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Spotlight – Magazine of the **Essex CTC MG**, a local **Member Group**
of the **Cyclists’ Touring Club**, the national cyclists’ organisation
President: John Steer Volume 6/2012se24

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The Editor reserves the right to edit contributions for reasons of space, clarity or libel.

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	Pam Nelson	☎ 07812 209862	Delegate
Havering	Stephen Ingall	☎ 07890 386984	Secretary
	Dave Rowlands	☎ 07948 583979	Delegate
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Certificate of Merit Committee

John Davis, Peter Moore, John Steer

Essex CTC MG Trustees

Stefan Eichenseher, John Steer, Brian Penny

Closing date for the January / February 2013 edition is on **15 December 2012**

Editor's foreword

This edition of the Spotlight comes out just before our Essex CTC AGM, when all will be changed with regards to who's in charge of the different posts. Well, if it was as easy as the re-shuffling in parliament, we would be happy. However, rewards for the work of committee members are not as obvious as the remuneration of MPs. Following a discussion at the Essex CTC MG committee, you can read an encouragement on p 24.

Earlier in the year, I could have used the free space due to lack of contributions to finish sequential essays in one go. The reason for keeping the pages down at 32 for this issue is down to the reduction of advertisers renewing their subscription. Their contribution makes for a third of the printing costs. So, more pages require more advertisers.

Whether businesses can or want to afford the £15 or £28 (£13 and £25 for renewals this year) for advertising in our magazine, or not, does at least partly depend on what value they get from it. As you might remember, earlier in the year I asked, whether people would write a review on advertisers they used. Only little has come of it, but this would give advertisers an idea of how they are doing, and an incentive to continue.

And here is another one on advertising: the jersey saga continues. However, the toing and froing seems to take form and colours from a decided-upon design through changing an established design to back to the initial colours and layout. At the AGM we should get a reasonably well designed jersey that hopefully will be accepted by members of all MGs.

There is another point on representation of the Essex CTC Member Group and its affiliated MGs; and this is the website. Here comes my plea: We need someone, who is prepared to volunteer and maintain the www.essexcycling.co.uk website. As for contacts, information and runs lists updates, a suitable online presence is the thing of the day!

Have fun cycling.

Your editor,
Stefan Eichenseher



The President's piece

I must apologise for the lack of the President's piece in the last Spotlight, as I was away on foreign travels. I was also trying to set up a deal on buying a bungalow, which meant a house move and no time for cycling (even a President can't do everything at once).

The cold weather is on its way again - I would say along with the rain, but we had enough of that this year. I just hope that it's not too bad this winter and we can still get out on our bikes. As John Hand said to me some years ago, most of us have an ATB (or, as some of you know them, Mountain bike), which means we could change the rides to suit the weather. *[Think of appropriate clothing! Ed.]*

The issue of the new inter-member groups' shirts is still going the rounds with hopefully a decision being made in the New Year by the Parent Member Group Committee.

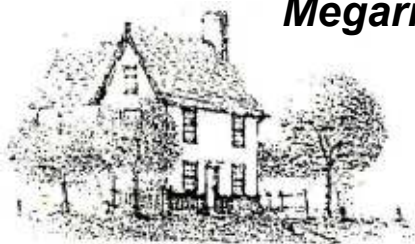
With AGMs out of the way, we can all now get back cycling and supporting our committee members, whether they are new ones or the old ones returning.

Enjoy your cycling, wherever you ride.

John Steer

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The SEG's 75 75 Mile Reliability Ride

Sunday 24th February 2013

Start at Market Café in Woodlands Road,
Wickford, Essex SS12 0AL

Contact: Stefan Eichenseher, 01702 621810,
s.eichenseher@googlemail.com

You find the entry form on our website
www.essexcycling.co.uk

Essex CTC Member Group Christmas Meet

The **Essex CTC Member Group Christmas Meet**
will be held
at “**The White Hart**”
in Margaretting Tye,
(OS167, TL683011)
on the **9th December**
from **10.30am to 3.00pm**

Member Groups' Reports

Chelmsford Member Group

October 7 – It's a tricky business planning an autumn route in advance, simply because the weather can be so variable. Diana, Martin, Norman and John were already at the start when I arrived and seven of us would eventually have set off, had it not been for an un-repairable puncture, which forced Phil and George to abort the mission. We took the Sustrans route, via Fyfield and Moreton meeting or passing a higher than usual number of other groups of cyclists along the way. The cool, sunny start faded into even cooler mists, as we travelled west and so we were glad of a warming break at Hastingwood.

After elevenses, the mists evaporated under an intermittent sun, revealing countryside just on the cusp of changing into its autumn colours. There were occasional hints of fruit and the smell of newly turned soil on the still, fresh air. John and Maggie caught up with us for lunch at HBO, after which the route returned via High Easter with 52 miles clocked in my case and the feeling that this was one ride, which could have been enjoyed just a tad longer. **Adrian Leeds**

Colchester Member Group

September 2, 2012 - Heybridge Basin - A more perfect destination than Heybridge Basin on a warm, late summer afternoon is hard to imagine.

Caroline and Paul's ride took Linda, Alan, Des and Gillian out to Tiptree for coffee at "Tom's Farm Shop & Garden Centre" where no-one was able to resist an excellent homemade snack to accompany elevenses. In addition, some hard selling from a sales team, whose tactics would be admired by Alan Sugar, may well have recruited an innocent bystander for future rides!

Approaching our lunch destination, the sounds of a brass band floated towards us from the quayside, and the farmers' market in a large marquee adorned with nautical flags promised rich pickings for those of us needing to buy lunch. Needless to say, we weren't disappointed and our picnic table by the lock afforded us an excellent view of a variety of boats of all shapes and sizes heading out to sea. Add to this the elegant Thames barges making their way seaward from Maldon and a cold drink from the pub - it was hard tearing ourselves away and getting back onto the bikes.

Returning to Colchester via the Tolleshunts and Tiptree, we crossed the finish line of "The Jef Schils Memorial Road Race" in Birch without the merest hint of applause! Shortly after this, we were stopped by marshals near "The Layer Fox" to allow the racers through - a very fast and determined looking peloton! Arriving back in the town under ever more threatening dark skies, which thankfully didn't produce any rain, we all sped off homewards. A Grand Day Out indeed. **Gillian Walker**

October 14, 2012 - Great Wenham - Eleven of us left Colchester Leisure World to head out to a new elevenses stop in Weeley. Apart from cycling through Essex University, along Boundary Road, we stuck to



Route 51 of the National Cycle Network all the way until Tendring, where we saw this pair of driving Shetland ponies.

The "Homestead Cabin Café" gave us a warm welcome and despite the large number of us coped admirably with our and other customers' orders.

Onwards to our destination, "over the border" in Suffolk, via Great Bentley, Great Bromley, Dedham - where Steve punctured on his new bike - and Higham, we arrived at "The Queens Head" a little after 2 pm

(when they stop serving food). We were initially disappointed that we wouldn't be able to get any lunch. However, as it became clear there were quite a number of us wanting food, they obliged to serve us either jacket potatoes or baguettes (with a choice of fillings).

As some of the group came from Tiptree, there was a split before the final leg, with Alan taking some back an alternative route, while the rest headed back to Colchester with me, through Capel St Mary, Bentley, Brantham, and Little Bromley. **Malcolm Mitchell**

Havering Member Group

19th Aug - Tower Bridge to West Kent - We caught the train to Fenchurch St, where we were met by Andy D, Roy W And Bernie C. We headed over Tower Bridge then followed the back roads, occasionally catching sight of the river. It's surprising how quiet it can be this close to Central London. When we reached Greenwich, we stopped to admire the newly opened Cutty Sark with its glass bottom looking into attraction. From here, we rode next to or near river to North Greenwich. Riding towards the dome, I had forgotten how big it is. We also admired the other buildings around it and then all stood in wonder at the new Emirates Airline cable car. Bernie left us here going back to the north side of the river on the cable car, as he likes to travel in style.

Kent has some beautiful rolling countryside, but unless you want roast dinner on a Sunday, it's a desert. So after stopping for more good views and fuel at the "Thames Barrier Visitor Centre", we made our way to Eynsford, which is an oasis in Kent with shops and pubs serving sandwiches, as well as being very picturesque.

We decided to cut our ride a bit short, as we had only arrived at the pub at 2pm and one member needed to get back. It was hot at 30°C. The long steep hill we came down into the valley, where Eynsford is, turned out to be the least worst option to get back. The group didn't then believe me, but I was warmly thanked at the top of the hill. We made our way back to Orpington station for the train back to London. **Stephen Ingall**

9th Sept – Battlesbridge, by the River Crouch - Gordon, Stephen, Dave and Alex rode for Bulphan and Dunton and onto Little Burstead. We stopped off at Lake Meadows in Billericay for 11ses.

We made our way up around the south side of Hanningfield when we picked up Barry, who was out for a ride. This was my first time going into the Rettendon turnpike, which was worth the hassle to get to the café,

Continued on page 13

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where we sat outside enjoying the sun. For the return, we went around the north-side of the reservoir. **Stephen Ingall**

16th Sept - Woodham Mortimer with Chelmsford CTC - Dave and Stephen rode up to meet with Chelmsford group in the “Wetherspoon’s” pub for 11ses in Billericay, who had about 9 members in there group. We rode with them to Woodham Mortimer instead of the Coalhouse Fort, Tilbury, as the leader felt road conditions were not good. We stopped for lunch in the “Hurdlemaker’s Arms” pub. **Stephen Ingall**

23rd Sept - Epping Ongar historic railway - Gordon and Stephen decided to just ride to 11ses, as heavy rain was forecast for the afternoon. The railway is the section of the Central line that used to run from Epping to Ongar. It is run by volunteers running a limited timetable of trains on the line, including steam trains. We had our 11ses stop at North Weald Station on Station Road in the passenger car they have set up as a café - of course we sat in first class. **Stephen Ingall**

30th Sept - Burnham on Crouch - 7 riders set off this Sunday: Barrie, Alex, Steve, Dave, Bernard, Bernard’s son Alex plus myself.

A two hour ride to the first stop at Rettendon “BHN Garden Centre” for a good coffee, but incredibly slow service. So we lost nearly half an hour there, which meant we arrived at the “Quayside Café”, Burnham, at about 1.30. Again, the service was very slow, mainly due to them being quite busy.

After a less than average lunch, we set off going north, which was well worth the extra few miles to enjoy some quieter roads on our return journey. It also helped to avoid the very busy B1012, which judging by the many flower tributes by the roadside and the crazy motorcyclist practicing for a Moto GP along this road, seemed far too dangerous for us cyclists.

We finally reached Upminster at 6.30pm. Completing about 80 miles, very tired, as the whole of our return journey was into a fairly strong wind.

Gordon Peel

South East Essex Member Group

12th August – Great Leighs - Twenty-one cyclists left Wickford in two groups and made their respective ways to the “Secret Garden Tearooms” in Chelmsford.

Eleven went onto lunch at “St. Anne’s Castle”, where we were joined by a late arrival in the shape of Martin P. On our way home, there was an

Continued on page 19

Forthcoming Events



Organisers: please advise me of anything you wish to be included

Date	Event	Organiser
7 Dec	[MG] Chelmsford Group Christmas Meal "Horse & Groom", 7 for 7.30pm	Adrian Leeds
9 Dec	[EMG] Essex CTC Christmas Lunch , "The White Hart", Margaretting Tye, 12pm	Lynda Collins
15 Dec	[MG] SEG Christmas Dinner , "The Lodge Country Inn", Rettendon, 7.30 for 8pm - Pre-book with John Steer by 18 th Nov.	John Steer
16 Dec	[MG] Havering CTC Christmas Lunch , Othello Restaurant, Upminster, 12.30pm - Open invite (!) - see Havering website, RSVP Secretary ASAP. Short ride before TBC	Stephen Ingall

If not stated, please see the *Impressum* (p. 4) for organisers' contacts.

Easy Rider Meets



Date	Pub	Destination
11 th Nov	"Brambles Restaurant"	Chelmsford
9 th Dec	"The White Hart" for [EMG] Christmas Meet	Margaretting Tye
13 th Jan	"Prince of Wales"	Mountnessing
10 th Feb	Ingatestone & Fryerning Community Centre	

Easy Rider Lunch Meets - for details contact Pete Moore: 01245 263165

Chelmsford Member Group – Runs List



Secretary: Adrian Leeds

4 Oaklands Crescent, Chelmsford CM2 9PR, ☎ 01245 260272

Runs Secretary: Dave Russell

7 Willows Crescent, Hatfield Peverel, ☎ 01245 381055

Rides Start: Sundays: Bus Station at the end of Fairfield Road
(near the Civic Theatre) 9am for 9.15am

All day rides start **9.15am**

For Tuesday evening destinations

call Peter Moore ☎ 01245 263165 or Dave Russell ☎ 01245 381055

Date	11ses	Destination	Leader
25 Nov	Rayne ("Station Café")	Finchingfield	A Leeds
02 Dec	Coggeshall Dutch	Mount Bures	M Cockersole
07 Dec	[MG] Chelmsford Group Christmas Meal "Horse & Groom", 7 for 7.30pm		A Leeds
09 Dec	[EMG] Essex CTC Christmas Lunch, "The White Hart", Margaretting Tye, 12pm		Lynda Collins
Alt	Stisted	Ford Street	A Leeds
16 Dec	Hastingwood	Horseman Side	D Southin
23 Dec	Hanningfield Reservoir ("Water's Edge")	Purleigh, "The Bell"	A Leeds
30 Dec	Stansted	Thaxted	J&B Taylor
06 Jan	Andrewsfield	Finchingfield	A Leeds
13 Jan	Perrywood	Copford, "The Alma"	D Emery
20 Jan	Sawbridgeworth	Dunmow	A Leeds
27 Jan	Heybridge Basin	East Hanningfield	M Cockersole
03 Feb	Ongar, "Budworth Hall"	Stock	A Leeds



Havering Member Group – Runs List



Secretary: Stephen Ingall

ctchavering@gmail.com or ☎ 07890 386984

www.ctchavering.btck.co.uk & www.essexcycling.co.uk

Runs Start: Roomes (Home & Fashion) Store, Station Road, Upminster

All rides meet Sunday 08:45 for 09:00 start unless otherwise stated

Date	Destination	Leader
25 th Nov	Chignall St. James ("Three Elms")	
2 nd Dec	All-comers Ride	
9 th Dec	Meet as usual. [EMG] Essex CTC Christmas Lunch, "The White Hart" Pub, Margaretting Tye, 12pm	Lynda Collins (Organiser)
16 th Dec	[MG] Havering CTC Christmas Lunch, Othello Restaurant, Upminster, 12.30pm - Open invite, see Havering Website. RSVP to Secretary ASAP. Short ride before TBC	Stephen 07890 386984
23 rd Dec	Ride to Hanningfield to meet Chelmsford CTC. Ride with them to Purleigh ("The Bell")	Stephen 07890 386984
30 th Dec	Moreton, *	
1 st Jan – Tuesday	[MG] New Years Day Ride - meet at 10am	David Rowlands 07948 583 979
6 th Jan	All-comers Ride	
13 th Jan	Gilston, Herts. ("The Moor Hen")	

All-comers ride –

Catering to new cyclists;
regular members can continue
for full ride as normal

* = Destination to be decided on the day

The group out on a bright sunny winter's day



South East Essex Member Group – Runs List



Secretary: John Steer

☎ 01702 529 638– e-mail segssec@btinternet.com

Runs start: from the Market Café in Woodlands Road, Wickford SS12 0AL,
Sundays at 9.15am for 9.30am, unless otherwise stated.

Club Nights are the 2nd & 4th Friday of the month
8.00pm @ St Laurence & All Saints Church Hall,
Eastwoodbury Lane, Eastwood, SS2 6RH

Date	Eleveses	Destination for Lunch
November 2012		
25 th	West Hanningfield ("OJ's Soul Café")	Danbury ("The Cricketer's")
December 2012		
2 nd	Battlesbridge ("Meadowcroft Garden Centre")	Mundon ("The White Horse")
9 th	Ingatestone ("Garden Centre")	[EMG] Christmas Meet Margaretting Tye ("The White Hart")
15 th	[MG] Christmas Dinner , "The Lodge Country Inn", Rettendon, 7.30 for 8pm - Pre-book with John Steer by 18 th Nov.	
16 th	Bunsay Down ("Golf Club")	Nounsley ("The Sportsman")
23 rd	Chelmsford ("Secret Garden Tearooms")	Pleshey ("The Leather Bottle")
30 th	Maldon ("Crystal Café")	Little Braxted ("The Green Man")
January 2013		
1 st	[MG] New Year's Day Ride - 10am start	
6 th	Rochford ("The Beehive")	Paglesham ("Punch Bowl")
13 th	Blackmore ("Blackmore Tearooms")	West Hanningfield ("Three Compasses")
20 th	Great Baddow ("Bringy Pine")	Bicknacre ("Brewer's Arms")

Note: * When **EMG** or **MG** events take place, the local ride will include a booked Eleveses venue, but not a specific pub for lunch, unless otherwise stated.

Check out www.velocipede.org.uk for GPX and TrackLogs TCX files of our rides.

Colchester Informal Member Group – Runs List



Secretary: Alan Palmer
☎ 01206 792929, mob 07939 395067 or
alanpalmer@phonecoop.coop
All rides meet Leisure World Container
by Skatepark at 9-30am

Date	11ses	Destination	Leader
Nov 25	Woodham Walter, "The Cats"	Coggeshall, "Dutch Nursery"	Alan Palmer
Dec 02	Harwich, "New Bell Inn"	Mistley, "Place Park"	Alan Palmer
Dec 09	EMG] Essex CTC Christmas Lunch, "The White Hart", Margaretting Tye, 12pm		Lynda Collins (Organiser)
Alt	TBA		Pam Nelson
Dec 16	Bures, "Eight Bells"	Coggeshall, "Dutch Nursery"	Alan Palmer
Dec 23	Decide on day		
Dec 30	Copford, "Alma"	Aldham, "Millrace"	Alan Palmer
Jan 06	Bures, "Eight Bells"	Stanway, "Barnplants"	Alan Palmer
Jan 13	TBA		
Jan 20	TBA		Malcolm Mitchell
Jan 27	Heybridge Basin	Coggeshall, "Dutch Nursery"	Alan Palmer

Note:

Since the *Colchester CTC Informal Member Group* has its roots in the "Cycle Champions", bikes, helmets, etc. can be provided free of charge.

Members are welcome to attend Bike Drinks, for all local cyclists, held on the 3rd Monday of the month, 8pm at "The New Inn", Chappel St South (CO2 7AX).

Check our website for further information: www.colchesterctc.co.uk



The New Inn, Colchester

unfortunate incident involving Alan S. We had just started to climb up towards 'Old Riffhams' in Danbury, when his crank arm sheared off due to metal fatigue and he came off his bike with a bump. After administering first aid, we managed to get him and the bike to "The Cricketer's" pub, where his wife was able to pick him up in the car.

26th August – Framlingham, Suffolk - Eleven met at the "Carmargue Café", Valley Farm Riding and Driving Centre, Wickham Market, at 9am for breakfast in the café. We then continued on to Framlingham and unloaded our bikes in the Elm Street car park. Our route initially followed NCN1 past the castle and along country lanes through pretty villages until we reached Farnham, where we joined the busy A12 for a bit. Luckily, we survived and we soon heading for Snape Maltings and our elevenses stop at the "Granary Coffee Shop".

Afterwards, we headed out through Tunstall Forest and back to Wickham Market passing through Easton and Brandeston on our way to Earl Soham and "The Victoria" pub for lunch. The local micro-brewery is just up the road and the ale can be recommended. After eating and good conversation, we continued along country lanes back to Framlingham, where we stopped at the "Lion's Den" ice-cream parlour for ice-cream! By the time we got back to the cars, we had completed 41 miles.

Manchurian

16th September – Rowhedge - This was a 9am start and 18 riders followed ride leader Ian (Manchurian) out to Morrison's in Maldon for an early "elevenses". Ian then took four riders on to "The Anchor" at Rowhedge, a distance of 22 miles from Maldon. This was an agreeable pub, that ticked all the boxes, and the landlord came over and introduced himself. There were tasty huffers, Spitfire ale and a cycle rack!

Just after Maldon on the return leg, we left Jon and Lynda to ride at their own pace, but it wasn't long before Jim had a tyre go down. As Ian had a much longer distance to ride home, we let him continue. Two is the ideal number to sort out a puncture, three is a crowd and five is excessive! We were soon underway and caught up with Jon and Lynda. By the time Jim and myself got back to Wickford, we had covered 73 miles and been out nine hours. Ian exceeded a 100 miles (!)

The memorable things about this ride, other than the puncture and Lynda having trouble with her shoe cleats/pedals, was the distance (probably

the longest of the year), a stiff head wind all the way back and some appalling overtaking by motorists, even by Essex's standards. **Mel M**

23rd September – West Hanningfield - This ride started off promisingly weather-wise and eleven brave souls (including a new rider - Ron S) ventured out to Blackmore. But unfortunately we lost Martin P along the way due to his chain coming off and I mistakenly assumed he'd stopped for another reason – sorry, Martin. We left the tearooms in light drizzle and six went onto the “Three Compasses” at West Hanningfield. After lunch, the rains came and developed into a torrential downpour and I for one was thoroughly drenched by the time I got home.

7th October – North Fambridge - As the group numbered twenty, we split into two, one led by Peter W and one by Ian M. Some of us headed for the new café at the Horseshoe Nursery in Bicknacre by taking as direct a route as possible, as we had two new riders with us (welcome to Neil & June N). Seven went onto the “Ferryboat Inn” at North Fambridge and as we were just about to leave, John & Sue arrived by car (having a respite from all the hassle of packing & moving house). Threes' was taken at the “Haybarn Café” in Battlesbridge.

14th October – Viking Trail, Kent - The bi-annual trip to the Viking Coastal Trail was enjoyed by ten riders (John S, Ian M, Lynda & Jon C, Melvin M, Karen & Paul H, Ian & Mike C, Charlotte V), who met in “La Café Crème” in Birchington for breakfast. We then drove the short distance to the seafront at Minnis Bay, unloaded the bikes, and then set off along the esplanade towards Margate. The ride around the headland was very pleasant in the sunshine and, as it was such a clear day, you could see the offshore wind farms and the Maunsell sea forts. When we reached the harbour at Ramsgate, we found our way barred by police crime scene tape and had to make a minor detour to regain our route to the Lido at Pegwell Bay, where we stopped for something to eat.

After lunch, we continued along the trail passing the Viking longship and parted company with Mel at the turn to Minster, as he wanted to continue to Sandwich and explore a longer route. The journey inland went through Monkton and St. Nicholas at Wade, where we stopped for a pint in “The Bell” pub. We returned to Minnis Bay by the sea wall and reached the cars about 3.15pm. As we finished loading, Mel appeared and we were soon all on our way home. **Manchurian**


LEL 2013 – Volunteers required!

by Tom Deakins

Gt Easton control is only open for the return leg,
from 05:00, Tuesday, 30th July to 05:00, Friday, 2nd August 2013.

Help is needed with all areas: stamping cards and other admin/IT, catering, cleaning, bike parking, general dogsbody-ing and keeping everyone happy!

Any level of commitment would be most welcome, even just a few hours to give staff a break. A form for volunteers to detail their skills and availability is at <http://www.londonedinburghlondon.com/volunteer> or, alternatively, contact Tom Deakins for paper copies at 31 The Causeway, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 2AA, (Tel. 01371 876931).

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me, if you have any queries. 



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New Committee Members required

By John Hand, South East Member Group

FREE TYRES !! FOR ALL ESSEX CTC MEMBERS from 19th November 2012!

To see, if you qualify, you will need to read this article in its entirety!!

As we move toward the time of year for AGMs, it is important that we know what we need to achieve for the good of the club and thus the members.


I attend the Essex CTC Committee Meeting once a month in Billericay, as a representative for the South East Member Group. The meetings generally last less than two hours.

It has become obvious to me, sitting in on these meetings that some committee members are taking on too many roles. This leads to inefficient execution of the roles they were originally elected to carry out. So what is all this verbiage leading up to?

I am sure that there are members out there, who could bring their expertise to the committee. We have two members who carry out five functions - this cannot be right!

The Essex CTC AGM is on 18th November, so it is important that as many members as possible attend and it is even more important that members stand up and apply for the positions on the committee.

It is very easy to look the other way, leave it to 'someone else', just turn up for the club run and hope 'someone else' has done it all. I'm afraid the same faces each year step up to the plate and take on the functions. So let's take some of the additional functions off of them and help spread the load.

I will not be at the AGM unfortunately, as I fly out to the Far East to negotiate the free tyres on the 17th November. However, when I turn up at the first meeting in the New Year, I look forward to seeing many new faces and giving us the problem of needing a larger meeting room. 

Chelmsford 2012 “Spring Tour”, Hunstanton

By Adrian Leeds

“Sunny Hunny” (we hope) wrote Dave on the forward paperwork. And it was indeed sunny - between the showers. This was to be the wettest April on record for many places in Britain and sure enough, the rain did keep coming. A Met Office severe weather warning for northwest Norfolk, predicting strong winds and heavy rain was given for the first day. I felt a very slight tinge of guilt, as I stowed the bike in the car for the run up to Norfolk, but lo and behold the high winds and lashing rain met on the way, washed that away. Having passed through the storm, I arrived to find Hunstanton relatively dry with most of the 14-strong group already at the “Clermont Guest House” and eager to get out for an afternoon ride.

Dave led us out to Bircham Windmill, starting off in drizzle and arriving with heavier rain just beginning. Joe’s puncture approaching the mill via the bewildered little lane came late enough for him to push the bike to shelter before fixing it; and we stayed a good while to warm up and dry out. “The Mill” features a welcoming, cycle-friendly cake shop, to which we were to return later in the tour. The rain eased off on the ride back, and we rode atop the sea wall over the final leg, getting a drying side-blast of fresh sea air. [22 miles]

The “Waterside Bar” offers plain fare at a very reasonable price and some unfussy entertainment usually thrown in. This was to be our feeding and watering hole for four out of the five nights. After dinner, there was a so-called “quiz”. It was really a cross between a Quiz, “Battleships” and Bingo, in which you placed your answers randomly into a grid and the answers were also randomly read out. You then needed a “line” of correct ones. The very confused cycling tourists fielded a noble team of 5 and gained a plucky “last place”.

Ken led Friday’s ride. It was a fine, sunny start slowed by two punctures on the way to elevenses at Burnham Market (“Tilly’s Tearooms”). Lunch had been arranged at Stiffkey for a reunion with Edgar. On the way, we were overtaken by Edgar’s daughter Helen, driving the *Holkham Forge* truck. We followed on and made a visit to the Forge, which was originally set up in the mid Victorian era serving the needs of the Estate. These days, it is operated by a collective of artists and blacksmiths, who specialise in high-end ironwork. To those interested in this sort of thing,

Continued on page 27



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we offer, please contact 0870 873 0060 or look up www.ctc.org.uk



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At Stiffkey, the (quite pricey) sandwiches were enormous and garnished with large portions of chips. Edgar was found alive and well although tormented by osteoporosis these days. We had a good lunch and convivial chat.

After lunch, we went in search of afternoon tea. The "Jolly Farmers" at North Creak was found to be closed, so we continued towards home, as the weather turned to heavy showers. The group eventually sheltered for a long slow afternoon tea at the "Railway Pub", Docking, where they have a model railway running round the back rooms at "picture rail" height. Torrential rain ensued making us late back with 53 miles logged.

The evening was again fine and we hurried to the "Waterside", which was staging what they call a "Band Night". Forget any notions of trombones and twirling majorettes, which that title might call to mind: this was an example of the Heavy Metal usage of the word. Twang, Cerraangk! Bash, Bang, went the rehearsal – as the tattooed, bandana wearing (middle-aged) leather-clad ensemble warmed up. The volume was sufficient to actually clean your teeth, if you smiled widely. The intelligent people amongst us left the bar at this point, their ears already assaulted to quitting point. A few older, deafer, rocking biker-types within the group stuck it out to the 10pm "break" when, heads jangling, teeth gleaming, ears ringing, we staggered home.

On Saturday morning, I led and we mustered at the well-known "Fat Birds Don't Fly" cycle shop, where I got a bargain set of £1 brake-blocks in their sale. It was the Queen's Birthday, so it seemed quite appropriate that we should visit her little Pied-a-Terre, otherwise known as Sandringham. The rain came on steadily, as we shadowed the main road, before a photo-opportunity in front of the impressively ornate main gates. The wetness thus received required a good long elevenses stop to dry out and allow the shower to pass over. Lunch was taken at the very picturesque "Castle Rising Tea-rooms", taking in the Sandringham Royal Railway Station on the way. (NB: no line, no trains). Urban myth has it that closing this particular line cost Dr. Beeching his knighthood – who can say, but it certainly must have been a beautiful place in its heyday. Restored by a "bootiful" bowl of soup and bread, I returned to the business of touring, taking the pretty-way-round the damp, fern-lined forest roads. We went via the Massinghams, Harpley and "The

Mayflower" wood and returned via "Great Bircham Mill" for afternoon tea. In spite of the rain, the scenery and the ride remained enjoyable [43 miles].

Continued in the next issue

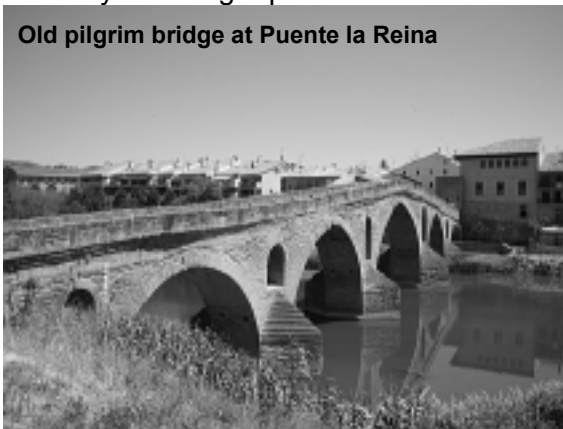
He, who would valiant be - continued

By Chris Mills

Saturday saw us off to a café for breakfast. We were puzzled by the queue in the street so early and on investigation found it was to use the recycling machines, which paid people for their bottles, tins etc. We wanted to leave Pamplona to the south of the official route to avoid a major road. We found our way easily and set off across undulating, but rather dull country, which soon became covered with vineyards. As the midday heat blasted out, we reached the pretty, little chapel of Santa Maria de Eunete, where we saw our first lizard and watched a christening party assemble dressed in their finery. Young Spanish ladies do like

their very short skirts! On we went over the long and narrow medieval stone bridge at Puente la Reina and up and down hills until we reached the bliss of a shady picnic in the shade of the church at Lorca. The heat now was intense and we battled on along the old road close to the motorway that replaced it through Estrella and Los Arcos,

Old pilgrim bridge at Puente la Reina



where we took a more pleasant road to Sensol. Here we stopped for refreshments and joined weary Spanish cyclists, who were complaining that it was too hot for them! It was hilly again and almost at the top the last hill before Viana we were alarmed to find a cyclist lying in the ditch and feared the worst. However, his son was with him and he said Dad would be OK after a rest, so we went on. As we approached our goal for the day at Logrono we used a combination of maps, Mark's GPS and a bit of intuition to pin down the Husa hotel via a stretch of off-road through a nature reserve. This search technique served us really well for the rest of the trip. The hotel looked like a huge warehouse on an industrial estate, but when we finally wheeled our bikes into the palatial lobby at

8.15, we were greeted by the lovely Natalia and all was well. She showed us a posh conference room for the bikes and gave us a conducted tour of the buffet restaurant, where we later dined on a tremendous range of salads and more or less anything else we wanted for 9 euros. This had been a much harder day of 62 miles.



Street pictures in Logrono

We left after a good buffet breakfast and entered Logrono's centre, which had a huge cathedral and streets of handsome old houses. It being a special Sunday the main street was full of people, many of them nuns, making large pictures on the road using what looked like wood shavings dyed in various colours. It reminded me of Derbyshire well dressing. Apparently, after the pictures were finished and admired there was a mass and then a procession, which tramped across all the pictures. We used a mixture of minor roads, main road hard shoulder [not much fun] and off-road bits of

the Camino trail to reach Najera, where we sat under trees outside the café Hispano and shared a pre-lunch snack of tortilla, peppers, fish, pig's ears and cake. There was then a rather unpleasant ride along the hard shoulder of a very busy road (which should have been bypassed but wasn't yet) in the heat to Santo Domingo, where we had our picnic in a square. We were just too late to see a parade. All we got was the band returning to put their instruments away. Before leaving, we searched for a church, which for some reason has an elaborate chicken coop [with hens in it] at the altar, but we failed to find it. More hot main road followed and at one watering stop we re-encountered our father and son Spanish cyclists, who were still struggling. We were pleased to reach our hotel in Belorado and cool down with a beer on the terrace before going to the main square to eat. We had the first of our 'pilgrim's specials', 3 courses for 10 euros, including a good paella and rice pudding, which seemed popular in North Spain. The air in the square was full of swifts swooping everywhere and we spotted 2 storks' nests, one on the church,

the other rather bizarrely on a tower crane! The slightly-the-worse-for-wear landlord seemed rather evasive about breakfast, so we went to bed after 49 not too memorable miles.

Continued in the next issue

Thinking of...

... well-known people who enriched the life of our cycling community:

Dave Russell from the Chelmsford MG is recovering in Broomfield hospital from an accident after being knocked off his bike by a car.

We wish him a speedy recovery and getting back onto the bike. "Dave, Chelmsford needs you as the runs secretary!" [Ed.]

Useful Website Links

Essex CTC Member Group	www.essexcycling.co.uk
Cyclists' Touring Club	www.ctc.co.uk
Chris' site: route planning resources	www.velocipede.org.uk
Yet Another Cycling Forum	http://yacf.co.uk/forum/index.php

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Herongate Cycles (Cycle Shop)	www.herongatecycles.com
Hopleys Garden Long Barn (Café)	www.hopleys.co.uk
Kings Road Cycles (Cycle Shop)	www.shedbornbikes.com
Megarry's Antiques and Teashop (Café)	www.megarrysteashop.co.uk
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