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WOW 24/7

Travel

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The generation game

Julie Marshall spends an idyllic family weekend in the Lake District

The Lake District, favourite haunt of mountain climbers, backpackers and watersports enthusiasts is also a wonderful place for a family holiday - even if you have no interest in outdoor pursuits.

There are stately homes to visit, lakes to cruise on and delightful restaurants and cosy little pubs in picture postcard towns and villages to be wine and dined in.

I recently spent a weekend near Kendal with five members of my family - daughter, sister, niece, mother and aunt - in a bid to prove that three generations of women could co-exist for a few days and enjoy the splendour of the Lakes together.

I needn't have worried; from the moment we crammed ourselves and our bags into a too-small vehicle the stage was set for a weekend we would all enjoy immensely.

It helped that we were based at the Hyning estate, a delightful complex of seven luxury cottages a few miles out of Grayrigg right on the doorstep of both the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Lake District.

Owned by husband and wife team Richard and Jan Hinchliffe, who live on-site, the accommodation is among some of the best I've come across.

Absolutely everything has been thought of: kitchens with juicers, microwaves and dishwashers; an open plan lounge with a log-burning stove, and spacious bedrooms with large comfortable beds. And what a bathroom!

There's a licensed bar on site and, providing you book in advance, meals can be



The Hyning Estate in the idyllic surroundings of the Lake District National Park.



Discover your inner Tarzan at Go Ape in Grizedale.

provided. The first night we cooked and ate a meal together and then sat around the large kitchen table - glasses of wine in hand - and caught up with each other's lives.

The two younger girls (aged 20 and 21) don't get to spend as much time as they'd like with their grandmother and great-aunt and so this was a perfect opportunity to do just that.

We'd put together a packed itinerary and were

Travel facts

ACCOMMODATION: www.thehyningestate.com
CRUISE: www.windermere-lakecruises.co.uk
ARTS AND CRAFT HOUSE: www.blackwell.org.uk
SIZERGH: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sizergh
GO APE: <http://goape.co.uk/days-out/grizedale>
HELP: To organise your holiday visit www.golakes.co.uk.

determined to cram as much into the following three days as was possible.

Saturday morning found us huddled in our waterproof jackets, brollies hoisted to stave off the relentless rain as we watched the shores of Lake Windermere disappear into the mist from our vantage point on top of one of the boats operated by Windermere Lake Cruises.

The company has 16 boats which, between them

make some 1.25 million passenger journeys each year and, though, of course, it would have been nice to bask in glorious sunshine, the damp conditions did nothing to dampen our high spirits.

We lunched at the Laura Ashley-themed Ashley Belsfield Hotel in Bowness-on-Windermere, which, although the surroundings were pleasant enough, the food was nothing special and service was poor - the staff stretched thin due to a large wedding party.

After lunch we ventured out once more and found, tucked away down a side road in Bowness, Blackwell, a fine example of an Arts and Craft house, a fantastic find and definitely deserving of the title of hidden gem. It was built at the turn of the 20th century as a holiday home for Sir Edward Holt a wealthy Manchester brewer and has survived with almost all its original decorative features intact.

There are no roped off areas and you can enjoy the house as it was intended and even curl up in the window seats with a book to soak up the atmosphere.

Sunday was a day of activity - at least for four of us - as we ventured into nearby Grizedale forest for a day of swinging through the trees at Go Ape.

The girls took themselves off to the Tree Top Adventure, my sister and I went off in a Land Rover to the very top of the forest so we could make our way back down on a series of zip wires - it was enormous fun; we left the two older members of the party to stroll in the forest.

On the way back to Yorkshire on Monday we just had time to call into Sizergh house, a magnificent medieval house which has been in the Strickland family for 760 years.

A fitting end to a magical weekend and one which I unreservedly recommend - no matter how old you are.

Holiday ideas...

Fort Myers

Fort Myers, gateway to south-west Florida's sunny Gulf Coast, is famous for its beaches, fishing and shopping - and for the opportunity to learn about two of the nation's most famous inventors and business leaders. For Fort Myers is home to the winter estates of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford.
www.visitflorida.com

Jacksonville

The largest city in Florida in terms of population, Jacksonville - on the banks of the St Johns river, is a major port and home to two US naval bases. The city prides itself on its southern hospitality and tourists are always assured of a warm welcome. Relax on the white sandy beaches or sample the wide range of water-based activities such as kayaking, paddle boarding, fishing and surfing.
www.visitjacksonville.com

Trip of the week...

CHRISTMAS OR NEW YEAR IN MADEIRA

Treat yourself to a few days in Madeira. At this time of year, the streets all over Funchal are decked out in their festive finery and with its year-round Mediterranean climate, it's the perfect place to enjoy some winter sun and festive fun. Eight days by air from £819pp - Monday departures, December 21 and 28 from Gatwick, Manchester and Leeds Bradford airports. Advertised price is correct as of July 31 and is based upon departure from Leeds Bradford airport on December 21. Visit www.offers.omega-holidays.com/terms-conditions.pdf for full terms and conditions. Call 01524 37500, quoting JPTRAVEL, or visit www.omega-holidays.com



Reader travel

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