

# MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | FRIDAY, 21 JUNE 2013

## Normandy

We hurried off this morning for our visit to the Mont. Our plans were thrown into disarray by the exorbitant parking fee requested - \$25 Australian!! We refused to pay that for the short 2 hours we wanted to stop there.

Turning back towards our overnight park we found a roadside possie and then rode the 9 kms to the island site by bike. 30 years ago we were able to easily drive right up to the base of the Mont and park without any problems or parking fee. With over 2mill visitors each year I guess things needed to change - it is probably for the better.

It was only 9 am when we arrived at the entrance and people, and machines, were everywhere. A low bridge was being built to replace the causeway that has been the only access for centuries. We locked our bikes up and started to nudge our way through the crowd up the incredibly narrow main street. We have seen beautiful half timbered and stone houses on this trip, but none with the height that these had - most were three and four stories high. The crowd was just too much for us so we turned away just before the abbey to found a quieter place to get a better view of the vast sand flats that surrounds the Mont at low tide.



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Best view of the Mont was from our van



Bombed out gun emplacement at Point Du Hoc



**PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE WORLD**  
We saw these two having their wedding photo taken with all the road works, trucks, graders and tractors in the background. Not sure what their next location was going to be.



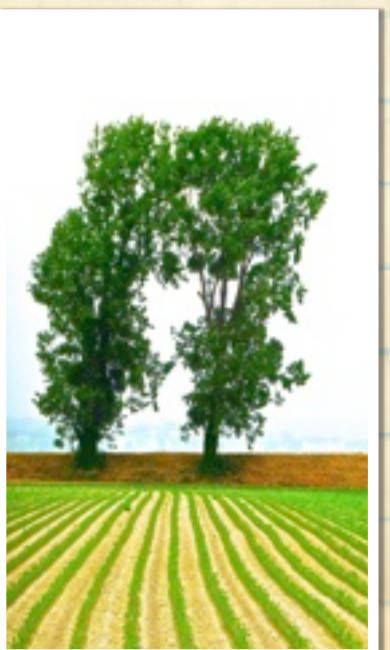
**LEST WE FORGET**

Monstrously large chrome monument - had to be American!!



**ARTISTS AT WORK** There are always repairs to walkways being done while thousands of tourist walk by. Silly Australians take photos of this - not sure why?

## SNAPS



This area has the greatest tidal range in the whole of Europe - an astonishing 24 kms! The tide is said to go as fast as a galloping horse.

We could vaguely see the distant water line but not much else. Back we rode to the van. The winds were freezing and we were sweating inside our clothes - not a good combination. Back at the van a hot cuppa and dry clothes made all the difference. It was at this point that we realised we had the best view of the Mont - from our van.

Where to next? We decided to drive along the coast to see what we could see. The first little section, near the Mont, was on (very) minor roads and gave us a lovely view of the muted colours of the grass and grains and sky and farm buildings.

We continued on to sample some of the more westerly Normandy coast. As it turned out, the area we headed for was where the D Day landings of WWII occurred. We drove on to the coast at Point Du Hoc. It is just between Utah and Omaha beaches. The long line of buses and people led us to the part of the battlefield that has been retained as a memorial. We wandered amongst the bomb craters and the bombed gun emplacements. We could hear many American accents around us. There

was also one group of French school children. There are many memorials like this dotted all along this coast. Visiting one was enough for us however.

We started off again and presented Emily with our intended finishing point. We were shocked to hear that it was three hours away. Not today we thought. Around the next corner a caravan park appeared so in we went. Hey presto, nice facilities AND a fantastic view of Gold Beach and it's headland monuments near the town of Arromanche. We could also clearly see the remains of one of the prefabricated ports (the Allies called it Port Winston after Winston Churchill) that were used to land the cargo necessary for the invasion. Gold Beach is where the British and a considerable number of Canadian and Polish forces attacked the Germans. An earlier prefabricated port built by the Americans only lasted 2 weeks. It was washed away by a very bad storm (and, according to some, poor American engineering).

There will be more war related sites for us in the next few days. We are now off to the Somme and Flanders to view the areas where Australian soldiers fought some pitched battles in WWI.

View of what's left of Port Winston from our caravan park site

