

BIRCHFIELD HERITAGE TRAIL!

The Red Route! 📍



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Big Local
Birchfield

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Birchfield Heritage Trail – The Red Trail

This second trail takes us on a journey around the east side of Birchfield. Like the Green Trail it reveals some of the hidden secrets of the Birchfield area, how the place has changed over time and the many links between Birchfield and other parts of the world. The trail raises questions about Britain's colonial history, the impacts of which continue to the present day.

1 Cavendish House – Later Grosvenor Road Studios, 16 Grosvenor Road

Built in 1872 this was home to local JP and Brass-Founder, James Henry Stone. His brother, Sir Benjamin Stone MP, was known as "Knight of the Camera" for his passion for documentary photography. The building later became the Hollick & Taylor Studios – reputed to be the second oldest operational recording studios in the UK after Abbey Road. Many well-known musicians rehearsed and recorded here and recordings for film and television included the sound effects for Gerry Anderson's Thunderbirds and Stingray.

2 Mill House & Old Mill Grove

Old Mill Grove was once the location of Handsworth Steam Flour Mill and Handsworth and Perry Barr Brewery. Mill House is still standing and undergoing reconstruction. A stream passes under the site before joining the River Tame. Was this once the location of a water mill?

3 Site of Roman Kiln – Wellington Road

Site of a 2nd century Romano-British pottery kiln on what was once Hiron's Garden Centre. There is evidence of occupation from the late 1st or early 2nd century AD. The site was first excavated in 1959 and some of the pottery is in the care of Handsworth Historical Society. A second excavation has recently been carried out in advance of a housing development.

4 Site of the original Aston Villa Football Ground – Wellington Road & "Willmore Road" – Commonwealth Games Festival 2022

Site of Aston Villa's first football ground, occupied from 1876 to 1897 before Villa moved to its present location at Aston Lower Grounds, now Villa Park. Villa were one of the founder members of the Football League and the first league match was played at Wellington Road on 15 September 1888. Willmore and Leslie Roads were built on what was the Villa ground.

"Willmore Road" by local musicians Kate Luxmoore and Lekan Babalola is one of the tracks on the album "On Record" produced for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Festival.

5 Perry Barr Odeon Cinema – now the Royale Suite

Perry Barr Odeon Cinema – now the Royale Suite – was the first cinema to carry the Odeon name in the UK. The Odeon cinema chain was founded by Oscar Deutsch, born in Birmingham of Jewish parents who emigrated from Hungary to escape antisemitism. The Odeon chain grew to 250 cinemas and remains the largest cinema chain in the UK and Ireland.

6 Birchfield House – Birchfield Road

Birchfield House once occupied the green space at the corner of Heathfield and Birchfield Road. It was acquired in 1833 by clock-dial maker Samuel Wilkes, one of the most prolific dial makers in nineteenth century Birmingham. Wilkes was living at Birchfield House in 1849. He aspired to climb the social ladder, speculated in property, and acquired a collection of Old Master paintings but following an economic downturn, stagnant prices, and changes in clock fashions he was declared bankrupt in 1850.

7 Holy Trinity Church and Birmingham Jame Masjid

Designed by architect JA Chatwin, Holy Trinity Church was dedicated in 1864. Reverend Cannon Eve Pitts is the present vicar and was the first Black woman to become a priest in the Church of England. Reverend Eve has spent decades fighting racism and campaigned for 1st August to be recognised as Emancipation Day – the day the Slavery Abolition Act 1833 came into force. On the opposite side of Trinity Road is Birmingham Jame Masjid which opened in April 1988 and acts as a hub for the local Muslim community.

8 Site Aston Villa's first football game – Wilson Road

Aston Villa are reputed to have played their first match on the land now occupied by houses at Wilson Road. They played against local rugby football team Aston Brook St Mary's, so the first half of the game was played under rugby rules and the second half using football rules.

9 WELD – Wilson Road

WELD (Westminster Endeavour for Liaison and Development) was a community project set up in 1968 by two local Primary School teachers. It had art and photography at its heart and several well-known Birmingham based photographers were associated with it, including John Reardon, Derek Bishton, Brian Homer and Pogus Caesar.

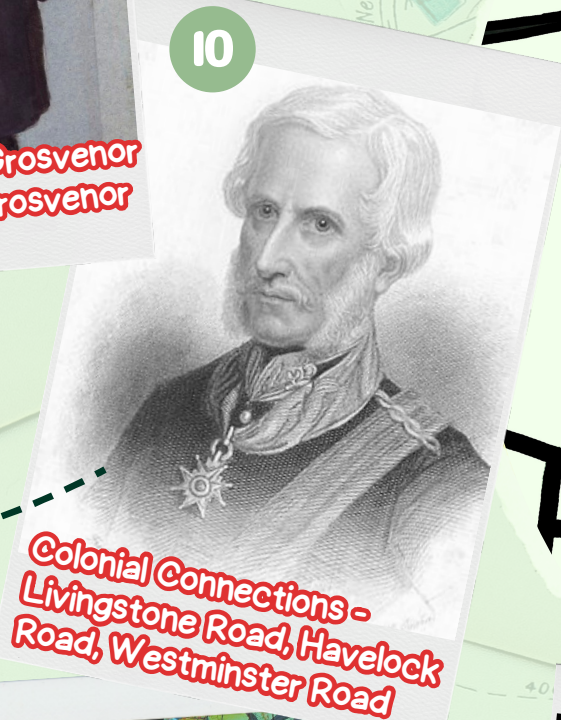
10 Colonial Connections – Westminster, Livingstone, and Havelock Roads

Street names can reveal a lot about the history of an area. As Birmingham expanded in the nineteenth century many streets were named after notable local or national figures or significant events. Street names such as Wellington Road, Livingstone Road, and Havelock Road are a reminder of Britain's colonial past. For example, Major-General Sir Henry Havelock is known for his brutal suppression of the Indian Rebellion in 1857.

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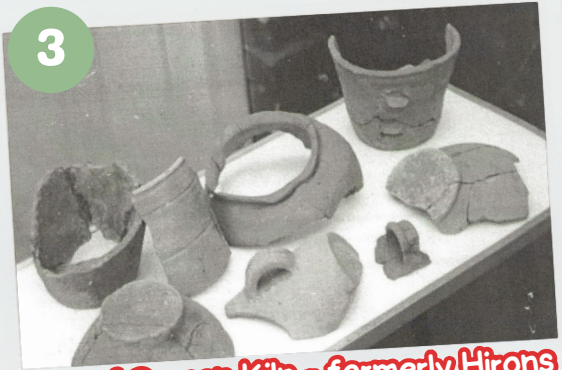
1
Cavendish House/Grosvenor Road Studios, 16 Grosvenor Road



10
Colonial Connections - Livingstone Road, Westminster Road, Havelock Road



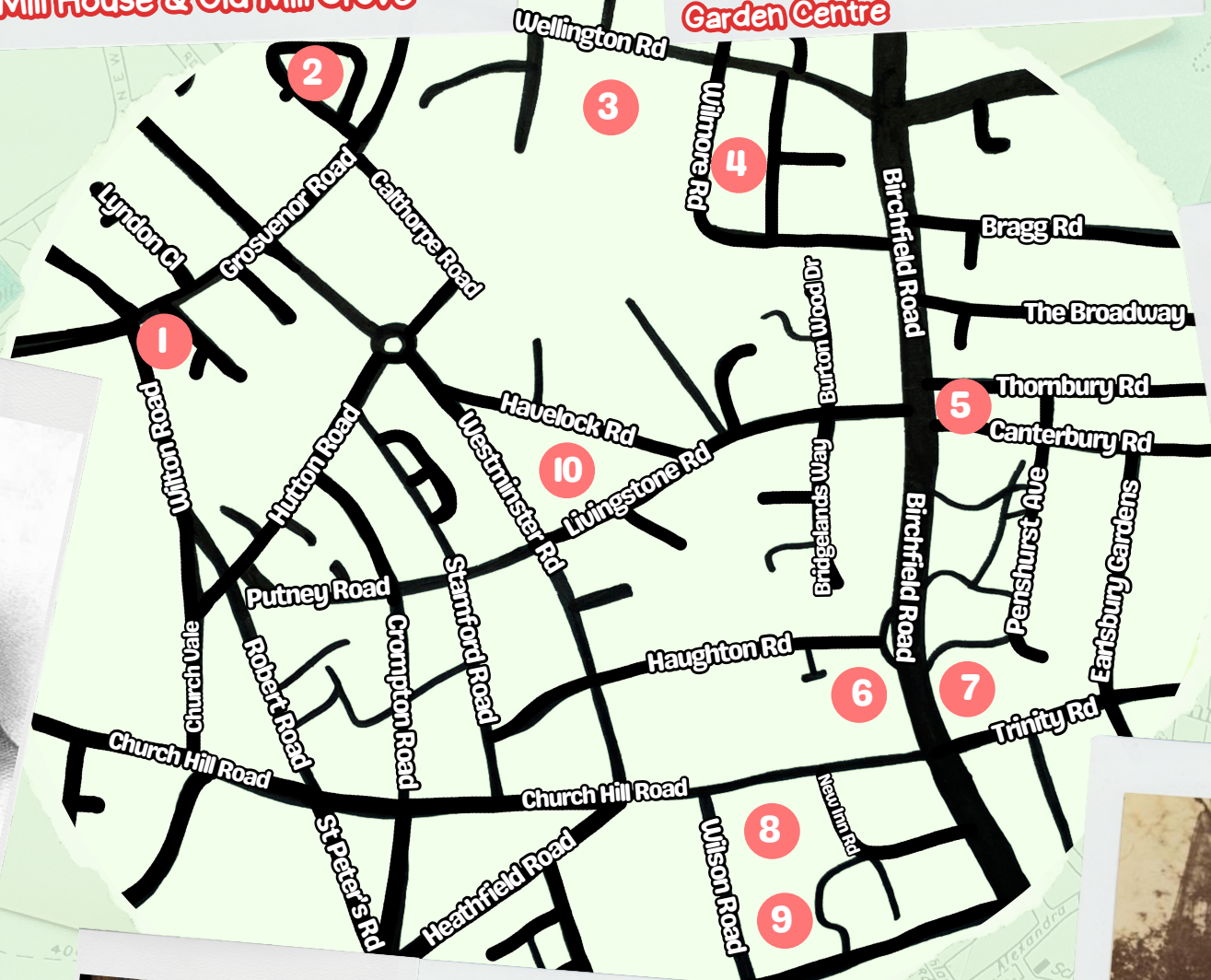
2
Mill House & Old Mill Grove



3
Site of Roman Kiln - formerly Hirons Garden Centre



4
Site of Aston Villa Football Ground - now Willmore Road and Leslie Road



5
Perry Barr Odeon Cinema - now the Royale Suite - 271 Birchfield Road



8 **9**
Site of Aston Villa's first football game - corner of Wilson Road and Heathfield Road
WELD - 35 Wilson Road



7
Holy Trinity Church and Birmingham Jame Masjid - corner of Trinity Road and Birchfield Road



6
Birchfield House - now green space located on Birchfield Road between Houghton Road and Heathfield Road