

Sturgis 2015

We rented Harleys through Orange & Black in the UK, as you are given a better level of Insurance with a lower excess than if booking direct. Also, only a £200 deposit (at the time of writing) with the balance 6 weeks before travel.

We booked our own hotel (Hampton Inn Westchester) and the next morning a mini-van arrived from Woodstock HD to pick us up.

Upon picking up the bikes we rode North to Milwaukee to the HD museum, (Free entry for HOG members) then to the old factory in Juneau Ave, where we met a guy outside who took us in for a look around. We left there to ride to I-94 Madison for our hotel, Americas best value Inn.

Next day ride via The Cave of Mounds which was well worth a visit which was discovered after an explosion!

We then rode via route 151 and route 20 to Waterloo, where we turned right to head up to Clear Lake Iowa. The reason for this was to make a pilgrimage to the Surf Ballroom where Buddy Holly, Richie Valens and the Big Bopper played their last gig before the fateful plane crash just up the road near Mason City. The Surf ballroom is amazing, and you are left to wander around and look at all the exhibits, get up on stage, go in the dressing room; a very atmospheric place.

Next it was a short blast up to Albert Lea in Minnesota, to the Museum there which houses a collection of Eddie Cochran items, plus a bonus of old original buildings including a jail, school house, and an old 1930's Harley in the entrance.

A visit to Bergdale HD, just up the road off I-90, saw the biggest collection of HD collectibles and clothing for sale I have ever seen at a dealership. They had a warehouse attached which housed rail upon rail of sale clothing, so much so that we couldn't really be bothered to look through it. Oh yeah! they supplied fresh popcorn and warm cookies too! Hint, hint!

We continued, that day, for 170 miles to our next stop at Sioux Falls and the Red roof Inn which was a bit scruffy, but hey ho it was only for one night.

Next day, back onto I-90 with a stop at Mitchell to see the world-famous Corn Palace. Every year its decorated with corn cobs, which are dyed different colors to depict scenes all around the building.

We then continued to our next overnight at a lovely motel, The Iverson Inn, in Murdo. The owner, Dan, took us for a beer at a bar opposite his motel, and some great steaks. We also had a look around a fantastic car and bike Autorama, which was a paltry \$2 to have a look but it was impossible to spend enough time to see everything.

Next day saw us ride to Badlands national park, which was amazing! Then on to Rapid City HD which was huge, a rally site in itself with so many Vendors and show bikes.

We left there, rode past Sturgis, to our stop at the Holiday Inn in Spearfish. A 16-mile ride to Sturgis was nothing after the distances we had been doing, and Sturgis was Sturgis of course; with ride outs to Mt Rushmore and Deadwood.

We had seen enough after 3 days and left, riding through the Black Hills into Wyoming, and then East into Nebraska. This part of the trip was only outlined and we booked the following nights hotel the night before via hotels internet, after deciding what there was to see.

We basically followed the Oregon wagon trail, and saw places like my namesake, Smith Center, which was also the geographical centre of the US; Abilene, Buffalo Bills Ranch, which we happened across and was brilliant.

We stopped at classic car places, and were interviewed in a gas station for a local rag. "Harley riders from the area known as East Anglia stopped for a brief re-sprite". That must have been an exciting place if that was the news!

We continued onto Kansas City and picked up Route 66, stayed the night and had fantastic BBQ next door to our hotel (Quality Inn) at Bandanas BBQ.

Next day we high tailed it outta there and onto St Louis, stopping at Concordia for lunch and another super museum at the tourist info center. German POW's were shipped there during WW2. There is also a fantastic collage made from the brick work on the side of the center, depicting this and the train that brought them. Overnight in St Louis.

Back onto Route 66 as much as possible back to Chicago, stopping at Staunton County Classic Cars, which was massive with over 1000 classic yanks.

Route 66 was the usual old gas stations and fun, and riding into Chicago to the end / beginning of 66. A stop off by Lake Michigan to cool down, then ride to Woodstock HD near Crystal Lake, ready to take the Harleys back the next morning.

Up early next day, ride to Walmart to buy Levi jeans at \$19.99; Wranglers at £10, then sadly take the bikes back. When we picked the bikes up they had 6 delivery miles, we took them back after 14 days with 3054 miles on!

Another Harley adventure completed!