

FRANCE

July 2018

Friday 6 July

We're in the middle of a heatwave, the World Cup, Wimbledon, British Grand Prix and the Tour de France. It's only 11 days since we returned from France and just under 3 weeks since Rick had his perforated appendix operation at the Argentan hospital. The motorhome is fully loaded with bikes, a wardrobe, cot, stool and various other things for the house. We've even asked Mike and Thyra to bring the bag of lime cement and the spare buggy with them when they visit us on Monday. Julie is coming with us for a few nights. Unfortunately, Rick's bad back returned this week and as he thinks he has food poisoning he booked a cabin on the ferry to enable him to have full, private access for his frequent trips the toilet.



Rick armed with toilet roll on route to house



The family opposite us are staying for 3 weeks, big excitement as they have a splash pool but the mother is on crutches with a broken ankle. Isabelle was very concerned that some passing gypsies had stolen the wicker basket that we put outside because it was riddled with woodworm. She showed us all the flowers in the church that the family opposite donated. Although Rick hadn't eaten anything since breakfast on the ferry he still had stomach pains and urgent toilet trips. He didn't have a temperature but Julie and I were worried that it may be connected to his operation. We decided that if it wasn't any better tomorrow he would see a doctor. It seemed like a repetition of the week leading up to his appendix operation.

Saturday 7 July





Carpet burns from putting together the wardrobe and baby bed – worth the effort though

Another day worrying about Rick's stomach problem, he wouldn't see a doctor. Watched England v Sweden in the quarter final – brilliant result, everyone is in love with Gareth Southgate. The village annual fete was held on the football field. Its the first time we've been and we sat next to a young couple from Brighton who have bought a place in Lignieres-Orgeres. They came along with Geoffrey the retired school teacher who after consuming 3 bottles of wine wet himself. It was a really great evening, haven't danced so much for ages.



Sunday 8 July

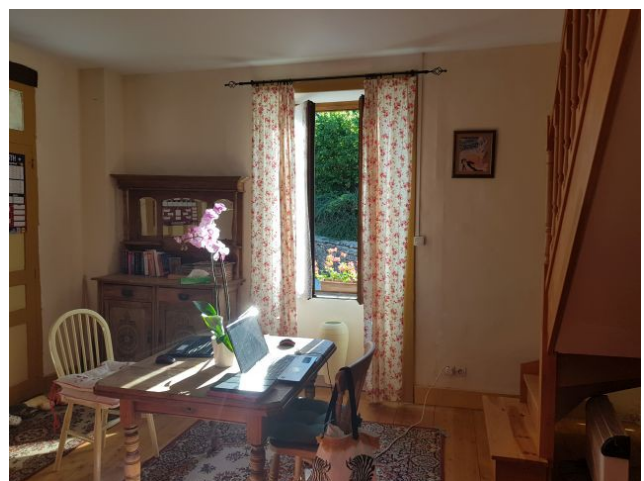
Rick is cured but just in case he is only drinking water and eating yoghurt, bread and bananas. He's blaming it on food poisoning, the dodgy duck we had. Julie and I went to the special service in the church next to us. It was hard going and very long especially when feeling a little delicate after last night's celebrations. We couldn't cope with the drinks in the car park afterwards.



Late afternoon we set off in the motorhome to try and find where the English couple lived. Wasn't successful so we drove on to the the leisure lake at Ferte Mace.



The amazing wasp nest



Sunshine in the lounge

Monday 9 July

Busy day for jobs, cut the grass, made a headboard and finished off the carpet tiles. Big day in politics, Boris and David Davis have now resigned as they don't like Theresa May's Chequers Brexit. Mike and Thyra had a difficult journey to St Ellier as the Newhaven cable holding ramp snapped and the ferry was cancelled so they had to go from Dover. Rick discovered a big wasp nest on the garage door and sprayed it with some killer stuff that we got from the Carrouges Agricol.

Tuesday 10 July



Rick still trying to connect up on the old Ariel



Fun at the Château

A proper holiday day starting at the Carrouges Château. We were greeted by a wonderful smell coming from avenues of Tilia Americana (American Basswood) trees. They smell a bit like orange blossom, honeysuckle and sometimes polish. We followed this with a picnic lunch at the Ferte Mace lake. Onto Bagnoles, such a lovely Casino town and much bigger than I remembered. Too tired for a game of boules but we had a tasty barbeque instead.



Fascinating Nicolas Henry exhibition at the Château



7 km cycle along the old railway line - exhausting

Wednesday 11 July

Mike and Thyra left for Ile de Re and we drove to Caen to take Julie to the ferry. We parked just outside the ferry terminal parallel to the car park. After saying goodbye to Julie and driving about 3 miles Rick said that the garage/storage door had come open and was flapping about. We stopped in the next supermarket car park for Rick to sort it out. He said it looked okay and locked it again. As we were going along we jokingly said perhaps when we stop we should check for migrants. In all the years we have had the house we have never visited Falaise and thought it would this be a good opportunity. When we reached the castle I jumped out and Rick called out that there wasn't anyone in the bathroom. When I heard what I thought was him speaking to someone I went in and peered into the storage area underneath the mattress. It all seemed in order but then I spotted what I thought were some red shoes and asked Rick what they were. Suddenly it clicked that they were attached to a black man curled up behind the barbecue. I screamed and shot out into the car park. I could see Rick giving him a drink and showing him where he was on the map. When I calmed

down I went in, he said that he was from Sudan and that he got to Italy by boat and then took a train to Caen about two weeks ago. He apologised for frightening me, we didn't know what to do with him so Rick said he would drive him back to Caen. We couldn't put him back under the bed so he sat in the seat behind me. He seemed nice but these people are desperate and he could have had a knife or he could have robbed us. I insisted Rick drop him off a little way from the port and in a public place. We said goodbye to him in a garage forecourt where just the other side of the bank were many other lads like him. What a scary time, I felt quite sick with it.



So disappointing, we're out of the World Cup, England got beaten by Croatia 2 goals to 1, football is not coming home after all!

Thursday 12 July

Today we joined Mike and Thyra at the campsite in La Flotte, Ile de Re which is an island north of La Rochelle.

Sunday 15 July

Back at the house after falling in love with the motorhome again. Lovely to see Sue and Martin arrive, they've put their house up for sale. Well done France for beating Croatia in the final of the Russian World Cup. We were at the house in 1998 when France last won and people came out of nowhere to dance in the street. That didn't happen this time, just a couple of cars went by displaying their flag and beeping their horns.

Monday 16 July



New dressing table and stool and TV now all set.

Canopy installed above door,

Going back home this afternoon so today spent clearing the loft and general cleaning.

Well its been a bit of an eventful few weeks in France what with Rick's appendix operation and our stowaway but we leave the house in good order to be enjoyed by all the family. I think we've reached our objective and anything extra from now on will be a bonus.

Check out: <http://www.chateau-saintpaterne.com/moments-gourmands> somewhere very special to eat or stay near Alençon.



Job List – July 2018

The new TV cable needs tacking to the roof

Cracks in the kitchen step filled with lime cement

Decided to have a wooden windowsill in new bathroom, trip to Brico Depot for extra piece of wood.

Finish skirting board in lounge

Pin skirting board in new bathroom

Fit mirror bottom of stairs – Rick is making a fix for this

Wire mesh in loft eaves to keep birds out.

Remind Gaby to get quote for bird shield on chimney

The vacuum cleaners are both knackered.

Rick not happy with the mower, he thinks the carburettor needs cleaning out. On the good side most of the jobs for this year are completed.