



The Magazine of The Scottish Motorcycle Club

WELCOME...

to the last edition of 2014. Winter is drawing in and for many of you (including John and I) this means tucking the bikes up clean and cosy until the better weather arrives next year. For those who are brave, or out of necessity, and are still riding, take care over the coming months.

Cheers, Janet Moss

Bikebytes@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

After 7 happy years as SMC Membership Secretary, I've decided not to stand for re-election at the next AGM in March 2015. I'm broaching the subject now, in the hope that over the next few months, you will consider volunteering to take on this enjoyable and rewarding committee post. I will, of course, provide any help which the new secretary might need to ease into the role.

As the title suggests, the main task of the Membership Secretary is to take care of the admin associated with the club membership. The only requirements for the role are a modest amount of 'computer confidence', an enthusiasm for keeping the members' records up to date and, above all, a commitment to guard the members' data with your life!

If you'd like to find out more about the role, please contact me either by email at secretary@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk or call me on 07802 200964.

Steve MacKinnon

EVENTS

A couple of upcoming events for your attention are:-

DECEMBER CLUB NIGHT (Wednesday 10th) We have an interesting evening lined up for you and to let you get away from the build up for Christmas.

The Long Way Up : A ride from the bottom of South America up the Pacific Coast to Alaska. Wilson Hutchison and his two pals are starting this epic ride in February 2015 and expect to complete their journey three months later. This evening he will talk to us about their preparations for the journey.

We then can look forward to another evening next year after they have completed their ride when he will tell us about their adventure.

So please come along to show your support, as they are raising money for the Deafblind Scotland charity, and to whet your appetites for next season.

AWARDS NIGHT This popular annual event has been booked again for Saturday 21st February 2015 at the Mercat Bar in Edinburgh at 7.30pm for 8.00pm. If you want to go, please send your confirmation to John Hill, Chair@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk as we need to know definite numbers. This event is for members and partners.

RABBIT IN THE HEADLIGHT

David McWilliam (and friend) are in the headlight this time:-



How long have you been a member of the SMC?

I think I joined 2007/8 it was just as Steve Mac was taking over as Membership Secretary.

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

Passed my test early 1970s. First bike on the road was a brand new BSA 250 Gold Star which cost £315 bought from Shaws, Mill St, Perth. I had many bikes from the age of ten as I was brought up on a farm and had lots of fun on two wheels.

What would be your dream bike?

Rob North Trident.

What is your favourite biking road?

I like the road from Poolewe to the Kyle of Lochalsh, also the Kinlochleven loop is a blast and I really, really love coming up over the Struggle and down Kirkstone Pass in the Lake District.

Where were you born and when (optional)?

Born Dumfries Royal Infirmary, lived near Portpatrick so don't know why my mother had to go all the way to Dumfries.

What's your favourite film?

Life of Brian. I've seen it so many times but still the tears roll down the cheeks with laughter, especially Julius Caesar with the speech impediment!

What's your pet hate?

Drivers who use their phones, it's so dangerous.

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

I would save Mollie our Cockapoo pup, the little boat my daughter made at her first school woodwork class. I smile everytime I look at it as she hated woodwork. All my Arai helmets.

Who from history would you like to meet and why?

Mike (the bike)Hailwood and ask him how he managed look so much the part of any bike he rode. Any photos you see he is perfection in motion.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION FROM SEPTEMBER

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ALASDAIR WOOD HAS BEEN DOING A BIT OF MAINTENANCE:-

VFR Front Forks – Refurbishment



It had needed done for quite some time, the weather playing its part in the deterioration of the front forks over the past 6 years of all year round riding.

Having become an IT contractor, and working in the centre of Edinburgh, I found myself using the train every day out of pure convenience, rather than using the bike. The VFR was therefore sitting idle all week and thus gave me the perfect opportunity to strip the front in preparation for refurbishing the front forks.

I had found a brief guide on another forum on how best to proceed with this work, from the preparation work which is always key to a good finish, to the painting. Having purchased the required sandpaper, meths, primer and paint I propped the VFR up and set about removing everything.

Armed with old tubs and pots I removed all the bolts holding the wheel, callipers and front mudguard in place. Some bolts came out easier than others I must add. I chose not to remove the forks altogether from the bike. While it would have been easier to carry out the work with the forks removed, I don't have the work space available.

They say preparation is key so armed with sandpaper I started scrubbing away, first with a coarse paper gradually moving to a finer grade as I progressed. I used meths to clean the forks after each sanding, ensuring the forks were free from dust and grime.



I had wrapped tape around the top of the fork to prevent dust getting into the seals and carefully sanded away, to my heart's content until left with a smooth finish. One done, one to go...

I had read on the Internet forums that it was a worthwhile job to apply a primer and as recommended by others that had done this very same job, I went for the U-Pol Acid #8 Etch Primer.

This primer promotes paint adhesion and ideal for use on galvanised steel and aluminium. It's also ideal for rub through prior to the application of colour paint and fast drying.

A few old towels and well positioned clothes pegs later and I was ready to start painting. I applied several light layers building up the application of the paint with each spray, rather than spraying on heavily and causing possible runs in the paint. The result was rather impressive to say the least.

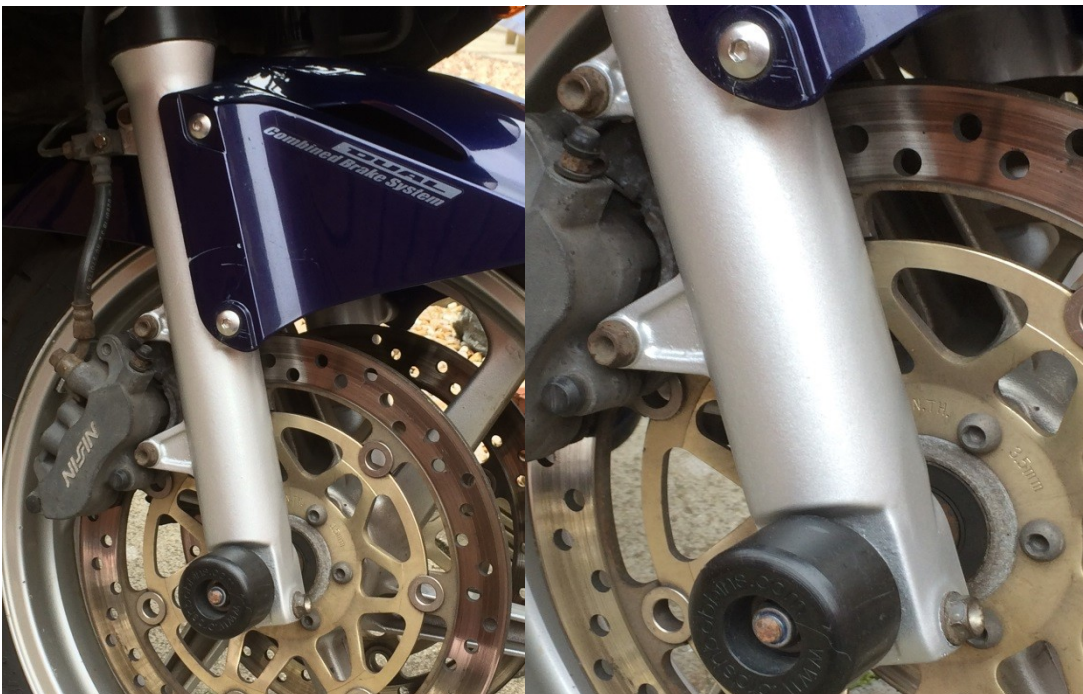
Although fast drying I chose to leave the paint to dry overnight before moving onto the application of the main colour. No further sanding was required after the primer.

There was only one recommended choice for the main colour, which had to be silver and that was the Hammerite Direct to Rust Smooth Silver spray paint.

This paint provides a durable, corrosion resistant decorative coating for ferrous and non-ferrous metals. Although this paint can be applied direct to rusty metal, and has no requirement for primer, I still chose to apply a primer simply to aid in protecting the forks and to give a good, clean finish.



The next stage in applying this paint took in the region of 4 days as I could only apply the paint at night after I had finished work for the day. Again, applying light coats thereby building up the layers and allowing the paint to dry overnight between each coating. It took in the region of 4 to 5 coatings to obtain the required finish. Afterwards, it was a simple matter of reassembling the front end. The finish speaks volumes in my opinion.



GOLF COURSE CHALLENGE 2014 - & ??? 2015

We are coming towards the end of the 2014 Challenge and at the moment (or at least at this moment of writing on 13 November) we have a total of 206 visits recorded, with eight members who have visited all sixteen courses to gain their Gold award. I'm hoping those currently with a Silver or Bronze award will add to their tally and get us to a new record to beat the 2012 Bridges Challenge total of 208 visits. If you have not been following the progress of the Challenge you may like to take a look at the current table of visits [here](#) on the Club website, and the summary front page report [here](#). The visit photographs in the Gallery show some interesting views too.

This Challenge is the fifth of the series I have organised, and will be my last. If you have enjoyed them and would like to see the Challenge continue, please consider taking on the job of organising the next one. The Club needs someone to step forward soon if it is to be organised in time to start at the beginning of 2015. I can give guidance and advice if wanted. I have created a new topic in the Challenges section of the Forum [here](#) to allow members to ask questions and all to see the answers.

I'm off now to start designing the award certificates ready for the Awards Night scheduled for 21 February.

Steve Middleton

JOHN HILL & ALAN HOPPER SHARE THEIR HOLIDAY TO CROATIA BIKING IN THE BALKANS - PART 1

Some of you will know that John Hill and I decided on a trip to the Balkans to get some serious biking done before the colder weather. For some reason our editor thought it might be a good idea to do a bit of a Run Report...so here goes.

We set off on a Friday lunchtime in unusually warm weather for our overnight crossing between Newcastle and Amsterdam. The temperature was nudging 20 degrees at one point, pretty good for mid September. It was a perfect start down via Coldstream with a stop at the cafe in Millburn. John had said something about being there for around 5 o'clock so it was as well that he double checked the timings before we ordered another coffee as the thing was actually sailing at 5 o'clock so some pretty spirited riding followed. When we arrived at the port a minute or two after the deadline, it was a little worrying that there was no sight of anyone else queuing up. Luckily we got through to join a handful of other assorted late-comers on the other side of the gatehouse with the ferry being virtually loaded already. The one consolation in all of this is that, being last on, we were amongst the first off.

We decided to have a couple of fairly full biking days at the beginning of the trip to get some of the distance under our belts. The first day saw us through Holland and much of

Germany down to Ulm, a distance of just under 500 miles which we did mostly by motorway. Nothing very exciting therefore on this day, just the need to keep a particularly close eye on the mirrors. What seem like little specks in the distance one moment can be flying past at very serious speeds in a nanosecond - and we were 'making progress' ourselves as they say. The weather stayed fine until shortly before we arrived at our small hotel in Ulm in the evening.

Next day, with the kit dried out and the sun shining, we decided to do a bit less motorway so headed down through Austria, dipping into Italy on the old and scenic Brenner Pass rather than by the modern bridge route, passing back into Austria again and on to Slovenia where we had booked a couple of night's stop at Lake Bled. Keeping to the old roads cost us a bit of time on the passes but the scenery was worth it, the weather was good and we weren't too bothered about seeking out our hotel in the dark which we later found without any real problem. We had a very warm welcome, a hot shower, cold beer and a good meal before heading to bed.

Next day was a day of rest having now done around a thousand miles since leaving home. Bled made a good base, it is very picturesque with a nice lake you can walk round easily but with beer stops and other coffee and cream cake stops, this all added to the time ... and the fun of course.

Suitably refreshed, we headed off next morning through Slovenia's back roads for a stop at Postojna where we planned a look at the incredible 21 km underground network of caves. There is a train which takes you round part of these. The sight of all the strange stalactites and stalgmities has to be seen to be believed. Suitably impressed and I think with a little more cream cake (a speciality of these here parts), we then headed down into Croatia and its coastline where we would stop overnight at Opatija. Great value hotel with a buffet dinner, as much as you could eat (and drink), secure parking and with a fantastic sea view. Highly recommended.



The next day was probably one of the highlights if not THE highlight of the trip, at least from a biking perspective. The coastline, particularly in the northern part of Croatia, is superb for biking. Sweeping bends which never seem to stop, good road surfaces, lack of traffic - at least this day - with stunning views of the hills and mountains on one side and countless islands on the other. Biking heaven. I think we both just found a new most favourite ever road. Our stop this time would be Trogir (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) where we arrived late afternoon after an exhilarating day's run and had pre booked an apartment for the night. A five minute walk to the old town revealed a beautiful little gem of a town which would make a good base for a longer stay but we had allowed ourselves just one night so that we could get to our eventual destination of Dubrovnik where we would give ourselves a bit more relaxation time.

Slight apprehension next morning as we discuss our route which would take us through Bosnia for which neither of us had been able to get insurance cover for the bikes. We had heard that you could buy it at the border although others had said not at the one we were going through. We also had doubts about whether it would be worth the paper it was written on. With our sensible helmets on, we decided to try and buy it in Trogir before leaving but the nice girls at the local Allianz office said they couldn't help, the electricity was all down anyway so no computers working and anyway why not just take a chance! At 50 Euros each, it was tempting and with their reassurance that they never ask for it anyway, we threw caution to the wind and went for it.

Bosnia occupies a very small bit of coastline sandwiched between Croatia on both sides and it literally takes 10 minutes to get through from one side to the other at this point. We were much relieved to get through without any problem at all. I don't like to think of what might have happened if things had been otherwise and of course we had to do the same thing to get back on our return leg.

Down the coast then to Dubrovnik where John had organised an apartment with garaging and a stunning sea view. I am sure there must have been at least 300 steps up to it from the harbour. Dubrovnik is another gem of a place with ancient fortified walls and a lovely, compact if a bit touristy old centre. As we approached the town, we noticed one of those enormous Italian cruise ships which disgorge over 3000 day trippers first thing in the morning and then they all move on to some other idyllic spot in the Med later in the afternoon, leaving Dubrovnik much more peaceful. It seems too small a place to cope with numbers like that. Oh and I nearly forgot - it too is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



By this time, John's wife Jan had flown over for a few days and we would then do our own things for a few days to meet up again later in Italy. At least that was the plan. John and Jan headed up the coast a day or two later. I had a day off and took a minibus trip into neighbouring Montenegro where again insurance cover was impossible to find so this seemed like a good option, which indeed it turned out to be. Perhaps a place to return to on 2 wheels as and when EU membership and therefore insurance are sorted. I visited Kotor (the third UNESCO World Heritage Site in as many days) and Budva a pretty little fishing village where everything seemed very inexpensive. Not a UNESCO site in sight here but it should be! The three of us met up briefly for coffee next again day in Split (back through Bosnia and now getting a bit more confident of border controls here) where I would take an overnight ferry to Ancona on the east coast of Italy. John and Jan were having a few days in Split before Jan would fly back.



A smooth crossing and out on to Italian roads at 7 o'clock next morning. I had to get to Turin that day having booked my bike in for a service at the BMW dealers. They were fine about leaving it there for a few days as I was going to stay with my daughter who lives there. Her flat is in the pedestrianised town centre where there is no parking anywhere near. It was mostly motorway now to cover the distance and after the usual coffee/petrol stops etc, I got to the dealers mid afternoon. As it turned out, it was just as well that they were happy with me leaving the bike there for a while. This would end up being a longer visit than planned but that's another story. Don't miss next month's thrilling (and final) instalment!

Alan Hopper

MY "BMW BABY" BY JOHN NICOL



Well here we have my latest BMW motorcycle. The model is an R80ST, registered in November 1984, with only 41,000 miles on the clock and in good nick for its year. Comes complete with the original panniers and chrome rails (see later photograph) and fitted with a rare "Bikini" fairing. The weather protection you get with this fairing is nearly as good as having a second class postage stamp in front of you. The original toolkit, hand pump and the owner's manual came with the bike, along with 8 moths M.O.T., and road tax. I have been after one of these models for over 5 years. How did I take so long to get one? Well pure luck really, as in the past I was always been beaten to a good sale, as per normal until now. I was trawling on the internet using the "I" pad one lunch time, googled in BMW R80ST for sale in UK. To my utter surprise, up came this one on the Car and Classic website. I duly phoned the guy after studying the photographs in the advert, got hold of

him eventually. Apparently his phone had been going non stop since he had put the bike up for sale, he had loads of people wanting to come and see it. However as it was for sale in Coventry and this being a Friday and with other commitments over the weekend I could not possibly get down to his part of the world until the Monday. He had a lot of interest from abroad as well, including Australia and other parts of Europe.

He had already made appointments for people to come and see it over the weekend. I simply, after a long biker to biker chat, said really I do not want to come and see it, I want to buy it and would he take a deposit for the deal. He was taken aback slightly and to my astonishment said he would have a think about it. Wow I thought, a sale is a sale. 20 minutes later he called me back, said he liked to be fair to everybody, but as I was the only one so far who was willing to buy it at the set price, that the deal was done providing I paid a deposit into his bank that afternoon. I could not believe that the deal was done that day. Boy was I a happy bunny.

I was very grateful to my trouble and strife for coming with me in a hired van on the Monday, all the way down to Coventry, to pick up the bike. When we arrived at the location, as soon as he opened up the garage door I was astounded by the condition of the BM. I was like a kid with a new toy. We duly loaded the bike, secured it well and travelled back up the road. With both of us sharing the driving, we got home eventually around 10.30pm ish. Time for bed.

When I unloaded the bike the next day, boy was I excited. Apart from it having a flat battery, which was soon sorted, it started first time and I have never looked back since. These bikes are not everyone's cup of tea; you either like them or loathe them. You can guess the category I'm in.



Here we see the bike with its original panniers, which are still in good working order. With a little bit of tinkering and fettling she is a beauty to drive on the road. Normally BMW gearboxes are very noisy, i.e. clunky, this one is a quiet as a mouse. Never driven a BM before with such a smooth gear change on it. Long may it continue?

I have had few teething problems recently, but you must take into consideration that the bike is 30 years old and it will need some TLC to keep it running. Spares are easily available and the bike is easy to work on.

Some background history to this model. They were built between 1982 and 1984 with only 5963 being built in total. So you can understand that these models are becoming rare and collector's models.

They are fitted with "Boxer" style air cooled engine producing 50hp. It is said that this was the best boxer engine ever built by BMW. It weighs 198 kgs so makes it easy to handle. It was produced after the launch of the R80GS in 1980. The ST never really took off in the USA market hence the limited production. As you are well aware the GS has proved to be one of the most popular bikes on the road. However with smaller wheels and reduced fork travel the ST is one of my all time favourite classic bikes. Boy do I love it!!!! The way it handles, power output etc., matches the machine perfectly.

I have recently fitted a Secdem screen to the bike as I was really fed up coming home, frozen, or soaked after being caught out in the rain.

It makes a tremendous difference to creature comforts, especially at my age.

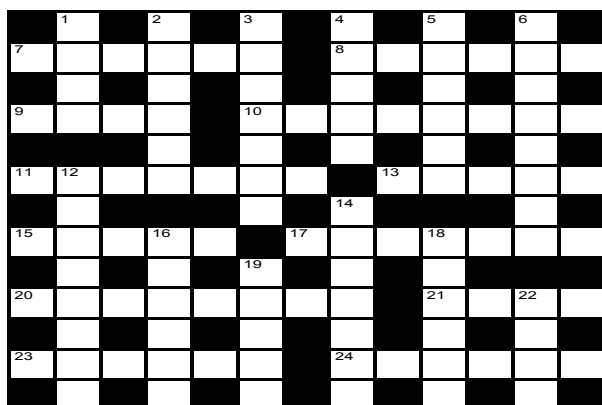
You do notice the difference on driving this one compared to my BMW 1200RT which has the luxury of heated seats and hand grips. Boy do I love them (both I mean).

Never mind I do love my ST model of the BMW range. It keeps me busy in my garage over the winter months, cleaning and polishing as well as making sure it is in tip top condition.

It would be nice to hear from any one who has similar bike or would consider having one. I would strongly recommend them.

Happy motorcycling to you all.

John Nicol

**Across**

- 7 Fog or ice may be one (6)
- 8 Gets on a bike (6)
- 9 A kind of brake (4)
- 10 A place for one's feet (8)
- 11 Device that makes two things compatible (7)
- 13 Not illuminated (5)
- 15 Highways (5)
- 17 Split away from a chosen course (7)
- 20 Small pieces of paper thrown on festive occasions (8)
- 21 Slang for "talks" (4)
- 23 Circular coral reefs surrounding lagoons (6)
- 24 One can admire it riding through the countryside (6)

Down

- 1 Cab (4)
- 2 Reverse (4,2)
- 3 Instructed and enlightened (7)
- 4 Extensive, unenclosed countryside is (1,4)
- 5 Enjoy a ride (3,3)
- 6 Putting away (in a secret place) (8)
- 12 Those who fall away from a course (8)
- 14 Cogwheels or gears (7)
- 16 How bikers aim to ride (6)
- 18 A high speed in M.P.H. (6)
- 19 Every biker must pass ????? (1,4)
- 22 A stream in Scotland (4)

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