

# EUROPE 2023

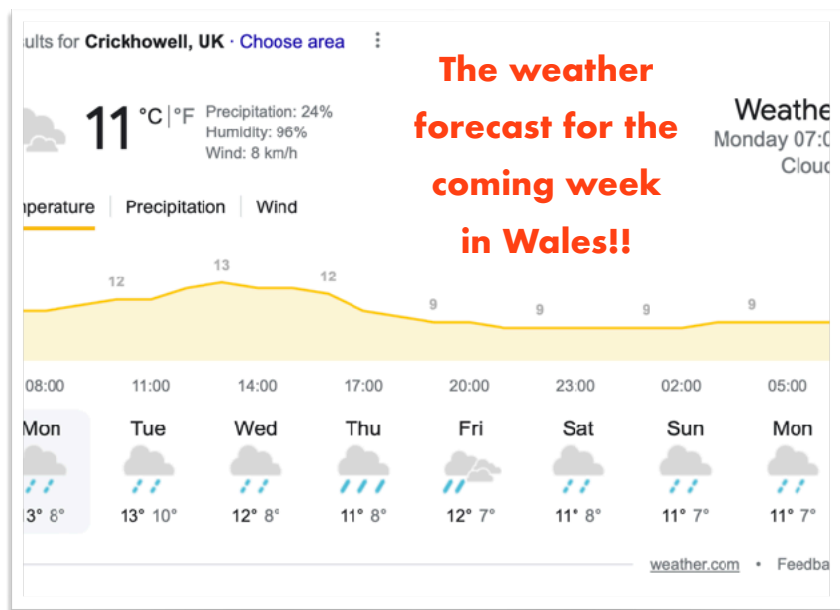
4 months | 6 countries | 8 house swaps | 10 journey legs

## Leaving Austria

We had a wonderful start to the day. Christian drove the 20 minutes to a train station so that we did not have to take 2 trains to get to Vienna Airport for our trip to Gatwick. We had our usual very convivial and informative conversation on the way. He even helped us with our bags to our platform. The Brantner's are a lovely family and have greatly enhanced our stay in Austria.

The train journey was supposed to be 2.5 hours. It was going swimmingly until we get to the very last little bit — we were just 10 minutes from the airport when we heard an announcement that the train could not continue because of works on the track.

The sighs were palpable. We were going back to the last station — Vienna Central and were invited to look for another train to continue our journey. It occurred to us of course, that if this train could not get to the airport, no other train from Vienna could either!! Great thinking 99!!



So of course that left us with having to find another method of transport. We joined the crowds from the train trying to get to taxis and buses. We found an empty taxi and stepped in. Unfortunately we got a "bad" one. He fleeced us 50 Euro for a 15 minute trip!! Not happy Jan.

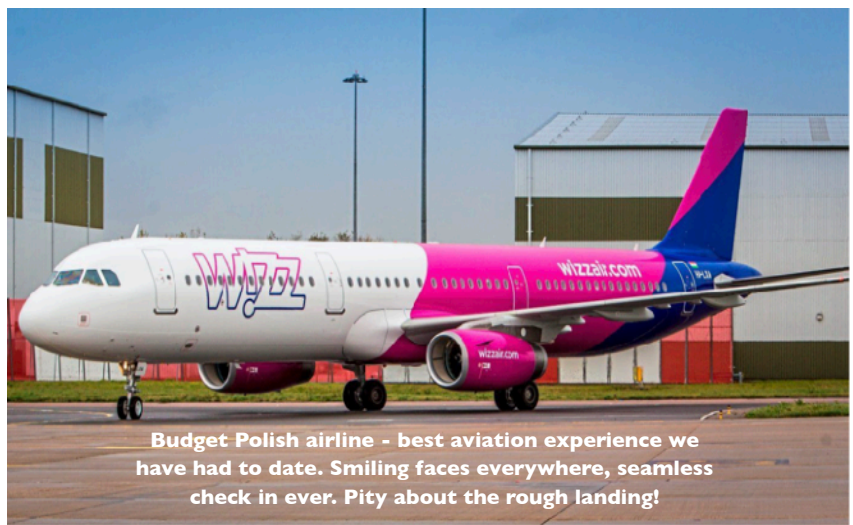
Our faith was restored at Gatwick Airport - waiting for a transit bus to our hotel when a car stopped, dropped off some passengers, and then when Heather asked where the bus stop was for the hotel, the driver said "hop in, I will take your there." Naturally we did not get in and I did ask "how much, approximately."

His response was extraordinary - "for two lovely people with rather huge bags - GRATIS!!!" We looked at each other and thought how nice is that? Our confidence in humanity was revived although I did wonder as we were traveling if he was "taking us for a ride." I also asked myself "do we look that old?" When we arrived at the hotel we told him to look us up if he ever got to Brissy. Certainly made our day.

To top off the good news the Travel Lodge hotel has a 24 hour cafe so we even had a pizza for tea. Lovely. There is also tea and milk in the room for Heather. How wonderful.



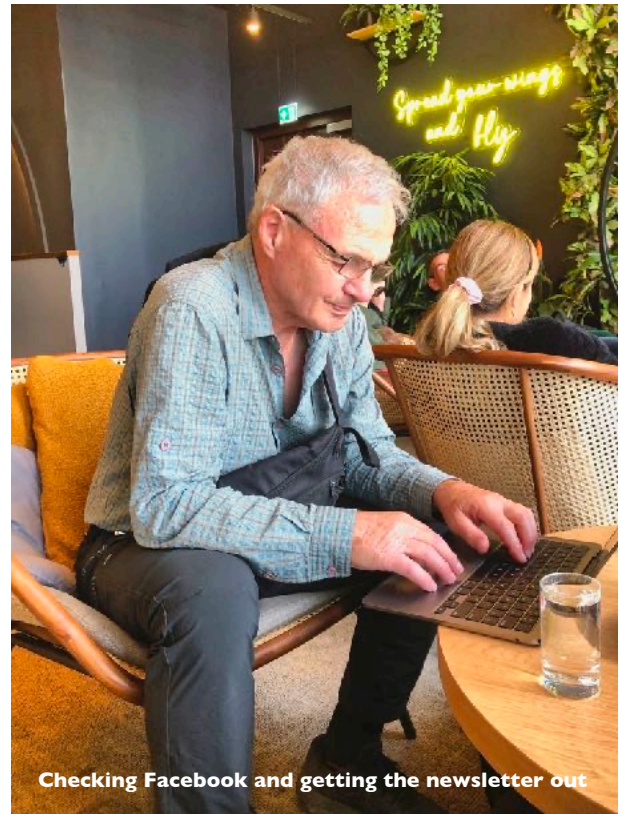
Robot waitress at the Vienna airport



Budget Polish airline - best aviation experience we have had to date. Smiling faces everywhere, seamless check in ever. Pity about the rough landing!



Making sure Heather only gets half.



Checking Facebook and getting the newsletter out