
EEEEK WE HAVE A LEAK

Craig | Joanne | Peanut



Overview

We sadly said good bye to Sicily and said hello (again) Italy. It was a strange but quite a nice feeling to arrive in a place that we'd already visited. It gave us a confident feeling of knowing exactly what to do and where to go, a feeling we'd not experienced for a while. As usual we have seen some amazing places and met some wonderful people but unfortunately this has been over shadowed by the 13th week curse. Everyone and everything has hit a problem and it was Homer's turn first, he got a rather soggy bot...

Wednesday 2nd July: Messina to Polistena

The Sicilian ferry companies operate in a very different way to the UK. Somethings are like home - several ferry companies operating from the one port, so you select the operator, the times and the prices. What they don't have are the signs telling you which operator terminal



you are entering. Once you turn off the main road to the port entrance, it becomes damn hard to turnaround (barriers). You end up in a small queue in which you then buy the ticket and then straight on the ferry. A bit like a McDonalds drive through but quicker...think I'll have a McFerry please.

The one way ferry ticket from Sicily to Italy cost `€56 and took around 20 minutes to cross. We are both sad to leave Sicily, it is

truly a wonderful place. Once on Italy we drove off and hit the Italian roads once again. Craig punched in our destination and Marg began to recalculate the route. Marg didn't seem to be chatting a lot today maybe she has a throat infection? After a bit of a shake and a mild battering around the head she woke up and within minutes she was back dishing out orders. After about half an hour we were climbing higher and higher and to my horror we were back on those blinking suspension bridges that wobble. How on earth did they construct these bridges so high. You know, they should carry a health warning "side winds may cause IBS, clench now".



Craig for once in your life, please ignore Marg (GPS).

On the way to 'we have no idea' we spotted a Autan sign (big Italian supermarket). We pulled up and headed inside in the hope of finding some goodies. 10 minutes later we were heading back to Homer with nothing more than a big bag of black peppercorns. A large supermarket but nowt in to shout home about, gutted. We'd not been long on the road when we spotted another large Italian supermarket, this time a Mercadi. Same as before, we pulled up and within 10 minutes we were back on the road. Hey ho and a big sigh... then we spotted a garage with cheap diesel €1.54 L. We'll have some of that, thank you. Craig brimmed Homer and just as we were setting off he noticed a Lidl sign and so we followed the signs, we were hoping 3rd time lucky on the supermarket sweep.

After about 15km Craig pulled to Homer to a sudden halt and after a couple of sharp words mainly beginning with "f" he spun Homer round and headed back to where we'd just come from. We'd left the fuel cap at the garage.....derrr. Thankfully it was still there when we returned just where we left it, so popped it on and set off, again. An hour later we were exiting Lidl full of happy smiles and lots of goodies.

We drove around a few places to find a space for the night but not much around here. Polistena was quite dim and miserable and the only horizontal place we could find was the cemetery. Not ideal but at least it should be dead quiet. bum bum.

Thursday 3rd July: Polistena to Fabrizia

Polistena was just a kip stop, so once we'd had breakfast we set off to the highlands. The drive was brilliant winding up and down through valleys, crossing tiny bridges that just managed to hold the weight of Homer and dodging massive pot holes in the road. Some of the pot holes were more like mini craters, which Craig expertly managed to avoid. As we approached the little village of Fabrizia we spotted a water tap. Just as we were about to get the hose pipe out a chap in a white van stopped and told us to get water from Acqua and pointed back to where we'd come from. You could tell he was

saying it was the best water in Italy (not heard that before) but we couldn't quite understand where he wanted us to go. We didn't see any village or fountain on our way here, so where the heck did he mean? The chap was a genuinely nice soul and he ended up driving us to Acqua. 2 minutes up the road and the van man pointed towards a dirt track and before we could blink, he'd gone. We looked at the dirt track and thought, is this worth it? The tiny dirt track could go on for miles and we only need a bit of water. Is it worth getting stuck? Craig wasn't



The water fountain that brought us to Acqua

too fussed but I said I wanted to have a look. It was a squeeze for Homer but by gosh it was worth it. As the little lane came to an end, it opened up into a well maintained and immutably clean forest with a natural spring, picnic area and a small fishing lake. It was Bella Bella Bella. With no one around except a couple of forest rangers, we asked if it was OK to fill up with water. The wardens were lovely and friendly but they kept telling us to do something regarding the water. No matter how hard we tried they couldn't get their point across and we just couldn't understand. Next minute one of the chaps jumped in his car and asked us to

follow him. It was going to be one of those days, three steps forward and two steps back. Craig reluctantly followed whilst I thought it was great...2nd person in a row helping us fill up.

I think is brill and adds to the adventure and anyway we have all the time in the world so why not have fun. The chap drove to a natural water fountain with a tap and big tubbo (hosepipe). Bloody brilliant, saves filling the 10l water containers and traipsing back and forth. We filled up



Our parking spot in the forest for the next few days

and then decided to go back to the forest and explore it for a while. Back at the forest, we parked and asked the wardens if it was OK to stay overnight. They were chuffed to bits for us to stay but couldn't understand why we would want to stay there. We exchanged pleasant bits of words and with the help of a phrase book and a paper map, we explained our trip so far. They were genuinely interested in us, the motorhome, our trip but still couldn't understand why we wanted to stay in the forest. I suppose when you work somewhere day in and day out, you stop seeing the beauty and only see the chores? Little by little another warden would turn up and by the end I bet we had around 15 wardens around us asking questions. We spent the rest of the day chatting (couple of hours) and it was so nice to share our experience with them.



Our new forest friends the extremely welcoming Rangers

After a yummy tea, we went for a stroll around the forest, it was just wonderful. Not a soul in sight, so we have a huge





forest all to ourselves, how cool. We'd only been back in Homer a few minutes when an elder chap pulled up and walked over to the van. "Elo Elo, you English, you there" We stepped out of Homer, half expecting there to be a problem but quite the opposite. Word had spread in to Fabrizia that the English people had arrived in Fabrizia and this little old chap had drove to the forest to greet us. How sweet. It felt bazaar to have everyone talking about it but also nice at the same time. His name was Emmanuale and many years ago he spent time in Southampton where he learned to speak English. Emmanuale was so friendly and he gave us a few different church postcards that he recommended we visit.

He was only a small chap but he had a heart of gold, you could tell. Craig reckoned he was gay but either way it didn't matter because Emmanuale was a lovely chap. We said good bye but somehow we got the feeling that we'd be seeing quite a lot of Emmanuale.

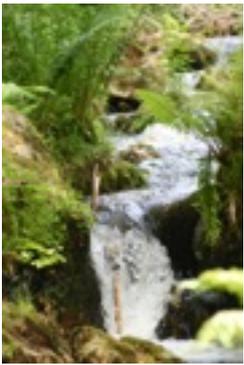
Craig opened a chilled bottle of white wine. To his surprise it was red and fizzy, it was so funny because the cork went pop and he absolutely shit himself, as anyone would when it pinged all the way around Homer killing everything in its path. The wine also completely messed with his head...fizzy red but none the less, he still chinned it. As we sat looking at a new moon, we notice red flashing dots. Aaaaah fire flies and they are following the little stream. We watched them dance and twinkle and strut their stuff in the hole of finding a partner. After a couple of hours the fire flies twinkle started to fade but once again they had put on a wonderful and fascinating display. Time for bed and what a refreshing change, the air temperature had dropped to a lovely 16, it was heaven.

Friday 4th July: Fabrizia

We said good morning to our new forrest friends and you could see how happy they were to see we had not moved on. Equally, it was lovely to walk up to a warm hello and bunch of happy faces. They wear their uniforms with pride, Parco Nazionale Della Sila and so they should as they are doing a fantastic job. Years ago they felled the area for



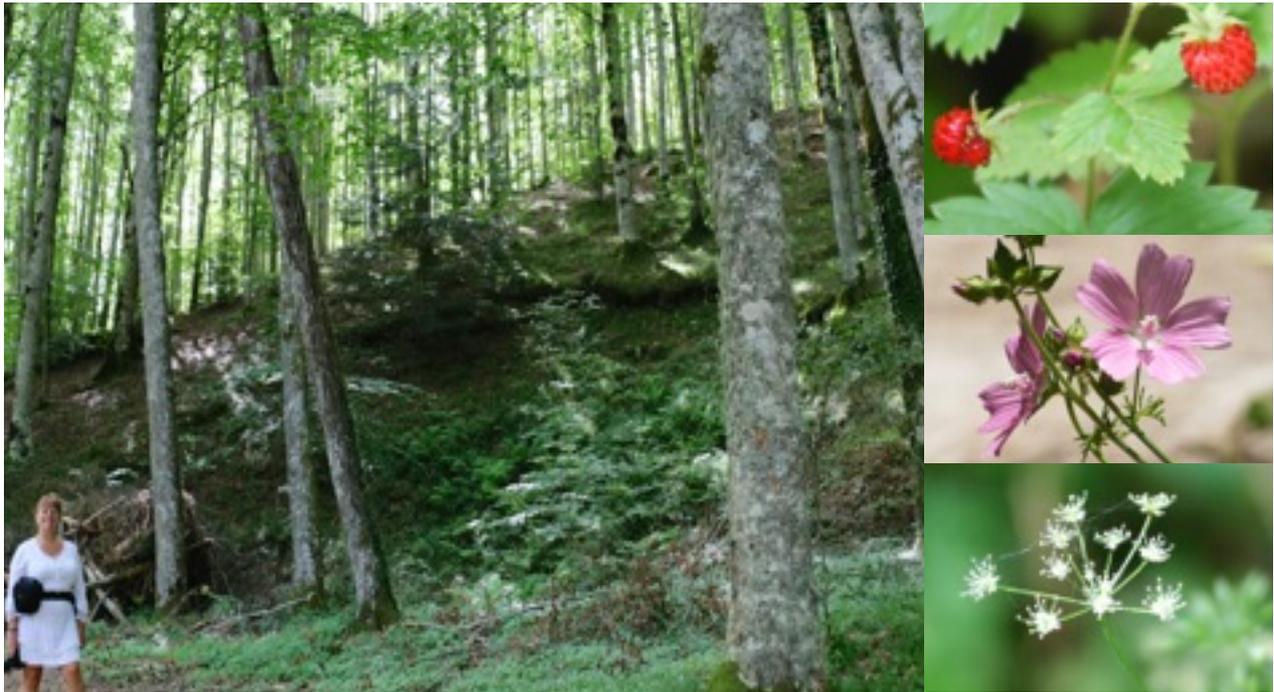
construction for numerous things including the fine churches in Rome. With no very little forest the area became plagued with malaria, killing a large part of the Calabria population. With poverty and malaria it was a while before the Calabria Region got back on its feet (and it still one of the poorest parts of Italy). Now the forest is protected along with its ancient pines, Giganti Della Sila, which can live for several hundred years.



We had another walk in to the forest, sticking to one of the many trails. We saw loads of different plants like strawberries, mushroom and wild flowers. We didn't see any birds, which surprised us but we did see some cool butterflies and moths. On our way back we noticed a big pond, which we think is to hopefully attract a few anglers, one day? Back at Homer and everyone was having a site meeting. We think they were talking about cutting down certain trees because when we were out walking a few of the team were marking trees that looked a little manly. Once the meeting over with the main chap from yesterday (Guilespie) came over and started chatting. We couldn't understand what he was saying but we tried until a young girl turned up. Another one of the wardens had called their daughter and asked her to come over. Louisa was 16 and she spoke a little English. She asked us loads of questions on behalf of the forest team and vice versa. By 2pm everyone was heading off and it was only once they'd all gone we managed to suss out what Guilespie wanted - he was asking us to join them for lunch. Too late, they'd all gone, gutted. Guilespie returned before any to the others, so he jointed us and shared an espresso.

Later that afternoon we were just dozing when tap tap on the door. Emmanuale dropped by to say hello. He chatted on and on about all sorts but he is one of those guys that you could listen to all day, he is little gem. Then his sister telephoned and asked him to hurry up. He'd only





nipped out to pick up some medicine for his sick mother, poor mom was suffering whilst Emmanuale wasted precious time nattering to us.

That night, plenty cars came and went, all having a toot at us and Homer. We certainly were the highlight of the town.

Saturday 5th July: Fabrizia

It is nice and cool at night but during the day it still get pretty hot and today is no exception. It too hot to talk a walk in the forest, so we had a cycle in to Fabrizia. The village had a few little shops but not sure if open or closed. Everyone watched

us cycle around the village. We went to the church and cycled through the village streets. This place must be one of the tidiest and cleanest

villages in Italy, it such a refreshing change. The people and the houses look quite poor but guessing not much call for work out here in the middle of nowhere. Then I hear "oann" "oann". It was my mate Emmanuale shouting from his home. We cycled over and he was so pleased to see us. Please come in "oann and aigio". Then his sister came to the door and looked at Emmanuale. I guess his mother wasn't too





Emmanuale's church

well and the last thing she needed was strangers chatting away. We declined and said we needed to head back. Shame because it would have been nice to see how they lived especially as Emmanuale had one of the largest houses in Fabrizia. From the front door, it didn't look much - concrete stair case with no carpet and an old table with lace cloth on top.



No wonder the people of Fabrizia are frightened of Peanut



Remembrance wall

Sunday 6th July: Fabrizia

As we looked out the window we could see two little old ladies dressed all in black with clog hopper 'wellies on their feet . They were carrying little baskets? We had no idea what they were doing but it was only 5:30 so whatever it is, I sure hope it is worth losing sleep for. Later we discovered they were out picking the prized and highly sort after truffle and by gosh you need to be up early to pick.

Its is sunday and picnic day for all the family, so the village people have come to the forest to have Sunday lunch with their families. The chaps all put on their wells and headed in to the forest for truffles and forest food whilst the moms got the fire ready. At the side of us are 3 little separate areas. Each with their seating, table, canopy and BBQ. Even the nuns came to the forest to join in the fun and



Found this little chap on out floor this morning - who's invading who's space?



tuck in to some good grub. Quite a few of the people offered us food and asked us to join them for the BBQ but Craig is a fussy eater, so we politely declined. We watch the families had the odd chat and then decided to go in to Fabrizia for the night. On the way, we pulled up at the main fountain and filled up Homer. We also dumped our grey water straight in to one of the main drains, as the road was at a perfect angle for draining all the water. Once empty we closed the tap and then went inside and ran a load of fresh water in to the grey water tank to give it a good rinse. The soap build up stinks, so good to give it a rinse every so often. After a bit of a slosh I went in to the garage to open the tap and let the grey water drain again. **Craig there's a load of water pouring in to the garage, in fact its like a waterfall. Jesus Christ where did all that come from, shit turn off the taps.** An hour later and we'd sussed out the

leak - The shower tray has two plug-holes and the wall of the rear plug-hole had a little hole in that had been bunged up with mastic. You couldn't see it without using a mirror, so well hidden, We guess it has been there for a long time? We mopped up the water and and dried all the basket and storage boxes. Then another Oh Shit look at this. Homer has a nasty looking hole in the garage floor and as we tapped the floor and peeled back the floor, it didn't look great. It also stunk which explains why cant get rid of the nasty smell despite our constant cleaning of anything and everything. We tracked the water trail and we could see the water path right in the guts of Homers main timbers. As we followed it to the roots, it became clear that the little shower hole has probably been dripping tiny amounts for a long time and over that time its rotted the floor. Craig boddged the shower hole, so at least we stopped any more water



damage as well as being able to still shower. What we couldn't do is bodge the floor and we have a real worry that the rot is in the main timbers. Ummmm not sure what to do.

We parked up in Fabrizia on the village square and chatted about our options before retiring for the evening.



Monday 7th July: Fabrizia to Cosenza

We set our stall out and got all Homers documents together then we moved to a shaded and let distracting place. We all details to hand we called the warranty people - we have another 20 days on the warranty, so fingers crossed its covered. The girl on the other end took our details and asked us to give them a call once at the garage, so she could approve or reject the claim depending on the cause. We then rang Edgehill (who we bought the motorhome from) and as always, they were very helpful. Our concern over the safety of the vehicle is worrying both of us and Craig doesn't really worry. We had no idea if it was structural. We had a look at the repair centres and nothing in Southern Italy. The nearest one is near Bologna in the north. Given the nature of the problem we decided to go to Germany and take Homer to Hymer, the manufacturer and if there is a serious problem we can hopefully claim under the warranty. Now we had 20 days left, so best get our skates on.

On the way out of Fabrizia we called at Emmanuale's house, I had written him a little thank you note for his kind and warm welcome to Fabrizia. Unfortunately he wasn't in but his sister took the note and we just had to trust she would pass on. We then went to the forest to say cheerio to our forest friends. As we pulled up they came dashing over. They were gutted to find out we were leaving but when we explained they understood. Unfortunately they wanted to help fix the problem in an Italian way, so they called have the village to help. We couldn't stop them and it was a welcome relief when one of their daughters turned up, she spoke a little English. Eventually they understood our plan which allowed all the village folk to go back home. Then just as we were leaving, Emmanuale came speeding in to the forest. He had just received my note and he came to say good bye. He gave us a big hug and kiss and shed a few tears (and so did we) as we set off to,,, Germany.



This little old lady filled her water bottles from the fountain everyday. We are not sure where she lived but it was at least a 3km walk. We noticed her several times but never managed to get a photo of her carrying the water on her head. Remarkable lady



I drove to Cosenza and boy was it hot. We passed loads of field fires where the hay had got too hot and just ignited with the heat. Can you imagine if we chose to wild camp and didn't know about the fires, I dread the thought. At one point Homer really struggled to get up a road as the tarmac was just peeling away, it was scary.



Once in Cosenza we went straight to Lidl and filled up with food. It was also a decent car park, which will do us just fine for the night.

From this point things got a little worst, so I didn't manage to type up the updates until 20th July. Fingers crossed my notes good enough to jog my memory

Tatty bye for now xx