

SEDGLEY JOURNAL

The occasional news-sheet of Sedgley Local History Society
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THE PUBLIC HOUSE

The pub, ale house, tavern, inn, drinking den – whatever you call it – is in decline and has been since the 1980s. The reasons are well rehearsed from banning smoking in 2007 to supermarkets selling cheap alcohol. The habit of ‘going out for a drink’ is losing out.

The Lost pubs Project (www.closedpubs.co.uk) is archiving closures running at four every day of the week. It is a sobering thought that at this rate the last pub in the UK would close in 2050!

The Sedgley Manor villages reflect the national trend with pubs being demolished or reused as shops, offices or residential conversions. Others, like The Severn Stars, Summer House (Woodsetton) and The Leopard have an uncertain future.

Demolitions – Boat, Earl of Wessex, Ivy House, Prince of Wales, Pig on the Wall.
Retail etc. – White Lion & White Horse (both Coseley) – fast food, Grand Junction – dentist; Swan Inn (Woodsetton) & Waggon & Horses (Lower Gornal), Crown (Upper Gornal) – all offices; Green Dragon, Cottage of Content & Copper Bowl – all restaurants.
Residential – British Queen, Straits House, Tavern (Hurst Hill), Hop & Barleycorn.

MEMORIES OF COSELEY

Claudia was born in 1933. She has vivid recollections of life in the village during the 1930s and 40s.

Her early memories have been published with the catchy title *Nothing to Hyde*. Stories and anecdotes tumble from the pages covering school days, Sundays, holidays and the dark days of wartime.

Her family history is lovingly told with humour and warmth and will appeal to all Black Country folk.

She has already written three books about Coseley and thought it was about time to pen a more personal record.

Beryl Wilkes (Claudia Hyde) is the author.

The book is available direct – 01902 491583
Also at Regards Card shop, Bramford Estate, Coseley and Bywater News, Upper Gornal.
Price - £7.95

BAGGERIDGE VILLAGE

Around 1900 the Earl of Dudley’s coal mine was getting underway. At its peak the pit was Europe’s biggest. Taking out the ‘thick coal’ of Staffordshire meant a deep shaft and by the 1960s working the seam was difficult. Closure came in March 1968 and subsequently the site became Baggeridge Country Park.

Next door, using colliery waste and on-site clay, the Earl opened his brickworks in 1936. Under changes of ownership bricks were made until 2008. In 2014, with the exception of the landmark chimney, the whole site was cleared for a residential development.

Using the name ‘Baggeridge Village’ the six phases will eventually create 170 houses, a community centre and craft workshops. Later a nursing home is proposed.

BORN IN THE MANOR

Andrew Griffiths lived in Woodsetton and attended Bramford Primary School and the High Arcal School. His father, Bob, was Mayor of Dudley in 1982.

From school he entered the family engineering business followed by work with a building society. A spell in the European Parliament as a political adviser and in Westminster with important roles for Theresa May and Eric Pickles prepared Andrew for life as an MP.

He was elected to Parliament in 2010 and again in 2015, winning Burton & Uttoxeter for the Conservative Party. Here, the nature of the constituency allows Andrew to be a strong advocate for the brewing industry and farming. However, Andrew can still drink a local brew as Lower Gornal and Pensnett based Black Country Ales opened a pub in Burton in May 2015!

Frederick William Johnson was born in Sedgley in February 1917. He was the son of a blacksmith. (Sedgley's Co-op supermarket stands on the site of the smithy.) Frederick's schooling at Queen Victoria in Bilston Street was interrupted when, at the age of eleven, the family moved to Canada in 1928. Here, he trained as a lawyer and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1963 and in 1965 joined the Bench eventually becoming Chief Justice in 1977. He was politically active as a Liberal. He was appointed 16th Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan in 1983, retiring from the post in 1988.

In 1990 he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada followed by the province's Order of Merit in 1991. Frederick died in June 1993 and was given a state funeral.

Over the years he made several visits to Sedgley renewing his links with Tipton Street Methodist Church. At the Sunday School his father, Edwin, had been superintendent and a local preacher in the Dudley circuit. In 1972 Frederick presented a communion table to the church in memory of his parents.

(Acknowledgment: The late Trevor Genge wrote an article about Frederick Johnson in The Blackcountryman magazine – Spring edition, 1995)

SEDGLEY MANOR TRIVIA

From 1800 to 1850 the population of the nine villages of Sedgley Parish trebled from 10,000 to 30,000. Although the area was well known for nail making it also had a reputation for making chains. White's Directory for Staffordshire (1851) named ten major nail masters in the Parish of which six made chains. These masters employed hundreds of workers toiling away in out buildings attached to their cottages.

WEBSITE WATCH

Woodsetton War Memorial ~ www.woodsettonmemorial.com

The Mount Tabor Chapel WW1 memorial was re-sited in November 2015. Dudley MBC, Woodsetton Charitable Trust & High Arcal School were involved in the project and name research.

Revolutionary Players ~ www.revolutionaryplayers.org.uk

Launched in November 2015 this superb site investigates nearly forty movers & shakers living in the English Midlands during the C18th & early C19th – Arkwright to Wedgwood, Darwin to Watt – all the great names of the Industrial Revolution.