

# NORTHUMBRIA BLOOD BIKES

Newsletter: July 2014



**Cover Photo:** Four-times-Olympic-medal-winner Rebecca Adlington poses next to our Blood Bike at the Great North Swim event Windemere, with the Madathlon NBB swimming team.

## Madathlon swimmers at Windemere....

Madathlon, the charity who raises funds for life-saving equipment by setting themselves gruelling challenges, had several of their members participating in this years Great North Swim to raise money for Northumbria Blood Bikes.... And we managed to get a photo-opportunity with the double-gold, double-bronze, Olympic swimmer Rebecca Adlington posing alongside Bright Northumbria, our FJR bike which was in attendance to support the event.

Thousands of swimmers and visitors were at the event, which came as a surprise to the NBB members who had expected a far smaller crowd! - We were very restricted as to where we could stand to promote ourselves, but are extremely grateful to the organisers who were kind enough to give us a prime spot on the site. As for the swimmers? Wow. We were tired just watching them, so they must've been exhausted!

The swim was a one mile (or optionally two mile for the mental cases) journey across the lake amidst hundreds of other equally crazy participants.... Luckily the weather held for the entire day, and when it did show signs of rain we were all so worn out that we were happy to see it. After the event was a photo opportunity and a cheque presentation.... See the next page for more.....







## A breath-taking donation from a remarkable charity!

We still can't believe how lucky we are to have had the support of Madathlon this year, enabling us to purchase at least one, possibly two bikes to transport blood, samples, and urgent medical supplies between hospitals in their region. The Great North Swim event culminated in the presentation of a cheque for £7,200.00 from Madathlon. Unfortunately Edd Gardiner was unable to attend, but co-founder Rob Shields (pictured far left) who also swam the event, did the presentation in his absence. We've now purchased a Triumph Trophy and are sorting the livery and lights. Madathlon have chosen the name of the bike (see page 5) in readiness for an official press event later in the year. The bike will also carry Madathlon's logo, and continue to support their work wherever possible (they will continue their challenges to raise funds for other causes in the years ahead!). To join them in their multitude of physically demanding events, contact them by searching "Madathlon" on Google, Twitter or Facebook. By the way, we have no idea who the white-faced photo-bomber in the black swimsuit is (far right)!

## Cramlington Ladies Group: 12<sup>th</sup> June



Northumbria Blood Bikes were invited to give a talk at Cramlington Leisure Centre. John Parish and Owain Harris did the honours, and everyone wanted to wear a Hi-viz vest. In time, we hope to get some sponsorship & events resulting from this type of visit. -As the pictures clearly show, we were very well received!



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# NBB in the local papers... -two weeks in a row!

In addition to the Cramlington group (Previous page), Owain, Graham and Sue also did talks to Lions NE 'Zone' and Morpeth and Whickham Rotary Clubs. This resulted in some substantial press coverage by the Morpeth Herald; The first (below) with a nice feature & photo of our first blood bike appeared on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. Just one week later, the full page article (right) was a fantastic editorial which will spread word of our work to the Morpeth area.

## Change of zone chair

### MORPETH LIONS CLUB

The club is part of Zone 3A, which comprises six clubs throughout Northumberland. For the past two years, the Zone Chair has been Dave Wheeler, a member of the Morpeth club.

He is destined for higher office as he will probably become District Governor in two years time.

His district will incorporate North East England and all of Scotland.

It is therefore time for Mr Wheeler to pass on his Zone responsibilities and he didn't have to look far as his replacement is fellow Morpeth Lion Margaret Treweek.

In paying tribute to his leadership in the Zone, she might well have told him, in the nicest possible way, to 'Get on your bike!'

This was because her first act as Zone Chair was to introduce two members of Northumbria Blood Bikes (NBB).

They gave a presentation about the excellent work these



Morpeth Lion Dave Wheeler and Zone Chair Margaret Treweek.



From left, Morpeth Lion Adrian Barnes, Zone Chair Margaret Treweek and Northumbria Blood Bikes rider.

volunteers do - out of blood transfusion service hours, they transport blood to hospitals in the North East where there is an urgent need. The controllers and riders work to an operational handbook. The aim is to respond to

calls within 30 minutes.

NBB now has four bikes and more than 100 members, with 60 having undertaken assessments and riding qualifications.

The motorbikes are big sport tourers chosen for comfort and weight.

A range of fund-raising activities are carried out by many of the organisation's volunteers. Anyone wishing to find out more about the work can call 07533 56841 or email membership@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk

The talks always prove to be popular, and with photo-opportunities for the attendees to sit on top of our bikes, we never fail to attract attention. Well done Owain, Graham & Sue for some outstanding publicity to add to our ever increasing portfolio!

### CLUBS & SOCIETIES

Send your club reports by email to [smorgher@heraldpress.co.uk](mailto:smorgher@heraldpress.co.uk) or by post to Morpeth Herald, 17 Newgate Street, Morpeth NE41 1AW

## Members hear of vital two-wheeled service

### MORPETH ROTARY CLUB

Sue and Owain Harris are keen motorcyclists and a few years ago they helped to found a charity called Northumbria Blood Bikes.

The National Blood Service does not operate after 7pm on a weekday and is closed at weekends. The blood bikes continue to fill the gap.

They carry blood free of charge to hospitals after hours - hospitals would otherwise have to use a special courier to bring in blood at a cost of £1,000 to £1,500 a year at each hospital.

Members are all keen bikers who fund raise and do their own riding to pay for the charity. The riders get in touch with the National Association of Blood Bikes and they are committed to the mission to tell them how to start up such a charity.

They intended and agreed to set up their own fund-raising committee and a system of hand-outs was the most important element.

They bought an information display unit, special jackets with high-visibility reflective tape and they do not claim individual expenses, any money that they raise stays within the local area.

In addition, the National Association of Blood Bikes support local areas for special projects.

The volunteer riders must be over 21, have had two years experience of riding with a full licence and have passed the advanced test. Bikes have to be purchased with the right carrying capacity before adding the official licence and a



Sue and Owain Harris of the Northumbria Blood Bikes charity during their recent presentation at Morpeth Rotary Club.

### Highlights

They have to pay for maintenance, tax, insurance and petrol. They depend on donations and fund raising at weekends, including at major events such as the Great North Run and Great North Swim and a skydiving activity. They bought two Triumph Tiger bikes after their most recent efforts.

The blood is carried in insulated, sound-proofed hospital bags and is taken to the National Blood Service on a motorbike. They have a relief rider who goes on call from 7pm and on some days they may not be needed, but on others they will be out on duty all night.

They go as far north as Berwick and as far south as Charlton and head west to Wharfedale and Bradford among other places. When a hospital agrees to work with them, it signs a service level agreement. The charity has monthly meetings, and there is a meeting every three months and an annual meeting open to the public. Around 100 bikes are involved with go-trained individuals and also trained on how to carry the blood. They can only run with the lights on and they are given a special letter from a hospital to say the run is urgent and even then they do not break the speed limit. Bikes carry a tracker so

## Our next AGM - just around the corner...

It's that time again... make a note in your diary; Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup>. Not an easy date to forget. We're still looking for a venue, preferably in the south of the region. Let us know if you have any suggestions, and watch the Website / Forum / Social media for updates when we find a venue.

As always, we will have a formal session where we go through our annual business review, discuss plans for the coming year, revisions to our constitution etc. Followed by some less formal banter no doubt!

Sue Harris, our secretary, has opened the flood gates for agenda items and nominations for committee posts. The deadline for either is August 11<sup>th</sup> (one month before the meeting) so if you would like to get in touch to nominate someone, or suggest a topic for inclusion, get your skates on!

The committee positions of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary are all directly elected positions and there are also up to eight other committee positions open for election. If you are a member of Northumbria Blood Bikes and would like to nominate a member for any of the above posts, he/she must have been a member for at least one year. More details available from Sue Harris, [secretary@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk](mailto:secretary@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk) or via the phone number at the end of this Newsletter.

## MG Northumbria @ Corbridge:



Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July was the annual MG Owners Club show in Corbridge. This is the club which made a large donation enabling us to buy our second bike, so we didn't intend to forget their generosity! We attended with "Octagon" (named by the MG Owners Club) to support them at the event, and to show visitors how the donation had been used wisely. Unfortunately, nobody took a picture! ...So I've been scouring the internet for images, but have none to show yet. If I find one I'll include it in next months' newsletter.

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## In memory of Jankers....

Based near Manchester, GB Bikers members come from all over the UK, and they have a meet at the start of each summer with a raffle, a collection & other activities to raise money for a charity of their choosing. This years meet was on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May, and was poignant because it came soon after they heard of the death of a long-standing, highly valued member of their forum, Mr. John Doyle, affectionately known as "Jankers" (pictured above). Bloodbikes was to be the charity for this years donation, but as Jankers hails from Sunderland, Northumbria Blood Bikes was chosen. 40+ bikers turned out for the meet, and several more who couldn't attend made a contribution anyway. As a result, we were kindly given £538.00 in memory of John, and our fundraising manager Graham has written to both GB Bikers and Johns Wife, Susan, to acknowledge receipt of the amount and to thank them for their generosity. I hope that the GB Bikers members will make themselves known to us if they chance across us at any of our publicity and fundraising events, as we'd love to convey our gratitude in person. It's comforting to know that Jankers friends have supported a worthy cause in his honour.

## Our new neighbours; up and running already!



Only last month we reported that we had new neighbours moving in, and already they're fully operational, with TWO bikes. Bill & the team must have been working non-stop to get all the administration in place. Not only that, they've already had their first mid-run transfer with us: On 5<sup>th</sup> July, only their second run, we took a transfer from them to bring into Newcastle. Cumbrias rider "Stan" (right) met up with our Phillipa Bromley for the transfer. Well done & Congratulations and best wishes to Chairman Bill Bertham & his team...



On a similar note, it's worth mentioning that Rob from Bloodrun (Our neighbours in the South of the region) says that they are at last nearly ready to begin a service with James Cook Hospital in Middlesbrough, and we may finally be on the verge of those transfer runs to/from Newcastle.

## ASDA Benton, 12<sup>th</sup> July:

Another excellent day in an Asda store, this time in the foyer at Benton. There was plenty of interest, lots of saddle hopping and blue lights. Thanks for the support one and all: It was a lovely, hot, sunny day and it takes a lot of effort to stand in a supermarket foyer watching trolley loads of beer go past instead of hovering around a barbecue! ...Another great days fundraising to help us stay operational ☺ Thank you!



## We're back on the Green Token Scheme!

It's been a while since we've been on one of these, but they always prove to be a successful method of boosting our funds... For the next two months, we are on the 'Chosen by You' Community Life green tokens board at Asda Living in Durham (Arniston Centre). We are the middle box so if you shop there, please do ask for green tokens and put them in the middle box. We need to raise lots of funds to continue our vital work so whatever each of you does has a direct impact. Happy shopping!

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## The first MADATHLON blood bike makes its debut:



I gotta admit, it seems a little weird to be showing off a photo of our latest bike on the same newsletter as the cheque presentation which funded it, but that's pretty much how it happened: our original enquiries to Triumph go back nearly a year, so we arranged to take delivery locally as soon as the Madathlon funding was available. These pictures were taken at ASDA, Darlington, on the day that our first brand new bike was collected. As it arrived at the store, it showed just 33 miles on the clock! Northumbria volunteers had joined Madathlons team for a day of bag-packing and fundraising, so it seemed only right to show them the results of their hard work over the last year. The Trophy will be liveried shortly, and is to be called "Claire", in memory of Claire Gardiner. Pictured right is the store's Community Life Champion, Louise Gibson, who finally gave in to temptation & had a go on "Octagon", our Honda Pan European. (Thankfully we took the keys out of the ignition - we're not that crazy!)



## Despicable customers at Ashington Town Fair:



Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June saw our events gazebo at Ashington town fayre with "Octagon", our Honda ST1300, and several volunteers staffing the event throughout the day. We raised over £125.00 as well as raising awareness of our group, and we even had a visit from a "Despicable" character (left, like you needed to know) who almost matched us in Hi-Viz yellow! What were the chances of that, eh? - one in a "Minion"!



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# Expanding our coverage

It's been a long time coming, but the work with Northumbria Trust has now been extended to cover six new hospitals.... Morpeth Whalton Unit, Rothbury Community Hospital, Haltwhistle War Memorial Hospital, Berwick Infirmary, Alnwick Infirmary and Blyth Community Hospital.

There may not be much additional work from these hospitals but the addition of them has only happened as a result of them learning that they can trust the group as a whole and all the members to deliver quickly and safely - so it's another well done! By my counting that makes 16 hospitals in the region served by our group..... quite impressive for a group that only went live in February!

## New membership cards coming soon:

Firstly we should say a big thank you to Rob Wilkes for getting all our membership cards done in the past; he's been a fantastic help. In response to feedback we've had from our members, we are going to purchase a card machine to print our own in future, with a lot more important information on them. This will mean that cards should be available to new members far quicker than before, and we're hoping to get one that will also do business cards for events and presentations. Printers like this are pretty expensive, but we will be aiming to recoup some of the costs by offering a card printing service for other groups at a small charge. If you know of any groups that might need quality ID cards (not just blood bikes, local clubs, sports teams, businesses etc) then please contact Barry (our membership chap) via [membership@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk](mailto:membership@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk).

## More development online, too:

Mike Thompson, our IT manager, is busy reconfiguring the members area of our website and forum to ensure they contain all the important documents that Members need. For example, the telephone numbers, postcodes and access information for the six new hospitals (top of this page) are already posted so that members have the knowledge needed to deliver to them safely. Thanks to Gary Annan's tireless driving around the region, we also have videos of the approaches to most of the major hospitals we serve, so you can see which entrances we use, where to park, and which intercom to ring!

Training documentation such as MHRA blood handling are there too, and plans to make the tests "on-line" are being developed. At the moment, some of the information may be found scattered in various forum threads etc, but bear with us.... We're working on it! Our aim is to have a single, central point of access for training, resources and reports so that our members have full visibility of whatever information they require.



## Changes to handover times on North Central rota

From 11<sup>th</sup> July onwards, the weekend handover times are to be alternated to ensure that both riders are not simultaneously delayed due to shift handover issues and taking the previous rider home. South Central rota will remain at 7am & 7pm. North Central rota will hand over at 8am, and 8pm. Friday night shifts (both rotas) will still start at 7pm, and Sunday night shifts will still finish at 7am. Hopefully this will help to provide continuity of service and make our weekend work more "Seamless"... important as more and more hospitals are starting to use our service....

# Future events to put in your diary:

For more info on any event on this page, email Graham at [fundraising@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk)  
Without fundraising, we simply wouldn't survive. We need to keep raising money to finance our fuel, tax and insurance charges, pay for our uniforms, tracking devices, printing materials and more. We also need to save up a cash reserve for bike maintenance, and the inevitable days in the future when we need to replace a bike. Please spare an hour or two at one of the events below if you can; showing your support helps to keep us operational and we really appreciate whatever help you can give.



## **ASDA Leechmere Road, Sunderland: fundraising & publicity:**

Sign up for this if you can spare a couple of hours: Similar event to Asda Benton above; three people needed + 1 to bring & take away the bike. 10:00am - 5:00pm



## **Bikewise 2014: Durham Police HQ**

This was the first outdoor event we ever held with a duty bike on display, just one year ago! Already plenty of volunteers for this event, but please show your face, we'd love to see you!



## **ASDA Gosforth: Bag packing & publicity:**

BAG PACKING, so we need as many volunteers as we can get!!! 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?



## **Tesco, West Auckland (NEW)**

Our wonderful Madathlon friends are holding a bag-pack event at Tesco. Please show your support for this amazing team who have already provided our first brand new motorbike!



## **Asda Living Durham**

Saturday August 23<sup>rd</sup> from 11am- 4pm Would you be able to support the stand for an hour or two?



## **The GLENDALE Show - CANCELLED**

Change of plan from previous newsletters, regrettably we have had to cancel our pitch at this event and will not be attending.



## **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.....



## And Finally....

This little gem was spotted by Mike Thompson (our Web & IT Guru) in Durham and he couldn't resist taking a picture. Let's hope its just an advertisement, and not in use. If it was, it would probably explain Durham Hospitals' enthusiasm for our service!

...Perhaps the taxis are realising that two wheels are better than four, so they're phasing them in, one wheel at a time?



That's all for this month..... 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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