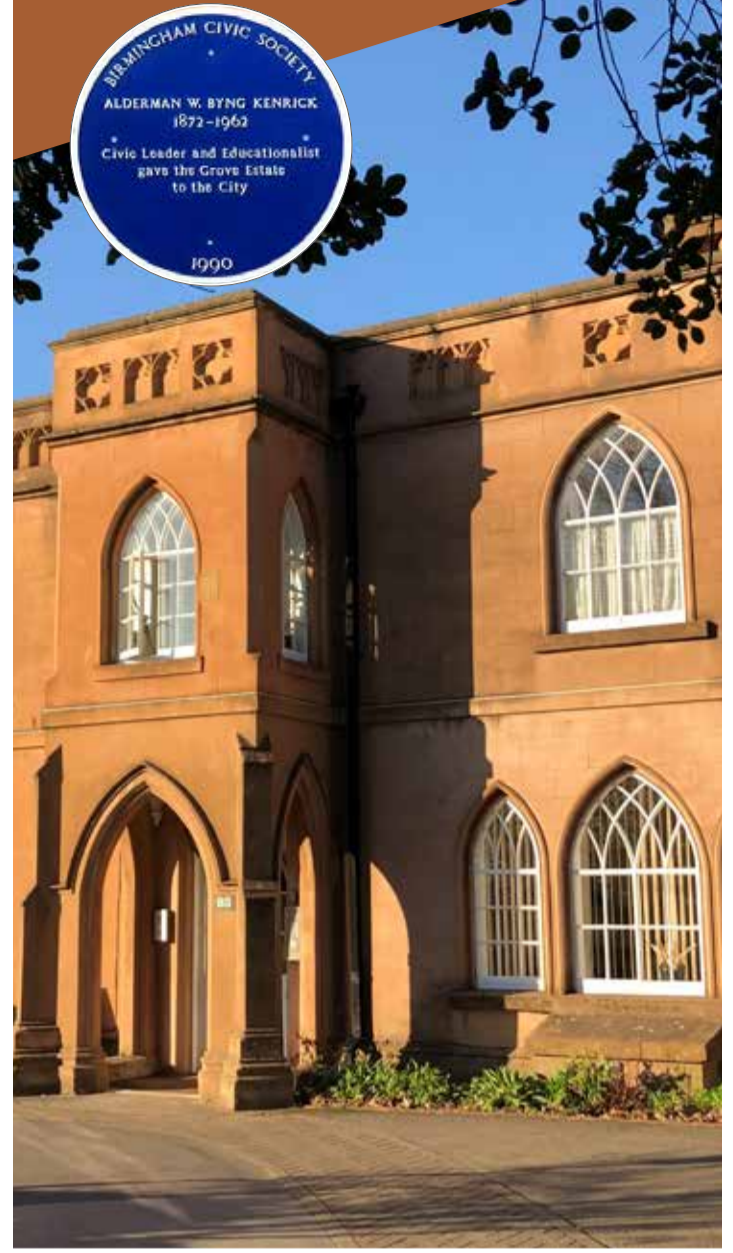


# Harborne Blue Plaque Walk



## In brief

## Walking distance

3.89 miles / 6.26 km

## Category

Easy/Moderate

There's a wide range of places to eat, drink and shop along Harborne High Street, in addition to Edgbaston Village a mile from Harborne ([www.edgbastonvillage.co.uk](http://www.edgbastonvillage.co.uk)).

Walk available through the 'Walk Run Cycle' app: [www.walkruncycle.com](http://www.walkruncycle.com)



## How to get there

Harborne is a vibrant suburb with a high street, three miles (5 km) south west from Birmingham city centre.

## Public Transport

### From City

By bus - using buses to Harborne.

By train - from New Street travel to University station.

For more information visit: [www.networkwestmidlands.com](http://www.networkwestmidlands.com)

## By car

Harborne is easily accessible by car. Car parking is available at pay and display car parks, and there is on-street car parking.

## Walk or Cycle

It is easy to walk and cycle to Harborne.

## Harborne Blue Plaque Walk



Walk developed by Heritage Volunteers from The Arts Society Birmingham Evening and sponsored by Calthorpe Residents' Society and Calthorpe Estates.



[www.tasbe.org](http://www.tasbe.org)

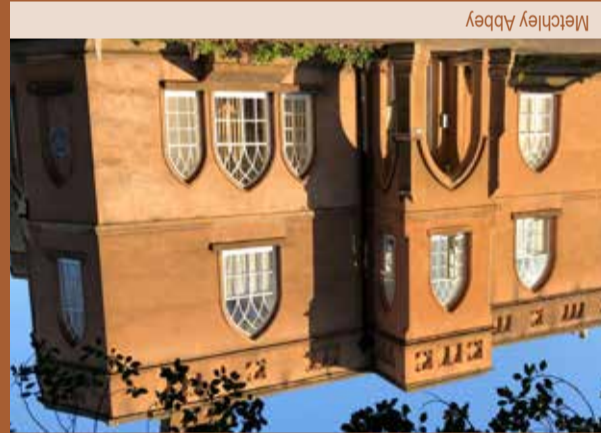
[www.calthorperesidents.org](http://www.calthorperesidents.org)

[www.calthorpe.co.uk](http://www.calthorpe.co.uk)

April 2019



Here are some of the places you will see on the walk



Metchley Abbey

Parts of St. Peter's CE School opposite the church date back to 1837, making it the oldest school in Birmingham still in use for primary education. However, the original school, founded in 1757, was on the High Street at the top of what is now Station Road. In 1861 a new primary school was opened further down Harborne High Street. In 1961 this moved to Station Road where it stands today. The old clock tower building then became an adult education centre, but today it houses coffee shops and restaurants. Also on the High Street, Harborne Library was originally built as a Masonic Hall in 1879, purchased by the city for £2000 and converted to a library in 1892. The Blue Coat School, founded in 1722 by the then rector of St. Philip's Church (now Birmingham Cathedral) to provide education for children of poor families, moved out to a site at the top of Harborne Hill in 1930 and is there now as an independent preparatory school. Metchley Abbey has no religious association and was built in about 1800 on land originally part of a medieval deer park belonging to the de Birmingham family. Metchley Fort, the remains of which can be seen outside the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, marks the site of a minor Roman fort dating from about 40AD.

Harborne was mentioned as a manor in the Domesday Book of 1086 and is located between the Chad Brook and Bourn Brook. During medieval times it was a small farming village based around the parish church and manor house. The parish church of St. Peter's dates back to 14<sup>th</sup> century, the present church being built in 1867. The manor house no longer exists, the site being incorporated into Grove Park. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century Harborne changed from being mainly agricultural - well-known for its gooseberries, corn and potatoes, and cottage industries developed. Nails were made in the homes of labourers and women provided laundry services for the wealthy city folks. Chad Valley toy factory was established in 1840 and remained in Harborne for 80 years. The railway, connecting Harborne to Birmingham, came to the town in 1874, as light industry increased and the population with it. Harborne voted to become part of Birmingham in 1891. The railway carried passengers until 1934 and only closed to freight in 1963. The disused line has been developed into the Harborne Walk and cycleway, a green route alongside a nature reserve. Harborne has plenty of green spaces: 2 parks, Queens Park and Grove Park and 2 golf courses. Harborne swimming baths opened in 1923, being rebuilt as the Harborne Pool and Fitness centre in 2012.

## A brief history of Harborne

# Harborne

## The route

**Instructions start from Harborne Fitness Centre but as it is circular, the walk can be started anywhere on the route. As you walk around look for the blue plaques at the locations indicated on the sketch map at the bottom of this page.**

**Start from Harborne Fitness, Lordswood Road. Or if travelling by train, from the University train station follow signs to Women's Hospital, then start from H4.**

### H1 W.H. AUDEN (1907-1973) - Harborne Fitness centre, Lordswood Road (on right of entrance)

Winston Hugh Auden was an Anglo-American poet born in York. A house on this site became his home from 1919 for the next two decades. He studied English literature at Christ Church Oxford between 1925-1928 and after university spent five years teaching. In 1939 he moved to the United States and taught in American universities until 1945, becoming an American citizen in 1946. In 1947 he won the Pulitzer Prize for his poem 'The Age of Anxiety'. His work covered themes of love, religion, morals and politics. He returned to England to be Professor of Poetry at Oxford between 1956 and 1961. Back in America, he spent his winters in New York and his summers in Europe. Apart from his writing, which included opera librettos, he also was involved with documentary films and poetic plays. One of his poems written in 1937 'As I Walked Out One Evening' has references to Birmingham. His poetry reached a wider audience after his death, his poem 'Funeral Blues' being featured in the film 'Four Weddings and a Funeral'. He died and is buried in Austria, but a memorial stone to W.H. Auden can be seen in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey.

**Walk around the corner into War Lane. Continue down the hill, at double roundabout cross Fellows Lane at the first roundabout and turn right into Tennal Road at the second roundabout and walk up the hill.**

### H2 FRANCIS ASTON (1877 - 1945) - 91 Tennal Road

Francis William Aston FRS, was a chemist and physicist. In 1922 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry for his work on the development of the mass spectrograph. Aston, born here in Harborne, lived in both this house and Tennal House opposite. He attended Harborne Vicarage School and Malvern College before becoming a student at Mason College, the precursor to Birmingham University. After three years working in the brewing industry from 1900 he won a scholarship to carry out research which led to his discovery of what is now known as 'Aston Dark Space'. Moving to Cambridge in 1910, he worked on studies of positive rays, obtaining evidence of the existence of two isotopes of neon. His research was interrupted by wartime work on aeroplane fabrics at the Royal Aircraft Establishment but resumed in 1919. His invention of the mass spectrograph made possible the separation of isotopes by the slight differences in their mass leading to his formulation of the Whole Number Rule.

His subsequent work into deviations from this Rule was of great importance in the field of atomic energy. Aston was a keen sportsman and gifted musician. Also skilled at photography, he travelled extensively, in particular in pursuit of his interest in astronomy.

**Cross Tennal Road and return to the roundabouts. Cross Northfield Road and go right into Vicarage Road. Walk up the hill to St. Peter's Church (which is worth a look), then right past the pub. Opposite St. Peter's School cross the road, continue right into Grove Lane. Walk alongside the park then left into Mill Farm Road (plaque on a freestanding monument).**

### H3 W. BYNG KENRICK (1872 - 1962)

**- Garden wall, Kenrick Building, Grove Road**

Wilfred Byng Kenrick was born in Birmingham and educated at Rugby School. On graduation from Balliol College Oxford, he joined the family firm of Archibald Kenrick & Sons of West Bromwich, manufacturers of metal hardware products. From 1914 he served on various committees of Birmingham City Council, particularly the education committee, of which he was chairman from 1922 to 1928 and again from 1931 to 1943. Byng Kenrick was instrumental in giving Birmingham an education system of the highest order in spite of the difficulties of the time.

In 1928 he became Lord Mayor of Birmingham, being made a Freeman of the City ten years later. In addition to Council work, he was a Governor and deputy Pro-Chancellor of Birmingham University; a Governor and Bailiff of King Edward's School; and had associations with Birmingham Repertory Theatre and the City Orchestra.

A year after Kenrick died, the family residence 'The Grove' was demolished, the garden and grounds being given to the city as Grove Park an open space for the enjoyment of the citizens of Birmingham. A paneled room from the house is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

**Continue down Mill Farm Road and cross the grass onto Harborne Park Road. Cross dual carriageway, turn right, walk down to the roundabout and take first left (Metchley Lane). At traffic lights turn right to hospital, go past QE A&E and follow road round to the Women's Hospital.**

### H4 DAME HILDA LLOYD (1891—1982) - Women's Hospital

Hilda Nora Shuffelbotham was born in Birmingham and went to King Edward V1 High School before studying medicine at Birmingham University, qualifying in 1916, when forty percent of students were female as a result of the First World War. Hilda specialised in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and set up a service known as the 'Flying Squad'. This consisted of teams of doctors and midwives who went out to obstetric emergencies in the home, helping to save the lives of many women and babies. She was appointed lecturer at Birmingham University in 1934, becoming the first female professor in 1944. In 1936 Hilda became a founder member of The Women's Visiting Gynaecological Club, which encouraged and supported female clinicians. She believed that women should return to practice after having children, a radical idea at the time and in 1949 became the first woman president of the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists. Hilda Lloyd was made a Dame of The British Empire in 1951.

**Continue past the hospital onto Metchley Park Road, turn first left into Hintlesham Avenue. At T-junction at Metchley Lane, cross the road to Metchley Abbey. This is private property but plaque 5 is clearly visible from the road.**

### H5 GRANVILLE BANTOCK (1868 - 1946) - Metchley Abbey

Sir Granville Ransome Bantock was a British composer of classical music and friend of both Edward Elgar and Jean Sibelius. Bantock was born in London and studied at the Royal Academy of Music. Later he moved to New Brighton

and conducted the first performance of Delius's 'Brigg Fair' with the Liverpool Orchestra. In 1900, he settled in Metchley Lodge (now called Metchley Abbey) and became Principal of the Birmingham School of Music (now the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire). With Elgar and the conductor Adrian Boult on the staff, the School of Music became quite prestigious. Elgar dedicated his second Pomp and Circumstance March to Bantock and when Elgar retired, Bantock was appointed Peyton Professor of Music at Birmingham University. He was one of the first to conduct the works of Sibelius, who dedicated his Third Symphony to him.

He played a major role in the formation of the City of Birmingham Orchestra in 1919, the forerunner of the CBSO and the first work played by the orchestra in 1920 was Bantock's overture 'Saul'. In 1930 he was knighted, and in 1934 retired back to London to teach at Trinity College.

**Walk towards the roundabout to the right and cross the first exit, turning left at the second exit, Greenfield Road. Plaque 6 is about 100 yards on the right.**

### H6 DAVID COX (1783 - 1859) - 116 Greenfield Road

David Cox, considered one of the greatest English landscape painters, was born in Deritend Birmingham, the son of a blacksmith and a farmer's daughter. At 15, he was apprenticed to a miniaturist painter, moving to theatre scene-painting two years later. Although resolved to becoming a professional artist, his living came mainly as a drawing teacher and author of a number of books on landscape painting. In 1805 he first visited Wales, the landscape inspiring many of his future works. In 1813 Cox was appointed to teach drawing at the Royal Military College, but resigned upon finding the environment too constraining. Married and with a young son, he moved to Hereford where he taught for 5 years at a girls' school. In 1827, he returned to live in London, exhibiting at the Society of Painters in Water Colour, but also at the first exhibition of the Birmingham Society of Artists. He continued with his iconic watercolours for the rest of his life, then in his fifties he also began to paint and exhibit in oils. In 1841 the family returned to Birmingham to live here in Greenfield House, which remained his home until his death. He is buried beside his wife in the churchyard of St. Peter's Church, Harborne.

**Retrace your steps a few yards to Bull Street and walk down to find plaque 7 at number 10.**

### H7 GEORGE HUNT (1892-1960) - 10 Bull Street

George Edward Hunt was a leading Arts and Crafts jewellery designer and maker, he was born in Dudley. After his mother died in 1927 the family moved to Harborne where he lived until his death. At 5, George became deaf after contracting diphtheria. Privately educated until 16, he then won a free place at the School of Art in Margaret Street and the Vittoria Street School of Jewellery and Silversmithing in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. George designed and made his prize-winning jewellery at his studio and workshop in the garden of this home. In 2006, Bonhams held a touring exhibition of his work entitled 'The Silent World of an Arts and Crafts Jeweller'. He also designed the bronze panel on the headstone of the family grave in St. Peter's Churchyard.

**Continue down Bull Street to Harborne High Street and refresh yourself at one of the many cafes, bars and restaurants\*. To return to the start of the walk turn left and follow the High Street back up to the swimming baths.**

\* Refreshments and toilets are also available at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, Women's Hospital and University Station, in addition to Edgbaston Village - for details visit [www.edgbastonvillage.co.uk](http://www.edgbastonvillage.co.uk)

