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## Circuit de Bretagne - 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> August

For the stalwarts amongst us, there are no surprises in store at the Circuit de Bretagne. The weather is virtually perfect, the hotel high quality (but understated), with good food, liquid refreshment and, above all, excellent company with friends and motoring acquaintances.

This year however hurricane 'Big' Bertha was to spoil some of the 'best laid plans of mice and men'.

The sea crossing (Porsmouthe - St Malo) on Brittany Ferries went very well. Gathering up the regular band of musketeers, Graham, Ian, Plo, Nick (anything with a pulse), Dick and CV (Desmond, Tony, Dave, Tony - all excused themselves, citing work or charities or other such nonsense). Fine food was consumed, accompanied by excellent ivory tinkling from the corner of the bar which we 'inspected' after the meal.

The crossing was millpond calm, which assisted Dick in getting in his nightly exercises of the vocal chords. Next day up at dawn (an hour early) for the 'full English' then debark and off trundling down the well-trodden and very pleasant French countryside. Under 2 hours later we arrived at the famed 'Westhotel' at about 10am (Dick having slept all the way, merrily ruminating to himself).

We were able to deposit our bags and other (clinking) luggage in the room (first floor spiral arm of the galaxy), however we were ejected from the bar and dining room by an irate staff member - for treading on the newly cleaned carpet!

Nothing for it but to sample the local wares and stock up on petrol etc for the morrow!

Refuelling completed, lunchtime beckoned so we set off (on foot!!) up the road, where the 'Northern contingent' decided that the best bet would be to 'grab a bite' in the local supermarket/McDonalds, whereas me and Dick tried the local 'leg over the wall' French restaurant (which was nearer and open!). Our meal was excellent, with delicacies accompanied by white wine and a detailed description of our young waitress' problems and the multi-positional performances which she employed to overcome recreational deficiencies (not something for the faint hearted!).

The afternoon passed with greeting the new arrivals at the hotel, signing on and keeping a watchful eye on the progress of hurricane Bertha which threatened to engulf France/our hotel/and the circuit!! Shock horror. That night all 5 musketeers made our way to the 'leg over the wall' restaurant, where the economy set meal revealed its delicious delights. Unfortunately yours truly - geniatric, forgot to bring the rucksack bulging with lubricating fluids, so we had to settle for the en-dearing house red and white - hey ho, I was going to give it up anyway!

Next morning the storm hit as predicted, and there was much checking of electronic devices to the effect that there may be a dry window for an hour at 3pm. What joy. Needless to say there was no rush to get to

by Chris Varey

the circuit (an open car and far too much HP on the slicks and dry settings stayed firmly on the trailer).



Ian Stewart's M3 and Paul Wallon's Tornado in a sea of Porsche

As predicted, the circuit sported rivers and lakes and only the adventurous (with lots of dashboard buttons to press) ventured out onto the circuit. I did manage to get a couple of rides in impressive tin tops - the first in Tim Evans' Porky with 20" wheels and oodles of grip and poke, very impressive putting on the power coming out of the pre-straight double apex through the river - without a slither or any untoward movement. The second ride was in Yan Havers' now geniatric Porsche, but being an excellent driver and joined to the hip to the machine, understeer was controlled with finesse and aplomb.



Chris Varey waiting for the rain to start in the dry

The rain did stop at 3pm (after an impressive 2 hour lunch), so we tiptoed round on slicks in the vain hope that a dry line would appear - but then it rained again, so we packed up back to the hotel. (It takes about an hour to change a hard/dry setting to soft and squidgy, not to mention changing wheels - and we were on holiday!).

That night, after a visit to the hotel bar, we again visited the leg over the wall restaurant, this time suitably armed with liquid provisions. The more expensive menu proved to satisfy everyone's tastes and was washed down with fine wines from the musketeer's cellar.

Up early next day for what proved to be dry, warm but dull weather - still, straight to the circuit (just put in Temple de Bretagne and she whisks you there in a trice!).

A quick briefing, fettling and then trundle off on the dry to test out the new slicks, experimental settings and ideas for new lines.