

Tassy Day 10 – Beauty Point – Devonport via Zeehan



Breakfast is a choice of three types of cereal, three choices of fruit, yoghurt, toast, scrambled eggs, bacon and hash browns. I didn't need much lunch after pigging out on that lot.

There had been a shower or two overnight, the only rain seen for the entire trip. The serious praying I did the week before had paid off ☺ I cannot recall being cold the entire time we were in Tasmania, which was great. No soreness across the shoulders and neck area from being hunched over the handlebars, the warm weather helping the muscles to stay relaxed and supple. Hence, more enjoyable riding.

Ten riders today: Ben, Paul, Misho, Pina, Rod, Kurn, Stewart, Mark, Ian and me. We head into Beaconsfield Caltex for fuel and the 9 am start point. Some sad tyres, Dave's crying enough. He only does 90 km or so before heading home via the highway to Hobart. My tyre isn't much better. Sides are about gone, centre okay. I replaced the front a couple of days earlier in Launceston, courtesy of Pete bringing a spare and the shop fitting it. I also changed the front brake pads which brightened up the stoppers quite noticeably.

Misho is sporting a nice white rear rim courtesy of Ben, Misho's rear tyre calling it quits yesterday. One more reason to ride a Honda (interchanging of parts) (Resistance is futile. Pigs arse! Kwakas rule, hey Mark? You won't see us joining the dark side. Never ever! Though never is a long time...) I'm crapping on here as it's hard to remember details as the entire ten days resemble Super Pole at a World Super Bike round. A 5,000km sprint! Fabulous!

Ben led us off taking all the good roads, (silly words: every road's a good road in Tasmania) down through the usual Hollwell Gorge to Frankford, passing the old tractor model with its straw farmer driver. Dave waves to the straw man as he goes by. It looked funny from my position behind Misho. Dave's showing us the way and taking care on the wet road, which will soon be dry.

On to Westbury, (where Dave departs), Deloraine and then morning tea in Sheffield. But not before heading up through Paradise, a great steep uphill climb preceded by a one way bridge, most unusually with a car on it, eh Ben?! Stu scares the life out of a native chook trying to cross the road, it eventually taking off in a flutter of feathers and dust. A Black Angus bull with his head over the fence was calmly surveying proceedings - until Rod arrived. He seemed to take offence at the racket Rod was making whilst on full noise, shaking his head and tail at the same time. He was still looking at Rod a half kilometre down the road when I went past, probably wondering what the hell was that! Sorry to upset your blissful existence my friend. No doubt he returned to his surveillance of the paddock full of virgins on the other side of the road in pretty quick time.

There was a Steam Fest in Sheffield with lots of people about. A fellow walking a very handsome brown and white llama down the main street was charging two dollars for a photo but I had to decline. Tight arse you say? No, just didn't have two dollars. Tony has an argument with a 4-wheel drive whilst parking, the horn wins. Ian leaves us here to have a gander at all things steam while we push on for Tullah. Mark had to make a work related phone call at Sheffield and hoped to catch us at lunch.

We head up past Paloona Dam, down to Forth and back up to Wilmot and Moina along unrelenting, always climbing twisty roads and then past Cradle Mountain along those fast sweepers. Then the last 20 km of fast open road to Tullah for fuel. Next the fabulous Plimsol Road and down to Zeehan for lunch. "Yee Hah" ☺ Pina and Misho were two-up, Pina leaving her bike at Tullah for some high speed work with Misho.

No sign of the policeman today. We saw him earlier in the week when thirty five cents over the dollar was staring me in the face. Zeehan is where you can get a cheap burger and a great salad roll, and they did look nice. I ate my plane-Jane lunch brought along on the back of the bike: a can of baked beans, a muesli bar and an apple, similar to most days saving a bob or two where I can. I need a job or cut down on these long distance rides. Cut down! That'll be the day. Too much fun to be had.

We put more distance on the tyres out to Reece Dam not stopping to inspect the scenery this time. Across the dam wall and into the next 55km of sweepers and twisties where my rear tyre felt like it had turned to mush with no feeling of grip at all. I slowed down and whispered a silent farewell to Ben as he disappeared around the next corner. I know what he is thinking: "Pussy". *[You took that long I thought either you or Misho had crashed ...Ed.]* I can also bet there's a smile on his face as well. Misho catches me and I point to my rear tyre and cruise on. We arrive at the main road intersection and Ben waves us on to Tullah for a splash of fuel and to pick up Pina's bike before heading back to Sheffield for arvo tea.

Whilst getting fuel more people complain about the lack of feel from their tyres. "I thought mine was going flat" was heard. "Just the road surface" was another. It must have been the surface because the tyre felt fine on the way back across Cradle Mountain to Moina. Those sweepers are really nice hey Ben?

On to Sheffield for arvo tea at the fudge and coffee shop, then 22 kms back to the boat which turned into 50 after we checked out Misho's crash site at Latrobe where he hit a kangaroo 9 km into the 2011 trip. There was some talk about an extra one hundred km *long* cut, but it was not seriously considered an option. Pina screamed "No!!" I think we had about an hour and a half to kill. Back in Devonport I had Maccas as did Rod. Most of the others ate on the boat.

Another good day with no mishaps other than Tony having a snooze under a tree whilst rear riding, I heard someone saying ☺. Four hands went up when rear rider duties were called for at the start of the morning which is slightly unusual. Shagged tyres and tired people could have had something to do it.

According to my odometer I rode 5,353 km boat to boat, and an extra 164km door to door. It's hard to put the trip into words except to say AWESOME. Thanks fellas and gals for making it a great trip. Thanks Ben for leading us all over the island. For those injured, well wishes and a speedy recovery and we hope to see you back soon.

Cliff Peters