

Exchange Heritage Tour

Location

The Exchange: 3 Centenary Square
Birmingham B1 2DR

The event is cost Free, booking is required.
Contact BHLHS by your normal means.

Join our friendly guides on a heritage tour of The Exchange and discover its hidden history and fascinating stories.

Our guides will take you on a journey through time, revealing the secrets of this beautiful art deco building, from its beginnings as the headquarters of the Birmingham Municipal Bank to the University's recent redevelopment and restoration.

You will explore the stunning banking hall, see the original safe deposit boxes and vaults, visit rooms not normally open to the public, and learn about the building's unique features and design.

The History Society has booked your heritage tour. *Which is free of charge.* Discover the past and future of this magnificent building.

Tour date and time

Thursday, July 27th Tour to Start at 12 noon:
The tour lasts approximately 40 minutes.

(Be there 10 mins before the Tour starts)

The meeting point for the tours is in the Banking Hall at
The Exchange.

Make your own way there by Boat, Train, or Plane. or
Bus, Taxi, or Car.

Balsall Heath Local History Society Gazette

JUNE 2023



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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 27th July.:

No regular meeting but we have a guided tour of The Exchange on Broad Street – see left.

The Gravestone for Benjamin Orange Grimmatt



Readers of the Gazette from September 2021 may remember the story of Benjamin who was taken to Canada together with his brother George, by the Middlemore Homes in 1914. George had consistently good reports and stayed in Canada as an adult. However, Benjamin did not thrive and eventually it was discovered that he had suffered a brain injury in a motor accident before leaving England. His host family cared for him until he was 18 but then he was returned to England and placed in Monyhull Colony in Kings Heath, a council run home for the mentally deficient. He lived there for the rest of his life and was buried in Brandwood End Cemetery.

In November last year we launched an appeal for fund to restore the gravestone. As a result £300 was raised from donations and a contribution from Benjamin's family . Many thanks everyone. The stone has been restored. Rest in Peace, Benjamin.



On Radio 4: The Ballad of Eliza Showell by Liz Berry



Readers of The Gazette will remember that Liz Berry's book, "The Home Child" was published recently, telling the story in poetry of her great aunt. Eliza Showell was taken to Canada by the Middlemore Emigration Homes in 1908.

A radio producer, Mair Bosworth, picked up on the book and on Sunday June 11th there was a lovely programme on BBC Radio 4 entitled, "The Ballad of Eliza Showell". The programme also featured on Pick of The Week on June 18th. I supplied some brief bits of Middlemore background. Information. You can listen to these broadcasts via BBC Sounds using this link, until the end of June

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001mt17>

The programme has had a lot of amazing reviews.

"Oh it was so moving. So beautifully produced... this programme has enhanced my understanding of the story. Hauntingly sad and delicately conveyed."

"Thank you so much for the considered research that you carried out on the overall subject as well as the story of your great aunt. Most of all, many thanks for the sensitive delivery with which you all communicated your work"

Val Hart

A donated picture of Runcorn Road.

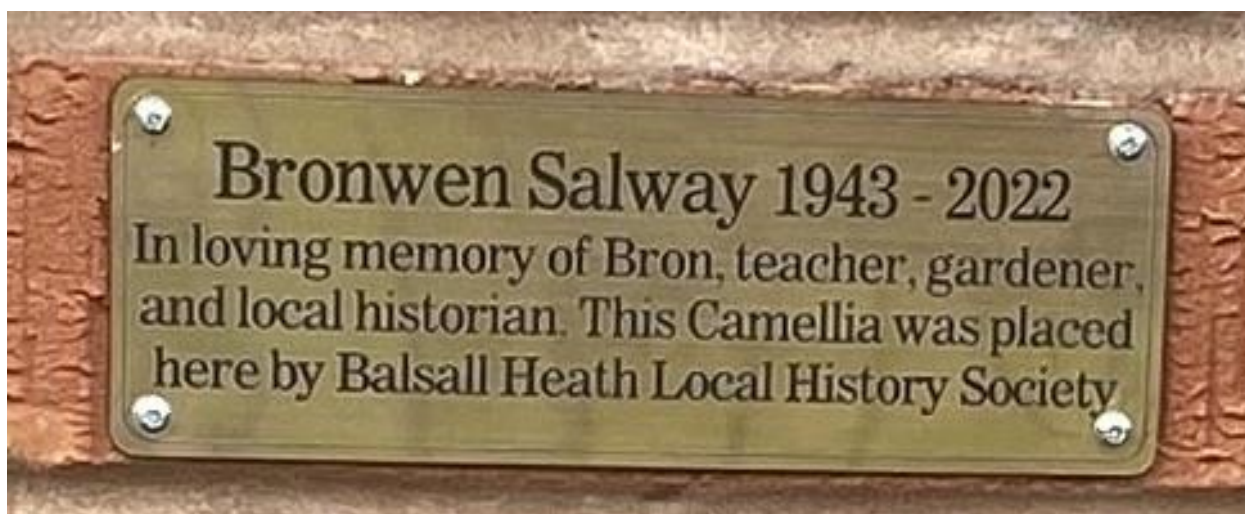


Many thanks to Dave Woods who came across the Society at the Local History Fair in 2022. At that time he talked to Bron Salway and offered to give us a copy of this postcard. I met him recently when I gave a talk to Midland Ancestors at the BMI and was delighted when he produced this photo for us. His grandmother lived in Runcorn Road, in one of the houses on the right hand side.

Val Hart

A Memorial for Bron Salway

This Camelia has been planted at St Paul's Venture, Malvern St. Our thanks go to Hywel, Mark and the Evergreen Gardening Club for their help.



Balti Triangle Decline

On Thursday 15th of June (2023) BBC Midlands Today TV programme ran a story about the decline in the number of Balti Restaurants in the world-famous Balti Triangle on the edge of Balsall Heath in Ladypool Rd and its surroundings. The reasons are thought to be twofold. Though close scrutiny shows a very complex picture.

The first of the two headline reasons is due to a big change in customers' choice of food. Younger people today are looking toward Dessert shops and Burger Bars. Covid-19 has been blamed for a number of things. Apparently, it fueled a sharp upturn in Dessert Shops.

“Bucking their previous ongoing decline. This ambient category has been the main engine room of this uptick; its nostalgic brands and value-for-money proposition chiming well at a time of upheaval and economic uncertainty.”



Regarding Burger Bars, there has been a big shift here too. “Once the choice was limited to McDonalds and Burger King, but the Brit’s love for the gourmet version of this treat, has continued to grow. As they are presented with a multitude of “premium” burgers from the likes of Byron, Honest Burger, Five Guys, and Shake Shack.

And now for the Balti Houses themselves. In their hay day, there were dozens of them serving up to 20,000 customers a week. Now there are just four!

Zaf Hussain, of ‘SHABABS Restaurant, explains “The old guys have died or retired and do not want to do it anymore, and younger members of the family have not taken it on.”

Andy Munro, a leading member of the Association for the Protection of the Authentic Balti (APAB), accepts that young people today will have different tastes to the older generation. But his association is about protecting the genuine Balti. That should be cooked and served, in the Birmingham-made thin pressed carbon steel flat-bottomed ‘wok’ (the balti). This retains all the flavours and the caramelisation that occurs in the cooking process. This is said to be the absolute prerequisite for the proper and authentic balti so loved by Brummies.



Birmingham Made Balti Pan or ‘Wok’

JF

Moseley Road Improvements?

This newspaper article in the Birmingham Mail via @ birmingham_live was published on Friday, February 24th this year. It told us that on the following Monday, work on new bus lanes and junction upgrades on the city's busy Alcester Road was due to start as part of an ongoing £30 million project to improve bus services across Birmingham, Sandwell, and Dudley.

News

Work set to start on improvements to Alcester Road bus routes

STAFF REPORTER

WORK on new bus lanes and junction upgrades on the city's busy Alcester Road is due to start on Monday as part of an ongoing £30 million project to improve bus services across Birmingham, Sandwell and Dudley.

The new measures will give buses priority to improve journey times and reliability as they bypass traffic

jams through the Balsall Heath area.

Work on the road, between Highgate Middleway and Park Road, is likely to take four months, with completion expected to be completed by the end of June.

It is being led by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) in partnership with Birmingham City Council.

This will be followed by works in

Birmingham city centre, running from June, to provide bus priority measures in Margaret Street, Newhall Street, Summer Hill and Snow Hill Queensway. These are due to be completed by October.

The £30 million cross-city bus project will see priority measures, including bus lanes, junction upgrades and bus gates installed on a long route between Druids Heath and Dudley.

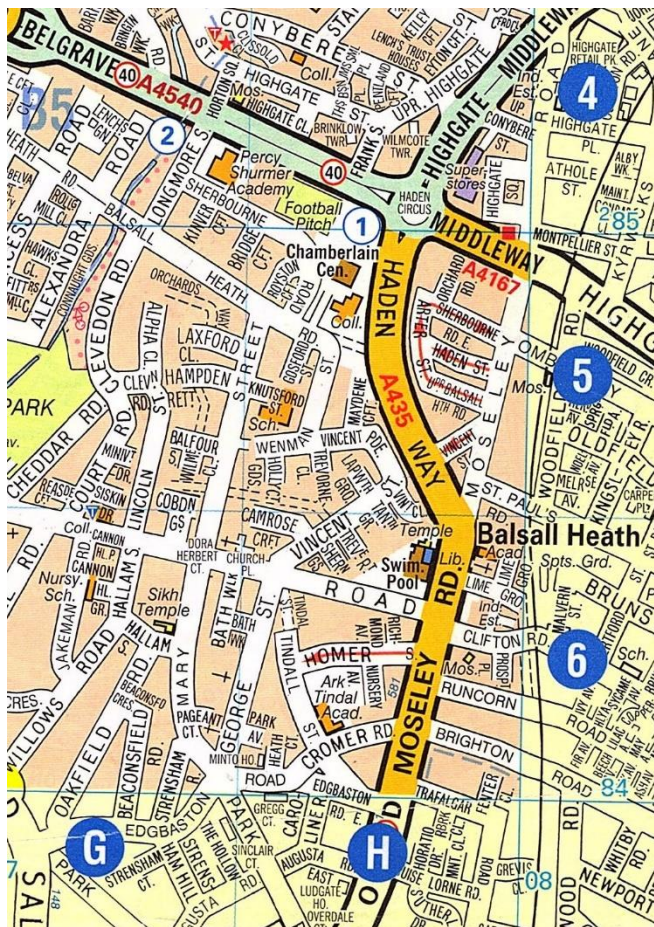
TfWM, which is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), is working in partnership with Birmingham, Sandwell and Dudley councils on the project. The Department for Transport has provided £24 million of the funding.

The scheme will allow buses, including the 50, 82 and 87 routes in Birmingham, Sandwell and Dudley following the A435 and A457 to cut through the traffic

congestion and improve reliability.

Cllr Ian Ward, WMCA portfolio holder for transport and leader of Birmingham City Council, said: "Anyone who uses Alcester Road at busy times will understand the need to encourage more people to swap their private cars for more sustainable public transport - not only to cut traffic congestion but also to improve air quality and cut our carbon emissions."

The work on the road, between Highgate Middleway and Park Road, was likely to take 4 months and be completed by the end of June (This week). The work, being led by Transport for the West Midlands, together with Birmingham Council However the thing is that until this month there hasn't been a significant sign that the work was proceeding on the A435 as predicted.



The article goes on to say that cross-city priority measures include bus lanes, junction upgrades, and bus gates installed on a long route between Druids Heath (think Maypole) and Dudley.

Bus Lanes

Rule 141 of the Highway Code states that: 'Bus lanes. These are shown by road markings and signs that indicate which (if any) other vehicles are permitted to use the bus lane'.

Bus Gates

A bus gate is a length of street that effectively creates a shortcut for buses that reduces travelling time by removing through traffic. On some occasions, other vehicles may also be permitted to use a bus gate.

So, what is happening on the road now? We have seen some rather lengthy traffic delays, attempts to explain why have been few and varied. "There is a four-way traffic light system in place at Haden Circus." And "Road work is going on at the junction with St Paul's Road."

While the news has been unspecific, there does seem to be an understanding that the controversial proposals originally made for the stretch of the A435 between Haden Way and Brighton Road are not going ahead.

MOSELEY

STREET FAIR

11-4pm

Saturday 15th July,
2022



Balsall Heath History Society goes to Moseley

As part of Moseley's Community Festival this month there will be a BIG street fair from 11am to 4pm on 14th July and the Society will have a stall. Come and find us there.

Other Events

1pm 10th July

Cinema & Censorship in the 1930s

Lecture by Dr David Thompson at the Birmingham & Midland institute, Margaret St. B3 3BS
The Birmingham Cinema Enquiry Committee began in 1930, born out of concern for what people were viewing in cinemas, especially children eagerly soaking up pictures at popular Saturday matinees. The Committee gained a name nationally and internationally, with several conferences held in the City, and a petition was sent to the Home Secretary in London. Depending upon contemporary points of view, it was either a genuine attempt to resist the deluge of sensationalist and sordid pictures, often from the U.S.A., or a group of self-appointed interfering busy-bodies and "troglodytes".

Tickets £6.13 from Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cinema-censorship-in-the-1930s-the-work-of-the-birmingham-cinema-enquiry-tickets-651707262967>

Friday 28th July 11am – 4pm

Festival of Archaeology Open Day at Weoley Castle Ruins

A special open day, as part of the Council for British Archaeology's Festival of Archaeology 2023 with guided tours and various activities for all.

Tickets £2

For booking and more details see <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/festival/festival-event-listing/festival-of-archaeology-open-day-at-weoley-castle-ruins.html>