

# Riders' Chronicles



**This Issue**

**How Many?**

**Dreary Jan  
Afternoon**

**Fly Ride**

**I remember..**

**Restoration**

**Black Forest**

**Winter Rant**

**Train Chase**

**Profile**

**March Guest**

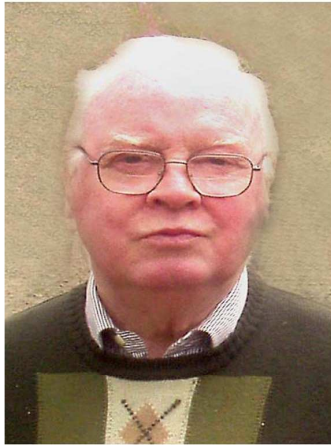
**Much More**



**March / April 2009**

**The Newsletter of Northumbria  
Advanced Motorcyclists**

## **Your Committee 2009 – part 1**



**Jack Lormor**  
**Honorary Group**  
**President**



**Ray Charlton**  
**Chairman &**  
**Newsletter Editor**



**Clive Taylor**  
**Vice Chairman /**  
**Training Team**



**Michael Sutherland**  
**Secretary**



**Simon Hadden**  
**Treasurer**



**Carole Kibble**  
**Membership Secretary**



## Chairman's ramblings

You would think that without any bike rides to distract me I would have all the time in the world to compile this issue of the Riders' Chronicles. You would be totally wrong as here I am at the end of the first week of February and I have absolutely nothing written.



There has been a distinct lack of contributions and as I have been somewhat distracted with carrying out major changes to the house, I must admit that I have been guilty of not chasing contributors up.

On the plus side, I now have a new bathroom, staircase and a re-vamped kitchen and utility as well as a redecorated lounge and dining room.

It suddenly hit me that the newsletter should be in the hands of the printer in readiness for distribution to members during the last few days of February. This prompted me to send a panic e-mail to many Members almost begging for contributions.

I need not have worried as the faithful came to my rescue with just enough articles to fill the usual 28 pages with wide and varied interesting articles.

I really must take a leaf out of Ron Patrick's book and do more 'press ganging' members for articles.

If it worked for him getting volunteers to organise ride outs then it must work for me.

January and February have been particularly bleak with extremely low temperatures, snow and ice and virtually every combination that makes biking a non runner.

As most of you know, our Membership Secretary, Carole Kibble lives in the wilds of Ayle, Near Alston and has been snowed in for quite a while due to the dreaded white stuff.

She sent me the following photograph showing the view from her back window, which clearly sums up the situation.

Looking on the brighter side, spring is just around the corner and its arrival heralds the start of the biking season.

The first main event will be the Scottish Bike Show at Ingleston, Near Edinburgh, which always attracts large crowds despite it being held so early in the year.

It is only a couple of months before NAM's annual trek to Pitlochry takes place and the regulars as well as some first timers, will be setting off for this popular event.

Happy riding.



## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Dr David Taylor	Robert Taylor
Philip Mason	Raymond Bell

## CONGRATULATIONS ON PASSING THE IAM TEST – Well Done

Terry Longstaff
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## 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



## 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](http://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](mailto:Hadden101@btinternet.com)

or

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

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

WHEN	WHOM	WHERE
15 <sup>th</sup> March	Jack Stewart	Scotland -- Just
19 <sup>th</sup> April	Dave Glennie	The Four Counties
17 <sup>th</sup> May	Don Frazer	Heading West
21 <sup>st</sup> June	Craig Hopkins	Scarborough
19 <sup>th</sup> July	Alan Thompson	Borders
16 <sup>th</sup> August	Mick Sutherland	Four Valleys and a Viaduct
20 <sup>th</sup> September	Ray Charlton	TBC
18 <sup>th</sup> October	TBC	TBC

## THE DROP-OFF SYSTEM:

- **YOUR** riding is **YOUR** responsibility.
- The purpose of the ride is an enjoyable and safe ride out, **not a race**.

At the front of every NAM Ride-out there is a **Leader** who will be identified at the pre-ride briefing.

He is permanently at the front of group and is identified by either a hi-viz H belt or hi-viz jacket.

At the rear of every ride-out there is a **Back Marker** who will also be identified at the pre-ride brief and will also wear either a hi-viz H belt or jacket and will remain at rear of group at all times.

**At no time will any rider overtake the Leader or drop behind the Back Marker.**

Each time the ride reaches a junction or round-a-bout, the rider at No 2 position, behind the **Leader**, will stop and mark the junction for the rest of the group – **BE AWARE OF AVOIDING STOPPING ON CLEARWAYS, YELLOW LINES OR ANYWHERE POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS OR ILLEGAL.**

When the **Back Marker** arrives, that rider will then re-join the group ahead of the **Back Marker**.

At the next junction or round-a-bout, the next rider in No. 2 position behind the **Leader** will drop off and mark that junction, rejoining the group in front of the **Back Marker**.

**This procedure will be repeated at each new junction.**

**OVERTAKING** is permitted between the **Back Marker** and **Leader**, but **ONLY IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO**. Ask yourself whether an overtake is necessary and remember it could be off putting to first time rider

When overtaking other vehicles, take care not to merely follow bike in front.

If traffic conditions slow progress, do not worry as the drop-off system works and ensures that no-one is left behind.

Riding in a group presents additional hazards, so ride to the system, and remember, **Safety first**.

Riders who are not part of the group are a significant hazard. Stay safe.



## NAM MONTHLY MEETING – March 2009

We have pleasure in announcing that our Guest Speaker for the March meeting is Peter Rodger, Chief Examiner for the Institute of Advanced Motorists. This should prove to be a very interesting night and will give you an insight into what is going on within the IAM and the opportunity to put questions to Peter. This is a **'NOT TO BE MISSED NIGHT.'**



***Peter Rodger is currently the Chief Examiner of the Institute of Advanced Motorists.***

***Previously he was Head of Driver Training at the Metropolitan Police Service, Hendon.***

***He has extensive experience in police driver training, having been responsible for training in cars, on motorcycles, and in LGV and PCV's, as well as for the more technical training given to police officers in collision investigation, traffic law etc.***

***Peter was involved in the development of the police national standards for driver training policy in the difficult area of pursuits at both a local and national level.***

## How Many & Who?

By Simon Lupton

Over the past ten years or so I've been touring in Europe, and the UK, with a few friends and a question we've never really found the answer to is; how many and who?



Our annual motorcycle trip was kicked off by a former school friend who was a motorcycle bobby at the time, and one of his colleagues, who then invited me along. Three seemed to be a good number, no problems getting onto camp sites or finding places to eat, didn't frighten too many old ladies or motorists.

The early trips were great fun, a good combination of riding, walking and drinking. As time has marched on the walking was dropped, the drinking necessarily reduced and the holiday is now a pure motorcycle trip. Word got round and a couple of others joined "The Trip" and over the years they have invited their pals culminating in a trip of 13 a few years ago.

I've got to admit this was too many, too many different personalities, too many different riding standards and too many people to find food for! Personally I found it hard work, I always seemed to end up leading, which generally suits me as I like to ride at my own pace, but when you've got 12 others breathing down your neck in a foreign country whilst navigating and making progress it gets a bit wearing day in day out. Some seemed to forget I was on holiday too! I wasn't the only one who found it too much, so we decided to cut numbers back for the following year.



Fine, for a year, we went with four, just as well that particular year as I was riding with a week old broken shoulder blade and rib so my humour was diminished at times! Then it happened again! The next year people who weren't known by the majority were invited, only this time things took a turn for the worse. On the first full day in France we were warming to the twisty roads and starting to make good progress, I was leading, the chap behind, we'll call him Bill, was virtually a complete stranger to me, but watching him in the mirrors he looked to be riding some tidy lines and staying with the pace okay, I was quite impressed.



We stopped for an ice-cream in the sun then continued on, I decided to sit at the back of the group for a while and watch. After twenty minutes or so riding some great roads through the forests, the rider in front of me slowed and came to a stop just entering a tight left hander, strange place to stop me thinks, must be desperate for a pee! I continued on, only to be met by the other lads heading back, alarm bells started ringing.

Bill had managed to launch himself and the bike so far into the trees that they weren't easily visible from the road, fortunately his exit had been seen by the lad who stopped, I rode by completely oblivious to what had happened. I must confess I thought he was dead when I first saw him he was so grey, emergency services were summoned, do you know the emergency number in France? I didn't but someone more organised than me did, 112.

Fortunately Bill made a full recovery after spending a couple of months in various French hospitals, and not learning a word of French! Needless to say the dampeners were put on that particular holiday somewhat. Discussions were held and the following year numbers reduced slightly but another stranger appeared, some people just don't take the hint! Needless to say he fell off too, only a minor tumble but the potential was there for something more spectacular.

Before the end of that holiday I'd decided I wasn't going next year, that's this year now, a few days in Scotland with a couple of others would do me fine. That's how it started out anyway, now there's rumoured to be twelve going!

Maybe I'm a bit anal about preparation, there are others who are more so, but I've always found it handy to take a map and some waterproofs. It amazes me some folk will go to Europe for a week, cover 3000 miles and take neither with them, just rely on others to show them round and hope it doesn't rain, it nearly always does.

So what do you do, just give up and let anyone come who wants to and deal with the consequences, or do you start offending people? I'm definitely erring toward the latter, when I look back at some of the unknown quantities who have been on the trip, one was sadly killed and another is now permanently in a wheel-chair, both in bike incidents away from our tours, then the Bill incident, that's a big percentage of the 17 or so people who have come along.

Motorcycling is potentially dangerous, riding in groups perhaps more so, especially when tramping on a bit, no-one is immune to mistakes, been there myself, a tale I think I've already told, but you need to look at reducing the risks, perhaps being choosy about who you go with is one way.

## News items

By Ray Charlton

### Flip-front helmet tests

Increasingly popular flip-front helmets now have their own Safety ratings, laid down in new testing standards to meet a minimum legal safety standard.

The new regulations, announced recently by SHARP, (the Department of Transport's Safety Helmet Assessment and Rating Programme) will initially cover 20 of the most popular flip front models and will soon be extended to a total of 96.

Flip Front helmets from a wide price range have been assessed and have been awarded a four or five star rating. This should allow riders to find a high scoring helmet in a size and style that fits them at a price they want to pay.

All helmets must meet minimum legal safety standards, but the SHARP scheme uses a wider range of tests to provide riders with more information on how much protection a helmet can provide in a crash.

The new tests, which award ratings of between one and five stars, showed that the performance of helmets can vary by as much as 70 per cent.

For more information about the SHARP programme, visit their website at <http://direct.gov.uk/sharp>

### Reporting dangerous roads

The BMF is working closely with Ridesafe BackSafe to highlight their Report-A Road scheme for all road users.

The scheme is intended to encourage motorcyclists in particular to report any road defects such as potholes, sunken drains, damaged inspection covers and the use of over banding to the Highways Department of their Local Authority or to the Highways Agency for motorways and trunk roads.

For further information look at <http://www.bmf.co.uk/report-a-road> or <http://www.ridesafebacksafe.co.uk>

### Snippets

A motorcyclist travelling at 70mph died after a pheasant hit his crash helmet in a 'million to one accident' in Lancashire. An inquest was told he swerved into an embankment and died.  
Verdict: Accident.

***Ironically the very same thing happened to me on the A7 heading towards Hawick. I was temporarily 'knocked out' for a few seconds. It was like being hit with a breeze block. Tom Pringle who was following and witnessed it saw me slowly drift over onto the wrong side of the road before recovering my position as I came round. Not very pleasant (pardon the pun!) - Ed***

## A dreary afternoon in January

By Eric Fitzpatrick

The lady in the café welcomed me with, “You must be mad to be out on a bike on a day like this!”

Yes, it could have been better. The temperature was 6.5C; the cloud base was down to 1000 ft.

The roads were wet, greasy with salt, while mud and loose gravel from developing potholes added interest.

So, what was I doing in the café at Millfield? All I had set out to do was a quick blast from toon to Otterburn and back.

My intention had been to get out of the house and enjoy a ride on familiar roads.

By the time I reached Otterburn I wanted more. Jedburgh, Kelso, Coldstream and Wooler beckoned.

I had been reading about “the system” and techniques of bike control, all of which are easy in the armchair.

Today, on the bike, conditions of road and weather meant that all could be applied and practised.

Chosen lines were tighter because of the mud and gravel lining the edges and centre of the carriageway.

Visibility over the Ottercops and Carter Bar was down to 20 – 30 yards.

Melting snowbanks on the high ground meant that water streamed across the road. With the temperature at 2C on Carter Bar, was any of it frozen?

The salty, greasy roads meant that bends had to be treated seriously, with full attention to the elements of bike stability and gave much practice at shifting weight to minimise angles of lean and at taking bends on a driving throttle.

Reading the system and riding the system are poles apart.

The lady in the café was wrong. I was not mad. On the contrary, I was warm, comfortable and making the most of a rare opportunity to practise a greater range of advanced skills than usual on a single outing.

Even better, the sense of achievement and exhilaration lasted well beyond the chore of hosing the salty mud off the bike.

I must do it again,

## FLY RIDE TO LANDECK

by Michael Sutherland

To ride the high passes in the Austrian and Swiss Alps is the ambition of most, if not all touring motorcyclists.

A popular way to travel to the Alps from the North East England is to take the overnight DFDS ferry from North Shields arriving at the port of IJmuiden, for Amsterdam just after breakfast the next morning, giving a full day's riding ahead.

Making your way past Arnhem through Holland and then through Germany down the Rhine valley it is approximately another 550-600 miles to the Swiss and Austrian borders.

For riders travelling in a group or with a pillion, it is a two day trip staying somewhere like Cochem on the Mosel or Heidelberg on the Rhine for B&B, arriving at your destination the following afternoon.



While this leg of the journey can be an enjoyable part of your overall holiday, (taking into account that when it rains in the Rhine Valley it really rains) there is no getting away from the fact that this is four days out of your holiday, two days there and two days back, meaning that you need at least ten days away to explore the Alpine region.

As an alternative and having just a week's holiday for Whit at the end of May Geraldine and I decided to take up the suggestion from the owner of

the Enzian Hotel in Landeck, Klaus Stubenbock, to fly to either Munich or Innsbruck and to hire one of his BMW motorcycles for six days from Sunday to Friday.

The 'Austrian Arrow' service operated by Tyrolean Airways flies directly from Newcastle to Innsbruck in just ninety minutes.

This is the opposite end of the scale to Easy Jet with the air stewardesses in smart 'Thunderbird' style uniforms serving a complimentary in flight meal and announcing to passengers "if you have any requests or questions we will answer, as this is our mission".

At Newcastle Airport we did a good impersonation of the 'Stig' as we travelled in our motorcycle gear with helmets to make more room in our luggage for other clothing.

We soon got used to the questions, "Where's your bike"? "Is it in the hold"? "Is it a folder"?

The gradual descent into the Innsbruck Valley takes about twenty minutes of the flight with some excellent views of the mountain peaks, the pilot even side slipped so that we could see out from both sides of the small jet aircraft.



We were met at Innsbruck by Klaus' nephew in his estate car and were soon booked into the hotel where we met up with our friends Geoff and Anne from South Shields, who with two weeks holiday had arrived in Landeck on their FJR that afternoon having taken the DFDS ferry on the previous Thursday.

Talking over breakfast on Sunday morning to a group of bikers from Ayr who were having a rest day having been travelling for three days we were almost embarrassed to say how quick our own journey had been and that we were planning a ride into the mountain region of Germany and Oberammergau that morning.

Landeck, a small railway town about the size of Morpeth, situated at the convergence of two rivers forty miles west of Innsbruck is a skiing centre in winter with several hotels now staying open in the summer months to cater for tourists, especially motorcyclists, visiting this Tyrol region of Austria.

Klaus enjoys the best of both worlds being a ski instructor in the winter and organising bike trips in summer where destinations in Germany, Switzerland or Italy including fourteen of the highest passes can be reached within a day's ride from Landeck.

You have to remember to take your passport with you! Over the last two years Klaus has developed a partnership with BMW where you can 'test ride' a bike for the day or book ahead for the week as we did.



Our GS 1200 has just 700 km on the clock and came complete with top box. Over the next six days we travelled into Switzerland around St Moritz over the St Leonard's pass and visited the lakes region around St Wolfgang.

On the final day we tried a 1200 GT, a very quick bike which can easily overtake caravans and camper vans on the passes but for me did not have the character of the slower boxer-engined GS which is an excellent all rounder especially with a pillion, the anti-dive suspension geometry completely preventing helmets from clashing during braking on the steep descents. We were sorry to have to hand it back.

What about the cost you say? Well generally Austria is about 10% better value than in Britain, with Switzerland being 10-15% more expensive. The overall cost of the holiday including flights and bike hire is comparable or even less than taking your own bike when taking into account the ferry, fuel and the extra nights' accommodation to and from Holland.

While many bikers will of course prefer to make the trip to the Alps on their own bike, fly-ride is an option if you can just take five or seven days away.

Geraldine and I are planning to travel to Landeck again this May time and I will be happy to provide up to date costings for 2009 and other information for this type of biking holiday if you see me at one of the club nights.

## I remember the first time I ...

By Ron Patrick

Ray's asking for articles for the newsletter, which is all very well! But I never have anything to say. Struggling to find some inspiration that will set me off and fill the requested page, I come up with nothing. This could be the story of my life; I'm good at coming up with nothing.

Isn't it odd that as we search back for detail about some event, the bits that went wrong are usually more interesting than the bits that go right?

I remember the first time I came off my bike, it was a Norton Dominator 88 circa 1953.

I'd been up to Glasgow with my mate on the back sometime in the mid fifties, across to Carlisle up the A74 (single carriageway then) then back via Edinburgh and the A68, great!

Well, it turned dark after Edinburgh and we progressed happily past Otterburn. At that time there were lots of sheep on the moors and the roads weren't fenced off, so you had to be careful.

Not much traffic on the roads but eventually car lights appeared ahead and I dipped mine. As I was about to pass, I noticed the car appeared to be travelling slowly, which it was, as it crept past a flock of sheep straddling the road. O dear! That's us into the thick of them.

My mate came off sideways with me taking a close look at the tarmac. I could feel my nose scraping along the road and flipping onto my back, could see the beloved Norton cascading past in a shower of sparks.

Getting up, I didn't want to touch my nose, as I knew I'd lost it. My mate, feeling ok asked how I was and didn't mention my nose. Bloody Hell! I thought, it's so bad he won't even look at it.

He went away to chat to the car driver and I, not feeling any blood running down tentatively felt my nose.

It was still there! I'd been wearing those MKV11 goggles, which have a nose flap and whilst this was shredded, my hooter was pristine. Funny what little discoveries can cheer you up!

We were both ok, but my shoulder was a bit sore. Pulling the mudguard off the wheel, we were on our way.

As I reflect back, it's a good job front number plates were removed from bikes, as the sheep was cut in two.

For those of you who are becoming bored with this sad tale, here is a quiz question.

I passed my heavy goods vehicle test in 1953 whilst in the Army. What was the maximum speed limit for HGV's at that time?

Answer at the end.

Mind you, I've been off a few times in the Army (National Service) 1953 to 55 although I don't know if this counts.



I did some Trials and managed to fall off at most of the sections, this was something else I wasn't very good at.

We used dispatch riders bikes, 500cc side valve BSA or 350cc ohv Matchless.

This came about as I'd passed my test prior to going into the Army at 18 and managed to work my way onto bike repairs with the REME.

At one stage some new bikes were delivered and the Army in its wisdom decided that those irresponsible dispatch riders would be unsuitable people to run-in these bikes.

Very important in that era. What to do? Brainwave, let the mechanics run them in.

Do me a favour! Our average age was nineteen, about eight of us. Rural Oxfordshire had little traffic; we went ballistic.

I thought I was good as I accelerated past all comers, but couldn't work out how they all tended to come past me at the later stages as I ran out of steam.

It wasn't till much later that I learned that these bikes had four gears, I was used to three on the James two-stroke I'd learnt on. We did have some fun.

What about running them in? Pardon!

*Answer; 20mph.* However some exceeded this limit by as much as 25%.

"Shocking isn't it."

## **The restoration of Malcolm's Norton**

By Neil Hamilton

### **The dawn of a project**

As the "Swinging Sixties" were drawing to a close, my friend Malcolm became the proud owner of a Norton Dominator 650 SS. The purchase was in some small part my responsibility as my buying his BSA Bantam (star of "The Wrong Way Round") provided a considerable proportion of the cash outlay. The sixties was the decade that introduced the wonderful Mini Skirt, the rusty metal skirt that came on this Brummie lass were significantly less attractive and immediately consigned to the bin. She had obviously suffered a hard life with the years of water and road salt taking its toll on the original cellulose paintwork. The engine however sort of ran although it appeared that there was a small person inside with a pneumatic drill who wanted out.



### **Time to strip**

With precious little remaining in anything resembling good order (the gearbox was still working fine) a full strip-down was the next task. Nuts and bolts removed after prolonged anointing with holy oil (plus gas for those who can remember it) were carefully placed in meticulously labelled jam jars with nice screw tops. We were later to discover that the felt tip pen writing on the glass jars disappears when handled with oily petrol hands!! We also discovered the joy of sorting



nuts and bolts from tiny bits of broken glass when the jars fall off the shelf. My Father at the time had a grocery shop and several OXO tins were pressed into service as a more robust alternative. Over a few short weeks, everything was dismantled, cleaned and packed away. The crankshaft was in need of regrinding, with a telltale crack extending up number 1 con-rod placing the smoking gun squarely in the hand of the culprit. Bores however were fine with just a little glaze to bust from the cylinder walls.

### Framing the picture

Whilst sporting the ubiquitous "Featherbed Frame" this was the slightly less favoured wideline variant. Beggars however can't be choosers as the price had been a snip. Lots of chips and rust bore testimony to the years of service already given and a complete strip to the bare metal with power drill and wire brushes were called for. Persistent deep rust patches were treated to a "wonder compound" of the time "Naval Jelly" (not to be confused with lotion for applying to the belly button!). Bright and pristine, the frame was treated to a coat of best shipyard red lead (the Sunderland shipyards were undoubtedly the sponsors of many motorcycle renovation projects over the years), followed by two coats of Belco Brushing Cellulose primer, well rubbed down. This was followed by two further coats of Belco Black Brushing Cellulose, rubbed down and polished with T Cut. The resulting finish was far superior to any powder coating that I have ever seen. Petrol tank, oil tank, mudguards and battery box received similar treatment, providing a splendid alternative to the shaving mirror. Useful feature as all the finished parts were safely secreted in Malcolm's upstairs bedroom.

### Assembly time

With all the parts prepared, seat splendidly recovered with some suitably grained black vinyl from the local haberdashers, the great time had come. Rebirth of a new legend. Engine, meticulously polished with Solvol Autosol slipped in, followed by similarly polished gearbox. Wheels too had cast off rusty pallor with suitable anointing with Solvol and the inevitable "elbow grease". The chain, after steeping in paraffin (not in Malcolm's bedroom) since the inception of the project, was transferred into a tin of Duckhams Chain Lubricant ready for fitting. Excitement was growing now as the finishing line was approaching. Electrics were re-fitted (much simpler than a current BMW would be), mudguards and wheels. She stood triumphant like the Phoenix arisen from fires of rust and neglect. Tomorrow we would ride.



### Launch day

All was prepared, the sun was even shining, the work was over, it was time for the real fun. A gallon of petrol went into the tank (cost six and sixpence or 33p in new money) and with a tickle of the carburettor, the smell of petrol mingled with the old socks aroma that was the trademark of most sixties teenage male bedrooms. Ignition on, feel for the compression stroke, kickstart and .....phutt, phutt. Kickstart again... the beast was alive. No man inside trying to get out, only the sound of Malcolm's mother from downstairs shouting in strident tone "Malcolm....., the downstairs ceiling's cracked. I did tell him to take it off the centre stand first but excitement had the better of him. And how did we get it out? He rode it down the stairs and out through the front door, how else!!



## EXHAUSTED

By Tony Forster

Probably one of the most contentious issues, in the UK generally, is that of noise and motorcyclists, as usual, seem to stick out more than most as the guilty party. (Daily Mail readers and Nimbi's can now nod in agreement, "Akrapovic exhausts are made by illegal immigrants living in houses paid for by us, the taxpayer etc").

Leaving aside the "wide wheel boys" brigade of Subaru's with their drain pipe exhausts and dodgy Corsa's, bikes are collectively seen as the worst offenders.

The problem is that the only sound measurement system to pass noise emission tests is based on decibels, which does not take into account sound quality.

As an example, I regularly get bikes going along our street and the absolute worst noise is produced by a small capacity two stroke, which sounds like amplified angry wasps, yet no doubt passes noise tests, probably because it produces a feeble sound pressure wave (no doubt there's a few sound experts among us who can verify or correct this statement).

The fact that this miniscule motored bike passes our house at about eleven at night, may make it stand out even more is neither here nor there but it can be heard clearly (and irritatingly) from about half a mile away.

Moving on from the buzz saw two strokes, next up are the four stroke fours. Modern ones whistle past with a sound of cogs and pistons whirring and there is more of a whisper from the exhaust than anything, unless they're on full chat, when they wail like a banshee.

Some folks like screaming multi's, I don't and would rather they have a lower less offensive tone. Triples are much the same, but have a bit more character. Twins in whatever engine configuration, seem to have the most likeable (to my ears) tone; Ducati, anyone?

All of the above are on standard pipes, which restrict noise to whatever the current fashionable limit is. On aftermarket pipes, the effect can either be pleasing or horrifying and, at the risk of being beaten up by Harley owners everywhere, Hogs are the worst offenders..... the first thing Harley owners do when they buy a bike, is customize it, great, no problem, except they often put on straight thru Screamin' Eagle pipes, partially to get the engine to perform as meant to and partially to deafen everyone else.

Now I have no problem with a fruity sounding exhaust, but this is going a bit too far in the attention seeking stakes.

There are some folk who ride their bikes through the city, towns and villages repeatedly and the thunder of a Harley on open pipes is not pleasant, it's just annoying.

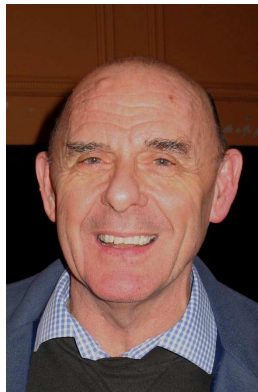
The point of all this rambling? Buy a twin with a nice aftermarket but street legal exhaust..... No, I mean the problem is the way noise tests are conducted and should focus on the tone, rather than the decibels.

High pitch is more offensive than low pitch, but try persuading the legislators of this.

Now can anyone tell me how I remove the baffle on a Remus exhaust?

## A Bike Trip to the Black Forest and Vosges Mountains

By Dave Glennie



Following the presentations about foreign trips on several club nights during the winter of 2007/8, I was fired up to have a go at it myself. However, unlike Ron Patrick who is brave enough to strike out on his own to foreign climes, I was much more cautious and felt a lot happier if I could have some company, especially for my first attempt.

Fortunately, I discovered that four guys from where I work (Hartlepool Power Station) were planning a European biking trip during 2008 and I was able to join them on a trip to the Black Forest and the Vosges Mountains in September last year.

My bike is a 2007 Yamaha FZ1 and I had no luggage for it so, during June/July 2008, I investigated the options available. One of the guys at work had some Oxford soft panniers that he said I could borrow but they wouldn't sit correctly on the sub-frame of my bike so I eventually decided that I'd have to bite the bullet and buy some proper hard luggage - it's not cheap that stuff, is it!

There don't seem to be many hard luggage manufacturers who've produced racks and cases for the FZ1 other than Givi and Kappa. I found out that these are really the same company although the Givi kit is a bit more swish AND expensive. I'm not out to create a fashion statement (as those of you who know me will have realised) so I decided the cheaper Kappa kit would suit me fine. I bought the racks, side panniers and top case all for £400 from an internet outfit, MotorBikesandParts.com.



Fitting the racks took me a couple of evenings in the garage and now I can easily remove the pannier racks when not required because they're a bit ugly, although I leave the top case rack on permanently. After fitting, I loaded them up with some gear and took the bike for spin. I'd heard horror stories about the stability of a bike being upset by luggage and wanted to check all was OK. In fact, the luggage was hardly noticeable. At the beginning of September I took the bike to Ian Bell for a service and had two new tyres fitted so I was ready for the big day.



My travelling companions all live on Teesside and North Yorkshire so the ferry crossing was booked from Hull to Zeebrugge which meant that I had to ride to Teesside to meet the first two, then onto Stokesley for the second pair. Since we were already on the Stokesley - Helmsley road (a real biking treat) we used it, then went to Hull over the North Yorks Moors and arrived in plenty of time to

board the ferry.

At the check-in, one of the guys collected our passports together to present to the boarding staff. It was immediately apparent that there was a problem - Keith had brought his wife's passport instead of his own! P&O Ferries were very helpful and told him that, if he could return within a couple of hours with his own passport, they'd transfer his booking to the Hull-Rotterdam ferry that evening. He phoned his wife to get her to drive south on the A1 and meet him at

Ferrybridge Services which should give him time to meet the deadline. We said farewell to him and four of us boarded the ferry.

Not having taken a bike on a ferry before I wasn't sure about the procedure for tying down. In fact the deckhands just threw us some tatty ropes and left us to it. Fortunately, I'd brought a couple of my own ratchet straps and soon had the bike secured. We booked a five berth family cabin and paid just under £100 each for the return crossings. The cabin was impressive with ensuite toilet and shower facilities so, after changing out of our bike gear, we headed for the bar.

The meal package on P&O Ferries was excellent. For £22 each we got dinner and breakfast. Both meals were buffet-style help yourself affairs - the choice was overwhelming, the quality of the food first class and you could make as many trips as you liked to restock - a real 'fill ya boots' experience. The crossing was fairly smooth and I slept like a log, sated by booze and food.

Next morning, day 2, we checked our mobiles for a text message from Keith and learned that he'd missed the Rotterdam ferry and had to ride to Dover for a crossing to Calais. Since we hadn't pre-booked any accommodation for the trip we didn't know exactly where we'd be come nightfall although our intention was to ride through Belgium and Luxembourg and get into Germany before finding somewhere to stay.

We agreed to keep him informed by text message and he started his longer ride from Calais to try to catch us up. In fact he managed it fairly easily because we stayed on normal roads while he used the motorways. The trip across Belgium was drab and uninteresting with fairly short sections of straight single carriageway road punctuated by slow crawls through small towns and villages.



It wasn't until we entered Luxembourg that we even saw a road with a bend! The last 20 or 30 miles of that first day, when we got into Germany, gave us our first smiles after some 250 miles of riding. Next time, we agreed that we'd just jump on the motorway and get those miles over as quickly as possible.

Our first night was at a place called Prum in south west Germany and we easily found an excellent hotel for 40 euros each (B&B). Keith arrived only an hour after us and there was a good bar next door that did meals. So we turned in again with guts full of beer and food - notice a

recurring theme here?

Day 3 produced even better roads as we traversed some hilly country with twisty roads, to Cochem and then south in the Moselle valley. None of us had realised that we'd be so close to the Nurburgring so, on approaching Cochem, I was surprised to see direction signs to it only 6km away. The leading rider said later that he hadn't seen the signs so it would have meant splitting up to detour there. Oh well, maybe another time.

That evening saw us billeted in Baden-Baden and we had a night out in the centre with more good food and beer - no surprise there then! Day 4 was eagerly anticipated by all since it meant a trip south down the renowned B500

through the Black Forest. The day dawned bright and cold, the roads were damp with dew but that ride was an experience that still brings a smile to my face when I think about it. As we neared the Swiss border we turned west at Lake Tittersee and skirted Basle to cross the Rhine into France, heading for Belfort.

That last section was a bit boring but another good hotel set us up again for the next day. I had a little problem as we entered Belfort by getting into a lane that turned in a different direction to the rest of the group and it took me a while to find them. A text saying 'We're in the town square' isn't much use when the locals kept telling me that there are four town squares in Belfort!

Day 5 involved a trip north through the Vosges mountains with a few detours to take in some of the highest passes that we had identified on the map. We didn't get off to a good start since the road, that we'd chosen, turned out to be closed and we had to detour a little. We eventually got back on course and rode through some of the best biking country I've ever dreamed about.

Personally, I thought it even eclipsed the B500 and just had bend after bend after bend. Sometimes we seemed to have the bikes healed over for so long that I was sure we'd reappear up own jacksies! I just didn't want the day to end and after some of the best bits I was really tempted just to turn around and go back the other way.



At Col du Grand Ballon d'Alsace there were quite a number of bikers (being a Saturday) and we had lunch on a spectacular terrace overlooking views of the mountains. We had a laugh with a group of German bikers who were highly amused by the British biker expression "chicken strips" and they went down the rows of parked bikes identifying bikes that had tyres with these features (none of ours, of course!).

That evening saw us staying at a small French town called Sarrebourg. We had our dinner in a restaurant that turned out to be owned by a biker who owned a TDM900. (They are SO common, aren't they?) When he found out that we were bikers he made us really welcome and he cooked us the best steaks we'd ever tasted.

Day 6 saw us start the journey back towards Zeebrugge via Metz and Verdun. The roads here aren't too wonderful but at least you can keep a reasonable average speed. We were heading for Cambrai but stayed in a little town called Le Cateau just to the east.

Day 7 and we visited some of the WWI sites near Thiepval. It was a misty morning and the whole place had an eerie feeling that was compounded by the reduced visibility. By midday we needed to cover some miles to get back to Zeebrugge so we jumped onto the A26 autoroute, stopping at La Coupole, near St Omer, to look at the WWII V2 rocket launching site. We arrived back at the docks in plenty of time to board and sampled the plentiful food and beer again.

Day 8 we arrived in Hull to torrential rain after 7 days without a single drop - typical British weather! The ride back to Tyneside was not one to remember although it was without mishap.

We have just booked our ferry crossings for September this year, although this time we will blast across to south west Germany on motorways, ride the B500 again then get into Switzerland this time. Mind you, I've put in a special request to do some of the Vosges again!



## a bit of a winter rant

by John Magee

### MOBILE PHONES

How often have you been out in your car or worse still, on the bike and either people pass you or you them and there they can clearly be seen to be using a mobile phone?



It is really worrying when you are on the bike as you never know whether they are aware of you or not.

Why is it that the majority of these people are driving top of the range motors over and above £25,000 and yet they can't afford a cheap hands free kit?

I am not just getting at this particular group of motorists because you do see other road users such as van and truck drivers, which, considering their responsibilities makes it even worse.

My wife and I do a fair bit of travelling and we have a Picasso which is higher than the normal size car, giving us a much greater view into other cars and its amazing to see drivers even texting with it on their knees thinking that no one can see them,

There are occasions that I wish I was a copper in a unmarked car some times,

Even when they realise they can be seen, some put them down but the majority just continue doing what they are doing, with complete contempt for the law. Why is there never a PC around in such cases.

It is my humble opinion that the only way to stop this practise is by not just fining them and putting points on their licence, but to ban them for say two weeks the first time and progressively increase the ban for further offences.

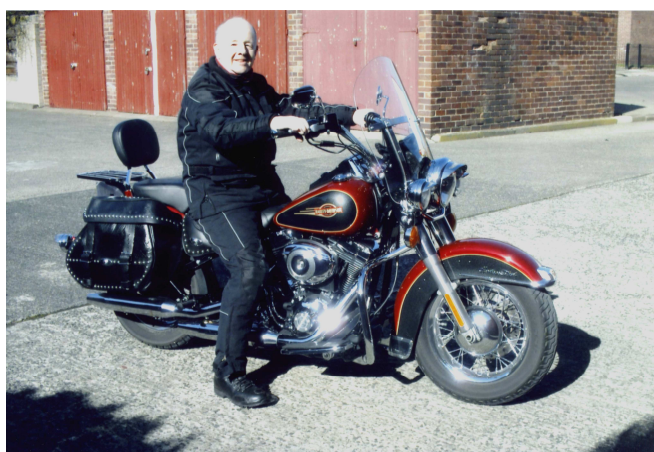
I am sure this would help to resolve the problem.

I must admit that I was one of those who used a mobile whilst driving when they first came out, but as soon as hands free became available the company fitted them to our cars. And I made sure I never did it again.

Now that I have got that off my chest I am now out for a ride on the bike for a couple of hours.

Proper riders us Harley lads!

***Sad, so sad! He obviously really believes he is a proper rider! - Ed***



## Chasing The Train

By Simon Hadden

Every now and again, it's good to do something ridiculous, if not completely potty. And so it was, that I chased the 12.07 train from Hexham to Hawick up to Falstone.

Now the rails had long gone but this wasn't a problem. I had the timetable, you see. Not just any timetable, of course. Oh no. To be precise, one dated September 27<sup>th</sup> 1948 until further notice, Price threepence. I would race the train from that, using the B31, which emerged from the BSA factory in 1947.

Over summer 2008, the whole idea of "chasing" the train developed a life of its own. Fiction and fact became intermingled to produce a tall tale, which, if nothing else, would provide a good excuse for a run out.

My feisty Great Aunt (who actually deserted Northumberland for the bright lights of London in the twenties and drove an ambulance during the Blitz) came back to Hexham for a few years in the late forties. With her MG embedded in a dry stone wall, she was somewhat stuck for transport, when an invitation to a wedding in Falstone plopped through the letterbox in August 1948. A suggestion that she might ride pillion on the brand new Beesa invoked a response of "Not on your life, ducky. A charming thought, of course, but I'll take the train." And so it was that

she steamed out of Hexham on the 12.07 to Hawick on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1948, leaving her hat box behind on the platform.



The Border Counties branch ran up the remote North Tyne valley into the lonely hills on the Scottish Border. Three trains a day ran up to Riccarton Junction and sometimes on to Hawick. It was a run through glorious scenery but made little money. Much of the land is good only for grazing sheep or growing timber. But the roads are great on a bike, especially an old bike.

Back to Hexham station and onwards sixty years in time. It's Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2008. The station clock (now digital) shows 12.07. Standing on the down platform I suddenly spot a vibrant hat box left lying on a seat. "My goodness, she's left her hat behind".

Striding out of the station, the hat box is tied on to the rack of the trusty B31 with twine. This takes several minutes. The B31 fires on the first kick but it takes another couple of minutes to get out of the station approach, due to heavy Saturday traffic – not a problem the rider would have had in 1948, I suspect. The clock is ticking. By now the train would be four miles away. We're still in Hexham. Come on, come on. Can't you see we have a train to catch? Finally, someone stops to let us out and we're off. Old OS maps shows that in the 1940s the road we're following led only to Acomb and the North Tyne valley – a typical country road. Nowadays the A69 dual carriageway blasts along this route for a few hundred yards. The Beesa's pulling well but there's no need to slow up for the speed camera on this section. Once we're on to the A6079 proper, the remaining twenty five miles are little changed over the last 60 years. As the road runs north, it climbs up out of the valley, leaving the railway far below. Passing Wall station we're ten minutes behind the train. Is that why there's no tell-tale smoke from the loco to be seen? It's easy to ignore sixty years on these roads.



The weather's probably not changed much either. Hexham's persistent drizzle had now turned heavier. The forecast for the following day, a Sunday, was perfect with warm golden sunshine. We couldn't do the run then, of course, as the timetable showed that the trains ran "Week Days only", meaning Mondays to Saturdays inclusive.

This was the first time I'd had the old crate out in such grotty weather. Water spray was everywhere but the magneto and spark plug kept performing admirably. Humshaugh station is on our left, across the fields, as we cross the Roman Wall and head past the farmstead at Dunkirk. Plodding on under a skew viaduct, we roar up to Chollerton station and turn off the main road. The nearby church incorporates several Roman pillars, recycled in some earlier century, from a nearby Roman edifice.



Were we catching up the train? Past Barrasford we hurried, the highway running a few hundred yards to the west of the railway. Slowly the Beesa gathered speed on the narrow lanes, its barking exhaust bouncing off stretches of dry stone wall. Swinging round Chipchase Castle, the road runs next to the trackbed. Slowly we were making up time. There was the unmistakable smell of coal smoke in the air as we passed a cottage. It might have been from the train – just a loco

with one or two coaches.

At Wark, the station lies a mile or so from the village. The road crosses the North Tyne on a spindly, metal bridge. From here up to Bellingham, there's a typical Border Country "A" road – twisty, narrow, quiet. The B31 was on home ground. 50 mph is fast enough for me on a rigid 350. It's the speed at which the exhaust beats become a steady drone – glorious.

On the other side of the river, the line runs via Redesmouth, where a line from Morpeth comes in from the east. A four minute stop was timetabled there, which could only help the hatbox catch up with its owner. Five minutes later, the train had reached Bellingham (North Tyne), whose long nameboard can now be seen in the railway museum at York.

The road runs gently downhill towards Bellingham, and we're rushing along. Over the river yet again and left towards Tarsset – more time saved as we've no need to enter Bellingham proper. It's 1.00pm as the Beesa starts to accelerate away from the 30 mph limit and the train's still ahead. The exhaust note quieters as I change gear, the rain pours down and Wandering Willie's nowhere to be seen. This Hawick-based engine, together with a handful of D30 classmates was often at work on this lonely line. Named after characters in Sir Walter Scott's novels, the first appeared in 1912 and the last was scrapped in 1960

At Lanehead, near Tarsset station, the narrow lane via Rushend and Donkleywood beckons. It's shorter than the main road but slower and gated. Climbing above the line, up on to open fell, the bike's still pulling well. Stopping to open a gate, the hat box seems to be sagging in the wet. Will it stay intact until Falstone church? Trundling onwards to Thorneyburn level crossing, the railway gates are open (as always nowadays) but there's another gate for the livestock and it's shut. I manage to flood the Amal 276 and it takes a couple of minutes to get the old plodder started again. Rounding a sharp bend, we meet a herd of cattle that look amazed to see any traffic, let alone an old BSA. They stare in amazement. Moo look - a B31 – not seen one of those for ages. They shuffle off the road, leaving us to tiptoe through a quagmire. The Beesa is not at all fazed by this nasty mess and squelches onwards. Another few miles and we pass Falstone station – no train to be seen as we're seven minutes late.

Now I'd guess it would take seven minutes to get off the train, walk down the road, under the railway bridge and up to St Peter's Church, so we'd have caught up with Great Aunt M. just by the gate. That's my thought anyway.

Back to 2008 and the rain's still coming down in torrents.

Falstone Tearoom looks more attractive than a photo stop by the church so we head there first. There's no one else inside – strange this, as we're having plenty of fun.

Ever welcoming, they are always prepared for motorcyclists, particularly wet ones, to whom they dispense plastic bags, to protect their chairs.

Then we're given their full attention and order corned beef pie (authentic for 1948, you see). Not sure if the coffee cake was authentic too, but it tasted good.

We strung out this feast for an hour and a half but the precipitation never stopped.

So it was that we headed home in an authentic, Cheviot downpour. I'd wager that's not changed much in sixty years either.





## Member's Profile

### Michael Sutherland – Club Secretary

Born 1952. Like most bikers you never forget your first rides on a powered motorcycle.

For me this was a Raleigh Runabout moped on a farmer's field in Sunderland followed by a BSA 250 C11 and an early Sunbeam with what seemed like very wide tyres, (S7 – Ed) around the cricket pitch in the village of Hutton Le Hole in North Yorkshire where my cousins Kevin and Stephen lived.

You had to be careful with the Sunbeam by angling out your right leg to avoid the flames on the overrun as it had no exhaust manifold!

We used to push an old cigarette packet fixed with a clothes peg to the rear seat stay on our pedal cycles to make the sound of an engine.

My father told me off severely saying that this would slacken the spokes but we still did it once away from the house.

My father served in the RAF and always owned and rode motorcycles until his retirement moving down steadily in capacity from a Triumph 500 Speed Twin with a 'sprung hub' to a Velocette 350 to a series of mopeds and Honda cub 50s, 70s and finally a 90.



I clearly remember my mother on a cold wintry morning literally grilling the spark plug from the NSU Go-Quickly 'like a sausage' so that the little two stroke would fire up and not be fouled up by the 'petrol' mixture.

Sheets of newspaper warmed in front of the coal fire provided extra insulation on the daily commute to the Rolls Royce aero factory.

Safety goggles from the factory floor were provided for eye protection; it was a revelation when the 'jet style'

Stadium helmet came out with a bubble visor. In those days you could buy a windmill arrangement from Halfords which attached to the front of your helmet with a rubber sucker and spun round at speed to disperse the rain.

I expect that Clive Taylor would have had one. The term 'anorak' had not even been invented then!

I took my test at 17 on the Honda 50, the examiner leaping out from behind a Hillman Imp with a rolled up copy of the Sunderland Echo to signal for the emergency stop.

As a student at Grey College, Durham I had a 'part share' in a BSA Royal Star 500 ex-police bike, my contribution being to pay for the road tax and insurance.

A 'Steve McQueen moment' was recreated on a trip to Lindisfarne by stopping at the beginning of the causeway to remove the filler cap and swilling the tank from side to side to listen for how much petrol you had left.

You must have seen this in the Great Escape.

In 1976 I took delivery of a royal blue MZ 250 Super 5 which had the 3.5 gallon 'bumble bee' tank and one of the longest silencers on a production motorcycle.



A 250 was seen as quite a powerful and desirable bike at the time and after replacing the plastic East German 'Pneumat' tyres with Dunlop 'Rain Cheetahs' it handled in the wet too.

Proper motor cycle clothing was still something of a luxury and I often wore a pair of white overalls on top of every day clothing together with a black PVC jacket for some protection from the weather.

I must have looked what my son calls 'a complete dawk' (And you called Clive Taylor earlier! – Ed) and I did get some funny looks from staff and inmates at Acklington Prison where I was working at the time.

I have also enjoyed cycling, riding from Land's End to John O' Groats and onto the Orkneys at the time of my 40th and became a 'born again' biker in 2000 when the previous owner let me have his Honda Deauville for a

good price provided that I take on the repairs to side of the fairing which had happened when he had come off, by coincidence, on a frosty turn at the end of the Lindisfarne causeway.

Originally joining the DAM (Durham Advanced Motorcyclists) group I was fortunate in having excellent tuition from Kevin Weldon who also undertook my Observer training for NAM.

Ray Charlton took me for a day's wet weather training in March two years ago which showed me how much grip modern motorcycle tyres have once they have warmed up.

Currently I am gradually restoring a 1961 BSA Star 650, which found me rather than me acquiring it, and Geraldine and I are really looking forward to its first run out in the spring up to Rothbury for morning coffee and scones!

Many parts are still labelled in Flora tubs and yogurt pots in the utility room and Geraldine has had to agree that the exhaust pipes and petrol tank in the living room have saved on 'Hoovering.'

Looking ahead to 2009 we will be there at the Pitlochry and North Wales club weekends and I am hoping to begin my senior observer training in March.

Being part of a friendly club where you are always improving your riding skills, you can obtain helpful advice and listen to other members' trips and touring holidays both in this country and abroad is what I like most about NAM.

## Committee 2009 – Part 2



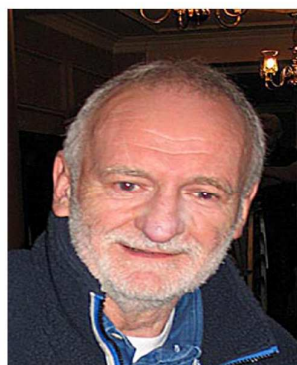
**Alan Richardson**  
Training Team / Team  
Leader Tyne & Wear



**Geoff Spencer**  
Training Team



**Glenn Knowles**  
Website Editor



**Jack Stewart**  
Rideout  
Co-ordinator



**Dave Thornton**  
Team Leader  
Northumberland



# 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, 27th March 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.



**nam-online.org**  
**Telephone: 07951 035038**



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