

RIDE REPORT
NEW JERSEY MOTORSPORTS PARK AHRMA ROAD RACES
& VINTAGE SWAP MEET, JULY 15-16 2017





We are a group of 6, including 4 riders and one sidecar passenger. Riders choose the Moto Morini 500, the Harley XLCR, the Yamaha RD400, and the Triumph Bonneville, according to their individual tastes and desires. I will drive the EML/BMW R100 sidecar outfit.





Andy Powell (PA), Rob McMenamem (PA), James Dulude (MA), Ed and Liz Richmond (PA)

To get into Jersey, we must cross the Delaware Memorial Bridge; not exactly a back road, but we jump off at the first exit and are immediately transported to the hinterlands of New Jersey's undiscovered west coast. This undeveloped area, famous for farming and bivalve extraction, borders the eastern shore of the Delaware River all the way to the Delaware Bay, then rounds Cape May to the open Atlantic. Towns like Shellpile, Bayside and Sea Breeze promise quiet glimpses into history, but first we pass through Pennsville and Salem, then stop at the Hancock House which guards Hancock's Bridge. During the Revolutionary War, while Washington's troops camped for the winter in Valley Forge, a massacre took place here. Thousands of troops needed a steady supply of food which came from fertile South Jersey farmlands via a steady train of horse drawn wagons, every one of which crossed Alloway Creek. The Hancock House guarded this bridge and was often used for overnight shelter by travelers and American Militia men. British troops entered the house late one night and bayoneted 15 men and women in their sleep to gain control of this strategic bridge.

On March 20, 1778, Mawhood issued the following mandate to his British troops:

“Go - spare no one - put all to death- give no quarters.” At approximately five o’clock in the morning of March 21, 1778, these orders were carried out. With local Tories (British Loyalists) and their slaves acting as guides, Major John Graves Simcoe and approximately 300 troops attacked the Hancock House where they knew the local militia was stationed. Everyone inside was bayoneted; not a shot was fired. Among the 10 killed and five wounded, was Judge William Hancock. He died several days later.”



Fancy brickwork is topped by the initials of Sarah and William Hancock and the date: 1734

The day is warming quickly and after a short tour of the house we are back on our bikes and on the road again. We cruise at a relaxed pace, enjoying the warmth, passing through massive peach orchards and arriving, after 80 miles, to the ultra-modern complex that is the New Jersey Motorsports Park. We enjoy free entry in return for RetroTours' support of the event, thanks to the kindness of the promoters. We also enjoy luxury accommodations in an air- conditioned condo which borders the racetrack, thanks to the kindness of my neighbors Mike and Kristie Taylor, who lend the condo to RetroTours. The back deck is mere yards from one of the track's longest turns; we can spectate in comfort, beer in hand. Our entry includes full access to the pits, which is the way things are done in the American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association (AHRMA). We refresh and ride into the pits/swap meet area, then park next to a bunch of cool looking vintage bikes. We meander around the swap meet and pit area, checking out race equipment and the racers, who are happy to chat. When we regroup at our bikes, we are in for a big surprise: unknowingly, we have parked in the area used for judging the vintage bike show, and several of our bikes have been entered in the competition.



In addition to the racing, there was some real competition in the vintage bike show, including a very nice Benelli 900 Sei (at upper left), a BSA Gold Star (left), a /2 BMW with 'Beetle Bags' (behind Gold Star), and the beautiful Harley pictured above.

Not sure about that 'kickstand; on the HD though.

Other interesting bikes seen in the show and in the pits included:



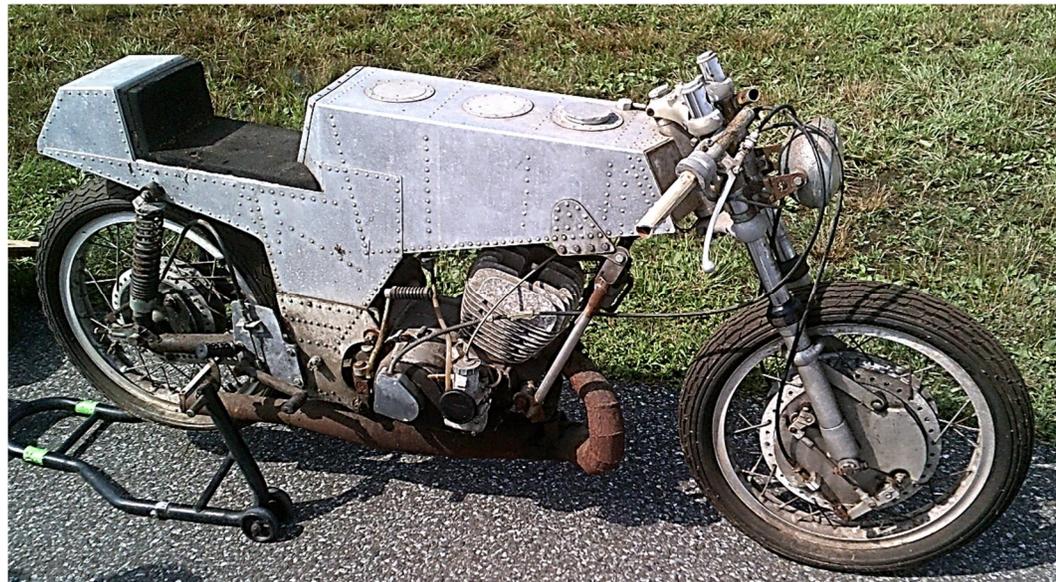
Left: a Ducati café racer with an unusual exhaust system; *a welder's worst nightmare.*



Right: a Suzuki T500 project with expansion chambers; *surely an extreme environmental hazard/smoking racket.*



Left: a lovely CBX with custom exhaust system; when he revved it up for us and dogs in the next county began to whine: *real six shooter exhaust.*



Above: an incredible barn-find displayed in the pits: a Kawasaki Bighorn monocoque framed road racer from the 70's. This one-off ultra-lightweight rotary valve two stroke was quite competitive and technologically advanced with its handmade, riveted aluminum monocoque chassis which incorporated the fuel tank. I hope it gets restored and raced again. *Simply awesome!*



It seems odd to me, but for some reason, electric road racers get track time at AHRMA events. Most of them are branded Energica, but this maverick is running a Zero-based machine. They circulate in eerie, near total silence.



A group of Canadian engineering students is on hand with their electric entry. Their team spirit and uniform garb are unequalled in the pits. Such enthusiasm! Ah, youth.

We watch some close racing, eat track food for lunch, and enjoy getting mildly sunburned. When we return to our bikes for departure the vintage bike show awards are being handed out. We are delighted and stunned that several of our bikes have won awards. We didn't even know the bikes had been entered!



Best
XLCR?



Best
wife?



James chose the Bonneville and so did the judges.

Back at the condo we refresh in air-conditioned comfort for a bit before walking to the trackside restaurant for a decent meal. After the feast, a few of us return to the pits where motorcycle-themed movies are being shown outdoors; the atmosphere is very laid back and party-like. What a perfect way to spend a summer evening! When we return to the condo, the remaining RetroTours riders are being entertained by Dave Roper, a well-known racer who has stopped by after spotting our bikes parked out front. Dave has some stories to tell, spanning several decades, and he loves nothing better than to share his fascinating international racing exploits.

It feels good to get a good night's sleep. We are up early Sunday morning and back on the road after coffee and muffins, heading south from Millville to jump on board the Lewes-Cape May Ferry. The 90-minute cruise is a delight; warm sunshine bracketing the playful dolphins in our wake. Brunch on board is none too shabby. We disembark on the Delaware side and pick up Old Route 9, no longer the popular shore route, but perfect for our purposes. We pull into the Dover Air Force Base to check out the Air Mobility Command Museum.



In line to board the ferry on Sunday morning.



An airplane big enough to hold 6 Greyhound busses!



An unscheduled gas



Relaxing on board the ferry



After gawking at and climbing aboard vintage aircraft for a while, we head back onto Route 9 for 35 delightful, traffic-free miles, weaving through phragmites reeds, flying over hump back bridges, following the west banks of the Delaware River.

We have covered 190 trouble-free miles in 2 days of easy riding; a relaxing time, though we have managed to include some history, some racing, an ocean cruise, much good company, classic aircraft, and a couple of take home trophies. I am looking forward to NJMP/AHRMA next year....

....AND I THINK YOU SHOULD JOIN US!



**Smiles all around. Cold beer and hot food waiting inside.
A weekend to remember.**