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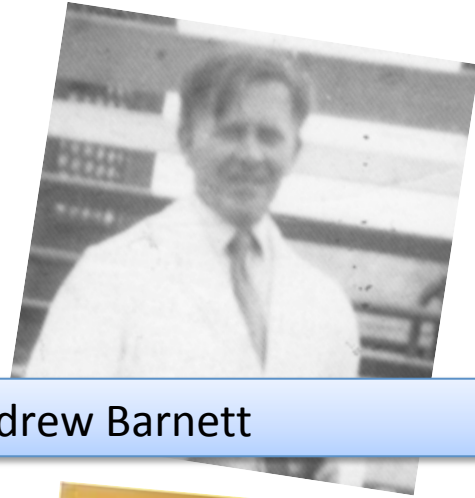
**FAMILIES AND PROMINENT PEOPLE**

# **LOCAL HISTORIANS**

# Crediting work of local historians



Trevor Genge



Andrew Barnett



Ron Baker



Chris Smith

# **SPORTS PERSONALITIES**

# Bobby Thompson

Bobby joined Wolves as a youngster in 1959 and signed professional forms in July 1961. His debut was in 1962 and he played for them throughout the 60s, making 278 appearances in the latter years of Stan Cullis's 16-year managerial reign. His best finish with Wolves was 5th in the First Division in 1962-3. He made the first of eight international appearances for England in the 8-3 Home International victory over Northern Ireland in November 1963. In 1969

The Sportsmen was a sports shop opened by Eric Morecambe. Dave Fereday the golfer, and Bobby Thompson were the owners.





## Phil Parkes

Lived in Monument Lane, Sedgley.

Beginning his football career at Walsall, turning professional in 1968, he made over 50 appearances in the Black Country before moving to London, signing for Queens Park Rangers for £15,000 in June 1970. His QPR debut was on Saturday 22 August 1970 in a 3–1 defeat at home to Leicester City.

He was a pupil at Dormston School from September 1961 to December 1965.

# Tommy Postlethwaite – Snooker Champion

*Changed days indeed!* writes Doug Francis

In May 1983 John Parrott reached the final of the world's oldest snooker championship, losing 13-9 to Tony Jones. As the B&SCC had obtained sponsorship Jones received £1000, Parrott £350.

John Parrott epitomises the present day ambitious young player — he had his sights set on the professional ranks, had his own manager and coach and was already a well-known name nationally. He had won Junior Pot Black in 1982 and was to do so again in 1983. He had even signed with Peradon & Fletcher to market his own 'name' cue.

How different it all was in 1948! The Final was then stage at the famous Burroughs and Watts Hall in Soho Square. The winner was Sydney Battye of Manchester who defeated Tommy Postlethwaite from the Wolverhampton area 6-4. Both received replica cups as prizes. Money prizes would have been unthinkable in a strictly amateur competition. There were no Northern and Southern Championships. The Competition proper was made up of the 17 players who had successfully won their area's part of the Competition.

Like John Parrott, Tommy Postlethwaite also epitomised the young player of his day. He was a sheet metal worker which meant that billiards, snooker and soccer had to be fitted around his job. He enjoyed his game of billiards for itself but was aware of its value in developing his expertise at snooker. He was captain of one of the Midlands' leading snooker clubs, Goldthorn Social, and derived just as much satisfaction from its winning exploits in C.I.U. Competitions as he did from his own individual achievements. He was not overconcerned with what he could get out of the game; he enjoyed the cut and thrust of competitive play and the camaraderie that often went with it.

There was no highly developed tournament play in 1948. Apart from local League Competitions and what the C.I.U. provided, it was the English Amateur Championship that beckoned the very good amateur player.

Postlethwaite entered the Birmingham area of the Championship. Since the motor car was beyond the means of the working man, getting to matches could entail several bus rides, particularly if the venue was a goodly distance from

Wolverhampton. This imposed a discipline over and above that required in the match itself. While John Parrott was able to mull over his defeat in a nearby motel, Tommy Postlethwaite had to hurry back to Euston Station for the train journey to the Midlands. His understanding employer had given him the time off but would expect him back at work the following morning.

## DIFFERENT WORLDS

Postlethwaite had no ambitions of becoming a professional. In any case the organisation of the 1948 professional game bore little resemblance to the 1983 model. The number of professionals was small. Joe Davis had retired from Championship play. Walter Donaldson was the World Champion. Fred Davis to become Champion had to challenge him with the contest being decided at several venues spread over time. Fred won 84-61. In 1983 Steve Davis defeated Cliff Thorburn 18-6, the culmination of the now annual Crucible Theatre TV spectacular.

In 1948 TV was in its infancy and video very much a thing of the future. Yet this latter has allowed the dedicated player the opportunity of studying in depth, for example, the 147s of Steve Davis and Cliff Thorburn. The 147 Joe Davis made in 1955 has only been recorded by means of the written word.

Parrott and Postlethwaite, therefore, inhabited different snooker worlds. They were both runners-up in the English Championship but there their paths diverge. It would never have occurred to a Tommy Postlethwaite that he could earn his living at playing snooker; a John Parrott could rightly feel that not only should he be a member of the W.P.B.S.A. but that he could be successful in its tournaments.



Tommy Postlethwaite (photo by Maurice Ward)

# **SEDGLEY FAMILY BUSINESSES**





## The Slater family of Sedgley Shoe Box

Mom and Dad ran the Shoe Box in Bilston St from 1959-86.

Dad used to take me down to Molineux on game days. (Had his own workshop right next to the tunnel, where we could stand on the bench and watch the game) Remember getting a match ball from the Wolves, signed by all of the players ! Of course, what did I do ? Kicked it around the streets and wore off the signatures ! The Doog, Waggy, would have made a nice piece of memorabilia now !



The Slaters' Shoe Box in Bilston Street in the 1980s

# The Huband Family - Cakes



The Huband family ran the Wimbush shop in High Street Sedgley.

Frances Huband,  
who lived above the  
shop





## The Egginton Family – Chemists in the Bull Ring

The late Chris Egginton's family  
ran Egginton's pharmacists in  
the Bull Ring

Sedgley from around the turn  
of the last century until the  
1970s.

Beginning as a dispensing  
chemist, the business later  
expanded,  
latterly becoming a local  
department store - at one  
stage it even  
boasted a coffee lounge.





Charlie Cartwright's  
Newsagents business

# The Cartwright family newspaper business in Dudley Street

# The Butler Family of 1 Bull Ring – Drapers; Musicians

Family lived at 1 Bull Ring since 1881  
(census) - till late 1930s; run by  
Butler sisters (Elizabeth?; Annie;  
Mary) until sold to Hartills Butchers

Sydney Butler became a famous  
operatic tenor; and founded Sedgley  
Operatic Society



No.	House	Name	Sex	Age	Mar.		Occ.	
					Mar.	Mar.	Occ.	Occ.
126	1	Johanna Cooper	Wife	72			Widow (Margt Str)	Sedgley - Bull Ring
		Elizabeth	do	70			do	do - Bull Ring
		Mary	do	66			do	do - Bull Ring
		Elizabeth	do	62			do	do - Bull Ring
		Mary	do	48			do	do - Bull Ring
127	1	Sydney Butler	Son	28			Draper	Sedgley - Wellington
		Elizabeth	do	27			Draper's Assistant	Stafford - Bull Ring
		Mary	do	26			Draper's Assistant	do
		James	do	24			Draper's Assistant	do
		Richard	do	23			do	do
		Maria	do	22			do	do
		Henry	do	21			do	do
		Maria	do	20			do	do
		Elizabeth	do	19			do	do
		Mary	do	18			do	do
		Elizabeth	do	17			do	do
127A	1	Johanna	Wife	72			Widow (Margt Str)	Sedgley - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	70			do	do - Bull Ring
		Mary	do	66			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	62			do	do - Bull Ring
		Mary	do	48			do	do - Bull Ring
		Elizabeth	do	47			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	46			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	45			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	44			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	43			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	42			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	41			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	40			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	39			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	38			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	37			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	36			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	35			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	34			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	33			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	32			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	31			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	30			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	29			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	28			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	27			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	26			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	25			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	24			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	23			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	22			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	21			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	20			do	do - Bull Ring
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		Maria	do	18			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	17			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	16			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	15			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	14			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	13			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	12			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	11			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	10			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	9			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	8			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	7			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	6			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	5			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	4			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	3			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	2			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	1			do	do - Bull Ring
		Maria	do	0			do	do - Bull Ring

Total of Women 3 1/2 ✓      Total of Male and Female 9 11 ✓



## **Atkins Undertakers.**

14 High Holborn,  
Sedgley.

“Most kids had paper rounds, but my part-time job then was to help with the removal of bodies - not for the faint-hearted!”

My roots have always been firmly planted in Sedgley. I didn't carry on with my father's business, as I didn't really feel it was quite the thing for a young lad to do. I took up hairdressing and have continued with this throughout my life. I haven't moved far from High Holborn, as I now trade in the Bull Ring. My business, Oliver Twist Hair Design, has been trading in Sedgley for 22 years.





# Dan Price - BD Price Toy and Cycle Superstore

“We’ve been in the cycle trade in Sedgley since 1895 – the oldest surviving business in the village. BD Price Superstore was built in 1987/88 on the site of the terraced house where I was born in 1940.

At the time we were based in High Street in what is now the Coop Funeral Services shop. Shopfitters installed some of the shelving and we brought peg boarding across from the old shop. We ran the two shops in parallel for about a week until we were ready transfer operations to High Holborn.


The toy section of our business began in around 1962/3 . “





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## The Brookes Family – Tools and industrial machining Tools

Graham Brookes, Janet Brookes, Roger Fellows, Alan Brookes

Began trading in 1904. The family company continued through sons and grandsons. They made woodworkers' tools; also machine tools for industry.

“Janet still lives in the house in gospel end st do u remember they had a train that run right across the front of the two houses loved it wen we were children Mrs Brooks was a really lovely lady I used to serve her when I worked in Robinson's fruit an flower shop she was always so nice”



## The Whitmore family of Spout House Farm Cotwall End Road

Q:What was your family's connection with Spout House Farm?

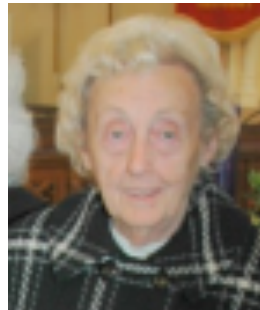
I was born in 1926 on the farm itself. It belonged to my dad (who was called Reg) and mum, and before they had it, my grandfather had it. My family name is Whitmore. My grandfather had Spout House Farm, and what we called 'Top Farm' on Sandyfields Road, also called Greenhill Farm.

Q:Would your grandfather have owned those farms in Victorian times?

Yes, I would say so. My grandfather bought Spout House Farm from the Law family, who had owned it for generations.

Q: What kind of farm was Spout House?

It was a dairy farm mainly. We grew vegetables, potatoes and wheat too and other foodstuffs to feed the cows with. It was 'organic' in those days - there was none of this 'patent' stuff until later on (ie chemicals for killing weeds). Years ago, we used to go up and down the rows with a hoe, to get the weeds out – you didn't get anything out of a bottle then. We had a man who would do it.



[John Nickolds "My Dad worked at Spout house farm for Reg and Alice Whitmore in the 50s"](#)

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The Field family  
butchers'  
business in Bull  
Ring Sedgley.

**PUB LANDLORDS**

*Abdull Patell: "I got banned and called an "article" more than once, but so did a lot of young fellas who drank in the swan lol"*



**Geoffrey  
Bangham  
Landlord of The  
Swan in the  
1980s**

"A real character ! He kept The Royal Oak at Hilton for some years and also Quarterhouse on Compton Road and indeed was a great host"

**POLITICIANS**



Councillor Alan Hickling

Mrs Muriel Hickling's 'Elizabeth Cooper' Clothes Shop at the corner of High Street and Bilston Street

Manufacturing Chemist. Used old stable block. Supplied snuff to Alfred Preedy; made first marker pen; started Dormston Trading Estate; Sedgley UDC Chairman 1962



Interested in theatre organs. Wurlitzer from Gaumont Walsall; replaced by larger Wurlitzer from City Cinema Leicester.



**EDUCATION**



# Barbara O'Connor

Former Dormston Headteacher Barbara O'Connor who was the driving force behind getting the theatre and sports hall (The Dormston Centre) built at Dormston, opening in April 2000.





1937

**‘Hughie’ McLeod -  
Headmaster of  
Queen Victoria  
School  
1920s-1950s**



1940

# **COMMUNITY FIGURES**



# Lil Parton

My mum's first garden party was held in 1976. It was my father Jack Parton's who first suggested it, to raise money for the restoration of the bells at All Saints'.

Revd John Linford undertook a sponsored walk with his brother along the entire length of Offa's Dyke for the same purpose the following year.

For the next ten years Mum opened her garden to the public, ending in around 1986; the events were in fact a cross between a fete with stalls and a garden party with tea and cakes.





# George Cox MBE

“1st Sedgley Scouts started in 1910, but it took 67 years before we had our own headquarters. The site we chose was in Ladies Walk, at the far end of what is now Coop car park. We obtained the lease from Dudley Corporation in 1970 and opened Jubilee Hall on 5th November 1977. “



Military service in World War II with the Royal Marines, long career with Mander's in Heath Town, Wolverhampton ; award of his MBE by Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace in 2009 for services to the Sedgley community.



## Mike Edwards – Sedgley Morris Men

His enthusiastic leadership and participation in the Morris Men's dances was a shining example to everyone of how it's possible to keep oneself fit and active in retirement.

He was also very active in arranging and dancing at the village's May Festival, when local children dance around the Maypole in Vicar Street Gardens.



## **Doug Smith – Tower Captain, All Saints’ bellringers**

Douglas Smith passed away. Amongst his many achievements was his lifelong passion and dedication to bell ringing at All Saints', Sedgley. He was a campanologist for 66 of his 83 years and the tower captain here at Sedgley for 37 years.

**WELL KNOWN LOCAL FAMILIES**





# THE WEDGE FAMILY OF HALL STREET



**LAND AND PROPERTY OWNERS**



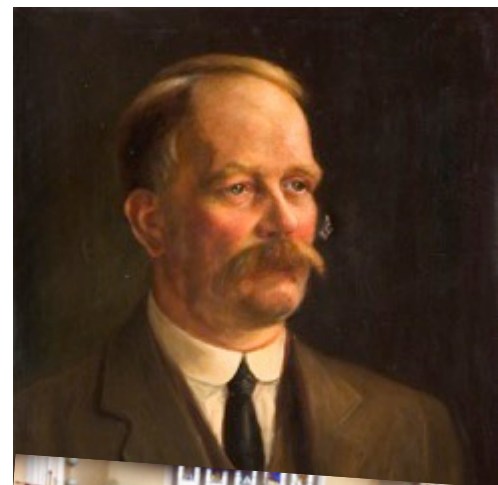
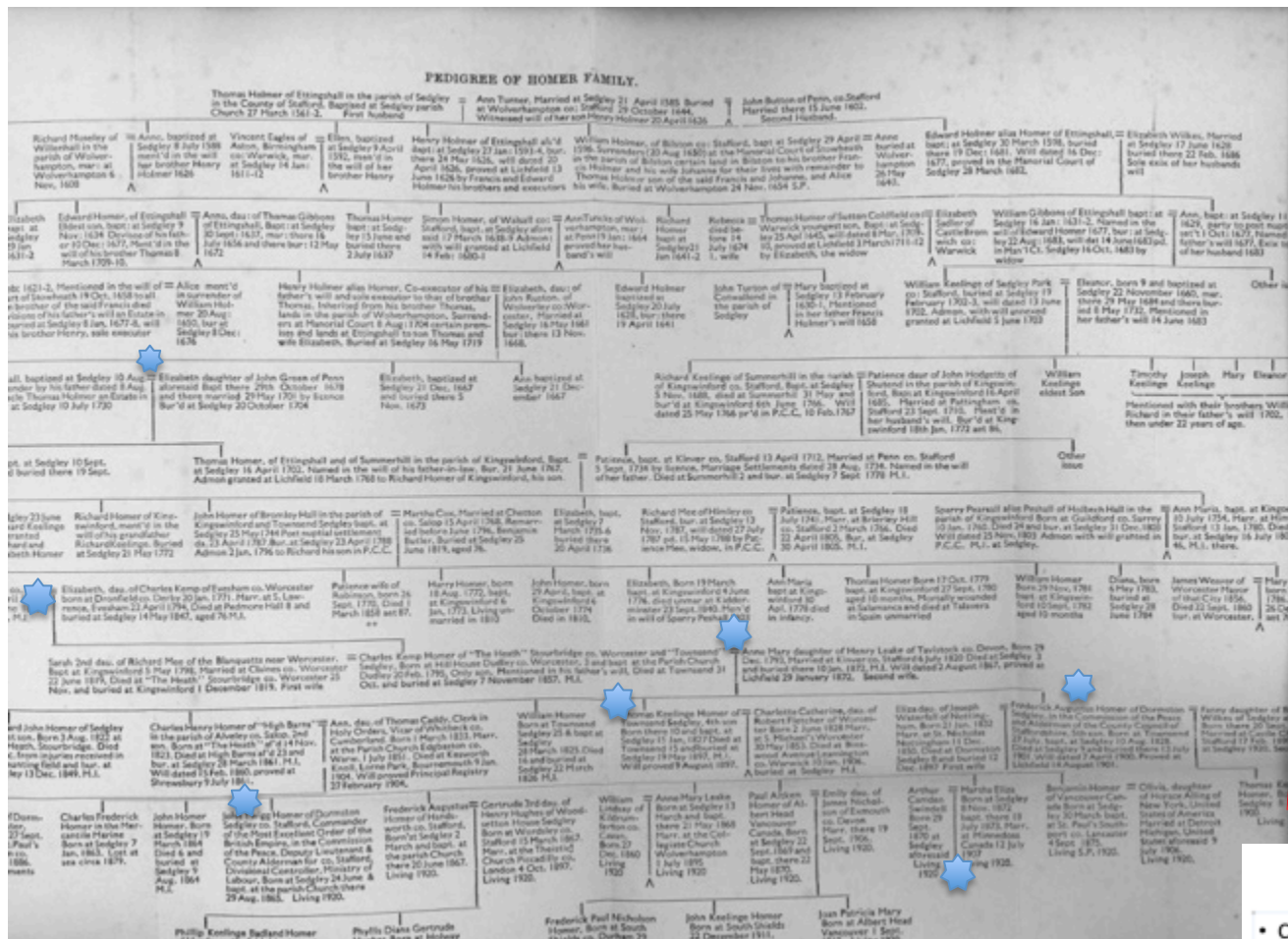
# The Homer dynasty

Homer family, a prominent 'dynasty' of landowners in Sedgley, once owned 'The Villa' at 17, Dudley Street which they renamed 'Dormston House' after the Manor the family inherited in Worcestershire.



St Nicholas' Church , Dormston, Worcestershire

# The Homer 'pedigree'



The Homer Dynasty

- Charles Kemp Homer 'Landed proprietor' (1851) of Townsend House
- Frederick Augustus Homer of 'The Villa' (Proprietor of Lands and Mines) 1871
- John Twigg Homer of Dormston House

Matt has looked into the family ancestry, in particular a Captain John Homer, a sea captain who sailed from Bristol and eventually settled in Boston in the 17th century.

# The Tinsley Family and 'The Limes'



The Limes was built by the Tinsleys in around 1851, shortly before Thomas Tinsley died, probably from cholera. His wife Eliza carried on the family business, expanding it dramatically to the point where she employed over 4,000 outworkers in Cradley Heath in 1871.

## The Limes and the Tinsleys

**Before 1851** The Limes was built on a plot known as Quarry Piece in 1844. The plot west of it, named Limepit Piece, was owned by Theophilus Tinsley, a nail factor and licensee of the Leopard public house on Dudley Road, from which he ran his business. Nail factors bought in small iron rods that were turned into nails by workers at home. Factors paid nailers for their work, and sold their products on.

### Eliza and Thomas Tinsley

Eliza Butler married Theophilus Tinsley's son Thomas in 1839. Thomas prospered in the family's line of business, and a splendid new house was built for them. Tragically, the eldest of their six children, Elizabeth, died in May 1851, just before they moved in; the following month, Thomas died suddenly. Within weeks, Eliza had begun to run his company, and named the house The Limes, maybe punning on Limepit Piece next to it. (A nearby house was already called The Quarries.)



Eliza Tinsley, date unknown

Eliza established a factory at Reddall Hill, and by 1871 employed four thousand 'men and boys'. The company's products were exported all over the world. She lived at the house until her death in 1882, gradually retiring from the business. She was a benefactor to local charities, sometimes working with her neighbour, F. A. Homer. Eliza, Thomas and two of their daughters are buried in All Saints' churchyard.



Eliza Tinsley's company made chains in Cradley Heath and made what was at the time claimed to be the longest chain ever to be produced in the Black Country.

## Owners after the Tinsleys

### The Fowler family

Henry Fowler (1820-85) made his fortune as a colliery proprietor and iron-master. He came from Bilston, then lived at Tettenhall, and bought The Limes only towards the end of his life. His widow Eliza remained there with their son, William Henry (1853-1920), until her death in 1889. When William married in 1893, his address was still The Limes, but between 1896 and 1900 they left to live with his wife Jessie's family in Cheltenham.

### William Arthur Foster (1862-1919)

Arthur Foster (as he was known) grew up at Woodsetton House on Tipton Road. He became a solicitor, with a flourishing practice in Wolverhampton and Tipton. In 1900 he married Editha Greville Prideaux, and bought The Limes as an impressive home for his bride. A governess for their two daughters, aged 9 and 6, was living with the family in the 1911 census. In 1919, however, after Foster's tragic death, his widow and the girls moved to London. He was buried in his family's vault in the Vicar Street cemetery, now a garden.

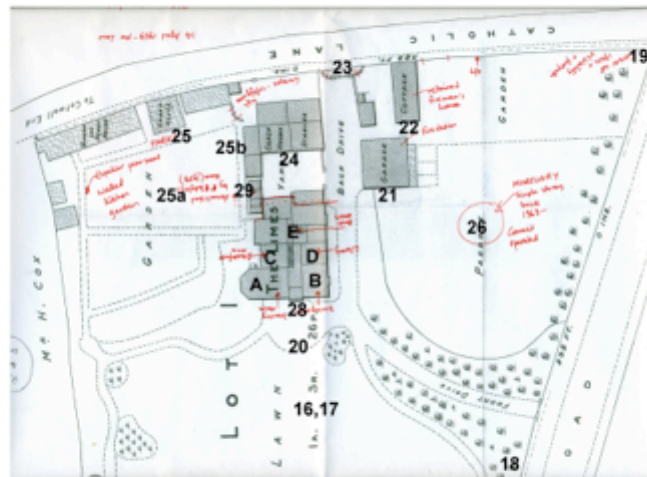
### Eliza Gray Gibbons (1845-1929)

Eliza was the daughter of John McNab Ballenden, who served Sedgley as a doctor for over 50 years. The family lived at Bleak House on Dudley Road, next to present-day Arcal Street. In 1898, she married the widowed John Lloyd Gibbons, owner of Ellowes Hall, the finest house in the district. After he died in 1919, she bought The Limes; her youngest brother, also a local doctor, already lived on the other side of Dudley Road at Holborn Lodge.

A sale catalogue, produced for the property's auction following her death in 1929, gives details of the house's layout at that time. The marble-floored entrance hall offered access to the drawing room (with bay window), dining room, library and breakfast room. Oak stairs led to four bedrooms, and a bathroom with supplies of hot, cold and soft water.

Two bedrooms were also provided for live-in servants. They had their own Hall, and worked in a 'Kitchen-Scullery', Butler's Pantry, larders and cellars. Outside, stables housed up to three horses, and a garage had been added with the advent of the motor car. A two-bedroomed 'Man's Cottage' provided tied accommodation for a male employee, perhaps with a family. While the area that is now Coronation Gardens seems always to have been parkland, near the house there were flower beds (including roses), a greenhouse, a vinery and peach and melon houses, and a kitchen garden.

# The Limes



*From private residence to council offices: the changing usage of The Limes . (Plan of the house and garden from sales particulars when the Limes was put on sale in 1929. )*

Coronation Gardens (16, 17) were originally the front gardens to The Limes. In the 1960s a council mortuary (26) was situated in the former paddock. There was a Fire Station (21) to the right of the back drive, in use until around 1971, when the Tipton Road station was built. What was marked as a 'cottage' in 1929 (22) was occupied by a retained firefighter. (23) was the entrance used by the Urban District council Parks and Highways departments in the 1960s. (24) were originally the stables for the house, later used by the council to store drain cleaners and mowers. (25a) was originally a walled kitchen garden, used by Sedgley UDC as a yard and plant nursery. The former 'Vinery and Peach house' and greenhouse (25) were used for growing plants. (28) was the front entrance. To the house. (29) was a wall where espalier pears grew.

In 1929, when it was still a private home, the room usage was as follows: (A) Drawing Room (B) Dining Room (C) Breakfast Room (D) Library (E) Back (servants') stairs.



The Limes as it looked in 1947, by local artist Ron Baker.



Gornal and Sedgley Fire Watchers gather for the last time outside the front door of The Limes in November 1944 (left); Sedgley Auxiliary Fire Service (right) who were also based at the Limes.

**Wartime use, 1939-45** In 1936, Sedgley Urban District Council bought The Limes to use as additional offices. However, by 1939 it was being used as the village's fire station and headquarters for the Auxiliary Fire Service, Fire Watchers and Air Raid Patrol. Fire watchers used the tower to look out for incendiaries dropped by German planes.

### Public and commercial use, 1936-2007



After the war, Sedgley Urban District Council used The Limes for its Engineers, Public Health and Parks departments. The Parks Department used the walled garden and glass houses as a yard

and plant nurseries. After the council was abolished in 1966, it was used by Dudley Council entirely for Public Health. In 1970 the property was sold to computer company Compact 3000 who used it for its headquarters. Its last owner, BAAN Systems, vacated the property in 2007, after which it was unoccupied and became derelict until June 2012, when ROE Developments began the conversion of the original house into four large apartments. Four smaller new apartments occupy the original stables area, and two new, detached houses are built on either side of the old house.

**The Observatory** One of the most distinctive parts of the Limes is the Italianate tower. It's similar in design to towers at [Osborne House](#), built for Queen Victoria on the Isle of Wight in around 1845. Its original purpose is uncertain: it's possible the tower was a later addition after the main block was built. Victorian grand houses often included whimsical or eccentric structures that indulged the owners' penchant for the bizarre or exotic. Workers at The Limes in the 1960s describe a set of mirrors on all four walls, angled at 45 degrees on the ceiling cornice, and still referred to the room as the 'Observatory'. Sitting in the room (even allowing for the windows) the mirrors provided a 360 degree panorama of the area.

**To read more about the history and owners of The Limes go to: [www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk](http://www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk)**