

1st. Wychwood Guides

I seem to have left it a bit late in life to discover the joys of Youth Hostelling, but that is what Tracy and I did with five Guides early in February. With the help of Family Railcards and promotional vouchers we managed to have a very busy weekend at minimum cost.

The first new experience for some was travelling by train from Kingham to Paddington, crossing London by tube to London Bridge and then on another train to Rochester. The last part of the journey was completed by taxi.

'It was a long journey and we went on four trains and there were lots of people.'

'We went up a big escalator and I said 'Don't look down!'

'It was lots of hustle and bustle as Tracy says, getting on and off the trains.'

'When we got there the Youth Hostel was really smart and clean with nice rooms.'

After breakfast on Saturday we took a long walk to the bus-stop and waited for ages for a bus to Rochester, eventually a kindly driver told us that bus no longer ran and we would have to change at Chatham bus station.

When we finally arrived at Rochester we spent what was left of the morning in the Guildhall Museum, a real 'hands-on' experience geared to children and all free! After a picnic lunch we visited the Dickens Experience and learnt about Charles and his characters.

'I didn't like the prison ship so I held Christine's hand.'

'In the Guildhall Museum we pressed some coins and did some brass-rubbing.'

'I really enjoyed the Dickens Experience and me and Emma got scared when Charles moved his head'

On Sunday it was goodbye Rochester, London here we come and we were blessed with a cold, crisp, sunny day. Leaving the train at Waterloo we walked along to the South Bank complex where we spent several hours in the Museum of the Moving Image. Again there were many things to have a go at, including an audition for a Hollywood movie. If you are looking for somewhere different to go in London this one is definitely worth a visit. We then crossed the river via the Hungerford footbridge to picnic in Trafalgar Square.

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There was just enough time left to walk up the Mall to peer through the railing at Buckingham Palace, where the flag was at half-mast. We were not sure if this was for King Hussein of Jordan or if the Queen Mother had died and we'd missed the news. Then we walked back through St. James' Park to see the Horse Guards on duty in Whitehall.

'We went to the Moving Image Museum. I did a dance with a Hollywood lady.'

'We went to Buckingham Palace but the Queen was not in.'

'After that we went to see the guards sitting on their horses, we all had our photos taken next to him.'

At Paddington we checked the kitty and found just enough for burgers for the children – the final treat of a memorable weekend.

My appeal for help with fund-raising met with a very minimal response – not one of the parents of the 40 plus children in the Guiding Movement in the Wychwoods offered to help, but I did have offers from two of the busiest grannies I know. Perhaps it is time to scrap fund-raising and just ask parents to cover the full cost of their children's activities.

However Tracy now has two new helpers at meetings, thanks Karen and Sarah your interest is much appreciated.

Christine Halliday, 831134.

