

We are soon to depart on a trip that we had planned a few years ago but a month before we were due to depart, Covid arrived and put a stop on our and everyone's travels for a couple of years. Now we can finally set off on our Norwegian adventure and hopefully if you join us, we will try to be informative while bringing a smile to your face. If you have read any of our previous blogs you will know that we don't go for a lot of the planning lark and this one isn't much different although we have booked the first two of ferries of the journey. First one will take us from Harwich to Holland and then we have given ourselves 10 days to travel through Holland and then to Denmark's northern tip to catch the next ferry to Norway. Then we are in wing it mode, we get off the ferry turn left and head for the coast when we get there we turn right and head north for lots of miles, using lots of bridges, tunnels and ferries. Our aim is to get to Skarsvag the northern tip of Norway and the Arctic circle, we will have to wait and see if we manage to get that far north, we do know that we will get to the Arctic Circle and beyond, we hope that you can join us to see how far we get, what we see and what we experience on an adventure that starts when we leave our Liverpool home on the 20th May 2024.

30th April

We have been doing a bit of rough route planning however as with most of our planning this will probably change a number of times while we find places to see and things to do along the way, I suppose its better to have some form of plan even if you don't stick to it, the ferry dates are fixed so we will need to work around them. The first part of the journey is a 6+ hour drive down our wonderful motorway system to get us to the Harwich ferry terminal, we will travel there on the day before and stay overnight at the ferry terminal as we need to be on board by 8.30am. When we booked the harwich ferry we were given a few options regarding seating the choices were no booking and sit where you can, book seats for £40 or have a comfort class outer cabin for £38, I don't think that really makes any sense for an 8 hour crossing, needless to say cabin has been booked. The next firm date is 10 days later when we get the ferry from Denmark to Norway which again had some strange seating options either none, luxury seats for €50 or a lounge with free coffee, tea and snacks for €40, let me think for a minute oh ok lounge it is. We have planned a couple of stops while in Holland the first of which will be Delft which is less than an hour from the ferry port, there is a park up close to the city so we will head there to see if there is space for the night, if there is we can go and explore Delft in evening and then have the next day exploring the city during the day. After that we will have to wait and see what happens, however on the return journey we will travel back through the south of Denmark and through Holland so if we miss somewhere on the outward journey we may have time to visit places on the way back providing we have sufficient Schengen days left, we do want to have a couple of Schengen weeks in reserve in case we find a cheap sunny getaway.

20th May

Today we set off on our Norwegian adventure and as with all of our longer trips I have mixed emotions, the excitement of the journey ahead wondering about the places we will visit, the sights we will see and the people we will meet. Then there is a slight trepidation of things that could happen on the journey but I need to put that out of my mind as you could have the same thoughts about every day life so let's give that a miss and move on.

The big one is leaving our family and friends and knowing that we won't see them for eight to ten weeks, on this trip our emotions are stretched more than ever as this time there is a small person to leave and we will miss our lovely little Lucas lots and lots, when you don't see an adult for a couple of months there is little change, yes I know there can be changes but on the whole grown ups don't alter much in that period. Then there is the little person who will change in 2 months as he is growing up not grown up he will be bigger, talking more, doing more and we will miss these changes but we will have video chats with him, well it will probably be with Andrea, Phil and him, as he is not fully au fait with WhatsApp video chats just yet, ok after all that we/I need to get on with it and move into let's get going and enjoy it mode.

Our departure was no different than our previous trips planned for 10am departed at 10.45 which is actually pretty good for us, I am not going over the drive to Harwich to get the other than the M6 was its usual horrible self and that was before we got to Stoke so we diverted off down the A50 route was only 15 minutes longer, it may have been only 15 minutes but that still made for a 6 hour drive. Not sure why but the journey felt like driving to the end of the world and definitely felt more than the actual 6 hours of my life that I will not get back. Here is the first tip for anyone living up North, make sure that you get the ferry from Hull to Rotterdam, yes it is more expensive but it will be worth it, your probably asking why we didn't go that route, it was the original plan but in the time between looking and booking the price had more than doubled and was a bit silly.

Anyway after such a wonderful drive we have arrived at Harwich ferry port and are parked up just by the check in booths with lots of other vans including a CV60 which we are parked next to, we have had a chat with its owner who is off on a trip around Holland. We will that it for today as there is not much you can say about parking in a ferry port car park, I wonder what I can find to say about being parked up on a ferry for 8 hours, well I am sure I will find something to say we will have to wait and see.

21st May

This is mad, there are engines starting up all over place with more vehicles arriving all time and it's 6.20am for a ferry that does not depart until 9am, do they think it's going to leave without them or because they can get off 1st, I didn't know that we were taking part in race across the world but with a campervan, phones, credit cards and Google maps. Anyway as in Rome, we are dressed, Glo is fired up and we moved a total of 30 metres to join the queue, an hour later our passports are checked and we are given boarding cards and cabin cards then we move about 500 metres to join another queue, not sure that there was much point in moving in the first place, while in this queue there is a short walk to the duty free shop, well it would be rude not to have a look, the look turned into the purchase of a bottle of rum and a bottle of gin for the princely sum of £19 could not refuse but god knows what it will taste like. Forty five minutes later we are boarding the ferry for our first cruise of the trip, we are guided up to the bum of the van in front and then the next task was to find the stairs or a lift to the required floor. After a bit of searching we find the exit to the stairs and the lifts, we are parked on the 3rd floor and plan the ascent to the 10th floor using the stairs as usually the lifts are rammed, however as we walk past the lift towards the stairs the lift doors are about to close and it only has three passengers, quick let's join the posh people and make a fast ascent. The cabin comprises of a double bed, single bed and en-suite oh and a mini bar now that could be dangerous, there is no price list so it could be double dangerous, however we are driving so probably the only option would be a tin of Pepsi. We leave our bags and head off to explore the boat, ship, ferry whatever you want to call it, there are lots of seating areas and you can

even go outside and sit in the sun deck area, well that might be nice on a warm sunny day however today it's cold and a tad blowy so we won't be sitting out there. As we are walking round we see the guest information desk, me thinks that out of interest I will get a price menu for the mini bar, when I ask the gentleman behind the desk he smiles and says that they don't have any as the mini bar is complimentary now that was a surprise and made cabin price even more attractive. Then as it's an 8 hour crossing we head back to our cabin for a relax, oh and to empty the mini bar, no we didn't do any such thing, there is not really much more to say about a ferry crossing other than there is a lot of water surrounding the thing and that's all you can see, (see what I did there)

A number of hours later it's time to get ready to return to Gloria and head for Dutch soil but just one thing to do first, yes that's right empty the mini bar fridge well you wouldn't want the wine to get warm 🥵. We join another queue, this time to get off and then through passport control, was there any questions about what booze and food stuffs we had on board it was just Hi stamp passports Bye job done, my concerns over dairy and meat products totally unfounded. Next stop Delft and to find a park up for the night we had found one on search for sites but the location was a bit vague why people don't use What Three Words to make it easier for people to find as it don't see the point of telling people about it and then let them struggle to find it. Others had said that they had been there and it was full which going by the amount of vans coming off the ferry was a possibility, anyway we get there and it's empty park up sorted. Oh the what three words are (plays.starring.scoring) it's peeing down so we will not going for a walk down the canal that we are parked by, hopefully tomorrow the weather will be better and we will be able to go into Delft to explore, considering that I didn't think that there would be much to say about a ferry ride there was a bit going on, tomorrow we all might even get something interesting about Delft, we will have to wait and see.

22nd May

Not sure what time they arrived but 2 other vans joined us last night and there not much sign of life in either of them but for us it's time to head into Delft, we head for a car park that is suitable for Motorhomes, it's free and about a mile walk into the city, it's not far and we arrive there in less than 15 minutes and great there is no problem parking. On the way to the car park we pass on of those places that fill me with dread, it's a big place painted in blue and yellow, I know it's a bit childish but we wanted to see if our IKEA family card would work and deliver us free tea and coffee. It's only a ten minute walk away so of we go, yep it worked free coffee and tea and even better as you can have free cappuccino now that's a bonus but we did have to accompany the beverages with a couple of fresh croissants, well it would be rude not to, next task is to escape the place without having to walk around all of it, a short cut is found and we escape. Next stop Delft and we arrive there about 20 minutes later, it's not very busy and I am not really sure what I expected other than lots of shops selling blue and white pottery. It wasn't long before we had done the tour of the city and really found much, the main square with city hall at one end and church at the other was architecturally pleasing, now although I don't go to church at home very often but when I am away I do like to go to them to look at the architecture and also to light a candle for loved ones we have lost, my great friend Lin and I do the same for each other. Unfortunately it is not happening at this one as I am not paying €8.50 each to go in, now don't get me wrong I have absolutely no problem with making a donation and I always do, I didn't even mind being mugged for a candle which I wasn't allowed to light and had to hand back in an Italian Basilica, it was a beautiful building, this €8.50 was not happening. After that and a couple of Delft ware shops we were about

done, our plan of spending the day there was finished by 1pm time to head off to Gouda, now there is a sort of plan for Gouda we have looked and there is a car park in the City which has free overnight parking with facilities set up by the council to attract visitors, a note Liverpool and other councils. We arrive in just under an hour and wow does the car park attract visitors it sure does, there are Motorhomes everywhere we find a parking space but it is not in an authorised overnight bay. There are cars parked in some of the bays so the decision is to park up go for a walk and hope that one of the cars has moved when we get back, the walk into town is only 10 minutes and we are soon in the market square which is surrounded by restaurants and shops, we have walk around and then head back to the car park. As luck would have it a car that is parked in a motorhome bay is just about to leave, I go and get Gloria while Barb stands guard, Gloria is parked in the bay just in time as 3 more Motorhomes arrive, with nowhere to park. At about 8pm we walk back into town to see if there is any night life or anything going on, but a Wednesday night in Gouda is not the most lively place in Holland, there are just a few people in a couple of the restaurants but most of them were empty. We find a local bar that's open we head in and join the grand total of 6 guys, now they don't sell anything like ordinary pilsner they only have a selection of stupid beers that end up at 12% and a bit more, we won't be having any of them. We order 2 of the weakest option just the 6% they arrive in glasses that would contain just over half pint, well it hold that quantity if the top inch was not froth, this beer is not to be gulped down like an ordinary pint it is supposed to be sipped like fine wine, well that is judging by the guys sitting next to us, they remind me of a line from Billy Joel's song The Piano Man "there's an old man sitting next to him making love to his tonic and gin" two of these rascals is enough and we are soon back at the car park only to find that even more Motorhomes had arrived and just abandoned all over the place with no regard of the designated parking area. Why is it that there is always a minority that are intent on to spoiling things for the majority, I hope that they all get a parking ticket I hasten to add that none of these are from the UK there was only 1 other UK van in the car park and that like us were parked in designated bays. I wonder if anymore will arrive during the night, we will have to wait and see tomorrow.

23rd May

Well yes more did arrive and they are parked with even more abandonment than the others, not going to go into nationality's but none from the UK, there is a cheese market in the town square today and we set off to have a look around well what a difference a day makes, the town square is a buzzing hive of activity with market stalls set up and busy with people. The main display is set up in the centre and made up of lots and lots of waxed rounds of Gouda cheese, now ain't that a surprise. This little display is obviously a show for tourists as there are people having photos taken with girls in traditional Dutch cheese making dresses, then there is a horse and cart being loaded with the okrounds of cheese and a lady with a slice of cheese microphone, I kid you not, giving a commentary about what's happening, to be honest I did not need a commentary about a person picking up a cheese and putting into a cart but some people must have as she kept getting rounds of applause. Eventually we manage to drag ourselves away from the excitement, as you can imagine I found this very difficult but drag we did, the only problem was that we turned around and walked directly into a stall selling fabrics, oh no surly not, those of you who know us know that Barb makes stuff it's actually beautiful stuff and very talented she is, however we have enough material at home to open our own but bigger market stall, but we still haven't got this colour with this design in this type of material, needless to say we are now going to carry 2 metres of the stuff around Europe for the next 8 weeks. The next stall is a fish monger now this guy has got some seriously big fish and some ugly ones too, the also sell cooked food such as fried fish, potted

prawns on baguettes, eels now the first two would be ok if it wasn't 10am but eels no thanks, judging by the people at tables eating this next one seemed to be the most popular but I was prepared to give pickled herrings with extra onions and chillies an extremely wide berth at this time of the morning, well at any time. The rest of the market was made up of various food stalls selling bread, pancakes and stuff and then there were stalls with the usual genuine authentic tourist tat made locally in China. Right that's us done but before we leave we stop for a coffee and people watch for a while, the coach parties have obviously arrived, loads of people following various coloured umbrellas being waved in the air, we are definitely gone now. We have had enough of towns now, well we have been to two, we want to head off into the countryside and also cover some miles to narrow the gap between Gouda and the northern tip of Denmark and the ferry to Norway. We have six days before we get to the ferry but we want to stop for a couple of days and relax rather than drive every day, the sort of planned route is 1200 kilometres this means we will have to have a couple of serious driving days, there is a shorter route but that just takes us south to north up the centre of Denmark but that doesn't look very exciting. This afternoon's plan is to drive the three or so hours to Osnabruck and find a stop over, we are soon on the motorway and I now remember why I like driving in mainland Europe, get up to speed set the cruise control and arrive at your destination, there is none of this stop start traffic jams like our wonderful motorway system, the majority of drivers have lane discipline, they get to the speed limit and there, yes there are road works but they hardly slow you down, amazingly this style of driving has a massive impact on fuel economy, over a 180 mile trip including getting out of Gouda city centre Gloria returned an unbelievable 42mpg I have never got anywhere near that on UK roads and suspect I never will. The drive to Osnabruck sees up travel into the third country on our trip and Barb has found a free park up which is not far off the motorway about 20 miles from the city, when we arrive at the park Barb breaths a sigh of relief as what she hadn't told me that although it was on the site finder app it had no reviews which isn't really a good sign, it will have tomorrow as it's a great spot ok it's in the car park of an equestrian centre but it has free waste disposal and EHU for €1 for eight hours it is also on the banks of the river Ems and has plenty of grassed area to sit and relax, what three words address is, (symphonies.consequences.showy) it will get a good review tomorrow when we get some internet signal as that is one thing that is missing here. The plan tomorrow is to get to southern Denmark but it is a 4 to 5 hour drive so we will have to see how that goes, I will let you know tomorrow.

24th May

Ok let's go, Denmark here we come hopefully as it's a long drive and we might be being a little optimistic with our plan to get to Kolding this afternoon the first problem is that it's 10.30 and we haven't left yet, we need to stop messing about and get a move on. Before we go there are a couple of van jobs that need going that are on the blue list of jobs and Barb want to see if the little horses have been let out to play but they hadn't and with the blue jobs done we are off. This is going to be a bit of a boring day as we were driving for most of it and it turned out to be a lot longer than we originally expected but more about that later, time to retract my steps and tell you some of the things that had previously missed out. We all know that bicycles are everywhere in Holland and that town centres are predestined areas, in the outer parts of both of these cities there are designated cycle lanes and even have separate traffic lights. However in the central pedestrian areas there are no cycle lanes and no defined paths, the things come at you from all angles and with electric bikes they are travelling pretty quickly, unusually no one uses a bell to single that they are coming through, on the market day in Gouda I was surprised that no one was run into. Right let's get back to today this journey is not going well, yesterday I was praising

the virtues of the Dutch and German motorways, today we have returned to the M6 and the M25 on a Friday evening rush hour, there are miles and miles, sorry kilometres of road works with three workmen standing there one holding a shovel, one pointing and one having a fag and not a great deal else happening then we get to the Bremen bypass and it's stop start for miles. There was a slight moment after we got through Bremen and we actually got somewhere near the speed limit but that only lulled us into a false sense of security as if by magic more road works appeared, then we arrived at Hamburg well this made Bremen look like kids stuff. Six lanes of traffic surrounded by major very major road works sat there moving about a foot at a time, not sure which plonker decided that it would be good idea to arrive there at 3pm on a Friday which is obviously poets day. Eventually we get through all the traffic and as we head further north the traffic gets less and less but we have given up on the idea of getting to Kolding, next job is to find somewhere to stay, we find somewhere that looks suitable but it has not got any reviews on the Apps but off we go, when we arrive we find out why there are no reviews and that was because it was shut, other people must have been there and found it shut so why don't they leave a review saying so, well there is a review now that will hopefully help others to not waste their time. Our next options are a town centre park up or to find a site out of town, after today's journey we need somewhere to relax for a bit and we think we have found somewhere that looks like it fits the bill only it's another 30 minutes away but it will be worth it to get out of the city and into the countryside. Thirty minutes later we arrive and wow is this a gem of a place or what, just off the motorway but you could be miles from it, it has the easiest self check in ever, beautiful pitches overlooking a lake, it's just idyllic, it's late afternoon but the sun is shining brightly sharing its warmth so we can sit outside, have a beer and forget about the day's travel experience. The late dinner is an alfresco event while we watch the sun rays glisten on the lake's still waters, then the sun starts to set and if you have seen my photographs you will sort of understand how beautiful it was, the hues of pinks and blues gradually turning to orange and then as it sinks further below the horizon finally turning to brilliant fiery red before disappearing until returning the next morning, it just took the stress of the day away, well along with a cool beer.

25th May

We had discussed staying here for another night and just chilling out by the lake in the sunshine, however Mr Weatherman had got his predictions slightly wrong as Mr Sun was hiding somewhere, it was cold damp morning with the forecast changing to being much of the same for the rest of the day, so we decided to move on. We had now crossed another open border into the forth country on the trip, there will be a few more before we return home, but for now there is more to see of Denmark and we set off for Kolding, this drive was much more relaxing than yesterday with very little traffic until we arrive at Kolding, I am not really sure what I was expecting of the city but it certainly wasn't the massive commercial centre that it is, we had planned to stop but after a drive around we decide it's not for us and head out onto the open road again. The next part of the sort of plan was to head west to the coast and then follow the coast north, owing to the power of Facebook my cousin who lives in Germany had seen our location and got in touch and told us that their daughter and family were going to be staying in Vorupor which is on our route north. I get in touch with Britta and we make arrangements to meet tomorrow. We head off towards Esbjerg and then north along a strip of what I would describe as a wide sandbar with the North Sea on one side and the Ringkøbing Fjord on the other, it is just under 40 kilometres long and nestled within that sand dunes for protection from the North Sea winds there are houses dotted all around in no particular resemblance of order.

There is a mixture of older and smaller thatched cottages which resemble grown up Hobbit houses and new larger architect designed houses, there are hundreds of them scattered about on both sides of the road, I guess lots of them are holiday homes and that they are in demand which usually means they have a fairly hefty price tag. We continue on to Hvide Sande which is going to be both our afternoon and overnight stop, as this is a holiday destination the camp sites have some pretty silly prices which we aren't willing to pay but you can park in the marina car park for free during the day and they charge 130dkk for an overnight stop over, that sounds like the place for us. We arrive and take a place in a line of campervans and motorhome's one of which is wearing UK plates this is only the second one we have seen since we left Rotterdam over 600 miles ago. After a walk around the town and stop for a coffee and a tea to give us time for a spot of people watching, now I don't think that the Danes are great fans of tea as we haven't yet been successful in getting a proper cup tea for Barb since we have been here and today is no different, a cup of hot not boiling water and a separate tea bag to drop into the cup. Then it's back to the van to watch the guys fishing from the harbour wall, well I say fishing they are standing or sitting with a rod in their hand but not a great deal in the way of fish coming out of the sea. Not much happened after that other than our next door UK neighbour came for a chat but the least said about that the better, glass eye and sleep come to mind, that was it for the day.

26th May

I am awake early so I get a coffee and head outside to let Barb have a sleep in, now I admit that it's a bit fresh and possibly shorts, t shirt and flip flops was not quite the correct attire for this early in the morning. There are few guys fishing one which walked past me wearing a hoody, jumper, an extreme all weather coat, a hat on top of his hoody, hiking pants and boots he says hello as he walks past and looks at me as if to say your mad, he could have been partially correct, but hey I am on my holidays. What we have found is that nothing much seems to be open on at the weekend even the car showrooms are closed, now that would lead to heart attacks in the UK, not much is different here, there are a couple of coffee shops open but that's about it, good job we have brought our own mobile coffee shop with us. We have arranged to meet Britta this afternoon and it's about a 2 hour drive we best be getting a move on as we want to have a stop on the way, we are only about half way along the sand bar road which is actually the Holmsland Dunes we pass more oversized Hobbit homes and then find a road that leads to the sand dunes, beaches and the North Sea. In the car park there is even a thatched roofed hobbit house public loo, I know small things amuse small minds but it did look funny, especially when you turn around and there an electric car charging point in the middle of a sand car park. We head off over the dunes and on to a white sandy beach that goes on for miles with not a trace of rubbish that has been left by mankind or that has washed up from the sea, the only thing apart from sand is the pebbles that were once ragged stones but that are now rounded smooth by the thrashing waves and the grains of sand acting as sand paper without the paper. In all of this nature's beauty there are massive concrete bunkers left from the war which once contained massive guns made to destroy ships and human lives. When you look at these things that still stand leaving a memory of wars that have taken so many lives that we should never forget the horror and futility of war, but when we look at history and the world today I don't think that we will ever get over man's hostility to man. Flipping heck we are getting a bit deep we best lighten up and move on, next stop is Hvide Sande to meet up with Britta, Manu and their children, now this town is even more of a holiday destination which means the site charges are even more expensive and the local authorities have an intense dislike of wild camping. We are early for our planned meet up time so we park up and head off for a look around, it is still out of

season and it's not as busy as imagine it will be in the holiday season, after a look around we have seen a car park a couple of minutes outside of the town that looks like it may be ok for an overnight stay. Back to Glo and of we Go, couldn't resist it, at the car park it's obvious that the vans already there had no intention of leaving and it's possible that they have been there for a couple of days, this will do for us. Just as we park up, Britta messages me to say that they were on their way, the sun is shining so we ignore the weather forecast and walk back into town wearing shorts and t shirts we meet up by the jetty and after long time no see greetings we head off for coffee, well I had coffee while others in the group had a beer. The rest of the evening was a family affair so I will keep that private and give you a brief update tomorrow, but for know that's your lot.

27th May

Let's have a quick catch up of yesterday afternoons events firstly ignoring yesterday's weather forecast might not have been a good idea as after we had all been sitting outside for about 30 minutes the dark rain clouds started to move over us and with a clap of thunder the heavens opened and it absolutely threw it down, we beat a hasty retreat inside restaurant. We are not going anywhere soon and with another round of drinks ordered we sit chatting and catching up on times gone by and future plans. There was no chance of the rain stopping and we decide that we will all go to Manu & Britta's apartment, first job is to collect Glo so Manu and I make a dash for his car and he gives me a lift to the car park then it's off to the apartment which is only a couple of minutes away. We end up having take away pizza and a few beers possibly a few to man, we had already decided that as there was no one else staying at the apartments we would stay in the parking area which made having a beer did not matter. It's funny that whenever we are on a trip and we meet up with friends or relatives I always get behind with blogs, not sure why that happens well actually I do know exactly why it happens we are usually having a good time a late night and a few bottles of what's it called. This morning we have breakfast with Manu, Britta and the children, breakfast turns into brunch and and nearly a late lunch, time to say our goodbyes before we start thinking about dinner. With farewells done we set off, we are now a day ahead of our sort of plan to Hirtshals and the ferry to Norway so we head east for a bit of exploring but as it's mid afternoon the exploring will have to wait until tomorrow, after a couple of days of sort of wild camping we need a reasonably priced plus's with facilities. A bit of checking out a couple of the park up finding Apps we find what was a small farm and is now Kurt's home and vineyard with 6 campervan pitches, it is in the middle of nowhere and apart from the occasional plane taking off from a small airport a few miles away it is quiet and relaxing which is what we need after the last couple of days, you can roam around the grounds, the small vineyard and really just make the place your home. If you are heading to Hirtshals the site is close to the main E39 and is about 20 minute North of Aalborg, the What three words address is [geothermal.caresses.petals](#). Not much to say about the rest of the day as we just sit outside in the sunshine relaxing and later use the sites cooking facilities rather than Glo's oven, the only downside was that the local farmers had been spreading something on their fields and it certainly was not Lynx Africa, the smell did recede as the day went on either that or we just got used to it. Let's see what happens tomorrow we could really do with something exciting to let you know about, but I am sure that there will be endless views and experiences for me to try and put into words when we get to Norway, for now we need decided on what we do tomorrow and I will let you know what that is tomorrow.

28th May

If we were on a weeks holiday we would be on our way home today but we aren't heading home we are really only just getting started and the expletives used to explain the sights of Norway that are yet to come. The weather this morning is awful so our thoughts of staying at the vineyard for another day and chilling in the sunshine are out of the window, revert to plan B which we haven't got so we will have to make one up. Right we are off to Aalborg which is only 30 minutes away when we arrive we find a park up that allows overnight parking, the only snag is that it is absolutely and persistently chucking it down and there is no way that I am walking around a town in this weather and there is even less chance of me sitting in this car park looking at nothing, there has got to be a better option and that is to move on further up the coast it before that we need to go shopping, am sorry but it looks like this is going to be a boring blog day but i cant miss a day out and just think how it is for us, we are here doing it. shopping done we head off down the motorway to Frederikshavn, the drive was horrible due to the battering down rain fortunately the journey was not that long but it was still pouring down and we had no intention of walking around this town in the rain either. We head for the free stopover we have found its a car park overlooking the Baltic Sea there are plenty of other vans that have had the same idea, we pick our spot and wait and see if the rain would like to stop for a while it did stop for a bit and we managed a quick walk along the beach but it was cold and looked like it was going to start raining again so we went back to Glo to get warm. Look I can not stretch this out any longer it's even boring me, let's call it a day and hope we can do better tomorrow.

29th May

Really peaceful stop over last night with a number of vans for company, after a leisurely start to the morning we head for into the town for a look around on route we take a detour to have a look at the docks there are some pretty big boats parked up at the quayside ok that's the boats done let's go and see the town. There is free parking not far from the Main Street which by the look of it is the only shopping street in the town, a couple of minutes after parking Glo we arrive at the shopping street. Now to say that it's not very busy would be being kind it is absolutely empty totally devoid of people, there are lots of empty shops but what there is a lot of is charity shops which are Barb's favourite sport, this could take a while as some of them are massive they M&S look like a corner shop. Apart from the charity shops there is not much of interest but we do need to do a spot of food shopping, let's make this quick, we go back to Glo drive to supermarket, shop and leave. Next stop is one I have been waiting for we are heading an hour up the road to Skagen and the most Northernly tip of Denmark, as the weather is good we by pass the town and head another couple of miles North until we can not drive any further, there is a very large car park and one part of it is full of Motorhomes, Campervans and even a caravan, it looks like we can stay here for the night as this lot are parked on ramps, the posh ones are on hydraulic self levelling system, posers, we find a nearly level bit and that will do us. After a continental lunch the usual cheese and ham baguette we are off to explore the tip of Denmark, you can travel in a seated trailer pulled by a tractor but we choose to walk along the beach, it is just a touch blowy and not very warm, most sensible people are wearing grown up pants, coats and some are even wearing fleece beanie hats, me shorts and T shirt, people look at me as if I am mad and as we walk along the beach I am starting to agree with them it's blowing a hoolie but hey I am on my holidays.

This is one of those places that is meaningful on a trip it's a place with a difference something that doesn't happen anywhere else and that makes it important and is always a memory not to forget. As we walk along the white horsed waves are getting bigger and come crashing on to the beach. At the end of the beach we arrive at Denmark's most Northernly point where the North Sea and the Baltic Sea meet each other, where salt water meets fresh, nearly fresh water. The meeting is not a smooth affair between the two seas as there is a difference between the two, a visual difference that is seen as the North Sea clashes with the Baltic Sea. Strictly speaking this is not correct as it is actually the seas of Skagerrak and Kattegat that meet but for me it's the North and Baltic Sea's that clash together and although the seas are very rough today the joining of the two can be seen as a line, although not a very straight one, as far as the eye can see. Barb is hoping that the North Sea has calmed by Friday morning as we will be crossing it to get to Norway. We had found a couple of park ups for tonight but it appears that we will be able to stay here even though it is not shown on any of the park up sites, it may be cause it is still out of season as the parking meters are covered up and have a note saying no charges until 1st June, just got here in time. Food beer and a bit of a chill out are the order for the rest of the evening, lets see what happens tomorrow, one thing we will have to do is to check wether it is best to fill Gloria's fuel tank here or not Norway best get on that job now, I will let you know.

30th May

I forgot to say yesterday that when we were at the end of Denmark at the end of a beach and a step away from being in the the North Sea, my phone had 5g 4 bars, it's nuts that you can't get a signal in our house. 😂 there a few other things that I missed yesterday, we did a live video on Facebook from the tip of Denmark, the audio was a bit pants as I mentioned yesterday it was blowing a proper hoolie, Barb had a paddle in both the North Sea and the Baltic Sea which is something that you don't often do on the same day last but not least Britta contacted me yesterday evening and said that they had been there in the afternoon while we were there but we did not know each was going yesterday, there is another example of Big planet Small world. I think that is all that I missed so back to today and a bit of last night, if I said that it poured down last night it would be a vast understatement I am surprised that there aren't dents in Gloria's roof, some of the vans were surrounded by water, not enough to cause any damage but if you did have a walk through cab then you were going to get very wet feet. Our first stop of the day was to the Skagen Grey lighthouse this was not a long journey as it was about 2 minutes away, its not like other lighthouses as its name suggests it is grey brick and not painted white most other lighthouses. We have a wander round and go down to the beach and guess what we see, correct the sea but which one I know you are dying to know well ok it's the Baltic Sea. There is more evidence of wars gone by as the beach has a number of large concrete gun emplacements between the lighthouse and the port, we did consider going to the top of the lighthouse but its was £10.00 each for the privilege of climbing 210 stairs to see two sea's, a beach, some ships at anchor and a town. Now I am nowhere near tight but this journey is a marathon not a sprint and I am sure we will find a better place to spend 20 quid especially when you have been up a lighthouse before, time to move on. Next stop is Skagen town which is only a 10 minute drive away, now this is a pretty looking town with all the shops freshly painted and well maintained with not an empty or charity shop in sight. Initially when we arrived we thought that there was a market happening but it wasn't, all of the shops had large tent sized umbrella's extending their floor space to sell more stuff there are also a good amount of coffee shops, bars and restaurants all with outside seating which lets you watch the world go by while people

watching. We escape with not making a purchase other than the obligatory baguette for our continental lunch, then its time to move on this time the journey is a little bit longer it will take us just under an hour to get to Hirtshals where tomorrow we will catch the ferry to Norway, excited yes we are. Here are a couple of things we need to do, first have lunch and then find a fuel station to fill Gloria's go go tank that we have left to be as empty as possible so as to fill her up here rather than in Norway as its a bit cheaper here, I tell you what, the meter on the pump does not half spin fast when it needs to get 755Dkk to fill Gloria's tank we are ok for LPG and AdBlue so we do not need to get that for a while. Glo has been returning some fantastic MPG figures over the last 10 days but I do not expect that we will see anything like the 42 mpg she achieved the other day, as the roads in Norway are going to be much different than the ones we have been using here.

Next jobs are to find a park up as there are no free ones showing on any of the available Apps, we check at the ferry port but you can not stay there which makes us think that we will have to pay, that is until we arrive at the town centre there are 4 car parks that look like Motorhome Dealers sales pitches, none of these look like they are going anywhere until tomorrow morning and we join the one overlooking the beach where we hope to another fantastic sunset but that does not happen until just after 10pm. We are park up for the night and then its time to explore the town which isn't that big and is also a sea port my expectations are not that high, however I am mistaken as although small it is very pretty with no empty shops and again the shops are freshly painted in the same yellow moving to orange colour after a walk around the town we strolled down to the harbour not the main ferry port but to where all the smaller fishing boats a pleasure boats are moored the majority of which look to be well maintained it there are a couple of basket cases that I would not fancy sailing around the harbour let alone the open sea. We return to Glo and discuss wether we should go out for a meal this evening as there is a restaurant at the harbour that is supposed to serve the best fish and chips going, we do like our cosmopolitan food, well its not just fish and chips it is a selection of different varieties of fish with french fries. After giving it due consideration we decide give a miss as we had a late lunch and it would a waste, I am sure we will find somewhere in Norway but god knows what that will cost. Next is to wait or sunset, yes I know we have had a few sunset shots but I need to make the most of them as when we get further in Norway there wont be any as it wont be going dark. After sunset it's time for an early night as we have to be up early n the morning to get to the ferry port, I bet it will be like the start of a race in the owning as all these happy campers head for the ferry, not sure why as we will all get off together but I bet there will be people there at 7am for a 9.30 sailing we will have to wait and see, did I mention that we are excited, Norway here we come.

31st May

I had set the alarm for 7am to allow us time for breakfast and then head off for the ferry terminal, well the 7am alarm as not required as I am awake at 6am and can not get back to sleep which means that we are an hour in front of our schedule. While we have coffee and tea the rest of the car park is like an old style Le Mans race start with everyone starting their vans and heading for the port, not really sure why but off they go while we sit having my coffee and Barb has tea. After waiting for a while we are still ahead of schedule but drive down to the ferry terminal to park up in a different and join everyone else that was in the stop over car park. I am not sure if overnight stop over is ok to use in the summer period but it's worth a look, the what three words address is (cheeky.childbirth.collected), the other ones are all very close by. All of the vans that were previously parked in the various stop overs are now here and have been joined by even more that must of been hiding somewhere else, oh and there is still only one UK van.

Once the gates are open and passports are checked we are soon on board and after a bit of a drive around the boat we are parked with a foot between us and the van in front, we have booked a lounge as it was only €14 and included free drinks and snacks. It is as a very smooth crossing and 4 hours later we are ready to disembark, after reading the official rules of what you can bring into the country I had been a bit concerned about the contents of Glo's fridge and a couple of other places that were not keeping alcohol cold, well I need not have worried as I did not see one van being checked, we should have brought a bit more with us. Right first stop is our arrival port of Kristiansand and the first job was to find a parking space to fit Glo into, after a bit of misleading directions that tried to get us into a multi-storey car park that Glo would not go in we found an open air one which again was rammed with other vans of various sizes. Next job pay for the parking which after using pay machines in Denmark which gave you various language options including English, this one didn't It was Norwegian or nowt, now that took some working out eventually I figured out how to pay of 2 hours, after we got our ticket our Monzo card app fired up and said the cost was 7p they have got to be having a laugh, you couldn't look at the payment sign at the Liverpool 1 car park for 7p. Next a walk around the city, we manage to find the main shopping area which was the busiest one we have been to so far on this trip, there are all the usual high street brands and a fair few restaurants thrown in for good measure, now everyone has said that Norway is expensive don't get me wrong for a northern lad it's not exactly cheap but the prices are very similar to London prices and indeed Liverpool prices if you choose to drink in a posh gaff. It's getting on in the afternoon and we have had enough of a busy city, it's time to head off into the countryside before rush hour starts. We have a rough plan to head for Stravanger which is 250k on the main road that we don't plan to use to get there so that won't be happening this evening, we set of on that route with a plan to find a site as close as possible to Kristiansand, we get out of city and Barb finds a site that is about 30k away, we have not got a clue if it will have a pitch or how much it will be but as we have been wild camping for 5 days we could do with a camp site. Arriving at the site the office is closed and the sign says pick a pitch and come back later with no indication of what the costs are, well we are here now, let's pick a pitch and risk it. About an hour later we head back to the reception to see what it's going to cost but actually as we are parked up, Gloria is on levelling ramps and I have had a beer our fate is sealed and we are staying whatever it is. It is a quiet site although there is a bit of road noise but not unbearable it is overlooking a lake or is it a fjord not sure I will find out later, whatever it is it's full of water, turns out it's 350Nok per night without electric but we don't need that as long as the sun shines, the next decision is how many nights to stay, after talking about 2 nights I ask if there is any discount for three, the young lady laughs and then says no, oh well it was worth a try, so far we haven't stayed in one place for more than a night in the last ten days we are staying here 3 nights, if you are looking for an CMC award winning site this place won't fit the bill but I don't think you will find one around this location this is a great small privately owned site with very helpful staff it has got everything you need including a kitchen you can use, washing machines and dryers, full waste disposal, great view, you can hire bikes for 50Nok a day now that is cheap, it is a 15/20 minute bike ride or just under an hour walk into town and we would definitely stay again and with birds singing, the sun setting over the river and the fir tree covered hills it is pretty good. The site the details are Sandes camping, Mandal and the what three words address is (clotting.tests.contrived) time to relax and enjoy the peace of the evening, let's see what happens tomorrow.

1st June

The next two days are going to be short blogs as we chilling out on the site after the last the weather is not good in the morning we We chill out at the campsite and catch up with some admin, trip costs so far (Eeeek) sort out the blog site as it's only showing the last three blogs an I want it to show all of them, stupidly it runs through three different it buffs and none of them are being very helpful and are just blaming each other, next the an WiFi has stopped working so that needs to be sorted, I have emailed Maxview and I am awaiting a response. It is all getting very frustrating as you would think it should be a easy job but it ain't, I have given up until I get a response from Maxview. As for the costs so far we need to reduce them over the next week or so to get them back on track to be fair they have been high because we did stack up with stuff before we arrived in Norway and also we had been for a meal with my relatives while in Denmark both of which we will not be doing here, so it should even itself out in the next couple of weeks. In the afternoon the sun came out and we could sit outside in fact it was that hot we had to put the awning out for some shade from the sun and that's about it really for the day.

2nd June

It's beautiful this morning and there is a bit more admin stuff as we need to have a bit of a plan as to route we are taking over the next few days, after the route we ending up with us sort of planning the next 600+ miles with 8 planned stops which include Fjords, water falls, glaciers, a car race track which is obligatory on any of our trips wherever we are in the World and a couple of towns and villages, obviously this will change as we travel as I am a big of a nut on any form of racing with an engine or a sail. Again there is an attempt to get the WiFi and website working but I have given up on both until I get, hopefully get some assistance from both of their support team when they are open tomorrow, I will let you know how helpful or not helpful they are later. We are going to go into Mandal today to have a look around, we have three choices of transport to get there, we can walk, hire a couple of the extremely cheap pedal bikes which I bet we won't get for 50Nok on any other part of the trip, I still can't get my head around the price, or the other option is that we can drive. Our original preference was to walk but it is really really hot a trip in Gloria wins, we are there in now time at all and find a suitable car park which is free on a Sunday, there is probable reason that it is free as like most places we have found in Holland, Denmark and now Norway everything is shut on a Sunday which I think is great as it gives everyone a good work life balance, it is also great for most guys as all that can be done by our better half's is window shop and there are not many shops to look at which makes it quicker and also free to walk around. There is a marina with lots of boats in various sizes and a car park that motorhome's can park overnight, but we don't see the point as it is 250Nok per night with no facilities, there is one of those stupidly expensive motorhomes parked up, I cant remember what make they are but when I saw one at the NEC you had to be wearing an expensive suit a tie and have an invitation before you could have a look inside I think they are in the £800,000 starting price bracket and they are massive I would ask why you would park in a dusty car park but it probably won't fit on a site, there is another site down the road that is 600Nok a night so both of these prices make Sandes camping extremely good value. Not only are the shops closed so are most of the coffee shops and the ones that are open don't look that inviting. On our way into the town we had seen a bakery that also served coffee and head back there and wow what a choice there are lots and lots of all sorts of pastries we settle on two massive and I mean massive custard danish pastries they make UK ones look like midget gems. We sit outside with coffee and a tea oh no tea so it's coffee a coke and our biggest sugar hits ever seen. (if you want tea make sure that you bring your own tea bags) then it's back to

the site for another chill out while watching various sizes of motorboats cruise along the river and that's about it for today, tomorrow we continue our journey and I am sure that we will have some amazing sights to share with you.

3rd June

It's time to hit the road again and it's a great driving day, the sun is but it's not too hot, there is a queue at the grid of stuff out of our motorhome and to refill water tanks, luckily we had done ours yesterday so we pass the queue and we are off we are heading for Stavanger which is a 250k drive as we are going to follow the coast rather than the main, shorter and quicker route, but hey we are not in a rush. As we head off into the countryside there are some beautiful views the mountains surrounding the road are either covered with massive pine trees or are so sheer that nothing can grow on. I did say that I was not expecting Gloria's magical 42mpg that she achieved the other day and I was not to be disappointed, rather than the flat open roads with too much traffic in Holland, most of Germany and Denmark, here as we get into the countryside there isn't a straight bit of road and as for flat bits you can forget them, there are many bends left and right and they are only defined by how tight they are and the hills work in the same way steep, steeper or even more steep and the descents are exactly the same. The road goes over bridges through tunnels that look like they have been created by blasting and digging rather than using a tunnelling machine, these are both major feats of engineering and there are not just one or two there are loads of them of various lengths. There are also lakes with deep green water all the way along the road the only difference between them was the size and the landscape surrounding them, it's difficult to stop saying wow, don't ask me how many lakes, bridges or tunnels we had seen I lost count ages ago. We hadn't originally thought that we would not get all the way to Stavanger today as we had some other places to visit on route but these are towns, don't ask why we are going to another town as what we actually came to see is countryside. I suppose that the thought process was that we probably won't go there again so we should have a look, and have a look is what we did. the original plan was to go to the town have a drive around to familiarise ourselves and then park up and have a look around. What we actually did was get there drive around familiarise ourselves decided not to stop and drove off. We did get to Stavanger at about 4pm now this is one busy place with traffic everywhere, this is certainly not our happy place we do drive around and try to find somewhere to park Gloria but this became tedious and frustrating which was made worse by the fact that we needed to find somewhere to park up, and in this city and surrounding area this was proving to be a difficult task. Anyway you guessed it, we fought our way through the traffic and headed off, the route takes us through another tunnel but this one is the big daddy of all tunnels and I mean all tunnels this is the amazing Ryfylke tunnel, now I thought the other tunnels we had been through today were feats of engineering well they were puppies compared to this rascal it is 14.4 kilometres (8.9 mi) long and is currently the world's longest subsea road tunnel and it's also the deepest tunnel of any kind. Both records are expected to be surpassed by Rogfast, which is projected to open in 2033, but for now we can say that we have been through it and pretty amazing it is.

We had two options one was to carry on for another couple of hours of pay to sleep at a harbour about 30 minutes away, as we had been driving for most of the day the harbour won even though according to the park up finder apps it was going to cost 150Noc oh well off we go and when we arrive there are lots of other vans, we just about find a spot which there would have been a lot more of if the vans already there had not parked 4 foot apart, anyway let's go and pay, well the park up apps were wrong it's actually 250Noc but we are here and that's it, actually it did get a little worse as I had placed the ticket on the

dashboard in a place that could be seen when the screens are closed, but while the door was open the wind that was howling off the North Sea decided that it would be a good idea to give the ticket a good blow so that it could do a magicians disappearing act down behind the dashboard never to be seen again, this could be an interesting conversation later on when Mr Ticket man comes around, I hope he can speak English or it could be even more interesting. Tomorrow's plan is to go for a hike up to Pulpitt Rock but the weather forecast is not looking good, we sure ain't going up there if it's peeing down and blowing a hoolie which the BBC weather forecast is saying will happen for the next few days but hey they have been wrong before, a couple of times, we will wait and see and I will let you know tomorrow.

4th June

I left a note on the windscreen explaining the disappearance of the parking ticket and that if they knocked I could show them the proof of purchase, as no one knocked I suspect a couple of things happened either we are going to get a parking ticket in the post or we did not need to pay in the first place. The wind and the hoolie blowing outside have not relented with me t that the trip to Pulpit Rock is off the cards, it seems that this weather is with us for the next few days so there is no point in waiting around as it's not going happen, by the way when your planning a holiday do not what ever you do go at the same time as us and if you do make sure you go in the opposite direction, I think that we are rain magnets. Plan is to head on towards our first planned stop the Langfoss waterfall, Mr Google and Mr Apple Maps tell us that we can get a ferry around the corner that will cut a big chunk of the journey, but they don't mention the departure times and it also a proper faff find out on the internet. As we have our prepaid ferry registration we pop round and check the times, there are marked out numbered lanes ready for the queueing vehicles but it's like ghost town not a sole around and no timetable well there was but it was two years old, at this point we should have got a message, we checked some more internet sites and found that it departed at 12.45 great but as we are early and we need to get some shopping we go in search of shops, it appears that Tau is not you could call a very busy place as there is a fuel station with the most expensive fuel that we have seen so far, as for shopping there is not much choice just two very small supermarkets that must be owned by the expensive fuel station as they are also the most expensive food outlets we have been to, due to the lack of anything else and the next place for shops would mean driving through the a Big Daddy of tunnels twice and we haven't had the pleasure of receiving yesterday charge yet, so I expect these two shops and the fuel station have the job sown up, the only thing they the were missing was Arkwright's till. Shopping done and sandwich had we go back to the ferry port, we are still early but there is no other vehicle parked up in the lanes, the alarm bells should have been ringing louder any way we pull up in pole position in lane one and as the departure time got ever closer we were still not joined by the rest of vehicles taking up their position on the grid, the bells are getting louder but as 12.45 approaches out in the distance was a ferry heading towards us a great rate of knots, not sure how fast a great rate of knots is but it sounds good. There a number of people waiting but no vehicles and we are about to find out why as the ferry gets closer, yes it's a ferry but it's not a very big one this could only hold Matchbox or Corgi toys vehicles, there must be another one right behind but I thought I would check, as the passengers get aboard, there is a lady counting them on, I ask her over the noise of the engines when the car ferry would arrive, as the ferry is leaving as quick as it arrived, none of that rope to the harbour wall lark it's more of keep it in reverse until everyone is on and then full throttle forwards, anyway she shouts oh that doesn't sail from here anymore, oh great what a waste of a morning. We best get into plan B mode well we best have a plan B first but as Mr Google and Mr Apple Maps do not have an

alternative it's wing it time again, luckily the boat lady did shout that we will need to take the small road now I wonder where that is, one thing for sure we better go and find it. Find it we do and we are off, now this an interesting road it climbs up down and around mountains it's got more hair pin bends than you can count, it goes to single lane with at the drop of a hat without any warning, sometimes this happens half way round a sharp bend and yes it is used by articulated lorry's now that's interesting, Gloria's automatic transmission is confused to say the least, we have planned to drive what is supposed to be a spectacular mounting road later on our journey but I think that this bugger will give it a run for its money, I am really sorry that I had not put the GoPro on to film the experience.

The next bit of road is interesting as it's got water separating it, yes a ferry crossing but as we arrive this time we are not on our own there are a number of vehicles already queuing and more arriving behind us, this better be a big boat. Again this one arrives at a rate of knots as it gets closer and closer it's full reverse and full power to the bow thrusters to get it in position, again there's none of that securing with ropes lark it is kept in position by the engines and the knowledge of the guy on the bridge. As soon as the small ramp is down and the one vehicle that's on board is gone we are waved on and told to get a move on, in a matter of minutes we are off, the prepaid tickets must be working as a member of the crew points a phone looking thing at Gloria's number plate and walks off. We are the first on and are right at the front meaning we are going to be first off, as this is our first experience of Norwegian ferry crossings I would rather have been the second or third just to see how it works, twenty minutes later the boat's arrival and docking was just as quick then it was gentlemen start your engines, the flag drops, wheels spin beside us and we are off there is no messing about here and again none of that rope stuff. It's mid afternoon and it's been a bit of a stressful day so it's time to find a stop over which by the looks of things is not going to be very straight forward as at one side of the narrow road is a solid rock mountain and on the other side there is a serious drop into something, usually water. Barb finds a place about 15 miles further on but you gotta pay, we decide that if we find somewhere in between we will stop there if not we will pay up, what you have got to remember is that on these roads in Glo 15 miles will take over 40 minutes. In the 15 mile journey there is nowhere else to park up unless you have got something that will float, 150Nok it is then, it's a private piece of land, hard standing overlooking a lake, a big lake which is surrounded by mountains, sounds idyllic well it would except for the clouds covering the mountain and also that it's pissing down in capital letters. The really good thing about being parked in a sort of proper site is that you can have a drink which I won't do if we are just parked up somewhere random, and boy do we need a drink. We have reversed parked at the edge of the lake looking at the clouds and the rain but you know what it is still beautiful, hopefully the weather forecasters have got it wrong tomorrow as the plan is to go to see one of Norway's biggest waterfalls and also go glacier hiking, one thing is for sure if it's raining like this, the waterfall will be be putting on a dramatic display we will have to wait and see, so will you but we will know first.

5th June

Let's start by saying Wow what a day,

It's right what they say about the weather in Norway you never know what's going to happen next, last night it absolutely threw it down and was still at it when we woke up then as we got ready to go the sun came out and the view over the lake was beautiful. We leave the site with sun shining brightly and then ten minutes down the road the rain starts again and it's that heavy we can only just about see where we are going. The weather forecast

is much of the same for the rest of the day which does make it a good idea to go walking across a glacier so that is getting struck off the list but there will be more to view on the journey north. That leaves us with the two waterfalls, we set off for the first one which is about an hour's drive well that's according to maps, as we have found, whatever Mr Maps tells us is wrong and this route is obviously no different and we arrive at Svandalsfossen waterfall about two hours after setting off. To be honest I was expecting it a bit more from this stop don't get me wrong the waterfall was pretty impressive but with all the hype I was expecting a car park, coffee shop and a shop selling the usual tourist tat not that I was going to buy anything, but what we got was a bit of a lay-by that just about had room to park in. After some photographs and getting wet not just by the waterfall, but the rain which was pouring down, good fun taking photographs with a golf umbrella balanced on your shoulder and if Mr Newton reads this, no I do not like taking photos in the rain so the photographic opportunity did not last long. We head off for the next location Langfossen Waterfall there is a straightforward route along the main road but there is also another route which looked more interesting and that's the route we take. Did I say interesting route, what I should have said wow wow what an amazing route, it takes us through the mountains but what we didn't know was it didn't take us through them it took us over the top of them, we could see the snow on the top of the mountains but little did I know that we would be parked in it. The road snakes its way upwards and upwards and then upwards so more winding its way around more hairpin bends the road has more hairpins than a ladies hairdresser's, all the time climbing and climbing some more, Gloria's automatic transmission is more than confused as we head higher and higher, we pass a ski lift on the way I think it was the top of it, I am not kidding I thought I was going to get altitude sickness and we hadn't finished climbing we have left the bottom of the snow line a while ago and the views are amazing, I can not put them into words. Eventually we get to the top, the ragged point of the summit is only just above us, there are snow drifts ten feet tall at the side of the road, there are blue glacier blocks of snow floating in the lake at the top and I nearly wet myself when I saw the sign saying no swimming, there is a space for a park up but even I think it's a stupid idea. We are joined by two other vans and that is the only other vehicles we have seen, I wonder why that is, both of the vans are German and we have a chat in broken English about the spectacular views. It's so amazing that we don't really want to leave this magnificent landscape but down we will have to go. Now when climbing the route you have most of the control over your speed but on the descent the Incline of the road, the weight of the van and I suppose a bit of that Sir Isaac Newton's gravity lark want to propel you down the road at a considerable rate of knots. With the transmission holding a low gear and the revs raising your foot is on the brakes a considerable amount of the time, I have to say the the new BF Goodrich rubber that Gloria is now shod with behave fantastically with not one wheel spin on the way up, this would not have happened with the standard tyres which would have been scrambling for grip and losing the battle. As the road continues downwards we stop a number of times not just to cool Gloria's brakes but to take in more of the visual beauty of this landscape I could go on about it forever and still not do it justice, I absolutely loved that drive, it made one of my favourite roads Bealach Na Ba look like a small hill. After using 2 years of brake pad life we reach a point where the road actually levels out, I am a bit sorry it's over but it's now time to head off to our second waterfall of the day. Obviously our time plan went out of the window hours ago but it's not far to the Langfossen waterfall, 30 minutes later and this is more like it, a car park coffee and ice cream shop and a tat shop selling stuff for tourists. Now this is a waterfall there is a proper load of the wet stuff coming over the edge here probably helped by the fact that it's been raining persistently and heavily, it's not just the water and the spray it's the roaring sound of the water cascading on to the rocks below, this needs some photographs and one thing for sure you are going to get wet and wet I did while trying to

keep as much of the wet stuff off my camera, although the water drops 612 metres it is not the highest in the country which we go to as we head further north. Right that's more than enough excitement for one day it's time to find a park up and find one quick, Barb has found what may be suitable so off we go, it's a car park in a small village and it's not really got a view, well actually it hasn't got any view but we have had enough views already today. Tomorrow we are heading for a city, I will let you know how we get on with that tomorrow.

6th June

Peaceful night, we were joined by one more van, well when I say peaceful it would be have been apart from the founder and the pounding rain which was trying its hardest to put dents in Gloria's roof, then this morning the sun is shining brightly when we leave. It but that does not last long as twenty minutes down the road it batters it down that hard that headlights are required, ten minutes later it stops and the sun comes out again. It's a two hour drive to Bergen but as we departed early and we are only staying on a main road Mr Apple Maps was nearly correct with his timings, that was until we arrived at the city and headed for the designated Motorhome car park. The place is rammed with three lanes of traffic which decides to head of in any direction, it's not as but as Italy but it's not good especially when you have been in the countryside for a while with single track roads and you haven't got a clue which lane you are supposed to be in, we do make a lot of drivers very happy, anyway we find the car park which has a fair few vans already parked. The car park is next to the cruise liner dock and there are two gargantuan ships tied up these are tied up not like the internal ferries. There is one thing about these ships and that is the amount of passengers and this then adds to the amount of tourists that will be in the city oh yippee. Off we go and we are correct the place is rammed, the restaurants one the harbour front have got their tourists menu displayed, the ones that are higher than everywhere else, the shops on the front are doing a roaring trade in selling tat to tourists including genuine Norwegian jumpers which as the price depicts are probably made in china. The city itself has some beautiful buildings but the architecture has been spoiled by the corporate signs outside and the neon signs in the tat shops. Don't get me wrong it is a lovely city but it's just not for us, we were happier at the top of the mountain yesterday, we stroll around for a few hours and play dodge the people and how many umbrellas and little flags we can see waving in the air with a line of people following behind making sure that they don't loose sight of the leader of the pack. After covering five miles strolling around, we must have been following an umbrella, we decided that a Zara shop in Bergen was the same as a Zara shop anywhere else, it's time to go before the rush hour traffic starts to flow, well actually stop and start. It's too late it's started and we like everyone else make slow progress leaving the city. As we escape there are two lines of traffic one is completely stopped with a long very long queue of traffic and the other is free flowing, we think that outside lane are turning left but as Mr map showing a straight line we dive into the free flowing lane passing the long queue of traffic, then there is a slight problem as when we approach the front of the queue, Mr map decides to tell us to turn left, well what can you do yep you make an impersonation of a BMW driver, indicate and push your way into the lane, well at least I indicated. The next stop on the list is a five hour drive that's not happening as it's 4.30 and we also need to do some planning to find some more points of interest on route or nearly on route, the plan is to get away from the city and then find a park up. We don't want to go too far in case we mis anywhere to visit, this is not a very exciting or romantic stop over, it's a petrol station / mini supermarket/ restaurant car park, I pop in and check that it's ok to stay, yep no problem that will do us it's close to the main road so we can get straight on it in the morning and far enough away to not hear the traffic. Then it's route planning time and we do get carried away and

plan the next nine stops and probably five days if not longer as we will probably find places to add to the list. There looks to be some exciting stuff to see and do, the last one of which is to drive the Trollstigen mountain road this also has more hairpin bends than the hairdressers shop, it looks fantastic and may even give yesterdays a run for its money, let's hope it's open when we get there, we will share the rest or some of the route with you tomorrow.

7th June

Water Water falling everywhere

Today's plan is to visit the Skjervsfossen Waterfall which Mr Maps says will take two hours and ten minutes well we know by now that will not happen and we recon on three hours off we go, the road initially takes upwards into the mountains but rather than continuing climbing upwards it drops and takes us through the valley of sheer rock face mountains reaching for the sky. We have a bit well actually a lot of rain lately and last night was no different it poured down this means that you are in for a good display at a waterfall. What we hadn't expected after driving less than 15k that we would find massive waterfalls in this valley they were tremendous and there were more around every corner, we had to stop to take photographs and a lot of them. The road lead us over bridges and through numerous tunnels ranging from 30 meters to 5 kilometres, at the end of one of longer tunnels was a T junction and while we were in the tunnel Mr stupid sat nav had lost his way and could not make his mind up left or right he finally decides we should turn right, I wish I had ignored him and turned left but as the tracker company was phoning us yet again to see if Gloria had been stolen, not sure it likes deep tunnels or boats, at this rate we will be getting an invite to their Christmas party, no she hasn't it's ok. We take the right turn and Mr Stupid's chosen route, the road was good for a while and then he shouted turn left and we did as we were told, which was a big mistake that we would out shortly find out. The sensible road then turned into a nasty road, it turns into a single lane road with the occasional passing places, on the left is a rock face that could not be described as smooth and protrude towards the road especially on the blind and left hand bends which there are a lot of, on the right there is either a concrete barrier with chunks missing out of it along with various colours of paint, or there an Armco barrier with more bent than straight bits, did I mention its narrow, very narrow, the tunnels have no lights and are just pitch black then you exit into bright sunlight and then immediately into another black hole, your pupils struggle to figure out if they should be big or little. After some more blind bends there is a tunnel in front of us that looks like it should be for a motorbike, I kid you not I have seen bigger mouse holes in skirting boards, nope it's not for motorbikes it's for Gloria to enter and hopefully come out the other end in one piece, with a sigh of relief we exit, after a few more blind bends with jagged rocks and bent Armco we arrive at Mr small tunnel smaller brother, we stop at the entrance and look at each other and wonder if Gloria will fit, she must fit other things must have got through it before us, ok let's go just to make things even better this brother may be smaller but he is longer and also includes bends, there bendy marker boards on both sides of the path to try and make sure that you don't remove the side of your vehicle, this is not funny and Barb is more than quite, when we escape Barb says I thought I was going to have a heart attack and she wasn't on her own, after some more blind bends we finally come to a junction to a major road, well it wasn't really a major road but it was compared to the road from hell, me stressed don't be silly. It's totally wrong and I fully disagree with corporal punishment but on this occasion Mr Sat Nav deserves to have his bum spanked. Finally four and half hours later we arrive at the Skjervsfossen waterfall, this one has a car park but no shop selling tat, I could do with a drink but I settle for a cup of tea. Time to have a

look at the 150 meter high waterfall, we walk down to the viewing point and its pretty impressive however this vantage point does not give you the best view of the power of the waterfall, what does do is let you see that if you drive two minutes down the road there is space for a few cars at the very bottom of the falls, as we look down there is plenty of space for Glo but we best get there quick. The view from down there was far more impressive and showed the full force of the falling water, from here you can walk to the bottom of the falls and this time I wear a proper wet jacket well it's not wet it keeps you dry oh you know what I mean, after saying wow a couple of times and a few more photographs we set off to find a campsite yes a campsite not a car park. Our next destination is only 40k away but Barb finds a suitable place at a reasonable place to stay and it's not long before we arrive, Glo is parked up and level enough not to bother with levelling ramps there are more important things to open ((guess) and also places to go, yippee free hot showers. Well a day that was supposed to take three to four hours ended up taking eight and bit. It was slow progress today and you will have to wait and see how tomorrow goes, thinking about it so will we but we still know earlier than you.

8th June

Our 1st stop today is Flam which is only 22k away so it's a nice short trip but we are not going to get there early as we are making the most of being on a site may as well as we have paid for it. Anyway we eventually set off, 5 minutes down the road we enter the 2nd tunnel which is 10k long we exit that one and then enter the second one which is 7k long then we arrive at Flam so out of a 22k trip we have spent 17k of them travelling under the mountains. This is a proper tourist town well I would call it a village but it certainly attracts tourists who mainly arrive on coaches some of which must carry a defibrillator or possibly two, as they leave the coach they follow the guides who are waving what I suppose are repurposed selfie sticks which have various things on top of them, some have various flags some depicting the travellers country of origin, some have a little cuddly toys and one had a fluffy orange complete with leaves, these all protrude as high as possible and are waved vigorously so none of the following parade end up on the wrong tour and then possibly the wrong coach to wherever. There are loads of coaches which meant lots of flags with a trail of sheep following behind, now this is not really my happy place and just to add to it there are lots of tourist tat shops selling touristy things, yes I know we are tourists but we ain't falling for all that tax free sales nonsense, oh and there are lots of pop up food stalls selling a variety of food at prices even Gordon Ramsey would balk at, they have just got to be kidding however there enough of the other tourists making purchases from all of the stalls, luckily some of which sold soup or something that you did not have to chew. There is one thing that we do fancy and that's a trip on the Flam railway which has been described as one of the most beautiful train journeys in the world and is one of the leading tourist attractions in Norway. The train runs from the end of Aurlandsfjord, a tributary of the Sognefjord, up to the high mountains at Myrdal station 866 metres above sea level. The journey features the finest aspects of the stunning scenery of Western Norway. It sounds great but it does have a bit of a problem and that is the ticket price which will blow the daily budget out of the water, oh stuff it we will only be here once and 1460Nok later we have the tickets in our hands and there is just time for a coffee before we board the train. Here is a bit of information from the website, Construction of the railway started in 1923 and was completed in 1940. It is said to be one of the greatest engineering feats in Norway. The 20-km long railway line is one of the steepest standard gauge lines in the world, with 80% of the journey running on a gradient of 5.5%. There are no less than 20 tunnels, 18 of which were built by hand. One of the tunnels even takes a 180 degree turn inside the mountain. Once onboard we pick or seats in one of the vintage carriages, obviously the bit at the end that pulls the carriages is now electric. Off we go

it's not long before we go through, yep you guessed it a tunnel then the train starts to climb on it's way to, yep you guessed it, a waterfall, Barb and I are busy looking out the windows on both sides of the carriage and standing up when needed to get the best view. It also gives the opportunity to do a bit of people watching and it amazes me that people have spent good money for this experience and sit there not looking out and mountains topped with the remaining pockets of the winter snow which is hanging on until it eventually thaws as it gets warmer up there, but let me tell you that when we were up there other day it was not warm enough the thaw anything, anyway back to people watching not only do the magnificent mountains the valleys below the waterfalls and not even the sight of the original church dating back to 1667 get these two remotely interested, they just sit there like a pair of bulldogs chewing a wasp, god knows why they paid all that Donk, they could have just stayed on the coach. It's a pretty impressive trip but would I pay all that Donk again or indeed would I have paid it in the first place had I known what was in store probably not but possibly my expectations were set too high, I do expect that it is pretty magical in the winter with snow covering everywhere. Back at the village we wait with others to get off the train Mr and Mrs Bulldog push their way through the queue, I bet these two are fun at parties. Back at Glo we plot our route to the next stop which is about two and half hours away but as we have used another day and it's now 4.30pm we will not be getting there, it's stop over hunting time, Barb checks out the relevant Apps and finds a suitable car park about forty minutes away, off we go and ten minutes later we enter a tunnel not any tunnel but the Big Daddy of tunnels it is the Laerdalstunnelen Tunnel at 24.5 kilometres long it is the longest road tunnel in the world, that means in the last week we have been through the two longest tunnels in the world, now I hear you say how can there be two tunnels that are the longest tunnels in the world, well the difference is that the Ryfast tunnel is the longest undersea road tunnel hence there are two, one under the sea and the other a long rascal under mountains. There are markers every kilometre that tell you how many kilometres you have done and how many you have left to go, there are sections that are illuminated by bright different coloured lighting to keep drivers alert, eventually we are out and only a few kilometres away from tonight's stop over, we arrive and join six other vans and more arrived later, tomorrow's first stop is a laughing two and half hours away, let's see how long that takes, you will find out tomorrow.

9th June

I don't want you getting ideas of last night's park being by the side of an idyllic lake with calm still waters or by the side of a meandering river or even another evening surrounded by snow capped mountains, you can forget all those romantic ideas, we are in a car park in a small town, I know how to treat my wife to the finer things in life. No lie in this morning we need to be on the road but first it's a walk to the local shop for some delicious fresh bread well possibly not as the supermarket along with everything else is shut it's like a ghost town, the only sign of life is in the car park as a couple of vans are leaving. Mr weather looks like he is yet again going to spoil our plans as it's pouring down again and we won't be doing any walking in this weather, remember what I said about going on holiday at the same time as us, we are going to miss two stops of today's plan, first stop is to catch a ferry from Fjords which is a 23k journey, immediately after leaving the village we enter the first tunnel of the day which is 5 kilometres and as we exit in to the pouring rain it's a matter of moments before we enter the second tunnel and this one is 8 kilometres, out we go back into the rain again but not for long as tunnel number 3 is awaiting our entrance this one is 7 kilometres as we exit this one the auto wipers just have time to start swishing across the screen and we arrive at the ferry. If you do a bit of maths it works out that on a 23k journey we have spent 20k underground, I am starting to

feel like a mole, it's not long before the ferry arrives and again there's none of that ropes being thrown to tie the ferry up with and there are two reasons for that, there is no one on the ferry to throw it and there is no one on the harbour to catch it, the boss in the high up bit just keeps it in position using the engines, as soon as the ferry touches the harbour, the ramp on the ferry starts to lower which doesn't take long as it's only three foot high, then car engines roar, well apart from the electric ones and the boat is empty within minutes and we are driving on board before the last car is off, all on ramp up and we go and then it's the same procedure at the other side with the two lanes of traffic getting of at the same time, there is no messing about on these things Off the ferry and after 500 metres we enter another tunnel then it's on to visit the Sognefjorden which has the name King of the fjords as this is a big rascal, it stretches 205 kilometres from the ocean and it also the deepest with a maximum depth of 1,308 metres, there is none of that about 1,300 or 1,310 metres it's 1,308, there is one end of that tape measure that I wouldn't have wanted to be holding. As it's 205 kilometres longer we are obviously not going to see all of it we stop and have a look down the fjord, due to the inclement weather conditions we are not getting out of Gloria, I know it's a bit of a flippant way to treat the King of fjords but it's a body of water a large one I will give it that but we are off, look if you are passing the biggest thing going you have got to be able to say that you have seen it right ok that's done we are off, we do see lots more of it as the road follows the side of the lake. The head of for our second destination but on route Barb has found that there is a glacier on the same route and as we haven't seen one yet we have to make a small diversion to the Boyabreen glacier, fortunately when we get there the rain stops and we walk to the lake at the bottom of the glacier. Glaciers are beautiful pieces of nature and show the power of the planet that we are doing our best to destroy, it will bite us back, the top of the glacier is cover from view by the low cloud covering it along with the surrounding mountains but you can still see the blue colours in the ice. After some time taking photographs of this amazing creation we stay and have lunch, which turned out to be a good idea as the clouds lifted a bit and the sun came out, it wasn't going to give you a suntan but it did show off the colours in the glacial ice. We best get going or we are never going to get to our next destination, a few kilometres down the road we end up in a diversion, which is actually an anagram of we are going the wrong way and have been got some time oops, I can't blame Mr Maps this time as someone had told him the wrong destination, not too sure who but he might be a clue. Our destination is now even further away and we are not going to get there today but we need to make attempt to get some kilometres covered, after another hour it's time to find a stop over and tonight it is at the top of a mountain alongside a ski lift which is about to reach the top, if it wasn't the rain and the clouds we are in, we might have a great view, hopefully we will have in the morning, I will let you know.

10th June

This morning we need to cover some kilometres but it does not bode well as according to Mrs Maps google maps female voice has said that the first leg of todays drive 95 kilometres and it's going to take 2 hours and 20 minutes, now that is a bit of slow going. Due to the weather we are going to bypass Geirangerfjord look out point as it's not going to be worth it and we have seen a couple of Fjords, revert to plan B which is to head towards Trollstigen and the spectacular mountain road, however that is four and a half hours away what do you think the chances of that happening are, I will let you know later. Let's go for it, the first stop needs to be a fuel station as when we were climbing through the mountains Glo's Adblue put some in me light came on, I know that when it comes on you still have a fair distance to travel before limp home kicks in and you certainly do not want that happing while on these roads, so let's do it sooner than later, I did think that this

would be a fairly simple process but how wrong was I, we try a couple of fuel stations with no success then we find a station well I call it a station it was in a small village where everything else was closed and there wasn't anyone around, that seems to be the case in lots of the villages we have traveled through I am not sure where everyone hides, anyway back to the fuel station which isn't really what you would call a fuel station it's of piece of land hidden behind some houses and consists of three pumps, petrol, diesel and adblue it's also one of those prepaid things that gives you back the money you haven't spent. Right let's go for it, the first thing that is strange is that you can't actually see a pump as it's hidden in a metal box, perhaps they do not want to scare the pigs, right close the door before you do anything, place card in machine, how many Nok are you going spend and the answer to that is not a clue, the choices are fairly limited and jump in considerable chunks of change, the 800Nok button is pressed even though it won't be that much, thanks we have got your money fill up as much as you like that is until you remove the pump from its hiding place pull the trigger and nothing happens, after a lot of button pushing the machine says thanks I have got your money now sod off, oh great this could be interesting especially as there isn't sign of any form of receipt. We will deal with that later we continue down the road for another 30k before we find 4 fuel stations close together first one no pump ok I will get a 10 litre container of the stuff well I would it had been open, next one and yes they have got a pump, yippee it's another prepaid one but this one actually works, pump out of protect a pig box and adblue finally added, well wasn't that a proper faff. The fuel is about the best price we have seen recently 18.9Nok per litre, and deep joy it's another prepaid rascal but it works fine, the station also has something else we have been looking for, a jet wash as Glo is looking extremely dirty, let's cut this short, she is washed and we are off. I said that we weren't going to the Geirangerfjord, well we weren't going to the viewpoint but we do see a lot of the Fjord as the road meanders its way along the side of it for a number of miles and climbs upwards over the mountains and then down to the valley through another tunnel we drive through the valley for a couple of kilometres and then enter yet another tunnel but this one is different as soon as you enter it heads upwards dramatically it's like being on the Big one in Blackpool but it goes on for ever continuing to climb eventually there is light at the end of the tunnel high up in the mountains. A bit of a breather as the mountain road gradually twists and turns its way across the mountains but then it's time for the descent this is like reaching the top of the Big one and hurtling down the other side and to make it a bit more interesting they through in a couple of hairpin bends for good measure, given the choice I would sooner be going up around hairpin bends as you have more control rather than a three and a half ton van wanting to go as quick as it can in a downwards direction all the time being helped by that gravity lark, Glo's gearbox tries to reduce the speed but is struggling to keep the revs at a sensible place while the brakes are using 6 months of their usual wear, eventually we are down and into, yes another tunnel and then out for a couple of kilometres until we at the ferry to cross over to the other side of the Fjord, this will cut out many kilometres of driving. We find that finding the ferry is strange as there is not one sign as you drive along the road giving you any clue where it is, we found it as the road came to an abrupt end, we join the small queue and the illuminated signs says the next one will arrive in six minutes. Six minutes later the flag has dropped and the cars drive off the ferry and a couple of minutes later we are on board, there is none of that ticket lark as we have a prepaid agreement that works off ANPR. Not long before our lights change to green and it's every man for himself to get in the one lane before we enter yet another tunnel it's like wacky racers but good fun and a remarkably quick process. The time as usual has been gobbled up, it's after two and we haven't had anything to eat, time for a pit stop for some lunch, along the route we have followed and crossed a raging river as it crashed against rocks making a magnificent display of white water but I don't think you would be doing any canoeing down it. Anyway at the stop

Barb has chosen, this same raging river is crashing downwards with white water everywhere and even the bends in the river cannot slow this massive force of water that at this point it falls considerably hitting massive rocks and angrily fighting its way past the rocks while providing a fantastic display of unstoppable as it passes at considerable speed, if you get in there you ain't getting out. We are forty minutes away from Trollstigen and The Road, but the weather has taken a considerable turn for the worse and there is no point in driving what we expect to be a more amazing mountain pass than the ones we have previously visited, this rascal does not have a few hairpin bends it got eleven of them. We are forty five minutes away and decide to stay the night where we are and hope for better weather tomorrow. Just after 6pm the road is quieter the tourist coaches have gone home and the weather has cleared, let's go for it, if the weather is clear we will head up the road, it's not as if it's going dark anytime soon. We set off and this road starts climbing towards the top of another mountain when we reach the summit at seventeen hundred metres the weather changes its mind and the clouds fall as does the rain, we are only 12k away from the Trollstigen road which in this weather will be a total disappointment, we now have two choices we can go down the mountain and find somewhere near the village, now that would be the sensible thing to do or we can park at the summit of this mountain, well guess where we are spending the night, yep at the top in the low cloud and rain surrounded by pockets of snow but hey we are not on our own there a couple of other lunatics parked here as well, there is one other thing I forgot to mention, it's flipping cold, let's hope that it clears up tomorrow as there will be a fantastic view from both here and the top of the mighty Trollstigen Utsiktpunkt, we will all have to wait and see.

11th June

Shall we go up it or down it, oh let's do Both

It was a tad cold at the top of the mountain last but I am not sure exactly how cold it was and I was not going outside to find out, what I do know is at 9am it was only 3°C and sunrise was at 3.30am, the plan we made last night was to get up at 6am or even earlier and attack the Trollstigen before everyone else especially the tourists and coaches, then we can enjoy the drive down the Trollstigen on our own. At 5am, 6am and 7am it was obvious that it was not going to happen as we could not see the end of Glo's bonnet let alone the mountain pass. This meant that although they hadn't slept at the top of the mountain, we all arrived at the same time, oh well I suppose that's the way the mop flops, thinking about it we could have stayed at the top of the mountain for another night and then enjoy the drive alone or near enough alone, but as the weather forecast was of much the same and it was a tad chilly up there, that was not going to happen. We are at the Disney experience in a couple of minutes but as we don't fancy buying some tourist tat, we head to the start of the descent, the weather is not great and there is a lot of traffic and is slow going due to it being near enough single carriageway with passing places that people have not a clue how to use. It's a bit slow going but the views are absolutely amazing and when we have completed the 11 hairpin bends I suggest we should try it in the opposite direction, I am not 100% sure Barb was into this idea but we turn around and on our way back up the mountain pass, when we arrive at the summit we stop at the Disney experience not to go to the shop but to go to viewing platform where you can get a view of all of the road, next stop it's back to Glo for the second descent. The weather has cheered up a bit, when I say that I mean that it is raining less than it was before, at the bottom I tell Barb that I am not sure if I enjoyed more going up or down, I got a look that said don't even think about it, so out of a lack of bravery I didn't ask.

Some info about the road, there had been a pack horse track over the mountain for hundreds of years, and work started on the road in 1916 and it was opened in 1936, it comprises of 11 hair pin bends each with its own name most of which are named after the foreman who led the construction gangs that built the road. Looking down at the road it is an incredible piece of engineering. The tip of you want to drive the road which although it looks a bit daunting it isn't, it's an easy drive and in my opinion even though its summit is not as high, Bealach na Ba in Scotland is more difficult although Trollstigen probably wins on its waterfalls and views. Two tips try and do it when the weather is better and get there very early to avoid the traffic, don't forget sunrise is 3.30am. Next on the list is to drive the ocean road. It is described as "A unique stretch of road which takes you right out to the ocean's edge, and is known to be the world's most beautiful drive." It is made up of 8 bridges including the Storseisundet Bridge, the road was used in Daniel Craig's last James Bond film "No time to die" we will be starting at Bud and driving the complete length of the 64 to Kristiansund and then on to Trondheim a journey that maps says is a 4 hour drive but who is kidding who with that one. For now we are heading to Bud which is about a two hour drive providing we do not find any distractions along the way, the rain has stopped and now the sun has come out as we drive along the meandering road as it follows alongside the fjord giving more spectacular views, we pass through small villages with a mixture of both new and traditional houses of various sizes and colours built on the mountainside which will offer the residents even better views of the fjord and the surrounding mountains, there are some seriously big new architect designed and I would suspect expensive properties that dwarf the traditional ones. You would think that the new properties would spoil the appearance of the villages but the quality of the architecture let them stand in harmony with the smaller wood houses that are painted in different colours and dotted around, some of them are so high you wonder how you get to them. One thing we noticed and have noticed in most of the villages we have driven through is the lack of people, there is no one walking around, in their gardens or anywhere for that matter, for us it's a bit strange. We travel on through more tunnels, bridges and a ferry ride which is another case of a Le Mans start, your on and then off in minutes, there is none of that paying lark a guy or girl walks past your vehicle with what looks like a phone points it at your registration number and boom the cost of the crossing is deducted from your pre paid account and the next morning you receive an invoice for the toll and ferry crossings you have made on the previous day. Amazingly we have not been distracted and we are soon to arrive just outside Bud, we are going to stay at a site tonight to do stuff no not that, clothes washing, route planning, add expenditure to the spread sheet which hasn't been done for a while so should be fun, and some other stuff. Barb has found a reasonably priced site with everything needed including washing machine and dryer, as a bonus it is in a cove over looking the Atlantic Ocean or is it the Norwegian Sea whichever it is the view is spectacular and to make the view even better Glo is reversed as close as possible to the small beach at the waters edge. To give you a better idea of how far north we are, if we looked west we would be well past the tip of Scotland, above the Faro Islands and in the next couple of days we will be above Iceland, I have been there but I went by plane. Camping is a much more relaxed affair here than it is in the UK, you can turn up whenever you like and during the day there is no one at reception, you just park up and then go to reception later, name, phone number, registration number, number of peeps, how many nights and pay, job done simples.

12th June

I always find this point on a long trip strange, as if we were on a three week holiday we would have been home 2 days ago, but were not and we still have some time to go before we reach our goal of driving to the most northerly tip of mainland Europe. When I booked in at reception last night I made a mistake as I booked in for two not one night, well it wasn't really a mistake as it's a beautiful setting and we need some slow down and chill time before we continue north. This obviously means that the Ocean Road trip is going to be tomorrow, now that leaves me in a bit of a predicament as I can't just say to you all, hello we sat down all day that's it by, oh I am sure I will find something to say. While we stationary we have time to recap on observations we have made, the first one started in Denmark and has continued all through Norway, this is that all or nearly all of the gardens are immaculate we originally thought that the house owners must be out there everyday mowing their lawns but no, what they all have is robotic lawn mowers that pop out of there own little garages complete with charging point and continually mow the lawn to the perfect height, I imagine when it pops out on finds that it is raining it just pops back into its garage and waits patiently until it's ok to go and do its stuff. Another thing which is a bit more important is that the people are very patriotic and fly their nations flag at the first opportunity, it is also a sign that there is something to see or go to as you drive along, every hotel, campsite, kaffee shop, restaurant, shops and even petrol stations are proudly flying their flag, yes I know that most countries in mainland Europe proudly fly their national flag it just seems to be more prolific here, I can see four just looking out of the window. I can never understand that even though this happens in most European countries, if we fly the Union Jack or heaven forbid the flag of St George we are seen as racists or is it just another way of giving the UK another kick. Anyway nots go there, what else did we do today, well I took the drone out for a fly across the see, I took some photographs, as for bringing the expenditure account up to date well that didn't happen. One admin job that's has really been cheesing me off has been the blog site and finally after a more emails and more phone calls the "it" guys have finally added the missing link and sorted the website out and now at last, all of the current blogs are showing in descending date order, wow that has taken some time. Barb had been doing some local research and has found a restaurant just down the road that serves a traditional Norwegian buffet, I am not convinced but Barb's thought process is that as it's a buffet she will hopefully be able to find something she will like, ok off we go let's give it a try. The place is only open until 6pm so we best get in there quick. Right how do I put this, well it's not the most lively or exciting restaurant I have ever been to, it's a bit like school dinners, there are instructions saying that when you have finished with your plate, empty any remaining food into the bin and then stack your plate with others of the same size and put your cutlery into a bowl half filled with water. I guess that I am not really selling this very well but I haven't got the buffet yet, the fish soup is ok and after following the well trained people our bowls and spoons are placed as instructed, now on to the main courses obviously there are a couple of differently cooked herring, then there are cold crinkle cut chips, something that is a cross between a large meatball or faggot in gravy, a fish stew some other stuff and what is something we herd someone talking about the other day while we were having a kaffee and that is a Klubb a traditional potato dumpling, got to give one of them a try. After collecting our cutlery we scuttle off back to our table, you know when you say I have got try that and then regret it, well that happened with a couple of things on the plate, you know when you go to Chinese all you can eat buffet you keep returning for something different, well that won't be happening here, luckily for both of us there was a selection of cakes and other deserts, Barb went for cheesecake and what she thought was chocolate mouse which turned out to be chocolate blacmange, mmm tasty.

Let's not talk about Gordon Ramsey being worried, compared to this the chef in the 5 Ways is on his way to his second Michelin star, I am sorry and I do not wish to offend anyone but this was not for us. One thing we did notice was the Liverpool FC scarfs hanging on the walls turns out that the owner was a mad Liverpool fan, wherever you go in the world it's either the Beatles or Liverpool FC we have a quick chat with him before we leave. The meal reminded us of a traditional Mormon meal we had in America while on our way to collect a Winnebago in Iowa now that was truly awful I don't mind offending that chef as it was inedible and the hotel wasn't much better. To finish on a high note, tomorrow we will travel the Atlantic Ocean Road which is supposed to be something amazing and to cover the entire length from here to Kristiansund is a two hour drive and there is absolutely no chance of that happening, we will have to wait and see and so will you.

13th June

We head off for the ocean road and today's destination which is going to be past Kristiansund and then on towards Trondheim we won't get there but the plan is to stop an hour or so past Kristiansund. The start of the Ocean Road is about 30 minutes away, let's get going and for a change we do actually arrive in 30 minutes. Time for a couple of photos of the road before we actually drive along it, in Norwegian the road is called Atlanterhavsvegen the road is just over 8 kilometres in length and connects a series of islands by means of 8 bridges. I have heard and read so much about this road I am really excited to actually see it and the views that it offers, before we set off the GoPro is attached to the front screen, turned on and ready to record what is described as the world's most beautiful car journey. Luckily the sun is shining, let's go before it changes its mind, the road does offer some beautiful scenic views and as we approach the Storseisundet Bridge you will have seen it, it's the one that rises steeply and then curves before dropping back downwards. The actual driving time is about 10 to 15 minutes but we do stop at the viewing stop to we'll have a look at the view, again I don't wish to upset anyone or to spoil anyone's future thoughts about driving the road. My experience of driving the road was the same as I had a number of years ago which started with a childhood dream of driving an E Type Jaguar, years later the opportunity arose and it wasn't just to drive it, it was to drive it for a week, the anticipation of this experience was nearly too much to bear. The day finally arrived, the car looked beautiful its shiny Red paintwork glistening in the sunshine, I climbed in turned the key and then pressed the start button, the engine spluttered in life and then as I pressed down on the accelerator there was a gorgeous roar, my heart was pounding with excitement as I pulled out onto the road to experience my childhood dream, it wasn't long before my dreams were shattered, the thing although it had just a huge amount of money spent on it was awful make that horrible to drive for an hour never mind a week which I hasten to add it did not happen. I returned to the garage along with my shattered dreams, I parked it up and walked away, sometimes you should let your childhood dreams remain dreams. Now the road wasn't quite that much of a let down but after reading everything about it perhaps my expectations were set too high, Barb wasn't that impressed either and on this occasion I did not suggest driving it twice more.

About an hour later we arrive at Kristiansund a harbour town with a marina full of sensible sized yachts with brightly coloured houses rising up the hillsides and surrounding the natural harbour, we park up for free and head off into the town, the town is built on a hillside and all the roads head upwards from the marina, not surprising that. Up the hills into the town, there are some shops open but there are lots of empty shops with to let or for sale on the windows and by the look of the conditions of them they have the signs up

for a while a long while, we wonder if this is the result of Covid but as we walk back down to the Marina we find that there is another reason, as there is a reasonably new multi floor shopping complex with the usual well known high street brands found everywhere, but there was also empty units in there with available to rent notices on the windows. We have a kaffee while overlooking the harbour and then head back to Glo for a sandwich and then on to our next destination. It is about four hours to the next stop which is Trondheim we know that we are not going to get there this afternoon but the idea is to get an hour or so closer to it find a park up and finish the journey tomorrow. After leaving the town the first stop is the ferry from Seivika to Tommervay, before I tell you about the ferry there is something that we can't get our head around and that is, when you are driving there is not a sign in sight that gives you any indication that there is a ferry nearby, it's only the sat nav that knows otherwise it's like getting to a top secret destination. We arrive at the end of the road where the ferry sails from, join the small queue and the illuminated sign says it will arrive in 6 minutes and it's right it appears like magic. This one is a big rascal with proper raising bow doors fore and aft it also has a second deck for cars, as it approaches the dock the bow door is open and a couple of minutes later it's docked the cars, wagons, campervans and motorbikes are off and as the last bike rides off we are on and the one guy on deck points his camera thingy at the registration plate and that's it, the bow door starts to close and we are on our way, this cruise is about eight kilometres and is across the Norwegian Sea, well not right across it as that would be much further. There is a good reason for them using a bigger boat as this is the proper sea not a fjord and even though it looked pretty calm from the quayside it's a little choppy out here and there is enough movement for you to know about it, I don't think it's going to make you seasick but you can see the bow raise and fall. The clever sat nav says that we are about to arrive and as it says 200 metres to go, the front door starts to open and as soon as there is a thud when the boat meets the dock, engines are started and we are off. The road follows the side of the sea then a fjord before heading inland then we are surrounded by forest, it's no wonder all the houses are built of wood as there is certainly no shortage of the raw ingredient it's growing everywhere, we pas through small villages with traditional houses scattered on the hillsides, obviously all made of wood, some with red timber with green roofs and others with green timber and red roofs, obviously other colours are available. After about an hour we start looking for a park up, we turn off the main road and find a space at the tip of a fjord which leads out to the Norwegian Sea, this will do nicely and as the sun shine on the flat calm waters it looks lidilic and it is apart from the wreck of a coach we are parked next to, but hey we can close the blinds on one side and hey presto it's gone and it doesn't spoil the view of the fjord and the surrounding mountains. I wonder what is in store for tomorrow, well I am sure we will find out the, I don't want you to think that I have got a downer on things the place is beautiful and perhaps I just need to stay in the countryside and enjoy what nature has to offer, let's see what we can find tomorrow, I do want to find a mouse no sorry a moose but not with front of Gloria and to aid this not happening she has a couple anti moose and deer things on her front bumper, I will tell you about them tomorrow, I bet you ca not wait.

14th June

We are awake early and we head off for Trondheim it is a couple of hours away well it's supposed to be, we set off and as soon as we are on the main road we head upwards as the road climbs the mountainside, at the top there is a viewing stop and it's another wow moment the sun is starting to shine through the clouds which makes the view even better, if we find a wow moment 15 minutes from our park up this could take longer than two hours. The road then snakes its way down into the valley and then alongside yet another fjord for miles, it passes through some villages with their painted wooden houses dotted around the hillside, yes there are some wow moments but we just enjoy them as we pass otherwise we will make this 2 hour journey into a day. The landscape changes dramatically and often within in very short periods of time, one minute you are looking at fields, then a forest of pine trees, did I mention that there is a few of them knocking about, then there are sheer rock faces rising from the side of the road heading upwards with pine trees at the top, their roots clinging on through a very thin layer of soil, some of these are natural rock faces while others have been created when explosives have been used to blast away the rock to allow the road to pass through. The road twist and turns, not sure that they have thought about straight bits. The sun is shining brightly and is actually sharing some of its heat, the temperature is creeping up and it even manages to start with a 2 now don't get carried away as it's only followed by a 1 but we will settle for the 21°C as that's hottest we have had for a while. We continue on and you may have noticed that I haven't mention any tunnels, well I am about to, the first one is 7k and I don't wish to complain about the sun but your eyes get a proper shock as your pupils go from from as small as they can to as big as they can in moments and then the opposite at the other end and there is a blink of an eye moment when you can't see, which is not really a good idea at 80kph but you get used to it. It's a good job they do, as the lack of tunnels at the beginning of the drive is now being made up for, they arrive thick and fast and of totally different lengths from 30 meters to just under 5 kilometres there is no end to them as we exit the last one the road widens and more traffic enters the road, not sure where they came from, the road continues to grow and ends up with three lanes in each direction all full of cars, this is a bit of a culture shock. This isn't a little city it's a big and busy one and to ferry people around they have bendy buses, big three section double bendy buses with countless wheels and it looks like they can be driven from each end, obviously they are electric. Now let's try and find somewhere to park her and after following numerous parking signs the lead multi-story car parks that Glo won't fit in unless we fancy a convertible Glo, we head for one at the dock which is not just a car park it is a city campsite with electric hook up and waste disposal facilities, you can stay for up to five nights at a cost of 250Nok plus 50Nok for the EHU, why on earth would you want to stay in a noisy car park by the docks in a city for five days. Obviously people do as they are sitting out with table and chairs with power leads everywhere, it might be us but we think that it is a bit strange, we still haven't found out what it is but every time we arrive in a car park people start looking at Glo and us, we have started think that we have got two heads, they have obviously seen a Fiat Ducato campervan before as they are like bottoms, the other day there was a guy looking at Glo as we arrived back to here from a walk, I asked him if he liked her, he just smiled and walked off, now when people stare we wave frantically at them. She is parked up and we head off into the city, the sun is really strong and as we walk along a tree lined we take some shade in the dappled light shining through the fresh vivid green leaves of spring, anyway the place is pretty full of people following the person with the flag on top of its extendable flag pole, yep there is a cruise ship in, I am still in a bit of shock due to the amount of people, we haven't seen this many for weeks. There is a beautiful church well I suppose Cathedral and some interesting buildings after that it's full the usual shops one of which is called Mr Wigan not

sure where the pier was, we make a stop for a beer for Barb and a Coke for me and sit in the sunshine doing a spot of people watching. I am not complaining but the now 24°C that it is supposed to be feels more like 30° I guess we are still in a bit of shock at the difference between our recent 0° on top of the mountain the other day and 24° today, it's time to leave and head out of the city. Back in Glo we put our next stop into Mr Map and he gives us two options either 17 hours or 15 hours how long, you have got to be kidding nope said Mr Map I ain't kidding now which route do you want to choose I can't wait all day, ok keep your hair on, let's go for the 15 hour route. I think we should have a sweep to see how long it is actually going to take to complete the 1200k I recon 4 days depending on how many wow fantastic moments there are there are, I suppose the more there is the more exciting and interesting it will be, at just under half way between the two points we will cross into the Arctic circle, I wonder if there is a line where you can stand with one foot on each side. The daft thing about the weather is that it is currently warmer at the highest point in Norway than it has been here and further south until today, let's hope that it stays that way. I have changed my mind and I am going for six days, we will find out next week, I just remembered that I was going to tell you about the anti deer and moose thingy's but I will do that tomorrow.

15th June

We double checked last night and today's planned journey is about 400 kilometres down the only road available, it's a main road and it says that it's going to take nearly six hours which by our current run rate means about 2 days, this is probably going to be a long day as ten minutes down the road there is a wow moment and we had to turn around and go back to take photos, then about twenty minutes later there is another wow moment which also required a U turn to take some more photos, this could take some time. Then we got onto the E6 main and only road, now in my mind a main road would just go straight to the destination or very close to it, when I had a look at Mr Maps last night it did look like it had a couple of bends in it. How mistaken was I, the road turns left and right like an extra long snake, the bends vary from a bit of a twist to very nearly a hairpin and they are relentless as it snakes its way through valleys, alongside Fjords and through forests, mainly forest there is definitely no shortage of trees and I think at some point the road went round one of them twice, it also goes from being a reasonable wide single lanes to that narrow that you have to breathe in when an articulated lorry passes in the opposite direction. Then at times it goes down to a single lane over bridges now that's interesting when a 40 ton truck is hurtling towards you with no intention of slowing down never mind stopping. It's just ridiculous the only rest from turning the steering wheel left or right is the 100 metres of nearly straight bits that turn up every now and again, it's no wonder that it takes so long to cover a relatively short distance. Then there are road works as they are building a new road to replace this snake and at times they meet each other, the diversions bits vary from driving off a cliff where they have dug up the road and back up the other side, even more twisty bits but even narrower, I don't want to meet a wagon at this point and at a last resort temporary traffic lights with one narrow lane. One thing that this road is for certain, apart from the bends to keep you awake it's the most boring road going, there is nothing to see, not a wow moment in sight so you may as well just drive and get to the end of it. Oh and yes there are tunnels but not long before the road changes, it does get a bit more interesting at this point as the forest opens and you can see the snow capped mountains in front of you, and then the tunnels to get you through the mountains and again they range in length from 30 metres to just under 8 kilometres, there are loads of them which again give your pupils some exercise they weren't expecting. Last night and this morning we thought that we had absolutely no chance of getting anywhere near the Arctic circle centre, but the road has sorted itself out and is

now wider with a series of straights with gently sweeping bends and the speed limit has increased. We are going to get into the Arctic circle, in fact we get into it twice as the road pops over the 66th parallel then pops out for a bit a little bit and then makes its mind up and goes back in. I am amazed that we have got to the centre today, I was sure that we would not get here until tomorrow but no we are definitely here along with lots of Motorhomes and campervans of various sizes ranging from sensible to stupid, possibly we could all have a party in the daylight at 2am. After a look around, taking pictures and going into the Disney experience and on this occasion actually buying something, well this is another important first and deserves to be remembered, so obviously it's fridge magnets and sticker for Glo's back door. When we get back to the van we do as others and get table and chairs out so as to sit in the sun with a little celebration drink and the small tin of beer being sipped like the fine wine that its price suggests. All this excitement and there is route planning to be done which includes Glacier visiting, Whale hunting, well not hunting more like sighting, a cruise ok it's a ferry to the Lofoten islands, moose sighting and eventually getting to the North Cape Lighthouse, there is still a long way to go and we haven't helped the distance by doing our own bit of zigzagging to get to the places we want to see. We will have to wait and see where we get to tomorrow but that's for tomorrow as will the deer and moose thingy things.

16th June

Guess what, our plans have changed overnight but I suppose you have to have a plan in the first place to be able to change it, but we will get to that in a minute but before I forget about them again, them being these deer and moose thingies. I am not sure if you have seen the damage a deer can inflict when they are hit by a car and it doesn't do the deer much good either, now I haven't seen one yet but I think that a moose is bigger than a deer but I might be wrong, let's go with that they are bigger and then imagine the damage to both parties if the unexpectedly meet at speed. I really need to get to the point which is that these thingy things are like little cone shaped trumpets that you stick to the front bumper, the idea is that as the wind that is hitting the front of Gloria it is also forced through these little trumpety thingies and produces a sound that is supposed to frighten deer and possibly moose's away, not sure how they work if the deer is in full flight across a fence towards the road, I don't think that moose's do that type of fence jumping thing but they might. There is absolutely no evidence that these thingies work but for the sake of three quid they are worth a try even if it's only to tell you about them and I have seen the result of a car meeting a deer at speed and it wasn't a pretty sight. Ok that's them thingies out of the way never to be mentioned again, back to the change of plans that yesterday were to leave the Arctic centre and head for a glacier which is in the opposite direction than we want to go, it adds about five hours to the drive and it also looks like you need to prebook a trip to get there, which we hadn't done as we didn't know we were going there until yesterday and now we are not going so there is no need to book, I think I am with that but I didn't need to make it that difficult. Plan B is put into operation but as usual there was wasn't a Plan B but there soon was and that was to get to Bodo and catch the ferry to the Lofoten Islands, there is a ferry at 11am but we are not going there in time for that one and the next one is at 4pm we will easily be there in time to catch that one and it will give us time to have a look around Bodo but it is Sunday and we expect it to be shut. It's about two hours away and off we go, we drive across the top the mountain on the only road available there are lots of campervan stop overs of various sizes available and also a campsite so don't worry if the Centre car park is full. There is a narrow river with crystal clear ice blue and green water flowing serenely along the side of the road, at this point the descent is not steep and although the river picks up its pace it still remains serene and peaceful. We loose sight of the river for a while but the road and

the river meet again when the descent is steeper, the river has widened and is now fast flowing the road and the river continue downwards but now the river is falling faster and after a couple of bends in the road we meet the river again, only now it is a raging torrent of unstoppable water violently crashing onto the rocks in its path, the water is now white and is roaring and shouting at the rocks to get out of its way, I suppose it's a bit like a waterfall that's because it is a waterfall. As we descend to sea level we meet the river again and now it has grown much wider with water now slowly meandering its way to the massive lake that it will soon become part of. Then it's just a drive to Bodo with not much happening apart from the pupil shocking tunnels and some bridges, there is only one planned stop on the way and that is just to fill Glo's gogo tank, at a station close to Bodo with the best best priced fuel, job done we head in to the centrum with the idea of parking up having a look around a town which because it's Sunday will be closed. Before we go into the town we head down to the ferry terminal just so we know where to go when it's time to queue up and that time looks be right now. It's now 12 o'clock and the ferry does not sail until 4pm but out of the four lanes available, the first two are full and the third is starting to fill, there is a line of Motorhomes and campervans following us, so we quickly join the third lane which is soon full of the vans behind us taking up the available spaces. One of these lanes are pre booked so it is a first come first served lark.this man's we have a four hour wait but if miss this one then we will have an eight and possibly an overnight wait, it looks like we are staying put in the queue. It turns out that it was good job we did, because as the hours went on more and more vans, cars, motorbikes and wagons kept arriving so many of them that the guys on the dock opened more lanes which should have been for other destinations, it looks like this is going to be a popular place. With four hours to kill, we have lunch and then as nothing was going to happen here anytime soon we went for a walk into the town, really it was just a walk as just as we expected everything was shut. We get back to Glo and the queue of vehicles continues to grow, as the guy in the old shark film said, I think they are going to n ed a bigger boat a much much bigger boat or more than one.as there is still nothing happening I put the solar panels to charge the Ecoflow much to the bewilderment of our continent friends who already look at us as if we have go two heads. Then at twenty past three things start happening and the first of the three rows starts moving, panels and Ecoflow are quickly and not very tidily, well thrown in actually, as we pull forward the guy says have you registered, well the van has prepaid crossings, no have you registered as a passenger, er no we didn't no you had to, now it ain't that difficult, scan a QR code and fill in the details, but if the had told everyone in the queue we could have been doing it in the last three and a half hours. We are getting closer to the boarding ramp but are told to wait, the boat is very nearly full and they are squeezing every vehicle into the smallest place possible, then we are on being guided inch by inch to the car in front, so close he couldn't open his tailgate and we had to use the sliding door to get out of Glo, they manage to get one more van next to us and last but not least a small car parked at the back door at 90° to all of the vehicles, wow that was close, I told you they should have got a bigger boat. Given that one two and a bit lines got on board, the vans in the other lines could be there until Tuesday, we definitely just got there in time. After a four hour uninteresting cruise we arrive around the Lofoten isles, as we dock it's the usual gentlemen start your engines but due to the close proximity of all of the vehicles, people are guided off rather than the usual squealing of rubber to exit first. Next job is to find a stop over which started to prove a bit difficult as all the ones we had found on the different apps were full,time to drive around for a bit and see what we an find and find one we do, its not ideal as there are a few other vans and there is not much space but we manage to fit in without blocking anyone else. It's a great view over a small fishing village and a view of the mountains which look like they are from the Lord of the Rings Trilogy, the tall ragged rock

face looks like daggers reaching for the sky, but the Dark Lord Sauron does not make an appearance. That's enough of the scary bits more tomorrow.

17th June

We have a couple of options today one is to drive upwards on to the next island while having a look around on route or find somewhere to stay and chill out, as we have been on the move and not really stopped for the last few days, the idea of a bit of a slow down and relax wins the competition, I don't think that either of us took a great deal of convincing. Before finding a site, which after a bit of research we may have already done we will pay it a visit just to make sure. First trip is to the bottom of the Island which is only 15 kilometres away and it's not long before we are there, as there is no other road leading to or from here it's a dead end straight into a car park, this was also once a small fishing village but there is no fishing now just a museum of times gone by. Next we head to check out the campsite it is only a forty minute drive, well it would be of all of the Motorhomes and Campervans in the Northern Hemisphere weren't on the same road, we best get to this campsite first as you can not book it's just first there first to pitch up. When we arrive there is not much to think about, it is in a small cove on the west coast with pitches right up to the beach and it says in the blurb that you get all night sunsets, that's it where do I pay, it's only 12 o'clock but there is none of that 'you can't book in until after 3pm jobsworth' lark going on here, it's just a case of, do you want electric if yes pick one of the pitches with a power outlet if not park where you like. We park up on the grass with Gloria's back doors as close to the sand as possible which was about a foot. The sun is shining and there are a few fluffy white clouds dotted about in the deep blue sky, not much to be done here, ramps out, table and chairs out, kettle on, job done. I like this being able to check whenever as it gives you most of the day that you are paying for rather than getting the three quarters of a day you get at home, especially when you just want to chill out sitting in the sunshine while the gentle waves roll on to the beach with a calming sound. After dinner we decide to be brave and go to the beach bar to see how much a legal mugging costs at the bar, well I can tell you that it's nowhere near the price of a pint in the Five Way's but I have paid as much if not more in the UK but there is a difference, here you can sit out on the decking and watch the sun is slowly turning to that beautiful orange and red glow of sunset as it is very slowly makes a path to the horizon but the angle of descent gives a strange effect as it appears to be travelling horizontally not vertically. Eventually it starts to head downwards by which time we have returned to Gloria, to get ready for the all important sunset photographs, well we not have rushed as the sun is not giving up easily and is hanging stationary in the sky, yes its colours are deepening but it's got going down without a fight. It's midnight and it is still a long way off dropping down to the horizon then it's 1am and it's moved a bit but not much, it looks like it could be a long night but also very memorable as I have not seen this happen before, however it does look like the GoPro is getting stuck on the side of the van and set to time lapse mode, we will see what happens.

18th June

Sticking the GoPro to the side of the van worked a treat however I can not say the same for the time lapse, don't ask as I don't know but it couldn't wait for the sunset and it went to sleep on its own, oh well it's a good job I got some camera shots and there is always tonight for the GoPro to stay awake as we have booked for two nights to let him do his time lapse stuff. Yes the site was budget blowing as was last night's bar experience but if today is and it better had be a none spend day and tomorrow and the next couple of days are low spend days we will have caught, ok I exaggerate it wasn't that bad and someone will have a worse and possibly more expensive day. It's not as warm this morning and the wind is blowing a fair bit, I still haven't got my head around it not going dark and last night it was even more surreal as at this time of year the sun does not set below the horizon it just sat there glowing bright orange and red. Today is going to be one those r and r days joined together with a bit of trip planning for the next few days but we probably know what's going to happen to that, then there are photos to sort through, a few days blogs to catch up with and the bit I keep putting off, the expense sheet that will shout hey what have you been doing for the last couple of days, slow down. Now that job is a pain when you leave it for a while as you can't remember what the item was, especially when you don't know what day it is, but the worse bit is that if you do it on a day to day basis it does not appear that much but when you do five or six days together it hurts, get that done first and then it's out of the way and everything else is easy. Then it's check out photographs time which is done while sitting outside which nice and relaxed but sometimes interrupted by vans leaving and arriving which then obviously leads to some van watching to see if you get van envy or not, while I was checking out another Fiat Ducato arrive, at this point the someone I mentioned before having a bad day, well it was just about to happen. Further down the field to us is surprisingly a Fiat Ducato Campervan but this one had its awning extended and I guess with no tie down straps attached, there was a strong gust of wind across the site and mr wind decided to turn this guys awning into a large sail. It didn't just go up it went up and over the roof and down the other side, oops this looks expensive, I was about to go over and offer some assistance but then I noticed that while the owner was up on the roof fighting the sail and the blustery wind a guy that was with him was still sitting in his chair, note to self don't get involved. Finally this guy gets up and with a bit of help from him, the owner manages to reef in the sail and wrestle it to where or as close to where it should have been, that was unfortunately exciting. A while later I am going past the van and ask the owner if things are ok which as seeing that the whole awning was on the floor I wasn't expecting a positive response and I was correct, it turned out that when the sail took off it had ripped the whole 6 metre awning away from its mounting points on the roof of the van and deposited itself on the floor. They guy is Dutch not that it matters but I thought you would like to know and to give you an idea of the task ahead, he is not young, not very tall well he is shorter than me so that's not very tall and there is not that much of him, but considering the speed he was up on the roof before he was a bit like Spider-Man, also it is just his wife and him who are going to try and fix things. He tells me he has fixed the roof mountings and was then going to have a try at fixing the mounting points on the awning itself but that could take a while, I am just on my way for a shower but if he needs a hand later just come over and let me know. Ten minutes later I am on my way back and he has a couple of straps thrown over the van and fastened to the awning with a plan of himself and his wife hauling the thing up the side of the van and back onto the roof, now I am not sure if you know how heavy a six metre awning is, let me explain in detail, it's heavy bloody heavy and there is absolutely no chance of them doing it on their own, it's then I notice that Barb was at the far end trying to help the wife hold the thing two foot off

the ground. Hang on a minute just stop and I will go and put my towel down and put something on my feet, I am not sure that there has been much of a risk assessment has been carried out and I am sure that the HSE would be too impressed but hey let's go for it. Ideally it would have been great to use the ratchet straps he had at each to haul the thing up the side of the van however there was a slight problem, they were too short. So what options are we left with, well it's good old brut force, ignorance with a bit of added stupidity for good measure. He pushes the thing up from a ladder which is obviously too short and insecure while I take the weight of the thing at the same time as hauling it up using the straps which are now probably long enough to go into the ratchets but can't as I can't let go of them without the thing dropping and flattening the Dutchman, this is just stupid and a tad annoying as there are guys sitting in their deckchairs while we risk life or limb. With a fair bit or more BF&I it's back on the roof, not attached but it is on the roof, the plan is for me to hold it in position by pulling on one of the straps while he fastens the clamps to the roof and then we do the same at the other end, then it's sort of secure while the rest of the mounts are fastened as tight as a tight thing can be. Amazingly without any injuries it is all secure and even more amazingly is that when the winder is turned the awning winds out granted with a couple of sticking points but it did work as it should and with a few, let's call them adjustments the sticking points were now unstuck and it was operation, even the legs worked as they should after a bit of gentle persuasion, congratulations, fist bumps, a few sighs of relief and thanks were passed around and next time it was wound out he promised to use tie down straps and neither of us would talk to hse or whatever it is in Norway. That's it I need a rest and probably a drink but I refrain and settle for a cup of tea, ok this blog to complete, GoPro to set up and just time for a paddle in the cold Norwegian Sea followed by a walk along the beach hand in hand under the none setting sun, it's 12.30am and there is no sign of it setting, that's probably why it is called the none setting sun. We are back on the move again tomorrow and yes there is a plan but anything could happen to that, again we will have to wait and see.

19th June

The weather has certainly taken a turn for the worse this morning, it's cold, it's raining, the sky is black and it's blowing a hoolie, but apart from that it's ok, as there is no sign of it improving any time soon, we get packed up and set off towards Tromso but we won't get there today or even possibly tomorrow as it's a long way. We have a couple of stops planned on the way, the first one is about 45 minutes away and is a village that is said to have a hippy bohemian vibe and is supposed to be worth a visit, let's go and see what it's all about. In one way it's a good idea that we get some kilometres done, as it certainly isn't a day for sunbathing however the driving conditions are pants, especially on the narrow roads, it is raining rather hard. Once we turn off the main road it's then 8 kilometres drive down a single track road which is covered by most of the motorhome's and campervans in the Northern hemisphere, apart from the queue of them on the road travelling in both directions, they are parked up on everywhere and anywhere there is a space to put one. When we finally get to the end of the road, yes it's a dead end so you have to do it all again in the opposite direction. The car parks are rammed packed with you know what's, with the occasional car thrown in for good measure, fortunately for us as we drive into the car park a car is just leaving, thank you that will do for us. The torrential rain has now decreased to a misty drizzle, we head off for look around, there are shops selling artisan stuff, there are a couple giving demonstrations of their skills such as glass blowing and pot throwing, the clay type. There are a number of other shops selling stuff that I would not describe as artisan, this is more, key rings and bottle openers with Norway with plastic Norwegian flags stuck on them and not even stuck on straight, other tat with the made in china logo covered with a none removable bar code, there was a tin

mug with a picture of Moose on it which I nearly bought as it's the only Moose I have seen on the trip so far and I want to see a moose, wouldn't mind seeing a Whale and a sea Eagle as well. Then apart from a couple of restaurants and kaffe shops that was about it, well there was a fish and chip shop and I really do want to try their fish and chips, but I am on see before you buy mode and there was no one else having any, so that will have to wait for another day but it will happen. Next job is to turn around and attack the the one lane highway and hope that there is not another fleet of Motor Campers coming the other way, which fortunately there wasn't and we were soon back on the main road but don't get carried away with the word main. Obviously we have already been through a number of tunnels of varying lengths and also two fantastic bridges linked islands together, they were great, the next gap between two islands is to wide for a bridge or tunnel, so yes we are going on another cruise, as we arrive at the harbour the ferry is just arriving and its front door is opening, it's a big rascal and even though there is a reasonably long queue in front of us, I am sure that we will all get on board, as soon as the cars leave the ferry, the queue starts moving and we drive past a crew member with scanner in hand, he points it at Glo's number plate as we are moving towards him, thumbs up and all aboard. There was plenty of room for everyone for all of the vehicles of various sizes and unlike the one the other day there was still plenty of room, it's another short 20 minute cruise and we are soon back on our way to the car deck, couple of minutes later engines started and we are off. As the weather is still not good and as there is not much to see during this section of the route the plan for the rest of the day is to do some more kilometres and get closer to Tromso which is still over a six hour drive even though it is only 450 kilometres and that's six hours without our planned and unplanned stops. Talking about stops when we arrive at the next town we need to stop and get some provisions, these shopping trips are always interesting as when you look at different things you haven't got a clue what it is or what you do with it. Yes I know a banana is a banana and most vegetables are them same but there are a few rouge ones thrown in just to confuse you, the main confusion starts in the tinned items, cheeses, sliced meats, chilled and frozen stuff, but we are now getting the hang of it a bit although there are still surprises that taste nothing like you expected. Barb has persuaded me to purchase some beer which I have been refusing to do as I can't bring myself to pay the price printed on the label, but I am forced to buy some, after we have paid we head back to Glo who is waiting patiently in the car park. Right let's get some kilometres covered, but it's not long before it's find a stop over for this evening's free sleeping, it's not long before a suitable spot become's available and we join a couple more vans to spend the evening together, well parked together and that's as far as it goes. Tomorrow should be simples it's just head North towards Tromso, I wonder if that will happen or will we get sidetracked on the way, we will all have to wait and see, I do know that there will be another cruise involved and now so do you.

20th June

It's a milestone day today as we have now been away for a month but it doesn't seem that long and surprisingly we are only three or four days away from our original destination, the top of Europe's mainland. We have arrived at this point of the journey much quicker than our original plans and that is partially our fault and also a greater power than us has had a major input to the situation. For our part we have probably come too early in the year and should have waited until the end of June or the beginning of July which may have given us a chance of better weather, then there is the greater power, the big guy or whoever is in charge of the weather. What can I say, well for the majority of the trip the weather ain't been that good, yes we have had some lovely days and we definitely made the most of them but we have had a lot of wet days which have stopped us from

doing some of the things we wanted to do but hey that's the way the mop flops and what it does mean is that we will have to come back and do the bits we missed. On the plus side I am not sure if we would want to be here in the summer, we imagine it would be a complete nightmare given the amount of Motorhomes / Campervans, cars with tents on the roofs, tents, people sleeping in cars and a couple of caravans that are here now is completely crazy, they are everywhere and I mean everywhere trying to use every suitable bit of land to park on. As you may have read the amount of vehicles trying to board ferries is more than the ferries can cope with and sometimes people are having to wait nearly 24 hours for a crossing, this is not really the peak season and I shudder to think what it must be like then, they must need two story lay-by's to give motorvans places to park, I think it would be a nightmare. I have got fed up typing Motorhomes / Campervans so they will now be known as motorvans, let's get back to today I woke up this morning thinking what a great nights sleep I had, thinking that it was about 8am I thought it was time for a coffee and as Barb was asleep she could have a cup of tea to awake up to, I checked my watch before putting the kettle on, was it 8am, 7am no it was 1.30am I had been asleep for less than an hour, it's a good job I didn't wake Barb with her cup of tea. The real 8am arrives and today's plan is to head off to catch the next ferry and see what we could find on route, we set off and it's not long before we are sea level and the road follows the coast of the Norwegian Sea, there are houses dotted along the road and a few on the hillsides it is certainly not a highly populated area and again it is strange as there is no one around not a soul to be seen and this has been the same in other villages we have passed through. The road heads away from the sea but water and trees are never very far away from you and we soon to our right there is a massive Fjord with a mountain range towering above the whole length of the Fjord, the road follows alongside the Fjord before heading into the forests, did I mention that there is no shortage of trees. There is not much to see in the villages we pass through and we do not need any shopping so the only stop was a photographic one. The usual plan is put into motion as we approach the ferry which is actually signposted which makes a change, if you missed it the usual plan is go to the ferry terminal so you know where it is and are not trying to find it when you should actually be boarding and then go into town for a look around. The visit to the terminal again as the other day there is already a large queue, lanes one and two are full and lane three is getting there, best get in the queue and again give the town a miss. The wait today is not as long as the four hour wait other day but it is still two hours before the ferry is due to arrive well that's what was supposed to happen. 2 o'clock arrives but not the boat and there is no one to ask what is happening in fact there is no one full stop, after a while the two line illuminated sign says that the 8.45am ferry is cancelled and as for the 2pm ferry it still says 2pm, eventually the ferry arrives at 3pm the guys wander round with their phones things point one at Glo's registration plate and then give a thumbs up, this is looking positive. Lane one and two are loaded and lane three including us start to move the van in front of us is waved forward and so are we, he gets his front wheels on the ramp and then is stopped, they did need a bigger boat, totally dejected we are both told to reverse up and move to the front of lane one, with the response at least you will be the first to load onto the next one, oh great thanks a lot any idea the next one will be, no we are running late so we can't say, oh thanks again and then the ferry went and so did everyone else. Nobody in the queue has got a clue what is going on but it is bedlam going on behind us as everyone in our original lane three now wants to be in lane one behind us, people are trying to reverse but they can't because of the vehicles behind them and this is compounded as one of them is a caravan obviously with a car attached at the front, then there is a massive 12 ton ridiculous expensive Morelo house on wheels that was behind in lane three now wants to be behind us again while the caravan also tries to do the same, it's great fun watching all this going on behind us, in fact it's that much fun I get out to get a better view which did help with the disappointment of not getting on

board. I am not sure if you have seen one of these Morelo vans and I think that I have mentioned one previously in the blog but this is a proper big one, not only is it three times the length of Glo it is also over twice as tall, the door mirrors are as big as an ironing board, it's not far off being a 52 seater coach and as for price, well they are about the same price as a house, obviously not one in London but a sensibility priced one. The smallest one they make has a starting price of around 247,000 quid and that is without adding anything from the extras list which is also very long with very expensive bits that you could not put a tick in the box as lots of them are must haves, this rascal is not one of the starting price kiddies this thing is one of the big daddies with an obscene price tag, I think the saying is, if you have got to ask how much you can't afford it, the extras list on this daddy would easily very easily be more than Glo and possibly two of her. Do I like it nope, the designer must have only been able to draw a large flat sided rectangle box, the most shapely thing about it is name badge and that does not protrude from the flat front of the box but a least it's curved. Eventually the illuminated sign says that the next ferry is due at 5pm, yes we have waited ages but the only other route was a six hour drive which would be considerably longer in Gloria. Let's try and cut this short which is very unusual when I want to tell you about stuff, boat arrives door opens we are second van on then they load both front sides of the boat and then decide that it would be a good idea to bring the Morelo monster truck down the middle lane right up to the front door this could end up in tears and as the box on wheels was passing Glo I thought that I would stick around just in case the box on wheels gets anywhere near to Glo and I will be able to give it a good stopping type smack on the side, well it's about as close as I am every going to get one. Well there is two members of the crew at the front guiding the thing in and also a couple at the back for when it needed to reverse, it was obvious to a blind man on a galloping horse that this Goliath was not going to fit in this gap without taking the side of something and try as they like, in the end they have to admit defeat now the admitting it was ok but now they had to reverse the thing off, this again was worth watching as now the gap that was there when it came in has now been filled with other vehicles, after a bit of a game of jenga they manage to get it far enough back to be able to move smaller motorvans into the gap that should have been in originally. The behemoth then moves forward and they can then finish loading the boat, we could have been at the other end of the cruise by now, well we that's not true as it's an hour and a half crossing. As we set sail, as we stand on the top deck we can see that again anything past the middle of lane three did not get on board, actually thanks to the big thing there was probably two more vans that didn't fit in the boat, there was also the same chaos going on as all of the vehicles did battle to get into their rightful grid position and some trying to move up a few places. This lot were staying the night at the terminal as we were on the last boat of the day and they were going to have to wait even longer as the first ferry in the morning had already been cancelled, at this point we might have decided to go the long way, it's not like it's going to go dark. I didn't do very well giving an abbreviated version of the last events but I will try and do better now, an uninteresting hour and half cruise passed with nothing to talk about other than the Norwegian Sea had decided to put some waves out there and the boat was bobbing about a bit, right it's time to disembark and we are definitely getting off this boat before the expensive box on wheels attempts to manoeuvre itself off. As soon as we are off the road climbs very quickly and very steeply and we are soon back inline with the snow that is hanging around until it starts to get warmer which judging by the forecast ain't happening anytime soon, Barb has found a park up not far away at the a Troll museum I kid you not. We are soon there and join lots of vans in a very near full car park, the actual museum is closed due to a fire some time ago and possibly been finished of that Covid thing, but it still allows overnight parking and includes fresh water, water emptying and the other thing that wants emptying that no one wants to talk

about and it's all free, let's say thank you to the Trolls and that they don't come knocking later, I will let you know tomorrow.

21st June

Well the Trolls didn't pop round and after doing the jobs at the service point we are on our way to Tromsø via another ferry and a number of tunnels some of which could not be described as wide. Today's journey will include another ferry crossing and this may be our last one of the Norwegian part of our journey. We have checked out the route and there does not look like there are any interesting stop offs so the first stop is going to be ferry terminal which is about a 2 hour journey, the road soon drops to sea level and we say hello to the Norwegian Sea again while we follow its coastline for a while before heading underground again into the first tunnel of the day taking us under another mountain, this one is nearly 3 kilometres and is not the straightest one we have been through but it's ok as this one is reasonably wide, we were hoping that when we exited the tunnel would be shining and we would need the a/c on, unfortunately the weather was worse on this side of the mountain it's raining there is low cloud covering the mountains and it is also dropping down and hanging in the crevices between the mountains, I have to admit that the weather has not been its kindest to us or to the numerous other travellers and there are lots of them, who are here but we are making the most of it and we wonder if we could cope with what must be madness in the short months of summer, it's busy enough now. We have now left the sea but we will join it again later, anyway as I have said before you are never far from water and today is no different we are now following the side of a Fjord. As we continue the road narrows and is now single lane with passing places which slows progress and shows that there are also idiot drivers here as well as most places, there are bridges are single lane and then we enter another tunnel this one is only as wide as the road that leads to it, single lane with passing place tunnels are interesting to say the least and it seems that the more we go through the narrower they get, at times there it's even a bit of squeeze getting past oncoming traffic using the passing lanes, it's mirrors in and a deep breath. We know that we are going to be early for this ferry but we also know if you don't get there early you won't get on, but you don't have a choice as there is no alternative route, when we arrive we are in the middle of lane two which we now know we will get on the next ferry. As there is no other route, the other lanes soon begin to fill until there are no more lanes and just a queue up the road, some people will be having a long wait. The ferry arrives and we are soon boarding this is a much simpler affair as the box on wheels is not here and there are no lorries in the lanes, the crew are doing their best to get as many vehicles on board as they can and move us forward inch by inch closer to the vehicle in front, so close in fact that Glo's bonnet is directly under its bike rack, if there is a bit of a swell and the vans start moving about this is not going to end well, as soon as the crew member goes to the other side of the boat, reverse is selected until there is a sensible distance between the bike rack and Glo's bonnet. The vehicles are so close it is difficult to get past them to get to the passenger decks, once upstairs I head to the open deck at back of boat, there is still a queue of vehicles that will more than fill the next boat, looking at the van at the front of lane one I know exactly how he feels. It's only a half hour crossing so we are soon weaving our way through the vehicles to get to Glo who is on the other side of the boat, no there weren't stairs on both sides. It was going to be easier to get off this boat due to the lack of you know what, well it would have been if the driver of the van next to us had returned to the drivers seat, as the vehicles in front of us start to disembark, he and his family rush with a bit of panic into the van, oh blow this there just room to get past and we are off followed by other vehicles passing mr panic on both sides, it really is every person for themselves. Once off we drive past the vehicles waiting to go in the other direction, it's obvious that the majority of these guys

are not getting on board this boat, as every lane is full to overflowing and then the queue goes back to the road and up the hill which we are about to ascend, we hadn't realised how long the queue was until we started passing it, it was long and I hope that they don't have to sleep there as they will probably fall out bed, luckily that's not our problem and we keep moving upwards as the road continues to climb, this road is single track and more and more unknowing motovans pass us on their way to the ferry and a long wait but they are at the point of no return as their only other option is an extremely long drive all the way back to where they have come from and then start heading south, their only option is to wait in the queue. We have the choice of driving to Tromso and arrive late in the afternoon but we have decided to park up and then head into Tromso in the morning. We find the ideal place not far of the main road, it's in the valleys of the mountains at the edge of a Fjord, there will be no midnight sunsets here as the sun has forgotten where he should be and has let the clouds take his place but apparently he is coming out to play tomorrow and also see what Tromso has to offer and we all find out tomorrow.

22nd June

Great park up last night great view of the Fjord and mountains, we were joined by another 6 motorvans and no noise what else could you ask for, oh black out blinds is what you could ask for, even Glo's blinds do not block out much light I haven't really had a problem with sleeping in daylight at night time but for some reason I was awake at a stupid o'clock and could not back to sleep it wasn't long before Barb was awake, it is possible that was my fault. We are only about an hour away from Tromso and it's not long before the outskirts of the town and we follow the signs pointing to the sentrum, like sheep we follow the signs which take us into a tunnel, nothing unusual there however this one has a new experience waiting for us, it's got roundabouts and you will notice the about word had an S on the end and that because there were more than one, after going round 2 of them we keep following the sentrum signs to another roundabout, again in sheep mode the sign is followed but as we exit the about there are red flashing lights which I guess you stop at, there is a sing which we obviously don't understand but I think that it's a single lane tunnel and it was our time to wait. Which turned out to be good news as there is another sign that neither of us seen on our way to this point, this sign even though pretty small was very important as it said the height limit was 2.2 metres, now that is a very big problem as Glo is 2.7 metres, this means that We either end up with a convertible Glo stuck in a tunnel or we need to find away to reverse onto this busy island or do a 5 point turn in front of us. On this occasion we took the cowards way out and went for the 5 point turn hoping that we could turn around before a line of traffic coming in the opposite direction arrived, fortunately it was a four point turn and we get back to the roundabout, after driving around it twice we pick an exit that did not have a height restriction sign and was heading in the sort of the right direction, we haven't got a clue where we are going and the sat nav has even less than us. A sigh of relief and we are out of the tunnel, coin goes up in the air, lands and says left and left we turn which amazingly was the right way, mr sat nav has finally caught up with himself and directs us to the chosen car park. I don't care how much it is to park, I am not going anywhere near that tunnel. We walk into town and we are nearly on our own, nothing is open, shops cafes nowt, we ask a guy sitting outside a locked door cafe and he told us that nothing opens before 10am, other places a bit later and some don't open until lunch time, that explains why there has not been a massive surge of passengers escaping from the massive cruise ship that is tied with lots of rope to the quayside. They will soon be heading down the gangplank to meet their guides who are waving their flags on sticks for the tourists to follow at various speeds, some won't be able to walk that quick. Let's get round to have a look at stuff before they arrive to congregate in the middle of the

pavement while listening to the flag waver give them snippets of information that they will have forgotten by the time they get back to the boat and in some cases before that. We have a look around and there are a couple of visits to the charity shops I am not sure what Barb is looking for but visit we do, well I wait outside. Mr Sun has made an appearance and certainly sharing his warmth making the coats we are wearing are a bit redundant and are being carried rather than worn. We did think of having a budget busting day and have lunch there but after looking around at the restaurants and cafes that are open there is nothing that Barb fancies and I really want fish and chips but I do want to look before I buy, also I want a hot dog and an ice cream be assured it will happen. For the time we find nothing we fancy, the thought of eating a Rudolph burger or a Whale burger does not sit well with me which is unusual as I will usually give most things a try, as sum of which I have regretted. We decided to save the budget for either later or another day. There is one more place to visit before we head off and that is the Arctic Cathedral which is on the other side of the river, it looks impressive from this side standing majestically looking over the city, there is another reason that I am attracted to is that we go over a bridge to other side and not through a tunnel. We get back to Glo and the the six hours that I had requested from the machine were not all used but hey it was only the cost of an hour and a bit in Liverpool one. Over the large bridge we go and a couple of minutes later we are at the Cathedral and yes it is certainly impressive from the outside we did not venture inside as we think that it is wrong that you have to pay to go into a place of worship, I have absolutely no problem of giving a donation and I do every time I visit our Cathedral's but having to pay twenty quid to go in does not sit well with me. Right let's get going there are two route one is a two hour longer drive and the other route includes three ferries crossings, we go for the ferry route let's see what happens with these today. The first ferry is only 15 minutes away and as we have found with most of the ferry terminals we have used, the word terminal is a bit of an exaggeration it's more like a bit of metal pier pointing out towards the water that the ferry bumps into, also as with most of the ferries we have been on are down a dead end road unless you want get a ferry, luckily this one is only about 5k along a relatively good dead end road. When we arrive it's good news the ferry is due in 15 minutes and we are only forth in the queue, we will definitely get a aboard this one even though it's only a small ferry with just a 5 foot drop down ramp t drive on to it, there are not many vehicles getting on which makes it a bit more relaxed with no need to park a foot away from the vehicle in front of you. The crossing is about 30 minutes which gives you time to go to the upper deck and take in the magnificence of the mountains with an uninterrupted view, I will never get tired of looking at them, they are breathtaking. We arrive at the destination then its keys turned and engines roaring, not the electric ones obviously, it's the usual speedy, hey you get offa my boat, we are soon on our way to the next ferry which when you turn off the main road you still have another 27 kilometres to go and this this one was a dead end. When get to the bottom the the ferry docks, we are 2nd behind the BMW that went hurtling past us 10 minutes earlier. Great only 20 minutes until the next one arrives, well it was great until the sign changed and said that it was cancelled, the next one is due in an hour and as we are at the point of no return for the other route so wait for the ferry it is. During the first 20 minutes the queue behind us has grown considerably and was now back to the end of lane two, then the cars that to expected to catch the next ferry start to arrive and the queue grows to a size of, I think we need a bigger boat. While waiting we have lunch and the time soon passes, this ferry is one of the big ones with a proper opening bow door, well we are crossing the Norwegian Sea, it may be a big boat and even though we are loaded like sardines in a tin, only half of the queue get on board, well we are on and off we go, this crossing takes about an hour which gives even more photographic opportunities from the upper decks. At the other end It's the usual escape from boat as fast as possible, then it's a 45 minutes which includes drive down the 27 kilometre one

way street to the next ferry, on they way down the 27k cul-de-sac we notice that there are not many vehicles heading in either direction and there is a fear that others know something we don't, like this one has been cancelled as well, but we didn't to worry as when got there, a couple of other vehicle were already queuing and the display showed that it was on time. The ferry arrived and a full load of vehicles came off the boat, we are signalled to move forward and on we go with Glo in the middle lane, I thought this could be interesting when we are getting off as above each lane are a set starting lights. The sun has come out allowing for more photographic opportunities, then it's a sit in the saloon before we are told to return to our vehicles. After the guy in the top office had a few attempts, some of which were miles out, eventually he gets the boat in the correct position so that the front flap could open, as it was lowered I was a bit disappointed that the starting lights were not used. When we get off the queue of vehicles is massive it fills the three lanes and continues up the road, some one will be waiting a long time, it does make you wonder if you are going in the right direction. We want to stay on a site tonight as it's been a few days wild camping and as the days travelling has been longer than expected we want to find one soon, we stop at one have a drive around drive out and keep going, a couple of kilometres down the road there is another site and this one is mint, we book in and pay and then choose a grass pitch with a view overlooking a Fjord with mountains in the distance. After a little adjustment to get Glo level, plugged in to the mains and then it's chairs out in the sunshine, this is great we wonder about staying for two nights, we will wait and see tomorrow.

23rd June

The weather is beautiful today which means yep we are staying, a few of vans on the front row which leads directly on to the beach have left an pd after paying for another day we move Glo to the front row to give her an uninterrupted view of the fjord and the mountains surrounding it, yep it's beautiful. Now this could have been a short blog day, you know the ones, sat in the sun, did a bit of admin, started and didn't finish yesterday's blog, bit more sat in the sun, lunch and stuff like that. Before I tell you about today's stuff, I need to go back a day as I had forgotten something, between getting off the last ferry and getting to the site we had to stop to get some supplies, bread, milk, yogurt, something for dinner and some other stuff, I had also fought my fear of buying beer due to its cost but needs must we had run out of the stuff, with a trembling hands I collected a 6 pack of something. As I turned to walk away a lady started speaking excitedly to me in Norwegian, sorry do you speak English yes you need to get to the check out quickly you only have two minutes, two minutes want for, don't waste time you need to get to the check out right now or you won't be able to buy that, pointing to the six pack i am carrying in my shaking hand, why, don't ask just go quickly, ok I go immediately to the till at 5:59 and thirty seconds, the guy on the till said that was close, me what was close, well it turns out that you can not buy beer after 6pm on a Saturday what's all that about, Bargain Booze would go bust, well them's is the rules and we made it 15 seconds to spare as they went through the till. Back to today, when Barb went to pay for the additional day she was invited to a traditional midsummer BBQ and bonfire with the the locals and others to celebrate midsummers day, it is not known here as the summer solstice here, it can also fall on one of three days depending on the phase of the moon, not sure how that works as I haven't seen the moon since we crossed 66° North. When I say invited to the BBQ well yes we were but you had to pay, ok we will come and join in I wonder if I will be able to bring myself to try a Rudolph burger and perish the thought of a whale burger, I will have a go at a cod buttty as the fisherman amongst us have been pulling them out of the fjord all morning, I thought that's a good idea free cod and get charged for the bbq, it's a very light lunch in anticipation of tonight's bbq and bonfire.

During our journey over the last couple of days we had seen lots wood wood piles made into bonfire pyramid shapes all over the place and this explains why, they are to be found all over the country and are used to ward away witches and evil spirits. As 7pm approaches and our excitement rises with thoughts of Rudolph and other delicacies that we have not experienced before we head off with bottle of wine in hand to join in the celebrations with our fellow witch fighters. As we take our seat we notice the distinct lack of any smoke rising from the burning embers of a BBQ there is also a distinct lack of any mouth watering aromatic smells of Rudolph burgers and all the delicacies we have been expecting all afternoon. Well we think that they must have looked at the HSE manual and done a risk assessment that due to the prevailing wind the BBQ must be round the back of the hobbit house to ensure that people did not get smoke in their eyes. After a glass of wine which is the two euro stuff I got at the duty free shop and surprisingly it is pretty good, it is then announced the the food was ready to be served but there were still no signs of Rudolph shouting ouch that's hot and there was a very good reason for this as we were about to find out. It turns out that the Norwegians had not been to our house for a BBQ as their idea of one was a large very large box of cold prawns that you spooned onto your plate and they are accompanied by two slices of bread and butter. The prawns still head their head and their coats, shells on which wasn't a problem but by the time you had removed their heads and coats there was not a great deal left of them, I do like prawns but after pulling the heads and coats off three plates of them it was getting a bit tiresome and a Rudolph would now be good, however there was a reason for the lack of any of that bbq charcoal with meat sizzling on it, what you actually got was another box of prawns. To say that our expectations let alone the payment had taken a bit of a knock would be a slight understatement, as with most celebrations alcohol started to provide the excitement this was obviously the alcohol that you brought with you as there wasn't any included in the price. Then it's time to light the bonfire but there isn't one then a car drives onto the beach towing a trailer with a boat and it that was full of stuff, this was followed by another couple of trailer loads of wood and stuff and soon a bonfire although just a pile of stuff was ready to be ignited. Everyone had to go and watch the ignition of the bonfire and give a round of applause as the flames begin to grow and glow, while the witches and evil spirits bugger off. I am not sure what crap was hidden at the bottom of the boat but the black acrid smoke that was heading skywards was certainly not just wood, it was time to retreat to the hobbit house and the roaring open fire pit in the middle which was burning real wood. The merriments continued and we had conversations in a number of different languages using Google translate and a bit of guess work, as we are driving tomorrow we say our good nights in German, Norwegian, Dutch and Finnish and leave the revellers to consume more alcohol just to make sure that the spirits had gone, and not the evil ones. It's back to Glo for us to get get some sleep before the final attack on our goal, let's see how that goes tomorrow.

24th June

Although we had left the party early which is most unusual for us, Barb is feeling a tad sensitive and needs some more sleep, I am not sure if I have mentioned it but I am having let's call it an ongoing conversation with one of the ferry companies that will not accept that Glo is under 6m in length and can therefore charge us double for crossing, to say that they are being difficult and a complete pain in the arse would be an understatement and they are asking for an official document that shows Glo's registration number and length, well that document does not exist. I phone Elddis, they and Fiat made Glo, to see if they could help after a conversation with a very helpful lady, she sent me a copy of the Certificate of Conformity which shows the vehicle details as well as Glo's chassis VIN number. Great let's send the jobsworth pain in the arse a copy of this along with the V5C

that links the registration number to the chassis number on two very official documents, I also added an invoice from a different ferry company that shows the length and registration number, let's see what response we get from jobsworth in the next couple of days. We finally depart the campsite just after 12 o'clock with a bit of a drive in front of us an 8 hour drive which will obviously not all happen today, as always the drive offers us some fantastic views, it takes us through villages with houses dotted around the hillside all different sizes, painted in various colours, the road twists and turns as it follows fjords, the Norwegian Sea, lakes and mountains, through tunnels, over bridges, through forests, over mountain passes and through the valleys between snow capped mountains rising majestically skywards, it is pretty spectacular. Hey it was good that bit don't you think, we do stop at a roadside cafe for some lunch and then it's get on with it and cover some more kilometres, we getting through them there kilometres and have done over half required to complete the journey. It's time to find somewhere to park up, we check out a few places but none of them really float our boat, we are looking for something with a bit of a view and if possible some facilities and obviously we don't want to pay as we have blown the budget at the last site and need a couple of freebie's to catch up, a couple of those K things we find the ideal spot. It is a nearly new government supplied park up situated in a bay with water from the Norwegian Sea, it is a purpose built facility with park up bays for motorvans, wooden huts for cyclists and walkers in which they can pitch there tents while sheltering from the element it has heated toilets, well the room is heated not the actual toilets, it also has waste water disposal and fresh water to fill your motorvan's tank. Thanks Mr Norway this will do nicely, we have a walk around the bay and on the return trip it starts to rain but we get back to Glo just before it buckets it down, that's it for today we will have to see if we manage to get to 71° latitude tomorrow and so will you.

25th June

It's a early start this morning as we want to try and to 71° North today, it's a good job that I did all the blue jobs on Glo's water stuff yesterday as there is a queue of motorvans waiting to use the facilities, as we are done we can drive past them, I drove past them twice just for the sake of it, yes childish I know but you can't beat a smile on your face first thing in the morning. Mr Sat nav tells us it's going to take three and half hours to do 105 kilometres, has he lost his marbles we were about to find out, this road has got more twists and turns than a twisty turny thing can have it is starting to look like the three and half hours may be correct. Yet again the road takes us through tunnels, over bridges and the other stuff that you already know but I have to say the views from this road are absolutely double absolutely amazing and it also includes turning a bend and a flock of Rudolph's and mates crossing the road in front of us, it looks like we will stop and wait as they have no intention of waiting and leisurely cross the road at there own pace with not a care in the world until a wagon goes past and, no it doesn't I am only kidding or is that a baby goat. Along with the roads twisty stuff it also has another interesting feature and that is it's narrow with rock face with sharp rocky things sticking out on one side and a steep drop into the Norwegian Sea on the other side it's shall we say interesting especially when a coach carrying passengers from the cruise ship we past before, comes hurtling down towards you with no intention of slowing down while Glo is as close to the Armco barrier as she can get. Anyway Mr Sat nav has got his calculations completely wrong and we approach 71° North in less than two hours and after parting with 175nok to get into the car park Glo is parked up in prime position in a front row seat overlooking the Norwegian Sea. Time to go for a walk and obviously a selfie in front of the globe, this was a great idea but the timing could have been managed a bit better as there are 5 or 6 coaches that have just arrived and there is a fight for selfie positions by the Globe and star jumps going

on everywhere, blow this for a laugh we will come back later, it won't go dark so we can come back at 2am if we need to. On our way back to Glo I notice a tandem bike ok there is nothing madly unusual about a tandem but you don't see many of them and we have seen lots of cyclists in Norway but this was our first and made it pretty spectacular is that they had ridden from Japan yep Japan, when we were at the Globe we did congratulate ourselves on getting to our goal on our road trip although we do have plenty more to see on the return trip. Then you see a tandem that has been ridden from Japan now that is some road trip and respect to them, I did think that we had seen some proper travellers when we saw the guy on his motorbike who had come from Kuwait, but Japan on a pedal bike wow respect to them. When we get back to Glo for lunch and a bit of r&r, I sit wondering if they just had the bike flown into the airport about 100k away surely not, especially when you looked at the front and rear panniers it looks like they have brought the contents of their house with them. Our plan is to go for our Globe selfie when it was quiet, now it looks like will not be on our own tonight, I kid you not there must be about 100 motorvans of various sizes oh and one caravan, well I suppose that is not as many peeps as there are in 5 coaches. After dinner the rain stops for a bit and we head off to the globe to see if we can get some photographs without coach loads of people, well we got that wrong as at 8pm they are still coming, there are 5 of the things parked up. We manage to get a couple of snaps before the hoards arrived and by the looks of it they will keep arriving as the centre is open until 1am, now here is another thing about the centre, obviously it has some stuff explaining stuff and some form of light show and another obviously a cafe and a Disney experience souvenir shop. Now that sounds reasonable however it's 330Nok to get in, even if you want to go to the cafe to buy a coffee and cake which will probably be 20 quid and if you want to go to the souvenir shop to spend money you still have to pay the entrance fee, is it me or is that just crazy, they have definitely lost the plot that's like having an anti sales person before you get through the door. It's a real shame that the weather is not good as we will not be getting the midnight sun that we have experienced on other parts of Norway but would have been extra special here, however the weather is not supposed to be getting any better up here until Friday and we are not waiting until then, so the experience of being here will have to suffice and I would have bought something out of souvenir shop just as a reminder but I am bugged if I am going to spend 330Nok to get into a shop to spend even more money, someone needs to explain that to me like I am a child, don't go there. Tomorrow we will head back down this exceeding long cul-de-sac to see where we are going next and you will find that out tomorrow as will we but we will know first.

26th June

Parking at the front overlooking the Norwegian Sea seemed like a good idea yesterday afternoon however 10pm last night it decided to start blowing a proper hoolie and when I proper I mean Gale Force and GF1 by 11.30 you could just about stand up outside, nothing to do with alcohol just the wind, people were tying their pop tops down with rope because the wind was so strong they couldn't close them, people with roof tents were try in get them down before they got ripped off, it was the full don't come knockin when the vans a rockin but it was the wind howling off the sea making Glo rock all over the place, we thought we were going to be sea sick. As the night / morning as I didn't go dark apart from the clouds over the sea turning jet black, the wind continued to gain strength and I was sure it was going to pull the sky lights out of Glo's roof, this was starting to get serious and a tad scary. We needed to move to find a safer position but that meant that I had to get Glo off the levelling ramps, it wasn't possible to open the front doors so entry and was a speedy affair, to speed things up everything was just thrown all over the place and Glo looked a right mess. At 2am we are driving around the car park trying to find a

safer spot and ended up hiding behind a big bugger but it wasn't really much better. Ideally given the choice we would have escaped from the top of the mountain but the cloud had covered the road and we didn't deem it safe. There certainly wasn't much sleeping going on especially in Glo, people were standing outside at 45° trying to figure out what to do, I still had major concerns about the sky lights being pulled out of the roof. At 4am the cloud started to lift and although Glo was a proper mess inside we made a dash to escape before anyone else was ready and we would have the road to ourselves to make a safe descent, obviously a risk assessment had been carried out, we set off down the extremely long cul-de-sac and we are the only ones on the road so we are able to use all of it just in case a major gust tried to get us, 30 minutes later we are off the mountain and even though the wind is still strong it was better than up there, refuge is taken in a supermarket car park close to a wall for protection. We manage to get some sleep for a couple of hours but the car park was starting to fill up, it was time to move on even if Glo looked like there had been a small explosion inside but it doesn't matter as we are all safe. It was a bit of a shame as the sun had come out and if it was the same at 71°10 we would have had some good photographic opportunities but are we going back up there, nope we ain't. Barb goes to get some supplies and I next door to get fuel, there is a cafe next to the fuel station and we go in for a coffee and a hot water for Barb, she brought her own tea bag, then we are off, we will ourselves and Glo out when we stop for lunch. We are doing the return trip via Sweden as it's more straightforward and quicker plus we haven't been to Sweden, another tick in the countries box, we are heading east ish before heading south east into Sweden then down to Denmark, hey doesn't that sound simple, well I suppose it is but the drive is over 2000 kilometres, we haven't been Sweden before so we might find things we want to see and do, we have got to pay the most we have ever paid for crossing a bridge I think it's about 50 quid, well it does make the new Runcorn Bridge look like one you have made of Lego, the Malmo or Oresund bridge is nearly 8 kilometres long as is supposed to be something special, but it will be awhile before we get there. The first part of today's route was just of the reverse of our route to 71° North, and I think I gave you enough wow expletives to describe that route. As for today's route after the first bit we turn left on to the E45 but we are not going to talk about this route as this road is the most boring road and views we have seen on this trip and if it was boring for us it will really be a cure for insomnia for you. Fast forward 200 kilometres, after last night's experience we need a bit of comfort and have booked onto a campsite with all the essentials and we think that it will be good to sit outside in the sunshine, oh yes that fiery yellow ball in the sky has made a guest appearance and looks like he is going to give us another midnight sun evening, you couldn't have made that appearance last could you. A campsite is found at an agreeable amount of Donk's, however the plan of sitting outside in the evening night time sun is thwarted by the fact that there about a million large ferocious hungry mosquitoes and as I get bitten for fun we will be watching the sun sort of set from safety inside Glo, although she still needs a good clean inside but that's waiting until we are not near mosquitoes land as we need to empty her and start again, she did manage to get washed today and that's a story on its own and I will tell you about it tomorrow night, when we see what happens during the day we will all find out tomorrow.

27th June

Well where do we start, car wash or the events of last night, let's start with the car wash, finding a car jet wash in Norway is a bit like hunting for the Holy Grail only more difficult, I was beginning to think that they were like Unicorns, Big Foot and Nessie but hey we found one, I am definitely buying a lottery ticket when we get home. If ever there was a business franchise opportunity that would be used all over Norway it would be Eastern

European hand car washes you would make a fortune, I guess there must be some legislation that does not allow them or someone would have thought about it by now. When we found it, a guy was washing his 4x4, do you know the line from Billy Joel's the Piano man "There's all old man sitting next to me making love to his tonic and gin" well the guy cleaning his 4x4 was making love to his Lance and Brush, I was worried that he was going to remove the paint, he kept putting money in the box like a slot machine addict you see in the pub. I was nearly losing the will to live but Glo was filthy and had to be washed, I got to the last chapter of war and peace and before I could finish it he started to reverse out of the bay, then he remembered that he hadn't washed the rubber floor mats, there's another 10 minutes of my life gone, eventually he had finished and reversed out. Let's get in there quick, now to give the guy his due, the time taken wasn't all his fault as the washing cycle was ridiculous and you could not bypass one to get to the next, I finally realised that this was a money making plan as you would get half way the next program that you didn't want to actually use for the second time, it would stop and say hey you more money or your going to have a half cleaned van, I finally manage to complete the Crystal Maze and reverse out, Glo is clean but not sparkling, the guys at the car wash in Liverpool would have done a better job.

Now onto last night's events, Top tip folks to save you pain, just a word of warning, well a few words. If you are planning a trip Northern Norway and are either going through or coming back through NE Norway NW Sweden and possibly lower down in West Sweden, take as much Mosquito repellent as you can carry and not just body stuff, a couple of tins of house / van stuff to fumigate the van. I had been told the Norway was bad for Mosquitos but we were lulled into a false sense of security as we didn't encounter many on the way up the west coast. The little swines made up for it on last night while in NE Norway and we were eaten alive by the large ferocious hungry beasts. Even though we had the windows, skylights and blinds closed we woke up in the middle of the night to the buzzing noise of about 3 million ferocious Ninja mosquitoes inside the van having a good old feast, the rest of the night was spent swatting the swarm, it was like playing Bash the Rat at the fun fair only with smaller targets and more of them. I suspect that they had got in around the sides of the skylights which are now firmly blocked with a temporary fix, will find a better more permanent solution when we get home. When I asked a local how to deal with them, their answer was lots of clothes and a hat with a net, bit like being in Oz. They recommended a spray to fumigate the van with and it worked, that was the second horrible night but hey we will get over it when the bites go down. Needless to say we vacated this campsite as soon as possible, the site was supposed to be restful and peaceful to recover from the previous night's gale force winds, if there was a choice I would settle for the winds. The road down the first part of the trip took us out of Norway and out of the Arctic circle which I really liked and even though it's June the weather was much better than I had expected. We left Norway and the road took us into Finland as we drove along there was a sign at the side of the road saying coffee and doughnuts 50 cents, they use the €, as we had beat a hasty retreat from the campsite we hadn't had breakfast we thought that we would go for the coffee and doughnuts, this place was proper weird, badly carved things about two foot high some of which were unrecognisable things, inside the place was rammed so full of stuff there was nearly no room between the shelves, it was full of I heart Finland things of all description, full of hunting and fish gutting knives, hats, genuine native clothing and any tat from. made in China that tourists may. It when passing. The lady behind the counter was "Sami" native Finnish and I didn't look as if she cared if she sold stuff, she didn't to us that's for sure. There was no way Barb was going to eat here even it was only 50cents there is another place over the road which was much better with lovely friendly people, after tea and coffee we are back on the road, we had been on the E4 for a number of kilometres and

decided it was one of the boring roads we had ever been on, the tall pine trees came right to the edge of the road obscuring a view of any kind apart from pine trees. We carry on down the E4 until turning off towards a campsite Barb has found, when we arrive I head off to reception and told the receptionist that I had three questions, ok she said fire away, ok have you got room for a campervan tonight, if so how much is it and are there any mosquitoes. The answer to the first two questions were positive and the third was yes but it's not too bad especially on a pitch by the lake as the wind off the lake gets rid of them and as an additional answer she said that at this time of year in this area you will get them there is no hiding from them they will find you. Ok let's do it, we are booked in and paid, we head over to the lakeside and pitch up. The sun is shining, time to sit outside in the evening sun that lasts until, well for 24hrs a day, our little mosquitoes mates are not so prevalent than the last place but there are a few of them but not as large or ferocious as their larger Ninja relatives up the road. We want to find somewhere to stay for a few days to slow down and relax as the most time we have spent in one place is two nights which when you think about arrival and departure times it's really only a day and a half, could this be the place well we haven't decided yet and that means you will have to wait until tomorrow.

28th June

Neither of us had a very good nights sleep, I think we were both waiting for the Ninja mozzies to arrive which they didn't, but I think we expected them to and kept waking up to the buzzing sound that was not actually there but was in our minds, It was probably the trauma they had left us with. Now these little beasties really love me, apparently they are more attracted to blood group O which means that I must be blood group OOOOO and it's only the females that bite you not sure what that means. I have more bites than a dot to dot book and now my body has sent histamine as protection to the infected areas and the bites are really starting to irritate, I really do not have a good reaction to these wee beasties bites and my hands have swollen enough to keep me awake. Right enough of this wow is me crap let's get on with things, Mr Sun has come out to play which means that its coffee in the sunshine, Barb is still not keen on coming out in case the you no whats are out but their not. Now then do we stay here for a couple of nights after some more shall we shan't we, the decision is to stay, Barb is still not happy to come outside until I give the all clear and I am left outside like a sacrificial lamb to have my coffee while on mozzie look out. Well we were ok for mozzies however as the sun got higher in the sky, I can't say it rose as it had never set, what did arrive instead of the wee beasties were horse flies and these things have a real bite. I play bash the rat for a while but I am fighting a losing battle, there is no point in staying here as Barb won't venture outside while these things are around, that's put paid to oh yes let's stay here conversation it's now a conversation about where we are going next, Glo is packed up and we are off. Barb has found a town called Pitea a couple of hours away that looks interesting and that was today's destination. Today's journey takes us back on the most boring road going which means there are no stops on route the journey and does not take long, the plan of finding a campsite that ticks the boxes with decent reviews is proving very difficult, well impossible and we need find an alternative which just happens to be another car park a 10 minute walk into Pitea, it may be a car park but when we arrive it's an RV park there are vans everywhere, we manage to find one of the last few places and what makes this so unlike UK well most camping on this trip has been totally unlike the UK but this one has a proper campsite just across the narrow entrance road, the Caravan & Motorhome Club would have a heart attack looking at 30 ish vans parked for free outside their front gate. Obviously parking up here does not take long it's a case of stop, put it in park, put the handbrake on, take keys out of ignition and close blinds job done, when we have

carried out all of these arduous tasks, we get changed to have a walk into the town. As we walk in we see that there even more vans parked on the other side of the main road, never mind the CMC having a heart attack, the local councils would be in a state of panic, the difference here is that they appreciate that the more vans that stay, the more is spent in their towns which has all the positive effects on the town's economy. As we walk into the town it is very busy which we find very unusual as when we have visited any town in the evening nowhere has been as busy as this, the whole population of the town must be here. There is obviously something going to be happening as the Main Street is lined with people on either side, as we walk down the bars and cafes are full of people drinking and this is the first time that we have experienced this party atmosphere on any other part of the trip. We visit a few places but they are all full and there are even people at tables playing a game of how many empty glasses we can create, the table is littered with them, these guys are certainly not, making love to their tonic and gin. We make our way through the crowds and find "The Bishops Arms" what an English pub in the middle of a Swedish town, what is that all about, well it's about being the biggest bar in town and it's full of peeps, while in the queue we check out the beverages available and the answer to that was everything although they didn't sell Carling but there more than sufficient alternatives available. Drinks purchased let's go outside join the excited jovial crowds and find out what's going on, we find out that it is to celebrate the start of a kids football tournament that takes place all over the weekend. There is a marching band followed by all of the different clubs taking part all singing their own club songs and chants, all getting tremendous rounds of applause as they pass and it takes some time to pass as there are get this 891 teams registered to play in the games, this could be a long night, thankfully not all of the teams are in the parade but there is a lot of them. While it is quiet at the bar we order two of the same and find a place at a tall table with stool's, we get chatting to two Swedish couples just a bit younger than us, after singing the praises of Liverpool football club they asked about our trip and are amazed at what we are doing. I think our trip is good and we are really enjoying it, but I am not sure that it deserves the word amazing, travelling to Norkapp on a tandem from Japan is amazing if not a bit stupid, travelling around the circumference of the globe in a small aging Motorhome is amazing (YouTube), but to them our trip is pretty impressive, hey I will settle for that. They may be impressed by our trip, Barb isn't too keen on the husbands male chauvinist pig attitude and I am not too sure about the way he has significantly reduced the personal space between us, it was time to drink up, leave the party and head back to our car park home for the evening and try and formulate a plan for tomorrow. It's time to stop this here and go do some formulating I should be so clever, we will let you know what we come up with tomorrow.

29th June

This car park sleeping must be agreeing with us as neither of us woke up until after 10.30 which is very unusual, and by the time we had breakfast driven over the road to get some shopping, we only drove to the COOP as it was on our exit route not because we were being lazy. It's after 12 o'clock before we are back on my mate the E4 and we are heading to Umea on the hunt for Red October, I am on one of my, if we find a site I want to be on it asap just to get our monies worth, it's about a two and half hour drive and while Glo and I do battle with a pretty severe gusty side wind, Barb is trying to track down the illusive Red October and the site finder apps are not really coming up with the goods, they have suggested a few that do not fulfil brief and suggested others that sound like they may be what we are looking for but when you read the reviews they are definite no no's. Barb has found a stop over which is at a caravan dealer who supply a parking area with EHU and services right that will do for the night. When we arrive there is a QR code to book in

through, there are a total of 14 pitches and the grand total of one is occupied but on the booking in process it says that there are only two places left as one of them was pitch 13 and there was no chance of me using that one, that is thanks to one Mr Tony Reynolds, and the other is pitch 12 which is right in the middle and miles away from a EHU point, ok miles might be a bit of an exaggeration but it was the furthest one away from the sparky stuff. Now I fancy number 6 in the corner and I am not a number, my thinking is that's it's 4pm and there are 12 spare pitches at a remote site a couple of miles from anything, the qr code might be a bit optimistic on its number of arrival so unlike me well it is like me I hedge my bets and park in pitch 6 with Patrick, Barb says that if anyone arrives and is booked on the pitch I will be dealing with it ok. I will settle of that, look if I can deal with getting a Motorhome pitch at Carfest without a ticket, which did cause Barb and Antony some anxiety, Jennie and I were confident that we would get away with it and we did(if you want to know more just ask, it was fairly amusing) then parking in the wrong pitch with 12 others available was going to be a complete doddle. Plugged in, Glo level and chairs out and sitting in the sunshine job done, as you can guess there is much more to say about today other than the search for the search for the Red October campsite continue. I probably need to do a bit of padding out here otherwise it's going to be a bit of a short blog lets see what I can come up with. Checking back over previous blogs I found the bit about Nordkapp and having to pay to get into the centre to go to the shop or cafe and I hope you agreed is a bit of a weird idea but hey if you can get away with it then it's a great business idea. I have remembered a couple of things but I am only going to add one to todays because if we do find a three day event campsite there is not going to much to say about sitting out hopefully in the sun. Right that's filled a bit but here is the real bit of padding, when we where in Lulea a couple if days ago we did go hunting for a real boat that Barb wanted to see. The port of Lulea is Sweden's most Northernly port and is the home for for Sweden Ice Breaker fleet that operates up to 130 days a year to keep a crossing in the Baltic Sea clear for shipping, oh and they are expensive rascals. We eventually found a way to get to where the ships are parked and after all that driving around to find a way to get up close and see them and see the top of them is about all you can see as there is a large fence keeping peeps away and kept away we were. Back at our evenings salubrious location, needless to say we haven't been inundated with a large number of motorvans shouting that's my number 6 position, in fact only other van arrived and it was a big expensive Carthargo rascals and it just so happens was the one we beat to water disposal point and kept him waiting especially when he honked is horn, well that made me think that it was time to top up the washer bottle while we were there, not sure he was very happy but hey and yes some may say it was childish but I will live with that. He also remembered the occasion as he said where you at the site in Piteå at the disposal station that I beeped at, yep that was me and if there was one here I would beat you to that one as well. Right I have run out of stuff, actually I haven't but I need to keep them for the next few days when we have found Red October, we will all find out tomorrow.

30th June

I know you should never start things with a negative but this could end up being a bit of a boring day for you, as it looks like Barb may have found the missing Submarine or even a campsite that on paper looks like it ticks all the required boxes and also has good reviews, it better had be the one as most unusually we have emailed to book a pitch and will be staying put for three nights. It's less than 2 hours away which although it means that we only need to spend a couple of hours on the Chris Rea road and I might struggle for content. The good old E4 is empty today, well it is Sunday and we arrive at Overhornas in less than 90 minutes, while it might have been a good idea to book onto a site that we plan on staying put at for three days, we do need some provisions and on a Sunday that is a bit of a mission as most places are closed. As we approach the town we see a Lidl and although the car park was very nearly empty the shop was in fact open, it doesn't really matter how many parking bays Glo uses as there is no one about and inside it's the same story, shopping here and in Norway is completely alien to us and it's like it was in the old days in the UK, although I am not too sure how far back we have to go when it was like that. It does make you wonder who has got it right, it must make for a better work life balance and also have a completely different way to shop and as for buying alcohol we in the UK would be in shock, at supermarkets you can only buy beer up to 3.5% proof and obviously no wine or spirits and you can only buy the beer until 6pm on a Saturday. Stronger beers, wines and spirits can only be purchased from what is called Systembolaget and depends on the size of the city, town or village how many if any shops there are, this is how it works.

Opening hours have been extended in some places in recent years. In larger centres, Systembolaget stores may be open Monday-Saturday, perhaps until 7pm on weekdays and 3pm on Saturdays. In smaller towns, opening hours may be restricted to weekdays and/or office hours only. In remote areas and small villages, the local store often operates as an extension of Systembolaget, where orders can be placed in advance for collection on particular days of the week. They are also not allowed to run any promotions on any beers, wines or spirits. I guess that means if you plan a last minute BBQ on a Sunday your guests better like water, if any of us lived here we would very quickly get stuck into brewing our own beer and might even get a still.

Right that's your lesson on how to buy or not buy alcohol in Sweden, we have arrived at Overhornas and we do our usual drive around to give ourselves an idea of whether to park up and have a look around or decide that the drive through, it's Sunday and as you will have guessed it's shut so plan is to go to the site and get our full value for money by being there at our earliest check in time. First impressions are really good reception staff had booking reservation were very helpful, easy check in, code protected access barrier, large pitch with low fences to separate pitches, great facilities including free washing machine well the use of it, ehu included in a very reasonable price, small restaurant and bar all overlooking a lake that feeds into the sea, yep great site, well found Barb. It's a good job I had the information about the purchase of alcohol to pad this out otherwise this would have been pretty short as all that happened was to park and level Glo and plug her into the ehu which did cause a bit of excitement but I don't want you sitting on the edge of your seats as it's not that exciting, the usual power cable was too short and I had to delve into the bottom of a storage locker to retrieve the extra long one and then things get even more exciting as when I went to plug into the power box it was wait for it, an old style 2 pin European connector which then meant I had to use the patch lead and also use the tester plug to make sure the polarity was correct which it was. Now that really is struggling for content, but it is needed as the rest of the day involved sitting outside in the sunshine, a walk down

to the lake a bit more sitting in the sunshine with a sundowner, well you can't really call it a sundowner as it still doesn't go down and that was really about it you will have to wait until tomorrow to see how low I can get and what content I can find from the last few weeks to use, I bet you are looking forward to see what you get, well we will have to wait and see. What we have done is found Red October so that hunt is over but may reappear again as a sequel, for those of you don't know what the Hunt for Red October is, it was a film about a Russian submarine's Captain "Sean Connery" who wants to defect to the USA taking the latest Russian sub with him, I have just looked it up on Google and it was released in 1990 omg 34 years ago, I must have seen it on one of those channels that show old films, I can't have watched it in 1990 ffs, I am going for a lie down.

1st July

Let's get straight to the point, this blog may require a certain amount of padding with things I have not told you about previously because of the blogs were long enough without them and I was keeping some back for days like today as really we have not done a great deal and even that is exaggerating, the day went something like this, got up late, it's was raining, lazed around had lunch lazed around had dinner and then we got adventurous. There is a bar on site and we thought that we should at least walk up there and support the business, all excited to be going out we need to get dressed up to make a good impression, now that bit really is made up what it actually meant was change from shorts to grown up pants as it's a bit chilly. The excitement rose as we walk up the field, over the wooden bridge with a troll living underneath it and then climbed the steep wooden stairs, by now the thought of having a none sundowner beer was making our mouths water and it's a good job it did as the beer wasn't, as we approach it doesn't look very busy and there was a good reason for that, the bar is closed on Mondays come back tomorrow. Luckily we had been to the Systembogalet not the supermarket as they stuff they sell is like dishwasher, we had real beer in the fridge. Let's start with stuff from yesterday when nearly everything was closed, we went to Ornskoldsvik to have a look around and as suspected everything in the town was shut. The thing we did notice which we thought was completely bonkers was the ski jump that goes under one main road and overhangs another main road and a petrol station it was totally bizarre and also Eddie the Eagle was nowhere to be seen, it probably wasn't being used due to the lack of snow. However this is a serious place as it is Sweden's centre of ski jumping and is where most jumpers are trained. Between 1984 and 1995 it was also the host of six World Cup competitions, there must have been some very clever filming to disguise the petrol station. Right here we go with some things I haven't told you about before, well I think I haven't, first one has really been ongoing since we where in Denmark, as we were driving past houses with front lawns it was amazing how everyone we went past was immaculately trimmed, we originally thought that the owners must be out there everyday mowing their lawns but they weren't what they did all have was robotic lawn mowers who constantly went around the lawns in sections and wizzing back to their charging points as required some had the charging points in their own little garages, there are a number of them spread around this campsite, they just trundle around minding their own business, continually keeping the grass trimmed come rain or shine, that's that one ticked off the list. A quick wiz back to today when we went into the town which was great for parking Glo and bigger motorvans as there were lots of outdoor parking areas, the one we choose doesn't have a machine, you have to pay using an App, fortunately I have one such app already on my phone as they use it in the Lake District, in the UK it was easy to use and to my surprise it was exactly the same here apart from one major difference, it all goes them to start off with, the app finds the car park you are in, you confirm it and then choose how long you want to stay for, now this it is completely different to the UK as you

only have one choice of time period and that's 24hrs, ouch this could hurt but did it, not in the slightest as it cost £2.30 for the whole 24 hours, it probably took me longer to check that I hadn't done something wrong than the actual process, £2.30 what's that all about, well about 10 minutes in Liverpool One. I am not sure if you have seen the video of driving the Trollstigen Road this was on my tick list ever since we have been planning the trip, as we went further North in Norway the closer we got to the road and the excitement rose, well we did it, we did it three times and we are so lucky we did, we drove it on the 11th June and it was closed on the 20th June due to a rockslide. What I didn't know until I have just read about it, was that the road had only been opened since the 7th June so it had only been opened a couple of days before we got there and during the days it had been open there had been six reported rockslides hitting at least five vehicles and the last one was apparently the size of a football that went through a cars windscreen. The closure is for the rest of 2024 and possibly beyond, which means we were lucky to be able to drive it and also very lucky to escape unscathed especially after driving it three times. One last filler and then I will save some for tomorrow, this one is about the amount of electric vehicles there are in Norway and there will be more after 2025 when every new vehicle will have to be zero-emissions so either Electric or Hydrogen, currently over 20% of new vehicles registered are Electric vehicles and they would have you believe that all Norwegian's want to save the planet, yes of course some do but the biggest reason they are selling is that all Electric vehicles are exempt of both the high purchase tax and the 25% VAT, which makes it a no brainer as it makes them a load cheaper than petrol or diesel cars. However if you talk to people who own one and you ask them how they get anywhere in this large country, their answer is oh we don't go in this we only bought it because we have two cars and this was a cheap second car, we have a diesel car as well for longer journeys, which makes a bit of a mockery of what the politicians are saying, well I suppose there is nothing new there. Right that's it, let's see what I can tell you tomorrow.

2nd July

We returned to Ornskoldsvik hoping things would be open, we have found in lots of the towns we have visited that the shops do not look as if they are open, they are dull and uninviting it's like the lights are turned off or they have only got 40 watt bulbs especially on the window displays, the outside of them look grubby and that the windows have not been cleaned for months, you have to try the door to see if they are open. After having a walk around we stopped for a coffee overlooking the square, just as we sat outside, a buskers band started playing and their first song was Billy Joel's Piano Man, now if he had heard their rendition of his iconic song he would have sued them, they were truly truly awful, the acoustics were bad but the vocals were terrible it sounded like a herd of cats being strangled, I very nearly went over to pay them to stop their wailing and go home, they definitely need to go back to wherever they practice and practice some more, they also need to record one of their noises, listen to the playback and finally take their instruments to the local pawn shop. I am not having a downer on the towns it's probably that it's just not we are used to, especially the group they make Liverpool buskers look like international pop stars. Along with the strangely located Ski Jump, the town does have some fantastic quirky new apartment buildings they really are different and look amazing. On the drive back to the campsite there is a sign advertising an outlet shop further along the road and we stop to have a look around, it looks like it is a popular establishment as the large car park is nearly full to capacity but there is a second car park which has plenty of space for Glo and others who think that it is a race track and are playing fastest around the car park, people drive quicker in car parks than they do on the road. For some reason Barb thinks that it's a fabric outlet I am not sure why but she did,

well she was sadly mistaken as it was an outdoor clothing and fishing outlet store, this place had more fishing rods than my cousin Rob and I didn't think that was possible, he has a separate barn to store them in, I kid you not, that said he is darn good at catching some massive fish while sharing his knowledge with pupils of his craft, check this out it is impressive, <https://www.tjongsfjordlodge.com/tjongsfjord-lodge-robert-langford/> Rob if you are reading this you owe me a pint. I am not sure how this is classed as an outlet store as the prices are eye watering I shudder to think what the price of the stuff was before it gets to the outlet store. Needless to say there were no purchases made and we are still looking for a suitable present for our lovely little guy. We carry on back towards the campsite but we do have to make one U turn as Barb saw a large charity shop and she does like a good charity shop, I am not sure why as she doesn't make purchase, empty handed we return to the campsite on a route which could be described as interesting, it sure wasn't the way we came in originally. Glo is soon parked level, plugged in, the chairs and table are out and we are sitting in the sun while I try to think of things to stretch this this blog out. We are back to a couple of recap moments and observations, what I was saying yesterday about electric car cars being the thing everyone wants there are a large number of people who totally disagree with this thought process as we have seen more car and bike clubs parading around in things that are nowhere near close to being fuel efficient. We have seen large groups of fuel guzzling flame spitting sports cars popping and farting while chasing each other on the out of sight country roads, then there are the local chapters on massive Harley Davidson's thundering down the roads with exhaust noise that sets car alarms off. Then after these guys have played at burning fuel, the big guns come out to play, the immaculately prepared and restored American classic cars with engines so big they would not fit under the bonnet of a large modern day car, some of these things are the size of a coach with massive fins at the rear to help them go in a straight line as they are not good at going around bends, they don't have carburettors they just have a hose pipe that supplies fuel to ever thirsty big block 7 litre monster engine. These guys do not seem to be worried about being carbon neutral and I wonder how many electric cars it takes to make up for all these gas guzzlers, these clubs of like minded people are not few and far between we have seen lots of them in both Norway and Sweden. Now let's get to the serious hell raiser boys with their 6.1Lt Hemi V8's these things are everywhere and they all like to leave their screeching tyre lines where ever they can, on every road we have driven on there are random burn out lines and the evidence of doughnuts every few miles, I don't think that any any road we used had been spared. We were parked on a side road when one of these bright red monsters rolled up, then with his left foot lightly on the brake pedal and the other firmly on the loud pedal the revs rise and the power from V8 Hemi makes the rear tyres give up their battle for grip and start spinning at a tremendous rate making smoke billow from the rear of the car while leaving black rubber tracks on the tarmac, the brakes are also starting to loose the battle as the monster moves slowly forward until his left foot is taken off the brake and the monster shoots off like a dragster at Santa Pod leaving black lines all down the road, crikey they must sell some tyres here. Right that's it until tomorrow.

3rd July

In the interest of the local economy and helping small businesses we have booked breakfast at the campsites restaurant, we had originally done this as we were planning on leaving today and then we wouldn't have to sort breakfast out in the van, but we have changed our plan and are staying another night, but as we had already booked breakfast and it would be inconsiderate not to turn up, not to mention that we had already paid for it. The table is booked for 10am and we get there before that as you might know I hate being late or even on time, I would much rather be early and wait for a bit. The young guy

looks at the computer and informs us that our breakfast will be six minutes what are we doing, catching a Japanese train, six minutes what's all that about, shortly would have done. Up to now we have been extremely impressed with the site and the female member of the team was extremely helpful, professional and efficient, unfortunately she wasn't working this morning and I think the C team was on duty, I was initially impressed with the ready in six minute quote but things went down hill from there. We had booked to have breakfast in the restaurant however the sun was shining brightly and sending its warming rays upon us, so we chose to sit in the very pleasant outdoor area, then very close to the promised six minutes the continental breakfast arrived, now our expectations of the selection of continental delicacies arriving on a silver platter accompanied with matching cutlery and bone china cups may have been a little high, but as continental breakfast usually consist of a number of different elements we had expected it to be served in some form of buffet style. What we actually got was two brown paper bags containing the elements of the breakfast, accompanied by two spoons, one knife and we were told that the spoons were for the yogurt and the single knife was to butter the rolls, I think he thought that because we are English we weren't to sure what to do with them, oh and there wasn't a plate in sight, the coffee and tea were served in paper cups and the same spoon for the yogurt was expected to be used to stir your tea or coffee, now I was about to complain but we were laughing that much all I could do was ask for another knife and lick the spoon prior to it entering my paper coffee cup. I might have been being kind by saying he played for the C team, I actually think he was one of the C teams ball boys, anyway the brown paper bag ripped in half actually made great plates, yes I know I should have complained but I could not be bothered starting the day with an argument as he obviously thought that this was the way things were done, I also went with the when in Rome lark, I am just glad I hadn't ordered cornflakes and milk. Now in-fillers will definitely be required today as that was about the highlight and it probably goes down hill from there. Let's be honest we haven't done a great deal today, after we returned from our unforgettable breakfast, I offered to do a pink job which was clothes washing, I was probably just being tight as the washing machine is free to use on this site, but somewhere in the fees you have paid for it. I just got to the machine room in time as a minute after I had started loading the machine and older couple arrived with their home village entire weekly wash, I kid you not they could just about carry the 5 over flowing IKEA bags they had with them, I don't think that they were very happy about missing out by a minute, they are standing there watching what I was doing which frankly I hadn't got a clue. I can use our washing machine even though Barb might disagree with that, added to the fact that I had never used this type of machine before and also that every wash cycle instruction surrounding the knob was in Swedish, I was struggling a bit the best I could do was turn the knob and look at the wash cycle time displayed, these times ranged from 15 minutes to four hours and fifteen minutes, as they were still wittering on behind me I was tempted to select the four plus hours wash but being British I did the right thing and chose the three hour wash, no I didn't I chose the next wash up from the fifteen minute wash which I thought would do buggar all, there were no options between fifteen minutes and one hour so an hour it was, as I walked away I could hear them muttering unhappily as they looked at the display timer as it clicked down to 59 minutes, oops I don't think that they were very happy, well they should have got up earlier they had plenty of time while we were having our Ritz style breakfast, ritz biscuit that is, anyway they will have to wait. Not wanting to be late I stroll up to the washing machine room and they are sitting outside like a pair of praying mantis, I walk into the room and the machine is showing what around here must be the magical 6 minutes, by this time they had followed me in and after looking at the timer they went back outside and returned to their perch. Now at this stage I was really thinking of putting the wash on an additional spin cycle and walking away, but just the thought of it put enough of a smile on my face,

machine unloaded I walk around the corner and politely tell them that the washing machine is ready for them, as I collected our washing, they were hurriedly filling the machine and then female and deadly praying mantis asks me if I knew its load capacity, I suggested that as they could not close the door there was possibly too much in it. The site have also supplied a rotary washing dryer and just to be a proper awkward sod I spread our washing so that the sun and the gentle breeze would both be at their most effective. A while later well it must have been an hour I return to find the rotary dryer at 45° and struggling to stay upright due to the weight of clothes, bedding and whatever else they have on it, I remove our dry clothing and leave one towel which is not quite dry, as our clothes are removed the rotary dryer moans as it tilts past the 45° angle. We have been sitting outside in the sunshine then it starts to rain, Barb puts the chairs away while I go to rescue our towel which should be dry apart from the rain, the towel is sitting there all on its own, the praying mantis have swooped down and removed all of their clothing quicker than a large flock of locust can demolish a small field of green vegetation. I return with my towel which has only been exposed to a minimum amount of rain and will quickly dry once inside Glo, not long later the female mantis arrives a knocks on Glo's side door, Barb opens the door and politely says hello, the mantis says abruptly your husband took two of our towels when he removed his washing from the line, Barb looked at her indignantly and responded equally abruptly no he didn't, are you sure, yes I am perfectly sure, the mantis stood stationary for a moment then with a huff she turned and walked off, Barb was not a happy bunny. The afternoon turns to evening even though it's not going dark, we go for a walk down to the lake, there is a large fire pit and stacks of kiln dried wood, fire lighters all free for anyone to use and sit around a raging fire, one of the guys had decided that some the logs were too big and was chopping them into smaller pieces, well when I say chopping, he was hitting the wood with the smallest axe going, it must have come out of a Christmas cracker, you could hear the wood laughing as the mini baby axe bounced off it, I had to keep my hand over my mouth to stop myself laughing while Barb was elbowing me in the ribs to shut me up. On the way back to Glo, Barb wanted to take a walk around the site to find the mantises lair to confront her regarding the loss of her towels, fortunately their lair was well hidden, unlike ours as Glo is the only van in the village with UK sticker and that was a bit of a large clue. Tomorrow is our wedding anniversary and Barb has found what looks to be an interesting town with an even more interesting whacky restaurant not racers and there is a park up with full facilities a 5 minute walk from it. The only sticking point is that is a three and half hour drive to get there, so we better get some sleep and tomorrow we will see if we get there.

4th July

It's an important day today, it's our 43rd wedding anniversary, who said it wouldn't last, well actually a few people but we have stuck at it just to prove them wrong, that is obviously not true and without all the soppy but true love of my life stuff, Barb is also my best friend and travel buddy. Lots of people ask how do we get on in such a confined living area for so long, let's not kid ourselves that it's plain sailing all the time and obviously there are times when we do have words but they are usually after a long tiring travelling day when things aren't going quite right, usually about turning left not right or vice versa, but we have an agreement and our own special gesture that we have used for years instead of using the reversed V for victory sign, our sign breaks the ice and makes laugh so that we don't really fall out. We are also both very easy going on where each of us want to go and do, sometimes we do go well off our main route so that we can both put ticks in the want to do box, otherwise its usually a darn long way to revisit it, Barb does say that my places to visit and to do ideas are usually a bit more whacky than hers, I can't think why, but some of you might tend to agree with her and if I was honest I would

probably have to agree with her. Things like driving to Montenegro just because the James Bond film Casino Royale was supposed to be there, even though no filming actually took place in Montenegro so why go, well it's a bit like this trip why go to the most Northernly place in mainland Europe, stay for a day and then turn round to come back, why well because it's there. Other people in the world take on and accomplish far more serious adventures and goals, ours are comparatively easy but they are still goals that we have achieved, I do have a few more whackier ideas on my bucket list but I just need to convince Barb that they are good idea and as the years move on I need to do that convincing a bit quicker. Well that's filled some time and space up, Glo is made ready and we set off for Soderhamn and some quirky restaurant that Barb has found, best get going as it's a three and a half hour drive which around here probably will not be achievable, the main E4 is not far from the campsite and we are soon on the totally boring road I have travelled for a long time, it is no wonder the drive back through Swend is far quicker than coming back through Norway, one it's a fairly straight road and two there is absolutely nothing to see apart from trees, it's a bit like being on a cruise, water water everywhere except this is trees tall trees that obscure everything apart from more trees and the occasional uninteresting manufacturing towns with loads of pine tree trunks piled up next to a petrol station. One thing that is interesting about the road while in our minds being darn right dangerous is the exists, there are virtually no deceleration lanes there is just a turn right sign about a hundred metres before you have to turn right as if into a side road while the traffic behind is travelling at 110kph especially the wagons as they just don't want to slow down, then if you want to turn left it's the same thing none of that slowing down lane, it's just a 90° right turn which immediately turns into a you turn and then lets you take your life in your hands crossing lanes travelling at 110kph in both directions, on some occasions there is a deceleration lane, it may only be 100 metres long but at least it is one but then it turns into a left or right hand bend that can taken at more than 30kph. I would rather go in a straight line which leads to the one exit you need, even the straight line bit is interesting as it is one fairly narrow lane with Armco barrier on one side and then one those wire barriers separating you from the oncoming two lanes of traffic then after a few kilometres your side of the road turns into two lanes and the oncoming lane goes down to one effectively making narrow overtaking lanes which aren't very long, this slowing down then speeding up to overtake a caravan that is getting blown around, it's a bit foot down and take a deep breath and then finding an artic breathing down your neck, hey I am not making this road sound like a nice drive, well that's because it's not. Barb has been seeing handwritten signs at the side of the road which says Loppis and a distance, with help from Google translate, Barb gets it to Flea market, now what have I been saying about Barb for some unexplainable reason loves visiting tat shops and also what I was saying about accommodating each other. Well I thought we were safe as there can't be many Loppis 100 metre signs on the E4 well how wrong was I, about 2k down the road, yep correct a Loppis 100 metres sign, quick decision time, do you want to go, errr yes, indicator on anchors on, turn 90° right to turn left, risk life crossing 3 lanes of 110k traffic, now I know 110k sounds quick but it isn't really, get Google to convert it to mph, well I am not doing everything for you, we pull up outside a warehouse, now I was hopeful that Loppis actually had something to do with Lois Lane, my mind does work in strange ways at times, at times who am I kidding. Well I was to be disappointed as it was a warehouse full of stuff that could be described as tat worse than crap, there was a funny bit to the visit, Barb had gone in before me and had gone straight on instead of turning right which I had done, when we met up in the tat bit, Barb said did you go straight on, nope why, I had to run out as it was full of, now how do I put this, oh things that look like willies with out the rest of a male body attached that some ladies might purchase, we were in hysterics with people looking at us saying under their breath don't worry they are English. Well I have dragged into flea market tat shops a number of

times but this one now officially holds a world record, I have never seen such complete and utter junk in my life it was not only crap it was expensive crap, it was like a car boot sale with Harrods price tickets, we needed to escape quick before we caught fleas. Next door to this shine shop was a cafe and while we were stopped I suggested a kaffee know this was the second mistake, we walked in and immediately thought that it was an extension of the flea shop but with more fleas, it was horrible and beat a hasty retreat as did the couple who had followed us in and were running back to their large motorhome. Next job is to risk life and limb getting across the three lanes of traffic, when driving on the right or as we prefer the wrong side of the road, I have two pet hates, turning left and the worse one is roundabouts they are just weird. Short version we get back on E4, arrive at our destination which is the town motorvan park which is next to the restaurant we drive in and hey what a result there were lots of space available which was a bit of a surprise, anyway how do we book in, phone number on wall, this looks easy and yes you got it too easy as up to the 30th June it was first here got a space but they change it from the 1st July to first to phone up and prebook got the space which meant no place for Glo. We had been talking to the guy that has the cafe next door and pointed at some empty land about 10 yds away from the proper site and it's free, thank you but we really wanted the facilities as well, he said don't worry about that come and have a coffee and I will give you the code for the doors, right result all the services with zero cost well apart from the coffee and ice cream but I didn't tell him as up to then he hadn't given us the code. Glo is soon parked up overlooking the river and we have a piece of paper with the code, happy days. After a walk around the town we head back to Glo to get to go for our anniversary meal, the restaurant called Hunker Junker Garage is a few minutes walk away and is an outdoor zany affair, well we suppose it would be a zany affair if it was later in the season and it was a weekend as it was it was a bit quiet with not many people but certainly was interesting, meals ordered and paid for, ticket with number given and instructions that when number is called come and collect your grub, I return to our table and then think we might have a slight problem as he was calling the numbers out in Swedish and my interpretation of 23 shouted out in Swedish was none existent even after checking with Google translate, best go and ask if he can call 23 out in English, yep not a problem. The food price was reasonable however the price of two small tins of beer followed by two more was eye watering, a bit like being at the big M you take your plates tins and stuff back to a point where waste food goes in here, plates go here, glasses here, cutlery here, tears and tins in here, I thought that I had got a job. We head back to Glo for what by comparison is free beer and to decide to stay another night or head further down and follow a smaller slower road along the coast of the Baltic Sea no decision made so we will all have to wait until tomorrow.

5th July

Right decision made we are staying put and not because we are hung over, we only had two small beers at Hunker Junker I was tempted by the rum bar but did not give way to the temptation, we had thought about walking into the town for a drink but we ended up going back to Gloria and had one beer and one glass of wine, I know you will have trouble believing that but it's true, I remember when our celebrations went on until the early hours of the morning. As we are staying put, it might mean that there may be a bit of delving back into the saved stuff to make up, but first there are a couple of things that did actually happen today and the first one is going to have you saying wow I wish I was with you it sounds so glamorous and exciting. Actually you will be glad you haven't bothered, as the massive news was that the milk had gone off and I to go to the supermarket to get a replacement before I could have cup of coffee, wow living the dream, there is one thing about buying milk in different countries and that is they use different colours for there

types of milk, in Norway semi skimmed is in a pink Tetra Pak container and here they use green and not being ignorant and not being able to understand the language I stand there with Google translate pointing at the different containers only to realise like an idiot they have the varying percentages on them Doh!. I take the opportunity to have a walk around on my own and at 8.30am I was certainly alone, more staff than customers in the supermarket and as for out in the Main Street there was me, I suppose it's only to be expected as nothing else is open and won't be for a while. I walked back through the park area just me and my semi skimmed milk, I did consider a game of crazy golf as I thought that I could beat a Tetra Pak of milk but I was missing a bat and ball, sorry golf fans I meant club. At least being up early did have one benefit as I was able to collect the fresh bread from the local bakery that Daniel had waiting for me collect at 9am, after a conversation putting the world to rights and discussing fast noisy cars and even noisier Harley Davison's and how good they are at setting car alarms off while riding past, he knows as he has got one. I eventually return to Barb and Glo, Barb thought I had got lost but Glo did not seem to be particularly bothered. We were now able to have cups of tea and coffee, I decide that I would be brave and have mine on the floating pontoon just by where we are parked I also thought that it was a good idea to wear a T shirt and shorts which were ok while walking around town and chatting to Daniel in his cafe but the same clothing was not the best idea to be sitting on a pontoon which is floating in the river as the chilly morning air blows down the river, it wasn't long before my coffee was finished and I headed back to our home on wheels to get warm. We are now going to have to delve into the reserve stories my options of which to use are getting a bit thin on the ground as I have used a few of them up recently so I might be scraping the bottom of the barrel but let's give it a try, let's start with the smaller animals it has been great to see a number of red squirrels including very young ones shooting up trees as you go past and even a few hop, skip and jumping across roads thankfully the out of the way country roads and talking about crossing roads we have seen a number of Rudolphins crossing roads some of which have been fairly close and for us to come to a stop in various places as they saunter across the road without a care in the world without even using a Zebra crossing, well they probably don't know what a Zebra is as they live in Africa, they probably don't know anything about Africa either, what did I say about the bottom of the barrel. We are now going to move up again in animal size and that's about Moose, we have seen that many warning signs to be aware of Moose I had expected to see a tribe of them by now. Exactly how many have we seen well that's easy and the precise answer is none, not a one I am beginning to think that they are either the world hide and seek gold medalists or they are closely related to Unicorns, I have really wanted to see one, a moose that is not a Unicorn but I suppose we will just have to go moose hunting with a camera, I might have to find a zoo that have moose, it's not the same but then I would know they exist, to be honest I know they do as we have seen them in America these must have been the losers in the hide and seek championships. Not seeing one is a good reason to return as well as seeing the Aurora Borealis, and Norway in the winter with snow on the mountains glistening in the sunshine. Wether we would drive all the way or fly and pick up a hire car is something to be talked about after we have been to a few more places in Europe with Glo, problem there is we will have to wait for three months for a Schengen clock to reset to Zero, unless the new boss at number 10 can get the rules changed so we have the same agreement as Mainland Europeans have coming to the UK, bloody Brexit negotiations or lack of them are to blame, I am not getting into that conversation. We have a travel day tomorrow which should be great fun as the weather guys are forecasting 45+ MPH winds and yes it's MPH not KPH that should make an interesting drive down my favourite E4 or if we can find another route which will probably be longer but a more pleasant drive. We will see what happens tomorrow.

6th July

The weather man has changed his mind and moved the 45+ mph winds forward until tomorrow which hopefully means that we have a better drive today even though the expected wind isn't arriving today we are still going to take the longer but hopefully the more enjoyable coastal route towards Gavle as our first stop. We have a couple of jobs to do before we can leave, Glo needs a couple of those Blue jobs that need doing by a male, seems that this women's lib only works for certain jobs and this was is not on the list, while I get on with that one, Barb sorts Glo's interior ready for travel, I wonder what she will not close or fasten this time, I really hope that she doesn't read this. There is one more thing to do before we go and that will make us wait until 10am, I have mentioned before, in fact just the other day, that Barb likes nothing better than a good look around certain types of retail outlets which range from charity shops, second hand shops, antiques and collectibles and now Loppis shops have now joined the club, I have what I call an anagram, it has absolutely nothing to do with any combination of the letters involved but it does fit the products they have to offer and it is "A right load of crap" Well it just so happens that when we parked here on Thursday right opposite where we park is yes correct a massive sign above a door saying secondhand goods and collectables obviously we had to pay it a visit on Thursday and it's massive it's as big as a department store which in my mind just means that they have got more crap to sell, as usual after a walk around no purchases are made and we leave. What's that got to with 10am today well it was shut on Friday and Saturday but open again this morning which will have given them time to restock, they were a number of other people that must have thought the same as by 9.30am a fairly large queue was forming. Barb said that she wasn't going to queue and that she would wait until they had all gone in, I got an abrupt answer when I suggested that she might miss a bargain when Barb returned she said that it was like a bunfight at the ok corral with everyone trying to buy a right load of tat, fortunately none of which Barb had with her. By the time had said farewell to Daniel and his brother we were on the road by 11am, as we arrived the Adblue warning light had come on which means that our first job is to top up the tank and we might as well fill the diesel tank as well. As every new and reasonably new diesel engine vehicle including wagons use adblue you would think it would be available at every service station, well it isn't the first two we stop at nope, third one yes but it's not working which it doesn't tell you until it's taken your card details and the usual prepayment. This is getting silly then forth time lucky they have one it's stuck in the far side of the station with a special cover over the handle, it's as if they treat it as a contagious disease mind you synthetic pig wee is not the most pleasant thing and I definitely wear a glove when filling the tank, it's slimy it stinks and they want you to believe it's synthetic mind you if it is pig wee how do they collect it in the quantity required, with both tanks filled it's time to get moving as we have used half the day up messing around. After another stop at a Loppis after a roadside sign was spotted and after making an extremely quick visit as this one was actually selling crap we eventually arrive in Gavle next job is to find some parking for Glo, we head for two places that also offer overnight parking but they are full but they have facilities and we need to empty Glo's waste washing water as I park over the drain, guess what type of shop is next door "I don't Believe It" I will sort the water you go and have a look, I get summoned to go in, now I thought that the one in Soderhamn was big well this one made it look like a corner shop it's also got a cafe and I head off for a very reasonably priced new fresh coffee. Now can we at last go and find a parking space in the town, how difficult can this be well very as it turned out, obviously the multi storey are no use and the open space ones are too small, we eventually find a roadside space only to be told by a very helpful passer by that you can only park on the other side of the sign. There is a space between two cars in front of us and it's a bit tight, Barb looks at me and says are you sure and the response

was Glo is going in this flipping space if it takes the rest of the day, Barb watches Glo's bum and she is parked with one reverse and one forward manoeuvre a definite driving test pass. Ok let's pay and go for a walk, there is no machine and they only accept payment through a different App than the three I already have, download the App add details phone number, email address, card details and home address, now all this went well until I got to the enter Country from drop down box well as we have all found before UK is either one of the first two or it is hiding right at the bottom of the list, ok it's not at the top scroll down and it's not at the bottom, ok GB, Great Britain, England nope none of them either, they are definitely making it difficult because of Brexit. Let's start at the top and go down the list slowly and although the list is in Swedish and every country in the world is listed, there is nothing that even remotely resembles anything that could be our country. We are parked outside a coffee shop and I go into ask for help which I thought was going to be easy but wasn't as the two young girls in the coffee shop couldn't find the UK either, mind you I think they would have difficulty finding it on a map. At this point they toys are just about to exit the pram, but I won't let these things defeat me, Barb says let's go before you have a heart attack, let me try one thing I open the App that I use in the UK and even in the Lake District and low and behold it brings up the exact spot we are in and displays two numbers, the one on the post and then the same one with a couple more numbers to link them together and even though the sign clearly states that you can only use the app on the sign something has happened since the sign was put up and the two companies must have started talking to each other ffs that was difficult and that's another 30 minutes of my life I am not going to get back. Clock started with a 2 hour time limit and we are off for a walk around, there are a couple of interesting buildings and guess what else, yep shops more flipping shops most of which are the same as you see in any other town other city in the world let's get back to Glo, I stop the timer on the app so that we can be charged the correct amount and I think we had spent longer to pay than we did to walk around and after all that faffing about it cost £1.50 to park, get me out of here. Let's get to tonight's park up I need a drink, fortunately it was only 30 minutes away and was a great park up out in the wilds next to a very small marina, it's more like a park up for small boats than a marina but I Let's get to tonight's park up I need a drink, fortunately it was only 30 minutes away and was a great park up out in the wilds next to a very small marina, it's more like a park up for small boats than a marina but I suppose that is what you call a place when you park a collection of boats. It's very peaceful with just a few people arriving and going out in their boats I am not sure where they are going as it's 10.30pm and now that we are further south it does go dark. It's getting late and we still need figure out what we are doing tomorrow, when we do we will let you know but that will be tomorrow.

7th July

We had looked at the Stockholm options and none of them were going to happen today so we had a relaxed morning and breakfast sitting outside watching the boats bobbing around on their moorings, while we plan our Stockholm visit and book in at one of the City Stellplatz park ups, there are a number of options around Stockholm some of which have the price tag of a double room with breakfast in a Travel Lodge, these are immediately crossed off the list as are the fully booked ones, I suppose that's a bit obvious really. After a bit more hunting we find one that is a sensible price and a 10 minute walk to the metro station and then a 15 minute train ride into the city that will do us, now all we have to do is pay which like you I thought this time would be a straight forward process as there can not be two booking forms that don't like the UK well how wrong was I, it again starts with all usual jobs to register your details to allow you to book a pitch, name, email, phone number and make up a password and then you will get an email back with a reservation number that will hold the booking for you while you log in and go to the payment bit. This can't be as difficult as last time, well let's just say I was wrong. Start with the usual, name, address, phone number, email again, card number and choose Country, again there is no sign of the once mighty UK, Montserrat yes UK no, it looks like we have fallen off the planet since we upset certain countries in Europe. Same performance as yesterday look down the list a couple of times and no sign of us but this time I notice something in Swedish that didn't resembles anything like a country and after a bit of help from Google and Google translate, I figure out that it stands for the rest of the world that they have not mentioned in the list, that's the level our UK has fallen into, which is even worse when you look through the list where there are countries listed that you have never heard of and probably have a population of 3. Great let's pay but as it had taken so long I have been timed out and have to start again, eventually it's booked. With all this faffing about we are not going to go to the city today and have made the booking for tomorrow night so that we can maximise our time in Stockholm, which means we have to find another park up for tonight, I can't believe all this has taken until after lunch time and we haven't even had lunch or breakfast for that matter. Barb has found what looks like a decent park up for this evening which is about 30 minutes from the Stockholm stellplatz and we head off there and to have lunch, by the reviews we have read this is not the most salubrious car park but it is only a 5 minute walk from a lake that is popular for swimming it has a couple of beaches and a beach bar. Well the reviews aren't wrong about the car park and they are correct about the lake and its beaches, well when I say beaches yes they are sandy but there isn't massive of it. We have a walk around the lake well not all of it as it's massive, we sit for a while by one of the beaches looking out over the lake and then head off to check out the cafe / beach bar, now this is a bit whacky, there is a deflated bouncy castle, various children's toys scattered all over the grass, the seating is old bus seats spaced randomly around the area and then a ramshackle shed with a decking area and it also sells food surprisingly pizza, the place is a bit weird it may be fun when it is full of people on a warm bright summers day, but today with on one else there, it's just strange and we vote to give it a miss and return to Glo. Usually by this time we have been joined by a couple of vans but we are still on our own, this is a bit strange best be having a look for a reason and a walk around we find a very small sign that says parking between 06-24 and when we checked the past reviews on the park 4 night app it confirmed the up to midnight parking. Now I suppose nothing would happen if we stayed but if you are doing this type of wild camping you need to be respectful and not give motorvaners a bad name. Fortunately there is another park up 30 minutes away and we head there, hoping that there will be a space as it is only suitable for 5 vans, fortunately there are is only one other van when we get there and it is a lovely secluded spot by a nature reserve, we have a bit of Stockholm where to go what to see planning so that's your lot for today.

8th July

As we are awake early we head off towards the Stellplatz just so we know where it is for later, when we arrive Barb just pops into reception to see if we could book in just before the allocated 12 o'clock, the guy on reception said that our pitch was vacant now and we could book in immediately, that's a proper result as it gave us another couple of hours that we weren't expecting to have. Usual stuff with Glo, level out, plugged in job done, after breakfast we head off to find the local train station which the guy on reception has given Barb all the details of which way to go and which train to catch into the city. We set off to find the train station, a couple of people are leaving just before us and as they seem to know where they are going so rather than follow the instructions we follow the leading sheep, now this train station is supposed to be around the other side of the stadium and then just up the road. Right this stadium is big but it must have grown as it's taking for ever to walk around it but follow the couple we do only to find as we turn the corner that they are going for a bit of Willy, it's far to early stop it, there is a chain of supermarkets called Willies which does make me smile, there is also a chain of Burger joints called Bastard burgers which I thought would translate into a different word but it doesn't, yes childish again but if it makes me happy. Anyway we don't want a bit of Willy we need a bit of a train station which we eventually find, we purchase a three day travel pass which lets you use any form of public transport, job down platform found, train arrives in 4 minutes and unlike the UK it does arrive, it's new, it's long, it's clean, it's quiet, there are loads of seats and it arrives into the city 4 stops later on time. Up a couple of long tall escalators we are in the middle of the city, we had thought of getting the hop on hop off bus but the reviews are not good actually they are awful, so it's a walking tour and it's a big place and it's busy, apart from the obvious shops which there are a lot of and probably even more eateries all offering lunchtime specials. Once they are out of the way and you look upwards above the bright shop signs the architecture is fantastic, old 5 story buildings with ornate hand crafted stonework separating each floor and the windows the craftsmanship is amazing, you can't imagine the time taken to create these buildings and these are only houses or apartments It's difficult to say only but that's because when they were built that's what they were normal houses. Out of the narrow streets and into the open the architecture of individual buildings is superb, not just the palace or the parliament buildings there is the majestic Grand hotel dating back to 1874, then looking around the list of beautiful buildings is endless and the more you actually look the list keeps growing. The passes we purchased earlier include free passage on the ferries and there are a number of them, we are not really bothered where they go as we have time to use them all and see what they have to offer, when we get to the first one there is a long queue but they run regularly and there is not just one doing the route this route has three or four so if you don't get on one the next one will arrive soon, this ones first stop is the fairground with rides that make people scream with either delight or fear as loud as they can. This place has one of my pet hates which you may remember from when we where at Nordkapp and that is you have to pay to go into the fairground to spend money once you are in there, it really pees me off, but on this occasion as we are over 65 we get in for free, luckily I had our passports with us to confirm our age. Another reason why I would have been unhappy paying an entrance fee is that Barb won't go on any of the rides, I really needed Phil & Jennie with me in here. Obviously I could have gone on them on my own but there was a long wait for each ride and it's not fair on Barb to stand around waiting to hear me scream, like that would happen, not going on a ride is another thing that would not make me happy about paying an entrance fee, actually we probably would not have gone in. Back to the ferry for another cruise, the queue is not long and we are soon back at our starting point, as we get off this one there is another one arriving immediately next to us, let's get this one and see where it goes sounded like a fair plan for

a local commuter ferry. The light bulb should have shone brightly when we got on board as the seats were proper covered seats pointing towards the front of the boat and thinking about it, it looked more like a boat than a ferry if you know what I mean. We choose seats with our own table and as we do the commuter ferry backs away from the harbour, turns around to point out to sea and then takes off like a power boat with big engines, we think that this is a bit shall we say unusual especially when we start to go faster, I am not sure that this was a good idea, when I look at the wall there is a computer type information screen which says in Swedish that this local commute ferry ride is 70 minutes one way oops, well I suppose it's another cruise to add to the list, our main concern was that it was not a one way trip and that it was returning to the same place we kept from. It has got a stop on its way to its final destination but there is not point getting off there as the only way back is on this ferry on its return trip. Right then let's make ourselves comfy for a two and half hour ferry journey, that would have got us from Calais to Dover. We arrive back at our place of departure, both of us are hot and tired, probably should have a sleep on the cruise but we didn't want to miss anything even if though the return journey was exactly the same but with the pointed end of the ferry pointing the other way, next time before we just jump on some random ferry we will check where it is going before we get on board and also that it is making the return journey. Being a pair of party animals we had planned on staying out and sampling Stockholm's night life but at 7pm the shops were still open and there are still lots of people in them making purchases, our minds had the thought of staying out finding some live music and partying until late or at least until the last train left the central station. Well that was our mind's idea but our bodies said to mr grey bit between the ears you can forget that idea I am knackered and unfortunately mr body was 100% correct and said, find that train station and find it now, fortunately the station was not that far away and we only had to wait about 10 minutes before it arrived, the short journey gave our feet a short reprieve before we had to finish the last section of the marathon from the station back to Glo. This time we will take the shorter route and avoid the Willie as we haven't got time for that, even though the party animals had thrown the towel in early, it was still after 9pm before we heard the welcoming bleep from Glo's alarm as the open me button is pressed on the key. It's not long before the fridge is open and a long cold Coke was poured into the waiting glasses, well only bits that actually resembled Coke was that it came in a tin and it was cold and wet. Then we have the guess how far we have walked competition, just over 10 miles was the Apps reply, that will be the reason that our feet are tired and sore, right tomorrow we will go into town later and definitely stay out later, but for now we are done in and you are not getting any more, mainly as I hadn't finished it and had no intention of doing so, hence the wait and which will obviously make me late with the next one, yes I know under promise and over deliver, well I don't have to worry about all those motivational quotes anymore so you will just have to wait, how is that for the power of positive thinking, don't get me started.

9th July

Stockholm day two is not starting as early as yesterday because we need to keep up our stamina for this evenings wild night out, this gives us time for breakfast alfresco and also a look around to see what other motorvans there are in this large car park, the answer is a selection of everything you can think of and as for value, well wow there is some serious kit parked here, in the big boys car park for larger vans there are 4 house sized Morelo's and these are all the big brothers of the range that have a starting price of between £300,000 and £500,000 and that's before you start putting ticks in what they call special equipment boxes, then there are 2 American coaches complete with slide outs after that there are some other serious sized homes on wheels then we move down to more

sensible sized vans and camper vans including Glo, then there are some strange and bizarre conversions then after the older vans we get to some basket cases, oh and there is one of the massive 12 ton 4 wheel drive military truck conversions like our friend David and Jess have, and you need a ladder to get in to and also a big cheque book. There are about 50 vans and homes on wheels in the car park and if you added and the values together the total figure would be eye watering. You may wonder why anyone with a 500k Motorhome would park it in a stadium car park and the answer is simple they won't fit anywhere else in the city, when I look at these car parks and campsites full of vans they always remind me of marina's full of expensive boats but at least all of these motorhome's are being used and have traveled from all over mainland Europe and just the one from the UK that's us. Enough of this van looking we need to be getting a move on to catch the train into the city and this time we are going the short way and giving a bit of Willy a miss and it's not long before we are in the city for another walking tour before our party time this evening and long into the night. Describing the city is going to be like yesterday's only that we found even more beautiful buildings which have been kept in fantastic control and I am sure that they will be there after the more modern box's houses that have been built and that includes our own house. We stop for some lunch just before lunchtime specials finish, this time we have succumbed to the pizza and pasta options and as they have an early starter happy hour it would be rude not to start the day off with a small libation well that actually means two large beers to accompany our lunch. There is a lot of talk about Stockholm being expensive and obviously it can be but if you have look around you can find great food at an extremely reasonable prices and it doesn't have to be down some back street in a not very salubrious establishment, the one we chose was on one of the wide spacious streets with a large outside seating area, just to give you an idea of costs, Barb had chicken pasta and I had a pizza which were accompanied by salad and obviously the two large beers, the chicken pasta was probably the best we have ever had in any restaurant including ones in Italy all for the total cost of 350Sek which translates to £26.69 and the following 2 beers cost 98Sek £7.31, such good value for such food, we couldn't eat out in Liverpool for that even in our favourite Italian. What we have noticed while eating out in Sweden is the way you order your food, it's a bit like some places in the UK but they are not really restaurants, the waiters do not take your order, you go to the bar or counter order and pay for your food, collect your cutlery, side salad and drinks then you sit down and when it's ready a waiter comes out and shouts the names of the dishes he is carrying, you put your hand up and he brings it to you, as with the numbers the other this all works fine if you understand Swedish, if not you just keep putting your hand up, well it works and the food was fantastic. As we are leaving I ask what time their happy hour finished and the answer to that was could be 5pm could be 9pm according to how busy they are and how many customers they need to attract, I suggest that 9pm sounds like a good idea and that we will see him later. Now we need a real walk after the food and also to stop us staying and spending another 98Sek on you know what. Our walk finds us back at the water and a selection of the other ferries available, this time we are more careful with our choices and check the route and times before we board the boat. As we head off one of the crossings we can see two cruise ships parked facing each other with each of the Captains saying my boat's bigger than yours, unfortunately for them they are both wrong as moored behind them is P&O's Queen Anne whose Captain is sitting in his big I am the boss chair on the massive bridge, saying unfortunately gentlemen my boat is the biggest and it makes yours look like a couple of rowing boats in Sefton Park Lake, I have to say that I agree with him, it is very big and very impressive and I guess that the price of a stateroom ticket could purchase all the cabins on the other two boats. When we return to the dock we find the next ferry and again check that it is coming back soon we get on board, you may be thinking why get on a ferry and not off, well if you have been to Seacombe ferry terminal you will know why, seriously it's because

you a totally different view and perspective of the city which you don't get from just walking around. Then it's time for another walk which soon requires us to take an ice cream break, I am not sure if it is the Norwegians or Swedish who love their ice cream the best but both countries have lots of ice cream outlets. We are sitting having our ice cream break, when we had one of those moments when your eyes are playing tricks on you and you can't believe what you are actually seeing. I admit that while sitting people watching you can see some strange things but this one did make me think, what is going on here. There is a lady walking along the cobbled street pushing small pink pram which I originally thought was a child's toy pram but there was no child in sight, oh well perhaps she has just bought it for her child or granddaughter but as she approached we noticed that there is something moving in the pram my immediate comment to Barb was oh stop it she has got a dog in the pram but it must be a pretty small dog. I admit that this pooch in a bag or pram defies logic to me, it's a dog not a baby, it's a dog. Well it wasn't a wasn't a dog it was a babyish sized bunny rabbit with a pink ribbon bow and a pink ribbon lead type of thing, well I nearly spat out my ice cream as I started laughing while Barb is telling me to stop, anyway the lady pushing the rabbit walks past totally unaware of the amusement and disbelief she is causing me, a rabbit you have got to be kidding me. Let's get on with this walking tour and while we are at let's see if we can find some places we fancy visiting when our merriment commences, we find some more beautiful buildings that we had missed previously and we have also made some mental notes of places to visit later in the evening. After another hour or so we are done sightseeing in fact we are actually done full stop all our thoughts and bravado had faded long ago in the afternoon never mind this partying all night, it's more like let's get back to Gloria and go to bed. We find the shortest route to a train station and we are soon on our way back to the car park, we do have a bit of extra walking to do when we get off the train as we need a bit of Willys as we need milk, oh the shame we have gone from revelling party animals to, we need a pint of milk, how things change. I suggest that we get an Uber from Willys but I am told to man up and get walking, we arrive back at Glo with heat and feet exhaustion and it's no wonder as when we look at the pedometer app we have done just under eleven miles today, well that's certainly got our steps in over the last two days. I am going to use this as an excuse for not writing up today's blog but that would just be a cover up to me falling asleep which is what actually happened, hence there is nothing left to say until tomorrow.

10th July

After falling asleep waking up and before going back to sleep at a real bedtime we decided to stay another night and go into Stockholm for one more day to do the full cultural bit of the buildings and museums from the inside rather than just admiring them from the outside which up to now is all we have had time for, I suppose 2 hour lunches and 3 hour cruises might have something to do with it but there was a lot to see. The first job is to book onto the site for another night that shouldn't be too difficult, a walk up to the booking in office to confidently book for another night, wasn't what I was expecting as I was told that you can only stay for two nights if you have previously booked a pitch, sorry I am not quite with that, well that's the way it is, ok can we leave the van somewhere while we go into the city, nope sorry can't do that, ok don't lose it, is there places we can park the van in the city, well there are but we are all linked and they are full, are you sure we can't leave the van here for a couple of hours, nope afraid not, now when we discussed the idea further I can see a justifiable reason, the problem they would have is if they allowed everyone that asked the same question, there would be vans parked everywhere with their owners lying saying that we will be an hour, it would be pure chaos and without any revenue, fair comment and fully understandable. We have walked around

the city to know that parking is at a premium especially for a 6m long 3m high van, from one of our cruises yesterday we saw yesterday the city motorvan park was full with people being turned away. Let's give up on this idea and follow our way to the coast and get out of city life and get back to the quieter country life where we are both much happier even if you have to struggle for shops and stuff, these are the type of places that don't have Systembolaget (off licence) so you have to place an order and they will deliver it to your local grocery store and they make two deliveries a week, I shudder to think how this would work in the UK and I wouldn't like to publish Bargain Booze's response to the idea. Needless to say we head off to the local systembollocks which is next door to a bit of Willy's, two birds with one stone and use a pincer attack one to each shop, make purchase and rejoin at Willy's exit point at edge hill. Next let's get out the city and the road option is my favourite E4 or we can use a different route well we could if there was another one. Right man up and get on the southbound E4, fortunately we are only the Chris Rea road for about 50k then we take the smaller slower E22, Barb has checked out a couple of stopovers, as there isn't a great deal of coast road unless you keep going down very long dead ends that go to the sea and nowhere else, we don't want one of these we want to find one that's by the sea but also close to the main ish E22 and we think we have found one but first we are going to visit a town called Norrköping with the intention of doing our usual driving around and having a look then deciding whether to say, well we didn't stay and headed for our planned stop over and it's lucky did, we arrive and it's a fantastic place a small marina in cove of the Baltic Sea, we got there at about 11 o'clock and grabbed the only pitch available, we just got there in time as 3 or 4 vans arrived immediately after us. Before we arrived our plan was to stay for one night but before we had levelled Glo and plugged her in that one night had changed to two, I am not telling you any more as I might need to use that bit tomorrow, until then that's it.

11th July

I did keep one bit of yesterday's journey in reserve for today, when we were travelling down the wonderful E4 at 110kph, I have said it before that 110kph sounds quick but comparing it with real proper meaningful speedometers like the ones with mph it's not, it's a bit strange that just because it says 110 in big numbers on the digital dashboard your brain also thinks it's quicker than 68.3 mph although that is quick in Glo as although she can she doesn't usually travel that fast unless overtaking, she is much happier cruising along between 60 & 65 mph. There are overhead signs on this stretch of the E4 which are something we haven't seen since leaving the UK, and like most of the speed signs on any of the roads here, there is nothing gradual or any advance warning that you will need to reduce your speed within a certain distance, none of that lark it goes from travelling at 110kph to now and I mean right now 60kph and as the speed limits are so stringent to within 1kph everyone nearly halves their speed in about 10 feet, there are brake lights everywhere as rapid deceleration obediently gets you to the required speed limit within seconds. These immediate speed limit orders and the complete lack of deceleration lanes which have been replaced by turning 90° right, even if you want to turn left, when you want to exit any road including the E4 which is the main road through the country, can you imagine exiting the M6 using a full turn right here, new car sales would go through the roof replacing all of the written off cars behind you, even on this road the speed limits go from 110 to 70 to 50kph in seconds and as soon as you get to the 50 sign there is a speed camera. All of these accidents waiting to happen explain why the drivers are so good at keeping a safe distance from the car in front, this obviously does not apply to wagons or Audi drivers who have a death wish. Going back to the overhead speed signs, they are like the ones we have on the M6 that are supposed to help traffic flow when in actual fact all they do is bring all the traffic together and create traffic jam, only here

you have to traffic jam which cars mostly remaining a safe distance between each other that is until it comes to a complete stop. There are a few road exit signs on some counties roads that for many years have brought a laugh and a childish grin to my face, such as German exit sign says Ausfahrt, Danish exit sign says Afslut, but the sign at the side of the E4 side Tom Tit Experiment, we are both laughing uncontrollably and my assumption was to associate this sign with the overhead speed instructions as in my opinion they definitely were a Tom Tit Experiment. I have since been told that it has nothing to do with the speed control system but is actually a children's first science experience centre, now I am not sure if that is really a good name to be used for a child's learning centre, I think that it was a much better design the speed control system and I wish ours on the M6 could be called the same.

12th July

It's a beautiful morning with the sun's rays reflecting off the calm and still Baltic Sea it's another morning for alfresco breakfasts while watching the sensible sized yachts and motor cruisers sail in and out of the marina, there are some beautiful and some not so beautiful yachts which is something that I don't really understand. In my mind yachts should be sleek, functional and something that makes you go wow and admire as you would at sleek and beautifully designed cars and also motorbikes, to me they are works of art that have been created to be so, this usually means that they come with hefty price tag ranging from expensive, very expensive, extremely expensive and obscenely expensive are words associated with any works of art, as with all things quality always comes at a price and with yachts size is an important factor that has a dramatic influence on which bracket of expensive they fall into. I understand that functional things also come within the same range of expense but with a pleasure yacht they should be exactly that, where I am getting to or trying to get to is that I cannot understand why anyone but spend serious money on a boat that hasn't got that wow factor. I think that I managed to say all that without being sexist and saying boats are usually classed as female and named as such, oh bugger I have just blown the sexist bit that I tried so hard to avoid. As with van envy when we go for a walk around the marina I do check out the various types of craft that might give me boat envy and I was surprised that out of all of the boats of varying types and sizes there were only 2 that got into the green-eyed envy category. The one that won was a serious ocean going yacht it wasn't that big but it looked up to the task a had the collection of I have been here stickers stuck to its rear end, no it didn't I am just kidding. That is about where my green-eyed envy of this yacht ended I can not think of anything worse than sailing out into the middle of a sea or ocean with only water for company for as far as you can see, don't get me wrong I would very happy bobbing around the coastline of any warm climate country but that crossing oceans lark would not appear on any form of yes I would have a go at that list, the idea wouldn't even get to the thought process. After our walk around the marina we continued on following the coastline for a while, but as it's a coastline not a lake we decided not to follow it all the way, on the return we stop off at the cafe by the marina for a coffee and a Coke, they don't do much of that tea lark, I best come clean and say that both beverages were accompanied by 2 different types of cake which went on the 50/50 rule. While sitting there watching the world go by, and also a bit of people watching, two guys arrived on jet ski's, now one of these would be on the must have list they are great fun and it could be parked next to the reasonable sized motor launch with a Big motor securely fastened to its bum, they would make for fun days in the sun back to reality we head back to Glo for a bit of sitting in the sun and some more boat watching. We had considered going for a swim but the waters of Baltic Sea do not look that inviting, certainly not like the blue and

green waters of the Norwegian Sea did when we were there, which even though it looked inviting, its temperature had different ideas, I got as far as just above my knees and that was about as far as I got obviously it was only because, I had trousers on, didn't have swimming shorts, didn't have a towel and anything else I could think off. I am not going to stretch this out anymore as all the rest of the day was spent sitting outside in the sunshine while watching more boats bob about, I am not too sure what tomorrow is going to bring as we really like it here and have booked to stay another night before we head further south, we will have to wait and see what we can find to rabbit on about, I don't think that I have got anything in reserve from previous days so I will have to delve into the memory banks, now that's a laugh I have trouble remembering what I had for breakfast, but as we have been travelling Barb has been written down some prompts that may help.

13th & 14th July

What a difference a day makes, yesterday was beautiful and at times too hot to sit out in the sun today we have woken up to grey and chilly morning with rain promised for the rest of the day, I brave sitting outside for the first cup of coffee of the day, shorts and T shirt to start with, then shorts T shirt and fleece then while chatting to our Dutch neighbours the wind started to blow and the Baltic Sea which yesterday had been calm and tranquil now has small waves with white horses and the boats are really bobbing about, I can't see there being much action on the boating side of things today. The forthcoming rain was pushing the wind in front off it just letting us know it was on its way which we already knew as we could see it coming across the sea bringing grey storm clouds with it. After our chat it was blow this for a lark let's back inside. It was just as well that we did as not longer after the promised rain arrived and stayed with us for the rest of the day in various strengths raging from hard to very hard to extremely hard with the later one staying the longest. Only one van departed today and that space was soon filled, during the rest of the day there was a steady stream of vans varying in size arriving and driving past the Full sign that is in the middle of the road, this continued all day with about 25 vans ignoring the sign, driving past us and then having to turn around to leave. A few did stop in the daytime parking area waiting to pounce like my praying mantis mates just in case someone decided to leave, eventually one by one they would give up and leave as it became obvious that none of were going anywhere. Now I would like to think that some of this additional influx of interest is partially down to me, while I was talking to the young lady yesterday to book for another night she was really happy that we liked the place so much and asked if we would spread the word about the place in the UK as we are only the 2nd UK van she has seen here, I can't remember if I have mentioned that before, I told her I would leave positive glowing reviews for her. Right before any of you mention the sexist word about her description, she is young and she is a lady so how else would you like me to describe her. Anyway I posted the glowing reviews on all of the site finding Apps that we use, granted one was written and then was copied and pasted to the rest, they were published yesterday and look what's happened today it's got to be because of The Hawks On Tour reviews, well it's got to be hasn't it. The rest of the day was spent watching the rain while listening to it bounce of Glo's roof. There are a couple of things that I haven't mentioned that we did think a little strange, the first ones are found as we drive into the village on our way to the marina and are situated in someone's front garden, and are large and I do mean large sculptures the real big one is a naked lady lying on here side and wearing nothing but a smile, she is about 6 metres long and is to my mind a bit of a rough sculpture. Then there another which looks like the same lady but she is standing up wearing the same outfit but she has shrunk a bit in height, she has also been joined by a slightly taller bloke and she is looking longingly into his eyes, he is also without any clothing apart from a towel which is covering his thingy so we are not too

sure how longingly she is looking, these two could do with a bit of touching up, using the same colour paint. There are couple of statues dotted around the garden but they are not as big or bold, the sculptor was born in 1893 and the house was his home for 30 years, it is now a sculpture museum. There is another sculpture by the same sculptor and it is on an islet on the way into Paskallavik harbour, it is called "Rode Gubben" which translates to Red old man and is a three metre concrete statue of an old man in a red coat and a black top hat and is apparently is one of the villages most famous symbols but according to the translation he is of no known origin, anyway he is standing straight and proud on a little island all on his Bill and today he must be soaking wet. There is not much more to tell you about as It rained constantly for the rest of the day, evening and into the night which meant that there was no way we even considered going outside. So let's leave it here for today and see what happens tomorrow.

15th July

Last night when it was absolutely pouring down and blowing a gale, some people with two toddlers all with life jackets on were walking down the jetty to one of the yachts, not a very big yacht, I originally thought that were planning on leaving the safe haven of the harbour and going to take the boat out to sea with the two toddlers on board, even though they all had life jackets on I did think it was a bit foolish, fortunately they did not leave the harbour they must have just been going to bed, if I had gone to bed while thing was bobbing up and down, that last thing I would have been doing is sleeping. We are on the move today but we are not in any great rush and also we need to do a couple of housekeeping jobs on Glo before we leave, our Dutch neighbours leave just before us and are also heading south but much further than we will be travelling. We leave not long after them following their route south and then we will head west for a while to get to a secret location that you will find out about later. But our first job was to find a caravan or Motorhome shop, outlet, store or whatever you want to call it as we need some fluid for Glo, fortunately Google says that there is one 10 minutes away which is a bit nuts as this village is not the largest place in the world. We head off to have a look and yep there it is, a yard type of thing full of Hobby caravans but not a sole around, let's go people, none in the workshop let's try this door, great it's a shop and there is a person, we make our required purchase and our on our way but not before we look at the massive coach they are converting. Our first stop is the city of Kalmar which is an ancient city with a beautiful castle, the city's fortified walls are at least 10 feet thick and are immaculately preserved, the city has some beautiful buildings and again these are immaculate, this is another city where you have to walk around and appreciate the architecture and how these ancient buildings have been preserved and survived untouched for hundreds of years. Yet again we hadn't done our research properly before arriving at the city, well as usual we hadn't done any research and as such it wasn't at all what we expected, our expectations were of a small sleepy city and it certainly was not that, the first thing we noticed was the amount of Motorhomes parked everywhere and I do mean everywhere, there were hundreds of the things and lots of stellplazt park ups dotted around the city, all full to capacity with motorhomes of all sizes, I thought that there was lot where we stayed in Stockholm but this is just nuts. It's a large city which appears to be very popular. The city itself is full of people and extremely busy and there are the usual familiar high street brands, this part of the city is not for us, we hadn't come to shop even though there were a number of the high end shops where I love purchase my clothes, well as long as it's Hugo Matalan. We need to escape the high street and the throng of people eager to part with their to buy something with someone else's name on, there was even a queue waiting to get into the Louis Vuitton shop to be legally mugged and still have a smile on their face while walking out wearing a badge that says LV, which is a bit daft as his name

was Fred. That's it we are done let's get out of here, there is obviously something dogging sorry doggie going on as they are everywhere lots of them in their owners Motorhomes, it is also the start of International Sand Sculpture week, which if we had arrived later in the week would have been interesting to have seen, busy place this Kalmar, but too busy for us, we need to leave. Our next stop was to be further down the coast but we have scrapped that idea as we would then of have come back to get on the road that goes west to our surprise location. Back in Glo, we are told that the journey will take 90 minutes well that is once we get out of the city. Strangely enough we didn't manage to stick to the 90 minute travel time as on route we spotted a Loppis sign and we need to pay it a visit, yep is a charity shop and a big one, it's ok you go in and I will look after Glo, at one point I did think that Barb had been abducted by aliens but she did return but empty handed because they don't take card payments and we didn't have any Swedish Krona I can see that she is a bit disappointed as not surprising she had found some material at a bargain price, I suggest that she could go and see if they will accept euros as we have them, she returns material in hand, obviously the euros did the trick. Let's get back on the road west which leads us very close to our destination in fact it's that close anyone would think that the road had been especially built to get you there. Now usually you have to drag me to this place that has the same brand colour as the Swedish National flag, and the thought of actually paying to go in, is just insane. Have you guessed where we went, yep that's correct we went to the IKEA museum and yes I have lost my mind. As I mentioned before you have to pay to get in but as we are paying the guy asking the money is very happy to tell us that the entrance price includes free coffee in the restaurant I mention that as we have IKEA family cards we get that for free anyway, ah yes you do but you are in the museum, don't ask me I didn't understand the difference either. Now sometimes I might be a little cynical but as museums go this is definitely not anywhere near the top of the interesting list in fact it might out have made it onto the list. I am not going to bother trying to describe it other than its got some old, well if you can call it old" furniture while at the same time mixed with new stuff with the prices displayed and saying that you can buy them in the Disney experience shop downstairs. The shop is probably the biggest part of the museum and amongst other things, you can buy little painted allen key key rings, which are obviously a must have for someone. Of course we did go for our free offer and hot water as Barb has brought her own tea bags, they are not big on tea here, after we had finished our "free" drinks we obediently return our cups to the service area this was interesting as it wasn't just a trolley that you put your tray on, it was a conveyor belt that took your tray away, that's how desperate it got to be impressed I did learn one thing and that is what IKEA stands for and I don't mean human rights, wars or important things, I mean what the acronym IKEA stands for, I bet you have to Google it to find out but if you already know, well what can I say. Right that's enough of IKEA and it's disappointing museum, obviously that is only our own opinion and others may love it, that's why we are all different, our next stop was to be wonderful Copenhagen but kept actually going to the city until tomorrow, Barb has found a stop over just before the Malmo bridge, it was an uninteresting one and a half hour drive so I will spare you joining us for that. We head off the main road to find the stop over which the sat nav says we still have 7 kilometres to do down country lanes which got increasingly narrower, we think that we are going to the middle of nowhere and actually we were, we have absolutely no idea how this stop over was first found by the person that put it on the park up finding app, you wouldn't find it if you lived a mile away from it. We carry on down the country lanes and eventually arrive at the end of a road which led to the Baltic Sea, there was a small parking area by what used to be a small jetty, there was one van already there so we joined him. Later in the evening there was a terrific thunderstorm accompanied by some lightening but I was hoping for more of a display, the sea was getting decidedly choppy and a small yacht came into the cove for shelter and I don't blame him. I bet he had an

interesting nights sleep bobbing about on his bunk, bark in the parking area we are joined by three more vans, the find a place to park up app definitely works, we will see where it can find for us tomorrow night, but before that we will cross the Malmo bridge and visit Copenhagen and you will find out about that tomorrow.

16th July

I was hoping for some better weather this morning but someone has got other ideas, it's grey and drizzling which is not great when you are crossing the Bridge as it will spoil the view and a bit of the experience, but as the weather forecast does not improve for the next few days we have to go for it today and hopefully get a short break in the weather. Last nights stop over was only twenty minutes from the bridge but before we cross we have a job to do and that is because Glo's windscreen is covered with the remains of a couple of thousand fly's, bugs and what ever else we could collect at 100kph on the E20. Plan was to find a petrol station with one of those sponges and squeegee on a stick which along with the bug removing sponge that we have, we should be able to remove the remains so that the GoPro can film the crossing, well we did one better than that we found a jet wash that Glo would fit in. After applying Pythagoras theory to the workings of the machine and finally getting it to accept payment and then selecting a couple of buttons from the 47 available, we are in business and the water starts flowing and flowing at some force, then it's the routine of spray, foam brush oh and then half way through the process the flow of water stops and machine shouts I want more money, obviously Glo is a bit bigger than the usual cars, any way more funds inserted and Glo is clean. Needless to say as we got about 5 minutes down the road it starts raining, we stop for a coffee to see if it clears up and it does, the sky still grey but the rain has stopped. Off we go and we are soon on the E20 and there is now only one way to go and that's over the bridge, we have prepaid so hopefully the cameras read Glo' registration number and the lights will turn green and that is exactly what the do and then as soon as we drive through it starts to rain. Well we are going to have to live with what footage we get as we are definitely not crossing this bridge three times, not at the cost of each crossing, right I know that you will be interested in getting some details about the bridge so here you go. The Malmo bridge or to give it's proper name the Øresund Bridge is actually part rail/road bridge and part tunnel spanning the Øresund between Sweden and Denmark. Here you go its facts time, It is the second longest bridge in Europe with both roadway and railway combined in a single structure, running nearly 8 kilometres (5 miles) from the Swedish coast to the artificial island Peberholm in the middle of the strait. The crossing is completed by the 4-kilometre (2.5 mi) Drogen Tunnel from Peberholm to the Danish island of Amager, ok it's a big rascal and as such in commands a a hefty toll charge and you can only get a discount if you use it more than once, well I am not going over it to come back and then go over it again, so we will have to stump up the full 475 Danish Krona which calculates to just the £53.65 how much, well it certainly makes the Runcorn Bridge look cheap and also small. I have to say that it is a pretty spectacular piece of engineering and offers great views which would be fantastic on a glorious sunny day which is one thing that we haven't got but we make the most of it and we will have wait and see what the GoPro footage is like. Right next stop Copenhagen and the first job will be to find a parking spot, last time we were here we parked up outside the city and got public transport in, this time we did not plan on staying that long and that meant parking in the city. Barb has found a few suitable car parks, it is going to take us about an hour to get into the city and on route Barb finds a couple more parking possibilities. It's busy getting into the city and there are a number of Motorhomes which look like they are driving around in circles trying to find somewhere to park as their motorhomes won't fit in standard parking bays whereas Glo will as long as we can find one that will accommodate

her length. We do have to drive around for a while but eventually we find a space on a road but she is a bit long and is over the end of the parking area. We are told that the parking is strict and the fines large and we don't fancy that lark again, there's a van parked on the other side of the road in a space big enough for Glo, the driver approaches the van and before he opens the door Barb has pounced on him and asks if he going, yep I am but can I have a fag first, well ok if you must, as he is driving out Glo is right behind him and parked. We head off into the hustle and bustle of the busy streets which we have decided is definitely not our favourite place to be, no shops thank you and we head to the famous Nyhavn canal with it's colourful buildings and buzzing atmosphere, what that means is that it's extremely busy and there are people trying to sell you boat trips, walking tours and the restaurants with their waiters trying to tempt you to a table to sample their vastly overpriced food. We escape past all this to the quieter end of the canal and do think of walking to visit the famous Little Mermaid, but we have seen her before and I don't suppose she will have changed. It's time to head back to Glo but we make a couple of stops on the way, one was to the Marble Church which like lots of churches all over the world and of all denominations is a beautiful building and even more beautiful inside, even though we have seen some extremely impressive churches especially in Italy you still have to sit for a while to admire the craftsmanship and design and you may even want to say a prayer. We head off back to Glo and head out of the city and to our park up for the evening which is about an hours drive, as we turn off the main road and start a magical mystery tour down country lanes which get increasingly narrower, this is now a how on earth did anyone find this park up in the first place and does it actually exist, a bit further on and here it is a very pleasant little stop over overlooking a sea. We are joined by a couple more vans and we are treated to another sunset not as good as the Norway sunsets but an impressive was just the same, I guess you know what's next and you would be correct, so more tomorrow.

17th July

This is going to be a bit of a short and sweet one today as we had a leisurely and slow start to the morning and it wasn't until lunchtime that we were ready to leave, as we have a while left before we catch the ferry from Rotterdam we have a few days to slow down and not rush too much from one destination to another although we do have tonight's park up arranged which surprisingly is another harbour, we make a couple of quick stop in small towns as we pass through them, well they were supposed to be quick but we are still on Barb's antiques road trip looking a small pretty blue and white plate so we are hunting one out in every charity shop we can find, first town no result. Next a village no result, third one is a town this time and it has a number of charity shops, eureka the exact item is found but there is a slight problem they only take cash and we haven't got any. Barb is disappointed but not as disappointed as me as if we can't buy this one we will have to keep searching, hang on I have got Euros se if they will take them and yes they do, thank goodness for that, Barb was questioning the exchange rate, I don't care just buy it. We head off to another harbour stop over at the town of Skaelskor, however after the blue and white plate hunt charming though it is had dragged on a bit, we get there later than our usual planned stop times. When possible and if it's a place of interest rather than just a car park I like to get to them earlier so that we can have a look around and stuff and also to get a space, as good and interesting place fill up quickly, fortunately even though we have arrived late there is still space in the designated Motorhome parking area which you have to pay for and you can get a harbour card that gives you access to all the amenities available. The designated overnight parking area has about 10 vans parked up but the rest of the car is littered with vans in the free daytime only parking area

and the are blatantly ignoring the rules and staying for free, now I have no problem staying anywhere that does not say no overnight parking and is not intruding on anyone. However when the signs say no they usually mean No and to double up on breaking the unwritten rules some of these vans are parked up next to people's gardens and are just taking the P. It does wind me up a bit for a couple of reasons firstly we have paid and they haven't but more importantly they are being inconsiderate to the residents and there is a chance that they may complain and then the local council may stop all overnight parking spoiling things for everyone, possibly I am being too considerate, rant over more tomorrow, hopefully story not rant.

18th July

After breakfast we head off to explore what we initially thought was a small town, well we were wrong it's bigger than we thought, it has got the what is now becoming the norm as it has beautifully preserved buildings along with shops, and lots of them. We need to get away from shops as we now have "The Plate" we can go for a walk around the harbour to look at the boats that are parked up, as usual there are some big expensive rascals, some more sensible sized yachts, some small motorboats and some complete basket cases. On our return to Glo we stop off at the Harbour restaurant / bar, I was told that Norway was expensive well we didn't think that it was that bad, as the prices in this Harbour bar were definitely evidence that Denmark can charge just as well if not better. I think that just because there is a harbour and boats which are usually an expensive hobby then the customers at your harbour bar are happy to pay the prices because they want to be seen there, well you can count us out of that one. As our short walk turned out to be just under five and half miles and after that and to get over the price of two small beers we deserved a sit out in the sunshine, as we are in no rush we decided to stay another night now I could be a total hypocrite and move Glo to the other side of the car park and join the rest of the none payers but I couldn't do that could I. So it's a return trip to the payment machine to pay up like a responsible person, when I paid yesterday you also have the option of buying a harbour card which gives you access to all of the facilities, obviously there is a cost but it is well worth it, when you have paid, the machine prints a receipt and also an eight inch long sticky yellow label this is supposed to be secured to some part of your boat to show that you have paid for parking your boat, and the issue the same thing for the van park up, it wasn't going around the wipers so it spent it's time on the dashboard. During the early evening a number of English classic cars arrived one being an immaculate Morgan it was beautiful and the chrome spoke wheels shone in the sunshine the owner must have not only cleaned them after every drive, they looked like he polished them every time. Just past the car park on the other side of the harbour there is a fish monger who also has restaurant as part of the business, well when I say restaurant that may be a bit of an exaggeration it's more like a chippy with tables, it looked really good and we headed over to it for an early dinner, the menu is as if it been especially designed for the English that can't speak Danish, it's pictures and numbers, you order the number you want, pay for it and when ready collect from a hatch on cardboard plates a slightly different experience but the food was very good, then like a well trained person you put your plates in the bin, cutlery in a tray and your glass in a rack, I don't really know why I find it strange as it's exactly the same as any burger / fast food joints, but I do. We get back to Glo and while we are sitting in the sunshine the couple from the none paying van next to us which shall we say could do with some TLC, the van not the people, well possibly the male could do with a look in the mirror. I know that I don't shop at Hugo Boss but this guy has me well and truly beaten, faded yellow three quarter length combat pants that looked like they were due to be put in the bin, T-shirt that had never seen an iron since it was purchased ten years ago and a faded blue bucket hat which for some

reason reminded me of Popeye Doyle, have you got the picture in your mind, just keep it there for a minute. We FaceTime Barbs mum and are telling her where we have been, what we had been doing and where we were now, we are showing her the surroundings, the harbour, the boats and the then Popeye Doyle comes in to the shot and Jean starts laughing and says doesn't that man at the back of you look funny in his yellow pants and funny hat. We both have to stop ourselves from bursting out laughing as we had the iPad on full volume, he obviously heard the conversation and returned to his van, while we chuckled away to ourselves. After that excitement it was about it for the night, tomorrow we will decide whether to stay another night or move on and get closer to Holland, we will all find out tomorrow.

19th July

The decision has been made, we are moving on but not that far as after have a leisurely morning while waiting for Popeye to make an appearance in exactly the same outfit as yesterday hat and all, I say morning while trying not to laugh, it's lunchtime before we leave and we need to do a bit of that boring food shopping which every time we go, we get a basket, look around for ages and end up looking enquiringly at unidentified things and then putting them down extra quick when Google translate works it's magic and explains that it's pigs entrails we end up buying bread, bananas, meat for sandwiches, yogurt and something for one meal. After another shopping experience we head to a park up which is by a beach, it's becoming the norm now that these park ups could win the world hide and seek championships. On the way down a country road there are hand made parking signs pointing to a field, there are cars pulling in to the car park at a great rate of knots, with people carrying camping chairs, blankets and stuff. We pull into the field to go and have a look, when we get over the road to the restaurant there are lots of people milling around getting drinks from the bar and outside there smoke billowing into the air accompanied by a pretty good smell. There are six guys tending to three massive hog roast bbq's which when the lids are opened contained a lettuce, no they didn't each of the monsters had an equally massive pig inside being carefully prepared to feed, now these three little piggies weren't little they were big enough to feed a small town, we wondered where enough people would come from to consume this amount of pig. Unfortunately they are not ready yet and Barb didn't fancy staying so we head down the country road to the beach, this is obviously a favourite place with the locals as there are lots of people on the beach, in the sea and playing games on the grass, no not them, they were playing badminton and ball games. We go for a walk along the beach and do consider going for a swim but after trying the water to knee height we thought better of it, it's no wonder it's called the Baltic Sea. When all the locals go home for the evening we are left with one other van and a guy sleeping in a Tesla, don't ask me but I am sure that it would not be comfortable, I know that there is not been much to tell you about today but I will try harder tomorrow.

20th July

It's another no rush to leave morning the sun is shining, it's still early which gives us time for a walk along the beach on our own before others arrive to enjoy themselves, we are heading towards Sonderborg yet another harbour town and have one planned stop on the way there, Barb has found a cemetery with RAF war graves which is on our route, I always think that if we are near war graves we should go and pay our respects to the brave men and women who gave their lives so that we could have our freedom. It proves a bit of a task to find the cemetery and it is not as large as previous war cemetery's we have visited, it's actually a local cemetery which also has a small memorial and three

graves of airmen who lost their lives nearby. The cemetery is on the coast of the Baltic Sea and has pebble beach, we have a walk along the beach and reflect on those who lost their lives and I also collected some more pebbles for our friend Sharon, she doesn't collect them but uses them to help others heal emotional problems they may have, these pebbles are more like stones as there is very little tide here and they do not get rounded by thrashing waves. I have pebbles and stones from various meaningful locations during our trip that could tell us a story of their journey which will now be the Wirral and Liverpool as I am keeping a couple as mementos of our journey, ranging from the Arctic circle, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea and the special place where they both meet, from Glaciers and other interesting locations. Some may say that it's a bit daft but in answer I would say that the pebbles are all one offs you will never find another the same, they have been collected by a person that has chosen each one individually, to me they have more meaning than fridge magnet that says "I Heart Norway" and was probably made in China by someone who gets paid a pitiful wage and works under awful conditions, which do you think is more special, me sceptical never but I know which I would choose. I would actually choose both as if we didn't buy the fridge magnets there would be nothing to pay the pitiful wages and something is better than nothing, flipping heck that was getting a bit deep.

Next stop is our next harbour destination and guess what, yep we are running late and as these park ups are free we are concerned that there will be no space for us, when we arrive there are vacant spaces but it's not the prettiest of places with not a fantastic view of the Harbour, there is another one on the other side and we head off to have a look, we need to cross a bridge that spans the Allsund Strait, we arrive at the bridge to find a queue, lots of flashing red lights and the bridge open in an upright position. As we wait in the queue we can see the masts of numerous yacht's as they pass we lost count of how many went past in each direction, so it must have been more than ten he he, we can hear the Harbour master or whoever opens and closes the bridge shouting through powerful PA system telling the boats to speed up as the bridge was about to close, some of them did not speed up enough as the bridge started to close and they had to stop and take position ready for the next time the Up button was pressed. We get to the other side of the marina and this park up is fantastic, amazingly we get a space at the front overlooking the water and the yachts, there lots of them and not a basket case in sight, this is not at all what we were expecting, there are some seriously expensive and some obscenely expensive yachts and motor yachts, motor cruiser's or whatever you call an expensive motorboat, parked up and there are lots of them. Now this does put one thing in my mind, a harbour full of expensive types of boats means lots of filthy rich people which in turn means that all of the restaurants, bars and shops will have prices to match the wealth that is knocking about and that's not good for us mere mortals, what is great is our parking space a view that overlooks all of this floating cash, a bridge that goes up and down more often than any other bridge I have seen letting dozens of let's call them yachts with sails and ones without sails travel each way under the bridge at regular intervals and the guy with the microphone telling them to hurry up, if one of the big without sails speeded up it leave a tsunamis in its wake, heaven knows what it costs to park them even if they are parked three abreast and what is our cost for all this, well it's all free, that might not be the case if we venture out for a drink. Glo is level and apart from turning the passenger seat around that was us set up, time to have a walk around what we had expected to be a small village, well that is probably like most of our planning we treat it as a surprise experience when we arrive that way we are not disappointed when we get there. You couldn't be disappointed with this town it has quaint streets mixed with a verity of independent shops, cafes not like Stans cafe on the dock road, ice cream parlours, bars and restaurants all of which have outdoor seating area's for the beautiful and not so beautiful people to be seen and as expected they all have overpriced menus as expected

the menus vary a bit but they all manage to maintain extremely similar prices that no one is ever going to question, well I might I have found that once you are in a similar location once you have looked at the first establishments menu the prices will be very similar at every other one that you look at. We have a good walk around and while we are at it we check out the menus and yep the pricing theory was correct, there are a couple of bars that have happy hours but by the look of it they double the price and then give you two for one, strangely enough we do find a bar called the Rose and Crown and another called Penny Lane, for the life of me I can't think why and as neither of them open until the evening we can't have a look. It's hot and we have done a lot of walking around the town and we think we have earned a cool beer, we sit outside like the beautiful people we are and have two large beers and large they are at just under a bucket full well just under a litre and yes they are much more expensive than a litre of super super plus fuel, in fact it's the price of a couple of gallons. Time to head well rush back to Glo for a sit in the evening sun and watch expensive floating things either park up or get ready for a race under the bridge, drinking an extremely reasonable price tinny while watching the rich rascals on boats taking corks out of champagne bottles with the shortened version of a sabre, I kid you not, mind you the cork did come out without taking the neck off the bottle which I did when I tried it with a bottle of Prosecco and a carving knife, after watching how it is supposed to be done I realised that I may have been a bit vigorous in my actions with the carving knife. We had thought about going out this evening but after such a hectic day and a six and half mile walk, how did that happen, we sit outside play guess the price of a boat which keep arriving until darkness starts to fall, what is this darkness thing all about. That was about it for the day and as we sat outside waiting for darkness and the evening view, the blog is falling behind, note to self get it written and stop enjoying yourself.

21st July

We like it here, its got great views, it's chilled out and it's free so we are staying, in the morning I am sitting outside having a coffee when a lady who is obviously from the harbour is walking around checking that the owners of the boats had paid for their parking. She double checks one of the ones with masts and after checking its name against the small electronic device in her hand, stop it, it looks like the boat that is the last one that is triple parked. It's a bit early for the rich and famous to be up and about so she stealthy navigates her way over the first two boats so as not to disturb their slumber and then when she gets to the none payer, she produces a knocking stick and lightly whacks it on the roof, she gives it a couple of minutes and then gives it four proper good whacks with her stick that probably woke the residents of all three boats. Eventually the captain came our from below decks rubbing his eyes, now asking her what she was doing was his first mistake and then answering the ladies question have you paid with no I bloody haven't was probably his second mistake which not only landed him with full payment and also a none payment fine which he was warned that if he continued with his attitude would keep going up and he should produce a method of payment pretty sharpish, I was slightly taken aback as when we had said good morning earlier you wouldn't of thought butter would melt in her mouth, well it would. After she stealthy returned over the other two yachts, which was pretty pointless really as I think the second whacking with her knocking stick will have awoken them, when she disembarks we smile at each other and I give her the thumbs up and she returns the gesture, that was a fun way of starting the morning. Next stop while Barb is having a lie in, I head off in search of a bakery which to be fair I didn't expect to have a very positive result as while walking around yesterday we didn't see one and also it's Sunday which means it's difficult to find anything open never mind a bakery that probably doesn't exist. As suspect after a good hunt around there was no bakery not even a closed one to be found, the only thing that was open was the small

supermarket in the shopping centre it's a bit strange walking around a shopping precinct on a Sunday there is no one about and nothing is open apart from the small supermarket which even though it is the only thing open and only has a couple of customers, a loaf of dubious nature is purchased, we haven't been able to find any bread that we like in Denmark, right it's back to Glo to make toast, Barb does ask if I had got lost and I actually hadn't realised how long I had been or how far I had walked. Then it's time for us both to go for walk this time we start with a walk around the harbour and explore further down where we hadn't previously been, we had thought that the boats outside our residence were big but there are some monsters down this end and there looks like there's a bit of that mine is bigger than yours, I shudder to think how much money is parked here, you could probably buy a small country if you cashed this lot in. Then we head back into the town and I love it as all of the shops apart from a few are shut, after our walk around the town we go back to the harbour to visit the ice cream parlour, every other shop in the town may have been closed but the ice cream parlour definitely wasn't as you could tell by the queue along the harbour. It's like every person off every boat has decided that they want an ice cream, the queue does not move very quickly as when you do get inside the selection available is massive and as the various names are in Danish it's difficult to decide what to have, there are some that are obvious coffee, pistachio, caramel, vanilla, chocolate to name a few then there are others that you can guess by looking at them and then there are the others that you have to ask what they are, there is a bit of a rush in the decision process as the queue is ever growing, then after you have figured out what you want the next frustrated questions are cone, waffle, waffle cone, small or large cup and how many scoops, flipping heck can I just have a 99. The next thing is to eat it, do you eat an ice cream? anyway you have to do whatever it's called quickly as it's that hot outside the ice cream is melting. While we are sitting outside playing our which is the biggest and which is the most expensive boat the bridge opens and the QE2 heads towards us, this is one serious boat and I imagine if the manufacturers of it heard me call it a boat they would have a blue fit, there is one space left along the harbour wall which had been reserved for this massive thing or for other big ones. The captain slowly manoeuvres it towards its parking bay, when he has it side on to the harbour wall he uses what I guess are bow and stern bow thrusters to bring it slowly towards the harbour while the crew in their casual but immaculate uniforms lower the fender things that are also immaculate and have the boat's name on them, into position to protect the sides from damage then the as new black ropes are uncoiled ready to fasten it to the harbour, when the captain is happy that his boat is in position and secure the engines are turned off and the crew plug her into the ehu with a big fat cable. Look this isn't the biggest yacht going but it's the biggest one here and the guys who were saying mine's bigger than yours have all disappeared below decks, the manufacturer's name is obviously on the side of it just so everyone knows it is a proper bit of kit. I can't help myself I want to know what this thing costs, a quick Google for Princess Yachts shows that this ain't no piddling little company it employs 3,000 people in a number of countries, the first thing that comes to mind is that if they employ 3,000 people there must be some demand for these expensive toys. Now unsurprisingly they do not publish the prices of a new boat as I assume that each one is individual and built to the buyer's requirements, that said they are advertising a second hand one the same model of boat that is parked in front of us, the one they are advertising is 5 years old and it has a price tag of, wait for it €18,000,000 plus VAT yep that does say eighteen million euro plus tax, now if that had been in pounds sterling it would have been expensive but as it's in Euro's that price is ok, and that price is for a 5 year old one and this one looks brand new so what is it worth and if you changed it into hard cash just imagine how many homeless people or people that have to choose between being able to buy food or heat their homes and yes this thing isn't biggest or most expensive thing floating around. Oh and think for a moment that Philip Greens

biggest yacht cost \$150 million and he has got two more how obscene is that and then you get to the proper boats not the piddling cheep things, Roman Abramovich's Ship with an estimated cost of \$700 million. Let's get back to reality berthed directly behind Glo is a motor yacht that has a fantastic history all of which we be explained in the picture of the Danish translation, it abbreviated history is that was built in Scotland in 1936, during WW11 she was used by the Royal Navy as a patrol vessel in Scapa Flow, after the war she was bought Percy Thrower the TV gardener, now that's a proper boat, have a look at her full history. While we are sitting outside Glo a helicopter which looked military flew very low and then hovered over the sea behind us we could not see what was happening as our view was obstructed by the castle and trees, Barb has a walked over to have a look and unfortunately they wee having to carry out an air sea rescue, the man was successfully taken from the water and then flown away in the chopper, hopefully he is ok. After that there was a lot of sitting around until the evening and after dinner which we had on board the good van Gloria, not paying those silly restaurant prices, we headed into town to check out the night life which we expected given the amount of boats and people to be very busy. To our surprise the only places that were the few restaurants on the quayside and even they weren't full, we walk up the hill past Penny Lane which was absolutely empty, we continue to the top of the hill and find a restaurant / bar that has a few people sitting outside, we choose a table and two Long Island iced teas form the two for one offer, these are sipped like the guy from Billy Joel's Piano Man, the drinks were definitely in the just the one Mrs Wembley category and after paying and a small tear we head back down the hill, my thought is that while we are here we have got to go into the Penny Lane gaff but when we look inside there is only two people plus the bartender as we turn around he calls to us us to come back and join them ok then just the one. Whoever ones this gaff has never been to Penny Lane or a bar in Liverpool it it was grey, dingy looked like it could do with a good clean, it's association with Penny Lane was a couple of Beatles pictures and a plastic red telephone box, again this definitely a just the one place. Then it's back to Glo to people watch well it would have been if there was anyone to watch, the next question was do we stay another night as we do like it here oh and it's free or do we move on, you like us will know tomorrow.

22nd July

Even though we like it here its time to move on, we leave early as we want to get past Hamburg before we find somewhere to stop for the night, it's not long before we cross the border and boy do you know it, the first stop was a large supermarket which is just as you cross the border and it is rammed with people as Danish people who cross into Germany as things are cheaper and take car loads of stuff mainly booze back over the border, if they bothered travelling a bit further they would find it cheaper again, as I suspect this supermarket has prices to match its position. Then there are other things that go steadily down hill such as road surfaces, traffic jams and lunatic driving, how can things have changed so much within 20 miles. After the relatively quiet journey we have had since we left Germany on our way North this all comes as a bit of a shock but although we don't like it we soon get back in the groove. We are going to make it a long driving day today as we want to get past Hamburg and hopefully Bremen, as we approach Hamburg the real

traffic arrive along with traffic jams, there is massive road construction stuff going on which leads to long queues in narrow lanes creating traffic jams as the traffic try's to get through the road works, eventually we are through them but we had put in a place for a tea break in the sat nav, unfortunately this stop point also had serious road works and we found ourselves crossing over the bridge into the city and we are not going there over the bridge the sat nav says make a U turn oh yea like that's going to happen here, we make a more sensible decision and turn left at the lights and then turn around to head back over the bridge, overall getting through this little lot has taken about an hour to get through, Bremen was looking a bit of an ask but we did get past it and as soon as we did we stopped at a small campsite on a farm that Barb had found while we were on route, we are soon booked in, Glo is parked up and level enough for one night, it was a tiring day and after food that was about us done for the day, tomorrow we will cross another border into Holland.

23rd July & 24th

I have combined these days as there wasn't really much to tell you about, the 23rd was another long driving day with more traffic congestion and the sat nav told us something we had never heard before and that was he wanted to change route as we were approaching a dangerous thunderstorm with a danger to life, now that sounds serious but do we say thanks and press the reroute button do we heck we haven't seen a good thunderstorm for ages. We continue on towards the expected thunderstorm, did it arrive did it heck, then we continue to our stop over for tonight which is nothing glamorous at all, it is a lay by on a small country road I is next to a large canal so I we near water, there is sounds of thunder in the distance and we begin to wonder if parking under a large electricity pylon was a good idea, I suppose we will find out in the morning. When I said that there wasn't much, I was not kidding as that's it, no wonder I have joined two days together.

24th July

We want to get some kilometres done today so don't get excited for content, Barb has found a proper, real campsite site not just a space on a country road and the site fits our requirements, it's got facilities and it's a reasonable price, lots of the others Barb found have had ridiculous prices that we are not prepared to pay unless it's a hotel. After a four hour drive and a lunch stop we get to the last couple of kilometres before we arrive at the site, we followed the sat nav directions to the site and were convinced we had gone the wrong way as the sat nav took us through what we would call a housing estate, a posh one but still nothing but houses then the road changed to a country lane and after 200 metres there was a sign for the campsite, we drive in and initially thought we were driving into someone's driveway and actually we were. The site is in the back garden of the owners house, when I say garden it's a big garden with a lake in the middle it's probably a couple of acres and a full campsite with amenities and EHU on every pitch which are

divided by a small hedge, the owners are extremely friendly and we are offered a pitch overlooking the lake or the fields beyond, Barb makes her choice and obviously it's one with overlooking the lake, five minutes later Glo is level, plugged into the free EHU and we are sitting in the sunshine with a cup of tea, yes a cup of tea. Usually when we are staying on a site that's what we do, stay put, relax and go for a walk to look at what's going on locally, possibly visit a local eatery for a snack, ice cream parlour or even a beer. That is not happening here as we are in the middle of nowhere and there isn't anything to see or do, apart from relax, chill out, admire the massive Koi carp and there are lots of them as well as two sturgeon's which are about 2 metres long, it's a beautiful place but we had made one mistake before we arrived, we should have gone shopping for some fresh provisions as there is absolutely nowhere to go on foot or even a bike for that matter, even the local village which we drove through didn't have any shops so I guess you have to travel a fair way to do your shopping. We have got sufficient supply's for today and for a few days but we do need some fresh stuff but that will have to wait until tomorrow, I did warn that this wasn't going to be very long but I don't expect that thought that it would finish now, well it has.

25th July

We had to go out to get some supplies and unusual for us we had to take Glo with us, as we are going off site we decided to make a day of it and visit a couple of places our first visit was to Arnhem which is about an hours drive. I don't want to go to the city and see more shops that you can see at home, but I do want to visit The John Frost Bridge and the war graves of the brave men that lost their lives so we could be free, there are 1754 graves in this cemetery which is a fraction of the lives lost in the WWII but it is still the final resting place of named and unnamed souls, when you see two graves next to each other who were brothers aged 19 & 20 and they both lost their lives on the same day, can you imagine if they were your your children and opening an envelope to get that news. We have visited a number of war graves on our travels over the years as we think that if you are close to one, which isn't difficult if you are in France, Belgium, Holland and other countries that you should visit and pay your respects. Like the others we have visited this one is so still, quiet and peaceful and although it is surrounded by trees and fields there is not a bird to be heard, they also all so well kept thanks to the War Graves Commission. Our next stop was Apeldoorn as I had read that during July and August there is a real craft market with people not only selling their stuff but also displaying their expertise, stuff like beehive basket making, clogs, walking staffs, blacksmiths and others that are very specialised crafts that if these skills are not past on to future generations they will be lost forever. When we get there the first job is to find a suitable parking space for Glo which we eventually find then the next job was to pay and get a ticket, well I thought I had problems previously which I had eventually sorted out, but this machine was determined to defeat me and there was no way I was having that, there was only one way of paying and that was by card, the two methods available, contactless or stick it in the slot and neither would work, in other languages I can usually with a bit of guesswork fumble my way through but with this machine the instructions were only available in Dutch which may as well have been double as I hadn't got a clue what it was saying. I get a bit in the frame of mind that a machine this simple will not defeat me and I eventually figure out that for some reason the machine does not want to accept payment my our Monzo card, shoved a different card in the hole and seven euro and fifty cents later we can stay for two hours. He head into the town which as expected is much like other towns it has shops that have the same names as ones we have at at home but we do need to carry on through the main streets as we need to get some cash as surprisingly the campsite only takes cash now would you believe that, oh and you don't get a receipt I was nearly in

shock. A cash machine or an ATM was becoming like a sequel to The Hunt For Red October, we asked at a couple of shops and with a bemused face they asked Cash why do you want that and then ermmm I am not shaw where there is one of those old fashioned thingies. After another walk around and ask around we are told oh yes there is one of those in the town, fortunately it wasn't too far away but it did manage to charge us €4 for the pleasure of giving us our own money but as there was not a great deal of other options we were held to ransom and said ok give us the money. Next job let's find this market which I had seen once on some information on the tinternet but wasn't able to find again for confirmation, well this market was becoming the 2nd sequel to the submarine hunt for a red thing only this was proving much more difficult than the parking meter. We asked at a couple of shops and were told that it would be in the market square, off we pop to the market square, we are getting our steps in today, we find the market square and what was well it was bare that's what it was, not a stall in sight and no evidence that there was going be one anytime soon, getting fed up of submarines and running out of time on my mate the parking meter we head back to Glo and to head off to our temporary address. I did say that there was nothing near the campsite but Barb has found that there is a cafe/bar/restaurant not too far away, off we go on another hunt and after driving through a different not quite as posh housing estate we find the establishment. There are few people sitting outside and they have spotted the UK badge on Glo and are thinking eeee their not from rounds these parts, as we go in we check that we haven't grown a second head, it is becoming more evident that they don't get many visitors around here from our island. Now how do I put this, shall we say that the establishment is different, it's got a bar a restaurant with lots of empty seats and if you go through a different door it has a take away none of which have got many customers, we get a couple of reasonably priced beers which is something that hasn't happened for a while and take them with us to sit outside in the sunshine. While we were sitting there we had a look at the menu and this was our first mistake, it was obviously only in Dutch as I am sure the there is not many if any of us UK folks go there, Google translate comes out to play and even that smart rascal struggles to tell us what we could eat. We think that we have deciphered some of the menu and place an order, second mistake, I go for the safe option of cheese burger and french fries with mayonnaise, Barb goes for what we thought was a relatively safe option, a trio of skewered chicken satay kebabs. Not long later I get my burger and Barb gets a thing of unknown origin and there is one of them not three but it is big whatever it is, what it turned out to be was a battered chicken we think kebab, anyway the chips were good. I did offer to take Barb back tomorrow for lunch but by her response I got the idea that she was not too impressed with that idea. I think that we may need to up the budget for our next meal out and see if we can get a decent one before we leave the country. Back at our temporary address we sit outside in the evening sun and laugh about our Michelin star meal, well it probably tasted like a Michelin tyre, trust me we had tried to find other options before we got there but nothing was open. I could imagine the owners of these restaurants having conversations with their friends and saying that they couldn't make a living out of running their own restaurant, now they would not have needed Gordon Ramsey or Alex Polizzi to come and share their extensive knowledge with them, they could have just asked me and they would have received the simple answer of Open the doors and let people in, it's very strange nowhere ever looks open never mind inviting. That's another day done and we are not sure what is happening tomorrow as we haven't got that far in the thinking process, I suppose we will work it out in the morning and when we know we will share it with you, until then that's it.

26th July

Now I have started a few other blogs with this is going to be a short one as we have been in full relax mode today and haven't left the site, our ferry is booked for Tuesday and we want a couple of slow days before the return journey begins. We are only a couple of in fact we have only left your chairs to make couple of cups or tea, make lunch, another cup of tea and a couple of walks around the lake to watch the massive Koi Carp basking in the sunshine and occasionally jumping out of the water, there are also two even bigger sturgeon's which are nearly two metres long and the owner has been told will grow to three metres, not the prettiest fish going but the if they there is a female they do have the added bonus of producing caviar. Another English couple have arrived and there is a bit of a state of shock as they haven't had two UK vans here at the same time, I am not sure why as it is a lovely peaceful site. I have a chat with to Brits and they have also mean to Norway but had spent most of their time in the south, they had done a couple of things that we had wanted to do but couldn't due to the weather which it appears that they had been more fortunate with. They had been to see the largest waterfall and had driving the other road that I had wanted to drive that has 27 hair pin bends, it is not supposed to be as exciting as the Trollstigen but it does have more hairpin bends, oh well one more to add to the list for next time. That's about it for today but we do have something lined up for tomorrow.

27th July

We are on day 67 of our trip and only have 3 more days before we catch the ferry and I have mixed emotions, I love being away and visiting different places, seeing things that you will not see anywhere else in the world, meeting different people and experiencing their cultures, the fun of going shopping and not having a clue at what you are looking at or buying and it being a complete surprise when you have it for dinner that evening, there are some things that are definitely staying in the shop. On the other hand I am really looking forward to seeing our family and friends, which after a long time does bring a tear to my eye on our first reunion and hug, oh and I really fancy a sweet and sour chicken with fried rice. Let's get back to today, we have been told that there is a bit of a shop about 45 minutes away that we should visit, why on earth would we drive for three quarters of an hour to go to a shop well because it's not just any shop this is the biggest leisure shop in Europe and another first to tick off the list, Glo is made ready to go and we just check our route before we go. There were three route options and we have chosen the slower route that will take us through towns and villages rather than the uninteresting motorway, it's a drive and you don't want to here about another one of them, let's just say that forty five minutes later we arrive at Obelink. There is a queue to get into the massive car park, the site covers 18 acres and the megastore itself has a shopping area of 72,500 square metres, as you drive into the car park the shop looks massive from the outside and you through the windows you can see a display of Motorvans and Caravans, so what, well they are on the second floor, this could be interesting but the first job is finding somewhere to park as the car park is rammed and people are driving up and down lanes to find a space, we can't be bothered faffing about like that and head for the far end of the car park where there are spaces available but people don't want to walk that far, well we don't mind and as we walk towards the shop the same people are driving down the same lanes hoping that someone will leave them a space. Ok we are in and yep even as you walk in you can see it's massive, one reason for that is you can not see the other end of the shop and there are three floors of this, everything is excessive such as the camping chairs department which is one item we are looking for, there are hundreds of them, you could probably spend the day there trying each one out and then by the end of the bum on seat testing you would have forgotten which one you liked the best, they varied from €20 to €200 it was ridiculous and made anything we have in the UK look like Arkwright's

corner shop and we haven't even completed the first floor. There are travelators that allow to take your shopping trolley with you to ensure that they don't miss a sale because you cannot carry an item, you can just put it in your trolley on any of the three floors, its really difficult to express how big it is and it's a bit like being in IKEA as once you are in you can't find your way out. To try and put into some sort of size comparison it is just under three times the size of IKEA's Warrington store and that's big enough, it's like going on a day out as it takes you nearly a day to get round it, the one thing that let it down was the restaurant, the food was crap. That's it we are done and head off to the tills and the queues are massive at every till, people have trolley's overflowing with stuff and not cheap stuff unlike us who have a couple of bits the most expensive of which is a pair of sandals for Barb, when we get back to Glo we are a bit foot sore and out of interest we check to see how far we had walked and we had clocked up just over 5 miles in one shop now that is just stupid. We have a couple stops on the way back but not interesting ones, two food shops and one fuel stop which unless we take any daft diversions and not too much right foot should get us all the way home. Back at the campsite Glo is driven straight onto the levelling ramps, plugged in, chairs out and cold beer jumps out of the fridge oh well ok if we must. That's your lot until tomorrow and you have only got three more days of reading this literary masterpiece, now there's a laugh, actually there will be a forth edition as there will be a round up of the trip in the epilogue, but what will happen over the next three days, all will be revealed to you shortly after we know.

28th July

Well we know what we did and it won't take long to keep you up to date, it was a gorgeous day and the options were to drive closer to Rotterdam and waste a beautiful day or stay put and sit in the sunshine and the later option won and book. The sit in the sunshine is about it for the day, we did talk to our new a Dutch friends and our new English friends, go for a walk around the pools, when you stop at a certain place at the side of the lake the Koi Carp and the Sturgeon's all come and congregate as this is the spot where they get fed and as soon as someone stands there they think food is on its way. What else did we, well we had lunch oh and I did go for a look at the site owners Harley Davidson it's a lovely thing that would also set car alarms off and possibly house alarms, you certainly couldn't sneak out on it without everyone knowing. What else, well we sat out in the sunshine, oh and a high point was putting the awning out so we could have some shade from the skin burning sunshine, that was about it really so with nothing else to tell you I will add this to tomorrows blog as it's not really worth sending this on its own.

29th July

It is another beautiful day and I wish we could stay but we need to get closer to Rotterdam so that we don't have rush or get caught up in traffic in the morning on the way to the ferry, I would sooner be there an hour early rather than being 10 minutes late and getting all wound up if there is a traffic jam or just a hold up. The other English couple on the site are on the same ferry as us tomorrow and they are doing the same thing and they would also like to stay, we have breakfast al fresco to make the most of the weather. Then it's time to pack up and get Glo ready to go, we say farewell to our Dutch friends, the site owners and the English couple and say that we might see them on the ferry, before we go one of the other people we have been talking to, wants to take a picture of Glo's Wheels and Tyres why he didn't ask during the 4 days we were both there I don't know but we have a conversation about them, it's a shame that they weren't clean and

shiny and the lettering needs re-whitening to show them off properly, but he likes them and wants to get a set. Then after Barb has had a look at the Harley Davidson we say farewell's again and set off, we are not going straight to tonight's park up as we have a couple of last things to do before we leave, the first is to visit the RAF museum at Arnhem. As it's an important museum and is over three floors you would expect it to have a decent sized car park, well we did however after we followed the signs to the car park we found out that it hasn't got a large car park by driving in still following the signs into a car park with less than twenty cars, with no way out other than the way we came in which shall I say was a bit tight and included 3 90° turns and with more cars arriving all the time, gosh how fun is this, eventually with some shouts of Stoop from Barb I got Glo turned around and escaped the car park, we saw a parking sign saying bus parking stuff it that will do, we follow the signs and the bus parking area is park at the side of the road, me wound up never. It's not that I am not interested as obviously I am but this is not the largest museum I have seen and it's not that I am tight but it is €15 to get in, Barb goes in and is going to give me a ring if it is fantastic and I shouldn't miss it and then I would go in and join her. I went for a coffee and after a while I guessed I wasn't getting the phone call and I didn't, Barb said that it was interesting and very moving but not fantastic, inside the museum there was information regarding nearby war graves which turn out to be the ones we visited the other day so we head off for our next stop, we had promised ourselves that we would go out for a proper meal and we went on a hunt for a restaurant that was on route to tonight's park up. We have ruled out, pizza, burgers and Indian and after Barb had a hunt on internet she did find quiet a number of possibilities but unfortunately most were shut on a Monday, she did find a Chinese that was open and I fancy that as after two months I do fancy a Chinese meal which will be on the no no list when we get home as I really need to go on a real life style of eating which means a diet. Address is put into sat nav and is on our route to tonight's stop over, off we go but as we were getting closer to the restaurants address the unfortunately without being snobby the neighbourhood had started to take a bit of a nose dive, it was starting to get like a place that you wouldn't park your car even so we go to have a look, we arrive and from the outside it did not look that inviting, Barb goes to have a look and our initial thoughts are confirmed and Barb does not want to eat there. The next choice was an Italian which wasn't that far away which didn't instil a great deal of confidence and again or fears were confirmed it didn't look that great, Barb finds another closer into the city centre, the road takes us past the restaurant and this place looks like it fits the bill perfectly. Next job is find somewhere to park and yippee there are parking bays at the side of the road outside the restaurant and the second yippee was that you could pay using the EasyPark App, this restaurant is completely the opposite to the first two and is pretty flash. We find seats outside under the shade of massive parasols, I always find restaurants great for people watching and this one was no different, the waitress and taken our drinks order a Coke and a small beer for Barb, a notice a couple sitting not too far away from us, the guy was having and Aperol Spritzer and his partner was having white wine, our drinks arrive and the waitress says to let her know when we are ready to order, we place our order and after a while our shared calamari starter arrives and during this time the level of the spritzer had not altered even slightly, our main courses arrive and there is still no sign of the level of his drink going down, he either doesn't like it and doesn't want to admit it or he is just tight, what have I said about Billy Joel's Piano man song. We finish our main courses and while deciding wether to share a dessert we have second round of drinks, the volume of Spritzer is starting to go down as it's starting to boil, it's hot enough under our brolly and they are sitting with the blazing sun on them, I do wonder if he is waiting to see if given enough heat the Aperol will turn back to water or what ever liquid it started from or actually come to the boil. We decided against the desert but we don't leave immediately as now I am playing a waiting game but eventually I give in and prepare to

leave, we could have stayed longer as the people on the table next to us had very kindly offered to buy us drinks because we had swapped tables with them so they could add two tables together as there was a fair few of them, he doesn't know how lucky he was as I was driving and not drinking. The food was great and the service was fantastic, the pasta did struggle to match the one that Barb had in Stockholm which was on the lunch time special menu, that said in the one in Stockholm was amazing and probably one of the best we have had especially at the ridiculously cheap price, terribly sorry Casa Italia but even you would struggle to match it. The other great thing was considering that the place was fairly flash and in lovely surroundings, the bill was very reasonable, it's amazing how cheap you can eat when there is no alcohol consumed. Next stop is the park up which is a twenty minute drive away and is another one of those how on earth did anyone find this place, it's another in the middle of nowhere spot in the countryside and will be our last stop over before we catch the ferry tomorrow and return to England and the excitement of seeing our family and friends, but the ferry trip is for tomorrow and we will let you know how our last cruise of the holiday goes, you probably won't find out tomorrow as when we land we will start our drive home, I will let you know asap.

30th July

This will be our last day in Mainland Europe well for this trip anyway, we had about an hours drive to get to the port but before we get into that I just need to rewind to last nights park up, I don't know why but I am still amazed by what people do and how stupid they are. The parking area is big, probably not as big as a football pitch but certainly bigger than half of the pitch, we are accompanied by three other vans and are dotted around giving each other plenty of space and also leaving plenty of space for other vans that may arrive to have plenty of space of their own. So imagine the scene a large car park, with plenty of space, another van arrives drives around and then parks about 2 feet from Glo's bumper, now if the car park was rammed I can fully understand that situation but in this car park there was absolutely no need to do that unless it was Glo's magnetic personality, then he got out and started playing football with his children well actually with a ball but you know what I mean. I have had previous experiences of footballs and vehicles and it can be a costly one especially when they are using a proper football and not just a light one, as usual these gentle kicks of a ball get more and more competitive and Glo has near misses with a couple of the over excited kicks of the ball. Not wishing to have a heated conversation regarding any damage that may occur, I open the cab blinds and move forward possibly being slightly overzealous with my right foot and moved Glo to the vacant 20 foot of space in front of us. In the morning we were up early and it would appear that a local farmer for some reason wanted everyone one to be awake as he had decided to cut the grass surrounding the car park using a tractor to pull a grass cutting machine, it didn't bother us as we were leaving early but I don't think that the lack of spacial awareness behind us was too happy, as we left I gave both Mr Spaceman and the farmer a polite farewell wave. We have a couple of places to visit before we go to the ferry port, first we go to the big M to use the facilities and grab some breakfast, coffee and a tea, this was an interesting experience as the sat nav took us the wrong way down a one way street fortunately there was nothing coming the other way and I rectified the problem pretty smart ish by going into the big M's exit rather than entrance, now I know that two wrongs don't make it right but it was certainly the safest way to sort the problem, in Mr sat nav's defence I would say that's the first time he has majorly cocked up in over 6 thousand miles and as I was in charge of the steering wheel and should have checked instead of blindly following instructions, any way no harm done unless there are some traffic cameras around but hey it's done and can't be undone. After tea, coffee and making use of the big M's WiFi, we head off to the next stop and that is to fill Glo's LPG

tank as its 65cents per litre and as we have used gas for a lot of our 72 day trip it seems like a good idea to top up her tank before we return to the UK, this seemed a good idea at the time, well it wasn't, according to Mr Sat Nav the cheap LPG was only 10 minutes away but as we travelled towards the petrol station, Mr Sat Nav had not been informed that the main road towards the station was closed, now we follow the diversion signs and as soon as Mr Sat Nav caught up we were now 20 minutes from the fuel station, getting to the station as a complete pain in the bum, but I was not going to be beaten by a diversion sign. Well I nearly was but I didn't and we finally arrive at the fuel station, the Lpg pump is clearly identifiable and the next job is to find which connection is required, the bag of connectors is retrieved from under the seat and the collection of adapters are laid out so that the correct adapter is close to hand, filler gun is removed and after looking at the connection it is easily identified as the same as the UK, well I suppose it keeps the other adapters in pristine condition. Using these LPG pumps is a proper faff but the gun is connected and secure, time to press the big black go button and in goes the gas, normally that would be it job done go and pay. However this pump had a different idea as rather than squirting the LPG into the tank and then cutting out, the flow of gas is a trickle and a slow one at that, after about 5 minutes we have an extra litre in Glo's tank, stuff this for a lark let's try the other pump, a minute later the tank is full and the combined total cost for all this fffing about was a massive €5.90 wow what a saving, I am really glad we perceived for such a saving, we have probably spent more in diesel getting there. Next task is to get to the port and looking at the expected eta we should be there on 15 minutes, the take me there button was pressed and off we go, as we approach we follow the Stena Harwich signs and we are soon at the entrance to the check in bit, now it does seem strange that there is not a sign of another Motorhome, car or bike and the alarm bells start to ring quietly, Barb goes into the office to check and is told that we are in the wrong place this is just for wagons. Oh well not a problem we will just go round the corner to the none commercial bit, to make sure that this time we go to the correct place, the address is put into Mr SN and he says 52 minutes and there are also hold ups on route, 52 minutes what are you talking about you silly boy, reply was if you had entered the correct destination in first place it would be round the corner however some smart arse pith in Europort thinking that there was only one well the smart arse hadn't checked properly and has now found out that there are two ports one on each side of a large blob of water, which there was no way of crossing without going back to the junction where you could turn left or right. We can't blame Mr SN for this complete cock up as it was an input error by some soft sod in the cab, this soft sod was the guy sitting in the drivers seat, on our way to the wrong port I had laughed at the vehicles travelling in the opposite direction stuck in a traffic jam, we now find ourselves same traffic jam. Fortunately we have enough time we get to the correct dock, well I say fortunately but as we sit stationary and the clock is still ticking away it may change to hopefully. The traffic starts to move and we arrive at the correct check in and join the queue directly behind the couple we had been at the same campsite one night previously, we said hello and they asked if we were stalking them, we have a chat for a while and then it's time to board the ferry for our last cruise of our adventure, as the journey takes over six and a half hours we have booked a cabin for crossing, it just gives you space to chill out, possibly have little siesta and also a shower, oh and there is the added benefit of having a complimentary minibar obviously you can't drink the contents as you are driving later but you can still take it home with you. During the cruise we do have a walk around the ship and we even ventured outside at the back of the boat, it is a bit windy and even though I did try and temp Barb to have a look from the upper viewing decks she declined my invitation and after a purchase from the duty free shop we returned to our cabin which has a double bed and also a single it is also and outside cabin which had caused me some concerns when I was making the booking as I wasn't to keen on being outside but the description actually

what it did mean was that the cabin had a window although for some reason did not open. At 7.30pm there is a call for drivers and passengers to return to their vehicles and then we join others in the descent from level 10 to level zero, we soon disembark and are then through passport control and then through the bit where they may want to have a rummage through the van. Then we are back on the UK roads and it doesn't take very long to remind us the difference between the driving standards here and the driving we have been part of for the last 72 days. As soon as we get to the first busy roundabout the road rage starts with two drivers waving parts of their hands at each other I originally thought that they were waving at each other but it became obvious that was not the case, then 100yds later we are stopped with others in two lanes at a set of red lights when an Audi Q something decided that it was acceptable to drive past the two stationary lanes and continue through the red traffic lights, and that's before we have traveled 2 miles, welcome back to the UK and that's before we encounter the pot holes which are surrounded by fading white marker paint, I did wonder if the ship was making a return trip that we could get on. It's now 8.30pm and we are not going to travel all the way home so we need to find a stop over for the evening but we want to cover some miles into the journey before we find a stop, now this is another difference from the park ups in the countries we have visited where places for wild camping are plentiful and welcomed. Here we are struggling to find anywhere that has decent reviews and the safety of the parking stop is and should always be your first consideration, as such we find a stop over in a lorry park on the A120 very close to Stansted airport, it's not the nicest or quietest stop but there are a number of wagons and motorhomes parked which all adds up to safety in numbers, it's sad that this was the only stop we could find that had decent reviews. There are a number of cars with people sleeping in them and I don't mean just having a nap before continuing their journey, with the amount of stuff in their cars these people looked like they were living in them, anyway they were just like us and not doing any harm, then it was time to get some sleep before we continue the journey home.

31st July

This was the final day of this adventure and we a 4 hour drive home depending on what our fantastic road network has in store for us, first job before we set off is to have something to eat, shall we fire up the cooker and the Ecoflow or it just so happens that there is a roadside cafe in the park up, now after 71 days away, the cafe obviously wins. We do have breakfast alfresco even if it is in a lorry park, we had a conversation with a couple of wagon drivers who ask us where we are going and where we have been, the where we are going conversation didn't take long as they all new where the Pool is, and asked how far away we live from Southport then we got where we have been and that conversation took a lot longer as they were very interested in the adventure and a couple of them have the adventure on their bucket list and after the conversation and the question and answers parts a couple of others had also added it to their list, hey we converted a couple of wagon drivers, no not like that. Barb is doing this part of driving and after we say goodbye to our wagon driver friends we are off, I am not going to drag out an uninteresting drive along the M1, M6 and M62, needless to say the driving standards and lane discipline haven't improved since we left the UK, we had one stop for a driver change and then it's not long before Glo is being reversed into our driveway. As the house has been on holiday let while we have been away it is immaculate and ready for your next guests and at the moment that's us and we are not quite as tidy as our usual guests, it's not long after a cup of tea that the job of unpacking everything we loaded in Glo 72 days ago and there is a lot of it, when will we learn to pack less stuff, that's difficult when you are not sure what weather conditions you are going to encounter. It's not long before the house has gone

from devoid of stuff to full of stuff in a very short period of time and the washing machine is about to be tested to destruction, the rest of the day was spent doing much of the same, how on earth did we manage to put this much stuff into Glo. The difference is that when we load stuff in, we do it over a couple of days and on our return we take most of it out in one go, I think for our next trip we will put everything we are planning to take in on one go that way will see what we are actually putting in and hopefully reduce things a bit. This all sounds like an uninteresting end to a 72 day trip but it is back down to earth with bump time and we will need a couple of days to get used to not travelling, sitting, eating and sleeping In a 6 metre van, I hope Glo doesn't get upset by being referred to as a van but that is what she started life as. This lark of unpacking is getting boring so let's end this now and then there will be the epilogue where I will try to sum up the trip, that may take a day or two to get my brain fired up into memory mode.

This was the final day of this adventure and we have a 4 hour drive home depending on what our fantastic road network has in store for us, first job before we set off is to have something to eat, shall we fire up the cooker and the Ecoflow or it just so happens that there is a roadside cafe in the park up, now after 71 days away the cafe obviously wins. We have breakfast alfresco even if it is in a lorry park, we had a conversation with a couple of wagon drivers who ask us where we are going, the where we are going conversation didn't take long as they all new where the Pool is, and they asked how far away we live from Southport because of the horrendous tragic events on Monday, it's difficult to believe that this could happen anywhere and to think that it could happen in the sleepy town of Southport is shocking and words cannot describe what happened, my thoughts and prayers are with the children and the families affected. After talking about the unbelievable tragedy, they ask where we have been, but after talking about the loss of children's lives our travels seem unimportant but it did lighten the conversation and took a lot longer than a trip up the M6, as they were very interested in the adventure and a couple of them have the adventure on their bucket list and after our conversation and the question and answers parts a couple of others had also added it to their list, hey we converted a couple of wagon drivers, no not like that. Barb is doing this part of driving and after we say goodbye to our wagon driver friends we are off. I am not going to drag out an uninteresting drive along the M1, M6 and M62, needless to say the driving standards and lane discipline haven't improved since we left the UK. We did have bit of a detour which was a planned one as we had bought a camping chair for Barb, it was a posh one at a very reasonable price so it was worth the detour. After that we do had one stop for a driver change and then it's not long before Glo is being reversed into our driveway. As the house has been on been on holiday let while we have been away it is immaculate and ready for your next guests and at the moment that's us and we are not quite as tidy as our usual guests, it's not long after a cup of tea that the job of unpacking everything we loaded in Glo 72 days ago and there is a lot of it, when will we learn to pack less stuff, that's difficult when you are not sure what weather conditions you are going to encounter. It's not long before the house has gone from devoid of stuff to full of stuff in a very short period of time and the washing machine is about to be tested to destruction, the rest of the day was spent doing much of the same, how on earth did we manage to put this much stuff into Glo. The difference is that when we load stuff in, we do it over a couple of days and on our return we take most of it out in one go, I think for our next trip we will put everything we are planning to take in on one go that way will see what we are actually putting in and hopefully reduce things a bit. This all sounds like an uninteresting end to a 72 day trip but it is back down to earth with bump time and we will need a couple of days to get used to not travelling, sitting, eating and sleeping In a 6 metre van, I hope Glo doesn't get upset by being referred to as a van but that is what she started life as. This lark of unpacking is getting boring so let's end this now

and then there will be the epilogue where I will try to sum up the trip, that may take a day or two to get my brain fired up into memory mode.

The Epilogue 9th August

We have now been back in the Pool for 5 days and after travelling for 72 days, visiting 6 countries and according to Glo's odometer we travelled 6408 miles, yep miles, with a total driving time of 195 hours, at an average of 32 and a bit mpg, with that information we can work out that we used 200 gallons of fuel. We still haven't sorted everything out, I haven't even started on the admin and costing stuff and I will probably put that off for a while, without adding up the receipts the fuel expenses can be roughly costed, the fuel prices varied in different countries but if we work on an average of £6.50 a gallon it's approximately £1300 which considering where we went and the roads we travelled on. I don't think that it is a 3.5 ton Campervan which was probably carrying too much stuff, now that we have a rough calculation it makes me want to add all the fuel receipts to get an exact figure, yes I know that I should have done our spending costs each day, but I didn't so let's just leave it there knowing that the task will be more difficult now, but it will be done. The real difficult bit is trying to separate our favourite places we visited on our adventure, I can rule a couple out pretty quickly and these fall into the Cities and Major Town's category which is a bit daft as I have lived in a city for all of my life or is that the reason why, yes there are some amazing buildings in immaculate condition that are hundreds of years old and the architecture is fantastic, after that they are full of shops with bright signs showing the same names as we have in our cities and towns. The next thing wrong with them is people and the chaos that comes with hundreds and depending on the size of the city make that thousands of people, we find that the longer we are out in the countryside and then we do visit a city we are pretty intolerant of the chaos and need to leave as soon as possible, I know that we had missed things by not staying longer in some cities but if your not enjoying it why stay, if we wanted to come on a city break we would have but that's not why we came. While we are on the towns bit we found that the smaller towns didn't suffer with the same chaos in fact they were exactly the opposite, with very few if any people walking around and the shops were a bit dingy so much so you didn't know if they were open or closed, that's towns and cities done, oh I forgot one other thing and that's the rubbish that people (that's being polite) think that is ok to just drop or leave anywhere without giving any thought to others. You may have guessed by now that we would sooner be out in the countryside especially where there is water and we are not don't mind if it's sea, fjords, lakes, rivers, canals or waterfalls it all seems to have a magnetic attraction I think it is the movement, the sound of waves crashing onto a beach or the white waters of fast flowing rivers and the force of the water with its unstoppable power, well unless someone builds a dam. I am not sure if it is the force of the sea's and the fast flowing rivers but it always makes me think of the power of nature and our planet and if it wants to bite us in the bum it can, no matter how hard we try to destroy it. You can also get the double whammy of a beautiful sunset or sunrise with pink and blue hue's and the golden glow of the sun reflecting off calm rolling waves of the sea or ocean, it doesn't matter how many I see, I want to see more as even though it is the same sun (obviously) every time, each one is a unique experience. The sunsets on this trip are like no others we have seen before as they are still sunsets at midnight and through to the early hours, it is a fantastic sight but it does make me stay awake until silly o'clock in the morning and even walk along a beach after 1am to take yet another photograph, I think that I have just a few sunrise and sunset photographs in my collection, if I was posh it would be called a portfolio, anyway what ever you want to call it

I have lots of them. Now I could get into saying how much I love the countryside but if we go that route this could be an extremely long epilogue, let's just say I like it as much as sunrises and sunsets then we can get back to the trip. Let's get to where we did we like the most and that is very difficult as I don't think that there was anywhere in Norway that we didn't like so I will be just have to give a few places mentions that highlighted the trip, first let's say wow what a beautiful place is the Lofoten isles the scenery is magical, the first Glacier we saw again showed us the power of nature, as did the magic of the waterfalls and the fast flowing rivers crashing onto the rocks as if the water is shouting get out of the way I am coming through and you really don't want to get in my way. We had a couple of one off moments for us, yes others have seen them before and others will see them after us, but on this trips they were firsts for us, in Denmark we go to the tip of Jutland where the North Sea and the Baltic Sea meet but don't mix which cause a line between the seas separating the different coloured waters, then there was crossing into the Arctic circle which to be fair was a bit like crossing the road, one side your in it, the other your not but it was something we hadn't done before. After entering the Arctic we continued to the most northernly point of mainland Europe getting there was another first for us, why go there well just because it's there and we have driven there even if the weather didn't want us stay overnight, then we had one off roads one of which we were fortunate to be able to drive, this was on my want to do list, I am not sure it was on Barbs and this was the Trollstigen which when we arrived it had only been open for three days and seven days later it was closed due to rockfalls hitting cars it will remain closed for the rest of the year and possibly longer, we were lucky and drove it 3 times, down twice and up once, Barb was made up. We drove through the two longest tunnels in the World, yes there are two that hold that record, check it on Google, in Norway they are currently building a longer one, we drove through a tunnel with roundabouts now that was a bit odd. We lost count of how many tunnels, bridges and ferries we used to get to our destinations, two of the bridges did stand out and can not be forgotten they are the Oresund and Storebaelt bridges apart from them being awesome they also won't be forgotten for the toll costs to cross them. I could go on about the places we went to but they have all had mentions in the blog on the days they happened.

If you have a plan to visit Norway we have a couple tips for you, let's just do them as a list, if you are travelling from Harwich to Holland on a day crossing pay the extra 30 quid and get a cabin a much more relaxed crossing and if you have a comfort class cabin you get a complimentary mini bar. From Denmark to Norway you will go by Fjordline ferry make sure you join their Fjordline club as you get a small discount on the trip, we also booked the lounge where you get free tea, coffee, cakes and comfy seats for the journey. Next toll tags make that you get them as the discounts are definitely worth having and also get a prepaid ferry pass, ours cost £230 and then you get up to 50% off Norway ferry crossing, each crossing is deducted from your prepayment and when you return home you can claim any remaining funds, it is a bit of a faff setting it up as you can not do it on line but once you know this it's easy you send them an email they ask for some details and do the rest well apart from paying for you. If your van is under 6 metres make sure you have a digital copy of the V5C and get a copy of the Certificate of Conformity so that you can prove the length as we were overcharged as that said the van was over 6mt, with these two documents you can prove the length of your van. Next if you are going to use the big bridges more than once, then pay and join the multiple crossings gang as it cheaper but only if you are using it more than once. Oh and for really really big savings, if you like a drink then buy as much booze as you can carry in Germany on your way through. Another thing you need to do is to set up some parking apps such as EasyPark it makes paying for parking much easier and some places only accept payment by an app, also check if payment is required on a Sunday or Bank holiday as lots of places were free.

I suppose the big question when you are recommending a trip is, would you do it again, and the answer to that is yes but in a different season, I would love to do it in the winter but I don't think that Barb will allow that to happen. The other thing is that there are a lot more places to see in the world and on this trip we were able to tick off another 3 on our list. Well that's about it for our Scandinavian adventure to the most northerly point in Mainland Europe, now we have to think where do we go next we'll Barb says that it has got to be somewhere warm so I have been thinking that we could go to Punta de Tarifa in Spain as according to Wikipedia this is the Southernmost point in Mainland Europe and depending which route you take is about 1,700 miles so would be about half the distance of this adventure, I haven't suggested it to Barb yet but it does tick the box of somewhere warm. Gloria has been stripped out until she was void of anything that wasn't fastened down and had a full after adventure clean and is ready for her next trips which will moly be local and not as long as this one. There is one more thing that I do need to do and that will be to sort through the photographs but that might take a bit of time, when it's done I will upload them to the website and let you know, if you have been reading about our travels, thank you for your time, if you haven't you aren't getting thanked and you wouldn't know anyway, what more can be said other than until next time that's your lot.

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