

SEAX

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

April 2010 Issue 172

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COPY DATE FOR APRIL SEAX is MONDAY 26th April.

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Centre 19 website :

<http://www.essex-crusaders.org.uk>

VSOC website :

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

Rep's Rambling:

Hi Everyone

It looks like winter is finally over, the sun has been shining and temperatures nudging double figures. March saw a number of members out on the Sunday impromptu rides with the weather being good enough for some of us to stay out riding all day. It really is great to be back on the bike again.

There are plenty of rideouts and events planned for the next six months which I hope will appeal to members, see the monthly rideout sheet with SEAX for more information on individual rides and events. The rideout calendar is not set in stone, so if you know of a rideout or event please let me know and I will try and fit it in.

Monday 5th April, ACE Cafe, Southend shakedown. This event has turned out to be one of the biggest rideouts of our calendar and a lot of members first ride of the year. Some members have purchased new bikes at the beginning of March, it would be good to see you all at Boreham services for 10-00 departure for Southend seafront to watch the bikes arrive from the Ace cafe.

C19s annual Sunday lunch is at the Anchor Pub is on the 18th April, excellent Sunday roast and great value. Come by bike or by car, everyone is welcome, family members included.

Sunday 2nd May. Hedingham Castle Jousting competition. Depart Boreham services 10-00am, depart top of High Street (by church), Halstead at 10.45am for castle. Good day out, bring a picnic, admission charge £11.00 per person.

For some of us the first Rally of the year is Southern Snakes in Holland, thank goodness for global warming, last years temperatures did not fall below a barmy 7c, a bit different from 6 years ago when it was a chilly -4c and the frost was so thick the tents looked like igloos. We all took it in our stride, hardy bikers that we are, the very warm welcome that we received plus the copious amounts of anti-freeze helped to keep out the cold.

On the subject of rallies, if you are thinking of attending any of the VSOC rallies this year, could you please give a thought to perhaps purchasing your tickets in advance. The main reason for this is that it helps the organisers of rallies to know

how much they can spend on the rally which hopefully benefits the members who attend.

Three of us went to Butlins at Bognor Regis a couple of weeks ago as part of a group of 60 VSOC members. which was arranged by C16, It was a brilliant weekend arranged by C16, at least 4 live bands a night, fancy dress Saturday night, 90% of people dressed up, theme, school reunion, think St Trinians for the girls and let your imagination do the rest. Everybody that went said what a terrific time they had so 80 places have been booked for next year, 11,12,13,14 March 2011. This is staying in 2 bedroom self-catering apartments with own bathroom, heating and a fully equipped kitchen, eat in or try one of the various eateries on site. All evening entertainment is free, plus some fairground rides, large indoor swimming pool etc. This great 3 night weekend, theme Soul and Motown, could be yours for the miserly sum of £50-00 per person, a £25-00 deposit per person is required to reserve your place. For more information contact me or Peter.

As we come to the end of March, your membership of the VSOC expires on the 31st of the month, remember to renew as soon as possible before the dreaded penalty payment comes into force on the first of May.

Get those bikes out, hope to see you at one of the rideouts.

John

WOOTTON BASSETT – MOTHER'S DAY RIDE – MARCH 14, 2010

I had seen mention on a couple of web sites of the proposed ride to honour the service men and women who have died in Afghanistan, and to thank the people of the town for the way they turn out when bodies are repatriated. I registered and became number 4,800 for the ride. What had started as a ride out by a group of friends had snowballed massively and was already a bit out of hand.

Mr K sent a note to C19 with the web site link; the ride appeared in MCN; on the VSOC and HOG web sites; and in some newspaper blogs; and it went from a large ride to just a bit silly. The police stopped registrations as it went past 10,000 bikes. As a fair weather rider I wanted to go on this one even if it was raining here in Essex as I set off. To make sure that I could be awake and fresh for a long ride with an 08:30 meet at the M25/A12 services at Brentwood I went to a choir concert that my wife was singing in at Croydon on the Saturday night. Left the rugby club post concert soirée at around 00:30 and got home around 02:00 on Sunday morning.

Was in a bit of a rush on Sunday but got to the services at around 08:10, refuelled and waited for a couple of other members of C19. No one came, so at 08:40 off I went on the M25. Just a few bikes around, but once I got on the M4 there were bikes everywhere. Nice touch, someone in authority had turned all the matrix signs on the M4 to say "Think Bike". Caught up with a strange group of bikes, mainly HOG people with a road captain at the front and a tail gunner at the rear but sports bikes, trikes, and non HD cruisers joining the group all the time.

Moto Reading services for the next refuelling stop – the pumps were full of bikes, lots of tills but only three cashiers so it took a long time. On to Junction 17, turn off the motorway and join a several mile queue to the assembly airfield. Police everywhere, new AA road signs at all the junctions. The airfield; which I reached just before noon; was amazing. I have never seen so many bikes all in one place; it is reported as the largest gathering of motorcycles and bikers that the UK has ever seen. Toilets and burger vans were in attendance as were the AA repair men and a couple of vans from local bike dealers. A bit chaotic but I suspect that the numbers of people had overwhelmed the organization behind the ride. Then the down side of such a large gathering; the police were counting out groups of about 500 bikes to leave the airfield at a time. Had to wait till 15:30 before I departed on the 17 mile ride to Wootton Bassett.

Going through the villages on route from the airfield was a humbling experience, people at their garden gates waving and showing posters of support for the entire route. The ride was well controlled by the police (civil and military) all junctions were blocked, and we just swept through. Usual lack of ride discipline by sports bike people who seem to have no idea of riding in two staggered lines with minimal gaps as requested in the ride briefing papers. Got to the High Street just after 16:00, it was busy, but not the sort of crowds I have seen on TV for the repatriation convoys. Straight out of the town, onto the M4 and head for home, bikes of all sorts everywhere. Was passed on the slip road as my little 650 struggled up to 80mph by a brand new V-Max that I had admired in the airfield queue. What a daft projectile; front wheel in the air; a couple of noisy gear changes; and it was gone.

Refuelled at Reading again, lots of out of order pumps, lots of tills but too few cashiers. Got on with a rather tiring ride home in very heavy traffic in the company of rather a lot of bikes. Back home at 19:45 absolutely knackered by 320 miles in a day but feeling pleased that I had taken part in something rather special.

As soon as I got in my domestic staff informed me that there was a message from John Evans on the answer phone from Saturday. It told me that I would be on my own if I went, the others had dropped out. So that's why there was no one at the Brentwood services.

Photos are at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8566860.stm>. They show the High Street absolutely packed with people, but that was at noon and I didn't get there for another 4 hours, so many of them had gone home. Since found out that

Tracey and Neil had gone down on the Saturday and were much nearer the front of the ride. At the time of writing the event had raised a little under £100,000 for the Afghan Hero's charity. They are looking at a re-run in 2011, with a hope that the troops will be home by 2012 and that a third run will be inappropriate.

Bob Owen.

FOR SALE

Yamaha XV535 Virago
1995 Nice example with custom parts.
Taxed and MOT'd
£1,500
Tel: 01394 411 208 / 07917 896605
Rob Cragie



FOR SALE

Kappa 40 litre panniers for sale. Will also fit Givi frames
Some scuffing on R/H pannier. Photographs available.
£150 ovno Cost over £300 when new. Buyer collects or will deliver locally
Please call David 01375 892120 between 6pm and 9pm,
or email cougar.centre19@btinternet.com

The Harley-Davidson Story

William Harley was 21 when he drew up plans for an 116cc engine, which was built and fitted to a pedal cycle. That was in 1901. He was joined by his friend Arthur Davidson, and together they worked on what was really a motor-bicycle. With the help of Arthur's brother, Walter, they completed the project in 1903, however the boys were so dissatisfied with their first attempt, they scrapped the bike, but not without gaining valuable experience along the way.

The second machine, with a 405cc engine is classed by many as the first real Harley. The bigger engine and frame design meant this machine was something other than a motor-bicycle, and was a forerunner of the modern motorcycle. The prototype was built in a ten by fifteen feet shed belonging to the Davidson family; although the engine parts were said to be built at the West Milwaukee Railshops, where older brother William Davidson worked as a foreman. By 1905 this motorcycle was being offered to the public on a very limited basis. Three were sold that year.

The shed was eventually moved to the Juneau Avenue factory to serve as a reminder of the company's humble beginnings, but sadly was accidentally demolished by contractors during the 1970's.

By 1907 production had reached 150 motorcycles, and in that year they began selling their machines to police departments. Also in that same year, a prototype 880cc, V-twin engine was developed and displayed at the Chicago Automobile Show, although very few V-twin motorcycles were sold before 1910.

By 1909 well over 1,000 motorcycles were being produced, a tribute not only to the boys' engineering skills, but also to their entrepreneurial attributes.

In 1917, when the USA entered the arena of World War 1, new demands were placed on the company, as the military needed a robust, reliable machine. Harley-Davidson rose to the challenge and



produced 20,000 motorcycles for the war machine.

This no doubt helped the company take their place as the World's largest motorcycle manufacturer, and by 1920 they were producing over 28,000 units which were sold in 67 countries.

The depression of the Thirties hit the company hard and production fell to less than 4,000 in 1933. Through necessity, they produced a three-wheeled

delivery vehicle which was named the 'Servi-car', a design that stood the test of time and only ceased production in 1973.

As war came again, Harley-Davidson copied the design of the BMW R71, and produced the XA model, as once again the company answered the demands of the United States Army and produced large numbers of motorcycles. They also built the WLC for the Canadian military, and sent more than 30,000 units to the Soviet Union.

After the war, the company flourished and the 'Super 10' and 'Topper' scooter were produced. In 1960 they bought fifty percent of Aeronautica Macchi's motorcycle division and the importation of the 250cc horizontal single began. This bike wore the Harley-Davidson badge and was marketed as the 'Harley-Davidson Sprint'. The company became sole owners of Aermacchi in 1974.

Hollywood too has played a part in the development of Harley-Davidson, sadly tarnishing the company's image and leading the brand to be associated with groups such as 'Hell's Angels'. In 1969 AMF bought the company, decimated the workforce and began to produce a machine which was much inferior to its Japanese rivals. Sales slumped and the company was on the edge of the abyss. The company's reputation became almost irredeemable.

Under pressure from Harley-Davidson, the US government introduced a 45% tariff on imported motorcycles over 700cc, but instead of going head to head with the Japanese, they concentrated on the 'Retro' style of bike. Many of the components for these machines were built overseas, and the quality of the finished article took a turn for the better.

In 2008, a Harley-Davidson Museum opened in Milwaukee. The three building complex contains a large collection of motorcycles and other Harley-Davidson memorabilia. This represents a huge leap from the shed in the Davidson's backyard and the austere years of the Great Depression.

Proof enough that Harley-Davidson is more than a motorcycle, more than a company; it has become a way of life for motorcyclists all over the world. William and Arthur would be delighted



APRIL RIDE-OUTS AND EVENTS

SUNDAY 4TH

IMPROMTU

Depart Boreham services 10-00am

MONDAY 5TH

ACE CAFÉ, SOUTHEND SHAKEDOWN

Depart Boreham services 10-00am for Southend

SUNDAY 11th

WALTON on the NAZE

Depart Boreham services 10-00 for Langham services (Shell garage, A12 north of Colchester), depart Langham services 10-45. Stopping at the transport café on A120 to meet C10 members who wish to ride with us to Walton.

SATURDAY 17TH

FUMCC, BIKESHOW and MEET KESGRAVE BELL INN, KESGRAVE, IPSWICH, IP5 1AA

www.fumcc.co.uk Make your own way.

SUNDAY 18TH

LUNCH, ANCHOR PUB, STRATFORD St. MARY, SUFFOLK.

Depart Boreham services 10-00 for scenic ride to pub, weather permitting. or make your own way arriving 12-15 onwards. Come by bike or car, This is a family day out so all are welcomed.

Sunday 18th

Bikers in Paradise Park,

Paradise Wildlife Park, White Stubbs Lane, Broxbourne, Herts. EN10 7QA
Tickets on the gate, £16-00, concessions £11-00 Make your own way.

www.bikersinparadise.com

FRIDAY 23RD

VSCN, SOUTHERN SNAKES, KONINGSBOSCH, HOLLAND.

Depart Thurrock services (petrol station) 06-15am. Fill up in Dover before boarding the ferry.

SUNDAY 25TH

ACE CAFÉ then on to LONDON M/C MUSEUM, 29 OLDFIELDS LANE SOUTH, GREENFORD, UB6 9LB

Depart Marks Tey 09-30 for Brentwood services (Total garage on the A1023, Brooke Street roundabout M25/A12), depart Brentwood services 10-15am for ACE CAFÉ, cup of tea, coffee or breakfast, then on to the M/C museum.

www.london-motorcycle-museum.org

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:

April

North meeting.

8 pm Monday 12th April 2010. **[NOT 5th as this is Easter Monday]**

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

South meeting.

8pm Monday 19th April 2010.

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

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham.

May

North meeting.

8 pm Monday 10th May 2010. **[NOT 3rd as this is May Day]**

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

South meeting.

8 pm Monday 17th May 2010.

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

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham.