

21. RUGELEY TOWN CENTRE



The site of the two power stations in the 1970s.



The power stations in 2015.
Courtesy of Nola Lovatt

Coal mining and power stations

Since mediaeval times, Rugeley has been important in providing power, first in the form of coal and, more recently, from the power stations built on the edge of the town. The town was given a great boost in 1960 when it gained a new colliery, Lea Hall.

The neighbouring Rugeley 'A' power station complex was completed in 1963. However, both this power station and the colliery closed within a few years of each other in the 1990s. An adjoining power station, Rugeley 'B', was opened in 1972. In 1983 when both power stations were in operation they employed about 850 people. All operations ceased on Wednesday 8 June 2016 followed by the decommissioning of the site.

The Boiler House was demolished using explosives on 20 August 2020. The main chimney was 183m (600ft) tall and was demolished on 24 January 2021 at 8:32am. The four remaining cooling towers were 114m (380ft) tall and were demolished on 6 June 2021. Today the site is being redeveloped to create a sustainable and innovative mixed-use neighbourhood.



Power station demolished.
Courtesy of Nola Lovatt

EXPLORE AND DISCOVER

Its great thoroughfare situation

An account of Rugeley from the early 19th century declares that Rugeley's prosperity was considerably enhanced by its great thoroughfare situation.

When the Trent and Mersey Canal was completed in 1777 it brought a new measure of prosperity to Rugeley. The transport links it provided promoted the growth of trade and industry.



The opening of the Trent Valley railway line in 1847 gave Rugeley another boost. This view from the railway line, taken in 1916, shows some buildings in nearby Talbot Street. The allotments were built over in the 1930s.



Image courtesy of Staffordshire Arts & Museum Service

Rugeley lies on the busy London-Chester road that has carried heavy traffic from the earliest times. From at least 1700 what is now The Shrew was a coaching inn. It was visited daily by passing stage coaches and road wagons.

Before pedestrianisation in 1973, we see a Dewhurst's van outside Taylor's bakery shop, with a Foden cement tanker passing on the right.



CANNOCK CHASE HERITAGE TRAIL

Cannock Chase Heritage Trail is a 10-mile route linking the towns of Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley. It passes through, or close to sites of historic or environmental interest, with interpretation boards along the way that tell the story of each location. Intended to support a healthy lifestyle, the trail is a facility for walkers and cyclists, offering walks and off-road cycle routes. The trail was initially funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and several project partners in 2008.

The trail passes close to wildlife sites of international importance. Cycle wheels, horse hooves, and feet, can severely damage these sites, and out of control dogs disturb wildlife. Please help us to protect wildlife by remaining on designated routes and by keeping dogs under close control.

Remember to follow the Cannock Chase Code.



Scan the QR code to download a map of the Cannock Chase Heritage Trail



Take on the
Cannock Chase Heritage Trail Challenge
with the **Cannock Chase Can App!**

Cannock Chase Can is an exciting health and wellbeing programme to help you make healthier lifestyle choices. It hosts a variety of wellness challenges which can be undertaken as an individual, group or family. Here's how you can get involved...

Download the App for **FREE** today by visiting **Google Play** and the **App Store** and searching for '**Cannock Chase Can**'.



Scan the QR codes on each interpretation board to bring to life elements of the Trail. Content has been created by local schoolchildren alongside professional artists and The Birmingham Repertory Theatre.



Chase
Tales
Trail



Hear
Our
Heritage

Collect all the QR codes for each themed trail to complete the challenge and gain points and rewards for your efforts.