

Balsall Heath Local History Society

ANNUAL REPORT 2013 - 2014

Time
for tea at
Balsall Heath
Carnival
July 2013



Sharing memories with old and new friends



George V
Silver Jubilee Party
Arcadia Terrace
Clifton Road
May 1935

Bringing History To Life

BALSALL HEATH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1979 to promote interest in our local history. The Society has achieved considerable success, working with schools and community groups, organising exhibitions and events, collecting resources and producing its own publications. We feel pride in our area value its strengths, both past and present. Local History has a key role to play in community cohesion.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

The Society has seen another active year. One in which it has successfully continued to promote Balsall Heath through a wide variety of events, social media and publications. I thank everyone who has supported us in our efforts. The range of what has been achieved is here for all to see. Time to look back and feel pride, but also to look forward with enthusiasm – bringing history to life.

PROJECTS

Diamond Balsall Heath

The Heritage Lottery funded project was launched in January 2013. The concept was 60 years of history in the area through objects and people's stories inspired by them. Objects featured included the telephone, marbles and a lump of coal. We worked with several schools on the project, including sessions at Balsall Heath Library. It has been presented in several sessions with adults, who have enjoyed it as an ideal catalyst for reminiscence. We will continue to use the project as a basis for history sessions.

Photographic Group

The Society's Photographic Group has made enormous progress in sorting out the collection of photographs which is housed in our History Bay. This has been rehoused by subject matter into archival boxes. Each photograph has been indexed and cross-referenced.

Including Women

The Society was commissioned to edit and produce a booklet of interviews of the experience of growing up, as remembered by women from a variety of backgrounds.

THE BIRMINGHAM HISTORY THEATRE GROUP

features several Society members. This year kicked off in June with the extremely well-received production "**Life's Rich Pageant**". The play focussed on the inter-relationships of several characters involved with the 1938 Pageant of Birmingham. It was a dazzling combination of live performance, songs and specially created "old" newsreel footage. This was followed by two "street theatre" productions. The first in July saw performances at Galton Valley pump-house and bridge in Smethwick. It was followed, in September, by two historical trails along Ladypool Road. Such was the positive reception for this that it was decided to rework it as a stage production. "**Memory Lane**", as it became, played to three audiences in March.

DIARY OF EVENTS

June 9th. Birmingham History Fair

The annual fair is always well attended and showcases the best of local history in Birmingham and Balsall Heath!



June 22nd/23rd: DBH weekend

A huge exhibition of artefacts and display panels from the Diamond Balsall Heath project, along with some of the best photographs we have of Balsall Heath through the ages.



July 6th: Balsall Heath Carnival

We walked in the procession and had two tents at the Carnival featuring Diamond Balsall Heath and a welcome cup of tea and cakes! All went down well.

September 14th/15th: DBH heritage weekend

We were a proud part of the annual Heritage Open Days event. Another chance for people to see Diamond Balsall Heath and selections from our History Bay.

May 11th: Moseley Road Baths

We had a display at this event organised to support and promote the on-going campaign to keep the baths open.

IN THE SCHOOLROOM

Our **Schoolroom** in the old Clifton Junior School had successful visits from primary schools. Clifton and Heath Mount, who are regular bookers and always want to incorporate the sessions into their curriculum planning. All enjoy the experience of the Victorian Classroom to compare with classrooms today.

Classes also came from Oaklands, Colebourne and from St Augustine's in Coventry. The sessions are always well received and the children enthusiastic about the sessions whether Victorian or WW2. We also provide some artefacts handling and quizzes when required to work alongside the classroom.

Our Victorian themed classroom continues to be popular alongside our WWII evacuation period lesson.

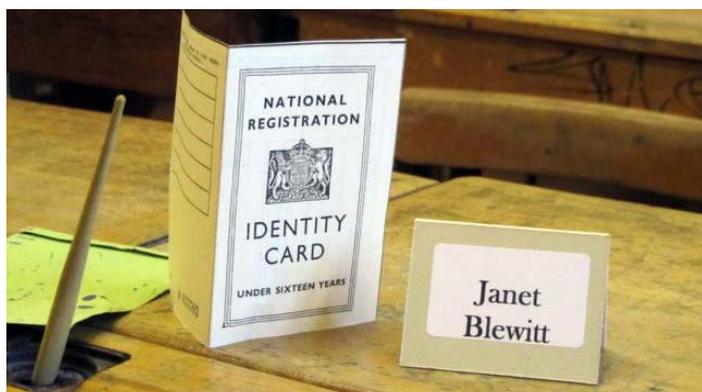


School sessions feature the teacher instructing the children in a variety of school-day activities ranging from times tables to practising writing with dip-pens. Feedback from the visits is always positive and complimentary. Thanks to Bron Salway and Pat Johnson for running these sessions.

OUTREACH WITH SCHOOLS

We offer resource materials for loan:

- **Victorian Resource boxes** containing artefacts for school use based around the topics of 'Victorian Life' and 'Victorian Schooldays'. Clifton School find they "make our project work come alive".
- **World War Two Resource boxes** containing artefacts, documents and worksheets



ENQUIRIES AND INFORMATION

Research queries mostly come in about family history in Balsall Heath. This will usually include requests for copies of photographs. Many who contact us donate pictures and information for our collections.

The Gazette. The Society newsletter is available as a downloadable pdf, in printed form as well as via email. It contains news of current activities as well as archive features. The circulation runs into hundreds.

Our Websites include news of all our events, activities, features and publications. The Facebook group now has hundreds of members swapping stories.

MEETINGS AND TRIPS

Our monthly speaker meetings featured the following: Laurel and Hardy and their Birmingham connections (*John Ullah*), A History of Handsworth Park (*Simon Baddeley*), Projecting Britain (*Chris Sutton*), Birmingham's Historic Buildings (*Lewis Braithwaite*), Water In Towns (*Mike Byrne*), All Hat, No Rabbit (*Neil Roberts*), Erdington Cottage Homes (*Gudrun Limbrick*), The origin of some King's Heath street names (*Andy Bishop*), Do you remember the 50s and 60s (*Mac Joseph*), Skulduggery at Soho (*Mary Bodfish*).

In August we had a delightful trip out to Handsworth Park and one in March to Birmingham Council House.

Meetings are held on the last Thursday of every month (except August) at 7.00 for 7.30 at St. Paul's Venture, Malvern St, off Clifton Rd, Balsall Heath. All are welcome to come.

PARTNERSHIPS

Our grateful thanks to those who work in partnership with us.

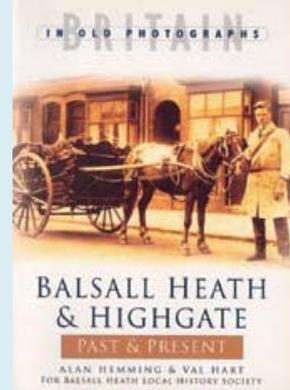
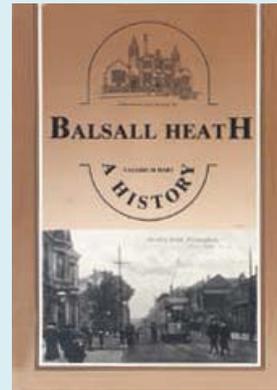
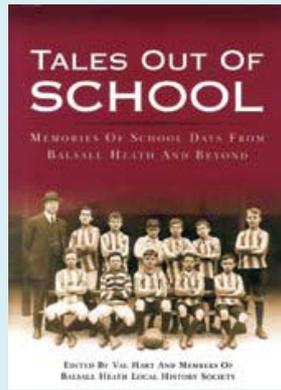
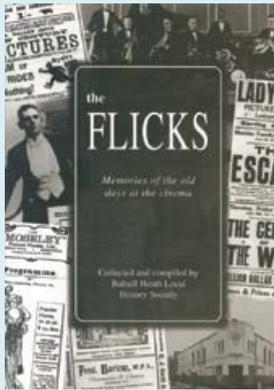
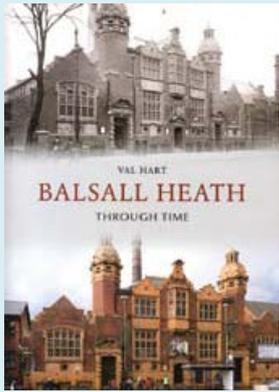
- **St. Paul's Community Development Trust**— provide a base for our history worker and support.
- **OPNOCS** (Older People's New Opportunities Consortium)
- **Balsall Heath Library**
- **Birmingham Archives & Heritage BHOPS** (Balsall Heath Older People's Services)

FUNDING SUPPORT

The following organisations financially supported our work in the last year.

- **Comic Relief - £560** (our tea tent at the carnival)
- **Harry Payne Trust - £300** (oral history sessions)
- **Heritage Lottery Fund - £10,000** (Diamond Balsall Heath)
- **William Dudley Trust £300** (Reminiscence workshops)

Publications... Available from Balsall Heath Local History Society



Balsall Heath Through Time Price: £10.00

by Val Hart

Then and Now images of Balsall Heath from Victorian times to the present day. Old and current images are contrasted to depict life in a richly diverse community.

Balsall Heath, A History Price: £7.99

by Val Hart

The development of Balsall Heath from farmland and heath of the 18th century to the suburb of the 1930s and 1940s.

The Flicks Price: £1.00

Memories of the old days at the cinemas in Balsall Heath through contemporary accounts and people's memories.

The Moseley Road Trail Price: 20p

The Development of the Moseley Road from the 1740s. Locations map with historical notes and photographs.

Including Women Price £1.00

Edited by Val Hart

A fascinating collection of interviews with women from several countries and different backgrounds. The similarities and contrasts of life growing up.

Brown Paper and Goose Grease Price: £1.00

A dictionary of traditional remedies, chiefly collected from memories and some from personal experience.

The Moseley Road Baths Price: 20p

A quick dip into the delights of this historic pool which is a major landmark in Balsall Heath.

Balsall Heath & Highgate Past & Present Price: £7.00

Edited by Val Hart and Alan Hemming

Fascinating photographs of the area arranged under topics. The editors have added lively and informative captions which bring to life Balsall Heath through the ages.

Tales Out Of School Price: £5.00

Edited by Val Hart

Memories of schooldays by adults from Balsall Heath and beyond, spanning more than a century and five continents. A story of what school really felt like for 120 different people. The happiest days of their lives, or perhaps a time to forget?

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2013-2014

President: Richard Albutt (elected November 2005)

Chair: Patrick Baird

Vice-Chair: Pete Salway

Treasurer: Pat Johnson

Programme Secretary: Bron Salway

Committee Secretary: Val Hart

Committee Members: Ellie Gabbay, Albert Johnson, Jenny Lloyd, Margaret Pendry, Susan Rose, Diane Stead

CONTACT INFORMATION

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WEBSITES

www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk
www.digitalbalsallheath.org.uk

FACEBOOK

Balsall Heath Local History Society

Charity Registration Number: 1101945