

**Balsall Heath Local
History Society Gazette**

AUGUST 2024



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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 are: £1 for members
and £3 for visitors.**

**Meetings are held at St Paul's
Venture, Malvern Street at 7:30
pm. Refreshments will be
served from 7 p.m to 7:15 p.m.**

Coming soon

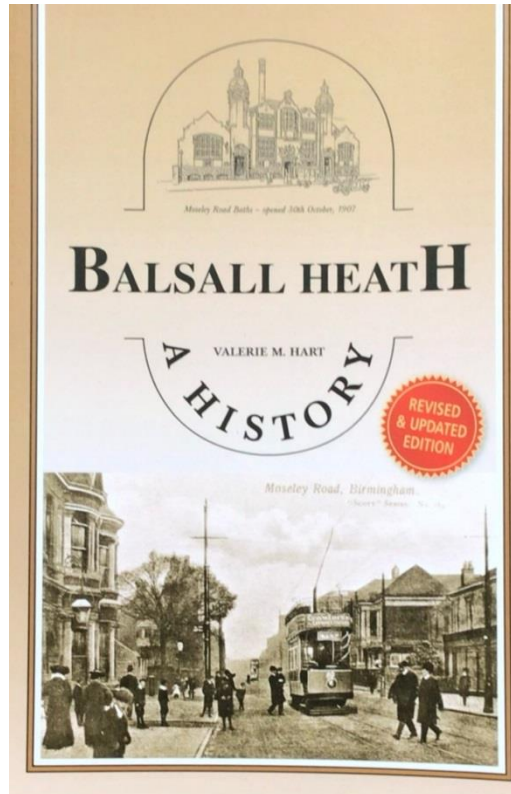
**Thursday 26th September 7pm
for 7.30pm Paul Jaques on
Warwickshire & B'ham Home
Guard**

Canada and Australia.

BOOK LAUNCH

Saturday, Sept 7th at 2 p.m

with a talk by Val Hart



**“Balsall Heath,
a History”, by
Val Hart, was
first published in
1992.**

**It had many
reprintings but
has been out of
print for some
time. This is a
revised and
updated edition
with very much
improved
photographs.**

**On sale at £10.95 but Launch Price on the
day: £9.50**

**At the Old Print Works, 498-506 Moseley
Road, B12 9AH**

EXHIBITION

Friday, Sept 6th To Sunday, Sept 8th

11 a.m to 4.30 p.m

**Displays about Balsall Heath's Heritage and The
Lost Children Exhibition which tells the story of
the Middlemore Emigration Homes in Highgate
which took over 5000 children from Birmingham to**



In the Drawing Room at the Old Print Works, 498-506 Moseley Road, B12 9AH

Moseley Road Swimming Baths Update

On August 20th 2024 a meeting took place with Viv Harrison, Historic Pools Officer at Moseley Road Baths. It was very interesting to hear this exciting update from her. Viv detailed the hopes and plans for every area of the baths. At present, an exact opening date is not known.

Moseley Rd Baths is one of the oldest of six Grade II* listed swimming baths in the UK.

Viv started by telling us there will be Interpretation Boards around the building and tours of the building will take place in due course.

The area at the back of the Baths, which appears to have been a playground at some point, will become a community garden.



In the Boardroom the parquet flooring has already been restored. This will be a flexible space which could be used as a meeting room or even for small exercise classes.

There are many ideas for uses of the women's slipper bath area. It is hoped that it will be a wellbeing space, maybe with spa options and a sauna. There could be a steam room or steam pods. It might be an option to rent out space to practitioners.

The men's second class area will be stripped out, as it is not in good condition and could become a café space. The staff space will remain. Knocking through into the library will be taking place

during the phase 1 works providing a physical connection between the two buildings for the first time

Pool 2 will be boarded over and could then be used for hired activity, such as weddings and corporate events. This would be a nod to the past when the boarded over baths were used for tea dances.



It is intended that the Gala Pool will remain as a swimming pool. It will be slightly smaller because of added pipework which will need to be concealed. The cubicles will remain, although some might be enlarged. The Galleries and spectator areas will remain. The aim is to retain the heritage, but improve it to modern standards as much as possible. There will be a regular timetable and additional events could be planned, such as film screenings.

Kitchen space can be created in the Boiler room. It is thought that this will be for putting together pre prepared food for events. A mezzanine floor will be constructed to house the plant.

The Laundry room will become a small gym. Features such as the racks and tank will remain, but the wooden staircase will be removed. Pull down stairs will be installed instead.

Access will be improved with the installation of lifts and level access on entry.

Courses will be offered, such as training for lifeguards. There will also be some volunteering opportunities e.g. for meet and greet or to assist in the maintenance of the community garden.

No dates for opening of either the Baths or the Library are yet available

Balsall Heath Local History Society has also received an update from Birmingham Council. The first phase of the restoration and redevelopment work is to begin this month. It has been made possible because of grants from the UK Government, Birmingham City Council and The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The first phase will be in four stages, starting with the roof and façade. Scaffolding will be erected in September. Phase 2 which involves restoring the Gala pool and the conversion of Pool 2 is subject to further funding. It is to be hoped that funding will be forthcoming for this important project.

JH

A Society Visit to the Serbian Orthodox Church

Instead of a formal meeting at the end of July, we had a visit on July 22nd to The Serbian Orthodox Church in Bournville.



Fifteen of us assembled at 2pm outside the church and were greeted by the priest, The Very Reverend Father Nenad Popovic. Father Nenad opened the door to reveal the amazing interior of this building. There are two striking features. Firstly the wall and ceiling paintings, which are copies of medieval frescoes found in some old Serbian monasteries. Every inch of the walls and ceilings are covered. Father Nenad told us that the paintings were done by only one man over a period of ten years. This artist was Dusan Mihajlovic.



The second striking feature was the fact that there are no seats in the church (apart from one or two around the edges). Apparently, Orthodox services can last for four or five hours and it is customary for parishioners to stand for the whole of this time. Even one of their oldest ladies, who is in her nineties, insists on standing.

Throughout the church, there are many icons, which are of great religious significance. These are all of Serbian origin.



The History of the Church

In 1947/8 over 10,000 Serb exiles came to the United Kingdom. They worked in essential industries and even those with professional qualifications found themselves working in factories, mines or in agriculture. As post war labour shortages eased, the Serbs were able to find more suitable employment, with many of them moving to Birmingham. From these people, the present parish of St Lazar was formed.

In the 1950s, they worshipped from a property in Middleton Hall Road in Cotteridge. As numbers grew, efforts were made to raise money for a purpose-built church. A large amount of money was quickly raised and the Cadbury family made a piece of land available in Bournville for a very reasonable price. The foundation stone of the Church was laid in 1965 and the building was finished and consecrated in 1968. All of this had been made possible by the generosity of the Cadburys, Bournville Village Trust, a Midlands Industrialist, Sir Alfred Owen and Dragan Lucik the godparent of the Church.

The visit concluded with tea/coffee and cake in the church hall, served by one of the ladies of the church.

JH

Midland Ancestors Local and Family History Fair. July 2024

On Saturday July 13th 2024, Balsall Heath Local History Society attended the Fair. On our table we had a selection of our books for sale and various free leaflets and booklets. We had a quiz relating to Brummie and Black Country words and phrases. Few people entered into the quiz, but it did stimulate conversation and brought back memories of long forgotten phrases, for instance **'She was in her oiltot'** and **'A face as long as Livery Street'**.

The Fair was held at King Edward VI High School for Girls in Edgbaston. It was a good venue and was very well attended. We had a steady flow of visitors to our table and where possible we assisted with people's queries concerning family history or queries about the Balsall Heath area in general. There were over 35 tables occupied by various organisations such as community groups, genealogy groups and museums. A good day was had by all.



JH

Other Events

Birmingham Heritage Week runs from 6th -15th of September and has now listed this year's events.

- In Balsall Heath, the details of the new Book Launch are already on page 1.
- There are also Dramatic History Trails on Sunday 8th , and a new Exhibition from 6th - 8th .
- Brandwood End Cemetery, the story of its civilian remembrance garden on 14th
- .There is a history and discussion on the past and future of the Golden Lion in Cannon Hill Park on 6th
- . The Back to Backs has an open evening on 7th
- . For those that missed last year's tour, The Exchange on Broad St. tours on 7th.
- Other local attractions will open for free including Moseley Dovecote, Park, and Ice-house and Sarehole Mill.
- All Saints church will have a world war 1 remembrance exhibition on Saturday 7th
- Moseley Local History society has a talk entitled 1944 and all that on Tuesday 10th

All of those listed here are for free but some will need booking. Other events may charge money. It's a good idea to look at the listings for yourself early as there are many I haven't mentioned some events will probably be booked up early. For details see

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

On September 18th the Kings Heath Local History Society will have a talk entitled "There's More To Sarehole Mill Than You Think...". details at <http://www.kingsheathhistory.co.uk/>

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