



Sedgley's

Diamond 60

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

1985

A blast from the past

By David Melhuish

During the mid-eighties I was a police inspector covering the area between Sedgley and Dudley. Whilst completing paperwork and sipping tea at Sedgley Police Station, we received a message I assumed to be a domestic gas fire incident and I dispatched one of my officers to a house in Lower Gornal.

The officer reported from the house that en route he had seen a large crowd gathered at the abattoirs in Five Ways with an ambulance and fire engine in attendance and suggested I attend. He added mysteriously that should I “discover anything missing”, he believed he’d “already found it”.

I found the rear yard at the abattoirs like the scene from a battlefield. A small brick construction had been shattered and the mortar plugs from the brick work lay scattered around the area like bullets. Tin sheeting and bits of metal lay twisted all over the place. Windows were broken, and a large boiler four foot by six foot was missing - apparently it had ‘shot off into the air’. You might guess where it was to be found: yes, that’s right, about a quarter of a mile away in a house in Leafy Rise.

On arriving there I spotted a large hole in the roof. Tiles had peppered cars parked in the street, causing considerable damage. On entering I was immediately confronted by the boiler, still piping hot, lodged in the staircase.

Luckily the woman occupant and her two small children hadn’t been injured, although (together with an employee of the abattoirs) they were taken to hospital suffering from shock. All were released following check-ups.

Call it morbid fascination but I’d love to have seen that boiler flying through Lower Gornal!



David was drinking tea at Sedgley Police Station in 1985 when the emergency call came in.



The boiler at Fields Butchers’ Lake Street abattoir had exploded, flying through the air.



It crashed through the roof of 4 Leafy Rise, Lower Gornal.



It came to rest, still piping hot, in the staircase of the house.