



John Coles @ Travel-PA

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Since launching my new business at the Hounslow Business Expo earlier this year, I've attended networking events organised by the Chamber of Commerce and other local organisations. Through my career as an aeronautical engineer, I've had the good fortune to work with aviation people across the globe. With the transition to my new career, I can now enjoy meeting people in my own local community, speaking about their work, and discovering a whole new world of business.

In my last newsletter I reported on Airbus's decision to stop production of the A380 double-deck super jumbo, and I explained how managing the disassembly and recycling of two A380's will bring my aeronautical engineering career to a close. We're making good progress with the project and I hope to finish the work around the end of June. Several people have asked how an aircraft can be recycled, so I will write a report and include lots of photos in the July newsletter.

As I embrace my new travel career, I am looking forward to the CLIA conference in Southampton to be held 15th to 17th May. It will be interesting to learn about the newest ships and the latest innovations in the cruise industry, and exciting to step on board Celebrity's Edge and Cunard's Queen Mary 2.



Disneyland Paris

by Janet Lumley



John helped us plan and book our trip to Disneyland Paris, arranging the hotel, park passes, meal deals. We wanted to include a day trip to Paris, travelling on trains and Metro. John advised us to visit Paris on a weekday, to stay clear of the weekend "yellow vest" protests. He planned a route for us and recommended downloading the rapt.fr app, which includes journey planner, local maps and tourist information.

On Saturday we travelled via the Eurostar and checked into Cheyenne Hotel in the Disneyland Resort. We chose the Cheyenne because it is close to the Disneyland Village and backs on to the river, so you can walk along the river path to the village or hop on the shuttle bus. After check-in we headed straight to the Disneyland Paris Parks, where the Disney magic took over, and spent a fun afternoon on the rides.

Sunday we took advantage of the Disney *magic hour*,



when the park is open to hotel guests, before opening to the public at 10am. We stayed in the parks all day. We successfully managed to go on every ride, see the parades and stunt car show, ending the day with the laser and firework show.

On a very sunny Monday, after *magic hour*, we took the 10 o'clock train from Marne la Vallee, to Chatelet, to see Notre Dame. From there a lovely walk along the River Seine to the Royale Bridge, and through the beautiful Jardin des Tuileries by the Louvre museum, to Place de la Concorde and Champs Elysees and Arc de Triomphe. We then crossed the bridge to the Eiffel Tower. Returning on the Metro from Champs de Mars Tour Eiffel to Charles de Gaulle, then on Marne la Vallee.

Paris was definitely worth going to, we enjoyed the freedom of travelling at our leisure, being able to stop and look at the paintings for sale along the River Seine, taking in the sights and atmosphere of Paris.

We took advantage of *magic hour* once again on Tuesday, enjoying a few more rides before taking the Eurostar home.

We had a great time in Disneyland Paris. During the holiday we managed to go on all rides. We clocked up six times on Pirates of the Caribbean, four times on the Rock and Roll Roller Coaster, and not forgetting It's a Small World!



Quiz: There are two Victoria Islands in the Arctic and one in Africa. Territories of which three countries?

In the last newsletter John Costello wrote about his travels to **Victoria Falls**. Here we look at three other “Victorias” in Africa:

Lake Victoria, Uganda

Africa’s largest lake, Lake Victoria, covers an area of 23,000 sq. miles (twice the size of Belgium) and is shared by three countries: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. To the north of the lake, Uganda has emerged from a troubled past to become a most exciting wildlife destination, with a variety of landscapes, well maintained parks and some very special wildlife.

The tropical rainforests on the lower slopes of the Rwenzori Mountains are home to 611 bird species and the famous tree-climbing lions of Ishasha. The Kimbale National Park is the place to encounter chimpanzees, which mesmerise tourists with familiar behaviour and social interaction within family groups. Moving south, the Queen Elizabeth National Park provides a more traditional plains safari experience, with elephants, giraffes and zebra. But the highlight of any trip to Uganda is hidden in the Biwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Each morning, rangers set out with small groups of intrepid explorers into the forest in search of the critically endangered mountain gorilla. A group will trek up to three hours to reach a gorilla family. Then sit quietly for an hour observing the animals just five metres away, listening to them grumble at each other and marvelling at the sheer size of the dominant male silverback. Seeing mountain gorillas in their natural environment ranks as one of the most awe-inspiring wildlife experiences available on our planet.



Victoria, Seychelles

The Seychelles is an archipelago of legendary natural beauty, set in the Indian Ocean, one thousand miles from the east coast of Africa. The 115 islands form two distinct groups: the Inner group are notable for tall granite peaks, while the Outer group comprise low-lying coral atolls and reef islands.



Victoria, the laid-back capital, and the international airport are on Mahe, the largest of the Inner islands. Visitors can explore colourful fish and fruit markets, wander through the Botanical Gardens and National Museum, see the colonial-era Courthouse, even discover a miniature replica of Big Ben!

The Seychelles government has designated almost 50% of the country as conservation areas. These are home to unique endemic species, from the smallest frog to the heaviest tortoise, the fabulous coco-de-mer (the largest seed in the world), the curiously named jellyfish tree, and all eight surviving Seychelles paradise flycatchers.

A two-centre holiday is a good way to experience the contrast of the two island groups. Better still, take a cruise to explore the entire archipelago, sailing past emerald mountains to unspoiled white beaches and crystalline waters. Select a cruise that includes Aldabra, the world’s largest raised coral atoll, a wildlife reserve and breeding ground for the hawksbill sea turtle and green sea turtle.

Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, Cape Town, South Africa

Cape Town was founded by the merchantmen of the Dutch East India company, anchoring in the bay below Table Mountain to replenish their ships before the arduous journey across the Indian Ocean. In 1858, when Winter storms wrecked thirty ships at anchor in the bay, the authorities realised the need to construct a year-round safe-haven. Work on the harbour commenced in September 1860 when Midshipman Prince Alfred ceremoniously tipped the first load of stones for the breakwater.

Many years later, the V&A Waterfront, named after the young prince and his mother, is a popular mixed-use development of hotels, retail stores, bars and restaurants. The recently opened Zeitz Museum hosts the world’s largest collection of African contemporary art. A sunset yacht cruise is a wonderfully relaxing way to enjoy the setting sun illuminate Table Mountain.

The V&A Waterfront is the departure point for the ferry to Robben Island. On the island, informative tours explore the former maximum-security prison which held South Africa’s political prisoners and culminate with a visit to Nelson Mandela’s cell.

