

# Deep Roots, Living Branches: A History of Baptists in the English Western Midlands

Alan Betteridge



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**Deep Roots, Living Branches: A History of Baptists in the English Western Midlands** Alan Betteridge There have been Baptist churches in the Midlands since at least 1626. This book describes their story from Stoke-on-Trent in the north, to Droitwich in the south, and from Rugby in the east, to Oswestry in the west, and covers the whole of the large West Midland conurbation surrounding Birmingham. This volume includes the whole range of Baptists who have arisen from different sources over the generations, whether or not they have been in organised Association life. Local historians will gain an insight into a vital aspect of their community's story. Original texts have been used to let people and their churches speak for themselves. The story has been divided into periods of time, reaching 2009 when the office of the Heart of England Baptist Association (which covers most of the Baptist churches in this account) made a significant move to a new location in Selly Oak. Within each period important topics are highlighted, such as worship, social impact, church planting, etc. in this way considerable growth and important changes over the years are detailed. Some exciting stories emerge, such as the leading role Baptists had in the campaign to abolish slavery. The publication of Deep Roots, Living Branches is a contribution to the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the start of the world's first Baptist church among English emigres in Amsterdam in 1609. The book includes numerous line-drawings by the talented artist, the late Violet Kennard of Coventry.

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