



Balsall Heath Local History Society

THE GAZETTE

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The old Church of Christ building on the Moseley Rd

This building is now a mosque and Arfan who is based there is very interested to know more about its history.

Below is what I have found out from The Victoria County History and a pamphlet donated to the History Society many years ago by Nell Wilkins. She also added a note that her great grandmother attended the Charles Henry Street chapel. An amazing link with the past!

The Church of Christ was a national evangelical movement which came to Birmingham in 1858 in the persons of Mr & Mrs David King and Mr J.B. Rotherham. They started in a small room in the city centre and moved to various temporary locations before purchasing land in Charles Henry St and building a chapel there. In 1866 they began a Sunday School and in the following five years established separate congregations at Summer Lane and Great Francis St. By 1944 there were another six, spread across the city.

Charles Henry Street Chapel opened in 1864 with sittings for 350. It must have been popular because it was enlarged in 1891 to seat 400.

Then there was a big move in 1912 when the congregation moved to a purpose built chapel on the Moseley Road, next to the Swimming Baths.

By July 1912 the Sunday School here totalled 245 scholars with 32 teachers. A Band of Hope was formed and temperance teaching was a regular feature. In addition, there was a Mutual Improvement Class held weekly for adults.



The chapel was clearly a major hub. The Churches of Christ published a weekly magazine "The Bible Advocate" produced by the Publishing Committee and this moved its operations from Leicester to Birmingham. The Moseley Road base was also closely connected to the Training Committee, which later led to the founding of Overdale College in Birmingham in 1920 which trained ministers for ordination. Interestingly, this was based in Park Road, Moseley for ten years before moving to Westhill, Selly Oak, in 1931. The Churches of Christ Annual Conference was also frequently held in Birmingham.

In 1935 the chapel was renovated and modified to include a carved pulpit, Lectern and Lord's Table, and later a pipe organ was added.

The Fellowship of Churches of Christ of Great Britain and Ireland was born in 1979 in Scotland upon the dissolution of the old Association of Churches of Christ of Great Britain and Ireland when many of the churches joined together with Presbyterian and Congregational churches to form the United Reformed Church.

The congregation moved from the Moseley Road chapel in 1980 when it moved in to splendid purpose built premises in Mary St, Balsall Heath, shared with St Paul's Church.

Does anyone have more information or memories they would like to share?

Val Hart