



## **Main club rallies:**

### **International Rally 2019: Bob Tym Writes -**

You may be aware that next year's International Rally will be in Kampen in the Netherlands from 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> June . This is only about 70 miles from the DFDS ferry terminal in Amsterdam. If you've ever thought of going to the International, but been put off by the long distances involved, this is the easiest to get to for a long time, once you've got over the shock of the cost of the ferry! I'm planning to go. If you are interested in travelling out there in a group, let me know. Bookings for the Rally don't open until February. - - - - -

#### **-Scribe adds:**

Scribe used to visit a company in Kampen regularly, trying to sell them things. At which he failed – but they did give him some very nice coffee. Kampen is a really pleasant traditional Dutch Town, on the Ijssel, one of the branches of the Rhine, on its way to the Ijsselmeer, or Zuider Zee. Likely to have lots of cosy sit-out-and-eateries in attractive surroundings. The landscape around is FLAAATT!, but, if you head off in the direction opposite to the big cities, quiet countryside and peaceful roads, and quite a few small old harbour towns on the Ijsselmeer.

You can save cash on the ferry if you share a cabin. Food and drink is expensive on board but we, frequent users, take our own sandwiches and booze.

**There is also an “Inside Rally”** 21-24 Sept, in Somerset, at St Audries Bay (Suggests by the sea and suggests hotel or cabin accommodation). Your scribe finds the roads down there, while suffocatingly pretty, excessively windy and congested, though a nice route takes you down via the Fosse Way and he has used it often. However he may choose this date for Kamtrek – read on –

### **And then the IMPORTANT BIG CLUB RALLY – OURS!**

Yes, we are hosting a rally again, and again in Morpeth. 26-28 July. Stand by for being asked to help with all sorts of things!!!

Your scribe will attend as many rallies as possible, but has to fit things in like family and sailing boat (obsession B).

### **Melrose rally**

The big Norton Club in the sky arranged a rally for softies in a hotel at Melrose. 3 nights, meals morning and evening and cheap. Big Norton Club in the Sky thinks we are all too ancient to camp (REFUTED!!). A small number of Northumbrians attended. More turned up for rides out. Big rides out in good weather and lovely roads in the lovely Borders. Inevitable trip to the museum at Hawick, where everyone positively wallowed in Jimmie Guthrie. Masses of Nortons. Much “Craik”. What's not to like? Can't remember much more – too much medically prescribed red wine? Went to the factory shop in Hawick and bought the most expensive sweater in the entire universe. (Wife says I may not use it to wipe up oil spills).

### **Camping weekend at Yetholm – Bob's report:**

We had a very modest turnout this year. The weather was good, but a few of our regulars chose to attend the Reivers Rally at Melrose the weekend before. Nevertheless, we had a select attendance including our Aberdonian friends, Bill and Campbell along with Gary and Amy (our Chester le Street based members who travel all over Europe but somehow never manage to come to club nights!). Alan and I were there along with Robin Robb who'd ridden up from Chester on his very nice Fastback. There was also Ian, who none of us had met before but who'd dug his Commando out after it had been lying unused for 20 years and ridden it over from Glasgow. Ian's bike had a few faults (which I'm not going to list here to save him any embarrassment) but he was provided with plenty of friendly advice so he was able to go home with a list of jobs to be done. He hopes to be at the National Rally in Morpeth next year and I hope he'll be there.

The format is much the same each year. We arrive at the campsite on Friday afternoon/evening. We adjourn to the pub (the Plough) for dinner around 1930, although some like to cook their own food. We then have a few drinks over the evening. On Saturday morning after breakfast we set off for a run. This time we went over to St Mary's Loch. We were joined on the run by Ian and Joyce Crooks who'd come to join us for the day. The weather was kind to us and it was a great ride out. Alan had his own ride out to visit his house in Sanquhar which he assured me was also a great ride, but quite a long way!

Saturday evening was similar to Friday although Robin and I had a walk to the Kirk Yetholm pub, The Border Hotel for a pint before dinner in the Plough again.

Two great evenings with good company and a great ride out! What more could you ask for?

### **Kamtrek: Stitch-up of the Northumbria branch scribe! – (and next year's?)**

Sean used to be a nice man! He helped me make a windscreen! Now he has landed me with running Kamtrek 2019 (last of the decade). Probably its revenge – he may have thought I got him into all this Kamtrekking! He had arranged a fascinating historic route – and it took him three (or was it four) outings to plan it. We visited the memorial to the Otterburn battle, a bastle house (feature of the border raiders and reivers), a cemetery near Acklington (world war 2 front-line airfield), where British and German airmen are buried in adjoining groups, the site of a World War 2 training exercise where it went wrong and the squaddies drowned. Well, whether it be recent or ancient wars, with battle, murder and sudden death, I do find myself writing this on November the 11<sup>th</sup>.

Next year's Kamtrek? The low attendance at this year's meant that Sean put in about ¾ of a day's work per person (and Clive's friend, Rolf the Kraut, could not possibly be made to do next year's Kamtrek because he had to go home.). There was some talk of changing the thing into an evening ride – or altering the date. Anyhow, before settling all this I hope to do some stock-taking, and find out from the various groups that sometimes attend, what's the best date/format to attract more attendance. (Suggestions on a postcard please). We still think this is a great event.

### **Our illustrious chairman breaking mileage records?**

Bob (Illustrious), with Ginetta on the back (Brave or foolhardy?), this year has been to the Applecross weekend (400 miles each way), toured Ireland (lots of miles) and then buzzed off to the International in Austria followed by a detour to Vienna (innumerable miles). There should be an award!

### **Note about brakes, and the Scribe's dommi.**

For your info the brake shoes relined at Swift Brake, 5 Railway St, Newcastle NE4 7AD, 0191 273 4273, front and rear are a success, well matched to the drums (I left the wheels), and after some time to bed in, the TLS front brake is better than it ever was. Turnround for the job quick too.

As for the Dommi, I took the unbelievable theory about "wet seizures" as serious and modified accordingly. This year 2500 miles (lower than most years) but AOK. No excuse for avoiding Kamtrek.

### **Boring story, but at least it is about "Classics" even if only partly about Nortons:**

We are just back from USA where, among other things we visited an old friend and associate. People get older: his son, Brian, is about to retire. Brian is into a particular kind of racing and classics – Bultacos. Has got together a race team and also is constructing a workshop to support the race team and to restore old Bultacos. Apparently there is quite an interest in old Bultacos. I got to inspect various bits of Bultaco. He plans to tour the USA next year with a big van and compete in various events. I asked Brian to send me a note on his kind of events and he sent me the following.

### **Bultaco Astro Invitational**

Charlie Roberts is the CEO of the "Rookie Class of 79" this charitable organization helps injured Motorcycle flat track riders. Charlie had the idea to put retired professional flat track racers on the Bultacos' during the American Flat Track Pro races at various tracks, and auction off the number plates. This has been going on now for over 3 years and has become a favorite with the fans.

I wanted to get involved. The father of my professional racer Ryan Varnes is Kevin Varnes. Kevin was a Factory Suzuki Professional Flat Track Racer and a contender for the Astro Invitational. Last year Kevin rode a donated Astro that was not in the best of condition. This is when I stepped in and offered my fully restored Bultaco 360 Astro.

This Year Kevin entered the Astro Invitational at the Springfield Short Track the Saturday night before the legendary Springfield Mile on Sunday. There were 23 Astros entered, 4 heats and they took the first 2 out of each heat, the remainder went to a Semi that also took the first two. Kevin did not do well in the heat so that put him into the semi, which he won. The photo is Kevin No.89 passing Garth Brow No.15 for the win. Kevin went on to get 6<sup>th</sup> in the final, not a bad showing for the first time out and running against some fairly modernized Bultacos.

I have also attached a picture of Ryan Varnes riding my Kawasaki Ninja at the Springfield Mile. This shot is at 138 MPH and tossed into the turn. (Right hand pic, below)



*(Thinks: “I have not seen Richard doing this at East Fortune”)*

Brian also has a Commando and he led me on a guided tour of some of the peaceful lanes of Eastern Pennsylvania. A grand morning out!!



### **Scribe musings: (Still November the 11<sup>th</sup>)**

One advantage of being scribe is that it provides a forum in which to babble, or rant - And, maybe after fifteen years of newsletter writing, I am entitled to a rant. Although Christmas is approaching we are in the midst of remembering World War one. For my generation, and most of us “vintage motorcyclists”, World War One is still very real – our grandparents generation lived through it, and died in this evil piece of mass stupidity, and which my historian son calls “a giant dick-waving competition”. It is important that younger generations know this piece of history, but I am not happy with the coverage in the media, and the lessons which the younger generation may be failing to learn from it. You would hardly think anyone else had been in the war, apart from the British, or that there had been anything other than the Western Front (horrific though that was). Indeed even today we are paying the price of that war. You can take the chaos in the Middle East as just one example. And remembering the dead? How do we best remember them? Were they all heroes? There was immense heroism shown, but I cannot help also bringing to mind the words of the writer Robert Graves, who lived through it: “Wretched children, wetting their bags with fright, driven into the machine gun barrage”. Heroes – or victims? Wilfred Owen, soldier, war poet and also war victim, imagined some kind of reconciliation after death - - “- I am the enemy you killed, my friend”. One hundred years later, and I, for one, am still angry.

What has all this to do with Nortons? Well, in 2016 this Nortoneer, en route to the Italian rally, went to show recognition of other people's war, (not on the BBC) and visited the Verdun battlefield site, where German generals managed to bleed two armies white. I was soon "battled out" and left – perhaps most striking were not the monuments and vast cemeteries, but a "pee-stop" quite some miles from them, to find the whole forest floor pock-marked with shell craters. I rode on South along the "Voie Sacréé", the one-way road for so many French soldiers.

Bikes, maybe old bikes, bring people together – whether riding a Commando in the Pennsylvania countryside, or in the NOC International rallies. I find this a heart-warming experience. Maybe the world needs more old motorcyclists! - or motorcyclists on old bikes - End of rant. That's off my chest.

**I must move on – Christmas is coming;**

- And I have to prepare organ playing for 2 Sunday services and then the Carol Service on the 16<sup>th</sup> Dec. Anyone for a carol service?
- and post- New Year, lots of planning for a great year's Norton-ing!

(I must stop: Lizzie says there is a man at the door, dressed in red, wearing a pistol in a shoulder holster, clutching a Martini in one hand and a bundle of speeding tickets in the other. He seems to have a big swag bag. Apparently he said "My name is Claws – Santa Claws". I need to check this one out. )

**Simon's xmas menu. (pub has reduced the choices – sorry) . Simon says:**

<b>Melton Constable - 20th December - 7:30</b>	
2 courses	£14.95
3 courses	£16.95
<b>Starters:</b>	
1	Homemade carrot & coriander soup served with croutons and bloomer bread.
2	Chicken liver, clementine & cranberry pate, real ale chutney & oatcakes.
<b>Main courses:</b>	
1	Traditional Turkey Dinner, Yorkshire pudding, stuffing, pigs in blankets & all the t
2	Traditional Roast Beef Dinner, Yorkshire pudding, stuffing, pigs in blankets & all th
3	Root vegetable & goats cheese nut roast, served with vegetables, Yorkshire puddi
<b>Deserts:</b>	
1	Traditional Christmas Pudding, served with hot custard or brandy sauce.
2	Belgian chocolate fondant, served with mint chocolate chip ice-cream.

Please let me know the choices that you would like before the 10<sup>th</sup> December.

Please note if I do not confirm your order then I have not received it! If in doubt, please ring me on 07483 888801 to confirm.

**Officers - - -**

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