



SMOKEY'S CORNER #7

Al Greaves

A Winter Ride

The winter of 1959/60 I was going around with a girl who lived in Vancouver. We agreed to meet and go riding on the Saturday on my '58 A.J.S. 650 twin, The day turned out to be cold and overcast so we decided to take in a movie instead. we parked on Granville St., went to a double feature, came out at about 8:00 P.M. to behold six to eight inches of SNOW where there had been none! and still snowing.

Well, nothing to do but put her on a bus and head home to Newton in Surrey, a normal ride of three quarters of an hour. What a trip! I headed up Kingsway, stopped at Teds 99er Cafe, one of the few open all night in those days. Went inside for a coffee and a warm-up. As I turned to sit down at the counter, I caught a view of myself in the large mirror on the wall, a momentary shock passed over me! my hair had turned white! "No, No" said I to myself, that's snow. Much relieved, I sat for a while, then out to continue my journey.

Along the rest of my ride on Kingsway the traffic was sparse, the road was level, so no one was having difficulty. Riding in snow is fairly easy if you do two things, one, put your feet out like outriggers until you get to about 15/20 m.p.h. then put your feet back on the pegs. two, watch for lumps of harder snow or slush, which can deflect your front wheel and end in a spill. Be vigilant, as you slowly freeze up, tiring, slow work.

Nearing Pattulo Bridge on McBride Boulevard, I round the downhill bend to pass under the Royal Ave overpass, what a mess, cars are all over the road, diagonal, sideways, wrong side of the road, most are more or less stuck, others are spinning their wheels and going nowhere. I ride in and around the snarled traffic, people are out pushing, I look at their faces, they and the drivers have a noticeably resentful look on their faces when they see me. I would have thought they would be thinking "What's that idiot on the motorcycle doing out in a snowstorm" and smile. Next stop, the Roundup Cafe in Whalley, more coffee and a warm-up.

The clock says about eleven, more coffee, and more warm-up. I leave about midnight, it's still snowing heavily, I wipe the snow of my seat, fire up and head out, when I reach the junction, I am astonished to see that the road has been ploughed! I pass Queen Elizabeth High School doing 50 m.p.h. Now I am faced with a different set of problems, the snow is swirling around me stinging my face, and forcing my to adopt the tactic for driving in the rain with no eye protection, it is done this way, you tum your head about forty-five degrees to the left, close your right eye, and peer over the bridge of your nose with your left eye, when this tires , switch eyes.

Down the hill and passing Bear Creek Park, I detect a small red light some distance ahead of me, I know I can't stop, so carefully easing into the other lane, wondering what it is, I pass a road grader pushing snow off the highway! No flashing or big rotary lights like they have now, just one tiny taillight! I arrive home, no problem! When the preceding events cross my mind from time to time over the years, I chuckle, always imagining what the grader operator told others, something like "I was out pushing snow about midnight and some idiot on a motorcycle fly's past me doing at least 60 m.p.h. and it's snowing like crazy!"