

SEAX

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

February 2011 Issue 182

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COPY DATE FOR NEXT SEAX is SUNDAY 20th February.

Contacts:

Centre Rep.

John Evans

10 Woodlow; Benfleet; SS7 3RL.

Tel: Home 01268 775720 mobile 07778 643986

john@evans6387.freeserve.co.uk

Deputy Rep. (North) Peter 'Mr. K' Gauntlett

Home 01206 570604

mobile 07531 614887

petergauntlett03@aol.com

Deputy Rep. (South)

Trevor Lathrope

01245 320525

trevorlathrope@gmail.com

Seax Editor

Alan Ferry

mobile 07973 371812

seax2008@hotmail.com

Spider

Claire Gauntlett

uglymonsters01@aol.com

Centre 19 website :

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

VSOC website :

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

Rep's Rambling

We started off the year by having C19's rearranged Christmas party on the 15th January at the Swan Inn, Maldon. A great turnout from C19 members with a total of 72 people attending. The evening went well, one or two problems with the catering which we seem to encounter when catering for large numbers, food was good but drinks were expensive. DJ, afterwards, playing rock and roll tracks from the 50's and 60's. (Shame about the cobwebs in the chandeliers, must remember to take a Hoover if there is a next time). A great evening was enjoyed by all. Many thanks to everybody who contributed prizes towards the raffle. If any one knows of a suitable venue for our Christmas meal for 2011 would they please let me know, catering for about 70 people.

Now that Christmas and the New year are behind us, it is time to look forward to the coming year.

Our AGM (see AGM report in this issue) was held on the 17th of January. It was disappointing to see only 27 attend, out of a total membership of 81. Thanks to those who attended and thank you for voting me back into office.

This meeting is important to me, the other committee members and to all of you as it provides an opportunity to discuss last years likes and dislikes and with your input take C19 forward into 2011.

The membership of C19 now stands at 78 members and 3 associates. As a centre this is very encouraging as the membership has been increasing steadily over the last 3 years. While many of the other centres in the VSOC have seen a decline in their numbers which is bringing down the VSOC membership in total. Hopefully C19 has something to offer to old and new members. Any suggestions or concerns that might bring improvements to the club are always appreciated and we will try and act upon them.

A big welcome goes to Dave Winning and Geoff Hart our newest members and to Ian Wallace who has come from C13 and is a 15 year member of the VSOC.

Membership renewal time is now upon us. The new membership year starts 1st April 2011, the membership fee has been held again at £17-50 for postal applications, see membership renewal form and £17-50+£1-00 (admin costs paypal) through the VSOC website.

The ride-out calendar for 2011 is published with this issue of SEAX. If you come across an alternative ride-out or event during the summer months let me know and I will try to incorporate it into the calendar

As you will see from the events for February, there are a couple of Bike shows, the time and meeting places (fingers crossed for warm sunny weather) are only suggestions for I know some of you will be going by car so you can buy lots of goodies. On Saturday 26th at the Anchor Pub, Stratford St. Mary there is a social evening with an excellent meal, £10-50 a head. If you think you can come please let me or Peter know.

John

Deputy Rep (North)

C19 North meeting 10th January 2011.

Welcome to the first meeting in 2011, access slightly marred as the A12 from Eight Ash Green was blocked and subsequently shut, fun and games !!

The meeting was fairly well attended and as we had changed the date due to the Bank Holiday the car park was monopolised by the MG club !!no problem as it was good to see Vicky and Nick again.

Things have been quiet as far as biking is concerned due mainly to the weather and the time of year, roll on the warmer weather.

John is busy putting together the ride out list for 2011 but would still like more input from members please, if you have a place you would like to visit on a ride out, can you let John know as soon as possible.

Probably a bit early but we have received membership renewal forms for distribution, membership is still capped at £17.50 for the umpteenth year so still good value for money.

It was decided to have a centre evening meal at The Anchor on Saturday 26th February 2011, hopefully that day and date will suit most so see you there.

Just a reminder that rallies are looming up and in some cases early booking can save you money. John and I can help any of you that are thinking of rallies abroad with times, costs etc starting with Hogs and Rats at the Hague in Holland at the end of April, an easy one to get to as it is only 7 miles from the Hook !! Then Belgium in May, all details are on the national website.

Just leaves me to say Happy new Year everyone and hope to see some of the 'sleeping' members during the year at some point.

Ta ta for now

Peter

ESSEX CRUSADERS AGM REPORT

The AGM was held at the Bell Inn, Woodham Ferrers on Monday 17th January 2011 and was attended by 27 members.

The meeting was opened by John Evans.

The Club Officers were elected for the coming year, with the current officers all standing again.

The posts of Centre Rep - John Evans, Deputy reps - Peter Gauntlett (North) and Trevor Lathrope (South), Treasurer - Carol Evans, Seax Editor - Alan Ferry and Web-master - Claire Gauntlett were all voted unanimously back into office.

The posts of Merchandiser and Events and Ride-out Co-ordinator remain vacant.

The accounts were presented by Carol Evans.

Alan Ferry queried the amount of income showing in the end of year figures for the Christmas dinner.

This occurred because most of the tickets for the dinner were sold before the end of year, but the dinner was not held, and therefore paid for, until January 2011.

The increase in the cost of producing Seax was pointed out by Chas Harris, he asked if there was a way of reducing these costs.

Peter Gauntlett read through a summary of events attended in 2010.

John Evans presented a proposed list of events and ride-outs for 2011, which was generally accepted by all who attended. It was made clear that the list can be changed to accommodate alternative ride-out suggestions.

There was a short break for refreshments.

Merchandise was discussed. It was requested that Tour t-shirts would be made available for 2011. Bob Owen asked if we could have some pennants made. We will contact the supplier to obtain a price. Baseball caps were mentioned, again we will make enquiries reference price and quantities.

Rally 2012. The club is looking for a suitable venue to hold our rally in 2012. John, Peter and Trevor have visited sites in Braintree and Clacton. Sean and Leigh Davies, and Chas and Nikki Harris stressed just how difficult it is to find a venue that fulfills all the necessary criteria, as they had spent many months looking for sites for our previous rallies in 2004 and 2008.

Bands for the rally - Sue Haynes has a friend whose son is in a band. We will try to find out if they are playing locally so that some of us could see if they are ok for a rally.

A Rally Committee will have to be put together over the coming year, Tracey Bishop, Dave Moore and Sean Davies have all offered to help.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

ESSEX CRUSADER CLUB FUNDS

At the recent AGM the accounts showed that the club had made a loss of more than £200-00 over the year 2010. The annual membership fee of £17-50 is paid to the central funds of the VSOC and does not fund local centres. Essex Crusaders, as a local centre, has to raise enough revenue to cover costs.

The funds held by the club are reasonably healthy but the centre cannot continue to make a loss, and therefore steps need to be taken to increase income and reduce overheads.

The three main sources of income are:

1) Ride-out donations

For those members who did not know, these are so called as originally monies were collected from members who attended ride-outs, £1-00 per bike was collected on a Sunday morning. As the same people turned up each Sunday, it seemed unfair that they should fund others who only attended the occasional ride-out. A one off donation to cover the whole year (suggested amount £5-00) was introduced as a fairer and easier to collect alternative.

Some clubs collect subscriptions but so far, we have preferred to rely on the generosity of our members to make a donation to club funds. Perhaps this voluntary donation should be re-named so as not to exclude those who do not take part in the Sunday ride-outs.

If you wish to support your club, please remember that this small contribution can make a big difference to the finances of the club.

Thank you to everyone who has already made a donation

2) Raffles

The club will aim to hold a raffle at each meeting (north and south) throughout 2011.

Thanks to those who donated prizes for the Christmas raffle.

3) Merchandise.

The prices of hoodies, sweatshirts and T-shirts have been held as low as possible over the last few years, but with prices increasing each time an order is placed, the profit on some garments is now only pennies. Sorry, but some prices will have to go up.

Club Expenditure.

We try very hard to keep outgoings as low as possible. At the AGM it was noted that the cost of producing Seax has increased and so we are looking at ways to reduce costs.

If anyone has any ideas for raising revenue or cutting costs, please let us know.

Carol Evans -Treasurer

Altberg Boots

I'm sat here, at home, with a big grin on my face and wearing my motorcycle boots. No, it's not because I'm suffering withdrawal symptoms after not being out on the bike for so long. It's because I've just welcomed home an old pair of friends, returning after major surgery. Let me explain.

Way back in 2000 I bought a pair of Altberg Clubman boots. The reason was the Alpinstar boots that I had used let in water, while a pair of Altbergs had withstood torrential rain without leaking. They belonged to a friend who had done the identical 4 day, 2000 mile, wet ride that I and others had done. His were the only pair of feet that remained dry. I ended up with plastic bags as liners.

These boots were expensive, (by my standards) but I bit the bullet and decided to buy some. But life is not that simple. The first pair that I bought by post did not fit me correctly. No problem, they would exchange them. But they suggested I had my feet professionally measured to ensure the best fit. They could do it for me in their shop. Which is in Richmond, North Yorkshire! Oh great!

But fortunately I was due to visit family in the North East. Not too far away.

So taking a day to visit the shop was incorporated into the family visit.

Feet measured, order placed and then patiently wait. For the boots were to be made in their factory, also in Richmond. As well as motorcycle boots they also make walking boots and boots for the army at Catterick. Not the standard issue army ones. No those are kept bulled up by the squaddies and officers for inspection. The hard wearing, comfortable Altberg ones are used for the hard work. Now's there's a recommendation.

Since then I have worn my Altbergs on every ride. They are not only comfortable and waterproof, but they are also ideal for walking around in when sightseeing.

They have survived various "offs". Sometimes better than I did!

But obviously they became scuffed and worn. Finally after about 10 years one of the zips started to come away from the leather. Well you could say that I've had my money's worth. But wait all is not yet lost.....the factory offer a refurbishment service. Again not cheap at just over £84. But these have been the best boots that I have ever had. But that's about 2/3rds of what I paid for them originally!

Oh, go on they've got to be worth it.

So early in November off they went back to the factory. Today Tuesday 18th January they returned home. I hardly recognized them. New soles, new zips, new linings, new Velcro, some new leather parts and new waterproof membranes. So how do I know they are mine and not a new pair? Well they still have the odd battle scar that gives them a bit of character and street cred. Oh yes they're certainly mine.

So if you are thinking of treating yourself to new boots, don't bother with those cheap ones at the shows. Have a look @ www.altberg.co.uk or email enquiries@altberg.co.uk and ask for a brochure.

By the way does anybody want to buy a pair of Alpinstar tech series GPS size 7 motorcycle boots. Haven't been worn for about 10 years. Just call Cougar.

Why not tell us all about a product you rate highly, or warn us about something that is shoddy.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS FEBRUARY.

Thursday 3rd - Sunday 6th

LONDON MOTOR CYCLE SHOW, EXCEL, LONDON, E16 1XL

www.motorcycleshow.com

For the more hardy riders who would like to go by bike, suggested meeting, Thurrock services, (petrol station) 10-00am departure for Excel, free parking for bikes.

Saturday 26th - Sunday 27th

LONDON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOM BIKE SHOW

ALEXANDRA PALACE, LONDON, N22 7AY

www.alexandrapalace.com to get reduced ticket prices, pre-booked, £12-00, concessions £10-00,

On the door £15-00, concessions £12-00

This is a new show at Ally Pally, possibly the custom bike show that was at Earls Court in previous years in a different guise

Suggested meeting for those on bikes, Brentwood services, (total garage) J A12/M25 depart 10-00am for Ally Pally.

Saturday 26th ANCHOR PUB, STRATFORD St. MARY, SUFFOLK

An evening meal has been arranged at the pub as a social evening get together with good food and a drink. For those who have been before will know Essex Crusaders are always made very welcome, should be good evening, hope you can make it.

2 COURSE MEAL. £10-50.

Main course

Roast beef or chicken, roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding and 3 veg plus gravy.

OR

Steak and Guinness pie, new potatoes, and 3 veg plus gravy

OR

Cod/haddock chips and peas

Dessert

Meringue mountain, or chocolate trio mousse, or apple and mango pie, or fresh fruit salad.

If you are interested in going to this meal could you let me or Peter know so we can get an idea of numbers, we do not need to know your menu choices.

Centre 19 meeting's dates:

February

North meeting.

8 pm Monday 7th February 2011.

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

West of A12, North of Colchester

South meeting.

8pm Monday 21st February 2011.

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

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham.

March

North meeting.

8 pm Monday 7th March 2011.

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

West of A12, North of Colchester

South meeting.

8pm Monday 21st March 2011

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

On the B1418 between Bicknacre and South Woodham.