



*The Balsall Heath Local History Society was founded in 1979 with the aim of promoting interest in our local history. We feel pride in our area and value its strengths – past and present. To meet our aims we work with local schools and community groups organising exhibitions and events. We have also produced several publications. We are a registered charity and rely on grants and donations to achieve our aims. For more information on our work, or to volunteer and help please contact us.*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST

**Ernest Dyche** (1887-1973) started a photographic studio on the Coventry Road in 1910. He then opened his second studio on the **Moseley Road**, Balsall Heath a few years later. Dyche trained his son, Malcolm, in the art of photographic portraiture, and for many years he worked alongside his father. In an effort to increase their trade, Malcolm photographed guests at dinners and social events in Birmingham, and together father and son promoted themselves as 'Theatrical Photographers.'

The post-war period saw a wave of migrants coming to Birmingham from Africa, the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent, many of whom visited Dyche's studio to have portraits made for their friends and relatives back home. Over the next twenty-five years, the bulk of the studio's clientele was drawn from the local Asian and African-Caribbean communities. By the time it ceased operating, in the mid 80's, the studio had, in effect, documented the development of both the first and second generations of this initial wave of immigration.

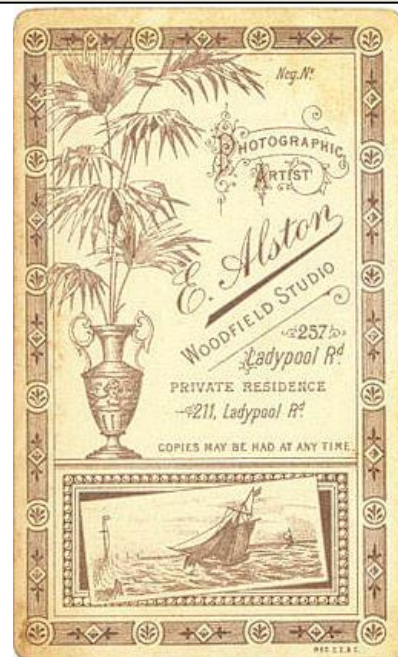
The collection was retrieved from the studios in 1990 by Pete James for the Library of Birmingham (as it is now called), where it is available for consultation. The majority of those sitting for their portraits are unknown, but it remains a fascinating study.



**The Dyche Studios at 354 Moseley Road – then and now.** The display on the street promoted his business. The original front door was moved to the middle of the premises and an extra window put in. The current owner bought the house off Dyche's son Malcolm.



**Above:** Birmingham Transport employee – photographed by Dyche.



*There are other photographers whose work we know of. Ezra Alston, William Baker and Arthur Wells all produced studio portraits in the late Victorian/ Edwardian heyday. These have survived down the years in family collections and lately reproduced on the internet, as a result of the family history boom. We hold copies of some in our history bay.*

### Next Meeting:

**Thursday 31st October 7:30**

The Venture (on Malvern Street by the farm)

**Birmingham's Historic Buildings**

by Lewis Braithwaite

### A LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIOS

The below list is almost certainly incomplete and includes some places that might probably be deemed outside the area.

- Ezra Alston**, 257 Ladypool Road (1896)  
**William Baker**, 213 Moseley Road (1896)  
**Baker and Hudson**, 118 Gooch Street (1896), 243 Gooch Street (1912)  
**Baker and Swift**, 270 Moseley Road (1912)  
**Beaumont Calvert**, 575 Moseley Road (1912)  
**Edward Bennett**, 83 Belgrave Road (1896)  
**Central Studios**, 252 Moseley Road (1965)  
**William Cooper**, 215a Stoney Lane (1935)  
**James Darnley**, 27 Hampden Street (1935, 1936)  
**Ernest Dyche**, 354 Moseley Road (1913 -,1948, 1961, 1962, 1963,1965) \*Theatrical, Clubland & Home Photographers (1959, 1965)  
**Miss Lulu Hanman**, 346 Belgrave Road (1912)  
**Thomas Harvey**, 454 Stratford Road (1935, 1936, 1959) 424 Stratford Road (1961 - 1963)  
**Highgate Studios**, 57 Highgate Road (1961 - 1963)  
**Leon Studios**, 83 Ladypool Road (1965)  
**Arthur Louis**, 217 Gooch Street (1912)  
**Charles Edgar Moreley**, 105 Ladypool Road (1896)  
**M.C. Morris**, 246 Ladypool Road (1959, 1961 - 1965)  
**Arthur Mumford**, 243 Gooch Street (1936)  
**Clara Osborne**, 454 Stratford Road (1912)  
**Patsy's Studio**, 72A Stratford Road (1963)  
**Punjab Studio**, 225 Balsall Heath Road (1962 - 1965)  
**Sam's Studio of Photography**, 49 Longmore Street (1965)  
**Stanley's Studios**, 60 Stratford Road (1965)  
**Stephen Studio**, 246 Ladypool Road (1948)  
**Wainscott and Co**, 366 Moseley Road (1912)  
**Arthur Wells**, 466 Moseley Road (1935, 1936) 354 Moseley Road (1896, 1912)  
**Roland White**, 359 Moseley Road (1896)

It is interesting that some premises were re-used by different photographers. Notable here is 354 Moseley Road which was used by Arthur Wells and then Dyche. The Punjab Studio stands out on this list as there is the obviously strong implication that it was catering for the immigrant population, a group that has been previously only associated with Dyche. To date nobody has come forward with any memories of the Punjab Studio.

### DIAMOND BALSALL HEATH

The Diamond Balsall Heath exhibition was a success with plenty of visitors. We had the beautiful exhibition panels on display, one per object, which attracted much interest and praise. Several visitors came to see their old classrooms as well. Unplanned, but added by request on the day, were several guided tours of the school and the surrounding area!



### HAPPY TRAILS TO YOU!

The **Ladypool Road** on Sunday 22nd September was a great success. Phil McMullen was the tour guide for two entertaining rambles along the richly diverse and historical road. There were many surprises for the assembled throng and several bemused locals (*below*).



The event was part of the **Still Walking** festival and attracted people who were "new" to our trails. Some of the stops along the route are pictured below. Many thanks to all the performers who, as usual, gave it their all and also to Ben Waddington for including and promoting our walk.

