

# NORTHUMBRIA BLOOD BIKES

Newsletter: April 2014



**Cover Photo:** Volunteer Philippa Bromley talks to ITV reporters about our expanded service to Darlington Memorial Hospital.



## A Years' worth of publicity in one day....

Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> March. Wow. What a day. We were aiming to approach the media about the launch of our service in Darlington, and Owain Harris, our publicity officer, discovered that the hospital

has its own PR company that deals with local media for any newsworthy events. The result was impressive; the day started with Owain doing an interview live on the BBC Radio Tees breakfast show. Shortly afterwards an entourage of blood bikers descended on Darlington (Owain Harris, Philippa Bromley, John Parish, Alan Ross and Chris Mitchell) for the filming of an ITV Tyne Tees news feature. Russell Urwin (Haematology and Transfusion Manager at University Hospital of North Durham) was on hand to provide some sought-after soundbites and video clips to convey the views of the hospital staff. A photographer from the Northern Echo arrived and took some pictures for an editorial which appeared on their website within a couple of hours. Then Owain & Alan drove up to BBC Radio Newcastle to record a six-minute interview, which was broadcast the same afternoon. ITVs footage went out twice, a small edit at lunchtime, and a larger feature on the six o'clock evening news, and featured in their digital newspaper on their website.

All in all, an unprecedented amount of coverage via TV, radio, newspaper and internet. Thanks to everyone who contributed on the day....Owain has now set the standard and it will be interesting to see how long it will take before we get another day with as much coverage as this one!





## More from the publicity this month:



(Far Left) Publicity guru Owain takes the 1200RT to Sun FM, and gets a radio interview and a feature on their website.

(Left) Vice Chairman Alan Ross gets interviewed by BBC Radio Newcastle.

(Below) Richard Scholfield rides off from Cooper BMW with the squeaky-clean RT.

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March also saw “Bamburgh” our BMW1200RT, and “Marvin the Mini Moto” taking pride of place on the showroom floor of Coopers BMW Boldon, as they held an event to promote the launch of their new models for the 2014 season. Owain & Sue Harris (below left) were on hand to talk to visitors and gained several leads for people interested in riding or fundraising for us. Also on site was Geoff Spencer (Below middle), our patron saint of training. His smooth talking also managed to convert a couple of visitors to follow our cause...



Many thanks also to Paul Scott, from the Marketing and Communications department at County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, who managed to get the editorial feature (below) into their “Your Trust” NHS magazine. The magazine is published on 7<sup>th</sup> April and reaches on average 20,000 staff, members and stakeholders around the county!

## New ‘blood bikers’ helping the NHS save lives



Ready for delivery, l to r, Trust haematology and transfusion manager Russell Irwin, and John Parish, Chris Mitchell, Alan Ross (seated), Owain Harris and Philippa Bromley from Northumbria Blood Bikes.

Darlington Memorial Hospital is teaming up with Northumbria Blood Bikes, a group of volunteer motorcyclists who deliver life-saving blood products out of hours. The new ‘blood runners’ service now means that there is a dedicated group permanently on call.

Russell Irwin, haematology and transfusion manager at Darlington, said, “The partnership with Northumbria Blood Bikes means we can provide better services for patients. We can replenish the Darlington blood bank through the night and at weekends and get blood that has special requirements on a defined system.”

Owain Harris from Northumbria Blood Bikes added, “We donate our time and skills for free because we want to help save lives and improve patient care. We offer a dedicated service that we hope we can extend to other areas of the North East.”

[www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk](http://www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk)

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## Lindisfarne gets Liveried! Before and after photos:



We reported last month that we had run into problems getting the FJR1300 livery. We're pleased to say that this is now all sorted, and here she is dressed in her finest... Thanks to Richard for arranging a short-notice appointment for measuring & fitting, and to Owain for a long drive to the other end of the country to get it applied. Coming soon to a hospital near you!



## A spectacular donation from Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust:

At the end of last month, Peter Robertson sent a speculative email to The Charity & Volunteer Senior Lead Officer at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. A bit of a long shot, but the kind of thing which has, in the past, beaten the odds and turned out well for us. (Remember MG Northumbria...everyone thought that was a "long shot"!)

The Charitable Funds Committee met on 17th March 2014 and I am pleased to confirm that the committee agreed to a donation of £5,000! We're busy trying to arrange a bit of publicity to record the cheque handover, but in the meantime I've been asked to convey thanks "to the volunteer drivers for the wonderful service they perform to support our patients." I would also add thanks to the volunteers who help out in other ways; attending fundraising events and, as in this case, writing speculative letters to potential contributors.... you never know when the one you least expect will come up trumps!

If anyone has any similar ideas of contacts worth approaching, please let Graham Moor know ([fundraising@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk)), as there are set approach methods which vary depending on the type of contributor involved. Also, he may have already made contact or have connections within a group, so going via Graham will ensure we don't duplicate efforts and end up pestering the same contacts from multiple sources.

## Blood Transfusion nurses at next open meeting:

For our next open meeting we are planning to have some nurses from the Blood Transfusion service to do a short presentation, explaining how the process works, and inviting questions from the attendees. Paul Strachan suggested the idea and our Chairman Peter, who is himself a legendary blood donor, invited them as "guest speakers". Our meeting will be at Northumbria University once again, in the Rutherford Hall, Ellison Place, Newcastle on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June 7.00pm, and all are welcome.



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## ASDA Publicity event at the Metrocentre...



To support the Green Token Scheme which was running at the Metrocentre's ASDA store, we had an event on 28<sup>th</sup> March where Octagon stood in the foyer alongside the two Mini Motos. During the event, we were pleasantly surprised by a couple who run their own fundraising operation; selling bacon sandwiches to the staff for a small profit, which they give to charity... known as "Billy's Bangers", they were kind enough to drop in a donation of £100.00! The dynamic duo are pictured top right with our Chairman, Peter, while Billy himself is inset (right). This brought our foyer collection for one day to over £430.00 !



## Our second event at Tesco Sunderland:

Another major event for us this month was at Tesco's flagship Sunderland store. This time we were invited to set-up on the main level of the supermarket opposite the tills. We used the gazebo and flags, which have rarely had an opportunity to be used over the winter. For many of our volunteers it was probably the first time they'd seen the gazebo which was custom-made for us last year, but you'll see plenty more of it in the weeks & months ahead.



We were there for two days, Saturday & Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> March. Many thanks to all the members who volunteered to help at the event; Bag-packing provides a valuable income for us, and helps us not only with fuel & insurance expenses, but also to fund additional vehicles, livery, uniforms etc. It was good to see such an impressive turnout; people are slowly beginning to realise that these events are really good fun, with good banter and a lovely atmosphere.

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## Just Helmets teams up with Blood Bikes



Local business "Just Helmets" is proud to support Northumbria Blood Bikes and is offering not only a Voucher Code 'BLOODBKES' which will save the customer 10% off

their purchase, but they will also donate a further 10% to the regional Bloodbike group from where the customer is located.

Pete Bredael, the owner of Just helmets, says 'We could easily stock a myriad of brands, but have carefully selected our portfolio to cater for the more mature rider who is looking for a quality purchase. We have found that the main requirement is for premium flip front helmets with sun visors with communication systems. We are proud to offer a specialist service for a product which is a very personal and important part of motorcycling, our unique approach has seen us expand year on year through difficult trading conditions leading to the opening our new showroom in January this year, we can now offer custom fits and we are seeing customers travelling in some instances many miles for our unique service.'



Just helmets is also the first dedicated Reevu Stockist, the new revolutionary rear view helmet, designed in the North East of England, which is gaining strength in the UK market allowing motorcyclists a rear view vision just like a car for the first time. Just Helmets is the only Solus motorcycle helmet retailer in the UK and specialises in premium brands such as Shoei and Schubert, together with a range of Bluetooth communication systems.

For more info, Just Helmets can be contacted via their website [www.justhelmets.co.uk](http://www.justhelmets.co.uk), or by telephone on 0191 6531303. Don't forget to tell them that you heard about them from our NBB newsletter...



### A cheque from ASDA Gosforth:

In February we were lucky enough to win the green token scheme at ASDAs Gosforth store, where the lovely Michelle Castledine, community champion, had made us all feel so incredibly welcome for our publicity event & bag pack. Owain & Alan headed back there on 3<sup>rd</sup> April with our Honda ST1300 "Octagon" to be presented with a cheque for £200.00. On the bike (the bigger one this time!) is manager Steve McKenna, with Michelle in the foreground, and Alan who brought the bike to the store. We're going to be back at the Gosforth ASDA on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July, and those who attended last time are already looking forward to it!

### NBB Descend on the Freeman:

Rota Manager Gary Annan arranged another social "Coffee evening" for members on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, this time at the Freeman Hospital, Gosforth, in anticipation that our service will soon be expanding to include it.



The trip included a quick tour of the areas where we park, deposit and collect consignments, so that members will already be familiar with the procedure when the service is launched.



# John Parish pulls his weight with the ladies....



Washington Slimming Worlds Group is, at the time of writing, five weeks into a six week sponsored slim where individuals were invited to choose their own chosen charity to support. Bloodbiker John Parish saw the opportunity to capitalise on this so, with the permission of the facilitator, he gave a short presentation to the group, at least two of whom have chosen Northumbria Blood Bikes as their charity. He also placed a collection 'tin' on the payment desk which

is now almost full (probably with 5 pence pieces as the weekly cost to a member is £4.95!) One of the ladies (Margaret Elliott, Sunderland) has raised £58.00, and another lady has over £100.00 in sponsorship but hasn't finished collecting in all the money yet.

John started going to this club on 5th Feb and has already managed to lose 1½ stone so far and feels much better for it. Anyone interested in feeling the same? John's group meets at Glebe Methodist Church, Fatfield Road, Glebe at 9.00am & 11.00am on Wednesdays. If it's out of your area you can find the nearest group at the website [www.slimmingworld.com](http://www.slimmingworld.com), or call their free national enquiries number 0844 897 8000.



## Open meeting at Northumbria University:



The 13<sup>th</sup> March open meeting went very well, with Chairman Peter Robertson updating everyone on the development of the group since our last open meeting in December last year. We have been lucky enough to be given the use of the Rutherford Hall at Northumbria University, for both this open meeting and the next one, together with use of their big-screen projector. Some new faces attended, there was plenty of discussion & good banter. Among the many topics discussed there was a proposal by John Parish (pictured right), who proposed the idea of a smart red tie as an optional addition to our uniforms. Very smart!



## Bike number four on its way:



Take a sneak peak at bike no.4, a second FJR, which will be joining our fleet in the next few weeks. While Prescott was taking place, Bike Manager Richard was driving up and down the country checking out suitable bikes, and found this one.... It's on a 2008 plate with 30,000 miles on the clock, so plenty of life left in her yet. Richard describes her as "gorgeous" condition, and has several improvements on the (older) Lindisfarne model. The screen is bigger offering better protection, and the seat height is adjustable.

Richard also made sure that this model matches the livery we had problems with last month, so we already have her uniform to put on! More in next months newsletter...





The long-awaited Prescott Bike Festival saw Northumbria Blood Bikes participate for the first time, with our largest ever outdoor event display; a good testing ground for the several outdoor events we have planned over the summer of 2014. Owain & Sue Harris, John Parish, Rob Wilks, Ian Hunter,

Graham Moor, Alan Ross and Mike Briant all donated their time, fuel & hotel expenses to represent us at the event (no money was taken out of our group funds to finance the visit)... and despite public attendance being lower than expected due to bad weather, we made many good contacts and gained plenty of insight into how other groups operate, and we will, over the next few months, attempt to incorporate some of the ideas ourselves. We also met up with Tim Peters, the Regional Operations Manager for BMW Authorities (he deals with all of the Police, Fire & Paramedic motorcycle teams around the country and, more importantly, knows when vehicles are being disposed of with full kit on them!) He's a valuable resource for retro-fit equipment and also mentioned that a smaller alternative to the 1200RT, the F800GT tourer, is now available for authority use with lights & livery etc.



Rob Wilks and Ian Hunter took part in the opening and closing parade of blood bikes, and we were also joined by Darth Vader, among others, who took time out to visit our stand for some publicity photos.

As the day came to an end the weather resulted in many visitors and exhibitors getting stuck in the mud, and Owain ended up having to tow an air ambulance helicopter display out of the field....Rob was on hand to help jump start a Landrover, and all of us helped to push people out of the mud... so we now have a reputation for our group's willingness to assist! Thank you to everyone involved in this event for making it such a success.... We created a very professional image and made some invaluable contacts....



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# Future events to put in your diary:



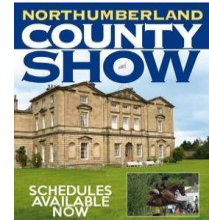
**ASDA Blyth: Bag packing & publicity: Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May.**  
Sign up for this if you can spare a couple of hours, the diary is open already on our events calendar:  
[www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk/fundraisingcalendar](http://www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk/fundraisingcalendar)



**Rider Training: Slow Riding skills**  
Practical tips to improve slow riding technique with our Training Officer, Geoff Spencer. No need to book, simply turn up on the day. Members only for tuition, but everyone is welcome to observe & have a chat. Starts @ 16:30  
Heighley Gate Garden Centre, Morpeth.



**Northumberland County Show:**  
We've have a stand at this show on Bank Holiday Monday May 26<sup>th</sup> and we're fully staffed for this one. But we'd still love to see you drop by if you're going!



**The Hoppings: Newcastle Town Moor**  
The return of the largest travelling fairground in Europe. We're provisionally booked for the full nine days so will need plenty of volunteers to help us...



**Bikewise 2014:**  
A dream event for bike fanatics, and we have a stand booked.... add your name to the events calendar if you would like to help out on the day...Spaces filling up quickly for this.



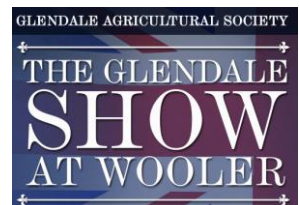
**ASDA Gosforth: Bag packing & publicity:**  
Sign up for this if you can spare a couple of hours: WE HAVE TEN TILLS to staff! The diary is open already on our events calendar (link above) if you can help us....



**The Crawcrook Fair:**  
Saturday August 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11am- 4pm Would you be able to support the stand for an hour or two while the rest of your family look around the show?



**The Glendale Show (Wooler):**  
August (Bank Holiday Monday) between 9am & 5pm.



**Eldon Square Shopping Centre, Newcastle:**  
Confirmed as Saturday and Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> September. Drop the kids off in town with the other half & give us a hand! (Possibly holding two events at both 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 them than me....





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

All events are on our fundraising calendar at [www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk/fundraisingcalendar](http://www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk/fundraisingcalendar)  
So please add your name to any you can attend. No fundraising=no fuel=no Blood Bikes! We also want to hear if you know of ANY potential fundraising opportunities....contact numbers below.

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!



You can also contribute by signing up with [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://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.

## NABB have updated their website...



The Nationwide Association of Blood Bikes has updated its website and now looks considerably improved in its appearance. One of the features it now incorporated is an interactive map of the UK, where a simple click on any region will direct you to the website of the relevant blood bike group which covers it. Unfortunately our region seems a tad small (Newcastle, as opposed to Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and County Durham), so we've written to them to ask if they can take a look at it and modify it appropriately. You can visit the new look NABB website at [www.bloodbikes.org.uk](http://www.bloodbikes.org.uk).

That's it for this month....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](http://www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk)



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