
The Monthly Magazine Of The Scottish Motorcycle Club

WELCOME

It's been a rather wet August but we were lucky on many of the club runs to enjoy some pretty fair weather. **John Hill**, from Stirling, joined us on the Brechin & Braemar run on his Yamaha FJR 1300 and signed up as our newest member at the end of the trip. Welcome, John, and we hope to see you on many more ride outs.

The chestnut trees are already starting to display a hint of autumn colour but we still have many club activities to look forward to. Coming up in September:

Thursday 3rd: Janet & John's Chip Shop Run to Comrie. Meet at Stirling Services at 6.45pm.

Saturday 5th: Paul Broughton's half day Summerlee Industrial Museum Run. Meet at Dunblane Cathedral 10am.

Sunday 6th: Steve Middleton's epic Grand Tour taking in Kinlochleven, Fort Augustus and Dalwhinnie. Meet at Stirling Services 8.45am for a long day out.

Wednesday 9th: Club Night. Black Bitch, Linlithgow 8pm.

Saturday 12th/Sunday 13th: Janet & John's Moray Weekend. Meet at Kinross Services 9.45am. This is now fully booked.

Saturday 12th: Steve Middleton's trip to the Bo'ness Hillclimb. Meet at West Port, Linlithgow. Time TBA.

Saturday 19th: Ken Eddie's half day Trossachs Run. Meet at Dobbies, Stirling 12.45pm.

Saturday 19th: BMF & MAG 'bikes in bus lanes' event. Meet at Hermiston Park & Ride at 11.30am for a ride through the city streets to Holyrood Park.

Saturday 26th: Ken Eddie's half day Up 'n' Doon th' Forth Run. Meet at West Port, Linlithgow 12.45pm.

As always, please log in to the website at www.scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk for all the latest news, run reports, photos etc.

Steve MacKinnon

EDITORIAL

September already! At this rate, the only way that I'm going to get some decent riding is if we move to Spain...there's the small matter of winning the lottery first though.

In this edition (seven pages!), we've got the second part of the Moss's journey to the 'Far North', Paul Cameron's experience of 'Rocket Ron' Haslam's race school, Steve Middleton's trip to the Channel Islands and the first of our 'Bodge of the Month' articles (we need some more bodes...any ideas?).

Another bumper edition...this is great!

Enjoy YOUR magazine!

Ken Glendinning

Bikes in Bus Lanes?

Last September, the City of Edinburgh Council decided not to allow Powered Two Wheelers to use the City's bus lanes. The BMF and MAG had presented very credible submissions to the Transport Committee to support our side of the argument and the safety and congestion benefits. Unfortunately, a number of the other submissions were against, especially the cycling lobby. They don't want buses in bus lanes either of course!

This September, we have asked the City Council to look at this again and this time we have some councillors on our side. We're also taking a leaf out of the cycling lobby's book and trying to raise our profile a bit.

Contact the Scottish Motorcycle Club via the Membership Secretary:

Steve MacKinnon

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BMF and MAG are arranging an escorted run through the City Centre on Saturday the 19th of September, meeting at the Hermiston Park and Ride at 11:30am and heading for Holyrood Park.

Obviously we need as many motorcyclists, scooter and moped riders as possible on this run to get ourselves noticed and hopefully, get some media coverage. I know we have another run organised that day, but, please try to come along or spread the word to as many people as possible so that we can maybe sway the Council's opinion this year.

Ken Glendinning

THE MOSS' DO SHETLAND & ORKNEY PART 2

Welcome to the Orkney part of our holiday. We arrived in Kirkwall at 11.00pm, in almost broad daylight, after another calm crossing and checked into our next "hotel", which was actually a room above a restaurant. We had breakfast in the restaurant the next morning (which cost extra) before setting off to explore. After a look around the Broch of Gurness, it was then onto the Brough of Birsay. This is located on a tidal island and unfortunately the tide was in so we had to make do with just peering at it across the bay. Skara Brae was next on the list.



It was a wee bit disappointing after all the great places we had visited on Shetland, very much set up for the tourists. In fact Skail House, which is a mansion where the chap who uncovered Skara Brae lived, is much more interesting and well worth a visit. Next was the Ring of Brodgar which is a henge (ditch) with standing stones on it. We were well impressed with the car park because it had 4 motorbike bays.



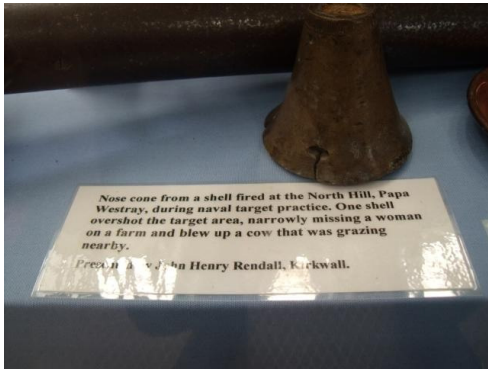
After a picnic lunch we headed down to the Italian Chapel with its wonderful plaster and art work. In the evening it was seafood for dinner and the commencement of research into Orkney Ale:- Dark Island and Northern Lights being the favourites here.

We were up and out early the next day to catch the ferry to Hoy. As we rode towards Rackwick we came across the Drawfie Stane which is a huge piece of stone that had been hollowed out as a tomb. The incredible bit was that it had been hollowed out just using bone and stone tools. You could still see the marks from when it was done over 5000 years ago! Our next stop was the car park at the Youth Hostel in Rackwick and a 3 mile trek up and around the headland to The Old Man of Hoy.



In biking kit this was no mean feat! Fortunately we had left the helmets attached to John's bike. (Ken Eddie had given us a handy tip before we went on holiday about taking a pedal bike lock with us and threading it through the helmets to attach them to the grab handle on one of the bikes. We had done this all through the holiday and it was great, not having to carry helmets everywhere with us. Thanks Ken!)

But it was well worth the hike. What a fantastic stone stack and so impressive close up! Although if you are a bit iffy about heights, you might not think so. After the 3 mile trek back it was off to Lyness and the Scapa Flow Visitor Centre for lunch and a good look around all the memorabilia from both the first and second world wars. It was actually quite emotional too, especially learning about the Royal Oak.



Nose cone from a shell fired at the North Hill, Papa Westray, during naval target practice. One shell overshot the target area, narrowly missing a woman on a farm and blew up a cow that was grazing nearby.

Presented by John Henry Rendall, Kirkwall.

Back to the mainland and off to Maeshowe, another stone age tomb which is covered with Viking graffiti – very bizarre. Back in Kirkwall it was a wander around St Magnus' Cathedral, dinner in a pub (with more ale) and then we happened upon a fiddle and accordion club who were having their weekly practice session nearby. 9 accordions, 3 fiddles, a drum and a keyboard, a brilliant way to end another day.

Next day was our last one on Orkney. We spent the morning looking around Kirkwall and then rode, or should I say got blown, to Stromness. Weather was still sunny/cloudy but the wind had certainly got up. Had great fish and chips for lunch overlooking the harbour, keenly watched by the seagulls, very reminiscent of the film *The Birds*. Then it was on the ferry to Scrabster. We stayed with friends in Thurso and rode home the following day, stopping off at Urquhart Castle to complete our memorable 10 day trip.



A few last notes (hurrah I hear) on our trip. 10 days, 11 ferries, 1025 miles door to door.

We could have done with a couple more days on both islands to do everything that was on the list. Petrol in Aberdeen – 99.9p, Lerwick – 114.9p, Kirkwall – 112.9p, Thurso – 106.9p. If you do contemplate a trip to Shetland and Orkney and are interested in learning about their history, join Historic Scotland. We joined in May on a trip to the Borders and since then, with all the places we've visited, we've more than saved the cost of the annual fee for both of us. And there's still 9 months left. Oh, and one last thing. Don't have your bike break down on Shetland (or at least not a Honda), but that's another story...

Janet Moss

Ron Haslam Race School

The well known Ron Haslam Race School <http://www.haslamraceschool.com> offers two main types of course. The first, the 'Premier' course was attended by me in August 2008 as a way to improve my riding skills, and as such I thought I'd run you through the day should it be something any other readers consider.

Booking

The Premier course gives you the chance to ride a Honda CBR 600 motorbike, race-spec on the famous Donnington Park Race Course under the instruction of a professional motorbike racer. Ron Haslam and Leon Haslam also teach on the course (a fact I can testify to, as they were both teaching when I was there!). So high quality teaching is assured. There are only two students per instructor, so the teaching is in-depth and tailored to your individual need.

Registering

Arriving on the day felt a bit like turning up to my driving test. Full of anticipation...and scared to death! But the process was smooth, with a simple sign-in and placing in to a group, and then waiting in their cafeteria for my group to be called. Different time slots were allocated to the groups, so it was easy to go for a walk around the area, look at the track and give clear instructions to my wife as to EXACTLY where to stand to get the best pictures. I'm sure she appreciated my input.

Introduction

When my group was called, we all went to change in to our leathers etc. If you had arrived without equipment, then part of the deal was for all leathers, helmets etc to be supplied. If you brought your own, they were checked for track suitability, and if anything did not come up to scratch equipment was supplied, and your belongings were kept safe by the staff. We were then taken in to a briefing room whereby an instructor went through usual health and safety

information and fire regulations prior to going in to detail about the track, the corners, the braking and leaning points and fielding questions from all of us along the way. This lasted approximately 1 hour. Just enough for all of us to get that bit more nervous.

Track Time

Time on the track consisted of 3 x 15 minute sessions. I have to confess I didn't think this sounded much at the beginning, but afterwards I was aching and exhausted both mentally and physically. Considering the intensity I think it was more than enough time. The actual format took the form of a 15 minute chat, followed by a 15 minute ride. This meant that while one group was on the track, the other was getting theoretical instruction. The advantage of this was two-fold; 1) The instruction gave you time off the bike to digest information, and to be given feedback on your last session and; 2) The tyres for your allocated bike were always up to temperature, meaning that no time on-track was wasted warming up the tyres. The allocated instructor asked me if there was anything I wanted to cover, and took this on-board whilst on track.

Finale

At the end of the session, the whole group was taken back in to a briefing area. At this point we were presented with an attendance certificate, and more importantly feedback from the instructor.

To give you an idea of the quality of teaching, here's some before, during and after pictures of my riding styles.

Before



During



After



Conclusion

The day itself was intense, but worth every penny. Positives? Well, cheap compared to other similar courses, good instruction, almost one-to-one, and all equipment supplied (including bike). Negatives? Actually...I can't think of any!!

Paul Cameron

CHANNEL ISLANDS BIKING

Elaine and I have just returned from a week's break in Jersey, flying in and using their very good bus service to get around. You may know that there is a maximum speed on the island of 40MPH, with the usual 30 in built-up areas, and a more recent use of 15MPH on specially designated Green Routes to protect walkers. The island would fit in a 7mile by 9 mile box and most of the roads are just two lanes wide without a footpath but high hedges as well. Thus there is not much incentive to use anything much more than a basic vehicle, in my view, but the locals seem to disagree with loadsa 4x4s, luxury and supercars frequently seen, and many superbikes too. I had already decided that a scooter would be my favoured transport if I lived there, when I took the opportunity to talk to a local bike rider.

We were on the bus to start a walk on the East side of the island when a rorty exhaust woke me up as it overtook – itself a rare activity, and there was the bike parked when we got off the bus. A Laverda 750 Formula in the distinctive green, white and orange paintwork of the late-90's bike, fitted with the best components from Brembo, Paoli, Ohlins and so on. I did my best to impress Elaine with my knowledge and as usual failed, but she did indulge me by listening. The rider was sitting on the other side of the road taking a coffee so I suggested to him it would be the only one of its type on the island. Yes, but only because the other had recently been sold onto the mainland. We discussed the limitations on riding pleasure on the island and he agreed, using a SV650 for his commute to work, but holidays saw the Laverda in use. Better roads were available in France but at a cost of £80 or more for a return ferry crossing to St Malo. I had seen Fireblade, Blackbird, Hyabusa, ZZR1400, Pan1300 and other big bikes, but he mentioned a Ducati Desmosedici – the £40,000 MotoGP racer-with-lights – to be seen on occasion.

I asked about tests and licences since I had seen a Ducati Monster with an L plate – they incorporate the L (or a P for Probationer) in the number plate in place of the country identifier – and I could not see how that could be under UK regulations. Apparently Jersey has a dual level learner / test system with a restricted probationary period for both the 125s and for higher powered bikes, so you can see 150MPH bikes with an L plate on. We didn't go into details, but it sounds an interesting approach, similar to the Japanese graduated licences from what I understood him to say.

I didn't find a bike shop – there are limits to self-indulgence on holiday with one's non-biking wife – but a car sales lot across the road from a bus stop we were waiting at in the west of the island had a trio of bikes. There was a 2001 Ducati ST4s (the top-spec one with Ohlins this and Marchesini that) in grey at 7,000-odd miles by a policeman going for £1950, and if you wanted one I'm sure that is a good price.

We also took a day trip to Guernsey by ferry and lashed out on a bus tour right around the coast of the island – 60p each! Their fare is a flat price however far you go, hence the bargain. At the bus station I caught the local bike cop plotted up talking to a visitor, with his Deauville parked nearby.



The visit to the Channel Islands contrasted strongly with the car tour we made earlier in the year to the Outer Hebrides. Despite the good weather we don't really want to return to the former (been there, done that) but really enjoyed the rugged beauty and scenery of the Scottish outposts and will return. I'd also recommend them to fellow bikers, particularly with the reduced fares on the long ferry routes due to the recent introduction (for a trial) of the Road Equivalent Tariff. I worked out that a tour including Skye, Harris and Lewis would cost under £42 for bike and rider on ferries (Uig to Tarbert, Stornoway to Ullapool).

Steve Middleton

YOUR CORRESPONDENTS ARE.....

Last month and this, **BikeBytes** has had articles from Paul Cameron and Steve Middleton, and the picture shows them and the link between them – Laura Cameron neé Middleton.



STEVE'S GRAND TOUR – 6 SEPTEMBER

I've had support for running this long run to and from Fort Augustus taking in some of the best biking roads and adding up to over 300 miles, so it is going ahead, weather permitting, on Sunday 6th September, starting at Stirling M9/M90 services.

We need to get away early to fit it all in so it we will meet at 8:45 for the briefing and a 9:00 start.

Please be ready with full tanks and empty bladders, and a determination to ride progressively. This is not a trip to be undertaken lightly; stamina and a good relationship with your bike seat will be needed.

Details of stops and fuel, and a Google map, are on the Club website, and I shall hand out a summary of the route.

If you have not read them recently, I suggest you review the Club's standards for ride etiquette and the

Drop Off system posted on the website in the Articles/Services section.

I invite volunteers for Tail End Charlie – email shop@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

Steve Middleton

BO'NESS HILLCLIMB - 12th SEPT

I am going to this two-day meeting reviving the motorsport event that used to be part of the British Hillclimb Championship I read about when I was a sprog, when it attracted the likes of Jackie Stewart to compete. It re-ran for the first time last year and this year they have added to the course and classes, including motorcycles. Each day starts with practice at 10, racing at 2, and I am going on Saturday.

Why not join me? - I'll be at the West Port carpark in Linlithgow at 10:30 to meet up.

Details are on the hillclimb website at <http://www.bonesshillclimb.org.uk>

A late announcement is that the Battle of Britain Historic Flight will do a fly-past at 12:10 - how about that as a bonus!

Steve Middleton

Applecross Camping Weekend

Well, it was an interesting, and occasionally challenging, weekend. Twelve of us set off from Stirling Services: David Jerome, John Moss, Steve Panter, Ken, Fiona, Sarah & Alexandra Eddie, Steven & Fiona Kenny, Hamish Davidson and Linda & I.

When we arrived at the Green Welly (where we met David McWilliam) in damp and grey conditions I feared this was the weather set for the rest of the day but after the coffee stop the sky cleared and we had a pleasant run along the A85 towards Oban. The churning white water at the Falls of Lora was more dramatic than I'd ever seen before and as we crossed over the Connel Bridge we could see canoeists paddling (frantically) below us.

We rode onwards and upwards to one of our favourite coffee stops, the Castle Stalker View Café. I switched the phone on and received a message from the Applecross Inn saying they had overbooked the tables for tonight and could we eat earlier than our 8pm booking? Not very impressive, especially as I had double checked the booking the day before and this error hadn't been mentioned. Oh well, I got a promise that we would be fed no matter when we arrived so we pressed on.

We fuelled up at Fort William, had a leg stretch at the Commando Memorial where John Hill joined us and

then enjoyed a great ride through Kintail and Glen Shiel, in the shadow of the Five Sisters, to the obligatory stop at Eilean Donan Castle.

On the road again, up the east side of Loch Carron then down the west, through the village and on to the turn off for Applecross. We were lucky that we had good weather for the ascent, though the brief photo stop at the top of the pass was surprisingly chilly. As we descended to Applecross village we passed a few deer which looked neither scared nor impressed at the site of nine bikes plus support car. We rode straight to the Inn, arriving at 6.30pm, and helped them out of their overbooking problem by pre-ordering our meals then going to the campsite to erect our tents and get ready. We had agreed to return to the Inn to claim our table at 7.45pm. At 7.44pm, as David Jerome was tapping home this last tent peg, we wandered down to the Inn, had a drink and then were shown to our own little dining room just off the bar area.

We were well looked after by the owner, Judith, and her staff and, as always, the food and drink (and company) was excellent.

By good fortune, we'd just got settled into our tents when the heavens opened. Heavy rain continued all night, but I think everyone survived the deluge without getting wet. No one was very impressed with our neighbours who *started* singing at 2.30am. As we had expected, the campsite was a lot busier than when we visited last September and the facilities struggled slightly to cope with the extra number of visitors. Nevertheless, we had breakfast in the Flower Tunnel and debated whether to ride round the peninsula or retrace our steps over the pass. We chose the latter option and were rewarded with a panoramic view over Loch Kishorn as we descend from the Bealach.

We stopped at The Moorings, Corpach for lunch where David J, Steven & Fiona and John Moss headed for home while the rest of us had some soup and sandwiches. John Moss has written that he enjoyed the run back through Glencoe but I have to say I didn't enjoy the high, blustery winds and driving rain one bit! We turned up at the Green Welly in drowned rat mode but any hope that the bad weather would blow over was misplaced and there was nothing for it but to head for home. Fortunately the wind wasn't as high from here on and by the time Linda & I got back to Stirling, the sun had reappeared.

Thanks are due to David Jerome for conceiving the idea of a second visit to Applecross, and for leading the group there and back. A grateful mention in dispatches to Sarah Eddie (and co-pilot Alexandra) for transporting tents and kit in her car, to Ken for providing refreshing amber nectar after a long ride

and to Steve Panter who laid on some life saving coffee after a hard night. Finally, thanks to everyone who came along on the trip; despite the odd glitch, you made it a very enjoyable weekend.

Steve MacKinnon

Bodge of the Month

Topping up Clutch Fluid in an emergency

Problem : your clutch doesn't work because the fluid level is too low and you're stuck in the middle of nowhere with no brake/clutch fluid available.

Tools required : bike tool kit and 3 drinking straws (sourced from a handy restaurant).

Method (as devised by Steve Panter):

1: remove covers from clutch and front brake fluid reservoirs

2: dip drinking straws in front brake fluid reservoir and cover the other end of the straws with your thumb

3: remove straws from reservoir – some brake fluid should be held in the straws

4: put straws in clutch fluid reservoir and release thumb – the fluid will be released into the reservoir

5: repeat steps 2 to 4 as necessary, being careful not to take too much fluid out of the brake reservoir or you may end up with bigger problems than not being able to change gear

6: replace reservoir covers

7: top up brake and clutch fluid as soon as you can get some, probably at the next available garage

So where did all the fluid go in the first place, assuming there was no leak? The rubber hoses degrade over time, allowing the hoses to expand and increasing the amount of fluid they can hold, so the level in the reservoir drops. Service schedules generally recommend replacement of brake and clutch hoses every 4 years. If your bike is over 4 years old and still has the original hoses you should get them changed – a good excuse to get some nice stainless steel braided ones.

Finally, it is always a good idea to check all your fluid levels as part of your pre ride check.

Alex Muir

Run Reports

The website is being regularly updated with run reports and photographs, so why don't you log-on and read some of the reviews at:

www.scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

Articles for BikeBytes

Send any articles, pictures, funny stories or anything vaguely motorcycle related to:

bikebytes@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk