

'THE SUNSET VIEWS OVER CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK WERE MAGNIFICENT ON AN AMAZINGLY GRAND SCALE.'

We stayed in Driggs that night, and were glad of our winter gloves and plentiful layers the next morning, as we rode over the Teton Pass into Wyoming - at 7:00am it was two below zero.

A long wait at some roadworks gave us the chance to warm up, and the opportunity to chat with the guy controlling the traffic about Harleys - he'd blown his up on a run back from LA.

That just topped the previous day's story from Ross, a gas pump jockey who assured me that he'd broken his leg on a Road King just like mine.

I tried not to think about that as the traffic-control guy waved us through, and I fought to keep 700-plus pounds of Milwaukee metal upright on the slippery clay of the unfinished road. Fortunately it steered well, and I managed, but not without working up a nervous sweat.

We steered clear of the Interstates, and riding through Flaming Gorge we discovered the delights of looking out for and taking the old highways that have been made redundant by new



Living the dream on Emigrant Pass, California.

road building programmes. These older roads may take a little longer, but they're virtually free of traffic and still in good condition.

After visiting the Dinosaur National Monument (and resisting taking a picture of the Harley in front of a model T-Rex) we climbed again, over the Douglas Pass (elevation 8,240ft) and admired the glory of the region's deciduous woods in autumn.

But it was the next day that proved the best of the whole trip for me. We rode along the banks of the Colorado River through the beginnings of a gorge that eventually becomes the Grand Canyon; Cheshire Gorge will never be the same again.

Later on, taking a detour through Small Valley, we met some real cowboys herding cattle along the road. We pulled over and switched off,

and after a bit of shouting they decided it was safe to pass us by.

Down into Moab for an excellent lunch at the hippy-run Electrica Café, then on to the Arches National Park where erosion of soft rock layers had left some enormous natural bridges of hard rock.

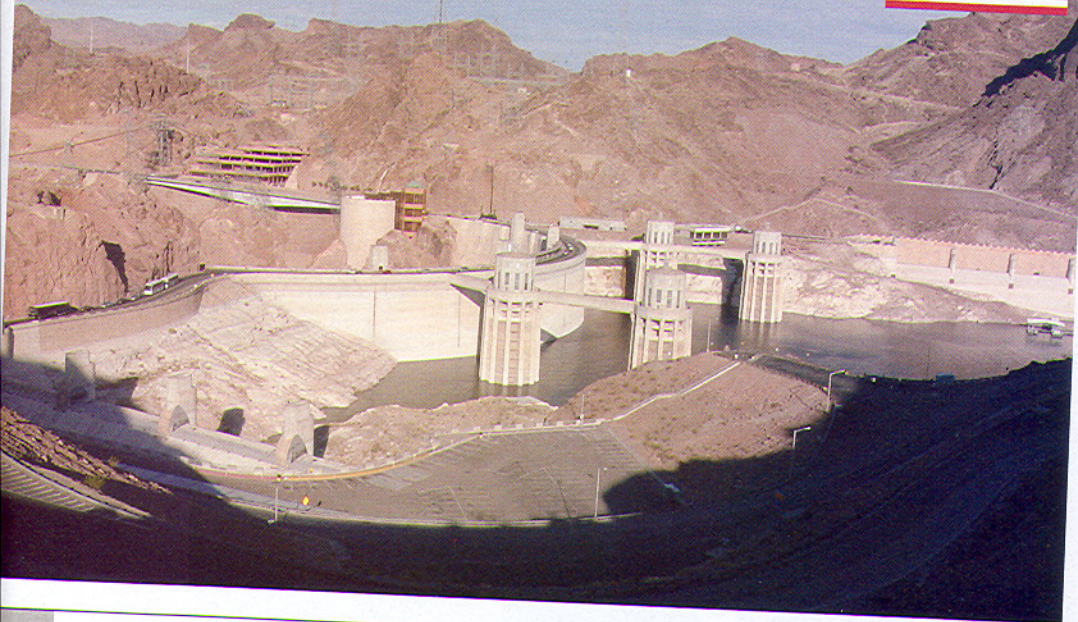
It was late afternoon when we finally arrived at the Dead Horse Point lookout, recommended by Scott. The sunset views over Canyonlands National Park were magnificent on an amazingly grand scale.

I found Canyonlands even more impressive than the Grand Canyon - I'd seen the latter on TV so many times I guess it had less of an impact on me.

We did spend a day and a half walking the southern rim of the Grand Canyon though, before heading on to Las Vegas. On the way



Nevada



So it was a late start next day, despite the fact that we were planning to tackle Death Valley. Then we discovered that the direct route had been washed away by flash floods, and it was lunchtime before we reached the place.

I was almost disappointed to find that due to the time of year the temperature was 'only' a bearable 102 Fahrenheit (39 degrees C)!

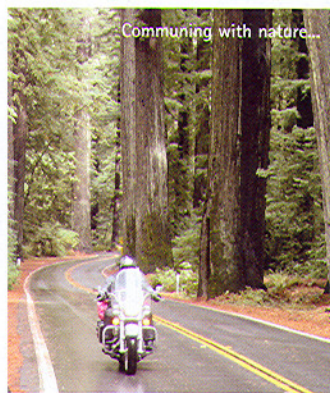
Now Scott's advice had been clear - fill up when you can in Death Valley, as petrol stations aren't that common. But that didn't prevent us from ignoring the next one we passed because it was too expensive (UK thinking).

Sure enough, the Harley spluttered to stop after doing 233 miles. That was actually quite good, but still 15 miles short of the next town. Still, the Pan had some fuel left, so we rode two-up into town, before returning with a plastic can full of fuel for the empty Harley.

Towns are a lot further apart in the USA and some places shown on the map are little more than a collection of trailers, so if Scott says fill up at such and such a place, fill up!

Yosemite National Park was next on the itinerary and we approached Yosemite Valley from the east, crossing the Sierra Nevada Mountains at Tioga Pass, our highest yet at nearly 10,000ft.

The views of sheer granite cliffs and pine-forested mountains reflected in Lake Tanaya, and the entrance to the



Communing with nature...

waistcoats, they were obviously living the dream; good luck to them.

It left a strong and vivid impression on me, but as the saying goes there are old riders, and there are bold riders...

There was more Route 66 history at our motel in Kingman - it was there we met Chester, a truck driver who had plied the old Route 66 from LA to Chicago, and then on to New York, for decades. He was nearing

retirement, and must have covered millions of miles over the years.

The Luxor Hotel in Las Vegas had less atmosphere than that route-side motel, but there was more of a buzz down on the famous strip. I can remember finding ourselves caught up with a group of UPS employees on a company do, and the rest is a blur.

we called at Jerome to visit the Gold King Ghost Mine.

We got there early so Don who runs the place was able to give us some personal attention. He showed us his 1914 Packard truck, which started from cold with half a turn of the starting handle; his 1949 supercharged truck that he had flat out at 110mph on the Daytona banking; and his single-cylinder kerosene sawmill engine flat out at 300rpm and idling at 40.

Don told us he had been inspired by the Amberly working museum in West Sussex, but Don was hugely more entertaining - a real larger than life character who brought the old days alive for us when the area was a thriving copper mine.

We couldn't do this trip without sampling Route 66, visiting Seligman with its old cafes before stopping in Kingman for the night.

On the way four guys passed us on Harleys, doing 100mph in tight formation. Wearing bandanas and

Washington

