

2026 TMRA BATHURST RALLY REPORT

Riders and partners began gathering at the Panorama Motel on the afternoon of Thursday 10 September; more were to arrive during the course of Friday ready for the weekend's activities. The weather for those driving, from as far away as the NSW North Coast, and riding, from as far away as Bega on the South Coast, was brilliant—as it was for the whole weekend, so I won't bother commenting on that again. Perfect one day, perfect again the next. And the next!!

First, some thank-yous. Despite being overseas for the rally dates, Events Director Lorraine, as usual, kindly organised our routes and the rally timetable—thanks for your dedication, Lorraine. Thanks particularly to our new Bathurst attendees: Mark and Gaynor, Neil, and Russell, who all brought 'old' bikes. Special mention goes to Don and Rex, who (with Bob) rode their 'new' Triumph Americas from Bega to Bathurst after ditching their Harleys, at long last. They couldn't be happier, by all reports, and we can finally say 'welcome to the club' to some long-term club members. But buying bikes called Americas? Just as well we're not Canadians! Congratulations, too, to Col, who has taken over the presidency after Peter's sterling 10 years' service in the job; and of course Bernie's efforts doing back-up were much appreciated.

The destination for Friday's ride and lunch was the Black Stump Hotel, Trunkey Creek. Trunkey has been a common short trip for us over the years; in this case a good warmer-upper for those of us who arrived early. Eight riders headed off; Russell's 1936 Triumph 5/1 seemed to nip up a bit en route, and barrel bolts managed to loosen themselves, but every time the bike slowed down it then got a second and then third wind and breezed along at near to 100 kph. Very impressive. We knew the Trunkey hotel already had a booking for 25 people; it turned out they were a group of old ex-Division 10 rugby league players who were intent on giving cheek at every opportunity—we gave as good as we got; a good time was had by all.

Following a leisurely lunch at the Black Stump (extremely excellent burgers, incidentally) and some repair work to the sticking throttle on Neil's '62 pre-unit Bonnie, we took off for home via Newbridge. Despite the lovely roads to Trunkey, the condition of the route to Newbridge and beyond was rather ordinary. Russell ruefully wrestled his rigid over really rutted roads, and in fact ended up searching along a roadside fenceline to find a length of wire (in this case barbed) to tie up his rear-mounted stand.

Saturday dawned, naturally, and you know what the weather was like. Troop numbers had grown to 17, most on old bikes. Great to see (and hear!). After a riders briefing at 9.15, with particular emphasis on how to leave Bathurst, we took off for our first wayside stop at the Newbridge recreation reserve. Rather than just taking the advised route south initially to Perthville, our mob somehow ended up taking three routes to just the second turn of our trip, but luckily everyone met up before we'd gone too far. After

our first leg-stretch we headed to the little town of Neville, where, as we have done previously, we parked outside the pub to have a squiz at all the Guzzis there for their annual event.

“We wandered lonely as a cloud,
Through fields of bright Canola.
It really was much nicer than
My brekky-time Granola!” (apologies to W. Wordsworth’s *Daffodils*)

Who’d have imagined that hill after hill of rolling yellow canola fields (okay, paddocks!) could inspire the Secretary to create such pleasurable poetic prose while riding along those lovely country roads around Mandurama and Canowindra—it really was a very pretty ride. And remember, it’s Man-dew-ra-ma and Ca-nown-dra.

At Canowindra we were lucky enough to park in front of a street barbie being run by the local Lions club, just over the road from the Old Vic hotel that we have stayed at on a couple of Lorraine’s Central West events. Many of us indulged in a sausage in bread (onions on top; according to some a terrible occupational health and safety sin!) and a chat with the locals. We asked about the condition of the Cargo road to Orange, having already experienced some pretty dodgy tarmac, and one of the Lions members—who admitted to being a Harley rider, no less—suggested we avoid that route and travel via Cudal. We followed his advice, thinking principally of poor Rigid Russell, and, while the road was probably not as scenic or as challenging as it would have been through Cargo, we were pleased to have a good surface, sweeping bends and nice views to keep us happy.

Our bit of daily excitement came on the Cudal side of Orange when Jack’s lovely Jubilee Bonnie lost power—gradually at first before conking out totally. No cause being obvious, Jubilee Jack, Backup Bernie and Tailend Trev got the bike on the trailer without too much delay and met up with the rest of the group at the Mt Panorama Motor Museum for King of the Rally voting, before we all headed off for our Annual General Meeting and awards presentation. Before proceedings began the Secretary congratulated all rally participants for being at the meeting on time—the first occasion in living memory!

Russell’s gorgeous 1935 Triumph 5/5 was voted King of the Rally, former President Peter noting that the bike had previously been owned by late member Vance Tomlinson, while Neil’s 1962 Bonneville took out the President’s award, perhaps a result of Peter’s affinity with pre-units! Neil subsequently acknowledged the help Steve had provided in getting the Bonnie to its present condition.

Day three saw many riders head home, but nine bikes proceeded to the east of Bathurst and then north to Limekilns, Wattle Flat and Sofala, where once again all our old bikes took up the prime parking spot—right in front of the pub (closed for the day, so no doubt that helped). After coffees and milkshakes, and a leisurely half an hour milling about the

middle of the street and lolling around outside the pub, we headed out towards Hill End and the Eglinton turn-off, taking us back to Bathurst. These roads probably provided the best bit of riding for the weekend, with lots of up-and-down winding, twisty corners—as the old ad used to say, life's pretty straight without twisties!

The rally will be back at the Panorama motel next year, 10-12 September. The owners and staff certainly look after us and members agree the venue suits our purposes perfectly. Stay tuned, too, for another regular Hunter Valley event later this year, and, for triplers, we'll confirm soon a February-March date for our Southern Triples Rally in Corryong next year.

Trevor Fowler
Secretary