

EUROPE 2023

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

Traveling with the our Grandies

It is rather lovely to have our two grand boys and Maddi with us on this trip. Heather and I feel privileged to have them tag along and enjoy watching them interact with each other. We see the joy in their faces when they come across new experiences - of which there are many. Blayze would prefer to be in Poland and has stated that England is a "once only trip". Things might change when he is older. Nevertheless he is positive about life and at times exhibits a sense of humour. He certainly has a mind of his own — which can only be good.

Having an extra pair of hands, and minds, is good. There have been times when we needed to stop to work things out as a group. The GPS is not always right. Teamwork will be put to good effect when the 3 of them have to travel home on their own.

Maddi continues to take lots of photos as memories of her trip. Everyone looks forward to reading our newsletter - an important way to document the days filled with adventure.

The trip is essentially an education for the our young family. Heather and I have travelled enough over the years to appreciate how much planning and research is necessary to ensure a positive experience. Hopefully much of this will rub off. We have certainly packed a lot into the two weeks so far.

Blayze is completing his school homework, albeit with a little prodding from us. His curriculum is online so he can tackle things any time he chooses. Heather spent an hour with him this morning helping with some maths puzzles. How times have changed!! Everything is now on the internet.



Lost in 100 Acre Woods

We have finally figured this weather. Drizzling and chilly until about two in the afternoon and then, still chilly but some sun peeps out. Also, the car is too cramped for five for long trips. Answer, short haul trips in the afternoon.

This morning was a supermarket run to stock up for the next few days and then a walk on Beacon Fell.

This fell was where we went riding on day one and Maddi wanted the boys to see it. The trees are giant and the moss is verdant. There were quite a few other walkers in the area, including lots of children as it is school holidays. We walked to the summit and then wandered at will. Our "will" got us a little lost. But with a little figuring we eventually found our car.

I took a lone walk once we got home. I tried out the supposed short cut to the show grounds. I love the fact that the public are encouraged to exercise by the existence of public walkways across private property. There are so many tranquil spots where one can contemplate. Most houses in the villages are bedecked with blossoms. Some of it, I believe, is to prevent cars crossing the 500mm to their exterior walls.



Another interesting thing I noticed is a plaque on the walls of the Sun Inn, just a few steps from this house. It tells the story of a young girl who was jilted by her fiance who then married her friend. On the day of the wedding (of these other two), at the church opposite the inn, Lizzie jumped out of the window and hanged herself so she could be seen by the couple when she came out of the church!! Of course her ghost is said to have been seen in the inn and she was buried, at her request, outside the doors to the church, so that the other couple would always have to pass her. She got her wish! What self respecting English village does not have a ghost?

Being in the home of Harry Potter, Blayze has decided that he needs to see all the movies. It is quite exciting really because he has not viewed the last three films. When we get to London we will go to Paddington Station where we can see Platform 9 3/4.

And so our local adventure continues. We are getting used to the narrow roads, the village church bells clanging every hour, the clip clapping of a passing horse with horse riders in fluorescent jackets, the loud droning of passing tractors pulling all sorts of trailers behind them and taking up all the road. We are impressed by the extremely pleasant local inhabitants strolling down the street or along the forest tracks wanting to stop and have a chat.

For the boys and Maddi everything is of interest. Even going to the shops to buy food. Prices to compare (so much cheaper than at home), new products to sample (Marmite is bloody awful and nothing at all like Vegemite), the search for cordial goes on, everyone has had a turn at cooking. Then there is the ongoing inclement weather - drizzle rain and overcast skies for literally the whole time we have been here. It's not freezing (unless the wind springs up on the fell) but it is nippy enough most times for us to tote a jacket, just in case. Our house is warm and cosy with the fire on most nights - a very homely feeling.

Our kitchen is extremely well stocked with cooking implements/crockery/cutlery and the bedrooms have very comfy beds. We can't imagine living anywhere else for a couple of weeks. This "living like a local" is certainly something we will all remember. Maddi, in particular, is keen to come back here in the future and bring her sister and mum along.

