

FENDER BENDERS CUSTOM TOUR. SATURDAY JUNE 8, 2019



The group formally known as the British/European Interest Group, now known as the Fender Benders, arranged for this custom tour. Over the years they have joined a RetroTour several times. This time *they* picked the day, the bikes, and the distance. 'The Pinnacles' is one of my favorite local rides, it fit the distance requested, and The Fender Benders had not been there before. Eight riders signed up, down a bit from previous years, then one cancelled for health reasons, so seven Benders plus me: we were a group of eight. Bikes were chosen to honor requests as much as possible:



Parked up for lunch at the John Wright Restaurant. Left to right:

1970 Triumph T100C

1979 Moto Morini 500 Strada

1973 Norton Commando 750 Fastback

1974 BMW R90/6

1976 Moto Guzzi 850T3

1976 Honda GL1000

1976 Yamaha RD400

1983 Suzuki GS550ES (behind BMW)

With 2 British bikes, 2 Italian, 3 Japanese, and 1 German motorcycle, surely this assortment represented the classic era. Riders were free to swap bikes at will throughout the day; some did, others preferred not to. Breakfast was scheduled for 8:30 on Sunday morning, and everyone arrived on time which pleased my wife Lynn, a very punctual person. We feasted on the buffet that she had prepared, sifting through paperwork and procedures while eating and drinking coffee. This was made especially easy since most everyone had been before. Next, it was down to the garage to get familiar with the bikes. Chris had asked about the CB400F for his wife Kathleen, but Lynn sold it a while back. I prepared the GS550ES, thinking it would be equally suitable, but Kathleen surprised me by choosing to ride the T100C, a kickstart only, right side shifter machine, which she mastered by the end of the day.

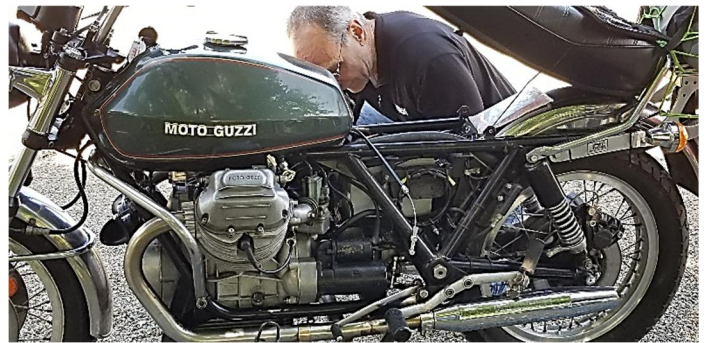


Downstairs after breakfast I went over each machine with its rider. The weather was especially favorable: warm, and not a chance of rain; rain suits were left at home. In particular the starting procedure for kickstart only bikes was demonstrated, as some of the riders were near the bottom of the learning curve for kickstarting big bore twins. It didn't take long for



these experienced riders to learn the technique and we were soon on our way, heading north and west on small, lightly travelled roads. We stopped for a short break at the birth-place of Robert (steamboat) Fulton and took a few extra minutes to tend to the

Moto Guzzi 850T3; the clutch cable had all but broken, only 2 or 3 strands remained. All the RetroTours bikes carry spare clutch and throttle cables and a repair was soon completed.



Another 15 miles had us at The Pinnacles, where we took advantage of the available port-a-potties and admired an aerial view of the Susquehanna River. A further 25 miles up curvy River Road, following the east bank of the river, brought us to Columbia, PA where we crossed the over on the Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge, famous for once being the longest covered



bridge in the world—over a mile long—and instrumental in stopping the Confederate Army from advancing on Harrisburg after they conquered York. The Union soldiers set the bridge on fire, then blew it up for good measure, ending the advance of the rebel army. Today, the bridge is the longest of its type still: constructed this time from 26 preformed concrete arches and stretching across the river like some grand boulevard.



On the Wrightsville side there is a Sunday buffet brunch restaurant located in a very old silk factory right at the base of the bridge. Lunch was included in this tour package and we feasted while discussing old bikes and lying about how fast we once were. From the parking lot, the view of the bridge was quite fetching; enough so that some young couple decided that this was the ideal spot to tie the matrimonial knot.

The weather was still perfect as we left the restaurant. We stopped to gas up and rode about 8 or 9 miles to find dessert and amusement at The Haines Shoe House. The story goes that young Mr. Haines had been jilted by his fiancé and was travelling from Chicago to Washington DC by bicycle to see his mother. The bike broke near York, PA and the young traveler sold his engagement ring to raise cash with which he bought a bunch of shoes. These he pedaled to Amish farmers in the area and did so well that he decided to roll the dice again and re-invested in more shoes. He did so well, selling door to door, that he eventually opened over 50 retail outlets and became a millionaire, which was a big deal in those days. He had a property next to US Route 30 and for promotional purposes, had The Shoe House built. Today it is a roadside attraction and ice cream is sold under the arch of the shoe.



Chris and Kathleen took a selfie at The Haines Shoe House.

After ice cream we followed the west bank of the Susquehanna south, back towards home. On the way we stopped at the Indian Steps Museum, a very out-of-the-way place. A wealthy Dutchman in days of old had it built as a summer retreat and lodge of sorts. We were getting a little tired at this point but still had a few miles to go, including a run through scenic 'Peach Bottom' along the Conowingo Reservoir. Finally, we passed through Rising Sun, Maryland and ran east for 25 miles or so before popping back into PA at Lewisville. From the border, it was a short hop home for a celebratory home cooked meal, more bench racing, and final farewells.



It's hard not to smile when the weather is this good, not to mention the bikes and the company of like-minded individuals.



THE FENDER BENDERS (Left to right): Mirek Filipek, Hubert Kojer, Jacek Szymak, Kathleen Jones, Peter Badgio, Chris Jones, Tomasz Szymak.