

A wonderful haven

Hidden away from Cornwall's busy coastal resorts, **Mike Parker** finds a holiday park for connoisseurs.

The main route into Cornwall is the A30 dual carriageway, which cuts right across the centre of Bodmin Moor. A little way before Bodmin itself, my sat-nav directed me off the main road, and I was suddenly in real Cornish territory. The narrow country road passed, like a sunken lane, between tall hedges, making it feel as though I was driving through a maze. Then the road followed a hillside down into the valley of the River Camel, across an ancient, narrow, beautiful stone packhorse bridge, over a disused railway line (now the route of the Camel Trail cycle and walking path), and up the other side of the valley through lowering woodland, with lichen covered trees obscuring the sunlight.

After another stretch of hedged lane, I was onto the wide expanse of a B-road (a busy route between Camelford and Bodmin), but then off again onto another narrow lane and finally at my destination.

There is a sign on the B-road, but otherwise you might not know Glenmorriss Park was there, as it's well screened from the lovely surrounding countryside. And as you enter, you could be forgiven for thinking that it really is a 'park', as its first focal point is the huge 'village green' style recreation area, with some beautiful mature trees at its edge, a boules piste and picnic tables opposite the reception and shop, and the 'Black Pasty' pirate ship play area.

WORKING TOGETHER

There has been a caravan park on the site for something like 50 years, but it was only in February last year that the present owners, the Lloyd family, took over. Richard and Penny Lloyd, their son David and daughter-in-law Emma (who have four children), come from Worthing in

Sussex, and all worked in one capacity or another in healthcare. Richard had retired, and the others all felt they needed a change.

"As a family we always enjoyed the outdoor life," said Penny. "Camping and caravanning gave us the freedom to do more together as a family, and Richard and I still have a motorhome, which we use when we have the chance!"

"Running a park like this was something we could all do together, and our experience in caring for people and in running a business operating residential care homes, had given us the skills needed to be able to offer excellent customer care. We are passionate about wanting to make people feel comfortable and happy. Our philosophy in business has always been to provide services which we would like to have ourselves."

The Lloyds searched for about six months for the right site, through agencies and the internet and by visiting parks, but the first time they visited Glenmorriss they knew it was the right one for them.

"There was a lot of land here, and the park hadn't been overdeveloped and commercialised," Penny said. "We could see it had potential as the kind of park where we would want to come and stay ourselves."

There was a lot of work to be done, though. The house that came with the park had to be renovated, and the family got a real insight into holiday home life by sharing a static (all eight of them) for the first three months of their residency. The weather in 2008 was poor, and Easter particularly early and cold, and the first season also revealed problems with the electricity supply, which resulted in the whole site being rewired.

Fortunately, the teething problems



There is a variety of homes of different makes and ages on site - and the Lloyds believe new owners should be able to buy the home of their choice

The rental homes - including two well-equipped 1950s chalets



The reception and shop



There is an excellent heated swimming pool

GLENMORRIS PARK

Longstone Road, St Mabyn,
Cornwall PL30 3BY
Tel: 01208 841677
Email: info@glenmorriss.co.uk
Website: www.glenmorriss.co.uk



- ▶ 12 month licence (holiday use only), but park is open ten months - home owners may have access on request during closed period if park is staffed.
- ▶ 15 year tenancy agreement with new homes
- ▶ Ground rent £2,000pa (plus VAT)

- ▶ Bottled gas
- ▶ Mains electricity billed by park
- ▶ WiFi internet access
- ▶ No subletting
- ▶ Pets permitted

Prices from £23,500

FOR SALE

At the time of writing two homes were available: a new 38ft 2-bed **ABI Elan** at **£31,000** and a one-year-old, ex-rental 28ft two-bed **Swift Burgundy** at **£23,500**, both complete with decking. There are also two new pitches available for the home of the customer's choice.

have been overcome, and after a busy (and later) Easter, the weather forecast for the remainder of the 2009 season is good, and bookings in the peak period, Richard told me, were about 30 per cent up on last year.

CUSTOMER CHOICE

In all, Glenmorris Park occupies about 12 of the Lloyds' 18 acres of land, with an adjoining field set aside for exercising dogs. The site has permission for 56 holiday homes altogether, but only 17 are sited at present (seven of them rental homes), including two show homes for sale, with two further pitches under preparation adjoining the green. Further development of holiday home pitches will take place on one of the areas beyond the green currently set aside for tourists.

The two homes currently for sale are a 28ft ex-rental Swift Burgundy and a 38ft ABI Elan. But the two new pitches will be available for homes of the customer's choice. "We have access to models from the leading manufacturers," said Penny, "and we believe the best option is to allow the buyer to choose the home that they want."

FORTUNATE

Those who buy homes at the park will be fortunate indeed, providing they do not expect the development of further pitches to coincide with more commercialisation.

At present Glenmorris has a lovely, and good-sized, heated outdoor swimming

pool, with a paddling pool beside it. As well as the Black Pasty, there are dedicated children's play areas with climbing frames and the like. Take a walk across the green and you can visit the chickens and the pygmy goats, and you'll probably pass the ducks on the way.

At reception there is a shop (open every day in summer) with milk, eggs (from the chickens, of course – you might be asked to go and pick them out of the henhouse yourself!) and other food and household necessities, as well as sweets, ice creams and holiday accessories. In the morning bread, croissants and pastries are freshly baked to order.

Beside reception is a sizeable games room with pool, table tennis, a few arcade games and a wide screen TV with a DVD player.

But that is as far as entertainment provision will go. What gives the park its character is the loveliness of the setting and the peace and tranquillity it offers for people (including families) who are able to make their own entertainment amid the Cornish countryside.

WELL PLACED

In fact, being quite centrally placed, Glenmorris is ideal for exploring Cornwall (and Devon, too, for that matter). Penzance is 60 miles in one direction, Exeter 68 miles in the other, and both the north and south Cornwall coasts are easily accessible, with St



The park's 'village green', with the Black Pasty pirate ship play area

What can I do around here?



Padstow

Go for a meal at one of TV chef Rick Stein's eateries (from very expensive to fish'n'chip cheerful), hang out by the quayside with a pasty or visit the lovely Elizabethan manor house and gardens at Prideaux Place.



Port Isaac

Setting for the TV comedy-drama *Doc Martin*, but well worth visiting for its own sake – and you can take in some other lovely nearby spots, like Polzeath, Rock and the tiny church of St Enodoc, last resting place of Sir John Betjeman.



Eden

No visit to Cornwall is complete without a day at the Eden Project, the amazing collection of biospheres built in a disused clay quarry near St Austell – the brainchild of Tim Smits, who also rescued the nearby Lost Gardens of Heligan.



Colliford

Colliford Lake Park has 58 acres of woodland, moorland, wetland in the middle of Bodmin Moor, with play facilities for kids (some indoors), shop, café, music events and fly fishing for natural brown trout.

WHAT DO YOU THINK, JACKIE AND ALAN?

If you care about the environment and welcome the growth in the availability of organic food, you will probably want to raise a glass to Jackie and Alan Gear. This couple were for 30 years a driving force behind the Henry Doubleday Research Association charity (now called Garden Organic), the world's leading organisation dedicated to organic crops and food, and which runs the famous Ryton Organic Gardens near Coventry. Both have been awarded the MBE for their work, and they now run their own organic project consultancy.



They are also holiday home owners at Glenmorris Park.

"We have owned caravans or mobile homes for the last 20 years, on sites all over the country, from Dover to Norfolk to Bude," said Jackie. "But I can say without hesitation that the Glenmorris is the best we have ever been on. It is small enough to be friendly but big enough to give each pitch more than adequate space for privacy. The surrounding countryside is exquisitely pretty, but it's within easy reach of the beaches and it's central to a choice of interesting towns, villages and harbours."

One of the most important things for the Gears is that good, fresh, local food and (very important for them!) quality coffee can be found easily. "We can even find organic wine in Wadebridge," Jackie adds. "And back on site we can, and do, buy a

loaf of freshly baked organic bread every day from the shop, and we enjoy the fresh eggs from the hens, too."

The couple chose the site originally because of the swimming pool, but Jackie said that what they now appreciate most is the professionalism of the owners. "The Lloyds are a smashing family. Everyone seems to work so hard keeping the site clean and tidy, and nothing seems to be too much trouble for them.

"They also seem to be genuinely happy working as a team and it's great to see this very personal approach, as opposed to the many corporate oriented businesses that unfortunately prevail these days.

"We're so glad we found this wonderful haven... But don't tell too many people!" ■

The best park we've ever been on – it's great to see this personal approach

Austell, Looe, Padstow and Newquay all within easy reach, as is beautiful Port Isaac, famous as the location for TV's *Doc Martin*. The Royal Cornwall Showground, where there are events throughout the year, is close by, too.

"It's a brilliant area for sightseeing," said Penny. "You can get to so many places so easily, but at the same time it is very peaceful here. It's the perfect

place for retirement or semi-retirement holiday homes – but lots of our home owners also bring their grandchildren here, and the children love it, too."

It's easy to understand why that should be the case. Glenmorris is a little gem ideally situated in a lovely part of Cornwall and if owning a holiday home in the West Country is your aim, you would be well advised to pay it a visit. ■

LOCAL INFO

- ▶ **Local amenities:** The shop on site (open daily in summer, and on request off season) sells milk, eggs, freshly baked bread and pastries and other foodstuffs, wine and beer and delicious Cornish ice creams. The nearest alternative is the **General Stores** and **Post Office** in the village of St Mabyn, about 1 mile away. **Supermarkets, banks, etc** are in Bodmin (3 miles).
- ▶ **Health:** The nearest **GP** is at St Kew Highway, about 2 miles. **Dentists, opticians** and **pharmacies** are in Bodmin. The nearest **A&E hospital** is at Truro (24 miles).
- ▶ **Transport:** The nearest rail

- connection is Bodmin Parkway (a couple of miles south east of the town) on the Plymouth-Penzance line. The nearest **bus** service is the Camelford-Wadebridge-Bodmin route 2 miles away on the A39.
- ▶ **Eating and drinking:** There is a **pub** at St Mabyn, and others at St Kew Highway and St Tudy (2 miles). Otherwise, head to Bodmin for **restaurants, takeaways, etc.**
- ▶ **Entertainment:** There is a two-screen **cinema** at Wadebridge (4 miles) showing new releases and **theatres** in Newquay (17 miles) and Truro. Wadebridge and Bodmin have **sports centres**.