



Northumbria Branch Newsletter : July 2017



Meet Your new Branch Secretary (and Judy!)

The fellow on the left, who looks like a cross between Desperate Dan and Popeye the Sailor, is actually Simon Murray, our new branch secretary, to whom your scribe is eternally grateful for taking away his heavy burden. The charming and lovely lady next to him (that should be worth something!) is Judy, who is also a full member of all things Norton in her own right.

Simon does things with ships – lots of ships all over the place, including some very big ones. This means he spends lots of time on airships, so I am sure he will welcome any help available. Meanwhile Judy works part of her time training politicians. Well, it is high time SOMEBODY trained them!

Your scribe returns to his earlier rôle of being just bullshit writer – so you do not get off lightly! (If we can have a webmaster, how about a bullshit-master? An MBS?) However this month he has been given no less than two learned articles to publish, so that means he has a lot less to write. So keep them coming!

So far the weather has smiled upon us. Three programmed branch events so far, with the Clive Taylor Memorial Run, the camp at Clennell Hall, and open day at the Aln Valley railway.

CTMR: Clive Taylor Mem run:

Sunshine (but quite cold), small lanes with bends, gravel, potholes etc but nobody fell off. Simon attempting to run out of fuel meant that the last section (running at a moderate, almost tick-over speed, took us to the PUB OF PIES, where they make their own pies and everyone ate PIES. Trad coffee and cake stop

at East Woodburn bit with overwhelmingly record attendance, we had some trouble getting the coffee to go round. Here are bikes at East Woodburn.



Main club rally, Suffolk:

More lovely weather. Attended by your scribe plus Gary and Amy, from Northumbria. Big ride out went to Lavenham where the “Lovejoy” series was filmed. All very bijou – with Nortons –



And our own Clennell Camp:

More sunshine, in fact **baking** heat. Well, since it has repeatedly rained or galed, or both, at Wooler, someone said that maybe the weather would be better somewhere else. So we rode in the heat to the Honey Farm, near Berwick, led by Bob plus BBQ for all, organised by Simon and Judy.

We really were on the map. Approx 14 from Northumbria but a further 14 or 15 visitors – primarily NOC members from elsewhere. I asked one group how they had found us and they said through “Roadholder magazine”. The visitors included our ever-most- faithful non-members – the two Aberdonians, plus Davie from Edinburgh, and Alan from Hull. Your scribe finds this all most heartening – we are definitely on the map and it is good to find so many friends from all around, old and new. And we got a new member – John Kelly! Welcome, John! Maybe we can spread the net even wider and get someone to ride in from Moscow! And 17 Nortons counted. Also another red letter day as your scribe’s lady actually slept in his tent – which she also did last year at Kendal – this after having said, at least 15 years back, “I will never sleep in your tent again as long as I live!”.

The camp was followed by the open day at the Aln Valley railway, well attended too, I am told. Scribe had to leave early on the Sunday to play a church organ to the faithful.

So – how did Clennell work out, against Wooler? Not my decision – but some observations – re. Clennell - Prettier site, though both are attractive.

Many trees, giving shelter on what was a windy first day. And: Many trees adding to the midge hazard.

Toilet situation in the hall ok when the building open but at night only rather remote loo behind a lot of beer barrels - clean but un-lovely and maybe not the most ideal thing for the ladies.

No obvious showers though someone begged a shower from the bar. Did not research this. Stayed smelly!

Excellent fish and chips meal, and food pretty good. Band one night for those who want it, and better than most. (Question of personal taste).

More difficult access for riders who may have already travelled a long way.

TBig difference from the days when we used Clennell regularly: all petrol stations in local villages have closed, even Rothbury. This means planning ahead by arrivals, and also limits “runs” to routes that can find fuel before too many miles have elapsed. “Baby-tank” Commandos maybe most affected.

Your scribe has enjoyed Clennell, Otterburn Hall, and Wooler. But sunshine is definitely better!

Thanks to Simon and Judy for the organisation – requiring numerous trips back and forth from Base.

In 5 Days time is the Corbridge show but I will save any report on that until the next newsletter.



Three bumps on a wall

Richard racing at the BobMac weekend at East Fortune.



Inserting the incontinence device

2 of us turned up and were treated right royally to tea, coffee and Swiss roll from the Richard Johnston family racing tent (3 generations present). Richard suffered from various gremlins, but the last piece of “inspired improvisation” (we do not use the “B-word”) involve making a paper nappy for a leaky oil tank.

Method: Oil coming from somewhere under tank. Lift up tank slightly. Push in thick paper towels and slide around to remove oil. Put in clean paper towel and notice the point at which the oil “Blodge” forms. Take another paper towel, cover corresponding area with silicone sealer and slide under tank and clamp down tank. Go out and indulge in “dust-up” with small lady rider who Richard managed to overtake twice on the bends but who then pulled away from him on the straights. Excuse “she is a mere slip of a thing and weighs nowt”. Diet recommended.

And – don't forget: Camp with scots at Yetholm 8-10 Sept and Kamtrek 1st October.

And: Here's two articles, with thanks to Bob Tym and Derek Turnbull:

“Biker Down” course:

Following the link from John's email on 4 March, I booked and attended the Biker Down course on Saturday 11 March. The only other person I knew there was Ian McGregor from the BSA Owners. It seems the course is in heavy demand, after only a couple of bookings on the first two days, it was advertised through various Facebook pages and filled up completely within a day!

The good news is that the course is organised by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Services and they do plan to run more courses. This was the first course they have run and the syllabus is evolving. They have a Facebook page where they will give details of future courses, but they couldn't say when the next one will be.

The course was excellent. It lasted from 1030 to 1400 and the time really flew by. It was split into 3 modules.

Firstly they dealt with “scene safety and management”. You want to help people injured in a road accident but, you'll be no use if you get injured trying to do so. The first thing is to very quickly survey the scene and identify dangers and how any risks can be minimised. If you've got other people with you, you can send them to flag down traffic. A bike is next to useless as protection against oncoming traffic, with or without hazard lights. Call 999 immediately and give as much information as possible. Do not assume someone else has called 999. Your mobile will use the nearest radio mast for a 999 call regardless of which network it belongs to (but there are definitely areas in Northumberland where there is no signal at all). Particularly they need to know the precise location, the number of injured persons and so far as you can tell the nature of those injuries. You also need to carry out a triage of the injured people. Check the quiet ones first. People who are shouting and screaming will certainly have an airway and be breathing. As you get more information, you should continue to pass that on to the authorities by further 999 calls. Information will be passed onto the emergency services responding to the call and they'll be able to work out their own strategy before they arrive.

The second module was “First Aid and Trauma Management”. This dealt with the priorities such as dealing with catastrophic bleeds before clearing airways or conducting CPR. There were a few (but not many) quite gory photos, discussions about tourniquets, instructions on conducting CPR. We also practised helmet removal, this should only be necessary if you need to clear an airway and not necessary at all if you're dealing with a flip-front helmet. We also learned about the risk of spinal injuries and pelvic injuries. I'm not going to explain any of this in detail. You really need to go on the course.

The third module covered “The Science of being Seen”. This is a great topic for a club night discussion. I'd never thought about the lack of contrast between hi-viz yellow tabards and helmets and a background of fields of yellow rapeseed. The best hi-viz colour is PINK, because it's not a very common colour in the urban or rural environment, but what you really want is a solid block of pink (pink bike, pink trousers and jacket and pink helmet), but I'm not sure who's going to go that far! Dayglo yellow is ok in cities but not always so good in the country. Dayglo orange, as used by British Rail of yore, could appear brown under certain lighting. There was also discussion of the way we are seen, or not seen by motorists. Mixes of colours are not good. The break up the outline of the motorcyclist and his bike. Big blocks are best. As Stu said during the course, when a motorist comes out of a side road, what's he looking for? It's not bike, or even cars. He's actually looking for GAPS and if he thinks there is one between a couple of oncoming cars, he might well go for it only to find that you are there!

This is a thoroughly worthwhile course and it's FREE. All you have to do is book on line. If you want some advance warning before it opens for booking, email biker.down@twfire.gov.uk and tell them you are interested.

Bob

Here's a nice article from Derek Turnbull, now freed from excess work and setting the correct priorities for life!

The Law of Unintended Consequences – or how one thing leads to another with a Commando!

This all started when I decided to resurrect the Commando after a long hibernation. Fit new battery, add petrol and drain the sump ... because all the oil has gravitated from the tank to the lowest point of the engine. Despite having a factory-fitted non-return valve fitted to the oil pump, Commando oil always succumbs to gravity.

Determined not to go through this routine every time I got the old girl out, I decided to fit an aftermarket anti-drain valve in the oil feed line. I selected an Anti Wet Sump Valve #H08 from Holland Norton Works (www.hollandnortonworks.eu) and it seems to work well.



It's not cheap (74 Euro + p&p) but it is well engineered and high quality. It simply replaces the banjo bolt in the feed line out of the oil tank.

I decided to join a discussion on the NOC website regarding wet sumping and describe the valve I'd fitted. There followed lots of dire warnings on the engine-destroying consequences of valve failure, all of which were valid. On the plus side, there are folks out there who have used non-return valves for a long time without problems.

I figured that there are many components on a Commando that could fail without us knowing, with catastrophic results, so I decided to trust the manufacturer and fit the valve. Hopefully I won't live to regret my decision ... after all, what can go wrong with a ball and spring?

Wise men recommended fitting an oil pressure gauge; but I reasoned that the oil pressure will vary dependent upon engine RPM, oil temperature, oil viscosity and the mechanical condition of the engine, so I decided that oil pressure is a variable I'd rather not monitor - on the grounds that it will probably just worry me. I finally concluded that I'd be happier with an oil warning light to let me know when oil pressure had failed all together.



Cribbing an idea from Don Pender <http://www.tritonmotorcycleparts.com/297620484> I decided to fit an oil warning light into the instrument cluster, operated by a Triumph pressure switch fitted to the rocker oil feed banjo bolt.



All parts were sourced in UK on the web and the only real engineering required was to rethread the pressure switch from 1/8" NS to 1/8" BSP simply using a die, then take up slack on the double banjo with copper washers.



Parts List:

Part No	Description	Supplier	Price
210275DS	5/16 BSF Double Banjo Bolt - Stainless	Venhill	£7.02
3/60081S	M10 Straight Banjo - Stainless	Venhill	£7.71
29203177838	1/8 x 1/8 BSP Female x Female Fixed Barrel Nut	Essex Engineering	£3.96
	Triumph Oil Pressure Switch	Tri-Supply Ltd	£8.50
	Triumph Oil Pressure Switch Cover	Tri-Supply Ltd	£3.20
CWL12R	Warning Light 12V	Vehicle Wiring Products	£3.30

All I have to do now is take her for a long proving run and await the next 'Commando Challenge'. Wish me luck!!

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