

FRENCH MOTORHOME DIARY – SEPTEMBER 2016

Thursday 8 September

Drove 467 miles towards Avignon, the final hour being a great strain on our heart and relationship. The Aire that we had earmarked at St Desirat in the Rhone Alps didn't seem to be there so we consulted the Tom Tom for the nearest campsite. It took us on a horrendous journey through gorges, across ravines, bridges and roads with inches to spare, through a tiny completely renovated hamlet, up a mountainous track to the campsite. It looked absolutely wonderful but we were told that it closed yesterday. The owner could see that we were very hot, tired and frustrated but she didn't let us stay. She said that the Tom Tom nearly always sends people the difficult route but we could take a more direct, easier way to another site near Vion (19 euros) which was about 30 minutes away.



I've never seen so many butterflies

Friday 9 September

It was a two hour journey on a very busy motorway today, altogether we have spent 83.10 euros about £67 on tolls. We were now in Provence where there were fields and fields of fruit. Stopped at L'Isle sur la Sorgue, home to the largest flea market in France. It has a fantastic market every Sunday and Thursday with stalls overflowing with fruit, fresh walnuts, olives and apparently men in aprons slicing hunks from giant wheels of cheese. It was a shame we missed that but we did have a brilliant lunch by a canal.



We stayed at Camping des Sources just outside Gordes and spent a relaxing afternoon amongst the

olive trees and by the much appreciated swimming pool.



Some bamboo gazebo's, first ones we've seen apart from ours.

Rick relaxing by Motorhome

Saturday 10 September

Rick has had an email that someone has retrieved the “Hugo” from the Château at Carrouges. He had to phone Bet Fair as they have lost the money he transferred last night to his Australian Wallet, He's been internet betting in UK during the day and Australia each night. We had a morning visit to one of the most beautiful towns in France and this time it really was. Gordes has been inhabited since Roman time.



Cooked sea bass and tomatoes in the motorhome underneath the stone city of Les Baux that sits precariously on a 245 metre rock. It was similar but smaller than Gordes. It has been inhabited since 6000 BC and in the Middle Ages was home to powerful feudal lords in Southern France.





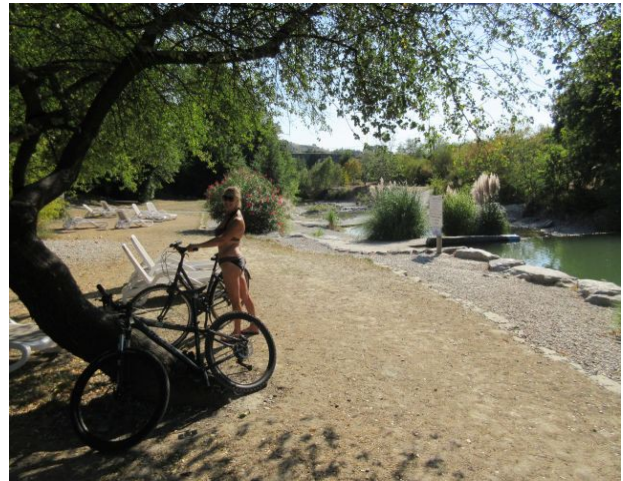
We just passed through the Roman town of St Remy de Provence as we had trouble parking. Stayed in St Martin de Crau (16 euros 30) which was very much a three star campsite however everything was operational and they did have a very good restaurant. There was a fete on in the town where almost every hobby, local clubs and sport were being represented.



Sunday 11 September

A relaxing two hour non motorway journey passing through Remoulins, Bagnois sur Ceze, Pont St Esprit, Viviers and stopping for lunch at the hilltop village of Alba la Romaine. Our site at St Jean le Centenier was just as the book described: parkland campsite with plenty of trees and bushes. It said we would enjoy the birds, the views, the relaxation, the river, walking, cycling and a new heated swimming pool. Actually, it was even better as the sun was shining, a welcome drink awaited us, there was hardly anyone there and the facilities were excellent.





First ever river swim

Monday 12 September

Once again took the scenic route in the Ardeche area travelling through Le Puy en Velay and Brioude to the Chateau de Grange Fort in Les Pradaeux which is in the Auvergne region . We travelled up, up and up the twisting roads and across a huge plateau surrounded by volcanoes then it was **downhill for 9kms**. There were miles and miles of just mountains and forests with nothing else, no houses, no people. The plateau was where all the agriculture took place but still hardly any signs of life. 9 kms is a very long way downhill. France has such a lot of land and such a lot of diverse scenery. I wonder why the migrants want to come to the UK when there is such a lot of space in France. Then we read in the news it is thought that 50% of migrants do actually want to stay in France.



Caught up with all the news at home, Don and Helen have been to Toulouse and have put an offer in for a canal boat which sounds very exciting.

Tuesday 13 September

Set off at a reasonable time as we had planned the journey the night before. We headed towards Clermont which is a huge industrial city set in the valley and then drove through Chamalieres, Pontgibaud, Pontaumur and stopped for lunch in Aubusson. The roads were good and the scenery pleasant but nothing spectacular. Aubusson looked an interesting town but it was too hot to hang about, so after a huge lunch we thought we would head straight for Camping La Perle in Fourneaux. The last few sites with swimming pools have spoilt us and we were a little disappointed with La Perle. The pool was closed for the season and only the terraces were available which were close

together with a lot of road noise. They did have an “A la Carte” restaurant but we were full from our enormous lunch. We seriously thought of moving on even though we had paid 27 euros but decided to make the best of it. Rick bought a second hand bike at Ford Market which he is not too sure about. The other day he had to adjust the brakes and now he has a slow puncture and he thinks its too small for him. We decided to do a bit of exploring on the bikes. It was a long cycle downhill to the river while all the time I was thinking we are going to have to go back up this. I moaned an awful lot especially when I had to push my bike up a steep rocky path. I didn't believe Rick when he said we would eventually get back to the main road. When we did the Tom Tom confused us by saying we were going in the wrong direction and it was another 4 kms. We ignored it and after cycling miles we did eventually get back to the campsite. Tomorrows forecast is rain and I admitted that I want to go back to the house. I have enjoyed Provence but it was a really long journey and we've already visited lots of the places on the route back to St Ellier. Perhaps I've been away long enough and want to go home now.

Wednesday 14 September

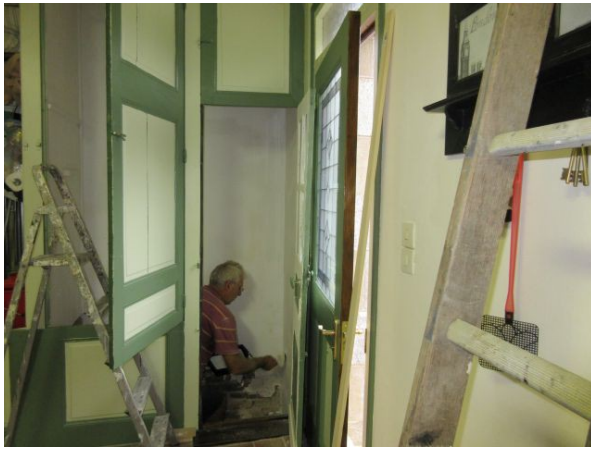
Early start, we are going home, that is our French home, its a long drive but worth it. The weather is on the change and rain is forecast today whereas at home there is weather breaking temperatures of around 30 degrees. It was great to get back to the house and Rick could become human again by having a shower, shave and new set of clothing. We were able to catch up with the Paralympics as it's just not the same hearing how many medals we have got. In so many ways its more inspiring than the main Olympics. We replanted the “Pauls Himalayan Musk rose”. English television and a comfy bed again.



Rick started to sort out the cellar ceiling and replanted the “Paul's Himalayan Musk” rose

Thursday 15 September

It was a wet morning and we an unexpected free day to just potter around and finish off a few jobs. Set off fairly early to Carrouges for the market but when we got there we found it wasn't on. We were both convinced it was Wednesday. Needed to buy a doorknob but the Indian shop that sells everything was closed as was the Charcuterie that we have been nurturing for my gluten free pates and foods. We found another Charcuterie/Bouchier that was actually open (yes there are two in Carrouges) and stopped at the bar for a coffee. We had time, the inclination and also the energy to finish off a few jobs.



Rick filled in the top part of the cellar stairs walls and we then painted them. However, the next morning most of the paint had fallen off.



Finished filling in and painting old loft hatch and under the new staircase



Had to refill all along the edge of the Church door and Rick put some insulation tape around the edge to stop the drafts.

So pleased we were able to go back to the house after our motorhome trip as it means we can have a

fresh start in 2017.

Last year's obsession was **stairs**
This year used by our heirs
In 2016 its been **doors**,
Which we find adoring
But you probably think very boring
However, next year it will be **utilities**
That will certainly improve our facilities

If I can stop Rick internet betting
Very soon you will all be getting
A proposed utility route to the loft