



THE

BEEMER

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EDITORIAL

By **Brian Radford**

Please note the change of venue for the Sunday breakfast on 3rd October. The breakfast convenes at the usual time of 0930 but the site is Mary's Bleue Moon Café, 9535 Canora Road at the east side of the Airport. Thanks, Colleen for the "Heads up". Nobody should be meeting at the Blue Peter. It is the Bleue Moon that we want. However, this member of RVI won't be at the breakfast, as unless we are snowbound I'm headed to Last Chance to Camp and Ride as hosted by our friends of the Valley Riders Club, so I'll be at Oroville, maybe on Friday 1st October, more certainly on Saturday the 2nd, and unless the conditions are absolutely horrible I plan to use the tent as my domicile for the last time in 2010.

The 20th Anniversary of the RVI was a great party thanks to the hardy souls that camped in the rain at Sayward. Thanks even to the less hardy that were ensconced in drier but less sociable quarters in the Fisher Boy Motel. I'd like to go back to Sayward when in sunnier surroundings, but we did have a good time. My personal highlight was the Anniversary cake of which by default I was chosen as the most ancient attendant to get the first piece. My cut was crooked but delicious and there was lots left for the rest of you, I hope.

The October issue contains a thoughtful article from Derrick Ward, wherein quite a few strings resonate from my own (figurative but not actual) guitar. I, too, stopped along the Moha Road to watch the First Nations people fishing at the Bridge River confluence with the Fraser. It might have been the same lady giving a patient and courteous explanation regarding the picturesque activity. (My photographs were also figurative and not actual). Also on these pages is another welcome offering from the ever facile pen of Geoff Stevenson. Keep this good stuff coming, ladies and gentlemen. We are well aware that the non-riding season looms large so we really need lots more interesting accounts of motorcycle events, adventures and insights to span the gap. Ride happy and we hope you will have enjoyed the Port Renfrew Loop ride on Sunday, 26 September, which will be history by the time you read this.

Cheers **Brian**

**SUN. OCT. 3, MARY'S BLEUE MOON CAFÉ
BREAKFAST 9:30 AM 9535 CANORA RD.**

THE BOOK**by Derrick Ward**

Each time we ride our motorcycles we add a page to our book of riding memories. Over time these pages organize themselves into chapters with headings like: Memorable Corners... “that downhill decreasing radius sweeper where I nailed the line from beginning to end”. Or, Transcendent Scenery... “the high desert in Oregon near Shaniko on a turbulent early June day”. Or, The Bike Running Perfectly... “carb’s balanced, new Avons, rev’s at the sweet spot, clipping the apexes of endless esses on Duffy Lake”. Or, People Met on the Road... “the happy Japanese rider donning rain gear pointing at the gloomy sky and repeating “rain, rain” one of his few words of English”.

But, buried in the book of memories is a darker chapter, the Near Misses. These are incomplete, unresolved memories. These are the “what if” memories. What if my front tire had not re-gained grip on that damp downhill left hander in California, what if the SUV driver talking on his cell phone had not re-connected with reality an instant before turning left into my path, what if there was a car in the oncoming lane when I ran wide? Returning from the Hotsprings Rally last month I met up with Ernie Reigle at the Hydro campground outside Lillooet. The showers we had we had encountered on our separate ways from Nakusp cleared up and we spent a comfortable night even though the site I had picked was downwind of the loo. In the morning Ernie agreed with my suggestion that we divert over to the Bridge River road just to have a look see before tackling Duffy Lake and heading home. We rode some very nice twisties to the end of pavement and agreed that further exploration was warranted when we had more time and were prepared for off pavement riding. As we approached Lillooet on the return we stopped and watched the local First Nations folk harvesting and wind drying sockeye from the Fraser using the traditional dip net technique. The power of witnessing this gathering of winter food using methods established hundreds of years ago was not diminished by the blue plastic tarps and orange snow fencing much in evidence. The basics were still intact and we appreciated the learning more from a lady passing by who took the time to answer questions and point out details.

Then it was off to that fabled pathway, the Duffy Lake Road. Almost immediately the pattern of the ride was established. Four lumbering motor homes blocked any sort of reasonable progress. After disposing of them we encountered more and the ride degenerated into a choppy exercise of “catch and pass”. Occasionally the way forward would be clear for a few clicks and we would try to set up a sporting pace and rhythm. On one such respite I approached an “open” right hander, rock wall to the left, drop off to the right, with a slightly downhill approach somewhat obscured by trees. I set up for a wide, late apex approach and had the bike laid over, committed to the line when I was startled to see that subsidence in the road surface had created a significant bump, one I did not want to hit while leaned over. I immediately stood the bike up and found myself in the oncoming lane. The corner exit was to the left and downhill so I had little opportunity to see if there was oncoming traffic. Thankfully there was none, but “what if?”

I have given much thought to the question. Clearly, the official line would be that I was going too fast for the conditions. I’ll grant that, it’s a character flaw. But, what if I had not reacted as I did and had hit the bump while laid over? Would the bike have been chucked on its side? What if there had been oncoming traffic as I approached the turn? Would I have instinctively slowed slightly, “put a little in the bank” and been more able to cope with the road surface on my side of the line? What if a car had suddenly appeared while I was on the wrong side? Who knows, I got lucky. But luck when it comes to survival is way at the bottom of the list, a fool’s panacea.

This is another page in the dark chapter that will be tucked away with a page marker for easy access. It is the recollection of these incidents and the learning from them that constitutes “experience”. I hope not to gain too much more, at least not that way.

At lunch in Pemberton, I asked Ernie if he had seen my bobble. He, being much occupied with his own ride, had not. Damn, I shouldn’t have admitted it!

RIDING THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED**By Geoff Stevenson**

The plan had been to take six or seven days, avoid the interstates, ride as far south as Baker City, OR., and spend a night there in the restored Geiser Grand Hotel, which once promoted itself as the finest accommodations between St. Louis and Seattle.

In fact, the plan was abandoned after two days (more on this later), but Chris Jones and I covered just over 1,800km in mid-September - only about 20km of which was on the superslab. We found lots of roads less travelled - and visited such major centres as Inchelium, Starbuck, Royal City and Dodge.

We caught the 0700 ferry from Swartz Bay and took Highway 3 to Princeton. Our Highways Ministry keeps trying to straighten out this road (I remember it back to the late 60s; it was more fun then), but it's still a fine ride.

The theory was that, by leaving after Labour Day, we'd encounter fewer RVs on the road and this seemed to be mostly true. (Our other theory - that motels would be cheaper by then - didn't seem to work so well).

After an unscheduled detour in Osoyoos (which included an illegal left turn right in front of the RCMP detachment - fortunately, without apprehension), we stopped for a cup of tea in Greenwood and were soon in Grand Forks and settled in at Johnny's Motel.

This is run by Nicky and Clive. Because he's a Brit, they flew B.C. and Canadian flags outside - plus the Union Jack. Our neat and tidy unit had a new bathroom and the place was full. With taxes, we paid \$83. Walking into town for supper, we passed the Imperial Motel, with just one car in the parking lot and wondered what rate we could have negotiated there.

Nicky had told us about the Twisted Tomato restaurant for breakfast next day - and gave us a coupon promising 10 per cent off. This was excellent value on Highway 3 a couple of clicks west of the downtown core.

All meals are baked, rather than fried; we each chose an omelette and these came piping hot in a cast iron skillet. Coffee was free and for \$6.95 each, we had our best breakfast of the trip. Cheapest, too.

We crossed into the Excited States at Danville, WA. This is a modest border post; perhaps if there had been more traffic our interrogation would have been briefer. The (female) border guard wanted to see bike registration papers as well as passport. Then followed a string of questions about firearms, alcohol, drugs (Chris had to explain the prescription drugs he was carrying), money over \$10,000 (I wish!), length of stay, etc., etc. There must be something about Danville: Last time I was there the (male) guard asked me whether I was carrying anything except gasoline in my gas tank!

We headed south on Washington Highway 21, a lovely ride in a sun-dappled river valley. At Republic we headed east on Highway 20 and over Sherman Pass (5,575 feet). This is a great track, with new pavement most of the way and we made good time.

You can cross Roosevelt Lake (the Columbia River restrained by the Coulee Dam) by bridge just west of Kettle Falls, but we rode down the west side of the lake to Inchelium and took the Columbia Princess ferry east to Gifford and Highway 25. The ferry was free for us, if not for Washington state taxpayers.

Now we slanted south and east, spending the night in Clarkston, WA. We found a Motel 6 with its typical compact but clean room for less than \$60 and began to explore the neighbourhood on foot.

Tomato Brothers, which shared the Motel 6 parking lot, had half-price beer during Happy Hour and we were right on schedule. Both Washington and Oregon have a wide selection of microbreweries; I tried four or five IPAs from different brewers on the trip and they were uniformly excellent.

(Incidentally, those of who think that, say, Budweiser and Labatt Blue are pretty forgettable beers are cheered to know that in both Canada and the US, the big breweries are slowly losing market share to the microbrews).

We'd had two days of dry roads and temperatures in the high 20s, but the Weather Network was warning us now that a change was coming. We enjoyed happy hour and Mexican food for supper and agreed we'd check the forecast again on the morning.

Thursday morning dawned damp and foggy and checking the 10-day forecasts online at Weather.com confirmed that it was likely to rain most of the way to Baker City - and most of the way home. Neither of us fancied a 1,300km ride home in the wet, so we agreed we'd head home now - and try the Geiser Grand another day.

We headed west on Highway 12, then turned northwest through the rich farmland south of Moses Lake and were soon in Ellensburg. The morning gave us the only drama of the trip (I always reckon the best rides are entirely non-eventful!) as I came around one corner to find the highway blocked by a hay trailer.

The pavement was damp, but I stopped in plenty of time. The farmer, who was towing a 20-odd-foot trailer behind a pickup and was almost in the ditch making the tight turn out of his hayfield, waved embarrassingly as we rode around the back of the trailer and continued west.

We were now on Highway 261 and heading for Starbuck. This is a typical rural town, with abandoned buildings rotting away and hard times all around. Son Brad and I had eaten breakfast at Huwe's Cafe there a couple of years ago. But now it's closed and for sale. (No, I don't believe there's a link between the town and the coffee company).

Lunch was in Royal City, after we'd ridden past a few thousand hay bales; bins of rosy red and freshly-picked red apples; and many acres of recently harvested wheat, barley, oats and corn. These are often big farms, with eight-wheel drive tractors (complete with air-conditioning and GPS systems).

Royal City was obviously a centre for Mexican migrant farm workers. We saw just two restaurants, both serving you know what. After two attempts, Chris is still waiting for the fish soup he ordered. He picked away at the bean plate that came instead, but my grilled tilapia was fine.

It seemed clear that the waitress' English skills were less developed than we'd thought - even though we ordered by pointing at the illustrations on the wall, and Chris clearly asked for *numero uno*.

Royal City is not far from Vantage, where I90 crosses the Columbia. We used the same bridge, but got off the interstate on the other side and rode to Ellensburg on Highway 115, which offers an excellent view of the Wild Horse Wind Farm, run by Puget Sound Energy.

We stopped to admire a few dozen wind generators whirring away and could have ridden as quickly as on the super slab a few kilometres to the south if we'd chosen.

(For you technical types, the farm has 127 1.8 megawatt turbines spread over 8,600 acres).

The roads remained dry and we figured we'd press on to Leavenworth, on the theory that, if it was going to rain seriously on the Friday, the closer we were to home, the better.

The Obertal Inn put us up for \$99 (but this included breakfast) and we were soon off the bikes and scrubbed up in search of more cheap beer during happy hour. Leavenworth visitors presumably have deeper pockets than in Clarkston, since we found no bargain libations.

Dinner that night was a low point. You don't want to know ALL the details; suffice it to say that the waitress brought the wrong bottle of wine (she had opened the bottle and poured two glasses before we spotted her mistake; it turned out that the Columbia Crest Shiraz I'd ordered was not available, but Chris chose a Red Diamond Cabernet replacement and this was fine).

The waitress (no makeup, loud voice and perhaps 30 pounds overweight) then proceeded to talk down the dessert choices - and suggest we go around the corner for the next course. I doubt she'll be there much longer.

The weather forecast remained pessimistic, so we donned rainsuits as we left Leavenworth. But we flew up Stevens Pass in mostly sunny weather and drying pavement and were soon headed into Mukilteo.

Our timing was perfect here, since we rode straight onto the Whitbey Island ferry and were soon in Langley for lunch. This is a charming little town with some elegant old buildings. We also found the Langley Cafe, where the Tuscan bean soup and Greek salad was excellent.

We talked for a while to a glass blower operating out of an old fire hall. We watched him blow a colourful conch shell and admired his many skills. I doubt there are many Republican voters hereabouts in what is a pretty sophisticated little village (a number of interesting B&Bs, too, but I doubt they're cheap).

We stopped again in Coupeville, another tourist attraction with a variety of heritage B&Bs, good restaurants - and a 200-foot-long wharf that offered a fine view of Mount Baker, poking through the low clouds.

Since we had lots of time and the rain held off, we stopped again at the Deception Pass bridge for more photos. This links Whidbey and Fidalgo Islands and we were soon in Anacortes.

This is one of my favorite small towns (wife Anita and I have been there dozens of times over the years on a succession of boats) and I knew Chris would enjoy the Rockfish Grill.

But first, of course, there was happy hour and we had another tasty and affordable mini-pub crawl. Blind luck got us to the Rockfish just before it started to fill up; 15 minutes after we sat down the place was jammed and they were lined up 25-deep out to the sidewalk. Chris enjoyed six beers with his ribs - but they were only 2-3oz. tasters! (I stuck to the IPA).

By Saturday morning the promised wet weather had arrived and we rode to the Washington State ferry terminal just after 0700 in light rain. It was foggy, too, and our ferry trip to Sidney was made in part at reduced speed - and with regular mournful blasts of the ferry's foghorn.

Canada Customs was its usual civilized self: The officer looked at my passport, filed the customs card I'd filled in on the ferry, said "Welcome home" - and didn't ask a single question! The contrast with Danville couldn't have been greater.

I'm confident we'll get to Baker City and the Geiser next year. But, as a down payment, we had some fine riding (and clearly made the right decision when we agreed to short-circuit this trip after just two days).



The road less travelled: Some of the curves in southeastern Washington.

Photo by Geoff Stevenson

WEBSITE FOR ADVANCED RIDER TRAINING COURSES

www.advancedridertraining.ca

Advanced Rider Training Course: October 29-31st

CLUB CONTACTS:

THIS LIST ENABLES YOU TO: submit articles or ideas for future issues of Beemer Reader, pay your dues of \$15, order club clothing, and borrow books and DVD's.

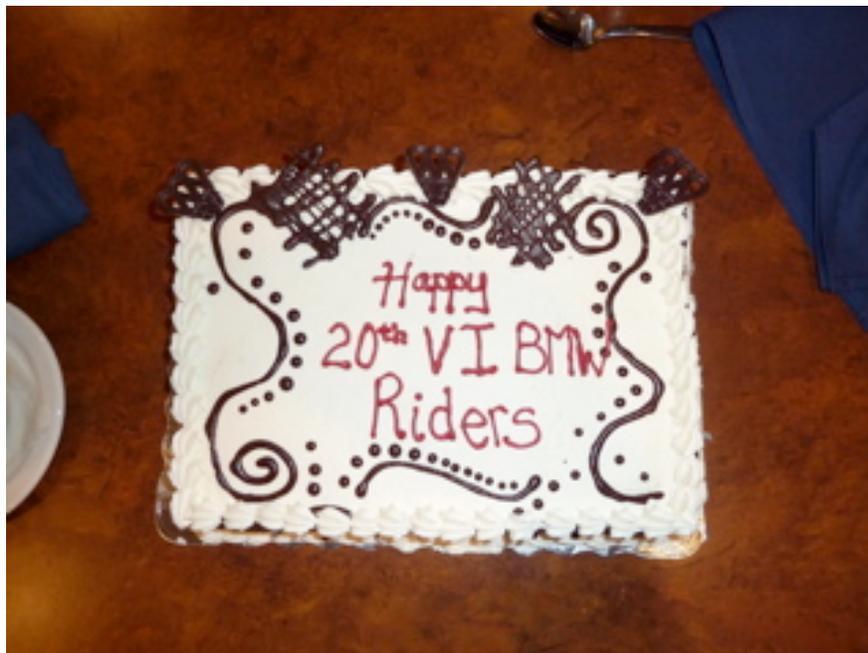
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CLUB RIDE SCHEDULE 2010

Date	Event	Location	Type	Organizer
Oct 1-3 Fri-Sun	Last Chance to camp & ride	Osoyoos Lake State Park Oroville WA	Campout	Valley Riders , Pres. Ron Wiebe
Oct 3 Sunday	Monthly Gathering	Mary's Bleue Moon	Breakfast	Colleen Barnes
Nov 6 Saturday	Monthly Gathering	Chequered Flag	Breakfast	Klaus Kreye
**Nov ? Saturday	Annual Meeting	TBD	Meeting	Klaus Kreye
Dec 5 Sunday	Monthly gathering	Chequered Flag	Breakfast	Klaus Kreye

Issued 20 June 2010

Please notice that the Annual Meeting has been changed to November – date & time to be announced in the November Beemer Reader



Anniversary Cake at the Gun & Rod Restaurant