

March / April 2018



Runners Up at the
Dave Doo Photographic Competition 2017
Anni Gregson (Essex CTC MG)
"Praying Mantis takes a Ride, Oman"

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Spotlight – Magazine of the Essex CTC MG, a local Member Group of Cycling UK (formerly the Cyclists' Touring Club), the national cyclists' organisation

President: Dave Rowlands

Volume 2/2018se55

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Closing date for the May / June 2018 edition is on **15 April 2018**.

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

Officers of the Essex CTC MG - we are serving you ...

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Certificate of Merit Committee

Brian Penny, John Steer, Martin Cockersole

Essex CTC MG Trustees

Stefan Eichenseher, John Steer, Brian Penny

Editor's Foreword

The freezing temperature in the last week prevented many folk from exercising themselves in the white landscape. My brief undertaking to Hadleigh on Thursday morning wasn't too bad (at 7:30) holding back some cars, as there wasn't enough room for me to cycle safely nearer the kerb. There were still the odd folk, who thought a couple of inches spare to my elbow is sufficient, to save a few seconds ... until I catch them up at the next traffic lights, obviously. However, on the way back at about 9:30ish the snow was settling again (see pic overleaf) and even cars wouldn't go much faster than 20 mph. So I could nicely keep up with them, whilst they didn't dare to overtake – for some reason (?).

After this brief snowy interlude of “proper” winter to start *Spring*, I hope that you're all appropriately clothed to be safe/seen in these wintery conditions.

Now, we have an eclectic assortment of ride reports. Not to be seen as biased, but in this issue I like the one from Colchester.

I had an enquiry from a member by letter on the events that we are having this year. Since we are running a very much reduced list, I would suggest to anyone inclined riding events to have a look at the ACME list on p. 19.

And for the older or more sedentary club members: remember, the EDARF Spring Meet & lunch (advertised on p. 12) is open for everyone!

Right, so, that leaves me to say – as always – those who are fit go forth and cycle. I hope that you are all out and about and have fun on your bikes!

Your editor,
Stefan Eichenseher



The President's Piece

Hello all

Sitting here, on a cold dark evening, the long hot days of summer seem like a million years in the future, but touch wood the worst of the weather is behind us now and we can stretch our legs a bit.

During the year I hope to get out with the Essex groups to cover new ground.

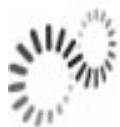
Event-wise the *Dot Sharp 80K* is not that far away now, *May 6th*. David Doo Photographic Competition doesn't open until September, but you can get snapping anytime!

May the p*** fairy leave you alone, and the wind be behind you!

Dave Rowlands
Presidente



Hadleigh, 1 March 2018
@ 9:30 (after ½ hour snowing)



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Member Groups' Reports

Chelmsford Member Group

January 7 - The First Ride in 2018 - The changeable weather had brought us bright sunlight but a cold NE wind, which probably kept the numbers down and only three of us were at the start. A cold night made ice likely, so we rode cautiously, but only found a few mushy patches.

About half way to Blackmore I decided to cut out some of my planned route to get there earlier. With the "Blackmore Tea Rooms" this is never a bad idea considering how busy they get. John and Adrian had arrived ahead of us and we were lucky to get a table. Cyclists still kept arriving and when we went to leave there was some lifting required to extract bikes from the mass of machines!

On the way to lunch we stopped at the "Bricklayer's Arms" for Martin to hand in our post-Christmas meal menu choices. Dave S and I made use of the toilets as the queue at Blackmore was ridiculous.

I followed my planned route to Moreton, but again went for a shorter route to Matching Tye. I led the ride to "The Fox" two months previously and on that occasion it was fall of cyclists and I was expecting more of the same. It turned out to be very quiet! Brian T arrived a little later and had lunch with us. We had passed him earlier going in the opposite direction near Blackmore.

Over lunch we discussed our tea stop. The only practical choice was "The Snug" and that was rumoured to still be closed for the Christmas break. So with no tea stop we were heading back to Chelmsford. I didn't fancy the openness of Matching Airfield with that wind, so I recycled part of the route we hadn't used earlier.

I was back at my car about 15:20 with plenty of light left having done 51 miles.

January 14 - Mix n match ride - As this is a combined group report some of the riders mentioned may be unfamiliar to you.

I left Wickford with nine riders from SEG led by Brian Penny. Of the usual leaders Ian Mather was away visiting his mother and Peter W had a family event.

At the top of Brock Hill my intention was to peel off and do a 13-mile loop before meeting the Chelmsford Group at BHN. All hopes of a long loop were dashed when my front tyre went down.

I arrived at "BHN" to find Norman L waiting there, so we went in to await the arrival of the small group led by Dave Russell. A rare visitor to our ride was Peter Tibbitts. Equally rare was Heather out on her own with Eric laid up with back problems.

I rode with the Chelmsford Group to Purleigh and then continued towards Maldon. Along Blind Lane I met Brian leading a large party of SEG returnees. I wondered if anyone was going to the pub, but I carried on to the "Wetherspoon's".

Whilst I sat there, as no-mates Mel, I planned my route home. Shortly afterwards Jim C and Claude turned up in civvies. Jim is still waiting for a stent op and is limited on how much he can exert himself before he feels queer. A little later Jon, Lynda and Ron S appeared. As we were leaving I noticed the amount of muck on Jon's bike, which indicated just how muddy the Beeleigh Abbey route had been.

I stuck to my return plan as I knew the other three riders were going to SWF, which would have meant the Turnpike for me.

Home by 15:30 after 39 miles.

February 4 - A cold Sunday ride - A bitterly cold wind kept everyone other than the hardy, fools and the leader away. It was the kind of weather where sucking a Fisherman's Friend was appropriate!

Four of us (Adrian, Dave S, Martin and I) left Chelmsford. The ride out by Mashbury Road, which is a steady climb and was into wind became too much for Martin, who opted for a coffee at the "Snug Café" and a return home.

I led the remaining two into Dunmow from the west side, which is the most cycle friendly approach. Already at "The Paradise Café" were Dave R and Diana who had come by car.

Our exit from Dunmow was along the B1256, which was not a pleasant experience with loads of traffic, uphill and a cold crosswind. After Felsted there was only Adrian and me. I made for the Flitch Way, which was a bit of a mistake. Adrian's mudguards got seriously clogged up so we had to get back to tarmac. Both wheels were removed to clear the guards.

On the way to the pub we did a grand tour of Great Notley's cycle paths. At "The Compasses" in Littley Green we found both Daves, Diana and John B. John had been off-riding for a while and was still suffering from a cold.

There was no interest in a tea stop so we rode back into Chelmsford with John coughing like a good'un. **Mel Martin**

Colchester Member Group

[See page 23 for a report that turned into an essay. Ed.]

Havering Member Group

Dec 3rd - Wai's first time as leader and three joined her for a short loop around Horndon-On-The-Hill. A cuppa stop at "Puddledock" café then back to Upminster.

Dec 17th - Kelvin's magnificent seven made it to "RSPB Rainham Marshes" for elevenses.

Dec 31st - Dave's magnificent seven set off on our last ride of the year to Blackmore for elevenses. Three returned and four carried on to "The Viper" for lunch.

34 miles, no rain and no p.....S!

January 7th - Dave ja vu! Eight out on our first ride of the year. Advertised ride was "The Saddlery" at Margaretting, but as we approached "The Viper" the temptation proved too much and in we went!

Lunch was up to the usual Viper standard and after a natter it was time to go.

A wind assisted ride home clocking up thirty miles. **Dave Rowlands**

Jan 21st - Chan, Gordon, Helen and I set off on a short ride to "RSPB Rainham Marshes". On the way to Rainham the weather decided to take a turn and we decided to do the same, so the team backtracked to the "Ingrebourne Valley visitors centre".

Three of us stayed to lunch while we watched the rain turn to snow then we all took the quickest way home. **Joe Collins**

Jan 28th - Six set off for Lake Meadows but as the café was packed they ended up in Bar Zero instead. **Dave Rowlands**

Forthcoming Events



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

Date	Event	Organiser
6 May	[EMG] 80km - Dot Sharp Memorial Ride, Starting 9.30am from: Mountnessing, Church Hall	Dave Rowlands 07948 583979

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

EDARF

EDARF & VRC - Spring Meet

SATURDAY 7th APRIL 2018

Langdon Hills Golf and Country Club
Essex RM14 3TY

12.30 noon for 1.00 pm

£16.50 for a 3-course Carvery

Bookings please by 31st March to

Money to be paid to
Bernard Hand (Treasurer)
169 Normanshire Drive,
Chingford,
London E4 9HB

Bernard Hand
020 8524 3356

bernardsidneyhand@tiscali.co.uk

Cheques to be made payable to EDARF by the 31st March

Chelmsford Informal Member Group – Runs List

Contact: Adrian Leeds

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

Runs Secretary: John Beaumont:

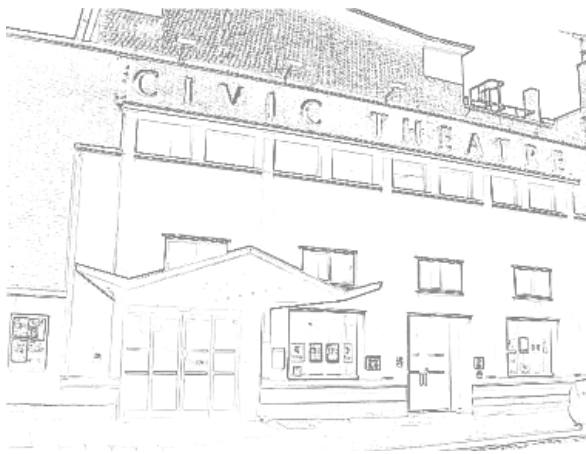
5 Riddiford Drive, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2GB, ☎ 01245 630864

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
Mar 11	Sawbridgeworth, Shed	Moreton, Nags Head	J Beaumont
Mar 18	Blackmore, Tea Rooms	Matching Tye, Fox	A Leeds
Mar 25	Dunmow (Scrumptious)	Cornish Hall End	J Beaumont
Apr 01	Finchingfield	Saffron Walden	Mel Martin
Apr 08	High Easter Snug	Sawbridgeworth Gate	D Southin
Apr 15	Raine Station	Castle Hedingham Bell	M Cockersole
Apr 22	[MG] Chelmsford Spring Tour Weekend		A Leeds
	Alt : informal Ride		TBA
Apr 29	<u>8:45 START – Dobbs Weir</u>	Stansted Abbott's	D Southin
6 May	[EMG] 80km - Dot Sharp Memorial Ride , Starting 9.30am from: Mountnessing, Church Hall		Dave Rowlands 07948 583979



Havering Member Group – Runs List



Secretary: David Rowlands

david_rowlands@hotmail.co.uk or ☎ 07948 583979

Promotions Officer: Kelvin Dane

kelvindane@live.co.uk or ☎ 07922 111790

www.essexcycling.co.uk & www.haveringcycling.com

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

All rides meet 8.45 for **9am START** unless otherwise stated

Date	Destination	Leader
Mar 11	9am START to Rettendon	Dave Rowlands
Mar 18	9am START to High Roding	Dave Rowlands
Mar 25	9am START To Writtle 45 miles	Wai 07956 236325
Apr 01	9am START Short Ride Beginners Welcome	To be Decided
Apr 08	9am START Destination to be decided	Kelvin Dale 07922 111790
Apr 15	9am START Destination to be decided	Alan Pine 07716 096303
Apr 22	9am START Maldon	Dave Rowlands
Apr 29	9am START Green Tye (Herts)	Dave Rowlands
6 May	[EMG] 80km - Dot Sharp Memorial Ride, Starting 9.30am from: Mountnessing, Church Hall	Dave Rowlands 07948 583979
May 06	9am START Short Ride Beginners Welcome	Kelvin Dale or Alan Pine
May 13	9am START The Blue Egg Gt Bardfield	Dave 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



Southeast Essex Informal MG – Runs List



Contact: John Steer

☎ 01702 529 638– segssec@btinternet.com

Runs start: from the Wickford Café,
3-5 The Broadway, Wickford SS11 7AD -
Sundays at 9.15am for **9.30am**, unless
otherwise stated.

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.

Club Nights are held once a month (check website for date) on a Friday at 8.00pm
@ St Laurence & All Saints Church Hall, Eastwoodbury Lane, Eastwood, SS2 6RH

Date	Elevenes	Lunch Destination
18-Mar	Norton Heath (Transport Café)	Writtle (Rose & Crown)
25-Mar	ediR emitremmuS tratS Chelmsford (Moulsham St Café)	Runsell Green (The Anchor)
01-Apr	Easter Sunday Margaretting (Saddlery Café)	West Hanningfield (Three Compasses)
08-Apr	Witham (Oliver's Nursery)	Little Green (The Compasses)
15-Apr	Coggleshall (Clockhouse Bar & Café) 9am start from Rettendon Turnpike Billericay (Blue Boar) 9.30am start	Little Totham (The Swan) No booked lunch stop for 9.30am ride
22-Apr	Writtle (Lordship Tearooms)	Mill Green (The Viper)
29-Apr	Langford (Museum of Power Café)	Kelvedon (Railway Tavern)
6 May	[EMG] 80km - Dot Sharp Memorial Ride, Starting 9.30am from: Mountnessing, Church Hall	
		Dave Rowlands 07948 583979
ALT	Bicknacre (White Elm Garden Centre)	*see note
13-May	High Easter (Snug Café) 9am start Blackmore (Tearoom) 9.30am start	Matching Green (The Fox) for 9am and 9.30am rides
20-May	Woodham Walter (Bunsay Down GC)	Witham (Bottesford Court)

Sunday Rides

Please remember to check the website (www.essexcycling.co.uk) for any last
minute changes to rides, including cancellation due to bad weather.

Mid-week Rides

Wednesday at 10am for 10.15am start from Rettendon (BHN Garden Centre) for
an informal ride to either a café or pub for lunch. Destination decided on day.

Colchester Informal Member Group – Runs List



Contact: Alan Palmer

☎ 01206 792929, mob 07939 395067 or

alanpalmer@phonecoop.coop

All rides meet Leisure World Container by Skatepark at 9:30am

More information on www.colchestercycling.uk

Date	11ses	Destination	Leader
Mar 11		Earls Colne, Valley Golf Club	TBC
Mar 18	Tiptree, Perrywoods	Woodham Walter, The Queen Victoria	Des McCarron
Mar 25		Castle Hedingham, The Bell	Ken Rickwood
Apr 01		Whitham, The Battlesford Court	Simon Brooks
Apr 08		Little Baddow, Paper Mill Lock	Ashley Ager
Apr 15		Gt Bardfield, The Blue Egg	Des McCarron
Apr 22		Little Oakley, The Olde Cherry Tree	
Apr 29		TBC	
May 06	[EMG] 80km - Dot Sharp Memorial Ride , Starting 9.30am from: Mountnessing, Church Hall		Dave Rowlands 07948 583979
ALT	Boxted, Fillpots	Earls Colne, Essex Golf Club	Des McCarron
May 13		TBC	

Please check the online runs-list (www.colchestercycling.uk/runslist.html) for the latest updates on destinations.

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

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).



The New Inn, Colchester

Member Groups' Reports – cont'd.

South East Essex Informal Member Group

The following rides were all cancelled due to the weather:-
17th, 24th (Xmas Eve) and 27th Dec, 3rd Jan, 28th Feb and 4th Mar.

Wed, 20th Dec – Stow Maries - Ian M, Graham R, Paul H and Peter R left BHN at 10.15am and did a big loop back to the “Prince of Wales” pub. I was so hot sat in front of the open fire that I had to turn round and toast the other side!

Sun, 31st Dec – Witham - Seven left Wickford in one group and headed for “Paper Mill Lock” via Brock Hill, Middlemead, West and East Hanningfield, Gay Bowers and North Hill. Upon arrival we found the Chelmer Navigation was nearly bursting it's banks, but luckily not before we'd had sustenance in the café. Mel M, Mike C and Martin P continued onto Bottesford Court, whereas Peter W, Ian M, Graham R and Peter R returned home.

Mon, 1st Jan 2018 – Mill Green - Only four (Ian, Jon, Mike & Mel) continued the SEG tradition of a New Year's Day ride from Wickford leaving Café Coppa at 10.30am. We met Lynda C, who had ridden direct from SWF at “The Viper” along with John S, Ken W and Peter H who had driven there.

Sun, 7th Jan – Cock Clarks - We were delighted to see Jim C at the “Wickford Café” this morning before a group of seven (Ian M, Jon C, Peter R, Graham R, Tony B, Karen and Paul H) left at 9am to head for “D's Diner” in Hatfield Peverel. Another group of four (Brian P, Lia W, Ron S and Martin P) left at 9.30am and headed for “Butts Green Garden Centre”. Six (Brian, Lia, Graham, Ian, Jon and Ron) later met at the “Fox and Hounds” for a re-arranged Christmas Meet (although only SEG's present) and John S, Claude A and Jim C came by car.

Wed, 10th Jan – West Hanningfield - Three (Ian, Paul and Graham) went out to Great Baddow and Galleywood before returning via Margaretting Tye and Stock to the “Three Compasses” where we enjoyed our sandwiches and beer in front of a lovely open fire.

Sun, 14th Jan – Langford (Museum of Power Café) and Maldon (Rose & Crown)

Wed, 17th Jan – Navestock - Graham and Paul went to “The Alma”.

Sun, 21st Jan – Rettendon - Graham R was leading the group, but they only went to elevenses at the “Lordship Tearooms” in Writtle, as the weather was deteriorating fast and it was decided to forego the lunch stop at “Buckhatch Nursery”.

Wed, 24th Jan – Paper Mill Lock - Only Paul and Graham were out today.

Sun, 28th Jan – Rochford (Beehive Café) and Hawkwell (White Hart)

Wed, 31st Jan – Writtle - Paul and Peter went to “The Wheatsheaf”, which serves mini huffers!

Sun, 4th Feb – Mill Green - Peter W led a group of nine including Peter C (not refereeing a football match) and Paula R out via Brock Hill, where we saw Karen & Paul H speeding down on their tandem. He continued along Middlemead to East Hanningfield, Butts Green and Sandon arriving at “BB’s Coffee Shop” in the Meadows Shopping Centre in Chelmsford at 11am. Six continued to “The Viper” for lunch.

Wed, 7th Feb – Runsell Green - Ian, Paul and Graham returned to “The Anchor” following a successful earlier visit and I was duly impressed by the very large baguettes, even Jon C would struggle to eat one!

Sun, 11th Feb – Ongar - Five left at 9am lead by Paul H en route for Bird’s Green via Stock, Margaretting, Mill Green, Blackmore, Norton Heath and Willingale. We arrived at the “Bankside Café”, which is located near the fishing lakes just after 11am having covered 23 miles from Wickford. Four left at 9.30am and went to “Blackmore Tearooms” and two went to Billericay. Lunch was taken at the “Two Brewers”, where Ron S joined the five 9am starters.

Wed, 14th Feb – Great Wakering - Graham and Paul went to “Nanny Egg’s Café”, which is very small and only has room for six people, but sells home-made cakes at £1.50 a slice and pots of tea come with knitted cosies! **Ian Mather**



2018 Audax Club Mid-Essex Events

by Tom Deakins

14th April: **The Woodman's Daughter** 50km and **The Woodman** 100km, 09:00/10:00 from St Mary's Centre, Churchend, Dunmow.

New for 2018: A trip around the woods of mid-Essex at bluebell time. 50km has alternative on- and off-road routes which can be mixed and matched. Ultra-low minimum speed of 8.3kph gives 6 hours to take your time to enjoy a leisurely day out on the 50km event. Refreshments at the start and a cream tea at the finish, included in the entry fee.

5th May: **Green and Yellow Fields** 300km. 00:01 from Manningtree Station CO11 2LH.

Midnight start following Friday night curry in Manningtree, fast overnight sections to the north Norfolk coast for a café breakfast, back to Manningtree via Wymondham and Needham Market. One of the longest established Audax events in the UK, since 1979.

Manningtree Station



2nd June: **Asparagus and Strawberries** 400km. 09:00 from Manningtree Station.

The classic tour of East Anglia – via Ixworth, Halesworth, the Reedham Ferry and Acle to the coast at Wells-next-the-Sea, for fish and chips, if you're quick enough! Back overnight via the 24-hour McDonalds/garage at Barton Mills and then through Saffron Walden to the finish and breakfast at Manningtree Station Buffet.

28th June: **The ACME Grand 1000km**. 11:00 from the Battersford Court, [Wetherspoons] Witham: **Thursday start**.

Another completely new event: Heading west to Llandovery in South Wales via the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean. Back via the Black Mountain, Cardiff, Forest of Dean to the Vale of Evesham to pick up the outbound route near Towcester. Book your own accommodation/take a bivi! 75 hours available, at 13.3kph minimum speed.

13th July: **Hereward the Wake 300km**. 21:00 from St Mary's Centre, Churchend, Dunmow.

Friday evening start, following optional curry at the Jalsa Ghar in Dunmow. Through Cambridge and out into the Fens at Whittlesey, across to 'The Pag' [Newport Pagnell services] for a first breakfast, options of several cafes in Biggleswade and at Reed later then back over the chalk hills. Brunch at the finish included in the entry fee.

4th August: **Essex R & R/ A Little Essex R & R**. 200/100km 08:00/09:00 from Witham Labour Hall CM8 2EE.

Two lovely routes looping around Essex rivers and reservoirs. Breakfast and food at the finish included in the fee.

8th September: **Fenland Friends [Flatlands Reversed]** 600km. 06:00 from St Mary's Centre, Churchend, Dunmow.

Does what it says...flattest possible 600km event in the UK [1,073 metres of climbing], this time reversing the traditional route to twice cross the path of riders on the **Yorkshire via Essex 600** starting from Sleaford, Lincolnshire at the same time. Breakfast at the start and optional pub finish.

6th October: **Richard Ellis Memorial 200/100km**, 08:00/09:00 from St Mary's Centre, Churchend, Dunmow.

The 200km route goes to the Orchard Tea Gardens at Grantchester, the Maglia Rosso Bike Café at Hawstead and then to Manningtree. 100km out-and-back to the Maglia Rosso. Breakfast at the start and pizzas at the end included in the fee.

November 2018 - February 2019: third edition of the ACME Winter Series... Full details, entry fees, route sheets on www.aukweb.net and www.acme.bike Entry available online [paypal] or from Tom Deakins, 31 The Causeway, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 2AA, Tel: 07757 247727

Colchester CTC and “The Beast from the East!”

(Another BBC weather forecast fairy tale)

By Les King & Gill Adams

One evening a few weeks ago we received a message from Paul to say that he was at a ride planning meeting and, as we normally join rides at the Coffee stop that are coming in our direction from Colchester, would we be interested in leading a ride, if someone else led as far as Tiptree? The unfortunate thing about getting a little bit older your brain does not work that quickly and I was unable to come up with any excuse and in no time we were put down as leaders going unto Heybridge.

We had some ideas of routes, but as the date drew closer the weather forecast deteriorated by the hour and panic started to set in. The Tothams are full of small lanes, so we decided to just do a route around without going too far. In the event of the 2 foot of predicted snow/ice we would all be able to get home quite quickly.

Sunday morning arrived and just as we were having our second cup of tea in bed Caroline (deputy leader) phoned to say she was on her way down to the Leisure Centre and the roads in Colchester looked clear. “She had offered to take a few hours off duty from mopping Pauls fevered brow and taking care of his every whim!” In fact the actual words we think had been I will be glad to get away and out on the bike for a few hours. This meant that we had to get ready to leave our warm cosy bed and trundle down to Perrywood.

Surely on such a cold and windy morning no one was going to venture out and we had planned our day by the fire. Can you imagine our dismay when arriving in the car park to find Neil, Shelly and Simon waiting for us. They live out in the wilds on the other side of the A12 and had opted for a later start and came straight to the coffee break. We had all just settled into the café when we saw Dave Russell locking up his bike soon followed just minutes later by Caroline and 2 others from Colchester. (Was this going to be it?) What we had not realised several others had crept into Perrywood leaving their bikes out of sight, which finished up with 14 sitting down for coffee and cake.

Well time went on and eventually Les said 5 minutes and 9 hardy souls departed, leaving Alan, Caroline and the others to make their way home. The first destination was a little lane up in the “Essex Mountains” at Gt Braxted, where we stopped to admire the very good view over Mersea and

on a clear day you can see the wind farms off the coast at Southend. Unfortunately Chris dismounted beside the tallest part of the hedge and complained that he could not see anything, but then you can't please everybody. Then it was a ride through the Totham Lanes (some of our favourites), doing a loop around Goldhanger with Chris again complaining that every time we seemed to be heading for Heybridge we would turn away again, and he felt that 12.30 was easily time for lunch.

This was a trick that I learnt from last week's ride with Ken every time we got near his lunch stop we would then head back into the hills of Polstead and Hadleigh, at one point stopping a local cyclist (in fact almost knocking him off his bike). He told us, if we went back and turned right, it was a very pretty ride, but going straight on was a big hill. We all turned our bikes around heading for "pretty", but Ken being made of stern stuff would have none of it and soon had us all heading for the hill!

When we arrived at the lunch stop, "The Jolly Sailor", Ken did point out that we could not really call this a cycle ride, as we had hardly had to pedal having the wind behind us and the ride being nearly all downhill! Mel had arrived for lunch having cycled into the strong headwind all morning coming from the other side of Maldon.

We had excellent service. The pub is small, but they had reserved a large table and made us very welcome. The discussion soon turned to route home. I had thought, back through Tiptree to School Road, Copford, and leave everyone to make their own way home, but somehow Gill's suggestion of coffee and cake at "Abberton Visitor Centre" got the better of us.

We said goodbye to Mel and 9 headed back towards Tolleshunt Major, at which point Dave turned off to head home. The rest of us going onto D'Arcy, Salcott, to School Road and Gt Wigborough, although Chris rushed ahead and took the first turning to Abberton (we think his bladder had got the better of him!). Simon also left at this point to make his way home, but we had to include School Road as the climb is a little bit steeper and we thought this would make Ken happy! We eventually arrived at the visitor centre having battled through the headwind and cold leaving Shelly, Neil, Ken, Peter, Chris, Gill, and Les to enjoy CAKE and a good natter. Our apprehension had been unfounded. The roads had been clear of ice and it had turned into a really nice day out with excellent company. 🚲



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Going Dutch: SEGs Late-Summer Cycling Tour, 2017 – cont'd

By Martin Pipe

After a walk around Kampen – the city towers, churches, a distinctive cheese-shop and a cafe where we enjoyed excellent coffee and locally-made ice-cream over conversation with the Italian proprietor and his Dutch wife – we enlisted the help of the tourist office (and its computers) to book the next night's VodF digs – in Utrecht. Having tired ourselves out with 60-70 miles cycling into headwinds and late arrivals the previous couple of days, we decided to get to our next destination by train. Yes, we cheated. The shame...

Rail travel in the Netherlands, which is the responsibility of a state-owned company, is good – but expensive. Commuters are encouraged to leave their bikes in secure covered racks before catching their trains. If you want to take your bike on the train, you'll pay for the privilege; in the UK, doing so is free (for now!). A one-way off-peak ticket, which has to be bought from a machine, from Kampen to Utrecht cost over 20 euros for both bike and rider. The southwest-bound 100-kilometre 'stopping' journey, on one of Holland's iconic 'double-decker' trains took approximately 90 minutes.

The university city of Utrecht, like many other areas in Holland, is criss-crossed by canals. Our Thursday-night stay was not far from the city centre, which is overseen by the gothic-style 368-foot Dom Tower. It's the Netherlands' tallest church tower. Our hosts were an elderly couple, the male half of which could speak no English.



Thanks to our convenient location, the walk into Utrecht's vibrant nightlife was a short one. Canal-side bars, restaurants, galleries and shops stayed open late – we ate at a Greek restaurant in the museum district that evening – and there was a real 'buzz' in the air. Contributing to this was the

clattering of mudguards and the click of freewheels. Yes, Utrecht was the best demonstration of Dutch cycle use we experienced.

Overwhelming numbers of people, young and old, choose to travel by bike in Utrecht. And in the central areas these worthy machines were parked (well, piled!) everywhere the eye could see. This, our landlady explained, was becoming such a problem that a 'bike garage' is due to be built in Utrecht shortly. Ladies and gentlemen in the flush of youth are happy to ride traditional Dutch 'sit-up-and-beg' roadsters of a design that would be seen as hopelessly-unfashionable by UK teenagers.

We frequently saw many of them taking 'passengers', who sat on the bike's rear luggage rack. 'Carriers' - tricycles with a wooden box at the front for young children, goods or pets – are common sights; it would be encouraging to see them on British roads too. The city's older residents tend to use electric bikes, which have become very popular in recent years. Racing groups and recumbents were also encountered regularly during our Dutch tour.

In Holland, there is an extensive national network of purpose-designed tracks ('fietspads'). Usually running alongside roads and canals, they are shared by cyclists and mopeds. Where cyclists and cars share smaller roads, speeds are limited to 60km/h. Wider roads, meanwhile, have unidirectional cycle paths on either side. Refreshingly, cyclists are given priority at junctions. That, coupled with the flatness of the terrain, helps to explain why cycling is so popular there. And the results are obvious! The air is perceptibly cleaner than it is in UK towns, and obesity is much less of a problem. However the Netherlands ranks first in the EU for cyclist deaths, as a percentage of total traffic.

Holland's official cycle tracks are numbered – as, come to think of it, are the UK's. There are frequently path-side maps to show how they interrelate, enabling your route to be planned. Theoretically, at any rate; the information provided – and, for that matter, road signs – were alas often contradictory. Indeed, some tracks are not properly-identified. We certainly came across this problem in Utrecht, especially when trying to get out of it in order to make our way to the quaint city of Gouda – our Friday-night stopover. And that was despite the instructions prepared for us by the kindly proprietor of a cycling-themed cafe. As regards routes we tried to follow, Herman recalled LF1, LF21, LF22 and LF23 as particular nightmares. "If only", he recalls, he "had not left the maps, with our routes carefully marked out, on the kitchen table"...

continued next issue

Useful Website Links

Essex CTC Member Group	www.essexcycling.co.uk
Cyclists' Touring Club / Cycling UK	www.ctc.co.uk / www.cyclinguk.uk
Chelmsford City Member Group	www.chelmsfordctc.co.uk
Colchester informal Member Group	www.colchesterctc.co.uk
Havering Member Group	www.ctchavering.btck.co.uk
Cafés for Cyclists	www.lebidon.co.uk
Yet Another Cycling Forum	http://yacf.co.uk
Bike-packing and cycle touring journeys	www.ridethebike.co.uk

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Basildon Timber (Decking & Timber)	www.basildontimber.com
Chris Regan Ltd (Accountant)	www.chrisregan.co.uk
Ciclos Uno (Cycle Shop)	www.ciclosuno.com
Cycle Cellar (Cycle Shop)	www.cyclecellar.co.uk
Richardson Cycles (Cycle Shop)	www.richardsonscycles.co.uk
Southend Bach Choir (Choir)	www.southendbachchoir.org.uk
The Ingatestone Café (Café)	www.ingatestonesaddlery.co.uk
The Cycle & Toy Centre (Cycle Shop)	www.thecyclecompany.co.uk

Cover picture:



Runners Up at the Dave Doo Photographic Competition 2017

Anni Gregson (Essex CTC MG)

“Praying Mantis takes a Ride, Oman”

“At centre focus this insect enjoys an excellent position in midfield on the tyre seemingly having been drawn to the one spot of light, which it holds with its front legs. A good shot, where the spokes accentuate the delegate legs of the insect.”



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