
REPAIRS ALL ROUND

Craig | Joanne | Peanut



Overview

The mood in camp didn't change much in fact it probably got a little worse before it got better. We all seemed to be suffering from something and if it ended in 'al' it needed attention - mechanical, physical, emotional, dental etc. Even Peanut was grumpy and tired with the heat. We've certainly tried to make the most of our stay in Ferrara but when you are banned from going in the sun things do get quite restrictive especially when you are living in a tin box. Every time we picked ourselves up something else seemed to knock us down and every little minor thing ended up feeling like a massive issue. However, we found some nice supermarkets and monasteries to wander around in between visiting hospital, the pharmacy, the water fountain, the bank and the garage. Glad to say my hubby still has his builders bum and lovely to see him get giddy over some homer improvements. Come the end of the week we were ready to move on and back to being happy campers.

Saturday 12th July: Bologna to Ferrara

OK Homer is not feeling great but onwards and upwards. We arrived late last night, so no idea what our surroundings look like apart from we know its quiet. We gazed out the window to find a beautiful old building with lots of arches and a courtyard. No idea what it used to be in its hay day but certainly very attractive and such a shame to now see it condemned and surrounded in orange "keep out" tape. **Now listen up Homer, you'll be permanently parked in that courtyard if you don't behave yourself.** With that we tucked everything in and hit the road towards Verona.

It feels really bazaar and in many ways feels like we are in France not Italy. The area and life style is so very different to the Italy we've experienced for the last 3 months. Its lie a checker board of fields and plains with the Po river running everywhere you turn. Here it is very tidy with large uniquely styled villas in the surrounding farmland. Lots of fast cars and middle ages men thinking they are Tom Selleck with dark slicked back hair and turned up t-shire collar. After slumming it in the south we may have to upgrade the clothes otherwise people will be chucking money at us. Hey that might not be a bad thing, it will at least pay for the repair bills lol.

This morning. we had a look at the map and decided to head to one of the approved Italian Hymer dealers. Its on the way to Verona, so might as well. When we spoke to Hymer they could not see us until mid August. This is our thinking...we have a warranty that runs out in a couple of weeks and if we get to a Hymer dealer and have them fix it then good chance everything will be covered under warranty. We've called the warranty and logged the claim, so in terms of notification we are OK but the clock is ticking.

You have to have the repairs done in a given timeframe and the timeframe is even tighter if you are travelling outside the UK. The main worry is the water damage impact, if its rotten (like rotten timbers in your home) then it may be written off and I don't fancy writing off £40k. However, the italian culture is very different to ours and they will quite happily ride around in a motorhome until it falls to pieces. Everything is safe until it is not longer fit for purpose. So their views will probably not align with ours just because of our up bringing. We called a few people back in the UK to just to sense check our thoughts.



Spotted this home made roof for the cement tub.



There are a lot of cherubs in the area. Might be us but we think they look evil rather than angelic.

This little cubby one certain sent a shiver down my spine.

We arrived at the Italian Hymer dealers at 3pm - mid the italian witching hour when they all switch down. We had a bite to eat and waited in the blistering heat. I don't have any but sure felt like I was sweating my nackers off. When the dealer opened we went inside and it looked like a really old warehouse. The lady asked us to wait 10 minutes. An hour later she asked us to take Homer around the back and the mechanic guided us in to one of his bays.

In all fairness the lady did speak good English but she was one hell of a stuck up *itch and she knew what was best. We went through all the different problems for her to say ...we can do but we don't know how long and really, we don't want to do them. Her view was..well if the grill doesn't work then find another way to cook or if the heater doesn't work go somewhere hot. You know when you want to give someone a slap but can't. We politely said thank you for ALL her HELP and how grateful we were for her professional advice then shot off. The only thing she could do for us is find a replacement handle for the roof window.

By now my itching was painful and to calm it down we drove around the corner and I dunked myself in a bucket of cold water. A bit like our Oliver but I look like a big inelegant umps lumpa rather than a dainty cutie. Everything was itching, I was in agony. It was already hot but having an itch on top made my skin unbearable. My skin was that red, you swear I was a pickled beetroot. Once my skin calmed down we had some tea and then set off to Verona.



As we arrived in Ferrara the road signed got a little confusing with all the different road works and improvement programs. Then as we turned the corner Homer did one hell of a cough and splutter. If you didn't know better you'd think he'd gone in for a long jump. Jeez Homer you nearly gave us heart attack. We looked at the dash and could see an amber light. We both sighed and pulled over. Craig spotted a Fiat dealer and so slowly showed Homer the way. I felt sorry for Homer, he was shattered just like the rest of us. We are all tidy, weary, fed up, grumpy and hot.

The Fiat dealer reopens on Monday morning.

We tried to log on to the internet to see if we could find a fiat centre that opened on Sundays and a doctor but guess what...we cant get on the internet. You need two things to get on the internet - credit in our broadband account and a signal. We didn't have both. We drove around a little and found a signal but to top up you need access and to get access you need credit. Bloody stupid why don't they have an emergency number when stupid people like us forget to top up! Craig did the set up at home (being the computer wiz) but he forgot how to top up. We fafted around the rest of the day trying to get access. I even tried to get hold of my sister to pinch her McDonald user name but she was in silence doing a master cleanse. Oh how the little things in life seem so difficult at times. Wait one minute scratch scratch. *Craig will you just itch my back its driving me nuts. No not like that, just scratch the damn thing don't piss around being all gentle just scratch hard man. I am doing my best. Well I am still itching so its not worked. God give me strength. And me.*

That night my itching became a real concern.

Sunday 12th July: to Friday 18th July: Ferrara

The next morning Craig was up and out before I could lift my eye lids. I was semi cursing him for storming out and being in a foul mood when in fact he'd gone to the police station to find out if there was an emergency doctors in the area. I felt bad for thinking bad thoughts about him, he's a good guy and I know he loves me to bits. Think I need to give him a big cuddle xxx

We went to the doctors and sat in a dark corridor with half a dozen other sick folk. It was like waiting for a prison sentence with no light, grubby chairs and posters reminding you that aids kills. If I was lucky I could be one of the people to get a free test for cholera! Every so often I could hear a faint hum and not

sure if it was a mosquito trying to eat me alive or if the man's chest was about to explode. At the end of the dark corridor there was a door labelled "ambi 3". The walls were paper thin and you could hear the whole patient / doctor conversation. Not sure on the diagnosis but the woman opposite was clearly not impressed as her eye brows nearly fell off several times. Either that or she didn't like the sound effects when the doctor said "bend over". I just sat there and scratched like a monkey whilst they all looked at me like I was some freak. You know what, I didn't give a shit and if one of them says a wrong word to me, I will deck um.

I tiptoed in to the doctors and like a little mouse said **hello, do you speak english?** She was a young doctor and asked me to wait on moment. She returned with a colleague who spoke English. After a quick examination she told me to go straight to the hospital. I was gutted she couldn't just give me some drugs and send me on my way. I also shit myself, what the hell is wrong with me, hospital eh?

We went to Ferrara A&E, a really plush hospital. They did the triage assessment, I passed and got taken to another room. Then they did the initial doctor assessment and I passed and got taken to another waiting room. I then got taken to another room and a senior doctor took a look at me, I passed and got taken to another room. Then we noticed the time...oh shit, its witching hour and we're going to be sat here for hours. And we did. I was gutted we never got £200 for each time I passed go, too. Eventually a lady called Lucia stormed in to the room. She wore a long white coat and dolly shoes. She had a stern look on her face and there was no crossing her. **I speak little English OK. Better than my Italian. Umm. Now strip.** I didn't know if she meant everything or just my top? If I strip everything and she doesn't mean it, I will look a bloody fool but if she does, then she'll shout at me again. Oh god. I will just take off my top. **More, More, keep going.** Not sure this felt very dignified and felt more like a strip search than an skin examination. It felt like something out of a carry on film with a strict matron. Lucia wrote her report and sighed a lot along with the word Allora, which we later found out means next. **Oanne, I think you have a skin problem.** Really, I would never have guessed. God she is good the quack. **Now go to pharmacy and pick up these drugs and come back tomorrow morning at 10. This is the place E 1 0 Amb 7. You understand, yes.** I take the mick but she was actually very good, she examined my skin and asked me loads of questions. The language barrier caused a few issues but we got there in the end and she spent several hours examining me. Lucia ended up being the senior dermatologist at the University of Ferrara Hospital - a bit of luck?

For the next 6 days we stayed in Ferrara getting things back on track, nearly.

A lovely walled city with a chic warehouse feel due to all the brick architecture.



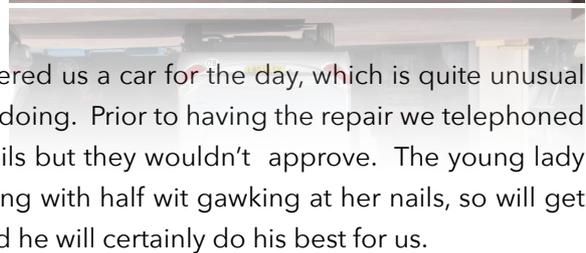
I spent hours most days in and out the hospital having all sorts of tests and seeing Lucia. Lucia arranged so many tests my skin looked like a pin cushion. We even had a cultural communicator to help translate with the medical staff that didn't speak any English. Lucia prescribe a number of drugs including steroids and cortisone but without the tests she couldn't confirm her diagnosis. The phlebotomy lady thinks I may have a parasite infection from the fir tree whilst Lucia thinks it is photo-dermatoses. I was ordered to not go out in the day and to bath as much as possible (challenging when your in a motorhome with broken shower). On Friday 18th I met up with Lucia to run through all the tests. Unfortunately news from the lab says they wont all be ready until 29th July and then Lucia goes on holiday for a month. So next appointment will be September. We made the decision to move on to a cooler climate as it gets silly hot here. The hospital will send my results home and Lucia will do me a referral letter plus drugs for another 7 days. That way I can either find another doctor when we get to cooler climate or fly home. If I go in the sun, I must cover up and also put on this prescription sunblock but at least I am now free to go out!

Homer's hopping around got worse but we were stuck between taking him to the garage or me to the hospital. Anyway we finally got him slotted in at the Fiat dealer and the diagnosis was as expected engine throttle sensor and injection controller. Craig thought the diesel consumption had increased on the last run, which lines up with the problem. The garage were so helpful and friendly and did the repairs very quickly. They understood our issues with time and the hospital

and worked with us, which really helped. They even offered us a car for the day, which is quite unusual for Italy. The repairs cost just under €600 but it needed doing. Prior to having the repair we telephoned the warranty company in UK and gave them all the details but they wouldn't approve. The young lady just kept saying the computer says no. No point debating with half wit gawking at her nails, so will get Edgehill to phone up and sort out for us. Lee is great and he will certainly do his best for us.

The way in which the warranty people dealt with the claim (our 1st and only claim) made us think about our trip in a different light. Of course we want everything fixing, it is our home but we need a balance that works for us and not them. They dictate timescales that are not practical for us given I need treatment and the fact we are a few 1000's km away from the garage. We are going to inform them that I have a skin problem and we will get to Germany as soon as we can. We will travel at our pace and get the repairs done when we can. I will put it all in writing - its about being fair and reasonable end of. We are not too fussed about the little things, its the timbers and the shower. Craig has bodged the shower but can you imagine no shower with skin condition and 40+ degrees, not good. If I don't have my cold showers then I turn in to a ugly monster and not very pleasant to be around. Anything that moves in out 2 foot floor space will get its head bitten off...poor Craig & Peanut.

Parking wise, we found some great spots in Ferrara mainly the hospital car park. We're not joking. It was flat, clean, a few plants, a grid or two and plenty spaces and also free.



Non of this £1 an hour malarky like at home. It was perfect for motorhomes. The best spot was right at the side of the mortuary - dead quiet and not too busy with visitors. We had a lovely view out to Ferrara and the surrounding countryside and when we got bored we just drove Homer to another part of the hospital. When not at the hospital we parked outside a cemetery and then outside a monastery.

I am banned from going out in daylight, so when I am not at the hospital, I am either in Homer or walking around a supermarket. One day I got so bored I took my camera in to a supermarket and took photo's for everyone. When I think about it now, I must have looked a right tool taking

photographs of tomatoes and chickens. Who in their right minds takes photos of supermarkets, clearly I am not right in the head and neither is Craig for letting me take photo's. This skin condition

has made me stupid. Anyway, I have taken the photo's so you might as well have a look - it shows how good the supermarkets are over here. In fact, this is the day Craig went and got all sorts of goodies to cheer me



Fine hung ham



Olive Oil Selection



Live Crabs
You'd be alright
'pinching' one of these



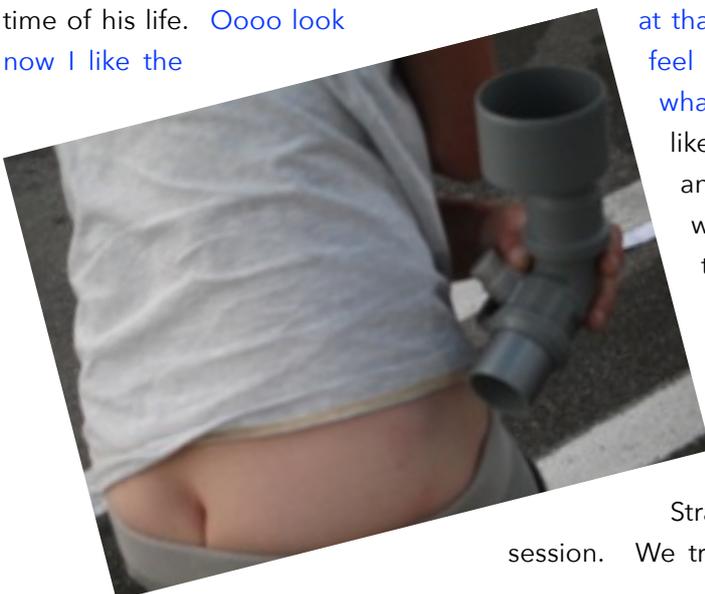
up. He bought all sorts of different foods to do a tapas sort of tea and then we realised I had to fast for 24 hours. I really felt sorry for Craig, he planned it all so well. My hubby is wonderful...when he's not grumpy.



Equino = horse meat looks dark



One day we found a Bricoman. Now how cool is that for a name. Every time I see it, I smile. I can just imagine the Italian TV advert...BRIC-O-MAN in a deep masculine voice. A bit like our Cilit Bang advert where you slam in down on the counter to prove its strength. Anyway, Craig was like a kid in a sweet shop. We entered the store and the usual happened, I am sure this happens to all men and not just my Craig. He struts in and couple of feet in to this big store, stands there, legs a part, hands on hips and looks around like he knows what he is doing. This inner confidence appears from nowhere and all of a sudden we are traipsing up and down bloody DIY isles and he is having the time of his life. [Oooo look now I like the](#)



[at that screw, that will fit in the bog cavity. Oooo feel of this pipe, its good grade this stuff, wonder what I could use that for.](#) I followed him around like a lap dog, smiling to reassure him I was alive and nodding to look like I understood what he was chunnering on about. Occasionally I touched his shoulder then people didn't think he was on his own. A one point he spotted something and he got so excited he shot out the door to measure Homer's watering hole. Within minutes he was back in BRICOMAN stomping towards me with "yes" smile. Straight to the drain pipe section for a jigsaw session. We tried all sorts of pipes in pipes, every bloody

combination until Craig was happy. Two pieces of grey pipes later and we existed the store with our purchases. Craig went outside for a tinker, which I must admit was nice to see because we've had a lot of shit lately and to see him happy fills me with joy. If two pieces of pipe make him this happy, he can have another two tomorrow! With his builders bum he went to work and made a self holding funnel for filling Homer when he is using the water tubs. Whilst Craig tinkered I went on the loo. We have the net closed, so most of the time we don't have to shut the bathroom door when we go to the loo. Motorhomes are great but sitting on a loo with your nose pressed against a sliding door in 40+ is not great. I sat there on the loo, in the middle of BRICOMAN car park watching the people go back and forth. Then it dawned on me, this is weird. I actually hadn't thought of it before now but every day we sit in the middle of a car park and have a poop whilst people walk on by without any inclination of what we are doing. At home, I never once walked in to Sainsbury's and thought someone in this car park is having a poop and watching me right now. So folks next time you see a motorhome in a car park...please do not disturb or if you do, bring a newspaper.



Oh forgot, found this in BRICOMAN for my sister Mandy. It is wrapped safely in the back of Homer for you. Is it big enough?



When I went to the lab for tests we met a full on gangster. We are guessing he was a dangerous guy because he was surrounded by three police officers (carabinieri) and the chap only had one leg, so hardly gonna do a runner, is he. I actually felt for the guy because everyone who walked passed him looked at him like he was dirt. If looks could spit then they spat. They made it so obvious and whilst the guy probably was a toe rag, we shouldn't jump (no pun intended) to conclusions. After all the guy might be the victim of a crime and the police are there to protect him.

Craig bought a fag machine to do his rollies. It was so funny watching him try and work out how the thing worked. After about 20 fags he said, i give up, I don't know how this damn thing works. I just passed him the box and showed him the 1.2.3 step instruction. I laughed, he frowned. Typical man trying to work stuff out rather than read the instructions. I must admit he has cut down quite a lot, so well

chuffed for him. In a few weeks I will swop out his tobacco with my camomile herbs and lets see if he notices. Just had a thought...it may calm him down hahaha. I will keep you posted chaps.

I remember one particular night, I was so tired and my feet were swollen and my legs itching like mad. Craig went and got me some freezing cold water from a cemetery tap and made me a big bowl of water to soak my feet. I stuck my feet in it, it was heaven. I was so comfy I went to sleep. Unfortunately the heat and the itching got the better of me and at 3am I went for a 2 hour walk around Ferrara. I was shattered but it was heaven to get out of Homer and walk round without covering up and hiding from the sun. I had a right old chat to myself as I wandered around the town and put the world to rights. On the way back to Homer I spotted a bakers and it was just opening. I got Craig a lovely big croissant, his favourite and an apple slice. It should make a nice surprise for his breakfast.



The weather has been very hot in Ferrara and there is no breeze. One night we passed a temperature station and it was 43 (110) at 8pm at night. How sticky hot is that! The day I went for bloods was hot and a bit scary too. Obviously we couldn't take Peanut in to the hospital, so we had to leave him in Homer. We opened every window

and door possible plus showered him but with no breeze it was too hot. Craig nipped back several times but after spending all day in the heat and with the odd tea break, he struggled. Poor little man was finding it so hard and we're sure the heat is stressing him out. Leaving him for so long was a horrible feeling and we did our best to juggle everything but still felt awful leaving him.

The monastery at our side "San Georgio" was pretty good.

Again it was one of those places where time stood still and the pure simplicity of the church, beautiful paintings and the humble accommodation brought tears to my eyes. As we walked around the little monk who often loitered outside the





main entrance followed us everywhere (you often saw him chatting to people and we got the feeling he was giving them a little guidance). You didn't always see him but you knew he was there following your every move. In fact, at times you could feel and see eyes following you all around, monks in prey and peeking through curtains. It was a little spooky at times especially near the crypt. Thank god the church bells didn't ring otherwise I'd have screened the house down. The monastery had a tower at the side of the main church and originally we thought it was just the bell tower but no, it was the tower where they placed all the dead monks. We didn't take many photo's inside the monastery so not to offend but it was beautiful.



Detail on the brick work, nice but spooky





We found a little take out pizza place runs by two young Sicilian brothers. One night we called for a take out and you know what it was delicious. So good we went back the next night and he did me a special pizza.pesto, cheese and sausage. Craig opted for the spicy salami. The brothers were lovely and they came from La Bahira and totally shocked when we



said we stayed there. Obviously it opened up the conversation to talk about our homes towns - Sicily & UK. They told us that Sicily is beautiful and they miss it along with their family but the government is corrupt and they cant make a decent living. With this they both headed north and opened up their little pizza place. Next month they go home to Sicily for a holiday and both of them were looking forward to a months break. The elder brother said he once went to England with his girlfriend. I thought he said he went for Nookee but I misunderstood he went for Newquay. I am not quite sure he understood the meaning of nookee, which is probably a good thing but it did make me smile given its reputation.



We had a cycle in to Ferrara a few times mainly in the evening when the sun went down. It was quite a pleasant place and I liked the feel of it. Craig wasn't too struck on the place but I think that was more to do with the rinse and repeat situation. Constantly driving back and forth to the hospital or the garage or the chemist etc etc. Ferrara is quite a cosmopolitan kinda place and very pretty.





The local Catholic Club

Originally owned by the Este dukes who commissioned all the artists in the area to build the town. As you can imagine with a bunch of artists, it is well pretty and very elegant and many refer to it as the finest Renaissance city in Europe. In 18th century the Este family had no one left to inherit the land (not surprising since they loved killing each other) and they had to hand over to Ferrara and got kicked out to Medena. Under the papacy rule the town went down hill and everyone abandoned what was once a beautiful bustling town. Years later the town dusted itself

down and started again with grand squares, medieval palaces, portico lined streets. Its a walled city and during the evening everyone seems to run or cycle along the wall. Must admit, it is a pretty place. The

two pretty cool things to see are the massive moated castle and romanesque-gothic cathedral but loads of other stuff as well. Ferrara is the type of place you could quite easily sit in the piazza with cool drink and people watch all day. They have a lot of open air concerts in the

city and next month Simple Minds, James Blunt and James are playing there. Shame we'll not be around for the Simple Minds, quite like a bit of Midge.





Candle for Russell



Where's Craig? Confession Box?



At the beginning of the week my sister said Russell was misbehaving in the back of Homer. He was frustrated because he never got the chance to travel in the motorhome with us and hence all the problems. We had a word with him and told him we'd chuck him out on Anfield if he didn't behave. Really helped me get back to being a glass half full . thank you sis xxx and with that we're off in to the mountains not sure where but it will be cooler and closer to Germany...ish.

xxx