

EUROPE 2023

4 months | 6 countries | 8 house swaps | 10 journey legs | 2 grand-boys

Getting stuck in?

Oh joy to the world - there were organised sessions of walking football taking place three times a week, all within a convenient 30-minute drive from our residence in Chipping. However, my excitement turned to disappointment as I participated in the activity. Upon joining one of 6 teams, it became evident that the local interpretation of "walking football" differed significantly from what I had anticipated. Not a single player adhered to the walking rule, and the level of tackling was surprisingly intense. I was taken aback by this unexpected turn of events and expressed my concerns loudly, only to be reprimanded by the referee. The referee informed me that this style of play had been the norm for the past two years. In response, I suggested that it was high time for the club to reconsider labelling it as "walking football." Despite the discrepancy, I still managed to derive enjoyment from the physical activity.

On Ya Horse?

This morning, Heather harboured some concerns about her upcoming ride. Apprehensions regarding the horse's size and spirited nature crossed her mind. However, these concerns proved unnecessary. Upon mounting the horse, the skills she had acquired years ago resurfaced effortlessly, enabling her to ride with ease. Her ride was cut short after a single canter, not due to fear, but because the horse's awkward gait hinted at a potential strain on her back. In the end, her worries were unfounded.



Acting like a Local

A long held dream for Maddi and a second English countryside trek for Heather. My first trek was in 1983 with Kelly when she was 6 years old. Maddi arranged for a two hour trek in a nearby location — the Breacon Fell. The boys dropped us off and we spied our mounts — gypsy cobs. For the uninitiated they are a small, light draft type of horse. We clip clopped over very rocky ground, up and down quite steep slopes and through a reasonable sized stream. Canter and trot was on the menu. We both partook but the paces of the ponies were not very smooth. My elderly back suggested I enjoy "Rocky's" very rocking horse style walk. The day was cool and the wind was up, but the scenery was special. Getting up so close and personal to the forest was a lovely experience. It will be interesting to see if tomorrow my bones remember those two hours!

Whilst we were riding, Siggy had located a walking football group in Preston. Apparently there was not much "walking" happening and when Siggy made a comment to that fact, he was told by the referee to virtually "pull your head in".



Probably a deserved comment considering he is a “visitor” to the group. Despite the full-on tackling and running he had the exercise he needed. Why they advertise this as “Walking Football” is anyone’s guess - given that they have been going for over two years now. Another session is on offer next Tuesday evening - something that Siggie is interested in attending again. He reckons he needs the exercise.

A late afternoon visit to the closest National Trust location — Rufford Old Hall, completed our day. We managed to pick up our 14 day passes and had a quick tour around the place. It is a beautiful very old building from the 1600s. The boys had fun trying on some pieces of armour and we particularly enjoyed the grand hall. By 4pm we were all tired out however and decided to sit and enjoy a cuppa and cake before leaving.

A nice home cooked pasta meal, followed by a open fire in our lounge completed our day.







