



Photography by Tim Cushway

Where to? The great navigation challenge

Part three of a five-part series in search of a distinctly different weekend wonder. Vicky Deacon takes us en-route to some very unusual places to stay in Britain with the help of the Blaupunkt in-car navigation system.

So far, our quest to find the most unusual places to stay in the UK has taken us to remote West Usk Lighthouse in Wales and the rustic Bolebroke Watermill in Sussex. Part Three sees us heading to the ever pristine and unspoilt South West to visit the Brentor Station B&B. This relatively new bed and breakfast offers a sublime combination of peace and quiet, with history brought-to-life and miles of walking and cycling country through barren and unspoilt moorland.

We set off on Friday afternoon and, typical of London traffic, we were shortly met by a plethora of other holidaymakers and weary workers. Rather than sit and wait, we made good use of the traffic avoidance feature on the TravelPilot to skirt the masses. Despite the abundance of cars, we managed to arrive on schedule to a warm welcome by Sue and Eric Rhodes at Brentor Station. Hungry from our travels, we followed our hosts good advice and dined at the Peter Tavy Inn, a highly recommended local eatery. The Inn offers excellent food in a warm, cosy and casual atmosphere.

Later that evening, on the moors, the mist settled and our journey home was a little more arduous. Fortunately, the navigation system gave us plenty of warning about the numerous turns that punctuated our return journey and we returned in relative ease for a comfortable night in our own little train station bed.

The B&B has two double rooms and one twin room. Only one booking is taken at a time so we had the whole of the first floor to ourselves – although as an option you could enjoy quite the weekend with a few friends.

A selection of breakfast treats (including fresh fruit and yoghurt) and finishing off with the full English (or any variant that you requested) greeted us the next morning. Freshly squeezed orange juice and the freshly laid eggs (courtesy of Henrietta and friends) were well appreciated.

After breakfast, Sue took us on a tour of the station and the gardens. Starting with the old ticket office, still complete with collected tickets, we moved out onto the platform – which adjoins the breakfast room - and still has many of the original features. Standing on the platform surrounded by memorabilia such as old suitcases and signage, it is quite easy to imagine that a steam train will shortly arrive or whistle past! The former waiting room sits directly opposite and the garden stretches away following the line of the tracks, which have long since been removed and filled in. We strolled down the garden basking in the sunshine and taking in the impressive view of the Church of St Michael de Rupe, whose silhouette stands out against the skyline high on a hill, far above the station. Henrietta, the breakfast egg provider, joined us for this amble and Sue pointed out a local brown trout that resides in the stream passing through the property. This short walk encouraged us to explore the moors and discover what Dartmoor really has to offer visitors on a short weekend break.

Hay Tor rocks were our first point of call, where we climbed to the top and watched over the Dartmoor ponies and their foals. These magnificent views on this fine day made everyday life seem so far away.

Enchanted by the beauty of the countryside, we visited Becky Falls, where fast flowing water churns over granite boulders that are so typical of the



The Brentor Station House B&B is another great find in the search for unique locations about the UK.



Hay Tor rocks yield views of the Dartmoor beauty.

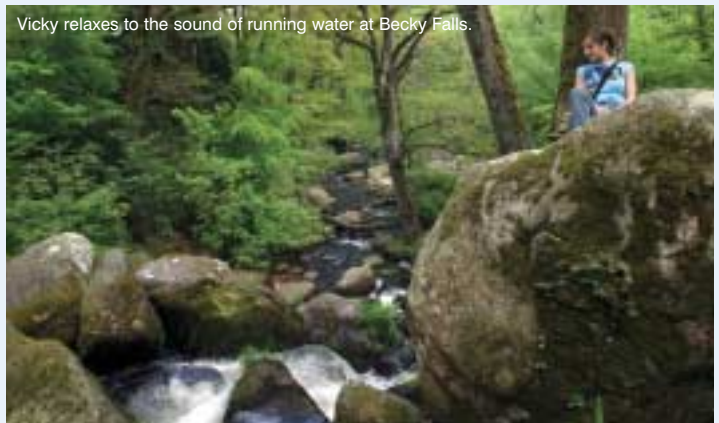


Moor ponies make for entertaining driving.



Finding the Gorge was easy with in-car navigation.

Vicky relaxes to the sound of running water at Becky Falls.



area. We spent some time clambering across and up (and through – oops) the waterfall. Nearing exhaustion after such a hard day, we did as the moss does and plonked ourselves on large smooth boulders with our feet in the water.

Sunday came all too fast and, rather than sifting through tourist literature, we used the TravelPilot to find local landmarks of interest. Lydford Gorge beckoned us and the navigation system showed us the way. This National Trust owned property offers an exciting walk through the gorge from the 'white lady' waterfall to the 'devil's cauldron', where the water rushes through an opening before swirling around violently in the 'cauldron'.

On returning we made our final farewells, over a steaming pot of tea and tasty homemade carrot cake, another example of the effort and thoughtfulness of our delightful hosts. If you are after an unusual stay in a welcoming and homely weekend abode, Brentor Station B&B is without a doubt one of the nation's finest.

Further information: Brentor Station B&B can be found in Brentor, near Tavistock in Devon, PL19 0LP. Tel: 01822 810403 www.brentorstation.co.uk

Blaupunkt offer the best in in-car navigation systems. Call their hotline on 01895 83 8880 or visit the website: www.blaupunkt.co.uk

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For your chance to win a Blaupunkt TravelPilot E1 (we have one to give away), simply answer the following question:

What kind of weather conditions did the TravelPilot guide us through to enable a safe return to the B&B?

- a)mist b)hail c)snow

Send your answer on a postcard to: M&L Blaupunkt Competition, Britannia House, 21 Station Street, Brighton BN1 4DE. The prize will be drawn on 27 September.

Watch out for part four of 'The Great Navigation Challenge' in October's *Motoring & Leisure* for another chance to win a Blaupunkt navigation system. At the end of this five part series in December, you will be able to vote on the unusual places featured for a chance to win not only a stay in the winning B&B but also a TravelPilot E1 to take you there!



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