



Riders' Chronicles



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July / Aug 2009

**The Newsletter of Northumbria
Advanced Motorcyclists**

Slow riding event 26th April 2009



Chairman's ramblings

Have you ever had one of those weekends where nothing goes right? Mine arrived on the May Bank Holiday trip to Pitlochry.



The weather on the journey there was mixed with both sunshine and quite wet periods, which is what we have come to expect at this time of year in Scotland. The weather was bad enough, but on arrival at Pitlochry I discovered that I had a puncture in a brand new rear tyre. **(Disaster No.1)**

Being Bank Holiday weekend, nothing was open, but thanks to Neil Hamilton for at least getting me mobile with a temporary plug in the offending hole.

Saturday arrived and I was scheduled to lead a ride out to Oban, Fort William and back to Pitlochry, but with the thought of the temporary plug in the tyre on my mind and remembering that they should only be run at a reduced speed, I could not relax, backing off on almost every bend in fear of the tyre suddenly deflating again.

We eventually made Oban at a much reduced average speed and on the recommendation of Jack Lormor, five of us ventured into the Caledonian Hotel for lunch. This was **Disaster No.2** as one hour and 15 minutes later we still had not been served our meals. Eventually four meals were served up and I was forgotten completely. This is not good news when you are diabetic as food should be consumed on a regular basis throughout the day.

Disaster No 3 occurred at Fort William in torrential rain which had penetrated the inside of my visor reducing visibility considerably and making the GPS screen unreadable. As a result of which I missed the turning onto the A86 back to Pitlochry. Carrying on, I was convinced there was another turning off to the right a little way ahead which would lead us back to the A9 and Pitlochry.

However, after 15 miles I pulled the group over at a viewing point for Ben Nevis to check the GPS's forward planning, confirming my theory about the right turn to the A9.

Disaster No.4 - It was at this point that Eddie Turnbull advised me that he had a rear wheel puncture. We messed on in heavy rain for over half an hour with a repair kit that had been in my top box for over nine years, resulting in every plug snapping. (Probably due to old age!)

Someone came to the rescue with an aerosol repair canister and we eventually got on our way again.

I found the turn off but soon realised that it was going to put well over 40 miles on our journey, so the best option was to turn around and return to Spean Bridge and the A86. Knowing there was a petrol station nearby I led the group to it so that Eddie could blow his tyre up and others could fuel up.

Earlier another member and his wife had a mishap when their bike overbalance whilst stationary causing his wife to fall off the pillion. **(Disaster No.5)**

Thinking everyone was ready to move off, **(Disaster No.6)** I started back towards the A82 to head back to Spean Bridge and I noticed two or three riders moving off behind me. I turned left

onto the A82 and after a quarter of a mile noticed that I had no-one behind me, so I pulled over to wait for them. What I was not aware of, some riders were still filling up so the two or three riders who had started following me stopped to wait for them, unknown to me. I waited about five minutes and saw a group of headlights appear, so moved off and continued on my way. **(Disaster No.7)** On reaching Spean Bridge I pulled over to allow everyone to regroup only to find that I had been leading a group of different riders. I waited another few minutes with no signs of any other riders but knowing that Wilf Cook had a GPS, wondered whether they had decided to take the longer route back after all.

I carried on in the rain and by this time the rear tyre felt as though it was losing pressure as it was getting very 'mushy' on the backend.

On reaching Dalwhinney I pulled over for a nature call and as I was returning to the bike, I saw the rest of the group pass by. I eventually caught up with them on the A9 heading to Pitlochry and back to the hotel.

I later learned that there had been other incidents that contributed to the disastrous day.

(Disaster No.8) Two riders had had a coming together at very slow speed whilst manoeuvring, knocking the flasher lamp off one bike and punching a small hole in the fairing of the other.

Disaster No. 9 - The last straw was another member who misjudged the way the slip road from the A9 to Pitlochry tightened up on itself quite severely and had run off onto the grass. Thankfully without injury or damage.

It was obvious that concentration was beginning to lapse by all due to the stress of the problems we had faced. I know that I personally felt shattered.

On checking my tyre back at the hotel I discovered that it was indeed losing air again from the temporary repair, which in itself rendered the thought of any further ride outs pointless.**(Disaster No.10)**

Disaster No. 11 - Even that was not the end of the day's problems, on ringing home later I learned that my new German Shepherd puppy was proving to be the 'puppy from hell' and causing havoc. This made me feel rather guilty having left a new puppy behind whilst I was "enjoying myself" (?????) at Pitlochry. Regrettably the pup is no longer with us.

This was the last straw; I decided to return home on the Sunday and eventually arrived home after numerous stops to inflate the tyre. The following day I removed the wheel to have the tyre repaired and could find no trace of the temporary plug. No wonder it was deflating!

Whilst these incidents totally ruined my weekend, it clearly had an effect on many others, **for which I must apologise.**

But what could I do? I had fitted new tyres prematurely to avoid having problems on the trip - Perhaps I would have been better to have made the trip on the old rubber.

Fortunately, these disasters did not affect all who attended and although the others experienced the inclement weather, it did not appear to spoil their enjoyment totally as several small groups did their own thing on the Sunday and had a good day out.

The evening was rounded off with a quiz or two in the lounge arranged by Michael and Geraldine Sutherland and Maureen Magee. Judging by the comments afterwards, apart from my unfortunate day, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

R J Deans	Brian Field
S McCloud	L Carr
G Mayne	

Test passes

Gary Barnes	John Ennis
Raymond Bell	Thomas Mason
Robert Douglas	

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

A word of thanks

From Dave Henderson

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who made the trip to Pitlochry brilliant.

For people to take on organising the event itself and those who “volunteered” to lead and organise rideouts for others to enjoy is a responsibility I would’nt relish taking on.

I have nothing but respect for you all.

I’m sure others would say the same too.

I have travelled on roads that I didn’t know existed because of these people,

Thanks everyone.

Dave

Committee

Honorary Group President: **Jack Lormor**

Chairman: **Ray Charlton**

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

Treasurer: **Simon Hadden**

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

Membership Secretary: **Carole Kibble**

Website Co-ordinator: **Glenn Knowles**

Ride out Co-ordinator: **Jack Stewart**

Newsletter Editor: **Ray Charlton**

Team Leaders

Northumberland: **Dave Thornton**

Tyne & Wear **Alan Richardson**

Website

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

or

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.**

rideouts

WHEN	WHOM	WHERE
19 th July	Alan Thompson	Borders
16 th August	Mick Sutherland	Four Valleys and a Viaduct
20 th September	Ray Charlton	TBC
18 th October	TBC	TBC

Free barbeque – yes Free!

Your Committee have arranged a **Free barbeque** for yourselves and Wives/partners to take place at the Hastings Arms, Seaton Delaval, (on A192 from the round-a-bout (Ice Cream Parlour) in Seaton Delaval)

The event will take place on Tuesday, 11th August at 7.00pm, which is the night of the August monthly meeting.

This is not just an ordinary run of the mill BBQ, but an event with a special menue which consists of :-

Mixed Grill comprising:-

**Lamb Chop
Pork Chop
Gammon
Sausage
Black Pudding
Steak**

Home made Beef burgers

Chicken Kebabs on Skewers

Chips / Jacket potato's / Potato wedges

Salad

Rice

Pasta

Potato Salad

Coleslaw

Vegetarian Options

In order to give the pub an indication of numbers, if you wish to attend, please E-mail ASAP either Ray Charlton or Simon Hadden indication how many tickets you require. This is a special event and your support is needed.

raycharlton@sky.com or hadden101@btinternet.com

May The Farce Be With You

By Neil Hamilton



At the beginning of April Northumbria Police set themselves apart from every other force in the North by scrapping its motorcycle section. Chief Superintendent Neil Mackay, head of Northumbria Police's operations department, stated:

"A decision was taken on 7 April, with immediate effect, to dissolve the force's motorcycle capability to maximise the safety of officers." He further added: "There will be no loss of service to the public. Everything that can be done with a bike can also be done with a car."

Obviously Mr Mackay is not a motorcyclist and fails to appreciate the small size of motorcycles compared to Volvo patrol cars and the significant progress advantages of a much superior power to weight ratio. He seems also to be somewhat confused as to the timing of the decision as 10 new BMW motorcycles were shipped out to another force the week before he believes that decision was made.

In response to correspondence to the Chief Constable from a concerned motorcyclist, Chief Inspector John Barnes stated:

"Northumbria Police motorcyclist come within the motor patrol; sections of each Area Command. A review of the demand for motorcycles showed that motorcycle officers patrolled in marked cars most of the time, as part of their operational role. Concerns were raised regarding officer safety as they were not riding daily and not maintaining their skill level. This was found to be the result of a number of factors including weather conditions, as motorcycles are more dangerous to ride in wet weather or in snowy or icy conditions. In addition, the majority of work undertaken by motorcyclists was escort work and they were found to be more vulnerable than officers in cars. Northumbria Police has been reviewing its motorcycle capabilities since 2007 and, as a result of the above, a decision was made to dissolve the force motorcycle capability."

In light of around two years of careful review, one is left pondering why in March of 2009 they took delivery of 10 brand new police specification BMWs only to sell them off a few weeks later.

On the 22nd of April, local MP Sharon Hodgson (Gateshead East and Washington West) contacted the Chief Constable raising concerns at the decision and requesting his assessment its impact on force capability manage events and visits, particularly those which would be liable to cause disruption to traffic.

She expressed a wish to understand the budgetary constraints and the rationale behind the decision in order that she may allay her own concerns and those of local people who are concerned by the decision. A month later, she was still waiting for a response.



Elsewhere in the North of England, the situation is somewhat different: Cumbria currently have eight motorcycles with no planned change, likewise Durham with nine, North Yorkshire with 23 which are currently under review to determine how they can be used more and Cleveland with eight.

Commenting on an HGV monitoring initiative which Cleveland force maintain the motorcycles are ideal for, acting Inspector Gary Hatton stated in a recent BBC TV interview:

“Because they are so small, they can sit up on the hard shoulder and very quickly get out into the traffic, pick out the vehicles that we want and bring them in.”

Chief Inspector Barnes further stated:

Northumbria Police, together with other partner agencies, has always pursued a strategy of engagement (well since Operation Fireblade at the beginning of the decade) and education with the motorcycle community. Our aim has never changed and there will be no loss of service to the public, as we will continue to direct the same activity towards motorcyclists.”

We look forward with anticipation therefore to the participation of Northumbria Police motorcycle officers, complete with police bikes at the September cornering clinics as has been the norm for past events.

In February 1991, Norman Schwartzkopf famously said “*I would describe that report as **bovine scatology**, okay?*”

Perhaps history is repeating itself!

Product news

Tyres – We have been approached by North East Tyres, Middle Engine Lane, Wallsend. (Behind B & Q) Who have offered good deals on motorcycle tyres.

Give them a try and ask for a quote, but make sure you quote **NET/NAM** to identify yourself.

It simply means North East Tyres / Northumbria Advanced Motorcyclists.

In case of emergency!



A very useful dog-tag is available that could prove to be a life saver. It is designed very much on the lines of a military dog-tag, but is in effect a swivelling heavy duty USB memory stick.

Worn around the neck at all times with a reminder sticker on your helmet, it is engraved with the universal and international medical symbol together with the letters ICE. (In Case of Emergency)

Your personal details, such as name, date of birth, G.P, next of kin, any allergies and a full list of any medications you are taking is easily programmed in using a computer or laptop. They are available at most bike shops for just under £20.00. Ian Bell certainly stocks them.

Visit www.utagice.com for more detailed information.

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 – **BE AWARE OF AVOIDING STOPPING ON CLEARWAYS, YELLOW LINES OR ANYWHERE POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS OR ILLEGAL.**

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**. Ask yourself whether an overtake is necessary and remember it could be off putting to first time rider

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.



BOOK REVIEW "RACE TO DAKAR" BY CHARLIE BOORMAN

Needing a book to read on holiday, I picked up this one on impulse at the airport. To be honest I wasn't expecting much, as I knew Mr Boorman had crashed out of the 2006 Dakar at an early stage. Nonetheless, I thought it might be interesting to see how he'd gone about putting his "privateer" team together.

The inverted commas are because the whole premise of entering the Dakar was to make a documentary of how a privateer, as opposed to the big factory teams, approach the event. The privateer label is rather loosely applied, as the team of three riders was sponsored by BMW, Touratech and other well known companies.

Mind you all credit to Charlie because he not only had to get the sponsors on board but also persuade Sky to buy the footage which they would shoot during the race.

I have been openly critical of the last Ewan and Charlie adventure (Long Way Down) as it seemed to be largely a marketing junket for BMW, but the Dakar is a totally different kettle of fish and there is nowhere to hide if and when it all goes wrong.

For those who don't know, The Dakar Rally has been knocking around in one form or another since 1978 and was the brainchild of a Frenchman, Thierry Sabine, who was to tragically lose his life in a helicopter crash in 1986 while working on the rally. It used to be known as the Paris Dakar rally, but became simply the Dakar, when various cities began to be chosen as the start point.

Due to terrorist threats it was cancelled in 2008 and the 2009 version was held in South America. Cars, bikes and even trucks all take part (the trucks are generally support trucks for the factory teams and are to get round the race rules of limited outside assistance to competitors, as any vehicle participating in the rally can assist any other.

The rally starts on New Year's day and runs for two weeks.

The book is well written and illustrates the difficulties and cost in just getting to the start line. It also shows the massive gulf between the factory teams and everyone else. The race operators (ASO who also organise the Tour de France) run a fine line between making the rally too tough and too easy and have the clear objective of only 40% of the competitors finishing the Rally.

Sometimes they get it badly wrong and over half of the field are left stranded in the desert overnight, when this happens, they can cancel the next day's stage or adjust the start times.

Each stage starts with a liaison which can be several hundred kilometres, before you even get to the start of the official timed stage and then there is a further liaison to the evening bivouac after the timed stage.

It is all very tough and the competitors risk injury and death on each stage, usually from the rally cars or trucks that seem to have no regard for the bike riders.

All in all a very good read and it should thoroughly put you off entering the toughest race in the World, even if you could raise the fifty grand necessary to get you and one bike to the start line.

FORKS, MIRRORS, BRAKES AND UNDERWEAR

Topical tips from Michael Sutherland

Try this test for yourself. Spray a small amount of WD40 onto a paper hankie or piece of kitchen roll and wipe this along any curtail rail at home, then feel the difference this makes to the runners.

A similar improvement can be had on your bike's front forks to regain that plush feel to the suspension especially if you have over sprayed with a sticky preservative such as Scott Oiler 365 over the winter months which can cause the stanchions to rub against the oil seals.

Just wipe a **small** amount of WD40 onto the stanchions then pump the forks a few times.

A similar improvement can be obtained on the rear damper rod.

Inevitably bike wing mirrors get knocked in the car park or when wheeling your bike in and out of the garage and as we re-set them the tendency is for them to be adjusted upwards.

Check this for yourself; you may find that the upper half of each mirror is showing sky rather than what you really need to see – what's on the road behind you.

Recently I replaced the brake pads on my old Triumph Trophy with EBC 'HH' sintered pads rather than Triumph OE parts.

They bedded in quickly and the improvement in braking and safety is really noticeable and they only cost about £5 more per pair.

While looking for a new 'base layer' long sleeved T shirt I was recommended to try 'Icebreaker' clothing made in New Zealand with 100% Merino wool rather than man made hollow fibres.

This fine wool is smooth and comfortable keeping you warm and wicking perspiration better than man made fibres.

The other main benefit is that they don't develop an odour and can be worn for several days at a time without washing.

Michael Palin is said to have worn an Icebreaker vest for 40 days without washing on one of his safari trips!

They really do work as hollow fibres trap a residue of bacteria even after washing where Merino wool lets this pass through the garment. Icebreaker's official importer is Bradshaw Taylor based in Rutland but their products are increasingly being stocked at outdoor specialists.



Tips for new riders

By Ray Charlton

It is amazing how we all think we are doing the correct thing by ensuring we carry the right emergency equipment on the bike.

I can think immediately of a tool kit, spare gloves and neck tubes, first aid kits and probably the most common of all an emergency puncture repair kit for tubeless tyres.

Having quite large panniers and top box on my bike I can probably carry a lot more than the average rider and as well as the items outlined above, I also carry a small 12 volt air compressor, a power bar with the appropriate sockets to remove spindle nuts, spare waterproofs and probably much more that I have forgotten about.

However, a recent experience at Pitlochry has highlighted to me that carrying such equipment is pointless if you do not know how to use it.

I have arrived at this conclusion following an experience resulting from Member Eddie Turnbull getting a rear wheel puncture north of Fort William.

Much to the relief of Eddie I announced that I had a puncture repair kit in my top box and it would only be a few minutes before I had him mobile again.

Don't you believe it! The repair kit in question had been carried on a succession of bikes for over nine years and it suddenly dawned on that I have never had occasion to use it, but undaunted, thinking it was a relatively simple task, proceeded to assault his tyre.



The kit had been lying around for so long even the printed instructions were unreadable, but, nevertheless carried on using the rotary file to open up the offending hole in the tyre.

I noticed that the kit had two types of plugs, one being a tapered plug and the other one, (BMW type?) was a rather strange shaped piece of re-enforced rubber.

It was fairly obvious that either plug could be inserted into the prepared hole using the supplied tool to insert the plug into it, apply some adhesive, stretch the plug and insert it into the tyre.

Not to be. As soon as any force was applied trying to force the plug into the hole, it merely snapped. This repeated itself on three further attempts so I tried the BMW type plug only to find they were snapping also.

Closer examination of the plugs by stretching them revealed signs of tears in both types of plugs resulting in the conclusion that the plugs had been lying around so long, the rubber was perished and unusable.

The moral of this tale is quite simple, ensure your emergency kit is still serviceable and make sure you are well acquainted as to how to use them. I was certainly not alone on this subject as no-one present had had any 'on hands' experience in using these kits.

Ironically it was Neil Hamilton who temporarily repaired my tyre, but the plugs he used appeared to be little more than string coated in some form of messy and sticky adhesive which were far easier to use than my rubber plugs.

If any Members of NAM happen to know of any dealers who would be prepared to come along and give us a demonstration on how to use them, I feel sure we could all benefit from the experience.

The tyre repair kit is not an isolated example as a quick look around motorcycles in car parks (not NAM's) reveals quite a frightening picture of items that have clearly not had any attention for a long time and were potential disasters waiting to happen.

The most common example was neglected drive chains, ranging from being dry and not lubricated to extreme examples of them being heavily coated in rust.

In many cases they could be seen to be hanging down obviously well outside of normal adjustment.

Are these riders not aware of the consequences should a chain snap or lock up? The potential outcome is frightening.

Tyres are the next item that jumps out at you with many blatantly well below the wear bars, with many, particularly on high performance sports bikes, totally void of any tread whatsoever.

Many fairings could be seen with missing attachment bolts which would result in panels flapping around at speed and again a potential danger should they break away.

A visit to Westgate Hill on any Saturday morning will also reveal many bikers riding without the correct safety clothing. As soon as the weather warms up you will see many riding in jeans and trainers and some with only thin nylon paddock jackets that offer no protection whatsoever.

I think the prize for the most foolish rider has to go to the owner of the blue Triumph Sprint who could be heard clearly openly boasting about the modifications he had done to his brakes.

He was quite proudly showing his handiwork to anyone who showed interest in his bike complete with a rather loud Teesside accent.

Apparently he had sourced a set of callipers from a breakers yard for a Suzuki Hayabusa and had fitted them to his triumph and was openly boasting that it was the equivalent of fitting brakes from a Ferrari to a Golf GTi and that they were so good he could leave his braking much later and out brake everyone on the road.

Does this clown not realise that bike manufacturers spend millions in research and development to fit a brake that is most suited to the weight and performance of an individual bike.

As the performance of a Hayabusa is far greater than a Triumph Sprint, it is obvious that there will be a tremendous mismatch in what he has done and his actions could prove to be fatal in the longer term.

The thought crossed my mind as I rode away, I wonder if his insurance company is aware of such a monumental modification? I would say not and hope that he is not the one to have an accident with me or my family.

Concern for the other half

By A. Dalkin

It is important for men to remember that, as women grow older, it becomes harder for them to maintain the same quality of housekeeping as when they were younger. When you notice this, try not to shout at them. Some are over-sensitive and there's nothing worse than an over-sensitive woman.

My name is Ron. Let me relate how I handled the situation with my wife, Jean. When I took early retirement last year, it became necessary for Jean to get a full-time job for the extra income that we need.

Shortly after she started working, I noticed she was beginning to show her age. I now usually get home from the pub about the same time she gets home from work. Although she knows how hungry I am, she nearly always says she has to rest for half an hour or so before she starts dinner.

I don't shout at her, instead I tell her to take her time and just wake me when she gets dinner on the table. I generally have lunch at the pub so eating out again is out of the question; I'm ready for some home cooked food when I get home.

She used to do the dishes as soon as we finished eating. But now it's usual for them to sit on the table for several hours after dinner. I do what I can by diplomatically reminding her several times each evening that they won't clean themselves. I know she really appreciates this, as it does seem to motivate her to get them done before she goes to bed.

Another symptom of ageing is complaining. For example, she will say that it is difficult for her to do the shopping during her lunch hour. But we take them for better or worse, so I just smile and offer encouragement. I tell her to stretch it out over two or even three days.

That way she won't have to rush so much. I also remind her that missing lunch completely now and then won't hurt her. I like to think tact is one of my strong points.

When doing simple jobs, she seems to think she needs more rest periods. She has to take a rest when she has only half finished mowing the lawn and several extra breaks when she's vacuuming through the house.

It does annoy me, vacuuming when I'm trying to watch my favourite program, but I try not to make a scene. I'm a fair man. I tell her to make herself a nice cup of tea and just sit for a while, and as long as she is making one for herself, she may as well make one for me too.

I know that I probably look like a saint in the way I support Jean. I'm not saying that showing this much consideration is easy. Many men will find it difficult. Some will find it impossible! Nobody knows better than I do how frustrating women get as they get older.

However, even if you just use a little more tact and less criticism of your ageing wife because of this article, I will consider that writing it was well worthwhile. After all, we are put on this earth to help each other, eh?

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ron died suddenly last week. He was found with a 24-inch Stanley screwdriver rammed up his backside with only 2 inches showing. His wife Jean was arrested, but the all-woman jury accepted her defence that he accidentally sat on it.

Consideration for others

From Derek G Twamley

When I arrived at the Wheatsheaf Hotel for the April meeting it was disgusting to see two motorcycles occupying a disabled parking space next to the entrance door, and another two parked on the lines of the same space.

Four bikes parked 'inconsiderately'. **I was not the only person present inside to remark on this**, including a lady in a wheelchair.

She was not very pleased. I commented on the parking, and two members laughed, (one an owner of one of the bikes) saying something like "He would walk around with a limp"

This remark also promoted laughter! (Was this a meeting of NAM members - perhaps I was in the wrong room?)

I think it was the Chairman who did ask the owners to move the bikes.

One of the aims of NAM, according to the website, is ' to encourage motorcyclists to have a positive attitude towards road safety, and improve the general attitude of bikers to other road users.

Not many marks scored out of ten on this night.

Perhaps it might be a good idea to refer to 'parking' and not just 'riding' when discussing the aims of advanced motorcycling.

Derek is quite right, we should be showing a good example on all aspects of motorcycling, not just on the road. – Ed.

Pitlochry weekend

We would like to thank Michael and Geraldine Sutherland for all the hard work they must have put in to organise what was a brilliant weekend. (even though the weather was 'iffy') The Hotel was great, (following the refurbishment) and food and services were excellent.

The pool, hot tub and sauna were the bonus. There was a lot of good humour amongst all of the group and special mention to Captain Kirk and his crew (they will know who I mean)

Maureen and I have not laughed so much for ages.

Once again a brilliant weekend, roll on Wales!

May I also take this opportunity to thank Carole and Alan for there talk about their trip to Morocco, (last months talk)

They are obviously braver than me to go there

John & Maureen Magee (The Noisy Bikers)

Llareggub

By Allan Thompson

Having visited North Wales for a riding trip a few years earlier, I was keen to return and again sample the beautiful scenery and superb flowing strips of asphalt with their ever changing altitude.

My better half, never keen on being perched on the Daytona's pillion pad, left me in no doubt on her thoughts of doing the 550 mile round trip with me and so the car also travelled.

Excellent – a support vehicle to carry my luggage ! With the cottage booked, my brother and sister-in-law travelling from the south to meet us and the kids deciding they had better things to do than spend time with us old-folk, things were looking good.

The forecasters had indicated that after weeks of mild weather, this weekend would be cold and wet. They were right! The alarm bells started ringing when by Washington Services, I could already feel damp seeping through my waterproofs.

The next two hours crawling down the A1 averaging 45mph with torrential rain from above and constant spray from the front and sides was a ride best forgotten. At the new Wetherby Services, I decided it was time to sample their coffee and radiators.

As I walked from the bike, every moving part of me squelching in unison, I questioned the appeal of biking in such conditions. Thus far, the trip had been as enjoyable as a trip to the dentist or watching Newcastle United play. Inside, I chatted with a like minded soul also dripping everywhere and moaning about non-waterproof waterproofs.



He confirmed the weather was getting worse as he came North and that it had been sunny further South. With this encouraging news, I squelched back to the bike and headed for Chester. Once into North Wales, the traffic levels dropped, the temperature warmed and even the sun came out for brief periods.

I travelled along the often scenic A55 which runs along the north coastline to Llandudno and then down onto the fabulously flowing A470 down through Betws-y-coed and then up and over the slate mountains at Blaenau Ffestiniog before dropping

back to sea level and the short run up the coast to my destination just outside Porthmadog and a short walk from Clough Williams-Ellis' Portmeirion, famous for the pottery (which is actually made in Stoke) and Patrick McGoohan's 'The Prisoner'.

The next morning, we woke up to sunshine. The cottage was a beautifully restored 1900 farmhouse with breathtaking views over the bay at Porthmadog and with Snowdonia's mountains filling the horizon.

The only thing the owner had failed to mention was that he had fitted a coin meter to everything he possibly could and also left invoices scattered around the property for things such as use of towels and bedding !

My enthusiasm couldn't be dampened however and with the girls deciding to ride the famous Ffestiniog railway, my brother-in-law and I donned leathers and headed for the mountains.

Through Beddgelert, scene of the well told 13th Century tale of Prince Llewelyn's faithful hound, up

towards Caernarfon on the A4085 and then around the northern base of Snowdon to Llanberis. Llanberis will be another name recognised by fans of steam trains as this is the setting for another 'Great Little Train of Wales' and has a short line which runs the length of the lake. It is also the home of the National Museum of Slate Mining which became very appealing when the heavens opened for the first time that day.

What started as a temporary rain stop ended up as a two hour tour of an extremely interesting attraction explaining how North Wales had roofed the Industrial Revolution in Victorian Britain.

The road south up and over Llanberis Pass and then round the southern base of Snowdon is a road not to be missed and a freak hail storm which lasted about 10 minutes and forced us to seek cover under trees just added to the atmosphere of this marvellous area.



The following day, we agreed to leave the bikes and travel down into Portmeirion to see what all the fuss was about. The life's work of a successful local architect, Clough Williams-Ellis built this complete village between 1925 and 1973 in various architectural styles from Britain and Italy. This unique attraction was very interesting and definitely worth a visit.

The following day, it was time to travel home and after a hearty breakfast in Porthmadog, we said our goodbyes and headed east.

A different route was chosen for the journey as I had enjoyable recollections of the A494 from Dolgellau via Bala towards Llangollen.

This road is quite simply superb with hardly any traffic and long sweeping bends, inclines and descents amongst beautiful scenery. You do have to be wary however of the occasional wayward sheep!

Finally, I headed towards Chester again and then onto the motorway network for the journey home.

There is a common misconception about Wales and the Welsh. I personally like both.

The scenery in Wales is second to none, loads of interesting history and the roads are a bikers dream (although the weather often isn't).



I always find the people hospitable and cannot understand the common complaint that they talk Welsh in the presence of English people. Do these same people find Germans speaking German in Germany annoying ?

At the risk of sounding like I'm on the payroll for the Wales Tourist Board, if you've never been, give it a try. It's the perfect destination for a great riding weekend – but like all rugged West Coast areas, don't forget your waterproofs !

Allowable expenses for observers

No.	Expense	Entitled to claim	Amount	Info. required on expenses form (No receipts required)
1	Attendance at a Cornering Clinic with observed ride undertaken.	Observer Senior Observer	£15 from NAM	a) Date of Cornering Clinic. b) Name of person being observed.
2	Taking someone, whose name was collected at Cornering Clinic, for an observed ride on another day.	Observer Senior Observer	£15 from NAM	a) Date of Cornering Clinic. b) Name of person being observed. c) Date of observed ride
3	Attendance at a Cornering Clinic with no observed ride undertaken.	Observer Senior Observer	£10 from NAM	a) Date of Cornering Clinic.
4	Taking an Associate on a first assessment.	Senior Observer	£5 from NAM & £10 from Associate	a) Name of Associate. b) Date of first assessment.
5	Taking an Associate on an observed ride.	Observer Senior Observer	£5 from NAM & £10 from Associate	a) Name of Associate. b) Date of observed ride
6	Taking an Associate on an pre-test.	Senior Observer	£5 from NAM & £10 from Associate	a) Name of Associate. b) Date of pre-test. See also Note below.
7	Taking a new Observer on an assessed ride.	Senior Observer	£15 from NAM	a) Name of new Observer. b) Date of assessed ride.
8	Taking part in a Recce for a monthly rideout.	Full Member including Observer and Senior Observer	£25 from NAM (up to 4 members can each claim £25 for any one rideout).	a) Date of monthly rideout for which Recce is being carried out.
9	Attending a committee meeting	Committee Member	£15 from NAM	a) Date of committee meeting.

Note: On completion of a successful pre-test, the Senior Observer should collect the associate's record sheet and send it to the relevant Team Leader.

This allows the club to:

- a) calculate the average number of runs needed by associates to attain a successful pre-test.
- b) enable the auditor of the annual accounts to check any claims, if required.

May Morning, 2009

by Neil Hamilton

Once again, the weather forecast for the annual Scotland expedition was not optimistic. Indeed, a forecast appropriate to Noah.

With this in mind, we set off upon a modified route hoping to avoid the bulk of the rain. I had been experimenting with a video camera mount that had suffered from vibration on previous tests.

Today saw the mark II prototype in action, featuring a neoprene foam shock absorber. Leaving Seaton Burn Services however indicated an over-correction to the vibration problem, with the camera making a passable impression of Churchill the dog's head: a degree of suspension pre-load was obviously required.

The journey North was uneventful until the Forth Road Bridge provided opportunities for some serious filtering practice due to an accident blocking both northbound lanes. The tedium of the M90 was soon relieved by the winding road past Knockhill and onward towards Crieff.

Required to mark a T junction next to a small wood, I cursed the drawn out pack of riders and the voracious appetites of the local flying insects (why did Noah take those two midges on the ark?). The planned coffee-stop in Aberfeldy was skipped due to plain lack of opportunity.

The years have not been kind to Aberfeldy which seems each year now to more resemble a wild west ghost town: a sad relic of its former glory. Arrival in Pitlochry was a much drier experience than expected and hopes were raised for the remainder of the long weekend.



Saturday morning saw the steady splash of raindrops in the multitude of puddles in the car-park, but the sun was also attempting to penetrate the rain sodden clouds.

A day of "sunny periods and scattered showers" looked likely. Passing through Kenmore after a brisk hour ride saw the necessity to break ranks and move ahead to catch some video of the passing horde.

Video in the bag, time to catch up on the empty, winding road to Killin (the sad lot of the photographer). Time for refreshments in Killin and an opportunity to enjoy the splendour of the Falls of Dochart. Ray asked if I had pondered the volume of water and where it all comes from.

I have spent enough time in Scotland to be completely aware of where it all comes from and was minded of the lines from a Runrig song "The endless storms, the months of rain", QED sir!

Photographer duty again so off ahead through Crianlarich, slowly passing the "official" photographer in his van, lurking to catch the unwary and onward following the railway lines to Tyndrum.

Small as it is, Tyndrum sports two railway stations (Tyndrum Upper and Tyndrum Lower), as the line branches at Crianlarich into the Oban and Fort William legs. Today's choice for us was Oban. Winding over the empty road Westward, a fine photo spot was found to catch the "parade".

Had I been wearing a high-vis jacket, some consternation may have been caused to passing traffic by a guy lurking at the roadside with a hand held video camera. Oban delivered as usual, with the sun shining on the bay and the hills of Mull in the distance. The temptation of Haggis and chips from the chippy round the corner was too much although the seagulls on the bay helped with the chips.

Lunch over, Alan Richardson and Sid Corke were up for a progressive ride up to Fort William and were joined by Brother-in-law John (ER6-F) and myself. The journey was most satisfying with only a little rain to mar the videoing of Alan and Sid in front as we swept North towards Fort William (originally named after William of Orange).

Standing at the head of Loch Linnhe, with the snow-topped mass of Ben Nevis towering behind, one could be forgiven for assuming that it's quite an attractive place. Wrong, despite its magnificent setting, Fort William has all the charm of a motorway service station. A dual carriageway runs along the lochside, over a litter-strewn pedestrian underpass and past dismal 1960s concrete boxes masquerading as hotels.

Today it also rained: the Scottish rain, by the bucket. Refuge was sought in a little tea-room up from the main street with onlookers completely unperturbed at the sight of for dripping wet bikers. I guess they are used to soaking wet people in Fort William.

Off on the road again, just in time to see the second cohort appearing through the rain and murk. Riding Northeast towards Spean Bridge, skies brightened and following the East-bound A86 through Roybridge, the roads were drying and the sun appearing.

The journey East swept through undulating curves, dips and crests through woodland bursting with the smells of vegetation vitalised by rain and sun. Skimming past the shores of Loch Laggan (part of the huge hydro-electric system supplying the Lochaber aluminium smelter at Fort William), the quaint Ardverikie Castle (Glenbogle, from the TV series Monarch of the Glen) and onward to



Dalwhinnie. Whilst little more than a road junction, Dalwhinnie is famous for the fine single malt produced in its distillery. I always have a bottle in my personal collection and believe it to be a fine spirit of the highlands.

Little option exists for the return to Pitlochry but with minds now on sauna, pool and dinner, a steady cruise down the A9 was acceptable.

Cracking day Grommit!

Pitlochry - one of Saturday's ride outs

By David Henderson

The small group of 7 bikes transporting 12 individuals that chose to be led by the intrepid Mr. Michael Sutherland accompanied by over-the-shoulder navigator Geraldine weren't to be disappointed with their choice of leader.

His first decision was to stay on the east side of the country to get the better weather and by all accounts he got it spot on.

The show started off at 10.30 am and after a short ride of 30 miles on the A924 we had our first stop at Braysliff Farm coffee shop at Blacklunans. After a bit of good humoured mayhem we finally got our refreshments.

There was a lot of banter going on whilst we waited for our coffee / tea etc and boy did we have a good laugh, 12.30 pm, time to move on. The B951 led us to the B955 and the run up the valley to Clova and the hotel there. 1.10 pm just in time for lunch.

The weather has been great which showed the valley at *its* best, very impressive to say the least. 02.10 pm and we travelled back on ourselves to Cortachy but this time on the other side of the river. Onto an unclassified road which brought us onto the B974.

Once again weather, scenery and roads at their best. Our next stop was at 03.20 pm and 120 miles from the Hydro when we stopped at Strachan to top up at Tesco's filling station. Onto Banchory to join the A93 and on this road we just tootle along till we arrived at Ballater for afternoon tea, Parked the bikes opposite the Brown Sugar Cafe having done 51 miles since the fuel stop.

The priority at the cafe is of course the loo so there is a bit of a scramble to get there first. The girls serving behind counter appeared to be quite overwhelmed at the sight of 12 helmeted individuals storming through the door. Once again the patter just flowed giving rise to large amounts of laughter again, It's 05.30 pm and we leave for Braemar. Pass Balmoral Castle but no invites from "her indoors".

Still on the A93 we enter bikers heaven, Glen Shee no less, awesome, just awesome. We have been well blessed with great weather most of the day and riding the Glen it stayed good for us letting us appreciate its beauty and the thrill of the taking advantage of the great road that runs through the Glen.

But all good things must come to an end and for us it was the return to Blacklunans where once again joined the A924 and headed for "home."

Got back at 07.00 pm and the unanimous agreement from the group was, what a brilliant day out. Time for a shower, dinner and a drink or two to finish off the day.

One the Sunday Rideouts

10.30 am and ready for the "off". Our destination is Fort St, George east of Inverness on the Moray Firth. David Thornton is our man to follow today, "Our" being Ann (D's pillion wife), Preff, Wilf, Kristfan and myself.



We head for the A924 to Kirkmichael, onto the B950 and the A93 at Blacklunans, North through the fabulous Glen Shee again, this is the first time any of us have ridden the Glen in this direction and it gave us a different perspective of the scenery and the road too.

There was plenty of snow on the mountain tops. on through Braemar onto Cathie. We passed Balmoral Castle but still no invite from "Her indoors." At

Cathie we left the A93 to go onto the B976 (passing places) this linked us up with the A939, Onwards towards Cock Bridge and as we left this town the road just climbed and climbed up skywards. When you looked up the road all you could see was blue sky.

It was that steep, Concentration was the order of the day as the road still showed an abundance of sand / grit etc,

This would be the remnants of when the road was being kept passable so skiers could access the summit. They could then enjoy the thrills of whizzing down the snow covered mountains with 2 strips of wood strapped to their feet.

The descent into Tomintoul was brilliant. On arriving in the town we headed for the Fire Station Cafe where inside were many of the weekend group having a welcome lunch break.

It's taken 2 hrs and 73 miles to get here. Time to leave and call into Grantown-on-Spey so Kristian can fill up his wee tankie.

Back onto the A939 and more great roads, Pass through Femess, Littlemill to bring us to Nairn.

Pick up the A96 head west onto the B9039, This road is straight as a die. The local bikers must have a field day riding it.

At Ardersier we followed the signs that would eventually bring us to Fort St. George at 02.30 pm. We spent 2 hours looking around but this wasn't enough to do it justice. A unique thing about one of the Chapel stained windows was a Guardian Angel playing the Bag Pipes.

Unlikely to be another one in the world! Time is getting on and at 04,30 pm we head for "home". The quickest / fastest route back was the order of the day so we joined the A96 and headed west to pick up the A9 for our southward journey.

Fuel stop at Aviemore then continue our brisk ride to Pitlochry. A quick hot bath followed by dinner. The rest of the evening having a drink and socialising.

Can it get any better? **David Henderson.**

A Motorcycle Museum near Barcelona

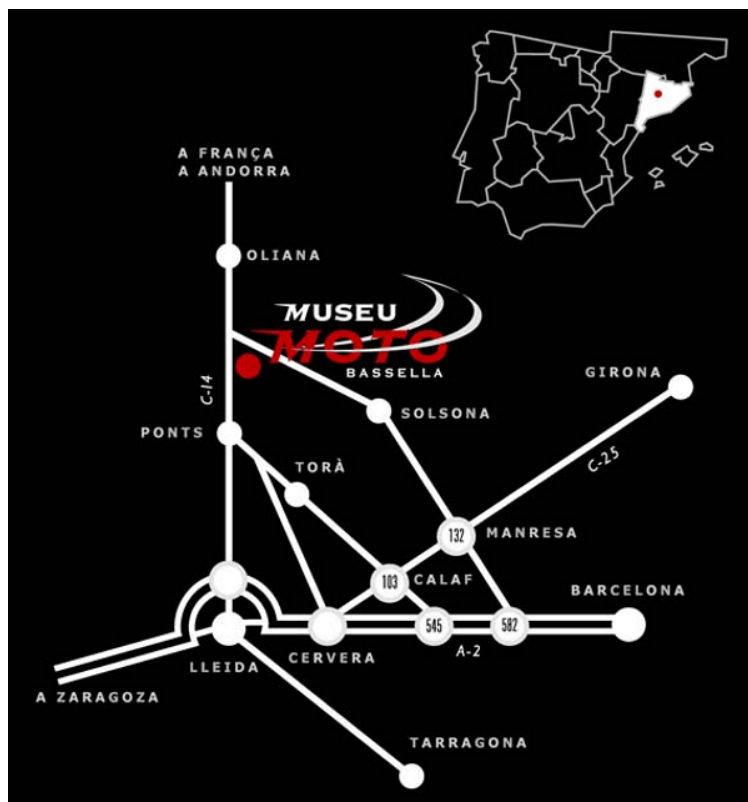
By Simon Hadden

Around 85 miles north-west of Barcelona lies the Bassella Motorcycle Museum. The museum is housed in a new building, together with a restaurant, next to a petrol station in the middle of nowhere. As Spanish roads have kilometer posts, it's difficult to miss - it's at km 14.

The adjacent petrol station sign also features a motorcycle stuck on top of the petrol station sign for those who can't read kilometer posts.

Needless to say, I still overshot the place and had to carry on for a further 3 km before I could turn the hire car around.

I blamed my father who was doing the map reading and he blamed me for incompetent observation...



Anyway, on approaching the museum for the second time, we managed to pull into the car park and visit the museum.

It's rather like a smaller version of the National Motorcycle Museum at the NEC, Birmingham.

One hall is devoted to historical machines from all around the world, many from the UK. The second hall, downstairs, houses a temporary exhibition which changes every 6-12 months.

At present, this contains a good display of motorcycles made by the three largest motorcycle manufacturers in Spain – Ossa, Bultaco and Montesa.

Nice as these are, I've always had a soft spot for Sanglas roadsters, which have a

rather more British look.

Upstairs there's a Sanglas outfit, which was the first in Spain to be used by the local equivalent of the RAC – very important it looks too, in a rather understated way.

If you like looking at rather odd, lightweight machines, you won't be disappointed.

There's a selection of weird, cheap motorised transport, including bicycles with friction drive engines.

These are counterbalanced by some exotic racing motorcycles. There's also a nice 1920's workshop display.



We spent at least an hour wandering about, on a Tuesday morning. During that time we had the place to ourselves.

By the exit there's a small shop, where I managed to get a prized Sanglas mug at an exorbitant price.

We didn't try the restaurant, a tempting, upmarket burger grill. It's definitely worth a visit if you're in this area of Spain.



Details of the Museum are

Museo de la Moto de Bassella
Carretera C-14, km. 134 , 25289 Bassella (Lleida)
www.museumoto.bassella.com

Monday to Friday: 10.00 – 18.00
Weekends and holidays: 10.00 – 20.00
Closed on Wednesdays

Main ticket: 6 €
Students, young pass, senior citizens: 4 €

NAM Rideout 19th April 2009



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, 24th July 2009**

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.



www.nam-online.org
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