



## **Ben Waddington**

Getting under the skin of a city like Birmingham isn't something you can do overnight, although that was how **Ben Waddington** and a group of friends began their quest some ten years ago. It was almost by accident that Ben became a guide to the hidden, overlooked or secret parts of the city. He was trying to help people out in finding out about forgotten characters in Birmingham's cultural and industrial past. Ben quickly recognised that he couldn't be an expert in all things Birmingham and has since set out to help others reveal what is under the city's skin, by setting up the Still Walking Festival, and supporting local people to tell their stories.

Notes from the podcast interview by **Andrew Stuck**: Recorded in July 2015 on a walk in Old St Pancras Churchyard in London. Published in April 2016 on <http://www.talkingwalking.net>

Still Walking - more than just a festival... <http://www.stillwalking.org/whatwedo>

Ben began walking at the time of the full moon, to re-invigorate night time walking and gain a different perspective on Birmingham and its environs. One of his first 'guided walks' was a walk through the city centre in 2006 investigating the eighteenth century Lunar Society that held meetings in the Soho district of the city. <http://lunarsociety.org.uk/about/the-original-lunar-society/> A modern day equivalent of the Society still meets: <http://lunarsociety.org.uk/what-we-do/>

Central Library Arts & Reference <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Lib-Central-Library%2FPageLayout&cid=1223092573158&pagename=BCC%2FCommon%2FWrapper%2FWrapper>

John Baskerville, printer and Birmingham resident: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Baskerville](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Baskerville)

Ben sourced support and money to develop the Still Walking's mentoring programme for local people in part by using crowd funding platform Kickstarter: <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/stillwalking/still-walking-festival>

### **Waddington's recommendation for a walk is:**

To purchase a hand lens, wander through a graveyard looking at lichen and mosses or scabble around on your hands and knees, in the grass to look at those tiny creatures you often overlook.

Purchase a hand lens

[http://www.nhbs.com/title/202210/10-x-21mm-hand-lens?bkfno=219462&ca\\_id=1495&gclid=CP7mlrOXpMwCFdYy0wodafQJMw](http://www.nhbs.com/title/202210/10-x-21mm-hand-lens?bkfno=219462&ca_id=1495&gclid=CP7mlrOXpMwCFdYy0wodafQJMw)

and a helpful book

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Nature-Discoveries-Hand-Richard-Headstrom/dp/0486240770?ie=UTF8&\\*Version\\*=1&\\*entries\\*=0](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Nature-Discoveries-Hand-Richard-Headstrom/dp/0486240770?ie=UTF8&*Version*=1&*entries*=0)

or read Ben's account of a walk of the Moss Garden <https://stillwalkingblog.com/2013/04/27/wildwall/> The Moss Garden is variously St Martin's in the Bullring and back streets of Digbeth - it can happen anywhere in fact. <http://www.bullring.org/>