

Comstock Chapter News  
Antique Motorcycle Club of America  
Winter 2018  
Part 2

## Cinco de Noviembre

By Rodd Lighthouse

The first fall picnic took place at the Canavan residence on November 5, 2017. George and Linda made chili, cornbread, salad, and guacamole for the masses, which included many of Comstock member's spouses and friends.

The picnic include a tour of the house, which is decorated with Linda's fantastic artwork, and the garage, which is home to a 1910 Brush, 1930 Pierce Arrow, 1930 Ford Coupe, 1939 Ford Coupe, and Geo's 1968 BMW R69S US. Cool stuff!

Thanks to the Canavan's for hosting the picnic and for the great food and hospitality.



## Vintage Japanese Bike Sale

By Rodd Lighthouse

Over the last several years, Jerry and Patti Meadows have been working hard to liquidate the late Phil Anderson's accumulation of motorcycles. Several hundred British and other European motorcycles have already been sold, but around 200 motorcycles, or remnants of motorcycles, remain to be sold. Most of the remaining motorcycles are Japanese, but a few European scraps remain. In an effort to try to get rid of the remaining parts, pieces and bikes, the Meadows invited Comstock Chapter members out to the secret stash in Palomino Valley on December 2, 2017.



Six members and two friends showed up to rummage through the piles of motorcycles, in search of their newest treasure/s. Mike Leukauf ended up finding five treasures, including two early 70's Suzuki enduros (TS 185 and TS 125), two late 60's Honda SL 100's, and one 73 Honda TL 125. Rick James went home with an early 70's Suzuki enduro (TC 185) and a 1970 Yamaha 125 twin (AS2C). Peter Hipp got away with a Honda CL 70. Charlie Stewart stole a BSA B25 and a Triumph TR25, as well as some miscellaneous British wheels and BSA plunger frames. George Canavan found a double leading shoe front brake off of a Kawasaki that he may try to fit to his old JD Harley-Davidson. Rodd Lighthouse overpaid (just kidding) for a Harley-Davidson Rapido, a BSA A65 frame, miscellaneous British wheels, a remote float Bing carburetor, a set

of Ceriani forks from a Penton, and a Cobra chopper seat.

Although there was not a noticeable dent in the pile of motorcycles, it was a good day for the Meadows. A total of twelve motorcycle carcasses were removed from the property on Saturday, excluding the CZ parts, (frames, wheels, forks, seats, etc.) that Jerry stockpiled and hauled to Reno for a future sale. Additionally, up to six more bikes are expected to be sold at a later date as a result of the sale.

An interesting follow-up to the bike sale, almost immediately upon unloading his newly acquired Honda TL 125, Mike Leukauf went to work on his new toy. Although the bike had been sitting outside without a carburetor for an indeterminable amount of time, the engine turned, and had compression and spark. Mike took a carburetor off of one of the Honda SL's that he purchased at the sale, cleaned it and put it on the TL. Fresh gas and a few kicks later, Mike was riding the TL around his yard. Pretty cool. Good job, Mike.



Thanks to Jerry and Patti Meadows for the opportunity to rummage through the mounds of motorcycles.

## Reno Rough Riders – A Third and Final Installment

By George Canavan

Things seemed to be going great for Kelly's "Reno Motorcycle Repair Shop" and the Reno Rough Riders. There were race bikes, four wheel specials, retail success and plenty for the boys to do when not working. TT races (back then that was Tavern to Tavern), cross country runs in the form of an annual race from Virginia City, out past Winnemucca and back for over 700 miles distance. That is when they weren't bashing their heads in playing Motorcycle Polo! What next?

Well, the trail seems to run cold in recorded history for Reno's first motorcycle repair shop. The internet doesn't offer up much for the motorcycle historian. All the photos in these three episodes were a gift from a Bonneville belly tank



racer and fellow hot rodder, Elmo Rodge. No back story, just the photos. More details will take shoe leather and a trip through someone's family album, as yet to be discovered.



Years ago, we did contact Guy Clifton at the Reno Gazette Journal for an electronic visit to the RGJ Morgue. Guy was able to contribute the following:

I found this story in the Nevada State Journal, December 12, 1923.

“For the third time in the last three or four years, the Chisum Building on West Second Street between Sierra and West Street was seriously damaged by fire. Flames, which were discovered shortly after 7:30 o'clock last night were uncontrolled until after 9 o'clock.

The fire started in the basement of the Reno Plumbing Company, gutted the lower floor, worked its way into the stairway leading to the second floor, over the Reno Physic-Medical Institute, before it was extinguished.

The damage was not estimated last night. The alarm was turned in by George Marsh who was in the Reno Motorcycle Shop owned by William Kelly. He noticed smoke in the basement of the Kelly establishment and located the flames as beginning in the plumbing shop.”

Yes, the same Messrs. Kelly and Marsh of the Reno Rough Riders. Perhaps Kelly, the Harley Davidsons - “Triumphs in Endurance, Speed and Power” and the Rough Riders had enough at 127 West Second Street and went on to better things. What do you know?



## **Bike of the Month**

### **October 2017 1970 BMW R75/5**

By Dale Schuett

It all started during my oldest daughter's senior year at Cal, 1998. She met a guy who rode to class about 350 days a year, and eventually opened his own motorcycle shop. After about six months of riding with him, she bought a 1979 BMW R65. Eventually she said "dad, you used to ride, didn't you? If you had a bike, we could ride together." That started me researching motorcycles again. It took a couple years, but I bought my 1970 BMW R75/5 in the winter of 2000. It had been painted, supposedly had the engine rebuilt, and it wasn't black (like 90% of all BMW's).

During my research period, my daughter let me ride her R65, and I took the new rider's course to get my motorcycle endorsement. I took it out about three nights a week, learned how to maintain the bike, and joined the Airheads Beemer Club in the San Francisco Bay Area. I also joined the BMW Motorcycle Owners Club and the Antique Motorcycle Club of America. The Airheads was an active club, doing weekend rides and monthly dinners, and I met dozens of great people. I held an annual Tech Day for about eight years every August. The Airheads taught me a lot over the 15 years I was active in the club, and bailed me out when I did something stupid.

In 2015, I decided to upgrade the heads for unleaded fuel, including hardened valve seats, new valves, valve springs, and valve guides.



The new top end forced oil past the rings, so I sought the help of a buddy who owns a shop in Redwood City, CA. A few days later, I received a call. The good news, standard size new rings, no new pistons. The bad news, the previous owner used RTV instead of BMW gaskets for sealing the cylinders to the block. In the process, he blocked an oil passage, and one of the rod bearings was down to the brass shell. So, new rings and bearings, no damage to the crankshaft, and now I have a classic bike that will outlast me by years or even decades.

One interesting story is the cable operated brakes. Once, on a ride near my old Pleasanton, CA digs, Bambi jumped onto the road about ten feet in front of me. I grabbed both brakes, locked up both wheels, and missed Bambi by inches. I have tried several times since to lock up the brakes and come away slower but not skidding. Seems that adrenaline allows extra strength after all.

# **November 2017**

## **1977 Triumph T140**

### **Silver Jubilee**

By Jeff Park

In 1977 the last British motorcycle manufacturer left was Triumph, and it was on its last legs. In just a few more years they too would be gone. The Silver Jubilee was made to get in on the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's reign as queen. Triumph decided to build 1,000 Special Edition 750 Triumphs. The color scheme was Silver, Red, White, and Blue. The motor featured chrome primary cover, timing cover, and transmission cover. The seat was blue with red piping, and the chrome wheels had blue, red white stripes painted on the chrome rims. The motor was a standard 750CC Triumph twin, kick start only with the federal mandated left foot shifter, and front and rear disc brakes.

The idea was to see if they could sell the 1,000 they made. Those bikes had a special badge on the side cover which read "One of a Thousand". The bike was a good seller, and Triumph decided to sell another 1,000 units worldwide, but the side panel was changed from one of a thousand, to Limited Edition.

My Silver Jubilee was originally sold in the San Francisco Bay area, and made its way to Seattle, where I found it for sale on Craigslist. The bike had a hair over 1,900 miles on it when I bought it. The original owner stored it in less than ideal conditions. I have decided to keep it in its original patina because they are only new once, and it is in pretty good shape considering the years.



# **December 2017**

## **1921 Harley-Davidson**

### **Model J Special**

By Montana Albitre

From time to time, I've stumbled upon great little finds while looking for something completely different, such is the case with this motorbike. It must have been 2012 or so, while scouring across the internet, trying to find antique bicycles and the like, when I came across the heart of this little gem you see here. There was a Craigslist ad for an estate sale in Cleveland, listing all sorts of junk and trinkets that I had no interest in. There was however a mention of "old bicycles and parts" that I thought could materialize into something of value. I called the gal posting the sale to find out her father had recently passed and had amassed all manner of clutter and garbage and no apparent focus or specific interest in the "collection". Just stuff accumulated over a life time and all she wanted to do was to clear it out as quickly and painlessly as possible. We had a brief telephone conversation, and the bikes and parts she described seemed to be more modern than anything I would typically want. A bust. I did however ask about any old automotive or motorcycle junk her father may have had. "Let me check", and a few days later I got an email. Photos of hubcaps, old tires, and engine parts. Among them was this Harley J engine. I wanted it, for no good reason, and with no knowledge of these prewar Harleys, but it looked so cool, maybe just as a display piece or paper weight. We made a deal and I was able to find a bike shop in Ohio that was willing to crate the hunk of iron and ship it out to me. I think I paid nearly as much for the shipping as I did for the motor itself! (I did score a pretty good deal I believe!)

When the thing finally arrived at my doorstep, I grabbed a hammer and cracked open the crate and really couldn't be happier with it. Immediately I took it out back and turned the pressure washer on it, got all the grime, grease and dirt off to reveal that nice rusty top coating that's all too familiar to us. However, the insides seemed to be in great shape considering what the outside looked like. It has compression, the valves and springs operated, and it still had oil in it. Much better than I imagined it would be, so much so that it seemed more fitting to throw it into a bike rather than let it sit on a shelf. Again, not knowing these bikes, I had no idea how difficult it would be to build a somewhat restored 1921 Harley Davidson.

After a few months of searching websites, swap meets and AMCA club meets, it was settled. There was no way I was going to build even a remotely original bike out of this. I've clearly got CB350 finances with Brough Superior tastes. A custom it would become.

I am an Ironworker by trade, and old cars and bikes have been my primary hobby since I was 15 or so. I have the tools and partial fabricators skill set to make what I want so the welders and torches came out. I found a bent Triumph pre-unit frame here locally and was able to use the front portion of it. I made up the rear "hardtail" section, welded the two together, and started on the front end. Looking through some my old moto books, I decided to build a leaf spring fork rather than the old HD style springers they had in the 20's. I got a hold of Paul Brodie in Vancouver, who was building gorgeous replica Excelsior boardtrack racers, and bought a set of fork blades off him that he was using on these racers. A little tweeking, cutting and grinding, a few arc strikes, and I had the bike on two wheels. The spring steel I was able to source from a wrecked Jeep Wagoneer, taken to a spring shop off 2nd St. where they were able to form them to my template and properly heat treat them to bring back that bounce that was lost in the annealing.

The tanks I built out of 16ga mild steel to emulate something between the flat sided tanks and the more common teardrop style. This is still a total oil loss bike, so the tanks are actually three chambered. Fuel, reserve, and oil. I'm still on the fence about the material though, they are heavy, and I've been considering redoing them in polished aluminum instead.

The bars and triple clamps are CroMo as well, adjustable from the more upright drag angle, down to that wrist breaking boardtrack crouch. I haven't ridden the bike yet, so I'm not sure at which position I'll be able to find comfort, so adjustability should be useful. The gearbox is a 4 speed out of Commando I believe, another swap meet find with an attractive sticker price. I think I've got the sprockets, chains, primary and angles all figured out, just not completely fabricated yet. The motor sprocket is a one off to fit the tapered HD crank but with an English chain. The clutch is a combination of Norton Atlas and Triumph pieces, necessary to ditch the Commando triplex and run a single chain instead. Wheels and tires are old clincher style rims wrapped with 28x3 white rubber bands.

That's about where we're at this moment. I worked pretty steadily on it for a year or so, but other projects bumped in and this has been put on the back burner for some time now. I'm currently finishing up one of my automotive projects, so hopefully I can give some attention to the J model Harley again soon.



## Repeating History

By Rodd Lighthouse

Part of the British occupation of India, my mother and her family, parents and siblings, were born in India and migrated to the United States in 1948. Prior to leaving India, a portrait was taken of my mother's family who are all seated on a Harley-Davidson WL model (45 cubic inch). I'm not sure if my grandfather, Winston (cool name), owned or even rode the motorcycle that the family is seated on in the photo below, but I have always liked the photo. In fact, I recently requested a copy of the photo so that I could display it in my home. Based on my uncle's appearance, the little guy on the gas tank, my guess is that the photo was taken in 1946 or 1947, when he would have been around 3 years of age.

My grandparents have since passed, but in May, my mother, aunt and uncle came to Reno for a little reunion. While visiting at the house, I thought it would be cool to repeat history, so I pulled out my old '34 Harley-Davidson RLD (45 cubic inch) and snapped another family portrait, approximately 70 years after the original family portrait.



## Winterize Your Bike, a Reminder

By George Canavan

By now there is no denying that “that season” is upon us once again. Why, you can just about hear those sleigh bells off in the distance. And, pumpkin spice lattes are getting harder to find as they are pushed off the shelf for eggnog and peppermint treats. Before we go off into a glucose induced seasonal comma, we have work to do!

This is not the time to forget our two wheeled steeds that have provided all that fair weather entertainment and transportation through the fairer months. Winterization! A bit of time spent in the garage now will head off lots of headaches next Spring when you are anxious to get rolling again.

To that end I have spend several minutes scouring the inter-webs to plagiarize the most popular thoughts of others who actually gave this process some thought. The approaches offered range from the casual to the extreme. From, “don’t forget where you left it last Fall, Bro” to a full on Q-Tip twirling spa day mania, The following is a synopsis of their thinking. Pick and choose to create your own remedies for Winter survival.



(photo off the web from [bikebandit.com](http://bikebandit.com))

- \* Store your machine in a climate-controlled environment. Hint, just a tarp over the saddle does not qualify. A place of honor in the living room is most excellent but unnecessary.
- \* Give your bike a thorough cleaning. The longer that road grime sits, the harder it becomes to remove. Certain bug remains can attack paint quality and alloy finishes might also be stained. Cleaning will also give you that chance to glide both hand and eye over all the mechanical surfaces. You might just find a loose wheel spoke or dangling ground wire and head off a bigger issue.

- \* Fuel treatments for storage. Several approaches are offered. Choose wisely. One camp says, “If you have a carburetor, drain your float bowls.” The idea is to eliminate water and moisture bearing fluids from those pot metal bowls. There is plenty of documentation to support the destruction water can do to carbs. Another camp promotes, “Add a fuel stabilizer to the gas tank, then run the engine long enough to fill the float bowls with treated fuel.” This approach keeps gaskets wet but the fuel could also evaporate in place leaving sediments, etc. There are lots of good fuel stabilizers at the local markets as well as alcohol free fuels to take advantage of this season.
- \* Lubricants. Engine oil becomes contaminated with spent fuel deposits and raw gas as the miles pile up. Transmission bits get worn and particles float around in the lube looking for places to stack up. Warm up the bike and change out fluids now and you will be ready for the call when we pick a date for the next 100/100/100 Ride. Also, now is a good time to treat exposed metal surfaces with a blast of WD 40 or like product. Then cap off your exhaust pipe openings. How many stories have you heard of Springtime start ups involving flaming mice nests, roasted acorns being shot across the shop, etc?
- \* Fog it, Baby! In the marine world folks routinely lay up their crafts for the winter. They are very aware of what happens to the reciprocating mass in the engine as moisture penetrates the crankcase - seized pistons and rings, stuck valves, etc. Pull the plugs and give each cylinder a shot of engine fogger.
- \* You may want to remove the battery. Either on the bike or off, choose a local that will prevent freezing and use a quality charging unit to protect it through the winter.
- \* Lube your cables. Clean and treat leather with a high quality dressing.
- \* Raise the pressure in your tires by 5 to 10 psi, and park the bike up on a hard, clean surface that will remain moisture free. Round tires work better than square.

There are lots of resources out there to guide your approach as well as many products to help you prepare for great early season riding. Check out - <https://www.wikihow.com/Winterize-Your-Motorcycle> or any of the other trusted information resources that you have used in the past.

Here is my personal tip for those who suffer from pesky rodents. Especially where wires are involved. If you suffer from wire loom damage from your furry visitors, there is something new to bring to that buffet table. In addition to all those spring loaded, peanut butter laden instruments of death scattered about the garage this winter, here is a new one: Honda’s solution in the car world is a tape treated with hot and spicy capsaicin. Try part number 4019-2317 for the 60’ roll. And don’t lick your fingers.

## **Upcoming Events**

December

- December 16 – 21 Helmet Show at See See Motor Coffee – Reno, NV

January

- January 23 thru 27 - Mecum and Bonhams Motorcycle Auctions – Las Vegas, NV

February

- February 9 thru 11 – The One Moto Show – Portland, OR

For other events, please visit the AMCA’s website, [antiquemotorcycle.org](http://antiquemotorcycle.org), under the “Events” and “Chapter” tabs.

### **Comstock Chapter Directors**

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To contact the Comstock Chapter or any of the directors, email [comstockamca@gmail.com](mailto:comstockamca@gmail.com).

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