

Travel

Get a taste for the high life

Pamela Hoey enjoys an action-packed weekend at Ribby Hall Holiday Village

I WAS enjoying sitting in the blazing sun, listening to the birdsong and watching the ducks swim past lazily when the peace was suddenly shattered.

"Mum, look how high I am!" It was my daughter Ella, who along with her friend Elijah had made their way to the top of a precipitous climbing wall and were both very proud of themselves.

The wall was just one of the many attractions to be found at Ribby Hall Village, a holiday park near Kirkham, not far from the bright lights of Blackpool.

But the resort's gaudy attractions could not tempt us away from our surroundings.

We spent the weekend at the village staying in one of their newly refurbished Poppy bungalows.

It was beautifully decorated in muted tones, with a well appointed kitchen and three good sized bedrooms; a master with an ensuite and two twins.

After the children had chosen which of the twin bedrooms they would sleep in and had unpacked their clothes (!) it was time to explore.

The children led us first to the adventure playground with its selection of swings and most importantly two zip slides, which were only abandoned when pain stopped play.

As we had arrived in the early evening the leisure centre was closed as was the on site shop, so we drove the short distance to Kirkham and stocked our cupboards at the Morrison's supermarket, ready for breakfast the next day.

When we woke the sun was blazing so what better way to start the day than a dip?

Actually it was far more action-packed than that.

Ribby Hall Village's leisure centre has a fantastic indoor swimming pool. There are areas for toddlers and older swimmers, two massive hot tubs, (and boy were they hot) and two water slides which whizz you down their tubes before depositing you safely away from fellow swimmers.

If all that excitement gets a bit much there is a pool exclusively for adults to swim, which also houses a steam room and hot tub.

I snuck away, leaving the children with my husband having races on the slides and indulged in a few lengths and enjoyed the chance to clear my mind.



DAREDEVILS: Ella and Elijah tackle the 25ft climbing wall, and inset, the Poppy cottage

TRAVEL FACTS

PAMELA was a guest of Ribby Hall Village, Ribby Road, Wrea Green, Lancashire, PR4 2PR.

She stayed in a new Poppy cottage (sleeps six) and costs from £250 for a mid-week

break.

To book a horse riding session call 01772 687 829.

Use of the pool is free, but charges apply for other activities.

We finally managed to get the children out of the pool with the promise of an ice cream bought in the site shop, which sold all the usual supplies as well as some locally produced meats and cheeses, and some very tempting cakes.

After the ice cream it was off to The Island. It is actually an island, built just behind the leisure centre and plays host to a number of activities, including the aforementioned climbing wall.

My favourite was the pedaloes. My daughter and I took to one while the boys pedalled off in another. My daughter wanted to steer, which lead to some up close and personal meetings with the lush greenery which

grows on the riverbanks. I also had to perform some pretty nifty three point turns, but we managed to stay inside the boat, which is the main thing.

We then had a round of golf on the nine hole mini golf course, with holes based on some of the greatest in the world (but obviously a lot smaller).

That evening we ventured to the village's Bar and Grill, one of two bars on the site. This is very much the hub of the evening entertainment for families. Housed in the venue is a grill, bar, amusement arcade and stage, where Cyril the Squirrel was just getting the party started for a room full of excited children. We ate in the grill which had a comprehensive

menu and a children's menu. Elijah had the biggest piece of garlic bread with cheese we'd ever seen for a starter, Ella commenting that it was almost the size of his head.

The service matched the food. My steak was cooked perfectly, while when my daughter couldn't see anything she wanted on the children's menu the waitress said she could have a children's size lasagne from the adults menu.

While the youngsters tucked in with gusto (they'd used an awful lot of energy that day) my husband and I enjoyed a glass of rioja from the wine list, which I think is the nicest we have ever had.

One thing I would say about the venue was that while the children gathered around the stage to dance and play games those who were a bit too old for the entertainment could sit at the other end of the bar, well

away from the noise in comfy sofas. Having sat through family nights before I thought this was very well planned.

The village is set out in a series of closes, each with a different name.

The holiday homes radiate off the central thoroughfare, while static caravans and wooden lodges are based to the far side of the leisure centre.

There are two great ways to take in your surroundings and we had a go at both.

The first was my choice, a half hour hack around the grounds on horse back. Ella, Elijah and I were led around the well marked bridle paths by the chatty stable girls, but for the more competent riders longer hacks are available.

The second was the children's choice. We hired four wheeled cycles for half-an-hour, relinquishing control, foolishly, to the two non-drivers in the group. The cycles, which have a cover, two steering wheels and can seat four, are great fun. But be warned, if you are sitting in the passenger seat and heading for an oncoming car, you can try and turn the steering wheel as much as you want, but it's fixed. My advice is that you keep control of the hand brake at all times, despite the pleas of younger passengers. Enough said.

We had a thoroughly brilliant time at Ribby Hall Village, and if the pleas of my daughter are anything to go by, it won't be long until we'll be back.