JUNE - 2010

BikeBytes

The Monthly Magazine Of The Scottish Motorcycle Club

Welcome

June already! Welcome to the latest edition of **BikeBytes**. We've had some great runs during May to destinations including Lochgoilhead, Dalwhinnie, the Lake District and Fort William and the June calendar looks equally tempting.

Please note that, this month, several runs have an earlier than usual meeting time:

Wednesday 9th June - **Club Night**, Black Bitch Tavern, Linlithgow, 8pm.

Saturday 12th June – Susie Dundas's epic '**3 Meals on 2 Wheels**' run to Skye. A long trip of approx 380 miles so we make an early start at Stirling Services at 7.45am.

Sunday 20th June – Janet & John's **run to Bute**, meet at Dobbies, Stirling at 9.15am.

Saturday 26th June – Ken Eddie's **half day run**. Details TBA.

Sunday 27th June – John Hill's **Corran Ferry and Beyond run**. A fairly long run of about 280 miles along some beautiful roads through Ardgour, Sunart and Moidart. Meet at Dobbies, Stirling at 9.15am.

As always, please keep up to date with the latest news and run info at:
www.scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

Steve MacKinnon
secretary@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

bmf Kelso Bikefest 2010

The SMC will, once again, have a club stand at the bmf Kelso Bikefest this year. The event takes place on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th of July and some of us will travel down on the Friday evening to set up the gazebo and get the stand ready for the opening of the show the next morning.

I've attended a few of these Bikefests, with the club, and can say from experience that everyone had a great time. Last year was especially good as Steve Panter brought along his gas fired barbeque and we ate magnificently all weekend, a feature which will be repeated this year.

The Bikefest is an opportunity to promote the club and enjoy the weekend surrounded by motorcycle culture of all types. First and foremost, though, it is a chance to have a sociable get-together with club members in the beautiful Scottish Borders, wander round the club and retail stands and experience the entertainment laid on by the bmf.

Club members staying over for one night or two, generally bring their tents and camp near the club stand. We could really use some volunteers to help out on the SMC stand so if you're interested and available for any or all Friday, Saturday and Sunday, please contact me by email (secretary@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk), mobile (07802 200964) or simply talk to a committee member on a run.

The bmf will supply us with some free entrance and bike parking passes for those manning the stand. First come, first served!

Steve MacKinnon

Editorial

Gadgets!

Most people that know me, know that I'm a bit of a gadget geek……though I'm not Ovine enough to queue for hours for Steve Jobs' latest, over-priced, shiny toy!

The gadget 'fetish' does extend to motorcycling and I have spent a little of my hard-earned on electronic bits-and-bobs for the Tiger.

I noticed a recent thread on the club forum recently regarding GPS units suitable for bikes.

Contact the Scottish Motorcycle Club via the Membership Secretary:
Steve MacKinnon
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Now, I've used a GPS on my bike for tours and long trips for some time now and I find it invaluable.

I don't think that it replaces the need for a decent map…..sitting in a bar, mulling over your next day's riding is much better with a large map and a pint in hand!

In any event, even though I work in the telecoms industry, I know only too well, that you should never totally rely on something electronic or battery power!!

The GPS does though, give that re-assurance that you can always find your way home. One thing that I like to do when I'm out riding on my own on the Tiger, is to 'explore'….If I see a road or track heading up into the hills, I'll head off that way and see where it takes me…Safe in the knowledge that the Garmin will always get me home, wherever the road takes me.

It's also really useful for finding the nearest filling station for when you find that the needle on the fuel gauge is a lot lower than you expected! I can get up to 240-odd miles on the Tiger, but I can also get a lot less depending on how I've been riding.

The Points Of Interest (POI) detail is amazing….tourist destinations, pubs, hotels, music venues, bike dealers….you name it. In Germany, a few years ago, it found me a motorcycle accessory shop where I could buy replacement gloves for the ones which were about as waterproof as paper!

I used to have a Garmin Quest that took me through Europe and Ireland a few years ago. Now, I have a Zumo 660, which also plays mp3 music files and connects me to my mobile and the Bluetooth headset in my helmet.

Here's one thing though…my Garmin has the usual speed camera database loaded that bleeps at me whenever I'm nearing a speed camera and riding above the limit (extremely rarely, obviously!). Did you know that in some countries in Europe, it's illegal to use these?

In most European countries, it's illegal to use actual radar detectors (apart from Hungary and Russia), but in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Macedonia, Spain and Switzerland it's illegal to have the speed camera POI system in your GPS enabled. In Germany you can be fined €75 and in Ireland and Switzerland, they can confiscate the GPS!

Anyway, I'm sure that no motorcyclist would take his sat-nav directions as seriously as this stupid cager:



Ken Glendinning

CASTLE CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

As at Wednesday 2nd June we have seven members (and eight bikes) registered in the Member – Bike Record and a total of 25 visits documented. I know there are some others who have not yet submitted their evidence of a visit.

Leading scorer so far is Tommy Taylor with six visits recorded, and lots of useful information posted in the Forum about access details. Close second is David McWilliam with five visits.

Most popular castle is Stalker as a result of two recent Club runs passing by and stopping to give seven visitors, then Inveraray having had Judy's run pass the door for five visitors.

All the castles except Cawdor have had at least one visitor – who will be first up to the Nairn area?

If you have not yet taken part, go see the item on the website in the Articles / Services area for the details.

Steve Middleton

NICE SCOOBIE – BUT…

I've been a fan of Subaru with their flat-four engines, 4WD, rally successes and a mean shade of blue for a long while, so this one caught my eye recently, but for the wrong reasons.

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Busy street, neat car turning left – nice. Yes?

No!

It's parked. Seriously, yes, it is parked, unoccupied.

Here's the questions.

1. Where? – as accurately as you can get it. (Answer later in this edition)

2. How many UK laws/ regulations/ Highway Code rules can you count being broken?

Steve Middleton

CAN-AM THREE WHEELER

Saw this on holiday recently – won't say where since it is part of the answer to the Subaru article earlier – and it rather imposed itself on the area. I'd not heard of it, but on the way home found reference to it in a magazine advertisement that claimed it could be ridden with only a car "license", so probably under US legislation. Only after looking at the pix for a while did I notice it has no brake lever, so possibly the foot pedal does that job. No idea if it has a clutch lever, and I'm now annoyed I didn't go crawling around on the floor taking greater note of its underpinnings. Maybe it has an auto gearbox too.

It turns out to be a Can-Am, produced by a subsidiary of the American Johnson company who make outboards, power water skis and similar. It has a BRP badge, but no indication of capacity, but to shove its bulk and corresponding weight around at a suitable rate it must be a litre at least. I didn't see it move or hear it run, despite hanging around a bit until Elaine dragged me away. I'd love the chance to ask, "Gissa go mistah".

The tyre cross-sections indicate it is designed not to lean into bends, so a bit disappointing on that score, but it should be fun, and more reassuring than a Goldwing trike with one wheel up front and two out back.





Steve Middleton

HONDA TEST DAY RUNS

Honda recently brought the demonstration bikes to Phoenix in Grangemouth, and after leading the morning run to Moffat I went along in the late afternoon for a go on a couple of bikes, mainly attracted by the VFR1200, but that was booked so I took another to widen my experience of the performance envelope.

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The Fireblade was small, a bit uncomfortable but by jeez it goes. Due to the tight shepherding of the leader it barely got above 5,000 revs but even there it pulled well, and the go when I managed a squirt up to about 8,000rpm would be highly addictive. Excellent ride comfort from the suspension, great precision to the steering.

They kindly put on a solo run for me at the end of the day – perhaps my "maturity" and grey beard persuaded them I would be a good prospect for a sale! The VFR1200 was nice, very nice, but not £12,000 nice on my scale of VFM. Seat, ride, handling were as you would expect and very good. The exhaust sound at about 4,000 and well open was a bit tinny thru' my plugs. The whole thing was very easy to operate and place where I wanted, and the weight (always a concern for skinny me) gave no worries, with easy slow speed control and balance. I was fortunate in that it was me and the shepherd and no-one else, and he wanted to push the bike he was on, so we had a fairly high speed tour of the hinterland of Alloa and Dollar.

I did not like the mirrors on either bike - poorer than my VFR800Fi.

Steve Middleton

Scoobie Answers

Location is answered by Google Earth map:- http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&ll=42.700478,9.449852&spn=0.0079,0.016716&t=k&z=16&msid=101242476713338251734.00048657a20addd5ba371

- and suggested by the TABAC sign (for France), confirmed by the F in the blue country area of the registration plate. Corsica is indicated by the 2B suffix in the plate indicating the Haute-Corse department.

Biggest town there is Bastia, the Prefecture.

Run Reports

Remember that you can log run reports on the club website. The run organisers always like feedback and it helps to improve future runs.

Here's one from Judy's recent run to Fort William, submitted by John Moss:

First of all, my sincere apologies to Judy for running into her rear end in Crianlarich and damaging her number plate light. Everyone says it's all to easy to do this, but I still feel like a plonker. Now, what an epic day! A little longer than we first expected, due to the closure of the Rest And Be Thankful because of an accident, which led to us taking a detour via Dunoon and the ferry to Gourock. We also saw a pair of ospreys on Loch Awe whilst stopped for tea at the Cruachan Power Station (first time to see an osprey in the flesh for Janet and I).



Four of us met up at the Loch Lomond Homes and Garden centre close to Balloch (Judy, Janet, Steve Middleton and me). Steve was only with us for the first part of the run, mainly, I believe, to bag another castle from the Challenge! Our route took us up the West side of Loch Lomond where we were joined en route by Alex. We then headed over the military road to Gairloch and up to Arrochar. From here we headed up to Crainlarich (ouch!), then on to Tyndrum, stopping at the excellent Real Food Cafe for a coffee (and cake!). As we pulled in to the car park we spotted David McWilliam waiting to join us.

Steve Middleton re-joined us at the cafe just as we were leaving. He'd done his detour via Inveraray and was heading home. From Tyndrum we rode through Glen Coe (excellent conditions, but a little disconcerting when a helicopter flew overhead, don't think it was an enforcement unit, at least we hope not!) then took the Kinlochleven loop. Again excellent conditions and very little traffic made for a most enjoyable ride. It was then on to Fort William and lunch at the Lochy in Caol.

Our route then took us South through Ballachulish, stopping at Castle Stalker, for those that had not already bagged that one, and heading East at Connel towards Loch Awe where we stopped for afternoon tea at the Cruachan Power Station and a spot of bird watching! Our next stop was Inveraray where we all collected the required evidence for the Castle Challenge.

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The plan was then to head back towards Arrochar over the Rest And Be Thankful and down the Loch side back to our starting point, but as mentioned above we were thwarted in this because of the accident at the bottom of the pass. We were told that the road would be closed for at least 4 hours, so we turned around, and more by luck than judgement ended up heading to Dunoon (blame me!). I think this was a good move as, even though retracing our steps to Inveraray may have been quicker, we had the opportunity for a half hour or so rest at the Dunoon ferry in glorious sunshine. I've never been to Dunoon before, and I certainly want to go back sometime soon. There were three ferries operating so they were getting through the queue quite quickly, although the queue onto the road as we left looked pretty long! As it was getting quite late, we just headed our separate ways as we left Gourock, with Janet and I taking the M8 all the way, arriving home 12 hours and 300 odd miles after we'd left! A long and exhausting, but mostly enjoyable day. Thanks Judy!

Lot's more 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

No new crossword-quiz this month, but at the end of this issue are the answers to May's 'bikes and politics puzzler'. Hope you got them all?

New puzzle in next month's issue!

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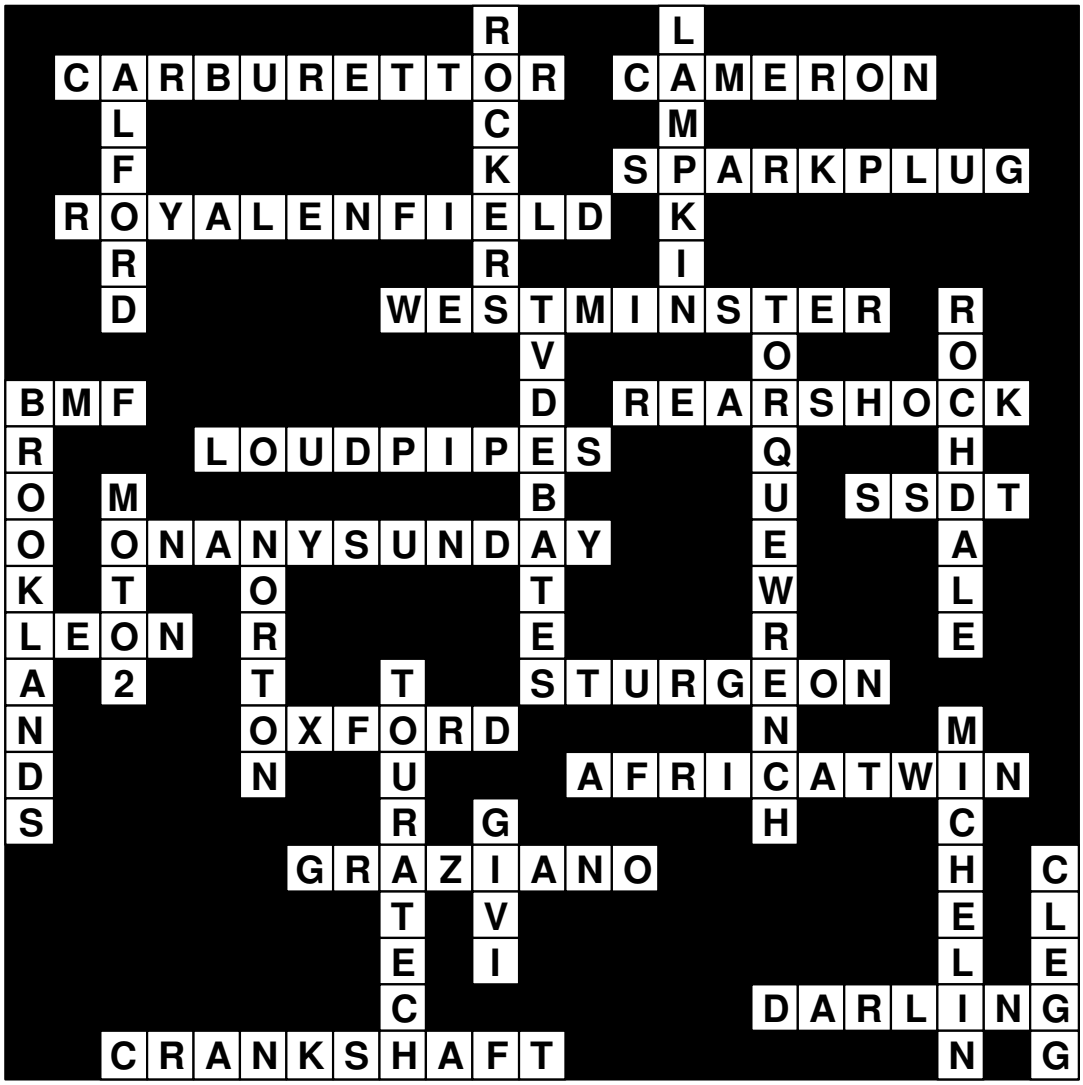
Answers to
May BikeBytes Crossword-Quiz



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