



## Balsall Heath Local History Society



# Annual Report 2020-2021

### **Bringing history to life**

The Society was founded about 40 years ago with the aim of promoting interest in our local history. Over the years the Society has achieved considerable success, working with schools and community groups, organising exhibitions and events, collecting resources and producing our own publications. It is important we all feel pride in our area and to value its strengths, both past and present. Local history has a key role to play in underpinning community cohesion.

## Chairman's Report

What a strange year it has been! In last year's Chairman's Report I had hoped that the Society would be back to its usual meetings by Sept 2020 and here we are, twelve months later, still waiting for that day to arrive. Luckily it has and Sept 30th will be our first meeting in a little under two years.

Despite the lack of regular meetings I have to thank the Committee for continuing to keep the Society's interest at heart Jim Fitzpatrick recently organised two meetings elsewhere: St Alban's Church and the Wythall Transport Museum. The Society has also been represented at a weekend exhibition at the Old Print Works. Val Hart and Jim Fitzpatrick have also been busy answering queries relating to the Lost Children Project as well as general enquiries on Balsall Heath.

I also have to thank Bron Salway for continuing to find interesting speakers for future meetings and Jenny Hodson for coping with the intricacies of minute taking.

I also have to thank you, our members, for your continuing interest, which was perfectly illustrated by the numbers who turned up at the two special events. Here's to a more normal and successful year to come.

*Patrick Baird*

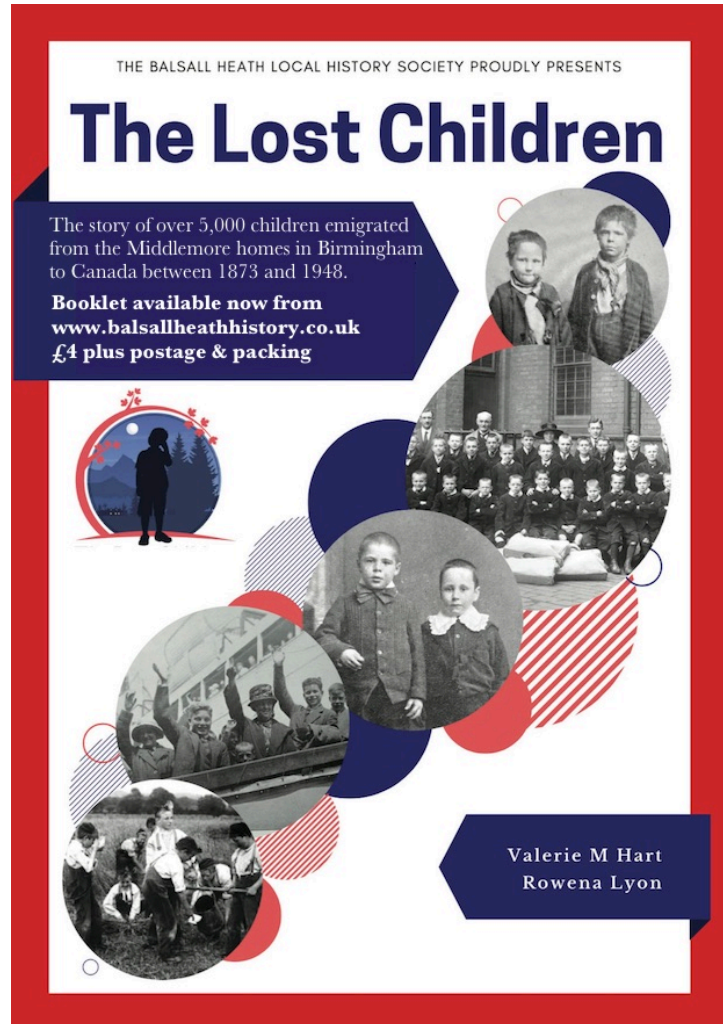
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## Enquiries and The Gazette Newsletter

Research queries are steady and are usually connected to family history. The Gazette has flourished this year and expanded, as distribution by email has meant we could spread to more pages. It has a wide circulation and we get a lot of positive feedback. Thank you to all readers who help by responding to enquiries and thanks also to all those who have shared their Balsall Heath memories with us.

## The Lost Children Project

The Project aimed to raise awareness of the work of the Middlemore Homes which emigrated over 5000 children from Birmingham, chiefly to Canada, between 1873 & 1948. The children were placed with farmers in the backwoods until 1932 and after that to Fairbridge Farm School.



The funding for this Project has now finished but the work is continuing with the help of many volunteers. The book, "The Lost Children" has been selling well and enquiries from relatives have continued to flow in during the pandemic. We expect to resume research in the Archives in the coming year. Val Hart has given a talk for the British Association for Local History, now on their website.

Plans for the Blue Plaque in St Luke's Road, Highgate, are well advanced with a date set in July 2022 to tie in with the Commonwealth games coming to Birmingham.

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## Events

We had a stall at the **Old Print Works Open Day in September 2020** but have not been able to do anything more because of Covid.

## Donations

We have had some lovely donations this year:

- A photo of girls with their "Jewish Challenge Trophy" in the 1920s, which we have been researching.



- An extraordinary metal version of a Dyche photo;
- A set of three photographs of members of the Middlemore family together with a booklet of memories of her father by Emily Christabel. Donated by John Middlemore's great, great granddaughter.
- Two photos from Moseley Road Photographic studios.

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## Committee Members 2019-2020

President: Richard Albutt

Chair: Patrick Baird

Vice-Chair: Jenny Hodson

Treasurer: Pat Johnson

Programme Secretary: Bron Salway

Committee Secretary: Val Hart.

Committee Members: Jim Fitzpatrick, Judith Millington, Pauline Pedersen

## Meetings

Meetings in normal times are held on the last Thursday of every month at 7.00 for 7.30 at St. Paul's Venture, Malvern St, off Clifton Road, Balsall Heath, B12 8NN. All are welcome to come along. The programme is on our website.

The AGM for the year 2019-2020 was conducted by email in December 2020.

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## Partnerships & Funders

Thanks to those who work in partnership with us: **Birmingham History Theatre Company, The Old Print Works, St. Paul's Community Development Trust.**

We have also contributed to other local projects:

**Let Us Play** (General Public)

**The Whole World in One Place**  
(Future Seed)

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## Contact Information

Balsall Heath Local History Society.

The Old Print Works,  
498-506 Moseley Road,  
Balsall Heath.

Birmingham B12 9AH

[www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk](http://www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk)

[www.thelostchildren.uk](http://www.thelostchildren.uk)

email: [info@balsallheathhistory.co.uk](mailto:info@balsallheathhistory.co.uk)

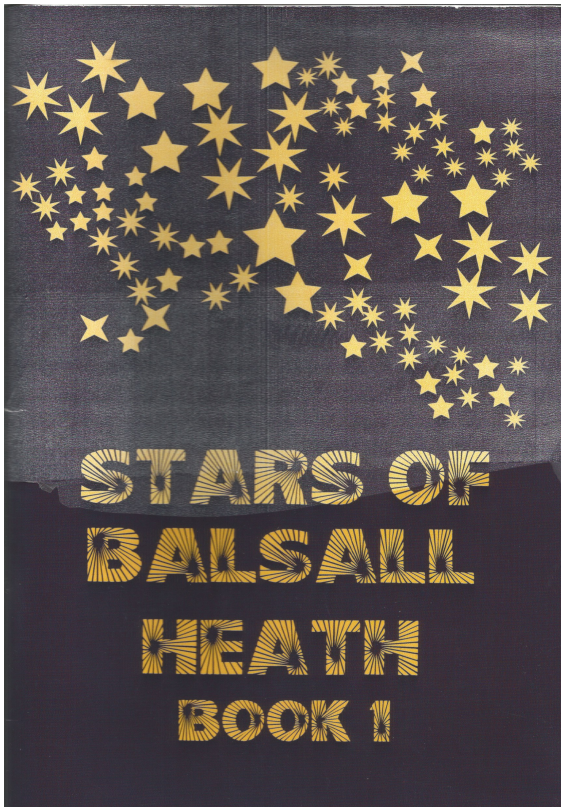
We can also be found on Facebook

# Publications by Balsall Heath Local History Society

All our publications are available to order on our website, [www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk](http://www.balsallheathhistory.co.uk)

**The Lost Children.** The story of over 5000 children emigrated by the Middlemore Homes in Birmingham to Canada between 1873 & 1948.

**Stars of Balsall Heath.** Vol 1. A few of our most famous Balsall Heathans.

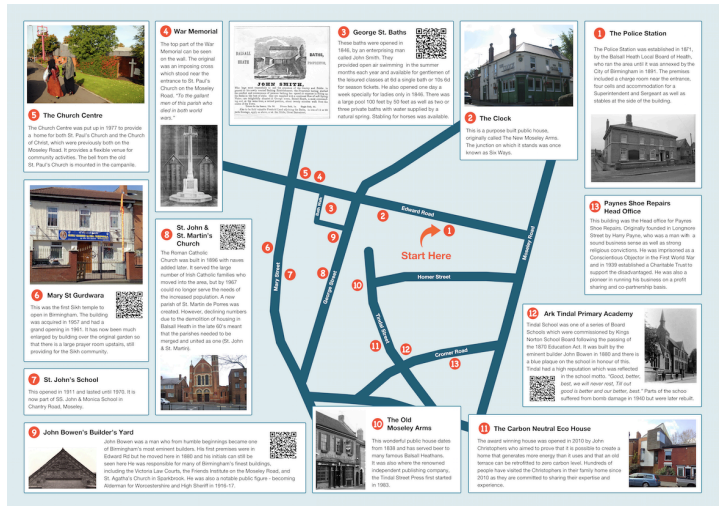


**Sweet Memories** A dictionary of confectionery from times gone by.

**Balsall Heath Through Time** by Val Hart. This book illustrates some of the major changes to the area since 1939.

**The Flicks** Memories of the cinemas in Balsall Heath.

**The Moseley Road Trail** The Development of the Moseley Road from the 1740s.



**A Street Trail** of the Edward Rd area.

**Brown Paper and Goose Grease** A Dictionary of Traditional Remedies.

**Balsall Heath, A History** by Val Hart. Our development from the heath of the 18th century to the suburbs of the 1940s.

**Balsall Heath & Highgate Past & Present**

*Edited by Val Hart and Alan Hemming*

Photographs of the area by topic.

**Tales Out Of School** Edited by Val Hart.

Memories of schooldays by adults from Balsall Heath and beyond, spanning more than a century and five continents.

**The Gazette** Our monthly newsletter. Stories and photographs from the past and present.