

travel

Driving Miss Lazy



CHEERS!: Enjoying a pint at the Charles Bathurst Inn

Vicki Robinson's boots are not made for walking – but she found it was still possible to enjoy all the Dales has to offer

BEFORE we begin, a word of warning – a trip to Arkengarthdale can lead to feelings of extreme laziness.

Why? Well, from this writer's experience at least, even the vaguest hint that a visit there is on the agenda will prompt friends and family to wax lyrical about how WONDERFUL the walking is in that area. Take some hardy boots, a flask and a rucksack, you'll be urged, the hikes are simply MARVELLOUS. Now, that's all well and good if you're the sort of person who's never happier than when yomping through the heather with little more than a map and poor mobile phone reception for company. I, on the other hand, prefer to let the car and other mod cons take the strain at all possible times.

Or, to put it another way, the amount of full-on, get-some-ah-in-your-lungs walking actually achieved during my stay in Arkengarthdale was virtually nil.

But that did spoil the trip? Did it heck as like – although, as warned, the crestfallen looks on the faces of those aforementioned family and friends when they heard of my laid-back approach to the break did prompt (very brief) feelings of regret at not being a little more active. As it turns out, though, the Dales is not just walking country – it can also be driving country. And you needn't feel guilty about ruining the picture perfect environment too much if, like us, you were driving a hybrid car. For our weekend away, we'd borrowed the



WARM WELCOME: Charles Bathurst Inn

new Lexus CT 200h – the one Kylie has been driving on telly for a few weeks now. It's the first luxury compact car of its type



GREAT DRIVE: Lexus CT 200h

and made short work of the dips and hills of the Dales. In electric mode it's almost silent. And its incredibly low emissions (you don't even need to pay road tax) leave you with a very smug feeling as you're zipping along behind all those Chelsea tractors driven by our fellow city-dwellers. And in less than two hours – and using surprisingly little fuel – we were arriving

at our base for the weekend, the Charles Bathurst Inn.

Known to almost everyone you meet as simply CB's, the hotel nestles within the Yorkshire Dales National Park in what must be some of the most spectacular scenery the county has to offer. This 19-bed-roomed historic inn and restaurant dates back to the 18th century, when guests would arrive on that other eco-friendly form of transport, the horse. Externally, little must have changed, and even inside its features positively reek of the past – exposed brickwork, blackened wooden beams, and endless nooks and crannies to explore. We were given a warm welcome and shown to our room up a small flight of winding stairs. It has double windows with a great view over the Dale.



SPACIOUS: A room at the Charles Bathurst Inn

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