



Northumbria Branch Monster 2023 Christmas Newsletter for a hugely expanded Northumbria Branch! (And with a specially composed Christmas poem!)

(It must be the inspired leadership of our branch sec. that causes the membership to keep growing. Which means it's high time he was honoured by being appointed Branch Sec for life.)

Anyhow, for any new members, this is John Powell, Northumbria scribe, who has been producing this document for decades, which includes contributions from members plus any drivel that comes into his head.

Also, once upon a time in prehistory, the newsletter was almost the only way events were reported and recorded. Now with the blizzard of Facebooks, Emails, and, who knows? - Twitters, Whataspps, Blatters and Splats, it is hard to include, here, more than a fraction of the material flying round in the ether.

However these newsletters do go onto the branch web site (which few people look at) and they provide a permanent record, unlike the transitory blatters, splats etc. Enough!!!

But First!~ The Christmas dinner bash.

Some soul searching went on here – it has got a lot more expensive, but every alternative was too. This is now the world we live in. It's "Fork out all your dosh while you still have some, or don't have a life." Simon is sending an e-mail with the info, but, to repeat what he will send (I hope!):

After feedback from various members about the Christmas meal last year, it is decided that the meal this year will be in the Ridley Room at the Ridley Arms, Stannington, on the 21st December, meeting at 19.00, and eating from 19.30.

The cost is £32/person, for 3 courses, or £28 for two. However for branch members there will be a £5 subsidy, funded by a grant from the Big Norton Club In The Sky. (BNCITS).

Deadline: contact Simon by 14th Dec absolute latest, including your food choices. Menu at end of this newsletter.

And now, here is a Christmas poem (Shakespeare, eat your heart out)



Santa's Sidecar

Santa said, "Oh damn!"
Its Christmas time once more
I have to zoom right round the world –
This thing's become a bore.
I have to take that lousy sledge
As round the world I go,
But with all this global warming,
There's no more bloody snow!

But I can put a sidecar on my bike!
(The kiddies will not mind)."
So off went Santa on three wheels
(The reindeer ran behind,
For all of Santa's reindeer know
That kiddies leave a reindeer treat,
Wherever reindeer go!)

He fixed the sidecar on the left
(it was a British bike)
But where they drive on the right hand side,
Was a thing he did not like
"The sidecar' sticks out in the road",
Santa was heard to mutter.
"And here I am, the wrong way round,
And riding in the gutter.
I'll have to keep it up like this
And ride the way I am
For many many lousy miles
Until I reach Japan!"

Well, Christmas came and Christmas went
And the kiddies all were happy
But the sidecar made the bike so slow,
He took it off - - and went like billy-ho

And now some philosophy!

The Norton 961: There is a growing number of these machines in the club. Indeed your scribe overheard a conversation the other day about a possible get together of 961 owners to compare machines (Garner and post-Garner productions and all the variants).

But I have always seen the branch as being an old bike club. What is the 961? – old? - hardly. – Classic? - well sort of retro-classic or retro modern? But as Nortons keep getting produced there must come a time when 961's and their successors become the majority, but with just a few grizzled old farts still jumping on kickstarts, tickling carburetors and doing all the things old farts do. Well, this is actually a success – Norton LIVES! But the world will eventually change. The old farts will have to get used to it. (*That bit falls under the category of drivel that forms in the scribe's head*). Anyhow, if anyone would like to send a brief 961 report, that would be great: material for the winter season newsletter.

Weather

Weather has been a big issue the season - we had rain, rain, rain until the Clive Memorial run in May. Lots of rain for the camp at Bonchester bridge (scribe was away), and for which I have no report. Maybe because not much could happen. Non stop rain again for the Aln Valley Railway open day, though I am informed some stalwarts did turn up.

But- great heat on the way to the Aberfoyle rally. A sunny Wooler camp. And a Yetholm camp which started out hugely hot, and many Simon Rides out achieved, including the one to the Nook Café near Alston where it is possible for Northumbrians and Cumbrians to meet.

Following from this, admire the below (has anyone a caption? Email scribe to win! Copy Simon who wants to know!)



And here he is at it again, at the last Simon ride of the season:



And, just because he should not feel left out, here is your scribe, also caught fettling, but with more hair!



A more dynamic approach to classic motorcycling arrived with this pic, captioned “Donnington Park. Finished 4th in pre-55 class.” Sent by Brain Riley. Good photo!



The “International” Rally (Well, it really must be a Euro rally, because it is hard to ride to Oz, or Cape Horn.)

This time, the Southern tip of Sweden. We were quite well represented, and there were some “firsts” who had never done one of these rallies before. One such new rallier was Varne, who seemed to have enjoyed the experience, though he did not make a major tour out of the route. Richard and Jen did make a tour, going to Schotten (bike racing) and a wine tasting on the Mosel/Moselle where they got ripped off. (Anyone traveling in Germany wanting good plonk at good prices, contact the scribe who regularly gets in large quantities, which he most regrettably drinks). Mind you, you cannot bring much back on a bike. Post Brexit allowance is 18 litres (or is it 18 bottles?) per person, which is a lot better than before joining the original single market, when it was only 3 litres.

And then Gary and Amy returned from Sweden via Bergamo, which is the kind of thing they do.

People were impressed by the organization, and the number of countries from which Norton Owners arrived.

Your scribe and Lizzie were not at the rally – having been occupied in breaking down all over Holland. I have to cure myself of the habit.

Kamtrek 2023 (This report received)

Well, the weather was kind to us and Derek had planned a great route with some easy and some not-so-easy clues! The start was at the Morpeth north bypass layby. Off we went and headed to the clues; we started in a clockwise direction and headed to Rothbury, while others headed anti-clockwise to who knows where!



(Previous)The view from the most southerly of the clues

The clues had a local feel and were at varying levels of difficulty so all could enjoy trying to solve them as well enjoying the great route that Derek had planned. The clues took us to a mixture of ‘Guns and Graves’. Not as macabre as it seems, but I particularly ‘enjoyed’ visiting the area of Lord Armstrong’s family resting place, close to the river Coquet, a beautiful setting.



(Above:)The view in the most northerly of the clues

Note to self for future Kamtreks – don't rely on the SatNav, you can guess why!

We ended the event at the Melton Constable, which had been so busy the kitchen closed early, so we had to make do with snacks instead of Sunday lunches. But it was a beautiful day, so we sat outside and enjoyed the August sunshine.

Unfortunately, as is the case in recent years, the attendance was disappointing, especially considering what is involved in planning the event. We had a few apologies as the date selected clashed with other events and hobbies! (Including the football World Cup final). Maybe we should change the date of the Kamtrek to later in the year as it was or if there's not the interest, consider dropping the event completely.

And the winner is..... Dave Twinn – Congratulations!



The winner in a state of shock!

Dave's bike was also so shocked after winning and – probably faced with the prospect of doing it all again – immediately locked itself into 4th gear and refused to move any further unless it was on the back of an AA recovery truck. Dave and his bike eventually got home at 10pm.

The joys of Kamtrek!



Its not ok to win this one: you have to organise next year's



Winning this one is fine!

And then there was Yetholm

(Is it true that a Geordie, or maybe a Northumbrian, is just at Scotsman with his head bashed in? Because there must be some kind of affinity. We do lots with the Scots, while having no working programme with the Yorkshire lot, who are just as close, and definitely nice people, but to the SOUTH of us).

Anyhow: - a great gathering of Scottish and Northumbrian campers. HOT!! Scribe arrived running in sweat. Simon arrived on the Saturday, followed by a trail of Northumbrian non-campers (too wimpy to camp?).

Yetholm, as well as providing a small, personable camp site and pubs, is a gateway to some wonderful riding country. Tourists, obsessed with the Highlands, or maybe only with Skye and Glencoe (which they submerge under humanity), completely miss the Borders, which is a lovely area. But maybe its best not to tell them.

Anyhow, much jollification, and then by divers routes to Keilder, from which most went to see Ian Crooks' railway restoration in the hills North of Newcastleton. So, together with Tony and Danny, we have more railway freaks. Ian (and Joyce) are long term members, escaped Geordies, living in the Borders.

Note for next year: David Templeton of Tayside Nortons gets us booked in for a pub meal on the Saturday night but not the Friday. And the pubs do get booked up, so also book ahead directly with a pub for the Fri. Town Yetholm or Kirk Yetholm. Otherwise you could starve.

Here is Ian regaling Norton owners in one of his railway carriages:



It really exists – Simon’s Commando!

A NOC branch secretary actually riding a Norton! Over many years occasional promises were made by Simon that he would have a working Commando, but nothing appeared. (Blaming suppliers was a useful excuse). Anyhow at Simon’s end of season ride out, it appeared! Unfortunately on the way home, a plug fell out of the carburetor, causing fuel to pour out. Richard whittled a wooden plug and bashed it in, which worked. He is, after all, a famous engineer! Anyhow attendance must have been a near record for a ride, with a good social gathering at Simonburn.



And here’s some really good news:

To welcome back from the near-dead, Sean Mulloy, after some kind of crisis occurred inside his skull. After a lot of time in hospital (they drilled a hole in his head--- in his case a hole in the head is a GOOD THING_), he is back in great form!!

A last word: and requests

Winter is when we fettle, and your scribe could do with material for his next (winter) newsletter. Reports on any projects would be most welcome. Alternatively your scribe loves visiting workshops to see what’s up and is very happy to write up your own project. Contact info below.

Also: Simon has emailed a provisional plan for 2024, which I am not copying here, but here are 2 dates that particularly need to be kept open:

1: National Rally (of the big Norton Club in the Sky): at Corbridge Rugby Ground 5-8 July. It looks like Simon is the boss of the event and he is sure to need helpers!

2: AGM on 29 Feb 2024. Leap year! Lots of opportunities for the ladies!

MENU!!!!



FESTIVE MENU
Book before November 1st, and parties of 8 or more will receive a FREE GLASS OF PROSECCO if they have pre ordered prior to their reservation.

STARTERS

Roasted Butternut Squash & Mixed Bean Minestrone Soup (ve available)
Unsalted butter, warm crusty baguette

North Atlantic Garlic and Chilli Prawns
Avocado and Bloody Mary rose sauce, toasted sourdough

Spiced Smoked Duck Breast
Navel orange, watercress and winter radish salad, pomegranate dressing

Panko Breaded Brie Wedges (v)
Cranberry compote, young winter leaf salad

MAINS

Traditional Butter Roasted Christmas Turkey
Apricot and cranberry stuffing, pancetta wrapped pigs in blankets, duck fat polenta roast potatoes, roasted caraway carrots, honey glazed parsnips, chestnut roasted buttered sprouts, braised red cabbage, winter greens, rich turkey gravy

Vegan Wellington (ve)
Butternut squash, chickpea, sweet potatoes, carrots, cashew nut, smoky red pepper, redcurrant chutney vegetable

Crispy Skinned Salmon
Sauté potatoes, cauliflower, chorizo crumb, tiger prawns, garlic butter

Roast Strip Loin of Beef
Woodland mushrooms, baby onions, smoky crispy bacon lardons, cavolo nero cabbage, creamy mash, Bordelaise sauce

Venison, Redcurrant and Port Pie
Thyme and rosemary salted Hasselback potatoes, maple roasted roots, crispy kale, blackberries

Plant Based Mushroom and Chestnut (ve)
Truffle oil

Twice Baked Local Cheddar Cheese Souffle (v)
Beetroot pesto Parmesan cream, apple, pear and chicory salad

SIDES

Duck fat roast potatoes | Braised red cabbage (v)
Honey glazed carrots and parsnips (v) | **Pigs in blankets**
Sausage meat, apricot and cranberry stuffing

DESSERTS

Homemade Christmas Pudding (ve available)
Rich brandy sauce

Chocolate Orange Millionaires' Cheesecake (ve available)
Honeycomb and Biscoff sauce

Sticky Toffee Pudding (v)
Butterscotch sauce, salted caramel ice cream

Eggnog Crème Brulee (v)
Poached winter berries

Ice Cream and Sorbets (v)

£4.50 each or three for £10.00

Officers - -

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

Secretary: Simon Murray. 01670 785792. mob 07483 888801 . simon@barmoor.com. E-mail will be best.

Money scrounger: Alan Millar. Tel 01670 853223 mob 07734402110 better text than e-mail, though e-mail is a_m_millar@hotmail.com.

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