

Victorian Moseley: More News and Views in the Press

Birmingham newspapers and local journals and magazines reported on people, developments and events in Moseley in the nineteenth century, sometimes in a wry and humorous manner.

The Development of the Suburb

Moseley Hall was being seriously affected by road building. The *Dart* of 1884 said that 'daylight has been let into Moseley village by the felling of trees in the park for a new road' and 'the old wall is being pulled down, and a rail being put up' (*The Dart: The Midland Figaro*, 'What We Hear', Friday 6 December, 1884, p.12).

Park Hill exemplifies Moseley's development. The Taylor family cut Park Hill through their Moseley Hall Estate in 1865 and the first building leases tendered. Plots were sold off piecemeal over time. In 1865 an advert stated that 'A portion of beautiful park attached to Moseley Hall has recently been laid out for the erection on building leases of villa residences exclusively, for which it is admirably adapted' (*Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Saturday 9 December, 1865).

The Development of Park Hill, Moseley, 1860-1900. (1860s; 1870s; 1880s; 1890s; 1900s)

(Map constructed using *Digimap* by Janet Berry. Research by Paul & Pam Rutter, Roy Cockel and Janet Berry).



In 1886 W.F. Taylor sold plots fronting Alcester Road which cut across the kitchen gardens of Moseley Hall. By the late 1880s W.F. Taylor had planned a grid of other roads across the greater portion of the estate (Library of Birmingham Archives, 355198, Photographs and newspaper cuttings relating to Moseley Hall).

William Dyke Wilkinson, known as 'The man who bought Moseley' wanted to buy Moseley House opposite St Mary's Church. He wrote: 'I saw clearly this would become the marketplace of what would be the most popular suburb of Birmingham' (Library of Birmingham Archives, MS 579/6 71aE, Newspaper Cuttings).

St Mary's Row, early nineteenth century.



In 1891 *The Dart* reported: 'Moseley as a suburb is growing larger and more important every day. New houses are being built in nearly every road, and the sound of hammering fills the air from six o'clock in the morning to six at night' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, 'Tittle-Tattle from Moseley', Friday 21 August, 1891, p.5).

In 1900, *The Dart* claimed, 'Moseley village is rapidly undergoing great changes' and 'Moseley Hall grounds are being surrounded with large villa residences' (*The Birmingham Pictorial and Dart*, 'Whispers', Friday 19 January, 1900, p.5).

There were many complaints about footpaths and the state of roads:

‘I wonder why it is that the footpaths of a great many of the roads in Moseley are so abominably pebbly and rough? Is this their chronic condition? Church Road, Woodstock Road, Sandford Road and Woodbridge Road are all the same, indeed I don’t believe there is one footpath in Moseley that you could call smooth. Not only are these footpaths most uncomfortable to walk on, but they are also ruinous to light summer shoes, as I for one, have found to my cost, and no doubt other ladies have also’ (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley (by Mollie), Friday 31 July, 1891).

The Dart in 1893 criticised the state of the roads and complained about how muddy they were, but by 1903 Spurrier described ‘good and well-lighted roads’ (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Friday 27 January, 1893, p.10).

The Loss of Moseley’s Rural Ambience

Moseley Village Green, 1858.



In 1894, Edward Holmes, a Moseley architect who had lived in Moseley for sixty-two years, bemoaned the loss of the rural environment, remembering the ‘Good old days ... when Moseley was noted more for its green pastures than its villas’ and when School Road was a

‘narrow bye road ... bounded by holly hedge’ and ‘innocently rustic’ with houses ‘few and far between on Alcester and Moseley Road’ (*The Moseley Society Journal*, Vol. 1, No 10, November, 1894).

A *Birmingham Mail* article in 1903 remembered a time when a pleasant country walk from Digbeth to the Village Green could be enjoyed, lamented the loss of fields and footpaths and drew attention to the cutting up of important estates, the cutting of new roads, the handsome residences that had been built, the exclusivity of the suburb and its ‘chiefly large villa-mansions’ (*Birmingham Daily Mail*, 15 October, 1903).

‘Villadom’, though, was denounced by the editor of the 1899 *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal* as spoiling Moseley’s rural nature (*Birmingham Daily Mail*, 15 October, 1903).

Moseley Society

‘There is no reason whatever why policemen should not have sweethearts, indeed, as long as the force has been instituted, the members have rejoiced in the reputation of being the most amorous of mankind. No, there is no reason whatever why these gallant defenders of the peace should not court as many ladies of the kitchen as they please, but I wonder some of the Moseley domestics do not so their courting in a more quiet and orderly manner. It is anything but pleasant for the inhabitants of the other houses round about to see a white-capped head poked out of the window of an opposite house at all times in the day, and to hear the strains of an anything but refined or melodious voice floating through the air whenever a policeman passes underneath. This is, of course, not the policeman’s fault; I rather blame the girl’s mistress for allowing it, but still I think, if the stern guardian of the law so minded, he could put a stop to such disgraceful and idiotic nonsense’ (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley, Friday 17 July, 1891).

‘Is it true what I hear, that Moseley society is very exclusive? Someone was telling me the other day, that though they knew people well by sight and had met them at public balls etc, they had never been able to get an introduction to them’ (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley (by Mollie), Friday 21 August, 1891).

Heard at Moseley and Balsall Heath: ‘that most of the Moseley people have got so rich so suddenly they are afraid sociability will not be considered *comme il faut*’ (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley, Friday 3 January, 1893).

Birth, Marriage and Death

Victorian newspapers had birth, marriage and death columns and marriages, in particular, were a strong feature of the gossip column.

Birth notices featured a son born to George T. Piggott and his wife of Clydesdale, Park Hill, and a daughter born to Frank H. Westwood and his wife at Hanover House in Trafalgar Road on 1 February, 1892 (*Birmingham Daily Post*, Saturday 6 February, 1892).

Weddings were of great interest.

A popular wedding: Moseley was *enfete* this week on the auspicious occasion of a matrimonial celebration of great interest in the neighbourhood, and so great was the public desire to be present at the ceremony that it was deemed necessary to post bills in every direction bearing the legend:-

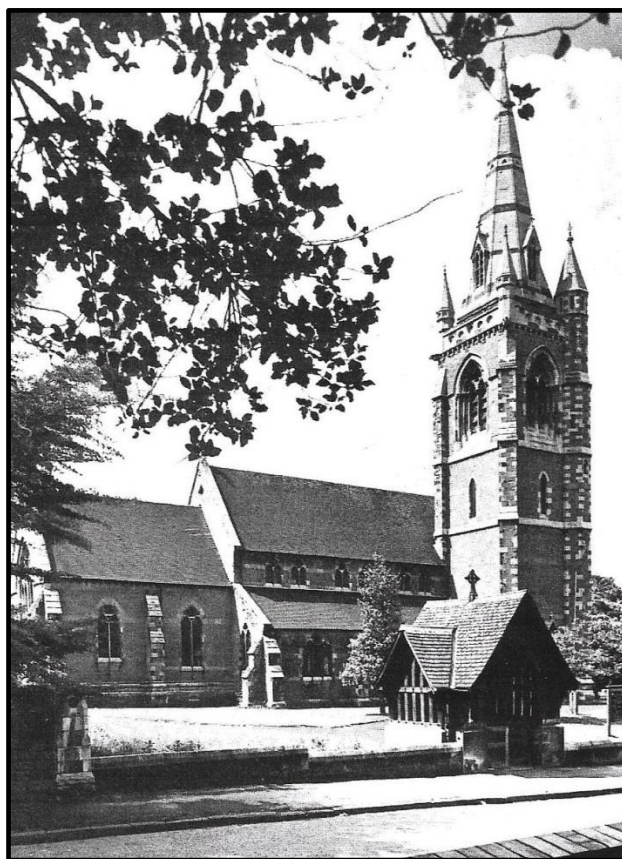
THIS WAY TO THE WEDDING

All passed off without a hitch, and it is understood that the festivities were not confined to Moseley; the numerous employees in town, connected with a well-known solicitor's firm indulged in unwonted festivities on this joyful occasion (*The Dart: The Midland Figaro*, Friday 1 May, 1885).

A wooden wedding anniversary: 'I have heard of golden and silver weddings, but until last week had not heard of a *wooden* wedding. No doubt my ignorance on this point is most lamentable, but I must confess I felt nonplussed when I was told that a well known and wealthy family in Moseley were having great doings on account of their wooden wedding. Pic-nics, dinner-parties etc., have been the order of the day. There is no doubt the Moseley gentry know how to enjoy themselves and never let an opportunity pass them by in so doing. I presume wooden weddings will now become the fashion! Well! Anything for a little stir and excitement' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley, Friday 17 July, 1891).

A quiet wedding: 'We Moseleyites feel both hurt and grieved in such a wretched season as this – the only bit of diversion we get is through weddings. Just when the blues are worse than ever, and we are dying for something to break the monotony of the steady deluge of rain, we hear, quite by accident, of a marriage we have been looking forward to for months having taken place very quietly at St Anne's, Moseley. No crowded church, no pretty dances, no grand display – so nothing- at least not that we know of. It is a great blow, and it will take us some time to recover from it' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley (by Mollie), Friday 4 September, 1891).

St Anne's Church, Park Hill



A Local Victorian Wedding (courtesy of the Owen family)



'The happy couple who kept their wedding so private, are Mr Frank Wakeman, of Park Hill, and his bride – Miss Edith Hughes – late of Deerpark, Oxford Road. They are spending their honeymoon, I believe, in wandering about picturesque Wales, and before finally settling down in their pretty home (somewhere in the neighbourhood of Park Hill) intend taking a trip over to Ireland, unless, indeed, their plans have undergone recent alterations' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley (by Mollie), Friday 4 September, 1891).

The Alabaster Wedding: In 1893, Miss Ellen Margaret Alabaster, who lived with her parents, Edward and Fanny, at 7 Park Road, married Rev E.J. Bishop of Park Road (Cadbury Research Library, C1/10/11, *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal*, 'District Jottings', No.10, March, 1893, p.7).

A Local Wedding, early twentieth century

(The parents of Mrs Alice Rushton (nee Young) who ran the Douro Wine Merchants on St Marys Row)



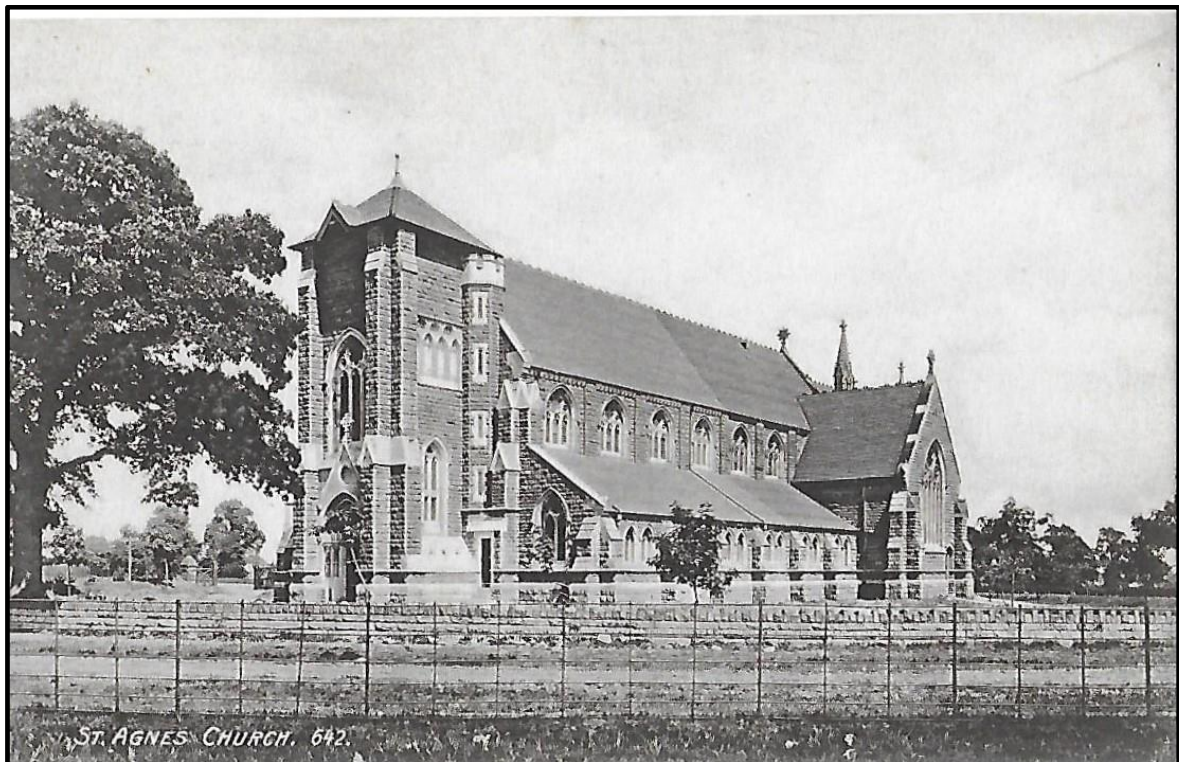
The wedding of Miss Kate Hookham to Mr Harry Mason at St Agnes' Church, 1891

(*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley, Friday 10 July, 1891).

'I was fortunate at Miss Hookham's wedding on Thursday, to get next to a nice, communicative loquacious little old lady who did her level best to tell me the names, pedigree, and relationship of everyone in the church. When her own knowledge failed her, she would turn to her next neighbour, or lean over a couple of pews to enquire off someone

else the exact information I required. It was of no use my politely begging her not to trouble herself, her exertions on my behalf were quite supernatural, and made myself, as well as the people roundabout, not a little uncomfortable. She grew excited once or twice, especially so when the interesting moment arrived when the bridegroom had to repeat the words after Mr Colmore, that made the lady at his side his wife. 'Doesn't he speak up well! Well, now I never *did* hear anyone speak up so well!' was the remark she kept repeating in my jaded ear.

St Agnes' Church, early twentieth century



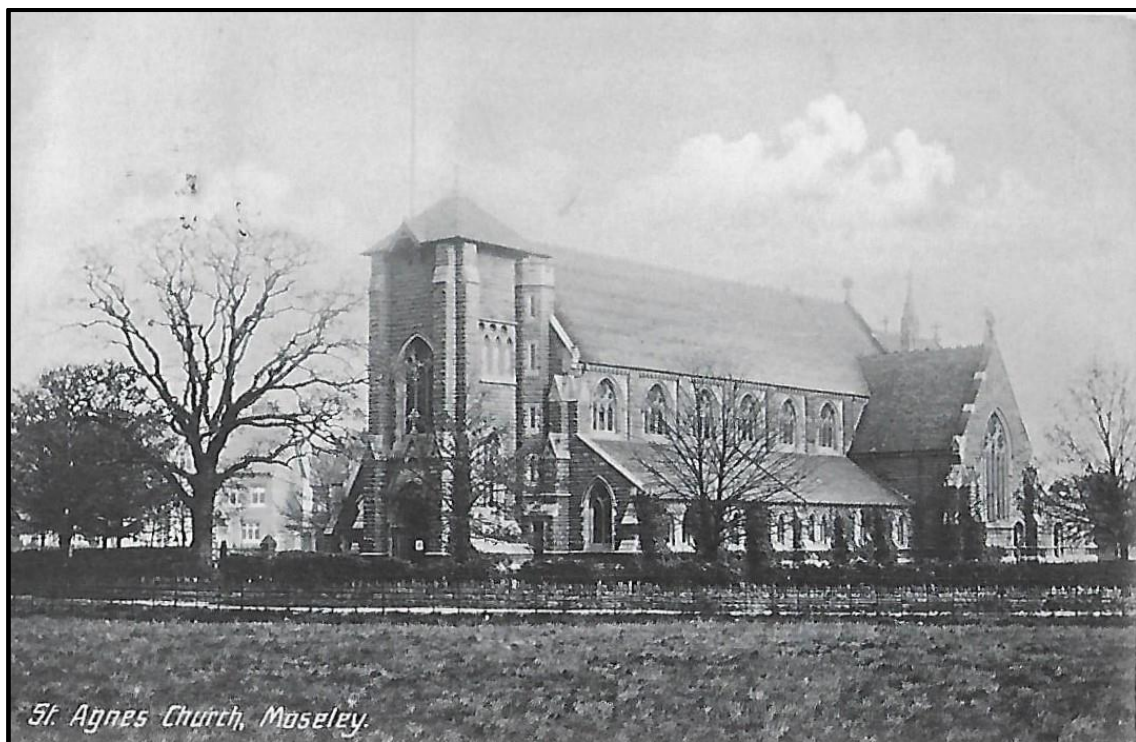
I should think the little church of St Agnes never looked brighter or prettier than at Miss Hookham's wedding. It was beautifully decorated and the brilliant costumes of some of the ladies present added not a little to the brightness of the scene. I think I have rarely seen so many pretty dresses gathered together in one place as I did on this occasion. They were all works of art, not one 'dowdy' costume being amongst them. Mrs Mason's dress of fawn and green brigade, trimmed with green silk (I believe) was exceedingly attractive, and in marked contrast, but equally as handsome, was Mrs Hookham's magnificent costume of rich black silk with jet trimmings. The five young bridesmaids looked very bewitching, and a murmur of admiration passed through the crowded church as the bride in her pure white robes, passed up the aisle, followed by her little maids.

Mr Green, the bridegroom's brother-in-law, seemed to have his hands full in his character of general manager and director. I thought he looked rather hot and tired, though he preserved a smiling face and a laughing word to the last. 'Now, madam,' I heard him say, in a tenderly persuasive voice: 'you must *please* move on one side, the ladies cannot possibly get by if you block up the way'. I marvelled that he was able to keep his temper at all under such trying circumstances. The disorder in the church was very great. No policeman was present to keep order. All and sundry were admitted, and the result was confusion and great difficulty in moving about.

I thought Miss Hookham seemed rather nervous during the ceremony, her replies not being audible where I sat. I cannot say the same of Mr Mason, or if he was nervous he did not show it. I thought he looked very radiant and very happy.

The happy couple, I believe, left for Scotland the same evening. It is to be hoped they will have fine weather during the honeymoon. On their return, I understand, they will live in Mayfield Road.'

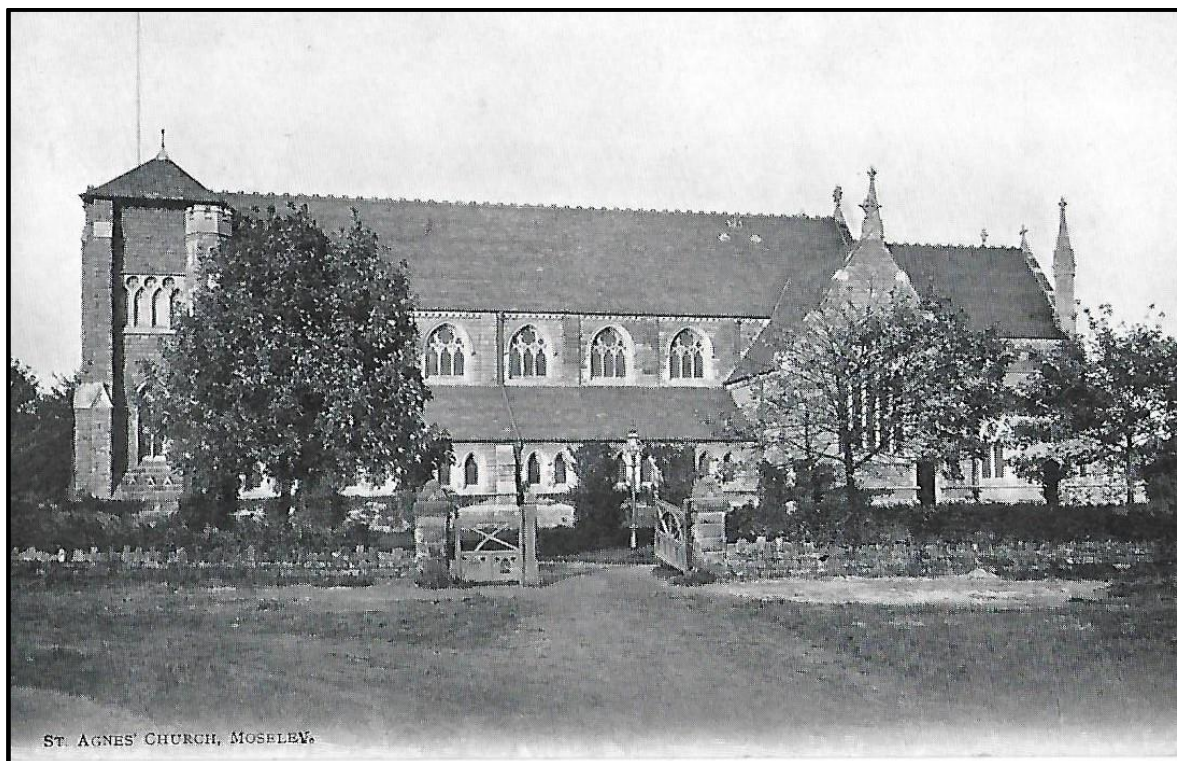
St Agnes' Church, early twentieth century



St. Agnes Church, Maseley.

'St Agnes' Church is undoubtedly fast becoming a most popular evening place of worship in Moseley. I do not wonder at this, for situated as it is in a pretty and sequestered part, with fine country approaches from every direction and being within walking distance of the village, no one could wish for a more quiet or peaceful spot for religious worship, or a prettier walk on a summer's evening. ... Only one thing! And it is a pretty chime of bells. I wonder the rich inhabitants of Moseley are not ashamed to sit Sunday after Sunday listening to the tinkling of one solitary little bell the sound of which closely resembles the tanging of tins when gathering in the bees' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley, Friday 3 July, 1891).

St Agnes' Church



First Houses: 'The fine air of suburb seems to be very conducive to matrimony, and Mayfield Road specially attractive to newly married couples; no less than four in the last two months have settled in adjacent houses, one old bachelor only intervening. What an atmosphere of bliss he must reside in! Enough I hope to make him think of bettering his solitary position' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Moseley Gossip (by Carlotta), Friday 7 August, 1891).

'Mayfield Road is not the only road in Moseley patronised by newly married couples. I think Kingswood Road may consider itself one of these popular and highly favoured districts. For some weeks past loads of furniture have been arriving at intervals before one of the prettiest little houses in the road (rejoicing in a 'sunny' name), and now the blinds are up disclosing very pretty curtains, and the neighbours are all vying each other who shall catch the first glimpse of the happy bride' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley (by Mollie), Friday 14 August, 1891).

Mayfield Road

(East side of Mayfield Road and north of Forest Road junction)

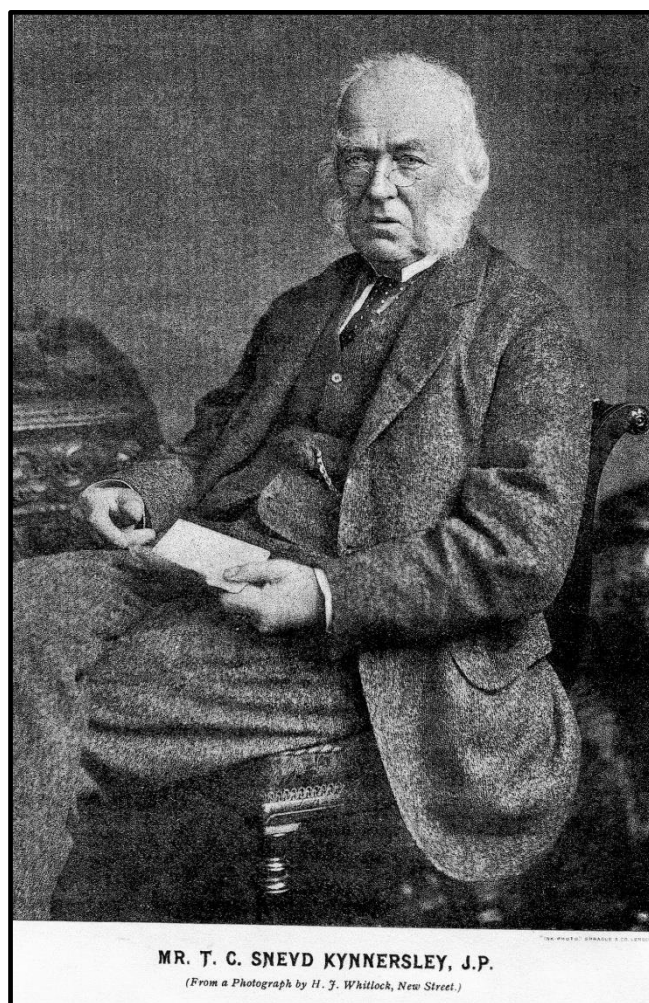


Funerals of important people were reported extensively in the press.

Edward Cooper, Joseph Chamberlain's gardener, was buried at St Mary's Church, Moseley, and his funeral was attended by Austen Chamberlain (Library of Birmingham Archive, JC6/7/1-173, *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal*, No.1, June, 1892, p.12).

The death of **T.C. Sneyd-Kynnersley** of Moor Green House, aged eighty-eight years, J.P., and Stipendiary Magistrate for Birmingham with an interest in reformatories, industrial schools and Prisoners' Aid Societies, was listed in the *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal* in 1892. This obituary gave the reason for his death (following an operation for strangulated hernia) and detailed his family, education, achievements, titles and interests. The report listed all the important mourners, including his servants, two of whom were bearers. The numbers of participants and the size of the audience indicated civic worth and important attendees revealed status (Library of Birmingham Archive, JC6/7/1-173, *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal*, No.1, June, 1892, pp.7 & 11).

Thomas Clement Sneyd-Kynnersley



Fundraising

Fundraising was an important part of suburban life that provided numerous opportunities for volunteerism.

On 4 February, 1893, Mr J.L. Holder of Pitmaston, Moseley, provided the flowers for the Annual Ball of the Birmingham Division of the First Worcestershire and Warwickshire Volunteer Artillery (Cadbury Research Library, C1/10/11, *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal*, 'District Jottings', No.10, March, 1893, p. 244).

Moseley Vicarage in 1893 raised money for the Indian Famine Fund (*Birmingham Daily Post*, Thursday 22 November, 1894).

There were Bazaars on 21, 22 and 23 November, 1894, when the 'ardent saleswomen' were named and received publicity (Library of Birmingham Archive, *The Moseley Society Journal*, 'Local Gossip' by 'Paul Pry, junr', Vol. I, No.10, November, 1894; *Birmingham Daily Post*, Thursday 22 November, 1894).

'Mrs J. Milton James and other ladies' held a Sale of Work in 1873 in Moseley (*Birmingham Daily Post*, 3 December, 1873).

The Parish Magazine tells of Sales of Work that took place in 1879, 1881 and 1885. In 1887 a meeting called on ladies to help run a large bazaar: '... we feared Moseley would have no bazaar'. Three committees were set up to manage the printing, decorating and amusements, but these involved only men whereas ladies met to plan stalls.

Stalls were named after holders' favourite flowers and goods included kittens, babies' shoes, antimacassars, dog biscuits and strawberries. The newspaper named ladies involved. (*Birmingham Daily Post*, 3 December, 1873; *Birmingham Daily Post*, Thursday 22 November, 1894).

On November 21, 22 and 23, 1894 a major Bazaar at the Moseley and Balsall Heath Institute was held in aid of St Mary's Church Funds and 'ardent saleswomen' were noted.¹ Miss Louise Thomas organised historic productions and the Bazaar was opened by Mrs Smith-Ryland. LBA, *The Moseley Society Journal*, 'Local Gossip' by 'Paul Pry, junr', Vol. I, No.10, November, 1894; *Birmingham Daily Post*, Thursday 22 November, 1894.

There was a 'Sale of Work' at Moseley on Thursday 14 and Friday 15 June, 1900, in a field at the corner of Oxford and School Roads opposite Moseley Vicarage in which, 'ever to the front in well-doing', the ladies of St Mary's and St Agnes' raised money for the Indian Famine Fund.² Ladies were also to the fore in collecting and giving additional subscriptions for the cabmen's hut in 1884.³

On November 21, 22 and 23, 1894 a major Bazaar at the Moseley and Balsall Heath Institute was held in aid of St Mary's Church Funds and 'ardent saleswomen' were noted. Miss Louise Thomas organised historic productions and the Bazaar was opened by Mrs Smith-Ryland (Library of Birmingham, *The Moseley Society Journal*, 'Local Gossip' by 'Paul Pry, junr', Vol. I, No.10, November, 1894; *Birmingham Daily Post*, Thursday 22 November, 1894).

¹ LBA, *The Moseley Society Journal*, 'Local Gossip' by 'Paul Pry, junr', Vol. I, No.10, November, 1894; *Birmingham Daily Post*, Thursday 22 November, 1894.

² LBA, MS 579/6 71aE, *Programmes and Posters*.

³ SMCA, Canon Colmore's Diary, pp.185, 225 & 269-70.

Leisure

Admission for the many female members of Moseley Football Club (Rugby), was free in 1879. In 1888 the grounds of Moseley Football Club were upgraded with a new covered stand free to all members, but 'ladies not members will be required to pay half a crown a season' (*The Reddings: The Home of Moseley Football Club (Rugby), A History 1880-2000*, pp.5-7; *The Dart*, 'Tittle Tattle' by Mollie', 30 October, 1891).

There were many female spectators who apparently enjoyed rugby football at the Reddings: 'Quite a large number of the fair sex graced the game with their presence, and judging by their unstinted applause when a fine bit of play came off, I should fancy they entered thoroughly into the spirit of the game' (*The Reddings: The Home of Moseley Football Club (Rugby), A History 1880-2000*, p.9). 'The ladies, as usual, made a brave show in spite of the keen wind' (*The Dart*, 'The Reddings', Friday 12 October, 1888.)

Numerous horticultural societies emerged, especially in the provinces, organised largely by the middle classes. *The Dart* reported on the annual Flower Show at St Mary's Church which raised money for the Children's Hospital (*The Dart*, 'Tittle-Tattle by Mollie', Sunday 5 July 1891).

Holidays: *The Dart* noted that 'Moseley is very quiet at present, nearly everyone of note are at the seaside. Mr Heath, of 'Armada', Wake Green Road, and family, have been recruiting their health at Llandudno for some time', the vicar of St Anne's went for 'a long rest and holiday on the continent' and 'Mr and Mrs Johnston are travelling on the continent and have reached Vienna' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Friday 7 August, 1891, p.13, Friday 14 August, 1891, p.5 & Friday 4 September, 1891, p.11). No record suggests an increase in crime during such absences.

Crime

An important ongoing attraction of Moseley was that it was considered generally crime-free and safe. There was a police presence, however, and a new Police Station and Court House was 'about to be erected' in 1891 'probably' on a site in Woodbridge Road (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Friday 17 July, 1891, p.5).

The prestigious homes of Moseley were tempting to criminals. 'A Daring Burglary' and 'Impudent Thefts' were reported in 1892 and 1895 when *The Mount*, a large detached villa in School Road, the home of **Mr Hookham**, was ransacked (*The Birmingham Daily Post*, Friday 22 April, 1892). An umbrella was taken from Mr Cook of Queenswood Road and a silver snuffbox from Mr W Stevens of School Road (*The Birmingham Daily Post*, Tuesday 19 February 1895). In 1895 the burglary was attended by Sergeant Hill and Constable Wainwright of the Moseley Police.

In 1889 Henry Beresford Moore of *The Firs*, Trafalgar Road, known as 'the Moseley Baronet' was sentenced for fraud. In 1892 local MP George Hastings was given five years for misappropriating Trust funds and a lady in Church Road was restrained in 1895 for throwing things into a neighbour's garden.

For a short period Moseley had its own fire brigade formed in 1897 and sited in premises erected 'near Mr Bullock's house' according to the *Moseley Society Journal*. The Fire Station had 'a fire escape, hose cart, a Toziers patent hand engine and several hundred feet of hose'. A local journal tells of a fire in 1897 at *Uffculme* caused by 'the fusion of wires conveying electric currents for the lighting of the house' and in 1898 a blaze in Woodbridge Road in the shop window of a Miss Lloyd, milliner and a house in Caroline Road where the servant girl who was reading by candlelight in bed went to sleep with the candle burning.

Education

Local sons went onto University: A.B. Bradford, for example, after attending 'a well-known Moseley private school' went on to King Edwards School and then achieved a double first at Oxford (*The Dart*, 'University Honours for a Moseley Gentleman', Friday 5 July, 1889).

Adoption

Many children's institutions, such as Barnardo's, as well as individuals and 'experts', were opposed to the adoption of illegitimate children. Unrelated couples did adopt, but the adoption was mostly kept secret. However, one well-known family in Moseley did not hide their adoption; a marriage announcement in the *Birmingham Daily Post* clearly stated that the bride, Mary F. Whitehouse (Pollie) was the adopted daughter of George Walker of Moseley'. She married George F. Heaven at St Agnes' Church on 29 April with Rev W.H. Colmore officiating (*Birmingham Daily Post*, 'Heaven - Waterhouse', Thursday 30 April, 1891).

Childcare

Many children were left in the care of nursemaids: 'If some of the Moseley married ladies knew in what danger their children often stood, I think they would be more careful with whom they sent the little things out. For instance, looking through the window one afternoon, I saw collected at the corner of the road no less than three nursemaids with perambulators, gossiping and laughing loudly with a policeman. One of these highly trustworthy young women was playfully balancing the perambulator, of which she had charge and in which were two babies, on the very edge of the kerbstone, not thinking of what she was doing I could plainly see, but intent upon 'mashing' the stern limb of the law. Suddenly, just as I expected, one of the little mites inside the perambulator leaned over on the one side, and in another second the babies would have both been pitched out on their heads, if the policeman himself had not – without commendable presence of mind – stopped the carriage with his foot' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley (by Mollie), Friday 31 July, 1891).

Servants

Servants' wages were poor so girls were constantly changing position, rarely spending more than a year in one home.

The language of newspaper adverts shows that attracting servants was difficult. Terms used included 'small family', 'family of four', 'family of three', 'girl kept', 'nurse kept', 'plain cooking' and 'good wages', although one stated boldly that 'only steady girls who know their work need apply'. The adverts stated:

'General servant (experienced) wanted immediately for a small family, nurse kept, good wages, Ivythorpe, Ascot Road, Moseley';

'Woman (25-30) wanted to do plain cooking, family of 3, young girl kept, The Hawthorns, Ascot Road. Apply after 6 p.m.';

'General servant (good) wanted, four in family, part washing, Gordon house, Church Road, Moseley';

The Hawthorns, 6, Ascot Road, cook and housemaid, 'only steady girls who know their work need apply, family of 4, wages £18 and £14'.

(*Birmingham Daily Post*, Wednesday 14 May, 1884, Monday 3 February, 1890 & Wednesday 1 November, 1893.

Maycroft in Ascot Road, was again looking for a general servant in 1895. The advert stated 'General servant wanted, about 16 years, must wash, 2 in the family, Maycroft, Ascot Road by Moseley Station' (*Birmingham Daily Post*, Monday 8 April, 1895).

Civic Involvement

Roles undertaken in politics and civic endeavour received wide publicity.

Several Moseley men sat on the Kings Norton School Board, including, from 1877, Rev. William H. Colmore who was its chairman in 1895 (Cadbury Research Library, JC6/7/1-173, *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal*, No.1, June, 1892, p.7 & C1/10/11, *Moseley and Kings Heath Journal*, No.10, March, 1893, p.268).

Edward Holmes, an architect, was a member of the Kings Norton Board of Surveyors and chairman for a period, when 'he filled the important capacity of chairman with an impartiality and success which is truly. He took great interest in labour disputes, especially those connected with the building trades, acting often as a very successful arbitrator. He was instrumental in the widening of Woodbridge Road and improvements to Moseley Station' (*The Moseley Society Journal*, Vol. I, No.10, November, 1894).

Gas

Gas was laid early in the second half of the nineteenth century, but there was no street lighting. William Dyke Wilkinson led the 'Anti-gas' Party successfully against having a gas works built at Kings Heath. The 'very respectable old gentlemen who composed the Rural Sanitary Authority' were against street lighting. They feared it 'would completely destroy the beautiful rusticity of the dear old village' and argued that 'The village had been light

enough for us and our fathers before these stuck-up Brumagem folk came'. Moseley at this time had not a single lamp in any road' when the village was showing signs that it 'would before long become a populous suburb' (Library of Birmingham Archive, MS 579/6 71aE, *Newspaper Cuttings*).

'A gentleman, well known at Moseley, met with a severe accident on Monday, through seeking for an escape of gas with a lighted match' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley, Friday 17 July, 1891).

Entertainment in Moseley

The Moseley middle class involved themselves enthusiastically in a wide range of events.

'It is true of many amateur performances that the plays are neither well selected nor well played, and that the audience attend either from a sense of duty or for the purpose of seeing some of their friends. This holds good, to a certain extent, on the present occasion [the first performance of the season at the Moseley and Balsall Heath Amateurs at the Board Schools, Clifton Road (The Institute)]; for the play of 'Heroes' is of a very wishy-washy description; but for the acting we have nothing but praise' (*The Owl* (Birmingham), Friday 15 December, 1882)

'A large and fashionable audience assembled on Friday evening at the National Schools, Moseley to hear two pieces, written by our clever townsman, Mr Edgar Pemberton, performed by the local company of amateurs, assisted by friends from Edgbaston' (*The Dart: The Midland Figaro*, Friday 16 January, 1885).

'The Programme of the 1885-6 session of the Moseley and Kings Heath Institute is before me and a very good one it is...and is certain to afford delight and edification to the suburban swells' (*The Owl* (Birmingham), Friday 9 October 1885).

The Moseley and Balsall Heath Institute:

'A Temperance Demonstration, on a large scale, will take place in the grounds of Moseley Hall, on Bank Holiday, under the auspices of the Birmingham Temperance Mission. The affair will be held under the patronage of His Worship the mayor (Alderman Barrow) and every exertion is being put forth to make it a gigantic success' (*The Dart: The Midland Figaro* (Birmingham), Friday 2 August, 1889).

The lectures advertised are all on excellent and well known topics, one given in January, I see, being on that much written and lectured upon subject, 'Marriage'. I intend to patronise this lecture, if possible, for I am anxious to hear what more can be said upon a topic already done to death (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley (by Mollie), Friday 4 September, 1891).

Moseley Girls

'I was not a little amused the other day at a conversation I overheard between two swell young Moseley ladies (nameless, of course). Said the first young lady-

'Were you with me when I bought my fawn dress at R-?'

'No! Why?'

'Well! I met the man who served me with it in New Street yesterday, and he *actually had the impudence to take off his hat to me*. Fancy being acknowledged in New Street by a counter-skipper! I thought I should have fainted'. (Friend unable to answer for some seconds through horrified amazement)' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley, Friday 3 July, 1891).

They say in town, the Moseley girls are best
Are far away the best,
Eclipsing unmistakably
Those girls out further West.

(*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Friday 10 July, 1891)

Overheard in New Street on Saturday morning-

Edgbaston swell to Moseley ditto- 'I say, Jones, have you seen this week's *Dart*?

M.S.- 'No, why?'

E.S.- 'There's a lot about the Moseley ladies in it' (Rest of the conversation lost to the world)

(*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley, Friday 26 June, 1891).

Strange light in the Sky – An April Fool Prank?

'A gentleman signing his initials A.W., has been writing to the papers about a 'wonderful phenomenon' which has been seen by several persons in Moseley one night last week. The phenomenon was that of a beautiful band of light, its appearance like the tail of some huge comet, but arched like a rainbow, and extending from the moon to the eastern horizon. The gentleman who assisted at the seeing of the phenomenon, expresses surprise that none of the papers have mentioned it, and asks if anyone can account for the apparition' (*The Owl* (Birmingham), Thursday 2 April, 1885).

A Bear in Moseley

'The presence of a strange looking man and a still stranger looking bear, has caused a great deal of excitement in the neighbourhood of Woodstock Road lately. Roadfulls of children have been nearly wild with excitement and pleasurable fear, and even grown up children seemed amused at the antics of the bear' (*The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, Tittle-Tattle from Moseley (by Mollie), Friday 4 September, 1891).

Janet Berry