

FORWARD

The following is a brief account of the M.S.C.A.V. Christmas Tour of Tasmania 1973-74. As to what really happened is left to the cherished memories of those who were present. I trust you will find this magazine enjoyable to read and a souvenir of a holiday which could be classed as different.

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Contributors

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My grateful thanks goes out to the following typists who made this magazine possible.

- Miss M. Fenech
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RAVEL-LOG OF THE M.S.C.A.V. TRIP TO TASMANIA DECEMBER 26 1973 TO JANUARY 11 1974

ITINERARY

1973	December	26 <sup>th</sup> -	Ship left Melbourne 7.30pm
		27 <sup>th</sup> -	Arrived Devonport and travelled to Turners Beach where we camped three nights – Afternoon trip to Gunn’s Plains.
		28 <sup>th</sup> -	Tour to Stanley, the Nut and Boat Harbour
		29 <sup>th</sup> -	Mersey –Forth HEC schemes
		30 <sup>th</sup> -	Travelled to Strahan in pouring rain and camped two nights
		31 <sup>st</sup> -	Gordon River Launch Cruise in pouring rain, luckily there were many females on board
1974	January	1 <sup>st</sup> -	With hangovers it was on to Hobart where we thawed out and camped for five nights
		2 <sup>nd</sup> -	Tour of Port Arthur Penal Settlement in beautiful sunshine at last
		3 <sup>rd</sup> -	Dover thermal pool and Hastings Caves
		4 <sup>th</sup> -	Sight seeing of Mt. Wellington in the fog and tour of Electrolytic Zinc Plant
		5 <sup>th</sup> -	Strath-Gordon River and Lake Pedder (more rain)
		6 <sup>th</sup> -	Scenic trip to St. Helens via the exquisite Elephants Pass and St Mary’s Pass to camp for one night
		7 <sup>th</sup> -	Travelled to Launceston via Bridport and camped for three nights
		8 <sup>th</sup> -	Tour to Bell Bay, Tamar Gorge and Comalco Aluminium Plant
		9 <sup>th</sup> -	Tragic trip to Poatina Hydro Scheme and Midland Towns
		10 <sup>th</sup> -	Back to Devonport
		11 <sup>th</sup> -	Arrived Melbourne 8pm as the bloody ship lost its reverse gear

## M.S.C.A.V. – HONOUR ROLL

Bruce Higgs	650 Triumph
David Cumming	500 Suzuki
Garry Penhall	750 Moto Guzzi
Howard Higham	750 Honda
Howard Moffat	750 Honda
Cheryl Gallagher	600 BMW
Garry Osborn	750 BMW
Brendan Gleeson	650 Yamaha
Bob Monaghan	750 Yamaha
Trevor Michie	500 Yamaha
Les Luke	350 Honda
Daryl Clarke	350 Yamaha
Steven Robinson	250 Suzuki
Jeff Nocker	750 Honda
Don Sexton	750 Honda
Ken Holmes	550 Suzuki
Peter Binnion	850 Honda
Greg Smith	500 Honda
Lloyd Wissman	500 Moto Guzzi
Ian Taylor	600 BMW
Marilyn Taylor	500 Honda
Paul Price	500 Honda
Keith Anderson	750 Honda
Andrew Davernport	750 Norton
Heather Jones	350 Honda
Mick Fagan	500 Suzuki
Charlie Jacobs	750 Suzuki
Michael Formani	350 Honda
Jolyon Dunn	600 BMW
Andrew Rowe	750 Ducati
Dick Bloxham	750 BMW
Rolf Jinks	350 Honda
Denis Ackland	750 Honda
Mick Davis	350 Honda
Bill Elliot	500 Suzuki
Ned Borgelt	600 BMW
Linda Bowers	550 Suzuki
Brian Ahern	500 Honda
Ron Liebe	750 Suzuki
Adrian Val	350 Honda
Bob Hodge	750 Honda
Graham McFeeters	750 BMW
Geoff Harrison	350 Honda
Roger Holt	650 Yamaha
Chris Bowers	750 Honda
Kay McFeeters	Pillion
Judy Stringer	Pillion
Judy Holmes	Pillion
Peter Philferan	pillion

26<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 1973

Four-thirty on the afternoon of Boxing Day saw a huge punctual posse of peripatetic people pent up for their pending perambulations of that popular paradise for pleasure seekers and their pillions – *TASMANIA!*

Everybody was on time, with many relations, friends, non-travelling members and even several television type folks to farewell us.

After our initial briefing we all headed off for the ferry terminal, with Bruce Higgs leading, Michael Formani rear rider, and Garry Osborne and Howard Higham as patrols – a formation we held to for most of the trip.

After a bit of a wait, Fagan eventually led the 46 bikes into the cavernous vehicle decks of the Empress, where the bikes were secured, on their main stands, with ropes to the wheels, front and back and amidst much trepidation on the part of most of our members.

Everyone eventually found their way up top to their lounge chairs, and after all the guys had finished using the ladies toilets, set off to explore the ship, which was a lot bigger than most of us anticipated.

Inspected Darren and Ned's cabins, gave the ship's captain a few pointers, checked out the Christmas tree decorating the mast (a good luck type custom Andrew D informs us), dragged Bob M away from Cathy his tearful fiancé, and "*YO-HO-HO and a bottle of lemon-lime-and-bitters and we're off!*"

Those in the know immediately joined the queue outside the eating house and after a humble, but very satisfying meal, most of our gang were to be found on deck beneath the navigation bridge, for a mental "*fang*" down the Nepean Highway and Arthur's Seat, all quite visible from the channel, and after "*seeing*" us safely through the heads we all headed for the night-capatorium, where the regulars had already commandeered a large corner for us. Had a friendly Irish steward that everyone thought OK, except for Linda that is. But then I guess we have to sympathise with her, for with attributes like hers, if someone comes up and asks "*What can I do for you SIR?*" we should at least query the qualifications of his optician!

The bar closed at the ridiculous hour of 10.30 so by 11.00 the upper decks were deserted, except for about 40 odd (in more ways than one) mad motorcyclists, wandering around peering in dog kennels, deck-skating on the slippery planking and hanging onto Hairee and Shadow's ankles so they wouldn't blow away! Trevor Michi went for a climb but soon got down after nearly being deaded by the radar thingy! Andrew Rowe had a disagreement with his stomach, lost his front teeth overboard and was seen to be wandering in a daze like the proverbial gummy shark, only greener!

Most of our members had retired by midnight, and so ended phase one of our tourific pilgrimage.

### DAY ONE – 27<sup>TH</sup> December 1973

A sleepless night for most, with people resorting to dozing up on deck, outside the purser's office, in cupboards, on the floor – ANYWHERE but those wretched airline type lounge chairs!

Heather performed on deck, reciting "*Alice's Restaurant*" from where to go, and at dawn a few keen shutter-bugs were up to photograph the sunrise and search the horizon for that comet which didn't come. Everyone looked very tired and bleary-eyed during the old queue up for breakfast trick, but after stoking up on baked necks and hot chocolate we gathered in the smoke-room to watch the approaching island state. Fagan summed up our thoughts with "*Hey Hairee, get a load of those mountains, we've gotta ride round, hoo-hoo!*" Little did he know....

Kung Fu Canary made rude suggestions about the steward and his vacuum, while Gary Penhall went round opening women's doors. Formaldehyde got rubbished (literally) while photographing seagulls feeding on the ships refuse and Roger had a shave in the passageway outside the ladies loo.

We docked safely and gently at davenport (well some of our guys were up on the bridge) in beautiful sunshine, and everyone promptly shot below to examine their precious steeds! Much relief – they'd travelled well during the silky smooth crossing and had hardly shifted.

We disembarked with a minimum of fuss, assembled outside the terminal, and after a count of heads zapped off towards Turner's Beach, near Ulverstone (8 miles approximately) stopping off at the Devonport Bluff, where an "*Advocate*" newspaper fella lined us up for a photograph, much to the amazement of the large crowd of staggered onlookers!

Pitched camp beside the sports oval at T.B. a fair way from all the facilities, but it was nice and private away from all those horrible car-driving people.

During lunch we heard on the news that "*The wharves at Devonport drummed to the sound of 46 motorcycles this morning.*" We were believed to be the largest tour by any one group of bikes in Tassy.

A small deputation set off for Devonport airport to pick up their pillion passengers, while those at camp had the first visit from one of many local motorcyclists – an incredibly young looking 16 year old on his 350/3 Kawasaki. (L-permit available at this age). We had our first breakdown – Andrew's new 750 Ducati, with a gooped up spark-plug, and Marilyn and Linda checked out the rather amusing gent's W.C.'s.

By 2.00pm we had all reassembled and were off on our first tour to the Gunn's Plains Caves.

After passing through Ulverstone and wondering at its incredible clock tower, we soon came to realise just what touring in Tassy was going to be all about ...beautiful green hills and valleys, a result of the plentiful spring rains, and oh! Those roads! grass all the way to the verge of that serpentine bitumen, twisting and turning its way along side rivers and up and down dale, made for the scrape scrapery of curve starved mainlanders!! *Zowie and Lappy-doo!!*

We arrived safely at the caves, the parking area for which was on the side of a steep hill, overlooking the plains set in an attractive valley.

The caves proved fascinating, with no coloured lights illuminating the various features – plenty of water flowing through the first very high cavern and our guide gave us all second thoughts by explaining how the level had been known to rise quite rapidly and told of some of his near misses at being trapped inside!

After we'd all played the musical stalagmites 'n' tites, and reached the end of the guided section, where there were yet more unexplored caves, we returned via a slightly different path and eventually emerged into the bright sunshine again, glad that we'd taken the time to visit these almost eerily lit caverns, with the flowing water contributing a little extra interest.

We departed via Preston, more growly roads a few miles of dusty but easy-to-ride-on dirt, and back onto the bitumen again.

Right from the outset, the standard of things to come was being set: corner marking, actual riding and Bruce's leading were all excellent!

The evening a couple of our members met some local motorcyclists (the first of *many*, hey?) in town, who followed us back to camp and then on our ride via Braddon's Lookout to Darren's aunt's at Ulverstone for supper.

The lookout gave excellent view over the Forth River and our campsite, while en-route the reaction of the locals on our passing was absolutely incredible, due I'd say to the fact that a lot of people know about us from the *favourable* radio publicity. Everyone was friendly with kids rushing out to wave and give peace signs, and one old fellow even raised his gardening hose in salute to any of us that waved to him!

Nearing Darren's aunts, what was that white and silver Be-em doing outside that brick establishment, minus its female pillion?

An hilarious time was had over supper – inevitable so it seems when any of our mob gets together – and we were surprised to receive an invite to a party being turned on for us by one of the local bikies.

Supper finished (and many thanks to Darren's aunt and cousin-in-law for having us) we returned to Turner's Beach – what a sight it is to see a long, single file line up of bikes at night, on a country road, especially when they all switch on their blinkers together! Some members took up the offer of a drink or three at the local bowling club, but most people were glad to turn in well before midnight, due to the previous night's lack of sleep.

DECEMBER 28

*Wild Bill* was up at 5.00am *bleah!!* Loud voice. Much talk. Result: most people up by 6.00am. Who was loudest: Bill or that alarm clock kookaburra? I believe that at least two of the club's couples had some good "*clean*" fun in the shower that morning!

Formaldehyde went for a swim. Brrr! Quote: "*Shows how much sense he's got!*"

Anyway t'was a glorious sunny day, so after our little meeting at 10.00 we headed for Stanley and the Hut halting briefly at Wynyard long enough to buy lunch and for Brendan to set a pattern of his own! First off the randy mark by chatting up a hitch-hiker (female!) and giving her a ride up to the Hut and back.

We zapped around to Table Cape and checked out its beautiful view, and from there, along more A-1 bike-bitumen, to Boat Harbour. Swim, swim, eat, eat lice bitten Dennis Ackie *anna uppa* inside thigh area! (Sea lice that is – Dennis wasn't carrying his own!)

On the way to Stanley a brief stop was made to a much distant "*Hut*" from Pt. Letta which is a ship loading point for iron ore, transported in slurry form by pipeline from down south.

At Stanley, the Hut rises steeply behind the town and after a tough nine minute ten second climb (timing by courtesy David Cumming) the fitter members of the club were afforded breathtaking vistas of the surrounding sea and countryside. Neither Dick or Les Luke could travel more than a few yards up the track on their bikes as it was so steep.

Meanwhile, Trevor Michie was selling his pattern for the trip, namely *falling off!* Les Luke was continuing his *breaking down!* that's not quite fair, cos that 350 does a good job the way it gets used (and abused). Much amusement at the local policeman's comments:

*"you're quite a tourist attraction yourselves!"*

And to a lairizing local on a 175 Honda:

*"What are you trying to do? Get these people a bad name or something?"*

The return trip was made via the expressway rather than the twisting scenic ocean road we used on the way out, and we arrived home having lost only two people! (Bothe on Honda "Utes").

That evening saw a diversity of interests keeping us all out of mischief (or getting us into it) from sampling the friendly atmosphere of late night shopping in town, attending the party put on for us, having drinks spilt on us by Greg Smith at the Bowling Club, picking u chickadees of doubtful age, (ask D.C and D.A 'bout that) to sitting in hotel W.C.'s waiting to hear amusing conversations such as the one overheard by Paul Price in the Bog which went something like this:

First local: "*Gee, seems to be a lot of bikes in town.*"

Second local: "*yeah, the Melbourne Hell's Angels, according to the article in the paper this morning*"

First local: "*No! Not Hell's Angels. The Melbourne Scooter and Cycle Club or something like that.*"

Second local: "*Wonder where the scooters are?*"

First local: "*They wouldn't be able to keep up with the bikes. They'll probably be here tomorrow!!*"

Did you know all this happened in the Bog, on this day, 1973 Marilyn Taylor was bitten on the ankle by an ant!

DECEMBER 29

Greg was up at 6.30am to fulfil an important task – to go pick up our fearless president, Big D at the airport! (Who incidentally nearly went to Launceston!)

We were fortunate enough this day to have a pudding-basined local BMW rider by the name of John to show us around the impressive Mersey-Forth hydro-scheme and a magnificent job he did too.

First stop was for petrol at Spreyton, where almost the entire club converged on one service station with only one pump attendant! It was here that the “*Advocate*” photographer caught up with us for our second of many newspaper photographs, this time of Roger the Lodger and his jam-jar.

Lunch was purchased at Sheffield, where some of the more generous members fed meat pies to a local horse and thence on to Lemonthyme power station to devour our goodies, soak up the sun, watch people retrieve their beloved Frisbee from the icy stream and to wonder about our new-found Tasmanian friends who kept running into each other!

Poor old Steve on the green 250 Suzy gave us all a bit of entertainment too, by jousting with a pot-hole on a bend. No great damage to Steve luckily, but he succeeded in ripping out a large number of rear wheel spokes, so guide John teed up the use of a friend's truck to get the bent Suzy back to Heap's workshop in Ulverstone. On this trip Daryl and Wild Bill also came unstuck.

Visited the Bethana power station and performed the old “*start the 750 Ducati at the top of the tunnel*” trick! Echo-echo-echo!

A very tired group of bikies was then led off to the Devil's Gate power station, where we were given a quick course in “*how to make your own electricity.*”

*You take one large power station, open a few valves, add water, twiddle a few knobs, look at a couple of dials, and PRESTO! High speed natural sparks!*

Only problem is, when John went to shut the station down again after our demo, some debris got caught in a valve. Result? A few hours overtime for a couple of H.E.C. fellas to repair a broken valve closing link!

Final (yawn) stop was at the central control point for all the power stations, where they woke us all up with a very loud demonstration of what a circuit breaker can sound like. LOUD!

On the way “home” through more greener the green countryside we passed a sign pointing to “*No-where-else*”, 7 miles and one couldn't help but notice that all the corner markers were asleep in the grass verge!

The broken Suzuki picker-uppers took John to tea at Uncle Tom's Cabin gave Steve a hot bath at Darren's aunt's and returned to camp to find we'd had a visit from Mr Heap a 74 year old enthusiast of bikes and camping (who was a mechanic and real tradesman). He arrived on a '54 BSA, with a home built outfit which looks as if it were modelled on a zeppelin air ship. He had incidentally what Andrew Rowe called a classic in turn signals. His right turn was arm hung straight downside of body with the index finger horizontal.

He would have liked to have had Andrew's Ducati for a few days to pull it to pieces to see how it worked but Andrew couldn't spare it.

A local police motorcyclist (450 Honda) also came by to say a friendly hello – with a bit of luck he'll see us in Melbourne in June.

It was interesting to see the Tasmanian motorcyclists' reaction to our visit. Some would come straight into see us. Others would drive up and down a few times first to pluck up courage. Others we would go out to ask in. Mostly they proved a very pleasant lot. One night we had 20 riding with us. Everywhere some of them asked if they could come on day trips with us. One couple actually riding from Devonport to Hobart to be with us for the two days.

After a joke session round the primus light "*campfire*" everyone turned in early to get a good night's sleep for our big shift the next day.

### 30<sup>th</sup> December

The good weather couldn't last forever and next morning we were greeted upon awakening with an overcast sky and drizzling miserable rain.

Nobody seemed to want to make a shift and so it was with reluctance that most of us attempted to pack our bikes in the rain. It was impossible to remain dry and we were all wet through.

The trip to Strahan was fairly long and very, very wet, in fact it would be the worst days riding I have ever encountered. There were spills galore with Andrew Rowe, Heather and Cheryl all coming off in the wet. Poor Andrew nearly drowned in the gutter it was so wet.

The trip was very slow and the entire convoy was stretched out over a great distance. The roads were good and the scenery was beautiful.

We stopped for lunch at Rosebery wet as shags and with extremely low morale. Luckily Ron Leibe turned up in an ambulance and gave us a bit of a laugh as the person he was going to pickup had already arrived in town on the back of a bike. Heather wasn't as bad as Ron first thought and only had a bruised something (?) or other. Considering the way she was riding at the time she was very lucky it wasn't worse.

After many attempts at trying to kiss a local girl in a cafe by a few of the boys we were off, as the weather was not getting any better at all. In fact if we hadn't moved, the bikes would have been washed away.

The trip to Zeehan was called off by all but a handful although Darren assured us that not seeing Zeehan was like going to England and not seeing London. Incidentally a few more bikes came unstuck on a shortcut from Zeehan to Strahan.

Trevor Michie had the unenviable job of being corner marker on the road into Strahan which is 26 miles long, has 266 bends and had to be tackled in pouring rain and with at least a 50mph head wind.

I have never seen so many long faces in my whole life as when we were informed that there was no room for us at the camping ground due to a mix up in the bookings.

Lucky for us the people were very kind and offered us the drill hall to stay in. So the episode of communal living of the MSCAV began and what a great time it was. Those that could not find room in the hall spent the night in gaol.

I don't think we'll ever forget that place with money, sleeping bags, gloves etc all hanging out to dry, why in fact I bet you can still hear the echo of Mick's voice there today, after all, he didn't shut up for 48 hours.

After a few beers at a local pub ON SUNDAY and a quick bite of a beautiful crayfish at \$140 a go many weary bodies fell into bed that night in an endeavour to get a good night's sleep.

### 31<sup>st</sup> December

Partially thawed out the club was looking forward to a relaxing day out of the wet on a cruise down the Gordon River.

Bill Elliott set the ball rolling for the day when he introduced himself to the Captain and said “hi I’m Wild Bill” to which the Captain said to his mate “there’s one in every crowd”. There may well be one in every crowd but there were also twenty or so young Christian type females on board and all the young gigolos in the club wasted no time at all in sniffing up the strays.

As the day wore on the weather became worse and time was spent either in the bar, sniffing around or helping the Captain steer his boat.

The first to lead the way chatting up the girls was “Hot Lips” Gleeson, “Gummy Rowe” and “Smoothie Michie”. The boys did a great job considering the amount of annoyance they received from the others through the window. The birds were good lookers but to this day we reckon Michies’ girl was under 15.

I am led to believe that this river is a beautiful site on a fine day but sitting in the bar during a hurricane I could have sworn we were only touring up the Yarra.

Upon arrival back at the dock we all split up, some farewelling the women they and chatted up and the others off to the pub to celebrate the New Year early and discuss the following conversation overheard on board the Dennison Star.

He to Her “Lousy weather”

She “Yes”

He “So much for the small talk, do you or don't you?”

She “Sharp No”

He “Well you might as well piss off”

No prizes to guess who said it! About this time the local policeman Charlie was seen on Gary’s B.M doing 70 or 80mph. He said he was only doing 35 but the tacho was 4,500 anyway who was going to book him as he was the only policeman for thousands of miles. He said to us in the pub, now you fellows watch it or you must let me ride your bike twice round the block and buy me a glass of beer. At 11 that night Charlie and his wife joined us until the pubs closed at 12.30 for New Year’s celebrations.

He might as well, he said, as he couldn't arrest anyone as he had nowhere to put them unless he kicked some of us out of the cells.

New Year’s Eve - Who will ever forget Lu Lu Wild Bill’s songs while standing on the table at the local? All the beer drunk, all the beer spilt on the policeman’s wife. Auld Langsyne. Buying beer at 12.30; the dance and the way we got thrown out (1 violently) where were you when the lights went out? Meeting up with all the others on the veranda of the local at around 1.30. The brawl between Graham and Steve. The reception received when the salubrious group arrived back at the hall. The arrival of WILD BILL.

Yes indeed what a night it was.

*THE BIKE CLUB AS WE SAW IT FROM THE DECK OF THE DENISON STAR* by Beth and Sue

Tour Leader: *Er, you kids, will be sharing this boat with 40 or so Victorian bike riders. Be careful.*

Girls: (4) *Good, good, good.*

Others: (44) *What are bikies doing taking a scenic tour?*

Enter bikies in straggling formation from hotel opposite looking very rough, unshaven and jovial.

Sue: *Hey Beth, ...look at the leathers coming.*

Beth: *Sue... will you just look at the camera for a minute.*

Sue: *Look at that one!*

Beth: *Soo..oh (thinks, maybe I'll take a look here) Hey...there's Tiny Tim.*

Sue: *Looks like the old ladies "ll be out numbered today.*

Later in lounge and Sue is interviewing Brendan.

Beth: *Oh no, already she's winning on.*

Sue: *Yes I look like mother*

Brenda: *Yes, I think you do...*

Enter Rhonda and Carol, Brendan slightly distracted, completely ignores Sue and Sue leaves by back entrance, thinking....

Sue: *Well missed out, better see what Beth's up to.*

Creak, thump, thump, thump, creak thump, thump, thump. Enter funny Bob.

"Merrily we roll along," holding two cans and a glass.

Bob: *Hishe weather girlsh.*

Beth: *Bit wet.*

Sue: *Bit windy.*

Bob: *Need a drink so you won't notice the roll. Meet the boysh.*

Darren: *Nice to meet you. Bows slowly and smiles.*

Sue: *Where you boys from?*

Boys: *St. Kilda, Essendon, Fitzroy, Footscray, Kew, Thomastown Burwood....*

Sue: *Local yokels?*

Beth: *Indigenes aborigines?*

Sue: *Look at that one with the pen. Is he the only one able to write?*

Darren: bows, he's writing an article for a magazine.

Sue & Beth: *Oh, you read as well, do you? So do weee...*

Enter a dark swarthy stranger with a five o'clock shadow (at 10 in the morning!!)

Sue: *Emm I saw him before. Downstairs. Doesn't appear to be interested in girls. Bad luck.*

Need we say more.....

## TUESDAY 1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 1974

There we were, all snug in our beds nursing our heads from the night before and not wanting to rise early to travel the two hundred miles to Hobart. In fact not one soul stirred before 7am, and then only after Wild Bill came out with his friendly morning greeting "hands off cock on with socks".

By 8am, the area was a hive of activity with bodies going in all directions preparing meals and trying to find lost property.

By 10am the area was almost clear except for Keith running around looking for his trousers. All's well that ends well, as Keith didn't find his trousers but he found two other pairs that didn't bloody fit.

10.10am and we were off, yes you guessed it, it started to bloody rain and by the time we assembled in Queenstown it was bitterly cold and very miserable.

Queenstown was virtually deserted at this hour and as we would our way up the bleak, vegetation free mountains, one could not help but wonder how anyone could live in such a god-for-saken hole.

The entire countryside had been eroded away by wind, water and most importantly the thick smoke that spewed forth from the many industries in the town. This was just further proof of mans foolishness in tempering fro gain, and in doing so destroying all that is beautiful around him.

The climb up the mountains was both slippery and spectacular, and those lucky enough to get a glimpse of sunshine, received a most magnificent sight of the rays lighting u a waterfall running down the mountain into the valley below.

After some good roads and some bad, about eight miles of thick slippery mud to traverse, the weather improved. By this stage of the journey everybody was starting to handle the conditions really well and not one person came unstuck. Ian should rate a mention here, as while he didn't actually drop is bike he did a magnificent U turn towards the edge of a cliff.

Lunch, and promising skies could be seen ahead and the quickest repair job of the trip went to Bob Hodge at this stop.

On the dirt section a stone cracked part of his under sump and oil was spurting out. In the time it took us to have a meal the sump was drained (on the ground) removed, cleaned, repairs with quick sealing araldite, replaced and refilled with oil. The repair worked too! Wonderful stuff araldite;

Off again and the crisp air that had greeted us earlier in the day was slowly but surely warming and our icy bones, that felt as if they would snap any minute, started to thaw. A few pea vines were encountered on the way the roads were indifferent and was saw another flaming power station.

Bad luck struck in the form of a strong gale in New Norfolk which uprooted Ian's BMW and smashed his new screen I understand that it has become a very expensive business in replacing it too. Bad fault in BM's by not having wide centre stands.

Hobart at last and a good night's sleep and a shower was a god reward for the atrocious conditions of the infamous west coast.

And so ended an era in the life of the MSCAV for although I would like to return to Tasmania, I don't particularly want to see that coast again.

### WEDNESDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> JANUARY 1974

We were really in the spotlight this day what with T.V crews and newspaper reporters fighting for interviews, but also the bus load of girls that we were following had arrived and all the young "jigs" were hard at work.

"Living History" – yes that's what I said, for we had all read about Port Arthur at school but the first hand look at the settlement hammered home the stark realisation of what really did happen and why the poms are a cruel selfish race. The school room is not in contact with reality and as a picture is worth a thousand words, imagine what visiting the place must be worth.

Before visiting the settlement however, the morning was spent looking at fantastic examples of Mother Nature and how the forces have carved giant structures out of impervious rock, namely the Blowhole, Tasman's Arch and Devils Kitchen.

The trip through the settlement was even more memorable by the fantastic charm and wit of our guide. The place now a day is peaceful and tranquil, time will continue to make the place beautiful but I doubt if it will ever heal the scars and the blot on Australia's past.

Back in Hobart Town it was time to live it up and many people took the opportunity to enjoy the food at the Black Prince Hotel or do what comes naturally and chase girls. Did you hear the one about the boys who picked up a couple of strays and found out that one was an unwed mother and the other was married – I believe it was a real fun night as all they got out of it was an empty petrol tank.

## THURSDAY 3<sup>RD</sup>, FRIDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> AND SATURDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1974

Over the next few days the club really got to know Hobart and its surrounds as well as the good night spots to visit. An enjoyable evening was had by about twenty of us who saw Alvin Purple, but as it was just across from the Black Prince Hotel there was no wonder it was such a success.

The trip from the camp site to Hobart involved traversing three very scrapey type roundabouts and rumour has it that a certain person, who shall remain nameless, on a Suzuki Cobra was really fanging it on one of the roundabouts when a cop on Saint flew past him deflating his very high ego but not his voice.

The run to Dover was held in fine conditions and the thermal pool, while not exactly being quite like we expected, was enjoyable. The pool smelt like a sewer and looked like a sewer but and no bad side effects – ask Claw as he was unlucky enough to have his togs forcibly removed – and in front of Nuns too. “Shocking”.

The caves were the best we had seen in Tassy as they had been established for a fair while. The track leading to the caves was in itself an adventure as the little track wound in and out of the beautiful bush, which gave the appearance of a rain forest, and with just the right amount of mist to make the forest feel eerie. No drop bears were sighted though – just penguins come nuns.

The trip up Mt. Wellington was a twofold disaster, firstly Jinksy took the wrong turn (typical) and secondly when we got to the top you couldn't see “Zublik” in front of your face as it was too foggy.

## SUNDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1974

One thing you can say about Tasmania and that is that everything is old, so it wouldn't be right if we didn't stop off at a power station or something old on the way to St Helens. Darren didn't disappoint us and we had a quick trip to the eldest stain glass window on the Island.

The trip to St. Helens was another one enjoyed in fine sunshine and Elephant Pass and St. Mary's Pass were the best areas we had travelled through up to date for picturesque scenery. (Ask Michael, the camera freak)

The roads could be likened to the Black Spur but wider and longer and such, much fangier as Mick and Garry proved.

The town of St. Helens was very dead (a bit like Lorne in the off season) and very expensive, that is if you could find anything edible.

Everybody was really dog tired by this stage and for a change the campsite was very silent all night.

What happened: -

Two chaps showered together in the toilet block (not Club members luckily)

Michael F. slept with his clothes on.

A stranger who after talking to us gave us a present of 30 fish scaled and cleaned as a present for breakfast. That's what Tasmanians were like. They didn't miss much either, one woman in a shop in George Town said that she had never seen 31 bikes together before. Yep, she was right about the number.

J.B finally departed.

The Christian women didn't come here (thank God) 2 or 3 of the chaps definitely needed the sleep.

## MONDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> AND TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1974

Civilisation was again reached when camp was pitched at Launceston, here the price of food etc was very reasonable and the three nights stay was enjoyed by all bar one (more about him later).

The Christian type girls had caught up with us again and all the “jigs” crawled out of the wood work and were hard at it again.

One story worth relating is that of a certain person who persuaded one of the girls from the bus tour to go out with him on the bike instead of the prearranged tour. After a quick ride it was discovered there was no such place out in Launceston so they returned to camp and to kill time crawled into her tent.

They were caught unawares and in state of undress by the return of the bus, so he had to lay low while all noises, lights and other assorted sounds went on in the neighbouring tents. When all was quiet he scampered back to his own tent with his tail between his legs. The funny part about it is that he spent two hours in her tent and all he got for the trouble was sticky fingers.

J.B turned up in Hobart, but he had some problems with his rent-a-car, it seems the tyres dept going down. Luckily Roger carried a car pump and he could keep pumping them up. Now this train of events had us worried and we were sure he and faulty tyres. J.B followed us to St. Helens and low and behold they went down again but this time Roger’s pump had disappeared. What to do? Call in Sherlock Holmes maybe? Anyway this story had a happy ending, Roger found his pump wrapped up in his sleeping bag in Launceston (should have looked there in the first place Roger! How can anyone misplace a pump that size) and J.B left and we haven’t seen him since. HOORAY!!

Also during our short stay in this fair city the warriors of the club were called upon to execute a very dangerous mission and that was to replace the flag rope at the top of St David’s Tower – a Cathedral no at restaurant (Roger take note!

Three warriors tried, Bruce come Brian come Jeff, for a while, there was a lot of come and very little action but Jeff finally succeeded and the MSCAV flag was unfurled to celebrate the victory.

Another enjoyable aspect of Hobart’s camping facilities was the mobile toilet which would disembowel anyone who dare flush while sitting there upon the throne. However, there were some, (who will remain nameless) who received great enjoyment out of being sucked asunder.

The trip down the Strathgordon Road was via Russell Falls and a must for any future excursion to the Island State. Much controversy has waged over the past year or so on the saving of Lake Pedder. One club member who went on this run has the following opinion of the development:-

“Everyone knows that in any club organization members may not like everything that some of the presidents, secretaries, etc do, providing they improve things overall we must live with the small dislikes for the general betterment of all. This is how I see Lake Pedder. I haven’t read all the arguments for and against flooding of the Lake but do know that the country previously inaccessible to most people is now available to all, sure some country may be spoiled a little, but the H.E.C have done a wonderful job in opening the country. Firstly the road must be the best in Tasmania and with only a toll of 50 cents for bikes and \$1 for cars. All registration numbers are recorded going in and checked off going out. They have built picnic areas with water, toilet blocks, shelter sheds and barbecues with supplies of wood. The buildings are in sandstone to blend in with the country. The country is really magnificent, that is, what we could see for rain. All mountain and mountain ranges are marked with signs as are all geological rock formations, some of which are 700 million years old. The main thing is that it’s now accessible to all car and bike owners. Don’t ever miss it. The H.E.C have done an excellent job”

The last night in Hobart was spent in many different ways, but the two who went back to the Black Prince for a final beer, namely Claw and Garry, received a few free beers from a very grateful manager who said we were the best behaved group who had ever set foot inside his hotel – and that included the locals.

The story on Hobart is only but a few snippets of a memory which has gone cloudy with time, we all have our memories whether it be mobile toilets, parking tickets or hotels – so don't accept that everyone did only the things mentioned above. There are many unwritten stories about Hobart and I know a few blokes who hope they never are!!

Then there was Howard H who fell head over heels in love – AGAIN! (I'm keeping count Howard)

Then there's the quiet one Keith who ran off with a librarian and then there was Brendan who after arriving anywhere a girl would always appear and one minute afterwards he would be chatting her up. Fair dinkum if that lot was in the middle of the Nullarbor at night a girl would appear and Brendon would appear and get to work. Talk about the knack – he has it.

The club had difficulties in locating a hotel which would serve them counter teas, but through perseverance and a great thirst one was found.

Each night in camp little get-togethers were held where everyone sat round drinking, not the alcoholic type of cider as it was against club rules. Shall we just say it was an unlabelled brand which had to be drunk before we could tell whether it was alcoholic or not.

The following is for anyone who may wish to find out how to eat corn flakes while seated in the pouring rain. Why anyone would want to know for is beyond me but it proves that an Editor's lot is not a happy one.

The things to do are – firstly put less water in the powdered milk otherwise it will be too diluted by the time you are finished. Then put on boots, bright red wet weather suit and sit Bell Helmet high on head, looks a bit like a hair dryer, by now you look like a complete and utter crank and the little men in their white coats will be after you, and Lloyd has a photo to prove it, doesn't he Darren???

\* \* \* \* \*

#### TRAGEDY AT POATINA – WED, JAN 9 – 1974

The last full day of the tour was to be a trip from Launceston to Poatina, to the Great Lakes in the centre of Tassie, and to the towns along the Midland Highway between Hobart and Launceston. As this was a long tour – about 320km, we started from camp early, 9.30 instead of 10.00am. About 25 riders set out, passing quickly through Longford and Cressy on the way to Poatina Power Station. When we got there, we parked the bikes in front of the immaculate landscaped gardens, and enquiry office, to wait for the small diesel bus that would ferry us down the 1km long tunnel to the underground power station. Two busloads were needed. The access tunnel hewn out of solid rock is barred to all petrol driven vehicles, including motorcycles.

The power station itself, with a quiet hum of five 50,000kw generators, is bright and airy; cool on a hot day, being 153m below ground level. The water comes from the Great Lake nearly 1 Km higher than the power station, and only about 5km away at the top of a steep escarpment. The head of water (830) m is the highest in Australia.

We left Poatina about 11.30 to climb up the winding road to Brady's Lookout and the dam at Miena. The weather was overcast but dry; there seemed to be a slight mist about on the road. I was near the end of the string of bikes, well separated along the series of hairpins up the escarpment. About halfway up I passed Wild Bill, who had stopped. As I passed he waved towards the trees at the side of the road. I looked, saw nothing, and carried on, assuming that Bill was answering a call of nature (I thus broke a Club rule). At the top of the climb, the day was still overcast, but within a few miles a sudden, dramatic change occurred: the overcast cleared abruptly, revealing a vividly clear blue sky and throwing into sharp relief a superb Alpine landscape of glaciated rock and coniferous trees. I was, somehow, reminded of Siegfried Sassoon's words in the trenches of World War I:

“Everyone suddenly burst out singing  
And I was filled with such delight

As prison'd birds must find in freedom  
Winging their way across the white orchards and dark green fields.  
On, on, on, and out of sight.”

Miena was reached along a 6-mile (10 Km) stretch of dirt road; we stopped for eats at the petrol station there. We left after a few minutes, returning to the Lake Highway – Poatina road junction, about six miles south of Miena. I had not, until that moment, realised that anything was wrong; it was, therefore, a devastating moment when Greg Smith told me that Daryl Clarke had been killed. I had not realised there had been an accident, although afterwards I found that Peter Binnion had ridden up to Miena (whilst I was getting lunch) with the preliminary news. Daryl had apparently run out at a hairpin near Poatina; over the edge of the road, through a narrow belt of trees and shrubs, and over a concealed precipice; he had died instantly. Nobody actually saw this happen; but Wild Bill, who was following Daryl, suddenly noticed Daryl's absence. Looking back, he was a slight dust cloud in the air, and stopped to investigate. Had he not done so, it might have been a long time before the accident would have come to light. Ironically, it was to Daryl himself that I had confided my fears of such a tragedy during the tour. Daryl and I had been good friends; he was, like me, rather quiet, but good fun to be with once you had got to know him.

It was a very subdued party of bikies that travelled on to Bothwell, then back along the Midland Highway to Oatlands and Campbell Town. A party had been planned that afternoon, on a property near Campbell Town. I think the party should have been cancelled; as Trevor Michie said, he declined to attend, returning instead to camp at Launceston with Les Luke and a few others. I admire them for their decision. The majority went to the party, but although our hosts did us proud with food and drink the party was not a resounding success. In the circumstances, not surprising.

Are there any lessons the club can learn from this disaster? Daryl was a pretty inexperienced rider; he went on the Tasmania trip only as a result of a last minute cancellation by another member – in fact, it was only on Christmas Day he knew he was definitely going. He had nearly wrecked his bike a few weeks earlier, and was still dressing his scars at the start of the tour. During the tour, he dropped his bike at least twice before the final accident. He was somewhat ill-equipped, wearing canvas shoes rather than leather boots, and had some difficulty in securing his gear on the bike. By his own admission, he tended to day-dream; he loved the Australian bushland, but its beauty caused his attention to wander, even when riding. Bruce Higgs assessment, brutal but perhaps accurate, was that he would never had made a good motorcyclist. With hindsight, perhaps he should not have been accepted for the fairly tough Tasmania tour. It's worth noting that just about all the youngest riders on the tour pranged their bikes. Perhaps the more expert riders expect too much of their less experienced brethren; I am only too aware of how closely I came to dropping it several times on the tour – and I've been riding ten years or so.

I quoted earlier the poets' thoughts during a brief respite from the horrors of trench warfare. From memory, the lines end:

“Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted  
And beauty came like the setting sun  
My heart was moved to tears  
Oh! The song was wordless  
The singing will never be done.”

“The singing will never be done”. Perhaps that might serve as an epitaph for Darryl; he died doing the thing he loved most of all, riding his bike through the beautiful Australian countryside. Ride on, brother, ride on!

THURSDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> AND FRIDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1974

Back to the ship and guess what more “BLOODY” rain, but not before we went via an area of interest, Entelly House. These areas were really great and we got so stuffed with scones and tea, I thought the club would all die – not with a bang as would be befitting a bike club but puffed pastry!

By the time we arrived at Devonport I could feel great expectation in the air as the forty odd people were very exhausted after 14 gruelling days on the island. If anything, perhaps too much was crammed into far too short a time.

Absolutely exhausted the club pile on board the ship and stumbled about in an attempt to find seats, berths, birds etc. Some of us had only one thought on our minds and that was to have a beer in the relaxing lounge, but others stood on the deck to have one last look at Tassie and wave farewell. Our new found friends from the Apple Isle parked their bikes on one of the cliffs and flashed their lights as we slowly steamed up the river and into the Strait.

On board that night much frivolity was had as after the bar closed that night a select few were invited to the crews bar thanks to Charlie and got well and truly "PISSSED".

With great expectation in our hearts the Heads of Port Phillip Bay were sighted and we all dreamed of our own little beds and a good shower – that is except for Cheryl and Garry who showered together. This however was not to be as the flamin ship could not dock due to high winds and we spent the next 12 hours anchored in the Bay.

In this 12 hours the bar was not open and we got one free meal, which was welcomed by Mick, as his money supply was exhausted (at 18mpg what can you expect)

The hard luck story of this wait was of Mr H Higham who had asked one of the birds on the Christian bus to wait for him on the dock and he would drive her the 20 odd miles to catch the bus at the next stop.

Anyway every hour on the hour he disappeared into the gents – no one knows what he was doing but he sure had calloused hands by the time we docked.

Anyway we docked at approximately 8pm, the bird waited and Howard drove off in the general direction of Brisbane.

Tasmania, land of great roads and lots of rain, a place where it all happened and will happen again in 1976.

P.S All reference to Peter Binnion has been deleted from this magazine as he has got engaged to one of the girls he met on the Island. This was done to save his forthcoming marriage, as his bride-to-be was not amongst the names of the girls mentioned in the articles.

### TASMANIA – A LIVING HAPPENING

To all of us Tasmania was a perfect example of communal living. So much should have been learnt by the participants in sharing, togetherness, happiness and living of life together. Where were all the humanitarians? Few and far between I'm afraid. Some people wouldn't know happiness, getting it together, or living of life if they fell over it!!

Would you? Roger Holt! There were also numerous others.

Mr. Taylor for instance.

If it happened it happened in Tasmania.

Mike Formani made it happen.

Numerous droppings of machines happened.

In-clement weather happened.

A Ducati happened, 96 decibels of it.

It happened to Dennis Ackland.

The harrowing experience of death. (Great sorrow).

The joyous tiding of birth did not happen, although many couples were trying (the married ones that is).

It should happen later.

Of course, then there was the greatest happening of 73-74 a psychological people happening.

Other authors of Noble prize fame shall give a more detailed account of "*Tasmania A Living Happening*".

THE END