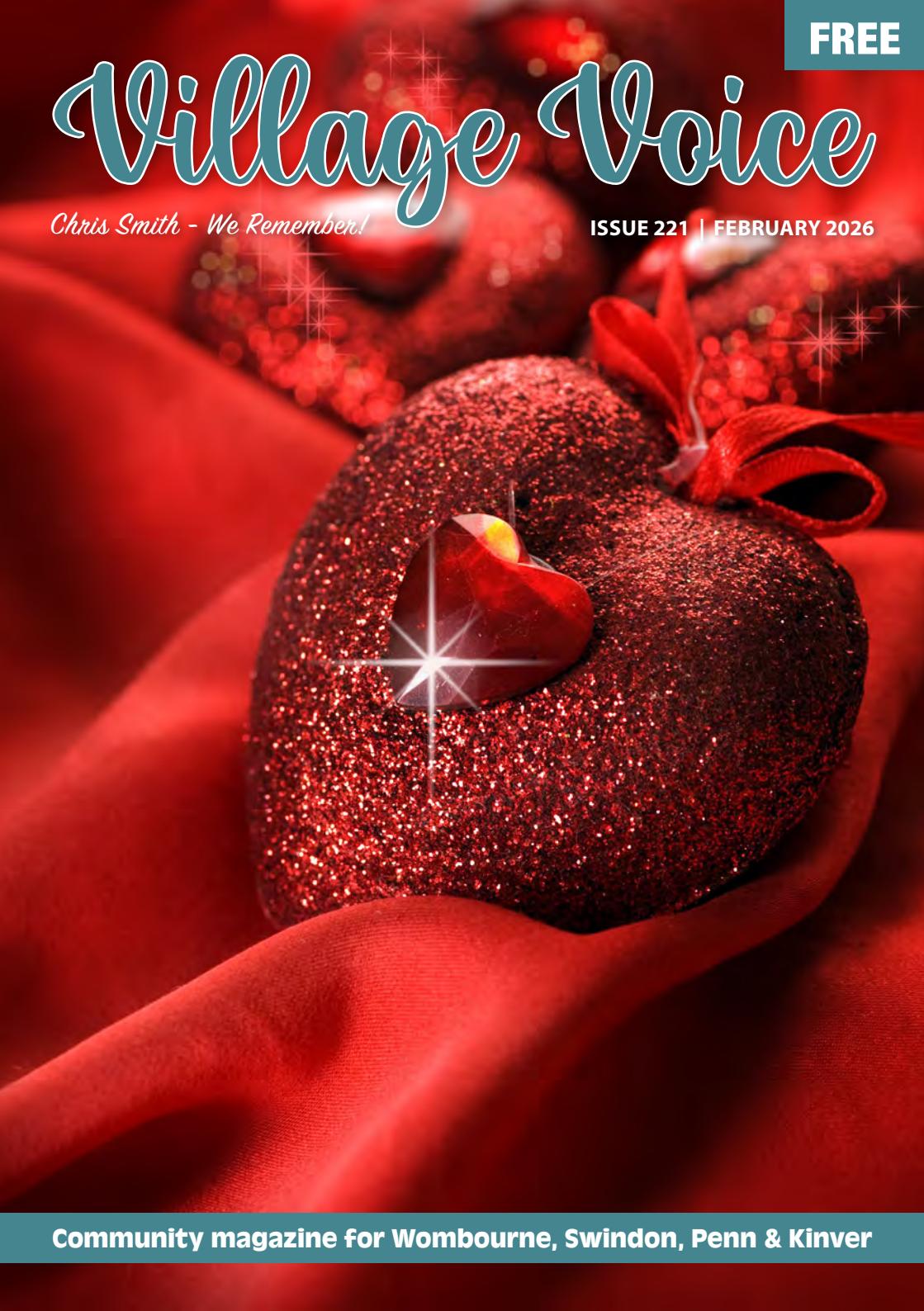


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Chris Smith - We Remember!

ISSUE 221 | FEBRUARY 2026



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Village Voice

**Community magazine for
Wombourne, Swindon, Penn & Kinver**

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 Bilstion, 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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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 56.

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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★ In September 1933 the Earl of Dudley disturbed a burglar at Himley Hall. On hearing a noise during the night the Earl armed himself with a revolver and went to investigate. The thief escaped with a number of small silver items by diving through a drawing room window.

★ The derivation of the name of local villages is an interesting topic in itself. "Kinver", for example, is thought to come from "Chere Vere" meaning Royal Rose whilst "Bobbington" takes its name from Bobba The Saxon who founded the habitation well before the Norman Conquest in 1066.

★ Wherever you look in Trysull there seems to be something of historical importance. The bridge across the Smestow Brook is particularly unusual because it is Grade II Listed by English Heritage. The bridge was built in the late 18th century and is described as being "*of red brick with ashlar dressings and comprises three segmental arches with alternate raised voussoirs, two keeled ashlar cutwaters and plain parapet string to coped parapet. Abutments sweep forward.*" Halfway across the bridge is the sign seen above right. The Motor Car Act 1903





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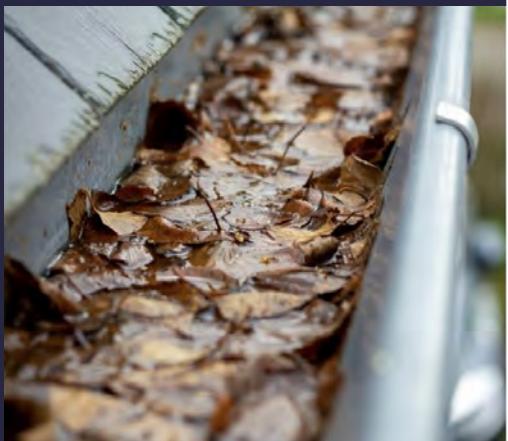
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THE BILLY BUNN MYSTERY

One of the greatest mysteries in Wombourne is who (or indeed what) was 'Billy Bunn' who had the lane named after him. Many people (including us) have attempted to track down the mysterious 'BB' but with little luck. In desperation we searched for any Billy Bunn's that we could find.

The first one that we found was a 1950s singer (seen right) who had a couple of hit records with his group "His Buddies". His style was somewhat unique—he was a natural soprano—and he caused great concern by disappearing shortly after having his first hit "*I need a shoulder to cry on*".

The second Billy Bunn is the President of the North Carolina Pecan Growers Association. The pecan tree (a member of the hickory family) is used both to produce nuts and wood for the manufacture of furniture and flooring.

Next on our list was the skipper of the boat "*Putford Provider*", one of the trawlers from Newlyn that featured in the *Trawler Wars* series on TV. And finally we found a Billy Bunn who is President of the "*Lost-in-Space Hunting Club*". This Club takes its name from a cult American TV series which revolved around aliens hunting down humans. Today the Club's main prey is deer. Of course, none of this brings us any closer to identifying Wombourne's Billy Bunn but who knows, perhaps one day the mystery will be explained...





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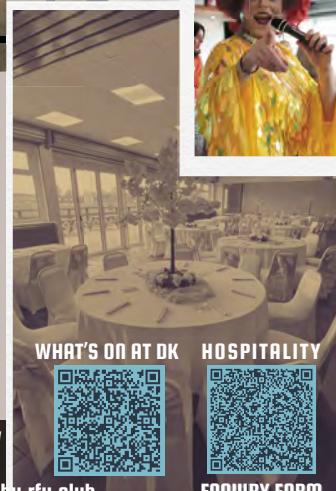
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THE SAD CASE OF THE WOMBOURNE REGISTRAR

In 1923 the village of Wombourne was stunned when its much liked and respected Registrar of Births & Deaths was arrested for attempting to murder his wife.

Just before Christmas Arthur John Edwards was at home in Penn with his wife Harriett and their three children (the youngest of whom was only 10 months old). As they prepared to go to bed Edwards suddenly attacked his eldest daughter Cecily (15) and his wife with a razor. Whilst Cecily suffered only a minor injury Harriett had a deep cut to her throat which later needed stitches.

Luckily the screams of the two women were heard by nearby carol singers who hauled Edwards off his wife. He was clearly very distressed and repeatedly said "*It must be done before midnight...before midnight. I meant to do them all and myself as well*". He was arrested and when he appeared at Wolverhampton Police Court the Medical Officer at Birmingham Prison stated that he believed Edwards to be insane. He also reported that a few years earlier Edwards had been a resident in Stanford Asylum.

An application was made to the Home Secretary to have Edwards committed to a mental hospital but this was refused and the trial had to take place. Although at the trial Harriett Edwards did not give evidence against her husband he was found guilty but insane. He was sentenced to be detained indefinitely.

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INTERESTING EVENTS INFEBRUARY

2nd (1665) British forces captured New Amsterdam, which was the centre of the Dutch colony in Manhattan, North America. After its capture, New Amsterdam was renamed 'New York' in honour of the Duke of York who was its new governor.

4th (2004) Mark Zuckerberg created the Facebook social media platform whilst he was a sophomore at Harvard. The following day over a thousand people had registered which was only the beginning. Today Facebooks has more than 2.91 million monthly users.

6th (1952) King George VI died leaving his daughter Princess Elizabeth to take the throne and become Queen Elizabeth II.

11th (1975) Margaret Thatcher became the first female leader of the Conservative Party. A few years later in 1979 she also became the first female Prime Minister, serving until 1990. Due to her uncompromising politics and leadership style, she quickly became known as the 'Iron Lady'.

15th (1965) Legendary singer and pianist Nat King Cole died in his sleep at St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica, California, at the age of 45. He was thought to have suffered from lung cancer. He was best known for his music including hits such as 'Unforgettable', and "I Love You" and also made history in 1956 when he became the first black host of a variety series *The Nat King Cole Show*.

29th (1692) Three women—Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne and Tituba—were accused of witch craft, thus marking the beginning of the Salem Witch Trials in Salem Village, colonial Massachusetts. The trials led to the execution of 20 'witches' with more dying in prison before and after the trials.

26th (1797) The Bank of England issued the first ever £1 note which continued to be printed until 1984. It was withdrawn in 1988 in favour of the £1 coin.



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it's a fact!

- ★ At the Assizes held during the summer of 1863 the Earl of Dudley took out an action against one of his tenants, John Beddard of Penn Wood Farm. Beddard was accused of removing straw and dung from the farm without permission and of neglecting the property. The jury, however, found that the case had not been proved and found Beddard not guilty.
- ★ A local farmer—George Whitehouse of Hinksford Farm—appealed against an enforcement notice that had been served on him by Seisdon Rural Council in January 1974. The Council said that the farm vehicle from which he was selling potatoes, turnips and sprouts should be classified as a building and as such it did not have planning permission. The appeal before the Department of Environment Inspector also heard from Staffordshire County Council that the roadside stall was causing traffic problems as customers were parking on the nearby verge. The appeal was rejected.
- ★ Stourton Castle on the outskirts of Kinver dates back to the late 11th century when it was a Royal Hunting Lodge used by the King (William II) when he came to Kinver Forest to hunt deer and other game.
- ★ In April 1849 at Staffordshire Assizes Thomas Lewis pleaded guilty to stealing a wheelbarrow, the property of Joseph Woodcock of Kingswinford, for which he was sentenced to two months imprisonment. Whilst in court, however, an extra charge of stealing a wheelbarrow from James Noakes of Wombourne was put to him. Again he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a further two months in prison.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Himley Country Hotel is based on the old village schoolhouse and room originally built by the Earl of Dudley to educate the children of his estate workers.

No-one is quite sure why Wombourne's parish church is dedicated to St Benedict Biscop. He lived between 628 and 690 AD in the North East of England and was Abbot of Wearmouth. He was a great scholar and his most famous pupil was the Venerable Bede who, amongst other things, introduced the BC/AD form of dating.

One of the first factories to have been established in Wombourne was the safe-making works of Sedgley businessman Joe Timms in 1926.

For a short time Seisdon was the home of part of the British car industry. In the 1950s Jack Turner, a Welshman, set up a garage at the Old Smithy in the village from which he acted as chief mechanic to look after the racing cars of various wealthy drivers who 'privateered' in motor races. After a while he decided to start building his own design of sports car using a Lea Francis engine and, following considerable success with this, he decided to go into full production. He moved first to premises in Merridale Street, Wolverhampton before outgrowing those and transferring to a new facility at Pendeford Airport. In 1955 he launched his first production model, a 2-seater with an Austin A30 engine. To beat purchase tax he sold them in kit form. Almost half of his production was exported to the US and a number of celebrities of the day purchased them (Petula Clark bought two). However, production ceased in 1965 and the company, Turners Sports Cars, disappeared in 1966.



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PENN—NOT A VERY NICE PLACE TO LIVE!

Before the residents of Penn take exception to our headline we would make it clear that we are talking about the mid 18th century when, it seems, there was a certain amount of lawlessness about the area. We have come across two stories that illustrate this fact:

In February 1749 a number of newspapers throughout the country told a blood-thirsty story of how Thomas Rowbotham, parish clerk to Penn, was attacked and almost killed on his way back from Wolverhampton Market one evening. He was almost home when he was stopped by a man called Thomas Daw who, without any provocation “knock’d him down, kick’d him and beat him with a knotty stick that he had got for that purpose in a most inhuman manner”. Worse was to come for as, when Rowbotham tried to escape, he was caught and Daw knocked him down again and “hack’d his head in a terrible manner with a stone, bit off his ears and stamp’d upon him with all the violence imaginable”. The victim of this terrible assault tried to call out but was presented by Daw attempting to force open his mouth and pluck out his tongue before filling it with dirt. Fortunately for Rowbotham a passing horse and carriage scared Daw enough to make him flee, leaving him

almost lifeless. Shortly afterwards, however, his groans were heard by a couple of passersby who carried him to the White Hart Inn at Penn. So badly injured was he that he could not be moved from the pub for three weeks.

The second event happened just two years later when a man and his wife were attacked not far from the same site. This was about midday when Joseph Bates and his wife were walking back from church and three men jumped out of the hedgerow and attacked the couple. One man held Mrs Bates whilst the other two started punching and kicking Joseph. When he was prone on the ground one man held a knife to his throat and threatened to kill him if he failed to return the horse that he had stolen. After taking all the money he had on him the three men ran away. Bates said, however, that it must have been a case of mistaken identity as he did not have a horse—stolen or otherwise.

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10 THINGS YOU (PROBABLY) DIDN'T KNOW About Valentine's Day

The first recorded Valentine was written by Charles, Duke of Orleans in 1415, while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London after the Battle of Agincourt.

Valentine's Day is of course synonymous with a red heart. However, this was not always the case...the heart shape we know and love today was not originally linked to emotions of any sort. It was believed to represent the shape of a seed or even the human body. In ancient times, the symbol was often used in art and literature for a variety of meanings including fertility and life. It was not until much later, during the Middle Ages, that the heart began to be associated more with love and passion.



Chocolate, of course, is a major player in Valentine's Day. However, it only became popular in the 19th century and all thanks to Richard Barrow Cadbury who was born 22nd March 1835 and was the second son of the Quaker John Cadbury who was the founder of Cadbury's. Richard came up with the forward-thinking idea of packaging chocolates in heart-shaped boxes specifically for Valentine's Day. This move quickly gained popularity and soon the tradition of giving chocolates as a symbol of love became widespread. The rest is, as they say, history.

The Victorians considered it bad luck to sign your name in a Valentine's Day card. Instead they would mysteriously sign their love letters 'XOXO'.

The saying 'to wear one's heart on one's sleeve' comes from a medieval Valentine's Day ritual that saw the names of local spinsters dropped into a hat for a romantic raffle! It was said that each of the town's bachelors would then pick a name, pin it to his sleeve for a week and take that lady as his Valentine. Apparently many couples became husband and wife seven days later!

In the 18th century it was believed that women who received the most Valentine's Day cards would marry within the year. This superstition suggested that the number of cards symbolised a woman's desirability and foretold a speedy engagement.

In the 17th century and thanks to Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans, Valentine's Day faced a brief ban in England. They opposed anything to do with the celebration of romance and other forms of frivolity and they sought to suppress it because it was deemed to be sinful and overly indulgent. Lucky for lovers everywhere that the ban was short-lived and was reinstated when the monarchy was restored in 1660.

There are a few underlying superstitions about Valentine's Day. One that we came across was most definitely aimed at the lady of the relationship. If a woman spotted a sparrow she would marry someone poor...if she saw a goldfinch she would marry a millionaire...if she saw a robin flying in the sky then that would suggest that she would end up with a sailor...if she saw a blackbird then that would mean she would marry a clergyman...if she saw a flock of doves then that would promise a long and happy marriage. However, beware of seeing an owl or woodpecker first thing in the morning as apparently this would mean that you are destined to stay single.



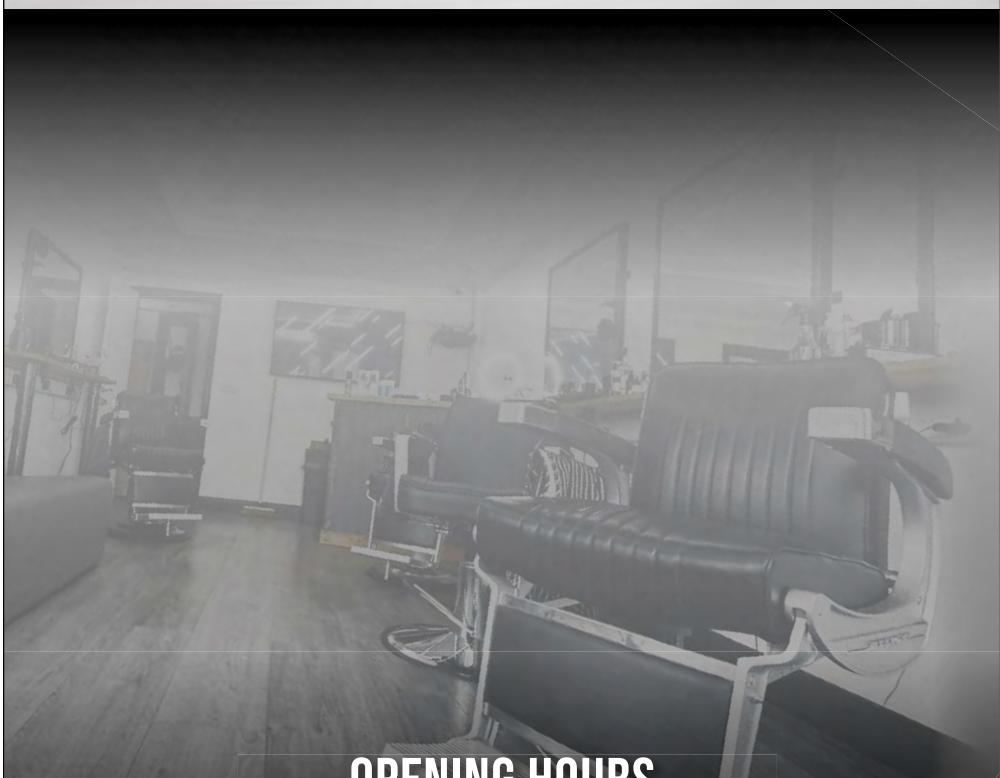
When you think of Cupid you probably come up with the image of a naked cherub shooting arrows of love. However, in Roman mythology, Cupid was the God of love and was known as Eros in Greek mythology—he was seen as a handsome immortal who used gold arrows to spark love and interfere with the emotions of Gods and men...

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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

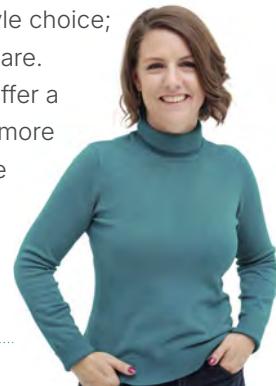
She encourages clients to unfollow accounts that evoke comparison or pressure. This makes it easier to recognise what genuinely brings us joy (not what we feel we ought to want).

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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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





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

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O	W	L	E	Z	E	R	Z	S	I	D
T	S	S	E	W	A	C	E	D	S	N
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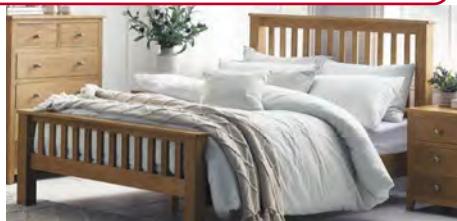
★ In October 1867 an extraordinary discovery was made just outside Kinver. A group of workmen were drawing water from a long disused pit shaft when they hauled up the sleeve of a woman's dress. They delved further and brought up a small bag which contained the corpse of a child. When they opened the bag the lifeless body fell to pieces as it had been immersed in water for an estimated 18 months. A brick had been tied to the bag to ensure that it had sunk. At the inquest into the unnamed baby's death the coroner asked that further investigations should be made of the pit shaft to see whether any additional evidence could be obtained. The workers returned but were horrified to find not one but two additional bodies at the bottom of the shaft. Whilst the cause of the death of the first two victims could not be established it was clear that the third child—a boy of about six years of age—had been murdered. Police enquiries were started but the children were never identified, although members of a Kinver family who had moved away over a year before were suspected.

★ Under the Shops Act 1950 all shops were required to close for one half day per week ("early closing") unless special dispensation was given by the local council. In November 1966 Staffordshire County Council decided to suspend this order on 21st-24th December in certain areas including Seisdon (but not Kinver) to enable shops to take advantage of the pre-Christmas rush. One of the reasons given for this decision was that bad weather in mid and late November had put off many people from venturing out and some shop owners had expressed fears that they would be bankrupted unless trade picked up.

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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, ~ Mozart!"

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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it's a fact!



In November 1878 there was a daring attempt to burgle Envile Hall (seen here right) which was the home of Lord Stamford. As Lord and Lady Stamford were getting ready for dinner in their respective dressing rooms his



Lordship's valet came across an intruder who suddenly pulled out a revolver, threatening to kill the servant. Fortunately the valet reacted instantly and ducked into a side room, locked the door, opened the window and started to shout for help. As the alarm had been raised the intruder took to his heels and fled through a window. He—together with two accomplices—were seen running over the lawns to the coach road where a horse and cart were awaiting them. Although no-one was arrested for the attempted burglary it was assumed that it was a professional gang possibly from out of the area.



Mystery stories abound around Wombourne but the strangest one we have heard is the disappearing rabbit of Wombourne Park. A driver hit a white rabbit as it ran across the road. The driver got out and sure enough there was a dead rabbit in the middle of the road. He put the dead rabbit in his boot in order to dispose of it later—but when he got home it had mysteriously vanished!



Above the door of Trysull Manor is an intriguing inscription “*Stranger should this catch your eye, Do a favour passing by, Bless this house ere you be gone, And it shall bless you passing on*”.

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:**
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As always,

Enjoy!

Trevor Langley

Adam Chamberlain Kyle Perkins

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MOURNING THE “QUEEN OF THE MIDLANDS”

When Georgina, Countess of Dudley, died in February 1929 a huge crowd assembled at St Michael’s Church, Himley to pay their respects to a lady who was much loved in the area.

She was the third of eight daughters of Sir Thomas Moncrieffe and the second wife of William, the first Earl of Dudley. She was renowned for her beauty (as a child she was painted by Millais who declared that she was the most beautiful model he had ever painted) and her down-to-earth attitude. During the Boer and First World Wars she worked for the Red Cross in London caring for injured soldiers as well as spending time at the Guest Hospital in Dudley. She was also very practical and compiled “*The Dudley Book of Cookery and Household Recipes*” which included some 500 separate recipes for all occasions.

She died at Pembroke House in Richard Park, a residence granted by King Edward following the death of her husband in 1885. Her body was brought back to Himley for burial. The pall bearers were eight old servants of the Dudley estate and floral tributes included one from Queen Maud of Norway.



Georgina, Countess of Dudley was a much loved figure locally and her funeral at Himley Church attracted a huge crowd.



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Price includes dinner, bed & breakfast and excursions.

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 46.

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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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 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.



The Wombourne, Swindon, Penn & Kinver PARISH PUMP



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A reading group for crime fiction lovers!
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Friday 6th March 2026
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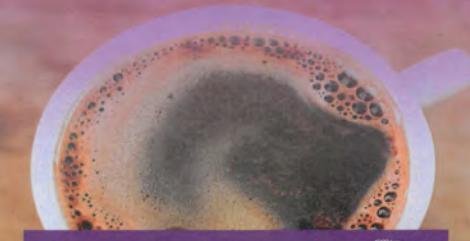
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ANOTHER AID CONVOY STORY

The very first humanitarian aid convoy I drove in during my ten years as a member of the German Red Cross consisted of twelve aid lorries plus our mobile kitchen lorry. We left Bremen at 1800 hours on Friday with two drivers to each truck, driving through the night all the way south into Austria. The convoy was several hundred metres long and the kitchen lorry, which could travel faster independently, went on ahead to meet up with the main group at pre-arranged stopping points. At these we were able to refuel the lorries and ourselves. Breakfast on the Saturday morning always amused me as it consisted of a steak sandwich, chocolate cake and copious amounts of coffee.

Approaching the city of Linz on Saturday afternoon before we entered the city, we were met in a lay-by that was big enough to take all the lorries and had been closed off for us by the Austrian police. We were then provided with a police escort front and rear into the city and with all our blue lights on we sailed through red traffic lights and, where necessary, even driving on the wrong (left) side of the road! The night was spent in an Austrian Red Cross centre in the city. Sunday morning we were off again to get to the Hungarian border. Most lorries, unless they were carrying perishable goods, were generally not allowed on the German and Austrian motorways at weekends but we had special dispensation as we were carrying humanitarian aid. Going through the international borders was always strange as it didn't matter if there were twelve trucks in the convoy or, as I did on occasion a single truck, it always took four hours to go through customs. In the very rear of each truck we also had a few "goodies" such as children's toys in case any of the eastern European border guards decided they wanted to check our loads. In that event you simply offered the guard something for his own children which invariably had the desired effect

Alan Peace—Himley Hall and Park Senior Warden 1985-2012



The OVER 60's CLUB
meet at **Swindon Community Centre, High Street, Swindon, Dudley DY3 4NR**
on **Monday afternoons between 1.15pm and 4.15pm.**

If you are looking to meet new friends then why not consider popping along to join this friendly and fun loving group and enjoy tea, coffee, biscuits, bingo and a raffle. For further information please contact Lorraine on **07855 200 736.**



The Wombourne, Swindon, Penn & Kinver PARISH PUMP



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DATE FOR YOUR DIARY!

Retired Himley Park warden and acclaimed fundraiser and ambassador for Cancer Research UK, **Alan Peace**, will be entertaining the Wall Heath Wednesday Club at 2.00pm on Wednesday, 11th February in the Wall Heath Community Centre. Of the many talks Alan does, this time he will be telling the audience about "*Why You Should Never Work With Children or Animals*" which is just what he spent a lot of his working life doing! The talk takes a light hearted look at some of the comical situations that Alan has been in with both children and animals.

WOMBOURNE QUILTERS

meet every 3rd Wednesday of the month between 7.00pm and 9.00pm at the Hand in Hand (next to St Benedicts), Church Road, Wombourne WV5 9EZ

We currently have 16 members from very experienced quilters to those new to the craft of quilting and sewing.

Our programme is varied with members volunteering to share specific techniques and skills with the group. In these mini workshops we have just finished making tie bags and in the next few months we will be exploring Manx quilting, denim upcycling and Hawaiian technique. We also work on our own projects.

Anyone with an interest in working with textiles and who enjoys sewing is very welcome. We offer a free taster session and our annual subscription is £40 (payable in September). For new members joining during the year the rate is reduced.

Telephone Kate Brierley on 01902 711983
or email Erica at
ericawiddowson@hotmail.co.uk

**THE NEXT PARISH PUMP WILL
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