

February 2018

# Apex

*Looking Through The Curve*

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



# Did anyone say “Bike Show”?

By Jeff Crabb

The cover photo is of a 1930 Terrot 350 HST—also below. The bike was manufactured in France. The cylinder and cylinder head are cast as one piece. Engine is a side valve design utilizing a total loss oiling system (oil is not re-circulated back to an oil tank). The machine has a Bosch Magneto ignition and original Amal carburetor.

This is one of many bikes that were taken in on the last Saturday of January at the Garage Brewed Moto Show held inside the Rhinegeist

Brewery. Jeff Odean organized the transportation and eleven of us rode up to Cincinnati on a foggy, wet nasty day in a nice and dry van. Thanks Jeff! <http://garagebrewed.com/>

This month we have John Rice's Barber trip and short story about a route worth taking.

Please enjoy and remember, send all of your contributions to [apex@bluegrassbeemers.org](mailto:apex@bluegrassbeemers.org).



**Apex is the official newsletter of Bluegrass Beemers, Inc.  
Lexington, Kentucky MOA #146 RA #49**

**Jeff Crabb, Editor [jdcraab@hotmail.com](mailto:jdcraab@hotmail.com)**

**Deadline for submissions is the last day of the month.**

**Back issues of Apex can be accessed on our website**

**Join us at Frisch's on Harrodsburg Rd.**

**in Lexington, Kentucky on any Saturday, 7-9:00 a.m.**

**BMW Club  
Bluegrass Beemers**





# BARBER VINTAGE DAYS, 2017 (WHO INVITED NATE ?)

By John Rice



The first weekend in October brings soft golden-lighted days, mild weather and most important of all, the Barber Vintage Motorcycle Festival. Held at the world's largest motorcycle museum near Birmingham, Alabama, the festival would be even better this year with the addition of the new twin museum building, newly constructed beside the first. George Barber's collection always had many times more bikes than could be displayed and now some of the excess would see the light of day in the new facility. There would be vintage racing on the world-class track set within the huge park area that also hosts an excellent swap meet, an infield full of vendors and various show events as well as off-road competition in the woods. In short, a perfect fall weekend.

After my past year of "medical inconveniences", I really wanted to ride a bike to the event, but I also wanted to make sure Grandson Ian and his friend Ashlin got to attend. My son, a dedicated car person with a minor interest in motorcycles, came to my rescue by volunteering to drive the boys down in his car

so that Jay and I could two-wheel it to Alabama.

As is our typical custom, we turned a six hour drive into a two day motorcycle journey, meandering though, Kentucky, Tennessee and northern Alabama. I would tell you how we got there, but our route kept changing such that neither of us can recall an exact path. By Thursday night, somehow we had made it to our motel in Pelham, a 20 mile two-lane ride from the park.

Cold air and clear skies made for a pleasant ride to the park Friday morning with that familiar quickening of the pulse that occurs when one nears the site of a bike event. The closer one gets, the motorcycle traffic gets thicker and the variety of machines provides a wonderful background of exotic engine sounds, some so iconic you can recognize them even in the din, others so unusual that you strain to pick out the source. These events tend to draw the deeply committed enthusiast rather than the costumed posers, so various forms of leathers, old and ancient dominate with cafe racer duds side by side with modern

long distance touring kit. Parked in front of the museum entrance was a Maserati-engined custom-built motorcycle next to a delicious 60's era BMW sidecar rig by a well-worn KLR fitted up for world adventuring. Next to them and everywhere around were examples of motorcycles as everyday transport, world traveler conveyance, ego expression and some that combined elements of all.

Our little entourage made its way into the museum so that the newcomers in the group could get an overview of what is on offer. Ian, an old hand now on his second trip, took the lead. Inside, the boys were drawn to the collection of Lotus race cars, one of Mr. Barber's other passions, from the first 1948 version, looking like a back yard shed project, to the modern formula One style open wheel compe-

tition machines more like earthbound aircraft than "car".

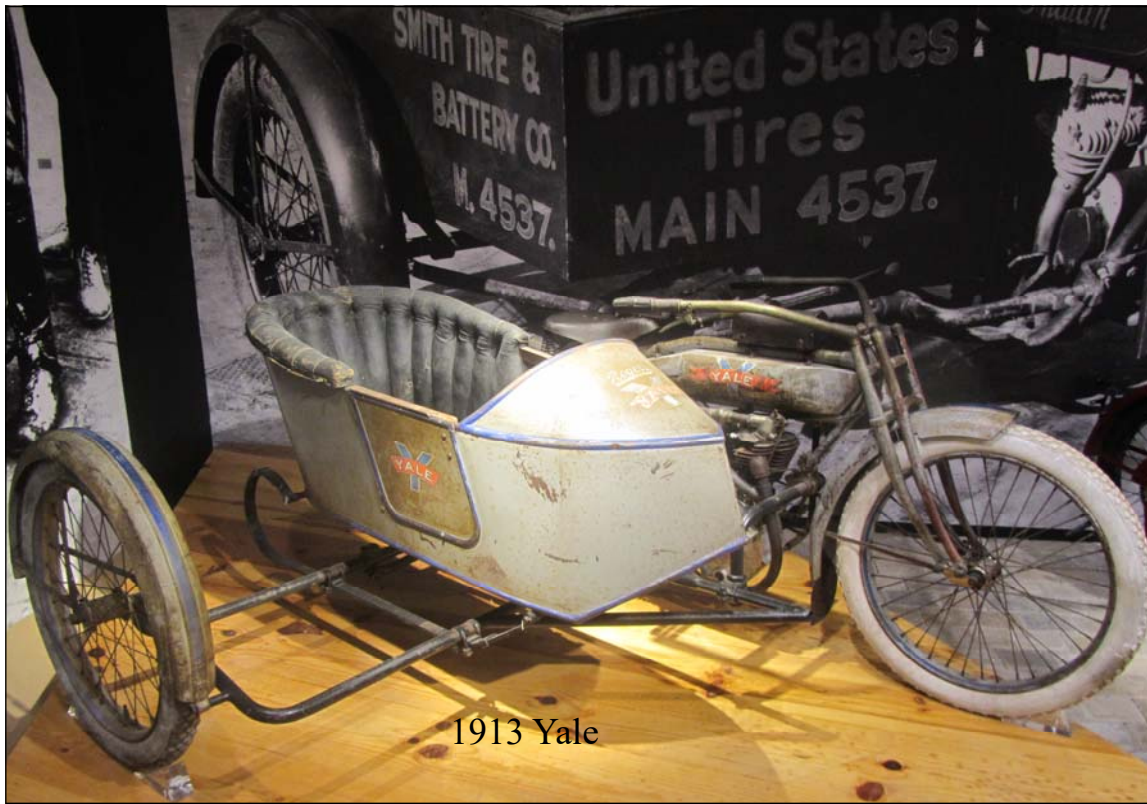
Down into the lower level where the working shops are located, we enviously toured the hospital-clean assembly rooms and looked into the CNC machine shop where just about any restoration part necessary can be made from scratch. Down there also are the warehouse facilities where we could see through the door that the new building still couldn't hold nearly what remains of the collection.

Outside we caught one of the timely shuttles that constantly circle the track so that visitors can easily get to any of the many venues. I was still using a "knee scooter" for getting around and this meant hoisting the awkward device on board the shuttle and squeezing in among the passengers. Typical of motorcycle

John's son John, grandson Ian and Ian's friend Ashlin in the museum's basement.







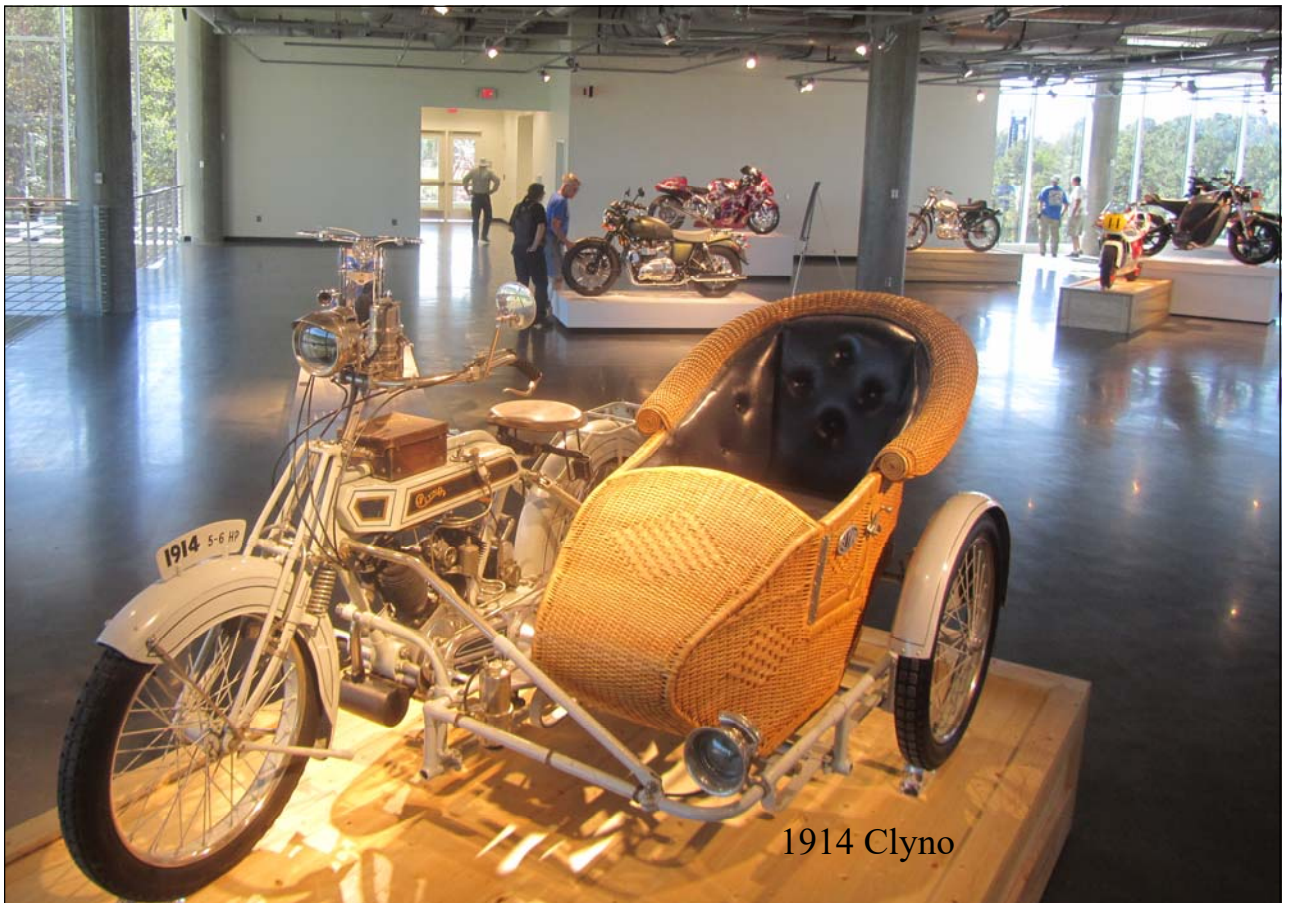
1913 Yale

Jay and I loaded up at dawn and sallied forth into the breach. My son and the boys, shielded within the confines of a safe automobile would leave later and of course, beat us home by a day. We elected to take the dreaded Interstate, usually to be avoided at all costs, to move north as quickly

promise as Hurricane Nate moved up from the Gulf. Traffic was light through Birmingham.

For the first time in the event's history, the Sunday session was cancelled and the visitors were urged to head for home.

Sunday morning



1914 Clyno



people, all were accommodating and always made room. We perused the swap meet for interesting bits and pieces, my scooter passage there made easier by the paved aisles. I recounted to the teenagers the story illustrating Mr. Barber's approach to making this a first class operation. On the second holding of this event, years ago, the swap meet was in a bare grass field and the paths between vendors had become worn down to dirt. Rains came on Saturday and the paths got muddy. Within a few hours, there were multiple trucks on site, laying smooth gravel in the muddy tracks. When we arrived the next year, the paths were paved. Mr. Barber does it right. No "must haves" were located on the first pass this time, but we would return again for several more raids.

Further around the circuit is the Ace Corner, an enclave built up on a hill in the infield to honor the iconic Ace Cafe in London, the spiritual home of cafe racers everywhere. At the base of the hill is an area with vendors of cafe racer accessories and bikes and a bandstand for showcasing rock and roll, an integral part of the cafe scene from the 60's. Up the steep hill is the Ace Corner Cafe, an outdoor restaurant with tables overlooking the track, and a cafe racer bike show. Golf cart shuttles constantly strain to make the round trip up and down the hill for those unable or unwilling to tackle the knuckle-dragging steep slope. I had to use the ride going up, but the knee-scooter, sadly deficient in brakes, made for an exciting trip down!

The next stop on the circuit is the new bike

showcase, with BMW and KTM bringing examples of their wares for test rides. I thought of how a non-motorcycle person, those who typically don't distinguish between bikes as anything other than "loud" or "in the way" would perceive this variety if plunked down here up close and personal. The dual sports seem like large insects or perhaps other-worldly transport for some armored science fiction hero. The big touring machines are slick and almost formless with their all-enclosing

bodywork maximized for quiet aerodynamics,







Lamborghini V12—Why the dual seat?





looking as if they could fly, silently powered by Dilithium Crystals.

We pass by the pits where the racers are tuning up and readying for a day's practice. In the distance we can hear the cacophony of engine sounds, the pounding big singles, deep growling twins, howling threes and fours and cutting through all, the occasional metallic ringing screech of an expansion chambered two- stroke raging as if something terrible and very, very angry is ripping its way out of a

static representation of machines competing and the real thing out there on the asphalt. In a bit of architectural whimsy, there are glass panels in the floor so that we may watch the visitors below as they stroll among the machines.

There is a new bridge over the track that joins a path alongside a waterfall and makes its way through a bit of woods to a sky bridge that affords an overview of much of the race-track.



New Bridge

metal container. We plan to visit the pits later in the weekend, but as we will see, plans get changed.

Back at the museum, we checked out the new building. This one now contains more of the racing machines with a faux drag strip occupying the hallway between the facilities, and a raised motocross track, complete with hardened plaster "mud", wending through the hall, bikes arranged as if in the middle of competition. As in the original building there are floor to ceiling windows overlooking the track so that we don't have to choose between seeing

One must be a museum member to access this bridge, so we have joined on our way in. Outside, Mr. Barber's sense of humor is on display as Bigfoot fishes calmly in the decorative pond and a giant struggles to hold up the bridge pillar so that we may safely pass. From the terminus of the overpass, the practicing racers can be seen from one end of the track to the other, only occasionally disappearing behind the trees to come rocketing out into another curve a few seconds later. The track is tightly wound around the low hills of this park such that it seems at first glance that the





these events. No matter how much experience one has with the frustration of “projects”, the sight of an interesting rusty two-wheeled relic starts the mind spinning and an entire rebuild can take place in the mind within seconds...minus all the aggravating bits, of course.

We met British “round the world “traveler” and author Sam Manicom in the swap meet where he was hanging out with an Australian couple who had just completed a trip of about fifteen years or so, covering much of the planet in a sidecar rig. Along the way they had raised their infant daughter to a teenager, home schooling her via a classroom setup in the sidecar.

As we left Saturday evening, the gathering storm clouds had changed from a threat to a

speeding bikes are going as many directions at once.

We left as the park closed Friday night, heads buzzing with all the activity. Saturday seems now to be a blur, with revisits to the venues, time spent in the infield watching the various stunts being performed by young men and women who are still under that wonderful youthful illusion of immortality and invulnerability. The infield vendors offered everything from high end riding gear, new bikes, custom old bikes, miraculous potions and products guaranteed to make your next major project trouble free, and a variety of carnival-style food sufficient to clog the heartiest of arteries. Ian scored some odds and ends for his Bultaco restoration and many bikes in the swap meet sparked the “all it needs is...everything” conversation typical of



Sam Manicom



ham in the wee hours of Sunday, but little actual light was available as the dense clouds obscured the sky. Rain was annoying, not yet at full downpour mode, but the winds were another matter. Even at 60 mph on the wet pavement, it was difficult to make a straight forward progress. If seen from above, our path looked more like a sine wave, like sailboats trying to tack into a headwind as we were

headed toward the facilities in the back, a man said, over my shoulder, “Y’all must be REAL bikers!”. The voice and cadence were exactly that of our own Lowell Roark and when I turned to face the speaker, he even closely resembled Lowell, but no relation, he said. He and his round-table companions were all motorcyclists, but had chosen to leave the bikes at home on this day. They expressed their admiration for our fortitude, but the



1867 Roper Steam Velocipede

knowing glances that passed among them reflected their true thoughts, quite reasonably, that actually we were nuts. We couldn’t really disagree as we walked back out into the downpour.

With the wind subsided a bit, we switched to two-lane, but still on a direct course north instead of our typical meander. Late afternoon found us crossing the Kentucky border, where the weather map indicated that Nate had gone ahead in a northeasterly path to wait for us on the way to Lexington. The map showed clearing skies to the west, so we headed for Bowling Green.

blown from one edge of our lane to the other, then worked our way back over, only to have the inexorable push of Nate start the process anew. Sometimes a gust would take me clear off to the shoulder, leaving me wondering again if perhaps this wasn’t the best idea we’d ever had.

Eventually farther north the wind became less fierce as the rain volume increased, meaning I guess that we had crossed some threshold within the huge storm circling around us. At Arab, Alabama the bikes needed fuel and we needed to be off the bikes for a bit and a Shell station beckoned us in. As we walked in

As storms will do, Nate had gathered up all his nasty stuff and carried it east, leaving blue skies in the vacated space behind, so we began slowly drying out as we headed the other way looking for lodging. A motel with a vacancy sign and two nearby restaurants hove into view and our soggy, wind-blown journey was done for the day. With damp gear spread around the room, looking like a yard sale, we walked to the Mexican restaurant to relax and reconstruct what, all things considered, had been another successful bike trip.





This is Nick Maffey from Marcy, NY. The bike started out as a completely stock 1986 BMW R80RT. They used a 3D printer to fabricate many of the custom touches on the bike including the Flexible Grips, Brake Covers, Air Box, Tank Badges, Hub Cap, Key Switch, Headlight and Tail light. They wanted to prove that anyone, with a bit of knowledge and practice, can print functional components for their custom builds. He was showing this bike at the Cincinnati Garage Brewed Moto Show.





More from the Moto Show. Starting below and going clockwise; an Allstate Compact, 1956 Norton Model 99 Dominator and Lee Thompson standing next to his “first bike” model—a 1966 BMW R27.



## Route One — John Rice

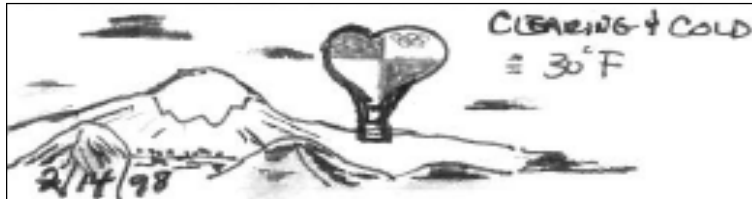
Driving the sidecar rig on the way back from Athens, Ohio recently, I crossed the Ohio River back into Kentucky near South Shore. Not in any particular hurry, I turned off highway 23 to take the scenic route home.

Route One in Kentucky begins at the Ohio River in the small county seat of Greenup. The road winds along creek paths, alongside the hollow where Jesse Stuart grew up and wrote his stories of country life, past Greenbo Lake State Park (where fifty years ago a friend of mine once made the teenage mistake of chasing a skunk into a culvert....we let him ride way behind on the route home) and on to the Oldtown Covered Bridge. Built in 1880, it is a two-span bridge, on a Burr design, 192 feet long over the Little Sandy River. The bridge is on the National Register and was renovated to its original state in 1999, but open only to foot traffic now.

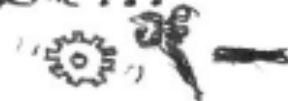
Not long after the bridge, Rt. One comes into Grayson, in Carter County, where once could be found pecan pie that was featured in the New Yorker magazine. Sadly that place is now gone, but if you take the turn off Rt. One to Route 60, headed west, the gentle curves will lead you to Morehead Kentucky where Rootabaker's Bakery can be found on Rt. 32, just north of 60. Here in this converted old house are pastries that are worth the journey...from anywhere...to eat. Pies, cookies, tarts, whatever the folks there feel like making that day, and even lunch if you are sufficiently disciplined to eat real food first, but everything is wonderful, without exception. First time visitors to Rootabaker's get a free sugar cookie with buttercream icing. It sounds innocent enough, but be warned, they are addictive. You will be back.

From Morehead, the possibilities for good roads are nearly endless, in any direction. One can go back up to the Ohio River starting on Rt. 32, down into the wilds of Eastern Kentucky on 519 or continue on Rt. 60 into the city of Lexington. There really aren't any bad choices.





ST. VALENTINE'S DAY ISN'T FAR AWAY ,  
 AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT'S HERE ! ,  
 IF YOU HAVEN'T BOUGHT HER CANDY AND FLOWERS YET,  
 YOU BETTER GET YOUR "HINEY" IN GEAR . . .



Here's the group for today:

- \* 1). Jim Brandon
- \* 2). Ryan King
- \* 3). Robbie Carter
- \* 4). John Rice
- \* 5). Hubert Burton
- \* 6). Dave McCord
- \* 7). Boone Sutherland
- 8). Chester Martin
- 9). Tom Sutherland
- \* 10). Paul Elzyon
- \* 11). Philip Baugh
- 12). Randy Scott
- 13). Mary Beard
- 14). Bob Beard
- 15). Pete Galskia
- 16). Chris Warner
- 17). Dave Sparkman
- 18). Bill Vass
- 19). Ben Pruitt
- 20). Steve Bishop
- 21). Bob Gore

- 22). Jeff Crabb
- 23). Kim Crabb
- 24). Joe Bark

*Boone*

# Books available on loan

The following books are available on loan. Email me when you want to borrow one, and I will bring it to breakfast (or whatever other arrangements need to be made...I can deliver within reason) and I'll put your name beside it on my list.

I don't mind if people keep them a while (it takes me forever to read a book now....I keep falling asleep and then have to re-read the last 10 pages or so) but I don't want to give them away for good. At least not yet.

John Rice



***Bahnstormer*** By LJK Setwright  
***Streetwise*** By Malcolm Newell  
***The Bart Markel Story*** By Joe Scalzo  
***Mann of his Time*** By Ed Youngblood  
***Yesterday's Motorcycles*** By Karolevitz  
***The Scottish*** By Tommy Sandham  
***This Old Harley*** By Michael Dregni  
***Racer: the story of Gary Nixon*** By Joe Scalzo  
***All But My Life: Bio of Stirling Moss*** By Ken Purdy (OK, not a motorcycle book, but who doesn't like and respect Stirling Moss?)  
***Investment Biker*** By Jim Rogers  
***Obsessions Die Hard*** By Ed Culbertson  
***BMW Twins & Singles*** By Roy Bacon  
***Bitten by the Bullet*** By Steve Krzystyniak & Karen Goa  
***Cafe Racers of the 1960's*** By Mick Walker  
***More Proficient Motorcycling*** By David Hough  
***Tales of Triumph Motorcycles & the Meriden Factory:***  
By Hancox  
***Sport Riding Techniques*** By Nick Ienatasch  
***Total Control*** By Lee Parks  
***Smooth Riding*** By Reg Pridmore.



***A Twist of The Wrist ( Vol 1 & 2)*** By Keith Code  
***Triumph Tiger 100 and Daytona*** By J. R. Nelson  
***This Old Harley (anthology)*** By Dregni  
***Side Glances*** By Peter Egan  
***Mondo Enduro*** By Austin Vince  
***Big Sid's Vincati*** By Matthew Bieberman  
***101 Road Tales*** By Clement Salvadori  
***Riding with Rilke*** By Ted Bishop  
***Legendary Motorcycles*** By Luigi Corbetta  
***Red Tape and White Knuckles*** By Lois Pryce  
***A Man Called Mike*** By Hilton (bio of Mike Hailwood)  
***The Perfect Vehicle*** By Melissa Pierson  
***One Man Caravan*** By Robert Fulton (first known circumnavigation of the world by motorcycle)  
***Monkey Butt*** By Rick Sieman  
***Ariel: The postwar models*** By Roy Bacon  
***Short Way Up*** By Steve Wilson  
***Endless Horizon*** By Dan Walsh  
***Leanings (1 & 2)*** By Peter Egan  
***Into the Heart of Africa*** By Jerry Smith  
***The Last Hurrah*** By Des Molloy  
(Autographed copy, with DVD of the trip)  
***Whatever Happened to the British Motorcycle Industry***  
By Bert Hopwood  
***Down the Road*** By Steve Wilson  
***Motorcycling Excellence***  
By Motorcycle Safety Foundation  
***Leanings 3*** By Peter Egan  
***Ghost Rider*** By Neal Peart  
***Revolutionary Ride*** By Lois Pryce  
***How to Drive a Sidecar Rig*** by David Hough