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From Yorkshire to the Sahara: Life in the desert with traveling couple

A couple on a unique journey around the world talk about their travel highlights so far, their Channel 5 debut and what they miss about the UK

David and Charlotte Stephenson left the UK in September 2020 to fulfill their dream of driving around the world in their purpose built overland vehicle.

The couple caught up with Jorvik Radio's Bill Colman on 13 April from a beach just outside the small town of Dakhla in Western Sahara, located over 1,000km south of Agadir, Morocco.

"We came into the desert and it was just wide open spaces as far as you can see," Charlotte said. "It's quite stunning."

They had just spent four days driving to Dakhla so they could be closer to the Mauritania border, the country they want to visit next.

"The roads down here, a lot of them are unmade, so progress is slow. But it's literally all sand and camels, just like you see on the tv," David explained.

"It was quite empowering to spend our evenings or our nights sleeping knowing that there are probably no other human beings for possibly hundreds of miles."

In addition to the vast openness of the Western Sahara, the other recent standout moments of their journey have been the architecture and scenery.

According to David, there is "an almost biblical scene with people farming the land using donkeys and mules. A lot of the houses built from mud, some stunning kasbahs...just everywhere we looked it was almost biblical."

David and Charlotte have also recently featured on an episode of Channel 5's Million Pound Mega Motorhomes. Charlotte who spent many years as a hair stylist to celebrities in London said, "It was interesting for me...I've done quite a bit of tv and film work. I've always been on the other side of the camera."

When asked about their vehicle, David responded that "the truck is holding up well. It was designed to sustain the type of treatment it's getting...And every week there is a minor repair. Something will come loose, or something will need an adjustment. But you know, we're in rough terrain. It's harsh."

David and Charlotte's vehicle is so large that they both have HGV (heavy goods vehicle) licenses so they can drive it. After Charlotte claimed to be the better driver, David quickly added, "We share the driving, Bill. Charlotte drives all the big open roads and I drive the dusty shaky paths and in town where a big vehicle is hard to maneuver."

David said that there isn't much he misses about home, but he has "had a yearning for some Marmite." He got his daughter to send some from the UK but "it got intercepted by the customs. I'm trying to negotiate with them and explain what it is. Bearing in mind this is a Muslim country and it looks like it's animal product, but it isn't actually."

Days before the interview, Morocco extended its lockdown for an additional month, meaning that David and Charlotte wouldn't be able to continue their journey south into Mauritania just yet.

They've thought of some alternative plans which might allow them to continue south along Africa's western coast. One possible option is to drive back north to Casablanca and ship their vehicle to Senegal. "But we need to make sure that we can get on a flight," Charlotte explained. "There is no point in us shipping the truck and then we can't leave the country."

Bill responded, "Well I guess when you planned this trip of a lifetime, you didn't plan to have a pandemic at the same time. That complicates matters a little bit". David and Charlotte agree.

This is the second interview in a series which follows David and Charlotte Stephenson on their journey around the world. The Stephensons will speak with Bill Colman every four to six weeks as they travel the world.

You can read previous articles and keep up with their journey here at [Jorvik Radio](https://jorvikradio.com/news/) (<https://jorvikradio.com/news/>) and follow them directly on their [website](https://www.sommertravelling.com/) (<https://www.sommertravelling.com/>) and on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/sommertravelling/) (<https://www.instagram.com/sommertravelling/>).

Written by: Rebecca Mendoza