

## **Germany - Daniel Ash**

Hello to All,

WELL I just got back from my euro tour today and wasn't it a way to cap off the last 3 months. I now have so much to write about. The last 3 months have seen a lot of highs and lows. The lows being most of the exchange students slowly filtering out of Germany. The highs being the trip to Mallorca, the holidays and the 29 day Eurotour.

At the end of July I went to Palma de Mallorca for 4 days with my host family. This was a lot of fun and Mallorca is really beautiful. We went sailing for a day, spent a day shopping in Palma and a day on the beautiful bays of Palma.

Then it was back to school for 4 more weeks before the holidays. Soon enough the holidays came round and I tried to keep myself busy with meeting friends and going out. I went camping on a lake with some friends for a weekend and it would have been a lot more fun if I didn't get sick on the afternoon we left. But nonetheless I was glad to have the opportunity. On the 21st of August the Eurotour came around.

We all met us in Frankfurt and spent the first night there getting to know each other and being a very loud bunch of people. The group is not the normal euro tour group but it is made for the people that come in January so most of us were from the southern half of the globe. 15 Brazilians (who can make more noise than 40), 15 Aussies, 3 New Zealanders, 5 Argentinos, 1 Chilean, 1 Venezuelan and 2 South Africans made up our group.

I quickly made friends with the latino group as I was happy to speak spanish with them on the first day and since then I was always with the Argentinean boys and the chilean. We had loads of long bus trips where we watched wonderful things like "The Castle", Nature's Best Music from New Zealand and most importantly a film on the Life of Steve Irwin. There was 1 sad day on the bus.

We saw the most amazing things through our 29 days. Here is a list of the cities we visited in order. Frankfurt, Prague, Vienna, Dachstein (Austria), Salzburg, Füssen (in Germany where the Neuschwanstein castle is), Venice, Florence, Rome, Toskana, Pisa, Milan, Strassbourg, Paris, Brussels, Brügge and last of all Amsterdam.

The whole trip was a highlight but there were definitely some special moments. For one we saw the Pope in Vatican city which I found special and I just fell in love with Paris. It was for me the most beautiful city.

Anyway I am home now and have come to realise that in a little over 3 months time we will be packing our bags to go home to Australia!! That is certainly a scary thought. There are lots of things to look forward to such as the winter snow sports, Christmas, New Year's and then all of a sudden the year is gone. My greetings to everyone back at home!

Daniel Ash

## **Germany - Jack Crocker**

My last few Bounder Reports have consisted mainly of my, nothing short of extraordinary, trips through Europe...

This month has been a quieter one, but I want to tell you all about one day in particular. A day where I thought to myself, this is what Rotary Exchange is about.

It started out as a normal Saturday; a pleasant little sleep in, an extended breakfast and a lay in the sun. The weather was abnormally good for September, as it has been for the last few weeks. My host brother (Kosta) and I decided to ride our bikes into town as there was an International Festival on with a few of our friends playing in school bands etc. We ate lots of

food and listened to band music, but as the afternoon started to kick in, we decided it was time to move on.

Kosta had a bit of English homework to do, so we went and sat in a comfy little café and drank a few coffees and talked about languages and laughed a whole lot. It was so nice. Then as the afternoon sun burnt on, and Kosta seemed to be done with his homework, we decided that the afternoon was too nice to give up on yet. We rode to the other side of town where the park and botanic gardens are, and rode around the park for a while. Then hunger kicked in, as it usually does for a pair of 18 year old lads and we decided we'd try the new sushi bar in town. I usually have a rule against asian food in European countries, but I thought I'd give it another chance. I was pleasantly surprised. Once the plates were empty, we spotted a pool hall a few blocks further, and as we are both pretty competitive, challenged each other to a few rounds of pool. He must have spiked my sushi, because Kosta came out one game on top, but nonetheless, it was a perfect way to end such a day.

It was a day where I felt so at home, with nothing to worry about and not even any homework to do. It wasn't an extravagant day. We didn't plan it. We didn't book it. It was pure spontaneity.

It's a day I will remember.

I love exchange.

Tschuess, Ciao, Auf wiedersehen...

Jack Crocker xxx

### **Germany - Laani Craven**

Well I've been up to a lot as you would expect...it's been what? Quite a few months... I am now into my 8th month here and can hardly believe it has gone this fast. 2 days after my 8th month 'anniversary' parents are arriving in Germany where they will encounter a welcoming committee consisting of and incredibly over-emotional, semi-insane me!

I believe I left off in June just as Australia lost to Italy in the WM (World Cup) in the 8th finale. So of course tragedy struck as I was sitting with my best Aussie friend Georgia in a restaurant and we watched in slow motion that fatal fall in the 11 meter box...I almost cried. George actually did cry... Germans were coming past her and giving their utmost condolences. But that was just the start to my worst week here. The next morning I was almost arrested in a supermarket. I kept beeping in the scanners and so a couple of security people took me into the depths of the supermarket, into a dimly lit little room and I had my bag searched. It turned out to be pens I had bought somewhere else but had the same barcode sticker as at this particular supermarket. To end off this fantastic week I was informed that my Grandfather had died suddenly. It didn't come as a huge shock to me. I had expected it. Nevertheless I was still devastated being here on my own and having to cope with it. Luckily my friend Ash had stayed over the night and helped me a lot. Also this month I had a lot of good exchange friends fly home. Rather a sad period really....

July didn't get a whole lot better. I have to say first however, I did start a new German course and still have lessons 3 times a week for 1 and ½ hours each lesson. On the 8th one of my closest friends Ash (who was in my town and school) flew home. She was closely followed by my Canadian friend Anali. School holidays began on the 20th. So that was an upside and the weather couldn't have been better. It was my 6th month 'anniversary' on the 22nd. But like I said, July wasn't much better than June. I got kicked out of my host family by my host mother. The situation was confusing as I really didn't think there was anything wrong. The long and short of the story is she didn't think I was getting on well with the rest of the family and not integrating at all. Everyone else was fine with me though. It was just her. I don't know what her deal was, but that's what happened and I had to accept it. My next family couldn't take me until 3 weeks later because their son was moving to Ohio for his exchange then. So I stayed

with the same host family. One good thing about the school holidays was that my host mother and sisters were away for almost all of it. I had good times with my host dad and host brothers (the older of whom came home from Uni in Passau in the middle of the hols). I did get to go to an island in the north sea with this family called Juist. It was fantastic fun.

So August dawned on me and brought the rain. But it was filled with good times after the low I had. I hung out with my German friends who weren't gallivanting around Spain. And of course with my Aussie friends who are still here. Everyone else has gone home. I travelled a lot around my state too. I went to Hamburg and Bremen and then further north to Emden and Norden. It was practically free with our student holidays ticket. It only cost 24 Euros for the entire holidays and it saved me SO much money. It was possibly the best thing I have ever bought in my life! So, the Zwischenahner Woche (Woche=week) started on the 16th. It's a huge fest in my town. My host dad said that everyone who has moved away from Bad Zwischenahn either to study or whatever comes back for it. So I went and partied it up with my oldest host brother Philip and his friends. And of course my German mates. I went to East Germany to a place called Fleesensee for a family weekend before I moved out. It was really beautiful and we had great weather for it.

Then on Monday the 21st I moved families. I really didn't want to leave the family (well the host mother yes, otherwise no). But it was for the better I think. My new host family are really great people. They own a Baumschule (tree school/plantation)...well...several. I went with my host mum, brother (Christian,8) and sister (Linda, 14) to Bayern my first weekend there. We went to Regensburg to visit my host mums mother. We also went to their holiday house in the Bayerische Wald (Bayern Forest on the border of Czech Repub.). It was cold, but breathtaking. Really fantastic. We played a lot of card games. So watch out when I come back! Lol. School went back on the 31st. I have lots of English classes.....and it's kind of boring, but I get through it ok. I understand pretty much all of the German now. So I suppose I have done really well over the holidays. My course has helped a lot. Last weekend was the Oldenburg Stadtfest (see if you can guess what that one means...fairly simple). It was pretty fun. The entire city was full and filled with awesome music. I had a great time. I also has a paddle tour with my Rotary club last Sunday. On this paddle tour it was just my old host dad and me in a big canoe and it was hard work. We went 18kms and at the end I was practically dead. I wanted to chop my shoulders off. I was a little sick with a head cold too so I kept telling my German friends to just shoot me.

Lol. I was in bad shape for a couple of days. My lovely host mummy however filled her rather large bath tub with hot water, bubbles, lit candles, turned on music and told me to stay in there as long as I wanted. She is so sweet. And then this afternoon she booked me a massage and it was soooo good. Am feeling MUCH better..I. I bought her flowers...hehehe. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of September was our district's orientation for the new inbounds. I got to meet them all and I had fantastic memories of how I felt when I was new.

Really fresh. It's an interesting feeling to be an oldie! And last but not least last weekend I went on a trip with my Rotary club to Kiel (in North East Germany). Weather was perfect and the city was green and gorgeous...right on a deep water harbour. We visited ship yards and went on a harbour tour and city tour...it was rather fantastic and being Rotary we ate incredibly well! All is busy on the horizon and I can't wait to keep going on this trip. It's hard to think there's only 4 months to go.

Until next time everyone! Laani Craven