

## 21 May 2010, Friday

We are in York looking at the sights. Will stay here overnight and then travel down to Bath.

First stop this morning was the bus which took us to the York Castle Museum. Website - <http://www.yorkcastlemuseum.org.uk/Page/Index.aspx>

This museum is worth visiting as it gives you an insight into what life was like from a period in York's history to the 1960's. It was very well done. You can spend hours in the museum if that takes your fancy. I noticed that there were lots of schoolkids there – good way to keep them interested and amused.



On the bus again and then we visited the York railway station. We had a bite to eat and then walked around the station. It is very impressive and a large place.

On the bus again and we travelled towards York Minster. Website -

<http://www.yorkminster.org/visiting/what-to-see-and-do/>



We spent a very long time here. Sandra went on a stained glass tour while I waited, just sitting and taking in this magnificent cathedral.



Went shopping afterwards and bought gifts for Linda Martin and Janice's Dad. I also bought a carryon luggage bag from Sports Direct. I think the bag will be used for all our gifts.

We are dining in tonight at the hotel. We met a couple (they live in Aberdeen, Scotland) who were staying at a bed and breakfast and came to the hotel for an evening meal. I gave them Sandra's web address because of the lady's interest in leadlighting.

Checked if our phone number in WA was connected – still not done.

## 22 May 2010, Saturday

After breakfast, we left the car in the car park at the back of the hotel and walked into the CBD of the City of York. The purpose – return a bag I bought from Sports Direct – one the zips was stuck and we reasoned that we should return it in case the other zips malfunctioned in exactly the same way. When we got to the store, we looked at another bag and found it also had problems with the zips. We got a refund instead.

Sandra bought a few books for reading. One is never enough just in case the books are awful, she gets to choose. That is the problem with having such excellent choice of reading as members of the City of Mandurah library.

We did not travel to Bath today. Could not see the point in it if we were not going into Wales. I reasoned that I had seen enough Roman stuff and the long drive to Bath and back was not a good option.

We instead travelled in the direction of Leeds. Got here, parked, found the Marriott Hotel (website - <http://www.marriott.co.uk/hotels/travel/lbadt-leeds-marriott-hotel/>) and then got lost getting there.

Had to ask a West Indian couple to jump into the car and direct us to the hotel. The sat nav just kept getting us lost and we ended up lost. The couple managed to get us back to the hotel. Thank goodness. We gave them cab fare and something to talk about – those dumb Aussies that got lost in Leeds.

The hotel is really top drawer and the room is really nice with air conditioning. This is a standard deluxe double.

The weather in England has been quite hot for the past 3 days and everywhere you go you see all these white bodies sitting in the sun slowly turning red.



The car is valet parked for a princely fee of 17 pounds per day. Given our experience getting around Leeds it is probably worth it.

Leeds is not a tourist town – they don't advertise an information centre in the approach to town and you have to ask the locals. It turns out that the information place is in the railway station right in the middle of the CBD.

We went shopping in the main town centre and discovered that Leeds is a big and busy place. Top of the list was a cabin size bag for moi. It is needed to hold all the necessary presents that we have bought for all you folks back home.

Checked if our phone number was connected – still not done.



We decided to go out and have Italian – the hotel recommended Bibi's Restaurant. Website - <http://www.bibisrestaurant.com/>. The website does not do the restaurant justice. Probably needs a good web designer. Know anyone?

This is a place you must see and experience before you die. I really mean it. It is straight out of the gangster era in the USA. When was the last time you saw vertical lights from floor to ceiling surrounded by white and gold?

The floors are hard tile and conversation is impossible. It is just loud. You are there to eat and drink. Conversation is impossible.

I loved the place. I half expected to see Al Capone come through the door. All the waiters wore their hair slicked back and work dark uniforms. I thought I saw my nephew (Ashley deLamotte – dead ringer). I almost called out to him.

The food is fantastic and so are the charges. They gouge you for some fairly low level wine quality (we had a Spanish Rose). They add 10% to be bill as a gratuity. Never seen that happen in a restaurant in England. They tell you that they are going to do it on the menu so you are forewarned.

The maitre'd was female and she wore black top that required gravity to keep on. I kept looking at her every time she passed hoping that it would fall off. Sadly, it did not. Asset wise, she was not blessed but she had a killer smile. You can tell this is the wine talking.

Imagine an American restaurant in the prohibition era with black, red, white and gold with lights around the bar. Everyone is in standard black and the service is so efficient it makes your head spin. Couple that with fantastic food and you realise that everyone must visit Bibi's restaurant before they die.

This is the sweet I had. Unbelievable!

### **COPPA “CIOCCOLATISSIMO” £4.75**

White & dark chocolate ice-cream,  
chocolate fudge pieces, hot chocolate  
sauce, chocolate coffee beans and  
fresh cream

Oh! The bill. 52.25 pounds for 2 courses and a bottle of wine.

Don't look for a cheap night out when you visit. Be prepared to be gouged.

### **24 May 2010, Sunday**

We are going to travel from Leeds in the direction of Scarborough (the east coast) which is reasonably close to Darlington. Probably spend one night there and the next night in another town closer still. We are aiming to have our first night in Darlington on Tuesday, 25 May 2010.

Reflection – the use of the laptop and the purchase of the dongle for internet access was a good thing. I have been able to keep in touch on matters affecting us financially and it has been particularly invaluable regarding communication (cheaper phone calls and access to email).

Reflection – the dongle allows email to be received through Outlook Express but it will not send the email out. Sending email out either requires the use of Hostgator or using email access provided through wi-fi at the place of accommodation.

Our phone number at home is still not connected.

Reflection – the road signs here are very limiting and can be a problem for new travellers. If only local governments take it upon themselves to signpost consistently so that at a glance you know where you are! I would like to see signs at lights and intersections as you are moving so fast that you cannot look for signs that may be posted on the side of a building.



There was a huge traffic hold up on the way to Scarborough and we got here around 1.00 pm. We are in the Clifton Hotel (on the beachfront) part of the English Rose Hotels Group. The tariff is 90 pounds per night with breakfast. I think we have the best room in the hotel.

Website - <http://www.clifton-hotel-scarborough.co.uk/>

We went for a walk into the city centre (about 10-15 minutes away). The weather here is very steamy and it started to rain when we were walking in the city centre.

The rain certainly cleared the beachgoers. Visiting the beaches here is serious business and every square inch is packed with cars and people.

There is no wi-fi in the hotel but they have a lift. Thank goodness for that. I hate stairs.

My dongle works fine – 5 bars.

The Eagles lost. Both Grant Brown (Hawthorn) and Dylan Etherington (Essendon) are celebrating wins this weekend.

### **24 May 2010, Monday**

The all ordinaries are up today. Hope that is a good sign for the week ahead.

Our phone number is still not connected. Perhaps later today?

We are travelling to Middlesbrough – arrived around midday and checked into the Thistle Hotel – very upmarket and expensive. Website -

[http://www.thistle.com/en/hotels/united\\_kingdom/middlesbrough/thistle\\_middlesbrough/index.html](http://www.thistle.com/en/hotels/united_kingdom/middlesbrough/thistle_middlesbrough/index.html)

The hotel charges by the hour for the use of wi-fi. Better to bring your own dongle – it works here – 5 bars. Compared to the hotel room in Leeds, it is not as good value for the money.

Went for a walk around the CBD, had some coffee and then walked down to the movie theatre to see Robin Hood. I liked the story and cannot understand why it received a lukewarm reception at the Cannes film festival.

Went out to dinner at Nandos. Once in a while I go out to places like this to remind myself what awful food they serve. This place and experience was no exception.

### **25 May 2010, Tuesday**

The all ordinaries are down today. Not a good sign for the week ahead. The eurozone debt crisis continued to rattle global markets and spread its concerns to the Australian market.

Received a phone call from an Asian girl (iPrimus) at 2.25am local time (Middlesbrough, England) asking for Sandra. She wanted to advise us that both our numbers were being re-connected and wanted to explain what had taken place. Sandra told her that the call was costing a fortune (the mobile is on international roaming) and that she wanted something in writing to explain what had happened. The girl said she did not have the authority to do that. The girl also did not know we were overseas and had not seen my letter.

A good case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand was doing.

One interesting observation! iPrimus had my mobile number and used it to contact Sandra. Why did they not do that initially instead of leaving a phone message on our answering machine?

Anyway, it will be interesting to see what iPrimus will come up with.

I cannot sleep and am writing this at 3.50am local time. Sandra is also up reading.

Tried the phone number at around 10.30am (WA time). It is ringing but not going through to the answering machine. I suspect that the number is just ringing in the local exchange. The fax number has definitely not been connected.

We are off to Darlington today and will be seeing Alan Hodgson for his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. Alan says he is 21 going on 88.

We are staying at the George Hotel in Darlington. Website -

[http://www.eurobookings.com/piercebridge-hotels-gb/the-george-hotel.html?label=bh37254\\_george+hotel+darlington&gclid=CKy3joCr76ECFR6Z2AodJFuwKA](http://www.eurobookings.com/piercebridge-hotels-gb/the-george-hotel.html?label=bh37254_george+hotel+darlington&gclid=CKy3joCr76ECFR6Z2AodJFuwKA)



Janice Harwood used to work at this hotel when she was doing her training. We have a very nice room and the tariff is very acceptable. We booked for 2 nights.

Travelled into the CBD of Darlington to look for a card and carry bag for Alan Hodgson (his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday is tomorrow). We just could not find a

card that says 21 going on 88 (only kidding).

Went back to the hotel and promptly fell asleep for the afternoon. We were exhausted. No sleep all the morning and it caught up with us. That meant when we work up we missed connecting with Janice and co.

Had dinner at the hotel – food is good.

Went for a walk afterwards – the rear of the hotel is the showpiece – it is often used for weddings. Met someone who was fishing. Never seen anyone in waders before. The fisherman must be related to Grant Brown. He did not catch anything either.

### **26 May 2010, Wednesday**

The all ordinaries are up today. Hope it stays that way.

Janice is picking us up around 10 am today – we are off to see Barnard castle.

We spent some time looking around the village/town called Barnard Castle. Busy (market day) and quaint.



Sandra and I went off on our own around lunchtime and looked at the castle itself.  
Website – <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/barnard-castle/>

Sandra went off to look at the Bowes Museum while I waited in the foyer – my back was giving trouble again and I could not face the stairs of which there are many (website - <http://www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk/>).



Dinner tonight at a pub to celebrate Alan Hodgson's 88<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**27 May 2010, Thursday**