



Northumbria Branch Random Christmas Blather by the Scribe

First and foremost, there is the Christmas meal

And we are back at the Melton Constable again, and it is no bad thing to give them a bit of extra business, since they host us through the year, and the drink drive laws restrict how much we can actually spend with them.

Only, compared to the last time we “festivated” there, the menu is much reduced. Reason unknown. But I always think that the thing that matters most is the company. So: Choose:

The Christmas meal will be on the 15th December and starts at 7:30 pm and costs £22 per head:

STARTER

Vegetable Winter Soup

Warm crusty roll

MAIN COURSES

Traditional Roast Turkey

Yorkshire pudding, pigs in blankets, homemade stuffing, mash & roast potatoes with seasonal vegetables

OR

Root Vegetable Apricot Goats Cheese Nut Roast

Yorkshire pudding, homemade stuffing, mash & roast potatoes with seasonal vegetables

DESSERT

Christmas Pudding & Custard

If you want to attend, please let Simon have names and confirmation non-veg or veg option no later than the 4th December – simon@barmoor.com. As usual, partners very welcome.

Racing Richard races again, just in a different way.

You would think after getting grounded from classic racing on his Nortons, due to having broken too many arms, Richard might slow down a bit. But no! Racing has just changed shape. Here is his vainglorious report:

If I may proffer my own achievements for the "season" just closing, using the same supplier (= Richard) as your supplier of services, parts and technical expertise to prepare the much vaunted Bantam Cub at the last running of the "Beamish Trophy Trial". I did indeed manage to finish 4th overall from 115-ish finishers after 120 miles! In fact I managed to secure the much aspired to "Best Over-65" award in addition to the more prestigious "Best under 450cc 1960's". A close run thing, only 7 points separated the first 4 finishers. The event was in fact won by a sprightly 80 year old(trials riding since 1957) on a 1929 Enfield 350cc. One of those events that, as soon as it has finished, you look forward to next year! Richard*

OK – this was not on a Norton. But Richard's Norton did race – with a friend on top. Which resulted in a Norton repair job.

*Well, Richard has a fixing business – Nortons and others

Yetholm Camp: What the scribe remembers.

A wet arrival led to a better day, and as Your Scribe had suggested a ride and nobody else came up with anything else, he found himself followed by a trail of bikes including many Scots who clearly needed to be guided through some of their own country. So, off through Jedburgh, Bonar Bridge, and to Hermitage Castle, where Mary, Queen of Scots once shackled up with Boswell.

Here an interesting BIT was seen lying alongside Graham's bike. It was the insides of the tacho drive, leaving an interesting hole which went, "Puffa-Puffa-Puffa" when the engine was started. So the hole was bunged up with something wrapped in PVC tape, and he went back. See pic. (Graham keeps appearing in this newsletter).

Continuing onwards to Eskdalemuir, Campbell learned the meaning of fear, when for some reason he barrelled too fast into a bend, had to brake on the bend (a "no-no"), which turned into a cattle grid. He was on his fairly recently restored Featherbed, and claims that had he been on his Commando or Rotator he would have been a gonner.

On our arrival at the Tibetan monastery, he looked pretty drawn but there is something wonderful about the spirituality of the place, even if it is someone else's kind of spirituality. Soon, mellowed-out spiritual Norton riders were to be seen, sitting in serene silence around the site. Campbell claims he rode his featherbed much better on the way back.

Here's Graham's bodge



And here are a few spiritual riders



Kamtrek (and Graham appears again!)

We did do another Kamtrek, and the turnout was slightly less pitiful than last year. Also we were boosted by a couple of non-members, but this has always been an event open to all. And, as long as somebody is prepared to put in the work to prepare the route, it looks like it will continue. And, below, is a pic of Derek receiving the trophy from Graham, otherwise known as the short straw. But, what a great day for tootling around the countryside, with an agenda!

These events have been organised in various ways. A bit back, Michael Sutherland decided the social bit was what mattered, and he arranged short legs between the clues with lots of coffee stops. Last year, the social lunch stop went on a bit long and we got all behind. This year, no lunch stop (take sandwiches) and socialise at the end. Well, it is all up to the organiser.

And thanks, Graham!



There are thieves about!

Graham, the same Graham, has had his bike stolen – no, not the Norton, the modern one. Stolen with modern immobilisers. Three arrive on 2 bikes and ride away on three. Were the police interested? Well, hardly. That was in **Gosforth at midday!**

And a member of the scribe's Spanish conversation group has had a similar experience. Three arrive on 2 bikes and ride off on three. Security cameras from the shop next door recorded the lot. - The police? - "No number plates could be read". Scribe would have thought that with all the traffic cameras, the thieves route could have been picked up.

I would also have thought that a good policy would be to chain your bike to a lamp post. But, today, battery driven angle grinders are available. Are we helpless?

Preview for 2023!

Normally plans for the year are released for the Feb AGM, But our committee has got really industrious, and we now have advanced notice of the following:

Riding Challenge for 2023

To encourage riding solo or with friends, we're proposing a challenge for 2023:

For riders to find as many castles, peel towers and bastilles in Northumberland between January 2023 and Wooler (3rd June) to encourage riding. There will be two prizes; one for the highest number of castles, peel towers and bastilles (on any bike) and one for Norton riders with the highest number of castles, peel towers and bastilles. Pictures and grid reference to be provided for each castle, peel tower or bastille visited. *Let Simon know if you are interested in participating!*

National Rally at Aberfoyle booking is now open.

The Solstice Rally #2 - 16th to 19th June 2023 – booking available via the NOC web site. Somehow Simon has got the job of organising this event. Great response by the Northumbria branch already, with many having already booked!

Wooler

Our main branch weekend and barbeque is 2nd to 4th June at Highburn House Burnhouse Road, Wooler. Pre-booking essential.

Additional weekend away.

We're trying somewhere new! On the 19th to 21st May, a weekend in Moffat, details to follow, but there is camping, B & Bs and hotels, so there should be something for everyone and a new area to explore.

And of course the usual events, Clive Taylor Run, Kamtrek, Nook Café run, coffee runs and evening rideouts (and more!).

And here's a mental rambling.

John Park is a near neighbour, who has the habit of turning up, without warning, on the doorstep, demanding coffee – and this while I am still wandering about in my P. J.'s. Mind you, I am usually up at 7 or so, and his arrival may be at 11. Its just that I regard the whole washing-shaving-dressing thing as an infernal intrusion into the enjoyment of the morning. And not only is his visit a welcome surprise, but it means I can put off getting dressed for even longer.

And so I returned the compliment, and visited his garage, demanding coffee. What's there this week (as John seems to keep acquiring and disposing of old bikes)? Answer: an M.Z. Well, my work used to take me frequently through Checkpoint Charlie, and I still remember the smell of 2-stroke. But what surprised me in the M.Z. was the thoughtfulness that had gone into the design, for the customer's convenience. And bear in mind, this was a state monopoly: the customer had no choice anyhow. O.K, there were a few components creatively bodged out of steel tube hammered into shape, but, as you can see from the following pics, the thoughtful touches included fold-away pannier frames, a fold-away rear carrier, and, under the seat, a lovely cast aluminium tool tray, divided into compartments. And more. And I wonder if, under our market economy, the builders of British motorcycles were this considerate. (Mind you, the M.Z. is gone again – trouble starting it.)



And, because this is supposed to be a Norton club, here is John's special creation, where he has made an earlier Norton out of a later one. He even retro-fit girder forks.



Another mental rambling.

Christmas is about joy, renewal, even rebuilds, but Christmas (and maybe even more, New Year's) is also a time for ghoolies, ghosties, and long leggedy beasties. Usually I like to share something amusing with you at Christmas, but just for a change, here is a really grisly and dark old chestnut. This famous story is called "Appointment in Samara"

"Once, long, long ago, there was a man who lived in Baghdad. He was happy, and prosperous and with no troubles. That was the case until, one day, while walking through the market, he suddenly saw Death walking towards him. And the skull face under the hood looked into his eyes, and one skeletal hand was lifted, as if Death was about to speak.

And the man turned and fled; "Death saw me!" – "Death recognised me!" – and he mounted his horse, and galloped out of Baghdad. He galloped many days, changing horses at caravanserais, until he finally arrived at Samara. Here he found an inn, stabled his horse, and enjoyed a good meal, and a rest.

Later, he went out into the street for a little air. Turning a corner, he found himself face to face with the gaunt skeletal figure of Death.

And he said to Death, "How can you be here, when I left you far away in Baghdad?"

Death replied, "Yes, I was surprised to see you in Baghdad, because I have an appointment with you here, in Samara"

So do not worry about what may befall you, when you jump on the kick-start and ease your steed into the road. For you do not know what could befall you, if you stayed at home. Carpe diem! Preferably on two wheels!

Merchandise

The winning item from Simon's recent email about branch merchandise was the 'T-shirt'! A close second was a woolly hat. Watch out for an email asking if you are interested in purchasing one and what size you are!

FINALLY - Do lots of happy riding in 2023!

Officers - - -

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