

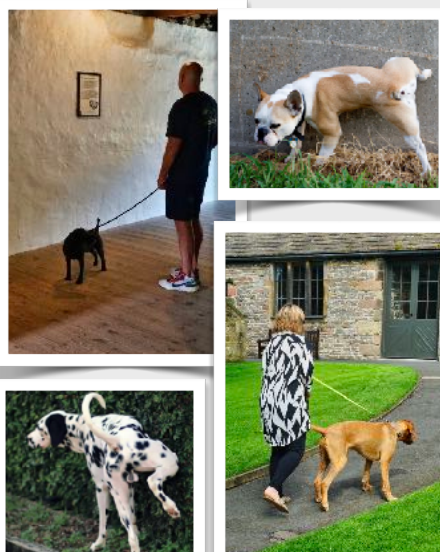
# EUROPE 2023

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

## Dogs

The fascination with, and allowances made, for dogs in this country amazes all of us. I believe its common to Europe in general. No matter where you go, be it restaurants, pubs, heritage sites, national parks, isolated tracks or even public lavatories, you will inevitably find 4 legged friends. Its not just small dogs either. The strangest example we saw recently was a huge great dane in a Chipping pub. The dog made quite an impression on patrons, and us. Daft English! Free entertainment indeed.

Thankfully, unlike Paris on our 1983 trip, we see very few dog droppings although I did chat to a cleaner at the castle today as he was scrubbing the bottom edge of one of the walls of an out buildings. He told me dog piss continues to be a real problem. It's highly acidic and eats away at sandstone. Once one dog marks its presence the same spot gets bombarded. I guess dog elimination provides much needed jobs which stimulates the economy.



## North Yorkshire

Skipton Castle in North Yorkshire was our destination for today. We packed a picnic lunch and made an early start. The castle was commenced in 1090 by a Norman lord and is the most authentic medieval castle remaining in Britain.

The country we passed through was much more open because of the absence of hedges on the roadsides. It gave views of lovely open fields and oh so many beautiful sandstone buildings.

We did not get to explore the whole of the castle as it is still being lived in. The parts we did see however were very interesting - a dungeon, kitchens, hall, bedrooms and guard rooms that gave views of approaching intruders. The central courtyard had a 400 year old yew tree. After completing the circuit we met up at the cafe and had some refreshment. Siggy, Blayze and myself then headed off to explore the canal side path. After that Siggy, who was very tired, decided to go back to the car and have a nap. I loved the thought of having an hour to myself and exploring the very busy commercial centre. It was a market day today. I wandered the main streets and a few of the side arcades. "Thrift" shops seemed to proliferate. I purchased some socks because we seem to managed to lose a pair - and I can't even blame the washing machine for that.

## No Running or Tackling?

Wow - just as I leave! Lets hope this time around that its real "walking" football - and not the bastardised Preston North End version of the beautiful game.

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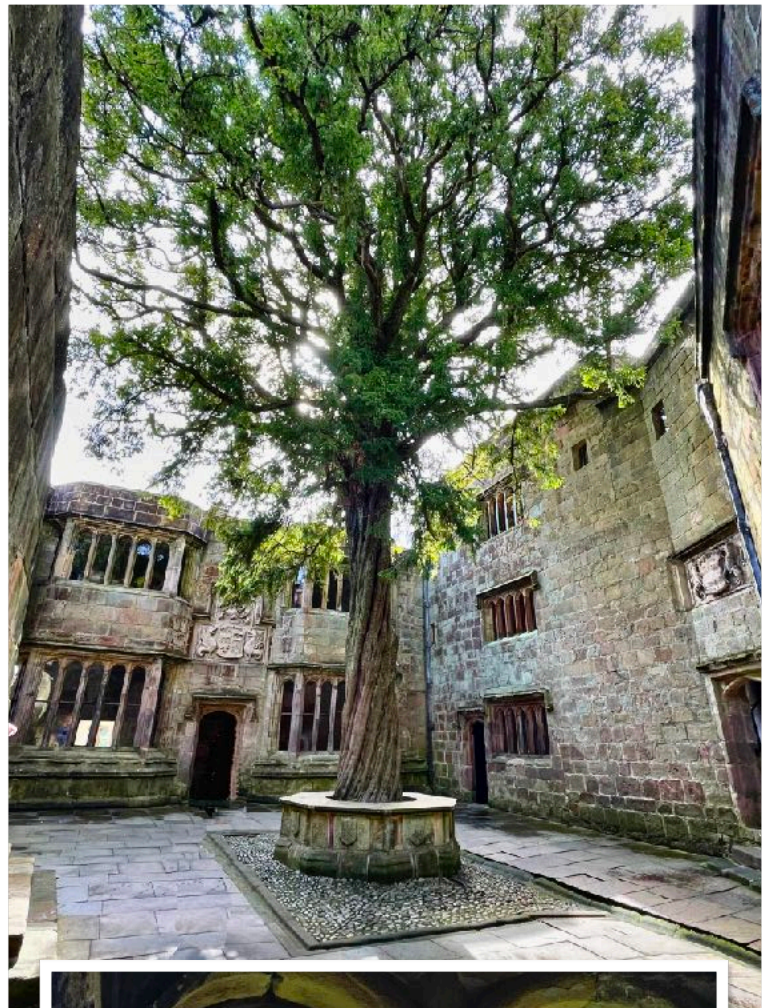
## Three year siege

Skipton Castle was built in the early 11th century to keep out those nasty marauding Scots to the north.

It changed owners numerous times but in 1310 it was heavily fortified with stone ramparts replacing the wood. It looks the same today.

In 1642 the castle was the last remaining Royal bastion and was laid to siege over 3 years by Parliamentarians before yielding. 3 long years? How did the inhabitants survive? They had a secret water well and ran domestic animals within the walls. You would have imagined that everyone would have been totally sick of the staple diet of pigeon, chicken and pork.

The siege was broken when Parliamentarians blasted the castle with canons from higher ground continuously over a 2 month period. The ruins were rebuilt in the 1800s and is today owned by Fattorini family - manufacturers of jewellery & trophies.





### The Long Drop

In the Middle Ages lavatories (called 'privies' or 'garderobes') were often placed, like this one, in small enclosed balconies above a stream, moat or cliff. Later privies had down-shafts, flushed by water from the roof. A heap of soft spongy moss took the place of the modern toilet roll.

