

British Columbia Motorcycle trip – August 10 – 14, 1987

Monday August 10 – starting mileage 2357.3

On the road at 8:15. Dreary, overcast, slight drizzle, but forecast is for sunny days for the next week – off to BC!

3 PM – What a morning! Hit a little rain in Washington on I-5, so I stopped to put on the rain gear. No sooner I got back riding than the sprinkle let up. Had some trouble finding the Sumas border crossing, so I ended up crossing in some little town called Aldergrove. Stopped for lunch and didn't listen to another biker when he said it looked like rain. Took off the rain gear, and as soon as I hit the highway around Chilliwack, the skies opened up! Got soaked and stopped to put rain gear back on. Very windy, too. Not a lot of fun, but the rain let up in Manning Park, but not the wind. Lots of traffic. Took a break on the road to Princeton, and it was now sunny, so took off the rain gear. On the road to Penticton, it started to rain again, so I fueled up and back on with the rain gear. Then it stopped raining. What a day!

Several campgrounds were full, so I pressed on to just south of Kelowna, a private campground on the lake. I will try to get an early start, shower and breakfast in Kelowna. Campground cost \$10 but the shower was worth it! I was in bed at 9:15 and very tired. 393 miles today.

Tuesday August 11 – starting mileage 2751.3

Up at 5 AM due to all the noise in the campground. Smoker's cough in the next tent, whooping cough two tents over, laughing and conversation at 3 AM, whiner dog, etc... Oh well, it's good to get an early start. Ready to get on the road at 6:15, then stopped to have a cuppa with the guy across the street. Rapped for a while and left at 6:45. Fueled up in Kelowna, and on the road again!

Rotten lunch in Golden – hamburger in the Sawmill – never again! Then on to Yoho - \$6 use fee and any camping fees extra. Since it has just started showering, I only hope not for long, it's back on with the rain gear. Stopped at the Natural Bridge, great picture taking opportunity. Very nice!

Very slight showers, and didn't hardly get wet. Next I went up to Emerald Lake and then Takakkaw Falls. Very spectacular falls. Camped at Lake Louise (maybe) – long line and cost \$10.50 (CAN) – site G-9. Everybody's got their hand out! So far I've spent \$46 Canadian and this place doesn't even have a shower! What a tough life! That total doesn't even include petrol. At this rate, I will have to head back on Friday.

Wednesday August 12

Up at 7:30, on the road at 9 AM. Some decision making: whether or not to stay at Lake Louise or move on. Decided to move on up to Lake Moraine first thing. The view is spectacular and all through the trip the forest smells are simply outrageous! On the road again to Protection to set up camp, and then to Jasper.

Well, the best laid plans... Rode to Banff, 'cause the sky looks bad to the north, so I'll spend a little time making up my mind.

Banff is kind of cute and touristy, but the hot springs were outrageous! Great shower and a nice swim in a 40° [104° F] pool, all for \$1.75. After all the rain and cold, the hot pool really made me a new man. Nice little \$.75 souvenir and borrowed a towel, too. Then down to town and some lunch. I sure hope that the runny nose and malo feeling is just from the riding and not a cold coming on...

After lunch plans are to go over to Kootenay to get a camp site, and then do some sightseeing. Well, on the road toward Jasper from Banff it started to rain a bit, so that settled my mind to go for an early camp at Marble Canyon (J-1.) Set up the tent and still a slight drizzle. Oh well, some sightseeing – went to the continental divide and then back towards camp and a little past (2 km) to the Painted Pots.

Saw another motorcyclist with his helmet on, walking on the trail. Commented that he should take the opportunity to get out of the darned thing, and he turned out to be a she! A real nice gal, riding solo on a small Honda, Debbie from Whistler BC. We chatted for a while, had a cup of coffee, exchanged information, and then it really started to rain! Got wet heading back to camp and had a light snack, wrote this journal, and decided to hit the hay early and get an early start in the morning. It is supposed to be a nice day tomorrow, so I hope to get up to see the glaciers at Jasper, but we will see. Otherwise it is on the road to Seattle.

Not too many miles today, in fact very few, but none the less a good day. Had fun in Banff and really enjoyed chatting with Debbie. One thing about touring on the Gold Wing is that it is really a conversation starter. All sorts of people come right up to me and ask about it, compliment it, and have a story to tell. I just wish it could have been nicer weather.

Thursday August 13

Well, up at 6:30 and on the road by 8. Left tent and sleeping bag to dry out and headed north. Fueled at Lake Louise then up towards Jasper. Big fog, rain, no view, rotten road but pushed on. About 40 KM north of Lake Louise the sky broke open a little, but still no views. Decided to push on to the Columbia ice fields, and the weather turned very cold!

The glacier is very impressive, but it sure is cold up in the ice fields area. Stopped to look at the Athabaska Glacier, then some coffee at the tourist centre. It started to rain, so I headed back to Lake Louise for some fuel. 280 km and the red light didn't come on, but I rode for 20 km on E. Great place, Smitties at Lake Louise. Grabbed a burger and then back to get my tent and sleeping bag, then on to Radium Hot Springs.

This weather is the pits! A little clearing for lunch, but of course that's because I'm not riding. All in all though, I am not sorry I came up here. It will be nice the next time, since I will know what is what, where to go, etc.

Well, quite a few miles since lunch. Camp at Champion Lakes in Beaver Valley. And the rain held out till I got the tent set up. Hooray! Voracious mosquitoes! The campsite is about 15 km south of Castlegar, BC, a real nice place and not crowded at all.

The trip here was sort of wild: it rained almost the entire way. Fueled up in Cranbrook, about 280 km from Lake Louise. The red light finally came on after about 180 miles. Kooteney Pass out of Creston was wild! Fog and heavy rain, so bad that I could hardly even see! In bed by 8:30 and will try to get up early. Pack up and on the road to Redmond.

Friday August 14

Well, a long day is behind me now. Up around 6-ish, packed and out of camp by 7. Left \$7 in the box and had to drive around the park gate. It was supposed to be opened at 7, but still was locked at 7:10. No problem with the bike!

South through Trail to Highway 22 and the border crossing. For the first time, I was hassled. The crossing opens at 8 AM, and I was last in a line of several waiting cars. Stopped to put on my rain pants, so several minutes passed after the car before me went through. Not one of the six or seven cars and trucks were stopped, but the border patrol guard made me turn off the motor, asked for ID, and then searched my cycle. I sure didn't think that was necessary, but oh well... So, on the road again – miles and miles – on through Coleville National forest. Lots of rain [go figure] then to Omak where it was finally hot and sunny. After that, Okanogan National forest and more rain. Lunch in Winthrop. Finally got an entire afternoon ride without rain. Just a tiny sprinkle on the North Cascade Highway, but not too much.

Finally, home at about 5:30, picked up the mail, cat and dog, and did some laundry.

Ending miles on bike – 4140.9, for a total trip miles of 1783.6. Total cash out of pocket was about \$75, fuel cost about \$70 (\$73.67 CAN, which is approximately \$59 US and \$10.60 US.) Total cost for the trip was about \$150. Not bad. Would have been better if I hadn't gotten do damn WET! In retrospect, I'm not sorry I went, I did enjoy myself, met some nice people, and found out about some of my own personal limits. The most miles in one day was today, about 430 miles. Or maybe it was yesterday. My guess it would have been 480 miles or 768 km. I suppose with a little practice, I could do 500 miles a day, but not with such rotten weather.