

CORNISH NOSTALGIA

Dan Burden spent many summer holidays visiting Cornwall with his family as a child. Fast forward 20-odd years, he returned to see if his childhood holiday destination was still as he remembered.

It's funny how the smallest things can evoke powerful memories from our childhood. For some it is the sweet smell of candy floss, drifting over the chatter of a travelling fair. For others it is the discovery of a long-forgotten teddy bear, worn with love, secrets and years of companionship.

For me, it is sitting in a traffic jam on the A303 just outside Stonehenge. I had spent many a happy summer here as a boy, staring aimlessly out of the window, arguing with my brother or asking my mum if we were nearly there yet. The answer to this question was invariably: "No – shut up!" as our destination was north Cornwall, hours of driving away and more importantly, home of my ancient and wise grandad.

For the first time in 20 years I was heading back to my old stomping grounds and was eager to see just how accessible the place was (my suspicion was not very). Memories of many a childhood summer came flooding back once we were greeted by the magnificent, rolling vista of the Cornish countryside, enshrouded in its oh-so-familiar cloak of grey, grey rain.

During our week away I soon discovered that the general rule of thumb for negotiating Cornwall as a wheelchair user is drive as far as you possibly can before getting out of your car. Only a fool would stop at the first parking space they found, as the numerous picturesque harbour towns are built on slopes that would make Chris Froome get off and push. However, once you're at sea level there is generally a car park,



which saves a lot of wear and tear on your shoulders (or more accurately those of the fleet of passers-by who would be giving you a shove).

Due to the number of grey-haired visitors/retirees, parking across the county is only free if your car is road tax exempt. The one exception to the rule is the main car park in Padstow.

The ferry from Rock is fun and fully accessible (although be careful to do this at high tide or you will find yourself deposited on the inaccessible beach rather than the ferry slip).

Other beaches are more suitable for our kind, and on the one day when the rain relented we were lucky enough to get onto Polzeath beach. Apparently there is a



beach chair available for those who book in advance, but why bother doing that when you can massively inconvenience your friends and loved ones by forcing them to push your regular chair through quicksand?

The beach evoked fond memories of standing up to my waist in the sea, teeth chattering as wave upon wave crashed into my tiny, frozen torso. Sadly, my wave-jumping days are now over, so I had to make do with lying in the sun scoffing a 99.

The final stop on my week of nostalgia was my grandad's bungalow in Camelford. It was here that I had fallen in love with the idea of a house without stairs. Who would have thought that 15 years later I would never have to use them ever again? SCI was clearly my destiny!



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Ever wonder what it's like to have your own cheese kitchen? Imagine no more with a visit to Lanhydrock House and Gardens. For those who can transfer, there is a Trampler available (think Bear Grylls's mobility scooter) which can be used to explore the extensive grounds.

■ www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lanhydrock

Avast ye land lubbers – all aboard the good ship *Paraplegia*! For those of a nautical persuasion, the Wheelyboat Trust has a number of wheelchair accessible boats across the county for you to hire.

■ www.wheelyboats.org

... AND ON A RAINY DAY

In the inevitable event that your holiday is a wash out – or if you just fancy a glimpse of the future when we are all living on Mars – why not take a trip to the Eden Project? As well as three biomes housing plants from across the globe they host numerous activities from children's education to rock concerts.

■ www.edenproject.com

Want to get up close and personal with a lobster? The National Lobster Hatchery gives you all this and more. You can even adopt your own lobster from as little as £3 – result!

■ www.nationallobsterhatchery.co.uk

WHERE TO EAT:

Anywhere that sells Cornish Cream Teas.

SHARE YOUR TRAVELS WITH SIA

If you would like to share your experience of going on day trips or holidays, either in the UK or abroad, email Breda Duggan at b.duggan@spinal.co.uk