

The Hawks go Dutch

As usual with one of our trips there is a plan not much of one but it is a plan and plans can be changed. Here is the outline of our plan so far, we depart Liverpool on the 23rd April and head for Hull, yes I know you're asking why would you go to Hull, well that's where we get the ferry to Holland, After a night on the ferry we head up towards Amsterdam and our first stop, Halfweg which is just outside Amsterdam. We intend to spend about a week exploring Amsterdam, the surrounding area and the Keukenhof a flower festival covering 2500 acres, deep joy. Then we head off towards Copenhagen the planned route takes through into Germany crossing the Rheine towards Osnabruck, then on towards Bremen then Hamburg. We then head North through the Huttener Berge Nature Park crossing into Denmark towards Kolding then Odense, we then cross the Nyborg bridge to Koser and then on to Copenhagen. We hope to spend a few days exploring Wonderful, Wonderful, Copenhagen but that will depend on how expensive it is, I don't suppose they would be very happy if we just parked up in a local car park like a couple of pikey's. We then start our return, we have chosen a different route through Denmark which will enable us to see more of the country, this will take us South towards Maribo and then we catch the Rodbyhavn to Puttgarden ferry. From there we head towards Calais as yet we have not decided on which route to take as there are a couple of alternatives, so that's the rough plan we will keep you informed as we go.

23/04/15

Gloria is packed up and we are ready to depart the wonderful city of Liverpool at about 10.45am, after a quick visit to mum and dads we set off up the M62 on a journey that Sylvia tells us will take 2 hours and 20 minutes, ha I have heard that before. As we approach Brighthouse Barb remembers that Trish told her that there is a great shopping place to go to not far off the motorway, thanks Mrs O, there is only one problem we don't know what it is called or where exactly it is.

So, while we are waiting for a txt from Trish with the name of the place we head off the motorway in search of the unknown, we do find a shopping centre but this is obviously not the place based on the description we have, but there are various eateries so we stop for a bite to eat. While we are there Trish sends Barb the name of the place where we should be, and when we get back to Gloria, Sylvia tells us that it is only 15 minutes away so off we go. We arrive at the holy grail and Barb goes in for a look around while I try and sort the Blog, bloody technology, Barb arrives back, luckily without any purchases and we set off again.

We have not been back on the M62 for very long before we see a sign for an "outlet village" as we have got hours to spare we go for a look around and hey guess what, it's Cheshire Oaks in Yorkshire. We get back to Gloria again without any purchases and set off again, we eventually arrive in Hull at about 5pm, as we have a couple of hours before we board we go in search of a Tesco to fill Gloria's go go tank as we have 4p a litre saving to use that will expire before we return, after a twenty minute detour we find the store and replenish Gloria's tank, and hey we saved 46p yippee. Oh, and so much for Silvia's 2 hours 20 minutes it took us just over 6 hours, now there's a shock.

Then we head back to the ferry terminal and board our ferry just after 6pm, again it's not really our ferry it belongs to P&O, we have an outside cabin, which is a tad bijou and compact it's a bit like being in Glo so we feel at home. The cabin is not really outside but it does have a window rather than being down in the cheap seats. After finding our cabin and unpacking our overnight stuff we set off to explore the vessel, and it's a proper big bugger with a number of bars, a cinema, night club, restaurants, there's a casino oops and later there is a cabaret, which I hope is better than the one in Llandudno.

We have found a bar and it's only £3.90 a pint! now the quandary is cabaret or casino, as the cabaret is free so that's going to be the winner. It's bed time, even though we are on one of the upper decks and in an outside cabin, however this boat must have the slowest revving engine in the world of marine engineering and the bentest screws, shafts, props, whatever they are called, going. You can feel every revolution of the engine god help the people in the central lower deck cabins, they must just get pissed, this could be a long light and not for the right reasons, roll on 7am.

24th April

We are awakened at 6.30am European time, by a bing bong through the ships PA system and then some happy chappy telling us that's 6.30 and breakfast is being served, it reminds me of Hidey Hi. We wander downstairs for breakfast and join a long queue of fellow campers, no cruisers no let's get it right passengers, and are finally shown to a table. After breakfast we collect our stuff from our bijou and compact cabin, then we make our way to the Skydeck that's P&O's posh name for the top deck to watch the ship being manoeuvred into its berth and may I just say what a very professional job they made of it.

We disembark (God that sounds painful) just after 9am, as we emerge from the bowels of the ship Sylvia starts giving her instructions, after using what seemed like every "A" road in Holland (bloody complicated route) we arrive at the campsite in less than 2 hours. We book in and are told that even though we are early we can go to our pitch straight away, I have to say it's a good job the staff can speak English as I am struggling with even the most basic words in Dutch. After getting yet another wiring attachment to plug Gloria into the mains (why is it every European country has to have a different connector, we are all in the bloody EU and not separated by any borders to speak of) anyway rant over, Gloria is set up, level and is on full power. Time for a cup of tea and a chill out in the sunshine for a bit,

After our chill out time it is time to mount our bicycles and head off to the train station and then into Amsterdam, it's a nice ride to the station through the wooded countryside in the warm afternoon sun, very pleasant. The trains run every 15 minutes so it's not long before we are on our way to the capital, and even less time before we are actually there. The station is in the heart of the city so you are immediately thrust into the hustle and bustle, there is a song that says something like "there's a million bicycles in Beijing" well I am not

sure how many there are here but I would not like to count them, they even have multi-storey bike parks.

As we walk through the streets there is a certain aroma in the air that you cannot get away from, does everyone here smoke whacky backy, well possibly not everyone but certainly lots do. We wander around taking in the sights and sounds of a vibrant free and easy city, and let me tell you there are some sights. After a couple of hours wandering around we stop for a sit down, ok yes it is in a bar but our feet are sore, after a couple of "just the one Mrs Wembley" we continue our tour of the city. Just after 7.30pm we board the train back to our bicycles and then to Gloria.

Then it's time for a beer, some food and an early night (been up since silly o'clock don't you know) so that's it for today of to the Kuekenhof (27 acres of tulip's) festival tomorrow so that has the makings of another foot and bum sore tiring day, yippee can't wait, more tomorrow folks sleep well.

25th April

It's another wet one today, it's raining I mean, due to the weather plans have changed and we are not going to the Kuekenhof today, we are going to have a chill out morning, Barb goes for a swim while I sort a few things out and get some bread. Here is a useful tip if you are going to Europe and using campsites, we have found that in most of the countries we have visited no matter how much you pay for a site you still have to pay for the showers. On this site you can use the Swimming pool, Gym, Sauna and the Solarium for Free but the showers are 50 cents, totally bizarre, that said for 50 cents four people could shower (if there was room) they go on for ever. After lunch we mount our trusty steeds (come to think of it they have not been named yet, will have to work on that) and head off to the train station. When we got the train yesterday it was fairly empty, today however as it is the weekend it is rammed full. This is not a good sign as we suspect that the city will be packed with people, you know the stupid ones that decide to stop in the middle of a crowded narrow street or in a doorway so that they can have a chat to their 6 or more mates.

We arrive in the city and as suspected it is extremely busy, we have tickets for a canal cruise (getting into this cruising lark), the Bols experience and the diamond museum, now there's a shock. The diamond museum is the furthest away at the far side of the city so we head off there first. When we arrive at the museum we hand in the tickets that we have purchased online via the magic of the tinternet and the lady behind the reception desk scrutinises the tickets and finally says that they are ok and we can enter, bloody happy sole

she was. Here is a travel tip if you travel to Amsterdam which is the very heart of the diamond business, save your money and do not buy a ticket or even bother going to the diamond museum, as how do I put it, oh I know it's shit, with a capital S and very disappointing. They need to go to Geneva and take some lessons for the utterly brilliant Patek Philippe museum, you have got to go it's fantastic. From the museum we go to Coster's diamond jewellers next door we are looking down into a display case when a very deep voice asks if we need any assistance, when we look up it's not a bloke it's a woman or is it a bloke with extra bits, and large bits at that, as the conversation goes on it becomes more obvious that it's a he-she, crocodile Dundee would have had his hand somewhere to double check but I did not want to be quite so forward. I have to say that as a major diamond jeweller their display was disappointing at best I would have sooner gone to Costa coffee.

Then it's onto the Bols experience, here our internet tickets are readily accepted and after the usual this is the way we distil bumf we get to the interesting bit the tasting section, our tickets include one cocktail and two shots of our choice, we start with the cocktails and then move onto the shots. When we have finished our cocktails I go back to the bar to order the shots, since we arrived there has been an influx of people and the queue is fairly long, the wait is not helped by the fact that the young lady serving the section I am waiting in seems to be new and has to keep looking at the recipe for the cocktail she is making, she has got a nice bum when she is shaking the cocktail shaker though, so it does make the wait worthwhile.

With a little bit of a stagger it's back into the outside world and onto the canal cruise, time is getting on and there is not much time left before they finish the daytime cruises and the queue is massiive so we decide to leave the cruise for another day. After some healthy eating (a bratwurst and a portion of Frits and Mayo from the fairground) we find an Irish bar for a libation and a sit down, after a couple of "Just the one Mrs Wembley" we make our way back to the station, we are still on the far side of town so it takes a while to weave our way through the throngs and the narrow streets.

When we get to the station there is a train on the platform but the doors are closed the lights are off and there is no one at home, there is an announcement on the PA system and on the visual displays, but it's all Dutch to me. After waiting for a while with some other would be passengers I head off in search of some information that we can understand. It turns out that there has been an accident, a train has hit someone further down the line and the line is closed, we have the choice of traveling on a number of difference trains to circumnavigate the accident or get one of the buses they have put on to take passengers to the various stations, we opt for the bus as this sounds

like the most direct route. We trek across to the ad hoc bus stop and find a couple of hundred people waiting, we join the queue and wait, two buses arrive obviously not sufficient for the amount of people waiting, we ask when the next buses will arrive but they do not know and suggest that it may be quicker going back to the station and catch the various trains required to get to our destination.

We trek back to the station and after catching a couple of different trains we arrive back at our original point of departure, next problem it's about 9.45pm and it's dark, now this would not normally be a problem however some smart arse namely me decided to remove the lights from the bikes and leave them in Glo so that they didn't get nicked, in my defence we had not intended in being out after dark. The initial part of the ride, about 2 minutes, was ok as there were some street lights but the next mile or so is through the woods and there ain't no lights in the woods, interesting ride to say the least. When we arrive back at Gloria the top is off the vin rouge quicker than a quick thing.

While we discuss our trip back to Glo my thoughts are with the person involved in the accident and I imagine that he or she will not have the luxury of being able to pour themselves a glass of vino, it's a sad life at times, we just had to put up with an interesting journey home. Well that's it for today folks let's see what happens tomorrow.

26th April

By the looks of the weather today's report may be a tad short, it's raining and we have no intentions of going out and getting soaking wet, so it's going to be a chill out day in Gloria, so I may have to pad it out a bit with some previous observations. Such as on our journey from the ferry terminal on the A20 we saw our first windmill and our first dyke and a big one it was too, I don't think I would have like to stick my finger in it if it started to leak.

After lunch and a fair bit of Internet and iPad messing about completed I mount my trusty steed and in true hunter provider style set off in search of the local shops to purchase some cow juice. When I arrive in the town there is only one shop open so it's that one or nowt, now purchasing milk, like a lot of other items is a bit of a lottery as I have no understanding of the Dutch language, I can usually work out what I am buying in most countries, yes sometimes it's by a process of limitation but the Dutch language has me somewhat foxed at the moment, hopefully I will catch onto it in the coming weeks. Anyway, I think I have purchased semi skimmed milk and start the return journey. The route takes me along canals, lakes and through the countryside, the lakes and canals are full of houseboats and the narrow lane

in the country are full of small houses, it's like living in an episode of "Tiny house nation" I get back to Gloria and in true hunter provider fashion display the fruits of my labour, well a carton of milk and to be honest it didn't put up much of a fight just €1.35.

Not much more to report really just a couple of G&T's, dinner and a bit of Dutch TV, oh and the hunter provider had to do the dishes, hopefully tomorrow will be a better news day. Oh, one thing we have done is to name our bikes Fred and Freda, mine is Freda and Barbs is Fred, so I will be mounting Freda and Barb will be mounting Fred on regular occasions. I better stop now so goodnight.

27th April

We awake to a beautiful morning, so we are off to the Keukenhof today while Barb makes some sandwiches and I ready our steeds for the journey ahead. It's not long before we have mounted Freda and Fred and are on our way to Haarlem for where we will catch a bus to our final destination. It is a bank holiday today and as we ride through different villages people are getting ready for the festivities later in the day to celebrate the Kings birthday.

Now this is the first time Barb has ever ridden before and it's also a long time since I have done any distance, after about 6k I get the impression that Barb is not too impressed with this cycling lark, and by the time we arrive at Haarlem station which is about 10k I am left in no doubt. Mrs Wembley is definitely unimpressed, and she is also not impressed that we will have to do the return journey to get back to Glo.

We find the first bus that we need, it is due to leave in about 5 minutes so we climb aboard and choose our seats, not to sure that Barb wants to sit down, and in a matter of minutes we are on our way. The digital information board tells us that the journey will take 1hr & 15 minutes, we did not think that it was that far to the Keukenhof but as the journey unfolds we find out why it is going to take so long. It's as if they have decided to have just one bus that travels down every street between Haarlem and the cookiehof, it's like a magical mystery tour, God knows how the driver remembers the route. Eventually we arrive at our stop where we will get onto another bus that will takes us to the gardens thankfully this trip only takes 10 minutes. This trip is turning out to be an adventure in itself.

In no time at all we have passed in our tickets and are into the gardens and it's time for a cup of coffee and peruse the map before we start. Ok so just 23 acres of gardens to walk around, don't worry I will not be reliving all 23 acres

with you, I will just say that there are some magnificent displays and let the photographs in the gallery do the talking, I bet your relieved about that. We meander around the gardens for about 6 hours, well that did include a beer and coffee stop, it is time to set off on the return journey. In about an hour and a half we arrive in Haarlem where the festivities are still going on, it is pretty wild and the streets are strewn with empty beer tins and bottles, it's a bit like Liverpool after the Beatles festival. We stay in town for a while to soak up the atmosphere and find an Irish bar for a quick libation, then we wind our way through the streets still full of well-oiled bodies wearing all sorts of orange items of clothing and wigs. We find our bicycles and with another moan from Barb, mount Fred and Freda for the journey back to Gloria. We arrive back at Glo at about 9.30pm after 20k on Fred and Freda and god knows how many more kilometres walking around the cookiehof and the town, we are not sure if it's our feet, legs or backs which hurt the most. Then to add insult to injury I read that Cavendish and the rest of them have just done a stage that was 189 miles, sod that with a capital S and get the top of that bottle of wine. That's about it for today it's an early night for us, more tomorrow.

28th April

When we awake it's not just raining there are large hail stones falling from the sky as well, not going anywhere in this weather so it's kettle on and breakfast, just after 11 the weather clears up, we mount Fred and Freda and head for the station to catch the train into hamsterjam. Just as our tickets are dispensed from the machine the train arrives, good timing or what. We had been wondering how wild the festivities had been in the Capital given that they had been very lively in Haarlam, which is a much smaller town. When we get off the train the place is a mess, empty alcohol containers of every shape and size, from tins, bottles to kegs litter the streets, the refuse disposal guys are struggling to get the place cleaned up. Boy it looks like these Dutch guys know how to party.

First stop is a canal cruise that we booked from home on the tinternet, the address on the ticket is the other side of town so we head off through the littered streets to the canal by Ann Frank's House there we board the boat for our cruise, second cruise of the holiday, definitely getting into this cruising lark. The cruise takes an hour and fifteen minutes and is very informative especially as the master of the vessel adds his own commentary to the pre-recorded one playing over the PA system. Cruise over its time for a sandwich and a coffee, before we hit the streets again.

After a couple of hours walking around looking at the sights and taking in the pungent smells that attack your senses, oh that will be the whacky backy, we stop for a while to sit and people watch. Then it time for something to eat, Mr Whelan has suggested a place "the cafe de Klos" which is about a twenty minute walk so off we go, more walking. When we get there the place is fairly busy but we get a table, the place is fairly rustic with all the food, meat or chicken being prepared on an open charcoal grill at the back of the restaurant. Barb has chicken and I have a rack of ribs and very good it was, it's difficult to say if the ribs are as good as mine but they give them a good run for the money.

It's time to set off back to Gloria so we the couple of k back to the station and catch the train waiting on platform 1, no one has been hit by another train tonight so we are back at our station in about 15 minutes, rather than the two hours it took the other day. We have been good so far on this trip and have actually purchased tickets for every journey rather than using the same ticket for a number of days as we have previously, but there was no need to. We mount Fred and Freda for the last time today and follow the cycle path through the woods and back to Gloria. As we are moving on tomorrow Fred and Freda are secured onto the rear of Gloria and I take the awning down so that we are ready for the off in the morning. Then there is just time to catch up with the blog before its bed time, so that's about it for today more tomorrow.

29th April

We are moving on today and are up early to finish packing stuff away into Gloria's various hidey holes, I go over for a shower only to find that the gents washrooms are being cleaned, now in my mind 8am ain't a sensible time to be cleaning the facilities, but hey when in Rome, well Holland. I return about 30 minutes later and they are still being cleaned when I ask how long the lady says oh a while but just use the female facilities, simples problem solved. Not too sure what would happen a Caravan Club site if the guys started using the ladies facilities, we would most probably hear the screams from here, and you would be reported to the committee, taken outside and flogged at the very least. Are we Brits narrow minded or what.

We are having a return trip to the Keukenhof but rather than messing about with the bus that goes everywhere trip we are going to drive there in Gloria and rather than the two and half hours it took the other day, we are there in 30 minutes. It's much the same as the last visit, lots of flowers, so when I can eventually get a decent internet connection I will upload the pictures and let

them tell the story. We leave the Keukenhof in the afternoon and head off North, with a little detour so that Jules and Verne can continue their world tour of motor racing circuits by visiting the old GP circuit of Zandvoort, there is nothing happening at the track so after a quick photo we set off, we travel a couple of hours up the coast to Julianadorp and find a campsite for the night.

The site is between the sand dunes and the bulb fields, it's pouring with rain and blowing a gale so we are not venturing out of Gloria, time for a bit of route planning and blogging before bed, more tomorrow folks and hopefully I will be able to upload some pictures.

30th April

We are up early this morning as the carfest tickets go on sale at 8am and we need a motorhome pass for Gloria, ok so we are not up that early as 8am UK time is 9am with us. Anyway, I am ready to purchase a ticket as soon as they go on sale, I press the button as the clock strikes eighty or nine depending where you are. Guess what "this site is experiencing high demand and you are in a queue" and guess what again, by the time I get connected Al the camper van tickets have gone. I now have two options to get Gloria into Oulton park for this year's Carfest, option 1, phone my buddy Luci and see if she pull some strings and get me a ticket, or option 2, blag our way in with the ticket I have from the original Carfest in 2012, which we have already used twice. Barb has said she is not going if I opt for option 2, Luci you better come up trumps or I have a problem.

We are on the road just after 10am, we are heading for Bremen which Sylvia has informed us is a trip that should take under 4 hours, but we know that means bugger all, our first detour is to drive through the tulip fields, well not the actual fields a road that went through the fields. There are thousands of tulips in all colours and they do look magnificent, next we visit what we think is going to be one of the tulip growers shop, but it turns out to be more of a garden centre. Then we find a tulip growers shop and Barb purchases a bunch of beautiful red tulips for us to have as a display on Gloria's dinner table. After a quick trip around the town centre and a stop for fresh bread and stuff for lunch it is time to get onto the main road and get some miles done.

After a couple of hours we turn off the motorway to go the services to stop for lunch, the services are not actually on the motorway, they are half a mile off the motorway and this is where we take our second detour, this one was not planned as some twit "me" took the wrong lane and ended up on another motorway going the wrong way after 5k one way and then 5k back we pull into the services for our lunch. After our sandwiches, a cup of tea and a slice of cake while watching a guy expertly dig a hole with a brand new digger it's

Bremen here we come, this time getting in the correct lane for the roundabout. At 3pm we cross the border into Germany, well I say border it was a sign at the side of the road that we passed at about 100kph, oh how times have changed.

We arrive at the campsite just outside Bremen at 5pm and soon have Gloria level and plugged into the mains, now for a few days we have had a little problem with Gloria, her back door has stopped working with the remote locking, this morning I found a broken wire at the bottom of the door so we made another stop today at the B&Q of Holland and purchased some wire and connectors to repair the problem. While Barb prepares dinner, I attempt to repair the wiring fault, which would have been a simple job if there had been enough wire protruding from the door, which there wasn't so the next step is to remove the inner trim of the rear door, as with all these quick jobs this is turning into a mammoth task and is not one to be carried out in a field with a Swiss Army knife. So, in true FIAT form, Fix, It, Again, Tomorrow, I put the bits back together and revert to the good old days and use the key.

Then it's time for dinner, followed by a bit of blogging, some TV in German and then to bed ready for our trip tomorrow which will take us North East to Hamburg and then North up into Denmark and our night stop destination, Kolding after that our route takes us to Odense and then the apparently stunning bridge, I am looking forward to that, more tomorrow folks when we get an internet connection, until then bfn.

1st May

Gloria is ready for the off at about 9.15am the campsite destination has been entered into Sylvia and she is shouting out her instructions even before we move off from our pitch. Flight checks completed, well is the aerial down, items secured, roof vents closed and stuff like that we are ready to go. First stop is to the fuel station to replenish Gloria's thirst, she is not doing bad and is averaging 30mpg, then it's onto the supermarket to gather some milk and a couple of other bits. There is a large shopping complex not far from the campsite, however when we get there everything is closed, after a couple of minutes I realise that it is May Day and in Germany everything closes on a bank holiday, and I do mean everything, even IKEA is closed.

We follow Sylvia's instructions and head off along the E22 towards Hamburg on a trip that should see us arrive at the campsite just outside Kolding in

about 4 hours, yes I know we have heard that before. The trip to Hamburg takes about an hour and then we head North onto the N7. When we do so Sylvia reminds us of our trip in Oz when we joined the Stewart highway which went on for ever, by saying "continue on this road for 240k and then turn left". To relieve the boredom, we play a couple of games first one, how long can you keep a midget gem in your mouth for, Barb managed a woeful 7 minutes and I declared at 20 minutes, thanks to Jane for supplying the midget gems. Second was to tell each other what we know about Denmark and what Danish names we knew, Barb scored zero, and I did not do much better but I did know, Lurpak, Carlsberg and that they are fairly good with bacon. That's fairly bad considering you are visiting a country, and all you know is bacon butties and beer, mind you thinking about it what's wrong with that.

I have set Gloria's warp drive (cruise control) to 90kph she is happy going faster but it buggers up the fuel consumption, Sylvia's display shows no speed limit but there are signs saying 120kph. The rest of the drivers are using the same book as Sylvia and everything that goes past us must be doing double our speed which is easy for the big Mercedes E class's and Beemer's with proper bid engines not the piddling little one we have, but we are passed by a knackered looking Fiat Panda which must be at its terminal speed and did not look at all safe. A Mercedes SLR goes past at a hell of a rate of knots and was only beaten by a guy on a motorbike that must have been going close to I suspect it's flat out speed somewhere around 180MPH, he went passed us like we were stopped.

Further up the N7 we cross the border into Denmark, another unremarkable experience with just a sign saying hi guys welcome to Denmark, of course it doesn't, what you do notice immediately is the drop in speed the signs say 120kph and everyone is doing 120k or less. We continue on and arrive at the campsite which is number 69 in the ACSI campsite guide, we could have stayed at number 68 a bit further down the road but I quite fancied number 69, childish I know but it makes me laugh. On the subject of laughing one thing that makes me giggle every time I see it on the German motorways is the exit sign which in German is Ausfahrt, yes I know childish but it makes me laugh, small boys and all that.

After a slight detour down some farm tracks we arrive at the campsite just after 4pm only 2 hours over the estimated journey time but we did stop for lunch and a cup of tea, so not bad for us. We go into reception and hand in my ACSI membership card and the lady asks if I have some other card, I say no, I have got a Caravan Club card or even a Camping and Caravanning club card, sad sod, but I did not think they would be of much use. She tells me that

we will need one of these whatever they are called cards if we are traveling around Denmark so it looks like we have joined another club and we will get the card in the morning when we settle our bill.

It's a nice site close to the sea and with its own heated outdoor swimming pool, well it is heated but not until the middle of May, so we won't be venturing in there. Gloria is soon set up with no levelling required and connect to the mains with yet another different patch cable, this one has a digital read out showing how much power you have used, extra blankets tonight Barb, you're not having the heating on, squeak, squeak. When Gloria is settled we head off for a walk along the beach and then a quick look around the site to find the closet you know what. Then is back to Gloria for a proper cooked meal, of chicken and chorizo risotto made by my own fair hand. No TV tonight I have tried pointing the aerial in all directions but only get sound and no vision, and the sound is in Danish so that's not much use to us.

So we chat about the ease of border crossings in Europe, and contemplate whether we will find it so easy crossing borders we will need to cross if we embark on the trip we have been thinking about, and we come to the conclusion that no, those borders may require a bit more than passing a sign at 90kph, more work required on that one. There is time for some blogging and then some Danish homework and trip planning, blog done trip planning to be done now so bfn more tomorrow.

2nd May

Today we are heading off towards Wonderful Wonderful Copenhagen not too sure if we are going to stop on route just depends if we find anywhere we like, so with all the gear stowed and Gloria's fresh water tank topped up and her waste tank emptied we settle our bill and depart the site. Barb has decided that we are not going on the motorway and instead we are on the minor roads so that we can see some of the country. Now Sylvia did take us down somewhat can only be described as farm tracks yesterday so we do ignore a couple of her instructions and eventually find ourselves on a form of sensible road.

So, what did we see on our tour of the countryside, well we saw some windy roads, some fields, a lake some villages, one of which lured us in as the Main Street was coned off and it look like there was a market going on. So, we stopped in the interest of obtaining some local culture, when we walk into the village it turned out not to be a market, but just that the local shops had put their end of line tat out in the street in an effort to get shut of it. We left and

carried on down some more windy roads, we have not managed to find anywhere interesting to stay so we have decided to press all the way to Copenhagen. This means that we will be traveling over the bridge today now dear readers I have misled you a bit when I called it the Nyborg bridge, the start of the bridge is a town called Nyborg but it is actually called the Storebaelt Bridge.

We leave the country roads and join the E20 which goes all the way, to Copenhagen, after about an hour we arrive at the Storebaelt bridge before we cross it we stop for lunch and a nice cup of tea, I climb to the top of some stairs hoping to get a better view of the bridge but the 86 steps up and back down gave me no more than a view of the road. After lunch we set off over the bridge all 18 kilometres of it, and it is a fantastic piece of engineering if the amazing engineer I.K. Brunel could see it he would be extremely impressed. When we arrive at the end of the bridge and the toll booths Barb hands over the 235DK charges the gentleman in the booth says sorry the charge is 360DK as you have a bike rack on the back and it has taken you to the next length charges. So here is a tip if you are traveling over the bridge with bikes remove them from the rack and put them inside the van and save yourself the princely sum of thirteen quid.

Then we head for the campsite which is one of the closest to WWC but it's still about 25k outside the city, we arrive and book in, again the receptionist speaks perfect English and we are soon on our pitch, I get Gloria level and powered up while Barb puts our laundry in the washing machine, no we have not brought one with us, there is one at the site. Then it's time to chill out for a bit, have our dinner, write the blog and watch some French TV as it's the only thing we can get as I can't be bothered setting up the sat dish. Into Copenhagen tomorrow so should be more to report and photographs to upload if we can get a decent internet connection, night all more tomorrow.

3rd May

We set off from the campsite just after 9am for our trip into Copenhagen, we have been told that the train station is a ten minute walk and we have been given a map which takes us along some minor roads as you are not allowed to walk along the main roads to the station. First task purchase a ticket, after some research yesterday we have found that we can get a day ticket that we can use on all the different forms of public transport, trains, buses and boats for 130DK. As it is Sunday there is not a lot open at the station and after a bit of searching we enter our requirements into a ticket machine, which after

letting us go through all of the options, said unable to issue tickets at this time. The guy at the small shop tells us that we can get a ticket from the 7/11 around the corner so off we trot, with tickets purchased we set off to find the correct platform.

Once aboard the train we settle down for the journey which takes about 25 minutes and then we arrive to Copenhagen central, one of the city maps we have been given has a walking tour, which covers the majority of places of interest and takes about three hours, once we have our bearings we set off following the instructions on the map. As it is Sunday most of the shops are closed but there are lots of coffee shops open and that is where the majority of people are, at the outside tables drinking coffee chatting and watching the world go by. We follow the route to Nyhavn which is a small harbour and is where Hans Christian Anderson once lived, now he could tell a story, we stop for a coffee and sit down in the sunshine. As luck would have it there are some classic cars driving past, so camera out and pictures to be taken of the selection of beautiful cars, including a 1912 Packard, a lovely Aston Martin DB3 and a delightful little convertible which is as yet of unknown origin so I will need some help when the pictures are on line. Oh, and an Austin Princess in crap brown metallic who on earth thinks that this brown thing should be in the same company as these other cars which are in fact more than cars they are pieces of automotive art.

From there we head off towards the statue of the "Little Mermaid" after a photographic opportunity with LM we continue along our designated route, and we find more classic cars, it turns out that today is the Copenhagen Classic Car Grand Prix, what a result shops are shut and classic cars galore, more photographs to be taken. As we continue on our route we keep finding more and more cars, it turns out that this is no owners day out but a full blown event. We continue our route which as luck would have it is the same route the cars are using, we arrive at a large square which turns out to be where the event is using as a rest stop and display area for the cars. There are a few cars parked up and then the size of the event unfolds as a never ending procession of beautiful cars, including the Princess, now this is a classic car event does this mean that the princess is what the younger generation have look forward to seeing as classics, god help them. The cars continue to queue to enter the square, when I say this is a big event, I do mean big, the Army are there overseeing the parking of the cars, well I guess it's the Army reserves.

By the time all the cars have arrived there must be close to two hundred beautiful and expensive objects of motoring desire, oh and the Princess parked on display. I am torn to pick my favourite, between the Aston, some

1950's Mercedes SL's, the Packard and really lovely Mercedes 220 which is such a beautiful car I find the owners and congratulate them on owning such a lovely thing, and they tell me that they love and cherish the car, which is great. When we can get an Internet connection I will bore you all ridged with photographs. There was also a great little white convertible which I will need some help identifying as we only saw it earlier in the day and could not find it again at the display area.

There is also some form of war related memorial service going on as there are lots of ageing soldiers walking around displaying their medals with pride, and so they should they gave a lot for us and we should never forget. We then head back towards the city centre and find a bar for a sit down and a well-deserved libation after our what turned out to be a 5 hour walk around WWC. We are staying in town for our dinner and have found a Danish smorgasbord restaurant, that's like a posh name for all you can eat, Jules and Verne are with us and have to get in on the act by having their photograph taken at the dinner table. The waitress looks at me a tad disturbed so I explain about J&V's Facebook page and we get into a conversation about them as her friend has a toy that has its own Facebook page, see there are more lunatics around than me.

After dinner we head back to the station and start the search for the train to take us back to the campsite well not the campsite but the station closest to it. On the walk back to the campsite from the station we come across one of the old soldiers we had seen earlier in the city, this one had most obviously been celebrating with his mates and was somewhat worse for wear and was taking one step forward and three back. We asked if he could do with a hand getting home and after asking where we were from and some other stuff we took an arm each and escorted him home, it was the least we could do and he was most appreciative, bet he had a bad head this morning.

When we get back to Gloria there was just time to catch up with the blog and each some French TV before it was time for bed, we will be head back to Germany tomorrow so more, then night all.

4th May

We set off from the site at about 10.30am and we are heading South from WWC towards the ferry which will take us over to Puttgarden in Germany it's about a 2 hour drive and there is not a great deal to report about the trip, apart from there are some major road works going on which was made more apparent when we saw a road sign that said "work started April 2013 completion expected October 2017, now that's a big job.

We arrive at the ferry terminal and when we get to the pay booth the lady asks Gloria's dimensions, now we had thought about removing Fred and Freda just in case the price went up, however when I said the Gloria was 5.9 meters long, Barb piped up, "that's including the bikes" which it's not but she said that's ok then as the price changes at 6 meters, well done Barb for being so convincing. We board the ferry which dear readers is the 3rd cruise of our trip so we really are getting into this cruising lark. This one was like getting on a bus no sooner had we paid, we were on board park up and then we were sailing in a matter of minutes, we did not even get time to drink the cup of tea that Barb had made.

The cruise only lasts for 45 minutes mind you the do 45 crossings a day, busy little route, this time crossing the border back into Germany was even less of an event as it happened at sea and there ain't no signs out there. After we disembark we stop for a quick sandwich and then it's onto the campsite which is about 30 minutes from Hamburg and a 2 hour drive from Puttgarden. We arrive at the site at 5.30pm, we are soon booked in and on our pitch with the deck chairs out so that we can chill out in the sun. We go for a walk along the river bank and sit hand in hand to watch the setting sun. After our walk we return to Gloria and have cheese and biscuits with a glass of vin rouge on the patio, before we give in and climb inside Gloria to get warm. Then it's time to catch up with the blog and then I may try and get a TV signal, I will let you know if I am successful tomorrow, we'll get a TV station that is, good night one and all more tomorrow.

5th May

Only a short one today, it has been raining all night but this morning we have beautiful sunshine, we have decided to stay here for another night and go into Hamburg today for a look around. After breakfast we wander to reception and book in for another night, while we are there we try and use the Internet which is absolutely hopeless and cost €4, I can't believe the Internet in this country its, well how do I put it, oh I know it's crap. So, we give up and return to Gloria and then heavens open and it pours down. We are not going to walk around a city in the pouring rain so the trip to Hamburg is off for the time being at least.

After an hour the rain stops and the sun comes out and boy does it shine, it is hot very hot we sit on the patio and soak up the sunshine and undecided whether to make the trip into the city. While we pontificate, the black storm clouds gather overhead along with thunder and lightning, the trip to the city is not going to happen and we retreat into Gloria for shelter. This saga continues for most of the afternoon, sun then rain, sun then rain so we ain't

going anywhere. The rest of the day is spent reading and things like that while watching the lightening light up the sky and listening to the roaring thunder.

So now you know why it is only a short report today, oh one thing more to mention you may be pleased that you are not with us today, as due to the sun The Hawk donned his Steve Irwin's (Oz shorts) and had his legs on display, so count yourself lucky you missed that, hopefully we will be able to give you more interesting news tomorrow, until then sleep well.

6th May

After breakfast, Gloria is readied for departure, all items stowed away, all hatches closed and locked and mains supply disconnected. Hamburg here we come, we stop to pay our bill and while doing so find that the public transport strike is still on and the park and rides may not be operating. Given that there is little to no public transport running, everyone thinks that the city will be jammed packed with cars, that's Hamburg off the agenda then.

Barb sets a new destination into Sylvia and off we go heading the Bremen, we have no joy with wifi so plan to find a big M and use theirs, we pass a few on the motorway but some smart arse says that we will leave it until we get to Bremen, and boy do I regret it. We arrive in Bremen and after another drive around decide that as we cannot find anywhere central to park Gloria we ain't stopping, and continue our search for a Maccy D with no joy. We do find a burger king and eventually find our way into the car park, we go inside and guess what no wifi. Barb talks to Sylvia who tells us there is a Maccy D 7 minutes away, so off we go.

What Sylvia had not told us that this Maccy D was not a standalone gaff but was actually inside a shopping complex, we park Gloria and head into the shopping mall find the Big M and log on. We need to decide which ferry route we are using for our return trip, Holland / Harwich or Calais / Dover as the crossing from Holland is 100 quid more expensive when all things are taken into account, the French have won, now we have a rough idea of our return route. Next it's time to escape from Bremen we pull onto the main road out of town and after 200 metres come to a complete stop, parked up in a traffic jam and no way out. After covering about 4 kilometres at a snail's stop and start pace, we are through what turns out to be one lane closure while they repair the central barrier.

We are now a good way behind schedule, nothing new there then, so we need to rethink our stop off for tonight, Barb checks out sites and finds one outside Osnabruck which should take us about an hour and a half with an arrival time of 4.30pm, this is good as it gives us time to unwind after what has been a bit of a frustrating day. Sylvia guides us to the site with pinpoint accuracy, they have a special one night stop off park which only costs 10 euro and you can use all of the main camps facilities, now that's a result we will have some of that.

Gloria is soon set up, level and plugged in, well I say plugged in when I switch Gloria over to mains power the reversed polarity warning light is on, now as they use the same mains connector as we do in the UK this is a slight problem which can be overcome by adding a French patch lead and by trying the two pin plug in both ways you can sort it out. Before I go and get the lead from the locker I try the connector in one of the other sockets and low and behold hey presto this one has the correct polarity. What is it with electricity over here how come it does not matter which way a plug or a socket is wired, if we wired a socket wired the wrong way around it would not pass any kind of testing, is electricity different over here or am I missing something?

If you understand that your better than me, anyway after dinner and g and t in a crystal cut glass, it's time for blog writing some reading and then to bed, more tomorrow folks, bet you can't wait.

7th May

It's the elections back in the UK and we wonder what the state of the nation will be tomorrow will the lunatics take over the asylum or are they already there, I am sorry to say that today's report will not be one to keep you on the edge of your seat as yet again we change our plans and do not get into the major city we had been planning to tell you about. Let me tell you more, we set off from the cheap and cheerful site with Sylvia set for a route to Rotterdam which she tells us is just over three and a half hours away.

We join the madness of the A1 motorway where I have to say some of the overtaking manoeuvres and tailgating would be described as reckless at best in a BTCC race. About an hour after leaving we have another effortless border crossing, passing a sign at the side of the road at 90kph and now we are back in the land of the clogs. For a change we meet Sylvia's demands and arrive at the next campsite within the timescale she had given us.

The plan is to book in, get our pitch and then drive into Rotterdam but after we book in and are shown to our pitch by a very helpful chap, it is a good job we were shown to our pitch as this site is more like a small estate we are on pitch 524 and that's not the highest number on the site. After we are at pitch and have been given all of the instructions about the site we decide to leave Rotterdam for another day and instead chill out and enjoy the sunshine while we can. After lunch in the sunshine we chill out for a while and then go and check out the two bars that are on the site before returning to Gloria for a bite to eat.

I do not want you to get too excited but we should have more to report tomorrow as we are going to visit the town of Gouda which apart from being famous for its cheese (by the way I am getting fed up of cheese and ham sandwiches) also has the longest Cathedral in Holland at 123 meters in length, it also apparently has some magnificent stained glass windows, all 72 of them dating back to the 16th century. Don't say that you are not given some fascinating information while reading the rest of this drivel, from there we plan to go to Rotterdam (good song by the Beautiful South) not sure yet if that is going to be tomorrow or Saturday, you will find out not long after us.

That's it for today more tomorrow I know you can't wait, bfn.

8th May

We are up early this morning, showered, breakfasted and after emptying Gloria's tanks are on the road by 9am, we are heading into Gouda and the journey takes us less than half an hour to arrive at the motorhome car park. When we arrive, we find that we could have stayed at this city centre car park overnight, which is a shame as we could have had a night on the town. Oh well never mind we park Gloria and our original idea was to mount Fred and Freda and cycle into town, however as the town is so close we walk into town and Fred and Freda will have to wait another day to be mounted.

Gouda is a quaint town and we stroll around looking at the buildings and the shops, we pop into one of the cheese shops to taste the produce, full of cheese we leave as does everyone else. Some of the buildings are ancient, as one can tell by the dates on the wall. I mentioned to Barb that any Americans

visiting would think it was a time not a year etched into the building, as they cannot comprehend 1327 as a year. We stop for coffee and cake and to use the Internet, however slow it is, and then we head back to Gloria.

We depart the lovely town and head for the big city Rotterdam which is only 30 minutes away well it would have been if numpty nuts had followed Sylvia's directions correctly instead of taking the wrong turn and taking us on a 10k detour. This is the third time I have failed to do as Sylvia has told me and I am in danger of being taken outside and whipped, not sure whether to do it on purpose tomorrow, that must be after reading "50 Shades of Grey". We arrive at Rotterdam and it is a bustling metropolis with lots of sex shops and a certain aroma in the air, Gloria is not at her best in busy streets with silly junctions and lots of traffic and after driving around for a while unable to find anywhere to park Gloria we give up and head out of Rotterdam for the countryside we are all more at home.

Barb has tasked Sylvia to take us to a campsite on the coast just under 2 hours away and off we go, this journey is slow process as there are roundabouts every 2 to 3 kilometre which with Gloria means by the time you get into top gear you need to be applying the brakes. The roundabouts are also traffic calming as it is impossible to go around the at anything over 20kmh. It feels like we have made more gear changes on this leg of the journey than we have on the rest of it in total. After a little detour we arrive at the site and book in, this is another big site not as big as yesterday's but still big, as we drive round to our pitch we notice we are definitely in the minority as everyone else on the site is Dutch and as we drive round we get looks from fellow campers as if we are from Mars, I think we found one other none Dutch vehicle and that was German.

We set Gloria level and plug her into mains power, it is now early evening and we head for a walk towards the beach on route, it starts to rain so it's time to get back to Gloria and prepare dinner. Any blog updates or Internet usage is not happening here as Internet charges here are €10 a day. If we had been in any one country for long enough I would have purchased a data card but as we have been country hopping it has not been an option, also out in the countryside there is no 3G availability anyway. That means you will have to wait with bated breath for the next instalment.

After dinner we attempt to watch some TV but nothing on in English tonight, we do find an episode of desperate housewives and Eva Longoria looks good in any language, so I just turn the sound down. It's then blog composing and then some reading before its lights out, more tomorrow guys bfn.

9th May

It blew a proper gale last night with Gloria given a good rockin in the wind, we are up and at em early this morning and on route to yet another country, Belgium and the city of Brugge this is another 2 hour trip on roundabout infested roads, mind you we are out in the sticks. We arrive in Brugge and then play hunt the car park, when we find a suitable space for Gloria we are not sure if it's free or we need to pay, Barb sees a traffic warden and is told that we can park for free and it's a five to ten minute walk into town, right result.

The weather is not sure what to do, one minute sun next minute rain so we put wet coats in to our back packs, well there not really wet but you know what I mean, and head off into town, the early morning flower market stalls are just starting to pack their unsold stock away and there are some beautiful verities available, it's a shame in one respect that we are not on our way home or purchases would have been made. These would have added to the Dendrobium apollon orchid which Barb purchased the other day from a garden centre and Charlie the chilli plant that brought with me, sad I know but I would have missed him growing up had I left him at home with the others, and you can't beat a good chilli.

Brugge is a beautiful city with some stunning buildings, we stroll around taking in the sights and sounds of the city, by mid-afternoon the city is really busy and the shops and restaurants are doing a roaring trade. We stop off for some lunch at an Italian restaurant, which was a bit of a disappointment but hey let's not dwell on that and look at the positives, lovely city and sunshine well with intermittent rain. We saw some scooters, motorised ones, in a shop that we thought would look good on the back of Gloria, and on our way back to the car park we go back to the shop but luckily enough it's is now closed.

We get back to Gloria and head off out of town, it's getting on a bit so tonight finds us parked for free on a motorway service area, along with lots of wagons, vans and at the time of writing one other camper van. So long as none of the wagon drivers come knocking with any silly masks it should be ok. Hopefully there will be more tomorrow but for now that's about it, goodnight all, bfn.

10th May

We awake unscathed and have had no visitors during the night wearing masks offering dog walking exercises, it is early I have to say, especially by our standards. 7am sees us up and having a cup of coffee, the showers at the services cost €2.50 and last night Barb was all up for making the two bucks fifty clean both of us, but in the cold light of day I shower alone. In true hunter provider form in return from the shower with a pan o chocolate and Danish pastries, after coffee and pastries we set of for, Ypres, Leper, Eypres, Eyeeps, Lepee, no matter which we spell it Sylvia says no, even if Churchill said that this town will always be a part of GB, Sylvia can't find it, so we put in the closest point and set off.

Just over an hour sees us in the town and we know because we have stayed there before that there is a motorhome park ten minute's walk of the town centre. However finding it is a different matter, eventually we find the site but there is a notice on the barrier saying full, bugger, Barbs says that she we will go and check just in case, and returns to Gloria with the good news that they do actually have a space, I return to the reception with the necessary details and we are booked in on site a3. In no time at all Gloria is on the pitch level, well nearly, and wired for power.

Within twenty minutes of our arrival we are ready to set off into town as we get to the end of the path there are a number of floats starting to park up, looks like there is going to be some sort of procession going out on today. When we arrive at the town centre it is obvious that this is not going to be a small event but in fact is going to be a full blown job, as there is a massive grandstand seating set up in the middle of the square. We go into the information centre to us the free wifi that we know is available from previous visits, while we are there Barb asks one of the members of staff what is happening today. Indignantly she says it is the Cat parade that they have every three years, oops pardon me for not knowing, but isn't this is the information centre after all.

The pussy parade is due to start at 3pm and is followed at 5pm by pussy throwing and at 6pm Witch burning, I can't wait, the town is now starting to fill up with people and there are chairs lined up at the side of the road all along the route. We wander around and walk up to the Menin Gate which always makes we realise what so many brave young men gave for us, it is a very moving. The pavements are now crammed with people waiting eagerly with anticipation for the start of the pussy parade, we decide that a good place to watch the parade from is the Eypres bar which looks out at the Menin Gate. We get a seat by the window as the parade starts to go by, the first part of the parade is just, wagons and vans which we presume are sponsors of the event and are getting my some advertising, however what some of them will get out of it I don't know but I suppose if you are local you have to be seen to be in it.

Then it is the turn of the floats intermingled with bands, people on stilts, fire eaters, flag throwers and the like, the floats pass by, each of them with people throwing sweets and things into the crowds which eagerly gather them from the floor. The parade continues with all forms of pussy cats displayed culminating with a float with two massive cats on it, I have to say that the Giants parade in our home town knocked spots of this parade, that said we don't have a witch burning. As the parade finishes and people start to drift away we head for an Italian restaurant that we have been to before for dinner. Then it is back to the Menin Gate to watch the Last Post played which is done every day at 8pm, this evening due to the parade there are lots of people gathered in silence while the bugle plays the Last Post, paying their respects to the brave heroes who gave so much and should never be forgotten, very moving and tearful.

Then it's back to Gloria for some blog writing, some reading and an early night, we are heading for Dunkirk tomorrow, so yet another border to cross, until then bfn.

11th May

We set off towards Dunkirk which by all accounts is an hour away, before we cross the border into France we need to top up Gloria's go go tank and while we are at it find somewhere to give her a wash as she is looking decidedly mucky and strewn with dead flies back bums. Now car washes have been few and far between on our journey but we find a fuel station with a jet wash just outside of town. We top up Gloria's tank for €1.17 per litre, at the exchange rate we got that's about 87p in English money, someone is having a laugh with fuel prices in the UK. Then it's time for Gloria's bath, Barb goes to have a look at the shop next door while I struggle with the operating instructions, which are in Flemish, not a jar of glue, until I ask the guy in the next bay who explains which buttons to press and in which order. Barb returns and Gloria is a lot cleaner than she was but her bonnet still bears the remains of flies from 5 countries and I think I will have to get the cut and polish out when we get home.

Then is on towards Dunkirk, it's not long before we have another uneventful border crossing and we are now in the land of the garlic munchers, we arrive be in Dunkirk have a look around and then head to Macky dee's to use the free wifi and book our ferry crossing, the wifi may be free but it is still painfully slow it's like being on a dialup modem, if you can remember them. Then it's onto the Auchan hypermarket as we need a couple of provisions and may even buy a bottle of vino, the Auchan is massive and you can purchase just about anything you require, unless that is fresh milk, no sign of that anywhere.

After loading our provisions into Gloria, we head off in search of a campsite, now we could park up at the docks for free but I fancy a proper site, Sylvia tells us that there is a site 12k away so off we go. We arrive and book in, and you can immediately tell you are back in France gone are the multilingual receptionists speaking perfect English that we have encountered on our travels further north here it is French or F off. Not to worry I can cope with allo allo le camping car une nuit du person, we pay up princely sum of 12 euro, so cheap enough, and head off to our pitch.

Gloria is level enough for one night and is soon plugged into the mains however we are back to that old reversed polarity lark so a couple more connectors are required from the locker, soon sorted and all powered up. It is a beautiful day so the chairs are out and we sit in the sunshine with a cup of tea. We have done some washing and have a washing line set up between the trees, it's a good job we are not on a Caravan Club site or we would be up in front of the committee on a charge of lowering the tone. Another English van pulls onto the pitch opposite us, so we say allo sorry hello, it turns out that they have four dogs and two parrots with them, bet it smells nice in there. While they take the dogs for a walk I have a whistling conversation with the parrots, it is mildly amusing, but four dogs and two parrots, I ask you, is that normally what you would take on holiday.

Barb has paid a visit to the washrooms and is not too impressed, communal facilities with urinals directly on display, no loo seats, it's not that there missing they just don't have them, what is it with the French and toilets. After dinner we go for a walk to the beach on the way we pass a war bunker and when we get to the beach which is massive, you remember that just over 70 years ago men and boys gave their lives on beaches like this, it is a chilling thought. We return to Gloria who at the moment is looking like a Chinese laundry with the heating on and directed into to bathroom. Then it's time to catch up with the blog and then relax for a bit before it's bo bo time, goodnight all bfn.

Epilogue or the end bit

Well I bet you are wondering where we have been as we have not posted anything for a few days, well we arrived back in good old Blighty on Tuesday afternoon via a ferry from Dunkirk to Dover. The ferry crossing was good value at £46 in total, it was a smooth crossing that lasted 2 hours this I think was the 5th cruise on our trip, which must make us seasoned cruisers, on the other hand I don't think that if you added them all together it would have been a full day at sea or even on water.

After we disembarked we went in search of a fish and chip for lunch, after lunch we set Sylvia the task of navigating us to Braintree to see Ann and Hannah. This route took us down some exceedingly narrow country lanes, and after covering over 1700 uneventful miles in Europe some stupid English twit decided he or she wanted both sides of the road. Gloria takes evasive action and avoids the full frontal which would have happened otherwise. Unfortunately there was a whopping Big Bang from the passenger side as it brushed through the bushes, the Big Bang was the door mirror connecting with what we suspect was a big branch, and then the mirror propelled itself through the near side quarter glass, showering Barb and the rest of Gloria's interior with fragments of broken glass, and a funny smell.

After the screams and the uttering's of "oh flip" and things like that, we found a wider section of road in which to pull up and assess the damage, ok so obviously one broken window, mirror glass hanging off and a couple of dings in Gloria's bodywork. After refitting the mirror glass, brushing the thousands of pieces of broken glass from Gloria's interior, taping up the void where the glass once was with good old tank tape, all obviously accompanied by some fairly strong expletives, we set off towards Braintree. The journey is made more interesting as I now have no view of the passengers mirror, this makes pulling in after overtaking a very interesting manoeuvre.

We arrive at Annie's late on in the afternoon, Ann and Hannah get back about an hour later, they have been shopping for some new walking boots for Hannah's latest adventure, she is off to Africa on Friday for a month (on her own) the brave girl. We spend a lovely few days with the Grice Girls and leave them on Friday morning setting off to Jennie and Antony's while Hannah sets off later in the day for Heathrow and a tad further, we hope she has a wonderful time and wish her safe travels.

Next on our list of destinations is St Neots and after a couple of stops we arrive at the Moore's residence at about 4pm, this journey was not hampered by lack of vision through the passenger mirror, as the double A man arrived on Thursday morning and replaced the broken quarter glass with a brand new one piece item. It was great to see Jennie and Antony and we had a great weekend with a BBQ on Saturday, we stayed in Gloria on Saturday night parked up outside the house like a pair of Pikies, with Glo plugged into the closet free electricity supply, Jennie and Ant's garage. As we are back to family time that's it for this trip until next time, safe and happy travels.