

France May 2014: Pt 6 D Day and the Normandy beaches

Bluebell the motorhome is parked up in the free aire at Arromanches Les Bains. We're parked up alongside over 20 hired motorhomes that seem to belong to the BBC however they are unoccupied, infact – nosey pants here had a good look through the window of one (or five!!) earlier and the beds aren't even made up? We've been told by the tourist office that the aire is closed until 10th June, but bearing in mind we'd already driven onto it, parked, had lunch and a wander by the time we found this out, plus there

France May 2014: Pt 6 D Day and the Normandy beaches

are 3 other non BBC vans here, we've decided to be brave and stick it out here. The security van has just done a round and seems happy for us to be here so that's good enough for us! ☒

There's not much breathing room in the spaces here, but it is free!



Our neighbours- 20 odd hired motorhomes belonging to the BBC - although no one seems to be staying in them!!

Today we had a contemplative but pleasant drive along the Normandy coast, passing the pretty Courseuilles sur Mer, Deuville and Trouville. We've done this tour before ([read here](#)) but never made it Site Hillman, so that was our first stop today.

France May 2014: Pt 6 D Day and the Normandy beaches

Site Hillman was given the code name HILLMAN by the Allies, and consisted of 18 concrete bunkers buried 4m deep and linked by tunnels. It was surrounded by minefields and barbed wire, and was defended by guns, machine guns, and armoured gun posts. On 6th June, the 1st Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment captured Hillman and the bunkers seem to have been untouched since.



the entrance to Site Hillman



France May 2014: Pt 6 D Day and the Normandy beaches



It's free to visit Hillman, and is very interesting, if not eerie! There are info boards dotted about - I'd highly recommend it as a place to visit

After our Hillman visit, we carried on to Arromanches as we were concerned that there are only 19 spaces on the aire there and didn't want to not get a space! As it happened, we bagged the last space, so celebrated with lunch and a stubby. By this time, I'd noticed all the other motorhomes had BBC signs on the dashboard, and were infact hire vans, but we put it down to prep for all the coverage from here next week. Still not sure why they are in motorhomes and not hotels though!!

France May 2014: Pt 6 D Day and the Normandy beaches

We got soaked on our initial walk into town, and had to retreat back to Bluebell for our waterproofs. It was then that we noticed the no access sign blocking the aire. This definitely wasn't there when we drove in as we wouldn't have been able to get by it. Still undeterred, and suitably dressed in waterproofs, of course the sun came out as we returned into town. Nosey Norris aka me, went I to ask about the aire at the tourist office, where I was told it was closed til 10th June! :-/ I decided to keep quiet that we were infact parked in the aire and we carried on up to Port Winston via the free shuttle train!



Soldiers patrolling the beach here at Arromanches – one of the anniversary events

France May 2014: Pt 6 D Day and the Normandy beaches



the view of Arromanches from the 360 degree cinema

After a good look around and soak up of the very busy atmosphere, plus a purchase of a couple of new stickers, we opted for crepes and a vin rouge which was delicious and then headed back to Bluebell. We've got an excellent internet Fon signal here thanks to motorhome wifi. After dinner we enjoyed an evening stroll into the town, which was more enjoyable as it was far less busy than earlier today. As much as we've enjoyed revisiting, the huge crowds were off putting- but seeing as this is one of the key sites of the Landing beaches, a week before D Day it's hardly surprising.

France May 2014: Pt 6 D Day and the Normandy beaches



Next week, we've heard there is lots planned for the D Day anniversary itself- Chris Evans brings his Breakfast show here on Friday morning, there is a big concert and even a Prince William and Kate will be here. So no doubt they are already beginning the preparations and tightening security.

Once the anniversary celebrations are over, be sure to visit Arromanches if you haven't already- seeing the remains of the landing platforms in the sea is really a humbling sight.

One final thought for tonight...



Until next time

France May 2014: Pt 6 D Day and the Normandy beaches

Lx

Share this:

- **Share on X (Opens in new window) X**
- **Share on Facebook (Opens in new window) Facebook**
- **Share on Pinterest (Opens in new window) Pinterest**
- **Share on WhatsApp (Opens in new window) WhatsApp**
- **Email a link to a friend (Opens in new window) Email**