



Riders' Chronicles



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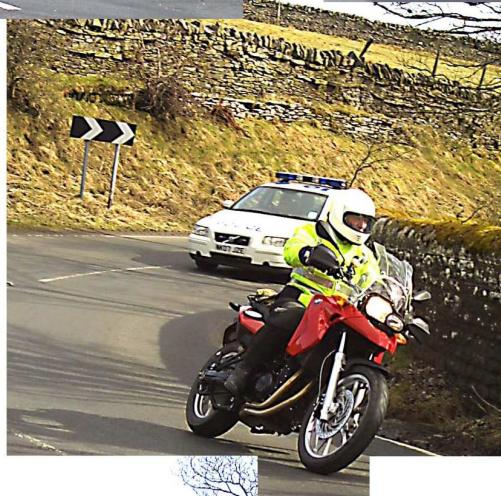
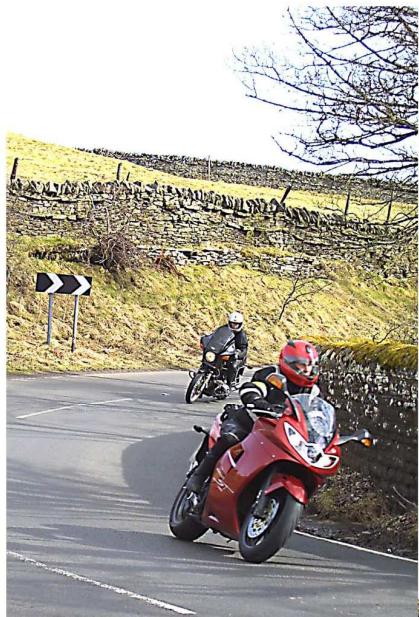
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May / June 2009

The Newsletter of Northumbria
Advanced Motorcyclists

First Rideout 15th March 2009



Chairman's ramblings

At last winter is behind us and the days are opening up and getting warmer. We have already had our first rideouts, well supported as usual and putting smiles back on many faces as we shake off the winter blues and look forward to summer and (hopefully!!) the warmer weather.



As usual, NAM has a comprehensive programme planned ahead for you starting off with four Cornering Clinics, which is worth a visit have you not attended one before. The remaining four events are arranged for later in the year.

As well as the monthly rideouts, organised by several new faces, we have had the annual pilgrimage to Pitlochry at the recently refurbished Pitlochry Hydro Hotel and our second trip to Wales later in the year.

I would encourage you to participate in as many of these events as possible to allow you to get the most out of your membership.

In addition to these events, the Training Team have a busy training programme for new Observers and potential Senior

Observers. Should you be interested in becoming an Observer, please contact any member of the Training Team who will provide you with all information you require.

Following the dramatic increase in Membership Fees by the IAM, they are now increasing the 'Skills for Life' programme to £139.00. Whilst this is quite a hike at anytime, in the light of the current depression, the timing of such a move must be questioned and it remains to be seen whether it will have an adverse effect on recruitment for NAM.

Whilst such an increase may seem very little to folk in the affluent South, here in the North-East to those lucky enough to still be in employment, many are facing a reduction in their working week, with the corresponding reduction in salary and even possible redundancy at any time.

I can foresee many potential Associates thinking twice about spending their hard earned cash on something they are not even obliged to consider, putting the money saved towards something more important in life to them.

No doubt time will tell if I am right or wrong, but as we have already seen a drop of close on 100 not renewing their subscriptions this year, following the earlier announcement regarding the IAM subscription, I fear that this bitter pill may just be one too many.

Some hot news just in – Northumbria Police has decided to disband its motorcycle section and has sold its brand new and unused fleet of BMW RT's to Avon & Somerset Police. This could be something else that could have quite a devastating effect on NAM's recruiting capability as it is highly likely that this will also mark the end of the Cornering Clinics, which has previously been an excellent venue for recruiting new Associates for NAM.

On a brighter note, Clive Taylor and I are about to embark on the task of producing an 'in house' training video and the first attempt will be a demonstration advanced test. It is hoped that if this proves to be successful, we will look towards a similar venture on cornering, observation etc. Should you have any suggestions on this front, please let us know.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A. Slater	R W Bell
T P Mason	

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

Funny

Supplied by Neil Hamilton

The chief woman 'Greenie Tree-Hugging Activist', who was responsible for getting horses banned from National parks and State forests, was climbing a tree to have a look out over the forest when a Tawny Frogmouth Owl attacked her for invading its nesting site.

In a panic to escape, she slid down the tree, getting a great number of splinters lodged in her crotch area. In considerable pain she hurried to the nearest doctor, and told him she was an environmentalist and how she got allthe splinters.

The doctor, who was no environmentalist, listened with great patience and then told her to go into the examining room and he would see if he could help her. She waited for 3 hours before the doctor reappeared. Angry, the woman demanded, 'What took you so long?'

'Well...' replied the doctor, '...I had to get permits from the Environmental Protection Agency; the Forestry Service; the National Parks and Wildlife Service; the Wilderness Society and the Department of Conservation and Land Management before I could remove 'old growth timber' from a 'recreational area' .

...

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
17 th May	Don Frazer	Heading West
21 st June	Craig Hopkins	Scarborough
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

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.



Do you have to keep a bit on the side?

By Clive Taylor

Some years ago it was a common sight to see a sidecar attached to a motorcycle. After all, the working man had a tough time affording a car particularly before the advent of less pricy four wheelers like the Austin A30, Morris Minor 1000 and mini. So if you couldn't afford four wheels, three would do almost as well.

In their heyday of the forties and fifties bikes with sidecars were pressed into service hauling Mom, Dad and a couple of youngsters plus a load of luggage off on their annual hols at the seaside with little problem.

Remember, bikes were different then with easy back yard maintenance and a lusty engine providing lots of torque rather than outright power. The reverse in fact of today's bikes. What's more bikes up to the 1960's came with their frames conveniently arranged with fittings to take a sidecar should you choose to mount one. And it wasn't just large capacity bikes that were used either. Most of the major sidecar manufacturers (of which there were many) featured lightweight ones in their catalogue including those for use with Vespa and Lambretta scooters. What the hill climbing performance was like I dread to think !



So, what about this black art of sidecaring then. The first thing to realize is that the geometry of this strange asymmetric three wheeler is quite critical if you want to have any chance of negotiating any sort of corner at all. Sidecars could be supplied with a host of different frame fittings to cope with different bikes. Swan necks, plugs, straights and ball joints were all used to glue bike to sidecar.

Now the clever bit. For best results you need at the very least three if not four connections to achieve a solid assembly. Otherwise the whole thing bends and flexes and eventually something breaks. Don't forget with a whole compliment of passengers and holiday luggage, half a ton dead weight is quite easy to achieve.

Next take the sidecar body off the chassis so you can see what's going on.

The bike has to lean away from the sidecar by one inch measured at the handlebar so you need a plumbob and a spirit level and a method of holding the bike in place. Ropes tied to the garage door is good ! Now you need to arrange the sidecar chassis so that the sidecar wheel is anywhere between three inches and a foot in front of the bikes back wheel. But be prepared to move it backwards and forwards after a test ride if it won't go round corners.

Get hold of a big ball of string. Put a piece along the outside of the bike wheels and adjust the steering so the string is straight. Put another piece along the sidecar wheel and jiggle the chassis about until there is a $\frac{3}{4}$ " toe in, just like a car. Miss this bit out and the thing will never go straight.

When all this is done sort out the connections and bolt it up. Not so easy because the fittings are designed to go on square and you want some of them to bend a bit to get the tracking right ! Leave the body off and motor smartly up the road for a test ride. Park your wife or child on the

sidecar mudguard to hold it down. A degree of faith is required here as the point of no return is approaching!

If it wont go straight either the toe in is wrong or the bike lean out is wrong or both. Back to the garage for adjustments then.

When you come to the first left hand corner, give it some beans and the bike should pivot around the sidecar wheel. If not you will go straight on quickly realizing that the sidecar wheel lead is wrong. If you have the sophistication of a separate brake for the sidecar wheel, give it a prod to start the reaction.



Now head confidently to your first right hand corner. Shut the throttle and the sidecar will begin to overtake the bike. A dab of back brake will assist. If it still goes straight on you've got the sidecar wheel lead wrong the other way. Hay ho, back to the house to re-adjust everything.

Get it all right and you can steer with either the brake or throttle. But never, ever hit the sidecar wheel brake when turning right.

When all is well, re-fit the sidecar body and offer friends or spouse a spin. Don't be put off by their reticence. Insist that they join you and appreciate your new found skill. After all, you can provide toilet paper discretely tucked underneath the seat.

Here's a tip. If you choose a sporty lightweight sidecar for extra zip and you are sad enough to have no chums on board, shove a hundredweight of spuds or a load of bricks inside otherwise every time you show off going round a left hand bend the sidecar wheel lifts alarmingly causing sphincter palpitations.

So enjoy a bit on the side and live in peace with your sidecar.

P.S. With this winter's weather in mind, I can tell you that the best vehicle to use in snow is a bike and sidecar. You can't fall off, you see and the traction is surprisingly good.

Very Important for drivers.

Please pass on to all friends/colleagues.

Unwitting motorists face £1,000 fines as thousands of photo card driving licences expire.

Thousands of motorists are at risk of being fined up to £1,000 because they are unwittingly driving without a valid licence.

They risk prosecution after failing to spot the extremely small print on their photo card licence which says it automatically expires after 10 years and has to be renewed - even though drivers are licensed to drive until the age of 70.

The fiasco has come to light a decade after the first batch of photo licences was issued in July 1998, just as they start to expire. Motoring organisations blamed the Government for the fiasco and said 'most' drivers believed their licences were for life.

A mock-up driving licence from 1998 when the photo cards were launched shows the imminent expiry date as item '4b'. They said officials had failed to publicise sufficiently the fact that new-style licences - unlike the old paper ones - expire after a set period and have to be renewed.

To rub salt into wounds, drivers will have to pay £17.50 to renew their card - a charge which critics have condemned as a 'stealth tax' and which will earn the Treasury an estimated £437million over 25 years. Official DVLA figures reveal that while 16,136 expired this summer, so far only 11,566 drivers have renewed, leaving 4,570 outstanding.

With another 300,000 photo card licences due to expire over the coming year, experts fear the number of invalid licences will soar, putting thousands more drivers in breach of the law and at risk of a fine. At the heart of the confusion is the small print on the tiny credit-card-size photo licence, which is used in conjunction with the paper version.

Just below the driver name on the front of the photo card licence is a series of dates and details - each one numbered. Number 4b features a date in tiny writing, but no explicit explanation as to what it means. The date's significance is only explained if the driver turns over the card and reads the key on the back, which states that '4b' means 'licence valid to'. Even more confusingly, an adjacent table on the rear of the card sets out how long the driver is registered to hold a licence - that is until his or her 70th birthday.

A total of 25 million new-style licences have been issued but - motoring experts say - drivers were never sufficiently warned they would expire after 10 years. Motorists who fail to renew their licences in time are allowed to continue driving but the DVLA says they could be charged with 'failing to surrender their licence', an offence carrying a £1,000 fine.

AA president, Edmund King said: 'It is not generally known that photo card licences expire: there appears to be a lack of information that people will have to renew these licences. 'People think they have already paid them for once over and that is it.'

'It will come as a surprise to motorists and a shock that they have to pay an extra £17.50.'

The AA called on the Government to use the annual £450million from traffic enforcement fines to offset the renewal charge.

Scottoiler

By Louise Bennett

I thought that I would share my Scottoiler experience with the group!

A while ago I purchased a Scottoiler complete with the touring kit and a dual applicator.



I managed to pick up the whole bundle for a fiver on the internet.

When it arrived in the post the parcel was streaming with blue oil because the previous owner had not bothered to empty the reservoir.

I can only assume that this moment of laziness had cost the sender a few extra pounds of postage stamps!

However, I fitted the kit to my Bandit and had good use from it for about a year.

After this time I found that it wasn't dispensing the oil anymore. Try as I might I emptied, refilled, took the unit apart, did all of the suggested things on the Scottoiler website, and a few more besides, but to no avail.

Rather than getting rid of the offending device I thought that a phone call to Scottoiler might help.

I got the number from the website (whatever did we do before the invention of the World Wide Web?) and made a call.

cannot remember who I spoke to but whoever it was, was very helpful and gave me a few other hints and things to try.

Unfortunately not even this got my oiler working. I emailed the chap I spoke to and he told me to parcel up the 'dispensing bit' and send it to Scottoiler.

Within three days I had the parcel returned to me fixed free of charge and ready to go back on the bike. They even refunded the return postage!

I cannot think of the last time that I had such a good service from a company.

I can only say that such a customer-caring attitude should not go unnoticed and that I will be telling everyone about this experience!

Forever a fan

A Good and A Bad Sunday

By Billy Wilson

Sunday 15th March, the first rideout of the year.

Got up to a nice blue sky, the weather forecast was good and set off up the A19 to meet the lads at Seaton Burn services.

Suddenly a pheasant ran into the road and then flew right towards me; it was like everything went in slow motion.

I managed to put my head down and the bird hit me on the top of my head and on the shoulder. Luckily I managed to control the bike and arrived at Seaton Burn.

There were about 50 club members and we were quickly sorted into 3 groups, I was in group 2 led by Dave Glennie and back marker Craig Hopkins.



We set off for Chollerford passing through Belsay, Kirkharle and Hexham Road.

On arrival at Chollerford we had a coffee stop, then headed up to Penrith.

Leaving Penrith we made our way to Workington then onto Dalston which was a really nice stretch of road and the lovely weather made it all the better.



The rest of the day was spent travelling through Warwick Bridge, Stagshaw, Greenhead heading back to Chollerford.

However, not all was well as whilst on the Military Road near Brampton I changed down the gears for the corner when my bike cut out. Being unable to restart it, some of the lads helped me push the bike down to a garage but still couldn't get it started so I had to ring for recovery.

The lads offered to stay with me but I told them to carry on with their ride.

The recovery couldn't fix my bike and had to bring me all the way home. The following day the bike was taken to Westgate Road for repair.

It turned out to be the front brake sensor switch which had short circuited on the handle bars and also took out the alarm as well.

My day went from good (the lovely weather), to bad (the pheasant), to good (the rideout), to bad (the breakdown), to very bad (the repair bill!!!!).

Thanks to all the lads who helped or offered to stay with me. It was appreciated.

Book & Magazine reviews.

By Tony Forster

“Lois on the Loose” and “Red Tape and White Knuckles”.

Lois Pryce is married to Austin Vince, famous for Mondo Enduro, a bunch of lads circumnavigating the globe on Suzuki DR350's.

Lois' first book “Lois on the Loose” documents her leaving her unsatisfying job for a journey on a Yamaha xt255 Serow through North and South America and does so in a very readable style. Rather than it being a travelogue, it's much more of how a traveller and, especially a lone female traveller, reacts with the people she meets in some fairly notorious macho South American countries. Like most trips you read about, Border crossings are the difficult bits, with over zealous, underpaid officials generally trying to extort money from the unwary traveller. The way she mostly deals with these successfully is pretty impressive. Travelling alone can take its toll and she does hook up with others along the way, some more successfully than others.

All in all a good read and well recommended.

In between books Lois gets hitched to Austin Vince and then decides it's a good idea to ride solo through Africa, North to South. This is a much tougher journey, this time on a Yamaha 250 off roader and you really get a sense of what the (to us) madly unstable continent is all about. Despite all advice not to go there, she even travels through the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Hint; anything that has Democratic in its title is the exact opposite and should be renamed “Likely to Die”. Her adventures are based on a route ridden and travelled by two ladies who did the trip on a motorcycle combination in the early 1930's, when all the countries were colonies of the various European powers (and much better organised).

Strangely enough, when she finally reaches Namibia she is taken aback by the sudden sterile travelling on appalling roads and living on your wits organisation and sanitation of everything, which is a huge culture shock when you have been. ***Another book to recommend (and, no, I'm not her agent).***

Magazine review

Trail Bike Magazine (TBM).

I have been reading this one on and off for a few years now, even though I haven't had a trail bike for decades and finally decided to subscribe on a two year deal. It's quite hard to find the mag, as it's a small A5 (I think) size and often gets put behind others in WH Smith's racks of Celebrity fest rubbish (who reads all that crap, anyway?) Anyway, the publication as the name suggests is all about offroad stuff and covers trail bike, motorcross and enduro bike tests (and their related sports), together with anything new like electric trail bikes and alternative fuel powered machines. There are also some interesting columnists, including (again) Lois Pryce and Chris Evans, no, not the ginger haired DJ (can you say ginger haired these days or is it offensive?). This Chris Evans, runs off road tours in France and manages Cyril Despres ; who? Multiple Paris-Dakar winner and general Rallye Raid god, that's who. They also test out trail riding holidays round the Globe.

The tests they do are very unbiased and much more indepth than the more mainstream monthly mags. I did get a bit lost off with some of the competition reports, until I began to recognise the personalities and how many off road, trials and enduro World champions we have in this country, but you soon pick this up. ***Verdict; worth a punt of your £3.50 for one month at least.***

Tips for New Riders

by Ray Charlton

Now that the biking season has started and many of us are venturing out for the first time for several months, it is essential that your mind is focused on the potential dangers you face and in particular the skill of assessing road surfaces and conditions and adjusting your riding to match what is there at all times.

Learn to read the road ahead to extract knowledge of what lies before you and use this knowledge to plan your progress carefully and safely.



Scanning the road ahead and assessing its ever changing surfaces and responding to what you see is essential to stay safe. The handling characteristics of your bike are very much dependent on tyre grip and changing road surfaces can vary these characteristics greatly.

Fundamental riding control is determined by this grip as it plays a major role in how your bike handles and responds, as it affects steering, cornering, braking and acceleration.

The average rider does not pay sufficient attention to changes in road surfaces whereas the better riders are constantly aware of the road surface and its surroundings and how it can affect them.

A rider who has developed these skills is constantly looking well ahead to identify changing road surface conditions and adjusts his speed and strength of his braking, acceleration, banking and steering to retain adequate road holding and remain safe.

A thinking rider is constantly aware of the surroundings and how they can affect the road surface and the handling of his bike.

Different situations call for vigilance in different ways:-

On Town Roads – Be aware and try to avoid riding over metal drains or slippery metal inspection covers, tar-banding, pot-holes or repaired sections after excavations, oil, diesel and petrol spillages and road paint.

On Country Roads – Tar banding (the tar joint around repairs) mud or other droppings, (from cattle!) spilt grain in summer and wet leaves in autumn, cats-eyes and road paint. (White lines, 'Slow' markings etc.)

Garages / Service Stations – Fuel spillages on roads, roundabouts and bends, especially on or near motorways.

Be aware of the camber of the road on a curve or a bend. Know the difference between a Crown Camber and a Super Elevation.

The slope of the camber increases stability if it falls in the direction of lean, but reduces stability if it rises in the direction of lean.

A Super Elevation bend provides stability in both directions, unlike a normal Crown Camber. If you cross over the crown of the road on a left-hand bend you enter an area where the slope of

the camber is destabilising as it is sloping in the opposite direction.

Most road surfaces are good for road holding when they are clean and dry. At hazards such as roundabouts, or junctions, tyre deposits and fuel spillages may make the surface slippery at precisely the point where effective steering, braking and acceleration are needed to negotiate the hazard safely.

Be particularly vigilant if it suddenly rains following a long hot dry spell as the surface can be particularly lethal due to an abnormally high deposit of tyre (rubber dust) deposits building up and creating a slippery film on the surface when wet.

These deposits are normally washed away with frequent showers and do not normally present such a hazard to bikers, but if there has been a long dry spell, beware.

There are four types of road surface that each vary in characteristics and have both advantages and disadvantages to riders.

Asphalt / Tarmac – Give a good grip when they are dressed with stones or chippings, but, in time become polished and lose some of their skid resistant properties. Watch out for shiny and worn sections that may not offer as good a grip as the dressed area.

Concrete – Often have roughened ribs which give a good skid resistant surface, but can hold water, which freezes in cold weather and creates a slippery surface that is not easily seen.

Cobble Sets – Low grip when wet and any rain increases the likelihood of skidding.

Specialised Anti-skid Surfaces – Good when new but deteriorates with age, reducing grip. (Often laid for experimental and comparison purposes)

Road Surface Changes (worn or patched areas)

Keep a careful lookout for any irregularities in the road surface. If you can alter your position to avoid them without putting yourself into other dangers, then do so, but remember vital checks such as mirror and head-checks before changing position.



If you are unable to avoid them, carry out rear observation and reduce speed. Where possible, ride over them in an upright position to maintain control and stability.

Common surface irregularities are:-

White Lines etc; – The white plastic paint used in road markings is very slippery when wet and the edges can be likened to tar-banding.

Where possible avoid riding over such markings, or choose a position that will minimise the danger.

For example where there is a 'slow' sign painted on the road, **ride** between the letters rather than over them

Road Joints (Tar Banding) – Take care where road repairs have left poor joints between the reinstated surface and the original road surface.

Even slight variations in height can affect machine stability, deflecting the bike from its intended course and can catch you out very easily.

Avoid road joints running along the length of the road, usually where an extended trench has been excavated.

Tar-banding provides less grip than the surrounding surfaces, particularly when wet.

Metal Covers – Manhole covers, drain covers, temporary metal sheeting and cattle grids, can be included provide poor grip especially when dusty or wet.

Unfortunately in many urban areas, manhole covers and similar hazards are often in the natural line of a bike.

Avoid them where you can or at the very least try to keep the bike upright.

Physical Defects – Potholes, projecting manhole covers, sunken gullies and general debris are serious danger to the rider.

Keep a constant lookout for them and ride around them if possible.

Otherwise, brake while you are on the approach and pass over them slowly.

Always consider rear observation before you brake or deviate in any way.

Conclusions

Maintain your vigilance through good observation and early identification of potential hazards, formulate an action plan and negotiate the danger safely.

Develop this skill and your riding will certainly be a lot safer.

- 000 -

Funny from A. Dalkin

A woman goes to see a psychiatrist and tells him her husband does nothing for her love life..

"Have you considered taking another lover?" asks the doctor
"I have already done that, but he is still not enough for me." She said.

"How about taking another lover?" he suggests
"I keep trying that and I now have seven lovers, plus my husband, but I still can't seem to get enough." She moaned.

"My goodness." Says the doctor. "You're quite an anomaly."

"Oh thank goodness for that." She quirps. "Will you please tell them all I'm an anomaly?
"They all keep calling me a slapper."

TDM Long Term Test

By Clive Taylor

The purchase of the Yam 900 TDM at the end of 2004 was the start of a four year period of quite a lot of biking for me. Having lived with it now for 52000 miles it might be interesting to see how we've got on together.



It has stayed generally standard, but I did fit a Scotoiler almost from day one, which I believe in soundly. The first chain lasted 31000 miles and was still ok and the second chain shows only slight wear now. I fitted a front mudguard extension which has had little effect and the engine paint has come off at the front of the crankcase and barrels. It's not too much of a problem though, because the paint is a sort of silvery colour very similar to aluminum anyway so it's not so noticeable.

Cold hands in winter is a bummer so I fitted hand guards from a BMW 1150 GS. You have to modify the bar end weights but then they fit just fine. Hein Gerrick (Daytona) heated grips are cheap and effective.

The standard screen, I find directs the wind blast straight to the chest so I fitted the tallest available from Yamaha which is 6" higher than standard. The only problem is that I find it a bit noisy around the helmet but it does the trick.

The bike itself is a sort of trailey style which suits me. The seat height is ok for my 5'8" and I can get both feet on the ground. Padding is just about ok and is good for 250 miles before you need to ease your cheeks!

Reach to the handlebars can be adjusted but the foot pegs are fixed. The tank is said to hold 20 litres but it actually holds about 21 and that can give a range of 250 miles if you are careful. Even if you give it some stick 200 miles is pretty easy. Over 50mpg is normal and I managed 62mpg on a trip round Britain a couple of years back. It doesn't use any oil between services and normal 10 – 40 SAE oil is used, not the fancy stuff.

The engine is an offset twin so runs like a vee twin which has a pleasant sound and feel to it. It's reasonably smooth and is fitted with two balance shafts which help a lot if long motorway journeys are your thing.



The 6 speed gearbox has been reliable but I still feel that the shift is a bit clunky. You sort of get used to it and compensate but it is not as good as a Suzuki gearbox.

The suspension is fine and fully adjustable although I think that the single rear unit might be getting just a bit tired now. It seems to go a bit squirmy if pushed hard round bumpy bends. I

suppose the answer is – don't push it hard around bumpy bends ! That saves buying a new damper unit.

Some weight is carried a bit high so you need to be careful pushing it around but it doesn't seem to be a problem when on the move even when slow riding.

All the fixings have stayed rust free and apart from the paint on the engine all the other paint and plastic has survived very well considering it has gone through four winters.

Thus far I have taken it to Ian Bell's for all the servicing (minor every 6000 miles, major every 12000 miles) and they work out at about £110.00 a time which isn't too bad. The lack of a conventional fairing makes it cheaper as everything is accessible.

Tyres are lasting about 8000 miles which is sort of ok by modern bike standards. I've used Metzeler Roadtec lately which seem ok to me. Both wheels are quick and easy to remove & replace providing that you fit a centre stand which does not come as standard. Stupid !

All the electrics have been reliable but the headlight (especially on main beam) is not good and lacks penetration. The lights have no separate switch (like most bikes these days) and I have replaced the dipped beam bulb twice now but it can be done without removing any bodywork in 5 minutes. Surprisingly the rear bulb (also on all the time) is the original.

Many TDM 900's seem to have a problem with the fast idle when the engine is first started and is cold. Either the fast idle is not fast enough or it won't come back down to its normal tickover speed when warm.

I am the world expert on this irritating problem and have now cured it. So if you have a TDM with this problem give me a ring.

I have had to replace the fork seals once. Not because they were leaking but because the seals are held in by a silly steel retaining clip. This can corrode and in so doing damages the dust seal. The fork legs come out very easily but you need a special tool to strip the fork legs down. Yamaha sell this tool for about a million pounds so I made one at work which club members can hire from me for £100.00 a time! ***Is that all! - Ed***
The seals and new clips were quite cheap but I don't think this should happen.

I had to fit a new battery last year so the original only lasted 3 years. I suppose it is about normal today. The problem is that as soon as the battery loses a bit of steam. That's it. The bike seems to need a sound battery otherwise it just won't fire. Mine stays on a charger all the time especially during the winter.

The brakes are good especially the front and the pads last for ages. The back one works ok but for some reason the disc has become badly grooved and I can't fathom out why. This goes hand in hand with rapidly wearing rear pads. So far I've got through 4 sets even though I am not hard on brakes. It must be a function of the single piston design. I have noticed other TDM 900's have exactly the same problem so it's not just my bike.

Another good thing is that it is easy to clean. Three spoke cast wheels and everything accessible helps.



In the practical world of real motorcycling, the TDM is pretty good. It carries load very well and hard luggage can be fitted easily. Good at covering long distances with ease it is sure footed when the weather is bad. Reliable, definitely and it has a good turn of speed, only running out of steam when well above the national speed limit. It has very good torque that can pick up strongly coming out of slow bends.

They all seem to have a strange flat spot just off the throttle stop. It manifests itself when you need to pull away from a slow bend or roundabout having closed the throttle. Nothing happens for a split second and then power comes on with a snatch. I am told it is the way that the software is configured in the ECU but I would have thought that could have been ironed out by now.

Good looking, well that's in the eye of the beholder. My wife thinks its dead ugly.

Would I buy another one – yes, it's jolly good value, practical and reliable. The only problem I have is that the second hand value on my bike is now very low because of the mileage on the clock. This is such a stupid problem in the bike industry. Any modern bike should be able to run 100,000 miles without problem just like a modern car.

I notice that there are quite a few TDM's in NAM now so maybe folks are finding it an attractive proposition just like our continental brothers have been doing for years.

Ode to an Advanced Rider

By The Balding Biker (unknown!)

Advanced riders use a system
to safely and smoothly progress
others use the seat of their pants
but sometimes things end up a mess

For our system we need information
we take it, use it and give
it lead us to make good decisions
helping us longer to live

Our position is very important
and our speed as we go on our way
to be in the right gear is essential
as we torque ourselves through the day

Accelerating out of the hazards
never using speed to excess
looking after ourselves and others
we will always make good progress

So remember when using our system
please don't cause others to frown
keep the shiny side ever upward
and the oily side firmly down



**With apologies' to this rider! I just needed
A good photo to fill this space. - Ed**

My Early Years

By Dave Henderson

On Reading Tony Forster's exploits in the May / June 08 issue of Riders Chronicles prompted me to think about my hiking histor, particularly his mention of the Red Hills".

I thought that I was the only one to have had experience of riding around the "hills" and I was quite amazed at someone else knowing about them.

I moved house when I was 10 yrs old to North Kenton. This move enables me to experience the joys of the countryside. Not on a motorised bike but on my beloved Raleigh racing bike, One of my regular haunts was to go to the afore mentioned with newly found friends.

The hills were only 2 to 3 miles away from my house but it seemed to take forever to get there.

When I think back about riding through those country lanes it was brilliant.

As many subscribers to the magazine have pointed out no traffic to speak of, birds and other wild life in abundance in the hedgerows - Happy days.



This all took place circa 1954 / 55 and the hills could still be seen from the A1 until very recently but, unlike Tony's theory of them being red clay, I put their colour and shape down to them being slag from the mines which had smouldered (they were warm to the touch) over a long period of time to change the appearance to what became known as the "Red Hills".

Moving onto my motor biking experiences - My introduction to bikes came about when I left school at the tender age of 15 and started work as an apprentice motor mechanic.

My place of work was in Back Goldspink Lane in Sandyford and although it was primarily all about cars, the owner had a pa! who was the Foreman of the motorcycle side of St. Andrews Motors, situated in Gallowgate. (***I purchased my first new BSA 650 from here. – Ed***)

He was known as Norman (Tubby) Harrison. He used the workshops where I worked to do "govy" jobs along with buying and selling bikes and that led to my first introduction to bikes.

My first bike, if you could call it that, was an N.S.U. Quickly 49cc moped.

Unfortunately It was an insurance write off having caught fire and was being disposed of by the Insurance Company.

I became the new owner for the princely sum of £2. With an abundance of guidance from Tubby I stripped, re-sprayed and rewired it to make it road worthy again. I used it to commute to work and eventually passed my on it (1st time!).

Trying to give right turning hand signals and maintain speed was a bit of a nightmare, so it was time for me to part with the moped and move onto bigger things.

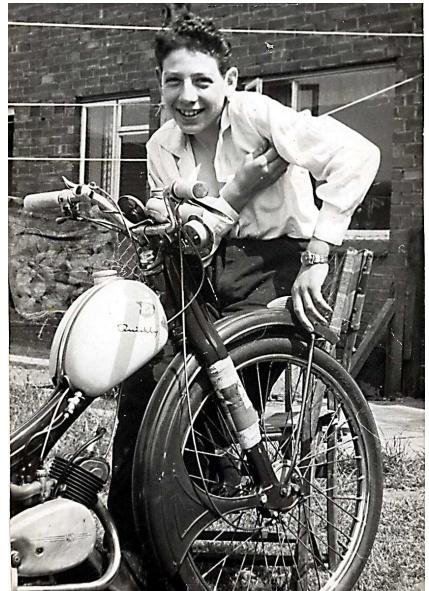
I sold it to a window cleaner from Low Fell for a whacking £18, The bigger thing was in the guise of a B.S.A. Bantam 125cc. Life with the Bantam was uneventful other than it had the infuriating habit of when putting it into first gear it would go backwards, yes backwards, which could be quite disconcerting especially when there were cars behind you.

I can't remember how I disposed of the Bantam but better things awaited, It had what would now be described as "wow" factor, Come in my next bike the Triumph Cub 150cc, It seemed sensible at this stage to give the old head a bit of protection and I became the proud owner of my 1st crash helmet. I must have looked a picture when wearing it, It was made of thick cork and in the shape of a basin! It does'nt bear thinking about now.

It proved to be a good investment at the end of the day as two spills soon put it to the test.

First one a Morris Minor Estate pulled out in front of me on Clayton Road, in Jesmond.

I hit it side on and vanished over the top of the car.



With head in one piece but masses of bruises I was taken to the R.V.I in an ambulance and eventually pass off as fit enough to be sent home.



This was about 1962 and I receive a bill from the ambulance service for attending the accident for £7, So being charged for emergency assistance is nothing new.

My second was at the junction of Jubilee Road and Salters Road when the front wheel went over a wet manhole cover. And I lost control. I was very briefly knocked out this time but passers by helped me to the roadside and once I got myself sorted out I carried on to work.

At the time I couldn't understand how I came off and I went back to see why I came a cropper It was then that I saw the manhole cover top was in fact wood blocks. It was like that for many years and may even be like that now (*There used to be quite a large area of these blocks immediately in front of the old Dene Motor Company in the Haymarket, (next to the Farmers Rest) and they claimed many an unsuspecting biker in the wet, including my own Father. – Ed*)

Once again it was time to move on from the Triumph which I sold but I didn't bother replacing it, although helping Tubby with his sideline I got the opportunity to borrow many makes of bikes, Manufacturers of which I can remember, but individual models escape me now.

The only one that has stuck in my mind was having the chance to ride a Ducati 125. Whizzing around on that red bike was exhilarating to say the least.

Because of other things happening in my early days (girls for one!) motor cycles did not seem that important anymore and I drifted away from them and eventually moved on to 4 wheels.

I did eventually come back to bikes but that's for another time perhaps.

life in the slow lane.

By Sid Corke

Normally, throughout the winter, the bike is my main source of transport apart from the occasional use of the family car during spells of bad weather, usually coinciding with an empty petrol tank on the bike.



This year however, I have been fortunate to have the use of my brothers little 50cc Peugot Speedfight scooter, but, after my first ride on it, I concluded that 35mph was not sufficient for my needs so it was time to embark on some home brewed tuning to improve the performance.

The exhaust was 'modified', air filter cleaned and main jet drilled out slightly and about 5 mm removed from the top of the carburettor slide and a quick road test revealed that another 10mph was available from the little 50cc two stroke..

I have to admit its great fun riding around with the feeling that the speed is far greater than it actually is and even more satisfying at the thought that I am achieving almost 100% better fuel consumption than the TDM.

The greatest satisfaction is knowing that my pride and joy, the TDM, is safe from the rigours of winter salt and crud.

Following the advice in the last newsletter about keeping warm by wearing a hi-viz jacket to keep out the cold winds. I can now confirm that this was good tip and has helped to maintain my comfort as this winter has been long and hard.

Riding throughout the winter, with its dark mornings and evenings with the occasional icy roads does make you appreciate the skills learned through advanced riding, particularly positioning to make your presence more visible and smooth use of the controls to stay out of trouble, which is just as well as the number of cars that pull out of side roads in front of me is alarming.

The main cause of not seeing bikers is that their car windows are iced or snowed up, or even just misted up, as the drivers have not bothered to clean them, or have just scraped a small 'porthole' to peer through. It is no wonder that many bikers become victims of such thoughtless road users.



Whilst the scooter has been pressed into service the TDM has been getting some TLC, having the brakes cleaned, freed off with new pads and much polishing has been carried out.

I had previously looked down my nose at such little bikes, but now I now know these little machines can be fun in their own way as well as being an extremely economical and practical mode of transport.

Another Day At The Office

By Neil Hamilton

Thanks for the sub Darling

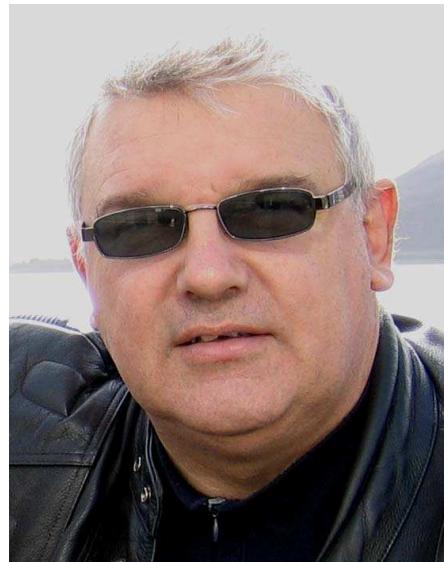
Mr Diary says: "Monday 26th January 2009, 10:30, Meeting at Colburn Business Park, North Yorkshire (next to Catterick Garrison)".

Don't you just hate those business meetings?

But American prophet Edgar Cayce said "*actually, we have no problems - we have opportunities for which we should give thanks*". I have long wondered however if Apollo 13 astronaut Jim Lovell's immortal words could ever have been Houston, we have an opportunity. My opportunity however was clear-cut.

Multimap's route offering was via A690, A1M, A6136: a decidedly boring 52 miles. The opportunities for a motorcyclist were many.

08:30 start as the cold January night offered plenty of microclimate "opportunities" en route.



Sweeping out past the Lambton Estate towards Chester-le-Street, the early morning sun behind casting shadows of bike and rider onto the road ahead as car drivers on their way to work were passed briskly.

Westward to Stanley (according to urban myth, taken during the Falklands War of 1982 in a pincer movement by the Irish SAS from an airdrop in East Falkirk and a beach landing at Coxgreen), Maiden Law and Lanchester.

Onward, via Cornsay Colliery, past the array of wind turbines onto the A68 at Tow Law. No collieries now, the best we can do is a museum in Northumberland with wind now seeking to provide the power once generated courtesy of British pitmen and King Coal.



Tempus fugit so no time for a bacon bun stop at the Wear View Diner, just a right turn and South to Staindrop.

A couple of years ago I taught for three months at the school there and had to make the return journey every day, rough but someone had to do it. How many ways are there back to Sunderland from Staindrop? (*answers on a postcard please*).

The road continued south via Winston, across the A66, through Gilling West and into Richmond. Almost 10:00, quiet streets

as the workers were now at their treadmills then few country miles saw me to my destination in a new business park which could easily have been delivered as an Ikea flatpack.

11:30 meeting over, the sun was higher and the day much warmer. What to do now?

Motorway or some other way? Hmm, difficult one, let me think.

Several nanoseconds pass, the boxer engine is humming and the front wheel pointing Reethward. Amazing how cross-vision is improved by the lack of leaves on the trees and hedgerows as the winding road from Richmond is gobbled up by the hungry beast.

Rider was hungry too and the fare of the Penny Garth in Hawes beckoned but the temptation of the Swaledale route via Gunnerside, Muker and Buttertubs Pass postponed the repast. The road was clear but quiet with much snow evident on the tops and by the roadside and the "Brif'en" wire fence to the left seemed to offer scant protection today from a "Cresta Run" down snow covered slopes into the valley bottom.

The little market town of Hawes bustled with shoppers, delivery drivers, the odd sheepdog and two bikes outside Penny Garth.

Once inside it took much willpower to resist the temptation of the 'All-day Breakfast' but the home made pea n' ham soup and bread-roll were fine fare.

Jacket off, the tie really had to go, shirt and tie is definitely overdressed for the Penny Garth.

Time to chew the fat with the couple of bikers already there then decision time again:

Kirkby Stephen the short way or the long way? Nanoseconds pass again, Ingleton it is then.

Moor miles slip away and the monumental Ribblehead Viaduct looms into view.

A winter's day like this makes you think what a great feat of engineering building the Settle to Carlisle line would be even today.

Sweeping down to Devil's Bridge, the car park was a shadow of its usual glory but a few hardy souls had still made the pilgrimage.

The winding road up the Vale of Lune to Sedbergh was as good as ever with the road by Cautley Spout onward to Kirkby Stephen never failing to deliver.

Time for a brief stop (those little white tablets again) then on to Brough and the superior route over the moors to Middleton in Teesdale.

Back onto the Moors again over to Frosterly with a brief stop to take in the scenery at Bollihope common, before returning home via Wolsingham, Tow Law and Chester-le-Street.

"Been out on that bike again" she said. **No** was the reply, been to a meeting.

And the best bit, 104 miles cost is tax deductible.

Thanks for the sub Mr. Darling, an opportunity for which I give much thanks.



From A to B

By Simon Hadden

Road numbers of some description are used just about everywhere. They make navigation easier, whether by map or GPS – a small facet of a modern transport system.

The system we use in the UK was devised in the 1920s and the basic idea has remained unchanged ever since. So a 1920s Sunbeam rider would recognise the road from Corbridge to Carter Bar as part of the A68, just as it is today.

Of course many roads have been upgraded since the 1920s and many new ones have been built but the fundamental ideas remain unchanged.

So what are the fundamental ideas?

The main public roads in mainland Britain are divided into two types. A-roads are the major through-routes. B-roads are a lower class of road forming links between the A-roads.

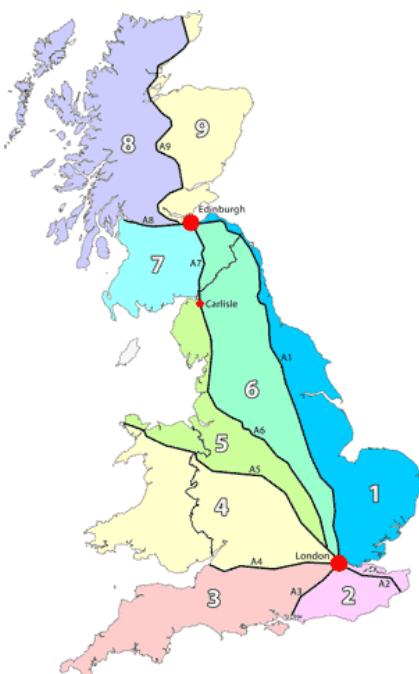
All A- and B-roads are given numbers. The allocation of numbers is based on a hub-and-spoke system. As mainland Britain is long and narrow, there are actually two hubs, London and Edinburgh.

Radiating from these hubs are the nine principal A-roads 1 to 9:

A1	London to Edinburgh	A6	London to Carlisle
A2	London to Dover	A7	Edinburgh to Carlisle
A3	London to Portsmouth	A8	Edinburgh to Greenock
A4	London to Avonmouth	A9	Edinburgh to Scrabster
A5	London to Holyhead		

These roads divide Great Britain into nine distinct areas, shown in the diagram.

Each zone is numbered, taking its number from the A-road on its anticlockwise edge. Other roads get their number according to which zone they lie in. Thus the roads lying to the east of the A1, lie in zone 1 and thus start with a 1.



A192	North Shields - Morpeth
A1058	Newcastle - Tynemouth
B1325	Earsdon – Seaton Sluice

The roads lying to the west of the A1, start with a 6, since they lie in zone 6, largely east of the A6, such as:

A69	Newcastle - Carlisle
A697	Morpeth – Coldstream - Carfraemill
B6344	Weldon Bridge - Rothbury

Of course, some roads cross into adjacent zones. Such roads take their number from the furthest anticlockwise zone they enter. Thus the A38, running from Derbyshire down to Devon, runs through zones 6, 5, 4 and 3. The most anticlockwise zone is 3 so it begins with a 3.



Simon Hadden in full flight

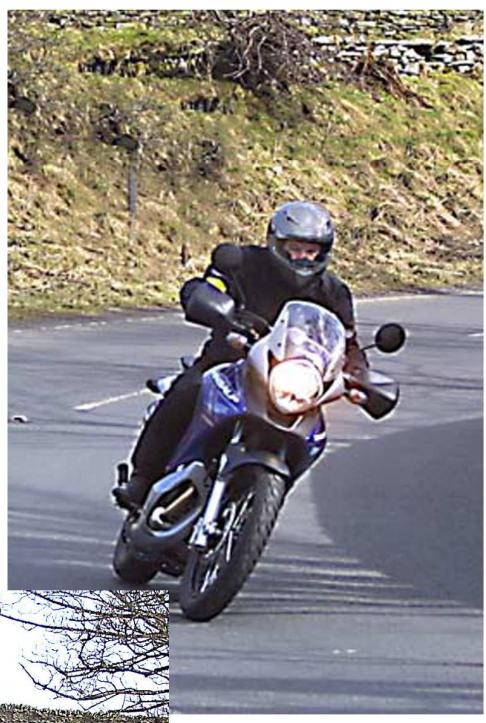
the numbers were first allocated. At that time it wasn't even a country lane.

Three-digit road numbers, and B-roads, get their numbers in batches. So in zone 1, A186 to A197 lie in (the old county of) Northumberland, and A198 and A199 are in East Lothian, near Edinburgh.



The snappy-sounding B9090 has been around from the start of the numbering system. Before the World War 2, many road signs were set up by the AA or RAC.

First Rideout 15th March 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, 29th May 2009**

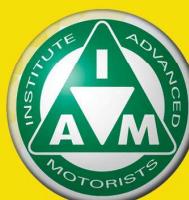
MONTHLY MEETINGS

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.



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