

A scenic view of a German countryside. In the foreground, a white building is partially visible on the left, with a large tree in front of it. The tree has green leaves and some yellow catkins. The ground is covered in tall green grass with small purple flowers. In the background, there are rolling green hills, a small village with red-roofed houses, and distant mountains under a blue sky with some clouds.

The German Bit

Andrew Lievesley

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This is the final (or is it first) part of my 2,000 mile walking journey + 150 miles by train, bus and cable car from Salzburg to Seville via Santiago de Compostela.

This part of the journey takes me from Salzburg in Austria, through southern Bavaria then in the last few days back into Austria and over the Swiss border. So it is right that I have called this 'The German Bit'.

The weather was variable but the scenery was very pleasant... not spectacular, just pleasant and very similar from one end to the other. Robert, our son, joined me for the first 4 days of the walk, after that I was 'all by my own'. The average daily distance walked was 14 miles but varied from 10 to 23 miles. The total distance walked was 240 miles.

Due to time constraints I 'took out' 60 miles by train. Also I missed out another day for reasons that I will explain later..... I am no longer a walking purist.

I have preferred to show the journey as one continuous story, with few references to place and specific days. Below is a map of the walk; the blue lines are the train journeys.



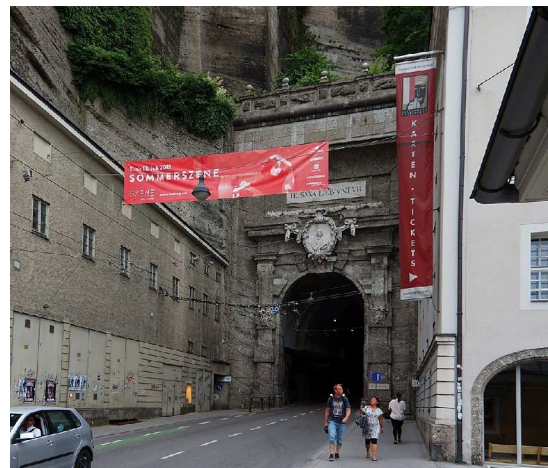


I'm sure Salzburg will appear in another book, so here is a quick overview.

We arrived, knocked off a few churches etc. Rob then led me astray to a beer garden.....Situation normal.







The route starts by going down a tunnel in a cliff to the side of the road then out by a stream to the airport. Eventually we get to our first Sticky Bun (SB) of the trip











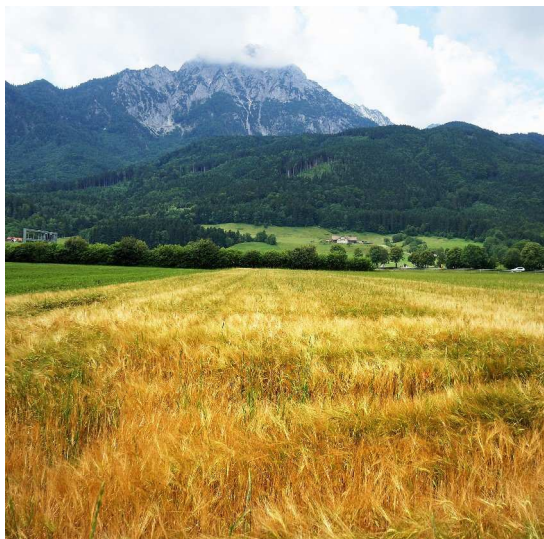
For our 1st night on the walk we stayed at Bad Reichenhall, a Spa town. Average age older than me and very quiet.

For an explanation of the picture above and to the right you need to go to Wikipedia













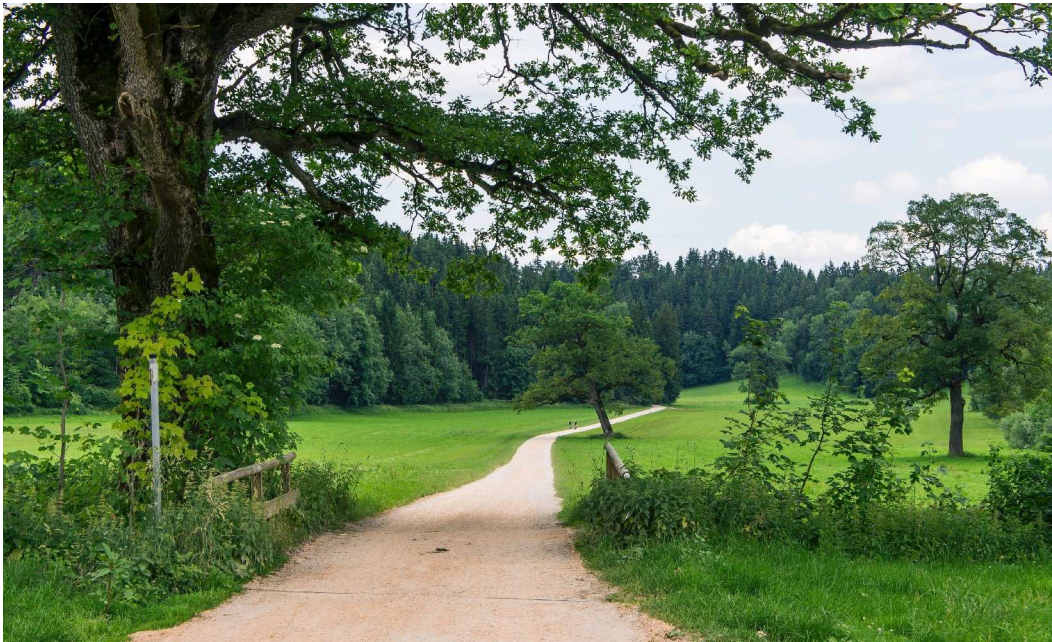






We were in the village called Anger. So one amongst us had to 'Look back in Anger'







The forecast said rain.... and did it rain! No coffee shops; no SB's; just rain and a cheerful Robert.

We were amused by the cigarette machine on the side of the fire station wall. A cafe/bakery in the village would have been more amusing.

Over the page we found a lady of very senior years out walking in the middle of nowhere. From where to where, we know not. Clearly she was enjoying the day as much as we were.





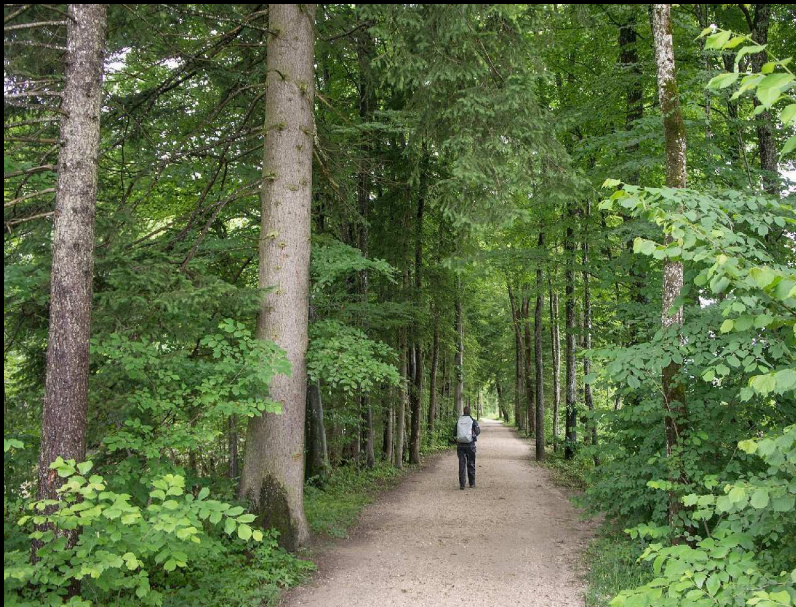




The rain sort of dried up at Traunstein but we sneaked on a train for the last 3 miles, overran our station through chatting and had to walk back through the woods... one of our better own goals.

At Seigsdorf we stayed at a hotel with cake shop attached, what a win. The hotel Alte Post next door also provided some of the best food of the journey.



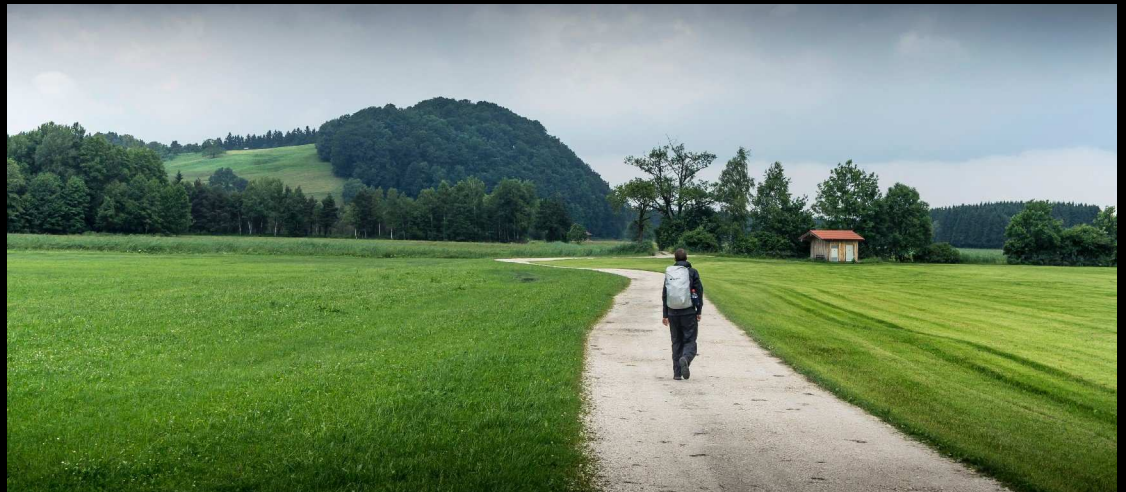
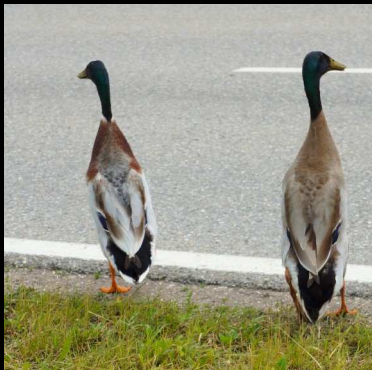




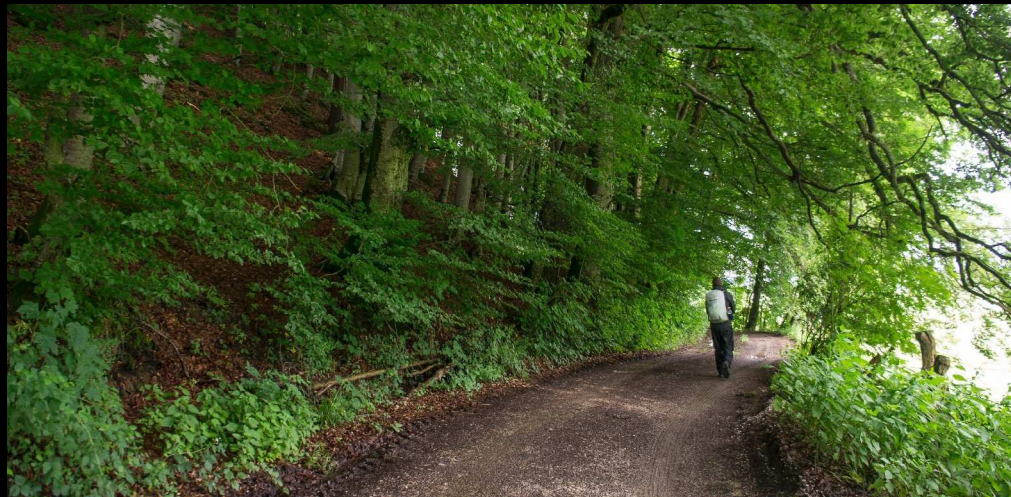
Another wet day and a tactical mistake, instead of going to the bakery, where they serve coffee in Germany, we went to a cafe and the wonderful looking cake was not only expensive but dry.

The good news was the day eventually dried out with and we had some lovely views







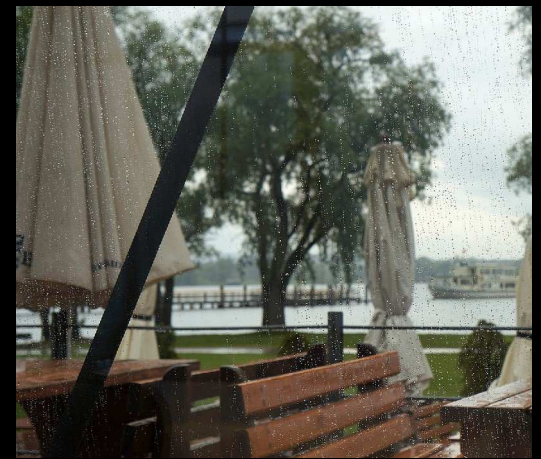




Sadly, in the evening, it started to rain again. Rob was going home the next morning.

I had envisaged our last evening together drinking beer in Bernau Chiemsee, by the lake and in the sun, instead we watched the view through rain drenched windows.

Eventually the last empty tourist boat appeared out of the mist to complete the scene.





Sad at the departure of my fun playmate, I climbed away from the lake and enjoyed showers for the rest of the day.

In a very small village I found a fantastic painting on a garage door ... modern, inappropriate and just brilliant.

I thought I was in for a long walk on a road, but the path/cycleway was separated by a hedge, that eventually led into wood. In the end a better day's walk than I thought with lots of variety.

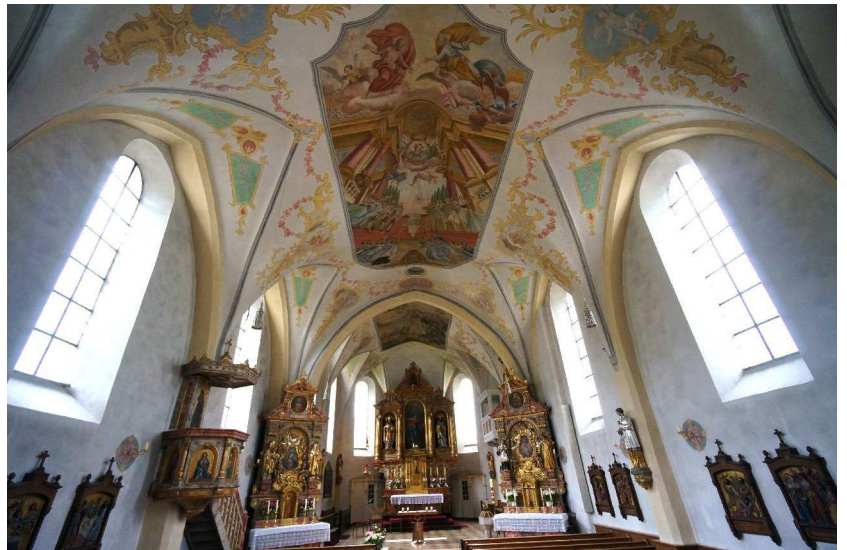


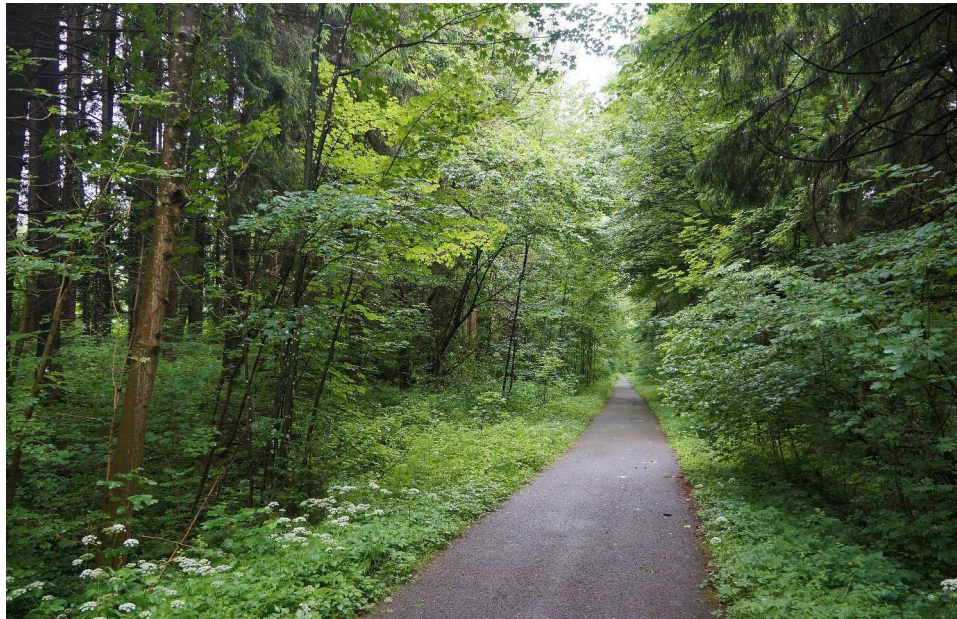


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Neubeuern was a complete surprise to me, a lovely Bavarian town with a handy viewing hill attached, but after 16 miles I was knackered.



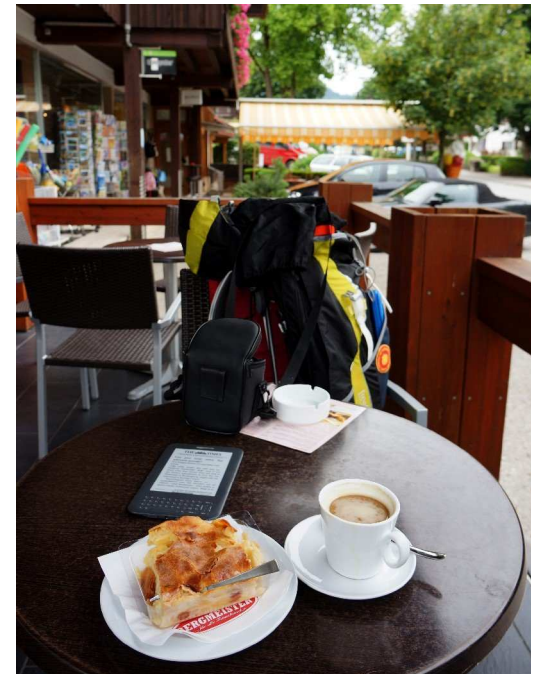




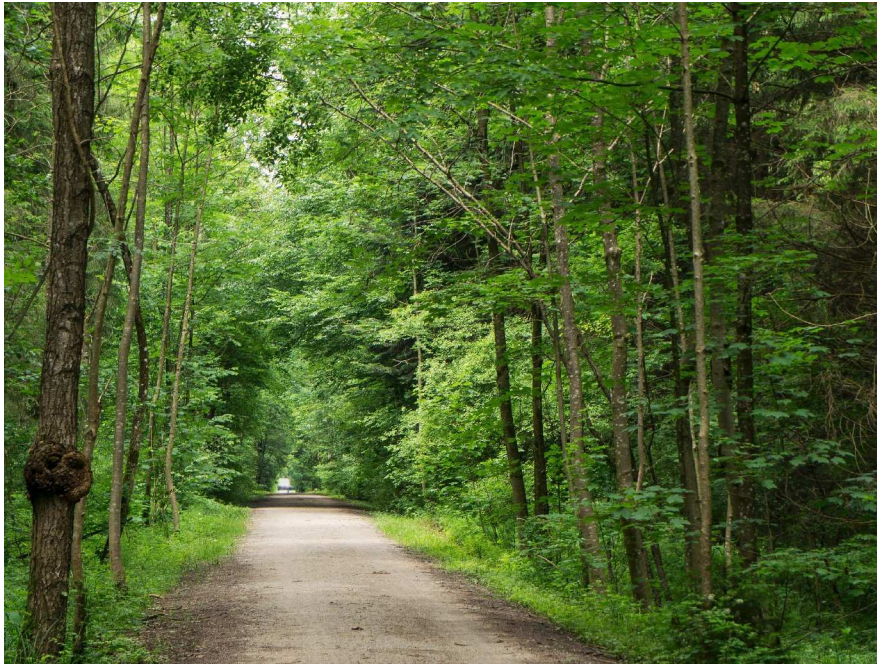


A pleasant but overlong day of 18 miles. The highlight of the morning was the apple struddle for my SB and a fantastic Baroque church in a hamlet of 10 houses.

The afternoon was spent in a forest and a long track to my destination.



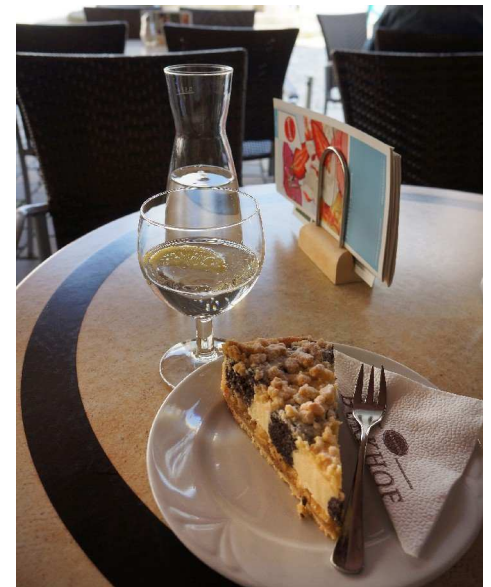






Today I took the train to take out 60 miles of the trip (as planned!) On reflection I should have probably taken the train all the way to Weilheim, as the 10 miles I walked was relatively boring. The two highlights of the day was it had been threatening to rain all day, but only did so when I was sheltering in a church eating my sandwich and then hailed as I had a follow up coffee in a bar in a small village.

The other highlight was my afternoon SB... a cheese cake taken in the by now sunny town of Weilheim.









A long walk with lots of heavy showers, with a big hill thrown in at the end for good measure.

A lack of a good SB sort of rounded off the day. On the plus side there was an amazing baroque chapel on top of the hill and I was occasionally walking off tarmac.







Today had everything, with a fair chunk of sun thrown in later. The morning was spent in woods, some of the path could be described as 'exciting and challenging'

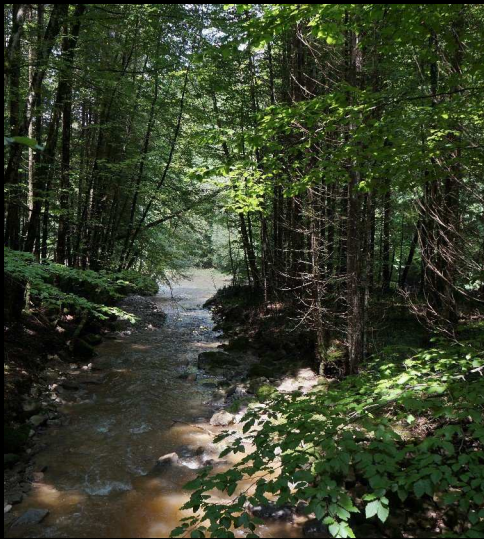
Lunch was taken overlooking a large meadow and late afternoon I hit upon the fantastic monastery church of Rottenbuch... a sort of Baroque, Parma Cathedral.

The 15 mile day ended in the lovely village of Wildsteig with venison stew for supper... very good it was too.







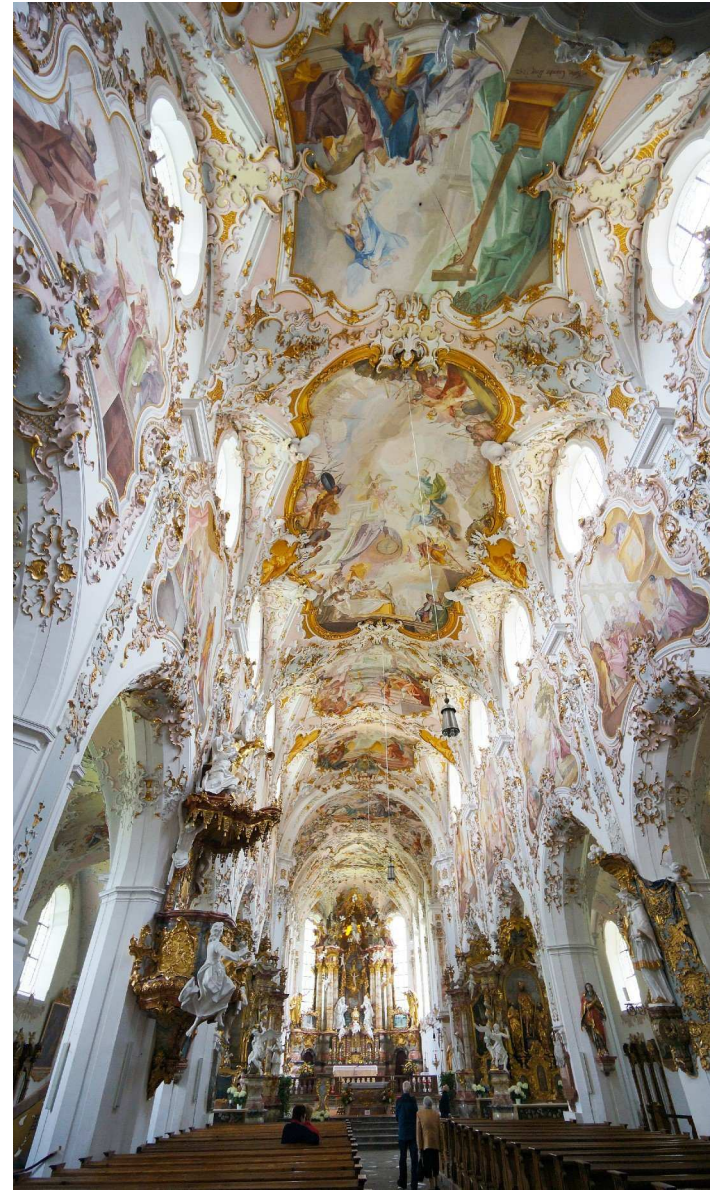




This was my lunch stop; one picture from where I sat, the other looking at my seat. Like the whole journey, not exciting but very pleasant.













Wildsteig church was opposite the Gasthof, the modern lectern fitted in so well with the rest of the church.







Today there was sun, over the top baroque churches, including the UNESCO heritage building, The Weis Church. Then on to pleasant, open, woody walks, orchids, boarded pathways through blossoming marsh land followed by open meadows.

In fact the sort of day Julie Andrews would have enjoyed.

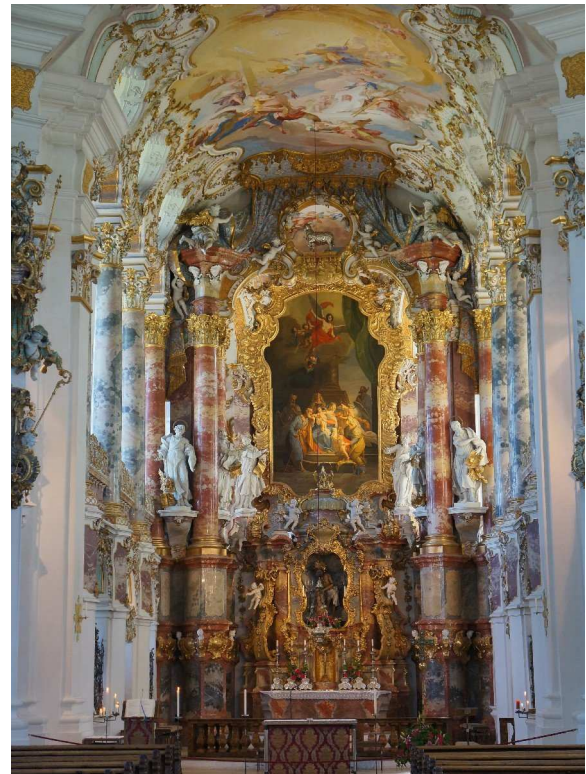
To be fair, the end of the day degenerated a bit as I did visit a beer supermarket (nothing purchased, just admired) I can't carry surplus stuff, even beer.

Later, I was pleased to discover a bottle of my favourite 'dunkel' beer to have with my supper.







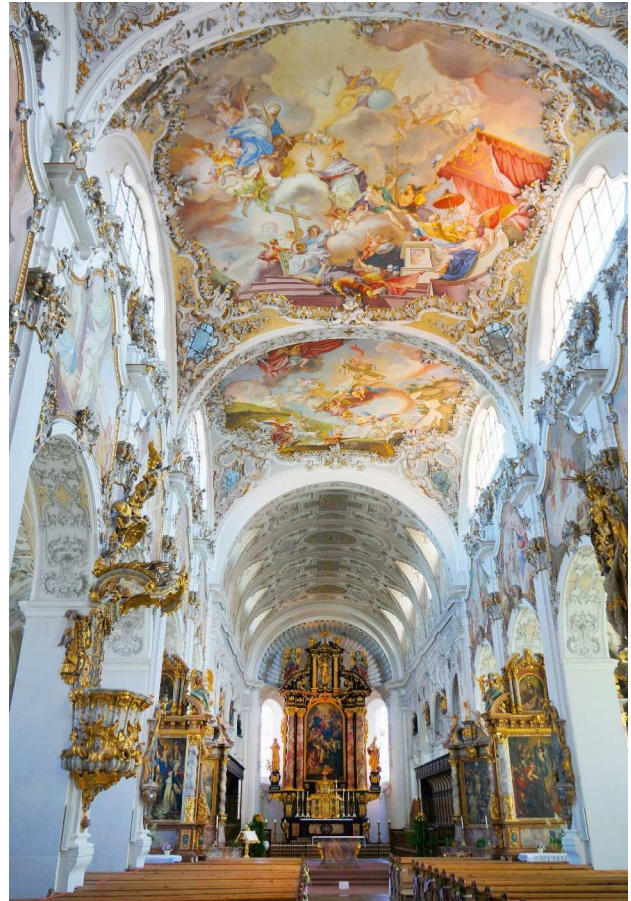




Fußweg
Für Radfahrer gesperrt

Achtung!
Der Weg ist nur für Fußgänger
geeignet und darf nicht
benutzt werden. Bei
Verstoß wird eine Geldstrafe
erhoben.







Picking the right lunch stop can give a definite '+' to enjoying the countryside, you have time to admire everything in detail.

Today was such a day, although I was eating a big SB in the place of being able to get anything better. I sat under the tree above and admired the view underneath it.







If there was one picture to describe my trip in Bavaria, the one above would be it. Sadly it's format did not let me extend it over two pages.

Today had everything, sun, distant views of the mountains, woods, rivers, meadows, reed beds and the best sticky bun of the trip, delivered at the key 16mile point of this very long 20mile day. On the minus side I had my first blister for 8 years and it was getting more than a little uncomfortable.



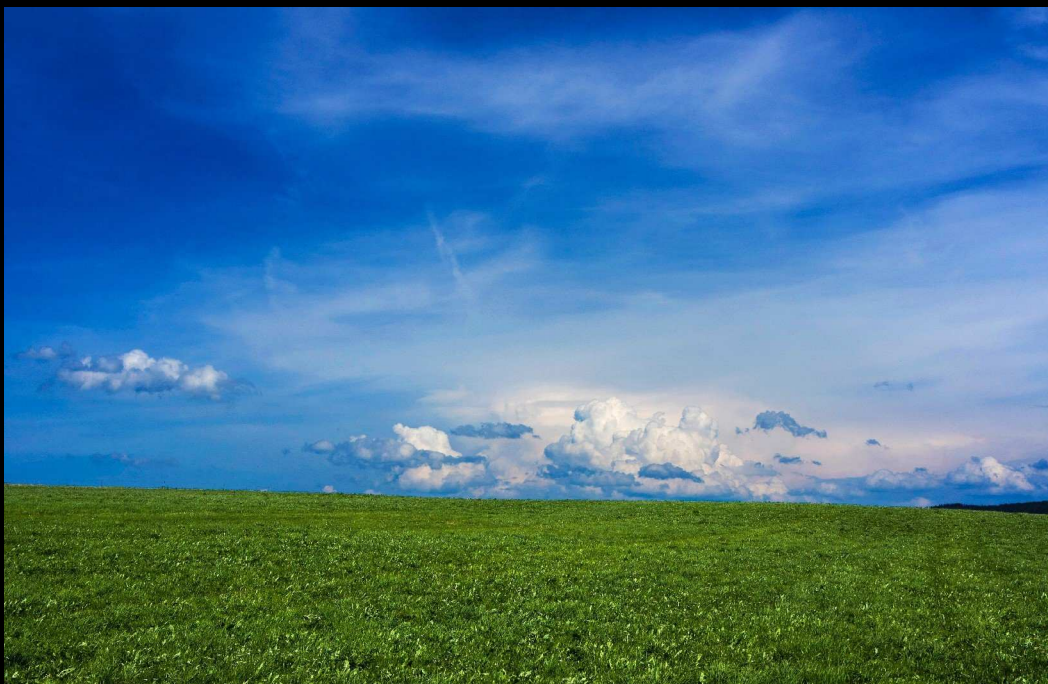
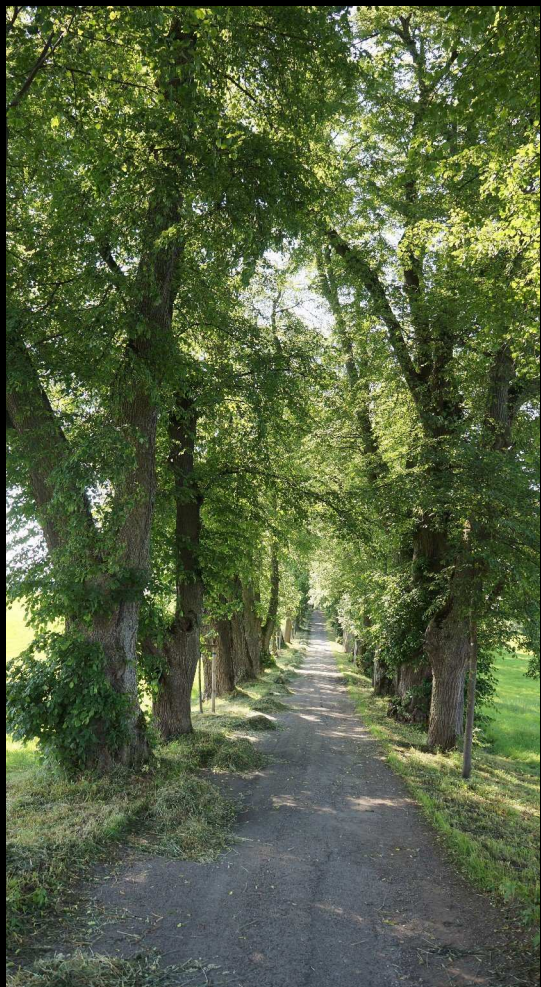












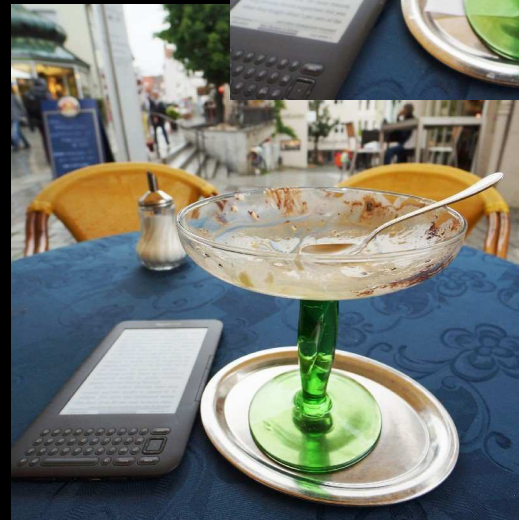




Today I had a choice; walk 22 miles in heavy rain through a forest to Kempten with no village, SB or coffee and a very sore blister...Or catch a train, book into a nice hotel spend the day reading, drinking beer and eating a very big ice cream.

Well, what would you have done?

I had a great day in Kempten, a magic young lady called Cornelia Nigg at the tourist office solved all my problems and more to the point found me a nurse and doctor who between them padded my blister well enough for me to walk the next day.





After a good breakfast I set off to cover a relatively short distance to my next nights stop, which the lovely Cornelia had booked for me.

On route I stopped for a coffee the church behind the pub had a pilgrims stamp. Since I have my 'Compostela' I do not bother with stamps these days, but for old times' sake I did it.

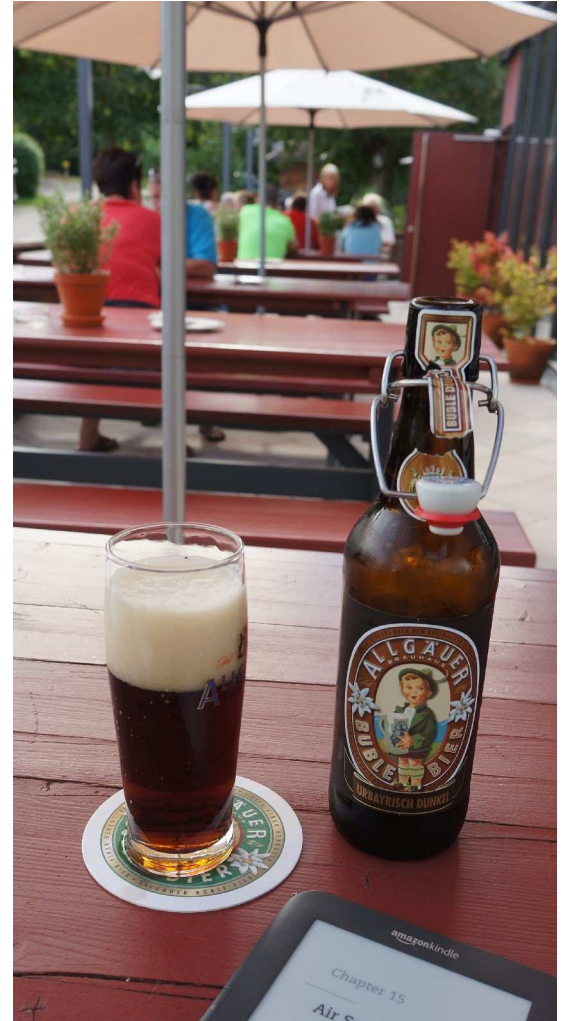
The picture on the opposite page is taken from today's lunch stop.

Having only walked for a short distance today, I made up for it in the evening, when I discovered I had to walk 3 miles to the next village for food.













Today was supposed to be sunny but wasn't and was spent in the rain in forest on top of a ridge.

The highlights of the day were a little village church that depicted some bishop slaying the Moors. Also the path disappeared into a mass of felled trees.

Not a great day on the Camino.







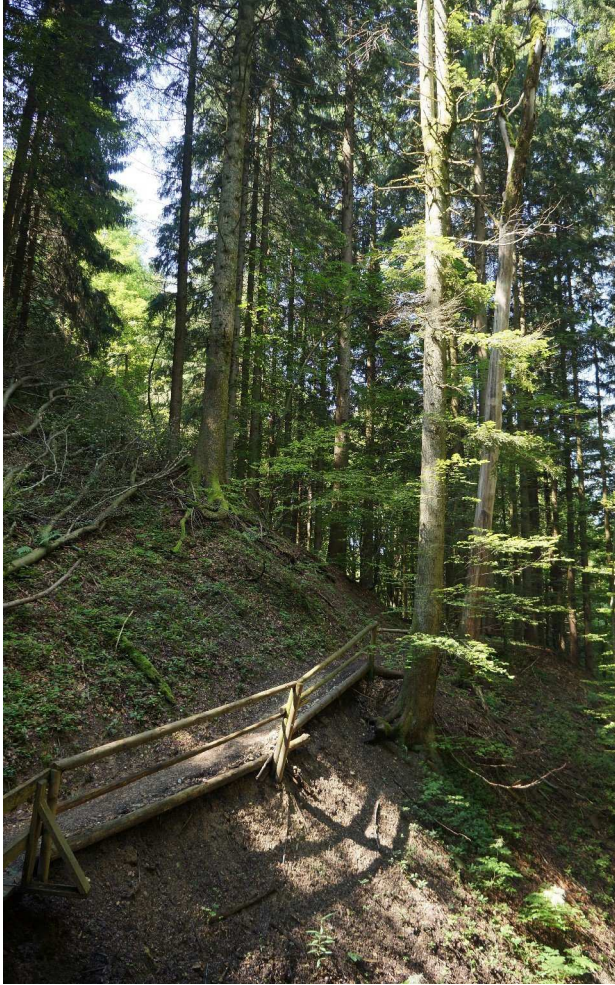






Before leaving Weitnau I popped into the local church. Something completely different, every surface was painted, it really was magnificent.

A hot sunny day spent in woods to start off with followed by distant views, but it was a long journey of 20 miles.







Lunch was taken inside a small church. I needed a seat and to get out of the sun. It still had wall decorations from 1574.





Today I cross back over into Austria and catch a sneaky cable car down to Bregenz.

It was a lovely day, unfortunately it was a Sunday, so all the troops were out. I had visions of a celebratory beer at Pfander cable car station, but it was packed... so I went down to the city for refreshment.

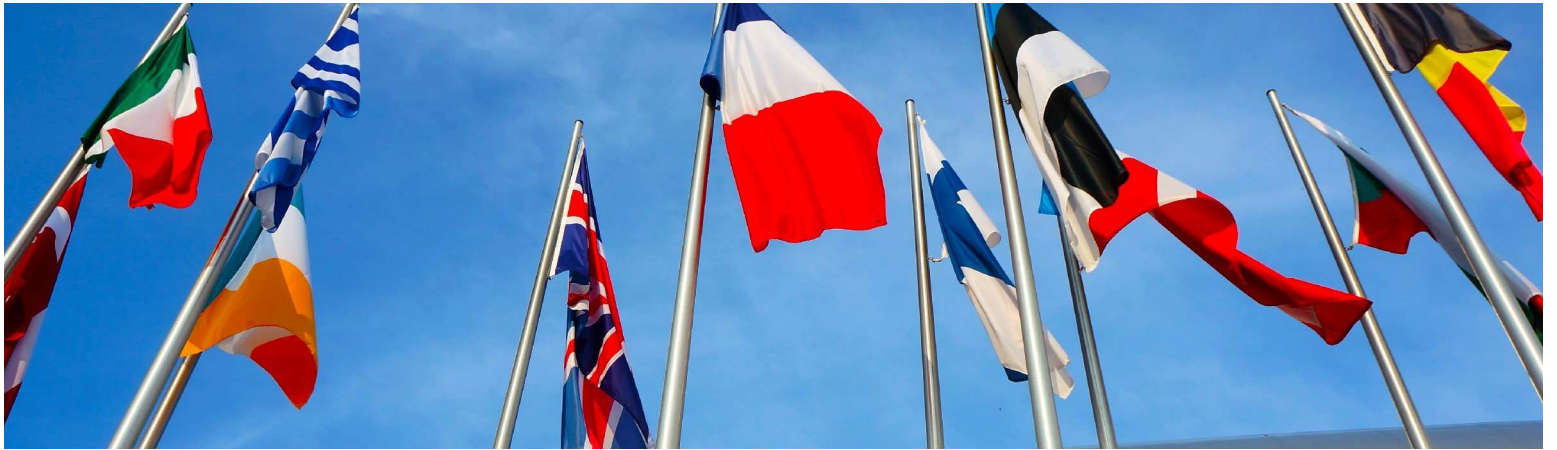


















Having got to Lake Constance all I needed to do was to cross the Swiss border and the job was done. Regrettably that was not going to be as easy as I thought, because of the lack of accommodation .

The journey started on a hot day looking over a very blue lake then on to a small detour to Dornbin and on to the Swiss border the next day.

Crossing the Rhine into Switzerland was a tad disappointing, no flags, border guards nothing. So I pressed on to the nearest railway station, boarded a train to Zurich Airport, then the flight home.

Job done.... the end of a 2,000 mile journey taken over 8 years.

As well as feeling very tired I felt a sense of anti-climax , as I always do at the end of these long walks, but also a great sense of achievement







I was very proud of this group of wrinkly men. It was 9.30 in the morning and they were into their first pints.





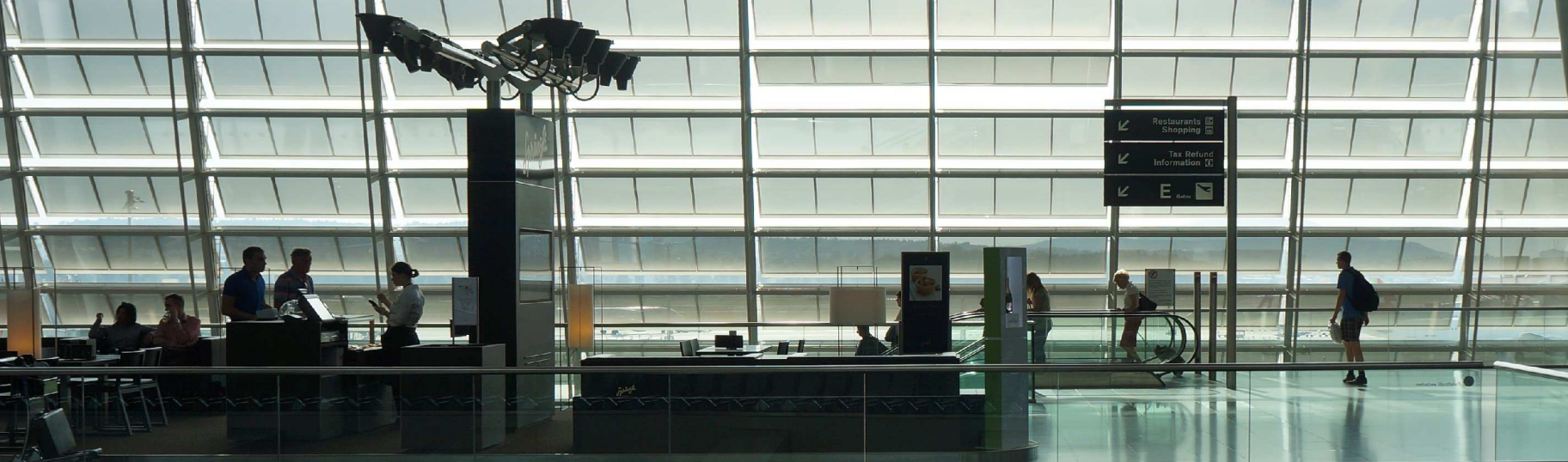








Flughafen Zürich



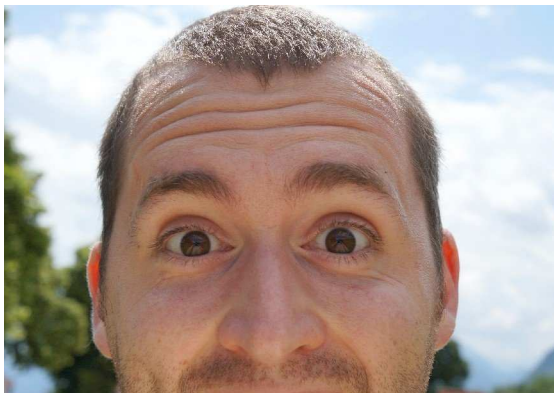
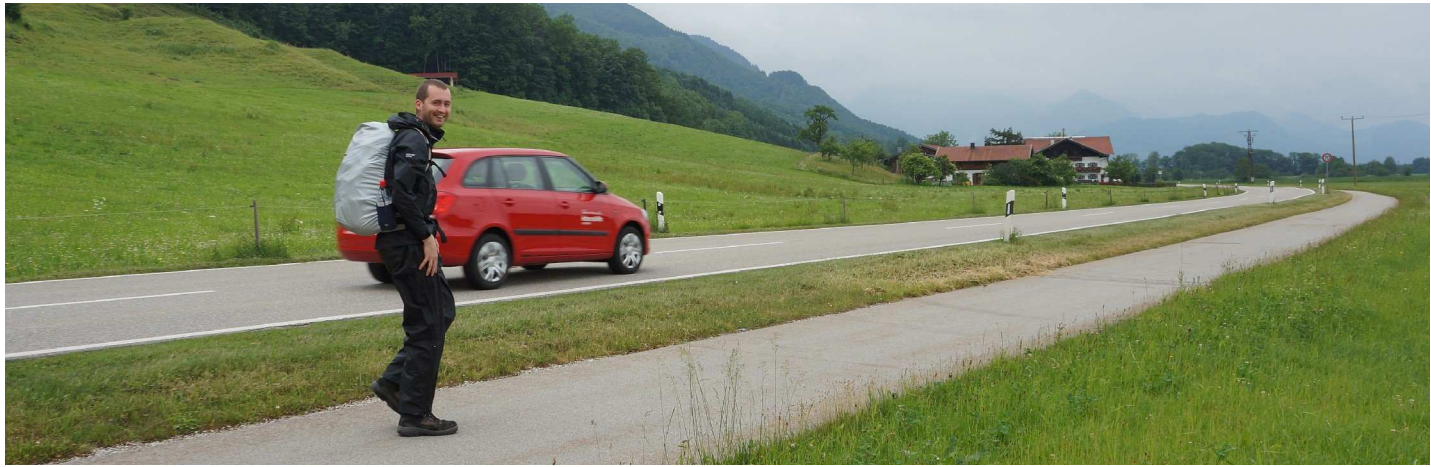


From the age of 3 Rob has been able to pose for photographs, even if you don't want him too.

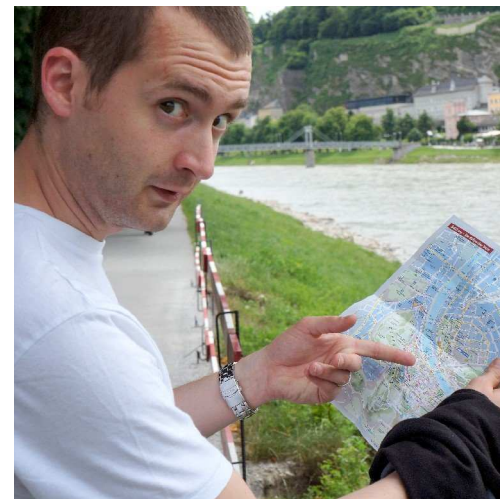
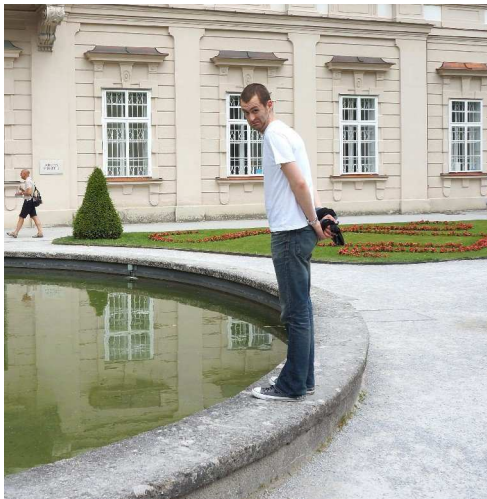
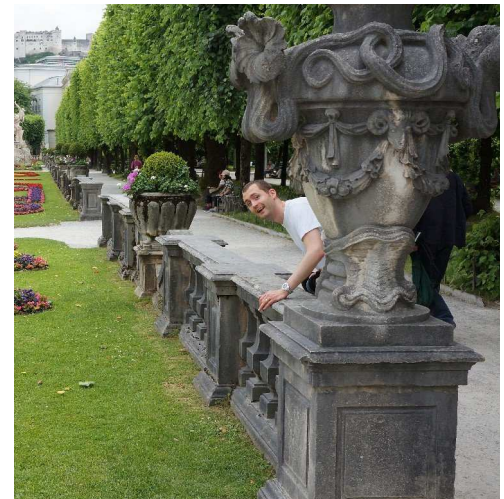
30 odd years later things are not improving, in fact it gets worse, if he lays his hands on my camera when I am not looking I get a selection of 'Selfies'...here is a selection of our personal pictures.

Including a few of the old man that he hung out with.



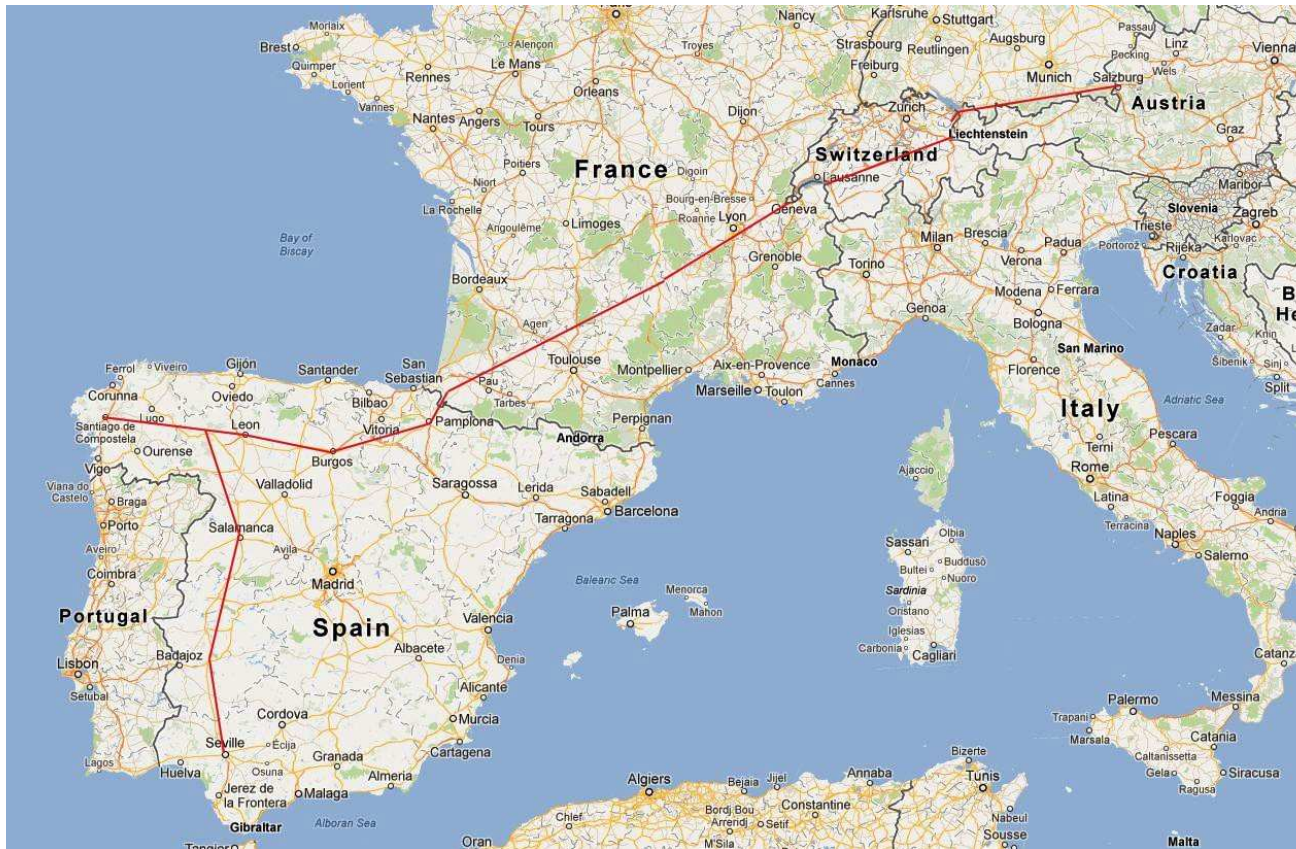












The whole 2000 mile journey



