



Wedding Band

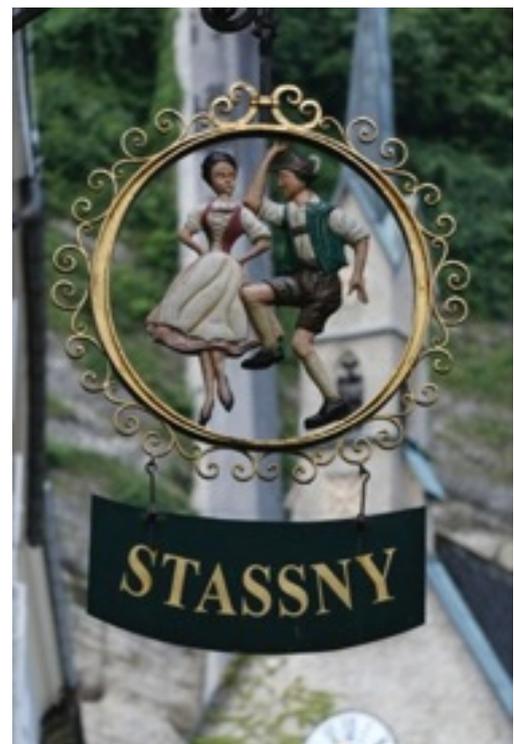
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## LOVE IS IN THE AIR

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This week we've continued to go east towards Salzburg and see the best of Land Salzburg (region). You get the best of Austria's clean air, blue mountain lakes and the countryside famous for Sound of Music. I used to watch this film when I was little and just the thought of pretending to be Julie Andrews makes me all giddy. But we'll save the "doe a dear la la la" for another day. The more time we spend in Austria the more we like. I have never felt so safe in a country, we could leave the motorhome unlocked and you know it would be safe (not that we would). It is more the country we love rather than the people. The people are nice but generally they keep themselves to themselves, so difficult to comment on really but one thing is for sure, they are bloody good custodians to their land.

Austria was an unexpected visit and its been jam packed with activity. Every day is none stop, so the updates are a little more fact and less humour that usual.



## Saturday 2nd August: Grossglockner to Goldegg

We woke to the sound of goats and el pachas and the goats and el pachas woke to the sound of Craig's morning fart., loud and very long Needless to say they didn't stop near Homer for long. Peanut also took the opportunity to sneak in bed and snuggle up with Craig.



As we set off, we could see cars and coaches arriving in their 100's, so glad we chose to visit the pass on a weekday and not a weekend. having said that, it was great to drive passed all the different vintage cars with people dressed in their matching vintage attire. We even saw x&a group of tractors all brightly made up for the occasion.

As we wound our way down the country roads the views were amazing. Austria grows on me more and more and I genuinely cannot believe how beautiful the country is and how the Austrians act like guardians to protect their wonderful surroundings. They have such pride, it is just lovely (and very rare) to see. Everything they do demands attention to detail and the detail demands nothing but high quality and the best. They are immaculate both in and outside of their home and we have not yet seen a piece of litter or graffiti anywhere. The Austrian's are





very nice when you speak to them but they don't engage in conversation and very much keep themselves to themselves.

Once we arrived in Goldegg there was no mistaking the centre of attention here, the 14th century castle. Perched on top of a hill overlooking the small lake, which is a funny brown colour due to peat saturation. We parked up and headed to the castle.

We managed to get in to the courtyard of the castle but that's about it. In July and August the castle is home to well-to-do couples wanting to tie the knot in unusual but prestigious places. Today was no exception, we walked right in to the middle of a wedding. We quickly realised we need to head back outside the castle before the ceremony starts. We sat outside and watched loads of people arrive and enter the castle. At first we thought some of the guests might be band members but then quickly realised that it is tradition to turn up to a wedding in traditional Austrian dress. The people turned up in their droves and each one wearing their outfit with such pride, it was so nice to see. Obviously we'd seen the Austrian dress but we never



realised they still wore it. After about 10 minutes we heard someone shouting and then a band walked up the street and right to the castle gates. The band leader shouted a few words and then everyone came outside. Another tradition is for everyone to meet at a venue then walk with the bride and the band to the church. Then its a church ceremony followed by the usual dinner and knees up. A lovely day watching how another country celebrates a wedding.

Other than the wedding and listen to the celebration we didn't do too much. Quiet day for us!

# Sunday 3rd August: Goldegg to Werfen

As our castle and town visit was interrupted yesterday by young love, so we thought we'd try again this morning. The town of Goldegg is only small but it's lake attracts local people from



all over who come and bathe in the water and claim all sorts of goodness for your skin. Yeah right, its bloody cold and its only reason it feels good is because your head says it must be good if it costs €50 for a dunk. The only refreshing bit is the fluffy towel as you briskly exit the water. The lake is a mixture of natural spring water and peat or so they say but quite frankly it looks like sewage pond.



The 14th century castle was bought by Count Christoph of Schemberg in 16th century. He added a massive hall with renaissance ornaments, Christian paintings etc. Then in 1973 the local council bought the Castle and renovated it to what it is today. It is a beautiful building but not like our castles and wandering around, it feels more like a grand mansion. At the side is the church and cemetery and little war memorial.



At the side is the church and cemetery and little war memorial.



Notice the helmet

As it is a Sunday lots of people are gathering for morning church and once again, they are dressed in traditional dress. Wonder if its this village or if they do it through-out Austria? Anyway it is so nice to see and just makes Austria that little bit more special and attractive.



Travelling to our next point we debated the pro's and con's of both brick and wooden houses. Craig had plenty to say





and he mentioned a time in dotty quarry where he held on to a piece of wood at one of the gassing off points and it was significantly warmer than anything else. So there must be something about the thermal properties in wood that make it a good material even in extremely cold countries. Got a feeling our next house may be wooden!

We arrived at Werfen in the late afternoon and parked on a free camper spot near the river. The views were stunning. To the right we has the Tennengebirge mountains and straight in front Castle Hohenwerfen, it was beautiful. We had a little bike ride in to Werfen before settling down for the night and the big adventure tomorrow.

The Castle is something else and it setting is just brilliant. Its been used in a number of films from Sound of Music to Where Eagles Dare and not surprised given the grandeur and setting, it beautiful. Founded in 11th century and one of Land Salzburg's most important castles. We fancied having a ride up to the castle but we discovered its mainly an attraction for kids - falcon shows, kids rids etc, so we thought we'd give the castle a miss and save ourselves for Elsrrientwelt.

Werfen itself was pretty quiet but still very pretty. Mainly one high street with a lovely hat makers and shop. Plenty of little restaurants but I think that's due to the fact a well known chef set up stall here.



Cheap Shoes!



Blacksmiths



Back of the hat shop

On the way back to Homer we followed the river and Craig noticed a park. Its not like Craig but he fancied a go on the zip wire. Peanut soon followed and he loved the tunnel. Not sure he enjoyed the slide but he had no choice with Craig, poor little chap. After the roundabout we all felt a little wobbly and so time for home, real fun half an hour. When I think about it, we are not right in the head...who takes their dog to the park. Bet Austrian's thought we were bonkers.



Cool Breeze Dad



Oh Shit!



I can't "paws"



Peanut exploring the park - blind as a bat but snout still works x



Free camping spots don't come much better than this

# Monday 4th August: Werfen to Salzburg

Wide awake and ready for the worlds largest ice-caves Eisriesentwelt. The cave stretches for about 42 kilometres and the entrance has brilliant ice formations that extend for nearly 1 mile. The natural cave includes a number of ice structures, frozen waterfalls and lakes ending of course, with a spectacular ice palace. It was quite a trek...1st we caught a



Homer is down there



Tunnel about half way up



bus about 1/4 way up the mountain. Then we walked for half an hour to the ticket shed. Then we walked another half an hour to the cable car, which took us to about 3/4 up the mountain. Then we walked for about an hour to the cave entrance. It was hard work. The climb was fairly steep and it got pretty damn



cold. By the time we reached the entrance we were completely covered in cloud and could not see more than a few meters in front. At the entrance we were met by a guide, Bernie. He spoke damn good English, which made the tour much more interesting. Unfortunately you cannot take camera's inside, so no shots I'm afraid and it really is a shame because it is pretty wonderful inside. We were given davy lamps for light and when we entered the cave boy it was windy. Little kids would be swept off there feet it was that much of a gust. We walked up around 1000 steps in the dark, except the little light from the lamp. The lower part of the caves are cooled by the passage of cold wind in the winter, the thaw water freezes as it trickles in forming gigantic ice figures. The figures are constantly changing and growing, so each year the cave looks different. The original explorer died in world war I and his wish was for his ashes to be buried in the cave. Well now Alexander von Mörk has company, our Russell. I know Russell doesn't like the cold but we did tuck him well under the urn, so he should be pretty warm. Overall we were in the cave around 2 hours and it was superb but I was bloody knackered. I haven't had the chance to look on line but I would imagine there are plenty pictures so you can get some idea of what it is like (wonderful). Click [here](http://www.eisriesenwelt.at) and it should take you straight to the website [www.eisriesenwelt.at](http://www.eisriesenwelt.at). However, I have put some photo's from the web at the bottom of this update for people who cant access internet .

Back at Homer and Peanut was pleased to see us! We gave him a little treat for being a good boy and after a quick shower and bite to eat we set off for Salzburg. The drive was as beautiful as ever, passing Golling waterfall and lake Fuschi where they filmed the opening scene of Sound of Music.



Austrian Number Plate -

We did a quick Lidl shop before heading in to the capital to get our bearings. The parking is pretty expensive at €3 per hour, so we decided to go on to a campsite. Yep you heard us right, a campsite. Aiden campsite is just 5 kilometres from the centre and at €21 per night its not too bad given high of season and proximity to the centre. As we pulled up the heavens opened again, well this is no surprise. Every time we pull on to a site it rains! Hey ho. We had a quick drive round the site but difficult to see a great spot in the dark and rain. Anyway we finally backed on to a nice green spot and then guess what... sunk. The ground was completely saturated and no matter what Homer was going no where. Jeez what do we do? Craig tried all sorts to get us out but nah, Homer was well and truly stuck. Next minute a load of Italians walked over all balling and shouting, waving their arms in the air...feels like we never left Italy! They were all offering advice but when you are stuck, you're stuck. Next minute everyone and his dog were pushing us out of the mud, thanks guys xxx. With Homer free we just popped him on the corner were we could see stone under foot. Not the best place but its dark and we can move to a better place tomorrow.



## Tuesday 5th August: Salzburg

It rained all night and the ground was saturated. We put out the canopy, had breakfast and then decided to clean. We scrubbed and scrubbed until Homer was like new. Every cupboard emptied and washed. We also took advantage of the washing machine and did all the big items like chair covers and bedding. God it is so much better than hand washing those heavy items. Just as I had put the 1st load of washing in, I notice a little hand spinner. Just like mum's. I gave it a go with all the lighter items and boy what a difference. I think we might look at how much electricity they use and if we can have one for Homer. It would make life so much easier.

The whole day we cleaned but we did stop for the occasional chat as people walked by. It was so nice to chat with people, we even dumped in to some English! We did meet a really nice couple from Holland. We spent a long time chatting to them and for the rest of our stay we often stopped and had chats with each other. They were a lovely couple with two children and a rescue dog.

It thundered, lightened and pickled down all day and come late afternoon the ground around Homer was getting way too boggy. Quite a few motorhomes had left, so we moved Homer to higher ground on grass with lots of stone underneath. We didn't fancy getting stuck again.

Funnily enough we moved to the other side of the road from where we originally got stuck. So every time we looked out the window we could see Homer's tyre marks and matching mud slide. The ground here was solid and more level, so we felt all round. And that's it for today, folks.

## Wednesday 6th August: Salzburg

I woke bright and early at 5:30 and despite all efforts I couldn't get back to sleep, so I got up and tiptoed around Homer. Clearly I didn't do a great job as Craig barked some remark at me before throwing the covers over his head. I made a brew and then through the corner of my eye, I saw something move. It was a bloody big spider. I don't mind insects and things as long as they don't invade my space. Then without warning this thing dropped. I thought it had dropped on to the chair, so I scanned every inch but no spider. Where the hell had it gone? I can't sit down with my brew knowing there is a massive tarantula waiting to crawl on me. Just as I went to scan the chair again then damn thing dropped right to eye level. There it was looking me right in the eye and dangling on a piece of its thread. Another second and it would have been crawling all over me. Don't think I've ever had eye contact with an Austrian



**Bronze Ghost**

spider before! Now how do I get this thing in mid air. Ah ah, there's a glass from last night. I slowly dropped the spider in to the glass and it just sat there. Next minute it was licking the beads of red wine and before long it was drunk as a monkey and fast a sleep. Needless to say at this point, I opened the door and chucked him outside.

I did the last of the washing whilst Craig did the last of his morning snoring. Once everyone up, washed and dressed we got on our bikes and cycled in to the city. Today is a



**David Beckham?**

The High Street Windows & Markets



Cute Jumper



Designer ski wear



Austrian Dress shop



Cool sign



Sun Flowers



Pretzel stand



Basket Man

lovely sunny day, so lets make the most of the weather. Salzburg is a city rich in baroque architecture and sound of Mozart. The best way to decide the city...the Salzach river runs



### The Cathedral



in the middle and to one side you have the old town and to the other you have the new town.

### The Residenz - blinking cherubs everywhere





Sword Practice in the park

The city sits between two mountains - Monchsberg and Kapuzinerberg, so pretty scenic. Although personally we prefer the views and feel of Innsbruck compared to



The RUSS bar



View of Salzburg from river

Salzburg. Having said that, Salzburg is much bigger and yet you still feel like you are in the countryside, with little pockets of quiet rural retreats, its is weird. Certainly doesn't feel like London or Manchester were the countryside feels a million miles away. Famous for sound of music but more importantly, the home of Mozart who



Street Scenes



Spot of Brunch



was born here in 1796.

There is loads to see and do but we managed to see Hohensalzburg Fortress, Cathedral, Residenz, Mirabell Gardens plus much more.

On the way home we called in to a Billa Supermarket, bit like a waitrose. Craig found me some lamb which I haven't had for months and he also found a joint of pork just perfect for BBQ... which is what we did when we got back to Homer and it was yummy.

When we left this morning there were hardly any motorhomes around us but when we got back it was packed. Like M6 on a Friday afternoon. Then when we looked at the plates they



Someone dropped by right at the side of us



Craig doing a mega BBQ



Perfect Port with a little cracklin



Tyre marks to right - when we got stuck

were all Italian, that figures, they love cramming themselves no matter what. We said hello and then next minute they were coming over with glasses of wine. The Italians are so friendly once you break the ice. Next minute our Dutch friends walked passed with their dog and they stopped for a chat. It was great, an international garden party and of course the Italians then brought our the grappa. Turned out to be a good night with plenty banter and even french fries thrown in for good measure by our Italians! Craig says good night with a few little hick ups and a slur xxx

# Ice Cave Photo's from web.

