

# ESSEX

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

August 2014 Issue 223

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## *Centre 19 meeting's date*

### **August 2014**

North meeting

8pm Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014  
The Anchor, Upper St, Stratford St Mary CO7 6LW

South meeting

8pm Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2014  
The Rettendon Bell, Rettendon Common, Main Rd CM3 8DY

### **September 2014**

North meeting

8pm Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014  
The Anchor, Upper St, Stratford St Mary CO7 6LW

South meeting

8pm Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014  
The Rettendon Bell, Rettendon Common, Main Rd CM3 8DY

## *Reps ramblings*

### **Hello Crusaders,**

Firstly I would like to congratulate from all of C19, Phil (red rag) Stevens on his wedding to Pat this coming Saturday, even though they should be at the rally, have fun guys look forward to seeing your photo's.

What lovely hot weather we are having at the moment, its a shame its all during the week and then those storms spoiling the weekend, Which leads me to say what a disappointment it was not to have the club support for our annual BBQ at Mersea, a lot of work goes into this event which is for you and your families, you can bring cars. It was a hot day with a few showers and was enjoyed by those that came. 2 from C13 and 4 from C15 and about 19 from C19. A big thank you goes to Alan Ward for all his running around to get the equipment, marquee, boiler, scaffold boards etc, also to everyone else that stayed and helped tidy up THANK YOU.

Well it doesn't get any better, due to the lack of response and interest in the Christmas meal, even though Neil has asked for suggestions and supplied his e-mail for suggestions and interest, he only got a handful of replies back, so therefore there will not be one. No doubt this will be up for discussion at the AGM. Sunday the 19th October at the Rettenden Bell. For those who want to have a meal before hand as we did last year I will book and take names soon. C16 Solent rally this weekend, and on the 3rd August it is time to shine those bikes and display them on our stand at the museum of power bike show, it was a good turn out last year so lets have another good day. I will be there from 09.30 to set up with Trevor and extra pairs of hands won't go amiss. See you all soon.

## *NOT A RIDE TO BRUGES - SUNDAY JULY 6*

Lunch in Bruges was the plan and around 20 of us had accepted John Evans invitation to

use Eurotunnel to the continent for lunch. Up at a very early hour for the ride to Thurrock Services to meet up in time for a 06:50 departure to Folkestone, weather overcast but dry so looked OK for the ride. When parking noticed that the small triangular vent plate on the top of my Caberg crash hat had gone missing – was sure it was there when I left home.

Off in a line across the Queen Elisabeth Bridge and a few miles of the M25 to the M20, and light drizzle started. At this point I started to regret having not put my plastic rain suit on over my leather jacket and denim jeans. As we rode along the rain got steadily heavier and with the amount of road spray I was getting seriously wet. The open top of my crash hat was letting my hair get very wet and my jeans had gone two tone – dark and wet up to the knees

At the refuelling stop at junction 11 (just before the tunnel) the consensus was to abandon the ride and have breakfast in the services. Cougar and I came very close to carrying on to the tunnel (we both put our waterproofs on), but not that close. In the services the weather in northern France and Belgium was researched on smart phones; heavy rain and thunderstorms. Cougar emptied a considerable quantity of water from his boots, good waterproof boots that would not let the water from his denim jeans out. Memo: don't tuck denim into boots for rides in the rain.

Back onto the M20 and head for home in steady, and sometimes heavy, rain. Fun with noisy exhausts through the Dartford tunnel and out into Essex as the rain eased off. Back home in South Woodham Ferrers and the rain had only been light for some of the morning and had now stopped. Found the vent plate for my crash hat on the bedroom floor and refitted it. Wet waterproofs and jeans on the line outside to dry. Had a sandwich for lunch then got the mower and cut the grass.

An expensive (Eurotunnel, AA European recovery for the day, a full tank of petrol) and wet trip to a dismal motorway services in Kent. Many thanks to John Evans for arranging the trip and sorting out the logistics; hope we have better luck next year.

**Bob Owen**

## VSOG INTERNATIONAL RALLY AT ROSDORF JUNE 13-15, 2014

A big adventure for me, my first international rally, and rather a long ride to Lower Saxony. All the usual daft things to sort out, do I need to have breathalyzers for France (no the law is in force but the EU has told the French that they cannot impose penalties); does my insurance cover me fully comprehensive in Europe (yes, they both do – one policy ends on the Saturday and the new one with another company starts on the Sunday); have I got all my documentation: AA breakdown/recovery to arrange; and which route to take.

Contact another Ford pensioner that I used to work with and arrange to spend a night in Cologne on the outward and return legs of the trip. Book up with EuroTunnel and then look at the route and distance in more detail. Longest trip so far has been rally in Blackpool (270miles) but this is 550 just what the XV1700 Roadstar was made for, great long trips across America, or in my case great long trip on boring European motorways.

Off at sparrow-fart on the Thursday, need to be at the tunnel at 09:10 and want to get on the train with a full tank so stop at last M20 services for first fill up. Share my train carriage with three Aston Martins on their way to Le Mans for the 24 hours. Rest of train is full of other high performance cars heading the same way. Next stop outside Brussels for toilet, lunch, and fuel. Typical Belgium, light rain for around half an hour till I get to the German border. Next stop late afternoon in central Cologne at Manfred's apartment, bike locked away in garage and time for a beer. He gives me Kolsch and I give him Ridley's Old Bob and we sit and reminisce for a while before heading out for a meal (and some beer) in the local community centre.

Off in the morning through heavy Cologne traffic and out to the motorway east for next fuel stop. German motorways a bit scary once on bits with no speed limit. I am bumbling along at 120kph passing heavy trucks all the time but every now and then the empty space behind me is suddenly full of a car trying to slow down from a damn silly speed. They are so polite compared with South East England, just leave my left turn indicator on to show that I am continuing to overtake and they drop back, and wait. The second I turn the winker off and pull in, they blast past and are gone, just a set of brake lights in the distance as they frighten the next overtaking vehicle.

My Garmin tells me to turn off the motorway on to a narrow country lane that twists and turns alongside the motorway to Rosdorf. Right turn up a narrower lane between village houses and up the hill, twisty single track through trees to the camp site. There are a couple of rally signs on trees but without the sat-nav I would not have found it. Great welcome from our German hosts and a goody bag containing a rally patch and some unusual items - good quality plastic plates, mug, and cutlery. Ecologically sound Germans - no disposable plates, cups or cutlery for our meals. Not sure if it's a legal requirement or just frowned upon, but the people of Lower Saxony are turning their backs on the throw-away society. Purchased drinks come in cans and bottles with a deposit for return of the empty, stand by for Coke in 1.25 litre returnable glass bottles in the UK this autumn.

Tent up amongst a group of Centre 19 people who got there earlier, a bottle of Old Bob, and a wander round the site. Even a swimming pool (outdoor and no heating but used by a hardy few). Tea and coffee plus a barbeque doing Bratwurst rolls for €2, an indoor clothing and boot market, two bars (but to the disappointment of some only doing local lager type beer at €3 a half litre) and a large marquee with a proper wooden floor. Great looking showers/toilets, even hair dryer in the ladies, this was an upmarket site compared with most UK rugby clubs.

Took my plastic plate for dinner which had arrived with professional caterers in a white van. A great meal of very high quality despite having to serve around 500 people in a very short time. The band started and the beer flowed, the evening was under way. Excellent band, the lead guitarist was extremely good, and they got the crowd up and dancing.

Saturday and up early for a hot shower, the showers did go cold later and it turned out that the boiler had failed. With German efficiency the engineer came and fixed it by late morning. Caterers were back with a buffet breakfast German style with cold meat, cheese, bread, fruit, and yogurt. A few moans on the lines of "Where's my fry-up" amongst the UK contingent of over 200 people (we outnumbered the Germans). Nipped out to the nearest petrol station (10km away) to fill my bike for the ride out.

Great ride out, 110 bikes lined up and left the camp under police escort. Six police motorcycles and a police car as tail end Charlie. The most competent and aggressive marshalling I have ever seen, not only did the bikes block every junction but they made all oncoming traffic on the little local lanes pull over and stop. Motorists just waited as the long line of bikes passed and the car at the rear waved them on again. Having blue flashing lights and highly visible firearms helps when marshalling a ride out. Around the half way stage we stopped for refreshments in a forest car park. There was a tall concrete structure with a phone mast on the top, it was also a water tower and had a lift to the viewing platform on top of the water tank. A great view but a few bikers suffered vertigo and stayed pressed against the wall of the lift shaft rather than walking to the safety rail and looking down. A ride out of that size is an amazing experience and the people in the little villages we passed through seemed to enjoy us passing through.

On our return to camp after 40 miles through pleasant rolling countryside I spoke to one of the police riders who spoke some English (I have almost no German) and thanked him and his colleagues for marshalling so well. He thanked me, and all the others, for giving the police a great morning out away from routine police work and the excuse they needed to blue light past the line at high speed on closed roads.

Saturday afternoon involved a few beers and some rather silly games on the field, the games included running about and beer drinking in relay teams. There was also the wedding of two German bikers. Both dressed in black and a very gothic. A priest/vicar in bike gear; his denim waistcoat had a large cross on the back and said (in English) "I ride with Jesus"; did the formal ceremony in the marquee. Another excellent dinner and a different band started. They were even better than the Friday night band and the lead guitarist was outstanding. In a break in the music an award was given to the biker who had ridden the furthest to the rally. My 870 km faded into insignificance compared with the winners 2,800 km ride from North Sweden.

It rained quite hard for a short period overnight so I awoke to a wet tent and the prospect of rain on the way home. Hot shower; good breakfast; rollup wet tent; load bike; put on plastic rain suit; and head for Cologne in light rain. It soon stops raining and I make rapid progress, this is Germany on a Sunday so hardly any trucks on the road. Yet another stop for toilet, food, and fuel at the half way point and continue west.

Arrive at Manfred's apartment early afternoon and put my bike away in the garage again. Go for a stroll round his neighbourhood, just window shopping as being a Sunday the shops are closed. Cafes and bars are open and overflowing with customers. We have to look out for cyclists; there are hundreds of them and they take little notice of red lights or one way streets. Later we are joined by Rolf (another pensioner from Ford Germany Finance Office) and after briefly admiring my bike set off by tram and metro to central Cologne for a meal. Eat in a great place in Heumarket (in English Haymarket – it got its name the same way as the London one when both were agricultural economies). Have enough beers (at €4.25 a half litre – city prices) to sleep extremely well.

Monday morning and back on the bike to head for Euro Tunnel. Dry and bright all the way to German - Dutch border then steady light rain and back into the plastic suit again. Another fuel, toilet, and food stop in the rain. On again for yet another fuel stop near the Belgium - French border and the rain stops. Plastic suit back in the pannier and press on

to the tunnel in bright sunshine. Get there a long time ahead of my booking and accept the next free of charge earlier train. Could have gone immediately but the excess charge was nearly what I paid for my return trip. Have to kill an hour and a half and the terminal is dismal but the car park is full of petrol heads in exotic cars returning from Le Mans (another Audi win) so the time passes.

Out into Kent and the rain starts again, plastic suit back on under a bridge on the M20, still raining as I go into the Dartford Tunnel but dry in Essex when I come out. Back home and 1,115 miles (1,800 km) since Thursday morning. Empty house as Gill flew off to Ibiza at lunch time for her summer holiday, my bum is a bit sore, but it was a brilliant long weekend. Many thanks to our German hosts for superb facilities, good food, great bands, and a wonderful ride out.

### **Bob Owen - Centre 19.**

Photos are on Flickr at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/7940646@N04/sets/72157639921013346/>

### *C12 Rally 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2014*

It was a bit manic for me on the Friday so I left later than planned, straight down the A12 and right on to the M25 where I caught up with Clive and Tina, they turned off at South Mimms and I kept going, having no reason to turn off.

I arrived in about 2hrs 20mins in the dry, so that was the first bonus. I planted my tent next to Bob Perkins and Liz half hoping that Liz had bought the full kitchen, no such luck !! but they had got a gazebo and comfy chairs so all was not lost.

Denise [ C19's Mrs Alien ] was already set up having arrived by train, well done missus. Norman and Trev came by motorhome having seen the weather forecast. They got it right !!!

By tea time there were a few from C19 but many hardened rally goers from many centres were missing, maybe too soon after the International.

There were also many that had come out of the wood work and it was good to see Roger the Scarf from C16, Mark Winterbottom and wife from C9, both 21 year members.

Friday night was rock and roll and the band played one after the other with very little time to breathe, it was good to see members dressed accordingly.

Dave Enefer arrived at 8.30am on Saturday having worked till late on Friday

Saturdays ride out and classic car display were cancelled due to rain, nothing new there, but the C19 party tent came in very useful, it does need seam sealing though!!

Saturdays band, one we have seen before were too loud for most who made a hasty retreat to the alternative bar, where at least you could hear yourself talk. Why do these bands have to play sooooo loud.

The late night burger van functioned well having run out of buns on the Friday night.

Sunday saw Dave and myself packed up and ready to roll by 9.30 and after a spirited ride, within the limits !! and with no traffic problems I was home in a little over 2 hrs.

The attendance was down which seems to be the trend these days but the rally was well organised and C12 members worked very hard to ensure that it ran smoothly, well done.

Peter

## *C19 BBQ 13<sup>th</sup> July 2014*

A lot of preparation goes on for this annual event so to cancel due to possible bad weather is not an option, shame members don't realise this.

The usual band of merry men and women turned up at Mersea at about 9.30 to erect the marquee that Alan had gone to Layer to pick up along with tables and chairs, thanks to Austin for donating scaffold boards with 'supalux fire retardant material nailed on, again picked up and stored by Alan.

It took about 1.5hrs to set up everything, Salad was prepared on site, rolls purchased the day before, onions cooked the day before so all was ready to go, but where are the guests !!

It rained on and off during the day but more sun than rain which was never heavy and the marquee and gazebos were large enough to accommodate everyone and more,

It did rain just as the BBQ's were lit but out came the umbrellas, so no damage done.

All in all it was a good day and not really marred by the weather. I guess there were 40 there so not too bad in the end.

## *Retired riders ride out 16<sup>th</sup> July*

Trevor did the arranging and it was agreed to have a ride to Northfleet in Kent where there is an American style diner with American cars on show, reputedly.

5 of us met at Thurrock for 10.30 and off we went, it was at that point that I left my glasses behind but didn't realise until I arrived at Northfleet and couldn't read the menu.

The diner had 2 customers but after ordering we were told it would be some time before we got our food as they were just switching over from breakfast, the mind boggles, but he was right, it took nearly an hour to get our food, Trev asked where the American cars were and was told they get put away for the Winter to which he replied "but it's not Winter now".

The food was acceptable but the service wasn't, so probably one we will avoid in the future as I hate to think what would have happened if they had a rush.

Trev and co decided to go further in to Kent but I returned to Thurrock, but not before getting stuck at the Dartford crossing for an hour or so due to an accident, I filtered from the A2 to within 1 mile of the crossing and then got stopped by a bunch of Harleys who had decided to give up and just blocked the filter lane, I knew some of them so it was good to catch up. We eventually got going again and it was then that I got spotted by Clive in his lorry, its always the way isn't it,!! Mr K out with the Harley boys is how it looked and I got told as such !!

My glasses were not where I had left them, nor had they been handed in so off the Specsavers for me. That was an expensive ride out !!

Peter

## *Ride out to Battle 20<sup>th</sup> July*

Firstly I will introduce myself, Rob new associate member riding a Yam xjr 1300, although was a full member a few years ago with my other half Joan on me Dragstar in case any of you remember me? Well we left Thurrock ontime, about 10.40am despite Bruce's, loose linkage! about 10 bikes.

Trevor took us the scenic route although at one point after a bit of confusion, early on, it did look briefly like we were heading straight back over Dartford Bridge, having just come over.

We got there and it was dry and pleasant, first thing we did was hit the tea rooms, most of us had cream tea, a few had bacon sarnies etc, although in fairness Paula made a point of trying a bit of everybody's!

Then we did the historic Abbey tour, of Battle, where it all happened, most interesting and i felt educated afterwards. Mark and Kay said they walked the whole battlefield, but still did the tour in the same time as us?

Bruce looked the part trying on the Normandy Battle helmets in the shop

Coming home was fine until we emerged from the Dartford tunnel to Thunder Lightning and heavy rain, (welcome back to Essex) Trevor must have known as he left early, after cream tea.

All in all it was a good day, this was my brother in law Cliff's first rideout, he's parting comment was "I don't get as wet as that when i have a bath, but i still enjoyed it"

Great to be back and thanks for your company

Till next time

Rob

3rd August

Museum of power bike show, Langford [Maldon]

10.00 Boreham

10th August

Yarmouth Carnival

9.30 Boreham, sharp, 10.00 Langham [I've made 10.00 instead of 10.45 because I want to leave promptly, don't want to be hanging around]

17th August  
Box Hill, Surrey. Via Woolwich Ferry.  
9.30 Marks Tey, 10.30 Thurrock

22nd-25th August  
Centre 4, Northern Raiders rally, North Shields

31st August  
Picnic at Thetford Forest, Norfolk. Bring your own stuff.  
10.00 Boreham, 10.45 Langham.

7th September	Air Ambulance Run, Basildon to Harwich
12th to 14th September	YCCNL Dutch Rally, Holland
14th September	Reedham Ferry, Norfolk
21st September	Comfort Cafe, Cambridgeshire
28th September	Greenford M/C Museum and Ace cafe,
5th October	Copdock, Suffolk, Bike show
11 <sup>th</sup> October	Runcton Holme C10 charity party
12th October	Brightona? if it's still on
19 <sup>th</sup> October	C19 AGM details to follow

## *From the Editor*

The Irish rally next year [end of May Bank holiday week end] is in Arklow, Co.Wicklown at the Arklow RFC.

Those that haven't been to Southern Ireland before, here is your chance. If there is any interest I could investigate an extended trip, please let me know.

Just a heads up for those wanting euros, I got 1.237 on line this week, pick up at Sainsburys, so £202 got me 250 Euros, I would say that is about the best it has been for a long time.