

Tuesday 7 May 2013 23310 -23505 – 195 kms

On our way to Newhaven and oops Rick has forgotten the sat nav that he paid a fortune to update, never mind we will have to resort to the old ways. However, I see a divorce on the horizon, especially as I am struggling to see the maps and feel sick every time I look down for too long!!!

All seems well at “Maison Kirk” as we sat on the doorstep to enjoy our gin and tonic. The sun was still out and it was warm and a little humid. Yves has mowed the grass and Gaby even popped in to say that she is going to see the roofers mate who lives in the village to get a quote for repairs to the Granary roof rather than a replacement. It's a holiday week and she thinks she will be able to get an answer by the time we return from our motorhome adventures in the south. Umm, heard this a few times before but you never know.

It's brilliant now we can use the lounge and watch television, it's made it feel so much more like home. We've even got comfy seats and Rick made it cosy by lighting the kitchen fire to help dry the place out. All seems fine apart from the explosions coming from the washing machine which keeps cutting the electricity out but Rick will sort that out tomorrow.

Wednesday 8 May 2013 Alencon 23505 – 23538 = 33 kms



It's been raining but the good news is that Rick doesn't have to look like a stalker whilst sitting outside the church logging into Gaby's internet as he can get a connection inside the church by the altar. He's feeling a bit bad about it, like he has a direct line to god, it doesn't feel quite right. Anyway we have emails etc. Oh no, he has forgotten the PVA for the lounge ceiling and also the decoder for the television. We got Alan to order the part that had blown up for the washing machine which will hopefully arrive before we leave Milhars. The television here was great last night but today something is wrong as it keeps flashing on and off. It should come with a warning that the reception might induce an epileptic fit. Didn't realise last night but everything, especially wood, is covered in a fungus so there is lots of cleaning up to do. We spent ages trying to get someone in the Brico Depot to understand what PVA is, no luck and we were even shown a doormat – it somehow got lost in translation. After that exhausting session we decided to go and buy some gin and wine. Rick has been in some strange world of his own, I think he has been thinking about his internet betting. He is able to access our home computer remotely and keeps going to the church to check how it's going. He seemed to have been gone ages so I thought he was staying for a drink round Gaby's then I saw the missed calls. He was locked in the church! I had to knock up the school bus driver who locks the church each evening who thought it was hilarious. Rick came out looking a little sheepish but at least he was only using his phone and not the laptop so his secret is safe for the time being. I forgot the rice and potatoes. The television is definitely on its way out, it's difficult to follow a programme when it constantly flashes on and off. It's back to reading books and doing puzzles.

Thursday 9 May 2013 Carrouges 23538 – 23547 = 9 kms



Dull weather and the television is knackered, however, Jen's little one that she had at uni is working well but you have to sit quite close to be able to see it. I've made some contingency plans and Julie has been to Climping to collect the Sat Nav and post it to Alan's where we will be next Tuesday. She has also picked up the PVA, sander, tile cutter and cement for George to bring over at the end of the month. Rick's spent most of the day filling in the end lounge wall. We've taken the bed out of the lounge and put it in the small bedroom, it's a bit tight getting in the room but a more comfortable bed. We're going to give away the double bed that was that room as it's 25 years old and a bit done and squeaky. We now need for the lounge a bed settee and a small table or desk to house the hi fi and computer. I've been busy scrubbing all the woodwork as it's covered in mould. I've weeded front and back of the house and also potted up the pots on the doorsteps and the window boxes.

The neighbour's seem to be bemused by Rick's sudden conversion to Catholicism but he is feeling a little embarrassed and has given the church a miss today!

Friday 10 May 2013 Alencon 23547 – 23573 = 26 kms



Another dull day and also a bit chilly, we are never lucky with the weather here. Came back from our trip to Alencon with a new vacuum cleaner as the Dyson has gone all brittle and bits are breaking off all over the place. Even after taking a list with us we are still forgetting things. I swept and hoovered the loft and cleaned out the linen cupboard. Rick carried on filling in the wall and started on the ceiling. He gave the grass up the road the first cut and being earlier in the year it was so much easier. I introduced myself to the couple who have bought the place opposite by our garden but they were very French and we just exchanged pleasantries. The school bus driver and his wife walked back from the car park with me and were still laughing about Rick being locked in the church – those mad English!!! He's very interested in buying the Granary but it's difficult to understand them as they can't speak any English and don't seem to understand my French. Think

we will delay our departure to Alan by a day so we can get some jobs done. Jen and Hayden are having an amazing time in Vietnam and due to some termites have been upgraded to a villa with a private pool. Crept round to the outside of the church at 10pm and it was pitch black, no stars and the only lights visible were from Gaby's and the family opposite. Everyone was in bed, no life in the village at all. We went into Carrouges yesterday about 4pm, bearing in mind it was a holiday, there was not a soul in sight, no shops open and most of the houses had their shutters closed. Where are all the people, what are they doing? I washed my favourite jumper on the wrong setting and now it's half the size it was. I read the wrong end of the dial and washed it at 95 degrees. I could cry; must start wearing my glasses again.

Saturday 11 May 2013



Average weather, dull, sometimes sunny with showers and about 14 degrees. Face Timed Jen and Hayden which was great, it's amazing we can see and speak to them for nothing when here we are in France and there they are in Vietnam. More of the same at the Maison Kirk, Rick filling in and rubbing down the ceiling and me putting wood preserver on the windows. I move the lounge furniture around again (a habit acquired from Mum) and we don't think we need a bed settee now as you could put all the sofa cushions on the floor to make a bed and there is a duvet etc in the cupboard. We may need a little table to put the computer on but that's all – less is good. Rick's got withdrawal symptoms from his internet betting and even with a guilty conscience he's back in the church.



Sunday 12 May 2013 Loches & Chateauroux 23573 – 23761 = 188 kms

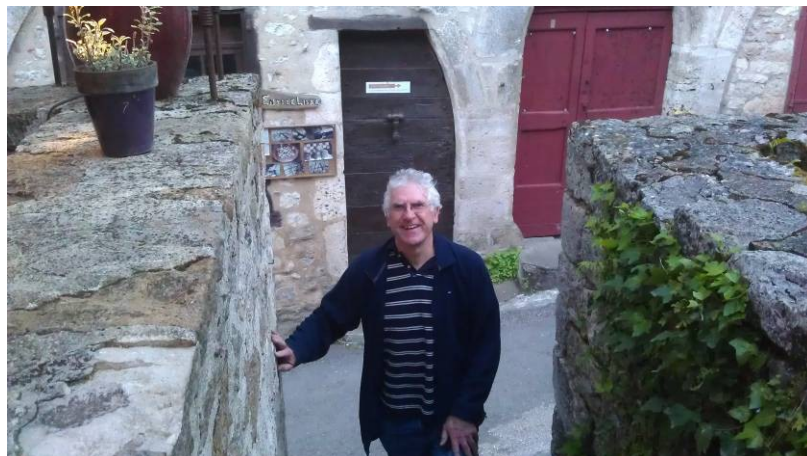
Rick woke up in a panic at 7am insisting that he must change the wiring in the bathroom radiator plug. We can't get the right French plug so he's feeling bad about using a British one. I think it is ridiculous as I am sure George is not going to take the plug apart to check the wiring. As we were up so early we were almost ready to set off in the motorhome by 9.30 am which is a record.

However, along came the school bus driver with his wife, son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. His daughter-in-law spoke good English and confirmed that they were keen to buy the Granary. I said I would consult the rest of the family and get back to them. No sooner had they left when Gaby turned up and we caught up with the local gossip. The Moroccan chap opposite got stopped by the police who found he had been driving in France on his Moroccan licence for 30 years. As he is now unable to drive until he gets a French licence he has moved temporarily to Ferte Mace where he works. The lady opposite who is complaining about the damp from our Granary is going to sell up and move closer to her family. The daughter from the Epicerie who is unmarried now spends a couple of months each year with her nephew on the French Island of New Caledonia, we've been there and it's lovely.

We finally left about midday and went via Ciral as Rick wanted to get his baguette but we only got as far as Alencon when he had a big, big panic thinking he had left his mobile at the house. Fortunately it was a false alarm. We stopped at an Aire in the medieval Cite Royale de Loches and wandered around the royal lodge where Joan of Arc met Charles VII and then explored the dungeons (le donjon). As it was still reasonably early we set off for the campsite at Chateauroux. It's lovely to be back in the motorhome as we are forced to relax. We have seen some beautiful spring flowers here as the warmer weather means they are ahead of Normandy and home. Bluebells are lining the verges, lilac, laburnum and blossom are in full flow and the wisteria is just so fresh that it looks artificial. The only down side is that the crumbs from the French bread and bobbles of wool from my jumper and Rick's fleece where I washed them at too high a temperature are everywhere and it's driving me mad.



Monday 13 May 2013 Saint Cirq Lapopie 23761 – 23968 = 207 kms



It's another French public holiday today and it was raining and miserable as we set off on our long journey to Saint Cirq Lapopie. The final hour was a bit scary as we were on minor, narrow, windy roads with overhanging cliffs and sheer drops into valleys below. The scenery was quite stunning and we somehow had hit on one of the prettiest locations in France next to the River Lot. The sun had come out and it had warmed up as we settled into our plot at Camping De La Plage. We set off about 7pm to walk along the river to what we thought was the nearest town for supper. After about 20 minutes we came to a sign that said Bouchies 3.5 kms. I had my sensible Sue hat on whereas Rick was wearing his Reckless Rick one. We went back for the bikes but Rick has also forgotten the lights and there was no way I was going to risk having to get back without any. To cut a long story short we cycled about 10 miles up and down hills to find that the only restaurants open were in the village of Saint Cirq Lapopie which was right at the top of the hill. Rick was getting annoyed with my lack of adventure and we were both secretly thinking it was back to the motorhome for a bowl of cereal. However, we struck gold, the climb up wasn't too bad and we found a brilliant busy restaurant in fantastic surroundings where it was even warm enough to sit outside. Of course it was all downhill back to the campsite and good moods restored all round.



Tuesday 14 May 2013 Milhars 23968 - 24012 = 44 kms



Cycled the route along the river we would have taken last night if I hadn't put my foot down and thank goodness I did as it would have been impossible to even walk back in the dark let alone cycle. Bouzies was a little port where you could hire a boat for a few days and travel approximately 25 kms along the river.

It was quite tricky without a Sat Nav finding our way to Alan's along the windy roads. We had to take a sharp left turn at the top of the hill near Saint Cirq Lapopie and Rick had to do several three point turns trying to avoid a tree and the wall which had a sheer drop down to the river below. The village signs were very confusing and we had to keep reversing back to a crossroads or junctions.

At one time we tried about 5 different roads and of course it ended up being the one we started with but we just had to go a little further before it branched off to the correct road. Arrived at Alan's late afternoon and we were welcomed by his sister Debbie and German brother-in-law Wilfred. After an aperitif in Saint Antonin we had a meal in Festin D'Babette. Not too late to bed as we have an exciting day planned for Alan's 70th birthday tomorrow.



Wednesday 15 May 2013



It was raining but we started the day as we meant to go on with a champagne breakfast. Alan took 20 friends to lunch at Le Segelar the local restaurant. It was great fun meeting all his English and French friends. I sat next to Andrew who does barn conversions and got the low down on plastering. He confirmed that the French don't go in for PVA so he always brings loads back with him after a visit home. Alan has made some nice friends, Mo and Sharon who worked and work as Air Stewardess for BA and also Gillian who recently became a widow. It was a four hour lunch after which we spent the evening listening and mimicking the different owl sounds on You Tube.



Thursday 16 May 2013



We have to go to Albi today as now Alan is 70 he is unable to renew his British driving licence without an English address. He took all his forms for a French licence into the French official office but he now needs to sort out a medical and fill in loads more forms. Had a look at the Basilica Sainte Cecile in Albi that is built to look like a fortress with its internal walls and ceilings painted in an interesting style. Best lunch so far was found in a side street from the Basilica for only 18 euros for 3 courses. Apparently it has been a French law since the 1940's that all restaurants should include service charge with their bills but you can leave them something extra for the drinks. Really good, well presented very French food. Had a visit to Le Clerc to buy something to replace my jumper and Rick's fleece that I have completely wrecked. Had an aperitif at Linda and Andrew's up the hill near Alan. What an amazing place, they have basically restored a ruin. When their daughter reaches 14, because she lives in a remote village she will board at a school in

Albi until she is 18. Linda was saying that their daughter started school in France age 7 she was in a class of only 14 with varying ages. She came back after the first day and said that she needed a napkin and a knife and fork as each lunchtime the French children sit down to a 3 course lunch. How civilised is that! Great evening playing “Who Wants To Be A Millionaire” on my ipad. Even though there were a lot of German questions we couldn’t seem to get past £8000. Then suddenly we made the £1,000,000 but by then we had had so much to drink that we didn’t understand how we did it. Rick couldn’t help keep mentioning the war but Wilfred took it well and we were all laughing our heads off.



The front of Linda and Andrew’s house and part of the courtyard
Friday 17 May



After all this wining. Dining and entertainment we needed to chill out a bit. We stayed in and caught up with a few jobs while Wilfred and Debbie set off along the pot holed road to Cordes . Rick helped Alan take of the old swimming pool cover and had a go at fixing the shed door. It was actually quite warm for a couple of hours in the afternoon but we all spent ages searching the gravel for a tool Alan either dropped or mislaid. Champagne at 7.30pm with Fraiser who lives in Epsom but has a holiday house opposite Alan. He then joined us all for a delicious meal once again at Le Segelar. We couldn’t resist another game of “Who Wants To Be A Millionaire” and even though some of the questions were repeated we couldn’t get past £32,000. We bought some new questions and then Rick got a bit cocky and took too many chances. Great fun and great evening.

Saturday 18 May

Rain again, sometimes heavy. We said goodbye to Wilfred and Debbie who were off to stay with a couple in the French town they were twinned with and then onto help their granddaughter celebrate her first birthday. Rick couldn’t help slip in a little something about the war but agreed that some

Germans especially Wilfred do have a sense of humour. Not sure that having our Sat Nav back is such a good thing as it sent us all over the place on our journey to Moissac. However, after somehow avoiding all the deviations because of the fair in the town we made it to the L'île de Bidounet campsite just before the next downpour.

