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Village Voice

Chris Smith - We Remember!

ISSUE 249 | AUGUST 2026



Community magazine for Sedgley, Cornal, Coseley & Tipton



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Village Voice

Community magazine for
Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton

Cover story

Undoubtably, the RNLI is one of the most active services in the country and this is our way of reminding readers that, whilst we may be a long way from the sea, when we go away on holiday we may still require their services. This year the RNLI is celebrating 25 years of lifeguard services and what started as a trial on the south coast of England in 2001 has over the years expanded to over 245 beaches around the UK and Channel Islands. In the words of the RNLI *"It doesn't matter who you are, or how you get into trouble, if you need help at sea, RNLI lifeguards and lifeboat volunteers will be there for you"*.

We hope that you enjoy reading this highly informative article.

Gail



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Please note that the closing date for our competition this month is **MONDAY, 24TH AUGUST 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 **SEPTEMBER 2026** edition of **VILLAGE VOICE** is **THURSDAY, 20TH AUGUST 2026**. Please book your space early to avoid disappointment.

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it's a fact!

- ★ In 1925 the Kingswinford Division of the Unionist Association held a Great Garden Party at Himley Hall. As well as all the usual stalls and attractions (including whippet racing, tug of war and Punch & Judy) in the evening there was a mass open air meeting which was addressed by Col. The Rt Hon. L.S. Amery PC MP, the Secretary of State for the Dominions & Colonies. It was estimated that 8000 people attended—including 77 year old Patrick Dooling, a second hand furniture dealer from Birmingham. Unfortunately Mr Dooling was also a part-time pickpocket and he tried his luck on some of the people at the Garden Party. He was seen and caught by a member of the audience and handed over to a police constable at the gate. He was taken to Sedgley Police Station and he appeared in court the following Monday where—despite his age—he was given a sentence of three months imprisonment with hard labour. The court heard that he had a very long record of offences recorded against him going back 52 years.
- ★ It seems that during the 1840s clergy in Coseley had something of a penchant for writing books. In March 1840 the following advertisement appeared in a number of national newspapers. “In the volume, cloth lettered, price 6 shillings. Plain Sermons preached to country congregation by Francis Foreman Clark AB, Headmaster of the Grammar School, Newcastle-under-Lyne and formerly Minister of Christ Church, Coseley”. Six years later there were advertisements for “The Church History of England by the Rev. John A. Baxter MA, Perpetual Curate of Christ Church, Coseley, Staffordshire. Dedicated by permission to the Right Rev. The Lord Bishop of Lichfield. Two volumes cloth. 16 shillings.

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SHOOTING AT GORNAL

In 1879 the population of Gornal was stunned when the very popular vicar of St James' Church was shot and seriously wounded.

The Rev. James Yates Rooker had gone to The Green (now known as the Five Ways) to buy some goods in Jabez Addenbrooke's grocery shop. Whilst at the counter he heard his name being called from the doorway and turned to see Charles Hartland, a young chorister from the church, standing there. Without hesitation Hartland raised a gun and fired at the clergyman hitting him three times in the head. Immediate assistance was summoned for Rooker and he was rushed to hospital. In the meantime a manhunt was started for Hartland who was later apprehended in Brierley Hill and charged with attempted murder.

At his trial at Stafford it became clear that Hartland had been nursing a grudge against Rooker since 1877 when Hartland had been summoned to court for exposing himself to young girls. Rooker had been chairman of Sedgley Magistrates Court on this occasion and had sentenced the youngster to immediate imprisonment rather than the normal fine. For the attack on Rooker, Hartland was sentenced to 12 years in prison—despite the fact that Rooker himself had pleaded for leniency. Indeed, after the court case a petition with over 700 signatures (including that of the Rev Rooker) was sent to the Home Secretary asking for Hartland's sentence to be cut. The request, however, was refused. Such was the esteem with which Rooker was held locally his parishioners raised enough money to send their vicar on a three week convalescence to recover from his wounds. He duly returned to his flock and, almost a year to the day, was again sitting in Sedgley Magistrates Court.

In total the Rev Rooker was vicar at St James' for over 41 years and oversaw many highs and lows of the area. These included the closure of many of the pits and the misery of hundreds of families suffering abject poverty, including having to rely on the soup kitchen organised by Rooker and his church. Little wonder that he was so well thought of.



The Rooker vault at St James'

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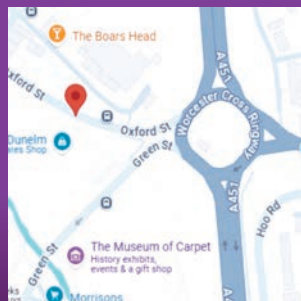
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DID YOU KNOW?

Sedgley Farms is a small town in Delaware, USA located 96 miles from Washington, DC. Its most prominent landmark is the New Castle County Detention Centre.

One of the first football teams in the area was Sedgley Villa FC which had been formed in around 1878. Initially it played friendly matches against other teams but then joined the Wolverhampton & District League. The club folded in about 1903.

In 1897 the average number of pupils attending schools in the area were: Daisy Bank 501, Mount Pleasant 474, Lanesfield 204, Bilston Street 295, Red Hall 865, Dudley Road 319, Upper Gornal 398, Robert Street 411, Hurst Hill 311 and Christ Church (Coseley) 804.

In 1834 there were some 43 firms in the Black Country making bricks, almost a third of which were to be found in the Sedgley/Gornal area.

Wolverhampton Wanderers almost moved to Sedgley rather than take up residence at Molineux. For eight years until 1899 Wolves had played their games at Dudley Road, opposite the Fighting Cocks pub. By then, however, they had joined the embryo Football League and required better facilities. For many months they scoured the area looking for an appropriate 'home' but with no luck. They even looked at moving out of Wolverhampton and considered two possible sites in Sedgley (the records don't say where these were, however). At the last moment, though, The Northampton Brewery Company who had recently bought the Molineux Sports Arena together with Molineux House (which they converted into a hotel) offered to construct a stadium for the club. This they did and charged Wolves just £50 a year rent.

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it's a fact!

- ★ The death of John Flavell of The Wynd, Sedgley was reported in 1940. He was 82 and until two years before he died he had still put in a full week's work as a bricklayer. Indeed, he had spent some 63 years following this trade and had spent 62 of them as a member of the Gornal branch of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers. He was also a founder member of Sedgley Conservative Club, a member of the old Sedgley Cricket Club and a leading member of the parish church's team of bellringers. He had four sons, four daughters, 27 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.
- ★ One of the best known footballers to turn out for Lower Gornal Athletic was Edwin (Eddie) Clamp. Born in Leicestershire in September 1934, he was capped five times for England Boys and joined Wolves as a 15 year old in 1949, turning professional three years later. His league debut was against Manchester United in March 1954, the first of 241 senior games for the club. During his time with Wolves he won four England caps before in November 1961, he moved to Arsenal—although he only stayed there until September 1962 when he transferred to Stoke City. Two years later he moved Peterborough United before then dropping down into non-league football playing for Worcester City and finally Lower Gornal Athletic. He retired in 1969 at the age of 35 and he died in 1995.
- ★ In the Birmingham Daily Post of 15th March 1943 the following advertisement appeared in the 'Musical Instruments For Sale' column: "Granby Simplex Pianola 50 rolls as new £90—evening Pearson, Glamis, High Park Crescent, Sedgley Dudley—bus at door".

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GORNAL'S SHOCK MACHINE

Without a doubt one of the foremost engineers to have come out of Gornal was John Johnson Shaw.

Born in Church Street, lower Gornal in December 1873, John went to Redhall Junior school before transferring to King Edward's in Birmingham. He was always interested in science and, in particular, was fascinated by earthquakes. Whilst on holiday with his parents on the Isle of Wight he was thrilled to find that the Liverpool scientist John Milne had returned from Japan and had set up a laboratory close by. At the time Milner was widely acknowledged as one of the pioneers of seismology and the keen youngster from Gornal arranged to meet him, a meeting that was to blossom into a long friendship. Having been inspired by the work that Milne had already undertaken, John Shaw returned to the Midlands (his parents had by now moved to West Bromwich) and set about designing his own seismograph. By 1908 he had developed a working model and was indeed the first person to identify an earthquake that occurred on the other side of the Atlantic (in Mexico). Later he was to develop what was to become known as the Milne-Shaw Seismograph which for many years was the standard model used throughout the world to detect and measure seismic activity. Most were actually constructed in a small workshop in the garden of John Shaw's home in West Bromwich. John Johnson Shaw was awarded a CBE for his work but never really received a public recognition for the prominent scientific and engineering work that he undertook.

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FAMOUS EVENTS IN HISTORY IN AUGUST

4th—1693: According to popular belief, Champagne is said to have been invented on this day by French monk Dom Pierre Pérignon and even now Dom Pérignon remains a highly popular brand of vintage Champagne. Historians, however, will argue this fact saying that it is unlikely that champagne was invented on this exact date—what we do know is that Pérignon made huge contributions to the development of modern champagne. He was responsible for creating the technique that finally produced a successful white wine from red wine grapes.

5th August 1583: The first British colony in North America was founded by Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a British navigator and explorer. He sighted the Newfoundland coast and took possession of the area around St. John's Harbour in the name of the Queen. He was later lost at sea in a storm off the Azores on his return trip to England.

8th—1963: Britain's Great Train Robbery is well documented as being the most famous robbery in history when £2.6 million was stolen from Royal Mail. It was carried out by a gang of five criminals led by antiques dealer Bruce Reynolds. A railway signal was tampered with which in turn forced a Post Office mail train travelling from Glasgow to London Euston to stop. After taking control of the train and attacking the driver, they drove it to a pre-arranged meeting point and loaded the money into a trunk. Today this would be worth approximately £60 million.

22nd—565: The Loch Ness monster was said to be spotted for the first time by St Columba while he was on his way to visit the King of the northern Picts, near Inverness. Although accounts place the beast to have been there for around 1500 years, all attempts to find evidence to back this up have failed. All that said, 'Nessie' continues to be a very good visitor attraction.

SQUIRE KNIGHT'S LEGACY

Born to poor parents living in Coseley in 1742, Squire Knight became a very successful chemist and druggist with a nation-wide reputation for preparations that could cure almost any ill.

In his youth he collected medieval herbs in and around Woodsetton and sold them at Dudley market on Saturdays before later opening a shop in the town's Queen Street. His potions included his Purifying Family Pills which were said to cure everything from indigestion, loss of appetite, giddiness in the head, wind, heartburn, cramps, spasms, fevers and eruptions of the skin. Similarly, his Cough Pills were apparently able to relieve coughs, colds, hoarseness, and asthma as well as "all obstructions of the breast and lungs". His Eye ointment was even more effective and could cure impaired vision, partial blindness—and even restore burnt eyelashes!

But most amazing of all was his Balsam which cured the afflictions of over 10,000 individuals—including those with influenza, bronchitis, whooping cough and all lung complaints. Squire Knight was the darling of London Society and numbered Lords, Earls and Barons as his friends. He was also known to several European Royal families. Not bad for a Coseleyite who spent some time in the Workhouse in his youth!



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SEDGLEY GARDENING SOCIETY FLOWER SHOW POSTER COMPETITION

We were delighted to hear from Diane Beardsmore, Chair of Sedgley Gardening Society.

Along with Treasurer, Richard Cooper they were invited by the Headmaster of Queen Victoria Primary School in Sedgley, Matthew Priest to present the prizes at the end of term Assemblies, for the Poster Competition.

Diane commented: "We were very impressed at the level of entries from Year 6 pupils and we had 25 entries in total. We had two judges, one of which is a recognised artist and who currently has her work on display at Wolverhampton Art Gallery." The prizes for the competition were very kindly donated by Tesco for which the Society are extremely grateful. They were presented as 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes to the pupils.

The entries will be on display at the Flower Show being held on Saturday, 15th August at Sedgley Community Centre, Ladies Walk, Sedgley DY3 3UA. The event is open to the

public from 12.30pm until 3.15pm. The winning entry has been made into an extremely colourful poster (above) which will advertise the Flower Show.

Well done to all who entered the competition—the standards were obviously high and the pupils worked extremely hard to meet the criteria and were a real credit to their school.



Help make the St Chad's Poppy Display...

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We are planning a POPPY installation at St Chad's Church, Pattingham this November and we will need lots of poppies. If you would like to help, please contact Tracey on 07804 039 330, or email traceyelizabeth.tw@gmail.com. We will supply the wool, a poppy pattern and any helpful guidance.

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THE SENTENCE OF THE COURT

In 1323 a band of robbers led by Richard de Tutbury and Nicholas Ernold de Condorve stole money and goods worth over £1000 (about £2 million at today's value) from Dudley Castle—which was at that time within Sedgley parish. They were caught red-handed in Coseley and taken to Stafford where they were put on trial. For some reason the trial was adjourned and it was decided that they should be transported to York for the trial to continue. Despite being bound hand and foot, the robbers managed to escape during the journey and for almost two years they lived as outlaws close to Nottingham. Indeed, it is said by some historians that their exploits were the basis of the tales of 'Robin Hood' although there is absolutely no evidence they had any intention of giving anything to the poor! The goods from Dudley Castle had been recovered in Coseley and were returned—only for them to be stolen again three years later.



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BRAINTEASERS

This month we have pulled together a real mixed bag of brainteasers—see how you fare.

1. What is this cryptic word:

E H C A

2. Replace the letters in this simple sum with the numbers from 0-9 to complete the correct answer:

HORSE

SADDLE

= GALLOP

3. ABSORB DIVIDE GLITCH
MARGIN RECESS

Which of the following words belong in the list above... and why?

QUIVER SHAKEN SHIVER TINGLE

4. $62 - 63 = 1$

Move just one digit to make this sum correct

5. 8 5 4 9 1 7 6 10 3 2

What is special about the sequence of numbers?

6. Forwards I'm heavy but backwards I'm not.
What word am I?

7. Just say what you see:

LM0TAHERW

8. SCORE

SCORE

SCORE

SCORE

Answers, if needed, are on Page 56.



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it's a fact!

- ★ In 1857 the Dudley Weekly Times reported that *"About a dozen poor men were summoned by the churchwardens of St. James's Church, Sedgley for Church rates, the sums varying from 1/4d to 2/8d. The whole of those who appeared put in the plea of poverty as a reason for non-payment added to which, by a few, was this—that their landlords had agreed to pay all the rates. The relation of their distress by some of them was enough to soften even the heart of a rural churchwarden. The churchwardens present, however, proved to be impervious to such pleadings and demanded immediate payment."*
- ★ In the 17th century the inhabitants of Tipton were extremely generous in donating money to other communities that had suffered losses or were in need of relief. In 1657 they collected 7s/10d for the people of Desford in Leicestershire after a fire had devastated the town. In later years donations were sent to other towns including Southwold in Suffolk, Milton Abbey in Dorset, Oxford and Chichester.
- ★ In 1961 a special donkey race was organised in Gornal to raise funds for the Robert Street School Swimming Pool Fund. Competitors in the race included Cllr T.P. Hanley, Chairman of Sedgley Council (riding 'Harry') and the former chairman Cllr J. Timmins who won the race on 'Sonny Boy' (Cllr Hanley fell off his mount during the race). The event was organised by Sid Hale, the licensee of the Old Bull's Head and it raised £36.
- ★ The number of people entitled to vote in elections in 1854 were 603 people in Sedgley and just 455 in Tipton. The total for Kingswinford, however, was 1736, more than in Wolverhampton at just 1390.

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POSTCARD FROM WILLY—THE KNITTED TIPTON SLASHER

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beautiful Cathedral.
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about don't be shy come
and say hello.
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William Perry
The Knitted Tipton Slasher



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This year the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is celebrating 25 years of its lifeguard service. Started as a trial on the south coast of England in 2001, the service has expanded to over 245 beaches around the UK and Channel Islands helping keep beachgoers safe as they enjoy the coast. It doesn't matter who you are, or how you get into trouble, if you need help at sea, RNLI lifeguards and lifeboat volunteers and will be there for you. Collectively, RNLI lifeguards and lifeboat crews have saved more than 146,700 lives since the charity was founded in 1824.

LIFEGUARDING

On the beach, every second counts, which is why since 2001 the RNLI has also operated seasonal lifeguard patrols at beaches around the UK and Channel Islands. Over the past 25 years, our lifeguards have carried out over 48 million preventative actions, aided more than 440,000 people and saved over 2,000 lives. To find out more about the 25th anniversary of RNLI lifeguards, visit RNLI.org/Lifeguard25. Last year, 1,608 RNLI lifeguards provided a service on 249 beaches. Highly trained and equipped, RNLI lifeguards spot danger as it develops and respond instantly. They also provide safety advice and a reassuring presence on the beach. Local authorities and beach owners work with the charity contributing to the RNLI's lifeguard service costs. You can use the RNLI website to find your nearest lifeguarded beach close to home or whilst visiting another part of the UK or Channel Islands. To find your nearest lifeguarded beach visit rnli.org/find-my-nearest/lifeguarded-beaches.



This year the RNLI has created a special podcast, *We Are Lifeguards* which is a series that takes a closer look at what it is like to keep people safe at the seaside. Across five episodes, the podcast series explores the different aspects of lifeguarding, from the equipment lifeguards use and the training they do, to how every beach poses its own challenge. You'll hear lifeguards, past and present, talk about their experiences and hear from the people they've rescued. Search for 'We Are Lifeguards' wherever you get your podcasts.

LIFEBOATS

Providing a 24-hour search and rescue service around the UK, Ireland, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, in 2025 alone, RNLI lifeboat crews launched over 9,000 times and saved 272 people. Most RNLI volunteer crew members don't have a nautical background, so they receive world-class training from the charity, which gives them the vital skills to save lives, as well as confidence in each other and their lifesaving equipment.

Crews get the best kit, lifeboats, equipment and facilities the RNLI can provide. The RNLI has 238 RNLI lifeboat stations, 470 lifeboats: 155 all-weather lifeboats, 315 inshore lifeboats and 6 hovercraft. This is what it costs to build a RNLI lifeboat, deliver it, and make it ready for service:

- Shannon class all-weather lifeboat costs £2,781,000
- B class inshore lifeboat costs £322,000
- D class inshore lifeboat costs £101,000.

Each volunteer will also need their specific crew kit to keep them safe whilst carrying out their role effectively. The cost of kitting out an all-weather lifeboat crew member from their layered clothing to their lifejacket, helmet and gloves costs over £2,700 (RRP).

WATER SAFETY

Around 138 people die by accident in UK and Irish coastal waters each year. Men and boys aged 15 and over are most at risk, with activities including boating, walking, paddleboarding, waterside play and swimming accounting for most coastal incidents and deaths.

If you ever see someone in trouble at the coast, call 999 or 112 and ask for the Coastguard. If you are able to, tell the person to relax and float on their back and throw something buoyant to help them stay afloat. **If you ever find yourself in difficulty in the water, remember Float to Live:**

- Tilt your head back, with your ears submerged
- Relax and try to breathe normally
- Move your hands and feet to help you stay afloat – it's fine if your legs sink, we all float differently
- When you've gained control of your breathing, shout for help or swim to safety if you can.

INTERNATIONAL WORK

It's not just these shores the RNLI is keeping safe. Globally, around 300,000 people drown every year. The RNLI is helping other lifesaving organisations to tackle drowning in their own countries. The RNLI and its partners are putting lifesaving into the hands of local communities.

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE RNLI

There are lots of ways you can support this lifesaving charity and local fundraising branches are always on the lookout for more volunteers. No matter how much time you are able to give, if you think that you can help or you would like to know more, please get in touch with the Brierley Hill and Kingswinford Fundraising Branch by contacting Mr John Pittwood on 07725 174176 or email him at jnp46@live.com

- Give time – see what other volunteering opportunities are available by visiting: rnli.org/support-us/volunteer
- Connect with the charity on social media to be inspired by the latest lifesaving stories by following @RNLI
- Shop with the RNLI where all profits go towards lifesaving work. You can visit the online shop at shop.RNLI.org
- Donate in memory of a loved one adding to the thousands of names that have been added to the letters and numbers that identify Shannon class lifeboats through the Launch a Memory campaign. Visit RNLI.org/LaunchAMemory
- Become a member by giving on a regular basis. Visit RNLI.org/membership
- Make a donation to power the lifesaving work. Visit RNLI.org/donate
- Leave a Gift in your Will – these are for the RNLI's crews' protection at sea, helping to fund crucial training, equipment, kit and more. 6 in 10 lifeboat launches were possible thanks to the generosity of supporters leaving a gift in their Will. Visit RNLI.org/legacy.

IT'S ALL IN THE EYES!

When it comes to attractiveness the colour, shape and size of the eyes is a major factor—which probably explains why women in the UK spend in excess of £25 millions a year on cosmetics for their eyes alone. Here are a few facts and figures about the eyes:



Your eyes blink between 17,000 and 27,000 times a day. Each blink lasts around a tenth of a second.



Almost half the brain is associated with the control of the eyes and the processing of the information that they collect.



The human retina comprises some 120 million 'rods' which enable black, white and grey to be distinguished and 8 million colour sensitive 'cones'.



The eye of a human can distinguish as many as 500 different shades of grey.



Under the right conditions the human eye can see the light of a candle at a distance of 14 miles.



Eye makeup has been used by humans since Ancient Egyptian times when a substance called kohl was used to enhance the eyes. This was made up of burnt almonds, copper, ash and ochre and was much used by the likes of Cleopatra.

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it's a fact!

★ A strange case was heard at Dudley County Court in July 1894 after William Lowe, a farm labourer from Penn brought an action against Edward Dickinson, the relieving officer in Sedgley for false imprisonment and wrongful prosecution. Lowe had apparently married a woman from Sedgley on 1st April. They had been seeing each other for around six months and then found that she was pregnant. The marriage was purely to preserve her good name and directly after the ceremony she returned to live with her parents in Sedgley and Lowe went back to his home in Penn. At first he gave his wife 15 shillings a week which was almost all his earnings. Later he reduced that to half of his earnings at which time his wife said that if she did not have all his wages she would not have any. Two months later the relieving officer called on Lowe to say that his wife was locked up at Sedgley until bail could be arranged. Subsequently Lowe appeared in court charged with running away and leaving his wife to claim off the parish. The charges, though, were dismissed and as a result of that decision Lowe decided to sue Dickinson. The jury heard that Dickinson had not checked his facts before having Lowe arrested and did not even realise that Lowe had never lived in Sedgley. Lowe was granted £10/10s in compensation.



★ For many years the Britannia pub in Upper Gornal was a home brew house and under the auspices of its erstwhile licensee Sallie Williams it produced a much admired ale called "Cow & Gate". Brewing ceased in 1959.



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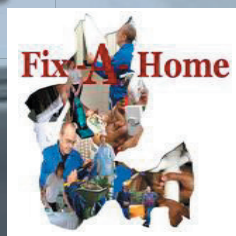
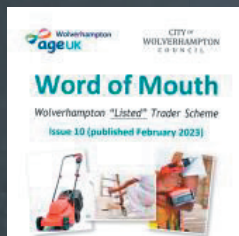
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TIPTON REMEMBERS HEROIC JOE

Two special ceremonies were held to commemorate the centenary of the action in the First World War that earned Joseph Davies from Tipton the Victoria Cross, the highest award for members of the British military. Here we tell his story...

Born on 28th April 1889 in Nock Street, Tipton, Joseph (or Joe as he was widely known) John Davies first joined the British Army at the age of 21 when he signed up with the Welsh Regiment on 19th August 1909.

At his medical—which took place in Birmingham—he was recorded as being 5ft 4¾ inches tall and weighing 199lbs. On 18th January 1910 his battalion was posted to Egypt where they took up garrison duties over the next four years before being transferred to similar duties in India. With war being declared in Europe, however, Joe and his battalion were ordered to return to the UK from where, after a short period of home leave, they were then posted to France in January 1915. Within months, though, Joe suffered a shot to his shoulder and was returned to the UK for treatment and recuperation before being stationed in Gibraltar for over eight months. In May 1916, however, he returned to the front line, this time with the 10th Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. The Battle of Delville Wood on the Somme commenced on 14th July 1916. The following day—despite a very large loss of men—the 1st South African Brigade took the Wood but over the next few days their hold on the land was loosened by continual bombing by the German forces and several attacks involving up to 6000 troops. On 20th July reinforcements in the shape of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the Suffolk and Royal Berkshire Regiments were sent forward to try to relieve the South Africans.



The Fusiliers in particular faced a very hostile fusillade and many of their number were killed. Corporal Davies and eight others found themselves separated from the rest of the company and under extreme pressure from the enemy. All their officers had been killed and it was left to Joe Davies to take command. As the citation for the Victoria Cross says: *“When the enemy delivered their counterattack the party was completely surrounded but Corporal Davies got his men into a shell-hole and by throwing bombs and opening rapid fire he succeeded on routing the attackers and even followed and bayoneted them in their retreat.”* As a consequence of this action (which was witnessed by an officer) he was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest honour for gallantry in the face of the enemy. The medal was presented to him on 7th October 1916 by King George V at Buckingham Palace.

But before that he had civic receptions in both Tipton and Wednesbury. Corporal Davies continued in the Army until he was discharged on 14th December 1918 as being “surplus to military requirements”. After the War he moved to Bournemouth where he lived until his death on 16th February 1976. On 20th July 2016—the 100th anniversary of the action that saw Corporal Davies awarded the Victoria Cross—a special ceremony hosted by Tipton Civic Society and the Tipton branch of the Royal British Legion took place at the King’s Arms in Toll End Road.

Back in 1992 the Society and RBL had placed a prestigious blue plaque on the Nag’s Head pub in Great Bridge but following the closure of the pub it was decided to move it to Toll End Road, close to where Corporal Davies went to school. It was felt that the 100th anniversary of the Delville Wood battle was the most appropriate date to unveil it. Three days later a separate ceremony was held in Victoria Park, Tipton where a special stone tablet to Corporal Davies was unveiled by grandsons Mike Howard and Bernard Harvey and great-grandson Ian Harvey who had travelled up from Dorset to pay tribute to their relative who had shown such bravery all those years ago.



TIPTON REMEMBERS...

Joseph Davies was one of the lucky ones. Although he was injured, he survived the war and went on to live in Bournemouth until his death in 1976. Many of those other men from Tipton who took part in the Great War were not so fortunate and almost 900 lost their lives. Local Historian Andrew Johnson painstakingly undertook research into all those identified as either coming from Tipton or having connections with the area. He published his findings on a website at www.tiptonremembers.net which is probably one of the very best of its kind. Details of the backgrounds and circumstances of the deaths of these men and one woman) are recorded in fascinating detail. In many cases Andrew has journeyed to France and Belgium and taken photographs of the graves as well.

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Chocolate cake



Karen Hayes, formerly of *Occasional Cakes*, has very kindly provided this month's recipe.

INGREDIENTS for a 4-layer cake... simply halve the ingredients if you require a smaller cake – although never reduce the cooking time.

- 600g golden caster sugar (much better for you as the less refined version)
- 200g good quality butter
- 2 heaped teaspoons of baking powder
- 350g self-raising flour (I personally do not sieve because the flour is blended well in the factories)
- 8 tablespoons of milk (full fat if possible)
- 6 free range eggs at room temperature
- 12 tablespoons of boiling water
- 100g cocoa powder (not drinking chocolate)

PREPARATION

Make sure all your ingredients are at room temperature before you start, take them out of the fridge a good hour before.

Set your oven to 150-160 fan or gas mark 4, 180 if no fan oven

Grease and line with baking paper 4 x 7" round tins (I use vegetable oil or lard as butter can sometimes burn in the oven)

(I use solid bottom tins not loose bottom but that is a personal preference as they create a more unified shape and there are no lines where the base comes out.

METHOD

Blend the cocoa powder with the water and allow to cool (this gives a glossy effect on the cake and intensifies the flavour).

Then simply add all the remaining ingredients and mix together with a paddle or "K" beater with your mixer never use whisks as this can over beat the cake making it tough and dense.

Divide the mixture equally between the tins and bake in the oven for approximately 25-40 minutes (depending on your oven). The best test is the smell as it cooks – this will change in time. Press the cake gently in the middle with your finger and if it bounces back it is done – this normally happens around the time the cake comes away from the

edges of the tin. Alternatively, test the cake by inserting a skewer diagonally in the cake and if it comes out clean then it is cooked. If any mixture sticks to the skewer simply leave the cake in the oven checking every 4-5 mins so as not to overcook.

ICING FOR INSIDE AND OUT

I use a simple butter cream:

- 250g butter (room temperature)
- 500g icing sugar

Blend together and add Nutella or similar style spread if you want to add a chocolate flavour.

Fill each layer and sandwich together. You can add fruit in between the layers (such as strawberries) but remember this shortens the time you have to eat it as this can start mould growth. The remaining butter cream can be spread around the outside of the cake as this helps to prevent the cake from drying out and gives added moisture. For decoration simply add your favourite chocolates or sugar flowers which you can make yourself from sugar paste (there are lots of videos on the internet as to how to make sugar bag roses without any tools or equipment).

Now simply enjoy with friends... that's the best part....

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The Mary Stevens Hospice

— to open new shop in Gornal —

The Mary Stevens Hospice will open a brand-new shop in Gornal on Friday 14th August. The new shop will stock a range of goods donated by the local community, including high-quality clothing, footwear, books and collectibles, and all profits from the shop will help to fund The Mary Stevens Hospice in Oldswinford, Stourbridge.

The opening brings the charity's total number of shops up to 16, with other locations including Stourbridge, Dudley, Kingswinford and Kinver.

Gail Phillips, Retail Area Manager for The Mary Stevens Hospice, said: "We are delighted to be opening a shop in Gornal this summer. The shop represents an exciting opportunity to strengthen our presence within the local community while generating vital funds to support hospice services."

The new shop, which is located at 52 Louise Street, Lower Gornal, DY3 2UB, will officially open at 10am on Friday 14th August, and will then be open 9am-4pm, Monday to Saturday.



The shop will also be taking on new volunteers. Anyone interested in volunteering at the shop can ask in-store or call **01384 210 291**.

The Mary Stevens Hospice provides palliative and end-of-life care, free of charge, to people living with life-limiting illnesses and their loved ones throughout the Dudley borough and beyond.



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Our prize this time is hopefully going to spur you all on to catch up with some DIY. With that in mind we are pleased to offer two lucky winners the chance of each winning a £50 gift card for B&Q – this is courtesy of one of our lovely advertisers who is very kindly supporting us with this. Please note that only one entry per person is allowed – multiple entries will not be entered into the draw. Good luck to you all.

All you have to do is search out the square below for the 16 words associated with **B&Q VOUCHERS** 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, 24th August 2026**. Good luck!

B	O	S	T	C	U	D	O	R	P	Z
S	H	E	D	S	G	V	Z	E	I	G
B	O	U	T	D	O	O	R	S	N	V
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6. VOUCHER
7. ART
8. BRUSHES
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12. PAINTS
13. PLANTS
14. ORGANISE
15. SCREWS
16. CLEANING

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SEND TO: B&Q VOUCHERS COMPETITION, 50 REDHALL ROAD, DUDLEY DY3 2NL

OR WHATEVER by John Sparry

‘A little tyke from Sheffield’

The fascinating story of how Enid, the future mother of Roy Hattersley, left the marriage for which she was being prepared by Roman Catholic priest, Frederick Hattersley, after he fell deeply in love with her, and how they lived happily ‘ever after’, is a real life account of a situation usually found inside the covers of novels such as ‘The Thorn Birds’.

Roy Hattersley, MP, Member of the House of Lords, writer and journalist—and indefatigable supporter of Sheffield Wednesday, has died, aged 93.

That tingling tale of the romance which led to Roy’s early entry into politics—his mother, Enid, became Lord Mayor of Sheffield, and mentored the development of the Crucible Theatre, now centre for all things snooker—were just some of the Hattersley discourse during, some years ago, his time on stage at Stourbridge Town Hall delivering his contribution to the series of Celebrity Lectures.

My own appreciation of Roy comes not only from some of his excellently written books of essays and memoirs—try ‘A Yorkshire Boyhood’ and ‘Who Goes Home’ - but also that we’re both too late for Christmas being born in different years, but on December 28th. Holy Innocent’s Day! I might add!

I am indebted to my friend, Malcolm Pillar, for the article in The Guardian on Roy Hattersley: apparently when in a department led by Barbara Castle, she called him ‘*an able, tough, unscrupulous little tyke*’.

When he was on the Stourbridge stage, my question to him, having listened to his regular appearances on Radio 4’s ‘News Quiz’ was why had Private Eye’s ex-editor, Richard Ingrams, ceased contributing? (I always chuckled when the Private Eye man surprised himself by announcing in headline form ‘INGRAMS KNOWS ANSWER, SHOCK!’

‘No worries’ said Roy ‘people give it a rest as they please’.

Those years ago it was an entertaining evening with Roy Sidney George Hattersley, ‘Politics is a tough business!’ and when first a Sheffield councillor ‘was younger than some of their dustcarts’.



Roy Hattersley, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and M.P. for Birmingham Sparkbrook, seen visiting the party conference in Brighton on October 1st 1991

By John Sparry, Ridge Cot, 15 Enville Road, Wall Heath
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(Sorry folks, no texts or voicemails accepted—I just can’t cope with that!)

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WHEN SAM COTTON HELD COURT

Without a doubt one of the best loved characters in Sedgley was Sam Cotton who served as Chairman of Sedgley Urban District Council in the 1920s.

Born in Pensnett in 1872, Sam came from a family that moved around the area as licensees of various public houses. Eventually they settled at 'The Royal Hotel' in Coseley and Sam enjoyed a settled childhood—although he left school at the tender age of 12, working in factories and shops until in 1893 he decided to concentrate on being an entertainer. Times were hard, though, and to top up his income (he was earning about £100 a year as a stand-up comic) he took a variety of jobs. He formed an amateur dramatic society in Coseley and wrote a number of one-act plays which they performed.

During the First World War he worked as a pianist at a cinema in Tipton before returning to work as an agent for the Liverpool Victoria Friendly Society. His strong vocalist views led him into politics and he became involved in Sedgley Council. He also became Secretary of the Sedgley Working Men's Club and Chairman of Sedgley Pensioners' Club. Despite all this involvement in the community, Sam was most at home performing and well into his 90s he would entertain at old peoples' clubs.

He died in 1965 but even today if you mention his name in Sedgley there are those who remember 'Mr Sedgley' who always had a smile on his face.

WINES: SOME 'IRRESISTIBLE' FAVOURITES

A review by Trevor Langley

There are some wine productions that can be classed as irresistible. For this quest I searched for a range of wines and found a most acceptable list, that were indeed, labelled 'Irresistible'. Various types of wines satisfy numerous people, be it a dry white, off-dry production, sweeter delectation or perhaps something sparkling.

EXPLORERS SAUVIGNON BLANC (12% vol), from Marlborough, New Zealand, I found to be dominated, exceptionally well, with the fruity flavours of gooseberries. This dry wine is extremely popular, satisfying many white wine lovers, constantly.

VIOGNIER ST GABRIEL PAYS D'OC (13% vol) hails from France. This dry, fully-flavoured wine production has the pale gold colours and excellent bouquet enticing to the mouth's pleasures. Floral and ripe stone fruits are most evident.

BACCHUS (12% vol), from Kent, England, is a further, very popular dry white wine. I rated this production highly, having overtones of elderflowers and goose-berries. Fresh, and again with an aromatic pleasure for the nasal senses, this wine has countless devotees.

SOLO (12.5% vol). This dry Garnacha pink pleaser comes from Spain. The pale pink colour adds 'interest' to many dining tables. Old bush vines provide the red fruits for this delectation.

EIGHT ACRES (11.5% vol), from Kent, England, is highly-rated by many dry, sparkling rosé, wine lovers. Ripe, juicy red fruits are very noticeable, for the mouthfeel and the palate's delight. Again, this elegant wine adds delicate colour to a lot of dining occasions.

PROSECCO (10.5% vol) is hugely popular around the world. Both the sparkling white and sparkling rosy productions are regularly a feature at celebrations, parties and events. Italy is one of the countries, renowned globally, for wine productions of high-quality and their Prosecco wines are always in demand.

All of these wines can be very much enjoyed on their own, as well as accompanying numerous foods, such as white meats, fish, seafoods, salads and more, admirably.

I located these wines at a Co-op store, all in their 'IRRESISTIBLE' range. I found the Co-op ranges of wines, including a good number of award winners, to be most excellent. Knowledgeable advice is always available, in stores, if required. Take time and pleasure, to find your favourites. Web: www.coop.co.uk



**COMING UP IN THE
SEPTEMBER EDITION:
"Out & About: Lucarelli"**



As always,

Enjoy!

Trevor Langley

THE GHOST OF HIMLEY SWAMP

One of the local ghosts who has been seen most frequently in recent years is that of Gideon Grove, son of a farmworker from Trysull. He worked at Holbeche House on the outskirts of Wall Heath where his master was Stephen Lyttelton, one of those accused of being involved in the planning of the Gunpowder Plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament. Once the Plot had been discovered Lyttelton and a number of his co-conspirators travelled to Holbeche House but were forced to flee when the house was shaken by an explosion. In the confusion Grove was taken as one of the plotters rather than just a servant and was chased into Himley Woods. As he careered through the woodland he took a wrong turning leading into Himley bog...and was never seen alive again. In fact his body was recovered from the bog three weeks later. Since then it is said that the ghost of Gideon Grove has been seen—and heard—on many occasions.

Just before the First World War, when the railway line between Wombourne and Pensett was being constructed, workers often reported seeing a figure running through the woods and then disappearing without trace. Frequently they said that at the same time they could hear baying hounds. Two accidents have been caused on the Himley Road close to Himley Hall when cars have swerved to miss a figure that seemed to run across the road and then vanish...and walkers in the woods have reported hearing a man sobbing breathlessly within the woods, although no-one was found. The most persistent stories, though, concern sightings of a man in the grounds of Holbeche House with over 20 reports of a figure seen fleeing from the oldest part of the house.



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BRAINTEASERS ANSWERS

1. Backache
2. The values of letters are A=1, D=6, E=5, G=3, H=9, L=4, O=7, P=0, M=8 and S=2
3. QUIVER—all the words have their first and last letters consecutive in the alphabet.
4. The answer is easy—but only if you are a mathematical genius! Move the first 6 so that the sum reads:
5. They are arranged alphabetically—Eight, Five, Four, Nine, One, Seven, Six etc.
6. Ton
7. Mother-in-law
8. Four score and ten

$$2^6 - 63 = 1$$

**MORE BRAINTEASERS WILL
BE COMING YOUR WAY IN OUR
SEPTEMBER EDITIONS.**

COMPETITION WINNERS

The answer to our Wordsearch Competition in the **JULY** edition was either **MIDLANDS** or **THROUGH** which was misspelt. The two lucky winners who each receive a **FAMILY PASS** to **THE WEST MIDLAND'S SAFARI PARK** are:

JAMES BICKER of **KINGSWINFORD** and
JESSICA MAY-BLACKHAM of **WOLVERHAMPTON**

You can find this month's competition on page 50.

PLEASE NOTE: Only one entry per person per month is allowed – multiple entries will be disqualified. Winners are chosen at random from all correct entries received by the closing date.

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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, 24th August 2026 – GOOD LUCK!**

Congratulations to **TINA OHRI** of **WOLVERHAMPTON** who was the lucky winner of the two tickets on offer in the **JULY 2026** edition.

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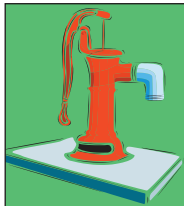
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The Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton PARISH PUMP



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Monday 17th August:
Helen Farquharson from Halfpenny Green Vineyards
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* Plus lots of enjoyable activity groups to join:
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For more information, please contact Karen
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SEDGLEY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



31st Annual Gardening Club's Flower and Vegetable Show to be held on

Saturday, 15th August 2026

in the

**Sedgley Community Centre,
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Judging:

Flower Arrangements—Cynthia Simpson
Vegetables—John Spire
Crafts—Kath Jackson

Judging from 10.00am-12.00 noon
Open to the public from 12.30pm

ADMISSION £1.00 PER PERSON
(under 16s and Members of the Gardening Club
are admitted free of charge).

Exhibits received 5.00pm-6.45pm on
Friday, 14th August and 8.00am-9.30am on
Saturday, 15th August.

Auction of produce at the end of the show.

For further information please contact
Diane Beardsmore, Chair, on
07913 660250

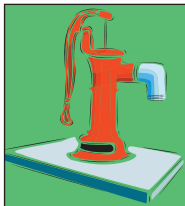
THE NEXT PARISH PUMP WILL
BE IN THE **SEPTEMBER 2026**
EDITION AND THE COPY
DEADLINE IS

Thursday, 20th August 2026.

Don't forget that insertions are free if
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The Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton PARISH PUMP

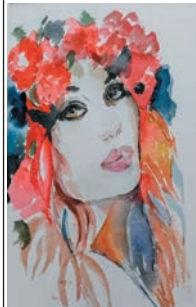
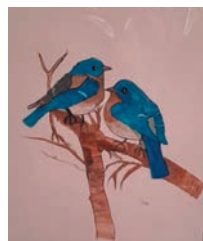


Victory Painting Group invite you to come along and enjoy refreshments including delicious Home Made Cakes on Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th of August 2026 from 11.00am to 4.30pm at the 19th Annual Exhibition of their Creative Artwork. Entrance is free. The Venue is at the 'Lydiat Room' Brick Kiln Way DY3 4BB which lies off the A463, Wombourne to Sedgley Rd. The room offers views of the children's play area and miniature railway of neighbouring Baggeridge Country Park. A large car park is available nearby the location and limited disabled parking is available immediately outside the Room itself. A lift and stairs provide access to the first floor exhibition. Children and well behaved dogs are welcome. On arrival you will receive a free brochure of the works of art exhibited, all of which are created by our 30 members, some of whom

will be on hand should you wish to meet them.



The exhibits are of varying mediums, subject matter and size, and are attractively displayed in a spacious room where you can sit and socialise whilst having a cuppa. The ready to hang paintings are reasonably priced, so too the selection of Greetings cards depicting the artists' work. Cash or card is accepted should you be tempted to buy.

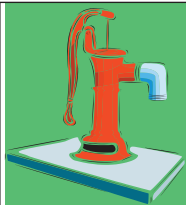


Victory Painting Group meet weekly to enjoy a day of painting and socialising. Throughout the year professional artists visit and provide demonstrations, some open to the public for a small fee. Often their painting is donated for prizes toward the raffle held on both days of the exhibition. Details of demonstrations and members' art may be found on our website and Facebook page.

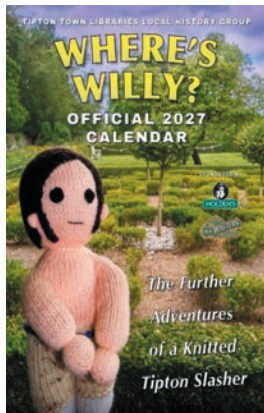
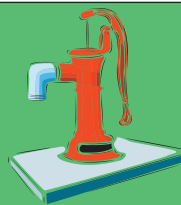
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The Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton PARISH PUMP



TIPTON TOWN LIBRARIES LOCAL HISTORY

SOCIETY are pleased to announce a special event and the launch of its new calendar *Where's Willy 2* the further adventures of the knitted Tipton Slasher. Knitted William has been out and about the region to popular and some lesser known attractions and proceeds from the calendar will go to host further history events and projects including a commemoration of the victims of the Tipton 1916 Zeppelin raids to be held in January 2027.

The event and launch will take place at the Dudley Archives on Saturday, 5th September from 10.00am-12.30pm and features a talk by popular historian Keith Hodgkins on the Slasher's Tipton and a showing of some local history films. Knitted William will

be in attendance and loves to have his photo taken. This year's calendar sponsored by Holden's Brewery and A&A Walters Funerals will be on sale at the event and inside one of the calendars there will be a golden ticket featuring special prizes from local businesses. Anyone buying a calendar on the day will receive a special limited edition gift which is only available on the day. Admission is free but there are limited spaces so please book early through [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk)

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/tales-of-slasher-and-calendar-launch-tickets-1993496491670?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=wsa&aff=ebdsshwebmobile>

SEDGLEY ACTIVE RETIREMENT GROUP

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

SEPTEMBER

3rd—**Industrial Revolution in the Black Country** by speaker John Homer

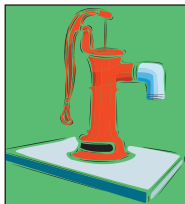
10th—**Postman's Knock** by speaker Alan Godfrey

17th—**The Story Teller** by speaker Gavin Young

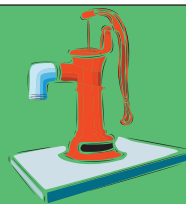
24th—**China, Land of Pandas and Dragons** by speaker Ray Sturdy

New Members are always welcome and the first two sessions are free. For further information, please contact

Stuart Lawley on 01902 882973



The Sedgley, Gornal, Coseley & Tipton PARISH PUMP



Fundraising
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11am to 3pm
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or +447707404014 for more information



IT'S WRITE HERE

It's Write Here is a writing group who meet at Coseley Library, Castle Street, Coseley WV14 9DW on the 4th Thursday of every month at 11.00am-1.00pm.

Pens, paper and complimentary tea and coffee (courtesy of the Library) are provided.

If you are interested in creative writing, expression or discussion of books, individual and collaborative works and ideas then we would love to have you join our group.

For further information please telephone the Library on 01384 812775 or email them at coseley.library@gll.org



KNIT & NATTER

10.30am on 2nd Saturday of month



ALL WELCOME

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

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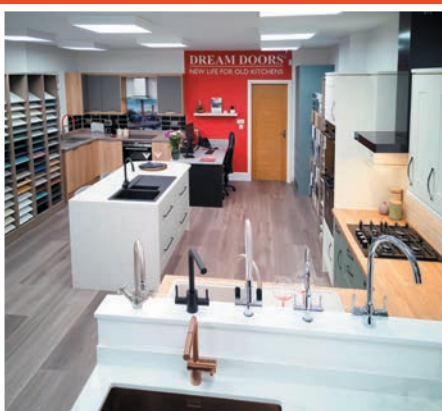
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