

FIFTH SECTOR – CORNWALL

Day 14 Al & Kev pick up

After an uneventful but pretty trip from Lechlade to Heathrow it was time to exchange the car for something a little bigger. As it turned out, given the upgrade to the E Class Merc we could have done with that for the next part but I was unable to extend. The reason became evident as we arrived with the car collection centre full of people as this was day1 of the Bank Holiday weekend. Everyone was on the move!

Unfortunately the attendant was clearly unhappy working on Saturday morning of the long weekend and so the service was atrocious. After several attempts to finalise the transaction we ended up with a different car to that ordered, one that had not been washed since sitting in the yard gathering dust and a satnav that was finally provided after an hour of searching. Al & Kev arrived after 26hrs without sleep and as these 2hr negotiations completed. We were pleased to be on the road.

But the euphoria of the moment soon evaporated as the satnav failed to fulfil its part of the bargain. Shazza, as the very small TomTom satnav became known, was so quietly spoken initially that the driver and navigator were unable to hear the instructions (masked also by the chatter from girls in the backseat) and the screen representation was appalling (compared to the integrated screen in the Merc). To gain composure we started circulating the round-about outside the car collection depot until ultimately, after attempting to leave the vicinity unsuccessful and the girls insisting on return for instructions on satnav use, we found our way back to the depot. Sound was re-established and we were on our way. Shortly though it became obvious that Shazza was only a part time assistant as she lost GPS connection continuously, often straight after sending us down a narrow lane, and then returned several miles later to give instructions aligned to the roads before she went off line. Very confusing and really unusable. So we managed to have lots of laughs as we navigated our way through the lanes, catching glimpses of road signs in the overgrown landscape and finally reaching our destination.

To get out of Heathrow we fought on with lots of laughter, many missed turns and lucky not to cause accidents on the M3. Our first stop as a foursome was Stonehenge. We checked into a delightful



pub in Amesbury, near Stonehenge and then went on to the attraction at 5pm with many other tourists. We were all very impressed with an unexpected feeling of how spiritual this place feels. The stones are really impressive, far bigger than expected and clearly arranged in a circle in the middle of the paddock. You cannot help but feel like you are re-enacting the gathering of people from 1000's of years ago.

The visitor centre was excellent with the story of the history. It told the story of how it was believed to be built with

rocks being brought from 30 miles away and more. All be pulling on rollers and then standing the

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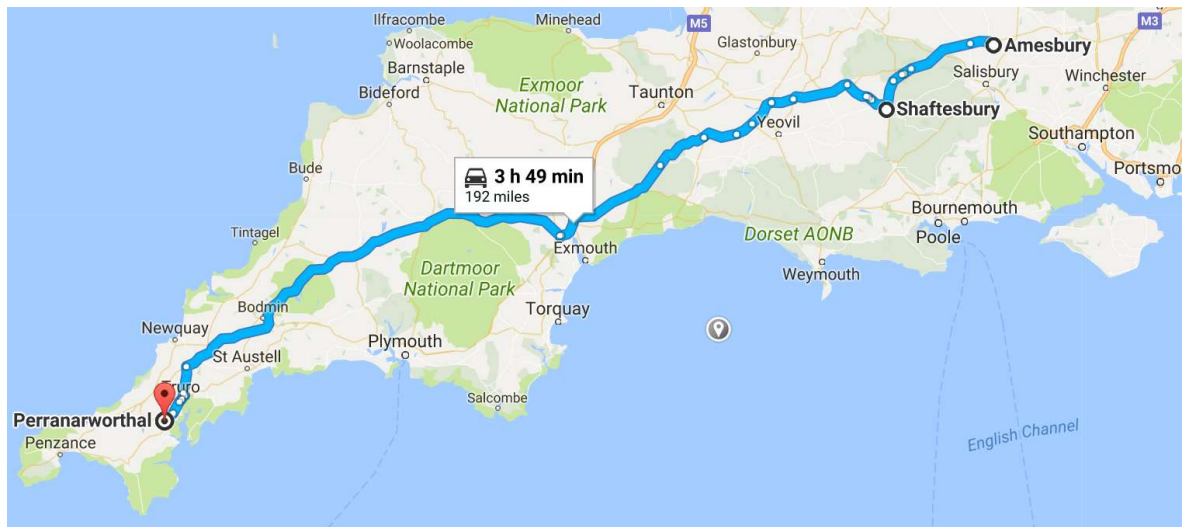
10m stone up with 2.5m in the ground. Then they had to get the 20 tonne lintels up on the top. Difficult to do today out in a field and certainly unthinkable without a crane or two.



We then got to rest up in a great pub in the small village near Stonehenge, Amesbury. A great first day.

Day 15 Heading west to Cornwall

The part of our journey was to be a full day drive across Devon and Cornwall to our base for the next few days at Perranworthal, near Falmouth.



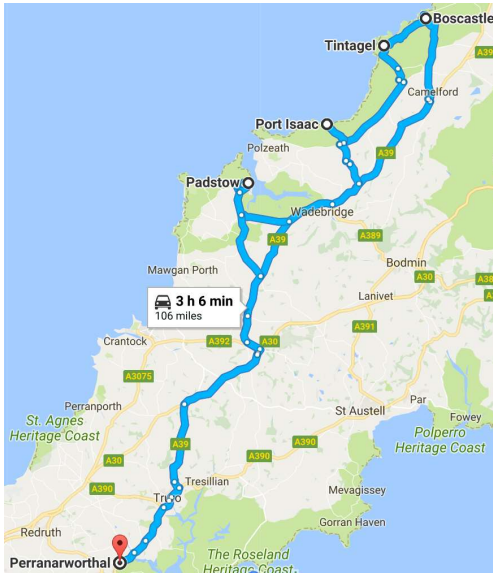
But first we found a lovely historical site in the town of Shaftesbury. We spent a couple of hours just walking the site of the medieval of Abbey that was founded in 888 to house the nuns and was destroyed by King Henry VIII in 1539 during the Reformation.



Our accommodation for the next few days was at the Perran Foundry in Perranworthal which is well down into Cornwall. This foundry that is hundreds of years old is now being renovated to provide luxury accommodation. We had the two Engine Room at our disposal.

Day 16 North Coast of Cornwall

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Our introduction to the beauty of Cornwall was on the north coast. We had become a bit practiced in the use (or lack of use) of the Satnav and so the trip did have several surprises as we found ourselves on uncharted (literally) roads but that was part of the adventure.

The first stopping point was the fishing village of Boscastle. What a surprise. A quaint harbor protected from the sea by a large rocky cliff that we climbed for a better look while many swam in the crystal clear water of the inlet. Very picturesque.





On to Tintagel. This is the site of the castle renowned for the King Arthur stories. The castle itself is difficult to get to and the crowds were massive on this hot sunny day so we made do with the best coffee on tour.

Port Isaac was the next stop. This is now famous for the set of the TV series of Doc Martin. (Port Wren) Like most of these cliff mounted villages there is very little car traffic down in the village and all parking is arranged on the clifftops and there is a long walk down the cliffs.



Finally for the day another little surprise packet in the village of Padstow. Again you come off the top of cliffs down into a gorgeous little town with a fishing port and a lot of tourists and cute shops including the Cornish bakeries full of Cornish pasties.

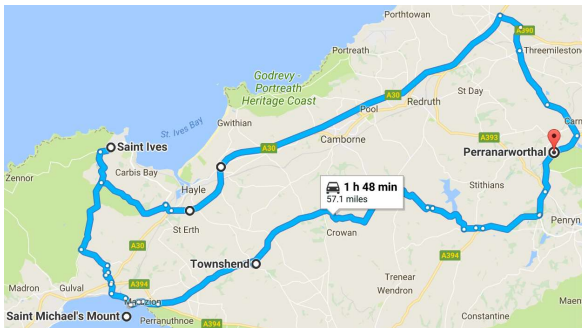


After leaving the car at the top of the hill and walking down into Padstow it was obvious that they survived on the locked small harbor that was dealing with the large tide range. Outside the lock were mud flats with beached boats.



Day 16 South Coast of Cornwall

The next day we took on the southern coast with St Ives and St Michaels Mount. With low tide due about 4pm when you could walk across to the otherwise island of St Michaels we set off to St Ives in the morning.



Our round trip was made even more 'round' by a few rogue directions from Shazza our satnav that sent us onto small farm round where we had the chance to practice our passing skills with both tractors and oncoming cars.

Eventually though we made it St. Ives.

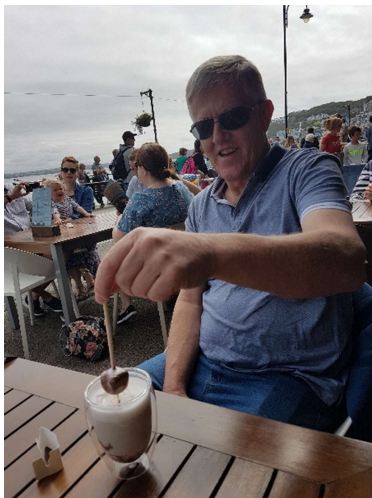


The first challenge...the car park high on the hill looking over St.Ives and each overflow carpark seemingly full.



We finally found our way to the bottom of the hill where there was a gorgeous bay, clear water and, as Kev proclaimed, the best hot chocolate ever. Luckily the water had suggested that Kev take the cardboard carton that encased the chocolate cube because I am sure we would have taken a significant time to work out what this little cardboard box was about when it arrived.

The suggestion of a bus trip back up the hill was very welcome.



One of Marg's must see places was StMichael's Mount. This is apparently the equivalent of the Mount Michelle that we had seen in Normandy many years earlier.



The island is accessible only by boats until low tide when a walkway appears. Many try their luck before the low tide but have to be prepared for a wet torso. We enjoyed our walk around town.



Day 17 The mouth of Fal river

We were now looking for attractions closer to home. Falmouth jut added to the story of gorgeous fishing villages in Cornwall.



As Alison put it during the day, what could be more perfect than a day in a beautiful village with a Cornish pasties, sun, sand and garden.

We had found the sand and the garden by taking a local bus with all the very senior citizens who were commuting throughout the village for their daily tasks. We did note that each person on the bus seemed to know the others and were very keen to talk (not a mobile phone to be seen!)



Day 18 Truro

The bigish local town was Truro. It provided a few major department stores so we decided to have our one non-driving day as a shopping adventure for the girls while the boys explored the local brewery. The adventure was constructed around the 20 minute local bus ride from outside our local Inn through to the town. The girls got the early bus, the boys caught the midday schedule to align to the tour of the Skinners Brewery in the afternoon and then we were to meet for the bus ride home and a tea at the local Inn. Well planned and well executed despite some late afternoon storms that constrained the boys from leaving the brewery for around half hour (there are worse ways to be inconvenienced).



Photo 14: Kev the bar tender

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