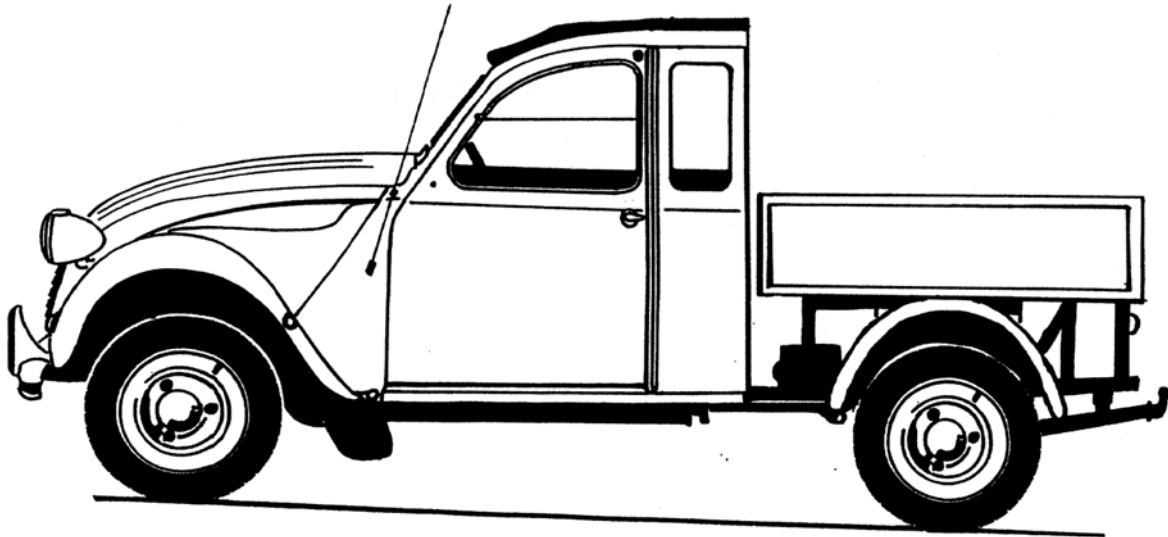


July 2023

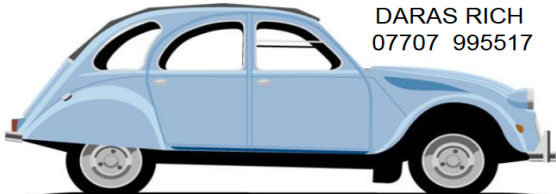
Les Slimes



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- Correspondence



DARAS RICH
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Please send copy and pics to John Chaplin (biker1@btinternet.com)

Les Slimes



World Meetings Smooth Driving all the Way (Almost)!

Part Twelve - Return to Poland

July 2015 was soon upon us and Torun in Poland was our next destination. Sue and I were on our own again, with 'Pierre', travelling separately from the rest. We stayed overnight in Calais and then headed east for our next night stop in Hanover. All the way out of France and through the Low Countries the weather was absolutely foul and wipers and lights were in use at all times. We had just crossed from The Netherlands into Germany when we stopped at a rest area for a break.

We were there for a good while. When I turned the key to go there was nothing - the battery was completely flat. It was clear that we needed a good amount of charge in the battery to get us on our way, especially in view of the weather, which, although now moderating a little, was still not good. Fortunately our classic car insurance policy covers overseas breakdowns, so we rang the relevant number for assistance. After rather convoluted attempts to explain exactly where we were the message was finally got across and we were told the German equivalent of our Automobile Association were on their way.

Les Slimes



The German breakdown man spoke not a word of English and after a brief investigation pronounced "Batterie Kaput". He wanted to go and get a new battery but I persuaded him by using my few words of German and a somewhat bizarre form of sign language to put as much charge as possible into the existing one. This he finally understood and accepted. Soon we had a good charge in the battery and were ready to go. Our rescuer was a little incredulous that the 2CV was going to take us to Hanover and I'm sure fully expected us to be in touch again before long but off we went with his wishes for a "Guten Fahrt" or safe journey.

Fortunately the weather started to be more on our side and continued to improve. Eventually the wipers and lights could be turned off and I was happy that we weren't going to drain the battery again. We were even able to use the 'Satnav' to help find our way to the pre-booked hotel in Hanover. Without it we would probably have still been looking! When we parked at the hotel I deliberately left 'Pierre' pointing down a slope to give us a chance of a rolling start if necessary.

Les Slimes



I also hoped for a dry sunny morning to give a much better chance of starting success. I think I must have been quite tired that night because I have little recollection of where we went for an evening meal except that it was just a short stroll down the road somewhere. I also know I slept very well and woke up to see the sun streaming through the bedroom window.

It was sunny and warm for the new day so no problem getting going. Our destination was not too far away for we had a hotel booked in the western outskirts of Berlin, near the Olympic Stadium and rail station to give us an afternoon and evening in the city. On the way we detoured through the centre of Potsdam to marvel at its architecture and buildings.

It was only a short walk from our hotel to catch the local train into Berlin city centre. The only complicated part was mastering the German instructions on the ticket machine to get the two return tickets we wanted. By the time the second train arrived we had sorted it out and were on our way!

Les Slimes



Berlin was a delight and we enjoyed a wander around the centre of the city and a drink along the banks of the river before heading towards the Brandenburg gate. Near there we had an evening meal and then made our way back to the station for the return rail journey to our hotel. It was a very enjoyable day!

Our destination was now Poland and the World Meeting. We had a route planned to get from our hotel, around the outskirts of Berlin and back on to the autobahn towards Poland. This worked fine until we hit roadworks, which had of course closed the two main roads we needed! Luckily, after a little wandering up and down a few roads we somehow got back on track and everything was plain sailing. We arrived at Torun in good time and followed the well-placed direction signs for the meeting without any problem.



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This took us to the Moto Arena stadium where already quite a number of 2CVers had parked up and were gathering. As we found out later this was at one end of the large meeting site and more travelling was still involved. A queue had started to form by the ticket office and we joined it and were also soon joined by the rest of our Escargots group. Unfortunately there was no proper control of the number of people allowed into the office at any one time so the rather small office became very congested.

Eventually we reached the ticket counter, checked in and received our information pack. We now learnt that to get into the meeting we had to drive some distance around the outside of the site to the other end to get to the meeting entrance. Off we set and soon joined the end of a long queue but this moved relatively quickly and before too long we were turning off into the entrance drive and joining a relatively fast moving line to pass the control, armbands raised and enter. Once we had all gathered the next task was to decide where to camp.



Les Slimes



In the end we settled for a spot in the middle of the site, not too far (or too close) to a stand of portaloos but also not too far from the action. Our tents were soon erected although our awning, which really belonged to a larger tent did not fit completely straight. We tried various ways of trying to straighten it and eventually gave up and lived with it slightly crooked! Once we had fully explored the site we found that beyond the marquee and catering facilities etc. it stretched right back to the stadium itself, where we had checked in. Indeed where the flea market was to be held in the mornings was in the area where we had parked on our arrival at the stadium

The weather through the meeting was very pleasant and as well as the many activities available on site most people took advantage of the free transport into Torun on the tram network which our meeting wrist band gave us. One evening there was a convoy of 2CVs into Torun, restricted due to space to around 150 cars, and a display along the river bank. It was a splendid sight in the town with local residents and 2Cvers all enjoying the spectacle and the various stalls which were there for the evening. We all went in on the tram.

There was a large Croatian contingent at the meeting to support their bid to host the World Meeting in 2019. Portugal had of course already been chosen for 2017 and they gave us more information on their plans. Many of us, as per usual made advance bookings. Croatia were, to their very evident delight, awarded the staging of the 2019 event after the vote of countries at the meeting. This was something to look forward to!

Les Slimes



As always the meeting was all too quickly over and it was time to wend our way home. Many of our group were extending their stay with detours on the way back but sadly we again didn't have any



spare time available and had to make a direct trip home with an overnight stay in the Netherlands. We borrowed a voltage meter from Daras to check that the battery was charging properly and I am pleased to say the

battery behaved all the way home. It was however changed soon after our return. It was time to dream of Portugal in 2017 - it would come soon enough!

Maurice

Ed....thanks Maurice a great further edition on your travels

Les Slimes



Letter from Adrian and Christine

I heard from Adrian who has moved away from our patch and but still keeps in touch with Escargots via Les Slimes.....great to hear form you Adrian and many thanks for writing in.....in his words>>>>>

"Hi John.

No problem please go ahead, just a bit more detail about the picture of the fleet! The picture was taken on my drive in the early 1990's (sorry the quality is not better).

The Dolly was mine, (also had a matching red and white camping trailer to go with it), the blue Special was Christine's and had lifted suspension with black bull bars and spot lights and the red pick-up was

my 'project car'!

In the picture you can also see Simon Day with his H van.

The pick-up was made from a crash damaged grey Charleston with a bent chassis which I got through Tim Evans.



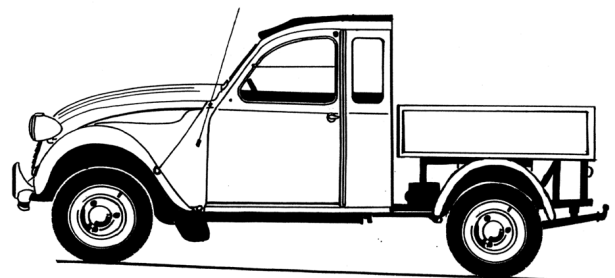
Les Slimes



Tim and I put a good second hand chassis underneath and stripped all the mechanicals off of the old Charleston and started the build of the pick-up. The main body shell was ok so we effectively cut the back of the shell off down the line in the middle of the rear doors.

Tim then constructed the rear of the cab with steel box section to create a strong frame, steel panels were then welded onto the frame to create the back of the cab. Side lights were cut in the panels for the small windows and a heated rear screen fitted in the rear panel. Second hand wings, bonnet, bumper and the original Charleston chrome headlights finished off the front end. There was just enough room to fit a spare wheel behind the passenger seat in the cab.

The rear pick-up back box was made out of a welded angle iron frame with steel panels fitted, this was then mounted on a braced steel frame welded to the chassis. The top lip of the pick-up back box was finished off with varnished ash a la Morris Traveller. The rear end was finish off with a tow bar, and the pick-up was painted fire engine red with a black half-length folding roof. Finally as advertising for Tim Evans, the sides of the rear box had the name of Tim's business 'Just 2cv' and phone number down the sides.



Les Slimes



We tweaked the engine with Luminition electronic ignition, and wound the suspension up as high as it would go. Being somewhat lighter than a standard 2cv and with a lower centre of gravity, it went like a bat out hell, got clocked on the A24 Capel by-pass doing just over 90mph, one of the many times I was pulled over by the boys in blue!! It handled like a dream and I was regularly spotted lifting a rear wheel when cornering fast, a wonderful fun machine to drive.

I've attached my original outline plan for the pick-up, please feel free to put it in Les Slimes.

I wonder if any of the fleet still survive today, red and white Dolly (E989FNJ), blue Special (C545OPN) and Red Pick-up (B414HCD).

I'm sure some of the 'older' club member will remember us, we had a pair of West Highland terrier dogs that we used to chase around the campsites and my cars were also fitted out with 'ham radio' gear.



As happens, along came our daughter and a change of circumstances so we both moved onto various Suzuki 4x4's over the years, and now suffering with dodgy knees, we both drive automatic Ford Ecosports (I know the shame of it!). But one day I would like to find a 2cv or a Lomax 'project' car.

Best regards to you and all at the Southdown Escargots.
Adrian and Christine"

Les Slimes



.....and finally some interesting stats.....



The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) latest MOT Compliance Survey for 2021-22 has revealed that 10.1% of cars that passed the test, should have failed. DVSA's data further found that 12.2% of MOT test results in 2021-22 were incorrect, and that 2.1% of cars that failed the test should have passed. The survey has shown that nearly 1.3 million vehicles are now potentially unsafe and potentially illegally being driven on roads

across the country. According to the official documentation, the DVSA retest a random number of vehicles to double check if the MOT has been correctly carried out and given the right verdict. In 2022, 1,732 MOT tested cars were re-examined by mechanics at the DVSA. Shockingly, out of the vehicles retested, 65.9% of the vehicles were found to have at least one defect which the MOT test station had either incorrectly examined, missed, or recorded under something else. Further analysis showed that 51.6% had three or more defects missed or issues that the DVSA's team of examiners disagreed with from the original assessment. Lamps, reflectors and indicators continue to be the most frequent reasons for vehicles fail their MOTs, but it's problems with brakes and tyres that are more likely to lead to the most serious failures.

RAC