



Junction 11

The Monthly Newsletter of Reading HOC



Welcome to the bumper size November 2008 issue of Junction 11, the monthly newsletter of the Reading Branch of The Honda Owners Club. We meet from 7.30pm on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at The Swan Public House, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, Berkshire, RG7 1AT. If you ride or just have an interest in bikes at the moment, pop in and say hello, we're a friendly bunch that likes bikes and enjoys a good social gathering. For more information about Reading HOC contact Allie, our Branch Secretary on 07954 603217 or email Reading@hoc.org.uk. We look forward to seeing you soon at The Swan.

Latest News

The **International Motor Cycle and Scooter Show** takes place at the NEC Birmingham between the 28th of November and the 7th of December. The Honda Owners Club is represented there so pop along to their stand, CC10 in hall three, and say hello.

The **Reading Toy Run** takes place on the 7th of December. Bring a new toy and meet at Sainsbury's, junction 12, M4 for 12.45pm departure to arrive at Foster Wheeler (formerly Shire Hall) next to Junction 11, M4 at 1.00pm.

The **Reading Branch Christmas Party** takes place at The Swan on the 10th December. Admission to the party is by ticket only, available from the Club Secretary Allie Gane, reading@hoc.org.uk. Tickets are £15.00 each and include buffet, first drink and entry into a mystery draw. The party is not restricted to members of the branch and all are welcome to come along and join in the festivities. Closing date for ticket sales is the 26th of November to allow catering numbers to be finalised.

The **Reading Branch Christmas Raffle** will take place at the Christmas Party on the 10th of December. Tickets are already on sale at £1.00 each and will also be available on the night. First prize is a £55.00 John Lewis Hamper, second prize is a £30.00 John Lewis Hamper, third prize is a bottle of champagne. If you have any difficulty in obtaining tickets, contact Marion, branch treasurer, treasurer@reading.hoc.org.uk

HOC Reading is pleased to announce the launch of its own exclusive range of branch merchandise. Currently the range includes polo shirts in a variety of colours and sizes including ladies fitment, mugs and external bike stickers. All of the items are adorned with the new club badge which was designed by Gaz. Orders can be placed through the branch treasurer Marion, treasurer@reading.hoc.org.uk. See the merchandise section on page 9 for details.

Test Ride Day 25th October Reading Honda

The Test Ride day courtesy of Reading Honda was a fantastic success. A great range of bikes were laid on to allow members to put them through their paces. Bikes available included; CB1300, CBR1000RR Fireblade, CB1000R, CBR600RR Hannspree, CB600F Hornet, VFR800 and VT750DC Shadow Spirit. Below are comments from some of the participants.

From Keith - excellent day.

CB1000R. Liked the CB1000R very much. Handles superbly with ample power at 125hp. Steering is a little light when accelerating out of corners. Not much protection from the elements. When pushing back on the seat the raised rear seat sticks into your bum which can be a little uncomfortable. The best ride of the day by far.

CB1300 had lots of very smooth power. Has a heavy feel to it and although it cornered well was not as agile as the CB1000R. With the slightly raised screen I found the buffering from wind very uncomfortable at high speed. Strangely the CB1000R with no screen to speak of was much better.

Tried the **Shadow 750** and had to return early. Very lacking in power, I think the rev limiter was cutting in at around 5,000rpm. Handled like a shoe box full of mud. The cruiser laid back feet in the air style was not very comfortable. Harleys will never be for me.

I shall be keeping my CBF1000 as it offers all round service from touring to sports. It has lots of luggage accessories. It has pretty good protection, the screen can be lowered or changed. The CB1000R would have a slight edge on performance and handling but not enough to make a change.

My wish is that Honda puts the CB1000R power plant into a CBF. Now that would make a good all rounder.

From Mike - I agree it was a great day, and many thanks to Honda Fireblade

CB1000R. Brilliant, very easy to ride, exudes confidence on cornering, smooth running powerful engine with loads and loads of grunt. Comfortable seating and control layout. Light hydraulic clutch, well balanced ABS brakes. I just could not stop smiling when I rode this one. If I had the money I would probably buy one and I might just do that when my current CBF1000 is a bit older.

Honda Hornet. I liked the light weight and impressive performance for a 600cc machine. After riding 1000cc+ bikes for the last couple of years it was noticeable how much gear changing was required to keep the bike on the boil, this eventually resulted in a painful left hand from so many gear changes. Handling and road holding was very good.

VFR800 Disappointing. Handling was totally different to the other bikes, I had to really ride it round corners as it gave a distinct feeling of wanting to go straight. There is a definite kick when the power comes on which is somewhat unsettling when accelerating out of a corner. The engine was powerful and made a wonder-

ful exhaust and induction noise when I wound the power on. The low set handlebars did not suit me resulting in sore wrists by the end of the ride.

CBR1000RR Fireblade. What a fantastic bike, the power, handling and exhaust note was just brilliant. I would not buy one because the low set bars and high rear set foot pegs would cripple me on any sort of long run. If I was 30, 40, 50 years younger it would be a different story!

VT750 Spirit. I only did a short run up and down the road on this one. I liked the comfortable low seat, the forward set footpegs take some getting used to. The bike was smoother and quieter than a Harley. If my wife was to show an interest in biking again I would buy something like this because she could get on and off easily and the bike would be comfortable for touring around.

From Erica

Loved the **CB1000R** - such an animal ! Great handling! It made such a fantastic sound and you could feel the elements all around you - felt like I was doing 120 mph and was only doing 70 ! "

Different to the **Hornet** which, although very racy and with lots of 'go' it did lack power. Handling was good but again the 'open to the elements' was more difficult for a 'fairing clad' VFR rider to get used to.

Approximately 12 people expressed interest in the club and some 25 were given the News letter and information - so lets see what happens at the next few meetings!

From Bryan

CBR600RR With some trepidation I mounted the CBR600RR. It is the first time I have ridden a sports type bike. To begin with I was unsure round the car park; the handlebars seem so close to the tank. Out on the road it went ok, however my arms were sore when we got back, it is not a comfortable ride. I also found it less than nimble to ride slowly round mini roundabouts, perhaps it is just my lack of ability!!!. This was the first time I had met the '20 mph' corner too, and had a slight wobble there. All round I don't think I would like to own one of these bikes.

VFR800. Second time out was on the VFR. I was really looking forward to this ride, I have always liked the look of this bike and it had been on my shortlist before I got my CBF. Unfortunately I was disappointed when I rode it. It is hard to put my finger on why but it just didn't feel right for me. There is no mistaking it is a comfortable and competent bike, but I just for some reason didn't feel good on it.

CBR1000RR – Fireblade. Number three, and a surprise to me because I didn't plan to ride this, was the Fireblade. Again with real trepidation I mounted it, it felt better than the 600. Up and down the car park it felt easier to ride too. Over the motorway junction and onto the dual carriageway and open the throttle..... It certainly goes a bit!!!! I have driven Ferrari's and single seat racing cars before, but nothing prepares you for the way in which this accelerates, it is awesome!! Ok having slowed down (a little) for the roundabouts and corners I settled into what was a most enjoyable ride. I am not a fast rider at all, I prefer to get

there slow and safe, but this just lets you go round corners so easily, you look at the speedometer and realise that the numbers are so much higher than before. It seems to a novice like me that this bike is easy to ride quickly; I assume an experienced rider would be able to ride it VERY quickly. It was also very civilised ridden slowly round roundabouts and in traffic, which was a marked difference to the 600. In summary this was a blast, it is a bike I would like in the garage to take out when I wanted to smile, however it would not be an everyday ride for me, I would end up in jail!!!

Varadero. Fourth and last, again a surprise, this time it was the Varadero. Sitting on it in the car park it seemed a long way down!! My little legs would barely reach the floor. Out on the ride it was great fun, it handled so much better than I had expected. It was such a comfortable riding position too, easy to ride and easy to see from. I was amazed that I was able to keep up on the windy bits with the 600 in front of me. (The 600 could do with self cancelling indicators I think Allie)

Overall it was good to try out bikes on the same route one after the other. It gave a good direct comparison in real time. The main thing I came away with was the fact I did buy the right bike for me at this time, the CBF1000, although the Fireblade still made me smile!!!.

The other good part of the day for me was to follow the lead rider, to be able to see his lines of riding helped me out a lot and I am sure as the day progressed my skill increased too, so I have some lasting experience of the day to take and perfect as my life in the saddle goes on.

From Allie

Coffee and wonderful cake from Erica first! Priorities chaps! You missed a treat there if you didn't come down for a sample!

VFR800. Forgotten I had test ridden one of these some months ago thinking I would buy one, but remembered why I didn't. Too much like hard work in the lower gears, and never knew which gear I was in as couldn't hear the engine – unlike my current beast! It was basically no fun and I felt was working too hard to make it do anything. Didn't feel safe on it either as I didn't know what it was doing.

CBR1000RR. (Fireblade, yes the bike I have poo-pooed as a 'boys' bike!) I am officially in love! Oh my !!! Where do I sign to buy one?? When I first got on Mark (our fab man from Oxford who lead us round) wondered what on earth I was doing riding THAT! ... the riding position was totally alien - you feel like you are sitting on the front wheel, there is hardly anything between you and the road, the seat feels like a rock, the arms too straight. Within 5 minutes I had a grin right round my face... it was pure uninhibited – joy! The raw power just waiting for you to say go ! no hesitation, its almost like it knows what you want to do before you do it, and throttling off it doesn't complain, just growls a bit (what a sweet noise – all bikes should sound like this!) and does it immediately and the braking is so sweet, cornering is a dream, a nudge and round it goes (even the 20mile an hour corner I had an OH SH*T moment on the VFR previously). And I felt so safe. That was the bizarre thing, even though I knew I had so much power, I felt completely safe. And I knew I didn't have to go through my 20 questions with my current bike, to see if could overtake – I slight flick of the wrist and I was passed, no dropping down gears, no hesitation. And when we got back, I was pleasantly surprised that the seat (mine and the

bikes!) had been quite comfortable, though don't know what it would be like on a long journey – maybe wouldn't notice what with having too much fun? And had no real wrist / arm soreness. This is not a bike for a novice rider and glad I have a few years / miles under me. I would get proper training to ride this WHEN I buy one, just to get the best out of it.

I am in love....

IF YOU NEVER BUY ONE OF THESE, TEST RIDE IT IN APRIL, AND SEE IF IT DOESN'T PUT THE BIGGEST GRIN ON YOUR FACE!!

CBR600RR – no competition after my previous ride – just didn't have the same buzz / wow factor and was harder work to ride than the Fireblade.

Watch this space for my new bike!

We had a fab day with Honda Fireblade, Erica made loads new friends and me thinks we will be filling up The Swan next meeting!

Thanks to Darren, Mike and Chris of Reading Honda for laying on a great day. We look forward to the next one.

Honda Owners Club AGM Donington Park 26th October 2008

The 2008 Annual General Meeting of the Honda Owners club took place in the Senna Fangio Conference Suite at Donington Park on Sunday 26th October. Even though the weather was pretty miserable approximately 120 members turned up for the meeting to be greeted by bacon rolls and hot drinks. A very professionally produced booklet was available for all attendees, which detailed the agenda of the meeting and reports from the respective committee officers. The meeting started off with presentations from members of the Executive Committee, which showed the club to be in a very strong position, with membership numbers and finances up on the previous year. The main source of income for the club is from membership fees however this has been supplemented with excellent advertising and regalia sales this last year which has helped the HOC make a good profit of over £2,300. The officers of the Management Committee were re-elected unopposed and a proposal to extend the committee to include Regalia Secretary, Website Administrator and Display Materials Co-ordinator was unanimously carried. The Saddle Sore Shield was presented to a thoroughly deserving Richard Hartland of Three Shires Branch who was present at almost every event of the year! Finally before lunch, "Thank You" presentations were made to Rona Bell, John Measures, Robert Mills, Ian O'Neil and Andy Reynolds in recognition of their contributions to the club. Jennie Clarke was presented with the Alan Augustin Trophy for her outstanding hard work as Regalia Secretary. A superb hot lunch provided courtesy of Honda UK was followed by the opportunity to look round the Grand Prix Museum which also contained some bikes in addition to its impressive F1 car collection. Marion & Chris represented Reading.



HOC Chairman Andy Young & Rona Bell



Jennie Clarke & Andy Young



Lunchtime for the Attendees

AGM Photos courtesy of Alan Sharkey
Manchester Branch

Member Profile

Allie Gane (Reading Branch Secretary)

Age:	Old enough to know better
Lives:	Reading, Berkshire
Current Bike:	Honda CBR600
How Long Have You Been Riding?	7years
Favourite / Dream Bike:	2008 Fireblade
Best Biking Moment:	Test riding a Fireblade
Worst Biking Nightmare:	Throwing my bike down the M4 then sliding behind it on my tummy, lovely skin rash!
Biking Ambitions:	Riding coast to coast in the US, track days, learning how do off road riding, doing some advance training to get the best out of my new Fireblade – what this space 2009! Riding in Europe – across the longest bridge in the world. Riding all my favourite roads back home in New Zealand.



Product Reviews

This months product reviews are provided by Allie Gane

Product:	Akito Desert Gortex Winter Trousers
Cost:	£79.00
Purchased:	MTC
Length of wear time:	5 days, snow and rain!
Name and rating:	Allie rating 9/10

Technical Spec:

Outer shell constructed from heavy duty 600D polyamide / reinforcement using strong Airtena / sporty fit due to elastic inserts at legs and hip / Knox approved protectors on knees / detachable hip protectors (mine didn't seem to have this?) / wind-proof, waterproof and breathable due to Techpore membrane / 3 in 1 modular skin system (separately detachable membrane & thermo-lining) / heat shield inserts / reflective print / anti slide insert (lets hope I never have to test this!) two side pockets /

cargo pockets at thigh.

Had slide down the M4 in my old winter gortex trousers and were tapped up, and they are like 'nappies' to wear, giving no grip when riding dry on the bike. Hated wearing them.

Sam at MTC gave me two pairs to try on (and go sit on the bike with them). First thing I noticed with the Akito was how light and thin they felt in comparison with my old ones. Had to wear them today (snowed!) and am really impressed. There is a leather 'bum' patch which gives reasonable grip on the seat and really warm considering how cold it was today. Around the waist there are pull in tabs. (once I get skinnier!) All four pockets are a good size. The leg end is nicely snug so there is no flapping over the boots. The zip is high enough that I didn't have to fight getting it over the boot.

Overall they seem very warm, light and comfortable to wear. (The cat liked the feel of them too, so they must be good!)

Product: Antifreeze Wind Proof Protection
Cost: £39.00
Purchased: MTC
Length of wear time: 5 days, wind, snow and rain
Name and rating: Allie rating 7-8/10

Wanted to replace having to wear 1m layers in the cold. Although this offers good protection in the wind, in the cold I still needed 4 layers underneath it plus the gortex jacket with inner lining. It does have a thumb catch so that when you put the jacket and gloves on it doesn't ride up. Noted that my hands / arms seem to be warmer. And it has a 9" zip to the side and not at the front with a high neck, which is very nice and snug. Doesn't let any air down. It is nice and long, so when the other layers would ride up this does seem to keep them in place.

Product: Knox Pack
Cost: £35.00
Purchased: MTC
Length of wear time: 5 days, sunny, wind, snow and rain
Name and rating: Allie rating 9/10

Wanted to replace my old back pack as it doesn't really carry a laptop, and what with the club and taking my laptop, wanted to offer a bit more protection. Also my old pack just wasn't comfortable.

The Knox Pack is really comfortable to wear - this feels like you have nothing on your back, as the weight is distributed at your hips. The pack has a specified laptop zipped cover which fits in the middle section of the pack. There are four corner hooks to ensure that the laptop doesn't move about. There is a document section behind this next to the back of the pack. The open inside flap has compartments for pens credit cards and mobile. It would have been better if the mobile compartment had a cover as the mobile has a habit of dropping out. It also has a spare visor pouch which is attached in the pack by Velcro.

It has two outside side pockets of a reasonable size and you could attach a sleeping bag to the top of the pack with the 'suppressed strap system'. It also has a helmet carrier. It is good in that it will sit upright as you pack and unpack the case. It has a waterproof flap over the outside zip which seems to stop any water getting in.

(And boy did it rain the second night I used it).

Only gripe is that it could have been a tad bigger, as the aerodynamic design losses space at the top of the pack. I am using this as my work back pack, just because it is so much more comfortable than my old one and carry my change of clothes, lunch etc. More than that and I have to take an extra bag which is a pain.

Thanks to Allie for providing the Product reviews. We hopefully should have even more next month after the Motorcycle Show at the NEC where plenty of bargains are bound to be had.

Official Reading HOC Merchandise



Reading HOC Mugs

£7.50 each



Reading HOC Polo Shirts

£15.00 each

**Available in S, M, L, XL, 2XL & 3XL
Red, Green, Blue, White and Grey
Ladies Skinny Fit also available**



Reading HOC Sticker

£2.50 each

**A high quality sticker 10cm in
diameter**

All orders for branch merchandise should be placed with Marion, our branch secretary. A polo shirt order form will be mailed out upon request. Merchandise will be delivered to the next branch meeting subject to availability to save on postage. If postage is required this will be added at cost.

For enquiries or order placement, contact Marion, treasurer@reading.hoc.org.uk

Future Events

Date	Event	Location
November 28th- December 7th	Motorcycle Show	NEC
November 30th December 7th	Branch Ride To NEC Reading Toy Run	Meet Sainsbury's, Junction 12 Foster Wheeler, Reading
December 10th	Reading HOC Xmas Party	The Swan
2009		
January 14th	Branch Meeting	The Swan
January 18th	Local Ride Out, Pub Lunch	TBA
January 28th	Branch Meeting Guest Speaker	The Swan

For more information on ride-outs, contact Mick, chairman@reading.hoc.org.uk

Reading Branch Contacts

Mick	Chairman	chairman@reading.hoc.org.uk
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Reading Branch Website www.reading.hoc.org.uk

If you have any material for inclusion in the monthly newsletter or wish to be added to the mailing list please mail Chris at news@reading.hoc.org.uk

Until next time keep on riding but make sure it's safely.