

Is the Triumph T100 a Tourer?

I recently purchased a Triumph T100 after riding adventure style bikes since 2009. These bikes were good tourers with long travel suspension and good luggage carrying capacity. However I also ride a Yamaha SR500 and a Suzuki Titan, these bikes are very easy to live with as they have low seat heights and this makes manoeuvring them easy at walking pace. I considered other bikes like the Yamaha MT series and even BMWs mid- size bikes but I have owned BMWs in the past. The Triumph was something I wanted to try. I had read a few road tests about the Street Cup and Scrambler but I wanted the bigger fuel tank and the T100 had that. I settled on the T100 rather than the T120 as I don't carry a pillion very often and the fuel economy of the T100 was far better than the T120 which gives a much better range.



So after the first service was completed I did a couple of shorter rides and soon realised that it (I) needed a screen. I ordered one from Dart Screens in the UK and it arrived in Australia in less than a week but it took over a week to get from Sydney to Townsville. The screen took minutes to fit and it does a reasonable job. My next modification was a power outlet on the handlebars. Why do they put a USB port under the seat?

I decided to attend the SR500 Club Rally in Bethanga again this year and rather than carry the SR in the ute to Warwick and ride from there I decided to ride the T100 all the way. My plan was to ride to Mackay. I stayed with my daughter for the night, this is only an afternoon ride but as usual there were strong headwinds all the way. The computer on the Triumph is very easy to toggle through, much easier than the Honda Africa Twin which is just too complicated for its own good. The fuel economy readout showed 3.8L/100 kms. When I refuelled the computer calculated that the range

at over 400kms. The range to empty is on show all the time just above the fuel gauge, I find this a very useful feature. I managed to get down to the last 70kms several times with the fuel light telling me I had 3 litres left. That's a reserve of over 75 kilometres. The bike did 360kms several times before the light came on.

After a good sleep it was off to Warwick for day two. I have done this ride quite a few times on my Vstrom and Africa Twin so I was interested to see if the Triumph would make the journey as easily as those bikes did in the past. I chose to head south to Rockhampton first before turning towards Mt Morgan and Banana on the Leichardt Highway. (A5) I figured the winds might be calmer away from the coast. The bike didn't miss a beat thank goodness as Triumph doesn't supply a tool kit. So even adjusting the chain isn't catered for. I gave the chain a spray of lube each day on the ride and I didn't adjust it at all on the ride. I did stop a few times on the way, once to get a look at the Isla Gorge and fuel stops of course. I arrived in Warwick after 12 hours on the road and just after dark, this showed up one major fault of the bike, the headlight is absolute shit. My 09 Vstrom's headlights are still the best I've had on a bike. Triumph should really fix this as there is no excuse for putting such a crap headlight on a bike in this day and age. I stayed in Warwick for a couple of nights before heading to the rally. I wanted to arrive in Bethanga on Friday so I left on Wednesday giving me plenty of time for a relaxed ride. A cunning plan or so I thought at the time.

I headed south on the New England Highway to Uralla before turning to Walcha and Gloucester. The weather was awful it was raining and the wind was building.



I arrived in Gloucester and booked a room at the Roundabout Inn. I've stayed here before during a Vstrom gathering and my bike spent the night securely locked up in the shed. An early start the following morning saw me headed south and west. I had breakfast in Dungog at the The Long Room Café down the southern end of town, it was very good. I then turned towards Singleton and Denman. Heading west I ran into the first of the very strange weather that was around at the time. A heavy dust storm was brewing up and visibility was down and combined with low cloud it was hard to work out what was going on in the atmosphere. After refuelling in Denman it was off to Bathurst via Ilford and Sofala. I did the obligatory lap of Mt. Panorama and was tempted to do another but time was getting on and the weather seemed to be closing in.



I went through Perthville and had a stop at the Trunkey Creek Hotel for a coffee, it was getting cold. Shortly after leaving the pub it started to rain lightly and the temperature dropped further. Crookwell was next on the map and I turned towards Boorowa. The weather got very nasty as I headed towards Rugby with branches getting broken off the trees and blowing onto the road. Shortly after that it started to hail. There was no shelter in Rugby so I pushed on to Boorowa and stopped at the first pub and got a room for the night. Forty dollars for a dry bed seemed like a good deal.

The following morning it was still raining lightly as I headed south towards Gundagai and Tumut. I stopped in Harden for breakfast and waited for St. Vinnies to open, I hadn't packed any warm clothes apart from a singlet, Vinnies opened early for me and I purchased a red sleeveless vest for \$2 that came down nice and low to keep my back warm. The 30 or so kilometres from Jugiong to Gundagai passed quickly and I turned towards Tumut, there were some road works on the way and it was getting colder, there were reports of snow nearby and it felt like it. In Tumbarumba I had lunch and purchased another jumper from St Vinnies. Tumbarumba has cheap fuel.

The bike was unfazed by the conditions and seemed to be going better with every passing kilometre. The Pirelli Phantoms seemed to be good in these conditions and never showed any signs of misbehaving. The run down to the Murray Valley was great as the weather was improving and the road to Granya running parallel to the Murray River was great fun. I stopped to get a photo of the river before making my way to the rally site in Bethanga.





The Bonneville had covered the 3011kms without a hic cup and was still getting 72mpg despite the weather conditions. There were already a few people set up and after putting up my tent I decided to go the hotel for some light refreshment.

The rally was great the local recreation club does the catering for the week-end and the food was fantastic and the bar prices very reasonable. It was the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of the SR500 and anyone who brought one along got free entry. On Saturday morning a ride over the Granya Gap was organised and the windy section was very enjoyable. After a coffee and morning tea it was back

to Bethanga for the “Show and Shine” where everyone gets to vote for bikes in different categories.



This is followed by a great meal of roast meats and desserts where awards are handed out and the raffles are drawn before the band fires up and the party carries on. I retired early as I wanted an early start. My plan was a two day ride back to Warwick followed by another two day run back to Townsville. I took the easy way by going up the Hume Highway to Gunning before heading back up to Bathurst via Trunkey Creek. From here it was back through Sofala to Ilford where the fuel was cheap and onto Scone via the Bylong Valley.





The Bylong valley Way is

badly potholed in sections but the windy bits are still good fun. After getting back onto the New England Highway it was onto Murrarundi past all the horse breeding studs and onto Wallabadah where I called it a day before I had to rely on that dreadful headlight. I can recommend the pub here. The rooms are very good and the showers are hot, \$50 for bed and continental breakfast. The tank was still almost full so it was off north towards Warwick. The temperatures were comfortable with Guyra living up to its reputation as the coldest place in the region. It wasn't until Tenterfield that the temperatures started resembling summer. I stopped at the top of the Moonbi Range to

have a look at the view.



I had another night in Warwick with family before heading back to Mackay. I gave the bike a quick wash before retiring for the night and oiled the chain again. This time I decided to use the A3 route north. This follows the New England Highway through Toowoomba, Crows Nest, Goomeri, Gaynda, Biloela and Rockhampton. This time the weather decided to turn on the blowtorch rather than the blast freezer. There was heavy smoke from the bushfires. I arrived in Rockhampton at 3pm and figured I would make it to Mackay just after dark. It was extremely hot and I stopped at Marlborough for a cold drink before pushing on to Sarina where I topped up the tank. I can recommend Sorbello's Italian Restaurant in Mackay, it was my daughter's partner's birthday so eating out was a good idea.

The last leg of the ride back to Townsville was one of the hottest rides I've ever done. I stopped in Bowen to refill my water bottle and to top up the tank. I poured the contents of the bottle over my shirt then refilled it. The cooling effect was great but trying to ride with my visor open was torture, the heat was dreadful. There was a long delay crossing the Burdekin bridge as they were doing repairs. I emptied the water bottle over myself again. I was completely dry 20 minutes later. I arrived back home at midday. After getting out of my riding gear I went straight into the swimming pool. The heat wave continues as I type up this report and bushfires rages throughout Queensland and flash floods hit Sydney. These extremes of climate make riding interesting and memorable. In the 5936kms that this ride took, I experienced high winds, high temperatures, a dust storm, hail, rain and freezing temperatures. The Bonneville ran faultlessly, returned excellent fuel economy and was comfortable, the only extras were the Dart Marlin screen, a USB output on the handlebars from

Jaycar and a sheep skin on the seat. My RST Adventure gear performed reasonably given the extremes I rode through. My Sena, Spotify and iPhone supplied music and navigation. St. Vinnies proved a valuable source of emergency gear. The pubs were welcoming and the rally a great success. Is the T100 a suitable touring bike? It'll do me just fine.