



NORTHUMBRIA BLOOD BIKES

April 2019

Please feel free to copy, print, save or forward this newsletter to increase awareness of our charity.

APRIL
2019 NEWSLETTER



RECENT DONATIONS RECEIVED

Gratefully received:

Mr McCann handed £40 to Malcolm Cramman as a Thank You for NBB helping save a family member's life.

Evenwood WI Talk Stephen Winn £50.

Probus Durham Talk Nick Burton £164.20.

McColls Darras Hall £34.26.

Car Stickers sold at March open meeting £35.

Clems Pirates Rugby Club £500 cheque.

Thank you to everyone involved!

DONATIONS

Nigel Barlow with Megan Blacklock



Cheque Presentation for £1500
Soroptimist International of Sunderland. President Megan Blacklock
Thanks so much from NBB.

DONATIONS

Nigel Barlow at the 4 Ladies, Cramlington



We were asked to call into the Four Ladies in Cramlington Village. The Patrons did a fundraiser for us last Halloween. Thank you Sue, Chris and all you lovely people at the Four Ladies.

DONATIONS

Ian Muirhead & St Oswalds ladies



St Oswalds ladies club enjoying tea and biscuits following tonight's talk in Shiney Row, £38 raised. Thanks ladies.

DONATIONS

Ian Muirhead & West End church ladies



Talk delivered to West End Church Ladies club, Hexham.

A warm welcome received on a very chilly night, plus a nice

Cuppa and a donation of £60. Thanks ladies.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



When people think about Northumbria Blood Bikes they are more than likely think of the stereotypical hairy biker bloke (no offence chaps). We actually have quite a few female volunteers amongst our ranks, plus two women who are on our committee and two female Patrons. However, we always welcome more females to our team and we are already striving for more equality.

On #InternationalWomensDay this year's theme is #BalanceforBetter so if you would like to become a volunteer for our charity please visit www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk

FEEDBACK

Message from a fellow NBB volunteer:

Last night while sitting by the reception desk at the Leazes Wing of the RVI a lady in a dressing gown came over to me and said, "Thank you. If it hadn't been for you people on Friday night, I would have died". Before I could get any information she walked away.

Later on while the rain had managed to get into every part of my jacket, gloves and trousers, a warm feeling came over me as it hit home that what we do does matter.

Well done to the Friday night team - it could have been you.

MESSAGE FROM A FOUNDING MEMBER

Ken's story:

Ken informed me that the initial information he received concerning the Blood bikes, was on a visit to the bike show down at the NEC 2013. The NABB had a stall there, Ken got talking and it raised Ken's interest, and he was furnished with a contact number for a Mr Barry Bullas of the Northumbria Blood Bikes. Barry was membership secretary at the time, Ken reckons he was probably head cook and bottle washer as well. At the time Ken approached Barry, NBB were only servicing the hospitals in Newcastle, and because Ken was from Darlington, south side of the region, it was suggested that Ken should approach EVS, the Cleveland branch of the Blood bikes. Having contacted EVS, and awaiting a response, a week to two weeks elapsed. Not having had a response from EVS, Ken was wondering what to do next, when a call came from Barry Bullas, asking Ken if he was still interested, as the Darlington memorial hospital had come on board. From that point onwards Ken became a member of NBB. Ken liaised with Barry Bullas, Gary Annan and Richard Schofield at the Darlington memorial hospital. Richard bought the bike down which was an old, ex police RT1200.

Whilst waiting to complete his assessment, the now famous photoshoot at the Angel of the North took place, Ken tells me he's one of the better looking guys on the shoot. At the shoot, Ken met Nigel Barlow, and that was the beginning of long and lasting friendship, although Ken calls Nigel grumpy pants, Ken assures me it's a term of endearment.

Shortly after the shoot, Ken found himself passing the assessment with Geoff Spencer. Having then passing the security checks, Ken put his name forward for his first shift for the NBB. Ken cannot remember how you registered for the shifts back then.

Progress

Since those early heady days Ken has carried out about 170 shifts, all on the bikes and believes that he is the oldest NBB member doing full shifts on the bikes. When asked how old he is, I was told, 33 and a little bit. Looking good for 33 and a little bit.

MESSAGE FROM A FOUNDING MEMBER

The first shift.

For Ken's first shift, he awaited the bike to be delivered to his house, Gary Annan bought the bike. Ken then had to run Gary back home using his own car, then returned to his house. He then collected the bike and proceeded to do the shift. At the completion of the shift, the reverse of the start of the shift had to be carried out. Often Ken would hand over the bike to Malcolm Cramman, Ken would deliver the bike to Malcolm's house and rely on Malcolm to run him home before he could get any sleep. This was the normal procedure for shift handover in the early days. It actually resulted in two hours being lost off of each shift.

Ken's first shift wasn't very busy, the riders were based at their homes back then, awaiting a call. NBB didn't have any radios back then, so all of the NBB business was conducted using their phones. Originally NBB carried out their own controlling. At a later date a company in Stockton took over the night shift controlling

Ken says he was very nervous on his first shift, not being familiar with the Newcastle area, but recalls thoroughly enjoying the shift.

On a later shift, Ken tells me, he was approaching the Q.E hospital in Gateshead at about 3am. Whilst going over the sleeping policemen (speed bumps) the pannier fell off and proceeded to slide down the road, waking everyone in the vicinity. Ken contacted Barry, the committee member on shift, when Barry got there they effected a repair using a torch a lot of patience and some string they managed to get their hands on before they tied the pannier back on. It begs the question, where do you get string from at three in the morning, in Gateshead???? The next morning before Andy Watson could take the bike out on the road, Andy and Ken made a running repair to the bike, using those ever reliable zip ties, surprised there wasn't a mound of bodge tape included as well.

MESSAGE FROM A FOUNDING MEMBER

Ken, says that since joining back in 2013, he has seen a lot of positive improvements to NBB. When you compare the normal operating procedures of then to now, its obvious that our current procedures are so much improved and easier on the riders and drivers.

Currently

Ken spoke of the positives he has experienced, or has been involved with, whilst being involved riding the bikes, how the area we service has grown and massively increased. Ken mentioned the friendships that have occurred during his time in NBB, old friends and some new friendships with later members of NBB. Ken wants to mention the crew he usually does his shifts with, Chris Mann and Ronnie Paton, (affectionately known as the knitting circle). Ken mentioned the number of younger lads and ladies that are now involved with the charity, all becoming dedicated members of NBB.

Recently Ken has taken on the role of testing NBB members south of the region for their Annual assessment. This was to assist Geoff Spencer, who's workload was reaching breaking point.

Ken has recently undertaken, and passed his Rospa advanced driving test (a Gold no less), this is so he can then carry out his shifts during adverse weather conditions during the winter months and has nothing to do with him getting soft. Ken says, he hopes that during his time on the bikes riding for NBB, that he has been inspirational to other members. Ken also wants it known that he has no intention of hanging up his riding boots, and intends to be around for a long time to come, improving his knitting skills within the knitting circle.

My comments

My own personal experience. To answer Ken's question on inspiration, whilst undergoing my Rospa advanced riding certificate. Ken was my tutor and whilst having a debriefing and a coffee we got to talking about the blood bikes. Ken gave me my introduction to NBB, and later, in his own time showed me around the various sites we service. For that Ken you have my thanks.

APRIL CALENDAR DATES

Tesco Durham
10.00 to 16.00hrs
Sunday 14th April

Easter at the Bebbby
Friday 19th April
Saturday 20th April
Sunday 21st April

Durham Easter Egg
Run Awareness
stand
Sunday 21st April
08.00 to 11.00

360 Challenge
Saturday 27th April
08.00 to 17.00

OUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Alan Johnson Fleet Manager:

We have a few new bikes due to join our fleet in the next month.



Andrea Witherspoon Training Officer:

11 more riders now on the blue light list plus 5 car drivers and out of them 4 are car and bike.



Kirsty Lawrence Publicity Officer:

We have our first 'Speaker Workshop' organised on 15th June—more information on our events calendar.



FOURTH ANNUAL 360 CHALLENGE

**NORTHUMBRIA BLOOD BIKES
ARE ASKING YOU TO HELP THEM TO SAVE LIVES**

ENTER THE FOURTH
360 CHALLENGE EVENT

RIDE THROUGH WILD SPECTACULAR LANDSCAPES,
MOORS AND COAST LINES

SATURDAY 27TH APRIL 2019



READ ABOUT & ENTER THE CHALLENGE AT:

www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk/360Challenge

CHOOSE YOUR STARTING POINT EITHER:
EARL OF ZETLAND OR GOOSEPOOL HOUSE AND CAFE

Registered Charity Number 1166689



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

So, another good month, lots been happening. Weather very changeable, making it very difficult riding the bikes. I'm not talking about the road craft needed to control and manoeuvre the machines, I'm talking about having to decide whether we wear winter thermals and heated vests, or brave it and wear only two layers instead of four or five, as the temperatures fluctuate up and down. It could be though, that as a southerner I haven't acclimatised yet, even after 33 years of living in the North East.

At the last open meeting, it was announced that the number of riders registering for the 360 challenge are good, with a lot more entrants expected, nice one. I cant wait for the day.

I was fortunate enough to have Ken Tait submit an article, based upon his experience over the years of his service to NBB. However I did have to sit in his house while Ken dictated the article to me.

It would be good to have an article by an NBB member each month, so come on, give ma call on my mobile. I will meet you, and construct an article on your experiences in NBB.

Nick Burton, Newsletter Editor.



www.northumbriabloodbikes.org.uk



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FUNDRAISING HOTLINE:

0191 364 3113

for any opportunities to increase our funding through sponsorship, locations for collecting tins, supermarket events etc...