

February Half Term – Mini
Break/Ruby's first trip out!

Thursday

Ruby the Campervan is parked up on the very quiet **Woodstock Farm**, near to Downham Market, Norfolk. For our first ever overnight stay in Ruby we decided to stay local, so we could spend plenty of time on site playing with our new toy!



After 6.5 years of motor homing, we've just decided to downsize/sell our car and motorhome and replace with something we can

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use day to day but still get out on the road for adventures! We were really excited about our first trip out in Ruby, if not a little apprehensive- we've sold our car already and ploughed all our excess savings into Ruby the VWT5. We know we LOVE being out and about, but going from motorhome to camper van means we've lost an awful lot of space! Can we make it work?!



On arrival, Keith got everything out of the boot area and repacked it neatly, whilst I reorganised the internal storage. An hour later and we were both beaming. First impressions were good- we've got everything that we had in Bluebell on board and still have loads of spare room!

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A nice feature of Woodstock Farm was that it has it's own private woodland and the owners have made a nice circular walk. We decided to have a leg stretch and enjoyed seeing groups of snowdrops dotted here and there.



Back on site and we got the kettle on, before taking nice hot showers in the small shower block. Dinnertime soon arrived and I decided to throw myself into the deep end by cooking a SimplyCook meal- Korean Lamb Chops, with Jasmine rice- which was absolutely delicious. We had been spoilt in Bluebell as she had a 4 ring hob with grill and oven. Ruby only has 2 rings, but I felt excited about the prospect of hunting out new recipes. **Simply-Cook** is a fantastic option for camper van cooking- most meals are only cooked using

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one or two rings on the hob. Fab! You can try your own box of SimplyCook [here](#).



One of the most popular comments re our decision about getting Ruby has been about lack of Pop Up. I wondered how I would find cooking whilst sitting down, but actually I rather enjoyed it! Being a much smaller space, we needed to rely on good old fashioned team work to produce the meal- I sat one side and Keith sat the other side- he was my commis chef, passing things from his side of the van on request. I quite liked that we were working together as a team- meal times in Bluebell often were my job (I don't really mean "job"- I enjoy cooking but because there was plenty of space, I often banished K out of the way!)

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Dinner enjoyed and I went off to wash up at the kitchen sink block- this was new to me, we'd always used the sink in BB but having no hot water in Ruby meant I really needed to get used to using on site facilities more now! Again, I didn't mind it- not having to worry about how much water we have left in our tank / is the waste tank nearly full was quite enjoyable. (I realise I may feel different about this in the middle of a rain storm/ on a overly busy/untidy site!)

Bed time next and we were quite excited to set out Ruby's bed and the porta potty. The bed area setup was very very quick and easy- before we knew it we were snuggled up and nodding off!

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Friday

Morning dawned and we both were happy to report that we had slept well. The lack of pop top meant that our morning cup of tea ritual needed to be not in bed as we couldn't sit up, but within 2 mins we had packed up the bed area and the kettle was on- normal service was resumed.

After a breakfast of venison sausages we drove 5 miles down the road to Denver, not USA, but on the outskirts of Downham Market, Norfolk. We enjoyed a 5 mile walk that took us from Denver past the old windmill (sadly in a state of disrepair-I think/hope it is being done up), Denver Sluice, along the River Ouse, before making our way through

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Downham Market and back to Ruby in Denver.



Once back on site I got the slow cooker plugged in on high for our evening meal of Pulled Pork, Homemade “campfire chips” and colslaw.



We enjoyed a relaxing afternoon, I did some knitting, Keith listened to some music and at dusk we took a little walk along the nearby lane to see if we could spot the Barn Owl- we did, but he was far too quick for my camera! Beautiful.



Saturday

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We had another good sleep last night, we switched sides and it seemed to work better. The weather was fairly good so we decided to turn Ruby's wheels towards the seaside rather than heading straight home. Keith picked a nice walk from our AA walk box that was based around The Burnham's and I had been going on for ages about how I would love to buy some North Norfolk Mussels and cook them overlooking the sea, so we decided that would be lunch today. Colin the CoPilot (sat-nav app) was set for Burnham Market and an hour later we pulled in to the beautiful but very busy picturesque village. We managed to get a kilo of fresh local mussels from Gurney's Fish Shop, wow what a find this place is, if you like your local food you HAVE to visit!

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Into the ice box the mussels went and we carried on to the harbour parking at Burnham Overy Staithe, where we parked up beside the water and began our 4 mile walk. By now the sun was out, and I was as happy as a pig in you know what! I think the cal lot the mussels meant our pace was through the roof, and we arrived back at Ruby in just over an hour and a quarter! Not bad for us as we've been a bit lacking on the old walking front recently.



Yay! It was FINALLY time to cook my Mussels- writing this back now, and I'm thinking that I sound a bit of a looser, but hey ho. For the last few years I've had this crazy bucket list item of buying fresh mussels and cooking them overlooking the sea and now was my

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chance. I was so excited! I took my time to de-beard the mussels and scrape the barnacles off before steaming them in my mussels pan I got for christmas along with an onion and some cider and double cream. Let's just say the anticipation of the big event (haha) was totally worth it, it was just one of those perfect moments. I would say poor Keith, but he got to enjoy the meal too!



  All too soon and it was time to head back home, but not before a cheeky little stop at another of my favourite places in England, Walsingham Abby, to see the GLORIOUS display of perfect snowdrops.



What an absolute corker of

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a day, and trip actually. We drove home with big smiles on our faces, Ruby survived her first live in test, and we were feeling happy with our purchase. Hurrah. Hard to think that only 3 weeks ago we were devastated at the parting of ways with Bluebell.

Until Next time, and something tells me that next will be very soon(!),

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