

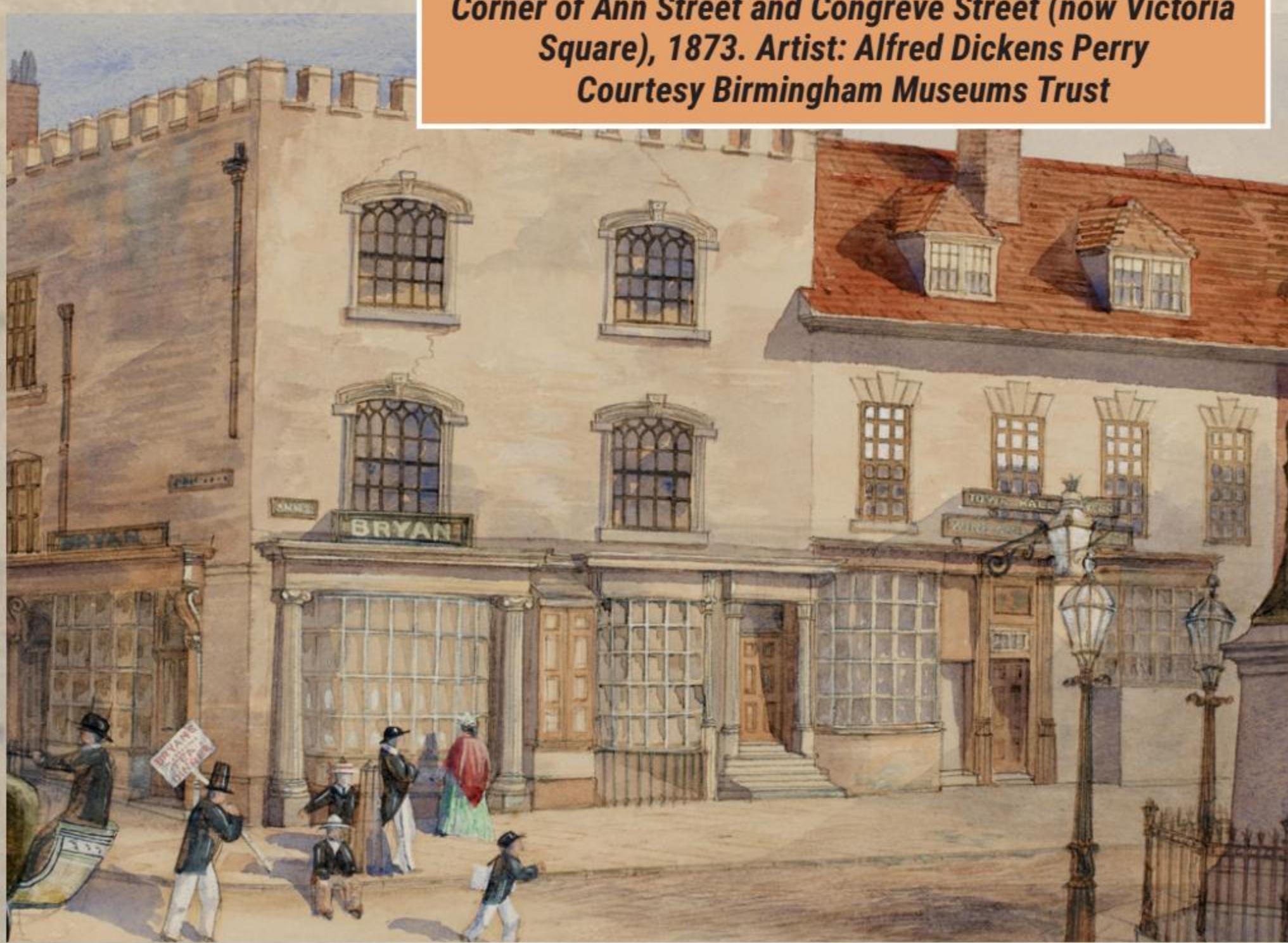
COLMORE HISTORY

MAGAZINE

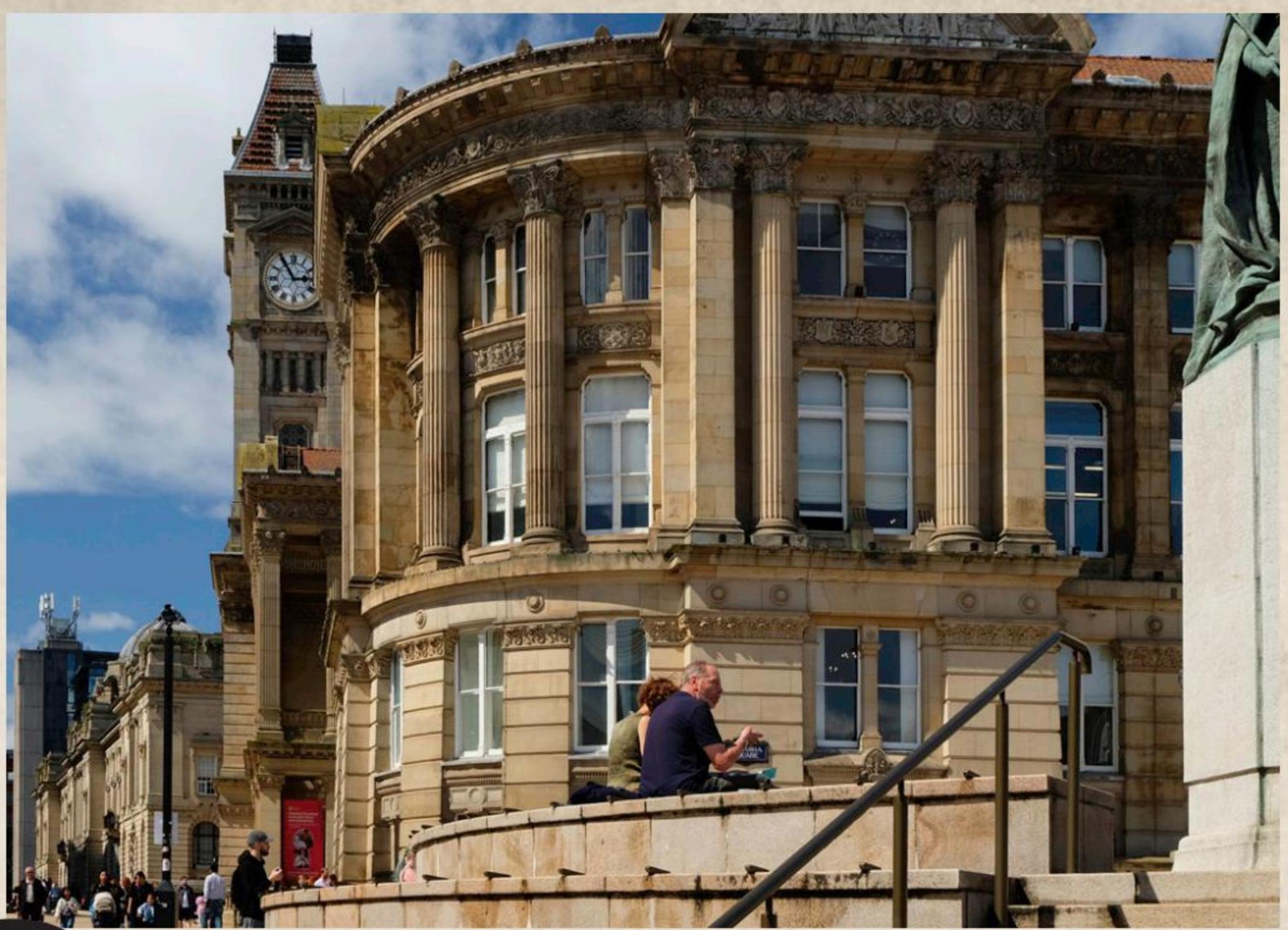


George Shaw

BIRMINGHAM'S FIRST PHOTOGRAPHER



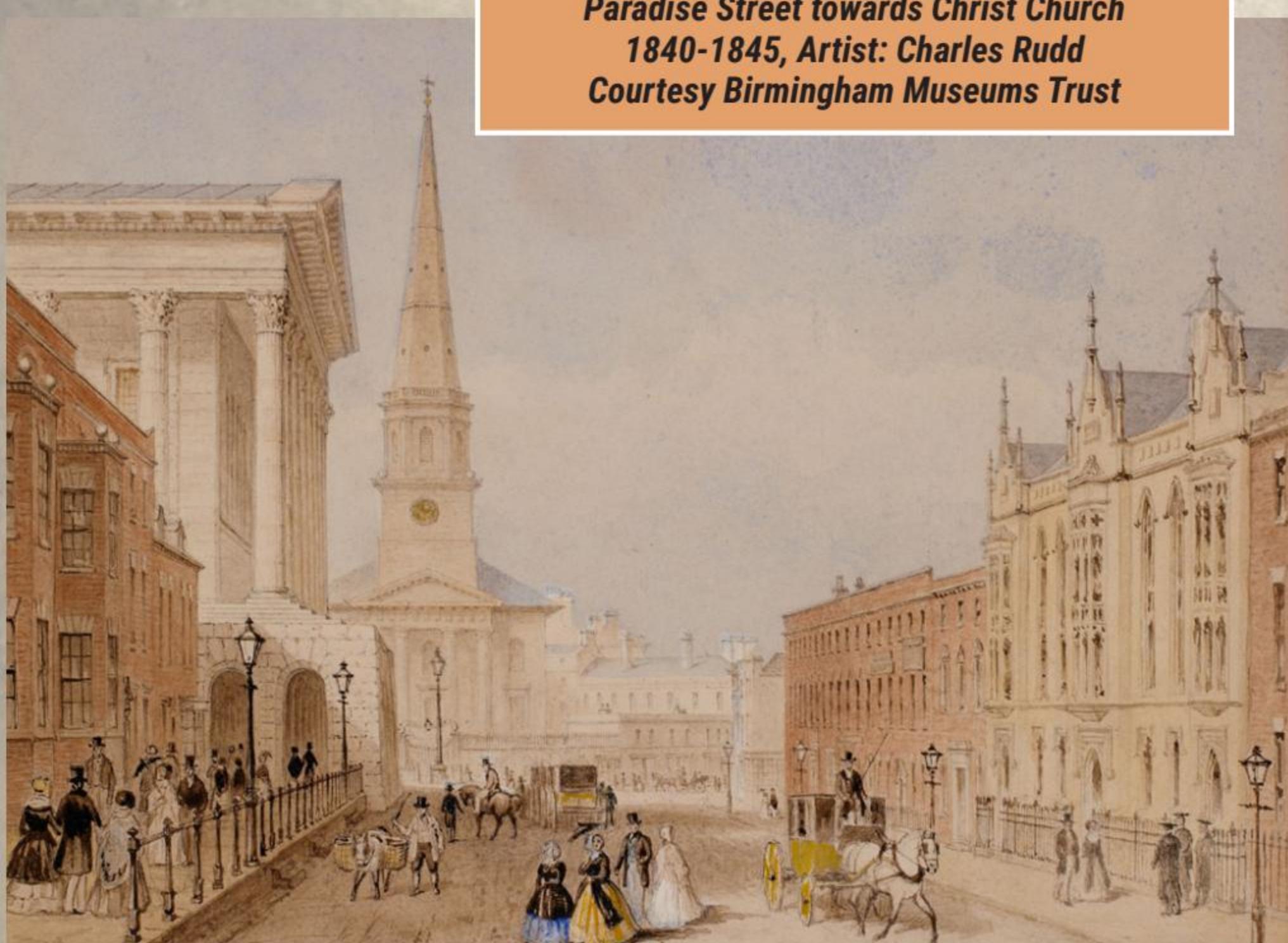
Corner of Ann Street and Congreve Street (now Victoria Square), 1873. Artist: Alfred Dickens Perry
Courtesy Birmingham Museums Trust



THEN & NOW



Church Street, date and source unknown



Paradise Street towards Christ Church
1840-1845, Artist: Charles Rudd
Courtesy Birmingham Museums Trust



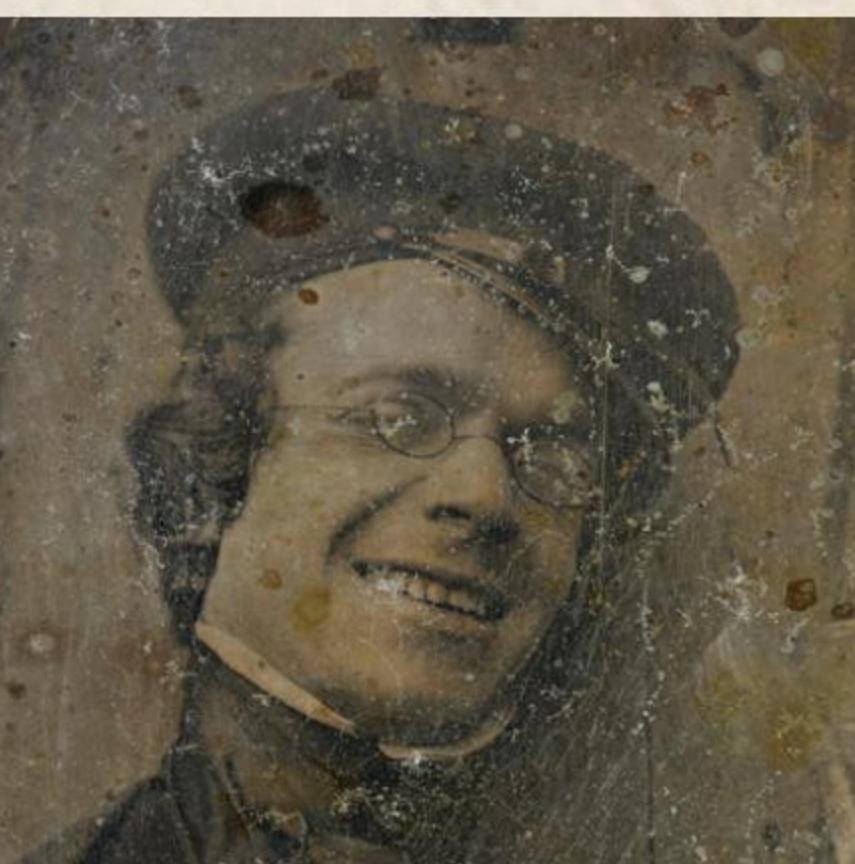
WHAT'S INSIDE

COLMORE HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS



OLD SQUARE

PAGES 4&5



GEORGE SHAW

PAGES 6&7

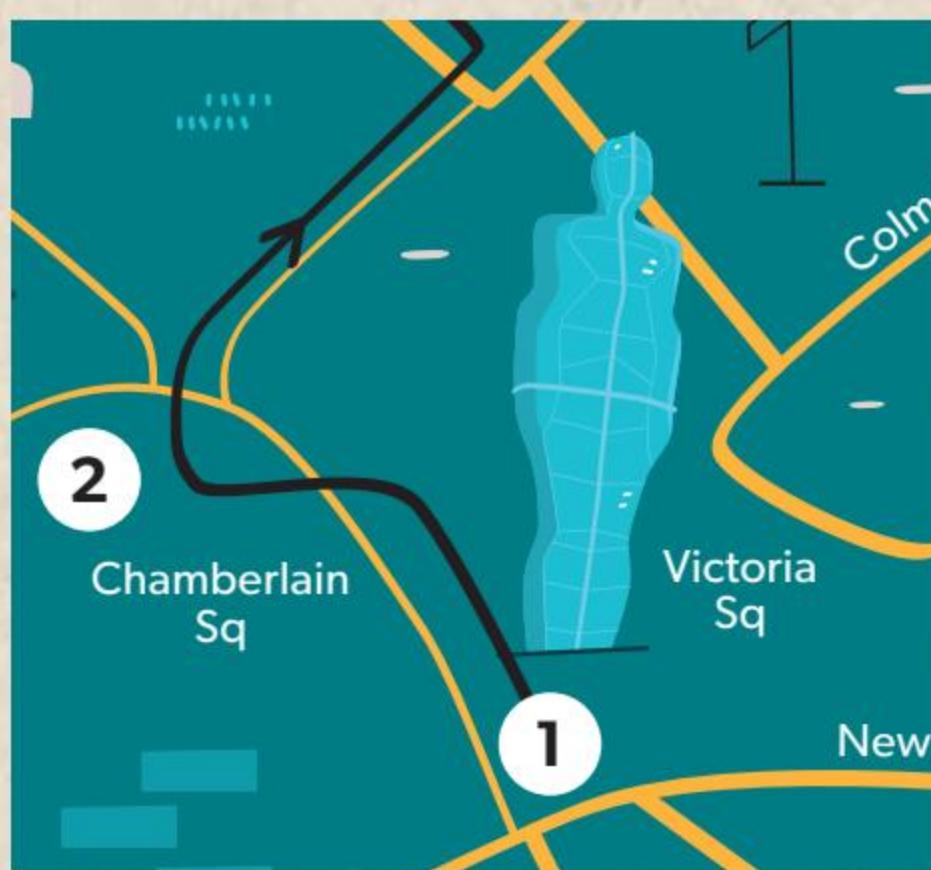


SCHOOL OF ART

PAGES 8&9

ART ACROSS THE DISTRICT

PAGES 10&11



DECORATIVE COLMORE

PAGES 12&13

BMAG AT 140

PAGES 14&15



COLMORE HISTORY MAGAZINE



Nestled in the vibrant commercial core of Birmingham city-centre, Colmore Business District is more than just a hub of commerce and innovation – it's a living tapestry of history, culture and architectural legacy.

The name Colmore itself traces back to the influential Colmore family, whose estate shaped the very streets we walk today. Their legacy, woven into the city's Georgian and Victorian fabric, continues to echo through the District's grand facades and hidden corners.

This magazine invites you to journey through time and discover the stories that have shaped Colmore into the dynamic District it is today. Through a curated collection of articles with insights and reflections from historians, architects and cultural experts, this booklet celebrates our remarkable area.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all of the contributors whose passion and knowledge have brought these pages to life. Your voices help preserve and share the unique heritage that defines Colmore.

We hope this magazine inspires you to explore, reflect and connect with the past that surrounds us.

*Mike Mounfield, Chief Technical Officer
at Colmore Business District*

Colmore History Magazine is produced by Colmore BID:
colmorebusinessdistrict.com

Designed by Stacey Barnfield:
edwinelliscreativemedia.com

Printed on environmentally, socially and
economically viable paper stock certified by FSC



FORWARD!

THE OLD SQUARE STORY

Once the height of Georgian elegance, Old Square has long been buried beneath layers of Birmingham's restless reinvention. From monastic lands to a fashionable address, then to bustling streets and forgotten subways, its story mirrors the city's own – always changing, always moving forward. This is the tale of a place you've likely passed without a second glance, but where the echoes of Brummagem's past still quietly linger.

Old Square isn't the story of Birmingham, but it is an old and familiar story of the city.

In 1828 the Birmingham comedian James Dobbs first performed "I can't find Brummagem" at the Theatre Royal in New Street. The song lamented the fact that Birmingham had changed so much that it was unrecognisable. Nearly 200 years later there are still people saying the same – that the city they knew is fast disappearing. No one can remember the elegant Georgian

square that was once located there, or the notable individuals and wealthy families who once lived in this exclusive estate.

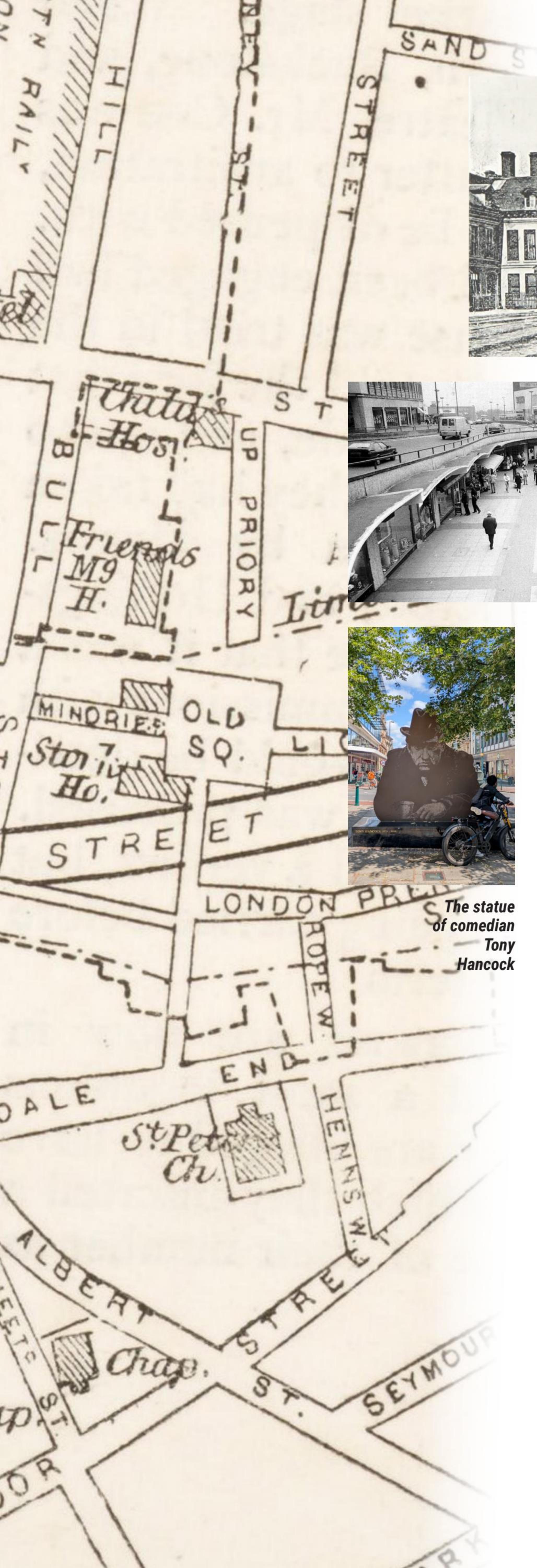
It is easy to walk through Old Square with no knowledge of its name or history, as it is a midpoint on a journey with very little to encourage you to stop. However, if it is a nice day out and you have the time, you may be tempted to sit for a while on the granite plinth next to Tony Hancock, as he nurses his tea and stares glumly out at the world. A quote attributed to the Birmingham born comedian

"I turned my deficiencies into a workable thing" works remarkably well for the city.

Birmingham was recorded as a small insignificant manor in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and the quality of its agricultural land was poor. However, in 1166, Peter de Birmingham (evolved to the Birmingham we know today) bought the right to hold a weekly market from King Henry II. Attracting traders, merchants and makers of all kinds, Birmingham proved more fitting for entrepreneurs and innovators than for farming.



Top: Old Square, 1907 and the Lewis's department store in the 1950s, above



Old Square in 1871 and 1985 (left)



The statue of comedian Tony Hancock

Old Square was built on the site of the medieval Priory of St Thomas of Canterbury, first recorded in 1286. Located on the outskirts of Birmingham, the Augustinian monks may not have heard the banging of metal or smelled the stench of tanning, the everyday sounds and smells of the growing small town. When John Pemberton, a wealthy ironmonger, acquired the land in 1697, it was still outside of the town that had built up around the Bull Ring. By this time, self-made men with new wealth were looking to invest in properties and land. It was a smart move to develop an exclusive estate to target wealthy families, in a location where they could quite literally look down on Birmingham.

There was a long honeymoon period for Old Square as it became home to important families, but the expanding town could not be held back, and in the 18th and 19th centuries Birmingham experienced bouts of recession, social problems and riots. The Stork Hotel opened at the end of the 18th century (formerly house numbers 3 and 4) and the illusion of exclusivity disappeared. Old Square declined in fortune and reputation and was demolished in 1882 due to an Improvement Scheme to remove some of the poorest streets, and

Joseph Chamberlain's vision to create a "great street" (Corporation Street). This ambitious plan to create Birmingham's premier shopping street was at an estimated cost of £1.5million. Redevelopment included The New Theatre, renamed The Grand, opened in 1883 and Lewis's department store opened in 1885. When Birmingham was granted city status in 1889, it was reinventing itself with much swank.

The post-war years were less kind to Old Square and to the wider city. Old buildings were routinely demolished to make way for the modern, with city engineer and surveyor Sir Herbert Manzoni favouring the future over the past. The theatre was demolished in 1960, and other buildings were torn down as their leases ran out. Shops and entertainment had made it a "destination", and Old Square was a major thoroughfare for people and trams, but now buses and cars clogged the busy streets and change became inevitable.

It had a brief interlude as an underground shopping centre and subway (1960s-1980s), the most recent "nostalgic" memory for Brummies. The remaining nearby Victorian buildings have a fading grandeur; it is worth stopping to look up and see the beautiful carvings in their walls. Birmingham's motto, 'Forward', is perfect for a city constantly rebuilding and reinventing itself. But "Brummagem" is not lost. There is history all around us, and the Old Square story is not over yet.

By Linda Spurdle

George Shaw

THE CITY'S PHOTOGRAPHIC PIONEER

While Birmingham celebrates icons like Boulton and Watt or Ozzy Osbourne, few know George Shaw – a working-class pioneer who created the city's first photograph in 1839. A chemist, patent agent, artist, and educator, Shaw played a key role in shaping Victorian Birmingham's scientific and cultural life.

As new research by artist **JO GANE** uncovers his legacy, Shaw's place in the city's history is finally being recognised.

Birmingham has its share of heroes who have forged the identity of the city. Iconic figures such as Boulton and Watt, more recently Benjamin Zephaniah, Ozzy Osbourne, Joan Armatrading and even the fictional Tommy Shelby are publicly celebrated and commemorated in the city, yet few people on the street today know the story of George Shaw and the contribution that he made to early photography in our city. Our George Shaw is an unsung working-class hero for the city.

This George Shaw is not the painter from Coventry or George Bernard Shaw. The son of a glass maker from Dudley, George Shaw (1818 – 1904) had a long career as a patent agent, based on Temple Row and later at Cannon



Street where he assisted local manufacturers in protecting their designs. He was also a lecturer in chemistry, an early photographer and an artist based in Birmingham during the mid-nineteenth century. He made the first daguerreotype photograph in Birmingham in 1839.

Shaw contributed to civic life in the Victorian city and shared his knowledge widely, even offering advice and printed instructions for obtaining a patent free of charge. He lectured widely on scientific developments and chemistry at many of the educational

George Shaw, with a Stourbridge glass. c.1844, Self-portrait, daguerreotype.

This self-portrait of George Shaw is startlingly informal for the date it was made.

institutions in the city that were later amalgamated to form the Birmingham and Midland Institute, including, the Mechanics Institute on Newhall Street, where he was vice president in 1841. His understanding and commitment to the value of education for all is further reflected in his role on the committee of the first free public library in the city, the Shakespeare Memorial Library.

In the mid 1840s, Shaw's scientific work caught the attention of eminent scientist Michael Faraday, who reportedly



*New Street,
Birmingham, c.1844
by George Shaw,
daguerreotype.*

This is at the end of New Street, near the current site of the Odeon today. This photograph by George Shaw shows the Pantechnetheca building on New Street, a retail premises which was set up by Charles Jones to showcase the wares of Birmingham manufacturers. At the time this photograph was made it was a drapers and tailors owned by Samuel Hyam.



*Queen's College is shown as the gothic building on the right-hand side in this watercolour by Charles Rudd.
Image: Birmingham Museums Trust*

commented to Shaw's colleague, John Percy (1817 – 1889) on a visit to Birmingham that "in many things I am to him a child." Shaw's extensive lecturing activities extended beyond Birmingham and he delivered lectures in London at the Royal Society on improvements he had discovered to the early photographic process of the daguerreotype.

Shaw's involvement in public life in Birmingham included championing the manufacturers of the city, and in 1849, he organised the Exhibition of Manufacturers and Art as part of the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at the purpose-built Bingley Hall. His role in this industrial exhibition set up future work on a grand stage; in 1851 Shaw served as a juror at the Great Exhibition held at Crystal Palace in London and later, he was a juror for the 1862 International Exhibition.

A capable watercolourist, Shaw also made artwork in the landscape, often at Packington Park to the south of the city, where he painted, sketched and photographed alongside his friend and neighbour, the landscape painter, Frederick Henry Henshaw. Some of these calotype photographs remain today in the collection of the Musée D'Orsay

in Paris. During this period in the 1840s and 50s, Henshaw's studio on Green Lane in Small Heath was described as the "centre of artistic, literary, and scientific society in Birmingham."

Shaw was employed at Queen's College on Paradise Street as Professor of Chemistry. The building of Queen's College remains today as Queen's College Chambers on Paradise Street, across the tram lines from the Town Hall. Here, Shaw worked alongside renowned metallurgist John Percy, who was Professor of Organic Chemistry. Alongside his colleagues at Queen's College, Shaw was an expert in what was then a revolutionary new manufacturing process; electroplating, which originated in Victorian Birmingham. Shaw and Percy made early photographs together and shared their knowledge through photographic and scientific networks, collaborating on a series of

experiments into the light-sensitive qualities of photographic materials in 1844.

Shaw's work remains important in Birmingham today as it offers an overlooked and untold story; the chance to reconnect to the innovative industrial and artistic past of the city. George Shaw's story highlights the leading role that Birmingham played in advancing photographic materials and technology.

In late 2014, Pete James (1958 – 2018), former curator of photographs at Birmingham Central Library, uncovered a private collection of daguerreotypes by George Shaw that tell this extraordinary story, some of which are pictured here. These rare and beautiful images are the subject of a recent practice-based PhD by artist Jo Gane across the School of Art, Birmingham City University and the Photographic History Research Centre, De Montfort University, funded by Midlands 4 Cities doctoral training partnership. Colmore BID are working with Jo Gane to develop a project that raises awareness of George Shaw's important role in Birmingham's history.

Artist Jo Gane will give an illustrated lecture on George Shaw at the BMI on 15 September 2025 from 12:00-13:30.

**PATENT OFFICE,
CANNON STREET, BIRMINGHAM.**

PARTIES about to SECURE their INVENTIONS by PATENT, or their DESIGNS by REGISTRATION, may obtain the PRINTED INSTRUCTIONS GRATIS by applying personally, or by letter, to

**MR. GEORGE SHAW,
PATENT OFFICE,
CANNON STREET, BIRMINGHAM.**

7030

*Advertisement for Shaw's Patent agency,
Birmingham Journal, 17th Aug 1857*



‘More than just an educational institution, the School of Art’s building is a testament to the city’s artistic ambitions’

The Birmingham School of Art building, located in the heart of the city at Margaret Street, is a prime example of Birmingham’s rich cultural history. Designed by architect John Henry Chamberlain and completed by father-and-son architects William and Frederick Martin in 1885, the building’s Venetian Gothic style stands out in a city known for its industrial heritage. More than just an educational institution, the School of Art building is a testament to the city’s artistic ambitions and the changing face of the Colmore Business District.

A Masterpiece in Venetian Gothic Style

Chamberlain’s design for the Birmingham School of Art is a bold embrace of Venetian Gothic architecture, characterised by intricate stone carvings, pointed

CREATIVE HEART

BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL OF ART, MARGARET STREET

arches, and detailed decorative elements. The building’s exterior, built with deep red brick and rich sandstone, is adorned with terracotta details that enhance the visual impact of the structure. The design draws inspiration from the grand Venetian palaces, with a decorative flair that conveys a sense of both elegance and grandeur.

Notable features include the grand, central entrance framed by decorative arches and columns, adding vertical emphasis and creating a striking silhouette against the city skyline. A continuous band of Doulton’s tile work containing lozenges, lilies and sunflowers on blue backgrounds runs around the building. Large, multi-paned windows allow natural light to flood the interior, fostering an ideal environment for creativity.

The sculptural elements around the windows and doorways serve as a constant reminder of the importance of craftsmanship in art and design.

The building cost £21,254 (at the time), and was funded from donations from the Tangye brothers (£10,937) and Louisa Ryland (£10,000). The site was given to the Newhall estate by William Barwick Cregoe Colmore, the last of the Colmore family to live and work in Birmingham. The nearby Barwick Street is named after him.

Context within Colmore Business District

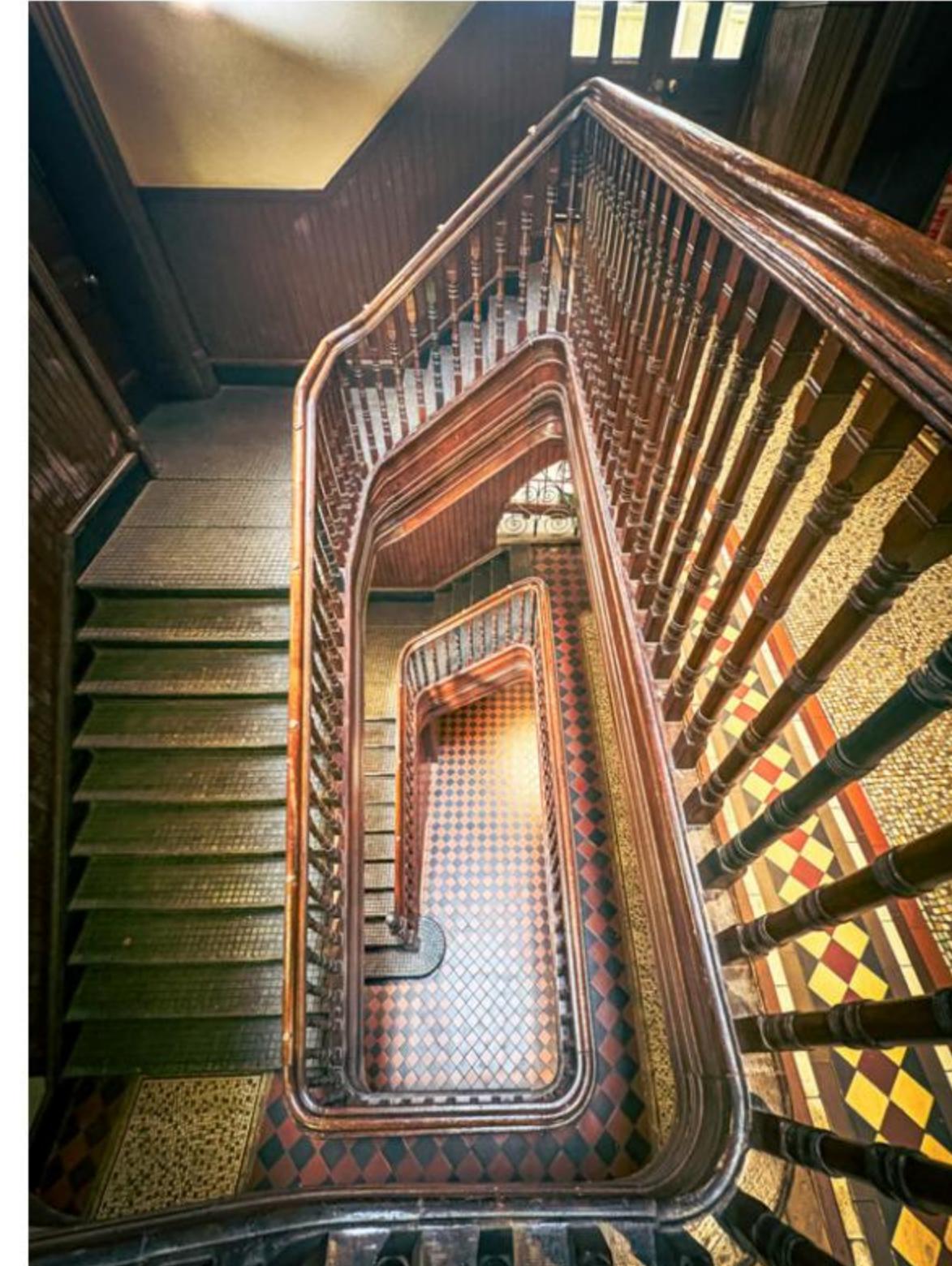
The Birmingham School of Art sits within what is now known as

the Colmore Business District, an area that has evolved over the centuries from open green fields to a genteel suburb and, by the 19th and 20th centuries, to a commercial centre with a largely 'white-collar' character. Unlike Birmingham's industrial districts, which became synonymous with the city's manufacturing success, the Colmore area was carefully regulated to maintain a more refined atmosphere. Leases on the land often stipulated 'no chimneys,' ensuring that industrial smoke and grime would not taint the District's aesthetic. This allowed the area to become a centre for professional and medical activity, and as the middle classes began moving from the grand but fading Georgian houses to the new suburbs and surrounding villages. With the arrival of the railways, Colmore's Victorian commercial buildings and cultural institutions began to thrive.

The Birmingham School of Art's position within this district reflects its role as a cultural and intellectual beacon in an otherwise business-driven area. The juxtaposition of the grand Venetian Gothic building with the modern glass-and-steel office buildings nearby highlights the continuity of Birmingham's creative energy, even as the city's economic landscape shifted. The School of Art's enduring presence in Colmore Business District serves as a reminder of the city's commitment to both preserving its heritage and embracing the future.

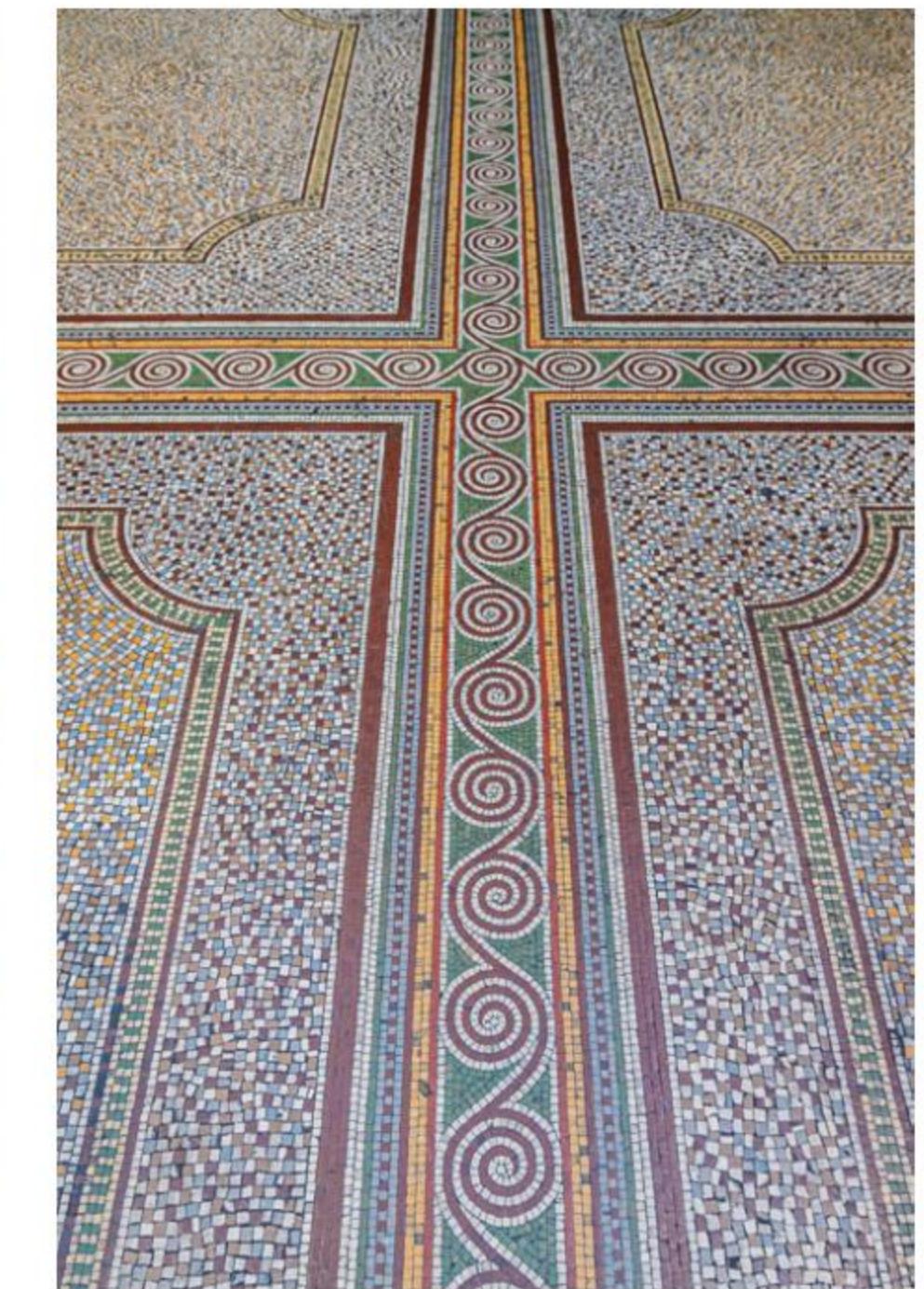
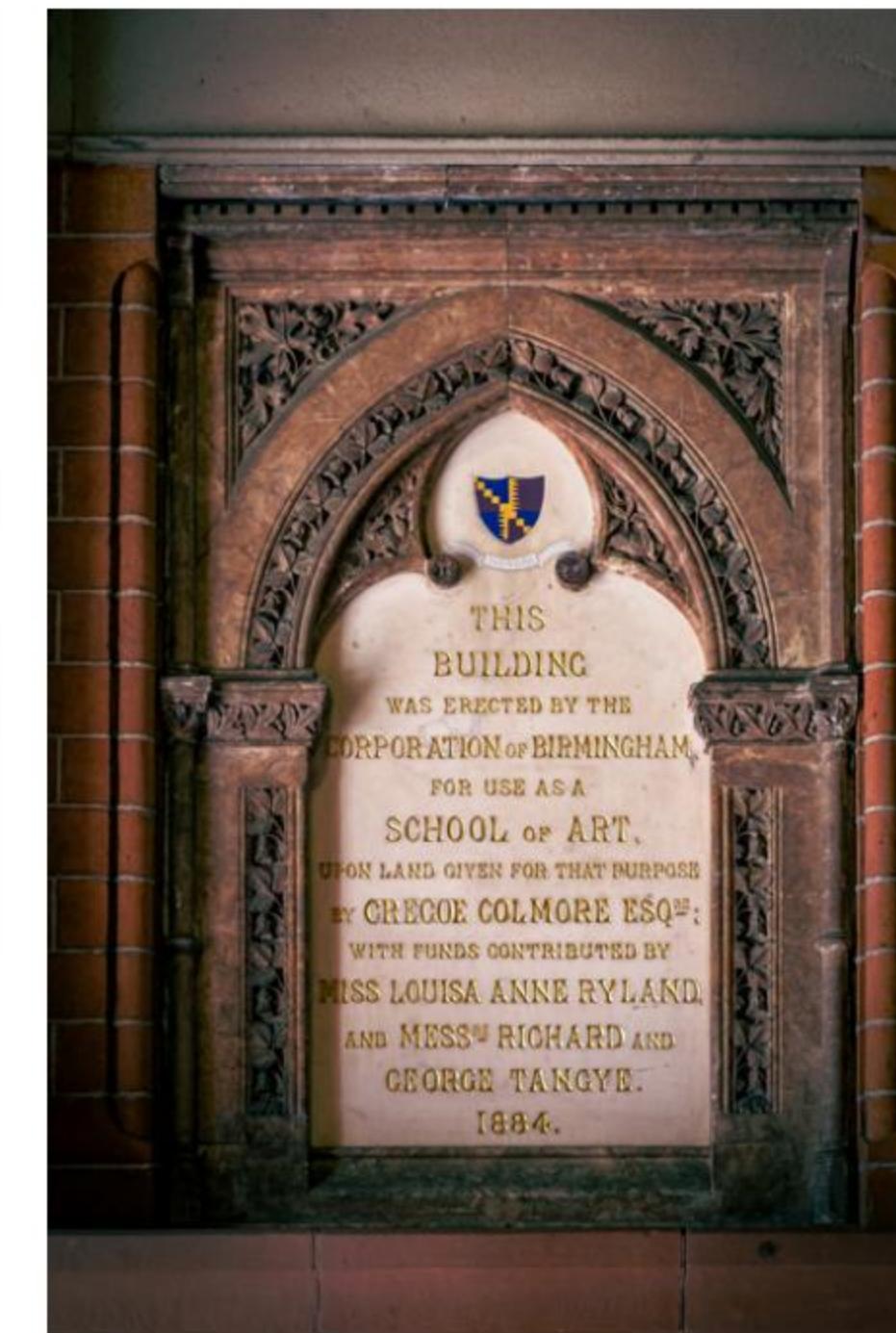
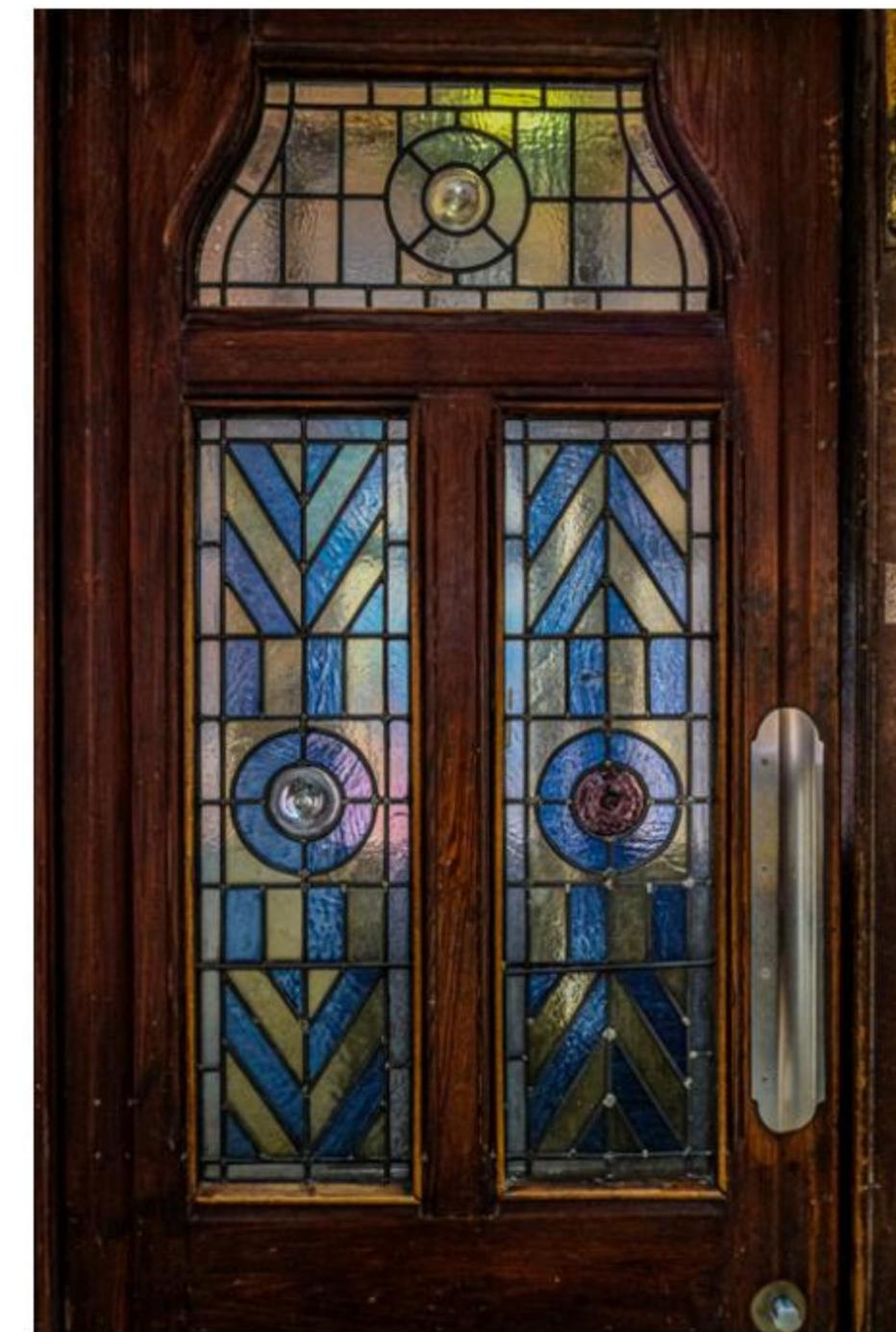
A Historical and Creative Legacy

Since its opening in 1885, the Birmingham School of Art has become a key institution for nurturing creative talent in Birmingham. Its association with the Arts and Crafts Movement and its emphasis on the integration of fine and applied arts have left a lasting mark on the city's artistic identity. Through the decades, the building has served as a training



Civic splendour: Inside the beautiful Birmingham School of Art

Pictures: Stacey Barnfield



ground for artists, designers, and craftspeople who have contributed to Birmingham's cultural and creative scene.

The architectural style of the building itself is deeply tied to the aspirations of the city at the time. By the late 19th century, Birmingham was transitioning from an industrial powerhouse to a more diverse and dynamic city, eager to showcase its intellectual and artistic credentials. The Birmingham School of Art's Venetian Gothic design, with its ornate detailing and bold presence, reflected this shift toward cultural and educational advancement.

A Modern Touch to a Historic Space

Today, the Birmingham School of Art

remains an integral part of Birmingham City University, continuing to inspire new generations of artists and designers. While modern teaching spaces have been incorporated into the building over the years, the historical architecture has been carefully preserved, ensuring that the building remains a point of connection between the past and present.

In the context of the Colmore Business District, the Birmingham School of Art stands as both a historic landmark and a vibrant educational institution. Its Venetian Gothic architecture, once a symbol of the city's cultural aspirations, continues to play a key role in Birmingham's ongoing artistic legacy.

By Mike Mounfield

FROM IRON:MAN TO ALRIGHT BAB!

A WALK THROUGH ART IN THE DISTRICT

Colmore BID is celebrating the rich and eclectic mix of public art that brings colour, character and conversation to Birmingham's Business District with an Art Walk.

This free, self-guided trail showcases a diverse range of sculptures, installations and architectural highlights, reflecting both the city's industrial heritage and its creative present. From world-renowned works like Antony Gormley's Iron:Man in Victoria Square – a tribute to Birmingham's engineering legacy – to more intimate pieces like Thomas Attwood, sprawled on the steps of Chamberlain Square with papers and ideals at his feet, each stop tells part of the story of the city and its people.

The walk also includes architectural gems like the Birmingham and Midland Institute, a beacon of learning since 1854, and newer additions such as Umbra on Church Street, a shimmering globe inviting quiet contemplation in the heart of the city. Meanwhile, the Livery Street subway has been transformed into a vivid, tiled gateway linking Colmore with the Jewellery Quarter.

This evolving public gallery – shaped by artists, historians and community voices – highlights the value Colmore BID places on creating a District not just to work in, but to experience, explore, and be inspired by every day.

1. Iron:Man

Created by Sir Antony Gormley and



cast in Corten steel, Iron:Man was a gift from the Trustee Savings Bank. Originally sited in Victoria Square but moved slightly for the tram line, the tilted figure is anchored firmly in concrete. Gormley described it as a reflection on Birmingham's industrial past and creative future, his first public work in Britain.

2. Thomas Attwood

This collaborative piece by Siobhan Coppinger and Fiona Peever

Above: The Alright Bab! neon light sculpture

*Facing page:
illustrator Tom
Wooley's art trail
map for Colmore
BID*

depicts Thomas Attwood, founder of the Birmingham Political Union (1830), reclining with papers and soap box at hand. Look closely to find the words *Reform, The Vote, and Prosperity*, reflecting his fight for fair parliamentary representation.

3. Birmingham School of Art

This red-brick masterpiece by J. R. Chamberlain opened in 1884, funded largely by philanthropist Louisa Ryland. Her lifetime donations to Birmingham exceeded today's equivalent of £140 million. The ornate carvings and tiles remain a testament to the city's investment in the arts. The School's roots lie with the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, still active today.

4. Birmingham and Midland Institute

Founded in 1854, this Jacobean-style building promoted scientific and technical learning. Its clock, gifted by Abraham Follett Osler, was once linked by telegraph to Greenwich Mean Time. Osler also pioneered meteorological measurement, managed a glass company that exhibited at the Crystal Palace in 1851, and helped found the National Education League.

5. Colmore Row's Tree-lined Boulevard

Nature shapes the city as much as stone and steel. Midway along

Colmore Business District



Colmore Row stands a tree planted in 2000, now a mature part of the streetscape. Its presence reminds us how greenery enriches Birmingham's heart.

6. Umbra, Church Street

This striking globe sculpture by Wolfgang Buttress provides a place to sit and meet. Inspired by the natural world, it shimmers in changing light and takes its name from the darkest part of a shadow during an eclipse. Funded by Colmore BID and the City Council, it's a contemplative urban landmark.

7. Birmingham Cathedral

Though modest in size, the cathedral boasts four magnificent stained-glass windows by Edward Burne-Jones, Birmingham-born and a leading figure in the Arts & Crafts movement. His lifelong partnership

with William Morris influenced design far beyond the city. Spot motifs here that echo across Colmore's historic buildings.

8. Clarendon Fine Art

Part of a network of over 60 galleries, Clarendon showcases original works, collectible editions, and sculptures by both acclaimed and emerging artists. A chance to enjoy and buy contemporary creativity in the District.

9. Livery Street Mural

This colourful mural by Edward Luke Thrush and Anna Davies, commissioned by Colmore BID, spans 60 feet. Packed with references to Birmingham landmarks and history, it rewards a careful look to uncover its many stories.

10. Livery St Subway

In 2025, ceramic artist Adam

Colmore Art Trail

1. Iron:Man, Victoria Square
2. Thomas Attwood
3. Birmingham School of Art
4. Birmingham and Midland Institute
5. Tree-lined Boulevard
6. Umbra at Church Street
7. Birmingham Cathedral
8. Clarendon Fine Art
9. Livery Street Mural
10. Livery Street Subway
11. Snow Hill Mural
12. Alright Bab!

Nathaniel Furman revitalised the subway with vibrant tiles inspired by the architecture at each end. Funded by Colmore BID, Jewellery Quarter BID, and Moda, the installation has transformed a once-dull passageway into an artwork in its own right.

11. Snow Hill Mural

Oliver Budd's mosaic celebrates the railway but adds a playful twist; some carriage passengers are local icons and famous figures. It captures the energy of a city always on the move.

12. Alright Bab!

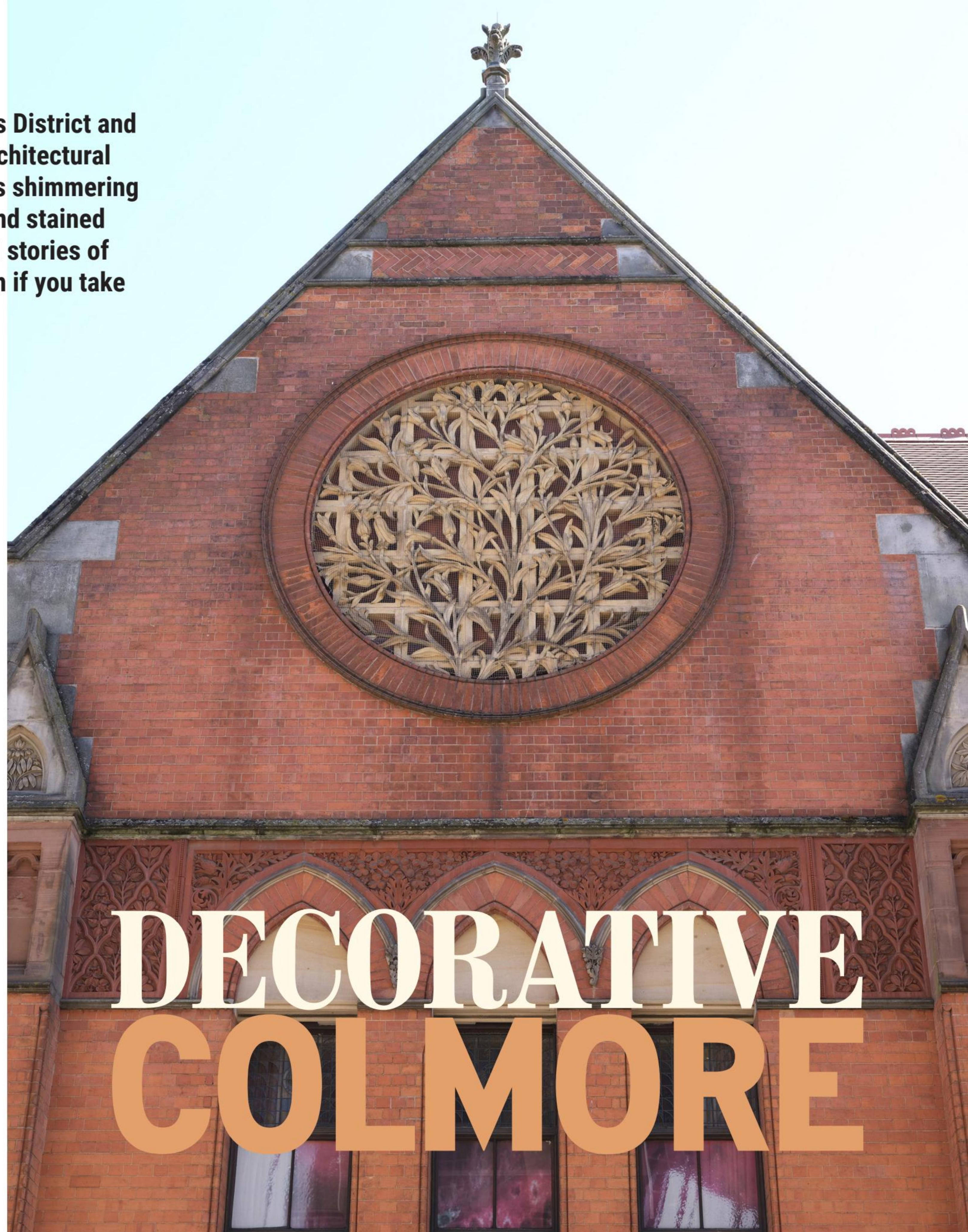
This neon-style light sculpture, a legacy of the 2025 Birmingham Light Festival, greets visitors with the city's warmest phrase. Its colours can change for festivals and events, keeping Colmore Square vibrant year-round.

Pause and look up in the Business District and you'll discover a city alive with architectural detail. From Chamberlain Square's shimmering memorial, to gothic grotesques and stained glass, Birmingham's buildings tell stories of civic pride, artistry and innovation if you take the time to stop and notice.

Pausing and looking up whilst you walk around the Colmore District can be a rewarding, visual feast of decoration. There are stories to be told by the crests, motifs, and the occasional grotesque figure.

Let's start with placing ourselves between the flank of the Council House and the exotic Victorian celebration of a city father, Joseph Chamberlain, a centrepiece to the eponymous square.

This restored memorial, created in 1880 and recently cleaned up and shimmering, was designed by John Henry Chamberlain (not related). The crafting of this 20m high piece was an example of collaborative working, with the 50cm portrait medallion of Chamberlain by Thomas Woolner on this, the south side and the mosaics encircling sourced from Salviati Burke and Co. of Venice, no less. The memorial was erected to celebrate the public service of Joseph Chamberlain, who was present at the inauguration ceremony. Chamberlain was a Birmingham businessman,

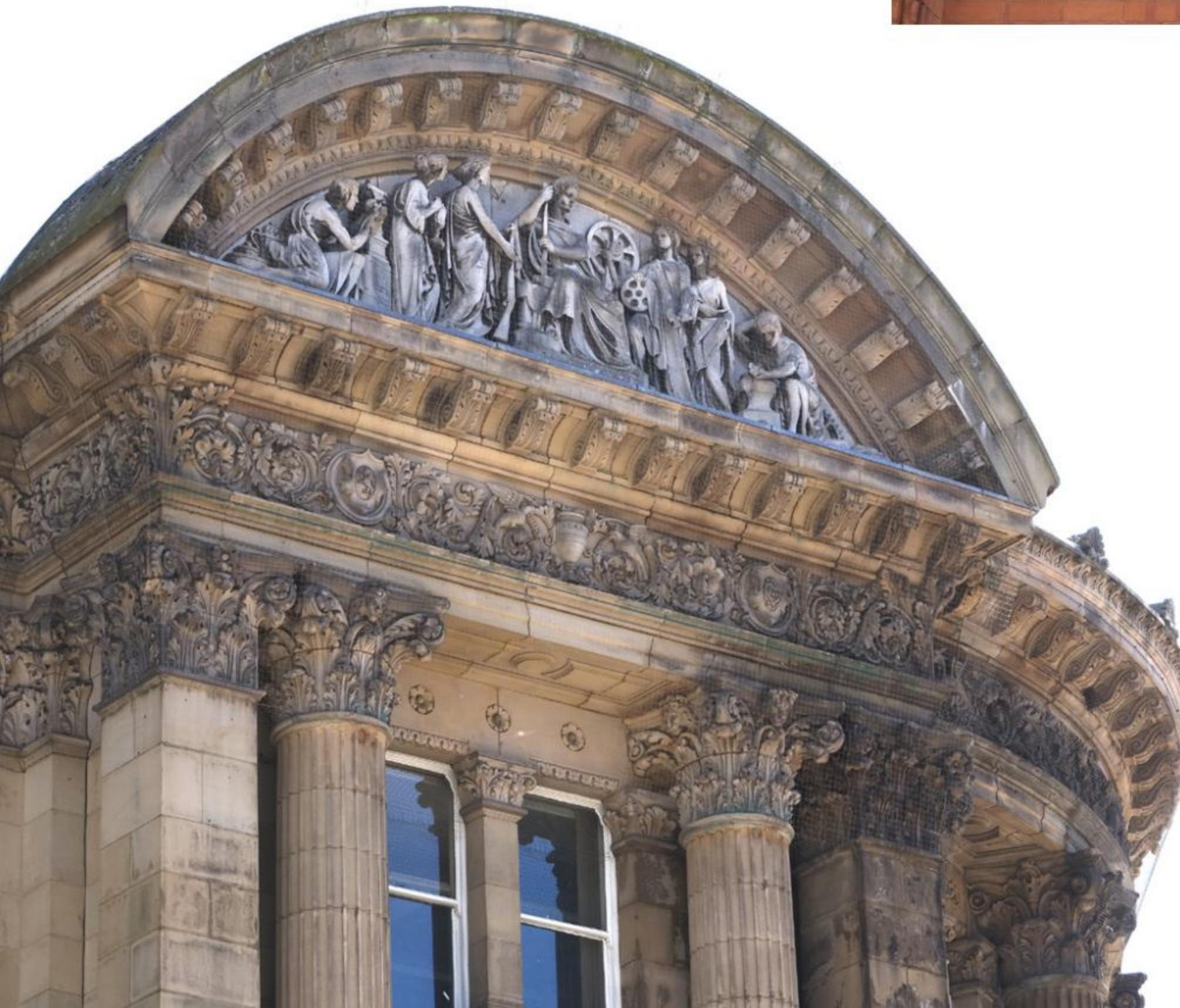


councillor, Mayor and Member of Parliament. He died in 1914.

Swivel from here and take a look at the portal where you will see the Lord Mayor's car at moments popping in and out, but take a look at the painted, wrought iron gates. Completed in 1879, the Council House, now Grade II* listed (quite a special status), is a celebration of the Victorian style, rather cleverly blending both Classical revival architecture with Baroque influences making it worthy of a

fulsome gaze. The gates, which are a prominent feature of the building's facade, frame the Birmingham crest or shield, a symbol of the city's history and identity with a mitre at its centre.

The Council House was regarded as a success as within two years work began on what we know as The Extension, built between 1881 – 85. This was a combined art gallery, museum, and the home of the corporation's Gas Department, thus a truly mixed use building.



It connects via a decorative, enclosed bridge, like our own Bridge of Sighs! The challenge designing galleries and museums is arbitrating between blank walls with very few windows and how to deal with what may become rather austere exteriors. This is met with aplomb here, on a face that can easily be missed if you don't stop and consider it.

Birmingham School of Art

Part of Birmingham City University, the School of Art is a Grade I listed 'Venetian Gothic' building that has original stained glass windows, as well as an impressive stone rose window, designed by John Chamberlain. It was completed after its architect Chamberlain's death by his partner William and his son Frederick Martin.

It is widely considered as Chamberlain's masterpiece and was a hugely important centre for the Arts & Crafts movement, which celebrated a return to nature in the face of increasing industrialisation. William Morris lectured here, with notable students including the Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones.

The Venetian style is exemplified by this round piece high up in the gable on Margaret Street.

Birmingham and Midland Institute

Opposite Birmingham School of Art is another listed building (Grade II* Listed) with an incredible history, the Birmingham and Midland Institute (BMI), designed by F. Barry Peacock of architects Cossins, Peacock and Bewlay.

It was founded by an Act of Parliament in 1854 for the 'Diffusion and Advancement of Science, Literature and Art amongst all Classes of Persons resident in Birmingham and Midland Counties'.



The BMI has played its part in the city's cultural life for almost 170 years. Charles Dickens was one of its early Presidents. You'll have learnt from this magazine that George Shaw also lectured here.

The clock, an easily missed piece of beauty and heritage, is embedded into the wall of the BMI. Abraham Follett Osler, pioneer in the measurement of meteorological and chronological data, created this. To keep accurate local time, he built an astronomical clock outside the Birmingham Philosophical Institution (BPI) in Cannon Street. This was eventually synchronised by telegraph to Greenwich Mean Time. The clock transferred to the BMI after the closing of the BPI in 1852.

In 1883 Osler donated clock and bells for 'Big Brum', located in the clock tower of the new art gallery. This replaced a wired network of clocks as the town's main time-piece. Osler also managed the family's glass manufacturing company in Broad Street, which displayed the world's first glass fountain in the Great Exhibition of 1851 at Crystal Palace. Osler was also a founder member of the National Education League.

Queen's College

Queen's College, on Paradise Street, was a medical school founded by William Sands Cox (1802 – 1875) in 1825 as the Birmingham Medical School, becoming the Birmingham Royal School of Medicine and Surgery in 1836. In 1843 the school received a royal charter from Queen Victoria and began to operate from a large gothic building on Paradise Street as Queen's College. It was a forerunner of the University of Birmingham today.

*Facing page:
Birmingham
School of Art, the
Council House and*

*Above: The Gates
to the Council
House and BMI
clock*

*Left: A Queen's
College gargoyle*

In a watercolour by Charles Rudd (see page two), it is the Gothic building on the right-hand side and remains today, opposite the Town Hall. There was a new, replacement façade added in 1904. It is this new facade that is worth a pause to study, to see the terracotta grotesque figures that sit above the windows.

**Words and pictures
by Philip Singleton**

BMAG AT 140

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery celebrates its 140th anniversary in November, having been officially opened on 28 November 1885. Since then, it has been at the heart of the city's cultural life, sharing world class collections and exhibitions with generations of visitors.

Sir Whitworth Wallis, the first Director of BMAG, in his office



Museum staff in 1888



BMAG under construction during the 1880s

All pictures courtesy Birmingham Museums Trust



THEN & NOW

The stunning Industrial Gallery at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, after 1893 (glass plate negative, above) and the gallery today, with its popular Made in Birmingham display.



New watercolour print at WM Police Museum



The West Midlands Police Museum on Steelhouse Lane is now selling this lovely watercolour artwork of its red-brick exterior as a postcard and memento of your visit. [Visit museum.west-midlands.police.uk](http://museum.west-midlands.police.uk)

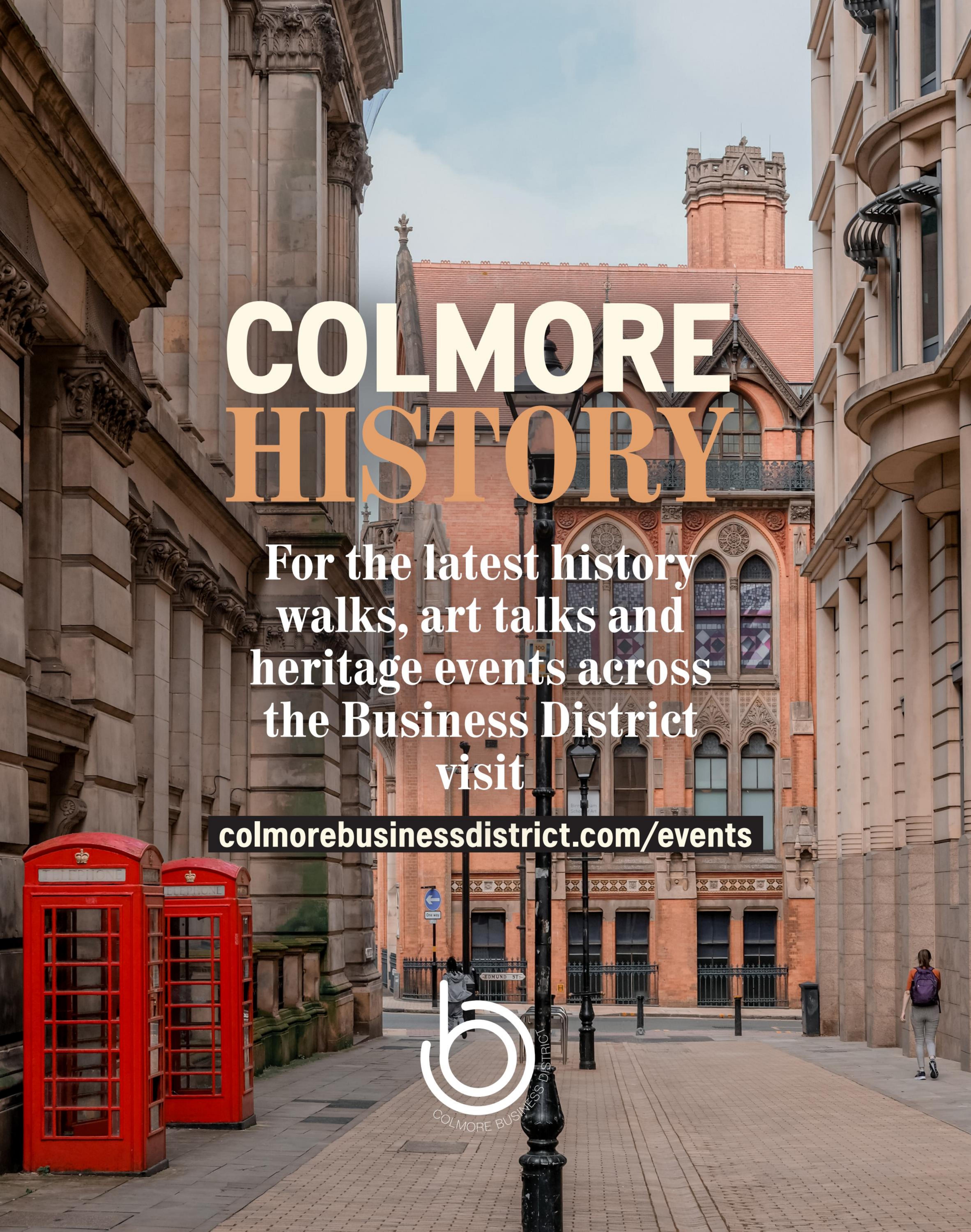
Heritage Week going from strength to strength

Birmingham Heritage Week returns September, with more partners, more buildings, and more stories to uncover across the city. Now in its 11th year, the ten-day festival is thriving thanks to support from Birmingham Museums Trust, the National Trust, the University of Birmingham, and local charities.

This year's programme promises over a hundred events, tours, and walks, opening the doors of landmark sites and hidden gems alike. Many of these are in Colmore Business District, offering fresh opportunities to explore the area's rich history and architecture. The event is partnered by all five city-centre BIDs: Colmore, Central, Southside, Westside and Jewellery Quarter.

Heritage Week has grown despite funding challenges, proving the strength of community support and the appetite for rediscovering Birmingham's past. From civic buildings to secret gardens, it's a chance to see the city through new eyes.

To keep up with announcements and future events, follow Birmingham Heritage Week on social media.



COLMORE HISTORY

For the latest history
walks, art talks and
heritage events across
the Business District
visit

colmorebusinessdistrict.com/events

