

Albany Vintage & Classic Motorcycle Club

HILL CLIMB

The first weekend of November found me headed south to Albany for the annual Hill Climb up Mt Clarence. It meant missing 'Mogumber' and I was prepared to be minus some brownie points for this one, having had a great time there last year. Got off to a lousy start having taken a bait on Thursday night. Never, never ever buy and eat pre-packed sushi (California rolls). Having survived all manner of roadside fair in Malaysia it was my local deli in Capel who provided the 'the dodgy dose of dorry-di' fodder. A part of the story best kept short, meant a late start Friday, Cheryl was determined to pack some dressy clothes so the big panniers on the Multi plus a duffle bag did the trick for a 3 night jaunt. Because of my sensitive digestive system we decided on the quick route down, which for me means Donnybrook, Boyup-Brook, Frankland, Mt Barker. The public dunny in Donkeybrook was a welcomed sight, followed by a trip to the chemist for "Gastro-Stop"... drastic measures called for plugging the exit point.

The leg to Boyup- Brook went easy, and the only reason to stop was for fuel (good stuff that gastro stop). The next section is over a hundred k's and tempts the throttle wrist, but we had all day and I was on my best behaviour with precious cargo riding pillion. All went well until we got to Mt barker, where I decided to take the scenic route via Porongurup National Park. The local Council had dug up the road and I copped about 20k's of gravel. Hours spent cleaning engine and rims the day before seemed all in vain and I was grateful for the recent addition of the rear hugger.

The Frederickstown Motel was our choice of digs. It's not flash, but it's clean, gets serviced every day and is close to everything by foot. We joined Mike Warren and Pauline at the Earl of Spencer for dinner. Still in recovery mode it took a lot of effort to down 1 pint of Guinness and a salad, before retiring early. It was good to be in town and set for day 1 in Albany.

Saturday involves a "Show and Shine" in Stirling Terrace and the road is blocked to all 4 wheeled traffic. The array of old, not so old and new bikes was pretty substantial. The first 2 bikes to catch my eye were a pair of 1974 Ducati 750 Sports and as it turned out one was Kev MacKinnon's ride, the very same bike that took top honours at OVEST 2008. The other was owned by Kev's mate Marco Vittino. The pair had ridden down through Northcliffe / Walpole and were still grinning at breakfast from a rain free day in bevel heaven, Marco had also brought down his 1973 450 to ride in the Climb on Sunday.

I took quite a few snaps of well presented and unusual bikes (too many to list), including a 1941 Indian and a 900 Super Sport. The afternoon was taken up with a 'Poker Run', which took in all those parts of Albany the average punter doesn't know about. With stops at some pretty picturesque places. We really liked Cosy Corner despite the cold wind and the threat of rain (this is Albany we're talking about). The event was attended by some 400 bikes of all descriptions, with a short course for the older, slower models and those who just plain chose short and a longer ride of about 150k's, concluding at The Rifle Club, where hot tea/ coffee and cakes were provided. I caught up with some Bunbury mates (still have a few) from the Bunbury Indian Harley Club. A few tall tales and it was back to the motel.

Saturday night had us dining at the same place with a party of 7 and feeling bug-free I was able to give the bar and the food a nudge. Be warned, however, the meals at the Earl of Spencer are mountainous. I had lamb shanks that looked like two whole legs of lamb taking up a plate and a second plate of vegetables. Consequently only got through one shank.

The main Hill Climb Action kicked off at 10am Sunday. Entry is only \$3 including a programme (can't beat that with a stick). Riders nominate their times and then have 3 runs at matching their nominated time. Although it's not about speed, some know only one way to ride, and some just need to keep the revs up to stay running. The weirdest thing I saw on the day was Loose Bruce in another silly hat (not really). It was a thing called a TRIKING (1978) 850. Not sure how it qualified as a bike, but it's like an early version of 'The Spyder'.

All in all we found the atmosphere very casual and relaxed, with no one giving you any grief and plenty of room to wonder about at your leisure. It would be great to do as a Club Run next year, if we can only manage the busy calendar for October/ November. And the pubs are OPEN in Albany!

Cheers, Coops