

SDG Social Scene Report for TR Action 196

Our very first static show of the year and also a first for the town of Eastbourne occurred on the May Day bank holiday weekend. We chose Sunday as the day that we would have our greatest presence and it turned out to be the best day for weather in the end too, all be it a bit on the chilly side. In all we had 9 cars situated on the top of the wish tower hill, overlooking the beach towards the pier, with many other classic cars on the other side down on the western lawns. It took a while for the cars to filter through as they came from the Sovereign end of the seafront near the marina to the show at the other end nearly 4 miles away as a cavalcade. Next year this might change. Once arrived SDG members were greeted with the first outing of our very own gazebo, which was for a time not used, but by the afternoon a gathering of our members had occurred. Some of us even had the pleasure of a ride in the infamous Eastbourne dotto train. Fireworks rounded off the evening and I think the show was a success overall.



On the club night in May we tried something new, a visit to an award-winning vineyard called Ridgeway situated near Ditchling Beacon in the heart of Sussex. We were joined by members of the Kent group, who went to great lengths to arrive at the Five Bells at Chailey in time for 7pm, before we set off to meet the others at the vineyard for a tour at 7.30. After a hasty amendment to our group parking we quickly embarked in viewing some of the 16-acre land that the vineyard covers, growing varieties of grapes that allow them to make sparkling wines. The 1,500 tins dotted throughout the fields we later learnt were to burn paraffin during frosty spells to raise the temperature to prevent damage to the valuable vines.

As the light faded we were taken inside to the winery where grapes are crushed, fermentation and wine bottling occurs. Immediately you could smell the alcohol. Once the wine has passed through various stages here they are allowed to mature in the cellar below and I think most of us had not really absorbed that making good wine could take at least 4 years before you were able to sell any stock.

At the moment they had over 100,000 bottles of wine in their cellar increasing to quarter of a million by the end of this year. We learnt that they had real problems keeping up with demand especially as English sparkling wine has such a good reputation these days.

Lastly we moved onto the wine tasting. Probably the best part of the evening. We tasted four very different types of wine and everyone had their favorites and I think I remember seeing a few bottles purchased and packed into bags before the journey home. As the evening was still early when we finished some headed back to Five Bells as the men desperately needed a pint or two.

By the time you read this we will have attended another 4 shows, had our cannonball run and the first round of our best presented TR competition. We don't stop there as plans for SDG's presence at this years international will be well underway as well as our summer barbeque during the August club night. Details of all events and club nights can be found on our web-site or why not subscribe to our newsletter. Or just pop along and meet us we would love to see you. Till then happy motoring.

Jane Worsfold