

FREE

# Village Voice

*Chris Smith - We Remember!*

ISSUE 241 | DECEMBER 2025



*Merry  
Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year*



Community magazine for Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton

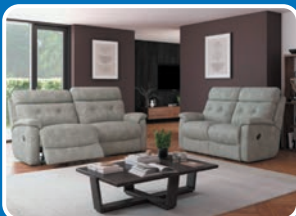
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# Village Voice

Community magazine for  
Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton

## Cover story

Christmas is, of course, almost upon us and the annual frenzy of buying presents has well and truly started – indeed, some of the “Christmas” sales actually began in October! If, however, you can put aside all the commercialism that abounds, Christmas can still remain a time of quiet reflection with the family. Many of us strive to keep the familiar Christmas customs such as decorating the Christmas tree, a roast turkey lunch and even the King’s Speech. Indeed, even those that go abroad at this time of year still often look forward to maintaining the old traditions with Christmas trees and turkey sandwiches on the beach!

Wherever you are have a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Peaceful New Year.

## Gail



## IN THIS ISSUE

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26 This month's article from Trevor Langley is very apt with Christmas coming up – it is all about sparkling wines.

28 Rock the Mistletoe is a newly formed band who have dedicated their time and effort free of charge to come up with a song. All in aid of children's charities.

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56 Brainteasers Answers

56 Win 2 x tickets to the Robin Club in Bilston

58-61 The Parish Pump: Read about what is going on in your area.



Please note that the closing date for our competition this month is **FRIDAY, 19<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 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 **JANUARY 2026** edition of **VILLAGE VOICE** is **THURSDAY, 18<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025**. Please book your space early to avoid disappointment.

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# BRAINTEASERS

**We end 2025 with another batch of devious Brainteasers. If you by chance need the answers they can be found on page 56. Good luck!**

1. Two barrels contain the same amount of water. The water temperature in one (barrel A) is 47°F and the other (barrel B) is 29°F. Two cricket balls of the same size and weight are dropped simultaneously from the same height into each barrel. Which ball will touch the bottom of the barrel first?
2. To paint two lines dividing a motorway into three lanes costs £1000 a mile. What would it cost to paint lines to divide the road into six lanes over a distance of six miles?
3. Rearrange the letters of NEW DOOR to make one word. A clue is that the answer ends in 'd'.
4. John has three sons. The eldest is four years older than the second son who in turn is four years older than the youngest who is exactly half the age of the eldest. How old are the three sons?
5. And now for a WORDBAT! All you have to do is to identify the word or phrase.

D	D
O	O
O	O
G	G
O	O
N	N



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# it's a fact!

- ★ **Animal rights activists are not a new phenomenon.** On 23rd February 1891 a lecture about the Church Anti-Vivisection League was given in West Coseley School. The meeting was conducted by the Reverend J.P. Wright of Bridgnorth who suggested that—at times, direct action against vivisectionists may be the most appropriate action to take!
- ★ In April 1883 a miner called William Kinsey was sentenced to imprisonment for nine months after committing a series of assaults whilst “made drunk” a few days before. He apparently threw pieces of ironstone at about 20 women in Lower Gornal rendering several insensible and dangerously injuring others. The court heard that when he was arrested Kinsey feigned madness and he had to be carried to the police station. The injuries to 12 of the women were serious enough to stop them from working for a number of days.
- ★ **One of the most unusual buildings in the centre of Gornal Wood is the ex-bakery in Prospect Road.** It was originally built in 1900 by Ben Williams as a two storey factory where hearth furniture (mainly fire irons and fenders) were manufactured. Williams had learnt his trade as a colliery blacksmith and used his considerable skills to build up a sizeable business. He also—as a sideline—leased a considerable acreage of fields locally and then took over Ruiton Farm. Failing profits from his factory decided him to close down the company (known as B. Williams & Sons) in 1924 and he sold the building to Rupert Griffiths who converted it into a bakery.



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After the Birmingham New Road was opened in 1927, Coseley UDC arranged for trees to be planted on both sides of the road. The trees were dedicated to those from the area who had lost their lives in the First World War. Each tree had a plaque attached with the name of the victims remembered in this way.

Sedgley Wake was always celebrated in early November. During the week-long festival workplaces would close, many weddings would take place and sporting events held.

Although Sedgley's Bull Ring is well known, it is often forgotten that Gornal also had an area where bull baiting took place. It is not known exactly where it was—although it is likely to have been around Five Ways.

On Sunday, 30th December 1792, 264 poor families from Sedgley and 31 from Himley—a grand total of 923 individuals—were entertained at Himley Hall by Viscount Dudley and his family. Each person received 2lb of bread, 2lb of beef and a pint of strong broth.

In 1933 Beacon Cycles, based at High Holborn in the middle of Sedgley offered a total of 10 'Beacon' models from the 'Roadster' costing £3/19s/6d to the 'Flyweight' at £7/10s/0d.

Although normally life in the Workhouse was pretty dreadful at least at Christmas there was some relief from the routine and treats for everyone. This included a full Christmas lunch with all the trimmings which was served by the workhouse staff dressed in fancy dress.

For many years the Gibbons Works in Deepdale Lane, Lower Gornal ran its own railway system on the site. It had two steam locomotives named 'Emily Gibbons' and 'Gibbons 1920'.



Our friends at the Odeon Cinema complex on Merry Hill have very kindly sent us 2 x family passes to give away to the two lucky winners of this month's competition. So, pen at the ready and get finding those hidden words and, who knows, you could be a winner of our competition this month.

All you have to do is search out the square below for the 16 words associated with **ODEON CINEMA** 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 **Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025**. Good luck!

S	T	N	E	V	E	M	E	R	R	E
T	S	O	C	N	O	E	D	O	S	S
A	T	N	E	E	W	R	W	D	C	E
E	N	Y	V	P	M	R	E	I	R	S
S	L	L	I	H	N	Y	N	O	E	A
E	V	V	L	L		E	C	N	E	E
T	E	F	I	L	M	T	E	A	N	L
S	F	A	C	A	M	A	M	T	S	E
O	L	P	S	M	L	I	F	S	C	R
C	O	F	E	E	E	F	F	O	C	S
P	O	P	C	O	R	N	O	C	O	P

### HIDDEN WORDS

1. ODEON
2. CINEMA
3. RELEASES
4. NEW
5. MERRY
6. POPCORN
7. HILL
8. COSTA
9. FILMS
10. VIP
11. FAMILY
12. EVENTS
13. SCREENS
14. SEATS
15. LIVE
16. COFFEE

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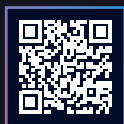
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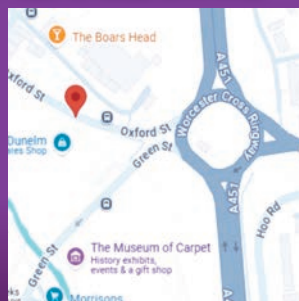
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With the cold weather now upon us it is worthwhile remembering that fish in garden ponds are particularly vulnerable to predation from herons.

The number of herons in the areas has over the years increased dramatically and with food harder to come by they are now often seen trying to take fish from garden ponds. Many of these unwelcome visitors are juvenile birds and as well



as feeding their hunger, they also practice their hunting techniques. The result is they may well kill a lot more fish than they actually need. The best way of thwarting these killing machines is to cover the pond with a net. It is also worthwhile trying to make sure that there is not a clear 'flight path' into the pond (they are such big birds that they need a lot of room to land safely).

There have been a few reports of another ace fisherman—the Kingfisher—making an appearance in a few local gardens. Whilst it is always thrilling see such a beautiful creature it too can easily clear a pond of fish within minutes. To reduce the likelihood of this happening make sure that there are no obvious perches from which the bird could launch itself.

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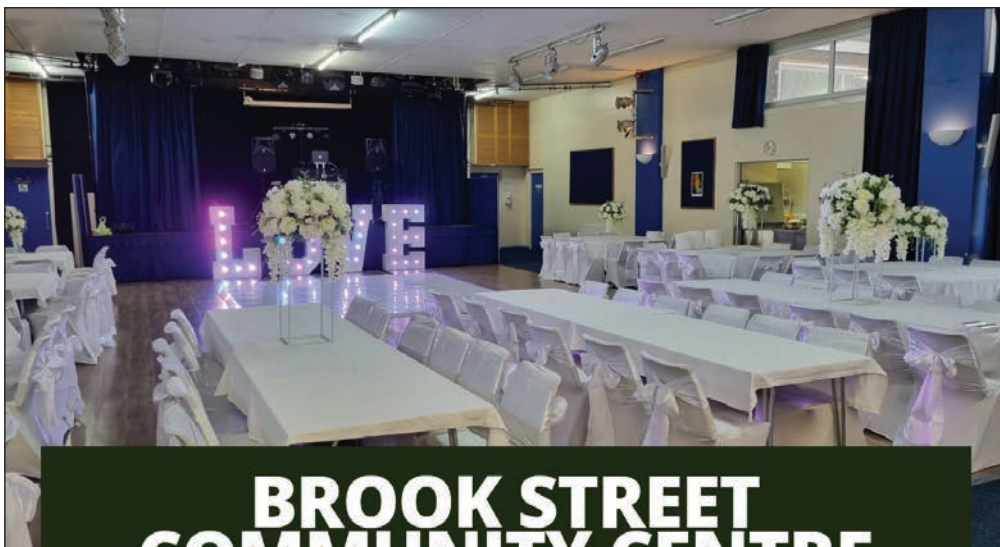
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# it's a fact!

- ★ The Ellowes Pub in Ellowes Road, Lower Gornal was renamed the Spriggers Arms by landlord Malcolm White. The name was in memory of his grand-father—Sprigger White—who played in goal for Ayr during the 1900s. At the time he held the record for the fewest goals conceded in a season.
- ★ There was great controversy over a football match between Pensnett Victoria and Woodsetton in the Sedgley & District League back in 1901. The match ended in a 2-2 draw but the referee sent a report to the League saying that he only allowed Pensnett's second goal (the ball had gone out of play before it entered the goal) because he was intimidated by the spectators. The League awarded the game to Woodsetton but—perhaps surprisingly—did not impose any sanctions on the referee.
- ★ In 1940 during the Second World War 12 people died in Tipton as a result of a 'friendly fire' incident. The people were part of a wedding party who were holding a reception at a nearby pub after the wedding ceremony at the Parish Church. At around 8.50pm an anti-aircraft shell that had been fired from a battery at Tividale crashed through the roof of the pub and exploded. Those killed included Florence Lily Jones, Richard and David Pottinger, Albert Danks, Gordon Monks, Margaret Stanway and Ethel Gough. The licensee and his wife (Mr and Mrs Samuel Hedley) escaped with only minor injuries.
- ★ In 1845 no fewer than 47 defendants with the surname Bates appeared at the magistrates' court in Sedgley.



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## DRINKS: Wines—some sparkling sensations

A review by Trevor Langley

Exton Park Vineyard is located in Hampshire and was commenced during 2003, with vines being very well suited to the climate and soil conditions. Exton Hall boasts a premium events space and venue. Exton Park's award-winning sparkling wines have many devotees and their production of wines continues to expand, complementing the core range and are now available and served in top hotels, plus restaurants and can be found in leading retailers and wine merchants. The prestigious Vault Wine Club offers exclusive discounts, plus member-only events. Wine Club membership can be purchased as a gift voucher – perhaps as a surprise for someone special?



Certainly, some of the company's wording states 'Wines That Satisfy The Imagination' – and I have to agree. I decided to try the Exton Park Discovery Pack.

**Exton Park Brut (11.5% vol) Reserve Blend** is produced utilising Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grape varieties (60% and 40% respectively) to a great advantage. Bottle-aged, for at least three years, this production has countless devotees. A fruity freshness is most evident, for this very popular wine.

**Exton Park Blanc De Noirs (11.5% vol) Reserve Blend** uses 100% Pinot Noir grapes in its production. With tropical fruits on the bouquet and mouthfeel, the palate's delight continues through, for a most impressive finish.

**Exton Park Rosé (11.5% vol) Reserve Blend** has 70% Pinot Noir and 30% Pinot Meunier grapes in its make-up.

An excellent pink rose colour, plus flavour, give this wine the recognition and respect that are justifiably deserved. Delicately balanced and with tropical fruit overtones, this delectation adds colour to any dining occasion too.

These are just some of the impressive wines from Exton Park Vineyard. Fine perlage, plus huge enjoyment are further delights of these wines. Perfect for pre-dining, on their own and for accompanying foods, I found these Exton Park Vineyard productions to be attractively presented and a most enjoyable introduction to their wines. I look forward, absolutely, to furthering my tastes and desires. Please visit the very informative website for all details and information. Highly recommended.

Exton Park Vineyard, Allens Farm Lane, Southampton SO32 3NW. Tel: 01489 878788.  
E-mail: [enquiries@extonparkvineyard.com](mailto:enquiries@extonparkvineyard.com) Website: [www.extonparkvineyard.com](http://www.extonparkvineyard.com)

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*Trevor Langley*



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**ROCK THE MISTLETOE** is a band of around 20 local artists who have got together to record a song entitled “*Christmas Time (Bells Chime)*”. The idea was the brainchild of Steve Taylor of Black Country Carpets in Stourbridge who got together with Alan Bell from Stage Studios in Halesowen, Ade Hill from the band Dr and the Medics, Gel Newey from Bleeding Hearts and Plutonium.

Alan was the initial creator of the song and with everyone’s help and a few studio sessions they turned it into the song it is today.

Steve hosts Retro Rock on Black Country Radio every Monday evening and through the show he met all the artists now involved in putting together the song. It was a case of getting together over a couple of weeks to record the vocals and instrumentals and then Alan went ahead and arranged for the song to be mixed.

The line-up boasts an impressive array of talent including Alan Bell and Mark David from Moosejaw, Russell Peake from Electus, Lisa and Tallukah Lilley from Showcall Academy of Performing Arts, James Barnes and Mike Conningby from Queen Reloaded, Ian Slater from Don’t Stop, Ian Hideous and Jay Decay from Decay 87, Jason Keely from Black Country Radio, Cy Wooldridge and Jess Skidmore (who Steve knew mainly from local theatre as well as performing with them in various bands such as Housewives Choice and Adam Husk from Labelled Ded). Alex Bell played keyboards with Sofia Whitehouse on vocals. Also on vocals were Mike Croutear from Queen Reloaded and Alan’s fellow band mate Mark Davies from Moosejaw

Everyone involved with this project has freely given their time and Alan has done all of the recording and offered his studios free of charge. The object is quite simply to raise as much money for children’s charities as they can via downloads and streams. CDs will also be available and a video (edited by Philippa Davies and assisted by Jess Skidmore) has been recorded which is now available to view on YouTube. The song is available to download on most major streaming apps and platforms.

The group are hoping that the song will become a future favourite and, fingers crossed, that it also makes the charts. All they need is enough interest and promotion which they are constantly striving to get—if there is anyone out there who has any ideas of further promotion the team are always willing to listen.



**If you would like further information or would like to speak about possible promotional aspects of the project please contact Steve Taylor at Black Country Carpets on 0795 898 2246**



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# CHRISTMAS FACTS

Two of Santa's reindeer had very different names. In the 1823 poem 'A Visit from Saint Nicholas' which originally introduced the world to Santa's reindeer, two of the flying animals had slightly different names, according to Syracuse.com. Donner and Blitzen were instead called Dunder and Blixem, the Dutch words for "thunder and lightning".

Everyone at one point or another in their life will settle down to watch a Christmas movie. But did you know that Hallmark holiday movies only take two weeks to film.

The record for the largest floating Christmas tree goes to Brazil. It is 278 feet and 10 inches tall and has almost three million lights adorning it. Brazil's massive float metal Christmas tree set a world record in December 2007—the tree is brought out each year as a part of Rio De Janeiro's Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon.

Jingle Bells was the first song sung in space. Hard as it is to imagine rocking out to a song whilst floating amongst the stars, the crew of NASA's Gemini 6A space flight certainly got into the Christmas spirit and made history when they played "Jingle Bells" on 16 December 1965.

Eggnog is a popular drink during the Christmas holiday season and dates back to Medieval times when it was called "posset". It is made with sweetened and spiced milk curdled with ale or wine and served hot. It is said that the monks in the 13th century enjoyed this mixture with the addition of eggs and figs.

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## A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE...HOW MANY DO YOU REMEMBER?

What do you remember about **COSELEY?**  
**The Clifton Cinema which was built in 1938 and closed in 1963.**

The Apple Tree pub in Castle Street which reputedly served the best pint of Banks's in the whole of Coseley

**The day (18th February 1986) that Darby's fish shop next door to the Royal Hotel collapsed.**

Arthur Davis' bicycle shop.

**The Summer House pub which had a maze laid out in its rear garden.**

The Old Coseley Council House (which was sadly demolished in 1968).

**Page's Picture House—later called The Cosy Cinema – which later became the Ex Servicemen's Club.**

The Cookery Centre at Mount Pleasant School.

**The day that the 'Canon' finally closed (31st March 1994) having been established in Coseley as long ago as 1826.**

Mobberley's Brick Works in Upper Ettingshall Road

**The Cobbler's shop (which was more of a shack) at the Foxyards crossroads.**

The opening of the Silver Jubilee Park on 30th May 1936.

**The old police station in Avenue Road which was demolished in 1975...and the Fire Station in Green Street.**

And most recently, of course, Coseley Swimming Baths.

**We hope that these evoked a few memories. All being well there will be more "memories" in the New Year.**

## FOR REINDEER READ GOAT!



**If anyone tells you that they have seen Santa's sleigh being pulled by a team of reindeer don't believe them! In fact since ancient times it has been pulled by two goats!**

The suggestion that the sleigh is powered by eight reindeer called Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen comes from an American poem entitled "*A Visit From St. Nicholas*" by Clement Moore and published in 1823. Before this it was generally accepted that the sleigh was pulled by two magical goats called Gnasher and Cracker. This comes from ancient Norse mythology in which it is said that Thor, the God of Thunder was pulled on his chariot by two goats. Through this tale goats became revered and it was said that if you were to put a goat on its head on New Year's Eve you would have good luck for the next year. The Moore poem, however, introduced the idea that it was reindeer that pulled Santa's sleigh

and in America at least, this became the widely accepted story. The reindeer were described as "tiny" and not at all like the traditional Caribou-type animals depicted in most films since including the very popular 1994 version of "*Miracle on 34th Street*". In New Brunswick, Canada there is a range of peaks known since 1964 as the "*Christmas Mountains*". There are a total of 10 separate peaks in the range—eight of which are named after the reindeer in Moore's poem. The other two are North Pole Mountain and Mount St. Nicholas.



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# it's a fact!

- ★ On 15th December 1869 the local press reported “*considerable satisfaction is expressed by the peaceably inclined inhabitants (of Sedgley) at the vigorous steps taken by the police to abate the riotous conduct of drunken fellows parading the streets during the small hours of the night and disturbing those who have gone to rest. On Monday at the Police Court Edward Lavender and Thomas Lavender, two old offenders, were charged with drunken and disorderly conduct at half past 12. When requested by PC White to desist and go home they refused and continued their noisy behaviour.*” Edward Lavender was fined 40 shillings and costs. Thomas Lavender was fined 30 shillings and costs. In both cases they were warned that if the fines were not paid they would be imprisoned.
- ★ Complaints about public transport in the Black Country are nothing new. Back in 1898 there were reports of “*utmost dissatisfaction*” with the Dudley and Wolverhampton trams. It was said that there were regular breakdowns as “*many intending passengers to Sedgley have had to tramp the journey on foot*”. One correspondent in the Dudley Herald said: “*The dilapidated engines still continue their inglorious career amid dense clouds of steam tainted with the noxious gas known as sulphuretted hydrogen.*”
- ★ On 10th May 1941 the Earl of Dudley officially opened the Miners’ Welfare Institute in Lower Gornal which was equipped with a variety of amenities for recreation and education and was provided for the use of the 1700 employees of the Baggeridge Colliery. The cost of the building was around £20,000 and was funded by the Central Commission of the Miners’ Welfare Commission.

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Brierley Hill Samaritans are as vital as ever in supporting the Black Country. For 52 years the Samaritans at Brierley Hill has supported some of the most vulnerable people in our community. The core Samaritans service is the telephone-based national helpline, available 24/7 every day of the year (free to call on 116 123). Whatever people are going through in life, if they're having a tough time, they can call that number to talk to someone. All Samaritans are trained volunteers – none are paid for their time – and they are there to listen, focus on thoughts and give people space to explore their feelings.



The 80 volunteers at Brierley Hill Samaritans are also keen to make a difference out in the local community, attending outreach and awareness events throughout the year. In the last year, they have attended post-incident prevention work at railway stations following suicides on the railways locally), held awareness events at Merry Hill and a number

of other locations, attended Pride events, handed out leaflets and mental health tips at local Supermarkets and given talks to a variety of groups.

As with all charities around the country, regular funding is a major cause for concern to the Samaritans. Brierley Hill is an affiliated branch of the National Samaritans Charity, but it is also an independent charity in itself (registered Charity Number 1168020) and is entirely self-funded. Through a generous bequest some years ago, the branch is fortunate to operate from a purpose-built building, Beryl Hill, on Albion Street just off Brierley Hill High Street. However, in order to continue to operate they must cover their own annual branch running costs which are now approximately £25,000 a year. Volunteers specifically for the Fundraising and Outreach teams are therefore always a vital part of the branch.

It is interesting to note that 80% of people who contact the Samaritans do not express suicidal feelings at the time they are calling. However, by calling when they are having a tough time, they may have taken an important first step in allaying further despair by accessing a service where they are listened to in confidence, and they can talk freely without being judged.

Samaritans support and empower callers by helping them to explore their emotions and clarify what is causing their distress. Hopefully by doing so they can then make



sense of their situation and see a way forward. Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy and it is the vision of all who work for the Samaritans that fewer people die by suicide. Between 2021-2023 Dudley registered 8.8 suicides per 100,000 people, the highest rise in deaths for decades. Every death by suicide creates a ripple in our communities too, on average it is



estimated that 135 people are affected every time someone takes their life. This includes family, friends, work colleagues and the wider community. It is clear that the need for the Samaritans service is as vital today as it was in 1973, when a dedicated group of local people first came together to form the Brierley Hill branch. If you need emotional support please call the Samaritans free

of charge on 116 123. If you are interested in volunteering at Brierley Hill Samaritans or making a donation to help with the running costs of the branch, please visit their website: at [www.samaritans.org/branches/brierleyhill](http://www.samaritans.org/branches/brierleyhill) or follow them on Twitter: @BrierleyHillSamBrierley Hill Samaritans.

**Samaritans can be reached around the clock, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year** and respond every 10 seconds to a call from anyone who is struggling to cope and who needs someone to listen to them without judgement or pressure. If a caller needs an immediate response it is best to call on the phone using the **freephone number 116 123** or by emailing [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Although Brierley Hill Branch is not always open, they are linked with other branches in such a way so that anyone who calls, whatever the time of day or night, is able to speak to a volunteer.

# ORDER IN COURT!

An incident on 27 April 1779 at Sedgley Court House caused an outrage throughout the village.

As the entry in the court records shows: "*Wm Southwick, gentleman during the Sitting of this court with great force and violence with a wooden club or stick of the value of one penny which he then and there held in his hands did assault and strike Wm Bennett, Deputy Beadle of this Manor, in the mouth and thereby knocked out two of his teeth and so drew blood from the same Wm Bennett.*"

Bennett was a popular man in and around Sedgley. Although his duties included bringing wrong-doers to court, he was accepted as an honest and fair man with more compassion than most in his position. The assault on him was therefore considered a serious crime and at his subsequent trial Southwick was fined 39 shillings and 11 pence.



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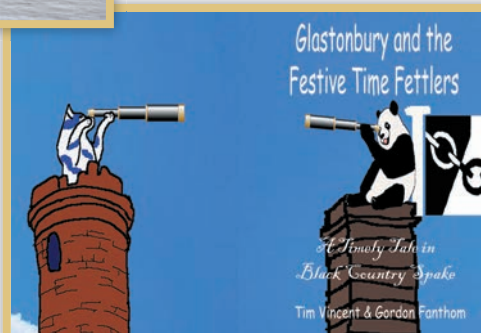
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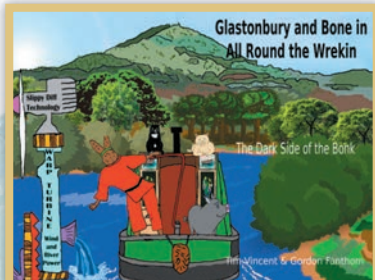


Glastonbury and Bone's Purrfect Black Country Crimbo Living Spake special edition is part of the Glastonbury Tails Picture book series about the adventures of the Highly Lovable Cats and tells the tale of how Glastonbury and Bone rescue the APP's (Amanda and Peter Panda) who are trapped in a huge snow drift on their way to the Crimbo Market to buy their Crimbo Bamboo; eventually they are rescued by Glastonbury and Bone with some help from the Thai Hares

who are a special form of Kung Fu Tyre fitters next to Grease Monkeys Garage and drive around in a Bright Yellow Pick Up truck. The Book also contains a special Crimbo Version of the Glastonbury Song. Also available in the Glastonbury Tails series is the Festive Time Fettlers picture book where the Glastonbury, Bone and the Bargies travel back in time to a Victorian Crimbo Market aboard the Time Rattler Canal barge.



All around the Wrekin, the dark side of the Bonk is the latest Picture book in the Glastonbury Tails series and tells the tale of how the crazy critter crew are called upon in a mission to save the famous Spanner Bridge from collapsing into the River Severn far away from home on the Dark side of the Bonk.



Moley Moley the Black Country Cahnsul's mining expert has been using AS (Artificial Saftness) to develop stronger Hexagonal shapes for pot holes with the help of Professor Buzz Word. Introducing the new Improver Apprentice 'Rattle Can' and Badgerridge and Brockma, the Cahnsul Snoopers, to the team. Grease Monkey, Glastonbury, Bone and all the crazy critter crew from the Glastonbury Tails picture book series wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Keep an eye out for the new book called '1966' – coming out soon.



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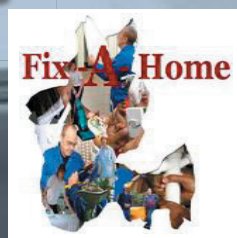
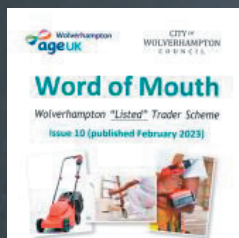
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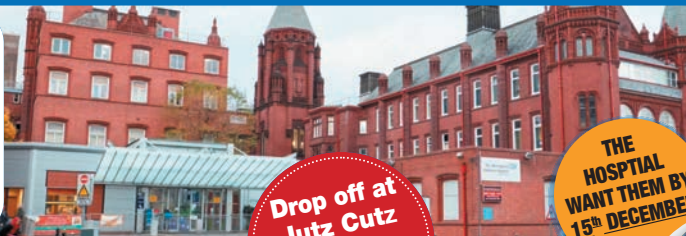
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## E: [DENSONGARETH@YMAIL.COM](mailto:DENSONGARETH@YMAIL.COM)

## “A SORDID AFFAIR”

Under the headline “A Sordid Affair” in January 1918 the County Express published the story of how John Stott (57), a boatman of Great Bridge, Tipton was charged with damaging an oil painting, two pairs of boots, a suit of clothes, a cloth jacket, a pair of riding breeches, a khaki jacket, two shirts, an overcoat, a felt hat, two padlocks and a wooden clothes box, all belonging to Nebo Littlewood.

When he appeared in court Stott pleaded not guilty and a full trial took place with witnesses having to give evidence. It seems that Littlewood had been lodging with a woman called Charlotte Harrison and on the day in question he left the house at 6.00am to go to work as normal. When he returned at about 5.15pm he found that the damage had been done to his property which had been in his locked bedroom. In cross examination he was asked if he was sleeping with Mrs Harrison. He replied emphatically ‘No’. The solicitor for Stott then asked why were some of Mrs Harrison’s undergarments were found in his room but Littlewood could give no explanation.

Next up to give evidence was Mrs Harrison who said that she was estranged from her husband (although she occasionally stayed with him) and agreed that she had had a relationship with Stott and that he had been sending her money. She said that on the day in question she had taken Littlewood his lunch to him at work and that when she returned home she found the door to Littlewood’s room had been broken and clearly damage had been done.

At this point Stott stood up and said that he was changing his plea to guilty and that he had only ever denied the charge because he wanted the whole story to come out into the open. He said that he had been having an affair with Mrs Harrison and that whilst he could forgive her spending the odd night with the husband from whom she was separated, he was consumed with jealousy when he found out that Littlewood too was sleeping with her. The magistrates fined him £3 plus ordered compensation of £10.

## — POEMS FROM — A BLACK COUNTRY BLOKE



JOHN HOMER

For many years John Homer has been involved with West Bromwich Albion, the Albion Foundation and the Black Country Living Museum, and is also a founder-member of the ‘ME, MYSELF AND I’ group which is a dementia support group for carers.

He is a speaker on everything and anything to do with the Black Country and local football.

He has now put pen to paper to produce a book of poetry ‘**Poems from a Black Country Bloke**’ which is dedicated to all things Black Country—a wonderful collection of poems about his youth and life in general.

The book is available to buy at **£9.99 (plus postage)**—please contact John on **07818 291578** or **01384 236827** or email him at **johnhomerwba@hotmail.co.uk**



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# OR WHATEVER by John Sparry

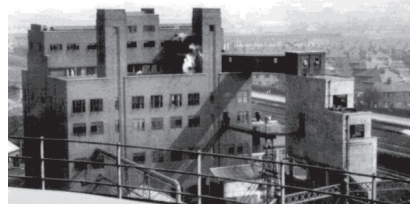
## *David Humphries...Enthusiast*

My friend, David Humphries, a fellow pupil at Stourbridge King Edward VI, was a wealth of knowledge on local history and technical subjects. When doing National Service, I recall him telling me of all the masses of wireless apparatus of which he was in charge when on expedition with his officer—who also came from the local Midlands. ‘Come on Humph, get all the gear on the truck and let’s get going!’”

David was fascinated by all the science behind the making of coal gas—when at Tipton Gasworks. After, David had a spell with his father’s Ocker Hill milk business which led to superviseship with Midland Counties Dairies.

Later on when he was Manager at Littlewoods Stores there was a week when he worked nearly 130 hours, “we had ladies dresses retailing at £1.99.”

David, in one of our phone chats told me all that there was to know about the Oystermouth Horse Drawn Rail Service. David worked in managerial roles for a scaffolding firm and the West Midlands County Council’s Highways Department—accidents to highways road furniture sometimes demanded very sensitive dealings with folk who had suffered injury or personal loss.



*An exterior shot of Tipton Gasworks from the scrapbook of David Humphries.*



*At the installation of the restored Sundial in Mary Steven’s Park, (l to r) Bryn Williams, Alan Cutler, John Sparry, John Farmer and David Humphries*

Humph also dedicated himself over many years to the discovery and reinstallation of the Sundial presented to Stourbridge by King Edward’s in celebration of the School’s Charter of 1552.

It was when managing departments of the West Midlands County Council’s Highway Authority—the offices were in an ancient building, David reckoned he had seen a ghost. Still, it was all part of the job.

A very courteous and kind man—he nursed his wife through her final illness—and above all, an enthusiast. It was a pleasure to have known David Humphries.

I still have a few copies of my first King Edward’s book available in which the article about David is included. and have just brought out the third—which features stage and screen alumni. Each volume is £12.50 including P&P or £9.99 at Hayes Cycles, Wall Heath. Actual phone calls only, sorry, I can’t cope with texts or voice messages—or carrier pigeons, for that matter!

**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!)*



# DECEMBER

AT THE ROBIN




## TALON

BEST OF EAGLES

**FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER**

FRIDAY 5TH DECEMBER

**FLASH**

A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN

SATURDAY 6TH DECEMBER

**T.REXTASY**

A TRIBUTE TO T.REX AND MARC BOLAN

SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER

**ROXY MAGIC**

A TRIBUTE TO ROXY MUSIC

THURSDAY 11TH DECEMBER

**JAGGED LITTLE PILL**

A TRIBUTE TO ALANIS MORISSETTE

FRIDAY 12TH DECEMBER

**FLEETWOOD BAC**

A TRIBUTE TO FLEETWOOD MAC

SATURDAY 13TH DECEMBER

**ROB LAMBERTI**

A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL

SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER

**FRANKIE THE CONCERT**

A TRIBUTE TO FRANKIE VALLI

WEDNESDAY 17TH DECEMBER

**BLACK EYED SONS**

THURSDAY 18TH DECEMBER

**BOOT LED-ZEPPELIN**

A TRIBUTE TO LED-ZEPPELIN

FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER

**TALON**

BEST OF EAGLES

SATURDAY 20TH DECEMBER

**KICK UP THE 80'S**

80'S PARTY NIGHT

SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER

**MOSTLY AUTUMN**

PROGRESSIVE ROCK

SATURDAY 27TH DECEMBER

**MAET LIVE**

A TRIBUTE TO MEAT LOAF

SUNDAY 28TH DECEMBER

**AC/DSHE**

A TRIBUTE TO AC/DC

TUESDAY 30TH DECEMBER

**ELTONESQUE**

A TRIBUTE TO SIR ELTON JOHN

WEDNESDAY 31ST DECEMBER

**THE SUPERSKAS**

NEW YEARS EVE SPECIAL

## FLASH

A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN

**FRIDAY 5TH DECEMBER**



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[THEROBIN.CO.UK](http://THEROBIN.CO.UK)

# it's a fact!

- ★ In February 1910 it was reported in the local papers that a local man, Thomas Smith, suffered a dreadful death. He planned to walk from Sedgley to Bilston and decided to take a short cut across fields rather than keep to the roads. There had been heavy flooding in the area and it seems that whilst walking across the fields he had stumbled into a ditch and his legs were encased in three feet of mud. He was found the following day having been frozen to death.
- ★ The Sedgley Beacon tower was built in 1846 and is 50 feet high and 7 feet in diameter. Although it is often said that it was built by Lord Wrottesley for him to pursue his interests in astronomy, it is more likely to have been constructed by a local landowner (Mr Petit) as a folly.
- ★ In February 1881 Henry John Llewellyn (alias James Brown, alias William Brown Edwards) of Tipton appeared in court accused of bigamy. At the time his profession was given as “evangelist”. He and Mary Anne Davies first met when they both joined The Life Boat Crew Temperance Society in Halesowen. Romance blossomed and eventually they married—the only problem was that Llewellyn/Brown/Edwards seems to have forgotten that he was already married at the time!
- ★ On 2nd March 1901 Gornal Wood village saw the opening of a branch of the Dudley Co-op in Zoar Street. The shop was an immediate success and it was quickly extended into the next door premises so that a haberdashery department could be added. Early managers of the shop included Charlie Pratt and Ted Bennett Senior who eventually became President of the Society.

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Glastonbury and Bone with some help from the Thai Hares who are a special form of Kung Fu Tyre fitters next to Grease Monkeys Garage and drive around in a Bright Yellow Pick Up truck. The Book also contains a special Crimbo Version of the Glastonbury Song. Also available in the Glastonbury Tails series is the Festive Time Fettlers picture book where the Glastonbury, Bone and the Bargies travel back in time to a Victorian Crimbo Market aboard the Time Rattler Canal barge.



*Businesses and friends of the Smestow Bridge Industrial Estate have all joined together to raise enough money to produce a special edition 2026 Calendar and make a donation to their friends at Wombourne's High Flyers Charity to bring a little joy and happiness every day in 2026.*

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# BRAINTEASERS ANSWERS

As water freezes at 32°F, the cricket ball would not reach the bottom of Barrel B!

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The answer is **ONE WORD**

16 years, 12 years and 8 years.

The Wordbat was a bit more tricky. The answer is **UP TO NO GOOD**

So another year comes to an end. We are always on the lookout for new Brainteasers so be sure to look out for more coming your way in the January edition.

## COMPETITION WINNERS

The answer to our Wordsearch Competition in the **NOVEMBER** edition was **HISTORY** (which was misspelt). The two lucky winners who each receive a **£50 SHOPPING VOUCHER** are:

**MR H. HANS** of **WORDSLEY** and  
**APRIL MORGAN** of **SEDGLEY**

You can find this month's competition on page 12.

**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.

WIN  
**TWO**  
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**THE ROBIN**  
IN  
**BILSTON**

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](mailto: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, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025 – GOOD LUCK!**

Congratulations to **MICHELLE GARRATT** of Tipton who was the lucky winner of the two tickets on offer in the **NOVEMBER** edition.

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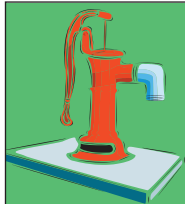
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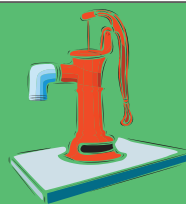
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# The Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton **PARISH PUMP**



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St  
James

## **ST CHADS CHURCH, COSELEY**

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Sunday, 14th December  
Carol Service at 4.00pm

Sunday, 21st December  
Carol Service at 4.00pm

Sunday, 21st December  
Christingle Service at 4.00pm

Wednesday, 24th December  
Midnight Mass at 11.30pm

Thursday, 25th December  
Mass at 10.30am

OOOO

## **ST JAMES THE GREAT CHURCH, LOWER GORNAL**

**Church Street, Lower Gornal DY3 2PF**

Sunday, 7th December  
Carol Service at 4.00pm

Wednesday, 24th December  
Christmas Eve Service at 7.00pm

Thursday, 1st January  
Mass at 12.00 noon



## **ANY INSTRUMENT ANY ABILITY**

## **EVERYONE IS WELCOME**

A group for adults (18+) meeting every term time Monday at Great Bridge Library from 7:15pm to make music and have fun.

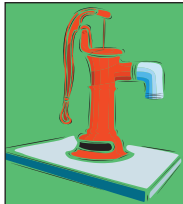
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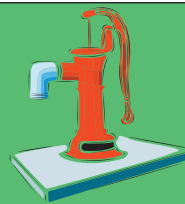
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SCAN  
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# The Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton PARISH PUMP



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*A very Happy Christmas and  
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all our groups and associations. Thank  
you all so much for your continued support  
and for taking the time to let me know  
what is happening in our local areas.  
It is appreciated.*

*Gail*

## IT'S WRITE HERE

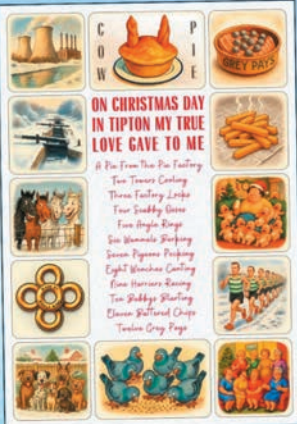
Write Here is a writing group who  
meet at **Coseley Library, Castle  
Street, Coseley**

**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.

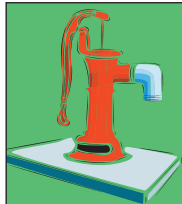
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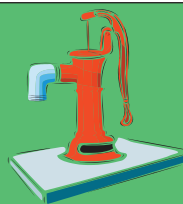
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bostin Black  
Country

Christmas cards for sale this  
year. They are now available  
from Tipton Library and from  
the Black Country Hub at Merry  
Hill Shopping Centre.  
Be sure to get yours in good  
time!





# The Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton **PARISH PUMP**



## **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.

There is a lot coming up for the New Year so  
be sure to look out for the January Parish  
Pump when we will be able to  
pass on details of future speakers.

The Guild are always delighted 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 NEXT PARISH PUMP  
WILL BE IN THE JANUARY 2026  
EDITION AND THE COPY  
DEADLINE IS Thursday, 18th  
December 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**

## **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...**

**11th December**—Black Country Christmas  
with Ian Bott

**18th December**—Clive of India with  
the wonderful Max Keen

**This then leads on to our Christmas  
Break—we will return on Thursday,  
8th January 2026.**

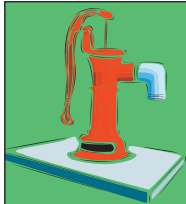
**NEW MEMBERS ARE  
ALWAYS WELCOME**  
—the first two sessions are **FREE**



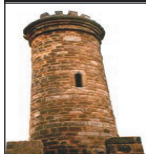
## **KNIT & NATTER**

**10.30am on 2nd Saturday of month**

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



# 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.

### COMING UP...

**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!

### VISITORS ALWAYS WELCOME.

Individual talks—£2.

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

## A BLACK COUNTRY CHRISTMAS *Carol Service*

THURSDAY  
18 DECEMBER 2025  
AT 7 PM

ST FRANCIS OF  
ASSISI CHURCH  
FREEMAN ROAD,  
WEDNESBURY



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author **BRENDAN HAWTHORNE**  
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**JOSH MILLARD-LLOYD**

## DUDLEY SENIOR RAMBLERS

Dudley Senior Ramblers are an active rambling group for the over 50s which meets every second Wednesday of the month from different start points within a 10-15 mile radius of Dudley. The walks are approximately 5-7 miles long.

The group usually conclude the walks towards the end of November and will resume again in February 2026. As such they are actively recruiting new members for 2026.

If this is of interest to you, please contact  
Jayne Keay (Members' Secretary) at  
[mjkeay@btinternet.com](mailto:mjkeay@btinternet.com)

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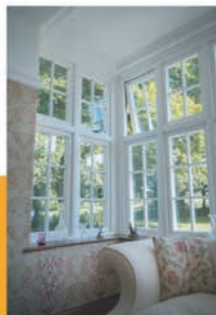
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