

Riding on the Downs.

Part One.

After freezing our arses off at the Frostbite Rally we spent the following seven days in the comfort of my sister's house with her four dogs, two donkeys and a warm fire.

On the Monday following the rally I took Murray and Paul on a short drive around the local area finishing up at the Sandy Creek Hotel with an old friend of mine who I sailed with at the local sailing club. The pub has the oldest continuous licence in Queensland.

Tuesday was the day we decided to go for a ride, my original plan was shortened because the days are short when you have to wait for the ice to thaw. We set off for Woodenbong, first we went to Killarney then through Legume (NSW) and onto what used to be the worst piece of bitumen road in Australia. To my surprise the road had been completely renewed, it was new, no line markings yet, wide, smooth and windy enough to have fun. We stopped at the café opposite the garage and ordered coffee and something to eat. Very good coffee and fair prices, I left a club business card on the notice board. The card was spotted by Shane Cavill the next day. If you going on a trip take some of these and leave them at various stops, who knows who will see them. After coffee we head to Urbenville where I hoped to find the hotel open. No luck there, so it was off to Toolum to see the falls, struck out again, road closed for repairs. So it off through the Toolum Scrub (National Park) to rejoin the Mt. Lindsay Highway back to Killarney. The ride was interesting with a rough section in the middle and new road at either end.

We arrived in Killarney and the pub was open, so we had some refreshments. A couple of locals who operate a bike business introduced themselves and we had a good yarn. After that we headed to Warwick via Tannymorel, Emu Vale and Yangan, all places where I had taught over the years. We stopped at Swan Creek to see an old teaching partner of mine who recently underwent cancer treatment. Her husband purchased my TY175 that I restored years ago. It was then back to Warwick where my sister has prepared a great meal and there was a line up of red wine to choose from.

Part 2

Wednesday saw us off to the famous pig and calf sale, a farmers market where in the past the many dairy farmers sold their unwanted poddy calves. These days with the decline in the dairy industry it isn't as vibrant as it once was.

Following that we went out to Morgan Park to check out the track followed by a trip to one of the local bakeries for a pie and coffee.

Thursday was a ride day so this time we headed west towards Leyburn where the first Australian Grand Prix was held after WW2. This was held on the airfield that was the operational base for Z Force during the war. We had a beer at the pub formally owned by Shane Webke, naturally there was a lot of football memorabilia on the walls. The Leyburn Sprints are held each August, a sprint around the streets that attracts thousands of spectators.

After that we headed off to Nobby, the home of Steele Rudd the author of "On Our Selection", it's also the home of Sister Kenny the nurse who revolutionised the treatment of polio victims.

From Nobby we headed to Clifton to the Irish Pub where we had a really good Irish Stew made with Guinness. From here we took the backroads to Allora and the Railway Hotel where we had another beer before taking the backroads to Warwick. That night we went out for dinner to the local Chinese restaurant, Roses, highly recommended.

Part3.

I persuaded Paul and Murray to do another ride on Friday. We took the Old Stanthorpe Road to Stanthorpe. This is narrow and there was a short dirt section that was rough. I think Paul's ignition

key jumped ship here. We followed the tourist fruit drive through Dalveen, Cottonvale, Thulimba, The Summit and Applethorpe all places with schools that I taught in my career. On arrival we found Stanthorpe was very busy and we couldn't find a park in the main street so we went to a back street behind the Town and Country Hotel. We sampled their wares before going to the bakery for pies and coffee. I planned on going back to Warwick via Liston and the Mt Lindsay Highway, a road that I thought was dirt. Paul didn't want to punish his bike so he went back on the main highway. Murray and I took the back road. Again, there was no dirt, not even through the Cullendore Gate on the border. We arrived back in Warwick fairly early and took the opportunity to load the bikes into the ute so we were ready to head back north after the Superbike races were over. The races are available on the streaming service STAN. They were good and we used our senior card to get tickets at almost half price.