

On the Road to Northern Ireland; Easter 2019 | Part 1

Friday

Ruby the VW Campervan is nestled in a pub car park in Cumbria, behind Britstop no NW69/19.



We had a mad dash north, leaving home at 2pm following a lunchtime gig in Norfolk which saw the close of our ridiculously term. Our britstop is located rather close to Appleby, which we only visited at half term. It's

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not a coincidence, we just couldn't drive vaguely past without stopping at Lower Howgill Butchers to squeeze some of their homemade Cumbrian sausages, smoked Appleby Brie along with a whole load of other delicious looking cheese into our already overflowing fridge – and of course, every adventure needs to start with a homemade sausage roll doesn't it?

We ate at the Britstop on Friday – perfect as we were wiped out, and enjoyed Cumbrian sausage and mash washed down with a couple of pints of Eden valley ale. A perfect way to end our term, only made more perfect when we found out the delicious sausages were sourced from the very reason we'd come this way up, Lower Howgill's in Apple-

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by.



Saturday

Our journey started early, we made the short trip to the butchers, before dropping onto the M6, crossing the border into Scotland and turning off at Gretna to follow the Galloway Tourist route towards Stranraer.



We had a tea, Scottish tablet and leg stretch break at National Trust's Threave Gardens where we saw some fabulous displays of daffodils.



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Sadly the gardens weren't dog friendly so Jazz had a rest in Ruby whilst we whizzed round! Our next stop was Portpatrick, the most picturesque lunch stop I think I can remember.



We sampled a local ale overlooking the harbour, the sun was shining and we could not have felt happier.

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☒ We stocked up on local ale and gin at the village shop before heading 10 miles to our home for Saturday night, the C&MC New England Bay site. This was huge and landscaped fabulously. We had a great sea view, which we enjoyed with a local gin and tonic.



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Dinner was a delicious lamb dhansak, before crashing out early to the sounds of waves outside our window.

Sunday

It was time to move off our lovely pitch at New England Bay as we had a ferry to catch at Cairnryan. We've vowed to return here though - I reckon a week along here would be fabulous, and we noticed lots of food places that we'd like to return to, including smokehouses, cheese farms, ice cream parlours and of course a distillery.

As we left the campsite we made a very quick stop at the Kirkmadrene standing stones, which date from 500-800 AD. The

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stones are now protected in casing but you can see some fantastic carvings still evident.



We also made a fuel stop at Stranraer Morrison's before checking in for our 11:30 ferry at Cairnryan Port.

Whilst we waited to drive on, we assembled Jazz's new travel crate.



We were crossing with Stena Line who very fairly, in our opinion, allow smaller pets on board in a crate with dimensions no larger than 80cm x 52cm x 52cm, providing that they are booked in advance. We purchased **this** folding travel crate from Amazon, and

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thankfully Jazz doesn't seem to mind it. Although the crossing is only just over 2 hours, Jazz's separation anxiety is bad enough at the best of times, so the thought of leaving him in our beloved Ruby on the noisy car deck, put me right off the holiday before we'd even booked it! When I was younger I travelled across the Irish Sea with a school friend of mine and their family, and dog, and during the crossing the usually placid dog completely wrecked the interior of their car! This memory lives on in my mind, and I didn't want to put Jazz through that trauma, or run the risk of Ruby getting wrecked either! We seemed to be the only ones who knew about this though as Jazz was the only one upstairs and we saw another family trying to walk their dog upstairs without success. It re-

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ally worked wonderfully for us, completely easing the stress of travelling on the ferry.



We booked our ferry a couple of months ago, taking advantage of their Tesco partnership using our Tesco club card points to cover the majority of the return crossing. The crossing was smooth and we were impressed with the facilities on board- and before we knew it we were arriving in the port of Belfast!

We had a short drive to Larne, where we picked up the spectacular coast road through Glenarm towards Waterfoot, stopping for a cheeseboard lunch in a scenic lay-by, before turning into our prebooked campsite at **Glenariff Forest Park.**

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We were exhausted by this point, all the travelling and the end of term catching up with us, so had a nap before rustling up a very exciting and low maintenance dinner – see my YouTube video [here](#) where I introduce our new VW gadget.

We are so excited to be finally in Northern Ireland and are looking forward to starting our adventures properly tomorrow!



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