

Shadow play for Drew performing oldest art



South African hand-shadow puppeteer Drew Colby showing his skills ahead of performances in Sandwell libraries

SANDWELL newcomer Drew Colby is the only performer in the UK who works solely with hand-shadow puppetry, one of the world's oldest art forms.

The South African has performed all over the world but has recently moved to Smethwick, where he now lives on his canal boat, which, from time to time, doubles as his stage.

Drew said: "When people hear the word 'puppet' the first thing that

comes to mind is usually a glove puppet. Traditional puppets such as Punch and Judy, or the Muppets but performances which primarily feature hand-shadow puppetry are rare."

He originally learned his skill while working at the Playhouse Puppet Company in Durban, South Africa, where he used bunraku-style puppetry, a traditional Japanese art form.

After coming to the UK he carried on his interest in puppetry and decided to create his own puppet theatre company Finger and Thumb, after

getting inspiration on a sunny day on his boat.

"I'd used hand shadows as part of other performances I'd created in the past", said Drew. "But a few years ago I became more and more interested in creating work which was solely based around hand shadows."

His latest show Peter and the Wolf is based on the much-loved music of Sergei Prokofiev. He will be performing it at Smethwick Library today (Thursday) at 2pm, and Bleakhouse Library tomorrow (Friday) at 3.30pm.