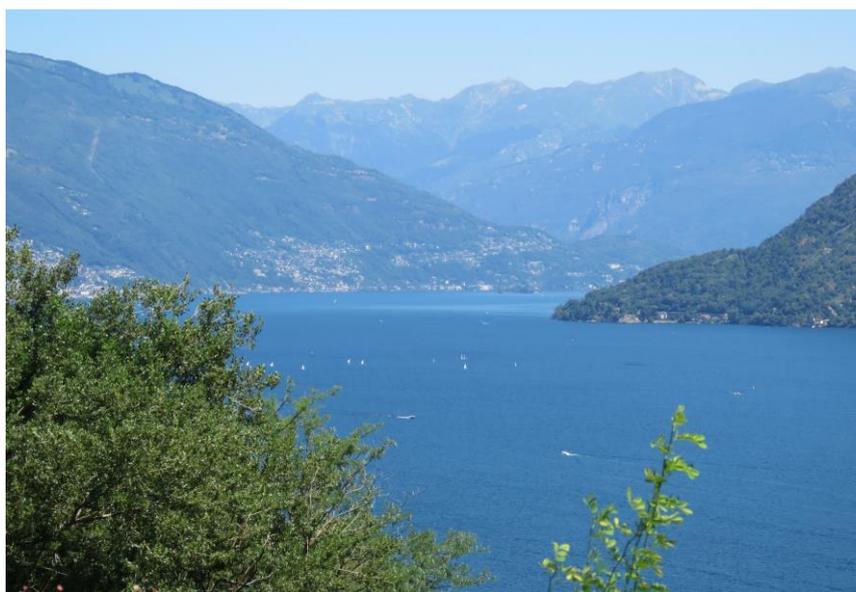


### Location: Cannero Italian Lakes

Cannero shares in all the attributes of the villages on the lakes, lovely views of mountains and water, nice lakeside boulevard to walk along, good swimming spots and best of all wonderful food. Our Hotel is right on the lakeside and we were lucky enough to have a table reserved for all our meals virtually at the water's edge. It was all very seductive and it was tempting to lie on the sun lounges catch up on Jane Austen and improve my tan to match the colour of the locals. But common sense prevailed, and we headed up into the hills for some protection. This is an example of the forest we walked through on the way to our first stop Carmine Superiore. This village is built on a rock promontory overlooking the lakes. It served as the first defensive outpost against the marauding Swiss who were constantly attacking the Italians in times gone by. One doesn't think of the Swiss as being marauding unless of course they are on a tennis court.

The walk was around the side of the mountain and was quite steep which meant that there was lots of remnant forest through the area. We have had some difficulty in recognizing the type of trees but again we think they were largely beech forests.

Like most travellers when you are away you start to compare the places you have visited in Australia with your current location. Anybody lucky enough to walk to the lighthouse at Wilsons Promontory in Victoria would be familiar with the view as you come over the last hill and head down to the lighthouse; as you come around a bend in the track the lighthouse is there in front of you, always in sunshine, just on the tip of the promontory.



After coming around a few bends over the last few days and coming across views like this, I would suggest that they are the equal of any of the startling views on our beloved Prom. Incidentally the Swiss border is just around the corner on the right and I guess that is where the marauders came down from.

We continued our way ever upwards but fortunately in the shade the whole time. Just

what we needed on a hot day.. At this stage the sun lounges back at the Hotel were a missed opportunity but Carol took an opportunity to sit down and partake of some local waters.



The village of Carmine Superiore is virtually as it was built, there are very few signs of the modern world in the buildings, water is even obtained from a mountain stream into a community well, but I suspect that at least individual houses have been plumbed and electricity added. There was a very strong sense of being in a time long past. The inhabitants had to walk in a considerable way from a paved road to reach their house, no ducking out for the first coffee of the day. This is a view of the village and its

church.

Our next stop was the village of Trarego which is the highest point in this part of the lakes and appropriately has the biggest church we had come across. The church was set on a flat piece of land with a lovely park surrounding the Baroque style church.



This was a meeting place for the locals as there was small groups of people enjoying the sunshine and each other's company.



Moving around the countryside you get the feeling that there is a great sense of community and that the people belong to and support that community. Perhaps this comes from many hundreds of years of the community living in the same area. It is something that is not as common in the settlement of Australia by Europeans. I have had some neighbours for twenty years and other than the occasionally Xmas greeting or attending to the logistics such as rubbish collection there has been little interaction. I had better become friendlier when I get home. What should we do with our lives? Many things, but the most daring thing is to create a stable communities in which the terrible disease of loneliness can be cured.

After wandering around the village looking for a shop, which there weren't any, we set off for Veggiona in search of a cup of tea and some cool refreshments. On arriving in the village, we came across this statue. This couple may be taking the sense (or feel) of community a little too far in public.



We managed to find a café which was open and enjoyed a nice rest with views over the lake. My resolve not to partake of ice-creams while on this trip was temporarily forgotten as I tucked into some beautiful pistachio flavoured ice-cream.

We dallied for quite a while in the garden area of the café as we knew we had a very steep walk back to Cannero. As it turned out it was not as bad as anticipated with lots of switchbacks and some pleasant periods walking through forest. The walk down also included watching a group of clowns practise their art in the grounds of a very appealing villa.

Next day we decided to catch the ferry to Cannobio and walk back to our hotel.

What can I say, Cannobio is yet another lovely village by the lake with great views. The



promenade was particularly grand because of the trees which had been planted. What Cannobio also had were plenty of shops with real products rather than tourist items; this gave us our first opportunity to do some shopping. Carol bought a dress in an attempt to match the elegance of the Italians at dinner while I spent some time looking for the perfect

pair of walking shoes, a dream that I am not willing to give up on. Those who followed my last adventure may remember the trouble I had on my last walk with my footwear. This time I have opted for a pair of Keens; they are comfortable but a bit heavy, so the pursuit continues. As I was looking I came across this display of local cheese for sale. The Italians really do food well.



We found this library in an old telephone box. The thing about a library is that it outranks any other thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never-failing spring in the desert.

Back at the hotel, as we were dressing for dinner, there was a tremendous racket outside in the street. Further investigations revealed that it was the clowns we had seen practising the day before. They are a group of clowns who provide their services voluntarily to visit sick children in hospitals and were advertising a concert to raise money to continue their efforts.

We won't be able to go to the concert as tomorrow we catch a train to Basel on our way to the Black Forest in Germany.

Just because there is a little space left this is a statue of Mary and son we came across.

