



Balsall Heath Local History Society

THE GAZETTE

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New Partnership Gives Hope to City Farm

St Paul's Community Development Trust are happy to announce that following lengthy discussions with a number of organisations agreement has been reached with The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWs) that will secure the long term viability of the Balsall Heath City Farm.

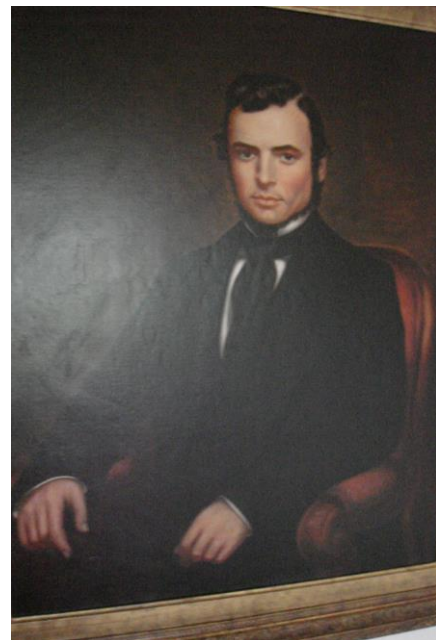
Threatened with closure since December 2018 St Paul's have been working with a number of organisations to try to secure the long-term viability of the City Farm. Now agreement has been reached with TAWs which means that the farm which has operated in Balsall Heath for over 40 years will remain open.



The Active Wellbeing Chief Executive Karen Creavin said "The City Farm is a vital space for children and families in Birmingham. We are really pleased to be able to work collaboratively with St Pauls to ensure that this project has a future and can contribute to the increased wellbeing of our citizens. We are working with Sport England and Birmingham City Council on an initiative called Active Communities. The city farm, and the ongoing partnership with St Pauls, will both be a key element of how Active Communities comes to life in this part of the city". The Active Wellbeing Society are working together with The Real Junk Food Project to bring a

community kitchen to the Farm, offering meals on a Pay as you Feel able basis. The kitchen will be up and running in time for the summer holidays and will play a vital role tackling food poverty over the summer.

The Portrait of John Gossage.



This was the focus of an enquiry we had received, which was featured in the last issue of the Gazette. One of our members has come up with some useful clues. There was a Birmingham Government School of Design from 1843, part of a national initiative to improve quality in design and encouragement of art education. So watch this space in case it's possible to track down some more information.

The Orange Tree Tavern

Many people may have noticed the name "Orange Terrace" on houses on the Moseley Road near the Highgate traffic lights. The name is a memory of the old Orange Tree Tavern which stood on the opposite side of the road.

It was originally built in 1781 as a family residence but by 1796 had already become a tavern. Advertised for auction in 1802 it had a "large garden & cherry orchard, planted with rich fruit trees, and a pump constantly supplied with fine spring water."



Lost Children

The Heritage Lottery Project is going well and we are currently collating detailed case studies. It comes as quite a shock, sitting in the Archives, to come across references to some of the families living in Balsall Heath. For example, the Medlicott family were living in Tindal St with their 3 children in 1871. By 1877 they were struggling with poverty, had 7 children and had moved to a back to back house in Highgate St. Their oldest son Charles was taken into the Emigration Homes that year at age 11 and shipped off to Canada the following year.

Worse was to follow. The mother, Amelia, was taken into hospital in 1881 and at that time two more sons, William and Thomas, were also taken into the homes in February and shipped to Canada in June. It is only recently that a contact has been made between the descendants on either side of the Atlantic.

There were others, too. The Toft children from Balsall Heath Rd, the Hollands from Birchwood

Road, the Browns from Bewdley Terrace, off Oldfield Rd.

The saddest aspect of all this is that so many families were split apart and many never met again. We have found various letters from children in Canada asking for news and information about their families. The Middlemore Homes always replied but were often not able to help, or unwilling to provide uncomfortable information.

It is thrilling that so many people have contacted us to tell us what they know about lost relatives. Thank you! We are starting to work on the exhibition for September. New volunteers to help with exhibition planning, admin and design are still needed.

Next meeting.

Thursday May 30th

The speakers will be Corinne Brazier and Steve Rice on Women in Policing.

7 p.m for a 7.30 start.

St Paul's Venture, Hertford St.

Visitors and new members always welcome.