

Trip #1

July 2007 I went on a Pacific NW ADV ride up into lower British Columbia. I told the organizer early on that I was bring my whole in One golf club and if the opportunity presented itself I was going to try and hit a few of the courses up there. Especially since the part of BC we were going to be in had a number of really nice courses. This would be around the cities of Nelson and Kelwona but the two courses I really wanted to play were both “pasture golf” courses one in Republic, WA and the other in Lilliooet, BC.

Day 1

Met up with everybody at Sultan, WA about 10 of the eventual 20 or so riders showed up there. The schedule was to leave Sultan at 0800, which meant that I had to leave my place at 0500 in order to miss the northbound traffic on I-405. For those of you not familiar with the area Sultan is on Hwy 2 on the way over Stevens Pass. Stevens Pass is a great road, good pavement and lots of sweeping corners.



The weather, which had been raining off and on the week leading up to the ride, started off the day dry and clear, good riding weather. We all blasted over the pass to Wenatchee and then turned north on hwy 97. Misplaced a couple of the guys on the way but since everybody knew the route it was no big deal. As it turned out we were dropping off and picking up different riders throughout the trip.

Any way I left the main group at the first gas stop in Omak since I was going to try and play the golf course in Republic and then meet up with them in Nelson BC later on. As I was leaving Omak there were two other members of the group that were just going by so I hooked up with them.

We made the turn East onto Hwy 20 at Tonasket and headed towards Republic. The weather was starting to get worse with clouds rolling in. By the time we got to Wauconda Pass (4,310 ft) it was raining; not hard, but definitely raining. I stayed with the two BMW guys for a while and then I passed them and started to make better time so I could get my golf in.

Found the turn off for the golf course, there was a sign on the main road. The access road turned to a gravel road almost immediately. According to the info I had I needed to go about 2 miles up the dirt road. Well two miles up the road the only thing I found was an abandoned building. Went a another couple of miles but the road started to deteriorate so I figured the empty building might be it. Went back, stopped and got off the bike to look around. Figured out this was the golf course but it was all closed up with no trespassing signs all over it. Found what was left of the tee box for the 1st tee.

So got back on the bike and headed to Republic. As I was going through town met up with two other members of the group, one on a Buell and the other on a DR. Stopped to talk told them the golf course was closed. Also told them the rain was coming in just behind me so we needed to get going if we wanted to try and stay ahead of it.

Just as we are leaving I see about 4 more members of the group pull into the gas station in Republic. It rained off and on all the way over Sherman pass. So not only did we have wet roads but also had to ride on grooved pavement as that whole section was being prepared for repaving. On top of that it was cold.

My well waterproofed leather gloves leaked, they ended up not drying out for about 2 days, but more on that part of the story later.



Got into Kettle Falls ahead of the rain, the main route lead north from Kettle Falls on Hwy 25, but there is another road on the west side of the river. Decided to take that. Turned out to be a great twisty road, just the last few miles were gravel. And it met back up with 25 just north of Northport. Photo is of DR 400 & Buell guys where side road met up with Hwy 25.

From there we headed for the Canadian border and Nelson. As we crossed the border it started to rain for real. Prior to this we had just been playing cat and mouse with the rain as we weaved in and out of the mountains.

Went from the border through Trail, Castlegar and then to Nelson. Got wet, wetter? The plan was to camp at Toad Rock campground a motorcycle friendly place. However, the Best Western across from the gas station we stopped at in Nelson looked like a better option considering the weather. Especially since I needed to find another pair of gloves.

I told my riding partners that I planned to find the local motorcycle shop and then get a room. I would meet them in the bar. Turns out they went to the campground and spent the night there.

Found the bike shop thanks to the directions of the front desk guy at the Best Western. The guys there at the shop laughed when I pulled off the soaking wet things I was wearing because they made a splashing noise as they hit the counter. The guys at the shop were a great help once they got done making fun of my other gloves and located the last pair of some insulated weatherproof gloves that fit well. They were Scott gloves that one of the guys said were actually for snow machines.

They also gave me a plastic bag to store my old gloves in until I could get them dried out.

Got back to the hotel got dinner and a drink. As I am eating in walks one of the BMW guys that I rode with from Omak to Republic and then lost track of when I went to the golf course. He said that he doesn't camp in the rain either.

After dinner went to the room and spent about 2 hours with the complimentary hair dryer trying to dry out the old gloves. Popped the fuse on that thing a couple of times as it over heated from the constant use. Still did not get them completely dry but at least they were not squishy any more.

Day 2

After a good nights rest I left early as there were no restaurants open in town when I got up so I just ate an energy bar and headed out of town. I stayed on the preplanned route in the hopes of running across some of the other ADV riders. Went past Toad Rock camp ground with out seeing anybody so just kept going. Got as far as Balfour Golf course, by now I am getting hungry. The sign said golf course and cafe. Grabbed a bite and then checked with the pro shop as to possible tee times. I was able to walk right on. 1st tee shot was ok, a bit to the right but I stayed out of the water. Hole 1 below from where I took my second shot.




This is an extraordinary golf course, the front nine is relatively flat and is laid out through stands of fir and pine trees. The back nine was hilly and very challenging. off the 10th tee I put one out into the rough on the right, in really tall grass. I tried a 5 iron and was just able to get the ball out to the fairway by about 5 feet. With water to the left and between me and the green, the hole is a dogleg left, I had to play up short of the green, scoring a 6 on the hole. Things went uphill from there. At least the views of the mountains and lakes were fantastic, better than my golf game, barely broke a 100. This shot is on the back 9.



Since I was just about the only person on the course I was able to finish the round in only 3 hrs. So back on the bike and back on the route I went. The scheduled route went up hwy 31 to Kaslo where you were to turn off on to 31A. This is a fantastic route. It goes up in to the mountains on some twisty roads and great scenery. Sorry I didn't stop for pictures, too busy riding.

31A meets up with Hwy 6 at New Denver. The route said go North on 6 to Nakasup. which is where I stopped for gas. Still no sign of any other members of the group. It was just a short ride from there to the ferry crossing at Arrow Park. As I pulled into the ferry crossing there was about 5 members of the original group. I caught up to them because the ferry crew shuts down from 12:30 to 2:30 for lunch. I got there a little after 1:00.



During the wait for the ferry another 6 or so riders showed up so by the time the ferry got running we had quite a crew ready for the first major dirt section of the ride. I ended up at the front end of the group with 2 guys on KTM Adventures. We took off at a good pace. I had to give them some room to keep the rocks off of my headlights. I stayed no more than 1 corner behind. The bad news is just a few miles into the dirt the two KTMs crashed into each other on a short straight section that went over a creek. I looked up from checking out the creek in time to see them collide and pick a path between them to miss them both. Picture of crash site. 



One of them suffered a cracked gas tank and the other a bent front disc. The good news is that neither rider was hurt. We were able to block off the broken tank and run on the unbroken one. If you are going to have plastic gas tanks good thing to have two. The other bike required the removal of the bent disc so the front wheel would roll. After a delay of about an hour we were able to get back on the road again.



The rest of the days ride was uneventful. With good roads and incredible scenery. The dirt road took us past Whatshan lake and then back to the pavement just outside of Needles. From there a fast run on west Hwy 6 to Vernon. I put some of my roadracing experience to use and made up some lost time. I also separated from the rest of the group. I waited a bit and the ride leader John caught up to me just on the outskirts of Vernon.

Picture along Whatshan lake is below.



Good thing he caught up as he was able to lead the way to the Summerhill Pyramid winery, which is where we were camping for the night. I would not have found my way through Kelwona as easy as he did. We stopped at the main part of the winery after taking a lap around through the vineyard looking for a place to park. Stopping at the winery we were told we were to camp in what was called the shire.



This is where the migrant workers stay during picking season. It was funny seeing all the tents set up in between the rows of grapes. We were able to have a campfire, which was nice to gather around drinking scotch, smoking cigars and telling lies about past rides and adventures.

Woke up with the sun. Used my new Jetboil stove to cook breakfast. It work well I was impressed with how fast it was able to boil water for oatmeal.

The rest of the crew seemed to take a bit longer to get moving so some of us early risers went down to the Starbucks in town. After our morning fix we got going and headed north on the Westside road toward Spallumcheen. Good road but lots of hidden driveways, had to be careful. The group got pretty spread out along this stretch and I ended up by myself when I got to Hwy 97.

Made the left turn toward Monte Lake, which according to the map that I had, is where we were supposed to turn south on a dirt road. The run on Hwy 97 was not all the interesting but it was free of traffic. I stopped at a little café/store at the turn off to the dirt road to wait for the rest of the guys. While I was waiting, the owner of the store got there and opened up. I let them know that additional customers would be there soon.

I only had to wait for about 15 minutes and about 5 members of the group showed up. We hung around the store bought some munchies and got under way. I let everybody else go in front for a while. The road turned to gravel just a short way in, not much dust which

was good but the gravel was that loose marbles stuff sitting on hardpan. It took a while to get used to the feeling of the tires being disconnected from the road but after awhile I picked up the pace and passed everybody.

Had to stop next to a road crew guy driving a grader to make sure that I was on the right road as there had been some roads branch off from what appeared to be the main dirt road, so I was not sure. They guy was friendly enough and told me I was still on the road to Douglas Lake.

I stopped just past the resort at Douglas Lake to see if I could successfully take a picture of the one of the other guys as they drove by with the camera in my phone. It did work and I got a good picture of John as drove by on the Beemer.



I mounted up and caught back up to him. We all stopped a short way down the road to take a short break and talk about the ride and take pictures.



After Douglas Lake the dirt road met up with pavement again on 5A next to Nicola Lake. Turned left (south) and headed to Merritt. While headed south saw two of the members of the group, guys on street bikes that had decided not take the dirt headed the other way. I waved and figured I would see them later.

John lead us into Merritt and while he was checking the route on his on board GPS he drove past the turn to north Hwy 97C. As he was making turns to get back on the correct road myself and the guy riding on my wing, on a BMW 650, lost John at a stopped light. Since I had already figured out which way to go I stopped and asked the 650 if he wanted to try and chase down John or just head out. He said he was fine on gas so we started to head out. As we did we ran across the guy on Buell Ulysses that I road into Nelson with on the first day. So we all took off on 97C and then to Hwy 8 toward Spences Bridge.

The BMW 650 didn't keep the pace so by the time we were to Spences Bridge it was just me and Buell. From Spences Bridge we headed south on Hwy 1 to Lytton. This is really neat section of Hwy 1 that goes through some deep canyons along the Fraser River. We stopped at Lytton where we both had to get gas before heading up Hwy 12 to Lillooet. Here the Buell guy said goodbye as he was going to take a break along the river. I wanted to get going so I would have time to play the golf course at Lillooet.

The course at Lillooet is special in that it is built on a still working sheep farm and the sheep are allowed to graze on the golf course. Once I got to Lillooet found the signs to the golf course that leads out of town and is about 5-6 miles down a dirt road. your looking at the pro shop and between the two buildings is the 1st tee. Those white dots are sheep.

The golf course is great and the sheep do not pose much of a problem and for the most part stay out of the way you just have to pay attention to were you step. I did not play very well but I found that tends to happen when I have rode a long ways and then just hop off the bike and try to play golf. I am just not very flexible. Started to play better and hit the ball well about the 5th hole after I loosened up a bit.

After the golf I headed for the tavern in Lillooet that everyone was suppose to meet at before heading up to Goldbridge. From Lillooet to Goldbridge is about 100 km on a road that starts out as bad pavement and becomes worse dirt and then back to bad pavement without much warning.

It is also one of those roads that is barely a lane and a half wide. Making passing of 4-wheel drive trucks towing horse trailers a bit tricky and not all that safe. But I was in a hurry as the folks at the bar had said I was about an hour behind every one else. There was also the rock fall on the road to contend with when driving next to the cliffs some of which even formed overhangs over the road. The scenery, what I saw of it, was impressive.





cliff overhanging the road.

I made it to Goldbridge just a little over an hour and a little before dark, good thing since the restaurant closed at 2100 hrs. I got the last room in the hotel as well. Some of the arrivals that were later than I, ended up camping in the hotels back yard. Food was good and the rooms clean. Also noticed the hotel was for sale.

The scene at Goldbridge



Next morning up early to head over Hurley Pass with our local guide, Claude. I ended up in front with Claude and we were running 45 to 50 MPH on a hardpan & loose gravel road. It was also a bit dusty so after a few miles we rode side by side rather than single file. Had a young deer run in front of us and then stay on the road in front of us for some ways. It was strange since all it had to do was jump off to the side to getaway but it just stayed a few yards out front. Felt like we were herding the thing.

After a while I pulled off to ask Claude were we should stop to take pictures. As we were talking one of other guys, on the DR 400, passed us going like crazy, Claude said he was going to try to catch him so we could get the group together for pictures. Claude was riding a KTM with knobbies so he could travel a bit faster than I could. I followed but stopped at the summit to take photos of the snow off to the side of the road.



After taking photos I got back on the gas to try and catch up to the other two. I still had not seen anybody else coming up behind me. I came around a fast left hand corner that was slightly off camber when I saw Claude's bike parked in the middle of the road. I wish I had a photo of Claude's face as I was locked up and sliding straight for him. I came to a stop not more than a few feet from him, looked up and said "bet you thought I was going to crash". I then took my bike back up the road a ways to slow everyone else down as they came around the corner. I then walked back to help lift the DR 400 out of the bushes

and get it back up on the road. There was no real damage to the bike, after all it is a dirt bike they are designed to be thrown on the ground. Once the gear was repacked we got back under way. By that time the entire group had caught up. I ended up at the back of the group as I had fixed a broken strap on the tail bag. My bike is in the foreground with Claude's bike in the distance. The 400 is off the road to the right by Claude's bike just out of the picture.



By the time we got back to the pavement I had passed about half the group. I really let it rip on the short section of curvy pavement leading into Pemberton. As I was stuffing it into the corners the feedback from the tires started to feel a little soft and mushy.

When we stopped to eat in Pemberton I checked my tires and found I had a flat rear tire. Had to take the wheel off to find the cut. One of the other guys had a pump that plugs into an outlet on the bike. It really did not seem to be able to generate enough volume of air to find the leak. Fortunately where we stopped for breakfast was next to a bicycle shop that just was opening up as I was working on the wheel. Good thing since it was Canada Day and just about everything else in town was closed including the local tire shop.

I opened up my old BMW tire plug kit and found the glue was hard as a rock. Had to buy a new tube from the bicycle shop and hope it was close enough to work with the BMW

plugs. After a lot of work and one failed attempt I was able to get a plug in and seated. There did appear to be a small leak still but I figured it was slow enough to get me down the road to Whistler or Vancouver were I could find an open tire store.

When I came out of the bicycle store I found that almost all my riding partners had left, with out saying goodbye. Only Mike (sestrom) and a couple other guys that were just getting ready to leave were still in the parking lot. They gave me a hand getting the wheel back on and then they had to take off to try and catch the Ferry to Vancouver Island. Mike stayed with me since he was taking the same route as I was at least to Vancouver.

We got to a Canadian Tire store in Squamish were we stopped and I checked the tire pressure. Had not lost any but I bought a can of "Fix a Flat" and put that in just as a bit of insurance.

The rest of the ride home was uneventful. I used one of the smaller border crossings by Sumas and did not have to wait in line at all. After that I picked up I-5 at Bellingham and just cruized on home.

All in all it was a good ride. Got to meet some great people, play a little golf, and ride some great roads. I have to admit I was a little apprehensive at first since this was the first time I had ever gone on a ride with this many people. It was also the first time I had gone on a ride with people I was not either related to, grew up with, or raced with, so I really did not know what to expect. But everybody rode well and safe, for the most part. I will be back for next years ride.