

"You must visit Bridport Carnival," recommends Shige, owner of Hell Barn Cottages in Chideock, where we stay. So we do and enjoy seeing the floats.

Hell Barn Cottages, a complex of five self-catering stone cottages, is only about 10 miles away down a quiet country lane. We stay in Rosemary Cottage. The first thing we notice is that we can park directly outside the accommodation, which is really helpful for unloading. Inside it's well presented, comfortable and clean. Downstairs is open plan given to sitting and dining and off this is a sizeable kitchen. There's a downstairs bathroom and shower. Upstairs are two bedrooms, easily accommodating the five of us. We enjoy relaxing here and there is a very popular games room where the children play and so do the adults, given chance: snooker, badminton and table tennis. There's a go-kart that Henry thoroughly enjoys riding. One evening Caroline, Harriett and I are able to play a game of badminton and it's great to see that Harriett's co-ordination is improving. Heidi and Henry are on the swings. It's an idyllic setting and it's no surprise that Shige, who has run this business for over 20 years and cooks Japanese food for guests, receives many repeat visits.

For us, holidays are all about mooching around and trying to relax if the children will let us. Our first attempt is over the border in Devon at Beer where we visit various exhibitions and an antiques centre. And then it's picnic time and the beach. Even though it is pebble, on a warm summer's day, we have to just lie down and savour the view.

The furthest we travel is some 70 miles away to Pennywell Farm near Buckfastleigh. Here the children hold rabbits, very cute piglets and feed the goats. They are even able to walk goats and watch piglet racing. The bamboo maze that leads to a tower gives views across the Devonshire countryside where we see gorgeous brown deer. When we are not admiring the animals the children are playing on the toy tractors and Henry loves the excavator where he can dig sand, returning to this throughout the day. "My favourite thing is cuddling the piglets," he admits. Pennywell is a great day out.

With his local knowledge, Shige recommends a hairdresser for Caroline in Bridport. She is happy with the results. Bridport itself is a busy market town with a good mix of independent and national retailers. For me it is the old bookshop with its tables of books lining the pavement that is a joy to visit. Here I find some gems that at some point I shall enjoy reading.



Seaton Tramway

Bridport Museum is another must to visit. Here we learn that the town is famous for producing nets. So next time you watch a football match the nets have probably been made in Bridport. During our visit the museum proudly exhibits the watercolour that JMW Turner produced of Bridport Harbour and it is a privilege to see it. There's just chance to relax in the Borough Gardens where we enjoy looking at the flowers and spy some butterflies and a dragonfly.

Just over 20 miles away at Ilminster we visit a Creative Coverage art exhibition featuring selected professional artists and craftspeople. We dine at the Talbot Arms at Uplyme, a busy and vibrant pub run by Wendy and Steve where Caroline, Heidi and I enjoy beef and ale pie with chips while Harriett and Henry have sausages and chips. There's an ice cream dessert for the children. It's a friendly pub at the centre of the community and we have a good chat to Wendy who explains how close knit and supportive the locals are, raising funds for renovating the village hall, which has become well used. From here it is possible to walk cross country from the pub to Lyme Regis. A night time walk here sees us trying to find the grave of Mary Anning. We make it to the beach.

The following day we leave Hell Barn for home at 10am.

For more information visit:

seatonjurassic.org

www.tram.co.uk

www.pennywellfarm.co.uk

www.beaminstermuseum.co.uk

<https://talbotarms.com>

www.charmouth.org

www.hellbarn.co.uk

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