

FEBRUARY BEAFORT RUN 2011

Sunday the 6th provided us with a cool, dry day which was a happy reprieve from the recent heavy rains. Once again your esteemed editor lent me his Gilroy Chief for the day. The first port of call was the Macca's on St. Georges Road. When I rolled in there was Sam Vella on his trusty CX500 Honda, Mr. Pilgrim giving his Gilroy an airing and a new face belonging to Guy Allen. Who was riding a rare and tasty S7 Sunbeam. These interesting machines feature an all Alloy 500cc engine, unit construction, overhead cams, shaft drive and rubber mounting and rear suspension, a pretty flash spec for 1947 and aimed at the well heeled Motorcyclist, unfortunately their target market was by that time cashed up enough to buy a car instead so they never got the sales or development the design deserved. Guy was not coming on the run but is in Indian buying mode so I am sure we will see more of him.

We set sail at 9am heading for the Deer park Sevro where we were to pick up the main body of riders. Ian Rhook led the way aboard Rod Leaman's Pumpkin coloured 53. Rod himself bought up the rear aboard his trusty 344 outfit, just ahead of Steve Higginbottom driving the back up trailer. Steve told the best joke of the day which is reproduced at the end of the article This bike has been the focus of ongoing development under Rod's ownership and now features a larger front brake drum and wider custom handle bars, Rod is slated to take it to Tassie for the upcoming I.M.C.A. tour. Wayne and Raelene Harbour were riding their Suzuki M109 Mega Cruiser. They are shopping around for a Gilroy and had arranged with Chris Horner to ride his for a couple of legs, This meant a game of musical motorbikes with Raelene going pillion on Phil's Chief and me taking the Suzy. It was my first ride on this type and it reminded me a lot of a V Rod with docile and pleasant manners when pootling around and ferocious power and warp factor acceleration when the throttle is nailed (Wayne invited me to give it the berries) Just like the Vee Rod the beach ball fitted to the rear end makes for slightly reluctant direction changing. I am not a big fan of the feet and arms forward riding position that would be more suited to a six foot banana but most of the Mega Cruisers seem to have these fashionable ergonomics.

Mean while Raelene having escaped the minimalist" gunfighter" seat on the Suzi was reveling in the luxury of a plush pillion seat behind Phil Pilgrim. She did complain that he did not provide the quite the same degree of wind protection compared to Wayne's beefier body.

We stopped for the obligatory coffee and bun at the Redesdale bakery

then proceeded on to our Lunch stop at the Beaufort Pub. Raelene really did not want to get off the comfy Gilroy and asked if perhaps her lunch could be bought out to her? After a very acceptable pub meal we prepared to depart for the second half of the days run. At this point we hooked up with Don McCrae who is El Presidente of the Antique motorcycle Club and now a member of the Iron Indian Riders as well. He offered to show us the area on little used back roads. At this point we swapped bikes again and Phil offered me the opportunity to sample his Gilroy Roadmaster while he tried Chris's Vintage for the first time. I had always wanted to do a comparison of these two outwardly similar yet quite different Bikes (See "Chief Shootout" article coming)

We headed for Leamouth but on the Beaufort-Waubra Rd there was a "Road Closed" sign and beyond that a dip in the road with a sizable washout over the bridge courtesy of the very recent floods. Don McRae picked his way through on the Kawasaki followed by the two Gilroy's, We made it through with some drama but the rest of the group decided to take the long way around and, as happens, that was the last we saw of them that day.

We three survivors stopped at Leamouth and had a pleasant chat whilst waiting for the rest of the group. After half an hour we called it quits and headed for home, Phil and I doing the final bike swap at the Bell street turn off on the Tullamarine Freeway This has to be the best riding weather for many years for a February. There is no excuse for not firing up anything on two wheels and enjoying it while you can.

Steve's Joke: Q. Why is a bad marriage like a card game? A. Because it starts with two hearts and a diamond and ends with a club and a spade!