

**DAVID MOORE**

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### **Moseley Road - a Journey from Victorian Inequality to a Wealth of Cultural Diversity**

#### ***Images:***

Moseley Road junction with Bradford Street.

Two large houses.

Bisected by a bypass.

Friend's Institute.

The Road sweeper.

Looking at Moseley Road.

The Guru Nanak Gurdwara Bhay Singh Sabah and Community Centre.

Mosley Road Library and Baths.

Moseley Road was originally a Turnpike Road. I have this imaginary image of a grand toll house and gates. Certainly, the houses are reflective of the wealth generated from the industrial city of a thousand trades. It was a gilded age; for some.

The architecture of these grand houses makes a bold statement of prosperous wealth and success. The fine lines and tall windows letting light and air into well-appointed drawing rooms, lounges, and studies. However, how happy these nouveau riche were is debatable. While they claim to have done alright for themselves, their need of wanting something bigger, better, grander with power over others is rarely synonymous with happiness.

The architecture of this house also makes a hidden statement about poverty and inequality. The tiny window on the top left is almost an afterthought. More to do with architectural symmetry than functioning well lit rooms for domestic staff. Indeed, the domestic staff lived in a very different world.

Mosley Road was cut, intersected by a bypass that's now an extension of Alcester Road to Camp Hill, the grand turnpike road now relegated to the second division of side road status. The Quakers Friend's Institute was once a fine building that fell into disuse in the late 60's. Ironically, with inequality on the rise again it has found a new use as a community advice centre and food bank. The site is run by people who have done alright for themselves and have come together to do alright for others. It is these projects that make me happy. I am

pleased to be associated with these remarkable individuals who have built a rich and diverse community.

It was near here I met the road sweeper. He was an incredibly happy guy. He told me how he was doing a worthwhile job and serving the community to help others. I am now a richer individual for meeting and spending time with this guy.

The width of the road is a past remnant of the aspirations of the road designers. The Victorians seem to have had grand plans at attempting to future proof their endeavours. This gilded age came to an end following two terrible world wars, with the population looking for a fresh start. A lot of older buildings had to make way for new developments built to meet the changing needs of a changing population. The Guru Nanak Gurdwara Bhay Singh Sabah and Community Centre is one such place. The sense of identity carefully placed on the dome, the signage and the gates makes a statement about this cultural change.

At the end of Moseley Road, we look on from afar at the Baths and Library. When originally opened at the turn of the twentieth century, these establishment would have been out of reach of the everyday working person. Now with the changes they have moved in time and place *From Victorian Inequality to a Wealth of Cultural Diversity*.

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