

Stepping into Churchill's footsteps – A night away and a visit to NT Chartwell

It's hard to believe that our last little adventure in Ruby was back at the beginning of June, when we had a weekend at the **Caravan and Motorhome Club Site at Crystal Palace** and visited the Churchill's Cabinet War Rooms.

It therefore feels natural that our next little trip away followed in the theme of Sir Winston Churchill, with us visiting his house – Na-

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tional Trust Chartwell. Of course, in reality it wasn't planned to be so ordered – we were of course supposed to be setting off to the New Forest on Wednesday for two weeks. Life got in the way however, and we decided to treat ourselves to a week in the Caribbean instead to recharge – but we don't leave for a couple of weeks, so we decided to combine an important visit to Keith's dad who is recovering after a new hip with a cheeky night away and then a day out to Chartwell.



After spending some time doing some odd jobs for Barry and Valerie and helping them with some chores (and having a little relax in their beautiful garden), we headed just 5 miles to the Caravan and Motorhome Club

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site Alderstead Heath. In all the years we've had a motorhome, we've never stayed here despite its close proximity to the M25, London and most of our family and friends! It also is literally across a field from where Keith lived for 6 years!



The campsite itself is fabulous actually - its huge and the pitches are well spaced out and landscaped. Despite it being close to the M25 its really not noisy - and is surrounded by rolling Surrey hills. It has all the excellent facilities that you come to expect from a Club site and at £24.90 for the night we thought it was good value.

We arrived at 4pm and headed straight out

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for a walk to nearby Chaldon Church, which is a really pretty little Church with rare and magnificent medieval wall paintings dating from the 1100s. The walk from the campsite took us about 20 minutes across the heath, over a field and through a field of sweetcorn. It couldn't have felt more away from the traffic and chaos that surrounds the area! (We both lived there – K for 38 years – me for 3 years – so this area brings back lots of memories!)



There is the option at this point to carry on walking on a circular walk until you reach the Fox, but as it was late in the day and Keith wanted to show me his old house in the other direction we retraced our steps back

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across the fields and beyond the campsite to Netherne on the Hill to see Keith's old stomping ground.

Nostalgic session over we got back to Ruby and had the most delicious BBQ we've had in ages, before sitting and chatting and chilling as the sun went down.



After a wonderfully silent night and deep sleep we woke and enjoyed a snooze with the tailgate open – the joys of a spacious private pitch! Keith made me an omelette for breakfast using our new gadget – **Electric Omelette Maker**. Just plug it in, whisk some eggs and whatever fillings you enjoy, pour in and ten minutes later you are enjoying the

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most perfect omelette. Perfect for campsite days with electric hook up and really dinky to store too. A bargain at £13.99 and it's really easy to clean too.



After breakfast we packed up, waved bye to Alderstead Heath, joined the M25 and drove 25 minutes to Chartwell, once home to Sir Winston Churchill.

We couldn't have picked a more perfect day to visit, the sky was a wonderful shade of blue with not a cloud in the sky. The National Trust own Chartwell so members visit for free. It is however worthwhile pre booking your house tickets online to make sure you have a time that suits you. Its free to do so

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(if you're a member that is)



We really enjoyed our look around the house - but its understandably very busy - especially since the film The Darkest Hour - which parts of were filmed here.



There is also a really good museum which includes plenty of Churchill's uniforms and medals. I loved the Monet painting of Charing Cross Bridge -it didn't jump out at me first but when it did I was mesmerised by it.



The grounds of Chartwell are wonderful -

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there is no doubt why this was a favourite place for Churchill. We brought a picnic with us and enjoyed it on the lawn in front of the house.



After a wonderful few hours (and possibly the best local ice cream I've had – the salted caramel Kent ice-cream was gorgeous) we nipped into nearby NT Quebec House – home to General Wolfe, we hit the carpark of the M25 and got home about 7pm feeling refreshed.



Highly recommend a couple of nights at **Alderstead Heath** – one to walk their walk and one to visit **Chartwell**, then onto **Crys-**

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tal Palace site (but it closes end of this year) for your **Churchill War Rooms** visit

Until next time

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