# Rutland Chapter



NEWS

HOC Chapter Not 6780

Newsletter June 2012

### SCRATCHY'S SCRIBBLINGS



Right where do I start? Oh yes, I know, the front cover! This photo was taken on the Cromer ride out back in May, it wasn't my choice for the front cover but I have been press ganged into using it! Caused a

bit hassle getting it! I stood patiently in line waiting my turn, then when the kid in fronts ride had finished he wouldn't get off! Bloody ridiculous he'd had his go, anyway Mike soon put his Mum straight and she dragged him off kicking and screaming!

Well we seem to have finally got rid of the monsoon that was April and May. How we only ended up cancelling one ride, the Hunstanton one, I'll never know! The rides that have taken place continue to be very well attended which is great to see. Rally wise we've had members attending the Cider, Iron Horse, Naseby Field and Brum Bash Rallies. My first one of the year was the Iron Horse Rally at Woodhall Spa, hosted by St Ledger, and I have since booked up for few more!

A week later, (well actually 3 days later), I attended the Chapter trip to Northern France brilliantly organized by Neil and Helen Hall. It was obvious well before departure, just how much effort they had put into it and I am so pleased for them that it was so well attended (29 members on 19 bikes) and everyone that went had such a great time. There was me at Brampton services just about to warn everyone about what to do, or more important, what not to do when we reached the Dartford Toll, only to find out that Neil had arranged for us to go straight through a special lane so we could all stay together. Honestly the whole trip was faultless and if you didn't go, you missed a good one! Check out Richards musings on page 2 for details and pictures of the weekend. Massive thanks to Neil and Helen from all that went.

About 20 of the Chapter have booked up for New Forest's Blazin Saddles Event in Weymouth, which has unfortunately sold out already, however, Mike Grant in organizing another Chapter weekend for late September, more details will follow soon.

From what I can gather quite a few have booked up for the Sofer Rally, at Bisley. It's sure to be a great weekend and tickets are currently still available, but don't hang about, its sure to sell out as usual. Andy has just confirmed he has sorted the shop

van for the weekend so you will be able to drop your tents etc off at the shop and the van take them to the site. Thanks to Sycamores for their continued support in making this happen. Once again we will taking the chapter BBQ and gazebo down for Saturday afternoon. Tickets are available from the HOG Website.

This year's Rutland Chapter Horseshoe Rally takes place, as I'm sure you are aware, on the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July at the Fox & Hounds at Exton, just north of Rutland Water. As you aware we have had to restrict numbers, due to the venue size, but have already presold more than our previous years events. Around 25 tickets remain and please remember there can be no pay on the gate. Mick Robinson has held his Rally Meeting and is well on the way to having it all sorted. All remaining Tickets are available from Sycamores, make sure you don't miss out!

Well I'm running out of stuff to dribble on about and the sun shining, so I'm off out for a ride. Make the most of it and get yourselves out there too!

Scratchy





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# **RICHARD'S MUSINGS**



#### France May 2012

I have loosely organised a trip to France the last few years. Well organised is a bit too literal as following my ability to get lost every day even before we got

abroad and my inability to even book the right ferry and hotel, Neil and Helen stepped up to the plate and showed me how it's done. So let's say right at the start, thank you Neil and Helen for a superb trip.

29 members on 19 bikes signed up. We even had a pre-trip meeting at The Fox and Hounds in Exton (our rally venue) to clarify all the points, we were also

issued with a trip pack, contact numbers, info on docs to take, Itinery etc. Impressive!

25 met up at the Brampton hut services on Thursday at 8:00. It was a bit dull and grey as we set off for the services at Dartford south of the Thames before meeting up with the remaining four riders. For the first-time I was going to France in the Chunnel. How good is it? Well never on the ferry again for me if I can



help it. But I must remember to bring more jelly beans and not expect to see the fish as we went under the sea, even though I asked for a window seat.

Getting off the train onto the road in France was very straight forward. We rode the coast road to Boulogne before heading inland and stopping for a pre-booked buffet lunch. Who knows that our dear director doesn't like foreign food? Our attempts at making



animal noises to describe the meats left the waitress looking very bemused. I couldn't for the life of me remember what noise a pig or a cow makes, but I sure did after spending 3 nights in a room with a number of our chapter members.

Another 50 mile of scenic riding took us to Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, where we booked in to our lodgings at Les Ballastieres. Because of the number we had to arrange for 7 travellers to stay in a nearby hotel 'Loubarre'. The couples, who had booked rooms in Les Ballastieres, run brilliantly by Sue and Paul, went to make themselves at home. The rest of us, 8 in total, chose a camp-bed each in the Hayloft. DHL Pete

was very concerned that if his 'roommates' snored, he would not have been able to sleep. You only get one guess as to who was the loudest snorer, even though



he was convinced it wasn't him.

The facilities at Les Ballastieres were brilliant with a large games room with bar, fridge, microwave, a TV for watching the

Champions League Final, loads of bike magazines, table football, pool table and a dart board, There was also indoor parking for the bikes (no sports bikes or sportsters allowed!) and a garage with air and battery charging facilities.

The first night our hosts provided a meal with chilli, jacket potato and bread. They had also laid on a barrel of local beer, wine and lots of tins of lager. Well it would have been rude not to try and drink it all. It was up at 6:00 for the Rutland strollers as Mike, DHL and I





went for a walk to discover the town of Saint-Polsur-Ternoise.
Pretty funny looks we got from the few locals about

at that time of the morning. It some became apparent that towns and villages in the vicinity of our base appeared deserted. I suspected that they knew the Rutland Chapter was in town and had boarded their homes up and locked away their daughters.

After breakfast, on the first full day overseas, we rode to Mont St Eloi, which was an old abbey with views over the local countryside. Respect was paid to a number of British war graves. We carried on to Vimy ridge where the Canadian Army had fought and beaten the German Army, in 1917, at a cost of approximately 11,000 casualties which included 2,600 killed.



As a result a portion of land around Vimy Ridge had been granted in perpetuity to Canada. They had erected a spectacular memorial to

the 11,285 Canadian soldiers "missing presumed dead" and also as mark of respect to the 60,000 Canadians in total who died in the Great War. Nearby are some preserved trenches, a tunnel network and an information centre. We encountered the only few

of spots rain whilst were we out the whole trip as we rode into the town of Arras for lunch, ice creams, to



visit chemists and a bit of sightseeing. Another gentle ride back to the digs for of us to the hotels gave a few of the guys, with baggers, opportunity to go shopping for more drink and nibbles

After a quick shower, for some, we all walked into town for something to eat. I went to a restaurant with Little Dave and Lucy and had a main course, dessert and wine. If the waitress had have spoken English we



may have got the starters we ordered. She introduced us to a customer who spoke English and knew the Ace Cafe. I think he may have

been a fraud as he did not know Little Dave's mate

with the mac and a carrier bag who is always there. Another good night back at the lodgings saw a few retiring to their beds early whilst other chapter members drank their share of beer and wine. Oh and Vodka! Of which some drank more than their share!

Saturday saw us visiting the Lille Harley-Davidson



dealer in Seclin in brilliant sunshine. The Dealership was very large and well stocked so after a bit of retail therapy buying t-shirts and scarves, we had a team photo in a pose that

only Rutland Chapter can do. (The photos in the HOG magazine never look like ours, but saying that their rally / road-trip write-ups never read like ours either. Is it me?)

The Lille chapter took us on a very well-organised and marshalled ride to the town of Bethune on some of

their
favourite
roads.
They are
going to
love
Rutland
with its
smooth
roads and
rolling hills



if they ever come here for a ride.In Bethune we had reserved parking and seating at a restaurant. The town square had been converted into a bike show with band, bungee jumping, bike displays and trader stalls. (Where the frugal ones amongst us bought



scarves like the ones at the dealership for a third of the price.) After couple of hours the Lille chapter led us back to Saint-Polsur-Ternoise where they joined us for a beer. Before they left we shook their even hands and kissed them. Is that normal?

Neil and Helen had organised a meal for

the last night which for some proved a disappointment. My meal was ok, but there again, my piece of steak was 4 times bigger than most. Scratchy was convinced that his came from the bottom of a shoe and a very small thin soled shoe at that. It didn't stop our enjoyment though and we were still in very good spirits as we walked home in the evening. We stopped to have a picture outside a very gothic looking house where the Les Adams Familee obviously lived. For those of you unfortunate to miss the trip,



the parts were performed by Scratchy — Gomez, Tall Dave - Lurch, Lucy — Morticia, Simon - Uncle Fester, Little Dave — Pugsley. Leaving me to

play Wednesday Adams, the miserable grumpy one who upsets people who was named after "Wednesdays child is full of woe". How unlike me is that? The Thing even put in an appearance when it came under my shower door earlier in the evening

and pinched my glasses.

More drinking, watching the football etc. ensued back in the games room before bed. On Sunday morning we reluctantly packed our bags back on the bikes and set off for a scenic, if misty, ride back to Calais for the Chunnel. Oops. We all arrived late at the Chunnel



embarkation point and had to catch a later train, but they run every 30 minutes so no real hardship. We got



back to Blighty 25 minutes before we set off. They are that quick!! We stopped at the first big services we came across for fuel and coffee. We knew we were home when the wife of a senior chapter member got told off by a policeman for not wearing her

helmet around the car park and then he promptly warned another of us for having a black and silver plate. I stood in front of my black and silver plate and Little Dave covered his up by parking his bike up against the hedge. It must have been the only hedge

that; we had come across, where one of the senior committee members wasn't watering to make it grow.



We went our separate ways on the

M25 with me going home with Little Dave and Lucy up the M11. Lucy's fuel light came on although the tank was still over 2/3rds full. So we stopped and investigated at Stansted services, where Little Dave discovered he now had a puncture. The price for a recovery was exorbitant, the emergency puncture stuff doesn't work on a tubed tyre and so he 'rode bitch' with me back to Peterborough before returning with his car and trailer to collect his bike later that evening.



To finish, the trip was excellent, with good company, a lot of laughs, drink, good food in the main part, dry roads, lots of roundabouts, small villages, French tolerance of motorbikes, a new version of second man drop off with hand signals and a lot of very fond memories. Many thanks again to Neil and Helen and to Sue and Paul at Les Ballastieres. Roll on next year.



PS I think I know now why we are possibly the only chapter not twinned with a foreign chapter. Now if they just open up a chapter in La Tourette, France, I think we could be in with a chance!!!

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### Hunstanton Ride Out - Sunday 10th June

Another Seaside Ride for 2012, to the popular resort of Hunstanton. "Sunny Hunny" as it is nicknamed is the only west facing seaside town on the east coast. It is a very popular haunt for bikers, who park on the seafront and treat themselves to the resorts "fish n chips" and ice creams.

Organiser – Dave Hetherington – Departs Shop 10.30am - Pick up Eve Green Services 11am

# <u>Chapter Meeting & Social Evening – Wednesday</u> 20th June

Monthly Meeting and Social Event held at the White Horse Public House at Morcott. This is situated on the A47 about 3 miles east of Uppingham. Find out all the latest information on upcoming events and the gossip from previous ones

All Members - White Horse, Morcott (A47) from 8pm

#### <u>Harley Rocks at the Harley Diner, Market Deeping –</u> Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June

An event laid on in conjunction with Rockford, Illinois, USA to celebrate Kegals 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Free refreshments, Live band, Entertainment, live link with Kegal's USA to wish them a Happy Birthday.

Harleys Diner, Market Deeping, 6.30pm - 10.30pm.

#### Elvaston Castle Ride Out – Sunday 24th June

Located in Derbyshire, near to Derby and Nottingham, Elvaston Castle Country Park encompasses approx 200 acres of open parkland, woodland and more formal historical gardens. Refreshments are available at this venue. This ride proved quite popular last year and it has been decided to return again this year.

Organiser - Mike Grant - Departs Shop 10.30am

#### Baston Car & Bike Show Ride Out – Sunday 1st July

An elongated ride around the local area, terminating at the Baston Car & Bike Show. The Chapter attended last year, the events first year. Proved last year to be a great day out, partly organised by our dealer principle Andy, so its good to support this.

Organiser - Scratchy - Departs Shop 11am

# Horseshoe Rally – 13th-15th July at the Fox & Hounds, Exton, Rutland

Our own Horseshoe Rally, which this year is to be held at an all-new location at the Fox & Hounds, Exton near Rutland Water. See poster in this issue for more details:

Live Bands, Disco, Custom Show, Ride Out, Fun & Games, On Site Bars & Catering.

Limited Tickets remaining from Sycamore Harley Davidson – No on the gate admittance

#### Vale of Belvoir Ride Out – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July

Following the popularity of this ride last year, we once again ride through the picturesque Vale of Belvoir. See views of Belvoir Castle, ride will call in for refreshments at some point Organiser – Pete Hewett – Sycamores 10.30am for 11am Departure

## **SHOP TORQUE**

Last month I was offered a great opportunity by Harley-Davidson UK. It was to join a press trip to the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Harley-Davidson Euro Festival in Saint-Tropez. After a couple of telephone calls and the green light from here I accepted the invite. For me this was something I had always wanted to do but due to work and family commitments I had never had the opportunity, but to be offered the experience free of charge and still get paid for it was a dream come true!

So it was all sorted and I set off to the Pillars Hotel in Oxford for dinner with the Harley team and for introductions to the journalists. The idea of the trip was to give them the true HOG experience!!

Next day we rode to HD head office in Oxford where we were given bikes and loaded our gear onto the support vehicle, we eventually left at 8.30 for Dover with Trevor Franklin (ex MCN Head Roadster) leading the party. I had opted to ride the Heritage Softail as this has always been a favourite of mine, but soon realised these guys were all professional bike riders and I needed to move up a gear. After riding for 80 miles we stopped for coffee at which point Simon from MCN realised he had lost the keys to his bike! So it was a case of sitting and waiting for the support vehicle to retrieve a spare bike and we set off for Dover again and arrived slightly later than planned.

We were fortunate to be loaded onto the Eurotunnel quickly but once on we were told there was a fault so we were unloaded and put on different train, I was beginning to think this trip was doomed. We



arrived in France 45 minutes later, refuelled the bikes and headed off to our first stop over which was Chalon-en-Champagne, a very nice town in the champagne region. We arrived at 9.30 pm, had a quick bite to eat and headed off to bed ready to rise early and do it all again the next day. We were up and ready for the off at 8.30am and after leaving the hotel we started our trip towards Dijon. This proved to be a fabulous day of riding as it was through the French countryside and the area was very picturesque. We

eventually arrived at Aix-Le-Bains at around 6pm and after checking in to the hotel myself and Simon from MCN headed into town for a well deserved beer, followed by a fabulous steak at the hotel.

The following day we set off to Grenoble where we joined the N85 Route Napoleon, this is a must for any riders as it is miles and miles of mountain



roads, hairpins, oncoming traffic and some great views as you ride through the Alps. This was the day I realised my riding skills had to seriously improve but I soon got the idea of cornering instead of going around them like a 50p coin! We eventually dropped down from the alps into St Tropez where the sight was just amazing — Harley-Davidsons parked everywhere and the coast road buzzing with bikes. After a short time we found our hotel and it is situated about a mile from the HOG rally so after checking in we had a bite to eat, a few beers and called it a night.

The following morning the sun was shining, so we forget the riding gear except crash helmets of course and set off for a ride along the coast road looking for somewhere to eat. We eventually found a great little restaurant over-looking the sea and enjoyed a leisurely lunch. After that it was back to the hotel to dump the bikes and get on the shorts and shades and head off to the rally.

The rally site itself was set on the beach and

was seriou impressive.

The first thing that hit me was the amount of people there just soaking up the amazing atmosphere. The rally site



consisted of many trade stands selling bike gear, different stages with bands playing different types of music and of course plenty of liquid refreshment bars! During the afternoon we watched the parade - so many Harleys in the same place at the same time – an absolutely amazing sight to see. The evening was spent socialising, watching the bands and chilling with a beer. We eventually called it a night at around midnight and headed back to the hotel for an 8am start in the morning. Sunday morning we left St Tropez and headed 500 miles to Troyes. Along the French motorways we had severe side winds and I soon realised the faster you went the more stable it was. Once we arrived in Troyes we had a wander and an evening meal and this is another lovely place I would definitely

recommend for a visit on bike. On the final day we left **Troves** and headed 500 miles to Calais, by this time the wind had dropped making it a pleasant ride to the tunnel and time to stop for lunch.



By the way the top box on an Ultra makes a great lunch box if there is a group of you!! Once we arrived in Dover the heavens opened and we soldiered back to Oxford.

I would thoroughly recommend this rally to anyone as it was well worth the miles covered and as for the riding I have certainly learnt a great deal about the different models and actually gained riding experience in many different conditions and most of all I can definitely understand the attraction of long distance riding and HOG rallies. Just in case you are wondering, I didn't drop any of the bikes over the three days – but one journalist did!

Ride safe!

Andrew

TO RECEIVE CHAPTER TEXT UPDATES

CONTACT PETE HEWETT



