

MMAA – Tasmanian Chapter

President – Wor Bro R GONINON – 0437 613 150
Secretary – Wor Bro Craig DEANE – 0408 129 643
Treasurer – Wor Bro Tony BRUCE-MULLINS – 0438 046 595

Ride Report – 28-29th November, 2009

Apologies: Very Wor Bro David MACROW
Wor Bro Tony BRUCE-MULLINS/Rosemary
Bro Peter ALLEN

Riders: Ride Captain: Wor Bro Craig DEANE (Deano)
Wor Bro Alan BURTON (AB)
Wor Bro Rick GONINON
Wor Bro Paul GONINON
Wor Bro Dickie McLOUGHLAN
Bro Peter SHACKLADY (Shakas)
Bro Richard HEIERMANN

Well, what a weekend to say the least!!!

As the saying goes 'only mad dogs and Englishman go out in the mid-day sun' there is another saying that can be added to the list of phrases being 'only the Tasmanian Chapter of the MMAA go out in wild winter conditions'

Having been planned for some time, the weekend ride to St Helens came much to the anticipated pleasure of those taking part.

However, what was not anticipated was the weather conditions which, given that we live in Tasmania, we should have 'anticipated'.

Awaking early on Saturday morning, yours truly walked the driveway at home for the morning paper, and viewed the morning cloud cover which looked very grey and 'water filled'.

Sure enough, not five (5) minutes later the rain started, first a drizzle, then a downpour!! Feeling very disappointed at the thought of the trip being cancelled due to the conditions and with the state forecast being for 'heavy rain and thunderstorms', a phone call was made to the Secretary, Wor Bro Deano, for his thoughts on the trip proceeding. He was of a similar view as myself in that it was far from being bike weather and suggested that I ring 'El President, Wor Bro Rick G and suggest we still go but in the comfort of cars.

This I did, only to be told "we are a motorcycle club, NOT a car club!!!" Put in my place, I again rang Deano and told him the news and that I would be at his place **on my bike** at 1100hrs to travel to Rick's shop in New Norfolk, to meet up with him, Paul G and Shakas.

With wet weather gear on and dripping water all over the floor of Rick's new shop, we arrived around mid-day and immediately went into the kitchen and put the kettle on. At the suggestion of Rick, we also dried the visors of our helmets and wiped them with Rain X. Rain X!!! It was wipers attached at full bore we needed!!!

The shop locked and secured, and with Paul & Shakas having arrived, we set off to meet Wor Bro Dicky Mc and Brother Richard H at Granton.

Given the weather conditions, it was great to see that seven (7) riders were taking part on this historical (or should that be hysterical?) occasion (more later)

We set off North along the Midland Highway for Campbell Town, arriving safely after having been nearly sucked into the slip stream of B Double, travelling above the speed limit for such a vehicle, receiving a good spray of road dirt/water as it did so.

Re-fuelling at Campbell Town, Deano, his mind still on the B Double, enjoyed the warm glow of heat on his leg before realising too late, that his leg was resting nicely against the hot exhaust pipe of his 'Shadow' at which time, had melted through his wet weather pants with his leg saved from being burnt, by his riding boots.

Hot food and drinks were heartily consumed after which, it was time to saddle up again and brave the conditions once more.

They say things come in three's and with the weather conditions, Deano's attempts at warming himself there was a third yet awaiting this intrepid group of riders (or rider at least!)

All ready to set off again, Shakas decided he would change his gloves at which time, he told the rest of us to ride on and that he would catch up. We rode out of Campbell Town and turned off onto the St Mary's Pass Road, at which time, there was no sign of Shakas. Having turned onto St Mary's Road, I noticed that Paul G had disappeared (he had stopped to wait for Shakas) from sight. Stopping on the side of the road, I waited for both Paul and Shakas to come into view which did not eventuate. Deano & Richard, who had noticed me slow down and then disappear from their view, turned around to find me waiting on the side of the road. Realising there was no Paul or Shakas, continued past to find them both. Like lost sheep, we eventually re-grouped and rode on.

It was riding on this stretch of road that the weather changed from wet, gloomy and miserable to bright, sunny and dry which, with a great road for riding, plenty of sweeping curves and with stretches of straight road, the trusty machines were 'opened up'.

Somewhere east of Avoca? (you know what I'm like with directions) we stopped for a 'breather' in glorious sunshine. It was at this time, remembering that things happen in three's, we learnt the fate of the missing Shakas at the turn off onto St Mary's Road.

With Christmas approaching, and all being in the festive spirit, an approaching police car travelling South on the Midland Highway gave Shakas, attempting to catch up with the group, a 'festive flash' with his radar gun. In addition, Shakas, noticing that the friendly police officer was turning the car around to greet him, received a Christmas card with a message on it. Shakas, obviously feeling very touched by this kind gesture, is going to donate a sum of money to the annual Police Christmas fund.

On ya! Shakas for demonstrating yet again, that Freemasons are always willing to donate to a worthy cause.

Riding on in glorious conditions, we reached St Helens safe and sound with Rick duly announcing our arrival by phone, to our various hosts.

Being met by same, we followed our hosts to their homes at which time, food and drink was both generously offered and well received.

Rested and refreshed, we arrived at the St Helens Masonic Lodge in time for the tiling at 1930hrs (7-30pm)

Having been given approval by the Most Worshipful Grand Master to attend the meeting representing the Masonic Motorcycle Association of Australia (MMAA) Tasmanian Chapter, we arrived suitably dressed in jeans, boots, riding jackets/vests with the MMAA Tasmanian Chapter insignia attached, shirt & tie and with our Masonic Aprons being worn appropriately, we were well received as per normal protocols reserved amongst Masons.

The workings within the Lodge and the ceremony as witnessed (Raising) was of a very good standard, being a credit to the Lodge in general.

After the Lodge was closed accordingly, we were shown to the South for light refreshments. Having already partaken of refreshments late in the afternoon at the homes of our hosts, we were faced with an array of foods too tempting to pass for which we all enjoyed. We did however, 'struggle' to consume the crayfish of which was eaten out of courtesy (yeah right!!!) to our hosts, in particular, the Worshipful Master (at least that's what Paul G said as he 'struggled' to eat the tails of a cray and a half!!!!!!)

Many thanks are extended to the Ladies of the Lodge, for preparing such a feast.

During the response to the toast, Wor Bro Rick informed the Worshipful Master and Brethren of St Helens Lodge that they can record for prosperity, the fact they are/were the first Lodge in Tasmania (in Australia for that matter) to receive the Tasmanian Chapter of the MMAA on this inaugural occasion.

The night having ended, we returned to the homes of our respective hosts at which time, it appeared that we all enjoyed each others company, with coffee's and social conversation being had into the early hours of the morning.

With breakfast consumed on Sunday morning, and with sincere thanks to our hosts, we met as a group and discussed the route home. It was planned to travel down the East Coast but were forewarned of atrocious conditions to which it was decided to head back the way we came even though, having already started to rain, we were heading into darkened and heavy clouds. (Having read the Mercury on Monday morning, it was a very sound decision not to have travelled down the East Coast on our trip home.)

Heavy rain was encountered most of the way to Campbell Town, slowing us down to a steady & safe speed limit, given such conditions.

Having again re-fuelled in Campbell Town and with coffees drank and pies eaten, Rick, Paul, Shakas and Richard said farewell to Deano and yours truly, as it was our intention to ride at a leisurely pace and turn off along the Colebrook Road on our way home, with the 'four' musketeers continuing on South on the Midland Highway (Dickie Mc was stopping at his daughters place in St Helens for a few days.)

Along with the rain, high winds/gusts were encountered after leaving Campbell Town, which did not abate during the trip home making riding conditions very uncomfortable.

In closing, weather conditions aside (and the donation of Shakas) the weekend was a very enjoyable and momentous occasion and one which I was/we all were, glad to be part of.

Again, our sincere thanks to all our hosts, the Worshipful Master and Brethren of St Helens Masonic Lodge and the Most Worshipful Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother Norm COOPER, for assisting in making this weekend possible.

Yours fraternally,

Wor Bro Alan BURTON

Ride safe, stay safe.