



# Riders' Chronicles



This Issue

Ramblings

So, So, True

Donnington

Cotswolds

Riders Tips

Man about the house

Funnies

Planning a rideout

To the Back of beyond

BBQ Pics

Rideout Pics

Much, much more



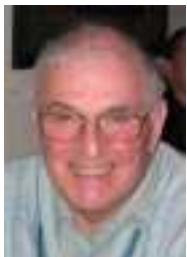
Sept / Oct 2009

The Newsletter of Northumbria  
Advanced Motorcyclists

## NAM Barbecue 11<sup>th</sup> August 2009



**Chairman's ramblings**



Having dedicated some 43 years to the I.A.M and its objectives, passing my first advanced test in 1966, it saddens me to see the path the I.A.M is stumbling down at the moment. You need to look back at the basic objectives of the I.A.M to understand why several long standing members have become very disillusioned of late.

The I.A.M was initially set up as a "Non profit making, Registered Charity, dedicated to improving road safety through improved training and awareness, measured by taking an Advanced Driving Test." Over the years it must have contributed to saving countless lives by making Drivers and Riders more aware of what they are doing, making them safer on the roads and keeping accident statistics down.

Even those who do not complete the training and opt not to take the test will have benefitted in some way over the years on the basis that if their training has changed for the better one single element of their riding then they have gained something. The I.A.M initially only provided training for car drivers and it took almost ten years before they branched out and included motorcyclists. In real terms there are possibly thousands of motorcyclists riding around now who may well have been caught up in the general carnage on the roads involving the vulnerable motorcycling fraternity.

Regrettably, over the years those in control at the I.A.M have frequently changed, to be replaced by a more commercially driven team who appear to have forgotten the basic fundamentals, venturing into fields that they should perhaps not be entering, that could in the longer term prove to be their downfall, with the main objective being 'money.' This trend has grown steadily in recent times and certain actions of the I.A.M have, to say the least, caused much anger with many long standing Members. This has resulted in many having already cancelled their Direct Debits for their I.A.M membership renewals.

The problems first came to light when the I.A.M announced a massive, over 60% increase in membership fees, with the feeble reason given as, 'not having raised subscriptions for 5 years.'

However, we soon learned that the I.A.M have allegedly been facing substantial financial losses which, when analysed, can only be attributed to poor decisions of former management.

Due to lack of transparency any accurate information on this matter is hard to come by making it difficult to arrive at mindful conclusions, but one alleged explanation we heard about was that a particular member of the management team, who remains nameless, declared that he would 'double the membership of the I.A.M' and immediately began introducing new ventures, at considerable cost, **before any increase in membership levels had been achieved and without its obvious increase in revenue.**

Preliminary release of the I.A.M's draft accounts were published earlier this year and it showed an unexplained discrepancy of £873,000. Jack Lormor wrote to the I.A.M for answers on this discrepancy and to date he has been totally ignored. Once again this confirmed a total lack of transparency and openness that could be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to withhold information.

This was followed by comments that certain officials within the I.A.M are allegedly paid expenses, for example, for hotel accommodation whether they used the accommodation or not, without the need for receipts. (**Have we not heard something on similar lines with M.P's?**)

The immediate effect on NAM resulted in a loss of almost 100 existing members in 2009. I should add that as with almost every local Group, we have an annual drop out of about 35 – 40

members, so the net additional increased loss of NAM members is about 60. I have spoken to many who have not renewed and without exception they all blamed the I.A.M membership increase for their departure. To date our recruitment during 2009 is down by about 50 against 2008 for new Associates.

For those of you who have not realised it, the life blood of the I.A.M is the voluntary Observers and Senior Observers, who dedicate a considerable amount of time in carrying out their duties. Without these individuals the I.A.M would flounder and possibly fail. What the I.A.M refuse to acknowledge is the fact that Motorcycle Observers/Seniors are subsidising the I.A.M considerably and although they receive a contribution from Associates towards fuel, this contribution goes no where near the true cost incurred.

It does not take into account tyre wear, increased mileages which bring costly services around earlier and affect the depreciation on their bikes when they come to sell it or trade it in. It also fails to recognise that Observers can spend 3 – 4 hours on Observed runs when you take into account travelling time to and from home to carry out the runs.

Armed with all of this information several of the Committee, began sending E-mails to the I.A.M to lodge their protests and I personally have had a considerable number of discussions with the Chairman of the I.A.M David Kenworthy. This has proved to be a very frustrating and fruitless exercise as the ‘party line’ was followed on every occasion, with most issues raised totally ignored.

I made the suggestion that the I.A.M should recognise the worth of Observers and should perhaps consider giving these individuals concessionary membership in appreciation of their commitment. This was partially taken on board, but, as seen previously, the I.A.M Management would not make a decision, but instead created a sub-committee to decide the issue. This sub-committee was made up of a team of individuals from the bike side and the car side, the latter obviously having little sympathy or support for the proposal. This provides a ready made excuse for I.A.M management to hide behind, claiming it had been considered by an ‘independent body’ and not the I.A.M Management Team.

We next received an announcement that this sub-committee had recommended ‘**An annual payment of £5 per ACTIVE Observer to each bike group.**’ This was seen as an absolute insult as Observers probably incur this cost making telephone calls throughout the year to arrange runs etc; with Associates. This angered many Committee Members further and a letter of protest signed by the Committee was sent, to the Chairman, David Kenworthy.

The result was a single joint letter in reply, copied to each of us which many considered it to be of an offensive nature and claiming ‘we had our facts wrong.’ It was noted that he totally ignored all of the issues we had raised with him.

Further responses to his letter were sent off by the Committee as individual members pointing out that he had totally evaded the issues raised and that unlike his response, without exception, our correspondence had been factual and accurate. These letters have been totally ignored now for several months.

Early July I attended the I.A.M Motorcycle Conference at Warwick University and it was very much apparent that there was a lot of unrest with many groups throughout the Country.

This was even acknowledged by one of the Managing Directors, Simon Best and their way of addressing the problem was the introduction of an interactive open forum for the afternoon session.

Each table had a laptop terminal allowing us to field what questions we liked. There were about 120 delegates and every question could be seen on a giant screen with the intention that the panel, made up of the Managing Director, Chief Examiner, Motorcycle Co-ordinator and four others would answer the questions as honestly and openly as possible.

Some of the questions being raised were very probing and relevant and it soon became obvious that the panel were being very selective in which questions they were responding to. Many delegates soon realised this and began putting questions verbally direct to the Panel.

Once again, we witnessed ducking and weaving by the Panel members and in several cases total contradiction of earlier statements.

In real terms, very few questions were answered fully and accurately and it was quite clear, despite suggestions for changes to be implemented by I.A.M Management they did not want any form of change and were obviously more than happy with the present trends that were currently in force.

The group I was in concluded that the Interactive Forum had backfired on the I.A.M Management in that it had not provided the response they were seeking, although no doubt, **THEY** will declare it a total success. I have since heard that Chelmsford Group has disaffiliated a while back and at least one other in the final stages of doing so.

### Latest News update:

We have now been advised that David Kenworthy is standing down as Chairman as he wishes "to devote his time to other interests."

We also learn that the I.A.M have made two new senior appointments; Colin Paterson has joined them as Director of Marketing and Communication and Paul Woozley as Membership Development Manager. This is in total contradiction of a statement made to me by David Kenworthy who claimed, "The I.A.M is making savings by not replacing staff as they leave."

Since the untimely death of Chief Executive Christopher Bullock, it seems that it now takes four individuals to do his job by having two Managing Directors, a Marketing Director and now a Membership Development Manager, making the total staff at Chiswick in the region of 100, compared to a mere handful that run RoSPA, albeit a smaller organisation.

Sadly all of this is taking its toll locally with potential splits in what was previously a solid, committed NAM committee, dedicated towards the success of NAM. My personal primary objective and loyalty, is and always has been, towards NAM and it saddens me to see it drop to this level.

However, the unrest, and atmosphere is taking its toll on myself and is not exactly the best environment for someone with cardiac problems. Because of this, on several occasions recently I have given serious thought to standing down.

For those who attended the last meeting you have heard arguments for and against remaining affiliated to the I.A.M., together with some deliberate and mischievous distractions. We are endeavouring to get Managing Director Simon Best to address the membership soon.

You will have the opportunity to vote on the matter soon, but whatever the outcome, it will be **YOUR DECISION.**

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

J. Coombs	Mark Skinner
-----------	--------------

## 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

## Fondling in bed

After 20 years of marriage a couple was lying in bed one evening when the wife felt her husband begin to fondle her in ways he hadn't in quite some time.

It almost tickled as his fingers started at her neck and then began moving down past the small of her back.

He then caressed her shoulders and neck, slowly worked his hand down over her bosom, stopping just over her lower stomach.

He then proceeded to place his hand on her left inner arm, caressed past the side of her bosom again, working down her side, passed gently over her buttock and down her leg to her calf.

Then, he proceeded up her inner thigh, stopping just at the uppermost portion of her leg.

He continued in the same manner on her right side, then suddenly stopped, rolled over and started watching T.V.

As she had become quite aroused by this caressing she asked in a loving voice, "That was wonderful. Why did you stop?"

He said, "I found the remote."

## 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**

*Promotions & Events:* **Craig Hopkins**

*Newsletter Editor:* **Ray Charlton**

## **Team Leaders**

*Northumberland:* **Dave Thornton**

*Tyne & Wear* **Alan Richardson**

## **Website**

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

**Telephone:** 07951 035038

# **So, so true!!!!**

By A. Dalkin

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years.

No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

Knowing when to come in out of the rain; Why the early bird gets the worm; Life isn't always fair; and Maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge)..

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place.

Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realise that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death, by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife, Discretion, by his daughter, Responsibility, and by his son, Reason.

He is survived by his 4 stepbrothers: I Know My Rights; I Want It Now; Someone Else Is To Blame; I'm A Victim

Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone. If you still remember him, pass this on.

**If not, join the majority and do nothing as usual.**

## Durham Advanced Motorcyclists

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

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

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

Join it there!

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

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

If you have any problems, send an email to:

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

or

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

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

## rideouts

WHEN	WHOM	WHERE
20 <sup>th</sup> September	Ray Charlton	Coast & Country
18 <sup>th</sup> October	TBC	TBC

## 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.



## TRIP TO DONNINGTON

By Dave Henderson



I was invited by David Thornton to accompany him to meet up with his friends and attend the W.S.B. racing at Donnington Park Race Track on the Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June.

As I had never been to see "live" motorcycle racing before I didn't hesitate in accepting. I arranged to meet David on the Saturday at Wooley Edge Services on the M1 at 10.30am.

Having checked the VFR the previous day and sorted out my kit and change of clothing etc. Ready for the off on Saturday and the weather at 06.00am was good so a good ride to the rendezvous seemed to be expected.

Filled up with fuel and set off in earnest at 09.00am. Everything was fine, A1 quiet then about 15 miles into the journey the weather just changed for the worst. Fog was in abundance so that put a "spanner in the works" so to speak.

Slowing down as you do and left hand glove converted into a visor wiper. A canny few miles were covered in these conditions but just as it changed suddenly earlier, it did so again and I was riding in clear weather which improved appreciably the further south I travelled.

I had some time to make up so the pace quickened somewhat. Junction 43 (A1M) was my leaving point to join the M1. The slip road for the services came up and dead on time I parked the bike having covered 130 miles in 1½ hrs. David had arrived a little earlier and, on his recommendation I ordered a full English breakfast and very nice it was too.

Having been fed and watered we headed off for our destination, the "Cat & Fiddle" pub just west of Buxton on the A537. Left the M1 onto the A628 heading for Glossop from there A57 up through Snake Pass heading for Buxton on the A6 onto A53 onto A54 to the pub.

We have just ridden on some brilliant biking roads. One of the group was already there with another arriving shortly after us. The pub is a bikers meeting place consequently it was too busy to get any food so the four of us headed back to Buxton for something to eat.

We then headed back to the pub where the other five riders were waiting for us. After all the introductions we headed off for our hotel in Ashbourne stopping enroute at Matlock Bath for coffee etc. The town was very busy and the locals told us that on Sundays the town was a magnet for bikers with huge numbers turning out.

We eventually arrived at the hotel, got ourselves booked in etc then 10 minute walk into the town centre for a Chinese meal and a couple of pints in one of the pubs.

Sunday saw us up early and fed with a cracking full English breakfast before Setting off for Donnington Park, with clear blue sky and getting hotter all the time. The track was quite a distance from the hotel and when we got there the bike park was starting to fill up, with 100's of bikes, of every conceivable make and model.

Into the park proper and found ourselves a good viewpoint. We got ourselves settled in, but the weather was really too hot and wearing leathers wasn't the best thing to have on.

The racing commenced with the big cc bikes followed by the 600 cc and it was awesome to watch. These racing guys are phenomenal and the speed at which they ride is mind blowing. T.V. coverage doesn't show how fast they are moving. The sound as they leave the starting grid and when they pass you is just unreal with each bike having its own unique exhaust note. Brilliant!!!

We watched six of the races and at 4.00pm decided it would be prudent to make a move to avoid the mass exodus of bikes that would take place later on. Ah well all good things must come to an end.

The car / bike traffic on the local roads was horrendous being very busy. We made "good progress" as the text book says with the group eventually parting company to go our separate ways. For David and I that meant heading for the M1 and home.

Apart from an eleven mile stretch of "average speed" the journey was uneventful. We stopped off at Wetherby North Services for a coffee. The weather was still excellent.

Back on the road and at the Tyne Tunnel / A1 junction David and I parted company with me staying on The A1. Just ten miles from home, I couldn't believe it, the fog just appeared from nowhere and that was the good weather down the pan!!! Anyway home safe and sound after a round trip of 480 miles.

I had an excellent weekend and would recommend a visit to a race track to see first hand "live" bike racing to take in the whole experience and atmosphere of the event.

## Who do we know like this?

By A. Dalkin

Here's a tale about the lady Premiere of the state of Queensland, Anna Bligh.

Anna Bligh was touring the countryside in a chauffeur-driven car, when, suddenly, a cow jumps out into the road, they hit it full on and the car comes to a stop. Anna, in her usual charming manner, says to the chauffeur:

'You get out and check - you were driving.'

The chauffeur gets out, checks and reports that the animal is dead but it was old.

'You were driving; go and tell the farmer,' says Anna.

Two hours later, the chauffeur returns totally plastered, hair ruffled with a big grin on his face.

'My God, what happened to you?' asks Anna.

The chauffeur replies: 'When I got there, the farmer opened his best bottle of malt whisky, the wife gave me a slap-up meal and the daughter made love to me.'

'What on earth did you say?' asks Anna.

'I knocked on the door and when it was answered, I said to them: ' I'm Anna Bligh's chauffeur and I've just killed the old cow.'

## A Day in the Cotswolds

By Clice Taylor

Subscribing to an "Old Bike" magazine can be useful sometimes and a weekend in late June was one of them. Simon H had noticed that there was to be an open day held at the Watsonian Sidecar Works in Blockley, Gloucestershire, south of Stratford upon Avon.



The added attraction was that there were free rides to be had on a varying selection of Royal Enfield bikes.

Some old farts will know that these stalwart machines originally made in Redditch Worcestershire have, for the last 40 years or so been made in Madras, India.

The specification hasn't really changed much in that time either. Still the same 350 cc or 500 cc single cylinder engine, good for 75mph or so with a following breeze. The point is that Watsonian Squire are the UK importers for these bikes and are keen to promote them.

We decided to make a weekend of it and resolved to camp nearby. Simon surfed the net as only he knows how and came up with a camp site near Bidford on Avon in rural Warwickshire. The idea was to have Friday off work and trundle down using the Fosse Way for a good slice of the journey.

This is a Roman road that originally ran from Lincoln to Cirencester and Exeter and would prove very useful in taking us almost as far as Stratford. It's about 270 miles but the tea shop and cake expert was singularly unsuccessful in finding a suitable hostelry.

We had to make do with a motorway thing instead. The hot weather encouraging hoards of children to be abroad, sweaty and fractious goading their irritable parents.

The journey was fine and the scenery, especially through the Cotswolds was very picturesque with the chocolate box sandstone houses peculiar to this area.

The campsite was on the banks of the river Avon and attached to a pub so good for an evening meal.

Simon was testing out a new small tent and I had borrowed a one man back packer tent off Louise Bennett. Both went up in a trice but they are truly difficult to get dressed in. Especially leathers ! I felt like Harry Houdini getting out of a straightjacket !

The following morning after bacon & egg butties we set off to the 'do'. The industrial estate where the Watsonian factory lurks looks like an old army camp but used by small businesses.





It transpired that from 1948 up to 1970 it had been used to house Polish families displaced during the second World War. Right out in the country, surrounded by trees, it was idyllic.



There were loads of people there and as usual the bike park held plenty of interesting bikes to inspect.

Much to Simon's delight a chap rolled up on an Ariel 3. Older folks will remember that this was BSA's attempt at a bike for everyone. It had 3 wheels like a trike and the front part of the frame along with the seat, forks and front wheel could be leant over like a solo. The back half including the 50cc engine and two rear wheels stayed upright.

The thing was a disaster. It was slow (just as well) and unstable and difficult to steer and maintain. So that was ok then but instead of selling millions as projected only a few hundred ever made it out of the dealer's doors.

How is it that we got it so wrong back then?

We took a tour of the factory which manufactures a range of glass fibre sidecars in various styles and also produces a trailer specifically for towing by a solo bike. Apparently they sell quite a few.

The company employs about 20 people and all seem to muck in to get the work done. There were a variety of Enfields all up on stands being prepped for delivery to dealers. The latest versions are up to date technically without losing the original charm.

They now have a disc front brake, fuel injection, 5 speed gearbox, decent switchgear and an electric boot - Quite civilized in fact.

On arrival, we immediately put our names down for a spin on one of the Royal Enfields and everything was very well organized by the staff with designated times for the rides. We chose our bikes and resolved to return at the appointed hour.

One employee had the onerous task of spending the entire day taking all and sundry out for a spin in one of the sidecars powered by an Enfield of course. He must have done dozens and dozens of trips with children a plenty and loads of adults of all ages and genders.



Soon it was time for our ride and as we nonchalantly got astride we trundled away behind the guide who was on some modern thing.

Having the right mental attitude is the key as tarmac ripping performance it has not ! Brisk acceleration it does have though and plenty of torque so steaming up hills without having to change down is the way.



They cruise along fine at 50 or 60 without fuss and appear to handle without drama.

Like all British singles, vibration is with you most of the time and looking in the rear mirrors makes you feel seasick !

The modern front brake is fine but my back brake lacked a bit of bite although Simon said his was fine.

The gearbox was very smooth and quiet and a nice light clutch. All 12 volt these days rather than the 6 volt of old but no idea what the lights were like. 80 mpg I was told so good economy.

These bikes have a loyal following and the enthusiasts rate them highly. It seems that the Madras Plant exports to about 30 countries and the UK is the biggest market for them outside mainland India where there are zillions on the road.

Later in the day Simon could wait no more. Off he went to bag a ride in the sidecar. I hurried after him to see his little bald head disappearing down the road but resolved to take a picture on his return. He certainly enjoyed it.

We were lucky to spy an Enfield with a Robin Diesel engine. Simon said that it is an engine that is used in a cement mixer. Well, it certainly sounded like it but with 150 miles to the gallon and about 15 BHP it certainly had one devotee at the event.

Other high points were A) the ice cream and B) the lunchtime curry (various types) made and sold by the local Scout Troop. Very appropriate & tasty.

Even the temporary bogs, specially erected for the occasion were up market with timber door frames and pictures on the cubicle walls. We only attend the best events you know.

We stayed all day in the warm weather which for the second year was kind to them. I must say that for a small company they had put on a pretty slick day which cost nothing to attend with free sidecar and solo rides, and nobody minds coughing up a few quid for the Scouts Curry.

Fortunately no Delhi Belly which in a small tent and snug sleeping bag would have been disastrous.

The next morning was again glorious and after breakfast we packed up and went our separate ways. Simon to return home and me to head to the south coast to visit my sister.

## Tips for new riders

By Ray Charlton

It bothers me when I see a motorcycle that has been neglected and not been subjected to basic safety checks. Such items as chains that are in need of adjustment and lubrication, worn and under inflated tyres and light bulbs not working are to mention a few.

First of all, the bike check is an important part of owning and riding a motorcycle simply because riders are more vulnerable to a loss of control than some other vehicles.

The check should also be an important part of an advanced test and we should be aware that there are two bike checks in Road-craft.

First there is the roadworthiness check and then the pre-ride check.

Looking at the roadworthiness check Roadcraft declares: Before you start your journey you should ensure that your machine is road-worthy.



You should carry out a pre-ride check every time you ride a motorcycle.

What do you understand about these two checks? Does the answer lie in the checking process? It is often thought that the roadworthiness check is a weekly / monthly / occasional check and the pre ride check is a daily/weekly/less important! (?) check.

Both checks are equally important and indicate the process should be carried out before the bike is ridden.

Looking at the content of each check reveals further clues.

The roadworthiness check seems to require the rider to get "up close and personal" with the bike.

For instance the tools for my bike are under the seat and so to check they are present requires seat removal.

The radiator header tank is usually behind the fairing and requires at least the loosening of a panel to be able to see the fluid level.

The oil sight level is in a dark place, low down and requires the need to kneel beside the bike and use a torch to ensure it can be seen properly.

The checking of tyres for cuts, foreign bodies, side-walls for cracks and valves for security normally results in dirty hands, but essential for your own safety.

The roadworthiness check is an in depth examination of a bike and its component parts preferably done when the rider is not actually dressed to ride away immediately the check is completed. In fact it may be carried out the evening before if the journey requires an early start.

Don't forget your roadworthy check includes yourself just before you ride.

Do you feel fit to ride? Will changes in weather bring any problems? What riding kit do you need and is it in good order?

The roadworthiness check also includes riding kit and it is worth remembering safety helmets, visors, tyres and lights are a legal requirement.

The pre ride check has a briefer checklist., ideally carried out when the engine and tyres are cold.

The reason is that if the bike has been ridden recently the oils and fluids may be hot and will not show an accurate picture when it comes to checking levels.

Tyres may be hot and therefore pressures misleading and inaccurate.

Some of the pre-ride and roadworthiness checks are visual checks of the machine. Is anything missing? Does it look right?

After both checks roll the bike off the stand, ensuring it folds away properly, and tweak the front brake to check the rebound of the front forks.

Move the handlebars from side to side to check for headstock bearing wear and with the engine running to ensure throttle cables are not snagging and raising engine revolutions.

You can check for brake pressure by pulling and pressing both the lever and pedal and before you ride too far take the opportunity to check the retardation effect.

Do you know what a worn wheel bearing sounds like? What about checking for worn swing arm bearings? The failure of these components could affect your stability and possibly put you at risk.

In order not to forget any element from being checked, Roadcraft suggests the word **POWER** as a memory aid. Petrol, Oil, Water, Electrics, Rubber.

Another option is the word **POWDER**, the additional 'D' for Damage or Drive is added. It is important to show you have a structured way of carrying out each check in such a way as not to miss out any item. Damage could include broken or cracked panels, or anything loose or hanging off.

If you recall your CBT Training the Driving Standards Agency included the word **BOLTSSS**, for Brakes, Oil, Lights, Steering, Suspension, Stands.

However, the criteria as recommended by Roadcraft is **POWER**, or **POWDER**, if you prefer.

Practically, riders often remember in different ways. So, if under Oil you include engine oil, brake and clutch "oil" chain or shaft oil then no matter. When you consider Rubber, (tyres for foreign bodies in the tread area, tread depth, sidewalls for cracks and valves for security), then including rubber hand grips, footrest rubber and even the seat for security then again, no matter. The important point is to not miss anything out.

Practice of this vital area of advanced riding and testing is the way to be perfect in application.

Chapter 1 of Roadcraft contains useful information about riding kit, riders' attitudes towards safety and health related topics which you may find useful in your checking process.

It cannot be emphasised enough that checking a motorcycle for safety and legality is vital and an important element of being an advanced rider.

Getting into the habit of using the **POWER** (or **POWDER**) mantra should develop a method of checking which misses no detail and demonstrates your knowledge of the bike that you put so much trust in.

The advanced rider should be able to as fully understand the difference between the roadworthiness check and the pre ride check.

The subject is not the most difficult area of The System for a rider to learn about and yet so many riders ignore the importance of it and miss out on an understanding of an important factor of riding.

- 00o -

## Yet another Funny

A Scottish Soldier in full dress uniform marches into a chemist.

Very carefully he opens his sporran and pulls out a neatly folded cotton bandana, unfolds it to reveal a smaller silk square handkerchief, which he also unfolds to reveal a condom.

The condom has a number of patches on it.

The chemist holds it up and eyes it critically.

"How much to repair it?" the Scot asks the chemist.

"Six pence," says the chemist.

"How much for a new one?"

"Ten pence," says the chemist.

The Scot painstakingly folds the condom into the silk square handkerchief and the cotton bandana, replaces it carefully in his sporran and marches out of the door, shoulders back and kilt swinging.

A moment or two later the chemist hears a great shout go up outside, followed by an even greater shout.

The Scottish soldier marches back into the chemists and addresses the proprietor, this time with a grin on his face.

"The regiment has taken a vote," he says.

"We'll have a new one."

## Man About The House

By Neil Hamilton

Having browsed the 416 pages of the 2007–08 session of the House of Commons Transport Committee “Ending the Scandal of Complacency: Road Safety beyond 2010”, I have discovered a number of items that should be of interest to motorcyclists.

Data shows that motorcycle deaths have increased significantly over the past 10 years when all other groups have shown a decrease. This has resulted in particular concern in the report.



### Change in deaths by road user group, 1994–98 average to 2007

Road user group	1994–98 Average	2007	Change (%)
Pedestrians	1008	646	-362 (-36%)
Cyclists	186	136	-50 (-27%)
Motorcyclists	467	588	+121 (+26%)
Car users	1762	1432	-330 (-19%)
Bus & Coach	20	12	-8 (-40%)
LGV & HGV	118	110	-8 (-7%)
All users	3578	2946	-632 (-18%)

Looking at the data in another way however we see something slightly different.

### Deaths per billion passenger kilometres

Road user group	1997	2006	Change (%)
Pedestrians	57	36	37%
Cyclists	45	31	31%
Motorcyclists	119	107	10%
Car users	3	2.5	17%

Since 1997 we have seen radical changes in car safety features with most cars now having so many air-bags that in an accident one would be like a kid in a bouncy castle.

Seatbelt pre-tensioners are routine, ABS, side impact bars, the list goes on, yet with no significant change to motorcycle safety features bar ABS the distance travelled related deaths for cars is only 7% better.

Motorcycle deaths however are still over 40 times that of car users for the same distances travelled.

The report states that the Government has set up a national advisory committee and is working

with a range of interests to ensure that motorcycling is seen as a central part of road safety policy.

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) suggested that other European countries, which have higher rates of motorcycle use, have lower motorcycle collision rates because drivers are more aware of motorcyclists.

The report recommends that the Government redoubles its efforts to improve the safety of motorcyclists and to ensure that their safety is seen as central to its road safety strategy.

Reporting to the committee, Mr Paul Everitt, *Chief Executive, Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders* in response to the question “what action can be taken to send those statistics going the right way again” stated “the best thing we can do is actually to encourage more people to do some form of training”. Mr Nicholas Brown, General Secretary, Motorcycle Action Group suggested that “on-the-ground evidence shows is that if the general public is more aware of motorcyclists then motorcyclist casualties come down”.

He further suggested “In motorcycle accidents three quarters of them involve another road user and the biggest single causal factor is the other road user’s failure to look properly”. (*Well no s\*\*t Sherlock*)

TRAVELSAFE made the following statement in a memorandum to the committee: “However every car and most motorcycles manufactured, marketed sold and used substantially exceed this speed limit.

There is no justification whatsoever or governments to continue to allow manufacturers to produce such speed limit exceeding vehicles”.

A memorandum from The Motor Cycle Industry Association states “The UK motorcycle industry has an estimated two million customers and employs approximately 15,000 people.

Turnover is estimated to be £3 billion per annum”. Not to be sniffed at Mr Chancellor!

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) advanced the following:

- The areas causing most concern at this time are young drivers and motorcyclists. This is not unique to the UK. There is a need to consider the introduction of graduated driving entitlement for young drivers, restricting the types of vehicle that may be driven and to raise the age limit for tests.
- Rider improvement schemes such as BikeSafe are shown to be successful and should be statutorily incorporated. (Interesting as BikeSafe must be police led and Northumbria Police are saying that they “will endeavour to continue in providing support to Cornering Clinics” *any more woolly and it would bleat*)
- The detection of motorcycling offences is problematic, encouraging non-compliance. This includes Vehicle Excise Duty evasion on a massive scale.
- There is a need for radical thinking in respect of motorcycles, including consideration of engine capability and the creation of protection zones where all motorcycles other than those specifically permitted, would be prohibited.

- Production machines are readily available for use on our roads with top speeds in excess of 200 miles per hour. Motorcycles are seen in the UK to be, in the majority of instances, vehicles of choice rather than necessity and one might consider if our congested roads are any longer fit for purpose for these motorised toys. *Thought – if motorcycles are too unsafe for police riders to use, then what about the rest of us?*

A few background statistics from The Department of Transport

- Most motorcycle use is for commuting, work and education trips during the week, motorcycles are versatile, multi-purpose vehicles and are used extensively for leisure journeys at other times.
- The motorcycle vehicle population (1,224,000 on the road at the end of 2006) is split roughly equally between 50–600cc machines and those above 600cc.
- The new motorcycle market (145,000 in 2007) is split roughly equally between 50–125cc (learner specification) machines and those above 125cc.
- Around two-thirds of motorcycle casualties are associated with junction collisions, typically where the driver of a larger vehicle collides with a motorcycle travelling with right of way.
- Motorcycle casualties are also associated with bends, specifically loss of control due to sudden change in tyre grip due to road surface conditions or rider error (although, by comparison, the proportion of car drivers killed after leaving the road is far higher than riders).
- To a far lesser extent, motorcycle casualties are also associated with overtaking manoeuvres either through the action of the rider or another road user.

These are just a few extracts from a large document but which make several points:

- The importance of advanced rider training such as that provided by NAM.
- The “Road Safety” groups pressuring for speed restriction of vehicles.
- The value of motorcycling to the economy.
- Questions over the agenda of ACPO.

Keep safe and watch your back.

The full report can be found at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmtran/460/460.pdf>

## Planning a NAM Rideout

By Ray Charlton

Having volunteered to lead the September rideout I began thinking of a route that would hopefully appeal to most riders.



It then struck me that if anyone is asked to do this that has never done it before, what would be the fundamental basics to ensure the ride is enjoyable, challenging and interesting?

With this in mind I felt that the planning of any ride is a mix of personal knowledge, up to date information about the area you intend to pass through and research on local events that may or may not be of interest to the ride.

I began by thinking of the things I like to avoid where possible and began with traffic congestion; Try to avoid areas known to be black spots.  
(Although the occasional small town or village may well be acceptable)

I also consider Motorways or Dual Carriageways should be avoided, unless being used as a means of rapid access to better things.

Consider the difficulty of the route as you will undoubtedly have a mix of experienced and inexperienced riders, who will have enough to think about without adding potential hazards to their problems.

Another major consideration is the availability of petrol as the tank range on modern machines can range from 90 – 300 miles between fill-ups, so the criteria has to start with the lowest denominator.

The next thing to consider is the length of the ride, 250 miles may be perfectly acceptable at the height of summer, but may not be acceptable in the autumn, once the clocks have gone back.

I find it useful to have a map handy marked with circles centred on our starting point and showing the range of miles in perhaps 50 mile increments, which gives a clear indication of the furthest point you wish to ride to on the ride.

We are extremely fortunate in the North-East and are completely spoilt for choice as Northumberland, Durham, Cumbria and Yorkshire and the Scottish Borders probably have some of the best biking rides in the Country.

I particularly have a leaning towards Yorkshire as the roads from Yarm gives the choice of heading towards Northallerton, Thirsk, Sutton Bank, Helmsley, over the moors to Goathland, Whiby and Scarborough, or alternatively through Stokesley on fantastic roads to Hemsley.

Unfortunately the latter route can be quite heavily policed due to over enthusiastic riding by our fellow bikers, who get bikers in general a bad name.

The only downside of this part of Yorkshire is the considerable mileage on Motorways to reach the better roads and, depending on the return route taken, mile after mile of dual-carriageway from Guiseborough onto the A19 towards Tyneside.

Still looking at an area south of Tyneside, there is the Yorkshire Dales, accessible on reasonable biking roads through County Durham. This gives a vast choice of options on fantastic roads, through wonderful scenery, well catered for with reasonable cafes and providing access to the southern Lake District. Although some of the more remote sections can provide shocks with extremely steep roads and tight hairpins.

Cumbria and the Lake District is another popular choice with access from Northumberland through Alston and Hartside, although it does get well ridden by the 'crazy' fraternity of riders, which in turn attracts quite a lot of police attention.

Northumberland has got to be the icing on the cake with several routes taking you North into fantastic countryside and challenging roads with a great variety of sweeping bends and tight corners, or, alternatively quiet country lanes. (**See Simon Haddens' article in this issue**)

Alternatively, there is an interesting Coastal Route to Seahouses and Bamburgh, allowing you to head inland to Wooler and then North into the Scottish Borders where the world is your oyster.

Kelso, Hawick, Melrose and even an authentic Buddhist Monastery are all there, again with roads to please every biker, allowing you to practise your riding skills at whatever level you are at.

From Hawick you can head west down the A7 towards Langholm, onto Longtown and Brampton and the twisting backroads towards Greenhead Bank and down the Military Road to Chollerford with a biker friendly café right on the round-a-bout.



No ride in Northumberland would be complete without visiting Kielder, another gem of the region and every location mentioned above have the statutory cafes for the frequent stops and natters.

Once you have decided on a destination then get it down on paper, itemising the route with potential fuel and tea stops.

You then need to carry out a recce ride, preferably accompanied by at least another possible group leader and two back markers, to ensure everyone is familiar with the route on the day, making sure you have zeroed your speedometer trip to check the mileages between sections.

During this recce make frequent stops and take note of the time and miles covered at that point. Determine whether fuel is available and a suitable café is there should it be needed. (This also includes personal comfort stops and facilities)

Check that any possible lunch stop is capable and willing to accept a large group of bikers and ascertain what they can offer.

Finally, pull the itinerary all together and copy it to the Rideout Co-ordinator and ideally circulating it on the NAM website.

If it has been planned well then there is less chance of it going wrong. Enjoy your rideouts.

## To the Back of Beyond

By Simon Hadden



A motorcycle is easy to ride along the smallest of roads. This is really rather good. If someone comes along in the opposite direction you can usually squeeze past without too much trouble. Even a turnaround is not much hassle, except on the heaviest of bikes.

On two wheels, you've no excuse to stick to main roads – go exploring. Like many things in life, it helps if you do a little preparation. It may be necessary to polish up your map reading skills and buy a few maps. Don't be put off by this idea .

It's a lot more fun exploring an area if there's no chance of getting lost. If you have the appropriate Ordnance Survey (OS) map, it's impossible to stay lost for more than a few minutes if you're on a road. You can even borrow OS maps from larger public libraries. (Maybe we could run map-reading clinics in addition to slow-riding clinics!)

Near to home, rural areas with dense networks of B-roads and country lanes include:

- a) the upper Wansbeck valley, between Morpeth and Cambo
- b) the area north of Rothbury running up to the Cheviot Hills
- c) the high land bordering the A68 between Corbridge and Kirkwhelpington

You can easily while away a whole day exploring these areas. Some of the roads are so small that even 30mph seems fast. Slow down and admire the view.

Although a map shows the network of roads, it's sometimes difficult to deduce which roads are signed as continuous routes by merely looking at a map.

Such signage makes exploring easier, as you can go a long way, just following the fingerpost signs. You can only determine these routes by travelling on them.

After a few forays, you start recognising the different places and can start exploring the lesser roads. Whilst the map is great for planning and also for working out where you are, stopping to consult the map at every junction is not much fun.



If you keep practicing and visiting the same part of the county, you'll probably find that the map grows in your head – that's inside, not sticking out the top. Eventually, you can make up a route as you travel along. Just as a GPS recalculates routes, your brain will do this too. It just takes practice.

Many places are connected by more than one route. Take Morpeth to Rothbury. I'd guess 85% of motorcyclists head up the A697 to Weldon Bridge and then head for Rothbury along the Coquet – all rather mundane.



Another 15% head west from Morpeth to Scot's Gap or Cambo and then head north – a more interesting ride. The remaining 5% take the “direct” route via Pigdon and Netherwitton. This route’s quiet, narrow, bumpy and by far the most fun. I’d wager that it’s only used by those who can read a map. You’re unlikely to stumble on this one, yet it’s a continuous route.

Another local example – Kielder to Hawick. From the Kielder road end, most riders head north via Bonchester Bridge. The alternative is to turn left and head south for four miles. This isn’t obvious but with a map

all is revealed. A short lane takes you via the former railway station at Steele Road to a wonderful little road that runs through the hills for twenty or so miles, via Whitrope Summit, before tumbling down into Hawick, emerging on the main street.

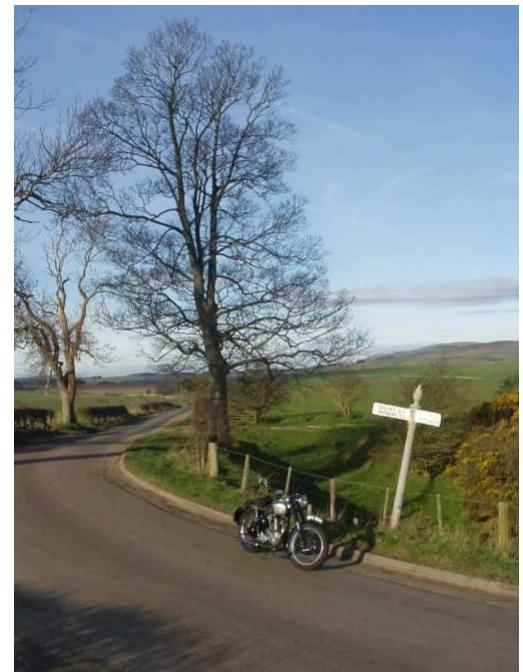
Once you’ve mastered the local area, you can use the same skills further afield. An enjoyable, yet completely pointless, way to spend a summer weekend is to enter one of the national rallies for motorcyclists. These take place in Wales (May), England (July) and Scotland (September). You make up your own route, visiting specified checkpoints as you travel about. There are several variations within each rally, starting wherever you like and ending at the same point as everyone else. It forms the perfect excuse to visit places off the beaten track.

Starting at 10.00 on the Saturday and ending at 12.00 on the Sunday these events offer the reason to cover hundreds of miles over roads you’d never normally visit. If you choose to forsake a B&B and kip under a hedge for a few hours, you can cover even more miles just for the fun of it – the joys of motorcycling. One night per year under the stars is quite sufficient as it gets decidedly chilly at 4 a.m. in September.

Most of our continental neighbours also produce 1:50,000 maps, though few seem as detailed or clear as the OS maps. Honourable exceptions include maps of the Alps and Italian Dolomites, together with those from northern Spain (Catalonia), which are rather nice.

On the Internet, these maps can be expensive and it’s usually cheaper to buy them when you arrive. Sometimes this is easier said than done. The Catalonian maps, for instance, seem only to be available in good bookshops, with garages and kiosks selling only infamous road maps. These awful offerings show neither contours nor details such as railways and rivers – the very details which make route planning and navigation simpler. Remember – the simpler the map, the harder it is to navigate, especially if you want to avoid main highways.

So, dear reader, get a map and go and ride to the back of beyond. Then put pen to paper and tell us all about it.



## 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, 25th September 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-onlne.org](http://www.nam-onlne.org)  
Tel: 0191 2533983



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



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.