

**Location: Great Saint Bernard's Pass to Lake Viverone**

The final part of our trip is a walk down the Aosta valley to Lake Viverone to complete the three-lake tour. While no walk is ever entirely down, the next six days is a descent of 2200 meters over 136 kms to the lake.



Our walk goes between two mountain ranges along a valley that contracts to one-kilometre wide at Bard then widens out to a rich alluvial valley. The views of the mountains on either side are quite stunning. What are men to rocks and mountains?

The valley is irrigated from the river full of water from the melting snow. A delightful two hours was spent following a water canal through a dense forest on a well-maintained earthen path.

The farmers here grow their grapes and kiwi fruit on trellis, so parts of the walk

involve walking under ripening grapes and budding kiwi fruit.

You look up at the side of the mountains and it looks terraced as per Tuscany but quite different close up.

This is how the kiwi fruit looked on the trellis.



What dreadful hot weather we have! It keeps one in a continual state of inelegance. Shade is precious and cold drinks are a little hard to come by. Even pleasure, you know, is fatiguing.

After a day off in Aosta we headed up to a B & B in Chambave. This was a small holiday farm tucked away up in the foothills. Like so many of these places, the hosts love their food and delighted

us with their own style of cooking. The four course meal was very tasty but I am not sure about putting Thyme in Panna Cotta.

Leigh had read an article by Richard Flannigan in reference to some backflipping by the Brisbane Writers Festival. He was outraged and decided to lock himself in his room for an afternoon to write a response. Read his response on 'the conversation'.

This year I am in a Jane Austen Bookclub, the project being to read her six published books during 2018. She had this to say about who has the power and who controls the stories.

"I do not think I ever opened a book in my life which had not something to say upon woman's inconstancy. Songs and proverbs all talk of woman's fickleness. But perhaps you will say, these were all written by men".

Carol and I set off for Issogne the next morning while Leigh finetuned his article for publication. He was confident that he would catch us on the track which he subsequently did. Carol and I are both finding the walking hard this time, perhaps the heat, perhaps that little older or perhaps not enough training.



On the track today, we met a solo walker who is doing the whole 2000 kms from Canterbury to Rome as a training exercise for walking the Alpine Way in Australia. She lives in Richmond! Her pack was heavy as she is carrying camping equipment, but she was in good spirits given the fatigue she was feeling. Her flight out of Rome is on the 8<sup>th</sup> September so I hope she can get there in time to complete the walk and

not have to catch a train.

As we walked off together she soon left us behind, us with our slow walking through Italy, she with her young and fit walking pace.

Readers of my last year's blog may remember the fellow locked behind bars in Bard.



A photo to remind you. As we walked into a village I spotted a man sitting on the bench in front of a church

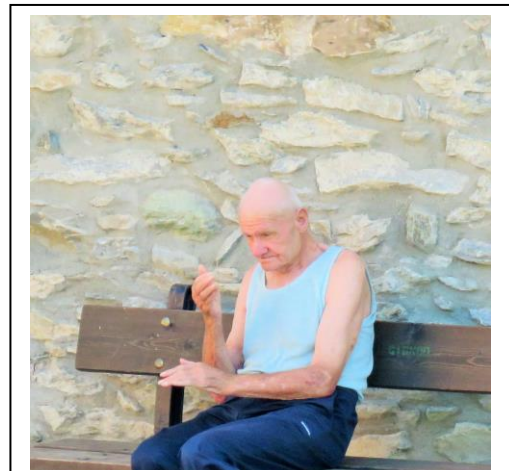
He has escaped. It is definitely him because as soon as Carol came near him to share the seat he scurried off

like a man who was about to be recaptured. He looks like he has been surviving on berries and leaves.

I hope he found somewhere to sleep.

We headed on to Bard. At this spot Napoleon's advance on Italy was stopped for fourteen days.

His response was to raze the existing fort to the ground. Lucky for us the fort was rebuilt, sans Napoleon, and the old officers' quarters have been converted







to a luxury hotel on top of the fort. The fort was used as part of making the recent avengers movie, there was no sign of Scarlett, though I looked high and low for her.

We thought we had left spooky rides on cable cars behind us in Switzerland, but you get up to the fort by using separate lifts over the

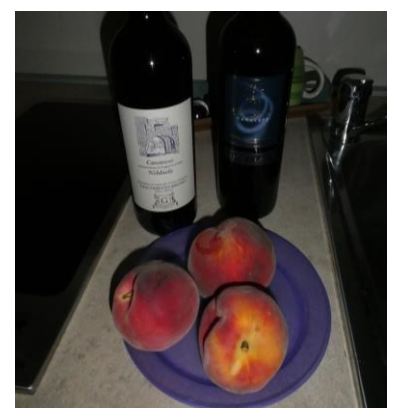
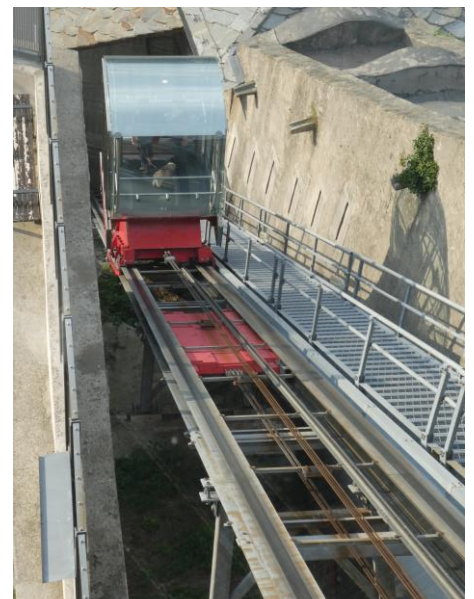
four levels. The views are magnificent back up the valley. It occurred to me as I was clinging desperately to anything that seemed stable and secured to terra forma, how much faith we put in engineers in our daily life. So many things could go wrong as we carry out our normal daily activities, but don't, so please all engineers keep up the good work. This gives an idea of how steep the ride was. It made the big dipper at Luna Park seem like a joy ride. Bard is well worth a visit, a small village but packed with things to do, we even went to a Matisse exhibition while we there. It has evidence of human habitation back to 3,000 BC so lots of historic sites to visit.

Our next village, Ivrea is also an interesting place; lots of old buildings, with the occasional church and very good strip shopping.

When walking towards Ivrea at a lunch spot a farmer stopped and gave us four peaches, we tried to tell him that two was enough, but he insisted on us taking all four as they were from his own orchard. They did add quite a bit of weight to my backpack.

The walk into Viverone was on made roads, with temperatures in the mid 30's it was a tough day. It was a pretty walk but was not offering us anything in compensation for our walking conditions.

But as always if you walk long enough and look hard enough you will be rewarded for your endeavour.



We entered a very small village which had places opened for lunch on a Sunday.



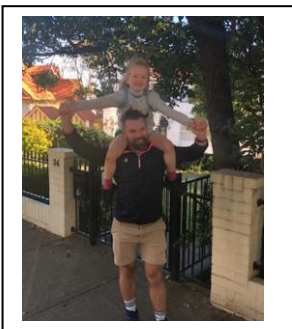
Taking an early lunch at this café, disregarding our dry hot lunch provisions we were carrying, invigorated us for the afternoons walk.

Wine drinkers would love this café as it had a huge range of wine for sale including the twenty locally made brews.

The stifling heat soon had an impact on us and as approach the completion of our trip our thoughts wander to what is next for us. I love the travel

but not sure if I want to do any more of these longish walks, 524 kms this time. I am encouraging Carol to continue because, if adventures will not befall a young lady in her own village, she must seek them abroad.

We both miss home but the wonders of modern technology enable us to keep abreast of what's happening in our family and friends' lives. These are some of the photos we received while away.



Leigh with his friend Lea's child Rita, before he joined us.



Mary, Molly, Sarah, Tom and Jess doing some whale watching in Warrnambool.

Mary needs to improve her selfie skills.

Alexander, the Mexican bandit.



As we walked into the last village of this holiday at the end of a long hot day we had one last reminder of how welcoming the Italians are. Walking up the main street a man invited us into his closed café for a cold drink with his friends. Carol opted for a cup of tea.. This is the group, all offers of payment were refused



That will just do for me, you know. I shall be sure to say three dull things as soon as ever I open my mouth, shan't I?

Goodbye and thanks for reading.