

## *The lion who came to tea.*

The house history of 169 Alcester Road, Moseley



**No. 169 Alcester Road, Moseley is now the site of Guthrie and Ghani, a  
haberdashery and fabric store**



**A lion cub at the Carnegie  
Boy's Club,  
169 Alcester Road**

The new owners, Lauren and Ayaz Ghani, of 169 Alcester Road, Moseley received a visitor recently who had lived in a flat there and remembered the visit of a lion cub. Several photographs from an album were produced as proof. Although the date of the visit is not known exactly, it is quite probable that it occurred around the time there was a Pets Corner at the Bull Ring Shopping Centre, part of a toy fair and children's grotto in the Centre Court Christmas Exhibition from the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1970. The animals were from the Marquess of Bath's Safari Park at Longleat.<sup>i</sup> Fortunately, there were no children there who were called Albert! (Apologies to the poet Marriott Edgar)



**Leo the lion, on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 1970, became the most unusual visitor ever to pad along the floors of Birmingham Children's Hospital. Since the children could not go to see Leo who is at the Pets' Corner at Birmingham Bull Ring Centre this week, the young cub was taken to the wards to see the children. A hospital spokesman said: the children were not told that Leo was coming, so when the cub arrived the children were really excited and not one of them was afraid. It was the most docile animal I have ever seen."**

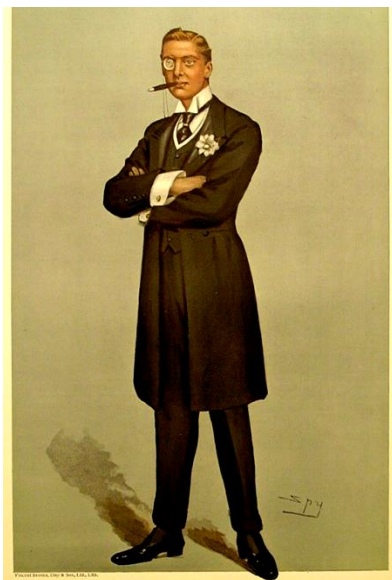
*Birmingham Daily Post, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1970*

The building has an interesting history. It was originally built as a working men's social club in order to allow them to spend evenings away from their homes in 'wholesome and healthy recreation'. The new building was to contain reading, chess, billiard and bagatelle rooms in addition to the usual offices. It was to cost around £700. If there was sufficient money and the committee allowed, it was hoped that a bowling green would be laid at the rear.



**Emma, Richard Cadbury's  
second wife**

On 4<sup>th</sup> October 1897, William Francis Taylor signed over the lease of the land on which the clubhouse was to be built and three months later, Mrs Richard Cadbury laid the foundation stone of the new buildings.<sup>ii</sup> After the ceremony, Mr Brewin Holmes, the architect, presented Mrs Cadbury with a silver trowel. In laying the stone she expressed the pleasure she had in accepting the invitation to lay the foundation stone especially as she understood that the club was to be run on temperance lines. Mr Frederick Henry Bell who presided at the ceremony, thanked those present for their generosity and said that the commencement of the buildings was made possible by the promise of Mr Cadbury to give £100, conditionally upon £500 being raised.<sup>iii</sup>



**A caricature of Mr Austen  
Chamberlain in 1899**

The new clubhouse and reading room was formally opened eight months later on Saturday afternoon 18<sup>th</sup> June 1898 by Mr Austen Chamberlain, M.P. The opening was the fruition of a thirteen year search to find and secure satisfactory quarters for the club. Through the efforts of a number of influential gentlemen, a building committee was formed and subscriptions of £840 were collected or promised. The building cost £670 and was clear of debt but for furnishing and landscaping the grounds a further £100 was required. Mr Austen Chamberlain in his speech acknowledging the pleasure it gave him to take part in the proceedings, said:



He was interested because of the representative position which he held in the district, and because he was so close a neighbour and all that concerned what they still liked to call "the village" interested and concerned him.<sup>iv</sup> The present was a great day in the history of the club, which had a somewhat chequered career. It was started in 1885 and flourished for one season, but by the end of 1886, or early 1887, the club had fallen upon evil days, and almost ceased to exist. He was credibly informed that about two years after that period it had no home and no visible means of subsistence. (Laughter) He believed that a meeting was really held to wind it up, and a coroner's jury of members sat upon its corpse to declare it dead, so that it might be buried and put out of sight, when the body showed unexpected and unmistakable signs of life and revived. (Laughter). It had now risen again into prosperity, such prosperity that he thought its first members hardly hoped for, and found its home in the comfortable clubhouse in which they were.<sup>v</sup>

The club was open to all people of Moseley over the age of eighteen.<sup>vi</sup> There was no distinction of sect or creed and it was entirely non-political. The subscription was only 5s a year or 6p a month if members preferred. The new membership numbered a hundred and it was hoped that this would increase and enable the club to pay its way independent of outside means.

**KING'S HEATH SPORTS CLUB.**  
An interesting statement of affairs was disclosed at the annual meeting of the King's Heath Cricket and Football Club which was held on Monday night last. Eighteen months ago the club secured premises in the Alcester-road (which formerly belonged to the Moseley Working Men's Club), and which has been a great success, these headquarters forming a social centre and also providing a source of profit as well. Mr. Lawrence C. Tipper presided on Monday evening, and the balance-sheet proved very satisfactory, showing that after parties and the provision of billiard tables had been provided for there was a balance in hand of £30. A new ground has been acquired by the club for outdoor sports at Billesley Common, adjoining the Stadium of the Tramways Committee. Mr. Robert Hull was elected president for the year, and the vice-presidents appointed were Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Sir John Holder, Bart., Mr. H. C. Holder, Mr. L. C. Tipper, Mr. C. Purser, Mr. W. Bateman, Councillor G. Ward, Mr. T. Timmins, and Mr. J. Satchwell. Mr. J. A. Moore was appointed treasurer, Mr. Paton hon. secretary, and Mr. Thomas Collins assistant secretary. Mrs. Hull (wife of the president) has arranged theatrical entertainments in aid of the funds of the club, commencing on 21 April.

**Kings Heath Sports Club acquires Moseley Working Men's Social Club**

However, by the summer of 1912, the club was in difficulties. The Tindall Street Old Boys Association had been in negotiations with the Moseley Working Men's Social Club to rent one of the large rooms for the purpose of a billiard room and to arrange the purchase of a billiard table, as they were desirous of 'strengthening the social influence of and usefulness of the association by forming a club where members may meet for recreational purposes.' To the association's disappointment, negotiations were broken off due to the club's financial difficulties.<sup>vii</sup>

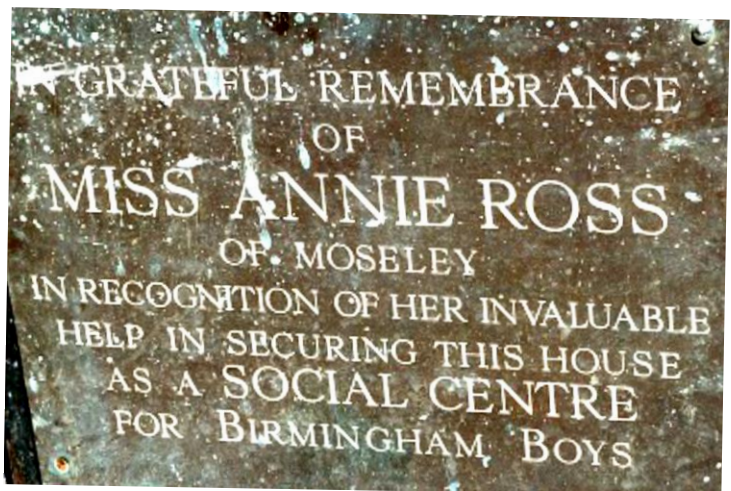
In the summer of 1912, the King's Heath Cricket and Football Club secured 169, Alcester Road as their headquarters. The sports club was also able to provide billiard tables and acquire a new sports ground at

Billesley Common, adjoining the stadium of the Tramways Committee. Mr Robert Hull was elected president for the year and Mr Austen Chamberlain, who had originally opened the new clubhouse in 1898, was elected vice-president along with Sir John Holder, Bart, Mr H.C. Holder, and six other gentlemen.<sup>viii</sup>

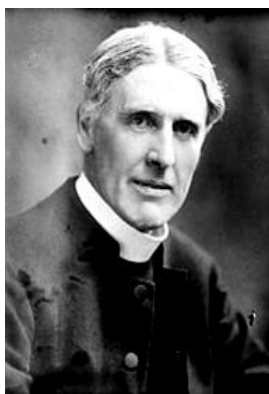
In 1927 King's Heath Cricket and Football Club became a limited company with 500 members each liable to £2 in the event of winding up with its registered office at 169 Alcester Road, Moseley.<sup>ix</sup>



In October 1934, the building became the eleventh and final Carnegie Club in the city and also its headquarters.<sup>x</sup>



A plaque on the outside of the building pays tribute and remembrance to Miss Annie Ross. Annie was the daughter of William Ross, a builder and owner of Springfield College, Moseley. Annie bequeathed money that enabled the purchase of the building for a social centre for Birmingham boys and when she died in 1936 the plaque was placed on the house in recognition of her generosity.



The Carnegie Clubs were established by Mr Arthur George Asman inspired by the work of Reverend William Hartley Carnegie, Rector of St Phillip and later honorary Canon.<sup>xi</sup> Through the actions of Joseph Chamberlain and the Bishop of Worcester, St Philip's became a Cathedral in 1905. It is interesting to note that in 1916 William Carnegie married Mary Endicott the widow and third wife of Joseph Chamberlain.

Arthur George Asman, born in 1887 , was the son of George Asman, a pawnbroker from Aston. The need for people to secure loans against personal property in a poor part of Birmingham was to influence his future life, together with the work of William Hartley Carnegie during his tenure at St Phillip's from 1903 to 1912. The Reverend Carnegie's work with the Street Children's Union led to the establishment of the Carnegie United Trust Fund. The outbreak of war in 1914 and eventually conscription in 1916, made for a difficult choice for Arthur and his Christian beliefs. Rather than become a conscientious objector, he joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Southern Company No 787, a non-combatant company at Cosham, Essex.

The British Army, which had no precedents or guidelines for conscription, formed the corps to provide a military unit for a category of conscientious objectors who had been conscripted but were prepared to accept only non-combatant duties, which was guaranteed in the case of the NCC. It was commanded by regular army officers and NCOs, and its members wore army uniform and were subject to army discipline, but did not carry weapons or participate in battle Their duties were mainly to provide physical labour (building, cleaning, loading and unloading anything except munitions)

After the war, instead of returning to his job as clerk to an Indian tea merchant, Arthur established the first of the Carnegie Clubs in Floodgate Street and Rea Street in 1921. The clubs were initially set up to give deprived children in the poorest parts of the city somewhere to go for recreation. This proved so successful that other clubs became established particularly when large housing estates were built in the suburbs. They contained junior, intermediate and senior sections and offered indoor and outdoor sports, drama, woodwork and photography classes and in more recent times the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.<sup>xii</sup> In 1936 the extension of the Carnegie Clubhouse at 169, Alcester Road, was completed providing improved facilities.<sup>xiii</sup>





**ASMAN.**—Arthur George, aged 72, died suddenly on February 10 at his home at "Carnegie House," 169, Alcester Road, Moseley. He devoted his life to the welfare of boys. Funeral service at St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's Row, Moseley, at 1.15 p.m., Monday, February 16, and cremation at Perry Barr at 2 p.m. Flowers to Hodgson & Sons, 120, Hockley Hill, Birmingham 18, before 12 noon.



On 10<sup>th</sup> February 1959, Arthur died at 'Carnegie House'. His funeral was held at St Mary's Church, Moseley.

The work of running the club was taken over by Norman King, a Birmingham Education Welfare Officer. Mr King joined the club in 1948 when he was fourteen years old before becoming an assistant leader at the age of nineteen in 1953. The centre continued to flourish under the leadership of Mr King who used to organise five-a-side football, table tennis, snooker, pool and darts for 11 to 18-year-olds at the club.

On 27<sup>th</sup> October 1961, the Boys Club was visited by the Duke of Gloucester as President of the National Association of Boy's Clubs (see left).<sup>xiv</sup>

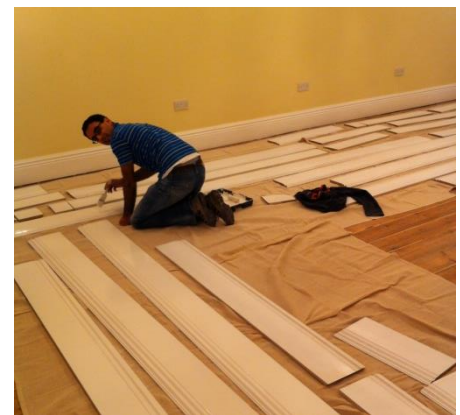
At its height the group had almost 40 boys meeting there for five evenings a week. When less than ten boys started turning up, Mr King decided it had to close.

The club eventually closed in 2006. Mr Norman King was then 72 years of age and had worked with the club for 58 years. He put this down to youngsters preferring computer games which the club did not offer. He said that:

I am feeling very, very sad about this and it is such a shame. I think, these days, young boys want to spend time on computers. They have other interests so they've moved on. When I first got involved the boys used to go camping. Later on they played table tennis, snooker, pool and football. I still meet former members and they remember me. I have even come across some who are grandfathers and who are 58 and 59. All that activity at the club helped to keep me fit and at my age, that really helps. It is a very sad time for the Boys' Clubs.<sup>xv</sup>

In 2006 the building was bought by Ayaz Ghani and in 2011 he was joined by Lauren Guthrie. Together they set about the painstaking task of restoring the building to its former glory completing the restoration two years later at the opening of their shop 'Guthrie and Ghani'.







The Moseley Society Local History Group newsletter in May 2013 reported the opening of Guthrie and Ghani, a new haberdashery and fabric shop on 27<sup>th</sup> April.



THE MOSELEY SOCIETY

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May 2013

### LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

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**This month we are reporting on the refurbishment of a historic Moseley building**

### Guthrie and Ghani Grand Opening 27/4/13

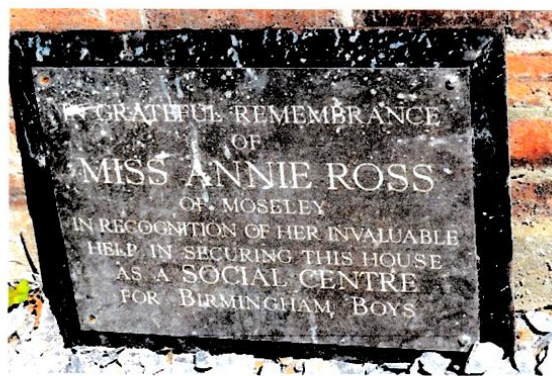
By Christine Mann



Welcome to a brand new business in Moseley and congratulations on the refurbishment of a notable local building. Guthrie and Ghani is a new haberdashery, fabric and yarn shop, based in 169 Alcester Road, in what was a social club for boys for most of the 20th century and had been rather neglected since its closure, but not anymore. The rooms are light and open, with a shop downstairs and workshops on the first floor. Do have a look at the website, where you can find links to view the renovations - [www.guthrie-ghani.co.uk](http://www.guthrie-ghani.co.uk).

The inscription at the front of the building records Mrs Richard Cadbury laying the foundation stone in 1898. Lauren's research reveals that the Cadburys were leasing the land from the Taylors. However, a large plaque above a door inside the building is more mysterious. **If anyone knows anything about 'Miss Annie Ross of Moseley', we'd love to find out about her.**

Lauren and Ayaz have worked long and hard for this day and we wish them every success - if the crowds queuing to get in on opening day are anything to go by, then they are well on their way.



Photos of Guthrie and Ghani by Christine Mann

**Researched and written by Edwina Rees. Moseley Society History Group.**

We would love to hear from the visitor to Guthrie and Ghani who brought in the photograph album containing the Marquess of Bath's lion cub visit. Our email contact details are:

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## Endnotes

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- i *Birmingham Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1970
  
  - ii Deeds to 169 Alcester Road, Moseley  
Portrait of Emma Cadbury, second wife of Richard Cadbury  
*Richard Cadbury and Birmingham* by Dixon, Helen Cadbury Alexander, published by Hodder and Stoughton, London in 1906, p 206
  
  - iii *Birmingham Daily Post*, 2<sup>4th</sup> January 1898  
*Birmingham Mail*, 24<sup>th</sup> January 1898
  
  - iv At the time of his speech Austen Chamberlain lived at Highbury, Moor Green, Moseley. Richard Cadbury lived at Moseley Hall from 1883 until 1890. He donated £30,000 to the Birmingham Midland Sanatorium Committee to buy the hall and 20 acres for the purpose of a children's convalescent home. Shortly before Christmas 1891 he moved to Uffcolme, Moor Green where he lived until his death in 1896.  
*Richard Cadbury and Birmingham* by Dixon, Helen Cadbury Alexander. Published by Hodder and Stoughton, London in 1906, pp.213 -230 and 244-262
  
  - v *Birmingham Daily Post*, 20<sup>th</sup> June 1898  
*Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 20<sup>th</sup> June 1898  
*Birmingham Daily Post*, 20<sup>th</sup> June 1898  
Chamberlain caricatured by Spy for *Vanity Fair*, 1899
  
  - vi 'People' refers to working men only
  
  - vii *Birmingham Daily Mail*, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1912
  
  - viii *Evening Despatch*, Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 1914



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- ix *Birmingham Daily Post* ,Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1927  
Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester image at Pinrest  
<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/311100286731571058/>
- x *Birmingham Daily Gazette* - Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1934  
*Western Mail*, Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 1936  
Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Hartley\\_Carnegie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Hartley_Carnegie)
- xi William Carnegie became Rector of St Margaret's, Westminster in 1912, Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons in 1916, and Sub-Dean of Westminster Abbey in 1919. He was also Archdeacon of Westminster between 1918 and 1919. He held the three posts until his death on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1936. Canon Carnegie's first wife died in 1902. He remarried in 1916, the widow and third wife of Sir Joseph Chamberlain, Mary Endicott.
- xii *Evening Despatch*, Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October 1933
- xiii *Evening Despatch*, Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 1936
- xiv *Birmingham Daily Post* , Saturday 28 October 1961
- xv *Birmingham Mail*  
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