

FRANCE – March 2016

Monday 21 March



Views from the bedroom windows

We set off from Newhaven with Julie and a whole lots of bedding in the roof box all ready for the start of the season at the French house. Lovely smooth crossing, Julie and I even wandered around the deck. When we got on the ferry a migrant was being fingerprinted. There hasn't been a problem at Dieppe before but since our last visit in October razor wire has appeared and there were a few migrants hanging around the port, seeing them made us feel very sad.

Not too much damp at the house, the most being on the inside of our new front door which I hadn't put any sealant on. It got quite cold in the evening and even though Julie was very appreciative of the hot water bottle she still went to bed in leggings and half her wardrobe.

Tuesday 22 March



Julie was armed with her spray bleach as it's "*clean, sort and get rid of anything unnecessary day*". Gaby has a new router (code on notice board) with an internet speed to impress Rick. Henry the vacuum cleaner died again but it was saved from the tip by a bit of maintenance from Rick. He also put a new bottom in one of the kitchen drawers and shaved a lot off the new front door to enable it to be closed again.

It was a tragic day for Belgium as ISIS suicide bombers bombed the airport and metro.

We set off to Alencon in search of firewood and ended up ordering it from Chaleur Boisee in Carrouges, it was 165 euros for 3 stairs, his English was a

lot better than my French.

The house is warming up and Julie went to bed dressed in a few layers less than the previous night.



Wednesday 23 March

I don't know how Julie is getting away with it but she is somehow managing to get Rick to do jobs that aren't on his list. Today apart from fixing the back of the cupboard under the sink she thought that the bed in her room would be better under the window. It would enable open the door to open fully and it would give more space at the other end. Julie and Rick went into Carrouges to get the parts for the plug that had to be moved and were thoroughly entertained by the Indian in the shop that sells everything. I've mentioned this shop before as the alarm is a metal bucket attached to the door.



The wood arrived but we think he has short changed us, that is if a stair is a cubic metre. Julie cleaned out the broom cupboard and I put the first coat on the door and weed killer on the gravel. Julie and I went to the supermarket in Carrouges to change two gas bottles.

The garden is in good shape and Rick mowed the lawns which hadn't grown too much.

The house is warming up as Julie went to bed less another layer of clothing. She's really pleased with the new bedroom layout.



We bought a bag of pellets for 3 euros from Brico Depot to try out

Thursday 24 March



It was another grey, dull day. We were all set to have a day out at the Camembert factory but found its only open Friday to Sunday during March.

We surveyed the loft area trying to work out the best approach to take. It was cold up there and we had to thaw out afterwards by the fire. We had a very nice lunch at the Logis Hotel near Ciral after which we took Julie to the Antiques/Reclamation site near Radon, well worth a visit. Then it was tree cutting, bonfire and putting a clothesline up - once again non of the jobs on the planned list but never mind, all good fun. The wood was too green and wouldn't burn, a job for next time. Julie and I battled with the boundary briars and Rick dug a hole ready for the arrival of the Pauls Himalayan Blue Musk rambling rose.



Julie thinks Rick might have cured her of chocolate. He said "it's not a meal, it's a taster" , since then she has not gorged on chocolate.

Friday 25 March

Julie has been sporting a bruise on her chin from gardening at home and I have a big scratch on my nose from Lydia, both our injuries are looking better but today I have had to pick out the thorns from yesterday's pruning.



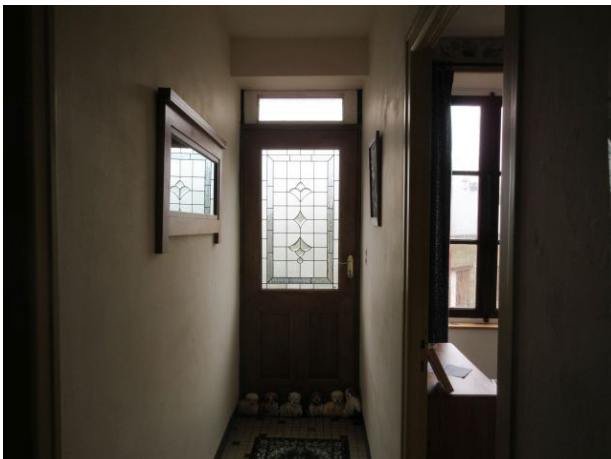
Sawing the end of the lamb so it would fit in the Slow Cooker - Washing flapping on our new line

Rick had to rewire the plug in Julie's bedroom as when she put the heater on it blew the circuit. During the night Rick came up with the idea of bringing the services up to the loft by the corner of the stairs. He is coming up with his plans to initially build the landing area and this afternoon we went to Brico Depot to price up some materials. It's strange that being Good Friday the shops and schools here are open. They had pens of live chickens, chicks, rabbits and ducks in the foyer of Le Clerc and there were loads of Easter eggs for sale.

Roast lamb in the slow cooker, very nice. Then followed a huge discussion, or should I say argument about Rick's obsession with hot plates and the percentage of people retiring to the West Country. I didn't dare mention that he must have a cushion on his chair and he likes to drink out of a bone china mug. This was after Rick said that we were doing his head in - talk, talk, talking all the time, both at the same time and getting louder and louder - he needs a bit of space.

By now Julie is able to go to bed in normal bed attire plus a dressing gown.

Saturday 26 March



We left the house in pouring rain and Julie will be on her own until Alex, Rachael and her Mum arrive Sunday about 6pm. I'm a bit worried about leaving her as her phone doesn't work but she can communicate by messenger and email. It's been a good break even though we don't seem to have achieved much but there has been a lot of planning for the loft. We are all very pleased with the new door as it lets in a lot of light into the hall and we would also like to change the kitchen door. Rick says he's been rushed off his feet carrying out orders from both Julie and myself!

Happy Easter to you all.

Sunday

Home safely late last night. There were more policemen than migrants at the port and the security was upped quite a bit. I was starting to get a bit worried as I hadn't heard from Julie even though we had sent her quite a few messages. She was there on her own without a phone, car and even worse - no chocolate!

Just heard, she's still alive but after we left the weather went bananas. Very stormy, thunder, lightening and heavy rain which went on until late in the evening. She even lost the television signal for a while. Water was coming in under the kitchen door and being blown quite a way into the kitchen. Maybe it is a good idea to replace the kitchen door. At least she has been kept busy even if it is fighting the elements.