

In unfading memory of my dearly beloved husband

Eldred Hallas who passed away Jun 13th 1926

Aged 50 years

Also of his wife Clara who died May 10th 1961 aged 91 years.



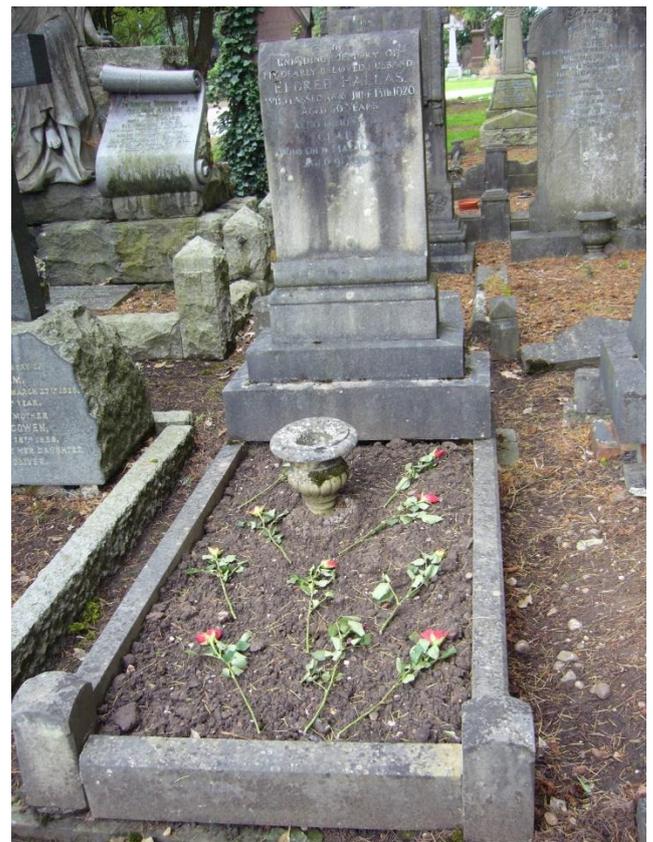
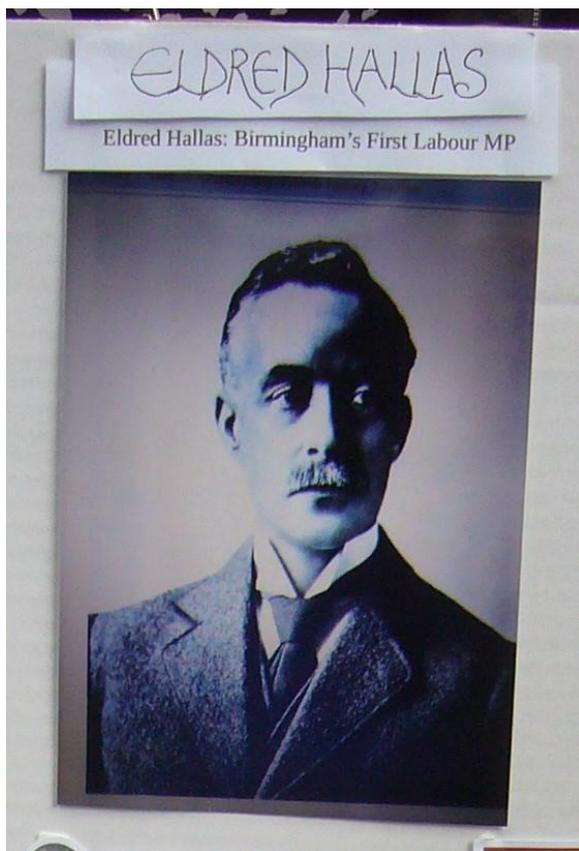
Eldred and Clara Hallas – Section A2 F/C Grave 69

Eldred Hallas was Birmingham's first Labour MP representing the Duddeston constituency

Born and educated in Yorkshire, Hallas moved to Birmingham in 1906 where he became leader of the Birmingham Municipal Employees Union. In 1911 he was elected as an independent socialist to the Birmingham Town Council for Duddeston and Nechells ward. During World War I, he became associated with the British Workers League which later became the National Democratic and Labour Party (NDP).

In the 1918 general election, Hallas was elected with the Coalition coupon for the NDP in the new Birmingham Duddeston constituency. However, he soon became disillusioned with the Lloyd George Government and joined the Labour Party in October 1919, becoming Birmingham's first Labour MP.

He stood down from the House of Commons at the 1922 general election, and unsuccessfully fought the Handsworth ward for Birmingham City Council in the 1923 elections as a Labour candidate. He died in a Moseley nursing home in 1926, and was commemorated by a plaque in the Balsall Heath branch of the Birmingham Municipal Bank.



Eldred Hallas Birmingham's first Labour MP representing the Duddeston constituency – Buried in Section A2 F/C Grave 69 Brandwood End Cemetery

Obituary: Eldred Hallas

(Reproduced from *Britain's First Municipal Savings Bank*
by J P Hilton - 1927)

The Bank suffered another loss when Mr Hallas passed away on the 13th July, 1926.

Although he had intimated on many occasions that his health was not as he would like it to be, it was hoped that he would overcome his indisposition. Medical examinations, however, indicated more serious trouble and he entered a nursing home where an operation was performed from which he did not recover.

The following resolution was passed by the committee at their first meeting after the death of their colleague:

RESOLVED:

That this committee learn with deep regret of the death of Mr Eldred Hallas and record their high appreciation of the valuable services rendered by him in connection with the inception and administration of the original Corporation Savings Bank, and as a member of the committee of management of the present Municipal Bank.

They tender their respectful sympathy to Mrs Hallas and family in their bereavement.

The full extent to which Birmingham is indebted to Mr Hallas in connection with the Municipal Bank cannot be estimated. When Mr Chamberlain (as Lord Mayor) expressed his views to a gathering of trade union leaders, he found a very warm enthusiast in Mr Hallas, who lost no time in preparing a rough scheme based on these views, which the Lord Mayor took up and fashioned into the scheme already referred to.

Mr Hallas possessed a brilliant mind which was always seeking further spheres of usefulness for the Bank; his oratorical efforts were invaluable in starting the Bank in 1916.

He had a magnificent voice for public speaking; he could, and did, sway thousands. Day after day, night after night, he addressed gatherings of workers, explained the scheme, and exhorted them to "save now and smile afterwards." How he managed to carry through so much work was a secret known only to himself.

Reading some of the speeches he made in those early days, one cannot help being struck with the accuracy of his forecasts as to the conditions that would arise when the war over. There is an uncanny similarity between prophesy and fulfilment.

Mr Hallas was a man of many talents, prepared to place those talents at the disposal of his fellow men. Direct of speech - he did not care whether you agreed with him or not - he was firm in his convictions, but big enough to admit the rights of an opponent to convictions also.

His services to the city as a member of the Council for many years, and as a Member of Parliament, were very valuable, but his services for those whose interests he was more directly concerned with, viz, his fellow trade unionists, transcended all. Evidence of his labours for them was not lacking at his funeral; one could see many trade unionists shedding tears as the last rites were performed. A chord had been struck more eloquent than words.

One could not be in his presence long before realising that there was a Municipal Bank in Birmingham, for he insisted on making the fact known. He always regarded it as the greatest friend the working man or woman could have; he visualised the time when Birmingham would cease to pay "threepence for a penny cake."

The name of Eldred Hallas is enshrined on the records of the Bank;

The tablet on the wall of Balsall Heath branch will be a perpetual reminder of him. The Bank lives to-day, largely because of his self-sacrifice in its early days. We were fortunate in having his powerful help; we shall treasure his memory; and we must see to it that the fire of his enthusiasm is maintained.

