



Northumbria Branch Enormous July 2021 mid- season newsletter.

This covid motorcycling has suddenly got hectic, and your scribe needs to get scribing/assembling before the potential mass of verbiage gets totally overwhelming!!

To start with, Secretary Simon has written a major treatise on the “Clive Taylor Memorial Run”, as follows. (I wonder if he is after my job)

The 2021 Clive Taylor Run

Our first event of 2021 and the first physical branch gathering for quite a while was held on Sunday, 9th May. The weather was dry and we had a few more attending than was expected (almost all British bikes and the majority being Nortons!), necessitating that we formed three groups, John being the original leader took the first group and Richard and Bob kindly agreeing to take the second and third groups. I was in the last group and here, in my own words, is the little adventure we had!



The first group setting off led by John and Lizzie.

We set off at a fair pace, but as we were catching up with the slower middle group, it was decided to have a short break at the Simonside car park to let the middle group get ahead. Then, continuing through Lorbottle towards Whittington, Bob stopped on a piece of convenient land on a corner and we all followed. The group all thought that we had caught up with the middle group again, but no, Bob had literally coasted to a halt!



Sean pleased that it wasn't his bike!

Once everyone had realised it was an enforced stop, Team Bob gathered around Bob's bike to ask 'what's wrong?', 'will it not start?' or in the case of Davie 'is it lunch time?'. Bob started disassembling his bike mentioning that he had fitted an electronic ignition recently and started to look at the cables on the box of tricks after removing the fuel tank – hallelujah – there were two dangling wires (Bob's crimping having come uncrimped!). After much playing with screwdrivers and pliers, the wires were re-attached and some insulation tape added for extra security (it's amazing what we carry around on our bikes!).

Let's see if there is a spark, nope, nothing. Bob then remembered he had also crimped a wire in the headlight!



Bob – note to self 'I must buy the right sized connectors next time!'

Compounding the problem was that we had no mobile signal – members with BT phones had no chance, but luckily Sean with his O2 phone walked up a nearby hill and managed to get through to John to tell him our woes!



The headlamp was removed only to find another dangling wire (Bob's crimping having come undone again!). Again, after using our basic tools, the wire was re-crimped and we again checked the spark – nothing! Cables were checked again with Alan's multi-meter that he always carries (!), battery inspected and crimps re-checked, but nothing would entice a spark at plugs!



'Is it lunch time now?'

It was then democratically decided that Bob would contact Carol Nash to arrange recovery and off he went to find a phone signal. Meantime, Derek started assembling everything and once complete, give the engine a kick over – and lo and behold, it fired first time and settled down to a smooth tickover! I rushed off to find Bob who, by this time, was several fields away and tried to tell him the good news, but he was engrossed in explaining his predicament over the phone and just give me a dirty look! After much arm flaying and mouthing some appropriate words, I managed to grab Bob's attention and promptly gave him a backa on me bike.

Once Bob had made sure everything was secure, off we went and ended up at Ros Castle, where John and Lizzie were still waiting patiently after everyone from the first two groups had pressed on home! Coffee and cookies were gratefully received by all.

Well, this was our first ride out for quite a while, I think it went well and hopefully everyone enjoyed the day.

Thanks to:

The group leaders – John, Richard and Bob

The ladies for coming along – Lizzie and Ginetta

The longest travelled branch member for making a great effort – Campbell (from Aberdeen!)

Food and drinks – John, Lizzie and Judy

And - Everyone for coming!

Finally, I think this was the 8th ride held in memory of our good friend and branch member Clive. We talked about him and remembered the good times we had with him and knowing that the route we had followed for the run was one of Clive's favourites.



We made it!

(My group was best! Nobody got lost! And no breakdowns except for a silencer trying to fall off, but which was speedily re-attached. But – Sympathy for Bob – while dicing and schussing through the traffic on the Glasgow motorways, I had an increasing misfire. Eventually a bad misfire and I limped into a service area. The cause – a spade connector had shaken itself loose and become a rattling fit at the ignition coil. Spade connectors are CRAPPP! - J)

And – here's Bob's report on the group ride to meet CUMBRIANS who have recently joined us – "Club Run to "The Nook Farm Shop" Sunday 6 June 2021"

Having recently recruited a number of branch members over the border in Cumbria, we decided to arrange a run over there and meet up with some of them as soon as we could reasonably do so in the light of Covid-19.

We met up at the Shell Garage at Heddon on the Wall and 10 bikes rode in convoy along the Military Road to Chollerford where we met Clive Taylor on his Norton 19S and Simon Haddon and Simon Haddon on his B31. From Heddon we rode to Fourstones and Haydon Bridge and then took the scenic A686 to Alston. It turned out that although Alston is in Cumbria, the Nook Farm Shop is in Northumberland...but at least we made the effort!

The Nook appears to be a completely new enterprise. The last time I rode down the the A688, there was only a small car park for the nearby Roman fort site. The Nook turned out to be a great meeting place. There was plenty of parking, it was very bike-friendly, most of the eating was out of doors (or under a covid-safe gazebo).

At the Nook we met two of our new members, John Jackson and Brian Magan, together with a friend of John's who was riding a Vincent.

We were also joined by Ian and Joyce who had ridden down from Denholm in the Borders.

It was a great to have the opportunity to meet up with so many friends and have a chat face to face (rather than on Zoom) after all the restrictions of the past year and a half.



That's not a nice thing to say to a Cumbrian! (My granny lived in Cumberland!)

The NOC rally at Aberfoyle.

Well, here's Simon Murray's rally:

Had a lovely ride up with other branch members.

Arrived in hotel car park.

Parked motorhome up.

Received message from Track and Trace to quarantine again.

Returned home.

End of rally.

(well, I think that says it all - J)

And here's Simon Parry's rally (Simon of the whiskers)

<https://youtu.be/W23cFRLf7gM> - and maybe that says it all too! (Simon has a new device that takes pictures in the most unlikely places, but the result is this link to his rally video -)

And here's Dave, George and Garry's rally, - and also an offspring's rally and an Hon member's rally: we won PRIZES!!!!

Bill of Aberdeen got to be "oldest rallier", while Alan's voluble son, Jack, got to be the youngest

- "Best in class" for "Commando", "Heavy twin" and "Rotator", went to George, Dave (Twinn) and Gary. All got rosettes!



And there were Highland rides, including in the Trossachs (what's a Trossach??)

If you ride due West from Aberfoyle you get to ride the slowest 15 miles of Humpbacks, hairpins, blind bends, one-way traffic, and pot holes, to reach the Eastern shore of Loch Lomond where the road, all roads, stop. . (The much-vaunted "Duke's Pass" was an anticlimax after this road). But at the Inversnaid Hotel! - a perfectly preserved and magnificently varnished piece of Victorian magnificence, where you can buy nourishment and drink, and admire the loch scenery. I think all "Northumbrians" visited the place and here are some of them, relaxing, before the testing ride back



And a highland ride for your scribe, Lizzie, Campbell and a nice man called Les.

Long, long ago, when the world was young, and Nortons were new, your scribe rode a green and cream Dommi 88 (with fairing), with Sam on the back (the friend I tried to get killed on bikes, in the mountains and at sea), over a high pass from the West end of Loch Tay, over the shoulders of Ben Lawers, and down into Glen Lyon. And, a short distance from where you join the glen, there is a small church where the ancestors of our treasurer, Alan, are all buried in a heap under a big tombstone. It had to be seen. The narrow road over the top is high, winding and coming apart in various places, and then you go down, down, down into the glen. What is it that makes a place almost heart-stoppingly beautiful? Is there some kind of “Feng Shui” for landscape? Going down, the moorland became interspersed with clumps of rich native woodland which grew ever denser as you descended. The valley itself: a scene of an almost overwhelming pastoral peace. We found the church, and the grave, and ----- what a beautiful place to be dead in! I can imagine Alan’s ancestors sticking their heads out on a summer’s evening, to take in the sunset. (Alan says we cannot put him in there because it is FULL).

No picture can do justice, but here’s the cemetery and the grave is the big one –



The spell was somewhat broken when I put my helmet back on – full of midges! Opening the visor did not get rid of them – more seemed to arrive. Best to close it and wait until they had eaten their fill –

We went on to visit a 5000 year old yew tree – yes, 5000 years. The Romans were relatively modern - -

- And so, back to tea! Here's the tree! Ride highly recommended.



Evening rides:

Simon has been keen to organise a few of these. No space to cover everything. Except the reception at the Beresford arms at Whalton was delightful and your scribe plans to treat his lady to a meal there. (Phone ahead to book due to Covid rules)

Club nights – pub still loth to encourage big gatherings – sorry.

And, finally, torquing Commando cylinder head bolts.

Simon asked me to write something on this, but there has been a tidal wave of correspondence on the subject by email since. And I do not have a Commando: – but some observations re the Dommi.

The correspondence seems to say:

- Make sure the bolts that go down into the block do not “bottom” so you cannot fully torque – and avoid puddles of oil at the bottom that may have the same effect.
- Torque figures seem to apply to clean but un-oiled fastenings. Probably.
- For the fastenings which you cannot access with a torque wrench, do them by “feel” to try to match the ones you did with the torque wrench.

For the Dommi I use the cheap “pattern” gaskets (copper sandwich), sold by Emery et al. But I have had one of these blow at less than 100 miles,(Have tried copper but got oil leaks) so –

- First ride, Newcastle to Amble and back. Re-torque and reset tappets.
- Re-torque and tappets at 150 miles
- Repeat at 500 miles
- Maybe again at 1000

The short studs that stick out under the head are wrong engineering. A fastening is like a spring – you should tension it into the elastic range, stretching it so it pulls the head into position. That’s the rule for all bolts. But you cannot get any effective stretch into short stubby studs. Long cylinder head bolts that go through the block to the crank case are a way to get more “stretch”. Not with the Dommi. Which means that as soon as the gasket settles, there is no “spring back” on these short fastenings. They become slack immediately. If you do not believe this, talk to Derek Turnbull – he knows.

Additionally (and I have worn 3 different cylinder heads over time), I have found the short studs that point downwards at the front, with the sleeve bolts, are prone to pull out of the threads after some riding. My theory is that, as they are above the exhaust ports, this area is hottest, the aluminium expands most, and, because the studs cannot stretch, they strip the threads. So – I do not do these up all that tight but keep coming back to tighten in the early stages. I have also had the sleeve bolts drop off.,

If you have read this far, you are heroic, or have nothing else to do.

NEXT WEEKEND: CAMP AND FREE BBQ AT WOOLER. COME FOR THE WEEKEND OR FOR THE DAY. LET SIMON KNOW YOUR PLANS SO THERE ARE ENOUGH BANGERS AND BURGERS.

AND!! KAMTREK TREASURE HUNT/SCATTER EVENT SUN 3RD OCT!

Much delayed event, organised by your scribe. Support your scribe! More Info. Later.

(NB this is an all-comers open event – drag in anyone you know who has 2 or 3 motorised wheels!)

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