

The Monthly Magazine Of The Scottish Motorcycle Club

Welcome

The recent Easdale run, led by Judy, left us in no doubt that autumn is upon us. The morning started with white frosted cars and chilly temperatures which nipped at our fingers. Of course, the upside is that rural Scotland is awe inspiringly beautiful at this time of year, with autumnal sun highlighting the reds and golds of the turning leaves. In other words, a great time to be (carefully) out on the bike!

A warm welcome goes to our newest member, **Graeme Latimer** from Hardgate, who was with us on the trip to Easdale. Graeme's bike is not easy to describe, as he has tastefully built it with components sourced from various donor motorcycles. There is a high percentage of Yamaha YZF in there, but the forks, wheels, fairing etc. are from different pedigrees. Check it out sometime, it's a really interesting machine.

With the nights drawing in, we are approaching the end of the 2010 runs schedule. However, there are still a few dates left to mention:

Saturday 9th - Ken Eddie will lead a half day run. Meet at 12.45pm, all other details TBA (check website).

Wednesday 13th - Club night. Black Bitch Tavern, West Port, Linlithgow at 8pm.

Saturday 23rd - Ken Eddie will lead a half day run. Meet at 12.45pm, all other details TBA (check website).

Saturday 30th - The event of the year! Steve & Ruby's wedding at Glen Pavilion, Dunfermline, 3pm till late.

More details on these and future runs can be found at:

www.scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

Steve MacKinnon

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Editorial

Great issue this month! Thanks to Steve Middleton for some information on the club's clothing and regalia and also part two of his 'Spot The Difference' quiz.....how many changes can you spot that Steve's made to his VFR over the summer?

Thanks also to Gavin Paton for a piece about his first motorcycling experience...This rung a bell with me and I'm sure many of you will relate to this story.

Thanks also to Steve MacKinnon for his report on the Ullapool run. I really wish I'd been able to make that run...it covered some of my favourite parts of Scotland.

I have missed most of the club runs this year for various reasons. The only one that I managed to get to this summer, was my own run to the Leuchars Air Show....where my Tiger's battery decided to pack in! A quick jump start from a Leuchars local (a biker obviously!) and an expensive return trip to Cupar Motorcycles later, and I did manage to see most of the airshow....and very good it was too!

I enjoyed the airshow, mainly because I'm a bit of a airplane ~~anera~~ enthusiast. I've always wanted to learn to fly, but never had the money or time, so I've contended myself with getting to know a bit about aviation and flying in general. Yes, a few of those new rivets on that Vulcan do belong to me!



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If I ever have any free time, I do a little fishing, a little hill-walking, very little amateur radio and, oh yes....nearly forgot, I have a motorcycle.

This made me think that all of us must have other hobbies that we share our free time with and maybe you could let us know a bit about them. It doesn't have to be motorcycle related, but I'm sure it will be interesting to find a little bit more about our fellow members.

I'd also like to take a minute to wish two stalwart club members, Ruby Rennie and Steve Panter all the very best on the occasion of their wedding on the 30th of this month in Dunfermline.



There is a wide range of other items in the supplier's catalogue that can take the logo – e.g. I have a fleece – see me at a Club night to take a look at it. Alternatively get in touch direct and we can discuss what you want by phone and email.

I'm sure that I speak for everyone at the SMC when I wish them every possible happiness in their married life together.

Ken Glendinning

CLUB CLOTHING AND REGALIA

A quick reminder of the items in the Club Shop on the website. Take a look at the items shown under the Club Shop button on the site heading. I currently have a part order and invite members to submit their wants via the order form on the site so I can forward it to our supplier. The clothing make good presents for Christmas. The logo is our 10-year commemoration as shown below.



Steve Middleton

My First motorcycling experience

In 1981 I had a friend that turned up at college for the start of the new session on a nice wee Honda H100 and this probably put me in mind to try motorcycling. George let me have a short ride round the car park on his "pride and joy" literally less than two minutes and never out of first gear.

Two weeks later with the confidence of youth, the knowledge that my first and only motorcycle ride had gone well and the first half of my student grant burning a hole in my bank account I took a walk up to Strathclyde motorcycle Auctions 10 minutes walk from Jordanhill at Anniesland cross.



In the auction that Thursday night was a lovely little H100 black in colour with blue stripes. After a very short and anxious few minutes it was mine for £175 I left a deposit of £25 and returned the next day with the balance and a crash helmet borrowed from my mate George. I have a vague recollection of nervousness as I exchanged my cash for the keys of my new four year old 12,000 mile purchase and the realisation that I would have to take to the streets at 5.00pm to ride from Glasgow to Paisley.

After 15 minutes of riding round the quieter residential streets between Anniesland and Jordanhill I was feeling very confident and much more relaxed. I remember pulling up to a T junction checking both ways and seeing a learner driver approaching from the right. With my 15 mins of experience on two wheels I knew I had time to pull out safely in front of him. This was my first practical example of the term power band and I must have used a bit too much throttle and let out the clutch too quickly. As my little two-stroke engine seemed to take on a new much louder scream and leapt forward. The front of the bike felt much lighter and I was definitely heading for

the kerb opposite the junction. The front wheel felt like it was pointing to the sky. The reality was probably that I had lightened the front suspension or lifted the wheel an inch. Good luck and good brakes had me back under control and wobbling down the road towards home and a very short time later I was screaming through the Clyde tunnel at a dizzying 45 miles an hour.

Over the spring and summer I put about 3,000 miles on that little bike. It never let me down, always started on the first or second kick of the starter. It took me through my then laughable joke of a motorcycle test. It survived my first and only motorbike accident when I hit a sheep at about 20 miles an hour.

At the end of the summer it was time to move it on and with a small amount of regret it was sold for £50 more than I paid for it.

I think it was shortly after this that the learner rules changed and the CBT test was introduced probably for very good reason.

Gavin Paton

Ullapool Weekend

The first thing to greet the visitor at the Falls of Shin cafe and gift shop is the unwavering and, frankly, unnerving stare of Mohammed Al Fayed. I kid you not: standing there in the entrance, in full highland dress, is an uncannily realistic effigy of the wee shop owner, rendered in wax by the artists of Mme. Tussaud's.

We sat at a table in the deserted cafe (we were early, on a particularly foul day), as rivulets of water coursed off of our jackets and formed small pools beneath us. Swapping notes on the effectiveness of our waterproofs, we watched the rain bouncing off the car park and overwhelming the gutters. It came as something of a surprise to discover that, despite all this, I was having a great time!

The previous evening, Linda and I had set off from Stirling at about 4.30pm, about an hour and a half after Janet & John, Ken & Fiona had started their journey on. The A9 was bathed in evening sun and, although we saw the odd shower clinging to the western hills, we stayed dry all the way to Inverness. As we pulled into the Travelodge car park at 7.30, the other four were just leaving for the pub. We quickly checked in then joined the others for drinks and a good meal in the Snow Goose pub. It was also nice to catch up with Gregor, a friend, colleague and Guzzi fanatic from my Cellnet days, who lives in the highland capital.

At the bar, one of the guest ales was Braine's IPA, a very pleasant, dark beer from Wales. Asking for a 'pint of Braine's' was a novelty!



When we looked out on Saturday morning, the weather looked dull and dry but, as we started the bikes to ride the few hundred metres to Tesco for petrol and breakfast, the rain started in earnest. We topped up the tanks first and were asked to remove our helmets at the Tesco station. However, it was only after we had filled the tanks and entered the kiosk to pay, that helmet removal was requested. It seemed a slightly illogical process. The cooked breakfast in the Tesco cafe was great value at £2.30. After breakfast, and with all our waterproof gear on, we headed north. Through Lairg and across the featureless Sutherland moors, we reached the north coast at Tongue and headed west to Durness. Again, before food, we filled up the tanks. The self service pumps were on one side of the road with the shop at the other. When we went in to pay we were asked, 'So, how much did you put in?' The snack lunch in the Sango Sands Oasis was very good and then it was back into the rain and round the coast. The road through Assynt is very narrow, winding and hilly and required lots of concentration. However, somewhere along the route the weather improved dramatically and we arrived at Ardvreck Castle on dry tarmac. Ken, Janet & John 'bagged' the castle and from there it was only a rapid run of thirty minutes down to Ullapool, our stop for the night.



Another fuel top up then we all checked into the Harbour Lights B&B which is a very short walk from the town centre. A quick wash and brush up then we walked to the Ferry Boat Inn for a few drinks. Appetite whetted, we strolled to the very busy Seaforth restaurant at the end of the street. It was only a 300 metre walk but a sudden, heavy shower turned the stroll into a sprint. Unfortunately, it looked like we were in for a long wait for a table so we had another drink or two (An Teallach Ale this time – even better than Braine's), until Fiona spotted a table for six being vacated and promptly claimed it for us.

A fine meal was enjoyed, with much daft conversation, followed by a return to the Ferry Boat to listen to an accordionist and then it was time to head back to the B&B.



The weather was dull but dry as we left Ullapool and rode down the A835. John kindly offered Linda a respite from the Versys seat on board the comfy Pan, but our backsides must be getting used to the inadequacies of the V's perch, as we were still ok. Just short of Garve, we took a right onto the A832 Strath Bran road and, after a few miles, the clouds parted and the sun made an appearance. The wet road gave way to dry tarmac and with misty, purple hills reflected in the remote highland lochs, we swept along the spectacularly scenic and sinuous road from Achnasheen. I couldn't help but hum a few bars of 'Caledonia'!



Soon we reached a junction, just before Lochcarron, where we turned left, bumped over the 'level' crossing at Strathcarron then attacked the fantastic, swoopy climb up to Stromeferry. A few minutes later saw us pull in to the tourist trap that is Eilean Donan castle. A coffee, a scone and then we were off again, stopping briefly at Invergarry to put a few litres in the Fazer before completing the stretch to Fort William. Petrol from Esso, sandwiches in Morrison's cafe. We rode down to Ballachulish then onto the Oban road and had a quick stop at Castle Stalker so that Ken could bag it. As we crossed the Connel Bridge, the Falls of Lora were in magnificent maelstrom mode, with canoes being tossed around on the surface of the churning water, far below us. The A85 was very busy with Sunday traffic (and lots of bikes) so we got fairly strung out but met up for a final break at the Real Food Cafe in Tyndrum. It was a very enjoyable weekend away. Thanks to Janet & John for planning a great route and booking the Ullapool accommodation.

Steve MacKinnon

Touring Germany (continued from last month!)

Tuesday 23rd May

Woken in the very early hours by bright sunlight (miracle of miracles!!). When I eventually dragged myself out of bed, I

found the straps that operated the shutters outside the windows....well, you live and learn!

Breakfast (Fruehestuck) was a nice assortment of cereal, boiled eggs, bread, cheese and fresh ham and salami – the usual German fair, but extremely nice.



Since the weather looked to be set fair for the day, with a good proportion of blue sky, I hurriedly put on my still damp riding kit and started up the Tiger. I hadn't really planned where I was going and I didn't want to waste any of the precious sunlight by visiting the Gasthaus Zur Linde looking for routes, so, on the basis that I had arrived in the Black Forest from the North, I headed South and then East.

I had the Garmin GPS programmed to avoid highways, so I just selected places on my relatively large scale map and let it find roads to ride. It did pretty well.

I found out that, when you head east out of the Black Forest, you very quickly reach the Rhein and at this point, it's the border with France. The Garmin told me that I was heading for 'Ferry', so I thought 'why the hell not?'



As I arrived at the river (the Rhein is about twice the width of the Clyde near Glasgow at this point) I wondered how much this was going to cost me and I had my loose change at the ready. There was no indication at the ferry arrival point. The answer was, of course, nothing! "It's part of the road system so of course it's free" - Scottish Government take note!

So, in a few minutes, I was riding in France! 'How cool is this?' I thought!

By this time it was late morning (and very warm and sunny) and, as I was passing through a small village, I spotted a Boulangerie. So, after what I thought was a pretty fluent transaction in French (but probably fooled no-one in the bakers), I strode out with a couple of pan-au-chocolat and a can of juice for my lunch.

Within a few miles I passed a quiet canal-side restaurant, which was closed, but the setting was perfect. So, after a point-perfect U-turn, on the narrow road (?!), I turned back and had a very peaceful and 'atmospheric' lunch beside a French canal.



This is what life is all about!! Now I felt that I was really on holiday.

Eventually, I dragged myself away and decided to stay in France for a little while longer. It's very flat around this area, but typically French, with tree-lined narrow roads, so why not enjoy it.

On the way South through Markolsheim, I noticed a sign for a Maginot Line memorial and, being a bit of a second world war history buff, I couldn't resist a look. The Maginot line was, of course, a line of fortified bunkers, block-houses, tank traps and trenches that the French built after the First World War to keep out any future German invasion. As any schoolboy will tell you, the Nazis simply ignored the Maginot line by invading through Belgium and the North of France and were in force behind the line before the French had realised what had happened.

The memorial consisted of one of the original block-houses, which was supposed to be open, but was bolted shut, some WW2 vehicles which were fenced off from vandals and a short note, in various languages, about the history of the place. Not much really, but I guess that the line itself was pretty useless strategically!



I rode further South and eventually re-entered Germany back over the Rhein – what a boon the GPS is when you come to closed road sign!

I headed East, back into the Black Forest to head for Donaueschingen, which is supposed to be the 'source' of the Danube. Very nice it looked too, but it was rush-hour and extremely busy, so I didn't hang around too long.

I programmed the GPS to take me back to the hotel via a rural route and it took me to one or two great roads. Once you get into the hills in the Black Forest, virtually all the roads are great for biking. It's a shame that it's completely tree-covered (Black 'Forest' eh?) as 1 – this causes the GPS to lose signal occasionally in the heavily forested areas, but also 2 – it hides a lot of the roads from a decent photograph. Maybe if you come here on a bike, you should strap a video camera to it...it's the only way to do it justice!



While I remember, the almost universally popular colour for the larger German car (or virtually any German car for that matter) is black. This can be quite confusing if you get stuck in a column of BMWs or Mercs in slow traffic as you think that you've got caught up a huge funeral procession!

Anyway, back to the B&B and I'd checked that the 'Zur Linde' was still open as I passed. I'm not sure how many miles I'd covered in the day, but my bum was starting to get a little numb towards the end!

Dinner at the Linde was very good – not quite Klaus and Bettina's cooking – but pretty good never the less. After a few curious looks the staff ascertained that I was the 'long lost Scotsman' from the night before. Apparently they'd been very quiet and shut-up shop early...I'd just missed them!

The owner, Klaus (again!), introduced himself and turned out to be really chatty, helpful and he was really eager to provide me with touring advice. From a huge stock of suggested tour routes, I'm persuaded with one that went South to the Swiss border and then returning North again a little further East. Klaus provided a local tourist map which he marked the route on and I programmed it into the trusty Garmin.

Now, some people would balk at the use of a GPS when touring I know, but I think that it takes a bit of uncertainty out of a ride. I've no problem with navigating using a map on the tank-bag and I always had the relevant map to hand anyway. The GPS allows you to just enjoy the recommended route and not worry about wasting time in getting lost. Sometimes, of course, getting lost can be fun and you can still do that with a GPS if you decide to head to some interesting road or location 'off-route'....it'll always get you back on course. You can always be sure of riding that 'magic' bit of road that someone has recommended though.

Klaus had pointed out the best bits of this route and I made sure that caught them.

Wednesday 24th May

The day was sunny and warm.....a miracle again! So, I set off after a filling breakfast – I wasn't planning on spending long looking for lunch.

That's one thing about riding on your own – you just tend to 'ride'! When you're with other people or with a pillion, there's always an excuse to stop to look at the scenery or perhaps look around a town or village, or do some shopping. When you're on your own though, you tend to just ride as this is really what you came here to do anyway.



The scenery is fantastic, very like parts of Scotland, but with many, many more trees (it obviously isn't as windy here!) and those gorgeous alpine style houses. They really are very picturesque and all, without exception, extremely tidy and perfect in every way. They all look like they have lots of rooms with colourful shutters, balconies, garages cunningly designed into the house and look as though they're worth a fortune. Tourism is obviously big business

in the Black Forest, but I can't imagine that everyone is that really well-off here.



That bit of road that Klaus told me was the best bit of the route was the 15km South from Hausern to near Albrbruck and it proved to be really fantastic. He said that it was nice and twisty, but that really didn't do it justice! In fact, it was so good that, when I'd come to the bottom of it, I rode back up and did it all again!! For most of this little section the bike isn't upright for longer than a second or two. There's alternating corner after corner, tight-angle short, narrow tunnels and jaggy rocks that threaten to shred you if you get it wrong.....but it's brilliant....and addictive!

On my second time down this section (I reckon that it's better North to South!) I thought that I was doing really well, when a guy on a Yamaha sports bike overtook me on a tight bend, already knee-down and not a hope in hell of seeing anything coming round the bend!!.....Bonkers!!

I thought that a third attempt may be a bit much, so, when I reached the small town at the bottom of the route and spotted the signpost for Schweiz, I thought 'why not?'...it's not every day that you get the chance to head into Switzerland.

I was hoping that the Swiss customs guy would stamp my passport as Switzerland isn't in the EU, but the bored uniforms in the customs booth just waved me through. There's no indication that you've left the German Black Forest and entered Switzerland unfortunately. It's not that there's suddenly snowy mountain peaks, but there were a few Swiss flags and you can feel that you've crossed a border.

However, I still had the rest of Klaus's route to complete, so my Swiss 'detour' only lasted about 25km - No chance to stop for any Toblerone or cheese. Did you know that Cuckoo Clocks are more Black Forest things than Swiss?

Back into Deutschland again and more of the Black Forest's great roads!

Lot's of bikes too, it's obviously a very popular riding area. New BMW R1200GS (nearly always red) seemed to be the order of the day – I really hope you're on commission Euan! Most bikers will wave at you here – always a wave of the left hand (easier on the wrong side of the road) never a nod. Harley riders though are obviously very cliquy though and only ever seem to wave at other HOGs!!

I'd had a great day and it was only my slightly numb bum that was glad to see the B&B when I rolled into Oberwolfach.

Klaus was eager to hear what I thought of the route when I went to the 'Linde for dinner and wasn't surprised to hear that I'd done the 'special' bit twice. Apparently, the record is held by a Belgian girl who did it five times!!

Klaus was trying to get me to come back in August for his 'biker party'. He apparently has barbeques, bands and strippers – female and male! – so, if you fancy an adventure(?) in the Black Forest in August, then maybe that's where to go!



During dinner, I met two couples from the Netherlands. One couple in a car and the other on a bike, touring together.

They'd been thinking about touring Scotland next year and were keen to know the best routes and the cheapest places to stay. Especially the latter as, in the view of most of Europe, the UK is a very expensive place! Makes you think doesn't it....and that's us without the Euro! So, we swapped email addresses and I promised that I could find them places to visit and some B&B recommendations. I did tell them that, of course, we couldn't promise good weather though, but it probably wouldn't be as wet as Germany....well, maybe not!

Between us and with Klaus's help, we made up a route for me to use when I headed for Malmedy in Belgium the next day. As little motorway driving as possible and maximum scenery – Out of the Black Forest near the Mummelsee 'where you can see the whole of South-Western Germany and a lot of France on a clear day', into France North of Strasbourg (It's rubbish and full of traffic, according to Klaus!). Through the Vosges du Nord and back into Germany up the Mösel again, before heading West to Malmedy on the motorway.

Last part – next month!

Ken Glendinning



The answer to our summer gardening woes?



No comment!

Run reports

Lot's of reports online and photos in the gallery!

<http://www.scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk/>

Articles for BikeBytes

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

bikebytes@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

BikeBytes Crossword

The answers to last month's crossword quiz follow part 2 of Steve Middleton's 'Spot The Difference' Quiz.

How many did you get from the September crossword?

Steve's answers next month, along with a new crossword.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCES – PART 2

Here is my VFR800FiY again, but with further changes since I invited you, back in the March edition of **BikeBytes**, to spot the changes I had made.

There is one obvious one for 1 mark, three less so for 2 marks each, and two barely visible for three marks each. Total six items, 13 marks.

So, here she is now, in September:-



This was the set up back in March:-



What is your score?

Steve Middleton

September Crossword Quiz - Solution

