

**RS Archer** @archer\_rs Sat Aug 01 06:21:37 +0000 2020

Had WhatsApp from idiot son, "French trains all crap, lots of Nazi stuff about wearing masks. I told them where to get off" Seems the idiot son got into an argument with French family after they reminded him of the need to wear a mask. He had removed it because "it was a bit itchy". Train staff threatened him with removal at the next station.

Update The father has got himself an estate agent, if it's the one I think it is they're rubbish. Idiot son message, 'The lads are all super pumped for next week. Darren says hello" Sigh. O what joy to come on new summer morning

So..... It seems they next week are arriving in a camper van towing a trailer. This so "the lads" all have somewhere to sleep when here and on the drive down. It is, I'm told, a "kick arse American job" that Darren owns from when he did Stock Car Racing.

WhatsApp message from idiot son. "Do you know if we can sleep in a French McDonald's carpark overnight?"

I'm assuming they want to avoid paying for camping fees. I suggested they check with "Brussels" as there were probably EU regulations covering that.

Overnight WhatsApp from idiot son. They depart Monday, crossing via ferry from Dover because Darren "doesn't trust the Euro tunnel train setup" Stay overnight somewhere south of Paris (for a "few beers and a bbq") then arrive here late Tuesday.

Based on my previous tweets some people are of the impression we have a (shudder) McDonalds nearby. I am delighted to say the closest one is over 50km away. Neither I or any member of my family has ever been there. Additionally, we do not have Walmart in France.

We all enjoy hamburgers here (steak haché) but we prefer high quality beef and seasoning. In addition we do prefer our meat cooked with a lighter touch.

Now it is nearly 10 and I must start working. I trust you all have an enjoyable day.

WhatsApp message from idiot son "Darren can't find the bloody camper keys, what a muppet. Without me organising stuff it all goes Pete Tong"

Good news, Darren found the keys it seems, the bad news? The battery is flat. Idiot son messaged me, "I'm at my wits end here. I tell you I'm on the edge"

WhatsApp message. "We borrowed a battery from a bloke's Transit van back of the estate. We are rocking" I think he means stole, not borrowed

They are now on their way to pick up who idiot son calls his "crew" Dave (workmate) and Jonny (who they all call 'Vegas') OK, this may take a while to write because I'm laughing so much after reading the latest WhatsApp from idiot son. Dave is not allowed to join the trip because his mum will not let him go. Seems he has neither tidied his room or cut the grass on Sunday like he promised. He's 25

OK Jonny (Vegas) collected. They are on their way. I'm assuming Dave is either cutting the grass or tidying his room while sulking.

They've broken down.

They are now running again (loose battery connection) and are on the motorway heading to Dover. Idiot son reports Jonny (Vegas) feeling car sick. "What a girl" is his considered opinion of that

Idiot son reports they are trying to make up time by, "Giving it the beans" That should go well.

They've been pulled over for speeding. Vehicle being inspected

Seems they got away with a warning but were delayed for over 40 minutes by the vehicle inspection. Idiot son claiming he, "Sweet talked me way out of it, they were puty in my hands' On route to Dover.

Interesting side snippet. It seems this will be the first time Jonny (Vegas) has ever left the UK. He was supposed to go to Belgium last year for a stag weekend but missed the plane after going to Gatwick instead of Heathrow. He has €50, as idiot soon puts it "just in case"

Idiot son reports that the bridge over the Thames at Dartford is, " Well high" The descendents of the Bard are with us.

For anyone in the area their booked ferry is apparently the one departing Dover 'Just after seven"

They have had to stop because Jonny (Vegas) is car sick again. Idiot son not impressed, "What sort of a man gets car sick, totally a girl thing"

Idiot son called me this time (he's very stressed) So to counteract his carsickness, they decided to let Jonny (Vegas) drive. He hit a bread delivery lorry and a German motorcycle sidecar while pulling out of the motorway services. Darren is trying to "sort it"

It's not clear if the motorcycle is German, the motorcycle and the sidecar are German or if just the owner is German. Or all three. Updates as I have them

I can confirm the bread delivery lorry is British.

Idiot son said he was, "Surprised I wanted to know" "Just wanted to be a part of it" I said "Thanks bro, I like that"

Kudos to idiot son. He asked the questions. Bike is German (a BMW) Sidecar is from Czech Republic. Owner is German and is named Peter. Peter's wife (not previously mentioned) is called Anna. They are from Bremen.

Idiot son proudly told me, "I wrote it all down to get it right" I told him he had done well.

Side topic. Dinner tonight is fish pie followed by lemon tart We will be drinking a lightly oaked Chardonnay from Jean-Louis Jean-Christophe Bersan.

Very garbled voicemail (my phone was on silent) The police have arrived, called by bread lorry driver. Jonny (Vegas) is shouting, not sure what about. Darren is trying sort things out but bread lorry driver "being difficult". German couple have left, minimal damage it seems

So somewhat shockingly, the vehicle is road legal, all three have driving licences and the insurance is up to date plus Jonny (Vegas) passed a breath test. Not likely to catch their booked ferry now, they are going to see what their options are.

We are having dinner now so no updates for at least two hours. To all those doing the same, we wish you a bon appétit.

As my wife has stepped away from the table I can reveal dinner this evening is accompanied by Miles Davis' 'Nefertiti'

Quick update. They will spend the night in Dover.

So they found a parking spot near the harbour in a small industrial estate. "Off to a local cafe now for a proper breakfast" said Idiot son. Seems that Jonny (Vegas) snores a lot.

WhatsApp message. They are on the 1130 crossing

I thanked him for the update and let him know the ship they are sailing on is 'The Spirit of France'. He wants to know if that was arranged to, 'Wind me up'

Confirmed by idiot son WhatsApp message. "Had some agro with the ticket people but now all sorted. We are on board and having lunchtime bevies."

They can see France ■■■

I don't have the full details yet but it seems there has been some sort of altercation on board after Darren tried to chat up some man's wife.

Apologies for the lack of updates I have both messaged and called them but without success.

Message from idiot son, "Can't talk now. Tricky situation"

OK. They are off the ship and on the road. The argument with the husband flared up again on the boat deck so they were held back to prevent further problems. Idiot son said they won because Darren got the woman's phone number unbeknown to her husband.

Darren was, "Doing well with a bird from Billericay when the husband arrived and got larey. An off duty cop calmed things but it all kicked off again when he saw us again in the hold place. We got held back so the bloke went first. No probs"

Idiot son reports, "The sat nav thing on Vegas phone has got confused but we reckon to be with you about 11 tonight' Also the 'bird from Billericay' has already sent Darren a text asking him to call her next week. His reputation is at an all time high.

Exchange with idiot son "We're passing Dunkirk, is that where they had the big battle in the war?" "Yes, the evacuation of Allied troops and you are on the wrong road" "Wrong road? You sure " "Very sure" "Shit"

I understand Darren is driving now. Looks as though Jonny (Vegas) has blotted his copybook. "We don't have time for these screw ups. Mind you French GPS, not 100% down to Vegas. He gets a pass this time"

So instead of turning South they reversed course and are back in the Calais region. Idiot son reports that so far Darren is not impressed with the French motorway network, describing it as, "A load of bollocks"

The good news is they are now on the right road heading south albeit hours behind their planned schedule.

They have just made it around Paris and are on the right road. I'm amazed.

I just walked past their house. No sign of any camper van. No overnight messages. How very curious.

Have just spoken to the father and he seems very calm. "He's always disappearing. Once when he was 14 he left home and lived in an ice cream truck for a week"

He went on, "Another time he went down to Portsmouth and spent three nights sleeping on some couple's boat. They had a big surprise when they turned up for a weekend of sailing. He was about 19 then I think"

OK so something has gone seriously wrong. They are in Nantes, that is 500 km aay

Seems not one of them remembered a phone charger so once all three phones were dead they we going by road signs and memory. Flawed memory with hindsight. They have now purchased charger and are, "On the road" Jomny (Vegas) car sick again

WhatsApp from idiot son, "Some good news, Darren has now been able to add French ones to his signpost collection' I'm hoping he means photos although....."

WhatsApp message. "Recon we about an hour from you. Is your Mrs cooking?"

I said we were having a quiet family dinner and surely he would want to eat with his father? "O him, yeah I suppose so"

I did mention the message to my wife. Her reply was not very ladylike but understandable 'Il m'emmerde lui'

For those interested our family dinner tonight is Chicken Parmassan with green beans ) I was just told) I will be serving a Nobile di Montepulciano with this and to follow we are having apple pie from a recipe my wife obtained when we where in Colorado five years ago.

As our daughter is now home I have taken the precaution of walking down the drive to close and lock the gates. Just in case.

My wife just reminded me (with a slightly concerning smirk) that my shotgun was returned from the gunsmith last week and is in the gun safe. "I am just mentioning it, nothing more than that "

Still no sign of them. My daughter said, 'Perhaps they have gone in the river, that would be very funny"

She is covering this live to her friends in Paris (she studies there) via Instagram (?). They are all hoping they have crashed in the river. Her best friend is soooooo annoyed she is not here.

I should say at this point I did, earlier today mention to the local police office that idiot son together with friends would be returning to the area today. I helpfully provided a description of their vehicle. Support your local police is my motto.

They have arrived. We are sitting by our pool with a drink. Daughter is providing detailed updates to an Instagram audience of 23 French and Belgian girls.

First question from daughter (and it's an insightful one), " Why are they all wearing the same clothes, is it a club?" All three are dressed in England football shirts.

Wife to daughter. "Come away from the fence, these chickens are not for you"

And now it is time for dinner. Further updates after that.

Quick update The Gendarme is here to inspect the camper van.

Voices are raised. It seems an argument has begun. My wife is clear, "This is not your concern" Daughter, "Dad, pleeeeeeeeeease"

The Gendarme has radiod for assistance

Henri has arrived to help. He is a police officer of considerable presence.

I will translate Henri's words verbatim, "You people will calm. If you do not I will hurt you and then arrest you. You are in France now"

My daughter is updating her friends in Paris . Several parents are following

All three have been arrested. My wife and daughter are crying with laughter

And now the father has been arrested as well. My wife has laughed so much our dog has run away.

Our dog returned home around 1am and is now tucking in to breakfast. As for the others in this sad saga of Anglo French relations. That will take longer to tell.

It all started with a routine inspection of the camper, the usual police interests such as tyres, lights etc. This was all fine. The vehicle is roadworthy, next they asked papers and as Darren opened the door to get said papers the policeman saw a road sign. "What is that?"

"Just an old sign we found" says Darrren attempting to close the camper door. Policeman not convinced, a scuffle ensues and both idiot son and Jonny (Vegas) decide to get involved. Policeman radios for assistance.

The first policeman that arrives in response to his colleagues call for help is Henri. A former shot putter of much accomplishment and now a power lifter he casts a shadow of considerable magnitude. Idiot son's opening remark did not help, "Lads, look it's Shrek"

Regretfully for idiot son Henri is very familiar with the Shrek series (he has two young children). He stepped forward, " Be polite or be hurt, you have a choice to make little boy"

By this time as all this was unfolding right next to our fence where they had parked my daughter had pulled up a chair and was providing a life commentary to her friends. My wife was, with hindsight not helping the general atmosphere by laughing and pointing.

The three continued to refuse entry to the camper. Jonny (Vegas) actually used the words, "I know my rights"

The police adopting a classic pincer movement outwitted our dynamic threesome by having Henri keep them talking while the other walked around and opened the other door. By luck this was on our side and so we were able to have an excellent view of the hoard.

They had around ten road signs of varying types but sitting prominently on the top was the one all eyes were drawn to. With black lettering and the blue, white and red background of the French Republic it read simply. 'GENDARMERIE'

The police offer lent in the camper to pick it up. Idiot son ran up to him and shouted, "Oi sunshine, leave that alone. It's ours " The policeman said "It is the property of France and you are all under arrest"

Now at this moment my daughter, already over excited and shrieking with joy decided to move from mere recorder of events to active participant. She shouted "There is another one in the house !" and thus did the father join the three under arrest. My wife applauded this.

The father responded with, "I am a sovereign British subject. You cannot do this"

I felt it was time to step in and try to defuse a rapidly escalating situation. I spoke with Henri, I explained why they were in France "That stupid green car we have in the compound?" I suggested an apology and a fine. He agreed to consider an alternative way forward.

They agreed to let me speak to the father. I explained to him the seriousness of the situation, the probable prison sentence. I suggested a groveling apology and a commitment to leave France immediately the following day.

I spoke to the police again and it was perhaps a comment from my wife that tipped the balance. She said a news story about a police sign being stolen from a police station would be embarrassing for all. The looks exchanged told their own story.

A compromise was reached. They would hand over all their stolen signs, they would collect idiot sons car first thing and depart France. Their passport details would be recorded. A magistrate would be informed and a fine levied in their absence. The father would stand guarantee

At 8am this morning we saw them depart. I later heard they quietly collected idiot son's car and were escorted out of the town by a police motorcycle. The father knocked on my door at 11am, "Do you think you could handle house showings for me?"

WhatsApp message from idiot son, "Thanks for all the help Dave, what a great trip. Lads had a blast. Dad says you are going to help him sell the house, cheers for that. We got lost again this morning, what are we like!!!!!!!" My name's not Dave

Another message from idiot son, "The boys want to visit that club in Paris where the birds all flash their knickers. What's it called?"

I suggested in light of recent events they forget Paris nightlife and go directly home. "Nah, got to have a good time when you can Dave. It will be fine, trust me." My name is still not Dave

I told him the regulations in France right now mean it will be closed. "Just need to slip the right man some folding and we'll be sweet"

Thought people might like to know. The idiot son, Darren and Jonny (Vegas) just arrived in Paris. I'm sure it will be fine.

A number of local friends have dropped by for an apero. It was our Mayor who spoke for them all, "Will they be coming back?"

I ran through the events of the previous evening. Some knew a little of the story, some none. Jules wife is now sobbing while laughing.

Unexpected WhatsApp from idiot son, "Paris is really busy, it would have been nice if you had warned us it was going to be like this. Plus cops keep looking at us funny. Your pals there have probably grassed us up to the Paris plod."

They have decided, probably wisely to, "Give Paris a miss until next time" and have decided to see how far north they can get this evening. Rather ominously idiot son reports that they are on the look out for "souvenirs"

Here at home to celebrate the forthcoming grandchild we are serving Champagne to a number of our friends and my wife is producing excellent canapé.

Wife has discovered dog eating canapé in kitchen. She scolded him loudly, he didn't look even faintly guilty.

At this point he has, of course once again become, "Your dog"

"Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed  
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;  
But then begins a journey in my head"  
Sleep well

WhatsApp. "Because Darren insisted that in the local language 'Calais' is the same as 'Ostende' we drove toward there but somehow we have ended up in Belgium. We are going to the port this morning to try and work out what went wrong. I guess its just a big port"

The overnight DM were once again a delightful smorgasbord of racism, antisemitism and stupidity. For some obscure reason the mouth breathers have decided I am Jewish and part of a conspiracy to do something or other. It wasn't really clear, but they're sure I'm involved.

I pointed out to idiot son the UK quarantine requirements now they have been in Belgium but he, "Doesn't have time for all that virus stuff." It seems he has, "Jobs to be getting on with" plus he thinks it is, " probably a hoax"

Ladies and Gentlemen a round of applause please. They have made it to Calais ferry port On the wrong day.

It seems there is a commendable level of honesty among the P and O staff at Calais as they will not, "Take a drink to change the booking" Darren it seems is astonished by this. He has never being encountered a person unwilling to be bribed.

O now this is funny. It seems that the amount they were offering as a bribe "cash in pocket, no-one needs to know" is more than the legal rebooting fee !

\*rebooking Sorry. Was laughing while typing

Father just called in to say goodbye. He thanked us for all we had done but he is unrepentant, "The EU has screwed us, they could never let Brexit be a success so they ruined it for everyone. In five years without the UK money it will be dead anyway and we will have won"

His parting comment to me was so very sad, " I always thought you were proper Brit like us but when I discovered you were half French something changed. I realised you were on their side. I feel a bit sorry for you now"

This is a good a point as any to bring this to an end. I have much work to do before our trip later this year to Kazakhstan and my publisher wants my current book finished. This thread has been a unique writing experience for me and I honestly hope 1/2

I never see any of them again. I will continue to post from time time but on other matters. To those who took the time to write and tell me how much you enjoyed it. I thank you. Be kind to one another. Goodbye RS Archer