

Northumbria Branch Almost a Newsletter, March, 2023

MONEY! MONEY! MONEY!!

Our treasurer is about to save the planet by capturing lots of carbon and needs all the help he can get. SO if you do not want to be expelled from the Northumbria Nortons (epaulets ripped off, sword broken in two, hat stamped on, etc), and if you have not already done so, SEND HIM FIVE POUNDS!

DO NOT SEND HIM CHEQUES:

Beam the money by transfer to:

Account: Norton Owners' Club Northumbria Branch

Sort Code: 30-93-55

Account number:01241950

(Unless you are an honorary member or Brian Miller (more about him later))

We Had an AGM!

Simon has emailed everyone with his minutes so there is going to be no repeat here, but a few things noted as important to your scribe, though quite possibly to nobody else, are:

Events: Simon has sent a "NOC Planner" of events. I have more or less crow-barred this into the end of this newsletter, though it is sideways. So I am also going to list the key "Branch" events here – as follows:

Sunday 23rd April: Nook café Alston, meet 12.00

Sunday 7th May: Clive Taylor memorial ride. Led by your intrepid scribe. We will end up at the Granby at Longframlington for food and jollity. Your scribe is working on a new route that ends up there and may take in the odd bluebell. If this change of route produces a mutiny, let me know. Start 10 a.m. Heddon-on-the-Wall

Fri 2-Sun 4 June, Wooler camp and BBQ. You will be bribed with a free night's camping on the Saturday (members and hon membersP) and a trip to see the new Distillery at Wooler.

Fri 16th to 19th June is the National Rally, again at Aberfoyle. (See Main NOC club web site). Lots of branch members going. Accommodation pretty well booked up but there is also a camp site and B&B's

15th 16th July a new camp at Bonchester Bridge. (Or turn up on the Friday?)

Sun 23rd July, Open day at the Aln Valley railway – if we make a bit show of it, the main club (BNOC=Big Norton Owners' Club in the SKY) will love us.

Sun 20th August: KAMTREK, rganised by Derek Turnbull. SUPPORT DEREK!!

Fri 8th to 10th Sept, Yetholm camp (to be confirmed with the Scots)

There are also EVENING RIDES, usually ending up at a hostelry, and the next is Wed 12th April. Info will arrive by email. There has been some disappointment about attendance at these rides, so COME!!!. (Thinks: The weather needs to warm up ----).

- And there is a whole lot more - see Simon's minutes ----

Random thought no. 1: We are blessed with having CUMBRIANS join us – only – they are a bit far off to join in very much. A possible meet-up across those hills has been discussed, and there is the Alston event, but, another thought: Your scribe was over there travelling by Dommi last Autumn and dropped in on a CUMBRIAN, thus scrounging coffee and enjoying the opportunity to pontificate re. how to get the said member's Dommi to work properly. It might be nice if any of us riding over there could drop in on or meet up with a CUMBRIAN anywhere near his chosen route. But how do we get people to contact each other, with all this data protection crap?? There do seem to be two Cumbrian contact members, Martin Chadwick and Eddy Stephenson...(Cumbria is a nice place to ride a Norton)

Random thought no. 2– the International rally in Sweden. :

It would be nice if we were represented there. But this year Mr and Mrs Scribe will not be going – calendar too full. But these “Internationals” are wonderful events with a character all of their own, and the journey can be combined with some great touring. The site is at the extreme Southern tip of Sweden and there is a catamaran ferry to very near there from the Northern coast of Germany, or you could go out or return via Copenhagen. While the North German countryside is not that exciting, off-motorway routes are possible, and there are the historic hanseatic towns of Bremen, Hamburg and Luebeck, hugely worth a visit. Distances are less than to last year's rally in the Czech republic. (I am almost persuading myself to cancel everything else and go ---). So – have I motivated anyone else??

(I can provide LOTS more random thoughts ---- but back to Nortons --)

Is this a rebuild, or a whole new construction?

Well, your scribe was allowed into Jim Land's workshop to see what was going on. I use the word “workshop” loosely. When I am allowed into anyone's workshop or shed, I realise that my own shed (where I do my bodging) is a mechanical slum. Jim's double garage (given over to motorcycles) , made **everyone else's** into a slum. I was scared of putting fingerprints on anything. I think I should have removed my shoes on entering and put on slippers. And maybe one of those anti-Covid suits. And in the middle stood Jim's “project”. And, whether a rebuild or a new construction, it is definitely “no holds barred”.

He has had this machine since 1975. It was two when he got it, and the purchase was financed with “compensation” money since someone had knocked him off his previous bike. It must have been pretty bad, because, as I remember it when I was a “yoof on a bike”, whatever actually happened, the “yoof”, being on a bike, was always to blame.

Anyhow the “new Commando” got heavily “caffee-racer-ified” with every go-faster gismo Jim could lay his hands on. But then marriage, kids, and, who knows it, maybe even cats and dogs, struck – the whole disaster. And the extra-fast Norton did virtually nothing for decades, until now.

The idea is to turn the caffee-racer back into a more “Roadster-ish” Commando, but definitely not as it started out.

The first thing that struck me was the incredibly tidy wiring (I use spaghetti), but look closely – the chain is a modern one with ring things. The forks are not Roadholders, they are Maxton – so are the shockers. The front brake is Brembo. (At least the rear brake is original). The Carburettor is a single Mikuni. The clutch is a “lightweight Colorado clutch” (what’s that?), there is an Alton starter mod – including the bespoke inner chaincase, for which a special nut was missing to go onto the even more special spindle that holds the outer chaincase on, and which was due to arrive shortly.

Jim looks every part a professional engineer, and not lacking in self-confidence, but he had the engine and gearbox re-built by SRM.

The paint job is something of his own design – paint applied by Bikeparts in Coupar. (Jim had done oil and gas in Aberdeen, and I suppose he passed close to Coupar regularly)

He also has a small tank, and an Interstate tank he can fit. (Personally I do not understand how, in a continent-sized country like the USA, small tanks were so desirable. Touring once in company with a “small tank” Commando, we were panicking if we did not find a petrol station more than 80 miles from the last filling.)

Here’s Jim and the surgically clean bike:



And these boxes contain all the stuff he took off it –
(- and look at that floor! – That’s a workshop floor!)



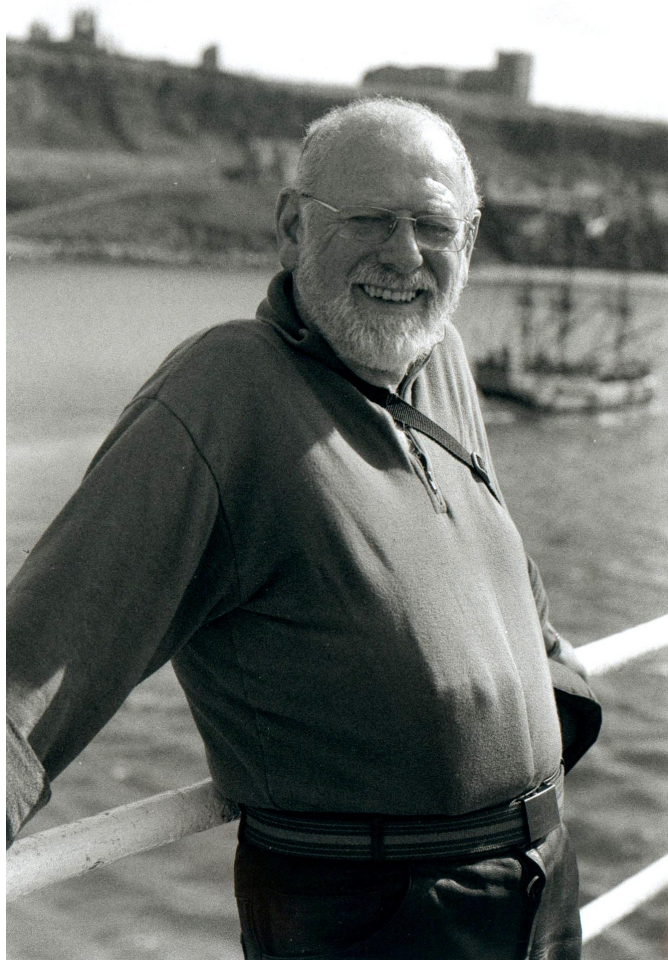
Davie Palmer

Those of us who have been members for a while, will remember Davie Palmer, from Edinburgh, who over many years joined our camping weekends, and also rallies all over Europe. I, the scribe, had a good deal of contact with him during my years as branch sec, as the primary contact for Edinburgh Scots who came to Wooler, the Salutation Inn camps etc.

Davie had suffered from a stroke a couple of years back – and this year we finally lost him.. Whatever the cause of death officially might have been, basically he had made the fundamental mistake of getting to be too bloody old! (Scribe had better watch out). His Commando frequently pulled a trailer, and had a luggage rack as big as a flight deck.. He could carry lots of stuff - and he took it everywhere. His motorcycle career started joyfully as a telegram boy on a Post Office Bantam. More recently he and Brian Miller, his travelling companion on many trips, attended the first Dutch Rally by taking an indirect route from Ijmuiden to the site – via Berlin! (and in a rain storm). Typical Davie.

But every end has a beginning – and a few of us attended Davie’s funeral and there we ran into Brian Miller, Davie’s riding companion over many years and distances. Brian expressed an interest in maybe joining some of our events, so, I am copying Brian with this “Almost a Newsletter” (BRIAN, ARE YOU READING THIS??). Some years ago his Commando’s engine suddenly fell into pieces in the road while riding out of the café at St Mary’s Loch. He says he is finally getting it back together, but thought if he arrived on his Guzzi that would be improper. BRIAN YOU CAN COME ON ANYTHING ON 2 WHEELS!

Here's Davie during one of our Whitby camps.



P.S. It looks like Gary McKnight has bought Davy's bike.

A note from Mick taken from the Facebook page:

The garage at Thropton now has E5 petrol.
(might it be worth compiling a list of E5 garages in the region? – or is that too much)

OK: Lets start making LOTS OF NEWS, in 2023!!!!

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NOC Northumbria Events Planner (Branch events in red)
2023

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sun 1												
Mon 2												
Tue 3												
Wed 4		1	1								1	
Thu 5		2	2								2	
Fri 6		3	3								3	1
Sat 7	4		Social Night - Sun Inn, Morpeh	1		Northumbria Wooler Weekend	1	5	2	7	4	2
Sun 8		5		2	Clive Taylor Ride	2		6	3	8	5	3
Mon 9		6		3		3		7	4	9	6	4
Tue 10		7		4		4		8	5	10	7	5
Wed 11		8		5	Evening Run	5		9	6	11	8	6
Thu 12	Zoom Call	Zoom Call	Zoom Call	6		6		10	7	12	9	7
Fri 13		10		7		7		11	8	13	10	8
Sat 14		11		8		8		12	9	14	11	9
Sun 15		12		9	Kielder Castle Show	The Bamburgh Run	9	13	10	15	12	10
Mon 16		13		10		10		14	11	16	13	11
Tue 17		14		11		11		15	12	17	14	12
Wed 18		15		12		12		16	13	18	15	13
Thu 19		16		13		Evening Run		17	14	19	16	14
Fri 20		17		14		14		18	15	20	17	15
Sat 21		18		15		National Rally Aberfoyle	Camping - Borchester Bridge	19	16	21	18	16
Sun 22		19		16		16		20	17	22	19	17
Mon 23		20		17		17		21	18	23	20	18
Tue 24		21		18		18		22	19	24	21	19
Wed 25		22		19		19		23	20	25	22	20
Thu 26	Club Night	Club Night & AGM		20	Club Night	20		24	21	26	Club Night	21
Fri 27		24		21		21		25	22	27		22
Sat 28		25		22		22		26	23	28	Stannington Show	23
Sun 29		26		23		23	Aln Valley - Summer Fair	27	24	29		24
Mon 30		27		24		24		28	25	30		25
Tue 31		28		25		25		29	26	31		26
Wed				26		26		30	27		29	27
Thu			Club Night	27		Club Night	Club Night	31	28		Club Night	28
Fri				28		28			29			29
Sat				29		29			30			30
Sun				30		30						31