

THE CORD

1973

From a rider's viewpoint.

by L. Bastedo

Well here we are back at Gold Rock Lodge for the start of probably the last Corduroy to be run from this location. For twenty years, Gold Rock Lodge has been the Corduroy's home and now due to the death of Les North, the Lodge's owner, who was one of motorcycling's greatest backers, the Cord must move on. Probably every enduro rider who ever rode or even heard about the Cord hopes this event will not die. Surely it is one of the premier enduro events in North America and yet due to a few guys, has always maintained its fun atmosphere. This, we must not let go and I understand plans are now being formulated to keep the Cord alive.

Saturday morning dawned sunny and cool — perfect Cord weather. Bill Dawson and I unloaded our bikes,

which had been scrutineered the night before and made ready for 200 miles of road, trail, beaver dams and whatever else the pathfinders had managed to find.

Barely 3 days before, I had received a new 175 Can Am and quite frankly was a little apprehensive about starting this run with a new motorcycle which I had not ridden for more than 50 miles. Bill was still using his trusty 125 Honda and both bikes started easily. So, we were ready.

What happened to me in the first 3 miles, at first, I thought I would never tell but it was too funny to keep to myself. It seems at the start, I forgot to do up the chin strap on my helmet. After 20 years, I guess I should have remembered. But, that's life. I noticed this of course, as soon as I got up to

road speed and duck bill peak started to lift the helmet off my head. After about 2 miles I thought how stupid can you get, it will take 10-20 seconds to stop and do it up and I am well ahead of time. This all occurred to me at about 50 m.p.h. on a gravel road, so I looked back to make sure no one was behind me before stopping and as I did, the wind caught my helmet peak and blew it right off my head and it merrily bounced down the road behind me. Funny, but my first reaction was to get back and pick it up before anyone came along and saw what had happened. So, I beat it back as fast as possible picked it up and was reinstalling it on my head when the next group of riders came by. Bill who had missed me came back and I looked at him rather sheepishly. Then I



started to laugh and related my story to him. The next few miles we road laughing like Hell. We had at least started in a good frame of mind.

Saturday's run in my mind was perfectly laid out miles of ridable trail with only two really tight checks. But even these were cleaned by the really good riders.

We finished the day down 3 marks but in good physical shape and both bikes were running well. Some of the other riders that I know asked me what I thought of the Can Am. My standard answer was "too damn much". Better have another day at it.

Saturday night we had a steam bath at the lodge, a dip in the lake and then sat around for hours sipping a cold one or two or maybe three while we listened to all the stories of things that had happened during the day. It never ceases to amaze me the tales that follow a run. When you put 200 riders over 200 miles some absolutely hilarious things happen everytime and I think half the fun of an enduro is listening to the riders after the day is over.

Sunday morning the alarm went off at 6 a.m. and I expected to awaken with muscles throbbing and aching. But what a pleasant surprise, I actually felt great. So after bacon and eggs and a gallon of coffee, we approached the park ferme to acquire our bikes. Ten minutes before we were due to start, I checked the Can Am and other than a loose chain and a couple of loose spokes, which we fixed in our 10 minute work time, we were ready to start the second day.

On the line my bike would not start and as much as I hate to admit it, I didn't even know where the choke

was. I looked at the carburetor and saw a little knob that might be a choke. I pulled it up and bang the bike started first kick. So away I went, just barely within my minute.

Sunday was no doubt going to be tougher than Saturday and it started with a twenty mile snowmobile trail that I remembered from last year. It was just one rock after another but I rather enjoyed it as the Can Am took the rocks in stride. And although my arms got a little sore and I lost a few more points, the sun was shining and we were having great fun laughing at each other's mistakes.

We knew the dreaded Peterson Trail was coming up after lunch but we were both looking forward to it. It was just that kind of a day.

When we came to the abandoned rail line at Tory Hill, we saw that some kids had taken down a barrier the organizers had built to route the riders around a bad washout. Apparently one or two earlier riders had fallen very hard at that point and I guess the kids realized what they had done because by the time we got there, they were flagging the riders down and directing them around the dangerous area. A little farther along, we passed a pickup truck coming in the opposite direction and thought, "Boy, what a place for him to be", as we were still on this very rough rail way. Two hundred yards further, we came to a bridge which was well marked with danger arrows as it was only two planks where a car's wheels would go but nothing in the centre and I thought it strange the organizers had not put a stake there to warn riders. It was not until after the event, when Dave Daniels was talking about this bridge, that I realized they

had put up a marker but the pickup I had seen had knocked it down when it crossed the bridge.

Just heard a story of poor Rick Irwin. On Sunday's run there was a plywood bridge across a boatway which of course had to be taken out right after the run had passed it. Seems Rick went over the bridge and about two miles into the trail his bike quit. By the time he got back to the boatway the bridge was gone and he had to go back the next day and load his bike into a boat to get back to where he could ride it out. See, I told you about these stories that keep cropping up!

I must admit, I felt sorry for Dave Hulse, who after a wonderful ride, apparently clean all weekend, missed the last check on Sunday and although arriving at the finish was a D.N.F.

Another tough break was Carl Cranke, who was the overall leader on Saturday but dropped off the pace when he failed the Trials section which is at the end of the run. I understand Carl protested to the organizers that the Trial section penalty was too tough but it was in the regulations published and was the same for everyone. Too bad Carl, maybe next year.

Well, we've finished another Cord. I didn't do too well but Bill managed a third place in his class with a good ride on his Honda. What is most important is that we had two days of terrific fun, riding one of the best laid out runs I have ever attended. The people at the check points were absolutely wonderful. I would like to mention some names but I am afraid I would miss someone who worked hard. So, instead I'll just say thanks to the British Empire Motor Club and to all you others who gave me one of my most pleasant weekends. ●

PREMIER AWARD

Tom Penton 125cc Penton

BEST OTHER CLASS

Bob Fisher Expert Medium 175cc Can-Am

WHITE TROPHY

(1st Canadian Junior)

Blaine Smith 175cc Can-Am

GOLD ROCK TEAM TROPHY

(manufacturers team)

Penton (1st, 3rd, 4th)

CLUB TEAM

Bob Old, Bob Smith, Wolfgang Kruse

HARD LUCK TROPHY

Jean Shepherd (broken leg)

THE CORD

From a gas crew's viewpoint.

By Raymond Goulet
Bentley's Enduro Team Manager

Wednesday. The phone rings in my luxuriously appointed and well lit office at Bentley's Cycles.

—"Hi Ray, this is Tino. Are you going up to the Cord this weekend?"

—"Yeah, sure Tino. Wouldn't miss it for anything. How far is it from Montreal?"

—"Hell only 420 miles. You should be able to make it in five hours. It's a lot closer than the other event we went to in "Durham". The Corduroy is in "Coboconk", Ontario.

—"Sure Tino, but there's only one problem. My boss is leaving for vacation at 4 o'clock Friday, so I won't be able to get out of here until nine."
"Oh! That's okay. My wife and I are leaving at noon Friday, already got my bike on the trailer. Don't worry about me."

Two hurried phone calls later, one to Dick the other to George, who make up the other two thirds of the Bentley Enduro Team. I manage to learn that their bikes have to be in the paddock at 11:00 pm Friday night.

To complicate matters, Dick's Volkswagen can only manage 65 mph in third gear at 14,000 rpm when he has two bikes on his trailer. After some rapid mental calculations my fantastic brain comes to the conclusion that there is no way I can possibly drive 420 miles in two hours, even with the Great Red Bentley's Enduro Truck. (350 - four barrel)

Another hurried phone call to Mike Claffey. After an hour of telling him how great his new Can-Am is, I hit him up for a lift for our two bikes in his truck. (Mike is leaving at 12 also).
—"Okay," he replies reluctantly, "but you'll have to haul my trailer back to Montreal for me. My new truck has no trailer light connections. I would also appreciate you helping me at the gas stops."

"Yeah! Sure Mike. Great! Great! Don't worry about it, the G.R.B.E.T. can pull anything." (A statement I regretted later).

Friday night. My partner in crime and gas stops, John Dingman, arrives at Bentley's to help us do our thing for the weekend.

Nine o'clock, and we're off on the 401, doing eighty-five and keeping a sharp eye out for the O.P.P.

3:00 am and we arrive in "Coboconk", exhausted but happy to be there.

To bed. Oh yes, bed! Sleep, cool sheets, soft pillow. Thirty five seconds later we are asleep. Waa-aa-aaa! 6:00 am — Three hours sleep. Some freak with a hand operated siren is walking around the camp grounds. Tino, Dick and George come bouncing into our cabin, full of piss and vinegar, and raring to go.

"Hey man, 6:00 o'clock, let's get breakfast."

"Huh? Year sure. Coming. Coming."

Over to the chow shack for breakfast. Two eggs, toast and bacon. The bacon! Braaack! Twelve of my taste buds committed suicide on the spot.

Key time approaches. George, Tino and Dick busy themselves with last minute preparations. Riders are looking over their route sheets. The line up to the can lengthens.

Tino is number seventeen, Mike twenty two, George thirty-seven and Dick, thirty eight.

"What! Thirty eight. That's twenty-one minutes difference between our first and last rider. How are we ever going to catch up?" John and I get into the lineup to the can.

7:45 am Fifteen minutes to key time, John and I are off in the G.R.B.E.T. John power shifts the big 350 to second and keeps an eye on the tuck as the revs build to 4,000.

First gas stop, "Gooderham". Key-time 9:35 am. Only thirty five miles away, plenty of time to get there. Route 503 our speed 65 mph, we turn onto route 407. Oh! Oh! The sign ahead reads: "Twisting Road for 22 miles. Watch out for logging trucks." Up, down, left, right, negative camber, positive camber, on and on. Our speed down to 15 mph. John starts to turn green, and I curse myself for having eaten that bacon.

Seventeen miles and we arrive at "Trappers Lodge", our first gas stop. We set up our sign down the road, "Bentley's Team, Gas stop, 400 feet". Check chocolate bars, gas cans, etc. . . . and sit down to wait for our first rider.

9:52 am. Tino in, right on time. John grabs the gas can and tops up the tank on the 360, while I oil the chain.

Tino jumps back on and is off, showering us with gravel from the big 450 knobby. Mike, George and Dick through on time. Get the sign, throw in the gas cans, pick up the Oh Henry chocolate bar wrappers, and we're off again.

On to "Apsley", the second gas stop. Gotta catch up to Tino. John slides the G.R.B.E.T. into second gas stop with all four wheels locked up, only three minutes ahead of our first rider.

"Whew! Made it. Here he comes now."

In and out only thirty three seconds, a new record for us. Mike doing okay with the Can-Am is through in forty-five seconds. Dick and George come in together. Damn! Gotta work fast.

"John! Spray that chocolate bar on the chain, while I get the orange juice for the bike. Any of you guys want a shot of cold gas?"

On and on through the day. "Tory Hill", "Gelert" and then back to "Coboconk". John wheels the G.R.B.E.T. into the parking lot, and we pile out, exhausted. Our total intake of food for the day; two chocolate bars each, and a pint of orange juice.

Our riders arrive and start the usual bench racing. . . .

"Did you guys manage to see the rider on the Triumph 500? He passed me like I was standing still."

"Naw, didn't see the Triumph. But did you three see the Econoline with the L-60 tires?"

"Huh?"

"Aw! Never mind you wouldn't understand."

Tino, George and Dick head for the chow shack.

"Hey Ray! Wanna have a look at the zipper on my barbour jacket, it's stuck," says George. "Man you guys have really got a soft job wheeling that pick-up around all day. You should try riding in the enduro one of these days."

"Yeah! but we haven't eaten. . .!"

"See you after supper, Ray."

"Sure, okay. . ."

John and I manage two hamburgers, and are already asleep by the time the guys return from supper.

Second day of the Cord, up at 6:00 am, breakfast, back on the road at 7:45 am.

The first gas stop goes by without incident. But heading towards "Tory Hill" disaster strikes. Coming towards a curve on route 503 at about 60 mph the right front tire suddenly goes flat. Into the curve at 50 mph and sliding

off the nut, and pounces on John's extremities.

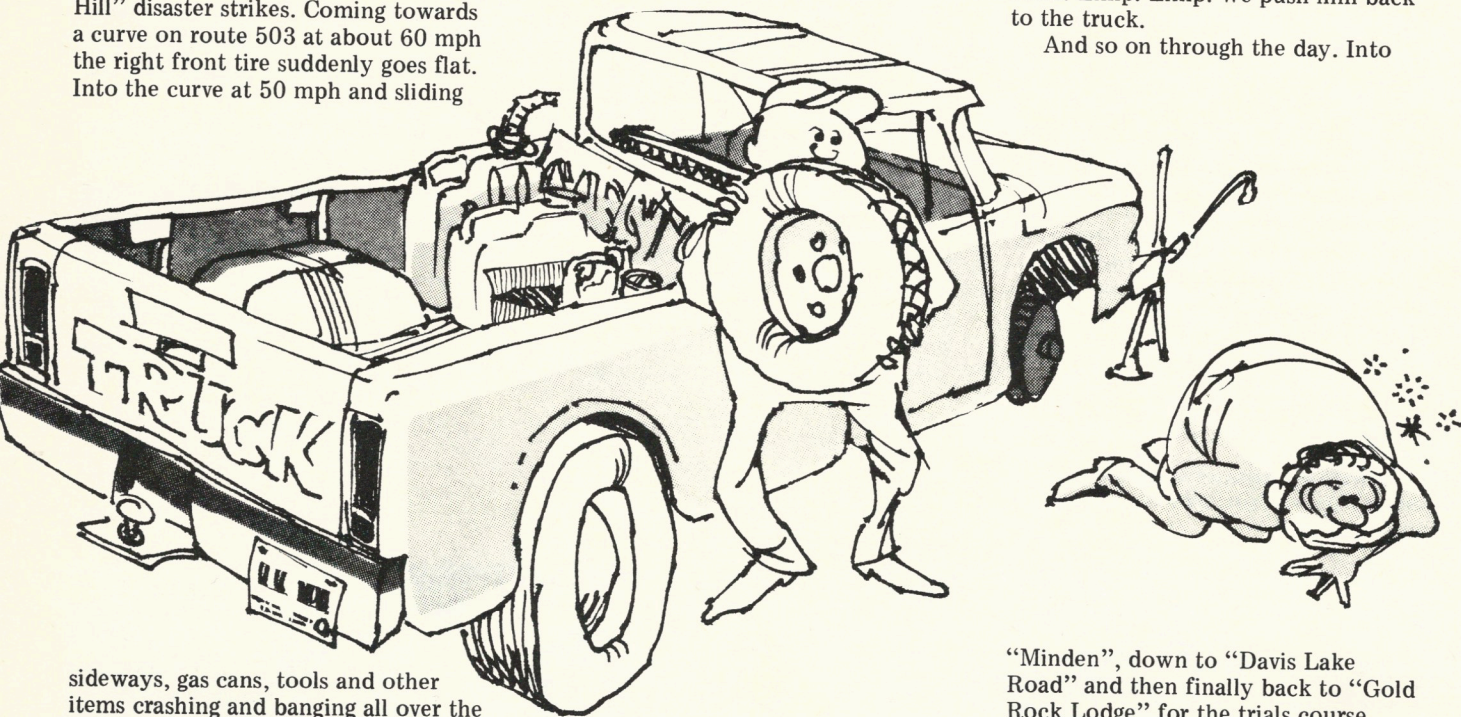
"Groan, son of a . . . &+*! (curseity, curseity) and John's face takes on the

down the road on our knees.

"Hell, sorry about that, guys, my brakes are wet."

"Yeah, we kinda noticed," says John. Limp. Limp. We push him back to the truck.

And so on through the day. Into



sideways, gas cans, tools and other items crashing and banging all over the bed of the truck. I manage to straighten out the G.R.B.E.T. and pull over to the side of the road.

The "Sonic" truck pulls up beside us. . . .

"Hey! you guys o.k. Can we help?"

After untangling myself from the array of route sheets, maps and other assorted items strewn all over the cab of the truck I manage a meek smile.

"No keep going, we'll try and catch up as soon as we can." Luckily Tino's wife, Pam, is helping us out today. When she sees we aren't showing up, she will stay to gas Tino and Mike, but Pam only has a 3 gallon gas can with her and won't be able to help George and Dick.

"John, you get the wheel off, while I unhook the spare."

Right on babes," and John leaps out with the jack handle.

Grunt! Grunt! Damn nut must be rusted on."

"Put your weight on it man, it's gotta turn." Blang! The handle slips

color of fresh tapioca.

After ten minutes he manages to make it back into the cab. Working like a madman I manage to get the new wheel on in fifteen minutes. I accelerate the G.R.B.E.T. down the road with the pedal on the floor.

Ten minutes to get to "Tory Hill" to gas George and Dick. Into the gas stop, one minute to spare. Fortunately George is late and we manage to get set up before he arrives.

"Man what a tough enduro," says George, "gonna have to try and make up time on this gravel road." And with that, he is off again.

"Here comes Dick," yells John. "Something funny going on, he isn't slowing down."

Dick's eyes are as big as saucers, as he holds the decompressor wide open.

"Damn, his brakes are out."

As Dick goes by us at about twenty miles an hour, John and I leap for the rear fender bracket and the momentum of the big 360 pulls us fifteen feet

"Minden", down to "Davis Lake Road" and then finally back to "Gold Rock Lodge" for the trials course. John and I retire to the lodge for eight beers and a hamburger. After an hour the guys arrive from the course.

"Great run, fine Enduro. Man that Peterson Trail was something else."

"We're going over to check the results, you wanna load our bikes up?"

"Sure, o.k. You guys must be tired after that two day run."

"Better believe it man, I've got this cracked finger nail giving me great discomfort," says Dick.

We load up the bikes, three in G.R.B.E.T. two on the trailer. Heading home on the 401, we manage to get 65 mph, even with the load. Our guys pass us at about Kingston on their way home.

"Man!" says John checking the odometer, "we ran 200 miles chasing those guys. I don't know what makes me do these crazy gas stops.

But we shall return. That's the way it is at every enduro. No trophies for the unsung heroes. "The guys in the gas trucks". ●