

Lazy Times

Lazy Days Touring Caravans and Motorhomes

Welcome to the 4th Edition of the Lazy Times. Happy New Year! And what a start! Snow, snow and more snow. Where ever you are in the country, I hope you are coping.

I would also like to point out that I am not responsible for the horrible photo of myself in the news letter. That accolade goes to Bob Borman.

This month we are featuring Staffordshire.

Staffordshire

Canals, Chases and Pots

In the north of the county are wild moorlands while in the south, the beautiful [Cannock Chase](#). The area's wildlife and plant communities are part of an historic landscape that dates back thousands of years. Cannock Chase was an ancient hunting forest and the wild fallow deer roaming here today are probably descended from the original herd introduced by the Normans. Designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1958, this is the largest surviving area of lowland heathland in the Midlands. The 26 square miles of the AONB forms a high plateau, bordered by the Trent Valley to the north and the West Midlands to the south.

In the Middle Ages [Cannock](#) was an agricultural town and a weekly market has been held here since 1259. Coal mining and iron smelting first developed here in Tudor times but the massive exploitation of the local coal seams began in the mid-19th century. New canal and railway links helped the rapid growth of Cannock's mining industry.

Other industries, such as edge-tool manufacture, also developed here because of the area's coal reserves and its proximity to the Black Country.

Coal mining reached at peak in Cannock in the 1920's but by the end of the 20th century the industry had vanished. The last deep-mined colliery on Cannock Chase, closed in 1993.

On the north-east edge of Cannock Chase lies [Shugborough Hall](#) the ancestral home of the late 5th Earl of Litchfield (the photographer Patrick Litchfield).

[Uttoxeter Race Course](#), which is close to Alton Towers so leave the kids and go and watch the gee gee's.

"The Potteries"

[Stoke on Trent](#) can trace its history back to the latter part of the Stone Age but it seems that the poorly drained clay soil made life here very difficult. It was this clay soil on which Stoke on Trent was to build its fame and fortune. In the 17th century the abundant supplies of clay, lead, salt and coal was enough to encourage the likes of Josiah Wedgwood set up his business in 1759 by which time the area was already a major producer of earthenware and stoneware. Soon factories and mass production dominated the area. Other now famous names soon joined Wedgwood. Spode, Minton, Wood and Whieldon all gathered to reap the benefits and capitalise on the natural resources of the area.

Famous people of Stoke on Trent: Robbie Williams, Anthea Turner, Neil Morrissey, Stanley Mathews to name a few.

There are more miles of [canals](#) within Staffordshire than any other county in England, and today these waterways provide opportunities for holidays exploring the countryside, either by boat or walking along the towpath.

The village of [Alton](#) lies to the east of [Stoke on Trent](#) in the rolling countryside and is today famed for the theme park to the north of the village from which it takes its name, [Alton Towers](#). The village of Alton is an ancient village tracing its history back to around 716 AD and with a castle being first mentioned in 1000 AD. The village is ideally situated on rising ground on the south slope of the Churnet Valley and today boasts some of the best views of the valley and surrounding areas.

For the connoisseur of real ale, [Burton on Trent](#) is a must visit. It all started with a group of monks at an abbey who discovered the quality of the well water was perfect for brewing.

As trade expanded the town flourished and by 1880 it is estimated that upwards of 40 breweries were in business in the town. You can revisit the past and experience first hand how Burton became synonymous worldwide with brewing.

[The Bass Museum](#) gives you a taste, literally, of brewing through the ages. Did you know that the first jar of [Marmite](#) was made here in 1902 and you can definitely find the Marmite factory, just follow your nose!! [Shopping!!!!](#)

Shopping in Burton is centred around the pedestrianised town centre. [Cooper's Square](#), [The Octagon](#) and [Burton Place](#) shopping centres contain many top high street names intermingled with specialist shops and welcoming bars and cafes.

Other Places to visit:

[Stafford](#), renowned for its floral displays from May to October and of course home of the biggest hoard of Anglo Saxon gold ever found.

[Stone](#) which gained its name from a marker for the graves of the sons of King Wulfhere who had his two sons killed because of their conversion to Christianity.

[Lichfield Cathedral](#) is a must see. Also close to Lichfield is the [National Memorial Arboretum](#).

Shows:

21st-24th January Manchester Central Caravan and Motorhome Show Tel: 08701 288288

23rd-28 February Nec Boat and Caravan Show Tel: 024 76571157



The Staffordshire Knot