

D-SECTION ISLE OF WIGHT TRIP

September 2023

BY NICK BURTON

This year the D-Section widened its horizons and ventured overseas (well it did involve a ferry!) to experience the delights of this fair Isle.

Our organiser this time was **Paul Buckett**, who knows the island inside out, not only as a result of being born there but also courtesy of driving Thorneycroft double-deckers prior to departing to the mainland for university (and in the fullness of time taking up a role within Citroën UK).

We were blessed with mill-pond conditions for our crossing and upon disembarking made for the Spyglass Inn, our lunchtime hostelry on the front at Ventnor, forearmed with a tulip map detailing our every turn expertly created by our organiser. The Royal Hotel, with origins from 1832 and subsequently receiving patronage from Queen Victoria, was our base for the weekend.

Our group this year was made up of some 12 couples who ventured this far in 10 Ds and one GSA, the Simms' Chapron unfortunately being 'hors de combat'. The vehicles in question ranged from a '69 Pallas bvh through to two Safaris, including our illustrious leader's '75 DS20.

On the Saturday morning we assembled for the obligatory group photo prior to departure in convoy towards our first destination, the Needles loW Landmark Attraction where those of us wishing to walk off the excesses of our previous evening's dinner took the precipitous footpath (yeah, okay, that's a bit of poetic licence, but there were steep drops, down to the still waters of the bay below). The landmark encompasses both the 'new battery' - a once top-



secret Rocket Test facility and the National Trust owned Old Battery with cannon emplacements protecting the approaches to Southampton from unwanted marauders. Naturally, we variously made our ways to the vantage point to snap gleefully on mobiles the limestone pointy things rearing up from the sea and the lighthouse beyond (this isn't a geography lecture so you can read up on that bit yourself).

The Needles Attraction cafeteria provided sustenance for most of the group, while some of us headed back to the Spyglass Inn, so as to get prime position by the Royal's heated outdoor pool (we were still enjoying temperatures in the high 20s during the weekend). Others visited the island's Botanic Gardens - bit of a disappointment, given it's so well established that these days they only have to cut the grass and clear any fallen branches. Osborne House and Carisbrooke Castle provided other venues to while away the afternoon.

It was a big weekend for classic

cars on the island, as it hosted an event at Ryde Esplanade, but given limited access one would have had to be in place so early in the day none of us sallied forth.

Most of us relaxed around the pool, enjoying pre-prandials and then dressing for our formal dinner. Apart from our excellent fayre, we were treated to a surprise performance: our very own **Richard Marshall** (he who brews fine ales for the D-Rally) gave a 'rendition' of 'The Green Eye of the Little Yellow God' ably assisted by **Roger Simms**. [Those of you with a classical bent will know this as a famous poem by J Milton Hayes - otherwise known as a 'dramatic monologue.'] Well, dear reader, think Stanley Holloway meets Mike Harding and you can visualise how these dinner-jacketed and white be-gloved strolling thespians appeared in our midst; it was hilarious!

Sunday morning and departure (for some of us) appeared all too soon. After breakfast we contrived a pincer movement around one of the tables to present Paul



Interesting facts about the two DS Safaris

David Gillespie's DS23 bvh Safari, according to its chassis number, was second off the line in modele année 1975. **Paul Buckett's DS20 Safari**, according to its chassis number, was one of the last, even taking into account ambulance variants which continued beyond the regular Berlins and Breaks. It's well known that Citroën didn't publicise the final chassis numbers for the closing year of production, so who knows, maybe these two survivors could now be the first and the last for that final year!



and wife Josy with a token of our respect to enjoy at the hotel, as thanks for what was a 'tour de force' in terms of content and professionalism for this year's D trip.

For next year Paul and I will join forces to arrange a sojourn to the Midlands, in particular Loughborough, where both he and I attended our respective seats of learning. Hopefully, we can find a weekend to suit prospective participants and thus far have been asked to avoid clashing with: Newbury Show, Kesteven Caravan Rally, Suffolk Churches Charity Bike Ride, Santa Pod European Finals and, last but by no means least, Heckmodwike Garden Produce Extravaganza (okay, I made up the last one). Hopefully, that means reveille will be sounded in mid-September.

