

February Half Term 2018; Wiltshire and Dorset. Part 1

Saturday

Ruby the VW Campervan is parked up by the Kennet and Avon Canal on the outskirts of Devizes, Wiltshire. We set off from Norfolk at around 09:00 this morning and had a fairly smooth journey despite atrocious weather!

We made a stop at the National Trust location of Lacock Abbey and Village, which is about 6 miles from Devizes.

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Lacock is beautiful traditional Quintessential-ly English Village, which houses the impressive Lacock Abbey- once a Nunnery but then sold on to the Tarbet family, and of course Henry Fox Tarbert who took the very first photographic negative from inside.



We really enjoyed our visit to Lacock and enjoyed a pint at the George which is home to a great log fire but also a very rare turnspit – a dog wheel which in its day, would have had a dog inside the wheel walk-in and rotation the spit over the fire.



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It was fascinating visiting Lacock Abbey and of course the very spot where the first ever photo was taken, and we could easily understand why the village is so popular with film and tv location scouts- Harry Potters house is in Lacock, classroom scenes of inside Hogwarts were filmed in the Abbey, not to mention series such as Cranford, all filmed here.

We arrived at our home for the next 3 nights, the Camping and Caravaning Club site at Devizes just after 4 and by quarter past we'd got the chairs out to enjoy the last few minutes daylight whilst we had a beer, our first al fresco beer of 2018.



First impressions of the site are good- as you

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would expect with C&CC club sites- free hot showers, dishwashing facilities etc and friendly wardens along with large hard standing pitches.

We reheated a stew we'd made a few days ago and froze for dinner and had a relatively early night. Time to relax- perfect.

Sunday

After a wonderfully quiet night we had a lazy Snooze this morning before getting up around 09:30. I prepared some ham for the slow cooker and Keith sorted the bikes. After a quick bacon sarnie we hit the canal tow-path just outside the campsite. The weather was bright and sunny albeit icy cold, but we

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enjoyed our 3 mile or so cycle to Devizes. We passed the very impressive Caen Hill flight of locks- 29 in 2 miles and the longest flight of consecutive locks in the country.



There was a nice tea room in the old lock keepers cottage so we popped in for a coffee and cake and to admire the view. I'm not sure if it was the cold weather, the fact that it was our first ride since August, or that the locks cover quite an incline but we found the cycle pretty tough! Enjoyable nonetheless.



We enjoyed our wander around Devizes- there was museum dedicated to Wiltshire life but we decided to give this a miss as we had

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Jazz with us. We popped in for a pint at the oldest pub in Devizes, The White Bear, an old Tudor inn where there was a lovely fire. Keith was enjoying the Wadworth ale, brewed in this town.



We enjoyed a flask of homemade soup overlooking the canal before a much easier (downhill!) journey back for the campsite. Ruby smelt amazing, slow cooker camping meals are just the best!

We settled in for an afternoon nap after picking up some local ice cream for pudding from the reception. Soon it was tea time and we cooked up some broccoli, cauliflower and new potatoes and some cheese sauce. Per-

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fect.



Monday

Monday dawned a lovely sunny morning and once we'd done some housekeeping in Ruby like replacing the gas etc we had a quick breakfast of porridge before unloading the bikes and setting off again along the Kennet and Avon Canal. This time we were travelling the other way- towards Bradford on Avon.

We passed a lovely pub about two miles into the journey but 'twas too early for a pint so we earmarked it for the return journey.

A mile or so on we saw a heron right in front of us on the path. It was a timid thing- I've

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never been so close to one. Turns out it was waiting for a local couple to come and feed it with breadcrumbs, and they were just behind us so we watched as the man threw the heron bread then the heron dipped it in the canal and ate it.



Beautiful creatures ♥

Another couple of miles along and disaster struck. Keith got a puncture! ☹ it wouldn't be a Ruby holiday without this happening – so you would think we would be prepared. Of course, we weren't; so we had to come off the canal path on the outskirts of Trowbridge where luckily there was a bicycle repair shop that was open. Good old 4G and google sav-

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ing the day. It was a 2 mile walk to the shop however and moods were low! Half an hour later, we'd got Keith's bike repaired – not one but two punctures by a Hawthorne, can you believe it! Apparently the stretch we'd just passed is notorious for Hawthorne punctures! We'd had our picnic in Trowbridge whilst they fixed the bike but we didn't find the town too inspiring, so we decided to turn round and head back towards that nice pub we'd seen on the canal. Rather than taking the canal path and risking more punctures we took the road which was 6.3 miles. It wasn't too bad but we found it difficult for the last mile or so as the road was hilly! Never mind, all was forgiven as we enjoyed a couple of drinks at the Barge inn at Seend. It was a lovely little pub right on the canal- I

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bet in summer it's packed!



We were then on the home straight, only a mile or so back to the campsite with better surfaces – mind you our legs were a gonner. We really need to get or fitness back up- Keith said he was feeling like he felt after running the London marathon! ☐



Luckily I'd decided to do another slow cooker meal today- beef and bean stew – so as we arrived back to Ruby she was smelling delicious.

We've really enjoyed our stay at Devizes Camping and Caravan club site- facilities are

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clean and pitches are spacious. Location wise is fabulous – I think we'd return here.

https://wanderleefy.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/0427c-img_4576-1.mov

Tomorrow we move on to Stonehenge. I've never been and I'm really excited!

Until next time

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