

Centre 15, The Smugglers,
Grim Reaper Rally
1st - 3rd August 2008.

Thursday 30th July, the day before our rally was due to start, arrived in sunny Gravesend and so did the Smugglers with banners, flags, bunting, tents etc but most importantly Ron Burr with the Tea urns. After a cuppa and a few hours of feverish activity the Gravesend Rugby club now started to look like a VSOC rally site. Baldeagle arrived with his disco and enough lights to make a display that could have graced Southend seafront.



The goody bags, 350 of the little buggers, were being packed by the girls in some sort of conveyer belt system, well done to them, my idea of how to pack the bags was poo poed and I was thrown out before I ruined their system!!!

Unfortunately due to a cock up with Tony Santos trade stands did not arrive but we, well Terry did, did manage to get one good trade stand, Alpha Custom Bikes, at very short notice.

Before we had chance to say, "This looks good for the VSOC members" and retire to the bar guest from centres 7, 17, 18 and 19 started to arrive.



A plan was needed very quickly to organise food and lay on some entertainment. The caterers who were on site planning the menus for the rally said they could rustle up some grub for us, Lucy and Tom said they could do a bit of music and karaoke, with about 50 of us the evening went off really well with everybody having bit of a sing song!!!

Friday morning, 1st August, saw the majority of people arrive, some arriving at about 8.30am with a steady stream throughout the day, and some on Saturday morning, until we had 348 members on site. The tattooist, Shamonik Body art, arrived and had a steady stream of customers over the weekend.

After most people had eaten Friday night saw Baldeagle (Disco), Loud & Proud, (cabaret) and Bad Pennies rock the night away until midnight when the music had to stop, once the

music stopped the bar steward said he would keep the bar open for about an hour, I went to bed at 4am and the bar was still open then. I'm lead to believe that some people were still drinking at 8am!!!!!!!

Saturday, Terry had organised a "lost booty hunt" for those members who wanted a tour round the Kent countryside, well done to the winners of that. Other members who did not take part were left to their own devices for riding out to places of interest around the county after looking at the information displayed in the tea pavilion.

About 4 pm biking games were played for those who fancied showing off their riding skills. Slow riding, water balloon throwing, lance the hoops, frozen tee shirt and tug of war. Thanks to Bob and Gibbo for organising and running the games. Well done to the winners of the games. Congratulation to the ladies who managed to beat centre 16's winning team in the tug of war, although it was about 20 ladies against 8 men!!!!!!!



Saturday night Baldeagle (Disco), Loud & Proud, (cabaret) and Drrink entertained us all. Although the music was supposed to stop at midnight we managed to get permission for a few late tunes as everybody was having such a good time.



During the evening prizes were given out to the winners of the games and the trophies for the "best bikes" at the rally were awarded.

Congratulations & well done to the winners of the best, Virago 250, Virago 535 standard, Virago 535 custom and Warrior.



The bar promised to stay open for an hour or so after the music stopped but again 4am loomed large for me, when I left and wobbled to my tent there were still people drinking!!

*Saturday night saw bit of a problem with theft from some member's tents. **I am glad to say that the perpetrators of the theft were not humans or VSOC members**, apparently some foxes and their cubs thought it might be a good idea to help themselves to some boots, gloves and, in one case, a pair of leather trousers, oops sorry Annya!!!*

Gravesend now has the best-dressed foxes in the UK.



Sunday morning saw members packing up and setting off for their part of the world hopefully having had a good time and taking away good memories of their time in sunny Kent.

We, centre 15 members, managed to get packed away and cleared up by lunchtime, after a light lunch in the clubhouse it was a trip home and an early night.

Finally a huge thank you from the Rally committee, and in no particular order to; Peter, Karen and all the staff & members at Gravesend Rugby Football Club, Trish and all the catering staff, Bad Pennies, Drrink, Baldeagle, Loud & Proud, Alpha Custom Bikes, Shamanic Body art, Lynch security, the centre 15 members that stayed up all night to assist with security, last but not least, all the Smugglers that worked so hard to make the Grim Reaper Rally such a success.

Special thanks though must go to all of our guests; it was our pleasure to entertain you.

It was a great event, sorry if you missed it. We look forward to seeing you the next one.

Ride safe, It's a jungle out there,

Ray Nicholson. Centre 15 Rep.