

## A Message for the New Year

In the absence of our monthly meetings, we hope we have maintained and fed your interest in things Balsall Heath and the wider subjects such as Lost Children and St Alban's Church Highgate lottery-funded repairs. We hope to continue this online newsletter and one day soon be able to hand out hard copies at a meeting. In meantime, we wish you all a Happy New Year.

## Balsall Heath Motor Works - George Le Resche



I saw this signed picture card advertised on eBay and bought it. The advertisement painted on the side of the van could not be resisted. Not by me anyway. Mary St Balsall Heath is where I spent most of my childhood. Balsall Heath Motor Works and the man who signed the card, George Le Resche, were a complete mystery to me until that is, I looked again at the address given on the Van, 155 Mary St.

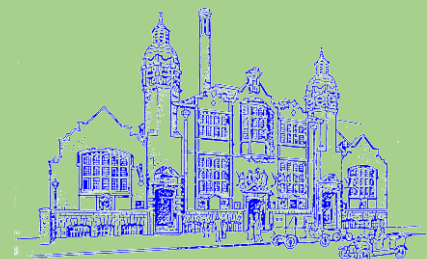
I am indebted to William McCabe and Val Hart for their individual research into Mr Le Resche and his Motor Works. The premises of the company were spread across a number



Accidents are bound to happen! The wording on this beautifully clear postcard constitutes a fine caption in itself. But questions remain – what were Hupmobiles? And how does one come by the name of George Le Resche?

## Balsall Heath Local History Society Gazette

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Telephone: 07565 194822  
Email:  
[info@balsallheathhistory.co.uk](mailto:info@balsallheathhistory.co.uk)  
Web:  
[www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk](http://www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk)  
&  
[www.thelostchildren.uk](http://www.thelostchildren.uk)  
Facebook: Balsall Heath Local  
History Society and  
lostchildrenproject

Next meeting.

The committee has decided to suspend meetings. We hope to start meetings again in 2021.

Membership of the Society costs £10 a year.

units and this is reflected in the full address given as 155-161 Mary St, that placed it on the corner of Mary St and Edward Road. Diagonally opposite the Coach & Horses PH at 162 Mary St.

Picture and caption credit to Old Birmingham Shops from Old Photographs a book by Eric Armstrong.

Two questions asked in the caption: Hupmobiles-An American automobile by the Hupp Motor Car Company of

Detroit. The company closed in 1939. And George Le Resche? Well, he was not the retiring type, was he? His name is on both the building and his "Breakdown Ambulance". George, 1880 - 1947 was one of 8 children born to Thomas and Selina Le Resche. At the age of 21, he was listed as a Mechanical Engineer as was his brother Thomas who was 23. In 1907 he married Marrium Freeman daughter of William Freeman a lamp manufacturer. They had 4 children of whom two died in infancy. By now George was listed as Automobile Engineer. The family had throughout their lives never been far away from the Mary St premises, living at various addresses including Darwin St Highgate, Cannon Hill Road, Willows Crescent, and Chantry Rd Moseley. George died in 1947 leaving an estate of £28,495. So, the motor trade had presumably done well.

### Footnote

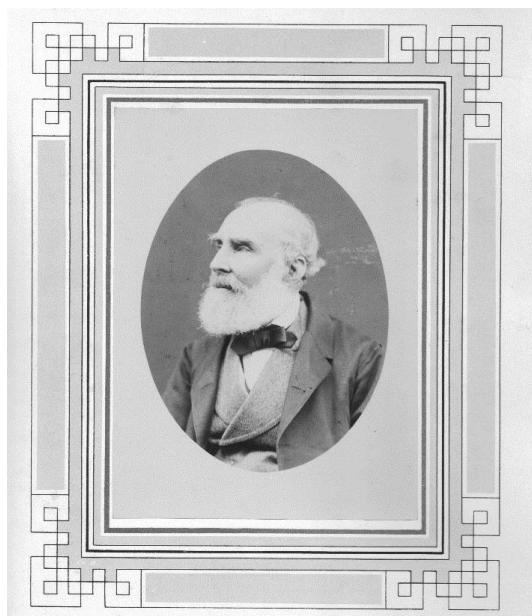
I and a few of my friends have memories of these premises on the corner of Mary St and Edward Rd during the early 50's, some years after George's death. It was a car sales showroom. I saw my first Austin Healey looking through the large windows. Its sleek lines lodged in my head long before I learned to drive. Other people remember the pedal car on display with its front end in the shape of an A30 automobile complete with the flying 'A' icon on the bonnet. How we boys wanted that pedal car. J.F.



## **A wonderful Middlemore Donation**

We have been contacted by a great, great granddaughter of John Middlemore who has donated to us ;

- three lovely photographs of John's father, William Middlemore and his uncle and aunt, James Littleton Middlemore and his wife, Sarah.
- a booklet containing Emily Christabel's memories of her father., John Middlemore, two articles from The "Edgbastonia" of 1883 & 1887 and family trees.



Here is a brief extract: from one of the **Edgbastonia** articles dated 1883.

"On a recent visit we were most courteously received by the matron, Mrs Evans- a kind, motherly creature- who conducted us over the entire establishment. The whole of the apartments, living rooms and dormitories are spacious, airy and well lighted. Each boy has a separate bed, of which there are twenty or thirty in each room. The boys, on their first reception, are stripped of their ragged and perhaps tainted clothing, and thoroughly washed in a warm bath. They are next taken to the store room, where they are fitted with clean and decent attire, and are then introduced to their future companions.

Mrs Evans told us that one of the boys, on being taken to the store room for the first time, and seeing the piles of clothing and bed linen upon the shelves, could not conceal his astonishment, but was altogether mistaken in the object of the collection, for he said he: 'Daint know as you kep a pawnshop'

Val Hart

## **A Memorial for the Carlton**

On 17<sup>th</sup> of November this year several children from Anderton park school set out to put up their own memorial to those who died in the bombing of the Carlton Cinema at the the memorial

garden 100 metres from the gates of the school. They were accompanied by the deputy head of the school, and Bron and Peter from the society who helped with hanging up their poems pictures and memorials from the trees at the back of the garden.

Some people had expressed concern about the unkempt state of the garden and there was a hope that there could be a larger more permanent display there at some point.

The Photographs in the right hand column were taken by head of the school and can be seen on her twitter page at <https://twitter.com/MrsSHC>

The event was also covered by the Evening Mail at <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/caring-kids-fury-after-finding-19301509>

William McCabe

Finally here is a picture from the archive that has been attracting some attention on our Facebook page.

