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Chris Smith - We Remember!

ISSUE 233 | FEBRUARY 2026

Community magazine for Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

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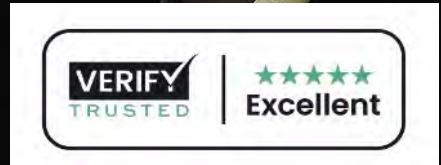
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Village Voice

**Community magazine for
Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley**

Cover story



February, of course, brings Valentine's Day when love is all around...at least that's the theory. It is the peak month for couples getting engaged – but coincidentally it is also the month when most divorces occur! Figures show that still over half of all marriage proposals are made with the male down on a bended knee. In essence, Valentine's Day serves as a reminder to all couples to celebrate love in all its forms, whether romantic, platonic or familial and to make it a day of connection and affection. There is of course a billion pound industry behind the day but sometimes the most simple ideas are by far the best approach – remember, not everyone is looking for that perfect diamond! Happy Valentine's Day.

Gail



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Please note that the closing date for our competition this month is **MONDAY, 23rd FEBRUARY 2026**. 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 **MARCH 2026** edition of **VILLAGE VOICE** is **TUESDAY, 17th FEBRUARY 2026**.

Please book your space early to avoid disappointment.



Courtesy of THE ROBIN in Bilston, we have two tickets up for grabs for one lucky winner. All you have to do to be entered is to send your NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER and EMAIL ADDRESS to villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk or write to us at The Robin Tickets, Forge House, 50 Redhall Road, Dudley DY3 2NL. The lucky winner will be drawn on **Monday 23rd February 2026 – GOOD LUCK!**

Congratulations to **JULIE PRIEST** of **QUARRY BANK** who was the lucky winner of the two tickets on offer in the **JANUARY 2026** edition.

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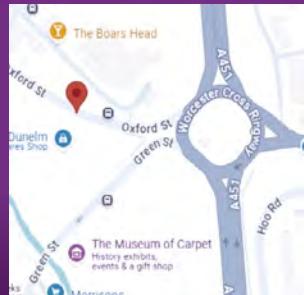
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it's a fact!

★ In December 1931 Lichfield County Court heard a case that lasted all day but involved a claim of just £4/2s/6d in damages, an amount that was dwarfed by the legal costs incurred by both parties. A Kingswinford-based company—Willets & Son—made the claim against a lorry driver from Lichfield who damaged an iron gatepost whilst delivering bricks to a building site. The driver was reversing through the gateway when, he said, the wind caught the gate and swung it into his path. The gate was ripped off and the company said that this was due to the careless actions of the driver. The judge pointed out that there was no firm evidence as to whether it was a simple accident or carelessness and that therefore the claim was dismissed. He also commented on the petty amount involved and said that he doubted whether the case should ever have been brought.

★ With the country suffering something of a recession, 1866 saw many companies going into liquidation. One of these was Kingswinford-based engineering company Patterson, Walker, Boydell & Roper. Creditors were initially told that they would receive 17 shillings in the pound but then John Walker, one of the partners, said that his conscience would not allow him to allow others to suffer because of the failure of the firm and so he sold his assets and paid the extra 3 shillings in the pound to the creditors himself. When he announced this his family tried to make out that he was insane in order to stop him—but fortunately they did not succeed.



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BRAINTEASERS

This month we are following George who throws up quite a few interesting Brainteasers all of his own! The answers can be found on page 72.

1. In his local pub George was given the chance to participate in a game of chance. For a £1 stake he was given the chance to throw three dice having first chosen a number from 1 to 6. If one of the dice shows his chosen number he gets £2 back, if two have his number he gets £4 and if all three show his number he gets £6. If none show his number he loses his stake. In the long run he wonders whether he is likely to win any money?
2. George writes out all the numbers from 1 to 100. How many times does he write the figure '9'?
3. George is set a strange mathematical sum by his friend Anthony. "When 4 is half of 9, 6 is half of 11 and 7 is half of 12, what is half of 13? he is asked.
4. To get his own back, George asks Anthony what mathematical symbol can you place between 4 and 9 to produce a number that is greater than 4 but less than 9?
5. Not to be beaten Anthony sets down another challenge for George. He lays out 21 matches and says that he and George can take it in turns to pick up a maximum of three matchsticks a time. The catch is that the person who picks up the last match has to pay the others £5. To give him the maximum chance to win Anthony kindly lets George go first. Why?
6. And finally, George left the pub after setting Anthony a simple question. "My granddaughter, Felicity is currently half her mother's age. Ten years ago, though, she was one-third of her mother's age. How old is Felicity?"

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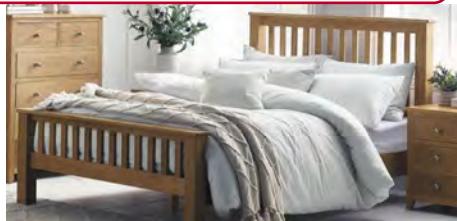
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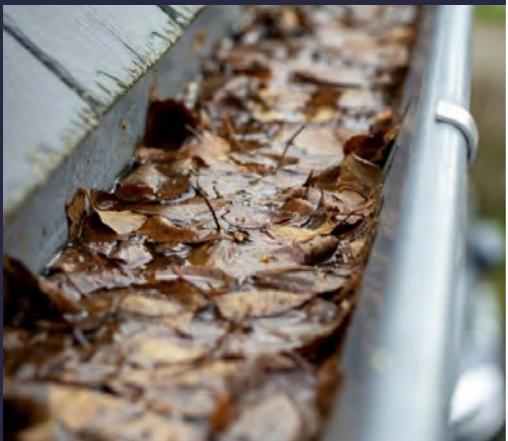
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DID YOU KNOW?

The Kingswinford Amateur Dramatic Society was formed in 1951 – but only lasted a matter of three years.

For many years at the top of Summerhill was an institution called “The Sunshine Home for Blind Babies”. It closed in the early 1960s.

After the Second World War, Kingswinford Wanderers FC had a short (and somewhat inglorious) history playing in the Worcestershire Combination League. In their five seasons they never once managed to finish above halfway in the table.

The railway viaduct at Stambermill was constructed in 1881, is 98 feet high at its highest point and the foundations reach a depth of 56 feet. It cost £13,855 to build.

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 societies to a regular youth club and the occasional dance.

Born in Kingswinford in 1680 John Addenbrooke is commemorated not only in St Mary’s Church in the village but also at St. Catherine’s College, Cambridge. He studied at the University, gaining a BA, MA and then PhD in 1712. He died in 1719 and in his will left £4000 (a very considerable amount in those days) *“to create and maintain a small physical hospital”* in Cambridge. In fact the bequest was used to build a hospital that has become one of the world’s leading heart transplant and cancer treatment centres—Addenbrooke’s Hospital.

In 1309 Stourton Castle was given to Richard de Clebury but he exchanged it with Sir John de Vaux.

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KINGSWINFORD'S TOP MAN

It is not generally acknowledged but arguably the richest Kingswinfordian was William Robertson Coe who was born in the village in 1869.

His father worked at the iron works in Swindon but the family moved first to Cardiff and then, in 1883, to New Jersey in the U.S.A.

William initially found work in an insurance brokers as an office boy and slowly worked his way through the ranks of the company, Johnson & Higgins. He transferred to its New York City head office and was one of those brokers who was involved in insuring the allegedly “unsinkable” Titanic.

Despite this set-back William continued to progress within the company until eventually he became its Chairman. His success was cemented, however, when he married the daughter of Henry Rogers, the millionaire owner of Standard Oil and one of America’s richest men.

In subsequent years William Coe joined the board of directors of various companies including the Virginian Railway Company, the Loup Creek Colliery and the Wyoming Land Company.

By now William was a millionaire in his own right and spent much of his free time pursuing his two loves—Buffalo Bill and horses. For many years William Coe was fascinated by anything and everything to do with William ‘Buffalo Bill’ Cody and eventually he bought the frontiersman’s ranch in Wyoming and set it up as a museum in which to display all the thousands of items of memorabilia that he had collected.

A keen horse lover, Coe also set up a very successful stud from which his horses won a number of important races in the U.S.A. Unfortunately, though, two of his best horses died prematurely from a virus.

William Robertson Coe died of an asthma attack in 1955 and he was buried at Locust Valley in London Island. In his coffin was placed a knife and rifle that once belonged to his hero, Buffalo Bill. In 1948 the William Coe Collection was presented to Yale University.

Planting Fields, a magnificent mansion and estate that he had built on Long Island, has been restored and is now itself a museum which attracts thousands of visitors every year keen to see how one of America’s wealthiest families lived.



William Robertson Coe relaxing at Planting Fields, his mansion at Oyster Bay, Long Island.



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A FEW FACTS ABOUT CHOCOLATE...

- ♥ The Swiss are the greater consumers of chocolate per head of population in the world.
- ♥ In Alfred Hitchcock's film "Psycho" chocolate syrup was used as the blood in the famous shower scene (the film was in black and white).
- ♥ Both Mozart and Napoleon were said to be lovers of chocolate. Mozart mentions it in his opera 'Così Fan Tutte' and Napoleon took some chocolate with him whenever he went into battle.
- ♥ Chocolate mousse was originally known as chocolate mayonnaise until the makers of "real" mayonnaise complained of confusion.
- ♥ The word 'chocolate' comes from the original Mayan 'xocolatl' which means 'bitter water'. Theobroma caco', the name of the cocoa plant means 'food of the Gods'.
- ♥ Chocolates as Valentines gifts were first introduced by Cadburys in 1868 using a heart shaped box designed by Richard Cadbury himself. Cadbury's innovative marketing and artistic designs contributed to the popularity of heart-shaped boxes, making them a staple of Valentine's Day celebrations.
- ♥ In 1897 the English consumed some 36m pounds of chocolate whilst the Americans only ate their way through 26m pounds.
- ♥ The world's most expensive chocolate bar is the To'ak Chocolate Master Series priced at \$490. Based in Ecuador, To'ak Chocolate is renowned for its luxurious chocolate bars made from the rare Ancient Nacional cacao, which was once thought to be extinct. The company emphasises sustainable and regenerative farming practices, ensuring that their cacao is cultivated without deforestation, thus protecting the Ecuadorian rainforest.

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PENSNETT CHASE – INDUSTRIAL ROOTS AND DEVELOPMENT

Until the end of the 19th century, Kingswinford was a vast area covering not only the existing population centres of Kingswinford and Wall Heath but also Wordsley, Amblecote, Pensnett, Brierley Hill and Quarry Bank. The largest part comprised Pensnett Chase, an extension of Kinver Forest, the royal hunting grounds.

Although Pensnett Chase was originally primarily used for hunting, as early as the 13th century there were reports of mining taking place on it. Three hundred years later, the whole Chase was pockmarked with mines—to the extent that, following deaths caused by people falling down abandoned pit workings, laws had to be introduced to ensure that all old workings were filled in. The Dudley Manorial Court decreed in 1701 that “*those that recd the profits of colepits and stone pitts in Pensennit shall ffill up the ould pitts*”.

Indeed, such was the need for some updated regulation on the use of the land known as Pensnett Chase that it was mentioned in one of the Enclosure Acts of 1777 which enabled

over 1500 acres of the Chase in Wall Heath, Wordsley, Shutt End and Kingswinford to pass into private hands. This was then followed by a second Act in 1784 which saw the final 1400 acres of the Chase disappear into the ownership of a variety of local land-owners. In fact, officially Pensnett Chase ceased to exist on Thursday, 17th August 1786 when the Enclosure Commissioners—Samuel Wyatt of Burton, Edward Palmer of Coleshill, Harry Court of Stourbridge and Thomas Hanson of Birmingham met at the Talbot Hotel in Stourbridge and signed the ‘Award Of Lands’.

By this time Pensnett Chase had developed into a major manufacturing area with iron being produced in over 100 separate works, plus clay being worked and used for furnace and hearth linings as well as the production of smokers pipes. In addition, there was a burgeoning glass-making industry, which had developed as early as the 14th century. In next month’s edition, we will be looking at the introduction of the steam locomotive, Agenoria which was known to the locals as ‘The Grasshopper’.



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Although it took place 'across the border' in Wollaston, hundreds of people from Wall Heath, Wordsley and Kingswinford flocked to see '*Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World*' when it appeared on 28th April 1904 at Egginton Farm.

The show was on a grand scale involving 800 people and 500 horses and even a number of buffalo. They travelled to the various locations across England, Scotland and Wales by train, with three engines hauling no less than 55 carriages and trucks.

Two separate performances were given on the day (at 2.00pm and 8.00pm) with the second being illuminated by electric lights, itself an innovation not seen in the district before. The programme was fast moving and included a wide range of scenes such as Cossack, Mexican, Arab and Indian riding, Japanese horsemen, bareback horse racing and Indian attacks on a stagecoach and settle cabin. Of course there was also a reenactment of 'Custer's Last Stand' for which Buffalo Bill Cody was particularly remembered.

Equally thrilling for the crowds was the chance to walk around a 'genuine' Indian village, see Chief Two-Elk and look in the traditional tepees erected for the show. The performances were part of Buffalo Bill's 'Farewell Tour' and the tour encompassed some 130 venues including Walsall and Stoke on Trent. In total the entourage travelled over 4500 miles in just 7 months.



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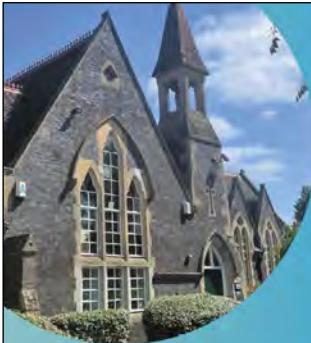


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MUCH MORE THAN JUST A PUB

The Yew Tree pub in Enville Road, Wall Heath is long gone but many locals from the village still remember it, not just for the beer served there but also for the various other attractions that it could offer.

By far the most well-known of these attractions were the beautiful gardens surrounding the pub. Indeed it was said that on one occasion the head gardener at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens was caught taking cuttings from the Yew Tree for use at his establishment!

Perhaps less gentle than the gardens was the cinder track alongside the pub. This was regularly used by professional runners who took part in 'private' races. This attracted several bookmakers who set up their stalls outside the pub. It was said that at times hundreds of pounds were wagered on these races—with much of the winnings being spent across the bar in the Yew Tree itself. The Yew Tree was also home to

another sporting pastime. It had what was reputedly one of the best bowling greens in the West Midlands. Indeed, so good was the surface that many contests involving the best bowlers in the country were held there.

In the 1920s the pub had a dance hall attached to the rear and the regular Friday night dances were extremely popular drawing crowds from as far away as Kidderminster and Birmingham. Indeed, fleets of coaches were frequently seen arriving at the venue to deposit youngsters looking to enjoy a few hours engaging in the *Lindy Hop, Charleston* and the other fashionable dances of the era.

The fact that the pub had so much ground attached to it perhaps largely led to its later demise. As the price of building land rose so the sale of the property became inevitable and first the gardens, then the rest of the pub was sold and demolished—leaving Wall Heath without one of its greatest landmarks.

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.

"Winging" it for charity!

For a number of years, I have been fortunate to raise awareness and thousands of pounds for various charities including Mind, Papyrus - a suicide prevention charity for young people, Birmingham Children's hospital, Alzheimer's UK, British Liver Trust and so many more. I have supported these incredible charities by pushing myself to the edge for charity.

I have raised thousands of pounds by taking on some pretty crazy, daredevil challenges – swimming with sharks, fire walking, a 15,000-foot skydive, a 200-foot abseil, a 160-foot bungee jump, climbing Ben Nevis ten times, and even stepping into the ring for a white-collar boxing match. However, there has always been one stunt that I always wanted to do but due to one reason or another, couldn't and that was to take part in wing walking.

Wing walking is the act of walking on the wings of an aircraft in motion. This thrilling aerial activity allows individuals to experience the sensation of flight while strapped to the top wing of the aircraft, often at speeds of up to and over 135 mph. One restriction of taking part was my weight, you have to be under 89kg. The biggest motivation for me to lose weight from 117kg to 85kg was to finally take part in this activity.

2026 is the year I will finally be taking part in wing walking on the 4th April from Sleap Airfield, Harmer Hill, Shrewsbury SY4 3HE. I have always loved supporting important charities, and by taking part in daredevil stunts I aim to raise as much awareness as possible.

Recently, I asked you, the community, to choose the charity. Hundreds of you commented with amazing causes, and I've chosen two: Midlands Air Ambulance and One Cat at a Time.

To donate please visit https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/shaz-wing-walking?utm_medium=CF&utm_source=CL



Upcoming community events

1st February – Kingswinford & Wall Heath Litter Pick – 10am • 13th February – Kuppa Club – 9.15am to 11am at Wall Heath Tavern • 15th February – Kingswinford & Wall Heath Litter Pick – 10am • 27th February – Kuppa Club – 9.15am to 11am at Wall Heath Tavern • 28th February – Charity coffee afternoon 1-4pm British Oak Kingswinford • Kingswinford in Bloom meet every Saturday and Sunday 10am by the library.

Contact me

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it's a fact!

- ★ During World War 1 the Home Defence Squadron of the Royal Flying Corps had bases at Great Barr, Chasetown, Perton and Kingswinford. The Kingswinford unit was not called into action, however, as the Midlands was too far for aircraft to reach and there were only three Zeppelin raids on the region with none reaching Kingswinford. There were, though, a number of false alarms—including three in one day.
- ★ There were strange goings-on at St Mary's Church, Kingswinford in 1880 when Thomas Southall, a miner from Netherton, married Mary Jane Powell. It seems that Southall was already married—he had wed a Mary Washington in 1873—and his first wife even attended the church service seven years later. She made no attempt to stop the ceremony but afterwards got her revenge by reporting Southall as a bigamist.
- ★ In September 1846 Samuel Instance and Joseph Martin were both fined £1 and costs at Kingswinford Police Court for organising a dog fight in a field at Commonside. Also arrested at the time were William Street, Thomas Grainger, Joseph Webb and Enoch Cooper who were charged with aiding and abetting the fight. They were each fined five shillings plus costs.
- ★ Throughout the First World War the Mount Pleasant Patriotic Committee in Kingswinford despatched regular parcels to local soldiers who were serving on the Front in France and Belgium. Each parcel contained cake, cigarettes, chocolate, salmon, tea, saccharin tablets, soap, peppermints, insect powder and apples.



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BRIERLEY HILL AND THE DEVIL

A request has been received to see if we could possibly re-run this article which was first published in 2011—and we are happy to oblige.

There seems to have been a long relationship between the Devil and Brierley Hill with two stories regularly told about visits by the evil one to the area. Firstly, it is said that the Devil did indeed visit the area and on seeing the number of furnaces operating he felt that he was already in hell. This often quoted verse sums up his view:

**When Satan stood at Brierley Hill
And far around it gazed,
He said “I never more shall feel
At Hell’s fierce flames amazed”.**

The second story is that it was at Brierley Hill that Satan made his will before he apparently “struggled on down to Dudley Woodside where he laid him down...and died”.

Other local stories include the belief that on overcast November or March nights you could hear ‘Satan’s hounds’ as they flew through the sky pursuing the souls of those who had just died. In fact it is likely that any such sounds were the calls of migrating geese, flying low because of cloudy conditions. Whenever these sounds were heard mothers would ensure that their children were kept indoors with all the windows and doors closed. The geese were probably part of the vast flocks that migrated from Russia and Scandinavia to spend the winter on the Severn estuary before returning in the early Spring to breed on the arctic tundra. Today those flocks are much reduced in size and very few migrating geese now fly over the Midlands—with global warming most seem to only fly as far as the Wash and Cumbria.



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This year at West Midlands Safari Park offers a living, breathing adventure waiting for guests young and old. From new events to adorable newborns and brand-new places to stay, 2026 is a year to make wild memories.

The fun begins over February Half Term with Character Week, where the children can meet their favourite TV stars, including Gabby's Dollhouse, SpongeBob SquarePants and Bluey. Paddington, Peppa Pig and Chase from PAW Patrol will also be making appearances and having their photo taken with guests.

Spring blossoms with Easter Eggstravaganza, an event where egg hunts meander through scenic landscapes for a chocolate treat at the end. Little 'eggsplorers' can go on a bug hunt, take part in some crafts, meet Bramble Bunny and Chirpy Chick and there are some more surprises in store!

May Half Term brings graceful giants into the spotlight with a brand-new event – Giraffe Jamboree. Tall, gentle and ever curious, the giraffes take centre stage with an amazing show, feeding opportunities and captivating talks from keepers.

June gets prehistoric for Jurassic June weekends. Watch out for claws, teeth and rustling ferns as dinosaurs are on the loose! But don't worry – they will be roaming around under the watchful eye of their keepers, so it might be safe enough to snap a photo or give them a pat.

Across some weekends guests will also have the chance to spot Eddie & Eliza, the park's beloved characters. They will be out and about, having fun, taking photos and meeting all the future conservationists.

Also new for 2026, will be the opening of brand-new Rhino and Giraffe Lodges, luxurious safari-style stays that bring you closer to the action than ever before. Wake up to the sights and sounds of rhinos having their breakfast just outside your balcony, or giraffes taking a gentle morning stroll.

Additionally there will be the chance to experience everything the Park has to offer, including spotting the two delightful giraffe calves have joined the herd – one born last October and the newest arrival in January – wobbling into the world and instantly stealing hearts.

West Midlands Safari Park opens daily for its summer season from 14 February 2026, including the Adventure Theme Park. More information and tickets can be found on the website: wmsp.co.uk



DAY TOURS

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 Tue 24 Feb Abergavenny & Monmouth £20
 Sun 1 Mar Llangollen & Betws-y-Coed £24
 Wed 4 Mar Oxford £23
 Sat 7 Mar National Waterways Museum £35
 Sat 14 Mar York £26

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INTERESTING FACTS ABOUTFEBRUARY

February has something truly unique and special about it—there isn't a single full moon all month! This makes it stand out from the other months of the year since every other month is home to at least one full moon in that lunar cycle.

I would think that by now everyone will know about Valentine's Day on 14th February. Each year, romantic individuals all over the world take part in this celebrated day by gifting their loved ones with beautiful cards and bouquets of flowers...but do you know that the oldest known Valentine's Day card sent in the 1700s, is on display at the British Museum in London?

The flower of the month for February is the Violet which represents faithfulness and loyalty. Violets have long been a treasured symbol in many forms of literature, captivating our hearts and minds with their stunning delicate petals.

20th February is National Embroidery Month. Celebrated worldwide it offers people in all walks of life the opportunity to express what a fantastic craft it is and to create some exceptional gifts, keepsakes or display pieces.

21st February is National Grapefruit Month and is dedicated to celebrating this tart but sweet fruit. Grapefruit comes in a number of varieties all with slightly different tastes and textures. So, why seize the month and celebrate this wonderfully juicy fruit which gives a burst of flavour to any dish albeit marmalade, cakes or salads.

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SPORTING HERO: JACK FLAVELL

Local lad, Jack Flavell, not only represented his country at cricket but could also have played top flight football if circumstances had been slightly different.

Envile Road, 15th May 1929 was the birthplace and date of Jack Flavell who excelled at both football and cricket. He joined Stourbridge FC and was offered a trial with Manchester United. Although United showed great interest in Jack, Stourbridge refused to release him from his contract. At 17 he was, however, transferred to West Bromwich Albion but his time was interrupted by the two year compulsory National Service. As well as playing occasionally for Albion during this period he also proved a very effective fast bowler for Stourbridge Cricket Club. Once he left the Army in 1949 he signed a contract with Worcestershire County Cricket Club. Unusually he batted left handed but bowled fast medium right handed. His best year was 1961 when he was the country's leading wicket taker with 171 wickets at an average of 17.79. This year also saw him win the first of his four caps for England.

He retired in 1968 having taken a total of 1529 first class wickets at an average of 21.48 runs. His best bowling figures were 9 wickets for just 30 runs and he achieved 10 wickets in a match 15 times in his 505 first class and test match career. He later became Club Captain at Envile Golf Club before retiring to the Welsh coast. After retirement, with his wife Marie, Flavell ran The Rafters Restaurant near Wolverhampton, and then a guest house in Barmouth, Gwynedd in Wales where he died in his sleep at on 25th February 2004, at the age of 74.



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Your Local Councillor Update

Dear Residents,

We're absolutely delighted to bring you some brilliant news to kick off the year: the Planning Inspector has now formally approved Dudley's Local Plan, and with it, the protection of our Green Belt.

This is a major victory for our area and something we've been working towards for years. Thanks to the plan being signed off, sites such as the Kingswinford Triangle and the land between Charterfields and Holbeache – which many of you told us should never be built on – will now remain as protected green spaces for years to come.

This outcome represents a clear vindication of the brave and forward-thinking decision by Dudley Council's Conservative Leader, Patrick Harley, to withdraw Dudley from the Black Country Plan. At the time, that move was criticised – often for political reasons – but it gave us back local control. Without it, we would have been powerless to stop developers from targeting our Green Belt.

Instead, Dudley forged its own path, producing a Local Plan that delivers the homes we need in the right places, using brownfield land first and safeguarding our countryside. The Planning Inspector's decision makes it clear: we were right to stand up for our communities.

There are still a small number of final modifications to be consulted on, but none of them affect our Green Belt policy. To be absolutely clear, the Conservative-run council's stance has always been: "Hands Off Our Countryside."

We know there will be further battles ahead, as national planning pressures continue to grow and central government tries to strip councils of their right to say no to inappropriate development. However, this moment marks a huge step forward, and we want to thank everyone who has written, campaigned, objected, or supported our efforts over the past few years.

This isn't just a policy win. It's a win for local people, for our environment, and for future generations.

As ever, we are here to keep fighting for you and our community.

Phil, Ed & Mark

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL TEAM BELOW



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HOLOCAUST—A LEGACY WE MUST NEVER FORGET

Dudley's annual Holocaust Commemoration Ceremony, organised by a committee which includes Dudley College Students Union, the Holocaust Education trust together with a small group of volunteers chaired by Councillor Keiran Casey, was held this year at the Assembly Hall at St James' Academy in Dudley on Friday, 23rd January.

The Organising Committee were proud to be able to introduce Peter Lantos BEM who was born in Hungary. He is a medical scientist who has made a huge contribution to scientific research in the UK and has written several books for adults and children about the Holocaust.

Peter was born on 22 October 1939 in Makó which is a provincial town in southeastern Hungary. His maternal family were owners of a timber yard which was managed by two uncles who lived in adjoining villas on the property. In contrast, Peter's immediate family resided in a modest annex at the back. Following the German occupation of Hungary in 1944, a wave of antisemitic laws was enacted and Peter's 18 year old brother was taken away for forced labour and sadly never returned. Shortly afterwards, the family was forced into the ghetto in Makó where they remained for several weeks. At the age of five in the summer of 1944, Peter was deported to Bergen-Belsen in northern Germany with his parents—simply because they were Jewish. Like many other children Peter's dreams were shattered by that action—he lost his toys, his home and his friends and found himself thrust into a world full of disease, hunger, cruelty and starvation and was to witness first hand the death of those around him.

On arrival Peter became Prisoner 8431 and he found himself and his mother cruelly separated from his father. Life was unbearable with starvation and disease all around him—there was no place for children to play or form any kind of friendship. Instead they were forced to witness



constant cruelty and death. Though Bergen-Belsen was not an extermination camp—there were no gas chambers—it became a 'hell on earth' through starvation, disease and relentless suffering. Peter's father died of starvation just four weeks before the British Army liberated Bergen-Belsen on 15 April 1945. After surviving the camp, Peter and his mother returned to Hungary but it was far from a joyful homecoming—21 members of his family had been murdered and his brother died of typhoid fever only a month before their return. Having lived through this experience Peter was driven to become a doctor but his plans to study medicine were at first blocked by the Communist authorities who labelled him 'alien class'. It was his mother's overall devotion which made her challenge the classification and he was eventually allowed to pursue his studies. After qualifying he received a research fellowship in 1968, which enabled him to work in London.

Over the years there have been many poignant memories shared by an array of Holocaust survivors and the Commemoration is always an extremely moving event. It allows everyone to honour the memory of those who died in the Holocaust and it goes some way to helping people to understand the evils of racism and prejudice and where this can lead to. It is now left to us all to oppose intolerance and hatred in whatever form, wherever it is found. Information on the Holocaust can be found at hmd.org.uk/holocaust and the life stories of survivors can be found at hmd.org.uk/lifestories.

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One of the top visitor attractions in the whole of the Midlands, the West Midland Safari & Leisure Park is a great day out for all the family – and we have 2 family tickets waiting for each of our two lucky winners this month. But, of course, you have got to be in it to win it – so get your entry in now!

All you have to do is search out the square below for the 16 words associated with **WEST MIDLANDS SAFARI PARK** on our list. Fifteen of them are hidden in the square (spelt forwards, backwards, up or down or diagonally) whilst **one is not there at all – or it may be misspelt!** Once you have identified which one is missing just fill in the form below and send it to us. Alternatively send us an email at villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk (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 **Monday, 23rd February 2026**. Good luck!

Y	E	L	D	W	E	B	K	S	T	R
O	W	L	E	Z	E	R	Z	S	I	D
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HIDDEN WORDS

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

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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 make 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 call Albert Scriven at the school. Cartwright did not deny the charge but said that Scriven had been impudent 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 9 months for theft.



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it's a fact!

- ★ In 1898 the Bridge Inn at Kingswinford was advertising an unusual attraction: “Look Here! *The largest Pig Alive To Be Seen At Walter Edward’s Old Bridge Inn, Dawley Brook, Kingswinford and No Deception.*”
- ★ At Wordsley Police Court in June 1846 a number of people found themselves on charges of selling beer without a licence. Silas Dunn of Kingswinford was fined £2 for selling five pints whilst a Rowley Regis man—Robert Lane—was fined £3 and costs for selling just one pint. Another Rowley man called Benjamin Millward was fined £2 plus costs also for selling a single pint of ale without a licence. Finally David Shaw of Kingswinford had to pay £3 and costs for selling a quart of cider without the necessary permission. His sentence reflected the fact that he had been convicted of a similar offence less than a year previously.
- ★ In 1838 the Gibbons Blast Furnace at Ketley in Kingswinford had a weekly yield of 236 tons of pig iron, the greatest yield of any single furnace in the country. This was achieved following the introduction of a new method of using the waste heat of the furnace to raise the temperature even higher than normal.
- ★ April 1900 saw William Hickman of Nash’s Fold, Wall Heath appearing in court accused of throwing a snowball at the Wall Heath Mission Church and damaging the clock thereon. PC Robinson witnessed this and saw the snowball cause £1 worth of damage to the clock face. It became clear, however, that Hickman had already been convicted of this crime and been fined 10 shillings and costs at a previous hearing. The case was therefore dismissed.

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FEBRUARY FACTS

February is, of course, one of our most unusual months. After all, not only is it the shortest one of the 12 but it is also the only one with a variable number of days.

Here we have compiled a number of other facts about it:

It was named after Februa, a Roman festival of purification (which is probably the basis of spring cleaning)

Later it was called Sol-monuth or 'Mud Month' in Old English.

Shakespeare only mentions February once in all his plays—'Much Ado About Nothing'.

In the USA February hosts a long list of special events including Pet Dental Health Month, Hot Breakfast Month, Jobs in Golf Month, National Women Investors Month and National Shopping Carts To The Supermarkets Month.

February's official flower is the primrose.

February, of course, has the distinction of being the month of St Valentine's Day. It has been suggested that St Valentine should be regarded as the patron saint of florists and chocolate manufacturers. He is actually the patron saint of bee-keepers, epilepsy, young people and the plague.

This year Shrove Tuesday (generally called Pancake Day) occurs on 17 February. It is officially the last day before fasting for Lent which commences on Ash Wednesday.

Although it is hard to pinpoint the exact first celebration of Valentine's Day as a celebration of love, it likely occurred in Paris in the 1400s. The English and French associated mid-February with that of the season of birds' mating, making it an appropriate time to celebrate romance.

— 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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“CELEBRITY” ENDORSEMENTS

We may be used to the latest influencer, entertainer or film actress appearing on television to promote the latest wonder cosmetic, slimming aid or cleaning product to name but a few. We found the following advertisement in a copy of the Liverpool Mercury from March 1832.

To: A Hawkes Esq., proprietor of Dr Wright's Pearl Ointment.

Sir, I am happy to bear testimony to the good effects of your Pearl Ointment upon a poor man named John Beckly of this parish who was severely afflicted with two large wounds on his left leg for twenty years. Some four years ago he was admitted into the Birmingham Hospital as an in-patient for five months and turned out incurable. He related his hopeless case to me and applied for parish relief. I gave him a pot of your ointment and advised him to try it which afforded him immediate relief, and by continuing its use for six weeks it perfectly cured him. He is now able to maintain himself and his family by his own labour without parochial aid. I consider this such a wonderful cure that it is my duty to make it known. Signed: Thomas Jefcoate, Governor of Kingswinford Workhouse.

Another advertisement appeared the following month in the Morning Chronicle. It read:

John Baker of Wordsley states in a letter to Professor Holloway that a few years ago he was under medical treatment in the Queen's Hospital, Birmingham for palpitation of the heart but returned home without deriving any benefit. He then tried Holloway's Pills which gave him immediate relief and in a short period his health was so much improved as to enable him to resume his employment. A short time since, however, he was seized with violent sickness and vomiting of blood, from which he has entirely recovered by having recourse to these invaluable pills; and he now enjoys excellent health. Sold by all druggists and at Professor Holloway's establishment at 214 Strand, London.



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Creating an intentional life for 2026

How simplifying and decluttering your life can make you happier

In a world that encourages us to upgrade, accumulate and say yes to everything, more people are discovering the powerful emotional and psychological benefits of owning less and creating intentional spaces.

For the past 10 years, Katherine Blackler, Certified Professional Organizer (CPO®) and founder of SortMySpace Ltd has helped individuals transform overwhelmed homes and workplaces into more supportive, calming environments.

The invisible weight of “too much”

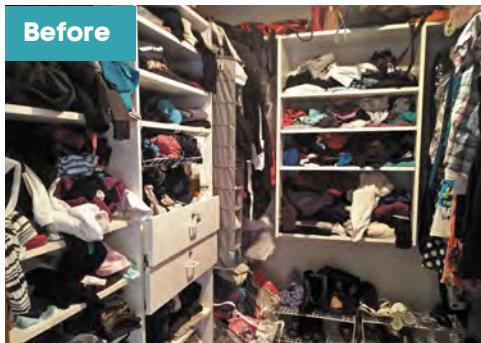
Clutter usually enters our lives quietly, a special-offer purchase here, a sentimental item there, a box we never quite get around to sorting.

“People underestimate the invisible weight that unnecessary belongings carry,” Katherine told us. “Every item you own needs storage, cleaning, maintaining, or replacing. Reducing what surrounds you, also decreases the number of demands placed on your brain, time and energy.”

Simplifying, she explains, isn’t about stark minimalism or living in a ‘show home’. It’s about finding your unique ‘sweet spot’ as to the volume of things you want and need around you. An intentional space reflects the life you’re actually living now, not one you used to live, or that you feel obligated to maintain.

Stepping away from social media pressure

“We often try to replicate what we see online,” she said. “But Instagram-ready perfection isn’t real life, it’s a heavily curated version of life. Often the content creators don’t sustain what you see in their images either”.



Before



After

She encourages clients to unfollow accounts that evoke comparison or pressure. This makes it easier to recognise what genuinely brings us joy (not what we feel we ought to want).

Reclaiming space, and emotional freedom

When you let go of what no longer serves you, you gain room, physically and mentally, for what truly matters. Simplifying your life doesn't require sweeping changes or perfectly labelled boxes. Katherine encourages starting small: one drawer, one shelf, one habit. Momentum builds slowly.

She also cautions that "New behaviours or processes can take time to adjust to, so be gentle with yourself if you fall back into old ways."

In a culture that celebrates consumption and busyness, simplifying is more than a lifestyle choice; it's an act of self-care. Decluttering can offer a path to a happier, more intentional life, one clear surface and one conscious choice at a time.



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BANKING ON THE GIBBONS

One of the most influential families in the Black Country during the 19th century were the Gibbons.

As well as being important iron founders and mine owners, the family was behind the establishment of one of the first banks in the area. The Wolverhampton Old Bank started trading in 1797 with Thomas, John and Benjamin Gibbons at the helm.

Initially business was very good but with their ironworks feeling the pressure of strong competition and weak demand, the Gibbons' faced liquidity problems and in 1816 the bank was forced to close its doors. The Gibbons were bankrupted and their assets seized—including several mines at Shutt End—in order to pay the creditors, all of whom were eventually paid in full.

Luckily, this sad situation was not seen by another important member of the Gibbons family. William Gibbons, the father of the three banking entrepreneurs was born in Gornal in 1732 but moved to Bristol where, with his father's backing, started an ironmongery business called Jno. Gibbons & Co.

Such was the success of this enterprise that by 1792 he was made Sheriff of Bristol and in 1800 was elected Mayor of the city - which in those days was the fourth largest in England. One of the reasons for his election was his involvement in a major campaign to stop cheap imports of hemp, iron and steel from Ireland. The campaign was waged against a series of proposed Parliamentary bills that would enable the imports to be made freely and without tax. The campaign was so successful, that all the bills were defeated and the importation of cheap goods from Ireland was foiled—a result that saw William Gibbons lauded as the 'Saviour of Bristol enterprise'.

On the back of this Jno. Gibbons & Co continued to prosper and when Gibbons died in 1807, the business was valued at almost £140,000—an enormous amount in those days. Meanwhile back in the West Midlands the Gibbons family had bought Corbys Hall in Pensnett and later purchased Ellowes Hall in Gornal. They had also acquired a significant estate at Leacroft in Staffordshire.

The 20th century was not kind to the family, however, and in 1916 Corbys Hall had to be demolished because of mining subsidence and most of the Gibbons mines were abandoned either through flooding or because they were worked out. Other Gibbons family businesses also failed and the family became far less powerful in the area although they maintained their estates in Staffordshire.



An old postcard showing Ellowes Hall in Gornal, home of James Lloyd Gibbons in the late 19th century.

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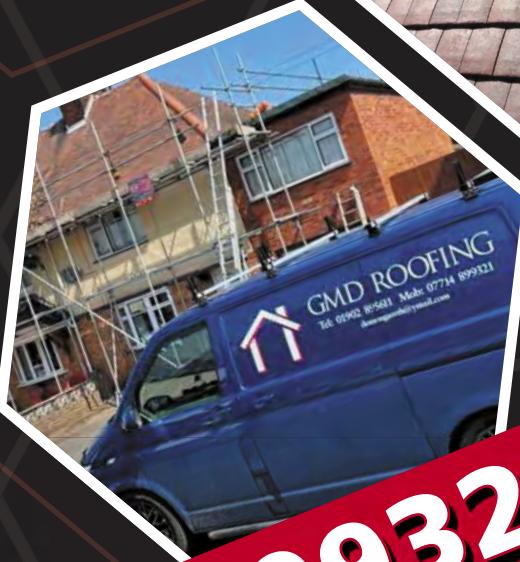


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EQUAL RIGHTS MEANT GAOL FOR WOMAN

In what was a legal 'first' a Kingswinford woman found herself sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour for stealing her husband's property.

The woman was 42 year old Myra Brooks who stole £21/10s and some clothes from her estranged husband William. The offence took place in February 1883, just a short time after the Married Women's Property Act had been added to the statute book. The Act had come about through increasing pressure being put on the authorities by those looking for equal rights for women. Until the passing of the Act married women were—in law—considered part of their husband's possessions and as such could not sue (or indeed be sued) in their own name. It seems that William and Myra were married in 1882 but sadly the marriage quickly broke down and just after Christmas she left her husband and moved in with a man called Fitzpatrick.

On February 8th she and Fitzpatrick went to her husband's house, broke in and stole money and property. The two thieves then journeyed to Kidderminster where they stayed in a lodging house for a few days. During this time they spent their ill-gotten gains freely which drew attention to themselves and which led to their arrest. When they appeared in court Myra Brooks pleaded not guilty saying that she had been driven from her home by her husband's behaviour. She said that he had even "advertised" her. This explanation, however, was not accepted by the jury who found her guilty or the judge who sentenced her to prison for six months.

Myra subsequently wrote (through a friend) to her Member of Parliament, Alexander Staveley Hill, asking whether he could do anything to help her—or at least get her husband arrested! As far as is known the MP did not reply and certainly it seems that she served her full sentence.



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FEBRUARY

The British weather fluctuates dramatically at this time of the year and we experience conditions from mild through to freezing temperatures and snow whilst at other times bright sunshine and cold nights. All this is "confusing" to our traditional semi-dormant plant growth habits. Some plants are starting to bud up to four weeks earlier than 5-10 years ago but are then struck by frost damage. Moreover, we are finding that traditional gardeners are having to change their working plans for the garden to potentially give plants a longer growing season due to the unknown temperatures that we are experiencing.

Cleaning greenhouses, sheds and tools alongside washing pots, ordering sundries and planning for the forthcoming season can be undertaken come rain or shine, warm or cold. Consider your growing plans for the display you're looking for versus your current plant stock. To supplement home grown plant cuttings start to raise seedlings at the end of the month and look at enhancing your plant range by visiting local nurseries where you can see the quality of plant stock before you purchase. They may also have opening seasonal offers and be able to offer useful advice and knowledge rather than just ordering online.

Whilst working on the garden in "good weather" days, cleaning and tidying the borders or turning over allotments and vegetable patches can all be done but please don't forget that the birds and wildlife will need food on both good and bad days whilst ponds will need to be defrosted regularly to release the build up of gasses underneath the ice.

OTHER JOBS TO BE DONE:

- From mid-February onwards sow tomato and cucumber seeds for green house growing.
- Plant out end of February/early March garlic and shallots
- As long as the ground is not frozen consider sowing broad beans, carrots and parsnips early and plant beetroot and Jerusalem artichoke tubers.
- In warm greenhouses, or under cloches, set out seeds for salad onions, lettuces, radish, peas and spinach.

It will be your last chance to prune winter apples, pears, medlars and quinces.

- Prune currant bushes, autumn-fruiting raspberries and prune back newly planted raspberries to about a foot high.
- Check the acidity of your soil, if too acidic add some lime.

Above all else, don't forget to keep smiling—the summer months are getting closer all the time!!!

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ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A SPEAKER?

One question that I am frequently asked is whether I can supply the names of speakers—granted there are a lot of names available via the internet but what if you are not well versed in computers? Periodically, therefore, we like to publish the names and details of a selection of local speakers. If you are a speaker and would like to be included free of charge in a future feature, then please email your details together with a current photograph to Gail at villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk

JOHN HOMER - A BLACK COUNTRY BLOKE!

For many years John 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.

His talks are a "pot-pourri" of stories, anecdotes, jokes, poetry and songs about the Black Country and life in general!

For further details of talks available please contact John either by:

Telephone: 01384 236827

Mobile: 07818 291578

Email: johnhomerwba@hotmail.co.uk



SUSIE MERRILL

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'From One Pig to Another'

A collection of lively stories from Susie Merrill about her days as one of the first mounted police women in London's Metropolitan Police. All delivered with a characteristic wicked sense of humour. On retirement she moved to the West Midlands to marry Richard and become a smallholder keeping rare breed pigs on Kinver Edge in South Staffordshire.



Many of her experiences are recorded in her autobiography: *'Police, Ponies and Husbands in-between'*.

Susie Merrill can be contacted on 07831 487648



Ian M. Bott is a well known Wednesbury antiquarian who is known for his love of the 'macabre side of history'. There are many talks available via Ian including:

'Black Country Murders'—true tales of gruesome murders.

'Lost Mansions of the Black Country' stories about the many great houses that were once a feature of the area.

'The Midlands Zeppelin Outrage'—1916 when a squadron of zeppelins were sent to bomb Liverpool but instead bombed Midlands industrial towns.

For a full list of talks and availability please contact Ian on 0121 556 8877.

TERRY CHURCH

has been speaking to various groups and societies for well over 20 years during which time he has given a total of over 300 talks.



He offers a range of talks including:

'Village Memories' - reminiscences of growing up in a village on the edge of the Black Country in the 1950s.

'1942 A Vintage Year'—a look at how life has changed in the last 70 years.

'You couldn't make it up'—a light hearted look at stories that made the news.

'Lost but not forgotten'—nostalgic reflections of Terry's life at school, work and play.

'Radio and Television in the 1950's and 60's'—entertainment as we knew it.

'Autograph Collecting'—the history of the signature and 60 years of collecting them.

'57 Black Country Sportsmen'—sportsmen who have made the Black Country proud. This is also the title of Terry's book published in July 2015 (a further volume was published in September 2017).

Terry can be contacted at:

**6 Wharfedale Close, Wall Heath,
Kingswinford, West Midlands DY6 9AZ**

Telephone: 01384 292170

Mobile: 07974 428261

Email: terrychurch6@gmail.com

KAREN EVANS

After completing a History degree Karen taught in primary schools before retiring in 2015. She then wrote two 'Grim Almanac' books for the History Press and she is currently writing for Family Tree Magazine on all things genealogical. Her love and enthusiasm for history was the impetus for her talks be it Regency dancing or using DNA in her own research. Karen's talks include:

'The Ultimate Black Sheep'—this uncovers an 1823 murder in her family which sent her on a thrilling and fascinating journey of discovery.



'Where does my family come from?' Unlocking the secrets of DNA testing—this talk covers areas such as understanding how the test works in very general terms.

'Dancing in the time of Jane Austen' - every savage can dance according to Mr Darcy but what would he have seen in the ballrooms of the day?

For a full list of talks available and availability please contact Karen on 07462 801829 or email her at karenevansdna@gmail.com

Max Keen is a retired teacher and speaking is his profession and being an avid historian he does so with the utmost of enthusiasm. There are 14 talks to choose from—here is a small selection:



'Sir Francis Drake: England's Greatest Naval Hero?'

'King John: The Worst or Most Useful King?'

'Pirates! The Fact and the Fiction'

'Hereward the Wake: The Last True Englishman?'

'Sir William Marshall: England's Greatest Knight?'

'The History of Dudley Castle 1071-1933'

Each talk features a multimedia projection and full period costume...including armour for the Henry V and Richard III talks.

Max can be contacted in a variety of ways:

Mobile: 07985 747261

Home: 01299 879841

Email: max55@uwclub.net

Website: www.keenhistorytalks.com

Or follow him on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/keenhistorytalks>

it's a fact!

★ The accounts of Himley Hall provide an interesting insight into the cost of maintaining the estate. In 1832, for example, the wage bill for those working on the estate (as opposed to those in the Hall itself) totalled £419/16s/0d. This included £4 for a mole catcher, 206/16s/0d for the park keeper and £50/8s/0d for a gamekeeper. In 1847 two new members of staff were recruited—a rabbit catcher earning 14 shillings a week and a rat catcher at 12 shillings a week. The rabbit catcher was allowed to sell a proportion of his catch to his co-workers. The rest went to the Hall's kitchen.

★ In 1882 the Wordsley Flower Show was held at 'Ashfield', the home of Mr E.S. Haines. This was on part of the site of what is now the King George V park. The entertainment during the afternoon was provided by the band of the 1st Staffordshire Rifle Volunteers and the event attracted a considerable number of visitors—one estimate was that throughout the day 2,500 attended.

★ January 1889 saw the whole of the Black Country covered in fog. It was especially bad in Tipton, Sedgley and Kingswinford where 'locomotion was well nigh impossible with the traffic of the district considerably interfered with, and the tramcars did not in all cases run.'

★ The Roman encampment at Greensforge, just outside Wall Heath, was first excavated in 1927 by a group of pupils and old boys of Wolverhampton Grammar School.



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FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *YOGURT AND KEFIR*

A review by Trevor Langley



Yogurt is a semi-solid dairy (or can be a non-dairy) production utilising fermented milk to create a product that is rich in nutrients, including calcium and protein, plus probiotics, that assist the health and well-being of bones, gut and/or severity from viruses. Greek-style productions are usually recognised to have a thicker consistency and higher protein level.

Multi award-winning Tims Greek Family Yogurts (Est. 1949) are inspired by their Greek family recipes and have the finest natural ingredients, plus gut-friendly bio-live cultures and fresh, pasteurised British milk combining, to bring really great tastes to fruition, with dairy goodness and creamy textures to the fore. Founded by the Timotheou family, their amazing story developed and now 'Tims', as the brand has become known, creates productions that continue to gain prestigious awards. Tims Greek Family Natural Yogurt I found to be very delicious on its own and also when accompanying fruits. Delights around the table were experienced. Other comments were that this product is so versatile it can be drizzled with honey and also used as a favourable dip, topping or dessert, as required. Other very popular choices include Blackcurrant, Honey, Caffe Latte, Mango, Raspberry and Vanilla flavoured yogurts.

Tims Greek Family Natural Kefir is a probiotic-rich dairy production that is fermented and produces a refreshing sensation which has digestive and immune benefits. The smooth productions of kefir are known to improve digestion and gut health, and, similarly to yogurt, can assist in the fight against infections.

Tims Foodservice Range offers opportunities for chefs, hotels, colleges and universities, catering establishments, wedding venues, also schools, plus hospitals and many other outlets, that require these types of productions, to gain access to bulk supplies. Stockists, further productions, information and more details are available on their very informative website. Doorstep deliveries are available and online ordering (*NB Tims itself does not sell online – just through wholesalers for the foodservice and eg Waitrose and Ocado for the Greek family range*) is easy too. All orders are dispatched quickly and efficiently (please see above). Highly recommended.

Tims, Mopes Farm, Denham Lane, Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire SL9 0QH. Tel: 01753 888380. E-mail: info@timsdairy.co.uk Web: www.timsdairy.co.uk

**COMING UP IN THE
MARCH EDITION:**
For the love of...Cider



As always,

Enjoy!

Trevor Langley

OR WHATEVER by John Sparry

In a bit of a 'pittle'

Hoppy Uniatz, the amicable ex-gangster who was part of Simon Templar, the Saint's team, perhaps having accidentally come across a page in the Times devoted to ornithology, when he was looking for a list of the next day's runners and riders—suddenly asked Simon and the Saint's lady friend, Patricia Holm, “Boss, ain't a nightjar the thing you keep under the bed?”.

A tough guy, I'd say he was well equipped to give any miscreant what we in the Black Country call a 'cogwinder'.

When I was endeavouring to sell second-hand furniture many years ago, along with night commodes—more convenient than nightjars—I was often asked for 'a pair of chest of drawers', and the customer only meant one not two, chests of drawers.

Similarly, when travelling for a local credit drapers, after bringing a lady in Amblecote the wrong item, I learned that a 'sleeping blanket' was a flannelette sheet.



Valuer and Manager, Sidney Bills (l) and Howard Hill

At Joe Brookes's Enville Street saleroom in Stourbridge on one Monday each month, valuer and manager, Sidney Bills, would bawl out anyone bold enough to try a tune on one of the 'pianners' - "Hey, ~ Mozzart!"

And Sidney always stationed a be-capped and brown-cowgowned Howard Hill on the little platform 'ter keep 'em from messin' with the carpitts'. Were they Lye, Stambermill or Stourbridge voices you'd hear enquiring, "Howerrd, 'ow much is that cubberd?"

Oh well, I'll go and 'put the kekkle on and mek some tay' Good Queen Bess, around 1590, pronounced it tay—but I doubt if she had to put the kekkle on herself.

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!)

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	£10 SKIN FADE/BEARD/STEAMER	£20
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	FOILS ALL OVER	
		£11

BRAINTEASERS ANSWERS

1. In the long term George should neither win nor lose. Imagine there are six people playing, each choosing a different number. Total stake money is £6 and if three different numbers are shown on the throw then three players win £2 each (£6). If two different numbers are shown then one player wins £4 and one £2 (£6) and if all three dice show the same number then one player wins £4 and one £2 (£6) and if all three dice show the same number then one player wins £6. This means that the game is even-handed and in the long run no-one will win

2. 20.

3. The answer, strangely is 8. Convert the numbers to Roman numerals and then draw a line through them (cutting them in half):

~~IX~~ ~~XI~~ ~~XII~~ ~~XIII~~

4. A point-making it 4.9

5. By going second Anthony only has to ensure that whatever George picks up he ensures that the number each round equals four. That way he cannot be beaten and the £5 must be his!

6. Felicity is 20 years old and her mother is therefore 40. Ten years ago Felicity would have been 10 and her mother 30.

COMPETITION WINNERS

The answer to our Wordsearch Competition in the **JANUARY** edition was **HISTORY** which was not there at all. The two lucky winners who each receive a £50 'DINING OUT' CARD are:

MARK CROYDON of **WORDSLY** and

MRS G MEEK of **KINGSWINFORD**

You can find this month's competition on page 44.

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.



Coming in March 2026...

Come & Sing!

A rare opportunity to sing FAURE'S REQUIEM with WDCS Singers

Saturday 14th March 2026 at Springdale Methodist Church, Penn WV4 4LT

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The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley PARISH PUMP



WALL HEATH COMMUNITY CENTRE

Envile Road, Wall Heath DY6 0JT

Telephone: 01384 273744 : Email: wallheathcommunityassoc@gmail.com

COMING UP...

7th February—Community Association Quiz Night and Supper - 7.00pm for 7.30 start. Tickets £5.00 to include a light supper and a ticket for the raffle. Teams of 6 (maximum) BYO drink. Tickets from Karen Page.

11th February—The Wednesday Club—2.00pm: Alan Peace, “Never Work with Children or Animals (by the man who has done both and survived)”. An anecdotal and light-hearted look at some of the comical situations Alan has found himself in during 40+ years of working with children and animals.

19th February—Thursday at 2 Club—2.00pm: Michelle Birch will be giving a talk about how different foods can affect our state of mind.

25th February—The Wednesday Club—2.00pm: Kate Round, “Meet the Designers”. Good designers lead fashion, making objects that are both desirable and collectable. Spanning the years 2500BC to the 20th Century, the talk follows the development of fashion in glassware into the modern era focusing on the designers who made sure that Stuart Crystal products were so successful.

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 name and telephone number or contact the Community Centre on 01384 273186.



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley PARISH PUMP



KINGSWINFORD ACTIVE RETIREMENT GROUP

Tutor – Siddique Hussain – Mobile: 07929 850814 : Email siddiqueh@gmail.com

St Mary's Church Hall, The Village, Dudley Road, Kingswinford DY6 8AY
Monday mornings (term time) 10.00am-12.00 noon

SPRING TERM 2026 PROGRAMME

9th February— *Dudley's Heritage: 'Discovering Heritage Data'* by speaker
Jayne Pilkington

16th February— **Half Term Break**

23rd February— *Honing Powers of Observation: 'Clues in Plain Sight'*
by Local History Speaker

2nd March - *What do Artists do all Day: 'A Little Too Graphic'*
by speaker Jools Lawley

9th March— *Discourse on a Reading: 'The Golden Bough'* (GROUP MEMBERS)

16th March - *Adopt a Tree 'Obtaining and Maintaining a Sapling'* (GROUP ACTIVITY)

23rd March - *Local Walks for Local Walkers: 'Looking for Slime Mould'*
(SIDDIQUE & GROUP)

The Group allows people to enjoy a social and active programme of
speakers, visits and discussions.

New members are always welcome. There is a fee (per term) of £25.00 plus optional
trip costs (transport and entrance fees if applicable).



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 are always happy to welcome new members.

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



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley PARISH PUMP



WORDSLEY LIBRARY, WORDSLEY GREEN, WORDSLEY WHAT'S ON DURING HALF TERM SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Saturday, 14 February—10.00am-1.00pm: **Saturday Family Craft (3+ years)**
DROP IN

Monday, 16 February—10.30am-11.30am: **Lego Spike Session—Making Lego Move with Coding (6+years)** **BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

Monday, 16th February—2.00pm-3.00pm: **Lego Spike Session—Making Lego Move with Coding (6+years)** **BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

Tuesday, 17th February—10.30am-11.00am: **Rattle & Rhyme (0-4 years)**
BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Tuesday, 17th February—2.00pm-3.00pm: **Chinese New Year “Year of the Horse” Craft (4+years)** **BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

Wednesday, 18th February—10.30am-11.00am: **Rattle & Rhyme (0-4years)**
BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Wednesday, 18th February—2.00pm-3.00pm: **Animal Themed Library Hunt & Make a Badge (4+years)** **DROP IN**

Thursday, 19th February—10.30am-11.00am: **Rattle & Rhyme (0-4years)**
BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Thursday, 19th February—2.00pm-3.30pm: **Professor Black’s The Lost Shark (7+years)**
BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Friday, 20th February—2.00pm-3.00pm: **Badger & Fox Paper Chains Craft (4+years)**
BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Saturday, 21st February—10.00am-1.00pm: **Saturday Family Craft (3+years)**
DROP IN

Please be sure to book your space where applicable by either calling Wordsley Library on **01384 812765** or email them at **wordsley.library@gll.org** or pop into the library and speak to a member of staff.



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley PARISH PUMP



Kingswinford Methodist Church
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THE NEXT PARISH PUMP WILL
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Don't forget that insertions are free if
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is non-profit making. Please send your
details via email to Gail at
villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk

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

18th February: **Crime Prevention.** Richard
Gwynne and Sarah Nixon from Brierley Hill
Police, advise the group on crime prevention.

4th March: **Across the World on a Tea
Towel.** Fiona Lucas will recall her
adventures and misadventures throughout her
worldwide travels, with her vast collection of
tea towels.

18th March: John Hamer Optician. Nicci
will talk to us about **DVLA requirements
for older drivers.**

1st April: **Billy Butlin.** Andrew French
talks about the life and legacy of Billy
Butlin.

15th April: **A Drop Of The Hard Stuff**
Ray Sturdy takes us on a journey through
Ireland for its scenery, music and humour.

Visitors are most welcome to come along
and hear how we organise this very
friendly group. Open to Ladies and
Gents.

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