

## ***A Different Type of Holiday in Plymouth***

An unusual holiday resort for someone born and bred in Portsmouth and having no interest in naval ships!

Most people think that my main interest is Railways, but really it's Passenger Ships-Ferries, Paddle Steamers, and local pleasure boats and Plymouth is the ideal centre for such an interest.

My Priest friend has a similar interest and as he lives in London, I arranged to meet him on the London train at Exeter St. David's. I travelled via Salisbury and Honiton on the old Atlantic Coast Express route. As my friend is no longer able to carry his suitcase, I helped to get it off the train and to a taxi to take us to the Royal Hotel our venue for 9 nights. On our foreign holidays when sailing from Plymouth with Brittany Ferries, we always used the Royal which is managed by a former naval person. We unpacked and were off for a walk along the Hoe to the Barbican which is an area of refreshment and where the ships depart. Supper followed at Rocky's.

We had done our homework before the holiday and in most cases had the various leaflets needed for our trips. The weather was fresh and bright.

On our first day, we were off to Par on the 09.19 train for a visit to Fowey. Walking from the station to the main road was a bus stop. Both sides of the road showed the bus for Fowey, so it couldn't be decided which side to stand, but in the end it didn't matter as we caught a taxi because the bus was late! Because of a later arrival, the proposed trip to Mevagissey wasn't possible, so we went across on the ferry to Polruan for lunch at the local Inn. We returned the same way and did a 50 minute cruise on a 28 foot launch to the river mouth and up river towards Golant where China Clay loaded onto freight trains, but not today! It was a fine warm day. After a brief refreshment, I used my under used mobile telephone to get the taxi to pick us up for Par.

The following day, we did the Morwellham cruise up the Tamar on the *Plymouth Express*, a small very basic ship with character and only 17 passengers on board for the 1hr.50 minutes cruise in the rain. We made straight for the Ship Inn

where a lovely lunch was taken. The ship returned at 15.25 arriving back at the Barbican at 17.05.

Next day we were off to Falmouth to go on a former Port of Portsmouth Floating Bridge Co Ltd Steam Launch, the *Princessa* which had been built in 1921 by Camper & Nicholson of Gosport. She had been sold in the 1950's to the Isle of Wight and much later made her way to Falmouth. The ship is still registered in Portsmouth and retains her name although not her steam engines. It was a glorious trip in bright sunshine, a moderate breeze and slightly choppy sea to the Helford River and Frenchman's Creek. We had a good journey home to Plymouth.

On Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July it was an unsettled day and found that the afternoon cruise we had already booked for to the River Yealm had been cancelled because of wind and rough seas. Instead we did a 75 minute cruise around the Dockyard and decided also to do a non-landing cruise to Cawsand on a former lifeboat. The trip was in a swell and choppy sea with fresh wind, which involved much movement! The person collecting the fares was surprised that we didn't want to get off and had to work out a fare for our journey.

On Sunday my friend had been recommended that we went to St. Peter's Church which we found out was a Forward in Faith High Church and the 10.30 Mass. It was a Victorian building that had been beautifully restored. They have a website at [plymouthstpeter.co.uk](http://plymouthstpeter.co.uk). It was a satisfying service.

As there was a 14.00 cruise on a small passenger boat going up the river to Calstock, we decided to do it. The vessel was very slow taking 1hr.55 minutes and 2hr. 5 minutes coming back. However, the ship was a solid vessel which reduced rolling and does cruises to the River Yealm for another company. It's a real family affair with the crew consisting of Mr. Smith and his son being the owners and Mr. Smith (senior)'s wife staffing the Bar. We were invited to the wheelhouse by the son. The weather today was unsettled with a strong wind.

On Monday we caught the train to Totnes and a double decker bus ride to Kingsbridge. The driver was bemused by the fact that we wanted to pay rather than use the free bus pass. On arrival at Kingsbridge we had a nice lunch at the Creeks End Inn before walking to the Boatyard Quay to catch the *Rivermaid* for a cruise to Salcombe with about 90 minutes ashore. Despite the poor weather, we had lovely sunshine on a clear day. We returned to Kingsbridge at the Quay because the tide had come in. Salcombe is well worth a visit and I believe cruises to some of the creeks off the Salcombe River is rewarding. We had heavy rain overnight.

On the Tuesday it was off to Totnes again, this time to do a cruise down the Dart to Dartmouth. The only problem was that the tide was out and the shipping company had got it wrong! We caught the bus to Dartmouth instead, having lunch at the Station Restaurant. It's a station that has never had a train, but that's another story. We did the 14.30 Dartmouth Harbour cruise up to Dittisham and down to Dartmouth Castle for an hour, before the 16.15 cruise to Totnes and train back to Plymouth. It didn't rain but the weather was unsettled.

On Wednesday it was the little *Weston Maid* to Cawsand where landing is over the bows onto the sandy beach. We checked the buses for Cremyll and found a nice pub for lunch. We got to the bus stop in plenty of time for the 14.25 First Bus to Mt. Edgecumbe for the Cremyll ferry to Stonehouse Plymouth. However the times were confusing and when the bus came along with Cremyll on it, we boarded only to be told he was going to Plymouth and hadn't changed his destination board! With a smile, he said the bus we wanted was on the other side of the road and gone! Fortunately I had spotted that Aline Coaches were going at 15.15. We were the only 2 passengers on the bus and the driver was very friendly and helpful.

On arrival at the pier for the *Northern Belle* to take us to Stonehouse Plymouth, we came across someone who we had spoken to at the Barbican several times regarding trips and he insisted we had a free trip on the ship, which we gratefully accepted. We walked back to the Barbican and went across to Mount Batten on a small launch,

had a short walk and returned on the same boat to Mayflower Steps. After a walk round Sutton Harbour which is adjoining the Barbican, we returned to do the packing.

On Thursday we caught the 10.44 to Paddington via Exeter St. David's where I changed for the Salisbury train. All the trains I travelled on were on time or within a few minutes. All the trips we did from Plymouth were on Cheap Day returns using the Senior Railcard. We didn't have as much rain as had been promised by the weather forecasters, but we enjoyed ourselves very much getting on 12 different ships in 10 days!

**Terry Creswell**

