

Les Slimes

June 2022

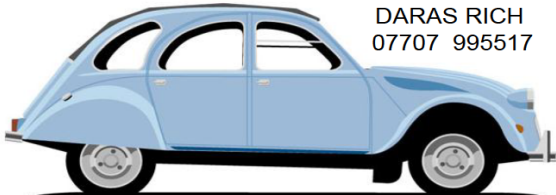


**Yes.....its BBQ time again
for
South Downs Escargots**

Inside

- Club Meeting at King Harry's Filed nr Cowfold.
- World Meets—Spain by Maurice

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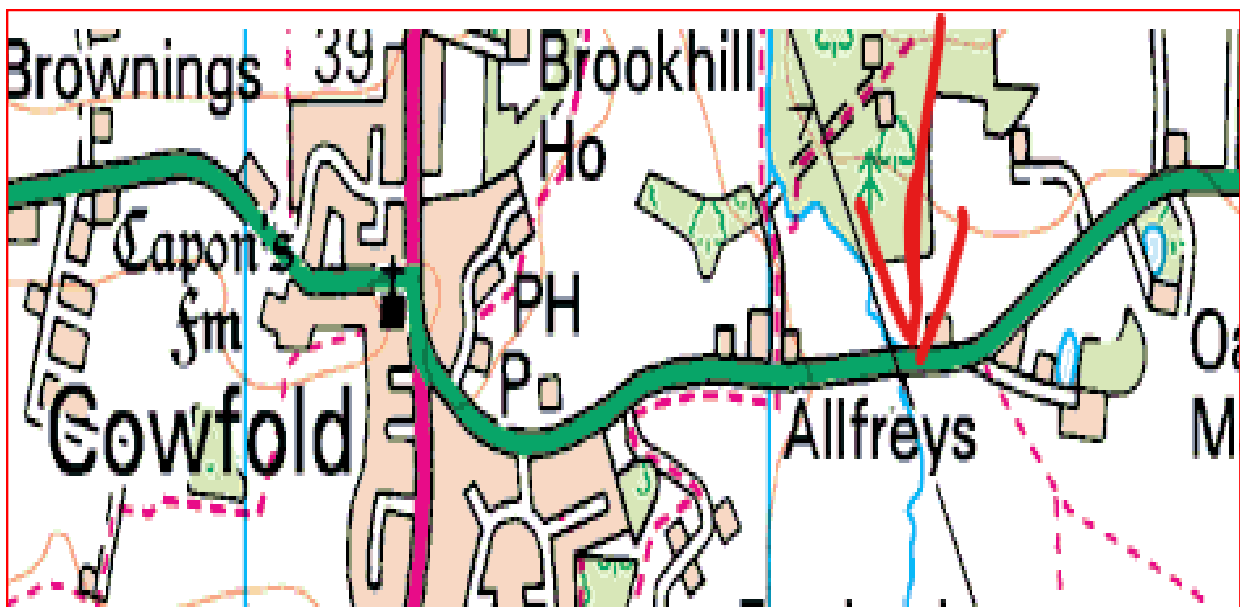


Newsletter of South Downs Escargots (www.southdownsescargots.co.uk/)
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Please send copy and pics to John Chaplin (biker1@btinternet.com)

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We will be holding the next South Downs Escargots meeting on Thursday 16 June at our Hat Camp venue, that is 'King Harry's Field', Cowfold, which is almost opposite the Oakendene Industrial Estate on the Bolney road. Arrive from 7/7.30 pm onwards - please bring your own food, chairs etc BBQ ready to cook from 7.30. Toilets will be open so bring drink !



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World Meetings Smooth Driving all the Way (Almost)!

Part Eleven – Viva L’Espana

In late July 2013 we were very busy and accordingly unable to travel with the main Escargots contingent down to Alcaniz and the Spanish World meeting. We had the wedding to attend of Sue’s elder nephew in Cranleigh, near Guildford on Saturday the 20th and were staying overnight there. We were also invited to go out on the Sunday and would not be home until late on that day. We were looking at a fairly direct trip to Spain on our own to join up with everybody else at the Meeting site.

Giving ourselves plenty of time to pack and get ready for the trip, we left home on the morning of Sunday the 28th of

July for the short trip to Newhaven port. The weather had been absolutely glorious for the wedding and still continued warm and sunny.

Our first night stop was made at a hotel in Bourges in the middle of France and from there we travelled down to Toulouse to spend the night at a hotel on the outskirts of the city, near the university and ring road. We made far better time

towards Toulouse than I expected and soon had time to leave the autoroute and potter down some of the country roads, finding an excellent scenic spot to have lunch in a lovely open area not far from a viaduct.



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From Toulouse we headed more or less due south in the direction of Barcelona. As we got into the foothills of the Pyrenees it got markedly colder. We received a message towards mid-day from our advance party for us to try and acquire some rock or nail pegs for camping as newly

arrived at the Meeting site they had discovered that the camping area, although appearing to be grass, was actually largely a tarmac surface underneath and it was impossible to get an ordinary peg to penetrate far enough into the ground. We did attempt to find pegs but by this time were away from any major towns and could find only very sturdy pegs which didn't look as though they would be quite strong enough!

As we climbed on the approach to Andorra the traffic started to build up and eventually became a stationery line which was not encouraging. However I had heard that it could be very busy getting across the border there and had already planned our route to avoid the country and go direct into Spain. This was a wise move for soon we reached a junction where we turned off for Spain and after that nearly all the traffic was gone. It would have been nice to visit another country, albeit a small one, but we had a Meeting to get to!

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We soon left the higher terrain behind and the going was easier for our heavily-laden Pierre. The signs started to show that Barcelona was less than 100 kilometres away and soon we saw the signs for Manresa and turned west along a very good and very quiet dual carriageway. We were now making excellent progress and the town of Lleida was soon reached. We by-passed the centre and saw the road we needed, the N211. Once on that we found we had only just over 100 kilometres to go to Alcaniz and the Aragon motor circuit which was the venue of the Meeting.

Arriving here was nowhere near as harrowing as arriving at Salbris two years before. There were queues of cars but in orderly lines and moving fairly quickly through the check-in points. We contacted Daras who explained that they were camping very



close to the exit which was not very far from where we were and came over. This meant that we were able to go into the meeting to join them by means of the exit road as we already had a pitch to go to. We thus avoided the journey back to the entrance and the drive all the way through the site to come back almost to square one!

The first job was to pitch the tent and we immediately understood the need for a rock peg as ordinary ones and not even the sturdier ones we had bought, would just not break the surface. Luckily Matt Damper had acquired one and so we used it to make all the necessary holes through the tarmac so that our standard pegs would then go into the ground. It was a little more time consuming, but effective! It was also pretty exhausting in the scorching heat and humidity, which continued through the meeting.

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The Spanish clubs put on an excellent meeting with a wide variety of attractions and we were fortunate to be not too far from all that was happening. We were also fortunate to have the Club Event Shelter to give us some shade from the intense heat and also shelter from the thunder storms triggered by the humidity. These were spectacular – no need for fireworks at this meeting! As ever the meeting seemed to fly by and it was all too soon time to pack up and travel north once more, this time as one group.

We were heading for Barcelona which was pretty much a must visit place, especially as we were so close. Not wanting to have the cars in the city we had found a B&B hotel up the coast from the city and booked to stay there for two nights. Parking was easy, it was close to a railway station and a short train ride took us straight into the heart of the city – perfect! However, on the way was another place not to be missed, the mountain refuge of the Monastir de Montserrat. This is set in a spectacular position and pictures cannot fully do it justice. It also had a cable car which took you high above for even more sensational views and I seem to remember John Shelley took the ride up there. If you are ever in the area it is somewhere not to be missed.



We had just the one day in Barcelona and made the most of it by taking the tourist bus around the various sites to save some of the legwork. Gaudi's famous and still unfinished cathedral, the Sagrada Família is an amazing centrepiece and there are many other examples of his work scattered around the city. Hungry and thirsty after our wanderings through the heat of the day we found a restaurant for tapas, before heading back to the train station for the return to our hotel.

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It was now a case of onwards and northwards as we headed out of Catalonia, through the mountains and into France. In the Catalan areas of both Spain and France it is strange to see signposts in both languages, either Spanish or French and Catalan. Our destination was now the walled hilltop town of Carcassonne, with its medieval citadel. Searching for parking here we got separated by traffic and ended up in two different car parks but joined up again by the walls. This was yet another place on this trip which is well worth a visit. The ground was still baked very hard around here but we found a campsite where you could borrow nail pegs and were glad we had them when hit by another spectacular storm, which did terminal damage to our little overnight pop-up tent.

We worked our way through France to our next planned destination, which was Chatillon-sur-Indre, a little place north-west of Chateauroux, where the local French 2CV club were having a week-end camp. Matt Damper knew two of the local deuchistes, Fabrice and Christelle and we were therefore aware of the camp. It was on the way so we decided to attend. It was great fun to be at a French local club meeting and there were lots of activities to keep us busy. A number of these still linger in the memory. There was an 'aperitif' time every evening when attendance was required at the old hand-cranked former petrol pump with your glass for your rose aperitif to be dispensed. This was enormous fun.



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We struggled a little with the Treasure Hunt around the area, with the instructions and directions of course all in French. The trick was to try and unobtrusively follow a French team and try and observe what they were doing. There were a few games included in a local park and Daras Rich was I seem to remember one of our better contestants. There were prizes for virtually all contestants in



the Treasure Hunt though, so nobody felt left out. There was also the obligatory welcome from the local mayor at the civic hall with refreshments provided.

Our spectacular success as a group was to win the 'Furthest Travelled' Trophy on the basis that the distance measured was from the UK to Spain and then back to Chatillon. This was perhaps a little tenuous but received in good spirits by everyone. At the end of the meeting myself and Sue once more split from the others and headed up to see one of Sue's French cousins and husband at their amazing timber-framed house not far east of Orleans before finally going on to the Channel for the ferry trip home. Just two years to go and it would be off to Poland for the 2015 World Meeting.

Maurice

Thanks Maurice another great read and an inspiration for us all to get out and about wherever in our cars !!! Ed

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UNTIL

THE



NEXT

TIME

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