

# NORTHUMBRIA BLOOD BIKES

Newsletter: June 2014

**Cover Photo:** The Mad athletes of “MADATHLON” on their three peaks challenge, raising funds for a new bike for us!



## Would you have what it takes to do this?

Madathlon, the charity who raises funds for life-saving equipment by setting themselves gruelling challenges, has been extremely busy this month.... and all in the hope of funding a motorcycle for us to continue our service! I don't know where they get the stamina from!



The Three Peaks Challenge (above), Coast-to-Coast Cycle event (left), a family fun day in Newton Aycliffe, and the Great North Swim.... Is there nothing these people can't do?

Madathlon have adopted us as their charity of the year and are aiming to raise enough funds to purchase a motorcycle, maybe two, so that we can continue to deliver blood & urgent samples across their region. It's never too late to get involved with Madathlon: You can find out what they are doing by looking them up on Facebook, Twitter, or just type their name into Google.... They're the first search result to come up!





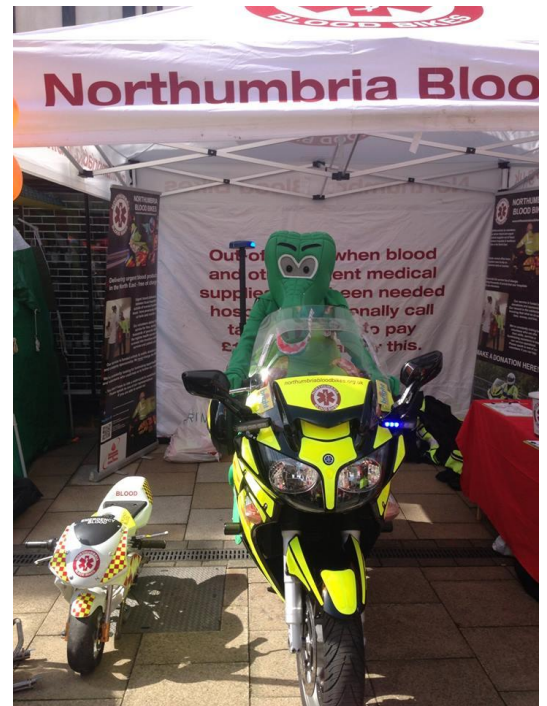
## ASDA Blyth sees their first NBB day

This month was a slightly less manic one for events and fundraising compared to April/May. (Easy for me to say, as I was on holiday and missed most of it!)

One big event was the first appearance of Blood Bikes at the Blyth ASDA Superstore. We were very well received and raised a substantial amount to help us with our ever-increasing fuel and maintenance expenses. Many thanks to all the volunteers who gave up their time to staff the event. There was plenty of interest from the public and some potential leads for new members wishing to join us, and it was a good opportunity to spread the news about our group to the Blyth community.



## Morpeth Town Fair, Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June



A very successful publicity event in Morpeth town centre this month with our newest bike in the fleet making an appearance next to Marvin the Mini-Moto, which was, as always, a big hit with the kids. For once, the weather held for us and there were plenty of questions from the public who seemed eager to find out more. Owain Harris, our publicity guru, commented afterwards "I have been contacted by ex-colleagues (police) still serving, who came to check you out...you were described as 'thoroughly professional, knowledgeable, and friendly' so take a bow all of you".... So it's only fair that we pass such compliments on to those who helped to make the event the success that it was.

Sadly, as the day drew to a close, our FJR bike had flashed its lights a few too many times and was unable to start, so we had to call upon a trailer to recover it. We've noticed that some blood bike groups carry a battery, disguised as a blood box, to power the blue lights at events to preserve the bike batteries and we may well look at going down the same route in future. Our RT was off the road at the same time with a faulty centre stand, so for a while we were left with only 50% of our fleet operational. How fortunate that we're no longer a one bike operation like we were last year!

*Providing effective and timely transportation of essential blood and medical products*  
Registered Charity Number 1152745



## MP fights our case in Parliament:



Chris Mitchell, Peter Robertson (chairman) and Alan Ross (vice chairman) paid a visit to Bidget Phillipson, MP for Houghton and Sunderland South at her Shiney Row office.

The visit was initially arranged to discuss an issue over changes to the self-regulation of blood bike groups across the country, but this had all changed in the time between the meeting and our first contact with her. Instead, we used the appointment to explain how we operate, and how significant an impact we are having for Hospitals in her constituency.

We discussed the proposed revisions of the Road Traffic Act (section 19) and how the potential changes to blue light use may affect our group.

She fully understood our potential predicament and offered to raise awareness of the impact of the proposed changes in a session at Parliament if the matter was brought up for debate. For those unaware of section 19, it covers the use of blue lights by organisations such as ours and potential restrictions or exemptions relating to the national speed limit, and red-traffic lights.

At present, we are allowed to use blue lights to make others aware of our presence on the road, but we are not permitted to drive through a light on red, nor to exceed 70mph. The legislation under review may change this, but with the addition of (considerably expensive!) mandatory training. (note; our own regulations insist that an authorised clinician requests the use of blue lights, and our riders cannot make the decision to use them unless the request has been granted this authorisation) A photographer from the Sunderland echo arrived to take photos for an editorial feature, so it's entirely possible we'll see an article in the next few days!

## Our members get a guided tour of the new Pathology Dept:



Rota manager Gary arranged this month's Coffee evening at Gateshead's Queen Elizabeth Hospital so that the members attending could be given a guided tour of the multi-million-pound path labs due to open in the next few months. The tour was guided by John Barker, Haematology, Blood Transfusion and Immunology Departmental Manager at the Q.E.H. We were lucky to be allowed this sneak preview as the area will shortly be designated as a clean room environment & we won't get near it! The tour was very comprehensive, and our riders all got to see the new collection and drop-off locations which will come into force as soon as the site becomes operational.

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## Three important notes for our riders:



First of all, a reminder about the Teltonika device, pictured left, which is provided with each duty bike. They may seem a little redundant in this day & age when most riders carry their mobile phones, but Teltonika has one vital feature; It tracks your location without any need to press a button on it. If the worst should happen and you're involved in an incident and, for example, are unconscious, this little device enables our control centre to pinpoint your location and send help..... But only if you remember to switch it on! Equally important is to remember to charge it between call-outs as it can use up a lot of battery power very quickly, and to try to hand it over to the next duty rider in a fully-charged condition whenever possible. This could save your life.... Please make sure it's taken with you, switched on until you finish your call-out, and re-charged when you get back home.

And secondly, there have been changes to the way in which our fuel card is used. We now get charged a fee every time we refuel, and with four bikes in service the fees will add up very quickly. We've decided that instead of having the bikes topped up to full after a shift as we have done in the past, we will now leave it until the tank is at around 20% before refuelling. This is with immediate effect in the hope we can keep charges to a minimum. (Of course, you're still welcome to stick a tenner into the tank with your own cash if you like!)



And finally, a quick note about any concerns with any of the fleet. If you find there seems to be a problem with any of the vehicles, please let Richard (our bike manager) know. It's occasionally been the case that problems have come to his attention "through the grapevine", by which time they may have become more expensive to fix, but also they could deteriorate and risk someone's safety! So, if you feel something is not quite as it should be, even if you can't pinpoint what it is, drop a quick email to Richard ([Richard.scholfield@northumbriabloodbikes.co.uk](mailto:Richard.scholfield@northumbriabloodbikes.co.uk)). A brief description like "handling corners differently" is probably enough, but the more information you can provide, the better. There will undoubtedly be instances in the future whereby early detection of a problem through the sharp eyes of one of our riders, prevents a minor concern from becoming a major issue! (And before you ask, the bald tyre pic to the left is NOT off one of our bikes, it just conveys the message!)

## Introducing our new neighbours!



There's going to be some new faces on the map in the very near future; a chap called Bill Bertham is chairman of a newly formed "Cumbria & S.W.Scotland" Blood Bike Group, technically our neighbours serving to the west of Hexham.

They already have around 30 members and plan to go live at the end of July... fast work! Meanwhile, they are being guided by Paul Brooks, Chairman of North West Lancs & Lakes group, who have assisted us many times over the last two years. We are also happy to offer our assistance, and look forward to working with them in the near future.

If you know of anyone from the Carlisle/Cumbria they can contact Bill via email: [bloodbikescumbria@gmail.com](mailto:bloodbikescumbria@gmail.com)

# Future events to put in your diary:



## Bag-Packing for MADATHLON; Asda Darlington

10am-4pm at Darlington ASDA - this is one of our many ways to say "THANK YOU" to Madathlon for choosing us as their charity of the year. We intend to have a bike there, and as many members as possible. Please trick your partner to come shopping while you spend an hour helping us!



## Ashington Town Fair

A stand with a bike & our gazebo on Station Road in Ashington. We need around 3 people to staff the event, plus someone to set-up ...and to take down the equipment at the start & end of the day....



## MG Owners Club, Corbridge 9am-4pm

This is the club which made a large donation enabling us to buy another bike, let's not forget their generosity! For more info on this, or any other event on this page, email Graham at [fundraising@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk)



## ASDA Benton: Bag packing & publicity:

Sign up for this if you can spare a couple of hours: The diary is open already on our events calendar (link above) if you can help us....



## ASDA Gosforth: Bag packing & publicity:

This is a change of date from the previous newsletter. Join Michelle Castledine & her staff for a cracking afternoon & great banter! If your wife is going shopping, would you rather be helping us, or dragging your heels behind a trolley while the missus chooses Pasta?



## 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?



## 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 than me.....





## This time last year....

How quickly time flies, eh?

This time last year we were proudly announcing the purchase of our very first bike, an ex-Strathclyde Police BMW RT1200. It's sometimes very easy to forget how much work has been done to develop and progress the charity over the last year, but the rate at which we have expanded has been phenomenal. We now have four bikes, two in full service every night, we're serving multiple hospitals in several trust areas, and have plans to expand with at least another two bikes and possibly a car. Despite the many opinions our riders have about the quality of the bikes we have, the high maintenance overheads etc, it's still worth remembering the humble beginnings from which we started!

### Northumbria Blood Bikes



June 2013

### Members' Newsletter



This last month has been really positive for us and once you've read this newsletter we're sure that you'll agree with our assessment of the situation!

#### Our First Bike!

The big news is that we have purchased our first bike, an ex-police BMW R1200RT.

The Committee decided to buy a decent second hand bike for around £4,000 - if such a bike was available. Vice-Chair, Alan Ross, noticed the bike in question on eBay, so three Committee members drove (through floods) to Glasgow to view it and we purchased it for £3,500. It's since been checked over by our friends / members at Morpeth Motorcycles who pronounced it to be in good condition, but noticed that the throttle was a bit sticky; that's now been fixed by the helpful people at Coopers in Boldon. The bike is now insured for Blood Bike use and has also had its blue lights fitted. It will be liveried up by the end of June. Once they have gone through the assessment process with Geoff Spencer, our Training Manager, we will begin the process of putting advanced rider



That's all for this month..... a slightly shorter newsletter than usual as Alan was on holiday for a fortnight & had a lot of catching up to do. Thank you all for your continued support.... Ride safe!

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



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