

Len's 50th letter from the Via

Date: 02/09/17

Location

Lucignano
D'Arbia

KM's to
Rome

396

Steps Today

32,717

Lucignano D'Arbia is our target for the Day, a nice easy walk out of Siena along ridges then a dip down into the village. There are a lot of villages with the name Arbia in them in this region. It means high walls or fortress which stems from the invasions of the Moors into Northern Italy from bases in Sicily and Sardinia during the ninth century. Not all the villages



have retained their high walls but this is a good example of a very small community which has. As we walked out of Siena today we were greeted with gunfire on both sides of the ridges, this was a constant for most of the morning. Repeated volleys of what sounded like shotguns, we thought the Moors may have decided to come back and try again. At one stage Carol had to go into the bushes for a nature call, I heard this

rather plaintive female cry from somewhere near Carol's vicinity. Not wanting to impose on her privacy I called out to her to make sure she was ok. To my relief her reply echoed back up the ridge, thankfully she hadn't been mistaken for a young deer.

The hunting season officially starts in Italy on the first Sunday in September, so today being a Saturday, these shooters got an early start. Like in Australia the gun lobby in Italy is a powerful political force supported by the arms manufactures. Shooting is a very traditional activity in Italy, and Italy apparently has the highest registered gun holders per capita in the world.

We are starting to meet a few more walkers now we are in Tuscany (the Via Francigena is very popular around Siena for shorter walks) and on the road today there were two females carrying very heavy packs and struggling on the Tuscan undulations and this young Belgian

walker who was carrying a very light pack and travelling solo. We walked with her for a while, having Carol with me does have some unintended advantages. Carol entertained her with stories of Brave Little Belgium during WWII. Earlier in the day we had decided to make a short diversion to visit a restored flour mill and buy some lunch. I explained to Carol that I wasn't hungry and had seen plenty of flour mills this trip, but she was determined to follow our plans and with some reluctance I left the Brave Belgian Solo walker to walk on alone. I hope she does not

enjoy her solitude, because she has tried to blend into the world before, and people continue to disappoint her.

As I write this up in my Hotel room I can hear squealing pigs, probably wild boar being chased by the hunter's dogs in the forest about one hundred yards from our Hotel, I hope the pig doesn't end up in my Ragu tomorrow.

