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Learn about ancestors at graveyard tour

Residents can learn about their ancestors by touring an historic Black Country chapel and graveyard later this month as fundraisers continue their campaign to restore the crumbling landmark.

Lye and Wollescote Cemetery and Chapels will be in the spotlight at a series of guided tours, at 11am-3pm on July 24.

Historians Jean Weston and Marlene, co-authors of the recently published book *The Lye & Wollescote Cemetery and Chapels: A Victorian Cemetery and its Notable Burials*, will lead the tours. Funds to restore the

Report by Heather Large

grade II listed chapels are being sought by the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust (WMHBT). The book was commissioned to raise awareness of the buildings and bring in cash for their redevelopment and it is hoped the tours will boost sales.

They will cover topics included in the book such as the historical development of the Victorian cemetery and the architectural significance of its unusual chapels.

The authors will also reveal the history of

the headstones in the graveyard, off Cemetery Road.

The open day has been organised by WMHBT and Dudley Council.

Dudley council's cabinet member for environment and culture Councillor David Stanley said: "This is a great opportunity to learn more about the history of Lye and Wollescote from two keen local historians who will bring the stories of the past to life.

"The authors have already had audiences of hundreds of people for their talks on the subject. This will be a rare opportunity for

visitors to meet them on site and get a real feel for local history. This is an excellent day out."

WMHBT chairman Alan Smith MBE said: "We hope many will take this chance to join one of the guided walks around the headstones and to view inside the chapels and see our display showing the proposed scheme to establish a new use for this beautiful historic building."

The session has been arranged as part of the national Discovering Places London 2012 Open Weekend.