

## Why a trip to Derby this Halloween could haunt you for a lifetime

Introducing a new Halloween experience: [Creatures of the Night](#) (31 October)

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Count Dracula's first ever appearance on stage. Derby hosted the play's world premiere on 15 May 1924, before it moved to the West End and then on to Broadway - where Bela Lugosi made the part his own.

The city is now in the middle of hosting a 14-month long programme of events and activities to mark the centenary. And while it may not automatically be the first place you would associate with Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, it *is* the place where the first-ever theatrical adaptation of Stoker's novel was staged; not to mention, the place where, 27 years later, Lugosi chose to finally put a metaphorical stake through the heart of the Dracula he helped to create.

Thanks to the success of the stage play Derby became the 'birthplace' of the character's journey from monster to international cultural superstar. When the curtain went up, the Derby Dracula was suave and charming, wearing evening dress and an opera cloak. This is the character that was adapted by Hollywood, and took over the world.

As a result, Derby has become a must-visit destination for all Dracula enthusiasts. Yet it already had a reputation for being a place when visitors can follow in the bloody footsteps of some chilling episodes of British history. The scene of England's final hanging, drawing and quartering, it was also the venue for the very last pressing to death in this country...

Possessing all the ingredients for a hair-raising visit, the city already offers a frighteningly good choice of ghost walks, trails through its dark side.

Local ghosthunter [Richard Felix](#) - most famous as the historian for Living TV's *Most Haunted* - explains that the city lies at the geographical and historical cross-roads of Britain. As such, he claims, Derby is "The Dead Centre of England".

Tours, tales and overnight stays will introduce visitors to some terrible tales, including that of executioner John Crossland, a criminal who earned a pardon for carrying out the sentence of death on his own father and brother, and whose spirit roams restlessly around the Cathedral.

Elsewhere, St Peter's Churchyard was literally filled with the 'undead' in the 14th century, when some of the victims of the Black Death who fell into a coma were buried alive; England's first factory, the Silk Mill, is 'home' to the ghost of a boy killed after being kicked downstairs for not working hard enough; and the cellar of the oldest pub in Derby, Ye Olde Dolphin Inn - once the site of a doctor's house and dissecting slab - is populated by a (presumably legless) poltergeist.

**New for the city's Halloween experience this year is Love Saddler Gate's [Creatures of the Night](#), a family friendly evening of Halloween entertainment on 31 October, featuring live entertainment, window dressing and plenty of spooky surprises. It's also a night to dress to impress as the finest vampire of the night will be named "Derby's best dressed Dracula". Family friendly entertainment will run from 4-8pm; while an adults-only element, taking place from 9pm 'til late, will feature a "March of The Vampires".**

Elsewhere, Derby will also be the venue for a macabre matinee on 13 October as Don't Go Into The Cellar present an original one-man show adapted from the Bram Stoker gothic novel. [Dracula or the Undead: A Macabre Matinee](#) is written and performed by Jonathan Goodwin, winner of the 2020 Hamilton Deane Award from the Dracula Society (previous winners include Mark Gatiss and Benedict Cumberbatch).

And for those who can't get enough of a ghoulish thing, Derby is expected to stage a major UK Ghost Story Festival in February 2025.

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**For further details, visit: <https://www.visitderby.co.uk>.**

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