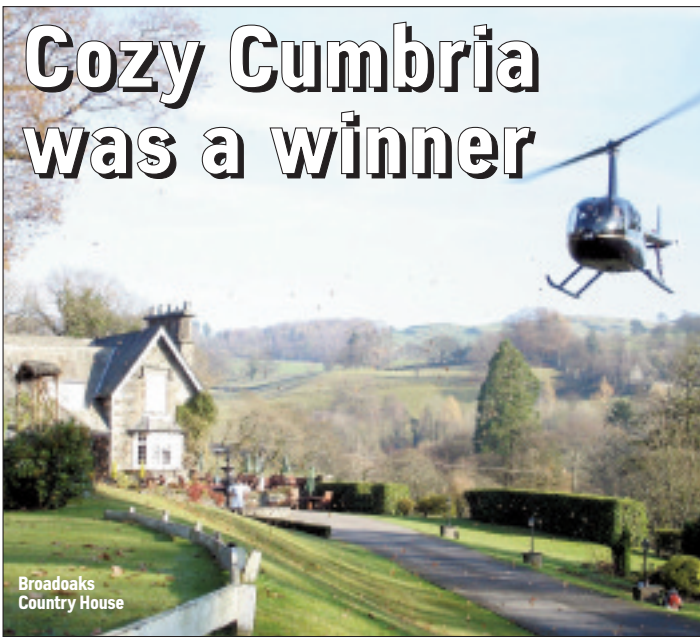


What'sOn24/7

Cozy Cumbria was a winner



Broadoaks Country House

TRAVEL

CUMBRIA - it's closer than you think.

This is something I discovered when I took the opportunity to go on a short break to the Lake District.

As I drove up, I thought of the countryside and landscape which inspired Wordsworth, recalling phrases like 'A host, of golden daffodils' or 'I wandered lonely as a cloud'.

Well I can tell Mr Wordsworth that clouds don't wander aimlessly, they hunt in packs and get together to form great big black blankets.

I should know, they hunted me on the way up as it showered on and off for the 209 mile journey.

I had envisaged a terrible drive up the M6 as whenever I turned on the radio, I heard of traffic jams on the motorway or long tailbacks.

As I was in Lancashire, the south side of the M6 was, in places, at a standstill or at best a crawl and I did say a little prayer it would not be like that on the way back.

I was heading to Broadoaks Country House which is located in Windermere.

This was an area of the country I had never visited and was interested to see what it was like and how it would compare to my expectations.

The country house, which is situated in seven acres of its own grounds, has been under new management for the past 18 months.

Entering the foyer, I could instantly tell this would be an enjoyable stay as it just gave off a sense of serenity.

There are 15 individually designed rooms at the house and I stayed in Ash.

The other rooms are named after different types of wood such as Maple, Sycamore, Beech, Willow and Oak to name a

few. The room was cozy but with plenty of space to move around and afforded me a lovely view of the main drive and the surrounding hills.

The main bedroom came complete with an en-suite bathroom and whirlpool bath.

There was a very comfortable four poster bed which gave me a good night's sleep along with a wide-screen television and a kettle to make tea and coffee.

To get ready for supper, I decided to take the short drive into Windermere which proved a pleasant distraction from the rain.

This was an ideal jaunt to stretch my legs and gave me a chance to work up an appetite for my evening meal.

On my return, I booked a time for a table. When I came downstairs later I went into the music room for an aperitif and a chance to study the menu and wine list before ordering my meal.

It was all very unhurried and relaxing.

To start, I had French onion soup and Emmental toastie. This was followed by pan roasted Cumbrian fillet of beef, fondant potatoes, wilted spinach, celeriac and truffle puree with wild mushroom jus.

I also had a side order of sugar snap peas and Jersey Royal New Potatoes.

To wash this down, I selected a bottle of Chilean wine. I didn't

have any dessert as I felt full so decided to opt for a relaxing coffee in the lounge.

All of this brought to an end to a lovely day.

In the morning, I woke about 8am which meant I had plenty of time to get ready for breakfast, served from 8.30am.

I plumped for apple juice and cereal to start and this was followed by the breakfast of champions - a full English.

This was made up of dry cured bacon, Cumberland sausage, homemade black pudding, tomato, button mushrooms, beans and a choice of fried, scrambled or poached egg.

This was all washed down by a pit of tea - lovely.

What did I think of Broadoaks?

It exceeded my expectations and as an establishment, I would have no hesitation in recommending it for you to stay at.

It provided all the comfort I would have hoped for and did leave me feeling relaxed and refreshed.

After breakfast, I left to head back to Kettering. As I was not in any rush I stopped off in Kendal to enjoy this market town.

So summing up, Cumbria really is closer than you think - and I think it is such a catchy phrase it should be on a bumper sticker.

LAWRENCE JOHN

FACT FILE

THE cost of staying at Broadoaks, including accommodation, dinner and breakfast, between now and September 4 for two nights on Friday and Saturday is £95 or it's £80 between Sunday and Thursday. A one night stay is £90.

All rates are per person, per night and are based

on two adults sharing a Victorian Bijou Room namely Sycamore, Willow and Beach.

For Ash, a Victorian Deluxe, you would have to add and extra £30.

For more details call Broadoaks Country House on 015394 45566 or log onto www.broadoakscountryhouse.co.uk



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