



Annual Review 2018-19

THE MOSELEY SOCIETY

Caring for an historic area of Birmingham

Charity no. 512211

Co-Chairs' Report

Helen Minovi and Geoff Rees

This year is the 40th Anniversary of the Moseley Society. In 1979, as in 2019, political disruption was the order of the day, the winter of discontent left rubbish in the streets, a Scottish devolution referendum took place in March, Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister in May and in June there was the first direct election to the European Union. More prosaic matters were concerning the inhabitants of Moseley: the plans for the widening of the Moseley Crossroads, the disgusting state of the Moseley car park and the inappropriate design of the then new Tesco supermarket. As a result, the Moseley Society was forged out of an inaugural meeting of 34 determined people.

In May 1979 a committee was convened, some of whom are still active in the Moseley Society. The aims of the Society were declared to be non-political, dedicated to the preservation and protection of the environment, the development and improvement of Moseley as a place in which to live and to represent public opinion on matters of general interest or concern. Planning applications are regularly monitored and commented upon and the car park clean-up took place monthly until 2017 when the Council finally took over. In 1983 Moseley Conservation Area was designated; in 1985 the restored dovecote was open to the public and since then an 18th century style garden has been created in its grounds; in 1999 the restored icehouse in Moseley Park and Pool was opened to the public. The capture of Moseley history has become an integral part of the Society's activity. Moseley Forum, which led to the Farmers' market and Moseley in Bloom, has been encouraged and supported as has the Moseley Community Development Trust. To go full circle, when Tesco applied to return to Moseley and build on the site of the Meteor Ford Garage, their initial plans were widely criticised. The Moseley Society was able to encourage the more sympathetic development which, after Tesco had changed its mind, became the Marks & Spencer building. One of the Society's major roles has been to develop or to influence planning and licensing regulations adopted by Birmingham City Council.

At the heart of all of these achievements are the many people who over the years have been willing to give freely of their time and effort to make Moseley the place that it is today. Without them Moseley would not be one of the national best urban villages in which to live, or be the vibrant, cosmopolitan and multicultural icon that it is today.

Secretary's Report

Fiona Adams

As the Secretary since 1980 it is tempting to use this Review to reminisce as, increasingly, I find myself wondering when one of the documents in my numerous filing cabinets should be passed on to the history group. In 1979 Moseley Ward was much as it is now although we had a County Councillor as well as three Ward Councillors to relate to. Having spent much time in the intervening years attending meetings in Sparkhill and Kings Heath, it has been very encouraging to have witnessed the start of the new Moseley Meetings. These are now taking place six times a year and enabling residents to raise issues directly with officers, councillors and members of our local police team. Coming to terms with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) was a necessary but not the most interesting feature of 2018/19. Events that stick out in my memory include playing games on the Village Green each



Thursday during August. It was the idea of Lorna Brewster of Moseley CDT to encourage everyone, not just the street drinkers, to enjoy the long hot summer days of 2018 on the Green. Another highlight was volunteering at Highbury for Heritage Open Days. I was on main gate duty during the afternoon and therefore heard many appreciative comments as visitors left the special WW1 event.

Treasurer's Report **Phil Williams**

The full report and accounts will be available at the meeting and can be sent to any member on request.

Income and expenditure

There was a surplus of income over expenditure of £1,277 in the year to 31 December 2018 compared to £688 for 2017. Income for the year is similar to previous years as is expenditure on meetings, events, management and administration. Less money has been spent on one off items, which has resulted in the surplus being higher than in 2017.

Balance sheet

Total funds have increased from £11,172 to £12,153 reflecting the surplus of income over expenditure for the year. This is not reflected in an equivalent increase in cash balances for a number of reasons, the most significant of which being reprints of History Booklets. These are booklets for which we have paid in the latter part of 2018 but have not been sold by 31 December 2018. They are thus in stock as at 31 December 2018 (i.e. stocks have increased to £674 from £153 as at 31 December 2017).

Marketing, News and Membership

Fiona Adams, Mike Marlow, Helen Minovi, Geoff Rees, John Rouse, Ray Tier, Geoff Williams, Sally Wright



We are pleased to say that the membership leaflet was finalised at the beginning of the year and is now in circulation.

In the 40th year of the Moseley Society, we feel that we are still contributing to the well-being of Moseley and are keen to encourage more people to join us. Recently our leaflet has been distributed to a wide area of Moseley and we will be continuing with the membership drive throughout the year.

We hope you enjoy our quarterly newsletters which are sent out via email and hard copy and appreciate Fiona Adams' interim emails that keep members informed of relevant news and

events. We now have a Facebook page and Ray Tier regularly updates our website.

The group is working on a roll-up banner to use at meetings and outside events. At our 25th anniversary a poster exhibition was created to highlight the achievements of the Moseley Society. This is being brought up to date.

Programme

Helen Minovi, Robert Orme, John Underwood, Ray Tier

Our 2018/19 programme of talks and events has gone well. We began in the autumn with Heritage Open Day, followed by eight different talks on such topics as wild life (one of Moseley in Bloom's two contributions).



Urban geology encouraged us to look for fossils in stones used to build the city centre; John Bowen, entrepreneur and builder; stained glass; and more. The quiz in January was as challenging as ever. There were nine teams, ten rounds and four question setters, including Pete Davies, who has joined the team, following the retirement of Roy Cockel. The afternoon team talk by the History Group was appreciated by people who prefer daytime events. Our December meeting was held at St. Mary's so that we could engage in a festive evening with Mick Perrier, the choir and the junior bell ringers. The event also gave people the chance to support the organ fund.

We are very grateful to all our speakers whose knowledge and enthusiasm made their talks so enjoyable, and to our audiences who have been responsive and supportive throughout, and for the fruitful discussions afterwards. We have begun preparing the next programme and would welcome ideas and suggestions for future topics and speakers.

Dovecote & Icehouse

Helen Minovi, Eden Berrey, Roy Cockel, Andrew Devey, Paul Lindley and Gill McGillivray

The Dovecote and its garden have provided an attractive backdrop for various activities over the past year: Heritage Open Day; Open Gardens - with sculptures, posters and plants; Andy Conway's book launch; the Savoyards'

photo shoot and monthly openings from April to September. On all these occasions visitors have enjoyed Roy Cockel's excellent Humphry Repton exhibition. The garden offers a peaceful haven for staff, visitors and patients of Moseley Hall Hospital.

A small team of volunteers at the dovecote has worked hard to maintain and develop the garden. The box-hedged rose and shrub beds, the kitchen garden, herb and sensory beds are flourishing. The small pond (just big enough for occasional visits by mallard) helps attract wild life.

We coped surprisingly well with last summer's drought, harvesting water in many buckets (we have no running water). The quince yield was spectacular and had us searching for recipes: jam, jelly, marmalade and dulce de membrillo were all produced from our crop.

We are very grateful for all the help and support we receive from our loyal garden team and stewards. Our efforts were rewarded with Level 5 "Outstanding" in "It's Your Neighbourhood" and a Special Achievement Award from Moseley in Bloom.

A loyal team of volunteers, organised by Kate Booth, opens the Icehouse throughout the season and on special occasions including Moseley Festival, Heritage Open Day and during music festivals in the park. Moseley Park and Pool has been undertaking work to restore the ground around the Icehouse which has become eroded in recent years, especially when the park is used by the Mostly Jazz and the Folk festivals. This year the Jazz event coincided with the long summer heatwave, but even so the bags of ice stored there by the bar stayed frozen and visitors are always intrigued to see the chamber in use as it was intended.



Planning & Licensing

Fiona Adams, John Dring, Bob Edmonds, Carolyn Hicks, Izzy Knowles, Gill McGillivray, Robert Orme, David Sandison and Stephen Sandys.

Our group continues to meet every three to four weeks to consider and respond to the new planning applications and during the year we have looked at 169, commenting on 110.

Two thirds of the applications were classed as 'householder', concerning extensions to residential properties. We submitted comments on over half of those applications – sometimes in support, but mainly because we considered the very large extensions would affect neighbours and the street scene to an unacceptable degree. Nevertheless, many of these applications have been approved and building works will continue to take place all over Moseley as a result. Many more building projects in residential property are the result of 'permitted development' and the relaxation of regulation in recent years also affects planning officers' decisions.

An increasing feature of householder planning applications is 'detached outbuilding to rear'. The trend for large buildings at the bottom of the garden continues and although the planners attach a condition that their use must be 'incidental' to the use of the dwelling house, we believe that more and more are being used as separate living accommodation.

We sent comments to the Planning Inspectorate on 6 appeals – 5 of which were for non-determination within the time limit. We took this to be an indication of the pressure of work in the under-staffed Planning Department. We have been assured that the Enforcement Section is once more fully staffed so we are hoping for action on some of the matters reported to them – such as people and not just fairies at the bottom of the garden.

Changes in the shopping centre continue and we remain frustrated by the failure to enforce the Shopfront Design Guide when businesses change frontages without having sought permission. Equally frustrating is the time and cost involved for the few businesses who do try to comply with the rules.

Work is nearly finished on the tightly-packed new houses that have been built on wooded back garden land off Oakland Road. Building is underway creating new flats on the corner of Wake Green and Mayfield Roads. The revised application was approved despite showing almost no garden ('amenity space' to planners.) It was all sacrificed in favour of parking spaces. An even more controversial car park was given permission at Moseley Hall Hospital. Despite evidence of decreasing air quality and measures to reduce vehicle use being enforced at a

national and EU wide scale, locally provision for car parking has been increased.

We look forward to the planning application for the new Moseley Station to reverse this trend in next year's report. We also look forward to the adoption by the City Council of the St Agnes CAAMP featured in last year's Review but another casualty of the staff shortages in the Planning Department.

Moseley History Group Report

Ray Tier, Janet Berry, Ian Binnie, Roy Cockel, Frank Gresham, Jim Hone, Edwina Rees



The History Group continues to flourish with a very enthusiastic and active membership. The highlight of the year was the World War 1 exhibition at Highbury, organised by the Group for Heritage Open Day. As well as displaying the results of the Group's own WW1 research and the work of other local groups represented by Dr Jim Andrew, Stephanie Silk, Doug Smith and Solihull School's curator John Loynton, the exhibition was greatly enhanced by David Vaux and Paul Jaques representing the Western Front Association. They brought magnificent displays from their own collections, the WW1 Re-enactment Society, a WW1 nursing exhibition and the Trench Choir.

A new booklet 'Moseley - Love and Loss in the Great War' was produced as a printed record of some of our most memorable WW1 research. Many more articles have been written and uploaded to the website about men killed in WW1 and commemorated on the St Mary's war memorial and elsewhere, and also those with no memorial. A visit was arranged to the final phase of the WWI exhibition at King Edward's School remembering Old Edwardians' contributions to the Great War. An exhibition and leaflet were prepared by Dr Roy Cockel as part of a national event to commemorate the bicentenary of the death of Humphry Repton who produced a 'Red Book' for Moseley Hall in

1792. The exhibition was displayed at the dovecote and at a variety of local venues including Kings Heath Library and Moseley Hall Hospital. A display on the history of the railway in Moseley has been created and is currently installed at the Exchange to inform the current debate about the reopening of Moseley station. A new project has started documenting examples of domestic stained-glass windows in Moseley.

Several successful history-related talks were arranged as part of the Society's evening talks programme. A guided walk focussing on the history of Moseley Hall was conducted for the Street Fair and the Group contributed a stall to the St Mary's Churchyard Open Day in June. The website continues to grow and now amounts to a significant archive of local history material. The group continues to meet on Thursdays to further its own research and respond to queries from residents and from farther afield, sometimes overseas, prompted by the website.

Committee in 2018-19

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

AGENDA FOR THE AGM

**To be held on Thursday 16 May
7.30pm at Moseley Exchange**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM held 17.5.2018
3. Presentation of the reports
4. Adoption of Report & Accounts to 31.12.18
5. Election of Trustees
6. Any other business

Following the formal meeting members will be offered refreshments prepared by Maison Mayci and an opportunity to drink a toast to the future of the Society, while celebrating its first 40 years. Fiona Adams and other long-serving committee members will lead a light-hearted discussion, reminiscing on changes they have witnessed.

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