

Len's 43rd letter from the Via

Date: 24 & 25/08/17

Location

Lucca

KM's to
Rome

537

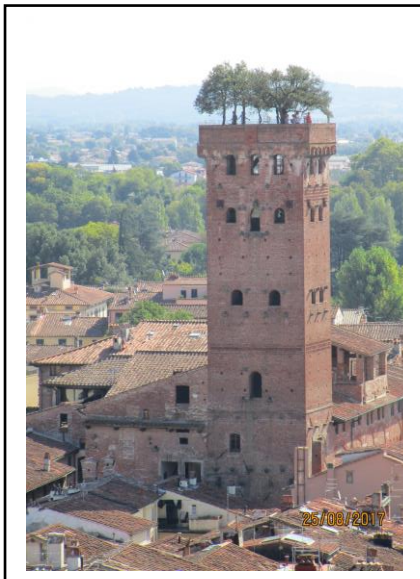
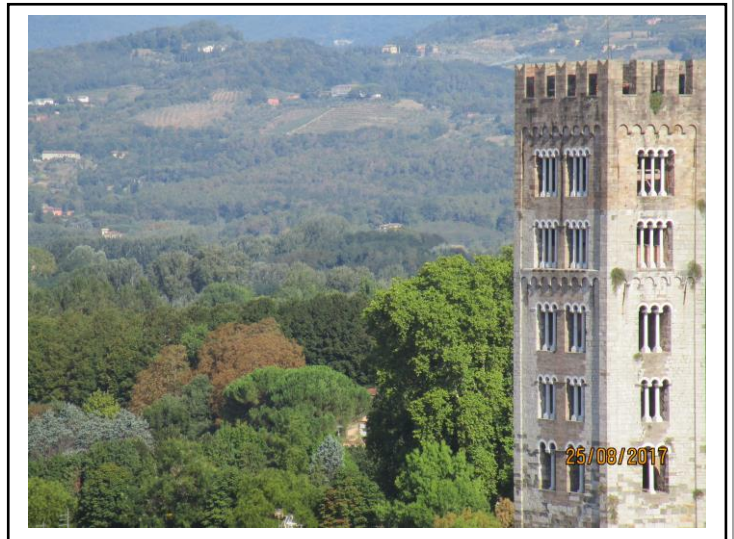
Steps Today

We settled back into Lucca very nicely, it is such a beautiful place. We started our stay by doing the Lucca Tan, a four kilometre walk around the fortress ramparts that were erected to defend the city in medieval times. The Melbourne Tan (length 3.67 kms.) is a well-loved walk, I welcome suggestions of other city walks from around the world that are on a par with the Melbourne and Lucca Tans. When we did the Lucca Tan all the locals were out, from the superbly fit running groups to quite a few oldies who were making a fair fist of getting out of first gear. There were also lots of younger children doing the circuit, certainly a much more diverse group than do the Tan in Melbourne.

To warm ourselves up for the coming weeks we decided to climb two of the towers in Lucca, not as high as the Florence towers but still taxing on the quads. This is a view from the clocktower back to the hills which I walked over to come to Lucca a few days ago. They don't look so high from on top of the tower. The original clockworks were still being used to keep the time and looked superbly designed.

The walk down was a fair bit quicker than the walk up.

The other tower is very unusual in that there are trees growing on the top. This is a view of it from the clock tower, it was interesting because it was built to service a group of apartments to the seventh floor.



Apparently, we humans will only walk seven flights of stairs to our living quarters but no more, the extra height was a recreational addition rather than for a utilitarian use.

Try to imagine a world where the lift wasn't invented, no more high-rise or skyscrapers, just lovely cities like Lucca.

As we were having a look at the St Francis Duomo we came across this carving on one of the walls. It is based on an Etruscan design and is used frequently in the Via Francigena publications. It is one of those design riddles where you must

find the path to the middle, I hope it is not supposed to represent us pilgrims wandering around in circles, many wanderers are not lost, just finding their path.

Tomorrow we are back on the Via with a short warm up walk of 18kms to Altopascio, a village off the tourist's usual itinerary but a traditional stop for pilgrims on their way to Rome.

