Scottish Motorcycle Club

BikeBytes

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January 2005

Volume 6 Issue 1

WELCOME

A Happy New Year to you and your family! We hope you had a great Christmas and received lots of biking things - maybe a new bike - that you want to tell us all about. What was your favourite, best, worst, funniest, etc? Send a wee note to **Steve** and tell him all about it so that we can all have a good laugh.

Talking about a good laugh, **Alex Rennie** sent me a hand-drawn cartoon for Christmas (thanks, Alex) and here's a copy of it. You won't catch me in an H-D jaikit, though! Like their bikes, I admire them greatly but they're just not my style!



I also received (not from Alex) the Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman double-DVD set *'Long Way Round'* , the story of their 20,000-mile motorcycle journey from London to New York via Europe, Russia, Siberia, Canada and USA. It's really excellent with many hilarious and several tragic bits but interesting all the way. I was disappointed with the Che Guevara *Motorcycle Diaries* film but *'Long Way Round'* is great and Old Fine Art gives it a 5-star recommendation!

Elsewhere in this issue you'll find an article about riding off-road in Wales. I've just succeeded, after several attempts, in making contact with a local company and am now able to say that we can definitely look forward to a Club Night Meeting presentation early this year followed a week or two after by an SMC visit to their place! More details later.

The current membership remains at 137.

Arthur Shepherd

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The formal Notices of the **AGM** to be held on **Wednesday 9 March 2005** are going out this month. Suggestions for **Agenda** topics and **Nominations** for **Committee Members** need to be with me by the Club Night Meeting on 9 February. A simple Nomination Form is available from me but you can make up your own as long as it shows the ***Post***, and the ***names*** and ***signatures*** of the ***Nominee, Proposer*** and ***Seconder***. Obviously, all must be current Members. Nominations for all posts are welcome but we particularly invite nominations for Meetings Secretary (including Video Club Librarian) and WebMaster, as Katharine and Stewart are not offering themselves for re-election this year due to work commitments.

The Committee Posts are: Chairperson, Editor, Events Co-ordinator, Meetings Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, and WebMaster. In addition, there are currently two Committee Members without Portfolio, at least one of whom is not offering himself for re-election. If you would like to discuss any of these posts, have any questions, or need more information, please contact me.

Outwith the Committee, there is also a BMF Representative (presently David Jerome).

If you can't attend the AGM but would like your vote to be counted, send in the Proxy Form that is attached to the AGM Notice.

Arthur Shepherd

NEXT MEETING

The next **Club Night Meeting** is on Wednesday **12 January** 2005 in the Black Bitch Tavern, 14 West Port, Linlithgow, and will start at 8pm.

Arthur Shepherd

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RUNS AND EVENTS

The 2005 **Calendar of Events** is taking shape (see the Members Area of the SMC website at www.scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk/rannoch/events2005.htm to see the latest version) with several Members volunteering to organise visits, nights out, weekends away, exhibitions as well as runs. If you want to contribute in any way, please get in touch.

David Jerome has organised an evening meal on **Wednesday 16 February** at **Maxies Bistro and Wine Bar**, 5b Johnstone Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2PW (Tel 0131 226 7770). It is just off the Royal Mile between the Lawnmarket and Castlehill. You'll find the prices reasonable and the menu varied, including some tasty vegetarian dishes. Further details, including menus, can be seen at http://www.maxies.co.uk. David needs to know well in advance how many to book for so, if you would like to go, see him at the next Club Night Meeting or contact him at home on 01506 464 122 or e-mail chair@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

Bob Crawley has organised a **Yorkshire Dales and Lakeland Weekend Tour** from **15-17 April** for which you need to book. Details were in last month's BikeBytes and are on the Members Area of the Club website. Bob has further news (on 5 Jan.) as follows:
Best regards from Kelso and best wishes for the New Year and 2005.
*Just to keep you in the picture, the SMC Weekend Tour to the Lakes & Dales is now **full**. With any further enquiries from club members I will endeavour to arrange private house bed & breakfast accommodation in the village of Caldbeck.*

The **Scottish Motorcycle Show** at Ingliston, Edinburgh is on **12 & 13 March**.

The **BMF Show** at Peterborough is on **21 & 22 May** if you can face it, but much nearer, smaller and lovelier is:-

The **BMF Kelso Bikefest** in beautiful Kelso on **17 July**, with camping available on-site from Friday until Tuesday 15-19 July. Book on-line at http://www.bmf.co.uk/events2005/kelso05/index.html or phone 0845 090 0157. I'll be marshalling and camping as usual for the whole weekend and we shall probably have an SMC Stand there too. Last year there were amazing bargains to be had.

The **ACU/BMF National Rally** is on **2-3 June 2005** in aid of Mencap, who have produced some publicity leaflets for dealers and clubs.

If you would like to know more, please contact me.

Arthur Shepherd

YAMAHA OFF-ROAD EXPERIENCE

I saw the following fascinating article in The Herald's Weekend Living magazine of 30 October 2004. It is reproduced with the kind permission of the Editor, Fiona Russell, and the author,Matt Warren, and with photographs from Yamaha Off-Road Experience (www.yamaha-offroad-experience.co.uk).
Fancy having a go in 2005?

Arthur Shepherd

HIGH RIDER

Full of beginner's bravado, Matt Warren samples the thrills and spills of off-road motorbiking - but he soon discovers that it's no easy ride

The ramp is approaching like hellfire on horseback and the needle of the speedometer is creeping slowly up. I've never jumped on a motorcycle before, and my better instincts are screaming: "Stop!" There is no section in the Highway Code entitled How to get Airborne on a Motorbike. If there were, it would advise a brief check in the mirror, a gradual application of the brake and a steady move right to avoid the obstacle.

Instead, as I scud up the ramp and launch into unsteady flight, I only have time for a quick prayer to St Jude, patron saint of lost causes. Time moves slowly when you are weightless, and like lightning when gravity regains its grip. As the forward momentum wanes and the ground scoots up to meet my wheels, I feel heavier than a busload of bricks and have a fizz of metallic, adrenaline flavours sparking across my tongue.

The bike comes down with a bounce and I hold on through a second, hopping flight. I veer left, then right, but as the tyres regain their grip and the brakes go on, I skid to a stop in a slew of shale and dust. The feeling is dynamite. As I kick down the side stand and clamber off the bike, I plan a new series of Stars In Their Eyes: "Tonight Matthew, I'm going to be Evel Knievel."

It's summer in central Wales and the engines of a dozen motorcycles are being gunned in a farmyard. The smells of petrol, manure and freshly mown grass hang on the breeze, and a herd of cows is looking on from a nearby field. Above, hundreds of acres of tracks, fields and forests rack up over a swathe of velveteen, humpbacked hills. For the motorcyclists who flock to Yamaha's off-road training school, God really is a Welshman.



A group receives instruction on descents

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Run by Geraint Jones, former British Enduro champion, the school, near the remote town of Llanidloes, Powys, is the ideal place for a high-octane whizz through the countryside. A fleet of Yamaha's latest off-road bikes provide the horsepower, the rolling hills the beautiful views, and the trails – all divots and bends - the thrills and spills.

In the changing room, the atmosphere is distinctly gladiatorial. Twelve grown men are stepping out of their shirts and jeans and into an array of protective clothing. Buckles are coupled, straps tightened and zips fastened.

Instruction begins on a dusty training circuit. In a tight, nervous huddle, we are shown how to brake, turn and jump - and how we are most likely to come off. As we rip around the track in a cloud of beginners' chutzpah, the latter is the easiest to get right.



One of the Instructors in action

I take my first tumble on a banked corner. I come in fast, lock the brakes, accidentally pop the clutch and unceremoniously drift wide of the apex, up the bank, over the top and into the dirt. Forward motion becomes vertical motion, time grinds to a syrupy slow motion and I leave the saddle in a flat spin, the bike arcing through the air behind me. Images of ambulances cut through my mind as I watch the ground stroll up to meet me, then crunch: the impact, a mouthful of mud and the first bruise of the day.

The bike, a throaty WR250F, comes off better than me, unscathed by the impact and purring for more as I hobble through the dust to fetch it. I squeeze out a constipated smile to a passing instructor, hoist up the machine and set off on another circuit. Pain, it seems, really is the best tutor.



The landscape, however, makes a great analgesic. Leaving the training ground behind, we rumble off across the fields and into the woods, where trails pitch and roll through the trees like lines of spaghetti. Winging down the tracks, with branches above and pools of shadow obscuring the contours below, concentration is key. On some stretches, things happen so fast that you don't even know you've come off.

We are warned about an awkward knot of tree roots cutting across one track. The rider in front of me locates it first, and I find him in a heap beneath a revving bike. "That was incredible," he says. "I didn't know I'd crashed until I looked down and saw my bike spinning through the air below me. I was so amazed that I didn't even feel the bump."

Science plays some strange tricks at speed. With a hand on the throttle and a foot over the brake pedal, the bike seems to do things that laugh in the face of school textbooks. Towards the end of the day, it appears these motorcycles will go anywhere - all you have to do is hold on.

Which isn't always easy. Bravado bears down on the beginner like a bull with bad breath, and by the end of the second circuit I feel like a pro. Faced with an open field, I gun the engine, let out the clutch and wait fort he horizon to rush up to meet me. But, as the old adage about pride coming before a fall shoots through my mind, I over-rev the motor, rear up on my back wheel and spill off in a pathetic heap. "Don't worry mate," says the instructor with a smirk. "It happens to the best of us." Humiliation, it seems, is the second-best tutor.

The gravel trail back to the farm takes us up along the ridge tops and through a picture-postcard slice of Welsh countryside. The sun hugs the hilltops and the valleys float in a pale orange light. Noise aside, this has to be one of the best ways to soak up the surroundings.

At the end of the day, after handshakes and cups of tea, I climb on to my own bike and head home, trying to resist the temptation to jump curbs and slide around corners. The adrenaline takes a while to wear off, but wear off it does.

Pulling into a service station, I come to a stop in the car park, kick down the stand and try to get off the bike. Nothing happens. Two hours after leaving the training school, my legs have frozen solid with all the bumps and exertions. As I call over an attendant and ask him to help me, I learn the final lesson of the day: go off-road by all means, but always get the bus home.

The Yamaha Off-Road Experience caters for individuals or groups of up to 12. Prices start at £150 per person and booking is essential. Tel: 01686 413 324 or visit www.yamaha-offroad-experience.co.uk

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TO MY DEAR CAR DRIVING BRETHREN, …

That is the start of a Blog entry from an Australian biker, and it contains some heart-felt (and maybe body-felt) advice to Oz cagers. If you are not familiar with the concept of a Blog (or "Web Log" - like a frequently updated diary / commentary recorded on the WWW for anyone to read) – there are loads of them around – see the BBC website www.bbc.co.uk for a starter list.
This article is included in http://thomasr.blogspot.com at http://tinyurl.com/4h4mv It seems to embody some good standards for our own riding, and could be used as an "educational" tool for non-bikers we know.

Seven years ago I ridded myself of the tin top and became a motorcyclist. On occasions when Her Kia-Rio-ness allows me to drive her precious, I am struck by what a disconnected environment a car really is: air con, radio, mobile phone et al to fiddle with or cause distraction.
I'm not without sympathy for you when you aren't at your absolute best on the road because I know you are not setting out to kill me, but folks—it sure can look that way.
Rather than road rage you, kick your doors or frighten you as some of my leather-clad brothers and sisters are wont to do, I will instead take this special time to offer you some handy DIY hints:
DON'T CREEP.
When you are turning out of a side street, whether left or right, don't creep out as I ride towards you. It makes me sweat blood. Blood I'll need if you do pull out. You might have seen me, but creeping sure makes it look like you haven't.
USE YOUR INDICATORS.
My late father was guilty of selective indicator use. It was a value judgement he made. If he thought no one was around he'd "do a drift". He's not here for me to yell at, so you, gentle reader, must cop this: i am around, and lane drifts are scary and dangerous! In return, I will position myself in your mirrors as best I can. I know we motorcyclists have a knack for getting in your blind spot. Sorry 'bout that.
I NEED MY OWN LANE.
I'm a caring, sharing kinda guy, but when it comes to my lane, i demand all of it. I need to move left and right to get in other drivers' mirrors, avoid cavernous potholes, oil and gravel etc., so I don't appreciate it when you pop two wheels (or more) into my lane. And that also applies when you want to go around a parked car. You can't just indicate and pull into my lane. It upsets and saddens me. A lot.
DON'T TURN IN FRONT OF ME.
One problem too many people have (and pedestrians I am including you in this) is judging the distance and speed of an oncoming motorbike. This is a daily source of worry for motorcyclists and represents a high proportion of overall motorcycle/car "get togethers". I hate approaching an intersection when I am on my own and cars are looking to turn right in front of me. Once again—no creeping as I approach. Give me eye contact, as I need to stare into your soul to see if you are all set to launch me over your bonnet. Don't stare at my headlight to help you judge my speed. It's an established fact that it can hypnotize you into thinking you can make it when you can't. And when the lights go red and you are back in the queue, don't try to sneak through on the red. In my experience, you are too focused on "going the sneak", and as a result you might find me face first through your windscreen, where I'll make an appalling mess of your upholstery.
LET ME SPLIT AT THE LIGHTS.
Yes, I know it is annoying when I sneak through the gap between cars at red lights and then go all the way to pole position. As I risk my life with every journey, the least you can do is make room for me to get to the front at the lights. I need to get away first. It's important. In return, I won't lane split once we are in motion, won't take off your mirrors, and I certainly won't split at 150km/h on the freeway just to freak you out.
NEVER, EVER TALK ON YOUR MOBILE.
This is the only time you will boil my blood. When I am doing my daily commute, the person driving for 5 Kms with a flashing indicator, lane drifting, and generally making a nuisance of themselves is all too often on their mobile phone. If I catch up to you when you do this, words will be exchanged. Harsh words. Perhaps the odd expletive. You will not have an excuse. And no, the hands-free unit just makes it look like you are not on the phone, but your mind is not on the job. Pull over and talk to your caller and you won't have to talk to me.
DON'T DRIVE A FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE.
Nothing to add there. Just don't. Ever.
GET A BIKE YOURSELF.
If you really want to improve your driving, ride a bike of any description. It will do you good to get the fear. Might stop you inadvertently dishing it out. As an added bonus, you will join a world where rising fuel prices are no big deal and tolls are a bother that other people pay on your behalf.
Til next we meet on them there roads, take care.
It's rather important to me.
Regards,

Tom Reynolds

RACER VISITS SMC

Last month's BikeBytes included a picture of a sidecar outfit (blue with a big thistle on the front) belonging to Charlie Cope, passengered by his daughter. Charlie happens to be a friend of member John Zarecki (who wrote the Concorde report) and our meeting on 8th Dec. was mentioned, with the result Charlie & Louise turned up to see us - and made Roberta Maxwell's evening. Others of us took the chance to quiz them about racing. I presented him with a souvenir copy of December's BikeBytes.

Steve Middleton

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CHRISTMAS CLUB MEAL

The bottom end:



- the top end:



All those macho guys were shamed by Ruby Rennie who arrived on her Bandit, the only member to bring a bike. Well done.

- and the Hotel's welcoming committee:



PRODUCT REVIEWS

Well, what did you get for Xmas? Report your opinions here so we can share.

I've been promised a MAC course, and got the book of Ewan MacGreggor's round-the-world trip. I've ordered a Double-Bubble screen for the VFR since I find "fast travel" (not quantified - but naughty) to be more blustery on the VFR than the good ol' CBX750. Several interesting items on eBay went for more than my budget, and I am getting ready to do the reverse and actually sell something – garage is getting a bit full! I've finally got the sewing machine out and fixed matching zips to the two jackets I got for peanuts at Kelso on the Hein Gericke tent.

My son Martin has sold the SV650S and over the Xmas visit he was trying for size the idea of a R6. I counselled caution, but didn't let on to Mum! My back-stock of RiDe and BiKE got hauled out for review and information.

Chair and Big Lad David Jerome reports progress and "…nearly finished restoring/doing up the old GTS." That's the second one he's fettled, and the Fazer thou' languishes unloved in the corner…

Steve Middleton

HERE IS THE SOLUTION TO DECEMBER'S PRIZE CROSSWORD PUZZLE.

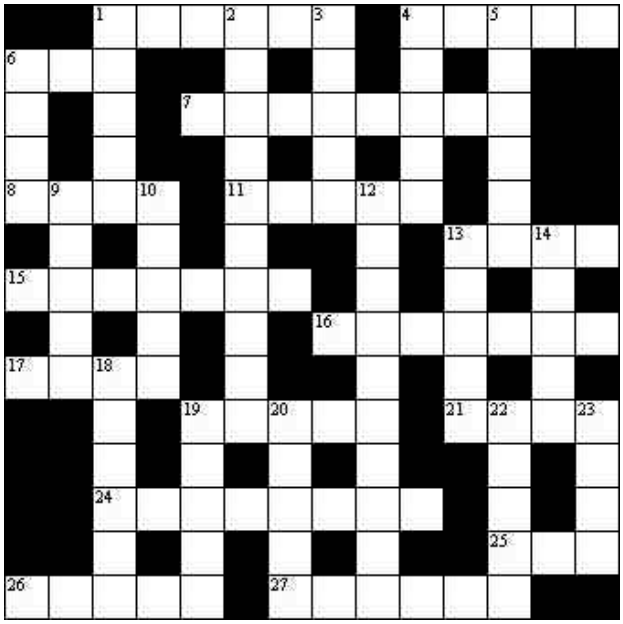


The rather tricky November Prize Crossword Puzzle attracted just five entries, only two of which were complete and correct. The lucky prize-winner (chosen at random at the Club Night Meeting in December) was **Judy Broad**.

Arthur Shepherd

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January prize crossword



Crossword and Clues compiled by Arthur Shepherd.

This month's Crossword is to wish you a Very Happy Biking New Year, so there are several references to that - and the time of year! Old Fine Art

Across

1 Agile stage performer with musical rhythm, training and agility, - like you on the floor at the local hop?! (6)
4 Home of monks or nuns (5)
6 Colourless solid even more hazardous when 'black' (3)
7 According to a menu that prices each dish separately, as on SMC dining nights out (1, 2, 5)
8 Granular icy tufts on objects exposed to the wind in freezing fog; sounds like poetry - but can be treacherous on a bike (4)
11 You don't normally want to have one loose! (5)
13 Black if a glossy bird but red if an Indian; to brag gloatingly (4)
15 Lines on a map joining points with the same barometric pressure (7)
16 What starts after *24 Across* (3, 4)
17 Bad when biking but produces a White Christmas (4)
19 Neat, trim, mentally alert, bright, shrewd, witty and clever - just like you! (4)
21 Lotus (4)
24 Auld Year's Nicht (8)
25 State of confusion or bewilderment common at this time of year; cloud at ground level (3)
26 Sits on and travels by bike (5)
27 Without much effort or trying too hard, the way your bike starts every time (6)

Down

1 Blue cotton fabric invented in Nîmes (5)
2 Famous Scottish Border Toon on the Tweed and A697 road that raised Scotland's other Guards Regiment & welcomed back the Stone of Scone (10)
3 Someone like Neil Hodgson, Jeremy McWilliams, Shakey Byrne (5)
4 Undressed version of 250cc Ariel Leader from 1960; if Red, it's an RAF Aerobatic Display Team Hawk (5)
5 A BSA (6)
6 Stravinsky's first name (4)
9 Norwegian dramatist who wrote 'Peer Gynt' (5)
10 Joint between wrist and shoulder, producing grease for polishing bikes! (5)
12 Absolute necessities (10)
13 Glasgow's river (5)
14 US Nebraskan city (5)
18 Showy three-petalled flower to give a lady (6)
19 On the road, circular ones give orders, triangular ones warnings, rectangular ones information (5)
20 Not asleep (5)
22 It's pretty when the trees are this as in Summer but can be treacherous when the roads are this as in Autumn (5)
23 Drink of eggs beaten with sugar, milk or cream, rum or brandy [sometimes written without its last letter] (4)

Write your name here: .....

Send the completed puzzle (or your best attempt if you can't quite finish it) before the end of the month for entry into the £10 prize draw to:

Arthur Shepherd, 41 The Gallolee, Colinton, Edinburgh EH13 9QL

Scottish Motorcycle Club

Meeting 10/11/04 : Black Bitch Tavern, Linlithgow

Arthur Shepherd opened and Chaired the meeting in the absence of David Jerome. He apologised that the Guest Speakers for this meeting (police from BikeSafe) were unable to attend due to conflict with duties, but had given the Club two invitations to visit Police Headquarters next year. A quiz night would be held instead.

Apologies Bob Crawley, Stewart and Ursula Bowman, Alan Hopper, Katharine Jackson, Ronnie Howat, Margaret Bennie, John Moss.

Minutes from previous meeting These were corrected for 12 b) to read "…receive £1 discount." and accepted. Proposed by Jerry Dawe and seconded by Alan Gordon.

Matters arising David Jerome and Alan Graham are meeting to sort out the amendments to the banner.

Finance – Judy Broad Balance stands at £1415.

Membership – Arthur Shepherd Two new members this month so current membership now stands at 137.

Events – Arthur Shepherd for Gordon Macmillan

Past Events

Bob's run to the Lake District (24th October) was well written up in BikeBytes. About 10 bikes went on the run.
Visit to Two Wheels. 14 people attended this and were well looked after by the crew at Two Wheels. Several purchases were made on the night and one member even went back at the weekend and bought a bike!
Jim Semple told the meeting about his run down to Dalbeattie (see write up in November BikeBytes). He encouraged members to support Bob's Christmas weekend.

Future Events

It is still possible to get places on Bob's Christmas Party weekend (3rd and/or 4th December). E-mail him as soon as possible. Accommodation is available for both the Friday and Saturday nights.
Alan Hopper's trip to see Concorde (14th November) has 11 members booked on it so far. See November's BikeBytes for full details of several ways to get there.
There is a proposed evening meal in Edinburgh on Tuesday 29th December to Maxies Bistro on the Royal Mile. Reasonable prices. See Arthur if you would like to go.
Roberta Maxwell is doing a sponsored sidecar ride at Knockhill between 9.00am and 11.00 am on the 28th November to raise funds to buy a titanium wheelchair for a disabled sidecar racer. She asked any members at the meeting for sponsorship. It is free to spectate this event; the time has been donated free by Knockhill. Afterwards there will be a Hot Hatch event for cars worth over £10,000.

Editor/BikeBytes – Steve Middleton Any contributions appreciated. Thanks to Jim Semple for his article.

Merchandise – Steve Middleton

Steve is nearly ready to put an order in. If any members need items for Christmas they must order now.
Steve thanked members who have put in orders for their patience while a large enough order is gathered.

Video Library – Arthur Shepherd for Katharine Jackson

The video library is now held at the Black Bitch all the time. Many thanks to them for doing this.

WebMaster - Arthur Shepherd for Stewart Bowman

There have been 300 public and 225 member visits to the website this past month. Nobody had sent any pictures, noticeboard entries or addresses for links. If any members have anything for sale please send details to both Stewart for the website and Steve for BikeBytes.

BMF – Arthur Shepherd for David Jerome Nothing to report.

Proposals for special prizes – Arthur Shepherd

Arthur proposed that a special prize of £20 be made this month for the crossword as it had been very difficult and only one complete correct entry had been entered. He also proposed that there was a £5 prize for each member of the winning team in tonight's quiz (teams of 4). These proposals were put to the vote and carried.

Crossword – Arthur Shepherd Only 1 complete and correct entry by Charlie Guthrie.

AOCB Nothing raised.

Next Meeting 8th December 2004 at 8.00 pm in the Black Bitch, Linlithgow.

Janet Moss **13 November 2004**

Scottish Motorcycle Club

Meeting 8/12/04 : Black Bitch Tavern, Linlithgow

Apologies
Arthur Shepherd, Judy Broad, Alan Hopper, Tom Barker, Janet Moss, Deborah Cavanagh, Jim Semple, Alan and Moira Gordon,

Minutes of Previous Meeting
Proposed by Roberta Maxwell, Seconded by Jim McKechnie

Matters Arising
None

Finance - David Jerome for Judy Broad
Current balance stands at £1,321.

Secretary's Report - David Jerome for Arthur Shepherd
No new members last month and the current membership stands at 137

Events - David Jerome for Gordon Macmillan
Roberta's sidecar event was a great success and raised over £2,800 and is expecting the final amount to be £3-3,500.
The Christmas night out was a great success and thanks passed to Bob Crawley
John and Janet Moss volunteered to help Gordon with the outline events calendar for 2005.
Steve issued a full list of all the 2004 events.
The Concorde trip was a great success and thanks to Alan Hopper for his good work
David Jerome suggested some awards for next year's events such as: the most runs organised, who attended the most, highest total mileage award, run of the year etc, and have a fun night at the end of the season. He will give more details at the next meeting.

Newsletter - Steve Middleton
We still need stories for the newsletter.

Merchandise - Steve Middleton
The last batch of orders has arrived and items are at the meeting ready for collection.

Video Club - David Jerome for Katharine Jackson
Reminded the meeting that the Video Library is now held at the Black Bitch all the time.

Website
Report carried over until the next meeting.

BMF – David Jerome
Some dates for the diary:-

National Rally	2 & 3 June 2005– Plan to discuss sponsorship of a team at the AGM
Kelso BikeFest	17th July

Crossword
Winner – Judy Broad

AOCB
Jim McKechnie said that that Jim Semple was still making good progress and was having his screws removed.

Date of Next Meeting
The next Club Night Meeting will be held on Wednesday 12 January 2005 here in the Black Bitch Tavern starting at 8pm as usual.

David Jerome