

EUROPE 2023

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Squeeze Through

Slender English roads flanked by tall, vibrant green hedges on both sides. This has been our prevailing scene in my recent days. The thoroughfares surrounding Chipping are scarcely broad enough to comfortably accommodate a lone car. The roads meander through the idyllic countryside, embraced by the lively, meticulously maintained hedges. These hedges form a corridor-like illusion, amplifying the road's already confined feel.

If fortune favours you, you might glimpse another vehicle approaching from a distance, allowing you to assess the situation early. But, more often than not, you'll come face-to-face with a car, or even more dauntingly, a truck or monster tractor, right around the bend. Speeding is ill-advised. Jolts and skids are part and parcel of the journey.

Spotting an oncoming car induces in me a heightened sense of anticipation and the need for careful manoeuvring to ensure a smooth passage. I experience a blend of intense focus and prudence as I navigate past. The narrow road and soaring hedges forge an atmosphere of closeness and mutual trial among drivers, relying on each other's competence and collaboration to navigate these constricted paths securely.

Our recent venture to Wray Castle encapsulated this sensation perfectly – inching forward cautiously, waiting for that inevitable fender scraping noise, breathe in everyone, fingers crossed. Mercifully we escaped unscathed.

Every drive I make in this locale is similar - the allure of the scenery converges with the pragmatic trials of limited space and near encounters.



Horses, Cars and a Castle

We decided to go to our various venues today - Maddi and I to the Black Horse Experience and Deakin and Blayze to the Lakeland Motor Museum. Siggy was the driver to cart us to the locations in the Lakes District (about an hour north) and shuttle us between.

The horse establishment is quite famous if you are a Friesian horse owner. They currently have 14 horses some of which have been rescued. Their aim is to promote the Friesian horse and to educate the public about them. They raise money by providing experiences such as the one we took. Maddi was particularly interested because she has her own Friesian boy at home. They introduced us to the various horses. Maddi spoke to the owner of the place and we were lucky to see two of the horses being worked. One interesting experience they offer is to sleep in a specially prepared stable with one of the horses. Heaven to a horsey person and probably hell to anyone else!

The boys really enjoyed the motor museum. Of particular interest was the DeLorean, the Ford Sierra RS Cosworth and many other classic cars. We met up after and enjoyed some warming lunch in the museum tea rooms.



The navigator (me) in her wisdom, then decided to take us up the west bank of Lake Windermere. I thought we would get good views of the lake but it was heavily forested in parts and extremely congested with vehicles. The drive to a National Trust establishment — Wray Castle — was “a little bit crazy” with bumper to bumper traffic on such a narrow road. The castle itself was rather dull and the walk down to the lakeside was not on because of the quite heavy rainfall.

Home again, we lit the fire and Blayne and I ate our tea watching Harry Potter while the others entertained themselves on their computers.





