

French Rivers Trip Diary June 2017

[all times (which are the times that the Facebook posts were made) are in AWST = French time +6 hours, ie subtract 6 to get local time]

Jun 13, 2017 4:37pm traveling to Paris, France from Paris Aéroport - Charles de Gaulle (CDG).

Jun 13, 2017 6:52pm added a new photo to Isaac Reid's timeline.
We've just arrived in Paris, and drove past the Stade de France, where England play France tonight.



Jun 14, 2017 4:03am

We have started the cruise! First attraction is the Eiffel Tower & original statue of Liberty (where we turned around and headed downstream).



Jun 15, 2017 4:12am

Today we visited Vernon (lovely half-timbered houses, etc, along with Bizy Chateau (miniature Versailles), and then Les Andelys mainly for Castle Gaillard (built by Richard II) up on the hill overlooking our cruise boat.





Jun 15, 2017 8:52pm

This morning, we visited Jumièges Abbey, considered to be "the most beautiful ruin in France". For some time in the 19th Century it was owned by someone who treated it as a quarry, selling off the building material piece by piece!



Jun 15, 2017 8:57pm

Later this morning, we visited the nearby Abbey Wandrille, which is still operating. It has 31 monks, and we were shown around by Friar Lucien. It functions according to the Benedictine order, which is not super strict (though the monks are silent - our guide had a special dispensation to speak!), and which also requires the monks to work to fund the Monastery. In order to help them, we bought some Monastery-made chocolate in the shop!



Jun 17, 2017 12:37am

This is going back a couple of weeks, when we were in Linz, Austria, but I really liked this image I saw in souvenir shops there! I should have bought the T-shirt, but already have too many (or the mug, but ditto)!



Jun 17, 2017 4:53am

Today we visited the Normandy landing beaches, in particular the British and Canadian sector (Gold Beach and Juno Beach), as well as the iron lifting "Pegasus" bridge (the first to be captured early on D-Day, prior to the landings), and a couple of (predominantly) Canadian cemeteries. Sobering...



Jun 17, 2017 1:32pm checked in to Rouen, France.
What a perfect day in Rouen!

Jun 18, 2017 3:27am

A very pleasant day spent in Rouen; here are some of the highlights (first being view across the Seine to the city (cathedral spire in background, our boat in foreground); then Rouen Cathedral, then St Maclou Church, St Maclou Aître (a 16thC cemetery, in the form of a cloister), and St Ouen church.



Jun 18, 2017 11:48pm

Cruising down the (Seine) river, on a Sunday afternoon. Gentle breeze, nicely warm, just about to have some crepes made on the spot... 😊



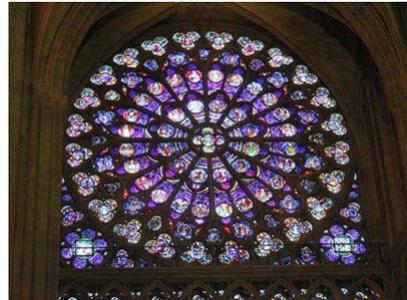
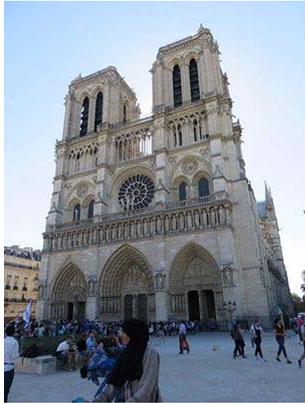
Jun 19, 2017 7:30pm

Yesterday morning, we visited Auvers-sur-Oise, the final destination of Vincent van Gogh, where he spent 70 days, painted 80 paintings, and died as a result of a gunshot wound to his stomach. Here is the church he famously painted, with (conveniently) a poster of his painting nearby. I looked as hard as I could, but could not see the little angel/demon in the window so vividly depicted in that Dr Who episode!



Jun 19, 2017 7:36pm

This morning we did a walking tour of the isles of Paris, famously including the Isle de la Cité on which sits Notre Dame de Paris (the last time we visited it was in Nov-2010 with Chris Wright - no queues to get in then!). Here the famous facade, the door and the rose window.



Jun 19, 2017 10:53pm

OK, so there's this helium tethered balloon near the boat, "Ballon de Paris", the largest balloon in the world (6,000 cum of helium) which rises to 35m. I had to take it, didn't I? A bit hot waiting in the queue this afternoon, but stunning views over Paris (eg the one showing the Montparnasse tower in the distance). A little disappointed that the Eiffel tower is only partly visible, and the Arc de Triomphe not at all (some high-rise in the way).



Jun 21, 2017 1:22pm at Bourgogne, France.

Now on the River Saone, gliding peacefully through bucolic Burgundy countryside!



Jun 22, 2017 4:44am

Yesterday, prior to joining our river boat on the River Saone at St Jean de Losne, we visited the pretty Burgundy town of Beaune, whose star attraction is the Hotel Dieu hospice, founded

in 1443 by the Chancellor to the Duke of Burgundy. It is one of the best-preserved medieval buildings in France.



Jun 22, 2017 4:49am

Today (Wednesday) we stopped for a while in the morning at the town of Tournus, on the River Saone. It has the 11th century abbey church of St Philibert (here the cloister garden).



Jun 22, 2017 4:52am

This afternoon, we moved on to Mâcon-sur-Saone, and moored near this 11th century bridge of St Laurent. In the evening was a music festival, with loud music emanating from all parts of the town (but all quiet on board!).



Jun 23, 2017 4:32am

Today we arrived in Lyon, the claimed gastronomic capital of France, if not Europe! If judged by the number of restaurants, then they surely have the title! But Lyon has other treasures... - eg Basilica Notre Dame de Fourvière on the hill overlooking the city, and famous marzipan “cousins” (cushions).



Jun 24, 2017 4:52am

Today, another day in Lyon - I visited the Confluences Museum not far from the boat (too hot to venture further afield). An amazing building (as are 2 others, orange & green, nearby), but while the exhibits were interesting and well laid out, not altogether overwhelming (4 progressive exhibits on Origins, Species, Societies and Destinies); the best was the Lumiere special exhibit, all about the Lumiere brothers who were from Lyon and were the first to have moving images (movies).



Jun 24, 2017 9:24pm

This morning, we stopped in Tournon; great view from the "Garden of Eden" - one man's great passion. But then (see photo) our boat sailed off without us!!! help! What are we going to do? [see my next exciting instalment]



Jun 25, 2017 4:39am

We jumped on a coach after our walking tour of Tournon and caught up with our boat at Le Pouzin - it arrived there 5 minutes before us. Then we sailed to Viviers where we had another walking tour which took in a visit to the St Vincent Cathedral (the smallest in France), where we enjoyed a wonderful organ recital. Great organist, fabulous deep sounding organ. Then enjoyed the panoramic views from outside the Cathedral, over the old town and to the mountains beyond.



Jun 25, 2017 11:41pm

Today we have spent in Avignon. Famous for its broken bridge (and the song that goes with it – “Sous (or Sur) le Pont d’Avignon”), and its Papal Palace built between 1335 and 1352 (or so!) during the 100 years that the Popes used Avignon as their home. The 14thC murals are quite amazing, as are the walls which still encircle the city (5km long - I cycled round them! - the boat won't get away from me this time...)





Jun 27, 2017 1:55pm

You meet some lovely people on cruises: here be Aussies, Irish & New Zealanders!



Jun 27, 2017 7:40pm checked in to InterContinental Carlton Cannes.

Strolling down La Croisette at the beach in Cannes: lots of beautiful people, and lots like us gawking at them!



Jun 29, 2017 3:07am

What a beautiful sight! No, not the Eiffel Tower, nice though it is, but the Australian Embassy, where we can obtain emergency passports to replace those stolen from us yesterday in Cannes (along with my computer). But we've had to defer our departure by a few days, now due to arrive back in Perth late Sunday night. 😊



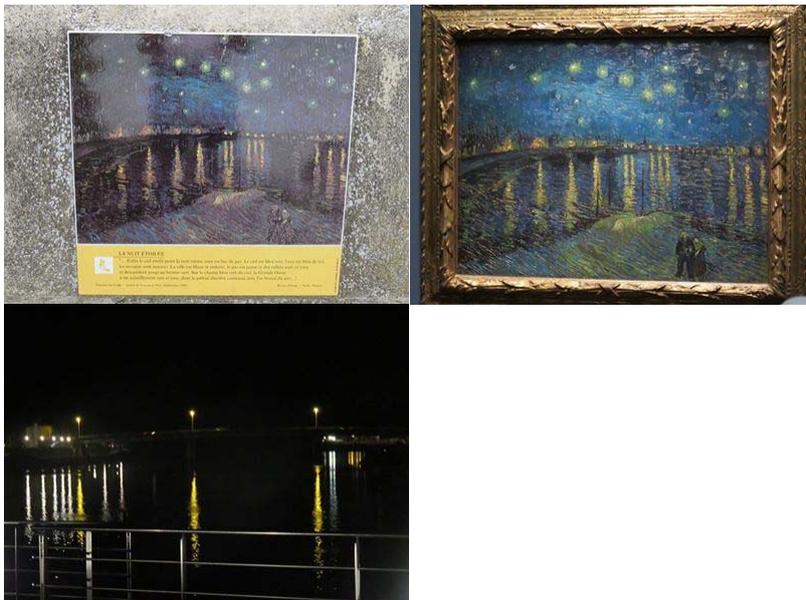
Jun 29, 2017 11:56pm

Just recapping (after the dramatic events of the last 2 days), we finished our cruise in Arles, where we moored for 2 nights, including a cruise further down-river into the Camargue (very little to be seen, actually). I went for a walk along the Van Gogh trail, ending up with this canal bridge, still there! It does seem to have weathered since Van Gogh's time! 😊



Jun 29, 2017 11:59pm

Also in Arles, just adjacent to where we moored, was the first "Starry Night" by Van Gogh, here with the original we just saw in the Musee D'Orsay, and my photo version of nearly the same view!



Jun 30, 2017 12:05am

Also in Arles (quite a bit to see there!) was the Roman Arena, the Roman Theatre, the Cathedral of St Trophime, and the courtyard garden in the hospital where Van Gogh spent some time.





Jun 30, 2017 12:22am

OK, I have now caught up. We took a stroll this morning along the Seine to the Musée D'Orsay (actually, it was 5km! But don't tell Helen), and saw many "attractions" on the way, with Eiffel Tower taking pride of place. In the Musée you can get a beautiful view through the clock face of Sacre Coeur de Montmartre. Of course, there were plenty of beautiful sights inside, too (see others of my posts for some).



Jun 30, 2017 11:35pm

Amazing development in the stolen bag saga. First, we collected our emergency passports this afternoon, so we can travel tomorrow via Heathrow to Perth! Just had a call from our son Tim, in Perth, who had been phoned by a man who says he found my bag near his car in the car park, complete with laptop and passports (Tim is listed as our emergency contact in the passports). He works for the Cannes hotel from which it was stolen, and has now delivered it to the Security Manager there who is arranging to have it sent to us (in Perth - sadly the timing is too tight for him to send it to us here in Paris). Thank the Lord for this mercy!!

Jun 30, 2017 11:48pm

Still using our enforced stay in Paris to look around a bit. Today I took in Field of Mars (THE Tower in background!), Les Invalides (contains tomb of Napoleon), UNESCO...



July 2, 2017 - Paris, France

Saying farewell to Paris, with view from outside our hotel and a very rainy Arc de Triomphe from our taxi...



Then home!!! (arriving just after midnight on Sunday, 2-Jul-17).