



Balsall Heath  
Local History Society

The **GAZETTE**

MAY 2016

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*The Balsall Heath Local History Society was founded in 1979 with the aim of promoting interest in our local history. 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.*

## SHIRLEY'S ROOTS IN BALSALL HEATH

Local author Shirley Thompson is working on a book about her family from Balsall Heath. It traces the histories of five families from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day and her book is to be published in September 2017 by Brewin. Shirley is interested in talking to anyone who can add background colour and information on Balsall Heath over the period she is covering.



The three principal characters in the book are her grandmother, Lilian Wareing (nee Baylis), and two of her younger children Harry and Madge Wareing. By 1913 the Wareing family had moved to 65 Brunswick Road. Lilian sadly died in 1926, a month after giving birth to her ninth child, Audrey.

Shirley's father, Harry Nash Wareing, is the third youngest of the children. He and his younger sister, Madge, were put into Marston Green Cottage Homes when their mother died. Their father was no longer there, as he had fled to America with his mistress, along with the £1,000 legacy from the Baylis family, intended to secure the children's welfare!

Across the road from the Wareings at number 70 lived Shirley's maternal ancestors, the Uptons. The Curtis family, who are other close relatives, lived at number 51. The book is set to feature a foreword by another Balsall Heathan, the comedian Don Maclean.

### NEXT MEETING

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 7:30**

The Venture  
(Malvern Street by the farm)

**You Can't Abdicate And Eat It...**

*by Mary Bodfish*

...So said the Duchess of Windsor, the former Wallis Simpson, for whom King Edward VIII gave up his throne to marry.

This talk explores the background of this couple, how their love affair caused a unique constitutional crisis in our history, and what resulted from it.



### A NIGHT AT THE MUSIC HALL

The shows set for May were postponed owing to an illness in the cast. The new dates are Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June (7:30) and Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June (2:30 and 7:30).

All performances are at St Paul's Trust on Hertford Street. Tickets £6 (£4 concessions) are on sale at the door - make sure you arrive in good time to get the best seats. Anyone dressed in suitable period costume will be eligible for a reduction of £1 from the ticket price.



***Nellie and Stan again in the back garden. This time a reverse view in front of the back of the house.***

For more information on the book, or to contribute material, you can contact Shirley via email at [shirleythompson@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:shirleythompson@blueyonder.co.uk)

## **IKON GALLERY MEMORIES**

The recent exhibition at the Ikon Gallery of Janet Mendelsohn's images of Varna Road attracted a lot of visitors. Many of them left their own memories of the area and the gallery kindly allowed us to share them with you.

This month we hear from Violet Mary Mallins who was a teacher at Clifton Road School: *"In the 1950's I taught at Clifton School. People were arriving in the area from Pakistan, India, Africa and the West Indies. They often lived in uncomfortable lodgings and had nowhere to go on Saturday evenings.*

*During the week many of them attended evening classes in English, Maths and other subjects at Clifton School. These and other Evening Institutes were organised by Mr. Hegan. He asked the Seventy Club of Carrs Lane Church and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, to which I belonged, to organise a Saturday night club. We played games – draughts, dart etc, talked, and were sometimes entertained by a singer or magician. We also had refreshments. Mr. Hegan was awarded an MBE for his efforts to make immigrants happy. I met my future husband at the club".*

## **DISTURBANCE AT BALSALL HEATH.**

### **FIVE MEN SHOT.**

On Monday evening, the usually quiet neighbourhood of Balsall Heath was the scene of a disturbance which threw the whole place into an unwanted state of excitement, and resulted somewhat seriously for the originators of the row. As far as we have been able to ascertain the facts of the case, which will become the subject of magisterial enquiry, they are as follow:—From the Balsall Heath Road to Moseley runs a field path, at the side of which is situated the farm of Mr. Jakeman, called Longmore Farm, and a little beyond which on the same line of road Mr. Jakeman has a fine meadow of mowing grass. At the end of the path is a road-side inn, called the Traveller's Rest. To this hostelry resorted on Monday afternoon some half-dozen Birmingham people of the class usually called "rowdy," whose names we have not been able to ascertain. After regaling themselves plentifully with the beer of the Traveller's Rest, they appear to have left about seven o'clock in the evening, and turned towards town. Shortly after leaving the inn they met a serving-man in the employ of Mr. Bodington, butcher, Bristol Street, and with that playfulness which usually follows extensive libations of beer, they commenced to play a series of practical jokes upon the unfortunate butcher. He, not liking this, turned upon his assailants, who immediately fell upon him, and in addition to giving him a sound thrashing deprived him of a bottle and some portion of his wearing apparel. Having picked all the fun out of him they could these playful Brums proceeded on their way, which speedily brought them to Mr. Jakeman's meadow, in which were a number of mowers at work. One of the men clambered over into the meadow, whereupon one of the mowers, a man named William Griffin, remonstrated with them. This they retaliated by giving him the second edition of the beating administered to Mr. Bodington's man. He followed them down the lane as far as Mr. Jakeman's house, when the row became "fast and furious," stones being used to supplement fists. Mr. Jakeman, who was in his house, hearing the disturbance, came out, and after securing his windows, which he feared would be broken by stones, ordered the fellows off his premises. They, utterly disregarding both threats and entreaties alike, continued to throw, when Mr. Jakeman retired to his house and armed himself with a fowling-piece, loaded with shot No. 7. Finding that the sight of the weapon had little or no effect upon the now almost infuriate rowdier, he threatened to shoot them, and seeing that threats were of no avail, he waited until they were some seventy yards distant, and then shot at them. They were considerably peppered, but not at all seriously. Finding that Mr. Jakeman assumed so determined an attitude towards them, the men made off, but speedily returned with a large mob, who surrounded Mr. Jakeman's house, and clamoured for his arrest. By this time Sergeant Lane, who is stationed at Balsall Heath, arrived on the spot, and in his custody Mr. Jakeman went to the police station at King's Heath, and gave himself up to Superintendent Humphries, who liberated him upon his own recognisances to appear yesterday morning. Yesterday morning Mr. Jakeman appeared before Mr. Lawrence at Balsall Heath, and after some evidence, the case was adjourned to next Friday week, when the matter will doubtless be fully enquired into.

*The Birmingham Daily Post of 8<sup>th</sup> July 1863 carried this lively story about "goings on" in Balsall Heath. The Jakeman family were well known in the area. Their farm, Longmore, is remembered in the street name Longmore Street.*

*Job Jakeman was from Worcester and ran a milk round from his farm. He is almost certainly a relative of mine as all the Jakeman's in Worcestershire are related to me!*