

Porepukah Xmas Camp

26th December to 2nd January 2013



Who Went:

- John Willis and Lou Tickner – ute, trailer, Z1000, DR450, bicycles, cabin.
- Misho Zrakic and Pina Garasi – ute, CBR1000, CBR600, power camp site.
- Ben and Julie Warden – car, trailer, bicycle, CBR1000, power camp site.
- Ron and Julie Johnston – car, trailer, bicycle, powered camp site.
- Rob Langer – van, DR650, bicycle, cabin.
- Peter Feistl – van, Ducati Panigale, powered camp site.
- Kurn Bridgeman – ute, CBR600, dirt bike, powered camp site.
- Cliff Peters - car, trailer, ZX10, powered camp site.
- Paul Southwell – van, CBR1000, cabin.
- Ian Payne – van, CBR1000, bicycle, cabin.
- Dave Ward – FIFO (Fly in, Fly out) , cabin.
- Steve Mudford – car, trailer and GSXR750 (staying in Harrietville).
- Mark Copeland – ZX10, powered camp site.
- Geoff Dick – R850GS, cabin.
- Lyn Duncan – DR650 (Porepukah Pub).
- Peter Hill – F800GS (Porepukah Pub).
- Ern Reeders – CBR954 (Mount Beauty motel).

Day 1, Wed 26th, 31 deg.:

Ben, Julie, Ron, Julie, Cliff, John, Lou, Misho, Pina, Peter, Kurn, Paul, Ian and Dave all arrived today. Ern was staying in Mount Beauty. The nightly run up Buffalo begins with 8 people on 7 bikes tackling the 52 km return trip.

Day 2, Thu 27th, 31 deg.:

Today, we would do the 'anti clockwise loop' comprising Bright (for fuel), Hotham (photo stop at Danny's Lookout), Dinner Plain for a coffee, Cassilis, Swifts Creek then Omeo for fuel and lunch.

We then explored the road to Benambra and stop at McMillan's Lookout where we encounter a couple of guys digging for giant earth worms, presumably as bait for fishing in Lake Omeo.

We continue on to Anglers Rest and Glen Wills to explore how far they have sealed the road to Mitta Mitta. Just a further 5 km of gravelly bitumen! Backtrack to Falls Creek (coffee) then down to Mount Beauty. On the way down we saw a convoy of Lotus sports cars, then one that 'failed to negotiate a bend' and ended on its nose vertical against the cutting! Indredibly, Eric Makin (ex MSR member) was leading this Lotus car group.

We took a slight detour into Bogong Alpine Village where coincidently we met up with Ben's sister Helen and her brood! We continued on to Mount Beauty, Tawonga Gap, Bright then back to Porepunkah. This 356 km loop was enjoyed by 11 people on 9 bikes. Ben, Cliff, Misho and Pina did the Mt Buffalo run that night.

Day 3: Fri 28th, 32 deg.:

Today's ride encompassed Bright, Tawonga Gap, Gundowring, stopping under "The Trees" for a visor clean. Then Lockhart Gap Road to Eskdale and Dartmouth Dam to check out the 'high' water level followed by Mitta Mitta for lunch. Some continued south on the Omeo Highway to check how far this end had been sealed! Another 13km. So that leaves approx. 30km of dirt which is scheduled for completion by May 2013, making another great motorcycling 'loop' to explore next Christmas.

We returned to Porepunkah via the same route. This 467 km loop was enjoyed by 9 people on 8 bikes. That night a group of 10 decided to try the Range restaurant in Myrtleford. To say it was riotous would be an understatement wouldn't it Pina!!

Rob Langer and Mark Copeland arrived today.

Day 4, Sat 29th, 32 deg.:

John Willis was up early to get his front tyre changed at the Bright tyre place as he needed a 14mm Allen key to undo the 'special' Kawasaki front axle nut and Ben's tube spanner was going to bend.

For something a little different we did Mt Buffalo in the morning continuing on to the old 'Cresta Ski Lodge' site where the road becomes very tight and twisty. Ian was very low on fuel so he decided to coast most of the way back down. We regrouped in Bright then headed over Tawonga Gap to Mt Beauty. The plan was for a quick run up to Falls Creek and return to Mt Beauty for a coffee but a few of the group remained in Mt Beauty including Dave Ward. When the main group returned, Dave, who had been riding Pina's bike, was waiting on the roadside plantation near the main roundabout. A green and white Kawasaki ZX10 shot past at 'speed' and then not long after a Police 4WD screeched to a halt and began interrogating Dave and now the main group as to who the Kawasaki rider was, what bike he was riding, was he with us, were we going in that direction, did we know him. We responded dumbly and blankly to all questions. "I suppose you wouldn't tell me even if you did know," the policeman eventually volunteered.

We continued through Tawonga and the Gundowring Road to pick up Happy Valley Road and then Carrols Rd (Rosewhite to Mudgegonda) to the Myrtleford Bakery, amazingly passing said ZX10 rider sitting on 95 km/h on the Happy Valley Road. He must have found a back way around Mt Beauty and then headed up the highway.

Who should we see at the Bakery but Rob Jones on his Triumph cruiser (380 kg he drily observed). He was on his way back to meet up with the wife at Lake Hume. He made the usual jokes getting us all laughing hard.

Next we planned to visit Lake Buffalo, back to Myrtleford, Happy Valley, Tawonga Gap and Bright. But with a couple of overzealous TOG cars about, several riders decided to head straight back to Porepunkah. Or the 34 deg heat and humidity could have had a part in the decision. Those hard cases who continued on the full route on this 'short' ride completed 444 km for the day!

Geoff Dick, Steve Mudford, Lyn Duncan and Peter Hill arrived today.

Day 5, Sun 30th, 34 deg:

Today we headed for Hotham, Omeo, Benambra and beyond to the start of the dirt at the bridge heading towards Corryong. Peter Feistl's Ducati was having hydraulic clutch problems that bleeding finally resolved. Back to Benambra and then left and out to the end of an interesting new road which stops very suddenly around a blind corner! Back home via Anglers Rest, Falls Creek, Tawonga Gap and Bright. A lazy 375km travelled for the day.

John and Rob went dirt riding to the Wonnangatta Valley. Ian, Dave and Lou did a bicycling 'coffee crawl' to Bright while Julie Warden went with Lyn and Peter for a dirt ride up the Kiewa Valley along all the ridges, catching up with friends along the way.

Day 6, Mon 31st: 34 deg:

Kurn and Mark left early today.

The rest of us met at 9.30am at Bright Caltex servo for the usual morning departure. Chasing Misho on cold tyres and potentially flawed Suzuki swingarm geometry up Tawonga Gap, Steve did a bit of 'gardening' resulting in a broken mirror and some delays.

The day's route continued through Gundowring and Tallangatta directly for fuel and eats. Ern met us here and it was great to catch up. Next Granya Gap, Bethanga Bridge and Lake Road till the dirt (not far from Old Tallangatta) for a photo. Then up to Bethanga and down to Talgarno rejoining the main river road for another crack at Granya Gap and on to Tallangatta for late lunch.

Home via the Omeo Highway towards Eskdale and then the brilliant Lockhart Gap Road, Gundowring, Happy Valley, Carrols Road to the Myrtleford Bakery followed by the 30 km long drone down the highway to Porepunkah. This 435 km run was enjoyed by 12 people on 11 bikes.

After a communal meal at the Porepunka Pub which saw 18 MSR people sharing a fast pub meal followed by sitting outside in groups. We eventually settled down to welcome in the New Year back at camp though very few (Ben, Julie, Geoff and Mark playing 500 cards) actually saw it in!

Day 7, Tue 1st, 34 deg:

Peter F, Paul, Dave, Lyn and Peter all headed home today. As it was a 12 noon start, Ben and Julie and Cliff went to The Horn lookout at Mt Buffalo at 9 am. The rest of us (Misho, Pina, Steve, Ian, Geoff and Rob) met Ben and Cliff at Bright for the run over Tawonga Gap, Mt Beauty and Falls Creek for lunch. Ron and Julie joined us here but Cliff, Geoff and Rob didn't. We continued on to Omeo, Hotham, Bright and Porepunkah to round out this 260 km loop.

Day 8, Wednesday 2nd, 34 deg:

The rest of us headed home today after another successful stay at Porepunkah.

Highlights

- Dave Ward flew in from Hobart and was picked up at Tullamarine by Paul Southwell. He shared riding bikes but predominately rode Pina's CBR600 with Pina riding as pillion with Misho.
- Peter Feistl's new Ducati Panigale with the subtle Feistl bling.
- Dave Ward getting a ride on it.
- Fine sunny weather with no rain during our stay (31 – 34 deg).
- Only 4 tyres changes this year as most came with new tyres fitted.
- Over 2500 km travelled with no major crashes or bookings.

Lowlights

- Ron not riding and being chauffeured around by Julie as his licence suspension had come into force.
- The Porepunkah Gastro claimed nearly 50% of our group with Peter F, Geoff, John, Lou, Cliff, Dave, Paul (and later Jo Southwell), Ron and Mark all suffering symptoms between 24 hours and several days. Gastro seemed to be rampant across the caravan park, though it is a mystery as to why certain people got it and others didn't.

Ian Payne and Ben Warden