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Hotel on the hill reigns in the rain

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THE last time I went to the Lake District was during the foot and mouth crisis in 2001, so I decided it was time to revisit the area.

I booked myself and my mum into the AA four-star Beech Hill Hotel at Bowness-on-Windermere, which boasts stunning views over Lake Windermere.

The circa-1900 stone-built rural property has 57 rooms, many with views overlooking the lake, ranging from the classic single to the Wordsworth Suite, all of which can be booked either on a bed and breakfast basis or dinner, bed and breakfast. Dinner can be booked in the hotel's Burlington restaurant, which is open to non-residents and has held AA rosettes for the last 20 years.

Also available to book is a 5-star gold award-winning cottage which is available with a tailor-made package to suit guests, including use of chef and waiter service.

The hotel also hosts special events including tailor-made wedding packages.

After travelling down the A592 from Bowness-on-Windermere for four miles we came across the hotel. From the outside the hotel appeared fairly ordinary, it was only when we opened the door that we were in for a very pleasant surprise.

We entered into a very spacious and welcoming lounge area, which is part of the original hotel and was full of big squishy leather sofas and a roaring log fire, which was very welcome on what had turned into a rather wet day.

We were welcomed by a friendly and efficient receptionist, who informed us of evening meal and breakfast times and offered to check to make sure our room was ready, which it was.

All the rooms have as standard en-suite bathrooms, Gilchrist & Soames toiletries, use of the indoor pool, flat screen TV, complimentary wi-fi access and I must say that the speed with which I was connected to this was superb, in fact the access was better than the well-known provider that my mum has at home.

Our very spacious room was on the first floor up a small flight of stairs. The twin room was furnished to a very high standard with plenty of high-quality pine storage and had a rather quirky shaped bathroom which had clearly recently been refurbished with full-sized bath with shower over, WC and basin.

A large bay window gave us magnificent panoramic views over the lake and surrounding Western Fells.

After dropping off our bags we decided to have a look around.

The front of the building really



did mask what is a really quirky and unique hotel. On our nosey around we kept coming across little flights of stairs which took us to more rooms and the suites which have patios and balconies. These are all designed to make the most of the lake views and stunning well-kept gardens, including a separate seating area, and the pool which has sun loungers.

Steps gave us access to the lake and the hotel's own private jetty which can be used for wedding photos.

We had booked our evening meal for 7.30pm and were informed by the receptionist to arrive 15 minutes before where we would be served canapés while we perused the menu.

From the menu we could tell that we were in for something special and it really was a superb experience.

After having our order taken, we were shown to the dining room, with the waitress offering to carry our drinks for us.

I decided on the black pudding

pancetta. For dessert mum opted for a trio of shots which came served in little different shaped glasses and consisted of a chocolate mousse, cream brûlée and a lemon posset.

I had a 'black and blue' which was an individual blueberry soufflé and a blackberry sorbet.

We then retired back to the very comfortable lounge area to finish our wine and savour what had been a truly fine-dining experience.

Breakfast was once again a very leisurely affair.

We were shown to a table overlooking the views which were even more stunning in the daylight.

After being asked whether we required tea or coffee, the friendly staff explained the protocol and left us to it, discreetly checking all the time if used crockery needed removing. They are very quickly and efficiently removed a rather large spider from the curtain, which was close to mum's head, using a glass to capture it and place it outside.

Once again the choice was very good with the option of croissants, melon, fresh fruit, cereal and a buffet-style for the cooked breakfast. On the table was a menu stating that there was an extra choice available which could be cooked on request, from porridge,

boiled or scrambled eggs to kippers (which were an extra charge).

We then decided that we would check-out, which once again was carried out very efficiently, and settled the wine bill from the previous evening.

We went on to pay a quick visit to Bowness to have a look round

GETTING THERE

WHERE: The Beech Hill Hotel, Newby Bridge Road, Windermere, Cumbria, LA23 3LR. Bowness-on-Windermere is 159 miles from Derby.

COST: Dinner, bed and breakfast at the hotel costs from £59

CONTACT: For more information on room rates and available packages, visit the website www.beechhillhotel.co.uk or call 0844 502 7587

and after visiting a quaint little tea room, we headed for home as once again the weather seemed to be against us and it was raining heavily.

I can honestly say that I would like to return to the Lake District, hopefully when the weather is a bit more settled. I would definitely treat myself to a return visit to the Beech Hill hotel as it offers a truly relaxing experience that won't break the bank.

Have you visited Beech Hill Hotel? Tell us at derbytelegraph.co.uk