


The MURVI Club Newsletter

Summer 2023

	Contents:		
	Editorial		Page 1
	A Faulty Fridge	Lindsay Paterson	Page 1
	First Time Meet Organiser	Adrian & Theresa Hitchin	Page 3
	Crickhowell Rally Photos	Lin Powell	Page 5
	Orkney and the Great Glen Way	Geoff & Carol Wilkinson	Page 7
	Webasto Wrestling	John Laidler	Page 15
	Next Edition		Page 18
Orkney Sunshine! Page 7			

Editorial

Two articles about rallies this year and an account of travels both by Murvi and on foot in Scotland are book-ended by two articles about repairs to Murvis. I hope this doesn't give an unbalanced view of Murvi reliability! The 3-way 'fridges (gas, 12 and 240 volt) can be temperamental and I suspect a few of our members have had issues with one so I hope Lin's article with a few added points from me will be of interest. My item about the Webasto I've added just to show it is possible to remove it without taking the interior of the Murvi completely apart, which was my first thought when I looked at how to get it out. But I wouldn't wish this task on anyone else. It is awkward and the unit is very expensive to repair because of the cost of parts. But the bulk of this edition is more cheerful and I hope you enjoy the photographs and reports.

A Faulty Fridge

Lindsay Paterson

My fridge worked ok on 240 volts AC and 12 volts DC. However, it was intermittent on gas. Looking at the flame indicator, the little gauge with white/green indicator, latterly it barely went into the green section. Eventually the fridge failed on gas operation

Investigation initially pointed to the thermocouple not producing enough voltage, it should be circa 40/45mV. Using a cook's torch I heated the thermocouple to prove the above. There was very little movement of the flame indicator.

Next, I checked the resistance of the mode of operation selector switch. It showed a varying resistance from about 140 to 11 ohms. Not what I would expect from a switch. To prove this I removed the switch from the circuit.

On repeating the above with the cook's torch, the flame indicator went into the green. Checking again with the switch fitted, when a little hand pressure was applied, the resistance fell to less than 1 ohm.

I took the switch apart and it would appear the moving contact which is held in place by a small spring was causing the resistance. The contact assembly for 6A/6B was cleaned and the switch reassembled. The resistance was now less than 1 ohm

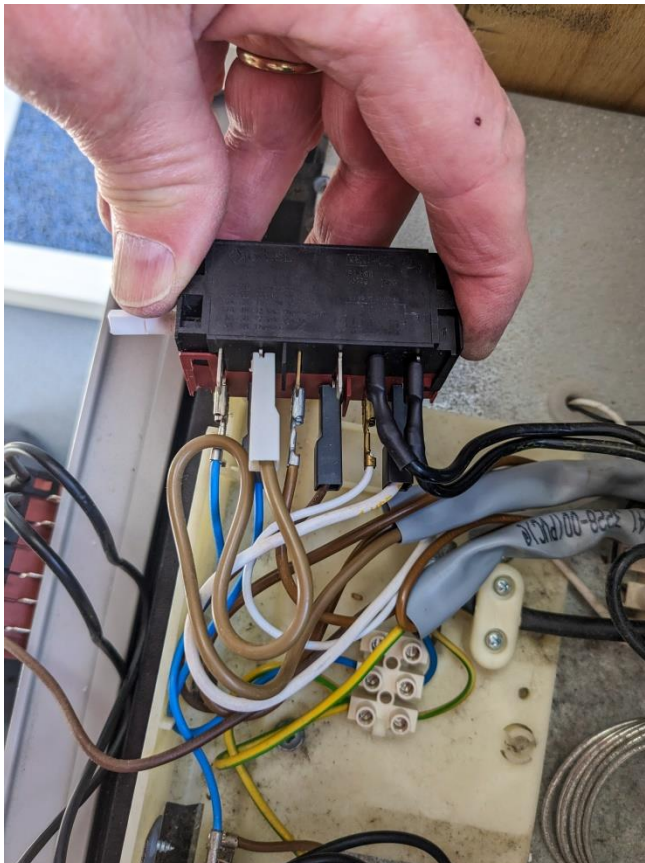
Do I replace the switch or refit the old one? After due consideration I decided to refit the original switch. I am happy the resistance is consistently very low, about 0.06 ohm

The only change I have made to future proof it, should the problem arise again, is to connect wires in parallel with the existing switch circuit.

If the problem reoccurs, all I have to do is connect the 2 wires together, effectively short circuiting the switch. This does not interfere with any safety interlocks.

I then opened the gas valve to the fridge and checked for any leaks with leak detection solution (the real McCoy), not washing up liquid. All was well and but I closed the isolating valve to the fridge and have arranged for the local caravan repair man to come and confirm there are no leaks. He should also issue a certificate to say everything is safe.

Editor's Note: I have also had problems with this switch. The symptoms were similar to Lindsay's experience with the needle very slow to move across a little way into the green zone. Jiggling the selector switch also caused the needle to move rapidly. The flame was lighting but it was staying at what I call the "pilot light" stage. When working correctly the flame is much stronger and burns with a slight roaring. I was not hearing any sound when it lit.



On our Morocco we have the smaller fridge with an oven above it which complicates access. To service the fridge you need to get at the top, it cannot be dismantled from the front. Fortunately, the oven is easy to remove. It is held in place by 4 screws at the front, the 12 volt supply at the back is easily disconnected as is the gas pipe – having made sure to close the isolating valve of course! The oven then just lifts off and reveals the top of the plywood cabinet built around the fridge. The top section is held in place by 8 screws but it was also glued down although I was able to crack the joint with a chisel without doing any significant damage.

The switch is shown on the left but despite my attempts to clean the contacts I couldn't resolve the problem so I bought a replacement from the online company

Leisure Shop Direct. The trick to replacing items like this is to swap one wire across at a time from the old to the new assembly after first taking a few photographs.

This repair does involve disconnecting gas pipes to remove the oven so please do not attempt this if you are in any doubt about your ability to put everything back together safely. Lindsay was very wise to get his work professionally checked.

First Time Meet Organiser

Adrian and Theresa Hitchin

After attending meets at various places around the Country we thought it was time to have a meet near to us, there's a campsite just up the road from us so it would be convenient for us. With Alan setting up the new booking system through the Hub I became the first to try the new system. It worked well once I learnt how different parts of it worked. Members going to a meet and booking direct with the site must still fill in the form on the Club website so their details appear on the spreadsheet and the organiser knows who is going.

The first day of the rally I took a walk around Falmouth, showing people some sights they wouldn't



normally see. We started with 13 of us (see above) and ended up with 6. I'm not sure if this is a good attrition rate for a Murvi meeting?

When we got back everyone said they had enjoyed it, even those who had broken away early. Whilst we were out walking Theresa had done the preparation for Cornish Pasty making in the afternoon. I had set up our day tent for Theresa to do the demonstration and by the time she started

there was already a large audience waiting to see the pasties being made. We ended up making 22 pasties, even some who only wanted to watch had one, we cooked some in our van and others cooked their own, all said how much they enjoyed them.

On the Wednesday Brian led a walk along the coastal path to Mawnan Smith, with 8 of us going, it was up and down but not too strenuous. The walk ended at the Red Lion in Mawnan Smith, I don't know how that happened, whilst having our refreshments we tried to work out the time of the Bus back to Falmouth, online we came up with 3 different times and ended up checking at the Bus stop.



Wednesday, I arranged a meal at the local Golf club for the Thursday evening. I picked up menus so we could pre-order what we wanted, which worked well until they said the Evening menu changed on Thursdays, so some choices had to be changed which is where I missed out one of the changes.

On Thursday everyone did their own thing, one group went to Flushing on the ferry to walk around to Mylor Dockyard and 8 of us went to Glendurgan Gardens. In the afternoon Tim had lost his phone, Colin (Stan) phoned his daughter who told him how to track it, this showed as being in Flushing, so off we went but found no sign of it, it then showed up as being in Penryn, so we looked there on the way back to Falmouth but still no luck. In the Evening 21 of us went to the Golf club but due to the menu mix up we were one meal short, luckily the Chef produced another one very quickly.

I think everyone enjoyed the week, most were saying when is next year's meet. Many said how the number was just right, we could all gather together without having to split in to groups and when we had the meal we all fitted around the table. Now to start planning for the next one. All I can say is if

you haven't organised before give it a go, doing it close to home you have the local knowledge to show people things they wouldn't normally see or do and Alan will guide you through the club booking system.

One thing having a meet down this end of the Country several were able to call in on Murvi either coming down or going home.

Crickhowell Rally

Lin Powell

Lin has cleverly put together three collages of photos she took at this year's rally at Crickhowell in Wales. The subjects shown are People, Canal Walk and a visit to the local Nature Reserve.





The The Canal





Orkney and the Great Glen Way

Geoff and Carol Wilkinson

Orkney

Given our usual *laissez-faire* attitude to planning our travel it came as no surprise to find that our favoured ferry company for travel to Orkney, Pentland Ferries, had serious problems. One of their boats was on long term loan to CalMac and the other ran aground with the evacuation of 60 passengers the day before we tried to book. Fearing that the only alternative, Northlink, would be inundated with passenger transferring to their service we wasted no time in signing up to leave on 14 June. The week prior to sailing was spent idling north through the North Pennines, taking in a splash of culture at the waterfront V&A in Dundee and visiting friends on the Moray coast. On the morning of 14 June we could be found on the overnight beach motorhome park at Findhorn receiving a call from Northlink Ferries enquiring as to our whereabouts and pointing out we should be half way to Stromness on a ferry at this time - I did say we had a *laissez-faire* attitude. They were very understanding when we explained we had our dates muddled and rebooked us for the next day.

The crossing was short, 1.5 hours, and uneventful. We headed straight for the Point of Ness municipal campsite on arrival, for a two night stay - the only site we stayed on during our two week sojourn. We have stayed here on previous trips. It's a great little site overlooking the relatively mountainous island of Hoy across Scapa Flow.

Having travelled around the Orkney Islands in our previous Murvi we were a little concerned that camping off grid might have become more of a challenge. We needn't have worried. There are many small, delightfully situated car parks, some of them belonging to the RSPB. Motorhomes seem well tolerated and there are plenty of clean well maintained public loos. The Ness campsite is happy for you to fill and empty for a suggested donation to a local charity.

Our main objectives for this visit were to do as much cycling, birdwatching, hiking and visiting sites of archeological interest as time and weather would allow. The weather was very kind and time was fairly open ended. There is also a well signed Creative Trail throughout the islands leading to artists' studios, jewellery makers, pottery workshops and many more.



One of the highlights was taking the foot passenger ferry to Hoy with our bikes [see above]. This enabled us to visit the wonderful Scapa Flow Museum which reopened last year and is a perfect way to explore Orkney's wartime heritage - it's free and has an excellent café. The museum has been shortlisted for Museum of the Year along with such illustrious nominees as the Natural

History Museum - results out this month. We then cycled the 10 miles to the northern ferry and crossed back to Stromness and from there cycled back to Houton.

We revisited all the well known archaeological sites such as Skara Brae [below left], the Ring of Brodgar [below right] and the Stones of Stenness, but the icing on the cake was our trip to Rousay from Tingwall. We spent the night before in the Murvi on the pier to catch the early ferry, again with bikes which incur no charge.



We cycled the road all around the island, virtually traffic free, stopping off to picnic by a beautiful white sandy beach overlooking a turquoise bay being entertained by grey seals hauling out onto the rocks. The main point to this visit however, was to visit the Westness Heritage Walk, a mile of rough coastal path which takes you on a journey through the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, the Viking invaders to the crofting clearances of the 1800s. The most impressive remains are the Midhowe chambered cairn and Midhowe Broch [below]. To be seen to be believed.



A group of archaeologists were keen to explain their race against the inevitable encroachment of the sea at one of their sites in order to record their findings at the Knowe of Swandro [overleaf left] before it disappears beneath the waves forever. The cycle ride back to the ferry terminal revealed many more chambered cairns all with hatches and ladders to facilitate entry into these fascinating tombs [overleaf right].

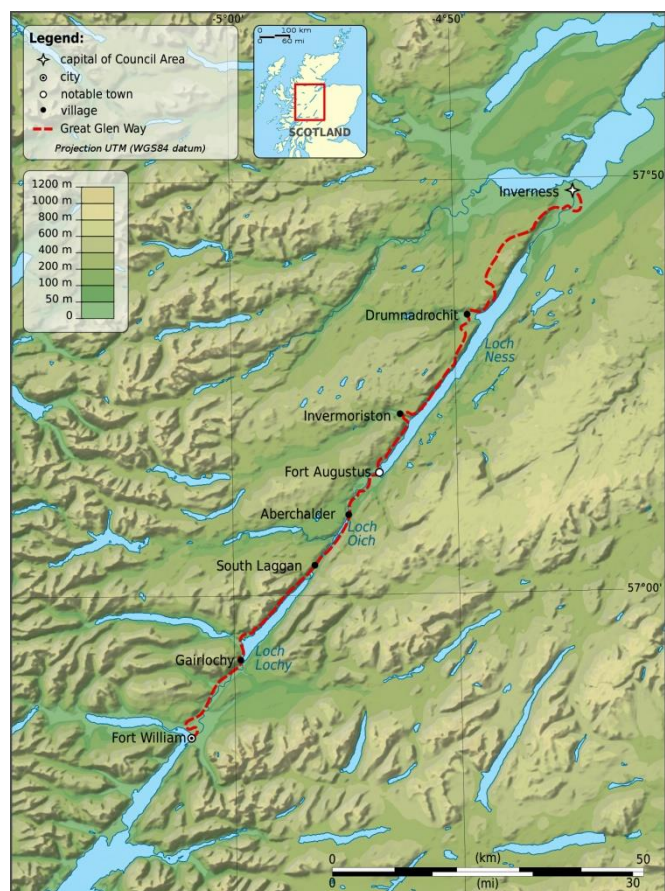
This day seemed like the pinnacle of our Orkney trip and we felt it could not be surpassed. We therefore happily took the ferry back to Scrabster the following day for the next leg of our adventure.



Great Glen Way

The ‘good idea ’came like a bolt out of the blue. We were just boarding the ferry from Stromness to Scrabster at the end of a magical exploration of the Orkney Islands. We didn’t have much of a plan about what to do when we got back to the mainland but neither were we in much of a hurry to head back home. So, after regaining my composure, Carol’s ... “why don’t we hike The Great Glen Way?”, seemed worthy of further consideration.

“The Great Glen Way” [right] is a long distance trail which (according to Wikipedia) runs 125 kilometres (78 miles) along the Great Glen, from Fort William in the southwest to Inverness in the northeast (note: I have reason to take issue with these measurements!). It’s normally hiked (over 5 or 6 days) from west to east to take advantage of the prevailing winds.



The Great Glen is not the only thing that joins Fort William to Inverness. The A82 does too. This presents the opportunity to use the regular 919 bus service to link sections of the route together along this general principle:

Park the Murvi at “B”. Camp overnight.

Take the bus to “A”.

Hike back to “B”.

Drive Murvi to “C” and repeat.

(This means, of course, that each section of the route is effectively traveled 3 times!)



One problem here is that the 919 is not a bus you can “hail”. The A82 is a tortuous road which clings tightly to the lochside for most of its distance and the bus will only halt at designated stops which are few and far between.

The other problem is that there is a limited number of “wild camping” spots along The Great Glen and vanishingly few within strolling distance of a bus stop.

But, anyway, feeling only slightly daunted, we set out to divide the route into bite sized chunks (say 20k - 25k) and then find somewhere close enough to both the route and a bus stop to park the Murvi.

Because we were basically heading south, we decided it made sense for us to hike the route “backwards” (ie from Inverness to Fort William).

I’d be happy to share the details of our wild camping schedule (let me know if you’re interested) but I won’t bore you with them here. Suffice to say, we managed to link the stages together without adding too much walking distance to the route.

The walk starts at Inverness Castle (normally, at the moment this bit is closed for building work) within a mile of the centre of Inverness. The start/finish point is marked by an engraved monolith sporting a brass plaque declaring that the route was inaugurated in 2002 by His Grace and Royal Highness the good Prince Andrew. This reference is obscured by Carol in our picture [above].

Day 1: Inverness to Abriachan (23k). We set off along a delightful footpath on a tiny island in the River Ness. Eventually, after breaking free from the suburbs of Inverness much of the first day was spent hiking through the Aird forest. When the forest gave way to a minor road the views opened out to reveal the splendid majesty of highland hills. The day ended at a small car park in the Abriachan Forest [right].



Day 2: Abriachan to Alltsigh (21k). A little bit more forest walking to start the day [below left]. Then, after passing through Drumnadrochit more delightful high level views opened up over Loch Ness [below right]. At the end of the day we camped in the car park of the Lochside Hostel in Alltsigh (having previously been given permission by the very friendly wardens).



Day 3: Alltsigh to Fort Augustus (23k). Today gave us the chance to fortify ourselves en-route with a magnificent “full Scottish” breakfast at the Glen Rowan café in Invermoriston [overleaf].



This provided the energy to climb the extra 1,000 ft in order to gain the “high route” to Fort Augustus above Portclair Forest [above right]. The day finished with a well earned dinner in the Boathouse restaurant in Fort Augustus before settling down in the Murvi on the newly built “aire” on the edge of town (c. 20 places).

Day 4: Fort Augustus to Laggan Locks (24k). For much of the day the route hugged the shore of the



Caledonian Canal [left] and Loch Oich [below right]. The potential boredom of the flat towpath was enlivened by the variety of nautical traffic on the canal, as well as identifying the birds and flowers beside the trail. “Forestry Operations” forced a detour above Invergarry and added an extra 4k to the route. The day ended in the Eagle Barge, a very



engaging floating pub at Laggan Lochs [below left].

Day 5: Laggan Locks to Gairloch (24k). The final two sections of the walk deviate some distance away from the A82 rather complicating the logistics and adding a few miles to the “regular” route.



This section covered the length of Loch Lochy [above right]. Much of the day was spent in the pleasant company of Mark from Cataluña (doing the walk the “proper” way by carrying his camping gear). A further deviation arose to avoid engineering works associated with a new hydro-electric facility.

Day 6: Spean Bridge to Fort William via Gairloch. That dratted A82 added another 3 miles to today’s route, but gave us an opportunity to admire the remains of General Wade’s “high bridge” on the old (1736) military road. For most of the day, however, the route hugged the Caledonian Canal which made for pretty unchallenging walking punctuated by passing sailing boats [right] and the brooding ever present Ben Nevis [overleaf left] before eventually arriving at Fort William [overleaf right], feeling satisfied, relieved, tired and ready for a beer (or two).



PS: according to my measurements (courtesy of Strava) we had walked 144k (c. 90 miles).



Webasto Wrestling

John Laidler

In the autumn of 2022 while using the electric heating feature of the Webasto an error message suddenly appeared on the control panel together with a red light. "230 volt element failure" it said and sure enough it had stopped blowing out warm air. We had suspected something wasn't right as for the previous 24 hours or so there had been a faint smell of burning but we couldn't find where it was coming from and there was no obvious smoke. I just assumed a moth or something had found its way into the heater and was being incinerated.

This happened at the start of our French trip on an aire with EHU but luckily the Webasto ran perfectly on diesel so we had a pleasant (and warm) holiday.

I didn't immediately look at repairing the fault when we returned as we used the Murvi on and off throughout the winter and I didn't want to lay it up for an indefinite period and lose the use of it. We subsequently took the (diesel only) Murvi to Spain this spring having been re-assured by a local Webasto agent in Plymouth that they could look at it in June as they were very busy earlier in the year with boats being returned to the water – the Webasto is commonly used in yachts as it is much safer than gas heating.

Unfortunately, the June promise was only an estimate and it wasn't until the beginning of July that they could look at the heater. I had thought about repairing it myself and had found a workshop manual online which described how to take it apart but the description did include a significant number of obscure seals and gaskets which I wasn't confident I could source. I was also in no doubt my knowledge of the Webasto was far from complete.

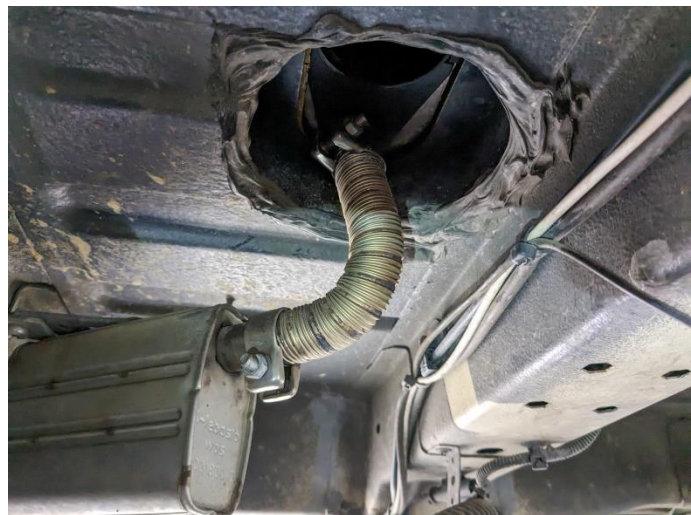
The Webasto of course lives at the bottom of the wardrobe or under the foot of the bed in the shorter wheelbase models. I have a suspicion Murvi may install it first then build the rest of the interior around it as at first glance it doesn't seem possible to get it out as there is virtually no space down the left hand side to reach the nuts which hold it in. I even considered trying to remove bits to improve access but short of removing the entire bed this wasn't a promising strategy.



The picture above is slightly misleading as it shows two gaps in the frame on the left. I cut these after removing the heater and this made it much easier to refit the washers and nuts on this side. On first removal there were no such gaps but it was possible to get a 10mm socket onto the nuts and undo them. There are two nuts on each side which hold the heater onto rubber feet when must act to reduce noise transmission and vibration from the vehicle.

But I am getting ahead of myself as you can't just lift the heater out after undoing the nuts.

Crawling underneath the vehicle you can access the exhaust which needs to be removed. I just undid the clamps on the flexible pipe and was able to remove it but it was a bit of a struggle. I would recommend removing the silencer first.



I was expecting to disconnect the air intake from below but further investigation revealed that it needs to be disconnected internally. A flexible pipe comes through the floor of the Murvi and then plugs into the front of the heater. It just clips into place and comes off with a pull. I accessed this area by removing one of the white vents opposite the pipe connection but I suspect you may be able to leave it in place and remove it by lifting up the front of the heater.

The diesel for the heater enters along a thin black pipe which connects at the front of the heater. A flat screwdriver will release the clamp and it can be withdrawn from the short section of flexible

rubber tube it is connected to. There was no leak of fuel and I sealed both the black pipe and the rubber tube with tape to prevent contamination by dust.

The next stage is to disconnect the 3 electrical cables which are on the right hand side on the floor. Access to them is made easier if you disconnect the flexible ducting which blows out hot air through the large vent, which is a bit of a struggle but can be done. The cables have the sort of connectors you often see in vehicles, all three are different but it wasn't hard to work out how to separate them.

Before starting on the water pipes make a record of which pipe, hot or cold goes where. I did this by simply putting a zip tie around the cold pipe and taking a photograph while it was still connected. You must also of course ensure the water has been drained from the tank and heater.

The pipe connections are a push fit type and I suggest you find a video on YouTube explaining how to disconnect them if you are unsure. The method is to turn the knurled section anti-clockwise for about a quarter of a turn then push in the sleeve. The pipe should then respond to a gently pull. My pipes obviously hadn't watched the video and didn't know what to do but in the end I got them apart. I made the disconnection at the right-angle elbows leaving a short section of pipe and another elbow still attached to the heater. This was done as it was easier to access these elbows.

The last things to disconnect cannot be reached until you lift up the front of the heater and then pull it forward a short distance. This is easier to write than it is to do. You can now access where the two 80mm diameter foil-lined ducts connect at the rear of the heater. One takes air to the front and rear of the vehicle and one blows air out of the front of the wardrobe/bed. They are secured to the heater



by large clamps which can be undone but I then found Murvi had put in a sneaky self-tapping screw right through the end of the pipe and into the plastic connection on the heater. I am not sure how general these are but once identified they are easily removed. The photo above shows the left hand duct missing as it disintegrated during removal. The one on the right was still in one piece but it needed replacing having grown too brittle to survive handling. The ducting is available online.

You can now lift out the heater. It weighs 25Kg and it will be a struggle. Have a towel ready to lay it down, either upside down or on its side as the stub of the exhaust protrudes out of the bottom of the unit so you can't put it down on that without risking expensive damage.

I took the heater to the Mount Batten Boathouse in Plymouth. Rex have given me the name of a company they had used in the past but when I rang them they were no longer doing Webasto repairs as they had lost the staff with the expertise.

The unit was subsequently stripped down and the electric heating elements were found to be in perfect order! The work wasn't wasted as we had experienced a slow leak from the drain valve and it was discovered the rubber seal in the valve was damaged and needed replacing. This can only be done after opening up the heater.

Putting the heater back wasn't difficult and was made much easier by fitting new 80mm ducting which were nice and flexible. The gaps I cut in the frame allowed me to just about get my hand in to replace the washers but when it came to fit the nuts I put a bit of insulation tape over the 10mm socket then pushed the nut into the socket. The tape jammed the nut in place and stopped it falling out when I lowered it into place on the end of the socket wrench extension. Alternatively, find someone with very small hands!

Once everything was put back I filled with water, discovering a small leak from one of the pipe connections which was quickly sorted by disconnecting and reconnecting. I then took the Murvi back to Mount Batten and the technician there connected up his laptop and ran several tests. All seemed fine, no faults detected. Very puzzling.

Back home I connected up the EHU and ran the heater on electrical power so see if it would heat up the water. It didn't and after about an hour the error message about 230 volt element failure and the red light appeared.

One of the benefits of this whole story is that I was slowly learning more and more about how the Webasto works. Mervyn, the Mount Batten technician knows the system well and my several chats with him were very useful and I had learned that the next thing to look at was the relay which controls the mains power to the electrical elements. When I started I didn't even know this relay existed but it is easily found behind the removable panel at the back of the wardrobe. Identification is simple, it's quite big and has Webasto written on it. As soon as I had it in my hand I could smell something wasn't right and taking it apart revealed obvious signs of scorching and overheating.

From a subsequent conversation with Rex I learned these relays are known to fail from time to time and he had heard of similar cases where the fault was assumed to be in the heater, because that is what the error message said, but it was the relay causing the problem.

At the time of writing a new relay is on order and I am reasonably confident this will sort out the heater. I hope so, a replacement relay costs over £400! Webasto spare parts are very, very expensive.

Next Edition

The next edition will probably be published in early October and a request for contributions will be posted at the start of September – but you don't have to wait! Just email anything you have to the following address at any time. newsletter@hub.murviclub.org.uk