

Name: Dave Thomas

Date of Profile: May 21, 2016

Voted in to the WCMC in 1965

First Bike : 1939 Indian 74 (80?) cu. in. in a box(s), \$30 cash. As I was unloading it into the basement my father ordered it out of the house. Took it to a friend's garage. It eventually went to scrap after friend's hospitality lapsed.

Current Bike: 2005 Yamaha Majesty scooter .

Bikes owned: 1939 Indian 74 cu in, 1952 Norton 500 c.c., 1952 Harley Model "K" (45 cu in), 1953 Harley, Golden Anniversary, 74 cu. In. 1959 Harley 74 cu. In. (Picked up at factory in Milwaukee), 1972 Honda 750 c.c. 1970 BMW R 75, 1991 BMW, K75s (Took delivery in Munich), 1999 Kawasaki KLR, 2005 Yamaha Majesty Scooter

I became interested in motorcycles as a kid about 6 or 7 years old when a guy on an Indian visited. I remember him kick starting and the noise when it started.



Age 17, 1952 Norton 500



Golden anniversary HD with
What's-Her-Name, Pretty
British Immigrant Date

The reason I joined the club:

I was new to the area, from St. Thomas, and wanted to associate with other riders. Motorcycling was a lonely sport at the time (1965). I was also impressed the Club had property and were involved in both road riding plus competitive motorcycle sports: scrambles, trials and enduros. The fact WCMC was affiliated with the CMA was a plus. I used to be the only rider from St. Thomas who journeyed to Harewood Acres to watch CMA sanctioned road racing. Previous St. Thomas clubs I belonged to were AMA affiliated.



Chicago Rest Stop, Bringing 59 Harley home. John Jr. left and HD Dealer John Nicholson

I loved the noise, the speed, the maneuverability and the misplaced feeling of invincibility. It's truly pure luck this can be read on our WCMC web site and not an obituary dug out of the bottom of a box somewhere, as told by some friend in loving memory.

I never competed in organized competition but certainly did on the road with many impromptu drag races on city streets and flat out on country roads. No challenge was let pass! Fortunately I was not a drinker at the time. By the time I moved to Fort Erie I was getting married which really helped calm my itchy throttle hand.

At the time I joined the Club it was the beginning of my house dog years and shift work which kept me away from most weekend Club activities or even thinking of holding any office that required me to attend meetings every week....Not to mention my 40 some odd year project building my house. I was on the first board of directors when the Club was incorporated.



Golden Anniversary
with friend Irvabelle



Receiving New Bike at the
BMW Delivery Centre, Munich

Some Club projects I was involved in were obtaining Lands and Forest seedlings and planting along the fences; building the registration shed for Wes with the late Arnie Davison; building the roof on the men's washroom, some work on the food booth construction.

As my boys grew up they were interested in motorcycle sports. I directed them into trials for the reason I didn't want to have to worry about them receiving an injury that may affect the rest of their lives. During that time I was active organizing WCMC trials for over 10 years.

At the same time WCMC did Christmas parades where the boys, dressed like reindeer would ride their trials bikes over a little house towed along the parade route, with kids inside looking out the windows.

Of the 11 motorcycles I have owned, I have only bought 2 of them new, and both, took delivery at the factory. I traded in my Golden Anniversary Harley on a new 1959 King of the Highway, FLH at age 18 (See photo in Chicago). The St. Thomas dealer, John Nicholson took me, with his family, to the Milwaukee factory at Easter time. John picked up 2 other bikes on the trailer. One for Rocky's in London and one for a Tillsonburg customer.

I rode mine home passing through Chicago on Cicero Avenue (before expressways). I have never been so cold in my life! Stopping for the night in Port Huron, Michigan, I dropped my new bike in the motel parking lot, my legs were absolutely numb. Dealer, John Nicholson was out of the car so fast he caught my bike before it hit the ground, and for good reason: I was 18 therefore under the age of consent; I had no one to co-sign for a bank loan since my father wanted no part in my possible destruction and the only collateral John had was my Golden Anniversary trade-in. Back in St. Thomas, John's wife set up a payment schedule of \$60 per month over 2 years.

I had the 1959 Harley when I joined the Club. Chester Osten and I were the only 2 Harley owners, for which I remember a number of derogatory expletives directed at the brand.

Getting an early start on my bucket list I bought my BMW K75s on the European Delivery plan. As luck would have it, the last year it was offered in Canada. It all started with an April test ride day where I placed a \$500 deposit to enquire if my bike could be delivered in July. Once confirmed the balance was due. But as a single parent, two boys working, I invited my 14 year old daughter to come to Europe. To which she whined: "But Dad it's going to spoil my summer. I'm going to have to go back to school soon as we get home!" Well once we landed in Munich there was no more complaining. We toured south to Italy, north to England, then back to Munich.

Other interesting adventures included 2 trips to the Isle of Man TT for the world's craziest road race and to take in the European motorcycle culture. They are as crazy as we are.



Munich Car and Bike Delivery Centre

After retirement I started to stretch my limits for adventure. I had my BMW dealer save the crate my motorcycle arrived in, to which I put to good use shipping it to Cuba on 2 occasions. What an amazing adventure. Bombs were going off in Havana and I'm asking to ride wherever I feel like. Thanks to Cuban friends in the Cuban trade union, CTC, who believed in me, I was allowed. I rode 33,000 km on the Cuban roads. I was there in the crowd when Che Guevara's remains were buried in Santa Clara. I had some amazing rides through the Sierra Maestra, Crystal Mountains, the Seirra Escambra. Best of all after meeting almost ever cop in Cuba I never had to buy my way out of trouble nor was I issued a ticket. They would just tell me what I did wrong and away I go.

I had a web site set up containing articles and photos of my Cuban adventures called "Dave's Cuba on 2 Wheels". Some of those articles were published in a book of the same name. Only volume one was ever published.

My trip to Panama, with friend Ken Reipert of Oakville, was another story: Mexico, it was military inspections 2 or 3 times a day on the road; In Central America several times we had to grease local police. Again some amazing rides. It was January, we trailered to Houston, then covered 14,000 km, Houston, Panama, Houston over 2 months.



Crossing the Arctic Circle to Inuvik, NWT with Anna and Pat O'Hara



Anna and Dave on their Majesty scooter