

The first solo rider ever to
complete the Iron Hog Challenge



Well done Mick!

New Chapter Members

Since the last e-magazine we have had a number of new members join the chapter. We are sure you will make them welcome. They are:

Kevin Mayoll CV10

Ron Hickey MK41

Alan Hill NN18

Ian Gornell PE4

Andy Stokes PE7

Chapter Committee

The Rutland Chapter Committee has seen a number of changes (see page 16) following the resignation of Pete Hewett, Neil and Helen Hall. Thank you to all former members of the committee for your hard work and dedication.



Director's dialogue

David Hetherington – Rutland Chapter Director

What a rally... We have had so much great feedback about the Horseshoe rally in July – about all of it really; the venue, the ride-out, the games, the band, the facilities, the food and the fun. Oh, and of course the weather! To have two rallies bathed in glorious sunshine has been incredible. Everyone involved has been thanked personally. You know who you are and you all did a brilliant job. Thank you also to all the chapter members who attended.

Plenty of things have happened since the last e-magazine including a focus on communications to ensure you, as chapter members, know what is going on in your chapter.

If you are a chapter member not receiving the bulletin or texts do please let a committee member know and we will sort it out.

We are putting together the calendar of rides and rallies for 2015 in September and would like your input. It is your chapter and I am keen that there are a variety of rides west, east, south and north of Sycamore's. If you feel there are some hidden gems with good roads in the county you live please put these rides forward at either the chapter meeting on 20 August or 17 September. We would really appreciate your input.

The chapter will be attending no fewer than two other UK rallies next year. One of these is the Cider Rally in Somerset. Rallies are a great opportunity for new and old members to get together for a weekend, meet other chapters and experience ride-outs in different parts of the country.

this issue

Richard's ramblings... P3

Shop news... P5

Spot the difference... P6

Iron Hog Challenge... P7

Focus on... P10

Pillion talk... P12

Benelux Rally... P13

Cider Rally... P14

Chapter Committee... P16

Horseshoe Rally 2014... P18

Editorial...

Dawn Hetherington

Welcome to the new-style Rutland Chapter e-magazine. I am delighted to be editor and hope you enjoy reading this. Remember that the content is made up of contributions from you, the chapter members.

My aim is to have some regular items in each edition and I will endeavour to ask all chapter members, over time, for their input. Don't worry though, if the thought of writing makes you quake in your motorbike boots just talk to me, I'll make notes and write it for you.

Some people may not know this...

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. How irresponsible I was in my 20's (30 years ago) riding pillion on the back of a Yamaha RD400 when I was 8½ months pregnant! Oliver weighed in at 9lb13oz so you can imagine how big my bump was!!!

Will I try for a motorbike licence? Who knows? I used to ride a trail bike on grass so I've steered and changed gear, oh and had a couple of pillion riders.... Will that do?



Richard's ramblings...

Richard Garner

Hasn't the weather been great so far? (That's damned it, watch it rain now!) Lots of ride outs and new members to swell the ranks. I have been splitting up the rides between the Fatboy, Sporty and the Buell with only a few issues such as replacing tyres and batteries.

A few of us went to the Brum Bash in May and got absolutely soaked. After two days we were camping in a swamp and just getting off the site was a real struggle. We were a lot more fortunate for our rally in July, as for the first time Mrs G (Sue) came with me. We won the tickets at the New Year party. Sue had never experienced the first night mayhem and imbibed more red wine than was good for a lady. She managed to be sick five times before we got home to Peterborough. Once down the side of the car, once over the dog and three times out the window. The next day she was fine and I did the ride out, expertly put together by Little Dave. Sue joined me again in the evening but curiously didn't drink. The bands at the rally were great. It was really good to see Black Hawk on our turf and roll on the Isle of Wight. Valter and Sandra did us proud, the beer and food at reduced prices went down well. Hurry up next July.

At the end of August Lucy, Sue and I went to France for five days. We travelled down to Portsmouth Thursday and caught the 4:00 pm Fastcat to Cherbourg. We arrived at our hotel in Bayeux after a slight detour as Lucy's satnav didn't recognise any road built after 1945.

After a good night's sleep it was my turn to lead, navigating by remembering the route in my head. Now there's a recipe for disaster. We managed to find Maddames Cafe at Pegasus Bridge and enjoyed a huge pot of tea. She did recognise us, as she has had words with us in the past. A few tips, do not tell her to use only boiling water and PG tips for the tea, also don't rev your bike outside the Cafe door.



We then went to Merville battery where the paratroopers destroyed four German gun emplacements with a reduced force on June 6th. We rode round the coast back to Bayeux, stopping for a few pictures and cokes on the way back to the hotel. We got lost again only a mile from the hotel. After a quick wash we went into town for a meal and drinks before retiring back to our rooms in the IBIS Budget. Saturday we went to Falise which was the birthplace of William the Conqueror. It rained whilst we did the tour round the Castle but appeared to be clearing up as we left. We got about 10 miles back to Bayeux and it absolutely threw it down so bad, we had to stop on the hard shoulder to let the worst of it pass. Fifteen minutes later it was if it had never rained at all

Solutions for a hassle-free ride

So, you set off for a nice tour abroad believing you have all the documents necessary with you; spare bulbs etc. for the bike, maps, booking forms, passport and appropriate clothing for all weathers. What you don't expect is that your visor turns opaque when 'you' clean it and the swivel 'button' breaks! Therefore, maybe before you go, research your bike helmet online (make, model, size) and jot down the part numbers and suppliers. It may save you time and money.



Chapter communications

A weekly bulletin is emailed out from the chapter director each Sunday evening containing: an update if there has been a ride-out that week and, an overview of events for the next few weeks

- Text messages for up and coming rides are sent out a few days before each ride
- The website contains allsorts of information including the ride calendar
- The Rutland Chapter Facebook page

...ramblings continued

Sunday was bright and clear and we left Bayeux for Abbeville. I have a great uncle in the cemetery there and we always pay our respects to his sacrifice that we might ride and live in peace in the future. We lit a candle on his grave and I left him a note from Stanground (our home village). He was injured in the battle of the Somme and died of his wounds in Abbeville, which was a Hospital clearing station at the time. Evening meal was in the Buffalo Grill next door to the hotel. Monday we came home by way of the chunnel. It was a brilliant trip.



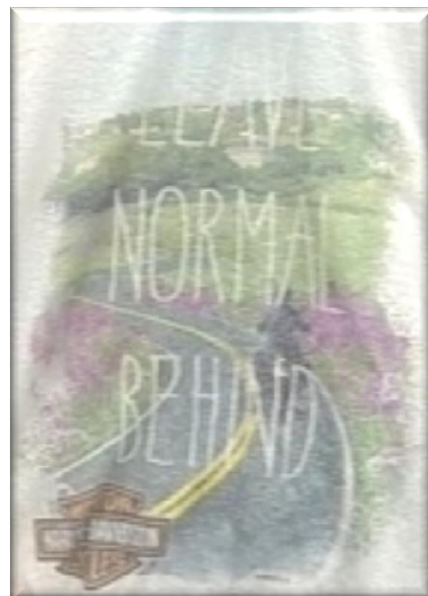
I can't finish without my five pennies worth on some of the issues with the chapter that are hopefully behind us now. Please don't disrespect fellow chapter members, as it's all about being friends and Harley riders. If you don't like the rules and can't be courteous and considerate of your fellow members, don't join or if you are already in, don't stay. I do not want to change what has been successful in the past for other people, as I have been in the chapter for nearly ten years now and I have seen this all before. People have come and gone and will continue to do so. We ride Harleys (and Buells), we laugh, we drink and most importantly, we organise things that all members can do regardless of the size of their wallets and riding ability. Oh and finally, as to patches, the only rocker to be worn over the top of the Hog patch is the Rutland chapter rocker, end of!

What do you enjoy about riding your Harley?

We asked some of the committee this question and here is what they said:

- The freedom, the buzz, the adrenalin rush, the noise!
- Not being in queues, being able to filter
- The camaraderie of riding together in big or small groups with like-minded people
- Leaving all your hassles behind
- It is you, the bike and the road

What is it that you like about riding your Harley? Email the editor who will try to publish it in the next magazine



Duty Free

Panniers full to the brim so no room for any duty free items?

Buy packs of cheap pants before you go. Once used, throw away. Not very green but it's amazing how much room is left for some goodies.



Shop news

Andrew Winham

Here at Sycamore's you may have noticed some changes taking place around the building over the past few weeks. We have finally created a brand new customer HOG Lounge upstairs for you to be able to relax and enjoy a coffee and a chat in the colder months. The exterior of the building has been clad to give a new, modern look with new signage to complete the look. The next part of our revamp will be the clothing department which will remain where it is but with new flooring, changing rooms (always handy, especially for the ladies!) and fixtures and fittings, so please bear with us while we complete these upgrades. Hopefully all these improvements will make for a better customer experience for your guys here at Sycamores.

Many thanks to all of you who have purchased new and used bikes from us this year, we have certainly had a good run on Street Glides as this model year is now sold out, so for those of you thinking about one for next year, please think seriously about getting your order in ASAP for MY15

As you are aware some committee members have stood down in the past few weeks and I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to those members for all their hard work over the years and for helping make the Chapter the success it is today. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Dave Hetherington (the only person I asked to be Chapter Director), and also the other new committee members. Good luck to you all I am sure you will carry on a great job. Please continue to show these guys your support and remember it's your Chapter!



In August I have my annual trip to the Harley-Davidson show and this year it is being held in Nashville, one of the many places I haven't yet been to!

The new bikes for MY15 will be launched while I am there and I am very much looking forward to seeing the all new Street and electric bike which are currently being tested in America. I will give a full update of my trip in the next newsletter, but if you can't wait until then I am always available at the dealership for a chat.

I look forward to seeing you at Sycamore's and hope you enjoy the rest of the riding season!

A warm welcome to all new members

Andy Baggott, Membership & Activities Officer

We've all been there!

You turn up to a new club for the first time and there are a lot of new people all stood around in little groups, laughing and joking, and looking really intimidating.

Trust me, we're not!! Just come up and say hi, and introduce yourself to one of the committee. We'll do our best to make you feel welcome. We may not look it, but everyone is really friendly.

What we would like to do in all editions of this newsletter, is to put a list of new members names and the first part of their post codes, so that other members can see what area you live in and maybe make arrangements to meet up prior to ride outs etc, or at least ride back with.

Trying to keep everyone informed of what is happening is very important to us and have started sending regular emails, texts and Facebook posts out each week with dates and times of activities, so please let us know all your contact details.

Likewise, all existing members, please let us know if you're not receiving these. We are probably not up to date with your contact details.

Midlands Air Ambulance

The Bucking Bronco proved to be very popular at the Horseshoe Rally, as well as the musical water buckets. A princely sum of £70 was donated to the Air Ambulance Trust. Thanks to Sue & Barry for running the games.



Twinning

Many Chapters are twinned with Chapters in the UK and/or abroad. The Rutland Chapter Committee, well Simon Terry, will be looking into what this means and how it might be good for our Chapter. Watch this space!



Spot the difference

Win a £25 Sycamore gift voucher!

Below are two images of the same bike (albeit pretty badly airbrushed). Your challenge is to spot the differences.



To enter, mark the difference, clearly write your name on your entry and pop it into the Rutland Chapter 'post box' at Sycamore's by 10 October 2014.

If you have images of your bike, before and after customising it, it would be great to use them in future editions of the magazine and it is also a chance for **you** to show off **your** bike! You could even judge the entries.

Good luck!



We have had some good ride-outs recently. Road Captains generally sort out the route, which can be a little more challenging especially when other members suggest stopping in a lay-by (Boston), but Road Captains are dedicated, they note who is on their ride and their experience and set the pace etc. accordingly. They do a brilliant job. Thank you.

Snug

At the start of the riding season, or just before you go on a long road trip, try on items of motorcycle clothing that you haven't worn in a while to check if they still fit. Waterproofs are generally taken but rarely worn. See Sue Kelly's Pillion Talk article...



Mick's manoeuvres

Mick Robinson – Iron Horse Challenge 28 Harley Dealerships on mainland UK in 48hrs

Iron Hog Challenge (28 Harley Dealerships, on mainland UK in 48hrs).

Well I saw this challenge advertised in this year's addition of HOG magazine and thought, 'here's something I wouldn't mind doing'.

Out came the road atlas. I know I had to start at Sycamore's (that was the easy part), now do I go north or south first?

Looking at the easiest and logical route from my point? North it was! So, after working out my route and putting the post codes in order I entered the lot into my satnav under the heading 'custom routes'. Anyone wishing to do this make sure you double check the information you feed into the satnav as I later discover!

Okay, route sorted, emailed Axel at Hogsback Chapter for the relevant documentation.



Let Anne (my wife) know of the intended dates of my challenge, so she can get time off work to look after the menagerie!

Two days before my trip I do a trial run from Sycamore's to Lincoln just to make sure the satnav is working as I want it to, and to let Sycamore's know of my intended start time on the Monday morning.

So here we are, Monday 7th July 2014, start time 08:30hrs. Stamped and signed out. First stop Lincoln. Feeling reassured as I'd already done this trip. On arrival, met by the staff who were expecting me. Another stamp, refreshments turned down on this occasion as I'd got some miles to do.



On to Robin Hood dealers next. I get there and the bloke behind the desk said:

"I hope you don't want money" as I approached with my form for him to stamp and date! Explanation given, signed and stamped and I was out of there, next stop Chesterfield. More friendly there and refreshments duly consumed. They can't believe I'm doing this alone! Then off to Leeds. Now here's a funny thing. I get there and set up the bike for the proof photo. The daily paper I used for the shot was still tucked into the cargo net securing my backpack, well half the front page anyway! I'd ridden from Chesterfield to Leeds with it still hanging off the back of the bike...

The next stop is to Newcastle, via a petrol station. Oh, don't forget another daily paper.

Newcastle, it's raining and the shop doesn't open on Mondays! The rain stopped long enough to get the photo. Time for food and there's a Pizza Hut nearby. That'll do for me. Dry off and use their WiFi to update my progress. Fuel up and Edinburgh here we come. Well, may I say, the A1 coastal road heading into Scotland was amazing.

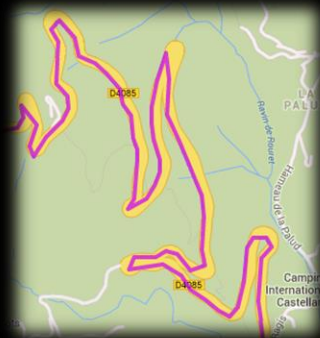


Sadly I couldn't stop for photos. If ever the challenge needed to have an uplifting moment, that stretch of road was it! Edinburgh is the 1st of the four principle dealerships I have to visit.

It is closed but what do you expect at 7.18pm? Photo taken and gone!

The Dealership

As a chapter we are really lucky to be supported by Sycamore's. Since becoming Director I have spoken with a number of other chapters and also some of our membership and we are really, very well looked after by Andrew and his team. Thank you



Don't look!

As a pillion passenger I am fortunate in many ways that, no matter how I position myself on the back of the bike, I cannot see the road ahead or the sat nav. This image is taken from the St Tropez trip!

Tolls

Keeping spare change for the tolls in a plastic bag isn't the best idea. Try using something that is a bit more durable and is easily accessible. Crawling on the floor at a toll trying to pick up scattered coins is not a great look, especially when 28 other bikes are waiting for you!

Challenges

HOG run a number of Chapter Challenges and Achievement Awards. These are for:

- Greatest number of miles accumulated
- Greatest number of participants
- Greatest average number of miles travelled per participant

There are various forms to complete so ask at Sycamore's if you want to know more.

The Iron Hog Challenge continues...

Glasgow satnav got me to the back door but I needed the front. Luckily it was next to the pub so sat outside in the smoking area. A modern Rab.C Nesbitt gave directions to the front of the dealership (I'll have to demonstrate his actions as I can't put it into words). Anyway, front of shop and would you credit it, out from the shop comes Caroline, shop assistant, who just happened to have been working late? After explaining to her about the challenge she opened the shop, stamped my paperwork and handed me a few 'freebies'. Thank you Caroline. As she locked up and went on her way I put an energy drink down my throat and headed off to Preston.

Stopped and refueled at Lockerbie, giving in to a few moments thought to the disaster that happened all those years ago.



Preston, photo and shelter under the canopy, recharge the phone. Shall I stop here the night or crack on? Sod it, let's go to Chester! I know, from talking to Daz, that this dealership was in Ellesmere Port. Feeling a little tired I called into the services prior to Chester. Sorry no room at the inn! Whether it was the way I was dressed? A quick big mac and use of the wifi and toilet, on I went.

So I was feeling a little perturbed as the satnav continued to take me into Chester! Even more upsetting was it telling me I had arrived at my destination, when outside a posh house in a selective neighbourhood. This I didn't need at 04.00hrs! Luckily I had my HOG magazine with me so a check of the 'Chester address and, sure enough, I had entered the wrong post code during my planning stage. New post code entered and onward to the dealership.



Surprisingly I was met by a roller shuttered frontage and rain. Photo taken - a strange look from a deliveryman.

I then had to reorganise my satnav! Then it was off to Stoke. Get there, refuel, but too early for the morning papers! So park up outside the dealership and doss down at the side of my bike. Luckily it didn't rain.

Shop opens 08:30hrs. I nip round to the paper shop get the newspaper for the day, back for the shop photo, and the lovely sales girl stamps my paperwork and makes me a welcome coffee.

Wolverhampton came and went. While at Statstone Birmingham, I booked the bike in for its MOT as it was due as the challenge finished. On to Cheltenham. On my arrival I spoke to the salesman there, who was also about to do the IHC, quick chat and a brew then off to Swansea (2nd principle dealership). A lovely riding route, but not if you're on a mission. Then it started raining!

Swansea sorted. Next stop, Riders Bristol. A bit more rain and nearly wiped out by an inconsiderate motorist (not my fault this time). Ride up to the front of the shop and before the stand on my bike touches the floor a member of staff came out to me with a cup of tea. Brilliant, then he produces a much needed bar of chocolate. I'd not even spoken to him yet! What friendly folk. Photo and gone.

Refuel at Bridgewater then into Riders at Bridgewater. On to Plymouth and quick photo (3rd principle dealership). Now to find a place to sleep. 'Sorry no room at the inn'. Everywhere was 'full'. Sod it.



...there's a lot to pack in, in 48 hours!

On to Southampton.

Get there and I thought 'how's your luck', there's someone in the shop at 01.30hrs. Either that or they're breaking in! No it was the burger man just packing up. It was only 50 miles to Guilford, so photo and gone. Guilford, photo, tired, no rain so out comes the bike cover, made a 'basher' and dosed down on the brickweave in the dealership car park. 06:20hrs. Start of the final leg! Refuel, new newspaper, off to Shaw Lewes. On arrival doesn't open till 9am. Can't wait. Photo and gone.

Although the dealership isn't in Maidstone I had another very warm welcome by all the staff. Refreshments and freebies, and I bought a great Hawaiian shirt there.

Refuel then on to Warrs, Mottingham Road (SE9). Photo and just as I was leaving they gave me a Warrs 90years patch. Thanks Warrs and happy birthday.

On to Lakeside with the friendly face of our Richard Auton. Chat and a brew. Into London for the Warrs on the Kings Road. Two hours to cover 24 miles! Once on the A4 my Bluetooth connection to my satnav decided to stop working. Good job I planned a backup because Reading doesn't have post code yet. I was given co-ordinates when the satnav told me I'd arrived at a for sale sign on the side of the road on a plot of land.



Quick enquiry with local stores but no one seemed to know. Photo and go. On to Oxford, photo and a brew and, again, they can't believe I'm doing it on my own! I can't stop as the last two are still to do. Blackbear included a visit from the village idiot (looking in the shop window as I arrive). "I bet they cost a lot and they don't go very far on them either!" I couldn't be bothered to say otherwise, I was on a mission to finish this challenge.

Home stretch, Sycamores here I come. 21:46hrs, refuel at Sycamores for the electronic time day, date stamp.

Photo and signed off by Joan at the petrol station.

Job done. All 28 dealerships visited in the time allowed.

**Would I do it again?
Yes but I'd pre- book somewhere to sleep!**



Helmet troubles

The key snapped in the padlock so I couldn't get my helmet off my bike. I was in the middle of nowhere; the RAC refused to help and suggested I call a locksmith! Fortunately a friendly policeman came to the rescue.





Rutland Chapter and me

Simon Terry

I started riding with the Rutland Chapter some six or seven years ago. Back then, there was definitely less grey hair on certain members and little need incontinence pads as there is today.

Having spent a year with another (larger) chapter prior to joining, it was clear that Rutland was special. Why? Because of the warm welcome I received.

For me, I cannot think of any other environment where people come together from such a variety of social backgrounds, areas and job functions yet mix so well, all linked by a common passion – to ride Harley's.

This is as true today as it was seven years ago. Having a club which blends riding experience in the way ours does is fantastic, I know my riding skills have improved since I became part of the Chapter. The social side is superb and I have so many good memories from the trips and rallies I have joined.

Great bikes, great friends, great social side – A Great Chapter!!!



Biking has been a life-long passion

David Hetherington, Chapter Director

My interest in bikes started when I was 12 years old. I used to watch boys older than I was riding their bikes and I wanted one!

The first of many, be warned, was an NSU Quickly I bought for about 10 shillings (50p) in 1970! Progression followed to a 98cc Villiers (no brakes), a BSA scooter which never worked, a Lambretta 1150 which caught fire beside my mate's dad's garage, a 350 Matchless, a 250 Panther, a BSA C12 and then a BSA C15S scrambler with the intention of entering competitions but I was too young!

When I was older, 17, I had a Suzuki 250. Sadly my drum kit wouldn't fit on the bike so I had to buy a car. A few years pass...

I'm now courting (such an old fashioned word) and I buy a Yamaha DT 175 followed by a Yamaha RD400. Now married and then along come the children and so another break in my riding...

Midlife crisis hits. My wife hires a Harley Davidson Fatboy for me for the weekend to 'get the bug out of my system'. That tactic failed miserably and actually made me even more determined to buy a Harley. So, here I am, 40,000 miles of great riding later on my Harley Davidson Softail Custom, and Director of Rutland Chapter. ...



Top tips for free 'facial treatments' while out on your Harley – you may recognise them...

Dawn Hetherington

I wrote this, many years ago after I, foolishly, hired a Harley Davidson, Heritage motorcycle for a weekend to 'get the Harley bug out of David's system'...

To ensure you obtain the best of these natural, free treatments, we would advise you ride pillion on a motorcycle wearing a helmet with no visor or face protector – the treatments are more intense if you choose to be the bike rider.

Acid free face peel

A fast and effective way to rejuvenate and smooth out a flawed or uneven complexion is to have strands of loose hair continually hitting your face at speeds of up to 70mph.

Natural face mask – day

For all skin types, once cleansed from your skin, the combination of bee and mixed fly naturally impacting your face results in extensive vitamin and mineral absorption – includes pollen and beeswax.

Non-invasive facial surgery

Strong winds constantly buffeting your features aid the tightening of muscles across your face, especially around the mouth which has to be kept firmly closed to prevent aspects of the natural day mask entering this orifice.

Intense Vitamin D treatment

Sunlight contains a natural vitamin which is proven to not only combat the effects of SAD but, used carefully and with the right protective lotion, can lead to a golden skin tone which immediately gives one a healthy glow.

Other treatments available:

Pure aqueous pore cleansing

The elements of pure aqua are second to none and the benefits of using this natural product are endless. The liquid literally shoots into the pores of your skin giving it a thorough, deep-cleansing experience leaving your dermis totally refreshed.

Natural face mask – night

The only way you can experience this wonderfully rich face mask is to go out on your motorbike at night. The addition of moths to the day mask enriches this treatment further and has the added benefit of being beautifully powdery and iridescent.

NB. These treatments have not been tested on animals but may contain animal products

Disclaimer: The long-term effects of these treatments, or come to that the short-term effects, will require further testing to truly understand their benefits

Some of the treatments require specific weather conditions so plan carefully to avoid disappointment!



Pillion Talk

Sue Kelly

Do I want to go to St Tropez? A question asked by Barry, of course Sun, Sea and Harley Davidsons!! Oh well.

Early on a Friday morning Barry and I meet up with the 'Alps' gang ready to set off to the HOG rally in St Tropez. Waiting on a bridge near Stanstead we are joined by Mick and Val. The ride down to Dover is as boring as ever (if there was a train that went to the tunnel I'm sure many pillions would take it. I hate this bit of journey). On arrival in Calais we motor down to the first stop at Reims and then onto Grenoble. Although this was good riding, the next two days was to bring an adventure in itself. After leaving Grenoble we headed up towards the Alps.

The weather was very changeable. It started off quite but the higher mountains

we travelled the weather became insipid. We even put on our waterproofs! I have never known Barry stop and don these sexy looking articles before and think I must have put on some weight since the last time as I needed a hand or two to get mine on. As we stopped for a coffee and E Cig break the sun broke through, blazing down on us for the rest of the day.

The roads around Castelainie are busy with bikes and sports cars flying about (a pilgrimage to all). How do you explain the views and road conditions apart from saying you all have to do it as no can describe it? Scratchy and others enjoyed the hairpin bends and were seen disappearing into the distance, with the stealth (Brian) not far from anyone's bumper. Many of the roads do **NOT** have crash barriers, so as you navigate the bends the only thing between you and the hundreds of feet drop are the sharp intakes of breath from the pillions (as I have a bit of a phobia of heights Barry was made to slow down otherwise I think I may have got off the bike and walked down).



We arrive safely at the rally site.

Day out to Monaco, pre F1 GP. The weather is very nice, hot and sunny although the down-side was trying to get into Monaco and the parking. Still it was a good test for the ABS and of course the customary nutting Barry in the back of his head!

Bonnie Tyler was very entertaining. It was a shame

her voice broke every couple of minutes. We were never going to win Eurovision song contest.

Eric Burden AKA the lead singer with the Animals. Barry wanted to see him to capture memories of a misspent youth. He was rubbish. People were leaving the beach in drones, desperate to get more beer to numb the sound. But saying that, standing on the beach watching any band with a back-drop of St Tropez is pretty amazing.



Benelux Rally, Larochette, Luxemburg

Peter Snow (former Rutland Chapter member)

Well our journey to the 2014 Benelux Rally started on a wet Wednesday afternoon riding from Cambridge to Folkstone. The first night was spent in the Sandgate Hotel. The hotel was okay, the food a little pricey but it had good off-road parking.

Thursday morning brought a nice sunny day and a short ride to the Eurotunnel. We were loaded on to the train with about twenty other bikes many going to the D-Day celebrations. It is quite amazing how friendly bikers are when you take the clubs and groups out of the discussion and how many great tips you get on where to stay and eat along your journey.

Once off the train we started our ride through France into Belgium. We had pre-booked a hotel called Le Merceny in a town called Bastogne. As we pulled up Jane started to swear at me through the intercom about my choice of hotels as this was based above a Q8 garage. I went inside the garage to check-in. We were then shown up to our room (Jane still uttering obscenities under her breath and something about this is the last time she lets me book the hotels). On entering the room we were amazed. The room was spacious, bright, and clean and had AC. Jane started to smile and again muttered something sounding similar to an apology for the earlier abuse.

We also had WIFI, so went on Tripadvisor for some information on places to eat. We saw some interesting reviews on a little place called Brasserie Lamborelle.

This place has a great menu and even better beers. One in particular was called Airbourne (7.1 ABV) which is served up in a pottery cup shaped in a WW1 helmet.

I also tried a Flambe Beer, a litre of ale mixed with a spirit and set alight. Pretty cool! Food was fantastic a great find.

Friday morning arrived bright and sunny and already getting really warm. So the final leg of the ride to Larochette was a complete joy. The scenery was great and the roads pleasantly quiet. Arriving early we stopped at a bar in the town and had lunch.

Just before 2pm we arrived at the Camping Birkelt and Benelux Rally registration table and within a few minutes we had our registration packs and keys to our accommodation. We were able to park our bikes right in front of the chalet and soon unpacked and settled in.

So as usual for Benelux Rallies, food and drink is paid for by purchasing tokens first. This means you then don't need to carry any cash later. The facilities on site were good, and adequate for what was needed. There was the usual few trade stalls, and of course the dealer tent. The site soon started to fill up and the fun began. There was a good turn out from many UK chapters, including The Fenlanders, 1066, Sherwood and New Forest to name a few and many ride outs arranged. One was to Luxembourg city, which is a must visit. The dealership ride out was great and they had a BBQ and a band playing there.



Benelux Rally, 5th to 9th June 2014, continued...

Peter Snow (former Rutland Chapter member)



What is good about these rallies is that you get breakfast included in your ticket. Each morning you go to the main tent and you get a choice of tea, coffee, juices, then there is bacon and eggs, also a choice of cereal and bread, pastries and meat and cheese. You can have as much as you like.

This is the 2nd Benelux Rally we have been to, and they are fun, relaxed, well organised with plenty of entertainment. They are well worth the trip. We will definitely be going to Holland next year.

My only negative is no AC, and as it was 33 degrees in Luxembourg, the nights were unbearable in the chalets. But do you know what it is worth it.

Cider Rally - May 2014

Having never been to another Chapter's rally in the UK this was all new to me. I was rather anxious about the venue which had been recently bought out by Pontins but more about that later.

We were booked in with the Plymouth Chapter as we had joined them for the Rome Rally in 2013 and have close friends in it. We were very lucky to get tickets/accommodation as this rally gets booked up virtually as soon as the tickets go on sale.



Rather than ride down by ourselves we were joined by Helen and Neil Hall and Richard and Kath Kitchen so three bikes, fully laden and three pillioners. David had mapped out the route on his Garmin to avoid motorways (my idea of hell). The route was really pleasant and we stopped for a pub snack at Avebury which is famous for its standing stones. Bath was lovely as usual albeit with very heavy traffic. There was a slight detour through a private housing estate and before we reached Cheddar Gorge we (royal we) had to negotiate a farm-like narrow steep track hoping that a car wouldn't come the other way. One did though! This was a biker's nightmare but I'm pleased to say the riders were brilliant and avoided any mishaps.



Cheddar Gorge is a joy to ride through on a nice day. I would recommend going down rather than up but that is a personal preference. We saw rock climbers and had to avoid wild sheep/goats crossing the road. Staged exhausts reverberated against the rock letting people know we were there! Because it was later than expected nothing was open to grab a coffee. The rest of the journey was uneventful and we were greeted at the gates with our information packs (with goodies) and given instructions where our chalets were. We don't recommend camping! The good thing was that, with a bit of manoeuvring, we were able to park the bikes outside our accommodation.

Cider Rally continued...

The chalets, we knew, were due to be refurbished and the décor was based in the 1950s/60s but it was clean and warm with twin beds and an ensuite bathroom. It could have even been described as luxury as we had coving on the ceiling!

Just time to unpack and then off to the 'restaurant' for dinner. We had been given armbands to easily distinguish those who were 'all inclusive' for meals. Previously, we found out, there had been waitress service but now you queued for your food like being at school. The food was excellent and there was plenty of choice.

Entertainment was provided on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. Friday night was a soul band and a ska band. Needless to say there were plenty of men strutting their stuff to the likes of Madness. The ballroom was massive and definitely had plenty of seating and space for dancing. Riders had a stand and I was lucky enough to be bought a new jacket for my birthday (which isn't for another couple of weeks). There were also some other stands in the foyer and outside the main building selling typical bike-type merchandise.

On Saturday we rode with the other Rutland Chapter members and the rest of the chapters into Weston Super Mare. The day was beautifully hot and the ride lovely. It was great to see so many bikes parked on the sea front. We spent a few hours walking along the promenade and had lunch before returning to the site. There are other facilities on site and we managed to fit in a cheeky swim in the pool. In the evening we were entertained by a modern-rock band and a glam-rock band.

There were four rides to choose from on the Sunday. As we have spent a considerable amount of time in Devon we decided to go on the 'four bridges, three counties' ride which was about 100 miles. The first bridge was the Clifton Suspension Bridge, we then went over the Severn Bridge into Wales, had lunch at Tintern Abbey, returned by the other Severn Bridge and finally over the Bristol Suspension Bridge. The ride was absolutely stunning with a variety of roads and the scenery was, mostly spectacular. I would certainly do this ride again. A hilarious comedian was part of the entertainment on Sunday night followed by the equivalent of the Worzels (who were good but not right for that venue). In addition to the bands there were various competitions that people could join in as well which added to the fun, laughter, enjoyment and ambience of the event.

Monday was breakfast and packing. We took a different, but good, route back with Kath and Richard.

We hope to get tickets for next year and to take lots of Rutland Chapter members with us. It was such good value. The rides, food and entertainment were outstanding. What more can you ask?



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2014

Rutland Horseshoe Rally



The 9th (or was it the 8th????) Horseshoe Rally 2014

Lorraine Ritchie, Plymouth Chapter

Although Wullie had attended the Horseshoe Rally on two previous occasions, this year was my first time, and also my first tented rally away from Plymouth. We left late morning on Friday as Wullie had to travel 50 miles each way first of all that morning to Plymouth Harley Davidson to get a problem sorted on his Streetglide. Travelling up the A303 from Honiton we then cut across Salisbury Plains to a lunch stop in beautiful Marlborough (and of course stopping en route to get a Wiltshire county sign for the ABC of touring). We later regretted our leisurely lunch in Marlborough as the traffic from there to Kettering was horrendous, and we had to filter most of the way. However, we eventually arrived at the Fox and Hounds in the idyllic quaint Rutland village of Exton, the site of the Rutland Chapter's annual Horseshoe Rally. Entrance to the rally was through into a gravelled coachyard, where about 50 bikes were already parked up (as well as luxury Porta showers and porta loos). We were met by Dave and Dawn Hetherington, who made sure we had our rally packs and then showed us to our "home" for the weekend. What a bonus to arrive to find your tent already erected, with a full height looxury air bed, 4 sleeping bags (including Dave's own one) and a stash of toiletries, food and alcohol!! Dave was very involved in his new role as Chapter Director so he was soon off to continue to help sort out the start of the rally. It was a lovely camping field, and we were pitched in with a great crowd of Rutland Chapter members who made us very welcome, some of whom we had met at the Cider Rally in May. On the field there was a gazebo with hot water boiler and makings for tea and coffee.

The pub has a large garden and the main rally activities took place in this garden. A tiki bar was open continuously serving most beers and drinks, and arrangements had been made for hot food to be served each evening for those who did not want to cook their own, at a reasonable cost. A la Carte could be purchased in the pub. The band on the first night had travelled all the way from the Isle of Wight, and had everybody up dancing straight away. Due to the proximity to all the local "posh" houses, an invite had been extended to the local villagers. The sight of all these black leathered bikers was nearly a bit too much for one resident, but she was overheard by Dawn to say to her daughter "I think it is alright Darling, they all seem to be middle aged and middle class!!!!!"

The landlord of the pub was a Rutland Chapter Member, and he and his wife worked so hard over the weekend to make sure everything went smoothly. Dawn and Dave were lucky enough to have a room in the pub, but that night the stress of running the rally got to Dave (or was it the alcohol), as he found himself taking a wrong turn for the en suite and woke to find himself in the corridor outside his room in the buff. Lucky for somebody that he woke before he emptied his bladder! As is normal, most members of Rutland Chapter seem to have a nickname, and Dave was always Tall Dave. For the rest of the rally he was "Where Am I Dave?"



Saturday started with a cooked breakfast in the pub (or a waitress also went around the camping field selling bacon rolls). It was then a case of getting into riding gear, a briefing by the road captain Small Dave, and off with a roar through the sleepy village for a tour of beautiful Rutland. It was nice to see other parts of the area, as we usually only see it from the Sailing club or the bike track around Rutland Water. The ride out was extremely well managed over some difficult junctions by the marshalls. An hour into the ride we arrived at Uppingham to Sycamore Harley Davidson, for the obligatory look around and nice complimentary doughnuts. Wullie also posed for his photo for the ABC of touring, although the dealership was undergoing a facelift and didn't have a sign outside. Then it was back on the bikes for another hour ride back to the Rally. I seem to be the only one who saw the Harringworth Viaduct. The bike show was judged by the newest Chapter Member "De New Ron Ron", who was convinced he would now make enemies before he had even started!



Sue and Barry did an excellent job of organising games for the afternoon, with a bucking bronco, and musical buckets (I won the ladies version!). Money was raised throughout the afternoon for a local village charity, and everybody chilled and enjoyed the beautiful weather.

The band for the Sunday evening was also excellent, playing more bluesy music. Just chatting with a Rutland chapter member, making idle conversation, we discovered that we had grown up in houses opposite each other in Huntingdon and with only 2 years between us had built grass houses together on the small green that separated us. With the balmy evening, the twinkling lights of the pub garden, candles on the benches, Tiki bar, wonderful friendly Harley family, local villagers and great music, it was a memorable evening – until the Director, when giving his speech, forgot to mention Plymouth Chapter when thanking everybody for coming – and he is a member of the Chapter himself! I know we are out on a bit of a limb in Plymouth but are we that unforgettable? – and relatives to boot!!!



So now we look forward to seeing some of our new friends again at Blazing Blazers Rally, next year's Cider Rally, or if not, at the next "Not really yet the 10th Horseshoe Rally"

