

February 2010

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

Official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc. Lexington, Kentucky
MOA #146 RA #4-49 <http://www.bluegrassbeemers.org>



Who says you cannot paint a motorcycle outside in January?
Brian Sawyer with assistance from Steve Little
builds another race bike. See Brian's
"An investigation into building a Race Bike"
beginning on Page 4.



The **KICKSTAND's**
ANNUAL POLAR BEAR RUN
Saturday, February 27th, 2010

(if snow or ice on that date, ride rescheduled for Saturday, March 6th, 2010)

KICKSTANDS UP AT NOON

**The group will leave from the store, located at
500 East Main Street, in Burgin.**

**The route/distance will be dependent upon group size and weather
conditions. We will end the ride with warm chili and hot coffee.**

\$5 per person - to cover cost of food and drinks

**For more information, phone 859-748-KICK (5425)
or e-mail SeeYou@TheKickstandLLC.com**

www.TheKickstandLLC.com

Sing along!

Mmm. Mmm.
Memories, light the corners
of my mind
Misty watercolor memories
of the way we were.
Scattered pictures of the
smiles we left behind
smiles we give
to one another
for the way we were.
Can it be that it was all so
simple then
or has time rewritten
every line?
If we had the chance
to do it all again
tell me would we?
Could we?
Memories, may be beautiful
and yet
what's too painful
to remember
we simply choose to forget
So it's the laughter
we will remember
whenever we remember
the way we were.



The way we were

I remember the
day when we first met.

I was on crutches, having become distracted by sunshine and its shadows.

Lurching across the showroom floor, I was mesmerized by her metallic red paint, the gold pinstripes sweeping across her fairing panels and tank.

She was the same, but somehow different, more alluring than the blue RT being unloaded, its glass fibre splintered, promise destroyed.

I lightly caressed her red tank, lingered around the fuel cap,

then moved my hand slowly to the seat.

"Yes," I instinctively said, handing my crutches to Maureen with the red RT moved to the parking lot, ready for me.

I slipped on the new helmet, jacket and gloves, and on my one good leg I balanced while lifting my muscle-shredded left leg over the high side of the saddle. With a little help to lift the RT off the side stand, I clicked the red RT to attention and set her in motion.

Maureen shook her head at us and loaded the crutches into the car, resigned to following us home.

That first ride confirmed what I had understood prior to...the

incident, and I looked forward to many rides more.

In August of 1986, we posed briefly for a friend to snap a photo following dinner. We bid farewell and swept along the gentle curves of Chrisman Lane on the five-mile ride to the garage.

With 32,000 miles together at that time, we moved efficiently, briskly, quietly, lightly clicking, whispering anticipation of the next long run, the BMWRA National Rally, perhaps, at

Myrtle Beach only hours away.

Tomorrow, then, with light load of gear, we would head toward the Atlantic Ocean on another journey that would last forever.

That's the way we were, ready on a moment's notice, always looking down the road, with no concerns for what we were leaving behind.

**Apex is the official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc.
Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #4-49
Paul Elwyn, Editor
paul.elwyn@gmail.com**

**Deadline for submissions is the last day of the month.
Back issues of Apex can be accessed at
<http://www.bluegrassbeemers.org>**

**Join us at Frisch's on Harrodsburg Rd.
on any Saturday, 7-9:30 a.m.**

Mechanical Musings 🤨

From: Wolfdata@aol.com
Date: Sun, 3 Jan 2010 17:57:47 -0500
Subject: opps
To: damccord3@hotmail.com

Dave
In case you were wondering, the roads were horrible on Saturday morning on the way home. Kept the shinny side up ok. I just don't care for looking in a motorcycles rear view mirror and being able to see your tire tracks in the snow. Not good. I've seen good and it didn't look like that.

On a Harley note, did you know the Sportster engine has 4 cams, one for each valve? Designed like that in the 50's. All 4 are gear driven. (see attached photo)

I was explaining to my wife that due to the somewhat primitive nature of Harley motors, when it gets real cold outside the cams can just "fall out" onto the garage floor. I explained that if that should happen about all that could be done would be to replace them with high performance cams that

stay in place when it's cold. I'm not sure she bought it.

It is about the only engine in production with that system.

One of the unique design features HD has that allow it to produce the extra power needed for vibration.

Unlike German, Japanese or Italian motorcycles, U.S. and English bikes produce enough power to not only drive the rear wheel, but to shake the entire motorcycle as well! Ha!

Left idling on its own, my bike will eventually shake itself off the stand!

Let's see a BMW do that!

Take Care
Love Life

Geoph



Geoph,

I can only imagine how tight one's grip could be on the handlebars with the view you had in your mirrors on the way home. Quite possibly that wasn't the only muscle that was in a constricted state.

I did NOT realize that the Sportster engine had 4 cams! Are the "big twins" the same?

If what you say is true, then I'm very hesitant to check out the garage floor beside my Road King. I'd say that it certainly qualifies as being really cold outside as I type this message !! I've already installed mildly "hotter" cams in my bike. I did this when I con-

verted to an S&S gear drive system to eliminate the original chain-drive to power the cams.

On the earlier "Twin Cam 88" motors, the cams were driven by a chain-drive system that had tensioners that would fail prematurely thus causing lots of internal damage.

By doing this modification, hopefully I've eliminated this problem.

But, due to this cold weather snap that we're experiencing, I surely must be on the lookout for the cams to naturally dislodge themselves to wind up on the garage floor.

If, in fact, this does happen, then I agree with your assessment that the only cure is a

"high performance" upgrade. This would be the only logical cure for this anomaly.

I'm sure what happens is the original cams must "shrink" with the cold and once that happens, there's absolutely no way that they will ever fit back in the engine.

If your wife has a hard time believing your explanation, feel free to show her this email. I'm sure that will make it as clear as

mud to her. 🤨

Thanks for sending this thought-provoking email as, I too, don't want to appear to be a Neanderthal to you and the rest of the club. Now, if you'll excuse me, I must go file the cal-

louses from my knuckles.

Dave

PS: John, I know you don't have much experience with Harleys, but I always value your insight into anything that involves two wheels. Care to add anything to this?



Dave,

I hadn't looked at it that way before, but by that assessment the Norton Atlas must be the most powerful bike I've ever had.

It has the excess horses to not only vibrate every fastener on it, not to mention the rider's fillings, but I'm quite sure it can

vibrate other bikes in the same zip code.

It has enough power to vibrate the space-time continuum sending it into the future to vibrate things that don't even exist yet.

The R1200GS, on the other hand, apparently has only enough power to pull itself, with nothing left over for vibration .

As for cams, I once spent the better part of the day looking for the cams in the Bultaco, with no success whatsoever. They must have already fallen out.

www.johnricelaw.com



An investigation into building a *Race Bike*

By Brian Sawyer



Me and Dee and the... Airstream, Home of ArcStream Racing.

I think it began in 1969. I was looking at buying my first motorcycle.

The choices were down to a 1967 Triumph Tiger Cub 200cc and a 1966 Honda 305 Scrambler. The Honda was way faster, some said more reliable, more adaptable to possible off road adventures and \$25 cheaper.

So I bought the Triumph.

It was this Icon thing I've always had. The Triumph was a classic beauty, with its righteously vertical cylinder, clean lines, austere but with single minded purpose.

Actually it began much earlier, but the manifestation of the personality "flaw" in motorcycles began there. It still continues.

I am an Architect, the embodiment of a romantic notion of the professional purveyor of

fine taste. Did you know that Wilbur, Mr. Ed's owner, was an Architect? So anyway, today I have two Airstream Trailers, a 1980 Vespa P200e....

Two 1971 BMW R-75s, one 1984 BMW R100T, a 1984 R65 Racebike, a 1996 MuZ Skorpion Racebike, a 2008 Yamaha 450 Racebike and actually several more bikes for street use.

So I was at Frisch's for breakfast one Saturday morning about nine months ago, and this fellow tells me about a local Architect that races a Ducati. "What is his name, I asked? I have not heard of this fellow." He did not know. He said he serviced the bike at Mike Wells Racing, so I called Mike to find out who this fellow was.

Well he was not an Architect, but a Kitchen Designer, and he did not race the Ducati but did track days on it. Still, the seed was planted.

I had been racing BMWs, MuZ, and Yamahas in AHRMA and WERA for the past six years. **As an Architect, I needed to be racing a DUCATI.** Why it was as clear to me suddenly as Bread and Butter, Laurel and Hardy, or BB King & Lucille. What had I been thinking! **I had to find a Ducati to race.**

So I set about searching Craigslist, eBay, Craig's Helper (SearchTempest), and CycleTrader.

Mostly I had been racing Vintage classes, and wanted to spend more time racing and less time wrenching. It had been evident to me in six years of racing that the weakest link in ArcStream Racing's efforts had been the bike mechanic. Since ArcStream Racing only has one racer and one mechanic, and they were the same person, it was hard to escape responsibility for the failure of the mechanical side of the equation. But racing a modern bike held the promise of a new found



**It was this
Icon thing
I've always had.**

An investigation into building a

Race Bike

By Brian Sawyer

dedication to improved lap times, a clearer understanding of the finer points of suspension setup, in other words, true RACING!

Besides, at 56 years old, I wondered how many more years would the hand/eye coordination be as sharp?

The reflexes, the ability to avoid disaster by quick-witted decisions to veer right rather

than left at critical juncture of time, motion and speed!

Probably too late anyway... but it wasn't going to get better so might as well go for it.

So we found this bike in Charlotte, NC. The seller told a sad tale of overextension, no money and a departed girlfriend who had allegedly run up the bills before departing. Sounded like the perfect "steal this bike."

So we negotiated, he whined, I whined, we didn't talked for a week, then two weeks. Then we whined about our respective sale positions some more and finally I agreed to give him \$3500 for his 2003 Ducati 800SS.

Well it turned out that 2003 was the optimal year for that bike. It had the Marchesini wheels, the Aluminum Swin-garm, the fully adjustable Showa front end and adjustable rear shock.

Ducati had downscaled the components on the years that came after it to make it more marketable.

OK, so Ducati is a track-bred bike and turning this into a race bike should be easy and cheap.

The classes I will be running it in require basically stock engine configuration, so I should escape the expensive and exotic costs of ported heads, and raising the compression ratio, and Carrillo rods, lightened crank and custom fabricated pistons. This should be easy!

So let's start making a list of what changes we will make, and just for "fun" this time, let's track the cost of those alterations.

I had never done that, because I did not want to know! I knew I wanted to go racing. The costs were incremental, not all at once, so it was easier to look the other way when it was \$200 here, \$300 there, and not look at total cost. But the economy was better then, there were more clients paying good money for my time. They are mostly gone now, and it's a new reality.

But still there were some upgrades I *had* to make if I were serious about podium finishes at all.

I was going to *have* to upgrade the suspension. I *had* to replace the expensive OEM bodywork with race plastic. I *needed* to replace those stock



**OK, so Ducati
is a
track-bred
bike
and turning
this into a
race bike
should be
easy and
cheap.**

2003 Ducati 800SS Race Track Prep Costs

Purchase Price of Bike		\$3,500.00
Front forks, revalve, new oil and spring	Material and labor	\$600.00
Penske 8983 Double Adjustable rear shock	Material Only	\$700.00
Sharkskins upper and lower fairing	Material Only	\$600.00
ebay front fender	Material Only	\$40.00
ebay gas tank	Material Only	\$140.00
Tail section-used	Material Only	\$85.00
front fairing stay-alim.	Material Only	\$65.00
Woodcraft Reasets	Material Only	\$375.00
Tirewarmer-used	Material Only	\$200.00
Front and Rear Pit stands-new	Material Only	\$320.00
Slip-on mufflers-Staintune/Ebay	Material Only	\$150.00
Power Commander to remap ignition for slip-ons	Material Only	\$300.00
Clip-ons 50 mm	Material Only	\$100.00
Race Tires-Winter Sale	Material Only	\$250.00
New Clutch	Material Only	\$300.00
New Sprockets 38, 39, & 40 tooth	Material Only	\$180.00
Dyno Run and Map PwrCmdr	Labor Only	\$100.00
Total to Date		\$8,005.00

An investigation into building a *Race Bike*

By Brian Sawyer

mufflers with something lighter, race tires, Power Commander III to tune the fuel injection...etc.

I took the bike out for a little seat time on country roads. What was that...the clutch is slipping! So over to Mike Wells Racing for a new clutch. Didn't count on that one. So to track costs, I built a little spreadsheet.

Whoa! What happened? How did my \$3500 bike go to \$8K?

I still had not factored in race entry fees, travel costs, Paint, labor for anything, or time.

In this cluttered photo, you can see the cramped conditions, and the multiple parts I acquired in my BMW race efforts.

You can't find 1960-era sheet vinyl flooring in this pattern anymore!

Now we stripped off the OEM plastic and stored it away. Some of the used parts were rougher than we hoped...

The "great deal" on an eBay purchased tank came home badly dented from the inadequate packaging it received for shipment.

The aluminum fairing stay I bought used from another racer was so bent that Steve Little and I had to bend it 20 degrees to install the front fairing.

The fairing stay, which supports the upper fairing was so bent that when we installed it, the lower fairing rode right on the front wheel.

We shipped the front forks off to install heavier spring and a Penske re-valve job on the forks.

Installed the new Penske fully adjustable rear shock, installed new EBC Double sintered brake pads, woodcraft rear sets, wondered when I would be able to paint the plastic. There's



snow on the ground and it's the middle of winter. Then one day in mid January, the temperature went up to 45...That's good enough!

I have a good sized compressor, a decent spray gun, and if the bugs aren't out and the wind is not too strong, we can do a quite serviceable paint job on a track bike.

Rubbing compound sometimes help a lot! It's about a five-foot paint job. You stand five feet away, and it looks



In this cluttered photo, you can see the cramped conditions, and the multiple parts I acquired in my BMW race efforts.

You can't find 1960-era sheet vinyl flooring in this pattern anymore!

How did this happen? Well it does, and it did. Even buying used parts off eBay and individuals, it really mounts up. The prices in the spreadsheet may have varied by 10% either way, but for the most part were pretty accurate. And as mentioned these costs did not include a lot of small incidental items, like paint, primer, fiberglass resin, brake pads, etc.



An investigation into building a *Race Bike*

By Brian Sawyer



**So, here we are, ready to go racing!
This is the best it's going to look.**

It's not really a safe sport. But as Steve McQueen said, "Racing is life. Everything before and after is just waiting."

If you know the costs, and you know the dangers and you

still want to go racing, it's the best sport in the world.

Besides....it's an Icon thing.

— Brian Sawyer
#508



**It's about a
Five-foot paint
job. You stand five
feet away, and it
looks pretty good!
Those 50 and over
can move up to
four feet away!**

pretty good! Those 50 and over can move up to four feet away!

We fabricated new support brackets for the Staintune slip-on mufflers, and Steve Little drilled them for lightness. I started safety wiring all the required nuts and bolts, a tedious job consuming dozens of drill bits.

So now we are getting really close, we are scheduled to go to Commonwealth Ducati in Louisville this Saturday to Dyno the bike so we can write new maps for the Power Commander III based on the current configuration.

So, here we are, ready to go racing! This is the best it's going to look. We have a race with the WERA race organization that we are going to Feb 6-7 at Talladega in Alabama, then Roeboling in South Carolina in late February and then onto Daytona for Bike Week early March. I'm pretty excited to climb aboard this bike, and for the possibilities out there.

I've broken four ribs - twice, had concussions, blacked out, broken fingers, and run through five helmets and four sets of leathers. I have a collection of broken camshafts, crankshafts, broken rods, thrown pistons, bent forks, one totaled Ford Pickup and spent thousands of dollars out of pocket on medical bills. Last fall one of the wheels fell off the Airstream at 75mph up in Michigan. Thru the six years of racing, there have been a half dozen or so fatalities at the tracks I was racing at and numerous racers airlifted out to nearby hospitals.



Date: Saturday, March 20th, 2010

Time: 11:00 – 1:00

cookoff winners to be announced about 1:15

Place: Harley-Davidson Louisville
1700 Arthur Street
Louisville, KY
(502)634-1340

Cost: there's no cost to enter or to vote

Awards: 1st, 2nd & 3rd place trophies will be awarded to the
people's choice chili cookoff winners
participation ribbons will be given to the first 25 who enter
the cookoff

Info: Lynn Keppy-Montgomery
(859)748-5425 / (859)236-7352
shesontheroad@bellsouth.net

**Plan on bringing a pot of chili with you or
simply stop by to taste test and vote.**

www.MotorMaids.org



Diana, supervising work on Jeff's ST

Started working on Jeff's R80ST, a lovely bike (or at least it was before I started on it).

Sending the heads off to be refurbished, lead-free seats and new valves & springs, but had to take the cylinders off to get the heads loose.

While they're off, I'll clean up the pistons so they will be worthy of the newly done heads. There will be a few other odds & ends to get this classic model back on the road by spring.

As usual in my garage, Diana supervises all shop work. I don't mean to inundate you with pictures of my cat, but it's hard to get a photo of anything in my garage without including her.

She's like a minor Hollywood starlet, always knows when there's attention being paid and a camera is available, getting herself into every shot.

I expect any day now to hear from her agent.

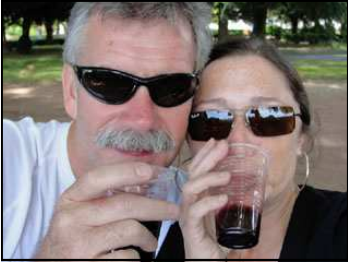
— John Rice



MotorcycleCannonball.com

Coast to Coast on Pre-1916 Motorcycles!

Sept. 10 - Sept. 26, 2010



The Streets in France Part 4

By James Street
with photography by James and Stacey Street

England, France, Belgium and now The Netherlands: After getting lost near the Dutch and Belgian border, we'd ridden north past Tilburg and into Oisterwijk.

The last time I'd been in Oisterwijk was in 1987 when my Dutch friend Chris and I had ridden a couple of his Triumph Triples through the Low Countries, and Chris had a girlfriend who liked to parade around their apartment naked. Not sure which I enjoyed more...

But Chris was now married and had two kids, and as Stacey and I waited in the parking lot

of a Japanese restaurant on the outskirts of Oisterwijk, I thought about the changes that had occurred in both our lives since I was last there and wondered what his family would be like.

Within a few minutes they arrived in an old, immaculately restored Land Rover and, as our friendship has always been, it seemed as if time hadn't stolen so many years from us.

After an introduction to Margette, his wife, and hugs that lingered from years of separation and close friendship, we were instructed to follow them back to their house in Harendijk which is a small village nearby. This part of The Netherlands

existed prior to World War II and has buildings, hedges and landscape that somewhat escaped the worst ravages of the war and retains the ambiance of pre-war Europe.

After a ten minute ride back through Oisterwijk and along tree-lined lanes, we arrived at Chris's house. He'd bought the barn end of a joined house-barn complex which is a common residential architectural configuration in that part of the world.

In between rides and voyeuristic interludes-remember the girlfriend-we'd cut the forms for the ground floor foundations in 1987 and now he'd gotten the project into the 90% complete range which was fairly impressive given that he'd done most of the work himself.

The living room was the epitome of what all vintage bike enthusiasts want but cannot have. Most of us have some intrinsic need to comply with society or a more basic need to keep our spouse from killing us, so we don't have what Chris has in his front room: a veritable motorcycle museum.

Check out the photo: There's a Vincent Black Shadow, a Slippery Sam Triumph racer replica made by the creator of the original. There's a Velocette Venom Clubman, and there are a couple of one-off racers from the early seventies. One of the racers propelled me down a cobbled road past a horse-drawn carriage at about 135 during my last visit there, but it obviously hadn't been ridden in years.

After I reeled my tongue back into my mouth and regained some composure, I snapped photos and then went outside to the patio where we gathered to have a few beers and while away the afternoon.

Chris then decided to turn my extreme envy into a full debili-



A grouping of the Velocette, Slippery Sam and the Vincent.

The Streets in France Part 4



For the record, Slippery Sam was built by Les Williams, who built the original Sam. For those who aren't into vintage bikes, Sam won the Isle of Man TT five times. When the original was destroyed in a fire that burned the English National Motorcycle Museum, Chris provided Les with some of the parts that were used to restore the original.

tating illness and took me to his garage. Inside he has a recent BMW HP2, a series of KTM dual sport and motocross bikes, the Triumph Legend I'd ridden a couple of decades earlier, a Ducati belonging to Majette, and another Land Rover in the midst of a frame up restoration. We talked shop for at least an hour as he walked me through the various projects he had underway, and then we retired to

his patio. His kids returned from sailing lessons and we had a pleasant summer evening talking — they're all more or less fluent in English — about our lives, kids, rides, and all of the stuff we want to do that generally falls into the category of "bucket list."

After beers turned into hours, more than I wanted given the knowledge that I had to ride back across two national borders to get to the Chunnel the next day, I slept fitfully from worry.

We got up, showered and got caught up in the hustle of everyone getting ready for their day's activities: Majette was going to work, the kids were going back to learn sailing, and Chris planned to ride with us to the Chunnel.

After a breakfast of local bread, cheese and coffee, Chris insisted that I take the HP2 for a ride. BMW's HP2 has been reviewed by several of the bike magazines, and they've more than adequately put it through its paces and can eloquently

and thoroughly describe its every attribute.

Let me simply say that it has two stroke acceleration in an incredibly nimble package; sort of like riding a street legal motocross bike (which, I suppose, is more or less what it is). I took it down some one and one half-width lanes at excessive speeds and managed not to throw myself into the tree-lined shoulder and only scared a few of the Dutch gentry on their way to work.

Upon return from the test ride, Stacey and I loaded our BMW up once more, donned our riding gear and commenced to say goodbye to Majette and Chris's kids: Kate and Ian.

Once again, it was a bit on the cold side and the BMW's fairing provided a welcome respite from the 55-degree air, and by this time I had figured out how to adjust all of the vents and dampers for air routing so we were able to stay fairly warm.

We took off through the back roads around Chris's house and headed for the motorway (Rijksveg). Once on the motorway we were riding in a 30 mph crosswind in heavy traffic, which I found unnerving, especially when trying to keep up with Chris at the 80-90 mph pace he was setting.

At one point we came to a nose-diving dead stop from those speeds due to somebody having pulled off the road (it was gratifying to note that rubbernecking occurs in Europe, too), which was nerve wracking. After about three and a half hours we found ourselves at the terminal for the Chunnel. Chris followed us to the point where he could no longer proceed without a ticket, and we stopped, said our goodbyes, and then pulled forward into customs.

The English Customs officers on the French side of the Chunnel were very polite but were concerned about the condition



James astride the BMW HP2 prior to scaring Dutch gentry on their way to work.

The Streets in France Part 4

of Stacey's passport due to it having been damaged by water several years earlier, and they cautioned us that while they were willing to welcome us into their country our folks may not be as friendly toward such a tattered passport (turned out that the US Customs guy in Cleveland said, "must have gotten this wet somewhere along the line" which was exactly what had happened, and he let us back in our country with no drama).

We then pulled through customs and queued up to get on the train. I had no idea what we were in store for, as I'd read articles on the net about riding one's bike onto the train and then standing there with it. I imagined riding onto an open flatbed trailer only to stand there while the walls of the Chunnel flew by.

Finally, our line of cars was called and we drove into what looked like a puffed up Air-stream trailer that was of sufficient capacity to allow tractor trailer rigs and tour buses on board. To my surprise, one of the stewards came by and advised me to place the bike on the side stand on the left side of the car and just relax. I was able to relax but Stacey wasn't: she was in mortal fear that the bike was going to fall over. So to keep her from having a psychotic episode, I stood there and braced myself against the bike to keep it from toppling on its side. Looking back on it, there was some sensation of acceleration as the train began moving, and the bike rocked considerably at times, but at no time was the bike in any danger of falling. For that matter, in the middle of the tunnel it was

somewhat difficult to detect that the train was moving at all. I walked through several cars to the bathroom where along the way tour bus passengers had disembarked and were hanging out, people were sleeping in their cars, and there was a festival atmosphere in some locales.

Not long after I got back to the bike and Stacey, there was an announcement that we were nearing England and would be disembarking shortly. As we approached the last mile or so before the rail yard the train rocked back and forth and then began to slow down. When the doors were opened and we pulled out into fresh air we were greeted with a typical English downpour that was to accompany us for most of the day.

After pulling into the English version of a convenience store, we donned rain gear and then took off, and I had to re-orient myself to the earlier mantra bequeathed us by Dr. Spooner, "Go left, look right." And it was again a bit of a challenge, as the week on the Continent had restored my old habits of thinking from a right lane perspective.

The rain was heavy at times and we pulled off at the Canterbury exit and stopped in a chain restaurant, something like a 5th Quarter, for lunch and to try to figure out if there was any way to avoid going back to the Orbital (the berserk outer bypass around London) to go north, and there wasn't. After talking with the maitre de, who was born in the USA but moved to England when he was 5, about our experiences of the last couple of weeks, we got back on the bike and rode west toward London.

We finally got on the Orbital and thankfully the rain stopped. By this time we were in slow, sometimes stopped, traffic. As we approached the tunnel, bikes began lane splitting past us and



Queued up for the Chunnel in France, ready for the train ride through the tunnel to England.



I wanted to join them but Stacey would go into an apoplectic seizure each time I tried, so I sat in line in the interest of marital harmony.

We got through the tunnel and once on the north side of the Thames got onto "B" roads and motored north. We were back into the suburbs on the northeast side of London, and the homes were well maintained and the estate nature of everything made it obvious that one didn't live there on a public servant's salary.

It was getting late in the day and the excitement of the day's adventures-Chunnel, back to riding on the left, London traffic, and so on-had exhausted both of us. We found ourselves in Stansted Mountfitchet, south of Cambridge, and started looking for an inn for the night.

Rode past one, went to the center of town, turned around and went back, and went into a walled compound of a pub and inn complex that must have been built in the 1700's. It was replete with a slate, steep pitched roof, brick construction, small portals and wavy glass windows that combine to re-



Aboard the train.

The Streets in France

Part 4

mind patrons that they're drinking, dining or sleeping in the aura of history. It took a while for the young heavily muscled and tattooed gentleman serving as bartender and innkeeper to take care of the patrons at the bar, but he came to us and apologized for taking so long and fixed us up with a room. We were on the second floor and could look out on the parking lot and see the bike, so we were set for a comfortable restful evening without worry about being able to keep tabs on the bike.

We awoke the next morning and got coffee out on the patio, met the owner of the inn, and he asked us where we were from. When we replied, "Kentucky," he literally moaned and said it was too bad we weren't staying for the evening because they were having some sort of Kentucky Derby festival. I'm sure we would have been given some sort of sideshow status in the evening's activities, but we had to be in Easington to return the bike the next day. We said our goodbyes, loaded up and rode north again.

The next to final day of our trip was fairly uneventful. We stopped at a pub and had lunch, and it was truly lousy and represented all I'd ever heard about the miseries of English food: bland and over-cooked, it was a bad version of Mrs. Paul's entries. A good beer or two may have taken some of the pain out of it, but riding on the left and the complications involved certainly reinforced my "don't drink and ride" conviction.

Back on the road after lunch and we're heading towards



Scarborough, on the east coast of England, the source of the tune, "Scarborough Fair" with a carnival on the shore.

Scarborough on the eastern coast, and late in the day in a roundabout I made a near catastrophic mistake: failed to recognize that there were two lanes in the roundabout and drifted toward the apex and almost clipped the front of a car that was overtaking me on the inside. The woman driving the car appropriately blew her horn, located about three feet from my right ear, and sufficiently brought me back to reality. I'll not make that mistake again.

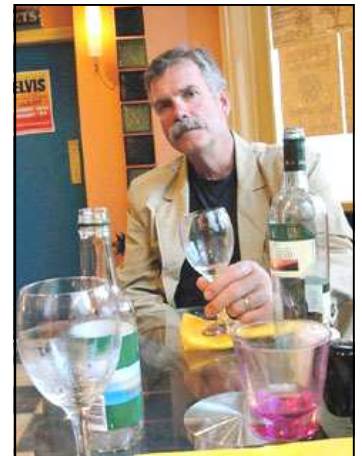
Scarborough is on the east coast and I suppose is the source of the tune "Scarborough Fair," and they in fact do have a carnival on the shore. We found an old hotel that had a wonderful and elegant room overlooking the main thoroughfare. After cleaning up, we walked downtown to find a bite to eat and found a huge pub, but I was more in the mood to have a sit down meal with a waiter. We

ambled back to an Italian restaurant in the lower level, about half way below street level, of an old building a couple of blocks away from our hotel.

Upon entering we were greeted by a gentleman serving as both waiter and maitre de who looked like a cross between Mohamar Qaddafi and Elvis and for whom England was not the place of his birth.

Mohamar Elvis is worth a chapter of description, as I've not been in the presence of such an amalgam of appearances and characters in quite some time. Curiously, as I was looking at Mohamar Elvis during ordering, a poster just over his shoulder came into focus that advertised an Elvis impersonation contest the next week. I'm guessing that Mohamar Elvis may not have had serious competition.

Thinking that prawns listed on the menu would be cleaned, I ordered them only to find that



Weird Italian restaurant in Sacrborough. Note the Elvis impersonator poster.

The Streets in France Part 4



Donkeys on Main Street in Scarborough

they were whole and quite messy. The tomato sauce in which they were served was the English equivalent of the sauce on Chef Boyardee Spaghetti-Os; only the meal was priced as if the prawns were from Neptune's personal cache and prepared by a French chef flown in for the occasion. They weren't, by the way. I shouldn't have been disappointed; this was English epicure after all.

We went back to the hotel and enjoyed a Gran Marnier in the lobby then retired for the evening.

Upon rising the next day we went down to the restaurant for breakfast where Stacey had the full English breakfast complete with beans, eggs, toast, and bacon that looked as if it was cut from the pig and then sprayed with a little hot grease.

Back to the bike which was parked out front, and to our surprise a group of donkeys was being herded right down

the middle of Main Street with a mile of traffic backed up behind them. Scarborough was a city full of incongruities and non sequiturs.

Riding north through rain showers, we were soon back in the North York Moors park. Even in the rain the scenery was beautiful. Imagine eastern Kentucky, my home, without litter and with no obvious poverty or disheveled property and you have an image of the Moors.

We wound up and down, through switchbacks and sweepers, with the occasional glimpse of the North Sea on the right as we approached Whitby. As mentioned earlier in this series, Whitby is the quintessential English coastal town. There are sailboats beached and ready to be launched, caravans (travel trailers), homes perched cliffside, and this wonderful winding road that delivers visitors into Whitby's heart, and

Whitby into the heart of the visitors. Our impatience in getting to and from destinations in the U.S. has destroyed many of the roads that made them so attractive to begin with.

Ironically, the most beautiful part of our trip was within thirty miles of where we started. Being in Whitby was bittersweet, as it was only a few miles from the home of our BMW and the end of our trip.

Easington soon presented itself through the windshield and we pulled into "White House," the name of the bike's home.

Shirley gave us a warm greeting and after cleaning the bike I was instructed to put it in a shed behind her house. I rolled the bike out back and was somewhat dismayed that the shed was built in the 1700's and not intended to accommodate a motorcycle. After stripping one of the bags off and

The Streets in France Part 4



We wound up and down, through switchbacks and sweepers, with the occasional glimpse of the North Sea on the right as we approached Whitby. As mentioned earlier in this series, Whitby is the quintessential English coastal town. There are sailboats beached and ready to be launched, caravans (travel trailers), homes perched cliffside, and this wonderful winding road that delivers visitors into Whitby's heart, and Whitby into the heart of the visitors. Our impatience in getting to and from destinations in the U.S. has destroyed many of the roads that made them so attractive to begin with.

cocking the bike from side to side as it went in at an angle, I was able to shoe horn the bike inside. I hope that Tom, the owner, gets it out and leaves it in the garage before I show up again.

After putting it away we were back in the rental car and on our way to London. England must have been sad to see us go because the sky cried a flood on

the way back. As we approached London in the pouring rain I was driving nearly 100 mph just to keep up with traffic. After getting to Heathrow, we found a hotel, checked in, and had a fitful night's sleep before heading home the next day.

What an adventure! Even though it is something of a dis-

tant memory as I write this, it was one of those times that we recognized as special as it was happening and has been enhanced and embellished by memory.

But isn't that what motorcycling does for all of us?

Many thanks to Tom Burklow for loaning us his BMW, Dr. Shirley Spooner for her hospitality, the owner of the Neufchatel shop who saved us, Monsieur Laurent at La Rosarie for saving us (again), and everyone else who became a part of our lives through our excursion.

\$2000 Cash Allowance



R1200GS \$17,990*

Lean into a great deal.

BMW Motorcycles of Louisville
116 W. Breckinridge St.
www.bmwloouisville.com
502-568-2311

**BMW Motorrad
USA**

Motorcycles
since 1923



Always ride safely and wear protective gear. *Price shown is MSRP. Price subject to change. MSRP includes destination and handling charges but excludes license, registration, taxes, title, insurance and options. Actual price is determined by retailer. ©2009 BMW Motorrad USA, a division of BMW of North America, LLC. The BMW name and logo are registered trademarks.