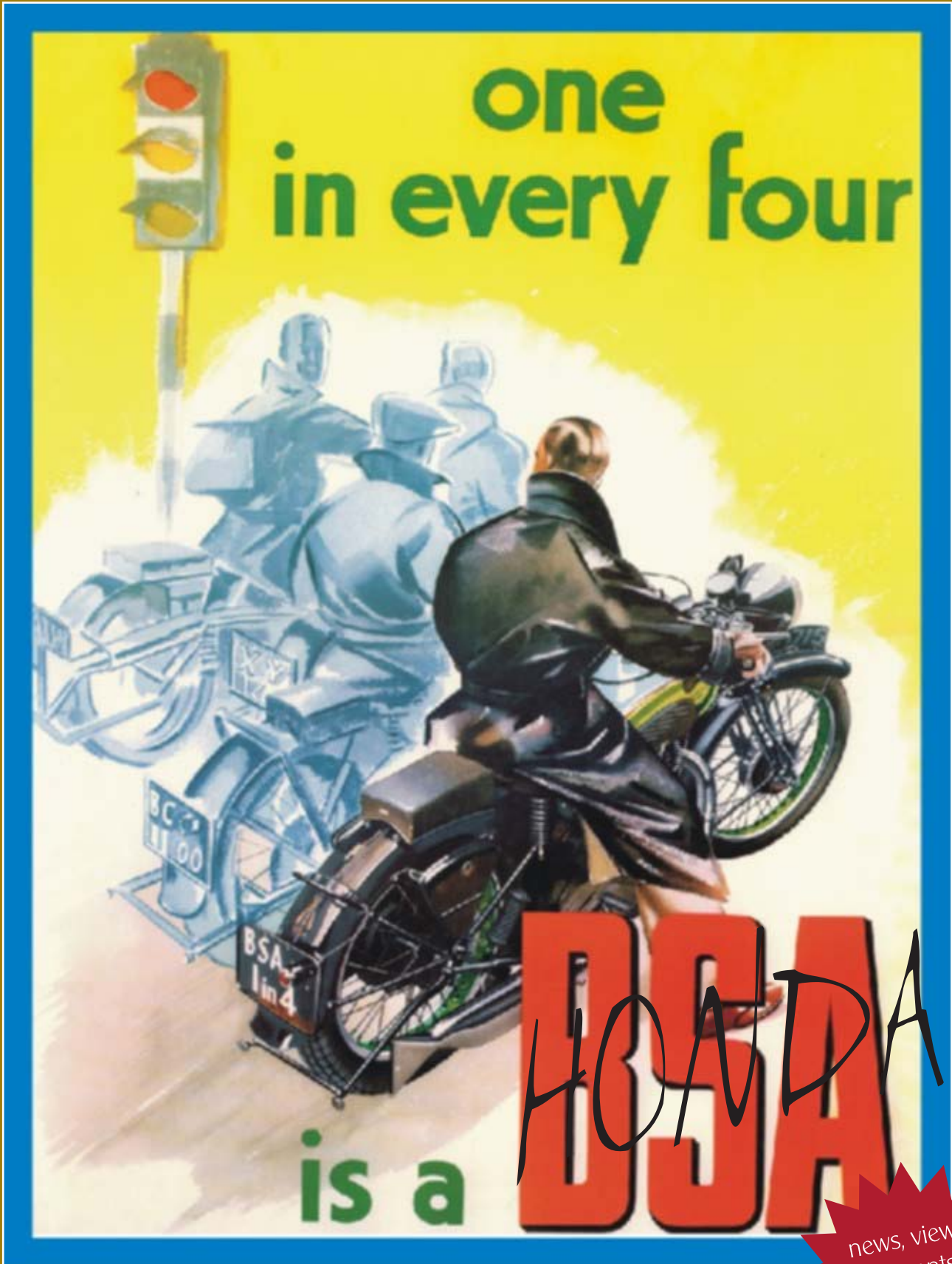


the banter

WINTER 2010



COME ALONG AND JOIN US - ALL WELCOME!

SCMC clubnights: 7.30pm, every 2nd Wednesday at The BAIGLIE INN, Glenfarg



Welcome to SCMC's new newsletter

As the newly elected editor of the SCMC newsletter I appreciate that following in the footsteps of Graeme Russell will be a tough act to follow. Graeme's tenure has been a long and successful one and I for one feel indebted to Graeme for his enthusiasm and dedication to the club. I would like to take this opportunity in thanking Graeme on behalf of the members for his stewardship and for supplying us with so many interesting and readable newsletters over the years.

I am fortunate in that Graeme will continue to assist me in my new role until I am suitably weaned and ready to stand on my own two feet. I relish the task ahead and would like to reassure members that any British classics bias that I may have been nurturing has been replaced by a more 'inclusive' interest – my thanks to Murray Flett for educating me.

As one of the club's younger members, and by younger I mean that I have only just concluded my first year of membership, I hope to become more enlightened by listening to SCMC members views and ambitions for the club. But as Graeme will testify writing and creating articles takes up considerable time and I hope a call for members to become involved by supplying contributions will help



to make our newsletter more appealing to everyone. For example you may have an opinion on some issue or may have just concluded a rewarding rebuild, completed an epic bike trip or would just like to share your favourite route with all and sundry. Even a trip down memory lane (ala Derek Horne's 70's Italian trip) would be worthy reading material – so please send me your experiences, all are welcome. Please include pictures as well - they really do paint a thousand words!

Much of the content, the contributions and the classic themed cover in this issue all reflect the current 'what makes a classic?' debate. Please feel inspired to join in on the debate and add 'your tuppence' for good measure - it's all fun! And now that my first 'welcome' is over with, it's on with the news!

SCMC Autumn Gathering by John Hyman

Sunday September 25th confounded the usual weather forecasters and turned out to be an absolutely superb day. Just my luck that I was unable to ride after just having had an operation on my left hand.

Graeme was volunteered to be on parade at The Achray House, St Fillans at 11 am (thanks Graeme) and by the time we arrived there a bit later (on 4 wheels) the car park was pretty well wall to wall bikes. Most people had grabbed a coffee from the Hotel and were having the usual tyre kicking session wandering around chatting to old and new friends. The range was surprising. From BMW and Grinall 3 wheelers through Norton Dominator, BSA Twins and more modern bikes to Chris Kiddie's

incredibly tiny (and noisy in a hedonistic way) Spondon Triumph. It was good to see people had taken the opportunity and travelled good distances to get there - Elaine and Andrew on their BSA from Haddington, George Martin on yet another BSA from Peebles and Jim Kirkham (now without the beard) on an elderly Honda from Oban were possibly the most travelled? This event was the first one we'd had with the new owners of the Hotel and we must have behaved ourselves because we're invited back again for 2011. From the general comments I heard I think we had a great event and promoted the SCMC.

Great weather and thunderous machinery greeted the day!



The Classic Versus'

In response to Murray Flett's article 'What's a classic?' I can only hold my hand up to what could be termed as 'loose and careless talk'. But before I am blindfolded and stood up against the wall allow me have what I hope is not the final word on this healthy debate. Murray is quite correct with his observation that I was of course referring to a poor showing of British Classics on the Strathyre summer run. However I will concede I was ignorant to the fact that there were many other non-British classics in attendance and I can only apologise for my blasphemous remark!

The crux of Murray's argument (or was it gripe?) would appear to be that not everyone can afford British classics. Fair point you might think. However I would argue that if one cares to look there are plenty of affordable classics on offer throughout the UK, complete and running, and at fairly reasonable cost. This is especially true if sourced through clubs or private classifieds. Also, if you search the web it is possible to pick up affordable classics UK wide, and have them delivered to your door for less than the price of a pair of Altbergs! Most classic dealers will also give a customer satisfaction guarantee - though you will need to negotiate this yourself when concluding a deal.

I thought it would prove interesting if I post a 'deal from the web' feature every issue, I also think it's imperative that the first ad should feature a foreign classic, just so I don't have to keep plying my new mate Murray in beers. *What are your views about buying bikes on the web? - contributions welcome!*

The other side of the coin is how many bikers would really desire a British classic when, in truth, they do require lots of fettling? I can honestly see the sense in owning a more modern (and reliable) classic from foreign shores - as history testifies, they did compete all too favourably with the failing British bike industry and we all know only too well how that sorry tale ended (see cover 'tear jerker' advert). Quality, refinement, value and reliability were arguably the winning qualities the failing Brit industry failed to appreciate in the late sixties. Decline was inevitable, the reasons many. *Your own views please - why and where did we fail?*

I might also be persuaded to agree with Murray's suggestion that barn finds are perhaps the stuff or dreams but for the fact that it does happen, or barn finds wouldn't be such a universal term (see 'found and fixed' in Classic Bike) - *Have you ever unearthed a*



barn find? - if you have, please share it with us!

Is it now the turn of seventies and eighties bikes to emerge as 'barn finds'? Perhaps the correct term today should be 'garage clearance finds'. Is this revived interest the result of a new generation reliving its youth? So today, much as with British classics, Japanese and Italian classic prices are also escalating - one just has to look at desirables such as Jota, Le Mans, Desmo (most!), R90S, PD80, K1(soon?), CB750, 500T, KH400, RC30, RC45, and all the rest!

In pursuit of a balanced view I invited some of my more learned contacts to give SCMC their own take on 'what qualities make a classic?' and I will post them over the next few issues. These articles may or may not add fuel to the debate - depending of course, on your own point of view, *all views are welcome!*

Useful links:

www.realclassic.co.uk/opinionfiles/opinion04050700.html
www.sump-publishing.co.uk/classic-bike-guides.html

'DEAL FROM THE WEB'



1979 HONDA 550 Supersport

£1795.00

Tel 01933 355525

www.northantsclassicbikes.co.uk

'What makes a classic?' by Gordon Small

Join the
debate - send
me YOUR
views!



The so-called British classics had so many faults. The makers knew what these faults were but did nothing about them. Take the Velo clutch. You had to get neutral before coming to a standstill or you had no chance. It was said the clutch was retained to give a narrow chain line and a narrow crankcase, leading to smooth engines. Yet I had a new Venom in 1960, one of three, and it vibrated so much Veloce took it back to Birmingham. They sent it back to me saying there was nothing wrong with it.

Many years later, I got to know Veloce technical director Peter Goodman, who had served his apprenticeship with gear maker Alfred Herbert. I asked him about the clutch. "Bloody awful thing" he said. "I was stuck with it several times."

Vincents now make a lot of money. But I never knew one that did much over 100mph. They were noisy mechanically. Noise means wear. They could also cast you off, the Series C with the Girdraulic forks could, anyway.

Where would Nortons have been after 1950 if a certain Irishman hadn't cobbled together a decent frame? Two machining operations instead of 70-something on the Garden Gates. It took some persuading for Norton to accept the Featherbed. How could somebody from the bogs of Ireland know better than them? Complacency, and a bit of ignorance. And accountants.

When a Triumph twin was put under racing conditions, the oil system was such that one side of the crank was starved of oil. They often went bang!

But the British bikes all had what was called character. This meant that you spent two weeks before going to spectate at the the TT rebuilding your bike in order to get there. Then you spent the TT fortnight rebuilding it to get home again. Happy days. These are our classics. Rose tinted spectacles, gentlemen.

While we were being sold BSA C11Gs, what else could you buy? What about a 250 NSU Max, sir? Double skinned exhaust system, a tool kit with even a duster. Last forever. Which "classic" would you rather have now?

When I bought the 1960 Venom, a friend bought an R69 BMW which I eventually also owned. The engineering, the materials, the electrics were beyond compare. Dull? Maybe you could say that, but they stood the test of time, acmes of reliability. There was a price penalty at the time, much of it import tax to protect the British bike industry.

Then, of course, we come to the Japanese. What a joke they were when they arrived. Petrol tanks back to front, square headlights and what do you want with two mirrors? But we didn't laugh for very long, particularly in the Isle of Man. What bike did they study closely to get their racers right? Manx? No. 7R? No. Gold Star? No.

NSU Rennmax ? Yes.

(continues over)

There are plenty of Japanese "classics" around now, even the Honda tiddlers are fetching money. The Japs have given us pleasure and excitement with reliability. But an old codger like me will never really see them as true classics.

But I am wrong in this. There has to be a yardstick and defining by year of manufacture is probably the only way, if indeed we need the term "classic" at all. By and large, motorcyclists, when they look backwards, see the bikes of their youth. That is why there are so many definitions of a classic. It also accounts for the lack of

pre-war bikes at vintage events today. The guys who remember them as everyday bikes are fewer on the ground.

At vintage events in the mid 1950s, entries included quite a few Veterans from around World War 1, 40 years before. When did you last see one here? That is the reason that 1970s bikes are now "classics". It's an age thing, and anno domini advances. We have to advance with it and enjoy it all while we can. So just stick together, and enjoy having the disease that is motorcycling.



“Sometimes we have to kick ourselves to accept that bikes we thought were more or less straight out of the showroom only 15 years ago are now eligible for classic insurance.

Part of the ethos of the club, albeit unwritten, is that bikes are to be used, not trailered to shows, and for that reason we've always resisted, until now, of having a club concours, and why our blue-riband event is the Scotia Challenge, which means you have to use your 'classic', whatever classic that may be. All are welcome at SCMC events.”

Graeme Russell, SCMC Secy.

'My Passion' by Cath Vaughan

When I was a little girl I really, really wanted a pony, however, being one of six children there was no way my parents were in any position to indulge my yearnings. I never grew out of my desire but when I was eleven years old I encountered something even more wonderful which I fell in love with just as passionately.

We lived in a large, rambling house and my parents took in a first- year engineering student as a lodger. Not only was he remarkable for his height (6'7") but he brought with him a beast of such fantastic appearance and thunderous sounds that my head was well and truly turned. He had a TRITON !



My brother Malcolm, then aged thirteen, and myself were captivated by this glorious machine and have both been committed motorcyclists ever since that day.

The student only lasted a year at Uni, then departed, taking with him his Triton - and my dad's old BSA Bantam, intending to fix it for him. That Bantam was to return to haunt me 32 years later, along with a nudist Hypnotherapist - but that's a long story and I won't bore you with it here!

As soon as Malcolm was old enough he bought his first bike, an MZ 250cc Trophy. Ugly as sin but sturdy enough to survive winter riding, with the occasional slide down the road - as an apprentice stockman his early starts coupled with very rural roads meant he had a few of those. He then bought a BSA Lightning combination and I became his very willing accomplice in trying to keep the plot on the road, both mechanically and as pillion. Many an hour was spent in the shed working on the latest catastrophe. My role varied from tasks such as grinding in valves, identifying where the "spare" bits should have gone, to retrieving the spanners flung in his occasional rages. We were a good team!

Once I reached the magical age of 17 it was time for me to launch myself into motorbikes. Fortunately I happened to have a boyfriend at the time who had thought himself rather superior, having as he saw it improved his status by abandoning his motorbike (a 1971 BSA Bantam) to buy a car. So I bought the bike and abandoned the boyfriend!

With some basic instructions from my brother, I tried the bike out on the local school playing field. I could see he looked a little doubtful but once I had convinced him that I could stop, start, signal and turn I could see no reason why I should not be heading off for work on the bike the very next morning. Well I got to work no problem, negotiating the narrow country lanes with cheerful exuberance but the journey home was another matter. Finding a bus stopped on a tight bend on one of the lanes, a more experienced motorcyclist might have approached the situation with more caution. With youthful abandon I assumed the bus had stopped to let off a passenger and accelerated past - only to run smack bang into a Citroen car that the bus driver was letting through. I can still clearly remember the surprise on the faces of the middle-aged couple in the car as I rolled across their bonnet! The car was somewhat dented, the poor bike was bent like a banana and I was little more than bruised. My mother, a woman of few but very pertinent words, came to collect me from the local Doctor's and merely remarked, "perhaps you'd be better to get some training next time". Oh she knew me so well!

Behind that hair Cath performs an exorcism on her dad's Bantam!



Member Profile: Mike Peter - Classic enthusiast & track demon

By his own admission SCMC Member Mike Peter is an absolute speed junkie! Obsessed with motorbikes since the tender age of 12, Mike now divides his onshore time between track days, classic ride-outs and competitive road cycling. Working as an offshore Drilling Mechanic, Mike is blessed with a 2 weeks on, 3 weeks off rota, and has the support of a loving family who encourage all his hobbies. Mike's garage is festooned with trophies that leave visitors in no doubt about his two wheeled racing skills, both petrol and leg powered - he's no slouch on the road or the track!

Mike had me creasing my sides with some of his crazy stories including many fatherly ticking-offs from Gordon Small and a funny slant on a serious accident where he left a fair portion of his liver, ribs and lungs on a bumper following losing out on a 'who's side of the road is it anyway?' argument with a Scamell HGV.

Other teen tales about thrashing around Fife and blowing holes in Jap 250 pistons made me appreciate how lucky I was to have met Mike in my later years - Mike's crew knew they had blown holes in their pistons when the trailing boy racers discovered tiny flakes of alloy pinging off their goggles, 'nothing for it but to grit the teeth and open the gas' said Mike - mad indeed!

Mike's a funny guy and fortunately he would appear to appreciate the lighter side of life.

Now approaching his half-century, Mike readily admits that the fun of classic riding (and a debt to Gordon Small!) is having a calming influence over his lust for speed. However Mike still harbours a desire to own the iconic race tool that is the RC30, and his current track bikes, a blue-printed Ducati 996 and a Honda SP2, get regular burn-outs on exotic circuits such as the Nuremberg Ring and more locally at Knockhill. So I think it's fair to say, Mike still enjoys dipping his toe into the 'red mist'.

His recent passion in restoring and riding classics however has Mike spending as much time in the garage as on road and track. This new interest has also won Mike some rather nice accolades as rewards for his fine restoration skills. Needless to say, Mike has now built up an enviable collection of classics within his spacious garage - complete with its wood burning stove! Next move according to Mike is to slot in his bed! This year Mike picked up a 'best in class' trophy at the Glamis Extravaganza for his lovely restored Honda SL 125. Mike's other bikes include an award winning Suzuki GT 380, a Honda 400/4, a Yamaha DT 175 and a sparkling 1956 Norton Dominator 600.

Whether on his bicycle or his motorbike Mike's favourite roads are in Fife, Perthshire and Tayside. Blasts to Rannoch Moor, the Sma' Glen and Glen Shee are regular routes and the chippie at Anstruther waterfront is another excellent excuse for airing his classics. Mike and local friend Tam Willison will be planning some SCMC ride-outs which will feature in future newsletters. Mike relishes SCMC membership and he is looking forward to becoming more involved with organising club runs next season, hopefully in an effort to encourage SCMC members to get together for regular, social ride-outs. Sounds good to me - one wonders however, if Mike will request a chequered flag and a finishing line just to add some spice to the runs! Watch this space.

Mike (SP2) on his way to another podium finish!



WANTED!
Volunteers
for member
profile

Notice Board

SCMC Christmas Meal The Inchtute Hotel

Wednesday, December 8th, 2010
7.00 for 7.30pm. Tickets £15.

2 Course Menu

Inchtute Steak Pie, served with vegetables and potatoes

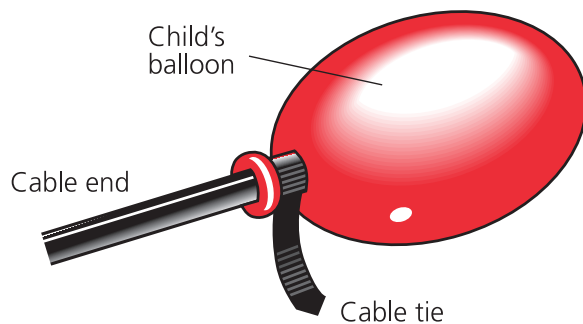
Roast Turkey with all the Trimmings

Saute of Mushroom and Spinach in a Creamy Garlic sauce,
set in a Filo Tart, Topped with Roasted Almonds,
with a crisp salad and potatoes.

Individual Christmas Pudding served with a Brandy sauce

Chocolate and Orange Cheesecake served with Fresh Whipped Cream
Trio of Ices (chocolate, strawberry or vanilla)

Booking essential please email j.hyman@dundee.ac.uk
(partners welcome) SCMC 2010 Scotia Challenge presentations.



Hot tip from MCN's archives - Simple cable oiler
We all suffer from sticking cables and market cable oilers are very expensive tools...so here's a clever tip.
Buy a small toy balloon and fill it with some light grade machine oil. Next prise the balloon over the end of the cable to be oiled and fix a small cable tie, tape or rubber band over the balloon end just to ensure you don't get splattered with oil. Up end the balloon and squeeze the oil through the cable until it drips from the other end - now you have a simple, cheap and effective tool!

And finally...Proud to be a Scot!

After having dug to a depth of 10 feet last year, Irish scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 100 years and came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network over a century ago.

Not to be outdone by the Irish, in the weeks that followed, an English archaeologist dug to a depth of 20 feet, and shortly after, a story published in the Morning Herald read:

'English archaeologists, finding traces of 130-year-old copper wire, have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech communications network 30 years earlier than the Irish'.

One week later, the Banffshire Courier in Buckie, Scotland, reported the following: 'After digging to 30 feet in his pasture near Clat, Aberdeenshire, Jock Broom, a self-taught archaeologist, reported that he found absolutely f**k all. Jock has therefore concluded that 130 years ago, Scotland had already gone wireless!'



SCMC Contacts:

John Hyman (Chairman) Tel: 01382 643083 E: j.hyman@dundee.ac.uk Graeme Russell (Secretary) Tel: 01382 330747 E: secyman.scmc@live.com
John Shabashow (Treasurer) Tel: 01828 686662 E: jshabashow2000@yahoo.co.uk Jake Beatson (Web) E: jake.beatson@yahoo.co.uk
Sandy Torrance (Scotia Challenge) E: astorrance@btinternet.com Stuart Urquhart (Newsletter) Tel: 01382 540285 E: stuartu@blue2.co.uk