

The Faces Behind the Name: A Look at the Lives of Sir Henry and Lady Barber

Locations	The Barber Institute of Fine Arts
Date(s)	Wednesday 8th February 2012 (13:10-14:00)
Contact	For more information contact 0121 414 7333 or visit www.barber.org.uk (http://www.barber.org.uk/)
	Admission FREE
Download	<u>Add to Calendar (/events/lectures/The-Faces-Behind-the-Name-A-Look-at-the-Lives-of-Sir-Henry-and-Lady-Barber.aspx?ical=true)</u>

The Faces Behind the Name: A Look at the Lives of Sir Henry and Lady Barber

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts owes its existence to the vision of Dame Martha Constance Hattie Barber (1869–1933). She was the daughter of a wealthy Worcestershire businessman, Simon Onions, who, after an education at Cheltenham Ladies College married the Birmingham solicitor and property developer, William Henry Barber (always known by his second name).

Henry proved a highly successful developer, making his fortune in the expanding suburbs of Birmingham and by his mid thirties he and Lady Barber were able to retire to Culham Court, an 18th-century estate in Oxfordshire. However, the couple maintained a close contact with Birmingham, Henry was an original subscriber to the endowment fund set up by Joseph Chamberlain to establish the University of Birmingham, and he went on to endow chairs of Law and Jurisprudence, eventually becoming a Life Governor. In 1924 Henry received a baronetcy 'for political services to Birmingham' and he died three years later.

Before his death, Sir Henry and Lady Barber had discussed establishing a permanent contribution to Henry's home city, and Lady Barber ensured that this idea came to fruition, founding the Barber Institute in 1932. She died, childless, four months later, leaving the entire Barber fortune to the Trustees of the Institute to enable the construction of a new building, the development of the art collection and the funding of public concerts.

As the Barber approaches its 80th anniversary, Jesse Campbell, research intern and Masters student from the University of Utrecht, has been taking a closer look at the lives of Sir Henry and Lady Barber. Her search has taken her as far afield as Belgium, where she read through 60 letters Lady Barber wrote to artist Nestor Cambier. The Belgian is thought to have painted Lady Barber over 25 times, with 18 of these in the Barber collection, and due to be highlighted in an exhibition about her life in the gallery at the end of this year.

This Lunchtime Lecture will offer an illuminating insight into the lives of the founders of the Barber Institute, bringing to light new information discovered by Jesse over the last few months.



James Jebusa Shannon -
Portrait of Lady Barber,
1912