

**Balsall Heath Local  
History Society Gazette  
APRIL 2026**



Telephone: 07565 194822

Email:

[info@balsallheathhistory.co.uk](mailto:info@balsallheathhistory.co.uk)

Web:

[www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk](http://www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk)

[www.thelostchildren.uk](http://www.thelostchildren.uk)

Facebook: Balsall Heath Local  
History Society and

[https://www.facebook.com/lost  
childrenproject](https://www.facebook.com/lostchildrenproject)

### **Membership Details**

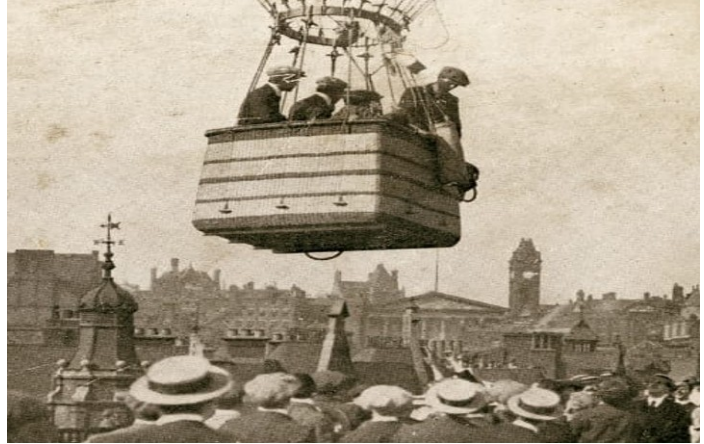
Membership of the Society costs £15 a year. Membership runs from January to December each year and application forms are available on the website.

Fees at meetings are: £1 for members and £4 for visitors.

### **NEXT MEETING OF THE SOCIETY Thursday April 30<sup>th</sup>**

at St Paul's Venture, Malvern St, off Clifton Rd. B12  
At 7 pm Refreshments will be served followed by the lecture

***Lieutenant Lempriere and the Parachute Queens***  
Presented by Richard Albutt. Filmed sequences by  
Haqi Ali



**Birmingham History Theatre Company** presents a dramatic lecture telling the story of George Lempriere, the famous Balloonist or "aeronaut" who lived in Handsworth,. He was renowned for his shows from the 1880s to the 1920s, which featured The Parachute Queens. The lecture will be illustrated with film clips and contemporary songs, performed live.

### **May Meeting Thursday May 28th**

The May meeting of the Society will be at St Paul's Venture on May 28th at 7 pm. The speaker will be Marus Belben talking about "100 year of Woodcraft Folk

### **26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026 - TALK GIVEN BY ANDREW REEKES 'THE GENERAL STRIKE 1926'**

At the meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup> 2026 the talk was given by Andrew Reekes. Andrew offers a range of talks on various subjects. On this occasion, he gave a talk about The General Strike of 1926. This seemed appropriate, as it has been 100 years since it happened.

The General Strike took place between May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1926 and May 12<sup>th</sup> 1926. There had been strikes pre 1914, but worsening conditions in the mining industry led to

further strikes in 1919 and 1921. Post WWI there was a surfeit of coal together with economic depression.

By 1925 the situation had become even worse. Churchill, as Chancellor of the Exchequer had reintroduced the Gold Standard, which caused British exports to become extremely expensive. International affairs caused further damage to the British coal market. German coal was permitted to be exported freely.



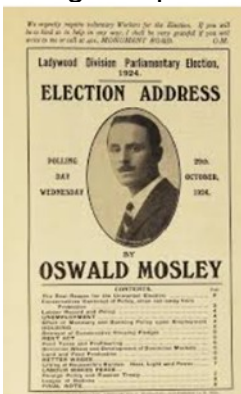
In order to maintain profits, mine owners wanted to reduce miners' wages and increase their working hours. The Miner's Federation rejected these terms with the statement 'Not a penny off the pay, not a minute on the day'. The prime minister, Stanley Baldwin offered a subsidy to the mining industry in order to maintain miners' wages. He also commissioned a report by Sir Herbert Samuel, which would look into the problems in the mining industry. The report, however supported a reduction in miners' wages and removal of the subsidy. The Miners' Federation refused the wage reduction. Negotiations failed to reach an agreement and the TUC announced a General Strike. There was sympathy for the miners throughout the country.

Not all workers were unionised. Unionism was weak in the car industry and Herbert Austin actively rooted out shop stewards and agitators. Unionism was strong in the public sector, as Chamberlain had set up municipal organisations, which led to these workers becoming unionised. The TUC limited the strike to railwaymen, transport workers, dockers, ironworkers and steel workers. It was felt that an all-out strike would bring revolutionary elements to the fore.

From the first day, all transport stopped, but apart from that, normal life for people was not affected. Those who wanted to work were helped to work, but seven buses which tried to run on Hagley Road were stopped by strikers in Bearwood. The Midland Red planned to run 30 – 40 buses and they were protected by a convoy of cars and Birmingham Police. A railway worker was arrested after calling the police a body of traitors. Churchill fought against the strikers and declared the strike illegal. The Labour party supported the strikers, which gave the party a boost. On May 12<sup>th</sup> the TUC called off the strike, although the miners continued to strike for several months, but most could survive no longer and had to return to work. They were forced to accept lower wages and longer hours.

After the strike was called off, Birmingham employers acted vindictively towards strikers and many were sacked. The tramways department would no longer recognise the trade unions. The Trade Disputes Act of 1927 banned sympathetic strikes.

In the aftermath, the Labour Party was gaining popularity. In 1926 Oswald Mosley became a Labour MP in Smethwick after winning a by-election with a majority of 6582. His policies had brought hope to the masses.



Mosley had contested Neville Chamberlain's seat in Ladywood in 1924. It was a close run contest, but after three recounts, Chamberlain was found to have retained his seat with a majority of just 77 votes.

The success for the Labour Party continued in the next General Election in 1929, when six seats in Birmingham fell to Labour. This included the Birmingham West seat, which had been held by Sir Austen Chamberlain. He lost by 44 votes.

The General Strike, which had been called by the TUC was an attempt to prevent wage reductions and worsening conditions for coal miners. Despite 1.7 million workers striking, the strike was unsuccessful and had to be called off. The General Strike has not been considered a major turning point in British Industrial History and there have been no further General Strikes since.

JH

## Relaunch of The Heathan

Originally founded in 1973 by Anita Halliday, The Heathan was a much loved newspaper until it became too costly to continue .



Then in 2016 Anita launched a new version under the name “ Neighbourhood News Online”. She died soon after and since then it has been produced by volunteers..

It has now returned under its old name as the definitive online source for news, culture, and local voices within Balsall Heath. The Heathan will put the focus where it belongs: on the streets and the Heathans.

### By the Community, For the Community

Balsall Heath needs a voice more than ever in changing times.. As development plans are reviewed residents want to be kept informed on council decisions and have a means to have their voices heard.

Led by an Alliance of Balsall Heath organisations and the [‘Believe in Balsall Heath’](#) partnership, We’ll celebrate both the rich history of Balsall Heath and its diverse communities as well as its exciting future.. We’ll put the spotlight on local legends, artists, community heroes and all people in Balsall Heath.

### At the Heathan Relaunch Event



## Closure of The Friends Institute, Moseley Road.



This magnificent building was commissioned by Richard Cadbury, designed by architects Ewan and Harper, and built by John Bowen, the famous builder of Balsall Heath. It is Grade 2\* listed. It opened in 1897.

The Institute's extensive rooms and halls were used for adult education and social work in the area reflecting Quaker values

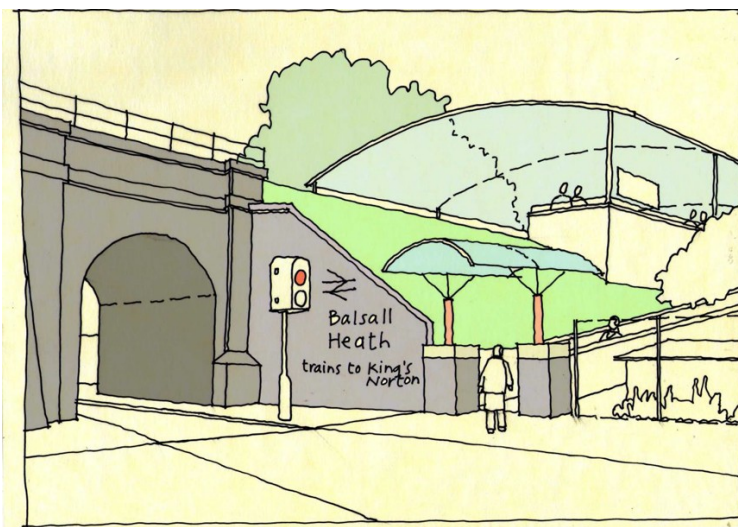
As home of the Dolobran Athletic Club. It was also the venue for the first international athletics match between England, Ireland and Scotland in 1900. It has continued to be a centre for many groups over the years.

In the 1980's it was transferred to Birmingham City Council and has now been closed on Health and Safety grounds. There is a petition online which readers may wish to sign, asking the Council to seek sustainable future use.

## Val Hart

### Balsall Heath Railway Stations

It is great to see the re-opening of the Kings Norton to New Street line with three new stations. However, it is a shame that the re-opening of a Balsall Heath station was not approved although it was in the Neighbourhood Plan of 2015.



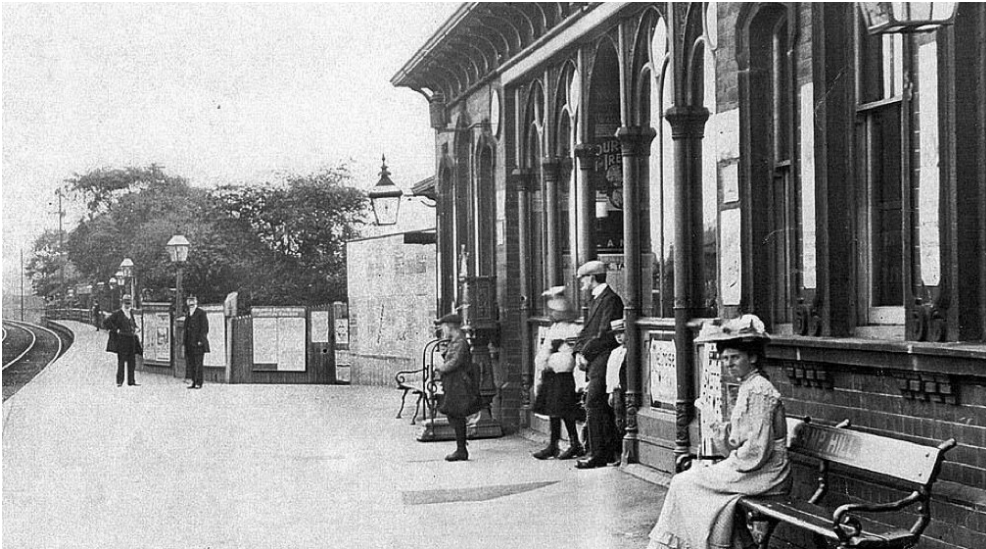
### In the past Balsall Heath had two stations

- 1. Camp Hill** . This actually stood at the junction of Moseley Road and Highgate Road. It opened in 1840 when the railway was first laid through Balsall Heath. The site is now occupied by Logmoor, a construction company, and the original stationmaster's house can

still be seen just by the bridge over the road.



Below is a view of the station in 1905



2. **Brighton Rd Station.** This ran between Runcorn Road and Brighton Road with access from both directions.



The bridge across Brighton Road was enlarged in 1923 under a scheme to support unemployed workers



Brighton Road station was smashed to pieces by bombing in 1941 and never re-opened.



Val Hart

### Other Events

2nd Saturday at the Old Print Works.  
May 9th 12 to 3 pm Festival poster available!

Balsall Heath Community Festival  
July 3rd to 13th More coming soon about this area wide festival

**CASH ONLY! 50P donation on the gate**

# Balsall Heath City Farm

## OPEN DAY

**MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>**  
11:00 - 16:00

A family fun day with stalls, refreshments, bouncy castle, animals, plant sale & more!

Balsall Heath City Farm  
10 Malvern Street  
B12 8NN  
0121 464 1889

**TOGETHER ST PAULS CITY FARM**

The Balsall Heath Local History Society is Registered Charity No. 1101945  
The Old Print Works, 498-506 Moseley Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham B12 9AH