

## Next Meeting

We return to actual meetings next month with a visit to the Transport Museum, Chapel Lane, Wythall, Worcestershire B47 6JA on Thursday 24th June at 2 pm. See also Website at <https://www.wythall.org.uk/>

Tea or coffee will be supplied on arrival with a welcoming talk and a guided tour of the museum after which you will be free to look around by yourselves if you so wish. Cost £6.00 payable on arrival.

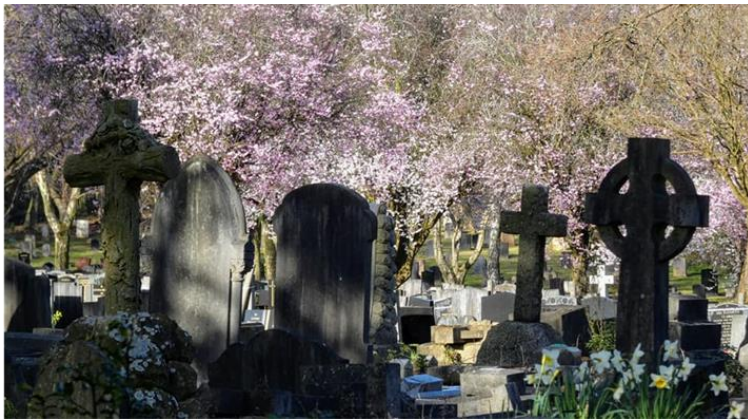
The museum will need to know the number of people interested in the visit so as to have the appropriate number of guides available. If you need transport there and back or will be able to offer a space to others Please mention that when you get in touch.

Email to [info@balsallheathhistory.co.uk](mailto:info@balsallheathhistory.co.uk) or [bron.salway@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:bron.salway@blueyonder.co.uk) or phone Jim on 07900 624570 to book a place

Covid Note: While this is not an open-air meeting, the museum is quite spacious with plenty of room for social distancing and circulating air.

A July Meeting has also been arranged on Thursday 29th at 7 pm - a visit to St. Alban the Martyr in Highgate. Full details in June's Gazette.

## Brandwood End Cemetery, a Monumental Task.



An organisation called "Caring for God's Acre" works nationally to support groups and individuals to investigate, care for, and enjoy burial grounds and graveyards, which encapsulate the history of communities whilst providing a wild life haven. Over the last year Gods Acre have been steadily GPS and geo physically mapping the whole of Brandwood End cemetery so there is now a map of blue squares, each one representing a grave.

Gods Acre together with the Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery are now aiming to recruit a team of volunteers to record the information on each memorial, for transfer to the digitized map. A large number of Balsall Heath residents lie there, including our John Bowen.

Three sessions have been arranged for 23rd June, 7th July and 11th August at the cemetery from 10.30-12.30 a.m. Only 12 volunteers can attend a session and booking is essential via Eventbrite.

This is the link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/154691517493>

Val Hart

## Balsall Heath Local History Society Gazette

### MAY 2021



**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**

**Membership of the Society costs £10 annually and can be bought via the Donate button on the Society website. Thank you to all who have chosen to subscribe this year in spite of the lack of meetings. We hope to hold our AGM in July as usual.**

### **Next meeting.**

**Transport Museum Wythall.  
Thursday 24th June 2 pm. (see left)**

# Emigration with consent

The Middlemore Homes always emphasised that children were emigrated with the consent of their parents and, indeed, farewell parties were held for the children. and their families.



## So why did the parents agree to the emigration of their children?

Many families were in desperate circumstances and believed their children would have better opportunities. In some cases they took agonized decisions about which of their children to send and which to keep. There were also unwanted children- maybe illegitimate or treated badly by a new step-parent.

## Child Protection

In some cases, however, the parents had little choice. In 1889 a new Act was passed, which gave police the power to report child abuse to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children who then investigated cases and prosecuted in the Courts. The Homes were a certified Place of Safety and the judge could recommend children be taken there for emigration.

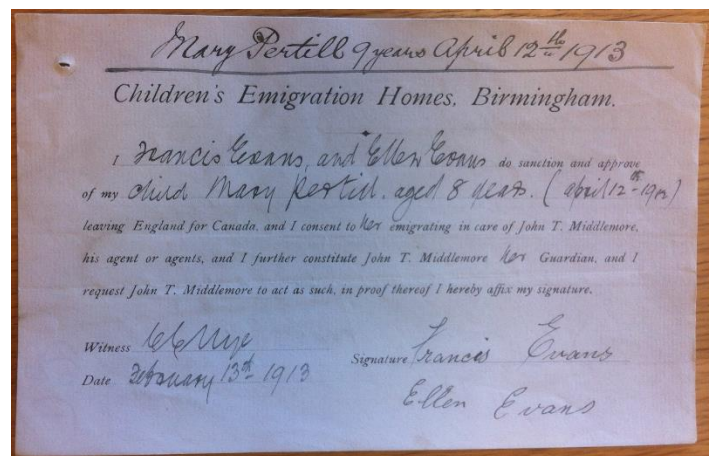
Mary Pertill is an example of a child referred by the courts. She was born In Crumpsall Workhouse, Manchester in 1904. Her brother died there in 1907, aged 8 months, of Marasmus, a form of malnutrition.

In February 1913, Mary's mother, now calling herself Hellen Evans, was with a new partner, and they were tramping around the country looking for work. They stopped at the Casual Ward of Warwick workhouse where the NSPCC picked up on them and took them to court. Mary at that time could neither read nor write.

The chairman fined the prisoners 10s each and remarked that it was a terrible thing that the child should be taken all over the country especially in such weather. They were committed to gaol for 7 days.

They signed consent for Mary to enter the Homes and both of them signed the form with excellent signatures. Mary left for Canada in May that year. She returned to England but never saw her parents again.

Val Hart



Please help us by raising donations from Easy Fundraising for the Society whenever you buy anything online. It is easy to sign up and recommended by many others. They give donations on over 4000 retailers as well as insurance companies.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/balsallheathlhs/>

There's also Amazon who will donate. – have a look at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1101945-0>

## Dorothy Bassett Found!

Two avid readers of the Gazette have found Dorothy, whose photo featured in the last issue - not actual evidence but she seems to be the only likely one. Well done and thank you!

Dorothy, born 21 Oct 1897 in Liverpool, was the daughter of Charles Bassett, a joiner who became a clerk of works, and of Kate Kelly. The family moved around a lot (presumably with Charles's work) and children were born in many different places. The photo is dated 1915 on the back, so Dorothy would have been aged about 18 at that time.

In 1911 the family were living in Handsworth but by 1939 had moved to Grantham Rd, Sparkbrook. Here they lived for many years. Dorothy never married and died aged 88, at 102 Moseley Rd, Highgate. Alas no one has found a possible match for Mabel to whom the message on the back of the photo was addressed.

## Babs's Balsall Heath

Dorothy Katherine Parsonage (nee Barry) has such a pedigree of ancestry connections to Balsall Heath that we could think of her as our very own Royal. She is also the second Nonagenarian - from the Latin word meaning 'containing ninety', that we have featured this year. Born in 1930, she is a year older than Dennis Jukes (See Gazette Feb issue).

Her lineage can be traced back to three generations of Brickmakers starting in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, all of them Birmingham based <sup>(1)</sup>. Her maternal grandparents were Charlie and Lottie Yates. Lottie as a child was smuggled out of Paris to live with her grandparents in Brunswick Rd <sup>(2)</sup>. Charlie, born in Sherbourne Road was a confectioner, a sugar boiler, working for the local sweet factory.

The couple had nine children, among them, Babs's mother, Dorothy (born in Arter St). Came to live at No 77 Vincent Parade.



'Dorothy' was a name that was used little in favour of 'Dolly'. In time her daughter, also named Dorothy, which she did not care for, was dropped for 'Babs' as she was the youngest child.

Babs's mom and dad were born in the same year, 1900. Dad (in Jakeman Rd) was Leslie Michael Barry. Later his family came to live in a tiny cottage-style house in Mary St. His mother widowed with 7 children. He met Dolly when they were both at Sherborne Road junior school (he dipped her pigtails in ink wells). Les joined the Navy in 1916 and served through to the end of WW2 <sup>(3)</sup>.

Photo; Leslie and Dolly, 1926 Vincent Parade, Les on leave from the Navy.

With Les away at sea for months at a time Babs lived with her mom and grandparents' house in Vincent Parade together with auntie Nell, and uncles Harry & Ted.





Photo: A big day for the Yates family, its 1937 and the youngest sister, Francis is getting married. Brothers Harry (Harold Goodwin) and Ted (Edward Douglas) approach St Paul's Church on the Moseley Rd to attend the wedding. The Baths and Library clock tower can be seen in the background.

Photo: Circa 1925 at Vincent Parade. Front, Ted, Nell, and Lottie. Back, Harry and unnamed neighbour.



In 1931 the family moved to No 211 Mary Street – 10 doors from the Eagle Tavern-also known as 'Snackers'. (See Gazette Aug 2019).



The Mary Street house had to be enlarged as other members of the family came to live there.

Photo; Mary St, Babs with her extended family. Uncle Ted and wife Rene. Grandfather Charlie, auntie Nell and Mom Dolly.



Photos; Back Garden, Mary St. Dad's home on leave, and in 1934 on her granddad's knee.

In 1937, Les and Dolly moved their family to No 83 Ombersley Road to live alongside her sister Francis, who was now Mrs Howard Evans at No 81. Granddad Charlie and Auntie Nell moved with them. Grandma Lottie had passed away in 1935.



## War

Babs attended Tindal Street infant and Junior School, her teachers were Miss Lovejoy, Miss Taylor, and Miss Clayton. + Mr Lockie and Mr Bishop (both were called up during the war). In 1940 the war really made itself felt following Landmine Bombings of Balsall Heath when the roads either side of Ombersley were flattened. She remembers vividly the bombing of the Carlton Cinema. The family went knocking on doors trying to find somewhere to stay far away from bomb-alley (Moseley Rd). Farmer George Rowney of Salter Street Earlswood agreed to take them in.



Dolly, her father Charlie, Babs, Aunt Nell, and their neighbours from Ombersley-Mr & Mrs Fox and their son Harvey all lived and slept in the farmer's front room for two years. The local school had no room for them, so no school for Babs aged 10-12. Babs and Harvey were strafed by machine gun fire by enemy aircraft in the farmer's field following a raid in Birmingham. The family decided to move back home in 1942.

Photo: Babs on the farm at Earlswood

## Babs grows up

For Senior school Babs went to Upper Highgate Street, as Tindal Street had been bombed. She left at the age of 14. A number of jobs followed including Russell's gift and card shop on Stratford Rd. Grubb's Factory Mary St, making immersion heaters. Solicitor's Law Stationary supplies in Newhall St, and managed Pleasure Portraits in New St shopping centre until the 1980's.

Babs was to remain in her Ombersley home until after she got married to Ben Parsonage in 1950. Granddad Charlie passed away the same year. With her Auntie Francis living next door she saw her new cousins David, Peter, and Rita, grow up.

Photos;

Far left, Outside No 81, 6 year old 'scallywag' Pete Evans with brother David. Pete became a professional wrestler (4). Francis would continue to live in Ombersley until the 1970s.

Left, circa 1950s Babs had met Royal Marine Ben and married him at St Paul's Church. They lived in the front room with her mom and dad at No 83, until they could afford to buy their own home in Kings Heath.





Photos: Ben and Babs leave St Paul's Church after the marriage ceremony. And circa 1970s she has gone blonde. With that smile it could be a case of "Blondes have more fun".

Today, her daughter Lisa, says of her mom, "She is 91, and full of spirit". Balsall Heath local History Society, says a big thank you to Lisa for giving her time and invaluable help in producing this story. J.F

Notes.

1; Joseph Charles the most recent of the brickmakers b 1846 d 1925 was known to be immensely proud of being involved in the making of Terracotta bricks for the new Victoria Law Courts. Victoria laid the foundation stone in 1887. Built by John Bowen & Sons.

2; Lottie (nee Harvest b 1869) was as a two-year old child, smuggled out of Paris France by air balloon The city was under siege by Prussian forces. Her parents had been working there.

3; Leslie was told by the recruiting officers to come back in two years when he was 18. He went back within the week and told them he was 18. He began training aboard HMS Hood. The Hood was to be sunk by shell fire during WWII with the loss of most of its crew. Just three men survived.

4; See Pete Evans, Balsall Heath Basher. Gazette Nov 2020



## News on the Trophy Picture

This picture appeared in our March edition and, as a result of the picture being reprinted in the Jewish Chronicle, we have some idea of who these people are. Phillipa Fisher wrote in to identify her nana Annie Cohen of Willows Crescent and Sadie Rose. *(I wonder if that's my mother's old friend Annie Cohen and my boss's wife – they would have lived on Viceroy Close, I think.- W McCabe)*