

Omeo Ride by the Wednesday Mob, compiled by 2Gs



Slideshow of pictures taken by Ron, paste this link into your web browser.

<https://picasaweb.google.com/114951357620889696754/21December2011?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCNaGnJ3g1selHg&feat=directlink>

Day1

There were 10 of us heading out on this trip Stuart (organiser and ride leader), Ron (TEC) Jeanie, Jan, and Robin, Les, Harold, Tom, Bruce and myself. With the first leg taking us from Werribee to Warrigal via the Freeway Jeanie and Jan opted for a more roundabout route and left at 7am. The remaining of us gathered at Maccas in Hoppers crossing and left at 9am looking at stopping at Longwarry for morning smoko. As prearranged I sent a text message to both Jeanie and Jan where we were stopping prior to leaving.

The weather was overcast as we set off and even had a few drops of rain at Laverton. With only

moderate traffic on the road we made good time and while the traffic increase at the ring road connection it wasn't until we got near to Montague street that I started to think that perhaps Jan and Jeanie had the right idea as we were now in bumper to bumper traffic. As we crawled towards the tunnel our orderly line broke up as cars pushed there way in and some of us started to change lanes. At one stage it looked as though there were a number of riders in front of the leader. This was not a major issue as we were all aware of where we were heading. As we neared the tunnel we were advised by overhead signs that the middle lane was closed as well as the left lane after the Powell Street turn off. Thinking this was going to be real uncomfortable section I was pleasantly surprised to find all lanes were open and moving reasonably well as we entered the tunnel. On exiting the tunnel I could not see Les who was ahead of me or Ron so I dropped back and when safe pulled over and waited for about 5 mins until Ron came into sight then took off as the opportunity presented itself, a bit further on Harold was waiting and headed off when he saw us coming. Sitting on the speed limit we were a bit surprised to see a corner being marked at the service station at Officer South. Stuart had not seen Les since the tunnel and call in, in case he had stopped there. He had and the decision was made to have smoko here instead of Longwarry. While we were there Jeanie contacted us and we organised to meet up with them at the roundabout near the Korumburra Freeway off ramp at Warragul. Well as we went sailing past Longwarry I noticed someone who look a lot like Jan standing near 2 bikes waving at us from the service station. Waving back in acknowledgment I kept going. Once we got to the meeting point we found that it was not suitable for stopping so for safety sake kept going. This was not a great concern due to the work Stuart had done prior by supplying maps and information of where we were heading.

After leaving the Freeway at Warragul we took the Korumburra Warragul road all the way to the South Gippsland Highway where we turned left and rode into Korumburra stopping at the bakery in the main street for lunch. With lunch finished we headed towards Meeniyan stopping for petrol at Leongatha on the way. At Meeniyan we took a left and headed for Dumbalk and then onto Mirboo North. Leaving Mirboo Nth we turned right and headed for Boolarra, then Churchill and finally rejoining the Princes Highway at Traralgon. It was then a straight forward run to our first nights accommodation.

We stayed at the Captain's Lodge just outside of Sale and found the rooms a mixed bag. The fridges were all turned off; In Harold room only half the lights were working and Bruce found mould growing in his. My room was OK, Ron's was even better, or was that because the beers were kept there. However with a somewhat abrupt host and an indifferent meal I would not recommend this place to anyone. I must admit though the experience we had here figured in our discussion throughout the remaining of the trip usually followed by a lot of laughter.

Day 2

A continental breakfast was supplied in the morning which 5 of us took up while the other 5 feed up with the service took off to Maccas. Les unfortunately had already taken up residence at the breakfast table as the five rode past on the way to Maccas. The look of relief on his face when the rest of us made our way in for breakfast was priceless.

Reforming at Maccas we headed out of Sale along the Princes Highway as the day started to heat up.

Still on the highway we passed through Bairnsdale and headed towards Swan Reach where we turned right and headed for Metung. Once in Metung we followed the shore line around to Shaving Point. Shaving Point is a boat ramp ferry docking area with a park and toilet area, an ideal spot for morning smoko. With the clouds breaking up Harold and Robin reminisced about yacht races they had participated in the area while Les told of a bush fire he attended in the area with the water police and some of the local characters he met. Leaving Metung we retraced our steps to Swan Reach and turned towards Lakes Entrances where we stopped at a local bakery (Lakes Patisserie) for lunch, I had a curried scallop pie which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Still on the Princes Highway we left Lakes Entrance and headed for Nowa Nowa and notice that the road started to become more interesting as the bends became more frequent. Reaching Nowa Nowa we turned left at the roundabout onto the Bruthen road. Arriving in Bruthen we refuelled and with a word to Stuart both Jean and Jan took off for Omeo in advance of the main group. Tom and I started moving along the Omeo road just to get the air circulating as it was starting to heat up quite a bit. About 500 metres down the road an empty timber truck with its rig on the turn table loomed in my rear vision mirror. Tom had the same idea as I did and we both quickly headed bush and it roared past. Finally Stuart passed us and we fell in behind him. As we got into the bends we noticed that the heat had affected the road surface with the bitumen becoming soft and loose and after slipping on a bend and losing my line I dropped my speed and gave the bends a great deal of respect. Meanwhile Stuart, Robin and Bruce continued on and finally being lost from view. About halfway between Bruthen and Omeo we caught up with Robin and Stuart only because they had stopped at a turning area. Grateful for the stop due to the heat we had a drink and stretched the legs for a little while.

As we passed Ensay and approached Swifts Creek the wind started to kick up and made the rest of the ride into Omeo interesting, at one stage I had been pushed over to the left hand edge of the road only to find myself in the middle of the road as I entered a cutting and gain some protection from the wind.

Arriving at the hilltop Hotel in Omeo we actually found a host with a smile on his face and a simple answer to a question "please yourself you can have a beer or I can organise the rooms" that first beer never touched the side. The publican also allowed us to park our bikes in the hotel's backyard which he locked and assured us that the dogs would wake us up if someone came into the yard. The accommodation was pretty basic with male and female amenities at opposite ends of the top floor. The room I was sharing had two bunks, no hanging space and only a stool to sit on but it was clean and I slept well. I woke once at around 5am to the sound of heavy rain to which I pulled the covers over my head and hoped it would go away by the time we got up.

The evening meal was great with nice size serving served in a friendly atmosphere good friends and excellent views of the surrounding hills. Sitting there waiting for the dinners to arrive we were treated to a sunset which bathed the countryside in sunshine and darkening shadows as the contours of the landscape came into play. About 30 mins later we were treated to heavy showers and high wind as a storm hit this was also accompanied with lightning and thunder. For some reason Harold decided to take down a garden umbrella during the storm and while it was entertaining and was nice to see him safely

back inside. After dinner Harold provided further entertainment by reciting a poem which I will call Tim Buck Two. About this time the storm had passed and we adjourned outside.

Outside we discussed the events of the day as well as our route for tomorrow. Having heard of the lookouts on the Towong Gap road we decided to alter our route by going to Mount Beauty instead of directly to Wangaratta. Have decided this we then took the time to watch the lighting flashes occurring on around the hills and how much clearer the stars are in the country.

Day 3

With another breakfast under our belt we were packed up and on the road by 9am stopping only to fuel up prior to leaving Omeo. The weather was overcast as we started the climb towards Hotham. Just outside of Omeo we stopped at the Kosciusko Lookout, which provided a good view of the countryside as well as overlooking the Omeo Township. We admired the view for a short while then headed off. About $\frac{3}{4}$'s of the way to Dinner Plain the weather took a turn for the worst and it started to rain. Stopping at Dinner Plain a few of us put on our wet weather gear while those with thermos took the opportunity to have a quick drink. Unfortunately there were no shops opened when we were there. It was about this time that the wind also picked up so we pushing on hoping to get off the mountain before it got any worst. Well we didn't make it, by the time we had arrived at Hotham it was windy rain and the scattered clouds were drifting in. At one stage I was about 30 feet behind Harold and had trouble seeing his tail lights. Any thoughts of stopping at Hotham were quickly forgotten and we started our decent towards Harrierville. About half way down we were now below the clouds and came across a lookout area. We took the time to stop as the wind and rain had dropped off. It was here that I stupidly opened my visor which allowed the misty rain to gather on the inside. Once on the rode again it fogged up and with no where to safely stop I had a very slow and uncomfortable trip into Harrierville before I could fix the problem.

While the weather at Harrierville was overcast there was no rain which allowed us to stretch our legs and enjoy the road. Just prior to Bright we took the Tawonga Gap road and headed for Mount Beauty. The road was well worth our detour from the planned route and the view from the Tawonga Gap Lookout was inspiring even with the cloudy conditions. From here it was straight into Mount Beauty as a few of us were now starting to suffer from caffeine withdrawals.

At Mt Beauty we found a wonderful shop with covered outside seating, a wide range of food at a reasonable price and good customer service. We were thankful for the cover as it started to rain as we sat down for lunch. It was here that we remember another Wednesday rider who had moved to Yackandandah, a quick call and Ron had arranged for John Hansford to join us for tea in Wangaratta. With lunch finished and given the weather conditions I offered to lead the ride into Wangaratta as I knew the area and the location of the Pinsent Hotel.

Just past Tawonga I noticed a sigh warning of cattle crossing the road so when I saw a herd on the road I put my hazard lights on and touched the brakes to warn those following. Another 200 metre down the road I had cause to mutter under my breath. The cows weren't on the road but strung along the fence on a slight left hand curve, if I had only waited a bit longer. Pass the cattle and about 19 km from Mt

Beauty we turned left towards Myrtleford. From Mt Beauty it's known as Running Creek Road and from the Myrtleford side Happy Valley Road and it was certainly that. At Myrtleford we stopped for fuel and notice that the clouds were breaking up and there was blue sky here and there. From Myrtleford it was a pleasant ride into Wangaratta where we booked into the Hotel.

After seeing the bikes safely parked and locked up in the backyard of the hotel it was time for a quick shower a few drinks and to check out where we could get a cooked breakfast the next morning. The hotel rooms were of high standard with ensuite in every room. Tea and coffee making facilities was supplied as well as toast and fruit juice in a fridge that was actually turned on when we arrived. What a difference from a motel in Sale.

We had dinner at the hotel's bistro and having earlier spoken to the tourist Information centre we were able to get a discount on our meal. Basically you needed to present the voucher at the time of ordering the meals and you only paid \$8 for the second meal providing one meal was over \$25 and the other under \$25.

It was an enjoyable last night with the added bonus of catching up with John. While it turned out to be an enjoyable ride we all pretty much agreed that we would have to come back again as we had missed some beautiful scenery due to the weather.

Day 4

Woke up to a clear blue sky in the morning and a promise of a good ride back to Werribee. Harold was up early as he needed to get back home early and was planning to go straight down the freeway. He dropped in at the café just after 8am where some of us were having breakfast and said his goodbyes and best wishes. We then returned to the hotel and packed up and were on the road just after 9am. To give Stuart a rest I took over as ride leader and after fuelling up lead everybody out of Wangaratta on the Whitfield road. While the road is relative straight there were a few nice sweepers and it was an enjoyable run to Whitfield through Moyhu and King Valley. As we neared Whitfield I noticed that the clouds were starting to gather over the range and hoped the weather would hold on the Mansfield leg. About this time in a pre arranged move both Jan and Jean passed hoping to take advantage of an open road through the range to Mansfield. We had planned to stop at Powers Lookout which overlooked the upper reaches of the King Valley. However with 3 km of dirt track and yesterdays bad weather we went straight pass the turn off and marked it down as another place we needed to return to. I did catch sight of Jean around there but lost her again after a few km. Meanwhile the weather was becoming overcast and the temperature had dropped making it quite cool, which After a great deal of fun we finally caught up with Jan and Jean who were patiently wait for us in the main street. Jan steered us towards a bakery she had discovered while attending the Spaghetti rally earlier this year. After Smoko it was off to Yea for Lunch. Heading out of Mansfield we travelled through Bonnie Doon marvelling at how the charter of the place has changed with the lake filling up and how serene the place seemed. Other then this the leg to Yea while good, was a bit boring after some of the roads we had travelled in the last few days.

After lunch the clouds looked so threatening that we all changed into our wet weather gear before

heading down the Goulburn Highway to Kerrisdale where we turned left and cut across to Strath Creek and then onto Broadford. Following the old highway we made our way to Kilmore and then Wallan where we turned right onto the Darraweit Guim road. It was about then that it started to rain, however by the time we reached Darraweit Guim the rain had stopped. Continuing on we arrived at the Lancefield road and turning left and made our way to the Sunbury road. Here we turned left and made our way to Diggers Rest via Bulla. It was here that we had a final group photo hand then headed for Werribee via Plumpton Road.

Over the four days I covered 1220km which included a wide range of road types and weather conditions, all of which was made all the more enjoyable by the company. So our thanks go to the ride leader Stuart for organising the trip and booking the accommodation. To Ron who was our TEC, main photographer and publican on the first night, and finally to the group for looking out for each other and being good company.

