



# Annual Review 2015-16

## THE MOSELEY SOCIETY

Caring for an historic area of Birmingham

Charity no. 512211

### Co-Chairs' Report (Helen Minovi and Geoff Rees)

This year gave the people of Moseley an opportunity to demonstrate their sense of belonging and to identify with what has been regarded for a long time as 'Moseley', when the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) proposals threatened to change the local ward landscape beyond all recognition. Community action involving the Moseley Society and the Moseley Forum led to well balanced and researched counter proposals being put forward and the presence of over 400 people at a public meeting in January showed how organisations such as our Society have a significant part to play in the life of the Moseley community.

The Moseley Society also gave support to Moseley in Bloom, the Moseley Festival, Heritage Open Days, Moseley Christmas lights and the Moseley Community Alcohol Partnership to name but a few. Our own internal reorganisation following last year's AGM has enabled our five sub committees to blossom and we are indebted to the leaders and members of these committees for their work which is encapsulated in the individual reports below. A revised constitution, that also introduces rotation of trustees, will be considered at the AGM on 26 May.

Membership will be an area for the Committee to focus on in the year ahead but we need support. Please spread the word and encourage friends, neighbours and relatives to join us. What we have is too valuable to lose.

### Secretary's Report (Fiona Adams)

At the start of February 2015 an accident at the Alcester Road traffic lights led to three months with temporary lights, long queues, road works and difficulties for pedestrians. Road and traffic issues have continued to play a significant role throughout the year and into 2016. We have had no indication yet that a new bus service to connect Moseley directly to the university and hospitals in B15 is under consideration, although we hope that if Highbury becomes a visitor attraction this will increase the viability of a new bus service. The plans to reduce parking in the centre of

Moseley to make way for 'Cycle Revolution' routes have coincided with requests for a residents' parking scheme and a plan from Moseley Hall Hospital to introduce parking charges. Meanwhile the colourful marks on the footpath turned out to be the precursor of '20mph' signs, as part of a pilot project introducing lower speed limits across the city.



The long-term aim is for a widespread increase in cycling, use of public transport, reduction in car use and improvement of air quality.

Litter and refuse collection loomed large in my inbox during the year. It took a while for all properties to be issued with wheelie bins leading to continued sights like this.



However the stalwart car park team continues its monthly clean-ups, leaving the bags of items that can't be recycled out for collection by the Waste Management team. This was part of the haul at the end of January 2016.



The car park continues as a haunt for street drinkers, as does St Mary's Churchyard, although the successful bid to Heritage Lottery Fund should result in a churchyard that feels more welcoming for everyone.

Sadly the funds available for Neighbourhood Wardens have all come to an end, but not before Helen Rehman and Philip Osman had launched a litter strategy for the Ward. We hope that residents' groups will continue to publicise and implement it.

We are grateful to Aman and Rosie of Village News in St Mary's Row for continuing to sell our Architectural History of Moseley poster and also postcards of the dovecote.

A highlight for the year was Heritage Open Days. Moseley Hall Hospital agreed to open the old Hall and their enthusiastic and knowledgeable Estates Manager, Andy Mould, showed the visitors around the Hall, while 17 volunteers from The Society opened the dovecote, icehouse and park. All the gates were open so people could make a circular walk and 662 visitors signed in.



The response from our members to an email appeal for help to deliver leaflets calling people to a public meeting about the LGBCE proposals received an immediate and overwhelming response. If you have an email address and have not told us – please do so!

### **Treasurer's Report (Phil Williams)**

The net incoming resources for the year to 31 December 2015 show a significant increase to £3,068 (2014 - £1,258) but a large element of the increase is non-recurring items. In particular there is a legacy of £1,000 and four years of Gift Aid claims (approximately £1,200 of the £1,600 of claim relates to the years 2012 to 2014).

Discussions are on-going to determine the best use of the legacy. Grants were made to the Moseley Christmas Lights and Moseley in Bloom.

Unrestricted reserves at 31 December 2015 have grown to £9,330 (2014 - £6,262). The restricted fund relating to the Local History Archive Project and other projects is now £1,894 (2014 - £1,668) giving total reserves of £11,224 (2014 - £7,930).

### **Marketing, News & Membership (Fiona Adams, Mike Marlow, Helen Minovi, Geoff Rees, John Rouse, Ray Tier, Geoff Williams and Sally Wright)**

This sub-committee has divided itself up into smaller groups. Fiona Adams, Geoff Rees and John Rouse have worked, with help from Joyce Elliott, on the revised constitution. Thanks to Ray Tier, the website now contains more up-to-date news and together with the Newsletter and Fiona Adams' regular emails, we hope that members feel well-informed of what is happening in Moseley. Geoff Williams is working hard to monitor the membership and send reminders to members who haven't yet renewed their subscription. Helen Minovi, Ray Tier and Sally Wright represented the Moseley Society at the stakeholders meeting at Highbury Hall. The reply to the LGBCE proposals took time and energy and Mike Marlow and Fiona Adams were involved, with other local voluntary organisations, in responding to the Commission, as well as keeping residents of Moseley informed and encouraging them to get involved.



Members gathered at a table in Fiona Adams' house to bundle leaflets informing residents of the meeting on January 16. A number of new members joined following the meeting.

### **Dovecote & Icehouse (Roy Cockel, Paul Lindley and Helen Minovi)**

A small, dedicated group of volunteers has continued to work at the dovecote throughout the year, developing and maintaining the garden, to provide an attractive, tranquil setting for the eighteenth century buildings. We opened each month from March to September, took part in Moseley in Bloom's Open Gardens, and were part of the Heritage Open Day trail, which this year included Moseley Hall.

For the first time we entered the RHS "It's Your Neighbourhood" competition. We were judged to be "thriving". Roy and Helen also received certificates of merit.

But we cannot rest on our laurels, or any other foliage: we are now having to replace ageing plants such as lavenders, and some of the

roses. A donation from friends and relations in thanks for the life of Lester Anderson has enabled us to do this, and to buy our own shredder.



Work at the dovecote is a team effort (rewarded by cups of tea and Helen's fruit cake.)

We are very grateful to all our gardening and stewarding volunteers, including Chris Cockel, for his scything of the meadow and wild flower planting.

Thanks go to Kate Booth who has taken on organising the rota of stewards at the icehouse, ensuring it was open throughout the music festivals in Moseley Park. Kate also



demonstrated how to make ice cream using salt rather than a freezer, which proved a very popular addition to one of the events for children organised by the Park and Pool Board.

Thanks to the persistence of Paul Lindley and the Park's electrician, the problem of the lighting at the icehouse was eventually solved so the many visitors could see more of the amazing structure (and we did not have to go on climbing up and down the ladder to light candles).

## **Programme**

**(Helen Minovi, Robert Orme, John Underwood)**

As last year, the Society and the History Group joined forces to organise the Programme, which began in September with a very successful, well-supported Heritage Open Day. The History Group's first event took the form of a visit to the Imperial War Museum in London. Our evening talks have been very interesting and stimulating, with plenty of food for thought. We are extremely grateful to all our speakers for their contributions of such high quality to our Programme: Dr. Richenda Roberts, Andrew Hamilton, Professor Trevor Hocking, Robert Stanyard and Professor Mike Cullen. We must also thank our members for providing such responsive audiences and lively discussion afterwards.

"Tea and Conversation" and our challenging Quiz were missing this year, but will be back in the 2016-17 programme.

We hope we have offered something of interest to everyone in the course of the year. We welcome suggestions for topics or visits or the offer to give a talk. Do get in touch with your ideas!

## **Planning & Licensing**

**(Fiona Adams, Ray Cocks, John Dring, Bob Edmonds, Carolyn Hicks, Gill McGillivray, Robert Orme and David Sandison)**

This year has been marked by the arrival of national restaurant chains and the closure of banks. There is very little the planning system can do to control this and as ever the message is 'use it or lose it' if you want independently run businesses to operate despite the challenges of high rents and business rates. Costa Coffee has gained permission to open in the former Barclays Bank; Pizza Express by the entrance to Moseley Park and Prezzo in the former Halfords. There is an application under consideration from Davenport's Brewery for the former HSBC Bank and Lloyds Bank has announced that its branch in Moseley will close in June 2016. The race is on to find alternative sites for ATMs including one at the Post Office. Don't forget that the Post Office also offers a wide range of banking services.

The Special Licensing Policy for Central Moseley was included in the revised Statement of Licensing Policy, based on a slightly enlarged area and also including off-licences. Moseley is the only suburban area with such a policy – but it is also the only suburban area with so many licensed premises so close to each other and surrounded by residential properties.

In the last year our enlarged group of active citizens has considered around 190 cases which were either new applications or appeals. The group now includes representatives from three residents' associations in addition to those with specialist expertise. The enlarged group has resulted in an increase in the number of comments, positive and negative, made on applications – 127 (65% compared with 29% last year.) 134 (69%) of the plans considered were 'householder' applications. We remain concerned by plans for unsympathetic extensions, huge dormer windows, removal of front gardens and the use of plastic windows. Many changes might seem quite small in themselves but the incremental effect on the character and appearance of Moseley can be great. We pay particular attention to the features of our two Conservation Areas and the 70 applications in those Areas this year. We have recently added a link on our website to



advice about permeable surfaces as there are now regulations aimed to ensure that all new hard surfacing of forecourts is permeable.

There were 10 applications to build new houses – the largest site given permission for new building is on land at the back of Park Road, accessed from Augusta Road. The approved scheme will allow 7 detached houses to be squeezed into a very small site with the only vehicle access to Alcester Road via the already congested junctions of Park Hill or Chantry Road. The most surprising site for a proposed new house was on Alcester Road, balanced atop a precipitous bank by the railway line. Permission was refused.

Although demolition work has begun at the former Sorrento Hospital outpatient buildings on Anderton Park Road no plans for replacement buildings have yet been advertised and we fear another intensive proposal here. We still await definite news of a start date for work on the Meteor site although there is some progress with the listed building in Wake Green Road and repairs to make the charming Arts & Crafts house suitable for its new owners are underway.

There is no sign of a decrease in applications – but at long last the Planning Department has started to put more emphasis on enforcement, including of appeal decisions. By taking such a detailed interest in the many changes to our neighbourhood our group sometimes feels under siege so we are always glad to welcome and support applications from people who wish to retain or reinstate the original features and materials that make Moseley what it still is.

### **Moseley History Group Report (Janet Berry, Roy Cockel, Frank Gresham, Jim Hone, Verity Montague-Smith, Edwina Rees, Rachel Tier, Ray Tier, Josie Wall)**

The group has continued its research into World War 1 with a focus on those whose deaths are recorded on the St Mary's war memorial, Moseley men with no local memorial and conscientious objectors, with articles being variously displayed and posted on the Society's website. A visit to the Imperial War Museum in London took place in September. A project has recently started researching the History of Moor Green Allotments as part of the Moor Green Allotments Association 40th Celebrations and is due for completion by September. The project will provide website articles, a booklet, displays and a calendar. Five wide-ranging talks were organised for the Tuesday evening programme on subjects as diverse as local history, World War 1, a clean water supply for the Black Country and the wives and daughters of the Lunar Society. There was a guided walk as part of the Moseley Festival.



A visit to the Franklin Collection of Chinese porcelain in the Birmingham Museums Collection proved most interesting.

A guided tour of St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham by Terry Slater has been arranged for 23rd June and a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum on 24th May. In addition members of the group continue to meet regularly on Thursdays in its new premises at the All Services Club and are extremely active in researching local history, often in response to requests from local residents, as well as producing displays and manning stalls for events at St Mary's Church, the Moseley Festival and elsewhere. Anyone interested in joining would be most welcome.

### **Committee in 2015-16**

Helen Minovi & Geoff Rees, Co-chairs  
Phil Williams, Treasurer  
Fiona Adams, Secretary  
Roy Cockel                      John Dring  
Jean Gilkison                  Paul Lindley  
Mike Marlow                   Robert Orme  
Ray Tier                          John Underwood  
Sally Wright

### **AGENDA FOR THE AGM To be held on Thursday 26 May 7.30pm at Moseley Exchange**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM held 21.5.2015
3. Presentation of the reports
4. Adoption of the Report and Accounts to 31.12.15
5. Election of Officers & Committee
6. Proposal to adopt revised constitution
7. Any other business

Following the meeting there will be a talk by a member of the newly formed Chamberlain Highbury Trust.

### **The Moseley Society Registered charity 512211**

The Society can be contacted via the Secretary at 36 Grove Avenue, Moseley, B13 9RY. Subscriptions and letters may be handed in at Moseley Travel, 172 Alcester Road, near the public car park entrance in Moseley, while information about the Society is available next door at Domestica, or across the road at Moseley Exchange. [www.moseley-society.org.uk](http://www.moseley-society.org.uk)