



Scottish Motorcycle Club

# Bike Bytes

Volume 2 Issue 12

December 2001

## WELCOME

Welcome to all Members (new and old) to another edition of BikeBytes, the last of the year. We wish you, your friends and family a Very Merry Christmas, a Happy Hogmanay, and a Wonderful New Year. We hope you receive a brand new bike for Christmas, lots of gear and accessories, and vouchers for biking holidays in your favourite parts of the world, track days and some training.

Speaking of which, you should have received the letter (by post or e-mail according to your preference) about Bob Crawley's generous donation of a full day's Honda MAC outing as the first prize in our **Christmas Raffle**. If you would like to enter, send your cheque to Alan Graham to arrive before the Christmas Dinner on 12<sup>th</sup> December and/or buy tickets at the Dinner.

Please note that your current **Membership Card** will remain valid for a wee while yet, well into the New Year. I will be inviting you to renew your membership (and we very much hope you will) but you won't be asked to pay until later on next year.

Remember the wide **photograph** that Cameron Harris took of us at the Spittal of Glenshee Hotel on Neil Stewart's run in September (see November's BikeBytes)? Well, I sent off for a print of the photograph and it's really good. It is 18in long, the print quality is excellent, and good value at the discounted price of £5 including postage. It's going to look good framed and hanging on the wall.

If you are out and about on your bike, do watch out for **harassed car drivers** who are trying to find a parking space, Christmas shop, control cross children, speak on the mobile phone, and peer through a six-inch diameter hole in the ice covering their windscreen (no holes in the ice on the side windows, which are dark-tinted anyway), probably all at the same time. Give yourself some space. Take care but have fun! See you at the Christmas Dinner or soon.

Arthur Shepherd

Two Triumphs – see Stewart's road test inside

## NEXT MEETING AND RUNS

As the **Christmas Dinner** is being held on 12<sup>th</sup> December, there will be no Club Night at the Black Bitch Tavern in December. The dinner starts at 8pm at the West Port Hotel in Linlithgow – you should already know that if you have booked as necessary. The next **Club Night** will be on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

### Latest News

Keep in touch with the latest news via the members' area on the website – Arthur posts up newsflashes when necessary or appropriate.

### Next Runs

There are at present no runs planned, but the new season's programme is being developed and if you want to contribute a run or help organise one (the more the merrier – please volunteer) then let the committee know and "we'll be in touch".

Alternatively, the list of Contacts in the recent editions of Bike Bytes includes details of members who welcome suggestions to join an informal run – so if the mood takes you get in touch for some good company. Surely you'll want to show off those new leathers and other pressies?

### BikeBytes contributions

Please send me any ideas, snippets, reports on activities or anything else you think we would like to read – I'll knock it into shape if it needs it. The best format for me to get it is via email (see the details at the foot of page 2) as an attachment in Word format. I can usually reformat from other sources so do not let that put you off. Typed paper originals are OK too with my scanner and text-reading software, and I'll even type up handwriting!

Steve Middleton



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## FifthColumn

It's winter up here in the frozen north again – we've had snow, gales and hard frosts already – the snow was about 6 weeks early, too. Could be a long, hard winter, so maybe now's the time to put the bike away and dig the car out of the back of the garage. Here are a few tips for relieving the boredom of 4-wheeled travel (not needed for 2-wheeled travel, as I find the antics of all the 4-wheeled homicidal maniacs provide plenty of entertainment). All of these tips have been stolen from "drivers" observed in the past week or two.

- **Buy a very small mobile phone.** Small ones are impossible to tuck between your ear and shoulder, so need at least one (and often two) hands to keep in place.
- **Do not buy a hands-free kit for your mobile phone.** Half the fun is finding the phone, trying to see who's calling, answering it, finding a bit of paper and pen....
- **On frosty mornings, just clear a circle in the windscreen before you drive off.** That way you get lots of surprises as cars you haven't seen cheerily toot their horns at you.
- **Eat your breakfast on the move.** Wait till you're on the motorway, then dig out the thermos flask that's slipped down behind your seat, pour yourself a coffee while "steering" with one knee, unwrap last night's reheated big mac and enjoy. Go ahead and use both lanes – nobody minds at all.
- **If the roads are slippery, drive more smoothly.** A nice 45 or so should do it. Everywhere.
- **Running late?** Drive very close behind that fool in front who's only doing 85 to pass a line of lorries. Really close, so that your headlights (and obligatory foglights, of course) don't shine in his / her mirror. This is the only way to make other drivers speed up or get out of your way.
- **Foggy?** See "Running late?" above.
- **Keep your concentration up by listening to the BBC Scotland news programme on the radio.** Nice and loud so everyone can hear them droning on about politics and football (everybody likes politics and football).

OK – I confess I've wimped out. The Bandit had what will probably be its last commuter run last Monday (12<sup>th</sup> November). Don't mind riding in gales and rain, but the above-mentioned chilly weather was making the last 20 miles or so on the

homeward run just too uncomfortable (and a tad dangerous). So, it's a one-and-threequarter hour run instead of 55 minutes. Still, I get to sit in the queues and listen to some decent music, so it isn't too bad.

*Stewart (chairperson) Bowman*

## Volunteers Needed

Jim McKechnie has confirmed his decision to step down as runs organiser after a two-year stint, so we are looking for a willing volunteer to start picking up arrangements for next year's runs as soon as possible. Please contact Jim or any committee member for info.

At the AGM in a few months' time, all the committee positions will (as usual) be up for grabs, and we would all be glad (relieved?) to see some more members helping to run the club. If you fancy having a go at being on the committee, or helping out in other ways, just speak to me or any committee member. For instance, if you fancy being chairperson (pleeeeeeze!) but maybe not straight away, how about being vice-chairperson for a year? Yes, I know we don't formally have such a position just now, but if there's a willing volunteer or two, we'll find a way... Same goes for the other jobs (membership secretary, treasurer, editor & meetings / minutes secretary).

*Stewart*

## Trip to the N.E.C

Unlike the Scottish Exhibition this is where the major manufacturers get the first chance to unveil their latest or model year 2002 products.

All the usual manufacturers were there; Kawasaki, flashing off the new ZZ-R1200, Yamaha with the YZF-R1, Suzuki, with the new adventure sports DL1000 V-Strom (check the spelling!), to compete with Honda's Varadero. (This seems like another growing category in motorcycling).

Honda's updated Pan and new Hornet 900; and of course Triumph, Harley, Ducati, and many other manufacturers were there, all trying to jump on the bandwagon's growth in scooters and biking.

Most of the manufacturers had their flashy, chrome, Harley-Cruiser look-a-like section. They all looked great, but would love to see the chromework after a winter season of the Scottish Salted Roads. (They still seem rather impractical to me in our climate).

Anyway it was great to see lots of bikes, even from the basic 125cc's via the Strange and Futuristic polished cast aluminium thing that was

on the Carol Nash stand and on to the customised, and highly decorated street fighters. Of course there were all the usual stands selling off their goods at discounted prices. From leathers and clothing stands, to helmets, and gloves.

We got a great demo of the Autocom, Rider to Pillion or Bike to Bike. Still the best in my opinion but Very Pricey (will just have to save my pennies up).

Then to Scottolier the automatic, chain oiling system. Apparently they now have a little attachment that oils both sides of your chain, instead of the usual one side. I personally didn't see it because of the crowd that was around them. But I did manage to purchase a Carbtune; a manometer-styled gizmo for synchronising my carbs and a hydraulic cable oiler.

I think my only complaint was that there was no real place to sit. With only a few seats around some of over inflated food stalls, lots of people were having to make do with sitting on the floor. Also there was lack of traffic control leading to the NEC itself. You would think for a major exhibition when two other shows were on at the same time, they would have had proper traffic control in and out, especially when half the road was under roadworks. But all-in-all great show and, yes, I would go back. I'm now just looking forwards to the Scottish Show in March again, and perhaps there I will manage to get the chain and sprockets I went down for!

**Ronnie Taylor**

## Trumpet Duet

What I'd wanted to do was compare Triumph sports bikes as they used to be (OK – through heavily rose-tinted bifocals) and as they are now, so I aimed for a ride on the new Bonneville and Daytona. However, by the time I got myself organised, the nice people at Motorcycle King had exchanged their Bonneville demonstrator for the "American" version and the Daytona was unavailable. So, American it was, with the TT600 for comparison.

### Bonneville

The Bonneville American sits somewhere between a retro British style motorcycle and a US cruiser: basically a normal Bonnie with high bars, forward-mounted pegs, slash-cut exhausts and kicked-out forks (33 degrees rather than 29) – very relaxed! The side-mounted ignition key slot and tank-top speedo (no rev counter here – it isn't that sort of a bike) round things off nicely.

I'll readily admit that the feet-forward riding position took some getting used to – I usually ride sports bikes, so kept pulling away from traffic lights with my feet waving around hoping to find a perch before I needed to change gear. After a few

miles, though, it was just fine – the only thing that didn't work for me was the rear brake pedal which I couldn't plant my foot on hard enough to do textbook hill starts. No doubt fixable with a bit of fiddling, though.

Enough picking, though – once on the move, this bike was great fun. Despite rather limited ground clearance it handled fine, with fairly confident cornering ability – easy enough to place on the road and keep on line through these ginormous bars. The five-speed gearbox seemed a bit notchy 'till I realised I was catching the toe of my boot on the bend in the gear lever rather than the endy bit what you're supposed to use! Performance really isn't the point of bikes like this, but the Bonneville was happy to be hustled at quite respectable speeds through Glenfarg and the Fife countryside. It's an imposing bike – all black and chrome – which attracts attention like I suppose Harleys do. I guess it goes with the territory, but I did find it a bit strange to return to the bike and find a few non-bikers gathered round admiring it – not something that happens to me very often! Definitely a bike for just taking it easy, maybe meandering though some leafy lanes of heading off to the seaside for a bit of posing on the promenade. Lots of fun, too, and more capable than it looks at first glance.

### TT600

Launched in 1999 as Triumph's assault on the Japanese 600cc empire, the TT600 is a lightweight sports 600 very much in the mould of its competitors. It's a good-looking bike, too, particularly in its newer single-colour livery.

The riding position was more like home for me – sporty but roomy enough to get comfy. Like most 600s, it's fairly short geared but makes a lovely noise when revved a bit (combination of intake howl and exhaust roar – addictive, but definitely not p.c.!). Nice light clutch and gearbox (6-speed this time, natch) give it quite a delicate feel at slow speeds.

I found that the engine really did not enjoy being asked to puddle about under 5,000 revs – seemed to be a couple of holes in its torque curve.

Anyway, it was a right wee screamer out on the open road. I took it out the Madderty road to Crieff and back via the A85, and it just gobbled up the twisty bits – lovely, lovely handling! It turned in with just the right amount of pressure on the bars, then held its line happily, even through some less-than-smooth bends. Nice feedback from both front and back ends, and plenty of grip. The brakes are very impressive too – loads of feel and stopping power.

I must admit I haven't ridden a lot of sports 600s recently (must get out more!), but I was impressed with the level of performance and handling offered

by the TT600 – I don't think it'd struggle to keep up with my Blade on most roads (and would probably be quicker on seriously twisty ones). Well worth a look for anyone considering a mid-size sportster.

Thanks to Motorcycle King, 7 Whitefriars Street, Perth (01738 633003)

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## **Buzz Off 2002 plans**

These are shaping up and you will find a pro-forma enclosed with this newsletter if you are interested in any of these trips.

It would be very helpful to me to get as early an idea as possible of the likely numbers so if you are interested, please send the form just now. The prices should be available at the turn of the year but I can give a brief outline of the plans just now.

### **Ireland (17-20 May)**

Coinciding with the NW200 road races. We go across on the Stena Sealink High Speed crossing from Stranraer on Friday evening arriving in Belfast from where it is a short run up to the hotel. Overnight stop there and then on to the races on Saturday for those who want to or I will lead a run up the beautiful Antrim coast for the others and then across country in the shadows of the Sperrin Mountains. On Saturday evening we all re-group at our hotel on the edge of Strabane where we stay both Saturday and Sunday nights (DB&B). On Sunday, I will lead a run around the Blue Stack Mountains down into Donegal on the west coast with ample free time in the afternoon to explore the town or take one of the pleasure boat trips out into the bay. We return to Stranraer at lunchtime on the Monday.

### **Scotland Tour (9-16 June)**

I am not sure if anyone will be interested in a week long trip in Scotland but you never know. I have been asked to put this tour together by an Italian bike tour company who are reckoning on 8-10 people. I could happily take a few more so if anyone fancies joining this, let me know.

Accommodation is to be 3 or 4 star hotel and is likely to involve 3 separate hotels.

My plan to date is to include Edinburgh and the Borders, Stirling, The Trossachs, Glenshee, Balmoral, Loch Ness, Glencoe, Inverary and Loch Lomond.

Being tourists, there will be lots of stops at touristy things such as castles, battlefields, monsters, the occasional distillery etc and of course there will be the usual brilliant roads and scenery.

Nearer the time, I might ask if anyone in the club is free even for joining one of the day trips as a tail end Charlie with the possibility of a free lunch for their efforts. Watch this space.

### **Italy/Germany(14-26 September)**

Probably the longest tour to date, this one is 13 days and packs in a lot. Crossings are overnight Hull-Zeebrugge, stopping 2 nights in Strasbourg giving a free day there to explore, through Switzerland into Northern Italy stopping a night just over the border in Italy, then on via Lake Como to Lake Garda for 3 nights there at Desenzano. There is an easy option whilst there of taking the train to such places as Verona or Venice, both being within easy reach. We then head up through Austria into Germany to stay in Munich for 2 nights coinciding with the Intermot 2002 bike show which alternates with the Milan show and is BIG! The Oktoberfest also starts the day we are there so a long lie will be allowed the next morning before heading up through the Black Forest (1 night) and then the last but one night will be at the Karlsmuehle Hotel near Trier. This hotel is well known to a number of us having been our base for the 2000 German trip. The following day we head for Zeebrugge and home. Hotels throughout will be of a good standard with en suite facilities.

As always, I will be happy to answer any queries about any of these. Otherwise, just send the pro-forma, which is of course on a no obligation basis.

**Alan Hopper**

### **New Discount Dealer**

Facts Garage, Laurieston in Falkirk (Tel: 01324 636704) are offering us special prices on motorcycle tyres and exhausts. Telephone John (who is a biker), mention Scottish Motorcycle Club, tell him what you are looking for, and see what he can do for you! John says he will offer good prices and may be able to offer extras, such as free fitting, depending upon the type, etc.

**Arthur Shepherd**

### **Honda Motorcycle Appreciation Course (MAC), 27/28 October**

I had been thinking about doing a MAC for some time, well before crashing my old bike. I was only too aware that my riding skills left a lot to be desired regarding both my own safety and that of others. As you may know, with the purchase of a new Honda comes the offer to get the course at a discount. So when I bought the new Fireblade, the decision was an easy one, and I took the first

course available through my local dealer, Dicksons of Perth. The Honda MAC Instructor for my course was Neil Stewart, who some of you will know from previous Club Runs. The course lasts two days, and the instructor takes two trainees at a time. Both are linked to the instructor via one-way radio, which means he can shout at you but you can't shout back. *(It does mean you can be rude and not heard! – Ed)*

If any of you are thinking of doing the course next year, this is what it's like:

#### Day 1

We started the day with a Briefing Meeting at Stirling Services at 9am. Neil outlined the aims of the course and the training methods. The next step is to have your riding ability assessed, which means the trainees take turn to ride in front, receiving directions and being observed, but no feedback. Then the instructor goes in front and shows you how it's done, and this was when I realised that I'd been doing everything wrong and had hell of a lot to learn.

We followed this with a couple of runs through Torrie Forest (A81/B822/A873), where the learning experience really began. Neil was constantly on the intercom, telling us what to do, where to go, and didn't mince words when I made a cock-up of things. We then headed for a well-deserved coffee stop on the A873 at a nice wee caff overlooking Flanders Moss.

Second session of the day, up onto the A84, through Pass of Leny and Lochearnhead, along Loch Earn, through Crieff, and zipping up the Sma' Glen for a late lunch at Dunkeld. All the while, with help from Neil via the intercom, my riding style was ever so slightly improving.

The afternoon session took us along the A923 towards Blairgowrie, then past Meiklour Beech Hedge towards Perth. We were riding right into the sun at that stage, which made observations very difficult at times. Some decent shades or a tinted visor would have been useful. We took some back roads towards Auchterarder, and some more twisties along A823north/A822 south. Then onto the A9 down to the Dunblane roundabout, through Doune, and we finished the day with a brief meeting in a layby on the road back into Stirling at around 5pm.

I was completely knackered and don't know how I got home, auto pilot or something.

#### Day 2

We started same time, same place: Stirling Services at 9am, headed towards Bannockburn and took the back roads via Kincardine Bridge

and A907 into Dunfermline. Another speedy practice run of some twisties followed, along the A823 past Knockhill, and thankfully, a well deserved break at my favourite coffee bar in Powmill.

Then a bit of a lucky break for me, I was asked to ride up front for a section that is home territory for me: A977 to Kinross, round Loch Leven, through Glenrothes towards Leven, and to Elie for quick photo stop on the sea front, then along the Fife coast to Crail for lunch.

I had mentioned to Neil a particularly twisty road near my home that I didn't like to take the bike on, and before I realised it we were heading towards it. First we had to tackle some tediously slow traffic in St Andrews, onto the A91 to Cupar and the A913 to Newburgh. Then some entertainment for us trainees: a quick stint riding pillion to experience a demonstration of sustained gearchange. It was then time to practise the dreaded Glen Farg, up and down till we got it (nearly) right, and eventually headed for a much deserved coffee break at Dicksons in Perth. Finally out on the A85 towards Crieff, the A822 towards the A9, through Doune, for a debriefing and to receive our certificates in the layby back near Stirling.

#### The verdict:

I would definitely recommend this course to anyone, no matter how long you've been riding. Most of all, it will improve your riding skills by teaching you where to position yourself on the road, using appropriate speeds, and how to accelerate through corners smoothly. (I still have a long way to go in that department!) But you are also taught advanced observation skills, reading the road for miles ahead though you can't see it, by looking for the lines of hedges, trees, and telegraph poles, and anticipating potential hazards.

All in all, a lot to take in over two days. We covered about 250 miles a day, mostly on twisty minor roads. I was absolutely exhausted, and I don't think I was the only one. I was beginning to suffer from information overload on the first day, and by the end of the second day I had completely forgotten the significance of sustained gearchange. If anyone who has done a MAC would like to enlighten me ...? *(and the rest of us!! Ed)*

Finally, thanks to Neil for putting up with an awkward customer for a weekend. I'm still working on what you taught us, and hopefully I'm a better rider than I was before.

**Ursula Rouse**

### A couple of extra items from Ursula:

#### 1. Getting home after an accident

In my case, up in Torridon, once I regained consciousness I phoned the AA (I'm in Relay) as I didn't have the bike insurer's number with me. The call centre operator asked for location details which I was unable to give in the state I was in, but Stewart's directions must have been sufficient. The AA then got its nearest contractor to recover the bike. It was (later) assessed for damage at the contractor's garage and taken away for scrap. The AA sent me an invoice for the recovery (about £400) which I forwarded to my bike insurers to be settled directly. This was over and above the settlement I received for the BMW K1 (£4,500 after excess and a lot of arguing).

We did not call the police as no-one else was involved in the accident.

#### 2. Keeping warm

I can fully recommend Honda heated grips, I had them fitted to my Fireblade last week and they are lovely in this weather.

### Bikesafe Scotland Initiative

It's not too often you receive mail from the Police (and that's the way most of us like it) so when a brown envelope popped through the letterbox with "Strathclyde Police Road Policing Complex" on it my immediate reaction was "it wasn't me Officer – honest!" Actually it was from the Motorcycle Section who offer "Bikesafe Scotland Initiative" inviting me to attend their Rider Awareness Presentation.

On arrival at the New Traffic Complex I was directed to the rear car park for a photo shoot which included traffic cars/bikes and 30 plus bikers (for the Local Newspaper & Police web site).

The presentation began with a talk and slide show by the Traffic Officers on hazard perception, observation links, road position, speed (enforcement is a last option – that's their story!) and personal safety (clothing etc...).

Next was a Paramedic emphasising he's the one you meet if you really get it wrong. He gave a brief talk and slide show of accidents and a demonstration of correct method of helmet removal (only if life threatening).

The "Statistic" (in his own words) was next up giving his account of how it's not always your fault - he was riding pillion on his friend's new

motorcycle when they were hit from behind by a speeding articulated lorry on a roundabout - he flew 60 ft with the grab rails still in his hands. When he landed he got up to run off the road, but the lorry hadn't stopped and ran him over, catching one of his legs around the exhaust. He got himself free then the rear wheels ran over both his legs – finally, the lorry driver thinking he was being helpful, reversed back trapping him! Doctors had to amputate his right leg to save his life.

The evening ended with refreshments and an informal chat, after our briefing for the Assessed Ride:- **don't forget to speed, your road safety exhaust (extra loud so people hear you coming), small number plate and dark visor** (subtle aren't they?)

A week later I was back for my Assessed Ride, Traffic Officer Iain Paul gave a briefing of the morning's route and led the way for the first few miles. We headed along Shieldhall Road onto the A739 for the Clyde Tunnel (sticking religiously to the speed limit) towards Milngavie, then followed the A81 through Blanefield, just before Dalmary we stopped for a de-brief; everything was going well.

We then joined the A811 past the Balloch turning on the A809 towards Craighat for about 15 miles, time for another de-brief. I must have been going too slow as Iain said that on certain parts of this road it's easy to do three figure speeds (**maybe when you're not being followed by a Police bike**) we then headed onto the A82 for Glasgow, Iain took the lead and I followed him over the Erskine Bridge onto the M8 - you get some strange looks following a Police bike at over 90 mph.

Back at the Traffic Complex Iain asked if I had done an Advanced Riding Course. When I admitted I had, to my relief he said that it showed (thankfully he didn't recommend I take one).

Other SMC members have done Bikesafe - Jim Simpson, Arthur Shepherd and Stewart Bowman (*and me; all with different Forces I believe. Ed*) - I certainly would recommend the Bikesafe Initiative having had a brilliant time. The Traffic Officers help you relax with jokes and stories (strange sense of humour they have) as well as passing on some of their experience and knowledge; **"all this and it's free"** so what are you waiting for?

**John Branney**

## HONDA MAC – 25% Discount Offer

Just a small note to remind members that should any of them wish a MAC that the 25% reduction for 2 members attending on the same dates is only open until the end of the year, but anyone booking this year can wait till 2002 to do the course on any make or age of bike

This is also valid for a one-day refresher with two people attending on the same date.

The cost per person with 25% reduction is £180 incl. V.A.T for two days, or for one day is £90 incl. V.A.T. Two days will be £240 next year. Folks will need to be already paired up, so to speak, Neil doesn't do any matchmaking. Honda UK has told him that he had done more training courses than any other instructor this year. He puts it down to his unfailing charm, but we know it's more likely due to the fact that he has the prettiest scenery and most interesting roads in the country.

The usual method of contacting Neil is at home on 01360 440718, or E-mail:

neilstewartmac@netscapeonline.co.uk

He can take payment over the phone, with most credit cards or cheque.

**Neil Stewart, MAC Instructor,  
DAS & CBT Instructor**

## DAY- LIGHTS ROBBERY SAY BMF

News that the European Motorcycle Manufacturers Association (ACEM) has adopted the practice of Automatic Headlamp On (AHO) for all motorcycles, scooters and mopeds from 2003 has robbed the rider of choice, say the British Motorcyclists Federation.

AHO means that the headlight is 'hard-wired' to illuminate automatically whenever the ignition is switched on and therefore the normal on-off headlight switch is not even fitted. Nowhere in the world has the effectiveness of either DRLs or dipped headlights in reducing accidents ever been proven say the BMF. In fact, research has shown that the speed of an approaching motorcycle is far more difficult to assess with its headlight on than without!

Commenting, BMF Chief Executive Simon Wilkinson said: "We suspect the main reason for this move is the manufacturer's wish for globalisation of standards to cut production costs, not to improve road safety

The BMF were successful in 1983 in getting the then government Transport Minister, Lynda Chalker, to drop plans to make DRLs compulsory on motorcycles and also succeed in getting the Advertising Standards Authority to force Lucas Industries to withdraw adverts for DRLs on the grounds that their safety benefits were not proven.

**British Motorcyclists Federation** [www.bmf.co.uk](http://www.bmf.co.uk)

## THE NOISE BOYZE

It's official, excessive noise is an infringement of your human rights! Well at least it is if that noise is at night and it prevents you from having a good night's sleep.

Cars and bikes are regulated for noise - well they are when they leave the factory, after that, it's an after-market playground, especially with bikes. In fact, one of the first things most sports bikes owners do is fit the obligatory end-can. The reasons vary but the most common one is for the bike to 'sound better'. Who to? The rider, for sure. The general public? I don't think so! The performance gains are certainly marginal on a road engine and as some of you might know, because today's engines are so finely tuned for performance within noise and emission limits, some systems can actually have an adverse effect and reduce power.

I know it's a difficult message to get over because bikes are exciting and fun and without noise, it seems that excitement fades away. As attention grabbers an illegal end-can works. Fellow bikers might well be impressed, schoolboys certainly will be, (schoolgirls less so), but for the general public, bike noise reinforces the image of the stereotypical noisy, dangerous motorbike - the thing that those of us in the lobbying game are always trying to disprove.

The problem for us all is that this deliberate action of making more noise is counter-productive to the long-term good of biking. We bikers are in a minority at less than 2% of the population and about 4% of road traffic. We already suffer a disproportionate rate of accidents so adding extra noise just adds to our ills.

The police say they are clamping down as part of the Bikesafe initiative; we call it harassment. But having said that, a plainly illegal end can/race can, clearly marked 'Not for Road Use' is difficult, if not impossible, to defend. (The other aspect of you not being covered by insurance if your machine is no longer road-legal or modified is something else to bear in mind).

If this was France or Italy, noise wouldn't be a problem, in fact, they thrive on it, but it's not. This is good old UK and like the Germans, we are on the whole an orderly lot. We live by rules and regulations and in the main, do so without complaint, but when it comes to bikes, we hate regulation, we despise restrictions, we detest speed cameras - we like our freedom.

It's that freedom that biking's all about, but on a small island like ours, have we really got the freedom to make as much noise as we want? This is not the BMF siding with authority; this is the BMF being realistic.

**Jeff Stone**

**BMF WELCOMES BIKES IN M4 BUS LANE**

Yesterday's announcement by Transport Minister John Spellar that the M4 bus lane is to be opened to motorcyclists has been warmly welcomed by the British Motorcyclists Federation.

BMF Chief Executive Simon Wilkinson said: "This is good news for all PTW users. The Highways Agency has recognised that separating PTWs from main stream traffic can have real safety advantages, but we also see it as an incentive for more people to take to two wheels and literally beat the traffic."

The M4 proposal brings to seven the number of bus lane schemes now running or trialing PTW access. The others are: Bristol; Birmingham; Colchester; Hull; Reading and Swindon.

**jeff.stone@bmf.co.uk**

*Following the visit of Colin Pate as our guest speaker in November, this (edited) press release:*

**MAG - No more life on the margin**

From Ian Mutch – MAG's *Streetbiker* editor I've had a dream for 28 years. A dream that motorcycling would have a huge powerful organisation such that no one in the government or the road safety lobby would dare upset us and anti-bike legislation would be dismissed as too risky to contemplate I once hoped that the motorcycle media would help to build our organisation but with notable exceptions they have ignored, ridiculed, and marginalised us to a contemptible degree It is for that reason that MAG decided to launch its own newspaper to put road riders' interests ahead of trivia about which bike is a nanosecond faster than another. I hope you'll agree that in *Streetbiker* we now have something to be proud of - a mag. which truly represents the voice, life, and activities of the genuine enthusiast road rider.

The next phase in our plan is to massively increase the circulation of *Streetbiker* so that its campaigning power is enhanced, and with it, the credibility of MAG as a major player in the motorcycle publication world as well as the lobbying sphere, and believe me, the two are closely linked. To do that we need more members, a lot more members. Full members naturally have greater benefits in keeping with the far higher membership sub they pay. At £20 a year, it is still nominal however, particularly in view of the ease with which that money can be recovered by taking advantage of MAG'S discount deals.

My intention is to build *Streetbiker's* relationship with its members by including more material from you. I want this paper to be even more the riders' paper than it currently is - in short, a vehicle of participation rather than spectating. How many

national publications can you pick up and read about your club's activities and see pictures of your friends rather than just the same incestuous camp of egotistical speed-crazed test riders and celebrities?

Right now, we print between 25,000 and 30,000 copies of each issue, but imagine if that was 100,000 or 200,000.

With a tiny effort at no net cost to you, we could make that dream a reality. Numbers will give us the credibility we need. We can afford to undercut the ad rates of all the mainstream magazines because we don't have to make a profit, and with a huge circulation and low ad rates, we would be a natural choice for advertisers with reduced budgets. Just imagine how sweet it will be to be able to cock a snook at the big publishing houses by outselling the very biggest of them without using a single newsagent.

MAG is not a club, it's a lobbying organisation, and you need not dilute your commitment to your club by one iota through joining MAG as a full member. Riders taking control of their own destiny. All you have to do is take out an individual membership.

We're so eager to get this off the ground that we'll give every affiliated club £5 for each one of its members who upgrades to full MAG membership through our Standing Order Mandate form. This is accessible through our web site on:

[www.mag-uk.org](http://www.mag-uk.org)

You can also contact our Central Office on: 0870 - 444 8448 for a Club form

**Ian Mutch**, [magnews@mag-uk.org](mailto:magnews@mag-uk.org)

**Here is the solution to November's crossword.**

1	R	A	C	E	S		4	I		5	S	C	R	E	W
	O		I		T	A	R	M	A	C		I		I	
6	B	A	R	R	A					10	A	N	G	E	L
	E		C		G	O	S	S		11	P	I		L	
12	R	O	A	R	S		H			13	G	A	N	D	H
	T				A		C			14	N	E		A	
	T				F		L			15	L	I	D	S	
	H					F	L	O	W		T	B		W	
	E				L		U				E	I		A	
16	B	I	G	E	N	D		17	B		E	T	H	E	L
	R		I			18	I	S	L	A	N	D		E	L
19	U	N	Z	I	P					20	D	E	L	T	A
	C		M			21	P	O	U	R	R	I		L	C
22	E	B	O	N	Y					N			23	E	L
															P

The winner will be announced at the Christmas Dinner.

The winner of the prize for **October's** Crossword Competition was Tracy MacMillan, whose name was drawn from among the eleven correct entries at the November Club Night meeting.

Maybe it's your turn to win this month – but you need to send in the solution to Arthur.





# Scottish Motorcycle Club

Minutes of meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2001; Black Bitch, Linlithgow

**Apologies** : from Jim & Sandra McKechnie, Katharine Dallman.

**Minutes** of October meeting : acceptance proposed Ronnie Taylor, seconded Ronnie Howat; accepted.

## **Matters Arising :**

Constitution: the committee will meet to finalise the proposal before publishing it in Bike Bytes before the AGM.

Guest speakers: a MOT tester will speak in January, a Paramedic in March; Bill Morgan hopes to arrange an Accident Investigator, and Steve Middleton a Transport Researcher.

Christmas meal: arranged for the West Port Hotel in Linlithgow, with the meal starting at 8pm on 12<sup>th</sup> December. This is next door to the Club's meeting place of the Black Bitch Tavern.

## **Introduction by Chairman :**

New Members : John Moss, Mike Main, Geraldine and John Middleton were welcomed to the Club, the last two in person at the meeting.

Committee: Members were notified that nominations for all posts on the committee would be sought for election at the AGM. Details will be in the next Bike Bytes. Jim McKechnie has already indicated he will not seek re-election as Runs Organiser.

**Finance** : Alan Graham reported a reduced balance that should be replenished by income from clothing sales later in the meeting, and circulated details of the account transactions. There should be a satisfactory balance until the next inflow of funds from the annual subs. due in February. A second quotation for Dayglo vests at approx £20 each was considered good value for the high quality item displayed.

Minutes continue overleaf.

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## **Buzz Off** **International Motorcycle Tours** **2002**

I am interested in the following tours (tick as appropriate)

Ireland Weekend, 17 – 20 May

Scotland Tour, 9 – 16 June

Italy/Germany, 14 – 26 September

Please contact me when prices, etc are available

Would you be happy to share a twin-bedded room? YES  NO

Will you have a Pillion? YES  NO

Name :-

Tel. No :-

Address :-

E-mail Address :-

Preferred means of contact:-

Please forward completed form as soon as possible to :-

**Alan J Hopper**  
112 Broomfield Avenue  
Newton Mearns  
Glasgow,  
G77 5JR

SMC November minutes, continued

**Membership** : Arthur reported new members giving a present total of 102.

**Runs** : No more formally arranged runs are scheduled until the new season, but members are encouraged to use the Contacts listing to arrange DIY runs. Both John Branney and Alan Hopper outlined various tours proposed by themselves on a semi-commercial basis, and information is in the latest Bike Bytes with further details to come.

**Newsletter** : Steve Middleton requested material and ideas; submission details are in the letter.

**Merchandise** : The ordered items were now available for collection at the end of the meeting.

**Video Library** : Kathy had prepared the requested videos for distribution at the meeting – they are on loan for a month between meetings.

**Website** : Arthur reported 66 member and 110 general public accesses of the site in the month. He has added various links to the site including the First Aid advice site reviewed by Steve in Bike Bytes.

**MAG & BMF** : No particular items to report this month. Magazines from both organisations were at the meeting

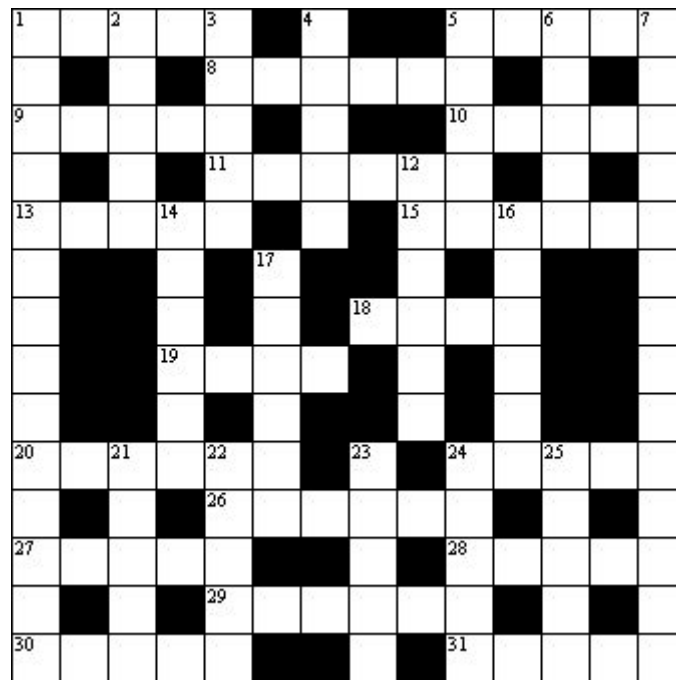
**AOCB** : Arthur organised a random selection method to choose Tracy MacMillan as the crossword winner from the 11 correct entries for the October puzzle. Arthur also reported the donation of a day's MAC training with member Bob Crawley that would be the prize in a raffle to be drawn at the Christmas Dinner – details of the entry will be circulated to all members.

The meeting then continued with **guest speaker Colin Pate**, Chairman of BMF Scotland who detailed the work of the organisation and its support for bikers, and answered questions on the current challenges faced and action taken. He explained BMF's representation at and lobbying of local Councils, the Rider Training Scheme and publications including the magazine and information Guide.

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# December prize crossword puzzle



Crossword and clues all prepared by Sue Temple

You may find some characters or events in Scottish history in the solutions to this month's Crossword

**Across**

1. Method of crossing water, anyone remember the one at Ballachulish? (5)
5. End of army service (5)
8. Reach your destination (6)
9. Aquatic mammal, genus *Lutra* (5)
10. Share out, distribute (5)
11. Medical person (6)
13. The smallest particles (5)
15. Middle eastern country (6)
18. Covering of a sore (4)
19. and 23 Down. Last female monarch: \_ \_ of Scots (4,5)
20. Fugitive, 16 Down perhaps? (6)
24. Mrs Fawcety (5)
26. Big girl's garment (6)
27. Site of the legendary Texan skirmish where Davy Crockett met his end (6)
28. Called for an answer (5)
29. and 4 Down Scottish King, 1306-29, victor at Bannockburn (6,5)
30. Lived in (5)
31. 17<sup>th</sup> Century mode of transport, carried by two servants (5)

**Down**

1. Scottish heroine, 1722-1790 (5,9)
2. Going back to the look of the past (5)
3. Imperial measurements of length (5)
4. See 29 Across
5. Those who are much loved and cherished, especially the old (5)
6. Mediterranean Island, GC (5)
7. The conflict that took place on Drummoisie Moor in 1746 (6,8)
12. Container for lubricant (6)
14. Class of animal to which we belong (6)
16. The notorious Mr MacGregor, 1671-1734 (3,3)
17. Hurried writing, scribble (6)
21. Ancient title for Scottish lords, such as Macbeth (5)
22. Cut short, stop from maturing (5)
23. See 19 Across
24. Resting places for bums! (5)
25. What happened to the 4 and 20 blackbirds in the pie (5)

Write your name here: .....

Send the completed puzzle before the end of the month for entry into the £10 prize draw to:

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