



Bumper Christmas Newsletter

December 2011 by Tappity John, (Northumbria Scribe and friend of the Venemous Bede)

First question in the Christmas Quiz: What's an "Acting Branch Secretary"?

Well, it looks like Dave Wardle got his way at last. When he was secretary, he asked your scribe, more than once, if he would take on the secretary's job. To which I kept saying that scribing was quite enough, thank you very much.

Well, sad events seem to have propelled your scribe into providing cover and continuity for Clive – and also, at the club night when nobody else asked Bob for Clive's job, I was not there!

So – until the AGM, when the secretary job can be properly regularised, your scribe will do his best to provide a secretary service, in this rather unofficial capacity. I'm a beginner, I'm doing my best, so please be patient with me. And now, to put my scribe hat back on - - - MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS.

There are some sad subjects that must be addressed in this newsletter. But first, as the only newsletter written about 2011 branch events, here's the dope – (I hope)

But First: Christmas Club night: with FOOOODDD!!

This Christmas at the "Shoes", on Thursday 15th December. A buffet of food, snacks, etc will be available from 8 p.m. onwards (this is an earlier start than usual, if you can make it). Quite a few club wives will be joining us, and more wives/spouses/partners etc, would be most welcome. The food is free of charge (Simon says it will not bankrupt us!). Depending on numbers, we could be put in the "Terrace room"- indoors! (from entrance go ahead, passing the bar on your left). It would help if you could let us know how many are coming. (- Maybe at the next club night, or e-mail or text - contact details at the end of this newsletter. Pplease--)

And, don't forget: Winter talks: (NAM). (= Amazingly Advanced Motorcyclists)

Michael Sutherland of NAM has invited us to join NAM for their winter talks programme. Full info on the talks can be found if you google Northumberland Advanced motorcyclists. However the next event, which sounds really interesting, is:

11 Jan: Mick Goodwin: High Andes Adventure. Place: Callerton Suite, Wheatsheaf pub, Callerton Lane ends (close to Metro stop, I am told), Woolsington, Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 8DF, Time:1900 for 1930

AND NOW, THE NEWS - - - -

Northumbria main event Number One: Wooler (equals RAINNNN!) -

- but also equals visitors. Apart from Dave Wardle's happy band of men (Shakespeare), four from Scotland and one from Shropshire. All in the rain. Lots and lots of it. A few risked a ride out to the Honey Farm – the bus-restaurant was full, so we were entertained by the farm owners in the kitchen. Then, with all the visitors, a crazy, zany, drenching barbecue, under a leaking gazebo, reinforced with a bit of borrowed tarpaulin, and enjoyed by about 20 people! Huge thanks to Simon and Judy for the barbecue. See some of the huddled masses:



Northumbria main event Number Two: Otterburn (equals lots more RAINNNN!)

Mercifully we changed our plans, and gathered on the Sunday, not the Saturday. Saturday was a deluge. The planned Saturday Spitfire fly-past never happened because the Spitfire could not see where it was going. Campbell Adie, from Aberdeen was found on the Saturday afternoon, camped in a swamp, but happy as a lark inside his tent. And on the Sunday morning – more RAINN! – but a miracle. On dropping down off the moors, approaching Otterburn, suddenly sunshine. Nearly all the Northumbria NOC bikes that had planned to come risked the weather. And we had a super display, with tea and coffee served. Still some “Occasional showers” – but the Gazebo had been treated with “Fabsil”, and it WORKED. (Pot of Fabsil cost about half as much as the cheap Gazebo had!). To our credit, since most of the “Non-Norton” bikes listed to come had chickened out, our numbers came close to equalling all the others combined. The show went on, public came, and it all ended with the RAF parachute display. Not a purely “old bike” show, but seems more popular with our members, and we get to show off “Norton” to the general public. Again, thanks to Simon and Judy for putting up the gazebo, and administering tea. Should we do it again??

And, by the way, the camera never lies. How many bikes had we on display?



(Full Zoom from afar - -)



(Wide Angle from close - -)

Ugthorpe Lodge Camp: NO RAINNNN! IN fact, HOTTT! (despite the forecast)

The Americans had sent a disused hurricane our way, and it was due to land. But, happily, it did not strike until the Monday. People came and went in shifts. Including Davie Palmer, from Edinburgh, and Jim Hartland (a Northumbria member from Guisborough, to whom newsletters have been sent for aeons, but who, until now, has never been seen). Jim claims he will get his Commando finished next season, and if we return to the North Yorks moors, he offered to take us on a tour. Get that bike going, Jim! Treat it as a challenge! Ian, who has been to these parts a few times, took us on a mystery run down innumerable pretty and terrifying descents, ending up at Whitby where your scribe went and drooled at the Sutcliffe gallery. (Sutcliffe – famous and amazing 19th century pioneer photographer of Whitby.)

We are doing well for Scottish visitors! Hopefully they were not too horrified by what they saw this year, and we can do more with them in 2013! But also an apology from Barry Crosby (Yorks), that he could not join us at Ugthorpe. And any sort of coordination with Dave Wardle's happy band of men totally failed.

This site, borrowed from Dave Wardle's portfolio, has the lot: camping, food, BEER, even B&B if anyone wants to bring ladies who dislike camping, a fascinating area to explore, and REALLY friendly people at the lodge. Your scribe liked it so much he took wife and USA sister-in-law for a B&B night in October.

BUTT! The ride down to the site is a fair way from the Tyne and is DEAD BORING! What do members think about this place for 2012?

Then there was KAMTREK!!

Kamtek is open to everyone of any consequence, the KAMTREKKERS this year being current and breakaway members of the Amazingly Advanced Motorcyclists of Northumberland, NOC Northumberland. - - PLUS Ray Mand, a motorcycling member of your scribe's walking group, who he had invited. Well, Ray was warned that this was the only competition where the object was NOT to win, because, if you did, you would have to organise the next one. But everyone was so helpful and welcoming to Ray that they helped him with all the clues. And, guess what? - he WON!! - not sure if he is still speaking to me.

He we are all gathered at the café at Almouth, at the end of the treasure hunt!



National and International rallies

The branch was represented at the national rally by your scribe and Clive2, on one of his last events. I can report that the safety briefing for the test hill at Brooklands was about the most over-hyped thing since the last election. (They should try Hard Knott). But we were totally upstaged by John Turnbull, who took his Commandator to the “International” in New York State. Including an incredibly brave lap of Manhattan. Apart from that he said he saw more trees than in his life so far, but reported than the natives were very friendly.

Rides out: We did some!

Led by Clive, the May ride out was COOOLD, and the late start was the result of Sean’s puncture outside the “Shoes”. Mended at incredible speed with Bob’s help. (the bystanders cheered), but this, and traffic jams meant we were too late at Morpeth and lost Neil. The shortened route, ended up at the Dyke Neuk, from which Sean Mulloy got home with more gremlins, in this case electrical.

The June ride went ahead without trouble, but in July, gremlins struck the Tappity Dommi, which stopped with dead electrics at least three times, having to be push-started. After the third of these, the “Dommi-pushers” lost sight of the rest of the group. But all converged happily at the pub for an enjoyable evening.

The next ride was replaced by a Clive Taylor memorial run, and the last would have fallen in October – too late: not enough light to ride by.



Rapid puncture repair at the “Shoes”

Brian Hutchinson at the Café racer gathering in Oxford, and at the Brunton show.

Sparkling like 1000 suns, Brian’s machine dazzled all the drivers on the A1 and M1, in a challenging ride to this café-racer event – and shortly after this, it was to be seen twinkling brightly at Brunton. Hard riding, Brian. I did not hear of any prizes this year, which is surprising – or are you just being modest?

Some more pictures from the gallery: - first at the Tappity Dommi’s 50th birthday bash!



Some of the “usual suspects”



A Norton cake for a Norton

And here is Neil in the rain. With defunct Commando. . First Simon's Commando packed up about 400 yards from his house and had to be pushed back, and replaced by a modern THINGG. Then on top of the most remote and lonely summit in Southern Scotland, and in the rain, Neil's Commando decided to expire. Fortunately with a little B***ing (must not use that word!), he got it going. However your scribe is beginning to have his doubts about Commandos. (Modern THINGG just visible to the left



Two sad notes before Christmas: First, Remembering Clive: The Clive Taylor memorial ride out.

Support for the Clive Taylor Memorial ride out was really heartwarming. There is a full report in Roadholder, so I will not repeat it here. There is talk of making this an annual event.

Condolences for Clive's family came from various branch members, and were passed on to Frances, Saul and Hannah. Also condolences to the branch and friends from Anna Dixon, (E Yorks), Thane Gillies (Canada), Tim Harrison, (NOC Chairman), Gino Rondelli (Tayside), and Campbell Adie (Aberdeen).

Tim Harrison, chairman of the big NOC in the sky, acted quickly (while at the Rally in New York State) to arrange for the selling of badges (recovered from Clive's house) at IOM. These were sold for £3.00, which provided a profit which has been sent to the Joey Dunlop Foundation in Clive's memory.

The big NOC club in the sky has also paid us for the cost of the branch's wreath at Clive's funeral.

We are still waiting for news from Strathclyde police regarding the cause of the accident.

And now, horrifyingly, another tragedy: Wolf Pfeiffer

Wolf's death has now been announced in "Roadholder." Wolf was one of those extraordinary, wonderful, larger than life characters who are absolutely unforgettable. He attended all International rallies, including those held in the UK, so a fair number of our members may have had the pleasure of meeting him.

A conversation with Wolf was an exciting, indeed mind-boggling experience! A condolence message has been sent on behalf of the branch to his wife (Elfrieda, or "Elfie"), and to Roland Grossbichler, of the Austrian branch.

The cause of death? – a head-on collision with a car driven by an elderly lady, who had lost control. – sounds horribly familiar. I particularly remember Clive and Wolf enjoying a good banter at the Austrian rally. – it seems a long time ago, now - -

So this period as “Acting Secretary” has involved some sad duties.

But life is for living, and, you must not stop living it, as the policeman at Clive’s accident site told us... So we go on ---. A test ride out over the borders, testing **ME**, not the Norton, and, “Yes - - - I can still do this - -”

Note re. “T Shirts”

Hopefully examples of “NOC Northumbria” T-shirts and polo shirts, with embroidered “NOC NORTHUMBRIA” badge, will be on show before or at the Christmas meet.

Finally a picture kindly provided by Dave Wardle, from the IOM!!



As Simon says, 2011 has been a “Funny Year”. But NOC Northumbria ‘s 2011 has also been a real affirmation of the joy of living, and of riding old motorcycles of a very special provenance. May all your Christmases be joyful, and your 2012 be bright!- - - also your lights!

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