

Les Slimes

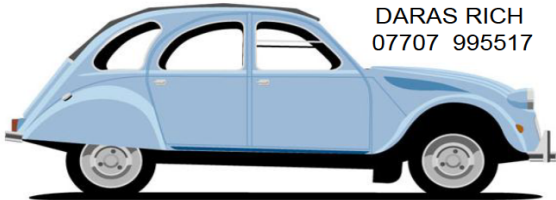
April 2022



Guess where
this is...
answer
inside

Inside

- Club Meeting at Royal Oak Wineham. 19.30 on Thursday April 21 (out door heated huts available)
- The Highway Code
- World Meeting Part 10



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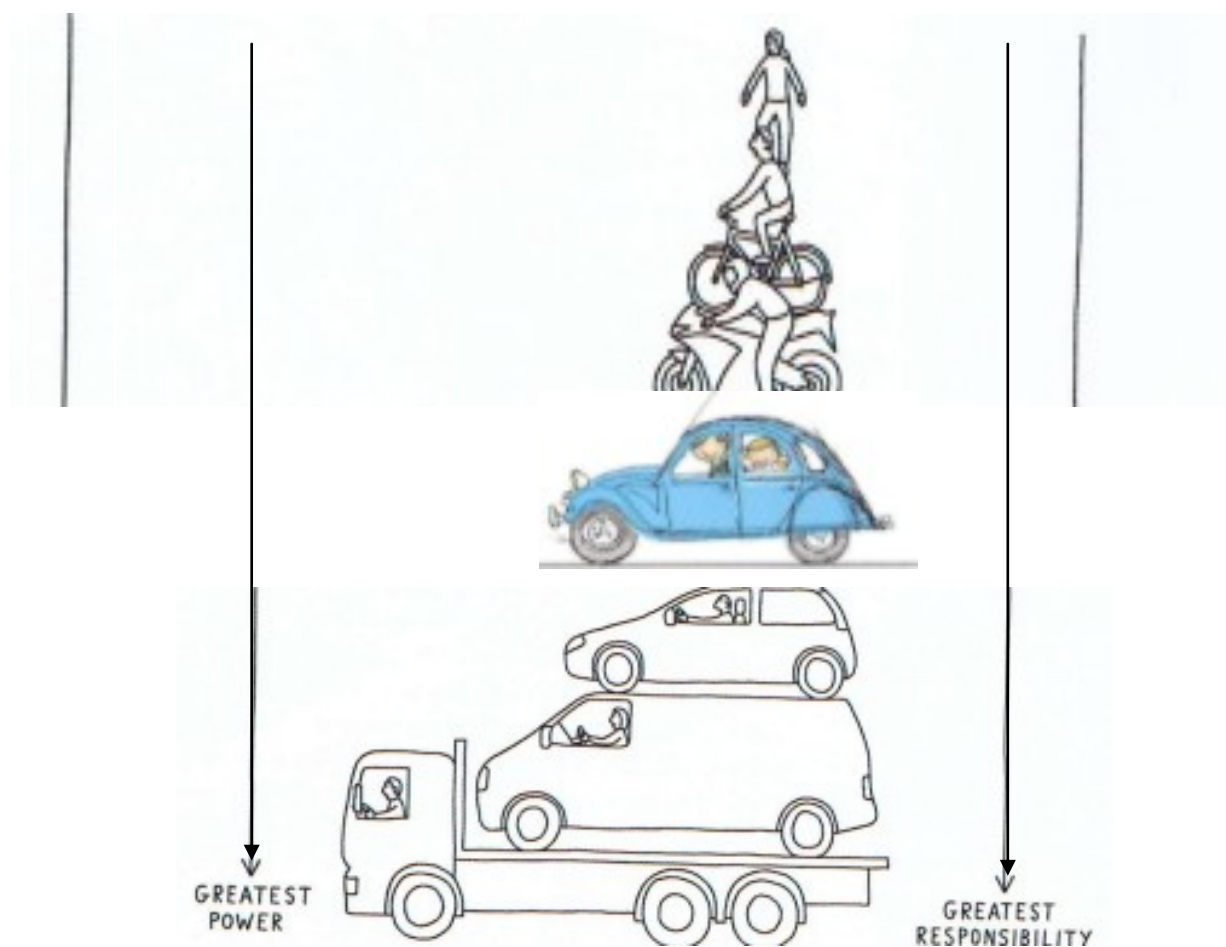
Newsletter of South Downs Escargots (www.southdownsescargots.co.uk/)
Member group of 2cvGB Articles and 2cv news always welcome.
Please send copy and pics to John Chaplin (biker1@btinternet.com)

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The New Highway Code

Re revised !!!!



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World Meetings Smooth Driving all the Way (Almost)!

Part Ten - La Belle France encore

Salbris, chosen for the 2011 French World Meeting, was a place known to us, a small town on the Route Nationale 20 south of Orleans. It had already staged an excellent French National Meeting, which we had much enjoyed. There was no doubt plenty of space for camping but the worry was that such a small place might be completely overwhelmed by the numbers likely to attend a World Meeting. This was especially concerning due to its very central location in France and proximity to the UK, Belgium, Holland and Germany. This was going to be a big meeting!



From the moment advance booking for the meeting opened sales were at an unprecedented level and by the end of May 2011 5,350 cars had been pre-registered. Xavier Audran, one of the French organisers, reported in the July issue of 2CVGB News that they were expecting an attendance of 7,000 or more cars and in the region of 15,000 people, which would triple the population of the town of Salbris. With our knowledge of chaotic entrance queues in the past at French National Meetings we were expecting problems and planned accordingly.

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Our group of Escargots members met up at an Etap hotel near to Salbris on the evening before the meeting opened to ensure an early start in the morning and early arrival in the anticipated queue. In the matter of the queue we were not disappointed.

We were still several kilometres from the site when we joined the long line of cars already waiting! Forward progress was very slow on the minor road and there were often more people out of their cars, chatting to friends or meeting new friends, than there were in the cars. Many drivers turned off their engines to avoid overheating coil problems and pushed their cars forward the few metres that were possible from time to time.

Eventually we reached the main road into Salbris and we were not too far from the turning into a large field on the right-hand side of the road, which was being used to assemble all the cars off the road ready for checking into the meeting. This field was already very busy and the marshals were forming the cars into long lines ready to go through the checking-in procedure. We were a long way from the front but could see that there appeared to be only one vehicle being checked in at any one time. This was crazy and we could see that the whole process was going to take many hours.

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After a while we realised that there seemed to be a separate line of vehicles checking in near the entrance and it appeared that these were vehicles with trailers. Matt Damper, who was towing a trailer and a couple of other of our group managed to extract themselves from the queue we were in and join that much shorter line. This was a very valuable move for it meant that we would have members camped on the site and keeping space for us when we finally managed to get through the madness of checking in.

Unbelievably it was a long time before the organisers realised that they needed more check-in points and doubled the number (excluding the trailer queue) to two. They also doubled the number of people at each check-in so that they were able to deal with two cars at a time at each point. Finally the progress was visible! Despite the warmth of the day and a few frayed tempers the mood was very friendly, patient and calm but the speedier movement of the queues came just in time, before the the field started to be overwhelmed.



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I see that in my Magazine notes for September 2011 I wrote that we were about seven hours between arriving at the back of the queue well outside Salbris and getting into the actual camping field. I regarded this as a bit of a bonus as in my pessimistic way I had anticipated a ten hour wait. Many 2cvers regarded all this as party time in the holding field and that was certainly the way to treat it. We were the lucky ones. Some people had to

camp in the holding field overnight!



I think that is more than enough on the trials and tribulations of getting into the meeting. The gathering itself was certainly massive. Official figures reported an attendance of 7,036 cars but

at times the booking in procedures seemed to break down and it was likely that quite a number of attendees were not logged in this total. There were also lots of people camped in the town itself on verges, green spaces and even in gardens of local residents. It was an enjoyable meeting but at busy times it was difficult to get from place to place quickly due to the sheer volume of people.



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Due to the relatively early entrance and excellent efforts of our 'advance party' we were lucky to have found a good flat space for all of us, not far from the entrance and close to the area around the lake where the flea market was held. The only disadvantage was that because of the one-way system in operation we were a long way from the exit point. Theoretically Daras should have gone to the flea market by driving virtually all the way through the site to the exit and then out, around the town to the entrance and back in again, which could have probably taken going on for half an hour! Like others close by, he sneaked the 60 metres or so the wrong way to save time and petrol. Barry Willis, who has attended a lot of Escargots camps, was struggling by on foot with his table and bits for sale one morning so I was able to give him a hand.

We drove out of the site only on one occasion on a shopping excursion and saw 2cvers camping everywhere. Apparently some, after needing to put their tents up there on the first night, even remained in the holding field throughout the meeting, going across to the main site for all the facilities. We were so close to the centre of town that it was easier and quicker to walk there to visit shops, bars and cafes or view the excellent 2CV display in the museum. The musical entertainment was typically French and everything was very crowded but, as ever, we enjoyed our stay in our little encampment, at the back of a large group of Italians. Prominent among the Italians was Franco Grosso, who was the main organiser of the 2003 meeting at Vinadio and also the ICCCR meeting near Rome in 2008.

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There were a number of strange 2CV adaptations to be seen on site. One striking one appeared to be a large cockerel, very much a French sporting mascot and also to be seen was a very smart and clearly hand-built mini caravan. There was also on display a spectacular sand structure of a 2CV, the like of which I have never seen before or since. Due to the size of the site and the sheer number of people I am sure that there were quite a lot of other things that we never got to see.



The Spanish club gave a presentation for the next World Meeting to be held on the Aragon Motor Circuit, in the north east of Spain and not a great distance from Barcelona. Ideas were already forming for a trip into the city to see Gaudi's works in two years' time. Poland was chosen as the venue for 2015 and their proposed site was to be in the



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As ever, the meeting ended all too soon but we did have a little more time in France before wending our way home. Only one thing cast a dark shadow over the meeting and that was the loss of his camera from our camping area by Simon Day on the last evening of the meeting. This was assumed to have been stolen and

it meant of course that Simon had lost all his pictures of the meeting, of which he had taken a considerable number. We did hear of a number of other thefts during the meeting but with such a large number of people crowding together and little except identifying wrist bands to control who was on site, I suppose this was sad but inevitable.

Home again we reflected on a meeting like no other had ever been and undoubtedly larger than any World Meeting would ever be again. At least we could say we were there, file away the memories and practice our Spanish for next time!



Maurice