



Sedgley's
Diamond 60
*Sixty years, sixty people,
sixty stories about village
life*

1987

Bert Bissell, Man of Peace

by Val Trinder (All Saints' Church Ladies' Society)

On **Monday 5th January 1987** the speaker at our monthly meeting was **Bert Bissell**. He talked to us about "his mountain", **Ben Nevis**, and of the pilgrimages he made there over the last 50 years. Most slides showed Bert with groups of young people and mountain rescue men struggling through extremely hazardous conditions to reach the top.

Some slides showed the mountain in all its grandeur, with breathtaking views of valley and loch, and I found myself wishing that I could frame some of them and take them home with me. Bert went on to explain how these expeditions had come about.

It started 62 years ago when he formed a Bible Class for young people at **Vicar Street Methodist Chapel, Dudley**. They began studying the life of Christ, and how He found peace from walking in the mountains. They decided to follow His example and this was how it began. After starting in Wales the walks progressed to Scotland, with visits to Fort William and Ben Nevis.

From these visits came the idea of a **Cairn for Peace** at the summit. Over the years there have been several plaques added to the cairn, the main one being from the youth of the United Nations.

Bert made 98 attempts to reach the summit and was successful on 90 occasions, the other eight being forestalled by bad weather. He ended his talk by taking us back to the very beginning to Bethlehem at Christmas time, to the place where our Lord was born which for us Christians is so meaningful.

I realised that this wonderful old gentleman had spoken all evening about people, places, and dates without notes. He was 84 years old.



Bert Bissell