

Our Annual Scotland Pilgrimage – May 2018 Part 3; the Trials and Tribulations of making our way back down South

Thursday – Time to leave Harris. I was so emotional, I cried as we sailed out of Tarbet!! It is SUCH a beautiful island, however the realisation dawned that we will never be able to visit again as the chances of us getting such amazing weather again are just so slim, we will never recreate this week away again! I was an emotional WRECK! A hungover emo-

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2018 Part 3; the Trials and Tribulations
of making our way back down South
tional wreck after our meal last night!

We landed on Skye, and made our way back to mainland Scotland over the bridge and back over Invergarry, which is a nice scenic run. Traffic in Fort William was horrendous so we didn't get to our prebook C&CC Club site at Glencoe til almost 6pm. The site was only booked as a stopover to break the journey back south up, and to empty, fill, enjoy one showers etc. We've wild camped in Glencoe many times before right in the heart of the mountains but this was a nice scenic campsite on the outskirts.

Sadly our luck with the weather was about to catch up on us, and our luck was about to change. First of all, the dreaded midges

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of making our way back down South made a dramatic entrance around 7pm.

There were foul, aggressive little blighters, and no matter what we had to prevent them we couldn't get them to leave us alone. An hour later, we were so uncomfortable that we made the decision to pack up and drive south! So two hours after arriving we were on our way again. Britstop bible in hand, we rang an overnight stopover near Gretna, explained that we may not get there during opening hours but please could we stay. Of course came the friendly reply. 3.5 hours later, we were pulling off the M74 at Gretna Green and bang. We had a blowout. ☐ Luckily, we were less than a mile away from the Britstop (actually, it took me a while to realise that it was a blowout and not a dodgy road surface). We carried on tentatively and

Our Annual Scotland Pilgrimage – May 2018 Part 3; the Trials and Tribulations of making our way back down South limped into the carpark around midnight to access the damage. Thankfully I'd not wrecked the rim by driving on a blowout. There was nothing we could do so we got the bed out and attempted to sleep.

Friday By 7am Keith was up, dressed and ready to change onto the spare. An hour later and we'd got the spare on, but our confidence in these fabulous looking 20 inch rim and low profile racing tyres was diminished as it's our second blowout in 9 months. Our moods were pretty rock bottom too (or so we thought!) – We were tired from the journey, confused about what to do with the wheels – should we sell these popular wheels and replace them with normal T5 wheels. In doing that are we going to lose value on Ruby as

Our Annual Scotland Pilgrimage – May 2018 Part 3; the Trials and Tribulations of making our way back down South the wheel rims are eye-wateringly high in value – they came with Ruby and do look swanky and generate a lot of interest in her. Are we putting ourselves in danger driving on these low profile tyres? Are they meant just for show and light driving? Ruby is our only vehicle so we use her lots. Since the end of March we've done 3500 miles and 3 weeks of that we were in China (not in Ruby lol!) Our load rating is ok but why are we getting blowouts? So many questions and things to consider. Load Ratings, Inch of rims, wheel types... the list went on and it became clear we needed to get home.

We rang our next stop, Dufton Caravan Park and explained and they were so kind, and told us not to worry and they would hold our

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deposit so we can use it when we rebook.

2 hours along the way I'm sure you can
imagine our faces as half way down the A1
there was another bang. Keith pulled straight
onto the hard shoulder and out we got, fully
expecting to see another Blowout. Thankfully
(as the spare was already in use!) it wasn't a
blow out. What the blinking hell was it? We
get back into Ruby and tentatively start her
up and she sounds like she's been chavved
up to the max with a super exhaust on. Not
only that but there is thick black smoke bil-
lowing out of the exhaust. Oh My God. Exact-
ly 12 hours after having a blowout we are
now sat on the side of the A1 (thankfully we
limped to a section of a drive to an equation
centre- so were off the main carraigeway)

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2018 Part 3; the Trials and Tribulations
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calling out the RAC. You just couldn't have
made it up.

2 hours later, Mr RAC Mechanic arrived, instantly spotting our spare, well it does stick our like a sore thumb! “You look like you aren't having much luck” he says. We fill him in on our previous 16 hours. By this time, I'm fairly sure our engine has given up. Keith's pacing tells me he's thinking the same thoughts. The tension in the air was palpable and the silence between us was fraught with anxiety which is very rare for Keith and I.

It took Mr RAC mechanic man less than 5 minutes to reassure us that our engine was not dead, and that actually the problem was that the turbo hose clip had popped and come off.

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This didn't mean much to either of us, but Mr
RAC Mechanic man smiled and said, you've
got two options. 1) I'll call out the tow truck
and they will tow you home or 2) I'll source a
new part for you locally this afternoon, and
come back and fit it for you, at no charge
other than the part itself. "How much is the
part likely to be" we ask? "oh, £40 max" he
chirps! I don't know if it was the stress of the
last few hours, the long journey or whether
I'm just a highly emotional lass, but my bot-
tom lip began wobbling AGAIN and next thing
I know I'm blubbing again!! What a relief.

2 hours later, and only £33 lighter, we were
back on the road again.



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Thankfully this time we got all the way home
without anymore drama other than two hold
ups due to accidents and we managed to get
home 24 hours after leaving Glencoe and
more importantly, in time for a fish and chip
supper to celebrate National Fish and Chip
day!

Despite the trials of the last 2 days, and arriv-
ing home two days early- we absolutely
adored our trip to Harris. The weather could-
n't have been better and I'd recommend a
trip to anyone who hasn't visited this wonder-
ful part of the world.

For us, we may give the West Coast a miss
now for a couple of years, just because we
are sure to be comparing it to this trip. Also, I

Our Annual Scotland Pilgrimage – May 2018 Part 3; the Trials and Tribulations of making our way back down South don't think we will go the last week of May again – it was so busy and those midges really were awful on Thursday. We were told but the wardens that they'd been around since Monday and they were just so intense. So perhaps back to Easter Scotland trips for us I think.

Also – make sure you pre book your CalMac ferries – even just to get to Skye. We met two families who hadn't and therefore couldn't take the ferry as it was full. It's a long way back to Fort William from Mallaig and then at least 2 hours from Fort William to the Skye bridge.

Until Next Time

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