

## TECH CHAT

with Ken Mortimer

Tools and Spares.

## What to carry?

There is a lot to consider when packing your bike for a possible breakdown. And as many different ideas as there are riders. I won't pretend to tell you exactly what you should carry but we can discuss the things that should be part of your decision making process.

First off; let's assess your abilities. If you're not inclined toward things mechanical then your tool kit should include a cell phone and a CAA card with motorcycle privileges.

Seriously, there is not much sense weighing your bike down with tools you will never use. And this carries forward for those riders with more mechanical aptitude.

If you are comfortable swapping in a new set of spark plugs, adjusting your chain and changing a tail light bulb but not ready to tackle a valve adjustment or changing your points then tailor your tools to match.

Second, just where are you planning on riding? Commuting in town, out for a coffee run after supper, day trips to vintage events? You can get away with a limited tool kit. You're never too far from help or home. A breakdown is going to be an inconvenience but not much more.

If you are heading out for a week's cross country run, things will be different. A problem on a trip like this could ruin your vacation. And getting the bike home or to a repair shop will be costly. So it makes sense to equip yourself to handle the repairs you're comfortable doing. Also worth considering; will you "mileage out" some maintenance requirements? Need to do an oil change for instance? Plan ahead and carry the needed items.

Next we'll have a look at your bike. There is no sense carrying a 12lb, 219 piece "do it all" tool kit that doesn't contain the 17mm socket that your bike needs to check the final drive oil. With my '74 Eldorado sidecar rig, mini booster cables are part of my tool kit. No kick starter and a lot of weight to bump start could turn a simple weak battery into a real pain! Think about your particular motorcycle and what issues you may run into.

And on the subject of matching the tools to the bike, it's a good idea to try actually performing some of the tasks you may have to do; using the items you plan to carry, before you leave on a trip. You don't want to be on the side of the road and find out that you should have packed a 12mm wrench instead of a 12mm socket.

To summarize, your on board tool kit should contain the tools that you are capable of, and comfortable using. They should match the jobs that you may encounter on your planned ride. And they should be the correct tools for your particular motorcycle.

If you're lucky enough to have it, the factory tool kit is a good place to start. If not, make a list and go shopping. Flea markets, used tool dealers and even garage sales can provide needed items at good prices.

Spare parts present a different challenge. Consider the same issues as for your tools but also think about availability. If



you become immobilized by a condenser failure while heading to Mid Ohio on your /5 BMW, most any bike shop along the way could help you out. Except, they probably won't have the part. So you'll be waiting. Even if you are not up to diagnosing and changing the part, carrying some common failure items could mean the difference between just a delay in your travels, or a cancellation.

When touring with others you have the opportunity to share tools and possibly some parts. This can lighten everybody's load. For instance there is no sense in having four bikes and four 12v compressors. Or four sets of tire irons. A little discussion before leaving could provide a better than usual cross section of tools and parts for everyone's benefit. And of course available space comes into play.

If you're driving a sidecar rig you probably have lots of room for a full complement of tools and spare parts. Conversely, my 200cc single cylinder dual sport that I ride for the commute to work has just a bag strapped to the rear carrier and my lunch takes precedence over tools and spares.

I began by stating that I can't tell each rider exactly what they should carry but here's a list that I suggest should be the MINIMUM starting point. You should carry the necessary tools to perform the following tasks, (if your motorcycle is so equipped):

- \* Check tire pressure
- \* Remove spark plugs
- \* Adjust the drive chain
- \* Adjust the clutch and clutch cable
- \* Adjust the front and rear brake and cables/linkage
- \* Replace the headlamp bulb
- \* Replace the tail light/brake light bulb(s)
- \* Replace front & rear signal light bulbs
- \* Check and fill all fluids- gearbox, final drive, brake reservoirs, cooling system

Along with these task-specific items, I'd recommend adding: pliers with wire cutters, multi tip screwdriver, small vise grips, mini test lamp, small adjustable wrench, and the basic wrenches that will fit the majority of fasteners on your particular bike. AND a flashlight! Even if you don't plan on being out after dark, it will come in handy at some point. Choose one that is LED, (easy on batteries) and don't spend too much. Save the big buck unit for at home and carry one that won't break your heart should you forget it on the side of the road.

The spare parts list: set of spark plugs, bulbs - tail/brake/signal, fuses, tie wraps of various sizes, a few feet of mechanics' wire, a few feet of 18ga electrical wire, a few quick crimp electrical connectors, electrical tape, a pair or two of latex gloves, cotter pins, drive chain master link, duct tape.

And the very best tool to take with you on the road?  
A well maintained motorcycle of course!

I look forward to receiving your suggestions of "must have" tools or spares that you carry and together we'll comprise a more complete list that I'll include in a future Tech Chat article.

A sincere thank you to those who are taking a few minutes and sending along some advice to be shared with your fellow CVMG members. Please keep the ideas and tips coming - [kmortimer@persona.ca](mailto:kmortimer@persona.ca)

.....Ken

Tips & Favourite Products for March

Thanks to Dave Dobson for this tip. He writes -

A couple of months ago I had the challenge of removing primer, paint and a full coat of bondo from a 1966 BSA gas tank. I was prepping tank towards re-chroming and needed to see the full ugliness of the dents before the chrome plater could give me reasonable estimate. Over the years I have developed chemical sensitivities and so I'm always on the lookout for low or no VOC products.

In both of the steps I'm going to describe, I always use safety equipment such as gloves, glasses and an activated charcoal respirator. In addition I tackle this type of work outside or in a garage open to the air.

**Step 1:** - Removing the primer and the thin parts of the bondo. I used a product called "3M Safest Stripper", available here in Calgary from Rona. This is a semi-paste material which I applied to the tank with a paint brush. This is a slow acting, product which ideally takes several days to penetrate and operate fully. Following product directions, I applied the paste liberally over the whole surface and wrapped the tank in plastic. Two days later I returned, unwrapping the plastic to find the primer, paint and bondo softened and ready to be scraped off with a putty knife. I scraped the paint / bondo on to a newspaper which allowed me to easily dispose of it.

Three such applications (apply / wrap / scrape) over a period of a week and the tank was down to the original finish except in areas where the bondo was particularly deep. Final cleaning of the tank exterior was done with water, again following directions on the 3M product.

**Step 2:** - Removing thick bondo. Following step 1, I was left with bondo approximately 1/4 inch thick in three areas of the tank. I installed the flame spreader on the nozzle of my propane torch. Approaching each of the areas in turn, I played the torch back and forth horizontally along the edge of the patch and found that the bondo began to lift away from the underlying metal surface. Care must be taken here to avoid setting fire to the bondo. As the bondo began to lift, I applied pressure with a putty knife and found that it dropped off in solid chunks.

I received a favourable estimate from the chrome plater and should be able to pick up a finished product next week.  
.....Dave

Next up is Paul Whittaker who wanted to add to the January Tech Chat with another method for dealing with damaged fastener heads.

Philips head case screws were sometimes a problem even without damaged heads, I found that a couple of taps with a hammer on the end of a suitable drift would jar the threads enough to let the screwdriver work. On damaged ends it had the added effect of pushing metal back into place, making the driver fit better. The only caveat is to not pound on an unsupported cover (outer chain covers etc are often screwed to the inner only) lest they break off. Paul mentions his experience comes from working as a technician for Brampton Cycle during the 1960's and 70's. Thanks Paul.

And Mel Hicken sent along a couple of tips:

In regards to your Article on frozen fastener (nut, bolts, etc.), if they are in a place that you would not want to use a Torch, (fire hazard, or danger to wires, etc), I have had success using a pistol type soldering gun. You have more control, and can pinpoint the heat.

Another tip which I have used when installing oil seals (over a shaft or putting shaft through a new seal), wrap the shaft with saran wrap and coat it with oil. The seal will be protected and the saran wrap and can be easily removed after.

Great advice Mel!

Remember, everyone is welcome to contribute to Tech Chat as often as you like. The more you write, the less I have to...

.....Ken Mortimer

The time is now to start planning those major summer rides – maybe this is the year to take in that other major CVMG Rally – the one in **Ponoka, AB.**

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**Canadian Vintage Motorcycle**  
central alberta section  
presents the  
**14th Annual Ponoka Rally**

*The Year Of The Italian*

**Ponoka Stampede Grounds**  
**July 23 24 25 2010**

(free camping & shelter available on back-ups)

**Pre-registration \$40/person**  
**After July 15 \$50/person**  
**Children 12 & under free**

**Free public viewing of the bikes & activities**

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