

NORTHUMBRIA BLOOD BIKES

Newsletter: February 2014



Sunday 2nd February - our first photo shoot at the Angel of the North, Gateshead. - The first time we've had so many volunteers together in uniform.... It was bitterly cold, but many of you stood up to the challenge. - Apart from Barry, the photographer, who preferred to fall backwards down the hill!



BANG!

There's been an explosion of activity this month, resulting in one of the busiest newsletters so far.

We finished last month's newsletter with the words: *"we might be announcing the start of a blood running service in our region, or the purchase of another bike...who knows!"*

.....little did we know how quickly things would evolve.

WE'VE GONE LIVE!!!

The biggest news by far is that we have started our first regular service for the Gateshead Trust, which means (initially) runs to and from NHBTS (Fenham) and the QE Hospital (Gateshead). This will shortly be spreading to include the Spire Hospital (Washington), Jesmond, South Tyneside and Sunderland Hospitals as part of a joint pathology approach with other local trusts. 3rd February was our official start date. Alan Ross created a short video to thank everyone who has contributed to the evolution of the group, and it's available on Youtube..... to find it, search for "Northumbria Blood Bikes Go Live". The idea of a launch video was for social networking purposes; by tagging everyone who has helped us, we should get increased awareness and more publicity. It worked: according to our statistics page, it was seen by 350+ people, with 155 likes, shares & comments.

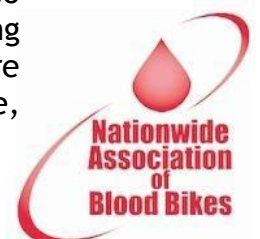


Photo shoot and official handover of bike#2 “Octagon”

The photo shoot at the Angel of the North took place on a bitterly cold Sunday morning 2nd February. Photos are already posted on our website via the Flickr photo stream, but there's a few below, too. We were joined by members from MG Northumbria, whose generous donation made the purchase of the bike possible. They chose the name “Octagon” for the bike, reflecting the shape of the famous MG badge. We've also featured heavily in MG's own publicity, which helps to further our cause. Afterwards, some of us invaded Starbucks (Metro Centre) & quadrupled their turnover for the hour!



Bike #3 is on its way:

Only a couple of days after the release of the January newsletter, we received word that bike #3 has been purchased. Richard Scholfield, man of many hats (Treasurer, Hospital Liaison, Bike manager) has been tasked with finding an appropriate bike on the basis that it would probably take some time to arrange lights, rack, and Hi-Viz livery. - Better to buy before we're screaming for a third bike so we have time to get it prepared. It's a Yamaha FJR1300, pictured here before we collected it. Excellent condition, 10k miles. Livery is already on order and we expect it to be road-ready soon.... Hopefully it will coincide with our service expanding to another NHS area!



Coffee evening in Darlington Memorial Hospital...

After the success of the informal coffee evening at the QE Hospital last month, we held this month's evening at Darlington, where there is very keen interest for us to start a service. Those who attended were given a tour of the Pathology department to see where collections & drop-offs would be made.



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Expanding our service: County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

We have a provisional start date of March 3rd with Durham & Darlington NHS Trust. This will include several NHS locations in the area. Talks are ongoing with Northumbria & Newcastle Trusts, including the possible introduction of a premature baby milk service (already established elsewhere) in our region. The Northern Region Co-ordinator says she'd like us involved from day one if it goes ahead.

Training videos:

Gary Annan has driven across the region to check the delivery & collection locations, and prepared video to show our riders where to park, and how to find the laboratories. Without exception, each of the locations visited were aware of our existence and the plans to use us, which is good news!

Thermal retention testing on blood boxes:

Gateshead NHS Trust deemed it necessary to test temperature drops in the blood boxes on our bikes & check all was ok. Chris Mitchell did the testing (a round trip from QE Hospital to NHSBT(Fenham) and back, using a box issued by the QE hospital with temperature monitoring equipment inside. The test was completed, and we're now waiting to hear from QE Hospital to confirm if anything else is required, or to get the go-ahead for NHSBT transfers.



We lost a good'un ☹

Regrettably, Martin Price has left the role of I.T. & Website Manager. External commitments were making it increasingly difficult to devote the time that his role needs. He leaves on good terms and will be around a little while longer to ensure a smooth handover. We wish him well & trust he will keep in touch.

Events planned for later this year:

We have a fundraising calendar on the forum which is up to date with future events. Please check it out at <http://www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk/phpbb/viewtopic.php?f=7&t=382> (login required)

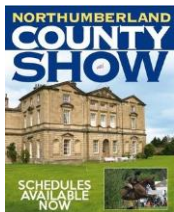


Prescott Bike Festival:

Quite a few going to Prescott now, including Owain Harris, Alan Ross, Graham Moor, Rob Wilks, Ian Hunter, Mike Briant and John Parish. Is it me or do I sense a pub lunch coming on?

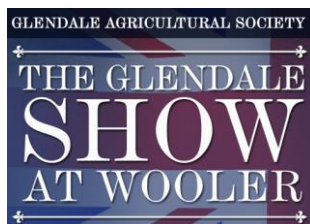
Northumberland County Show:

We've requested a stand at this show on Bank Holiday Monday May 26th and we're awaiting confirmation. We'll be looking for volunteers to help!



Bikewise 2014:

We have a stand booked....add your name to the events calendar if you would like to help out on the day (Sunday 20th July 2014).



The Glendale Show at Wooler:

We've applied for this one but have yet to receive confirmation of a pitch.... It's on 25th August (Bank Holiday Monday) between 9am & 5pm. Would you be able to support the stand for an hour or two while the rest of your family look around the show? ...That way you will have most of the day to see the attractions yourself. Just two hours could really help us out!

Eldon Square Shopping Centre, Newcastle:

Confirmed as Saturday and Sunday 6th & 7th September. Drop the kids off in town with the other half & give us a hand! (Possibly holding two events at two entrances to the centre)



Great North Run 2014:

Brilliant publicity last time, so we're trying for it again! We also have several people taking part in the run itself. Rather than me....



And possibly two more:

We're negotiating for the new COLOUR RUN event (Sunderland) on 20th June, and for a spot at Sunderland International Airshow on 25th-27th July. Watch this space...

Fundraising activity this month:

The big fundraising event for us this month was our first ever ASDA bag-packing event. Michelle Castledine, the community superwoman of the Gosforth store (pictured right with John Bell, Regional Manager) made us feel very welcome, and we hope we left as good an impression on the staff as they did on us! We managed to raise a fantastic £929.00 on the day, and Graham (fundraising guru, far right) also secured two future dates for return visits later in the year. We were also lucky enough to hold the event while the Regional Manager was in the store, so we got some great photos that we can use for targeted marketing to other Asda branches.



Then came another!



Tesco, Kingston Park, had been in our sights for a long time as we have to apply to a separate company to arrange events months in advance. We finally got our display there on Friday 7th February. No bag-packing, but a good opportunity to promote what we do and forge relationships with the store. We raised an impressive £787.00 over the two days. This event saw the Pan, "Octagon" on display inside the store; another first! Thanks to everyone who volunteered & attended.



Other fundraising activities this month:

- The **Joicey Trust** awarded a grant of £1000.00 towards our next bike purchase, after an application we submitted last year was successful.
- £181.50 was received after a collection in memory of Chris Ryan's stepfather. (Chris was formerly our treasurer). The money is to be spent on various promotional items, but was also used to purchase a blood box to use when demonstrating the bikes at school events and meetings.
- **Waitrose** green token scheme completed, and we received a cheque for £500.00
- **Just Helmets** Kindly donated a child's helmet for the kids to wear when we have a bike at events, and gave us 50% off another which we have ordered.
- **Nissan, Sunderland** Presented us with a cheque for £1000.00. Alan Ross, Owain Harris, Graham Moor & Chris Mitchell attended the event and Alan did a little thank you speech, reminding them that they helped us out with a substantial donation last year, when we had no bike. Chris brought along the 1200RT so that they could see how their money had been put to good use.

The Joicey Trust



Waitrose



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Green token scheme continues at Asda Gosforth



The green token event is still in full swing until the end of this month at ASDA Gosforth store, almost directly opposite Regent Centre Metro station. We were edging ever so slightly ahead of the competition last week, but they have emptied the tokens when we checked-in at the store a couple of days ago, so now it's hard to tell if we're winning or not!

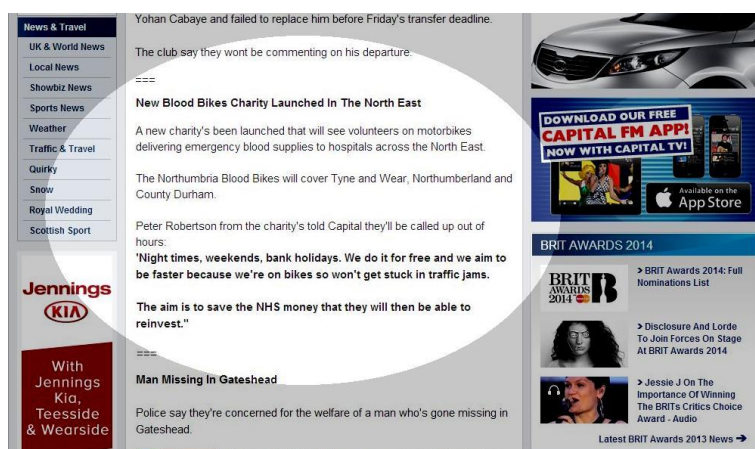
Please remember to ask for tokens if you are shopping here, as there is a large financial benefit to the charity with the most support from ASDA customers. We should have a result back by the time the next newsletter is written, so we'll let you know how we got on.

Publicity news:

The launch of our service resulted in a boost to the workload of our publicity man, Owain Harris, who has barely had any time to himself for the last fortnight. He arranged a press event at Newcastle Quayside, With John Parish, Geoff Spence & Chairman Peter Robertson in attendance. Metro Radio and Capital FM both turned up, and interviewed Peter....we're hoping to get soundbites for the website.



This resulted in a very good feature on Capital FM's website (right). We also got onto the front page of Durham Police Motorcycle section website with a photo from the Angel shoot.



We also got some great coverage from our friends at ASDA Gosforth, making it to the "Green Room"; an internal staff website used by many of their stores. This should be very helpful when approaching other stores. Not only that, but we are also featured on the community wall in-store.

....You'll be burning our fuel? ...Let's see you earning our fuel!

Next Dates for the diary: **21st/22nd February** - Tesco Trinity Square, Gateshead. Huge store, first time we're appearing there, so we want to make a good impression! We could need up to five people per shift, plus someone to bring & return the bike. We're there 9am-6pm both days.



***** Hot off the press ***** -News is just coming in that we've been invited back to the massive Tesco Extra store in Sunderland, for a weekend in March, including bag-packing! This has the potential to raise around £1000.00 per day if we can get sufficient volunteers to staff the tills. We made a big impression last time we were there, so much so that the store approached us this time!

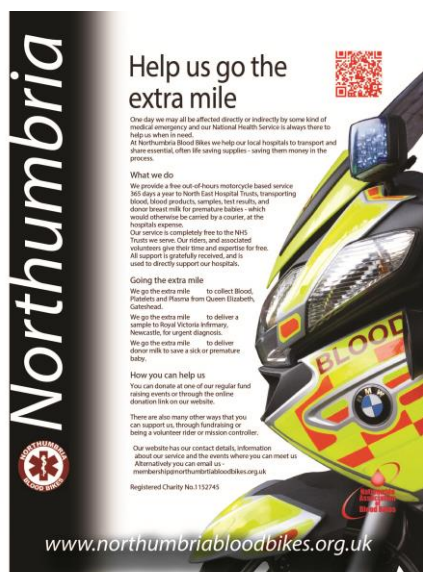
Graham Moor is sorting out which weekend in March it will be. Please keep an eye on the forum to find out earlier. This has the potential to be the biggest supermarket event to date... and we'd love to see you join us. The staff are great, atmosphere is fun... and watch out for "Nigels tea trolley!" (You had to be there last time to understand that one!). Graham is also in the process of arranging several visits to Sainsburys, Durham, for bag-packing and awareness events later in the year. More information on that as soon as we get confirmed dates.

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You may think we tend to go on & on about the importance of fundraising, and deservedly so...we do!! However, we also fully understand that everyone has lives and commitments of their own to cope with. Please don't feel that you will be looked upon in a negative light if you are unable to fundraise..... we understand that circumstances differ for each and every member, and we won't think badly of you if you are unable to attend. We do still need to promote fundraising and encourage attendance as much as possible in order to survive as a viable organisation, and will always be asking for volunteers to help. But if circumstances dictate that you are unable to attend, we won't think any less of you, so please don't feel pressured! Perhaps if you feel this describes YOU, you might be interested in easy fundraising below.....which costs nothing, and benefits us each time you shop online. We're already seeing good results from this, so spread the word!

easyfundraising
.org.uk

You can also contribute by signing up with easyfundraising.org.uk, a free way to raise money for our cause when shopping online. Our charity is already on there, just search for Northumbria Blood Bikes when you sign up. A full explanation of how it works is on the site.



And finally....

Keep an eye out for one of these bad boys pictured left. Graham Moor has adapted this leaflet from one which SERV Norfolk designed. We were blown away by the visual impact of it, so (with their permission) we blagged it to use ourselves. A short print run has already been produced so that we can see it in the flesh and make any modifications it might need.

Many thanks to Serv Norfolk for their permission to use the design, we think it's excellent.

We're also working on doing something similar with a tri-fold leaflet from the same blood group which will include one of the group photos taken at the Angel of the North earlier this month. Unfortunately Barrys cartwheeling demonstration was not caught on camera so will not be featured, unless you know different... if someone caught the moment, I'm sure there's a deal to be done!

That's it for this month..... probably the busiest month we've seen since the charity began. Look out for the new bike on the road by the time our next newsletter comes around. Until then, take care & ride safe ☺

FUNDRAISING HOTLINE: 07766 479 770 - for any opportunities to increase our funding through sponsorship, locations for collecting tins, supermarket events etc...



www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk



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