led the side for the first four seasons. It is not certain where the club's home was during the following season, its first under the name of Moseley Football Club and the first when the famous red and black strip was used. The uncertainty is because in those days football, of both codes, received little coverage in the local press and when Moseley were mentioned their home ground was simply referred to as 'Balsall Heath.' There is no doubt about the location of the club's home ground in 1875/76 because the forthcoming football fixtures published in the Birmingham Daily Gazette describe the ground as 'adjoining Camp Hill Station.' This was the station mentioned above and not Camp Hill goods station which was further up the line near Stratford Place. Maps of the time, although not naming the ground, clearly show an enclosure adjacent to the station on the southern corner of Highgate Road and Moseley Road. The position of the ground would have been a great advantage when trying to arrange fixtures with visiting teams as the main entrance to the station was on the opposite corner of the two roads.

After 1875/76 newspapers referred to the club's home ground as either 'Balsall Heath' or 'the Moseley ground.' By the 1878/79 season Moseley had definitely moved to a new ground because the Birmingham Daily Gazette now listed games as taking place at Oxford Road, Moseley. Having described itself as Moseley Football Club for the previous four seasons the club was now finally playing in Moseley.