

Nature Coast Tech Weekend
June 4-6, 2010

Scheduling conflicts kept pushing this annual event later and we ended up in the early rainy season here in central Florida. I planned on spending both Friday and Saturday nights and, since I was traveling by myself for a change, had the freedom to study the weather radar before leaving home Friday morning. Running the gauntlet of storms meant I departed around 10 to beat the local buildups while allowing two major cells to track northeast out of the Homosassa area. Those cells prompted Frank Zimmanck, our host to send me an email asking what I had done to tick off the weather gods. Strategy and timing, or just plain old dumb luck got me there with just a couple of sprinkles.

Riding across the central part of the state, I crossed the St John's swamp which was green and wet due to recent rains. Birds were everywhere and you always watch for "gators" this time of the year because they are seeking mates and a little strip of asphalt is not a deterrent if they think the female of their dreams is on the other side. The St John's River is the historical highway for early settlers in central Florida providing for their needs from the north while transporting their products out to hungry residents in east coast cities. It begins at two small springs just south west of Melbourne (Airmarshal Gator Balough's home) and is deep enough for steam powered side wheelers from Jacksonville down to Sanford. Passing through the historic area of that city I continued west with the ST just purring. Damn, love that bike.

Rolling into Frank's place in mid afternoon, I found Mike Barfield already at work on his R100GS. He was planning to change tires but Frank had discovered he didn't have the right tire changer setup so that was delayed while Frank ran to Ocala to pick up a better unit. Kevin Reimer arrived from Tallahassee on his R65 (had not gotten wet) and Mike felt his carbs should be adjusted so Kevin sent him out to warm the bike up. That 30 mile run turned into approximately an hour and a half because of a flat tire. We ended up bringing the bike back in a trailer and had to delay the carb tuning. Yes, he still had the old tire on and boy was that a long nail.

We got both tires changed after Frank returned and Mike headed out again to warm the carbs up. This time everything worked fine and, after Kevin did his magic on the carbs, the GS was ready to give Mike a few more enjoyable miles. We had some super southern fried chicken for dinner washed down with some good stout and called it an early night.

Up early and sitting around the coffee pot Saturday morning, we made bets about when the first bike would show. I thought about nine but it was a tad later with everyone checking that weather radar I guess. Bill Murray (not that Bill Murray!) from Port Charlotte rolled in on his R100 looking for help with the idle. Setting the valves helped but it was decided he needs to rebuild the carbs and that sport cam doesn't help. He spent the day with us though and shared his knowledge of Mexico because of numerous annual trips. Remember that "gator" ignoring ALL during mating season?

The story of the day has to be John Schaub and his beautiful 89 R100RT. He and I had traded emails about the bike, and I guess being dense, I never really understood. I did advise him to trailer it to Frank's though and he drove in around 10 with a pristine RT on a trailer. It had just over 9000 miles on it and looked like it had just left the showroom!!

John explained that he had owned the bike for about 7 years and put only 1000 miles on it because of weather, moves, jobs, but most of all the Mikunis the original owner had installed and his inability to understand the newer fuel system. He felt very comfortable with his first airhead's (76 R90/6) gravity feed but not with all the solenoids and pulse air devices. An excellent example of how working alone is tough but, with Florida Airhead help, John was up to his elbows in grease and learning about his machine.

By the time we got the machine off the trailer, Kenny Bryant, our VW/Porsche expert had arrived on his much modified R7/5 and the Gaitanis brothers (Tom and Bob) rolled in and rolled up their sleeves. To say John got a dose of Flairhead assistance is truly an understatement. These three, aided and abetted by Kevin, took him under their wing(s) and things started to happen.

John had rebuilt the original Bings which he had gotten with the bike, had new cables, and getting these installed was the first job. That went fairly smoothly except the left carb had sustained a hit somewhere in its history and the throttle ferrule wouldn't thread in easily from the top. Without a matching tap available, Tom Gaitanis showed us all a neat trick of filing a small groove in the end of the ferrule threads to convert it to a "self tapping" metal screw. Worked as well as a tap in the cast carb body and the carbs were installed with no more issues. Kevin set them per spec and the bike fired right up. Another issue was a poor repair on a coil wire which screwed up the tach which was addressed by breaking out the solder gun. A quick warm up run and final adjustment of the idle on the carbs and the bike sounded like it had just left the dealer. Now it ran like it looked...sweet!!! It was running so well that John refused to put it back on the trailer to go home. He rode the 60 miles, and we can only imagine the grin on his face. Cindy, his wife, brought him back to get his truck and trailer.

Thinking we had completed the heavy lifting, Bruce Spottswood decided to change the oil on his Mystic but we had forgotten that Mike Barfield had threatened to return with his R 90/6. Remember him, the flat before changing to new tires. Well that was nothing. He had a left side popping, backfire type of issue when he rolled off the throttle. Following our normal process, we started with the valves which were pretty tight. Had to let the bike cool down of course so that took a while and allowed many stories and other lies about when and who and where. Valves were not the issue so it was on to the carbs. Still had the problem.

Switched out spark plug leads to see if it was a coil issue, and since it switched sides, it could have been but we still had spark on both sides. So, check the timing...right and take a look at the points. Oh, forgot to mention that he has a Dyna ignition system installed. Mike wanted to convert back to stock points but we didn't have the parts to do that so Kevin continued to chase the problem. Timing was different for the two jugs so Kevin checked the magnets on the Dyna

and found one loose. Had to remove the pickup which mounts on the end of the cam shaft to tighten the magnet and, what the heck, it was not tight on the shaft that engages with the cam. The bike's timing was jumping back and forth about 20 degrees!! No wonder it was backfiring. It took a little time but both magnets were adjusted, after the sensor was tightened, and timing was right own. A quick run to warm up the carbs, do a final adjustment and we have another grinning happy customer. What a day. Grins and stout were shared by all.

Throughout this mayhem Frank was taking care of us all. When a tool was needed, he found it, and when we were hungry, he fed us. Boy did he feed us!! Starting with Friday night, we never missed a meal, and we actually had leftovers. Those who have seen Flairheads chowing down know that means the host put out large quantities of everything. He even fed those of us who spent Saturday night breakfast before we departed on Sunday. Now that I think of it, I don't believe anyone even brought in their own brew. To say he went above and beyond is truly an understatement. Great job Frank and we certainly appreciate your hospitality. Can we talk you into it again next year if we work the schedule a little earlier?

Click on Link below for photos:

<http://s845.photobucket.com/albums/ab14/R100RT/2010%20BMW%20Flairhead%20Nature%20Coast%20Tech%20Weekend/>