

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | MONDAY, 17 JUNE 2013

Loire Valley

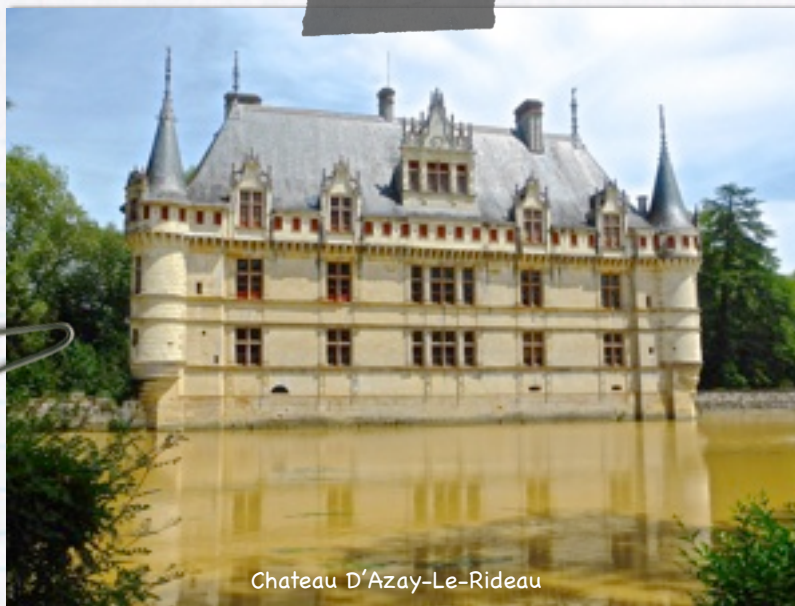
We have very fond memories of the Loire Valley. We visited this area in 1983 with our children and spent a number of days enjoying the tranquility of the river and visiting a number of stately chateaus. The intention today was to visit a few more and then slowly amble on west alongside the valley and end up closer to the province of Brittany.

The weather looked very ominous when we hopped on our bikes for a quick look around Loches where we had camped overnight. It was very early and we considered it would not take us very long to get a feel for the town. As usual we were wrong. Loches is quite large and the old town area was truly wonderful. We rode around within its walls high on the hill and admired the view below. The paved streets and medieval buildings were well maintained. Luckily we were in the gardens when the rain started because we simply sat under a large tree and waited for the storm to pass. It was then down to the lower part of town to see if we could get a photo of the church and the embattlements. As it turned out the best picture was from our caravan park!

After returning to the van we attended to our "housekeeping duties". Luckily there are not many when you live in a van.



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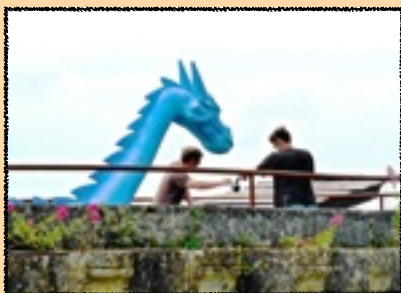
Chateau D'Azay-Le-Rideau

Rubbish

It never ceases to amaze us how much rubbish we personally generate as we travel along. We always have a bag full at the end of the day. But at least we do not have to purchase water in bottles as we did in Greece, Italy and Turkey. The water in those countries is not fit to drink so everyone has to buy bottled water. And therein lies the heart of the rubbish problem. Plastic bottles make up the majority of the rubbish in these countries. Another

difference is that countries like France actively encourage you to sort out your recyclables. There are recycle bins everywhere.

Not so in Greece, Italy and Turkey. The only encouragement you get there is to ensure you do not throw the paper down the toilet after wiping you bum. It is best not to block up the sewerage system but to throw it into the rubbish!!!



DRAGONS? We read that 15 million Euro was spent on the chateau and embattlements at Chinon. I wonder who convinced the government to erect strange gaudy coloured dragons all over the place. Really tacky.



CAMERA AIDE Great little tripod with flexible legs. So many uses - wrap it around objects and take delayed shots or steady the camera when there is no light. Great until it fell to pieces almost smashing my camera.



WHAT DOES THIS DO? This metal basin "thingy" sits flush with the wall and can be swiveled out for use. So what was it used for? It was the right height for either a urinal or a hand wash basin. Hopefully it was not both?

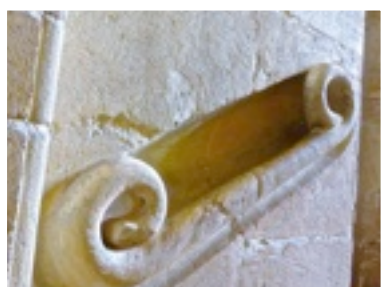
D'AZAY LE RIDEAU



WINDOW SHUTTERS



VAULTED WOODEN CEILING



CARVED STONE HANDRAIL



GATEHOUSE

You can't win them all.

We were also able to ring home. It is always good to talk to our family.

The first chateau we visited was Chateau D'Azay-Le-Rideau. It is in a town of the same name.

The building is surrounded by a moat and a large English style treed landscape. Because of recent very heavy rains the water was very murky. The pathways were sodden and the various streams were raging. I would hate to be the cleaner!

The chateau was built in the 1500s and added to over the centuries. The most interesting aspect for us was seeing the vaulted wooden ceiling in one of the big rooms. It really showed the workmanship of the era. One boudoir has been dressed in the style of the 16th century.

A short documentary showed how this work was done. It was very interesting.

Of particular note was the reed matting that covers most of the walls. This was apparently alternated with tapestries to keep out the cold (and the echoes no doubt).

After a sumptuous lunch of pressed meat (alah like both our parents used to prepare), purchased from a local supermarket, we went on to the chateau at Chinon.

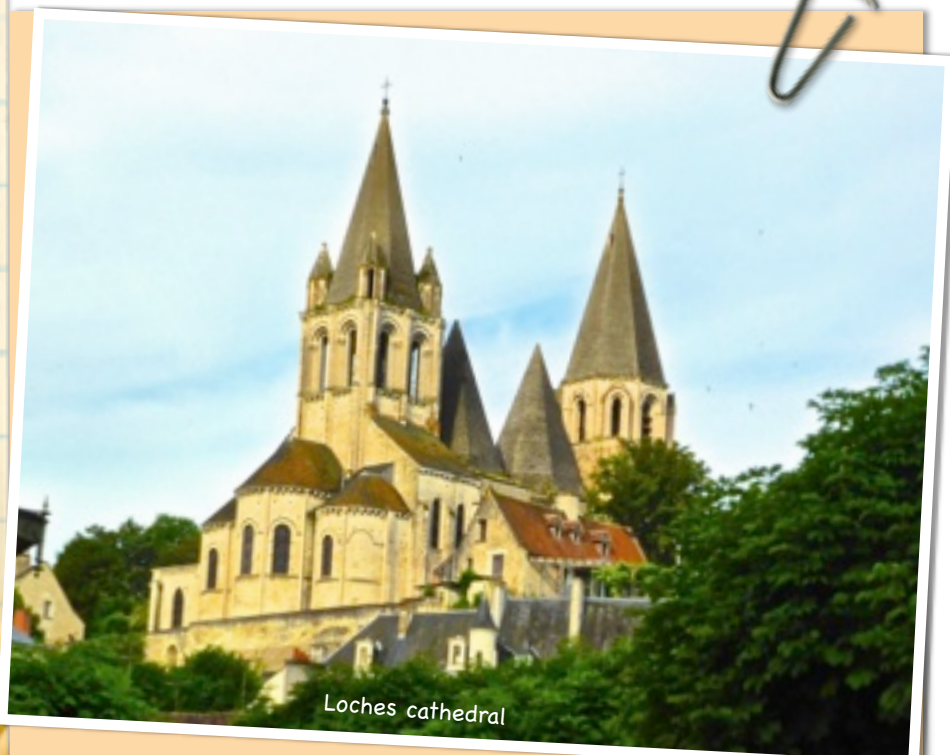
Unfortunately, it did not live up to the picture on the brochure. That lead us to believe that it was in good nick and it's interior had some great displays. In fact, much of it was in ruin and had tacky cement "dragons" located around the site.

The only aspect of real interest was the information and artifacts relating to Joan of Arc. She apparently was there in 1429.

We left fairly quickly and decided to continue on secondary roads along the southern, quieter bank of the Loire. By this time it was about 4 pm and we agreed that a short day was in order. The weather was dull and we were a little dull also.

We are sitting here now in a quiet park enjoying a bit of leisure time.

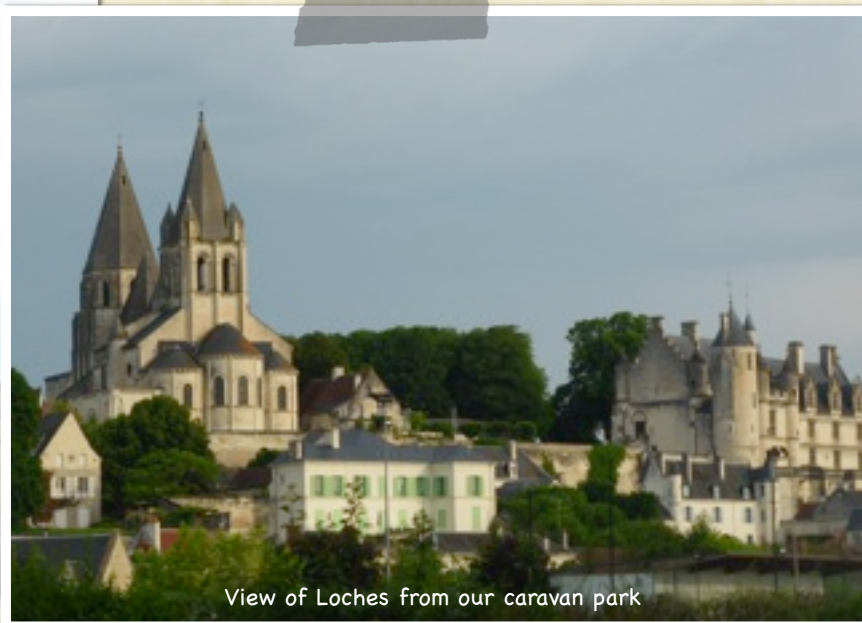
Tomorrow we will quickly head into the heart of Brittany.



Loches cathedral



PHOTOS



View of Loches from our caravan park



Chateau D'Azay-Le-Rideau



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