

Riders' Chronicles



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Jan /Feb 2008

**The Newsletter of Northumbria
Advanced Motorcyclists**

COMMITTEE 2007 - 2008



Jack Lormor
President



Ray Charlton
Chairman / Newsletter
Editor



Clive Taylor
Vice Chairman /
Training Team



Michael Sutherland
Secretary



Louise Bennett
Treasurer /
Merchandising



Ron Patrick
Rideout Co-ordinator



Carole Kibble
Membership Secretary



Glenn Knowles
Website Co-ordinator



Dave Walton
Promotions & Events



Alan Richardson
Training Team / Team
Leader Tyne & Wear



Nick Maddison
Team Leader
Northumberland



Geoff Spencer
Training Team

Chairman's Ramblings

Here we are at the start of another New Year, having seen the A.G.M in November and the Christmas Dinner in December.



The AGM brought several changes to the Committee following the departure of Simon Hadden (Secretary) and Jim Stephenson.(Treasurer) I would like to thank them for the invaluable work they put in on behalf of the Group..

New faces include Nick Maddison (Team Leader, Northumberland) and David Walton. (Promotions and Events) May I extend a warm welcome to them and hope they enjoy their terms of office in their respective posts.

Other changes include The Motorcycling God, (Clive Taylor) formally taking up the post of Vice Chairman, Michael Sutherland, (Secretary) and Louise Bennett (Treasurer)

I feel their contribution will be of great benefit towards the ongoing success of the Group.

The Training Team continue to introduce new initiatives, having organised a very successful Slow Riding Instruction day for Observers, the option will soon be extended to all Members who wish to sharpen up their riding skills.

In addition to this, they are now offering 'refresher' assessment rides for existing Members who would like to ensure they are still riding to the same standards they displayed for their I.A.M Test. **(See Page 23)**

2007 will be a very hard act to follow for us as we increased membership considerably and had the best ever results in Test Passes, making the challenge for 2008 even greater.

We look forward to the start of the biking season again with the annual trek to Pitlochry in May and the regular Rideouts, this year to be arranged for the 3rd Sunday of the month to avoid clashing with bank Holiday Weekends. (Ironically the first Rideout happens to fall on Easter weekend, which this year is on the 3rd Sunday of March....you just can't win!)

I would like to see greater involvement of more Members to organise Rideouts, Factory Visits and the like, instead of the same old faces organising them year after year.

If you have any ideas, please come forward and we will give you every support and help in organising anything of interest.

I should also remind you that our life blood is growth, as we need a continuous source of new members to sustain the success of the Club.

With this in mind, can I ask you all to 'spread the Gospel' by talking to other bikers in the hope they may join NAM, Your support on this matter is crucial.

Meanwhile, let's all look forward to the new biking season and hope it brings the good weather to enjoy our passion.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

D B Ives	M C Percival	P Holmes
B J Glazzar	S I Taylor	

CONGRATULATIONS ON PASSING THE IAM TEST - Well Done

Julia Horsefield	Observed by	Debbie Polworth
Peter Forster	“	Geoff Spencer
David Henderson	“	Ron Patrick
Derek Edge	“	Michael Sutherland
Bryan Hesp	“	Neil Oliver
Paul Connell	“	Peter Davison
Edward Scott	“	Dave Crampton
Doug Robertson	“	Louise Bennett
Alan Rochester	“	Chris Darling
Jack Stewart	“	Peter Morgan
Paul Marriott	“	Pete Davies
John Magee	“	Geoff Spencer
Veronica Faid	“	Clive Taylor
Graham Marshall	“	Ray Charlton
Lynton Johnson	“	Dave Thornton
John Johnston	“	Dave Crampton/Nigel Hore
Nathan Lane	“	Michael Sutherland

NAM MERCHANDISE

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

Equipment Badges	Self adhesive - attach to fairing	£1.00
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**

Rideout Co-ordinator: **Ron Patrick**

Merchandising: **Louise Bennett**

Promotions & Events: **Dave Walton**

Newsletter Editor: **Ray Charlton**

Team Leaders

Northumberland: **Nick Maddison**

Tyne & Wear: **Alan Richardson**

Website

www.nam-online.org

Telephone: 07951035038

Durham Advanced Motorcyclists

Durham Advanced Motorcyclists meetings are on the last Tuesday of the month at the Bowburn Hall Hotel, starting at 7.30pm.

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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

or

raycharlton@tesco.net

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Page 19: “A year with an RT” by Neil Hamilton. “The Short Way Round” by new contributor, Ian Hall.” (Page 21)

Several “Funnies” and much more.

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: There is a **Leader** at the front of every NAM rideout who will be identified at the pre-ride briefing. He is permanently at the front of group and is identified by either a hi-vis H belt or hi-vis jacket. At no time will any rider overtake the Leader

At the rear: There is a **Back Marker** at the rear of every NAM rideout who will also be identified at the pre-ride brief and will also wear either a hi-vis H belt or hi-vis jacket and will remain at rear of group at all times. At no time will any rider drop behind the Back Marker.

At junctions and roundabouts:

Each time the ride reaches a junction or roundabout, 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 roundabout, 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: this 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 the 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.

Announcement

It is with deep regret that I announce the sudden death of Christopher Bullock, MBE., Chief Executive of the I.A.M.

Christopher became Chief Executive in 1994 and has been instrumental in several initiatives that has seen the I.A.M grow considerably in latter years.

A full Obituary will appear in the next I.A.M Newsletter.

NICKS OCTOBER RIDEOUT

by Sid Corke

Lying in bed, wide awake due to the clocks going back, I could hear the wind and rain beating off the window.

Bugger, today is the last group rideout of the year and having downloaded the route from the website my appetite was surely whetted.



Looking at the clock, it was 6.00AM. Is this the right time? Did I change it last night? Not sure!

I must have dozed off again, wakening again some time later. Eventually I got up and looked out of the window, the rain had stopped and the wind had dropped to a breeze.

T.V. on, take to a look at the forecast..... yippee! Its blowing it down South and looking good for the North-East.

The run was through Northumberland, which was going to have the best weather throughout the U.K.

Bike out, checks done, gear on and up to Seaton Burn, Nicks run last year, was one of the better ones, and I knew he wouldn't let us down this time.

About twenty five bikes turned up, on what was now a lovely balmy morning.

We were quickly split into two groups, and I joined the first group of twelve souls, a perfect number.

Northumberland and the Scottish borders are always inviting, but today, with a clear blue sky and the trees beginning to show their autumnal beauty, it gave additional value.

From a rider's point of view, it was a great test of riding skill as there were intermittent patches of dry roads, and slimy wet, potential skidpans under every sheltered area or tree lined bend.

Nick had pulled out all the stops and done it again.

The route took in Rothbury, Kielder, Jedburgh, Kelso, Yetholm, Bamburgh, and down the Northumberland coastal route on many roads I had not been on before.

The combination of good weather, beautiful scenery, good company with all members equally matched for pace and progress, combined with excellent planning and choice of roads, made today's rideout one of the best I have been on, and I thank Nick for all his effort.

I look forward to his next one in 2008.

If Health & Safety existed in Nelson's days

Nelson: "Order the signal, Hardy."

Hardy: "Aye, aye sir."

Nelson: "Hold on, that's not what I dictated to Flagg. What's the meaning of this?"

Hardy: "Sorry sir?"

Nelson (reading aloud): "England expects every person to do his or her duty, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religious persuasion or disability." - What gobbledegook is this?"

Hardy: "Admiralty policy, I'm afraid, sir. We're an equal opportunities employer now. We had the devil's own job getting 'England' past the censors, lest it be considered racist."

Nelson: "Gadzooks, Hardy. Hand me my pipe and tobacco."

Hardy: "Sorry sir. All naval vessels have now been designated smoke-free working environments."

Nelson: "In that case, break open the rum ration. Let us splice the main-brace to steel the men before battle."

Hardy: "The rum ration has been abolished, Admiral. It's part of the Government's policy on binge drinking."

Nelson: "Good heavens, Hardy. I suppose we'd better get on with it full speed ahead."

Hardy: "I think you'll find that there's a 4 knot speed limit in this stretch of Water"

Nelson: "Damn it man! We are on the eve of the greatest sea battle in history. We must advance with all dispatch. Report from the crow's nest please."

Hardy: "That won't be possible, sir."

Nelson: "What?"

Hardy: "Health and Safety have closed the crow's nest, sir. No harness; and they said that rope ladders don't meet regulations. They won't let anyone up there until proper scaffolding can be erected."

Nelson: "Then get me the ship's carpenter without delay, Hardy."

Hardy: "He's busy knocking up a wheelchair access to the foredeck Admiral."

Nelson: "Wheelchair access? I've never heard anything so absurd."

Hardy: "Health and safety again, sir. We have to provide a barrier-free environment for the differently abled."

Nelson: "Differently abled? I've only one arm and one eye and I refuse even to hear mention of the word. I didn't rise to the rank of admiral by playing the disability card."

Hardy: "Actually, sir, you did. The Royal Navy is under represented in the areas of visual impairment and limb deficiency."

Nelson: "Whatever next? Give me full sail. The salt spray beckons."

Hardy: "A couple of problems there too, sir. Health and safety won't let the crew up the rigging without hard hats. And they don't want anyone breathing in too much salt - haven't you seen the adverts?"

Nelson: "I've never heard such infamy. Break out the cannon and tell the men to stand by to engage the enemy."

Hardy: "The men are a bit worried about shooting at anyone, Admiral."

Nelson: "What? This is mutiny!"

Hardy: "It's not that, sir. It's just that they're afraid of being charged with murder if they actually kill anyone. There's a couple of legal-aid lawyers on board, watching everyone like hawks."

Nelson: "Then how are we to sink the French and the Spanish?"

Hardy: "Actually, sir, we're not."

Nelson: "We're not?"

Hardy: "No, sir. The French and the Spanish are our European partners now. According to the Common Fisheries Policy, we shouldn't even be in this stretch of water. We could get hit with a claim for compensation."

Nelson: "But you must hate a Frenchman as you hate the devil."

Hardy: "I wouldn't let the ship's diversity co-ordinator hear you saying that sir. You'll be up on disciplinary report."

Nelson: "You must consider every man an enemy, who speaks ill of your King."

Hardy: "Not any more, sir. We must be inclusive in this multicultural age. Now put on your Kevlar vest; it's the rules. It could save your life"

Nelson: "Don't tell me - health and safety. Whatever happened to rum, sodomy and the lash?"

Hardy: "As I explained, sir, rum is off the menu! And there's a ban on corporal punishment."

Nelson: "What about sodomy?"

Hardy: "I believe that is now legal, sir."

Nelson: "In that case..... kiss me, Hardy."

- oOo -

Rideouts

Date	Leader	Destination
All Ride-Outs meet 10.00 am prompt at the Travelodge Car Park, Seaton Burn.		
Other dates will be published as they come in.		
Don't forget that, on most Sundays, many Members meet at 10.00 am at Seaton Burn for their own impromptu runs.		

Sunday Shopping Blues

by Nick Maddison

Do you get that itch to be on your bike on a sunny January Sunday afternoon? I bet you do! You wake to a wet, windy and cold Morning, the rest of the day looking much the same.



The better half suggests a trip to the shops. Breakfast starts the day, the phone rings, half hour later the worlds been put to rights, and you have just finished the chores. Right I'm ready let's go. You pick up the keys for the car, looking at the keys you really want to pick up.

Off down the road you go, heading for the place that looks the same in every town and city. The retail park comes into view; this place could be in Wales, Scotland or England.

You step out of the car, the cold hits you, well "it's too cold for the bike today dear" the better half tells you, and she's right! As you head into a shop that could be any were in this country, it looks the same, same signs, same products, same uniform, only the accents change.

As the doors open (are we getting so lazy or is it a marketing ploy that makes the door open 5 feet before you get there?) You hear a distant sound, the telltale sounds of a bike working its way through the Sunday shopping joy riders.

Three hours later

you emerge into the bright **sunshine**. Where did that come from? The day has certainly brightened up; you do a quick calculation, 30 minutes to get home, 10 minutes to get the bike out and checked, 10 minutes to suite up. Its 2.00 pm 50 minutes to get on the bike, that should leave about 40 minutes for a ride. Dear, I was just thinking, I might go for a ride when we get home, good idea says the one who must be obeyed! You speed up the walk, planning your route as you go.

The car door opens, you're in, and the car starts with just a touch of the key. The gods are smiling; you start to move off, why has that car stopped? Then you notice the half mile queue heading out of the car park. 15 minutes later the car crawls out of the car park, into 2 lanes of standing traffic.

Slowly the 15 miles to home clock up on the trip meter, 3 miles to go 50 minutes passed since you left the shop door. A drop of rain hits the windscreen, then another, the heavens open, your heart sinks.

As you pull onto the drive the other love of your life pipes up, are you still going for a ride dear. No not today dear is the reply, its too wet. As you carry the shopping in, you reflect on another missed trip to happiness valley.

Funnies



A little boy got on the bus, sat next to a man reading a book, and noticed he had his collar on backwards.

The little boy asked why he wore his collar that way.

The man, who was a priest, said, "I am a Father."

The little boy replied, "My Daddy doesn't wear his collar like that."

The priest looked up from his book and answered "I am the Father of many."

The boy said, "My Dad has 4 boys, 4 girls and two grandchildren and he doesn't wear his collar that way." The priest, getting impatient, said, "I am the Father of hundreds" and went back to reading his book.

The little boy sat quietly thinking for a while, then leaned over and said, "Maybe you should wear your pants backwards instead of your collar."

WORDSEARCH

F	D	T	D	B	E	E	C	C	I	S	G	R	J	G	J	F	D	S	D	V	T	H	Y	S
R	E	V	A	S	E	F	I	L	J	U	V	A	A	D	S	F	G	N	K	I	I	U	G	F
I	T	K	L	E	K	O	R	T	S	O	W	T	D	T	O	S	A	E	K	Y	J	G	S	X
D	V	G	L	J	F	B	U	O	N	P	D	G	H	Z	D	L	B	U	T	T	A	C	O	T
E	H	Y	H	I	L	L	I	D	T	U	V	W	N	D	S	A	Z	R	Q	W	N	T	O	K
R	K	V	K	A	T	V	F	N	U	M	R	E	S	I	E	U	W	I	Q	U	J	O	L	Y
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G	H	Z	D	L	B	U	T	T	D	A	N	I	P	E	D	R	O	S	A	F	I	E	L	D

BARRY SHEENE

BULTACO

SWINGARM

JORGE LORENZO

VINCENT

JOHN McGUINNESS

TWO STROKE

OBSERVATION

SUZUKA

DESMODECCI

MV AGUSTA

DROP OFF SYSTEM

WALL OF DEATH

BURT MUNRO

ROYAL ENFIELD

HEIN GERICKE

GIACOMO AGOSTINI

DANI PEDROSA

RIDERS CHRONICLES

LIFESAVER

COUNTERSTEER

PHILLIP ISLAND

LONG WAY DOWN

CHIP SHOP RUN

Solution on Page 25



Tips for new riders

by Ray Charlton

As a bike group, we still have the few die hard stalwarts who refuse to put their bikes into hibernation at the end of October and take advantage of the occasional winter rideout when the conditions allow.

With this in mind, I have been approached by several members with a request to write something on winter riding, so that hopefully they venture out better advised and able to enjoy the experience more.

Having full control of your machine is critical at all times, but even more so during winter riding, as the onset of frozen fingers and feet do little to assist in swift and smooth reactions to sudden hazards.

An essential factor in this situation means keeping warm and dry. Without adequate and proper protection, you'll be thinking more about your personal discomfort rather than what's going around you.

Remember that prolonged exposure to cold, leads to loss of concentration, impaired reactions and are the perfect conditions to bring on arthritis and rheumatism in later life.

With the availability of good waterproof and warm riding kit these days such as jackets and trousers made from materials like Gore-Tex and Cordura, there is no need to suffer or be uncomfortable. Add to this the availability of a range of thermal undergarments, electrically heated gloves, waistcoats and socks together with heated handlebar grips, and there is absolutely no need to be cold and wet.

Several thin layers of clothing over a few thick layers are much more effective at insulating you from the cold than piling on several thick and heavy garments. This works by trapping warm air around the body allowing you to retain body heat longer.

Extremities, such as wrists and ankles, are the most vulnerable in cold weather because this is where the blood circulates and is closer to the skin. The brain contains an organ called the hypothalamus, which monitors and regulates body temperature. If it drops by even one degree, the system's defence mechanism kicks in and causes the trunk of the body to draw warm blood to its main organs, leaving the hands and feet to fend for themselves.

If you use a heated waistcoat, your body will continue to feel warm and maintain the flow of blood to your fingers and toes.

The use of heated grips or inner gloves can also be useful to retain heat and comfort. Remember also the benefits of good quality, warm, waterproof boots.

Other important parts of your body to keep warm are your neck and head. Whilst a modern full face helmet offers a fair degree of protection from wind blast, this can be supplemented very



effectively by a “neck tube,” scarf or even a small hand towel.

A modern, light, but very effective Lycra balaclava completes the kit, making your upper regions warm and snug.

Another cause of feeling the cold is where your jacket tends to billow out allowing cold air to get trapped under it. A simple tip such as pressing on your chest on the outside of your jacket can compress the void and not allow the cold air to enter, allowing the jacket to help retain body heat.

Older bikers used to swear by wearing thin silk gloves under your main gloves as a means of retaining heat, but modern, effective insulation in winter gloves is usually sufficient.

If you reduce wind chill on the back of your hands by fitting hand guards, or even unsightly handlebar muffs, will help to retain the temperature of your extremities.

The road in winter

Winter riding is not as daunting as you first think, provided you prepare yourself and your machine correctly, keep dry and warm and plan your riding with far more diligence.

Under dry and good conditions, the Highway Code advises that it takes 175 feet to stop from 50 mph - however, when you are wet and cold, with restricted vision through a mud splattered visor you can probably double that figure.

Allocate yourself more time for all journeys. When riding in traffic, in bad weather, allow more than the usual distance between you and the vehicle in front. 500 - 700 feet may sound a lot, but it disappears fast in an emergency, or when you need to lose speed quickly.

If the driver behind gets too close, ease off the throttle and drop back further, it may encourage him to get past you, leaving you safe.

Drivers who travel that close probably don't even consider your situation, so let them past. Let them have their inevitable accident elsewhere without your involvement.

If someone moves into the gap you have created, drop back even further. Something to bear in mind is that it will have little if any effect on your journey time.

Also, make sure your visor is in good condition and, if it gets dirty, stop and clean it.

If the road is icy then you must slow down and remember that a lot of car drivers are unaware of your reasons for doing so and frequently become impatient and drive far too close behind you.

Far better you check with the weather forecast before setting out and if icy conditions are around then don't go out. However on many occasions the conditions are fine when you set out and a sudden temperature drop can totally change the situation for you.

Occasionally bright winter sunlit mornings can easily lull you into a false sense of security because the roads, although appearing only damp, will probably be treacherous. Take advantage of dry areas created by cars and trucks.

Usually the centre of the road will clear first, so ride on the crown of the road – see and be seen and avoid the slippery bits. When the low sunlight eventually burns off the early morning frost, the shadows made by overhanging trees and buildings, will still harbour black ice.

This usually arises after a damp day when it is followed by hard overnight frost – a combination to test the resolve of the most hardened rider.

Keep the bike as upright as possible retaining stability and control and you'll be more likely to complete your journey safely.

Obviously, avoid riding it there is snow around, but again, you can be caught out by a sudden shower. If you must ride in the snow, be gentle. Use the steering smoothly and throttle and gear changes to lose speed, lightly applying the rear brake as you come to a halt.

Avoid using the front brake because you have more control and more chance of recovering from a rear wheel slide. If the front wheel breaks away you have little chance of recovery.

The secret is to make an accurate assessment as to the conditions likely to be faced before even considering going out as an incorrect decision can prove to be an expensive error.

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**Why is this Italian Policeman stopping this biker?
(Answer at bottom of page)**

Answer: She is not wearing a safety helmet!

Slow Riding Day

by Alan Richardson

The event was held on Alnwick Fire Station Car Park, thanks to Dave Stone for organising the venue and for his assistance on the day. Thanks also to The Motorcycling God for acting as chief time keeper.

The weather was kind to us, and the fun started before the event began. One Senior Observer, (who we won't name – yeah right!) took more than one attempt to find the venue. It was amusing watching the rider passing the venue a number of times. Geoff Spencer summed it up, I knew I was going in the right direction when I saw him passing me going in the other direction!



David Stone demonstrates how to do a U turn

The final total for attendance was 12, which as it happens turned out to be just about right. It's always nice to get together and exchange news and views (gossip) whatever the size of the group on the day.

A very brave John Fagan started the event by volunteering to be the first . . . no pressure really! On the first exercise, which was a straight ride, 25m, between start and end cones, as slow as possible. John set a very respectable time for the rest to follow. The results were good, in the main double figures, with some complaining about their automatic choke causing them

problems . . .

In to the second exercise, a slow right turn through a series of cones. I failed miserably in my attempt to explain this exercise correctly; this became obvious when the first rider took a totally different direction. (I should have had a demonstration rider for all of the exercises, my thanks once again to Dave Stone who took on the role on the day).

Exercise three was a straight slalom; the idea was to keep close to the cones while completing the circuit in the slowest time possible.



Alan Richardson oversees Alan Ramsay on slow riding

A couple of riders were determined to ride as straight as possible though the circuit and may have had a good time had they not decided to run over some of the cones . . .

Exercise 4, was a u-turn circuit. Riders had to complete a circuit consisting of two u-turns. Since my powers of explanation were failing miserably, Dave Stone volunteered to act as demonstration rider, and did a great job. This event was much more difficult for those on sports type bikes as their turning circle is large. Everyone had a try and I think one or two people surprised themselves at their ability to complete the circuit.



Exercise 5, was a figure of 8; a follow on from the u-turn circuit really the circuit again being a more difficult one for those riding sports bikes.

The last exercise was an introduction to countersteering, demonstrated excellently by our demonstration rider. I'm not sure that everyone understood the purpose of the exercise as it was a little difficult to get up to 12 – 15mph in the space available. Everyone had a couple of attempts and as there was no real complaints I guess everyone grasped the principle.

Geoff Spencer putting in an incredibly slow ride time

Thanks to all who turned out for the event. I hope everyone had a good day and managed to take something away with them. I'm even more grateful that no one managed to leave anything by dropping and damaging their bikes . . .

I now have a better idea of how such an event would need to be set-up for Associates. I look forward to holding one for Associates early next year.



Neil Oliver showing good control on the heavy Pan

But on the day . . . Geoff Spencer was the SLOWEST rider.

(Congratulations Geoff, I hope the fiver you promised me is in the post!)

A year with an RT (and friends)

by Neil hamilton

After my second day of advanced rider training with an instructor well known to most of you, I was advised that the Kawasaki KLE500 on which I had done around 7000 miles since passing my test the previous April was too small and I needed something bigger. I broke the news to my Wife with the caveat "it would be foolish to take professional training and then refuse to accept the instructor's advice.



Thus on the 20th of October last year I rode off from Mill BMW on my brand new R1200RT SE beginning an 18,000 mile journey. The first leg was a gingerly 6.5 miles home in the rain on new tyres with the final leg mostly filtering the evening rush "hour" from Ryton to South Hylton. Between were many highs and with a struggle of recollection, the odd low and the odd bizarre.

Those who know me are well aware that my bike is a tool not a toy and sees use most days as my principal mode of transport. This has led to a few bizarre applications including the collection of two 6 metre rolls of lead flashing (27kg each pannier) and on another occasion 50 metres of 6mm three core armoured cable (36.5kg) requested coiled tight, any less tight and I would have been sitting on it!

My eldest Son Mark (Bandit one) was living in Newbury until January 2007 and a number of "midway" weekend meetings were order of the day. These included: Matlock (one and only youth hostel, we had forgotten how they smell) for the Cat and Fiddle; Lincoln for Mablethorpe and the Dambuster Inn, Scampton; Milton Keynes for an Enigmatic visit to the Bletchley Park Museum and a next day meet with Thames Vale Advance Motorcyclists (heated grips, seat and waistcoat served well on a -3°C November morning).

Sadly, work had to intrude into motorcycling activities and the RT was pressed into service commuting to various teaching assignments over Durham County. The kids soon caught on that I rode a bike (I guess my name in big letters on the side was a bit of a giveaway). This led to the following discourse from one class in Durham:

"Sor, do you come to school on a motorbike?"

"Yes I do"

"Is it that big BMW" (Well no st Sherlock!!)**

"Sure is"

"Wor Sor yer cool!"

Trust me, at 55 being cool (or even standing accused thereof) is good!

I guess the high point of the teaching was the assignment from the beginning of May until the end of term in July at Staindrop. Curse my bad luck but I had to ride from Sunderland to Staindrop and back every day and even claim mileage expenses. When I took Bandit One and Bandit Two past the school on a Sunday ride out, they were less than sympathetic at my plight.

As for lows, this is a hard one. I can recall perhaps three: Pausing at the side of the Brough – Middleton-in-Teesdale road only to have my friend stop on the uphill ground side of me and fall over into me when his foot wouldn't reach the ground; a seriously scary 10 minutes negotiating a 50 yard uphill section of pure ice 300 yards from home and a "cheek clencher" when a "lady"

in an Audi A3 pulled out as I was level with her rear quarter panel mid-overtake on the A68 (may the Lord be praised for ABS).

But what about the friends? I hear you ask. During the past year, my trusty steed has returned several times to the local stable of its maker (Mill BMW) and during these sojourns I have had several "loaners". My opinion of them is coloured by a neck problem that makes tilting my head back difficult but I venture a few observations.

K1200GT

Awsome power for a tourer, good weather protection, fast but feels less nimble than the RT and has for me, a less comfortable riding position..

R1200R

Nimble boxer, same power as the RT but 30kg lighter so accelerates better. Weather protection, square root of naff all.

K1200R

15kg lighter than RT, 53 more bhp. Accelerates at a slightly less rate than a surface to air missile. Weather protection, square root of naff all.

F800ST

45kg lighter than RT, 25 less bhp. Weight and bhp differences pretty much balance out. Handles like a dream, even carrying a rider of dimensions akin to those of a brown bear.

R1200GS

This was the alternate contender to the RT anyway, only the rear gunner swung the scales in favour of the RT. Filters like a dream due to high position and nimble hooves. 10 bhp less power than the RT but almost 30kg lighter, performance very similar. Can I have one as well as the RT? Please!

F800S

Oh my neck hurts! Super nimble steed however, very like the ST, but sportier. Lots of fun but the two days / 90 miles I had it were quite enough. Any more and I would need a week in traction.

Through my BMW experiences, I have also come to appreciate some German motorcycling terms.

Auf Scheisenestrasse	I am in trouble
Auf Scheisenestrasse ohne ein Paddel	I am in great trouble
Der phewen ner scheisenselfen	That was close
Die blinkenleiten ticken tocken	Indicators
Spitzenpoppenbangentuben	Exhaust
Kuplink mit schlippen und shaken	Clutch
Biggenfooten fur kangaroohoppen	Gear lever
Twistenzoomen maschinen	Throttle
Schnellenstoppen nicht fallenoffen	ABS
Der heiway robbery	Speed camera

The short way round...

by Ian Hall

Like many biking trips I would imagine, this one was conceived during one of those evenings when the beer is flowing quite freely. It started with the idea of riding round the world on two motorbikes, but as it had been done before and we could only get a week away, we watered down the scheme to just heading east and seeing where we could get to in the time we had. Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic became the targets because... well because they are east of here and we hadn't been there before.

So Spring Bank Holiday week, it was the Friday ferry to Ijmuiden – two men – me and Colin – and two bikes – my Deauville (affectionately called the Dull) and his Moto Guzzi Targa (no affectionate name - but more of that later). Saturday was an uneventful blast across Holland and Germany. First night we managed to get to the old east/west border.



Sunday dawned hot and sunny. The pre-ride checks were carried out, when we noticed a slight leak from the back of the Guzzi's gearbox. No problem – we got some oil and kept an eye on the gearbox level.... not asking why the leak was black and dirty when the gearbox was full of nice clean oil – but as I've said before, more of that later.

We went through the centre of Berlin, past the Brandenburg gate and the Reichstag, (photo 1) and on to Frankfurt where we passed into Poland, changing a few euros into zlotys at the border. We stopped earlier than planned in Zielona Gora, where we were trapped in a downpour. The roads in Poland can be a little rough and when there are a few inches of water it gets hard to see the potholes – so discretion ruled and we sat it out in a bin shelter (photo 2).

Out in the sticks not many people speak English and our phrase book was very limited, but we had the words for hello, please, thank you, beer and two – you can get a long way with five or six words....

Next day, we carried on further into Poland. I dropped the Dull on the outskirts of Wroclaw, stopping by the kerb and losing it on some sand. The pool of liquid that was left under the fallen bike was a little disconcerting – was this the end of the trip? It turned out to be a little bit of water from the header – no problems – carry on.

But then our troubles started. The Guzzi's oil light came on. Top it up – seemed OK – head on east. Oil light on again – stop to investigate – concluded that it was the switch – and carried on. Meanwhile we had met an English speaking local biker who stopped to help, and gave us his number in case we needed help – how things turn on small events. A few kilometres further smoke started to come out of the back of the Guzzi - a quick dive down the inside to bring Colin onto the hard shoulder before it all seized up (photo 3). Small flames were licking around the back end of the gearbox through holes that had melted in the aluminium casing (photo 4). At least it wasn't due to low oil pressure. Two days later we



found out it was the drive shaft u/j that had dried and seized – hence the black stuff leaking out of the back of the gearbox!

Anyway..... four hours later the Guzzi was on the back of a transporter and we were back in Wroclaw struggling to communicate with the driver (photo 5). This is where our Polish biker friend (Adam) came into his own. He arranged for the bike to be dropped off at a secure parking area (the police pound!), took us back to his flat for food and a shower, contacted his local mechanic, took us back to the pound to meet the mechanic and agree to get the bike to his garage, and then back to his flat for some beers and a floor to sleep on.



Next morning we went down to meet the mechanics (photo 6). They were a great bunch, and it was interesting to see them using a long iron pole to knock out the baffles of a Harley - the owner wanted a rumble. It was case of knocking it in inch by inch until the guy was happy with the note!



After spending the morning in Wroclaw with Adam we headed off on our trip, two up on the Dull, squeezing as much as we could of our stuff into the bike's panniers.

Heading east towards Krakow, we stopped at Auschwitz. There are two camps – Auschwitz 1, which is the smaller, and Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is difficult to put these places into words – it is certainly beyond my writing skills, so apologies for not writing more. We did stay overnight in the town (Oswiecim) at a religious retreat – the rooms were great and the traditional food very welcome – and it seemed

appropriate to have a quiet night of reflection.

The other site which we had been told to visit in the area is the salt mine, where you find statues carved out of salt underground. It was one of the less memorable parts of the holiday. It is very popular tourist hot-spot and as such not in the spirit of the trip.

Heading south we went to the Tatra mountains, staying in Zakopane. This is a beautiful area of mountains and forests (photo 7). The Dull continued to handle whatever was required of it – carrying two big chaps and their luggage, up hills and mountains, on very bumpy roads, at reasonable speeds.

The plan to go through Slovakia and Czech Republic had been shelved as we needed to get back to Wroclaw to get the (hopefully) repaired Guzzi. So here we turned round and retraced our steps.



Arriving back in Wroclaw on Friday, we stopped by the Russian memorial – it was common to come across memorials of the communist era, with T34 tanks and MIG-15 jets (photo 8).



At the garage we found that the ordered parts hadn't arrived - Poland is not big on Italian bikes – they stick to BMW and Japanese machines. So we took the decision to leave the bike to be repaired and for it to be brought back to the UK inside a friendly truck at a later date. The bike has been fixed and arrived back on the 9th November – over 5 months since we left it in Poland. I've not heard yet what state our dirty clothing is in – we'd left this in the Guzzi's saddle bags. Five months on, I guess it won't be too sweet!

So we left Poland on Friday evening, getting just across the German border before we stopped. The next day was pretty much non-stop across Germany, into Holland, for a few well deserved beers.

The Sunday we spent leisurely in Holland, visiting Arnhem, where we met a chap who was a boy there when the paratroopers went in (photo 9).

What was the enduring memory? No question - the friendliness and hospitality we received from the Polish people we met.

Announcement

Are you still good at it ?

Some riders have been members of the IAM for many years and it is often some time since they passed their advanced motorcycle test.

With this in mind the Training Group is offering any NAM member in this position the opportunity to undertake an observed ride at any time with a senior observer to ensure that their skill level has not deteriorated.

So if you would like confirmation that you are still “up to the mark” contact a member of the Training Group and arrange an observed ride.

Cost is £10.00 just like any other observed ride.

Contact your Team Leader, Alan Richardson or Nick Maddison if interested

Top this for a speeding ticket

Two traffic patrol officers from North Berwick were involved in an unusual incident while checking for speeding motorists on the A1 Great North Road.

One of the officers used a hand-held radar device to check the speed of a vehicle approaching over the crest of a hill, and was surprised when the speed was recorded at over 300 mph.

Their radar suddenly stopped working and the officers were not able to reset it.

Just then a deafening roar over the treetops revealed that the radar had in fact latched on to a NATO Tornado fighter jet which was engaged in a low-flying exercise over the Border district, approaching from the North Sea.

Back at police headquarters the chief constable fired off a stiff complaint to the RAF Liaison office.

Back came the reply in true laconic RAF style: ***"Thank you for your message, which allows us to complete the file on this incident."***

You may be interested to know that the tactical computer in the Tornado had detected the presence of, and subsequently locked onto, your hostile radar equipment and automatically sent a jamming signal back to it.

Furthermore, an air-to-ground missile aboard the fully-armed aircraft had also automatically locked onto your equipment.

Fortunately the pilot flying the Tornado recognized the situation for what it was, quickly responded to the missile systems alert status, and was able to override the automated defence system before the missile was launched and your hostile radar installation was destroyed..... Good Day..."

New Technology – a true tale!
by Ray Charlton

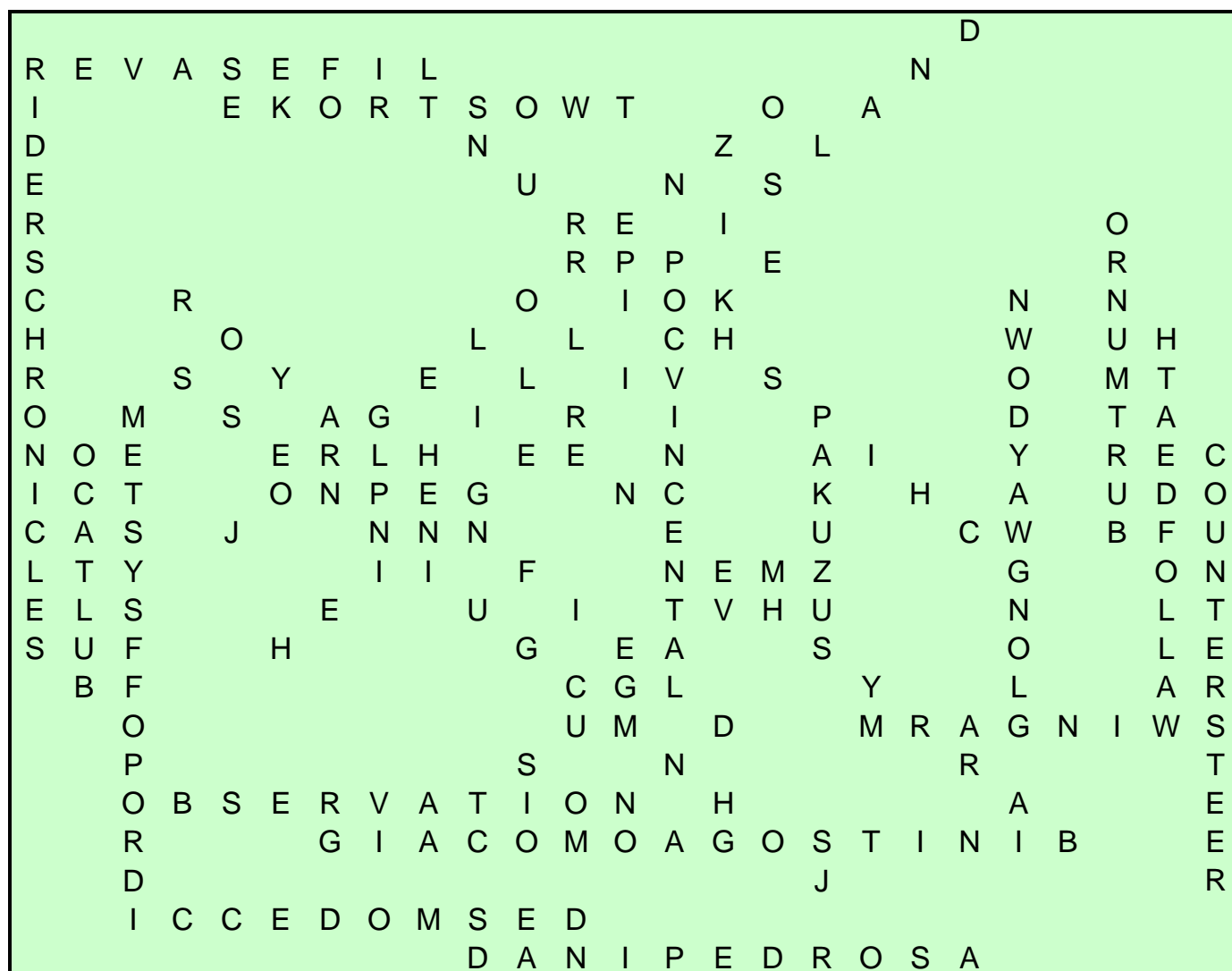
A neighbour of mine, who is not best known for his knowledge of modern technology, (i.e. cannot set a video to record a programme!) announced that he had just purchased a G.P.S navigation system for his car and could not get it to work.

"I've plugged it into the cigarette lighter, switched it on and have been pressing the screen for three days and the map has not changed." He said, with great frustration.

"Bring it round and I'll have a look at it for you." I said.

He duly brought it around and I could not keep my face straight when I saw that it still had the vinyl label depicting a map still fixed to the screen. I peeled the picture off and said, "Try it now." I have never seen him look as embarrassed in my life as he went away with a bright red face, saying, "....and For God's sake don't tell anybody what I have done."

"Of course I won't, you know I would never do that." I chuckled.....would I?



A magician joined a ship to work on a 3 month cruise.

Everything was going well except the Captain's parrot regularly spoiled the illusions.

Just as the magician revealed the empty cabinet, the parrot would shout "she's behind the curtain" or "she went through the trap-door".

One night, the ship entered a terrible storm and suffered fatal damage which caused her to sink.

The magician was one of the few to escape and desperately clung to a piece of driftwood.

As day broke, the magician was horrified to see the parrot land on the piece of wood.

The parrot stood with his back to the magician for 2 hours and then finally turned around.

"Ok" said the parrot, "I give up ! Where's the ship ?"

New Associate's Rideout

By Ray Charlton

Sunday, 11th November saw the first rideout intended as an introduction to NAM Rideouts at a slightly slower pace for new Associates.

Organised by Simon Hadden it was typical of his vast knowledge of the back roads of Northumberland and certainly lived up to expectations as being variable and challenging as well as being extremely scenic in the Autumnal weather.

Sixteen riders turned out, including two first timers and proceeded on a meandering route via Morpeth, Ulgham, Felton, Longframlington, Rothbury, Thropton, Whittingham and many other picturesque Northumberland villages before eventually stopping for lunch at Millfield.

Back on the road after lunch and onto Wooler, Wooperton, Alnwick, Rothbury, Forestburn Gate, Netherwitton, Pigdon, Mitford and ending at the Gubeon for a final cup of tea after a very enjoyable 130 miles.

Judging by the comments afterwards it seemed to meet the approval of all who took part with the usual comments of, "Where did you find those roads?" and "I'm sure we have crossed the A697 about 4 times today."

All in all it appears to have been a great success.

For Sale:

Matchless 350. This is a G11 frame 1957, AJS Model 16 engine 1959.

Engine only done 200 miles on new bearings, piston & rings. It has new wheels with Stainless steel spokes. There is a bench and trailer to go with the bike.

Price £1,500.

**Les Hodgson (NAM Member)
0191 2807234.**





SLOW RIDING INSTRUCTION
ALNWICK FIRE STATION
SUNDAY, 4TH NOVEMBER 2007

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@tesco.net

Deadline for contributions to next newsletter

Friday, 25th January 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

Tel: 07951 035038



Supported by Northumbria Police



The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Northumbria Advanced Motorcyclists or the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists and should not be interpreted as such.