

# Rutland Chapter

A photograph of a row of motorcycles parked outdoors. The motorcycles are primarily red and black, with chrome accents. In the background, several people are visible, some wearing blue jackets. The scene is set in a grassy area under a clear sky.

# NEWS

**HOG Chapter**  
**No: 6730**

**Newsletter**  
**May 2014**

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## **PETER PUTS PEN TO PAPER**

Welcome to the May edition of the Rutland Chapter newsletter. The riding season is now well and truly upon us, and although the weather has yet to fully play its part, we have already had a number of well attended rides.

Unfortunately our first official ride of the season was to have been to Foxton Locks on Sunday 6th April. The weather had not been that good earlier in the week and the forecast for the Sunday was very heavy rain with strong winds. Nothing had changed so by late Saturday the RC leading the ride and head RC decided to cancel it. Sods law prevailed, and whilst the weather certainly was not very good, the ride actually could have gone ahead quite safely. Lessons learned, and in future decisions will be made on the morning of the ride.

The Egg run on Sunday 13th April was attended by 91 bikes, and 1 Policeman, who I have to say did a sterling job blocking traffic and then getting to the front so quickly (alas the days of marshalls being allowed to do this are now long gone). Once again the Kids and Hospital staff were very pleased to see us and a good day was had by all.

Easter weekend saw 2 rides, on the Saturday to Jack's Hill cafe on the A5, and then a good trip through Rutland ending up at the Fox & Hounds in Exton. Both rides were well attended with around 20 bikes on each.

Our first ride in May is not until Sunday 18th, Nene Villages, due to many of us going to either the Cider Rally or The Euro Festival in St Tropez. Some interesting stories to come out of both I'm sure for our next edition.

At our last Chapter meeting I mentioned that both Alan Holmes and Lucy Gumbley had decided to stand down from the committee and that we needed to replace them. I would like to thank both of them for their contribution over the years, and also welcome Dave Romney who becomes our 2nd Activities officer.

### **H.O.G. Road Captain training**

During last season 6 Chapter members attended a series of Road Captain training courses arranged by HOG. Although under the banner of HOG, they were devised and presented by Senior Road Captains, Directors and Safety Officers of Dunedin, Red Rose, and Peak Riders Chapters, and developed using the feedback and first hand experiences of all those who have attended over the last 5 years. It is not HOG's statement of how anyone should ride, it is simply a presentation, together with practical tuition, of best developed practice over many years. It raises awareness of common issues, and suggests solutions, in many cases, more than one solution, and leaves the door open for individual Chapters to decide what suits them best, but all within a general framework that promotes safety and fun.

The vast majority of the course was around the planning, preparation and briefing of a ride, so not immediately obvious to most members, however there are a few changes to our riding style it was felt needed to be made and these are in the course of being introduced through the pre ride briefings.

If you have any questions, or are interested in the role of Road Captain yourself, please contact either myself or Neil Hall.

Finally, the new members lounge at the shop is nearing completion and it is hoped that the next Chapter meeting on May 21st will be held there.

Ride Safe

**Peter Hewett**  
**Chapter Director**

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## **EDITORIAL**

### **Reflections from the Back of a Hog**

I think it's fair to say that all of us in the Chapter love to ride. That's why we do it! However, our reasons for riding and the experiences we have will vary especially when you're the pillion and not at the 'business' end of the machine.

I am, and have been for many years, both a happy and willing pillion. Having briefly entertained the idea of riding solo I am, for the most part, content to be tucked in behind Neil watching the world go by.

For me it's not about getting from A to B, it's not even just about the thrill of being on the bike. There are all the other dynamics of what can happen when I'm sitting in my own space behind Neil. Some of my fellow pillion riders really like the solitude and shun the use of an intercom preferring to get lost in their own thoughts or music as the miles roll by.

There's something about not being face to face that lends itself to good communication. Maybe it's that Neil can't see my expressions! Don't get me wrong, we've had a few blazing rows on our travels too, the most memorable being the one we had whilst searching for the seals along the coast at San Simeon in California!

But this is where experiencing life as a pillion has its advantages over other modes of transport;

when the commentary, singing or debate gets too much, you can simply turn the intercom off! Unlike the one up front, we pillion riders are afforded the luxury of a little time and space to reflect on life, and for me, that is one of the joys of biking.

It would be great to hear from other pillion riders in the Chapter who would like to share their riding experiences with us. Email me, Helen, at [hellyhall59@gmail.com](mailto:hellyhall59@gmail.com). To get the wheels rolling in this edition of the newsletter, we catch a ride with Di Smith and find out what she loves about being a pillion.

**Helen Hall**  
**Magazine Editor**

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## **NEIL'S NOTES**

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

The new riding season is finally here, I'm so glad that we can get back into the saddle and ride again with friends. We have some good rides to look forward to for 2014.

I'd particularly like to welcome members who are new to the Chapter this season; I hope you enjoy riding with us to some great venues. If you are new to the chapter and not yet confident about riding in a group, have a word with one of our Road Captains who will be happy to give you any advice they can.

Group riding can be great fun, it's a very sociable way to travel and is, of course, impressive to onlookers. Here are a few pointers which will help to ensure that each group ride is a safe and happy experience:

- Carry out a safety check on your bike - tyres, lights, indicators etc. before the ride and arrive at the notified ride departure point with a full tank of fuel in plenty of time to hear the ride briefing

- Listen carefully to the ride briefing. Every briefing is different and contains information specific to each ride. For instance, a briefing may explain meeting points where the group will re-form or stop for refreshments or directions for specific road junctions where there may not be an appropriate place to safely drop a rider to mark a route (such as motorway exits).

- While riding in the group, look ahead - don't be too fixed on the bike directly in front of you

- Remain on the same side of the stagger during the ride (although you may find yourself on the opposite side of the stagger when you have re-joined at the tail of the group after being dropped off)

- When on twisty or narrow roads, the person in front of you on the opposite side of the stagger may wish to use the whole of the road so you may need to back off to give them room. Riders behind you will give you the same courtesy.

- Don't overtake other members of the group. It is ok, however, to close up a gap that has appeared in the stagger if invited to do so by the rider in front and on the opposite side of the stagger. A gap may appear, for instance, if a rider has dropped out.

- If you are the 3rd rider, give the 2nd rider plenty of room to pull over when dropped off by the ride leader and also be ready to drop off if you notice that 2nd man hasn't done so when requested.

If you are unsure of anything about the ride, ask one of our Road Captains. If you are new to group riding a Road Captain will be happy to advise you or find an experienced rider to ride in front of or behind you if you would find that useful. You might also find it useful to try and get a spot in the middle of the group where you can observe how the 2nd man dropoff system works before it's your turn to drop off

Ride Safe

**Neil Hall**  
**Head Road Captain**

## **MEET THE MEMBERS**

We posed some questions to Chapter members

1. How did you get involved in the Chapter?
2. What do you ride and why?
3. Your most memorable trip on your bike.
4. Describe what motor biking means to you in 3 words.
5. What is your favourite watering-hole to visit on the bike, either a regular haunt or a one-off find.

### **Pauline and Gordon Wilson**

Gordon and I went to the BMF in Peterborough in May 2013 and I happened to sit on a Harley from Sycamores in Uppingham, bearing in mind Gordon rode a Kawasaki sports bike at the time. He asked why I had sat on it and I replied, I liked it. A few weeks later he visited the shop. After a few test drives we ended up with a Heritage Softail. Weeks later Gordon bumped into an old school friend Dave Mulheron (aka ACE). Dave then introduced Gordon to Scratchy, Mike, Lucy and a few more whose names escape him. From there everyone made Gordon feel so welcome. A week later Gordon introduced me to them and, to be honest, I thought they were all mental! My kind of people. Since then I beg, literally, to go to the shop on my weekends off. We believe we have bought into a friendship as since then have met Lindsay and Alan Holmes. Jim and Steph Hill, Denise and Daz.

We had a few unofficial ride outs for breakfasts to American diners on the A1 and also Wellingborough. We did the first official one to Mablethorpe which we enjoyed very much. Weather perfect and very exciting.

Motor biking to us means, excitement, freedom and fun.

Favourite watering hole to be honest is 'The Limes Bar' in Corby which is in Dave and Draginja's garden, where we've ended up after a ride out or a night out. Also enjoy dropping in at

the dealership and Power Lunches for a cuppa and a chat.



Gordon and Pauline Wilson

### Steve and Lynn Smith

1. I had been a member of two chapters while living in Spain, the Santa Faz Chapter & the Costa Blanca Chapter so as soon as I settled back into the UK I searched out the nearest chapter, which was Rutland.
2. A Heritage Softail FLSTC, the reason why is a long story. I rode a Triumph Trophy but while on a business trip to Florida my colleagues and I decided to hire three Harleys to cruise on for a day. We had a Heritage Classic, a Road King and a Fat Boy and I rode all three during the day. I fell in love with Heritage and within three weeks of getting home I bought the bike I have today.
3. Lynn & I rode from Alicante to the European rally in Lisbon with the Santa Faz chapter.
4. Freedom, pleasure, friendship
5. The lakes at Guadalest on the Costa Blanca



Steve and Lynn Smith

## PONDERINGS OF A PILLION

For someone who always has a lot to say (no really I hear you cry?), I've actually been stumped to put my answer into words!

Over the years, I've been on the back of quite a few sports bikes. But it was really a case of, get on, hold on and let's see if we can get where we are going before we have even left!

Harley riding isn't about speed. It's not even about the destination, it's about the journey. Sounds twee to say but you know what I mean, don't you?

As we left the shop, on the first ride we attended, we found ourselves in the middle of the pack. I counted 8 bikes in front of us and I didn't need telling to look in the mirror to see the rest. The mirror was full of bikes and the smile on my face filled my helmet! That was 4 seasons ago....and the smile is still there.

Even when it's just the two of us, I don't feel like we are on our own. People stop and stare. Granted they do usually hear us before they see us. But that just gives them notice to wait and see what's coming lol. You can't help but smile. Strangers often speak to us about "her". Catching us either as we dismount or getting our leathers on again.

As a pillion, I love the fact that I have all the thrills of the ride, and can go into my "zone". Only being caught out by hitting Dave's helmet with my head when he slows down suddenly, which wakes me out of my bubble or I feel him tapping my leg, checking that I'm still there, as I've not spoken for 10 minutes! Yes, that does happen ...sometimes!

A pillion doesn't have many responsibilities....

I jump off and pay for petrol, leaving Dave to wipe off the excess petrol from the tank, or polish a chrome smudge. I have, in my keeping, the moulded plastic mat thing, (what's the proper name?) ready to place under the side stand, for

those unlevel and sometimes precarious parking areas. Oh, and of course to look good!

So, in conclusion, I have to say there is something special about being on our Harley. Is it the size of the bike? The amount of shiny chrome? The noise? The history? Status? Leathers? Yes probably all of these, but when I hear those fishtails calling, I'm ready to ride! I'm Queen Bee, and I'm in heaven! Does that make me shallow? Probably. But as long as the smile is still there, so will I be!

**Di Smith**

(on the left below)



## **BIKESAFE ASSESSED RIDE**

On a dull April morning I headed south towards Cambs Police HQ in Huntingdon for the second part of my BikeSafe training - the assessed ride. On the way I spotted Jim and Steve, who I knew were on the time-slot before me, out on their assessed rides heading north on the A1.

At my allotted time, I paired up with one of the police rider assessors who introduced himself as Ian (it was all very informal and relaxed). Ian outlined the route we would be riding which would contain a mix of A and B roads, town and countryside roads that would allow an assessment of my riding skills on all types of road and traffic conditions. Ian explained that he would indicate the route to me by use of his indicators or by raising his arm in the air if I was

to go straight on. He suggested that I relax and ride how I normally do and forget that he was behind me (that was slightly easier said than done!).

Then we got out onto the roads. There were some good riding roads - some lovely flowing corners and some tricky ones, some opportunity to open the throttle and do some overtaking and some times when it was necessary to be more circumspect. One cyclist decided to give a little wobble as I approached him so I made sure the next cyclist got more room. There was also one moment of haste as I overtook a car and then realised that Ian wanted me to turn left at an approaching junction - this was really a symptom of not knowing the route, but we made the turn without any problems.

The ride was over very quickly and it was time for a debrief. Ian's recollection of the ride was much better than mine and he was very thorough with the feedback. I was pleased with my assessment, the comments I got were recommendations for slightly earlier planning and preparation when cornering and overtaking. Ian gave me some positive feedback including comments on my road positioning and positive acceleration out of corners and junctions. He even said he really enjoyed the ride.

At times I did forget that I had a police rider behind me and relaxed and enjoyed the ride. What other road users thought of me being followed by a police bike I don't know - I wasn't aware of any change of behaviour of other road users but I'd guess that a few drivers had a chuckle thinking that I was just about to get pulled over for a ticket!

A few weeks on and several hundred miles later I do really feel that my riding has improved. I do now plan manoeuvres earlier and consequently my line, speed and gear selection through corners have all improved. A benefit of earlier planning for overtaking is that now I've passed a car before

Helen has a chance to say "you aren't going to overtake here are you?".



If you're interested in BikeSafe, workshops are being run frequently in the coming months by Cambs, Leics, Notts and Lincs police forces. Visit the website at [www.bikesafe.co.uk](http://www.bikesafe.co.uk) for details.

**Neil Hall**

## **EASTER EGG RUN**



Easter came late this year, but just as well as the weather was superb on the weekend beforehand when we embarked on the Annual Easter Egg Run – unlike last year, when it snowed!! It is always a bit of pot-luck as to how many bikes turn up for this event being one of the first ride-outs of the season. Although the Chapter organises this run, it is not a formal HOG event and is open to any and all bikes (and even scooters). The intention, in addition to us all having an excuse to ride around the local area en-masse, is to deliver Easter eggs to the Amazon (Children's) Ward at Peterborough City Hospital. I have arranged this annual event for some 8 years now, which is aimed at bringing a small bit of enjoyment and pleasure to the children who find themselves confined, or just visiting, hospital over the Easter period.

As a designated "charity run" we are able to secure escort assistance from the local traffic

police. This not only enhances the safety and publicity of the event, but enables us to keep our convoy together through roundabouts and traffic lights with the police riders using their "VIP Escort" techniques. In the past we have had support from up to 6 riders from the Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Cambridgeshire Police bike units and all have been very enthusiastic and very efficient. Unfortunately, due to various cut-back and policy changes, this year's run only had 1 Cambridgeshire police rider – but he did a magnificent job, aided by the Chapter Road Captains.

After stocking up with tea and baps from Su's Power Lunches, we set off from Sycamores in the glorious sunshine with no less than 91 bikes (including 3 trikes). Robert, our police escort, managed to get us all round the first roundabout then shot back to the front, overtaking the mile long convoy (yes it was over a mile long down the A47) in time to wave us through the (unfortunate) road works at Morcott (this had been identified as a potential problem area in advance by Neil Hall, who led the ride, and me when we surveyed the route during the week beforehand, but I had been advised, wrongly as it turned out, that it would be finished by the Friday). Robert then also saw us all safely through all the other roundabouts, main junctions, narrow roads and traffic lights, each time then racing back to the front for the next phase. He commented that he hadn't enjoyed himself so much for a long time – and he also commended us all on our safe and disciplined riding; so well done everybody.

We only had one minor problem as we came out of Oundle when an impatient motorist pulled on to a mini roundabout in the middle of our convoy just before Robert got there to block it. Still, being at the back, as Tail End Charley, I could see the other Oundle residents all stopped, or even came out of their houses, to look on and wave as we cruised past – especially when they spotted

the 4ft tall St Bernard in his helmet and goggles apparently driving a sidecar.

The children at the hospital were all very excited waiting for us to arrive and leapt into action when one sharp-eared youngster heard us coming round the raised roundabout at Bretton. We had a great reception committee of patients, staff and parents as we pulled on to the pavement alongside the ward where some more unfortunate patients were confined to bed, but waved through the windows. A whole cot-full of eggs and soft toys, generously donated by all the participants, were duly delivered to the nurses to be distributed to any children that come in over the next couple of weeks (they said that even any broken eggs get used by the kids to melt down and make their own chocolate cornflakes – mmmmmmm!). We then, gratefully, indulged in the tea/coffee and biscuits provided by the staff (which, incidentally, the Hospital Trust now make the staff pay for out of their own pockets!! So the Chapter, gladly, makes a donation to cover the costs). Let's do it all again at Christmas.

**Pete Ward**

## **CHARITY RIDE FOR ROBIN**

On Saturday 15 March the Chapter was able to give a very special 50th birthday surprise to Robin Sinclair. Robin sadly lost both his parents in a tragic plane crash when he was young and was brought up by Tom Sinclair, his uncle from Edith Weston. Robin does have some special needs but like us has a very keen interest in all things Harley. The very first thing Robin knew about his Harley trip was when 7 bikes, courtesy of Neil and Helen, Jim Garratt and his daughter, Steve and Lynn, Dave and Di, Tall Dave, Wymondham Daz and Mike made a very noisy arrival outside his uncle's home in the dark about 8.00pm. Robin had no idea that he was to be suited and booted and whipped away for a night time ride before being safely returned and dropped off to his

wider family at a local restaurant. To say that Robin was pleased with his ride was an understatement and what started off as a sedate pace from the village, which had been kindly lit by neighbours car headlights, turned into a faster windy trip with Robin's enthusiasm. Tall Dave, who was feeling a little lonely with Dawn being away overseas, very kindly offered to carry Robin's sister and she too rode with us in limited leathers. At the end of the night there was a real sense of achievement from all attending in being able to help make Robin's birthday so special. I know from the family he still talks about it to this day. As a surprise to us, Tom Sinclair kindly donated £100 to The British Heart Foundation on behalf of the chapter. Thank you to all who attended and to Sycamores for their help, helmets etc. and for the provision of a gift from them to Robin.

**Mike Grant**

## **RICHARDS RAMBLINGS**

No doubt the cancelled SoFER rally is of great disappointment to all the Chapter members who have attended in recent years. I know the five chapters who have put this excellent rally together in the past tried to find a resolution to the unacceptable agreement offered by the management of Bisley shooting ground. The National Rifle Association did not see the event of any exceptional value despite the fact that the site spending exceeded £150,000 over the weekend. If the rally was cancelled for any reason the rally costs would have been recoverable from the 5 Chapters.

However I know the club houses that we supported by buying breakfast and evening meals will miss the revenue that we generated. Maybe in the future it will take place again, who knows? We know from our own experience that our participation in events is a good money earner for any venue that is prepared to host a motorcycle

rally. I still feel that the stigma of what motorcyclists used to be in the 60s is still prevalent. Yet we are well behaved (maybe a bit noisy) and when we are out and about everyone smiles and waves. Why sometimes, do we not feel welcome?

On another note the weather so far this year has been a huge improvement over recent years. Last year the Easter egg run was cancelled due to snow! We have managed to complete a number of ride outs, organised and ad hoc basis. We have already been to the coast three times! Once to Mablethorpe and twice to Hunstanton. At Sunny Hunny it really felt like the town wasn't expecting people, particularly those on motor bikes, to be out. One of the most recent rides (despite the weather forecast) was to Foxton Locks which, like the New Owners Ride the week before, was well supported. Most of our Midlands based rides have ended up back at the shop. I have to mention that due to the travelling nature of my job, I manage to visit a lot of the other Harley dealerships around the UK and maybe I am biased but we are really lucky with our dealer. The staff at Sycamores are very helpful and friendly to all shop visitors, regulars or not. We now have a new HOG lounge and the revised shop layout works really well. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, Sue is always there with the van, so we know we can get a cup of tea and a burger. Remember we have to support our shop as this is what keeps it open and means that we all have somewhere to go and sit and talk and socialise at the weekend.

**Richard Garner**

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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## 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)

## FACEBOOK PAGE



We have a Facebook page for Rutland Chapter members to communicate with each other on an informal basis. To be added, search for the group 'Rutland Chapter of HOG' and click "Join", or send an email to Mike Grant requesting access (email address as below).

## CHAPTER MEETING & SOCIAL EVENING

The monthly meeting and get together is held on the third Wednesday of every month. Find out all the latest information on upcoming events and the gossip from previous ones.

All Members are welcome, the meeting starts at 8.00p.m. Please check the website for the venue.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**23rd European Hog Rally will be held in Biograd Croatia 12th-15th June 2014**

**To register:**

**[www.hogeuropегallery.com/croatia-harley-days/pre-registration](http://www.hogeuropегallery.com/croatia-harley-days/pre-registration)**

**The 7<sup>th</sup> Ride To The Wall will be on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October. Register at [www.ridetothewall.org.uk](http://www.ridetothewall.org.uk)**

**Rutland Chapter's Horseshoe Rally July 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> at the Fox and Hounds, Exton. Tickets on sale now from Sycamores Uppingham.**

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## **TAILEND**

### **The Golden Ticket**

One lucky motorcyclist will win the opportunity to ride a 1936 Harley Davidson EL in the 2014 Motorcycle Cannonball Endurance Run. The second prize is an all expenses-paid trip to the Harley Davidson factory in Milwaukee. The draw takes place on June 29th. For further info go to [www.cannonballgoldenticket.com](http://www.cannonballgoldenticket.com)

Get involved in the **Iron Hog Challenge 2014!** Based on 3 simple rules of 1) visit as many mainland UK H-D dealerships as you can in 48 hours 2) start and finish at the same dealership 3) you must visit these 4 H-D dealerships Edinburgh, Swansea, Plymouth and Maidstone! Good Luck! Full details @ [ironhog.wordpress.com](http://ironhog.wordpress.com)

Did you know that every picture published in the printed edition of the HOG magazine wins its photographer a H.O.G staff photographer's pin, so remember to send your name and address too

### **Business News**

Strong bike sales helped drive up Harley-Davidson's earnings by about 20 percent for 2013.

The company's profit jumped 17.6 percent to \$734 million, up from \$623.9 million in 2012.

"Without question 2013 was an outstanding year for Harley-Davidson," CEO Keith Wandell said in a statement.

The Milwaukee-based manufacturer celebrated its 110th anniversary and shipped 260,839 motorcycles to worldwide distributors, compared to 249,849 a year earlier.

Did you know that there was such a thing as Harley Davidson branded beer? It came in Harley Davidson branded cans, now collectors' items, if you can find one!

Anyone going to the **Daytona Bike Week** this year? Check out the infamous campsite called Sopotnik's Cabbage Patch where the main attraction is the women's Coleslaw Wrestling (it's a cabbage farm!) where clothes are optional!



**23rd to 26th May 2014**  
**this Late May Bank Holiday**

at the West Midlands Water Ski Centre  
 Tamworth Road, Cliff, Warwickshire, B78 2DL

**all this for only**  
**£27.00 per Adult**  
*Children under 18 free*

# The Big BANK HOLIDAY Bash

in conjunction with the Birmingham, Rolling Hills,  
 Stoke and Wolfruna Chapters

**CAMPING NOT YOUR THING?**

Now there's a **Free Shuttle Bus** between the  
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**ON FRIDAY, SATURDAY  
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**AK SCARFACE**  
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[www.bigbankholidaybash.com](http://www.bigbankholidaybash.com)