



Family break: Mum Ann with Barney and Leo

Branching out for some home truths with fantastic Lake District views

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Travel Reporter

YOU can rely on your kids to come out with unpalatable home truths.

Arriving for a short stay at Skelwith Fold Caravan Park, a mile and a bit from Ambleside, in the heart of the Lake District, our five-year-old and two-year-old were brutally honest about our accommodation.

"It's better than home," was their instant verdict of the two-bedroom static caravan, with central heating, fully equipped kitchen and a wooden balcony, among trees in a tranquil spot with fantastic views of the Langdales.

And "there's a bath in the bathroom and it's cleaner than ours" was the damning indictment of their parents' standards

FACTFILE

■ Skelwith Fold won a VisitBritain Excellence award for the best park in England.

■ David Bellamy gave the park his Gold Conservation Award for protecting the natural world.

■ The 120 touring pitches are hard standing, offer electric hook-up and are close to the toilet and shower block.

To book, call 015394 32277. Pitch

is £19 a night low season and £24 a night high season.

■ There are 300 privately-owned static caravans. They will set you back anywhere from £25,000-£80,000.

■ Email info@skelwith.com or visit www.skelwithfold.co.uk

■ Skelwith Fold is ideally placed for Keswick, Ambleside, Windermere and Coniston.

of hygiene. It goes without saying that our pitiful little garden at home was knocked into a cocked hat by the 130 acres of woodland and fields that make up the award-winning caravan park described by world-famous botanist David Bellamy as "a wildlife wonderland, absolutely bursting with

bio-diversity" and by Barney and Leo Cotton as having "the best adventure playground we've ever played in".

A five-acre meadow at the top of the park gives them even more space to wear themselves out.

Owner Henry Wild prides himself on Skelwith Fold's green cre-

dentials. Conservation initiatives mean that visitors may come face to face with red deer, red squirrels and badgers.

The village-style shop stocks day-to-day essentials, specialist local foods and drink plus wines, spirits and beers, all in a building designed to complement the Lakeland landscape, with "green" roof planted with sedums.

Just a short stroll from the park, admittedly at the top of a steep hill (What do you expect? It is the Lake District) is one of Cumbria's most acclaimed gastro-pubs with rooms, the Drunken Duck.

This is the sort of place where well-to-do couples on a weekend break read their Wainwright guides at the bar over a glass of wine. In the interests of research, we thought we'd better check it out.

Barney was horrified by the

absence of cheese and onion crisps and I was equally horrified by the eyewatering prices of the drinks (A glass of white set us back nearly £6. We balked at the £8 option.)

Sitting outside across the narrow lane at one of the tables, where you can enjoy your drink or meal against the stunning backdrop of the Langdales, we were struck by another example of the brutal honesty of youth.

Each table has its number painted on a stone, food for thought for an inquisitive five-year-old discovering the world of numerical coincidence.

"Number 40, number 41, number 42, number 43... mum's 43." Cue stifled sniggering from the adjoining table.

Bathroom cleanliness is one thing but sometimes the truth really does hurt.



Adventure playground: Barney Cotton does a bit of exploring