



the Beemer Reader

Newsletter of the BMW Riders of Vancouver Island

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FROM THE EDITORS

Man, I've died and gone to heaven - three articles from members in one month! Kristin Ackerson has come back to charm us with her writing style (after a too-long hiatus!), sharing some musings on riding in general and a recent trip to Long Beach in specific. Chris Paul has picked up a thread started by Paul Dewey's article on his R90S and carried on by Nigel Beattie's article on acquiring his R90S after a first bike trip on a Honda XL350, and has given us the story of his first bike trip on a Honda XL250. Anyone care to continue the thread? And last but not least, Michael Zeigler had written an article that has at least this person drooling to go to Norway, which he describes as a motorcyclists's heaven. He also offers some valuable tips on traveling in Europe.

We're back to our in-town home of the Princess Mary for the winter. I'm assuming everyone's okay with that - let me or Nigel know if you have any gripes or alternative suggestions (keeping in mind that it's hard to find places that will happily accommodate a group of 40+ people).

Enjoy the Fall!

Love, Sally

PRINCESS MARY RESTAURANT ⊕ 9:30 AM ⊕

January 6	Saturday
February 4	Sunday
March 2	Saturday
April 14	Sunday
May 4	Saturday
June 2	Sunday
July 6	Saturday
August 11	Sunday
September 7	Saturday
➤ October 6	Sunday ◀
November 2	Saturday
December 1	Sunday

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BEFORE AND AFTER

by Kristin Ackerson



I've had a truly fantastic second season. Along with riding good rides and meeting good people, I believe I've had a unique opportunity to ride alone and in many different groups. This constant meeting of styles has caused me to examine why I ride the way I do, and what I get out of my environment. One of the thoughts I continue to return to is how the action of warming up influences these perceptions. Sometimes warmth has a very literal meaning, but I've come to think of the process as a daily level of comfort that I gradually attain as the day rolls on.

My riding day frequently begins around 7 am. Unless the scotch bottle is much emptier than when I last unpacked it, my tent, chair, and ditty bag are rolled, stowed and strapped by then. I never worry about morning sun hitting the tent, since I am often awake before the big yellow orb even considers drying my dew-soaked fly. I like to play in little towns, take a dip in hot

springs, or just socialize in the early afternoon, so I have learned to make 100 miles or so before stopping in the morning. Because of these habitually early starts, I split my riding thought process into Morning Roads and After Roads. You'd think the simple act of sun cresting the cliffs along the run from Long Beach to Port Alberni would be only an act of warmth and light: not so.

The meaning of that warmth and light can completely change my perception of a road, my abilities, and my bike. I began thinking about Morning and After roads when out on a week long run with my husband, Derek. One waitress on the route of an early expedition described the Duffy Lake road as "crispy" while the folks driving multi-wheeled palaces watched me try to get warm. The word stuck in my mind. As I sat gripping my coffee cup with the stupidest pair of hands ever to grace my wrists, I reflected on the gray pavement that had looked as if it were going to crack with the imagined frost I had placed on it. The sun had even hit the water on the lake with hard bars of light, as opposed to the mellow gold spread that greets me on late afternoon rides. For a good 20 minutes I dove on the corners, braking hard at the entrance when I realized my forearms weren't relaxed and parallel with the bars, my shoulders were tight, and my hands were tightened in a death grip that all meant I wasn't prepared to

lean it out with a smile on my face. This torturous ride had me wondering how the skills I had exhibited the previous afternoon could just evaporate. I hated the cold, my electric grips would not work, and just who did that guy I call my husband think he was tracking a smooth circle around a corner I had made into some kind of tricky, pointy, geometric thing. "Crispy" summarized the whole experience, from the crackling cold to my electric temper.

The point is that this wonderful road, that many people at the Enderbee BeeCee Beemers get-together had extolled, is an After Road. After 100 miles, my bum connects with the seat in a very integral way that lets me know I have become a living, breathing part of my R80. After that first cup of coffee in a diner full of truckers and bikers, my head is eager to wrap around those corners before the bike gets there. After I've had my first taste of indoor warmth in 12 to 24 hours, my hands aren't quite so slow to respond. After I've looked at my maps and chosen a road for the pure pleasure of the ride, my mind is free to take the corners, wonder at the scenery, or bring out the box of knotty little problems I only consider when I'm enjoying the release of being on my bike for a big stretch. After all of these mental and physical comfort levels are attained, my chin can drop to the tank bag, protecting my chest from the wind when I roll on the throttle.

The tricks of light and importance of timing impressed themselves on me even more when I did the same road in a 12 hour period, first in the afternoon and then at 7:30 in the morning. This is the story of the Labor Day Weekend Long Beach Trip: Richard Doucet, whom I met at the Washington State Rally in Cashmere this year and later at a gathering at Sally's, told us that he often ends up riding alone because of work schedules. We were glad to invite a fellow camper along, so the three of us set off for Lake

Cowichan. Sunday morning, after Carnivore Delite breakfast of bacon, eggs, and pancakes cooked over a woodstove griddle, we embarked on 78 miles of dirt logging road to Parksville. I have found that dirt does not easily separate into neat categories, but simply demands that I sharpen up or content myself with 15 mph. This sort of baby-sitting is impossible with Richard leading the way. Not only is he a smooth, accomplished rider, but he approaches all kinds of surfaces with equal eagerness. We hit one stretch he called "the highway" because it was so smooth that our two BMW's whizzed along at 65mph. Derek's 23 year old Motto Guzzi El Dorado surprised us all with how well it handled the dirt, although clearance problems meant that the center stand scraped a couple of times. At any rate, the paved twisties from Port Alberni leading us to my second-ever glimpse of the B.C. coast were beautiful. Richard led on his PD, and the R80 tracked the asphalt corners behind him. Coming onto pavement on a sunny afternoon after a morning of bumps and stones is like suddenly being able to breathe underwater: I was buoyed by the experience, my eye immediately found and held the perfect line, and I was beyond normal sensation limits. This was one of my best After Roads yet, and I was only too pleased to be a part of the coastal beauty.

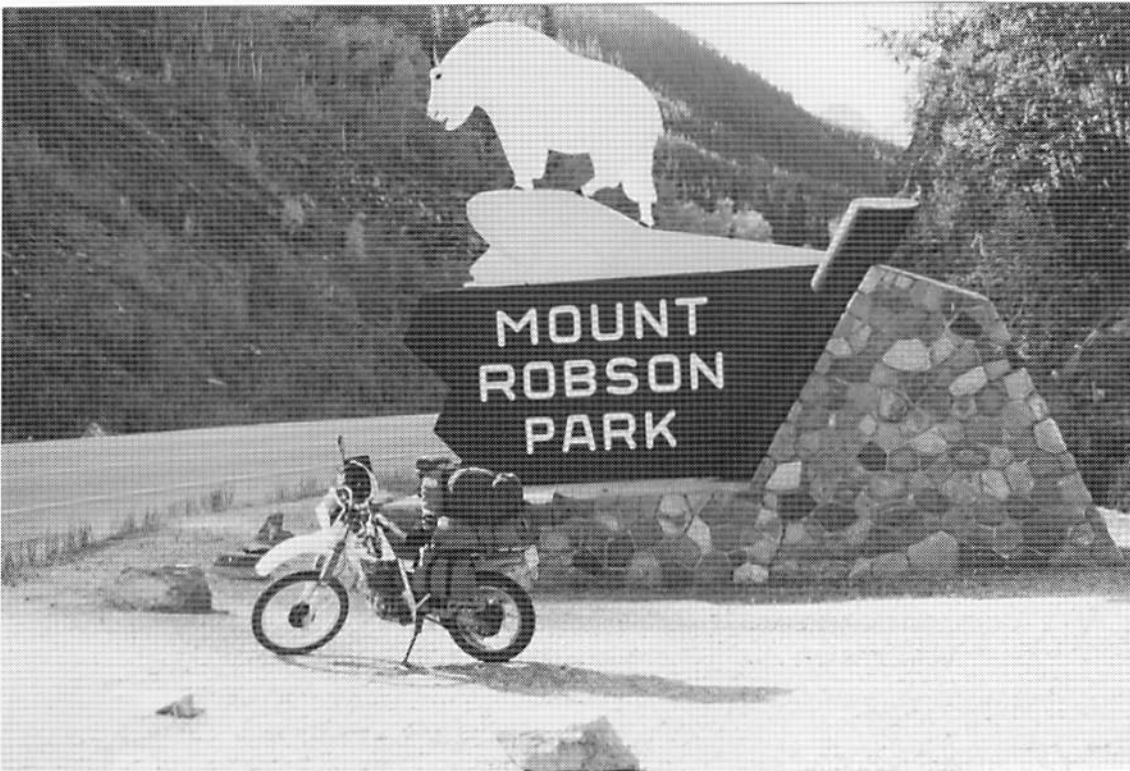
We had a lovely time on the beach, setting up our tents in the Greenpoint National Forest where the campsites are carved out of the living thicket like small green rooms with an endless ceiling. The weather cooperated and we spent a warm evening watching the tide roll out. By 7:30 the next morning we were on the road. This time the curves were not as hospitable. We no longer rode the outside of the cliff. The inside was somewhat pointier and more jagged than it looked when I was an entire lane away. The previous day I could at least imagine keeping up with Richard once he got into his groove. This early morning with the clouds whipping

around my wheels I had to finally let Derek pass me so he didn't get as frustrated as I had become.

Eventually we reached Port Alberni, much humbled. Richard's PD had cooked a transmission bearing, leaving him grounded until Derek and I came back with our new-old truck. When I finally caught up with him, he hung off of his bike like a contortionist trying to figure out where the horrible sound was coming from. Shame on me, I felt relief that I no longer had to ride so hard to salvage my dignity. Before or After, I guess all I can do is keep putting the seasons in. Someday it will just come down to Now.

FIRST BIKE TRIP

by Chris Paul



Although this is the *BMW* riders of Vancouver Island, Nigel's story of his first bike tour

on a Honda XL350 inspired me to write about my first bike tour on my 1988 Honda XL250R. I was finishing a school work term in Whistler and had a couple of weeks before school started, so I thought I might go riding for a few days. My friend Dennis had also been living in Whistler and was heading home with some free time, a learners licence, and a borrowed 1980 CB900F.

Day One, Sept. 19, 1990. We walk out of Dennis' cabin to find the 900's tank was leaking gas all over the engine. Don't panic. Hose it off and ride 8km to the only local garage. They drain it and patch it and we're ready to pack. Our equipment was rather primitive (huge sleeping bags, four-man pup tent - 9-10 pounds - sports bags and hand bags for very stylish soft bags). The idea was to stop at a friend's place in Richmond and pick up the remainder of our equipment and head out of Vancouver before rush hour.

As we chased a Porsche 911 down the Seatosky Highway we were doing well, with Dennis right behind me, until we took a hard right and his shoe tagged the pavement and his leg flew up past the tail light. We slowed down. Then every time the 900 stopped at a light it would stall. This continued to happen all

the way to Richmond. I told Dennis that I was not going to be able to carry him and the lug-

gage on the 250 if the 900 died somewhere, so he headed home and I loaded everything on the 250, just in time for rush hour.

My first and only planned destination was my aunt's in Prince George. I headed out through Mission and along the scenic north side of the Fraser. The 250 was no freeway burner. I camped at Emery Creek the first night and got an early start the next day. If you think PG is a long drive in a car, try it on an XL250. The nice thing about motorcycle touring in the fall is that you don't have to worry about where you pack your clothes. You just wear them all! After a long cloudy trip up the Fraser Canyon and 20 minutes of rain near Quesnel, I reached Prince George.

Day 3. No real destination except east. With a 200km maximum range (downhill with a tailwind) you fill up every morning. About 50km down the Yellow Head Highway I saw the sign last service for 154km. The gas station owner was not thrilled about going outside into the cool air to pump about \$1 worth of gas into my bike. The ride to McBride was sunny and cold but the autumn colours were worth it. At lunch in McBride I decided not to go through the Rockies but to head south toward Kamloops. I fuelled up again and headed east toward the turn-off. Just before the off ramp I changed my mind and went to Jasper. The elk were in rut and I witnessed an incredible battle between a pair of huge males - at a distance of 100 feet I could feel the ground shake.

Day 4. After a night of no sleep, many trains, baying elk, and freezing temperatures in a bad sleeping bag, I had breakfast on the top of Whistlers Mountain at 7400 feet. It was cloudy and I knew the ride to Banff was going to be cold. The scenery was beautiful but riding past the biggest ice cube in Canada (the Columbia Icefields) was leaving me praising my electric vest. After wiping ice, not frost but ice, off my

seat at Jasper, I decided to spend the money and stay at the Y.

Day 5. More ice on the seat and an early breakfast. Top up with fuel and oil and head for BC. Crossing the Great Divide at 1651 meters was one of the coldest days of my life. Going uphill with my left hand on the cylinder head and coasting downhill with my right hand on it. I could barely bend my knees when I reached Radium. When I had lunch in Creston I checked the map heading west. I either crossed Kootenay Lake on the ferry or took the Kootenay Pass. At 1774 meters it is the highest pass in BC and I wasn't going to get cold again that day. I spent the night at a campground on Arrow Lake with no running water and no firewood, and to top it off the toilets were locked for the winter.

Day 6. Highway 3 all the way to Hope. The Crowsnest is one of the greatest roads in BC and I have ridden it many times on the Beemer. After being cold for 5 days the 34 C in Chilliwack was a bit of a shock. By the time I got to the ferry terminal I could barely sit on the seat. The seats on the ferry were actually comfortable. I got home in the dark to end a 695km day and a 3000km 6-day trip. I met a lot of people who thought I was crazy. Since then, the rides have become more comfortable and I have met more crazy people like myself.

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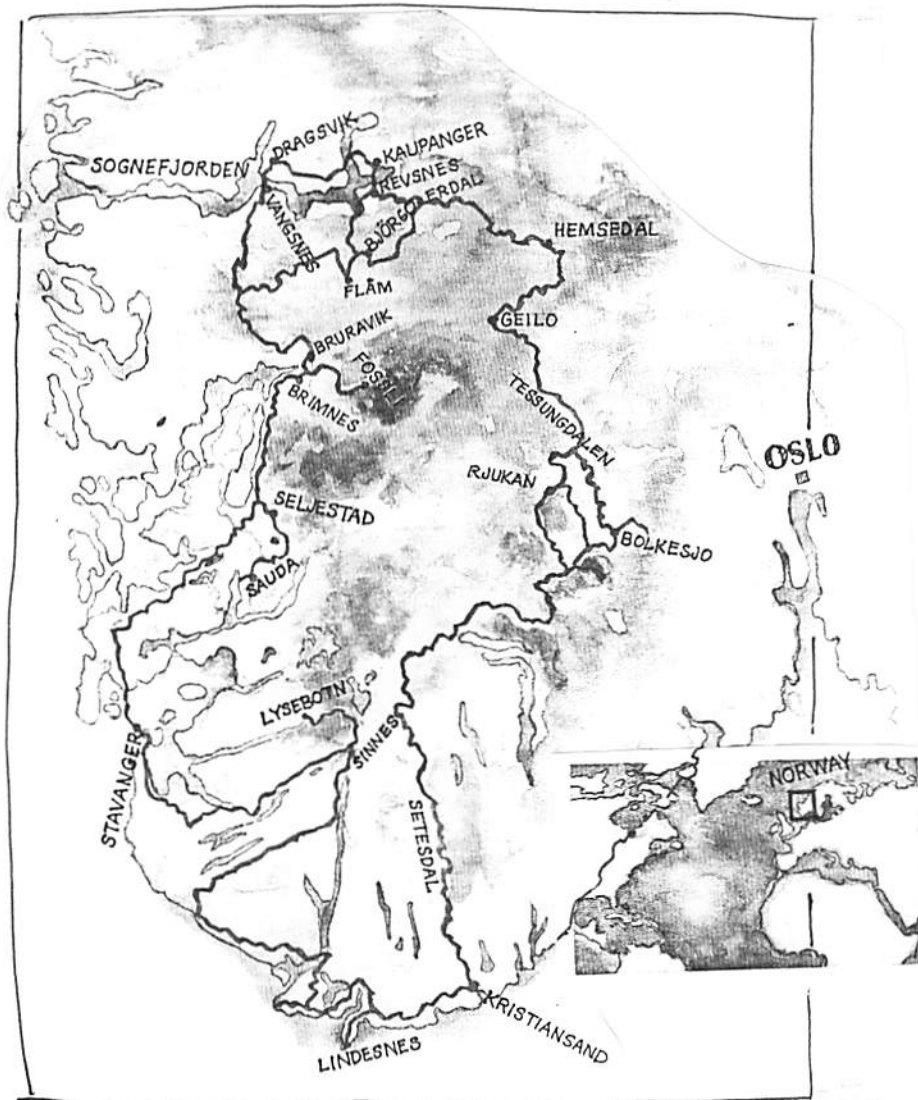


HAPPY THANKSGIVING
and
HAPPY HALLOWEEN!



NORWAY - A MOTORCYCLE DREAM

by Michael Zeigler



Early this year I got a call from Ross King (my BMW pal from Issaquah Washington) who had just been out to dinner with Helge Peterson, an adventure motorcyclist from Norway who was preparing for his next challenge - Mongolia - with Andy Goldfine of Aerostich fame. During the evening, conversation turned to the great riding in Norway, and by the time Ross got home he had made up his mind to head there in June. All he had to do was convince me, and that was dead easy.

A fax to Nordic Adventure Tours confirmed that they had a number of BMWs, including an R1100RT, R, or GS, a K75, and an F650 for the period in question, and that I could rent them exclusive of a tour. All arrangements were made in a series of faxes over several days for a fraction of the cost of one letter! Ross, who keeps a Honda ST1100 in Frankfurt (and an R1100GS here) would meet my flight in Oslo.

I chose to ride the F650, partly because it was the cheapest of the bunch but also because it has been so highly paraded in the media and is the hottest selling bike in Europe. I picked up my moto in Vennesla on a beautiful sun-drenched Sunday morning. Odd Terje (O.T.) Dovik, the owner of Nordic Adventure Tours (N.A.T.) made a special effort to open up for me and make sure I was fully conversant with the bike - which I came to nickname "tractor". He was also very helpful with planning our ride and was not the least secretive about the best motorcycle roads - al-

though as we were to find out, it's difficult to make a mistake in Norway!

The F650 is an odd looking bike with true enduro lines and a large bulbous fuel tank. It's single cylinder clunks away at anything under 4,000 rpm but it is well balanced, light and very manoeuvrable. My first ride around the N.A.T. office, surrounded by gravel and dirt, proved an excellent way to get to know the machine and to test my own limited skills. It left me feeling

comfortable - a feeling that was enhanced on the hard surface and confirmed over the length of the trip.

Norway is water in all its forms, and all are likely to be experienced by a rider. Salt water in the fjords, fresh water in the lakes, rivers and waterfalls, rain, snow and maybe ice. Good gear is therefore essential, not only for riding but also for camping, which by the way is legislated - you can camp anywhere in Norway as long as you are 100 meters from any building. Hotels are very expensive (\$150+ pp), hostels less so (\$35+ pp), with "wooden tents" - small huts with several sets of bunk beds and cooking facilities - a close third. Camping is on the bottom end of the expense schedule, at \$12+ per person. Food in all its restaurant forms is very expensive, even fast food: hamburgers for instance are about \$13.00, with a coke at \$3.00. Breakfast consists largely of pickled herring in every color, cold meats, bread and cheeses. As always be prepared for the 'great gas shock'...yes it's getting close to the better part of a \$2.00 bill per litre!!!

By the way, many have asked about the best way to get money while in Europe. My experience has narrowed down to the following" a VISA card with PIN number, and for emergency use only, \$500-\$1000 in travellers cheques. That's it - simple eh? The VISA card is all you will need, because in addition to its charging capacity - which is now almost universal - you can get cash in several ways. Firstly, you can always get a cash advance, at the current exchange rate, from any auto bank machine with the VISA symbol, night or day EVERYWHERE, for a cost of \$2.00 a withdrawal and your card's cash advance interest rate. (Sure that's 17% per annum, but for two or three weeks it's only 1.5% and much cheaper than the \$5.00-\$10.00 minimum commission you're going to pay to cash a couple of hundred dollars of travellers cheques, over and above a lousy exchange rate!) Secondly, in larger

centers you can make withdrawals directly from your account just like you do at home - it's just processed at the daily exchange rate plus a \$2.00 transaction fee. Trust me, it's sooo much more convenient and simple.

Norway, with a land mass roughly equal to California, is sparsely populated with just over four million people, most of whom live near the large centers. As a result, most of the roads are deserted - the biggest hazards are the sheep and cows. Speed limits are set at 80-90 kph with automatic three-week suspensions for speeds 40% above the posted limit - that could ruin your vacation eh! Fortunately during the trip we saw only one police car and we were averaging 300km per day.

Road conditions vary depending on the road, from smooth and fast on the toll roads (motorcycles are exempt from the tolls) to rough and bumpy frost-chewed tarmac on the single lane roads winding through the mountains. Needless to say, the only roads that saw much of us were the winding mountain roads. Picture, for a moment, the twisty 20-minute section of Gillespie Road - make it climb 2,000 or so meters and then descend with hairpin switchbacks, add stupendous mountain and fjord views as well as sunshine that lasts till 11PM, repeat this hour after hour and day after day, and you've pretty much got the picture. It's about as perfect as it comes.

Our 14-day tour began in the south of Norway and edged north and west in relatively short linear distances. That is to say, we went nowhere in a straight line fast but everywhere in twisted zig zags as fast as we could.

Up the lovely Setesdal valley surrounded by pine and aspen in hot sunshine we climbed into the Tessungdalen, where we were cooled by the wind off glacial ice. Temperature range gone crazy in a landscape that changes to moon-

scape at 1,600 meters - first warm, then cold... then nothing but snow and rock and a road that winds forever between them...then darkness. Eleven kilometres of darkness (11.4km to be exact) of the unlit Gudvanga tunnel that opens to the most vibrant blue fjord you've ever seen . You guessed it! There are hundreds of tunnels in Norway, most of which are very narrow and unlit.

Hugging the landscape, we completed our circle route by turning south through Bergen and Stavanger to Lysebotn fjord. From 2,000 meters we marvelled at the turquoise water, could not imagine how anyone could construct a road that could take you down such a steep vertical drop... then careened down through around 30 hairpin bends, with the last of them in a single lane, unlit tunnel - now that's a rush! In fact we had so much fun we turned around and did it three more times.

Norway - terrifying majestic dimensions in a pure clean landscape.

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BUY AND SELL

FOR SALE:

1972 BMW R75/5 (toaster). Restored, with hard bags, windshield, spare parts. Candy apple red. Collector plates. \$5900. John Bardsley 656-9660.

1972 Triumph Trophy T100C (high piper). Restored, collector plates. \$5900. John Bardsley 656-9660.

1977 R100/7, \$4200. Hermann Schaefer, 642-5006.

Parts For Sale:

Set brake pads to fit recent R bike, EBC #861 bought at Shail's, \$40;

Oil filter socket for K bike, Hazet 2169, \$10;
 2 into 1 exhaust for R bike, \$50;

Oil filter, long hinge type, 11-42-1-337-575 \$2 each or trade for short ones.

Dave Linkletter, 1-604-743-1633

Parts/Consultation

Looking for parts for 1970's machines? Unable to get parts in Canada and loathe to pay the exchange in the States? Or just need some general consultation? Roger Godlonton has found a resource person in Calgary who has 20 years experience working on pre-80's BMWs. His name is **Brock Downey**, and he is willing to address the above questions. He has contacts in Germany, so he can help get those hard to find parts. Give him a call at 403-278-2892.