

How I came to ride a Motorcycle

About ten years ago I was introduced to the world of the motorcycle by an experienced motorcycle rider, my wife's new found brother who she recently discovered . His name is Brian and he has been riding motorcycles from an early age.

Brian has a collection of Italian and Japanese bikes and is an enthusiastic motorcycle rider and suggested I get a bike and learn to ride. Well as time went by I went to many motorcycle shows with Brian and never did get around to riding a bike. Brian did not mention to me again about learning to ride.

In January of this year I got a call from good friend who had recently moved to Qualicum Beach from Richmond. His question was would I help his old neighbours John and Rosemary. John had ridden a motorcycle for most of his life but now illness prevented him from riding. John wanted to sell the bike but they felt uncomfortable about people coming to look at the bike and would I go and see them and help them out. Well after introducing myself to them and having tea and cookies I was taken to their car garage and behold, a beautiful bike stood parked gleaming away in the afternoon sun. It was a Yamaha 400 SECA with 40,000 kilometres, collector plates, and had been looked after with TLC. Then and there I thought why not buy it and take it home with the idea of maybe learning how to ride it. We settled on a price and I had the bike brought home on a trailer. There it stood in my garage gleaming away with that wonderful ruby red. I called my friend in Qualicum and told him the bike was in my garage and of course I was not going to ride it as it was very dangerous and my friend said for darn sure you better not ride. I told him I would resell it but I wanted to learn more of its mechanics and would change the oil and do a minor check up as I had grown up using mechanical devices. My friend thought that was ok.

I work at the Delta Police Dept. at the front reception desk and I asked around to the Police Members about learning how to ride a motorcycle as I had just acquired one. This was met with great enthusiasm with everyone saying get your rear into gear and learn to ride. Several of the members had learned how to ride at the Pacific Riding School and recommended it highly, so I signed up in March of this year with great expectations.

I still remember the first day, not knowing what to expect; everyone around me was decades younger than me. Wow! No one seemed to mind and I was accepted by all the new riders and the training staff. Well after the first day I thought to myself can I make it through the next day as I dragged my butt home. Well I got through the next day barely as I took frequent water breaks and the training staff asking me if I was ok! My sense of balance was out of kilter as my energy was running real low and riding through the cones was almost impossible. I realized that I should have spent a few weeks toning up my body first.

Many extra lessons followed with Mark (Kramer) sitting with me and giving me wonderful advice and spending time with me on how to ride. I'm sure most if not all the all the training staff thought there was no hope for me. I thought so too. Well I kept getting rebooked by Teresa and lesson after lesson followed and I kept failing the motorcycle skills assessment and watched the new trainees getting theirs and I did not. This troubled me a bit but I'm a big boy so I sucked it up with idea that I would one day pass the test.

Teresa sent me an E mail and I booked more lessons. This time I felt more confident and thought I can do this. Well the MST skills came and went and eureka I passed it!! The confidence that Ambrose had in me as I progressed through the course was outstanding. Ambrose has a great talent in making me believe that I could do it.

Monday the 16th of September came, and the class I was in was to ride in Surrey for the first time. Very exciting with about five of us trainees in trail with Horst as our leader hooked up by one way radio. It was a wonderful feeling riding down highway 10 taking the curve going past Scott road with the calm voice of Horst directing us. Back at the Riding school all our riders gave a brief talk to the incoming class giving our experience on our ride that evening.

The next day being Tuesday the class was booked to ride in Vancouver. As I had trained three days in a row Ambrose felt that I should rest for a few days and he would take me on a ride on his own time! On the 20th of September Ambrose informed me that we would ride in Surrey that evening. Well it was getting dark and was raining and away we went. Down highway 10 right onto King George with Ambrose's calm voice coaching me to observe all the road rules as we went along, I was very focused as cars whizzed by in the dark and rain. We ended up at a little restaurant on 152nd street and 20th Ave and had dinner.

Ambrose asked me how I felt and I said I'm ok and we proceeded to 16th Ave down to Ocean Park and right on Crescent Beach then to King George then back to Pacific Riding School. I knew that I had made a few mistakes along the way but was elated that I had made the ride in the rain and dark. Ambrose felt that I had made good progress but further practice lessons would be needed. These were to be booked at a later time. I cannot say enough about Ambrose. He is a most wonderful teacher and mentor.

Your Humble Student

Kevan Blackwell