

CHRISTINE WRIGHT

The 50 bus route joins the A435 at Maypole on the Birmingham boundary, shortly after leaving its terminus in Druids Heath. It follows this road North into Birmingham, travelling along the route of the ancient turnpike road through the heaths and common land which are still remembered in the names of Druids Heath, Kings Heath and Balsall Heath. This road changes its name as it goes into the city – starting as Alcester Road South then Kings Heath High Street, Alcester Road and Moseley Road.

The 50 bus is the backdrop to much of my life in Birmingham. I used it to commute to town from Mayfield Road Moseley, as a student at Aston University, and then from a flat in Salisbury Road as a newly married member of staff. The 50 bus was a major factor in our decision to look for a house in Kings Heath – as a non-driver, my husband wanted to live somewhere with a good bus service. Once my employment took me elsewhere, the 50 bus came to represent shopping trips and evenings out in town.

Text to accompany my ten photographs:

1. The bus route passes beside the Druids Heath municipal housing development, built in the 1960s to provide housing for people moving out from inner city Birmingham. In recent years, six tower blocks have been demolished and replaced with low rise housing.
2. A 50 bus passes over the Stratford-upon-Avon canal.
3. Alcester Lanes End, the end of the tram route until the trams were disbanded in 1949. Home to smaller and more quirky shops than the main Kings Heath shopping centre.
4. The straight Alcester Road South between Alcester Lanes End and Kings Heath.
5. Looking across to All Saints church at the junction of the A435 and Vicarage Road. One of the area's many Turkish Barber shops in the foreground.
6. A selection of the smaller shops at the North end of Kings Heath High Street.
7. The banks beside the Birmingham and Gloucester railway line have been cleared in readiness for the new station, to be opened in 2023. The previous station was open for 101

years, from 1840 to 1941. The original bridge taking the Alcester Road over the new railway was named 'the Queens Bridge' in celebration of the recent accession of Queen Victoria to the throne. The name lives on in Queensbridge School, just over the road.

8. Moseley village became a fashionable Birmingham suburb in the second half of the 19th Century after the arrival of the railway. The triangular area at the junction of the Alcester Road and St Mary's Row where the trees are growing is the site of the award-winning Moseley Farmers Market each month. Behind this is the 'Fighting Cocks' pub (with tower) and a row of shops with interesting gables.

9. The 1960's concrete Co-op supermarket, opposite a Victorian parade of shops, now all restaurants and coffee shops.

10. An interesting large decorated house on the 50 bus route, just North of Moseley. The mix of residents in the large Moseley houses lead to the suburb's interesting 'bohemian' reputation - some whole houses are lived in by wealthy people, others are divided into flats popular with students and other young people, others are used as various types of hostels

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