

City break with a difference!

2-3 August 2013

When my husband Nick asked me if I would like a mini break in London I leapt at the chance. However unbeknown to me the Longhorn Cattle Society had sent out a request for a Longhorn breeder to supply some Longhorns to an English Heritage site in London and Nick had contacted the organisers to see if we could help.

The English Heritage site in question was Kenwood House on Hampstead Heath; a very beautiful house (you may remember it as the back drop from some scenes in the film Notting Hill!) whose Dairy Buildings had sadly fallen into disrepair. With some lottery funding they had recently just completed a renovation of the buildings and for the grand opening they were throwing a grand garden fete and wanted some Longhorn cattle to recreate a famous painting of the Dairy by Julius Ibbetson.



The original painting by Ibbetson

So three of our cattle whose colouring best matched the colours of the cattle in the painting were selected; Cwrt Henllys Jellyfish, Halliloo Libby and Halliloo Lupin - and their modelling assignment was confirmed! The first problem was containing the girls, the solution was provided by our fencing suppliers McVeigh Parker who kindly supplied enough portable fencing to keep public and cows apart and on one of the hottest afternoons of the year we drove the fencing across London to Hampstead Heath to set up their home for the weekend. I had serious doubts about the haha (ditch) that was to be the barrier on the buildings side of their plot and was also worried about there being enough shade for them if the heat wave continued. English Heritage had supplied a brand new trough so at least we didn't have to worry about water for them.

Well we needn't have worried about shade – Friday morning dawned grey and rainy and as we unloaded our supermodels there was a huge crack of thunder and a fairly impressive thunder and lightning storm. Libby decided that the haha was not a problem to negotiate and as she cantered off down the field towards Parliament Hill I was pleased I had checked my NFU insurance policy the previous day! We managed to stop the other two from escaping and in true Longhorn style Libby decided that she would rather be with her friends. Some fence moving, a couple of pallets and some baling twine solved the problem!

We then had a couple of hours of Nick manoeuvring the girls into various spots and in various poses by possibly the most patient photographer in the world to get enough shots to produce the final picture and when he declared “it’s a wrap” we gratefully went to put our tent up – our accommodation for the next few nights, we felt it too risky to leave them in Central London completely on their own! By now the sun had come out, the cows had settled nicely and we had a rare relaxing afternoon.



The 21st Century version of the Original – this will be now used on several English Heritage brochures

The fete was held over the next two days and the response from the 30,000 attending public was outstanding – everything from children who had never seen a cow before to tree hugging veggies who after some discussion decided that actually, if they were to ever eat meat again they would rather eat flesh from a steer that had enjoyed a happy life grazing and slowly growing to produce the lovely Longhorn flavour! We were absolutely inundated with questions and information about the breed generally and the brochures supplied by the Society were very helpful.



Super models on location!

Of course the real stars of the show were our lovely Longhorns, an absolute credit to their breed with a real demonstration on just what an agreeable breed they are! After a long drive home (in time not miles b*****y M25!) they were very pleased to get back to their herd – but not as pleased as their lord and master Chalkney Matrix was!!

Babs and Nick Fuller – Halliloo Longhorns

