

Ric Lord Memorial Run, Kurri Kurri, 13-14 November 2021

Well it was great to finally get together again for another TMRA event—it's been a long time coming! We all got together at the Station Hotel-Motel on Friday arvo to catch up on the goings on, such as they've been, during the Covid period so far. Weather was pretty good for everyone riding to Kurri Kurri, though the couple of us from Canberra got a little damp during our leg to Sydney,

Saturday dawned cool and fine, though it didn't take long for the wind to pick up. We hadn't gone far when one of our longstanding members got caught out on a surprisingly right-angled right-angle corner covered in a mosaic of potholes and patches. His horizontally-opposed bike unfortunately became horizontally reposed! Hope your head is better now, Sav! Thanks to Steve and local visitor Brian for heading off and picking up Sav and his steed in Steve's van. The Bee-Em suffered a broken banjo but local rider Jack, who'd joined us for the day, "thought he might have one in the shed" and magically was able produce the required bit so Sav could get back on his bike on Sunday for the ride home.

Eventually we arrived (by various routes, as per most TMRA rallies!) at our first destination, Mt Sugarloaf—providing us with magnificent views along the coast. We then headed off to Maitland showground, the site of the first speedway meeting in Australia. See Bernie's photo of the descriptive plaque, and then to the steam engine club at Maitland, site of the Steamfest gathering every year. Some lovely big old engines were chugging away, and Woodie played the big kid and cadged a ride behind a mini engine. The highlight of the day was a 'load test' ride in a big new trailer that had been built. It was, you'd have to say, a pretty sedate excursion behind a rather ancient probably David Brown tractor, judging by the whitish paint colour. After 10 minutes of first gear progress at about 2 kph, we had to crank things up as our lunch appointment was approaching. The change into probably third gear seemed to take about three minutes, but eventually we scooted back to the bikes. The fun wasn't over, as ride leader Jeff had a tumble getting on his bike. He says he caught his jeans; I was next to him and swear it was a huge gust of wind at a most inappropriate time that did the damage. It just about blew me and my bike over too—and I had both feet on the ground!

Lunch was at the Potters Brewery in Cessnock—a lovely establishment though quite busy, being a weekend, and we had to search for a parking spot and then wait just a little longer for lunch than we might have preferred. At least it gave us plenty of time to discuss how we *should* have got to Mt Sugarloaf! The wind continued to blow and, though we had a great day riding, we were all happy to return to our Kurri Kurri base, where Shirl put on her usual spread of dips, cheeses and other savoury goodies before we adjourned to the hotel for dinner and a little more socialising. Lovely that Shirl, Marie and Helen down from Wee Waa (the rain had put a halt to harvest!) were able to catch up with Helen Ryan, whose husband Danny we miss very much.

Sunday, too, was fine and windy. Nine of the group, under Bob's guidance, headed off for a trip to several destinations around the state, while Bernie and I headed off to Canberra.

Apart from several bouts of heavy rain and the associated fogging up I'm sure we've all experienced in those conditions, we battled through a howling gale the whole way from the Hunter to Canberra. To add insult to injury, having dried out completely during the run into Canberra I was drenched about a minute from home. Ce'est la vie!

Thanks to Jeff and Woodie for leading us on a great weekend, and we'll look forward to our next "big" get together, in Bega during March or April next year.

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