



## **Don't miss this**

If you missed NWR's 30<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup> or 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration conferences then don't miss this one. If you were at any of the above, you will know why. NWR National Conference is an event not to miss any year but particularly not this one; it's our

## **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

What is more it will be in Birmingham and organised by a committee who gave you Warwick 1990 and Warwick 2010

### **Date**

**A revised date of Friday 10<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

### **Venue**

The Burlington Hotel, New Street, Birmingham

This historic Birmingham hotel which has hosted Hollywood legends, rock 'n' roll royalty – and where Enoch Powell gave his infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech – has recently undergone a complete major revamp.

The Macdonald Burlington Hotel, between New Street and Stephenson Street, has recreated itself as a leading conference hotel after undergoing a year-long refurbishment programme.

This 142-year-old venue, formally known as the Midland Hotel is now a leading luxury conference hotel, what's more it is literally directly opposite New Street Station and Grand Central.

Delegates who have already booked accommodation at the Burlington Hotel using the event code, your booking has automatically been transferred to the new date. If you booked via a third party such as Booking.com or Expedia for example you will need to get in touch with them to re-arrange your booking date.

There is a wide variety of **accommodation** available in Birmingham, however, early booking is advised.

We have negotiated a delegate rate at the Burlington hotel of £102 B&B which is a significant saving

on their usual rates. To take advantage of this call their booking line on 0344 879 9019 and quote code **NWRA110920**.

The Burlington is a 4\* hotel and service is excellent, however, if you are affected by noise, I will add a warning that it is right in the centre of the city, literally outside the doors of New Street station and can be a bit noisy. The Birmingham tram comes and goes from right outside the Burlington's doors to further (quieter?!) areas of the city where there are more Airbnb's etc. There are, of course, many hundreds of hotels in Birmingham so do feel free to explore the options!

Birmingham is easily reached by air, train, bus or car. The hotel is literally opposite New Street Station and has a tram stop outside the front door. There is no free parking available at the hotel which is in the centre of town and driving is not advised, however, there are plenty of NCP car parks nearby.

## The Conference

The conference will be all day Saturday and Sunday morning but with optional wrap around events on Friday and Sunday afternoons, a quiz on the Friday evening and a celebratory dinner with speaker on the Saturday evening. You can pick and choose which days and

events you want to attend. Our conference title is "Precious Gems" and the main speakers reflect this in a wide variety of ways.

## Weekend Timeline

Friday afternoon from 2pm – Wraparound events around Birmingham (*various prices, see below*)

Friday evening 8.30pm – Quiz evening (*free*)

Saturday 9am-5pm – Day conference (*£65, including lunch*)

Saturday evening 7 for 7.30pm – Conference Dinner (*£38, including speaker*)

Sunday 9 for 9.30am-2pm – Half day conference (*£40 including lunch*)

Sunday from 2pm - Wraparound events around Birmingham (*various prices, see below*)

## Saturday

Our first speaker is 60's icon **Valerie Singleton**. She joined the **BBC** in 1961 as a continuity announcer and in 1962 joined *Blue Peter*, where she stayed until 1972. She then continued until 1975 in a part-time role as a 'roving reporter'. Along with **John Noakes**, she continues to be more closely associated with *Blue Peter* than any other former presenter.

During her time on *Blue Peter*, Valerie accompanied Princess Anne on her first solo trip overseas on a Kenyan Royal Safari in 1971. In 1998, the two women met to reminisce about the Royal safari for one of *Blue Peter's* fortieth anniversary programmes. The documentary on the Royal Safari led to a spin-off series, *Blue Peter Special Assignment*, in which Valerie was solo presenter. It was shown at weekends and ran from 1973 to 1981. Initially each edition focused on European capital cities, but later covered islands and well-known historic figures. During her time on *Blue Peter*, Valerie also presented another BBC children's show, *Val Meets The VIPs*, a chat show which ran for three series during 1973–

74. Each edition featured an interview with a single public figure to which an audience of children were invited to put across their questions. A guest in March 1973 was the then Secretary of State for Education, Margaret Thatcher, who when asked if she would like to be Prime Minister said that she did not have enough experience, nor would there be a "woman Prime Minister in my lifetime".

In 1994 Valerie was awarded the OBE for her services to children's television. She still makes occasional guest appearances on *Blue Peter*. A true GEM and an icon of the '60s

Then we have **Peter Liddle MBE** who was County Archaeologist of Leicestershire when the body of Richard the Third was discovered in the car park. What a GEM of a find that was! Peter joined Leicestershire Museums in 1976 as Archaeological Survey Officer, having spent 6 years working as a site archaeologist in his vacation time. In 1997 he became Keeper of Archaeology running both the Museum curatorial side and the role normally called County Archaeology (overseeing planning and records). Having taken early retirement, he became Community Archaeologist for the County, finishing in 2012.

He was an Associate Lecturer at Leicester University on the Certificate of Archaeology course until that was wound up and is still an Honorary Visiting Fellow.

He was the Chair of judges for the British Archaeological Award for Community Archaeology and have recently joined the editorial board of the Journal of Community Archaeology.

After a buffet lunch, with time to chat with friends new and old, we have a selection of workshops from which you can choose:

*(New speaker, replacing Steven Bruce)*

### **Jason Middleton, 'A History of Jewellery'**

This talk looks at the role Jewellery has played from the earliest civilisations to the modern day. Periods such as the Renaissance, Victorian Period, Art Deco, Art Nouveau to Jewellery online today.

### **Carolyn Kirby, Victorian Scientists and Scandals**

Join novelist Carolyn Kirby for a talk which will reveal the real people and events underlying her award-winning novel *The Conviction of Cora Burns* which is set in 19th century Birmingham. Her illustrated lecture will focus on three controversial Victorians: Francis Galton, Arthur Munby and W.T. Stead. This will be followed by Q and A's and a chance to buy a copy of the book.

### **Robin Burton, Our Heritage of Song**

We, the English, have a great treasure chest. It contains the songs of the people. This talk explores the contents of that chest. Robin will use pictures, songs and community singing to illustrate a romantic story of a history that was so very nearly lost to us; a history that was rescued from the brink by a dedicated band of song collectors.

The talk examines a colourful cast of characters including Sabine Baring Gould, the writer of "Onward Christian Soldiers", who collected songs from the farm workers in rural Devon in the 1870s, and who was also known as a prodigious author, travel writer and author of the definitive work on Werewolves! It looks at how some of the

song collectors, such as Ralph Vaughan Williams, used the songs to give their own compositions a unique character. Robin will also cover how the songs have prompted the revival of traditions, such as the Stroud Wassail.

### **Marion Molteno, Creative Writing**

*Please note that this workshop has had to be cancelled. Delegates who had chosen this option will be automatically reassigned to Jason Middleton's workshop.*

### **Rachel Thorn, Drama Improvisation Workshop**

Rachel will be running a workshop looking at the skill of improvisation. Improvisation is great fun to do as well as being one of the best means of finding your way through a scene or into the head of a character. It is the starting point for devised theatre since it allows writers and directors to use their actors' skills to create and develop themes and ideas for plays; it can give drama a definite sense of truth. It is also used widely for role playing in educational and professional training contexts, such as where sensitive issues need to be tackled by coming at them through an imaginary scenario, when learners need to understand what it would be like 'if'. Improvisation is also vital for storytellers of all kinds, both those who do it for a living and those who just want to entertain their friends by adding a bit of colour to a tale.

Our last speaker for the day will be **Dr Nick Barratt**. (*Originally booked to speak on Sunday*) Most of us will recognise Nick from his appearances on the show 'Who Do You Think You Are?' but Nick has many other stings to his bow.... Dr Nick Barratt obtained a PhD in history from King's College London in 1996, editing the 1225 Exchequer pipe roll and several Exchequer receipt rolls from the 1220s. Nick started work in television for BBC as a specialist archive researcher for a number of programmes, including House Detectives. He has gone on to present or appear on other shows such as Hidden House Histories, Secrets from the Attic, So You Think You're Royal, Live the Dream as Seen on Screen and Missing Millions. As an author, Nick has written several books, including guides such as The Who Do You Think You Are Encyclopaedia of Genealogy and Tracing the History of Your House to general history books that include Lost Voices from the Titanic, Greater London: The Story of the Suburbs and The Forgotten Spy. His next book will be The RestlessKings. He was also a weekly columnist for the Telegraph and acted as Editor in Chief for genealogy magazine Your Family History.

Nick will talk to us about historical and genealogical GEMS using his wide and varied experience of historical research and academia. In 2016 Nick was made an Honorary Associate Professor of Public History at the University of Nottingham in recognition of his work in the field and chairs the Partners Advisory Group for the Midlands 3 Cities Doctoral Training Partnership. He is also a teaching fellow at the University of Dundee where he supports the Centre for Archive and Information Studies. At the moment Nick is working on a project to apply the latest research on digital memory curation to find more dignified forms of care for those diagnosed with dementia. Nick is a Director at the Open University and President of the Federation of Family History Societies and was Director of the Senate House library.

## **Books and bookings**

We are trying to make this Conference as environmentally friendly as possible, hence the recommendation to come by train, and have debated long and hard about whether to give attendees the usual Conference bags! We have decided that rather than have stalls selling items we will have a giant book exchange and would like everyone to bring along a book and take a different one home with them. Any leftover will go to a local charity.

## **Dinner with an old favourite!**

On Saturday evening there will be a chance to relax with a conference dinner at the Burlington Hotel. If you did attend the Conference dinner in 2010 or 2013 you will never forget our brilliant after-dinner speaker Lesley Smith in her personae first as Queen Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup> and then as Nell Gwynn. You may recollect there was quite a bit of banter about Elizabethan contraception! Following on this theme Lesley's presentation after our Celebration Dinner on the Saturday evening will be "Sex and the Tudors". **Not to be missed.**

## **Sunday**

Sunday morning will start with coffee from 9am to help us all wake up on a Sunday morning! We will then move straight into two workshops sessions at 9.30 and 11.00 (with a short break in the middle) – the workshops will repeat so you will be able to choose two from these exciting options:

### **Ian Maber, Lost in Translation**

Ian's presentations include animation, sound, humorous tales all designed to keep the audience captivated and laughing as they experience the world of The Teller of Tales. Talk Topics are a combination of storytelling and old-fashioned stand-up comedy. At first glance, this talk appears to be a formal lecture. But like all Teller of Tales presentations, all is not what it seems.

This is a humorous and light-hearted look at the way we communicate. With many visuals and misinterpretations of words and signs, this highly amusing presentation demonstrates a variety of ideas and signs from across the world. Featuring Stan and Kitty with their somewhat unique take on life, it will amuse and bemuse a wide range of adult audiences.

\*Please note this does contain some adult material, even though it is quite innocent.

### **Ruth Lowe, Mary Quant**

Ruth will talk about Mary Quant - her life, career and designs and will use original clothes, memorabilia etc to capture your interest. "Immortalized by fashion iconography as the originator of the miniskirt, London designer Mary Quant had an art-school background and had been designing and manufacturing her own clothes since the late 1950s. She had one distinct advantage over previous designers: She was a contemporary of her clients, rather than of an older generation. Convinced that fashion needed to be affordable to be accessible to the young, she opened her own retail boutique, Bazaar, on the Kings Road in 1955, introducing the "mod" era and the "Chelsea look."

### **Mary Bodfish, How we used to live**

Mary has taught local history research and palaeography for the University of Birmingham's School of Continuing Studies and says, "Sharing my discoveries via my talks has been a delight to me for over 20 years." Mary will use probate inventories to take us right into the homes of our forebears, enabling us to take a tour round the house of a late 17th-century yeoman and see in detail how his family cooked, dined, slept, cleaned, and clothed themselves.

### **Roger Butler, Canal History and Heritage**

Roger offers a range of waterway talks, including presentations using archive photos dating back to the 1950s. For us he will give a colourful presentation covering all aspects of the waterways and paying particular attention to the many canals which shape Birmingham to this day.

After your workshops we will reconvene to listen to our keynote speaker **Professor Anthony Grayling**, philosopher, author and broadcaster and Vice-President of the British Humanist Association. (*Originally due to speak on Saturday*) will speak about how the GEMS of our friendships and memories lead to a happy life, what philosophy teaches about what is required to live a flourishing life in pursuit of good values. Anthony Grayling MA, DPhil (Oxon) FRSL, FRSA is Master of the New College of the Humanities, and a Supernumerary Fellow of St Anne's College, Oxford. Until 2011 he was Professor of Philosophy at Birkbeck College, University of London. He has written and edited over thirty books on philosophy and other subjects; among his most recent are "The Good Book", "Ideas That Matter", "Liberty in the Age of Terror" and "To Set Prometheus Free". For several years he wrote the "Last Word" column for the Guardian newspaper and a column for the Times. He is a frequent contributor to the Literary Review, Observer, Independent on Sunday, Times Literary Supplement, Index on Censorship and New Statesman, and is an equally frequent broadcaster on BBC Radios 4, 3 and the World Service.

The Sunday conference session will finish with a buffet lunch leaving you free to explore Birmingham, with us or alone, for the afternoon.

### **If all this isn't enough!**

We have a wide selection of optional wrap around events many of which emphasise the history and architecture of Birmingham, including the hidden art deco buildings of central Birmingham and another walk discovering surprising aspects of Birmingham's history. The famous "Back to Backs" (N.T.) a canal trip and a visit to the Barbour Institute of Fine Art at Birmingham University and/or the nearby Winterbourne Gardens make a selection with something for everyone.

Even if you decide to "go it alone" Birmingham is a city with a wealth of interesting sights and venues ranging from wonderful museums and art galleries to the biggest Primark Store in the World.

## **FRIDAY Wraparound Events**

**Friday 10 September**

**Museum of The Jewellery Quarter**

**2.30pm and 3.15pm - Tours last 1 hour (approx)**

<https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/jewellery>

**Step back in time to a perfectly preserved jewellery workshop.** When the owners, Smith and Pepper, decided to retire they just walked out and the factory lay undisturbed for many years leaving a fascinating time capsule for us to explore!

Enjoy a lively guided tour and watch demonstrations of traditional skills.

**£11 including refreshments. Max 15 each tour.**

Meet in the Museum 15 mins before the Tour starts - 75-80 Vyse Street, Birmingham B18 6HA. Lots of ways to get there!

<https://www.rome2rio.com/s/Birmingham-New-Street-Station/Jewellery-Quarter>

**Friday 10 September**

**Birmingham Back to Backs -**

**National Trust 2pm and 3pm - Tours**

**last approx 75 mins.**

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/birmingham-back-to-backs>

**Carefully restored, atmospheric 19th-century courtyard of working people's houses**

A glimpse into the lives of the ordinary people who helped make Birmingham an extraordinary city.

On a fascinating guided tour, step back in time at Birmingham's last surviving court of back to backs; houses built literally back-to-back around a communal courtyard.

Moving from the 1840s through to the 1970s, discover the lives of some of the former residents who crammed into these small houses to live and work. With fires alight in the grates, and sounds and smells from the past, experience an evocative and intimate insight into life at the Back to Backs.

Once your tour is done, why not take a reminder of your visit home from the gift shop or take a sweet walk down memory lane in the 1930s sweet shop.

Meet in the Museum 10 -15 mins before the Tour starts

**£10 or free if a member of The National Trust. (Max 8 on each tour)**

**Friday 10 September**

**Birmingham Cathedral, The Cathedral Church of Saint**

**Philip 2pm - Tour lasts 90 mins**

<http://www.birminghamcathedral.com/>

Birmingham Cathedral is the city's Anglican cathedral. The church of St Philip was built for the growing town of Birmingham in 1715. The church became a cathedral when a new Diocese was formed in 1905.

The most significant treasures are the stunning set of stained-glass windows by Birmingham born artist, Edward Burne-Jones.

The cathedral has a strong tradition of musical excellence and regular evensong takes place every day during school term time.

The cathedral is at the heart of the city and welcomes visitors every day of the year.

Come and enjoy a Guided Tour where you will find out more about how the church became a cathedral in the town that became a city. See key features of the interior especially the beautiful windows and hear stories of some of the people connected with the building.

Meet at the entrance to the Cathedral - Colmore Row, Birmingham B3 2QB

**£5 including refreshments after the tour (Maximum of 20 people)**

**Friday 10 September**

**Art Deco and William Bloye**

**Walk 2pm – Walk lasts about 2 hours**

A walk around the hidden Art Deco buildings of Birmingham city centre, and the work of

Birmingham's foremost sculptor William Bloye. Birmingham is a city of change and a city of hidden architectural gems. Look carefully and you can find fantastic Art Deco buildings

everywhere. William Bloye was Birmingham's unofficial civic sculpture. His work can be seen all over Birmingham adorning everything from hospitals to pubs and even a supermarket.

*The tour is about 2 miles and takes approximately 2 hours. The terrain is mainly flat, but good mobility is required as we will be in an urban landscape. If you are interested in*

*Birmingham, it's history and architecture, this is for you.*

**Lead by Kevin Thomas.**

**Meet at 2o'clock at the Museum and Art Gallery.**

**£6 (maximum of 20 people)**

**Friday 10 September at 2pm**

### **Classical Birmingham Walk**

The walk will last about 2 hours. It is city centre based and is about one mile in length covering New St, Colmore Row and St Phillips church. Exploring the heart of Birmingham, with medieval monks, Victorian reformers, builders, architects, ambition and turmoil. This walk has it all and nowhere has more surprises.

**Lead by Ian Jelf**

**Meet at 2o'clock at Statue of Queen Victoria, Victoria Square. Friday  
£6.50 (maximum 25 people)**

### **SUNDAY Wraparound Events**

**Sunday 12 September - 3pm and 3.15pm - Tours last approx 75 mins. Birmingham Back to Backs - National Trust**

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/birmingham-back-to-backs>

**Carefully restored, atmospheric 19th-century courtyard of working people's houses - a glimpse into the lives of the ordinary people who helped make Birmingham an extraordinary city.**

On a fascinating guided tour, step back in time at Birmingham's last surviving court of back to backs; houses built literally back-to-back around a communal courtyard.

Moving from the 1840s through to the 1970s, discover the lives of some of the former residents who crammed into these small houses to live and work. With fires alight in the grates, and sounds and smells from the past, experience an evocative and intimate insight into life at the Back to Backs.

Once your tour is done, why not take a reminder of your visit home from the gift shop or take a sweet walk down memory lane in the 1930s sweet shop.

Meet in the Museum 10 -15 mins before the Tour starts

**£10 or free if a member of The National Trust. Max 8 on each Tour**

### **Boat Trip - Heritage City**

**Tour 3pm - 4pm**

<https://sherborneharf.co.uk/>

The City Heritage Route covers the Oozells Street and Icknield Port loops of the original James Brindley Canal, a section of the Sir Thomas Telford's Main Line and the area around the National Indoor Arena and the International Convention Centre before going through the Worcester Bar at Gas Street Basin and turning to disembark at the ICC.

All our Cruises depart from THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE QUAY SIDE; please arrive 15 minutes before the trip is due to commence.

**£9 Max 40**

## **Wraparound Event on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September with Sue Mack to The Barber Institute of Fine Art and Winterbourne House and Garden**

We will leave from The Burlington Hotel at **2.15pm**. Meet in the foyer outside the main conference rooms, a maximum of 20 people.

Please bring with you either: your Bus Pass, Contactless Card, or £4 payment for the bus, a return ticket.

We are using either of the X20, X21, and X22 buses to get to Edgbaston Park Road, for visiting Winterbourne House and garden and /or The Barber Institute of Fine Art.

**Winterbourne is a House and Botanic Garden**, entry is £7.20 for all areas, it has a tearoom and shop. The site is open from 10.30 - 5.30pm. You can tour the house and learn about the family who lived there and walk through the extensive gardens. (The tearoom might close earlier, do check times when you arrive.)

**The Barber Institute** is open from 11.00 – 5.00pm and is free. They would welcome a donation. There are four main rooms plus another space which might have a temporary exhibition in it. The rooms have a variety of paintings, and sculptures, with three small rooms off the main ones, two dedicated to drawings and one to coins. There is an automated coffee machine for drinks and a small shop.

I will be with you for all of the afternoon in The Barber Institute and will show you where to get your bus back in to town should you wish to leave earlier.

Do use these links for more information.

<https://www.winterbourne.org.uk/>

<https://barber.org.uk/>

I am looking forward to meeting you on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> and sharing this part of Birmingham with you.

## **Extra Information**

If the days and /or timings of the Wraparound Events do not fit in with your plans most of the places we have chosen can be visited independently so this information might be of help.

Birmingham is quite a compact city and not too hilly! It is available on the City mapper app which you can use on a smart phone and is very useful for getting from A to B <https://citymapper.com/birmingham>

It has three stations, plenty of buses and a Tram that goes all the way to Wolverhampton, via The Jewellery Quarter!

**This Website gives a good overview** <http://birminghamheritage.org.uk/index.html>

If the Back to Backs Wraparound Tours do not suit you time wise you can go independently but visits are by guided tours only. Booking prior to visit is essential. Please email [backtobacks@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:backtobacks@nationaltrust.org.uk) or call on 0121 666 7671  
Think Tank - <https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank>  
Digbeth - full of Street Art amongst other things!  
<https://visitbirmingham.com/inspire-me/areas/digbeth>

We tried to book Tours of the Symphony Hall and The Town Hall but apparently, they are awaiting new staff to arrange this so not possible at the moment. You may be able to peep inside or even book a show or concert though!  
<https://www.thsh.co.uk/>

Shopping and eating - amongst other areas, The Bullring and Grand Central at New Street <https://www.bullring.co.uk/> and The Mailbox <https://mailboxlife.com/> - both areas have a good range of shops and places to eat.

Birmingham has The Electric Cinema - the oldest working cinema in the country with some very comfy seats! <https://www.theelectric.co.uk/home.php>

### **The Jewellery Quarter has loads to see!**

<https://www.birmingham-jewellery-quarter.net/>

The **Birmingham Jewellery Quarter** is Birmingham's Historic and Vibrant Gem. With over 800 businesses, 100 Specialist Retailers and 50 Contemporary Designer Makers it is still the UK's centre for Jewellery. This is a fascinating area of Birmingham and has been described by English Heritage as 'a national treasure' and 'a place of unique character'.

Some of the Museums require booking so do look at the websites. You can get some discounts if you go to more than one too!

Some ideas of what to visit there

### **The Museum of the Jewellery Quarter**

<https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/jewellery>

(Guided Tours and more info in Wrap Arounds as well)

### **The Pen Museum** <https://penmuseum.org.uk/visit/>

The Pen Museum promotes and preserves the important legacy of Birmingham's pen trade, which, at its height employed an estimated 8,000 workers, of which 70% were women. The mass production of affordable pens helped improve literacy worldwide and wherever a pen was used it had most likely been manufactured in Birmingham.

### **The Coffin Works Welcome to Newman Brothers** <http://www.coffinworks.org/>

Be transported back to the factory's heyday in the 1960s and immerse yourself in the sights, sounds and smells of factory life during this decade. It produced the fittings for the funerals of Joseph Chamberlain, Winston Churchill and the Queen Mother.

### **St Paul's Church and Square** <https://www.stpaulsjq.church/>

St Paul's is an "Inclusive Church" and was developed out of a desire to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

## **LATEST NEWS**

Birmingham now has its very own Banksy in Vyse Street near the Jewellery Quarter Station. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-50728590>

## **If you stay a while Birmingham is not far from many interesting places**

Soho House - <https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/soho>

Aston Hall - <https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/aston>

Sarehole Mill -

<https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/sarehole> The

National Memorial Arboretum - <http://www.thenma.org.uk/>

Warwick Castle - <https://www.warwick-castle.com/>

Kenilworth Castle - <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/kenilworth-castle/> Stratford upon Avon - <https://www.visitstratforduponavon.co.uk>

So, what are you waiting for? Book your options, book your train ticket and book your place in NWR history