

BikeBytes

The Magazine of The Scottish Motorcycle Club

WELCOME...

To the latest edition of BikeBytes. We're now into Autumn and some unseasonably mild weather has meant that Club runs have continued well into October. For all-year-round bikers, here's hoping the weather stays mild!

Challenge Update

This year's Challenge has been hugely popular. At the time of writing, members have made 264 railway station visits. Currently, 10 members have achieved Gold awards, having visited all 16 stations.

		SMC Railway Station Challenge 2017																			
		Visits																			
		Forthard	Dunrobin Castle	Plockton	Arisaig	Roy Bridge	Boat of Garten	Kerth	Ballater	Rannoch	Cornel Bridge	Bo'ness	Lagybank	Berwick-upon-Tweed	Barnhill	Dumfries	Tweedbank	8	12	16	Award
Name	Totals	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P				
Alasdair Wood	7	28/04	28/04	30/04		30/04	27/04					11/03	11/03								
Tommy Taylor	16	29/07	29/07	08/10	20/08	20/08	09/04	09/04	26/03	01/07	20/08	17/04	17/04	17/06	24/09	24/09	17/06	01/07	20/08	08/10	
Janet Moss	16	02/05	02/05	08/07	28/05	01/05	01/05	03/05	03/05	22/04	01/05	25/03	22/04	25/03	25/03	25/03	25/03	01/05	02/05	08/07	
John Moss	16	02/05	02/05	08/07	28/05	01/05	01/05	03/05	03/05	22/04	01/05	25/03	22/04	25/03	25/03	25/03	25/03	01/05	02/05	08/07	
Ken Eddie	14	29/07	29/07			17/04	28/07	30/07	30/07	17/04	08/07	25/03	25/03	08/04	15/04	15/04	08/04	17/04	29/07		
Sarah Eddie	16	29/07	29/07	30/03	30/03	17/04	30/07	30/07	30/07	17/04	08/07	25/03	25/03	08/04	15/04	15/04	08/04	17/04	30/07	30/03	
George Kay	3											08/04	14/06				25/03				
Michael Wight	4											06/05	14/06	25/05			25/03				
Douglas Miller	16	28/04	28/04	30/04	02/03	30/04	27/04	22/09	22/09	22/09	02/09	29/08	17/09	17/06	01/04	01/04	17/06	17/07	02/03	22/03	
Alex Muir	12				15/08	15/08	12/08			14/05	25/06	16/04	16/04	16/07	16/07	17/06	23/04	16/07	15/08		
Peter Johnson	16	28/04	28/04	30/04	02/03	30/04	27/04	13/08	13/08	12/08	02/09	16/04	16/04	10/06	17/09	17/09	10/06	10/06	13/08	17/09	
David Jerome	10						27/08	27/08	14/05	07/09	04/06	17/04	10/06	28/05	15/08	23/04	27/08				
John Deacons	16	28/04	28/04	30/04	07/06	30/04	27/04	05/06	07/05	01/05	09/06	16/04	16/04	03/06	30/05	30/05	23/04	01/05	30/05	09/06	
James Millar	10	28/04	28/04	30/04	30/04	27/04	27/04					30/08	10/05	02/04	02/04	10/06		10/05			
John Nicol	16	26/08	26/08	09/09	06/05	28/05	18/07	27/08	18/07	14/05	23/05	01/04	25/03	21/04	17/09	21/06	23/04	28/05	26/08	17/09	
Steve Middleton	16	13/08	13/08	13/08	14/08	14/08	12/08	12/08	12/08	03/07	14/08	10/05	14/05	14/06	24/06	24/06	16/06	12/08	13/08	14/08	
Marcus Sharp	12	28/04	28/04	30/04	27/05	30/04	27/04			14/05	16/08	19/05	17/05	10/06			23/04	17/05			
James McKeeman	16	08/05	08/05	08/05	07/05	07/05	09/05	09/04	09/04	09/05	07/05	23/04	16/04	03/04	04/04	04/04	23/04	23/04	08/05	09/05	
Mandy Johnson	12				02/03		12/08	13/08	13/08	12/08	02/09	11/07	13/08	23/09	17/09	17/09	23/09	02/03	23/09		
John Hill	9						12/08	12/08	12/09	25/07	01/09	03/09	05/09				17/06	05/09			
Jonathan Douglas	11			01/10	01/10	03/09	27/08	27/08	07/05	03/09	03/09	30/08	31/08				17/07				
0	0																				
	264	14	14	14	14	16	19	13	16	17	17	21	20	18	15	17	19				

The Challenge will continue on until early next year. However, the Committee are now starting to think what the theme for next year should be. If anyone has any suggestions, please add them to the topic on the forum.

Mandy's "Other Club" National Trip Adventures

As some of you know I'm in another all ladies club called Curvy Riders which is a national club with approximately 450 members and 24 different regions from Aberdeenshire down to Dorset and even over to the Isle of Man (where our Chair Person lives!)

Because we are so far flung every year we have a National Trip where 100 of us will meet up for a long weekend (Friday – Monday) which is great way of making new friends, catching up with old friends, exploring different areas (the venue for the national changes every year – this year it was County Durham) and well just general good fun and banter all weekend!

This year was a big year for me, in part because of my antics last year where I slipped and fell in the shower (no alcohol was involved!) and generally being unable to ride all weekend and having to be rescued home by Peter, but also because this year we set up the new West Lothian & Central region which I am Point of Contact for.

After much planning and excitement (and sore heads on Peter's part as 3 giggling ladies sat in our living room trying to connect intercoms as he was trying to keep us right!) myself, Rebecca (who has also just joined SMC), Debbie & Kat all met up at Dobbies in Livingston for a rather drizzly and damp start to our trip – but don't worry – we were kept nice and warm by our rather fetching pink or purple tutu's (oh yes, we did!) and a quick blast along the motorway saw us stop at Hermiston Gait to meet Suzi the Fife Rep.



It was at this point that Debbie realised she had forgotten her swimming cozzie so Kat stayed with the bikes and the rest of us headed off into Decathlon – not really much I can say about that stop – except that I was picked on and tricked into putting a swimming cap & goggles on and we are still not sure if we are banned from Decathlon or not!



Back out to the car park and Suzi arrives, promptly followed, by chance, by Kona (Perth Rep) who was hard to miss in her day-glo yellow rain suit! So we waited for Kona to have a quick stop and then all set off together down to Earlston for a cuppa with just a few rain showers (luckily we dodged the heavy one that came on just as we were sitting down to our cuppa!) Think I forgot to warn the girls some of the bends are a bit severe over Soutra but all was good!

Because it was showery we decided to head straight to Otterburn Mill to meet up with Edinburgh & Lothians, Clyde Valley and Dumfries & Galloway girls rather than going through Keilder so off we tootled again down the A68 through some more wee rain showers. We met the girls and had a fab wee lunch and then each region made our departures at various times and we set off to go down the rest of the way on the A68, except the Sat Nav was being an idiot and kept wanting us to go round in a circle so I chose to ignore it for a bit well that turned out to be a bit of a mistake, as apparently it did know what it was doing in trying to get me to go back up the way we had come for a little bit (to find the A68) so we ended up going the “alternative” route – right through Newcastle, past the Metro Centre, on a Friday afternoon!! Lovely traffic jams and not really able to filter because of having panniers on and narrow lanes but we got there eventually – just a tad later than planned! A wee quick stop at Sainsbury’s in Bishop Auckland saw everyone fuelling up and stocking up on supplies for the weekend and Kat had a wee oopsy moment when we

got split up at the car park and some of the girls went the wrong way and had to turn back round and her bike (new Honda Rebel 500) decided it needed a little lie down in the middle of the road but other than a bruised leg, some scuffs and being a bit annoyed with herself all was good (note : us girls never drop our bikes, they just get tired and decide to have a lie down from time to time!)

Friday night is a more relaxed night as everyone arrives at different times, so rooms found, luggage dropped off and much squealing in excitement at the Jacuzzi bath and walk-in shower and we hit the bar to meet with the other fantabulous Curvy's for a wee drink before the buffet and general chit-chat and decide what we are doing on the Saturday amongst loads of hugs and general catching up with everyone and making introductions.

One of the local ladies, the lovely Sharon, had offered to lead a run up round Hartside Pass on the Saturday and we plumped for that (since she knows the local roads and we also fancied riding with other girls we don't ride with rather than just tagging along with the Edinburgh & Lothian and Clyde girls) so we were sorted so off to bed we went, although much chatting was to be had until the wee small hours (although Rebecca assured me she was a good girl and it was lights out at 10.30pm for her but I'm still not convinced!).

Saturday was a bright and early start for breakfast, before meeting Sharon & everyone else going on the run at 9.45am (a wee tad bleary eyed which would explain why Rebecca forgot to take her disc lock off her bike (MT07 Tracer) before she went to move off and over she went as well – few wee scuff marks and a not so happy Charlie when she phoned him) and then off for an amazing run up to Hartside Café with 13 of us heading out and my girls getting their first introduction to the drop-off system.

It was blowing a gale and probably borderline whether we should have been out or not, never mind the cyclists who were being blown off their bikes (literally), but we did it and it was amazing and we survived. The roads up to the Hartside Café are fantastic, and would be even better in the sun but unfortunately some of the group found the conditions extremely difficult and rather than have anyone feel pressured it was decided to split into two groups so I took over TEC duties with Sharon leading the final way up the hill.



A quick coffee and thaw out stop was had and by the time we left quite a few more bikers had arrived and some old vintage cars as well. Just after leaving Hartside you go down some pretty amazing hairpin bends and there were loads of grins later on when we stopped again and much “OMG did I really just do that” from us all! Next stop was Brough Castle Ice Cream Parlour which was lovely (although we ended up re-arranging the furniture to seat us all!) and then homeward bound to get ready for the evenings shenanigans (party night!).



In true Curvy fashion nothing is straightforward, and poor Sharon suffered the recurrence of a previous mechanical issue on her bike and she had to pull over in a layby and phone recovery and despite her protesting that we should just leave her in the layby at the side of the road, we stayed with her until she was recovered. So what's to do when you are stuck at the side of the road for an hour? Have a party of course! Who knew that neck tubes could also be used to keep your hair out your eyes when it's windy, and we all adopted the Gangsta look and sang along with cheesy 80s tunes I had on my phone and had a right good girly giggle which also included me getting stuck on the ground and struggling to get back up after having some photos taken – I'll leave it to your imagination the antics we got

up to – the other group that had come out with us that day even rode past and waved – as they thought we had just stopped for a break as it was in a rather scenic spot!



The journey home was just as eventful after pulling in to a garage for Mary from London to get some oil and a lady came running over to tell me I had something caught in my back wheel or chain as she heard it when I was passing. Much looking and rocking of the bike ensued and a wee ride round the forecourt when we were all a bit confused, was there? wasn't there? was it a stone lodged somewhere? Who knew and we weren't 100% sure we could hear anything so we decided to go the few miles back to the hotel slowly and made it back none the wiser (with me deciding to ride with just Debbie behind me as if I was at the front and went down I didn't want to take everyone else out – but I was happy to take Debbie out apparently!)

We got back to the hotel at 6.30pm to find out an issue Kat had had with her room hadn't been resolved so a couple of calls to reception & a meeting with house-keeping to resolve that with a fold-up bed being put in mine & Debbie's room we had about 30mins to get ready for party night pre-dinner drinks (with our room now resembling a dormitory with 3 beds all lined up in a row with not much room in between them!) – have you ever tried to get 3 ladies organised, changed, hair & make-up done in 30mins? That was a task and a half in itself!

Party night is exactly that – and what a party! The drinking had started before we even left the room for some of us, and I don't think we stopped laughing, dancing and drinking all evening and for those on my Facebook page, I apologise now for the "Facebook Live" rendition of Status Quo that we all had! We were still going at the end of the night and reluctantly headed back to our room when the DJ started packing up except Rebecca's room-mate wasn't well and had gone to bed early and Rebecca's key wasn't working – so she came for a sleepover as well and ended up sleeping on mattress toppers on the floor

at the end of the beds – so our room now slept 4! I think we finally stopped talking and giggling at about 3am after what had been an extremely long but amazing day!

Sorry, but you are NOT getting to see the morning after photo!!

7am saw us up on Sunday to get organised for breakfast and down for photo's for 9.30am! – Kat & I were only a little hungover but Debs & Rebecca hadn't even sobered up yet so the decision was taken to have a lazy day. After posing for the group & regional photo's we went to look at Tigger with one of the more tech savvy ladies from Clyde Valley and it was determined I had somehow lost a brake pad the previous day and as the disc also wasn't looking too funky! Exactly when the pad came off we have no idea as the brake was definitely working fine and we still weren't sure if we could hear a noise on the Sunday morning or not – until I pressed the back brake which suddenly felt extremely spongy and there was now a horrible grinding noise which hadn't been there before! With the girls hitting the spa and me hitting the phone to phone the AA and local garages (to get advice of "just ride it home love – you will be fine with jus your front brake – or do you not know how to ride your bike!") and speaking with Peter who was on the SMC run to Seahouses and had offered to come down and fit a pad if I could get one, it was eventually ascertained that this just wasn't going to happen on a Sunday and even being recovered to a garage on the Monday morning wasn't ideal as I had no clue where, who would have the pad and disc in stock, how long it would take to fix and when would I get home having to then ride up on my own it was decided I would phone the AA on the Monday morning (not ruining my weekend away!) and just be recovered home.



Unfortunately Kat has to leave us in the afternoon so we waved our goodbyes and then some of us (Debbie!) went for a wee nap and the rest of us sat about and blethered and sorted out the Sat Nav for the girls to get home on the Monday, since I was no longer taking them back up the road.

Sunday evening meal is again a more relaxed affair, with the AGM being held first (when else are you going to get 100 Curvy's in one place at the same time) and then the meal. Much excitement and google searching was done when our Chair person announced the

venue for next year's trip (apparently I'm still allowed to go on the trip as long as I don't break anything next year!). After the meal is a quiz run by our Aberdeenshire Rep but Debbie and I decided to retire for the evening although we still spent a couple of hours chatting before going to sleep!

Monday morning was filled with packing, more phone calls to the AA and getting my recovery sorted, so once we had breakfast it was off to help the girls get packed and see them off for their journey home while I stayed behind singing "All by myself" and waited for the AA man while helping some of the other girls move bikes and get organised for their own trips home.

The girls came home the correct way up the A68 thanks to Debbie's ace route planning skills, although from what I'm told it was a sloooooowwww start as her sat nav had programmed itself to find every slow moving vehicle possible (hay trucks etc) and about half an hour or more was spent in 2nd gear! They stopped for a photo opportunity at the border stone with a piper and caused quite a stir I believe. Much "ooooohhhh lady bikers - fantastic" attention and this was in no way caused by the fact that Debbie managed to lose the keys for her bike for 5mins (there are only so many places they could be so the mind boggles!!) before heading back up to Earlston café again for more white hot chocolate (I'm not jealous in the slightest!).

I eventually got home about 7.30pm after 3 AA relay legs and being dropped at Abington Services for 2hrs (I think they forgot to organise the 3rd stint home) after what was a very long day (for some reason the first AA man thought it would be better to come up the motorway rather than just fire up the A68 so that added quite a bit of time as well!).



I eventually got home about 7pm after being dumped at Abingdon Services or 2hrs but it didn't spoil the weekend in the slightest. Gutted I couldn't come home with the girls but I can honestly say I have not laughed or danced so much in I don't know how long.

The above is a glimpse into the shenanigans we got up to – as you would expect with 100 women getting together there was a fair bit of excitement and inappropriateness, and 100 women bikers is not different! But as we say – what happens on the trip stays on the trip!

Riding with the girls is very different to riding with SMC (as you can probably tell!) but I truly believe they go hand in hand – I wouldn't be able to lead the girls and take on the region (with Rebecca's help) like I have if it hadn't been for the support of SMC and the encouragement you all give me, and I think leading the girls and encouraging them so much means I'm able to push myself further on SMC runs (the girls have this strange notion that I'm really confident!) and hopefully become a more independent rider as well (they are forever telling me "we will just follow you"!)

One final, piece of advice I would give you all – you may want to avoid the Cheltenham area the first week in August next year!

I will leave you with one final photo of me and all the girls taken on the Sunday morning.



Ride, eat cake, repeat!!

Non-biking Activities

During the winter, when most of the bikes are off the road, the Committee thought it would be a good idea to have potentially have a day out doing something that was not biking but where Club members could have a catch up. Suggestions so far have been: a Knockhill track day, Go Ape, climbing at Ratho Station, having a go on Segways or Go Karting. If anyone fancies any of these, or has an idea of something else that we could do to pass the time over the winter months, please do let the Committee know – or even sound out the Membership to see who would be interested.

Awards Night

The awards night is going to be held on 24th February at the Star and Garter in Linlithgow. As most will know, there were some problems with the quality of service last year. As recompense we were offered a discount for our next group booking so we have decided to give them a second chance. If you would like to attend the Awards night, please let the Events Secretary know.

Contact the Scottish Motorcycle Club via the Membership Secretary: Peter Johnson
E-mail: secretary@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk