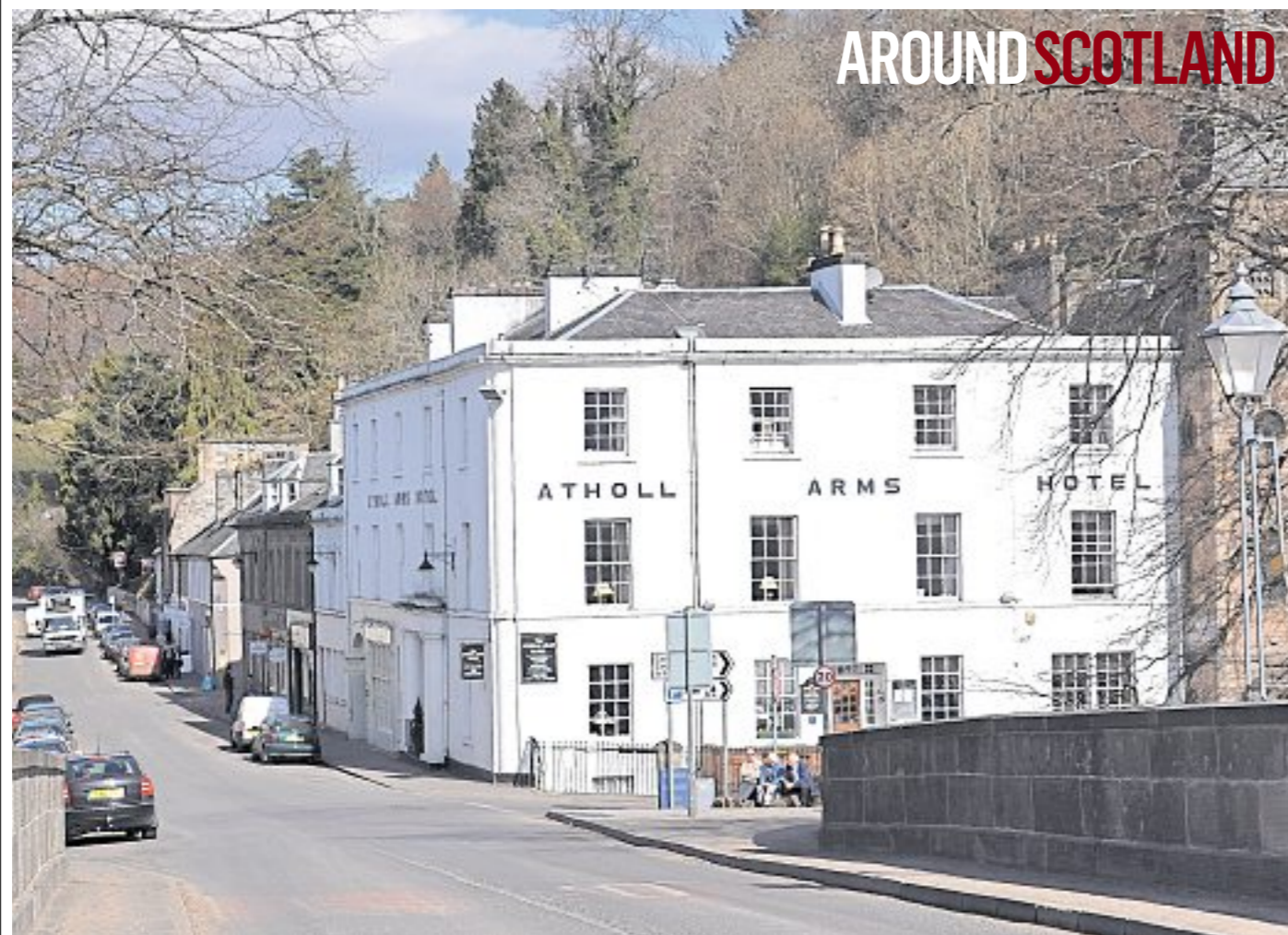


# Famous for a night



Cheryl Livingstone had a taste of what the life of the rich and famous would be like at the luxurious Atholl Arms Hotel, Dunkeld

Everyone at some point in their lives has fantasised about what it would be like to be famous.

To have people wait on you hand and foot, to have an everlasting amount of money and to have a house the size of a football pitch.

During a stay at the Atholl Arms Hotel at Dunkeld, I was given a taste of what the life of the rich

and famous would really be like.

For our two-night visit at the hotel, situated in the heart of the high street, my boyfriend and I stayed in what was probably the biggest room I have ever seen and fit for any rock star, actor or princess.

With a large wooden double bed, the Queen Victoria Suite came complete with its own dining table,

living area and en suite bathroom.

The high ceilings gave the room a sophisticated and traditional feel, while a flat-screen TV gave it a more modern edge.

The best part of the room had to be three huge windows, giving fantastic views of some of the town's best assets - including the River Tay and quaint high street.

We were sad to leave the beautiful space after our two-night stay, with my boyfriend joking that the suite was probably bigger than his entire flat.

The 17-room hotel is located at the south end of the town and dominates your views as you come across the Tay Bridge.

Built in 1833, some of its original features are still on show today. It comprises a mix of double, single and large family rooms, each decorated in a different tartan and all with en suite facilities.

Downstairs, visitors can choose between two restaurants - the Riverview and the Inn @ The Atholl Bar - or enjoy a drink or two in its beautifully decorated lounge or beer garden.

The River Tay provides the perfect backdrop to the garden, which we were lucky enough to enjoy in warm, sunny weather.

For our first night, we decided to eat in the hotel's restaurant, which was refurbished recently and uses locally sourced ingredients to create tastes which capture the different flavours of Scotland.

To start with, I went for scallops with fennel and carrot puree while my

boyfriend chose the traditional Cullen Skink - which was so good he nearly ordered it the following night as well.

Our mains of braised Angus beef with champ potatoes and garden vegetables and lamb with Mediterranean couscous also did not disappoint.

And although we were both full, we forced ourselves to share a strawberry shortbread tart which went down a treat.

On our second night, we decided to try out the hotel's bar menu, which was a long way off your typical "pub-grub", with the best beef and venison burgers we have tasted.

Daytime was spent exploring the picturesque town of Dunkeld with the National Trust for Scotland site The Hermitage being our first stop.

There was an air of magic and fantasy as we strolled through the domineering



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### Fact box

The Atholl Arms Hotel is a three-star hotel situated on the main street at Bridgehead, Dunkeld, Perthshire. Room rates range from £60 to £140 for bed and breakfast.

Until next April and subject to availability, it is offering a two-night stay in a standard double room from £89 and river-view rooms for £99 per person including dinner on one night.

To book or for more information, call 01350 727 219, e-mail enquiries @athollarmshotel.com or visit the website www.athollarmshotel.com

The Hermitage is situated just off the A9 Inverness-Perth road on land that stretches up the River Braan. For more information, visit www.nts.org.uk

The Loch of the Lowes wildlife centre is located two miles north-east of Dunkeld, just off the A923. It is open daily from March 10 to October 31 between 10am and 5pm and from November 1 to February 28, Friday to Sunday only, from 10.30am-4pm.

Tickets cost £4 for adults, £3.50 for concessions and 50p for children aged five to 16. Family tickets are also available. For more information, visit www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

large Douglas firs, down a winding path which led us to the Ossian Hall which overlooks the Black Linn waterfall.

It is a beautiful sight and very peaceful to wander around, with the noise of the rushing water in the background.

The site has a number of different walks of varying lengths and is a great day out for all the family.

Not far down the road is another spectacular site which gives you a sneak peek into the world of wildlife living in the area.

The Loch of the Lowes visitor centre and wildlife reserve covers 240 acres near Dunkeld and is a treat for bird and nature lovers.

Visitors are invited to enter any of the viewing huts at the site and, using binoculars, watch ospreys in their natural habitat.

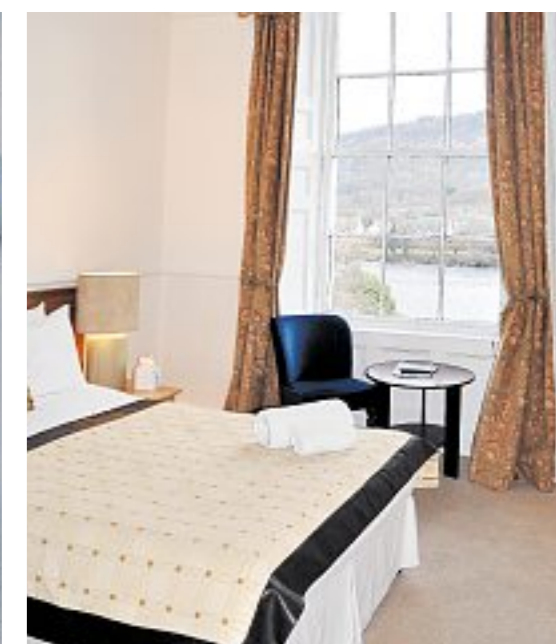
We were lucky enough to spot the area's most famous resident, Lady, and her son, who recently migrated south for the winter after her 22nd consecutive year at the nest, during which she has hatched 62 eggs.

There are also red squirrels, who never fail to delight as they chase around the trees looking for food.

A great day out for the fearless is activities centre Nae Limits, which offers extreme sports from bungee jumping to river rafting.

For theatre-lovers, the Birnam Arts and Conference Centre features many excellent productions.

We had a fantastic time living like celebrities during our time at Dunkeld. But like all fantasies, ours drew to an end when we drove away and headed back to reality.



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