



The Magazine of The Scottish Motorcycle Club

WELCOME...

to the first edition of the new Club year. Hopefully Spring has now arrived and you (and your bikes) are all ready for the new season of the SMC. We've already had several Runs since the AGM, including the successful Brugge trip, brilliantly organised and led by Ken Eddie, who also recently took us up to Glencoe and Kinlochleven and John Moss led us on an epic trip to Cumbria and the Hartside Summit and Cafe. Check out the Events section on the website and also look out for regular email updates from John on what is coming up.

In the last edition I listed all our committee members but unfortunately missed out Steve Panter, who is our committee member without portfolio, so many apologies to him.

Cheers, **Janet Moss**

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MEMBERSHIP

The membership now stands at 54. Reminders have recently been sent out so if you haven't renewed, better hurry up because you'll lose access to the website, club emails and of course the Runs at the end of May.

Also of course, if you have any biking friends/neighbours/work colleagues who aren't members it's always a good idea to promote the Club as new members are very welcome.

The Landmarks Challenge 2013

This year's Challenge is gathering pace with twelve of the sixteen locations visited, and three members only one visit away from gaining a Bronze award. Now the weather has turned for the better I hope you will all be overworking the website recording your visits. If you have not yet registered to join in, please do so and get going. Full instructions are on the website, but send me a message either via the Forum or a PM from the site if you have

any queries.

As at 6th May there have been thirty two visits by eight different members to twelve different landmarks, with me catching the Scooter Boys George Kay and Michael Wight with seven visits each. Only one more needed for the Bronze - who will get there first? Tommy Taylor is knocking off the northern ones before any of us southerners can get up there. The table of visits is [here](#).

So far there are fifteen pictures in the Best Landmark Photo competition [here](#).

Steve Middleton

Rabbit in the Headlight

This edition, our 'Rabbit' is with Alan Hopper who, as you read on, was one of the founder members of the SMC.



How long have you been a member of the SMC?

- Been in since the start and in fact was a founder member of Honda Owners Scottish Branch in 1993 which morphed into SMC with the new millenium.

When did you pass your test and what was your first 'proper' bike?

- Test? What test?! OK not quite that old but 1968 on my first bike, a Honda C200 - 90cc but looked like a proper bike rather than a step thru, much cooler being still at school at the time.

What would be your dream bike?

- I'm lucky to have had a lot of good bikes but I am really happy with my BMW F800ST which does everything really well. Mind you, a Benelli Tornado Tre would be OK for the odd sunny day.

What is your favourite biking road?

- Tricky one 'cos there are a few but probably Glenshee on a quiet day would be favourite.

Where were you born and when (optional)?

- Bridge of Allan a very long time ago.

What do you do for a living?

- I am a Chartered Surveyor and manage one of the big bank's portfolios - which shall remain nameless for fear of reprisals!

What's your favourite film?

- I am a member of the Filmhouse in Edinburgh and watch all sorts of great but usually obscure films hardly anyone has heard of. Best mainstream one lately was probably Argo. The Godfather would be a contender for the favourite.

What's your favourite food/drink?

- My home made penne alla matriciana with a glass or three of chianti.

What's your pet hate?

- Arrogance.

What 3 items (not including your family) would you rescue from your house if it was burning down?

- Laptop, mobile phone and camera which I probably couldn't live without. Not my work phone of course!

Who from history would you like to meet and why?

- Probably Napoleon who had this strange idea of making us all good Europeans, as of course we all are now!

SOLUTION TO MARCH'S CROSSWORD

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Check out Steve Middleton's 'Spot the Difference' on the last page for this edition's puzzle.

The Temptation

As most of you may know I currently ride a good, reliable and sensible Yamaha XJ900s Diversion. What I particularly like about the bike is the superbly comfortable riding position it offers for both rider and pillion. I would often shake my head in disbelief at riders of uncomfortable looking sports bikes especially those with a pillion passenger perched on the rear, and quite possibly along with a good proportion of the motorcycling public could not see the point of the UK biker's obsession with sports bikes.

Until, my good friend Allan bought a silver and black GSXR 750 that needed to be lowered 2 inches before he could comfortably touch the floor and he asked me to bring it the 20 miles home for him. It started as a nervous 5 minutes through a housing estate squeezed onto an unfamiliar bike; a tight urban street with speed humps every 25 yards narrow lanes, awkwardly parked cars, kids swooping about on push bikes (I am sure one of the wee ten year old overtook me TWICE).

We finally made it to the main road, a space in the traffic appeared and OMG!!! The acceleration, the power, and that sweet sweet sound. After following my good friend for a few miles in the pace car I felt I owed it to him to share in the sound of his latest bike so I powered past his car and disappeared into the distance. What a bike, together we danced into corners, flicked around roundabouts, dispatched cars and trucks in effortless overtakes and always being accompanied by that sweet sweet sound. I am sure we were hitting corners a good 10 miles an hour faster than I would normally have tackled them. Oh how I now understand sports bike riders. Sadly this revelation has perhaps come 15 years too late! It's not fair on my 54 year old 6 foot frame to be forced into a racing crouch for an extended period of time.

But, the beautiful silver and black GSXR 750 is sitting in my garage next to my Diversion waiting for the lowering kit to be delivered. My best ever biking buddy has said I can use it. He has left me the keys. But, is that fair, it is my friend Allan's dream bike that he has waited a long time for. But, they need to be used; they only come alive when they are used. But, I am insured third party when I ride it. But, my wife has said "don't you dare take Allan's bike out" But, its only 10 miles to my mum and dad's house for breakfast. It's cold out but the early morning sun is gently warming the road surface. The keys are also twinkling at me hanging on the key rack. I think of Gollum and the ring, will I be corrupted by the power of the GSXR. I can feel its presence it's only on the other side of this brick wall. The keys have found their way into my hand, and I am thinking of that sweet sweet sound....

Gavin Paton

The only response to Gavin's article in the last edition (apart from the one above) was from Steve Middleton.

BEST BIKE? HOWZABOUT MINE

Gavin Paton sang the praises of his Yamaha Diversion XJ900s in March BikeBytes, and threw down a challenge to prove there was another Best Bike in the Club. Well, I'll pick up the glove; I submit my "Old Faithful" Honda 1984 CBX750FE for consideration. I've had her for over 14 years and done about 60,000 miles.

Real world riding

The seat isn't as plush as the Divi, but last year after bending the VFR I used the CBX to complete the last five in the Bridges Challenge, including finishing off the final long-range four in three daily stages of 290, 280 and 150 miles. The half-fairing, like the Divi's, keeps the wind off the upper body, the reasonably upright seating position gives a good view and the engine response is excellent across the full rev. range for overtakes and getting a move on. The Baglux tank bag and Givi top box are enough for weekends away (in B&Bs anyway). The twin headlights (one of the first fitments on a production bike) are good at night-time.

Reliability

Apart from needing a new stator not long after I got it, the bike has never let me down. (I don't really count it as the bike's fault when the battery died on the M8 in the outside lane, and I had to push it across the four lanes approaching the Hermiston Gate roundabout!) However I do claim some credit for the reliability because I researched its weak spots and took measures to limit them. The international owners' group (TeamRC17) has several modifications documented by me on its [website](#). I used her for commuting ten months out of twelve into Edinburgh for seven years.

Servicing

This is the easy part. The bike has done about 80,000 miles and the cam cover has never been off the top of the engine. Mr H equipped this one with hydraulic valve operation and, provided the oil is in good condition, they need no attention for adjustment – magic. The electronic ignition (another early use) is reliable; the carbs stay in balance very well; the suspension damping fluid can be changed front and back; the voltmeter on the clocks

warns me of potential electrical problems; and all the important bits are readily accessible when needed. Air cooling further reduces the maintenance routine.

Simplicity

Air cooling, half fairing, and many parts in common with other Hondas make life easy. The electronic ignition is reliable, the carbs well proven. Mr H fitted the TRAC anti-dive system which gives me no problems, but other users seem to think it a pain, and it was dropped from Honda's bikes not long after this one. OK, she's got a chain, but a Scottolier sorts that out and I have the tools to fit a new chain.

Value for money

I paid about £1200 to a workmate in September 1998. Today I should be able to get £500 easily. That's about £50pa in depreciation. Fuel consumption seems to have crept up this year without me identifying a reason, but not trying to either! Servicing is mainly oil and filter @ 4,000 & air filter @ 8,000. Tyres are BT45 at a reasonable price. The biggest cost in replacement parts has been for exhausts with the original 4-2 system rotting quickly. The more modern RC42 CBSevenFifty of the 90s uses the same engine and basic frame, and its exhaust fits, so when a new aftermarket Sebring 4-1 for that model was mentioned on the TeamRC17 site ten years ago I was in there, and it has been corrosion-free since, with a wonderful sound thru' my earplugs.

In conclusion

My CBX750 is now 29 years old, and despite 80,000 miles and the worst the Scottish weather could throw at it for the last fifteen years it still brings a smile to my face, and steps up to the plate when I bend its more modern replacement. Just to show how good the bike is in other ways, it brought me into the Honda Owners Club Scotland branch, the forerunner of the SMC, so without it I maybe wouldn't be writing this. It also introduced my daughter and son, as pillions, to biking (and 100mph – *shush!*)

Steve Middleton

So the question was asked:- What bike(s) do you ride and give two reasons why you like/love/hate it. Here are your replies:-

Steven Kenny said:-

"Why I bought a Harley

Reasons for buying

I liked the look of the engine.

Wanted a change from what I had in the past.

The history and look appealed to me.

What my first impressions were of the bike

The handling/suspension was terrible compared to what I had in the past.

Very heavy bike.

Love the engines character and torque.

Felt special when riding it.

Even liked cleaning it!

What I think now

Have got used to the handling and accept the shortcomings as character.

Like the weight of it, it has a solid feel.
Still love the engine.
Still feel special when riding it.
Cleaning novelty has worn off and wish it was self cleaning.”

John Moss replied:-

“I did like my Pan ST1100, but the BMW R1200 GSA is an absolute monster (in a good way). It's deceptively light, easily manouverable, extremely torquey, a bit quirky and can go 400 miles between fill-ups. It's perfect for my needs, carrying enough stuff for the two of us for a week away. I do like the Boxer engine and all the boy's toys (ABS, Traction control, Stability control, electronic suspension adjustment, on board computer and GPS). Everything about it is extremely solid and the build quality is as you'd expect. Only thing missing was a protector for the very vulnerable oil cooler, I managed to source a very nicely manufactured one from Mark Hooton at www.cymarcbikeparts.co.uk in Scunthorpe.

Ken Russell's response was:-

“ Every time I swing my leg over the Deauville I can feel the happy grin spreading over my face. It's hugely comfortable and that V-twin noise great! The top box and built-in panniers swallow vast quantities of luggage and the weather protection is impressive. It sits happily at 70-80 all day and I can hop off at the end of a long haul feeling good for another couple of hours. Does it have any flaws? Well I've got used to the occasional reluctance to select neutral, and high on the list of improvements is a set of heated handgrips and hand wind deflectors. Oh yes, and twice I've had plug caps replaced which were tracking and causing rough running - apparently a known problem with Deauves. Fortunately dealt with before any of my longer trips! Anyway, she's never let me down (yet) and having a bike for more than a year gives you time to learn and love their little foibles.”

Steve Mackinnon verdict on his bike was:-

“Kawasaki Versys 650

In almost every respect the Versys is better than my previous bike, a Honda Transalp 650. The power, acceleration, fuel economy, handling and, most important of all, the fun factor are all much better than the Transalp's.

Of course it's not perfect. Two up, the seat quickly becomes uncomfortable. Unlike the Transalp, it doesn't have a centre stand and can't be fitted with one, due to the under-engine exhaust. I find this design choice unforgivable! Being a parallel twin, it vibrates, even though there is a balance shaft buried deep within the engine. I don't notice the vibration through the bars or seat much, but it tends to make various bits of bodywork buzz annoyingly.

The fairing/headlight arrangement has a look that only someone who had just scraped through Motorcycle Design 101 could have come up with, but recent models are marginally less offensive in this respect.

Bottom line – the good points far outweigh the bad. It's a cracking mid-sized motorcycle.”

Helena Morton's answer was:-

“I ride an old Honda Hornet. Two things I like about the bike are reliability, I have owned the bike for just over a year and have just had to replace bits due to normal wear and tear. ie chain and sprocket, oil changes. I've only been riding for 2 years come August so I'm just learning to do basic repairs which I've found to be relatively easy once I've bought the required tools.”

And finally Sarah Eddie says:-

“ I love my Bonneville because:

1. It's the perfect size, weight and power for me and even though it's not really made for long adventurous runs, it can quite happily manage it.
2. It looks awesome.”

EDITOR: -“What would you like to hear members opinions on? Drop me a mail at Bikebytes@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk and I'll ask the question next time”

SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

Here are 2 pictures of Steve Middleton's Yamaha TDM900A, before and after a winter of various minor fettlings. There are 12 changes (and the weather isn't one!) 4 are difficult to see. Answer in the next edition.



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