



SMOKEY'S CORNER #1

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All you need to know about riding a motorcycle in 1002 easy lessons (if you last that long).

I can't consciously remember when I decided to take up motorcycle riding. I bought a leather motorcycle jacket in the fall of 1955 (at Woodward's for \$60.00) and everyone kept asking me "what kind of motorcycle ya got?". I lied and said, "a Triumph". I guess, to make myself an honest person, I bought my first motorcycle. The first step is to get a good job, so I got one at Pacific Veneer (July 15th, 1957) New Westminster. The pay was \$1.65 per hour working graveyard in the hardboard mill.

The second step was to get a MC learner's license. This consisted of two rubber stamped phrases joined together with a written in "and" on my car driver's license. The third step was to go shopping for a bike.

There was a M.C. shop on 8th Street (near Edmonds), in New Westminster. There was nothing in my price range, so my mother and I headed off to Deeley's, by bus. We went in and the salesman showed me an old BSA 250 single with battery ignition right in my price range (\$300). He asked if I had ever ridden before. I said "no". He replied, "well you don't want this then!"

So off to British, where I met Pete Peterson, the manager. His wife, Jan, did the paperwork. The only bike in my price range was a 1952 Francis Bamett 200 C.C. (light blue). It was fitted with a swing arm suspension, Villiers engine and telescopic forks. Wilf, the mechanic and motorcycle rider trainer par excellence showed me the controls and said, "ride her up the alley and back". I rode up the alley and stalled while trying to turn around. I got it started and rode back. To this Wilf said, "You'll be O.K.!"

For \$279.00 (Insurance included) I was on my way home to Surrey. No problem, until I get to 8th and Columbia Street (New Westminster) where the railway tracks used to take up 2/3 of the street running at an angle to the traffic flow. Lesson #1: Cross railway tracks at an angle. I almost fall off but don't. Whew! I proceed across Putulla Bridge, up Scott Road hill and find out how much power a 200 cc with 3 speed trans has. Aha, more tracks at the top of the hill. I've got 'er beat now I think as I cross them at right angles. The rest of the ride home is uneventful

Having a motorcycle and working at P.V. (Braid Street off Brunette) has its advantages. When leaving, at quitting time, there was a stop sign at Braid and Brunette. There would be a line-up of employee's cars leaving all at the same time. It would back right up from Brunette Street all the way into the parking lot bumper to bumper! I would ride up the wrong side of the road to the stop sign and away I went.

Lesson #2: The Francis B. didn't have much power, so I would follow behind the cars. This worked fine, until one day on Scott Road. The car I was following turned left on Old Yale and a car at the stop sign to my right (not seeing me behind the left turning car) pulled right out in front of me. I veered to the right, he stepped on it, I missed his back bumper by inches!

Lesson #3; When going up hills I got into the habit of riding on the right side of the road. This encourages cars behind to pass you when they shouldn't. A problem arises at the top of Scott Road hill. Crossing the tracks entails changing from the right side of the lane to the left side of the lane to cross the tracks at a

right angle. Normally no problem, except this time a car tries to pass me. Just as I cross the tracks, I heard a big screech of brakes. So look first, Al!

Winter was coming so I got a 40 Ford pickup truck for transportation. I dismantled Francis B. (Don't like blue paint job) and found the down tube, under the seat) completely broken in two. I took the engine to British for an overhaul. The complete job, parts, and labour cost \$52.50. Now, what colour to paint it. I saw somewhere, a new plastic paint advertised. Sort of salt and pepper flecked. "Now" says I "that's different" I painted the entire bike black and white flecks.

Come Spring I put Francis B. back together fired it up roared up the road. The engine seizes so I cooled it off. I roared up the road again and seized it again! British, said "bring the engine back". So, they hone the cylinder out a bit, and I had no further problems. I ride my reassembled bike to British. They looked at the paint job and said, "by the way did you know that the model's name for your motorcycle is Seagull?". "Oh", I say, and they continue "and it looks like one just crapped on it".

During the winter, I had time to think about my close calls. I attributed them to a lack of power, so off to British again to get a faster, bigger motorcycle. In the meantime, "Hold your head up high and walk out in the sun, NEVER give up, NEVER give up, that ship."

