

# Rutland Chapter

A row of Harley-Davidson motorcycles parked outdoors. The foreground features the front of a white and black motorcycle with multiple round headlights and a large front wheel. Behind it, a red and white motorcycle is visible, and further back, a blue one. The background shows a brick building and some greenery.

# NEWS

**HOG Chapter  
No: 6730**

**Newsletter  
February 2014**

## PETE PUTS PEN TO PAPER

Welcome to the first of what is planned to be a more regular offering of the Rutland Chapter newsletter. We only managed 2 editions in 2013, and both of those were at the beginning of the year, so this year more effort is certainly required. As the saying goes, beside every good man is a good woman, and therefore the Chapter have invited Helen Hall to join the committee as Editor and organise us a bit better in this area. Many thanks to Helen for taking on the role.

As we creep slowly towards the start of the 2014 riding season, I would just like to look back briefly at 2013, our chapter 10th anniversary. Most will probably remember the year for the heat and sunshine, but don't forget we still had snow at the end of March.

For me the biking started at the very beginning of March. I always had a vision of the day I collected a brand new Harley and rode off on it under a perfect sky, birds singing, warm wind in my face etc. etc. ( you get the picture). Well it was the 1st March, very foggy, wet and very cold, absolutely nothing like I thought it would be. A whole tin of Mr Sheen required when I got home.

Our season really started in April with Foxton Locks and then Hunstanton, whilst many went down to St. Tropez. May saw another group go off to France, and there were various rides almost every other weekend up to our rally in July, SOFER in August, and then I.O.W in September. It was a busy year with a variety of rides for all tastes. And the weather, who could forget how hot it was. Perfect most of the time, but there were days when it was just far too hot to be wearing anything like what you should be wearing a bike.

This year has started in a similar way to last. No snow, yet, but in many ways the wind and rain is just as bad. However we shouldn't forget that it is winter, and if summer revisits itself like last year we should have another great riding year.

The calendar for this year has just been compiled and is available on the Chapter website - it will include many old favourites together with a number of new ones. This year is, of course, the

centenary of the start of the Great War and there are many events on throughout the year that we hope to get to. Full details will appear on the web site as soon as possible.

Ride Safe

**Peter Hewett**  
**Director**

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## NEIL'S NOTES

### A few words from our new Head Road Captain

HOG UK have been running a new training course for Road Captains at national level over the last couple of years which several of our Road Captains have attended. The recommendations from HOG that are presented during this course suggest that we should make some small but important changes to the way we ride as a group. These changes are designed to improve safety on the road and to standardise riding practices across UK Chapters.

I intend to publish a series of short(ish) articles through the newsletter and the Chapter website to explain from first principles how we, as a Chapter, should be riding as a group and why we should be riding this way. These articles will be informative for all levels of riders in the Chapter from our newest riders through to our most experienced riders.

These articles will include changes recommended by HOG for adoption by all HOG chapters and will highlight any changes that are to be adopted by Rutland Chapter to bring us into line with national recommendations.

For the first article, I'm going to review the new safety statement that the lead Road Captain will read out during the briefing for each Chapter ride.

***"You are deemed to be in control of and responsible for, your vehicle and your riding at all times irrespective of any guidance or instruction from any member of the road crew. You must at all times ride within the law and obey road traffic instructions"***

Firstly, the statement contains a principle that is fundamental to our continued safety and enjoyment - that you must ride within your own ability - failure to do so puts your safety and that of fellow riders around you at risk.

Secondly, the statement is also designed to remove any ambiguity about how you should ride and to make it clear that if you ride in an unsafe way or break the law, it is your own responsibility. You should never assume that a

Road Captain or any member of the road crew is suggesting that you ride in a way that is unsafe or would break the law - it is not their intention.

The application of these two principles will provide the basis for answering any questions that arise during rides when faced with a decision of whether to ride outside of your abilities or whether to, for instance, ride faster than speed limits to catch up with the main body of riders in front of you.

To be absolutely clear, you should never ride outside of your ability, nor will you be expected to ride outside of the law in order to keep a group of riders together on the road. In future articles, I will explain what this means in terms of ensuring that we all reach the intended destination of a Chapter ride safely.

In the next article in the series I intend to demonstrate why we need group riding policies and strategies and why it's vital that everyone who rides with us as a group understands these and applies them in a consistent way.

Best wishes and ride safe

**Neil Hall**

## BIKESAFE

### Notice for all riders

I've been discussing the BikeSafe course with Cambridgeshire Constabulary - BikeSafe is a police led motorcycle project that aims to reduce the number of bikers being hurt on the roads.

Cambridgeshire Police have a course running on 22nd March. The course will be based at Cambridgeshire Police HQ in Huntingdon.

The course is two days ish!!!

Day 1 is Saturday 22nd March which is all theory in the classroom. Normal finish is about 3.30.

Day 2 covers the ride outs. This will be on a day that suits the individual and the Police trainers as it is labour intensive. Each candidate will return to Cambs Police HQ for a one on one ride lasting about 1.5 hours in total.

There's normally a 2 week gap in between the 2 days so that everyone gets a chance to go away

and practice what's been preached in the classroom.

So, it's March 22nd at HQ for the day, including lunch. Then 2 weeks later the individual ride outs.

More details and the booking arrangements can be found at the website [www.bikesafe.co.uk](http://www.bikesafe.co.uk). Go to the Cambridgeshire area on the website.

I've already booked; I hope some of you will be able to attend with me.

**Neil Hall**

## **RICHARD'S RAMBLINGS**



2013 has been and gone however it was notable for me for being the first time I have worn shorts and flip flops at a rally. I don't think my legs are that bad and I

don't suffer from 'Frankenstein's feet' the illusion of having someone else's feet stitched onto one's legs caused by the serrated indentations left by tight socks on one's ankles.

As Pete has said we had some brilliant rides and trips over the course of 2013. The attendance at the ride outs and events for our small chapter (numbers not physical size) was brilliant and I know the envy of lots of other chapters with a lot bigger membership than ours.

When I am out on my Harley there are times when I see a Race replica up ahead and I try and sneak up on it and get past before they realise and then they promptly leave me standing on the straights and the bends. I know it's wrong but I have to try. Sometimes I wish the Harleys handled better. So after much discussion with Mrs Richard (promising to go on holiday together, do more gardening, cleaning etc.), and 'umming' and 'ahhing' I finally bought a Buell. I know it's 4 years since they stopped making them but I just had to find out for myself if the reputation, good or bad, was true. I bought an XB9SX from the

shop, it's an '09 with a 984cc engine and one of the last built. First thoughts are it is certainly different to riding a Harley in seating position and power delivery. My first few rides gradually got me used to the height of the bike and also how physically small Buells appear to be. It weighs approx. 70kg less than my sporty and it feels like I am sitting a further 2 feet up in the air. On the way back from the shop I saw over hedges and into fields where I had never seen before on my Harleys. It certainly is great fun going as fast round bends as on the straight. Its cornering ability was a real plus for Buells.

I have already had a good time taking all the plastic off, cleaning it and putting all the bits back on and seeing how many fastenings I had left over. It still has the original steel exhaust which is saying something as they normally didn't last much over a year. Corrosion on them was a big problem as they are positioned under the engine and catch whatever is coming up off the road. I have voiced my feelings on cleaning before, but for the uninitiated, it is really important that you put bikes away clean following any ride, particularly bikes from the Harley family. I know it can appear a pain, especially following a winter ride, but two or three hours spent polishing the machine will really pay dividends when you come to get it out the next time and there is no fur growing on the alloy.

Anyway, it's now nice and clean, even after the toy run. All I need now is some more nice dry clear winter days and maybe I will see you out and about.

**Richard Garner**

**(Sportster - Blowing away big twins since 1957)**

## **RICHARD'S RAMBLINGS II**

If any of you fancy a ride round the fens here is something to consider. I know it's flat but it means I don't have to walk up hills with my little,

but perfectly formed legs. Now a lot is made of the Davidsons' roots in Scotland especially in the HOG magazine but a particular point of interest can be found in Cambridgeshire, in the small fenland village of Littleport, 6 miles north of Ely, which lays claim to be the birthplace of William Harley's father.

In 1859 he left Littleport with his wife and emigrated to the USA, where they settled in Owego, a village on the Susquehanna River, 200 miles from New York City. Within 2 years the American Civil War was under-way and William enlisted in the army on January 2nd, 1863 fighting on the side of the Unionists in the New York Heavy Artillery. After coming through the war safely he returned to Owego, where subsequently his wife Susan possibly died later in childbirth.

William married Mary and left Owego and moved the considerable distance of 780 miles to Milwaukee. William gained work as a railway engineer and they lived at 222 North Street. The Davidson family lived at number 232. William and Mary went on to have a number of children, including William Sylvester Harley, on December 29th 1880. Sadly, none of the other children survived to adulthood. William Harley himself died on February 1916 at 647, 36th Street, Milwaukee.

Located in Church Lane, the Harley monument is made out of stainless steel and is a full-size replica of a 1936 Knucklehead. With the support of Harley-Davidson and the efforts of the Littleport Society the H-D Motorcycle Monument came into being in July 2003 and the unveiling was attended by John E. Harley Jr. and Margo Manning, the two Great Grandchildren of William S. Harley.

Please note that the ancestral home of the Harleys at 64 Victoria Street no longer exists. In its place is a row of 20th Century houses where it

once stood. Disappointingly, further planned Harley-focussed events in Littleport, since 2003, have come to nothing.



As a footnote I worked with 3 different persons called Harley in my last job, one of who came from near Littleport and was related to William.

## CALIFORNIA — OUR WAY

Helen Hall

Riding the Pacific Coast Highway had been on our 'bucket list' since owning our bike and last year the dream became reality when Neil and I went to California for three weeks and spent eleven days exploring the PCH on a Harley. In our experience, dreams are not often realised without considerable planning, research and conversations and whilst the execution and experience will be different for each of us, we thought some of you might be interested in what we did and how we did it.

Firstly, it's all in the preparation! Those of you who have led ride-outs or taken a group away for the weekend will know that a happy, successful, safe time doesn't just happen. Our California road-trip was no exception. For months

beforehand Neil and I talked about where we wanted to go, read books and travel sites, picked others' brains and pored over maps until gradually our plans came together. We toyed with the idea of going with an organised trip but decided that we craved the freedom that doing it alone brings. Finally we had the destinations and hotels booked, travelling south from San Francisco, via Yosemite National Park, stopping along the way to San Diego. It was now down to Neil to plan how we would get from A to B, with the use of a tablet and satnav he plotted the routes and saved them ready for when we hit the road. Don't be tempted to over plan your first day of riding as you acclimatise to riding in a different country, but do familiarise yourself with local highway codes and take advice from locals who know the area. Research where you are going so that you don't miss that memorable view or awesome biker café just because you didn't realise it was just around the corner!

Think carefully about what to pack especially if, like us, you are doing a one-way trip on the bike. After three days in San Francisco we collected our Glide from California Motorcycle Adventures who were the only Harley rental company that would guarantee us a Glide with a luggage rack, an essential when travelling light! After careful thought, we decided to buy a couple of suitcases from a charity shop here, pack them with our tour pak and pannier liners and only with as many things as would fill these. We discarded the suitcases in San Francisco and carried our own helmets as hand luggage. Hotels in the States come well equipped with bath and pool towels, toiletries and hairdryers saving precious space ladies! Remember to leave a little extra room for the inevitable collection of Harley t-shirts along the way (I think the final count for Neil was about 20!).

The temperature riding along the Californian coast in September varied from day to day and

sometimes from hour to hour. It was mostly a very pleasant 75°F and comfortable in a lightweight leather jacket or Kevlar hoodie. Fog would roll in off the Pacific without warning and the temperature could drop dramatically. But as quickly as it came it would go again leaving us basking in the warmth of the sun on our backs. The Valley and Yosemite were a different story! It was hot, almost too hot for biking so we would start our days early, riding in the cool of the day before it became too hot, oftentimes in just t-shirts with plenty of sunblock on! The hotel pools were a welcome sight on these days.

After two days in the park at Yosemite where we were blown away by the magnificence and sheer size of the mountains and Sequoia trees, our journey took us south through wide open spaces, through California's 'Salad Bowl', along lonely coastal hugging roads, up steep winding skyline boulevards and jostling with the traffic on seven lanes of freeway through Los Angeles. After eleven never-to-be-forgotten days and 1600 miles on the bike we reached San Diego and the end of our road-trip. There was real sadness as we watched our Glide being loaded onto Scott's trailer, not because the holiday was over (we still had another week and the Harley Davidson Museum to look forward to), but because we were saying goodbye to the freedom that came from having a bike, a full tank of gas and the open road ahead of us. We fell in love with California, the scenery, sights and people and can't wait to ride there again.

## TOP TIPS FROM OUR CHAPTER MEMBERS

**RE-SPRAYING** your bike? Cover it with cling film first. If you don't like the new colour, simply peel it off and start again.

L, Mkt Harboro

**A BUCKET** full of salty water hung from a tree makes an ideal nesting place for migrating sea birds.

W, Corby

**PLANNING** bike holidays abroad are half the fun. Next year why not stay at home and plan two? Just as much fun and it costs absolutely nothing.

R, Peterborough

**GRANDAD'S** old Army helmet, painted grey and placed on a skateboard, makes an ideal playmate for a lonely pet tortoise.

S, Grantham

**ELDERLY BIKERS.** Twisting your right wrist will make your bike go a little faster. Forget all the rubbish about suffocating at speeds above 15 mph, it was all a myth put about Honda.

M, Melton Mowbray

**MOUNTAIN BIKERS.** Stop that irritating squeal from your brakes and reduce wear on them by oiling the rims of your wheels before taking on that tricky descent.

B, Stamford

**SAVE** money on expensive nicotine gum by chewing ordinary gum and smoking a cigarette at the same time.

S, Crowland

**OLD** telephone directories make ideal personal address books. Simply cross out the names and addresses of people you either don't know or like.

C, Stamford.

## SO WHAT DID YOU MISS IN 2013?

Here's a few events that we didn't cover.....

### TOWCESTER AND NENE VALLEY RALLY - AUGUST

20 chapter members attended this event and were made very welcome by the members of Nene Valley and their cohorts. Those that arrived

late in the day missed the early morning heavy showers. On pitching our tents we got down to the serious business of having a good time particularly some of our lady members who drank a little bit more than was required! Hooker, who appeared at our rally with much success, repeated the feat on Friday night in the adjoining rugby club.

Saturday morning, those that were able, had a ride out to Lutterworth Army Surplus where we tried on an array of hats, (including a very fetching leather and chain peaked cap), helmets and gas masks. Although we resisted the temptation to go on a vast spending spree, we did partake of tea and scones in the café next door that was set out with a 1950's theme, including doyleys, crocheted anti-maccassars and the best bone china. Definitely somewhere that we need to revisit as a large group.

Saturday night's entertainment was a good, old-fashioned rock band that were called in at the last moment when the Ska band cancelled. Nene Valley have a habit on the Saturday night of dressing up and this year's theme was St Trinians. Steady.....

Sunday we departed and again I think we should support this rally in the future.

### SOFER 2013 - AUGUST

There were 45 runners and riders for the annual Bisley Handicap. Always a good value rally as due to the fact that 5 chapters partake in the organisation, the quality of the bands never ceases to please. Following on from a quality afternoon's drinking on the Friday, we all trooped down to enjoy the ska band playing outside before going into the main dance hall to see Creggan & Co with their Rod Stewart tribute act. Awesome!

After breakfast on Saturday we organised a rideout to Windsor. Whilst having our bands

checked at the gate, I found a NBF! A random guy joined the Rutland ramble at the last moment and I fully expected him to peel off and go on his way at any opportunity but he stuck with us throughout the ride out until we pulled into the pub. "Is this the organised ride out from the site, because I didn't want to miss it. I don't recognise anyone in this Chapter?" We soon put him right, demonstrating our welcoming nature, especially when he got a free cup of tea. On the return journey from Windsor to the site, Neil and Helen had a few problems with failing electrics but they managed to get going again when the bike had cooled down. The fault was later diagnosed as a faulty starter relay.



The Saturday evening barbeque was followed by a sterling performance from the Rutland Formation Dancing Team down by the open air band site, The Illegal Eagles played in the main hall following the firework display for those that were still able to stand. There were a few issues this year on site with the number of cars being allowed to run round the camp area during the rally. We had a runaway car go over one of our, fortunately unoccupied tents, and also into our gazebo. Luckily no-one was hurt. Unfortunately earlier in the day a small child had got injured by a car near to the showers. Maybe the organising chapters will have to review movement of cars next year. Everyone got home safely on the Saturday. SOFER 2014, another 'possible must' for next year?

As a footnote, be careful when in the showers, they can be very slippery as Lucy fell over and had to go to first aid. Also remember to lock the shower door as it can be embarrassing when your bits are exposed to a crowd of onlookers (they were my bits!)

Also thanks to Mike Grant for driving the shop van to Bisley at short notice. Otherwise the majority of us would have had nowhere to sleep as we had dropped our tents off at the shop, earlier in the week expecting them to just arrive.

## THE 2013 CHAPTER RALLY

Location - The Fox and Hounds in Exton from Friday 12th July to Sunday 14th July.

We were blessed with great weather for this sell out event with over 160 plus attending. The camp site area at the back of Valter and Sandra's pub was full. I know that some of us like to spread out when pitching our tents, but with space limited that wasn't possible and Mick had to be strict whilst keeping within safe guidelines (I thought Health and Safety was my job).

The strong rumour that in addition to bikes we were also planning to have a dog show proved unfounded, as my dog is so lovely there was no competition. We did have a dog fight when Cool pipe's 'Killer' had a family tiff with his two older siblings. No harm done.



Friday night saw us dancing away to Porky Pig, a local band. Friday nights at a rally always seem to

correspond with the most intake of alcohol, however despite a chapter member offering, in a loud voice to make coffee and tea all through the night to everyone on the campsite, the majority of us were up and feeling fresh for the ride out on Saturday morning. Mick gave one of his legendary (very comprehensive) pre-ride briefings before we set off for a ride round Rutland ending up at Sycamores Harley Davidson. As in recent years the shop did us proud by sponsoring the rally and giving all rally goers extra discount on goodies bought at the shop.

Saturday is games and karaoke time. Who doesn't love karaoke? (Names on a postcard). It was really hot, the weather that is, so we all decamped to under the trees on the green in front of the pub. Saturday's band was the Atlantics another proficient rock covers band. I think everyone will agree we had a great time, and I would like to thank Valter and Sandra for their hospitality. I believe we are planning to use the place again next year. But remember space is always going to be limited so either book or reserve your place as soon as possible.

## CHAPTER WEBSITE

All the latest news and details of events etc. can be found on the Chapter website at [www.rutlandchapter.co.uk](http://www.rutlandchapter.co.uk)

## CHAPTER FACEBOOK PAGE



Remember we have a Facebook page just for Rutland Chapter members so that we can communicate with each other as and when required. The page is 'Rutland Chapter of HOG'. If you are not yet subscribed to the page you can either ask a member who is to invite you in, or you can email Mike Grant on [mikemowbray@ntlworld.com](mailto:mikemowbray@ntlworld.com) and he will get you added to the group.

## CHAPTER MEETING & SOCIAL EVENING

Remember the Monthly Meeting and Social Event is now being held on the third Wednesday of the month. Come and find out the latest information on upcoming events and the gossip from previous ones.

All members are welcome – the meeting starts at 20:00. Please check the Chapter website for venue details

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Sand Racing at Mablethorpe Ride

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March

Departure point and times will be announced on the Chapter website.

### Monthly Chapter Meeting

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March

Find out all the latest information on upcoming events and the gossip from previous ones.

All Members, meeting starts at 20:00

Please see the Chapter website for the venue

### Ride to Foxton Locks

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April

Departing from Sycamore Harley Davidson, Uppingham. Departure time to be advised.

### Easter Egg Run

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April

Our annual Easter Egg Run will take place on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April and will depart from Sycamore Harley Davidson, Uppingham. Departure time will be advised nearer the date.