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

December 2008 Issue 156

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Rep's Rambling.

Well winter seems to have come early this year, cold, ice, sleet even snow on more than one occasion over the last month not the best of weather for turning up at Boreham for a Sunday rideout.

As from the 1st DECEMBER 2008 rideouts will start at 10-30am from Boreham.

ESSEX CRUSADERS CHRISTMAS PARTY 20TH DECEMBER
RUNWELL SPORTS and SOCIAL CLUB, RUNWELL CHASE. WICKFORD, SS11 7XX

There has been a terrific response to the club's christmas party, at the moment 79 are booked, there is going to be a disco afterwards and a raffle (any raffle prizes would be greatly appreciated). For the more hardy members you can pitch a tent for the night if you want to eat, drink and be merry and not drive home. If you intend to camp please let me know.

The hall will be open from 07-00pm, dinner will be served at 08-00pm, bar closes 01-00am, hall shuts 01-30am.

ESSEX CRUSADERS AGM
19TH JANUARY 2009, 08-00PM.
BELL INN, MAIN ROAD, WOODHAM FERRERS, CM3 8RF

This is your opportunity to have your say in the running of C19 during 2009 and comment on 2008. The more input we get the easier it is to direct the centre towards your needs.

All standing officers have declared they wish to stand for re-election for 2009 with the exception of Susan Haynes (deputy rep South) who will be standing down in January. Any member wishing to take on this position would they please contact me.

If any member has any item they would like to discuss at the meeting, could they notify me before 31st December 2008 so that it can be included in the agenda.

It is with sad news that I have to tell you that Graham Slocombe passed away in October, from cancer. He was a long standing member up until a year ago. He will be remembered for riding a sports bike, his last one a Fazer 600. He came to Bamford with us, day trips to France, rideouts and club meetings, he will be greatly missed by us all. May I suggest to members that if you have Grahams e-mail address in your group contacts that you please delete it. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

I would like to wish everybody a very Happy Christmas and a great New Year.

Look forward to see everybody at our Christmas party.

John

Would everyone please read the letter (on pages 9 to 11) from Kevin Hoyte as it concerns the future of the VSOC and possible changes to VSOC constitution. This is only a discussion document and your thoughts would be greatly appreciated.

Time will be set aside at our AGM in January for discussion and the implications of these proposals.

John

Deputy Rep. (North)

My Appointment.

It was announced at the South meeting some while ago that I would be in the running for the job of Vice Chairman VSOC, the position had been made vacant at the Essex rally in July after the existing VC had stood down. I hadn't considered the position until one of our members suggested to the Chairman that I may possibly be a good candidate, thanks for that, you know who you are.

After a fairly lengthy lead up, submission of CV, interview and selection by the National Committee (Centre reps) I was duly elected to the post at the National AGM on the 9 th November 2008.

Since then I have received e mails suggesting that I am now the 'chairman of vice', 'Miami', 'The Godfather' was suggested by one member, all collectively good puns but I will remain Peter or Mr K as I am sure there are members out there who don't actually know my real name and have always known me as Mr K.

I started the new job at the AGM and jumped straight in to the middle of the debate (agenda item) about a proposal to change the rules and constitution about ' once a member always a member ', this has become a very emotive topic and you will get the gist of it in Clatter, it will also be discussed at meetings and our AGM on the 19th January, it will be explained very clearly, looking at the ' bigger picture ' and comments are invited by the end of February 2009.

In the mean time I will continue as Deputy rep C19, unless of course there is anyone out there who would like the job (which is up for grabs, as are all positions at the AGM) in which case I would be pleased to hand over the reins and give support to the new Deputy !!!

I hope to see most of you at the Christmas meal (77 have booked so far) but if I don't, have a really nice Christmas and a happy and safe 2009,

Peter or Mr K
Vice Chairman
Virago Star Owners Club .

Irish Rally May 2009

Location: Raceview Road, Ballymena, BT43 7, United Kingdom

Dates Available: The rally is from the 1st of May 2009 until the 3rd of May 2009. The rally team will be on site from Thursday the 30th of April until Tuesday the 5th, so all are welcome to arrive early or Stay late as they want.

Tickets: Please make all sterling cheques payable to Brian O'Callaghan-Westropp. Please send a SAE with you payment to Brian at 6 Hyde Square, Kilmainham, Dublin 8. Ireland. The SAE's will be posted in Northern Ireland in batches, so please don't worry if there is a delay in recieving your tickets.

Ferries: The most direct route is to sail Stranraer to Belfast and head up the road 30 minutes to Ballymena. There are obviously other routes such as Fishguard/Pembroke to Rosslare, Holyhead to Dublin and Dun Laoghaire & Liverpool to Belfast. All route bookings on the ferries will be handled by Nutt Travel. They can be contacted at Nutt Travel & Promotions, 14A Artillery Road, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, N. Ireland, BT52 1Q. Tel: 028 7035 1199 Fax: 028 7035 8974. Email: info@nuttravel.com The reference when booking is "VSOC Ireland Rally 2009". It will cost you 79 return for a bike & rider and 89 return for a bike & 2 travelling from either of the requested ports.

Food on Site: All of the catering will be handled by Ballymena Rugby Club. They will be putting on Full Breakfast for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The lunch times will have rolls and a limited menu. The evening meals have yet to be confirmed, but we have requested that they provide basically pub grub if they can. Vegetarians will also be catered for at all meal times.

Bar Times: On the Thursday the bar will close at 11:30. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, there will be bar extensions to 1 a.m. The Rugby Club President has asked that the VSOC ask the members not to bring in their own drink. They will provide cans for "carry out".

Entertainment: There will be bands and DJ on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Tea & Coffee: There will be 24 hour tea and coffee facilities as normal.

Showers: There will be access to the showers for 18 hours each day and separate showers for men and women.

Parking: Hardstanding is provided for parking all 'bikes.

Security: We will have regular security patrols throughout the rally.

Rideouts: Because of the size of the club rideouts and the history in the 6 counties, we are officially required to register with the Parades Commission and notify them of our intent. It may be, at this stage, that we will issue route cards to Rally Attendees that show the different routes and places of interest that we are looking at for possible rideouts.

Currency: You are still in the UK, so sterling applies at the Rugby Club and in the 6 counties.

Staying Longer?: If Rally Attendees plan on staying longer or are coming earlier, please feel free to drop Brian a line and we can assist with information on their stay.

Ride safe

Brian, Adrian, Steve & Tommy

YORKIES WEDDING PARTY



Terry and Sue together With the YORKIES
Invite you to a "bit of a Do"
Fri 17th July / Sun 20th July. 2009
At Doncaster Rugby Club
Castle Park, Doncaster. DN2 5QB

Camping and excellent facilities at the club, with home cooked food.
Cheap bar until very late.
Top showers and 24hr toilets.
Our Hog Roast Caterer will serve food for the late eaters.

Friday night is Stag and Hen Night, with top band and regular D.J
Our fancy dress theme for the party night is
"SHIPWRECKED"

Saturday is Wedding day – bike escort please for the wedding couple
and we hope you will dress to impress! (right hand picture, above)
The band EMERALD – Irish / Celtic Rock band , together with one of
the best D.J's will keep the hall buzzing.

OW MUCH – you ask – NOWT

Just be generous with the superb raffle

Please let your rep or Terry @ The Yorkies know to be part of
thisweekend in the sun!

Centre 19 meeting's dates:

December

North meeting.

8 pm Monday 1st December 2008.

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

South meeting.

8pm Monday 15th December 2008.

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

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham.

January

North meeting.

8 pm Monday 5th January 2009.

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

South meeting.

Essex Crusader's AGM.

8pm Monday 19th January 2009.

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

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham

To the VSOC Membership

You may or may not know that we seem to have some varied opinion regarding the “Once a member, always a member” rule. At the recent National AGM, a proposal from Centre 14 raised a discussion point as seen below. The meeting was really split as to where we go with this, and to this end, I, and others, felt that you, the members should portray your views on the topic. Please take time to consider some of the information below containing the issue we and others have felt so passionate about. See at the bottom of this information on how to respond.

AJ's first revised proposal (taken directly from AJ's e-mail dated 20/11/08)

- From April 2009 any NEW member may only remain a member as long as they own a qualifying bike.
- Associate membership will cease altogether after that date.
- As a one off exercise, and as reward for loyalty shown to the club, any associate member registered before the 2008 AGM will be offered the chance to convert to full membership under the “once a member” rule.
- ALL existing members will continue to receive the benefit of the “once a member” rule.
- This change will NOT affect any full member joining before April 2009. NO current members will be affected by this change.

At the National AGM, we discussed this above “Proposal for Discussion” for what seemed forever, due to the passionate views presented at the meeting. Several e-mails have been sent between the National Committee expressing opinions both for and against which would have caused a major split within our club. To be fair our club Secretary endeavoured to negotiate an amended proposal to try to appease all. Clearly, further e-mails ensued which didn't help appease anyone. To this end, that has led to me publishing some of the detail behind the proposal so you all can have your say.

AJ's proposal as above was based around the need to retain the identity of the club by capping the amount of non-qualifying bikes within the club. At recent rallies and events, the perception was that there are more and more non-qualifying bikes turning up, thus giving the impression that the Virago & Star bike population was severely on the decline. Views have been that we still require to retain such identity as it was the bike that brought us all together in the first place and that other such bike clubs (ie: Goldwing Owners Club & Harley Owners Group) operated solely by having one make bikes in the club or your out if you sell it!

In fairness to both John Bryning & Peter Healy, the two originators of the club, they wouldn't have seen how the club has since grown and indeed evolved back in the early years since 1993, so any debates such as this were never likely to be on the agenda.

Other opinions suggest that the club is all about the people and does it really matter what they ride! Well, there will be some support for that view and fully understand why. You could step that on, by stating as long as the members change their bike for another custom/cruiser, surely they are still that "like minded person" as before. Again, probably true, but the club perhaps should be called the "custom bike club UK". Although in the past we have considered opening up the club to other customs, the management of running a club twice the size or indeed larger would present further issues, both operationally & logistically, so it has pretty much been put to bed so to speak.

The above proposal wouldn't affect anyone in the club as of now. They would all retain their membership, whether associate or full members, so why the furore? Certain Centre's openly promote having associate's as a way of bringing new people into the club, befriending full members, and then endeavouring to encourage them to buy a Yamaha custom so in turn they become a full member. I have to say in a few instances that had happened. Actual numbers I couldn't say.

Some say that an associate member should pay monies into the Centre, as they are officially the responsibility of the Centre and it's Rep. Some say the fee should be more that what we currently pay and that they should pay the monies into the National funds and in turn receive 4 Clatters a year, where now they get none. Perhaps the associates themselves should decide that! Under the proposal, there would be no further associates after say the 1st April 2009 (date to be decided in the future should any changes be sought). Those that are associates currently could be offered full membership as is. That idea could make membership clean and simple.....You are a full member only!

The follow up from the above would be that any NEW member joining after a predetermined date (example used: 1st April 09) could only stay a member whilst retaining the ownership of a qualifying bike! If they then sold it, their membership would be revoked forthwith. One argument for that is that we would gradually readdress the balance of qualifying bikes in the club, but arguments against would suggest we are going against the ethics of "once a member, always a member". Some would say that this is a particular positive within our club, and is why they feel comfortable with changing their bike and being able to retain their membership.

Other more concerning issues, surround how we operate under the guise of an "owners club". There is a perception that if we had more non-qualifying bikes, we cease to become an owners club and thus step into different territory with more "senior" clubs views on how we run. We cannot give out the wrong perception here and if we do, we somehow need to address this.

My personal analysis, for what it's worth, is that there are varied views out there, and that some of the views vary from the Centre Reps views, portrayed at the AGM. I know that majority rules here, but this will allow all you members out there to have your say. If you don't take up the opportunity to express your opinion, then that's fine. You shouldn't complain if there is a need for change, as you have had the chance to voice an opinion now.

There is no need for the club to make a “panic” decision here either. It’s more important to get things right, whether we stay as is, or to change things if required.

Due to varied opinions, I suspect there may need to be some amendments to our Rules & Constitution at some stage, whether it’s now or in years to come. I know it’s about the people, but it’s also about an identity that bought us together in the first place. The results of the feedback will let us know whether a change should be sooner rather than later, and whenever. If ever the change needs to come, we need to debate it hard and work towards a “workable solution” that at best can suit the vast majority of members, if not all.

For further clarification, speak to your Centre Rep, who will know all the debate had here. Your views do not have to emulate what the Centre Rep or other Centre members think. This is a chance for you to comment without the need to speak up or say who you are if you wish.

Please consider all the comments mentioned and portray your views in the following way/s:

e-mail the club Secretary with your views to secretary@vsoc.org.uk and/or to the Clatter Editor clatter2@vsoc.org.uk by the end of February 2009

This feedback & information will be confidential if specified, but will be used to formulate an overall view of what you members feel. If there is a need to change, your views will clearly suggest so. We, as a National Committee, will then restart valued, constructive debate and take on board your suggestions, and look to achieve the changes you mention over the summer months ahead.

Since the club was formed back in 1993, this is no doubt the most single most important decision we “may” need to take, that effect all the membership.

Thanks for taking time to consider the above, and also thanks for making your feelings known.

Kevin Hoyte
Chairman – On behalf of the National Committee