



GAZA: Palestinian Ateya Megdad, 43, washes his horse on the beach in Gaza City before breaking the fast during the holy month of Ramadan. — AFP

Derbyshire: Industrial history and 'Pride and Prejudice'



Sightseer places a coin in Eyam's boundary stone.

Snug in England's midsection, just under a 90-minute train ride away from London, sits the unassuming city of Derby (pronounced DAHR'-bee). It may lack the name recognition of other British tourist magnets (in fact, it only officially became a city in 1977), but Derby's past helped shape the modern world. Derbyshire - the county in which Derby sits - gave birth to the Industrial Revolution with the opening of its Silk Mill, the first modern factory. It thrived in the Age of Enlightenment and elements of its rich past have been carefully preserved in small museums, enormous stately homes and even centuries-old pubs.



Eyam's so-called 'Plague cottage,' in Derbyshire, England, where the village's first plague victim lived.

Land of pride and prejudice
One of Derbyshire's most famous residents never actually existed. Mr Darcy, of Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," hailed from the county. Local lore says that Austen based Darcy's home of Pemberley on Chatsworth House, one of England's most lavish stately homes. Filmmakers have taken note, using Chatsworth as a backdrop for 2005's "Pride and Prejudice," and the more recent BBC miniseries aired on PBS, "Death Comes to Pemberley." Within its towering walls is an impressive art collection built up over five centuries by the family that still lives there and opens its doors to visitors. Equally breathtaking are the surrounding grounds, which include a 19th century gravity-powered fountain that can shoot a stream of water nearly as high as the Statue of Liberty (about 295 feet or 90 meters). Other highlights include a deceptively difficult hedge maze, a brass willow tree that spouts water from its branches, and hedges fashioned into furnishings from a home. Also worth some gawking is the Chatsworth Estate Farm Shop, which sells food produced on the house's sprawling estate.



Lion sculpture in Chatsworth House's sculpture gallery.



Derby resident Silvana Robertson walking in the garden of Elvaston Castle. — AP photos

Plague village
Among the many picture-postcard villages tucked in Derbyshire's countryside is Eyam, also known as the Plague Village. The disease came to Eyam via London, in a rolled-up cloth, and quickly spread in 1665, killing 260 villagers within 14 months. What made Eyam different was a local rector's decision to quarantine the village, a move that kept the pestilence from spreading across northern England. Church gatherings were held outside, the dead were buried in backyards instead of the churchyard and money was exchanged with other villages on a boundary stone where it could be washed in vinegar. Vestiges of these heroics are all over the village, including the cottages where the plague first took hold and the boundary stone. The church includes a list of the plague dead and the grave of a single plague victim, the wife of the rector who called for the quarantine. A museum tells the villagers' stories and plaques dotted around Eyam give slices of its history. Public stocks still stand in a village green.



town's All Saints Church which sits above a hill-top and offers lush valley views and a history that stretches back to Anglo-Saxon times.

The river Wye running through the Derbyshire town of Bakewell in England.

Exploring peaks
Millions flock to Derbyshire to explore the towering Peak District, England's first national park. Walking trails wind throughout the Peaks, including the bike-friendly Monsal Trail and the Dovedale Trail, which leads to an isolated village. Bakewell provides a convenient hopping-off point for hikers, especially those with a sweet tooth. The town is known for its eponymous Bakewell Tart and Bakewell Pudding. The tasty pastries are said to have been invented by a local hotel cook who mixed up a recipe. Travelers can also visit the

- Also worth a visit**
1. The still-in-progress Silk Mill Museum - if just for a chat with its infinitely knowledgeable staff.
 2. Pickford's House, for a glimpse of middle-class living in the 1700s.
 3. The impossibly green grounds of Elvaston Castle, on the outskirts of the city.
 4. And for a thoroughly English experience, you can sit next to Derby County's imprisoned soccer fans at iPro Stadium. — AP



Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, England.