



Terry's Travels

TT9-1 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi everyone

The three weeks back in the UK seemed a mad whirl of business and pleasure. The building that was the HQ when I had my company was auctioned - happily two Asians decided they wanted it and competed. The new house is slowly being completed - it mainly needs the gas board to find their gas pipe !!

Yes at least three different teams have dug some six holes - they struck water - which meant the water board had to come and fix it ! - and so on. I have got building a house out of my system...

Visits to friends and family meant that time just flew by. Mercie was parked up for a while.

This latest trip started at Manchester Airport where the computer had crashed and manual ticketing and a terrorist scare created a three hour delay to our flights via Chicago to Minneapolis. Our friends knew of the delay and Skip and Louise were soon driving us back. Passing all the familiar store and restaurant names reminded us that it was almost two years ago that we were stuck in the States following the September 11th attack.

What a different world since then.

This trip is all about MOTORCYCLING and when we got to Humboldt at about midnight I saw my new Harley V-ROD for the first time. It looked fantastic. I felt just like a kid at Xmas.

Daybreak came about 5am (oh yes I was awake) and yes I was up and drooling in the garage.

Resisting the temptation to ride until at least 7:30am.

The first couple of days have been spent getting to know the new bike, check the built on luggage and buying a few clothes for the travel light trip. It is mid 80's and with powerful sun - ideal biking weather so far. Skip and Louise rode their Harley and we headed to watch their grandson play baseball. I understand it more now. This was held in a small rural town in the Mid West and we went afterwards to Big Johns for a chicken supper. This is American living.

The Harley dealership at Algona who supplied the bike took my photo outside a newly built replica of the first shed where Harley and Davidson started the company just 100 years ago. This is the reason for being here at this time and riding a Centennial model Harley.

I know - lucky bugger comes to mind and my version is " He who WEARS OUT most toys - WINS.

Terry - Humboldt, Iowa, USA.



Terry's Travels

TT9-2 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi everyone

Fort Dodge is the nearest larger town to Humboldt, so a shopping trip was to here. The V-ROD is the first water cooled Harley and with temperatures around 90 degrees the radiator fan starts up in town - a new motorcycle experience for me. Other local rides took us to the Des Moines river at sunset with the wonder of fireflies twinkling as darkness came. I couldn't neglect Bonnie (the Triumph Bonneville) and a charge soon had her started up and running just fine. I gave both bikes a shampoo and we were set to tour. Male bonding has been taking place with the V-ROD so he is now called "Roddy". He drinks at the rate of around 40mpg (American) and will need frequent stops for petrol with only a 3.7 gallon (American) under seat tank.

Our next social outing was to bike night at Amigos bar. What a super event, the outdoor barbie had good hotdogs and burgers at just \$1 each with beers also at just \$1. Lots of friendly guys and pals of Skips to talk to. One trusting biker offered me a chance to drive (?ride) his BOSS HOG. This is a massive motorcycle with V8 Chevy engine driving through a torque converter. I had drunk three beers so declined (we were being driven in a pickup). The car park was full of fine machines mainly ridden by older guys with two lady bikers too. If good looking chicks are arm candy for non bikers does this make them Biker candy when riding on two wheels?

This was only the start to the evening since we were headed for an outdoor concert. A big crowd - no mossies (they had sprayed) and T shirt weather had us rocking to "Three Dog Night" until 11pm - you may remember their number "Jeremiah was a Bullfrog" - a great night out topped off by going back to Amigos to watch the burn outs blackening the car park - crazy.

The countryside is lush and green here after plenty of rain, with the wonderful smell of new mown hay as the farmers work until nightfall. Skip and I rode to Algona to get some goodies from the Harley shop and we saw lots of bikes arriving for the ABATE 4th of July Rally. We were heading for Skip's cabin at Lake Okoboji - about a 100 mile ride on Roddy for the Independence Day celebrations.

Is this living - or what?

Terry - Lake Okoboji, Iowa Great Lakes, USA





Terry's Travels

TT9-3 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi Everyone

Skips pal Curt took us on Lake Okoboji in his large speedboat. The trip started at sunset - a perfect time. The daytime heat had hit at least 95 degrees and even at 9pm must have been 80 degrees. The lake was very busy with boats packed with bikini wearers and topless men but the essential equipment was a cool box and some bug spray. I was upfront with Skip keeping the nose down as the V8 inboard growled. I marvelled at the way the bow wave didn't come over the side - until one did, big time. I was soaked all the way South of my bellybutton but in the hot night it didn't matter. The Maybugs were hatching as they rose to the surface of the lake - spooky.

There was a storm warning on the radio as we headed back from our 'booze cruise' and another boat was just being launched. The merry young passengers wished us 'Happy Independence Day' which was just minutes away - very nice. The storm broke as we were back in Skip's cabin, with high winds, torrential rain and amazing lightning. Louise said it was heat lightning, rainbow lightning and chain lightning - but after a while I just went to sleep.

Next Independence Day morning was special breakfast expertly cooked by Skip, sausage patty, pecan roll and delicious watermelon. There were stories of tents blown away and a neighbour had his bell tent blown onto its side but it was the lightning that drove him to seek shelter indoors.

Its strange that we are here celebrating an event that dates back to 1776 when America got its independence of the Brits! One of the suggestions that General Adams made way back then was feasting but also fireworks. The lake has a firecracker show and Curt had kindly arranged to take us all on the lake for a front seat. We were taken by surprise when the first battery of rockets whooshed into the darkening sky. We were just 100 yards from the launching barge. The firecrackers were bursting right overhead and the explosions echoing across the dark water- it was fantastic. Lake Okoboji is one of five large interconnecting lakes which are part of Iowa's impressive Great Lakes. Independence Day is the biggest weekend of the year here so we had to join the boat jam to get back through the link under the bridge. Curt and his wife Sarah asked had we had "smores" - no.' Well come back to our bonfire and try them' - its another July 4th thing. They toasted marshmallows on the bonfire, put them on Graham biscuits with a slab of Hershey's chocolate and another biscuit to complete the sandwich. Once tried you will want some more - "smores" .

Terry - Spirit Lake, Iowa, USA





Terry's Travels

TT9-4 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi Everyone

Saturday night in Jackson, Minnesota is Speedway night. It began with a confident, almost tuneful 14 year old girl singing the Stars and Stripes as a rousing start to the races. There were Sprint cars, stock cars and modified 360 and 410's competing around the well prepared oval. The track was claylike and had been well watered so was slick but grippy. We had a good evenings racing before a lovely warm 20 mile ride back behind Roddy's bright halogen headlight.

Another days cruisin around Spirit Lake took the four of us to the Minnesota border. The pattern seems to be rain during the night and sunny days - suits us just fine. Our plan was to visit "The Ritz" pub on the lake for Skip and Louise's final night before they returned to Humboldt. Its so good to use a boat as transport for a night out. The live band was just finishing their gig when we arrived and one well drunken customer introduced himself as "the asshole" that you always get! - at least he knew himself!!

The boat ride back under moonlight with a quiet calm lake was special as we returned to our slip passing lakeside homes displaying the American Flag in coloured lights all reflecting in the still lake.

Di and I have settled into life in the cabin with lots of reading, writing - mostly on the deck where we watch the many varieties of birds amongst the mature trees. The squirrels are much browner than the ones in our English garden and the rabbits seem bigger. Then we take a bike ride into the miles of farmland, its strange to have a country ride on such quiet roads named 350th Avenue and 117th Street. The old adage used to be "corn should be knee high by the 4th of July" but modern strains are MUCH bigger. Iowa is all about corn, Soya beans and hogs. We avoid riding at dusk since 25% of all accidents are with deer - it can hurt on a bike!

We had a super evening down at Arnold Park - this is a historic funfair - and we had dinner at Maxwell's Beach Cafe - the ideal people watching place, with the sunset coming in over the lake. The "Queen" pleasure boat leaves from here, but even better is that this is the place for cruisin. The occasional rich kid in daddy's car comes by, but lots of immaculate customs and the battered cars crammed with teenagers too. I saw one impressive Corvette in NASCAR Pace Car colours with the number plate "OVER21" - he was. BOJI VU on a shiny Lincoln told us he was a local.

Of course I had to do a circuit on Roddy. A guy shouted "nice V-ROD" I don't reckon it was a chat up line with Di on the pillion.....

Terry



Terry's Travels

TT9-5 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi Everyone

We are settled into life in Iowa. We now know where to get 25c beers as a Wednesday special. - I can put up with a scowling barman. Taco dinner at \$3 is on a Thursday - with good pleasant service. In the "Naughty Pine" we had a good laugh. An old guy was in there and I had admired his mini motorhome.

He joked he was sleeping in the car park when there was a banging on his door at 3am. It stopped and he went back to bed. He was awoken again with more banging - so he got up and let her out!

Roddy has just had his first service at 1,000 miles and no faults just a headlight adjustment. I'm spinning him up a bit now - WOW - its by far the most powerful bike that I have owned. It has a 90mph SECOND gear capability and revving to just 7,000 rpm is impressive - it red lines at 9,000 rpm. I shall never use his full potential but its great for it to be there. Now what worries me is thiswhen Roddy got to the Harley shop he bought a bra. Yes Harley part number VRSCA Air box bra - actually it protects what looks like the fuel tank. It worries me that maybe he has transvestite tendencies.

You know I look at bumper stickers and T shirts, well the number one bumper sticker in the States is

' Welcome to America - now speak English '

I reckon that would be good for England too

The best T shirt so far is

' IMPOTENCE - its natures way of saying "no hard feelings"'

We are having a long weekend at the lake leaving tomorrow and going to a Joe Cocker concert at Lake Okoboji, but then next week I travel alone through Iowa then Nebraska before hopefully meeting Skip and the guys in Colorado. The plan is then to ride through the Rockies and into Wyoming before looping round into South Dakota for the massive Sturgis rally - should be plenty to write about....

Terry - Humboldt, Iowa, USA



Terry's Travels

TT9-6 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi Everyone

Joe Cocker was fantastic - a hot night outdoors next to the lake and everyone partying to the music - his gruff voice as good as ever. Memorable. Then the next night to hear Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown - this original blues musician is now 79 years old. He had a Grammy back in 1982 for his highly commended CD. It was a strange location - a cinema which only had the overhead lights so we saw only silhouettes. But I have an autographed CD and burned Skip a copy too - sssch - a nice memento.

I have been busy on the computer burning CD-ROMS with MP3 music and JPEG pictures from the still digi camera. The new DVD players can play together the music and the pictures which makes for a nice slide show on the TV.

The local Wal-Mart has a service for you to take in cards or CD-ROMS of your own photos, you put them on a screen and order what you want - quite simple and ready in 1 hour for only 29 cents (20 pence) for a 6x4. I hope I can do this in England.

Now a bit of tech stuff on the VERO. The 1130cc engine is fuel injected - the injection works better than on my BMW cruiser. The dual overhead cam V twin engine has had development work by Porsche and prefers 91 Octane unleaded. They achieved a very linear power through the extensive rev range. This results in you being able to select a gear and get a VERY wide range of speeds - ideal for the (rare) bendy roads here in the States.

Skip and I went for a test ride on the USA built Victory motorcycle - a competitor to Harley. When we got back on our Harleys we concluded that it felt a bit of a homebuilt job. We won't be having one of these any time soon - and they didn't even give us a T shirt

Terry - Jackson Hole, Wyoming (near Yellowstone NP).





Terry's Travels

TT9-7 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi Everyone

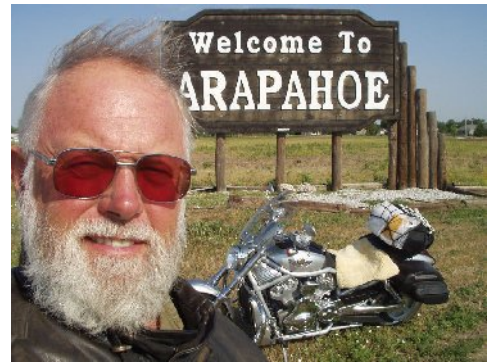
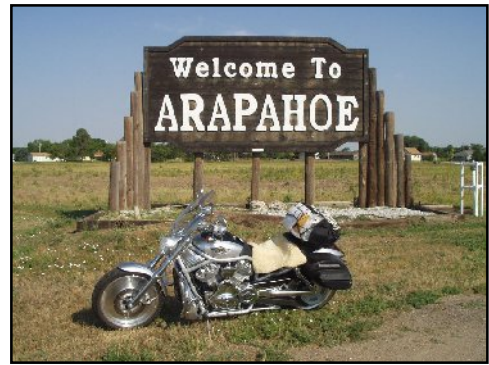
7am, out of bed, packed the leather panniers, put the bungees over the bag. Donned the leather coat - this was it, my trip West was starting. It was a little chilly feeling, even in the bright sun but the first temperature reading I saw was 77F. Country roads across miles of farmlands and eventually a few bends and rolling hills. I remember Ida Grove and Sac City as I travelled minor roads. I crossed the Missouri River and was in Blair NEBRASKA and celebrated with a DQ - that's a Dairy Queen dipped cone, welcome since it was now 90F.

I crossed the long plains, now hot and breezy on the 30 West. Roddy's front wheel being solid seemed to catch the side winds and needed more steering effort than usual. The petrol (gas) stops were now coming up quicker since the speed limit was now generally 60mph (5mph over is OK), and having a stretch was welcome. Its all railroad and truck traffic here but the roads were quiet across these hot dusty plains. The afternoon sun was not getting into my eyes yet and I rode until 5:30pm and selected a motel at Kearney close to a Pizza Hut. I got that wrong since it proved to be take out only. There was a Mexican one next door which proved to be excellent. The cold beer and tortilla with beans were well earned. It was still 85F at 9pm as the sun began to set.

The journey West changed as I crossed the Platte river with the farmland looking more productive and well irrigated. In Western Nebraska I saw several huge horrible looking cattle feed lots. The rail road here was built some 150 years before to get miners and opportunists from the Missouri to Pikes Peak in the Colorado Rockies and the goldfields. It was getting even hotter as I crossed into COLORADO. I had to stop to drink more water several times and stopped at the museum at Wray to get some shade and cool down - it was 110F! When I came out Roddy had been in the sun and I couldn't put my hands on the bars and levers without gloves. I had an early stop at Fort Morgan to escape the heat. It was 9pm before I left the room for a walk.

Leaving at 7am it was fresh and lovely riding and soon I was approaching Greeley when I first saw the Rockies through the haze. I was booked into the Motel Super 8 Windsor ready to meet up with my pal Skip and three other bikers. I had ridden 700 miles from Humboldt. I was now going to ride with them all in the Rockies and then to Sturgis the big rally. The convoy was a Honda Goldwing 1800 with trailer (Pat), same again without trailer (Joe) and a brand new model Honda VTX 1300 - an excellent cruiser (Rich). Skip rides a Harley Low Rider.

We had an early start to ride through Loveland, Estes Park and into Rocky Mountain National Park. Riding mountains



is what motorbikes are about for me so this was exciting. We saw deer, moose, elk, marmots, big horn sheep and climbed to well over 10,000 feet across Trail Ridge with vast spectacular scenery, we were even higher than some remaining patches of snow that feed the rivers starting at the Continental Divide. Then it was downhill on smooth bendy roads. At one pull in we talked with other bikers who gave us an icy drink from the Goldwing Bar (pannier). I can't repeat the best joke here - it would wear out the * key..... this was FUN.

We were caught in a mountain storm and donned the rain gear, it was heavy for about 10 minutes but then the foamy roads dried quickly and we enjoyed going over Muddy Pass before dropping into Steamboat Springs. Skip was leading and got a police car giving him a friendly flash as a reminder that he was going a little above the limit. Steamboat was one of the original American ski resorts and we got a motel across the road from the old ski jump that has been used in many movies. The pool and hot tub were welcome to complete a wonderful day.

Terry - Jackson Hole, WYOMING. (near Yellowstone Park)



Terry's Travels

TT9-8 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi Everyone

From Jackson we quickly entered the Teton Mountains. The Tetons are in the 7,000 feet range and we pulled off to get a photo. Three bikers who we know from Florida spotted Skip whilst passing at 70mph - it just shows how distinctive he is, and pulled in for a chat - its a small world. We then entered the Teton National Park and paid the \$15 fee that also covers the adjacent Yellowstone NP. Lots of bikes were around now enjoying perfect

weather for the ride through the worlds first NP. We were also getting closer to Sturgis and Bike Week. Now we saw buffalo and giant elk. Enormous lakes are within this huge park and rivers too. The fire damaged trees from the devastating blaze of a few years ago are everywhere but Mother Nature is busy restoring it all. They let nature do its stuff and have also re-introduced wolves to the park, not pleasing local ranchers.

The weather was breezy and when Old Faithful blew we got covered with fine smelly spray from the famous geyser. We rode through this geothermal area seeing geysers, steam, people bathing in the 87 degree creeks. By Mammoth Hot Springs we had already had a good days riding but we had much further to ride for our

accommodation. Crossing and re-crossing the Continental Divide which is the backbone of America was quite awe inspiring. On one side of the Divide all rain heads for the Pacific and the other side the Atlantic. Leaving Yellowstone through the NE entrance in MONTANA we headed for the Beartooth Pass. This was the height of our trip at over 12,000 feet. I can hardly describe the scenic vastness and beauty. Charles Kuralt has it as Americas most scenic 50 miles, I can only agree. I got my camera out but it made me feel that I could capture a mere speck of the 360 degree vastness at the summit. The evening sun was glistening on the snowy mountain tops as we started the long descent. Fabulous sweeping bends dropped us down and into the lively cowboy town of Red Lodge Wyoming at 8:20pm. We booked in but didn't unpack.

Dinner ends at 9pm so the idea was a quick beer first, other friendly bikers bought us a round and another and another so dinner was forgotten. The cowboy barman was tall, slim and knew how to wear cowboy clothes - he also bought a round. I saw a lady playing a poky and drinking alone. I got her to pose in very friendly manner with a loosened up Pat. You know, him that took all my dollars at pool. I told him I was going to get him. The barman cooked us a burger that Pat said was awesome - and thought the barman 'neater 'an s***' - somehow we got back to the motel.....

Terry - Sturgis, South Dakota, SA.





Terry's Travels

TT9-9 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi Everyone

We dropped down from Red Lodge but still we were high in the plains. Cowboys were herding cattle and haymaking was in process in some of the prairies. Lunch came early at the Cowboy Bar in Meeteetse. This is the very bar that Butch Cassidy was arrested and jailed as he left for horse thieving.

Pat with his Goldwing and trailer was leading and we Harley riders marvelled that all the plastic on his Wing didn't melt as we dropped down further into 100F plus as we arrived in Thermopolis. This is a spa town that claims to have the worlds largest mineral springs. You didn't need such warm water on a day like this. Even better was a ride out through the spectacular canyon that even had a tunnel. The river alongside seemed to be flowing uphill. Geologists have marked the rocks with types and dates throughout Wyoming.

I saw dates ranging from 3 billion years ago to a mere 100 million. Having been made to feel like a speck on the planet I now felt that we hardly get a tick in this vastness of time. Having ridden downhill one way we rode back along the same road and felt to be going downhill again - weird.

Our stop at Cody Wyoming was at the Buffalo Bill Memorial Centre. This is a complex of five museums which are all linked - the aircon was welcome. 'Buffalo Bill' William Cody was a Pony Express rider in his younger days and later in life he had the famous Wild West show. Books and films of his lifelong exploits made him very famous. One museum has a massive gun collection with Colt, Browning, Winchester and Remington with the Derringer miniature guns also displayed. European firearms dating from around 1500 were all part of the immaculate display. My favourite galleries displayed the art and sculptures depicting events like 'Custer's Last Stand' and life of the Native Americans (redskins). The natural history museum was very well laid out and informative.

A bit more high speed on I90 and a few minor roads and we arrived in a crowded Sturgis - the worlds largest motorcycle event. We were staying with Skip's friends Gene and Leila. A mattress each on the floor of their cool basement was ideal - with a shower too. The local VFW (Veterans Club) and the Broken Spoke Saloon was as much as we managed on our first night as Rich, Pat and Joe were leaving at dawn. Our team now had two more members, Rich Williams (Harley Centennial Heritage) and Dick (Harley dresser). We were set to enjoy the cacophony of Sturgis life

Terry - Lake Okoboji





Terry's Travels

TT9-10 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi Everyone

Sturgis is a small town in South Dakota - except for Bike Week when the area expands to some 450,000 average. It began around 1937 when Pappy Hoel and a few pals met up in this scenically wonderful Black Hills area. They had casual dirt track races, partied and toured. They started the Jackpine Gypsies Club. Mostly they camped - the area is good for that but note the signs - **CAMPING ALERT**

In case anyone is considering doing some camping this summer, please note the following public service announcement:

Campers in South Dakota are warned to wear tiny bells on their clothing when hiking in bear country. The bells warn away most bears. Hikers are also cautioned to watch the ground on their trail, paying particular attention to bear droppings to be alert for the presence of Grizzly Bears. One can tell a Grizzly dropping because it has tiny bells in it.

It is now mega , larger than life in what is now a controlled wild way. The bikes are big, shiny, colourful and EVERYWHERE. Even the swap meet isn't rusty old stuff but chrome or shiny milled from billet goodies. We saw one grunge bike but the owner returned with his FAR from grungy pillion - she was a peach. Millions of T shirts, dozens of tattoo shops with guys looking nonchalantly cool as they got pricked - I didn't get to see the girls getting tattooed. Nor did I see any holes getting cut to insert the metalwork in eyebrows, lips, tongues, belly buttons or bits where the sun don't shine. The smell of leather is everywhere. The women come in all shapes and sizes and bought boobs are everywhere - UGH! The ones with nice butts (bums) wear extreme cut offs, chaps (leather leg covers) and therefore display their 'bunny wunnies' - work it out.

Daylight dawned and four Harley riders left the basement for a cowboy breakfast in Spearfish. Then fabulous canyon riding, stopping and chatting with all the fellow enthusiasts before we arrived at the Crazy Horse

Memorial . This the Native Americans (redskins) answer to the four Presidents faces at nearby Mount Rushmore. The face of Crazy Horse is now completed and the whole rock carving will be bigger than man's previous biggest effort which was the Great Pyramid at Gizeh. Yes, at 563 feet high and 641 feet long this amazing project was started by Korczak Ziolkowski (sculptor) at the request of elders. Started in 1948 it is now gathering pace.

www.crazyhorsememorial.org

Rich led us to the 'Flying V' - a quaint historic building built to commemorate the miners that worked the area. Now the venue for "The Bag Lady" bash - just one of the many Sturgis party events. Its also a favourite place for wedding receptions - and honeymoons. I was glad we were in Sturgis before the official week started since it gave us quieter roads to enjoy.



Nighttime meant a longer visit to the Broken Spoke Saloon, where I stuck pins in the world map on where I'm supposed to live - England and New Zealand. We listened to the loud but good band for a while before even louder whooping attracted us to the rear fun area. Two shapely girls - surprisingly without tattoos - were being dumped into a water tank by guys throwing balls at a target. Much wringing of hair, adjusting of thongs and checking nipple covers had the guys queuing for more balls. A cage had a variation of what I think they call lap dancing. This included acrobatic ear massage - yes one girl could do it with her inner thighs. You could then get a photo with a hard body model type with pumped up boobs.

Yes - its all a hard life

Terry - Lake Okoboji, IOWA.



Terry's Travels

TT9-11 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi Everyone

Sitting in Genes front garden we watched the hill climb. A good idea since the bikes were raising a thick cloud of dust before several eventually conquered the hill. His rear deck overlooks the Interstate 90 and it was interesting to watch all the bikes riding by. About 40% were wearing helmets (by choice) some 50% had windscreens of some sort and about 40% had LOUD pipes - the ones with no baffles being VERY loud.

Quite a few have commented on my quiet V-ROD but there are LOUD modified ones also that sound more like a noisy Harley - I won't be going noisy - it gets you into re-chipping and warranty queries etc. Nobody talks about power improvements and I certainly don't need that anyhow. The girls hair sweeping back at 70mph is interesting. The long haired types (both genders) find that plaiting and braiding is the only way to go, then it doesn't stream out even at 70mph.

Skip and I went to the short track (like speedway). What an exciting night of racing. I learned some more American language

"flat ass crankin" = going fast

It started with a meaningful prayer by a member of the Christian Motorcyclists Association (CMA) The CMA has a lot of members who proudly wear their logo on all types of motorcycle clothing. Then there was a good rendition of the Stars and Stripes with Veterans raising the flag to the singing. Chris Carr the National champion was there and cleaned up the pro racing, but not before youngsters from 10 years old had raced VERY professionally. It was really good that they had a podium and they gave them non alcho champagne to do the spraying with. It was four hours of good entertainment on a beautiful evening.

The next night was the longer half mile and again Chris Carr gave an immaculate high speed performance in both classes in the pro class. The crowd enthusiastically greeted Pappy Hoels widow who at 98 years old got on the pillion of a 1948 Indian and did a lap. She was there with a Mrs Davidson of Harley- Davidson - these are Sturgis Royalty. Pappy Hoels widow promised to do the same again in her 100th year - what fantastic spirit, all part of the joy and freedom that Sturgis encourages.....

Terry - Humboldt, Iowa



Terry's Travels

TT9-12 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

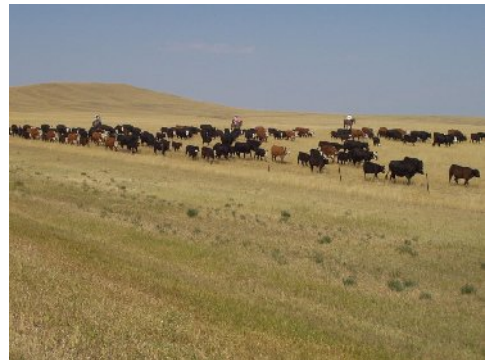
Hi Everyone

Skip and I rode back to Lake Okoboji to meet up with the girls in perfect weather. The 34 going East goes right past "The Full Throttle"- another giant saloon that we didn't get to this year. Bikes were turning in to look at the many vendors stands and maybe have a go with a bungee jump. Immediately we were past and into quiet open prairies. What an amazing contrast after all the noise and bustle of Sturgis. We saw cowboys herding cows along the mile after mile long fences and they gave us a friendly wave. We had a gas stop and the lunched on salad at Pierre to counter some of the fast food that we had consumed. We headed for the Huron Super 8 motel which proved the best stop of the trip. About \$64 for a double with breakfast A large new pool and spa. Best of all the receptionist that the food was awesome across the road. The Prime Time Tavern serves Filet Mignon - a small was normal by English standards and cost just \$5.95 with a salad and a potato - it gets a (TT 5*). The company was great at the bar and we have an intro to one of the Sprint car racers (more later)

With 4,500 miles now ridden on Roddy I feel that have enough riding to make more comments on Harley's V-ROD. I have already praised the smooth, quiet and powerful engine - the gearbox is also good too but a little lower first would be better. Now the handling, the low seat height makes it feel lighter than it is and it feels compact too. The length makes it slower to turn and the raked out forks mean that you have to work at steering it. Pushing the bars instead of pulling them is a better technique. I have done more of this contra steering but need to practice more - it certainly pushes into the bends better and it then corners pretty good. Since the brain doesn't easily accept pushing the bars to the bars to steer to the left actually makes you turn right - it may just be good brain exercise to help with Alzheimer's! I have ridden gravel and not had a problem with ground clearance. The brakes and stability are excellent. Above all its FUN and I think its orgasmic to look at too - so to sum up - am I satisfied? - OH! - YES _YES_YES.....

Keep the rubber on the road

Terry - Humboldt, Iowa.





Terry's Travels

TT9-13 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi Everyone

Riding from SOUTH DAKOTA towards MINNESOTA the terrain progressively got greener after the vast prairies, with some lovely hills and lakes as we crossed the State line. The weather was perfect, apart from some very hot days how lucky we have been to wear our rain suits for just 10 minutes in 3,000 miles of riding. We were still seeing bikers heading for the final days of Sturgis and waved. Pick up trucks were often carrying bikes with some on trailers.

*"Trailer your bike is a disease"
for help call*

1-800 SCARED 2 RIDE

Skip and I crossed the border back into IOWA and arrived back at his Lake Okoboji cabin to meet Louise and Di and Louise's two nieces Alli and Ash at his cabin for a weekends fun. First there was a parade of Hot Rods alongside the lake. Immaculate restorations in vibrant colours - it was great to see such workmanship and flair. A 1947 Mercury convertible in deep lustrous metallic maroon would have been my pick. Then a free evening concert alongside the lake, they certainly pack the events in here when summer arrives.

Even better we all had an invite to Sunday lunch at their friend Marlene's lovely lakeside holiday home with boat dock, which kept Skip busy on the barbie. After lunch Skip was driving their V8 Chevy powered Volvo drive speedboat. With six of us aboard it could pull a 'tube'. When it came to my turn I managed to fall off into the lake - it was warm - before I even got started. Then I had an exciting high speed tow swooshing over the wake until my arms gave out and I fell in again - WONDERFUL. Skip was quite exhausted with high speed driving for two hours at the same time watching for all the other boats as in turn he gave four of us some thrills.

We met more friends to be as we toured their lakeside home, extended and skilfully renovated over the last fifteen years. The second floor (in England 1st floor) deck was high in the tops of the surrounding oak trees. I was really impressed. In the front garden was a sign giving distances to where they had friends around the world. I hope to add one "Nelson NZ" when I work out the distance!

Terry - Humboldt, Iowa.





Terry's Travels

TT9-14 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi everyone

After just a couple of days back in Downtown Humboldt, which gave a time to write Emails, check with England and eat at Lomita's Mexican restaurant - their speciality is PITCHERS of Margaritas. It was time to leave for Knoxville - around 180 miles away with the girls on the pillions. It was pretty flat going out to Des Moines Iowa's largest City. Once again a friend of Louise's accommodated the four of us with Di and I in their 5th wheel trailer.

Knoxville was buzzing - we were there for the Sprint Car Nationals - the biggest event of its type in the world with some \$750,000 in prize money. It had the buzz of a smaller Sturgis - one immediate difference was white T shirts instead of black and shorts instead of jeans. All the properties close to the half mile dirt track were packed and every space taken with tents and motorhomes (RV's). The flash ones with scaled down Hummers for local transport. No doubt Arnie running for governor (he has at least one) will help keep them popular - yellow is the "in" colour.

We stood in line and bought tickets for the four of us for the first night and for Skip and I for the second. The first 50 cars were running on the first night, practice to begin with and then individual "hot" laps for grid position. These cars are 420cu inch V8 Chevies much modified with no fly wheels or gear box and running on alcohol - WOW. Do they sound and do they GO. Quite a few VERY spectacular crashes - one went up over 15 feet and brushed the overhead lighting - fortunately they resulted in no serious injuries.

The second night was even closer racing and appreciated Skip's knowledge to understand it all - he has been coming for almost 30 years. Even better was when the meeting ended we crossed the road into Diggums bar for a beer and the buzz. They then show edited tapes of the nights racing.

Our hosts Nyle and LouAnn looked after us extremely well and had arranged an interesting visit to Pella Corporation. They make windows and doors employing 3,500 people in this upmarket quality company - rated as the 12th best employer in corporate America and the town of Pella's largest employer. About an hours tour left me very impressed with their use of pine that is either veneered or covered in aluminium to make frames that are double glazed - all to order with SEVEN day delivery in the USA main States. Some featured efficient fly screens and best of all they had them with the louver blinds fitted inside the glazing and could be tilted and lifted. The metalised gold louvers then gave a triple glazed thermal efficiency. Nyle is a driver of the huge semis (trucks) and his boss at around 77 years old is the companies oldest employee of this unique private company.

Pella was settled by the Dutch and has developed around a 1850's working windmill. The centre has a new canal and has pavements and lovely flower beds that feature tulips in early May. Its so different to surrounding American towns - in fact its like visiting Holland.

Back in Downtown Humboldt and a charity night featured two entertainers doing 50s, 60s and 70s music very well - all outside a pub on another perfect night. Being 'home' gave a chance to watch the Knoxville final on Speed Channel which had cameras in the cars too. For the first time a 22 year old lady qualified for the A final - quite an achievement. "The Dude" picked up the big money.

The weekend ended with al party of 30 bikers coming around to watch the slide show of Sturgis on TV.

This is an action vacation

Terry - Humboldt, Iowa.



Terry's Travels

TT9-15 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi everyone

Since quite a few new readers have been added (and some deleted when undelivered) these TT writings now go to around 80 people in 14 countries. My Website still needs more work but is www.THinnco.uk it has some of my previous trips with photos. I really appreciate using Email as a conduit to the many friends and fellow travellers I meet around the world who keep in touch. I support and encourage you to support the "Riders for Health" charity which provides motorcycles as transport to link medics with primitive Africa.

Two months into this trip I am more 'in tune' with living in the mid West. There has been some hot and humid weather in Humboldt that has been energy sapping. Its bug time and now the corn bores have joined the mossies and grass hoppers in splattering my visor. Humboldt has the East and West forks of the Des Moines river and was laid out by visionary Stephen Taft with parks and very wide streets. Di got her picture in the Humboldt Independent - she entered but did not win a cookie baking competition. A cream puff won, but I would have had the Lemonade cake as the winner.

The local fresh sweet corn has been great to eat and as it becomes plentiful and be bought for only \$1 or \$2 for 12 ears! The local children have now returned to school but could be sent home if the school classrooms are too HOT.

We watched the thrilling MotoGP from the Republic of Czechoslovakia before 30 bikers arrived at Skip and Louise's for a party. Skip grilled Maidrites - like a scrambled ground beef. I did Patatas Pobre - sliced spuds, onions and peppers in olive oil. Barbequed beans - a feast that also marked the start of Di's long birthday fortnight (translation for Americans - that means 2 weeks). An evening with a Scottish couple gave some good conversation, they had emigrated with \$600 some 30+ years ago. America has worked out well for them. Another Bike Night at Amigos was as good as ever.

I can follow and appreciate the conversations much better in Skip's local now and can join in the repartee, to compete you have to be LOUD.

"tag team chick" = the local bike

"cruisin for a bruisin" = looking for trouble

"wented" = gone

if you think I'm going to put some of the above translations into repeating the stories - think again.

In the heat I have spent time on the computer and witnessed a virus attack that Norton dealt with. The firewall repels an unbelievable number of 'pings' as outside computers try to get down Skips fast DSL connection. Skip bought a new Kodak 3Meg digi camera which is giving superb results and now his computer is getting upgraded to a necessary 256k of RAM.

I accompanied 9 ladies to lunch at Stephen Taft's Memorial home. He was the man that built Humboldt. The 1867 house is stone built and has been beautifully restored and is now a quaint Victorian style private Bed and Breakfast doing occasional lunches - it was superb. Di and I will be doing a little B&B at our New Zealand home starting in January when our restoration (it started in Feb) is completed for January 2004 - end of commercial.

Terry - Lake Okiboji

PS Milwaukee for the Harley Centennial next/Di back to UK Sept 2nd/I plan to ride to Florida and would love to get to Cuba if I find a way.



Terry's Travels

TT9-16 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi everyone

Our final weekend at the lake included a poker run to assist the MS charity. About 200 bikes enrolled and in breezy weather we joined more of Skips friends for the 128 mile ride. For Poker Run read pub crawl - you call at about five pubs, have lunch at one talk to other bikers get you card stamped and return to the start alongside the lake. You get dealt a poker hand and the highest wins a prize. Your \$20 entry fee covers a meal at the end and the proceeds go to a charity. People that know me think I don't like gambling - in fact its not true - its losing that I don't like, so I didn't pay \$100 to join the draw for a new Harley Fat Boy.

Sunday was Di's actual birthday and Marlene served a champagne breakfast in her lakeside home before another super boat trip - another big thank you. The wind had dropped and it became 100 in the shade. Siesta time.

I had planned a birthday dinner and just the four of us went to a Teppanyaki style restaurant called Yesterdays at Arnold Park. The boss was our chef and we had a quiet cool dining room to ourselves. This was like European dining - no rushing - quiet conversation rather than the more usual 'talking competition' in noisy American restaurants. The food was superb (I had sushi quality yellow fin tuna) and gets a (TT4*) for this special occasion , Di was wearing the gold Harley Key that came with my Centennial bikeagain only in America.

Terry - Humboldt



Terry's Travels

TT9-17 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi everyone

Nine of us on five Harleys left Humboldt in bright fresh weather and headed East on the 3. The usual farm fields didn't change much until we approached the great Mississippi river. Then curving roads, more trees and a lovely warm climate as we crossed into WISCONSIN with impressive views all around.

The roads were interestingly undulating but for many miles the pavement was really bumpy and gave the bikes a pounding. As I followed Skip I could see the hidden rear suspension really working hard. We covered about 260 miles before stopping for a motel at Monroe. Candy, one of the group left us here, she was visiting relations, having ridden her Heritage Softail from Arizona before she got to the Centennial. She was a very proficient rider and we all did the usual staggered formation when riding together. Bikes were everywhere now and as we approached Milwaukee there were crowds on all the bridges waving enthusiastically and displaying "Welcome Home" signs to the Harleys.

The welcome continued at the rented house - the owners had collected lots of info and goodies to help us feel really welcome. The Centennial is to celebrate 100 years of the Harley-Davidson, something uniquely achieved in manufacturing motorcycles. The first event we visited was to see the new '04 models with a MUCH improved Sportster - now with rubber mounted engine - the entry level range. The rest of the '04 range was a bit disappointing. We met a friend of Di's brother by spotting badges for the Thames Valley Harley Owners Group. We saw others from around the world - Guam, Philippines, NZ, OZ, Guernsey, Indonesia, Hungary, Japan, Switzerland - truly an international event.

A T shirt read

*"I hope my boat comes in
before my dock rots"*

That evening we cooked on the barbie - the rented house came with car, computer and the gas didn't run out before someone had cooked half a cow. A friend always answers when asked how he would like his steak 'just cut its ears off and wipe its bum'.

We met many more friendly Milwaukeeans - even wearing a HD T shirt got a 10% discount. The town sits on the side of the massive Lake Michigan and has a wonderful lakeside area to host events. The famous art gallery with wings to shield the sun is here too. Our next event was Summer fest where we saw some expert trials riding, stunt jumping, 2,000 hp four wheel Monster Truck and had our ear drums shattered by hearing a drag racer called Ray Davies start his 900bhp drag bike which runs on nitro. The local police did a superb formation riding display, one dropped his bike but the crowd were nice to him. A comedy stand up then a good country band in one of the many stages and we were ready to go home before Skip and I had more excitement at the local short track. HD Sportsters made a great spectacle with close racing to a noise like thunder.

Terry



Terry's Travels

TT9-18 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi everyone

The Centennial parade had some 10,000 bikes (maybe 6 not Harleys!) rolling quickly by, with the riders proudly displaying flags of many countries from all around the world. The organisation down to the parking afterwards was wonderful. Friendly biker cops were all doing a great job. But the BIG event was the party. A mystery was created around who would perform. We heard lots of rumours - everyone went early, approaching 150,000.

The weather was perfect, the crowd well behaved, but little happened for hours. Food was hard to get - beer ran out - what a party. The opening Dooby Bros were gently booed by the disappointed crowd. Tim McGraw came on (in the top 10 C&W chart) - no better. Then Kid Rock did three good numbers and got the crowd going. The Harley COE started all the corporate back slapping bullshit - inappropriate. Dan Ackroyd was a lousy compere and when Elton John came on the crowd were leaving in big numbers - SHAME. The event promised so much but all I could think was Hype and Dollars.

The fireworks were excellent and there were about 70 Space Canon searchlights giving a super effect. The bus service worked well and we saw a young guy at some stop lights 'conducting' the bikers to play their loud pipes in turn - a true CACOPHONIC SYMPHONY - what a riot.

We didn't want our final night with Skip and Louise to end on a low note and found a late night bar. The barman/owner was quite a character and there was lots of chat, music DVD's and then three nubile customers got on the bar top to shake their boodies. We all had a good buzz on.

We said our goodbyes and a big thank you for a wonderful two months. Di and I then had a quiet night and took in a movie. The trailer for "Texas Chain Saw Massacre" had the best sound I've heard yet in a superb cinema.

Di flew to England and left myself and Roddy to ride to Florida.....

Terry - Branson, MISSOURI.



Terry's Travels

TT9-19 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi everyone

Riding alone I could decide just how to do my trip. As few Interstates as possible, no chain restaurants, drink water and eat fruit, swim where possible and don't always be looking at the map. Its easy to head South or West here and with the sun morning to evening I know my direction. I escaped the Milwaukee sprawl West on I43 and then 75 crossing into ILLINOIS. I rode very minor roads through more trees now with some showing the very early signs of autumn. The corn stalks are turning brown in some fields. I got my first sight of the Mississippi near Savannah and followed the Great River Road South where I overnighed in Davenport close to the great river.

I had an early start in perfect weather and when I passed Rock Island I was riding alongside the railroad singing the Lonnie Donnegan skiffle song about it. I had breakfast in Andalusia which had me thinking of my favourite area in Spain. The breakfast was a huge Denver Special and lasted me all day. By now my credit card was well used to going into the pumps and about \$4 filled the small tank. It was all great riding and just across the river it was still Iowa.

I was approaching Nauvoo and a few signs had mentioned it was an historic place but suddenly a huge striking white building came into view with a tower overlooking the river. I rode all around it and stopped at the Visitor Reception. It was a new Temple for Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints finished in 2002. I entered the hushed environment staffed by well presented people who quickly established that I was not a member of their Church. I watched an impressive movie then took a close look at what is a replacement Temple built in limestone to replace one that was destroyed in 1846 when they were driven out, its an exact replica. Then I looked around the village that shows what life was like in those early times as the centre of their Mormon Faith.

At Quincy there was a detour and I crossed the river into MISSOURI and headed S on the 61 and then the 79 Great River Road. More thrilling riding took me through the Mark Twain Forest and I just rode and rode, my sheepskin seat cover keeping me comfortable. I found my way through the prosperous outer suburbs of St Louis and found the excellent 109 S of Chesterfield which ended at Eureka where I wandered further S until I realised the sun was going down. I found a motel at St Clair to the West after a fabulous day.....

Terry - Branson, MISSOURI.



Terry's Travels

TT9-20 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi everyone

Roddy is starting many conversations, many guys know its a V-ROD but haven't seen one. One such conversation recommended that I go I44 to Rolla and S on 63. This was part of Historic Route 66 and took me through the Mark Twain NP and to yet another great biker road the 160. Sweeping curves on really good surfaces and I really got into the bend swinging before I reached Branson.

Set in the Ozarks or the Ozark Mountains it boasts scenic beauty and two large lakes but is an entertainment centre also, like Blackpool or Las Vegas but without the gambling. The choice of shows is quite bewildering and the game is to find the best shows with the largest coupons to use. Jim Stafford was amusing and had his talented 6 and 10 year old children on stage too. The musical 'Broadway' was wonderfully staged - great costumes, settings and good dancing. The lead female singer had a great voice coming from a mouth like the Mersey Tunnel but I missed the orchestra in the pit! - it was a bit like sophisticated karaoke - I know I'm a cynic. Best, for me, was an evening outdoor concert at the Silver Dollar City, a big amusement park. I went early to see some smaller music shows, they were good musicians but with poor PA systems. The thrilling and wet rides looked fun but made me miss my grandsons badly.

Luckily I was in Branson during the Shriner convention. These guys have Masonic links and generous waistbands - but even more generous hearts in helping children. The parade was quite amazing - some dressed as clowns driving all types of interesting cars and bikes and trikes and horses. The massive crowd took their lawn chairs and gave them great support, it must have taken about two hours for the parade to pass, with groups from all around the States.

I left Branson as dawn broke, the sun shining in my eyes as I went down Main Street with the colourful electric signs competing to get bums (butts) on seats. My own bum was a little damp with the morning dew. South on 65 to Harrison ARKANSAS and an early Sunday brunch. I was glad of the hot coffee as it had been a little chilly in some of the misty patches. Then E on the 14 for the best swinging so far. I had an incentive to get to Batesville and an early check in - the bike racing from Portugal and Holland was on the Speed channel.....

Terry - Pigeon Forge TENNESSEE.



Terry's Travels

TT9-21 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi everyone

I was on a high after such a great time in Memphis and was now headed East across Tennessee towards Pigeon Forge. I saw the first cotton fields before I overnighted at Winchester within sight of the Appalachian Mountains. As night fell thousands of birds circled and blackened the sky before noisily roosting in the trees behind the Jameson Motel. They settled for the night and so did I on my fold down bed in the tiny room - it was comfortable though.

My route needed frequent checks as I rode minor roads 127/50/108/399/8 and then the 30 E through Dayton - it was all wonderful. I started to see a few bikers again in the Appalachians and more so as I approached Pigeon Forge in the Smoky Mountains.

There has been a lot of interest in Roddy - I felt bad that he was so bug encrusted. Now with over 8,000 on the clock the rear tyre is showing wear. I'm starting to think that he could be called a radical sports cruiser tourer for one up riding.

Louise Mandrell (Barbara's sister) was my choice of show - a good choice. An eight piece band on stage made for an excellent music and dance show. Louise is a talented musician singer and dancer - in fact a very tidy 49 year old. She is SO popular with her patriotism and religious songs in this Bible Belt area where Dolly Parton is also based. I sat alongside a reunion of 15 guys who were flyers based in the Philippines some 50 years ago and had some good conversation in the intermission. The guy shook my hand and thanked me for England helping in Iraq! The Americans are VERY much against the French especially, for their lack of support.

There is talk of Sept 11th being called Patriot Day in remembrance and future skyscrapers will have better protection systems. A tape of Osama Bin Laden turned up for the anniversary - I'm sure it will help the sale of mats of his image for use in Gents urinals.....

I greatly admire how they are using the media to find wanted terrorists.

Leaving Pigeon forge early I rode along the main drag. A Rod Run was in town and for at least a mile both sides of the road were packed with shiny interesting cars and trucks. The grass verges were full of lawn chairs so they could enjoy watching all the cruisin'. I started climbing as I entered the Smoky Mountain NP, the early morning sun throwing beams through the trees and lighting the early morning mists. This is the most visited NP in the States and with 1400 different trees and plants gives the most fantastic autumn colours which will peak in about a month. There were early signs of this coming and since I was climbing to over 5,000 feet I had a double layer of gloves on for the first time. I rode over the Newfound Gap and crossed into NORTH CAROLINA where I stopped at the Indian reservation in Cherokee for breakfast. There was cinnamon in the oatmeal (porridge) - UGH. I washed it down with some reasonable hot tea, the day before even the tea had cinnamon - but even that is better than nuked iced tea!!

The 411 S took me into GEORGIA and it reminded me that my trip is coming to an end in the next State of Florida. With two more days of good weather forecast I am going for it to meet up with my pal.....

Terry - Orlando, FLORIDA



Terry's Travels

TT9-22 VROD in USA 4th July 2003

Hi everyone

The first miles in Georgia were spent coming down the mountains and travelling on smooth roads with the temperature rising, the humidity too. I decided to make miles and took Interstates I85 and I75 right through the centre of the massive city of Atlanta - not pleasant but I pulled off onto the 18 E to visit the Jarrell Plantation.

I was the only visitor to this secluded quiet piece of history. This land was bought in the early 1840's by John Jarrell having previously been a forested hunting ground for the Creek, Hitchiti and Muskogee Indians before being ceded! to the USA. He built a plantation on the 600 acres and with his family and some 40 slaves grew cotton and lived off the land. The family prospered (not as well as depicted in "Gone with the Wind") but did OK until the American Civil War drove them out and freed the slaves. He returned later and built it again, the previous slaves returning to take up work as tenant farmers and the plantation stayed in the family for 120 years, during which time they used early steam power to very cleverly drive saw mills, grind corn and to gin cotton (bale it). The family then gave the plantation to the State in 1974 in order for it to be preserved. The governor Jimmy Carter accepted it on behalf of the people of Georgia. It was an hour well spent to just drop back into history and marvel at the ingenuity of it all.

I headed for the library in the small town of Grey and it had just closed - sod it. I then booked into a seedy Asian owned motel. Not too happy with Grey I walked to the "Big Country" restaurant where I was brightly greeted by Miss America - well I would certainly have voted for her - my evening brightened. I sat at the bar and had an excellent meal of Tilapia (fish) and was greatly entertained by the college student staff. Lots of testosterone was evident plus the female equivalent. One waiter showed the barmaid how to correctly pour a glass of draft - she was not impressed - but I was - he gave it to me.....

The 441 South ran me through Georgia and then lots of fast empty roads to cross into FLORIDA before I rode into traffic again at Gainesville where there was a University Football game adding to the traffic. I stayed on the 441 all the way to Orlando (very heavy traffic) but I met up with my pal Ken who lives in Spain and is visiting the States for the first time.

I got a room at his motel. He had bought a pedal cycle from a nearby pawn shop and become friendly with the locals - all in his first week. This nice young waitress Becky had arranged for him to meet her widowed mum at Wendy's snack bar. Yes Ken, I will go with you to meet Connie. Ten minutes later we were both bemused. Connie had ridden dirt track bikes before losing her sponsorship for stopping to help a fallen rider whilst she was leading. She had FOUR Masters degrees and was a computer expert - but it all went wrong last year when she got on drugs - but ONLY cocaine. She took the rap for a friend for a felony and was jailed. She was on day release and had to go back in an hour! - and left.

Ken said that Becky's grandma could get us into Disney for free. I was truly AMAZED that the following morning grandma was driving Ken and I was following on Roddy in the smokescreen that the old pickup was laying.

Grandma signed us in (her late husband had worked at Disney) and we both played on the scary rides that Epcot (the new Space ride is quite an experience) and MGM give you warnings about.....

We bought wine and flowers for grandma - only in America....

Terry - Cocoa Beach Library, FLORIDA. (now with Ken)