



Talks are free to attend but spaces are limited and booking is essential. To reserve a seat, scan the QR code to visit our website better.org.uk/dudley-history-fest



If you've been inspired to uncover your own history, explore historic newspapers, access Ancestry, and more free local and family resources in our Archive and Local History Centre, Libraries, and online.



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FESTIVAL GUIDE

12TH-26TH OCTOBER 2024

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BETTER

In partnership with

Dudley
Metropolitan Borough Council

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Local History

The Coseley Tragedy

Saturday 12th October / Coseley Library / 1pm

Presented by: Anne Clark

What led Hannah Johnson Cox to drown her two daughters in Coseley Canal? What became of her and her family after that tragic day in 1901? How did the local community respond to these events? A story from my family which made the news headlines over 100 years ago, but still relevant to people today.



Entertainment History

At The Bottom Of The Hill: The Memorials & Graves Of St Edmund's Church

Saturday 26th October / Dudley Archives / 12.15pm

Presented by: Craig Denston

St Edmunds Church in Dudley is one of the towns two principle churches and is almost 1000 years old. This fascinating talk explores the history of the memorials and graves at this important venue.



Local History

History of Dudley Castle: 1071-1933

Saturday 12th October / Dudley Library / 2pm

Presented by: Max Keen

In this talk, Max will share the history of Dudley Castle between 1071 and 1933, from Domesday through civil war, to modern times.



Local History

The Gunpowder Plot & Its Midlands Connection

Saturday 26th October / Wordsley Library / 1pm

Presented by: David Cox

The Gunpowder Plot of 1605 is an important part of British history. Its discovery and failure is the subject of the yearly Bonfire Night. But did you know there are connections to this pivotal moment in British History in the West Midlands?



Local History

Village Memories

Tuesday 15th October / Kingswinford Library / 11am

Presented by: Terry Church

Terry Church recounts his experiences living and growing up in the West Midlands village of Wall Heath in the 1950's and 1960's. Now part of the urban conurbation of Dudley,



Local History

57 Black Country Sportsmen

Saturday 26th October / Halesowen Library / 2pm

Presented by: Terry Church

Join Terry Church to hear all about the 57 sportsmen who have made the Black Country proud, the subject of Terry's book '57 Black Country Sportsmen'



Entertainment History

Exploring Entertainment History

Thursday 24th October / Stourbridge Library / 6.30pm

Presented by: **Ned Williams**

In this talk Ned Williams will tell you how he goes about researching a topic that affects us all, changes daily, is often not recorded and is sometimes mobile in nature; entertainment.



Local History

The Historical Importance Of The River Stour To Cradley

Tuesday 15th October / Cradley Library / 11am

Presented by: **Margaret Bradley**

On its way to join the mighty River Severn the River Stour flows through many towns. But what impact did this waterway have on the town of Cradley?



Local History

Farewell Eve Hill

Saturday 26th October / Dudley Archives / 10.45am

Presented by: **Ned Williams**

Local historian Ned Williams pays tribute to Dudley's satellite area in this talk, Farewell Eve Hill.



Medical History

Quacks & Cures

Wednesday 16th October / Gornal Library / 7pm

Presented by: **Kevin Goodman, Author and Medical Historian**

Once, before easy and cheap access to medical help people depended upon Quack Doctors and Folk Cures to treat their illnesses and ailments. Meet some of the memorable Quacks and learn about the strange Folk Cures and discover why medicine sold by chemists could be just as bad.



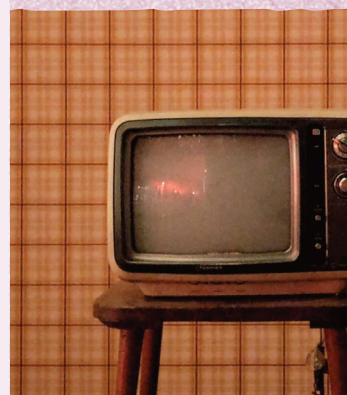
Medical History

The Diggum Uppers: Body Snatching & Grave Robbing In The West Midlands

Saturday 26th October / Dudley Archives / 1.45pm

Presented by: **Kevin Goodman, Author and Medical Historian**

The grave robbers trade was to keep the ever-demanding medical schools supplied with the bodies of the recently deceased. But they weren't confined to Edinburgh and London. They ranged across the West Midlands from the heavy industrial areas of Birmingham, the Black Country, and the Potteries, to the rural shires of Herefordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire. Discover the identities of the most infamous resurrectionists of the West Midlands; the medical men who supported them; the methods used to stop them, and the terrible truth of what happened when body snatching and grave robbing were outlawed.



Entertainment History

Radio & TV in 1950s and 1960s

Thursday 17th October / Lye Christ Church Hall / 2pm

Presented by: **Terry Church**

Television and radio in the 1950s and 60s defined many childhoods and produced some iconic productions from The Goon Show to Thunderbirds. This talk will be a fascinating trip back to that important era of British Culture



Local History

Life & Death in Dudley's Limestone Mines

Friday 18th October / Sedgley Library / 11.30am

Presented by: Adrian Barrett

A story that starts 400million years ago with the creation of a mineral that helped fuel the industrial revolution and captured the evolution of plants and animal life. The resulting landscape became known as the Wrens Nest and features Dudley Castle and Priory. The mining of this material has left vast caverns underneath Dudley which have been explored for decades. The abandoned mines led to a number of tragedies. This talk gives an insight into this dark world, including tales of tragedy, kidnap and an elephant.



Natural History

Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve

Tuesday 22nd October / Dudley Library / 2.30pm

Presented by: Paul Floyd

Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve is of exceptional importance. It is one of the most notable geological locations in the British Isles and visited and studied by geologists from all over the world. Paul is a walk leader at the Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve and will be giving an interesting and interactive talk about this amazing site.



Local History

Our Stour

Saturday 19th October / Long Lane Library / 11am

Presented by: John Billingham

Rivers play a huge part in the history of their region and the 25 mile long Stour is no exception. In this talk you'll find out more about the River Stour as it flows through the southern end of the Black Country from the Clent Hills to the River Severn



Military History

Churchill's Escape in the Boer War

Tuesday 22nd October / Stourbridge Library / 6.30pm

Presented by: Dr Spencer Jones

Winston Churchill is best known as the Prime Minister during WW2. Forty years earlier however he was captured in South Africa and had to make a miraculous escape. This talk will tell you all about this often untalked about history of one of Britains most enduring and iconic figures.



Local History

Why the Black Country?

Monday 21st October / Brierley Hill Library / 11am

Presented by: John Homer

With anecdotes and song John Homer will explore what it means to be from the Black Country and how that has shaped its people



Local History

Around & About Netherton

Wednesday 23rd October / Netherton Library / 10am

Presented by: Rob Broadbent

Netherton is known as the place where the anchors and chains for the Titanic were forged. Netherton however has a rich industrial history, much of which is now replaced by nature reserves, canalside housing and industrial estates. It has many places of interest and is home to one of the greatest athletes to ever come from the Black Country, not to mention one of the Black Country's most notable pubs. This walk and talk reveals much about the history of the Black Country and how things have changed.