

FRENCH HOUSE

September/October 2017

Friday 29 September

We can't wait to get back to the French loft (are we mad). Took the 17.30 ferry from Newhaven and arrived in Saint Ellier about 1am. Bit scary driving through the forest that time of night/morning should we hit a deer. Surprising number of cars too.

Saturday 30 September

First stop Point P to check out their plywood that we need to level the floor before we lay the vinyl and carpet tiles. We can't work out why its so expensive but finally settled for the 5mm from Brico Depot. Rick was very excited as the Le Clerc wine festival was on. It was 2pm before we got back to the house and we were feeling weary. If we want to keep the stone walls in the bathroom we need to do something about them before the floor goes down. Some years ago Don had made a start on chipping out the loose mortar. It's quite a job as its difficult to know how far to go, it's all a bit crumbly. Didn't think I'd be able to do it but I did quite well. In the meantime a very disappointed and tired Rick, who thought he would have a nice job wiring up the lights, found that that the supply box in the new bedroom was linked to the lounge lights. Oh dear, late trip to Brico Depot to buy more cable to run another feed through. Caught up with Don and Helen who had nearly reached Bordeaux on their river boat.

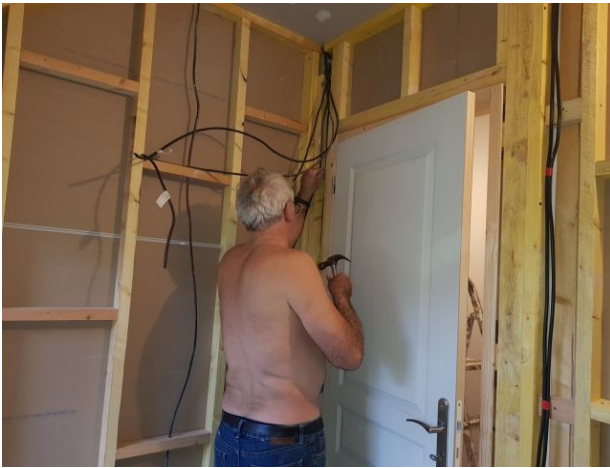
Sunday 1 October

I finished off chipping out the mortar and followed that by applying two coats of PVA. Then started the filling- in (did a bit in the kitchen too). Success at last for Rick, lights working in the new bedroom and bathroom.



Monday 2 October

Had a brief respite from the never ending rain. Rick's had a good day, his two way lights for the landing are working and power sockets are all go. Bad day for me, I'm not going to win any prizes for my filling in. Rick stepped in but it may have put us a day behind. It's a bit of a chicken and egg situation – we want to install the toilet, shower etc but before that we need to lay the vinyl tiles, before that we need to lay the plywood to level the floor and before that the electrics, sort the stone wall, the filling-in and painting the ceiling. Getting worried that two weeks won't be enough time. Planted wild fuchsias in front of lounge as the ones I planted out the other side of the house are doing okay.



Tuesday 3 October

Spent the morning plasterboarding one of the bathroom walls, it's time consuming and tricky getting around beams etc. More filling in the plasterboard and rubbing down. Gosh it doesn't sound much but we were working all day. It didn't rain, **it didn't rain all day** so I managed to almost get the washing dry, there was a dust sheet that had been out on the line since day one. This is the boring stage, such a lot of background work but nothing to show for it. A man is working on the vicarage opposite and staying in the caravan in the garden. It was very difficult to stay awake for the last of Dr Foster, 10 pm French time, but the no drinking evening almost did it.



Wednesday 4 October

Big sanding session on bathroom ceiling, followed by a coat of PVA and a couple of coats of emulsion. Getting somewhere at last. Put up some more plasterboard and Rick did a bit of plumbing. Duck breasts for lunch. Decided to plasterboard the back wall, it's a shame to cover up the stone but we think it will look better and brighter. My arm still aches from all the chipping out. There's still the new bedroom stone walls to do but it's very time consuming and we are always on a limited time schedule. The side wall will still be exposed adding character and is not so overpowering in a small room. Late visit to Brico Depot for plumbing parts and Le Clerc for top up supplies. Very difficult getting the right plumbing parts here and some bits are very expensive compared to home.



Positioning the shower and toilet

Thursday 5 October

Another coat on the ceiling while Rick put up the studwork on the back wall. He was feeling a little disillusioned as we thought we would come over this time, put down the plywood floor, lay the vinyl tiles and install the sanitary ware. Here we are nearly a week later and still not ready to start on the floor even though we have worked long hours. However, after spending the afternoon working on the plumbing he is motivated again, Another trip need to Brico Depot for some copper pipe etc.

Friday 6 October

Left home for Brico Depot just after 7pm, great we managed to get the sink unit for 99 Euros. I cleaned out the garage to make room for the wood that is being delivered tomorrow. Rick worked on the plumbing. Getting a bit nearer to our objective so a bottle of Prosecco celebrate.



Saturday 7 October

I insulated the back wall. Rick found he had a few adjustments to make to yesterday's plumbing and then there was a further delay to our plasterboarding because he decided to put more of the plumbing bits behind it – really, really hope there won't be any leaks. Everything was hard going today as we were tired and not in sync, it took ages to finish off the plasterboarding. At one point I was nearly garotted as Rick was pushing against my throat while trying to push the board into the corner. Thought we would be experts by now but there never seems to be a straightforward piece, always needing to avoid beams, wiring, pipes and sloping eaves. Rick worked late as he was determined to getting the first coat of filler on. The wood delivery never happened.



Big excitement loads of Ford Capri's drove through . Rick asked if it was a rally and the man said “No, it's a Ford Capri”.



Rick dropped a piece of kitchen towel down waste pipe. He made a contraption that sucked it up from the garage 2 floors below

Sunday 8 October

Rick put the plywood on the bathroom floor and finished the filling -in. I painted one of the walls. While everything was drying we had the first free time this visit and it wasn't raining. We walked up the hill stopping at the Petit Maison to pick some walnuts. As the gate was open we had a look in the old forge. The grinding wheel used to sharpen the tools still turned, it's quite a big building but very old. Sue and Martin arrived.

Monday 9 October



Wow the best day so far. The bathroom vinyl tiles went down a treat. I spent most of the morning stacking the wood. Four stairs 214.55 euros, we misunderstood the price the other day. What backbreaking work that was, Got a couple of coats of paint on the rest of the bathroom and Rick fitted the toilet and sink.



Tuesday 10 October

We turned the water on in the loft – no leaks!!! However, the hot sink tap didn't work so Rick took it all apart and to cut a long story short an insect was blocking it. Morning gone. Installing the new shower took ages and ages, it was so complicated. When are we ever going to get an easy ride, I suppose the vinyl tiles were fairly easy to install but some of them are lifting off. Rick had the first shower and it was excellent but a very long way to reach the electric towel rail. Went to Pre en Pal to top up – a bit more expensive than Le Clerc.



Wednesday 11 October

Rick finished off the two way landing switch in the lounge and installed the electric towel rail. We went to Brico Depot to source wood for the boxing in and skirting board. Rick gave himself a treat by visiting the wine festival. I took some biscuits to Christiana to thank her for keeping the grass cut for us. She showed me around her house and we had a long chat especially about Brexit. Had a great evening with Martin and Sue who came round for roast beef and vegetable lasagne. Have quite a few empties to take up the hill tomorrow.

Thursday 12 October



Once again - the morning after the night before. All quiet next door too!

It's good to be able to take things a little more slowly today – a chance to finish of a few jobs and mow the lawn. The climbing rose has really taken off.

Sue told us about a second-hand furniture place run by Prisoners behind the University at Alencon. It's called Emmius and is open Monday and Wednesday 2pm – 5.30pm and Saturdays 10am – 12pm and 2pm until 5.30pm.

We need to look out for something like the porch below that would protect the door above the steps.



Friday 13 October



Set off early as we wanted to have lunch out and a more relaxed journey to Dieppe. There are a series of loupes in the River Seine near Rouen and we took the free ferry at Bac De La Bouille to Sahurs. Then stopped for lunch in the pretty town of Broglie where I had the most disgusting lunch. Asked for sausage and chips but given Andouillette, a course-grained sausage made with intestines, tripe and chitterings, ughhhh!



Sunday 15 October – 20 October

The New Bedroom



We had a week in May at the house running the utilities up to the loft and then a 3 week stint followed shortly by another 2 weeks, that's 6 weeks in the loft. We're ready for a bit of fresh air but so very pleased with the results. Don and Helen returned from their Mosaic to Bordeaux boat trip and spent a few more days in the loft. Wow, we know they are younger than us but they just whizzed through the job list. Back again early Spring to finish off !