



In Memoriam Peter Charlton.

We are all sad to hear the sad news that Peter Charlton has died. He has been a member of the Society for many years. Our heartfelt condolences go to Jackie.

Birmingham Heritage Week

This year the events run from 9th to 18th September and there are too many to list here but these are the ones close to or about Balsall Heath.

The full list can be seen at

<https://birminghamheritageweek.co.uk/>

Along with details of how to book places

Balsall Heath Heritage Walk

The society's main contribution to the event. A new history walk with appearances by historical characters on Sunday 11th at 11:30am and 2pm. (see page 2 &3)

Every Grave has a Story

A walk though Brandwood End cemetery with stories of 7 former Balsall Heath residents. Friday 16th 2pm.

St. Alban's church.

This church will be open to the public every day of the Heritage Week although there will be restrictions during services.

All the above are available for free and without need to book.

The Lost Children Talk

A talk from the Lost Children project held in the meeting room at St Martin's Church at 2:30 on Wednesday 14th. Booking is required.

Trains and Boats and Dames

Meet characters from the past on a canalside walk from Bournville Station. Sunday 18th at 11am. No booking required.

Balsall Heath Local History Society Gazette

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lostchildrenproject**

Membership of the Society costs £12 a year. Membership runs from January to December each year and application forms are available on the website. Fees at meetings will continue unchanged: £1 for members and £3 for visitors.

Meetings are held at St Paul's Venture, Malvern Street at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served from 7 pm to 7:20 p.m.

Coming soon

**Thursday September 29th -
AGM and presentation of 'Lost Balsall Heath.' Images of places now gone from our neighbourhood.**

“The Lost Children” during Birmingham Heritage week

1. **The Exhibition**- now in the upper floor of The Back to Backs in Hurst St. It is free to visit with access from the bookshop on the ground floor. It is mounted on pop up banners and now includes one specially devoted to children who came from back to back housing in the city centre.

Presented by Balsall Heath Local History Society with support from Celebrating Communities funding from Birmingham City Council and Midland Ancestors

Opening times at the Back to Backs.

Friday 9 to Sunday 11th Sept. 10 am to 5 pm

Tuesday 12th & Weds 13th 1 pm to 5 pm

Thursday 15th to Sunday 18th Sept . 10 a.m to 5 pm

2. **Stories of the Lost Children,” a free talk**

September 14th. 2.30 p.m at the Deritend Room, St Martins in the Bullring.

We have followed some of the children who were emigrated to discover what happened to them, for good or ill. This talk will uncover some of their stories.

The Lost Children Book is also available at £4 from our website or from the Back to Backs bookshop.

A Balsall Heath Heritage Walk.

A guided trail on Sunday 11th September at 11:30 am & 2 pm. with some interesting visits, speakers and pop up characters along the way. The walk starts at the Old Print Works on Moseley Road and is free with no booking required.

Here a couple of the highlights: A visit to the former Tram and Bus Depot, now a vibrant place of endeavour and play. And The Old Moseley Arms Pub in Tindal St. Said to be a wood panelled paradise which inspires fierce loyalty in its regulars.



The Number 65 Tram returning home to the Tram Depot



Trams been taken apart for scrap. Photo from 1949

There was this. The No 65 Tram returns to the depot And then this. Trams being taken apart for scrap 1949.

Since then, this building housed the buses (including Midland Red), an engineering skills training centre, and an Indoor Cart Stadium.

The Creation Climbing and Roller Skating Centre has been here since 2005.

The High roof needed for the Buses and Trams is very useful for today's enthusiastic climbers.

Fancy a look around? We have a guided tour all set up for you! Join one of the two walks on the 11th of September.(Credit for all four photos, Creative Climbing Centre.)



As already mentioned we will be telling you about the history of one of the most well thought of pubs in Birmingham. The Old Mo! The Cool Dudes the Blues Brothers await your company.....

Trains and Boats and Dames

A Birmingham Heritage Week Walk

Sunday, 18th Sept 11 am – 2pm



Discover some surprising local history, meet characters from the past and join in with songs on a gentle three mile amble with The Birmingham History Theatre Company. Taking in the Birmingham to Worcester canal, Kings Norton Green and the parks before ending at Kings Norton Station. There will be a 30 minute break at Kings Norton Green where you can obtain refreshments locally or bring your own.

Performed by Birmingham History Theatre Company

Meet at Bournville Station, Maryvale Road entrance at 11 am.

Reviews of *The Lost Children Play*, performed at The MAC and the Blue Orange Theatre



*It was easily the best show that the Birmingham History Drama Group has performed. Peter Churchill's songs could easily grace the Westend or a musical film out of Hollywood. A.M.

*This is a story people should know about and is told here very well. H.O.

*Great production. So well thought out. I must say the final song bought a tear to my eye. P.R.G Creative City Projects.

* It was heart breaking. No one talks about these 'Children in Need' Andy.

*Wonderful performances and the songs were great. Ceri.

*Really enjoyed very heart-warming and interesting to see an unknown bit of history. Nicky.

*Wonderfully produced, thought provoking even for us who know. P & J(Relative of emigrated child)

*Congratulations to all on a superb show. I thought it was one of the best theatrical productions I've ever seen. Great music and songs, well sung. J.A.

*Moving, impressive performance with community heart. Anon.

*Very, very good totally memorable performance. Well done to everyone involved. Anon.

*Very moving and a part of my family's history. Anon.

*Fine writing with a concern for drama and accuracy; an enthusiastic, skilful cast and well-judged, self-written music production contributed to a memorable evening. The cast ably propelled the true stories and sang the catchy, lively songs with stamina, lifting the audience at the cosy "Blue Orange Theatre". S.C.

Haden Circus, Past, Present, (and Future?)

Your history society is being approached more and more as an authoritative body when questions about Balsall Heath and its history are raised. Back in May this year we were approached by a group of students looking to obtain a master's degree in Urban Design & Town Planning. Six of them under the collective title of Group 4, wanted to present to Birmingham City Council a possible plan for the future environment of the city by way of an integrated planning project, focusing on the existing Haden Circus roundabout (on Belgrave Middleway) which poses a major barrier to permeable movement on the border of Balsall Heath and Highgate.

Karen, representing the students asked the question, "I wondered if anyone has any images of Haden Circus prior to the construction of the roundabout." Our answer had to deny that there were any images of Haden Circus prior to the roundabout being built, as this road island *is* Haden Circus. What there had been at that location is illustrated in these photographs.

Past: Belgrave Road



They remind us of how this area looked once upon a time. Though they give an impression of a quiet place, Belgrave Road was part of the No 8 inner circle bus route. Busy, yes, but still a place of housing, shops, and useful pedestrian movement.

Top Left: Flo's Café' and Dares Brewery.

Top Right: High Class Shoe Repairs, Hardware Store, and the Electric Tavern.

Middle Left: At the top of Belgrave, near the Junction with Moseley Rd and Highgate Road with Orchard Road (leading to Sherbourne Road) on the right.

Left: Corner shop, Highgate Stores, advertising Ansell's 'The Better Beer' at the junction of Highgate Street and Hick Street off Belgrave Road.

These buildings would be cleared by demolition in the late 60s. The road itself (Hick St) would be erased completely by the construction of Haden Circus and its contributory road links.





This lovely photo shows us the interim time between the clearing of the housing and the building of the Belgrave Middleway. The No 8 inner circle bus coming towards us is passing the location of the soon to be Birmingham Central Mosque (opened 1975). The road junction seen to the right of the Mini motor car is Hick Street, destined to become Highgate Middleway, present day main route into the City. The building on the left housing the newsagent helps date this picture to very late 1960s. Our Group 4 students have seen this image and we can say "Dear Karen, this is exactly what it looked like before the existence of Haden Circus roundabout." We could only dream about parking our cars at this spot today.

Present Day: Belgrave Middleway and Haden Circus.



The wide spaces of Haden Circus a space for motor vehicles, a traffic artery. Certainly not pedestrian friendly.

The Future?

The group 4 master's seeking students have a proposal. They have put together a poster of imagines and futuristic ideas to illustrate it. We cropped the poster into parts in order to present it to you here.

The students proposal imagined for us here does not require any further explanation.

They presented their 'vision` of the future to the council, who were "very interested in the rationale

behind the proposal. However, it would cost a lot to take the vision through to reality. We believe that radical change is needed in this area for the city, the local community, and local economy."

That reference to local economy echoes the words of Joe Holyoak architect and urban designer, "there is a call to take us back to the closeness of community and local economy that existed before the bulldozers came."

EXISTING SITUATION

- Haden Circus - a major barrier to permeable movement
- High congestion
- Poor air quality
- Pedestrian fatalities
- 77 accidents between 2015 to 2020



THE PROPOSAL

- Transform the existing roundabout and connecting road network by creating an underground tunnel
- Active travel routes replacing the existing road network above.
- Creating an urban environment which priorities people rather than vehicles
- More?

The Aims of The Proposal

1. To create a green, active network which promotes active travel and improves air quality.
2. To remove the existing impenetrable barrier imposed by the roundabout and enable the effective and safe movement of people.
3. Reconnect neighbourhoods.



We can all see how the students would have benefited from their work on this project and it cannot be denied is something desirable about its aims stated above. We cannot also be any doubt about the costs of creating an underground tunnel such as this. It may be that the time has passed for encouragement for the use of the motor car. The city leaders are now restricting their use in way that has made the use of a car in the city fraught with tension. Joe Holyoak's remarks " I don't think we need any more expensive road engineering, even if it does have a green space on the top of it. We need to reduce the use of cars, not encourage them, and continue to develop what Balsall Heath is already: a fairly high density, mixed-use neighbourhood, *where it is possible to walk and cycle from one place to another*. What we have here then is students and an experienced urban designer agreeing on the desirable outcome of town planning. If not on the means of getting there.

All at Balsall Heath Local History Society send best wishes to the Group 4 students for a successful career in their chosen profession. JF.



Orchard Road/Belgrave Road, Balsall Heath, 4th September 1967.

See Haden Circus article above. Orchard Road ran between Sherbourne Road and Belgrave Road roughly parallel to the Moseley Road.

Edition 6 2016 of the Big Birmingham A-Z, Page 117 box H5 shows Orchard Rd as still existing. A recent expedition to the site established it is not there anymore. The site is occupied by a 6th form school.

Credit The Birmingham History Forum 2nd August 2010