



ON THE PALACE BALCONY WEARING THE IMPERIAL CROWN

## Queen Elizabeth II 1926 – 2022

Your Majesty, Ma'am, we address you with respect and with the familiar, for most of us have known no other sovereign. We watched you give your promise to serve in the crowded room of our neighbour. One of the first to have the new-fangled television sets. You have been our constant while the world itself constantly changed. We of the inner-city district of Balsall Heath watched those flickering images as though we were at the Saturday matinee in the Imperial Picture House. Well, we were kids then Your Majesty, we played in the streets in clothes mended and mended again. We ran about like ants under a warm summer sun. The girls roped skipped in the horse road, 'one potato, 2 potato, 3 potato, four'. We played Hopscotch and did hand stands against any nearby wall. The boys 'Aeroplaned, arms out wide making 'engine sounds', becoming even noisier as Cowboys and Indians. The thing is Ma'am, as we matured life threw multi changes at us. The NHS was getting established, we went to school until we were 15 years of age. The school board man saw to it that we got educated. Jet Airliners were shrinking the world, IBM revealed their calculating electronic brain. People were eating out more often, and marriage, with religion loosening its grip on our lifestyle, more likely to end in divorce. Our generation were the first to get the national title of 'Teenagers'. Ma'am you know all of this, a myriad of national lifestyle changes has happened since. But you didn't, you were our strength and stay through-out the years Thank you 'Lilibet'. R.I.P

## Balsall Heath Local History Society Gazette

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History Society and  
lostchildrenproject

**Membership of the Society costs £12 a year. Membership runs from January to December each year and application forms are available on the website. Fees at meetings are: £1 for members and £3 for visitors.**

**Meetings are held at St Paul's Venture, Malvern Street at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served from 7 pm to 7:20 pm.**

**Coming soon**

**Thursday September 29<sup>th</sup> - AGM and presentation of 'Lost Balsall Heath.' Images of places now gone from our neighbourhood.**

**Thursday October 27<sup>th</sup> Pat Franklin on Eldred Hallas, Birmingham's first Labour MP and his contribution to the founding of the Birmingham Municipal Bank.**

# Trains and Boats and Dames, Heritage Week Walk.



Birmingham Theatre Company performed this amazing walk on Sept 18th. It was punctuated by scenes and characters spanning the years 1643 to 1992.



There were songs accompanied by Peter Churchill, a total of a dozen scenes performed by costumed characters as well as a lurking Roman soldier seeking the way to Metchley Fort via Icknield Street , while under attack from an Ancient Briton.



# Balsall Heath Heritage Walk



We were delighted to offer this walk on Sept 11<sup>th</sup> as part of Birmingham Heritage Week. Our route started at Myrtle Cottage, believed to date from the late eighteenth century and then took us to Malvern Street to visit Balsall Heath City Farm, now 42 years old. Then in Runcorn Road we met Daniel Peters, a farmer who became a Railway Contractor, who gave his name to the house there. After that we returned to the Moseley Road to walk past the Moseley and Balsall Heath Institute before having a guided tour of the Creation Climbing Centre and Skatepark, which was previously the Tram Depot, opened in 1907 with room for 77 electric trams.



Next we were off to Cromer Road, past Payne's old HQ to reach Tindal Street, past the lovely old school building and Balsall Heath's Carbon Neutral ECO House. Here we were treated to a brief explanation of its key features, by John Christophers, the architect who designed it. Then we walked on, viewing John Bowen's yard from the pocket park before entering the famous Old Moseley Arms. Edward Road Police station was our next stop.

The glorious buildings on the Moseley Road were at the end of the walk. The Baths were, alas, still shrouded with scaffolding but at the Library we were addressed by a Librarian from times past who told us of the austere rules and regulations which were once enforced.

Attention was given to the Moseley Community Hub (old Art School) before we finished the walk back at The Old Print Works, where Mr. Butcher himself told us about his factory which was here from 1909 for about 100 years.

Thank you to all participants who came along to walk the walk with us and who made the two sessions most enjoyable.

Thanks also to the Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund who awarded us a grant for this trail. The printed version will be produced this autumn.

Val Hart



## The Family and Local History Fair Held at The MAC on Sept 15th

This was a wonderful occasion, It was organized by Midland Ancestors who succeeded in attracting stalls from a variety of organisations.



The Society ran a stall and we had a great day, selling a lot of our publications and making many new contacts. A big thank you from us to Midland Ancestors.

Val Hart

### Patricia Roberts Pichette, author The Middlemore Experience.

Friends and followers of Balsall Heath Local History Society (BHLHS) will be well aware of the society's work on the history of the Middlemore Homes and emigration of children to Canada. Work guided somewhat by Patricia's book (illustrated). She has become a much regarded friend and has travelled from Canada to be with us twice. The latest of which was this summer when she was able to see our work in the theatre with the play 'The Lost Children'

In her own words, she told us,

"I was delighted to attend The Lost Children presentation – twice – and would like to congratulate the cast and all associated with it, for the writing, the songs, the music, the acting, the overall production, presentation, and the enthusiasm of everyone involved.

I would love to see something like this in Canada". Patricia went on to praise the work leading to the unveiling of the John Middlemore's memorial Blue Plaque, and the Lost Children

Exhibition, which is presently on display at the National Trust's Back to Backs in Hurst Street, until the end of October. She added, "Back in Canada, I will not only be talking about what you are accomplishing in Birmingham, but also preparing a report for the Anglo-Celtic Roots, the quarterly Journal of the British Isles

Great Canadian Expectations  
The Middlemore Experience



PATRICIA ROBERTS-PICHETTE

Family History Society of Greater Ottawa (BIFHSGO). Thank you Balsall Heath History and performing arts group (BHTC), for your work and achievements. Enjoy the accolades”.

**Remember, the Society’s own “Lost Children Exhibition” will finish it’s run at the Back to Backs on Hurst Street at the end of October. Catch it while you can!**

## **Benjamin Orange Grimmett’s grave. An Appeal.**



You may remember Benjamin who was featured in The Gazette in September 2021. He was a child emigrated by the Middlemore Homes in 1915 but returned in 1921 to England to spend the whole of his adult life in Monyhull. He died in 1981 and was buried in Brandwood End Cemetery.

So an Appeal. Firstly- does anyone remember meeting Benjamin?

Secondly- is anyone willing to make a small donation towards restoring his gravestone? It would cost £300 and I have raised £100 of this already from people who came to the Heritage Week Stories from the Stones Walk . If anyone does wish to donate, it’s best to use the Donate button on The History Society website.

Thanks. Val Hart

## **Other Events**

Birmingham Museum and art gallery will change its exhibitions at the end of October so this is your last chance to see the exhibitions “Wonderland” pictures and memories of local cinemas including many in Balsall Heath, and “In the Que” memories of the Que club on Corporation Street.