



Roaming Pen Roger - French leave

It was time for our annual trip to Normandy, we hadn't been for over a year and seeing as it's so close and the good old Transmanche Ferry is still chugging across every day, so why not? Mistake number one was to go in August, yes the schools were on holiday and so put several hundred five to eight year old Giles, Henriettas, Tabithas and Doms together and what do you get? Mayhem! All the yummy Mummies and delicious Daddies wanted to do was to sit, sip their Sauvignon, read and leave their little darlings to run riot. And they did. Second mistake was to go on the weekend the good people of Dieppe were celebrating the 68th anniversary of the ill-fated Dieppe / Jubilee Raid. This was when 3,367 Canadian troops were killed, wounded or taken prisoner by the German army who were waiting for them, having been tipped off by secret agents. It's one of the most infamous stories of WW2 and they won't ever forget the Allies attempt to liberate the town.

Dieppe is without doubt one of the most attractive ports on the coast of Normandy but on this particular weekend all of Normandy and half of Paris were there, not helped by the glorious weather. The town is lovely at any time of the year but this weekend she had put on her best dress and new hat and invited everyone down to play. We took refuge up country in a new, to us, town, Forges les Eaux. This is really a find, a classic small Normand community that time has passed by, in common with many other small towns and villages in the region. So quiet was it that on a stroll on a Sunday evening through the main street we felt that we had to whisper, you could say it was peaceful some might say it was deathly quiet. They do have a new casino though with a very fancy hotel attached. You can guess where we were headed, not to the casino.

Back home and we couldn't help noticing that we have a new heliport - East Brighton Airport it's possibly called. The number of helicopters using East Brighton Park is becoming excessive; the Sussex Police helicopter uses the park to land sometimes twice a day. We will never know the reason, we are quite used to the incessant buzz of H900 (the call sign) hovering over some of the more challenging parts of the city. Can there really be that much crime? Perhaps. Every Sunday they take enormous pleasure, or so it seems, at buzzing

the allotments up on Whitehawk Hill, hoping to catch some illegal weeding no doubt. It is, nonetheless, very difficult to understand the need to constantly use the park. Heaven forbid that they happen to have lunch in the park café or maybe someone lives over this neck of the woods.

Neither do we know about the many occasions that the military Chinooks zoom across our peaceful hills. Of course the search and rescue Sea King machines are essential as the park is the nearest place to the hospital they can land and although noisy, we must accept the great job that they do. They are planning on a landing pad on the new hospital building, but that will be many years off.

Now to the great digital switchover. Everyone will have seen that annoying message on the televisions telling that the switchover is about to happen. By now everybody should be aware of the switch to digital broadcasting which is starting in Brighton in March next year. Digital UK, the 'not for profit' company charged with overseeing the changeover is sending out extremely comprehensive booklets to all households. These tend to be mystifying to anyone not fully conversant with exactly what is happening and why. A neighbour of mine, who won't mind me saying that they are not in the first flush of youth, has got totally confused and is concerned that it will cost a lot of money.

It will cost something, although it does not have to be very much, there are about eight options and to the uninitiated it can be puzzling. The website www.digitaluk.co.uk is good, but it has too much information and of course not everyone has access to the internet. My fear is that people who find the whole thing just too bewildering may fall victim to unscrupulous companies offering to fix it all for you. At a considerable cost. All that has to be done is that your existing television has to be converted to digital, if you have bought a set within the past couple of years then in all probability it is already digital. And now we have the annual increase in bus fares, it's only money after all.

Don't stress, relax and take it easy.

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The stars are out - October 2011

★ LIBRA: The Scales (24 Sept - 23 Oct)

If it is your birthday this month Libra then take that as an opportunity to really spoil yourself. Pampering, excess and indulgence in the forbidden fruits (only the legal ones of course!) are the order of the month. If your birthday has passed then give yourself a late birthday present and don't feel guilty!

★ SCORPIO: The Scorpion (24 Oct - 23 Nov)

Have you any holiday left Scorpio? You really need an adventure; attempt something new. Really stretch your wings and let the wind of change blow in your face. A place with the letter S is calling to you. On a different note beware of jumping to conclusions about someone - you have the wrong end of the stick!

★ SAGITTARIUS: The Archer (24 Nov - 21 Dec)

Are you beginning to regret that commitment you made Sagittarius? Perhaps you doubt your ability to live up to your promises? You may be right but don't change arrangements too quickly - think through all your options carefully. Tummy troubles are indicated - clear out any past-date food from the fridge!

★ CAPRICORN: The Goat (22 Dec - 20 Jan)

Don't waste time on stuck situations or obstacles this month. If you've met a brick wall, back up and look for another direction. A different way forward will become apparent. A place of learning offers a mix of challenges and opportunities for someone close - your support will be needed.

★ AQUARIUS: The Water-Bearer (21 Jan - 19 Feb)

Challenge and difficulty are indicated this month, concentrate on the things that are going well and you will find the strength to get through this period. A piece of music you haven't heard for a while will remind you of something that, in turn will lead to an opportunity in the future. Decisions are best left to the weekend.

★ PISCES: The Fish (20 Feb - 20 Mar)

You are being particularly enigmatic at this time aren't you Pisces? The truth is you aren't on any secret mission, or the holder of any secret knowledge. You are just going through one of your 'zoned out' moments when you don't really think about much of anything - but it is fun to keep 'em guessing, eh? Wouldn't do to keep it up for too long though. Look for the letter D.

★ ARIES: The Ram (21 Mar - 20 April)

Family ructions are looking likely this month Aries and as much as you know you should keep out of it you probably won't will you? In this instance however your opinion is as valid as anyone else's and who knows? Maybe it will help. The letter L and the number 5 will be significant

★ TAURUS: The Bull (21 April - 21 May)

This is going to be a period of crafty creativity. You will feel a tremendous sense of peace and satisfaction from a practical activity. Be it crafts, gardening or cooking, exercise that talent. You will surprise yourself and others just how good you really are! A dark coloured dog indicates a meeting.

★ GEMINI: The Twins (22 May - 21 June)

Mercury, your ruling planet is entering a new stable at this time and that tends to precipitate misunderstandings for those born under that sign. For this month you will need to be very careful to make your words clear and to get everything in writing if you are to get through unscathed!

★ CANCER: The Crab (22 June - 22 July)

Look before you leap this month Gemini! Your naturally intuitive early warning will be in fine fettle and that's good, but think carefully before reacting as jumping to conclusions could leave you with egg on your face! A machine will be problematic but keep your cool.

★ LEO: The Lion (23 July - 23 Aug)

You will hate me for saying this as it is part of your nature, but you are being more generous than usual, too generous for your purse or wallet to cope with. You need to decide on a budget and stick to it if you are to avoid empty pockets by the month's end. The numbers 5 and 12 are linked to money.

★ VIRGO: The Virgin (24 Aug - 23 Sept)

Is your star in the ascendant this month Virgo! Your morale takes a well-deserved boost as your expertise and abilities go into overdrive and earn you admiration and applause! An unexpected purchase mid-week will prove a good investment. Someone with dark eyes brings unexpected news.

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