

B14 ON THE ROAD AGAIN

PROJECT: EUROPE 2011

SUBJECT: B14 ON THE ROAD AGAIN SCRIPT

DATE: 15 JUNE 2011

Sadly, it was time to leave Le Tertre for good.



Corinne prepared the typical French breakfast of croissants, fresh bread, jams, juice and coffee/tea and we stoked up for the journey to the Loire River town of Suevres near Blois.

We packed our bags, loaded them on the luggage rack and strapped them down with sturdy leather straps. When finished it looked like something from the Beverly Hillbillies and would not have been out of place in a mule packtrain. My habit has become a walk-around inspection of the MG. Oil looked good. Water OK. Tires inflated and, as a precaution, checked the luggage rack. Oh, oh. One of the stanchions supporting the load had pulled loose from its mooring. The attaching screw was loose and needed tightening. This may get a little technical so bear with me. Used a screwdriver to tighten it down firmly and checked the other one. It, too, needed tightening. With a silent prayer of thanks to St. Christopher, we set off for Blois.



French back country roads are not at all smooth and can play havoc with an old car. We stopped in Chateau du Loire and ate a sandwich jambon in front of the City Hall. When I did another quick check of the luggage rack BOTH screws were missing and we were in danger of scattering our clothing across the French countryside and bringing our second honeymoon to a quick halt. Went back to the sandwich shop and, in my best French, asked where I could find a mechanic. "Not possible" was the answer. "Why?" I asked. After several tries, talking more slowly but louder each time, the woman taught me a new French phrase. "Bank Holiday." I can say it but can't spell it yet.



The French take their holidays quite seriously. Even though it was Monday everything was closed. Went back to the car and searched through my meager stash of spare parts in the tool compartment. Nothing worked so I drew on one of my best attributes... field expediency.

I'm really good at it but never found a way to profit from the talent. After assessing the problem, I found the newly chromed clamps that attach the rack to the car now didn't clamp down enough to keep the luggage rack from moving back and forth during turns, etc. The heavy load would slide from side to side thus putting pressure on the screws. They finally gave up and jumped ship. With no professional oversight I made two quick repairs.

One: Stuck my two best screwdrivers in the empty holes to keep the stanchions from moving.
Two: Wrapped friction tape around the rack where it meets the clamps to staunch the sliding.
Voila. A quick fix until a garage could be found the next day.

We drove very carefully to Blois, found a small Muslim grocery store that was open on the holiday, bought an inexpensive but delicious local wine, and celebrated a God given gift of making do in a pinch. We had reservations at the Chateau La Loin. They were expecting us but we were in for an eerie surprise



More to come on a most unusual hotel accommodation that we experienced near Blois.

Louise and Ray