

Sweden - Michael trotter

So here we are again. Each day that goes by brings me closer to the end of my exchange and to Australia.



As usual exchange is fruitful with challenges and amazing experiences.

Since last time I reported I've had my one and only host family change. (When I arrived I came with a bag of 20kg and that's including the stuff I gave away. I was shocked when I came to move as to how much stuff I'd accumulated.) After living with a family for six months you really get to know a family and when it comes time to move it's quite sad. Though in the same moment the family you are arriving in is very excited to meet you and is very welcoming. So it's quite a mixture of feelings.

All said and done, it went smoothly and so began the final six months of my year in Sweden.

Not long after the change of host families, my real folks arrived, and with them came a very ser-real feeling. When I first arrived I remembered how everything felt new and exciting and a little nerve-racking. When I led them both down into the train station of Copenhagen airport. I thought I was very comfortable with Lund, and everything here, the moment they stepped threw the arrivals doors, it felt like I'd been in Sweden 5 minutes again.



We travelled up to visit Jonna the exchange student that lived with my family from Sweden over summer.



The Swedes have a different idea of how to let everyone know that Christmas is on the way. Instead of putting up trees and playing terrible Christmas carols in all the department stores they brought out a drink, in fact because they have focused all of their Christmas cheer on "Julmust" Coca cola has become cranky. In December the Swedes drink 45,000,000 litres of julmust and in a country of 9 million that's a lot of julmust per person.

With the coming of Xmas comes the cold (unlike home) so I took the opportunity when it presented itself and hoped a train to Denmark with my bike and did a 50km tour of the Zealand island. One of the things I love the most about Europe is how close all of the countries are to one another. I could stand on the shores of Denmark and look straight over to Sweden, and in some spots see both countries without having to move my eyes. Europe is truly beautiful.





The realisation that the year will very soon come to a grinding halt came the initiative to get out and see some of the more important Swedish icons. Seeing as I've managed see the Volvo place in Göteborg, the Swedish royal castle in Stockholm and driven past Ericsson it was time to work my way to the place where absolut vodka is produced. I went with a friend of mine. After two trains and two bus rides we arrived in the little town of Åhus where every drop of the famous Swedish vodka is produced.

When we arrived at the desk I asked if there were to be any tours and was promptly told "No I'm sorry only in summer"

My host mum had signed us up to a tour about a week earlier so I called her and was able to call the lady at the desk and use her superior Swedish skills and sort everything out for us.

The tour was very interesting, I've never seen so many bottles of vodka in my entire life. Unfortunately because the drinking age in Sweden is 20 and most importantly because Rotary says no drinking we missed out on the tasting but instead received pins and a book all about absolut vodka!

See you in two months Australia.

Michael Trotter
Sweden.