



Watch out for the big craters! They're known as 'crown holes' or 'crowners ends'. The craters aren't the only thing that have

changed here – the woods and their mature ash, beech and sycamore trees wouldn't have been around when the mines were active. They were planted by order of Lord Dudley after the craters had appeared – the idea being to hide the destruction. Of course, Lord Dudley himself was partly responsible for the devastation – being one of the biggest mine owners!



Castle Hill

The precious limestone wasn't just used for buildings such as the priory, in the 15th century it was burnt in limekilns to make fertiliser for soils – and it would come into its own around 1600 when it was discovered that lime could be used to improve the quality of another precious commodity – iron.

How many craters can you spot?



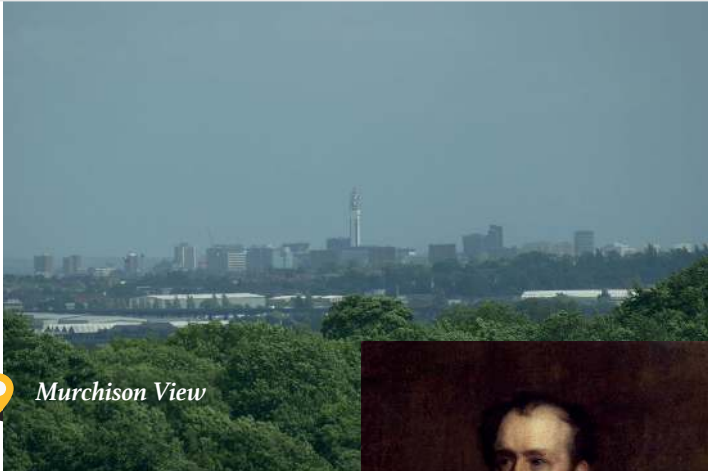
Start
Dudley Priory



The Black Country is where you'll find another important raw material needed to make iron – limestone. Four limestone hills characterise the area, and Wren's Nest is one of the most important geological sites in Britain, and a place loved by fossil hunters. Mining may be a thing of the past and many sites are now nature reserves, but on this walk, we'll take a look back in history from the fossils to the furnaces and beyond.

Dudley Priory was built all the way back in the 12th century. Even before then it was an Anglo-Saxon settlement known as "Dudda's Leah" – A lea is a clearing but we're not sure who Dudda himself – or herself – was! The castle was built soon after the Norman Invasion in 1066, with the priory dating a little later in 1150, built by Gervase Paganel, who was the Lord of Dudley Castle. The remains we can see are stone but originally it would have been constructed from wood. The remnants of stone are interesting.

Sir Roderick was fascinated by examining the Earth's many layers and the fossils within, to form a picture of Earth's history, over millions and millions of years. He and his wife Charlotte spent many years studying and recording the rocks in the Welsh Borders, creating illustrations to help others. He came Dudley to explore the famous limestone hills and it was whilst comparing samples, that he identified a new time period in Earth's history – the Silurian Age. Murchison chose the name Silurian after an ancient tribe from Wales – the Silures.



Murchison View



End
Seven Sisters Mine