



July / August 2014



Third Prize at the Dave Doo Photographic Competition 2013
Peter Walker, South East Group CTC
'Downhill speed record to Skipton'

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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 4/2014se32

Index

Index	3
Impressum:	3
Editor's Foreword	5
The President's piece	6
Member Groups' Reports	9
For Sale:.....	14
Forthcoming Events	17
Chelmsford Member Group – Runs List	18
Havering Member Group – Runs List	19
South East Essex Member Group – Runs List	20
Colchester Informal Member Group – Runs List	21
EDARF	22
Ghana - continued	25
French cuisine for the Cyclist - continued	28
Audax Windmill Rides 2014	30
2014 Windmill Ride 210 km Ride Report	31
Obituary – John Copas (lived until June 2014)	33
Useful Website Links	34

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

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Certificate of Merit Committee

Brian Penny, John Steer, *Position Vacant*

Essex CTC MG Trustees

Stefan Eichenseher, John Steer, Brian Penny

Closing date for the September / October 2014 edition is on **15 August 2014**.

Editor's Foreword

I think we cannot complain about the summer, although I just about remember the rather wet spring.

We are now in the middle of summer and lots of cycling events giving ample opportunity to exercise and inhale the fresh air of the country side.

The traditional Windmill Rides have seen a lot of old faces – veterans to the journey to Newmarket and back. There were also some riders, who I have not recognised. Two event reports give you an insight of the wet and windy venture on page 30 and 31.

Unfortunately, there is a bit of sad news in this issue again: John Copas from the Havering CTC Member Group followed Peter Moore into cycling heaven. You can read his obituary on page 33.

A nice series of ride reports and touring articles are quite refreshing in this publication again.

Unfortunately, I am still not out and about on two wheels, although I miss riding very much. And especially with weather like the one we have at the moment, I feel it immoral not to leave everything and have a quick dash around.

However, I hope you are all out and about and have fun cycling!

Your editor,
Stefan Eichenseher



The President's piece

By the time you read your copy of the Spotlight, the Tour de France will be back on its home soil and many members of the public will be buying racing bikes, which will sit in garages or sheds waiting to be sold on. It's up to us as CTC members to try and encourage these people that they can ride their bikes all year and in all weathers (how do the professionals train in this country to improve, before they go to foreign parts) ... They take part in the SEG's 75 event, I hear you say.

I don't know, if you have noticed that the local group numbers are dropping, even though there are approximately 70,000 CTC members across the country. The local groups of Essex need to encourage new members of all ages, especially the younger ones, from teenagers upwards both male and female.

The Essex group shirt is still selling well, which is good advertising for the local CTC cycling groups. You can still contact Brian Penny to get yours. His number is in the Spotlight under officers of the EMG for more details.

Stay safe and enjoy your cycling wherever you ride and may the puncture fairy be kind to you. Don't forget to talk to cyclists that you see along the way, as they might be interested in joining their local CTC cycling group that they didn't know existed

John Steer

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Member Groups' Reports

Chelmsford Member Group

18th May 2014 - Horseheath (Cams) - This was one of those beautiful early summer days to remember. With a clear blue sky and warm sunshine only a short-sleeved top was needed although sun protection was essential!

9 of us gathered at the start for the first leg to Finchingfield via Rayne and Shalford. We kept up a reasonable pace and arrived there at 10.45 when

**John and Margaret
on the 'pentacycle'!**



Margaret and John joined us on their 'pentacycle' tandem. For the uninitiated, this is a new creation of John's, which is hard to describe, but essentially a bike and a trike joined together.

After elevenses surrounded by a multitude of motorcyclists, we headed for

Horseheath where we enjoyed the usual excellent food and service at the "Old Red Lion".

We returned via Ashdon and Great Bardfield where we were only allowed takeaways at the "Blue Egg" as it was 3.35pm. The wind had strengthened to about force 4 from the Southeast for the return leg which made this 71 mile ride fairly challenging.

We arrived back in Chelmsford at about 5.30pm with the sun still shining brightly. **Martin Cockersole**

8th June 2014 - Ride to Kersey - Nine riders set off from the Town Hall under clear blue skies on a warm summer Sunday morning. Keeping up a steady pace we took the usual route to Marks Tey via Wickham Bishops, Tiptree and Messing, arriving at the "Bungalow Diner" for elevenses spot on at 11am.

For a variety of reasons only three riders continued to lunch at Kersey. The north Essex and South Suffolk countryside looked stunning in the clear light with fluffy patches of Cumulus cloud decorating the sky. Kersey is simply a classic picturesque English village and in the "Bell Inn"

we were provided with excellent sandwiches and trimmings along with well-kept ale.

We stopped for tea and cake in the garden of the Greenstead Green farm shop before heading back towards Chelmsford. I recorded 81 miles, a bit more than our normal ration these days. **Martin Cockersole**

4th May 2014 - The bright spring sunshine attracted only eight starters, but then, some of our regulars were overseas touring and thus avoiding the quite chilly breeze. The traffic seemed mercifully light until we neared Stansted, where we rode a mile on the B1051 and were overtaken by several vehicles including a Mercedes CL55 car doing at least 100 MPH. "The Yeoman Café" at Stansted served us well before six went on to Fernaux Pelham for lunch. "The Brewery Tap" made us welcome with a good selection of light options including Dave's "Garlic Infused Camembert Baked in its Box" - which he generously shared around. The ride home was punctuated by mechanical failures – firstly, my chain decided to break at the spring-link (thanks to Martin for the repair); Diana's rear tyre threatened to disintegrate de-laminating further, as we went and then my gears jammed. (Damaged rear mech and broken jockey wheel, caused by the earlier chain failure). Nevertheless, we made it to Sawbridgeworth, where "The Shed" stayed open late for us to enable a coffee stop. Not sure of the trip mileage, but it was well into the 60s in my case. **Adrian Leeds**

8th June 2014 - Four Counties Audax - Herts Wheelers organise this annual event, which this year was headquartered at Ware. Dave Southin and I entered the 160 Km "Four Counties" option, (there's also 2 counties, 3 and 5 to choose from, depending on your desired distance). We enjoyed superb weather all day. The ride goes by the highest points in Bedfordshire (Dunstable Downs), Cambridgeshire (GT Chishill) and Essex (Duddenhoe End) giving the riders a succession of stunning views across the English Countryside. Hilly, but worth it! **Adrian Leeds**

Colchester Member Group

[Unfortunately, there were no reports available from the Colchester Informal Member Group. Ed.]

Havering Member Group

April 27th - Just up to Blackmore - Five set off for 11ses at Blackmore at a surprisingly quiet tea rooms. A short ride was called for, so after hot drinks and a natter we made our way home via Kelvedon Hatch, Frog Street & Navestock for a change. **David Rowlands**

May 11th - Dot Sharp 80k - Chan, Gerald, Gordon and Dave joined sixteen assorted Essex riders on the Dot Sharp 80k. The rain died down, but the wind was a constant companion - OK on the way out but we paid for it later! We had a quick coffee at Hatfield Heath and then on to Gt Canfield and Gt Waltham. Then into that headwind through Chelmsford for the last leg on our last legs! Back at Mountnessing for tea & biccies, then home.

Thanks to the organisers and thanks for the lift, Gordon. **David Rowlands**

May 18th – Stisted - Early start on a brilliant sunny Sunday for Chan, Gordon & Dave. After a natter with Brian we set off for 11ses at "Paper Mill Lock", where we picked up Steve.

Onwards to Stisted, where we realised that the advertised destination was probably a bit over ambitious so we decided to lunch at "The Onley Arms", Stisted, just in time, as it was closing for refurbishment soon!

Return took us north of Braintree, where we experienced some geographical malfunctions!

Back on track to Felsted, Pleshey & The Easters we eventually reached home with 90+ miles covered. **David Rowlands**

May 25th - Cold Norton - Apart from a few spots at the start, it was a nice sunny day. The magnificent seven (Alex, Barrie, Chan, Gerald, Gordon, Kelvin & Dave) set off across the fens to Dunton and beyond. We passed south of Hanningfield reservoir to reach "BHN" at Rettendon - nice, but not the fastest service in the world!

Onwards and upwards we went to the top of Radar Hill and down to Stow Marie's and Cold Norton. At "The Norton" the usual Sunday menu was replaced by a BBQ, which only tempted one of us (me), the rest falling back on sarnies, as we lapped up the sunshine in the garden.

Return was via Purleigh, Bicknacre and a whistle stop at West Hanningfield bus shelter, Stock, Hutton and home. **David Rowlands**

June 1st - Short Half-day ride to Abridge - Four new faces, Helen, Sue, Elliot & Jason joined Andy & usual suspects, Chan, Ray, Steve & Dave. The nifty nine set off into the sunny lanes to Abridge via South Weald & Lambourne End. The sun must have brought the cyclists out, never seen so many!

At Abridge Elliot & Jason bade us farewell and the rest of piled into "The Bridge Deli" for our caffeine fix.

For the return, Dave led Sue & Andy the quiet way to Passingford Bridge then up Shonks Mill, ignoring the "Road Closed" signs (why were they there?). At Coxtie Green Sue headed for Brentwood and two headed for Upminster via the Nag Z.

Meanwhile Steve led the rest on a more direct route via Noak Hill and the Ingrebourne Way. **David Rowlands**

Continued on page 21



"Desperate" Marketing: Ian Mather (SEG's) standing at the most westerly point of the UK mainland (Ardnamurchan Point in Scotland), wearing his *Essex CTC jacket*, after completing his journey from the most easterly point (Lowestoft Ness). The islands of Rhum & Eigg can be seen in the distance.



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Essex CTC

www.essexcycling.co.uk

Chelmsford City Member Group

www.chelmsfordctc.co.uk

Colchester informal Member Group

www.colchesterctc.co.uk

Havering Member Group

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South East Member Group

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(Or contact Stella Surch on 01245 600426 to arrange viewing)

South East Essex Member Group

13th April – Little Green - Thirteen made it to the “Secret Garden tearooms” in Chelmsford, but only eleven sat down for 11ses, as two had guests expected at home. “Eight went onto lunch at “The Compasses” at Little Green.

20th April – Moreton - Only seven at Wickford today for the ride out to “Blackmore tearooms”. Unusually, nobody returned home, but instead continued to the “Nags Head” in Moreton. The route took us via Greensted, where we stopped to look at the log church, which dates back to the 10th century and has a 12th century crusader grave in the grounds. After lunch we followed NCN1 through Willingale back into Chelmsford and then made our respective ways home.

18th May – Bicknacre - Unfortunately, the scheduled away ride to Maidenhead didn't happen due to a lack of interest, and no lunch venue had been booked because of this, which is standard practice for the SEG's. It was decided that after 11ses at the “Crystal Café” in Maldon the remaining riders would head to the “Brewers Arms” in Bicknacre.

25th May – Woodham Walter - Seventeen headed for Cooksmill Green and “The Bakehouse Coffee Shop” adjacent to the “Fox & Goose” pub. Unfortunately, Martin P suffered a catastrophic bottom bracket failure and after much ranting and raving he managed with the aid of Claude & Jim to rig a temporary repair that got him to 11ses. Mel & Colin had gone on ahead and missed the coffee shop, as they were in front of the run's leader, but eventually back-tracked, when they realised their mistake. Charles T predicted rain at 11am, but it didn't materialise except on his house, maybe.

Only four went onto lunch at the “Queen Victoria” in Woodham Walter, as Claude & Jim accompanied Martin home to Wickford to sort his bottom bracket out.

1st June – Shoeburyness - Fourteen left Wickford via Brock Hill, Rettendon Common, Battlesbridge and Hullbridge to Lower Road, Hockley and the “Riverside Nursery & Garden Centre”. “The Waterfront Coffee Shop” has only been open since April and they'd arranged the tables into a long line to accommodate us and the four who met us there.

Nine went onto the newly refurbished "Parson's Barn" in Shoeburyness, a Wetherspoons pub.

8th June – Hythe to Dungeness - Although this car-assisted ride required an early start from Shoeburyness for me, it turned out to be an amazing adventure with lots of laughs, fantastic weather, good food and even better company. I rode the 6 miles to John's house and after loading the bikes on the rack, we set off to pick-up Brian P at the Rayleigh Weir. We eventually figured out how to get three bikes on the rack satisfactorily (my triple and butterfly bars always cause problems) and were soon heading for our rendezvous in Hythe with Lynda C, Claude A, Karen & Paul H, Mike C & Mel M. After a welcome cuppa and something to eat we were soon heading along the old military canal to join the quiet country lanes towards Lydd, where we stopped for a drink in "The George" just after noon. The final few miles took us past the nuclear power station, halted us at the level crossing to allow a miniature train to pass and past the over-priced shacks on the coast road to "The Britannia" at Dungeness. All our meals arrived promptly except Mel's, who was mistaken for a child, when the order went through the till (he's just a big kid really).

The return route took us back through New Romney, where we stopped to take pictures of the 3.15pm miniature steam locomotive, as it came into the station (more big kids playing with trains). We stopped at the "Lathe Barn Tearooms" for tea and scones or cake, and it was here that an amusing incident took place. In order to gather the riders for departure John S blew on his whistle and he reminded me of the fat controller but when I said this, Lynda C thought I was talking about her, so I got a kick up the backside. When I explained, she was reduced to a fit of the giggles and this proved infectious and even the fat controller joined in. We set off and some got left behind, so we waited on a grassy bend for the stragglers and, as Brian P arrived, he put his foot down and promptly fell down a hole with his bike on top (alas no picture but plenty of laughs and luckily he was unscathed, except for his ego).

We departed just before 6pm and, after a slow approach through the toll at Dartford we were soon heading for home after another exciting away ride with the SEG's. **Manchurian**

Forthcoming Events



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

Date	Event	Organiser
13 th Jul	[EMG] Peggy Thorndike Memorial 100m/100km , start @ 8:30 from Market Hall Café, Woodlands Road, Wickford, SS12 0AL, OS Map 178, TQ745933	Stefan Eichenseher
27 th July	[EMG] Summer Gathering , Woodham Mortimer, "Hurdlemaker's Arms", from 12:30	Brian Penny
10 th Aug	[EMG] Colchester 40/40 , start from Copford, "The Alma" PH, at 9:30	Brian Penny
7 th Sep	[EMG] Rough Stuff , start opp "The Cricketers" pub, Mill Green, at 10:00	Brian Taylor
28 th Sep	[EMG] Colchester 100 , start from Colchester, The Bricklayers Arms, CO4 5AA, OS168 TL992265	Malcolm Mitchell 07531 511112

If not stated, please see the *Impressum* (p. 4) for organisers' contacts or see our website at <http://www.essexcycling.co.uk/events.htm>.

Cover picture:



Third Prize at the Dave Doo Photographic Competition 2013

Peter Walker, South East Group CTC

'Downhill speed record to Skipton'



The verdict of the judge was:

"I liked this image, the sky, composition with the two cyclists and sense of open landscape are beautiful. The print however needs to be brighter, which can be done at the printing stage."

Chelmsford Member Group – Runs List



Secretary: Adrian Leeds

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

Runs Secretary: Dave Russell

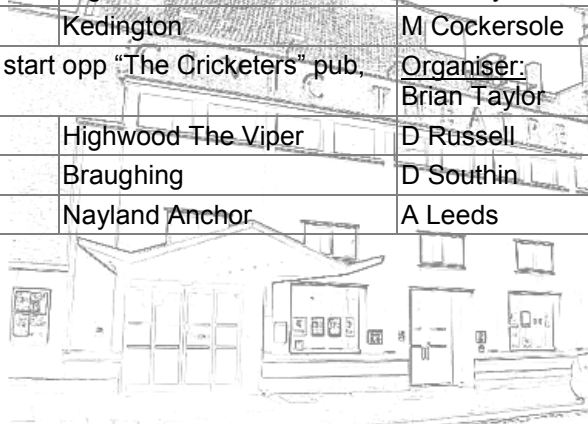
7 Willows Crescent, Hatfield Peverel, ☎ 01245 381055

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 Dave Russell ☎ 01245 381055

Date	11ses	Destination	Leader
13 Jul	[EMG] Peggy Thorndike Memorial 100m/100km , start @ 8:30 from Market Hall Café, Woodlands Road, Wickford, SS12 0AL, OS Map 178, TQ745933		<u>Organiser:</u> Stefan Eichenseher
ALT:	Blue Egg	Castle Camps	D Russell
20 Jul	Hatfield Heath P.O.	Dane End	D Southin
27 Jul	[EMG] Summer Gathering , Woodham Mortimer, "Hurdlemaker's Arms", from 12:30		<u>Organiser:</u> Brian Penny
ALT:	Maldon, The Fig Tree	Summer Meet, Hurdlemakers Arms	J & B Taylor
03 Aug	Finchingfield	Hadstock	D Russell
10 Aug	[EMG] Colchester 40/40 , start from Copford, "The Alma" PH, at 9:30		<u>Organiser:</u> Brian Penny
ALT:	Blue Egg	Copford Alma	TBA
17 Aug	Greenstead Green	Lamarsh Lion	A Leeds
24 Aug	Sawbridgeworth Shed	High Cross	D Emery
31 Aug	Blue Egg	Kedington	M Cockersole
07 Sep	[EMG] Rough Stuff , start opp "The Cricketers" pub, Mill Green, at 10:00		<u>Organiser:</u> Brian Taylor
ALT:	Hastingwood	Highwood The Viper	D Russell
14 Sep	Stansted Mt Fitchet	Braughing	D Southin
21 Sep	Marks Tey	Nayland Anchor	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
13 th July	[EMG] Peggy Thorndike Memorial 100m/100km , start @ 8:30 from Market Hall Café, Wickford, SS12 0AL, OS Map 178, TQ745933	<u>Organiser:</u> Stefan Eichenseher
Alt:	Southend, Bring a touring bike	Stephen Ingall
20 th July	40+ - Sights of London See website for Start time & place. Let us know if you are coming	Bernie Curtis
27 th July	[EMG] Summer Gathering , Woodham Mortimer, "Hurdlemaker's Arms", from 12:30	<u>Organiser:</u> Brian Penny
3 rd Aug	Short Half Day Ride: Rainham RSPB via Ingrebourne Valley country park	Stephen Ingall
10 th Aug	[EMG] Colchester 40/40 , start from Copford, "The Alma" PH, at 9:30	<u>Organiser:</u> Brian Penny
Alt:	11ses North Weald Historic Railway. Lunch in the Easter's or Rodings	Stephen Ingall
17 th Aug	Heybridge Basin, 11's Norton heath. 8.15 for 8.30am Start; Joint ride with S. Hert's CTC	S. Herts CTC & David Rowlands
24 th Aug	11ses Mucking Nature Reserve; Lunch: Nags Head, Ramsden Heath	Stephen Ingall
31 st Aug	Wareside, Herts (Nr Ware) Circa 65m	David Rowlands
7 th Sept	[EMG] Rough Stuff , start opp "The Cricketers" pub, Mill Green, at 10:00	<u>Organiser:</u> Brian Taylor
14 th Sept	Shoreham, Kent. Train to Barking, short ride to FREE Woolwich ferry into Kent	David Rowlands

Note:

First Sunday of the month:

Short half-day ride for those wanting a shorter or easier ride

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 segsssec@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	Elevenes	Lunch Destination
July 2014		
13 th	[EMG] Peggy Thorndike Memorial 100m/100km , start @ 8:30 from Market Hall Café, Woodlands Road, Wickford, SS12 0AL	
Alt:	Sandon (Sandon Garden Centre)	Mill Green (The Viper)
20 th	[MG] Tiptree (Tom's Farm Shop), 9am start	
Alt:	Woodham Walter (Bunsay Down Golf Club) 9.30am start	*see note
27 th	[EMG] Summer Meet , Woodham Mortimer (Hurdlemaker's Arms), contact: Brian Penny	
Alt:	Margaretting (Saddlery)	*see [EMG] above
August 2014		
3rd	Maldon (Crystal Café)	Kelvedon (Railway Tavern)
10th	[EMG] Colchester 40/40 , start from Copford, "The Alma" PH, at 9:30, contact Brian Penny	
Alt:	Billericay (Café at Lake Meadows)	*see note
17th	Cooksmill Green (Bake House)	Littley Green (The Compasses)
24th	[MG] Mildenhall , Suffolk, start from Long Melford (High St.) @ 9am for 9.30am, contact: Brian Penny	
Alt:	Bicknacre (White Elm Tea Room)	*see note
31st	Great Baddow (Bringing Pine)	Little Braxted (Green Man)
September 2014		
7th	[EMG] Rough Stuff , start opp "The Cricketers" pub, Mill Green, at 10:00, contact Brian Taylor	
Alt:	Hockley (Riverside Nursery & Garden Centre Coffee Shop)	Hawkwell (White Hart)
14th	Sandon (Garden Centre Coffee Shop)	Cold Norton (The Norton)

Note: * When **EMG** or **MG** events take place, the local ride will include a booked Elevenes venue, but not a specific pub for lunch, unless otherwise stated. This will enable members to make their own choice.

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
Jul 13	[EMG] Peggy Thorndike Memorial 100m/100km , start @ 8:30 from Market Hall Café, Woodlands Road, Wickford, SS12 0AL, OS Map 178, TQ745933		<u>Organiser:</u> Stefan Eichenseher
Alt:	Witham, Oliver's Nursery	Rayne, Booking Hall Cafe	Paul & Caroline Avison
Jul 20	Stratford St Mary, Hall Farm Shop	Shotley Gate, The Shipwreck	TBA
Jul 27	[EMG] Summer Gathering , Woodham Mortimer, "Hurdlemaker's Arms", from 12:30		<u>Organiser:</u> Brian Penny
Alt:	Layr Marney (tbc)	Woodham Mortimer	Alan Palmer
Aug 03	Sudbury, Weston's Cafe	Hadleigh, The George	Paul & Caroline Avison
Aug 10	[EMG] Colchester 40/40 , start from Copford, "The Alma" PH, at 9:30		<u>Organiser:</u> Brian Penny
Aug 17	TBC	Clare, Country Park Picnic	Alan Palmer
Aug 24	TBC	Chelsworth, The Peacock	Steve Hardy
Aug 31	Birch, Gallery Tea Room	East Mersea, The Vineyard	Derek Snowling
Sep 07	[EMG] Rough Stuff , start opp "The Cricketers" pub, Mill Green, at 10:00		<u>Organiser:</u> Brian Taylor
Alt:	Tiptree, Woodlands Cafe	Little Green, The Compasses	Alan Palmer
Sep 14	Langham, The Sheperd	Groton, The Fox & Hounds	Gillian Walker
Sep 21		Heybridge Basin	TBA

Note:

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



By Margaret Davis

Essex D.A. Reunion Fellowship has joined with the Viking Road Club to share Social Events because of dwindling numbers. There is a strong link between the CTC and the Viking, because the latter was originally formed as the racing offshoot of the Essex DA. Both held similar social events and some people belonged to both groups.

The latest meeting took place on the 10th May at "The Langdon Hills Golf Club".

Thirty-two of us sat down to enjoy a three-course lunch. A few people arrived by bike, most by car. We sometimes put the tandem in the car park early and have a ride before the lunch, but this time we had other commitments and it wasn't possible.

The Golf Club is on top of a hill, and the dining room is on the first floor and we all stood around with a drink, having a gossip and admiring the spectacular views.

The menu was wonderful and catered for all tastes. When we sat down however, we did not just have the menu to browse through, we also had the usual fiendish quiz produced by Eva Paine (the organiser and Editor of our quarterly newsletter). All the answers were Essex place names. The quiz was up to Eva's usual standard and concentrated the mind. I could have done with sneaking a local O.S. map in, but I think I would have been noticed!

We had a free raffle, again supplied by Eva, who recently celebrated her 90th Birthday.

There is no membership fee for joining EDARF, and all we do now is meeting in May and October for a meal. We are all either still cycling or are no longer able to for various reasons. Non-cycling partners etc. are welcome too. It is a great way to keep in touch with old friends, if you no longer ride, or even if you do, it is a good excuse for a chinwag.

If you want to know any more details contact John or Margaret Davis on 01787 474224. 🚲

Here is the next big event in the North of Essex!



<http://www.colchesterctc.co.uk/events.html>

Contact the organiser Malcolm Mitchell on 07531 51112.

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ANNUAL TRAINING CAMPS

February, March, April and September

Ghana - continued

By Steve Gregson

At Sogakope, a 'worldclass' hotel with a view over the Volta as it widened before the Atlantic Ocean. Good food. Sitting on veranda early morning a treat.

Dragoman bus passed us, open windows, a really old strong thing. Wonder, if those adventurers are sorry for us or jealous?

As we were not going north, we then put in an extra loop eastwards to the coast near Togo and found at Keta a Guest House by the beach with photogenic fishing boats / men. On the way, 7 young men on side of road handloom-weaving bright Kente strips, clickety-click. Further on drummers, trance-like dancers at some kind of religious or funeral event. In the lagoon, kingfishers, hornbills, plovers, stilts, weaver birds.

Here in Ghana, am wearing long ankle socks a la Wiggins, not for performance, but at average 8mp could do with that. More to reduce skin cancer risk on shins (2 friends suffered seriously).

We continue on our 'proper' holiday along the turquoise Atlantic Ocean; the sand and then the road - or something called a road - potholes connected with sand, of which the most lands on our shins and in the chains. Gosh, we have brown legs! Or sand-covered! Cross the Volta Delta on an engine boat, just for us 'special' price! Prampram, 6x 60ft tree trunks hewn out in the shape of the fishing boat hulls on a lorry and on the beach the finishing works going on, quite massive construction. Good for 15 years or so, a snip at £75000.

Marvellous to see all the young kids able to walk smartly alone to school. Dressed in clean uniforms, satchels and a polite Good Morning to us always.

At one point, on a lonely cul-de-sac along the coast a Muslim lady in a Blackburn Rovers top! As we had just seen them draw with City in the cup 0-0, we thought of such a sight in Blackburn back home.

Eating improving too, octopus, lobster, as well as the ocean's fish; safer than chicken; even a gin & tonic last evening.

Going to the west of Accra from Shai bird Reserve and run-down chalets, we got caught in torrential rain on the equivalent of the M25, but

fortunately we found a welcoming, excellent Forest View Hotel at North Dzorwulu, not far from the Accra airport.

One last observation, as we start our second month and are still happy to do so: Most days we were asked our age, but at the last occurrence, a big heavy plant transporter driver, helping with directions shook both our hands 3 times, then embraced Anni, hugged her and then hugged me too. He was a giant (black man). Such unexpected daily happy things are a great delight here in Ghana. Lots of fun, as we rode along; cries of 'Grandma', 'Grandpa', as they call folks, who are past it.

February summary so far - after a 3-day stay at Asaasi-Yaa, a friendly seaside resort, where we had breakfast overlooking the Atlantic, we decided to find some Rough-Stuff Touring and also to avoid the main east west highway, so turning west out of the gate onto a hard sandy byway; this soon became a grass-centred track, then a footpath, then just grass next to the beach then on to the beach, until an estuary, which we waded across; fast flowing, so gave 2 panniers to 2 young 'porters'. The next day more dirt tracks, but a nice hotel at the end. Then a 3-day diversion to the interior northwards on quiet roads to Oda and back south again, enjoying the cocoa plantations; short hills and a hotel with colourful garden where we ate our evening meal.

A few days later another beach track from Ellmina; meanwhile 2 castles to visit and in between a discussion with 3 'suits' with ties in a Security Firm's big 4-Wheel drive, who sat there engine running and wound up the windows, when we asked them politely to turn it off - arrogance in abundance...

Another walk on the beach to Besua, after a very steep headland track. The African Rainbow was a professionally run hotel, very friendly staff. Later a visit to a castle bought by a Surrey farmer. A day to rest up, then off again only to be halted by threats of extortion/protection money on another track that left us further back than when we started! ... All part of the adventure!

Still, in **March** so far there have been some lovely days on beaches by some of the Beach Resorts, where we have stayed, eating only fresh fish (and chips or rice) from the nearby Atlantic.

As a bonus, we have mostly managed to avoid the busy east west highway and are just half a day from the Ivory Coast border.

Weather still hot, no complaints there; now and again a shower, but no wet clothes, always somewhere to shelter; one puncture a week to give us a moan!

Hi again, what an experience at the frontier to the Ivory Coast! A long straight road that became

full of folk selling palm kernels, other fruit and veg plus all manner of goods on both sides of the road, exports/imports from the Ivory Coast; trolleys moving in all directions and us trying to make progress forwards; tall herb/medicine sellers from Niger and Benin. Eventually, we came to some closed gates and in the distance, a lagoon, perhaps 2km to the other side. The police, then Customs, then Emigration let us pass, but we were nervous in case of not being let back in, but in the end an officer took us to the edge of the Quay and we managed a photo. We bought a mango and avocado for lunch.



Cyclists in the rain

That was it, our tour nominally ended. We turned our wheels for home; just a couple of hundred miles to Accra airport. 3 days followed with us rolling along in a big gear, hind-wind for the first time; then a bus ride and breaking a lifelong taboo, when we rode the last kilometres to our guest house in pitch darkness.

Yes, Ghana, West Africa and 'The White Man's Grave' had certainly grown on us. The welcome of the people and the hot weather the real plusses.

See you soon. We have evaded the cannibals' pot so far!

The final ride to stay near the airport, collect a box and find an extra one went trouble-free. At the overnight flight check-in, the girls were so impressed with what was in the 2 boxes and consequently our riding in Ghana that they upgraded us! A just reward, maybe. It was certainly not for my sartorial elegance, a many times hand washed shirt and black toe-tector boots (for the wildlife snakes). 🚲

French cuisine for the Cyclist - continued

By Christine O'Neil

It is not just the type of food

Recent studies have shown that smaller portion sizes in France may explain why they can seemingly eat mussels drenched in garlic butter and still stay slim.

In fact, on average they consume far fewer calories than we do. This is partly because of their relaxed style of eating – the French savour their food. For them, it seems, eating is a life-enriching pleasure, not something to be rushed.

Eating in France is also very much a social activity. By taking things more slowly, there is plenty of time between courses for the body to work out when it is full. So for them, it is quality that counts, not quantity.

So, whilst on holiday you might pick up some life enhancing habits that you can continue when you come home.

Just compare a typical British diet with the healthier French version:

Typical British diet	Typical French diet
Rushed meals in front of the TV	Sociable, leisurely meals
Big portions	Smaller portions
Sausages, burgers – lots of saturated fat	Lean meats, fish and seafood – more protein, less carbohydrate
White toast and sugary jam	Smaller portions of breads and pastries
Sugary sweets and drinks	Dark chocolate
Fast foods and ready-meals	Local cheeses and hams
Crisps and biscuits	Olives, nuts, seeds and dried fruits
Processed foods and drinks	Plenty of local fresh vegetables, fruits and whole grains
Beer and wine (often to excess)	Small amounts of red wine with meals
Trans fats, margarines	Butter and olive oil
Salt and ketchup	Garlic, herbs, citrus juices and vinegars for flavouring

Cycling Nutrition

Running out of energy on a bike ride is colloquially known as *the bonk*, a term which equates to *the wall* experienced by runners. Legs can turn to jelly and a feeling of exhaustion and dizziness overcomes the rider. To avoid this sudden physical crash, it is essential for cyclists to eat the right foods at the right time.

Carbohydrates are an obvious choice for cyclists, and huge plates of pasta may just account for the prowess of generations of Italian road racers! Pasta is an example of a food with a low glycaemic index, and a source of carbohydrate, which is slowly metabolised. As such, it provides sustained energy. Highly glycaemic carbohydrates are easily-absorbed, boosting blood sugar and keeping energy levels topped up.

A Balanced Diet

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables (fresh if possible), whole grain breads, pasta, cereals, milk, eggs, fish and red meat is ideal. These foods need to be combined in such a way that about 60-70% of the total calories are coming from carbohydrate sources, 25% from fats and the remainder (about 15%) from proteins.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are great foods for cyclists. They don't clog your arteries or give you cancer, but carbohydrates don't all metabolise at the same rate.

The glycemic index rates the speed at which various carbohydrates are metabolised and their ability to raise blood sugar. Foods that rate high in the list make their energy available after twenty minutes or so, while foods which come in under 35 provide sustained energy. Glucose is the reference point, with an index of 100.

The glycemic response is influenced by the amount of food you eat, its fibre content, fat content or amount of added fat, and the way the food is prepared.

If cycling for longer than an hour or so, load with two grams of low-index carbohydrates per kilogram of body weight. These foods will help to keep your blood sugar level stable throughout the ride.

Highly glycemic carbs are best just before, during, and after exercise. The sugars from these foods enter the bloodstream quickly to be

available to your muscles. However, avoid highly glycemic foods too long before exercise, or pick foods richer in fructose than glucose or the mixture of the two sugars, sucrose.

Continued in the next issue

Audax Windmill Rides 2014

By Stefan Eichenseher


I have the pleasure to do only a short summary of the event, as the next article is a ride report of the experience of this year's 210km event.

Of 38 pre-entries 5 did not start. An additional 20 entered on the line making the mix to 24 riders on the 120km ride and 29 riders on the 210km ride. There were only 2 DNF – both on the 210k ride. One took a taxi from Newmarket, after running out of inner tubes, and the other got a bit too wet - also up there - and decided to quit.

As I understand, the beautiful sunshine that started the day was unfortunately accompanied by considerable headwind, which needed quite an effort working through some of the open planes. Upon the return journey the riders however could reap the benefit of a nice tailwind.

I had a couple of amazing late entries: 5 minutes after the 210k-lot left, Chris Regan turned up, signed in and made it round at a nice average of just over 10 hours. Brian Eves cut it even tighter: cycling up from Fobbing, he arrived at 10:10 at the Galleywood Heritage Centre blaming the headwind that he did not make it by 10. But he entered anyway. After a nap and some refreshments, I looked out of the window and thought, "what are you doing here? – You are not one who is likely to quit?" Brian was back after 5 hours 20 mins. And after another half hour later, the riders started trickling in, until the last finished at 21:38.

The feeding station at Ugley was evidently a welcome stop to replenish the carbs-drained muscles. Feedback on the organisation and route at the end of event, and also by email the following day, was very appreciative and encouraging to carry on with this event in the years to come.

All in all, it appears that all participants were quite enjoying the rides. I am looking forward to seeing some of you back next year! 

2014 Windmill Ride 210 km Ride Report

By Malcolm Mitchell

I arrived at Galleywood Heritage Centre for the Windmill Ride 210 km Audax somewhat earlier than I had intended to... I rode to the event from Colchester via Saffron Walden to turn it into a 300 km and had allowed 5.5 hours to get to the start, but actually made it there in under 4.5, which meant I had some time to kill.

There is something very relaxing about riding at night, apart from the extra concentration needed for road defects and wild animals! I only met one car between Colchester and Saffron Walden, a farmer in Stisted - a village I will now refer to from now on as, in the words of Hunter S Thompson, "bat country". Sadly someone on Lyons Hall Rd will have woken to find, or at some point through the day realised, that their cat tragically perished in the night. It's sad to see any "road kill", but when it is an animal cherished by humans it is particularly poignant. However, close to Radwinter I had the pleasure of seeing a bevy of roe deer that weren't at all shy or flummoxed by my presence on the road, very casually crossing and staying close to the road side, as I cautiously passed.

There was a trickle then flurry of vehicles and bikes descending on event HQ, with Stefan Eichenseher, the organiser, frantically getting the gates open and the hall set up with the help of Brian Penny. While waiting to get in, I met Adrian Leeds, Secretary of the Chelmsford section for the first time; I will now be able to put a face to the name. The start line was the last I saw of Adrian, as on the ride he was well down the road!

Stefan announced it was set to be good riding weather — not too hot, not too cold. I was a bit sceptical having waited for the sun to make an appearance for hours by that point! It did eventually though and was actually so warm I removed my sleeves on the approach to Finchingfield. Shortly after, busy nattering, I made a wrong turn heading for Belchamp Walter rather than St Paul (!) so arrived at the first control from the wrong direction (to the controllers surprise), via Belchamp Otten. No sooner had I set off, it started to rain and getting hungry and in need of another coffee boost I stopped not long after at Cafe Clare, where I reattached my sleeves before setting off again.

Onwards to Newmarket through the relentless rain, which rather than easing off got progressively heavier, so that by the time I arrived at

Greggs, I was much like a drowned rat! No matter, coffee and a large baguette plus the use of the hot hand dryer in the toilet got me ready for the final 100 odd km. I waited for the rain to ease, along with Eirlys Lougher and Cristina Ruiz-Perez, from Sussex, who were a bit more prepared than I ... with rainproof jackets. As I left, it was only spitting and the sun was even starting to come out. It did a little, but was quickly followed by another sustained downpour not far out of Newmarket.

It was still raining heavily, as I arrived at Saffron Walden, where one of the roads was being relayed ahead of Le Tour, which meant some oh-so-naughty pavement-cycling, before taking to the fresh tarmac. The rain wouldn't ease until just outside Chishill. I was glad to get to the windmill control, and also feel the change of wind having been cycling into it for some km's by this point. The chap manning the control was well prepared for problems, with track pump, inner tubes, and even a spare tyre handy! My only disappointment was he didn't play me a tune on his ukulele! After putting some air in my spongy back tyre, I was off again!

Now just light occasional drizzle and patchy sunshine, with the wind firmly behind me I pushed onto Henham, where I met Geoff Sharpe, from Buckingham, at the Victoria Cycling Club hut near Henham. Brian was at this control and rather than a musical instrument to entertain him, he had a pocket radio to keep up with the FIFA World Cup scores.

I queried, if sticking to the main road between Great Dunmow and Chelmsford would be quicker than the recommended route, but both Brian and Geoff assured me it would be faster to stick to the route sheet through High Easter, as it is predominantly a downhill run to Chelmsford. Just past the Barnston village sign I saw Tom Deakins, the only other fixed wheel rider, on his return to Great Dunmow having finished the event considerably earlier!

Thankfully the final leg did prove to be a quick one and felt quicker than the main road I used on the way to the start in the morning. Back at the Heritage Centre I filled up on more cake and biscuits before heading into Chelmsford again for a train home.

Thanks to Stefan, of the South East Group, for organising the Windmill Rides (there was of course a 120 km as well) and to all the helpers at HQ and en route. 🚲

Obituary – John Copas (lived until June 2014)

By Brian Penny



We've lost another diamond. Under that craggy face there was a heart of gold. He was a rather quiet character, but dig deep into the undergrowth and you'd find a finely chiselled sense of humour and a real devotion to cycling. He'll leave us with plenty of memories of the Essex CTC, because John was around in an era when the District Association organised 24 hour rides and rough-stuff events, where the bridleways were so soft you'd have mud up to your knees. John did all the tough events and was often the lone participant of the Havering Section. John became a firm favourite with the South East Group; often joining us for Youth Hostel weekends and Easter tours. He joined us on the SEG's End to End in 1986 organised by Peggy Thorndike and I'll never forget our journey down to Land's End, when we discovered his rusty driving skills led us to a close encounter with a brick wall. But most of all it will be his Spotlight reports that will stand the test of time. Following what must have been a particularly stop and start Easter tour in the 1980's, John likened the SEG to a museum collection and that, should a curator have been anywhere near Castle Heading, we'd have been included as exhibits. With such clinical observation I can only hope John's name is preserved forever on the Spotlight Reports trophy.

As John does not appear to have close family, our deepest sympathies go to his friends and those who knew him well. 🍵

Useful Website Links

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

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Kings Road Cycles (Cycle Shop)	www.shedbornbikes.com
Megarry's Antiques and Teashop (Café)	www.megarrysteashop.co.uk
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