

The Easter hols 2015: Kent and East Sussex- Part 5, Battle and The Cuckoo Trail

Thursday arrived and we had an early start- we were heading to Battle. Before we left the campsite on Romney Marsh, we got chatting to our neighbour in a caravan- who was travelling with his wife and his two birds of prey!!

Keith had visited Battle a couple of times before, so we decided against visiting the actual Abbey and Battlefield (Battle of Hastings

The Easter hols 2015: Kent and East Sussex- Part 5, Battle and The Cuckoo

Trail
1066), instead opting for the town trail and a pub lunch which was absolutely sensational (I'm really not exaggerating!!!) at The Chequers Inn. 



History states that the Abbey at Battle was built by the Normans on the site of the battle to give thanks to God for their victory against the Saxons. However a couple of years ago, the Time Team TV programme had a docu-

The Easter hols 2015: Kent and East Sussex- Part 5, Battle and The Cuckoo Trail

mentary on a new theory that the site of the battlefield was 200 yards away on what is now the site of a mini roundabout. After doing the complete town walk and visiting the mini roundabout (pictured above) (and the pub!!) Keith has a new theory..... The mini roundabout is at the left end of the ridge of high ground that the town of Battle was built upon. The monastery and main battlefield is 200 yards to the right of the ridge of high ground. Historians know that the Normans were attacking uphill (as seen on the Bayeux Tapestry) The mini roundabout is on the main road that runs through Battle, which has been the ancient route from Hastings to London since Roman times. It makes sense that the Saxons would have been guarding this route on the high ground to prevent the

The Easter hols 2015: Kent and East Sussex- Part 5, Battle and The Cuckoo Trail

Normans advancing. Historians know that there would have been at least 15,000 men fighting so it makes sense that the battle took place over a large area that would have included the mini roundabout AND where the Abbey stands as it is all part of the same high ridge of high ground. The high alter of the Abbey was supposedly built where the Saxon king, King Harold was killed at the end of the battle. This would make sense as it is slightly higher than the mini roundabout area, and he would have been in this position for strategic purposes. (Paragraph above courtesy of my guest writer, Keith!!)



After a day exploring and investigating, and

The Easter hols 2015: Kent and East Sussex- Part 5, Battle and The Cuckoo

Trail
a marvellous lunch- consisting of a beef, melted cheese and gherkin sandwich for K, a smoked chicken, egg and bacon sandwich for me, leek, potato and Stilton soup and a portion of chips, that altogether hands down wins the best sandwich EVER award, at the Chequers, we headed to our first Brit Stop stay of the trip, number 136, a vineyard near to Battle. Being wine fans, we always enjoy a stop at a vineyard and this one was no exception.



We parked up right next to the vines and wasted no time heading into the shop for a very generous tasting of their selection of English whites, sparkling and cherry liquor. It

The Easter hols 2015: Kent and East Sussex- Part 5, Battle and The Cuckoo

Trail
was all delicious, and we opted for a bottle of their 1066 dry white and a cherry wine.

There was a nice little trail that you can take leading you round the perimeter of their vineyards and by now the sunshine had appeared- it felt like we were in France!



Friday was a washout- the weather was terrible so we made the most of a long lie in, a big breakfast, then hit the nearest supermarket to stock up on supplies for the Easter Weekend, before heading to our next stop, a CC certified location campsite on the outskirts of Heathfield, which we were booked

The Easter hols 2015: Kent and East Sussex- Part 5, Battle and The Cuckoo Trail

on for 3 nights. We had a good chill and around 4pm when the rain stopped, Keith suggested a walk to to an old pub he had spotted in the good pub guide. It ended up being almost a 6 mile round trip but it was worth it. The Star Inn in Old Heathfield was a wonderfully atmospheric 14th Century coaching inn, with a huge cosy inglenook fireplace complete with benches you could snuggle down into. It was really lovely there and totally worth the long walk to get there!



Saturday arrived and the weather hadn't improved massively, however it wasn't going to stop us- we'd planned to cycle the Cuckoo Trail, another disused railway converted into

The Easter hols 2015: Kent and East Sussex- Part 5, Battle and The Cuckoo Trail

cycle/foot path. As it turned out, it wasn't just the weather against us- my bike wheel decided to buckle about a mile into our ride, throwing me off in the process. Luckily, I escaped with a few scrapes and nothing major, but we had to say a sad farewell to my trusty bike- a hand me down off Freecycle 5 years ago! Luckily Jazz's basket was riding on Keith's handlebars, so he was ok. We decided to leave Keith's old bike with mine, (he's been riding a bike too small and with one brake broken!) - I was adamant it wasn't going to stop us seeing the cuckoo trail, so we rescued the baskets off our bike and carried on by foot! 10 miles later and we got back to Bluebell tired, muddy but totally satisfied. The cuckoo trail is lovely, and we passed some beautiful countryside vistas, a lovely

The Easter hols 2015: Kent and East Sussex- Part 5, Battle and The Cuckoo

Trail
display of old railway gates and signs, and an old station at Horam. We didn't manage the whole trail as we were on foot but will definitely return when we get some new bikes!



It's now Easter Sunday, and we have declared a day of rest. We are enjoying listening to Classic Fm with our views of the coun-

The Easter hols 2015: Kent and East Sussex- Part 5, Battle and The Cuckoo

Trail

tryside, and have a leg of lamb for dinner
tonight.



Tomorrow we are heading towards Hassocks,
where we are going to do the the Jack and Jill
walk, which sounds nice ☐

Wherever you are, and whatever you are do-
ing, we wish you a Happy Easter.

Until Next time

Lx

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The Easter hols 2015: Kent and East
Sussex- Part 5, Battle and The Cuckoo
Trail

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