

## Location: Freiburg

Today our walk was taking us back to the hustle and bustle of city life at Freiburg described as a small provincial city. Freiburg was founded at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century and owes its development to the rich silver seams discovered in the Black Forrest which would have supported the building of its greatest feature being its symbolic Munster.

On leaving Kirchzaten we walked along the valley floor with much evidence of a prosperous farming community. We soon headed up into the hills, I was in favour of taking the low road to Freiburg along the river, but Carol argued for the high road because of the shade and the forest. The climb up was quite tough but didn't take us long and once the ascent was made we enjoyed a lovely forest path walk around the side of the mountain. We came across several playgrounds over the day. It was impressive to see how they had been made from material taken out of the forest or by using recycled material, such as an old tractor. This was a particularly good example. Not sure this could be done back home as it would be considered a legal risk as children may hurt themselves on the exposed iron bits of the tractor.

The playground was at a little place called Saint Ottilien, which consisted of the playground, a church and a restaurant, essentially all that's needed for a large percentage of the European population. It was a little early for lunch, so Carol and I shared a vegetable cannelloni with a goat's cheese topping, absolutely delicious.

After lunch we headed back into the forest and commenced one of those walks that are the reason we have this sort of holiday. A track covered in leaf mould with no jutting rocks. Amongst dappled shade of mature trees with occasional views to distant mountains or deep valleys. And then you walk around a corner and come across this view.



This is the church referred to as the Munster, the German word for cathedral. The building of the cathedral started around 1200 and took 300 years to complete. Freiburg was heavily bombed

at the end of WW II but the Munster was undamaged. There are also some great gargoyles on the side of the cathedral.

Everyday around the Munster is a market which has been an ongoing tradition since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. There are weights and measures rules (historical) on the church for ensuring compliant goods are only sold. This is an example of the mushrooms which could be purchased.

Another feature of the city are the Bachie, these are small canals totalling 15 km's in length bringing water diverted from the Dreisam river throughout the old part of the city. They are about a foot wide and eight inches deep with three inches of water in them. The original reason for the canals was to improve the air quality in the narrow streets. They are as nearly as old as the city but have been relined with modern bricks. At the market you can buy these little colourful boats.



And this is what you do with the boats,



pull them along with a piece of string.

The canals are also used to cool down your feet on a hot day and a general play space for Freiburg's children. There where also lots of dogs making use of the water to cool down but the water was constantly running which kept the canals clean. The strange thing was that if the canal was empty you would see people putting rubbish in them such as cigarette butts but there was no rubbish in the canals with water. Perhaps this is the solution to keeping the urban environment clean and tidy.

This small city has a vibrant feel to it like a lot of European small cities which share its space with a university. The controlling authorities have developed sustainable community living practices and to quote my track notes from Intravel, generates more solar power than the whole of Great Britain. By some quirk of position Freiburg receives the most sunlight of any German city.

And yes, at the market I was able to add to my owl collection by purchasing this owl with a clock. I know it is very Kitsch, but I am in Germany the home of Kitsch.

Tomorrow we catch the train to a small village called Wengen which is part way up the Swiss Alps.

