

Wild, wild West

Lee Davey and family set out to enjoy an action-packed adventure across Devon and Cornwall from the comfort of four Club sites

THIS MONTH'S SITES



1. ST AGNES BEACON

For the most up-to-date details, see The Club website – alternatively, see p58 of the 2015/16 Directory.



2. MERROSE FARM

For the most up-to-date details, see The Club website – alternatively, see p51 of the 2015/16 Directory. **Facilities include a playground and play area.**



3. PLYMOUTH SOUND

For the most up-to-date details, see The Club website – alternatively, see p56 of the 2015/16 Directory. **Facilities include a play area.**



4. MODBURY

For the most up-to-date details, see The Club website – alternatively, see p53 of the 2015/16 Directory. **Facilities include a playground and play area.**



You can book your pitch online at caravanclub.co.uk/searchandbook or by calling our Advance Booking Service on 01342 327490.

Please call Affiliated Sites directly.

FOOD + DRINK



Cycle Themed Café

The cycle hire shop at Bissoe has a themed café which proved irresistible after our guided tour from Mobius. There's also a large car park for those not on two wheels.

Contact: 01872 870341,
cornwallcyclehire.com/cafe.html
Nearest featured site: St Agnes Beacon

Chapel Porth Café

It's a lovely cliff-top walk from the St Agnes site to Chapel Porth Café to sample the local delicacy of Hedgehog ice-cream! The area is run by the National Trust, therefore car parking is chargeable for non-NT members.

Contact: 01872 552487,
nationaltrust.org.uk
Nearest featured site:
St Agnes Beacon



The Roseland Inn

This pub came highly recommended by other holidaymakers and we were certainly not disappointed. Surprisingly busy even mid-week, so booking in advance may be the safest option especially in peak season.

Contact: 01872 580254,
roselandinn.co.uk
Nearest featured site: Merrose Farm

Venus Café

Just a few feet from the Discovery Surf School in Bigbury, you'll find affordable, tasty snacks, drinks and ice-creams, what more could you want from a beach-side café?

Contact: 01548 810141
Nearest featured site:
Modbury



Burgh Island, as seen from Bantham

It has often been my theory that when it comes to holidays, happy children equal happy parents. So, before setting off on our trip to Devon and Cornwall, I asked my two, Poppy and Charlie, what they would like to do. Their reply – to have a go at kayaking and kite buggying – did not, I must admit, fill me with anything that resembled happiness.

I was still pondering the wisdom of letting my daughter, age 13, and seven year old son indulge in such pastimes when my wife announced that she intended to introduce the rest of the family to the joys of horse riding. So trekking was also put on the 'to do' list. All that was left was to add my suggestions of mountain biking and surfing (Cornwall is the surfing mecca in Britain) to the agenda, both of which looked positively tame in comparison to everyone else's.

First stop, and the most westerly site on our trip, was St Agnes Beacon, a peaceful 111-pitch (all grass) site that offers breathtaking panoramic views of Cornwall's gorgeous coastline. Covering six acres of prime West Country land, St Agnes Beacon has no toilet blocks but does boast laundry facilities and a motorhome waste disposal point.

AS SEEN ON TV

The nation was still in the grip of *Poldark* fever as we arrived and, even though the local beauty spots of St Agnes Head and Chapel Porth, which had both featured heavily in the popular BBC programme, were within walking distance, there was plenty of availability at this stunning clifftop site.

First on our activity agenda was mountain biking. Although Cornwall is not

"St Agnes Beacon offers breathtaking panoramic views of Cornwall's gorgeous coastline"

best known for this sport, its practically traffic-free roads and family-friendly trails make for a great two-wheel adventure. We opted for a guided tour from Mobius Bike Trails, which is based at nearby Perranporth beach. We were supplied with some quality Trek bikes before setting out on our tailor-made tour of Bissoe, famed for its tin mines and iron-rich orange pools. Once we had reached an area known locally as 'Mars', our guide Tim taught us a selection of basic bike tricks which we put into practise on our way back to base.

One activity done and dusted and, as yet, no casualties. Next day we headed

back to Perranporth beach and the Mobius HQ to try kite buggying. Thankfully, the session began with a comprehensive instruction lesson, before we were let loose into the 20mph winds that were blowing in off the sea. Despite my initial concerns, kite-buggying was, in fact, a fantastic way to enjoy some carbon-free, adrenalin-fuelled fun.

ROSY OUTLOOK

Heading south, our next stop was Merrose Farm, near St Mawes on the unspoilt Roseland Peninsula. This would make an ideal base for a first caravan visit to the >>

FOR THE FAMILY



Mobius Bike Trails

These guided trails offer a great way to explore the Cornish countryside on two wheels. Routes and bikes can be provided to suit all ages and abilities.

Contact: 01637 831383, mobiusonline.co.uk
Nearest featured site: St Agnes Beacon

National Marine Aquarium

The UK's biggest public aquarium is definitely worth a visit. Discover the creatures that live below Plymouth's waves, as well as some more exotic aquatic life from around the world.

Contact: national-aquarium.co.uk
Nearest featured site:
Plymouth Sound



Cornish Riding Holidays

Suitable for both beginners and experienced riders, this offers a more leisurely way to soak up World Heritage Site scenery. The family-run equestrian centre is open all year, but you are advised to call in advance to check availability.

Contact: 01209 211852, cornishridingholidays.co.uk
Nearest featured site: Merrose Farm

Discovery Surf School

Our lessons at Bigbury on Sea proved that having no kit and no clue isn't a barrier when it comes to surfing. Great exercise and great fun. Poppy was asking to go back again the minute we had left!

Contact: 01548 810535, discoverysurf.com
Nearest featured site: Modbury





Sandy Perranporth beach

“Visit Plymouth Sound and your eyes will have seldom been treated to such a fabulous view”

area, owing to the easy A-road access and a one-way traffic-light system which leads directly to the site.

Set in 14-acres of parkland, Merrose Farm has 178 pitches, 76 of which are hardstanding. There are great facilities on offer, including Wi-Fi, baby changing facilities, a laundry and a children’s play area. Wheelchair users and the walking disabled are also well catered for.

My wife Helen had spent most of her youth around horses and was keen to go on a trek, taking in some of the sumptuous Cornish countryside. She had brought all the kit with her, so on booking our outing with Cornish Riding Holidays in Redruth, I made it clear that although Helen was an experienced rider, I was very much a beginner. Once I had got over the feeling of being sky-scraper-high when sat in the saddle, things went very well indeed and we were led on a leisurely trot around this area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (highlighting how beautiful it is, it even managed to look outstanding in the rain!).

SOUND’S GREAT

Crossing from Cornwall into South Devon, we decided to take things a bit slower and checked in to The Club’s Plymouth Sound site. With just 57 pitches (all grass), it may not be the largest on the network, but it is worth a visit for the views alone and there’s a real sense of getting away from it all here. There are no toilet or shower facilities, but there is a playing field adjoining the site.

As I chatted to the friendly wardens on arrival, I noticed that every caravan (and deckchair come to that) was pointing in the same direction. As we turned the corner, I could see why – your eyes will have seldom been treated to such a fabulous view. Although a number of fields separate the site from the sea, the water seems to almost lap its very fringes, and it is easy to while away the hours watching the many ships sailing in and out of Plymouth harbour. This site was the perfect place to recharge our batteries and take in some less ‘extreme’ activities courtesy of the National Marine >>

CULTURE

St Agnes and Chapel Porth

This National Trust area is set to be even more of a draw, following its role in hit BBC drama *Poldark*. Parking is free for NT members only, however it’s an easy walk from the St Agnes site.



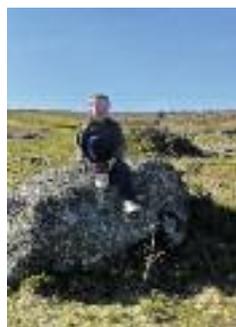
Contact: 01872 552412, nationaltrust.org.uk
Nearest featured site: St Agnes Beacon



St Mawes Castle

Built during the 16th century to defend our shores from the Catholic forces of France and Spain, this fortress remains very impressive and is well worth a visit.

Contact: 0370 333 1181, english-heritage.org.uk
Nearest featured site: Merrose Farm



Dartmoor

No trip to Devon would be complete without visiting dramatic Dartmoor. This year, there is a First World War exhibition (until September) that shows what life was like for the people of Dartmoor at that time.

Contact: 01626 832093, dartmoor.gov.uk
Nearest featured site: Modbury

Escot House

Set in 220 acres of stunning private parkland in the heart of East Devon, Escot offers a wide choice of outdoor activities including a red squirrel encounter, a maze and a woodland dropslide.

Contact: 01404 822188, escot-devon.co.uk
Nearest featured site: Plymouth Sound



OUTDOOR FUN



Mobius Kite Buggy

Picture holding a kite in your hands while steering a three-wheeled buggy with your feet – that's kite bugging. It's all down to kite skills and is very rewarding when you get it right.

Contact: 01637 83138, mobiusonline.co.uk

Nearest featured site: St Agnes Beacon

Cycling

Don't miss these two fantastic routes for cycling in the South West – the Devon Coast to Coast which runs from Plymouth to Ilfracombe (National Cycle Network route 27) and the Cornish Way from Land's End to Bude (National Cycle Network routes 3 and 32).



Contact: sustrans.org.uk



Active Cornwall

Kayaking along the estuary between Golant and Fowey proved a big hit with all of us. You can also enjoy a pie and a pint at Fowey before the return journey.

Contact: 01503 262680, activecornwall.co.uk

Nearest featured site: Merrose Farm

River Dart Country Park

Country parks have definitely changed since I was a lad and the River Dart Country Park offers a raft-full of energy-sapping activities as well as some pleasant walks in lush surroundings.

Contact: 01364 652511, riverdart.co.uk

Nearest featured site: Plymouth Sound



Aquarium, the River Dart Country Park and lots of cups of tea.

SURFING SAFARI

Modbury, near the ancient village of the same name, is a short hop from Plymouth Sound. It is a 12-acre site with 113 pitches (39 hardstanding) and, new for 2015, 12 tent pitches. The play ground is a good size and, on the opposite side of the site, there is a huge field perfect for playing football or flying a kite.

Nestled between sea and moors, Modbury Club site, which offers Wi-Fi and wheelchair/walking disabled facilities, is close to Bigbury on Sea where we booked a family surf lesson with Discovery Surf School. While Helen volunteered to act as photographer (mainly from the café!), Poppy, Charlie and I squeezed into wetsuits for an hour-long lesson. I had tried surfing once before and, quite frankly,

I was terrible at it. The initial part of our lesson took place on the sand, but we soon found ourselves wading out into the water. Much to Poppy's annoyance, Charlie was up and away in no time and I think the sibling rivalry pushed them along just as much as the waves.

I must admit that some of those waves could have been created by my initial floundering, but Jess, our instructor, soon identified problems with positioning (which was undoubtedly magnified by my issues with balance and co-ordination) and, to the amazement of all, had me surfing towards the shore. Surfing provided yet another great day out, and could put the final tick on our 'must do' list.

So, although letting the children have a big say on how we spent our time may have seemed like a gamble, doing the things we could all enjoy as a family meant everyone came home happy.

MEMBERS' VIEWS



Gary and Tessa Challenger had popped over to the Plymouth Sound site from their home in Dawlish, Devon. "The views are spectacular and we love to watch the ships and submarines coming and going from Plymouth. From water sports to history, there are lots of things for couples or families to do nearby. But for us, it's just a great place to relax while we are painting."



Jeremy and Judy Bloomfield from Plymtree in Devon were staying at Merrose Farm. "We haven't visited this part of Cornwall for 10 years or so. Friends recommended Merrose Farm as being a great base from which to explore part of the nearby coastal path. It's a beautiful part of Cornwall, not too far from home, and being a Caravan Club site, you know it's going to be of a good standard. The wardens are very friendly, too."



Simon and Nicola Ware and family from Somerset were at Modbury. "We chose Modbury as its nice and quiet and in a great location. The coast is easily accessible from here and we've visited Kingsbridge and Salcombe. Also, there are lots of beaches nearby such as Bigbury and Bantham."

Club Together

The online community that just keeps growing

To read even more member views, see our fantastic online forum at caravanclub.co.uk/together