

FRENCH HOUSE

April 2018

I've just got Rick to check this and OMG it's so boring ! I've been overindulging in news and have completely lost my sense of humour. Just look at the pictures and the rest is really for our info.

Monday 16 April

Picked up Julie for the 10am Newhaven ferry on a glorious day after weeks of rain. Teresa May due to have a hard time in Parliament after the Syrian attack on chemical weapons factories. We were fairly quick settling in, not too much damp mainly the kitchen door which was tight and needed planing down. Rick bought an Induction Hob at home so we had loads of saucepans and frying pans we could no longer use, so many pans, what a choice! Julie was very impressed with the new bedroom and bathroom. Still unsure whether to plasterboard the back wall as Don and Helen had made such a good job of the wall they had done it seems a shame to cover it up.



Tuesday 17 April



Decision made, it's going to take too long to chip out and grout the back wall. Trip to Alencon for materials and supplies. The kitchen fire has been doing strange things, every now and again it fills the house with smoke, so much so that Rick thought he was drinking ground coffee but it was bits of ash. We cleaned the chimney with the new set of rods and loads of sticks came down. Rick has a new apprentice but the first full day is always difficult as there is a lot of thought needed. The new family including dog are staying at the vicarage, not too sure about their choice of white plastic windows. The weed killer has done a great job and I got the garden up together in no time. It was such a lovely warm day that I washed and set up the garden chairs and tables.

Wednesday 18 April

Got up to 26 on the weather app. The rubbish bins up the hill have been replaced by new plastic and stainless bins and moved to a new hard standing opposite the original site. Busy day indoors, I started redecorating the bigger bedroom as it was full of cracks and looking tired. Julie and Rick finished the stud work on the back bedroom wall. We thought another trip to Alencon was required as we were short of wood. However, we didn't have to resort to sawing up the furniture but Rick was literally down to his last screw. Roast chicken supper outside.



Thursday 19 April

There were lots of bird noises coming from the chimney again. Busy, busy day for all of us, unfortunately another trip to Alencon because we ran out of insulation. We investigated buying a new double bed for the small bedroom but the slatted versions they seem keen on didn't look strong enough, the mattresses and bases were all priced separately making them too expensive. We have decided to source one at home but it will have to be able to fit it into the motorhome.



I finished off the decorating in the main bedroom downstairs. Rick and Julie almost completed the

plasterboarding in the new bedroom but tiredness took over. As we had fantastic weather once again we were able to eat our chicken supper outside. It was the hottest April day at home since 1949 reaching 27 degrees.

Friday 20 April

Big excitement as the French family's workman opposite came out all dressed up with rubber gloves and his head covered in a bin liner to smoke out the bees. I think they are going to have to repeat this a few times before the bees get the message. The new family who have two florist shops in Paris are holidaying with their 14 year old son, 12 year old daughter and 5 year old granddaughter.



Rick and Julie finished off the plasterboarding which was given its first coat of filler.

We popped into Carrouges to replace the gas bottle and get some bread. There are a few changes there, all good. The Indian supermarket has reopened, a new modern Tabac has opened on the corner of the square and the hotel has been taken over by Logis. We bought some excellent turkey and beef kebabs from the Charcuterie for our barbecue. Once again it was fantastic weather with a warm evening to enjoy our first barbecue of the year.



Reserve a table at the Logis Hotel for Saturday night



or lunch at L'Annexe

Saturday 21 April

Started the morning off by watching the rooks dropping sticks down our chimney. The fireplace is once again full of twigs, some quite big. Day spent rubbing down, filling in and applying the first coat of paint. Rick cemented the sides and bottom of the exposed stone walls.

In the morning we visited Emmaus, a second hand depot run by prisoners. Generally we thought they were quite expensive but nearly succumbed to a table tennis table for 50 euros but changed our mind when they tried to erect it.

We so enjoyed our barbecue last evening that we repeated it today. It nearly didn't happen though as the glorious weather was broken by a thunderstorm. **Warning- the loft skylights were open beyond horizontal and the rain flooded into the loft.**



Naughty Birdies



Knackered Ping Pong Table

Sunday 22 April

Lots of morning bird activity especially on our chimney. Hard to believe how many more sticks have arrived in the fireplace.

More rubbing down, filling-in and second coat of paint to bedroom and landing. Skirting stained and fitted in bedroom along with the architrave. Gaby stopped by and gave us the tragic news that Benoir, who had been in a bad place for a while, hung himself a couple of months ago. The new family opposite have bought another house in the village that they are going to convert into a gite. We've all not been sleeping that well. I told Julie we were reluctant to open the bedroom window because of the bees and bats. This put the wind up her as she was already battling with the ants, so much so that she spent Saturday night on the sofa.



Monday 23 April

Much cooler today but more comfortable. More bird watching, a bluetit managed to squeezed itself into the tiniest of holes in the outside wall opposite and a bee went into a minute stone hole inside the new bedroom. The rooks are still determined to build a nest in our chimney. Julie was in charge of staining and made a fantastic job of scraping all the green mould from outside lounge windows. Architrave and skirting completed on landing and bedroom floor and landing covered in plywood.

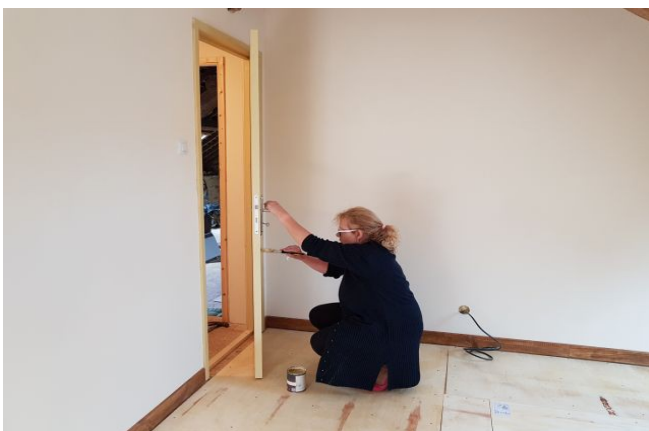


Tuesday 24 April



Can you believe it, the pavements are actually being jetted – what a difference!

Trip to Alencon for bathroom skirting, double sided tape for carpet tiles and top up on food and wine. Rick made a good start on the carpet tiles, Julie stained one of the loft windows and started painting the doors. I potted up the geraniums. The Paris family opposite showed us around their house, for the time being they are going to use it as a holiday home but hope to live there permanently in three years time. Their 14 year old son Paul who sings with the Paris Youth Opera sang to us. The husband is from a French Island near Madagascar and was particularly interested in our plumbing and acro props that are holding up the kitchen floor. He offered to lend us his cement mixer. Julie and I took some chocolates to Christiana to thank her for mowing our lawn. She likes to be called Liz, funny how the French seem so interested in our Royal family. She's a bit disillusioned with Macon who is visiting Trump at the moment and thinks too much attention is being paid to his wife's appearance. Night of the mussels.



Wednesday 25 April

I'm writing this up on the Thursday and its difficult to remember what happened. Rick had an upset stomach from the mussels. He found the carpet tiles very difficult to cut and unfortunately we didn't have enough. Very exciting though as we moved the bed and furniture from the small bedroom into the new bedroom. I think it rained but dried up enough for Rick to mow the lawn. Prince Louis born.



Thursday 26 April

Much better day for Rick as he finished off the plugs in the bedroom, wired in the new bathroom towel rail, sorted out the architrave in the bathroom, put up the chandelier in the bedroom and landing and did a bit of skirting in the bathroom. He also put a socket in the loft area. We washed the net curtains, painted some of the doors and architrave on the landing and painted the ceiling and walls of the small bedroom. Julie carried on staining windows and we painted the small bedroom walls and ceiling white. We also freshened up the hall ceiling by painting it white. The village has come to life with the sound of children playing.



Friday 27 April



Julie carried on staining to include the attic windows. I gave the hall ceiling a second coat. Rick fitted the spotlights and mirror light in the new bathroom, finished where the carpet tiles meet the top stair and also gave the lawn a second mow.



Rick's ingenious tool to fix the carpet at the top of the stairs - he wore the skin away from his fingers.

We took a little time out



The van is full of crates of baby chickens and turkeys.



Visited the lovely village of St Marguerite de Carrouges

Lack of materials and time meant that there are still a few outstanding jobs to do on our next visit which is only six weeks away. However, Julie was a great help and we decorated the two bedrooms, painted the hall ceiling, stained all the outside windows apart from the two bedroom ones – all additional to the proposed job list.

The neighbours fix for the bees didn't work. I gave them the contact details of the bee keeper that Sue and Martin used but they shocked us by spraying something into the hole and blocking it off. Since our return we were watching *Return to the Châteaux DIY* where they dealt with their bee problem in the same way – must be the French way.

George and Caroline are next to visit followed by Don and Helen on their way to the boat. We will arrive in our motorhome, hopefully with a double bed on board, just as they leave. Things are really looking up at La Maison Kirk.