

Balsall Heath Local History Society speakers

January to September 2024

All meetings will be held at St Paul's Venture, Malvern St.

Fees at meetings include refreshments and are £1 for members and £3 for visitors.

Refreshments will be available at the beginning of the meeting from 10.45 before the speaker starts at 11.15.

DATE	SPEAKER	TOPIC
Monday 29 th January 10.45 am for 11.15am	Val Hart	Places of work in Balsall Heath
Monday 26 th February 10.45 am for 11.15am	Norman Bartlam	Edgbaston Reservoir
Monday 18 th March 10.45am for 11.15am	Mike Byrne	The Bull Ring
Thursday 25 th April 7pm for 7.30pm	Richard Churchley	Place names in Warwickshire and Worcestershire
Thursday 30 th May 7pm for 7.30pm	Keith Clenton	Birmingham City Centre
Thursday 27 th June 7pm for 7.30pm	Andrew Reekes	George Cadbury
Thursday 26 th September 7pm for 7.30pm	Paul Jaques	Warwickshire & B'ham Home Guard

A Reminder about Society Membership for 2024

Membership runs annually from January to December and costs £12. Gift Aid can be added to this if you sign up for it. Existing members will have already received the forms via e mail but the application forms can also be downloaded from our website: www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk.

Balsall Heath Local History Society Gazette

JANUARY 2024



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www.thelostchildren.uk

Facebook: Balsall Heath Local
History Society and
lostchildrenproject

Membership of the Society costs £12 a year. Membership runs from January to December each year and application forms are available on the website. Fees at meetings are: £1 for members and £3 for visitors.

Meetings are held at St Paul's Venture, Malvern Street at 11:15 a.m. Refreshments will be served from 10:45 a.m to 11:00 a.m.

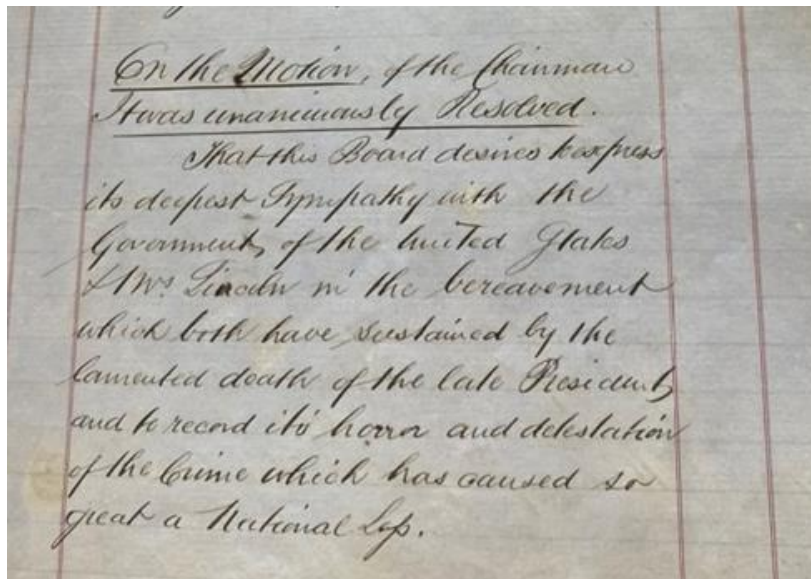
Coming soon

Monday 29th January 10.45 for a start at 11.15. Val Hart, on Workplaces of Balsall Heath 1730 to 2000

Balsall Heath Local Board of Health. May 1865

A message form one governing body to another.

I recently revisited the Board Minute Books in the Birmingham Archives and came across this charming snippet about the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.



"On the motion of the Chairman it was unanimously resolved: That the Board desires to express its deepest sympathy with The Government of the United States & Mrs Lincoln in the bereavement which both have sustained by the lamented death of the late President and to record its horror and detestation of the Crime which has caused so great a National loss."

Committee Members of the Society

We are beginning a new series of articles to introduce our committee members to readers of the Gazette. We will tell you a little about each individual, their role within the Society and their connection to Balsall Heath.

This month we start with our Vice Chair Jenny Hodson, who has been a member of Balsall Heath Local History Society since 2009.

Jenny – Jenny was born in Birmingham, but now lives in Lichfield. She is a retired Registered Nurse. She trained at Walsall Manor Hospital and her last position was as a Ward Manager at Sandwell Hospital in West Bromwich. Her main interests are Genealogy and The History of Birmingham.



Jenny's Role - Jenny manages our Facebook page and answers any queries arising there. She carries out some secretarial duties and in recent years has scanned and catalogued the photographs in our collection.

Jenny's Connection to Balsall Heath – Jenny writes:-

My connection to Balsall Heath is through my father, John Alfred Billington, known as Jack, who was born in Balsall Heath on October 16th 1919. He was the second son of George and Rose Billington nee Bartlett, who lived at 7 Noel Avenue, off Oldfield Rd. My grandparents, George and Rose were married at St Paul's Church on September 2nd 1911. At this time, Rose was living at 8 White St, off Clifton Rd. John and his older brother, George were baptised at St Paul's. My grandmother was widowed in 1946, but continued to live in Noel Avenue until 1970.



1924 George & Rose Billington with George Jnr & John



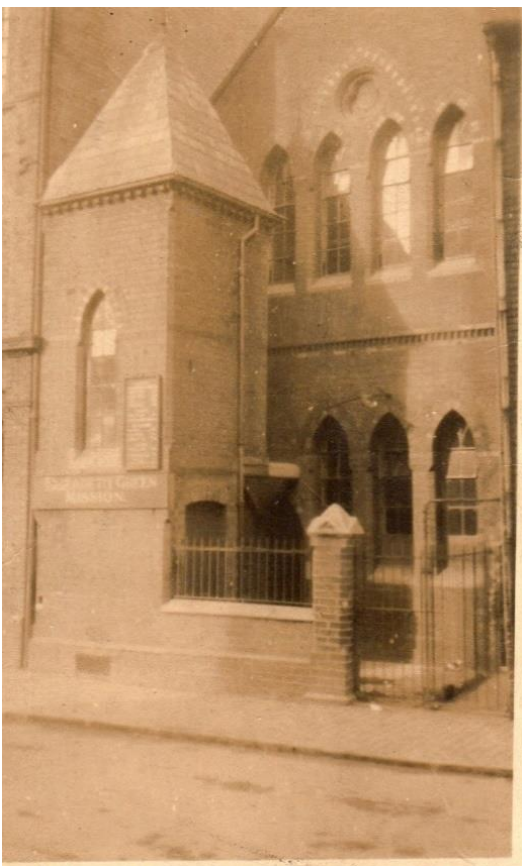
St Paul's Church



7 Noel Avenue

George and Rose met at The Elizabeth Green Mission in Alcester St opposite Rowton House. The Mission, as they called it was their regular place of worship and a place for social activities, too.

Two photos of The Elizabeth Green Mission



George is the 2nd gentleman from the left and Rose is standing behind the 1st seated lady on the left. Rose's sister, Ada is next to her behind the seated gentleman in the dark suit and Ada's future husband, Harry Gibson is standing behind her. This photo was taken in 1910.



John attended Clifton Rd School from 1925 until 1933.

School Report 1932

Please keep this for future reference.
 City of Birmingham Education Committee.
 CLIFTON ROAD SENIOR BOYS' SCHOOL.
 SCHOOL REPORT
 JULY 1932.

Name: *John Billington* Class: *11B*

	Mark.	Poss.		Mark.	Poss.
Handwriting	4	10	Reading Aloud	8	10
Arith. Mental	18	20	" Silent	10	10
" Mechanical	9	10	Recitation	7	10
" Problem	7	10	History	18	20
Algebra	-	10	Geography	18	20
Geometry	17	20	Art	10	20
Composition- Oral	15	20	Music	12	20
" Written	16	20	Science	12	20
Spelling	19	20	Handicraft	15	20
Top Boy's Exam. total	249		TOTALS -	220	260
Position on Term & Exam.	4 th out of 140 boys.				
Absences	4		Late	<i>Rarely</i>	

*Very good result in the Term examination.
 Interest & ability are shown in his work.*

J. Price Class Master.
H. J. Harris Head Master.

Next Term Commences August 22nd. 1932.

My father lived in Balsall Heath until his marriage in 1941. I enjoyed hearing his stories of his early years. I also have happy memories of visits to my grandmother in Noel Avenue. I remember her talking of shopping in Ladypool Rd and mentioning Conybere St. That always seemed a very unusual name. She often talked of what I thought was Aygott Road. It wasn't until I was about eighteen that I noticed the road sign for Highgate Road and realised that this was the 'Aygott' Road I had heard so much about. Happy memories inspired me to learn more about Balsall Heath. I joined the History Society in 2009 with my father. In 2011, I was voted on to the committee and have enjoyed playing an active part in the work of Balsall Heath Local History Society.

Jenny Hodson, January 2024.

Combe Bros, George St in the 1960s

We have had an enquiry for information about this company from one of our readers. He writes,

” I was involved with the company from 1961 to 1971 & we employed 21 women and 11 men, making brushes for dressing table sets & gents grooming. Our staff were English, Irish, Bermudan, Trinidadian, Arab-Welsh, to list just a few.”

Can anyone help?

Would you like to find out more about your house, your street or the local area?

The Moseley Society has a very active History Group. Members organise research and talks, lead walks, put on displays and write articles, or investigate their own interests. You can see some of this work on our website www.moseley-society.org.uk/local-history

We also manage a unique archive of documents, photographs, maps and journals, which local residents and others can use.

The group meets regularly in different venues according to needs of the members.

We always welcome new members, whether they want to do their own research or be involved in a wider project.

We are also looking for volunteers with specific skills. For example, we would love to meet anyone with library or archive skills to help with the collection.

We are a friendly bunch and you can give as much time as you like.

For more details, contact Ian Binnie on warwickfus@btinternet.com



Another Tribute to Bron Salway: Performances of The Flying Dutchman Opera in Birmingham this summer.

This article has been sent to us by Byron Jackson who was a pupil of Bron's at Heath Mount School. He sang at her funeral and is dedicating the performances in Birmingham to her memory.

Persona Arts is a new BME-led West Midlands based arts company who stage the opera and choral arts to the highest possible standards.

This new company has at the helm, Artistic Director and international opera singer, Byron Jackson. Born and raised in Balsall Heath, Birmingham to parents of Jamaican descent, he trained at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (2002-2005) where he was awarded the St Clare Barfield Memorial Bowl for Operatic Distinction. As a role model, he is determined to give opportunities to people to start and then sustain their careers, reaching their potential in the creative industries - especially those who are underrepresented. He has fundraised tirelessly to ensure his company and this project can develop as many underrepresented artists as possible.



Byron is a keen advocate of diversity and the underserved which are major issues within the current UK opera arts industry. It is something Byron has faced especially due to the colour of his skin.

Over the last two years, Persona Arts have been scouring the West Midlands to recruit community singers to volunteer to take part in our special Flying Dutchman opera chorus supporting our project partner, Birmingham Choral Union. From regional choral societies, amateur singing groups and opera companies, a diverse number of people have selected to take part in this unique project. After staging 3 successful community chorus workshops in Small Heath and Kings Heath, we have inspired a good contingent of singers, a number of which have never performed in an opera before!

Over the coming months we continue to recruit more singers, especially for our diverse children's chorus, and will present further community activities.

One of which will be our public opera masterclass for aspiring singers on Friday 19 April 2024. This will give the audience a unique opportunity to see what it takes in preparing opera singers to reach their full potential.

For further info:

<https://www.personaarts.org.uk/opera-masterclass-susan-bullock>

Persona Arts: *Der fliegende Holländer* (The Flying Dutchman)

Condemned to roam the seas for having defied God, the Flying Dutchman is cast ashore. Both man and ship can only seek redemption if true love can break the curse.

Byron Jackson FRSA leads an all-star cast of some of the UK's finest Commonwealth opera singers and features the Birmingham Choral Union, RBC community youth choruses and the Central England Camerata under the baton of Jack Ridley. This unique and diverse community production will be staged by the Artistic Director of the Commonwealth Games 2022 ceremony, Iqbal Khan, a formidable talent in the world of opera and theatre.



Performances: 7,10 & 13 July 2024 at The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, 200 Jennens Road, Birmingham, B4 7XR

The performances are dedicated to the memory of Bron Salway, former teacher and supporter of Byron and a stalwart trustee of the history society

Please note an inner-city clean air zone is in force for drivers. For more info:

<https://www.gov.uk/clean-air-zones>

To book tickets or to find out more information about the performances please visit:

www.personaarts.org.uk or www.bcu.ac.uk/conservatoire/events-calendar/the-flying-dutchman