

MODULE 1: Page 28:

Living in the Black Country

A part of the UK is known as the "Black Country". The Black Country is a recent name, but the expression came from the 1840s. The Black Country is a defined area of the British West Midlands, to the North and West of Birmingham, and to the south and east of Wolverhampton. It is believed that the area got its name because of pollution from heavy industries and coal mining that covered the area in black dust. There is a story about Queen Victoria ordering the blinds¹ lowered on her carriage as the royal train passed through. Most people believe that it is more likely that the name existed even before the industries, because black coal scarred² the surface of the local heath, and the presence of coal so near the surface on the earth, made the local soil very black. Oldbury, Smethwick, Worley, Wednesbury, Wolverhampton as well as Birmingham are towns which belong to the Black Country. This area is famous for its industry and Birmingham is famous for its accent, too. For instance "How are you?" in Black Country dialect has two variations: "ow am ya?" is from the Wolverhampton area and "Ahh bin ya?" in the rest of the Black Country.

Activities:

1. Answer the following questions:

1. Have you ever heard of the Black Country?
2. Would you like to go there?
3. Why is it called the "Black Country"? Choose among the following suggestions:
 - a) Because it always has a dark bad weather.
 - b) Because there is a very big forest there.
 - c) Because of the coal in the ground.
 - d) Because the pollution there is very bad.
 - e) Because cars are made there.

¹ Tende

² Aveva rovinato