

SEAX

The newsletter of the Essex Crusaders, Centre 19, Virago Star Owners Club.

August 2008 Issue 152

contents:

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|----|---------------------------|
| 2. | Editors Soapbox. | 2. | Rep's Rambling. |
| 3. | Essex Crusade III (Skynet) | 6. | Essex Crusade (Leigh) |
| 7. | The Sheringham Run | 8. | August Rideouts & Events. |
| 9. | August & September Meetings. | | |

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Editor's Soapbox.

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Deputy Rep (south):

Hi everyone,

Well, it seemed so long ago when we first started organising for our rally but before we knew it it was here ! and in a flash (or was it a blur after Annika's birthday shots on Thursday night !) then I was at home unpacking all my camping gear – minus my tent which I put into the wrong car on the Sunday thanks for dropping it back to me Adrian.

Have to say I didn't hear one complaint about anything all weekend so I guess all our hard work paid off – the bands seemed to be a success even though they were not the usual style rock bands most clubs seem to get for rally nights but they filled the dance floor both nights and the DJ did a brilliant job with everybody's favourite sing-a-long tunes.

If anyone has any photographs please send them to Claire to put on the rally webpage.

Thanks to everyone who helped during the weekend – you all made it a weekend to remember, not just for us but I have had a few thankyou's from other centre members too.

Hope to see you all soon

Take care

Sue

Essex Crusade III



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**4th-6th July 2008
Runwell Hospital Sports & Social Club
Nr Wickford, Essex.**

The sign said "welcome to Runwell Hospital – home of the Third Essex Crusade". The thought of it sent a chill down my spine! In fact, the jeers and taunts from the inmates of the "maximum security hospital prison for the criminally insane" were hardly noticeable above the roar of exhausts and the screams of Rally goers...!

The truth is that the Rally site was miles away from the hospital, and the only people we saw were staff members going in and out of the main access road as they started and finished their shifts! The site owners had really gone out of their way to ensure that we had everything we needed to make this (their first, and Essex's fourth Rally), a successful event. The signage on the way to the site was a little sparse, but posting Marshalls on the main approach roads help to ensure that everyone found where we were (eventually).

The bulk of the preparation work had been completed by John Evans and his team on the Thursday before the event, so by Friday morning there was relatively little left to be done. Marquees erected (thanks Kevin), tea urns filled, Portaloos in place, trade stands set up and bands ready to Rock'n'Roll with their make-shift stage, the scene was set.

The first of the party goers had arrived a full day early – they were that keen to get going. Fortunately, we were able to accommodate them without being thrown off the site ourselves..! As the rising summer sun quickly burnt away the early morning mist, it very was obvious that today (Friday) was going to be a scorcher! With

volunteers manning the entrance gates and high-vis yellow jackets on the approach roads, Rally goers soon started arriving. Slowly at first, but as lunchtime approached, the camping field started to fill up nicely. Bikes were not allowed on the camping field, but true to the old tradition of "Essex Barrow Boys" Phil Stevens and others made literally hundreds of trips across the fields portering wheelbarrows full of camping equipment from bike to site!

There doesn't seem to be a really successful way to put up a tent (whilst wearing riding leathers) without breaking into a boot-filling sweat! So the first thing to do was to remove as many layers as possible – not a pretty sight at the best of times. But with modesty thrown out of the window (you know who you were), the tents, gazebos and marquees were soon erected and many happy weary travellers were on their way to the bar. It was there that I caught my first glimpse of the all new VSOC 15-year membership badges (nice one Malcolm).

As night started to fall, Friday's band "Reeper" www.reeper.co.uk struck up their first set, and what a set it was. Having the bands play on the back of a lorry trailer was an inspired idea. The open-air atmosphere of a "real rally" got people rocking in their boots. With the dust of a day's ride soon washed away, people were able to let their hair down (those of us who have any). There were many smiles and nods, and much shaking of hands and manly hugs from long lost friends and old familiar faces. Our European brothers and sisters had arrived by this time, and the Dutch and Belgians put their best feet forward and headed for the dance area. With pints of beer at only £2.50 (which is cheap by soft-southern standards), there were to be many sore heads come the following morning!

Without a formal ride-out planned for the Saturday (due to the horrendous traffic conditions in and around the mid-Essex area), many were to head off to Brentwood for the wedding of Tony Santos (VSOC National Events Organiser) and Helen his new bride, with Centre 19 being represented by Mr.K and his entourage. The weather leaving the site had turned against us, but by the time the bridal party had reached its destination, the sun started to shine and was to remain out for the rest of the day.

The remainder of Saturday was punctuated with the sound of bikes running on and off of the site, some in search of a mini-adventure, and others in search of Alka-Seltzer. The site kitchens coped brilliantly at breakfast (as they had done the previous evening), by putting on a very good menu for very little cash (shame about the toast though). The site was proving to be an excellent choice (well done Chaz & Nicky). The tea, milk and toilet rolls were lasting and the Portaloos were being regularly cleaned and maintained by John's merry band of volunteers (I won't name you all, but you know who you are – well done).

By mid-afternoon there were some very peculiar sights to be seen. The Doctors & Nurses theme sounded like a good idea at the time, but nothing could have prepared us for what was about to happen... About a third of the entire rally attendance had dress up and joined in the frolics and festivities. As the evening

progressed, there were more blood-stained surgeons, consultant gynaecologists, modern matrons and naughty nurses than you could shake a tongue depressing stick at – and that was just the men! – the women were twice as bad! There was a short break in the disco for group photos before the Saturday's band – "3 Miles Hi" www.myspace.com/3milesHi struck up for another stomping session with a tremendous party atmosphere. The usual noisy "ridethrough" was followed by Otto's ubiquitous cabaret and much dropping of trousers to Tom Jones' Delilah (something of an Essex anthem these days!).

Something had happened on the Sunday morning. Word had got out that the weather was likely to turn really nasty. The wind was starting to pick up, and many were packing away tents and loading their bikes before heading for breakfast. The rain we were promised didn't arrive until lunchtime, but as many rally-goers had hundreds of miles to cover, the site was already half empty by 10am.

Most of the raffle prizes had been claimed and even Tosh had disappeared (as soon as his tank was fixed and he was able to put petrol in it again). Dave from the Outriders was still waiting for the AA van man, and the rest of us were left wondering where everyone had gone!

Sitting around the dinner table in the clubhouse after clearing down the tents & marquees and picking up what was left of the site rubbish, we were discussing how it all went and what the feedback had been from our (nearly) 400 guests. It was generally agreed that the site and staff had been excellent, the beer was cheap enough, the facilities were certainly up to scratch and the effort put in by John and his team was commendable. But what next? How could we make the next one even better? I can't wait for 2012 (isn't that the year of the London Olympics)??? - Roll-on 2012 and the Fourth Essex Crusade..!

SKYNET.



*Isn't that Lisa Simpson doing something
unspeakable to Bart???*

Essex Crusade – July 08

OK, so I keep thinking that I must put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard these days, and our rally has finally made me do it.

It's now a week since it happened and this is the first chance I've had to sit down and think about it, read the various emails and look at the photos, all of which have made me smile.

I'm sure those of you that attended need no further descriptions of the weekend we enjoyed and those that couldn't make it are probably bored of hearing about how good it was etc etc! However, a couple of things I feel need mentioning. Firstly a huge thank-you to Kevin and Fred for supplying and creating our tea tent which turned out to be the social gathering of many people over the weekend. It was such a nice area to sit and chat with friends and worked brilliantly. For such a huge tent it was pretty easy to put up and down with their guidance, which brings me to another thank-you. Many hands make light work as they say and it was a great effort this year from the centre members. Last times rally was sheer hard slog as we didn't have much help, this year was great, so many people came and helped and this made all the difference at the start and finish and enabled all of us to have a bit of down time too.

The site worked out brilliantly. It was lovely to have an indoor and outdoor area and with the bands on a trailer it had a real festival feel without being disjointed in any way. The food was excellent and the service first rate. We can't praise and thank the social clubs staff enough for the way they pitched in and entered into the spirit of a bike rally, an unknown quantity to them until the weekend. They worked with us as part of our rally team and I'm certain we will use their facilities again knowing just how welcoming they are to us.

Saturday night was once again a slight cause for concern, what is it about you guys dressing up as women?! If any of the residents of the local hospital had wandered out for the night who the hell would have been able to pick them out! Or the staff for that matter! It was like watching a rave for the criminally insane! Hilarious! The bands were a definite hit and there were many requests for phone numbers for subsequent rallies so I'm sure we'll be seeing them again soon. There seems to be a pattern emerging where we source great bands and then other centres book them, perhaps we should be charging agents fees!

Anyway, I could go on and on about how good it was and how glad I am that it's over (so glad to have my garage and spare room back), but it just remains to be said that without the huge amount of leg work that John and Carol have put in over the last few months this rally would only have been a patch on what it was. I don't know if people realise just how much work they have done behind the scenes before the rally even started so a massive thanks to them for that and here's looking forward to the next one – ha ha!!

Ride safe and with the shiny side up!

Leigh

The Sheringham Run – Sunday 29th June

Seven bikes left Colchester at 10.00am to take the A140 for Sheringham and it proved to be a very different ride to the day trip to France – in France there was one car roughly every two miles – but here there was one car every two metres!!! We had lunch in Sheringham, with a plague of flying 'peskies' that only seemed to be attracted to anything yellow, which meant the beer, chips, serviettes, plus my shirt, hi.vis. webbing and bamboo helmet!

From Sheringham we headed to Hemsby, where we stopped at Orange County Choppers and then had a coffee and doughnut. Then back on the road to somewhere, then picked up the A140 again, where I struggled on the dual carriageway at times due to headwinds gusting at a good 10mph! We made it back to the Ipswich area, where we all went our separate ways. It was a good 200 mile day trip, so a big 'Thank You' to the leaders of the pack.

Joe Cooper

P.S. Sadly the battery was down on my camera so no photos came out.

AUGUST RIDEOUTS AND EVENTS

FRIDAY 1ST TO SUNDAY 3RD V.S.O.C. C15, THE GRIM REAPER RALLY. GRAVESEND RUGBY CLUB, Rectory Field, Donald Biggs Drive, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2TL

Make your own way there or meet up Friday, 2-30pm departure from Thurrock services

SUNDAY 10TH

RYE/HASTINGS

Depart Marks Tey 09-00am for Thurrock services, depart Thurrock services 10-00 for Rye

OR

Damyns Hall Aerodrome, Averley Road, Upminster, RM14 2TN

Check out web-site www.mtv-essex.org/ok/annual.htm

The worlds largest airship will be in be landing and taking off at various times during the day, plus flying displays including a Spitfire. Over 200 military vehicles from the W.W 1 and W.W.2 will be on display Arrive at Thurrock services to decide which rideout you wish to go on.

SUNDAY 17TH

COMFORT CAFÉ, LITTLE ABINGTON

Depart Marks Tey 09-30 for Boreham services, depart Boreham services 10-00

FRIDAY 22ND TO MONDAY 25TH V.S.O.C. C3, P*UP ON THE PENINSULAR 2. WIRRAL RUGBY CLUB THORNTON COMMON ROAD, CLATTERBRIDGE, WIRRAL, CH63 4JU.**

Contact John for departure

SUNDAY 31ST

INPROMTU

Depart Boreham services 10-00am

For more information contact your reps
Please have sufficient fuel for rideouts so we can keep fuel stops to a minimum

Centre 19 meeting's dates:

August

North meeting.

8 pm Monday 4th August 2008.

The Anchor, Upper Street, Stratford St. Mary, CO7 6LW.
West of A12, North of Colchester

South meeting.

8pm Monday 18th August 2008.

The Bell Inn, Main Road, Woodham Ferrers, CM3 8RF.

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham.

September

North meeting.

8 pm Monday 1st September 2008.

The Anchor, Upper Street, Stratford St. Mary, CO7 6LW.
West of A12, North of Colchester

South meeting.

8pm Monday 15th September 2008.

The Bell Inn, Main Road, Woodham Ferrers, CM3 8RF.

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham.