

Balsall Heath Local History Society Gazette

AUGUST 2025



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www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk
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History Society and
lostchildrenproject
Membership of the Society
costs £15 a year. Membership
runs from January to Decem-
ber each year and application
forms are available on the
website. Fees at meetings are:
£1 for members and £4 for vis-
itors.

Refreshments will be served
at 2:00 p.m. followed by a
speaker

Coming soon

All meetings will take place at 2
pm on Thursdays at The Crea-
tion Centre (old tram depot),
Moseley Rd.

15th Sept Paul Jacques, on
The Warwickshire Home Guard
30th Oct Mary Bodfish, speak-
ing about James Keir,
27th Nov Betty Hagglund on
Mary and Martha Russell
Dec 18th A Quiz afternoon ,
hosted by Patrick Baird.

Programme for Autumn 2025

All meetings will take place at 2 pm on Thursdays
at The Creation Centre (old tram depot), Moseley Rd.

15th Sept Paul Jacques, speaking about The
Warwickshire Home Guard

30th Oct Mary Bodfish, speaking about James Keir, a
Scottish chemist, geologist, industrialist, and inventor;
is a lesser known member of the Lunar Society.

27th Nov Betty Hagglund speaking about Mary and
Martha Russell

Dec 18th A Quiz afternoon , hosted by Patrick Baird.

EXCITING NEWS!

A NEW PROJECT!

“ Balsall Heath in Changing Times .1960s to 1990s”



Today Balsall Heath Local
History Society is
announcing a £23,000 grant
from The National Lottery
Heritage Fund to explore,
document and reveal this
crucial period of Balsall
Heath's history

The Project aims to record and preserve memories
from people of diverse backgrounds, linking these
with the Mick Turner Archive of photographic images.
This composite picture will be shown in an Exhibition,
touring displays, a published booklet, and a 10 minute
film, as well as online on our website, Facebook pages
and Youtube



The years 1960 to the 1990s saw significant
transformation of the physical environment as well as a
radically changed demographic. Many migrants moved in

to the area, and some long established residents were compulsorily rehoused elsewhere as whole streets were demolished. Meanwhile the area was in decline with uncleared bomb sites from the Second World War, poor housing, high unemployment, appalling health statistics, poverty and a major prostitution problem.

However, this was also a time of new opportunities, new organisations and new ideas. There was growing dynamism and hope as the groundwork was laid for the thriving multi-cultural community of today's Balsall Heath.



LAUNCH EVENT

***for our new National Lottery
heritage Fund Project.***

Balsall Heath in Changing Times 1960s to 1990s

Sunday, September 21st 1.30 p.m.

At St Paul's Venture , Malvern St. B12 8NN

- ***Displays***
- ***Share your memories***
- ***A chance to sign up as a volunteer***
- ***Refreshments***



There will be a short guided walk at 3 and 3.30 pm

(limited places available)

This was a time when the physical and cultural landscape of this part of the area changed: parks created; some houses Urban Renewed or demolished; a farm created; a church demolished; a road closed, a new Infant School built; a public house demolished, and new Mosque built.



Balsall Heath Local History Society



National Lottery Heritage Fund Project

Balsall Heath in Changing times. 1960s to 1990s

This Project aims to explore, document and reveal a crucial period of Balsall Heath's history through collecting and recording people's memories and linking these with the Mick Turner Archive of photographic images.

✿ JOB ADVERTISEMENT ✿

The Role: Project Officer

Job Details: To co-ordinate the Project, taking the lead on the Oral History programme and supervising volunteers.

Salary: £15.38 per hour. (pro rata to £32,000 based on a 40 hour week)

Hours: 10 hours per week.

Fixed Term Contract for 60 weeks to Oct/Nov 2026.

Based in Balsall Heath, Birmingham.

Closing Date: September 7th at 4 pm. Interviews will be held 15th September.

For further details and an application form please email: info@balsallheathhistory.co.uk

Or go to our Website: <http://balsallheathhistory.co.uk/>

All members of staff employed by Balsall Heath Local History Society have an individual responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children/young people and vulnerable adults that they come into contact with.

It is a condition of employment that the successful candidate obtains a satisfactory enhanced DBS Disclosure.

VISIT TO

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE MUSEUM

JULY 24TH 2025

On Thursday July 24th 2025, instead of a formal meeting with a speaker, Balsall Heath Local History Society visited the West Midlands Fire Service Museum in Aston. The museum is in Ettington Road in the Grade II listed former Aston Fire Station, which opened in 1924.



The building has been renovated to a high standard to provide excellent display areas for the large amount of appliances, equipment and artefacts. The rooms are divided into themed areas, including the History of Firefighting in Birmingham, the West Midlands Fire Service and Firefighting in World Wars I and II.

After an initial chat in the coffee lounge, we were divided into two groups of five and the tour began with two tour guides to each group. All of the guides are retired firefighters who guide the tours on a voluntary basis. With many years of experience between them, they were able to explain in depth about the various items as we moved from room to room. We saw examples of the various styles of uniform used over the years and many types of breathing apparatus.

We saw a roll of honour for firefighters who lost their lives in the World Wars and photos of some of the firefighters killed on active service in World War I.



Two of the rooms from the museum.

The top photo shows War Memorabilia



The lower photo shows various artefacts including fire extinguishers and fire hose attachments.

These two photos are taken from the Fire Service Website.



An original early fire fighting appliance, which has been beautifully restored by a volunteer.



More examples of old pieces of fire fighting appliances and equipment.

Towards the end of the tour we visited the recently refurbished garage, which houses several antique firefighting appliances. The tour ended with coffee and a chat in the area which used to be the firefighters' mess. It was a most interesting visit thanks to the expert volunteers.

JH

Birmingham Heritage Week Events (Listed on website)

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

Founding St Alban's Church: The Mission of the Pollock Brothers

An illustrated talk about the struggles of two priests and the early days of St Albans Mon Mon 15
Sept | 6pm–7pm No booking needed

St Alban's Church Open Days

Fri 12 Sept | 12pm–6pm

Sat 13 Sept | 12pm–6pm

Sun 14 Sept | 12pm–6pm (*)

Fri 19 Sept | 12pm–6pm (**)

Sat 20 Sept | 12pm–6pm

Sun 21 Sept | 12pm–6pm (*)

(*) – Visitors are always welcome to join our service at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays but circulation and photography are not allowed during the service.

(**) – On Friday 19th the church will remain open for a talk at 6pm.

An opportunity to look around this Victorian Gothic church with spectacular stone vaulting. No booking needed

The Bunce Altarpiece in St Alban's Church

Fri 19 Sept | 6pm–7pm No booking needed.

An illustrated talk about the fine Arts and Crafts altarpiece in St Alban's Church

The Theology of the Pollock Brothers, Founders of St Alban's Church

An illustrated talk exploring the theology of the founders of St Alban's Church

Sat 20 Sept | 2pm–3pm No booking needed.

St Agatha's Church Sparkbrook

Spectacular Neo-Gothic Grade I listed Bidlake Church, opened in 1901

Sun 14 Sept | 12pm–1.30pm

Sat 20 Sept | 11am–2pm

Sun 21 Sept | 12pm–1.30pm No booking needed

Magic Door: A Cultural History of Moseley Park and Pool

Sun 14 Sept | 2pm–4pm Booking needed

Moseley School of Art: Behind the Scenes Tour

Sat 13 Sept | 12pm–5pm no booking needed

Sun 14 Sept | 12pm–5pm

**Moseley Hall Icehouse in Moseley Park & Pool
and
Moseley Hall Dovecote and 18c style garden**

Sat 20 Sept | 11am–1pm

Sun 21 Sept | 2pm–5pm this 18th century dovecote and garden for an insight into Moseley's rural past. No booking needed

St Agatha's Church Sparkbrook

Spectacular Neo-Gothic Grade I listed Bidlake Church, opened in 1901

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Sat 20 Sept | 11am–2pm

Sun 21 Sept | 12pm–1.30pm. No booking needed

Lieutenant Lempriere and the Parachute Queens

Fri 12 Sept | 7pm–8:30pm

Sat 20 Sept | 3pm–4.30pm

Booking by Eventbrite but tickets also available on the day . £5 charge. Birmingham History Theatre Company presents a dramatic lecture with film and telling the story of balloonist George Phillip Lempriere and the fearless young women parachutists whose exploits entertained huge crowds more than 100 years ago.