

Peter Stanford, Birmingham's First Black Minister in Highgate.



REV. PETER STANFORD.
(From a Photograph by Mr. W. Baker.)

Stanford was born in Virginia in 1860 and, like other American slaves, was freed at the end of the American Civil War in 1865. As an orphaned child he was captured by American Indians, whom he lived with for a few years. They eventually passed him to a group of Quakers, who took him to Boston where he was adopted by a Mr and Mrs Stanford. They treated him as a slave rather than an adopted son, so he eventually ran away to New York City. Alone and friendless he ended up living on the streets, part of a children's

gang who slept rough and made a meagre living collecting old clothes, polishing shoes and selling matches

A few of these urchins went to see the famous Christian evangelists Moody and Sankey. Stanford was challenged by their message and became a Christian. He then came to the attention of a group of influential New York Abolitionists who helped him go to a Baptist college and he was eventually ordained in Hartford, Connecticut in 1878. He became the pastor of a church there, serving the small black community.

In 1883 he travelled to Britain and settled in Birmingham in 1887 when he was invited by Hope St Chapel in Highgate to become their Minister. He stayed until 1895 and became a prominent campaigner for racial justice. His book, "From Bondage to Liberty" was published in 1889.



Hope St Baptist
Church, Highgate

The church was built in 1854 "at the sole expence of Joseph Weakley of Graham's Town, South Africa". Hope St ran both sides of the Pershore Road, parallel to Benacre St.

Who was Joseph Weakley?

His story starts in Wiltshire when as a young man he ran away from home to join the navy in its fight against Napoleon. Captured by the French, he spent 2 years as a prisoner of war in France, then came back to England and married in 1814. However, in

Balsall Heath Local History Society Gazette

OCTOBER 2020



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Next meeting.

The committee has decided to suspend meetings. We hope to start meetings again in January 2021.

Membership of the Society costs £10 a year.

1820 he saw an opportunity to join parties of settlers heading for South Africa. He set sail with his wife and 3 young children and settled in Grahams Town where another 8 children were born.

Joseph became a successful trader, in spite of ongoing ferocious wars with the Xhosa (Kaffir) tribes. Then in 1845 he came back to England with his wife and his four youngest children. In 1853 they came to Birmingham and in 1854 he founded a chapel and schoolroom in Hope St,

Highgate. His son, James, became a Deacon and later wrote, "Father and Mother had sweet voices and were fond of leading the singing at the chapel. Father also played the violincello and flute and he often sang favourite hymns and accompanied himself on his bass-viol at home."

So why did the Weakleys come to Birmingham?

The answer was supplied by James himself in an article he wrote in 1905. Joseph came "to superintend the shipping of guns".

In 1854 Joseph and his wife returned to South Africa, leaving James in Birmingham and another son in London.

James Weakley (Joseph's son) lived at 219, Mary St from about 1858 to 1875. Undoubtedly he must have named it "Grahamston Villa" after the place he was born in South

Africa. The house had religious connections with The Homeland Missionary Society in 1846. (VCH) In the 1990s it was listed as "The Homeland Deliverance Centre" with a sign for "The Assembly Hall" and still today the glass over the front door has, "Bible Tract Depot".

Directory entries for James Weakley from 1858 describe his occupation as "colonial agent", "shipping agent" or "Cape merchant". It seems the family had set up an international business, probably shipping guns to the South African colonies.



Val Hart

Online Fund Raising

Did you know that whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be raising free donations for Balsall Heath Local History Society with **easyfundraising**?

There are over 4,000 shops and sites on board ready to make a donation – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – and it won't cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds.

All you need to do is:

1. Go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/balsallheathlhs/> and join for free.
2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping.
3. After you've checked out, the retailer will make a donation to Balsall Heath Local History Society at no extra cost to you whatsoever!

There are no catches or hidden charges and Balsall Heath Local History Society will be really grateful for your donations.

The Society is also registered with **Amazon Smile**.

When first visiting smile.amazon.co.uk, customers are prompted to select a charitable organisation. Amazon will give 0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT and other shipping fees) of eligible **Amazon Smile** purchases to the charitable organisations selected by customers.

<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/101945-0>

Thank you for your support.
Val Hart

The Let Us Play Project.

The History Society contributed to this project which has now finished. It was about adventure playgrounds in Birmingham, including the Venture. Many lovely images and some oral history interviews are on their website:

<https://www.facebook.com/generalpublicprojects>

This Way To The Revolution

By Ian Francis with additional text by Edward Jackson. Designed by Justin Hallström. Flatpack Projects, 2019

A slice of social history, "This Way To The Revolution" sheds light on a host of untold stories about art, activism and survival in late 60s Birmingham. The book features over 100 images, among them photographs by Janet Mendelsohn and Nick Hedges which capture a specific moment when the city was coming to terms with a decade of sweeping redevelopment.

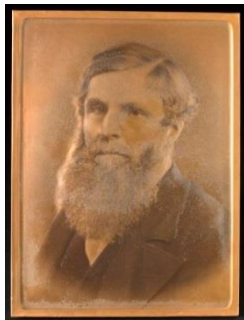
For more information:

<https://flatpackfestival.org.uk/our-projects/birmingham-68/this-way-to-the-revolution/>

PIRIM – the story.

Sometime in the late 1920s or early 1930s Mr C Townsend came up with a process to produce 3D portraits from ordinary photographs and print them onto sheets of thin metal. The results were known as "Portraits in Relief in Metal" or PIRIM for short. He also started

a company to sell these portraits called Sculpto Art. These were so successful that, in 1934 he opened an office in America. The company ceased trading in 1942.



The process worked from lines on a photograph and was “especially valuable in reproducing drawings of photographs of machines”. This may explain why the first version shown here is so much flatter than the second which seems to



have been lit to bring out the light and shade

sharply. The process itself was inexpensive although each photograph took work to prepare

On the new acquisition You can see the process at work on the hair



of the model. What is unusual about this one is the signature “PIRIM” in the corner. That isn’t on the others. Most likely this is something produced as a manufacturer’s sample and sent out to photographer’s who might wish to have the process applied to their work. Considering the style of the photographs we have seen from Dyche’s studio over time (full figure and occasionally posed action shots) it’s unlikely

they would have business from him. (William McCabe)

Departures – 400 Years of Emigration from Britain



This exhibition opens Friday 30 October 2020 at the Migration Museum Lewisham Shopping Centre, London SE13 7HB. Runs till June 2021.

To mark the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower to North America, Departures is a major new exhibition exploring 400 years of emigration from Britain through personal narratives, contemporary art and a range of media. It will include some Middlemore content, sourced from the Pier 21 Museum In Canada.

Our book, “The Lost Children” will be on sale.

Those of you who can’t make it to Lewisham and still want to see the exhibition can see a selection of photographs at

<https://www.migrationmuseum.org/100imagesgallery/> and all of the

images gathered for the project at

<https://www.flickr.com/groups/100imagesofmigration/pool/>

Events

Birmingham Museums have limited access to actual museums and much of this is by ticket for particular exhibits.

They also have online lectures that they charge for. Most of the exhibitions run from October to next April but the Lectures and some events may be only for one night. For details and bookings see

<https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/whats-on>

The Newcomen Society give monthly lectures on the history of engineering. They are still running their lectures online at only one a month. November’s will be on the 17th and about Charles Babbage who built computers before they were computers.

<https://www.newcomen.com/activity/babbage-and-the-abstraction-of-mechanism/>

For those of you that want a little more diversity in the subject matter and can take the more academic approach you can find podcasts and videos of various lectures from

Gresham University
<https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/making-history-online>

Oxford University
<https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/units/faculty-history>

and the Royal Historical Society.

<https://royalhistsoc.org/events/>

In this case you can sign up for future lectures or listen to/watch previous lectures