

RIDE REPORT: THE PINNACLES; **NOT** JUNE 16TH, 2023-----rather, the 23RD.

Fred: 1976 Honda CB550K2. Ed: 1983 Suzuki GS550ES. Joel & Liz: 1977 BMW R100S/RS/EML.
Nico: 1984 Moto Guzzi V65SP

A quote from the final confirmation email sent out 10 days before each ride:

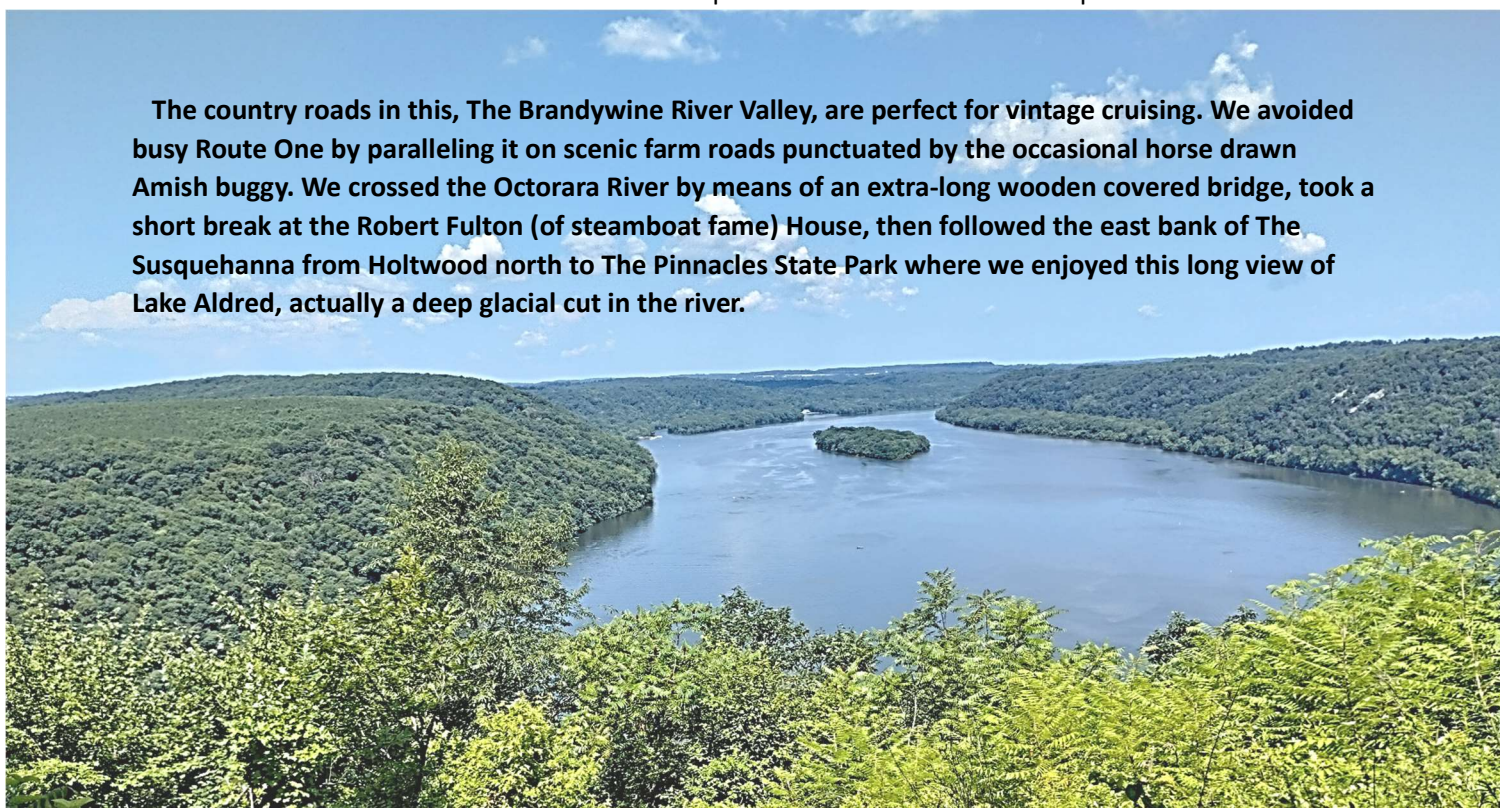
“This is a rain or shine event, there is a chance of rain anytime; we very well may ride through some showers. Of course, you will want a full rain suit.”

And in fact, when it rains, we still ride. Sometimes it *is* raining when we set out in the morning. We just put on full rain gear and hope to ‘ride out of it’ eventually. This was scheduled as a one day ride on June 16th and the forecast was unusually grim. The rain was steady and heavy, and there seemed to be little chance of ‘riding out of it’: the entire east coast was socked in and getting drenched. Wives are always more sensible about these things, and Lynn suggested that I cancel the ride. What, am I not a man? No way Jose.

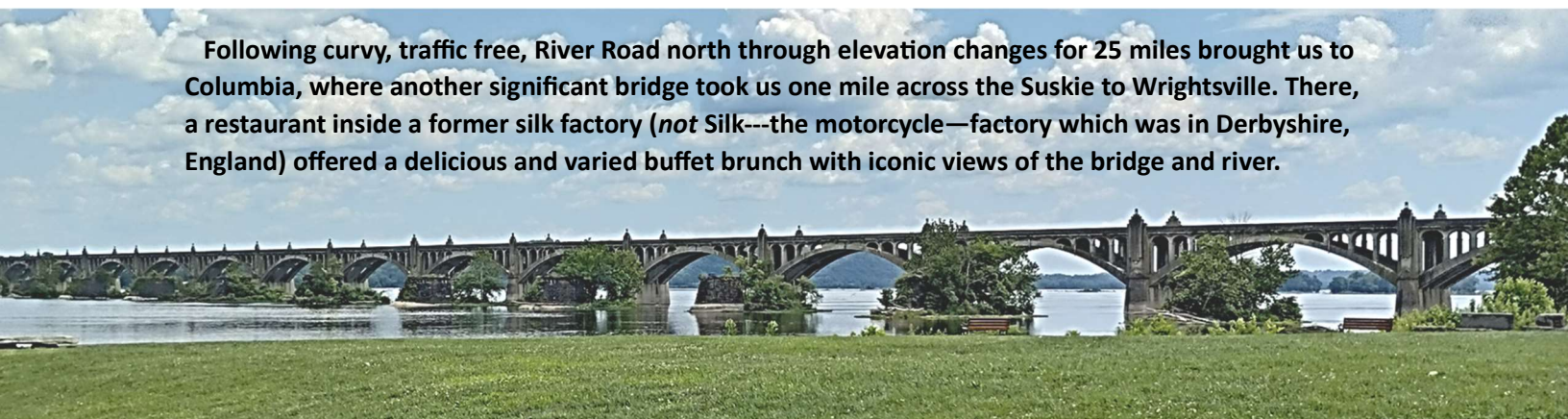
This was originally a group of 5 riders and one passenger. One rider cancelled a few days before (maybe he saw the weather forecast?) At breakfast at 8:30 were Fred, Nico, Ed and Liz, and I, and we were all ready to do it, damned the torpedoes *and* the rain. Still, everyone was local-- Ed and Liz having travelled the furthest from about an hour away-- so over coffee the idea was floated: maybe we should reschedule? We took our time over breakfast, hoping for a lull in the rain that never came. Sheepishly, I asked: “How many of you would be available if we reschedule this ride to next weekend?” I was mildly surprised that everyone was willing to try again a week down the road, and so it was that we reconvened the following Sunday for another breakfast.

It has been my experience that no sooner is a ride called for weather, as often as not, the sky clears as if on cue, and regrets abound. This time there was not a cloud in the sky on the day of our rescheduled ride and no regrets abounded. A warm sunny day, perfect for riding; we were all in agreement that we had made the right call by re-scheduling. Ed’s wife Liz would ride in the BMW/EML sidecar rig. Nico opted for the Moto Guzzi V65SP. Ed decided to get acquainted with his old GS550ES, and Fred elected to ride the latest addition to the RetroTours fleet: a pristine ’76 CB550K that he helped recommission.

The country roads in this, The Brandywine River Valley, are perfect for vintage cruising. We avoided busy Route One by paralleling it on scenic farm roads punctuated by the occasional horse drawn Amish buggy. We crossed the Octorara River by means of an extra-long wooden covered bridge, took a short break at the Robert Fulton (of steamboat fame) House, then followed the east bank of The Susquehanna from Holtwood north to The Pinnacles State Park where we enjoyed this long view of Lake Aldred, actually a deep glacial cut in the river.

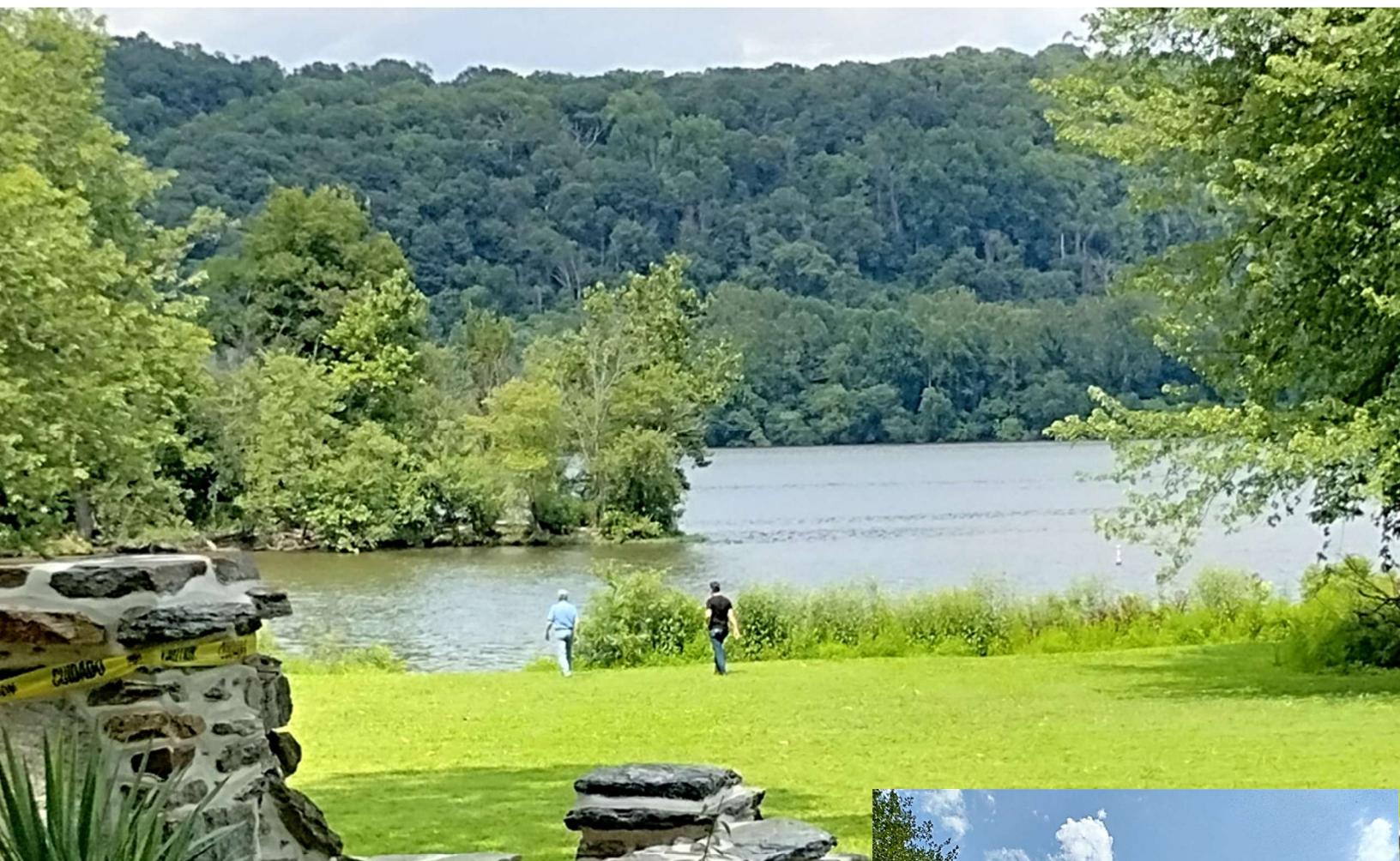


Following curvy, traffic free, River Road north through elevation changes for 25 miles brought us to Columbia, where another significant bridge took us one mile across the Suskie to Wrightsville. There, a restaurant inside a former silk factory (*not* Silk--the motorcycle—factory which was in Derbyshire, England) offered a delicious and varied buffet brunch with iconic views of the bridge and river.



For 'dessert' we took a short ride which included a mile of dirt road to view the now off limits Haines Shoe House. In years past, we entered the Shoe House for a self-guided tour, had an ice cream, and learned about Mahlon Haines, the business man/philanthropist who built it. Now it is closed to the public but can be rented on Airbnb or VRBO for just(?) \$300 per night. Still, we were able to pause at the gated driveway to admire the unusual architecture. As a well-dressed, middle aged couple sitting in lawn chairs gawked back at us, I couldn't help but think that for their \$300/night they looked for all the world like caged animals in a zoo.





A short stretch of Old Route 30 followed. Also known as The Lincoln Highway, it ran 3300 miles, coast-to-coast, from Times Square in New York City, west to Lincoln Park in San Francisco. Historical, but just here, straight as an arrow, so we soon peeled off onto a zig-zagging maze of farm roads which took us back to the Susquehanna, and we followed the scenic west bank northwards, stopping at Indian Steps for a stretch. At The Conowingo Reservoir, it was again time for a break. Here, we were entertained (disgusted?) by a troop of 30 turkey buzzards that frequents the parking area, presumably to feast on fresh fish guts thoughtfully left behind by sports fishermen who clean their catch on site.

The final 50 miles home took us across a corner of Maryland back into southeast PA. Lynn had a fabulous meal waiting for us. We enjoyed the food and the conversation that followed until finally, we began to think ahead to tomorrow's Monday morning obligations, and one by one, the riders headed for home.

It had been a perfect day of riding.

