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*Chris Smith - We Remember!*

ISSUE 239 | OCTOBER 2025



Community magazine for Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton



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Village Voice  
is published monthly by  
Village Voice Magazines Ltd  
Forge House, 50 Redhall Road,  
Gornal Wood, Dudley DY3 2NL



01384 866688 / 07817 904477



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# Village Voice

Community magazine for  
Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton

## Cover story

Over recent years Halloween has become increasingly commercial and many of its traditional aspects have been discarded in favour of new ideas such as 'trick or treat' and dressing up in scary costumes. On page 49 we take a look at some of the original traditions surrounding All Hallows Eve.

There are of course many people who are nervous about opening their door at night. With that in mind, for anyone who does not want to be bothered by 'trick or treaters' we have included on page 16 a **NO TRICK OR TREATERS** poster for you to put on your front door.

Have a happy and safe time.

*Gail*



## IN THIS ISSUE

**6,17,34,38** It's A Fact!

**10** Brainteasers

**14** The first of a series of articles from Trevor Langley who will be giving us his thoughts on drinks around the world.

**22** There are a couple of business opportunities for anyone looking to start a new business or perhaps you have a business and are looking for somewhere to showcase products.

**26** Our Wordsearch competition prize this month has come via our very good friends at West Midlands Safari Park who have very kindly given us 2 x family passes.

**30** Local author, Graham Fisher, has recently launched his latest book 'A Baker's Dozen' and we are able to offer three lucky readers the chance to win their very own copy.

**42** Once again, we have 20 pairs of tickets to give away to this year's Festive Gift Fair at the National Exhibition Centre. With fabulous bargains and great musical entertainment – it is the go-to event for all that is Christmas.

**56** Brainteasers Answers

**57-61** The Parish Pump: Read about what is going on in your area.



Please note that the closing date for our competition this month is **THURSDAY, 23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2025**. 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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### COPY DEADLINE

Please note that the copy deadline for the **NOVEMBER 2025** edition of **VILLAGE VOICE** is **TUESDAY, 21<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2025.** Please book your space early to avoid disappointment.

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# it's a fact!

- ★ In August 1934 Dr Alfred Webb, the Medical Officer of Health for Tipton, found himself in court in Gloucester accused of obstruction. He had been driving towards the city when he saw a fire at a farmhouse alongside the road. He immediately stopped his car and went to see whether he could render any assistance. Unfortunately he had stopped his vehicle in some road works and it had caused an obstruction for which he was summoned to court. His solicitor argued that if Dr Wall's medical expertise had been needed he would have received a commendation rather than a summons. The magistrates decided that although a technical offence had been committed they would not record a conviction against the man from Tipton—but he did have to pay four shillings in costs.
- ★ In 1900 the Brierley Hill & District Football League comprised 13 teams—Woodside Rovers, Groveland Villa, Brockmoor Harriers, Tipton Lancers, Pensnett Victoria, Amblecote Rovers, Old Park Unity, Kingswinford Wanderers, Netherton Red Rose, Woodside Wanderers, Dudley St Georges, Dudley Christ Church and Gornal Excelsior.
- ★ Until 1875 Coseley was always known as “Lower Sedgley”, a name that often rankled with the local population who felt very isolated from Sedgley itself (then known as “Upper Sedgley”). It was not until 1894, however, that Coseley became a separate Urban District and started appointing its own officials including a surveyor, a Medical Officer of Health and a Sanitary Inspector.



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# BRAINTEASERS

Over the past few months we have set a variety of Brainteasers. This month we have concentrated on providing some moderately easy ones. Answers are on page 56 if you need them.

1. Alan, Brian, Chris and David are exploring the jungle but have lost their way. They have only one torch with a battery life of just 17 minutes and it is getting dark. They come across a rope bridge but it is clear that it will only stand the weight of two of them at a time. The problem is that they all move at different speeds—A could complete the bridge in a minute, B would take two minutes, C would complete it in five minutes whilst D would take 10 minutes to cover the bridge. How would they get themselves over the bridge without the torch losing its power?

2. You are walking across a field and because you are feeling hungry, you pick up something. It is not meat nor does it have bones. You take it

home and put it on a shelf in the kitchen. Three days later it walks away. What was the object?

3. If you are standing in front of a bath full of water and you have a teaspoon, a small jug and a bucket beside you, what is the easiest way of emptying the bath?

**Our last three puzzles are two words combined—all you have to do is untangle them. The letters are all in the right order:**

4. SHEVOERT
5. FALLAMOUED
6. BRASHFECTIFULY

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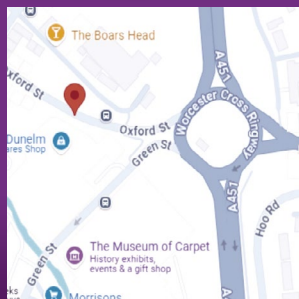
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## DRINKS: IN THE CARIBBEAN RUM SPIRIT

A review by Trevor Langley

And now for something totally different! We were approached a couple of months ago by Trevor Langley. Trevor is an independent reviewer of all things drink—he sources his own companies and has absolutely no connection at all to the brands which he chooses to write about. We thought it was a little different to our normal articles and so we start with the Caribbean and their love of rum.



Caribbean rums are highly respected and hugely appreciated throughout the world. Jamaica and the Dominican Republic are well known producers of Caribbean rums, as well as other Caribbean islands, that create delectable beverages of this type. The Caribbean is very much recognised as the ‘birth place of rum’ and the distilleries located in the Caribbean are amongst the world’s very best. Differing ingredients and different processes of production define the appearance, bouquet, pleasure for the mouth and add to the sensations on the palate.

Multi award-winning Diablesse Rum is UK based and was founded by Cleo Farman. The Diablesse Company produces small-batch blends of fine, aged rums, especially selected from Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica. The quality plus several unique profiles of flavour, that create distinctive productions, are now globally recognised. The rums are created using historic methods and are matured in charred American Oak ex-bourbon casks.

**DIABLESSE CARIBBEAN RUM (40% vol)** is a very regular choice for rum lovers. Caribbean rum is renowned around the world and this production (in my opinion) justly deserves the high rating it constantly receives. Little introduction is required for this delightful, small-batch rum, which is produced utilising a blend of fine, aged rums, from Jamaica, Guyana and Barbados, to a great advantage.

**DIABLESSE CLEMENTINE SPICED RUM (40% vol)** is a favourite with many spiced rum devotees. I found the Clementine contribution, for this popular beverage, to be evident throughout. Flavoursome and with a blend of warming Caribbean-inspired spices, including a hint of ginger, this small-batch production continues to gain in popularity.

**DIABLESSE COCONUT & HIBISCUS RUM (38% vol)** I found to be most pleasant indeed. From the bouquet to the mouth’s delight, with the flavours of fresh, natural coconut, plus hibiscus and ripe, red berries certainly coming through. The palate’s sensation continues, with the pleasures of this unusual, small-batch delectation.

The very informative website has all details of stockists and information about long-standing, proven methods of production. Personally speaking, I found the website enlightened me about the centuries-old stills, which are used in the production process. Online ordering is easy and orders are dispatched efficiently and quickly. [www.diablesserum.co.uk](http://www.diablesserum.co.uk)

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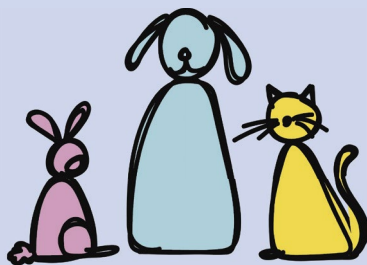


As always,  
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*Trevor Langley*



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**it's a fact!**

- ★ In June 1939 Sedgley Urban District Council found themselves in something of a quandary when a tenant of theirs —Mr B. Jones - complained that the Austrian pine tree that the Council had planted outside his house was now so large that it was blocking his light. He asked that the Council fell it but they refused. Shortly afterwards the tree was mutilated and the Council—not surprisingly—pointed the finger at Mr Jones accusing him of causing the damage and threatening to take legal action. A number of councillors demanded that Mr Jones be made an example of but wiser heads warned that as there was no direct evidence that he had actually damaged the tree, perhaps the most appropriate way of dealing with the matter was through face-to-face negotiation.
- ★ In the 1920s many of the hand-made bricks manufactured in the brickyards of the area were moulded by women. For every 1050 bricks made the moulder was paid 1/7d and their assistant would get 1/1d. If more than 24 bricks in each 1050 were cracked the amount paid was halved.
- ★ In 1974 the “Cottage of Content” pub in Clarence Street, Upper Gornal was presented with a special plaque to commemorate the fact they had won the H.V. Mainwaring Cup three years running (in 1971, 72 and 73). The Cup was presented each year by the Gornal & Sedgley Cancer Relief Committee to the pub raising the largest donation from their harvest.





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**DUDLEY WINTER  
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The Dudley Winter Ales Fayre is returning to Dudley Town Hall in November!

The three day beer festival runs 27-29 November and is organised by members of the Dudley and South Staffordshire branch (including Sedgley, Kingswinford and Wombourne) of the Campaign for Real Ale and neighbouring branches

There will be in excess of 70 real ales and ciders featured this year.

The doors will open at 1.00pm on Thursday and 11.00am on Friday and Saturday. Doors close on Thursday and Friday at 10.00pm.

Admission is free for all CAMRA members who book in advance for Thursday and Friday and is free to all without pre-booking on the Saturday.

To buy advance tickets please visit  
[www.dudley.camra.org.uk](http://www.dudley.camra.org.uk)

The festival this year celebrates the 200th anniversary of Priory Hall in Dudley and the bare knuckle boxer 'The Tipton Slasher'. In honour of these milestones there will be a special glass featuring them at the festival.

There will be live entertainment on the Friday and Saturday together with hot and cold food available each day.

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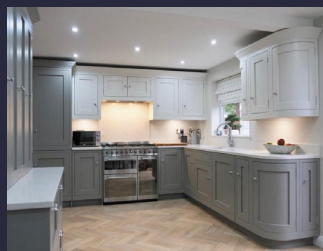
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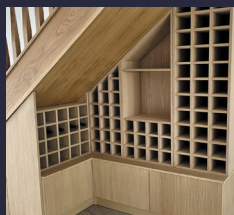
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## **CHRISTMAS RAID ON PUB**

**At the beginning of January 1984 seven people from Tipton—Myra Gregory, Catherine Tracey, Francis Gregory, John Feeney, Thomas Stevens, Joseph Saxon and Thomas Earp—appeared in court accused of stealing spirits, cigars and other items from the Turf Tavern in Toll End, Tipton.**

Edward Stevens, the landlord of the Turf gave evidence that at midnight on Christmas Eve he locked up securely including bolting the front door. At about 7.30am the following day, however, he found the front door was open and that a gallon and two quart bottles of rum plus quart bottles of whisky, sherry and port together with two boxes of cigars were missing. The police immediately started making enquiries which led them to Myra Gregory's house (which was well known as a brothel). Here all the accused were found in a very drunken state with several empty bottles strewn around. They were conveyed to the police station where they were searched and several cigars were found concealed on them.

In court Thomas Stevens said that they had been at Gregory's house when at around 4.00am Francis Gregory and Joseph Saxon left the house only to return shortly afterwards with the bottles of spirits and cigars. This was corroborated by Thomas Earp and in the light of their testimony the charges against both were withdrawn. The trial of the other five went ahead and the evidence against them was presented. In their defence all that the defendants could say was that they were so drunk that they could not remember what happened. In the end the jury found both Joseph Saxon and Francis Gregory guilty of burglary but the other three not guilty (a charge of handling stolen goods against them was not proceeded with). Saxon and Gregory were sentenced to six months imprisonment.

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All you have to do is search out the square below for the 16 words associated with **WEST MIDLANDS SAFARI PARK** on our list. Fifteen of them are hidden in the square (spelt forwards, 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 us an email at [villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto: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 of **Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025**. Good luck!

Y	E	L	D	W	E	B	K	S	T	S
O	W	L	E	Z	E	R	Z	S	I	D
T	S	S	E	W	A	C	E	D	S	N
P	A	B	D	P	E	W	B	R	A	A
S	R	L	L	C	H	O	U	I	F	L
A	Y	C	I	L		A	A	V	A	D
F	R	O	V	O	S	G	N	E	R	I
A	B	L	I	O	N	E	O	T	I	M
R	E	O	N	L	E	I	S	U	R	E
I	Z	I	G	L	L	T	H	I	R	D
L	D	N	E	H	G	U	O	R	H	T

#### HIDDEN WORDS

1. SAFARI
2. LIVING
3. PARK
4. WEST
5. RHINO
6. LODGES
7. AGE
8. DRIVE
9. LION
10. BEWDLEY
11. THROUGH
12. ELEPHANT
13. DINOSAURS
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15. ICE
16. ZEBRA

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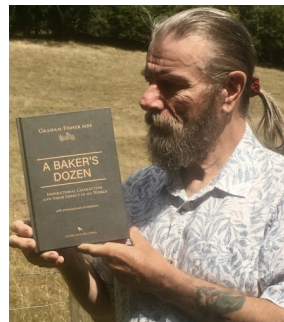
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With an emphasis on local personalities including Wesley Perrins MP, peace campaigner Bert Bissell and Halesowen artist Ray Stimpson the repertoire also includes those of more national prominence such as broadcaster Alistair Cooke, comedian Spike Milligan and eccentric writer Daniil Kharms. Graham describes it as *'sauntering along life's avenues to recount a medley of acquaintances that have left singularly affirming impressions of wisdom and virtue.'* Graham says: *'This has taken me a long time to pull together so I feel it is something of a magnum opus and a fitting testament to just some of the people whose lives have greatly influenced both mine and others. I believe their examples offer lessons for us all'*.

The book is available in hardback through the usual outlets including Amazon or direct from the publisher at £15.00 (+p&p) [sparrow@mac.com](mailto:sparrow@mac.com). 104pp with colour & b/w illustrations ISBN 9781739921248. More about the author can be found at: [grahamfisher.co.uk/about](http://grahamfisher.co.uk/about)

Graham has very kindly set aside three copies of his books for three lucky winners. All you have to do is answer a simple question: ***'What famous broadcaster can be found in Graham's book'***. Simply drop your entry into the post (Book Competition, 50 Redhall Road, Gornal Wood, Dudley DY3 2NL) or email your answer to [villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk) Please remember to include your full address and telephone number. The three winners will be drawn on Thursday, 23rd October. Good luck everyone.



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it's a fact!

★ As far back as 1903 a proposal was put forward for swimming baths to be built at Tipton but even when the Baths & Wash-houses Act of 1908 came into force the Council sat on its hands and did nothing until 1910. Indeed, the Council was the butt of many jokes as it had a Baths Committee but no public baths! Even in 1910 the Council only commissioned a report about a possible site for a municipal baths and it was not until 1924 that an area of Victoria Park was put forward as the location of an open-air pool. Boreholes were made but it was found that the water available was too polluted and so again the whole project was put on hold. In 1928 it was suggested that a covered baths should be constructed alongside the old public library on Victoria Park and it seemed as if local residents would finally get their swimming pool. That was until they found out that the deeds of the park did not allow such a development. So once again it was back to the drawing board. A new site was found on Queens Road and finally on 28th April 1922 the foundation stone for Tipton Baths was laid. Construction took some eight months and the Baths were finally opened on 25th January 1933. The total cost was about £25,000.

★ In January 1900 Sedgley Urban District Council received a letter from Staffordshire County Council demanding that they should create a deep sewage system in the district as a matter of urgency. The UDC responded by saying that owing to the subsidence caused by mining in the area it was not practicable to develop such a scheme – and that anyway the district had a very low death rate in comparison to other areas. The County Council was not impressed and threatened legal action unless action was taken.



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# A FEW FACTS ABOUT TIPTON

★ Tipton's Civic motto is "*Salus Populi Suprema Lex*" which means "*The supreme law is the welfare of the people*". The coat of arms (seen here right) was granted in 1938. The arms depict Dudley Castle topped by three gold wheels (to show industry). The knot below the castle shows that the town was in the county of Staffordshire and the stone at the top of the arms refers to the fact that the ancient name for the town was *Tibbington*.



★ It is said that Tipton has the oldest parish registers in the country. They go back to the year 1513.

★ In 1876 the Birmingham Senior Cup Final was won by Tipton Amateurs FC. They defeated Aston Villa by 1-0 in the final. The Tipton club, however, only lasted a few more years whilst, of course, Villa went on to bigger and better things.

★ The Fountain Inn on Owen Street, Tipton is best known as the former HQ for William Perry, "The Tipton Slasher". It is one of the oldest established pubs in the area having been first opened back in the early 19th century. Then it was a much more substantial building than it is today as it boasted a third storey which was removed during the 1950s.



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**it's a fact!**

- ★ The Tipton Municipal Orchestra was formed in December 1949 and was open to anyone aged from 9 to 90 with orchestral ambitions. There were both senior and student sections.
- ★ In April 1932 Joseph Shepard of Sedgley, a solicitor and former magistrates' clerk in Tipton, was declared bankrupt at Dudley Bankruptcy Court. He owed more than £15,500 and only had assets of about £4,000. During his examination he said that the debts were due to a failed investment in a brickyard, bad debts and heavy interest and charges on loans, mortgages and bank overdrafts. Shepard admitted that he had been living well beyond his means for some considerable time.
- ★ Grosvenor Road in Lower Gornal was originally known as "The Graveyard" because it was the site of a burial place used by the Quakers living in Wednesbury and Dudley. One of the first burials there took place on 1st December 1696 when Margaret, daughter of Samuel Fidoe was laid to rest.
- ★ At Baggeridge Colliery the first seam of coal (some 24 feet thick) was worked from July 1902 with a second shaft to the same seam being worked some 10 years later. It was almost 25 years later still that it was suggested that the naturally occurring Etruria Marl clay from the area could be combined with colliery shale to make bricks. Indeed so successful did this prove that in 1944 a separate company—Baggeridge Brickworks—was created.
- ★ In March 1890 it was estimated that in Tipton alone there were 43 million tons of workable coal and ironstone still to be mined in the area.



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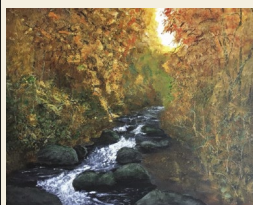
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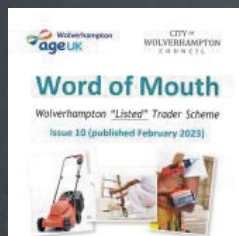
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## INDEPENDENCE MATTERS

# FIREWORK FACTS!

By Chris Pearce  
of Jubilee Fireworks Ltd

'Firework season' is fast approaching – with Diwali and Bonfire Night just around the corner. Fireworks play a big part in both of these culturally important celebrations, as they have done for centuries. Here are ten interesting facts about fireworks that you may not be aware of.

**1. Who invented fireworks?** It is generally agreed that the Chinese first produced very primitive fireworks (by accident) around 200BCE. However, proper fireworks as we know them were not developed until gunpowder was invented – around the 9th century. The Chinese were again involved but fireworks didn't really appear in Europe until around the 13th century. Marco Polo is often credited for introducing gunpowder to Europe, from which the production of fireworks developed.

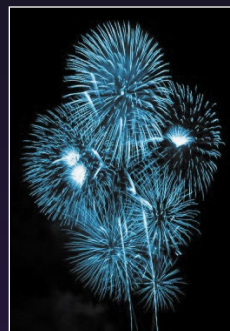
**2. Have fireworks always included bright colours?**

Surprisingly, no! Very early fireworks produced only gold and silver effects. Colours appeared when chemistry was better understood. Different metal compounds are responsible for the colours; strontium (red), barium (green), sodium (yellow), calcium (orange), copper (blue). Aluminium, titanium and magnesium both produce bright white sparks.



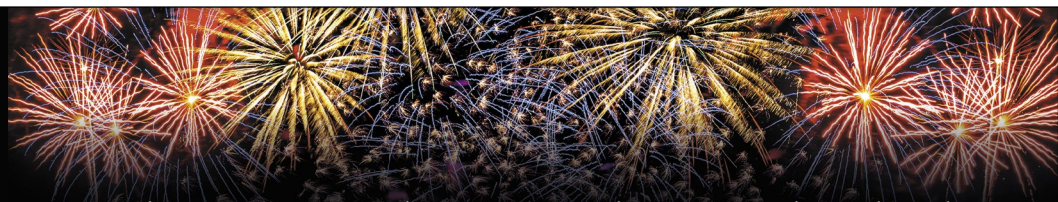
**3. Which is the hardest colour to produce?** Blue presents pyrotechnic chemists with the greatest challenge. It only appears in a very restricted range of (quite low) temperatures. If the reaction is too hot, the blue effect becomes very pale.

**4. Have fireworks ever been used in warfare?** Yes – as soon as gunpowder was invented (along with artillery), the use of fireworks became part of warfare. There were early experiments with rockets but fireworks were also used for signalling purposes. Illuminating flares, suspended from parachutes, were commonly used in the trenches in World War One. Generally, though, a 'firework' is now considered to be a device used only for entertainment.



**5. When did the first proper firework display take place in England?** There is some debate about this. Very primitive firework effects were used at the wedding of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, in 1486 (well before Guy Fawkes!). Fireworks became very popular in the reign of Elizabeth I – so much so that she appointed an official 'Fire Master'. Many historians suggest that the show staged for Elizabeth by suitor Robert Dudley at Kenilworth Castle in 1575, was the first 'proper' fireworks display to be





held in England. It was possibly an attempt to impress Her Majesty, with a view to marriage, and featured many of the fireworks that we would recognise today but also cannons and elaborate theatrical effects.

**6. Who is the world's biggest user of fireworks?** If we think of a single organisation, this accolade probably goes to Disney. They fire displays regularly at their theme parks throughout the world and are very much involved in the use and development of more environmentally friendly fireworks that produce lower debris and minimal smoke. At one stage, they also experimented with the use of compressed air to launch aerial 'bombs' (called shells).

**7. Was it ever compulsory to celebrate 5<sup>th</sup> November?** The answer is Yes! Following the failed gunpowder plot in 1605, an Act of Parliament was introduced, entitled *An act of public thanksgiving to Almighty God every year on the fifth of November*. This required every parish to hold special church services. The day was marked by sermons, bell-ringing, and later bonfires and fireworks. It was finally repealed in 1859.

**8. Why can't you buy traditional 'bangers' anymore?**

This is a surprise to many people, but the old-fashioned 'bangers' that were available in shops (to the delight of every schoolboy) were banned from sale in 1997 – the reason being that they were classed as 'nuisance' items. They were also responsible for many injuries and anti-social behaviour. 'Jumping Jacks' (considered dangerous and unpredictable) and mini-rockets were also banned.

**9. What is the world's largest firework?** The record is currently held by a 62inch diameter aerial shell – launched in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in February 2020. It weighed 1,270kg and was launched from a 26ft long steel tube. The result, which made the Guinness Book of Records, was a giant red and white burst at a height of 2,200 feet.

**10. How many fireworks are sold in the UK each year?** A reliable estimate is in the region of 70 million! This includes sparklers, fountains, roman candles, rockets, wheels and 'cakes' – a relatively new invention which was unknown before the 1980s. Cakes are popular multi-shot devices which produce a continual series of aerial effects and are effectively a display-in-a-box.



**Images:** Blue Fireworks are the most difficult to produce (Fact 3) Steamboat Shell Tim Borden, designer of the world's biggest firework, admires his 62inch diameter shell. (Fact 9) 1950s Standard Fireworks Box This modest box of 'Standard Fireworks' from the 1950s contained Bangers, a helicopter and a 'Jumping Jack' – all of which are now banned from public sale! (Fact 8)

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# HALLOWEEN

## FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO A MULTI MILLION POUND INDUSTRY

Although Halloween is now a multi-million pound industry its roots go back to pagan times when the festival of 'Samhein' celebrated the end of the summer. All Hallows Day became the official start of winter and All Hallows Eve (the evening before All Hallows Day) became shortened to Halloween.

There are, however, regional variations—in Cornwall it is known as 'Allantide' whilst on the Isle of Man the traditional name for the celebration is 'Hop-tu-Naa'. The Irish refer to it as 'Pooky Night', a pooky being a little mischievous elf. Indeed, originally Halloween had no real connection with ghosts or ghouls. It was about the imps and elves who, before hibernating for the winter, would go on one final foray to cause as much mayhem as they could. People would bribe them to stay away (the original of 'trick or treat') and the food that was given to them was used to

sustain them throughout the long winter.

In the United States the town of Anoka in Minnesota claims to be the modern "Halloween Capital of the World" and has introduced a by-law

that says that anyone not giving 'trick or treat' gifts is liable to a fine. They also insist that all the representatives on the local council are expected to dress up as witches, ghosts or ghouls.

One of the relatively modern customs that is popular is the making of Jack o'Lanterns out of pumpkins by placing a candle inside the hollowed-out shell of a pumpkin and this seems to have started in Ireland where, instead of pumpkins, turnips were used. Once the custom had been taken up by the Americans in the 1940s and 50s

the pumpkin (or other squashes) became the most frequently used vehicle for this form of



'art'. One of the most interesting aspects of the celebration of Halloween is the various traditions that are associated with it. The tradition of dressing up and wearing masks at Halloween dates back many hundreds of years and its roots came from a common belief that around this time ghosts returned to the earthly world and could then be encountered roaming the streets. The masks were worn by people to stop the ghosts recognising them and to fool them into the mistaken belief that they were other spirits. To keep the ghosts away from the houses people would leave bowls of food outside for them to eat—the early form of 'trick or treat'.

Also at Halloween any sighting of a black cat was deemed to bring bad luck as it was believed that witches had the ability to turn themselves into black cats in order to spy on the local population. So if this Halloween you happen to see a black cat be careful what you say and do!



# IN THIS MONTH

Over the years there have been many important events that have occurred in October.  
Here are just a few...

1066—The Battle of Hastings at which King Harold II was killed by William of Normandy took place (14th)

1805—The Battle of Trafalgar took place between the British and a combined fleet of French and Spanish ships (21st)

1908—Henry Ford's Model T Ford went on sale for the first time (1st)

1927—'The Jazz Singer', the first "alkie" film was launched in New York (6th)

1949—The People's Republic of China was founded (1st)

1957—The Space Age began with the Russians launching Sputnik I, The first satellite into orbit (4th)

1967—Revolutionary Che Guevara was shot dead in Bolivia at the age of 39 (9th)

1969—The brand new 7-sided 50p coin was introduced (14th)

1971—Parliament voted 356-244 in favour of Britain joining the European Economic community (28th)

1975—Muhammed Ali beat Joe Frazier in the fight known as 'Thrilla in Manila' (1st)

1992—The conservative Government announced plans to close a third of all deep coal pits with the loss of 31,000 jobs (13th)

2003—Concorde made its last commercial flight (24th)

2004—17 year old Lionel Messi makes his league debut for FC Barcelona in a 1-0 win against rivals Espanyol (16th)

2013—15 people killed by a series of explosions in a fireworks factory in Vietnam (12th)

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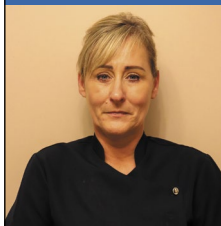
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## DID YOU KNOW?

During the war there was a major alert in Sedgley when it was thought that four unexploded bombs had been discovered. The Bull Ring was sealed off for two days...until it was discovered that the 'bombs' were milk churns!

In 1903 one of the most widely advertised products locally was "Underhill's Gornalia Pig Powder". Said to be a cure for "Swine Fever And Other Diseases", it sold in packets priced at 2d each, 10d a dozen or 9 shillings a gross.

In 1921 a 20-bed sanatorium for juvenile sufferers of consumption (tuberculosis) was opened at Himley. The cost of the house, plus 30 acres of grounds and the conversion was £8000.

The Dudley Herald Yearbook of 1901 gave some interesting tips for local cyclists. The route to London was 121½ miles via Birmingham, Leamington, Oxford and Reading. It was described as "*a good and picturesque road after leaving Birmingham.*" The route to Shrewsbury was 52 miles via Wolverhampton, Shifnal and Wellington and was described as "*after leaving Wolverhampton it is a good road until the Colliery district beyond Shifnal, Wellington to Shrewsbury, though is a grand road.*"

In 1966 there was great controversy over plans to demolish a cottage on The Straits and replace it with a petrol station. The developers said that the building was a "*little oasis of rotten development on a beautiful estate*" and that they planned to replace it with "*a pretty petrol station*". Sedgley Council were not impressed and refused the application.



OCTOBER 2025

BETTER Dudley

**DUDLEY LIBRARIES**  
in conjunction with  
**THE BLACK COUNTRY SOCIETY**  
**DUDLEY HISTORY FESTIVAL**  
**11th-25th OCTOBER 2025**



Coming soon to Dudley Libraries, The History Festival returns for 2025 with a host of fantastic speakers to meet. **ATTENTION** all History fans because Dudley Libraries have an announcement to make and we really want to share it with you. We have 34 events including talks and exhibitions for the History Festival 2025. We are really excited to be hosting some of the most well-known History speakers in the Midlands. So keep checking Dudley Libraries' website and our social media feeds for more information and announcements. To book your free place for any of the talks listed or to find out further information, please contact your local library.

There are 34 talks in total at the various libraries and Dudley Archives and Local History Service centre. Dudley's 'star' speaker is **Professor Carl Chinn** (right) who will be joining us at **Dudley Library** on **Friday, 17th October at 1.30pm**. He will be giving a talk about the Real Peaky Blinders. The talks are varied and range from Wren's Nest and the Stourbridge Glass Industry to James Whale an errant clergyman in Pensnett! It's not all local either, with general history talks on recipients of the Victoria Cross and the Dickin Medal, the Cavaliers and Roundheads and Vile Victorians exploring the darker side of daily life in Victorian Britain—definitely something for everyone.



Moving to **Gornal Library**, on **Wednesday, 15th October at 7.00pm** **Damian Carter** (left) will be talking to audiences about daily life in Victorian Britain—a place filled with hazards such as dangerous workplaces, the risk of disease, crime, drowning and starvation. He also delves into “strange dangers” - clothing which could injure, wallpaper which might be toxic and makeup which could be poisonous.

On **Thursday, 16th October at 2.00pm**, **Sedgley Library** will be hosting **Paul Floyd** (right), who will be talking about Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve which is of exceptional importance and is one of the most notable geological locations in the British Isles. It has been visited and studied by geologists from all over the world. Paul is a walk leader at the Wren's Nest Nature Reserve.

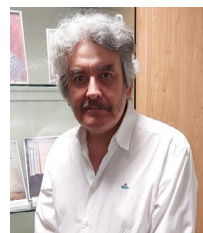


Also on **16th October at 6.45pm**, **Judith Davies** will be giving a talk at **Dudley Library** on the 'Retail Revolutionaries—the struggle for power and influence in the mid 19th century in Dudley'. Many of their leaders were shopkeepers of whom Samuel Cook is the best remembered but most of the others, such as Thomas Hill, Thomas Lester, the Twamleys and the Wood family, are almost entirely forgotten. This talk looks at the personalities and events which shaped the period.

Over at the **Archives and Local History Service from 10.00am-3.00pm**, **Kevin Goodman, Brendan Clifford** and **Paul Ford** are hosting **Local History Day**—a step back in time to explore the Borough’s intriguing past at Dudley Archives and Local History Service. The day will include talks by Kevin Goodman ‘Cholera in the Black Country 1832’, Brendan Clifford ‘The Black Country 500 years in 50 voices’ and Paul Ford, Archivist, who will be delivering a talk on ‘the place names of Halesowen and Lenches Bridge’. Throughout the day there will be family and local history exhibitions and publications for sale by local authors.

On **Wednesday, 22nd October at 2.00pm Dudley Library** will be welcoming **Brian Carr** whose talk will be “Local public artwork in Dudley”. Brian started to build the Dudley Public Art website in his retirement. Initially it was just to fill the online gap where little was recorded. Brian explored further, finding artworks not often seen and eventually spread out of Dudley Borough to cover the whole of the Black Country. Large or small, permanent or transient, he has tried to cover as much as he can find. As Brian will say, he is not an art expert nor a historian, just an enthusiast hoping to share what is out there.

The wonderful **Craig Denston** (right) will be at **Dudley Library on Thursday, 23rd October at 7.00pm** with his talk “From Kate’s Hill to California—James Whale, the Father of *Frankenstein*”. How did a working class lad born into 19th century Dudley become, for his time, the highest paid director in Hollywood? This tells an extraordinary life story that goes from a factory to a war, through art to the theatre, to the making of some of the most influential movies of all time, and, yet, ultimately to a heartbreakingly tragic end.



On **Friday, 24th October at 2.00pm, Paul Ford** will be appearing at **Sedgley Library** for his talk “Silence! - 3 stories from the Staffordshire Coroners”. History is about the written word but sometimes it is equally about what is not written. Here we look at three cases from Staffordshire Coroners where silence plays a huge part in a series of events... *Mustn’t Talk: Fit for Military Service - Cheslyn Hay 1916. Won’t Talk: The Curious Case of Maud Minnie Mills—Walsall 1912. Can’t Talk: The Silent Skeleton of Murder Mine—Dudley 1961.*

On **Saturday, 25th October at 1.00pm Quintin Watt** will be joining **Gornal Library** for ‘Tales from the Coroner’s Casebook—Life and Death in Georgian South Staffordshire and the Black Country’. This presentation examines the cases of unexplained deaths, presided over by Henry Smith Esq—Coroner of the County of Stafford between 1801 and 1842. These included: accidents, manslaughter, murders, suicides and ‘visitations of God’. Join Coroner Smith’s Jury and reconsider some of the cases he dealt with during the first part of his long career.

From **Saturday 11th October to Saturday 20 December Dudley Archives and Local History Service** will be hosting an exhibition from Agenoria to Beeching –the first and last days of steam in Dudley. The exhibition will consist mainly of two sets of photographs –one illustrating the first days of steam railways in the Dudley area between 1830 and 1860 and the second illustrating the final days of steam in the area, from the late 1950s and early 1960s.

**Wednesday, 1st October to Friday, 31 October** will see an exhibition at **Dudley Library** (Reading Room) ‘Bound by roots, divided by paths’. This project seeks to bridge historical and contemporary migration narratives, creating a space for cultural understanding and artistic expression. The exhibition will amplify the voices of displaced and migrant communities, exploring both personal and collective reflections on identity and belonging. Please see website for Library opening times.

# OR WHATEVER by John Sparry

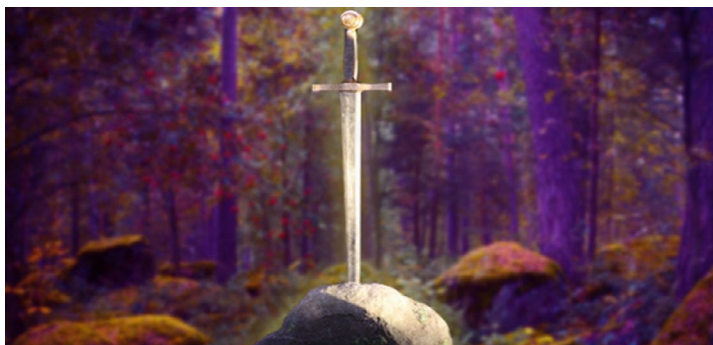
## *Heavy Metal*

In 1066, besides the invasion by William of Normandy, in the heavens appeared an object, leaving behind it a trail of dust and gas. Astronomers of the time christened it 'The Star with Hair'.

This space-travelling rock was correctly forecast in 1682 to be next due to zoom by Earth in 1759, by Edmond Halley, after whom the comet is now known.

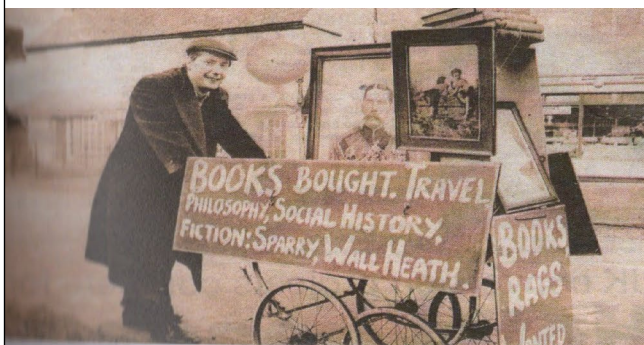
Currently, the hunt is on for fragments of the meteor which exploded and landed in Scotland. This sudden visitor was believed to be 30 million years old. What secrets of the universe will be revealed when located samples are scientifically examined?

In the misty past, perhaps around the time when flint knives from England's East Coast were being traded for amber from the forests of the continent, it is thought that the iron retrieved from meteors was being worked into weapons and tools.



Was King Arthur's legendary sword made of meteoric iron?

Lands in the Middle East were the cradles for men who made swords which were believed to hold magical and invincible power, being made in *an'bar*, the ancient Sumerian word meaning '*iron from the skies*'.



The iron I collected in my old pram (left) was more likely to have come from an old bedstead rather than the sky. One day a local doctor looked in the pram and remarked, "she'd never have lived, she was too heavy at birth!"

**By John Sparry, Ridge Cot, 15 Enville Road, Wall Heath**  
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# BRAINTEASERS ANSWERS

1. A and B go across the bridge (time taken 2 minutes). A returns with the torch (1 minute). C and D go across the bridge (10 minutes) and then B goes back with the torch (2 minutes). A and B then return across the bridge together (2 minutes). This means that all four have ended up on the far side of the bridge in a total of 17 minutes.
2. An egg which has hatched after the three days.
3. If the question asked for the quickest way of emptying the bath the answer would be the bucket...but it asks for the easiest way of removing the water. The answer therefore must be to simply remove the plug!
4. SHOT and EVER
5. FLAME and ALOUD
6. BASHFUL and RECTIFY

Watch out for more tricky Brainteasers in the November edition.

## COMPETITION WINNERS

The answer to our Wordsearch Competition in the **SEPTEMBER** edition was **CINEMA**. The lucky winner who each receives a **FAMILY PASS** to the **ODEON CINEMA, MERRY HILL** are:

**PATRICIA ROGERS** of Kingswinford and  
**SAM JONES** of Sedgley

You can find this month's competition on page 26.

**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.

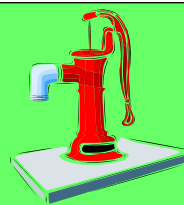
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Congratulations to **NICOLA ALLEN** of Wombourne who was the lucky winner of the two tickets on offer in the **SEPTEMBER** edition.



# The Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton PARISH PUMP



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## DUDLEY PROBUS CLUB

lunch meetings are held on the **2nd Thursday** in the month starting at 12.30pm and are held at **The Lodge, Wellington Road, Dudley DY1 1RD.** Coming up...

**9th October—Andrew French—‘Life of Norman Wisdom’**

**13th November—‘Hearing Solutions’ :  
11th December—Christmas Lunch with entertainment provided by The Sedgley Strummers.**

Further details can be obtained by emailing [dudleyprobus@gmail.com](mailto:dudleyprobus@gmail.com) or by visiting the Dudley Probus website.

## Penn Singers

[www.pennsingers.org.uk](http://www.pennsingers.org.uk)



## French Connections

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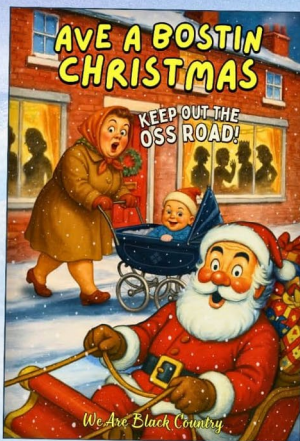
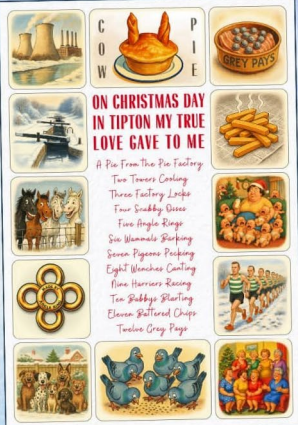
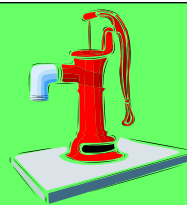
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Shopping Centre. Be sure to  
get yours in good time!



## SEDGLEY MORNING TOWNSWOMENS GUILD

The Guild meet at 10.00am on the first  
Thursday of every month at **Beacon Centre  
for the Blind, Wolverhampton Road East  
WV4 6AZ.**

This is a friendly group whose aim is to  
provide interesting speakers, fun activities  
and day trips.

### COMING UP...

In October we will be entertained by  
**Ron Nicholson** with songs from the  
50s, 60s and 70s.

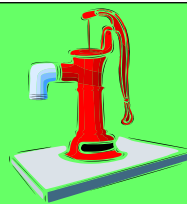
The Guild are always happy to welcome  
new members and the first two visits are  
absolutely **FREE**. So why not give it a go  
and see if this is for you—it is the perfect  
way to meet different people and make  
new friends.







# The Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton PARISH PUMP



Tipton Town Libraries  
Local History Group

**Tipton Town Libraries Local History Group**  
For more information please contact the History Group on [tthistorygroup@outlook.com](mailto:tthistorygroup@outlook.com)



MY PLACE MY WORDS

## POETRY WRITING CONTEST

IN MEMORY OF  
HARRY HARRISON  
& PAT ARNETT

Write an original poem about  
Tipton or the Black Country.  
Your poem can be in any  
poetic style, including  
dialect, but must be no more  
than 20 lines long.

Deadline for entries is  
November 6, 2025.



Black  
Country

Bugle

FREE ENTRY  
FOR OVER 16s

Entry forms can be collected from Tipton Library  
or by emailing [robert26hazel@gmail.com](mailto:robert26hazel@gmail.com)



**£50.00  
TOP PRIZE**



## KNIT & NATTER

10.30am on 2nd Saturday of month



**ALL WELCOME**

St Chad's Church Hall  
Oak Street, Coseley WV14 9TA

St James the Great Lower Gornal

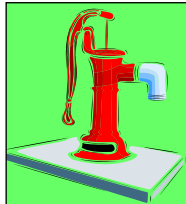
## Craft Fayre

Saturday 8th November 2025  
12 noon - 3 pm  
Memorial Hall, Lower Gornal, DY3 2PE  
Hot Pork Baps & Refreshments & Stalls!  
A few tables are still available  
Contact Jayne for more info  
07737 600541

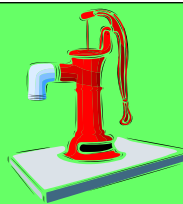
## IT'S WRITE HERE

**Write Here** is a writing group who meet at **Coseley Library, Castle Street, Coseley WV14 9DW** on the **4th Thursday of every month at 11.00am-1.00pm**. Pens and paper are provided and there is complimentary tea and coffee organised by the Library. If you are interested in creative writing, expression or discussion of books, individual and collaborative works and ideas then we would love to have you join our group.

For further information please telephone the Library on **01384 812775** or email them at [coseley.library@gll.org](mailto:coseley.library@gll.org)



# The Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton PARISH PUMP



## POPPIES & PUMPKINS



## COFFEE MORNING

*in support of Sedgley Community Centre and*

**ssafa** | the  
Armed Forces  
charity

*The regular Community Centre Coffee Morning  
with handcrafted poppies & pumpkins,  
other craft sales, raffle, cakes,  
pre loved books & jigsaws and more.*

**10am Saturday 18th October**

*Sedgley Community Centre,  
Ladies Walk, Sedgley DY3 3UA*

**Everyone Welcome**

## **Poppy Fields Project for Remembrance 2025**

### **POPPIES WANTED CRAFTERS NEEDED**

Can you help by knitting or crocheting poppies in red or purple of at least 10cm in diameter? The plan is to mount them on sticks and 'plant' them around the war memorials in Sedgley, Coseley and Woodsetton to create 'Poppy Fields'.



**ALL WELCOME TO JOIN IN WITH THIS  
~ SPREAD THE WORD ~**

*More information and example patterns  
available on flyers or by contacting:  
karenm\_moore@sky.com 07473885197*



## **SEDGLEY ACTIVE RETIREMENT GROUP**

meet every Thursday morning at  
**Sedgley Community Centre,  
Ladies Walk, Sedgley DY3 3UA**  
from 10.00am-12.00 noon  
(term time only).

## **COMING UP...**

9th October: **Travels with my  
Camera** by speaker Gordon Nicklin  
16th October: **Skittles**  
23rd October: **Quacks and Cures  
in the Black Country**  
by speaker Kevin Goodman  
30th October: **HALF TERM**

## **NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME**

—the first two sessions are **FREE**

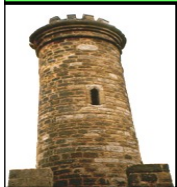
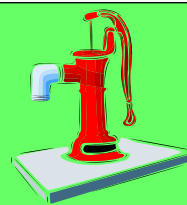
For further information, please contact  
**Sidney Millinson on 01902 270430**

**THE NEXT PARISH PUMP  
WILL BE IN THE NOVEMBER 2025  
EDITION AND THE COPY  
DEADLINE IS Tuesday, 21st  
October 2025.**

Don't forget that 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**



# The Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton PARISH PUMP



## SEDGLEY LOCAL HISTORY Society

[www.sedgleylocalhistory.org.uk](http://www.sedgleylocalhistory.org.uk) (also on Facebook)

Schoolteachers, Andrew Barnett and Trevor Genge were co-founders of the Society in 1984. Andrew launched the Sedgley Local History Museum (closed 2004) and Trevor published five books on the Sedgley Manor villages. Both were avid researchers and staunch supporters of conservation projects.

### Programme ~ 2025 / 2026

#### THURSDAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER—7.30pm:

##### 10<sup>th</sup> Andrew Barnett & Trevor Genge Memorial Lecture—A Perfect Place to Live:

*Ned Williams* explores a Wolverhampton 'garden suburb' followed by nationwide 'suburbs', and 'garden cities'. The promise was a perfect place to live, work and play in a well-planned environment.

#### THURSDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER – 7:30 pm

**Over by Christmas?** *Quintin Watt* examines the reaction of Black Country folk to the outbreak of the Great War. The widespread belief of a short war soon took hold.

#### THURSDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026 – 7:30 pm

**Film Night & Quiz – Number 3: *Members & Visitors Evening*** – Enjoy some short films and brain teasers.

#### THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – 7:30pm

**History of Dudley Castle:** *Max Keen* dresses up and plays characters to vividly take us through centuries of castle life.

#### THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – 7:30 pm

**Rogues, Villains & Peaky Blinders:** *Corinne Brazier* has researched the real lives of Birmingham's criminals and gangsters. The amazing true stories beat fiction!

#### THURSDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY – 7:30 pm:

**Annual General Meeting** followed by **Early Years at Soho:** *Mary Bodfish* celebrates industrialist Matthew Boulton and his famous Smethwick works culminating in the historic partnership with engineer/inventor James Watt.

#### THURSDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE – 7.00pm

Visit or walk - TBA

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME Individual talks – £2

St. Andrew's Church, Bilston Street, Sedgley, Dudley, West Midlands DY3 1JA

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## Village Voice MAGAZINE

Provides the ideal opportunity for local businesses to advertise their goods and services at a very reasonable cost.

There are three separate editions each month in the areas:

Sedgley / Gornal / Coseley / Tipton;  
Kingswinford / Wall Heath / Wordsley;  
Wombourne / Swindon / Penn / Kinver

Advertising rates start at the equivalent of just £10.00 plus VAT per month.

If you would like further information then please call Gail on

**0781 7904477**

or email:

**villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk**

## PLEASE MENTION

## Village Voice

WHEN USING THE SERVICES OF OUR ADVERTISERS  
THANK YOU.

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Foot Health Professional
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- Memories in Brushstrokes

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# Dreamworld Furniture



## CLEARANCE

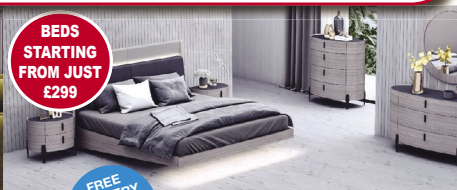
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**TEL: 01384 295660**



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For our customer  
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