

LOCAL LOOPS, July 1ST, 2018

First up, here is a Google review written by Nolan, one of the participants, after this ride:

"Ever been at a motorcycle show, thinking how you'd love to ride an old Triumph or Ducati or Enfield? Here's the answer to that dream! Ride old bikes out on the open road. This is no gentle parade route where you never get out of second gear. You are *riding*! If it's raining, you're wet. Hot, you're sweating. The bikes are real riders, not pristine show queens. Transmissions clunk, engines act up, if the shifter is reversed you have to learn it. Wonderful! Want to live out a multi-day ride? He does them. Can only do a day? He does those too. You can find a ride to fit you and your schedule and wallet. Joel, the owner, rides with you. He's not in an air-conditioned chase vehicle, he's riding an old bike in the same weather as you. In fact, there is no chase vehicle. If a bike acts up, it must be dealt with. Cool! Just like the old days. Joel is darn good at keeping these bikes going and working it out when they act up. He also doesn't treat himself specially. If the night is at a flophouse, that's where he's staying too. I've done two rides with RetroTours so far and will do more in the future. I'm riding bikes I would otherwise never ride. Banging gears, eating bugs, swooping through turns. This is heaven for a rider like me. If you too are a rider, it'll be heaven for you as well. I can't recommend Joel and his Retro Tours enough. Get out there and ride! "

Thanks Nolan. (I think it was worth the \$1,000 that I paid him to write it—LOL.) Nolan and his friend Dwight have written extensively about their RetroTours. Just search under RetroTours at ADV Rider.

Local Loops was 135 miles through the Brandywine Valley, broken into a half dozen short loops. Riders were served a continental breakfast, an authentic Mexican lunch, and a banquet style gourmet dinner. There were 6 riders, one sidecar passenger, and me; 6 classic bikes and one sidecar rig. All the riders were able to sample as many of the bikes as they wished, and even got to try piloting the sidecar rig in a wide-open parking lot. The day was brutally hot and humid, with temperatures approaching triple digits. We consumed 16 bottles of water, 6 granola bars, and 12 bottles of Gatorade. No crashes, some minor maintenance issues, and one injury: a bruised toe. I think everyone had a good time, judging from the fact that I had to throw them out about an hour after dinner. All except Chuck from Brooklyn, who rode down and was staying overnight. Liz, the sidecar passenger, and Cameron, one of the riders, took it upon themselves to document the day photographically, so I will let their pictures do the talking.

Seven bikes were rolled out of the climate-controlled garage at 7:30 AM, into the hot, hazy, humid morning:

1976 Moto Guzzi 850T3

1976 Yamaha RD400

1974 Kawasaki KZ750

1970 Triumph T100C

1979 Moto Morini 500 Strada

1971 BSA 650 Lightning

1977 BMW R100S/RT/EML



The two oldest bikes, both Brits: the Triumph and the BSA, would suffer the most from the heat. Being British, I'm sure they would have preferred a cool, rainy day.



Nolan and Cameron rode here, on a Harley and a Honda, respectively. After discussing procedures during breakfast, we went over control location and starting techniques and rolled out just after 9 AM.



Our first stop was next to Smiths Bridge, close to Granogue, the Dupont estate. The riverside parking lot was unusually full of folks seeking relief from the heat by floating down stream on bloated inner tubes. Liz grabbed these excellent shots from the moving sidecar. Well done!





On the following loop, the BSA refused to idle consistently, then became hard to re-start. The group became slightly fractured as a result. We stopped here to regroup; it was the only shade to be found. The heat was becoming oppressive.



35 miles to the second stop: a shady spot next to a cool creek. Drinks and snacks all around. Time to talk and bond. Bike swapping is a major topic of discussion.

Chuck won't let anyone near the T100C, despite it's being a bit cantankerous in the heat. Later, his right big toe gets bruised somehow, and he willingly switches to the KZ750 with left side shifting.



At some point, the discussion begins to turn towards lunch which is at the end of the next 35-mile loop.



Above: left to right: Chuck, Cameron, Dwight, Nolan, Joel
Below: Scott (who wouldn't give up the RD) and Ed. Liz is behind the camera.



Kennett Square is renowned for authentic Mexican food and La Pena Mexicana always delivers big. Horchatta and big smiles all around.



After lunch, we make a 25-mile loop to a small park just across the border in Delaware. The T100C is really acting up, and Chuck (center) is eyeing the left shift, electric start KZ750 longingly, after trying to bump start the Triumph with the ignition switched off. Didn't work, necessitating a long uphill push. We 'tailgated' off the sidecar at each stop; here, above left, Dwight digs for water.

Next to last stop, at a preserve back in PA, and Scott is looking slightly worse for wear. The final short leg takes us to the high school parking lot for a short course in Sidecar Driving 101.





Cameron records.



Chuck rests in the shade.



ABOVE: Nolan (center) hates driving the sidecar.

Cameron (right) loves sidecars. He has one.

Ed (left) is not yet sure. His wife Liz prefers the chair to the pillion seat.

Joel appears to be having second thoughts about his training methodology.





That's Liz, main photographer and sidecar ballast weight. Thanks for the pix! A short ride home follows, where Lynn has the AC cranked up and a fabulous home cooked meal waiting. Beers too. MMMM Beer. Here's the dessert:

