May - 2010

BikeBytes

The Monthly Magazine Of The Scottish Motorcycle Club

Welcome

Welcome to the May edition of **BikeBytes** and a very warm welcome to two new club members. **Jane Sadler is** from Edinburgh and joined us on the Lindisfarne run on her Honda CB500 and is now the proud owner of a shiny, red Yamaha Fazer 600. **Marcus Spinks** comes from Bathgate and rides a Yamaha Thundercat. We look forward to seeing you both on many of the runs in our packed calendar.

Events over the next few weeks:

Thursday 6th May – Alex Muir's Chip Shop run to Coatbridge, meet at Dobbies, Stirling at 6.45pm.

Sunday 9th May – Judy Broad's Lochgoilhead run, meet at Dobbies, Stirling at 9.45am.

Wednesday 12th May – Club Night, Black Bitch Tavern, Linlithgow, 8pm.

Sunday 16th May – Janet & John's Dalwhinnie/Spean Bridge run, meet at Dobbies, Stirling, **9.15am.**

Fri 21st May – Sun 23rd May – Steve MacKinnon's Lakes Weekend, meet at Bothwell Services, M74 on Friday 21st at 6pm.

Sunday 30th May – Judy Broad's Fort William run. Details TBA.

Membership Renewal: SMC membership renewals for 2010/11 are now due. The discount for early payment has been a great success and the vast majority of 2009/10 members have renewed their membership. By the time you read this the discount period will have ended, but if you've forgotten to put that cheque in the post, the club is still great value at £15!

Renewal forms and details can be found on the website: www.scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

Steve MacKinnon
secretary@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

Chairman's Bit



Is it May already? As ever, my contribution to **BikeBytes** has been "sporadic", and I note with horror that January was the last Chairman's bit. I promise I'll buck up!!

In February, twelve of us subscribed to a celebration dinner to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the club, at the Atholl Palace Hotel in Pitlochry. It was an excellent evening, with good food, splendid company, and very nice surroundings. We presented our founder member, Arthur Shepherd, with a tribute scroll to mark the occasion, and as a way of thanks for his inception of the SMC. We hope to evolve this concept into an annual event, albeit not as pricey as this one off celebration, and use this as a platform for presenting the annual awards, rather than at the AGM. We'll start to plan this before the end of this season, once we have Kelso behind us.

March was of course the AGM which I think was quite productive, with necessary amendments to the constitution agreed, and a good round up of the general club state of health. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the membership for their support of the committee's efforts over the past twelve months. The elected committee has remained largely unchanged, excepting the retiral of Arthur Shepherd from "front line" duty after serving the club since its inception in February 2000. A heartfelt thanks to Arthur for all the work he has put into the club. He will still be active in the "background" assisting Paul Broughton in keeping the website up and running and healthy. We also welcome onto the committee Steve Panter, who I think will do a great job for the club. I was really pleased that he agreed to be nominated, and that there was unanimous support from the AGM.

Contact the Scottish Motorcycle Club via the Membership Secretary:
Steve MacKinnon
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March also saw us start to come out of riding hibernation. I had the BMW ready to roll for taxing on the first of March (a month earlier than usual), after the clutch change and winter servicing / fettling, and led a half day run on 6th March, the first club run of 2010. While by in large the roads were dry, I did have to divert the route slightly, as some roads around Gleneagles were still impassable for bikes (even dodgy in a car), and while still a bit cold, it was a nice start to the biking year. Quite surreal heading over the moor road to Comrie on a dry road with four feet of snow either side of you!! Check out John Moss's photo's on the club gallery.

Since then, we have had another eight club runs, which is great, considering it's only the start of May. Turnout has been varied, ranging from 3 to 11, but generally on the upper side. I also have probably earned the distinction of being the only person not to turn up for his own ride-out. I was one of the thousands that got caught up in the travel turmoil when airspace was closed for Volcanic Ash clouds, and after a twelfth hour phone call from Malta, John Moss took up the baton and the run went ahead, despite my absence!! Shame I missed it, as I'm a fan of the Angus and Mearns coastal road, and the Cairn O'Mount. Maybe have to do a re-run later in the season, but opposite direction!!

Please keep an eye on the club calendar on the website, as there are runs / weekends etc being added all the time at the moment. There is pretty much something for everyone. And, please, don't be shy about adding outings to the calendar. Just contact the events coordinator, John Moss, or any committee member, and we will get it entered into the calendar, and get the word out.

Fiona and I will miss the club organised runs and events during the last two weeks of May, as we will be doing our own trip down into France on the BMW. Really looking forward to that. We'll try to keep some notes so that we can put a piece into a future BikeBytes, but, don't hold your breath. We're the worlds worst at that sort of thing!! I'm sure though, by the time we get back, there will be stories to tell.

Look forward to seeing many of you on the coming ride-outs, and (work permitting), the next club night.

Ken Eddie

Editorial

What a difference a ride makes!

My riding this year has, up to now, been a few short, local runs, usually no more than an hour or so, sandwiched between work and household 'duties'. Good fun, but somehow, un-satisfying.

On Saturday though, I found enough time to get out on Ken Eddie's 'half-day run' through East and Mid-Lothian. Maybe due to the busy work schedule recently, or other 'niggly' things going on, I hadn't realised how low I was feeling, but after getting back home on Saturday, I felt BRILLIANT. I was amazed how much my mood had lifted and I felt 'alive'.

I have noticed it many times in the past, but what the difference was on Saturday, I don't know! I would imagine that the physical or psychological effects have to do with the extra oxygen getting forced into your lungs, and the concentration-feedback loop that involves all your senses and pumps up your adrenalin levels….or maybe it's just the 'thrill' that bike-riding gives you. I'm sure that people like Paul will know more about this in detail, but, whatever it is…it feels GREAT!

Motorcycles should be available on the NHS!

In this month's **BikeBytes** there are some interesting articles on upcoming weekends away, the Castle Challenge and the new, special, 'Anniversary' logo, available on the club clothing and bike stickers.

I've also tried to get some articles from people outside the club and I hope that this will become a regular feature….if I can twist enough arms!

The first of these is by Stuart McIvor, who is the Edinburgh SNP councillor that has been very helpful in the BMF and MAG negotiations with the council over bus-lane access and bike parking issues. Stuart is very pro-motorcycle and has a Royal Enfield. He was also a motorcycle cop with the Met-Police in the Sixties/Seventies and has a great range of stories to tell. I asked him to do a little article for our newsletter, as an 'introduction' and that's what follows my little blether. Maybe I can get him to write down a few more tales?

Anyway, I hope to see you on some of our club runs this year…and remember: safe riding is no accident!

Ken Glendinning

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Guest Spot:

Police Motorcycling…

My love affair with motorbikes started on the 22nd of November 1963. I was standing at a bus stop in South London waiting for a bright red bus to take me to Barnes Metropolitan Police Traffic Garage. At the time I was a young police cadet on attachment to the Traffic Division. All of a sudden a chap on a motorbike pulled up and indicated I should jump on the bike. I recognised him as a traffic officer from the garage. I was flattered that he had stopped and that he was prepared to allow me on his bike. Prior to that fateful day I had never been on a motorbike. I gingerly climbed on – no worries about crash helmets then – and held on to grips somewhere under my thighs. Whoosh! - off we roared along the South Circular Road through Wandsworth and Putney and in no time at all we arrived at the garage situated in a suburban back street near the Thames. My new found friend disappeared towards the locker room whilst I stood and stared at the now gently wheezing British motorbike of unknown vintage and make. I was like Toad of Toad Hall. I had to have one – any one!

Later that evening around 7pm I was back at the garage for a meal break. The scene in the canteen was of noise and merriment as officers played cards, wrote reports in pencil, and devoured large platefuls of pie and chips. A lone officer crouched with his ear near to the government supplied radio tuned to the Home Service. No TV allowed then. We gradually became aware that he was calling for quiet. Actually not calling – screaming - would have been a more appropriate word. The intensity of his demand silenced us and the room hushed. Over the airwaves came the news that John F Kennedy President of the United States of America had been shot and killed in far away Dallas, Texas, his beautiful wife Jackie by his side. Playing cards were left spread out, meals unfinished, conversations left in mid air as we all trooped quietly out to our respective vehicles. Triumphs were kicked into action and I climbed into the back of a big black Wolseley – Foxtrot 15 – with two Korean war veterans in front both stunned into silence. Nobody said anything until we reached Hammersmith Broadway. But my love affair with the motorbike had begun!

A wonderful basic motorbike course in 1969 lasting a whole three weeks got me properly trained – a training which I am positive kept me out of more than one scrape. The bike involved was the Lightweight Velocette known universally as the Noddy bike. Not capable of much more that 45mph. On one of the training days sometime after lunch I was leading our pack of three. The training instructor roared ahead on his Triumph to have a smoke break. The straight rolling road somewhere in Hampshire lulled me into a gentle stupor. I became aware of a rushing of wind around the ears. I looked at the speedo which was creeping up to 60. How could this be? I glanced over my shoulder – there was the instructor grinning manically with his foot on my offside pannier revving the Triumph up into speeds beyond the acquaintance of my little Velo. I learned that day about observation. I had missed seeing my instructor parked up by a farm gate.

Later I patrolled the streets around Clapham Junction on the Velocette and later still as part of the infant Diplomatic Protection Group I rode a BMW in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, a Walther pistol concealed beneath my jacket. Pretty cool!

I had my own bikes ranging through Honda's, BMW's and Suzuki. Never once did I have an accident in London but on a trip to the island of Raasay off the West coast of Scotland rounding a hairpin bend at walking pace - the bike a BMW - slipped from my grasp and I fell with the bike on top. I suffered broken ribs. The island doctor who doubled as the Free Church minister asked me if I read my bible every day. I told him I did. At the time I had a bet with myself to read all of it cover to cover. It took three years. So I had truthfully answered.

Fast forward to the present and I am now a politician in my native Edinburgh. How did that happen? As a member of the Transport Committee I have taken up the cause of motorcyclists everywhere. We are a neglected branch of society. I will fight the good fight on your behalf. Safe biking.



Stuart Roy McIVOR
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Edinburgh 17.04.10

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An Overnighter to Arran

We thought we would do a recce to Arran so as to be prepared for our September weekend. After having done it we've decided we're not going to go back in September. Mainly because the roads are really uneven, making it more of a chore than a joy to ride, there's not much of interest to see, we couldn't find a hotel that would take us for only one night and the only decent bistro we found wouldn't take a booking for a table! If anyone knows anything different let us know, but we are planning something else, which could very well be a two nighter. Anyway, read on for the full story.



We left home at 7.30am making it into Ardrossan for the 9.45am ferry to Brodick. We had booked Hopscotch 5 tickets which cost £36 each. This covered the ferry to Brodick and then the Lochranza to Claonaig ferry the following day. Arriving in Arran about 10.45am, after a calm but chilly crossing, we spent the rest of the day riding all the roads on Arran. There were lots of pot holes, which you would expect after the winter we've had, not much traffic, but the roads were very bumpy – in fact both our front wheels left the ground at one point. We had lunch at the Shiskine Golf Club, a very tasty and reasonably priced soup and sandwich and afternoon tea was at the Machrie Bay Golf Club, again very good. Our accommodation for the night was a Bed and Breakfast in Brodick, The Glenartney, £78 for a double room. The room was great – clean and comfy, but the parking was stony which was a bit of a nightmare with the bikes. Looking forward to sampling the Arran Ale but whether it was too early in the season, the only decent bar we could found didn't sell it, so we had to make do with Deuchars. We sussed out a Bistro that did delicious "bogof "pizzas and also sold Arran Ale so the evening wasn't a complete disaster.



The following morning we headed straight for the Lochranza ferry and as soon as we hit the mainland roads, realised actually how bad the Arran roads had been. We headed into Tarbert and then carried on north to Lochgilphead, stopping for a bowl of soup at Inverary Castle. We then took the fantastic A819 north to Dalmally and then the even better A85 east to Tyndrum. Very little traffic and lovely sweeping roads made up for the "suboptimal" roads on Arran. A quick leg stretch in Tyndrum and then home via the usual Callendar/Stirling route. About 350 miles altogether.



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Having now decided not to do Arran in September, we are planning a two nighter (Friday 10th/Saturday 11th – NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE) instead. Check out the website but basically it's a run up the A9 to Inverness early evening on the Friday. Saturday is then up to Tongue, Durness and around to Ullapool for the Saturday night. Then Sunday is home via Loch Carron, Fort William and Glencoe. The trip will be 150 miles Stirling Services to Inverness, 200 miles Inverness to Ullapool and then 250 miles Ullapool back to Stirling - quite a heavy weekend.



The accommodation will be the Travelodge in Inverness (which you will have to book yourself - £55.80/room). Dinner in a local pub or en route then breakfast at the nearby Tesco, possibly buying a picnic there to take for lunch. A hotel in Ullapool which I will book (£70 or £80 per couple and £55 or £75 for a single depending on the room availability). Dinner in Ullapool. We need to know who wants to go on this trip so we can sort out accommodation. If you fancy going, drop John or Janet (janet.f.moss@talktalk.net) an email no later than 17th May.

Janet and John Moss

Lakes Weekend

I'll be leading a run to the Lake District later this month. We will be basing ourselves in Keswick for two nights which will allow us time to sample the Cumbrian food, drink, roads and scenery.
The details:
Friday 21st May:

Meet at Bothwell Services on the M74 at 6pm, with full tanks, for a prompt 6.15pm departure. We can also meet up at points further south on the M74 if that's more convenient.

Use the M74/M6/A66 to reach Keswick without delay - we should arrive before 9pm.

Check in and then meet up for food and drink.

Saturday 22nd May:

Ride the Lake District passes, stopping for lunch somewhere suitably scenic.

Sunday 23rd May

Depart after breakfast for a largely motorway-free ride home with a stop for lunch.

If you'd like to join us or just want more information, please call me on 07802 200964.

Steve MacKinnon

CASTLE CHALLENGE 2010 IS GO

The challenge is now open for members to take part. The idea is for you to go – on your motorcycle - to any or all of a dozen castles pictured and profiled on the challenge page of the website, record your visit with a photograph and upload it to the Gallery on the website.

An award will be presented to the member visiting the greatest number of castles. We shall keep track of the visits claimed and make a monthly summary. An early visitor was David McWilliam who posted up two visits on the first day the challenge was open.

On the site are full instructions, profiles and visitor advice for each castle plus comments by those who have made a visit about local interests and other advice. There is a Forum thread for you to suggest a visit and invite others to join you.

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The details are laid out with plenty of links to move easily between the different parts. The basic introduction is in the Articles/Services section of the Club website, labelled Castle Challenge 2010. This takes you to a full description of the challenge with a five-step procedure to take part, a full list of the castles with location details and links to the individual castle information and picture, plus a Google map of all twelve that can be used to plan a route, shown on the link below.

http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=101242476713338251734.0004853f739145c65a9f3&z=6

After you have posted a visit picture in the gallery, don't worry if a (R) symbol appears in the comments area below it. That will simply be me showing that I have recorded the visit in my summary. You can see who has visited a particular castle by looking at its gallery and the pictures posted, such as those for Stirling and Edinburgh castles.

Please join in, keeping to the advice on how to record a visit. If I see any problem with a claimed visit I'll send an email message.

Steve Middleton

ANNIVERSARY LOGO ON CLOTHING

We have modified the Club's embroidery logo to include the dates 2000 and 2010 to celebrate our tenth anniversary. The first order has been delivered, and here are samples of the logo.







To order clothing go to the Club's website and find the Club Shop button in the heading. There you will find details of the standard range of garments we use. I'll include some pix of the Anniversary logo there ASAP.

- AND ON A STICKER

Also soon to be available – probably at the May Club meeting – will be new stickers to put on your bike. Here is an early sample on my green bike. The white surround to the lettering will be reduced in width for the production version. They are 75mm high.

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Steve Middleton

Articles for BikeBytes

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

bikebytes@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

BikeBytes Crossword

It's crossword-quiz time again! This month, we have the usual cryptic motorcycle questions, and, just to be topical, I've added a few 'political' questions as well. Have fun!

Run Reports

Now that we're at last into Spring (?), the website is being regularly updated with run reports and photographs, so why don't you log-on and read some of the recent run reviews at:

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

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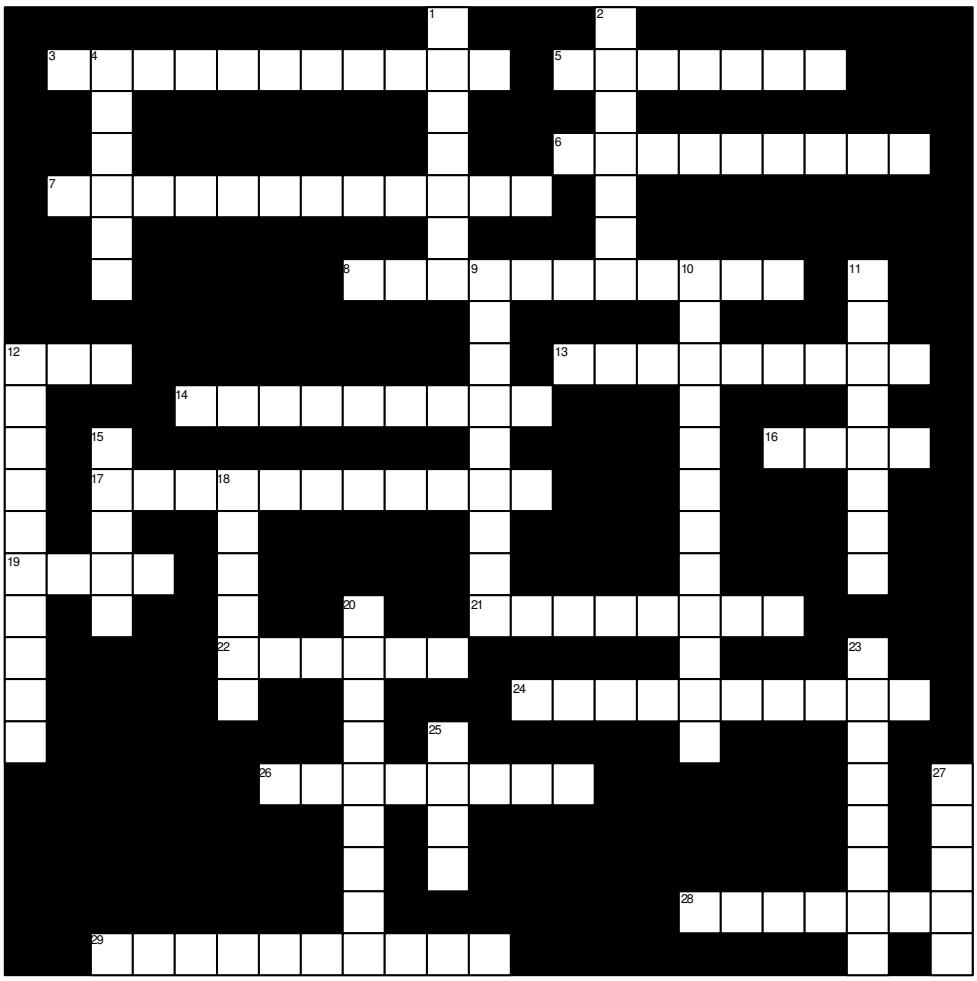
Scottish Motorcycle Club

May BikeBytes Crossword-Quiz



www.CrosswordWeaver.com

ACROSS

3 Needles and jets (11)
5 NOT a Highlander (7)
6 Discharge Connector (5,4)
7 Now made in India (5,7)
8 Parking charges and barking expenses (11)
12 50 years old this year (1,1,1)
13 Those potholes can give your back-end a fright (4,5)
14 Apparantly, they save lives...they just give me a headache (4,5)
16 Off-road, two wheeled event in Fort William (1,1,1,1)
17 Not a 'mainsteam' McQueen movie (2,3,6)
19 'Rocket Ron' Junior (4)
21 Nationalist Caviar (8)
22 'Boat Race' motorcycle supplies (6)
24 Honda's capable off-roader (6,4)
26 Rossi the elder (8)
28 Was Alistair a Captain in Blackadder? (7)
29 What the Con-Rods are connected to (10)

DOWN

1 Some of the British public probably still think of us as these (7)
2 Yorkshire's Trials Champion (7)
4 Grampian Motorcycle Convention venue (6)
9 The 'talking points' of this election (1,1,7)
10 You should use one of these for your nuts! (6,6)
11 Forgotten microphones here can be dangerous! (8)
12 Disused circuit for 'honest bankers' (10)
15 New race class this year (5)
18 After a long break, you can buy one of these again...pricey though! (6)
20 'GS' Bling (9)
23 They make Pilot Roads (8)
25 I thought it said a monkey topbox (4)
27 This politician could give you a nasty bite! (5)

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