

# see derbyshire by campervan

Sally Rodger finds lots to see and do on a fun holiday in the picturesque Peak District



Compact but comfortable surroundings



Amazing Chatsworth House



Sally and husband Jim

## Travel News

Despite a whopping 76% of British holidaymakers claiming to be animal lovers, those very people are committing acts of animal cruelty whilst abroad! According to a survey by Columbus Direct if you're willing to have your picture taken with a wild animal, swim with dolphins in an aquarium or even ride an elephant then you are one of these holidaymakers. What are your thoughts? Let us know!



Should dolphins only be seen in their natural habitat?

WORDS: SALLY RODGER PICTURES: GETTY IMAGES, ISTOCKPHOTO, ALAMY

We're nearing retirement, and starting to plan how we'll spend our extra time. One of our ideas was to buy a campervan. But it's a big investment if you're not sure you'll like it, so when Freedom To Go, part of the National Caravan Council, offered us the chance to try out a campervan for a few days, we jumped at the chance. You can get big, luxury models, but there was something very appealing about a compact version, just taking the basics, really getting away from it all.

The Hyundai campervan may have been compact, but it was perfectly formed. It had two gas rings, a grill and oven, a fridge and sink. The passenger seat swung round and the rear seats folded down into a really comfy double bed. There were foldaway tables, an elevating roof (this comes with a variation of another bed if you want to take the grandkids away for the weekend), lights, heating, curtains over every window and screens for the cab windows. Now, a word about the toilet. It

comes with a portable toilet – which is essentially a posh potty. It was good to know it was there in an emergency but we never needed to use it. We just made sure we opted for a pitch near the toilet block in the campsites. All the campsites we stayed at were clean, well maintained and run by staff only too happy to help “newbies” like us. Ashbourne Heights Country Park was the biggest, with static caravans and lodges as well as touring pitches, an indoor swimming pool and a great playpark. It's also

right on the Tissington Trail, offering great walks. Blackshaw Moor Caravan and Motorhome site was very peaceful and had lovely walks nearby at Tittesworth Reservoir. The Firs at Belper had amazing views over the countryside. We still haven't decided whether to plump for a campervan yet but I have to say that going for a lovely walk on the Derbyshire Moors, coming back to the van for a tasty lunch of cheese on toast followed by a reviving nap takes a lot of beating.

## Stunning Surroundings

There's loads to see in Derbyshire – we visited Crich Tramway Museum, where they've painstakingly recreated a period street in an old quarry. Ride the restored trams to your heart's content along the mile-long track, see the restoration work in progress and enjoy a lovely woodland walk. Find out more at [www.tramway.co.uk](http://www.tramway.co.uk) Where do you start with Chatsworth? The sheer scale and splendour of the house, the sweeping grandeur of the rooms, the paintings, the antiques, the glimpses of the history of the Dukes Of Devonshire and their very stylish

duchesses, the lakes, the fountains, the landscaped grounds. Allow a whole day for your visit and although it's a couple of miles away, don't miss a visit the Chatsworth Farm Shop – it's amazing! [www.chatsworth.org](http://www.chatsworth.org) Haddon Hall will look very familiar to fans of period drama, as it has provided a backdrop for *Elizabeth*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *The Other Boleyn Girls*, *The Princess Bride* and no less than three versions of *Jane Eyre*. We were lucky enough to attend a walking performance of *Jane Eyre*, which involved moving around the building, following the actors as they told the story. The audience absolutely loved it so hopefully they'll do it again soon. [www.haddonhall.co.uk](http://www.haddonhall.co.uk)

## Helpful Information

- ◆ Wellhouse Leisure, based in Huddersfield, is the UK's leading manufacturer of compact motorhomes and campervans [www.wellhouseleisure.com](http://www.wellhouseleisure.com) or call 01484 861100 for test drives and advice.
- ◆ Freedom to Go – if you are new to campervan and motorhome holidays, [www.freedomtogo.co.uk](http://www.freedomtogo.co.uk) includes a good list of hire companies all over the UK.



Blackshaw Moor Caravan Club Site

- ◆ Blackshaw Moor campsite has pitches from £15.85 per night.
- ◆ The Firs at Belper has pitches from £21.50 per night [www.camc.com](http://www.camc.com)



Ashbourne Heights

- ◆ Ashbourne Heights Country Park – has great touring pitches and also offers caravan/lodge stays from £367, based on four nights in a luxury two-bedroom caravan sleeping six. [www.ashbourne-heights.co.uk](http://www.ashbourne-heights.co.uk)