

## ‘Hacking’ down to Ushuaia

What does a motorcycle tour guide do when he needs a holiday? He goes on a motorcycle tour of course, although not one of his own! As a partner of GlobeRiders adventure touring company, Mike Paull has been working with renowned explorer Helge Pedersen since 2002, developing, organising and conducting trips as a guide and a tour leader, as well as being responsible for the [www.globeriders.com](http://www.globeriders.com) website. Deciding that he needed a bit of time away from ‘the office’, Mike shipped his GS rig from Seattle, Washington, to Santiago, Chile, and has begun a 28-day, 5,120-kilometre tour from Chile to Tierra del Fuego in Patagonia, Argentina.



As a big GS fan, Mike also helps organise local rides, rallies, camp-outs, and training events for the GS community in the Seattle area, doing whatever he can to “share the GS love”. The Japanese-American rider has two ‘hacks’ which both started life as BMW GS machines.

“The first hack I owned was a BMW R 1200 GS, mated to an EZS car. It was built in Holland and I’ve guided four GlobeRiders tour on it, including the Silk Road Adventure, Africa Adventure, World Tour and the Japan Hanami tours. The bike has about 96,000 kilometres on it already. The hack I’m using for this latest ride to Tierra del Fuego was an evolved design based on what worked – and didn’t work – with the first rig. This one is an R 1150 GS Adventure, mated to a Russian-built Ural car. So far, I have only done some local off-road rides and one long trip from Seattle to last year’s BMW National Rally in Wyoming. It only has about 4,000 kilometres on it.”

Mike had his left leg amputated below the knee after a head-on collision with a drunk driver in Siberia, while guiding the Globeriders’ World Tour in 2004. Because he doesn’t have the strength to lift or hold up a two-wheeler, he has opted for the relative

safety of having the third out-rigger wheel. He also owns a couple of Ural rigs, which are for sale, and he is working on a third BMW machine, again mated to a Ural sidecar. Over the years, he claims to have learned “as little as possible” about packing his panniers, but with the additional luxury of a trunk in the sidecar, Mike doesn’t have to be too careful about what he takes on these trips.

“As well as all the clothes I’ll need, I’ll bring along a standard kit and lots of tools, including a scissors jack for repairs on the ‘tub’, a back-up prosthetic in case my ‘daily-driver’ breaks, and a complete back-up shifter system, because without an ankle, I have a thumb-operated electromagnetic shifter on the bike. I’ll also pack as many stickers and postcards as I can fit in for give-aways, and because I’m Japanese-American, I’ll include a big bottle of sake for our farewell dinner!”



Mike is expecting to encounter mixed weather conditions on his ride, with temperatures ranging from just above freezing to the high 30s Celsius, plus lots of wind. Although he has journeyed to more than 40 countries in the course of business and personal travel, he is really looking forward to discovering this part of the world, which he hopes to add to his ever-growing list of favourite places to visit on a motorcycle.

“I love Africa for the sheer joy of riding the gravel roads, the deserts and the stark/harsh beauty of the dunes and canyons – you can really feel the age of man’s birthplace,” he says. “But, for a massively cross-cultural, historic and widely varying ride across many cultures, of all the trips I’ve done, the Silk Road is my favourite. You can almost believe in magic in Istanbul, and Turkey alone – with its layers and layers of history – is a wonder. Mix in the ‘Stans’, and the less-visited expanses and radically different ethnic peoples of northwestern China, the Gobi, the Turpan Depression, and end it all with the Terra Cotta Warriors, and you’ve got a stunning and mind-blowing ride.”