



Terry's Travels

TT3-1 Northern States of USA July to September 2001

It was midnight in Minneapolis when Di and I arrived into the States. Our friends Skip & Louise collected us from our airport motel the next morning - first stop was Cabellas, this is a HUGE store selling all outdoor equipment and clothing in an amazing setting like a natural history museum. The taxidermists have had quite a project here - but there is also a live aquarium that would keep us fed for the rest of our lives. We needed waterproofs and a few things for the upcoming bike trip. By upcoming I mean I join the guys at 7:30am the next morning. Arriving in Humboldt IOWA I got first sight of my new bike - a Triumph Bonneville in shiny green - similar to one I had in the early 1960's but built by the new Triumph factory in England. It looked small alongside Skips Harley. He had collected her and fixed the tag and insurance for me - all I had to do was a quick test ride and fit my luggage.



Next morning we went to meet the other 3 guys at the gas station and started out in hot sunny weather. I was riding in my leather vest and enjoying quiet roads through the flat plains. Mostly corn and Soya beans are grown here with the occasional chicken farm which didn't smell bad and pig farms that did. Soya bean oil is being mixed with diesel here as an effort in renewable resources. A substantial breakfast that America does so well came after the first 100 miles and my hands were a bit tingly - humm...



The next stretch I increased my speed to about 65mph - and never got the tingles again. The day ended at Winner with about 300 miles on the clock. Boy did the beers at the motel taste good - then it was a swim and a hot tub followed by a siesta before a good meal at the VFM club - I could get to like this....

The next days riding was in more undulating country and it was getting hotter. Besides my Triumph there was a Kawasaki Nomad and Yamaha Roadstar which look like Harleys and 2 genuine Harleys. Now I'm running at 70mph and we expect to be in Sturgis S Dakota by evening - even though we had a long stop at a casino where live music was being played by the world's oldest band (joking aside its very common for Humboldt people to live to over 100). We are now starting to see the pseudo bikers taking their bikes from trailers to ride into Sturgis. Passing through Injun territory the locals a chance to bum a dollar for a beer. The Bonnie is doing about 50 miles to the American gallon so I can go 150 miles before going onto reserve and with petrol at a pound per gallon I feel to be turning the clock back on the retro looking bike.....

Terry - Humboldt IOWA



Terry's Travels

TT3-2 Northern States of USA July to September 2001

Arriving near the Badlands (desert) region it was around 100 degrees outside. The cool air in the Longhorn Bar was welcome but an icy beer was even more so. Ankle deep in sawdust and full of bikers the walls were decorated with massive 6' cow horns, the bar stools from old metal tractor seats. Water is also drunk in these bars - you need it to avoid dehydration even though it doesn't fit with the "image".

The Magnificent 5 (not 7) rode their iron steeds into the town of Sturgis. The normal population is 5,000 and last year 750,000 bikers arrived! Our accommodation was a "shop" (garage) with 5 roller shutter doors - we corralled our bikes inside and shook down our bed rolls on the wooden floor of the loft. It had an aircon unit - VERY NECESSARY, and slipped the owner 100 bucks each for the week - a super deal since the location is on the corner of Main Street where it all happens. A loo and shower were below and vendors selling barbequed meats had a smoker set up in the forecourt. The nearest bar was the VFM club just 100 yards away - necessary since the police do not allow alcohol on pavements. There was a gazebo and chairs where we could people and bike watch.

My pals go to Sturgis a few days before it officially starts so it wasn't jammed yet. The vendors (well over 1,000) were setting up to sell the millions of T shirts, leather wear and chromed gizmos. There were customised Harleys by the hundred and the price range is around 30,000 dollars. I know - BOYS and their TOYS. Rather more modestly all I wanted was a sheepskin for the saddle of my Triumph to keep our butts comfy. This massive event grew from 1938 when 'Pappy' an Indian dealer invited a few friends, its been building up ever since with only two years missed during the second world war. It has a big effect on the local economy with nice houses renting for 5,000 dollars for Sturgis week. Shopkeepers rent their store to vendors and don't even bother operating them for the rest of the year.

The Broken Spoke is one of the bigger bars in the centre - its like a country fair and outdoor concert venue surrounded by outdoor bars. They sell their own stylish clothing too. The band and sound system were especially good and everyone was having fun - I love it. The dancers do it differently here - but its entertaining - especially when they fall over. Even in this heat its blue jeans and boots with a T shirt - the ladies were (undressing for the heat and those with the netting type leotards looked good at up to size 8 - it was obvious that they made them up to size 20 though!! There's big guys swinging the sledgehammer to ring the bell, the pointed lump hammer to drive the nails into wood stumps - it all builds into an alive sexual tension. Our evening stroll had now turned into a night out with more bars visited and then suddenly its 2am and throwing out time at the club.....and back to sit outside our gaff to people watch for another hour before heading to the loft to sleep.

Terry



Terry's Travels

TT3-3 Northern States of USA July to September 2001

Sturgis was now in full swing with all the vendors set up along Main Street and manufacturers with their bike displays and demo rides. near the interstate. BMW were running plenty of good looking machines. The new Honda Goldwing looked good but massive in canary yellow. Their new 1800 Cruiser I hated. Yamaha have an interesting Road Warrior coming. Then across the road to Harley. IT was there - I had read about it and seen fantastic pictures - the V-Rod. After I had my orgasm I decided that I wanted one. Despite living all these years I'm still a big kid. Then we took a stroll down the hot and jammed Main Street - bikes are shinier and noisier - in fact it's unusual to (not) hear a quiet one. The Boss Hawk bikes were there too with their huge Chevrolet V8 engines making the hot air more polluted. Painted near naked bodies have found their way from the anything goes camp sites to downtown. An airbrush squirts a base coat over the nipple to make it legal. Then the artistry starts - the lady seemed to find it exciting - I read later that the bottom half too was being done in the campsites. I can't imagine the themes -Grand Canyon - Flower Vase - Bicycle Rack??

The Christian Motorcyclists Association were there represented by a lady who was munching her way through half a pound of jelly babies - and no, I can't explain any religious significance. In the hot weather I thought the sign "Expose yourself to the Son and you will not burn up" was very apt. Skip and my spiritual journey was to the Fireside, the Oasis, the Dungeon and then we escaped back to the VFW club where a loud wealthy Alabama car dealer was quite amusing.

Skip then insisted that we had a "gut bomb" before going to bed, so it was Polish sausage dug from the slimy pile with trimmings and mustard. Surprisingly with no ill effects - just as well since the one toilet was often under pressure at our "digs". The fabulous riding round the Black Hills of S Dakota (one of the very reasons for Sturgis) took us down some scenic canyons. None more so than one that had the Bridal Falls, a spectacular waterfall that can be seen from the road. We even have two friends from Florida who were romantically married here 4 years ago. Another ride took us to a former school that is now a bar. The gym being available for sporting and social events - a big improvement. A sign proclaimed The Worlds Largest Bar - a new countryside bar called "Full Throttle" and it was BIG and LOUD - but the band was CRAP when we called. Still , old top loader washing machines were piled with help yourself peanuts to go with the beer so it wasn't all bad. Then there seemed to be more better looking ladies too - can we put that down to the peanuts?.....

Terry - Delafield WISCONSIN



Terry's Travels

TT3-4 Northern States of USA July to September 2001

I had an early start one morning riding alone towards Rapid City. Riding up another canyon by gravel road at first on my quiet "Bonnie" I was just so happy in the wonderful natural scenery when I saw a big dog coming out of the long grass about 60 yards ahead. WOW - its not a dog - what a wonderful creature with a very long body and long tail. It loped effortlessly across the road and contemptuously glanced at me - its a Mountain Lion. HELL - should I be scared - and then I was past. I was so entranced at such a wonderful experience that I didn't want this road to end - then another creature came across the road about 2 miles later - this time a long legged Coyote - didn't even glance at me - cool. I stopped for a coffee and rode back over part of the same road but no more exceptional wild life. I rode on to Custer National Park which now was busy with all the bikes and HOT.

Bikes and trikes with trailers loaded with the kitchen sink made it too busy to get the magic. Riding back through Rapid City I saw 109F on one of the banks! A hot "Bonnie" turned her first 1,000 miles. I had drunk about 6 pints of water today and was still thirsty. Sections of road had badly melted tar to care was needed. I got back and enjoyed a siesta after my 200 mile day in this heat. Three of the Magnificent 5 had now left Sturgis and Skip and I had a final evening at the Dirt Track races which were really good. Talking to others in the crowd their had been so many people affected with heat stroke that the State of S Dakota didn't have enough ambulances. All the more reason for us to get some more liquid input - but brewed by Budweiser. (I had been to a promotional show of theirs, lots of info but only 3 free mouthfuls!).

Skip and I rode out of Sturgis early to avoid some of the heat, taking a different route along the 34. After we crossed the Missouri River it was lunch and I also got chance to see a Lewis & Clarke exhibition. These were the all important explorers who opened up the West some 200 years ago. The nights stop in Madison after about 300 miles was near a good restaurant with some fair 'Chateau Cardboard'. Skip even used a car wash on his Low Rider. Next morning it was sprinkling - he shouldn't have washed it - and it felt chilly even at 65F after the 90's and 100's. We risked it without the waterproofs and it cleared. Another stop at a casino for water and toilet - we were poor customers for them. An easy days ride took us to Skip's cabin on Lake Okojobi. This is near the 130' deep blue water spring fed lake - a lovely area. The ladies met us here and we visited one of the many restaurants. There are many million dollar homes around the W side - the attractions are the boating and excellent fishing and a long established fun fair etc. We plan to come back here again later in the trip but in the morning its back to Humboldt

Terry - Port Washington WISCONSIN



Terry's Travels

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Back in Humboldt I again had internet access and took advantage of it. 'Bonnie' got a wash too and I met more of Skip's friends in the interesting local bars. Louise has a large packed Bric a Brac store with a mail order dept too for DIY candle making. A visit to the local Mexican restaurant and the heat returned - this time internally. Di slurringly commented on the excellence of the Margharita. Fort Dodge 20 miles away has the breakfast place that all the bikers meet at. But best of all we were headed to Algona - about 20 miles in the opposite direction. This is where Skip's long standing Harley dealer is. He also does John Deere and all the farming stuff. Skip had rung from Sturgis once I had seen the V-Rod in the metal and put his name on the list for me. They were reluctant to quote a price or delivery - or take a deposit. They will sell above list - in England we call it selling 'over the odds' - across here using a much better phrase - its called 'scalping' - so we will see what happens. We then went to a steam rally with steam traction engines working saw mills. There were old threshing machines and interesting bikes/cars - a good event. Even ice cream made the way before freezers - mixing ice and salt to get the freezing effect. Di and I were now leaving for the touring so 'Bonnie' was well loaded as we headed E to see the supplying Triumph dealer for some service. The riding got better and better with undulating countryside taking over from flat plains and this time a deer crossed the road safely in front of us.

Crossing the mighty Mississippi River we saw a paddle boat making its way upstream and then we were in ILLINOIS headed for the historic small town of Galena dating largely from the 1850's. General Grant lived here for a while and was given a mansion after the Civil war - nice place. The weather had been perfect biking weather 79F - 83F and sunny with just a breeze. Sunset was a delight - to sit out with a bottle of wine - I think I can stand roughing it.

Next morning 'Bonnie' loved the 'Stagecoach Trail' with trees, bends and switchbacks. The farms were looking very affluent as we continued E. The upmarket town of Delafield WISCONSIN had a super library with FAST internet access - and FREE - I like it. Quickly I found where the Harley factory was in Milwaukee and off we went. Arriving in the city we saw the monster Miller brewery before we found a motel. My mobile came back in range of a digital service so I was plugged back into the world for a while. Then a swim and hot tub was good before visiting Cactus Jacks with a lively African American bartender/waitress. We overheard her talking about a \$300 lunch with a friend in Barbados (not on one of my tips). Wisconsin was known as the Badger State since the miners were so busy digging they didn't have time to build houses. Its a dairy area too and the cities are very industrial. Its Eastern boundary being the great Lake Michigan. We visited the Harley factory (see TT2/6S which is more tech for bikers) which was most interesting and took a bit over an hour. It was overcast as we rode to the shores of Lake Michigan where we passed the most impressive houses (I should say modern mansions - I bet Willy G lives here!). It started to rain and for the first time we donned our fetching green waterproofs that match 'Bonnie'. I had to use Interstate 43 for a while but fortunately the spray wasn't too bad.

Terry - in rainy Manitowoc WISCONSIN so my writing is catching up!



Terry's Travels

TT3-6 Northern States of USA July to September 2001

'Bonnie' is so good in many ways - comfortable, brakes OK, torquey sweet engine, economical, neat and nimble, carries the two of us with luggage, cruises easily at 70mph and cost \$8,000. I'm less happy with the transmission though. Especially when hot, on initial bite of the clutch she sometimes judders and shakes - feed in more clutch and OK. It sounds and feels like a primary chain is flapping - perhaps due to a little uneven clutch take up - but yet she has gear primary drive. The Triumph dealer supplied the bike with a fairly tight O-Ring chain. The Triumph dealer in Rapid City did the first service and said the rear chain was OK. I went back (en route) to the original Triumph dealer at 2,000 miles who SLACKENED and lubed the chain. The fault persists. The dealer talked about the cush drive being in the rear hub - I don't think the problem is here. I will Email Triumph. I also find myself feeling for another gear since she runs up to 70mph so easily. They say that noisy silencers and re-jetting have quite an effect. Many people come and ask me the year of the Bonnie so they think its an old one. Then the next memories they have is problems with Amals - and especially Lucas! One couple who were riding bright yellow 80cc scooters told me they were on Goldfinches - not Goldwings.

Harley's introduction of the new V-rod is very interesting. Its the biggest change since they started in 1903 and even though launching as a 2002 model it may be that the Centennial may be most realistic. UK dealers have quoted prices from 12,000 to 15,000 pounds and delivery from September to Jan 2002 so who knows.

As well as the Algona dealer I have been to another who backed off taking a deposit from me. The US price is 17,000 plus delivery but one is quoting 24,000 with some "extras". The old die hard Harley bikers are critical that it isn't like a Harley. Anything that is not an old Harley is not a bike as they know it. Its from this background that I'm SO surprised at the style and form (and performance) of the V-Rod. Get to read about it - its in anodised aluminium (aluminium) somewhat similar to the De Lorean. The suspension felt really good - better than my BMW Cruiser which it has a similar look of. The performance where it counts is faster than a Ducati 916. Porsche have obviously done quite a job for Harley from the racing VR1000 bottom end. It develops 115bhp at the crank at 9,000rpm and by all accounts is quite a machine if you never take it over 5,000rpm. Its the first bike to excite me since I bought the Cruiser in 1998. The only car I have is now 15 years old - I bought it new and its a BMW 6 cylinder 325 - nothing excited me enough since.

Visiting the Harley Power Train factory was informative - its where they make the XL engines for Harleys and Buells including the Blast. Other plants build the bikes in Pennsylvania and Kansas City (where the V-Rod will be built). The R&D dept on the same site employs 650 people and is to be extended soon by 200 more. This secretive place was out of bounds even to most engineering staff. The huge engine plant building was bought by Harley in 1947 - it had been used previously to build for the war effort - propellers etc for B29's. The fanciest machines here were CNC lathes from Switzerland and robots handling precision grinding procedures following heat treatment. All finished engines are run for 4 minutes and their performance measured. Random engines are thrashed for 4 hours - dismembered and re-measured. Just as impressive to me were the old lathes that could be used manually for parts for the older engines. The plant also fully remanufactures old Evo engines as new. Employees can buy one new Harley per year with 20% off - the factories notice boards are full of employee bikes for sale. they also have a gym at the factory. Harley plan a large new museum for 2003 in their home town of Milwaukee. The tour uses a Video Theatre - as expected Willy G is featured - in fact his name is patented! He is promoted with some justification as the Bike industries father figure. You wear headsets to hear the guides commentary and see video snatches during the tour - as expected its very well done. So yes we did the tour and bought the T shirt....

Terry - rainy Manitowoc; with 2,500 miles ridden on Bonnie in her first 2 weeks of life.



Terry's Travels

TT3-7 Northern States of USA July to September 2001

Lovely weather, quiet minor roads and I found myself whistling in my helmet. Two deer were startled and ran back to the undergrowth. I was watching for more and missed a Stop sign - that brought me back to concentrating really quick! The houses here often have pot animals in their gardens - deer are the most popular but I saw a very proud pot Dalmation on guard. In England we seem (not me) to go for garden gnomes - and no I can't explain why - perhaps you should read Harry Potter. We rode through Green Bay (famous for the NFL team the "Packers") and came across McCoy's Harley shop - we had seen so many T shirts from here that we had to stop. Massive and only open for 5 months it had more Harleys displayed than we had seen before. Then N and into MICHIGAN - there's less farmland and more scrubland but some very desirable houses and cabins by the lake. Yes, it's still Lake Michigan which is more like a sea than a lake with waves and sandy beaches. It's 500 miles across at its narrowest point and the ferry gives out sea sick prevention bands. Lunch was walleye - a popular fish here - I still prefer haddock. We saw a poster for speedway at Norway, this small town uses a Viking boat as its symbol and we had Norwegian hosts at our immaculate motel. The speedway was a third of a mile asphalt oval with a good family crowd. There were Superstox and V8 sports cars racing - also some we would call bangers. It was great fun and very skilful - like a junior NASCAR. An odd one at the local bar showed us the most drunken locals yet.

This was the most Northern point on this particular trip and we returned S to Green Bay WISCONSIN to catch a Bluegrass concert. A motel on the Fox river allowed us to walk across to the event being held on the river bank. One beer from the selection of 50 different micro brews later - and about six songs and it started to rain. We adjourned to the nearby brewery built in a converted railway station. We listened from there in comfort before trying a local trolley ride around the downtown area. It now was raining seriously and washed out the concert - probably diluting the beer too! The Holiday Inn across the road had two musicians (very skilled old timers) and we had a great evening at the bar with the friendly people. We were sat next to an American with an attractive gold encrusted wife from the Dominican Republic. It felt like a party with the musicians drinking away their pay too.

Leaving Green Bay on Sunday morning was quiet and in perfect weather for biking. "Bonnie" was obviously enjoying her ride down the river and we were soon riding down the rural side of Lake Winnebago - the city of Oshkosh (B'gosh) was on the other side. The wind was at our backs as we turned W and we were fairly bowling along. Being the weekend there were lots of fellow bikers to wave to. We saw signs for Wisconsin Dells which intrigued us. From the pristine lush forested areas we suddenly arrived in a resort rather like Blackpool. This is also an English holiday town with big amusement parks and shows - in fact there is talk of casinos being introduced here too. The Dells is an area with lots of natural as well as the man made attractions. Even amphibian vehicles can give you a trip on land and water. Our motel turned out to be Russian owned with a multitude of different nationalities staying there. A short walk took us back to the centre and a lively bar full of young people having fun - and so did we. Another look around the following day showed us more attractions. The best was a massive Trojan Horse - just like the movies - except that it had a wide water slide coming from its rear end.

We are now headed back to the mighty Mississippi and with more hills and bends we were really appreciating the riding. "Bonnie" now had 3,000 miles on her odometer. At Prairie de Chien we headed N on the most wonderful road right alongside the Mississippi - it doesn't get better than this. At La Crosse we recrossed the river and were back in MINNESOTA. We found a motel near a VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) and inside there was an American flag fluttering with a fan - it had the proud comment "These colors don't run!". The town of La Crescent is famous for its apples and we toured the orchards on the high banks overlooking the upper reaches of the Mississippi River for our last look. Now we head west again.....

Terry - Clearlake (where Buddy Holly gave his final concert...)



Terry's Travels

TT3-8 Northern States of USA July to September 2001

Now back across the border into Iowa we were into a routine for the touring.

Travelling light made the packing easy and we chose the A&W restaurants to get our hot cup of tea (the English!). The farm equipment that we passed on the country roads was BIG and some looking to our eyes as if from another planet. Large auctions are held regularly so farmers can swap and change their equipment. At one village cafe we asked the waitress where the information centre was, she explained she wasn't from town, this just heightened to us the mega difference between farm dwellers and 'townies'. Taking the 16W across more flat farmlands we stayed at Mason City and got cotton wear bargains at KMart (take 40% off the already reduced prices). A visit to the local airport showed us a history of gliders from 1910, a visit too from aviator Amelia Ehrhardt in the 1940s - it was also the place that Buddy Holly so tragically flew from in 1959. At Clearlake just 8 miles away is the Surf Ballroom where Buddy (Peggy Sue on Coral), Ritchie Valens (Donna on Del Fi) and the Big Bopper (Chantilly Lace on Mercury) gave their last performance before crashing in winter weather. Next morning we went along a gravel road and walked the half mile between beans and corn to get to the crash site "The Place Where Music Died". It is regularly visited by fans who leave mementos - they also go to the Surf to do some bopping and remembering - especially each February at the special remembrance concert.

Then we arrived back at Lake Okoboji to meet Skip & Louise for the weekend - it was Di's birthday and they brought a wonderful cake in the shape of Iowa. Made of egg whites the fluffy sponge went well with the bubbles from the American champagne. It really is a relaxing natural area of lakes; with reading, watching videos, outdoor concert and a ride to the North of Spirit Lake where the road is the border of Minnesota. Iowa's other borders are the Missouri River (W) and the Mississippi River (E).

A cabin on the shores of the Lake was where "The Spirit Lake Massacre" took place in 1857. This was the last awful coming together of the violent problems between the Indians and settlers. Many reasons existed for the small band of Indians led by Inkpaduta to be hungry and discontent and arguments became violence leaving 30 settlers including women and children dead (no figures for Indians dead). Only 13 year old Abbie Gardner and two others were captured alive by the Indians. Negotiations secured her release in exchange for horses and food and she returned to the cabin and got married - still at age 13. Later she made the cabin Iowa's first tourist attraction, she is buried there with other settlers. We are constantly amazed at the extent of America's development in this relatively short time since these hard days.

Back in Humboldt for a few days allowed a visit to the "Grotto of the Redemption" at nearby West Bend. This remarkable place was built by Father Dobberstein in the 42 years before his death in 1954 followed by Father Grieving until his retirement in 1996. Father Dobberstein had been sent from Germany to this parish. It is 9 different grottos each showing part of the life of Christ and made from varying geological rocks from around the States and world. These were crystals, agate, fools gold, stalactite and stalagmites, quartzite's - all of amazing colour and textures. Petrified rocks - tons of it and even amethyst from Brazil are all painstakingly mounted into concrete backing which is never seen. The materials alone have a 4,000,000 dollar value - many collected by Father on a horse and wagon which was a truck later on. Father had made a promise that should he be allowed to regain health through prayer he would do this. He did - AND HOW - people even talk about it as the 8th Wonder of the World and all whilst being the parish priest too.

Back in the town of Humboldt a make of motor home called a 'Born Free' is manufactured on a Ford chassis. We jumped at the chance to see the factory and really appreciated the excellence of the construction - but we still like 'Mercie'.

This coming weekend is my final long ride with my pal - we hope to get to an antique dirt track race and swap meet with all the old bikes at Davenport IA. Then onto Springfield IL half mile and full mile dirt track races with the stars of these races.....

Terry - Humboldt IOWA



Terry's Travels

TT3-9 Northern States of USA July to September 2001

6:30am and chilly when Skip and I left for our weekend away. The bikes were just warming through and smoothing out when the sunrise came. Golden pinky rays started to catch the tops of the tall concrete grain silos. Why do I always feel smug when I see dawn whilst travelling? The rays started to strengthen and reached down to paint the tops of all the corn fields - beautiful. Iowa's roads are like a square grid dividing up all the farmland.

We are headed SE by combinations of S and E. the first turn East points us directly into the fiery ball of the sun. I could only see Skip's silhouette as he lead with his obligatory rear light on. He rides a Harley Dyna Low Rider with special straight pipes - that means LOUD. I can easily judge his throttle opening from the nails of sound that he hammers into the dawn. Whoops - the next turn S has gravel on the corner that I couldn't see and Bonnie slid a little - hey this is fun. An hour later its breakfast time, a short stack with maple syrup and bacon (I hear you Brits going Ugh!) - if you tried some of the hot tea you would really complain - they must pay 25 cents per hundredweight for the tea bags - and then pour tepid water over them!

The sun is hot now and the leather comes off. As we near Davenport we see many more bikers who all wave. We pass through the birth town of Wyatt Earp just to remind us of the heritage of these parts. The event we are headed for today is an antique swap meet and dirt track (see TT2/10S for biker report)

The next day Saturday we head onwards SE to another event, I'm really excited since I have only seen film of this the Springfield Mile. Star riders of the Nation race on a one mile dirt oval at speeds up to 135mph (TT2/10S). The riding to get there is even better and 'Bonnie' now has over 4,000 miles under her wheels. It is more undulating farmland -the settlers certainly had masses of land available to them when they came. You hardly ever see people working in the fields but pass many huge farm machines on the roads. Its such a contrast to my recent trip to China. History shows in some of the old buildings - an opera house built in the late 1800's is now a store selling antiques - TV has a lot to answer for. Another old bank is now the FDIC Pizza Place, the letters signify the guarantee the banks give customers so perhaps the pizzas are right on the money. Motels are scarce at Springfield but a phone call gets us a bed.

After two days of racing our plan was to ride half way back that evening. The event was much longer than expected due to a tragic death of a rider the previous weekend. This freak accident left a widow and child so fund raising was movingly taking place. A set of leathers for example sold for \$9,500 so a lot of cash was raised. The whole feeling was one of great caring and speaks well for the whole community.

The sky was almost black when we stopped for the night after another great day. We were still on the Illinois side of the Mississippi. Skip planned a touring route and we crossed the great river at Keokuk - I get such a kick from seeing this - almost like going to the seaside and we are a long way from that. As we crossed the river we hoped to see barges going through the giant locks but no luck. Now back in Iowa we picked up a long Scenic Byway and this was the best riding yet. Three buck deer galloped alongside looking proud with their giant antlers. Then a fish eagle snatched a large fish from the river that we kept re-crossing. Small proud and affluent communities lived amongst this scenic splendour. You can always tell when you get to the stylish places - you see even more of the New VW Beetles and PT Cruisers. Today is the Monday Labour Day holiday and the favourite pastime was cutting the grass - ride on mowers of course - and garage sales. One town was a giant sale - everything was for sale. For such an affluent country - and this shows more and more - they have even greater CRAP in the garage sales.....

Our next visit (Skip did such a good job) was to Knoxville , one of the homes of Sprint car racing and to see the track, the old cars and especially the new amazing tech ones was enlightening - now I want to see them race. More river crossings - this time the Des Moines river - and we also travelled the "Draagoon Trail" from yesteryear, I'm glad I'm riding rather than marching. Our day ended with filling the tanks for an unusual third time that day - then we swapped bikes for the last 20 miles back to Humboldt. It had been a 7am to 6pm day of travel at its very very best.....

Terry - Hiawatha,KANSAS



Terry's Travels

TT3-10 Northern States of USA July to September 2001

DAVENPORT ANTIQUE DIRT TRACK & SWAP MEET

This was held in the spacious fairgrounds and Skip and I arrived within minutes of his biker pals who were setting up their tents whilst we went for a look around. Masses of old bikes were there and the great thing is that a lot of them were being ridden. I had no idea of the number of engine configurations that Indian had built. Of course old Harleys were the most prolific and lots of young guys were riding hand change oldies. Dozens and dozens of vendors were selling goodies both old and new. The real big money bikes were on display indoors - quite a few with sidecars. I saw lots of names unknown to me and there was a lot of good old Brit bikes and especially a lot of old Beemers. Very rare Zundapps were there with chairs on and it was nice to see some rusty "fixer uppers". The big attraction to us was the dirt track races around the half mile oval - all within the fairground. Beers were flowing whilst watching and the racing was really well organised. Can you imagine racing with the oldest rider 77 years old? - the total ages of bike and rider was regularly well over 100 years. 1940's model Harleys were running better than when new with improved ignitions etc and really moved. The old Triumphs sounded very revved and stressed but competed quite well. The best as a superb looking and sounding BSA 500cc Goldstar which won its races. Old circa 1915 Harleys with side cars did demo laps and there was a rolling start for a race of those around 1905 - wonderful - one was a 4 cylinder. The crowd were very enthusiastic for this nostalgic and exciting event. **SPRINGFIELD MILE**

This also was held in fairgrounds and we also got to see a horsey event in one arena. The fit young ladies onboard had enticing tight trousers but frosty faces - back the bikes. The one mile oval is smooth dirt skilfully watered enough to make it slightly tacky - not dusty. There are two capacity classes - 600ccs - all Rotax ATK engines in frames with single shock and just a rear disc brake. Megaphone exhausts gave performance and noise. The 750cc class are largely Harleys (one fast Honda) with special V Twin race engines in similar frames with wide bars - they sound fantastic and in groups the sound of thunder is a good description. Qualifiers for grid positions then heats and last chance qualifiers to semis to "The Main Event" with a \$100,000 purse. Nationwide TV is there and a crowd of around 20,000. Springfield has the honour that a win here gives the coveted No.1 plate. The races have a 3 or 4 row grid six wide. They blast off wheelying through the first 3 gears changes and fling it sideways round turn 1. We watched from the start finish line (thank you ticket lady) - - this time the 750's were passing around 135mph - and inches apart. The best way to describe it is like the super competitive 125cc GP racing with drafting and passing and re-passing - so thrilling. The track and bends are 10 to 20 yards wide but the best 'slot' they compete for is a polished 2 to 3 yards wide. No wonder this is considered good grounding for GP racing - Gary McCoy would have been at home here. I was so lucky to be able to get to see this. Chris Carr (ex Harley road racer on the unsuccessful VR1000) and is now top in the dirt, Jay Springsteen and Rich King were podium finishers.

SKIP'S HARLEY

No American leaves his bike standard and Skip is no exception. The twin cam 1450cc engine has Screaming Eagle carb and Vance & Hines Longshot pipes. 1" of lowering makes it a very low and it has an extra wide rear tyre which has lasted a creditable 16,500 miles. Fat Boy bars and a small screen give Skip the comfort he wants. When I rode it after weeks on "Bonnie" it felt so radically different. The raw power pulses and the deafening noise when you cracked it open, but it really goes with some urgency and then needs a lot of turning with the raked out forks. I don't really like screens anymore - perhaps because I normally ride in good weather but the extra wind blast and wind noise in my helmet is very unpleasant to me. OK I have to put up with more bugs hitting me and my helmet. I am using an Italian helmet that gives open face and full face - when open I get shielded from the sun - I like it. I enjoy riding with Skip and his loud pipes - they announce our presence to humans and wildlife alike.

KNOXVILLE

The dirt track here is the place for some of the top Sprint car racing. Can you believe a time below 15 seconds for a whole half mile circuit? Yes the latest cars are over 800bhp, tyres like our F1 cars and bigger wings. Not content with special ally blocks and ally everything - titanium is now being used where money is no object. This class "World of Outlaws" has to compete with each other giving the other ordinary poor millionaire owners a chance to compete with each other.

BONNIE

Now ready for her first service at 5,800 miles and just 6 weeks old she's really good to ride - so smooth almost like a multi. She will get to stay in my stable of bikes - she's in good company.....

Terry - now back in Humboldt, IOWA for last few days of this trip.



Terry's Travels

TT3-11 Northern States of USA July to September 2001

After all the wonderful times we have just had in travelling the Mid West you can imagine the shock and disbelief with the tragic events here. I had a call from my host to switch on TV just after the first plane hit. I then stared in stunned silence as the events happened. I feel so sad and angry that so called humans can do such things. We have had wonderful local help to re-schedule our return flights to the UK several days later than planned. You now cannot carry even nail clippers when boarding. Future flying travel will probably never be the same again. I don't relish the return flying but obviously welcome the extra security. Our return takes us from Minneapolis - Chicago - Heathrow - Manchester, hopefully arriving 2pm Monday Sept 17th.

The World has changed.

From a very thankful

Terry & Di