

WEEKLY NEWS

Craig | Joanne | Peanut

NO GAS

Our 1st night in France and just as we're cooking dinner the gas light starts to flicker. We'd run out of gas. Oh No. 8pm in a foreign country looking for LPG = impossible. We found a few fuel stations but no LPG. Craig was beating himself up because he couldn't believe he'd made such a stupid mistake. Anyway next morning we headed to fuel station. First station - we tried to fill up but the LPG pump was running very slow. Maybe better luck at a larger station? We pulled in and hooked up and again, it was tricking in. It took 20 minutes for €1. Surely this can't be right? The security guard tested the pump and everything OK. Clearly we had a problem with our cylinders...Craig was not happy. We pulled over and started the process of elimination, digging out the manuals etc. You can imagine the drama. 2 hours later it turns out we hadn't run out of gas...it was an airlock. To top it all off we left the gas cap at the fuel station so Craig had to bodge something together.



Off We Go!

Friday 11th April we checked and then double checked everything before climbing in to our new Home...Homer the Hymer. By night fall we were in Dover and all excited for tomorrow's crossing to Calais.

We found a nice spot just on the waters edge and tucked in to a bag of fish & chips before snuggling down for the night.

Up bright & early, first in the queue for the 6:40 ferry to Calais. Homer looked after Peanut whilst we went on deck to admire the White Cliffs of Dover.

Saturday: Calais to Nancy

The sun certainly has his hat on today and it feels great to be heading in to the unknown with the sun shining. The roads are so smooth compared to the UK, so no squeaks or rattles from Homer which pleases Craig no end. For lunch we pull in to our first Aire and rustled up Croquet Monsieur! We quickly passed through Belgium and





We forgot

- Salt & Pepper grinder.
Managed to crush the pepper corns with pliers but I got blisters

ODD JOBS

- Leaky sky light in the bathroom - repaired with sikaflex & cling film
- Homer right hand side body puncture - glue gun & tape
- Snapped sunglasses - superglue
- Left LPG cap @ fuel station - bodge job by shaving a fuel cap.
- Elastic across the front door so we can hang the towel in the morning to dry out



Luxembourg before cruising back in to France and stopping off for the night in Nancy. We found a great little Aire called Chatenois, right by the river and it was free (no charge 6pm - 8am). After a walk around the town (world heritage centre) looking at all the elaborate buildings we headed back to Homer grabbing a apricot pastry on the way. Peanut had a few biscuits and then crashed out for the night, paws in the air to help them cool down.



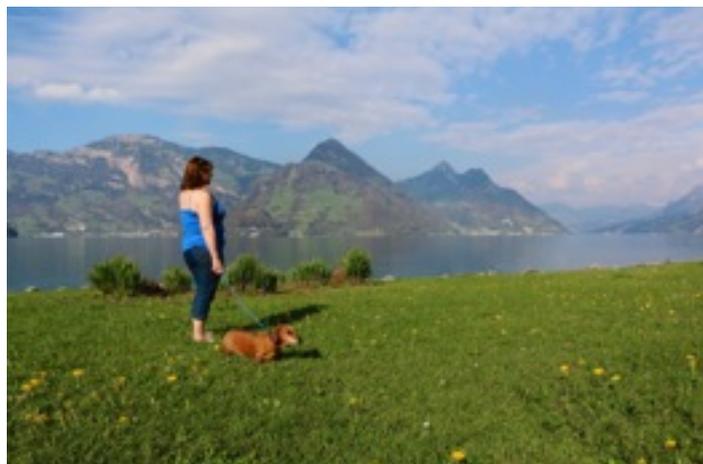
Sunday: Nancy to Seelesburg

Up bright and early to find an LPG station, which took a little longer than planned. Once on our way we headed to Switzerland passing through loads of tunnels and until now, I didn't realise I had a fear of tunnels. The first tunnel was about 9km and after about 5 minutes I couldn't hold my breath any longer. Oh shit this tunnel is longer than the one in Wales. These guys can sure dig. I started to wish Stallone was with us. I couldn't get that film 'Daylight' out of my head. I was convinced we were going to get trapped as the Swiss Alps collapsed all around us. An eternity later we popped out the other side.

The snow capped alps were breath taking, I could sit all day with my feet on the dash just humming along to 'Ibiza Chillout' After passing through Swiss boarder control we wound our way to Seelesburg and pulled up right next to the lake. Beautiful evening and perfect place to share a moment with our Russell.

We planned on spending the night on the lake but the local police turned up, so we and several other motorhomer's had to find somewhere else. We shuffled around a few places but difficult to find somewhere when its dark, so we opted for Lidl car park.

Tucked up in bed and snoring our little heads off when all of a sudden we heard sheep. Lots of sheep. Lots of very loud sheep. What the hell is going on, its 3am and we're on a Lidl car park? Had we rolled



WRONG TURNING

Upon arrival in Dover we headed for the port to check out where we needed to go in the morning. We missed the exit turning and ended up at police check point.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Took a little while to get used to the traffic lights. They go straight from Red to Green - no amber. At first it felt like OMG its on green, shit get going.

FLY SCREEN

We had a competition from Calais to Nancy to see who could catch the most flies on their side of the windscreen. Craig 56 v Joanne 72 Fly Screen

HOW'S FART

The Swiss word for motorway exit is Aushfart. Add in Craigs Lancashire accent and it's bloody funny.

BIG LINDOR BUNNY

Passed two huge Lindor Easter bunnies - about 15ft tall. I bet Freya & Ruby would love them.

ROAD MARKINGS

Did you know they have started to use orange road markings in Switzerland... weird

in to a field? We jumped out of bed. We were surrounded with lorries and cars full of sheep and strange men shouting things to each other. There's us two in jim jams gawking out the windows. For about an hour they swapped lambs and money and then buggered off. No idea if legal but certainly felt dodgy. An eventful night

Monday: Seelesburg to Germignaga, lake Maggiore

Happy Birthday Craig and as a special treat we went to Lidl for our first international shop. Craig loves shopping and oh boy was he in his element. We got a few bits, had breakfast, opened his cards and then set off to the dreaded Gotthard Tunnel. I wasn't too bad until Craig told me the 17km tunnel had the worst fatality rate in the world...cheers mate. I was surprised we made it through to the other end given our luck and the 'odds' of surviving but we did and cruised along passed St Bernard's pass, whilst Peanut yodelled a tune or two.

We pulled in for a brew and a bacon butty, had a chat to a convey of campers on their way to Greece before passing the Italian boarder at Lake Maggiore

We found a great spot at Germignaga Aire, right on the lake. Little bar with tables and chairs and children playing in fountain. At only €5 for the night we decided to splash out on an Italian ice-cream. Very refreshing as we strolled around the plaza. To celebrate Craig birthday we cracked open a bottle of pink champagne.



Tuesday: Germignaga to Monvalle

Filled up the water and then set off just hugging the lakeside. Passed through a little village called San Michele then pulled in a campsite called Camping Di Monvalle. Used our camping card and decided to put our feet up for a couple of nights €16.

Cycled to supermarket on the new Brompton's with peanut in his basket (he absolutely loves the bike). 5km later and my legs were like jelly and my bum bones ached. Good job we found a huge bottle of red wine for €2.

Wednesday chilled most of the day. New neighbours who we nicked named Mr Bean (Heintz)



lovely chap from Germany and yes he did wear braces.

Thursday: Monvalle to Frigicola, lake Como

Very windy road to Lake Como but very pretty. On the way, we pulled in for a brew and noticed a private cemetery. I didn't realise that most Italian coffins were kept above ground, up to six coffins high. We met a lovely lady and her grandchild, she was placing flowers on her husband's grave. Franco was only 58 when he died and he never got to see his granddaughter...we showed her our Russ xxx. We didn't speak the same language but we fully understood the sorrow of losing someone so precious.



We stayed in a lay-by and after a walk in to a nearby town we tucked in to steak and chips.

Friday: Frigicola to Genova

Set off nice and early so we could make the most of the day. First stop Bellagio. We pulled in to a car park about 1km from the village, had a cuppa and some breakfast. Craig took Peanut for a pickle and came back with 4 French male students! They'd travelled from Lyon and camped overnight with the hope of doing a bit of kayaking over the Easter period. They looked cold and tired. Anyway next minute feet were up and they were sharing coffee with us.



We cycled in to Bellagio (btw love our little Bromptons) and meandered up and down, in and out of all the little cobble streets. This place is just adorable.

Everywhere is covered in flowers from the lakeside walkway to hanging baskets outside the shops and cafes. The shops were very exclusive and for some strange reason we couldn't find a pound shop anywhere.

Apparently this is the loveliest town in Europe and I can see why. As we approached noon the village got busier, so time to head back to



Homer. After lunch we set off to Milano stopping off at a little fishing spot to share a moment with Russell. As we wound around the cliffs the roads started to get very narrow. We soon learned this is a problem in Italy because their driving skills are limited. They put their foot on the accelerator and don't take it off until they reach their destination. They will swerve and even dent their car before stopping, so you can just imagine the amount of tuts and hand gestures we received on a narrow road. Then we got stuck on a narrow road - jagged rock on one side



and sheer cliff on the other, bonnet to bonnet with an old biddy. Oh heck. Craig shuffled in close to the rock and after several moves he managed to squeeze passed. By this time we had a queue of cars behind and in front. Horns honking and heads bobbin we slowly pulled away and then we heard...crunch. Homer was hurt. A rock stabbed him in the right hand side just in his mid section near the door. As you can image lots of F words from Craig and thankfully a considerate bus driver got everyone to reverse. We pulled in a few miles down the road and fixed Homer with a couple of bandages (glue and tape). He was lucky the rock only pierced and cracked the plastic door casing, so no need for major surgery. Fortunately the tape is silver and Craig is a perfectionist, so cosmetic fix doesn't look too bad.

With Homer not feeling too good we decided to head for the beach and give Milan a miss. Genova seemed the quickest option, so we punched in the new destination and set off. Marg our Tom Tom voice lady decided to change her accent today..she went Chinese. Every time she said Genova we wet ourself laughing...why the Chinese accent? Anyway this boosted our spirits and we sang bond themes all the way to Genova.

The sun was just setting when we arrived in Genova, so we pulled up right next to the ocean and called it a day.

Saturday: Genova to Portofino

What a horrible nights sleep. Last night it poured down all night and non stop thunder and lightening. Craig didn't hear a thing!

We opened the bathroom door and Huston...we have a problem. The skylight is leaking. We both starred at the ceiling until our eyes woke up. I gawked at the water and Craig poked around the seal. We couldn't do a right lot until the rain backed off, so no other option than to put a towel on the floor.

We set off for Portofino and after taking a bum turn ended up several thousand km high in the Italian mountains. We have no idea where we ended up but as you can imagine, its difficult to turn a 7m motorhome around on a 5m wide road. At the top of the mountain we found a church car park and managed to spin Homer back round. Several hours later we parked up at Portofino.

The rain had backed off a little, so we put on our coats and cycled in town. At the port we spotted a few fancy boats circa £5m each but I'd rather have my little Homer any day.



Today we managed to find an internet connection...hello world

CAMPING FEES

Dover	Free
Nancy	Free
Seelesburg	Free
Germignsgh	€5
Monvalle (2 nights)	€32
Frigicola	Free
Genova	Free
Portofino	€7.5
Lavagna	Free



Sunday: Portofino to Lavagna



The sun is shining again hip hip hooray. We cruised along the Italian Riviera stopping off at little villages tucked in to the sloping hillside and charming fishing ports before finally parking up at Lavagna. For lunch we had crumpets (from the freezer) and then Craig prepared Lasagna & garlic bread for dinner. We went cycling for a couple of hours before heading back to Homer for the night. Peanut is pooped with all this cycling and fresh air but he is loving every minute.

So far the Riviera di Levante (Rising Sun) is pretty stunning and very beautiful.

Hope you enjoy the update and photo's and I am sure with time we'll get better with updates and internet access. If you have any comments, suggestions or questions then email us at craigandjoanne@me.com. Miss you all xxx

