

Mick and Trish Openshaw trip to France

Well what can I say about Ray and Christina's Gites – fabulous!!!! Get yourself out there.

My wife Trish and I decided on a weeks break after talking to Ray at last years reunion. He offered us "mates rates" and in good old Naval tradition "mates rates" are 25% more expensive!!!! No only joking, when we contacted him he did us a really good deal.

Now there are quite a few options in getting there but we chose to go from Portsmouth (as we live there) to Le Havre. It did mean a 3½ hour drive on the French side but when driving through the country side out there it didn't really matter.

After an overnight crossing in a first class reclining seat with LD lines and a 3½ hour drive we arrived at Ray and Christina's and were greeted with a friendly and familiar smile, that was Jet the dog who was always there to welcome new guests. We checked into our Gite, unpacked, and had some lunch and then went for a 4 km walk around the surrounding area. The weather was hot and remained so for the duration of our holiday.

There was a steak and chip night on at the local village that evening and Ray had organised some tickets. It was full of French people would you believe!! There is also quite a large Brit community and so we met some really nice people. The steak was out of this world as long as you like it rare. There was a French discotheque laid on as part of the entertainment and you could get up and dance as long as you danced like your Dad! We gave that bit a miss.

Our fantastic week was spent visiting the areas around Chateaubriant, the River Loire, Chinon and Saumur armed with my trusty SatNav. The roads are so open and really only saw heavyish traffic when we were near built up areas.

Our return crossing wasn't until 5pm on the Saturday. This gave us plenty of time to travel all the way back to Le Havre. We stopped off at the small seaside village of Honfleur for lunch. It's a small fishing town just south of Le Havre and we thought it would be ideal for a little lunch before boarding the ferry home. It was absolutely bustling with people all wanting to eat and if I may say so it wasn't cheap. In fact it would have been cheaper to have eaten on the ferry. But that's not the point, the food was excellent and the place was very picturesque.

Well what more can I say? There were only two of us this time, but we are planning to go back next year with some of our family as it was so peaceful.

If you want a relaxing holiday to chill out, then this is the place to go. You can do as much or as little as you like and Ray and Christina are the ideal hosts who look after you throughout.

Thanks again to you both and look forward to seeing you next year.

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