

# SEAX

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

July 2009 Issue 163

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<http://www.vsoc.org.uk>

## Rep's Rambling.

June has been a very busy month. Unfortunately the ride-out to the London motorcycle museum was cancelled due to rain.

The second weekend saw the International rally near Southampton with 685 members attending (largest VSOC event ever held) including many from all over Europe. 23 members of Centre 19 attended, most of us made it a long weekend, arriving on the Wednesday or Thursday; with some of us doing escort duty for the Danes and Swedes from Harwich. Everybody agreed it was a brilliant weekend, great facilities, excellent food, music to suit every body's taste and wall to wall sunshine.

Then came the day trip to France made up of members from Centres 19 and 13; 33 bikes and 16 pillion riders arrived at the terminal in Folkestone. One or two problems with registration numbers but that was soon sorted out. I took a new route, cross country to Boulogne where we had a leisurely alfresco lunch, and then a scenic coastal route back to Calais with a stop off for a viewing of the White cliffs of Dover (not quite white but a grey blur in the distance) . Quick stop for some duty free shopping then back on the train for home.

All being well next years trip will be to Brugge.

The following weekend was Centre 8's rally at Bromesgrove, some very heavy rain and thunder storms on the way there, report to follow.

It's good to hear that Dave has got his bike back after being off the road for 9 weeks, usual problem with Italian made bikes, electrical, corrosion on terminals, new earth wires needed to be re-run. So we can look forward to his company again on the Sunday ride-outs.

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### **SUNDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JULY**

### **BAR-B-CRUISE, CUDMORE GROVE COUNTRY PARK, MERSEA ISLAND**

You know summer has arrived when the clubs infamous BAR-B-QUE is here.

This is a family day out, so everyone is welcome whether you come by bike or car. Same place as previous years. You bring your meat and we supply the rest, salad, bread, tea, coffee and some soft drinks for purchase.

This year we are having a bring and buy sale, "motor bike related items". If you can label the items with your name, size, price, which bike it fits etc it would be a great help.

If you have any out door games we could play please bring them along. Don't forget your sun cream.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the BBQ.

John

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## Deputy Rep. (North)

### Centre 19 North meeting 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009

A well attended meeting, must be something to do with the weather as many had come on bikes. It would be nice to see a few more from the South now the evenings are lighter and warmer although it is good to see Barney and Denise making the journey North on a regular basis.

Welcome to Peter Osborne from Sudbury who has just joined us and attended his first ride out on Sunday to Barton Mills in Suffolk, he has also attended the last 2 monthly meets, Peter has just paid his membership.

I have written to all the non paid up members of C19 and asked for feed back as to why they didn't renew, I have received 2 replies so far and Graham Fairbrass who will be a 10 year member next year has assured me he is renewing his membership, well done Graham, it would be a shame not to receive membership of the 10 year club.

Kevin Ward confirmed that the 6 x 3 gazebo will be available for the BBQ, not quite sure about tables and chairs at the moment however but I am sure we will cope,

Peter

## FATHERS DAY VISIT TO FRANCE FOR THE SUMMER SOLSTICE

The Essex Crusaders have made an annual event of the ride-out to Pas-de-Calais for the pleasure of the quiet roads; the quality of food in Boulogne; and the fun of a thirty plus ride-out. This year John and Carole Evans chose June 21 for the trip – Fathers Day and the Summer Solstice. This ensured a good period of daylight for a long ride. In the opinion of a few of those participating it was also good excuse to get away from the family at the stressful time of wives shouting at children who had forgotten to buy cards for dad.

An 07:30 departure (what's the "0" for? – O my god it's early!) from Thurrock services means an early start, but longest day meant all the noisy birds in the garden had been proclaiming the dawn for hours before we had to saddle up. Thirty three bikes, with members from C19 joined by friends from C11 and C13 (49 people in total), we set off via the M25 and M20 for Euro Tunnel.

As always arrived a little early at the Chunnel and were offered a choice of two trains, one straight away and one 20 minutes later. As we were spread out across all the booking-in booths and too idle to enquire which train to use, some chose now, and the rest later – not a good way to keep the group together. Five people on three bikes took the first train thinking we could re-fuel ahead of the rest and speed the progress to the open road in France. Euro Tunnel knew better, on leaving the train and heading up the ramp we were signed to turn left and out through the freight filling station. The others on the next train were signed to turn right at the top of the ramp and exit via the tourist filling station. Chronologically only 20 minutes apart but also geographically one motorway exit apart. Our small group waited for around 50 minutes then concluded that the others had departed the tunnel by another route.

Your witless scribe and the others had no idea of the route planned for the day; other than it would be different from prior years and miss out Saint Omer. We set off for a small private ride south along the D940 coast road to Cap Blanc Nez. Park the bikes and walk up the headland to the viewing point - 134 metres above sea level. Visibility better than it had been two years ago when we couldn't see the sea at the foot of the cliff, but the White Cliffs of Dover were not really visible. Then on to Boulogne-Sur-Mer for lunch. With the aid (or hindrance) of Kevin's crap sense of direction we entered the town from the east rather than the north and it took some time before we found signposts for the historic fortified town centre. Once through the medieval town wall (Vance & Hines moment) we parked and became aware of a group of bikers waving at us from a courtyard eatery – we had joined up with the others again.

They had left the Chunnel, wondering where we had gone, and headed out on the pre-planned route. French road works blocked the road selected for the scenic tour to Boulogne and a long circular tour of the countryside back to the same "Route Barré" sign followed. Then on to Boulogne by an alternative diversion route.

Lunch in Boulogne is always a highlight of the day, great food in good company, but starting to look rather expensive. French inflation does not help; menu of the day at several establishments had risen to €15.50 (15 last year and 14 the year before). However, the main problem was the change in the Sterling Euro rate. It's still a damn good lunch but not cheap any more. Your scribe treated himself to the €19 menu, with a beer, a desert, and a coffee it came to €30, must try and charge it to my children as a father's day present (can but live in hope of cash flowing in the opposite to normal direction).

We all had a good walk round the old part of the town; the local municipal parks department were most of the way through building an art installation in the square outside the Marie. A small park with old wrecked cars and vans as flower pots, and comfy leather car seats to sit on. Good use of 10 year old scrap trade-ins from the government "please buy a new car programme".

Group split up again – two of the breakaway group bikes headed south to Le Touquet-Paris-Plage, the main ride continued, with your scribe, on the planned ride north up the D940 to Cap Blanc Nez. It's a spectacular coast ride, thirty one bikes strung out along a road that twists and turns through villages and up over headlands. At each crest a great view of the coast and in between quite a few hairpin bends to keep us all awake. The courtesy by the locals we encountered was amazing. Can anyone imagine drivers who get mixed up in a line of bikes in the UK pulling over into a lay-by to let us re-group before rejoining the road behind us? I watched it happen twice on the D940. We also got priority on several roundabouts where other drivers who had right of way stopped to let us keep in line.

Back at Cap Blanc Nez for one of those déjà vous moments; stopped again to walk up to the monument again (the imposing needle to celebrate those who gave their lives at sea in WW1) and the viewing point for Dover. Once again very difficult to see across the sea to Dover's white cliffs but we could just make them out. Opportunity for a group photo, lots of shouting and attempts to arrange bikers in rows by height. Cameras were given to a passer by who spoke excellent English (she may even have been English) and was not too confused by differing camera types and conflicting instructions. Good business opportunity for someone

– why is there no food and beverage van in the car park? Toilets would also be useful but I suppose by the time you have built a café and bog block the site gets a bit overdeveloped and there's no where left to park.

Back to the Chunnel and the two independent bikes re-joined us for an all on one train crossing back to Kent. Oh what a culture shock riding back up the M20. Very busy; lots of trucks (they are banned from French roads on Sundays); and people changing lanes at the last minute without signalling. Home again by 8 o'clock with tinnitus from my bike's exhaust in the Dartford tunnel and 231 miles clocked up, to find a card and a CD from the kids for father's day. They hadn't forgotten; so no chance of passing the bill for lunch over to them.

A great big thank you to John and Carole for organizing the logistics, Chunnel, route, and lunch venue for the day trip. As always (well nearly always) the gods were on their side with the weather. It is easy to assume that the organization of the trip just happens, but there must have been hours of work behind the scenes getting the train ride booked and pre-paid.

**Bob Owen**

C19 - Essex Crusaders.

p.s. *Should be some pictures on the C19 web site soon.*

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## **Editor's Note:**

**COPY DATE FOR AUGUST SEAX is WEDNESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> JULY**

**ANY SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE WILL BE KEPT FOR INCLUSION IN THE FOLLOWING EDITION (IF STILL RELEVANT).**

**THIS ENSURES RECEIPT OF SEAX (BY e-mail) PRIOR TO THE FIRST MEETING OF THE MONTH**

Thank You

## The Metamorphosis of Suzuki



Contrary to popular belief, Suzuki produced cars before they moved into the two wheeled market, but the early days of the company were devoted to the production of weaving looms. The father of the company, Michio Suzuki, the son of a Japanese cotton farmer, created a brand new version of the weaving machine in the coastal village of Hamamatsu, Japan. A successful

business was built upon his invention, providing employment and wealth for the company and its staff during the first thirty years of its incarnation.

Although the loom side of the business was still enjoying success, Suzuki thought the time was right to diversify, so after studying the market, he decided that the way forward would be the development of a car. In 1937, a development programme was launched, and within two years many prototypes integrating a cast aluminium gearbox and crankcase had been built. However, the company had a set back as the Japanese government declared civilians car a non-essential commodity at the outbreak of World War 2. When the war ended, Suzuki once again concentrated on the production of looms as the US government gave the go ahead for the shipping of cotton to Japan. The company flourished for a short while as orders increased, but the rug was pulled from underneath them when the cotton market collapsed in 1951.

This could have proved the death knell for Suzuki's operations, but rather than call it a day, the company once again turned their eyes toward motor vehicles. At this time, Japan had a dire need for cheap, reliable transportation, and a number of companies had begun to produce a clip-on engine which could be attached to a bicycle. Suzuki's breakthrough came with the development of a motorised bicycle named the 'Power Free'. Powered by a 36cc engine, this unique vehicle was the first to feature the double sprocket gear system, which allowed the rider to travel by pedal power alone, engine assisted pedalling or engine only propulsion. So ground breaking was the new innovation, that the fledgling democratic government offered a grant to the Suzuki company to assist research in motorcycle engineering. This was the birth of the Suzuki Motor Corporation. By 1954, 6,000 'Colleda CO' motorcycles were passing out of the factory gates every month. The Colleda was a single cylinder 90cc machine, which proved good enough to win a prominent motorcycle race during its first year of production. At this time, Suzuki

also began development of the 'Suzulight' automobile, which featured front wheel drive and four wheel independent suspension.

In 1955 Suzuki produced a larger offering in the form of the 125cc four stroke 'Colleda COX', and an improved version of the two stroke called the 'Colleda ST'. The TT model, introduced in 1956 was in essence the fore runner of the Grand Prix bikes. By their standards of today, the TT was regarded as a high performance machine, capable of reaching speeds in excess of 80 miles per hour, and leaving in its wake, machine with much power at their call. This motorcycle also showed a touch of finesses and featured some luxurious accessories, amongst these were indicators.

By 1958, 50, 125 and 250cc motorcycles were available from Suzuki and the familiar 'S' logo was introduced. Many of you will know that the logo is still being used on motorcycles today. Engineering research went hand in hand with corporate branding, so when in 1960 Suzukis made their first appearance at the Isle of Man, it was an important milestone for both departments. By 1962 they had claimed their first world road racing championship in the 500cc class. In 1964 the company set its sights on motocross Grand Prix, but enjoyed only limited success.

1976 saw the introduction of a range of four stroke machines, such as the GS400, a 400cc twin and the 750cc GS750. The shaft driven GS850G came along in 1978. So called 'Superbikes' were beginning to appear and the GS1000GS was developed as Suzuki's contribution to this class. In 1982 the turbo charged XN85 was introduced and before the year was out, Suzuki had claimed their 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive victory in the 500cc class.

It is fair to say that, had it not been for the Second World war and the later collapse of the cotton market, Suzuki could well have been solely a car manufacturer today, or worse still, not even in existence.

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## JULY RIDEOUTS

**SUNDAY 5<sup>TH</sup>**

### BATTLESBRIDGE MOTOR BIKE SHOW

Meet Marks Tey 09-30 for Boreham services, depart Boreham services 10-00 for Battlesbridge.

**SUNDAY 12<sup>TH</sup>**

### BAR-B-CRUISE, CUDMORE GROVE, BROMANS LANE, EAST MERSEA, CO5 8UE.

Depart Boreham services 10-00 for the Peldon Rose P.H.(at the junction of Colchester Road B1025 and Mersea Road) depart Peldon Rose P.H. 11-00 for Cudmore Grove.

A great family day out

**FRIDAY 17<sup>TH</sup>**

### YORKIES WEDDING PARTY, DONCASTER RUGBY CLUB DN2 5QB

Depart Boreham services 09-15 for rest area on the A120 between Dunmow and Takley, depart the rest area 10-00 for Doncaster.

**SUNDAY 19<sup>TH</sup>**

### INPROMTU

Depart Boreham services 10-00

**FRIDAY 24<sup>TH</sup>**

### **VSOC C14, REJECTS SUMMER BALL, ESHER RUGBY CLUB, MOLESEY ROAD, HERSHAM, SURREY, KT12 3PF**

Depart Boreham services 10-45 for Thurrock services, depart Thurrock services 11-30 for Esher  
Should be a good turn-out of C19 for this one. If you can not make it for the weekend why not come down for the day on the Saturday to see what rallies are about.

**FRIDAY 31<sup>ST</sup>**

### SCRUMPIES PARTY, BANWELL, SOMERSET, BS29 6DL

Depart Brentwood services J28 M25 /A12 (total garage) 10-00 for Banwell.

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:

### July

#### North meeting.

8 pm Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

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

#### South meeting.

8pm Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009

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

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham.

### August

#### North meeting.

8 pm Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2009.

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

#### South meeting.

8pm Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2009.

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

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham.