

It was an early start today, with a 6:30am departure from the Manor. Jo was kind enough to rise early to say goodbye. We've had a wonderful time in Scotland and it's been really special to celebrate Christmas and New Year with friends and family. Some of the locals were worried we would encounter bad traffic to the airport, but the roads were pretty deserted.

Today was the first of two really big travel days, where we really needed all the connections to work. We'd maximised our chances by avoiding budget airlines and had booked with BA to Europe. Flights out of Edinburgh in winter are mostly to warmer places, so flying to Zurich involved a connection through Heathrow. That definitely had the potential to go wrong, but at least the weather was in our favour.

We had a minor delay for de-icing as we left Edinburgh, but made up the time and landed exactly on schedule. We weren't sure how much security we would have to endure at Heathrow, but it turned out to be none. We'd been thoroughly checked at Edinburgh, so going through the connection route bypassed all the security checks. That left us with enough time to have a leisurely lunch at one of our favourite English restaurants from our last visit.

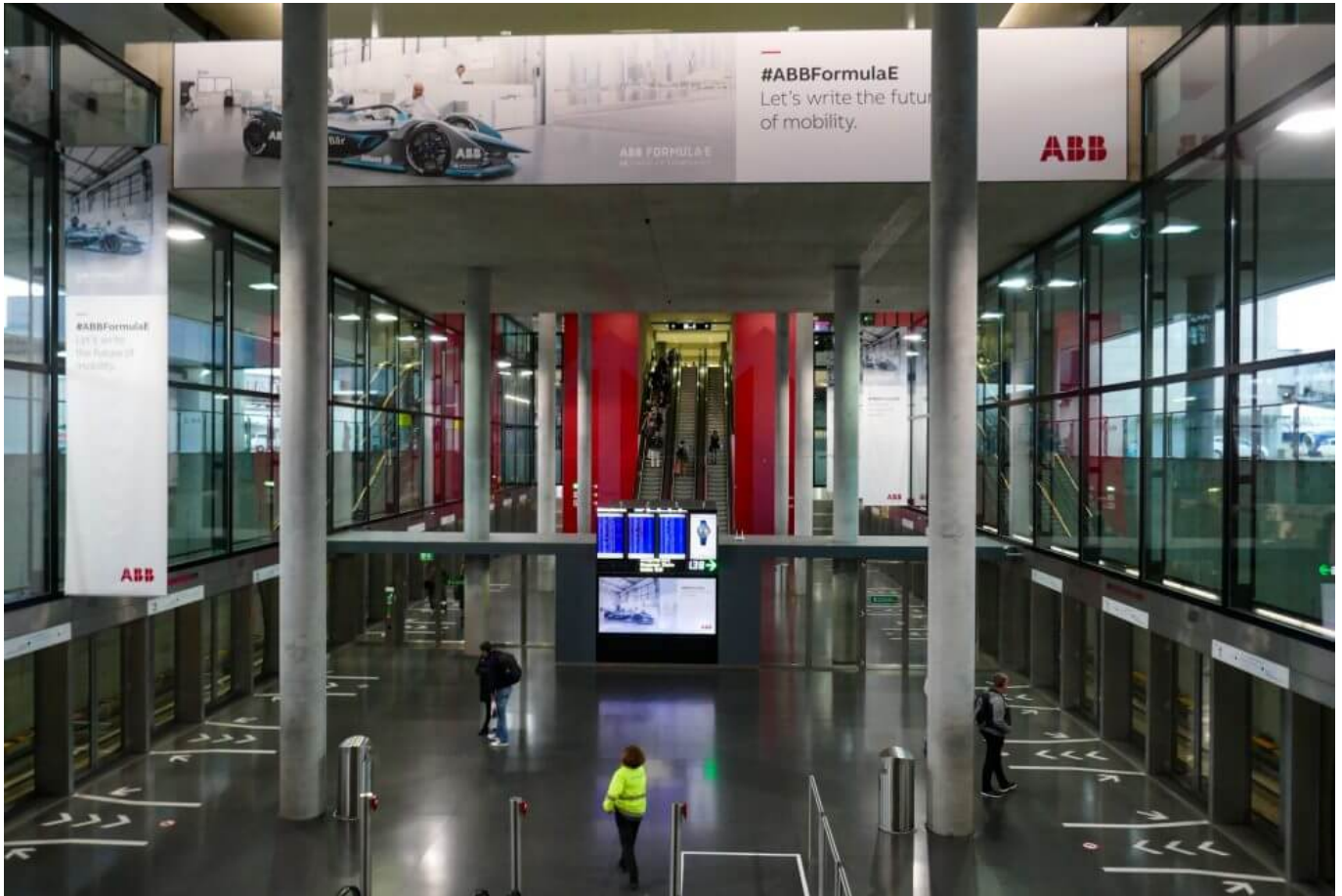
It was really strange being at Heathrow and not visiting London, but you can't do everything. The best we managed was a hazy view of The Shard from the restaurant. Our second flight was right on time and we landed in Zurich slightly early. I would highly recommend Zurich Airport as a stress-free airport, it's a world away from airports like Heathrow.



Heathrow Airport



Heathrow Shopping



Zurich Airport

The last part of today's epic journey was a train ride to Chur. We got really good connections again, with a quick change at Zurich Central. The Swiss trains are incredibly quiet and of course they run exactly on time. The only downside is they aren't cheap - like everything in Switzerland. There is a good reason we are only spending one night in such a stunning country!

After the lack of any snow in Scotland, it was awesome to see it snowing for our arrival in Chur. It was only 700m to our hotel, but we grabbed a taxi to avoid dragging our suitcases through the snowy cobbled streets. The taxi driver had very little English but was very kind and funny. We had no Swiss francs and were planning to pay by credit card, but the minimum cost for credit card was 20 francs. The driver kindly stopped at a cash machine so Andy could get some cash and pay half of that. Soon after we set off, the boot popped open and the warning beep started. The driver just laughed, said it would be ok and carried on. We beeped and laughed all the way to the hotel, but arrived with all our bags safe.

Our hotel is a gorgeous 16th century Swiss Inn. It's not flash, but very comfortable and totally authentic. Finding an affordable dinner was a challenge tonight. I'd found one restaurant that looked really good and was reasonably priced (for Switzerland anyway), but I hadn't booked as we had no idea of timing. We tracked it down but they had no space, I guess everyone else thought it was a good option too. We wandered round the gorgeous old town for ages in the snow, looking at menus but not finding anything suitable. In the end we went back to the hotel and I checked the notes on my laptop. That gave us a couple of ideas and we found a restaurant that wouldn't bankrupt us. It was a Tex-Mex restaurant, but had a few local dishes as well. I was the only one who ordered a traditional meal from the Grisons, although I had my doubts about the added corn chips being local cuisine.



Hotel Zunfthaus Zur Rebleuten



Swiss meatballs

After dinner we wrapped up warm and went for a snowy night walk around the town. It was a beautiful end to a busy travel day.



Chur Altstadt - The Old Town

