

Healesville Ride Weekend (Father's Day Run) 04/09/11

What a great ride this turned out to be with even big chief rain in the face putting on the perfect riding weather for us. The run started off at Ian Rookies place where a secret pow-wow was held by Rod, Ian, Stevie and Laurie where it was decided to go back to basics and ride like the old days. The run would be a test of the clubs skills, ingenuity, resourcefulness and tenacity and would not include a backup trailer. The secret crew went even further nominating a saboteur, who was in charge of creating obstacles on each leg of the run to further test the clubs mettle.

At the conclusion of the meeting the enthusiastic group set off to meet the rest of the club at the start line in Plenty Road. With Chrissy entrenched as chief driver in Rods Ken 2 (Toyota Land-Fill), she was to be joined by either Laurie or Audrey who had a mountain of spare clothes and helmets and were taking it in turns to be either the navigator or the passenger in Rods outfit. Special Skills maestro Cecil also chose to accompany those in the vehicle after volunteering to be the security overseer for the day.

A surprise for the motley bunch was encountered on the Ring Road when the Vice President Mark on his Chief seemed to just appear before once again disappearing somewhere off the Dalton Road exit. He was not to be seen again until his arrival at the start line some 20 minutes later.

Well considering that it was Father's Day, what a magnificent sight it was to see a dozen or so bikes lined up and ready to go and 90% of them were Indians. A couple of the member's bikes were in for repairs, however they still chose to come on the ride on their second or emergency bike.

The first leg was from Mill Park to Yarra Junction, and being fathers day it was only fitting that Phil Pilgrim was to lead on his legendary historic one and only example of a Indian-Vincent. I have no doubt that Phil Irving must have been smiling down on us as we were soon out on to the narrow country roads, with surprisingly good services and very few pot holes.

We decided that the first mole of the day must have been Phil as he deliberately made two wrong turns that were quickly picked up by an eagle eyed Rookie who passed the test with flying colours and directed us back on the correct path.

Hoping that persistence might pay off Phil then made another wrong turn, catching us all out this time, after signaling a U- turn at a small country fire station. The whisper is that this was a set up as the whole of the fire crew stumbled out to see our parade of old bikes.

From here we wound our way toward Diamond creek, (which for us Purists with open face helmets) the smell of the trees as we rode along made us feel so great to be alive.

3kms out of diamond creek Mark's bike began to splutter. It only just made it up the next hill, running pretty roughly on what sounded like one cylinder before the iron beast finally ground to a halt. A very disappointed Mark was heard to say, "I think that's it boys, Its Kaput by the look of it." Before the image of having "No Backup Trailer" could even begin to pop into any ones mind, as quick as a Flash Phil White was off his bike and on the job. A quick inspection completed, Phil muttered yup it's the battery, before opening the saddlebags on his own bike, and pulling out a spare battery, tools, and even a coil of wire. Phil Pilgrim being switched on as usual had noticed the gap in the riders, did a quick u-turn,

and was quickly on the scene. Mark's bike was running a 6-volt system and the spare battery was 12 volts, No problem said the two Phil's, we'll just convert it to a 12-volt system. The next few minutes was a scene worthy of a YouTube video, within 5 minutes the 12 volt conversion had been completed on the side of the road and Mark's bike was back up and running. To finish off with one of the quotes of the day from Phil White, "This is the sort of stuff that beat Adolph and his Nazis"

The ever-vigilant Ian Rookie had also called a halt in Diamond Creek until the stragglers caught up.

On the road again we found ourselves climbing along lovely sweeping bends up to Yarra Junction for morning tea. Where the ever-smiling young Sammy was waiting to join us. After tea and cakes we were about to saddle up when it was noticed that big Rod's tailpipe on the outfit had broken off at the muffler and was in danger of falling off. Phil White and his amazing saddle bags to the rescue again. Phil's saddlebags seemed to be like Hermione Grangers handbag in the Harry Potter series, he simply put his hand in and pulled out exactly what was needed. On this occasion it was a roll of special heatproof wire, at only \$1 a foot exclaimed Phil. Rookie completed the quick repair and we were off on the next 14kms to Healesville. The clubs vigilance on checking their bikes had been tested and we had all passed with flying colours.

The thunder of the Indians down the main street of Healesville was a sight and sound to stir the blood of any old biker. The town was abuzz with people at that time of day. We all parked up and headed to the Grand Hotel for lunch.

The Grand turned out to be a terrific spot for lunch, the food was excellent, the beer was cold and the staff were most helpful and friendly. While sitting out in the beer garden a couple of us still wondering why Mark had disappeared off the ring road earlier in the day. We recon he had pulled off to switch his battery for a dud one, just to test us out, and thus we nominated him as mole number 2. The only comment we could extract from Mark in his defense was his quote for the day. "Hey its Fathers Day so we can do anything we like"

One of the lunchtime highlights was when Stevie pulled out his Irish toy for a quick demo, to the great amusement of all-present. It's a must to be seen on any bike run and it's believe to have been invented by Paddy O'Riely during the great potato famine in Ireland.

Another funny moment was Audrey being sent off by Rod for a Pot (of beer) being Audrey's first time in a Pub, she was intercepted by Chrissy on her return with a glass of port in her hand. Chrissy quickly sorted the confusion out and presented Rod with his beer, Audrey then asked was she should do with the unwanted port, upon which Chrissy replied, well you better drink it as its your turn in the sidecar next.

After a great lunch we all moved off with Sammy taking the lead, this was a master piece of sabotage on two accounts, firstly Laurie Keenan the human sat nav, had been told that we were going back by the freeway. Having been caught up at the traffic lights he did not see us turn which resulted in him, Chrissy and the Ken2 (Toyota Land-Fill) heading off in the completely wrong direction. Fortunately the plot was spoiled by corner marker and eagle eyes Rookie, who spotted this and gave chase to turn them back around. Meanwhile out in front Sammy, knowing the catchphrase that an "Indian never rides past a servo without stopping" kept on going with the whole group following him. Low and

behold at about the halfway point back to Yarra Junction for the second time of the day Marks bike spluttered to a halt. With the Ken2 support car still AWOL; it was Phil Pilgrim to the rescue again. This was to be one of the few times I have not grumbled about the litter on the sides of the roads, as Phil found an empty coke bottle within thirty seconds. "We haven't got a spanner though" was the cry from Stevie and Mark,

"Ahhh we don't need one" said Phil

It turns out that Phil's Indian-Vincent is specially set up so the fuel line can be quickly disconnected without the need for a spanner. In a few minutes we had two liters of fuel in Marks bike and we were underway again. After a brief fuel stop at Yarra Junction, all the group was back together again, and young Sammy set off to lead us back across to Plenty road, back down the winding roads and sweeping bends. The sun was shining down on us, and Chris Horner's grin was a mile wide. You simply couldn't have found a better group to go on a Sunday ride with.

Somewhere along this section Rookies fuel cap make a break for it and bounced off into the paddock never to be seen again.

Sammy then threw the final challenge at the club when he turned off the main road. The next ten kilometers was quite a challenge for a group of tired riders to tackle at this time of day. It was up hill and down dale, full of steep tight corners and quite a few hairpin bends thrown in through some quite amazing forest.

Now big Rod is a powerful beast to say the least, (the name Spartacus comes to mind when you think of him) and is quite an experience riding behind and watching him wrestle the outfit round the corners, sliding round some of them and having to lean in to keep the chair from lifting on others. It was just as well Audrey had downed that glass of port, as even over the roar of our exhausts we could still hear the shrieks and squeals coming from her in the sidecar.

At the end of the leg and after a short regroup we all headed off home with the feeling that this was not only a great and successful ride, but that the club could now cope with any challenge that could be thrown at them on any run any time.

Given that this ride was Stevie's 60th Birthday and he now reckons that he is getting a bit old to be kicking the Bonnie over, he is really looking forward to the day when **Victory-Indian** produce a New Modern Scout, with all the push button bits with an electric kick start, and failing that a wooden leg should it fail.