



2nd February 2009

PRESS RELEASE

Museum Boss to Retire After 33 Years at the Helm

After more than 33 years as Museum Director and Chief Executive of the Black Country Living Museum, Ian N. Walden O.B.E has today announced his decision to retire at the end of July, 2009.

Ian joined the Museum on the [1st October 1975](#) and has worked tirelessly developing the Museum from nothing to an award-winning leading visitor attraction with a turnover of £2.4 million per year. He has transformed a small venture, attracting 8000 visitors in its first season into a large successful company that now employs over 200 local people and attracts more than 260,000 visitors a year.

Ian's vision of creating a canalside village depicting life in the Black Country from 1900 onwards has become a reality. Many local buildings of historical importance have been saved from demolition and Ian has created awareness within the Black Country Community of the vital need to preserve our disappearing heritage before it is too late.

Ian's inspirational vision and practical approach has seen the development of the traditional canalside village with its many shops, houses, workshops, chapel, cinema, public houses, traditional school, canal heritage and underground coal mine.

Ian Walden will be [He will be leaving the Museum on a high with visitor numbers up 12% and the new £10 million development about to enter phase 2.](#)

Ian N. Walden said: "I will miss the museum and all the staff a great deal, it has been a huge part of my life for such a long time but its time for me to move to a new chapter in my life,"

"I want to thank everyone over the past 33 years who have helped transform, what was an abandoned sewage works, into an award winning attraction. I am leaving behind a very capable team who will steer the museum into Phase 2 of the new development programme."

[will be retiring after 33 years.](#)

[Ian Walden, our Museum Director and Chief Executive has announced to staff today of his decision to retire at the end of July, 2009. I think a story looking back over the years at what Ian has achieved and how the museum has evolved would be of great interest to readers. Is this something you would be interested in?](#)

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

has won the Express and Star's which was held at a glittering ceremony at Walsall's Banks's Stadium on the 27th November 2008.

The award, which recognised an individual rather than a company, was given in recognition of Mr Walden's work, over a 30 year period, leading the landmark Dudley attraction.

Mr Walden said: "I like to lead from the front. I am surprised to win this award - after 30 years it is very unexpected but it's brilliant. The Museum is specific to the Black Country - it is about our patch. We get great satisfaction that people think we are getting it right."

More than 350 local businesses packed into the ground's Stadium Suite for the event which celebrated the pride and the passion of the Black Country. The Business Achievement Award represents the tenth major accolade the Black Country Living Museum has won in the last 12 months.

-Ends-

For further information please contact:

Fiona Carding, Media Relations Officer Tel: 0121 521 5692

Mobile: 07901 575995 Email: fionac@bclm.co.uk

Emma Middleton, Marketing Manager Tel: 0121 521 5603

Mobile: 07747 312196