

France – September 2016

29/30 August 2016

Got a night crossing with cabin for £217 but had to rise at 3.30 am and travel through thick fog in the dark to reach St Ellier. First time ever that we have opened the house door and been hit by the heat.

Its been a great year here as the rest of the family have started to enjoy it:

Julie joined us in March

Alex, Rachael and Anne came to stay on with Julie after we left

George, Caroline, Rachel, Matt and Matt's mum in June

Philippa, Glenn, Liam, Jack and Keiran in July

Paul, Kate, Ivan, Elsie, Chris and Sally in August

Philippa and Paul hadn't visited the house again since we purchased it in 1995.

I expect everyone is hoping that we are going to make a start on the loft area but after the great success of the new door above the steps and Julie witnessing how the rain floods into the kitchen we have decided to change the kitchen door. Also, when we came in March Rick didn't get to finish off the jobs in the lounge as somehow Julie managed to get him to do jobs that weren't on the list. . Once the fog cleared the sun came out and it was very hot. The old door is 8cms shorter than the new one.

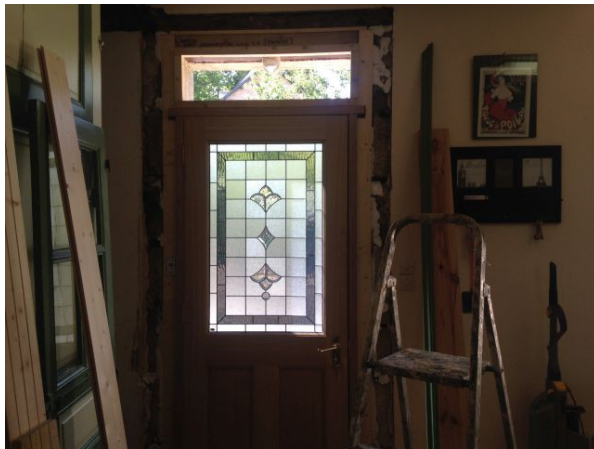
I spent hours weeding the gravel while Rick made a start on the new door.



The Presbytere opposite is up for sale, it needs a complete refurb. The bees there are still buzzing madly. It could be a really beautiful house but as it is facing the wrong way you can take full advantage of the wonderful views. Julie and I had a bargain at the last opening day of the BHS in Chichester, 2 headboards for £10 each. Unfortunately, the one for the smaller bedroom will have to be saved for the proposed loft bedroom as it fitted at the bottom but splayed out at the sides. Roast beef cooked in our multi electric cooker accompanied by a wonderful Mas Malbec.

Wednesday 31 August

I'm fighting a sore throat which seems to ease a little during the day. Another baking hot day and a successful trip to Carrouges. We caught the tail end of the market and discovered the Charcuterie where we bought some tomatoes stuffed with pork and covered in cheese – yum, yum. Half of the town appears to be up for sale.



I started on the garden opposite clearing the briar's and edges. George and Caroline had made a sort of hedge on the self seeded hazelnut trees which has given us some privacy. Rick spent all day taking the door on and off, on and off, on and off and so on.

Had lovely bbq on Paul's barbie. Very tired.

Thursday 1 September



Rick occupied himself sorting out the window above the new door and filling in the sides. I had a very prickly day {loads of briars} sorting out the verges between the trees on the boundary. Very hot day, Scratched to pieces, looks like I've got a bad case of self harming. Rick said he must temporarily board up the window above the kitchen door to stop the bats and swallows coming in. What a load of rubbish he talks. However, that very evening a big bat flew down from the loft and did a few circuits of the lounge. Still very hot.

Friday 2 September



Trip to Alencon to get some architrave and a extra few bits plus a visit to the Le Clerc. Found the MAS wine there which is under 4 euros a bottle and good enough to serve at a dinner party. Rick built the window above the new kitchen door. Filling in and staining day. During lunch a swallow flew though the open window above the kitchen door. Perhaps Rick was right after all. The Commune Gardener has got very friendly with Rick and keeps stopping to say hello. Rick was having a quiet pee by the motorhome (very French) when he stopped to say hello. I haven't got around to sewing on the button on his shorts and in the panic another button flew off, Rick had to somehow manage to shake hands without them falling down. Then tonight I am sitting on the loo with the door open and a great big bat flew pass and into our bedroom. I got into a terrible panic and somehow managed to open the bedroom window, turn off the light and close the door. Had to wait until Rick got back from getting his emails for him to check if it had flown out. Very scary. Very hot still. Then as we went to bed we had to race around trying to swat a couple of bees that had got through the open window. Satisfied that we had done away with them,. although very apprehensive that we might tread on them , we are then attacked by a huge moth.

Saturday 3 September



Rick fitted a rain deflector onto the kitchen door so we should now be watertight. He then spent the rest of the day getting the door to the cellar stairs to be draft proof and fit properly. The piece of wood that the cellar and kitchen door was attached to is completely rotten. He's a bit disillusioned today as everything is taking much longer than expected. I think he has had enough of doors. The spare lounge floor boards have really come in handy to saw up and saved us another trip to Alencon. He finally got his reward as conditions were right for the bonfire. I had doubled the original size with all my briars, clearing and weeds. Some teenagers got the communal hose out, not sure if they were doing the village watering today or were worried about our bonfire. There were quite a few children playing near the church again, they really have brought the village back to life. Entertained by the first night of this years Strictly Come Dancing and some more wine.

Sunday 4 September



First dull day with a few light showers. Rick finished fitting the cupboard door above the cellar door and new skirting board by the back door. After a quick visit to Carrouges he made a rain deflector and started building the window above the new hallway door. Its all doors here !!! He's running out of bits of wood, having used up all the spare lounge floorboards and made inroads into the props we used for the lounge ceiling.

I gave the new kitchen door its first coat of colour – it looks brilliant.

Drizzly rain all day to match our mood. My throat was sore again. Rick ate and drank everything in sight; he is definitely in refueling mode. While he was sleeping off his excesses I enjoyed the first episode of the new series of Poldark. A very satisfying end to a fairly productive day.

Monday 5 September

Drizzly rain again which wasn't forecast and husky voice but feel okay. Very sad news is that our neighbour Pauline passed away last Thursday.

Trip to Mr Bricolage to get glass for top of kitchen door. There is a two week wait for frosted glass so we had to settle for clear with a stick on pattern. It sounds terrible but doesn't look too bad, if we left it plain the men from the house behind our garden might be able to see into the kitchen. The beading we bought is too narrow – ugh! Rick then had another go on the window above the hall door and of course everything that he did yesterday had to come out and it was start again and again. The ceiling above then fell apart! Meantime I am busy staining and painting and generally trying to keep things a bit tidy. Decided to give that up until Rick has finished his woodworking, he's sawing everything in sight.



Tuesday 6 September

Rick went to M Bricolarge on his own to get another piece of glass and more wood. Meanwhile I was busy putting another coat of wood stain on both doors, the bathroom window and touching up odd bits. A bit of a finishing off jobs day. Drinks with and good gossip with Sue and Martin who had just returned from their trip to the south. Beef Bourguignon for supper.



The finished door



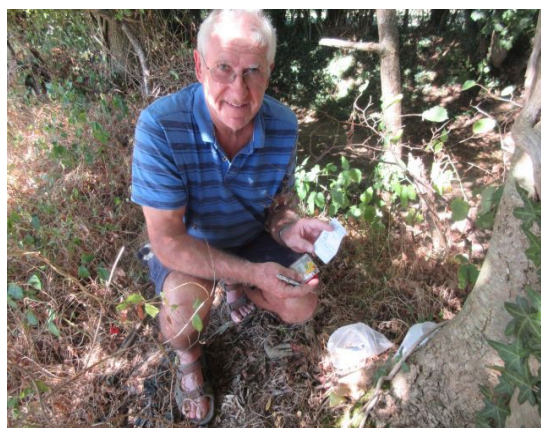
Neighbours lovely flowers

Wednesday 7 September



Rick spent ages trying to fix the hedge cutter while I had a clear out in the cellar.

George and Caroline had put us onto Geo-Chaching and we had found a few when holidaying on the Isle of Wight with Hector, Edwyn and Anne. Rick and the boys had also found quite a few in Hove and Lancing. In one of the caches they found a special badge called “Hugo” who wants to travel to the Eiffel Tower, New York, Sydney and Table Mountain. That afternoon we left Hugo in the cache near Carrouges Chateau. We then drove to St Denis Sarthon and cycled uphill to find one more but unfortunately we gave up looking for the next one as it was baking hot and involved more uphill treks.



Gaby invited all the local village children to come and cool off in her splash pool. Sue and Martin came round for drinks and another gossip. Having been at the house much longer than expected we decided to make an early start tomorrow and get as far as we can.

Reading through my diary, it sounds a bit boring but there is only so much you can say about doors and I must say we will be pleased to see the back of them for a while. However, it has been very worthwhile as they both look good we should be much more watertight in the future.

Saturday 10 September

Rick has had an email to say that someone has retrieved the “Hugo” from the Château at Carrouges. He's been internet racing in UK during day and Australia during the night. Bet Fair have mislaid some of his money that he put into his Australian wallet (put in, that means he's not winning) so a few phone calls are needed to sort that one out! He says that isn't true, he has to transfer money from his UK balance to Australia and back again each day. As from September 22 this process will be automatic. Ummm!

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