



*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.*

## A CLASS APART

The History Society classroom (right) is available for bookings priced at just £1.50 per person for a one hour session. Visitors have the option of either a Victorian or Second World War classroom “experience” – both of which are conducted by Society members in role and costume. Both are highly suitable for children and make a great way of understanding what life was like in school years ago. Traditional reading, writing and arithmetic lessons are covered for the Victorian period, while the Second World War focuses on the day before evacuation. Contact us, above, for more information.



### VE DAY IN LONGMORE STREET

This previously uncirculated picture (above) was sent in by Gillian Brownlow. It is taken at the party in Shirley Place off Longmore Street. Gillian is the baby in arms to the centre right!



Above: The Finnegan family wait for rehousing. This picture was taken near their home in **William Edward Street**, 1969.



### IT'S MY PARTY

The picture to the right is Amanda Gilbert's mother Iris and her friends. Iris is the girl with the umbrella and the group are sat in the back garden of Iris's home in **Clifton Road**. The occasion was Iris's birthday but we don't know if the umbrella was a present.



**Next Meeting:**  
**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November 7:30**  
 The Venture  
*(on Malvern Street by the farm)*  
**Water In Towns**  
*By Mike Byrne*

Mike Byrne for many years was Librarian at Acocks Green Library. Under Mike's leadership Acocks Green was the epitome of an excellent community library, being home also to the History Society there.

Since his retirement Mike has continued with the Society. They continue to do a lot of research into the area with great enthusiasm. More details can be found on their webpage at <http://aghs.jimdo.com/>

We look forward to welcoming Mike for what is sure to be a well researched and interesting talk.

**OFF THE PATCH**

This story is a little off our Balsall Heath patch, but one that otherwise would never be picked up elsewhere.



George Robey and his wife, along with the Rev Alfred Doyle, visit the church hall where he made his first public appearance, in 1888, St Mary and St Ambrose, Pershore Road, Edgbaston, 1951. He then went on to open the garden party in aid of church funds. The comedian was knighted in 1954.

**BOWENS OF BALSALL HEATH**

John Bowen, the illustrious builder from Balsall Heath, is to be commemorated next year by the Civic Society with a blue plaque.

The suggested site for the plaque is on the former Bowen Works in **George Street** which still remains there to this day. Bowen's crowning glory is probably the Victoria Law Courts, which is also being considered as the site for a commemorative plaque.

Anthony Collins, Great grandson of Bowen, sent in this delightful image of the man taken by W. Cooper.



W. COOPER  
 ARTIST  
 82 A. NEW STREET  
 BIRMINGHAM.

**A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S SCENE**



The delightful picture above, taken in 1953 of a production of "Midsummer Night's Dream" by **Tindal Street School**, was kindly sent to us by **Margaret Hendley**.

The pupils on the left of the picture played Queen Titania and her attendants. Margaret herself appears to the right of the Queen. The lad fourth from the left on the front row is John Bethune who lived in **Hallam Street**. The Head-teacher painted the backdrop himself.

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