

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | WEDNESDAY, 26 JUNE 2013

North Belgium

Today was definitely about the journey - not the destination. We had no plans or any firm destinations, apart from a place about 50kms south-east that is noted for its bike-ways. We had no detailed maps apart from the CityMaps2Go that covered only a small portion of the area.

The morning journey, using mainly the iPad, was very pleasant. It was via minor roads to Oudenaarde. The sun was shining. We observed the countryside and the houses. Any Australian would feel at home here. It was small holding farming country - cattle and more horses than we have seen before. The houses were very diverse in style. Some still traditional with steep roofs and attic windows. But many others were modern, even box like.

After arriving in Oudenaarde we had lunch by the side of a large canal and watched as huge barges plied the waters. We saw a large bridge open up to allow the barge to pass.

After a pleasant ride around the waterways, we put a pin in the map further east towards the Dutch border and headed on our way. Lack of a detailed map meant we had to rely on "Emily" to get us there.



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Oudenaarde

Bike Heaven

Belgium, like The Netherlands, is a country that caters fully for bicycle enthusiasts. Everywhere we went today we drooled at the bike paths. They follow the roads in some places but in others there are special paths just for bikes where cars cannot go. Yes, the country is pretty flat, but much money has been spent on bike infrastructure - bike bridges, bike road lights, bike bypasses. The people seem to absolutely love it.

Bikes were EVERYWHERE.



Bike bridge - no stairs



Bike path beside parking lane



VEEDUB NOSTALGIA Have seen a number of these reconditioned camping cars recently. They look fabulous but not for us - nostalgia aside we desire a bit of comfort in our aging years.



TANK TRUCK Not sure what this truck is used for but when the going gets tough you simply lower the tank tracks and nothing will stop you. Neat.

People say Belgium has an identify crisis but Belgians do not seem to care one bit.

Two and a half hours later we had made the 100 kms journey. It was via mostly uninteresting roads and through rather characterless towns. I am sure that we have similar nondescript places in Australia.

Unfortunately towards the end of our day we somehow got tangled up in the Antwerp ring roads. Emily made us go round and round following slip roads all over the place. In the end we had no idea where we were or in what direction we were heading. It was very disturbing and the very thing we had hoped to avoid.

We had to plough on though and eventually came to a tiny caravan park - the pin on the map. It had no toilets that we can find and no showers unless you pay for them and definitely no internet. The only plus however is that the place is surrounded by dense forests. The little old man who runs the place cannot speak a word of English and, of course, we cannot speak Flemish.

Our last day on the road tomorrow. We intend to stay for 3 nights in Roermond - a town very close to where we have to drop the van off. We will clean up and laze around for a while. The place looks as if it might have some good bike riding plus the rest from 3 months of constant traveling will be good for us before we tackle the long flight home.

