

# BikeBytes

October 2008

## The Monthly Magazine Of The Scottish Motorcycle Club

### WELCOME

It seems far too soon for summer to be over but already we're heading into autumnal colours and temperatures. Not that that stops the club's activities. In fact September has been a pretty busy month with a Chip Shop run, David Jerome's Arran run, an excellent camping weekend at Applecross and finishing with the Borders Weekend.

Not only all that but also three new members to warmly welcome, namely Gordon & Dorothy MacMillan from Dunfermline (BMW K1200LT and Kawasaki Z1000 respectively) and Kenny Lauder from Doune who rides a Suzuki GSX1400.

Coming up in October we have:

4<sup>th</sup> October - Steve Middleton's 'Run to Ayrshire'. Note that this is a Saturday run. Meeting at Abington Services (M74, jcn 13), 09:45 for a 10:00 departure.

8<sup>th</sup> October - Club night at the Black Bitch Tavern, Westport, Linlithgow which starts at 8pm.

12<sup>th</sup> October - Judy Broad's 'Western Run'. Meeting at 10am at the Loch Lomond Garden Centre on the A811.

For the latest info on these or any other club matters, please check out the website or contact a committee member.

**Steve MacKinnon**

### ARRAN 2008

It was an early start we had to be at the ferry terminal in Ardrossan by 09:00 for the ferry. George and Michael set off early from Livingston to get a good start. The others meeting at Livingston were George Warnock, Steve Panter Janet and John Moss. Already at the terminal when we arrived were Ken and Fiona Eddie, Steve and Linda MacKinnon and Mike O'Neill on his reliable and great looking Moto Guzzi Griso.

Straight on to the island and a quick northern loop and into Arran Aromatics and the cheese shop for something soft and smelly, after that a run around the southern loop, which took longer than expected so the posh lunch stop at the Distillery was chopped in favour of the sandwich bar at Lochranza. The food

was fine but the lady making the sandwiches had only one speed - slow.



The weather held up well, even a bit of sunshine came through. The next part was the fantastic A83 up to Lochgilphead and then finally onto Macdonald's at Balloch. I think everyone had a good time and did over 300 miles for the whole trip.



**David Jerome**

### AN AFTERNOON RIDE

Last Sunday (14/09/08) because it was dry (how many more of those are we going to get?) we decided, instead of doing the chores we had set ourselves, to go for a ride. Filled up with petrol at the Jet station in Linlithgow and headed down the M9 to

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Stirling, leaving the motorway at J10 and onto the A84 to Callendar, joining the A85 at Lochearnhead and turning left onto the A82 at Crianlarich. Turned right at Tarbet onto the A83 and then the sharp left onto the A814 at Arrochar. Stopped for a coffee at The Pit Stop and then it was on down alongside Loch Long. Keep left at a couple of roundabouts and get onto the A817 which goes through Glen Fruin. This is the military road and is absolutely fantastic!! A wide, well surfaced road with sweeping bends and amazing views, first of Faslane, then scenic moorland and finally Loch Lomond. Turn right onto the A82, then down to Balloch and onto the A811 back to Stirling and home along the M9. It took us 4 hours and 150 miles back to the petrol station (I ran out of juice at 140 – which was about two thirds along the M9). Try it sometime (the ride, not the running out of petrol).

Janet Moss

## APPLECROSS CAMPING WEEKEND – 20 & 21 SEPT.

Chair Davis Jerome suggested this weekend camping trip to use his gear, and several of us dug out our own camping stuff to join him, attracted by the infamous Beallach na Ba access road, and the opportunity to do a distance on the bike in terrific scenery.

So Saturday saw six bikes at Stirling M9 services; David J on his Aprilia Caponord, Ken Eddie on BMW R100R(?) with daughter Alexandra as pillion, Steve MacKinnon on Transalp, Fraser Simpson on Harley Davidson with all the trimmings including a tow bar, Steve Panter on a Suzuki Vulcan 900, and me on the trusty VFR750.



A casual approach to departure and making progress saw us stop at the Green Welly in Tyndrum around lunchtime, and the rain was trying to establish a presence. I hid behind a van and swapped leather trousers for textile and said thanks for the 3-box Givi setup I'd rigged for the first time. This has been used in different formats but this was the first use of all three bits at the same time, and allowed a sensible

allocation of different items of gear between the boxes. Ken's other daughter Sarah met us here in her car and Alexandra transferred to join her for the rest of the run. Steve P off-loaded his rucsac from his back into her boot to continue unencumbered.

David continued to lead us over Rannoch Moor and Ballachulish bridge to a fuel stop in Fort William where I grabbed a McDonald's to make up for a missed food intake the others had managed at Tyndrum. On again up the Great Glen to turn off at Invergarry and into a terrific run down Glenshiel and beside Loch Duich to stop at Eilean Donan castle for pictures and a tea break. The weather had cleared up by now but the sky was still gloomy and the distance hidden by mist. The castle was doing a booming trade in visitors and looked just how a Highland feudal castle should – despite it having been rebuilt and modified from a roofless ruin earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During this part of the run we overtook Ken Russell on his valiant Honda CG125, giving him plenty of space so he could keep up his hard-won momentum on corners and inclines.

We were aware that fuel supplies would be rare for the roads ahead, so went into Kyle of Lochalsh to top up, and to see the Skye bridge from a distance – it is very graceful. Off again and to the best bits that we (well, me at least) had come for – the trip over to Loch Carron, round its head and onto the Shieldaig road. I was amazed to see that Lochcarron village had more filling stations than my home town of Linlithgow. We soon turned off to the Pass of the Cattle – Beallach na Ba – and wound our way up its narrow twisting approach beside a fearsome drop the other side of the Armco. There were few vehicles coming down the other way and all were passed with good co-operation and waves so we did not have to stop except for one 4x4 that seemed to think it had a right to expect climbing motorcycles to pull onto the grass beside the drop. David J gave him a withering stare – or so he says – and I, further down the line and already stopped in a passing place, chickened out and waved it thru'. The really tight bit of the Beallach is preceded by a longish straightish bit clinging to the side of the glen, so you can see it getting closer. This also means you can see if there is anyone else on the road who might interfere with your own progress. We had a clear run and no problems, but several of us used up the full width of the road on the second alpine turn – the lefthander – and learned from that to cut the corner on the final one. We would have galloped up the remaining section to the saddle point at the top of the pass, but now we had emerged from the protection of the glen's walls we were exposed to a fearsome cross-wind, and mist, so made careful progress to the cairn marking the highest point. The pictures were taken and somehow Ken Eddie managed to light a cigarette despite the strong wind.



The view to the northwest and towards Applecross was hidden by mist and cloud, but there was a promise of sun behind it, and by the time we arrived at the campsite it was shining in welcome. Ken Russell awaited us – the tortoise had simply gone straight past Eilean Donan and Kyle to arrive about an hour earlier than us hares – and had sussed out the arrangements. T'other Ken's daughters already had their tent up, so we set to and amazed ourselves with the ease that modern tents can be set up. Steve P had brought a 4-man tent and complained that he was lonely in the large space! Fraser had an electric pump to plug into the Harley and blow up his airbed. Steve Mac's traditional 2-man tent would need to have very friendly occupants to meet its description. I had my daughter's 3-man tent and it was ideal – plenty of space to move around in but not too bulky or heavy on the bike. It strapped across the seat above the panniers very neatly. We had all remembered a puck for the sidestand, and Fraser's was a suitable size for the big and heavy Harley – it would have easily held a full meat and two veg. dinner.



Ken R was worrying about his wife – due in the car with two dogs – who had not arrived. He had found that there is no mobile phone reception in the area, so was concerned with no news, but joined us to prepare for dinner. The Applecross Inn lies below the campsite and beside the bay, but by the time we got here it was almost dark and misty anyway. Dinner was announced on two big blackboards on the wall, so we commuted back and forth from our table to

decide between the really attractive dishes on offer, most of them based on local seafood.

I'll not go into details of the food, except to say it fully justified the awards the Inn has won and the reputation of the quality of Scottish fresh produce. The beers were excellent too. Soon after we got to the Inn Ken's Carol arrived and they joined us with their two beautiful black flat-coated retrievers she had brought. I'm a sucker for this type of dog, and if they are well-behaved like these two then I'm full of respect for their owners too.

We all entered a competition to guess the number of footsteps to walk from Lochcarron to Applecross – the distance to the nearest petrol pumps – to support reopening the pumps opposite the Inn. Some brave local should be walking it about now, presumably using a pedometer to count.

We got back to the tents gone midnight, and soon Fraser was serenading us all with his snores. The other campers were not seen or heard, despite there being a modest number, including another group of 'bikes.



The weather overnight was kind and warm, and Sunday arrived clear and bright. The site's loos were good and clean, and Ken E offered fried home-grown duck egg rolls to all – what a treat. We struck camp and the tents all seemed to go back in their bags OK. We topped off with tea or coffee from the camp bar, while some had the full breakfast.

Steve P and Fraser decided to take their time as befits their cruiser bikes – and Fraser's well-worn rear tyre – while the other five bikes set off around the peninsula to Shieldaig. Ken R kept up well since the roads - and sheep - did not encourage speed, but we wished him well when we got to the wider road just before Torridon. I was leading this bit and set off to enjoy the sweeping open bends of the beautifully-surfaced road. Using a mantra of the main towns and reading roadsigns I managed to lead us to Beaully and stop at Drumnadrochit on Loch Ness for coffee and buns – and fuel.

David took back the lead and we wiggled on a fine road beside Lochs Ness, Oich and Lochy to turn off at Spean Bridge for the favourite road past Loch Laggan to Dalwhinnie and the A9. A quick spin down

this to the House of Bruar for another food break saw us all flourishing mobile phones and checking watches to make promises of arrival time to loved ones. As a result we set off again and put our heads down and peeled off to run home. I arrived in Linlithgow at 6:30 with 516 miles on the trip meter since filling up at the other end of town on Saturday morning.



A great trip, terrific scenery, excellent company and a really good dinner without any weather problems – just what the Club is all about. “Thank you” to David for the idea and leading the run, to Steve MacKinnon who did a lot of the detailed arrangements, and to everyone for their company, including the dogs.

**Steve Middleton**

## **ANOTHER SUNDAY AFTERNOON RIDEOUT – 21/09/08**

Another dry Sunday afternoon, and the gardening goes for a burton yet again!! We decided to go down towards the Borders this time, taking the M9 towards Edinburgh and then the Bypass, getting onto the A7 towards Galashiels. Turn right onto the B7007 signposted Innerleithen, joining onto the B709 down to Innerleithen, turn right then left still on the B709 past Traquair and down to the crossroads at the Gordon Arms Hotel, turning right onto the A708. Carry on down past St Mary's Loch and into Moffat. A cup of tea and a fruit scone at the Hammerlands Centre on the left just before you get into Moffat refueled the body, then a visit to the petrol station in Moffat refueled the bikes. Then through Moffat town centre and onto the A701 up the Devil's Beef tub and to Penicuik, back onto the Bypass and down the M9 to Linlithgow. 145 miles in 4 hours – another satisfying afternoon out.

**Janet Moss**

## **EXCITING FIRST BATCH OF HONDA MOTORCYCLES FOR 2009!**

Honda proudly introduces an exciting first batch of motorcycles for the 2009 model year. New models include the ever breathtaking CBR1000RR Fireblade and CBR600RR Super Sport machines, both now

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**CBR1000RR Fireblade**



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