

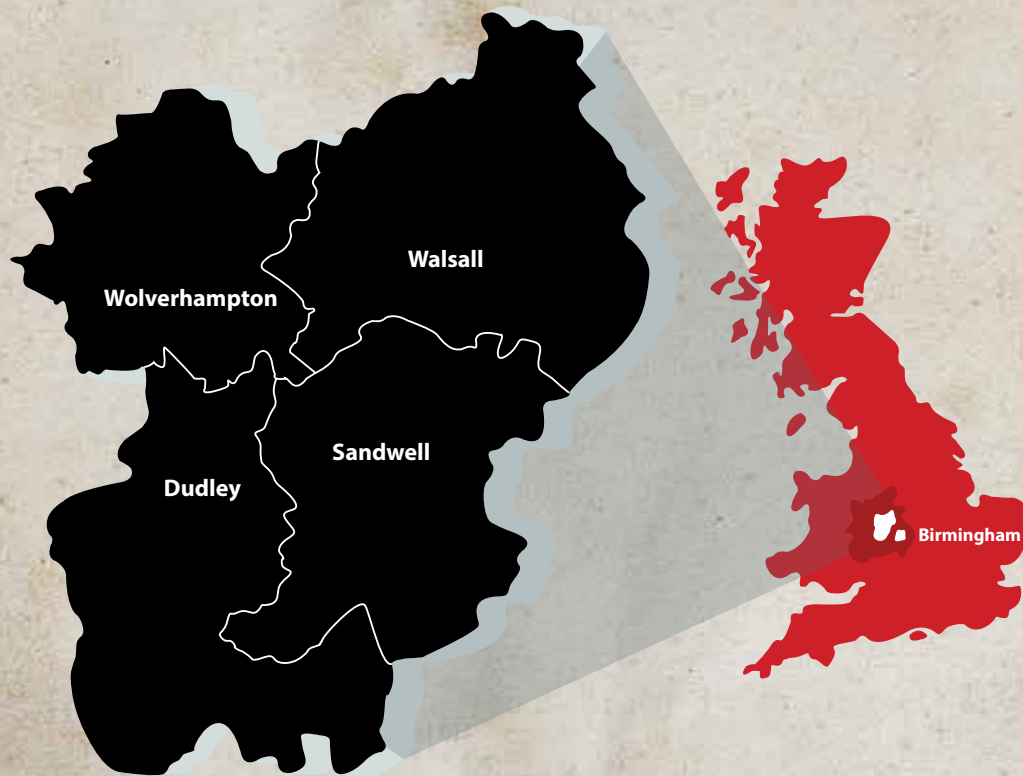
# BLACK COUNTRY

DUDLEY



# *Dudley – the capital of The Black Country*

The name Black Country is said to have been coined in the mid-19th century due to the smoke from the 1,000's of ironworks, foundries and forges plus the working of the shallow coal seam – “black by day and red by night” said Elihu Burritt – American Consul to Birmingham in 1862



Definition: The Black Country isn't shown on a map and locals argue about its boundary. Essentially it is an area to the north-west of Birmingham, made up of several towns that were at the heart of the industrial revolution, mainly involved in mining, coking, glass manufacture, iron founding, steel mills, brick making and engineering.

Dudley, Bilston, Blackheath, Coseley, Cradley Heath, Halesowen, Oldbury, Old Hill, Tipton, Wednesfield, West Bromwich are the towns where the 30-foot seam of coal came to the surface and is the traditionalists definition but others would now include the nearby towns of Stourbridge, Smethwick and the city of Wolverhampton.

Whilst we argue amongst ourselves regarding the boundary, we all agree on one thing – “we aye Brummies”..

*We Now Have*

**A FLAG**



**AN ANTHEM**

by local band The Empty Can

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMojuZFfpUU>



**AN OFFICIAL DAY**



14th July – a celebration of the area's industrial heritage and coincidentally, the date of the invention of the Newcomen Steam Engine (more on that later).

*Dudley is just this week (6th December 2021) submitting its application to become the UK's next city as part of the celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.*

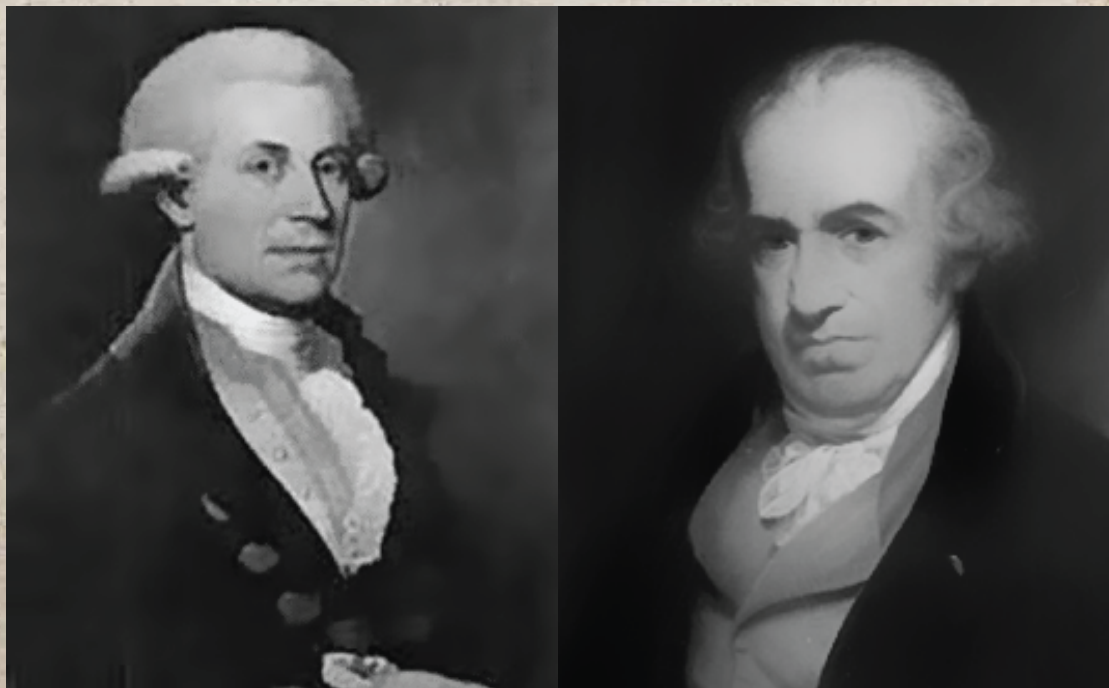
## *Pre-History*

428 million years ago, Dudley was covered by a shallow tropical sea, south of the equator during the geological period known as the Silurian, at which time the shells of sea-creatures formed the limestone that underpins Dudley and the surrounding area. Evidence of these sea creatures can be found at Wren's Nest nature reserve in the form of millions of fossils; collections of which are to be found in museums around the world. In recognition of its geological importance, Wren's Nest nature reserve was made a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1990. Probably the best-known fossils from the area are trilobites – a.k.a. “The Dudley Bug”.



## *The Industrial Revolution*

The first Abraham Darby, the father of the industrial revolution, was born at Wren's Nest in 1678. He learnt the secrets of iron smelting alongside his great uncle Dud Dudley. The Darby's relocated to Coalbrookdale in Shropshire where they refined their techniques and constructed the world's first Ironbridge in 1781.



ABRAHAM DARBY  
1678-1717

THOMAS NEWCOMEN  
1664-1729

Around the time Abraham Darby was transforming metal production, Thomas Newcomen built the first atmospheric steam engine at Dudley. This was a transformation that enabled manufacturing to free itself from horse power. The first steam engines were used to drain mines and pump water onto water wheels to drive machinery.

So Abraham Darby and Thomas Newcomen are the two men that really started the industrial revolution that Britain, and the Black Country in particular excelled.

# Today's Dudley

## BLACK COUNTRY MUSEUM

We now have the Black Country Living Museum to showcase the regions past heritage and most people will have seen this in the TV series Peaky Blinders where a lot of filming took place



## TEDDY GRAYS

We still have some famous companies based in the area but my particular favourites to mention would be Teddy Grays sweets manufacturer – established 1826



## BATHAM'S BREWERY

And Batham's Brewery – brewer of the worlds best beer in my opinion – founded 1877



## THE LABEL CENTRE

It is into this historic manufacturing area that The Label Centre has progressed using traditional printing techniques as well as investing in the latest digital manufacturing and information systems

