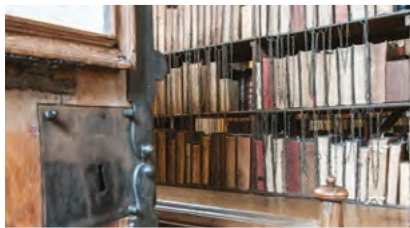


PLACES TO VISIT



1 HEREFORD CATHEDRAL



Reproduced by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral

When looking for the 'Word in the West Midlands' the magnificent surroundings of Hereford Cathedral might be a good place to start. Here are words in abundance, for the Cathedral houses the largest surviving chained library in the world. The Chained Library contains over 1,500 books, the earliest of which are the eighth-century Hereford Gospels. The Library itself dates from 1611, when the books were chained to the shelves to ensure their security. Two further highly significant documents, both dating from the late Middle Ages, can also be seen at the Cathedral: one of the only four surviving copies of Henry III's revised Magna Carta (1217); and the Mappa Mundi, a thirteenth-century interpretation of the world in both spiritual and geographical terms.

Hereford Cathedral, Hereford HR1 2NG
Phone: + 44 (0) 1432 374202
Website: www.herefordcathedral.org

2 STRATFORD-UPON-AVON



© The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

We could hardly omit William Shakespeare from this issue of *History West Midlands*. Many readers will doubtless have visited Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon. However, there are other places associated with Shakespeare's life to visit. A few hundred metres from his birthplace in the centre of Stratford is an exhibition at Nash's House, which stands adjacent to the site of Shakespeare's last home, New Place. Lying a short distance from the town centre are two other places of interest: the homes of his wife – Anne Hathaway – and his daughter, Susanna. You might need the car to travel the four miles to Wilmcote, where Mary Arden, Shakespeare's mother, lived.

The Shakespeare Houses, Stratford-upon-Avon
Phone: +44 (0)1789 204016
Website: www.shakespeare.org.uk – and, to book tickets for the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, go to www.rsc.org.uk

3 THE HURD LIBRARY AT HARTLEBURY CASTLE



© Derek Wilbraham/Enlightened Images

Hartlebury Castle lies four miles south of Kidderminster. The castle and its surrounding landscape have belonged to the bishops of Worcester since about 860 AD. At the back of the Castle, overlooking the moat, is the Hurd Library. The Library was founded in 1783 by Richard Hurd, Bishop of Worcester from 1781-1808. It is a unique example of a working library, formed by an eighteenth-century scholar-bishop, which remains on its original shelves and in the original room built for it. If you plan to visit the Library, it is important to note that admission is for pre-booked guided tours only. Visit the website below, click on 'The Property' and follow the link to 'Tours'.

The Hurd Library, Hartlebury Castle,
Hartlebury DY11 7XZ
Phone: + 44 (0) 1299 250883
Website: www.hartleburycastletrust.org

4 NUNEATON MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY



© Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery

Mary Ann Evans was born in 1819 on a farm on the Arbury Hall estate, some two miles south-west of Nuneaton in Warwickshire. Largely self-educated, she moved to London at the age of 31 with the intent of becoming a writer. Adopting the *nom de plume* George Eliot in 1856, and writing seven novels between 1859 and 1876, she became one of the leading novelists of the nineteenth century. The Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery houses an internationally important collection relating to George Eliot. There are over 150 objects in the collection connected with her life and work: personal and family belongings, commemorative ware, souvenirs, books, and artwork illustrating local places in which her novels were set.

Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery, Riversley Park, Coton Road, Nuneaton CV11 5TU
Phone: + 44 (0)24 7635 0720
Website: www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk

5 CHATSWORTH HOUSE, BAKEWELL



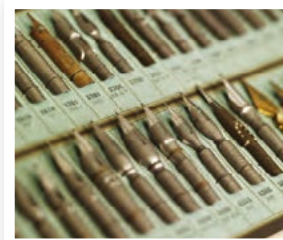
© Chatsworth House Trust

Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice* while in Bakewell, in Derbyshire's Peak District. And it is a truth universally acknowledged (by some, at least)

that she based the fictitious Pemberley House on nearby Chatsworth House. On his retirement from London, the first Duke of Devonshire turned Chatsworth into a sumptuous palace, a key building in the development of English Baroque architecture - even if it did lie in the midst of what Defoe described as a 'howling wilderness'. Chatsworth remains one of the 'must see' English country houses. With over thirty rooms open to the public and with five miles of garden paths along which to wander, it is not difficult to fill the day.

Chatsworth House, Bakewell DE45 1PP
Phone: + 44 (0) 1246 565300
Website: www.chatsworth.org

6 THE PEN ROOM



© The Pen Room

When Joseph Gillott died in 1873 his Birmingham pen-making factory was producing around nine million steel pens each week. Ten years later, the Birmingham pen trade's weekly output amounted to some twenty-three

million pens, seventy-five per cent of which were destined for overseas markets. Birmingham was the centre of the world's pen trade for more than a century, and the phenomenal success of this industry is reflected in the exhibits at the Pen Museum located in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. As well as discovering the history of the pen trade there are activities for the young and the not-so-young: calligraphy classes, talks, and writing in code for junior spies.

The Pen Museum, 60 Frederick Street, Birmingham B1 3HS
Phone: + 44 (0) 121 236 9834
Website: www.penroom.co.uk

7 THE PRINTING SHOP, BLISTS HILL VICTORIAN TOWN, IRONBRIDGE



© Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

Standing on fifty-two acres of land that originally held brick and tile works, blast furnaces and coal mines, Blists Hill Victorian Town is a vast interactive museum. Like many urban areas, the Victorian Town is constantly expanding. Once through the visually stunning entrance hall in the Visitor Centre, you find yourself on the main street. Walk down the street - past the bank, the New Inn and the butcher - and you eventually reach the printing shop. Periodically, there are demonstrations of the 1860 Henry Smith Cropper printing press in action. Before you visit, call the telephone number below to find out when the demonstrations are due to take place.

Blists Hill Victorian Town, Legges Way, Ironbridge TF7 5DU
Phone: + 44 (0) 1952 433424
Website: www.ironbridge.org.uk

8 SAMUEL JOHNSON'S BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM AND BOOKSHOP



© The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum

Samuel Johnson was born in the family home above his father's bookshop in Lichfield in 1709 and, although he was later to move to London, the town clearly remained close

to Johnson's heart throughout his life. 'I lately took my friend Boswell', he wrote, 'and showed him genuine civilised life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield.' Now a museum, Johnson's birthplace contains a varied mix of displays, reconstructed rooms and audio-visual media, all of which chart the life and major achievements of Lichfield's most famous son, from troubled childhood, through literary obscurity and financial poverty, to world renown and success.

Samuel Johnson's Birthplace Museum, Breadmarket Street, Lichfield WS13 6LG
Phone: + 44 (0) 1543 264972
Website: www.samueljohnsonbirthplace.org.uk

9 LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL LIBRARY



© Lichfield Camera Club

A short walk from Dr Johnson's birthplace stands the magnificent Lichfield Cathedral. Although the Cathedral's original collection of manuscripts and early printed books was lost during the Civil War, when the old library was much damaged and looted, a 'new' library is now situated above the Chapter House. Its contents include a fine fifteenth-century manuscript of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, a Henry VIII Great Bible, and Orders for the Regulation of the Prince's Household signed by Charles I. Tours of the Library need to be booked in advance. Permanently displayed in the Chapter House are the St Chad's Gospels, dating from around 730 AD.

Lichfield Cathedral, Lichfield WS13 7LD
Phone: + 44 (0) 1543 306100
Website: www.lichfield-cathedral.org

10 LUDLOW



© Shropshire & Telford TSB

John Betjeman once described Ludlow as 'the loveliest town in England'; and, many years later, Jeremy Paxman asked: 'Has there ever been a visitor to Ludlow who hasn't wished they lived there?' The poet A E Housman, author of the cycle of poems entitled *A Shropshire Lad*, never lived there, although his ashes are buried near the parish church of St Laurence. A couplet from one of the poems reads: 'Or come you home of Monday when Ludlow market hums'. Housman would be pleased to know that the market still hums of Mondays... and on several other days each week. There are also periodic Book and Craft Fairs, monthly meetings of the Poetry Café, and the annual Ludlow Arts Festival includes literature and poetry strands.

Ludlow Visitor Information Centre, Castle Street, Ludlow SY8 1AS
Phone: +44 (0) 1584 875053
Website: www.ludlow.org.uk