

# ACCESSING RECORDS: ORPHANAGES, CHILDREN'S HOMES, & MATERNITY HOMES



## INTRODUCTION

This guide provides an outline of the information currently available through the council to help people trying to trace their own histories and birth relatives.

	CONTENTS
<b>Finding records of individual children</b>	Records for children who were in care Records for children who were adopted
<b>1. Solihull Council Homes</b>	45-47 Richmond Road, Olton Ipswich Walk, Chelmsley Wood Swallow's Meadow, Shirley
<b>2. Warwickshire County Council Homes in Solihull</b>	The Hermitage
<b>3. Poor Law Union Homes</b>	The Woodlands Hill Rise Children's Home Marston Green Cottage Homes
<b>4. Other Homes</b>	St. Christopher's Home for Children Francis Way Maternity Home Dr Barnardo's Home
<b>5. Homes within other Local Authorities</b>	Sir Josiah Mason Orphanage
<b>6. Religious Societies</b>	The Church of England Central Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays

## FINDING RECORDS OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

### RECORDS FOR CHILDREN WHO WERE IN CARE:

When Solihull became a County Borough Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1964, it took on responsibility for children in care.

For children who were in care:

- there is no legal obligation to keep records before 1991.
  - it was general practice for records to be destroyed 2-3 years after a child left the local authority's care.
  - there are also various records at Solihull Central Library including:
    - County Borough of Solihull: Boarding out register 1964-1975
    - County Borough of Solihull: Register of children in care 1964-c1983
    - County Borough of Solihull: Boarding out register 1969-1985
    - Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council: Register of children in care 1978-c1989
- Contact Solihull MBC's Heritage and Local Studies Librarian on 0121 704 6976.
- prior to 1964, any surviving records of children in care are likely to be at Warwickshire County Records Office.

**Access:** Due to the Data Protection Act 1998 all Care Registers are confidential for up to 100 years. This means that the registers cannot be made publically available until all named persons in the register would be 100 years old. Individuals named in the registers can make a Subject Access Request under Section 7(1) of the Data Protection Act 1998 to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to request their information. Subject Access Requests need to be made in writing and accompanied by proof of identity.

Solihull Council  
 Council House  
 Manor Square  
 Solihull  
 West Midlands  
 B91 3QB

## RECORDS FOR CHILDREN WHO WERE ADOPTED:

For children who were adopted:

- The adopted person needs to apply to the Registrar General for access to their original birth records.
- If the adoption took place prior to 12 of November 1975, the person will need to see a counsellor before access to the records is given.

## 1. SOLIHULL COUNCIL HOMES

### 45-47 RICHMOND ROAD, IPSWICH WALK, AND SWALLOW'S MEADOW

Name and Address of Home	Records and Resources
<b>45-47 Richmond Road, Olton</b>	Children's Committee minutes 31st October 1967 record permission from the Government for the adaptation of the properties into a "long-term family group home".
	A planning application was submitted on 4th December 1967 for the conversion of two houses into a children's home.
	Children's Committee minutes 27th February 1968 refer to the move of the houseparents and the six children in care at the present accommodation in Richmond Road, to move to 5 Herbert Road, Solihull on 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 1968 where they would live for the period of the conversion, estimated 3-4 months.
	Health, Welfare & Children's Committee minutes 23rd May 1968 refer to the cessation of boarding out allowances to the houseparent when the move takes place ("in approx. 7 weeks' time") to Richmond Road.
	Records of those admitted to the home appear to be included in the registers of children in care held at Solihull Library.
<b>Ipswich Walk, Chelmsley Wood and Swallow's Meadow, Shirley</b>	These are described in the Solihull Times, 3rd July 1987 as "homes for problem teenagers", which were due for closure.
	Social Services Committee minutes 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 1987 reported that Ipswich Walk had closed in the summer of 1987.

## 2. WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HOMES IN SOLIHULL

### THE HERMITAGE

The Hermitage, located on Lode Lane, opened in the 1920s and closed on Friday 14th December 1973. By the time of its closure The Hermitage had become a diagnostic assessment and treatment centre for teenage boys.

#### Records and Resources

Some Registers were transferred to Warwickshire County Record Office in May 2013:

1. Register of admissions & discharges 1951-1961
2. Homes & nurseries record book 1953-1964
3. Homes & nurseries record book 1964-1970

That the home was retained by Warwickshire County Council when Solihull became a County Borough in 1964 is referenced in info from Solihull News, 8th December 1973, p. 37.

Warwickshire County Record Office does not hold any additional records of The Hermitage; however, there may be some information on individuals within the County Council's Public Assistance Committee Minutes. Public Assistance Committee Minutes are not available for general public access as they contain sensitive personal information but access may be granted under the Data Protection Act 1998. Any individual who stayed at The Hermitage may make a Subject Access Request under Section 7(1) of the Data Protection Act 1998. Subject Access Requests must be made in writing and accompanied by proof of identity; they should be sent to the Archive Compliance Manager:

Warwickshire County Record Office  
Priory Park  
Cape Road  
Warwick  
CV34 4JS

## 3. POOR LAW UNION HOMES

### THE WOODLANDS

The Woodlands, located at Friday Lane Barston, was operated by the Solihull Poor Law Union and open by 1908. The Woodlands accommodated 12 children and had closed by the 1920s.

#### Records and Resources

Records of Solihull Work Houses including The Woodlands can be found:

<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Solihull/#Homes>

### HILL RISE CHILDREN'S HOME

Hill Rise Children's Home, located in Long Leys, Meriden, was part of the Meriden Poor Law Union. It does not appear that any records of the home have survived, although individuals may be mentioned in the Public Assistance Minutes at Warwickshire County Council.

#### Records/Resources

Deeds in possession of the current owners indicate that the land was conveyed to 'The Guardians of the Poor of the Meriden Union' in 1904 for the purpose of a residence and office for the Relieving Officer.

According to a local historian the house was used as a children's home in the 1920s/30s and there was a previous home in Showell Lane used around the time of the First World War. It is possible that Hill Rise gave a home to orphans and children of unmarried mothers from other North Warwickshire villages.

## MARSTON GREEN COTTAGE HOMES

The Marston Green Cottage Homes opened in 1880 and was operated by the Birmingham Poor Law Union.

### Records and Resources

Records for the period 1880-1934 are held at Birmingham City Archives and at the Library of Birmingham (Ref.: BCC 10/BCH/1).  
<https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/archives>.

## 4. OTHER HOMES

Historically it was common for an agency of the Church of England or Roman Catholic Church to have been involved in orphanages and homes that worked to arrange adoptions.

## ST CHRISTOPHER'S HOME FOR CHILDREN

St Christopher's Home for Children, located on the Warwick Road, Olton opened in 1931 and was jointly funded by The Church of England Central Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays and the Midlands Waif Aiders League. By the late 1970s, it had become a home for children with severe disabilities, owned by the Church of England Children's Society. The Home closed in the mid-1990s and the site was redeveloped.

### Records and Resources

Records are held by The Children's Society.  
<http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/homes/OLTON01.html>

## FRANCIS WAY MATERNITY HOME

Francis Way Maternity Home, previously known as 'The Firs', was located at 124 Four Ashes Road, Bentley Heath. The Home appears to have been operational from 1940s to early 1970s. It was run by Father Hudson's Homes.

### Records and Resources

Father Hudson's Society have a list of all the homes for which it holds records:  
<http://www.fatherhudsons.org.uk/adults/support-after-care/9.htm>

## DR BARNARDO'S HOME, 53/55 WILDMOOR ROAD, ROBIN HOOD ESTATE, SHIRLEY

Dr Barnardo's Home, 53/55 Wildmoor Road, Robin Hood Estate, Shirley was opened in May 1966 for children of all ages and closed in 1991.

### Records and Resources

There is information in the Council minutes (Public Works & Amenities Committee, Dec 1970) about an increase in charges to local authorities by Dr Barnardo's. At this time it was noted that the Council had four children in care at the home in Shirley.

People who were formerly in a Dr Barnardo's home can request their own records:  
[http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/our\\_history/working\\_with\\_former\\_barnardos\\_children-2013/access\\_to\\_records.html](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_history/working_with_former_barnardos_children-2013/access_to_records.html)

Dr Barnardo's also offer a family history enquiry service:  
[http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/who\\_we\\_are/history/family\\_history\\_service.html](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/who_we_are/history/family_history_service.html)

## 5. HOMES WITHIN OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

### SIR JOSIAH MASON ORPHANAGE, ERDINGTON

The Sir Josiah Mason Orphanage was first occupied in 1868. Boys were admitted from the ages of seven to ten years old and left at fourteen; girls were admitted from four to ten years old and left at fifteen.

#### Records and Resources

Records of children are held at Birmingham City Archives:  
<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/localstudieslibrary>

## 6. RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES

### THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND CENTRAL SOCIETY FOR PROVIDING HOMES FOR WAIFS AND STRAYS/ CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

The Church of England Central Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays was established in 1881. In 1935 it became a registered adoption agency and by the 1960s was a leading agency. In 1946 the name changed to the Church of England Children's Society. Between 1960 and 1980 the society placed 10,068 children for adoption. From the 1970s, the society began to move away from its fostering and adoption work into preventative care for children in their own homes and communities. In 1982 the name changed again to The Children's Society.

Enquiries may be sent to:

The Children's Society Records and Archive Centre  
Block A, Floor 2 Tower Bridge Business Complex  
100 Clements Road  
Bermondsey  
London  
SE16 4DG

## USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

Children's Homes throughout the UK	<a href="http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/">http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/</a>
Solihull Heritage & Local Studies	<a href="http://www.solihull.gov.uk/heritage">http://www.solihull.gov.uk/heritage</a>
Boarding Out of Children Regulations, 1955 Section 10	<a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1955/1377/pdfs/uksi_19551377_en.pdf">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1955/1377/pdfs/uksi_19551377_en.pdf</a>
Registrar General	<a href="http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/">http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/</a>
Solihull Work Houses	<a href="http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Solihull/#Homes">http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Solihull/#Homes</a>
Birmingham City Archives	<a href="http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/archives">http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/archives</a>
Children's Society	<a href="http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/">http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/</a> <a href="http://childrenssociety.org.uk/">http://childrenssociety.org.uk/</a>
Dr Barnardo's Homes, West Midlands	<a href="http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_history/barnardos_homes/barnardos_homes_midlands.htm">http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_history/barnardos_homes/barnardos_homes_midlands.htm</a>
The National Archives	<a href="http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/">http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/</a>