

## *Storey Family Notes*

Here you will find a miscellany of Storey family members, their acquaintances, and some of the places and events that they have seen, all of which have been brought to life as a result of sifting through old photographs.

# **New Oscott**

## **(Fernwood Grange and E.W. Beston)**

by

Jillian Storey

See also *Storey Family Notes, Boldmere*  
and *Storey Family Notes, Wylde Green*

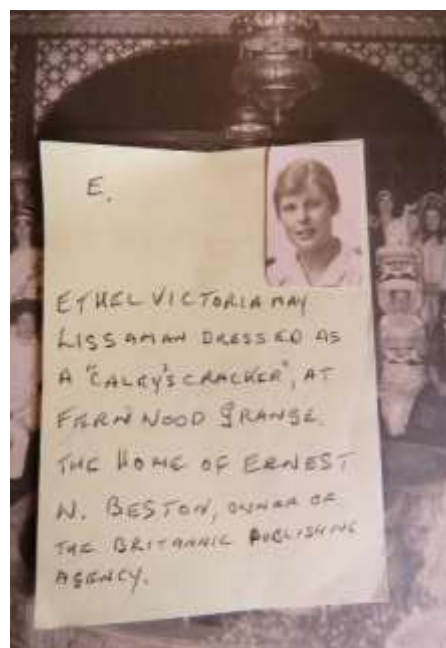
January, 2023

## Fernwood Grange

My grandmother Ethel Victoria May Lissaman moved to Slade Road Erdington with her family from Coventry, her father worked for Dunlop, and he had a job at the new works in Birmingham. Her first job was to work for a very colourful and wealthy man Ernest W Beston who lived at Fernwood grange and ran the Britannic Publishing Agency. I think it may have been something to do with gambling.

My grandmother used to get the No. 78 tram into Birmingham to work on Corporation Street. She kept a few treasures from that time such as an invitation to the Christmas party at Fernwood grange. A copy of EW Beston's very strange Black Book which outlines his Palladium system to break the bank at Monte Carlo! The book is dedicated to her from EW Beston on the inside cover. There is also a photo of a fancy dress parade at the Christmas party which is taken in the Abyssinian Boudoir at Fernwood Grange. My grandmother is dressed as a Caley's cracker.

She stopped working for E W Beston in 1923 on her marriage to Walter James Bird a Baker and Confectioner from 384 Boldmere Road.



The Abyssinian Boudoir at Fernwood Grange

FERNWOOD GRANGE,  
New Oscott, " "  
Warwickshire. " "  
*January 3rd, 1914.*



### ANNUAL NEW YEAR PARTY.

In again extending to you a hearty invitation to Fernwood Grange we trust that you will take full advantage of the occasion to enjoy yourself in whatever way you feel most inclined, remembering that Liberty Hall is the order of the day, and that the whole of the house and grounds are open to you to wander through or to inspect at your leisure.

Suitable outdoor and indoor games and pastimes have been provided, in which we hope you will find ample enjoyment, and we trust that you will remember your visit with pleasure, and that it may serve to maintain and preserve a good understanding, not only between you and your fellow clerks, but between us all, which may continue to operate to our mutual satisfaction.

With Hearty Greetings for a Bright and Prosperous 1914.

Mr. and Mrs. E. W. BESTON.

### **Information from the Birmingham History Society Website**

Ernest Beston who was born in 1874. In his late 20's E.W.B. decided to branch out on his own and with a little help from his father established a his first business as **"Ernest Beston Sporting Agency"**, 9 Hayden Chambers 83 High Street Birmingham and **Bestons Advertising Agency** at 25A Paradise Street in 1903-4-5 -7 which was a turf accountancy business which little did he know he was to become the biggest advertiser of the time.

During this period in his life he was living at "Hillfield" Forest Road Moseley and his other address at "Navarino" Sandon Road Edgbaston.

In a few years E.W.B was in the big time and money was rolling in, in an extraordinary amount. And he quickly moved to the heart of his beloved city, Corporation Street and took over the 3rd floor of the Ruskin Buildings. **Bestons Publishing Company Agency** then **The Britannic Publishing Company** telegram address "Wideawake" and **The Palladium Ltd. Advertising Agency** in 1920.

His business became so big he employed nearly 200 girl clerks at 191 Corporation St. who had the pleasure to go to Fernwood for the Annual New Year Party which E.W.B. loved. It was hard to believe at the time, but the post office was overwhelmed with the mail that was coming into his offices and for a company at that time to have 130 typewriters on the go was amazing. The mail just ground to a halt so E.W.B. soon settled the problem and the Royal Mail had special vans to collect and deliver his mail.

But all was not well for E.W.B. and he was always in the law courts defending himself against betting transactions and lost on court action and had to pay a fine of £8.000 which was a huge amount in those days and his name was banded about in the local and nationwide press.

The Paper **"Truth"** published an article claiming that E.W.B. was advertising under 52 different aliases as a Tipster...E.W.B. fought many court action against himself and paid out a great deal of money. But by E.W.B.'s reckoning he was racking in the money and bought "Fernwood" which he enlarged and spent a great deal of money on, also building a gaming room in "Fernwood". He purchased Fernwood Grange and over the years he added in the grounds a Switchback railway, and aviary, 13 peacocks, 4 Rolls Royce's and 4 four big St Bernard dogs which he kept in big cages and to the main house, he added a Cinema, music room, a Chinese lounge, an Abyssinian boudoir and a Ballroom.

Since the Little Black book has come into my hands I have tried hard to analyse it, as E.W.B. had wrote it, but he had wrote it in such a way that you have to separate fact from fiction (in the style of Rudyard Kipling).

But E.W.B. did break the bank of Monte Carlo (but this is open to misinterpretation, by today's standards) and his Palladium System did work .....

During the late 1920's Fernwood was sold.



# The Black Book

An Interesting Compilation of Facts  
and Fallacies Concerning My  
Varied Friends

BY  
E. W. B.

INTRODUCING  
How the Palladium Roulette System Beat the "Bank"  
Consistently at Monte Carlo.



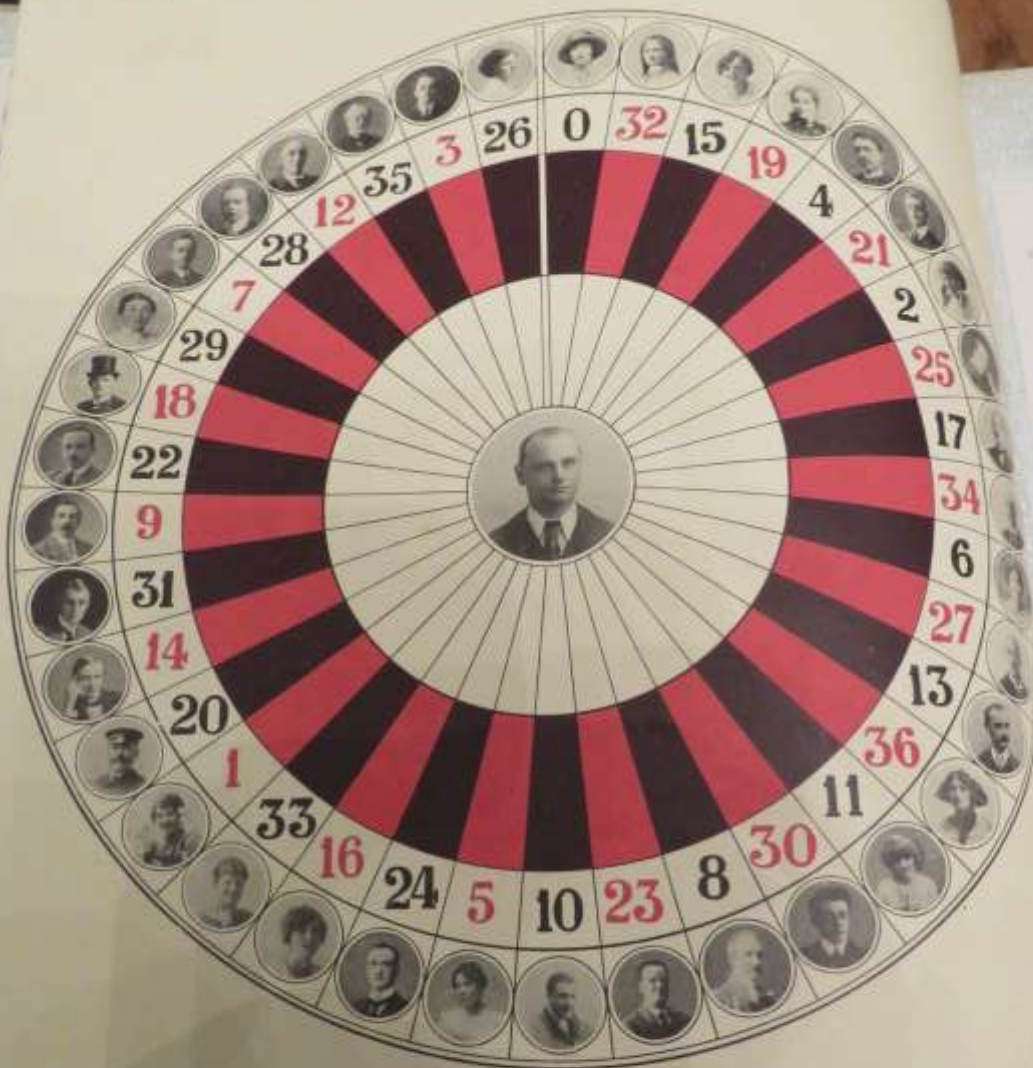
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BIRMINGHAM.



MCMXIX.







Key to the Photographs shown in the Roulette Wheel above.

- |                          |                           |                              |                              |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Mrs. E. W. Beston.    | 11. Miss Dorothy Ward.    | 21. Mr. H. E. Beston.        | 31. Mr. A. Porter.           |
| 2. Miss D. M. Hannan.    | 12. Professor A. Blitz.   | 22. Mr. Frank Matthews.      | 32. Nurse E. Oram.           |
| 3. Mr. Harry Millson.    | 13. "Bob Martin."         | 23. Mr. Charles Lane.        | 33. Mrs. W. Claypole.        |
| 4. Mr. Walter Turner.    | 14. Mr. E. H. Symonds.    | 24. Mr. L. Thorneloe.        | 34. Mr. W. Claypole.         |
| 5. Mrs. H. Millson.      | 15. Mrs. Eric Beston.     | 25. Mr. W. H. Burford.       | 35. Mr. F. C. Mounthin.      |
| 6. Mrs. W. Turner.       | 16. Miss R. Reaney.       | 26. Miss Connie Footitt.     | 36. Miss Kitty Beckerleg.    |
| 7. Mr. E. J. Whitehouse. | 17. Mr. Charles Wilson.   | 27. Mr. A. E. Guy Pritchard. | Zero. Miss Muriel Beckerleg. |
| 8. Colonel Hannan.       | 18. Mr. C. Sharp-Smith.   | 28. Mr. Tom Black.           |                              |
| 9. Mr. T. W. Tibbetts.   | 19. Mrs. Jessie Thurston. | 29. Miss Nellie Blitz.       |                              |
| 10. Mr. Shaun Glenville. | 20. Captain Beckerleg.    | 30. Mr. A. Millership.       |                              |

Mr. Ernest W. Beston in Centre of Wheel.

ALWAYS PALLADIUM !



To - Miss Ethel Lissaman,  
With every good wish  
from  
Conrad W. Berton

13.  
16 - 5 - 19

Always Palladium!

**The Black Book**

Is published for Private Circulation only.

Each copy is numbered, and the number of this copy is 118



## Preface.

*In this publication my real object is an earnest desire to provide a little diversion and a little amusement for my friends. If that object is attained, I am more than repaid.*

*All the characters mentioned in this compilation are known to me; many of them are personal friends, and if they find in these pages incidents with which they are quite familiar, and descriptive of things which come within their own cognition, I sincerely hope that I shall not offend their susceptibilities. Incidents grave and gay loom largely in the lives of each one of us, and those who are mentioned or referred to in this record of anecdotal medley have the assurance of my profoundest respect and anxiety not to give displeasure.*

*It has been said that laughter is one of the very privileges of reason, being confined to the human species, and I trust all my friends will find something in the following pages to create that laughing cheerfulness which disperses all sorrow and melancholy.*

*Laugh, and the world laughs with you ;  
Weep, and you weep alone ;  
For this solid old earth must borrow its mirth—  
It has trouble enough of its own.*

*Sing, and the hills will echo it ;  
Sigh, and it's lost on the air ;  
For they want full measure of all your pleasure,  
But nobody wants your cure.*

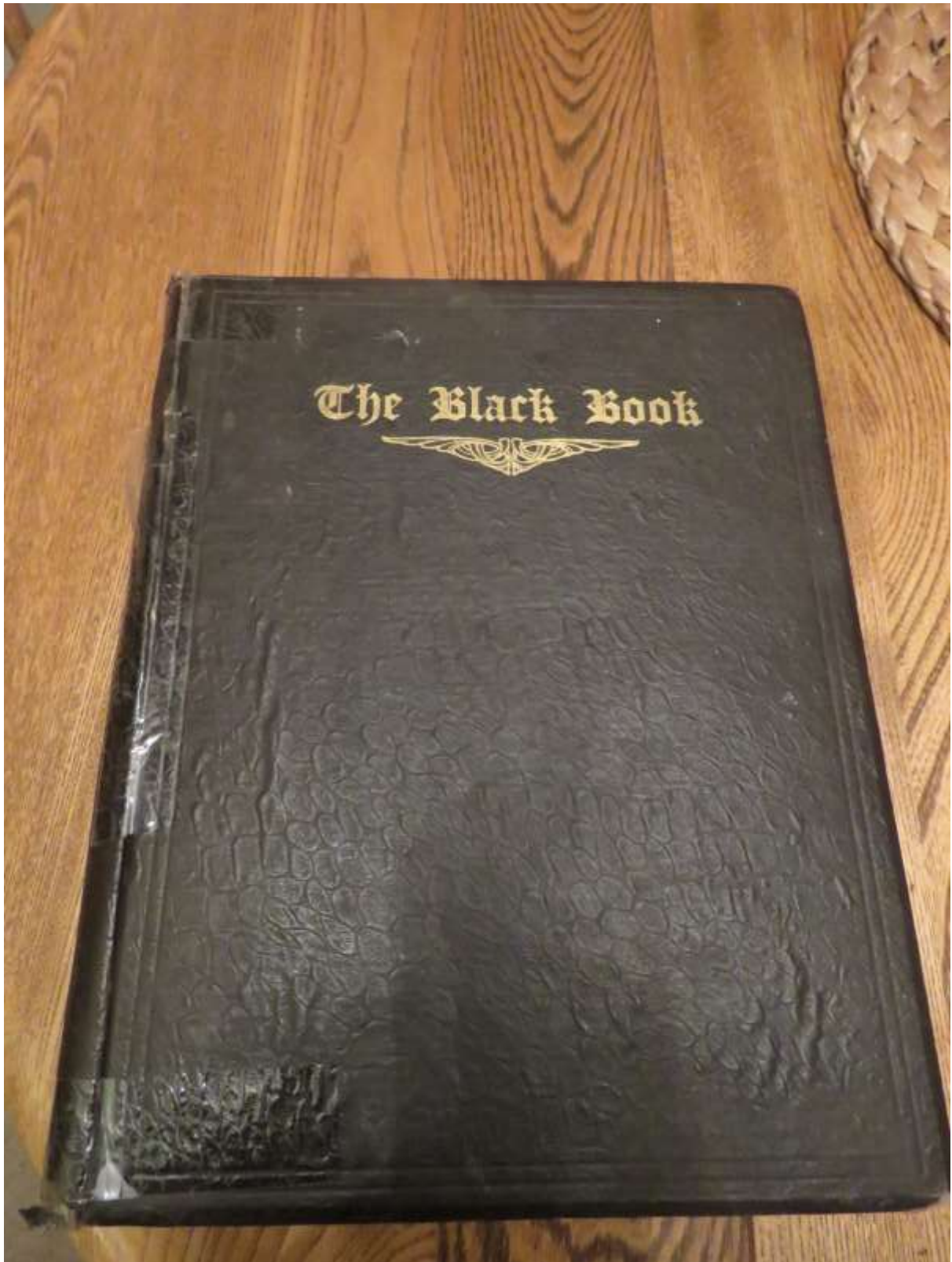
*Feast, and your halls are crowded ;  
Fast, and they pass you by ;  
Succeed, and give, and they let you live ;  
Fail, and they let you die.*

LORD FERNWOOD

(The Author).

January, 1919.





Written by Jillian Storey, daughter of Brian Bird 16.1.2023