# Black Country Living Museum wins Large Visitor Attraction of the Year after £30 million revamp



An unexpected gem in the West Midlands has captured national attention by being named the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year at the recent VisitEngland Awards for Excellence. The Black Country Living Museum in Dudley has outshone more traditional tourist hotspots, such as theme parks and royal residences, making it a noteworthy representation of the region's rich heritage.

Spanning an impressive 29 acres, the museum brings to life 250 years of the area’s industrial history, allowing visitors to explore cobbled streets, historic pubs, and shops, all while interacting with characters dressed in period costumes that reflect the diverse eras of the Black Country. Known historically for its contribution to the Industrial Revolution, the region is characterised by its iconic furnaces and foundries, a legacy that the museum showcases in detail.

Recently, the Black Country Living Museum has benefitted from a remarkable £30 million refurbishment—the most significant since it first opened in 1978. This revitalisation extends the historical narrative to include the post-World War II decades, illustrating changes in culture, technology, and society from the 1940s to the 1960s. According to industry reports, this modernisation reflects the museum's commitment to relevance and engagement in a contemporary context.

Visitor feedback reinforces the museum’s success; with an average rating of 4.4 stars on Tripadvisor from over 6,000 reviews, patrons laud the immersive experiences on offer. One visitor remarked, “Beautiful place. All the actors had so much information to offer,” highlighting the engaging nature of the costumed interpreters and the authentic atmosphere of the museum. Another noted, “I even did the 30 min tour down the mine which was very informative.”

However, not all reviews have been glowing. Some visitors have expressed dissatisfaction, criticising aspects of the museum’s presentation. One Tripadvisor reviewer described it as a “facade,” stating it felt like a “big barricaded building site” and lacked authenticity despite its impressive accolades. Such contrasting opinions serve as a reminder of the diverse visitor experiences that can often accompany cultural attractions.

The museum has made strides beyond mere entertainment; it was also a vital community resource during the COVID-19 pandemic, operating as a vaccination hub. Moreover, its innovative approach to education has included developing online resources, demonstrating both resilience and adaptability in responding to the changing needs of the public.

Recognised not only by visitors but also by the industry, the Black Country Living Museum recently received a Highly Commended award at the Civic Trust Awards and was celebrated at the West Midlands Tourism Awards for its contributions to regional culture and heritage. This ongoing recognition underscores its significance as a vital component of the region's tourism infrastructure.

The museum's new visitor centre has won accolades, including the 2024 RIBA West Midlands Award, exemplifying a blend of modern design and sustainable architecture. It serves as an essential welcome point for the 5,000 daily visitors, enhancing the overall experience with facilities like cafés and shops.

With its unique blend of history, community engagement, and modern facilities, the Black Country Living Museum is not merely an extension of Dudley's industrial legacy but a vibrant testament to the area's cultural narrative, positioning it firmly on the national tourism map. For those eager to explore, immersing oneself in its past while sampling local delicacies, like the highly regarded fish and chips, truly makes for a memorable day out.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/west-midlands-attraction-named-uks-31814784), [[2]](https://www.visitengland.com/visit-england-awards-2022-winners)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/west-midlands-attraction-named-uks-31814784), [[5]](https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2025/03/19/visitor-economy-champions-from-across-west-midlands-recognised-and-celebrated-at-awards-evening/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.visitengland.com/visit-england-awards-2022-winners), [[4]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/guests-brutal-tripadvisor-review-after-27793181)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://storyhubderby.co.uk/2024/05/15/black-country-living-museums-visitor-centre-wins-architecture-award/), [[3]](https://www.civictrustawards.org.uk/winners/black-country-living-museum)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://visitbirmingham.com/westmidlandstourismawards/visitor-economy-champions-recognised-at-2025-west-midlands-tourism-awards/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/west-midlands-attraction-named-uks-31814784> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.visitengland.com/visit-england-awards-2022-winners> - The Black Country Living Museum was awarded the Gold in the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year category at the 2022 VisitEngland Awards for Excellence. The museum, a major filming location for BBC’s Peaky Blinders, offers an immersive experience into the past with original industrial-era buildings, authentic shops, and heritage vehicles. It also adapted during the pandemic by opening as a major vaccination hub and developing online educational tools, showcasing its resilience and innovation.
3. <https://www.civictrustawards.org.uk/winners/black-country-living-museum> - The Black Country Living Museum received a Highly Commended award at the Civic Trust Awards for its transformative enhancement, including the introduction of a new visitor centre. This centre serves as a focal point for up to 5,000 daily visitors, providing a brief introduction to the rich history of the Black Country and the museum itself. The design focuses on sustainability and accessibility, reflecting the museum's commitment to enhancing the visitor experience.
4. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/guests-brutal-tripadvisor-review-after-27793181> - A visitor left a scathing review on Tripadvisor after visiting the Black Country Living Museum, claiming it was a 'facade' and lacked 'authenticity'. Despite being a filming location for the BBC drama Peaky Blinders, the visitor expressed disappointment, stating the museum was 'one big barricaded building site' and had 'little or no authenticity'. This highlights that visitor experiences can vary, with some expressing dissatisfaction despite the museum's accolades.
5. <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2025/03/19/visitor-economy-champions-from-across-west-midlands-recognised-and-celebrated-at-awards-evening/> - At the 2025 West Midlands Tourism Awards, the Black Country Living Museum was awarded the Gold for Large Visitor Attraction of the Year. The awards ceremony, held at Edgbaston Stadium, recognised attractions showcasing the history, heritage, and beauty of the region. The museum's award underscores its significant contribution to the region's tourism and cultural heritage.
6. <https://storyhubderby.co.uk/2024/05/15/black-country-living-museums-visitor-centre-wins-architecture-award/> - The Black Country Living Museum's new visitor centre won the 2024 RIBA West Midlands Award. Designed by Napier Clarke Architects, the centre serves as a welcome point for up to 5,000 tourists a day, featuring a café and shop. The award recognises the museum's commitment to enhancing the visitor experience through modern and sustainable architecture.
7. <https://visitbirmingham.com/westmidlandstourismawards/visitor-economy-champions-recognised-at-2025-west-midlands-tourism-awards/> - The Black Country Living Museum was recognised at the 2025 West Midlands Tourism Awards, winning the Gold for Large Visitor Attraction of the Year. The awards celebrate attractions that showcase the history, heritage, and beauty of the region, highlighting the museum's significant role in the West Midlands' tourism sector.