

# *Riders' Chronicles*



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**Nov / Dec 2008**

**The Newsletter of Northumbria  
Advanced Motorcyclists**



## Events of 2008



## Chairman's ramblings

We have come to expect the odd rain shower in this country, but I doubt if anyone was prepared for the downfalls we have experienced since the start of September. Morpeth saw its worst floods in 60 years after a month's rainfall came down in less than twenty-four hours.



I was undertaking some training the day after the storm in Northumberland and had to be diverted no less than four times to avoid extremely deep and fast flowing floods.

Heading for Chatton from Belford, we rode through several roads, flooded up to about nine inches for 40 -50 yards, but nothing prepared us for what confronted us ahead, with a raging torrent that stretched about 400 yards wide submerging the cricket ground at the east end of the village. When I tell you that this is usually a shallow stream a few inches deep, brings home just how much rain had fallen.

Retracing our path back to the A1, heading north and attempting to re-route through firstly Ford and then Etal proved to be even worse with scenes more likely to be seen at major disasters abroad.

We were eventually forced to abandon the run due to the conditions, something I have never had to do before.

Ironically, I followed the same route three days later and apart for a few small floods in the fields, everything was back to normal.

I seemed to have been dogged with problems lately as a week after the floods, I was passing through Jedburgh, heading for Carter bar and Otterburn and was just leaving Jedburgh to find the road closed by Police with a diversion through Bonchester Bridge to Carter bar.

This in itself was not a problem as this is quite a nice scenic route with good biking roads.

However, on reaching the peak at carter Bar we were stopped yet again by a long line of stationary traffic. Filtering by the traffic, we eventually came across another Police Car closing the road south.

We soon learned that this traffic had been held up for over an hour as a motorcyclist had come to grief on the dreaded diesel spill.

Having a front seat view, we could see the rider being put into the Air Ambulance and quickly whisked off to hospital. News quickly filtered through that the lad was conscious, had been talking to the Paramedics and Police and could move his toes and fingers, but was complaining about some back pain.

After a lengthy wait whilst measurements and details were taken by the Police, we were eventually allowed to proceed passed a very large diesel spillage that had now been cordoned off.

Talking to the riders friend, he advised us that the ill fated rider had just been crowing at their previous tea stop that "He had always managed to have 'offs' in the dry." It looks like he is maintaining his track record.

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A Frizzle	D Thomas	D R S Frazer
K O'Sullivan	K McCourt	T Longstaff
Gary Barnes		

## CONGRATULATIONS ON PASSING THE IAM TEST - Well Done

Stu McKenzie	Observed by	Ray Charlton
Greg Ramsay	"	Ron Patrick
Ben Glazzard	"	Colin Priest
Nathan Darling	"	Ron Patrick
David Steedman	"	Dave Thornton
Robert Smith	"	Pete Davies

## NAM MERCHANDISE

**Contact : Louise Bennett for all items of merchandise  
(On sale at all monthly meetings )**

Equipment Badges	Self adhesive – attach to fairing	£1.50
Woolly Hats	With NAM Emblem	£10.00
Caps	With NAM Emblem	£10.00
T Shirts	With NAM Emblem	£10.00
Polo Shirt (Black or White)	With NAM Emblem	£10.00
Sweatshirt	With NAM Emblem	£20.00
Fleeces	With NAM Emblem	£25.00
Tank Pads	With NAM Emblem	£10.00
Key Fobs	With NAM Emblem	£1.00
Sew-on cloth badge	With NAM Emblem	£3.00
Lanyard	With NAM Emblem	£3.00



## Committee

Honorary Group President: **Jack Lormor**

Chairman: **Ray Charlton**

*Vice Chairman:* **Clive Taylor**      *Secretary:* **Michael Sutherland**

*Treasurer:* **Louise Bennett**

*Training Group:* **Clive Taylor, Alan Richardson, Geoff Spencer**

*Membership Secretary:* **Carole Kibble**

*Website Co-ordinator:* **Glenn Knowles**

*Ride out Co-ordinator:* **Ron Patrick**

*Merchandising:* **Louise Bennett**

*Newsletter Editor:* **Ray Charlton**

### ***Team Leaders***

*Northumberland:* **Nick Maddison**

*Tyne & Wear* **Alan Richardson**

### **Website**

**[www.nam-online.org](http://www.nam-online.org)**

**Telephone: 07951 035038**

## Durham Advanced Motorcyclists

Durham Advanced Motorcyclists meetings are on the last Tuesday of the month at the Bowburn Hall

**The NAM Email group can be found at:**

<http://www.groups.google.com/group/nam-bikes>

Join it there!

By joining the NAM email group, you'll receive club news as it happens.

You can also send emails to the group, which are automatically forwarded to all the members of the email group – handy for getting technical help in a hurry!

If you have any problems, send an email to:

[Hadden101@btinternet.com](mailto:Hadden101@btinternet.com)

or

[raycharlton@sky.com](mailto:raycharlton@sky.com)

**All Ride-Outs meet 10.00am prompt at the Travel Lodge Car Park, Seaton Burn.  
Other dates will be published as they come in, but don't forget, most Sundays many Members meet at 10.00am at Seaton Burn for their own impromptu runs.**

## FUNNY

Two elderly women were eating breakfast in a restaurant one morning when Ethel noticed something funny about Mabel's ear and she said, "Mabel, do you know you've got a suppository in your left ear?"

Mabel answered, 'I have a suppository in my ear?'

She pulled it out and stared at it.

Then she said, 'Ethel, I'm glad you saw this thing. Now I think I know where to find my hearing aid.'



## Hadrian Harley Tours & Rentals - 1 Year On

By John Johnston

Well, what a year it's been for us. Since jumping in with both feet, 7 new Harleys, & a lot of help from our friends, how have we come on? You may or may not be aware that we started a new Harley-Davidson Touring & Rental company about a year ago, doing just that - renting out Harley-Davidson motorcycles, & organising guided tours here in the UK, Europe, USA & Australia.

The rental side of things is making progress, mainly with 1 & 2 day rentals, but we did have 1 bike out for a month last summer on a charity run, & we have 2 bikes booked out for 18 days later in the year, when some Australians are here for a motorcycling holiday. Now that we are officially affiliated with EagleRider, (the first in the UK) we are beginning to receive more enquiries, in fact we had an email just this morning from a Californian HOG group asking about 5-10 bikes for a tour next year. We may have to pay Burt at Just Harleys a little visit if that one comes off! We are also able to organise rentals of Harleys, Hondas, Yamahas & BMWs for both guided & self-guided tours, for anyone wanting to ride in the USA, & that's coming together quite well, too.

We have other tours planned, to Ireland, Scotland, Gibraltar, to Faaker See in Austria, & Lake Garda in Italy for the HOG European Rally in September. We did a full recce of the routes & hotels in January/February (in the car, though, I had to put my foot down, not doing that on the bike in all that snow!) We still have places for both of these tours, bring your own bike, or if it's just accommodation at the rally sites you need, we can help with that, too.

We've also done a recce for our Ireland Tour, & are introducing a short trip across to Holland & Germany, mainly aimed at those who haven't ridden their bikes on the other side (of the road, that is!) before, & want to gain a bit of confidence riding abroad, so we had to recce that, too. Like I said, it's a tough job ...

The 'Harleygrams' have been a surprising success, where people who have always admired the bikes but can't ride themselves get to 'Ride the Dream' for a while. We have even taken a 80 year old lady out for her birthday - she absolutely adored it, & kept asking John to do the ton!!

Arriving at the school proms, Harley style is something else that was popular last year. We have even arranged a tour through central London on a Harley, requested by a young lad for his girlfriends birthday.

Marjorie Ragg from Harley Owners Group UK invited us down to Oxford to talk about some HOG approved business options, but as you probably know, we must change our name, first. We had a huge response to the competition we ran to find a new name, with some very ... interesting suggestions indeed!

So, where are we up to, one year on? Well, as I said, it's been quite a year. We've had tears, fears & great leaps into uncharted (for us) territory. At the same time, it's been exciting, satisfying & extremely challenging. Will we ever make a fortune out of it? We very much doubt it, but up to now we have lots of satisfied customers, we've met loads of lovely people (& even converted a few of them to Harleyism!), & John just loves getting out there on his bike & sharing the fun. It doesn't look like we'll be giving up the day jobs just yet, but maybe next year, watch this space

## THE DROP-OFF SYSTEM:

- **YOUR** riding is **YOUR** responsibility.
- The purpose of the ride is an enjoyable and safe ride out, **not a race**.

At the front of every NAM Ride-out there is a **Leader** who will be identified at the pre-ride briefing.

He is permanently at the front of group and is identified by either a hi-viz H belt or hi-viz jacket.

At the rear of every ride-out there is a **Back Marker** who will also be identified at the pre-ride brief and will also wear either a hi-viz H belt or jacket and will remain at rear of group at all times.

**At no time will any rider overtake the Leader or drop behind the Back Marker.**

Each time the ride reaches a junction or round-a-bout, the rider at No 2 position, behind the **Leader**, will stop and mark the junction for the rest of the group.

When the **Back Marker** arrives, that rider will then re-join the group ahead of the **Back Marker**.

At the next junction or round-a-bout, the next rider in No. 2 position behind the **Leader** will drop off and mark that junction, rejoining the group in front of the **Back Marker**.

**This procedure will be repeated at each new junction.**

**OVERTAKING** is permitted between the **Back Marker** and **Leader**, but **ONLY IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO**.

When overtaking other vehicles, take care not to merely follow bike in front.

If traffic conditions slow progress, do not worry as the drop-off system works and ensures that no-one is left behind.

Riding in a group presents additional hazards, so ride to the system, and remember, **Safety first**.

Riders who are not part of the group are a significant hazard. Stay safe.





## The Wrong war round – part 2

By Neil hamilton

### Blazing Saddles

The midnight ride from Inverness to Beaulay was damp but uneventful with no traffic and clear skies, life was good. Just before the bridge over the river Beaulay lay the campsite track consisting of a wide grass centreline separating two parallel courses emulating a relief map of the Himalayas. The faithful steed, now liberated from its heavy pack burden laughed in the face of such obstacles until:

The lights went out, engine coughed and expired, a strong smell of burning and copious quantities of smoke issuing from under the seat. Reaction was lightning quick. After removing valuables from above the fire, battery box cover was whipped off and the battery lead ripped off.

The smoke subsided (deduced by sense of smell as the clear night was also moonless). The remaining traverse of the "Himalayas" became much more interesting pushing a motorcycle in total darkness but eventually sanctuary of the old army tent was reached and sleep was the only viable option.



Examination of the wreckage in daylight revealed a situation akin to a bowl of spaghetti having been struck by lightning although the battery appeared to still have some power. A few minutes with the trusty camping knife produced enough undamaged spaghetti to link battery to contact breaker to coil and the beast was alive again. Up into Beaulay and to the local garage, got any coloured wire I ask the man, och aye was the reply. Salvation, can I have three yards of six different colours please? Suitably furnished I returned to the campsite with a lighter heart.

### Robbery?

Returning to my tent I was suspicious that all was not as I had left it, a closer inspection revealed that the tent flap had been opened and hastily re-fastened. With heavy heart I opened the flap and surveyed. All seemed in order apart from the small box of bacon, porridge oats, milk and bread that most definitely wasn't there when I left. Faith in human nature restored I breakfasted and spent the remainder of the morning rewiring the bike with the aid of the trusty camping knife. Try that with a GS Ewan!!

Rewire completed it was time for a ride west following the Beaulay river to Glen Affric, very beautiful and one of the last remaining pockets of native Caledonian Pine Forest left standing. Showing how most of Scotland would have looked 500 years ago, this area was used as the location for the film "Last of the Mohicans" the year after this visit. The locked gate across the track by the Dog Falls had a sign proclaiming "no cars beyond this point" the small (Bantam sized) gate to the side however was unlocked and as not explicitly prohibited, Bantam and rider ventured forth through pine forest, red squirrels, pine martens, ptarmigan and red deer.

Not sure what any of them made of the little Bantam puffing its telltale two-stroke blue smoke. Fish and chips from the Beaulay chippy rounded off a most satisfying day.

## Castles, Canvas and Cocktails



Loaded up and off north via the Struie Pass, dropping down to Bonar Bridge and a brief detour to the Falls of Shin where salmon leap in the river below Carbisdale Castle which is undoubtedly Scotland's grandest Youth Hostel. Eastward bound past the even grander Skibo Castle, venue for the marriage of Madonna and Guy Richie in December 2000 and onward to a campsite nestling in the sand dunes of the Dornoch Firth. The little green army tent with Bantam seemed out of place amongst the plush caravans with their Jaguars, Humbers and Rovers (remember when British built cars ruled the luxury market?). Relief was at hand however when another young lad turned up on a Honda CB250 (rich git!). Feeling less out of place and enjoying company for the first time on the trip, a meal was prepared. Mid-repast a large Bessacarr (Rolls Royce of

caravans) caravan appeared, towed by a gleaming Humber Sceptre, driven by an aged military looking gentleman who surveyed the site with the eye of an officer planning a military campaign. Posted at a suitable distance from two "hippie" bikers (this was the year after Easy Rider) he and his wife attempted to site their "house on wheels". As the futility of their efforts became obvious and observing no help forthcoming from the caravanning community, I suggested to my companion that we help them out. Caravan suitably sited and levelled, we returned to our humble accommodation and concluded our meal. Some time later the "Lady of the house" made her way over to our tents with the invitation that we join them for drinks. Offer duly accepted we reclined in the plush interior with our new found friends to Pimm's complete with all the trimmings. Expressing their gratitude, they made some comment about not judging by appearances.

Bikers 1 Caravanners 0



## The Northwest Passage

Another day, another journey. Loaded up and on the road again Northwards to John O'Groats, a "must visit" location with little more than a signpost back in 1970. Go west young man and west it was past the Dounreay Fast Breeder Reactor and along the rugged windswept north coast of Scotland to Bettyhill, a village built in the early 1800s by Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland to re-house crofters displaced by the clearances. Following the shores of Torrisdale Bay and crossing the Naver the intrepid duo skirted the Kyle of Tongue (no causeway in 1970) and Loch Eriboll ending the journey near Smoo Cave close to the little village of Durness. Smoo Cave lies right beside the main North Coast road just over a mile east of Durness, where the Allt Smoo falls down an open shaft and flows through a series of huge chambers to emerge at sea level into a deep and dramatic tidal gorge. It is probably the most spectacular cave in Scotland. Tents pitched at Sango Sands food and sleep were order of the day after many hard miles in the saddle.

Don't miss the next gripping instalment: - ***The Kinlochbervie Fire Brigade***

## Advanced Motorcycle Usage

By Simon Hadden

The average motorcyclist rarely tests a bike to its full performance and never really finds out what the machine is capable of doing.

A recent visit to the Isle of Man saw me pondering over this one day – it's that sort of place. You've time on your hands, surrounded by machines and riders of all types.

On the road, the fast lads whiz past, leaving you for dead. In the street, the serious old bike lags huddle round some rare machine and twitter animatedly about its special widget valves.

Now I'd planned to go this year on the old BSA. As the BSA had only one roadworthy wheel at the time, I went on the TDM instead, which had two roadworthy wheels – far superior.

Once on the island, I began to wonder about testing the capabilities of the TDM, and realised, in a blinding flash, that the name might be quite apt. Perhaps it really could Toast Delicious Muffins.

Talking technically for a moment, this bike, like the BSA, has a dry sump, which means that the engine oil is pumped out of the sump, back into a separate oil tank, which lies behind the cylinder block.

Both engine and oil tank heat up whilst the bike is running. Yamaha thoughtfully provide a muffin-sized gap between the two components.

It's an undocumented feature of the machine. Only real petrolheads are aware of the engine's capabilities – it toasts muffins. But how good is it?

I decided to run a series of tests to push the bike to its limits. Right at the outset, I hit the first snag as our larder contained only bagels – yuk.

Anyway these also fitted into the engine so the testing spec. was modified accordingly.



The first runs made use of a bagel retention strap (BRS - similar in looks to a bungee strap but with far superior properties, to retain the bagel in position through left hand bends.

However, it was soon proven that the TDM design was of such sophistication that any BRS was superfluous.





Fast runs on the TT course were included in the testing regime.

For perfect toasting and even heating, a 40 minute run involving some low-gear running was found to be ideal (Fig. 3). The TDM then produces a perfectly cooked product, with gently toasted outside and evenly heated inside – yum (Fig. 4).

Advanced Riding Tip: if you like jam and butter on your bagel, add it after arrival.

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## Observers

**A bit of a moan really. Can we remind all observers that to maintain their accreditation with the IAM, a minimum of 10 hours of observed rides must be undertaken each year.**

**Whilst we do recognise that people carry out observing voluntarily, there is a commitment both to maintain this level and also help out at events such as the Cornering Clinics run by Northumbria Police.**

**We constantly struggle to get more than 5 or 6 observers at these events (out of about 35) which put even more work on the shoulders of the few.**

**Incidentally, if any observer ever wants to stand down please feel free to let us know. You will not be criticized and we thank you for your efforts in the past.**

**The Training Team**



## Planned trip for 2009

I am organising a 1st World War battlefield tour with a professional guide.

The plan is to leave here on Friday evening, 11th September **2009**, and go from North Shields by DFDS Seaways to Amsterdam and then travel to the Somme for 3 nights and then to Flanders for 3 nights.

The price will be around £450 per person .

This includes: the return ferry journey with a motorcycle, 6 nights bed and breakfast, entry fees to the areas where they are charged, and a guide who will be with us for the 6 days that we are visiting the battlefields.

The price is based on 2 people sharing a twin room, ensuite, at the B&B's and 4 people sharing a cabin on the ferry.

We return on the 19th September, arriving back in North Shields on the morning of Sunday 20th September.

If anyone is interested please contact Louise Bennett on 07951 035038, or email me.



## THE BIKER

A man was riding his Harley along a California beach when suddenly the sky clouded above his head and, in a booming voice, The Lord said, 'Because you have TRIED to be faithful to me in all ways, I will grant you one wish.'

The biker pulled over and said, 'Build a bridge to Hawaii so I can ride over anytime I want.'

The Lord said, 'Your request is materialistic, think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking; the supports required to reach the bottom of the Pacific and the concrete and steel it would take! It will nearly exhaust several natural resources.'

I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of something that could possibly help mankind.'

The biker thought about it for a long time. Finally, he said, 'Lord, I wish that I, and all men, could understand our wives; I want to know how she feels inside, what she's thinking when she gives me the silent treatment, why she cries, what she means when she says nothing's wrong, and how I can make a woman truly happy.....'

The Lord replied, 'Do you want two lanes or four on that bridge?'

## Here come the Germans

By Clive Taylor

Whilst we were in the Dolomites a month or so ago, Simon & I made friends with a German couple who were also on a motorcycling Holiday and staying at the same hotel.

It turned out that they had stayed at this hotel 5 or 6 times so were pretty familiar with the region.



They were able to give us loads of advice for good motorcycling routes which was much appreciated.

You may recall that both Simon & I managed to get some sort of 'Man Flu' early in the holiday but like all true Brits we like to share our possessions so dutifully passed it on to Ralf & Mic Penquitt.

Unfortunately, they seemed to suffer even more than we did and decided to cut their holiday short and went home a week early.

All this meant that they now had an extra week to take as holiday so made contact and came over to Northumberland via the DFDS Seaways ship from Holland to North Shields.

They stayed with us and good old Simon took an extra couple of days holiday after the Isle of Man trip to introduce them to various tea rooms and Northumbria scenery.

Ralf and Mic live near Bonn and were surprised how easy it was to find roads with so few cars on them so I guess we should count ourselves lucky in that respect.

We had trips over Hartside and into the borders, around Kielder and up the coast.

We visited the Samè Ling Tibetan Monastery at Eskdalemuir and went south to Weardale.

Mic is keen on castles so had a good time rummaging around in Alnwick and Bamburgh as well as passing Warkworth and Dunstanburgh.

The tea room at Alston Station was well received (Even better as your Chairman bought the teas) and we had a good look around the Hub museum just across the road.

If you have never been, go there sometime.

It is really good for nostalgia seekers.



The Brief Encounter at Langwathby seems to have changed hands but I thought it was ok, Simon was not so sure.

The start of the heavy rains effected things a bit but, hey, it's ok with the old rain suit on.

We even had a morning on the Westgate Road and a spot of lunch in the Salt & Pepper greasy spoon.

Not, it seems, a type of establishment that is common in Germany. After a big round of stottie, egg & sausage and cheese savory and a mug of tea they felt a good deal better.

We finished the day a Morwick ice cream parlour over near Acklington. Very good.

Simon came up with one of his delicious teas one evening and as we feasted on cucumber and egg sandwiches (with the crusts cut off, naturally) summer pudding and banana bread we reflected on a jolly good time with new friends from Germany.

They have even threatened to come over for the Manx Grand Prix next year.



I don't know if it's fair to subject them to a week of that nonsense yet.

Simon took them over to the Barbour factory shop to buy some stuff on their last Saturday morning (The day of the Big Rain) and as we prepared to leave for the run to

North Shields we realised that there were serious problems with flooding on the A1.

It took us almost an hour to get to the Port filtering gently past cars marooned by

floodwater.

But we just about made it on time and as we said our goodbyes, little did I realize what the journey back home to Longhorsley would be like on the worst day of flooding in the Morpeth area since 1963. Still, that's another story.

Mic and Ralf told us that if any club members would like to holiday in the Eiffel region of Germany (very beautiful) please make contact with them and they would be happy to help out.

If you do then please contact me and I will provide their contact details.



## Tips for new riders

By Ray Charlton

This month I am focusing on a matter that has been reported on two separate rideouts and relates to unnecessary and possibly dangerous overtaking during a NAM event.

On both occasions the individuals involved, persistently carried out overtakes as soon as they had completed marking a junction.

The incidents occurred on narrow roads as well as major roads and on several occasions resulted in the riders concerned being on the wrong side of a solid white line.

This in itself is an indication that the observation and planning of these riders is suspect and apart from breaking the law, could easily have resulted in a serious accident as white lines are there for a purpose, identifying a hazard or danger.

Apart from which, NAM rideouts are made up of riders with wide ranging experience ranging from the absolute novice or new member, to the experienced and skilful riders.

Such actions could easily surprise a less experienced rider and apart from which, is not exactly showing a good example of safe, skilled riding.

As you are all aware, NAM rideouts follow the Drop Off system, which is designed to accommodate the inexperienced rider and not put him in a position of having to ride beyond his experience.

Whilst the Drop Off system does allow overtaking between the leader and the Tail End Charley, it is intended to allow experienced riders overtake slower riders, but NOT as an automatic right.

It is not intended to allow overtaking on every occasion whether they are passing inexperienced riders or not.

I should not need to remind long standing members of the need to set a good example, not only to our own Members, but to the public at large.

Let it be known that if this behaviour is seen by any Committee Members, they are liable to be taken to one side and advised of their shortcomings. In the worst scenario they could be asked to leave the rideout, should the circumstances warrant it.

Rideouts should be enjoyable and we should never have such complaints made about what should be responsible riders.

Can I ask you to consider if an overtake is appropriate, is it safe, do I have space to execute it without endangering either myself or others, or even breaking the law and what benefits will I gain by carrying it out.

Remember that not all riders ride at the same speeds or standards and consideration should be given to others at all times.





## With the benefit of local knowledge!

by Alan Thompson

And so, after weeks of discussion, we were finally here! My journey from Whitley Bay to Coniston had been considerably easier than my brother-in-law, Colin's, trek from South Wales on his Pan European. Torrential rain, Friday afternoon traffic on the M6 and the first signs of early winter evenings had ensured that the trip had already been eventful but we were finally here, bags unpacked and parked in the lounge of the 'Black Bull', home of award winning 'Coniston Bitter'. Life was good !!

There were no firm plans for the weekend other than the fact that we didn't have to leave until Monday morning. Two full days of Lake District riding, all of which was new to my compadre who had never been to Cumbria before. Our hosts at the 'Willow Trees' B&B had proved to be amiable folk and thankfully had not displayed the dreaded disapproving scowl as we had pulled up on motorcycles. "I used to have a BSA" the owner announced on arrival and with that simple statement, the camaraderie had begun!

At breakfast on the following morning, it was apparent that award winning 'Coniston Bitter' had taken its toll. A hearty breakfast of the type only served up by British B&B owners soon set to work on the problem and by 10.00am, we both resembled human beings again. "Where are you going today?" our BSA buddy enquired. I had in mind the Windermere Ferry, Kirkstone Pass, Ullswater, Keswick, Honister Pass and finally, 'Britain's Favourite View', West Water. "Oh - You'll be coming back over 'Hardknott' and 'Wrynose' then?" he enquired. Having never heard of either of these, I was non-committal but interested to hear more. "They are great roads" he advised. "Challenging - but great fun". Perhaps the 'Challenging' description should have set alarm bells ringing, but this escaped me, and so with the benefit of our host's local knowledge, the plan was changed.

We took the described route, enjoyed the climbs and descents of Kirkstone and Honister, the trip to the Slate Mine Museum, the stunning scenery of the Western Lakes and finally prepared ourselves for the short run back over the mountains to Coniston via our host's recommended route.



As the road got narrower and steeper, it was soon apparent that the 'passes' were little more than mountain trails and equally obvious that once committed to the climb, there was no real opportunity to turn back. I was starting to have reservations as I negotiated the relatively nimble Daytona through some of the more challenging corners and was aware of the fact that this would be a real nightmare on a larger bike – like a Pan European. It is difficult to rank which aspects of the passes were most challenging. Certainly, right up there, would be the 1 in 3 inclines and descents, the 140 degree hairpins

more suited to a Montesa than any road bike, the endless gravel covered corners, the appealing mix of running mountain water and animal excrement strewn across every stretch of tarmac and the ongoing battle with vehicles struggling to pass on the single track in the opposite direction! I reached the first summit and with a sigh of relief, pulled over and found the first flat piece of ground I had seen for about three miles. My relief was short lived when moments later, a car pulled over and enquired if I was with someone on a 'Big Honda'. This was quickly followed with the statement "he's crashed".

As I tried to come to a halt on the steep descent, it quickly became clear that I was probably in more trouble than my brother-in-law who was busy searching through the remains of his machine in a slightly traumatised state. With nothing resembling flat ground in sight, I had a number of options all of which appeared to involve me, the bike, or me and the bike ending up on the floor. Fortunately, my brother-in-law recognised my predicament and ran over to help me man-handle it into a location where it would stay upright on its stand.

As we started to gather the bits, it was clear that this particular bend had some history. The ditch resembled an auto-jumble with bits of Suzuki, Yamaha and Ford amongst others growing in the foliage. With the screen and most of one side smashed, it was something of a shock when Colin announced that he wasn't going to be beaten and would ride it to the top.

The Pan started and eventually pulled away up the hill however the demonic scream and clouds of smoking rubber confirmed that the plan was flawed and as something seized at the next hairpin, the bike dropped again ensuring that any surviving panels from the first impact were now also damaged. With the Pan prostrate in the middle of the track, its rider lying partially trapped underneath it, a lengthy queue of traffic forming in both directions, darkness cutting in and no phone signal, my enthusiasm for the trip was waning. As regularly seems to happen in these situations however, a local biker was at the scene in his Discovery and helped us haul up the bike, drag it off the road and dump the remains in the bushes. "You must be mad bringing this thing up here" he stated.

We were forced to agree ! It was now dark and our new friend offered a lift down into Ambleside. He looked at me and the Daytona and with a knowing look, stated "you're going to have fun !" The ride down the other side of 'Hardknott Pass, through the valley and then up and over "Wrynose Pass" in the pitch black, pouring rain and negotiating all of the hazards described previously was a journey which will stay with me for quite some time.



In Ambleside we decided that it was too late to do anything about the bike and so Colin, a man with an undisguised hatred of riding pillion but also someone not prepared to pay the extortionate £25 taxi fare for the short trip down to Conistown jumped on the back of the Daytona. After a wet and winding ride back to 'Willow Trees' I enquired "How was that then ?". Clearly unimpressed with my 'Advanced Rider' credentials, he announced "I don't know – I had my eyes closed the whole time!"

We found the B&B in darkness with a note on the door advising they had gone to a local village shindig. After a quick wash and brush up, we decided it was time to reacquaint ourselves with the Black Bull's award winning beverage. The conclusion of that night again remains a bit of a mystery !!

The following morning over another superb breakfast, our BSA friend enquired with concern where the other bike was. We recounted the whole sorry tale whilst our host's face acknowledged the fact that his advice had played a key part in the saga. Finally, I commented, "That must have been quite a challenge on a BSA".

"Oh no" he said. "I've never done it on a bike - I was in a Land Rover !!"

## A Holiday in the Dolomites

By Clive Taylor & Simon Hadden

It's not so easy to come up with an idea of where to go for a bike holiday these days if you fancy something a bit different. Especially if the number of days (and funds) available is limited.

I don't know how we settled on the Dolomites area of Northern Italy or whose idea it was but neither of us had motorcycled there before so we took the plunge.

Organising the thing is all part of the holiday and very early on it became clear that there was quite a bit to do if disasters were to be avoided.

This part of Northern Italy is strange because years ago it was part of Austria and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Consequently German is the first language for most people although Italian comes a close second.

Simon found a suitable bike friendly hotel in a village called Nova Levante which is about fifteen miles south east of Bolzano. He did all the Krout speak on the emails because he is educated and secured a couple of rooms for us.



We decided to take three days to get there to avoid the German autobahns as much as possible and maximize the opportunity to see the local scenery. This meant booking a couple of B & B's in Germany which was no problem (for Simon !)

The handy DFDS Seaways overnight crossing to IJmuiden (Amsterdam) was booked which we have both used several times previously. It is very good if a tad pricey in the restaurants. Good, private shower & bogs got us off to a good start.

To maximize the number of days in the Alps we chose to return part of the way by train. This was the German DB Autozug service that took us from Bolzano overnight to Dusseldorf. We would then only have to ride about 160 miles back to the docks in Amsterdam.

The carriages are like the old corridor trains that were used in the UK for years with compartments for six people. Apart from having to share ours with an elderly German woman and a middle aged German couple, facilities were pretty good and the 14 hours passed smoothly once we had worked out how to erect the beds. Simon offered the old lady some of his ear plugs to combat snorers but she already had some !

In general our ride down through Germany was very picturesque once past the Ruhr industrial belt. We passed the Möhne reservoir and dam





looking very peaceful compared with the action undertaken by the Dambusters squadron in 1943.

The first B & B was at Battenburg – Dodenau. The place was run by a bunch of rockers by the look of them but they were very hospitable and the hotel was grand.

We both were suffering from sore throat and runny nose by now but our plan to visit the medieval town of Rottenburg ob der Tauber was accomplished but not before the Navigational Genius took a wrong route and we got separated. (I took the correct route) All was well as we met up again in Karlstadt before heading for Weissenburg and the second B & B.



Whilst clean (sort of) this one was a bit dodgy and the fare on offer that evening left something to be desired. I tried the liver sausage with dodgy vegetables and Simon had something with rather unappetizing cabbage.

The third day dawned very wet and as we splashed south towards Austria we were in for 10 hours of continuous rain. Past Oberammergau we stopped at Garmisch Partenkirchen for hot chocolate and cakes at a superior tea shop before crossing the Austrian border and heading for Innsbruck and the Brenner Pass into Italy.

Down the old road to Bolzano before a scenic route to our hotel at Nova Levante. This place went under the rather curious name of the Hotel Nigglihof but accommodation was very good and like everywhere else had undercover parking for the bikes.



The eight days we spent in this area were simply spectacular.

Loads of Alpine passes and scenery that simply doesn't exist elsewhere.

Some of the hairpin bends were really severe and not for the faint hearted. Picnics and cakes in abundance and very little rain ensured that our stay was top notch.

We even palled up with a German couple from the Bonn area.

They were motorcyclists but put their bikes on a trailer to bring them to the hotel. We thought this was somewhat novel.

They were very nice and took us on a couple of runs using experience gained from 6 or 7 stays at our hotel. Ralph had a GS BM and Mic had an older 800 GS. Rather stylish with what she



described as a Baroque rear end. I don't know if she meant hers or the bikes !

Every other bike was a GS BMW and there were plenty of bikes. It became a bit boring in the end although we did see quite a lot of TDM Yams though.

It's surprising how quickly the holiday comes to an end and before you know where you are we were unloading the bikes from the train and heading back to Holland and the ship. We managed to pass our colds on to the German couple who left for home early as they felt so rough.



Every cloud has a silver lining though as they have now made contact and are coming to stay in Northumbria at the end of August for 10 days so it will be our turn to show them some local biking roads.

Both bikes performed without fault, we didn't use any oil or get any punctures. Nothing came loose or dropped off. The whole adventure provided just what was needed for a biking holiday.

#### **Post Script**

As a well known International Playboy, I have to say that spending more than a few hours in Germany causes me great alarm.

This is because of their keenness for that great German institution of the SHELF TOILET PAN.

All premises more than a few years old are fitted with these awful devices since German people are obsessed with inspecting their waste matter for parasites.

Not to put too finer point on it, the waste stays above the water line marooned on the built in shelf until flushed away thus giving the depositor the opportunity to rummage about until satisfied that no nasty creatures are present.

I coped with the two nights traveling to Italy with fortitude but forgot that this part of Italy was once Austria (which is nearly Germany). Imagine my horror therefore to discover that our hotel had a sort of half way house for a bog.

Not actually a shelf you understand but a sort of ski slope designed into the pan which caused..... well you can imagine I'm sure.

***The usual culture we have come to expect from The Motorcycling God! Ed***

The moral here is to always pack a handy traveling bog brush when visiting this part of Italy.

For those of you with a passing interest in this subject see the links below

<http://www.leftfield.org/~scott/misc/toilet.htm>

<http://www.toytowngermany.com/lofi/index.php/t764.html>

## Submersible BMW

This is how Neil Hamilton found his RT1200 after parking it in the County Hall Car Park whilst attending a Cornering Clinic.

Fortunately the bike was fine, unlike Morpeth High Street which was devastated by the floods early in September.

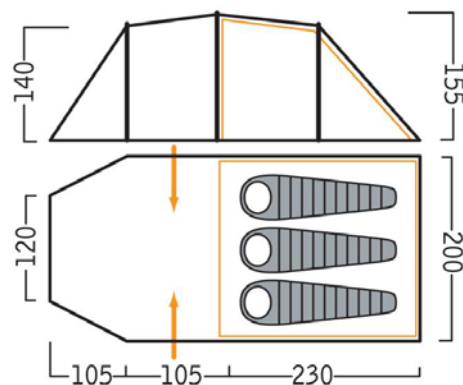


## Tent for sale

Vango Omega 350, 3 man tunnel tent. Never used, brand new, 2008 model.

Quick erect, built in groundsheet, glass fibre poles. Waterproof stuff bag. Ideal for motorcycle use.

**Bargain at £80.00.** Contact the Editor for further details.



## Scottish Rally 2008

By Clive Taylor

September came round again and the Scottish Navigational Rally beckoned as usual. Why do we subject ourselves to this daft event ? Well, just because we do, I suppose. Anyway, I've written about this run several times before so this time will confine these jottings to the odd things that happened rather than a route plan.

Suffice to say that Simon Hadden and I had to ride from Berwick on Tweed to Bettyhill in Caithness on the north coast then back to Crianlarich. The end!

We were supposed to check in at the Northern Gateway filling station in Berwick. But it was closed. Great start then. We decided to go to Morrison's next door and buy a Mars Bar in order to be able to submit a receipt. The woman behind the counter was not at all impressed by this action especially as there were about six other people doing the same thing.

Good news for car drivers on the Forth Bridge. Having just caused chaos for months building new toll booths it is now free of charge. Bikers have been free for years.

Good old Simon, He led me to a smashing café at Blair Athol. It's called the Watermill. Really good home made soup and home made bread as well (it's a working watermill you see). Absolutely splendid place. Go and give it a try when at Pitlochry next time. It's on the left by the railway station.



In order to ring the changes we decided to head north via the Black Isle and use the ferry that goes from Cromarty to Nigg. It must be the smallest ferry in the world and takes just two cars (or bikes) It's like a very short world war two landing craft with a ramp at the front.

Down a ramp you go which is covered with sand and bump up on to the ferry. There is no room to turn round so a turntable is helpfully built into the deck. It was so rough that we had to hang on to our bikes otherwise they would have fallen over for sure. No tying down on this ferry.

As we pulled in to Lairg for petrol, who did we see but the other bunch of folks who started off at Berwick. They were doing a different challenge to us but it's amazing how you run into folks even after many miles.

The Northernmost checkpoint was the Bettyhill Hotel right on the northern coast of the Scottish mainland with magnificent views from the dining room. We got there about 6.30pm and decided to have a proper meal and a break. Good food it was too and served by a brace of eastern European lads one of whom was wearing a rather dodgy hat. Not exactly a beret you understand but worryingly close to the untutored eye.

It was about 10.00pm when we left and as we headed west towards Tongue and then south to Lairg we came across many herds of deer. In fact, as it was dark we had to take great



care as these wonderfull wild beasts were everywhere. The stags with magnificent antlers were absolutely huge. As we picked them up in our headlights they turned to gaze at us before trotting off into the heather.

We decided to have a break in Lairg and as we came to a stop at about 12.30am a spotty youth came up and asked us if we knew anything about scooters. He couldn't start his and it looked a bit terminal as the kick start lever was stuck and the starter motor made a strange noise. What seemed odd to us was that there was a gaggle of youngsters all hanging around in sporty Corsas or Astras who seemed to come and go for the next hour or so attended by squealing wheels. Several pulled out toolboxes but none could help the stricken lad. After he decided to ditch his scoot at a friends house all these souls just seemed to melt away without a word. Where they all came from at this time of night was beyond us.

Our night time digs was a grassy bank at an all night filling station at Evanton. Nothing like sleeping under the stars for a few hours to freshen you up. (not)

We set off with Simon in front but I think he was still asleep as he managed the biggest detour to Drumnadrochit yet attempted. So much for the human GPS then. I'll have to teach him how to navigate.

Spean Bridge provided a welcome break and a Little Chef for breakfast. What's more the teenaged girl waitress was delightfull and helpful as well as cheerful and made our morning. Not something that is usually on offer at a Little Chef.

Glen Coe and Rannoch Moor were their normal spectacular selves and as we rolled up to the final control at the Suie Lodge Hotel we ran into the same group of people who we had seen at Bettyhill.

It turned out that these folks were just leaving for home in Bourmouth ! So, having come up to Scotland and done the five or six hundred miles on the rally they had another 600 odd miles ahead of them and one bloke was on an R1 Yam with his wife on the back.



I noticed that he had a gel seat cover though. Although we were only 200 miles from home we relaxed during the afternoon and then stayed the night.

All in all a very good rally. If anyone fancies giving it a go next year, let me know and I will pass on details.



## Some facts about the fire bike

by David Stone



Ray Charlton asked if I could write a few lines introducing myself, and the role of Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service's Fire Bike. The Fire Service have been tasked by government to develop RTC (Road Traffic Collision) reduction strategies. Northumberland offers some of the best biking roads in the UK and to assist our community and visitors to the area Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) have developed a Fire Bike to increase rider skills awareness.

I have been involved with the IAM since 1996, when I passed the IAM Motorcycle Test and completed the Observer Course, and have been involved with RoSPA since 1997.

In developing the Fire Bike I have completed a Police Response and Advanced Motorcycle Course, augmented with qualifications to assess motorcyclists up to Police Advanced (Class One) Level.

It is a great privilege to attend these Police motorcycle courses and I would be delighted to share some of the skills and experience I have gained with NAM members, I will be attending as many monthly meetings/ride outs as possible, so just ask!

One of the Fire Bike duties will be to carry out Rider Skills Assessments, NFRS will be liaising with motorcycle dealers/bike groups to offer assessed rides to customers/members, complete with a written report including recommendations to develop further skills with NAM or RoSPA.

Any ideas and assistance from NAM members to reach a larger audience would be appreciated. The Fire Bike has also supported Northumbria Police with "Operation Weekender" this summer and we have met a number of motorcyclists interested the Fire Bike and the partnership working.

Operation Weekender is an engagement programme where Northumbria Police Motorcyclists meet the biking public in popular areas to discuss rider skills and offers the public an opportunity to talk about issues such as dark visors, small number plate and race cans. When you see us out and about please come over for a chat, you never know we might just be ordering a coffee. In future I hope to assist NAM Training Staff with observer training and associate training, to cope with the (hopefully) increased membership resulting from the Cornering Clinics. As most NAM members will know the Cornering Clinics were well attended, greatly assisted by NAM Observers, and during the long winter days NFRS and Northumbria Police will be meeting to discuss next years programme.

To further add to the Fire Service Community role the Fire Bike will be attending Road Traffic Collisions recent article in local press. Published Date: 14 July 2008. *"Northumberland's fire*

*bike has taken to the roads for the Summer season and it is now kitted out to be able to provide lifesaving care at road traffic accidents.*

*An external automatic defibrillator and trauma care kit have been fitted to the fire bike and fire-fighter David Stone who rides the bike has been fully trained to use both pieces of equipment.*

*The fire bike is already used to engage with motorcyclists who ride on the popular rural routes in Northumberland, encouraging safer riding and explaining the importance of respecting the roads and the communities they ride through."*

David also works to spread road safety messages to all road-users, young and old

As a firefighter, he is ideally placed to offer advice and support.

Fire and Rescue Service staff regularly witness the tragic consequences of poor driving and riding skills when they are called to attend road traffic collisions and have to rescue casualties from the wreckage.

Now the fire bike has the equipment needed to respond to road traffic collisions where David can offer potentially life-saving assistance.

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service's Chief Fire Officer Brian Hesler said: *"This is a further example of how Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service are developing to be equipped to save more lives."*

*"When our crews attend a fire or an emergency incident like a road traffic collision they can often find people in need of urgent medical attention. Having a defibrillator on board the fire bike and a rider who is trained to use it means that we now have quick access to a piece of potentially life-saving piece of medical equipment".*

*"It is essential that the public understand that the defibrillator on the fire bike does not replace the need for a professional paramedic to attend the scene of an emergency incident. It is a crucial first response or interim measure that can be used to help stabilise a casualty until the ambulance arrives in situations where the fire bike may arrive on the scene first."*

Councillor Lesley Rickerby, Executive Member for Community Services added: *"Speed is vital when dealing with people suffering from a heart attack. We know that the quicker the shock is given after the person collapses, the greater their chance of survival."*

*"So having a defibrillator on board the fire bike means we can provide assistance extremely quickly. Our fire engines already contain a vast array of rescue equipment from ladders and pumps to first aid kits, spinal boards and defibrillators.*

*The defibrillator and trauma care kit that are now on the fire bike will be a valuable addition to the tools that we already have and could help us save lives."*

If you wish to have an assessed ride please contact me on 07881 852245 or [dstone@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:dstone@northumberland.gov.uk). NFRS will be setting up a free phone number for riding skills assessments but in the interim please just use my mobile number or email.

Please remember to pass the word about for the free coffee and biscuits at Wooler Fire Station on 19th October on the last NAM Rideout of 2008.



## Some events of 2008





# Contributions Required

This is your newsletter, articles, observations, letters and pictures are always needed. Maybe you have a question on Roadcraft or a tale to tell

Please send any contributions to:

**raycharlton@sky.com**

**Deadline for contributions to next newsletter  
Friday, 31st October 2008**

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

NAM meets on the second Tuesday of every month at the Wheatsheaf Hotel on the B6918 at Woolsington, near Newcastle Airport, at 7.00pm for 7.30pm.



**nam-online.org**  
**Telephone: 07951 035038**



**NAM is supported by:-**  
**Northumbria Police**  
**Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service**  
**Ride Respect (N.S.R.I)**



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