



NORTHUMBRIA BLOOD BIKES

November
2014
Newsletter



Northumbria completes its 500th run!

Thanks to the efforts of hundreds of volunteers, riders and fundraisers, and thanks to the kind donations and contributions from thousands of donators, we are proud to announce that we have hit our 500th Blood run since we started our service in February this year: Five hundred runs in less than three hundred days! Good work!

Our volunteers deliver blood and other urgent medical supplies 365 days of the year, day and night in every weather imaginable. Having visors that are clean, fog free and that repel the rain ensures we continue to make a difference for the NHS and its patients. That's why we were so excited to open a delivery from our friends at Visorvision.co.uk

who have provided us with enough award winning V2 sponges, FogTech anti-fog wipes and RainCoat water repellent spray for all of our riders. You can check out their products and see videos of them in action on their website:

<http://www.visorvision.co.uk/shop/>

Thank you, Visorvision!



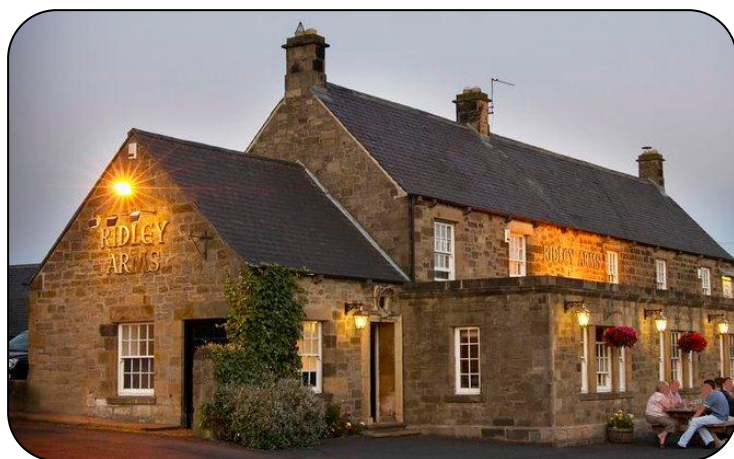
The Ridley Arms, Morpeth:

On Wednesday 5th November, Owain and Sue Harris, together with John and Val Parrish were invited by Cramlington Rotary Club to attend The Ridley Arms in Stannington, to present a talk on the work of Northumbria Blood Bikes.

Traffic was horrendous, even in Washington: It was another master class of filtering for what seemed like miles as everywhere was gridlocked. The Ridley Arms was a welcome sight, lights blazing through the dark and slight fog, and the promise of warmth inside from all the log fires going - toasty! Sue and John and Val arrived shortly afterwards and we were introduced to our hosts. The evening progressed well, the talk was warmly received and the usual questions followed.

They kindly made a donation of £100-00 to Blood Bikes, and the promise of more to come in future! Another full day for Blood Bikes, another talk, another donation, job done!

Story: Owain, Sue, John, Val.



Jankers' Memory lives on:



7th November: Northumbria Blood Bikes paid a revisit to see Susan Doyle, widow of GB Bikers member John 'JANKERS' Doyle, who you may recall from our July Newsletter, when GB Bikers gave a substantial donation in his memory.

Owain & Sue Harris spent the evening talking, laughing, looking at ship plans - John used to build the models from scratch using the plans! He had made so many models his widow was forced to have a clear out. Some went to family, some to auction, and some to the model boat club for members, along with a pile of spare parts for people to use in exchange for a donation.

Coffee was drunk and we laughed at the tales she told of John's exploits. We told Sue that the previous amount of money received was going to be put towards a Generator for the charity, and it would be adorned with a small plaque in memory of John, no doubt to be referred to (as it always has) as 'Jankers Generator'! Despite having spent a considerable sum of money recently on one of her cats which needed surgery, Susan generously donated another £200-00 to Northumbria Blood Bikes!

Story: Owain Harris



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Back to School For Northumbria BloodBikes....

Northumbria Blood Bikes went back to school again on 13th November, as Owain Harris attended King Edward 6th school in Morpeth where he spoke to the year 11 assembly about the work of the charity. No photos today, but as a result of the school holding a 'non - uniform' day recently, they raised a magnificent sum of money to be shared between two charities - and Northumbria Blood bikes is one of them! The final figure is somewhere around the £600-00 mark, so an excellent effort by all the students concerned - thank you one and all! A date is to be decided for the presentation and cheque handing over, and of course - photos!



Anacronym city: NBB at NAM AGM!

Northumbria Blood Bikes were invited to put on a display at the recent NAM AGM held at The Britannia Hotel at Newcastle Airport, and a very plush venue it was too!

The display boards went up, complete with IKEA's best 'flexy lights' to show off Madathlon and Claire Gardiner to best effect.



Special thanks go to Richard Scholfield and Stewart Wilkinson who brought two of the blood bikes (I believe SW was on the Cumbria Run later, so had gone to Albemarle to fetch it then backtrack to the airport - good effort!)

We spoke to some nice people, and made some good contacts, and may have an event or two as a result of being there.



We were provided with a buffet and allowed to sit in on their AGM. There followed a talk by guests John and Ros who run a biker - friendly guesthouse in Austria, not 'Australia' as the new chair stated - oops! It was the 'Gasthof Hochalmspitze' - the link is below.

<http://www.hochalmspitze.com>

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North East Ambulance Service



NHS Foundation Trust

NBB team up with NEAS for trial delivery service:

Last month, we reported on the trial of ambulance stations.... This month, we got fantastic coverage in the NEAS internal magazine:

“A group of North East volunteers who deliver out-of-hours blood supplies to local hospitals have been testing a speedier way of working, with the help of NEAS. Northumbria Blood Bikes used the Netherby ambulance station in Fenham, Newcastle, as a base in October - making it easier for local volunteer riders to have a location from where to collect a bike. It's hoped this combined use of an ambulance station will make it easier for them to respond quicker. If it's deemed a success, other ambulance stations across the North East could also provide a garaging facility.



Currently, riders need to have a garage or other secure place to store the blood bike - which is owned by the charity- while they are at work, home and on call. Volunteers comes from all walks of life. Sean Storey, a paramedic with NEAS's Hazardous Area Response Team and also a Northumbria Blood Bikes volunteer, said: "In critical situations, blood or other medical items need to be delivered urgently in order to save a patient's life. Blood bikes, with their distinctive livery, emergency lights, and narrow profile, can quickly get through traffic reaching the destination sooner. "If we can base our bikes around the region at NEAS stations, our riders will have a choice as to where they would like to pick a bike up from when they have a shift to cover. They will be able to go a station, leave their transport in a secure place and sign on for duty straight away. After their shift, they can return the blood bike at any time during the day - eliminating the need for sometimes lengthy pre-arranged handovers with other riders.”

Northumbria Blood Bikes launched in February 2014, and currently has a network of volunteers who ferry hospitals across the whole of County Durham, Tyne & Wear and Northumberland. Sean said: "We don't ride our own bikes, we ride bikes owned by the charity. We currently operate a fleet of 6 specially adapted motorcycles consisting of a BMW R1200RT, a Honda Pan European, two Yamaha FJR's and two Triumph Trophy's. "These are tourer type motorcycles designed to be ridden for extended periods and distances, that offer some protection from the worst of the weather and which have reasonable luggage capacity. Our bikes have full high visibility markings in order to ensure they can be easily identified as 'Blood Bikes' and to help our riders and their precious cargo be seen and stay safe. Our riders can be 'on call' several times each month, they take possession of the NBB bike, for the time they are on call, so that they can respond from home to any request for assistance. At the moment riders need to have a garage or other secure place to store the blood bike while at home and on call, they also have to transport the previous rider who delivers the bike back home which can cause down time for the blood bike.

"All riders are required to have held a full motorcycle licence for at least two years and hold a current advanced riding qualification or an emergency services equivalent. If people want to ride but don't yet have a suitable qualification, the charity can put them in contact with one of the local advanced rider groups so they can gain the required qualification. Volunteers come from a wide cross-section of the community, but all have two common interests. We all love riding bikes, but also want to provide an efficient and effective urgent and emergency item courier service which also saves our hospitals money.

.....Top marks to Sean Storey for an amazing article, in a relevant and well positioned publication!

It was agreed at the last committee meeting that the trial would be regarded as a success and that we would continue to use Netherby Drive, and it's to be extended to the other Rota.

The Little Haven, South Shields:

On Monday 20th October, Owain and Sue Harris attended The Little Haven Hotel at South Shields, where they gave a presentation to the Cleadon Rotary Club about the work of Northumbria Blood Bikes. As soon as they entered the room, Sue recognised a number of people from her days as a bank clerk with NatWest bank in King Street - she was soon deep in conversation with them about the good old days! The talk went well, and there was lots of praise for how professional an organisation Northumbria Blood Bikes are, and they were very interested in our work.

Story: Owain Harris



Bishop Auckland Methodist Church:

Tuesday 21st October, just one day after the Little Haven, Owain represented Northumbria Blood Bikes at a talk to the Women's Institute at Bishop Auckland Methodist Church on Cockton Hill Rd, opposite the hospital.

On arrival it appeared to be an ordinary looking church, so after parking and unloading the car he made his way inside. There were already some displays set up in the foyer area, and then the bombshell...a charming W.I. member approached him and said "this way dear, we'll show you where you can do your talk - you're on at 11.30." She led him into the main body of the church - which was full of around 250 - 300 women! Owain was duly announced at spot on 11.30, & handed a microphone. He stood at the front and went for it!

The talk went well, there were questions from everywhere about everything, and it didn't end there - afterwards he had to man the stand as they queued up for more talk appointments!

The General Havelock:

21st October 2014, Owain attended the second talk of the day, this one being at The General Havelock public house in East Sleekburn, having already done the Durham W.I. talk that morning!

John Parish must have hit traffic, as he was slightly later than Owain, but they got set up and gave a good talk. The questions were coming during the talk, as opposed to at the end, but they managed to answer them. The evening passed all too quickly, and they were soon packing up and heading off. A long day, with two talks to help to spread the word, and work of Northumbria Blood Bikes.

Owain Harris / John Parrish



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Blood Bikes, **Blue Lights** and the Tyne Tunnel: **Do you know the rules?**

People behave differently when there's blue lights & sirens behind them, as most of our riders are already aware. This can result in unexpected driving behaviour at the best of times, so imagine how much more stressful it is to drivers in the middle of a tunnel? The Tyne Tunnel has strict regulations to minimise incidents and safely allow passage of blue light vehicles, and they're in our riders handbook & on our website, but for those who may be interested....

You're on an emergency call, delivering to a hospital on the other side of the river. -If you don't know the rules for safe passage through the Tyne Tunnel by now, you're too late. Our riders receive a brief with details of the procedures, and the subject is covered during their blue light training, but here's a recap for them, and enlightenment for those who don't ride; there's a lot more to it than you'd think!

Firstly, our riders don't decide if a call warrants blue lights or not. That's a decision made by the hospital who books the callout. We insist on the name and contact details of the clinician authorising a blue light response.

Depending on the call procedure in use, either our call centre or a duty co-ordinator will instruct the rider that the call is authorised for blue lights (categorised as "immediate response") They would then notify the Tyne Tunnel control room, with the bike's direction and estimated time of arrival (ETA). The Tunnel Controller will notify any workers in the tunnel of the approaching vehicle, and depending on traffic conditions, may deploy the traffic management systems. Maintenance vehicles take a safe, stationary position, and if appropriate, the tunnel controller may deploy staff to key locations. In exceptional circumstances (for example during maintenance / two way traffic operation) a rapid response vehicle may be used to escort you through.

The following applies to all our volunteers, in bikes and cars!

Blue Lights Off

- Our vehicles must turn off blue lights on approach, until the vehicle is well clear of the Tunnel. Blue lights distract other traffic and can cause accidents. No matter how urgent your call might be, blues off.

(Even if an emergency develops inside the tunnel!)



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Stick to speed limit

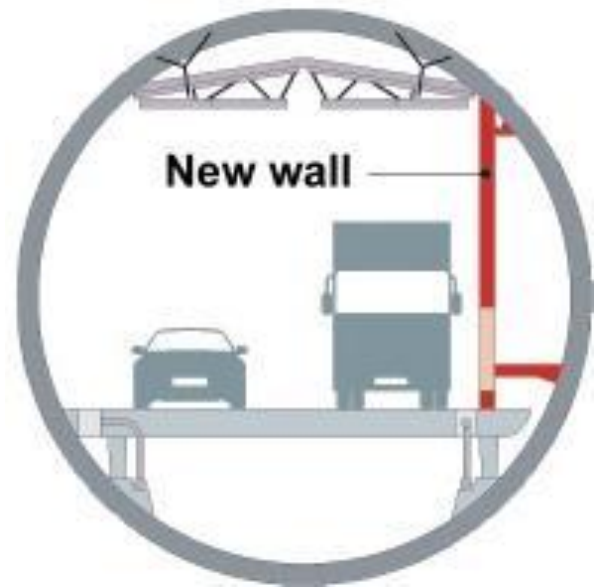
- Unless escorted by a Tunnel vehicle there is absolutely no deviation from the speed limits as shown at the approach to each tunnel entrance, no matter how urgent a call might be.

Stick to one lane - Overtaking is not permitted during normal traffic operation. You will not have blue lights or sirens, and you won't be speeding, so there will be no expectation by other road users for you to behave any differently than they do.

Observe the signs - The Tyne Tunnel has its own messaging system which instructs vehicles to stop, sets variable speed limits, and warns of other activities.

In the event of a breakdown - The cameras trigger an alert to the control room if they detect smoke, stationary traffic etc. It's like the "dead man's handle" on a train; An alert goes to the operator, but in the event that it is not acknowledged, automated traffic control measures kick in to cope with the problem. So, in the event of a breakdown, you needn't worry about anything except your own safety, and the safety of others involved.

Since the refurbishment of the original tunnel, both old and new tunnels each contain a dividing wall to enable anyone stranded to escape into a safety, shielded from the traffic. There are also telephones along the entire route allowing communication with the control room.



During the last month, Northumbria's Vice-Chairman Alan Ross had the opportunity to see inside the control room and talk with the head of operations about Northumbria Blood Bikes and the service we offer: Particularly useful considering that we are likely to be using cars instead of bikes in the near future.

We don't qualify for free passage through the tunnel when using cars, so it's safe to assume that we will be purchasing a couple of tunnel permit badges as the most practical solution for getting through the tolls on four wheels instead of two.

We've also been told that the Tunnel Control Room would welcome our members for a tour and a brief talk about the way that it functions, so we will undoubtedly be arranging a visit for one of our member meetings in the months ahead.....



A second generous donation from CIBSE:

Back in March this year we mentioned a lovely donation from the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE). Ken Kelly got in touch with me again this month to advise me that we will be receiving a £500.00 donation in the next few weeks, as proceeds from the CIBSE annual dinner and charity raffle.

Last time round it was overlooked for the newsletter, so this time I'm hopefully early! - Many thanks to all of the staff and contributors from CIBSE, and also thanks to Ken for assisting to spread the word. We'll ensure the money is put to good use to ensure the ongoing provision of service to our hospitals!

Sparks fly at Clennell Hall:

We recently received an invitation from John ('Rocky') and Roz Ramshaw, the current owners of Clennell Hall in Alnwinton near Rothbury to attend their annual Fireworks display, where they would hold a collection for Northumbria Blood Bikes on the night.

We eventually rolled into Clennell Hall where we found the car park was full, and Rocky had erected two large Gazebos on the lawns, complete with outdoor bar and fast food outlet!

There was a good crowd, and the fireworks were very impressive! We were made welcome by all; the kids had a great time on the mini motos. They gave us a cash donation at the end of the night - £100-00! So thanks to all who attended the display, to everyone who donated, and to Rocky and Roz for making us feel so welcome at their home.



ASDA cheque presentation:

Northumbria Blood Bikes were lucky winners of the 'green token' scheme at Asda Leechmere in Sunderland recently. Community champion Lesley Watson, who had previously had the bikes at the store, was on hand to present a cheque to the value of £200-00 to the charity.



Blood Bike members Rob Wilks and Richard Scholfield attended with two of our bikes - the BMW RT(our first ever bike purchased off eBay and still doing sterling work), and one of the new Triumph Trophy's, bought by our friends at [Madathlon](#) - this one is 'Claire'.

Thanks to Lesley and her colleagues at Asda for inviting us in the first place, and to all those people who put their tokens in our slot!

Story: Richard / Rob / Owain.

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WELL DONE BRIAN:

...When we get feedback about one of our members, we shout about it!

“I just wanted to pass on my comments about the fantastic service that was provided by Blood Bikes on Friday 8th November. The driver was called Brian Slassor and he picked up the majority of samples within 20 minutes, one was even within 2 minutes as he was waiting for another call from me in the café at WGH! He also gave me his mobile number after some confusion with the ‘call centre’. What could have been a very stressful night was made so much easier and the driver really did go above and beyond.”

**From: Aurthur Caitlin (RTF) NHCT
Sent: 08 November 2014
Subject: Blood Bikes on Friday Night**



This lovely email came to us thanks to Mike Carr, Pathology Manager at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, who wrote:

“I am delighted to be able to pass on these very favourable comments concerning the service from Blood Bikes on Friday evening, when a broken analyser at Wansbeck, meant the tests for Heart attack markers in blood were having to be transferred to North Tyneside. Please pass on our thanks to Brian.”

Emails like this are few and far between, so it's lovely to hear that our service is “making the difference”. Of course, our thanks also goes equally to all the other volunteers who help to keep our charity operational; we thank you all for your on-going support and hope that it may continue for a long time to come. Well done, everybody!

We plan to include this endorsement of our service in the next powerpoint slideshow that we do to promote our service in supermarkets and events.

If any members receive any similar emails, please forward them to Owain, our Patron Saint of Publicity, at this address:

publicity@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk



Children in Need



Northumbria Blood Bikes were approached earlier this year with a view to leading a project providing a 'Blood Bike' motorcycle escort for this high profile BBC fundraising event, supporting the 450 mile journey of a pedal-powered rickshaw from Salford, Manchester, to the set of Eastenders at Elstree Studios, London. There was some serious debate as to whether or not we should be involved at all, considering that the challenge was nowhere near our area. However, after some deliberation, we decided that the possibility of national publicity for bloodbikes, television exposure for them, and the prospect of future, more local work if it was successful, made it worthy of our involvement.



Brian Mason and the team at Car-Styling Signs, Washington (who supplied our magnetic signage) were kind enough to "Pudsify" Alans 4x4, which was used to provide support for the tow Madathlon bikes which attended the event. As it turned out, neither rider was too tired, so Alan never did any motorcycle work!

We also tried to promote NABB where possible (Left), but the livery printed in advance turned out to be fairly impractical to put on the bikes of the various groups who helped along the way.

The groups taking part included North West Lancs & Lakes, Midland Freewheelers, Northumbria, Derbyshire, Warwickshire & Solihull Blood Bikes. We took Madathlon bikes "Bella" and "Claire" (right), and worked alongside Medi-Bike escort team to maintain a 4-bike escort at all times. The event was a bit of a gamble for us, as we weren't sure if we would gain enough publicity to make it worthwhile, but all the groups agreed that it was great to be associated with such a major charity event, and each group had plenty of photo opportunities too!



Every rider throughout the 8 days of the event provided their services voluntarily, with some of them starting their working day at 2am! Many thanks to all those involved for their phenomenal generosity, donating, time, resources, and professional skills to ensure safe passage of the 67-strong convoy throughout its journey.

...And the feedback? - Alan got a text message from the BBC the day after the event completed: "Just wanted to say a massive thank you to you and all of the guys who've helped over the last eight days.... They've been great. Just so you know, we raised £2.1 million so far, the best ever!" - Thank you to all the volunteers who contributed to making this, our first involvement with the BBC and the NABB Network of blood bike groups, a great success!!!

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Are you an advanced car driver?

We mentioned this in last month's newsletter, and we've had a good response, but we're still looking! Most of you will already be aware (as a rider, you should be!) that we are not permitted to carry blood on the back of a motorcycle when the ambient temperature is lower than 3 degrees Centigrade. Earlier this year, there were several days where our service had to "stand down" in favour of taxis. That wasn't so much of an issue back then, when we were only serving a couple of hospitals. This winter there are a lot more people using our service, and we'd like to maintain continuity if we can, so we're looking into the acquisition of one or more vehicles to get us through the winter months. We will be looking for drivers with an advanced qualification, as we do with riders, who would be willing to cover the winter shifts. The training requirements would be very similar, with home security check, driving assessment with Geoff Spencer, and blue light training if we manage to get an appropriately equipped vehicle. So, the hunt is on to ensure we have an adequate list of volunteers to call upon. Do you know of any advanced car drivers who would be interested? If so, please ask them to get in touch with us via the website or by email to membership@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk - more information about the role will soon be available on our website, too.



Could you be a co-ordinator?

Some of you will recall when the group started, we had Shift Co-ordinators who were to take calls from the hospitals. After a trial, it was decided that this was not feasible as we struggled to recruit enough volunteers. Since then, the committee have been regularly discussing how best to handle contact with the various NHS Trusts.

We are aware that the Security Centre we use at present are changing their charging structure from April next year, and we need to do a proper evaluation of the impact that this will have on us and look at the options. Obviously cost will be just one aspect of the evaluation. We decided therefore to see if we could recruit and train some of our own Shift Coordinators possibly to work alongside the



Security Centre e.g. by taking calls up until say, midnight. If we can't recruit them now then it's a useful indication of what our options actually are! We have posted this to social media (Facebook and Twitter) and the job description is available on the website. So if you think it's the kind of role you'd be interested in, or anyone you know, please let us know! More details are available here: <http://northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk/volunteer/shiftcoordinators>



Coming in December - What's "The Big Local"?

The Big Local is a scheme operated by Nationwide Building Society. Every month, three different charities from a region in the UK are put forward for support from Nationwide. The general public have the chance to vote for the charity they would like to see supported. Each of the three charities gets £200.00, but the one with the most votes at the end of the month also gets £5000.00.Northumbria Blood Bikes are in the running for December.



As a shortlisted charity we can not only benefit from the donation, but also showcase ourselves to a large potential supporter base. Nationwide has over 2 million unique visitors to their website every month! It really is that simple: Go visit the website in December, and vote for us. It could make a huge difference to us, so please, tell your friends, and spread the word when you see us advertising on our social media sites. Every vote could make a difference!

<http://your.nationwide.co.uk/thebiglocal>

How does it work?



Each month we choose charities from a different UK region nominated by you, our members



You can vote for the charity you want to win through the Big Local site



The charity with the most votes will receive £5,000

And for next year: A sponsored Cycle Ride?

We're looking at possible fundraising events for next year, and are considering the possibility of a sponsored cycle event once all of the hospitals we cover are signed up. Potentially the route could pass, or call in to each of the hospitals we serve, be it from Berwick in the North to Darlington in the South or vice versa. I know that there are some cyclists out there and wondered if people might be interested in doing something like this in principle..? We're also keen to find someone to lead the project if there's enough interest to make a go of it..... If you fancy taking part, or even leading the project, please contact fundraising@northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk - and perhaps with your help we can make it happen;



We even know a bunch of bikers who could be marshals for the event! How good is that ? !!!

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Future events to put in your diary:

For more info on any event on this page, email Graham at 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 and more. 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 appreciate any help you can give.



TESCO. Kingston Park:

The first of three events today, hopefully a good day for us! 10am-4pm,
No bag packing, just a store-front awareness / collecting event.



ASDA, Boldon:

An awareness stand at the front entrance and a blood bike, with a bucket collection 10am-4pm... We'd love to see you there to help us out!!!



Wardley Club - Bike Club Fundraiser:

MadDog Bike Club have invited us to be at their fundraising event at Wardley Club.



ASDA, Ryhope:

The second of three events today, which one can you support?
10am-4pm, No bag packing, just a store-front awareness / collecting event.



ASDA, Benton:

The start of the Christmas shopping madness, hopefully a good day for us!
10am-4pm, No bag packing, just a store-front awareness / collecting event.



ASDA, Gosforth:

All hands on deck for the busiest bag-pack to date....
Lots and lots of volunteers needed, even if you're only there for an hour while the missus does the Christmas shop.... We need you, please help us!!!



Sainsburys, Arnison Centre, Durham:

Finally, we round the year (what a year!) off at Sainsburys for a **bag packing session**, and an **awareness stand** at the front door. Again, we need to have as many people as possible helping with this, even for an hour.

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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