Taking on the Men

The first women Parliamentary candidates a 100 years ago

A new book published by a local author tells the story of when the struggle for women’s rights was fought right here in Bearwood and Warley Woods. David Hallam’s ‘Taking on the Men’ reveals that just one hundred years ago the area now known as Abbey Ward, was the scene of the remarkable battle for women representation in Parliament.

Imagine a line running through Bearwood along Thimblemill Road and Wigorn Road. To the east was the county borough of Smethwick, a parliamentary constituency in its own right. To the west was Oldbury urban district, part of what was then the Stourbridge constituency.

Immediately after the 1918 Armistice, the Liberal Prime Minister David Lloyd George, called a General Election. With days to spare before the old Parliament was dissolved legislation was rushed through that enabled women to stand in the election.

It was the first election in which women could stand for Parliament and despite a scramble to get female candidates, only 17 women were able to get onto the ballot paper throughout the whole of the UK, which included all of Ireland.

Remarkably, two of those seventeen women contested the seats which covered the area we now known as Sandwell’s Abbey Ward, and there was another in nearby Ladywood.

In Smethwick, there was a straight choice between the Labour candidate John Davison and Christabel Pankhurst, daughter of the suffragette leader Emmeline, who stood on behalf of the Women’s Party, which supported the ruling coalition.

Mary Macarthur, who had achieved a level of notoriety when she led the Black Country women chain makers strike in 1912, stood as Labour’s candidate in Stourbridge.

Ranged against them were all the forces of tradition and rigid conservatism, and neither of the women actually won their seat. Christabel Pankhurst never set foot in Smethwick again, whilst Mary Macarthur died three years later.

But the area we now know as Abbey, saw political history being made at first hand.

David Hallam’s book, ‘Taking on the men: The First Women Parliamentary Candidates 1918’ can be bought for £9.95 on line from Brewins the publisher, from the Abbey Road Post Office (Kangs) the Warley Woods Trust Shop by the golf course. If people want a signed copy buy direct from me davidhallam5@aol.com.
Plans revealed for new Commonwealth Games Aquatics Centre

Sandwell council has unveiled plans for a new £60m state-of-the-art aquatics centre which will host the Commonwealth Games in 2022 at Londonderry Playing Fields in Smethwick.

Artist impressions of Sandwell Aquatics Centre show what the centre will look like. These drawings show the layout of the new facility and where it is on the site. They also provide information on the construction of the building.

The designs feature a 50m Olympic-sized competition swimming pool, a 25m diving pool and a studio pool along with 1,000 spectator seats.

Alongside the swimming facilities the centre will also include:

★ diving, swimming events an extra 4,000 temporary spectator seats for the Games in 2022
★ 450 on-site car parking spaces
★ three activity studios
★ minimum 8-court sports hall
★ 108-station gym
★ 25-station ladies-only gym
★ indoor cycling studio
★ dry driving centre
★ sauna/steam room
★ new football pitch & changing facilities
★ new urban park and children's play area; and a café

There is still an opportunity to comment on the design and facility mix. This will support the formal planning application which will be submitted after the consultation period has ended. There are drop-in sessions on

Tuesday 8 January – 5pm-8pm at St Mark's Church, Thimblemill Road, Thursday 10 January – 9am-5pm at St Mark's Church, Thimblemill Road and Tuesday 15 January – 4pm-6pm at Dorothy Parkes Centre, Church Road.

Download the consultation document for more information.
In January, the Any Book Bookclub will be meeting for the fourth time. We normally meet on the second Tuesday of the month, at 7.30 pm at Thimblemill library.

As the name suggests, instead of having a single book that everyone reads and which is then discussed, I would like to invite you to come along and share one book you read recently that you really loved. There are no rules as to what that book could be, any genre is allowed and indeed welcomed. So whether you like to curl up with some romance, the latest spy thriller, the most lauded award winning book, memoir, science fiction, fantasy.... it does not matter. Share it with us, you may hold to key to someone else's next favourite read.

I truly believe that every book has its reader and I love hearing people talk about the books they love. There are no good and bad books, just books that are enjoyed by some but maybe not by others. If you got the book in physical form bring it along, otherwise, the title and authors name, (maybe a screenshot of the cover on your mobile phone) will do. Each member is invited to briefly introduce their book, what it is about and most importantly why they liked it, what made it special for them. And then other members can ask questions.

After each meeting, the introduced books will be posted on the Facebook page (fb.me/anybookbearwood), so you can check up the title. It will create a nice little snapshot - hopefully - of what Bearwood is reading. Naturally, you don't have to live in Bearwood to attend.
Blue Monday Week - 21st - 25th January

**MONDAY 21ST**
BLUE CAKE COFFEE MORNING
10.30-12PM
BLUE PRIZE BINGO
EYES DOWN BINGO PENS AT THE READY!
2PM-3.30PM

**TUESDAY 22ND**
GENTLE RELAXING YOGA WITH PAUL
12.15-1PM
FILM AFTERNOON WITH REFRESHMENTS (FILM WITH BLUE IN THE TITLE)
2-4PM

**WEDNESDAY 23RD**
Afternoon Talk with refreshments
SMETHWICK 1ST WORLD WAR AND LIGHTWOODS MILITARY HOSPITAL
With local historian MARY BODFISH
2PM-3.30PM

**THURSDAY 24TH**
Coffee Morning
10am–12pm
AFTERNOON TEA PARTY
With Ron Popple & Dave Bartley
Magic & Black Country Comedy
1.30-3.30PM

**FRIDAY 25TH**
COFFEE MORNING
Coffee/tea/toast
And friendly chatter!
10-12PM
BLUE QUIZ AFTERNOON
PRIZE FOR THE WINNER!
Join us for an afternoon of general knowledge in the Mighty Blue............
2PM-3.30PM

Rachel Baiman Trio
plus support
Friday 25th January
Doors: 7.30pm for 8pm
The Friends Of Thimblemill Library are delighted to welcome back Rachel Baiman with her trio, comprising Cy (guitar) & Shelby Means (bass), for some more Old-Time, Folk, Country & Americana.

**Opening Hours**
Monday 9am-1pm 2pm-6pm
Tuesday 9am-1pm 2pm-6pm
Wednesday 9am-1pm 2pm-6pm
Thursday 9am-1pm
Friday 9am-1pm 2pm-6pm
Saturday 10am-4pm

The third Monday of January has been awarded the gloomy title due to a combination of post-Christmas blues, cold dark nights.
COME AND JOIN US AT THIMBLEMILL LIBRARY!
Thimblemill Library
WHAT’S ON
Thimblemill Road, Smethwick, West Midlands, B67 5RJ
Telephone 0121 429 2039, Email: thimblemill_Library@sandwell.gov.uk

January 2019

Learning

Tuesday
Computer Taster Sessions
Informal taster session for beginners
2pm – 3pm

Ipod class
Emails, notes, internet searches and changing settings
12pm-2pm

Wednesday
French Classes
Advanced
10am-12pm
Intermediate
1pm - 2.30pm

Thursday
Adult Ukulele Lessons
Scott: 07795176840
10.30am – 12.30pm

Friday
French Conversation Class
Brush up your French with this new conversation class
2pm - 3.30pm

Saturday
Music Lessons
Ukulele, Guitar and Choir Lessons for adults and children
10am – 12.30pm
Call Scott for further information
07795 176840

Employment Support

Monday
Job Club
1pm - 3pm
A free drop-in session to help with your job searches and job application forms

Tuesday
Steps to Work
10am - 2pm
One-to-one computer support for job seekers
To book an appointment, please ring 07900 903526

Social, Health and Wellbeing

Monday
Coffee Morning
Free coffee morning
10am-12pm

Tuesday
Book Club
Sit back and listen as we read a chapter or two each week
2pm – 4pm

Wednesday
Gentle Exercise Class
11.15am - 12.15pm
Gentle exercise for over 60’s or less able of all ages

Adult Reading Group
7.30pm – 9pm
1st Wednesday of the month

New
Any Book Bookclub
8th January
7.30-8.30pm

Yoga with Paul
Yoga for all levels and ages £3.00 a session

Thursday
Yoga with Paul
Gentle classes for beginners
9.15-10.15

Friday
Knit and Natter Club
10am - 12pm
Get creative make a friend
All are welcome

Friday Coffee Morning
Come and join us for a cuppa and a bite to eat or just a chat, everyone welcome
10am - 1pm

Trace Your Family Tree
Free ancestry course
With Chris Gregory who will be on hand to assist with family history searches
Every Friday
10am – 12pm

Birmingham Rep
Play Reading Group
Thursday 31 January,
Blue/Orange by Joe Penhall
7pm-9pm
Christopher is sectioned and admitted to a psychiatric hospital. As his doctor and senior consultant debate the cause of his psychosis, he makes the startling revelation that he’s the son of Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin. Joe Penhall’s darkly funny dissection of institutional racism and mental health in modern Britain is as vital and relevant as when it was first written.

A week of activities to aid health and wellbeing from
Monday 21– Friday 25th January