

# A wonderful day in – Clevedon – and – Portishead

We decided to celebrate Francoise birthday one day ahead (Saturday 6th August) so – still car-less – we arose early and took the 07.49 178 bus to Bristol, and then the 10.10 X7 bus to Clevedon. Non-Brit readers please indulge me. Brits know that such places are not the epitomy of sophistication or glamour but there were many delights in store for us.

I made a vow that I would speak to as many people as possible with the aim of giving them a 'lift' – mainly through gay banter and humor. It is just plain fun and gives an extra dimension to the day.

We met a man at our local bus stop who through coincidence had a plaque dedicated to his father on Clevedon Pier so we said we would pay our respects. Later... although he told us that the plaque was two thirds of the way up on the left, we did not realize the magnitude of our search. There are over 15,000 of them. I estimated it would take the best part of a day to search especially as some of them were dull with age and barely readable.

Met two Jehovah Witnesses on the sea front. They were two of the nicest JW people I had ever met. They were non pushy, non confrontational, and rather wanted to share their view of life, the universe and everything. We chatted for about 20 minutes. I felt they were really listening to us and not trying to push stuff down our throat.

We met a cheery couple on the pier, this time from Wales. She had taken the week off from a sports centre in Birmingham. Last night they stayed in the Forest of Dean area and highly recommended the Miners Arms, a gastro pub 200 yards away from the hotel where they stayed.

We met a highly motivated volunteer called Jim. He told us of the Great storm in 1990 where a spring high tide coincided with a strong on shore wind. Gardens of the homes on the front were flooded.

We had a celebratory lunch on the pier with no less than one and a half fish on the plate with batter that was so thin and crisp it did not adversely affect the stomach.

No question that the pier is a strong community in itself, but definitely kept alive by volunteers.

We wandered around the compact town centre. One street is quite posh – the Oxford Street of the area, called Hill Road. Many niche shops. We found a micro pub called The Fallen Tree and spent some happy time talking to the server. They were very proud of the locality of their ales. Strangely, they have no website but can be easily found in this short street. It is Number 15, and BS21 7PD if you are interested.

We found the bus that took us to Portishead. Not a dump as I had thought. A lively port with a huge Marina. We visited a lifeboat station and in particular the shop associated with it. They do a great job.

We caught the X4 bus at 17.10 then a connecting bus from Bristol 18.10 arriving home 19.20. The X4 is the only local bus that I know that includes travel along the M5.

I could just about get used to being without a car except for my gardening work. Mind you, we are somewhat lulled into a sense of ease. What about the weather which for 9 months of the year is either cold or indifferent.