

UK Holiday destination: The Thomas Centre – Lincolnshire

Well the summer is nearly over, and by the time you read this our children will no doubt be back at school and this is when the ‘summer sunshine’ will decide to join us in the UK!

I would like to share with you the week’s holiday we had at The Thomas Centre. I first saw it advertised in the NAS Communication Magazine, and within 24 hours had rung and booked us in. It was the best thing I could have done; we had a fabulous holiday and have booked again for next Easter. The site is very large and caters for 6 families and the owners live in a house also within the site. We chose a 2 bedroom bungalow, and this was comparable if not better than any other self catering/hotel accommodation we have had anywhere in the UK. The beds were made up and ready to drop into, soft towels in the bathroom, tea towels in the kitchen. Even tiny bottles of shampoo/shower gel etc etc in the bathroom (I have only ever had that in Hotels). In the kitchen was a welcome hamper that gave us enough ingredients to have an evening meal and the next day’s breakfast – plus a bottle of wine, which is always very welcome.

What impressed me most about the bungalow was how light it was and the colours used and the prints on the wall gave it a welcome of its own. The amenities of the site were enough for us to not leave the site for 2 days, which meant that Jamie had the comfort and security of his personal items around him but also could just go out on the trampoline or in the barn where there is a skittle alley/football table/table tennis & stereo for music if you so wish. Of course one or both of us went with him, but it was all so much more relaxed than any other holiday destination we have had.

You are surrounded by fields and the farmers were busy harvesting in between rainy days, roads were a good distance way and we knew Jamie was safe. There is an area that’s set out for football and a small wood to walk through, plus public footpath walks past the fields. Early in the evening the wood and fields were alive with very happy bunnies – Jamie tried chasing one and it stopped to let him catch up then was gone again. . Jamie is a ‘runner’, once he was ready to leave the bungalow 15 seconds before us and had disappeared, we guessed correctly he had headed for a tree to climb in the wood, but the family in the next bungalow were just going out and shouted over ‘Have you lost Jamie, we can help look for him, what we are doing can wait’. On another site I would have probably had to ask for help and explained that Jamie had Autism. Many visitors have re-booked already for next year, not least of all because of the high quality of the holiday homes - 4 star status.

The bungalows all have full disabled access facilities especially with regard to the wet room. The technical term for the standard to which they are, is the M2 Regulations for Disabled Access. M2 is important to those who have any range of physical or gross motor disability.

Jamie’s favourite thing!!

Jamie’s day revolved around ‘book swimming pool please’. The swimming pool is booked out to families to use exclusively for one hour, if you are lucky you may get 2 sessions, we never tried for 2 as I was concerned that if Jamie had 2 one day how would he accept not having 2 the next day? Maybe try that out next year. Also families can agree to share their sessions, but that’s at their own choosing. Jamie adores the water and used lots of energy playing about with an inflatable crocodile that we took along and an even larger whale that another family took in. He also took time out to relax on the floats and just gaze into space – where else could he have done this.

Gill's favourite thing!!

I loved the peace and quiet, and the knowledge that we were all somewhere that understood all of our needs. The friendliness of Jan & Richard, Lizzie & Thomas, so concerned that everything was just right for us all. Meeting and talking about our children with other parents, changes we have all made in our lives and will make until our dying day.

Peters favourite things!!

I enjoyed relaxing out on the patio with a wide expanse of grass, a nice view and Jamie on the trampoline (which is set at ground level in the grass). The Thomas Centre is a relaxing place all round.

I haven't covered everything the centre offers as I would take up most of this Newsletter that I hope will print this article!

But let me finish with something that happened quite spontaneously as we were packing up to leave. Jamie was on the Trampoline, which is set at ground level and laughing and jumping at the same time, from nowhere come's John (name changed) who was staying with his Mum & Dad. John is 15, Jamie is 9, together they jumped danced and shouted, when John decided to relax and lay down Jamie followed his cue. This must have gone on for at least an hour, and it brought really large lumps in my throat. I sat with John's Mum and Dad and we all were happy to see this communication between the boys take place. John no doubt spoke to Jamie but was not fazed if Jamie didn't answer (we will never know if he did or not!). At the end they just went their separate ways and back to their own lives. Let me also say that there is a sign that says only one person at a time on the trampoline, but we as parents took that responsibility.

We find holidays quite exhausting with Jamie and I find I get quite upset at the amount of time I spend telling him 'don't do this' 'don't do that'. Also worrying that he will get lost in crowds or be in an accident. I hope that the Thomas Centre could be looked on as a flagship for future centres and I'm sure it itself will keep growing and offering the families who stay there peace and harmony.

Look on the Thomas Centre Website www.thethomascentre.co.uk

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