

IIRA Midnight Express Ride

Sat 14 Jan 17

Attendance – 11 bikes 12 people.



Owen & Linda on the BMW Panza Tank, Russell Arthur - 48 Chief, Phil Pilgrim - Scout, Chris Horner- Scout, Phillip White – Brand Spanking New Springfield, Andrew Guy – 2014 Chief, Noel Thornby – 2014 Chief, Mark – New Black Bomber, Mark Barthelmie – New Triumph, George Fitzpatrick – Drifter, Peter Kime – Drifter.

Weather was mild, some cloud cover and no sign of rain.

Departed on time after much discussion about Phillips new Springfield, the new mufflers on Marks Triumph as well his new seat.

Headed off down Plenty road with minimal traffic and missed nearly every traffic light. Once onto Gorge Rd the traffic dropped right off and Owen set a gentle pace of 85 to 90 kph. The group of bikes stayed together all the way to Yarra Glen. Every one kept a reasonable distance from the rider in front and it was an unbroken line of red taillights as we meandered down through Diamond Creek and Kangaroo Ground to Yarra Glen. Stopped at the servo at the entrance to Yarra Glenn for a top up and a quick chat, then headed into Yarra Glen to sort out a meal for those that needed a top up as well. Disappointing to find we could not get a meal at the pub but the Chinese Take Away and the Pizza shop were open.

We all managed to sit around an outside table at the pub for a drink and bite to eat before departing in the darkness to Yea.

The road to Yea was the highlight of the ride. We had a full moon on our right, no traffic and a gentle meandering road in front of us. When we were on the Melba Hwy 25 k out from Yea the moon was directly in front of us at one stage, the road was straight and from the rear the line of red taillights with the moon just sitting above the clouds was a perfect picture.

While riding at night there is not a lot of scenery to see but riding with a group of bikes at a gentle pace made for a very relaxing ride. The only sign of animal activity was a Fox that went scurrying in to the bushes at the sight of the Panza Tank. It has always amazed me that on a mild summers night the bike seems to run so much better, the rattles disappear and the exhaust notes become a lot crisper. Being tail end charlie I got to listen to most of the exhaust notes from the various bikes in front of me. Marks new Mufflers on the Triumph gave a perfect triumph type

note (very similar to the Burgess Resonator of old.) Phil's new Springfield did not have the guttural roar of Noels and Andrews Chiefs but had a distinctive note that was reminiscent of Chips. Phil Pilgrims Scout was very different also, almost reminded me of the exhaust not from an Offenhauser Speedway motor in full song.

It is surreal riding into a town late at night, no shops open, no house lights on, no cars, no people. We pulled into Yea which was like a ghost town. Stopped at the local toilet block for a relief stop and a chat. The only activity was our group standing in the middle of the road chatting and a couple of kids sitting on a park table having a chat (they should have been home in bed.)

Left Yea and headed for Seymour, stopping at Seymour to allow those not going through to Owens Place to head off down the highway to Melbourne. Decision was made to go through Seymour and stop at the Caltex Servo just down the highway. As we went through Seymour the local police van was coming through in the opposite direction, a few hearts fluttered as we have expected him to do a u turn and pull us over for a chat.

Disappointingly it was only Phil Pilgrim, Phil White and Noel Thornby staying at Owens, the rest had to head back to Melbourne for various reasons. After fuelling up every one took off in pairs. I waited for Russell to take off then followed him down the highway at a gentle 90kph (no worries about traffic as there was not any) getting home at 2:30am. Give full credit to Russell for taking his old Chief on a run like this, his bike ran well and seemed as smooth as silk running down the Hume.

For my part it was a great ride, well run as usual by Owen Jones. Owen put a lot of thought into the ride and made the ride even though by the sound of him he should have been home in bed, he deserves a medal for being able to do the ride and keep us all together and not lose any one.

We as a club let Owen down by not letting him know who was not staying for the night. Owen and Linda went to a lot of effort to have a hot breakfast available but hardly anyone stayed to eat it. We give our thanks to Owen and Linda for what they have done for the club in organising rides, the Xmas Party and their hospitality sharing their house for the midnight express. We also apologise to them for not having the members fulfil their expectations by attending the ride. This is something we as club members need to get better at otherwise we will lose willing members due to lack of support.

Pete Kime

The next morning was perfect, great weather after nibbles earlier that evening catering for at least 10 we had plenty, Noel had slept on the couch, Phillip White in the loft, and myself in a spare room. Unfortunately Owens flu was even worse so much so he was off his food so we had 3 ton of bacon and eggs with toast to consume, we made little impression on it, Noel had decided to repeat the ride back to Inverloch through Yea Phillip White and myself decided to go to Pylon and had a pleasant Devonshire Tea at the old railway station capping off a totally perfect week end ride.

Sadly for Owen and Linda a lot of time and effort with not much satisfaction I personally expect, and I felt the same at the Xmas Party a lot of work catering for people in the Association that are quick to point out faults and never do anything to help or support our events. Both of these events were FREE and we get zilch in support, that costs all members and the association money, so from now on this will have to change if that's the way you all seem to want it! All major events that are be catered for will be charged for and RSVP one month out, that way if you decide and enter at the last moment you will look after yourself no meals, accommodation, or rides will be catered for you. So yes you will be welcome but that's all, this might teach people to "man-up" and think of somebody beside themselves and if you decide not to come to the ride because of this, seriously you were not coming and only kidding yourself. People in the Association that decide to go on runs on the same weekends that we organise 12 months out need to re-think about being in the Iron Indian Riders because probably you don't need to be with us, I agree something's "crop -up" a phone call would be nice which a few do to show they are genuine if this upsets you then you are guilty of this respect for other members.

Phil Pilgrim

