

Riders' Chronicles



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July / Aug 2008

**The Newsletter of Northumbria
Advanced Motorcyclists**

RIDEOUT SUNDAY, 20TH APRIL 2008



Chairman's Ramblings

Congratulations are in order for the Training Team, Senior Observers, Observers and Associates for making NAM one of the top performers for I.A.M Tests.

During 2007 we managed to achieve the magnificent number of 71 tests, making us one of the top performers among the bike groups within the I.A.M.. This compares with 57 tests during 2006 and 52 in 2005.



Achieving such results is a combination of dedication and commitment by all involved in the preparation of Associates for the test and also for the Associates themselves for making the effort and commitment.

It confirms the programmes and policies put in place by the Training Team to improve standards amongst Seniors and Observers is working and hopefully should be reflected further in improving the skills of our Members through improved initial guidance and a rolling programme of further training that we are now undertaking on several fronts.

I have always been a strong believer that new associates should be processed as soon as possible and encouraged to target and dedicate a given amount of their time to be available for Observed Rides. This should include a rolling programme of at least one, or better still, two Observed runs a week rather than monthly as it was on many occasions in the past.

The only problem with this result is we now have to try even harder this year to even match this performance, so Seniors and Observers please encourage all new associates to set themselves the earliest target for their advanced test.

On the down side, as in previous years, we have the usual number of Members who have not renewed their NAM Membership for 2008. This is not something peculiar to NAM and is a fact of life in most I.A.M Groups that many Members go through the preparation and pass the test and then, for reasons best known to themselves, seem happy to have the achievement and then drop out.

I must say that this disappoints me each year, but at the end of the day it is their loss and they are missing out on the many activities of NAM, ranging from ongoing training to many social events.

Should you be aware of any Member who has allowed their membership to lapse I would encourage you to try to persuade them to renew so they can continue to enjoy the benefits of a highly respected bike group.

We are now well into the biking season and have already had a few interesting ride-outs, training events and a very successful weekend at Pitlochry, thanks to the excellent organisation of Michael and Geraldine Sutherland. (Front cover photo is the harbour at Oban.)

Michael, together with Dave Thornton, are already planning an two day event to North Wales later in the year, the details of which are included in this Newsletter.

Stay safe and enjoy your biking.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

B. Wilkinson	P.Marsh	T Murphy
R Douglas	John Birt	N. Darling
I. M. Scott		

CONGRATULATIONS ON PASSING THE IAM TEST – Well Done

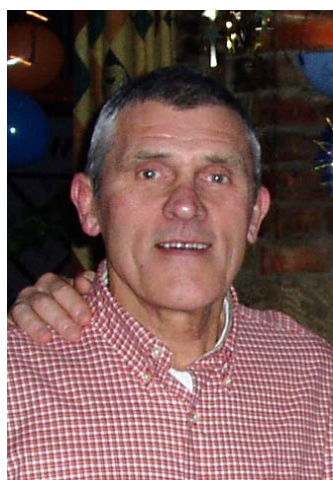
Malcolm Wilbraham	Observed by	Ray Charlton & others
Craig Hopkins	“	Allan Thompson
Neil Emmonds	“	Jim Knowlton
Clive Ducker	“	Alan Richardson

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

OBITUARY



It is with great sadness that I advise you of the sudden death of NAM Member, Les Hodgeson.

Les was a former Associate of mine from the old Newcastle Car & Bike IAM Group and was a long standing dedicated motorcyclist. Having seen service with the Coldstream Guards, he eventually returned to civilian life as a Supervisor in Swan Hunters Shipyards.

A man dedicated to keeping himself fit could be found on several days a week in the local gym where he went through a vigorous routine and was able to keep pace with others many years his junior.

He is survived by his Wife, Vera and Daughter, Lorraine and our thoughts are with them both.

Committee

Honorary Group President: **Jack Lormor**

Chairman: **Ray Charlton**

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

Treasurer: **Louise Bennett**

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

Membership Secretary: **Carole Kibble**

Website Co-ordinator: **Glenn Knowles**

Ride out Co-ordinator: **Ron Patrick**

Merchandising: **Louise Bennett**

Newsletter Editor: **Ray Charlton**

Team Leaders

Northumberland: **Nick Maddison**

Tyne & Wear **Alan Richardson**

Website

www.nam-online.org

Telephone: 07951 035038

Smile – your on camera!

By Ray Charlton

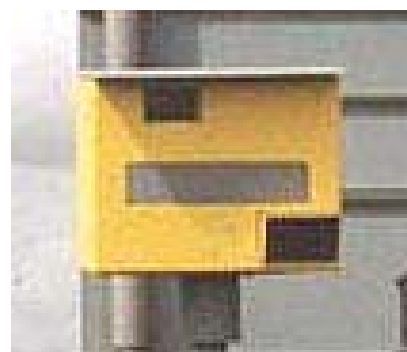
There are some 6000 speed cameras, (or Safety cameras as GPS Manufacturers prefer to call them) in operation across the UK and with many variants in use the question is, “Do you know your **SPECS** from your **SPEEDMASTERS?**”

All in all there six different kinds of camera (or variants) in operation, not including other devices for measuring speeding traffic such as VASCAR and hand held speed detection devices.

Here in the North-East we would normally find only two types of fixed cameras in operation, these being the **GATSO** and the **TRUVELO**, although a third type has recently been installed around the Wetherby area, these being the **SPECS** system.

Looking at the different variants soon reveals distinctive features that identify the type in use and are listed as follows:-

GATSO – These are rear facing bright yellow boxes and the camera inside emits a high-frequency radar wave and if an object gets in its path, such as a moving vehicle, the reflected beam gives information on the speed and direction of the vehicle.



If it is travelling too fast, the camera will flash twice and store the image on 35 mm film. This system has two weaknesses in that it can only store up to 400 images before it needs to be changed, and it only monitors traffic flow in one lane at a time.

There are over 4000 GATSO'S in the UK, accounting for around 90 per cent of all speed cameras.



GATSO MONITRON - Again, rear facing, but with a much smaller camera housing on a pole.

The camera is triggered by speed sensors set in the road and images are not stored on film but sent direct to the Police via a digital link.

This system is a common replacement for the old-style GATSOS. They can be found in areas of Bristol, Cumbria, London, Manchester, Nottingham, Norwich and Somerset.

SPECS – Small yellow CCTV style cameras facing in both directions and mounted on a distinctive blue column.

Using state-of-the-art Automatic Number Plate Reading Technology, (ANPR) they are used to monitor average speed and are fitted with infrared illuminators, they provide 24 / 7 coverage are often positioned a set distance apart to create a speed – controlled zone, discouraging the driver from speeding between cameras.



A few permanent sites in Nottingham, Gloucester and Northamptonshire, with recent installations on the A1 at Wetherby, but are becoming increasingly common at motorway roadwork's.

TRUVELO – Forward facing and has a distinctive pink lens.



Uses sensors in the road.(look out for three white strips just before the camera)

It is designed to take a picture of the car and the driver, to avoid any mistaken identity when the penalty is issued.

As it faces oncoming traffic, it uses infrared technology to avoid 'flashing' the driver.

Used considerably in Northamptonshire, but several are now appearing elsewhere, with a few in use on Tyneside.

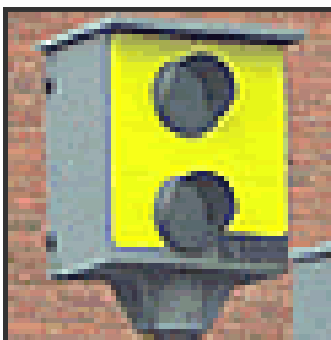
DS2 (Also known as SPEEDMASTER and AUTOVISION)

These are easily identified by the three discreet white lines on the road and are usually mounted on a grey post.

Covering two lanes of traffic, the strips calculate the car's speed and, when in use, the post is connected to a hidden camera in an unmarked van or Police car.



Often used as a mobile speed trap and is in use at many locations in the UK.



PEAK –Sited at the side of the road and again uses loops in the road to trigger camera when speeding car passes over them

It works by taking a measurement between two points and calculates the speed.

Frequently found in Leicestershire, Greater London and Berkshire.

Uses similar technology to the GATSO and is rear facing due to the flash it uses.

Other systems include **SPEEDCURB** predominately used to monitor traffic light offences, **WATCHMAN** – similar to GATSO, but can include a second camera for number plate recognition, handheld speed detectors and mobile devices.

Another system which offers tremendous flexibility in being able to monitor traffic speed in virtually any location is the Camera Van, which again uses similar technology without the need for flash.

Like them or hate them, they are now a major part of motoring activities and will forever be a source of argument as to their effectiveness or simply an easy revenue earner .

No doubt the lobbyist's opposed to them will never accept them as being justified or necessary. Make your own mind up.



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

Ride-Outs 2008

When	Who	What & Where
20 July	Kenny McDonald	Rideout to Lothian borders
17 August	Allan Ramsay	Rideout to Lakes
21 September	Allan Thompson	Rideout to Lakes
19 October	TBA	TBA

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.

Top Tips on Choosing a Helmet

by Russell of Motobrio, Hawick

Lots of people struggle when choosing a helmet, and not just about the colour!

Although style is important to many, you should choose a helmet that fits the best. But how can you tell if one is better than the other?

After much research and years of experience buying for me and selling professionally to others I have come up with the top 10 tips for helmet buyers

Buy The Best You Can Afford! Bell Helmets motto of old ***"You don't have a \$30 head so why buy a \$30 helmet"*** is as true today as it was in 1978. So buy the best you can afford.

The higher the value the higher the specification and you will know the international safety standards are more likely to have been exceeded by a greater margin.

Most big helmet manufacturers have a range of models and anything from their mid-range up should be the ones you are starting from.

Get the Right Helmet Shape for your head!



Choose a helmet manufacture that makes helmets to suit your head shape! Everyone's head is different and what fits one individual will certainly not fit the next one.

There are two main types – Round, and Long – Round head types fit best in HJC, AGV, Caberg, whilst Long type had fit best in Shoei helmets.

Uniquely Arai helmets seem to fit everyone – but at a premium price! ***(They don't fit me, can never get an Arai helmet on! – Ed)***

Crown Fit Should Be Right! Concentrate on the crown and brow area of the head when assessing fit. If you get this wrong the helmet will either be too small or too big.

The fit should be comfortable, without too much pressure, and you should just get your finger, up to but no more than, your fingernail in the brow area at the front of the helmet.

If you cannot get your finger in at all, the helmet is too small and you will experience horrific headaches after a time.

Cheek fit must be right for you! Some helmets have expansive cheek protection. This is to help save you cheekbones from breaking should you have an 'off'.

Some riders like them but they can make others feel claustrophobic and uncomfortable. If you are one of these check that the cheek padding is removable or not



Change your helmet Regularly! Plan to change your helmet every 3 to 4 years, even if there are no obvious signs of damage or wear.

This is because the shell material, no matter what it is made of, deteriorates in sunlight. It is actually attacked by UV A and B rays – the same radiation that burns your skin.

Over time this makes the material brittle and less resistant to splitting under pressure – obviously to be avoided. The other reason is that the lining (if non-removable) and retaining strap can be contaminated with skin oil and sweat – again making them less effective under tension, and allowing the helmet to move around and in some extreme cases actually to come off!



Choose neutral colours! Many riders and pillioners buy the current hot racereplica or a 'loud' graphic that matches their current bike, and then change their bike and are left with a horrendous colour clash.

Avoid this problem by buying a helmet colour that is neutral, but still allows you to be seen on the road.

Red, yellow, light-blue, silver, titanium, anthracite and graphite are all popular colours, as is white (but more difficult to get), and go with anything, as is black – but at the expense of visibility.

The Highway Code actually recommends a white helmet as your head is the highest point on a bike and give greater visibility.

Buy from a reputable source! With the advent of the thieves bazaar called eBay, every dodgy trader in the world can dump stolen, damaged or recalled goods onto an unsuspecting public.

Don't be caught out by the lure of a cheap buy and remember, you only have one opportunity to prove that the helmet was the right choice and you may not be around to return it under complaint!

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NORTH WALES TRIP – FRIDAY SEPT 5TH – SUNDAY SEPT 7TH

The club has booked a modern hostel near Abergate on the North Wales Coast for 2 nights at the beginning of September. There are 31 places available at the hostel at a cost of £10 per person per night including bedding and continental breakfast.

As with the Pitlochry weekend there will be the opportunity to join a group on the ride down to North Wales on the Friday morning or later in the afternoon, straight from work. A ride out, led by Dave Thornton around Mt Snowdon, the Conway valley and the National Park, has been arranged for the Saturday.

See Michael Sutherland or Dave Thornton for further details and to make a reservation. Payment is due in full no later than July 8th.

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.

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**.

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.

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Some More EVENTS For your diary 2008

Sunday, 7th September 2008

Bikes at Belsay,
Belsay Hall, Northumberland.
[www.sunderland classicvehicles.org.uk/Calendar.htm](http://www.sunderlandclassicvehicles.org.uk/Calendar.htm)

Club Events 2008

July		
8 th	Club Night	Wheatsheaf, 7.30 pm
20 th	Group Ride Out	Seaton Burn, 10.00 am
August		
12 th	Club Night	Wheatsheaf, 7.30 pm
17 th	Group Ride Out	Seaton Burn, 10.00 am
September		
9 th	Club Night	Wheatsheaf, 7.30 pm
21 st	Group Ride Out	Seaton Burn, 10.00 am
October		
14 th	Club Night	Wheatsheaf, 7.30 pm
19 th	Group Ride Out	Seaton Burn, 10.00 am
November		

Billy Wilson and the hairy bikers



Member Billy Wilson met the Hairy Bikers on a recent trip to Hartside Café.

Road Test – Yamaha Fazer 1000

by Ray Charlton

First impressions on seeing the bike is something of surprise. It looks aggressive even standing still with its chunky exhaust can and lean looking lines.

Fitted with a slightly modified, 143 bhp engine from the YZF1000 R1 supersports bike, slotted into a light alloy frame with an upright riding position and minimal bodywork, and you have a bike that screams 'fun.'

The handlebars and risers are slightly unusual, but prove to be extremely comfortable, with minimal weight being transferred to your arms.

Similarly the wide slab seat gives the impression that it could be slightly uncomfortable, but this impression is soon gone once in the saddle as it is very supportive and surprisingly comfortable.

I was pleasantly surprised at how low it is, being able to comfortably put both feet on the ground without any effort.



The controls and switches are all in the usual place making it easy to step onto it without having to re-programme your brain to remember where everything is.

Firing up the engine revealed a gorgeous 'burble' from the exhaust that should satisfy most riders who like to 'hear' their engines

With the engine originating from the racy R1, it may be felt that Yamaha's new Fazer 1000 would have been a handful, but, in reality, it later proved to be far from intimidating



Engaging gear was smooth as was the clutch on pull away and it was at this point I realised the footpegs were positioned slightly higher and further back than you would normally expect on a sports tourer and is probably a half way house between a sports bike and a tourer.

However, I found the riding position extremely comfortable and did not aggravate my oncoming arthritis in the hips, which make out and out sports bikes a definite no-no for me.

The new Fazer 1000, which is aimed at the increasing number of riders who are looking for the outstanding performance of the latest big-capacity sports machines but who don't want the out and out rawness of the supersports bikes.

However, despite its 143bhp power output - down on the R1 due to changes in the intake and exhaust systems - the Fazer is actually a gentle giant with soft edges, and as a consequence much less intimidating and far easier to ride than it might have been.



The Fazer's weight does much to calm it down, compared to the R1. At 205 kg, it's the lightest bike in the class and only 19kg heavier than the Fazer 600, but alongside the R1's 177 kg, it still looks on the bulky side.

The dramatic punch of the R1 motor has been diluted by the additional mass, but the throttle response is softer, too, with the result that twisting the grip means you are scooped along benignly rather than fired forward explosively.

But don't mistake this for slow: the Fazer is immensely fast, with a top speed approaching 160mph (although Yamaha is making no claims for this). With the four-cylinder motor spinning above 5,000rpm, the thrust is outstanding, and even below this, few other machines can keep you in sight. The red line is drawn at 11,500rpm, so there's a broad range of accessible power, which, at higher revs, is enough to give a taste of what an R1 is like.

As a general tourer, there's plenty of torque in reserve for overtaking, even in top gear, and the upright riding position, which, without the small fairing, would sit the rider in the brunt of the windblast. As it is, the mini fairing is very effective, deflecting the wind sufficiently to maintain speeds that would undoubtedly be uncomfortable on a naked bike.

As I mentioned earlier, the footrests are set higher than some riders might like - a consequence of the Fazer's considerable ground clearance - but with its comfortable seat and a generous 4.6 gallon fuel tank, it is a bike with a surprising touring potential.

Equipped with a relatively high specification suspension, which delivers outstanding ride quality and even on badly maintained roads, managed to keep the bike stable and controllable at all times. Even with its increase in weight over its smaller brother the Fazer 600, it still remained very 'flickable' on the twisties.

The steering is pleasantly neutral and obedient, while front-end stability is fine - drive out of a bumpy turn and, while the bars go light, they don't flap or threaten to take the bike somewhere you don't want to go and it becomes hugely enjoyable without losing much in terms of pace.

Like the engine, the brakes are based on those of the R1, and despite the extra weight, they perform superbly. Their immense power is so easily modulated that braking is no more threatening than any other aspect of the bike - instead, it's comforting knowing you can scrub off speed so efficiently.

The styling is something of an acquired taste; you either love it or hate it. Some dislike the angularity of the bodywork while others, including myself, love the triangular splashes of colour that appear to be compliment the overall design quite well.

But the Fazer's surprise is how well it works as an all-rounder - its top-gear acceleration is outstanding, good for relaxed touring and rapid sports riding, while comfort, control and handling all work together.

Far from being mad, it's rather a sensible choice for many different riders.

(With acknowledgement to Ian Bell Motorcycles for providing the machine.)

Rideout on Sunday 20th April 2008

by Ron Patrick

Don't bother reading this if you have something better to do. However if you appreciate faultless organisation and impeccable attention to detail, this is for you. I can safely say, this was the best Rideout ever researched and conducted on behalf of NAM. My natural modesty prevents me from telling you who was responsible for this premier event



Ron Patrick
Rideout Co-ordinator

OK, I might have had a little bit of help from Dave G, Jim F and Dave H.

Mind you! I think they're all softies, because on the day of the recce snow was forecast and when I suggested we do it in the car they all jumped at the chance. If they'd been proper bikers they would have insisted we do it on the bikes. And another thing, that Dave G gave me earache because I misspelled his name on the route sheet. He's lucky he had a sheet to read as I almost forgot to print them off.

The day of the Rideout dawned with a large number of bikers turning up, so we split into three groups. Simon L was coerced into leading the third group without any prior knowledge of the route and Simon W offered to be tail ender. At the briefing I outlined the route, stressing how we should ride well within our limitations, as this was our first rideout this year. This was met with a chorus of derision and a whole bunch of smart Alecs telling me that this was the second runout this year. Well! I was testing them to see if they were paying attention.

Off we went with our first stop at Greenhead for coffee, then to Brampton and onto the road for Langwathby. Unfortunately I missed the turn at Lazonby so we carried on to Plumpton and Penrith before joining the second group at Langwathby. I thought this was an excellent diversion anyway for those members not familiar with the very interesting countryside in the area.

Stopping to get ourselves sorted out, I found a number of riders excusing themselves and returning home via Hartside to some sort of sporting event between Newcastle and Sunderland. I don't know what that was all about and when I asked them, they gave me a funny look.

Next, off to Appleby for lunch where we filled the upper floor of the local café. I gained the impression that we'd been placed there to keep us scruffy bikers separated from respectable locals. Then to Tebay for petrol and onto Sedburgh and Garsdale Head where we turned left for Mallerstang Common. This took us to Kirby Stephen, Bowes and Barnard Castle where we had our second petrol stop. Unfortunately Dave G took the wrong road after the stop and headed in the wrong direction. Quickly corrected at the next junction, that put him back on route at Staindrop. It was fortunate that he made this deviation, as his group were able to view the very interesting countryside in the area.



Our numbers now depleted as members made alternative routes home we proceeded to West Auckland and Corbridge, ended up at Brockbushes Garden Centre.

"Mind you" what's-er-name, you know Simon L's missus. Well! She's a funny one. She ses to me, "how is it Simon was the only one who didn't go on the recce and was the only one who didn't make a mistake?"

Cheeky Charley! I told her to mind her own business. Anyway! The only time you see her is when she's sitting on the back of his bike, like a sack of spuds. Not a bad day out, we must do it again.

Tips for new riders

by Ray Charlton

A frequent question asked by Associates is, "Just what is a hazard."



The short answer is ***Any situation that arises during your ride that could possible be or become a danger.***

Whilst this is a bold and wide ranging statement, it perhaps does little to clarify the subject and could leave the associate just as confused as he was prior to asking the question.

During the course of your observed runs, your Observer will frequently draw your attention to examples of hazards that may have arisen during a ride and analyse how you dealt with it and may even frequently offer guidance as to how you could have dealt with it better.

As I have identified above, a hazard can be ***anything*** and it is perhaps easier to give some examples of some of the more common hazards you will face on a regular basis.

Beginning with the overtaking manoeuvre, this situation can be an absolute minefield as overtaking in itself is a potentially dangerous situation, even without the added problems of hazards.

The most common hazard facing a biker whilst overtaking is created by his own shortcomings in not using good observation to ensure the manoeuvre will be safe.

How many times have you seen a biker begin an overtake just before a junction only to face either the vehicle he is overtaking turning right or another vehicle coming out of a junction ahead on the left (or right) and driving straight at the biker.

He is faced with two options, either accelerating hard and getting back to his own side of the road safely, or braking and dropping back behind the vehicle he was attempting to overtake.

Either way, he has initially failed to make best use of the information that is there to be seen and made an extremely bad judgement in going for the overtake. If he is lucky he will get away with it, if not it is bad news.

Another example of poor observation and planning is overtaking when there is a lay-by on the right hand side of the road. The lay-by may be empty, but there is always a chance that the vehicle you are overtaking may suddenly swerve across the road into it, quite often as a last minute decision with perhaps no reference to his mirrors, or his blind spot where you are likely to be positioned.

In all cases you must assess what sort of hazard the vehicle in front represents and always ask yourself, is the driver aware of my presence? Are you able to predict from his earlier behaviour whether the response of the driver is likely to be aggressive? Does the vehicle size or the load on the vehicle prevent him from seeing me, or preventing me from seeing the road ahead?

Before overtaking you must consider the full range of possible hazards that can and frequently arise during the manoeuvre, such as:

- The vehicle in front
- The vehicle behind
- The road layout and conditions
- Road surface
- Overtaking in a stream of vehicles
- Filtering
- Overtaking on a single carriageway, dual carriageway and Motorways
- Right-hand bends
- Left hand bends
- Junctions, farm track entrances and lay-by's

Whilst on the subject of overtaking there is always one element that many riders fail to consider and that is ***Assisting others to overtake.***

Being aware and considerate and offering assistance to others can ease the tension and contribute towards improving the quality of driving for everyone on the road. How many times have you been on a journey and another driver extends a courtesy to you? Did you not appreciate that recognitions and make you feel good and want to extend similar courtesies to others?

Riding should not be treated in an aggressive and competitive way and should simply be the means to travel between two points as safely as possible. Being a considerate and courteous rider is a sign of a good rider and you should always be ready to identify means of making the progress of other road users safer.

With this in mind, if other road users wish to overtake you, assist them and help to keep you both safe. Be alert to the intentions of other riders and drivers behind you: use your mirrors and assess whether they wish to overtake or not. Allow enough distance between you and the vehicle in front for the overtaking vehicle to enter the gap.

The list of examples of potential hazards is endless, but as an advanced rider, you will soon develop the skills to identify any hazards, prioritise them and deal with them accordingly.

But remember that hazards are a rolling programme of changes unfolding before you. What is a potential hazard one minute may well be superseded by a more dangerous hazard a few seconds later due to the fact that the situation ahead is constantly changing and your brain is like a computer working in real time, having to decide what the greater danger to you is and how you should be reacting to it.

As a general rule hazards on open country roads can give you earlier warning providing your observation and awareness is there, whereas urban hazards tend to arise at much shorter notice, due to the volume of traffic, pedestrians and much more activity requiring your attention.

The intensity of danger associated with hazards varies with:-

- The hazard itself
- How close it is to you
- Road layout and road surface conditions
- Whether the hazard is stationary or moving, and if so, its direction.
- How fast are you approaching it

Remember, the greater the element of danger, the higher the priority that you should give it.

Once you have prioritised the importance of the danger of any hazard you can then decide a course of action to deal with it, with the objectives of the safety of yourself and other road users at all times.

This decision in most cases will be taken in a split second and should take into account:

- What can be seen
- What cannot be seen
- What might reasonably be expected to happen
- Which hazard poses the greatest threat
- What to do should the situation change. (Contingency plans)

If you plan your riding correctly, you should be able to make decisions in a methodical and accurate way at any moment and without hesitation.

Whilst riding you should be continuously anticipating, ranking and prioritising hazards in order of importance and deciding how to deal with them. At first you might find it difficult to consciously work through these stages all the time, but with practise this will become second nature and prove a quick and reliable guide to action

The three basic rules are:

- Anticipate, hazards
- Rank hazards in importance
- Decide what to do.

During your ride, monitor your own performance and ask yourself "How successful are you at planning?"

Avoid simply reacting to a situation rather than anticipating them. Practise these rules and become a better rider.

Member's Letters

I was disappointed to read in last month's newsletter that a new member thought the club was made up of cliques.

I've been riding for over 40 years (on and off) and a member of NAM for almost a year. I've been meaning to drop you a line for sometime now, congratulating NAM on the help, assistance and skills they have given me to improve my riding and enabled me to pass my advanced test.

I really enjoyed the rides out with my observers, they never talk down to you and were very constructive with their advice, and of course, the 'debrief' over a cup of tea covered many other motorcycling topics.

I've attended most of the Sunday ride outs since joining the club and found everyone very friendly, very often if your standing on your own someone will wander over for a chat, but it takes two to tango as they say.

Very often, it's a thankless task to run a club and the members don't realise the time and effort it takes to keep it going and maintain interesting activities, so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all for a very good and friendly club.

Many Regards

John Daniells

- o0o -

Hi Ray,

I've just arrived home in South Shields after a fantastic weekend in Pitlochry with the club. I would like to thank everyone involved in the organising of the whole weekend including yourself for the run I went on to Oban / Fort William on Saturday, it was fantastic, also a big thank you to all of the other members who supported the club and made everyone feel welcome, once again thank you.

Micky Price

- o0o -

Ray

Many thanks for the super rides over the weekend (BWG)

Had an excellent ride back today: - Pitlochry - Bridge of Cally - Blairgowrie - Perth - Bridge of Earn - Glenfarg - Edinburgh - Jedburgh - Bonchester Bridge - Newcastleton - Roadhead - Gilsland - Military Road - Western bypass to home 238 miles --- priceless

Thanks again

Neil Hamilton

A brief History of my Motor Cycling Years.

by James Fidler.

I first caught the motorcycling bug way back in my last year at high school, (not too many years ago!) when a friend offered to sell his two step-through mopeds for £10.00 each - so before he could change his mind, I snapped his hand off. We rode around on them all summer long, we drove on tracks, fields and disused railway paths - this is where I caught the bug!

I started to think about buying the real thing so a trip to a Motorcycle dealer was called for. I went to a place called (Costello's) which was in Tynemouth, it's now a pub beer garden and this is where I purchased a Suzuki GT 125cc - 2 Stroke Twin, It cost £353 pounds on the road with a foil tank of petrol thrown in!! I rode this until I passed my motor cycle test in 1975.



Yamaha had some exciting machines on the market so a RD 250 soon followed it had a blue and white 'coffin shaped tank' plus I fitted a fairing, rack & top box, this was my trusty steed for commuting to work in 1976.

I always used Norwich Union to insure my motor cycles and during my conversation with the broker he told me that any motorcycle over 350cc to unlimited capacity would cost the same to insure.



I now needed to look for a larger sized bike and this didn't take too long to find, a browse up Westgate Hill soon produced a result. I purchased a Suzuki GT750cc water-cool, and in the first couple of weeks everything seemed fine but, I soon realised that when you opened it up, the bike went into a speed wobble and I did not feel safe on it, I decided the beast had to go - maybe a smaller bike might be a good idea.

Kawasaki was based at the bottom of Westgate Hill so a talk with a salesman and a demo ride convinced me to part-ex the Suzuki for a Kawasaki KH 400 triple.

A straight exchange seemed order of the day and I found this bike lived up to all the road tests by different magazines. After I bought this 400, a few of my friends bought Kawasaki 400's which produced a mini grand

prix every weekend. Kawasaki had a brilliant range of bikes out at this time, so every other week when I visited the shop I would check out the bikes and it wasn't long before I wanted to change again.

Kawasaki Z1R was the next machine I owned, and I found it strange moving back to a larger capacity machine. This 1000cc bike was so different to the Suzuki 750, it was a good all round bike not counting its small tank range and the seat was hard.

I fitted a rack which helped to carry anything that I could tie or tape onto it and that did mean "anything" see the photo of the bike with luggage attached! It's unreal how much luggage it could carry, folly loaded with a rider & pillion and once on the move the weight disappeared. I think the Z1R is without a doubt one of the best bikes I have had the pleasure to own.

I had read in MCN that a new GPZ 1100 Kawasaki was coming out soon, so a ride to my dealers

confirmed this, so I filled out an order form which ensured delivery of a 150 mph Super Bike (well it was back then). I used this machine for visiting many rounds of bike racing at different tracks all over the country and many weekend ride outs.

One day when I was out on the bike a front wheel blow-out caused me to crash this machine and after repairing the bike, I decided to sell it.



Trail bikes were the next thing to try and a Yamaha DT 125 followed. To be honest 25 to 35 M.P.H. over rough ground seems quite fast as any one who is in to dirt bikes will confirm this.

After this I started to purchase cars and I seemed to keep the Ford motor company in business for a while but I always found bikes far more exciting.

A few more dirt bikes followed namely a MONTHS A 414cc, KE 175 Kawasaki, and a KL250 Kawasaki which brings me up to the year 1998 approximately.

One night while out with my mates I spoke with a chap who had a 900 Honda, he said that "he had the bike in bits, in his garage." I viewed it and twisted his arm up his back to allow me to purchase it.

He had been the 2nd owner and it had 15,000 miles on the clock, after getting the bike home I made a list of parts that were needed to make it road worthy. After I made a few phone calls I managed to get all the parts needed to assemble the bike over the winter period, an MO.T. and a major service at Motech in Byker which finished the project.

The classic Honda CB 900 FC was up and running, I kept this machine for 6 years until a good friend bought it (mileage 24,000). This was the biggest mistake of my biking life. In 2006 I bought the Honda back from him with (mileage 32,000) therefore on the log book I am the 3rd & 5th owner.

I joined N.A.M in March 2007, as an associate with the skills for life program and with the excellent guidance from my Observer, Ray Charlton, I passed my advanced test in June 2007, I remember this night very well, it rained so heavy and when I arrived at the club night, everyone just laughed because I looked like a drowned rat!! My leathers took over a week to dry out (must buy some better gear!)

This just about completes my profile, except in April 2007 I Swapped my KL 250 Kawasaki for a sports bike it's a 636 A1P Kawasaki which I am totally impressed with. Its head & shoulders better than any of my earlier bikes.

I think the most momentous occasion in my biking career was becoming an advanced rider. I now ride with much more relaxed and with a confidence I never had before and wish to thank all the riders at the club who have helped me to improve my bike riding skills over this time.

N.A.M. Pitlochry Weekend 2008

by David Henderson



For me the weekend away started on the Wednesday when I washed, polished, checked over and fuelled my Honda VFR 800 in readiness for the "off" on Friday morning.

I was well pleased with my efforts as the bike was looking great and this would give me to try out my latest purchases of a Vanucci tail bag and Kriega rucksack. I met up with the group at Seaton Burn at 09.30 am for a 10.00 am start.

The ride up was to be lead by our Chairman Mr. Raymond Charlton with yours truly bringing up the rear guard being suitably noticeable by my yellow coat. At 10.00 am prompt we set off we headed off towards Ponteland to pick up the A696 and set our sights on Peebles for our first break.

Stopping at Carter Bar for a "catch-up" and for those who felt the need for a cigarette. R.C. quickly had us back on the road and we set off again. The road down from Carter Bar. was being resurfaced and it was a bit "iffy" with quite a bit of loose gravel about.

Everyone got through safely and settled down with the weather being kind to us too. That is until we got to Peebles at 12.30am where, whilst we were having a tea break, it started to rain and continued to do so for sometime after we set off again.

The weather turned in our favour once more and we eventually stopped for an afternoon coffee at Muthill just south of Crieff. There the owner of the café' seized on the opportunity to make some extra income and presented us with a variety of cakes etc which needless to say were tried out by many of the group.

We arrived at the Hydro Hotel 4.50 pm'ish. Bikes were parked in the reserved area where as time passed the number being parked increased as more of the weekenders arrived.



The evening meal was served up and that was followed by a female singer who good humouredly joined in some of the groups banter.

On Saturday morning for those who chose to go there was an organised ride out to Oban and Fort William. The majority of riders opted to go and the sight of so many bikes on the road must have been quite impressive.

Passing through Kenmore brought back fond memories of the times I had caravanning holidays there 40 odd years ago. How time flies eh.



We arrived at Oban where there was a bit of a scramble to get the bikes parked but with the discreet movement of cones, things got sorted. After just over an hours break for some lunch, off again this time to Fort William where we stopped for a ½ hour stretch of the legs.

Setting off again till we reached Dalwhinnie where we had a brief “catch-up” stop and finally headed off on the “home” stretch. We picked up the A9 and as we dropped down on the approach to Pitlochry I was near the back of the group and the sight of all the bikes ahead of me all in line was just great with a touch of pride being part of them.

215 miles behind us, we were all safely back at the hotel.

Sunday was an ad hoc day whereby groups went there own way for the day. I joined a group of 6 bikers that travelled up to Dufftown railway station for a sandwich buffet that had been arranged for us in a converted rail carriage and then we headed for Alford to visit the bike museum and have a look around at the show that was being held that day.

On our way back to the hotel we passed through Glenshee which was brilliant not unlike Glen Coe for the scenery for those who have ridden through this glen.

Monday and alas the day to depart. I and 3 colleagues decided on an early start straight after an 8 am breakfast and we duly set off at 08.45 am.

We encountered some fog as we approached Edinburgh but that was short lived.



Over the Forth Road Bridge and onto the A68 / A697 and a welcome coffee break at Millfield where we split up to go our individual ways.

How do you describe a weekend like this?

Brilliant, magic, wow or any other adjective you can think of!

I have rode some excellent roads, met and chatted to club members who I had seen but never spoken to before and swapped tales.

The weather overall was brilliant though I know one or two got caught out. Am I looking forward to 2009 weekend away? You bet I am.

Some figures from me. 854 miles, 18 gallons of fuel that cost £102 with an average mileage of 48 mpg. cheapest fuel being £1.11 dearest £1.20 per litre.

Thanks to all those who made this weekend happen.

Funny

Miss Beatrice, the church organist, was in her eighties and had never been married.

One afternoon the vicar came to call on her and she showed him into her quaint sitting room. She invited him to have a seat while she prepared tea.

As he sat facing her old Hammond organ, the young minister noticed a cut-glass bowl sitting on top of it.

The bowl was filled with water, and in the water floated, of all things, a condom.

When she returned with the tea and scones, they began to chat. The vicar tried to stifle his curiosity about the bowl of water and its strange floater, but soon it got the better of him and he could no longer resist. "Miss Beatrice," he said, "I wonder if you could tell me what this is?" pointing to the bowl.

"Oh yes." She replied, "Isn't it wonderful? I was walking through the park a few months ago and I found this little package on the ground. The directions said to place it on the organ, keep it wet and that it would prevent the spread of disease. Do you know I haven't had the flu all winter."

Bike for sale

Honda VFR 800A

ABS, Silver, 52 plate with 6200 genuine miles. Full Honda service history, Smartwater markings and alarmed. Mint condition with recent service and MOT until September 2008.

£4100 or closest sensible offer.

Contact: Neil Darling on 07855 529189. First to see will buy



REPORT ON THE '4 COUNTIES' MAY 2008 RIDEOUT (or 'How to know when you've been framed!') by Dave Glennie

Although I obviously haven't seen the final copy for this month's Chronicles as I write this piece, I assume there is a photo of me somewhere alongside.



It was at the start of the April rideout that our Chairman singled me out for a portrait photo and I didn't twig what was going on.

If you have your solo photo taken then it will be swiftly followed by a request to contribute an article! So always keep your helmet on, preferably with a full balaclava, then you can't be identified.

(That doesn't work – see pic of Jim Fidler on Page 20 !! – Ed)

As I said during my ride briefing on 18th May, Ron Patrick has a silver tongue when it comes to persuasion and it didn't fail him again when he rang to 'encourage' me to write this article. I must learn to say NO.

As I pointed out to him, "Why ask me, I haven't a clue what happened during the rideout, it was all behind me?"

Furthermore, since I organised it, I'm unlikely to report anything other than it was a resounding success.

That's not quite true, I do know that the first group had a mishap with the drop-off system shortly after leaving Seaton Burn due to a rider (other than lead and back marker) wearing a Hi-Vis vest.

Never mind, the situation was eventually recovered and I think all who started the ride had re-joined us by the lunch stop. Unless there's a lone rider still out there looking for a group of 35 motorcyclists!

Obviously, I thought that the route was great and included some of my favourite biking roads including the A689 from Alston to Brampton and the B6357 from Newcastleton to Bonchester Bridge.

It would be great to have some feedback from participants to see if they agree (or otherwise, if they want to disagree).

There had been no rain in the period between the 4th May, when we did the recce, and the 17th. Fortunately, the 18th dawned bright but gave way to a few very light showers during the ride. I don't think it affected us at all and the day ended very warm and sunny.

Ron, who led the 3rd group, decided to bypass the 'official finish' at Alnwick and took his group back to Seaton Burn in response to a request from some members who hadn't known their way back from an earlier rideout.

I would prefer to see everyone finish at the same place with the option of a leader to ensure nobody gets lost going home.

As a final thought, I have to say that I really enjoyed the day but it's a lot less stressful when you are just part of the pack and don't have to worry in case it all goes wrong.

Slow Riding day

By Clive Taylor

The slow riding day has proved popular over the years and we have had a good take up for the last couple of events.

The extravaganza that took place on 20th April was restricted essentially to associates so pretty much everyone was in the same boat. About eight souls braved the coolish weather but the morning remained dry, ideal for our purpose.



Dave Stone and the Northumbria Fire & Rescue Service provided the venue which was Alnwick Fire Station training yard. We have used it before and it is ideal for this type of practice.

To mark a course, we use plastic cones that are more like discs so that you can ride straight over them if necessary without mishap.

The Training Group was out in force to lend a hand and Alan Richardson got things underway with a safety briefing. The first exercise involved folks riding a slow straight line.

The trick with any slow riding is to keep the engine revs up slightly, slip the clutch and apply moderate pressure on the rear brake to control speed. If you then keep your head up and look where you want to go everything falls into place.

It's very gratifying when someone who might lack a bit of confidence to begin with carries out a maneuver perfectly. They get a real kick out of it then. It's just a matter of practice and it does us all a bit of good to hone our skills in a deserted supermarket car park in the evening some time.

We carried out slow left and right turns and "U" turns and finished off with a figure of eight. Generally everyone seems to benefit and consequently the Training Group feels it is a worthwhile exercise to continue.



Poor old Jerry Baker had a problem with his bike when the engine kept stalling. No obvious cause was noticed and Good Samaritan, Wilf Cook offered to accompany Jerry back home to Hexham to ensure that he arrived ok. I've never heard of a Samaritan from Ashington before!!

Three of us had a spin out up the coast in the afternoon which was a good way to round off the day.

The next slow riding event is on Thursday evening 19th June at Heighley Gate Garden Centre (car park) at 18.30 hrs.

This evening do is open to anyone in the club so come along and eradicate the wobbles!

Don't worry if you ride a sports bike with limited steering lock, the course is marked out to ensure that you will not have a problem.

If you have any questions, give one of the training group a ring.

PITLOCHRY 2008



Contributions Required

This is your newsletter

Contributions Required

For newsletter, articles, observations, letters and
are always needed. Maybe you have a
question on Roadcraft or a tale to tell

Please send any contributions to:

raycharlton@tesco.net

for contributions to next newsletter
Friday, 25th July 2008

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This is your
pictures
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Deadline

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meets on the second Tuesday of every month at
Ratcliffe Hotel on the B6918 at Woolsington,
Newcastle Airport, at 7.00pm for 7.30pm.

NAM meet
the Wh
near



nam-online.org

Tel: 07951 035038



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