

Where's Bluebell?

Bluebell the Motorhome is parked up
.....well, we aren't really sure where she is
actually, as on Thursday she got picked up
for her MOT/Service and never returned- un-
fortunately she needed some work (new ex-
haust and brakes) so has been checked into
the car surgery until Monday or Tuesday!

This put a sad end to our plans for a night
away this weekend- we are both in dire need
of a change of scenery, and had planned to
have a night across the border in Suffolk on
Saturday. After a quick regroup, we realised
that just because we weren't able to stay
overnight, we still could take the car out for

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the day, especially with the weather forecast being optimistic. So feeling proactive having seen the first snowdrops sprouting their heads in our local woodland and Mr Weatherman confirming that we would have Saturday up to about 5pm to enjoy some winter sunshine, we hit the net to see where was in driving distance we could enjoy a drop of good old fashioned fresh air (and I could have a play on my new camera!). It was soon decided the National Trust Ickworth House would be our best bet, and being only 3 miles from Bury St Edmunds, it meant we could be there within 45 mins. Perfect.

You know you've not been out much when Friday night is spent making homemade soup for your flasks, and getting to bed early

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so we could be up bright and early to make the most of the next day! What a far cry from my life a few years ago, when Friday night would most certainly see me propping a bar up somewhere and grabbing some cheesy chips en route home in the early hours of the morning!

So, Saturday morning arrived and I awoke feeling excited about our day trip, especially with the sunshine making an appearance too! We hit the road just after ten and arrived at Ickworth Hall just before 11am. We'd visited the property a couple of years ago in the Spring, so we weren't fussed when we were told on arrival that only the gardens and parkland were open today (we had Jazz with us anyhow) Because we were visiting

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out of season, we were entitled to a “winter rate” so only paid £3:50 each.. Bargain!

Car parked, boots on and we set off on the “red trail” (7 miles) round the site via the Albana Woods, which we'd been told was where the snowdrops were beginning to bloom. I'll be honest, I was marginally disappointed with the display of snowdrops in the woods- we'd been warned by the friendly man in the ticket office that we were a bit early, they hadn't fully bloomed yet. Never mind, I managed to take some nice snaps and we carried on to do the walk. It soon became rather wet under foot, so we decided to break away from the longer walk and head back up to where the buildings and the famous rotunda via more heavy duty paths.

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I'm glad we did because we enjoyed the views across the parkland and gardens- there are some amazingly old and interesting trees scattered across the site AND if we had stayed on the red route, we wouldn't have found the Erskine's walk- which was a 3/4 mile round walk with thousands of snow-drops in bloom. Just gorgeous and much more like what I had hoped to see and photograph!

After half hour or so snapping away, I talked Keith into a drink and cake at the self confessed "Super dog friendly" cafe- Keefy had a coffee and I had a hot chocolate, Jazz had some biscuits and water and we both (Keefy and I) enjoyed a generous slab of chocolate and chocolate chip tray bake slice. Yum yum!

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We'd enjoyed a good 3.5 hours mooching around in the glorious sunshine and decided to head homewards, but wanted to drop into a nearby farm shop that also is listed as Brit Stop host (number 213) where we had intended to stay if we had been with Bluebell.

It was a lovely little shop with some lovely fresh veg for sale outside, including the most amazing sized flat mushrooms we ever ever seen! Naturally we bought a couple with the intention of baking them with some cheese, along with some veg for tomorrow and some chicken to pimp up in a curry for tea tonight! We had a nice chat with the owner and hope to revisit with van soon!

A lovely day, and just what we both needed ☐

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Happy Days

Until next time

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