The Emergence of the West Midlands: Culture, Communities and Change 1779-1918

Date(s)	Friday 30th March (18:15) - Sunday 1st April 2012 (17:00)
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Introduction

The historic English counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire constitute the West Midlands region. This label which implies a shared identity is, however, relatively recent. Economic, political and social transformation, and rapid urbanisation in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought about profound changes in the area and shaped the experiences of its inhabitants. This conference explores the developments which formed the West Midlands between 1779, when the Ironbridge in Shropshire was opened and the end of World War I.

Conference Focal Points

Shaping the West Midlands: demographic change, including migration; the role of transport, commerce, industry and agriculture in creating the physical landscape and wealth of the region; rural and urban developments; city and town centres, suburbs and housing; the impact of war; the West Midlands and globalisation, including connections with slavery and the empire.

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Representations: historical writing, guide books, literature, architecture, the visual arts (including photography), literature and music; civic and local distinctiveness including the emergence of civic pride and different versions of civic cultures; the emergence of regional identities in areas such as the Black Country and Potteries; the views and observations of visitors from overseas.

Class, Conflict, Gender and Ethnicity: the shaping of élites, the emergence of the middle and working classes and relationships between them; women's status in work and the domestic and public spheres; poverty and wealth; high politics and popular politics, local government including the activities of individuals, parties and pressure groups including trade unions; migration, the development of minority communities and the role and experience of individuals within these communities.

Culture: religion, including Anglicanism, Nonconformity, Roman Catholicism and Judaism; popular education: different types of schools, adult, technical and higher education, including the emergence of the University of Birmingham; sport, places of entertainment and leisure, such as pubs, public baths and parks; the emergence of civic institutions such as libraries and museums, policing and the regulation of behaviour.

Science and Technology: the development and application of science in industry, agriculture, public health and education; individuals, experiments, inventions and patents, scientific societies; observing and recording the landscape; medicine, medical training and the medical profession, hospitals and care for the sick and mentally ill.

The Impact of Knowledge: ways in which archives, libraries and museums contribute to knowledge, understanding and the dissemination of the history of the West Midlands in this period; examples of projects which are designed to capture and promote regional historical knowledge and heritage and community engagement; the use of new technology including approaches to digitisation, GIS mapping and visualisation.

Further Information

Outcomes: A selection of papers presented at the conference will be published in a book edited by Malcolm Dick and Stephen Roberts

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Venue: Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ.

- **Information booklet (/Documents/college-artslaw/history/cwmh/events/emergencewm.pdf)** (conference details including prices)
- **Conference programme (/Documents/college-artslaw/history/cwmh/events/emergencewmprogramme.pdf)**

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