

# SEAX

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

June 2009 Issue 162

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

## Rep's Rambling.

Well the weather just gets better and better, summer has certainly come early, lets hope it keeps going for the next four months. Unfortunately, two weeks ago my alternator decided it did not want to charge the battery anymore, it was worn out and burnt out. I stripped it out and had it rewound, replacement alternator not recommended (Chinese made), and I am now in the process of putting it all back together, hopefully I will see you for the Sunday ride to the ACE Café.

Dave (Coogey) sends his apologies for not attending any ride-outs for the last two months as his bike is still not well, in fact its still quite sick. It's been in a certain bike repairers in Chelmsford for the last five weeks and progress is slow; make that extremely slow with a lot of head scratching and not much else happening. He did get a phone call from them last week to say it was ready and he could pick it up.

Anne took him over to Chelmsford, where they gave him the keys and said it's OK. Feeling really pleased with himself he jumped on the bike it started on the button and he drove off, unfortunately he only got ½ mile when it started playing up, swift u-turn and limped it back to the bike repairs again before it died. As you can imagine he is not a happy man at the moment. Lets hope we see you very soon Dave.

## International Rally

There are no dedicated pick-ups for this rally, as people will be travelling from Wednesday onwards at various times. If you wish to ride down with company on any particular day let me know and I will try and find who is going on that day. Some are meeting the Swedes and Danes midday at Harwich, Wednesday and escorting them to the rally site and I will be meeting some Swedes 06-30am at Harwich Thursday morning.

International rallies are something a bit SPECIAL so if you can only manage one rally this year, this should be the one. There is something going on at the rally site from Thursday to Sunday, rideouts each day, bands and D.J's each evening. Theme for Saturday night is Arabian nights

Looking forward to seeing everybody on this weekend.

## Battlesbridge motorbike show. 5<sup>th</sup> July

Unfortunately we cannot have a stand at this bike show, they have changed the criteria for allowing stands on the site, you now have to be a classic or vintage bike club, and we do not qualify.

For those who do not want to go to the ACE Café June 7<sup>th</sup> there is a bike safe day at Gloucester Park, Basildon.

### Bike Safe

In this edition of the SEAX there is an article about Bike Safe from Ray. If you are interested in this day out on October 18<sup>th</sup> please let me know as soon as possible, we need 16 people to get this group booking price. You can never have too much training. (page7-8)

John

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### Ireland Rally 1<sup>st</sup> May to 4<sup>th</sup> May 2009

Trevor, Norman who was on his first long ride since hip replacement, Barney, myself and Grumpy from C13 decided to do the Ireland rally, sailing on the overnight from Birkenhead to Belfast. Jim had gone via a different route and had arrived on site on the Wednesday.

We arranged to meet at the petrol station at South Mimms services, I arrived first followed by Norman and Barney but no Trevor, even though he had led Barney and Norman to South Mimms, then Grumpy arrived, we all filled up and were ready to go but still no Trevor, a phone call revealed that he was waiting for us in the main service area and we had all got it wrong, hmm, Trevor hurriedly arrived and off we went.

Weather wasn't looking very promising and before long it started to rain, but we could see bright skies ahead so pressed on, until Trevor pulled alongside me at 80 miles pointing to his petrol tank, he had forgotten to fill up at South Mimms so a premature petrol, drink and eat stop was had and off we went.

We had decided to take the M6 toll road in view of the time and volume of traffic; but no Grumpy !! Apparently he had forgotten to do up his crash helmet, stopped with Trevor in support, job done, then Trevor took off a break neck speed to catch up and left Grumpy behind, resulting in us getting to Birkenhead without Grumpy who took the normal road .

The night crossing was uneventful with a 3 course dinner included in the ferry price (2 breakfasts and a 3 course dinner on the way back made the ticket price reasonable ). We arrived in Belfast at 7am to foul weather, in fact it was pissing down as hard as it could. Off the ferry to the petrol station, filled up and off to Ballymeena, just Grumpy and I this time as the other 3 had become disorientated, I won't mention who was responsible!

We arrived at the rally site which was awash by this time. We did manage to put our tents up during a brief pause in the weather but it still carried on raining most of the day and the rally field became a quagmire.

The Rock a Billy band on the Friday night was brilliant and saw a lot of people up jiving and rocking the night away,

Saturdays ride out was along the coastal road to Giants Causeway and very scenic too with no rain, the evening's band was a bit loud and heavy for me so early to bed,

Sunday's weather didn't improve much so it was decided to try and catch an earlier boat for the return journey, which we did and a quick dash from Birkenhead port to home on Bank holiday Monday proved just the recipe, no traffic, no rain and a steady speed saw us home before lunch,

All in all the Irish put on a good show aided by other VSOC guests, pity they didn't have the weather. Still it is Ireland and you know what they say about Irish weather.

Trev, you are a loose canon but great company and fun to be with in the most comical sense of the word. Did you find that I pod charger you dropped on the M25 ???

Signed Anonymous.



## **Belgian rally 22<sup>nd</sup> May to 24<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

The arrangement was to meet at Thurrock and leave by 6am for the 8am ferry from Dover to Calais. Anyone late would be left behind, sorry Grumpy and Sue !!. A quick dash to Dover saw us at the petrol station by 7am and booked in by 7.30.

We met up with several other VSOC members and Ray Nicholson Rep for C15 led 21 bikes to the rally site in Belgium, glorious weather for a change. There were 70 or so Brits at this rally which once again was a very good show and probably outnumbered the Continental contingents?

Barry from C12 had phoned me whilst on the ferry to tell me that Fred had bought my tent which I had left in Holland in April , so after a bit of haggling Barry agreed to erect it for me, result eh? And complete with a bunch of flowers for Glenda as it was her first rally, nice touch mate. Thanks for the en suite as well !!

The area behind the venue was not large enough for all the tents so many had to pitch between the road and the canal, sort of under a bridge, this was not appreciated by all, but the best that could be done under the circumstances, I am assured that next year there is a change of venue with facilities to accommodate all the tents.

The weather stayed lovely all week-end apart from a short lapse on Saturday night when it didn't really matter anyway, band on Friday night was good but space limited for a good knees up, band on Saturday night was questionable.

The ride out on Saturday saw us along country lanes, through villages, round tight bends, stopping for lunch at a nice pub/eating place , certainly tested the riding skills. But very picturesque and well attended.

We were treated to the delights of a very nice young lady who performed a seductive act on the stage, well she was a stripper really ( see the pics on the web site eventually ) Jo went up on the stage to dance with the YCC Columbia members who had come over for the rally, they reckoned she was a natural, natural what hmm !!!

Sunday was lovely again and most were able to pack away dry tents, I led the ride back to Calais via the Bikers Loft at Oudenburg ( near Bruges ) see other article about the de tour made by all but me in our group !!!!.

Anyway, another great week end with great company and all returned in one piece without any problems,

Ta ta for now  
Mr K



### **{ The ride from Belgium to Calais }**

I had been elected leader of the ride from the Belgian rally site to Calais, via the Bikers Loft at Oudenburg, near Bruges.

Sat nav was set and off we went with Tony and Stella from C4 and Steve and Janet (from now on known as the posh tart from upt north) from C6 in tow, the rest were all C19, the posh tart from upt north had elected to ride just behind me.

The ride was steady and uneventful until I took a premature turn off the motorway, which should have been another 100metres further, still no problem, a quick turn around and we were back on the motorway and the correct turn taken.

I then became aware that I was not being followed anymore and spotted the posh tart from upt north leading the rest of the pack on a slip road in to Gent. My other half commented that my sat nav was telling us to go the way we were so go that way I did.

We then made good time to the Bikers Loft to find that no other members of our pack had arrived, whoops. Another 20 minutes later and they turned up, (without Tony, Stella & Steve) led by the posh tart from upt north who came in to the building, head held low and muttering something like " I owe you a great big piece of humble pie " apparently she had taken them on a scenic route in to Gent, in other words had got them lost. !! worse then that she then picked up speed to make up time (doing 80 through road works which

was a 70 limit) and left Tony and Stella behind as they were pulling a trailer, good job Steve stayed with them for support.

Rested and fed we went off to Calais, once again with me in front and the posh tart from upt north somewhere at the back and arrived all in one pack, albeit Tony, Stella Steve and the posh tart from upt north pulled in about 5 minutes after the rest of us – did I leave them behind?

This was not the first time this weekend the posh tart from upt north had done this, as she did it to Tony and Stella on the drive from Calais to Belgium. Tony and Stella were leading but the posh tart from upt north decided to come off at an earlier junction with Steve in tow. Tony and Stella arrived first, sound familiar!!

It was a good job that Steve led the final part of the journey home to Preston as I don't know where they would be by now !!

Mr K with input from Stella.

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## **Hot Bacon Roll and Tea Incident - Essex Police BIKE SAFE.**

A few Sundays back whilst enjoying a leisurely ride from Boreham to the Abridge Log Cabin café C19 were stopped by Essex Police. Not that we were doing anything wrong at the time, just cruising along, John setting the pace. The officers explained that it was all to do with BIKE-SAFE, and they invited us into a nearby schoolyard where we were plied with freshly cooked bacon rolls and hot tea and invited to register our interest. Being a sunny but slightly cold morning we were very interested in the free hot snack and use of the loo, also some slight interest in the BIKE-SAFE course.

Courses are held on various Sundays throughout the summer and consist of a workshop and ride-out from the Boreham (Essex Police Complex, Holts Lane) to Burnham with one police bike per two C19 members. They will 'observe' riders and advise on improvements to biking skills. It's £50/ head and includes a restaurant meal. If we could get a group of up to sixteen C19 members on one Sunday, then they will do it for £40/head; I've confirmed this by email with them. It seems expensive but may be of benefit.

Attached are the dates/letter from the BIKE SAFE team. If you are interested please contact them directly, alternatively we could arrange a group booking; looking at the C19 Events Calendar it could be on an 'Impromptu' ride-out Sunday or perhaps 18<sup>th</sup> October, at the end of the season. Let me know if you are interested in a group booking and we can sort out a date.

Their web site is: [www.BIKESAFE.co.uk](http://www.BIKESAFE.co.uk)

Safe Riding.....Ray Rawlings



## ESSEX BIKESAFE RIDER SKILLS DAYS 2009

### BOOKING FORM

The Skills Day will be held at The Essex Police Complex, Holts Lane, Boreham, Chelmsford CM3 3BG from 8.45am to 5.00pm.

Please find enclosed a list of BIKESAFE courses for 2009. If you wish to book a course you need to contact Essex County Council on 01245 437347. The office is only open on Monday to Friday between 9.45am and 2.30 pm. If the office is busy please leave your details on voicemail and you will be contacted back, although it may not be on the same day.

The cost of the course is £50 and the preferred method of payment is by credit or debit card but we regret payment cannot be made by cash or with an American Express card. If payment can only be made by cheque, please make it payable to "Essex County Council".

Once payment has been made you will be sent a confirmation of your booking and a map to the venue along with essential further information on the Skills Day itself.

Yours sincerely

The Essex BikeSafe Team

#### Bike Safe events 2009

DATE	EVENT
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> April	Bike Safe work shop.
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> April	Bike Safe work shop.
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> may	Bike Safe work shop.
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> may	Bike Safe work shop.
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> June	Bike Safe work shop.
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> July	Bike Safe work shop.
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> July	Bike Safe work shop.
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> August	Bike Safe work shop.
Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> September	Bike Safe work shop.
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> September	Bike Safe work shop.
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> October	Bike Safe work shop.

## Yamaha History

Although the first Yamaha motorcycle didn't appear until the mid fifties, the company's history dates back to 1887, when the father of the company, Torakusa Yamaha began producing reed organs. The Yamaha Motor Corporation sprang into life on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1955, and remains part of the Yamaha Group. It has grown to be the second largest motorcycle manufacturer in the world, which is no mean feat for what was a fledgling company that arrived late in the motorcycle market.

Their first offering was the YA1, a 125cc, single cylinder two-stroke, was a copy of a German motorbike. The Japanese have often been accused of copying European models, but let's not forget that BSA also used this very same design to produce their Bantam. This machine, fondly know as the Red Dragonfly, laid the foundation of Yamaha's reputation for reliability, and success on the race track contributed to the bike's popularity.

The twin cylinder YD, the first machine designed by Yamaha, was introduced in 1957. A win a Mount Asama boosted sales, but at less than 16,000 models a year output was still way behind Honda and Suzuki. However, the company flourished during the following years, and in 1959 Yamaha were the first Japanese company to offer a sports model, the twin cylinder YDS1, complete with five speed gearbox. A kit was available which allowed the owner to adapt the bike for racing, both on and off road.

By 1960 the company's output had increased by a massive 600%, but a period of recession forced Japanese companies to look further afield to sell their products, and in 1961 Yamaha entered a team in the European Grand Prix. In the early sixties, America's economy was on the rise and Yamaha managed to sell 12,000 motorcycles in the States. In 1963 the figure was 36,000 rising to 87,000 in 1964. Yamaha's first factory outside Japan was opened in Siam (present day Thailand) in 1966, in order to supply Southeast Asia. By 1967, with 406,000 bikes built, production had overtaken that of Suzuki. Racing was important to Yamaha, so much so that in 1969 they constructed a full size race track near to their Iwata factory.

In 1970, Yamaha's catalogue carried 20 models; with a range from 50cc to 350cc. production had reached 574,000 units per year, the majority of which went to overseas markets. That year also saw the introduction of the first four-stroke machine, in the shape of the 650cc XSI, although two-stroke engines were still favoured for bikes below 400cc.

By 1973, Yamaha were producing over a million bikes annually, leaving Suzuki firmly in their wake. That year, Honda turned out 1,836,000 machines. During the seventies, Yamaha's RD twin cylinder sports bikes were proving a big hit and the company had once again backed a winner. As the eighties arrived, over two million bikes were passing through the factory gates. During this period, the four cylinder XJ's were developed with displacements ranging from 550cc to 1100cc.

One of Yamaha's most successful projects was the Virago, which was introduced as a 750cc, but 500cc and 920cc models were soon available. This bike was the first cruiser to come out of Japan, and proved to be immensely successful, so successful in fact, that Harley Davidson was running scared. They pressed for a tariff on imported motorcycles over 750cc, so Yamaha had to replace their 750cc Virago with the 699cc version, but at the same time, the 920cc grew to 1000cc. it eventually became the 1100cc. one of the most loved versions of the Virago is the XV535; its reliability and easy handling has delighted riders worldwide. The larger Virago's were replaced by the V-Star and Road Star models and the last model to carry the Virago name was the 2007, 250cc version.

It's understandable how Yamaha have accrued such a dedicated following. Over the years, their bikes have married cutting edge technology with reliability, which is no mean feat. Their designs have earned admiration from far and wide, and continue to do so today.

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## **Editor's Note:**

**COPY DATE FOR JULY SEAX is MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup> JUNE**

**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

## **JUNE RIDE-OUTS**

**SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup>**

**ACE CAFÉ, LONDON MOTORCYCLE MUSEAM,  
29 OLDFIELD LANE SOUTH, RAVENOR FARM, LONDON, UB6 9LB**

Depart Boreham services 10-00 for Brentwood services, (Total garage, A12/ M25 just off Brooke Street roundabout) depart Brentwood services 10-30 for the Ace Café

**FRIDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> TO SUNDAY 14<sup>TH</sup>**

**VSOC INTERNATIONAL RALLY, EASTLEIGH, HANTS,  
SO50 9HT**

The site is open from Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>, food is available pre and post rally days.  
Members are going to the rally from Wednesday onwards. If you let me know what day you are travelling I will try and arrange company to travel with you.  
Look forward to seeing everybody at the rally.

**SUNDAY 21<sup>ST</sup>**

**DAY TRIP TO FRANCE**

Depart Thurrock services 07-30 for Channel Tunnel M20

**FRIDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> TO SUNDAY 28<sup>TH</sup>**

**VSOC C8 MIDLAND MAYHEM 4  
STOKE PRIOR SPORTS AND COUNTRY CLUB,  
WESTON HALL ROAD, STOKE PRIOR, BROMSGROVE B60 4AL**

Depart Boreham services 09-00 for Brentwood services, total garage A12/M25, depart Brentwood services 09-30 for Bromesgrove.

Travelling M25, M40, M42, M5 south exit J5

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:

### June

#### North meeting.

8 pm Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009.

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

#### South meeting.

8pm Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

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

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham.

### 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.