

## Wales 2012

Here is the reason why we ended up in Wales for a weekend: I wanted to find a show that Keeb would enjoy so I did a search filtering for plays written by David Mamet for the time Keeb was visiting and it just so happened that a Welsh playhouse was staging a production of "Glengerry Glen Ross". I consulted my Welsh teammate who gave me advice on places to stay that were easily accessible to the Clwyd Theatr Cymru. Armed with that information, I planned our mini break to Wales.

I decided to treat us to first class train tickets since I was booking them so far in advance and they would be reasonably priced. That turned out to be a good decision as Keeb ended up with lots of room for his legs.

On the Saturday morning we headed out to the nearest tube stop as the first part of our journey was using the underground. When we arrived, there was an ambulance and police cars there and a policeman told me to take the bus. The official reason was "signal failure" but I was highly suspicious of why an ambulance would be required but did I not argue, and we went to find the bus stop

Now taking the bus meant we missed our train from Euston station but Keeb encouraged me to explain that it was not our fault. Since our tube stop's closure was not planned maintenance, we had no advance warning. Well, the man at Virgin trains gave me a lecture on the unreliability of weekend travel and that one should expect such incidents but, he eventually allowed us to use the tickets we had to get on the next train. From a distance all Keeb was seeing was the man's bobbing head and thought we would have to buy new tickets. I was glad we did not have to do this. However, in all the excitement I left my red hat in Euston station. Still, the train ride was very pleasant.

When we gave the address of our inn to the taxi driver outside the Chester rail station he said, "You know that's in the middle of nowhere!" Not what one wants to hear in a place they are visiting for the first time, but I had faith in my Welsh teammate.

We passed a lot of sheep and a corporate jet manufacturing plant, but I must say, the Welsh countryside was, as one sign helpfully explained, "an area of outstanding natural beauty". The Druid Inn turned out to be very comfortable and quaint with picturesque views.

We had dinner in our Inn's pub and had a short taxi ride to our play at the Clwyd Theatr Cymru near to Mold. Anthony Hopkins performed at this theatre in his youth, and we saw a photo of him on one of the walls. The play was superb. The actors must have had an excellent dialect coach because they sounded like authentic Americans. We both enjoyed our evening very much.

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After the play we went back to our inn and had desert in the pub. The people at the table next to us asked if we were okay with their dog under their table. Keeb patted her and so they turned their chairs towards our table and chatted with us. They were planning to see the play, so we assured them that it was a very good performance. They then they gave us advice on places to visit in western Wales and we told them about Caribbean islands to visit. When the two men, who were a couple, got up to leave, they each kissed my hand. I thought that was so very chivalrous!

The next day we spent a couple of hours in Chester before boarding our train back to London. Chester was historic with lots of Roman influence. We visited the "Roman Experience", a museum with recreations of life in Roman times and an authentic dig in the basement where Roman building remains were uncovered. I thought it was cool, but I find most things interesting. And since Keeb has been watching episodes of "Time Team" over here, the experience resonated with him as well. We agreed this was a great weekend and we hope to come back to Wales to do more exploration in the future. And great news – my red hat was turned into "Lost the Found" at Euston Station so I got it back on our return journey.