

FREE

Village Voice

Chris Smith - We Remember!

ISSUE 230 | NOVEMBER 2025

11 REMEMBRANCE DAY

NOVEMBER
LEST WE FORGET

Community magazine for Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley



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Village Voice

Community magazine for
Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

Cover story

The 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month commemorates the end of the First World War and, as always Remembrance Day is a very special public display of the continuing recognition of the debt we owe all those who protected us and our way of life.

The poppy is, of course, the iconic symbol of Remembrance Day when the sacrifice made by those Commonwealth troops who died during the First World War is commemorated.

On pages 52&53 we tell the story about how the poppy became such a universal symbol of the War to end all Wars and how it inspired many people to turn to poetry as a reminder to future generations that we must never forget.

Gail



IN THIS ISSUE

6,22,38,60 It's A Fact!

10 Brainteasers

42 Stuntman saves the show

52-53 Lest We Forget

56 This month for our Wordsearch prize we have raided the Village Voice coffers to provide 2 x £50.00 shopping vouchers.

50 We feature the second of Trevor Langley's reviews on all things drink. This month is all about Gin.

68 Brainteasers Answers

70-74 The Parish Pump: Read about what is going on with groups and associations in and around your area.



Please note that the closing date for our competition this month is **FRIDAY, 21st NOVEMBER 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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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 **DECEMBER 2025** edition of **VILLAGE VOICE** is **WEDNESDAY, 19th NOVEMBER 2025**. 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 **Friday, 21st November 2025 – GOOD LUCK!**

Congratulations to **JANEY SIMPSON** of **BRIERLEY HILL** who was the lucky winner of the two tickets on offer in the **OCTOBER** edition.

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it's a fact!

- ★ **In 1880 William Fletcher of Lawnswood House, Wordsley and Henry Smith of Summerhill, Kingswinford were both appointed as visitors of houses licensed for the reception of lunatics. Both of the gentlemen were also local Justices of the Peace.**
- ★ **It was reported in June 1846 that the 10 month old daughter of the landlord of the Yew Tree in Wall Heath had shown a remarkable growth pattern. Even at this tender age she was 31½ inches in height with a waist of 24 inches and her thighs were each 16 inches in circumference. Despite this she was in extremely good health.**
- ★ **December 1922 saw Thomas William Shakespeare of Chapel Street, Pensnett appear at Brierley Hill Police Court when he was fined 40 shillings for stealing two chickens, the property of Ernest Jeavons of Bobbington. He said that he had committed the offence because of poverty but Police Superintendent Willis said that 15 or 16 fowl had been stolen from the Kingswinford area over the previous few days.**
- ★ **A nasty road accident involving a local man was reported in the Birmingham Gazette of 6th September 1847. The story told how a party of travellers who had been to the races at Stourbridge were driving their cart at some speed down Stourbridge High Street when they were in collision with Edward Crane from Chaddesley Corbett who was riding a horse in the opposite direction. Crane was seriously injured and several of those travelling in the cart were thrown out and suffered varying injuries. By far the worst hurt was Joseph Hill of Wordsley Green whose skull was fractured and who died shortly afterwards.**

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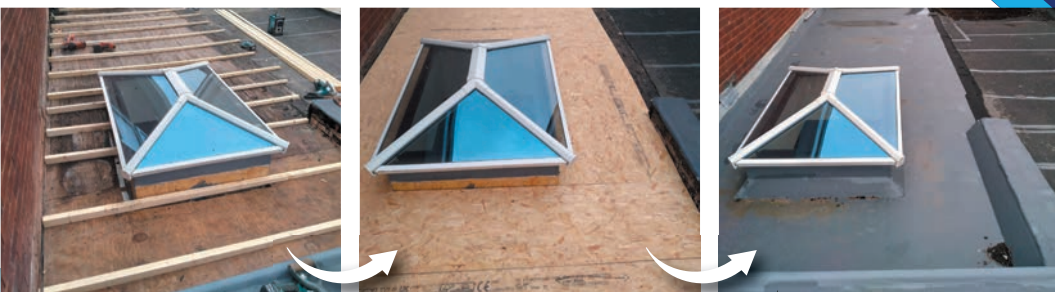
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BRAINTEASERS

This month we have a new set of crazy dingbats for you to try to work out. All you have to do is say what you see—it's as simple as that. The answers are all well known phrases and can be found on page 68 if you need them.

1 ME ME ME
AL AL AL

2

1	3	5
2	4	6

3 KNOW it NO

4 ROBBERS

5 QUACK CLUCK
CLUCK QUACK

6 WAETHER

7 ONDON
ARIS

8 PLEASANT CCU

9 GRA12"VE

10 ARTHUR
BORED

11 CCRREEAAMM

12 DAMN ?

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Sun 19 Oct St-Annes-On-Sea £26
Sat 8 Nov Autumn Gold Tintern & Monmouth £23
Tue 11 Nov Remembrance Day at NMA £20
Sat 15 Nov Leek Market & Stafford £21
Sat 22 Nov Melton Mowbray & Leicester £23

Sat 29 Nov Glow at RHS Bridgwater £41
Sat 6 Dec Yuletide coffee & mince pies £28
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Between 1871 and 1911 Wordsley Workhouse (on the site of the old Wordsley Hospital) housed an average of over 500 individuals at any one time. There were equal numbers of men and women.

In 2000 a survey published in the 'Daily Telegraph' said that Kingswinford had the lowest divorce rate in the West Midlands.

In 1327 there were just 18 taxpayers in Kingswinford. Together they had to pay taxes totalling 48 shillings!

The very first "Millennium baby" born at Wordsley was Benjamin Flavell who was born at 1.41am on 1st January 2000.

In Oak Street, Kingswinford the 'One and All' was a community hall that hosted a wide variety of events from the meetings of local clubs and the occasional dance.

Brierley Hill Road in Wordsley was originally called Bug Pool Road before its name was changed to Brewery Street when Wordsley Brewery was established. The demise of this enterprise, however, saw the road's name altered again to its current title. Wordsley School was, for many years called Buckpool School.

Dadford Warehouse (behind the Red House Cone) was named after Thomas Dadford, the engineer who created the canal. The warehouse was originally used by Webb's Seeds.

Green's Forge was one of four original forges used by Dud Dudley in 1621. It was converted into a corn mill but then demolished in the 1890s.

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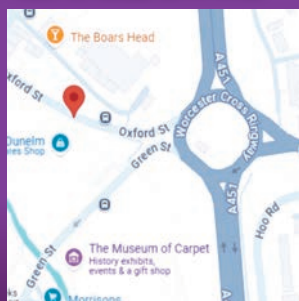
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HORSING ABOUT

It may not quite be the Wild West but at times in the past Brierley Hill must have seemed similar.

The 1860s saw a spate of rustling in the area with over 20 horses and ponies disappearing in the space of just two months. Most of the missing animals had been kept in Brockmoor and Pensnett and all had been taken during the hours of darkness with no clue as to who had taken them.

The loss of the horses and ponies caused substantial hardship for their owners as they were all working animals used either for hauling coal from the mines or delivering it to customers.

Around two months after the first animals had gone missing two boys reported a terrible smell coming from a disused mineshaft on the edge of Pensnett Common, close to Lenches Bridge. Investigations showed that at the bottom of the shaft were the corpses of the horses. A watch was kept on the mine and three nights later a George Yates from Brierley Hill was caught dumping another dead animal down the mine.

At his trial Yates could give no explanation as to why he had killed them and in sentencing him to six years imprisonment with hard labour the judge told Yates that *"if you are not mad then you are certainly extremely stupid!"*



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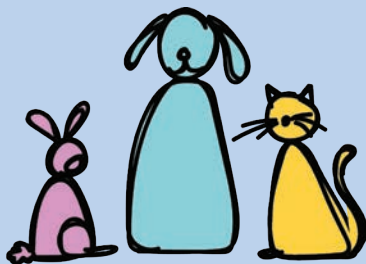


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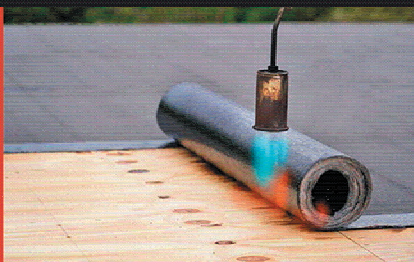
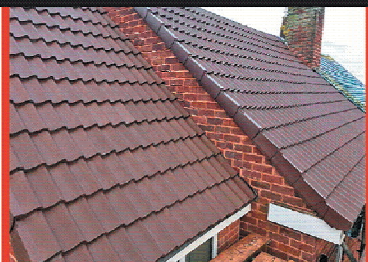
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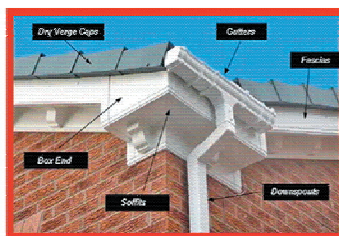
- ★ For many years the largest and most well-known employer in Wordsley was seed merchants Webb & Sons. Much of their success was due to the innovative marketing techniques they used to keep their name at the forefront of every gardener's mind. Whenever they won prizes at major competitions they would take photographs of their displays and prizes and send them out as postcards to gardeners throughout the country. They also provided prizes of seeds and cash to many gardening societies who were running their own competitions—in 1889, for example, they supported over 100 societies from the north of Scotland to Cornwall in this way.
- ★ Although it was built in 1858, by 1870 a debt of £200 on the construction of the Wordsley Institute still existed. To clear this outstanding amount it was agreed that a 'Grand Picnic' would be held at Prestwood Park on Monday, 3th July 1870. Members of the Institute alongside workers from several local glassworks marched with three bands—the Pensnett Victoria Band, the Bilston Excelsior Temperance Band and the 9th Worcestershire Rifle Corps Flute & Drum Band—from the Institute to Prestwood. Here there were various entertainments laid on including rides in a hot air balloon, a display of glass from local factories and a "velocipede circular railway" on which visitors could try out variously bicycles and improve their cycling skills. Admission to the park was 6d.
- ★ In April 1849 at Staffordshire Assizes, Thomas Lewis pleaded guilty to stealing a wheelbarrow, the property of Joseph Woodcock of Kingswinford, for which he was sentenced to two months imprisonment.

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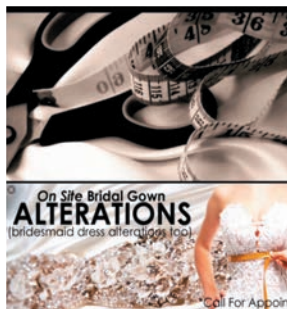
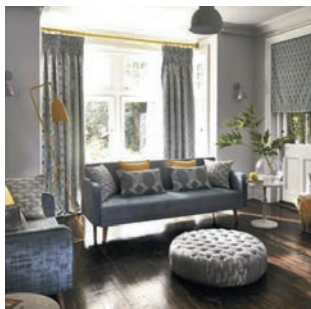
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The crowds flocked to see the Circus and the various acts including parachutists and stunt flyers. The star of the show, however, was Sir Alan himself.

He was a pilot during the First World War and then in the early 1920s was a test pilot for the de Havilland company. In 1926 he flew a plane around Africa and then later the same year flew a plane to Australia (where he was met by a crowd of 50,000).

Later he was to found a company called Airspeed with a gentleman called Nevil Norway who was better known as Nevil Shute, the novelist. The company developed the inflight refuelling techniques that were to become so important during the Second World War. He retired to the British Virgin Islands at the end of the War but returned to the UK shortly before he died in 1973.



Our photo above shows the "official" portrait of Sir Alan Cobham that hangs in the National Portrait Gallery"

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In April 1855 the magistrates court at Stourbridge heard a terrible story of child abuse in the centre of the town. The court heard that the mother of young Henry Edward Henefer had died when he was very young and his father had remarried. However, the sister of his mother believed that he was not being properly looked after and went round to the house at Gig Mill to check on the welfare of the boy. Several times she was refused entry but eventually she managed to force her way in. The sight she saw was clearly unbelievable. The boy was reduced to "a complete skeleton" with his feet wrapped in bandages as he had lost several toes through frostbite. She took the unfortunate Henry away and informed the police who hastened to the house to question his father and step mother. They, however, had disappeared. Henry was taken to the magistrates court in order that the police could ask for a warrant for their arrest. Word about the youngster's appearance in court had spread quickly and a large crowd had gathered to see Henry's arrival. So weak was the child that he had to be carried into the court and was unable to stand, having to lay on the seats during the hearing. The magistrate that heard the evidence took little time to announce that not only would a summons be issued for the immediate arrest of the father and his new wife but also that the young Henry should be admitted to the Workhouse where he could be properly looked after. The father was never found—it was suggested that he had fled abroad.



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Your Local Councillor Update

Dear Residents

Update on Car Parking Charges

We're continuing to push for a fairer deal for Kingswinford's local businesses and shoppers following the introduction of borough-wide car parking charges. After raising concerns that Kingswinford was being unfairly treated compared to larger town centres, we've now secured a reduction in the minimum charge to just 50p for 30 minutes starting 23rd October.

Speeding – Continuing to Raise Concerns

We've had ongoing reports from residents about dangerous and inconsiderate driving in several areas, and we're continuing to raise these concerns with Dudley Council's Highways and Enforcement teams.

Swindon Road, Enville Road, and Stallings Lane have all been flagged by residents, and we've requested targeted monitoring and further traffic calming measures where appropriate. If there's a speeding hotspot near you that hasn't yet been looked at, please let us know.

Early-Stage Plans for a BMX Pump Track

We're excited to be supporting early efforts to explore the creation of a dedicated BMX pump track somewhere within Kingswinford or Wall Heath.

This idea came directly from residents asking for more facilities for young people in the area. We're now working with council officers and local residents to assess feasibility. The estimated cost is around £60,000, and fundraising has already begun.

Once funding is in place, a list of potential locations will be drawn up, and a full public consultation will be carried out to ensure any decision has the backing of the local community. It's early days, but we're hopeful this could be a fantastic addition to the area.

Phil, Ed & Mark

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL TEAM BELOW



Cllr Phil Atkins
Tel: 07929 662888
Email: cldr.phil.atkins@dudley.gov.uk

Cllr Ed Lawrence
Tel: 01384 818007
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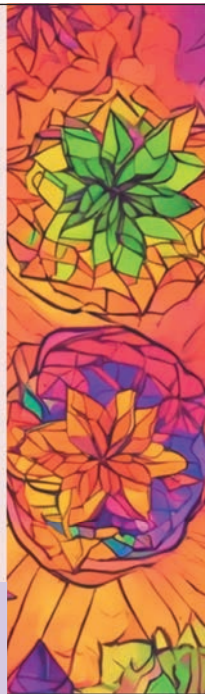


As the leaves change colours and the air gets crisper, it's the perfect time to reflect on what's been going on in your life. Autumn is a season of transition, and sometimes that can feel overwhelming. But don't worry, you're not alone! Kaleidoscope Counselling is here to support you in navigating life's twists and turns.

For many people Counselling can be viewed as a negative thing as we are often taught "not to air our dirty washing in public" however unlike talking to a friend I am able to offer a non – judgemental listening ear in a confidential environment there will be no bumping into me at a party and worrying about what you've said.

Counselling can support you to look at where you want to grow and make changes, helping these autumn and winter months seem lighter and brighter.

If you would like more information about me visit www.kaleidoscopecounselling.co.uk or email me at www.kaleidoscopewellbeing@outlook.com. I offer a free 15 minute chat to tell you about what I do and answer your questions.



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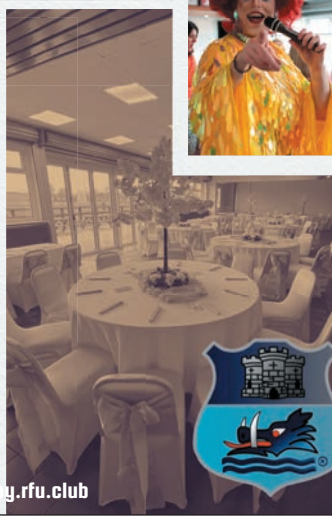
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it's a fact!

- ★ In July 1864 Elijah Hillman, the landlord of the Cross Inn, Kingswinford appeared in court accused of allowing skittle playing for money on his premises. Despite his solicitor pleading that Hillman ran his pub in a most respectable and orderly manner Hillman was found guilty and fined 10 shillings with £1/9s/6d in costs. This, however, was not the only time that Hillman found himself in court. In November 1872 he was charged with serving a drunk on his premises. The court heard how a police constable had seen a man, James Green, who was obviously drunk outside the pub. The constable watched Green enter the pub and after a few minutes followed him in. He saw Green standing at the bar with a glass of spirits in front of him. Hillman denied that he had served Green, saying that it must have been one of his friends who bought it for him. The magistrate said that the constable should have prevented Green from entering the pub in the first place and there was no evidence that Hillman had served him. The charge was dismissed.
- ★ The final phase of houses on Crestwood Park in Kingswinford was released for sale in April 1971. Prices started from a very reasonable £4,275. Not surprisingly, they sold very quickly.



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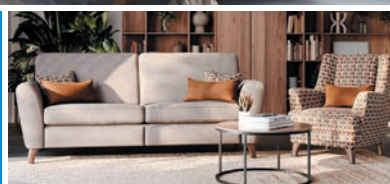


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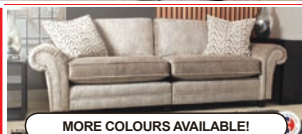


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STUNTMAN SAVES SHOW

For many years into the 1920s the Stourbridge Horticultural Society held an annual show at Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge.

However, despite some of the most magnificent displays regularly seen in the Midlands, attendances at the Show began to decline and in 1923 the organising committee decided to introduce other entertainment.

They arranged for local escapologist Victor Odin to perform a number of stunts—including escaping from a sealed packing case that had been submerged 6 feet under the park's lake. To make it more difficult he had been bound and handcuffed as well.

Over 6000 people flocked to the Show to see this daring stunt and when he emerged from the water it was said that the cheers could be heard as far away as Dudley. Victor was known as the “Harry

Houdini of the Midlands” and certainly many of his escapes were modelled on the great showman's act (our picture (right) shows Houdini in typical pose). However, Odin's act was much wider than just escapology—he also performed the “Dive of Death” and was frequently portrayed as the “Human

Bomb”. Although he performed his stunts across the country he often appeared at local shows and had a strong Black Country following. Victor and his wife Louise held their engagement party at the *Bottle & Glass* pub at Buckpool (which is now in the Black Country Living Museum) and so many attended that traffic on the road outside was brought to a halt!



**DUDLEY WINTER
ALES FAYRE**
St James's Road,
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27-29 November
2025

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

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.

Another plus point for visitors—anyone joining CAMRA at the event will receive two free pints!



KT1 AIR



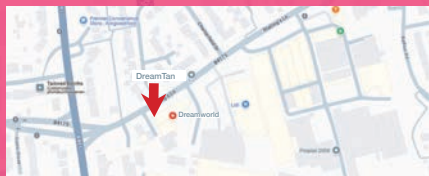
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WIFE FOR SALE!

In the 18th and 18th centuries getting a divorce was well beyond the means of virtually all working class couples no matter how much animosity there was between a man and his wife. As a consequence in most cases couples would just separate and go their own ways (although this had its pitfalls—the husband could be sued for desertion and the wife may well be classed as a “loose woman” if she found a new partner). There was, however, an alternative solution—for a man to sell his wife to another man.

Whilst such a transaction had no basis in law it seems that a number of these sales took place across the country and indeed Charles Dickens refers to one such event in his book *Dombey and Son*. Certainly in the Black



Brierley Hill, Tipton and Dudley for just 6d a time.

Wife selling was not taken particularly seriously by the participants and in all recorded cases it seems that both husband and wife were happy for it to go ahead with the wife having the power to veto the sale to any prospective purchaser to whom she had taken a dislike.

In most cases there was a considerable amount of pre-publicity about an impending ‘wife selling’ and on the chosen date a large crowd would invariably gather at the house and accompany the man and his wife to the nearest marketplace. On this journey the wife would wear a halter around her neck and be led by her husband through the most convenient tollgate where he would pay the appropriate fee for a cow, pig or sheep passing through it. Whilst such actions may seem very demeaning to us today it is clear from contemporary newspaper reports that such a ritual was taken lightheartedly by all concerned.

WIVES FOR SALE!

Country there were several instances of wife selling recorded.

The very first of these—in 1692—involved “John, the son of Nathan Whitehouse of Tipton” who apparently sold his wife to a Mr Bracegirdle. Although in this instance we do not know the price paid in a number of later cases more details are available. In 1823, for example, Moses Maggs sold his wife in Wednesbury marketplace for three gallons of ale whilst Lydia Jones was sold for 10 shillings and a quart of ale in the marketplace in Walsall the following year.

Not all sales were quite as profitable—between 1849 and 1859 wives were sold at

ONE COMMUNITY UPDATE BY SHAZ SALEEM

Hey wonderful people of Kingswinford and Wall Heath, I'm very proud to be part of the Village Voice writing a monthly blog to highlight amazing community groups and community champions.

As the founder of the Saleem Foundation charity and recipient of The High Sheriff Award, I believe volunteering makes me feel as though I am an ambassador for my area; I feel a sense of pride for where I come from.

The Old Courthouse Kingswinford opens in style

I had the absolute honour and pleasure to do the official opening of The Old Courthouse Kingswinford! Owners Prem Regmi and Bikram Kharel have done an amazing job transforming The Courthouse.

The Indian Bar & Grill is a Smokehouse specialist offering a wide range of delicious food including Ultimate Burgers, Smoked and Grilled Steak, and so much more. They also cater for vegetarian, vegan and have a variety of children's meals. It is absolutely amazing to see the Old Courthouse back open and being utilised!! The Indian Bar and Grill is open from 12 noon to 12am Monday to Sunday.



Bonsai Black Belt Academy host the Kingswinford Toy Swap

Myself and Alina Naz Saleem are proud to donate dozens of toys on behalf of the Saleem Foundation supporting the Kingswinford Toy Swap. Please donate your unwanted toys to us throughout November and help other local families this Christmas!! Please message or call Lydia to arrange drop off on 07581442336. On Saturday 7th December at Bonsai Black Belt Academy (1.30pm-3.30pm) you will be able to come and select toys for Christmas presents!!!



TSF Award for Heroes see triple winners

We have presented awards to three incredible champions. Jemma Louise from the Stourbridge District RSPCA won the Award for August. Emily Fereday from Fereday and Co won the Award for September and Roger Edwards from Sgt Peppers Friendship Club won the Award for October.

The Awards were presented by our community champion Lydia Longville from the Bonsai Black Belt Academy, Kingswinford, who said, "It's absolutely amazing hearing the lovely work done by these amazing people and on behalf of Bonsai Black Belt Academy we are proud to present these Awards to such fantastic people!" If you know anyone who lives or works in Kingswinford, Wall Heath, and the surrounding area and deserves to be recognised, please nominate them by emailing me at the address shown below.



Upcoming community events

9th November - Kingswinford & Wall Heath Litter Pick - 10am • **23rd November** - Kingswinford & Wall Heath Litter Pick - 10am • **28th November** - Kупpa Club - 9.15am to 11am at Wall Heath Tavern • **28th November** - Kingswinford Light Switch On - 4.30pm onwards - Kingswinford • **'Jingle the Wall Heath' Santa Trail** tickets are now on sale, please collect from Grandpa's Sweet Shop or contact me at the address shown below.

Contact me

📞 07786 196666 ✉ askshaz@hotmail.co.uk 📱 @shazsaleem001

NOTHING LIKE A WOMAN SCORNE...

The Somerset County Gazette in April 1839 carried a fascinating story about a local man who was double-crossed by two women.

A Mr Benedict Wragg, described as a “patent smoke bottle maker” from Dudley formed a relationship with a Lydia Bradley who lived in Birmingham Street, Dudley. Together they had two children but after a while, however, Wragg started to enjoy the company of another lady, Nancy Lane, a tripe shop owner. Unfortunately both ladies knew each other and Nancy decided that she would seek revenge on the double dealing Wragg. Having persuaded Wragg to agree to marry her, Nancy went to Wordsley Church and registered for the banns to be read...although rather than her own name she gave that of Lydia Bradley.

On the day of the wedding Nancy met Wragg at her house where she was already dressed in her wedding dress and other finery. She told him to proceed to the church and that she would meet him there shortly. Once he had departed she went upstairs and gave the dress to Lydia who quickly changed into it with the final touch of attaching a full face veil.

It was, therefore, Lydia not Nancy who walked down the aisle in Wordsley Church and—because Benjamin was somewhat overawed by the whole ceremony he did not notice the name of his bride! Indeed it was not until he lifted the veil to kiss his new bride after the ceremony that he found that he had married Lydia and not Nancy! His next stop was a solicitor’s office but was told that the marriage was completely legal and the only way of changing the situation was for him to seek a divorce...which would be expensive. He decided to stick with the wife he had (mistakenly) acquired. Such a nice man!

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DRINKS: MAKE MINE A GIN—AGAIN!

A review by Trevor Langley

And now for the second of our independent reviews on drinks around the world 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 this was a little different to our normal articles so now over to Trevor as he reviews the multi award-winning company Ginagain.



For this quest I searched several gin producing companies, and, indeed, there are a good number of excellent producers of very fine gins. Multi award-winning Ginagain Spirits received recognition from the outset and has grown to have many 'devotees' of their gins. Based in London, Ginagain Spirits has earned the appreciation of numerous gin connoisseurs. Ginagain Spirits was founded by Rick Allen. Enjoying his childhood around the Central Valley in California, USA, Rick was fascinated by the vast array of orange groves and became interested in the citrus and fruit farms in the area. His travels to England, during the 1990's inspired Rick to further his love of gin with California citrus inclusions. Time progressed and, with his wife Stephanie, they worked tirelessly on creating exceptional productions of fine, handcrafted, tiny batch, London Dry gins, utilising botanicals from global origins and California citrus, all to a great advantage.

Ginagain – Gin 01 (42% vol) has excellent overtones of California orange peel and cubeb pepper berries. Eleven ingredients are used to bring this gin to perfection, which has a hint of spice. I found this gin to be well-balanced throughout, from the bouquet, through the flavour and mouthfeel and then on to the palate's delight. Indulgent and welcoming.

Ginagain – Gin 02 (42% vol) has organic California grapefruit, fresh basil and ginger root as the ingredients for this delectation. Notes of grapefruit are forward for this production, then, the basil inclusion is detected, adding a most pleasant herbal contribution. The ginger comes in, with its warmth and a spicy hint. I found this high-quality gin to be crisp and invigorating, with a very good balance. Delightful and exceptional.

No artificial ingredients, sweeteners or artificial flavourings are used in the productions of these London Dry gins. Their very informative website has some more interesting details and online ordering is easy too with orders being dispatched quickly and efficiently. A gin company with commitment and dedication to the grand end results.

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Trevor Langley



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LEST WE FORGET



On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918 the First World War—the bloodiest war mankind has ever known—came to an end. It has been estimated that 16 million were killed in the conflict with a further 20 million wounded. Moira Michael, an American professor, was deeply moved by the plight of those who had lost loved ones or who had been injured in the War. She was looking for a way to raise money especially for those who were disabled through the fighting and then she read a short poem...

REMEMBRANCE DAY



The poem had been written by a young doctor called John Macrae who was serving on the Front Line with the Canadian Armed Forces in the Flanders region of Belgium. Just 15 lines long the poem “In Flander’s fields” inspired Michael not only to write her own poem but to always wear a poppy in remembrance. The idea caught on and soon she was purchasing silk poppies to sell to friends and relations in order to raise funds for ex-servicemen in her home state of Georgia. Within two years she was campaigning for the poppy

to be recognised as the American national symbol of remembrance, a feat she achieved shortly afterwards. The use of the poppy to raise funds for ex-servicemen and their families spread to France and then—following the formation of the British Legion in 1921—it was introduced into the UK. Such was the enthusiasm with which the idea was greeted that consideration had to be given quickly as to how the paper poppies could be manufactured (the first ones had come from France). In 1922 Major George Howson MC took on the task of making the first batch of British poppies in a small factory on the Old Kent Road in London. His staff were five disabled ex-servicemen and his total capital was £2,000. The poppy was designed to be easy for disabled ex-servicemen to make and the same design is still used today (although different materials are now utilised and modern machinery is used in the manufacturing process. Within months the workforce had increased ten fold and by 1925 it became clear that the existing factory was too small and so new premises were found at Richmond in Surrey where today work continues in producing poppies. In its heyday the factory employed some 365 people and manufactured a staggering 45 million poppies a year. In order to give you an insight into the work that is actually done for Poppy Day, the national total for 2024 was a staggering £51.4 million.



Life on the Front Line was incredibly tough and for many men their life expectancy once they had reached the trenches was only a matter of months, if not days.



The Poppy Factory's employment consultants are based regionally throughout England and Wales and offer regular one-to-one contact with veterans and their families. Their remit is simply to do their utmost to help them on their journey towards employment. They help with CV writing, job search, support with training, exploring new opportunities, interview preparation, overcoming barriers and in-work support. Each year their specialist team are able to help hundreds of people who are facing some of the most challenging situations in the Armed Forces to take positive steps forward on their own.

The actual poppy plant is unusual insofar as when it drops its seeds at the end of each summer the seeds themselves do not germinate unless the soil on which they have fallen is disturbed. During the First World War large areas of Flanders, a region of Belgium were devastated with virtually no buildings, trees or other vegetation left standing. All that was left was a sea of mud, shell holes and abandoned trenches.

Nature, of course, has a way of regenerating itself and the following spring plants started to appear. The first of these were the poppies whose seeds having lain dormant for years started to appear following the disturbance to the ground. In 1915 the sight of a sea of red poppies inspired John Macrae, a doctor in the Canadian Armed Forces to write in his diary a short poem. He had just buried one of his close friends and the cross on the grave was surrounded by poppies. His poem—"In Flanders fields" was published in 'Punch' magazine and was to become one of the best known poems to be written during the First World War and it in turn inspired others to write other poems with the same sentiments. We now go back to the beginning of this article to Moira Michael who wrote a poem called "*We Shall Keep the Faith*":

***"Oh you who sleep in Flanders Fields
Sleep sweet—to rise anew!
We caught the torch you threw
And Holding high, we keep the Faith
With all who died.***

***We cherish, too, the poppy red
That grows on fields where valour led;
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies
But lends a lustre to the red
Of the flower that blooms above the dead
In Flanders fields.***

***And now the Torch and Poppy Red
We wear in honour of our dead.
Fear not that ye have died for naught.
We'll teach the lesson that you wrought
In Flanders fields."***

This poem was published worldwide and the tradition of wearing the poppy "in honour of our dead" was born. This year the Royal British Legion's pledge is to raise in excess of last year's figure so please do support them in whatever way that you can and give generously.



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All you have to do is search out the square below for the 16 words associated with **VILLAGE VOICE** 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 (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 **Friday, 21st November 2025**. Good luck!

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H	I	M	H	E	C	I	O	V	N	A
I	L	A	R	N	G	M	C	E	C	L
S	L	G	E	S	M	A	P	O	B	A
T	Y	A	E	U	S	W	L	M	R	C
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3. NEWS
4. TEASERS
5. THREE
6. VOICE
7. PARISH
8. MONTHLY
9. COMMUNITY
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GUILTY!

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In 1869 local man Joseph King appeared before Brierley Hill magistrates charged with unlawfully and maliciously killing a cat belonging to Mrs William Lambert. He pleaded not guilty on the basis that he killed the cat because it had been caught poaching. He explained that the cat had disturbed a nest of partridges killing the young birds. Witnesses were called to verify that Mrs Lambert had a number of cats who regularly brought home game. She denied this and said that she only kept the cats to amuse her young daughter who was deaf. The magistrates disagreed and said that the cat was a poacher and that King was justified in his actions. The case was dismissed.

On 21st April 1879 the court dealt with two cases of animal cruelty. The first involved a horse owned by Isaiah Parkes who, when the RSPCA became involved tried to bribe the RSPCA inspector. He was fined 15/-.

The second case was against three Stourbridge lads accused of stealing the tail feather of a peacock. The court heard how suffering had been caused to the bird and how the lads—John Marsh, Joseph Parkes and Matthew Dimmock—had laughed at its distress. They were each fined £2.

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- ★ **Kingswinford first became a Rural District in 1894 when it was combined with Amblecote. However, four years later Amblecote itself was made a Rural District (the smallest in the country) and Kingswinford gained 'independence'. In 1938, however, it lost that and became part of the much larger Brierley Hill Urban District Council. This itself disappeared into the County Borough of Dudley in 1966 which then changed its name to Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council in 1974.**
- ★ **An interesting advertisement appeared in the Country Advertiser in December 1876: "Lost on 12th inst., from Wall Heath Inn, Wall Heath, a Black-and-Tan Terrier dog. Answers to the name of "General". Anyone returning him to the above named Inn will be rewarded; anyone detaining him after this notice will be prosecuted.". Sadly it is not known whether the dog was eventually found and returned to its owners.**
- ★ **In 1832 the spread of cholera throughout the country reached Kingswinford and seven people died. This was much fewer than in Dudley and, especially, Tipton where over 120 perished. This was primarily because Kingswinford was still a generally rural area.**
- ★ **July 1966 saw a driverless lorry loaded with 13 tons of gravel hurtle down Standhills Road, Kingswinford first colliding with a car being driven by the wife of a local politician and then hitting the wall of a nearby council house. Fortunately no-one was injured although the family in the house, Mr & Mrs Arthur Bradley, had to be temporarily re-housed whilst the damage was repaired. It seems the parking brake on the lorry failed whilst the driver, Sidney Capewell, was away having lunch.**

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THE ORDER OF THE COURT ...



As well as the court in Stourbridge, petty criminal cases were also heard at Brierley Hill Police Court. Hearings took place twice a week with local magistrates sitting on Mondays and a Stipendiary (full time professional) magistrate on Thursdays. Reports of these cases were frequently included in the local newspapers of the time and made fascinating reading.

In 1880, for example, Thomas Barnbrook of the Fox & Goose in Level Street, Brierley Hill was charged with unlawfully wounding Joseph Cartwright, a miner of Amblecote. During an argument Cartwright had been knocked from the Lock Lane canal bridge into the water and had to be rescued by boatmen travelling along the waterway. He suffered a broken leg, cuts and a badly bruised back. The two parties agreed an out-of-court settlement, much to Barnbrook's relief as he had been told to expect a prison sentence if it came before the magistrates.

Another case that was withdrawn before it got to the magistrates involved another Cartwright—this one called William who was the caretaker at Brierley Hill's Moor Street School. He had been accused of assaulting a pupil teacher called Albert Scriven at the school. Cartwright did not deny the charge but said that Scriven had been impertinent and provoked him. At the last minute Cartwright agreed to pay Scriven's costs and the case was dropped.

Not so lucky, though, was John James of Bank Street, Brierley Hill who was sentenced to a month in prison for stealing coal from the Earl of Dudley's Racecourse Colliery in Stourbridge. He had only just been released from serving nine months for theft.



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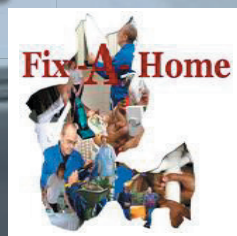
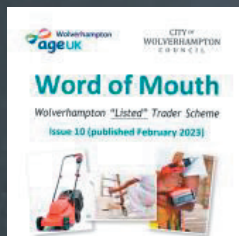
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INDEPENDENCE MATTERS

GUNPOWDER PLOT—THE STOURBRIDGE CONNECTION

As most people know the Gunpowder Plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament on 5th November 1605 was a failure and most of the conspirators fled to Holbeche House near Kingswinford. What is not so well known is that there were also further local connections.

The conspirators had taken refuge in Holbeche House, owned by Stephen Lyttleton, but were quickly surrounded by the Sheriff of Worcestershire and his men. The plotters realised that they would have to fight it out and so prepared their guns for use. Some of the gunpowder they had was wet and so they started to dry it out...but then an accident happened and an explosion rocked the house. A number of the conspirators were killed and most of the rest were quickly taken prisoner. These were taken to Stourbridge gaol before being removed to the Tower of London where they were held prior to being publicly executed. Two of the conspirators—Lyttleton and Robert Wintour—managed to escape although Wintour was shot through the arm by crossbow bolt. After spending the night hiding in a quarry in Gornal the two men made their way to Bullfield Farm on the border of Netherton and Rowley Regis. Here they hid for a while before moving on to Hagley Hall.

Whilst at Hagley Hall one of the staff realised that they were there and, mindful of the generous bounty on their heads informed the authorities.

Lyttleton and Wintour were captured and taken to Worcester where they were executed as traitors. When it was discovered that the owner of Bullfield Farm had hidden them troops were sent out from Stourbridge to



arrest him. On arrival at the farm, however, it was clear that the owner had fled—so the soldiers set fire to the buildings, slaughtered the stock and then trampled all the crops. In a strange quirk of fate, over the next 300 years the farm was rebuilt three times—and each time it was destroyed by fire. On the last occasion in 1909 a young girl caused a fire when the candle she was carrying up the stairs to bed set fire to her nightdress. She was, unfortunately burnt to death and the house destroyed. It was said for years afterwards her ghost haunted the area with many people suggesting that they had seen the light of a candle suddenly flare up and the face of a young girl appear in the middle of the flames. In some cases it was said that the girl could be heard screaming. Today the site of Bullfield Farm lies below an industrial estate.



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Nicholas Phillips of Lower Gornal
Susan Abbotts of Dudley
Graham Follos of Kingswinford
Charlotte Preece of Dudley
Wendy Weremiuk of Telford
Sarah Barnes of Kingswinford
Mark Mullett of Lower Gornal
Christine Piotrowicz of Swindon
Janey Simpson of Brierley Hill
Alison Watkins of Wordsley

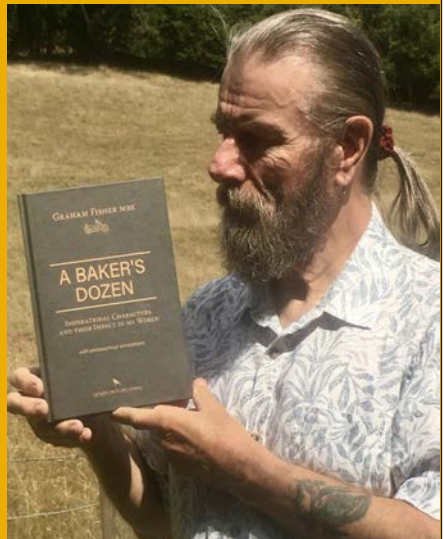
Michael Green of Dudley
Leanne Guest of Kingswinford
Angela Woolley of Patterningham
Jacqueline Hartshorn of Dudley
Neil Taylor of Halesowen
Sharon Breakspear of Tipton
Carole Eaton of Stourbridge
Julie Nicholls of Coseley
Karen Lloyd of Lower Gornal
Charlotte Haycock of Dudley

Also in our October edition, our good friend and
author, Graham Fisher, very kindly set
aside three signed copies of his new book
***'A BAKER'S DOZEN: inspirational characters
and their impact in my world, with philosophical
annotations'***

for us to offer to three lucky winners.
The draw has now taken place and we offer
congratulations to:

**Mrs Jean Homer of Lower Gornal
Joe Lees of Wall Heath
David Payne of Halesowen**

Your books will be winging their way to
you shortly.



BRAINTEASERS ANSWERS

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1 | Three square meals | 7 | Tale of two cities |
| 2 | Back to square one | 8 | Nice to see you |
| 3 | No two ways about it | 9 | One foot in the grave |
| 4 | Honour among thieves | 10 | Man overboard |
| 5 | Foul Language | 11 | Double cream |
| 6 | Spell of bad weather | 12 | Crossword puzzle |

So how many did you get? If you managed to work out 10 or more then you truly are genius level! Look for more crafty Brainteasers in the December edition.

COMPETITION WINNERS

The answer to our Wordsearch Competition in the **OCTOBER** edition was **LODGES** (it was missing from the grid). The two lucky winners who each receive a **FAMILY PASS** to the fabulous **WEST MIDLANDS SAFARI PARK** are:

SALLY DAVIES of Kingswinford and
MRS M HICKMAN of Tipton

You can find this month's competition on page 56.

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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live in the place they feel best: home.

See how we can support you.

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be home

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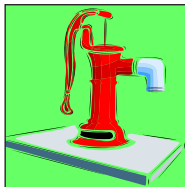
01384 297 839

Email

dudley@
bluebirdcare
.co.uk

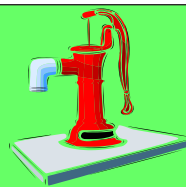
*Find
out more*





The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

PARISH PUMP



Kingswinford Methodist Church...dates for your diaries!!

Is it too soon to mention Christmas???

December 9th – Memorial Service, a time to remember those we love from 7:30 pm

Look out for our family fun Sheep Trail coming soon to Kingswinford, and join us at our All-Age Sheep Service on **December 14th** from 10:00 am

December 21st - Carol Service

December 24th – Midnight Communion (begins at 11:30 pm)

December 25th - All-Age family service from 10:00 am... come and join the celebration!!

Reminder to all We have an All-Age service for Remembrance Day on **9th November** and a Super Sunday—creative workshop for all the family on **30th November**.



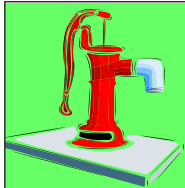
WEDNESDAY SENIORS GROUP 50+

invite you to enjoy afternoons of speakers and entertainment on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month at 2.00pm at Wordsley Green Community Centre, Wordsley DY8 5BN

COMING UP!

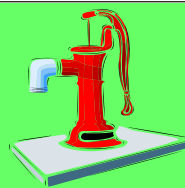
19th November: **Kays Catalogue**. Mr Kay opened a jeweller's shop in Worcester in the 19th century and forged ahead adding different lines to his stock. This led him to publish the well known catalogue as told by **Bernard Mills**.

3rd December: **Christmas Party Time**—an afternoon of entertainment by a delightful singing group and a company of hand bell ringers with audience participation.



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

PARISH PUMP



WORDSLEY TEAM PARISH CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL AND CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAYRE



The 2025 Community
Christmas Tree
Festival and
Christmas Fayre will
once again take place
at Holy Trinity



Church, High Street, Wordsley.
Please "Come and See the Trees".

The Church will be open for the
Community Christmas Tree Festival on
Friday 5th December from 12 noon until
5.00pm, Saturday 6th December from
10.00am until 5.00 pm and on Sunday 6th
December from 11.00am until 5.00pm.

There will be festive music and refreshments
served throughout the Festival and a warm
welcome is extended to everyone.

Our **Christmas Fayre** will take place on
Saturday 6th December from 10.00am until
1.00pm in the Church Hall with lots of stalls
and refreshments too.

ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Foundry Road, Wall Heath
DY6 9BA



St Andrew's URC are holding a Craft Fair on
Sunday, 22nd November between 11.00am
and 3.00pm.

Also, on the run up to Christmas there are
various events planned at St Andrews,
as follows:

**Monday, 8th December: 6.15pm—
Christingle Service**

**Sunday, 21st December: 4.00pm—
Blue Christmas** led by Rev Alison Smith

**Wednesday, 24th December: 6.30pm—
Christmas Eve Carol Service** led by
Rev Andrew Mann-Ray

**Thursday, 25th December: 9.30am—
Christmas morning service** led by
Bernard Peters.

**For further information please contact
Daphne Darby on 0753 0071 068**

DUDLEY PROBUS CLUB

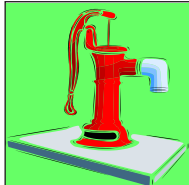
lunch meetings are held on the **2nd Thursday** in the month starting at 12.30pm and
are held at **The Lodge, Wellington Road, Dudley DY1 1RD.**

COMING UP...

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 or by visiting
the Dudley Probus website.



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

PARISH PUMP



WALL HEATH COMMUNITY CENTRE

Envile Road, Wall Heath DY6 0JT
Telephone: 01384 273744 : Email:
wallheathcommunityassoc@gmail.com

12th November: The Wednesday Club—
2.00pm. **Pete Kelly, Singer, songwriter
and guitarist.** Pete is a wonderfully talented
musician with an easy-going style.

20th November: Thursday at 2 Club—
2.00pm. **Sue Share, Vintage Charms**
Christmas gifts, demonstration and sale.

26th November: The Wednesday Club—
2.00pm. **John Fox, Quiz.** John returns
to the club with a seasonal fun quiz.

4th December: Thursday at 2 Club— 2pm.
Jacantus Ladies Harmony and
Christmas party. Prebooking required—
£12. For further details please contact
Karen Page on 01384 273744 or
email wallheathcommunityassoc@gmail.com

WORDSLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Wordsley Green DY8 5BN



CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Saturday 29th November
DOORS OPEN 2.00pm

Art, crafts & Handmade stalls, Christmas
Gifts, Tombola etc & Tinkerbelle's Kitchen
Treats & Fun for all the family

Adult Admission 50p. Child admission
FREE inclusive of visit to Santa's Grotto
(complete with 'Chocky' treat!)

YIPPEE, SANTA SAYS MRS CLAUS
HAD SO MUCH FUN AT WORDSLEY
LAST YEAR ...SHE'S COMING TOO!!!



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION KINGSWINFORD

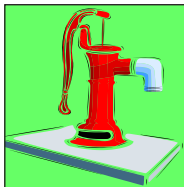


REMEMBRANCE PARADE

on **SUNDAY, 9th NOVEMBER 2025** (muster at 10.00am outside Club)
Parade arrives 10.15am at St Mary's Church, Kingswinford.

A short service will take place outside prior to wreaths being laid.
The parade will then proceed into the Church.

Royal British Legion, Summerhill, Kingswinford DY6 9JG : Tel: 01384 287312



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

PARISH PUMP



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THE NEXT PARISH PUMP
WILL BE IN THE **DECEMBER 2025**
EDITION AND THE COPY
DEADLINE IS **Wednesday, 19th**
November 2025.

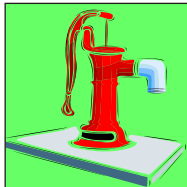
Don't forget that insertions are free if
you run a Group or Association that
is non-profit making. Please send your
details via email to Gail at
villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk

MEN'S BOWLS AT WORDSLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE—YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU!

If you have time on a Friday afternoon,
why not pop along to see us between
1.00pm and 4.00pm and join this highly
popular group for Short Mat Indoor Bowls,
Cards and Dominoes. There is always lots
of laughter and jollity with this group and
it is the perfect way to meet new friends and
enjoy a nice cup of tea/coffee and, of
course, cakes and biscuits! All equipment is
supplied. If you have never played before
that is not a problem as the group welcome
all abilities. There are subsidised
subscriptions.

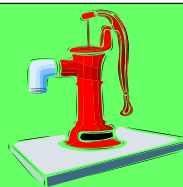
If this is of interest to you, please give **Bob**
a call on **07572 321401** and leave a
message with your phone number or call the
Community Centre on **01384 273186.**

We are busy preparing our
DECEMBER editions of Village
Voice Magazine. If you are a place
of worship within the areas of:
Sedgley/Gornal/Coseley/Tipton
Kingswinford/Wall Heath/Wordsley
Wombourne/Swindon/Penn/Kinver
and would like a free mention of your
services over the Christmas period
within our Parish Pump feature,
please do get in touch by email at
villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

PARISH PUMP



KINGSWINFORD LADIES LUNCHEON CLUB

At the October meeting Chairman Ann Rogers welcomed 27 members to **The Lodge, Wellington Road, Dudley** to enjoy their lovely food and hear about the wonderful care provided at Mary Stevens Hospice.

Meetings are held on the second Friday each month at The Lodge 12pm for 12.30pm. The next luncheon will be on the 14th November when the speaker will be **Mr Ray Barratt** who will be talking to the group about “**Bourneville Heroines**”. The Christmas festivities will be on the 12th December with a special raffle, a Christmas meal with wine and the speaker will be **Mr John Butterworth** who will be presenting a talk on “**My 6 of the best Christmases**”.

Visitors are most welcome and can attend three times before deciding to join. For more information please ring Chairman, Ann Rogers on 01384 273511 or the Secretary on 01902 372984 email jillgriffithsme7@gmail.com

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OR WHATEVER by John Sparry

'OXYDOL! For a bigger tub of richer suds!'

Pete Murray joined 'The Station of the Stars' in 1950. As an actor he had toured Britain and also appeared in James Stewart's film, 'No Highway'.

In the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg's Junglinster wireless studios he was soon presenting an exhausting raft of record programmes, plus features prepared on film tape back in London. The salary was £15 per week—which was £5 more than Teddy Johnson had been getting.

Dance band drummer and singer, Teddy, had turned his vocalising duets with Pearl Carr into a much more successful money-spinner, with smash hits such as the 'Eurovision 'Sing Little Birdie' (1959'.

Richard Nichols' carefully researched book 'Radio Luxembourg—the Station of the Stars', (1983) commences in the 1920s and '30s, when international arguments over the possession of radio wavelengths were being, shall we say, 'fiercely aired'.

Here, the BBC was outraged at the thought of long-wave competition. Even worse, "Dash it, those bounders in Normandy and Luxembourg are advertising. 'Tea! Soap!' To quote the BBC's indignant Toytown resident on Children's Hour, Mister Growser, Disgrrrraceful!"

Luxembourg's powerful transmitters were seized by Germany on the outbreak of World War Two. William Joyce, 'Lord Haw-Haw', tried to feed Britain with propaganda.

When this 'Humbug for Hamburg' started rambling on, presenters from the re-named 'Radio International (Fécamp, Normandy), such as Roy Plomely and Bob Danvers-Walker, had to get back to England.

According to 'My H. Samuel Everight Watch' it was just in the nick of time!



Cats loved the extra warmth of valve radios. On the Light Programme, Music While You Work, the Charlie Katz appearances included Ocarina and 26 other instruments.

By John Sparry, Ridge Cot, 15 Enville Road, Wall Heath
Mobile: 07831 342209

(Sorry folks, no texts or voicemails accepted—I just can't cope with that!)

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AT TOWNSEND PLACE MARKET

Kingswinford market at Townsend Place is situated in the heart of Kingswinford. Privately owned, the market has been trading for over 40 years and has a thriving outdoor market with regular stallholders attending Thursday through to Saturday each week.

We have a couple of business opportunities here at Townsend Place. Firstly, an established card business has become available. If you would like further information about this please give Richard a call on the number below. Secondly, with a limited number of spaces available on Thursdays we are now looking to expand what the market currently offers. Are you a crafter who is looking to be able to showcase your products? We would like to invite crafters and traders (there may well be upcoming trade opportunities) to join us. We offer competitive rates.

Come down and see us on Thursday, Friday or Saturday or call Richard on 07808 696969 for further information and to reserve a stall.

MORE OF IRRESISTIBLE FORCE MEETS IMMOVABLE OBJECT

The paradox of the irresistible force meeting the immovable object raises intriguing questions about the nature of power and existence, illustrating a logical contradiction that challenges our understanding of forces and objects. We do hope you enjoy a few examples that we have found.

If an irresistible force meets an immovable object what is the outcome?

If you try to fail at a task and succeed in failing what have you just done?

What was the fruit called before the colour 'orange' was named?

What is a male ladybird called?

Why is a lift still called a lift when it is going down?

Why is the third hand on a clock called the second hand?

If two aircraft almost collide in mid-air why is it called a near-miss?

The correct name for the fear of long words is "hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia"

Why is it so long?



Why are boxing rings square?

Is the fear of flying groundless?

Why is the word "abbreviation" so long?

If a cat lands on its feet when it falls and buttered bread always lands butter side down, what would happen if you tied buttered bread to the top of a cat?

If people from Poland are called Poles why aren't people from Holland called Holes?

Why do we play at recitals and recite in a play?

If you decide that you are indecisive which are you?

Suppose you travel back in time and prevent your grandparents from meeting. This would prevent your birth, meaning you could never have travelled back in time to cause the event in the first place!

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