

Arras to Trefcon (Day 9 to Day 11)

Km's to Rome:1785

I was reluctant to Leave Arras as the place I was staying at was very nice and was a beautiful old building. Breakfast was served on this beautifully laid table. I felt very special.



Arras is the first place I have visited that has the traditional town square in this instance a cathedral with the rest of the square lined with Italian designed buildings. On arriving in the countryside I was able to supplement my breakfast with some greens which the harvester had missed.

In the next few days I will be travelling through the Somme. There are much more knowledgeable and better writers than me that have written about the two world wars so I will confine my comments to wondering why we again have a war which has the potential to escalate into a larger catastrophe, you would think that the Russians would have some awareness of the massive loss of life suffered by Russia in those two wars.

There certainly is a sadness as you walk through the lovely countryside dotted by numerous cemeteries and the war memorials in each village no matter how small listing the names of the locals who lost their lives. There are very few references to the USA, some say God created war to teach Americans geography.

It is a bit of a shock as you walk along a quite country lane and you come across some leftover relic from the war.



But I continue on my way to Bapaume (Day9) which turned out to be a little how hum. I was very tired so I didn't venture out of the hotel to look at the village so I may be a little unfair in my assessment, instead choosing to partake of a very large steak with chips and salad.

Over the last few days I have been running into Volkers from Cologne. He island hopped from Cologne to Scotland and has been walking in the UK for 100 days before crossing to France. He has no final

destination in mind, when he reaches Rome he is going to turn around and walk to Spain to do the Spanish Camino.

As we were walking through the Somme I asked him how he felt about the two wars. He said that Germany will be eternally shamed particularly by WW2 and all he can do is do whatever he can on a personal level to not let it happen again. This is Volkers getting a little excited about how far he has got to go before reaching Rome. He very graciously gave me a snicker bar which is really a health food as it has got peanuts in it.



The walking to Peronne (Day 10) is a welcome change from the walking on roads, there is actually some forest walking and lots of shade. Passed through some lovely small villages and the kms sailed by. The wheat in the fields is almost ready for harvesting, I broke up a couple of the husks and the wheat is quite edible. Wheat would be the dominant crop in this area but there is lots of turnips and potatoes, I haven't actually seen any large scale fruit tree growing but most of the rural properties have at least a few trees.

Peronne is a nice town with a grand square, I ventured out at night to observe the locals having a good time. Stayed at a modern hotel which meant that at breakfast cereal was available. After just ten days I must be looking like a pilgrim, a woman approached me at breakfast wanting to know what walk I was doing.

When I told her(or more correctly showed her) she wasn't aware of the Via Francigena even though it goes through her town which is a bit surprising as she is a walker doing the Spanish Camino in stages, she has just one last stage to go which is the final leg. The Spanish Camino is much more popular, approximately 300 starting each day, from what I can work out less than five a day start the Francigena. The really strange thing is that Australia is over represented in the numbers.

Day 11 is a short walk to Trefcon and a stay at a Gite. Here I am early morning after visiting the fruit shop to collect my daily supply, with a short walk I can carry some extra food so I took the opportunity to stock up, the Jazz apples are in season and are deliciously crunchy.



On the way out of town somebody had drawn a nazi emblem on the railway siding, a most unpleasant experience given what has happened in this region. There had been an attempt to remove it but it had been carved into the concrete so was still quite obvious.

The walk to Trefcon was even better than yesterday as there were long paths through forest, however the mosquitoes were in plague proportions. I needed a full body suite for protection not just my rather pathetic fly net that I had brought from home, at least I got to use it. Nothing worse than carrying round

something for three months and never needing it. Again I passed through some nice village's and spent some quite time in them sitting on the park benches. The architecture differs from

village to village but they all have their grand Marie and generally a school and of course the church and obligatory cemetery. Cemeteries are great places to obtain water if you are finding accessing water difficult.

Here are a selection of photos from the day.



I had a very restful break next to a French Royal tennis court which appeared to still being used.

I arrived at the Gite which is a very old converted farmhouse. It is clean and the hosts are very helpful. I decided to have an early night as I have a couple of long and hot days coming up. I missed out on joining in on the local nightlife which consisted of riding horses around the village.

Hope you are all reading the book, I am just up to the part that sparks the romantic interest.

Looks like we won't find out where it is set other than it's in occupied France.

For those amongst us that it is relevant to, how about seven on the trot, if only we hadn't lost to West Coast.

Bonne Camino.

