

Thursday 13th September

A busy morning, working our way down the Buckby Flight with yours truly looking after bread, washing and coffee, clambering up and down into the boat with timers. It was a cool night, so much so that I intend to lay the fire today; if temperatures are low again tonight, I'll be prepared. Hot water bottle last evening, porridge this morning, both a first this season.

Yesterday we made our way into Braunston, along the towpath where Nick had collected a load of punctures on his bike excursion the previous afternoon. This kept him occupied all evening with cries of anguish as he found yet another thorn in a tyre! Pump-out and a small shopping expedition were the order of the day followed by a delightful interlude with Joseph and Janet who stopped for coffee en route for their boat break after which we travelled onwards. They told us how the dire summer weather had severely curtailed their boating earlier in the year. Then it was up the Braunston Flight and into the Braunston Tunnel. It was an irony that we had been commenting on how little canal traffic there is and were punished by meeting a number of boats **in** the tunnel – never comfortable as you see their lights for an age before you finally squeeze...eeze past! We stopped soon after and spent an increasingly cold evening, no Radio 3 and in the process of attempting to find it, lost Radio 4! No TV, but at least a good computer signal that was lost on Nick who developed a really nasty migraine and put himself to bed – quite a rare occurrence.

Today is bright and beautiful. We continue to lock down the Buckby Flight, with the A5 to the east and the busy railway to the west. At the bottom is a delightful seat, set up to commemorate a particular boat and canal traveller on his boat, Forget me Not. My bread effort today is an effort with kamut flour – an ancient Egyptian wheat. It looks fine – let's hope it tastes ok!

Monday 18th September Milton Keynes

We're heading south, having had a hectic weekend with Emm, Sean, Joe and Noah. We arrived just north of the Blisworth



Tunnel on Friday at lunchtime and caught the bus into Northampton to buy provisions for the weekend: fish pie ingredients for Saturday, and a pork roast for Sunday. The family managed to get away reasonably promptly and were with us to share some freshly made quiche and bread for lunch after which we were off through the tunnel. Though it was 3000+ ft long we made good progress, meeting no boats coming the other way so we motored through in just under half an hour. Joe wasn't too impatient awaiting the tiny speck of distant light become reality with sunlight on emerald green foliage. We proceeded through the delightful, canal-side community, awash with Saturday afternoon

tourists, collecting a delicious ice-cream on our way through and onwards down a couple of locks to our mooring alongside a country park where the children could run free.

The men took a fair while to sort the cratch to make it suitable for two little people, lining it with an indigo tent to ensure it was warm and watertight; and the children were asleep before 7.30 and the four adults could relax. Next morning Sean ran back to fetch the car and take it a few locks and a mile or so further down the cut – that was



after a walk back to the canal museum visit and a Sunday lunch. Two little people kept four adults full-on busy for the day until it was time to say goodbye. A successful, happy weekend I trust was had by all; shame that baby Noah wobbled away from adult hands for a



moment before their departure and received a nasty bang on his left eyebrow.

Yesterday we travelled on through open country, over the impressive aqueduct down one lock and onwards to Wolverton, where we replenished our empty fridge. As we were approaching Milton Keynes we spotted long term friends and boaters, John and Judy Quinlan and stopped for a companionable cup of tea. Today we travelled on for another hour to Campbell Park and I did a bus-foray into the shopping centre with the idea that I might start to look for Christmas present ideas. Aaaagh! It's feeling lots more Autumnal and I'm wondering if I have enough warm clothes or enough wood for the fire!