



*Northumbria Branch*

*Feb 2013*

## **Not quite a newsletter**

*Sorry, with all the hassle to do with the National rally, (and now our central heating boiler has packed up – more gremlins than a Norton) – I have not had time to put anything together – BUT I must announce:*

### *Annual General Meeting.*

***The Branch AGM will take place at 8.00pm at the Melton Constable Hotel, Seaton Sluice, on Monday 4th March 2011. Sandwiches as usual. Please come! (- notice the blood?)***

***Nominations are invited for the Branch positions of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. All nominations should be submitted to the Branch Secretary, John Powell, , either by email or phone ( [jnoandlizpowell@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jnoandlizpowell@yahoo.co.uk) ) by Friday 1<sup>st</sup> of March. In the event of a nomination being received a ballot will be held at the AGM.***

***Agenda will be prepared and will be forwarded by e-mail to those whose e-mail addresses are known.***

**APART FROM WHICH:** Well, more news in the next newsletter. However on this occasion, news from Ian Cartwright. Ian has been a stalwart camper and evening-rider-outer until the end of 2011. He says his arthritis has really slowed him down. Two treatments were tried in 2012 with not much to show for it. When last spoken to he was testing a third, and was hoping he might be able to join club events in 2013. He asked me to pass on his greetings.

Tony Sargent has asked for a note to be included re. Morpeth Motorcycles. As someone who has never used their services, I cannot comment on the quality of their work. However they have a well equipped shop, nice little café for passers-by, and are being incredibly helpful in the organising of the National Rally, including providing 3 marshals, the rescue (and sandwich) van, and a venue for at least one meeting and maybe more. Tony must love the place. He appears to practically live there. . But to round things off, here's a story -

## My story



Camping in the French campagne



Hill's angel in Italy



Nora and the Nortons in India

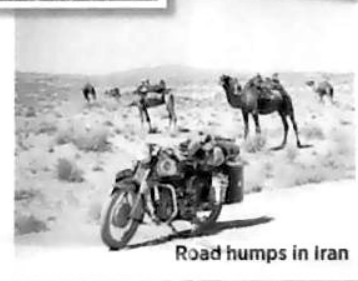
## Easy riders

Nora Traynor, now in her mid-eighties, recalls an extraordinary odyssey

As told to **Moirá Petty**

**R**AISED ON A FARM IN THE LAKE DISTRICT, I was a fearless child, climbing rooftops and disappearing for hours with my brother's catapult. I joined the WRAF at 18 as a radar operator, but left in 1953 on my new husband's insistence. Our marriage was short-lived and I was ready for an adventure. I was a member of a motorcycle club and when I announced my plans for a world tour on my bike, another member, Maureen Towler (nicknamed Johnny), was enthusiastic.

We paid £250 each for two 350cc Norton motorcycles fitted with special rear crash bars, which held petrol and water cans. I spent a year plotting a route to Australia and in June 1958, aged 32, I set off with Johnny, 28. We had £50 each in traveller's cheques and loaded the



Road humps in Iran

bikes with camp beds, sleeping bags, cooking utensils and spare parts.

The first night in France, we were drenched as it took us ages to pitch our tent in pouring rain. Johnny bawled her eyes out, saying she was homesick. In Italy, she was so interested in a display of straw hats that she failed to see a corner, but within minutes a cavalcade of men appeared and hoisted her and her bike upright. This became a regular theme, with men materialising out of nowhere to help, intrigued by the sight of two women bikers.

In Turkey, young men would offer us melons sliced with curved daggers. I had my first crash there, hitting a railway line covered in sand. We met a vet, whose surgery was a dimly lit café in which the local men were gathered. Blushing and protesting, and shielded by

Johnny, I removed my jeans so he could bandage my knee. After a night in the majestic shadow of a snow-clad Mount Ararat, we arrived in Tabriz, Iran, so mud-spattered that no hotel would take

us in. When the sand was too soft for a tent, we slept in the open. I woke one day to find Johnny speeding in one direction, a tarantula in the other. Crossing a 7,000ft mountain pass in Iran, my back brake went so I drove on my front brake past sheer drops all the way. We took bus tours of towns, where ladies would peep over their

veils at us. Though fascinating, we left Iran with relief as we were constantly questioned by soldiers, who once fired on us. We put our heads down and got out of there.

In Pakistan and India we were never allowed to pay in cafés, the other diners competing with cries of: 'Me pay!' Between Etah and Kanpur on the Grand Trunk Road, a little boy said: 'My mummy says, "Are you English and would you like a cup of tea?"' A wiring problem with my bike was rectified when a mechanic scaled a telegraph pole and cut a length of cable.

In Calcutta, we were befriended by the Assistant Port Officer who helped us get a passage on a merchant ship carrying jute to Australia. After a three-week voyage we arrived in Perth in October, where we planned to work to finance the next leg of our trip.

A year later, I was in a car crash outside Perth and spent three months in hospital. I was awarded damages, but by then Johnny had met an Australian who proposed and she settled down. I left her my bike for spares and returned home on the Canberra. I am sustained to this day by memories of the sights I saw and the people I met. ♦

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