

Traditional food took centre stage for us in the birthplace of the balti

Birmingham has a host of places to eat and enjoy a small refreshment, from High Street favourites to local take-aways and pubs.

It may be considered the birthplace of balti, but we side-stepped that on our trip to the Commonwealth Games, sticking to tried and tested as we had our grandchild with us.

Browns was visited twice and Bill's once and, in a bid to get out of the extremely busy city centre, we took a bus to leafy Edgbaston and there we found The White Swan, a quiet pub in an up-market area with much to commend it.

Browns at Unit 1, St Martins Square (B5 4BH) is located near the city's famous Bull Ring and Grand Central Station, ideal.

It is situated in a prominent site overlooking St Martin's Church, which dates back centuries and is cleverly lit at night.

The restaurant is on two floors and there is a balcony upstairs which offers good views. We ate downstairs on both visits.

The service was with a smile and the staff must be complemented, they could not have been more helpful, particularly with the needs of the youngster.

The food was well-presented and of good quality. Two things irked, however, mint sauce with fish and thyme sprigs on the top of a Yorkshire pudding. Unnecessary.

Bill's (B5 4BE) is yards away in the Bull Rink Shopping Centre

and also handy for the shops and station and we noted queues outside on several occasions during our stay.

The food was quality with the burgers arriving with tasty sides. They were busy but, again, they looked after the youngster.

Out of town now and we stumbled upon the stylish White Swan (pictured), described in their blurb as a premium pub, bar and restaurant, in Harborne Road (B15 3TT) which was in the right place at the right time during an afternoon walk.

It was hot with blue skies overhead and the outside seating with umbrellas and the quiet nature of the spot appealed, particularly after the bustling city centre.

We relaxed, I had a thirst-quenching pint of Cornwall-based, St Austell ale, and the ladies coke, but the plates arrived to diners near us with great looking pub food. I wished that we had more time.

The homely interior, with comfortable seats and decor which complemented the location, was an added bonus for those who wished to get out of the beating sun.