

June 2011

Apex

Looking Through The Curve

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





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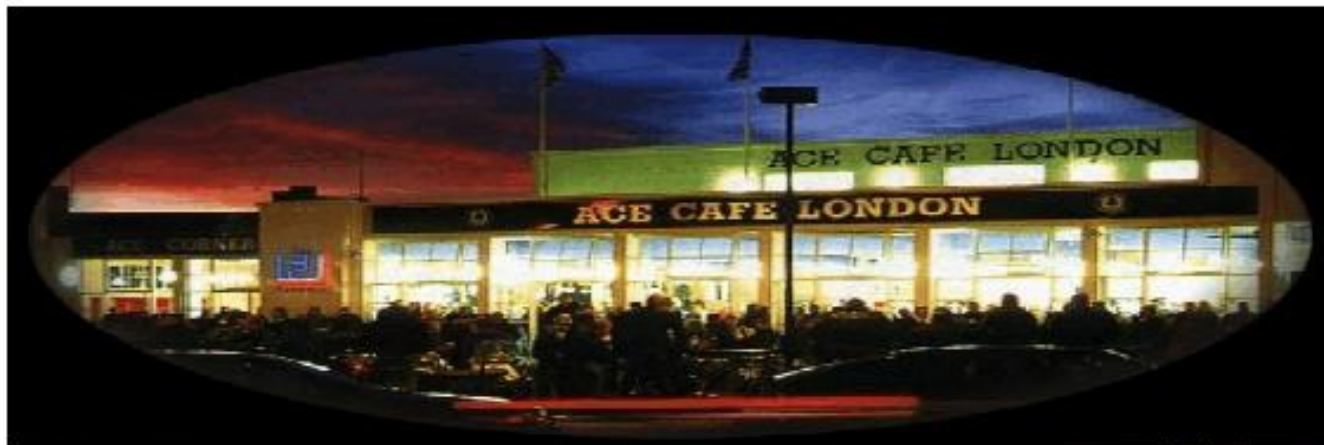
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Sixth Annual Ride 'em, Don't Hide 'em Café Run



Not a race, not a rally and definitely not another poker
run!

Meet us at The Colonel's Lady, 39 S. Main Street,
(parking in Church Alley at the rear of café)
Winchester, Kentucky on Saturday, June 11th,
2011 at 10:00 a.m. for another gathering with
riders of the Right Stuff.

No entry fee, no prizes - just a reason to ride.
Destination this year...The Kickstand and the Village Café!



For more information contact:
John Rice 859-229-4546



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The KICKSTAND's TIMED MOTORCYCLE ROAD RUN

Saturday, June 18th, 2011

Ride some of Central Kentucky's most beautiful roads. We'll give you a route to average 30 MPH. We'll give you a route that will take you through some of the most beautiful scenery in the state. We'll have refreshments along the way and present trophies to the winners. This will be a complete day of fun and excitement.

CANCELLED

There's NO COST to participate.

For more information, to inquire about the road run details, to volunteer to help or to check on local weather conditions, phone 859-748-KICK or e-mail SeeYou@TheKickstandLLC.com

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1st, 2nd, 3rd PLACES
LONG DISTANCE RIDER
CLUB WITH MOST IN ATTENDANCE
RODE BIKE WITH FEWEST CCs
OLDEST RIDER
NEWEST RIDER

We welcome another BMW on Saturday, May 28th, at Frisch's



Ray Brooks with his 1973 R75, an anniversary gift. The odometer reveals only 26,000 miles.



Burkesville 2011



The Kickstand enjoyed
good business.

Burkesville 2011



Burkesville 2011



Quarter Litre Touring

“

Half Pint” is a generally derogatory sort of term, denoting something too small to be taken seriously. Fortunately, our little Yamaha XT 250's, at a quarter litre, are just barely beyond a half pint in size and therefore can stand proudly on their own merits.

Jay Smythe and I left break-fast, in the rain, on Saturday May 14th, bound for Whitesburg and the Little Shepard Trail.

I had some experience with 250 touring, having taken this same bike on the Lap of Kentucky a year ago, but I'm still impressed with the capability of the little singles, soldiering on at a steady 60mph for hours at a time.

We headed down Rt 25 to Richmond and picked up Rt. 52 to Irvine, mostly straight highway, but still interesting in the wet. At Irvine, we started on the “good part” of 52 as it twists its way toward Beattyville. This road is usually populated by sportbikes on a Saturday morning, but in the downpour, we had it all to ourselves. The lightweight singles were well suited to the wet curves and some greater lean angle was possible with them than I ever would dare to do on a larger machine. Both bikes were shod with dual-sport tires, on mine the Mefo's I had put on for the Lap ride and on Jay's the new Bridgestone Trail Wings it came with. The Mefo's, a common choice for long-mileage, seemed a bit skittery on the wet asphalt, but nothing to cause undue alarm. The Trail Wings, according to Jay, seemed to stick as if the pavement were dry. I was in the lead (because Jay is hard to

keep in sight if he leads) and as I came around each bend, I'd check my mirrors for Jay only to see him heeled over much farther than I had managed.

I've always believed in the maxim “It's more fun to ride a slow bike fast than a fast bike slow”. I've discovered as my eyesight grows shorter and my reaction time grows longer, that this aphorism becomes even more appropriate and that my definition of “fast” and “slow” becomes much more elastic. The diminutive singles require of us far more planning and skill to maintain a pace that on a bigger bike would be less than sporting, but that's the fun part.

At Beattyville, we made our first pie stop of the trip at the Purple Cow.

This restaurant has long been famous for its pies and, wonder of wonders in Eastern Kentucky, has gone smoke free to boot! We opted for coconut cream on this occasion while our riding gear dripped on the floor and the other patrons gave us the sidelong glances usually reserved for the openly insane.

From Beattyville, we pressed on, still wet, down 52 to Jackson, picked up 15 and headed south.

Still light traffic, but the coal dust mixed with water always makes this stretch an “interesting” ride. At Hazard, we detoured down Rt. 7 to take in the Lily Cornet Woods, the last old growth hardwood forest in this part of the country. A short stop at the visitor center got us information on the history of the forest and, courtesy of the ranger, a “shortcut” on dirt and gravel roads over the mountain.

At Whitesburg the rain had given us brief respite and we started up Pine Mountain on Rt.

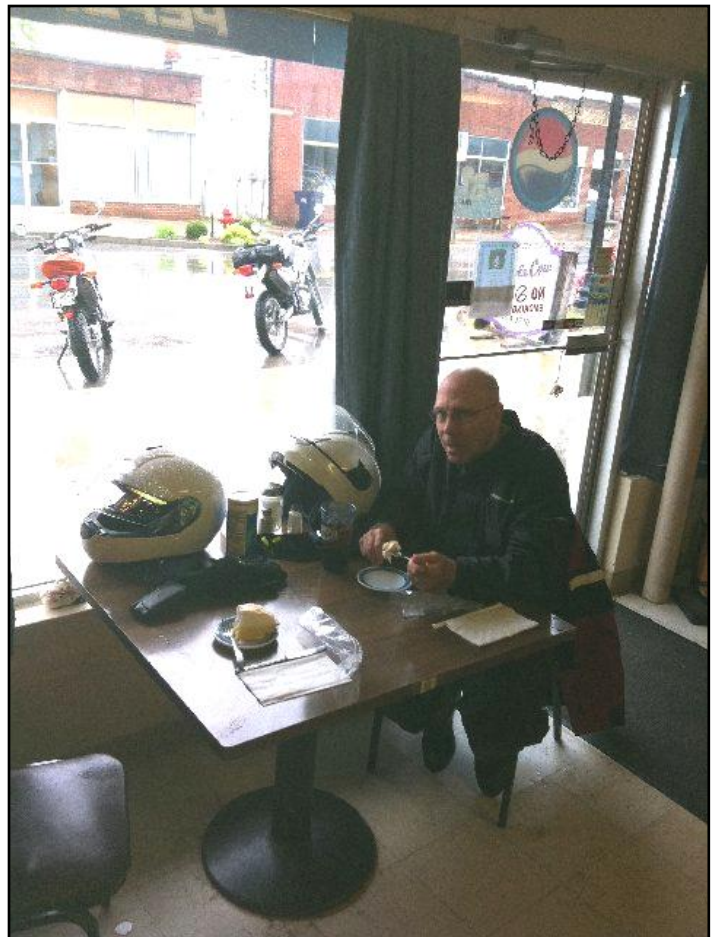
119. When I used to come down here in the early 70's, this road was a winding two lane, oil soaked on the uphill run by the laboring coal trucks, pave-



By John Rice



The Purple Cow in Beattyville, first pie stop



Quarter Litre Touring By John Rice



Entrance to Little Shepard Trail, natural habitat for the XT



Jay adjusts his "luggage."

ment rippled and broken strewn with gravel just where you didn't want it. Over the side, when one could spare a look, was a view of horrendous destruction by strip mining. Now the road has been widened, repaved and the reclaiming of the mine sites has been underway for some time. The curves are spacious and easy to see through and here on this Saturday, free of coal trucks. The 250's required 3rd and 4th gear for the grade, but otherwise seemed not to notice the strain. All too quickly we were at the top and the entrance to the Little Shepard Trail.

The first several miles of the trail are paved, winding a circuitous path through the trees along the ridge of the mountain. Again it amazes me that there are not hikers or mountain bikers or for that matter, anyone, up here with us. A couple of years ago, I did share part of this trail with a Mama Bear and her cub, but I wasn't looking for that company this time. There had been a significant storm at some point, with many small trees downed across the trail, but nothing the 250's couldn't handle. The trail passes through the Kingdom Come state park, but only a sign pointing to a campground gives it away. I wondered why there wasn't a small lodge, at least a coffee shop, at the park like one finds on the Virginia Creeper Trail near Abington,...

Eventually the paved portion ends, with no sign denoting which way the rest goes. It does, I learned, require a left turn on the county road and then an almost immediate hard right up an unmarked dirt road to continue the Trail. From here, it's mostly dirt with the remnants of a long-ago gravel application still visible in spots.

There are some deep ruts, but again, the Yamaha's proceeded on unfazed. Our pace, which had been in the mid-20's continued on as if nothing had changed. I recall that the 93 PD bounced around a good bit on this portion, but these kept their aplomb..

After several miles, this portion too came to an end. Last time I'd guessed wrong and went down the hill on the blacktop road, meeting by chance two members of this breakfast group, Jeff and Lee, and somehow never went back up to find the end of the Little Shepard Trail.

This time I tried the uphill option and found that it was, a few hundred yards up from the intersection, marked with a sign indicating that this paved road was the Trail. Like the beginning portion, the smooth pavement, about one conventional lane wide, twisted its way across the ridgetop toward Harlan.

We met a small SUV coming the other way, a young couple from Virginia who told us they came here every year. They had, from experience, brought a chain saw and we found, as we proceeded on, several places where they had cut away fallen trees that must have blocked the way. Apparently this road doesn't get a whole lot of attention. We came to a triple fork in the road where the pavement appeared to end with three graveled paths leading off to points unknown. Down one was a steel paneled toilet facility which looked as if it had been used in an assassination scene from one of the Godfather movies. There were as many bullet holes as there was un-perforated metal. We cast about a bit trying to find the correct path (neither the map or the

Quarter Litre Touring

By John Rice



we'd give that park a pass for the next day and go looking for less crowded trails.

The next morning we set out at daylight, again in the rain. We made our way west to Pineville for breakfast at Pine Mountain State Park, the only non-fast-food restaurant open in the area. There we were, somewhat incredibly, given our manner of dress, asked if we were here for the golf outing weekend.

Back into Pineville, we headed north on Rt. 66, up to Redbird. I'd often seen reports of dual-sport rides on the trails there and wanted to give them a try. 66 is a wonderful bike road under any circumstances, even wet, and all the better when it leads to trails. Our first excursion was on a path that turned

There are some nice overlooks.

phone-GPS were of the slightest help) and finally found that one of the forks did resume pavement again after a few yards. We elected that one and all too soon were at the end of the Trail, outside of Harlan.

It was getting to be time to find a place to stay, so we set forth into town. We located the Mountain Aire Inn, which appeared to be a fairly new lodge building surrounded by portable buildings that had been clad in half-timbered siding to give the impression of log cabins. This was the only "park at your door" motel in sight, so we accepted. Just up the road from the motel was an off road park that had been taken over for the weekend by a Hummer club, their huge muddy machines on trailers around our motel lot. We spoke to one of their group who told us they'd been there for three days. We decided



Jay ponders the mountains.

Quarter Litre Touring

By John Rice



Do these look like golfers to you? We thought the helmets and wet jackets were a dead giveaway.



Cue "Rockytop."

into a steadily rising set of wet slippery rocks that kept getting steeper and rougher as we went. Discretion being the better part of valor, we turned tail and headed back to the beginning. We'd realized by that time that we needed permits to ride here and getting caught without them this far up in the rocks just didn't seem a good idea.

We found a ranger station, closed, then followed sign directions to a country store that sold permits (\$7 each for a day pass). The helpful young lady behind the counter seemed puzzled by the fact that people came from far-flung places to ride the trails here.

Permits in hand, we aired down our tires and set out to find another trail. Soon we came to a trail head showing a map that sort of corresponded to the one we'd been given with our permits, but the terms were different. What had a name at the trailhead had only a number on the map. We took off on what appeared to be "Trail #1" leading to, we hoped, "Trail #2"..

At first the trail seemed little

more than a rough dirt road, but that changed quickly. Soon we were on a single-track path that went straight up the side of a mountain, its steep slope broken only by the occasional terrace. Two old guys on street legal 250's with duffels on the back, thirty degree inclines, rutted with rocks and slippery with mud in a pouring rain....what could go wrong?

Despite a few relatively gentle crashes, nothing much. Both of us were pleasantly surprised (again) with the capability of the little Yamahas. Despite my decidedly overlarge burden on its back, the just-more-than-half-pint engine tracted up the hill like it wasn't breaking a sweat.

Tired but surprisingly unscathed, we made it to the top of the mountain and found there Trail #2, which in theory would lead us back down to 66. This trail followed the top of the mountain for quite a way, then began descending at a bit less of an incline than the one coming up the other side. Halfway down we met some young fellows on the latest big-bore spe-



Not sure you can get the slope behind the bike as it falls away from the camera, but it sure looks steep from the bottom.

Quarter Litre Touring

By John Rice



That's Jay, below the terrace.



Jay making his way up the trail.

cialist dirt machines, both geared up in the high tech helmets, pads and protectors. From their astonished expressions, I assume they didn't expect to find their Grandpas up here, coming down from where they were clawing up, on such unlikely looking machines.

We headed back to the country store, where the proprietor's husband got out his air pump so we could refill our tires for the road trip back home. A few miles up 66 we found a car wash where we left several pounds of mud each. In spite of the abuse they'd suffered at our hands out on the trail, the quarter-liters were still in good spirits and ready for the black-top run back home. We found a good restaurant open in Booneville (also the only restaurant open in Booneville) where again the waitress seemed to find it amusing that people came down here to ride in the woods.

By the end of the day (yes, it was still raining) we'd reached Lexington again with just under 500 miles for the weekend. Not much perhaps by "big bike" standards, but factoring in the many miles of muddy trail, not bad. I'm a firm convert to the small bike theory now and looking forward greatly to doing it again.

—John

Go West Young Bike

(Or, How Paul's Bike Finds a New Home In Hawaii) Part 2



By Bob Beard

Packing,
Ugh.

and into the motorcycle, but first you gotta get to that point.

What to take? Or, more pertinently, what NOT to take?

Remember to balance the load between saddlebags.

Nobody loves this part. Alright, maybe someone does, but I hear there are people who enjoy arranging their linens too. The act itself is pure drudgery masquerading as an enjoyable task only because it hides beneath the woven threads of anticipation. But the gathering, the filtering of necessities and what constitutes a necessity; the constant tug-of-war over what goes and what stays is tiring, to say the least.

Obviously what you take on your motorcycle trip is tem-

packing up the trusty Hodaka 125.

3. Your reality base: On my first REAL X-country trip on my first BIG motorcycle (a 1973 Honda CB550K) I packed frying pans (yes, plural), a set of nested pots, a two burner camp stove and a liter of kerosene to blow it all up with. I had two Ray Bradbury hardcover books (*Fahrenheit 451* and *The Martian Chronicles*) and a guitar! A Sears canvas tent complete with four-foot long aluminum poles was strapped on over all of it. I looked like a one-man Gypsy caravan. As you can imagine the guitar and the tent were the first to go. One rainstorm lasting two days was enough to demolish those two fantasy items. The rest was eventually lost over a spread of about 7 states as I trimmed down to that which mattered. At the time I had just turned 18, the open road beckoned, and I had left my place of residence with visions of nightly campfires under warm, star studded skies. Live and learn.

4. Experience and temperament: One buddy of mine steadfastly held to a packing regimen that was tempered by the fact that his bike was old, unreliable, and hardly maintained. (and whose fault is that?) He brought only that which he was comfortable fitting into a backpack. This was not a virtual backpack-of-the-mind either; this was an external-frame Kelty bungeed onto the back portion of his seat. It sufficed as a backrest while riding and while not riding. It

was his footlocker/luggage/duffel/home-away-from-home when not strapped to his motorcycle, and I believe I heard him murmuring endearments to it one night in northern New Mexico. He figured that one good stranding deserved another and was determined to come out on top in the battle of decrepit bike facing off against stubborn man. Should the untrustworthy motorcycle effect the effrontery of leaving him without transportation he was fully ready to tear up his registration, throw the license plate over a cliff, file the VIN numbers off the steering head and stroll into the sunset with his trusty pack.

My particular packing dilemma, at least on this planned sojourn, results directly from the fact that the motorcycle I am acquiring resides some 5,000 miles east of my garage. Included within those 5,000 miles is about 2,495 miles of open ocean.

What this means is that instead of packing for my trip by strewing stuff all over the garage and slowly moving it about into different piles and sorting it out into where it will eventually fit when once I pull away from the garage, I need to get all this gear TO the motorcycle before I can even begin to pack.

On quick consideration it is no big deal. Toss it all into a suitcase, climb on the friendly skies, and wait for my Dora-the-Explorer Samsonite special to come around the carousel once I arrive at point B. Uh-huh.



In actuality, it is not the packing per se, but that choosing and sorting of what shall go and what shall not go that puts a crease in my undies. Once I have it all figured out and sorted out and trimmed down to a manageable mess then I am quite content to start the actual placing (packing) of gear onto

pered by such things as:

1. How much boodle you actually possess: You can't take what you ain't got.

2. How much carry space is available: Ingenious or inept does not matter much when you consider the difference between loading down your GL1800 Goldwing Deluxe as opposed to

Go West Young Bike

(Or, How Paul's Bike Finds a New Home In Hawaii) Part 2 By Bob Beard



Nice theory and all, but it does not really work that way in the world of flesh and bones and carry-ons, and weight limits and rubber gloved TSA drones.

Consider the gear that one needs to don merely to insure safety and comfort on a motorcycle: Helmet, gloves (a couple of pairs), riding jacket replete with internal pads and liner, overpants with all the add-ons of the jacket, and boots. Oh, don't forget some raingear.

That pile of goods is a suitcase full all by their lonesome, and these items are not things that make the pack list of someone starting from their own garage, *because they are wearing it*. I am NOT going to try passing through security

dressed thusly because I would spend the next ten years being debriefed in Guantanamo.

I plan on camping along the way so I have my single person tent, sleep pad, sleeping bag, and ground cover. Let us also not forget that this is a 30-year old motorcycle and however trusting my nature regarding Paul and Roy's mechanical abilities I would be seriously remiss by not carrying tools to counter the off chance of being tapped by Murphy's Law.

Is anyone keeping track of the load limit? And I still need to put some clothing into the mix. How many Samsonites have I sunk so far?

Remember too that I pick the motorcycle up in Danville,

Kentucky, but ship it from San Diego, California. Suppose that I did put all that equipment/gear/crap into suitcases and sucked up the extra weight and space fees that the airlines adore. What do I do with the suitcases while I am riding from the Bluegrass State to the Golden State? They are not coming with me as I crest the continental divide that is for damn sure. Yeah, it is a problem.

My basic solution to the conundrums involved is to trim, trim, trim and employ those fabulous "Flat-Rate" boxes the US Postal Service gives out. With the help of said boxes I will ship some goods to my dear daughter units, both of whom reside in Lexington.

My plan is to ship pretty much all of the actual riding gear (helmet, gloves, jacket, liner, pads, and boots), and to fly with my clothing, toothbrush, camera, phone and writing pad and reading materials stuffed into an overhead-sized duffel and my tank bag. My old tent (no, not that Sears canvas tent, thank you) has been replaced by a brand-new Eureka Solo backcountry tent which is being drop-shipped at youngest daughter-unit's house. This tent was bought sight-unseen, and my decision was based solely on reviews from Backpacker Magazine and the like. Chancy, eh?

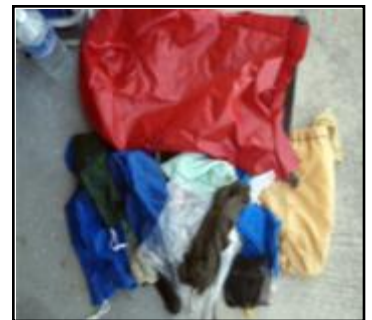
On this trip I am not bringing any cooking equipment. Fruit, nuts and hearty midday meals (Gatorade and Slim Jims) at as-of-yet undetermined small towns will get me through. And I am fairly certain a pint of Johnny Walker will find its way into one of the Krauser bags in

case provisions are running low some frosty evening.

Also coming with me are some items I tend to be a bit nutso about. We all have our peccadilloes (smaller and lighter than an armadillo) and my particular fetish tends toward straps and bags. I always travel with my BoB (Bag of Bags) and BoS (Bag of Straps) because something always needs to be a bit more secure, and the secure things always want to be a bit more organized into discreet groupings.



The Bag o' Straps



The Bag o' Bags

Also included among the indispensables are three knives and three waterproof flashlights and two tire pressure gauges. Maybe it is overkill but there are some things I cannot stand the thought of being without. Given the choice of going with-

Go West Young Bike

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out a toothbrush or a good knife on a motorcycle trip I would make the obvious (to me) choice and advise you to stand upwind while we speak. And, of course, my trusty whistle, because a backpacker's medical booklet I read decades ago left me with one indelible piece of advice, "You can't always yell for help if you are injured, but

if you are still breathing you can blow a whistle." The whistle goes around my neck before the kickstand goes up, and stays on until I am near hospitals, EMS and Pizza delivery services again.

As the time approaches for boarding day my apprehension rises. But I have consoled myself with the thought that I have

done this before and I have been going over my pack list for at least three weeks. If I have forgotten something it will not likely be enough to kill me outright. Perhaps by accumulative, small degrees and steps, but not outright. I have my credit and debit card, my license, the papers I need for the

shipping company in San Diego, and my boarding pass.

Kentucky and North America, Here I come!

(Stay tuned for Part 3 as I arrive in Kentucky, pick up the bike, and begin wending my way west).



Ian Rice
on the 350 Alpina



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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.

Memorial Day Ride

By Tom Weber

On Saturday I rode up to Argillite, Kentucky, around the corner from Flatwoods where I went to Russell High School and graduated in 1980.

Near Wurtland in Greenup Co., they now have a nice Veterans Memorial that was not there when I went to school.

The first picture shows a prank a couple of friends and I played that would have gotten us into big trouble back in the summer of '80 if we had been caught. We changed out a couple of letters in the sign. It took the city three months to find out, and they found out in the headlines on the front pages of newspapers from a couple of neighboring cities.

I hope the statute of limitations has run out on such a thing.

I also took some pics of a covered bridge near Old Town, Kentucky.



Memorial Day Ride

By Tom Weber

