

DAILY Mirror

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
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MIRRORMAN **CHRIS HUGHES'** SH
DISPATCHES FROM MOSUL'S FRO

One mile from ISIS



BIG DEAL

Book by Tuesday to get a 20% discount on all Brittany Ferries sail-and-stay gifts, cottage and cash holidays in France and Spain. The deal is available for breaks throughout the year, including Easter, spring half-term and the school summer holidays. Visit brittanyferries.com or call 0330 159 7000.

Travel test

BY CLAIRE CARTER

WHAT:

Thorpe Park Fright Nights. From £29.99pp to October 31. Some attractions extra, not recommended for under 13s. thorpepark.com

WHERE: Accessed from J11/13 of the M25. Staines is the closest train station.

PERFORMANCE: For theme park lovers, seeing one by night raises the adrenalin a notch. Here, the rollercoaster tracks are lit up in white and green, and zombies and ghouls occasionally jump out from bushes to grab you - all with a backdrop of eerie music and displays featuring skulls and brains.

Derren Brown's Ghost Train is new this year, and one not to be missed. I've been to a fair few theme parks, and this was definitely the most original and immersive ghost train I have encountered.

A condition of doing the ride is not to give too much away afterwards to keep it a surprise, but be prepared for all your senses to be turned disturbingly on their heads.

As well as the floodlit rides, a big part of Fright Nights are its horror mazes. Platform 15 is now and set on a disused railway track, with zombies and blubbery ghosts barring your path and screaming in your face as you try desperately to find the exit.

But Blair Witch - after the horror film of my teenage years - was far scarier as you're left to roam through the woods alone, only to have snarling, crying, muttering and screaming apparitions leap out at you from the shadows.

The Big Top was also fantastic and left my heart thumping. Set inside a huge tent, it overloads your senses as you step into a crazy electric world of out-of-control strobe lights, booming music, and terrifying screaming to create a twisted circus.

QUIBBLES: Some of the outdoor mazes, such as Blair Witch and Platform 15, are weather-dependent. But if you are capable of braving the zombies, you can probably face a few showers.

VERDICT: The perfect place to prepare for Halloween. 9/10

Got a junior train fan in the family?

The National Railway Museum in York's Future Engineers event is aimed at kids ages 7-11 and is on from today to October 30. It's a free hi-tech, hands-on family experience which reveals fascinating facts and the challenges engineers face in shaping the railways of the future. nmrm.org.uk

TRAVEL AN EYE FULL



Museums, shops, art, Gary Jones saw the lot on a family trip to Paris



SAY FROMAGE Mrs J. Gary, Monty and Scarlett

So it's bucketing with rain and the Jones family are pretty much soaked to the skin. But Paris is still the most beautiful city in the world - and even the children say so. We toyed with going to Lanzarote for our hols, with Mrs Jones family on the side of finding that elusive bright yellow ball in the sky.

But to be honest - and I know I'll find supporters of the volcanic island when I say this - it just looked a tad tedious. One of the star tourist attractions appeared to be a green lagoon that had started in many a sci-fi film. Not on my bucket list.

So I took a democratic vote with myself and plumped for Paris. We were not disappointed.

It had been two decades since I rode the boulevards of the French capital and my memories were tainted by sniffling waiters mocking my attempts at the language, probably quite reasonably.

This time around, the Parisians I encountered were charm personified, delightfully smug and chatty at every encounter. To say they were trying their very best because of the recent atrocities

would be unfair but undoubtedly they are genuinely appreciative of tourists helping their city recover to normality.

Getting to Paris courtesy of Eurostar is a delightful experience (if you're within reasonable travelling distance of London's beautifully restored St Pancras station) compared with the usual airport kerfuffle. We travelled out Business Premier, which was very classy. A private lounge at the station with complimentary breakfast buffet went down a treat, especially with the children, who I reminded were enjoying a luxury.

A simple few steps out of the Gare du Nord station and a short taxi ride later, just past the rather magnificent Arc de Triomphe (much bigger than it looks in the postcards) and we were plonked outside the most impressive Hotel Napoleon.

From the moment we stepped inside to the moment we left, we were treated as if we were the owners of this wonderful establishment. We were so comfortable that for two nights running we ordered room service. The food was top notch.

What made the Hotel Napoleon so appealing was the personal service, whether that was providing umbrellas for all or guaranteeing our children, Monty and Scarlett, had the non-alcoholic cocktail of their dreams.

All I needed was a quiet space with a comfy chair to read the newspapers and watch the world go by, which was duly afforded... until La Famille dragged me off.

Paris is so dazzling that it seems a pity to take the Metro, so we didn't, preferring to wear out shoe leather and endure the showery rain, which failed to take the shine off of our endless gazing at the architecture.

Queuing for the cultural attractions is a real pain so I seriously recommend booking in advance.

My favourite museum is the Musée d'Orsay, a former railway station and now a stupendous backdrop for some of the world's (mostly French) most famous painters. My daughter Scarlett insisted on striking the same pose as Edgar Degas' ballerina, which as far as she was concerned was the "best bit by far" (musee-orsay.fr; £12).

We did all the usual sightseeing

Parisians are appreciative of tourists helping the city recover

Lego high achievement

The world's tallest Lego building structure has been unveiled and it's a model of... the world's tallest building.

A 50th brick version of the Burj Khalifa in Dubai has been built at the Legoland theme park set to open soon in the UAE hotspot. It's made from 439,000 Lego bricks, and weighs a ton. The real Burj Khalifa under the road is 2,722ft high, made from glass, steel, aluminium, reinforced concrete and weighs considerably more than that.

Legoland is part of the Dubai Parks and Resorts attraction which is due to open on October 31 and also features Bollywood and Motiongate theme parks and the Riverland retail, dining and entertainment zone. legoland.ae dubaiparksandresorts.com



edited by

NIGEL THOMPSON

FULL

Great getaway ideas and travel tips you can trust at m



CHIC AND CHEERFUL
Tour the city for bargains



FRENCH REVELATION Hotel
Napoleon and balcony views

Get there

Rooms at the Hotel Jacquemart-André, Paris in Nov start at £274pn i/o. Hotel Napoleon Paris is a member of the Preferred Hotels & Resorts LVX Collection. preferredhotels.com

Eurostar operates up to 21 daily services from London St Pancras International to Paris Gare Du Nord with one-way Standard fares starting at £29. Standard Premier from £84.50 and Business Premier from £245. eurostar.com

Time zone UK +1hr

CURRENCY Euro £1 = 1.09

BEST TIME TO GO Autumn city break will be a Triumph



FAVES
Musée d'Orsay and, right, Galeries Lafayette shopping emporium were top Jones choices



TOP SPOT Arc de Triomphe

stuff. I'd recommend a boat trip down the Seine, if only because it saves on that shoe leather that my family were desperate for me to wear out (numerous operators, from £10).

You have to visit the Louvre because every tourist does. There was a lengthy queue but it soon disappeared and we wandered around soaking up so much culture that it was impossible not to feel swamped.

But my overwhelming desire was to run for the hills when faced with selfie-loving crowds at the Mona Lisa. Banning cameras would be my answer to dealing with the self-obsessed who find it impossible to view anything from their own eye without wanting an image that almost certainly they'll never view again. Anyway, gripes aside, the Louvre is an exceptionally rewarding experience (louvre.fr; £15).

Back on the boulevards again, there's always something or other -

shops in the case of Mrs Jones and Ms Jones. Mrs J swooned on a few, competitively priced dresses (or so I was told) by small French designers.

At least they couldn't shop while we were having lunch - and the choices are endless.

We pitched up at Le Bonaparte restaurant, funnily enough on Rue Bonaparte, where the food and service were impeccable. What's excellent about Paris is that you can eat well, relatively cheaply.

Fed and watered (half a bottle of red, in my case), we were back marching again before stopping at the Palais Garnier Opera House, which quite accurately describes itself as one of the world's most beautiful theatres.

Who was I to argue? Scarlett, an enthusiastic performer herself, was transfixed by the spectacle (operadeparis.fr; €7).

So it was back to the Hotel Napoleon and a well-deserved aperitif apres snooze. And then off to our newest favourite restaurant, the Bistrotologist, thankfully not a million

miles from our hotel. The food was divine. Go for the bacon burger. No ordinary bacon burger this, I assure you. We went two nights in a row.

One final recommendation from the Jones family if you haven't had your fill of museums is the Musée Jacquemart-André on Boulevard Haussmann. It's not far from the shopping emporium that is Galeries Lafayette.

Once a private home built in the 19th century, this absolutely stunning museum houses the treasures collected during the lifetime of banker and politician Edouard André and his wife Nélie Jacquemart. Well worth a visit.

And do have lunch in the mansion's former dining room. It's unlike any cafe I have ever eaten in before (musee-jacquemart-andre.com; £13.50).

Several days wandering around in Paris and I needed a new pair of shoes, such was the amount of walking undertaken. Not that I bought any in Paris, unlike Mrs J. But that's another story.

A boat trip saves on the shoe leather