

A long weekend in North Devon

The journey from Midsomer Norton to Ilfracombe in North Devon is less than 100 miles (actually 97.3) but actually takes three hours because you maintain – if you are lucky – an average speed of 30 miles an hour give or take an allowance for the odd caravan. I forgot that we were passing Hinkley point country, the massive white elephant that will deliver electricity to us for the bargain £900 a megawatt. Evidence can be seen of the size of this venture with coaches going to and fro taking workers from park-and-ride places or the caravans where they live. The structure itself can be easily seen 20 miles away.



We stopped off at a decent upmarket cafe plus health shop on the ground floor and a restaurant upstairs. I was amused to see a milk churn with cow skin on the top.

We are both fairly thrifty by nature and I don't think this is going to be an expensive holiday or should I say long weekend. Nevertheless, teas, cakes, coffee, all the extras you tend to buy do mount up. I think the most expensive city in the world is Hong Kong so North Devon comes a long way short of that. It is a county that survives on tourism for the most part. Property prices reflect the popularity of the seaside towns.

We stopped off at Watersmeet intending to visit it on our return journey (see diary entry for next Monday). The season had not yet started so many of the facilities are still closed and that included the delightful restaurant further up the valley so we decided to leave it and I made a few photographs.



We popped down into Lynmouth. This was the town that was flooded out in 1952 by what one local described as an unnatural rainstorm. It was in fact the result of cloud seeding experiments by the Royal Air Force but we better not go there. In the town are the usual selection of gift shops and gimmicks.



A rather unusual advert for a restaurant but certainly an eyecatcher



definitely an area of individualists

For some reason, there was a lot of sea mist so we could hardly see the features of the town never mind of the sea. Annoyingly, local people told us that the weather up till today Friday had been excellent and up to 17°C. Thanks very much for telling us.

And so to the hotel. Shearings is the Hotel group based in Yorkshire and you can be sure that at least a third of the people who are staying will be from Yorkshire. They provide cheap and cheerful half-board accommodation with very good breakfasts buffet style, (come to think of it, what other style is there these days) and an evening meal where the portions are exactly calculated according to the age and the appetite of the average customer. The hotel charges five pounds a night for parking but if you are clever and it is out of season you will normally find somewhere to leave your car. We enjoy free local bus transport so we don't bother to drive around. Anyway you have always got to deal with a problem in small seaside resorts of finding a space without the dreaded double white line. Car parks can be up to a pound an hour in the more popular spots.

We are paying the grand sum of £69 per person for three nights bed and breakfast and evening meal. There are two shifts. The weekend shift arrives Friday afternoon and leaves Monday morning, and the slightly more expensive shift arriving Monday afternoon and leaving Friday morning. If you contrast this with the rack rate, in other words what you would pay if you walked in the door and asked for a room you will notice a substantial difference.

HOTEL RACK RATE

Prices displayed are per room, per night, Bed & Breakfast, based on 2 adults sharing a Standard Double or Twin Bedroom.

Excludes Christmas & New Year

The June through September rate also applies to all Bank Holiday weekends and periods of local Festival or Event, any time of year.

	SUNDAY to THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
JANUARY & FEBRUARY	£99	£115	£129
MARCH through MAY	£115	£129	£145
JUNE through SEPTEMBER	£135	£149	£165
OCTOBER	£115	£129	£145
NOVEMBER & DECEMBER	£99	£115	£129

Rates are continually adjusted based on availability,

For our Best Available Rate please ask at Reception.

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So, people.

If you had been unwise enough to turn up and asked for three days you would have paid £359 for bed and breakfast only, having to find your own resources for supper so add another £50 for three suppers I would say. Contrast that with £138 for the two of us and I leave that thought with you. I'm slipping into Trip Adviser mode here. The food is not haut cuisine but

it will suffice and you get a nice comfortable quiet room. This hotel was two hotels knocked into one, a common feature of Bay Hotels. The floors were a bit creaky but then who cares really. It was clean and adequate