

Scotland May Half Term 2016 Part 2

Sunday dawned with beautiful blue skies across Loch Linney. We packed up and made our way along the scenic route to Fort William, 32 miles, 20 of which were on single track road on the loch side. We had uninterrupted views of the Summit of Ben Nevis and soon found a picturesque parking area to cook up a nice frittata breakfast.



Road to Fort William



Perfect spot for breakfast



Selfie in front on Ben Nevis

The rhododendrons alongside the road were just gorgeous in pinks and purple, it was a lovely drive. We kept commenting on the fact we've driven on the opposite side of the road, the A82 to Fort William, many times and have missed this!



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Ben Nevis and Fort William in front

We arrived at Fort William and did a food shop, poor Bluebell's cupboards were full to busting! Before heading to the campsite, we drove the short distance to Neptune's Staircase, a succession of 9 locks along the Caledonian Canal, built to enable Industrial boats to travel from the west of Scotland to Inverness. The canal and locks are a lot wider than those we recently saw at Foxton Locks and pretty impressive. There is a good cycle path alongside the canal, actually the majority of the way to Inverness, so we got the bikes down and had a pleasant cycle for a few miles in the sunshine.



Neptune's Staircase



Neptune's Staircase



Neptune's Staircase aerial shot from Drone



Cycle ride along the Canal



Picnic spot



Tired pooch

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We arrived at our campsite for the next couple of nights, Glen Nevis Holiday Park and checked in easily. At £24 per night (plus a sneaky £5 booking fee), it's a bit more expensive than what we would usually pay on a site, but in Fort William the options to wild camp are more limited, most car parks have no overnight parking signs, and there are no CLs. Our pitch however is fully serviced with grey water, electric and enough room to get the chairs/table out etc, plus we are at the foot of Ben Nevis, which, we can clearly see- yay for sunny weather! It's remarkably quiet and very nicely landscaped so actually we are more than happy paying our £53 for two nights.



Glen Nevis Campsite pitch



Ben Nevis view from pitch

For tea we put on the slow cooker for 4 hours along with a boneless pork shoulder and Swartz Pulled Pork mix. 4 hours later and we had the most delicious evening meal! And there was enough for a few pulled pork wraps for tomorrow's lunch!



Local ales to try

We had a lovely evening relaxing, and woke up refreshed. We were planning on cycling from the campsite to The Ben Nevis Range ski area for a trip up on the only mountain gondolas in Britain. However, it was looking like over 10 miles each way and we were feeling lazy, so we took Bluebell off her pitch for the day and drove down instead arriving as it opened at 10:00. We paid our £12.50 each (Jazz goes free!) and took one of the first gondolas up the

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mountain.



Gondola up Nevis Range



Gondola ride selfie



Jazz enjoyed it!

It was a beautiful journey up, and despite it being slightly cloudy at the top, it soon cleared and we were rewarded with brilliant views across Fort William and Loch Linnhe, and through The Great Glen. We even got clear views of the summit of Ben Nevis. We sat and took it in for a couple of hours. It was lovely and we felt on top of the world! There is a restaurant and shop at the top of the gondola journey, and plenty of mountain bike trails if you're into that.



On top of the world. Well Scotland



Amazing views

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Hello Ben Nevis



As close to the summit as I'll ever get!



Love this pic of Keith with Fort William and Loch Linnhe behind

On our return into Fort William we stopped at the Ben Nevis Distillery hoping to get a small bottle to take back to the van. We left feeling a bit disappointed in the shop, there wasn't a great deal of choice and only the option to buy huge bottles at £80 a pop. Compared to our local distillery in our village where live, St Georges Distillery, the shop wasn't good, so we left spending nothing!

We stopped instead at the Ben Nevis Highland gift centre (tat shop galore!) and managed to get a miniature Ben Nevis blend and a miniature Scottish gin along with plenty of tablet to last us our journey north tomorrow (the tablet not the alcohol, that will be gone tonight!!)



23degrees under Ben Nevis!



BBQ

We are now back at the campsite, our stall is most certainly set out, Keith's prepping his meat for the BBQ (ahem!). It's 5pm and the weather is 23 centigrade / not a cloud in the sky. I'm in a vest top and shorts and I'm not lying, it's boiling! Tomorrow we say goodbye to Fort William and travel north to be-

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yond Ullapool, for a couple of nights by the sea at Clach toll. One of our favourite sites in the UK. Fingers crossed with the weather!

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