

# Round Britain Following the Coastline Clockwise

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Being proud owners of a European Airstream 684 since 2015, we usually leave our hometown, Cologne in Germany, for four months in the summer. We (that's Monika, Harald and Peppi, our Smooth Collie) travel in different areas of Europe to learn about the countries and people. Our trips are not purely spare time, but "living on the road" – a mixture of work and holiday. Our profession as software developer and our Airstream make this way of life possible.



Arriving at Hebrides Gathering

Last year we visited large parts of Scandinavia and covered 8,500 miles visiting 60 campgrounds up to the most northern end of the European continent. This year, 2016, we decided to go to Scandinavia's western neighbor, Great Britain. Although we had visited Britain several times before, we still felt we hadn't investigated everything as thoroughly as the country deserves. We had heard of a small Airstream rally already planned on the Outer Hebrides in the north west of Scotland and it made us decide to go for what we called "Round Britain Following the Coast Clockwise".

Our tour began by going from Cologne to Calais in northern France. We chose

the Eurotunnel over the ferry connection as the most convenient crossing of the English Channel. You drive your tow vehicle and Airstream onto an enclosed train and passengers (including the dog) stay in the car. The train requires no more than 20 minutes to go through the tunnel under the sea and when you see the sun again you are on the island of Britain!

We learned a lot about driving our wide-bodied Airstream precisely during the first weeks. Along with Italian mountain villages, Cornwall has probably the narrowest roads in Europe and lots of them are single lane (for both directions). The good thing about towing an Airstream is that cars coming in the

other direction typically brake quickly and wait in a lay-by so you can pass. The challenges were the hedges on both sides, which were not very obliging! But all the small scratches (which you can polish away easily) were forgotten once we saw the steep cliffs and romantic villages.

the historic Hadrian's Wall, built by the Romans nearly two thousand years ago.

Sheep were now our companions, living on both sides and on the roads. The landscape had changed to moorlands and got rougher. Trees became an exception. In the southwest of Scotland, like Paul McCartney, we fell in love with the Mull of Kintyre. We saw a beautiful coastline and here we were happy to get lots of sun and nice weather. Travelling northeast, the next highlight was the most northern part of our journey, the Orkney Islands, off the northeast corner of Scotland. This is an even rougher area north of the British mainland but we felt cozy and comfortable in our Airstream and we watched the winds from inside our traveling home. The Outer Hebrides Airstream gathering was approaching so we turned around to go back in a southwesterly direction heading for the Western Highlands of Scotland to cross by another ferry to the Outer Hebrides in the Atlantic Ocean!

Airstreams are not mainstream vehicles and, whilst they are rare in the US, they are the absolute exception in Europe. In 2015, we only saw one other Airstream in four months of travel! Airstreamers are not very connected in Europe either. Besides the European WBCCI Unit,



Tools and Trip Recorded Harry's Camper

founded in October 2015, one can find a number of forums and Facebook groups. In addition, the European distributor organizes events every other year. There is quite a lot of enthusiasm developing in this young movement and the English community is probably the most active and networked so far. They became our constant companions on the trip, giving us a super-friendly welcome and lots of support and tips.

On-site Airstream gatherings were another boost and we were lucky to participate in two of them in Great Britain, the first in southern England and the second one on the Outer Hebrides. We really appreciated these because we were on the road for such a long time. We met exceptionally nice folks at both meetings and spending some days together we made many new friends.

As we write, we are now going down the east coast on our way back. We have to be back in Southern Germany in mid-August because we are invited to present our rig, a Land Rover Defender



**Airstream International 684 and Land Rover Defender**

and Airstream, in the foyer of the Erwin Hymer Museum, a place dedicated to caravanning history. During the “Summertime!” event, we will give a talk on

our trips through both Scandinavia and the UK. The motto of the event is “Going West” and the interest is huge!

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