

SEAX

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

August 2011 Issue 188

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COPY DATE FOR NEXT SEAX is MONDAY 28th August.

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

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

Rep's Rambling:

July has been a really busy month, starting with the day trip to France. Excellent weather, and for the first time in about four years we could see the White Cliffs of Dover very clearly.

The diversions in Boulogne left a lot to be desired, the French decided that they wanted to hold a street market so they shut off the main road into Boulogne, put a couple of control barriers across the road, found a piece of plywood and wrote Calais on it and put it on the ground, leaving it to your judgement to find your way around it. Only the French can get away with something like that.

Then we had the scenic ride through the smaller roads of Suffolk, to Aldeburgh where we had fish and chips on the beach. Centre 19's worst nightmare happened, it rained for the Bar-B-Cruise, but this did not stop about 45 members turning up, if most did come by car, including some from C10 and C13. I would like to thank everyone who turned up early to help set everything up, Kevin for the marquee that we could shelter in during the showers and Rob and Pat for the loan of a generator and boiler that kept us with a constant supply of tea and coffee. It did stay dry for the lighting of the BBQ's and lunch was eaten in the dry, then the heavens opened. Just to say thank you to everyone who made the effort to turn up, it makes all the hard work worthwhile.

Then came C5's rally near Hull, which unfortunately I could not attend. From the feedback from members who did attend they had a great weekend. September 11th Essex Air Ambulance run, Dunton to Harwich, more details to follow.

John

Deputy Rep (North):

C19 North meeting 4th July 2011.

The meeting was well attended, I think I counted 23 members so a good turn out and makes it all worth while.

We had the meeting outside as it was warm and dry, Jane provided us with hot roasted potatoes which by the look of the dishes went down very well, thanks Jane.

The day trip to France went very well and once again a hot dry day made it all the better.

The rally at Royston the previous week end saw 25 C19 members so a good turn out there.

The BBQ is the 17th of the month and it was asked that the more the merrier as far as helping is concerned makes it a lot easier, it was agreed to meet on site between 10 and 10.30 to set up the tent, BBQ's etc.

C19 have to host a rally next year, yes its 4 years since our last rally, unbelievable !! a small rally committee will be set up but help for the rally will be asked for as once again, many hands make light work.

It was nice to take a couple of Xmas meal deposits and receive a couple of phone calls from people who couldn't make the meeting but wanted to come to the meal, deposits are slow coming in and to date we are at 49 so come on C19 , I think I have done the reminders to death. Deposits due by the end of the month or even a call to say you want to come and will pay later. Time is running out.

I know it is early but plans are well ahead for the International rally in Sweden next June, looks to be a good one and a nice venue with cabins available if you don't want to tent. More info on the national website so have a look if nothing else.

By the time you read this Yorkies will have had their rally and it looks as though there will be a good attendance from C19, keep up the trend is all I can say. You may want to plan a holiday round C18's rally in Devon at the end of August or even just go to the rally, think about it.

We got a new membership list today and it is good to see that inspite of several members not renewing last time round we are still strong in numbers (66) and have 3 new members from the last time we had an updated list, onwards and upward.

Peter



Prince Charles sits on a Venture Star 1300; in the gardens at Clarence House; with the motorcycling branch of the Royal British Legion, behind.

RANDOM THOUGHTS ON A DAY TRIP TO FRANCE – JULY 2011

Saturday July 2 and I am in my car driving north across France from Chinon to the Chunnel at the end of a two week holiday. Booked for the 19:50 crossing and wondering which train I will be on tomorrow at the end of the Centre 19 day trip to France. Daft bit of diary organisation – come home from France on Saturday and go back on Sunday.

Set off at 06:20 for Thurrock services to meet up for the motorway trip to the Chunnel – departure scheduled for 07:00, a very early start for a long day. First stop is the services just before the Chunnel – fuel costs in France; other than at major supermarkets (that can match Asda in the UK); are outrageous. I had got used to seeing €1.699 (£1.600) on my holiday. Lots of milling around as 28 bikes refuel. One advantage of a car versus a motorcycle at the Chunnel booking in, in the car the front number plate camera does the work, your name is on the screen as you stop, you just confirm and drive into the car park. On the bike you have to enter an eight digit reference on a crap touch screen before proceeding. Trevor's Royal Star spews engine coolant on the ground but off we go through French Customs and Passport Control, both closed, all 28 bikes board and are spread over three carriages.

Off on the "wrong" side of the road to Cap Blanc Nez to view the White Cliffs of Dover. Fifth time I have been here on my bike and for the first time I can see all the way across. Amazing to be able to see the beach below us. Looks as though there are ants moving around until binoculars are used – it's people 134 meters below and some distance away, some on horseback riding along the water line.

Off to Boulogne for lunch, right in the centre of the town with no pre warning the dreaded "Route Barré" across our path. No organised diversion, just the road closed for a street market and people are left to muddle round it. Garmin SatNav is completely useless; all she can do is try to get me to approach the street market from another closed road. John leads us round and in through the medieval town wall to park near the Mairie as usual.

All sorts of lunch are available from cheap and crap up to quite pricy regional fare in more traditional restaurants. Despite some good looking Menu de Jour offers at between €16 and €22 I decide to use Le Swan again and have the Chefs Special menu. Bit pricy (with a beer and a coffee it's just over €30) but great quality and all local regional produce.

The town square outside the Mairie had a fresh art installation celebrating local farm produce. This included a life size plastic cow, some amusing scaled up giant gardening tools, and a quiche dish (with growing flowers quiche) that was around 5 metres across.

Back on the bikes and off to Saint Omer for afternoon tea. Another unannounced "Route Barré" blocks our progress in the centre of Boulogne. No diversion is signposted so John does a U turn and we all follow. Mrs Garmin now advises that I do a second U turn and continue on the original route. John heads for the new part of the town and downhill to the water front. At every turn Mrs Garmin announces "recalculating" and plots a route back to the closed street. Several kilometres later and out in a maze of narrow country lanes on route to Saint Omer she finally gets the message and abandons trying to send me back into the town. Great ride down the lanes; some only single track; out onto a motorway standard road; and to our second food break.

Park in a rather crowded town square, there is some sort of flea market in progress, many stalls in the sunshine and many of the cafes and restaurants are open. Carefully pick the wrong one. Never trust technology to be of any benefit – the waiter uses a smart phone to take orders but wanders off and no drinks appear. Reorder to same effect. Order once more, still no drinks. After waiting a total of 45 minutes go into the building to use loo and tell

waiter to cancel our order. By the way incoming waiters shout new orders at the cooks it looks as though the smart phone is only used to print the bill, the rest of it relies on the waiter telling the cook and the cook getting it right. Nearly as useful as my Garmin SatNav when a road is closed.

Lovely sight on the way to Chunnel, a young lady riding a white horse towards us bareback, well not quite, she was wearing a string strap vest and was sitting on a numnah. If this last word is not familiar to you try looking it up – on an equine site, not one about female anatomy, this could be part of a learning process for you. She had a lot of confidence and kept control of the horse despite the lack of saddle and a large number of noisy motorcycles.

Make our way back to the Chunnel, arriving at 18:45, book in for the 19:42 service (bit like yesterday evening for me) and head for UK Customs and Boarder Control. Bloody great queue and only half the booths are in use. We move forward one car length at a time with no shade in the full glare of the sun. Miss our departure slot, still in the Border Control queue when boarding closes.

Trevor (he of the boiling radiator) has no passport with him, jobs worth in the booth makes a song and dance about it, but lets him through with both parts of driving licence, bank card and other proofs of identity. The engine management light on my bike comes on and the engine cuts out. Won't restart so push it the last few cars lengths to the booth. Need help to get 350kg of the great dead thing up the ramp to the booth window. Have passport and am waived through, push dead bike to edge of road to assess the problem. Meanwhile Alan and Anna had their HD catch fire ; [see separate article – **SEAX**].

My issue a bit obvious, oil smoke drifts from the oil tank filler when it is opened, the entire engine is too hot to touch. Known problem with RoadStar – they overheat, particularly when stationary and left ticking over in high temperature. USA user forum had a discussion on it, Yamaha aware of the problem and fit a temperature sensor to disable the engine when it overheats rather than fixing the overheating issue. Wait at side of road for it to cool down and try to get assistance from tunnel staff to get some water to cool it down (bladder empty so can't piss on it). They have no English and my French is rather limited, I am told that pedestrians are not permitted in this area so I will not be allowed to walk to the shop for a couple of bottles of water. In response to a radio message a supervisor turns up with water container thinking I want it for radiator. Tip some over engine cases very slowly and carefully. Am told that if it won't start they will assist and get me on train so that AA can recover it in Kent, this is good to know, recovery from France would be a long process. It starts and off I go about three trains late.

Bike cools off some more in the train; on to the M20 and stop to refuel at second services. Home again via M25 and A13 giving a few people ear ache in the Dartford tunnel with a blast at full pelt in second and third gear. A great day out (apart from my bike overheating); 270 miles - some of it on great French roads; a brilliant lunch; and many thanks to John and Carole Evans for organising the route, tunnel, logistics, and good weather.

Photos are at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/7940646@N04/sets/72157626377513615/>
Or available at the link on the C19 web site.

Bob Owen

FIRE in the HOLE!

As Bob mentioned, in his article, a combination of high ambient temperatures and snail's pace providing excessive heat from the V-Twin; caused the heavy duty cable, from battery +ve to starter motor, to sag and actually contact the rear exhaust header pipe. Quickly burnt through the thick plastic insulation (causing smoke and a nasty smell); it was then attempting some 12volt/45amp electric welding; combined with some flames!

Think that was the fastest 'turn ignition off and 2 person dismount' that we have ever done. Squirted the remains of a bottle of drink on the cable; which was sufficient to extinguish the flames – if anyone else tries to tell me that you should not put water on an electrical fire; I think I will scream; I would prefer to destroy some wiring, than to lose the whole bike to fire? Was very frightening, actually, but it was obvious what the problem was and how to resolve it; although at this stage it was unknown if any further damage was done or whether the bike would start again.

We managed to push the bike through passport Control and then waited 30 minutes for it to cool enough to work on. With assistance from the UK Border Agency and Eurotunnel we insulated the cable, Ty-Wrapped it out of harm's way and with fingers crossed pressed the starter and she roared into life. Think we eventually caught a train 1 hour after the rest of the group?

At this stage, if you haven't fallen asleep, the observant among you will notice that there has been no mention of help from other motorcyclists, never mind other VSOC members who had been on the ride and specifically the 6 other bikes (ALL VSOC) who were in the queue, around us, when the bike caught fire..... CORRECT!

They all rode off to catch the train leaving us to fend for ourselves, without even asking if we needed any help. Even riding past Bob on their way to the train.

They didn't report our plight until they were safely on the train.

No one contacted us when they reached England and if we hadn't had a meeting the next evening; I wonder if we might still be waiting?

I won't put into writing how I felt about riding with this "Band of Brothers" – but it certainly wasn't pride!

Next time we go on a ride-out; remember that it may well be "as it says on the can" and is only a ride-**OUT!**

I will forever be in awe of riding with these real bikers!

Enjoy **YOUR RIDE.**

Alan

AUGUST RIDEOUTS AND EVENTS

THESE ARE UNSANCTIONED PARTIES. THEY DO NOT COME UNDER THE VSOC BANNER.

FRIDAY 5TH TO SUNDAY 7TH

SCRUMPIES PARTY, COURT FARM, BANWELL, nr WESTON-S- MARE, BS29 6DL
DISCO FRIDAY NIGHT, BAND SATURDAY NIGHT. FOOD VAN AND SHOWERS. £7

SATURDAY 6TH TO SUNDAY 7TH

SMUGGLERS PARTY, EAST FARLIEGH CLUB, EAST FARLIEGH, KENT, ME15 0JN
CAMPING AVAILABLE. £5-00

SUNDAY 7TH

BIKE SHOW, MUSEUM of POWER, HATFIELD ROAD, MALDON, CM9 6QA

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

SUNDAY 14TH

COVENT GARDEN, LONDON

Depart Marks Tey 09-30am for Thurrock services, NO PICK UP AT BOREHAM.
Depart Thurrock services 10-30am for Covent Garden. Travelling through Docklands and along the embankment to Covent Garden.

SUNDAY 21ST

ELY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Depart Boreham services 10-00 for Halstead (top of High Street by church) depart Halstead 10-45 for Barton Mills, brunch then on to Ely.

FRIDAY 26TH TO MONDAY 29TH

VSOC RALLY C18, PARTY ON THE POOPDECK WATTS, BLAKE & BEARNE SOCIAL CLUB, STRAP LANE, KINGSTEIGNTON, NEWTON ABBOTT, TQ12 3PS

Last VSOC rally of the season. For those members who wish to have a longer stay you will be able to get on the site from **Wednesday 24th** and depart by **Wednesday 31st**. If are going to the rally could you let myself of Peter know and we will try and coordinate departure times and days

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 1st August 2011.

The Anchor, Upper Street, Stratford St. Mary, CO7 6LW.

West of A12, North of Colchester

CENTRE 19

South meeting.

8pm Monday 15th August 2011

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

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham.

Dear member

Please see the bike questionnaire; (*attachment to SEAX*) which I am using as part of a report I am doing on behalf of the VSOC to Yamaha Europe. All country members of our group have been asked to carry out a similar survey so we can get a consistent approach when speaking with Yamaha Europe.

The report has to be finished by 1st October 2011 so time is tight!

Would you please take the time (not long!!) to answer the questions and send them back to me on petergauntlett03@aol.com

This also applies to members who no longer have qualifying bikes.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Thank you

Peter