

Florida Airhead Tech Session
Melbourne, FL
Dec 8, 2007
Report is dedicated to Heidi

Just another beautiful day in Paradise. Kevin Reimer and Tracy Sumner had ridden down from Tallahassee on his R80RT to see a Space Shuttle launch (didn't happen) and we rode to Gator Balough's (Florida Air Marshall) to collect him, Liz Vickery and "Pidgeon Forge" George Remick (Tennessee Air Marshall) for the two mile run to Danno Emerson's home for the session. We arrived to find Liz's 86 RT in pieces on the driveway with a false oil pressure light problem. Liz had loaned the bike to PFG after his GS broke in Tallahassee so it took him two rides to make it but he could still claim the distance award for the event. We left them on the driveway since only so many hands will fit in the innards of any motorcycle.

When we arrived at Danno's, we found a good gathering in place. His wife, Kathy, had wisely decided to attend to family events leaving him under the direction of three beautiful Wiemeraners they have rescued. The garage had already been occupied by Dan Franzmeier's 95 R100RT and Stretch Hendrix was patiently teaching the finer points of a spline lube. He also taught Dan how to use a carb stick and touched up the carbs. Smooth running machine when they were finished.

While they were working that situation, Bill Still was evaluating Bruce Spottswood's R50/2. Seems Bruce was attempting to make a super looking vintage bike look even better by repainting the headlight shell. Unfortunately, some of the wires did not get reconnected quite right and he had a strange electrical problem. With many drawings on scraps of paper and checks with a volt-ohm meter, they solved that problem. Bruce had also brought a carb rebuild kit and hooked Kevin into advising him on that task. After pulling the carb off the bike and breaking it down, they learned that the kit was not correct. (Is there a lesson here?) Careful cleaning and reassembly resulted in a super smooth running bike after Kevin got the carb adjusted. As a reward, he got to run it around the block and had to admit, it was almost as good as his R27s.

Dave Pfautz had brought his heavily used R100GS over from Tampa on a trailer and was in the process of changing out aged brake lines. He also had significant carb problems but he and Danno got that resolved by dialing and tuning after minor cleaning and changing out an o-ring. I think Danno's musical ability helps him with carb adjustment because a bike sure settles down quickly when he puts a screwdriver on it.

The story of the day however has to be Liz Vickery's 86 R80RT. She had ridden her Harley shovel head down from Tallahassee with Pidgeon Forge George on her RT and we had left them on Gator Balough's driveway. They arrived at Danno's with a temporarily reassembled bike and proceeded to continue the chase of the faulty oil light. After tapping her foot impatiently, Liz finally shoved all the ham fisted males out of the way and got her nimble hands involved. With occasional assistance from bystanders, she traced the problem through the instrument pod plug (corroded and crumbling/unusable) to the main wiring harness midway back on the frame. Some of the insulation internal to the harness had melted and was shorting out. To fix this situation, she had to pull the wiring harness out of the frame back to that point, splice in replacement wire

and then reassemble it all. To connect back to the instrument pod, she soldiered the wires direct since she didn't have a replacement plug!! Talk about focused effort and a demonstration of manual dexterity. It worked and they made it back to Tallahassee without a problem.

We had a couple of riders show up to show off. First, Kai Strauch with a much modified machine that started life as a 81 R100. He has added a turbo, converted to a single swing arm and installed a Suzuki front fork/dual brake package. With a racing seat and café fairing/shield it ain't your daddy's boxer. Tom Frost brought his R90/6 that he rescued from nonuse and converted into a sidecar rig. He has used a hodgepodge of Ural and Volkswagon beetle parts to connect a German sidecar of undetermined vintage to the /6 and has a very road able hack.

After we were assembled at Danno's, Tracy confided in some of us that it was Kevin's birthday and that she was going to get him a cake. She pulled that off and actually surprised the poor boy with noise makers and the cake with too many candles. He did have help from an errant breeze in blowing out all the candles though so he wasn't too embarrassed.

Other attendees were Tom Barnhart, Dave Edney, Martin Suaroz, Cuzin Dale Hibbs, Micky Trammell and Kurt Hollowood (Danno's riding buddy and official photographer). Matco Tools showed up too in the form of Danno's brother in law Bill McCormick. At least these are the documented participants but it sure seemed like more!! Yours truly got the Kitty litter award by allowing an oil drip on Danno's drive way because of an interrupted valve adjustment job. Seems the valve cover gasket works best if you retighten all the nuts before riding.

Truly a great session enjoyed by all and we hope to make this the first of Danno's annual events. Sadly, the week after the tech session, Danno and Kathy lost one of their dogs, Heidi, due to a long bout with cancer. She was the official greeter for the day with a head ready to be petted. Those who knew her will miss her.

Bob Messer
ABC# 9053



1 Heidi, the dog of the hour



2 Danno's Garage with work in progress



3 Liz hard at work on wires



4 Danmo on Dave's (sitting) carbs



5 The Gang and their rides



6 Stretch, Kevin and Gator doing what they do best



7 Liz hard at work



8 Bruce being overly supervised



9 Kai's wild machine