

Chavanges to Langres

Km's to Rome:1406

Day 23 started with a beautiful morning as I left Chavanges. It promised to be a nice walk, lots of forest tracks and not much tarmac, destination is La Rothiere. My hope for no tarmac was thwarted by an overgrown track, it looked passable further on but initially it required some heavy thrashing through waste high grass. There appeared to be a farm track that offered an alternative but the sudden appearance of two rather large German Shepherd dogs soon cut short any further investigation. The alternative was to take a lengthy detour on a busy road into La Rothiere. This whole area has recently been harvested and the stubble



baled for spreading on indoor cattle yards so I thought why not and headed off into the paddock and followed the tractor lines for about five kms which avoided having to walk on the roads, this is what I walked on. It's so alien to our way of farming in Australia to not have our paddocks and farms enclosed by fences.

I also passed the quarter mark of my journey today at 507 kms. On arriving at La Rothiere I booked into my hotel washed my clothes and myself and went down for dinner. I wasn't that hungry so decided to just have a main course so ordered the roast poultry with vegetables. I was rather surprised when a cooked whole chook came out for my meal, it was only a young

poulet but nevertheless would take a powerful lot of eating. It was a superbly tasting meal but the sheer size defeated me in the end, I couldn't even finish the very tasty chips. I waddled off to my room to have a lie down after. I should have had enough foresight to ask for a doggy bag so that I could have the leftovers on my lunch the next day.

Bar sur Aube was my destination on day 24, again a walk through a lot of forest on quiet tracks. Over these few days I did not see anybody on these tracks including local walkers. The only people I saw were either in the small villages or the towns I ended up in each day, it was a lonely couple of days, your own thoughts can become a bit boring after a time. There was one exception when I came round a corner and came across a women on a horse, I was neither glad nor unhappy to see her, but maybe that's what shock does, because I was surprised , that I will say.

Bar sur Aube as the name implies is on the river Aube , where I ran into my German walking friend Vockers. He has decided to change his destination to Spain and will now head down the St James Camino in France. Coincidentally Nicholas and Erika have decided to fast track their trip by catching a train to Lausanne so I have lost my travelling companions. Incidentally Volkens was eating a half kilogram tub of ice cream when I caught up with him.

The town is sponsoring the Tour de France in a couple of days so they were having a local bike race in the evening. I decided to get some takeaway and watch the racing. There were some



very young racers participating. I snapped these two older riders as they rode past my cousins butcher shop.



I retreated to my rather well appointed rooms for the night where I discovered that a free bottle of champagne came with the room. The owners of the hotel have their own vineyards and bottle the champagne on the premises, unfortunately I can't bring the bottle home for the drinkers.



The breakfast next morning on day 25 was outside on a terrace overlooking some of the vineyards. It's always good when you can start the day with a positive experience at breakfast, like the army we walk on our stomachs. This is another example of a moulin outside

the village on the Aube, obviously in it's time grinding wheat for flour was a very lucrative occupation.



My destination today was Orges via a visit to the abbey at Claivaux. This is a large establishment created initially by twelve monks in the 13th century. Unfortunately the only building open was the gift shop so unable to visit any of the large impressive buildings, had to be satisfied with a cold drink and cookie.

Arriving at my accomodation in Orges I was greeted by a rather large ferocious dog whose hackles were well and truly raised. Despite assurances that Melody was harmless I nevertheless put my pack between the dog and myself. Unfortunately the stay did not get any better so let's move on to Day 26 and the walk to Arc-en-Barrois, again lots of walking through forests. The forest's appear to be part of a National Park

system even though there is some logging happening, I guess things are the same the world over. I came across some signs promoting the autumn colours of the area along with the year round colour of the local flora I was particularly taken by the photo of these fungi although a bit of searching didn't reveal any live examples. I am always interested in the fungi of an area but my searching has been fruitless or should that be fungiless?



At lunchtime I was passing through a small village Cour-l'Eveque and found a nice spot in the local church with graveyard attached. What I enjoy about walking is finding nice lunch spots, for example on top of Mt. Obereron at Wilson's Promontory, the Nut at Stanley in Tasmania, on any ridge on the Larapinta trail, lunch on top of the portrait gallery in London, sitting on the River Tarn in France and looking at the snow capped mountains at Wenden in Switzerland.

A game we often play is name your best five lunch spots. This lunch spot had none of the grand views of the aforementioned but it was laden with emotion and history. I sat down beside five war graves three Australian's, one Canadian and one English. From reading the headstones it appears that a plane had crashed and the aircrew were all killed. All dying far from home and probably originally buried by the locals. Since then they have been reburied with the standard headstone of the Commonwealth forces. All of the deceased were under 25, what a loss. The

Australian families of Flight Sergeants M H Payne, D G W Brown and A D H Taggart would be pleased that the graves are being so well looked after and their loss of life is still being honoured.

It certainly puts my complaints about dogs and lonely forest walking into perspective, I must be more positive and be thankful I was never sent off to war.



On the way out of the village I passed a wine outlet selling ice creams, the heat of the day justifies a purchase. However I had to wait to be served while the owner tried to stop his cat from bringing a live snake into the house.

Langres is my ultimate destination today so was relieved when I rounded a corner and sighted the village on top of the hill. Langres is one of the few villages in this area with protective

walls. The walk into the village was quite onerous, I learned later it was 31 degrees which was unexpected.

Langres is the home of the French philosopher A Diderot, who produced the French encyclopaedia in the 18th century. I tried to work the following into one of my imbedded quotes but was unable so thought I should still share. "Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest"

Gruesome times.

I am having a day off in Langres so

looking forward to putting the feet up catching up on a bit of admin and casually checking out the shops and cake's on offer.

I can't buy anything though as my pack contents have been culled to the minimum and I have some big days coming up. I am desperate for a second pair of shoes to put on if a night but something would have to go, perhaps my wet weather gear. Bonne Camino.

