



## The Magazine of The Scottish Motorcycle Club

### **WELCOME...**

to September's edition as we head towards the end of the current season. The weather has been fantastic over the summer and hopefully it will stay dry for a while longer. The Events calendar has a Run on every weekend in September but if anyone wants to volunteer to do one in October, as we only have Ken's half dayer on the 26<sup>th</sup>, then get in touch with John M at [events@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk](mailto:events@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk)

Cheers, **Janet Moss**

[Bikebytes@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk](mailto:Bikebytes@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk)

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The membership currently stands at 62 and we welcome three new members:-

Mike Garbutt from Glenfarg who rides a BMW K1200s

Steve Kerr from Glenrothes who rides a Yamaha XJR1300

Ian Jones from Stirling who rides a BMW R1150GS

Mike Forrester from Falkirk who rides a Kawasaki ZZR600

### **LANDMARKS CHALLENGE**

Tommy Taylor has been out and completed the challenge, joining the Eddies to make three with a full house and a Gold award. Superb - well done to all. Chairman John Hill has got the bit between his teeth and the bike between his legs to gain the latest Silver. Janet and John Moss had got out in early August to get to Silver and currently sit on 15 visits each - only needing St Andrews to complete Gold. Gavin Paton saddled up and knocked off eight visits in a couple of days to go straight to Bronze and has added another one since. We have three Golds, three Silvers and six Bronzes at this report.

As at 9th September there have been one hundred and sixty one visits by eighteen different members to all of the sixteen landmarks. The most popular destination is McCaig's Tower, then Meikleour hedge and the A1 border site. So far there are thirty nine pictures in the Best Landmark Photo competition.

**Steve Middleton**

## **RABBIT IN THE HEADLIGHT**

Tommy Taylor, who as you have just read, has completed this year's Challenge volunteered(?) to have the spotlight turned on him for this edition.



### **How long have you been a member of the SMC?**

Officially, I joined in May 2000(?) but I had been a member of its precursor, the Scottish Branch of the Honda Owners' Club, since late 1981.

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

Passed my test in July 1981 on a H100. First 'proper' bike was probably the CX500EC (bought 1982). But I consider the earlier steeds (C70, H100 & 250 SuperDream) to be 'proper' bikes too.

### **What would be your dream bike?**

One that can cruise at motorway speeds, has a return of around 100mpg and costs next to nothing to insure.

### **What is your favourite biking road?**

Ah, now that's a hard one. Probably the A87/A877.

### **Where were you born and when (optional)?**

Aberdeen, February 1961.

**What do you do for a living?**

Systems Administrator (computer geek!) at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen.

**What's your favourite film?**

I'm not much of a film buff.

**What's your favourite food/drink?**

I'm not much of a food buff either – but ye cannae whack haggis, neeps and tatties.

**What's your pet hate?**

Inconsiderate buffoons – especially if they are at the wheel of a car.

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

Computer - it's got a lot of pics, docs & (my own) songs on it.

Bike jacket - it's got the keys in it!

Not sure there's anything else ...

**Who from history would you like to meet and why?**

William Wallace; to ask him how he managed to lose to those soft Sassenachs.

**SPAIN & PORTUGAL**

Thanks to Alan Hopper who sent in this account of his recent holiday abroad.

I have had a busy summer and hadn't managed a club run at all this year until yesterday so it was good to see a few 'old faces'. Various things have got in the way but I did manage a trip to Spain and Portugal on the bike at the end of May. I can recommend this thoroughly. The north of Spain is a complete contrast to the Spain of the travel brochures and in many ways the countryside reminds you of home. On one overnight stop - at Santiago de Compostella - I even came across a piper in the main square, not a Scottish export but local to this part of Spain and its Celtic connections. My route was to Portsmouth for the overnight sailing to Santander and although you can do it in the day, I decided to stop overnight at Salisbury to take in the Motor Museum at Beaulieu which takes you on a pleasant meander through the New Forest with plenty time for getting to the ferry after that.

The Portsmouth to Santander route gets you into Spain around tea time (what we call tea time anyway, not Spanish tea time) so I decided to do 2 or 3 hours before stopping at Oviedo for the night. The route is already quite dramatic here and although there is motorway, you can easily keep on the old roads given a little more time. The following day I kept off the motorway completely and had a good day's riding getting to Santiago de

Compostella late afternoon. The roads are generally well kept and on my routes at least were very quiet, scenic with lots of twists and turns through stunning scenery. What more could you want? Oh yes, then there's the weather. This part of Spain gets considerably more rain than the south but I had a week of sunshine as a bonus and at that time of the year, it is pleasant at around the low to mid 20s. Ideal for biking.

Santiago is well worth a stop with its magnificent cathedral and it is of course the stopping point for the thousands of pilgrims who do El Camino de Santiago, sometimes walking hundreds of miles to get there and not always for religious reasons I am told. Next day, I headed south into Portugal, an easy day's ride or probably no more than a few hours if I hadn't had a few coffee and photo stops on the way. My base for the night was a lovely little town on the coast called Viana do Castelo. Having parked up at my B&B, I wandered across the road and enjoyed some people-watching from a pavement cafe with my bottled beer for a very modest one euro! I could have had quite a few at that price but I was keen to see the place and take some more photos before dinner so resisted the temptation. Much cheapness though. The next day I headed across country, skirting the River Limia through a national park and more lovely scenery (coffee stop in the sun for 60 cents this time!) and back into Spain. Stopping this time at Astorga, I allowed myself the next morning off and had a good look around the well preserved old town which has a wonderful Gaudi palace and some beautiful old buildings. As always I was struck by how clean things were in contrast to home where the litter problem seems to have reached epidemic proportions.



Picturesque 60 cent coffee stop



Gaudi's Palace at Astorga

The afternoon promised some spectacular riding up to the Picos and again I seemed to have the roads to myself apart from the occasional car and various animals wandering around the road. I stopped over at Potes where I had been on a previous trip. This is a good base from which to explore the Picos in any detail, being a sizeable village with plenty accommodation and eating places. It is also an easy ride to/from Santander.



View of the Picos with sweeping bends, deserted roads...

I headed back there for around midday the following morning to allow me a few hours to see Santander itself and then boarded the ferry for the leisurely overnight crossing back to Portsmouth. Getting in mid afternoon next day, I then just headed straight back up the motorway and with stops etc got in just after midnight as I had to work the next day. Although it is a bit of a trek to the south coast and a longish and not cheap ferry crossing, the rewards are immediate when you come off with everything you could wish for on a good bike tour - scenery, roads, food and hopefully weather. Highly recommend it.

## Alan Hopper

### YOUR OPINION

You were asked what is your favourite coffee/lunch stop and why? Here are the responses:-

Sarah said

"I think my favourite is the Jameson Farm Shop just outside Abernethy as they have really nice organic food on offer which isn't too expensive and a big farm shop as well, with a lot of things on offer. It's also near to a lot of great roads round Perth."

John Nicol replied

"1. Glencoe coffee shop on left just past Glencoe Hotel and petrol station heading North. Don't know its name.  
2. Flat Cat Gallery in Lauder, yummy  
3. Number thirty one in the square Blairgowrie.  
4. Harbour café in Gairloch.  
5. Café in Moffat opposite the best western hotel, near the petrol station, again cannot remember the name."

Neil Johnston said

" My favourite cafe is the one where Alan Hopper buys the tea and scones, as I am still waiting for the event, the current favourite is The Flat Cat in Lauder, the apple pie is to die for and the Americano coffee is the best."

Jonathan Douglas sent in several links to his fave stops

"I found this café <http://www.the68cafe.co.uk/contact-us> on the A68. Good food, small holds about 60 people at the max, on the fabulous A68, the side without the annoying speed cameras. Not sure when the club is next likely to head down the A68, but it was a good find. Failing that I like the chip shop in Dunkeld, excellent F&C <https://en-gb.facebook.com/pages/Dunkeld-Fish-Bar/118232068240476>, but the best F&C in my opinion is in Oban, but a bit of a trek [http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant\\_Review-g186501-d1083193-Reviews-The\\_George\\_St\\_Fish\\_Chip\\_Shop-Oban\\_Argyll\\_and\\_Bute\\_Scotland.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g186501-d1083193-Reviews-The_George_St_Fish_Chip_Shop-Oban_Argyll_and_Bute_Scotland.html) definitely worth it though."

George Kay's reponse was:-

"I am a water and water sports / boating enthusiast therefore four of my favourite stops are:-

A85 - Lochearnhead Water Sports Centre and Cafe. This is a very relaxing stop with good parking, food Ts and Cs which is located lochside with its own car park, jetty, slipway and has inside / outside seating. Both inside and out are suitable for viewing water sports activities and also, from time to time, watching the comings and goings of a seaplane that resides adjacent to the centre and which takes off, circles the Loch and lands back at the cafe although I have not seen it for a while. The previous owners were particularly biker friendly but not sure about new owners although there are always bikers there so the owners must be OK with us all.

A708 - Glen cafe and Bistro St Mary's Loch. Once again a very relaxing water front location which is very popular indeed with bikers. A good variety of food, Ts and Cs with inside / outside seating. Owners must be very biker friendly going by the biker custom they attract and location can be extremely busy at times.

A199 - Foxlake Adventures - Approx 2 miles west of West Barns. Yet another waterside location with reasonable parking and for those interested in wake boarding, by pulley system, then it is worth a visit. The centre opened a new cafe / bar, in July this year which provides a limited but much appreciated albeit limited range of food, Ts and Cs. They only have outside seating and as to whether or not they are biker friendly I am not sure as have only visited by car so far.

Anstruther - Harbour front Fish and Chip Shops. Parking available in public car parks harbour side - Charges apply. This is a meeting place well frequented by bikers and is always worth a visit when in the area.

Cafe - Main Street Gifford. "Love Coffee" is a small but very friendly little cafe with seating for up to around fifteen people and is a very popular stop for motorcyclists, cyclists and walkers. The owner and his partner are both very interested in motorcycling. On street parking is free and convenient but it can be quite congested at times, especially in the immediate vicinity of the cafe, itself depending upon the weather and time of day however more parking is available around the village."

Steve MacKinnon nominated these stops

"There are cafes and restaurants which do great food (**The Allanwater Cafe**), others which are spectacularly situated (**Castle Stalker View Cafe**) and yet others which by their welcome, location and atmosphere are forever memorable (**The Applecross Inn**), but for sheer stoicism in the face of half drowned bikers, my favourite would have to be **The Cafe Bluebell, Campbeltown**.

John Hill, Janet, John and I arrived dripping wet from a run down the Mull of Kintyre in torrential rain. As we sat in the cafe, a small lake radiating slowly across the floor from our table, we looked less like a bunch of motorcyclists than a support group for the catastrophically incontinent. The waitresses took it all in their stride, remaining really friendly and professional as the rising water gently lapped around their shoes."

Michael says:-

"When I am on the bike I like to eat lightly and cheaply. For that reason I think that supermarket fare is hard to beat. A meal deal at Tesco for £3 gets you fresh sandwiches, packet of crisps and a bottle of fresh orange juice. If I am particularly hungry

Morrisons cafe can provide a 'Flying Scotsman' which is a fried breakfast, slices of buttered toast and a pot of tea all for around a fiver."

Steve Middleton wrote:-

**Key: S** = snacks, coffee, tea etc.; **L** = meals, lunch etc.

**Kinross, Loch Leven's Larder – S** Delicatessen café with nice furnishings.

**Dundee, Premier Inn – S** Café with some squishy seats. Check parking charges/details & reclaim fee.

**North Berwick, Ship Inn – S** Pub serving good coffee, outside tables. Park on pavement opposite or carpark round corner.

**North Berwick, Frier – L** Good chippie, next-but-one to C. above. Sit-down room at rear.

**St Mary's Loch, Glen Café & Bistro – S (&L?)** Chilled-out café with great views and outside tables.

**Moffat, Rumbin' Tum – S** Cake'n'coffee shop on east side of main road. Park in middle of street.

**Inveraray Castle Tea Room – S** Café In the basement. Very good cakes. Gravel carpark.

**H. Powmill Milk Bar – S**

Good cakes and scones, speedy service, outside tables. Watch the uneven carpark surface.

**Crieff, Royal China – L** Good chippie. Eat in the square opposite, park below that.

**A9, House of Bruar - S & L** Large with a wide range of good food, plus loads of retail therapy available.

**Peebles, Tontine Hotel – S** Squishy seats and good coffee. Find out what Tontine means.

**Peebles Fish Bar – L** Walk thru' the archway opposite down to the riverside to share with the gulls.

John Hill sent in his choices:-

"Crafts & Things, Glencoe. Good coffee and scones (that's how I rate my cafes). The cafe is always welcoming and cosy and has other tasty food. Great location as you've either ridden through Glen Coe to get here or are going to on the way back. It's always awesome. And beyond are some great biking roads. To sit outside on a warm late afternoon looking up to Glen Coe is as near perfect as you can get.

Craft Cafe on Laggan road just west of Dalwhinnie (sorry can't remember name). Good coffee, scones and home baking. Nice group of tables to sit outside in the middle of nowhere in the Highlands.

Flat Cat Gallery in Lauder. Only been there once, on last Sunday's run to Seahouses. Will try it again. Great selection of home baking and very pleasant service.

Local cafes I rate are :

Dollar Main Street. 1st cafe on left coming from Stirling direction. Can sit outside. Good coffee and scones.

Tillie Tearoom in Tillicoultry. Behind the bank on the right in the main street coming from Stirling, just before the bus parking area and right turn to Sterling Warehouse. Has own car park at rear. Excellent variety of scones, good coffee and tea!"

John and I came up with these favourites:-

**Brechin Castle Visitor Centre** – plenty of seating and good scones.

**Gleneagles Resort** – good parking, excellent service and fine afternoon tea!

**The Waterwheel Cafe**, Selkirk – bad car park but good food and pleasant surroundings.

**Quarry View Coffee shop**, Crarae Furnace, Inverary on the A83 – good service, lovely views and just before (or after) you've done the fabby A816 to/from Oban.

**Cafe Stobart @ Carlisle Airport** – good cheap food and you can watch the small planes take off.

**Mull of Galloway Lighthouse cafe**, - great roads, good food and stunning views on a clear day.

**Samye Ling Buddhist Centre**, Eskdalemuir – somewhere different to enjoy a meat free lunch in a very tranquil setting.

**Chimes Cafe**, Forres – good milkshakes.

And last but not least – **The Real Food Cafe**, Tyndrum – nice cakes/scones, good fish and chips, good parking.

## SUMMER PURCHASES

Over the summer I have been replacing some of my bike gear and I bought a new Knox back protector and a pair of Spada Hurricane boots from Two Wheels Honda, Edinburgh who discounted the goods for me.

**Michael Wight**

## STEVE MIDDLETON'S TRACK SESSION



I attended an invitation afternoon track session in the last week of August at Knockhill. Two hours, open track, 40 folk mainly with an IAM background, so sensible riders on their daily ride bikes. Judy Broad and Jonathan Douglas of SMC were there too together with others I know from around Scotland. The weather was perfect – dry, warm, not too sunny.

I had last been on the track four years ago on the VFR750 in a session using groups, so total time on track then had added up to about an hour. With an open track you could be out for the full two hours without stopping, but my physical stamina is not up to that, and

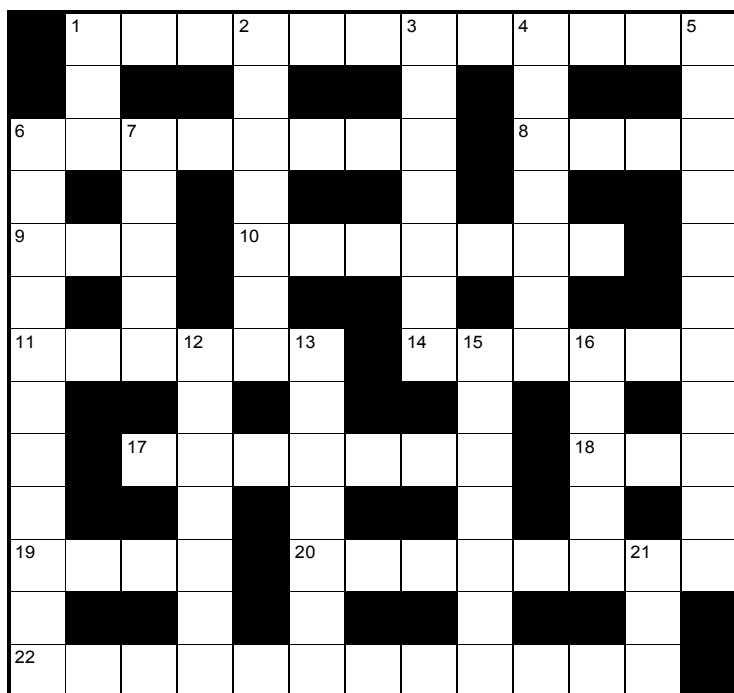
anyone's concentration will waver without a break. I did two 20 minute blocks with a total of about half an hour over two breaks – one was long while a fallen bike was recovered – then went out for a final 45 minutes until the chequered flag was shown. My trip meter showed a total of just over 70 miles; my GPS unit shows a maximum speed of 104mph (about 110 on the speedo – my attention was on the braking point!).

I had a great time. My TDM900A was able to keep up with just about anything round the corners and only lost out on acceleration to the sports bikes – oh, and BMW GSs. I (deliberately) found out what the ABS feels like when it does its thing, I now know exactly when the rev limiter cuts in, I got rid of my chicken strip on the rear's RHS and chamfered the hero blob on that side too. The bike behaved perfectly and showed no mechanical strain despite being outside its normal operating environment.

I'm looking forward to a promised repeat session, but run in the reverse direction to add to the interest – and to chamfer the other side of the bike! Mind you, the prospect of accelerating down the hill to the hairpin is a bit daunting, but I'll cope!

**Steve Middleton**

**Go down to the next page for the latest crossword. Solution in the next edition!!**



## ACROSS

- 1 Devices for increasing speed (12)
- 6 Clear highway (4,4)
- 8 Count Dracula's butler (4)
- 9 Large bird (3)
- 10 Rare (7)
- 11 Policeman (slang) (6)
- 14 Not wide (6)
- 17 Power, authority (7)
- 18 Short sleep (3)
- 19 At liberty (4)
- 20 Adds sugar (8)
- 22 Newton's regulations for movement (4,2,6)

## DOWN

- 1 Measure of electrical charge (3)
- 2 On the way (2,5)
- 3 A biker does this, given a green light (5,2)
- 4 Atmosphere at the top of a mountain (4,3)
- 5 See clearly with the aid of these (11)
- 6 Can a motor-cyclist be this? (11)
- 7 Fit out, furnish (5)
- 12 Outstanding skill (7)
- 13 Passage or Spring completes this phrase (7)
- 15 Illness (7)
- 16 Scope, or a group of mountains (5)
- 21 Woman in holy orders (3)

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