



Balsall Heath
Local History Society

THE GAZETTE FEBRUARY 2014

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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.

A STROLL DOWN MEMORY LANE

Last year's popular Ladypool Road Trail comes to the stage in March with three performances at St Paul's.

The Birmingham History Theatre Company are to present "Memory Lane – An illustrated lecture on the life and times of Ladypool Road". The lecturer is Val Hart and she will run through a history of the road which will be brought to life on stage with a series of scenes and songs illustrating her talk. The multimedia element to the show features four rarely seen film clips.

Please join us for a stroll down Memory Lane as it changes from rural country lane to the bustling hub of the Balti Triangle.

Performance Dates

Friday, March 7th at 7.30 p.m.

Saturday, March 8th at 2.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Venue: St Paul's School, Hertford St, Balsall Heath. B12 8NJ

Tickets: Available from St Paul's Trust Office, Hertford St, Balsall Heath at the bargain price of £5, concessions £3. Also available on the door at each performance.



Ladypool Road above in the 1970s
...and below Mason's on Ladypool Road in 1927



Balsall Heath Park, shortly after it was opened in May 1893



Telephone : CAL 0810

"MANNERINGS"

Baker & Confectioner



187 Ladypool Road
Sparkbrook, B'ham 12

1953

Next Meeting:
Thursday 27th March 7:30
The Venture
(Malvern Street by the farm)
Do You Remember?
By Mac Joseph

A nostalgic look back at the 1950's and 60's with Mac who is well known in Birmingham for his Old Ladywood Group.

ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL

-Val Hart

Spot The Pidgeon

Samuel Pidgeon appears in the 1841 and 1851 census as a brick maker, living in Balsall Heath Rd with his wife and children. By 1851 he was employing 12 men and boys so he must have had a large brickworks.

His oldest son, James was born in 1830 and by 1861 was living at 3 Raglan Place near the Moseley Road (not sure where this was). Married with 2 children, he also had his wife's family and their 3 children living with him. However in a Directory of 1862 he is listed as a Brick and Tile maker in Ladypool Lane near Church Rd. and he continues to appear in Directories like this until 1879.

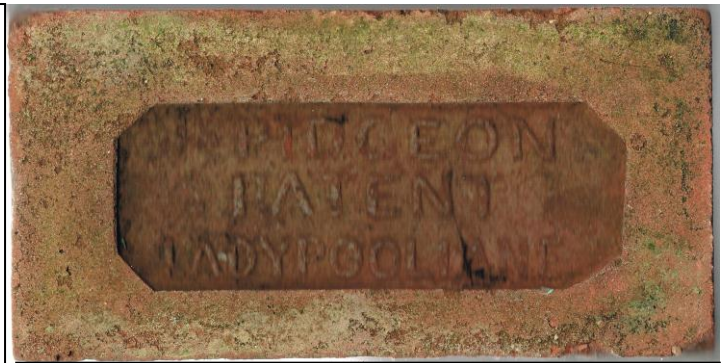
Meanwhile he had moved house. In 1871 he was living at 1, Clifton Rd with his wife, 8 children, and a domestic servant. In 1881, he was living at 48 Hertford St. In 1891 he had moved to Aston but still had 7 of his children living with him, aged between 17 and 31.

The brickworks had closed by 1889, presumably because the clay had run out. In that year the Medical Officer for the Board of Heath recommended to the Board of Heath that a refuse destructor be obtained to deal with the use of the tip at Pidgeon's Pool.

Other Brickworks?

In 1854 Samuel Harvey and Thomas Higgs gave notice of the dissolution of their partnership in "The Vinery Patent Brick, Tile and Coal Co" in Ladypool Lane.

In 1869 the brickworks opposite the end of Brighton Rd seem to be closing. Advertised for sale were: bricks, timber and materials; forming flues; drying sheds 120feet by 26 feet long; eight and ten hole brick kilns; office; clay mill; wood and iron work. The Brighton Road works dates from 1870s, and probably earlier.



Peter Churchill has once again supplied the songs for our latest production – "Memory Lane". He also helpfully supplied the brick pictured above! This he found in his garden and is from Pidgeon's brickworks on what was then known as Ladypool Lane.

REMEMBERING THE CARLTON CINEMA

Memory Lane takes one or two diversions off Ladypool Road. In one we will be covering the bombing of the Carlton cinema on the night of 25th October 1940. This was part of the 24th raid of the Second World War on Birmingham. It commenced at 7:52 p.m. and lasted until 12:14 a.m. on the 26th.

The first report of a bomb being dropped was at 8 pm when incendiary bombs fell in the Highgate district.

Arguably the worst incident of the night occurred at the Carlton Cinema, Taunton Road, which received a direct hit from a high explosive bomb. Many people were inside watching the film "Typhoon" when the bomb dropped. 19 were killed and approximately 20 others injured - 5 seriously.

Malcolm Summerhayes recalls the awful impact the incident had on his mother Clarice:

"My Mother was an ambulance driver stationed at Court Road, Sparkhill ARP Depot No. 16. She and her colleagues were sent to the Carlton on the night it was bombed. When they entered the building her attendant collapsed when she saw the carnage. A relief ambulance attendant was brought in. When my mother returned from duty the following morning, she burst into tears and then explained what she had seen when she entered the building. The only light came from the moon shining through the damaged roof. She could make out people sitting with their eyes open. It was only when she spoke to them that she realised they had been killed by the blast."



The Home Guard on the steps of the Carlton Cinema in 1940