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## **Day One: May 31**

**2:40 PM** Taxi called to confirm, soon we leave the house. Get carrots!

**3:37 PM** In airport, waiting at gate A5. All drinks from vending machines are \$2 -- so we drink tepid, low-pressure water from a fountain. Not very refreshing. The airport is hot, and the air feels stale. Bleah.

**4:39 PM** Our jet arrives at the gate. The area is full of passengers -- our early hopes for plenty of empty seats will not be fulfilled. Sigh.

We finished the WSJ, every section. I swapped it for an orphaned USA Today in the terminal. Hmmm. I do not recognize any of our fellow passengers. Susan says our hotel in NYC is 2.5 miles from the airport. I wonder if we can walk to and fro. We'll see. It makes sense for the evening, maybe less sense for tomorrow morning - when our flight leaves at 7:50 AM and we should arrive 2 hours earlier.

The pilot is distributing Dove candies to flight attendants and gate agent. Hmmm. Is there some hidden meaning? Susan says the candies are blue in some way, as we are flying Jet Blue.

**4:49 PM** The flight crew heads down the jetway. I don't think we are going to take off by 5:00 PM (the official flight time) -- we may not even pull away from the gate by that time.

We leave the gate area at .... 5:12 PM. Flight crew says flight time should be 51 minutes. We'll see ... This is an Airbus 320. Takeoff 0:18 - 0:47 at 5:31 PM. So, if 51 minutes *is* flight time, should touch down at 6:22.

Actual time of landing 6:56 PM. The pilot explained soon after we reached cruising altitude that there would be a delay due to heavy air traffic at JFK, and he was right.

**7:10 PM** In the terminal. Now, *how* do we go one from here? Walk? Ride? Call a shuttle bus? It's a busy evening at JFK -- I counted about 90 seconds between planes coming in for landings as we waited for a shuttle bus. Cool breeze is refreshing, much less warm than Rochester.

Dinner at the Holiday Inn Express is informal. I spooned some chili out of a hot pot by the check-in counter. Susan nabbed a selection of antipasti from a big platter -- she says the pepperoni tastes like a cross between pepperoni and salami, and the pickled carrot was spicy. We were advised to take the 4 AM shuttle to make our

7:50 AM flight, even though the ride to airport should take about 10 minutes. So we asked for (gulp) a 3 AM wakeup call.

Our room was frigid -- air conditioner was set to 55 F! Yikes! The room looks clean, though.

I played with "my" little camera, the Minolta. I can now zoom in/out, take pictures w/ or w/out flash, and delete the bad ones. Fine.

Saved one picture, showing part of our hotel room and me in mirror. Fascinating.



I hope we can both fall asleep quickly tonight -- if we wake up at 3 AM, we won't be able to get much sleep (it is 8:42 PM as I write this). Still, there will be coffee in the lobby; and, thinking forward, we will probably be *very* tired tomorrow night when we arrive in Paris. Perhaps that will help us acclimate to the new time zone.

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## **Day Two: June 1**

Happy June! It is now 3:13 AM EST, and we are up and at our morning ablutions. The room has warmed up considerably, to the point that I threw off all the covers except for a sheet by the end of the night.

*Figure here*

The shower has a very broad, flat head, of a sort of have not seen before. Susan calls it "the latest thing in



showerheads." But it worked well -- plenty of hot water, too. The shampoo came in a convenient squeezable little cylinder and smelled of cinnamon. So far, Holiday Inn Express is impressive.

Of course, since the next shuttle leaves the hotel at 4 AM, we will have at least 30 minutes to wait after we finish dressing and packing. I hope the coffee is not cold.

My first attempt at shaving with a razor went pretty well -- no cuts.

At checkout, no prob. We resist the siren call of the Internet terminals, at \$3 for 30 minutes. The night janitor is watching TV on the big screen in the "dining room", but he asks us if we'd like pastries -- and brings out a bowl of them. Thanks! The cinnamon buns are not very cinnamon-y, and a bit mooshy, but still better than eating air. The coffee is a bit cool, and perhaps of Latin American heritage, alas.

**4:12 AM** I sit in the terminal at the airport, which is pretty lifeless at the moment. I'd say that we may have been misled when we were advised to take the 4 AM shuttle bus instead the of 5 AM shuttle. On the other hand, it meant that we ran into a pair of nice young girls in the lobby. They had just returned from a two-week trip to Europe, through parts of France, Netherlands, Austria. We learned a bit about their travel as we sat in the lobby and then rode in the bus to the airport. They said

- northern Europe is *cold*, but southern France is warm
- we should try [a French stew](#), thick and spicy -- did it have fish in it?
- wandering through some cities at night without a man (just 2 or 3 girls) can be uncomfortable
- French boys are apparently the most persistent
- Prague is the least American of the cities they saw; they called it "third world" and thought it unfriendly
- hostels are not much cheaper than hotels
- one is expected to bring one's own towel at some hostels (I guess Douglas Adams was right). Since they had not done so, they had to dry themselves with whatever they could find -- including bed sheets!
- European food can be tasty, but near the end of their stay, they found themselves low on cash and craving fat-laden items -- so they went to McDonald's. They revelled in the substantial nature of the good ol' burger.

Susan says that the Air France check-in counter should open around 5 AM, so we must indeed sit and wait. It's just 4:20 AM now ... sob.

Ah, Susan says the rich French stew mentioned earlier is bouillabaisse -- full of shellfish. *Not* for me, she suggests, and I think she's right.

Signs of life start to appear in the Air France check-in area. Other passengers are starting to form a queue, but we are waiting until we actually see someone being processed. The Air France agents are putting little baskets of plastic (no, REAL!) flowers on the counters as part of their open-up procedure. It is clear that appearances are important.

Hmmmm. I would say, looking from a distance, that the agents are ready -- but just waiting to open -- no, there is action! 4:55 AM, and to the queue we go!

**5:04 AM** On to security. Looks like they aren't ready for passengers yet. One brave young man enters the maze to see how far he can get ... oops, he's stopped. But we are *in*! Well, forward to the next point ...

**5:18 AM** We have made it through security and are sitting at the gate. Rah! Security took a little time because, as the first group of passengers into the system -- we were numbers 5 and 6 -- we were used as "examples" for trainees. For example, my neck pouch was hanging out as I walked through the scanner. The senior agent stopped me, took hold of the pouch, and massaged it as he explained to the junior agent "these pouches should not still be on the passengers as they walk through -- they should be in the plastic bins. But if someone is

wearing a pouch, you must check it manually for metal items." Phew -- it was okay. The gate area has a little cart with complimentary breakfast items -- hooray! I'm off for coffee -- after all, the flight won't start boarding for another 90 minutes.

**6:43 AM** We have noshed, sipped and read one complete USA Today (which came compliments of the Holiday Inn Express). There are still about twenty minutes until boarding. Susan has turned to a copy of last month's Air France magazine to keep her occupied. Hmmm ... should I go look for a copy of the NY Times?

**7:20 AM** We are now sitting quietly in our seats, 30A and 30B. There is somewhat less room for us than there was on our JetBlue flight yesterday. Ah, well. At least we have window and aisle seats

*Figure here*

as Susan had reserved. Apparently, one of our fellow passengers ended up in quite a different seat than she expected -- window instead of aisle, or something.

The flight seems lightly loaded at the moment, especially the central 4-seat section. It's an Airbus A330, one of the smaller trans-Atlantic planes. Our plane looks very clean -- must be pretty new. Susan has found a French version of National Geographic, I'll start with a NY Times provided on board.

The pilot says flight time to Paris should be 6:35.

**7:38 AM** Push-off from the gamte.  $25-07 = 42$  seconds on the runup to liftoff. We leave the ground at 8:00 AM.

**10:16 AM** A stewardess sees me wrapped in two blankets and cries, "Oh! Il fait froid!" She states that she will go raise the cabin temperature -- at least, I think that's what she said. We had breakfast: omelettes, fresh bread, yogurt and orange juice. Susan had coffee, served in small portions but very strong, she said. I watched a documentary on geishas, which was narrated by an English woman -- Liz Hurley? The plane is currently just past Labrador, with 2362 miles to go (but not 2.5 hours to arrival, as the screen insists). We are flying at 39,000 feet and 582 mph.

**12:58 PM** We are approaching the continental shelf off Ireland. Only 1274 km left to go -- perhaps 80 or 90 minutes. We *should* be eating lunch soon. I've just read the first two chapters of "The Fellowship of the Ring." This is the first time I have read it since watching the movies, and there are indeed some sections of the book which call scenes strongly to mind.

Leave ground 8:00 EST. Flight time said to be 6:35. Expect landing at 14:35 EST = 20:35 Paris. We land at 20:35 on the nose -- good job!

We spent less than one minute at immigration! We were on the first bus off the plane, then outwalked most people to the booths. There was no line -- we handed our passports and cards to a young man who barely looked at them, and we were through! No customs, either. Wow. Is 2:18 PM EST = 8:18 PM Paris and we're in a monorail car, heading for Terminal 3 and our hotel. Everything has been smooth.

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## Day Three: June 2

**6:23 AM** We've just finished taking showers in our hotel room. It took me 30 seconds of pulling fruitlessly to learn that the glass shower door is fixed in place. D'oh! The shower is supposed to be designed in a simple, minimalist fashion which automatically prevents water from escaping.

*Figure here*



However, after my shower this morning, I found a small puddle on the floor of the bathroom proper, outside the shower area, as shown. Hah!

The WC is in a tiny separate cubical -- but of course -- just like a tiny closet. I guess that's the origin of the name.



**7:18 AM** We walked to Terminal 3 to reach the Eurocar desk, but it was closed! It appears that only their main desk at Terminal 1 is open on weekends (this early?). Nuts to Eurocar!

As we walk, my eyes almost tearup due to cigarette smoke.

**10:50 AM** We have stopped at a rest area -- Thierry something -- on the A71 South, just short of Vierzon. We purchased gazoil (diesel) to the tune of 23.25 euros, which must be about 20 litres; the receipt doesn't state the amount of fuel purchased. Wierd. We also used the toilettes -- love the female janitor fixing the sinks as I (and lots of other men) used the facility. Oh, and no door to the room, either. Sigh ...

Car odometer is now at 333 km, and trip meters is re-set to zero. We've driven about 200km already this morning, with perhaps 330 km to go.

Toll as we switch onto A20 from A71 is 16.70 euros, which we pay via credit card at a booth with person -- could we have used "cartes" lanes?



The only incident of note on the road so far was when a couple in the car next to us honked, and waved, and eventually convinced us to pull over to the shoulder. They explained that the hood was loose and might be lifted up by the wind. Yikes! We set it firmly in place and managed to get back up to speed without a problem.

**1:20 PM** At a rest stop between Limoges and Brive-la-Gaillarde. This one has *real* toilets, not just holes in the ground (ask Susan). Susan purchases postcard number 1, with cows. The automatic self-serve coffee machines provide only small 8-ounce cups, for 1 euro. Sigh. Where is a giant American Starbucks when you need it?

At least I got out the camera, so I can take pictures of the final portion of our drive.





**14:02** Reach exit 55.







**20:15** It's evening as we relax at our "gite," the little bungalow we've rented for the week at Le Peytol. Our hosts are Sue and Peter, augmented by Sam the Dog (*very* energetic) and an unnamed kitten. Our fellow guests are Tony and Amanda, a couple from England who also arrived today. We've been sitting and chatting and drinking and drinking and drinking wine -- all of it red, and the second bottle worth the effort. We've decided that tomorrow (Sunday), we will go to the market at Saint-Cyprien. We can buy food there, perhaps other things. We might try the bakery Lucco, or leave that for another day. We will also (but on another day) canoe down the Dordogne. Our host says that we should go to the rental shop on the north side of the river, near the Industrial Abbatoir. On *other* days, we may visit chateaux, or go to caves or historical museums (should one call them "historical" or "prehistorical"?)

Tonight, we'll nosh on bread and crackers and cheese and strawberries left by our hosts. We will need some more cash for the remainder of our trip, so we *hope* that we'll be able to withdraw money from our accounts using ATM machines tomorrow. We withdrew about 600 euros today, but gave most of it to our hosts, and can't withdraw any more ... yet.

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#### **Day Four: June 3**

**1:42 PM** After a leisurely lunch of bread products and coffee, we're about to go for a walk. We went to the market at Ste. Cyprien this morning, and had adventures with our appliances, but those stories will have to wait for later. I wish I had a hat ...

**4:16 PM** Back from a bit of a walk. We started by taking an official hiking trail, GR 64, up a hill to the east.











At some point we left the main trail,









but still reached Les Milandes.







We wandered around it, along the road to Faigueyrat, and back to Le Peytol.











































*The path of our walk is sketched roughly in pink on a topographic map of the area below.*





Phew! I'm bushed. My right knee is sore and stiff since this morning, which I don't understand. I was able to walk once I warmed up, but it is stiff and sore again now ...

**5:36 AM** We relax under the shade of the little abri, small pavilion by the edge of the tiny pond.





*Figure here*

The water flowing into the pond, and out of the pond, gurgles noisily, so that we can hear nearby birds, the occasional outburst from a neighbor's rooster, but little else. A car drives past on the main road, maybe 70 m distant, every 15 or 20 minutes. It's very peaceful -- good for reading, or sitting by the pond and watching tiny creatures carry out their tiny plans. This must be the season when damselflies and dragonflies transform from nymph to adult, as there are many empty nymph husks floating in the pond.

Peter told us that some of the tree plantings we have seen are plane trees (farmed for their lumber, I guess), or walnut trees. Walnuts are a local specialty, made into wine, bread, and confections (oh, and oil, of course). The little specialty shop one passes as one drives to Le Peytol from Les Milandes sells many walnut-themed items, for example. We also saw walnuts and walnut-based products for sale at the market in St. Cyprien this morning.

Ah, yes, the market. I should write a few notes about it. It ran for quite a distance along one street through the town, with a few tendrils going off for short distances to the side. The space between the booths on both sides was narrow, wide enough for only 3 or 4 people at most. We were blocked at times by small groups or even pairs of people standing and holding conversations. The fair was well attended, with hundreds of people walking about while we were there. We heard quite a bit of English spoken, some of it by the merchants to us (I guess we are obviously not French) or other Anglais. Susan says this region has been settled by English retirees and getters-away-from-it-all for several decades -- that's to our advantage.

A handsome young man gave us samples of his cheese -- some bland sort of cow's milk (two thumbs up), sheep milk (more bland, moushy), and then aged goat's cheese (mooshy, strongly flavored). He was nice, and friendly, but his cheeses ranged from 25 to 42 euros per kg. Yow! That's *really* expensive, bordering on sushi prices (*good* sushi). We did purchase a hunk of hard cheese, but from a different merchant, who charged

perhaps 15-20 euros per kg (or maybe 12-15? I forget).

We also purchased breads from the boulangerie in town: a big tourte, two pain chocolats, and a small loaf; some lettuce, tomatoes from a stall, and six little squash? or some round, rinded vegetable; and, at the Champion supermarket later, a bunch of stuff: ground coffee, some chicken and bacon-like meat, a few other things. The "super-market" looks more like a "market" -- it's smaller than an American supermarket, not even as large as a Grand Union in Vermont; and its variety of items is small -- just 2-4 types of each item, rather than the 10 or so one could find on shelves at Wegman's. The checkout clerks *do* scan with lasers and barcodes, but occasionally enter prices by hand. The store does not give away plastic bags (for free?) to hold one's items, but Susan knew this and brought a bag with her.

We also visited the famed Lucco, a world-class bakery and chocolatier, according to our hosts. Their selection of breads and pastries was pretty small. The breads were priced the same as those in the boulangerie we visited earlier, and the supermarket, Susan thinks there may be a mandated set of prices for bread. They also sell ice cream, which must be super-deluxe, as the price was 10 euros for a large package (one quart?) or 5 euros for a small (one pint?). Needless to say, we didn't buy any of *that*, but Susan did get some brioche and a chocolate pastry. I wonder if we will go there again?

**8:08 PM** Dinner was a mix of bread (a small part of the big, tough-crusted torte, a loaf of pain aux noix -- which has not only walnuts but also bits of melted cheese), cheese (for me), carrots and lettuce. The carrots are left over baby carrots we carried with us from home -- there are (were) still fine. The lettuce was local produce we purchased this morning at the market. It was disappointing on several levels: bitter, rather dirty (especially the outer leaves), and containing one small slug. Perhaps we'll stick with *super*-market lettuce in the future. We also drank together one bottle of beer, which was light and fruity. As we ate, we read bits from the New Yorker which Susan had cut out and stapled together: the Interesting Bits Reader.

**8:43 PM** The sun has not yet set, I think: nope. Clouds overhead are pure white, the sky a light blue. A passing high jet proves it, being a brilliant white.

**8:53 PM** The lowest clouds are turning a light grey with a hint of pale pink -- sunset must be starting. Hmmm .... the western sky is now very full of clouds, so I guess it could just be the shadows of these western clouds that are turning the low eastern clouds grey.

**9:03 PM** Eastern cirrus is in part turning pinkish. The air is growing chilly -- I have put on my wooly jacket, and Susan admits that soon, she will have to go inside (we are both on the porch) and go under the covers to stay warm.

**9:15 PM** The eastern sky's blue is becoming paler, and more greenish, sort of a robin's egg blue. The zenith has small patches of a deeper, more violet blue. Clouds high in the west are becoming, not white, but a pearly off-white. I would guess that the Sun has touched the imaginary horizon now; I guess a newspaper or TV weather report might confirm this guess.

Good light for landscapes probably around 7:30 - 8:30 PM.

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## **Day Five: June 4**

**9:11 AM** The sky is lightly overcast now, but the forecast looks like rain, with a high in the low 20s. There's a bit of a breeze from the west, so I'm glad to be wearing my fleece jacket.

We had been planning to canoe down the river today, but that might not be a good idea if it could rain. If we don't go boating, then what *should* we do? Drive to some chateaux, perhaps? We've been told that some businesses don't open on Monday, but that can't apply to the tourist destinations - can it? Hmmm ... maybe



caves?

Susan heard a bird which she thinks might be a cuckoo -- should check with a bird book sometime.

Last night, I checked the camera: I've taken about 140 pictures, leaving about 850 to go. Several times I snapped pictures while rotating slightly in place; I'll try to stitch them together to form large panoramas after we shall have returned to Rochester.

**11:32 AM** Raining in Montpazier. Good thing the market square has covered walkways!



















We just took many pictures inside the church.











Now we must find ways to explore without becoming soggy ...

Streets and alleys in the bastide are cambered to allow water to drain out towards the outer edges of the town.



**12:35 PM** We have seen all of Montpazier we want to see, and the light rain has returned, so it's off to another bastide: Monflanquin. We'd like to find a boulangerie and a post office, too.













**13:33** Susan notes that the interior of the church in Monflanquin is entirely modern; true.





*We reach the abbey of Cadouin*



















**4:57 PM** Gas at Champion: 28.95 litres, 513.8 km, 30.40 euros. That's about 17.7 km per litre, or roughly 45 miles per gallon.

**5:24 PM** Back at the gite. We must do laundry sometime soon, since a patch of slippery mud just outside the cloister of Cadouin left big patches of muck on Susan's pants. But we aren't supposed to run the washer during the day -- the cost of electricity drops from 11 PM to 7 AM. Should we stay up late, or do it early tomorrow? There is no dryer, just a clothesline, so if it rains again tomorrow, any washed clothes would stay damp. Hmmmm ... we need a weather forecast.

**6:15 PM** Tomorrow is probably going to be another rainy day, so we should plan on indoor activities. Perhaps we will go to one or two of the prehistoric caves in the area -- maybe even Lascaux itself. Well, Lascaux II, anyway; it is the replica built next to the real site, which has been closed.

Question: we saw some nice, newly paved roads on our drive today, as we went towards Montpazier. Susan wondered if a leg of this year's Tour de France would be running along that route. We should check when

we've returned to NY.

*Stage 18 of the 2007 Tour de France ran from Cahors to Angouleme, through the area in which we were staying. However, the route ran roughly southeast to northwest, on route D703, crossing the Dordogne at Domme and then running along the northern bank, past Lucco and into Saint-Cyprien. Our drive to Monpazier and Monflanquin, on the other hand, kept us on the southern side of the river and went to the southwest. So the roads we took today were not used for the 2007 Tour.*

**10:10 PM** Scrabble Classique! We play two games: Game 1 goes to Michael 311-279, Game 2 to Susan 309-300 in a squeaker.

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## **Day Six: June 5**

*The town of Vezere, a few miles from Lascaux, has place special tiles into the sidewalks to celebrate the ancient cave art.*











**1:30 PM** We eat lunch at the strangely named "the Flannagan's", on the bank of the Vezere in Montagnac, just before we go to Lascaux II.



Susan really likes the beer, "La Dame Blanche", a light wheat beer poured over a lemon slice. The maker is Brasserie due Canardou, and it appears to be organic. Will I be able to find it in Beers of the World?



# Menu à 12,50 euros

Uniquement le midi (only midday)

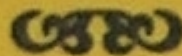
Salade de crudités

Mixed salad

Ou

Grattons de canard

Duck of pate



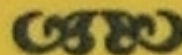
Faux filet, frites, salade

Sirloin, French fries, salad

Ou

Anchaud Périgourdin frites, salade

Piece of pig confit, French fries, salad



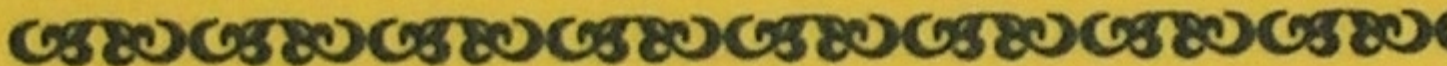
Fromage

Cheese

Ou

Dessert du jour

Dessert of the day



Our meal: 12.50 euros menu: salade (big), filet faux (thin steak) with pommes frites, and a desert du jour. We're waiting for the dessert now. Tasty food, but *very* leisurely service, even though there are only 5 tables with customers. We may have to rush to make our 2:20 PM tour of Lascaux II.

**4:41 PM** Susan is quite taken with the Maison Forte de Reignac, and with the nearby trog village.









**8:48 PM** We chatted a bit with Tony and Amanda (our fellow guests) about our trips so far. They recommend Les Milandes, don't really recommend the "hanging gardens" of Marqueyssac. Like us, they haven't yet really eaten out, but probably will tomorrow. We asked Sue to make reservations for us tomorrow night at Le Home in Belves, so we shall see just how good a 10-euro prix fixe can be.

We also plan to canoe down the Dordogne tomorrow, so we'll have to remember the sunscreen. It was clear at the end of today, so much so that we put our laundry and towels out on the laundry line to dry after we returned from our drive; wait, Susan put some clothes out there this morning, before we left, but it looked like the late afternoon was the best time. Anyway, we hope it is sunny again tomorrow.

We must also remember to mail the postcards we wrote and stamped today. I will send one each to my grandmother, parents, and sister. Susan has been writing several to send to her parents.

Oh, one last note: do *not* carry your dog into an historic cave. Let him wait outside and take pictures.

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## Day Seven: June 6

**9:35 AM** We're going to hit the river, despite the chill fog outside. We believe it will burn off and become sunny, so we have just covered ourselves with goo. My camera has 755 pictures left; we will bring it, but leave Susan's behind.

**11:44 AM** Well, that was not *quite* what we had in mind. The river valley was so foggy that one could not see the hills (and castles) from the water, so we decided to wait for the Sun to come out and go canoeing. Instead, we drove to Sarlat, which left us mightily unimpressed. Today was a (small?) market day, so the old part of the city was full, really full, of tourists. The road into the town were jammed with traffic. The only decent WC (more than a hole in the ground) was oversubscribed. Ugh. The high point of our very brief visit was dropping postcards into a box at the post office.













On our drive back, we saw Beynac castle looming above us. We'll visit it tomorrow, walk around a bit.



**3:27 PM** That was fun! As we drove down to the canoe-rental business, we passed a little boar -- with tusks! -- in a corn field. Another car stopped to photograph it. It was cute, but only from a distance.

We decided on Canoes Roquegeoffre, one of the two businesses on the north bank of the river, across from Enviaux. One of the agents drove us upstream about 14 km to Les Pendoilles, and we put in there. We paid an extra 1 euro for a large, watertight plastic jar -- a wise move, as the (very flexible) bottom of our canoe soon had a little puddle rolling from place to place -- mostly into the little depression where I put my feet.

The first half of our trip, past La Roque Gageac

















and as far as Castelnau, was a bit loud: we were accompanied by several school groups. The children were more interested in splashing each other than the scenery, of course.

*The castle of Beynac looms in the distance as we (and many schoolchildren) approach a bridge near the Chateau of Fayrac.*



*We couldn't see much of the Chateau of Feyrac through the trees on the south bank of the river.*





*On the other hand, we had a wonderful view of the castle of Beynac on our right.*









The second half, on the other hand, once we passed Beynac especially, was very different -- we were pretty much the only people on our stretch of the river.







We saw and heard many birds, including several herons, a pair of swans,





and a hawk being mobbed by swallows. The sky remained overcast all the time we were paddling, which was good. It seemed warm enough as it was, and would have grown uncomfortable if the Sun had started to shine.

*Near the end of our trip, we pass the Chateau Les Milandes, around which we walked a few days earlier.*







The entire trip of 14 km took us only about two hours -- much less time than the pamphlet suggests (half a day). The ticket agent was surprised to see us back so soon -- she said we returned before a party which left an hour earlier than we did. I suspect that most people would stop along the way to eat and rest on the shore, or walk up into the towns along the way. We saw many canoes left along the shore at Roque Gageac especially; I guess canoe thieves aren't common.

Oh, and we stopped at Lucco on the way back, too.

**5:44 PM** We hear distant thunder, and every now and then see faint glimmers of lightning, but the only rain falling is gentle and warm. Each of us has showered, and I ironed my one long-sleeved shirt -- we shall go to dinner at Le Home in style. Susan has kindly volunteered to put a load of items, mostly my knit shirts, into the machine. She has set the timer for 11:00 PM, when the cost of electricity goes down.

We had been thinking of starting early to Belvès, so we'd have time to wander and explore (and find Le Home), but with the rain, our plans, they are changed. We'll give ourselves just a bit of leeway, not two hours. Who wants to walk in the rain?

The new, fancy 3-way shower stall definitely leaks. Even after a brief shower with low-pressure spray, the floor collects a wet spot: between the front of the shower and the sink to the right. Sigh.

Of all the videotapes in the small collection in the laundry room, the only ones that piqued my interest were "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" and "Twenty Years of Air Tattoo." *That*, by the way, is apparently the name given to shows of vintage airplanes on the wing. Must be some British expression.

**10:34** Remember the monologue Reese delivers to the security camera, when he is being questioned by the

police in the movie "Terminator"? The answer he gives to the skeptical cops, along the lines of "It doesn't sleep, it doesn't eat, or feel pain, or pity; you can't bargain with it, you can't deal with it; it will hunt you down, and it WILL NOT STOP until you are DEAD!"

*The actual words, taken from the fifth draft of the script, are Listen. Understand. That Terminator is out there. It can't be reasoned with, it can't be bargained with... it doesn't feel pity or remorse or fear... and it absolutely will not stop. Ever. Until you are dead.*

Remember that? Well, that's how we felt at the end of our visit to Le Home. We had finished our meal (more on that later) and we waited for a waitress to clear our dessert plates and give us the check. We waited -- while the four diners to our side got their postprandial coffee. We waited -- while their coffee cups were taken away. We waited while *they* were given a bill. We waited -- while they had some trouble with a credit card. We waited -- while they got up and left. We waited some more, while another pair of diners left. Finally, after more than 20 minutes of waiting, Susan waved down a waitress and asked for the check. Argh! There were only 3 other active tables at that point, and there had been 3 waitresses. Did they simply take an instant dislike to us when we ordered, or hear our American accents -- so different from the British accents at the next table -- and decide to punish us for the actions of GWB? We'll never know, but they forced us to drive back along wet roads through fog in the dark, due to their glacial service. Grrrrr.

Dinner -- the food -- was OK. First course lentil soup in a very large, hot bowl. Second course beet salad and slices of sausage that tasted like hot dogs -- eh. Third course was trout for Susan, tasty but bony, and cheese omelette with fries for me -- good. Dessert was a tasty creme brulee. We each ordered from the 11 euro menu, and added a 1/4 liter of house white wine. Total: 25.90 euros. Pretty good food, but now we shall remember it always through the lens of the slow, slow, sllllloooooowwwwww service.

Bleah.

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## **Day Eight: June 7**

**10:10 AM** Our usual breakfast is one French press of coffee each, plus a pastry or two. This morning, I had both a pain chocolat -- sometimes called a chocolatine around here -- and an apple pastry; I am growing to love the apple pastries. Susan had a glass of clementine juice, too. We watch the weather on either Euronews or BBC News; the forecast is for more overcast skies and *possibly* rain, but we hope not.

Our plan is to drive about -- see Beynac, Domme, Cenac. Not very far, but we'll have to go from one side of the river to the other. Perhaps we'll eat a big lunch at a restaurant and settle for bread and snacks here in the gite for dinner.

*Since we will be taking this same route when we leave for Paris in a couple of days, we decide to note the time it takes to reach several points.*

**10:28 AM** Leave driveway.

**10:31 AM** Pass Les Islots.

**10:34 AM** Point Allas Les Mines.

**10:36 AM** Reach D703.

**10:41 AM** Beynac et Cazenac.

Our parking space at Beynac lot is good until 3:43 PM.



**1:59 PM** The first course of our lunchtime meal at le Restaurant du Hotel de Chateau, at the base of the road up to Beynac. We have chosen the Formule Bistrot (12 euros), which gives us 3 courses centered on filet mignon (again). But the menu includes a glass of red wine, which smells nice.

*We start walking up the very steep road to the castle.*



*Halfway up the road, we can see most of the big loop in the river just below Beynac. Some of the houses here still have the traditional -- and very massive -- limestone roof stones; they are laid horizontally, in overlapping rows.*



The castle was *very* interesting.









BEYNAC et ses BARONS			
MAYNARD		1115-1124	
ADHEMAR	III <sup>e</sup> Croisade	1147-1189	
RICHARD	I <sup>e</sup> Cœur de Lion Roi d'Angleterre	1189-1199	
PONS I		1200-1209	
GAILLARD		1238-1272	
PONS II		1251-1300	
ADHEMAR II		1269-1348	
PONS III		1346	
BOSON dit PONS		1341-1348	
PONS IV	Test.	1362-1366	
PHILIPPE	Test.	1403	
PONS V	Test.	1461-1463	
JEAN-BERTRAND	Test.	1485	
GEOFFROY I	Test.	1530	
FRANÇOIS	Test.	1537	
GEOFFROY II		1546	
GEOFFROY III		1581	
GUY I		1643-1656	
ISAAC	†	1687	
GUY II	†	1717	
PIERRE	†	1753	
MARIE-CLAUDE		1732-1811	
CHRISTOPHE-MARIE		1764-1813	
LOUIS dit LUDOVIC		1784-1844	
CHRIST. AMABLE-VICTOIRE		1831-1895	
SOFFREY-PAUL-LOUIS-ARMAND		1857-1940	
AMABLE-AVIT-CHRISTOPHE		1895- †	
PIERRE-AIME-SOFFREY-ARMAND		1929- Ces.	
LUCIUS-GROSSO Et DIONYSIA-UXOR SUA		1961-	

*The courtyard stands several hundred feet above a loop of the Dordogne.*







We were able to wander on our own through a nearly deserted building and grounds! We must have taken hundreds of pictures, both outside and in.



There really are oil-lit tapers in several staircases, just as Peter had said.

*Oil lamps also provide the only illumination in the guard room.*







*This bedroom in the southwest corner of the castle doesn't seem too comfy, though it does have a private toilet and a wonderful view.*













*In the great hall is the banner of the Baron of Beynac*



*Some sections of the castle are much younger than others. The family which owns the castle lives in one of the more recent areas; all we could see was a nice vaulted ceiling over a staircase.*





*The kitchen, however, has been preserved with all its original equipment. The large door leading into the kitchen was guarded very carefully....*









*Eventually, we walked back down the slope to the river's edge.*







**2:26 PM** We have finished our main course. Susan believes that the beef would scare Chris -- it was purple in the middle. Tasty, but a bit hard to cut. 'Tis indeed an unusual experience, eating in a restaurant whose windows look out onto the main drag. Cars and buses are perhaps five feet away as they roll to the west.

I have 562 pictures remaining, so I've snapped 193 between today and our canoe trip yesterday I suspect that the majority were taken today (I started today at number 329, and am now up to number 524).

Our coffee is served in cupts which are this tall.

*Insert picture here*

That's not a lot. Let's hope it's strong ... Yup.

**2:58 PM** Well, we were once again given, um, plenty of time to relax. Yeesh. What is it about the service in this region?

**3:04 PM** Leave Beynac lot.

**3:09 PM** Ooops, 703 closed so detour to Castelnaud.

**4:11 PM** One euro for parking in Domme. Cenac was great -- more later.

*The best feature of the bastide of Domme was the view of the river valley below.*







*Inside one of the old city gates was a tiny prison, in which the last leaders of the Knights Templar were held for years before being executed. We did not pay a fee to see their cell.*





5:36 PM Home again, 463 pictures remain on my memory card. That means 99 since we left Baynac -- most of which must have been in and around the little church of Cenac.

*This is a view from the "back" of the church -- this semicircular section, the apse, holds the stained glass windows you'll see further below.*







The tops of the columns in the interior were very well carved, and recently cleaned: all clean, yellow stone stone with smooth surface, looking brand new.







There were tableaux of Daniel and the lions (we identified it easily), Jonah and the whale (not sure), many others. I think one showing a large figure holding up the roof and second story of a building must represent Samson.



We saw that the stained glass windows are made in sections -- I guess it's obvious in retrospect, but we had never seen one panel of a window opened to let the breeze in.











There were *no* other cars in the parking lot -- we were the only visitors. If only they knew what they were missing!

**7:39 PM** We consider the day after having munched on bread, cheese and leftover veggies (Safety Bread is dead! Long live the non-Safety Bread!)







I finished the camembert yesterday, so today I cut into a large wedge of local cheese we purchased at the market in St. Cyprien on Sunday. Very firm, mild at first but with a sneakily sharp aftertaste.

Susan judges the day to have been one of the best so far: we found Beynac and the little church of Cenac to be excellent, and Domme was somewhere between good and very good. The Sun may have put a little bit of color on our necks and shoulders, but no real damage.

Tomorrow, our plan is to head out early to the town of Gourdon; it has no real sights of its own, but sits in the middle of a pretty region (so say the tour guides). Nearby is a grotto with two linked caves, the Grottes de Cougnac. The first cave has beautiful stalactites, and the second some paintings by the Cro-Magnon. The Rough Guide states that this grotto is lightly visited, so perhaps we'll be less crowded than we were at Lascaux II.

My plan for dinner tomorrow is to purchase lots of pastries and have a gigantic dessert. Susan has been enjoying the chocolat-y confections they make, while I've not tried one ... yet.

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### **Day Nine: June 8**

**9:01 AM** Leave Le Peytol.

**9:06 AM** Les Milandes.



**9:09 AM** Fayrac.

**9:11 AM** Castelnaud.

**9:15 AM** Over bridge at Castelnaud (stuck behind tractor).

**9:24 AM** Enter Sarlat.

**9:26 AM** Pass Casino supermarket.

**9:27 AM** Circle with D704 (goes to A20).

**9:31 AM** Split 704/704A.

**9:37 AM** Bridge Carsac.

**9:42 AM** Into The Lot.

**9:49 AM** Grottes de Cougnac.

We arrive at the ticket office just before it opens, which is apparently at 10:00 AM. No one else is here -- it feels spooky to be all alone at a "tourist attraction," but this *was* supposed to be lightly attended.



We must wait 20 minutes for the first tour, we are told. Okay. It's peaceful and quiet in the wooded picnic area



above the grotto, if you ignore the distant chain saw.



Cost of entry: 6 euros per person. It's a two-person operation. The ticket seller looks a bit like Sarah Paul, while our guide is a lean, older fellow with a gravelly voice. Our guide grabs a leaf blower and commences to clear the path on top of the little hill where we wandered taking pictures of butterflies. Ah, the rural life ;-/

Aha, the guide is the young woman. She takes Susan and me into the first cave, the mineral cave, all alone. Wonderful!

*These pictures, taken without a flash, give a rough impression for the visual appearance of the cave, lit only by a few incandescent lamps*







An intimate little limestone cavern, like a large swimming pool now empty, with stalactites of all sizes, mostly small (a few inches to one foot or so) hanging from a ceiling just 6-9 feet above the very dry, flat floor. Very tidy.







Now, for cave number two, the paintings -- we are joined by two older English-speaking couples.

*No photographs were allowed in this cave.*

**11:58 AM** Leave the nice little caves.

**12:46 PM** Spooky music in the Church of Ste. Pierre,







which has a few nice carvings above the main entrance still well preserved.









There are many cats about, but they are not friendly.

**12:59 PM** We sit in the main (modern) square of Gourdon. Susan writes postcards. I see a cinema, L'Atalante, is showing five films. Two of them, "Oceans 13" and "Die Hard 4", are American, the other three French. Looks like one rural family film, one (sex?) comedy, and one straightforward romance (Dialogue avec mon Jardinier, Les Chansons D'Amour, Tres Bien Merci).

**2:10 PM** Casino gas: 20.09 euros, 18.71 litres, 334.2 km and reset.

**5:58 PM** Another couple of games of Scrabble, because the backgammon set was covered in mildew. Game one: Susan romps 393-249, as all the tiles go her way. Game two: a tight battle. Susan comes from behind to win 304-283.

**7:34 PM** We've said our goodbyes to our hostess Sue (Peter left on a trip yesterday), and to Tony and Amanda. They very kindly loaned us one of their cellphones to serve as an alarm clock, when they heard that we did not have a reliable alarm and need to get up at 5 AM tomorrow. They will hit the road, too, just an hour or so after us. They will drive to Calais and then take the Chunnel back to their home in Hereford. It was nice to chat with them every now and then during our stay.

Now it is just about time for our dinner. We spent 11.20 euros at Lucco this afternoon on our trip back from Gourdon, so it will be pastries galore! Susan will cook up some veggies, and has washed some lettuce -- removing several slugs. Ewwwwwww.

The second cave at Cougnac was very different from the first, though only a little larger. It was wet, little drops falling to the floor every few seconds. The stalactites were therefore larger and more typical, for the most part,



with many more large pillars -- some of which had subtle shades of reddish-brown or grey (with greenish tint?) in addition to the standard cream. In the rear section of this cave were the paintings: first a series of simple finger marks, but then three (I think) canvasses on flat portions of the smooth walls. [Most of the walls were bumpy and moist, only these small areas were suitable for art]

There were some red figures and some black (charcoal) figures, dated from 20-25,000 years ago. Around and on top of some figures were dots and lines, especially pairs of parallel lines, added much later -- perhaps 15,000 - 17,000 years ago (I forget the exact numbers). We saw Megaceros, which I thought == Irish elk, but no one else agrees; I should check

*Yes, I was right :-)*

then some deer, and on the final canvas, mammoths. There were also two figures which our guide said were thought to be human -- legs and torso only, no head -- with spears (?) sticking in painfully. Susan thought one of these might be a wolf. We should check the artwork of Peche Merle, it is said, to see other examples of this style of art.

We really enjoyed this Grotto, perhaps because it was so intimate.

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## **Day Ten: June 9**

**5:32 AM** We've been awake for a while, since 4:40 or so -- a little creature was chewing on something inside or just outside the walls. We didn't need the cell phone alarm after all, and Susan's watch alarm went off, too.

The sky is now turning a light blue in the East, with light clouds. The forecast calls for clouds but no rain on our drive to Paris, which would be ideal.

There's a bird here in France which sings much like the mockingbird -- short snippets of many different songs. Is it a relative? And what sort of bird have we seen hanging around the castles and towns? It's a blackbird of some type with brown patch on the back of the neck.

**5:33 AM** Leaving gite.

**6:02 AM** Photograph Beynac through the fog -- legendary!



**6:08 AM** Heavy fog on the W bank of the river.

**6:18 AM** Escape unscathed from Sarlat!

*Insert picture here*

**6:31 AM** Sun appears through fog at Rouffillac.

**6:45 AM** On the A20 488 a Paris.

**8:15 AM** Limoges. Nice fog hides the Sun. Paris 382 km.

**8:28 AM** Still foggy in the river valleys.

**9:08 AM** Paris 298 km, cloudy near Argenton.

**9:35 AM** Paris 240 km. The farms are large as we approach Vierzon.

**9:58 AM** Paris 205 km. We get onto A71.

**10:37 AM** Paris 133 km as we approach Orleans.

**10:55 AM** Windmills appear in the *very* large fields.



**11:05 AM** 30.17 litres, 34.70 euros, 498 km odometer.

**1:02 PM** Sitting in Terminal Three. We slowly -- but surely -- navigated the roads around Paris. When we reached the airport, Susan again managed to guide us to the right place. Our only sticking point came when we couldn't find a parking place; on a second pass, success. No problem dropping off the keys and rental form -- a cursory glance, "Merci", no receipt. Nice. We then took an elevator down to the little airport train, where a young blonde South African told us her flight to Nice left in 40 minutes from Terminal Two. We don't think she'll make it :-( A familiar ramble to Terminal Three, and here we are. The joint is packed with people. It's obviously the choice of the bargain airlines: just a huge warehouse building with low partitions to mark out some booths in the middle. Most of the check-in counters are right against the side walls. No carpeting, few seats, just vast prairies of linoleum, covered with long lines of people.

**1:45 PM** I shaved with no shaving cream, gel, or soap -- just water -- and escaped unscathed. Hoorah.

**2:14 PM** We hedge our bets at check-in. I stand at the end of a long line for counter 39, while Susan goes up to a *very* sort line for counter 38. Both say Manchester. Ah, Susan comes back to join me. Sigh. Looks as if it will be tedious.

**2:47 PM** Now we must enter the security line. It zigs and zags in a dauntingly long fashion.

**3:08 PM** My carabiner is confiscated at security. Rats. Now, we wait for a bus to drive us to the plane.

**4:00 PM** After standing in front of the gate for 15 minutes, one of our fellow passengers asked why we weren't boarding a bus. The gate agent explained that our plane has not yet arrived at the airport.

- a. Thanks for letting us know -- *not*
- b. We are not going to depart at 4:20, are we?

**4:12 PM** The airline announces a 2-hour delay on our flight. It is now scheduled to depart at 6:20 PM, but I would not wager on it.

**5:36 PM** Suddenly we are on a bus. The airline now guesses that we will leave at 6:00 PM. **5:58 PM**

We waited 14 minutes in place on the bus -- without air conditioning -- not moving. Finally we drove a windy path to

*Figure goes here*

reach the plane, which was no more than 80 m from the place where we waited on the bus (just outside the terminal). We could have walked to the plane in one minute -- but of course that isn't permitted. Hmmm. Liability or security?

(Switch time zones to England -- subtract one hour)

**5:22 PM** Liftoff, after 32 seconds of acceleration in our 737-300. The launch was claimed for 5:20 (after the time switch), so I would not have lost my wager.

**5:46 PM** Turbulence as we cross the coast into English airspace. Just to our East was an artificial harbor and breakwater, as shown at left.

*Figure goes here*

Some three or four *big* ships were lying inside along the docks. Was this a naval yard?

*Possibly the Dover shipyard, see picture.*

**6:20 PM** We land.

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### **Day Eleven: June 10**

**9:59 AM** A bit of quiet morning with Sandi and Boyd. They picked us up at the airport last night, even though our flight was late, and brought us back to their home after just a short detour. They live in a terrace house (is that the term?) on the grounds of the University of Keele; evidently the school provides housing for some of its staff.







*We walked over to an outbuilding, which was perhaps originally the servants' quarters, or involved with the stables. There seemed to be a path leading from it back to the main campus ...*

























We had a nice home-cooked meal of vegetable-stuffed omelet with a side dish of tomatoes and fresh mozzarella. For dessert, Sandi and Boyd had strawberries and cream, Susan had strawberries, and I had cream.

Today, Emma will come home around 10:30 AM, and then I think we'll all go out for a bit of a walk. Our plans remain somewhat fluid.

The Venus flytrap caught two insects last night. Strangely enough, the corpses look almost untouched. Maybe they are dessicated, it's hard to say, but I would have guessed that the results of the digestive process would have been more obvious.

---

## **Day Twelve: June 11**

**7:32 AM** We are soon to head out as a group to York.

Yesterday was pleasant in a low-key way. We drove through the countryside to several local attractions:

*Emma, Boyd, Susan and Sandi head up the path*



Cow Mop\*, a Romantic Folly built at the top of a jagged outcrop of boulders (alas, it is sealed up so that one cannot climb it);

*Actually, that should be "Mow Cop".*











an old man of stone;



and then Little Moreton Hall, started in 1504.









Watch out for ducks and Eco-Chutes.





*That was a look back at yesterday's activities; now, back to today ...*

**10:26 AM** We make a rest stop, appropriately, at Penistone.

**11:55 AM** Lunch at Pizza Hut. All you can eat buffet of salad and pizza -- we wait for the pepperoni to be brought out from the kitchen. Emma and I spring for the ice cream machine. 37.40 euros for five people.

**1:28 PM** Quite a queue at the Post Office as we wait to purchase stamps for the latest batch of postcards.

*York Minster was beautiful, inside and out!*















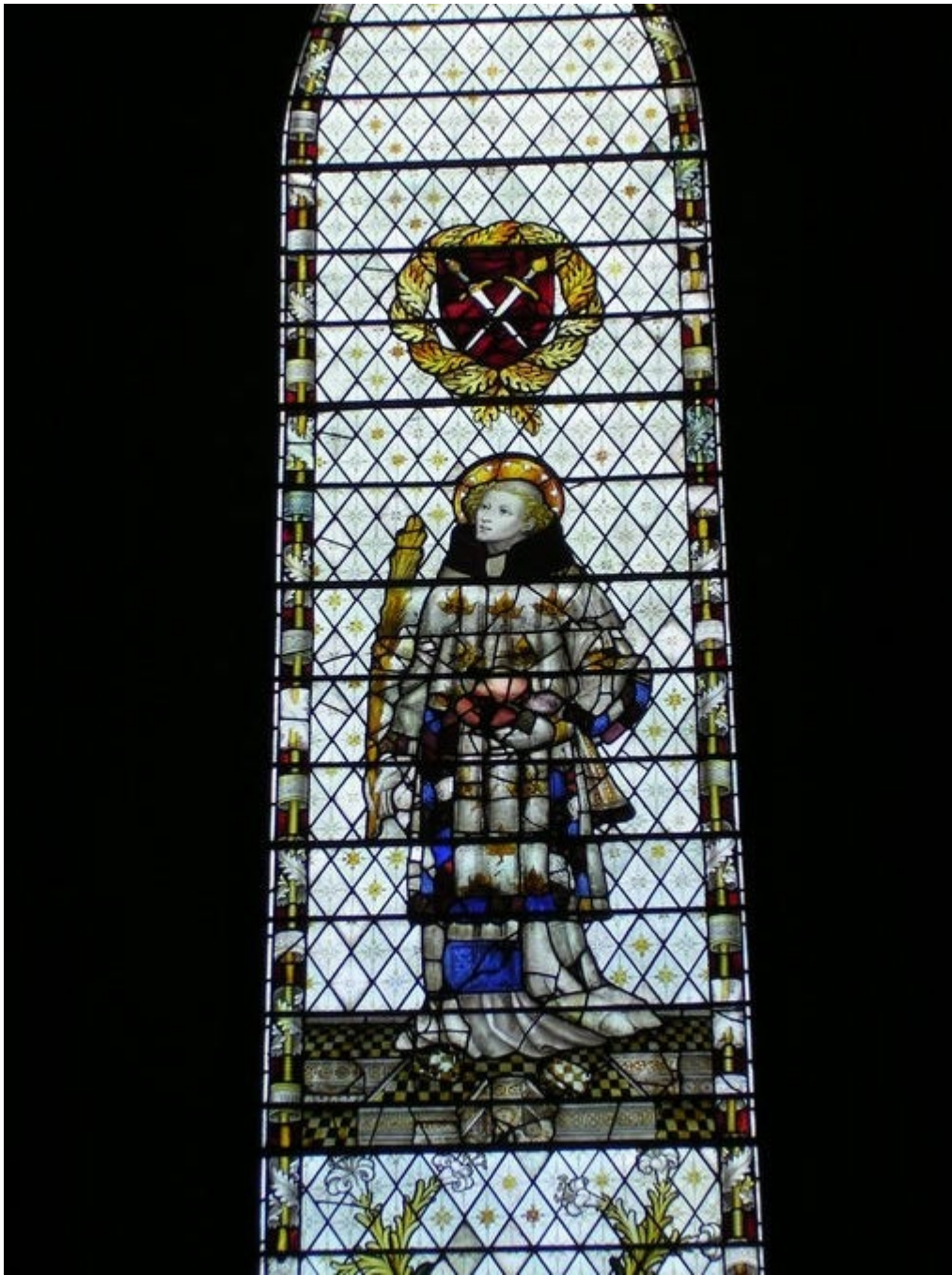






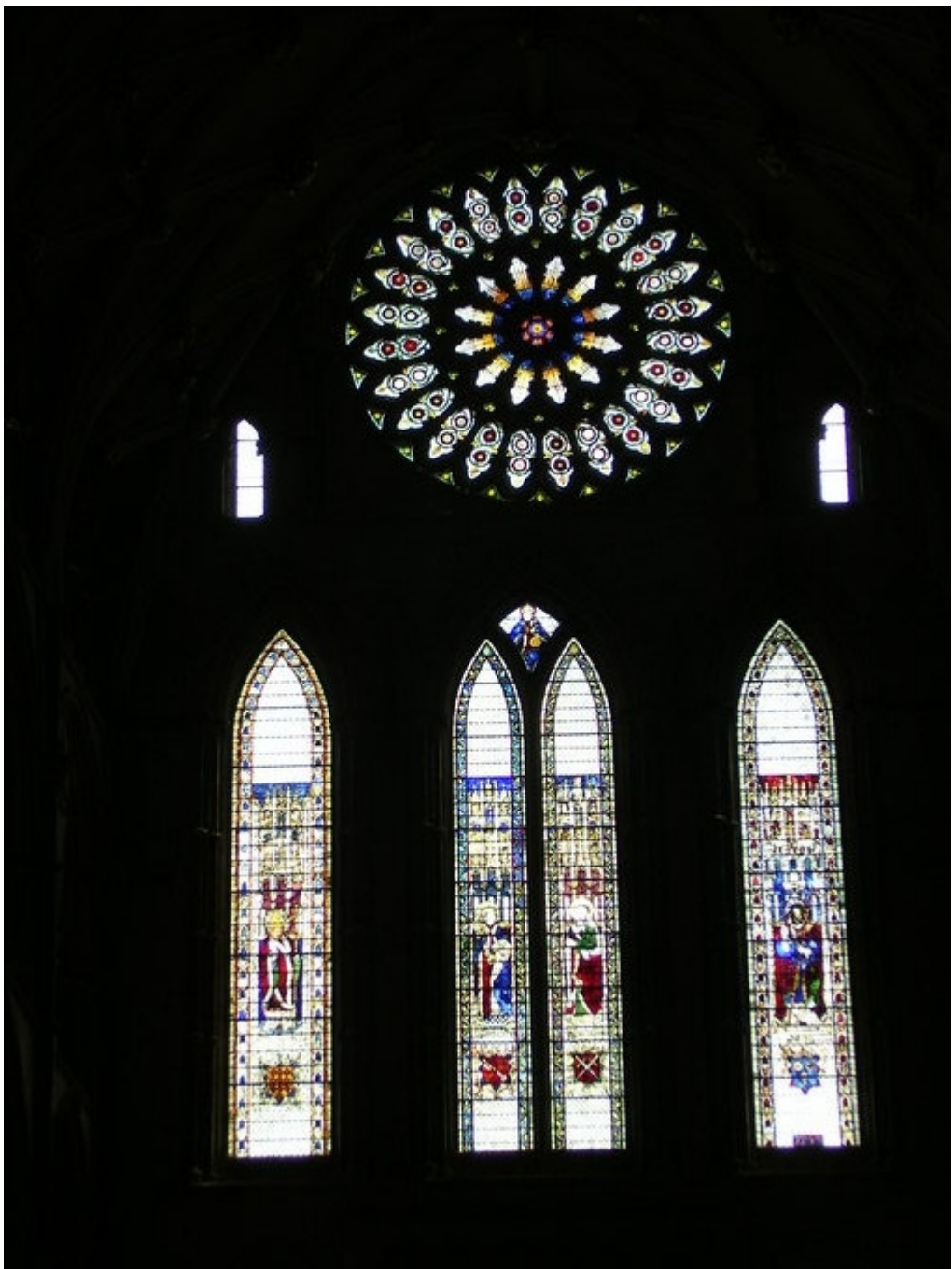














*We had to wait only a few minutes to walk up the stairs to the roof of the Minster*





*After climbing up one long flight in one tower, we walked out in the open to another staircase for the final climb.*















**6:53 PM** We are waiting for our dinner at La Place Verte, a Belgian restaurant on the banks of the Ouse at the southern end of the city. We have spent the afternoon wandering through the York Minster, then walking along the walls.













It will be a long drive home, but it's nice to sit and relax. Emma says: York's really nice; the weather was good, that's about it. Sandi and Susan criticize the rowers.

**9:29 PM** Back at the house, so much more quickly than our outgoing trip this morning. Things went pretty well on the drive -- no traffic, major highways, and an extended version of the alphabet game.

Note that the staircase to York Minster's tower has 275 steps.

The top surfaces of the steps had been worn so deeply that they were filled in and covered over, *twice*, I think.





That requires a lot of walking. I took a couple of pictures of them, along with many more – perhaps 200-250 in total of York.

Our gustatory choices today were far from English: Pizza Hut for lunch, Starbucks for a cool drink (\*), then the Belgian restaurant for dinner. Perhaps tomorrow we'll patronize a pub again, as we did Sunday for lunch. The steak-and-Guinness-and-mushroom, very tasty.

*(\*) A snack for five at Starbucks cost 16.90 pounds, or roughly \$31.30 at the current exchange rate. Compare to the price of items at the Starbucks in Paris below ...*

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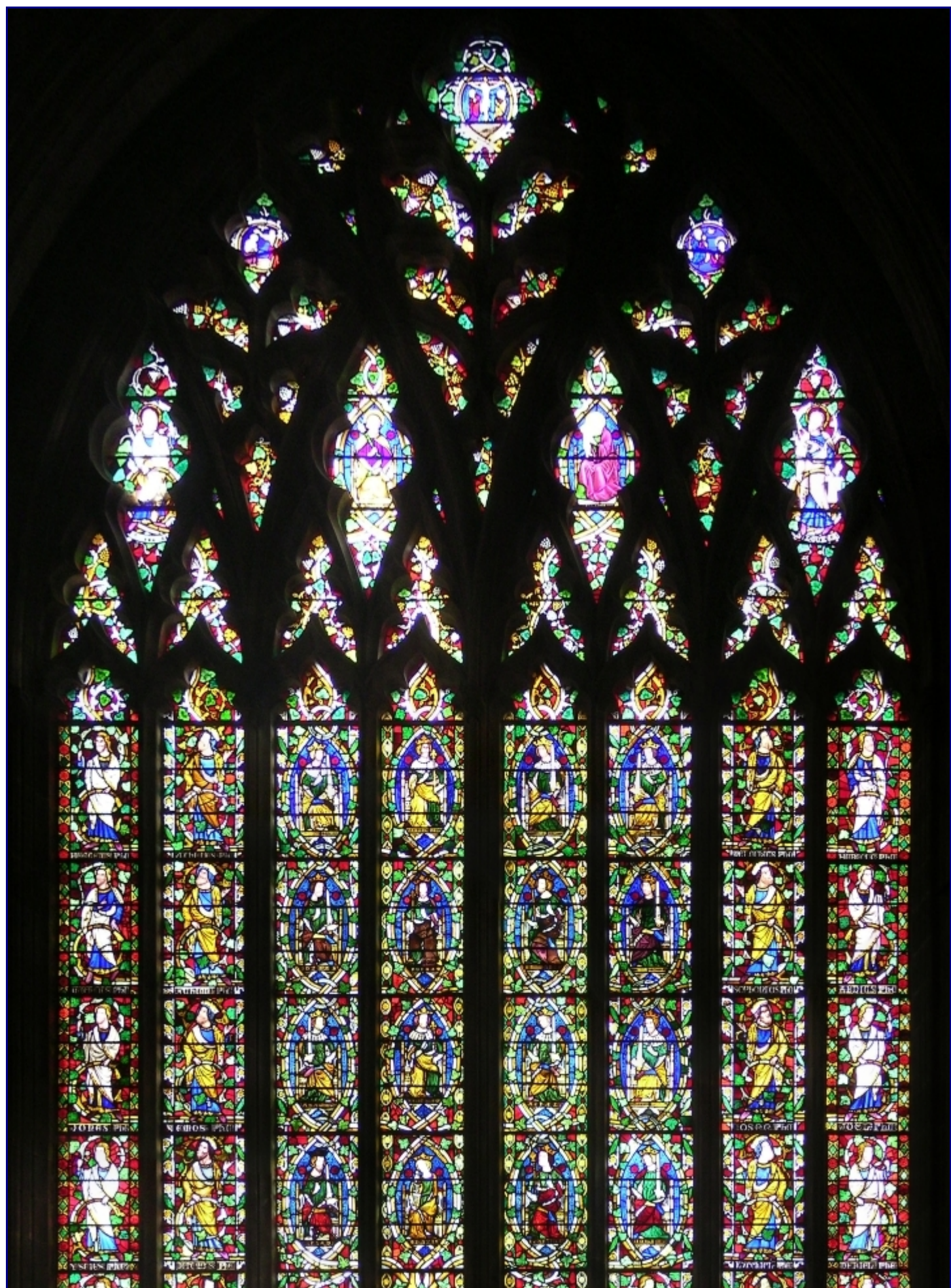
### **Day Thirteen: June 12**

**7:22 AM** A slightly frantic start to the day as people rush about to prepare for leaving. We were supposed to take off by 7:20 or 7:25 so that Sandi could get to work on time and avoid traffic. We will drop her off at her school, which is 45 minutes away, then continue to Shrewsbury.

**12:12 PM** St. Mary's church in Shrewsbury has quite a surprisingly large collection of stained glass. Their vicar in the early 1800s collected glass from the Continent as churches were destroyed or ruined. Lots of pictures.

*The "Tree of Jesse" illustrates the genealogy of some of the Kings of Israel.*







Now lunch at Poppy's Tudor Tea Room. We find that Strongbow Cider is much more tasty than Scrumpy Jack. Also, I wouldn't have expected the Tudors to enjoy Blondie's "Sunday Girl."

**3:39 PM** Was Ironbridge for foot, cart, or rail traffic? My guess is *rail*. (Whoops, wrong century)

*This iron bridge was built in 1779, although traffic did not start over the span until 1781. Clearly, rail traffic was NOT the primary user at that time.*









**4:05 PM** We arrive at Sandi's school, the Adams Grammar School for Boys. We wait while Boyd looks for Sandi.

Back in Shrewsbury, I was more impressed by St. Mary's Church than by the Abbey. The Abbey had been built by Normans -- a cousin of William was the founder -- and then destroyed and repaired and rebuilt several times. The most recent and extensive repairs were done in the late nineteenth century. There was just one tiny bit of the abbey outside the church still standing, an oratory gazebo that at one time looked over the refectory. Poor Cadfael! His (moved and) re-constituted gardens declined in popularity so much that they are now an organic garden and eco-center. Well, maybe he wouldn't have minded.

Alas, Sandi's class (or trip) is running late. We may have to wait a half hour ...

**5:36 PM** Alas, we arrived at the downtown book stores in Stoke-on-Trent five minutes before they both closed. No books for Susan today :-(

**10:54 PM** Bedtime. We have finished packing and will be ready to go when the taxi swings past -- we hope -- at 9:15 AM. After dinner, we drove to "the allotment" -- a garden patch Sandi and Boyd rent from the Town Council. It's about a mile from the house, on a hillside with many other little plots. They have only tamed and planted a small fraction of the approximately 30x40-yard area. Emma very proudly harvested one basket of strawberries.

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## **Day Fourteen: June 13**

**9:15 AM** Waiting for taxi. Junpei speaks great truth.

*See [Megatokyo strip 1012](#) which was published on this day. Junpei the Ninja assures Ping the Robot, who is having an identity crisis, "If zombies crush and try to eat, is real."*

**9:28 AM** Taxi at last, after some searching.

**10:39 AM** Check-in line. Susan's bag weighed 10.2 kg, but was waved thru. Mine wasn't checked -- phew!

**12:22 PM** Sitting at Gate 9.

**1:37 PM** Pull back from gate, after sitting for ~30 minutes.

**1:54 PM** Liftoff, 28 sec accel (plane lightly loaded?)

**3:01 PM** Touchdown in Paris

[switch times now, +1 hour]

**4:50 PM** Out at Terminal 3, walk to train/bus station, discover Roissybus leaves from Terminal 3, walk back, watch as Roissybus zooms past ... wait for next bus.

**5:00 P** Catch bus.

**5:34 PM** New bus driver.

**6:23 PM** In the Subway; we have been taking a detour because the line 7 station at Opera was closed. So, line 8 -> line 1 -> line 7.

**6:55 PM** Made it to the hotel! A thunderstorm popped up while we were in the Metro, and it poured on us as we climbed up to the street level. The only badly soaked bit was my right pant leg, which didn't fit under an awning. Now we are going right back out for food, still wet.

**7:20 PM** We return laden with pastries and tomatoes. Susan purchased an iced decaf coffee at Starbucks -- I may tomorrow. They were selling pseudo-Crispy-Cremes for 1.70 euros each!

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## **Day Fifteen: June 14**

**7:20 AM** Most of my clothes are dry, or almost dry. We will leave things in the room as we eat breakfast and then wander around Paris this morning. Our plan is to leave for the airport before noon (checkout).



**7:47 AM** Breakfast in hotel: small orange juice, basket of 10 pastries (brioche too sweet, Susan claims), hot chocolate.

**7:53 AM** Brush teeth while thinking of the ["Taffy and the Toothbrush"](#) episode of "Lazytown", a children's show on BBC, made in Iceland.

**9:41 AM** We finish our walk through Le Jardin des Plantes and to the river (briefly).





*This statue of the French naturalist Lamarck (dedicated in 1903) tries to assert his claim to have "discovered" evolution. His expression indicates how successful the attempt has been.*





*A muse tries to comfort Lamarck, but her words are overly optimistic.*



**10:24 AM** Susan purchased a postcard, and we each bought iced coffee at Starbucks: 4.40 euros each, or about \$6. Yikes! 125 pictures left on my camera. We are just hanging out in our hotel room for the rest of the morning, I guess.

**11:10 AM** I have come down to hang out in the lobby while Susan finishes packing. The clerk and hostess are watching TV -- "A History of Violence," I think. It's not what I'd expect to see -- in the US, most hotel employees stay behind the counters, not out in the same chairs as the guests in the lobby. Kit-Kat bars in the vending machine: 1.50 euros. The same bars were 20 pence in St. Mary's Church in Shrewsbury -- a much better deal. I see no evidence for a computer in the lobby.



**11:35 AM** The Metro is much less crowded at this hour. We can go *past* L'Opera station and get off at the next, then walk a short distance to Roissybus. It would have saved time last night if we had known this.

**12:00 noon** We catch the Roissybus (for once)! The driver kindly asks us our airline and destination, then looks up our terminal: 2F.

**12:25 PM** And *again*, we stop to exchange drivers. Are there two sets, one for inside the city and one for the highway?

**1:12 PM** Check-in, try number 2.

**1:23 PM** We have boarding passes.

**2:02 PM** Sitting quietly at gate E74. Weather in NYC and Rochester should be partly cloudy, according to the airport TV.

**3:35 PM** We are on the plane. This 747-400 does *not* have individual TV screens on each seatback, so we will have to watch the same show(s) on the same schedule as everyone. Sigh.

**4:08 PM** Announcement: we must wait for 70 passengers who were caught in a jam at some airport checkpoint. New takeoff slot 4:30 PM. But we are told that the captain has announced a new flight time more than 1 hour *less* than original time (!), so we should arrive in NYC on time. Flight time will be 6 hours 40 minutes.

**4:30 PM** We are still at gate (well, bus stop). Bye-bye, takeoff slot.

**4:43 PM** No motion, but we are given a cup of water.

**4:59 PM** Pull back from bus stop.

**5:18 PM** Liftoff, 44 sec runup.

**7:16 PM** We finish dinner: beef cubes for me, sea pike for Susan; two loaves bread each; cheese and butter (unsalted, until Susan added salt); plain yogurt; water and wine (Syrah for me, Chardonnay for Susan); and a pear and chocolate torte. We had champagne as an apertif -- yum.

[switch to EDT - 6 hours]

**4:41 PM** A snack is offered: bread and sliced cheese pre-packaged, OJ, fromage frais, cookies, coffee, and tea.

**6:05 PM** A safe landing.

**6:27 PM** Roll to a halt at gate.. No, false alarm -- we need to wait for a space ...

**7:00 PM** Looks like we needed special authorization to slide our plane's left wing *really* close past another plane's wing. Man. Five feet, maybe -- a guy in a suit was out there with the flashlight -- waving men. Multiple suits, Susan says.

**7:05 PM** *Parked.*

**7:13 PM** Off plane.

**7:16 PM** Into line for immigration.

**7:27 PM** Susan's passport confuses the regular clerk -- we must go to special office -- just finished now.

**7:55 PM** We managed to get a boarding pass, go through security, switch terminals before all that, and walk to the gate. Phew. Now we just wait. Flight leaves at 9:15.

**8:52 PM** We are waiting for our flight crew. They should be landing "soon" at another gate and then come here.

**9:26 PM** Sitting in 5D on the plane.

**9:42 PM** Captain says 51-minute flight, but 30-40 minute taxi!

**10:30 PM** We are 14th in line on the runway. Great.

**10:49 PM** Takeoff, 34 sec runup. This was supposed to leave at 8:45 PM.

**11:31 PM** Touchdown.

**11:54 PM** Home!

*It is almost exactly 24 hours since we woke up ....*