

A long weekend in Rural Essex; Oct 2014 part 2

Bluebell the motorhome is safely tucked up at home again after a lovely few days exploring the Essex countryside.

We had a pleasant night at BritStop number 209, and a very quiet nights sleep. With the clocks going back it was nice to enjoy our extra hour in slumberland, however we did find ourselves waking up the hour early! In actual fact, we were pleased we did- it had only just gone 08:00 and we'd just finished our breakfast when we noticed cars arriving onto the

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field in which we were parked on. Turns out the pub landlord had parked us on the community football pitch and although we did know this - the goalposts that he had directed us to park ***behind*** were a give away, it hadn't occurred to us to double check at the time of parking that the football field would not be in use (neither of us are into football one bit). In our minds why would he, the pub landlord, tell us to park behind some goalposts of an in use football pitch, knowing that the pitch would be home to a football match at 09:00 the next morning and then not to bother to tell us/warn us about said football match. Well- turns out we were wrong, and that was in fact what he had done. The footballers were obviously not impressed to see us there, and rather than take the *normal* ap-

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proach and come and ask us to move, they decided the best way way to kick a football full pelt right in the direction of Bluebell, which of course slammed right into the side of us – but amazingly caused no damage whatsoever *phew* Needless to say, we were on the road, albeit with a few ruffled feathers by 08:20 **on a Sunday morning** (I didn't realise there was such a thing as pre 10:00 on a Sunday!)

We had found a localish walk that we fancied in our **trusty onboard walks box** which started at nearby Earls Colne. The walk itself was varied, taking in meadows, a disused railway track, along a riverside and an ancient woodland. Somehow, we managed the entire 6.5 mile walk without taking any photos!!!

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Not sure how that one happened-sorry!!

After a pleasant picnic lunch, we decided to head back to the tranquility of beautiful Thaxted for our overnight stay. We've actually stayed here before – the parish council very broad mindedly encourage visitors in motorhomes into their small town by having designated *free* parking for up to 48 hours. Perfect. The town itself is gorgeous, with a lovely windmill, guildhall, 14th Century church, lots of historical picture postcard houses and the house where Gustav Holst composed his famous works, The Planets.



You can read about our previous adventures in Thaxted [here](#)

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As you can see on the photos above, the weather when we arrived on Sunday was overcast but Monday morning dawned in beautiful sunshine, so again we found ourselves heading out walking at 08:15- this time on a 3 mile walk around the village outskirts.



I'd been put in charge of the map and GPS ^



Thaxted Guildhall

We were very lucky, we were just taking in the sign outside the Guldhall when a gentleman asked if we would like a look inside- he was a member of the parish council and was

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about to open up to give his grandson a special visit, so we were invited up to have a look inside. It was a real treat, it only opens to the public occasionally as it's still in use as the parish council chambers.



first floor- the council chambers (sorry for blurry pic)



top floor, now an art gallery



out the window of the top floor, looking down the high street. The blue step just above the telephone box on the right is where Gustav Holst used to live



After a good luck around (thank you kind man) we had a quick cuppa and set off towards Saffron Walden, via the scenic route

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(suggested on the tourist board outside The Guildhall



It was a lovely journey round the quant little villages but again we failed on the picture front- this time I blame Keefy as I was driving and he had the camera!! Our favourites were: Thaxted obviously, Finchingfield, Arkesden and Saffron Walden.

Onto Saffron Walden just in time for some lunch, after which we set off on the 3.75 mile (which somehow turned into 5.5miles according to our GPS) World War 2 trail around the town. It was a lovely walk, which took us all the way up to Audley End House (EH)

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Over a bridge that during the war was mined and barricaded to prevent German tanks passing through in the event of a Nazi invasion



Passed a Pill Box



And numerous remains of mortar spigot emplacements all around the town.



It was a very factual trail and we both en-

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joyed it- although having already done a 3 mile walk that morning we both felt exhausted afterwards! The sunlight was beautiful though throughout



We decided we would try and get on a site that evening as we were running low on water and desperate on a toilet empty. Having made a couple of phone calls we soon got booked onto the nearby **Little Henham Hall Farm Campsite** At £12 for the night with electric it was a steal, and we were lucky enough to have the site to ourselves. The view across the field was lovely and we had a wonderfully peaceful night, enjoying the luxury of being on electric hookup, and being able to have a loooooong shower- bliss. Al-

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though there was no facilities onsite other than a Chemical loo point, water tap and 5 hookups, it was perfect for us and struck the exact balance of what we need to feel totally relaxed. From now on we are going to try and incorporate more small sites into our holidays. Although we love staying on BritStop sites, and don't like the larger regimented campsites one bit- we feel these certified back to basic sites may be just what we could do with every third night or thereabouts.

Next morning we were again treated to a phenomenal sunrise right from our bedroom window.



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Eager to enjoy what was forecasted to be the last of the glorious weather, we set off to West Stow Country park, half way between the campsite and home. We enjoyed having a gentle wander around the Country Park before heading home.

Once again we've had a brilliant mini break, and have been particularly lucky with the weather. We travelled exactly 200 miles over 5 days- and the total cost was just under £200.



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We are impressed with this as this includes my splash out birthday meal which obviously was more expensive than we would usually perhaps spend *well, I'm worth it!!* ☐

Until next time

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