

Nick and Mary Alexander - Mary Lou - 35SE

We had a busy 2016, punctuated at regular intervals with babysitting or hospital appointments it seems – not sure which was preferable!

We managed to escape to “MaryLou” in France several times throughout last summer – and it has so far remained a grandchild-free zone! Overwinter we kept the boat at Lagarde, on the Rhone-Rhine canal in north-eastern France, and that was our base for cruising in 2016, though our plans never seemed to quite go according to plan... On our first trip the bow thruster broke – not an absolutely essential bit of kit but pretty useful manoeuvring in locks and when mooring. In fact, managing without a bow thruster for most of the summer considerably improved our boat wrangling skills, but in the autumn we got it replaced – necessitating an eye wateringly expensive lift out at Niderviller... what do they say about boat ownership being like taking a cold shower while tearing up £20 notes? We hedged our bets and made not only sunscreens but extra rainscreens for the boat, which, despite looking a bit home-made, clearly worked wonders because the weather was mostly lovely and warm and sunny, and when it wasn’t we were at least dry! It was pretty pleasant and restful pottering along the canals and not going anywhere in particular, we enjoyed another ride on the Arzviller inclined plane, and found some lovely peaceful spots to toast the sunset and tie up overnight, and also managed to replenish our wine stocks for the coming winter!

In 2017, we will be making short cruises from our base at Lagarde, but possibly ending up at Toul to over-winter the boat, maybe paint the top-sides, and make this our base for 2018 – any information about Toul gratefully received!

Mike and Connie Johnson - Aura - Grand Sturdy 40.9 AC

Auxerre to St Jean de Losne via La Marne and the Canal entre Champagne et Bourgogne and La Marne.

Another epic and outstanding adventure in the ‘go-anywhere’ Linssen 40.9. From our winter berth in Auxerre to the next winter berth in St Jean de Losne, we travelled for 170 hours on passage, covering 492 kms, encountered 178 locks and visited 37 towns and villages, with Roger Edgars book always to hand for guidance.

We cruised through 6 major rivers and canals - Yonne, Haute Seine, La Marne, Canal Lateral del la Marne, Canal entre La Marne et La Bourgogne and onto the beautiful River Saone.



All was not plain sailing as our passage was interrupted by ‘La Crue’ – the devastating flood, experienced in France in the spring. We found ourselves marooned in Nemours for 2 months. A terrifying and exhilarating ordeal which we will recount for years to come.

After the ‘low’ of the Crue, there were many, many ‘highs.’ Leaving the comfort of the beautiful River Marne and the delights of Champagne Cork popping in Epernay to the narrow locks and low bridges of its ancient canal system. There is something quite magical about meandering down a wide, lazy river like the Marne. There is just so much to see, as at every turn there is a new vista and the uplifting sight of a flash of blue as a kingfisher flies across the bow.

In contrast, the 62 hours spent motoring 245kms down the Canal entre Champagne et Bourgogne. The ascent and descent through 116 extremely narrow locks full of filter-clogging weed, was challenging, but also strangely fulfilling.



All the towns we visited had their own distinct characteristics, from Vitry le Francois, st Dizier, Joinville, Froncles, Chaumont, Rolampont, Langres, Cusey and Maxilly sur Saone. This is ‘French’ France – very rural and at its most charming and tranquil.

The fun part was reaching the Saone in glorious sunshine – part River and part Canal (a derivation) and being reunited with Kingfishers again. This is a perfect boating river and a perfect Linssen cruising area.



The port of Auxonne has an excellent well managed Marina. Here a young French army officer came to begin his artillery studies – Napoleon Bonaparte – at the town's military academy which overlooks the Marina.

Over the next few weeks we visited Chalon sur Saone, Verdun sur Le Doubs, Tournus, Gigny and Macon.



Then, returning to our winter berth at St Jean de Losne at Blanquards boatyard. Here we received a warm and very professional welcome. Fortunately we had booked ahead as it is so popular and is always full.

Our plans for 2017/18 is to return to Maasbracht via 4 countries – from Lyon in the south, north on the river Saone to the Petit Saone, the Canal des Vosges, the Moselle, the Rhine and the south on the Maas to our home berth in Maasbracht.

It is a unique opportunity and a great privilege to tour this impressive cruising area.

Bob and Viv Garnett - *Isolde* - Grand Sturdy 410 AC Twin

Our second season with *Isolde* and we needed to combine some essential canvas work with the summer cruise. The plan was to go from our home base, Sneek in Friesland to Roemond so that Gommans Zeilen (the Linssen awnings contractor) could carry out the work before their summer shut down. From there we would head to Belgium and see how far we got before turning back to return to more tedious duties.

As a result of our last year's notes mentioning the need for leisure craft to enter the IJsselmeer via Lemmer rather than the major lock at the end of the Princess Margaret Canal, new member Steve Ewens helpfully pointed out we had got it wrong. It turned out that we had misunderstood the signage approaching the lock and subsequently never questioned our interpretation for several years of lengthy detours! You are never too old to learn and we gratefully embraced our new-found knowledge to reach Lelystad in one day instead of the customary two (thanks, Steve).

After a fairly hectic but enjoyable six days cruising we were pleased to reach Roemond. Gommans Zeilen were superb, meeting us on arrival to take our awnings away and returning to re-fit them the next day duly repaired. We were glad of a pause in our hectic journey and took the chance to explore the town, including the huge designer outlet pointed out by Mr. and Mrs. Gommans.

Leaving Roemond, we entered Sluis Linne on our way to the Julianakanal. The lock is 3.3m deep and as the water rose, a shout from Viv indicated a jammed rope, quickly confirmed as *Isolde* began to heel over. Bob took the knife, kept at the helm for such an event, and with his arm caught between boat and lock wall, managed to cut through the rope. With disaster narrowly averted and the lock filled, a few minutes later one of the lock staff was cheerfully telling us about boats that had been lost in exactly those circumstances.....

Somewhat shaken, we passed *Isolde*'s birthplace at Maasbracht and were pleased to find that the deepest lock in the Netherlands, the Sluizen te Maasbracht (11.58m) was fitted with rising bollards.



This proved to be a feature of all the deep locks we encountered on the Julianakanal and on through Belgium. It certainly makes "going up" much more straightforward. Later that day we sailed serenely through Maastricht, trying to identify the hotel window from which 15 years before we had been watching the boats go by and thinking how nice it would be, etc. With three nights booked into WV Treech we were looking forward to an evening with friends from our home village of Bunny in Nottinghamshire. We had, by now, got used to being asked about the Brexit vote by incredulous Dutch and other European boaters and it was rather good to get a photo of the two boats from Bunny, both flying the EU flag in what we hoped was a clear statement that "it wasn't us!"



Iskra and Isolde, the two boats from Bunny, moored at Maastricht

Leaving Maastricht, we crossed Belgium, picking up Alex, one of our sons, on the way, and from Namur we headed up river through Dinant and crossed the French border at Pont de Heer before turning reluctantly for the long voyage back to Friesland.

Alex left us to return home, but not before we had been met on arrival back at Namur by two members of the Belgian river police. They came aboard and asked to see the ship's documents, including bill of sale and evidence of VAT paid. They also checked the radio licence, radio operator's certificate and the skipper's qualifications. Whilst one officer filled in his lengthy form, the other asked to see the safety equipment. All had gone well to that point, but we had forgotten that the fire extinguishers were out of date. Fortunately we were saved from a hefty fine by the fact that the pressure gauges were still showing an adequate reading! We duly made a note to keep up to date checks.

Subsequent conversations with Dutch colleagues indicated that the Belgian river police often check visiting boats, in the knowledge that regulations are not so strictly enforced elsewhere and so, presumably, there might be pickings to be had. Visitors to Belgium, you have been warned!

From Namur, back to Maastricht and thence down the Dutch Maas, arriving a week or so later at the lovely marina and fortified town of Heusden, one of our favourite stopping places, where we were to spend a couple of days before a leisurely cruise northwards to Vianen via Gorinchem and back towards the IJsselmeer. All was well as we made our way to Gorinchem, crossing the Waal to enter the Merewede Kanal, only to find the access lock closed for repair, leaving us no alternative but to make a very lengthy detour along the Waal to Dordrecht, then up the Nord Kanal and finally against the current on the Lek all the way to Vianen. From there we went on to Weesp for a few days enjoying nearby Amsterdam, including a wonderful concert at the Concertgebouw.



The beautiful bridge close to the WSV marina at Weesp

On our way back north we found ourselves in the middle of a Royal Netherlands Motor Boat Club rally at Ketelhaven, with *Isolde* surrounded by thirty or so of the biggest cruisers we had ever seen on inland waterways. We escaped to the former coastal fishing port of Urk, where the fishermen's memorial on the cliff is a sombre reminder of perilous times before the enclosure of the Ijsselmeer.

We arrived back at *Isolde*'s home base in Sneek with quite a list of jobs for the boatyard. Yet all in all, the 40 days and 1200 km summer cruise was a wonderful experience and gives us plenty to think about in planning for next summer in Zeeland, the part of Holland we have yet to explore by boat.

Geoffrey & Maureen Holland - Chalune - Dutch Sturdy 380 AC



Chalune cruising along the River Ems in Germany

Unfortunately, our 2016 'Summer' cruise in the Netherlands was dominated by cold and rainy weather to the extent that we became so fed up that we returned home to Bournemouth at the end of July.

In late April 2016, on route to Chalune's berth in Ossenzijl, Netherlands, we treated ourselves to a three day stay in the pretty village of Willemstad. We had a nice room at the Hotel Het Wapen van Williamstad overlooking the old harbour and with views across to the Harienvleet.



However, the weather changed in Ossenzijl soon after launching the boat. We awoke to find snow covering Chalune. We continued to experience hailstorms, torrential rain, high winds interspersed with sunshine.



A rather slippery deck!

Our intention was to work our way north east through Friesland via Leeuwarden and Groningen to Delfzijl before entering the River Ems and to follow the river south into Germany for a time.

On the way we stopped at several towns to experience the local sights:

in Joure, we visited the Douwe Egbert's museum to learn about the development of this well known international coffee and tea business.



Douwe Egbert's coffee



Tea Bag making machine

In the 19th century, this tiny Freisland town, had 250 clockmakers making a good living by selling their clocks all over the world - now there are just three left.



A Clockmaker's workshop in Joue

In Groningen, we experienced the Dutch May celebrations in full swing in the Grote Markt where there was a full scale circus with huge, stomach churning, death defying 'attractions'. Needless to say we just watched from a nearby cafe!

After leaving Groningen, we continued along the straight Eemskanal to arrive in the marina in Delfzijl to a warm welcome from the volunteer harbour master. After two days of wet and windy weather, we left Delfzijl through the large sea lock into the Ems estuary in misty conditions. The crossing, to the entrance of Emden, was accomplished in an hour, we then had to 'gill around' outside the entrance to another huge sea lock as there was no waiting pontoon for a 'sport' boat. In addition, once inside the lock, there was nowhere to tie up for our size of boat other than to clamber down the boat's side and stand on a rickety floating 'log'. Not a pleasant introduction to Germany!



Harbour sights in Emden

The next week was spent exploring the towns going south along the River Ems.

Emden (pleasant), Leer (also pleasant), Papenburg (stayed at Hennings Yacht Haven, Linssen's North German agent).



A Childrens' Painting Day in Leer



The Meyer Cruise Liner Boatyard

Leaving Pappenburg, we continued south along the Ems but found the river uninteresting and decided to return to the Dutch waterways via the lock at Heren.

We soon crossed the German/Dutch border and over the next 3 days worked our way through several canals via Barger-Comascuum, Erica, Nieuw Amsterdam, Hoogeveen to the pleasant and interesting town of Meppel for a few day's R & R.



A Dutch Giraffe perhaps!



Statues of Peat Digging in Erica



Meppel Harbour



Model Yacht Display in Meppel

In Meppel, we were told that the main lock at Zwartsluis would be closed for a week, so we set off to pass through it on the way to Dronten on the island of Flevoland. We continued our passage through the canal to the marina near Almere before making the short passage across the Markermeer to Volendam to join the multitude of Asian tourists who arrive each day by ferry to see this attractive but 'touristy' town.



Volendam Harbour and street of tourist shops

After staying in nearby Monnickendam - a medieval, fishing village - we continued south on the small canal to join the North Sea Canal and then south through Amsterdam to Aarlesmeer - the market garden town of Holland and also under the flight path into Schipol airport!



Boats decorated with roses in Aalsmeer

Our cruise continued with stays in Brassem Meer, Leiden, Katwijk (on the coast), Leidschendam, Delft, Gouda and Haastrecht.



Dragon Racing in Leiden



Market Square in Delft



**In Oudewater, Geoffrey was weighed to find out if he was a witch
and
Maureen makes a small rope in the museum**

As the weather continued to be wet and windy, we decided to take Chalune back to her winter quarters in the Vrijon Boatyard in Ossenzijl and return to our home Bournemouth where we then enjoyed warm sunny weather throughout August and September!

Colin & Jocelyn Wright - 'Karin' - 35 SL



getting to Denmark in 2016.

2016 – April/May and July-September

A ‘mandatory’ launch date of 31 March gave us a freezing and very windy April in Friesland before we left the boat in Groningen to return home for, among other things, a daughter’s wedding and a ‘proper’ holiday in Canada and Alaska.

Urk Harbour

Having moved in 2014 from the Medway to Maasbracht, in 2015 ‘Karin’ made a circuit of Belgium and then moved up north, via SAIL Amsterdam, to winter ashore near Dronten, Netherlands, with a view to



The end of July had us moving from Groningen via Emden to Papenburg where our



other daughter and her family joined us for a week on board before they headed to Sweden for a week aboard the other Grandparents’ boat “Another Planet”. We chose Papenburg so that we could all visit the Meyer shipyard, a mind-blowing experience even for this retired ship surveyor. Granddaughter Holly’s godmother is from Oldenburg and we hosted a fun-filled 40th birthday party for her.

However the mud of the Ems

caused by dredging for the next cruise-ship delivery damaged our raw-water pump seal and created a leak that dripped 5 litres an hour all the way to Denmark. Oldenburg is delightful but muddy too.

Birthday party

By now we had found that, despite its name as a “ship canal”, the bridges on the inland route from Bremerhaven to the Elbe were too low for us and the weather and pump leak precluded the long trip out round the North Sea shoals. So we were in for

what turned out to be a pleasant 250-mile diversion via Bremen, Minden, Hanover and Hamburg, despite a near catastrophe with ropes in the fast-rising Anderten lock on the Mittellandkanal – a sharp knife kept ready saved the day. Hamburg at least gave us the opportunity to welcome former colleagues aboard in the rather lumpy City Sporthafen. However, after the excellent info that we had been used to when cruising Belgium and the Netherlands, it was a bit of a shock to discover that our brand-new Imray ‘Inland Waterways of Germany’ had not been updated since 1995.



Lüneburg Shiplift



Hamburg City Sporthafen



Traversing the Kiel Canal

Then on down the Elbe and into the Kiel Canal, by now with a more serious problem. Our sewage tank overboard pump had blocked (a relic of two hours spent unblocking the toilet when the grandchildren were on board) and with no by-pass we needed a suction pump-out. Only one was to be found and we were well and truly ripped-off. There are an awful lot of ‘mission critical’ systems on a boat and the toilet ranks high on the list. Although the pump cleared it was damaged so after a pleasant few days berthed in Laboe’s Baltic Bay Marina, and mandatory visits to the Naval Museum and by ferry to the Kiel Maritime Museum, at the beginning of September it was straight to Sønderborg and finally to Augustenborg. Here Anders and his team will sort everything out while ‘Karin’ is tucked up nice and warm until May.

So the nice ‘short’ run from Groningen to Augustenborg turned out to be the same distance as London to Lerwick!

The plan for 2017 is to take short hops around Denmark, returning to Augustenborg alongside “Another Planet” – the two boats were last together over ten years ago, at Burnham-on-Crouch. And there will be no problem re-uniting car and boat this year!



Sandro & Margaret Veronesi - Salty Dog - Grand Sturdy 410 AC

Our 2016 Cruise was one of the shortest since the start of Salty Dog's cruising in 2005, the longest being the 2007 cruise with 3250 miles. We are getting old... (advancing in age as Margret just pointed out....) we like to take it easy now.

The weather was not very good, we had to wait for a few days here and there, but the 5 nights in Ventotene and the 12 in Maddalena (Cala Gavetta) were our decision simply because we love those two places. We posted a few pictures and description on Facebook.

All the places in the logbook had been our regular stops over the years, we know them well and will be happy to send details, contacts and pictures to any Linssen Owners that might be interested.

The "highlight" of the cruise was the crossing Maretimo (Sicily) to Villasimius (Sardinia), it was really bad, forecasts were completely wrong as far as waves were concerned, not much wind but confused swell coming from different directions made us bounce around all over the place. It was a dark cloudy night with no moon, could hardly see the waves only feel them. I normally go to sleep at short intervals during night passages (occasionally not that short in calm seas...) but that night could not relax, not even for a minute!

Later on a very welcomed moon appeared really making the difference, a few hours from arrival waves were gone, completely, the sun was shining over a flat sea, the fishing gear was out and we got a 13 Kg Albacore Tuna that made us fell very happy again. The fish was immediately cleaned and joined the one already in the freezer caught between Salina and Fossa del Gallo (Palermo).

Sandro Veronesi

Salty Dog's Log Book 2016

Salty Dog	2016	Departure	Arrival	Miles
Monday	06-giu	Salivoli	Riva di Traiano	81,4
Tuesday	07-giu	Riva di Traiano	Circeo	78,5
Wednesday	08-giu	Circeo	Ventotene	30,04
Thursday	09-giu	Ventotene	Ventotene	0
Friday	10-giu	Ventotene	Ventotene	0
Saturday	11-giu	Ventotene	Ventotene	0
Sunday	12-giu	Ventotene	Ventotene	0
Monday	13-giu	Ventotene	Amalfi	57
Tuesday	14-giu	Amalfi	Amalfi	0
Wednesday	15-giu	Amalfi	Camerota	53,5
Thursday	16-giu	Camerota	Camerota	0
Friday	17-giu	Camerota	Camerota	0
Saturday	18-giu	Camerota	Tropea	82
Sunday	19-giu	Tropea	Tropea	0
Monday	20-giu	Tropea	Salina	48
Tuesday	21-giu	Salina	Fossa del Gallo	76,2
Wednesday	22-giu	Fossa del Gallo	Marettimo	60,1
Thursday	23-giu	Marettimo	Marettimo	0
Friday	24-giu	Marettimo	Marettimo	0
Saturday	25-giu	Marettimo		0
Sunday	26-giu		Villasimius	139,1
Monday	27-giu	Villasimius	Villasimius	0
Tuesday	28-giu	Villasimius	Villasimius	0
Wednesday	29-giu	Villasimius	Pto.Corallo	27
Thursday	30-giu	Pto.Corallo	S.Maria Navarrese	32,7
Friday	01-lug	S.Maria N.	S.Maria N.	2,06
Saturday	02-lug	S.Maria N.	Tavolara	57,53
Sunday	03-lug	Tavolara	Spalmatore	29,35
Monday	04-lug	Spalmatore	Spalmatore	0
Tuesday	05-lug	Spalmatore	Cala Gavetta	11,38
Wednesday	06-lug	Cala Gavetta	Cala Gavetta	17,6

Thursday	07-lug	Cala Gavetta	Cala Gavetta	0
Friday	08-lug	Cala Gavetta	Cala Gavetta	6,44
Saturday	09-lug	Cala Gavetta	Cala Gavetta	11,85
Sunday	10-lug	Cala Gavetta	Cala Gavetta	13,27
Monday	11-lug	Cala Gavetta	Cala Gavetta	11,96
Tuesday	12-lug	Cala Gavetta	Cala Gavetta	14,39
Wednesday	13-lug	Cala Gavetta	Cala Gavetta	0
Thursday	14-lug	Cala Gavetta	Cala Gavetta	0
Friday	15-lug	Cala Gavetta	Cala Gavetta	0
Saturday	16-lug	Cala Gavetta	Cala Gavetta	0
Sunday	17-lug	Cala Gavetta	Pinarello	29,5
Monday	18-lug	Pinarello	Campoloro	39,46
Tuesday	19-lug	Campoloro	Porto Azzurro	53,04
Wednesday	20-lug	Porto Azzurro	Salivoli	11,64
TOTAL MILES				1075,01

Rob Burrell and Katherine Banks - Squiffy Again - Dutch Sturdy 40.9 AC

Macon to Maasbracht, via Friesland, Den Helder and Amsterdam - 2016

In February 2015, "*Squiffy Again*", a new Linssen 40.9 AC Limited Edition built to our specification was delivered to Frontagnon Plage in the Mediterranean, and "*Mrs Squiffy*", our faithful Linssen 380 AC was loaded onto the same transporter and returned to Maasbracht.

We cruised the Mediterranean in 2015, getting as far west as Barcelona and as far east as Marseille, before deciding to head inland. At the end of our 2015 cruising season, we came inland at Port St Louis and headed up the mighty Rhone to Lyon, and the Saone to Macon for the winter, stopping at Valence to change the zinc anodes for magnesium on the way. The new marina at Macon is excellent with good security, very highly recommended with excellent public transport connections.

2016 was a good, but mixed cruising season for us. In February I flew to Lyon, train to Macon, and spent two weeks on my own preparing the boat for the season, de-winterising, cleaning, a couple of solo test cruises, music of my choice all day and serious "bloke food", bliss!

I flew back home, and a few days later on 6 March Katherine and I drove to Macon to start our season. The river levels were very high, the Saône was 4.0m higher than normal and running like a TGV, very challenging! Undeterred, we set off heading north up the Saône to St Jean de Losne, and the Canal du Rhône au Rhin to Mulhouse on the French / Swiss border. All very exciting, approaching locks at 45 degrees against the flow, and turning in at the last moment, a few navigation stoppages due to high river levels and extreme flow, an alternator failure and a total engine failure, not the ideal start to any season! During a navigation stoppage, we met up with a large barge flying an American flag, it was fun getting to know and cruising in convoy with my new "larger than life" American boating mate Jo, and a huge surprise to be told by his professional skipper that he was in fact famous movie producer Joel Douglas, son of Kirk and brother of Michael!

Katherine flew home from Mulhouse to visit her ageing mother, leaving me alone for a week to enjoy more music of my choice all day, further serious "bloke food", and more solo cruising. Our plan when Katherine returned was to join the Rhine, and cruise south about 30km to Basel, having cycled to take a look at the river, no way! We took the train and enjoyed a day in the city, a lovely city but massively expensive, particularly if you "forget" the currency is Swiss Francs and only have Euros, oops!

The flow on the Rhine was unbelievable; we joined and headed north going with the flow in the direction of Germany. 1,500 rpm engine speed on a canal with no flow = 8 kph, 1,500 rpm on the Rhine with the flow = 20+kph and surfing, very exciting! To attempt to go against the flow at 1,500 rpm, when turning to enter a harbour or marina, we were being swept backwards it was so fierce, 2,000 rpm was required to hold position, 2,500 rpm plus needed to manoeuvre against the flow.

The Rhine is a very busy river, many commercial vessels and hotel boats; we were the only private boat moving for most of the time! No problems thankfully, up to Strasbourg and right through Germany without problem, the Rhine was 6.0m higher than normal in places and double the width, sometimes well over 100m wide with groins and harbour and marina entrances completely under water, thank goodness for a good chart plotter!

Bruce and Lindis Dockeray - SKYLARK - Grand Sturdy 34.9 Sedan

Our 2016 Season involved collecting our boat (a Linssen 35 sedan) from Van der Laan and then meandering off with no very clear plan. We had loosely considered doing a circular tour of Belgium so we dutifully headed up the Maas towards Liege and beyond. In fairness Liege was quite an interesting city but frankly the more we saw of Belgium the less appealing it seemed to us. It occurred to us we could carry on going in a straight line and into France. Quite soon that became the plan. We entered the Ardennes and the weather was pleasantly warm and the scenery was verdant and at times dramatic. Vindicated by our decision we were also aided by our new found friends Chris and Sue Murray Wickes in *Triton II* who were plodding along the same route. Together we acquired the obligatory fuel cans, torches and VNF permits that seem to be a feature of French boating. The locks were all controlled by a remote control device that was supplied to us - the system worked incredibly well. Along the way we decided to leave the boat for a few weeks at Charleville-Mézières to allow a return to the UK and the real world. The harbour at Charleville was considerably bigger than most we came across and although the security was non-existent it was quiet.

A few weeks later we travelled back to Charleville-Mézières by train. Our timing had been prescient as during the intervening break there had been heavy rainfall and serious flooding in Paris and some other parts. Fortunately we brought the sun with us. For the second leg we had an itinerary and a destination - we had decided to head for Lagarde on the canal de la Marne au Rhin. The journey involved continuing along the Meuse for a considerably way before a short intervening section along the Moselle from which we could then pick up the canal. The journey took in Verdun, Toul and Nancy amongst others. The football Euro 2016 was taking place in France at the time and we followed the misfortunes of the English team and subsequently the highs and lows of France at various quayside hostelries en route. Of the towns we visited Nancy was particularly interesting and the central square (Place Stanislaus) is deservedly a World heritage location. The *son et lumiere* was impressive. At the time security was quite tight because the terrorist truck atrocity had just happened in Nice. Our final destination was a couple of days along the canal from Nancy. Our destination was very quiet but the facilities seemed sufficient and we had already decided to over-winter the boat here.

All in all, a most enjoyable trip. We are heading for St Jean de Losne In 2017.