



Riders' Chronicles



Final Issue

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Chairman's ramblings

When I took on the role of Chairman almost three years ago, I did not expect it to be a bed of roses, but certainly did not anticipate the ups and downs I have faced during the three years in office.

My first year was not very pleasant at all due to one thing and another, resulting in attempts to disrupt the running of the Group, which were eventually overcome, allowing the Committee to get on with the task in hand.

I had made my mind up personally right at the beginning that as Chairman, I would endeavor to direct the Group towards providing what the biker members **REALLY** wanted from **THEIR** club as well as improving standards and results on the training front. The other important factor was to remain totally transparent to the Members on every aspect of the management of the Club.



With these objectives in mind, my first thought was to create an effective Training Team and this was affected through Clive Taylor, Alan Richardson and Geoff Spencer, who were given a clean piece of paper to set the standards we wished to achieve.

The outcome, three years later sees Members who have now been trained to a much higher standard, due to many initiatives being introduced such as slow riding clinics and an in depth training program to prepare potential Observers and Senior Observers to a higher and more consistent level than previously seen. These initiatives contributed greatly to the Group getting an Award in 2008 for having the highest number of Advanced Test Passes in the region.

One of the most popular events on the calendar is the monthly rideouts, frequently attracting well in excess of thirty riders each month.

To encourage a greater range of NAM Members to get involved in the running of the group, we have encouraged (and sometimes coerced!) Members to organise a rideout, only to find that they thoroughly enjoy the experience and have felt they have put something back into the Group.

The Social side of the Club has seen many successful events organised for the Members such as the annual Pitlochry and Wales trips as well as visits to the Triumph and Jaguar factories and a Honda Racing Team, plus a very successful barbecue.

We finally arrived at my third and final year in office to find we were facing unexpected issues from the IAM that many found unacceptable.

I will not go over these matters as they have already been well aired over the last few months, but will enlighten you that several of the Committee felt so strongly about remaining affiliated to the IAM that a proposal to hold a ballot as to whether NAM should remain affiliated or disaffiliate was proposed and passed in open Committee.

Ironically, those behind the proposal to disaffiliate were most certainly the most committed and hardest workers in post and have personally dedicated much of their time to its success.

It was agreed that the Membership would be balloted to decide the outcome of this matter and it was at that point that I decreed that any ballot would and must be seen as being scrupulously

fair and open and that anything the Committee did must be seen to be completely transparent at all times.

Indeed, it was left to myself to advise the Membership of the background to the issue and I did so through these pages last month, where, I hope, I gave a balanced point of view, initially praising the IAM for its early objectives and its good work over the years as a non-profit making, charitable, organization to finally an outline of the treatment certain Committee Members had received, or in some cases, not received, on learning the I.A.M had lost £1.4 million in a year.

Apart from notifying the membership in this manner, there has been no canvassing of the Members for support from the dis-satisfied Committee Members to vote for disaffiliation. Unfortunately I cannot say the same about the other side as I have had two instances of an individual from the IAM attempting to discredit myself, which I consider appalling.

However, the ballot was organized and the issue of ballot papers was restricted to fully paid up Members of NAM, who were also fully paid up Members of the IAM. The ballot papers were sent out by post and the results are as follows:

Ballot Papers issued	115
Votes Cast	87
In favour of remaining affiliated to the IAM	61
In favour of disaffiliation from the IAM	26
Result: In favour of remaining affiliated	35 majority

As a result of the ballot the following Committee Members will be standing down.

Ray Charlton,	Chairman / Newsletter Editor
Clive Taylor,	Vice-Chairman / Training Team
Simon Hadden	Treasurer
Alan Richardson	Training Team
Geoff Spencer	Training Team
Glenn Knowles	Website Co-ordinator

Certain others on the Committee and some Members have indicated that they will not be renewing their IAM Membership once their current membership expires.

We are giving this early notice of intention in the interests of the continuation of NAM and allowing those involved the opportunity to arrange replacements of the right calibre at the earliest opportunity.

May I take this opportunity to thank those of you have supported me during my term in office and, on behalf of myself and the resigning Committee Members I wish both NAM and yourselves every success in the future.

NAM Test Passes

Jed Richardson	Ted Clark
Richard Coombs	Brian Fields

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

Resignation

Following the announcement on the NAM website of the ballot result, I regret that I am no longer able to remain a member of NAM.

I attended with much interest the meeting 24 September with Simon Best and was disappointed that he chose to take up almost half of the available time with a PowerPoint presentation. In the remaining time for questions he revealed after much probing, that the paltry offer of £5.00 was to all observers, rather than as suggested, motorcycle observers who actually incur direct costs in observing. It was clear that this decision was made to 'avoid upsetting' the car observers. Had the IAM taken the honourable position and applied the payment only to motorcycle observers, I suspect that we would not be in the position that we are today. I have also been most disappointed by the attitude of other members of IAM management and their descent to the level of personal attacks on committee members. I have also heard similar complaints from members of other groups.

Following the meeting of the 24th, I resigned my membership of the IAM and cancelled my direct debit. As my membership of the IAM ends 31 October, the next NAM meeting will be the last that I will be able to attend. I have thoroughly enjoyed my years with NAM and there will be many friends that I will miss but cannot bring myself to remain a member of the IAM while it follows the current misguided path. Perhaps at some time in the future IAM management will see the light but for the present it is:

Goodbye and thanks for all the fish! (and chips)

Neil Hamilton

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

Telephone: 07951 035038

24 Hours – 160 Horses

By Neil Hamilton

September turned to October and the trusty 1200RT was in need of a 42,000 mile service and an MOT.

Has it really been three years? Paul Sharman and Steve Brown of Cooper BMW Sunderland kingly obliged with the loan of one of BMWs latest offerings, the K1300GT SE.

Its forbear, the K1200GR was an awesome beast but this one has more horses and more torque whilst weighing in at only 8kg more. Had to be worth a look!

Collecting on Wednesday evening gave the opportunity to check out the new SE lighting arrangements featuring a xenon HID headlamp.

The configuration remains the same as the RT and previous GT, two plus one.



expected; better than most cars and considering the top speed of 155 mph, seeing well in the dark could come in handy.

Thursday morning was fine, bright and calm; everything that could be expected for a grand day out. A quick pause to fuel up on the recommended Super Unleaded, then off into the country. A

short sprint out to Chester-le-Street and then up on one of my favourite assessment routes out over back roads to Lanchester and on to Frosterly via Tow Law. Over moors to Middleton-in-Teesdale and moors again to Brough.

The one however is the HID with the two halogens providing main beam.

HID is claimed to give three times the light output of standard halogen, with high output halogens (as I use in the RT) claim 80% higher output than standard halogen.

So it would seem on output to be about even although having two dip bulbs provides the opportunity to create two illumination spreads.

Lighting performance was however, as



Cruise control on the A66 then power up the twisting hill to Hartside Top.

Bacon and egg roll with tea and the big red beast was calling again; want to play?

Past a few slow pokes on the moor before slipping off onto the minor road to Garrigill, then over the moors to Nenthead.

Fourth and fifth gears were order of the day for snappy overtakes with the nimble steed belying its 288kg mass.

Still getting caught out on the odd occasion by the quirky, non-BMW indicators but with so many toys to control, I guess something on the bars had to give ☺

Follow the Wear Valley past the old cement works (possibly to be turned into an eco-village) and a left in Stanhope and over moors again toward Edmundbyres.

Sporting the 13th century church of St Edmund, I believe it to be the inspiration for Rowan Atkinson's character Edmund Blackadder, as he hails from the nearby village of Stocksfield. Sweeping through the curves around Derwent Reservoir and across the A68 towards Shotley Bridge.

Time for some town work now as we head homeward and once again, the results aren't disappointing. Although a full 60kg heavier than the RT,



it was only the presence of some gravel underfoot which gave any cause for concern and the ridge along the length of the seat quickly dispersed!

Whatever I threw at it, the K1300 never failed to impress, even the radical hairpin on Forge Lane was dispatched with ease.

So after around 150 miles over some of the region's finest roads, was I impressed:

Y E S!!!

Plus points:

- Awesome power
- Even comfier seat
- Heated grip indicator on dash
- Slick (for BMW) gear shift

Minus points

- Price tag (tad under £14k)
- Quirky indicator switch
- Yoghurt pot fluid reservoirs

Yamaha XJ6 Diversion

By Clive Taylor

Whilst my bike was in Ian Bell's for a service recently, I borrowed a new spec Yamaha Diversion 600. It only had 47 miles on the clock so I wasn't able to give it any beans but I was able to get a reasonable impression of its good and not so good points.

The earlier generation of 600 Diversion was a totally different animal. The old model was very definitely a tourer with few sporty pretensions but I'm at a bit of a loss as to how to categorize this one. It's pretty sporty but tries to be a bit of a tourer but in a way it doesn't quite come off. It doesn't seem one thing or the other.

The power delivery is quite gentle and predictable, ideal for traffic and slower motoring (touring) but has a rev happy 12000 rpm 6 speed motor (sports)

The bike feels quite small and has a tubular main frame, not so common these days. It is fitted with a substantial main stand (GREAT) but strangely for a dual purpose bike (if that is what it is) it has no hugger which is plain daft. In fact it will cost you £140.00 for a Yamaha one.

Clearly the intention was to trim the cost as the rear suspension is a simple monoshock without any linkage. The front forks are the current Yam fare but they work well with controlled dive when the front brake is hit hard.

The big problem for me was the high frequency vibration at 6000 revs or 70mph in top. This is quite pronounced and is felt through the handlebars, seat and footrests. So this bike is not a tourer then. Not really.

The front brake looks like the one fitted to the R6 & R1 and the rear caliper is certainly different from the one fitted to my TDM which is just as well because I have just had a new disc fitted. Whatever it is they are both very powerful and progressive.



For folks carrying a pillion there is a handy grab rail but I suspect because of the stepped seat design the pillion sits way above the rider. The pillion footrests don't seem too high though.

No problem on this bike with burnt bums or legs as the stubby exhaust exits just in front of the back wheel with no can fitted.



Generally the finish seems pretty good and up to the Yamaha standard of late.

Cleaning might be a bit on the time consuming side with everything on show given that the strange spiky fairing is minimal. The five spoke wheels look quite easy to clean though.

The engine fires up easily and the light, cable operated clutch is very civilized. You can potter around in top at 30mph without any snatch and pull away smoothly. Gear change is ok but not brilliant but it might smooth out a bit with a few more miles on it. Certainly in give and take conditions the flexible power delivery negates any need for dancing on the gear pedal. Stick it in top and live in piece with the world. One thing's for sure, you only need 5 gears for touring. With 6 gears they are too close together making the bike very revvy

There is enough space under the seat for a bag of sweets and a Scottoiler and Yamaha have thoughtfully included a little bag of tools.

Power is 78 bhp and the weight is 211 kg ready to go. The fuel tank holds 17.3 litres. That's just not enough for touring although I have to say I don't know the fuel consumption..

So, my main dilemma is, what market is this bike aimed at ? Small touring bike, well, maybe but has a few short comings. Medium sized sports bike, they have the R6 for that. I just have a feeling that the folks who bought the old style Diversion won't fancy this one. Too radical.

It may have a tough time competing with the Kawasaki ER6 and Honda Hornet even though it is probably just as good.

All the controls are to the current euro norm and are located in the same position as all other modern bikes

. The seat seems awfully hard and because the riders' feet are set quite high the bony bits of your bum carry most of the weight. Thin folks with less padding should get a gel seat !

Maintenance looks ok with a dipstick for oil level, easy chain adjustment and bulbs that can be got at easily. The wide handlebars are adjustable.



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.



Appeal from the national blood transfusion service.

From Lorna Taylor

Members of NAM in Newcastle are being urged to become lifesavers by helping to provide some of the 2,215 blood donations needed by hospital patients in the North East each week.

Every day around 300 local patients rely on volunteer blood donors to help save or improve their life, and yet only six per cent of people who could give blood actually do.

That's why the National Blood Service (NBS) is calling on members to come forward and give blood – and help save a life.

Craig Taylor, spokesperson for the NBS, said: "The demand for blood is constant and we always need more blood donors to come forward.

"Every day, a hospital patient relies on blood donors to help save their life. That's why it's so vital that both new and regular donors come along to support their local sessions."

Donors can give three times a year. What's more, given that each donation is most often separated into three component parts - red cells, platelets and plasma – which are then given to different patients, each donation could help to save as many as three lives.

Donors give around 470 ml of blood, or just a little under a pint. Before donating, volunteers are also asked to complete a short health screening – complete with the famous finger-prick test – to ensure that they are well enough to give blood.

The whole process lasts around an hour, although it only takes about 10 minutes to give the donation itself. Then it's off to the refreshment table for some well-earned tea and biscuits!

Craig adds: "Giving blood can be a nerve-wracking experience and it's natural to be apprehensive, especially for first-timers.

However, you can be sure that whether it's your first donation or your 100th, you'll be very well looked after by our fantastic team.

"Giving blood really is a very simple thing to do, and yet it makes such a huge difference to many, many people.

For the sake of an hour out of your day, you could be giving someone else a whole lifetime. That's why we'd encourage everyone to think about giving blood."

Once blood reaches the hospitals, it is used to help literally thousands of patients undergoing a wide variety of different treatments.

The highest proportion is given to patients undergoing general surgical procedures, but blood and blood products are also widely used to treat orthopaedic, neonatal, paediatric, obstetric, gynaecological and renal patients.

People suffering from serious blood disorders such as leukaemia and severe forms of anaemia will also benefit from blood transfusions, as will, of course, accident and emergency cases.

In most cases, anyone aged between 17-65 who weighs more than 7 stones 12 pounds and is in general good health can become a blood donor.

For more information contact the national donor helpline on 0300 123 23 23 or visit the website at www.blood.co.uk.

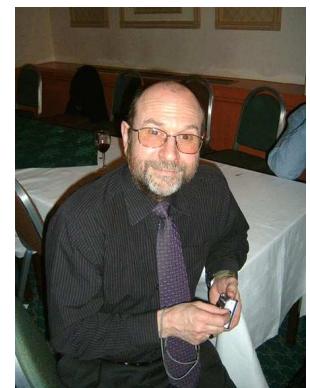


Kamtrek Treasure Hunt 2009

By Clive Taylor

Words like awesome, stunning, superior etc are normally confined to the sporting prowess of footballers.

In this instance however they can be applied quite legitimately to your scribe for it is he who triumphed magnificently and cruised into the winners enclosure at the finish of the 2009 Kamtrek Treasure Hunt recently.



This is an event organized by the local section of the Norton Owners Club and requires participants to pinpoint a series of locations using OS Landranger grid references and then solve the (often cryptic) clue.

The organizer was the other Clive Taylor as the rules state that last year's winner must organize this years event.

A good incentive to aim for second place then.



There were a dozen or so participants including Jack & Ann Stewart, Mike & Geraldine Sutherland & Sean Malloy from NAM.

He had his Norton in harness instead of the noisy old Ducati he normally rides.

The start was at our normal ride out start at Seaton Burn with a clue in the car park.

Clive had already declared that the route would be through rural Northumberland and so it was as participants headed via Morpeth through the back roads to Rothbury. Having bummed out at Morpeth by not finding the answer, Netherwitton was a triumph with the answer on a gate padlock.

The organizer's assistant chucked a spanner in the works by suggesting to your hero that there was no need to enter the church at picturesque Edlingham.

The answer proved to be inside so no points again ! Surely an attempt at sabotage. The fact that it involved a pair of mammals mistaken at first for a pair of mammarys didn't help.

On went the gaggle, solving clues as they journeyed north towards the lunch stop at Oxford Tea Rooms near Berwick on Tweed.

Well worth a try for tea and cake but a more substantial Sunday Lunch was considered necessary by some.

The old Chain Bridge near the honey farm at Horncliffe beckoned and with a short walk to settle the bloated tums the task was attacked in earnest .

The clue was however so obscure and tenuous that significant help was required from the organizer! Not very impressive.

A couple of more straightforward clues followed but then a clue that could only be solved by climbing to the top of a hill at the Ros Settlement near Lilburn. This involved a trudge of about half a mile uphill.

Advancing years and a (temporary) dodgy knee allowed your hero to insist that he would guard the bikes and helmets in return for the answer as the others came back down.

The youthful Stewarts and Sutherlands attacked the rise with gusto but were a tad flushed afterwards.

The final clue was at Warkworth. The answer involved two new buttresses clearly recently installed to the local church wall no doubt at great expense.

Dave Wardle from the Norton Club, a Quantity Surveyor by profession and well used to counting bricks for a living completely missed this civil engineering masterpiece much to the derision of other competitors.

Everyone retired to the Three Horse Shoes for the serious business of marking the answer sheets. In the interest of fair play this was controlled by the organizer's partner Francis.

There were some suggestions of cheating it has to be said and this normally gives rise to various arguments from disgruntled participants which can only be resolved by the displaying of photographs of each answer.

The reward for this day of toil is a trophy handed down each year but the recipient must pay for his own engraving !

Suffice to say that the victor showed great decorum in his hour of triumph and resisted the urge to whoop and shout about in the pub.



Instead he calmly accepted the plaudits and the need of other competitors to be seen standing close to him.

Surely only further confirmation that the title of "The Motorcycling God" is so richly deserved.

Throughout the day the weather was grand with no rain and reasonably warm.

The company was great and the route included some spectacular scenery as only rural Northumberland can provide.

Even the clues dreamt up by the organizer were pretty good and challenging.

Thinking caps on for next year then.

With very grateful thanks to Dr.Clive E. Taylor (no relation – thank God) for organising this event.

WHAT A GREAT WEEKEND IN WALES

By John Magee

We all met up at Barnard Castle as some of us live south of the river so after tea and toast we left at 11-0am next stop Tebay for fuel and then down to Carnforth railway station (arranged by M.Sutherland) great location live music included then back onto M6 onwards to Wales we arrived approx 5-45pm and still dry!



We all got settled in and then to the local pub for a meal (organised by Dave Thornton) a great night but poor Wilf nearly had a heart attack when it was arranged for him to pay part of the bill approximately £300 his face was a treat (sorry for the wind up Wilf)

During the night Myself and Dave Henderson decamped out of the bunk room due to some snoring (no names mentioned) and after a great breakfast cooked by Dave and Anne with assistance from others we then left for our run out a great ride out and then onto the pre arranged trip to the hydro power station. (this was worth seeing)

Apart from the hair nets that had to be worn) see photos up till then it had been dry but it was raining when we came out but not for long as Saturday night was bbq night ably done by Dave Thornton and with great help from his mother/father in law. (these are two fantastic people) nothing is a bother to them. Again a great night. Bed time saw me in another room Dave Henderson in the corridor, Craig and Josh in the main hall, resulting in a nice quiet nights sleep.

Sunday morning up quite early for breakfast (another dry day) and some of the group were going on the mountain train and the rest went with me to Anglesey. After pulling into what i thought was Beumaris. (Billy and Christine put me right) so on a few miles into and above a great place sitting outside in the sun having tea and Tiffin, What more could you want! then onto red wharf bay via a few farm tracks courtesy of my sat nav not working (piece of paper) but got there just as it started to drizzle. Into pub for eats when we came out it was chucking it down so waterproofs and head for home.

Sunday night was chilli night and we had anything left from the bbq - another great night of fun. (see photos) Monday brought another dry day for travelling home via the horseshoe pass to a popular bike stop the ponderosa this was unfortunately marred by the rather zealous north Wales police helicopter and patrol cars We were all pulled in for a check as they put it a large group of riders (I didn't see any rows of caravans pulled in) but laughed when I read in the latest IAM mag about the guy with the old Humber being pulled up on the same road for going too slow???

Believe it or not i was flabbergasted to be told that my number plate was illegal but he was just advising me that day (after having it checked at home apparently they must have the BS symbol and the post code of the maker on it (all sorted now) any how after a great ride back home and end to a fantastic weekend roll on next year.

I would like to thank everyone who went to Wales and made it a fun weekend and special thanks must go to Dave and Anne for all the organising of hostel and food and drink and sleeping bags safely delivered.

ps it was Dave Thornton's birthday on the Sunday and he tried a new bike he is hoping to get, - see photo (sorry Dave) Keep riding safely. John Magee (the noisy one) and not just the bike i hear some people say

Tips for new riders

by Ray Charlton

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



With this in mind, I have been approached by several members with a request to write something on Winter riding, so that hopefully they venture out better advised and able to enjoy the experience more. As I had written something on this subject sometime ago, I felt that it was time to resurrect it from the archives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other important parts of your body to keep warm are your neck and head. Whilst a modern full face helmet offers a fair degree of protection from wind blast, this can be supplemented very effectively by a "neck tube," scarf or even a small hand towel. A modern, light, but very effective Lycra balaclava completes the kit, making your upper regions warm and snug.

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

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

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

The road in winter

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

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

If the driver behind gets too close, ease off the throttle and drop back further, it may encourage him to get past you, leaving you safe. If someone moves into the gap you have created, drop back even further. Something to bear in mind is that it will have little if any effect on your journey time. Also, make sure your visor is in good condition and, if it gets dirty, stop and clean it.

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

Far better you check with the weather forecast before setting out and if icy conditions are around then don't go out. However on many occasions the conditions are fine when you set out and a sudden temperature drop can totally change the situation for you. Drivers who travel that close probably don't even consider your situation, so let them pass. Let them have their inevitable accident elsewhere without your involvement.

Occasionally bright winter sunlit mornings can easily lull you into a false sense of security because the roads, although appearing only damp, will probably be treacherous. Take advantage of dry areas created by cars and trucks. Usually the centre of the road will clear first, so ride on the crown of the road - see and be seen and avoid the slippery bits.

When the low sunlight eventually burns off the early morning frost, the shadows made by overhanging trees and buildings will still harbour black ice. This usually arises after a damp day when it is followed by hard overnight frost - a combination to test the resolve of the most hardened rider. Keep the bike as upright as possible retaining stability and control and you'll be more likely to complete your journey safely.

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

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

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

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

wales Trip 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:

MONTHLY MEETINGS

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



www.nam-online.org

Tel: 0191 2533983



NAM is supported by:-

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