



The Magazine of The Scottish Motorcycle Club

WELCOME...

to this edition which, for a few of us, is the end of biking for 2013. Some bikes are tucked up cosy, clean and dry for the winter, whilst others are still being ridden everyday, battling the elements (and traffic) on these dark winter days. Mine is one of the former so it's time to get the kit cleaned and put away and to do those jobs (decorating at the moment) which should have been done, instead of enjoying the fantastic weather and roads, over the past few months. If you are one of the latter, much respect and be careful out there over the coming months.

Cheers, Janet Moss

Bikebytes@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP

The membership now stands at 64 as we've recently welcomed two new members:- Chris Munro from Denny, who has a Yamaha XJ900 and a Suzuki Burgman 400. Gordon Robertson from Cumbernauld, who has a BMW F800ST.

EVENTS

As well as the usual Club nights over the winter we have a couple of other social events planned. On Friday 13th December we have booked a table at Brea in Stirling for a Christmas meal and the annual Awards Night is also arranged at the Mercat Bar, Edinburgh for 7.00pm on Saturday 22 February. Quite a few members (and partners) are already on the list for both events so if you fancy coming along, drop me a line (janet.f.moss@talktalk.net) and I'll add your names.

Also John Hill writes:-

"It's never too early to start thinking about and planning runs for next year. So even though John Moss won't be fulfilling the Events Co-ordinator position next year, please forward your ideas/suggestions to John now for him to pass them on. You don't have to lead the Run if you don't want to, but we are always looking for new Runs/places to go etc. We've had a great number of runs in 2013 and want 2014 to be as successful for everybody. So for starters, Alan Hopper will lead a weekend Run titled "The Borders and Lakes" on 4/5 October 2014. The recce went well this year with some great roads and scenery, when we could see it !! (and hopefully Alan won't get lost this time!! Only a minor detour which actually proved quite interesting! Well that's what biking is about !!). The overnight

stop was in Carlisle where we went out for an excellent Italian meal. Alan would like to get an idea of numbers Feb/March to start sorting out the hotel. Please send initial notes of intent to John at events@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk"

Club Calendar 2014

Ken Eddie has been hard at work compiling a Club Calendar for 2014. All members have been e-mailed looking at the demand for the club calendar which will be going to print shortly. This is to be ready before Christmas, and will go on sale around the December club night, priced at £5.00 a copy. It will be an ideal gift for the festive season, and a great opportunity for you to show friends/relatives how you spend your weekends with the SMC. They will be in A4 booklet wallhanger style, opening to A3 when hung, with a wirebind in the centre and will come in a matching card envelope.

If you haven't already done so, please e-mail keneddie@aol.com with an indication of how many calendars you may like to buy, to assist in the print order size.

Club Shop

Very soon you will be e-mailed a copy of the latest club merchandise catalogue with updated prices, so that you can get your clothing orders in for next years biking season. In the meantime we do have stock of sew-on club logo patches at £2.50 each, club stickers for your bike at £1.00 and one remaining woolly hat with club logo for £7.50. E-mail keneddie@aol.com for details.

RABBIT IN THE HEADLIGHT

Our 'rabbit' this time is with another of the Eddie clan, Sarah.



How long have you been a member of the SMC?

I joined the SMC as a 'non-riding' member in around 2009 and quickly realised that I actually wanted to ride bikes rather than sit pillion all the time.

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

I passed my test in August 2011 on a 125cc bike, restricting me to 300bhp for two years

and (finally) had the restrictor removed in August this year. I'm still on my first bike – the lovely Triumph Bonneville SE.

What would be your dream bike?

I'm lucky enough to own my dream bike .

What is your favourite biking road?

Hmmm... tricky. I've always loved the Lochearnhead to Crieff road, but this summer have discovered some fantastic roads, such as the A9 north of Inverness and (I think the road number's correct) the A832 from the Inverewe Gardens to Ullapool is also amazing.

Where were you born and when (optional)?

I was born in August 1984 in the Maternity Hospital in Aberdeen.

What do you do for a living?

I am a proofreader for Palimpsest Book Production Limited, which is a typesetting company based in Falkirk.

What's your favourite film?

Another tricky one as I have about 5 favourites. Back to the Future or Star Wars are the ones that have probably been favoured the longest. I couldn't count the amount of times I've seen the films but I still love them.

What's your favourite food/drink?

You can't beat a fish supper in my opinion, and a nice glass of wine to go with it.

What's your pet hate?

People speaking in 'text speak' i.e. saying things like 'OMG' and 'LOL' out loud. I don't even like it in text messages to be honest.

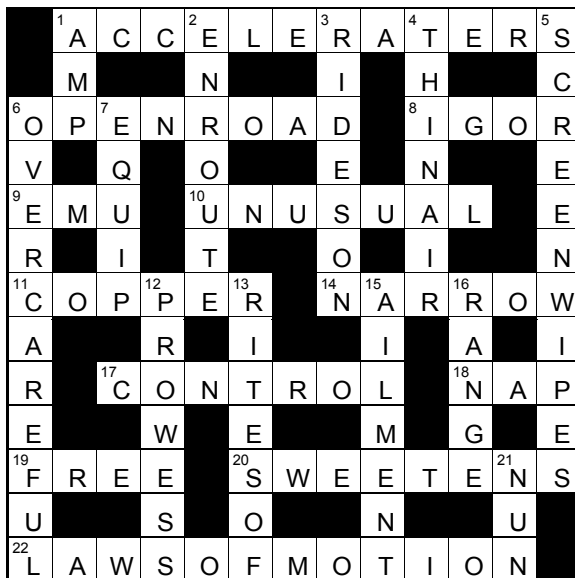
What 3 items (not including your family) would you rescue from your house if it was burning down?

Other than my cat I'm going to be very materialistic – my Kindle and my Freeview box.

Who from history would you like to meet and why?

I've recently been reading a book about deception and camouflage in World War II that featured a man named Sefton Delmer who was responsible for putting out fake German radio broadcasts during World War II. I'd love to meet him and ask him all about it. Or Alan Turing so I could ask him all about solving the Enigma machines.

SOLUTION TO LAST EDITION'S CROSSWORD



TRIP TO FRANCE, SPAIN AND PORTUGAL SEPTEMBER 2013

Thanks to Moira and John Nicol who sent in this account of their recent holiday.

Bon Jour, I mean Buenos Dias or is it Bom Dias today? Heck it was hard to remember which country we were in sometimes as we took a leisurely bike trip through France, Spain, Portugal and then back into Spain for the ferry home. Luckily they all took euros (and credit cards) so that was one problem solved. John and I spent 4 weeks on this trip so I'll try not to make it 'War and Peace'. We would recommend going at this time of year (although May/June would be equally good).

Picking up accommodation was never a problem, roads were mostly quiet and maybe we were just lucky, but apart from during the night, we only had 3 hours of rain in Europe and 1 hour in the UK. Being a couple of retirees neither of us want to ride long distances in a day and from past experience we usually have 2 nights, or even 3, at our main destinations so that we can have a day or so off the bike to chill out and do some sightseeing. The creaky knees mean we both need frequent stops as well so our pace of travel wouldn't suit everyone. There are, however, some compensations to this getting older stuff – no need to rush back to work. We had an overnight in the north of England and stayed with friends north of London for another overnight before heading for Eurotunnel. Our first experience of Eurotunnel with the bike. We used £10 of Tesco vouchers and topped that up with £7 on a credit card. It was all done in a jiffy over the internet and as we arrived a bit early we got an earlier train. I hardly had time to finish my coffee and we were off. Bonjour Francais! Easy peasy.



John wanted to avoid the Paris peripherique so we kept east of Paris and had our first night in Epernay, which was a nice little town. Pity we didn't have a chance to sample any of the champagne houses before we headed south to near Avalon.

Our B&B was a country house (more like a mansion) and we arrived in time for a swim before dinner. Bliss! We had booked dinner for both nights here. Past experience again has taught us that you either stay somewhere with a choice of restaurants within easy walking distance or you make sure you can eat where you're staying. I'm not up for going out to eat in my biking gear and John will definitely want a beer, wine or more likely both after a long bike ride. Wine was included with dinner, which was served round a large table where we met people from France (ok, ok, that was obvious), Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Jersey. There were also 2 couples from England and John wasn't sure whether to be pleased or not when they told him he was the first Scotsman they could actually understand. The area round Avalon is lovely and we would recommend Auxerre, Clemecy, Vezelay and Noyers if you are in this part of France.



We had our only wet day when we left there and can't complain as it went off in time for our gear to be dry when we arrived in St Etienne. Not a moment too soon as it poured 2 minutes after we got into the hotel and bucketed down for the rest of the night. One of the best dinners we had was in a restaurant just round the corner, thank goodness. That made up for the weather.

We continued south and stayed the next two nights in a Sawdays recommended hotel 45km south of Mendes (more of Sawdays later). Only the lady who owned the hotel spoke some English but we had our trusty phrasebook and managed ok. The wine list was actually more daunting than the food menu as Pierrette was an expert and the Vin de Carte ran to about 20 pages. Not being connoisseurs John asked if she could recommend a good house red. Whoops! 'Monsieur, they are **all good** house reds.' Well that was him told off.



The scenery and roads in this area were perfect for the bike, but we didn't venture too far as the next day we were off to Carcasonne. I have heard of the Milau bridge, but I gather driving over it is a 'must do' in this area. It has a visitor's centre with a restaurant, shop, tourist information area and information display so I guess that makes it officially a 'tourist attraction'. Exciting!! Well it was for one of us. We realized we were only about 10 kms from the Mediterranean Sea, so we made a short detour and had an ice-cream on the prom at Valra Plage, and then on to Carcassone which got me much more excited than the bridge thingy (call me a biker Philistine if you like). Our B&B here was a farmhouse about 30 mins walk from the walled city. We had breakfast with a couple staying from Germany and 2 American's who had flown over and hired a couple of motorbikes to tour part of Europe. They were great company and apparently do this regularly. Food for thought that we could do the same in reverse. We had 3 nights here, but with hindsight you can see most of what there is to see in Carcassone in 1 day so 2 nights would have been fine.



Our next stop was Biarritz and we both liked it a lot. If you didn't want to drive all the way there it would be a great destination for a mini-break with cheap flights. This is touristy France tho' and we had 2 small beers for 10 euros in a pavement café so be warned. Ouch!!



Biarritz is almost in Spain and we were soon over the border. We stuck to the toll roads today and clocked up nearly 35 euros in tolls. Ouch again!! We made good time however and the scenery was lovely going through the mountains. I had checked Trip Advisor and had 4 hotels on a list to try when we reached Valladolid. Thank goodness for Satnav when you get into cities with one-way streets. The first hotel was very good and we were already finding out that Spain is much cheaper than France.

France on Saturday, Spain on Sunday. Monday – oh it's Portugal now. Our 2 night stop in the Douro valley was a definite highlight. Well Vasco the owner had a motorbike so you can guess what the chat was about. We stayed in a beautiful house set in 14 acres of vineyard (yes they had their own wine) and the lovely grounds had tennis courts and a large swimming pool. It was dine in again as we were several kilometers out of town. We met English, South African and New Zealanders at breakfast. How did everyone find this lovely B&B? Well the internet of course, but have a look at www.sawdays.co.uk if you would like some top quality B&Bs (often rural, but not always) or some small boutique hotels. Ever noticed how everyone talks to you when you're on a motorbike? The ladies all want to know how I can survive 4 weeks with so little luggage and the guys all want to talk 'bikes'. By this point of the holiday the temperature is in the 30s.



It was only a short hop to the city of Porto and we were lucky enough to get a parking space right at the entrance to the hotel. There were only a few parking spaces and the alternative was a hefty charge for underground parking. The bike never moved for 3 days. Porto has a good metro system to get around and we also used the hop-on-hop-off bus to maximize the sightseeing. Well with all this port to taste who wants to drive? Porto is well worth a visit. Lots of sunshine, old buildings, history, river trips and did I mention the port?



I wanted to stop off at Santiago de Compostela on our way north. We didn't manage it. Even with the best planned trips you're never going to get it 100% right. We got stuck in traffic as a result of 2 lorries having an argument with a bridge at Vigo. This held us up and it was blisteringly hot being almost stationary in that heat. In the end both John and the bike were beginning to overheat and we had to filter through the traffic jam to get moving. Those of you who have done European trips will know that they have a totally different attitude to bikes filtering over there. It's the norm and car drivers are very accommodating. It still isn't easy on a heavy bike, loaded with luggage and a none too petite pillion passenger, but John managed. I also hadn't counted on the Spanish siesta habit of everything closing all afternoon. Lesson learned. Next time we'll book a stop there so that we can take in the Cathedral which is always listed as a top 10 must do for Spain.

Instead we headed north and stayed in La Coruna. It's quite a large city so we only saw a tiny corner of it, but we were right across from one of the beaches and yet again dinner was a resounding success so that made up for everything.

We agreed we would stay off the toll roads enroute to our next stop so we meandered along the north coast. I was loving the scenery, but John was concentrating on the road and eventually got quite frustrated with all the drivers holding him back due to the hairpin bends. All was well when he got a nice cold beer at our lovely hotel (Casa Cachon – another Alastair Sawdays find) and we had a swim before dinner. The receptionist had no English whatsoever, but she managed to find our booking. There was no rush as the restaurant was meant to open at 8.00, but the cook didn't actually start work until 8.30!?! Luckily the wifi worked in the restaurant so we ordered a drink and had fun. John used the phrasebook and I used Google translate to decode the menu. Our holiday was almost at an end and we were in a sleepy, sunny seaside part of Spain so it was a short hop to one of the lovely unspoilt beaches and I even had a swim in the Atlantic.

We stuck to the main roads for the final European leg of the journey which took us to Santander for an overnight before the ferry. This was another 'thank heavens for Satnav' city. Narrow streets, road works down on the front and lots of one-way streets, but we made it. We had time to do the hop-on-hop-off tour the next day before we headed for the ferry. Crickey! I've been on lots of ferries, but never seen so many bikes in one place in my life. There were too many to count, but it must have been hundreds. There was quite a long wait to load so as always we had lots of chats – did you have a good holiday, how was your weather, how long have you been away and especially where have you been? One couple had gone right down south with friends and across to Morocco but decided not to continue on to Marrakesh as the ladies in the party felt quite threatened. Everyone had tales of adventures to tell and we had a laugh about the average age of bikers these days. The food and drink on the ferry was good quality and not expensive, unlike some others we've used.



We arrived in Plymouth the next day just in time for the rush hour traffic, but we stayed with friends who live nearby and meandered home a couple of days later with a stop in the north of England. We managed the final swim of the holiday and another great dinner before the last leg and home to see the family. We saw some great places, met lots of lovely people and enjoyed some autumn sunshine before winter sets in. Where will the next bike adventure be? We don't know, but we'll have fun planning it.

Moira and John Nicol.

LANDMARKS CHALLENGE NEWS

John Hill has got out in the cold and completed his Gold at Mull of Galloway lighthouse, making seven with the "Full House". Steve Middleton disappeared from home for three days and 1,000 miles later came back with his final six in the camera, making the sixth Gold. Janet Moss and Runmeister John have been up to St Andrews to complete their pair of Gold awards, adding to Tommy Taylor and Sarah and dad Ken Eddie. Superb - well done to all. Gavin Paton gained the latest Silver joining David Goodenough. Helena Morton moved up to a Bronze over the last weekend of September. We have seven Golds, two Silvers and four Bronzes at this report.

As at 5th November there have been one hundred and eighty visits by eighteen different members. The most popular destination is a tie between the A1 Border and McCaig's Tower on 15 visits, then 14 to Meikleour hedge, St Andrews and the Forth Bridge. So far there are forty four pictures in the Best Landmark Photo competition.

Alasdair Wood has let us know what he's been up to lately.

Jim Allan Motorcycles in Falkirk are training me to be a CBT instructor, with a possible view to undertaking the Mod1 and Mod2 instructor training thereafter. This is not a career change, just something to do in my spare time and earn a few pennies along the way. I've been on several CBT assessment days now with new and returning bikers. Come the end of each day and with a sense of satisfaction, it's been enjoyable to see them pass after undertaking the classroom, yard training with slow manoeuvres and finally the 2 hour

road ride around the Falkirk area. The buzz they've got from it has been written all over their faces.

The end result of this is that I would be signed off as a Down-Trained CBT Instructor until taking the DSA assessment, but still allowing me to teach riders, both new and returning, on anything up to 125cc on the open road, so long as L plates are displayed of course.

I know there are IAM and RoSPA observers in the Club, don't know if there are actual instructors though but I guess if members know of friends wanting to learn or even their kids wishing to take up two wheeled transport, then I might just be able to lend a hand in what would be an official capacity.

And George Kay has also been busy:-

I thought that club members might be interested to learn that West Lothian College, which is based in Livingston, runs a part time evening class in basic motorcycle maintenance which works towards a City & Guilds qualification.

Since the age of fourteen I have been carrying out my own maintenance, to a certain degree, initially on motorcycles when I got my first bike which I got free namely a 50 cc moped (it always needed attention just to move) and then on cars, aged seventeen, when I got my first one for £35 after saving up my paper rounds money (it needed a new clutch before it could move). I received a huge amount of help and guidance from my father who in his time has rebuilt, serviced and repaired many motorcycle engines, car engines, gearboxes and more.

Thereafter I gained confidence and learned to carry out a fair range of routine maintenance and repair tasks either by necessity e.g. broken down at the roadside and or by economic restraints and have since honed my limited expertise by trial, error, extensive reference to owners manuals, workshop manuals and more recently to you tube tutorials. I have however always been very wary about certain tasks and wondered how this or that works.

Therefore a hands on course of some description or other was something I was always interested in doing and when I heard about the WLC course I was pleased to learn that a course was scheduled for 2013. I attended an open evening at the college, after the summer break, whereupon I had a general chat with college staff, reviewed the course content and then paid my £100 to enrol on the course.

The two hour per week evening class I now attend commenced during August and runs for a total of seventeen weeks until 18th December. Euan our course leader and an avid biker is a time served auto technician with over thirty years experience under his belt and is a full time lecturer in the college's motor vehicle studies department.

The college has a bespoke motor vehicle / motorcycle workshop with all of the facilities, tools, equipment and resources needed to make the course a joy to attend and also provided are parts, oils, lubricants, personal safety equipment and more importantly whole

bikes, part bikes, engines, gearboxes and the like for students to work on.

The course focuses on the main components of a motorcycle and each evening is themed and follows a pattern i.e. what a component does, what stresses and strains it endures, what can go wrong, what to look for when inspecting and checking parts, then more importantly followed by fully supervised hands on work involving dismantling, checking and reassembly.

Interspersed throughout the course are practical assessments that are recorded and verified and which count towards the City & Guilds qualification which sounds quite onerous but in reality is very straight forward indeed.

Some topics covered off so far:-

Chains, wheels (Including balancing), tyres, spark plugs, front forks, brake pads & shoes, brake callipers, fuel systems, clutch assemblies, wheel bearings and replacement of fluids e.g. engine oil, brake fluid, coolant and filters.

I am thoroughly enjoying the course, learning something new every week and I especially enjoy finding out about what specialised tools are available for different tasks, how easy they are to use and how they make life so much easier e.g. wheel bearing removal tool.

Euan has said that demand for the course is increasing especially as word is getting around combined with the fact that it seems to be the only such course available in the central belt e.g. one student travels from Glasgow and another from Tranent, so he is planning at least two and maybe even three courses in 2014 and beyond.

Any one interested can contact WLC directly and or go on line to the college web site.

OPINION WANTED

Many thanks to the few who responded to my request for 'your most enjoyable Club Run this season'. Here are their replies:-

John Hill replied: - "My favourite was the "Borders without the Abbeys" on 21 September. This because of the new and interesting start at Fettes College, a good turn out which made for more fun at the stops, which were also good, plus excellent routes through the borders despite some poor weather, didn't detract from an excellent day out.

John Moss says (to which I totally agree – Ed) "Brugge! Why? Apart from missing Fiona, the company was great. First experience of riding a bike on the wrong side of the road proved to be no trouble at all. Excellent leadership and planning of the Run by Ken. The walk round Brugge on Saturday was perfect. The gem of a cafe for breakfast, the restaurants with very competitively priced menus and the Belgian beer! The ride to Dunkirk, the very moving visit to the cemetery at Armentieres. Lunch in Gouda. Winning the Bingo on the ferry home."

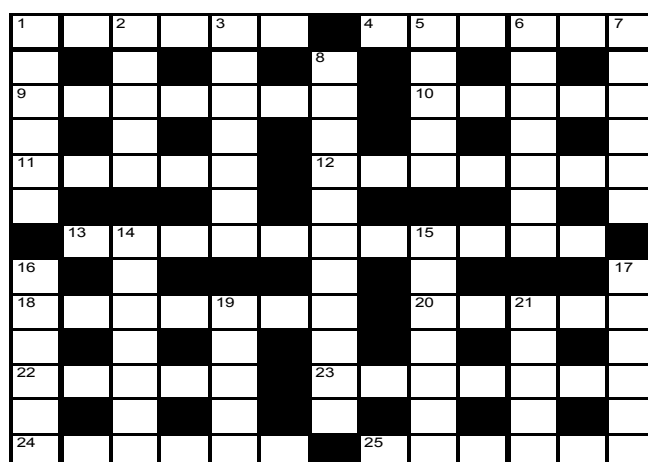
Tommy Taylor wrote:- “Enjoyable Club Run ... ?! This year... none of them! But that’s because I only made one. That was the rather wet run to Tayvallich; which I ended up bailing out of before the lunch stop. The only other Run I set out for was Steve’s Coire Cas run but again I had to bail; before even joining the group. I’m sure I WOULD have enjoyed some of the other runs ... if I’d been able to attend! Hopefully, see y’all next year.”

John Nicol had a couple:- “Strathpeffer weekend was a super run both for the biking roads but also weather wise. We were very fortunate to miss all the rain that was forecast. Visited some fantastic locations along with good coffee stops. Very good digs at the hotel in Strathpeffer. Overall excellent.

Run to Seahouses was very much a mixed bag, weather wise. We started off in good weather, however over the moors on our way to Berwick on Tweed you could hardly see your hand in front of you for the mist. Once we descended from the summit we had a nice clear run for a while. On our way to Seahouses we encountered the sea harr, near the coast along with a very busy bank holiday weekend. Return journey was even better, good roads, good weather and a nice coffee stop on the way home.”

Michael Wight found that:- “My most enjoyable (and challenging) Club run this year was the Campbeltown one on Saturday 14 September. The reason was that I wished to push the boundaries out in riding a small engined bike (Honda CBF) of 125cc over such a large distance. I travelled 375 miles in total and at the morning coffee stop at Inverary and lunch stop at Campbeltown I was only 5 minutes behind the rest of the other riders which was fantastic. It was an endurance run for me as I was about 10 hours in the saddle. The scenery on the return journey overlooking Arran was magnificent.”

See the latest Crossword on the next page! Solution next time!

**Across**

- 1 What a motorcyclist does when going uphill (6)
 4 Road rules should not be (6)
 9 Where bikers are seldom found! (3,4)
 10 Slang for petrol (5)
 11 More than the required amount (5)
 12 Not customary (7)
 13 Sleek, streamlined (11)
 18 Inflator (3,4)
 20 Very ready to roll (5)
 22 Get on a bike (5)
 23 Visiting places (7)
 24 Settle a bill up front (6)
 25 View (6)

Down

- 1 Transmission lines (6)
 2 Small section within a larger one, in a map perhaps (5)
 3 Bluster (7)
 5 Small, like a jewel (5)
 6 Incentives, spurs (7)
 7 Resides (6)
 8 Picturesque places (6,5)
 14 On the way (2,5)
 15 Roads (7)
 16 Preparation, getting ready (4-2)
 17 Shining (6)
 19 Prefix meaning "over" or "extreme" (5)
 21 Leader or escort (5)

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