

New Years Day Ride – Jan 1, 2005

“And the colour of thy mount shall be BLUE!”

Jim Bush



I have always been inspired by the reports of the BMOC Annual New Year's Day ride and the usually good turn out of hardy members, willing to brave the winter elements. This event is held whether it's cold, rain, ice, snow, wind or shine and this year's event would end up being one remembered for snow and cold.

The early breakfast crew was gathering at the Kalmar Restaurant for a ride departure of 11.00am. My metal flake blue '69 Norton S Commando was insured and had been prepared for winter riding several weeks back in anticipation of riding to a club meeting. The Norton always starts on the 1st real kick and today was no exception. I had made sure that I was properly attired in thick under woolies, thick sox, leather jacket and full face helmet.

At the Kalmar, Bernd Schalke had already parked his metal flake blue Norton, still bearing the signs of the snow from his ride over from West Vancouver. The two Blue Nortons looked stunning together in the weak morning light – a couple of book ends. Al Comfort had ridden his 500 Moto Morini, but that had been parked on the other side of the building, away from the British Iron. The blue Norton's were joined by the Blue BSA A10 of Lyle Whitter (hence my remark “and the colour of thy mount shall be BLUE!”)

A little later the Black Interstate Norton of John McKenzie completed the roster of bikes on hand.

The turn out for breakfast was quite good as a number of BMOC members had arrived by motor vehicle - including Pres. Bob Logan, Ian Bardsley, Bevin Jones,

Joan Schalke, Ron Moropito and Diane

The ride departed on time with me elected to lead the small group of three, with Lyle on the A10 and Al on the Moto Morini. Having Al along is like having an RCMP Patrolman on board – he is a BC Safety Council Riding instructor which makes me feel a little uncomfortable out front, especially since the Norton has no mirrors and I am seldom seen riding close to the speed limit. Well today I would make a fresh start and be a good example – 50kmph it would be (well maybe for the first km or so). I even ventured a hand signal or two.

We made a quick by-pass across Hwy 10 and down on to Colebrook Road (I would normally gun it to the max on this stretch, but not today, thanks Al), then to link up with KGH and Crescent Road to our first stop at Blackie's Spit for a photo op on the waterfront. As we neared Crescent Beach, the air was filled with falling snow flakes to remind us that it is the First of



A couple of cool guys indeed!

January after all.

We were all numbed by the cold and decided to keep moving. The final destination was the Polar Bear swim at White Rock beach – the crowds were gathering for the spectacle. There was a contingent of HOG riders parked on the sidewalk outside the White Rock historic train station – we decided to blend in and make use of the spare parking in the sidewalk (anything to beat paying those outrageous parking meter rates).

After witnessing the m el e of semi naked bodies braving the icy waters, we returned to the bikes. A number of the other riders were there admiring our bikes. One guy remarked about Lyles A10 – “well I have made of few of those into trikes and choppers in my time” – an unfortunate reminder of those early days where our prized machines were butchered and hewn into an unsightly conglomeration. I was reminded that my beloved S Commando itself is a survivor – the engine rescued from a home made rigid frame chopper with fat back wheel and a girder front end.

The ride home for me was a few short blocks, up the famed Oxford hill. Here I felt the power of the S rip past a car floundering up the steep hill – like a whip was on its back, trying to get as far away from that butchering rider down at the station..... (I think I might have watched Lord of the Rings too many times over the break.....).

Well, this was my first New Year's Day ride and all in all it was an enjoyable and memorable experience. Thanks Al and Lyle.