

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | TUESDAY, 11 JUNE 2013

A Mud Run

We felt we needed a change of pace so today was to be a slow one. It was slower than even we had intended.

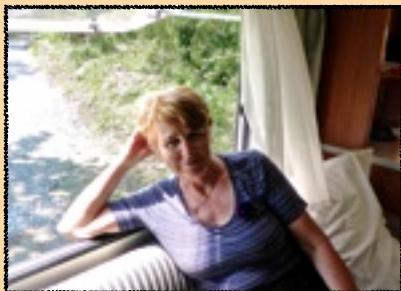
We decided to take the D roads out of town in a general northerly direction. Heather located what looked like walking/riding paths next to a nearby canal. We headed for them and found a tranquil spot beside the canal where we parked and had a cuppa - any time is a good time for a cuppa. Heather even has me enjoying one with lemon and honey!

We started off in good spirits. The day was breezy but sunny. We passed a number of craft on the canal - some were tied up while others were cruising by. We talked to two English couples who had rented a boat from nearby Carcassonne from a company called "Locaboat". They had just been for a bike ride and were heading back to their boat for lunch. Canal touring looks like great fun.

Meanwhile we were getting more and more caught up in mud. The recent rains had made our track pretty awful. The mud was accumulating under our mud guards and making the wheels stick so tightly they would not revolve. Poking a stick to dislodge the mud worked but only for a while till it gummed up again.



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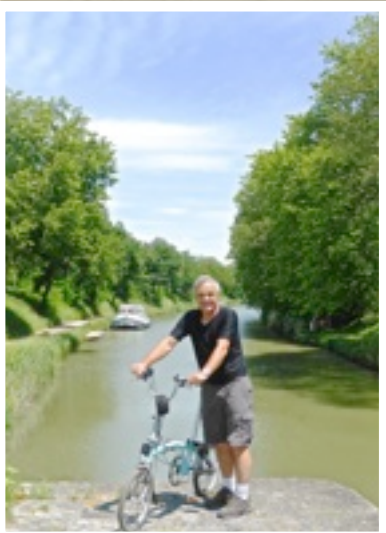
CAMPING NEIGHBOURS Each day we hope that the campers beside us are Dutch because, so far, it's been the Dutch who we have had more to do with. They are so friendly. Not so the French. They can't even speak English!



LOCK KEEPER'S RESIDENCE



OPEN SESAME !!



MUD LARK

There is something really peaceful about riding alongside a canal until you get stuck in the mud.

This was not fun at all. Time to go back to the van for lunch and a cleanup.

After some refreshments we headed off on a small bitumen road. We went by some small farms and open country. This was much better but after going up some hills Heather opted to go back and try the track on the other side of the river. Thankfully this was not so muddy.

The path took us past a lock where we watched as a small boat went through. Being mechanical I watched closely to get an appreciation of how the lock worked. It's a bit like tolls - with a lock keeper controlling the flow of traffic and collecting the money. It was surprising to me that the water gates were remotely controlled by the lock keeper who actually lives in a little house next to the lock. Boats pass through the lock at all hours so I wondered how soon the whole process would be automated like road tolls are today.

It was a nice change to get up close and personal with the countryside - even if the only locals we saw were a dead bird, a dead rabbit and a tiny little

mouse trying to scurry out of our way. We did wave and call out greetings to the canal boaters. They returned the greetings in a friendly fashion as they glided quietly by. Bonjour.

We could have stayed in our peaceful spot by the canal and free camped but decided to move on to places unknown. Not a lot more we could do here.

HEATHER THINKS CANAL BOATING WOULD BE A FUN THING TO DO IN THE FUTURE.

We continued north and started to climb into higher elevations. We eventually came to a great lookout, only about 50 km from Carcassonne. The town below looked inviting so we decided to see if they had a nice quiet spot for us for the night. They did.

Grass, water on tap and even internet as part of the low price! We were able to have a nice relax after cleaning the rest of the mud off our bikes. We were soon ready for another ride tomorrow.



Our trip so far