JULY - 2010

BikeBytes

The Monthly Magazine Of The Scottish Motorcycle Club

Welcome

June saw another great program of club runs, some quite lengthy and requiring early starts. Even though I didn't manage to go on all of them, my odometer shows 1500 miles added in the last four weeks! We always encourage club members to suggest or organise runs and special mention must go to Susie's '3 meals on Two Wheels' and John Hill's 'Moidart' runs. They were both outstandingly fine events, enjoyed by everyone who attended.

Coming up in July:

Friday 9th – Sunday 11th - BMF Bikefest, Kelso. Come and visit us on the SMC stand on Saturday and Sunday.

Wednesday 14th – Club night at Black Bitch Tavern, West Port, Linlithgow. 8pm.

Sunday 18th - Sarah Eddie's East to West Coast run. Meet at the big car park beside Hawes Pier, South Queensferry at 9.45am.

Saturday 24th - Paul Broughton's annual Treasure Hunt. Details TBA – check the website.

Sunday 25th - Judy Broad's Dunoon run. Meet at Loch Lomond Homes & Garden Centre on A811 just East of Balloch at 9.45am.

Saturday 31st – Ken Eddie's annual BBQ. At the Ken's house from 2pm.

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

Chairman's Bit



As I write this, we are making our final preparations for the annual club presence at the BMF Kelso Bikefest. We have a healthy number of volunteers to man the stand, most of whom will be camping over the whole weekend, so if you are heading that way at any point over the weekend, drop by the club gazebo, where you'll get a welcoming "cuppie", and can leave your helmet etc in our safe keeping while you explore the rest of the stands, or watch the amazing Steve Coley's display in the arena. We're all hoping for good weather for the weekend, not least because we're camping!!

Elsewhere in this issue of bikebytes you will see a report from John Moss, our events coordinator, on the way 2010 is shaping up as far as ride outs and other events are concerned. We did exceptionally well last year, and if I'm honest, I wasn't sure how we could top that, but in this, the clubs 10th anniversary year, things are looking good. We've had some great runs so far, with really good attendances. The half day runs appear ever popular, with the Fife one attracting 16 bikes. We've had some drenchings too, but I suppose we can choose the date, the destination, route etc, but can do very little about influencing the weather. But, while it's been wet at times, the temperature has been pretty good.

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Since my last contribution to Bikebytes, Fiona and I did a 2600 mile trip right down to the South of France and back, something I've meant to sit down and write about for Bikebytes, but maybe that can wait for a winter issue, to spur us on for another trip next year. It was however probably the most adventurous thing we've done on the bike to date, and overall, we had a great time. Fiona says though, next time, the Tent stays at home!!

That trip was of course the last hurrah for the R1100RS, which now sits in the garage awaiting a suitably cash equipped suitor, as I have already taken to the road on it's replacement, the R1200RT (in red, as Fiona insisted), which I am finding gobsmackingly well suited to my riding style. (Well I call it a style, some of you may think otherwise!!). I'm having a bit of an "issue" with it's Datatool alarm, but I'll live with that for now, and work on solutions over the winter. (Mr Datatool may find one of his products inserted somewhere undesirable sometime around January!!)

It would appear that I'm not he only one with new metal. Indeed, of the 16 bikes on the Fife run (26 June), a quarter were new to club members. Gerry Scott turned up with his Bandit 1200, Martin Pennycook on his Versys (which he'd only collected at 10am that morning) and Alan Hopper on his F800ST, as well as my RT. Must be that time of year.....I seem to remember a similar frenetic period of new machines last year!

Please keep an eye on the club calendar, as there is stacks of runs on it, and keep in mind 31 July, when the Eddie's will host a Barby at our place, to which you are all welcome. Details on the events calendar. And of course there are the club nights, next on 14 July.

Ken Eddie

Editorial

Just a short bit this month! Due to my much better half getting her money's worth out of the NHS, I haven't had much of a chance to get out on the bike. However, I have a special pass for Kelso this weekend, so I'll be doing my usual marshalling bit. I'm also looking forward to seeing the club represented there and hope we have some good weather.

What's the point of the **bmf** shows?....Well, the **bmf** certainly needs the cash, and the new company organising the events (The Mulberry Group) have a very professional attitude to the four main federation events.

After some problems in the past, it will probably take a year or two to get them back to what they used to be, but I'm convinced that the shows will prove to be extremely successful and popular. There's a much closer focus on motorcycling themes and hopefully this will suit most of the attendance. It's always the case that you can never please all the people, all of the time, but they'll be doing their best!

What will make a difference though, as far as the **bmf** shows are concerned, is if people give feedback to the federation and the organisers. We all have a slightly different view on the world and the **bmf** would really appreciate comments from people who come along to the shows. Send any comments to me if you like: ken_bmf@talktalk.net

On the subject of feedback! I'm told in the past that we've tried letters pages and comments sections in **BikeBytes** and had little response. It would be great though to know how we're doing….not just with the newsletter, but also with the club in general. The committee does a fantastic job and the dedication to making the club a success and as appealing to as many members as possible should be obvious in the extremely impressive events calendar.

However, let us know what you think…send us a note via **BikeBytes** on any subject you like…..good or bad. No news may often be good news, but it would be good to feel that every member was getting as much as possible from their club membership.

Anyway…see you all for a beer or two in the sun at Kelso?

Ken Glendinning

Castle Challenge Grand Tour

Saturday 19th June

David Jerome's plan was to visit as many castles in the Challenge as possible, in one weekend, with a possible target of eight. We met at Stirling Services and set off at 10am, me on the Versys 650, David on his Aprilia Caponord. We were on a tight schedule as we hoped to reach Corgarff, Kildrummy, Slains, Spynie, Cawdor and Urquart on Saturday, leaving Ardvreck for Sunday morning to be followed by a run down the west coast to Inveraray. The steely resolve that we'd need to keep things on track evaporated as the lure of coffee and scones at Spittal of Glenshee was too much to resist.

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Corgarff was an easy first visit – both simple to find and photograph. Then to Kildrummy just 30 miles up the road. The route from Kildrummy to Slains and then to Spynie looked quite complex as that part of the country doesn't seem to do direct roads to anywhere. We relied on the satnav and turned up at a cold and dull Cruden Bay, way behind schedule. We couldn't access Slains Castle with the bikes so walked to it and took some photos.



The weather improved dramatically as we headed west and by the time we reached Elgin the sun was shining and at Lossiemouth the breakers were crashing blue and white on the golden beach. Just down the road, we stopped at Spynie. By now it was about 6pm and the palace had closed for the day meaning we couldn't get the bikes anywhere near it so, nothing for it, but to walk again.

I phoned ahead to the Blackrock Campsite at Evanton,near Dingwall. The phone rang and a young female voice answered. She said, 'Snarkvaark'. Momentarily thrown by the unusual greeting I pressed on with, 'Uh, do you have space, this evening, for two, two man tents?'
'Wadeameenut', she said. It was difficult to place her accent. It might have been Polish or Estonian. Possibly Buckie.
Another woman then took over the conversation and assured me that they did, indeed, have camping space available but warned that the office closed at 9pm.

Cawdor Castle was next and also closed, but we were able to take pictures of the bikes beside the castle notice board. It was now 6.45pm and, after refuelling in Inverness, we decided Urquhart was a castle too far so, giving up on the plan to follow the west coast on Sunday, we rode to Dingwall then along the shore of the Cormarty Firth to the campsite, arriving in Evanton at 8pm. Blackrock turned out to be a very nice site. It was attractive, tidy and clean with good facilities. Cost was £9 per person/motorbike/two man tent. Our neighbour under canvas, a Dutch guy on a bicycle, put our weekend trip to shame. He was cycling through Europe and reckoned he would pedal about 4000 miles before reaching home.



The big issue now was the time at which pubs and hotels might stop serving food. At 8.10 the trusty old Vango Force 10 was up and I was ready to go. I looked round to see David still in the throes of his man-wrestles-with-giant-rubber-octopus tent pitching technique. It was a close run contest with the tent losing on points and after a short walk into the centre of the village, we crossed the threshold of the Novar Arms Hotel with minutes to spare before last food orders at 9pm. The bar service was slow and the food mediocre but they had some live folk music on and having a cool Kronenbourg 1664, or two, to the strains of 'The Black Velvet Band' was very pleasant.

After leaving the hotel, a fight with the locals, a memorable encounter with the wild women of Dingwall and a night spent in the cells were just some of the things we didn't do. I felt like a fraud, returning to the campsite before dawn. Before midnight, in fact. Surely badass bikers with only the road to answer to and perilous places to be should be all night party animals. As we walked back to the campsite we resolved to make more of an effort to adopt the mantle of dusty and dangerous, red-eyed road warriors.

I checked my self inflating mattress while David went off in search of the sauna.

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Sunday 20th June

The campsite proved to be quiet overnight until the dawn chorus at 3am. It was as though every bird north of Loch Ness had ordered an early wake up call, but once I got used to nature's racket, I was able to drift back to sleep. The previous evening we hadn't been bothered by midges but they made themselves apparent with the new day and bit mercilessly. We struck camp and set off in sunshine (and without breakfast) and headed for Ardvreck Castle, Loch Assynt in the far north west. We encountered several short stretches of road works with temporary traffic lights and discovered that several of their detectors didn't 'see' us so the lights wouldn't change. Since it was very quiet we were able to work round the problem.

The tank range of both bikes proved to be very similar. The Caponord has a large 25 litre tank while the Versys' only holds 19. However, the Versys was returning 60mpg to the Aprilia's 40 so we were both filling up at around 170 miles.

The weather deteriorated as we pressed west and the final stretch from Ledmore to Ardvreck Castle was a miserable and cold drag. We stopped in the rain to take photos at Ardvreck and I was reminded how difficult it is to force wet hands into lined gloves! In the castle car park there was a campervan in which huddled a family who had been sold the dream of the open road and endless miles of carefree touring in beautiful, sunny, idyllic Scotland. They didn't come out to say hello but just watched us with the dull-eyed stare of people who have, unaccountably, become bored with looking at rain for the past several hours and who would have given a limb to be back home in Milton Keynes. It was a relief to confirm that Ullapool was only thirty minutes away. We arrived at 10.30 for a late breakfast and used the Gallery Café, above an outdoors shop, which I knew from previous visits. When the guy asked for my order, my brain said 'muesli and carrot juice' but my mouth chipped in with 'a bacon and fried egg roll and coffee, please'. It was delicious.

We left Ullapool, passing the large Harbour Lights B&B which will be a stopover on Janet and John's 'Ullapool via Inverness' weekender in September. Within a few miles of leaving Ullapool, the sun came out and the run down the A835 along Lochs Broom and Glascarnoch to Garve was one of the best sections of the whole trip. Dry, quiet roads in good condition with fantastic scenery all around. Grin factor 10. Fuel on board and Castle Urqhart dispatched at 1pm followed by another brilliant ride down winding Loch Ness. A brief coffee stop at the rebuilt Spean Bridge Mill, which had been all but destroyed by a fire in January 2009, saw us refreshed for the next leg. The satnav said that the quickest way to get to Inveraray from Fort William was to go via Glencoe to Tyndrum then back to Dalmally and down the A819. I had assumed we would go down the Oban road to Taynuilt but you can't beat technology and the Glencoe way is marginally shorter and quicker.

On the run down the A819, we passed Janet & John and group heading north on the final leg of their 'Bute' run. A quick wave as we swept past was all we had time for then we quickly bagged the castle, retraced our route to Tyndrum and met up with the group at The Real Food Stop. I had expected the run down through Strathyre and Loch Lubnaig to be choked with traffic but I think it was late enough in the day for all the day trippers to have returned home and we had an easy run back to Stirling in the evening sunshine. My total mileage for the weekend was 701, most of them very, very enjoyable. We'd had a great tour and achieved David's goal of eight castles.

Steve MacKinnon

Events in 2010

Take a look at the SMC events calendar for 2010 on the website. This has been a record year for the number of events organised by the SMC membership. From 6th March through to the 23rd October there are just 3 weekends in which there is no SMC event organised. Two of these weekends are in Sept (18/19) and Oct (16/17), so there's a chance these will get filled too. There has been enormous diversity in the types of events and destinations for runs. Check out the Run Reports and Gallery on the website for a sample of what we've been up to.

In summary, on the 2010 calendar, we have

24 full day runs

SW loop, Loch Rannoch, Lindisfarne, Tayvallich, Cairn O'Mount, Perthshire, Lochgoilhead, Dalwhinnie/Laggan/Glencoe, Fort William, SE Loop, 3 meals on 2 wheels, Bute, Moidart, Caerlaverock, East to West, Treasure Hunt, Dunoon, Cream Bun Run III, Dumfries, 5 Counties, Alford, Leuchars Airshow, Easdale, Tayforth

7 half day runs

Perthshire, East Coast, Moffat, Fife, Campsies/Trossachs, TBA(x2)

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6 overnighters

10th anniversary bash, Lakes, Kelso, Castle Challenge, Applecross, Ullapool

6 chip shop runs

Biggar, Coatbridge, Callander, Falkirk, Posh, TBA

2 other events

Gazebo waterproofing and BBQ

The organisers of these events are:

Ken Eddie = 15
Janet and John = 5
Steve MacKinnon = 2
Susan Dundas = 3
Alex Muir = 2
Paul Broughton = 2
Sarah Eddie = 1
David Jerome = 3
Judy Broad = 4
Ken Glendinning = 1
Steve Middleton = 3
Ruby Rennie = 1
John Hill = 1
Committe = 2

A grand total of 45 SMC events compared to last years total of 35 events. This is the largest number of events we've ever had in a single season. A big vote of thanks to all those members who have organised an event, to those members that have participated, and those that will participate in future events this year. Your contributions are really appreciated.

It's also worth a mention that we've had 41 members (> 2/3 of the membership) and 12 guests participate in at least one event

If you'd like to organise an event, maybe for one of the blank weekends, or for one of the spare days still available (check the calendar on the website), please let me know at

events@scottishmotorcycleclub.org.uk

John Moss

Do average speed cameras work: A case study of the A77.

Road safety interventions often use vehicle speed reduction as a means to attempt to reduce casualty rates and with the advent of speed enforcement cameras this can be done automatically. The A77 has had a large section patrolled on it since July 2005 with average speed cameras – this is in fact the largest permanent average speed camera zone in the UK. However has this system been effective in reducing the number of casualties on this section of road?



The easiest way to assess this is to just look at the number of casualties prior to the camera being installed and compare this with the number of casualties post intervention – and this would show a large improvement in road safety. However this method would be flawed as there has been a general reduction in casualties from road crashes year on year and this has to be taken into account by estimating how many casualties would have occurred if the speed cameras had not been installed. This problem is sometimes referred to as the regression to the mean.

Once the computer has done some fancy mathematics values of casualty reductions can be calculated for the A77. This showed that the camera system has been effective in reducing casualties with a mean saving of around 0.8 casualties per month from July 2005 to December 2009; within the first year of operation the savings were over 2 casualties per month, a 24% reduction. The analysis also showed that over time the effectiveness of the A77 cameras tended to reduce and at around 27 months after the cameras went live the reduction in casualties due to the intervention reduced to zero.

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This is probably caused in part by some road users learning how to manipulate their speed and still avoid detection (but it would be unethical of me to divulge these).

Overall in the period that the camera has been in operation that has been a saving in casualties and lives, in real terms that means less pain and suffering for drivers and their loved ones.

Paul Broughton

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

This month's crossword quiz has a mixture of biking, Scottish and, to be topical, a few football clues!

The layout makes some of the clues a bit difficult, but, it's not meant to be easy you know!

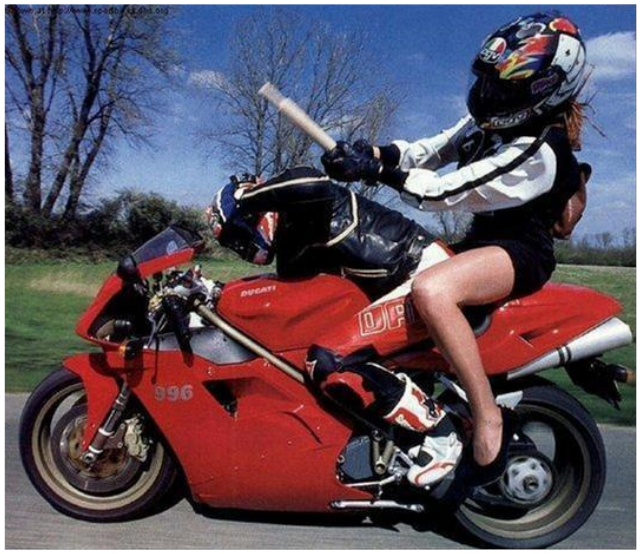
You can learn a few useless facts while you look the clues up on the internet….that's what I do!!

Answers next month….Good Luck!

How about this…a chainsaw powered motorcycle!



"If I'm going too fast…as simple dig in the ribs would have done!"



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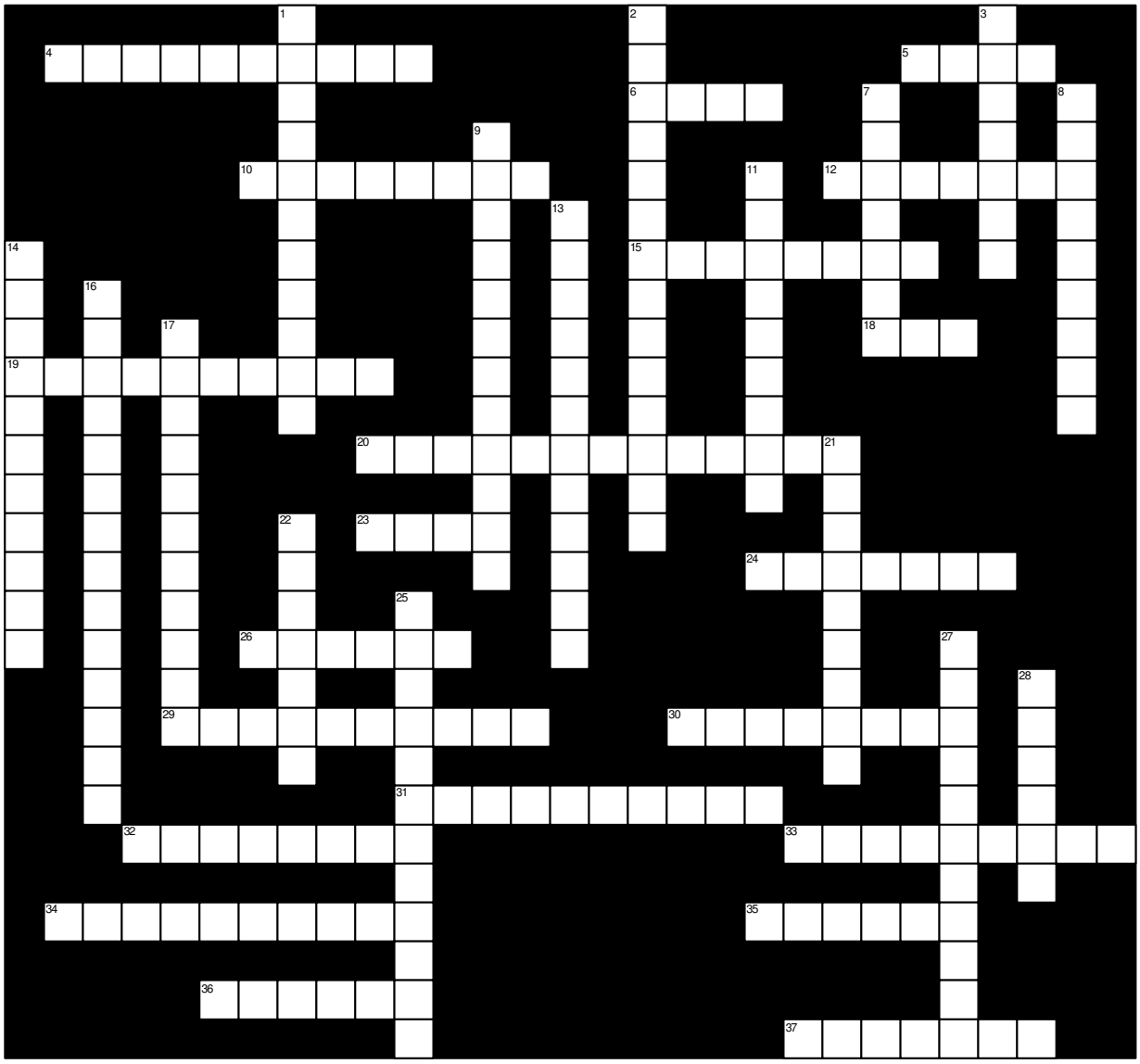

www.CrosswordWeaver.com

ACROSS

4 Yamaha YZF600 (10)
5 Often floods Dumfries (4)
6 Edison, the best footballer in the world? (4)
10 South African football's beautiful noise? (8)
12 Italian motorcycle manufacturer, founded in 1911 (7)
15 Bivalve Mollusc Bar (4,4)
18 Good month to visit this Forth island? (3)
19 Original home of the Edinburgh Monarchs (10)
20 St. Johnstone FC's ground (9,4)
23 Russian Outfit (4)
24 The Arctic Convoys sailed from here (4,3)
26 In the US, it's a girl's game...or so England thought! (6)
29 Clean Sweep on the island (10)
30 Did the ball really make a difference? (8)
31 Bike-Fest Park (10)
32 The Yanks left here in 1992 (4,4)
33 The spirit of Brora (9)
34 Epic racer we lost 10 years ago
35 Is the G.O.A.T. really moving here next year? (6)
36 Ship's Mate on the Vital Spark (6)
37 Made-to-measure motorcycle boots (7)

DOWN

1 Does Mr Shepherd sit here? (7,4)
2 Honda CBR1100XX (5,9)
3 The UK's most remote National Nature Reserve (2,5)
7 Clarkson fell off a scooter here (7)
8 First city in the world to have it's own Fire Brigade (9)
9 King James died here in 1513 (7,5)
11 Horny Fire Festival (2,5,2)
13 Washing clothes in the Sound of Jura - It's the third largest in thge world! (12)
14 Elderly Orkney Gent (3,3,2,3)
16 The original motorcycle in 'Heartbeat' (7,7)
17 The 'Blue Brazil' (11)
21 Drowned Superbikes (9)
22 MotoGP's #99 is from here (7)
25 'Easy Rider' who died recently (6,6)
27 Germanic Biking sales (4,7)
28 Most successful World Cup team (6)

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