



This month one of our travel bloggers Tim Saunders talks us through a recent visit that he and his family made to Cheltenham.....

A FAMILY TRIP TO... *Cheltenham*

The Regency and Victorian splendour of Cheltenham is only a couple of hours away from where we live, making it an extremely attractive place for us to visit.

Composer Gustav Holst was born in the spa town in 1874 and his father, Adolph von Holst was organist at All Saints' Church, Pittville. We stayed at The Cheltenham Townhouse in Pittville Lawn; home to some of the finest examples of 19th century architecture. It has been owned by Jayne and Adam Lillywhite for the past 16 years. "We bought it when I was expecting my daughter," recalled Jayne. "It was a nursing home. We have 22 bedrooms and four studios." With its freshly painted exterior, large sash windows allowing good amounts of light into its rooms together with high ceilings it's a wonderfully opulent environment.

Both the town and the park are minutes away. The hotel car park takes away the worry of finding a



space elsewhere. We check in at reception and are then whisked up to our family room with a king size bed for mummy and daddy bear, two singles for the little bears and a futon for baby Henry bear. Ah. Our children instantly spot the flat screen TV on the wall and need to watch it. It's nice to be able to have a cup of tea without the little darlings wanting our attention, even if this is for just a few moments.

It was time to explore, so we made our way to Pittville Park, where the children enjoy playing on the swings and slides. In the morning the hotel provides a splendid breakfast in its comfortable dining room with jazz playing in the background. We try the full English breakfast and the smoked salmon and scrambled eggs, which are delicious. We then have two enjoyable lunches so quite a bit of sitting around for the children but they cope.

The Gloucester Old Spot is a delightful country pub on the Tewkesbury Road, which has been run by Simon and Kate Daws since 2000. It features in The Good Pub Guide and The Michelin Guide to Pubs. Full of old rustic charm the large dining room is very cosy and warm thanks to its wood burner, even on a cold day. Caroline had a roasted squash, aubergine and tomato lasagne with pesto. Her rice pudding for dessert is equally satisfying. Heidi and I had the fish and chips, while Henry and Harriett went for the homemade pizza.

At The Old Courthouse in County Court Road there is a decidedly legal approach to proceedings. No surprise there as it was the county court until fairly recently. We find ourselves dining in the old court room, all the original furnishings still in place including plaques denoting: Defendant, Jury and Press. The food is tasty but the children are unable to sit down for too long and so begrudgingly we leave without any desserts. Lock 'em up m'lud!

Cheltenham is also a shopper's delight with exclusive brands along its high street.

For more information visit:
www.cheltenhamtownhouse.com
www.thegloucesteroldspot.co.uk
www.brunningandprice.co.uk/oldcourthouse/

