



## Northumbria Branch Pre- Christmas Newsletter.

Yes, - - - ANOTHER CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER – BUT ---

**This time a newsletter with somewhat reduced news. – Like -**

### **What did NOT happen:**

e.g. Your scribe was responsible for the **Kamtrek**. The first attempt turned out to be a day of predicted continuous rain – so the date was put back – to – a day where the forecast promised continuous rain from the time Kamterk started until it stopped.

Well, we have had a few noble souls do a previous Kamtrek in rain, but this forecast was not going to do much for turn-out, AND, Scribe was off to Spain next, after which it was just too late in the year.

**So, announcing a SPRING KAMTREK!** Join the joyful celebration! Celebrate renewal, hope, joy, bouncing lambs, hosts of golden daffodils, “oh to be in England, now that Spring is here”- and – probably – more rain. (Date of rain to be announced).

And, e.g. the **show at Stannington**. No club stand for “logistical reasons”. I never interpreted this one but assumed it meant there was nobody to bring, erect and lower the stand, and man it for the day. But members invited to come anyhow. The Stannington event is really a gathering put on by the Tyne Valley Classic Bike club, where other groups are most welcome, but not the kind of affair we have seen previously at Corbridge or Bywell, - but friendly: the village turn out with tea and buns! This year, without a gazebo where I could park the bike for some hours while I went off to play the church organ to the faithful, your scribe was, I am afraid, a “no-show”.

**Camp with Scottish branches at Yetholm:** Well, almost a non-happening, at least for Northumbria. Scottish branches turned up, but only one Northumbria member – and he’s Scottish!..... he seems to have enjoyed it.

### **But the big event this year was that we hosted the National Rally. Which HAPPENED!**

Simon, our peripatetic secretary (only needs in-flight refuelling and then he need not come down at all) has given me a report so I can just copy and paste, BUT I would like to add something.

I was sec for the previous rally, and it was so much work and stress for so many months that my wife threatened to divorce me if I did another one. (Mind you she has also threatened to divorce me if I start any more businesses). Nowadays, the big Norton Club in the Sky club does help, and that should reduce the work, but, it seems, not by all that much. Simply, it does not have the local knowledge, contacts etc. Anyhow huge congratulations to the team who put the thing together with a quiet efficiency that I clearly lacked.

The weather was pretty crappy, but everyone who came seemed really happy to be there – a great atmosphere.

Unfortunately a visiting member who had had some kind of back operation/treatment previously and who had dropped his bike on a ride, seized solid at the clubhouse – unable to move and in some pain. Simon and Judy got him to A&E, where he stayed in hospital, subsequently being driven by Simon and Judy to Peterborough where he was handed over to family. His bike was left with a local friend. Such duties are not even in the small print of a branch sec's duties, but Simon and Judy's GOOD DEED should be recorded.

Bob meanwhile had to deal with a puncture in the rain.

For some reason I have no rally pics. Here's Simon's report.

*Just a short note to thank everyone from the Branch involved with the Rampart Rally. Feedback from the main club and fellow club members has been very positive.*

*Highlights from the rally on Friday were John's TransCanada talk and Bob's daughter Sarah demonstrating the Northumbrian pipes. On Saturday, the weather wasn't great, however four runs were completed satisfactorily; the only hiccup was Bob suffering from a puncture, but as always, Bob was prepared and replaced the inner tube at the side of the road before continuing on. Saturday afternoon there was a display of Nortons in Morpeth town square. The mayor judged the 'best' bike and she choose honorary member Bill's bike. It must also be mentioned that the best Commando was awarded to Neil's bike - and I'm not taking any credit - but this was my old bike, with some repairs, improvement and a lot of elbow grease by Neil to get into the condition it is now!*

*On Saturday evening, the mayor presented the awards and the band performed a short set. I'm not sure if the cost of a band for future rallies can be justified - it seemed that the majority of the audience moved outside to be able to talk about bikes and reacquaint with old friends. Something to be highlighted to the main club.*

*Overall, the location worked well, catering was satisfactory; I haven't heard any negative complaints about the quality nor the quantity of food provided.*

*We are still waiting for the final accounts from the main club, but we have already made two donations to our selected charities - the GNAA and the Blood Bikes (the mayor's charity) and once the accounts are finalised, we hope to be able to make additional donations to both charities.*

*A special thanks must go to Alison, the Mayor of Morpeth, she attended both Friday and Saturday nights of the rally and also the display with enthusiasm and seemed to really enjoyed talking to all us old bikers!*

*So onto the next national rally to be held by our branch - note to the committee - let's not do it for a few years, like 2030!*

## **Pictures?? Well we have to have SOME.**

So here's George's ridiculously shiny next bike:



And here's a shop where we all must feel at home.



## **And a blather – or a celebration of motorcycling – just to share with you -**

November 2019 – rain rain rain – and then suddenly a dry Saturday! Temperature going to be no more than 2c, and probably salt on the roads but the spirit must be freed! Spray the bike with WD 40 – AND GO!

Stannington – Matfen – Ryall – and beyond, vast vistas of Northumberland – puddles and small floods – autumn leaves (careful on those corners!), but the roads are all mine and how the engine loves cold air!! Fingertip dommi control, poised as a ballerina, swing and swoop down through side roads and over the bridge to Wark – Bellingham with frozen fingers – soup, roll and coffee, and a walk up to Hareshaw Linn. `Back up via Sweethope Lough, moorland, (they've resurfaced some of the roads – no more bounces!), and on to the A696. The nimble lane-swinger develops flight. Only 500cc, but holding the speed limit on a whiff of throttle – catch a car and (singing loud praises of Mr Hopwood in my helmet!), overtake on half throttle with needle climbing rapidly past 70 and heading towards 80 – ease back (I've just had to go on the bad driving course), bank and glide round bends, never slowing, until – Ponteland – airport – up to 70 – and glide to a halt at the Western bypass. Sheer joy! (back home, hose down bike for salt and into the shed with a fan heater on, to dry the old girl, thus causing much global warming)

## **Christmas “Bash”**

Our Christmas dinner this year will be at the Ridley Arms in Stannington on Wednesday, the 18<sup>th</sup> December.

As decided at the AGM, the venue was changed so we can all sit together and the day of the week was changed to allow those who cannot make it on a Thursday night, the opportunity to attend.

Please let Simon know if you want to come. (Contact info at the end). The menu is below and you just pick on arrival, however to allow for seating arrangements, please let me know by 12<sup>th</sup> December.

We can start arriving by 7 and eat at around 730.



## while you decide

**PLUM PUDDING BELLINI**  
125ml Prosecco and a dash of  
Edinburgh Plum Gin Liqueur  
£5.95

**FESTIVE FIZZ**  
125ml Corte delle Calli  
Prosecco  
£4.95

**HEDGEROW ROYALE**  
125ml Prosecco, Cherry Brandy,  
Sloe Gin and Rosemary  
£5.95

## to start

**ROASTED CELERIAC, PARSNIP AND APPLE SOUP**  
Cranberry, Pecan and Rosemary Croutons

**SMOKY GRILLED CORN TORTILLAS** 🌱  
Chilli Tomato Salsa, Pea Hummus, Pickled Red Cabbage,  
Cashew Nut Sour Cream

**OAK SMOKED SALMON**  
Oven Baked Beets, Horseradish Root

**ROLLED HAM HOCK AND CONFIT CHICKEN TERRINE**  
Sloe Gin and Red Onion Chutney, Sour Dough Fingers

**DOREEN'S BLACK PUDDING  
AND LINCOLNSHIRE POACHER HASH CAKE**  
Caramelised Pear Chutney, Olive Butter Sauce

**SALTWATER PRAWN COCKTAIL**  
Pomegranate and Ruby Grapefruit

## the main event

**TRADITIONAL ROAST TURKEY**  
Duck Fat Roasties, Buttered Winter Vegetables, Nutty Sprouts,  
Cranberry, Walnut and Sage Stuffing, Pancetta Wrapped  
Chipolatas, Roasted Chestnuts, Spiced Bread Sauce  
and Rich Turkey Gravy

**WOODLAND MUSHROOM BOURGUIGNON** 🌱  
Cheesy Mash, Winter Greens

**CRISPY SKINNED SEA BASS**  
Garlic and Parsley Prawns, Charlotte Potatoes,  
Buttered Winter Greens

**VENISON AND ROOT VEGETABLE CASSEROLE**  
Sweet and Sour Parsnips, Pommery Mustard Mash,  
Peppered Kale

**SPICED CHICKPEA,  
SWEET POTATO AND CAULIFLOWER TAGINE** 🌱  
Steamed Rice, Garlic Flatbread

**POT ROASTED PHEASANT**  
Spiced Apple Crumble, Crispy Bacon Cabbage,  
Potato Dauphinoise

## for dessert

**CARAMELISED APPLE, FIG  
AND TOASTED COCONUT PUDDING**  
Vanilla Ice Cream

**BURNT CLEMENTINE CHEESECAKE**  
Gingerbread Trifle

**PAVLOVA**  
Christmas Spiced Winter Fruits, Vanilla Cream

**CHOCOLATE AND  
SALTED PEANUT TORTE** 🌱  
Brandied Cherry Compote

**CAFÉ ROYAL CHRISTMAS PUDDING**  
Brandy Sauce

**PROFITEROLES**  
Boozy Orange Cream, Dark Chocolate Sauce

**YOUR FAVOURITE COFFEE OR TEA AND A WARM CAFÉ ROYAL BAKERY MINCE PIE ~ £4.00**

## festive extras

**POMMERY MUSTARD MASH**  
£3.00

**DUCK FAT ROASTIES**  
£3.00

**BUTTERED WINTER GREENS**  
£3.00

**two courses £21 - three courses £24**

all allergen information available upon request  
🌱 denotes plant-based dishes, suitable for those following a vegan diet

## And – I forgot to mention (apologies to Tony and Danny and other railway maniacs) –

The Aln Valley railway has open days for old vehicles (with even older riders??, - well, true in my case – I need a jacket with, on the back, “the bike that just overtook you is 60 years old and the rider even older” ). Anyhow, the open days have been well attended by club members. The progress in building the line, the station, and restoring old locomotives and rolling stock is really impressive.

A few years back, they were running a “buy a sleeper” campaign. We own one (not sure which) .. Anyhow, they want to embark on the next section of track (already enough to run a train a short distance, but there is lots more to do), so they are trying to sell more sleepers – we’ll subscribe for another. You can also buy sleepers for Christmas presents!

So if you want to get away from all the politics and support something DIFFERENT – here’s your big chance - Their “buy a sleeper” form follows - and after the form, read on -

## Sign-up today to sponsor a sleeper for the AIn Valley Railway

If you wish to support this scheme, simply return this form with your cheque to:  
Mr Neil Brison, 6 Royal Oak Gardens, Alnwick NE66 2DA

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First name or initial(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Full home address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ sleeper(s) and enclose a cheque made payable to:  
"AIn Valley Railway Trust" for £ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CHARITY GIFT AID DECLARATION Registered Charity No: 1063332

### Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by AVRT from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a UK taxpayer. If your donations to the AIn Valley Railway Trust qualify for Gift Aid, please tick each box which applies -

☐ today ☐ in the last 4 years ☐ in the future

*I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations, it is my responsibility to pay any difference*

Please notify AIn Valley Railway Trust if you:

- wish to change this declaration
- change your name or address
- no longer pay sufficient Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax

*If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate & wish to receive additional tax relief due to you, you must include all Gift Aid donations on your Self-assessment Tax Return or ask HMRC to adjust your tax code.*

Name you wish to appear on the display:

Please sign & date below to confirm your consent for these details to be stored on our secure database. Your details will not be deliberately disclosed to any 3rd party.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## AND, BECAUSE IT IS GOING TO BE XMAS -

- I always like to try to find some amusing tit-bit for the Xmas newsletter. I found this one in the German magazine "Der Spiegel", and I thought that this was something with which we all might connect –

Under the heading "Toxic Femininity" (and that 's enough to get you into trouble already!), a columnist wrote the following:

*The car maker, Volvo, wants to build cameras into its cars, to read facial signs. Thus, before it starts, the car will be able to recognise if the driver has been drinking, or is suffering from some physical condition. In addition, the throttle will be cut back on the cars, if they exceed 180 km per hour. I read in an article that this will combat the natural aggressiveness of male drivers.*

*Volvo belongs to the Chinese. Long ago China started to control the behaviour of its citizens to minimise socially damaging behaviour. And, at least so far, this initiative is no surprise.*

*But what surprised me is that this proposal is all about gender. What's up with women? – are they not aggressive??*

*My car is a Peugeot 508 – spacious but not excessive. I am the only one around who does not drive a huge car. The standard mother's car hereabouts seems to be the VW Touareg, followed by the Audi Q7 and the Volvo XC90. One mother drives a Maserati! For a long time I had not realised that such a thing as a Maserati SUV could exist.*

*There seems to be a law, whereby the size of the woman is in inverse proportion to the size of car she drives: the smaller and blonder the driver, the bigger and more threatening the vehicle. Indeed the development of these vehicles can be traced back to the requirements of lady drivers. You can almost say that the SUV is the most visible evidence of the feminisation of road traffic.*

*Market research tells us that, when it comes to making the purchase decision, it is the woman who decides. When I lived in the USA I met a designer who had developed the first Chevrolet SUV. The passenger space had to have the feeling of a uterus, where one might feel snug and secure. The signal is: “here I am protected! Here nothing can happen to me!” Unfortunately for pedestrians who do not keep a sharp lookout, it is the opposite! And, of course, the SUV's are terrible gas-guzzlers.*

*Perhaps we really should talk about toxic femininity! This does not imply any hatred of women – quite the opposite. If I were a woman, I would hate it if everyone thought I was harmless! How does it go? – “Good girls go to Heaven, but bad girls get to go EVERYWHERE!”*

**Happy XMAS and avoid huge SUV's!**

***Officers - - -***

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