



Sedgley's

Diamond 60

*Sixty years, sixty people,
sixty stories about village life
since 1952.*

1957

Cycling memories of Sedgley

by Tony Hart

Back in the spring of 1957, together with a friend called John Bale, I planned a week-long cycling trip to the West Country. Naturally my bike needed tender loving care after being laid up for the winter.

On a cold March day after completing the ritual of new wheel bearings, replacing brake blocks and fitting a set of dropped handlebars plus a new set of brake levers, I set out on a test ride.

I grew up in Napier Road, Blakenhall, just off the Wolverhampton to Dudley Road. So the obvious route for this ride was through Fighting Cocks, past the elegant but now demolished pub of that name, up to Sedgley.

The trip from Fighting Cocks was a painful slog rather than a pleasure, however I freewheeled down Gospel End Road and onto Penn Common. It was then that the snow hit me - lots of it. I got home cold and miserable.

So why then did I get to love Sedgley? To me, as a boy, it was always where I wanted to live when I grew up. Compared to the tight-packed terrace houses of Blakenhall, it was rural bliss.

Also my first memories of Sedgley went back to the mid-1940s. On summer Saturday evenings we would catch the trolleybus to Sedgley and then walk down Bilston Street to the Beacon pub where there was a veranda in which kids could sit with their parents (a very rare thing in the 1940s) whilst they had a drink.

I looked on Sedgley almost as a holiday resort, one that was much more accessible than my beloved Weston-Super-Mare. In 1964 I realised my childhood dream when Anne and I married and settled in Coppice Close.



Tony Hart and his drop-handlebar bike in the 1950s



1950s bicycle spanners and a John Bull puncture repair outfit.



The Beacon Hotel (drawing by Ron Baker).