

France – October 2024

Tuesday 15 October 2024

This is it, our last visit to the French House as we hope to complete our sale on 5 November. We tried to get George and Julie to join us but Julie is about to have an op on her throat and George has a 70th birthday celebration Pigeon Shoot arranged. Met up with Don and Helen for breakfast on Brittany Ferries. Settled in and enjoyed Helen's chilli and chickpea curry.



Wednesday 16 October

I caught up with the gardening and Don mowed the lawn before it started raining again. I popped into see Lise who invited us to a classical concert in the church on Saturday. Rick and Don tried to chat with the village gardener but were met with a few grins and grunts. We had to get the chimney swept before we exchanged contracts as French chimneys have to be swept professionally twice a year and each time there is a new tenant. Our main chimney was condemned by the chimney sweep as it doesn't have a liner and the temporary registration plate was made of plasterboard. We were also told not to use the pellet stove as it hadn't been installed to regulations. We had a metal registration plate in the workshop but Don and Rick struggled trying to install it and decided to finish it off tomorrow. Helen and I went for a walk to pick some wild flowers. Rob and Julie joined us all for apéritifs and told us that Nicky and Micky's house up the hill had been broken into. Their wine stock was wiped out and they also lost some power tools. We've always been quite lazy leaving doors open when we go out. The only thing we have ever had stolen was a plant container. Supper tonight was ham with Don's chips which were a real treat. I fear sore heads tomorrow morning.



Thursday 17 October

Rick and Don were really pleased with their wood burner result. Helen and I started sorting out cupboards and stuff that could be thrown away. As we don't want to take anything back home with us part of the sale agreement is that the contents of the house are included. Had lunch at Loggis hotel, we all had steak apart from Rick who had a **disgusting** black pudding sausage. Got nostalgic going through my early French House dairies. Lots were missing from our website. We always remember the first visit when we all went with the children in our campers and caravans. Lots of long lunches at Martines cafe opposite, they were great days. When we first went the Épicière was open and we would be served by Monique's mother who was 90. It was just like going back 50 years as everything was out of date. In fact it's still a bit like that as the children play out racing up and down the hilly, village roads with their go-carts and bikes. There used to be a cafe in the same building as the Epiciere, also there was a Boulanger and an Electricians shop. The electrician used to store all his stuff in our Granary. No shops, bakers or cafes in the village now. During those early years we could get a good meal in Carrouges at Madame Vidu's or at one of the two hotels, all shut now. Sadly it's much the same in all the surrounding villages. This evening Don and Helen introduced us to Rummikub, a great game.



Friday 18 October

Don and Helen visited the very pretty village of Fontaine-Daniel where they had a vegan lunch (Rick has a problem with vegans). They weren't overly impressed with Mayenne and on the way back they stopped for a photo opportunity at Le Chateau Motte, Dick and Angel's home .



Meantime Rick and I visited the little zoo in the forest towards Sees. We were the only ones there and really loved it. I even had a go on the zip wire. Later I was trying to take off my nail varnish when Don surprised me by producing a big bottle of Acetone, he uses it for everything. He keeps surprising me, he even has a manbag! We were very pleased that our buyers Chloe and Jean-Luis had asked to meet us. Our agent Annabelle had Covid so Gaby came round to help translate. They were so nice, he is a Draughtsman and she's an Illustrator with a son at University. They fell in love with the house and as they work from home are going to convert the attic into a studio. Bolognaise, Rummikub and lots of discussion about Rick's phobias.



Saturday 19 October

We said goodbye to Don and Helen and set off to visit the Chateau at Lassey-les-Chateaux. It appears we aren't pronouncing words ending in "eau" correctly, I'm getting frustrated with my inability to make myself understood. It absolutely poured down, the streets were like rivers and we got completely soaked. We had to abandon the visit and try to dry out in the car. It was torrential rain but we dried out enough to have lunch at the Loggis. The car was covered in mud and our jeans had to be dried out on the rack above the wood burner. Lise was disappointed with the turnout for the classical concert, it was good, Rick even kept awake.



Don enjoying his whelks

Sunday 20 October

Found that there was box for used materials in Carrouges where we could put some of our linen. It was useful to have the extra day to do odd jobs and sort out the missing website diaries. Very sad to say goodbye to Lise, hopefully it will just be Au revoir and we will keep in touch by email. Spent some time with Gaby, she has been such a great help to us all, especially letting us use her internet and being such a support when

Rick had his appendix out. She reminded us of the time when Rick got locked in the church while doing his internet betting. Enjoyed playing the old cd's, couldn't get quite a few of them to play but enjoyed the ones that did. We even had a dance to Edith Piaf! Great news, on our final day we met Nicky and Micky from up the hill. They came round for aperitifs and we thought they were great. They are a similar age to what we were when we first bought the house. They have lots of exciting plans for their house and hopefully in a couple of years' time we will come to a village lunch and catch up with everyone.



Monday 21 October

We're going to be busy when we get home as Jen moves to Hill Grove on Friday. We have all eaten very well here and have had another fried breakfast courtesy of Don and Helen. Went to the cider factory to buy some rose cider which would make a nice refreshing summer tipple. It was busy there with tractors and people delivering apples. Said our "au revoir" not goodbyes to Rob and Julie. As we were leaving an épicerie van turned up at the church selling bread, vegetables and even meat. This is a new for the village and hopefully it will be successful.



I thought I was going to be okay leaving the house for the last time but Monique came to her door as we were leaving, she wanted a hug and started crying. It now seems very real. We've had the house for 28 years, its been a great adventure. The best part for us was converting part of the loft to a bedroom and bathroom . It's a shame Douglas wasn't able to see it as it was his dream but fortunately his family have been able to enjoy it. Lots of memories for us all.

