



For those who don't know, Wind & Fire MC is an international club for Harley-riding serving and retired members of the fire service, with over 4500 members in some nineteen countries around the globe. With the experience gained from running their own custom show, the guys in Chapter 12 were happy to assist the Kent fire brigade.

At the time of the show, the whole of the UK and northern Europe was, apparently, covered by a huge volcanic ash cloud which closed air space for almost a week. However, there was little sign of any such foreboding cloud – quite the reverse, in fact, as Maidstone was bathed in glorious April sunshine. If ash clouds provide sunny, happy days like this, then long may the Icelandic volcano continue to erupt!

The combination of good weather and a family day out enticed some 2500 visitors through the gates, encouraged, no doubt, by the free entry and easy parking. The crowds were treated to an exciting display by the Moto Stunt International team of riders who, given the limited space available, managed to delight spectators with their riding and driving skills. One of the female members of the team even rode through a wall of flames, although, thankfully, there was no need for the services of the many fire-fighting appliances on site.

There was the customary selection of stalls selling all manner of bike-related products, and you could even



KENT FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

CUSTOM BIKE SHOW

For the past five years, Wind & Fire MC Chapter 12 has held its annual Custom Show in Folkestone. However, for a short time, it looked as if there might not be a 2010 event, and indeed, without the intervention of the Kent Fire & Rescue Services, that might indeed have been the case. But, in typically heroic fashion, the fire brigade offered to host its 1st Sports & Custom Show, in conjunction with the Wind & Fire MC, at its training facilities in Maidstone, Kent.





The Kent Fire & Rescue Services's (KFRS) fire bike team was on hand to offer riders guidance on their behaviour (on the road, not in general), first aid, vehicle maintenance and advice on improving their riding skills. The KFRS runs a project called Fire Bike Pitstop, which is aimed at helping to persuade motorcyclists to take road safety more seriously. It was started as a direct result of the fact that, in the last two years, the fire brigade has attended some 170 accidents involving two-wheelers in which the riders had been trapped, seriously injured or killed. As part of Fire Bike Pitstop, the KFRS has introduced a new superbike to its fleet, and the Honda CBR1000RR FireBlade is being used by a team of four firefighters as an educational tool at various events.

As the sun shone, picnics on the grass seemed the order of the day, while old friends took the opportunity to meet and discuss their forthcoming rally plans and the custom bike show was an ideal excuse to laze around and enjoy the weather in good company. If the success and feedback received was anything to go by, then it seems the show could well be held again next year, volcanic ash permitting. Although it wasn't a Wind & Fire MC show as such, the KFRS appreciated its invaluable help, and it

was very well supported by members from around Europe, and even a couple from Santa Cruz, California. Nobody liked to ask how they expected to be getting home...

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purchase a pink fireman's helmet if you were that way inclined. I'm afraid to say that some gave into temptation.

Kent Fire & Rescue Service's Fire Bike Team Leader, Lawrence Pater, said; "Spring is here and, for motorcyclists, that means one thing – time to dust off your bike and get ready for the road! We wanted to kick start the season by providing a fun and enjoyable day, and at the same time, hopefully encourage more riders to think about their safety."

While obviously a lot of people ride all year round and thus weren't 'dusting down' their bikes, but just grateful for a day that didn't involve thermals and waterproofs, his sentiment was well-placed. On a day like this, I had to wonder why people want to spend time in their tin boxes. At the stand of a local rider training school, a number of people with the same idea were asking about the courses, as well as reading the messages scribbled on redundant L-plates by successful pupils.

