

Family Life

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Halloween Party at CBeebies Land

Heebie-jeebies at CBeebies!

Alton Towers is famous for scaring the living daylight out of teenagers and grown ups at Halloween. But what's there for younger visitors at this time of year? **ADRIAN CAFFERY** took his two children along to the annual Scarefest event

T'S always a bit of a balancing act for parents at this time of year.

You want your children to join in the Halloween fun but you don't want them so scared that they climb into your bed complaining of nightmares.

Scarefest at Staffordshire theme park Alton Towers has always been the go-to attraction for blood-curdling Halloween thrills – and this year is no exception.

New for 2018 is Project 42, a claustrophobic maze full of grotesque mutants and zombies who will leap out at their victims and block their exits.

The maze line-up also includes Sub Species: The End Games; Altonville Mine Tours: Uncover The Legend of the Skin Snatchers; and The Welcoming – Be Chosen.

All are recommended for those aged 15 and over.

So Alton Towers may not sound like the best place to take any squeamish nursery or primary school children, but there's actually plenty to get them in the Halloween spirit, too.

I took my two kids, aged four and seven, along at the weekend.

Our first stop was CBeebies Land which features 14 rides, shows and activities based on popular programmes that are aired on the BBC children's channel.



New for this year, a daily Halloween Party in the Big Fun Showtime arena features a veritable who's who of CBeebies characters.

Bing, Iggle Piggle, Hey Duggie and Postman Pat, among others, get dressed up and dance to Monster Mash and The Time Warp – even doing those pelvic thrusts!

The CBeebies 'Funsters' also host a variety of Halloween-themed activities in the arena.

CBeebies Land features a Furchester Hotel show and rides inspired by The Octonauts, The Go Jetters, Postman Pat, In The Night Garden and The Numtums.

Other attractions are based on Charlie & Lola, Nina And The Neurons, Mr Bloom's Nursery and Something Special, plus there's a

Tree Fu Tom playground.

After a few hours enjoying everything this theme park within a theme park has to offer (the queues were small) it was time for some more Halloween fun.

We posed for pictures inside of giant pumpkins then made our way to Mutiny Bay, which is being plagued by a washed-up crew of motley ghost pirates.

There are a few other rides here for younger children to enjoy, plus the Sea Life aquarium Sharkbait Reef (adorned with plenty of spooky skeletons).

From Mutiny Bay you get a good view of the enormous effigy on the wooden Wicker Man rollercoaster, which bursts into 'flames' as riders pass through it.

We then took the Skyride cable cars over the beautiful gardens to Cloud Cuckoo Land at the far end of the sprawling theme park.

Here, children can meet the ever popular Freaky Four gang for ghoulish games, spooky story times and trick or treat activities.

This year, for the first time, Skelvin, Phil, Patch and Franklin are being joined by Gretyl the Witch, making them the Freaky Five.

Not to be missed are the Freaky Funk Squad (the monsters in human form) who rip up the stage with a live rock 'n' roll party.

Nearby is the House of Monsters, a spooky maze of seven live shows, recommended for children aged eight years and over.

And watch out for the Alton Ancestors, who have been known to rise from their graves and perform Thriller-like dance routines in these parts.

After enjoying Cloud Cuckoo Land's three family rides, and with the sun setting, it was time to make our way back to the car park.

The resort was open until 9pm but we had visited on a school night. And after such a busy day, boy, did the kids sleep well.

So too did Mum and Dad – free from any nightmarish disturbances!

■ Scarefest at Alton Towers Resort takes place this Saturday and Sunday and then each day from October 19 to November 2. Theme park tickets are available from £33 for an adult and £27.50 for a child when booked online five or more days in advance. Car parking costs £6. Maze tickets start from £5 and pre-booking is strongly advised.

■ Alton Towers is open until 9pm during Scarefest so you may be tempted to stay the night. There are three hotels (including one themed around CBeebies) plus woodland lodges in the Enchanted Village. Overnight stays start from £41 per person (based on two adults and two children sharing on a B&B basis) when booked online in advance. See www.altontowers.com