

## WHERE TO SEE HIS PLAQUE

Edward White Benson's Blue Plaque is seen here in situ (below the Chivers To Let sign) on Benson House at 98-104 Lombard Street – which is where number 72 would be if still standing. The plaque was erected in 1984 by the Birmingham Civic Society.



## BENSON'S FAMILY FORTUNES

Edward White Benson married his cousin Mary Sidgwick and they had six children. Their fifth child was the novelist Edward Frederic Benson who will be best known for his "Mapp and Lucia" novels. Another son, Arthur Christopher Benson was a writer and lyricist who famously wrote the words for Edward Elgar's "Land of Hope and Glory". He was also the Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Their sixth and youngest child, Robert Hugh Benson became a minister of the Church of England before converting to Roman Catholicism and writing many popular novels. Their daughter, Margaret Benson, was an artist, author, and amateur Egyptologist. Interestingly none of the children married. After Edward White Bensons death, his widow caused some controversy when she "set up household" with Lucy Tait, who was the daughter of Benson's predecessor as Archbishop of Canterbury!

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### TRUST IN ME!

Tom Williams, the Conservative candidate for Balsall Heath in the Council Elections puts his points forward to the workforce of Alfred Davis Ltd, packing case manufacturers at 418/420 Moseley Road. (13th May 1954)

**Next Meeting:**  
**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 7:30**  
The Venture  
(Malvern Street by the farm)  
**Erdington Cottage Homes**  
By Gudrun Limbrick



## The children of the Homes

*A century of Erdington Cottage Homes*

## A HOME FROM HOME

The cottage homes at Erdington were opened in 1900 by Aston Union, next to the workhouse from where the first children came. Initially, the Homes were made up of 16 large houses (some detached, some semis) on either side of a long avenue. It was single sex accommodation - boys homes were on the right hand side, girls homes were on the left. Each home had two-dormitory style bedrooms and a live in foster mother. Facilities included playing fields, infirmary, swimming pool, school and chapel. Later, a probationary home was added.

In 1949, the homes were each given names rather than being known only by numbers. The foster mothers were replaced by house-parents - a married couple who the children were encouraged to call 'mom' and 'dad'. In 1966, each of the cottages became an independent children's home. The 1970s saw an end to house-parents replaced by a staff team working in shifts.

The homes were used as children's homes right up to the early 1980s. The buildings are now private residences but the exteriors have been preserved. A famous resident was Johnny Prescott, the successful 1960s boxer.

The author, **Gudrun Limbrick**, is our first speaker for the 2014 season. Her book tells, for the first time, the story of the thousands of people who spent their childhoods there through a combination of memoir and factual research.