



The Lost Children Exhibition

1. Sat, June 11th to Sun June 19th 10.30 a.m to 4 p.m
at The Old Print Works. 498 to 506 Moseley Road,
Balsall Heath. B12 9AH in the Director's office accessed

by the courtyard. Good disability access.

2. Mon, June 20th to Thurs, 23rd June 9 a.m to 4 p.m at Stanhope
Hall,. Ketley Croft, B12 OXG off Emily St, Good disability access

3. Sat June 25th to Mon July 4th at Moseley Road Baths, From 9
a.m daily. Closing times vary. B12 9BX. 5 steps to front door.
Disability access on request

4. July 14th to end of October at The Back to Backs at Hurst St, B5
4TE No disability access – steep stairs

Police Museum visit

July 28th Society Visit to the Police Museum

The Lock-Up, Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham B4 6BJ

Cost £15 per person. This cost includes refreshments and a
talk.

If you would like to come, please pay a £5 deposit at the
meeting on May 26th or June 30th or pay by the Donate button
on the Local History Society website, by the end of June.
Places are limited so book early!

Times

The Museum will be open for our group visit from **5 p.m** so there
is a chance to look round but you can arrive at a time of your
own choosing.

Then **6.15 p.m** Gather in the basement for refreshments and a
talk from 6.30 to 7.30. Another half hour after that to look round
until the visit finishes at 8 pm..

**Discover what it was really like to spend time on both sides
of the bars in our one-of-a-kind police museum, located in
the heart of Birmingham. Transport yourself back in time
as you learn about two centuries of policing history**

- Explore our Victorian lock-up that was built in 1891 and remained a working police cell block until 2016
- Find out about our policing pioneers, those who worked in the Lock-up and the people who paved the way for equality and inclusivity. The police officers who made the ultimate sacrifice, who fought in the world wars and those who died carrying out their duty.
- Discover what life was like for those who stepped through our doors. Find out about some of Birmingham's most notorious criminals who were held at the lock-up, including the real Peaky Blinders.
- Investigate and solve crimes in our forensics lab.
- Get hands on and join in the fun by taking part in our interactive displays, dress up in our police uniforms or take your very own mugshot.

Balsall Heath Local History Society Gazette

MAY 2022



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**Facebook: Balsall Heath Local
History Society and
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 June 30th, Val Hart
with more stories of the Lost
Children**

Forthcoming Programme

June 30th Val Hart . Stories of Lost Children, emigrated by The Middlemore Homes.

July 28th Proposed visit to the recently opened Police Museum. £15pp (£5 dep)

2 p.m. August 25th Stories from the Stones. A walk though Brandwood End Cemetery visiting some of Balsall Heath's graves.

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

October 27th Pat Franklin. Eldred Hallas, Birmingham's first Labour MP and his contribution to the founding of the Birmingham Municipal Bank.

November 24th Corinne Brazier The Police Strike of 1919

December 15th Richard Churchley A Century of Popular Songs 1860s -1960s

Look who came home!

Balsall Heath Local History Society was pleased to recently host a visit by June Mary Pitts, (maiden name Mills) to the area, who was taking us on a tour down memory lane.



June will be 90 in June, and was brought up at No 1/29 Longmore Street, by her grandmother Florence Ada Mills (formally Schuker). Her home was behind what was a barbers' before WWII and backed on to the River Rea. Although the house is no longer there she was able to stand approximately where her home once stood.

June visited a number of key sites from her childhood and delighted in remembering her time living and playing in the streets next to where she lived. In particular she remembers the rivalry between her street and the River St gang. She recalled walking to Cannon Hill Park, the trams that ran down her road, and the fun and mischief she had at the local cinemas, the Luxor and Triangle. June delighted in seeing the place where the cinder

track was and remembered the women bringing out the cinders to put on the track the days before the big bike races.

She recalled the shops she went to like Wrensons, Pinnicks and Muddimans, remembering too her Nan (Big mom) going to the Wallace pub and amazed to hear Amblers funeral directors, who had a place opposite where she lived, was still going today. We wish June a very happy 90th birthday and hope to see her again soon for another visit.

Our thanks go to June's son Barry for his considerable help in producing this item.

Celia Reeves



It is with great sadness that I learned of the passing, just before Easter, of Celia Reeves. Celia was a friend and colleague who taught for many years at Anderton Park Primary School in Balsall Heath and was, amongst many other things, a trustee and great supporter of The Play House educational theatre company. She was a passionate advocate for the company and a fierce champion for children and families whilst all along maintaining a great line in gossip and naughty stories! She shall be sorely missed. Steve Ball.

Fate of Congregational Church Revised



The Tram

This picture featured in April's Gazette brought about a lot of questions. Local history society member Alan Hemming asked, a) 'Why is a number 37 tram travelling along the Moseley Road?' Explaining that the 37 usually did a circular route from the City Centre to Cannon Hill Park. The Moseley Road not normally a part of that route. And b) 'It would appear that the pole from the tram taking power from the overhead cable is at the rear of the tram, if this is correct it would mean the tram is travelling towards the city on the wrong side of the road?'

What research we have done since Alan raised this query, only confirms the facts about the route the No 37 took. As for the tram being on the wrong side of the road, we shall continue to ponder. Any help you the reader can give us on the subject we would be most grateful for.(fn1)

Twin Peaks

Even before Alan's question, we had raised one for ourselves about this photo. Look again and note the twin peaks behind the tram, those are the towers of the architecturally much lamented Moseley Road Congregational Church. We have been very much under the impression that this church was completely destroyed by a bomb during WWII. So much so that we were looking to say that the above would likely have been the last photo of the church since it (the photo) was dated November 1941. Luckily, we could not find the historical confirmation of these facts that we knew were there somewhere and so left those words out of the final piece.

The Truth

The truth is there was a mix-up of Congregational Churches. Moseley Road had the responsibility of overseeing the affairs of its fellow church situated on Stoney Lane. This was the building that was destroyed by a WWII mine.



Postcard image of the Stoney Lane Congregational Church (fn2) which has been shown on maps to be on the eastern side of Stoney Lane. "Although called Stoney Lane Congregational Church it may have been known as being in Sparkhill to differentiate it from the Moseley Road Church." (fn3)

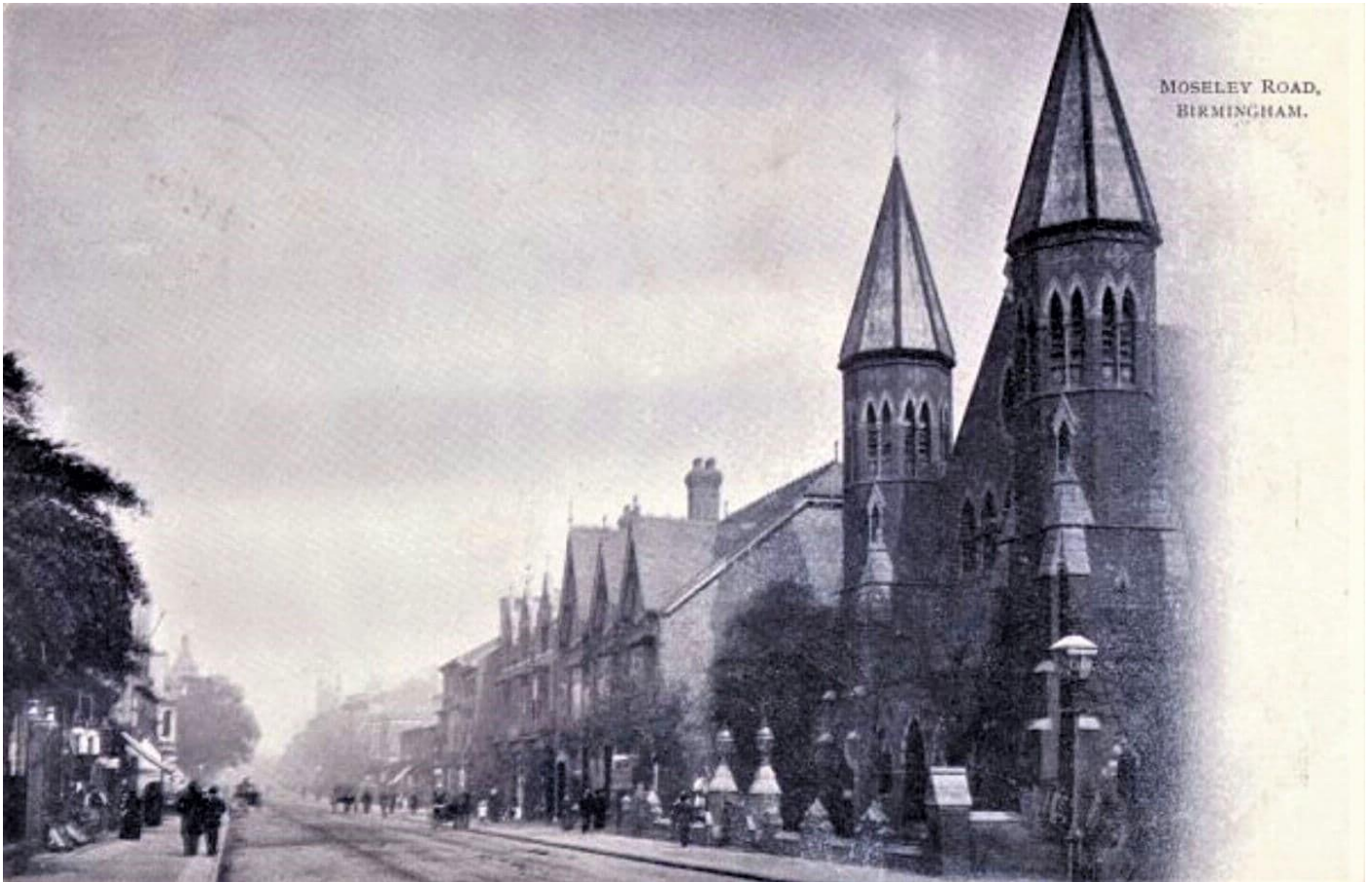
Establishing the exact date of the bombing can be a confusing endeavour, for instance the church is still listed in Kelly's directory in 1946, suggesting some part at least still existed after the war. However, Carl Chinn's book *Brum Undaunted* gives us the date as 13th December 1940. (fn4)

Stoney Lane Congregational Church, built in 1886, and its schools (1901), were totally destroyed by a mine. No person received injury, but about 150 persons were in a shelter on the other side of the road, twenty yards away, when the mine fell. Other buildings damaged that night were St. Peter's, Harborne; St. Mary's, Warwick Road; St. Agnes, Moseley; and the Roman Catholic Convent, Harborne.

Demolished, not Bombed?

So, what happened to *our* Moseley Road CC venue? Your writer asks that question in a sense of ownership not as a religious person, but one who through the mind's eye, pictures his childhood and youth, environment and wants to preserve it, even if it is through rose tinted glasses. This part of the Moseley Road's history figures strongly in the memories of many Balsall Heathans. From the 'Moseley Picture House at Belgrave Road, to the Post Office at the junction with Cromer and Brighton Roads. Obvious buildings come to mind, Baths & Library (saved), Methodist Church (bombed & rebuilt) and St Paul's Church (demolished).

It's the St Paul's example gives us a lead into the story of the CC's demise. In the 1970's Parishioners of St Paul's were unable to afford the upkeep, and together with the Church of Christ United Reform Church, built a new building (Edward Rd Church Centre). Twenty years earlier the Congregationalists had a similar problem but had a different answer, they sold the building to finance a new one.



The Moseley Road complete with Congregational Church in all its glory! St Paul's and the clock tower of Library and Baths can be seen in the distance. The traffic consists of horse and carriage. Suggested date late 19th or early 20th century. The view is North from Runcorn Road. Quite magnificent.

When we look to date when the demolition occurred, Kelly's annual directories is one of the first reference checks. It was still there in the 1952 & '56 editions, but not there a decade later. Three people who lived and/or worked in the locality from the early 60s confirm the Church was not there at that time. Mrs Joy Boden comments 'I remember that on that corner of Runcorn Road there was some kind of engineering business.' (fn5)

Confirmation, Demolished.

In 1954 this clip appeared; newspaper source not given.

City churches to be sold

Two disused Birmingham churches are to be sold—one as a warehouse. They are Moseley Road Congregational Church, Balsall Heath, and Watery Lane Congregational Church, Bordesley.

Neither has been used for services for some time. The Moseley Road church is to be the warehouse, and is in good order.

(Demolished by Default?) Its clear in this newsclip that the seller of the Moseley Rd property was expecting the church building to remain in existence ('and is in good order') as a **warehouse**. It is mentioned *twice*. Obviously the new owners weren't convinced about its usefulness. The sale went through by 1955.



This 1956 photo show the demolition of the church under way. One of the towers has already gone, and they have started on the second one. The roof has gone too. The housing with adverting billboards on its

walls are on Runcorn Rd. There were some good things coming out of all this, explained by this further clip giving a happy ending.

CONSECRATED

The new Congregational church at Banners Gate, Sutton Coldfield, more than half the cost of which was met by the sale of a Birmingham church, was consecrated on Saturday.

After Moseley Road Congregational Church was closed because the congregation had moved away, more than £8,000 was obtained for the property. On Saturday the minister at Banners Gate, the Rev. N. H. Kew, said that his church would also be known as Moseley Road Memorial Church.

The efforts of the congregation would now be directed to providing an organ costing £1,175 and a £4,000 manse.

The presiding minister at the consecration service was the Rev. W. J. Coggan, Moderator of the West Midland Province.



'Half the cost of the new CC at Banners Gate

was met by the sale of a Birmingham Church.' / 'Rev N H Kew said that his church would also be known as *Moseley Road Memorial Church*.'

So, there we have it, a picture of a church had information about it mixed up with that of a different church and became historical fact. We at the society shall have that put right for posterity.

We have a lot of people to thank for their help in the production of this piece. The members of the Birmingham History Forum have been at the forefront in sourcing info photos and clips.(fn6). Carl Chinn MBE for bringing clarity. Ellie of Local info, office Volunteer William and those quoted above. JF

Foot Notes

- 1, There is a premise that some trams employed on the No37 circular route were diverted to the Moseley Rd Tram depot for maintenance / service work. That would explain a presence on the Moseley Rd, but that wouldn't explain the presence of passengers. Or would it?
- 2, Postcard image credit Balsall Heath Local History Society (BHLHS).
- 3, Carl Chinn MBE quotation, email 16th May 2022.
- 4, Brum Undaunted Birmingham During the Blitz -Brewin Books 2005. By Carl Chinn.
- 5, Albert & Pat Johnson came to live in Runcorn Rd in the early 1960s. Joy Boden's family ran the Ironmongers shop on the opposite corner of Runcorn Rd at the time.
- 6, Forum members:- MWS, pjmburns, Sospiri, Phil, & Carolina,

Other Events

Birmingham Museum

With its recent re-opening, Birmingham Museum and Art gallery is putting on several new exhibitions that may be of interest. All of these will run until the end of October.

Wonderland – Birmingham’s cinema stories

Unseen pictures and memorabilia from the last 125 years of local cinemas, a “treasure hunt” trail and an opportunity to tell your own stories of local cinemas by writing on cards.

We are Birmingham

A culmination of a three-year programme to address representation and complex histories within the heritage sector

Unprecedented Times

A project on the history of the recent pandemic with opportunities to tell your own story at <https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/blog/posts/we-want-to-hear-your-experiences-of-living-through-the-covid-19-pandemic>

In The Que

A celebration of one of the UK’s greatest music venues, developed and curated by the Birmingham Music Archive. Personal artefacts, photographs, flyers, posters, other materials and a new thirty-five minute film all about the Que Club.

Blacklash: Racism and the Struggle for Self-Defence

An extensive archive of photographic, video, and political ephemera, this installation explores the lived modality of what novelist, political thinker and activist Ambalavaner Sivanandan described as ‘racism that kills and racism that discriminates’.

City of Empire to City of Diversity

from 18 March to 18 June at the Library of Birmingham.

An exhibition of pictures and other material from various sources. This includes a history of the Dyche studios and a lot of photographs from that collection.