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Chris Smith - We Remember!

ISSUE 210 | MARCH 2024

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Village Voice

Community magazine for
Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

Cover story

March is quite a busy month. First up we have Mothering Sunday which this year falls on 10th-March. This is the perfect time to make your mum feel really special. On 20th March Spring time officially begins with the clocks going forward on 31st March at 1.00am – we can all look forward to some long overdue lighter nights. Easter Sunday falls on 31st March and although it is Christianity's most important holiday its exact origins are unknown and almost certainly it dates back to at least Anglo-Saxon times. Read more about this on page 55.



Gail



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Win 2 tickets to the Robin Club in Bilston

6&29

We have two extra competitions this month – Capelli Hairdressing are celebrating 30 years in business and are giving away a **Cut and Blow Dry**. The second competition features Graham Fisher's new book – **Stourbridge Glass Museum: how it came into being**. Three lucky winners will get the chance to win a signed copy.

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Brainteasers

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Brainteasers Answers

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The Parish Pump. Read about what is going on with groups and associations in your area.



Please note that the closing date for our competition this month is **MONDAY, 25th MARCH 2024**. Entries received after this date will not be entered into the draw. Please ensure your name, address, telephone number and email address are included on your entry.

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Would you like some **FREE** publicity for forthcoming events or to recruit new members? Give us a call, send us an email or drop us a line here at **VILLAGE VOICE** – we would love to help. See our contact details on page 3.

COPY DEADLINE

Please note that the copy deadline for the **APRIL 2024** edition of **VILLAGE VOICE** is **Monday, 18th March 2024**. Please book your space early to avoid disappointment.



Courtesy of **THE ROBIN** in Bilston, we have two tickets up for grabs for one lucky winner. All you have to do to be entered is to send your **NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER** and **EMAIL ADDRESS** to villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk or write to us at The Robin Tickets, Forge House, 50 Redhall Road, Dudley DY3 2NL. The lucky winner will be drawn on **Monday, 25th March 2024 – GOOD LUCK!**

Congratulations to **JENNIFER EDWARDS** of Sedgley who was the lucky winner of the two tickets on offer in the **FEBRUARY** edition.

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WIN A COPY OF GRAHAM FISHER'S NEW BOOK

The wait is finally over for the newly published book by author Graham Fisher MBE FRGS entitled "Stourbridge Glass Museum; how it came into being".

Graham's new work covers the intense period of just 13 years—a remarkably quick timescale—from the formation of the British Glass Museum through to the official opening in 2023 of a brand new purpose-built canal-side facility that will conserve and promote both the heritage and the future of local glassmaking for generations to come. Graham Knowles, Chairman of the British Glass Foundation commented: "*Graham has captured the essence of creating what we consider is a 'People's Museum' from the relics of a former glassmaking site that, more than 20 years after its closure, is still regarded locally with great affection. His latest book is a fascinating narrative in its own right but his recording of how we arrived here will doubtless prove of immense value to researchers and historians yet to be born.*"

The book is available to purchase through the Museum and from all the usual outlets including Amazon, local retailers in and around the Black Country and Hay-on-Wye or via the author's website at www.grahamfisher.co.uk. The book is priced at £10.00 with all proceeds going to the British Glass Foundation/Stourbridge Glass Museum.

We have three signed copies of the book to give away to three lucky winners. All you have to do is answer a simple question: "*How many years does Graham's new book cover*". Send your answer either by post to **Village Voice Magazine, "Book Competition", Forge House, 50 Redhall Road, Gornal Wood, Dudley DY3 2NL** or email your answer to villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk



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BRAINTEASERS

We're keeping it simple this month with a selection of questions that range from easy to ridiculously easy. You may not need the answers but just in case they are on page 64.

1. "I can travel from there to here by first disappearing and here to there by reappearing". What am I?

2. Which three letters can you insert into each of the following to create a new word (the same three letters for each word):

B - - - ON C - - - TER
G - - - TY ME - - - ED

3. All the vowels have been taken out of the famous saying below. Can you replace them?

T R R S H M N T H F R G V D V N

4. There are three houses in a row. One is made of bricks, one of wood and the third from iron. Fires break out in each and people can be heard screaming in them. The emergency services are soon on the scene. Which house did the ambulance try to put the fire out in first?

5. What is the missing word in this sequence?

**Begin inch chapel elastic ?
cellar arisen end**

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it's a fact!

- ★ **The 1st Wall Heath Scout Group was formed in 1914 just seven years after Baden Powell had started the Scouting Movement. The Group was formed by Mr R. Worton, the village school's headmaster and local choirmaster and it met weekly**
- ★ **In 1908 Bolton Wanderers granted their captain, David Stokes, a special benefit after he had been with the club seven seasons. He was born at Ketley and initially played for Kingswinford Albion, Wordsley Olympic, Halesowen and Brierley Hill Alliance before signing for Aston Villa. He never actually played for the Villa before transferring to Bolton for whom he appeared 191 times. He played in the 1904 FA Cup Final in which Bolton lost 1-0 to Manchester City.**
- ★ **Charles II visited Wordsley in September 1651 following the defeat of his army at Worcester. He stopped at a house on the corner of Kinver Street and High Street where his supporters laid on a meal for him before he continued his journey on to Wolverhampton.**
- ★ **At an auction held in October 1917 the following local properties were sold: The George & Dragon Inn at Wordsley sold for £700; two cottages in New Street, Wordsley with a yearly rental income of £24/14s were sold for £300; a cottage in Barnett Street, Wordsley which was rented out at £13 a year realised £245; and five cottages in Kingswinford with a total annual rental income of £36 were sold for £400.**
- ★ **Holbeache Dairy Farm once stood where the Maidensbridge housing estate now is. It disappeared in 1958.**



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it's a fact!

- ★ In February 1959 an advertisement appeared in some newspapers in Somerset in the 'Situations Wanted' column. It read: "Skilled verger—sexton, do gardening or groundsman. Seek position in South. House essential". In May of the same year another advertisement was put in some Midlands papers in the 'Situations Vacant' section: "Verger, sexton, churchman, active. Five-roomed flat, coal, gas, electricity. £6 weekly and perquisites. Apply with references Rector, Wordsley Rectory."
- ★ In the mid 1800s one of the most notable residents of Wall Heath was local architect William Bourne who designed a number of churches and public buildings in and around the Black Country. One monument that he did design was erected in Halesowen and he engaged Henry Beeson of the Victoria Marble & Stone Works to undertake its production. Unfortunately the work was sub-standard and had to be done again. In apologising for the delay Bourne told his client "*Beeson is, in some respects the most foolish man I know but I have never found him dishonest.*"
- ★ "Aris's Birmingham Gazette" carried a story in January 1849 about rumours surrounding a possible murder in Kingswinford. The rumours started after a shirt saturated with blood was found by the manservant of a Mr Griffiths near to Himley Farm Pool. Also found was a hat with two holes in it as though a bullet had passed through it. Despite investigations by the local constables, however, no body was ever found and no local men were reported missing.
- ★ In September 1848 a total of 48 cases of 'drink and disorderly' appeared in Kingswinford Magistrates Court.

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Example 1 - £82,000

Mr T. from **BRIERLEY HILL** worked for **ROUND OAK STEEL WORKS**. In 1988, he was advised by a salesman from **PRUDENTIAL** to transfer his **BRITISH STEEL** pension to them. When he retired, he noticed he was getting less than his friends who stayed in the **BRITISH STEEL PENSION SCHEME**. Compensation £82,721.

Example 2 - £91,000

Mr S. from **QUARRY BANK** worked at **ROUND OAK STEELWORKS**. In 1994, he was advised by a salesman to transfer his pension to **PEARL ASSURANCE** (now called **PHOENIX LIFE**). When he retired, he noticed he was getting less pension than his friends who kept their **BRITISH STEEL PENSION**. Compensation £91,000.

Example 3 - £103,000

Mr M. from **DUDLEY** worked for **DUDLEY COUNCIL**. In 1989, after he was finished, he was advised by an agent from **SUN LIFE** (now **AVIVA**) to transfer his pension to them. When he retired, he realised he was getting a much lower pension than his friends who kept their **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION**. Compensation £103,341.

Example 4 - £48,000

Mr G. from **DIXONS GREEN** worked at **DMV FABRICATIONS**. In 1994, after he was finished, he was persuaded by an independent financial advisor to transfer his pension to **STANDARD LIFE**. When he retired, he noticed he was getting less than his friends who kept their works pension. Compensation £48,000.

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MOTHERING SUNDAY:

LET'S LOOK AT WHERE IT ALL STARTED

Mothering Sunday has its roots as far back as the 16th century when, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, all church members were expected to go their 'mother' church (usually the parish church cathedral or abbey) to worship rather than attend the service in a 'daughter' church.

These occasions were great family affairs and it became the tradition that domestic servants were given the day off in order to return to their families for the day.

Quite often the sons and daughters returning to their families would bring with them a small present for their mother—hence the modern tradition of buying a small gift. In days gone by the present would often be wild flowers picked from the hedgerows or a small simnel cake. This is a small rich fruit cake (not dissimilar to a Christmas cake) which is usually decorated with 11 balls of marzipan to denote the 11 'true' disciples of Christ—Judas was excluded for obvious reasons.



There are various suggestions about the origins of the name 'simnel' although generally it is accepted that it derives from the Latin 'similia' meaning a light wheaten flour which was used in its baking. The cakes would be produced by servant girls in the kitchens of their employers and then taken home to their mothers as a present. It has been said that the cakes were named after Lambert Simnel who impersonated Richard, Duke of York, the son of King Edward IV and who tried to seize the throne. However, there are numerous references to simnel cakes in literature that long pre-date the ambitious Mr Simnel and any connection can be dismissed.

A local tale is equally inaccurate. It tells of two sisters, Sim and Nell who were making a cake together and could not decide whether it should be steamed or baked. They even came to blows with brooms as they argued and eventually, it is said, they decided to steam the cake for a while and then bake it as a convenient compromise. There is no evidence, however, that these warring sisters ever existed.

Mothers' Day is celebrated across the world—although on very different dates. In Albania and Bulgaria, for example it is always celebrated on 8th March whilst in Indonesia it is held on 22nd December. In the US—like Australia, Canada, Italy, Turkey and Japan—it is always commemorated on the second Sunday in May.



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Sun 31 Mar	Easter Sun Betws-Y-Coed & Conway £25	Wed 24 Apr	Bath in Springtime £22
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INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT MARCH

- 5th—1936:** The British fighter plane Spitfire made its first test flight from Eastleigh, Southampton. Powered by a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine the aircraft entered into service with the Royal Air Force two years later.
- 10th—1886:** Crufts Dog Show was held in London for the first time—since 1859 it had been held in Newcastle. More recently the venue has changed to the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham.
- 16th—1872:** The Wanderers beat the Royal Engineers 1-0 in the first English FA Cup Final at Kennington Oval.
- 17th—1766:** Parliament in London votes to repeal the controversial Stamp Act in an attempt to stifle rebellion in the American colonies—“Taxation without representation is tyranny”.
- 22nd—1824:** The British parliament voted to purchase 38 paintings at a cost of £57,000 to establish a national collection which is now housed in the National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London.
- 26th—1902:** British imperialist Cecil John Rhodes died in Cape Town aged 48. Rhodes who controlled 90% of the world’s diamond production was influential in establishing the British crown in South Africa and Rhodesia.

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ORDER IN COURT



In 1880 the magistrates' court at Brierley Hill was full of miscreants from the Wordsley, Kingswinford and Wall Heath areas. These included several licensees from the pubs around and about—Elizabeth Munday of the Albion Inn, Wall Heath was fined £2 and costs for selling beer after hours. Charged with the same offence was Thomas Hand from the Cherry Tree Inn in Barnett Lane, Wordsley. He, though, pleaded not guilty on the grounds that the bottle of beer to which the charge referred had in fact been sold during licensing hours but that it had not been served until later because Hand had been distracted by carol singers. The deputy stipendiary magistrate sitting on that day obviously took the date of the offence—25th December—into account and found him not guilty.

Alcohol was also the cause of five Kingswinford residents (including 68 year old Elizabeth Farrington) who were each fined 2/6d for being “*beastly drunk*” at a local wedding and refusing to go home when ordered to by the local police. Those who were on ‘relief’ but refused work were dealt with severely. Robert Swain was charged with “*neglecting to maintain himself*” after being offered work in Bromley Lane but then only completing half an hour’s labour. His excuse that his work colleagues had threatened him because he was working for less than the normal rate of pay was not, however, believed by Haden Corser, the stipendiary magistrate who promptly sent him to prison for a month with hard labour. Corser told him: “*You did not try to work but found it easier to live on other people’s money than your own.*”

Finally, another individual who found himself behind bars was Francis Phillips who stole over 8lbs of meat from Mr Webb, the Kingswinford butcher for whom he worked. The meat was sliced off the joints that Phillips was supposed to deliver to customers. He was sentenced to prison for six weeks.



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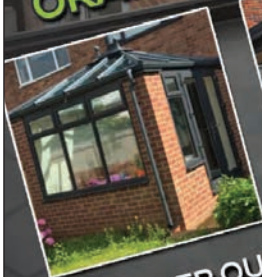
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it's a fact!

- ★ The Brierley Hill District Schoolboys Under 15 side in the mid 1960s included a wealth of talent—including five youngsters who were to go on to join professional clubs. Martin Bristow and Ian Davies both joined Walsall as did Phil Parkes (who then went on to play for QPR, West Ham and indeed England). Steve James signed for Manchester United and Kingswinford-born Brian Thompson joined Wolves before moving on to Oxford United, Torquay United and Southend United after which he dropped into the ranks of the semi-professional game with the likes of Chelmsford Town, Kettering Town and Rushden Town.
- ★ In mid September 1845 Kingswinford Police Court was particularly busy. Amongst the cases heard was that of a man called Rochford who was fined 5 shillings and costs (or in default seven days in prison) for ill-treating and cruelly using two dogs by causing them to haul an overloaded cart. The court heard that the dogs had been yelping loudly and were clearly in great pain. The next case involved James Brazier and James Lamon who were charged with dog fighting at Wombourne. It was said that one of the dogs involved in the fight belonged to Brazier and the other to a man called Pilsbury. He did not want his dog to fight but Lamon held him back. Both Brazier and Lamon were found guilty and fined 20 shillings plus costs.
- ★ An unusual piece of equipment was offered for sale in the Birmingham Daily Post in May 1942. "Bacon slicing machine by Berkel & Parnall equal to new. Price £75—The Heath Stores, Wall Heath. Phone Kingswinford 264.

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All the words searched this square below for the word associated with ODEON CINEMAS in list. Fifteen of them are hidden in it horizontally (straight forward), backwards, up or down or diagonally) whilst one is not there at all – or it may be misspelt! Once you have identified which one is missing just fill in the form below and send it to us. Alternatively send are mail at villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk (remember to include your name, address, postcode, telephone number and email address).

The winners will be the first two correct entries drawn at random after the closing date
6 Monday, 3rd March 2014 . Good luck

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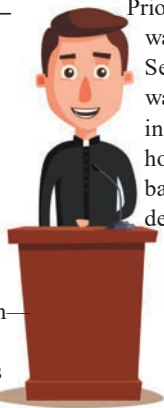
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CLERGY IN THE DOCK

Normally you think of men of the cloth being good law-abiding citizens—but that has not always been the case (especially, it seems, in Kingswinford)...

Between the 12th and 16th centuries a surprising number of vicars of Kingswinford proved to be somewhat prone to falling foul of the law of the land. Indeed, the only official details about the village's first vicar—William—concerns the County Sheriff taking action to repossess his goods as he was an outlaw. This was in 1186 and 150 years later another vicar of the same name was sued over the rent for a house in the village. He did not appear in court when told to and the Sheriff was sent to arrest him for contempt. In 1357 the vicar of Kingswinford Nicholas Jobynel



was accused of robbery and assault against the Prior of Dudley. On this occasion his co-accused was John de Sutton, the Lord of the Manor. Seventy years later the then vicar (John Bedhill) was accused of even more serious crimes including two rapes. He had returned to his home only to find that it had been stripped bare of all his possessions. It seems that this destroyed all sense of reason with him and very shortly afterwards he appeared in court accused of raping Joan Tanner and Christine Harewood, stealing silver from the church and entering the park of John Sutton and therein chasing and killing his game.

Whilst he was stripped of his priesthood by an ecclesiastical court, in the criminal court he was found guilty but given a pardon!

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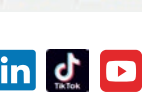
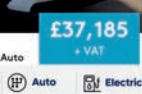
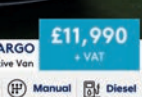
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HUGE SUCCESS FOR CLASSATHON FUNDRAISER IN MEMORY OF BLAZE ANGEL KERRY



Last December, just before Christmas, we were all devastated to hear of the death of Blaze Angel, Kerry Boucker. Kerry had worked most of her life as a senior colourist for Snippers and then Blaze Hair. Brett Harris and the Blaze Angels formulated plans for a fundraising event—a Back to Back Classathon at JD Gym in Brierley Hill which took place on Sunday, 18th February. It was a huge success and praise must go to everyone who took part in the event.

The plan was to raise £5000 for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity—an organisation that was instrumental in caring for Kerry and who are extremely close to both Blaze and the Boucker family.

So the plan for Sunday was a back to back Classathon which was open to both members and non-members (with small donations being given by everyone who took part). It ran from 8.15am through until approximately 2.00pm with HIIT Step, Bootcamp, Combat, Strength, Circuits, Spin and ending with Yoga. Huge praise must go to the powerhouse of the day better known as Laura Smith who tirelessly organised, taught and worked throughout the whole programme of events—true dedication. And then, of course, there was the Posh Tombola! As well as the many donations left in the salon, hundreds of prizes had been donated to the team including bottles of wines and spirits, pamper packs, chocolates and hampers and much more.

The stall was in the capable hands of organiser, Rose Cook Monk, together with a band of volunteers who all wanted to do their best on the day to make it a day to remember. And so it was. There have been radio interviews with Clive



l/r Candice Starkey, Kay Starkey and Mike Andrews of Air Ambulance; Pauline Gray, Rose Cook-Monk, Juliet Simpson and Jan Hopcutt.

Payne of Black Country Radio, press coverage and BBC Midlands Today covered the fundraising event on Sunday.

In total the team have smashed the original total of £5,000 and at the time of publication have raised a staggering £7800!!! Donations are still rolling in and the cut off point will be 28th April—a very apt day—Kerry's birthday. Going forward Blaze will continue to work with the charity by organising an annual fundraising event in aid of Kerry. Look out for a further update in the April edition of Village Voice Magazine.

**Photos courtesy of
Celina Taylor Photography**

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THURSFIELDS



STOURBRIDGE GLASS MUSEUM GALA EVENT

Most people travelling along the A591 road from Stourbridge to Kingswinford will be familiar with the smart new building on the left at Glasshouse Bridge. This is the brand-new Stourbridge Glass Museum, created on the site of the iconic former Stuart Crystal Glassworks and now home to the world-renowned Stourbridge Glass collection together with other exquisite examples of the glassmaker's skills. This modern purpose-built facility is also home to resident glass artists and plays host to a wide range of courses and educational events.

The museum was created by the British Glass Foundation working in partnership with a broad consortium, notably the site owners Complex Development Projects Ltd and Dudley MBC. Funded principally by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and European Regional Development Fund it took less than 13 years from being a vision to becoming a reality.

Stourbridge Glass Museum has since quickly become part of the fabric of Wordsley and has already established an international reputation. Opening to the public in April 2022, it was then 'officially' opened by HRH Duke of Gloucester in April 2023 and is about to reach its second anniversary. So, to celebrate this momentous achievement Stourbridge Glass Museum is hosting a special Gala Evening on Friday 19th April 2024.

This prestigious event will include a VIP reception for visitors followed by an evening of presentations and 'live' demonstrations showcasing the museum's work. Speakers will include BGF Trustee Graham Fisher, glassmaker Chris Day, and glass expert Dr Max Stewart. Resident glassmaker Allister Malcolm and his team will be showing their skills at glassmaking and their exhilarating Fire Poi performance. A highlight of the evening will be a raffle with the opportunity to win a truly unique work of glass specially made for the event by Chris Day.

Tickets are £50 and all proceeds will support the work of the museum.

BGF Chairman Graham Knowles says: 'The Gala Evening is our celebration of what we have always felt to be the 'People's Museum'. This is the first in what we intend as an annual event that will celebrate both the area's rich glassmaking history and its bright future'.

Full details and booking information at: <https://www.stourbridgeglassmuseum.org.uk>



Photo: Simon Bruntell



STOURBRIDGE
GLASS MUSEUM

**Stourbridge Glass Gala
2024
April 19th, 2024
18:30 - 21:30**

Join us for Stourbridge Glass Museum's Gala Fundraiser, celebrating its remarkable two-year anniversary while supporting a noble cause.

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stourbridgeglassmuseum.org.uk



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What are the differences between a sole trader and a limited company?

Sole trader

A sole trader is a self-employed individual trading as a business on their own. The individual and the business are one entity.

Limited company

A limited company is a separate legal entity. It operates independently from its owners and the earnings of the Company belong to the company, not to individuals.

Which is better – sole trader or limited company?

The best option for you will depend on your circumstances, the size of the business and future plans. Both structures have their pros and cons and speaking to your accountant will be crucial in making an informed decision on sole trader vs limited company.

Sole Trader

Pros	Cons
Easy to set up No need to register with Companies House.	Unlimited liability You take on all the risks and liabilities of covering business debts.
Fewer reporting obligations You'll need to submit an annual self-assessment tax return to HMRC but there is no need to file your accounts formally.	Less tax efficient Sole traders may pay income tax at a higher rate than corporation tax, as well as National Insurance. Sole traders are taxed on business profits.
Business control Business decisions are yours.	Limited funding opportunities Lenders and investors may favour limited companies so raising finance to grow your business can be difficult.
Keep all profits You'll retain all the profits after tax.	Less credibility Some organisations may prefer working with limited companies.
More privacy Business finances are not disclosed.	No business name protection Your business name is not legally protected.

Limited company

Pros	Cons
More tax efficient Limited companies pay corporation tax at a lower rate than income tax. Business owners and directors are taxed on income extracted from the company.	Reporting obligations Companies must file accounts to Companies House and HMRC. A Company Tax Return must also be submitted to HMRC. A Confirmation Statement and record of Persons with Significant Control must also be reported to Companies House.
Limited liability Owners are not normally personally liable for business losses.	Less control Control is shared with shareholders and decisions may need a vote.
Funding opportunities Lenders and investors tend to favour limited companies due to the level of legal protection and tax benefits.	More complex to set up Involves more paperwork and administration, including registering with and paying a fee to Companies House.
More credibility Operating as a limited company instils confidence and trust among suppliers and customers.	Less privacy Accounts and other documents filed with Companies House are on public record.

Profit extraction

Sole trade

Business profits are taxed as personal income regardless of how much you take out of the business. The amounts you do take out are drawings, and you are not taxed on these.

Limited company

Business owners are taxed on income extracted from the company, often in the form of dividends.

Tax rates

As mentioned above, there are tax differences between the business structure type. Here we have summarised the 2023/24 tax rates for sole traders and limited companies.

Sole trader - England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2023/24)

Band	Taxable income	Tax rate
Personal allowance	Up to £12,750	0%
Basic rate	£12,571 to £50,270	20%
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FAQs

Can I change from being a sole trader to a limited company?

Being a sole trader is a good option for many small business owners and self-employed people starting their own venture as it's the easiest business structure to set up. However, there may become a point when you decide it's better to be a limited company and it is simple to make the switch.

Is it better to operate as a sole trader or a limited company?

The better option depends on individual circumstances. There's no one size fits all approach, instead you'll need to balance the pros and cons to establish what's right for your business.

This article is intended to inform rather than advise and is based on legislation and practice at the time. Taxpayer's circumstances do vary and if you feel that the information provided is beneficial it is important that you contact us before implementation. If you take, or do not take action as a result of reading this article, before receiving our written endorsement, we will accept no responsibility for any financial loss incurred.



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it's a fact!

- ★ In August 1917 the following notice appeared in a number of local newspapers under the heading: *Notice of Sale By Auction of an Exceedingly Attractive, Detached Small Family Residence. "Ernest Davies has been favoured with instructions from William Meredith Hughes Esq., the owner, to sell by auction at the Old Bush Hotel, Dudley...that very desirable, soundly-constructed and most conveniently arranged freehold residence known as Beech Tree House standing in its own grounds of 2,223 square yards or thereabouts."* Despite the fact that it is described as a "small family residence" the premises actually had six bedrooms, a separate stable block (*with loft and harness room*) and a series of greenhouses 67 feet long x 15 feet wide. In these were a selection of mature vines that were said to be "*the most productive in the Midlands*".
- ★ In 1838 it was reported that a man known as Poor Old Cookey who was living in Wordsley had reached the age of 112. Apparently he had an accident as a young man which rendered him deaf and dumb. He served an apprenticeship for three years before becoming a labourer with various glass manufacturers. Despite his advanced years it was said that he walked very well and that his hair, although very long, was not yet grey. Indeed, those that did not know him thought that he was nearer 70 years of age than 112.
- ★ In early 1858 James and Sarah Caddy suffered one tragedy after another. They had 11 children but in a 10 week period six of them caught "brain fever" and five died as a result—the oldest was 29 and the youngest just 13.

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FUN AND GAMES IN THE AREA

One hundred or so years ago the opportunity to travel long distances to entertainment was enjoyed by only a privileged few. In most cases, therefore, more local events were patronised by the masses. Back in 1882 local residents could choose from a wide variety of garden parties, fetes and flower shows in the area.

The Independent Free Gardeners, a local friendly society, held its annual 'Grand Demonstration and Picnic' at Shutt End Park, Pensnett in June. Members of the society met at various pubs in the area and then marched—headed by brass bands—to the park where a wide range of entertainment was provided.

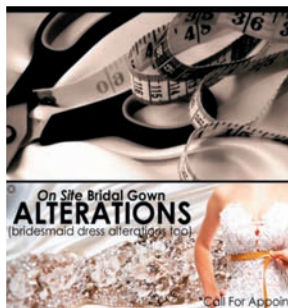
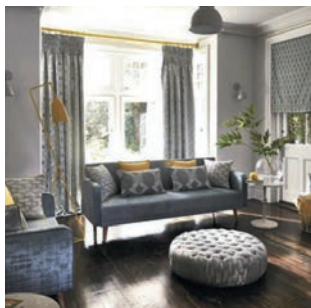
In Kingswinford the Annual Flower Show was held at Summerhill Court (by permission of its owner Henry Smith) and the funds raised were put to good use supporting various missions across the world.

Wordsley also had a flower show which was held at the end of July at 'Ashfield', the home of Mr E.S. Haines. This was on the site of part of what is now the King George V Park. The entertainment was provided by the 1st Staffordshire Rifle Volunteers Band.

The biggest crowds of any local event, however, were recorded by Stourbridge Cricket Club who attracted over 7000 to their annual sports day. Part of the attraction, however, was probably the fact that the 6d admission included a free pint of beer for all men or a glass of lemonade for the ladies. No sex equality there then!

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IT'S EASTERTIME—AND TIME TO SHAKE A STICK OR TWO

Easter is, of course, an important Christian celebration but its roots go back well beyond the birth of Christ. In fact the word itself is derived from Eostre, an Anglo-Saxon goddess of the dawn and spring.

It is for this reason that many of the traditional symbols of Easter are connected with birth, fertility and good luck.

Long before chocolate Easter eggs were invented the chicken or duck egg was used as a gift by children to their parents. The children would paint the eggs and give them on the morning of Easter Day.

The Easter Bunny—another symbol of fertility—is associated with the festival largely due to it's ability to reproduce very rapidly. Indeed, in Australia where it is something of a pest because of its high birth rate, some communities have banned the Easter Bunny in shops, replacing it with the Easter Bilby (right), which is an endangered small marsupial.



Another endangered race is the traditional Morris Men who entertain in villages both large and small especially around Eastertime. Many of their songs and dances are connected with the annual contest between Winter and Summer and have been around for hundreds of years. Even Shakespeare refers to the “old art” of Morris dancing. There are different forms of Morris dancing—locally it tends to be ‘Cotswold Morris’ or ‘Border Morris’ with six dancers whilst in other parts of the country (the

North West and South Yorkshire, for example) they dance with eight or ten. Also in the North West there is a tradition of all-women Morris Dancing troupes with the participants wearing clogs rather than boots. All forms of Morris dancing make full use of sticks, swords and other implements and it is thought that the term “to shake a stick” at something has its origins in Morris.



Although England is the traditional home of Morris dancing there are now 150 teams in the US, many more than in the UK. There is also one in Hong Kong and at least two in India! In Finland, Easter traditions include little children dressing up as witches on broomsticks and going from house to house collecting sweets (and it is often said that this was the true source of “trick or treat” at Halloween) whilst in the Czech Republic Ash Wednesday is called Ugly Wednesday!

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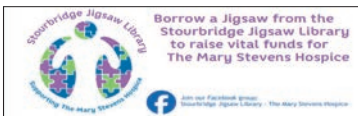
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On 2nd December 2023 the Hospice Jigsaw Library opened its doors to the public for the first time. Located in the seminar room in the Lodge at the Hospice, we have a welcoming warm space where people can come and browse through nearly 1000

puzzles, choose a couple to borrow, enjoy a tea or coffee and chat or pop a few pieces into our community puzzle. It costs £2 to borrow a puzzle and they can be loaned for as long as you like. All the major brands are represented and we also have over 100 puzzles to borrow in XL format, for puzzlers with sight, motor or dementia issues. The library is currently open Monday and Tuesday 10.00am-3.00pm and Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday 9.30-12 noon and Friday 1.30-4.30 pm. Our opening times are still settling, but they are largely determined by when our army of puzzling volunteers are available to man it.



The origins of the jigsaw library stem from coming to terms with grief and the combatting of isolation. When I lost my mum in 2019, one of my warmest childhood memories of her was completing jigsaw puzzles. We would spend lots of time together, puzzling alongside one another, sharing a space and each other's company. And so I bought a puzzle and completed my first one in a long time and found it enormously comforting. One puzzle led to another and I would

scour the charity shops weekly looking for the next one. When COVID hit and the shops shut, I set up a little jigsaw exchange on Facebook and started collecting jigsaws and loaning them out from my house to raise funds for my local primary school. A lot of people took to puzzling during the lockdowns and it quickly gained momentum. The number of puzzles in the library grew as did the number of puzzlers wanting to borrow them and I quickly had to sacrifice my dining room to house them all.

In 2022, my dad was diagnosed totally out of the blue, with a terminal brain tumour. I moved to London to care for him at home until he died. Up until that point I hadn't really had any experience or understanding of palliative care. The support both dad and I were given by his local Hospice was incredible. When I returned to Stourbridge I asked my group if we could change the charity we were supporting to Mary Steven's Hospice. The response was a unanimous yes. In addition to raising funds through the library, we started to hold jigsaw festivals in the Education Centre and since we changed to be Hospice supporters we have raised nearly £6000. We are so grateful to the Hospice for the space they have given us now to open a physical jigsaw library, which we hope will enable us to reach an audience beyond Facebook. We hope to be more than a jigsaw store and to be a community outreach hub where people can come and community puzzle, make friends and raise lots of money for the Hospice along the way. While the origins of the jigsaw library and its association with the Hospice come from a sad place, being involved in this project has brought me nothing but joy. I have met some wonderful people and am constantly uplifted by the generosity and resilience of others. We are an inclusive and friendly group and warmly welcome anyone who wants to get involved. If you haven't ever done a puzzle, give it a whirl. It is a great way to keep your mind occupied and slow things down in a very busy and complicated world. You never know you might like it. Happy puzzling.

Emma Kilbride—Stourbridge Jigsaw Library

Mary Stevens Hospice, 221 Hagley Road, Oldswinford DY8 2JR

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2024 Events



30
MAR

EASTER EGG HUNT

19
MAY

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16
JUNE

IT'S A KNOCKOUT

26
OCT

HALLOWEEN HUNT

20-24
NOV

PANTOMIME

1
DEC

XMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON

7
DEC

THE GREAT GATSBY XMAS BALL

FACEBOOK: WHVP VILLAGE EVENTS



Although we only set up our group in June 2023, we had already completed several projects beforehand including the King's Coronation parade. We felt it was time to become an official group, so in 2023 we did so with great success. We are just a group of local residents and businesses who have come together for the good of the Village. Last year we helped the following: ACORNS HOSPICE, Stuart King dream to run the London Marathon, MARY STEVENS HOSPICE.

We gave 67 Local families a Christmas to remember through: OPERATION SANTA, THE SALVATION ARMY, CHILDREN'S ER DEPOT.

OUR GOALS FOR 2024:

- RAISE THE OFFICIAL WALL HEATH FLAG
- VILLAGE NAME SIGNS • MORE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS
- HELP WITH VILLAGE IN BLOOM
- HELP WITH PARK PROJECTS

AND HAVE LOTS OF FUN
ON THE WAY...





KING GEORGE VI PARK, KINGSWINFORD “FRIENDS OF THE PARK”



“Friends of the Park” - a non profit group formed in 2022 is now led by Gemma Parsons, Luke Pitts, Sandra Cartwright and Alan Skidmore with a small group of volunteers. Their aim is simple—to improve park facilities, appearance and safety together with the preservation of wildlife, trees and plants. We last featured the group in January 2023 to report on what had been happening in the previous year so it seemed only fair that we catch up with the group again and find out what they have achieved, what are their future plans and also to try to reach out to some possible volunteers who might like to join the group—they currently have 800 followers on Facebook and this is growing all the time.

Friends of the Park organise small events and litter picks over the park, car park and are now including the area locally known as the Sandhole and the play area at the rear of Kingswinford Community Centre to their area of activity. The photos are to give you an idea of what they achieved during

2023—they are aiming for bigger and better in 2024!

Dates for your Diary include:

- **23rd March – Easter Event**
- **10th August—Play Day in the Park**
- **21st December—Christmas Event**
- **The last Saturday of each month the group organises litter picks**

The group are looking to reach out to potential volunteers of all age groups to join them, so if anyone is looking to get involved and would like to help to make a difference to the community, please contact the group via their Facebook page. All youngsters that attend the litter picks will be awarded a Certificate of Appreciation which can be used towards The Green Blue Peter Badge.



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BRAINTEASERS ANSWERS

1. The letter "T"
2. The three letters are R I T (making the words **BRITON**, **CRITTER**, **GRITTY** and **MERITED**).
3. The phrase is **TO ERR IS HUMAN TO FORGIVE DIVINE**.
4. **ICE**. The last two letters of the previous word are the first two of the next.
5. Ambulances don't put out fires!

**Here are a few bonus brainteasers—
answers will be in the April edition.**

1. A barrel with no lid is partially filled with beer. Alan thinks that it is more than half full and Brian thinks that it is less than half full. Without using any measuring instruments or by pouring the beer out of the barrel how can you find out who is right?
2. If a hen and a half lay an egg and a half in a day and a half how many eggs would six hens lay at the same rate in six days?
3. What falls but doesn't break and what breaks but doesn't fall?

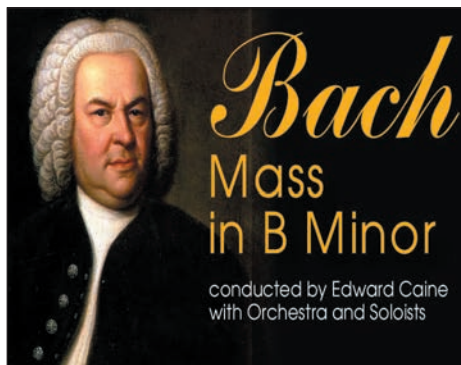
COMPETITION WINNERS

The answer to our Wordsearch Competition in the **FEBRUARY** editions was **TURTLES** – it was misspelt. The lucky winners of the tickets to **SEA LIFE CENTRE** and **LEGOLAND** are:

VERONICA MILTON of Wombourne (who wins a family pass to Sea Life Centre) and **Ms M A JEAUVONS** of Stourton (who wins a family pass to LegoLand).

You can find this month's competition on page 32.

PLEASE NOTE: Only one entry per person per month is allowed – multiple entries will be disqualified. Winners are chosen at random from all correct entries received by the closing date.



Wombourne & District Choral Society

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OR WHATEVER by John Sparry

Let's Give a toast in Tea to George Edward Wyers, Esquire!

My grandfather Harry was a skilled carpenter. I was not. A 'coffee table' I made in school woodwork, should it have made its way to a London saleroom rather than our coal shed, would have been catalogued, I think, as an interesting example of ethnic art.



When George Edward Wyers became joint proprietor with Margaret, his wife, of Wall Heath's Decormar store in the late 1960s, his ability as an experienced carpenter ensured constructive advice to customers embarking on tricky D.I.Y. projects—of course with anyone like me he'd have said, 'leave it to someone else!'.

The Decormar shop began as a single storey building on a piece of long-neglected land next to a row of old cottages. A Wall Heath veteran recalled an even more ancient dwelling on the site, the front door a step or so down, below the level of the pavement.

For well over twenty years at Decormar, George and Margaret built up a pleasing friendship with all kinds of patrons. Due to an unfortunate concatenation of

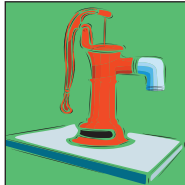
circumstances—we had the electricity cut off—my mum and I must have been valued customers for lamp oil, and candles. It was a pleasant experience, drinking a cuppa in the warm glow of the George Wyers Illuminations.

George, a Brierley Hill man born in 1934—the same year as Ontario's Dionne Quintuplets—was always ready for a chuckle. I was there when a lady told him "I'm expecting again." With a straight face, George enquired, "Have they found out what's causing it, yet?". Humorous and helpful—and Mr Wyers loved a nice cup of tea; the cup that cheers you up, and so did George.

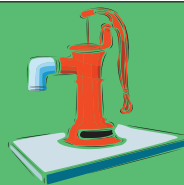


An old box of George's candles

**John Sparry at his bookshop, archive and (cob) website, Cot House,
Enville Road, Wall Heath : Telephone: 01384 359109**



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley PARISH PUMP



DUDLEY SOUTH LADIES LUNCHEON CLUB

meet on the second Friday of each month at
The Lodge, Wellington Road, Dudley—
12.00 noon for 12.30pm departing at
3.00pm.

The new speaker programme is almost
complete and will be issued in March
when the speaker will be **Kay Starkey**
from **Midlands Air Ambulance**, and in
April **Mr. Ned Williams** is the guest
speaker who will be talking to the group
about “**100 years of Cinema**”.

Visitors are most welcome and can attend
three times before deciding to join.

For more information ring Chairman, Ann
Rogers on 01384 274388 or secretary,
Jill Griffiths on 01902 372984 email her at
jillgriffithsme7@gmail.com

WORDSLEY HISTORY SOCIETY

meet at 7.30pm on the second Thursday of
the month at **Wordsley Community Centre**,
Wordsley Green DY8 5BN.

There was a very well attended meeting on
8th February, despite the very bad weather,
where we were taken on a retro ‘**Cruise
Through the Midlands, on the Canal
Circuit of 1971**’. At that time of the cruise
the use of the canals for leisure purposes was
very much in its infancy, and it was
interesting to see how some well known
canal sites and venues have changed over the
years. Our next meeting on 14 March 2024
will be looking at ‘**A Tale of Two Maps**,
**comparing the maps of Kingswinford
Parish from 1822 to 1840** showing the
transition from a largely rural area to that of
an industrial nature. We hope to see you
there. Members please note your
membership is now due for renewal, the
annual fee is £20.00 to include your
affiliation as a member of the Community
Centre. The visitors fee will remain at £4.00

KINGSWINFORD METHODIST CHURCH

Stream Road, Kingswinford DY6 9NP

www.kingswinfordmethodist.co.uk

Rev Alan Combes (01384 823146) alan.combes@methodist.org.uk



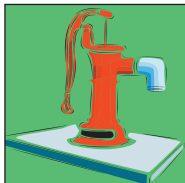
Mothering Sunday Service @10.00am.

Maundy Thursday – 28th March: 7.00pm – Rev Alan Combes

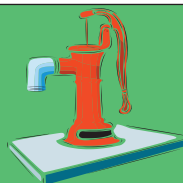
Good Friday – 29th March: 10.00am – Rev Alan Combes

Easter Sunday (additional) – 31st March: 8.00am – Rev Alan Combes

More information on all of the above can be found on the website (above).



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley PARISH PUMP



WALL HEATH COMMUNITY CENTRE

has certainly kicked off the new year in a big way with lots going on in the coming months.

7th March, **Thursday at 2 Club**, 2.00pm,
Tim Barney presents a very entertaining narrative that explores a variety of military brainwaves and inventions that didn't work too well.

12th March, **Sgt. Pepper's Friends**, 10.30am.

13th March, **The Wednesday Club**, 2.00pm,
Andrea Burley visits the club to tell the group the fascinating story of John Corbett and the history of Corbett Hospital.

19th March, **Sgt. Pepper's Friends**, 10.30am.

21st March, **Thursday at 2 Club**, 2pm,
Pen Turner presents "Travels with a Penguin", a talk not about penguins or travel but a talk to inspire you and to turn your wish list into reality.

26th March, **Sgt. Pepper's Friends**, 10.30am.

There is no Wednesday Club meeting on 27th March.

To enquire about booking the hall or for further information regarding any of the groups, please contact Karen Page on 01384 273744 or email wallheathcommunityassoc@gmail.com



The Olive Branch is a community café at New Life Church in Wall Heath. Our aim is to create a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere for all. We serve a wide variety of teas, coffees, hot-chocolates and cold drinks. We also offer a range of lovely cakes, tray-bakes, toast, teacakes and so on. We are open most weekdays. Come along and bring a friend.



We are OPEN

Mondays	10:00am - 1:00pm
Tuesdays	10:00am - 1:00pm
Wednesdays	10:00am - 3:30pm
Thursdays	9:00am - 1:00pm
Fridays	10:00am - 1:00pm

closed on 2nd Friday of the month

Keep in-touch via our social media:



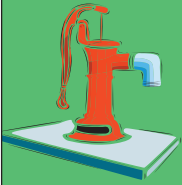
[theolivebranch_communitycafe](https://www.instagram.com/theolivebranch_communitycafe)



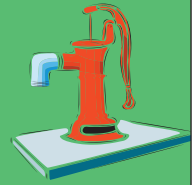
[The Olive Branch Community Cafe](https://www.facebook.com/TheOliveBranchCommunityCafe)



theolivebranch@nlcwh.uk



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley PARISH PUMP



WORDSLEY SENIORS GROUP—50+

have a couple of interesting talks coming
up in March/April:

March 20th - That wonderful charity
the Dogs Trust, which houses unwanted
dogs, is a talk by **Helen Barlow**. This
presentation will appeal to all dog
lovers.

April 3rd - Most of us have heard about
Fair Trade. **Elaine Barbour** will explain
the needs and supportive essentials that
are so important.

All meetings are held at **Wordsley Green
Community Centre, Wordsley Green
DY8 5BN** at **2.00pm**.

Everyone is welcome.

Members £3.00 : Visitors £4.00

For further information please ring
01384 288219

THE NEXT PARISH PUMP WILL
BE IN THE **APRIL** EDITION AND THE
COPY DEADLINE IS
FRIDAY, 15th MARCH 2024.

Insertions are free if you run a Group or
Association that is non-profit making. Please
send your details via email to Gail at
villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk



KINGSWINFORD & DISTRICT u3a Retired but not retiring? u3a could be for you...

Your local u3a has a wide range of weekday
activities to choose from, mostly at
**Kingswinford Community Centre,
High Street, DY6 8AP.**

We have over 25 groups from architecture
to walking—meeting once or twice
a month.

You can choose from:

Interest Groups
where you explore particular subjects
or learn new skills.

Fitness and Games Groups
to help you keep fit and have fun.

Music Groups
including playing instruments
and singing for fun.

We also have monthly **Coffee Mornings**
and Speaker Meetings.

Full details are available on our website
<https://u3asites.org.uk/kingswinford>
together with details of how to join.

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