



## Northumbria Branch Newsletter July 2013

It is my duty to write a mid-season newsletter. Well, try struggling through this lot! With all the rally stuff, last minute crises etc, I've just stuck together anything I can find in the bowels of the computer. In the meanwhile -

**The Rally  
(In Fact;)**

### **THE NOC NATIONAL RALLY, ORGANISED (?) BY THE NORTHUMBRIA BRANCH, AT MORPETH, 2-5 AUGUST, 2013.**

Last-minute crises? -

- Like this one : the T-shirt supplier decided to go on holiday. Since we are told that lots just turn up in spite of warnings, or they book at the very last minute after seeing the forecast, I wanted to order as late as possible to have a better idea of numbers.

So I have had to order early, and a whole lot extra on spec. Including for Northumbria members who I assume intend to come but have not yet registered. (Sorry if I guessed your sizes wrongly!).

At this point , after the list of registered ralliers and helpers reached 112, people stopped booking. For a week. Then one arrived today. I know of LOTS who have SAID they are coming. At Skipton around 40-50 arrived on the day without booking (food crisis!) **We are going to have to give numbers for the main meal to the caterer by Tues lunch time, latest, and also give estimates for the Friday meal and the BEER.** So if you intend to come, please, **please register** – best by post – ANOTHER form is attached. NB Branch members get green T-shirts for £5 (at a loss) so others can see them and ask for local advice if needed.

The T-shirt design is by Neil's son and is Magnificent. Here's a green one – as worn by members and helpers -





Apart from which a lot of people have offered to help and I hope to approach them soon. The main jobs seem to be table clearing (waiters not needed after all), manning the gazebo (open many hours so we need a shift system), setting up on Thursday, clearing Sunday and Monday, and marshalling bikes at the town square, and marshalling generally. Derek Turnbull has bravely offered to run the raffle (in aid of Northumbria Blood Bikes).

Beyond which, some reports:

### **The Sad News of Ian Laverick's death.**

Ian has been a member for many years. Known well to the Morpeth-ites and to people who were in the club earlier, when he was a more active member. It appears a very sudden death, but we do not know more. By the time you get this, I will have attended his funeral. I know Dave Wardle will be there, and maybe some others who knew him, though working hours make it hard. I am sure we all wish Ian well, in the great motorbike shed in the sky - --

After which, I only have time to sling together stuff stuck in the bowels of my computer –

### **The Clive Taylor memorial Run and a very red face - -**

Richard came up with the German term “Schadenfreude”, meaning something like “Taking pleasure in someone else's troubles”. So, on that basis, the utterly shameful events at the start of the Clive Taylor memorial Run may not have been so bad – since they may have given others such pleasure. Certainly they seemed to enjoy pulling my Dommi arpart all over the pub car park. And, lacking much further news for which I have time, here are the messages I sent the participants in this shameful event, after it was all over:

#### **Anatomy of an ignominious disaster.**

Well, here goes:

I removed the carburettor and then left the bike at the 3 Tuns in Don and Brenda's car, and after we left the lunch at the Dyke Neuk, we then went to Don's place, where we dismantled and blew out the carburettor and collected a BIG empty fuel can and a small can with some fresh juice.

And so back to the 3 Tuns. While I re-attached the carburettor, Don was busy draining fuel from the tank. We tipped out the quantity from the reserve and tipped the bike to get the last bit out. We then added Don's new petrol.

I was resolved to say that, if the bike started, I could claim it was because of blowing out the carburettor. (never change 2 variables a once!). And, yes, it started.

So I went to the garage and filled the bike with real petrol. And so we set off along the A69 towards town, Don following. The Dommi was running nicely at about 65 mph. Then, on the descent towards the intersection with the Western by-pass, some major misfires - followed by a dead engine.

I coasted into a lay-by. Old routine – flood, choke, kick, and a brief roar followed by death. It was now getting late. I poked around a bit. In the end (Oh Ignominy!) I phoned Carole Nash whose rescue service arrived 1 ½ hours later, Don staying by my side and refusing to leave me.

So the bike when home on a lorry.

Next morning lab tests – fractional distillation using my wife’s kitchen scale. And tin can, and a hot air gun to boil off fuel samples.

By this dangerous method, Boiling off the stuff taken from the tank at the 3 Tuns produced, by this dangerous method, approx.30% volatile stuff.

Boiling off new fuel now in the tank produced about 80% volatile stuff. Then I made two strips of paper towel, dipped one in one liquid and one in the other. Then hung them up to dry. After 30 minutes one was dry and the other still wet. 1 ½ hours later it was still wet. From which I conclude that, yes, it really had been diesel I had put in!

But why had the bike died with new fuel in it? I opened everything up and looked. Checked battery (sorted a small fault),. Checked all HT leads. Checked distributor. Bike started OK. A test ride to Don’s place delivering a gift of grateful marmalade, produced plenty of performance on the coast road, but erratic slow running and a lot of misfires when pulling away from tick-over in the tiny roads round Jesmond.

So I went home and did the things you do for erratic slow running – and - – a road test. Out in the back lane, but trying to pull away, misfiring.

Engage brain to produce a theory. E.G. my fractional distillation experiments with the fuels. Had the stuff in the carburettor fractionally distilled, leaving a diesel-rich residue in the float chamber? Action: drain carburettor and start again.

Engine sounds good. Out into the rush hour traffic and make it to the dual up the side of the town moor and rush up and down a couple of times.

Now misfiring has started at low speeds and stationary. So - Struggle home through rush hour traffic, keeping the motor running somehow.

Let out contents of carburettor and start again. Not perfect but very much better. Almost OK.

So – that’s what is happening. But how when the tank was really drained properly could there be enough diesel in the 3 ¼ gallons tank-full of proper petrol, with which I had set off from the 3 Tuns? More draining –

I had now drained off 5 litres into a can and 2 ½ into the tank of my very old British Seagull outboard motor. The plan is to add 2-stroke fuel to this and run the outboard on it. How can it not work? Seagulls in the ‘50’s and ‘60’s ran on an 8:1 petrol:oil mixture (much blue smoke). A hint of diesel should work fine.

Buy can of petrol. Rinse tank with a small amount of new petrol and drain off. Drain off carburettor.

Test run: good to start with but misfiring returns at small throttle openings when engine heated up. Big throttle opening plus revs – OK. Discover that it runs OK if I turn off the headlamp. So I check the battery – AOK.

2 possibilities:

- intermittent short in headlamp/tail lamp wiring.
- Something inhibiting the ignition system that can be overwhelmed by max voltage from the alternator, at high revs with lights off.

Remove fairing to access wiring in headlamp. Hear small object drop.

Object turns out to be the broken-off carbon brush from the centre of the distributor cap. Remove cap and find only a tiny fragment of graphite left inside last couple of turns of spring. Why was the engine running in the first place? (Damage done at the 3 Tuns?)

Put in spare graphite brush and re-install fairing. This should sort it out.

Test ride: once engine is hot, misfiring returns. Better at high revs or with the headlamp off.

Consider taking off the fairing again, but another thought – could there be a carbon deposit left in the plugs from the diesel? It should have burned off, but, well, you never know.

Remove a plug: White-ish deposit, maybe whiter than usual, but no carbon. Take out other plug – also a white deposit, but a bit less of it. Nothing that looks electrically conductive.

Well, what about a shot in the dark? Put in 2 old plugs out of the bits box.

Fire up and go for test ride.

Up and down town moor – ok! Go up A1 to Stannington and back – still OK.

Next day put Lizzie on the back, and, along with Ian Cartwright, whose new medication has allowed him to ride again, ride up to Craster and buy kippers. All very good. Buy Kippers.

So it looked like we were going to be setting off to the International Rally in France.

But WHY did those plugs not work?

And had the gremlins relented? – not a bit of it – they attacked elsewhere – a major fight to ward them off. Anyhow, Ian Cartwright sends regards.

#### **Rather old message from Richard:**

The Manx Commando is now back to winning form and we enjoyed a close second and an emphatic first place at the NEMCRC Croft meeting on the 7th April. Norton continues to rule! Quite good fun racing with a "dew-drop" on the end of your nose! Regards, Richard.

(Richard is off racing in Belgium and Germany and I await the next vainglorious report)

#### **The French Rally:**

Northumbria represented by Gary and Amy MacKnight, and ourselves.

Main report is that Lizzies's rear end is very sore and we need to get a softer dual seat!. The bike came back sick (again), but all gremlins now evicted (possibly temporarily).

It is always a pleasure to trundle across France on their minor roads – though the signposting leaves a LOT to be desired – and WHERE HAVE ALL THE PEOPLE GONE? All towns and villages apparently deserted at all times of day.

We enjoyed the rally, not doing a lot, just chatting and drinking a certain amount (as one does). The French set about serving massive 4-course gourmet meals to 400 people using various methods of serving. At the 3rd attempt they got it right! But all in all a major event, which was well managed.

Visits en route included the Monet gardens at Giverny (water lilies etc), and Bruges (staggeringly expensive meals) but all otherwise excellent, and Lizzie got us special offer hotel, so AOK.

**Wooler went fine**, though not a lot of our members, and visitors were down because so many of the long haul riders were just back, or coming back, from France. Due to our sick, post-France Dommi, I was lent Bob's all-purpose Triton – for which thanks –

#### **Evening rides.**

I led one early in the season. Don came back surrounded by a posse of people with rear and head lights as he was not exactly glowing in the dark. But a lovely evening at Newton-by-the-Sea.

I have not even checked to see if any more evening rides happened.

WE CAN DO ONE MORE ON WED 4<sup>th</sup> SEPT. IS ANYONE INTERESTED?

## Otterburn? What a lovely day – and NO MUD!!!

Among other things, John Storey ( new branch member) appeared with this!!!



## Warning from DON!

You may have seen a warning in Roadholder about insurers removing the provision whereby we are insured if we ride someone else's bike, and not making it exactly clear. Well this happened to DON. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

## Sept gets busy – Too busy? – but after Sept. it is all over, so make Sept a final fling!

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Sept :** Some very forgiving people said we should try the Clive Taylor Memorial Run again and this seems the only practical date. Well, we had previously moved it OUT of Sept, because Sept. was too crowded. But if nobody tells me not to, I, at least, will ride the route. Departing from the "3 Tuns" at Heddon-on-the-Wall, 9.30, with meal back at the Dyke Neuk 1 pm for those who want it. (Please let me know in advance if you plan to stay for the meal so we can book).

**13-15 Sept: Joint camp with Tayside and Edinburgh branches.** Salutation Inn (as before), on A 698 between Berwick and Coldstream. The site is just on the Berwick side of where the B6470 crosses the A698.

NB Also a couple of rooms available in the pub and also a static caravan with 3 rooms. To book one of these contact the Inn 01289 382291 or e-mail: [phil.thewindsorcastleinn@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:phil.thewindsorcastleinn@hotmail.co.uk). If booking make sure to name the pub – they run two. If coming, please tell your sec.

**29<sup>th</sup> Sept (Sunday) Kamtrek** – competition and exploration, this year run by Simon Hadden, who many of you may know. Simon just joined the branch, so how about making him feel really welcome and joining this event, which I and Lizzie regard as the most enjoyable of the year.

## OK – fingers crossed for Morpeth – please placate any rain gods you know!

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