Co-Chairman Helen Minovi welcomed all to the meeting. There were 35 members present.

1. **APOLOGIES** had been received from Sally Wright, Claire Spencer, Jean Gilkison, Michael Potter, Joyce Elliott, Anna Williams, David & Cass Whittingham, Rob Brown, Mike and Janet Berry, Ray Cocks, Monica and Peter Ricketts, Ellie Gabbay, Lynne Jones, Veronica Bradney, Geoff Williams, Liesel & Malcolm Rosindale and Eric Adams.

2. **MINUTES** of the last AGM held on 19th May 2011 and of the Special General Meeting held on 15th September 2011.

   The Secretary said that the Minutes had been emailed to all members with email addresses known to the Society. As advertised in the Newsletter, they had also been available for inspection from the website, at Domestica and the Community Development Trust, or could be sent to any individual member on request. The Minutes were taken as read and agreed on a motion put by Geoff Rees and seconded by Michael Marlow.

3. **PRESENTATION OF THE REPORTS.**

   The Annual Review containing reports of the different aspects of the Society's work had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Introducing the reports, the Chairman first asked members of the Committee who were present to introduce themselves. She said that the reports illustrated how active the Society’s committee had been and that there was a great deal to be pleased about – not smug or complacent but satisfied about what had been achieved.

   The Chairman invited questions. Anne Henderson asked if any light could be thrown on developments at the former Wake Green Lodge Hotel, now called Arif’s Palace. John Dring replied that a great deal of light was being emitted from the tree lights and floodlights surrounding the building as they are kept on all night every night. He said that the Society had been pressing for action to be taken by the planning department since November 2011, and that the issues of concern were the conversion of the hotel to a restaurant, building works and extensions carried out without planning permission, the use of the rear garden as a sheesha lounge with the whole area being covered by concrete arches and temporary roofing, music being played in the rear garden and the very bright lighting. He said that a planning enforcement officer had been refused entry by the owners and that he is therefore seeking a legal warrant. Meanwhile the Society has asked for the investigations to be widened to include licensing matters as the current licence does not include music or for non-residents to be served. John said that the initial response from the planning enforcement officer was that the lighting was not a planning issue but one for the environmental health section of Regulatory Services. Anne Henderson said that there is very little on-site parking so that parking in surrounding side streets is a major issue. John agreed that there were many aspects about which the council needed to act. Connie Perris said that the establishment had received very critical on-line reviews for its service.

   Sean Wheatley asked a question about the section in the planning report about the cumulative impact of house extensions, loss of trees and buildings in back gardens on the character of Moseley. He said that there are three houses adjacent to his in Merton Road...
where such alterations have taken place in the last year. He is particularly concerned about a building going up in a back garden which the planners say does not break regulations, and in another instance permission was given for major changes to a property and yet only three households were notified of the application by the planning department.

John Dring said that such issues had been a major source of concern to the Society for a number of years, but it is possible for residents to exercise permitted development rights and fill up to half of their back gardens with single storey buildings up to 2.8m high, provided they are at least 2m from boundaries. John said that legislative changes three years ago had reduced the power of local authorities to prevent such building – although the use of buildings in back gardens had to be ancillary to the dwelling house and could not be used as separate living accommodation. He said that the Society and also some residents’ associations, particularly the Russell Road association, had pressed the City Council and our MP for action on this issue, but it can only be resolved through changes to primary legislation.

Sean Wheatley drew attention to the hard surfacing of an entire garden, the removal of trees and erection of a wall built with yellow bricks that are out of character with the area at 72 Anderton Park Road, on the corner with Sandford Road. John Dring said that this had also been taken up with the planning enforcement team, but the only action that could be taken was to have the height of the brick piers reduced slightly.

John Dring said that the Supplementary Planning Document that is in preparation for Moseley and that is the first community-led plan of this type in the city, does include sections that are designed to protect and improve the heritage and character of the area.

There were no further questions and the Chairman closed discussion of the reports by thanking John Dring in particular, and saying how glad we all were that we had someone with his knowledge and experience willing to help the Society.

4. **TREASURER’S REPORT AND ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS.**

Presenting his report, the Treasurer Mike Marlow said that while we should never be complacent, the balances were healthy. He said that the restricted fund for the local history group represented a number of generous donations which had enabled many photographs to be scanned into a digital archive.

Pointing to the income from subscriptions, he thanked all those who had been able to add Gift Aid as this makes a significant contribution to the accounts.

Explaining that after three years in the role he was retiring as Treasurer, Mike said he wished to thank Joyce Elliott in particular for her inestimable help, and for continuing to prepare the accounts.

There were no questions about the accounts and the Chairman expressed thanks from everyone to Mike for his sterling work and the tight control he had exercised over the Society’s purse strings. She said that she was very glad that Mike was willing to remain as a member of the committee.

The accounts which were adopted on a motion put by Michael Hell, seconded by George Macleod and supported unanimously.

5. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE.**

The Chairman told the meeting that Anna Williams had offered to take on the role of Treasurer, an offer that had been gratefully received. The Chairman confirmed that all other committee members were prepared to continue in their roles.
With a proposal put by Esther Boyd, and seconded by Mary Stopes-Roe, the officers and committee were then elected unanimously.

The 2012/13 committee is
Helen Minovi and Geoff Rees [Co-Chairmen]
Anna Williams [Treasurer]
Fiona Adams [Secretary]
Roy Cockel
John Dring
Jean Gilkison
Paul Lindley
Mike Marlow
Robert Orme
Michael Potter
John Rouse
Claire Spencer
Rosemary Turner
John Underwood
Sally Wright

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

1. Fiona Adams said that shortly before the meeting she had received a request from a researcher for a BBC2 drama production who is particularly interested in speaking to people who grew up in Birmingham between 1920 and 1940 and who worked in horse racing, particularly in betting or on the race tracks. She had already been able to put him in touch with one member whose family could help, but would be glad to hear of any others.

2. Mary Stopes-Roe asked about the protracted building work at 48 St Mary’s Row, which was creating such an eye-sore in the shopping centre. Committee members explained that planning permission had been granted, and people living in the immediate area, with the support of Ward Councillors, had been pressing for action to be taken, at least to have the site tidied up. Unfortunately the owner reappears to do a small amount of work at irregular intervals thus making any sort of enforcement action extremely difficult.

3. George Macleod said that he commended the committee on the report, which is one of the clearest and most informative that he can remember.

4. The Chairman said that the programme of talks that George had arranged had just ended and she thanked him for picking such an interesting mix of speakers. She reminded members about the picnic arranged at the dovecote on Monday 4th June to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee.

There were no further questions.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.05 p.m.
Following the AGM Roy Cockel introduced Chris Sutton, local historian, and his assistant Christine Mann, who had just started work on the Heritage Lottery funded project to organise and classify the existing collection of items of local history. During the course of the project volunteers will be trained to carry on adding to the collection in future.

Chris gave a talk on ‘The enemy within – the plight of German nationals in Birmingham, and Britain, at the outbreak of WWI. He said that at the outbreak of the war Germans formed the largest non-British group in the population. He described the implications for national figures – for example King George V changed his family name to Windsor – and for animals – German Shepherd dogs were renamed Alsatians. During the 1870s many German immigrants had arrived in Britain, intending to travel on to the US, but some stayed here because they had run out of money while others chose to stay in prosperous Victorian Britain. By the 1890s Germans, especially Jewish Germans, were finding increasing hostility if they moved east, and so the westward migration increased.

Chris said that in the 1901 census eight people in living Moseley were shown as having been born in Germany – all eight lived in Park Hill or Trafalgar Road. Twenty four such people lived in Balsall Heath. By the 1911 census there are none to be found. Chris went on to describe the consequences of various Aliens Acts passed between 1844 and 1914. The 1914 Aliens Restrictions Act required Germans to report to the police, prove their good character and placed restrictions on changes of name.

Chris has much information, including about people living in Moseley and Balsall Heath, affected by these Acts, and about the conditions in which German nationals were kept during WWI.