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You can help boffins in bid to unlock Brummie accent

ACADEMICS from the University of Birmingham are appealing for people to get involved in a research project exploring the distinctive West Midlands dialect.

The region's linguistic heritage is set to be examined in a project comparing the way today's West Midlands residents speak to text from an ancient medieval manuscript originating from the area.

Written in the local dialect in around 1400AD, the lavishly-illustrated Vernon Manuscript contains more than 350 texts spread over 700 pages and weighs a whopping 22kg, the equivalent of a

checked-in suitcase. Over the next two weeks, researchers will be travelling across the region to film people attempting to read the text in the current dialect, investigating how the speech has evolved and seeing what aspects are still present today.

Luke Darbyshire, a research scholar at the university's department of English, said: "We are expecting to find that some common regional pronunciations and dialectical features present today stem from the medieval English used at the time of the manuscript."

For more information, visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/vernonmanuscript.