

Easter Holidays Pt 5: the East Coast of Scotland

Monday

Bluebell the motorhome is tucked safely behind BritStop 824 whilst her owners enjoy the ale from the on site brewery!



We left Skye this morning via the bridge and headed to the pretty town of Plockton for coffee and a wander. Plockton enjoys a micro climate and is totally sheltered, therefore there are palm trees that line the sea front- it's quite a sight to see!! The sea front is very pretty, and hosts a hotel, a small shop where

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we picked up some delicious highland blue cheese, and a number of b and bs. I should imagine in the summer it's heaving! We enjoyed a coffee outside the Plockton hotel- it was a bit early for anything stronger and we'd got a long drive ahead of us.



Next stop was the Eileen Donan castle, for elevensees- a tradition of ours that started 5 trips ago on our maiden voyage in Daisy. We visited that year, and enjoyed it- but these days we just pop into the car park for the obligatory pic of the outside and a brew.



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From here, we took the stunning road towards Inverness – which takes in some breathtaking scenery through the 5 sisters mountain range, with a brief stop to take in the battle site of Glen Shiel; and we were lucky with the weather today, resulting in a gorgeous drive.



We got as far as Loch Ness, Brit Stop 824- a hotel and micro brewery. Let me tell you, the outside doesn't look too much, but the food and beer is amazing. We've stocked up on bottled beer for the van, fed on haggis- Keith had a haggis pizza and I had haggis in the traditional form with neeps and tatties. Delicious! What's more- if it hadn't been for Brit Stops, we would never have found this place as it's nested behind some houses, off the

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beaten track. For us, this is what we love most about this scheme. It takes us to places where we can have a true experience rather than a touristy/mass produced one.



Tomorrow we continue with our exploration of Brit Stops/ food tour- we're heading to a cheese farm!! Sounds right up our street!

Tuesday

Bluebell the motorhome is parked at Brit Stop no: behind a cheese farm, near Inverness.



We couldn't have been made to feel more welcome today, our hosts are lovely, and from the minute you pull in this is evident:

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Our taste buds are going bonkers- we've been sampling (and buying) the cheese that is made here this afternoon, and it is delicious. The main cheddar they make here is voted in the top 10 in Britain, and I can see why. It's creamy, but also mature- and as soon as I popped a taster in my mouth I knew it was a winner. We bought three variations in the end; the lady told us that the crumblier one was made from milk taken in the winter months, which then needed to be left to mature for longer. It was very interesting, and we can see why the shop/cafe have been awarded 5 stars from Visit Scotland. We especially enjoyed watching through the glass partition to watch cheese being hand-made!

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Other purchases that we picked up here were Scottish oatcakes with garlic and rosemary in, also lovely, and some ice cream from the nearby Black Isle dairy which was am.maz.ing!!! Keefy's honeycomb flavour especially! And Jazz loved it!! Cheeky mutt!



Other than eating- which we started at Loch Ness this morning with a ginormous bacon baguette with this lovely view.....



we did a little walk to a pretty village nearby, on the banks of the Moray Firth to try to spot some dolphins, as this stretch of water is popular with dolphins. Unfortunately despite a

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lovely hour sat waiting, we failed to see them this time, but will definitely return next year.



Whilst we were chilling tonight we saw 2 barn owls hunting for their tea and the beekeepers came to collect the honey from the nearby bee boxes. It's been fantastic, and yet again another favourite spot has been born! Thanks Brit Stops ☐

Wednesday

Bluebell the motorhome is perched on the seaside behind Brit Stop 828. Excitement is lingering in the air, as word in the van is that tonight is Fish and chip night! Yum yum.

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We were on our way early (well... 9am) this morning, and just like the old saying goes- the early bird catches the worm- or in our case, lots of sightings of dolphins! We headed to Nairn harbour for our brekkie, and whilst cooking up eggy bread and beans (you can imagine the smell in our van this week!) Keefy exclaimed that he'd seen a dolphin! Eggs abandoned, I joined the search, and sure enough over the next hour we saw several sightings - one was pretty close too. I failed miserably on the photo taking- I was too busy squeeling every time it reappeared. However, that's one thing to tick off the list, as it was an amazing sight to watch these beautiful creatures playing in the wild. Apparently bottle nosed dolphins are called this because their long snout is said to look like an

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old fashioned gin bottle. It made me smile- I wonder how much truth is in it.



From Nairn, we drove east to Burghead, where they celebrate two New Years- the 1st and 11th Jan under the Julian calendar and to discover about the Clavie tradition and also see some Pictish stone engravings. The visitors centre (donation entry) is excellent and enjoys a panoramic view from the roof. There is also the remains of an Iron Age fort here, as well as the Burghead Well. It was a nice place to visit, and we are glad that we made the journey off the main road to get there.



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We then took the coast road east, towards Lossiemouth, making one final surreal stop at the small fishing village of Hopeman. It's got a pretty harbour here as well as an al-ladins cave type shop/gallery that we nipped into. Half an hour later we emerged £60 lighter but having gained this bad boy for our living room (at home not in the van!!) luckily we are traveling in a large vehicle as it's got a few miles to cover before it's installed with a couple of malts next to the sofa at home!!

So now it's time for fish and chips after a great day exploring this lovely stretch of Scotland.

Until next time

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