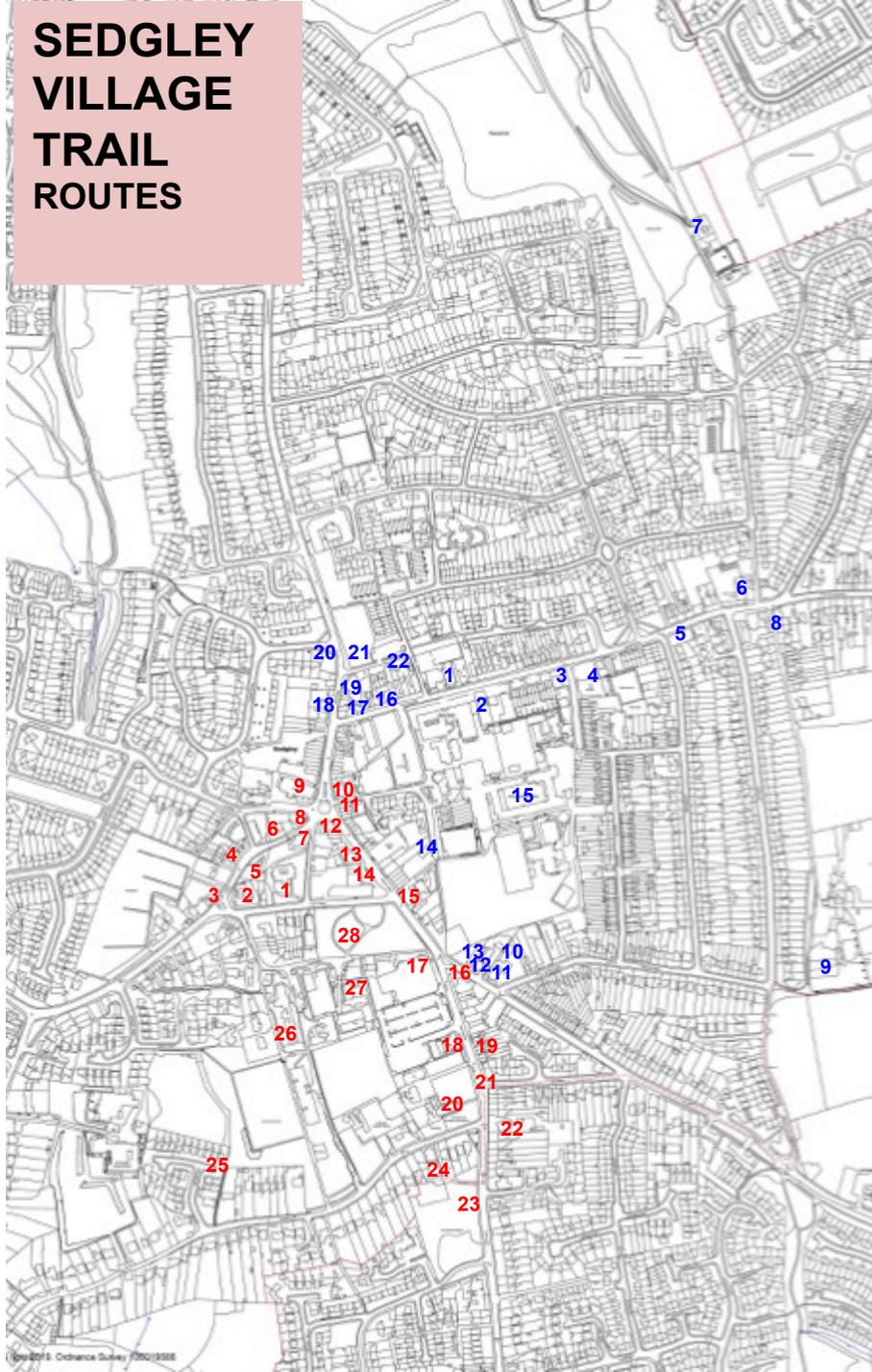


**BLUE TRAIL -  
North and East  
of Bull Ring**

## RED TRAIL

- 1: All Saints' Church
- 2: The Police Station, a former Workhouse
- 3: Café Cappella
- 4: The Olde Curiosity Shoppe
- 5: Gospel End Street – green
- 6: The Swan Inn
- 7: The Court House
- 8: The Bull Ring
- 9: The Clifton
- 10: The Red Lion
- 11: Beacon Crafts/formerly The Butlers
- 12: Former Eggintons
- 13: White Hors
- 14: Dudley Street Precinct
- 15: Dormston House
- 16: The Grand Junction
- 17: Asda formerly Watty Turner's
- 18: The former Sedgley UDC Council House
- 19: High Holborn Terraced Houses (listed buildings)
- 20: St Chad's Catholic Church
- 21: Chit's Grave Piece/Gate Street
- 22: Victorian Town Houses
- 23: Coronation Gardens
- 24: The Limes
- 25: Tenscore stile post
- 26: Sedgley Library and Ladies Walk Centre
- 27: Sedgley Community Centre
- 28: Vicar Street Gardens

## SEDGLEY VILLAGE TRAIL ROUTES



## BLUE TRAIL

- 1: St Andrews United Reformed and Methodist Church
- 2: Old and New Manse
- 3: School Street
- 4: Former Chapel/ Sedgley Working Men's Club
- 5: White Lion
- 6: Beacon Hotel and Brewery
- 7: The Beacon - Beacon Tower
- 8: Whites Drive
- 9: Site of Turl's Hill House/'The Belgians'
- 10: Former Primitive Methodist Church Hall
- 11: Former Primitive Methodist Church
- 12: Former Hortons DIY
- 13: Nail Warehouse
- 14: Rear of Dormston House/ Dormston Stable Block
- 15: Dormston School
- 16: Queen Victoria School/ Bilston Street – Turnpike
- 17: Steam Flour Mill
- 18: Wesleyan Methodists/Tasty Plaice/Miss Brassington's Private School
- 19: Georgian Buildings
- 20: Townsend Avenue – Townsend House
- 21: The Bypass that never was
- 22: Brick Street: Cottage Blinds

# 1: St Andrews United Reformed and Methodist Church



Stephen Wilkes senior (whose Nail Warehouse still stands in Brick Street) was a Congregationalist who appears to have had local people's spiritual welfare and educational interests at heart.

In 1856 Wilkes Senior donated the land for the building of Bilston Street Congregational Chapel, as well as £1000 towards its construction. Stephen senior and junior became close colleagues of fellow Congregationalist Thomas Darbey, who founded his school next to the chapel in Bilston Street in 1861.

St Andrew's URC Methodist Church was established in 1970 when the Wesleyan Methodists (who were previously in High Street Sedgley by Tasty Plaice) united with the Congregationalists, whose church it was previously.

The school building to the left was demolished and replaced by meeting rooms and a social centre.

Recently a community café has been established in the porch area of the church. It is open from 9.30am-3.30pm from Monday to Friday.

## 2: Old and New Manse



The Victorian Old Manse was once the home of the church minister - and located on the east side of St Andrew's Church. It eventually was deemed to be too small and became a private residence.

A new manse was built in 1928 by Sedgley Congregational Church. It is now owned by the West Midlands Synod Trust of the United Reformed Church for use by the United Reformed Church or the Methodist minister of Saint Andrew's Church.

# 3: School Street



What is now School Street was originally much shorter and led to allotment gardens, including Dormston School vegetable gardens, originally Queen Victoria's before Dormston was built in 1935.

The Working Men's Club may originally have been called the Sedgley Labour Club. It wasn't affiliated to any political party, and the name was changed in the 1920s.

People remember playing snooker in the working men's club, and spending Saturday nights there as children.

There was terraced housing between the corner of School Street and the old Methodist Chapel built in 1849.

On the corner of School Street on the right once stood a 1930s/ early 1940s house. This belonged to Lewis Hartill, the stone mason and funeral director, whose family had lived in Bilston Street before this.

However, another memory recalls the flats on the right of the picture as a coal yard that belonged to Sam Perry. In the 1950s he was killed when he was pinned between a lorry and a wall when the lorry ran away through not having the brakes on. Len, his employee, lived in the house at the front of the coal yard on the corner of Bilston Street and School Street and the business was run for some years afterwards.

A car parts shop is remembered in this location at one point.

This was all demolished a couple of years later to make way for the new housing which now occupies this site.

# 4: Former Chapel/ Sedgley Working Men's Club



The original Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was built in 1849. According to local historian Trevor Genge, it was known as Lane's chapel, after the influential Lane family - related to Jane Lane of Bentley Hall, who helped Charles II escape following the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

Before its construction, the first Sedgley Wesleyans had met for worship in the house of John and Sarah Hall of Bilston Street. John Hall (1791-1847) was a malt mill maker. Sarah Hall (nee Fullwood) died in 1849.

It is uncertain what this chapel was used for after the Wesleyans took over Homer's Temperance Hall in High Street in 1902, but in the 1960s it became the Full Gospel Church.

This closed in 2006. A design consultancy now occupies it (2019).



# 5: White Lion



One of Sedgley's oldest inn's and possibly the oldest surviving - it predates the Beacon Hotel probably by a couple of hundred years, and probably also predates the Bull's Head - from an era when most of the properties along Bilston Street would have been brick and timber, or at least half-timbered.

It became a coaching inn when the Bilston Road was turnpiked in the early 19th century.

It was owned by Ansell's Brewery in the 1960s. Tom and Fanny Hampton ran it for several years.

It was also known as 'Jim and Anne's'- a couple who ran the working men's club previously. It is said to be one of Sedgley's 'most haunted' buildings.

# 6: Beacon Hotel and Brewery



The Beacon Hotel and brew house dates from the Victorian era, being built around 1850.

In 1865 the licensee was Abraham Carter and the hotel was later run by his widow, Nancy. There were two subsequent licensees before the business was bought by Sarah Hughes in 1921.

Sarah ran the brewery until her death in 1951, using her own 100 year old traditional recipes.

Subsequently, her son, Alfred operated the brewery until 1957 when brewing ceased. It was reopened in 1987 by a grandson of Sarah Hughes. He spent £80,000 restoring the pub's tap room, snug and smoke room.

Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild was launched in June 1987. It was runner-up in the CAMRA National Pub of the Year competition in 2010.

# 7 : The Beacon - Beacon Tower

The Beacon is a public park, a favourite place for dog-walking.

It is one of the highest points in the Black Country, at 777 feet above sea level. There is reputed to be no higher point between The Beacon and the Ural Mountains.

It is said that the site was part of a network of beacons that were used to warn the population of the arrival of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

There is some divergence on who built the tower. It is commonly thought the "big whistle" was built by Lord Wrottesley, an amateur astronomer, for star-gazing.

The first baron died in 1841 but it was his son, the second baron, who was the serious astronomer and a founder member of the Royal Astronomical Society. He died in 1867. The second baron was president of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1841, the year his father died. The tower was built shortly afterwards.

However, others believe that the Beacon Tower was the work of local landowner Mr Petit, who erected the grand lookout as a folly.

In 1887 the tower reverted to its historical use when a fire was lit in a brazier fixed to the top, to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria. In recent years, Sedgley Morris Men have greeted the dawn on May Day by dancing at the site.

There are fine views in all directions; the industrial east, and the rural west.

In the past there was a reservoir, water towers and a lime quarry on the site. However in recent years the area has declined with anti-social behaviour and vandalism. There have been attempts to obtain lottery funding to repair the tower.



# 8: Whites Drive



White's Drive is an unadopted road, and has a number of residential buildings towards the junction with Bilston Street which vary greatly in age and design.

As the drive continues it becomes more of a country path and runs along the bottom of the gardens belonging to houses in Queen's Road.

To the left are glimpses of fields and countryside - a memory of what Sedgley was once like. At the end of White's Drive is Turl's Hill Drive, and on the left is the site of the now demolished Turl's Hill House.

# 9: Site of Turl's Hill House/'The Belgians'



In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Turl's Hill House in White's Drive had been occupied by the Whitehouse family who were steel masters in Coseley.

One of the family, who lived in Turl's Hill House, apparently went bankrupt, building a wall around his estate and according to local rumour, shot himself in the nearby quarry.

During the early part of the the second world war, Turl's Hill House was referred to locally as "The Belgians" or "The Belgian Yard".

Belgian refugees who had come over to England in the Great War were housed there.

# 10: Former Primitive Methodist Church Hall



The building was used for the Methodist church's Sunday School from the late 50s up till the 1990s. Children used to go to church with the rest of the congregation, and then halfway through would filter out, down the front through the vestry and then go outside to this building for Sunday School. It was a hall with a stage at the end and then a couple of rooms behind that.

There was a Sunday School anniversary event every summer when all the girls wore white dresses with a pink rose - the boys had grey suits. It was also used for church discos in the 1970s. There was Tuesday Club Run by an electrician - Mr David Webb. Children couldn't go to the club unless they had attended Sunday school two days previously.

There was another weekly club after school called 'Sunshine Corner' and they sang songs: "Sunshine Corner, oh it's jolly fine, it's for children under ninety-nine."

The church congregation worshipped in there when the old church became unstable - eventually the Methodist church sold the building to St. John Ambulance in around 2002. The building was also used by the Salvation Army and Salvation Army Cadets. The hall is no longer in use (2019) as the

# 11: Former Primitive Methodist Church



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# 12: Former Hortons DIY



The premises may have been a garage before Job Horton took it over – there was a ramp to an underground area that is remembered as a car repairers. Job 'Jack' Horton ran the business from the late 1950s. When he passed away the business passed to his son-in-law Derrick Garner, who ran it until the business eventually closed. Job is remembered as always wearing a brown work coat - his son worked with him.

They sold tools and DIY products; timber cut to size, glass, did picture framing, sold sand and cement, slabs and general ironmongery. They had a huge flat-bed circular saw and would cut timber to any size you wanted. They sold the wood shavings in big bags, ideal for family pets – and horses!

Before recent weights and measurements restrictions (1990s) you used to be able to take your own buckets and filled them up with sand, gravel etc.

Dormston school boys went there for small cuts of plywood for projects and nothing was to much trouble, in fact they had a plywood cut-offs section and would cut them down, charging a few pennies. There was a glass cutting table down the back, with a glass 'bin' below it!

It probably closed around 1990, and was replaced by apartments, sometime in the late 90s.

# 13: Nail Warehouse



The building was originally a nail warehouse.

In the 1980s a Mr Price and his brother owned it - they were the uncles of BD Price of BD Price Cycles and Toys.

It was a bed factory then, making springs for beds and the mesh bases for prison and army beds. It was an all-women workforce, apart from the management and the maintenance man.

The building is now owned by BD Price (as at 2019), one of Sedgley's oldest established businesses, selling cycles and toys. It is currently used as storage for the business.

# 14 Rear of Dormston House/ Dormston Stable Block



The passageway between Dormston House and Dormston Playing Fields is shown on the 1844 Tithe map – it could have been the servants' way to work at The Villa (later renamed Dormston House) and/or access to the open fields where Dormston School and the Kings Road estate now stands.

There was also a small lime quarry here, so access to that and to the fields may have led to this being considered a public right of way over the years. The alley to the side of Queen Victoria School may have also been part of these access arrangements.

Dormston House was once owned by the Homer family in the 19th and early 20th century; and the former stable block to the house, now offices, can be seen on the approaches to this location, on the right.

The stable block was used by a later owner of the house in the late 1940s and 1950s, Councillor Alan Hickling, as a laboratory and snuff factory. He was a research chemist who bought Dormston House after the Second World War. He was leader of Sedgley Urban District Council in the 1950s.

One former Dormston School pupil recalls using the passageway to go to the fish shop and to the milk bar to play music, around 1960.

# 15 Dormston School



Dormston School was established in 1935. The original site consisted of a single two-storey building that contained 19 classrooms as well as a dining hall, gymnasium, assembly hall and library.

This building remains in existence to this day, although substantial alterations have taken place since the mid-1990s and several completely new buildings have been added since the late 1960s. The school was built by Sedgley Urban District Council, but since 1966 has existed within the Borough of Dudley.

In July 1996, the National Lottery granted Dormston School £4 million to build the Arts and Sports Centre, which was completed nearly four years later. It includes a theatre, sports hall, art gallery and gymnasium.

[The part in front of the current offices was once the boys' playground - the old stone wall was higher and went all the way around. At one time it had half-buried air raid shelters; they were later filled in. Many football matches were played on the tarmac at breaktime.

In the original building, the girls used to be on the upstairs floor and the boys on ground level and there was no access between the two sections.

# 16: Queen Victoria School/Bilston Street - Turnpike



Queen Victoria School was built in 1897. To some extent, it took over the education of the poor of the village from the All Saints' Church of England National School in Dudley Street - that then became the church's Sunday School. However, Thomas Darbey's Day School by St Andrew's Congregational Church was also educating local pupils this time.

The car park is the only council-owned and controlled parking in the village and is used by Queen Victoria School and Dormston School parents for dropping off and collecting pupils. The pathway runs parallel with the High Street and leads to Mill Bank and Tipton Street.

Many of these old walls began life as field boundary walls. They are a great example of 'vernacular' building materials not only being used to great effect but also giving an area its unique appearance and character.

The headmaster of Queen Victoria from around 1910 to the 1940s was Mr Mcleod, and one of the senior teachers at this time was Mr Hughes. They appear on several class photographs.

In the 40s and 50s, on moving up from the infants, boys and girls classes were still strictly segregated, and the separate entrances for 'boys' and 'girls' can still be seen today.

As of 2019, there have been persistent rumours that the car park and former council tax office are to be sold to Aldi."

# 17: Steam Flour Mill



The Gornal Stone building to the right was originally a steam flour mill.

The whole mill complex was remodelled either just before or just after it was advertised 'to let' in 1868, and probably attained its present appearance then, including probable rebuilding of the corner house, which became a ladies outfitters and several successive hairdressers from at least the 1940s.

The first shop in the row along Bilston Street (set at an oblique angle) almost certainly was one of the 'small houses' included in the mill complex.

From the 1871 census Abel Fletcher was living around the corner in what became known as 'Mill House', High Street. He died in 1873 and in his will he says he'd purchased the mill from devisees in trust of his late father (Joseph Fletcher, a baker of Can Lane) who died in 1839.

# 18: Wesleyan Methodists/Tasty Plaice/ Miss Brassington's Private School



The left part of what is now Tasty Plaice fish and chip shop was the former village sub-post office, run by Mr Bourne, the postmaster. His son, Harold Bourne was killed in the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin during the First World War.

A Miss Bourne is remembered as living in the premises in the 1950s and 1960s.

The post office later moved to the bottom of Dean Street, and later still to what is now the Yummy Wok in Dudley Street. The current location (2019) was a former electricity sub-station next door to the Yummy Wok.

To the left, during the 1950s, was Miss Brassington's, private school. It was a small 'prep' school for girls, with only 12 pupils, for children aged 4-8. The adjoining property was owned by Miss Brassington's sister and their combined gardens were used for sports days.

# 19. Georgian Buildings



The building appears Georgian, of similar design and construction to the premises on the corner of Mill Bank and the Bull Ring. From the 1871 census Abel Fletcher was here in what became known as 'Mill House', High Street. A later occupant was Madeline Fellows.

The original Coop shop was in the Bull Ring in 1900, who then moved in 1922 to the single floor premises on the right of the photo. It had a receipt/money system that went along a wire above your head to the cashier in a little office. The Coop then moved from High Street to premises at the top of Bilston Street in the 1960s – that building later became Gould's Electrical Suppliers (now closed).

The building to the left was Pardoes, a wine shop in the 1950s and 60s, where you could buy cask wine if you brought your own bottle in.

# 20 Townsend Avenue – Townsend House



Frederick A. Homer who founded Sedgley's Temperance Movement in 1859 and Band of Hope (known as 'Homer's Army') was born at Townsend House in about 1829 - he died in 1901 aged 72. Charles Kemp Homer and his family were living at Townsend House on the 1851 census (though Frederick isn't shown with them). Charles was born in Dudley in about 1795 and was a land proprietor (as was Frederick later on).

The house apparently later became the home of Henry Bickerton Whitehouse, owner of Priorfields ironworks, Deepfields.

Two sisters are remembered living there prior to its demolition; they then had two bungalows built in Uplands Drive, opposite the end of Fairhills. A Miss Bridges may have been their companion/housekeeper. The High Street Methodists held their summer fayre in the grounds in the 50s.

In the early 1950s the land surrounding the house was sold and a council housing estate built. In the 1960s the house itself was demolished for the private housing. It had a beautiful staircase with old portraits on the walls. Miss Bridges was the last person to live there and moved into a flat in Townsend Avenue when the house was demolished. The original garden wall remains.

# 21: The Bypass that never was



The extensive green area in High Street was once terraced housing. There were two well known local pubs here – The Crown and the Pig and Whistle.

The area was demolished in the 1970s to make way for a village bypass, that was never actually built.



# 22: Brick Street - Cottage Blinds

This old nail warehouse was built probably around 1830, or possibly earlier, and belonged to Stephen Wilkes senior (1802-1862) and then also his son Stephen Wilkes junior (born in 1830). By 1851 they were living in Castle Street and Wilkes senior was described as a nail 'master', while his twenty-year-old son is shown as a 'factor'

Stephen Wilkes senior, was a Congregationalist who appears to have had local people's spiritual welfare and educational interests at heart. His family attended Ruiton Independent Chapel, Upper Gornal, where Stephen junior had been baptised in 1830 - the year that particular chapel was rebuilt - and in 1837 he apparently started using part of his nail warehouse as an evening school for young men of the village.

In 1856 Wilkes Senior donated the land for the building of Bilston Street Congregational Chapel, as well as £1000 towards its construction. Stephen senior and junior became close colleagues of fellow Congregationalist Thomas Darbey, who founded his school next to the chapel in Bilston Street in 1861. Both Stephens were executors and trustees of his will.

Stephen junior continued his father's business, but with his inheritance he was able to purchase Sedgley Hall Farm, and was living here with his own family of four sons and three daughters by 1871. He had, however, been widowed. The census for that year shows Stephen junior as a 'nail merchant' but also a farmer of 380 acres, employing eight men and six boys.

There were two servants, including a housekeeper. Over the next ten years Stephen expanded the farm to 500 acres and in 1881 was employing fourteen men and ten boys to work it.

By 1901 he and his wife Sarah were in their seventies and all their children had grown up and moved out, but Stephen and Sarah continued to live at Sedgley Hall Farm, employing house servants and farm workers alike.

