

Events 24



Two centuries of boat building. Geoff Taylor

Monday 15th January 7.30pm via Zoom.

(No charge for members or non-members - email societyblackcountry@gmail.com for Zoom log in details)

The talk will outline the history of a boatbuilding family that had its origins in the Black Country in the early 19th C.

It brings together many years of research and includes oral history, family documents and many original photographs.

Geoff Taylor is the Great Grandson of Joseph Taylor, who had a boatyard at Herbert's Park, Darlaston in the late 1800s.



Poetry open microphone with Emma Purshouse

Monday 19th February 7.30pm via Zoom.

(No charge for members or non-members - email societyblackcountry@gmail.com for Zoom log in details)

Sit back and enjoy a range of Black Country themed poetry on the virtual open mic, or join in by sharing a Black Country themed poem of your own or a poem by somebody else that you've enjoyed. Poets already confirmed Steve Pottinger, Dave Pitt, Mogs, Gracey Bee, Brendan Hawthorne and Kuli Kohli.

British Bhangra Music as Soundscapes of the Midlands, Rajinder Dudrah

28th February 7.30pm. Bilston Town Hall, (Free for member and £4 non-members)

British Bhangra is a genre of popular music that fuses Punjabi beats, music and lyrics, UK pop, RnB, reggae and other world sounds. Its history in Britain dates back to the immediate post-war period when migrants from the Punjab, resettled their lives and homes in the UK. This presentation will offer an analysis of how this Punjabi folk music became a genre of popular music in post-war Britain, particularly in the Midlands. It will draw attention to key cities namely Birmingham and Coventry (with reference to Nottingham and Leicester too), in terms of how they have sustained the cultural production of this music and its industry. The talk will also draw on and examine the following source materials: song lyrics; a cultural analysis of how and why the different musical genres are fused together in Bhangra; and a historical overview of the club venue spaces as helping to understand this soundscape of the British Midlands. Rajinder Dudrah is Professor of Cultural Studies and Creative Industries at Birmingham City University



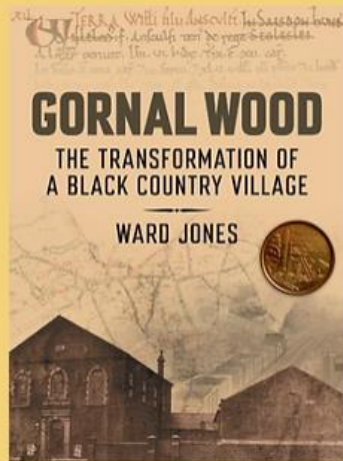
Black Country ghosts and hauntings. Haunted Highways by Andrew Homer 18th March 8.15pm (preceded by the Society AGM at 7.30pm) via Zoom. (No charge for members or non-members - email societyblackcountry@gmail.com for Zoom log in details)

The Black Country and surrounding area has more than its fair share of haunted highways. In this talk Andrew Homer will explore the eerie area once known as Fir Tree Hill, a contemporary report of a phantom hitchhiker, the notoriously haunted Hagley Road, and other reports of locally haunted highways

Black Country and Birmingham Skies, Andrew Lound

27th March 7.30pm. Bilston Town Hall, (Free for member and £4 non-members)

Andrew Lound talks of a time when Birmingham and the Black Country were at the forefront of aviation. The scientific concepts and practical application of raising into the air were experimented with and practiced over the skies of the midlands. From Andrew's 'Amaze & Astound' series, comes the story of the experimenters, the flyers and the industry that took humans to the air. A fully illustrated talk, with music and SFX.



Gornal Wood - the transformation of a Black Country Village by Ward Jones 15th April 7.30pm via Zoom. (No charge for members or non-members - email societyblackcountry@gmail.com for Zoom log in details)

The underlying theme of the talk will be how, especially in Victorian times, the village changed dramatically after centuries of isolation. Ward will explore the unchanging years, why and how change came, and some of the consequences.

History of Dudley Castle, Max Keen

24th April 7.30pm. Bilston Town Hall, (Free for member and £5 non-members)

A talk of two halves with Max Keen. In the first half Max will focus on the history of Dudley Castle from 1071 to around 1600. And then in the second half the attention will turn to the two sieges of 1644 and 1646. All of Max's talks feature costume, weaponry, and image projection.



Wolverhampton's Great War Memorials. Led by Quintin Watt,



Wednesday May 8th 2024. 1.45pm for a 2.00pm start. Meet at
Wolverhampton Civic War Memorial, St Peter's Square WV1 1TY

Wolverhampton City Centre is the location of several memorials, erected in the aftermath of the Great War. Some of these are inside churches or places of work, whereas others are located outside. They include stone wall plaques, bronze rolls of honour, stained glass windows, an obelisk and even rows of trees. This walking tour will highlight the stories of selected servicemen commemorated, as well as explain how and when each memorial was installed. The tour should last about two hours.

Willenhall unlocked. Walk led by Ian Bott.

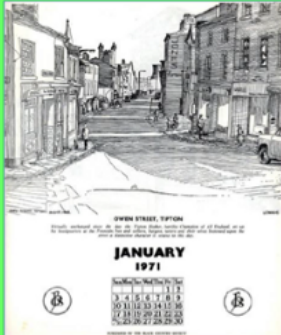
Wednesday 15th May 2024. 7.15 pm for a 7.30pm start. Hall street
Public Car Park, WV13 1PL

Willenhall's fame as a lock making centre is widely known, overshadowing a more complex history dating back before its Domesday entry of "Winehala". Join us to unlock the fascinating secrets of this still compact Black Country town, also fondly know as "Humpshire".

(Access to Hall Street is via the B4464 Walsall Street opposite to and between The County Pub and Willenhall Library)



Virtual Heritage Group 20th May - Black Country memories



Ticket to ride - A story that links a Birch Coppice chainmaker and anchor smith to both the Titanic and the Carpathia (Andrew Homer)

The life and times of Arthur Merriman – soldier and silversmith (Keith Bracey)

West Bromwich Workhouse (Donna Josefowski)

Sundays was for church - you went to church or stayed at home. Nothing else happened (Ward Jones)

Poem (Michael Coley Smith)

Memories of Bishop Milner Catholic Secondary School (Marie Rowlands)

A Dudley childhood – and a Rolls Royce (Jane McQuillin)

Christmas cards, calendars and first day covers – a look the Black Country Society Archive on line (Chris Baker)

Black Country Memories.

20th May 7.30pm via Zoom. (No charge for members or non-members - email societyblackcountry@gmail.com for Zoom log in details)

An opportunity for those attending to share photos, poems, stories or any other memories. Preliminary programme on the left. Contributions still welcome. Contact email address above.

More details on some of the items.

Ticket to ride (Andrew Homer). A remarkable story that links a Birch Coppice chainmaker and anchor smith to both the Titanic and the Carpathia. Told for the very first time, hear what descendant Andrew Homer discovered when he dug a little deeper into this intriguing bit of family history.

Sundays was for church (Ward Jones). In the decade or so which ended in the mid-1960s, life repeated Sundays as they had been for decades. For many in our black country village this meant you went to church or stayed at home. Little else happened. In this short presentation, Ward illustrates his memories of what that meant in practice.

Christmas cards, calendars and first day covers (Chris Baker). There is an ongoing project to properly archive much of the material produced by the Society over the last 50 years. This brief presentation will look at some items that have been mounted on the web site – Christmas cards, both traditional and cartoon format; calendars with monthly Black Country images; and commemorative first day covers and medallions.

The Sandfields Pumping Station – the past the present and the future , David Dimeloe, Trustee, Lichfield Waterworks Trust,

22nd May 7.30pm . Bilston Town Hall, (Free for member and £5 non-members)

David will describe how the pumping station was conceived and built in 1853 and why, and will then describe what has happened to the buildings over the last 170 years and the significant part that it played in the Industrial Revolution. He will the describe the current restoration program and the plans the Lichfield Waterworks Trust has for the future of this "Cathedral to the Industrial Revolution"



The Quarry Bank - Revisited. Walk led by Dave Galley

Wednesday 5th June 2024. 7.15 pm for a 7.30pm start. The carpark at the junction of Park Rd and High Street, DY5 2JR



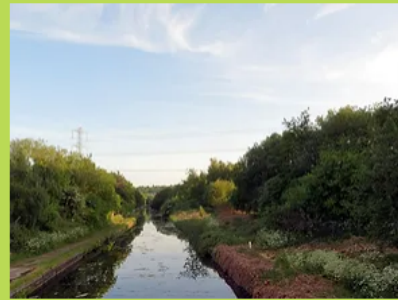
This Classic BCS walk is dedicated to the memory of John James who surveyed this walk with Ned Williams in 2001. This walk will follow the route of the original walk which looked at how Quarry Bank had changed from the features of 'Old Quarry Bank' recorded in local post card views. Come along and see what has changed again over the last 23 years.

Exploring the Canals of Dudley Port and Tividale. Wal led by Keith Hodgkins

Wednesday 12th June 2024. 6.45 pm for a 7.00pm start. Dudley Port Railway Station Car Park, Station Drive, off A461 Dudley Port, Tipton

Starting with a view of the new Dudley to Wednesbury Metro Line, currently under construction, we will access the canal at the delightfully named Puppy Green Aqueduct and walk along Thomas Telford's New Main Line Canal opened in 1835, to Dudley Port Junction and then past the site of the disastrous canal burst of 1899 to Albion junction. Here we turn right onto the Gower Branch, passing the BCN's only staircase lock to join James Brindley's old main line opened in 1772 at Brades Hall Junction. Turning right we continue to Tividale aqueduct where we will descend to the Black Country's newest canal, the Netherton Tunnel branch, opened in 1858 to return to Dudley Port Junction. A left turn will take us to Ryland Aqueduct where we can drop down to the main road and back to Dudley Port rail station.

This is a long walk of just over three miles but it is almost all on level towpaths, parts of which may be muddy if the weather has been wet.



A look at Amblecote. Walk led by Adrian & Kathryn Skelson-Reece

Wednesday 19th June 2024. 7.15 pm for a 7.30pm start. The carpark in School Drive, Amblecote, DY8 4DQ



Join us for a Walk around the best-preserved part of Amblecote Township, in the heart of the glass mile. Focusing on the locations and remains of some of the 39 glass works, including the people and watering holes that existed in the 400 years of the Glass Quarter.

Beasts of the Battlefield: animal imagery in the Staffordshire hoard, Charlotte Ball

26th June 7.30pm. Bilston Town Hall, (Free for member and £5 non-members)

The talk will explore the animal imagery of the Staffordshire Hoard, looking at the find from a symbolic perspective. Depictions of animals were important in early medieval art and belief. We will look at the way that this art intersects with the functionality of the objects in the Hoard, creating meaning for the wearer that is sometimes obvious and sometimes not!"



Banner bright, Ned Williams

24th July 7.30pm, Bilston Town Hall, (Free for member and £5 non-members)

A colourful survey of banners - trade union banners, Sunday School banners and Co-op banners, including scenes at Warrington Walking Day and Durham Miners Gala.'

Beer, bets and bull baiting by Mary Bodfish

28th August 7.30pm. Bilston Town Hall, (Free for member and £5 non-members)

Our forebears revelled in bull-baitings, cockfighting, boxing matches and abominable drunkenness; especially in the Birmingham and Black Country area. The boozy, bloody amusements of the working classes rose and fell in the 19th century – and something remains of them today



The Irish in the Victorian Black Country by Simon Briertcliffe

16th September 7.30pm via Zoom.
email societyblackcountry@gmail.com for link



In the mid-nineteenth century, thousands of Irish people settled in the Black Country fleeing famine at home and seeking a new life. This talk will look at their experiences, the prejudice they faced and the way they developed a community in their new home. It will focus particularly on Wolverhampton's Carribee Island, but draw in experiences from across the region.

The Stourbridge Glass Industry by Kate Round – Outreach and Tour Guide, Red House Glass Cone.

25th September 7.30pm. Bilston Town Hall, (Free for member and £5 non-members)

Kate will trace the roots of Stourbridge glass-makers back to the 8th century BC, from the Alabastron of Sargon II to their arrival in Stourbridge, considering how the glass industry shaped the history, wealth, health and working lives of the people of the town.



The Life and Legacy of Eliza Tinsley – Black Country Nail Mistress (1813-1882) by Rebecca Wilton

21st October 7.30pm via Zoom.
email societyblackcountry@gmail.com for link



Eliza Tinsley is a local legend, part of the fabric of Black Country folklore. Rebecca Wilton reinvestigates the type of woman she really was, what shaped her, and how she was able to grow her nail making empire making her one of the most successful business-woman of her time.

“Over by Christmas?” Black Country Civilians and the Outbreak of the Great War by Quint Watt

23rd October 7.30pm. Bilston Town Hall, (Free for member and £5 non-members)

This illustrated presentation examines the civilian reaction to the outbreak of the Great War in the Black Country. Was it ‘business as usual’ on the Home Front, or did war hysteria sweep across the region? Did the war bring out the best, or the worst, in local people? What happened to ‘foreigners’ living in the area? What were the myths and what was the reality? Come along and find out what you don’t know about the Great War!





Black Country History Day - Buildings, Heritage and the Built Environment in the Black Country

9th November at the Black Country Living Museum

10.00 to 4.30. £30 for members and non-members.

Details and booking at <https://tickets.bclm.com/103715>

Tickets for this history day are selling fast. The event hosted at the Black Country Living Museum and organised by the Black Country Society focuses on how local buildings and sites are being protected, preserved and presented. The event also looks and how the built environment has been described and visualised by artists, writers and photographers.

Lunch and refreshments are provided as part of the cost and the museum caters for different dietary needs including vegan, vegetarian and gluten free food. Those coming by car will receive a token so that they can exit the car park without having to pay. If you have any questions, contact Malcolm Dick on m.m.dick@bham.ac.uk

Programme

Tube Town Tales - what the world owes to Wednesbury, Keith Robinson

Rev John Louis Petit's 19th-century Black Country art: the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the built environment, Philip Modiano

The challenges of rescuing industrial heritage buildings, Mark Davies

Rubery Owen: Exploring the archives of one of Britain's largest historic privately owned companies - documents, photographs and film

Forging Ahead: Bringing the Halesowen & Hasbury Co-op to Life, Clare Weston

The Black Country environment of the mid-20th century through the poetry of Jim William Jones, Chris Baker

Crooked Britain: The Crooked House at Himley and some crooked survivors by Steve Roughton

18th November 7.30pm via Zoom.

email societyblackcountry@gmail.com for link

The Crooked House at Himley was a cultural icon which symbolised the beating heart of the Black Country. A Midland, National and Global treasure. Now lost. The owners served an enforcement notice to rebuild. A replica. Precious vernacular oddities remain - out there for all to enjoy - gems set in the landscape, representing our heritage. The essence of place. The presentation is a wake to the Crooked House - that-was, and a wake-up call to the crooked survivors. No more should be lost.



A Black Country Christmas by Ian Bott

27th November 7.30pm. Bilston Town Hall, (Free for member and £5 non-members)



Join Black Country Society committee member, Ian Bott, as he recalls the school nativities, toyshop windows, and Santa's grottos of the past. As well as touching on frozen canals, 'real' snowdrifts, office parties, and panto season, Ian will also take a delightful delve into the Dickensian yuletides of our Black Country ancestors.

The blue brick industry of the Black Country by Elizabeth Thomson

9th December 7.30pm via Zoom.

email societyblackcountry@gmail.com for link

Staffordshire blue bricks were typically known for their strength and use on engineering structures on the railways, canals and in sewers. An overlooked element of the blue brick trade in the Black Country was the production of special bricks specified by architects to replace of sandstone. This talk will discuss the origins of the blue brick trade through to the 21st century and the production of these bricks today.



The Rotundas Live at Bilston Town Hall

11th December, Bilston Town Hall

£10 for members and non-members



The Rotundas are an English folk band that plays traditional industrial and social songs of Birmingham and the Black Country. They draw heavily on the primary research of song collectors such as Roy Palmer, Jon and Michael Raven, as well as their own settings of tuneless lyrics. The Rotundas play folk songs that capture the vitality, character, history and lives of extraordinary people and places.

The band comprises: Nick (Guitar/Vocals), a Brummie lad by birth and Yam Yam by heritage; Ian (Lead Vocals), a Brummie chap by birth and heritage; Matt (Bass/Accordion/Percussion/BV's) comes from a long line of Aston Boat people; Emily (Fiddle and BV's) is an honorary Black Country wench by inclination rather than birth. The Rotundas are returning to play for the BCS, after their triumphant appearance at Bilston Town Hall last year. Tickets for this concert cost £10 for everyone. Tickets are available at society meetings or can be ordered by email at societyblackcountry@gmail.com. Please buy a ticket and encourage your friends and family to come too. It will be a great night!