

There are numerous television series which, while short-lived, gain cult-like status among their fans. One such series was the 1969-1970 series 'Then Came Bronson'. Although there were only 26 episodes, the show left a lasting impression on many viewers. Some riders even credit the series with kickstarting their initial interest in motorcycling. The Red Harley-Davidson Sportster, ridden by Jim Bronson, was a central element of the series.

Bronson's Garage is a small group of like-minded TCB fans who enjoy sharing the series with new people, rebuilding and preserving the bikes & memorabilia, and exploring Jim Bronson's Long Lonesome Highway for themselves.

As explained to me by Garage charter member Mike, "The concept of Bronson's Garage started in 2008 when I went to the Bixby Creek Bridge in Big Sur, CA with my replica bike by myself along with my wife Vicki. The following year in March 2009, which marked the 40th anniversary of TCB, Billy from Maryland, and Don from Texas also showed up at the bridge with their replica bikes and we spent the three days at the bridge, and also the State Park which was a filming location for the pilot movie. Since then we have had reunions and anniversary celebrations at MountainFest in West Virginia, Pickerington Ohio at the AMA Museum, a Jackson Wyoming filming location, in Iowa, and in Texas." He went on to explain, "This is the 6th TCB Reunion in six years. We generally try to center the reunion around filming locations, however the majority of Bronson's Garage lives east of the Mississippi River, so several other locations have been in the Midwest."

This year marks the 45th Anniversary of Then Came Bronson. The associated Reunion of Bronson's Garage was hosted at Buddy Stubbs H-D in Phoenix and took place April 25-26. It was an open event where everyone was invited to come out & see replica motorcycles, TCB movie memorabilia, & take a ride to some of the filming locations. Rain reduced the attendance but there were about 15 participants that showed up to participate in the anniversary activities. Bobby Guthrie was the event's guest of honor. He has the notoriety of being the TCB cameraman on all 26 episodes. Bobby is currently 74 years old and lives in California with his wife Linda Manz who is a Hollywood actress in her own right.

According to fellow Bronson's Garage charter member Billy Gibson, "We had riders and fans come from as far away as Northern California, Nevada, Missouri,

Texas, Colorado, and Arkansas. There were 12 replica or tribute bikes at the reunion this year. All, except one, were in running condition and were ridden at the reunion, and on the rides in the week that followed; although most were trailered to the event.

A display of memorabilia, which primarily belongs to Billy, was available to view at Buddy Stubbs Museum.

Mike described the rides: "There was a group ride to the Mystery Castle, situated at the foot of South Mountain at the end of Seventh Street in Phoenix. It is approximately 17 miles from Buddy Stubbs H-D; heading south down Cave Creek to 7th St. A private tour of the Castle was arranged. A comment was made that it is surprising how the Castle has not changed since the day they were filming episode 15 there in 1969.

"The next day, riders headed out Guadalupe Avenue heading east. At approximately the 2100 block was a filming location for episode 17 featuring a barn that was painted by an artist and Jim Bronson. It was a picture of a woman. The story here is that the barn remained there for many years after the filming, with the woman's picture still painted on it, until the area finally succumbed to the residential area that it now is.

"From there the ride proceeded out Guadalupe Avenue, over to Baseline, and out to Florence Junction. Here was another filming location, for episode 12. In the old days there used to be a gas station and the Oasis Lounge in the Navajo Inn Café. Of course these buildings are no longer there, but you can see remnants of the foundations. From there we headed up to the Apache Trail to Goldfield and on out the highway to the Bluebird Mine. The Bluebird Mine was featured in episode 10.

"At the end of the day, Bronson's Garage would gather at the hotel and watch episodes of Then Came Bronson; which was a lot of fun because Bobby Guthrie was able to give us some commentary on some of the filming stories that happened while he was there."

Bronson's Garage gets together as a group every year. However, Billy explained that they only do a big event with the full Memorabilia display and more than a couple Replica Motorcycles every 5 years. The next Big Event will likely be in Reno, Nevada (another filming site) in 2019 for the 50th Anniversary of the show. If you want to keep track of Bronson's Garage and where they'll be meeting next, visit their website at www.jimbronson.com/

Thanks go to Buddy Stubbs Harley-Davidson for hosting this year's Reunion.

Thank you to Mike & Vickie and to Bill Gibson for their help in putting this report together.

Hang in There ~

Betsy

