

The Pack

Utah Riders Association of Triumph's Official Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 3

Summer 2016

In the Heat of it

-David Barth

Spring is gone and it's boiling outside! The asphalt is hot enough to cook an egg and the tar snakes have reached that special squishiness that brings that feeling of uneasiness to us all. So what better thing to do than throw on the mesh summer gear, fuel up, and hit the road!

Our first ride of the summer was to the old mining town of Eureka. This is a good early season ride as it goes through the deserts west of the valley and can get very warm later in the summer. To "fuel up" we first stopped in Tooele at the Bonneville Brewery. While carrying the normal local assortment of adult beverages, they also make some of their own delectable foamy brews. The food is pretty good, too, with large portions. This is a pretty good place to hang out and watch a game as they have a large TV wall.

After refreshments and nourishment, we were off for Eureka through the empty desert of Tooele County. This ride gives you some good helmet time to ponder the meaning of life, the proper valve gap of a '71 Bonneville, or whatever occupies your mind. Eureka has seen some recent development and will hopefully continue down that path. During the recession, it was looking more and more like a ghost town. It is a gem and I hope it can start to thrive again one day. Down the pass and a few quick turns through an oh-too-short canyon and we were on our way back to Salt Lake.



In June URAT had its first every overnight trip: *The Great Escape to Torrey*. The name, of course, is a play



on the classic film titled *The Great Escape* in which actor Steve McQueen (actually his stunt double) jumps a Triumph TR-6 Trophy 650 over a fence in an attempt to escape pursuing Nazis.

While we didn't have to jump any fences to leave Salt Lake, it felt good to "escape" the city nonetheless. The group totaled over 18 once we picked up all the stragglers along the way. For our route down to Torrey we decided to take the Energy Loop from Scofield and back down Huntington Canyon.



Rarely do we get to hit Huntington Canyon unless we are on our way to a further off destination. The Huntington section is not to be missed as it starts at almost 9800 ft. and curves its way down from high alpine tundra past multiple lakes into pine forests and finally back to the high desert of castle country. ⇨



The ride between Huntington and I-70 is fairly bland as it is mostly straight the whole way. There is a certain beauty to the vastness of the open desert, though. And the distant rock "castles" are somewhat unique to the west. I guess we just become spoiled living out here and seeing this environment all the time. Once we hit I-70 and crossed underneath onto UT-72 things became more interesting, again. The road becomes curvaceous through pinyon pine with frequent cow sightings. Unfortunately for us, much of the road had been rather heavily tar snaked. Nevertheless, it was still fun and is a must ride on the way to Torrey. After a few pictures of the dis-



tant Henry Mountains from the approximately 9000 ft. pass summit, we carved our way down to the Fremont River valley and Torrey. Torrey is a cute town on the edge of Capital Reef National Park. It is a great jumping off point for many an adventure. Accommodations book up quickly so it is advisable to reserve very early.

We decided to stay at the Wonderland RV Park at the corner of UT-12 and 24 due to availability and price. The campground was nice with many tent sites, 4 cabins, and even a covered wagon with tables, an awning, and fire pit. The bathrooms and showers were all individual rooms in a bathhouse and were pretty clean. We were overall pretty impressed with the place. After settling in, hors d'oeuvres and drinks were served at the wagon by club "first lady" Heather Barth. Some got dinner thereafter; for others the hors d'oeuvres were enough. Later in the night the campfire was started and the stories started to pour out. I would personally like to



After filling our bellies, we hopped on highway 12 to ↗



thank Captain Rambunctious (Loren Burden) for the entertainment. "Brilliant!"

The next morning we headed across the street for the URAT sponsored breakfast at the Broken Spur. It hit the



spot and got us ready for the day ahead. The ride that day was the crème de la crème of scenic rides. The famous highway 12 makes a large loop (with UT 22/62/24) around the high Boulder mountain plateau and Escalante Grand Staircase. We decided to ride the loop counter-clockwise so lunch would be far enough away from breakfast. For a little more of an interesting ride, we went south through Koosharem and Antimony. While the road starts out pretty straight, it eventually drops onto John's Valley Road in the Black Canyon which is a curvy canyon that passes through the ghost town of Osiris. The main feature of the town is an old rock-walled creamery converted to a grain processing plant.

Next time we head there we'll stop for to explore buildings



From road be-

straighten out and heads south-southwest towards Bryce. Bryce is at the entrance to Bryce National Park and is a busy cluster of hotels, motels, and gas stations. The Best Western Ruby's Inn has a decent restaurant/buffet and a beautiful lobby. If you're looking to pick up a post card or buy a shirt there is a fairly large store attached to the hotel.

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Osiris the



start towards Escalante. Just after leaving Bryce you drop down into an area that is essentially the north side of the park. Along the right side of the road there is a parking lot for Mossy Cave. This is a taking off point for a picturesque hike through the yellow and red rock pillars which add contrast to the greens growing all around. There would be no hiking in motorcycle boots



for us so we took the requisite photos and headed out. By this time we had lost enough latitude and the sun was high enough in the sky that the temperature was really starting to rise. Thus the stops out of the shade had to be made as short as possible.

The road continues to Escalante where the altitude bottoms out at around 5500 ft. Just past Escalante is the first "right arrow" sign that signifies your drop into the switchbacks to the petrified sand area. The road switchbacks its way down through a smooth rocky expanse with sparse vegetation, carved out by constant erosion that took ages to occur. With each mile the scenery changes as you descend through prehistoric eras designated by the layers in the rock. At 5200 ft. you reach a canyon with a creek. It's all up hill from there to a narrow ridge named Hell's Backbone. This is not the place to lose control as there are cliffs on both sides of the road. The views of the Grand Staircase are awesome! Just don't stare too long.

Once you gain some more elevation you reach the town

of Boulder. At the intersection of Burr Trail and highway 12 is the Burr Trail Grill. This is a great place to grab lunch. We just grabbed a cool drink and chilled in the shade for a bit. The group decided to take a side excursion down the Burr Trail road. This is well worth it if you have the time. Burr Trail is a backroad which takes you into the lower altitude rock formations and eventu-



ally into Canyonlands National Park. At one point you weave your way through a scenic, tight, high red rock walled canyon. A good stopping point for those with road orientated bikes is the cattle guard 16.8 miles from the Grill. This point affords a great view into the Canyonlands area. For those up for the dirt road, the pavement ends just after mile 30. From there it is a graveled road. At mile 34 you encounter the Burr Trail switchbacks. While not for the faint of heart, the switchbacks offer up amazing views and are a must do for any adventure rider. From there, south takes you to Bullfrog and north takes to the junction with highway 24 in Canyonlands Park.

Based on our mix of bikes, the cattle guard was the turnaround point for us. We headed back to Boulder and hopped back on highway 12. From Boulder you start to climb onto the side of Boulder Mountain. I really love this section as it gets you out of the heat and into the forest. The road is quite bendy and climbs 3000 ft. from Boulder. On the back side it drops about 2800 ft. to Torrey. We quickly made our way through the turns ⇌





and back to the RV park. After high fives, showers, tapas, and drinks, we headed out for dinner. A campfire and stories of the day followed.

The next day saw riders heading out in various directions to journey home. Myself and a few other riders rode up to Fish Lake. This is another beautiful ride at altitude.

The road is great and the scenery nice, also. That road drops you back on UT-72 about mid-way up. From there it was the long ride home af-



ter an excellent weekend with friends. We will definitely be doing another overnighiter next year. Keep your eyes open for details once we have them.

A couple weekends after the trip was the annual British Field Day at Liberty Park. Another fun event full of British bikes and cars. There is even a tight autocross course set up. As with years before, our member Ron Hopkinson braved the course going for a new record. Unfortunately, this year he crashed out. The plastics of the bike took a hit and his rear brake lever broke but the bike was mostly OK. Ron himself walked away with scratches and torn pants. Luckily, only his pride was bruised. His bike is repaired and rolling at speed again. We look forward to what next year brings. Maybe new tires for Ron?

July's ride was RAT vs the Wolf, the must do ride over Wolf Creek Pass. The road was in good shape and produced many a grin. We rode it as an out and back and then headed

to lunch at the Spin Cafe. One of our faster members, Newell Thornton, turned 84 on that day! Don't let that number fool you, though. Most of you would only see his taillight in the distance on any given ride. A big happy birthday wish to him from the club!

As per The Last Mile, join us for our next ride on August 21st on Monte Cristo Pass. See you there!

*We also did a couple dirt rides since last newsletter. One in the west desert and another on the BDR. Keep your eyes open for more dirt rides to come. Also feel free to post on FB or Google if you are wanting companions on a dirt ride you are doing. ■



Looking for Wear Bars

-Jeff Thurmond

Looking for Wear Bars: a great name for a book about motorcycling. Sad thing is, many riders never look for wear bars. Amazingly, a few riders have no clue what a wear bar is.

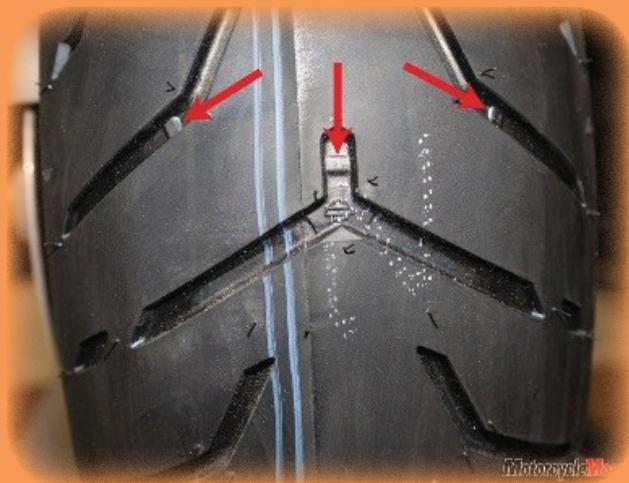
There are a lot of parts on a motorcycle that wear out. Some faster than others. Most of us have replaced a headlight bulb, maybe a tail light bulb or turn signal bulb. If your motorcycle has a chain, you probably have replaced the chain and sprockets. Brake pads wear out. Fork seals and shock absorbers do not last forever. And I would guess the most often replaced item on your motorcycle are the tires.

What is really intriguing about tires is how little most riders know. Including wear bars. Yes, all tires, except for race slicks, have wear bars. And even on race slicks there are wear indicators; they are small holes in the primary traction area. The US Department of Transportation mandates that all tire manufactures put wear indicators on the tire, and for those tires with tread, the indicator is a bar that is $\frac{2}{32}$ of an inch in height. The $\frac{2}{32}$ depth is also the legal limit of how much tread must be on a tire to pass safety inspection. When the tread gets down to the wear bar, replace the tire.

The wear bar is in between the tread or the grooves of the tire. Here is the problem with a number of motorcycle tires. There is no tread or grooves in the middle of the tire. The reason usually given for this is that the middle of the tire is the most used area and with no grooves it will wear longer and give better traction. Well, that is not necessarily true. First problem with motorcycle tires that have no grooves in the middle, is that in the rain, or even on a wet surface, the water will have no place to go and the smooth contact patch of the tire will produce hydroplaning. Worst wet weather tire design ever conceived. Second problem is you have no idea how much tread is left in the middle of the tire because with no grooves to put wear bars in, there are no wear bars except on the side of the tread. Oh sure, just run it until the cords show.



Unless you live on one end of a twisty canyon road and ride to the other end every day, you probably have most of your tire wear in the middle. You are going in a straight line more often than you are leaning into a turn. A few years ago, motorcycle tire manufactures started making the rubber compound different for different areas of ⇒





the tire. In the middle the compound is harder and wears longer. On the sides it is softer and gives better traction. Those tires that have grooves all across the tire have wear bars in the middle, and on the side of the tread. It is easy to see the amount of tread left using these wear indicators. Of course the tires with no grooves in the middle leave a lot to be desired.

If you are one of the few who take time once in a while to look for wear bars, look all around the tire. Motorcycle tires do not wear evenly. Rotate the tire and look all around it; you will see greater wear in some places more than others. And don't just look at either the front or the rear tire, as seldom do the two wear out at the same time. If you are not sure what wear bars look like, ask a fellow rider or ask the guys at a parts counter to haul out a new tire and point out the wear bars to you.

To give yourself a little more time between the need to look for wear bars, be aware the importance of proper air pressure in your tires. A few years ago, in an attempt to help people who are too ignorant to check tire pressure, the NHTSA under supervision of US DOT, required vehicle manufactures to add warning lights to the dash display that would alert the car driver of low tire pressure. This is called a TPMS or tire pressure monitoring system. Low tire pressure wears out tires. It increases fuel consumption. And can be a safety hazard. The accuracy of these idiot lights on the dashboard is questionable, but the threshold of when the indicator turns on the warning light is accurate enough to let the driver know a tire

needs air. Not all vehicles are included in the TPMS mandate, with exclusions for heavy trucks and off road equipment.

Now, you and I were taught that motorcycle tires are not like car tires. Motorcycle tires have different rubber compounding and a different tire carcass. Motorcycle tires loose air. Those little molecules of air slip through. So we were taught to check the air pressure before a ride, when the tire was cold. And if not before every ride, at least once a week. We all have a decent air gauge. Probably a few air gauges. One in the garage, one in each car's glove compartment, and one in some container on the motorcycle be it a top case, tank bag, or side case. And like so many motorcycle riders, we would rather have a gauge than an idiot light.

But like the growing number of motorcycle riders who have no clue about wear bars, some also treat their motorcycle like the family Ford or Toyota. The only two things that are important in the car are the D and E. Drive for go and E for empty fuel. These drivers have the car tire air pressure checked every time the tires are replaced. Hence the perceived need by DOT to have car manufactures put in the low air pressure warning lights. Then motorcycle manufactures got into the air pressure warning lights. Well, not everyone. Not all brands are doing it, and of the manufacturers who are, the monitors are only on a few models. No tube tires either. But for a motorcycle tire, the accuracy of air pressure reading is more important. Well, maybe not more important but a few pounds one way or the other in a family Buick does not make the same difference as it does on your motorcycle.

The tire air pressure monitors on motorcycles are not all that accurate. Your hand-held air gauge is probably accurate to a half-pound. If you use a hand held air gauge you are accustomed to and expect at least one pound accuracy. Not so with the on-board monitors. ⇨

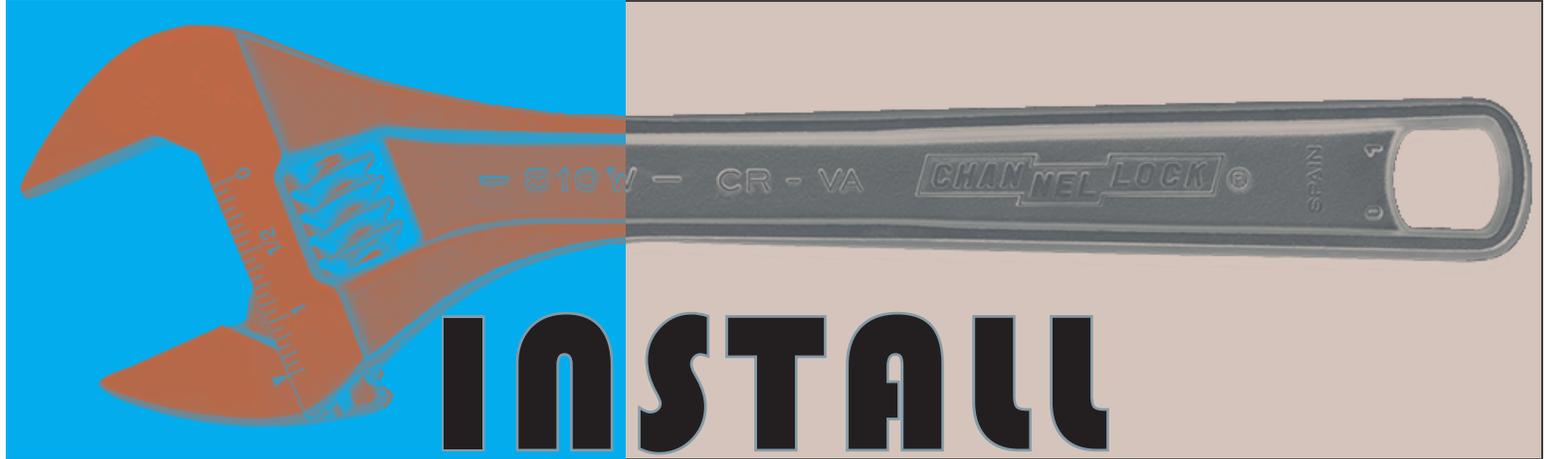




As said before, not all motorcycles have the tire air pressure monitor, and of course the older motorcycles don't. It seems that the higher-end models have the monitor. Not all monitors work the same. Plus some give a warning light if over inflated as well as under inflated. To compound issues with the on-board air pressure monitors, motorcycle manufactures do not make tires. The engineers of the motorcycle usually will work with tire manufactures to get a tire that is compatible with the handling and weight and load capacity of the motorcycle. But that was when the motorcycle was designed. Every year, tire manufactures come out with new designs, new treads, new rubber compounds, and of course, new load capacities and maximum inflation pressures. The motorcycle owner's manual may say that optimum tire air pressure is such and such. But five years after your motorcycle was designed and the manual was written, you just got a set of super gummy's with special water-whisking groves that have a totally different max inflation pressure than the slip & slides that originally came on your motorcycle.

Do you stick with the owner's manual recommendation of air pressure or do you run a few pounds under the max pressure ingrained on the tire sidewall? Tough choice. No, not really. If you can find the exact same tire brand and model as came on the motorcycle, the owner's manual recommendation is probably fine as the tire manufacture who designed the tire for the motorcycle was consulted. If you are spooning on a different brand of tire, go with the sidewall. The original tire may have been rayon and nylon cord and you are now using steel cord. The original tire may have been for dual-sport and you have given up that off road stuff and gone to street touring tires.

The important thing is that you check your tire pressure regularly, when the tire is cold. Cold meaning before you have ridden any distance as tires produce friction and friction produces heat. Second, and maybe the most important, have a look at the tire tread, and look for wear bars. On the other hand, if you ignore your tire air pressure and run the tires low, you will see the wear bars much faster. ■



TEC Shocks

-Craig Mossberg

One of the advantages of belonging to an organization like URAT is that you become friends with great people who know how to do things. Luckily for me, Loren Burden decided to upgrade the shocks on his new Thruxton with TEC alloy gas progressive rear shocks. Unluckily for Loren, the TECs didn't fit his new 2016 Thruxton so he made them available to me at a killer price. Not only that but he had done quite a bit of research on



mounting the new shocks and agreed to help me put them on my 2013 Thruxton.

The installation of the shocks is quite straight forward and doesn't re-

quire any special tools and takes about an hour to complete. We did our installation using the kick stand only. It did not require a jack or center stand. It does take two people, however, to muscle the shocks into place.

The first step is to remove the seat and rear silencers. It's probably possible to loosen the stock Triumph exhausts and not fully remove them but my bike has Dominator exhausts which mount a little closer to the shock mounts so it was necessary to remove them.

The next step is to remove the standard Triumph shocks one side at a time. It's easier to do this because the other shock assists in holding the frame and swing arm in place. The bushings on the new shocks are quite snug and it is necessary to sand the paint off the mounting studs to make them fit easier. Line up the top

and bottom bolt holes and mount the shocks onto the mounting studs. The second person needs to use a little muscle power to line up the holes with the studs. It was necessary to use a rubber mallet to get the mounts correctly lined up. Once the shock is in place, use a little Loctite Blue on the mounting bolts and snug them up.

The same process is repeated on the opposite side. Once both sides are in place, bounce the rear of the bike up and down to eliminate any bubbles in the gas reservoirs. Be certain the settings on both shocks are exactly the same. These shocks are quite firm compared to the stock Triumph shocks so I kept my settings at the lowest level and will adjust them in the future as I gain more riding experience.

The final step is to reinstall the exhausts and seat. Be sure to use exhaust sealant when remounting the silencers. Tighten all mounting bolts and put the seat back on and you're done. Now it's time for a ride. You will notice the difference right away.

You will like the looks of the TEC shocks. They are quite similar in appearance to the Ohlins used on the new Thruxton R but are a good deal less expensive. TEC shocks are available for the complete Bonneville line of bikes. The Thruxton and Scrambler shocks are slightly different due to tail height compared to the Bonneville. Info on these shocks and other TEC products can be found on their website: www.tecbikepartsusa.com.



Check out Delboy's Garage YouTube video on mounting TEC shocks on his Scrambler. It's quite helpful. ■

The Last Mile

Join us for URAT's next ride over Monte Cristo Pass!



Utah Riders Association of **TRIUMPH**

Presents

RAT vs The Count

(of Monte Cristo Pass)
Ride and Lunch

Sunday August 21st

at Triumph Motorcycles of Utah

Brief Meeting: **9:00 am**

Ride at: **9:30 am**

The Ride: From Triumph Motorcycles of Utah, I-15 to I-215 to Sunnyside Ave. Up Emigration Canyon to East Canyon to Henefer. I-84W to Trappers loop to Huntsville for fuel and lunch. UT-39 (Monte Cristo Pass) to Woodruff. Turn around and take the pass back to Huntsville. Fuel. Trappers Loop to I-84E to Morgan. UT-66S to East Canyon. The Canyon back to I-80W and back to the valley.

Approximately 250 miles — 5 hr 30 min ride time

We will be accepting membership applications for \$20. Membership benefits include: 10% off scheduled service, parts, and accessories, member-only sales at Triumph of Utah, free state bike inspections, club decal, membership card, and great people!

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