

## Titus's Tour of Tasmania 2011

Welcome back from the end of year festivities, I trust that all had a great time with family and friends? Well Phil and I certainly did and some We left for Tassie on the 2nd of Jan I remember the lack of sleep proceeding the morning before, due to the excitement of blasting out of my street in the early hours of Sunday.

So there it was this huge steel ship swallowing every truck, car and bike all in complete silence I was amazed at the efficiency of the crew, I parked my bike with 16 others and waited for the crew to tie the bars down. I tested how the secure my bike was by innocently wiggling the rear only to get put in my place in front of all the other riders by one of the crew who said 'there wont be any one down here to wiggle your bike like that' Great I smiled back at him stupidly.

On the deck I caught up with Phil, he took his bike in the Mercedes Vito van smart thinking. The cruise out to the heads took two hours almost to the minute, so slow out on Bass Strait the seas were may be 2.5 meters hardly moved the ship, sunny skies a really beautiful afternoon crossing, I walked about the many decks exploring all the places allowable to passengers, Phil spent most of the time watching movies.

Finally we dock at Devonport, there was a mad scramble to the loading decks which caused a jam at the stair well I guest I was not the only one excited, we all finally got to our bikes and waited for the huge doors to be let down. Once this happened every one slowly rolled out to terra firma but bizarrely I was not made to queue like all the others just was asked for a green card from the other check point and then rolled away brilliant.

I waited for Phil and Vito it seemed an age had passed by the time he came through. Finally Vito appeared and we motored to our first stop for the night. Phil later said that some chap tried to get in his lane and Phil had to stay put as to the crews directions then after the nuttier finished blasting his horn he got out of his vehicle and started to thump the side of Vito adding many expletives. Reminded me of a Datary moment with the raging Rhino ramming the side of the ancient range rover. Unlike the Rhino the nutter climbed back in his vehicle and waited like every one else.

Phil's mate has a very comfortable house, a great base after the Bass crossing. We had a BBQ dinner and planned our tour, I was so ready to blast off but again there was another night of uneasy sleep to go through before then. The next day I was first up got my self ready to meet the day then Phil emerged a little further on I was at the rear end of his Indian slowly rolling it out of Vito. It struck me how huge the bike was, much bigger the Springfield bikes nearly double in size So

after a full check over both bikes well finally got on our way Phil had the GPS which took us to Georgetown by the sea. Getting there though was filled with sweeping bends that cut through huge wood lands with open fields filled with growing produce, all passing by at great pace.

Georgetown it self was a little quiet spot, we found a cafe and sat enjoying the scene as our bike rested, one local couldn't quiet work out what Phil's bike was but you can rest assured that he soon walked away with a ear full of Indian history, there something to be said about road side learning. I road North to Lowhead to the light house, this spot would have been ideal to camp so close the beach, but it was to early in the day. When I got back to Georgetown Phil bumped into a mate from the Classic Club who was touring with his wife on there BMW of course what else. They came with us for a while to our next stop Bridgeport that's were we found a beautiful beach called Andersons Bay. There so many families parked on the sand the weather shined down it best the water so clean, I parked the Honda and went exploring around the rocky edges this place is a must stop for any one in love with the sea.

From here it was just the to of us we headed for our first over night stop Scottsdale a little farming community the town had lots of tall established buildings dating as far back as 1850. I pitch my tent just out of town on a public campground with other travelers. Found a pond near by and saw my very first wild Platypus cool! Next to my tent was an enormous bus those interstate types, out came an old woman a proceeded to light a fire in a make shift fire box built out of washing machine bits. Then out came her man grunted a few times before planting him self down in his chair looking as content as can be. 'Where you from they asked in a friendly manner' this seemed to open a who night of friendship filled with personal accounts of there many experience, free beer, singing songs and playing there guitar all the time Phil was in his paid room for the night( & loving it). Barry and Jane were what I would call classic Tasmanians.

The next morning we faced our bikes into the hills that looked down on Scottsdale, I didn't know it then but I was in for one of the best rides of the tour. Phil lead the way into Grand Vistas over looking awesome landscapes, Honda felt strong sucking in the cool mountain air tinged with farm smells. Road kill be came something to watch for lying from the night before, so I just slowed down a bit. It all flew passed it was like I was holding onto the back of a giant bird sweeping down the valleys and rushing up to the peaks, and again around the bend it repeats all over with even more fallen away valleys I felt so alive.

St Mary's was our next stop, this little town was laced with charming little shops my wife would have spent hours in but the one shop she would have avoided was the very one Phil and I stepped into. Ian was manning the fort that day a simple gent eager to boast about the

thousands of pre and post war memorabilia on display. There were models of cars, planes and bikes. A near complete forties AJS 500 that I wanted to take home. Smack in the middle of it all was a chassis of a 49 Pontiac that's slowly being restored, it was all mechanically finished, the body though was at the panel beaters. This Emporium of everything is a must stop when in St Mary's you'll not regret taking your time at the many items on display along with the NOT FOR SALE signs. Our tummies were rumbling, Phil suggested the Elephant Pass Pancake Cafe that leads through the Elephants Pass. It didn't take us long to get there, if you have ever been to the Dandenong's for lunch at a restaurant up in the hills surrounded by great views then you know what I mean. The food was great, basic fillings inside rolled crapes or thin pancakes. Phil warned me about our next leg, which contained tight descending turns for most of our way. I found this road great fun making the engine do most of the braking loved hearing both bikes burbling down to sea level.

St Helens was our next stop, this popular sea side town named after the European lady who was martyred 400 years ago for her faith after her death many came to her tomb asking her for help and many received. I went to get fuel for the bike while Phil fuelled his stomach, again I found the Tasmanian effect when looking for a stamp to send a post card home, I asked a local and she said ' here love I've one in my purse' she refused to take my 60 cents.

Phil and I meet up at the Marina after I took a few photos of the boats and the surrounds. Then we rode out of town taking a route along the water for a while, it was something else to wiz by so close to the sea. We road for long time at this time, the scenery was fairly bland though the road comfortable to blast through The Indian sounded the business up a head. We came to the Spiky Bridge built by convicts, made entirely from stone. On the wall where place pointed stones facing the sky may be to stop you climbing over perhaps?

Finally we arrived into Bicheno, lots of people about doing their holiday thing. We rode to one of Phil's customers who runs Bicheno M/cycle Museum Enfield's were on the show room floor the latest models, I wanted the black one. These bikes took retro cool to its purest form. Out in the back of the shop was a museum with many different bike makes but the heat in the place was too hot for me I needed to go out to breath again. This is were I stumbled on a guy taking his cafe racer off his Ute, it was apparently the sump plug hole stripped of its thread, the plug looked fine but the hole needed some love. Phil was kind enough to give the lad some tips and steered him in the right direction. By this time we needed to find our place for the night so I was busting to pop the clutch on this one bike museum town.

We both motored to Swansea the ride was fairly flat highway riding, I sighed when we ignored the Freycinet turn offs as I remembered going

there with my then new girl friend 12 yrs ago. Truly beautiful bay held by rugged landscape, the sand coarse under our feet the likes I've yet to see again. But you can't do every thing so soon we rolled into our second stop for the night.

Now in Swansea the sea was calm with a few boats in the water off Oyster Bay, I road around looking for a patch of grass out of the way. Phil disappeared but I wasn't worried because this town was our stop for the night. I turned off the main road that lead me to the local All Saints Anglican church a blue stone building sitting on plenty of unused land. So I said a little prayer and road in stopping behind the church. My ears were burning waiting for a screaming voice ordering me out of there. But none came all was silent, yippee! So as quick as a flash I got started pitching my tent.

I was so pleased with my self-smiling almost skipping as I made my way to the main road. There I saw Phil coming from the other end of the street. As I walked closer there I could see the Pilgrim was grim. 'Cant find any vacancies even the camping ground is full '! He cried out. All I said was 'the Lord provides' Phil looked a bit odd 'did you find a place, where?' I turned and pointed to the tall pointy steeple scratching the sky. Phil said ' you did what?' 'Its free Phil and if your quiet we both can stay what do you say?' I smiled back. 'You mean to say that you're camping on church grounds' Yes Phil I said go and see.

I then ran up to the church to meet Phil, he got there a little earlier. ' What do you think' I asked proudly Phil said worriedly ' did you ask permission to stay?' I hesitated a bit then said well yes sort of asked the good Lord to find me a place and so I found this, its his house any way so relax' I reminded.

So Phil reluctantly pitched his tent there on the spot, this was his first night out of the comforts of the Motel room after a bit I jokingly asked him how he would cope with out a TV? A grunt was all he replied. Then he took out a gadget that looked like a TV remote, I was about to look to see if he had a Telly in there too, but what he intended to do was set the alarm for the bike. Clever! You take the remote thing with you and if the thing goes off you know to get back to your bike.

No sooner had Phil finished the job than the Police arrived. A large Ford Territory the copper was on his own we it played cool.

'What are you up too guys?' he smiled quickly I thought of Christmas ' there was no room in the inn officer!' Phil confirmed ' every thing is all booked up' this seemed to true to the young man, then after a moments pause he said ' you know I don't think I can remove you off church land unless the Vicar makes a complaint.' As he said this I saw over the officer's shoulder through to the adjoining property a deranged old woman about 87 waving her arms in the air wildly silently telling us to sod off, but I looked back at Phil who by know was speaking to the officer.

After a bit the good local bobby went about his way, allowing the two mainland roughs to stay put. To celebrate we walked over to the pier slowly enjoying the peace man this was a special place. I can highly recommend the RSL the food was top rate served promptly at a great price. We walked around a little more before returning to our camp, it was near dark now and very quiet. Phil decided to move the great big Indian closer to the tree, this made his alarm go off the flaming thing screamed like a thousand tortured cats. Phil patted him self-licking frantically for the remote thingy, I felt dozens of telephone calls being made to the cop shop. Phil finally shut the screaming Indian, the remote was in his tent 'I'm always doing that setting the alarm then forgetting to bring the remote. 'Good job you' ve got that alarm fitted ' I said waiting for the cavalry to come storming in.

Now with the Indian safely reset we turned in for the night, I got into my sleeping bag switched on the light and did some reading, soon I was to be entertained by more screaming, this time Phil was involved in hand to hand combat with a huge huntsman spider It walked out of his sleeping bag as Phil got into it, The moment it made eye contact Phil said it leaned back onto its rear legs drawing fangs

I lay mesmerized listening to the yelling and thumps as the Phone began to be employed as a makeshift weapon. 'ITS A FOOT IN DIAMETER!!' Yelled Phil as he flicked it out. Time passed, peace reigned finally and sleep ensued, amen.

After a hardy breakfast at a local cafe bakery we hit the road again, smiling as we past the church on our left. We were heading south along a tight two-lane route right by the seaman it was so pretty dashing along mile after mile through all this beauty. Many miles passed now we well shot of Swansea. Phil took me to this old grave sight surrounding a small church, we walked in and I followed him to a head stone that had the inscription along these lines 'Here lies a husband that by his womanizing and gambling starved his family to ruin' Obviously righten by the wife just goes to show not all are dearly missed!!

We continued on riding hard wanting to lunch a historic Richmond, we went through Tribanna and Oxford the scenery was more farming laced amongst rolling hills.

Now at Richmond, we parked in the main street half way into the town. The place crawled with tourist cars every where, the place was a buzz with activity. For good reason the town is locked in time, it seemed every building had been restored all looking fresh and inviting. Phil led the way to our lunch spot just behind the main road the food again delicious and perfect coffee. We left there and road to the famous Bridge totally made of stone looked as good as the day early folk had finished it. I went further up the road and checked out this little church built on top of a very steep hill it took some effort to

climb up the steps I thought of the elderly folk on Sundays in there best helped up by other kind parioners. The inside of the church used a lot of timbers and the glass artwork was nice. What view this place commands.

Back to Phil who was sitting by the bridge watching the tourists do their thing. So we were on our way to the big smoke Hobart, the riding took us through more farming land scopes, which made the traveling pleasurable.

Phil had the foresight to pre book his accommodation earlier that day; so we rolled into the Motel and checked him in, I remember how hot the sun was . Now that Phil was set I had to find a campsite easier said than done! The guy at the motel didn't have a map so tried to draw one what a disaster that afternoon turned out we road for hours looking for a blessed camp ground I kept getting ' sorry no tents only camper vans' eeerrrr We must have ridden over the Derwent bridge five times. So in the end I stayed at another Motel that had cabins with beds made for me, I kid you not I was nearly longer. That night Phil took me out to a friend of his who ran Solo Pizza Restaurant at Sandy Bay, the place was packed, packed out on a Wednesday night! The food was great once we finally got seated and the hosts were charming. After a photo shoot with the Indian and Simon, the Restaurant's owner we headed to our Motels. The next day we were to ride down to the Huon Valley, but first I wanted to treat my self to a breakfast that I been longing forever since I arrived in Hobart. I rode over to Battery point were there are a lot of posh homes by the Bay, there in the little shopping strip is the best cafe bakery you'll ever find. Even at 9 am it was busy and by chance found a table out side. You must go to this fine eatery when in Hobart.

With a smile on my face I met Phil we both began to ride out of the city you forget just how hilly the place is but the bike loved it. We where heading for Snug and Kettering the land here came to sea level we stopped a few times to take in the grandeur of the place and envied peoples homes and there life styles asking ourselves what on earth are we doing in Melbourne? The road meandered through scenery that I just had to slow down for. By now we hit our very first traffic jam, the queue to the Bruny Island ferry I rode through to the office and was told of the delay. So I decided to just give it a miss, if I had gone it would have seriously put us behind. Phil took out his camera and took lots of shots of the bikes with the beautiful Kettering Harbor in the background bathing in the afternoon sun. Another spot in this glorious country that I could have stayed for a week!

Back on the road now we continued on for a half our of riding for a lunch stop to Cygnet . Now we head for Hobart this part of the road was a two lane with many sweeping down hill riding that would bog down Neil Armstrong in the height of his carrier if he were pedaling the other way? Phil's Indian Look fantastic as it burbled down into

Hobart. I think this route into the city took us over Mount Wellington; it was a great way to arrive into such a pretty city on such a beautiful sunny day.

Phil signaled to pull over to set his magic GPS I loved the man, his so organized just sit back and follow while he was making friends with the small box on his handle bars I watch the Hobart traffic whizzing past, I wondered if they even could see the beauty of their surroundings or have the time to go and be still to listen to the waves licking Kettering harbour?

Now heading west on roads that were full of slow traffic, warm weather. New Norfolk was our stop for the night, we entered the town in sweltering heat straight for the information centre, the kind people there said I could stay by the Derwent river which ran through a public park. Phil went to book into his Motel room and I headed for the loneliness of the park. I road past a child's play park then a footy oval and finally I found the river, a creek really, is this really the mighty Derwent? I spent a few minutes to set up the tent chucked in the bed stuff zipped it all up. I rode to a Cafe Restaurant the first that I found and sat braced for a cup of tea. Phil joined me after my second cup; he was pleased with his room for the night. Our host and I suspect the owner looked eager to please Phil asked her if she could recommend the food at the pub down the road, with an awkwardness that the late Boris Yeltsin replied to the question have you been drinking sir? The good woman said 'well you know the food here is great!' I didn't know were to look as I slowly backed out to the pavement.

We checked out a few antique shops, the first lead us to an enormous establishment full of every thing it's as if they never sell any thing! But what was quit unique is that this place had British motorbikes from the sixties. Mainly Triumphs and one Vincent but before you run out to book your flight let me tell you that there not priced to sell. At \$30 to \$35 thousand nearly double market value we both agreed these bikes are staying put. We rode to Phil's room.

His place reflected the cost it was Posh a Rama! I hit the showers eager to be rid of the grim of a hot day in the saddle. Then we walked to the pub, enjoying the town on foot passing pretty front gardens lined in many colours. The pub had excellent beer and food what more could you want really? The place reminded Phil of a pub in Austria he walked in to a silent hall filled with people not saying a word to one another their eyes glued to the TV. Phil started speaking and was asked to lower his voice, because this is the TV club and there not to be disturbed-----WHAT THE!

It was dark by the time we got back to Phil's room, we watched a bit of telly before I reluctantly made the move to my digs. Man it's amazing how things look so different in the dark, now I was rolling closer to my tent there were two cars parked to the left about 20

meters away full of guys. I gulped hard a bad feeling began to grow inside me! In my tent, inside the protection of half a millimeter of plastic sheet great! I lay there my ears burning picking up every sound adding fuel to my anxieties. The male voices filled the night some were near the rivers banks cracking sticks. My joy was near when I hear their cars fire up; they left finally but only to return with take away food. Then there other sounds that I just could not under stand things that are still a complete mystery this went on for hours I think it was about 1 am before I got to sleep But thank God I woke to a beautiful morning and all was well.

That morning Phil was on a mission we were to ride the full trip back to Devonport up the centre of the country. This took us through some parts of the land that was a vast contrast to the scenery that we had previously been through. Very yellow dry unkempt land holds, lot of abanded farm buildings, I wondered what two wheeled treasures lay inside them? At one point near Oatlands we came across some sheep on the road the first sign of life. But the biggest obstacle for us was the wind; all the way against it made for a tireing ride I hate to have had an open face helmet! I wish I had put in ear plugs, the burbling from Indian could not be heard over the wind.

In Ross we fuelled up the hungry bikes, then motored on I was averaging 12 to 13 dollars per 170 km I didn't ever need reserve. Hours of riding through these parts were long and monotonous compounding head winds never let up well I suppose the chaps in there fully loaded push bikes struggling up hill at 3 km had more to winge about as we blasted passed can you imagine there thoughts 'Oh goody another friggin hill!!'

Finally after hours in the saddle we turned into a large roadside restaurant at Elizabeth Town, rest was what I needed along with tea. The building was set high over looking pretty green landscape it was good to be here at last. Only 40 minutes or so to Devonport from here Phil analyzed, delaying our departure I stood for most of our stop happy to be off that thirty-year-old saddle!

Oh well back on the bikes, Devonport and a big house waits.

The next day was free time to just to kick back; you need to have days like these especially after an adventure. Phil started the big sell about an axe museum, he was so enthusiastic. As he banged on about it my eyes just glazed over, he was relentless. Time would pass and again the 'Australian President of all mad axe fanciers' would start banging on and on and on to check this place out. 'It's only just down the road ' he said.

After a rubbish dump stop [one of many] he cunningly drove to the Mecca of all axe fanciers, I sighed. As I took to the steps my face was as long as Queen Mary Antoinette heading up to the guillotine. Phil erupted in axe frenzied, I sighed. Now in side we were surrounded by



all sorts of tourist crap that you could take back. But strangely not a blessed axe to be seen. We paid our entrance fee I didn't want to pay the 10 bucks to see axes, but the kind woman said there was a platypus's area to wonder through so I was sold.

Glass case after glass case of highly polished axes hand driven in anger by some of the fastest blokes into pieces of wood Yippee and if you want to be there in 1976 at the grand show chopping championships you could have stood there till kingdom come watching the video HOLD ME BACK PLEASE

Phil crawled agonizingly slow reading every thing getting his moneys worth, I after searching desperately found the platypus's area. With my sense's heightened it was a relief to see a huge glass pond filled with creek bed environments. But I could not see any Platypuses, up and down I searched till I found two clay figures set in playful pose not even real bloody animals and I had to go through axe hell to see fricken fake Platypuses

The next great adventure Phil organized was a look at his mate's tractor museum out in Westbury. Glenn Shaw and his father have collected Tassie's complete stock of tractors from every direction on the compass. Shed after shed of all the worlds marque's sat happily in their retirement for the likes of us to inspect. There was even a Massey Ferguson with a Ford side valve Vee-Eight that nearly killed Glen because the throttle jammed open causing the front end to lift up nearly flipping over, but he managed to take control of the angry beast. We all enjoyed a BBQ lunch before heading back. Phil took us through a scenic drive, which leads us into a town called Deloraine. Very pretty little place it has a river running through it over it the council built a new bridge, we took a few pics here.

Sunday morning we got up early to meet the guys from the Classic Enthusiast's Club of NSW, there were about eight bikes and a few non-riders in vehicles. I headed to Stanley with them while Phil spent some time with his family they were due to arrive that morning. I have to admit that I was a little apprehensive about riding with strangers.

So finally after a hearty breakfast we all headed West and how! I left with first 3 bikes as soon as we hit the open rode boy the these country boys let there bikes rip! They just got faster and faster. The other poor guys where left so far behind what can you do? So I took a punt and turned off into Penguin the second town from Devonport. There they where riding in circles, we stopped at the beach in the end and I asked them carefully ' don't your friends mind that you've left them far behind?' 'Nah mate they no were to go' so we pressed on to Burnie for an Info centre stop after many wrong turns we finally located it. The kind people there let me book a campsite at Stanley. I enquired about a machine that was on display in the foyer, the service lady said that it came from the local paper mill pointing to the hill up

head, Gunns bought the place and closed it down just last year. Many jobs were lost, seemed they prefer to send the wood chips overseas than make the paper that this plant had done for generations. Gunns wanted the harvest rights that the mill had, not the mill!

We collected ourselves at the parking area by now many more arrived feeling a little peeved that they were left behind I bit my tongue! Some had things that they wanted to see in Burnie like shoe shops and museums, thought what a beautiful day to be on a bike so I said that I meet then in the next town up on Table Cape were Tassie's famous cheese comes from.

The ride there only took 30 minutes tops, but it was great to not have to wait or look out for others for the first time on this trip I rode alone even if it were only for a short time. Welcome to Wynyard passed overhead it was great to be back, I loved the look out that the narrow winding road took me too. Here the paddocks are alive with dairy the Friesian's look so pretty in the rich land grazing away the day. Also poppy fields in full bloom. The air smelt rich with freshness, I got off Honda as I was on Table cape. The day was so clear you could see for miles. I stood on the very spot where I pitched a tent with my girl friend 12 years ago. To the right you can see the great Black Bluff over looking Burnie. I found a disused path that took me to the edge of the cliff, and took pics of the rocky beach below the water so clean. I scand for large dark shapes in the water but could not see anything. Really this place is awe-inspiring, I took off my boots as I sat on the grass watching and listening to the throngs of tourists who were totally impressed. Soon the rumble of the other bikes turned up, and equally they too were sold.

Lunched at Wynyard by a river, all of us enjoyed teasing the sea gulls, when one of the blokes gives his chips to them some of us found a small motor museum, mainly for cars. There was three bikes one was a 1914 Indian, story goes [isn't there always a bloody stories with these machines?] The owner decides to hide his bike from the Government as war was on and they wanted transport. He stashes it in a large fireplace and bricks it in, goes to Europe dies and no one ever looks for the Indian. Years later in 2003 it's found this is one of a few dinky die untouched pre twenties Indian you will ever see. Next stop Stanley the ride there wasn't much to right about fairly ordinary landscape. We did visit a beach, seemed everyone was there very busy any wonder it was a glorious spot. The weather drew you into the water; I let it when I settled in Stanley.

We all unpacked I pitched my tent a little ways from the cabins. After woods a few others and I went to the beach. It was great to let the salt water do its thing as I looked up at the massive nut.

The bikes that were part of the rally were two 60's Triumphs one new cafe racer triumph, a Ducati Darma and three modern Jap machines.

All a great bunch of guys to boot. For dinner we walked to the local restaurant and spent the night there having a laugh eating, drinking getting to know each other. After dinner Mick and I went for a walk to through the town admiring the architecture. I remembered how piece full the place was.

We woke the very next day to over cast sky's, gone was the glorious sun shine for many days, so on with the plastics for we were off to Smithton further west still. This was a busy town with many shops; the women bought supplies for a dinner BBQ. Soon we were motoring again West still to a place aply named Dismal Swamp. I thought they were taking the piss; the weather was certainly dismal we all had to slow down out of fear. Now we were deep into the forest it seamed more wet in hear, but the air was so crisp it seamed sad to pollute it. The road was fairly flat but quiet windy in places. Our surrounding were super tall rain forest, so you can imagine that there was not much to see and the road was greasy wet.

All gathered at the Dismal swamp parking area, we set off to the main building. Tea was ordered and I sat by huge windows over looking the tops of huge greenery. If you wanted to and I couldn't be arsed, slide down inside a tube to the very bottom then walk up again to have another go, then walk up again and have another go\_\_\_\_\_no you cant you only get two goes I learned that the most recent Tassie Tiger sighting was documented only in 2003 By a trusted person of some sort. How cool if they finally photograph one next too current newspaper so the skeptics haven't a leg to stand on? Yeah right I followed the others down a path that led to the very base of the forest, the walk took us through huge old growth woodland. We all were taken back by the size of these great giants standing silently out of the earth, and to think that they all grew out of a seed no bigger than your thumb Unfortunately the mozzies started to bombard us like Stuka's they were eager for our blood, so we all quickly got out of there to the safety of the centre for more coffee and tea.

The ride back was better as the rain had stop, I ask Pat and Bill if I could move my tent next to there cabin were there was more shelter from the wind, last night the wind pushed fairly hard.

The weather steadily got worse as night arrived, mainly the wind it blew at about 80 kmh mixed with rain it made for miserable bike riding, so luckily Bill had a van which we piled into. He took us up to Highbray House an old stately home stead that was plunked up on top of the hill looking out to sea. Man how this old place stands up to the furious winds I will never know! I stood in the dinning room watching rain coming through the bottom of the doors covering the polished flooring. Upstairs I found a room the window was looking out to sea, I sat on the old couch and watched the vile weather. I had a little nana nap for how long I still don't know, but after waking I joined the others

and we all decide against risking pneumonia by looking at the garden so well called it a day.

That night we all gathered at the camp ground BBQ hall for beers and dinner, every one was in high spirits laughing and taking the piss out of each other. The girls did a fantastic job preparing the food.

That night the wind got up again even stronger than previously, I was not keen in laying in my tent just as well because Mick invited me to take the spare bed. The whole cabin was shifting back and forth and at times shuddering due to the gale force winds. And the rain sprayed heavily into the bargain.

In the morning all of us could not get out of the one lump town quick enough! We left with plastics on blasting out of the west. Our destination was Burnie this sadly was where I and the Classic Club parted company. They were headed for Strahan, but had to go into Burnie to do banking because one of them didn't have an ATM card, he needed cash from his bank book!!

As we rode the dryer it became [yeah!] , we got into Burnie stopped for some tea and sadly gave our good buys. I rode to Cradle Mountain for an hour the weather again grew wet, but the ride was quite spectacular. Once there I couldn't find any campgrounds and combining the wet made up my mind to head off to Devonport. By chance after a fuel stop I found a sign pointing to my destination 'only 75 km' so I headed this way. Unknowingly I had found the most fantastic ride filled with everything a motorcyclist could want. There were sweeping bends, sharp 25km on a bike turns! Long steep hill climbs valley after valley opening up before me all this and more and the weather had dried up too.

I rode into the drive and there was Indian gleaming back at us, we looked like we have been dragged through an acre of grime and dust. Phil his wife Carolyn along with their daughter Bonnie with foster kid Zack looked up at me as I walked into the house, the look on their faces convinced me that I needed to hit the showers.

The next few days the weather grew very wet we all watched the poor Queenslanders suffer terribly with the floods. Carolyn and Zak left us for Melbourne they flew out of Launceston.

Phil, Bonnie and I took Vito and went to Burnie, Penguin. After lunch Phil called on a customer Ken Jupp who restores Triumphs his shed was packed with so many models all rally ready. He even had a few surprises lurking under tarps. A Honda six 1000, and a Sunbeam shaft drive from the 50's.

What a great way to end our time in Tassie, our last night there was spent at a local pub for dinner, reflecting our time in this great place

truly made for motorcycling. Hope one day the Iron Indian Riders will all come too.

Sammy Vella