

## Toulouse CC

### 2 September 2007- A Day to Remember

In TCC tradition first the weather: A glorious sunny day with a mild mountain chill in the morning progressively warming throughout the day.

A week after the Siddals Cup Final Toulouse CC were set an entirely different challenge. The organization of this event was appropriately "shouldered", by fixture secretary Nasher. He ensured that the Toulousian 'Lemmings', a sixteen strong team, were dispatched south to take on the mighty Ariege Canyons.

The day started with the standard amiable banter, bravado, bluster and mickey taking over coffee and dutch courage, ie Armagnac, followed by a communal session of gentlemen fitters who provided the now favoured second strip of Toulouse, ... black rubber! (With one exception for whom only a jolly green giant suit was ample for his fine physique).

The instruction for lunches in some cases seemed to have been either misinterpreted or considered as a last supper and items such as smoked salmon, chicken and roasts and, tuna and crab salad were soon being packed into the sealable containers. This was in preparation for the hour-long mountain trek to the top of the canyon in a variety of close fitting trunks and loose fitting bellies!

At the top of the canyon, lunch and the obligatory red wine were followed by coffee and, then the frankly comical site of 16 grown men recently bloated trying to squeeze themselves into rubber suits that apparently are supposed to be two sizes too small, for snugness!

The hour had loomed, a procession of Lemmings made their way to the canyon. This was it the 'Lemmings' were on the edge, it was Bunny in the headlights and Knee's all a quiver territory. In characteristic gentlemanly fashion the youngsters were encouraged to the front and all others followed, ..... eventually. The leap with the instruction 'just make sure you land in the deep bit' was from fully 2m, the water as promised was a sweltering 37 degrees .... Fahrenheit (that's nearly 3 Celsius!). All were pleased with their achievement and not least of all their survival, but thoughts of a celebratory beer were soon quashed as the Lemmings were instructed to negotiate their way further down the canyon. This sounds somewhat easier than it was, the understatement of the day being "be careful it's a little slippy under foot at times", when in reality it was like trying to roller-blade on a wall of ice!

On route we encountered:

- a chimney that was negotiated by rope only to be confronted by a photographer, in the dark, and an escape route through a waterfall;

- a 6m leap, another opportunity for headlights and quivering; the instruction on jumping technique was to keep arms crossed over your chest and legs together was quickly forgotten as a wide variety of Wily Coyote impressions became the norm;

- abseiling down the side of waterfalls, it was uncanny how almost everybody eventually drifted under the waterfall for a good dowsing before the rope ran out and the sopping Lemming plummeted fully 50cm into the pool below;

another leap of around 6m, this time needing a push off but just in case you wanted to spend time thinking about it, or if there was any evidence of brain function the guide was on hand to provide a hearty push;

a Tyrolean traverse (us Lemmings know all the terms now!) which involved abseiling on 5m of rope over a 15m waterfall when fortunately a rope slide kicked in, whisking the grinning (I think it was a grin) Lemming towards the rock face opposite, the younger and more lithely of us elegantly skimmed across the lake whilst others appeared to plug like a pitching wedge shot landing in a cow pat;

then, there was the monster, the ultimate Lemmings Leap, where if you jumped from the top it was 10m, that's nearly 33ft, 394 inches, a four storey building, you get the picture; anyway Jack and his friend leapt long before Beefy arrived to caution against risks and the impact of no male heirs, they were followed by Martin 'the bigger', aka No Fags, and a procession of 'discretion is the better part of valour' troops – with flawed Lemming genes who followed the path a little further as they seemed to think a three storey building was quite sufficient, the author took the 'whatever happens I'll only do this once' attitude and as a consequence of the 10m option ended up writing this looking out of the top of his head where his eyeballs currently reside!

and yet the trickiest obstacle of all was an innocuous boulder which El Presidente in mid-conversation pirouetted off, disappearing beneath the water ..... twice!

the final obstacle was another leap of perhaps 5m requiring a bit of a run up, everything ran smoothly until Two Fags aka little Mart, who favours big hits to runs, at the critical moment lost his footing narrowly missing the big hit (and being renamed Half a Fag and a dog-end) and fortunately came up smiling.

Against the odds, the Lemmings had all survived this great adventure it and it really was time for that celebratory beer.

A great day, in a delightful location and in excellent company!

Note: For non-participants pictures will soon be available on the Internet.