



Settling in Brittany aged 10 -Analuisse Walker

Elaine: I'm really interested to find out your story, to hear your story, because to make a move to England (Brittany?) when you're quite young and settle in and stay here is an incredible achievement. So when did you actually move to Brittany, and how did you feel about it?

Ana-Luise: I moved to Brittany in 2004, so I was ten years old. I loved France, coming on holiday, because we had a holiday house here, but I didn't want to move here full-time. I didn't want to leave my friends, I didn't speak the language. I could say 'Bonjour', that was it. I didn't even know how to say 'What's your name?' I only knew 'Bonjour'. So I was dreading the move. I knew I cried a lot, and what didn't help was I was diagnosed with diabetes three weeks before coming to France – whilst we were moving, actually. So it was quite a difficult period. So we came here the first of April, 2004, and so it was the school holidays. We went to Disneyland, as a present we got ferrets We got animals as a present for coming. And then we started school, and it was the first day, we were nervous. I know I cried, leaving my parents, and my parents were so nervous they stayed around the town all day, drinking coffees and just going for walks and more coffees they were so nervous. And when they picked us up they said, 'Oh how was it?' And me and my brother went, 'Alright.' So they were 'Is that it? We had been nervous all day and all you had to say is Alright.' And so we were just integrated really well. The teachers spoke English – well, they put us with teachers who spoke English. And because we were the only English in the school, me and my brother, we weren't allowed to see each other.

Elaine: Oh really?

Ana-Luise: Yeah. Only break times. We weren't allowed. The Headmaster put that as a rule. And we respected it.

Elaine: Was your brother older or younger than you?

Ana-Luise: Younger.

Elaine: He was younger than you, so even more, well, it was difficult for him ...

Ana-Luise: He was seven when he came over, and I was ten. So, yeah. No, he ... I still make mistakes, with le and la. And sometimes I have trouble with ou and où whereas he doesn't make many mistakes, and he even corrects the French. But coming to France and being at school, I mean, we had brilliant teachers and instead of doing, well, the French that the French kids are learning, we were ... a guy would take us into a little office and teach us, like, how to say 'in' and 'dans' and 'en' what's the difference, and I think that made it brilliant, yeah, I think it just helped us. Because we lived, we moved to Plemet, which is 25 minutes away from Quintin. But my parents knew they were going to move, so they wanted to get us into a school and not change schools, coz it was already difficult moving from England to France, and so that's why for about a year we did, we went to school in Quintin. And then we moved to Plaine-Haute, which is nearer – ten minutes away. And so we stayed in Quintin all of our schooling lives, and we didn't meet many English. I think that primary school just helped us. And they understood my diabetes



'cos I had a few problems, of course, being diagnosed three weeks before coming. But I mean France has done so much, even the health system in France is brilliant. I know in England there's a lot of trouble to get new machines and in France they kind of force it on you. And you don't have to pay, anything. And they are a brilliant service.

Elaine: Well I'm so glad that that experience has proved so positive for you,

Ana-Luise. And I think it's important that people know that, rather than thinking I need to go back to England for medical treatment, because I think they're better off here.

Elaine So what about Franco-Brit, that society?

Ana-Luise: So that Association started in 2006, which I learnt the other day. I ... my parents, what they told me, 'cos I can't remember, I was 12, my parents got a leaflet through the door, saying We know you're English. If you're interested come and ... come to Franco-Brit. So Franco-Brit was based in Moncontour. So we went one night, and we went to this lady's house, and she was English with a French husband, and had kids here, who were bi-lingual, perfectly. And so you spent the evening, and you brought your own food, well, to share, and everybody just spent the evening talking and we were off with the other children, and it was monthly. So every month, we met up with the same people – French and English – we were about 100 at the beginning, in this house.

Elaine: So that's, again ... what an excellent sort of step you've had, excellent medical attention, good schooling and the Franco-Brit Association that all seems so helpful for someone who's moved here and wants to become part of the way of life here, as opposed to sort of just treading on the surface. Now you're obviously bi-lingual. How has it helped in a career?

Ana-Luise: Not as much as I would've liked. Well, I mean, I worked ... I started in biology. So, yes, there's a lot of English in that. I work, I try and work in quality, and so I do help translate now and again, and you get English customers that come in, but most of the people actually speak English, so it's just now and again 'Can you translate that?'

Elaine: You work in a bank?

Ana-Luise: Now I'm in a bank. And people do come over to ask 'Can you just read this?' But they've already understood, so I think it's just for them ...

Elaine: It's to check.

Ana-Luise: Yeah. But they've mainly always understood what they... what they're asking. So, it hasn't helped.

Elaine: Was there a point, Ana-Luise, when obviously you were at school, and you sponging up French then, that you parents would ask you to maybe make a phone call or to do something in French?



Ana-Luise: Always, even now! My parents speak French. My mum has always spoken French because she remembered it from her lessons and she ... coming to France every year for 20 years, it helped her, of course. But it's always the accent. So she ... well, especially if you're ringing your, er, phone company.

Elaine: So your present personal life, tell us about that.

Ana-Luise: Well, I just got married, well, in September. To a Frenchman, called Kevin, from Brest, and we're now looking for a house, all around ... still in Brittany, in the ?? area, well, Moncontour, all around there. I'm looking for a full-time job. In France you may have heard of CDIs and CDVs. So a CDV is a job where they say it's a CDV for six months, and you can renew that contract three times, and you have to wait a certain time before coming back. A CDI is a full-time job, where it means you can't be forced out of the job. So I'm looking for a ...

Elaine: In what area? The same? In banking? Or ... anything?

Ana-Luise: In quality. And banking, 'cos they're two things that I enjoy. And we'll see.

Elaine: Well, the very best of luck. So your future plans?

Ana-Luise: My future plans are, well, I think we will stay in Brittany. I don't think we have the courage to go elsewhere, and I think why, because it a nice place. We'll have kids, and get my job, my full-time job here.

Elaine: Well, excellent. So you're staying here, raising your family here in the future, with Ollie and the cat, and any other animals you might collect. Best of luck,

Ana-Luise, and thank you very much.