



# Northumbria Branch Newsletter :

## Amazingly advanced Xmas 2014 edition!!

SO ADVANCED IS THIS EDITION THAT IT IS GETTING WRITTEN IN OCTOBER. THIS IS BECAUSE IN THE RUN UP TO XMAS AN ARM WILL BE IN A SLING (THE END RESULT OF HEAVING MOTORCYCLES IN THE WRONG DIRECTION AND STANDING IN THE WRONG POSITION). ANYHOW IT IS EASIER TYPING IN OCTOBER WITH 2 HANDS THAN WITH ONE IN DECEMBER: OLD SAYING; "TWO HANDS BETTER THAN ONE!!"

ENOUGH SELF-PITY - - - - NOW TO BUSINESS --**YOU NEED TO KNOW:-**

### XMAS MEAL AND GATHERING:

**At: Melton Constable**

**Date: Thurs 18th Dec**

**Start 7.00**

**Booking ahead – Yes you need to book ahead or you will not get fed!! Book with us!**

**Joint venture with the BSA owners club (at least half of whose members appear to be members of the Norton Owners, and maybe vice versa).**

### How to book ahead:

**If you are on email** you will get my e-mail, with the attached form; ignore the form at the end of this letter, but **fill in the e-mailed attachment** and sent it to me. [jnoandlizpowell@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jnoandlizpowell@yahoo.co.uk). Clear as mud? - - good!

**If you are not on e-mail** use the attached form and send it to me by snail mail at John Powell, 9 Lily Crescent, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 2SP. At present I am of the opinion that only the following are not on e-mail: Stuart Rankin, Davie Price, Stuart Heslop. (Tony Sargent's e-mail will go to his son, Danny's address). Even so, **if you do not get an e-mail at the time you receive this letter**, fill in the form anyhow and send it to me, maybe with your current e-mail address on it as people sometimes change them and sometimes I suffer from typo's. Clearer than mud?? - good!

You can bring wives, partners, spouses, non-spouses, off-springs, on-springs, whatever you have, like, enjoy but:

ONE WARNING!! We are going to have too many people to just use the conservatory (fancy word for greenhouse) at the pub, so some will have to eat in the main pub. So it is first come first served, as far as places go. We can always mill around afterwards, exchange gay banter etc ( am I allowed to use that word any more???)

Oh – a menu is attached for food choice – the form, you know ---

Form to me, please, by Sat 13<sup>th</sup> Dec latest. ENOUGH!!!

**So What's next for the New Year?** - Happily I do not have to promote anything at this time, but horrible warnings about an AGM will arrive in early Spring together with demands for money. And – between now and then, lets brew up some great plans for 2015 (2015 already??? I'm historic!)

**AND WHAT NOC EVENTS HAPPENED SINCE THE LAST MAILING?**

Well, the big change this year has been the move to the Melton Constable. This has proven hugely popular not just with NOC, but also BSA owners, Velocette owners, VMCC, and virtually anyone coming by on two geriatric wheels. (We do not discuss age of the bloke sitting on top).

We'll see how it goes over the winter, when less people will be breaking forth of an evening on old motorcycles, but, yes, a very heartening response. Not the least because we were warned that if you change your venue, you lose members.

And there has been an outbreak of new bikes! Here are some, but others arrive hourly!



Well, I had to include Ken and Stuart, even though not on Nortons – and Stuart’s bike is not even a new acquisition. But there is a certain “Classiness” about them (I’m talking about the motorcycles, of course, not Ken and Stuart.)

### **Classic vehicles show at Corbridge:**

We were invited because they wanted classic motorcycles as well as cars, but in fact the show was ALL CARS except for us and a few individual exhibits. However a great day, with a good turn-out. (though I wish I could get Graham Geary with his wide-line 99 to join NOC Northumberland as well as just bringing his motorcycle to the show. Graham – I’m sending you this!!!!- - -)



But, with us being the only actual motorcycle stand, we attracted more than our fair share of interest from the general public – the stand was BUSY!. And – Tony Sargent won “Best motorcycle of the show” – but on a TRIUMPH! Do we rejoice or do we weep?



### **International Rally, Bremen.**

Three Northumbria bikes went to this, with five people on them, though Alan and tribe also dropped by in passing. It will all be in “Roadholder”, but I would like at least to express thanks to the Bremen branch (membership: 2), for organising a superb event. It was not of the cheapest, but, well, you get what you pay for, and meals etc were of the very best. The weather could have been improved upon, though. (Why is it that every time I take the Dommi to Germany, it rains?). And – nothing went “in die Hosen” – piece of German vernacular meaning, literally, “into the trousers”. Even so, Berndt of Bremen said lots went into “die Hosen”, it’s just that nobody noticed!

### **Camp with the Scots at Yetholm:**

A great weekend with great weather, food at the pub excellent, there WAS enough space at the camp site, in fact some to spare, and I was allowed to lead a great ride out though all my favourite roads, crossing and re-crossing the border just a few days before the referendum. (At Carter Bar on the South-going car park there is an information board which includes an old saga in a language that is not Anglo-Saxon, or Gaelic (they came from Ireland anyhow), but which is in the original language of most of Britain, maybe all of it – British - old Welsh (A Welsh friend can actually understand it). Anyhow, a great chance for your branch sec. to deliver a subliminal message. Identity?

Anyhow your branch secretary has always regarded the Scots as his compatriots, and has been proud to have been able to do so. So your branch sec. is delighted at the outcome of the Referendum. And then ----- our Norton Scots - what a great group of people! – what warmth, generosity, humour and what spirit! Hell, they even bought me drinks! What great compatriots!

### **Kamtrek:**

Your sec. was filled with gloom – expecting this to be the last Kamtrek ever, with interest fading to zero, and it not being worth asking anyone to take the trouble to organise next year’s route and clues. What a surprise at the start! A super turn-out. Sean Mulloy’s bike thoughtfully broke down thus reducing the number of actual competitors to 12

(plus with the organisers), which meant we were not obliged to turn ourselves into a “scatter event”. Dave Angles produced many more clues than were possible in the time, but he made them easy, and this made the ride-around more varied and the visits to lots of interesting spots all the better. In attendance were some NOC, quite a few Vintage people, and an amazingly “advanced motorcyclist” plus wife on pillion, Michael and Geraldine Sutherland. So advanced were they that they won – and will have to organise next years’ AND: KAMTREK LIVES!! (Richard and Jen won the tie-breaker - and --- Richard appears to have completed a racing season without crashing! The lad’s improving!)

### **Evening runs –**

Well, only one in the second half of the season, but 13 or more of us arrived at the pub in Alnmouth, after an evening about as beautiful as they come.

And, to end the season, here’s some tit-bits that arrived here –

### **Here’s an item forwarded from I know-not-where:**

***Subject: National Motorcycle Museum Press Release-Dunlop Puts In 109 MPH Lap On National Motorcycle Museum Machine!***

***Dunlop Puts In 109 MPH Lap On National Motorcycle Museum Machine!***

***Michael Dunlop put in a 109mph lap from a standing start at last week’s Classic TT on his late father’s ex-works Norton Rotary race machine which is now owned as part of the National Motorcycle Museum collection.***

***Michael was representing Robert Dunlop in the Joey Dunlop “the rivals” tribute parade lap held on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August.***

***Not so much “a parade” when Michael announced to Museum Director James Hewing that he was "going for it" and posted the incredible lap time on a bike he had never even sat on before getting on the grid!***

***Event Organisers had even arranged for replica JPS leathers and helmet for Michael to accurately replicate those worn by father Robert in the early 1990s.***

***The Brian Crighton and Museum team prepared bike ran perfectly and The National Motorcycle Museum was very proud to be able to help Michael represent his Dad in this way on the iconic Mountain circuit.***

**- and on the next page – just another tit-bit : A friend sent it a while back - - -**

And so, as the year grinds to a close, reindeer frolic on the Town Moor, cheesy Christmas songs belt out of every shopping centre, and the not-yet-emptied bottles accumulate in anticipation - - - while “surprise” gifts of Norton parts gather under Christmas trees, and relations not seen all year suddenly accumulate at the door ---- while the snow-drops crouch under the lawns, just ready to bounce out, and the darkest day rolls by, and ---- while stabled motorcycles sniff the air and start to think of Spring, - there’s that sudden frisson of excitement for the open roads of 2015. A Merry Christmas and a joyous renewal in 2015 to all our readers - -

-- and, on the subject of renewal, the word has just reached me that Dr. Clive’s daughter, Hannah, is expecting a baby. --- continuity is a wonderful thing - - -

Meanwhile we are:

Chairman: Bob Tym. 01670 517949. robert.tym@gmail.com

Scribe and sec.: John Powell. Tel 0191 281 8116. jnoandlizpowell@yahoo.co.uk . Mobile:07802 257800

Money: Simon Murray. [Simon@barmoor.com](mailto:Simon@barmoor.com)

*Thought of you guys - couldn't resist! xo Anne*

Going for

# Norton rides again but they can't make the motorbikes fast enough

As a revered brand is revived, James Hurley hears why government support is needed to bridge a skills gap

**I**t takes an optimist publicly to ask George Osborne for a handout, but Stuart Garner, the owner of Norton Motorcycles, is used to seeing audacious gambles end well. He bought the troubled bike maker in 2008 despite having no experience of engineering, and went on to ride one of its motorbikes at 173mph with no brakes, claiming a world speed record in the process.

Last week, Mr Garner collared the chancellor at a business event and asked for government help with his plan to set up a motorcycle manufacturing academy to revive an industry that's been in decline for decades.

"I will sit down with you, make it happen and if you need government support you'll get it," Mr Osborne responded. A better result than even Mr Garner expected.

After buying the Norton marque from an American investment banker — "that's all it was; no bikes, no factory, no income" — he brought its famous motorcycles back into production in 2010. The company has since won orders from the US, Australia and even Japan, which for a bike maker is a bit like "sending coal to Newcastle", he says.

Norton was founded in Birmingham in 1898 as a parts maker for bikes, producing its first motorcycle in 1902. One of its bikes won the first ever Isle of Man TT race. Speed records and more TT victories followed but the company's financial history is chequered, with ownership changing hands numerous times as the industry lost out to Japanese competition.

In its latest incarnation, about 80 per cent of its £6million turnover comes from overseas. "It's such a revered British brand that as soon as the trade heard we were back, we had inquiries from all over the world," Mr Garner says.

"Overwhelming" demand means supply problems, and international customers currently face a two-year wait to buy into Norton's renaissance, with each bike selling for about £15,000. Mr Garner is hoping to get the waiting list down to a steady six months after upgrading his factory, which is located in the grand setting of the grounds of Donington Hall in Leicestershire.



The "made in Britain" tag drives demand for Norton bikes, says Stuart Garner. It's got the sales but it needs the supply chain

## A long road travelled at top speed

**1898**

Norton founded in Birmingham as a manufacturer of "fittings and parts for the two-wheel trade"

**100,000**

Norton motorcycles manufactured for the military during the Second World War



**94**

Times a Norton bike has finished first in an Isle of Man TT race

**173mph**

World speed record for a rotary-powered motorcycle, set by current Norton owner Stuart Garner in 2009

Source: Times research

With much of the overseas excitement relating to Nortons' "made in Britain" credentials, he is concerned that the revival is being threatened by the demise of the domestic bike-making industry. "Demand is driven by authenticity, which is the difficulty. We've got great sales but we need the supply chain."

Mr Garner has fought to ensure that most of the components in his bikes are made in Britain (83 per cent at the last count) but he's determined that every

part in every machine should eventually come from domestic suppliers.

"Our mantra is British-made, which is what the global customer wants quality and craftsmanship," he says. "But we haven't got a supply industry, so I can't make a wheel and I can't make an exhaust without having huge problems, because we lost the industry to the Japanese in the 1960s."

To tackle the issue, Mr Garner wants that British motorcycling manufactur-

ing academy to train young apprentices. He says he's set aside 10,000 sq ft of space for the project, which he estimates will require £5 million to pay for equipment and training. "The plan is to incubate a new supply chain — how to make a wheel, a seat, a wiring loom."

Of the 100 jobs he hopes the academy could create over three years, he says some will become Norton workers, but others will learn the skills they need to launch start-ups. "We'd set them up with a bit of money, and some long lead time purchase orders so they can get some finance. That would allow them to build parts for other companies and give us the depth of supply chain we need." He's hoping Mr Osborne's pledge to help — made at last week's Times and Santander SME Summit — will mean he can "fast forward" the plan. "On my own, it would take me years to set up."

The next step in Norton's comeback could involve a return to TT. The company has a partnership with Halfords to fund the project, but he admits that taking on giant manufacturers such as Honda and BMW would be daunting. "We know it's a David vs Goliath task but we're up for it. Small teams of driven people can take on the world."

**Norton Owners' and BSA Owners' Christmas Party**

**2014**

**Please return this form by Sat 13th December!**

**If you got this form by e-mail:**

please complete (Excel Spreadsheet) and e-mail to [inoandlizpowell@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:inoandlizpowell@yahoo.co.uk)

**If you got this form on the Norton Owners newsletter and did NOT get it via e-mail,**

please complete and post to: John Powell, 9 Lily Crescent, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 2SP

**At:** Melton Constable, Seaton Sluice

**When:** Thurs 18th Dec

7 p.m.

Please select your meals choices. NB You can have any 2 courses for £10.95

or any 3 courses for £13.45. Cash collected on the night. A bit extra for the tip might be appreciated.

**IF YOU NEED TO CANCEL: TELL US! - email as above or text or phone 07802 257800!**

Sorry, no free meal this year: No rally so no profit to spend. Booze extra ad lib -

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of people:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Servings:**

**Starters:** Homemade veg and ham broth + Crusty Roll  
Prawn Cocktail + Marie Rose sauce

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Mains:** Full roast Turkey Dinner, with trimmings and cranberry sauce  
Roast beef dinner with trimmings  
Whole tail scampi + chips and peas  
Chicken breast in creamy mushroom sauce: -

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- with chips:

\_\_\_\_\_

- with potatoes:

\_\_\_\_\_

Veggie: Broccoli & cheese bake : -

- with chips, or:

\_\_\_\_\_

- with potatoes or:

\_\_\_\_\_

- with salad or:

\_\_\_\_\_

- with vegetables

\_\_\_\_\_

**Pud:**

Xmas Pudding:-

-with custard

\_\_\_\_\_

-with ice-cream

\_\_\_\_\_

Gateau - flavour decided on the day:-

\_\_\_\_\_

Vanilla Ice-cream:-

\_\_\_\_\_

Coffee or tea available on request, cost not included in the above.