



The Balsall Heath Local History Society was founded in 1979 with the aim of promoting interest in our local history. 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.

WHAT KATY DID

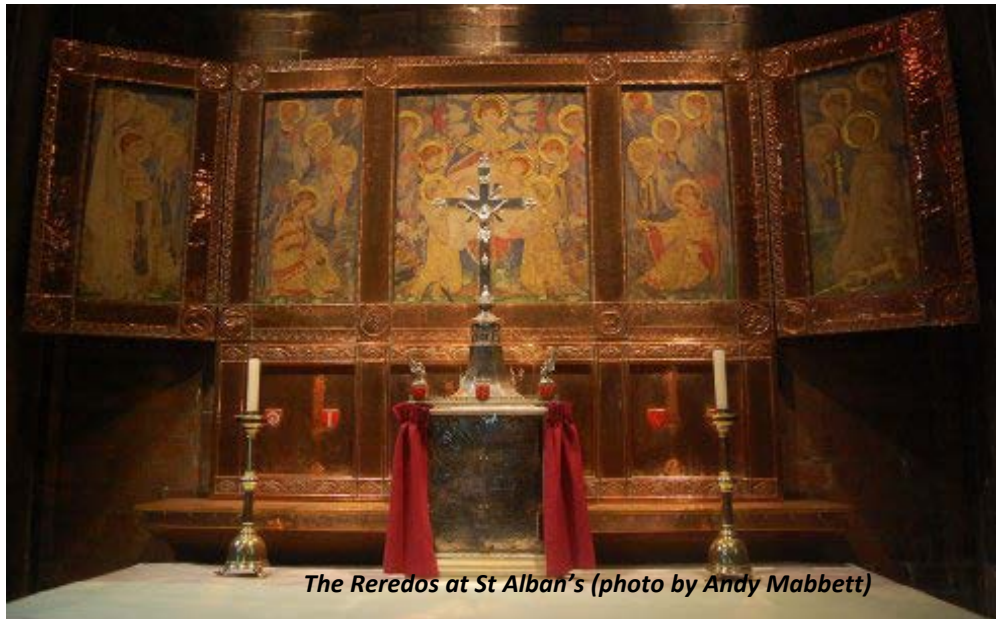
Kate Bunce's work is recognised with a blue plaque...



A Civic Society blue plaque commemorating Birmingham painter and poet Kate Bunce (1856 – 1927) has been installed on the wall of St. Alban's Church on Conybere Street in Highgate. The church is home to a magnificent Reredos (screen) that she and her sister, metalworker Myra Bunce, made and donated to it in memory of their sisters and parents.

Kate Bunce was the daughter of John Thackray Bunce, who was Chairman of the City Art Gallery, & a newspaper proprietor. She studied at the Birmingham School of Art. Her sister, Myra Louisa Bunce was a proficient watercolourist, & metalworker, who sometimes made ornate frames for her sister's pictures. Neither sister married and remained at the family home, which was number 24 Priory Road in Edgbaston.

Kate's pictures and paintings are often strongly Pre-Raphaelite, using strong colours, naive perspective, and packed with detail. Much of her best work was done before the turn of the century, after which she concentrated on religious works for churches. She was a devout Christian. Like other artists of her generation, she would have been increasingly alienated by artistic developments in the early part of the 20th century,



The Reredos at St Alban's (photo by Andy Mabbett)



Melody (Kate Bunce)

LEO AMERY



Leopold Amery was the Liberal Unionist MP for Birmingham South from 1911 till 1945. It was this constituency which absorbed Balsall Heath after it became part of Birmingham in 1891. Amery was the third MP for the constituency and was a well-respected figure in national politics. He held many military and political positions, including being First Lord of the Admiralty but remains best known for his words to Neville Chamberlain during a debate in 1940. He quoted Cromwell saying: "You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!" Amery's words turned the debate, and, after a vote, off Chamberlain went and in came Winston Churchill.

TIME FOR TEA

The History Society's tea tent and photo display made what is becoming an annual appearance at Balsall Heath Carnival. Visitors could stop and look at images of Balsall Heath in WW1 and the tornado (ten years ago now), while also pause a while for tea and cake. You can't do much better to be honest, and many on the day chose to do just that. Thanks to Comic Relief for the Grant which enables all this to be possible. We hope to see many more of you next year.



PROUD HERITAGE ON DISPLAY



The annual Heritage Open Days weekend drew people from the local area and further afield. Displays again on the tornado and WW1 plus some lovely old street and school views. The artefacts attracted interest as always, chiefly perhaps because we allow people to handle them. Recently a selection of maps has been added to our archive and these offer a fascinating view of how Balsall Heath expanded and developed. Main attraction as always though was the Victorian Schoolroom, which on the Sunday was photographed for national publicity by the event organisers. Thanks to all those who came along and especially our dedicated volunteers who staffed both this and the Carnival event.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday 29th October 7:30

The Venture

(Malvern Street by the farm)

Birmingham Then and Now by Mac Joseph

A welcome return for an old friend, who always provides a good talk.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

In 1894, British publishers were given permission by the Royal Mail to manufacture and distribute picture postcards. Early postcards were pictures of landmarks, scenic views, photographs or drawings of celebrities and so on. With steam locomotives providing fast and affordable travel, the seaside resorts and towns became a popular tourist destination, and generated their own souvenir industry.

Balsall Heath and Moseley are two locations which are well served by postcards, often offering unique views which are not otherwise available now. The first in a series we shall look at is to the left:- **Balsall Heath Road.**

