



# Dubbo and Western Plains Ulysses Branch

## Newsletter Sept - Oct 2009

We are a Branch of the Ulysses Club Inc. with an informal committee, and as such we do not have official meetings. One day we may elect a leader and a small committee to organise our activities; meanwhile our purpose is to enjoy our motorcycles and each others company. Friends and non members are welcome to ride with us. If you want to ride then simply be at the starting point at the appointed time. There's more fine print on the back page.

### THE BYLONG VALLEY WAY

*The White Rabbit does "Mudgee to Denman on Speed"*

The good news is they've sealed the last of the dirt sections of the Bylong Valley Way between Rylstone and Sandy Hollow.

The really good news is that you can link this with a couple of other nice roads to create 184 Ks of Bikers Heaven all the way from Mudgee to Denman, or even Jerrys Plains. To put this in proportion, Walcha to Wauchope via the Oxley Highway is 165 Ks – most of which is actually straight. The longest "straight" on the Bylong Valley Way is just over 2 Ks.

In simple terms it goes like this:

Start at Mudgee, take the Lue Road and head towards Rylstone; 5 Ks short of Rylstone, turn left onto the Bylong Valley Way. Proceed through Bylong and the Wollemi National Park heading for Sandy Hollow. 9 Ks before Sandy Hollow,

just as you pass James Estate, turn right onto Yarrowa Road. Stay with this until a closed bridge forces you onto the Yarrowa Diversion after which you can turn left for Denman or right for Jerrys Plains.

We went this way on the 2009 Soup Challenge, so here's the detail:

Start by topping up with fuel at Mudgee, its 184 Ks to Denman and there's every chance you will use much more fuel than normal. Head north from the clock tower, over the bridge and turn right onto the road to Lue. Good fun this, they've done bits of it up – we came across a "Federally Funded Bright Spot" which was particularly good. There's bits of everything in here, but the surface can be variable so it pays to keep your eyes open.

47 Ks from Mudgee you reach the Bylong Valley Way and it's decision time. Turn left for the really good roads, or turn right for the pie shop 5 Ks away in Rylstone. From this corner most of the next 100 Ks is new bitumen. It wanders through the forest for about 10 Ks then wriggles severely as it drops into the upper reaches of the Bylong Valley. The wriggles become sweepers as the road heads for Bylong – but watch it, there is the odd sharp corner and I did find one or two of their 35 Kph advisory signs were surprisingly accurate.

Years ago we had developed a theory that any half decent rider outta be able to double what the advisory sign says when Jammo piped up and said "Nah, just put a "1" in front". Anyway,

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## SEPT/OCT RIDES

(details page 4)

|                |                                       |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Sep 6</b>   | <b>Sandy Hollow</b>                   |
| <b>Sept 20</b> | <b>Mudgee</b>                         |
| <b>Sept 26</b> | <b>Weekend Away<br/>Hunter Valley</b> |
| <b>Oct 11</b>  | <b>Yeoval</b>                         |
| <b>Oct 17</b>  | <b>Weekend Away<br/>Tarana</b>        |
| <b>Nov 1</b>   | <b>Hillend</b>                        |

## Bylong Valley Way

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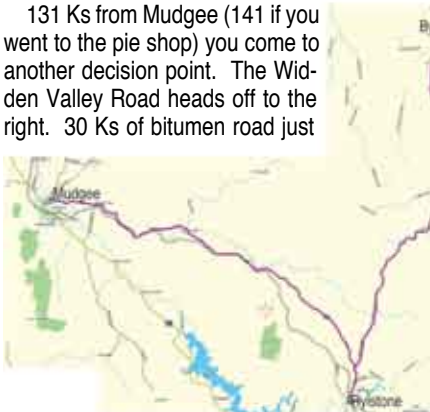
you have been warned, there's a few corners along the way that you'll just have to work out for yourself.

After Bylong the road gets even more interesting as it works its way up and over Cox's Gap and into the Goulburn River Valley. Later at the pub Ed Joshua explained that this is an old meteor crater, but road-wise there's bits of everything and lots of dead wombats. Also lots of crests where it's tricky to read which way the road goes next. But there's lots of corners and plenty of ups and downs. Incidentally, when you see a sign like "10 Km Winding Road" don't expect to see any advisory speed signs for a while.

I was enjoying myself in here when I noticed Jammo's Burgman closing up behind me. Bloody amazing the way he can push that scooter along. The pressure was on, I knew that the slightest mistake and Jammo would pass me. But the trouble with Jammo is that you can never be sure which side he's gonna pass you on – he's a bastard like that. He was still behind when we got to the steep uphill at Cox's Gap. Got him!! My 1300cc vs his 650 – horsepower wins again.

I was well in front over the top and luckily positioned to just sneak past a dirty great tanker that was charging down the other side at a most impressive clip. Even Jammo was impressed when he got to the bottom and could finally pass him.

131 Ks from Mudgee (141 if you went to the pie shop) you come to another decision point. The Widden Valley Road heads off to the right. 30 Ks of bitumen road just



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six feet wide. It's a dead end and you would only do it for the scenery, but it is spectacular. A nice way to catch your breath and get the missus back onside if she's still aboard.

148 Ks from Mudgee (158 for the pie-eaters) you go past the rather impressive James Estate and turn onto Yarrowa Road on your right (Sandy Hollow is about 9 Ks ahead if



you don't turn). There's about one K of dirt as you head up the hill, but I expect that one K will be sealed real-soon-now. Another 10 Ks of nice enough bitumen and you come to the Yarrowa Bridge which is closed, so you deviate onto the Yarrowa Deviation. Sealed, but quite an education – at one stage it cuts between a farmhouse and the out-house. Five Ks of this (just long enough to

play *Deliverance* on your iPod) and you do a sharp right to miss the last farmhouse, and come down a hill to a T intersection. Decision time.

Turn left and it is four Ks to Denman, right (followed by a left 200 metres later) and it's 28 Ks to Jerrys Plains.

Or you can just turn around and do it all again.

### Variations on a theme

There is another way from Mudgee to Bylong. You can go out via Munghorn Gap and Wollar but there is 20 Ks of dirt between Wollar and Bylong. At 76 Ks it is 20 Ks shorter but you miss out on the delightful Lue to Bylong section.

Coming from the south you can start at Bathurst and go via Sofala to Rylstone; or start even further south and go Goulburn-Taralga-Black Springs-Bathurst-Sofala-Rylstone.

At the eastern end it is only a hop-skip-and-a-jump to the Putty Road, or you might prefer Singleton-Dungog and Thunderbolts Way to Walcha and the Ox.

They're all out there just begging to be ridden.

*The White Rabbit*

### Your chance to try it

*Our Ride Committee reckons this sounds so good we're gonna do it, both ways, on Sunday 6th September with an early kick-off at 8:00am from the Shell in West Dubbo so we can be back in Mudgee for lunch. They've also snuck some other goodies into our Ride Calendar on Page 4.*

### Contacts

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Ride Committee:

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Sandy Lambert: email: mbdubbo@bigpond.com

## Ride Committee


They say nature abhors a vacuum, and here's proof. Sandy "Muffin Man" Lambert and Ian Simpson have risen to the occasion to fill the shoes vacated by "Hotmix". They are now our Ride Committee.

When not on his bike Muffin Man can be found dispensing tasty delicacies from his muffin stall in Dubbo City Centre/Centro. We've gotta find a handle for Ian that suits his bank manager image. He likes to call himself "Tiger" (that's his bike) but something like "Tucker" (as in Bush Tucker Man, Les Hiddins) comes to mind - we have seen Ian emerge from the scrub with his mouth full of roots and berries.

Congratulations on volunteering guys. Their contact details are on this page and their first Ride Calendar has some really good rides:

- A blat along the Bylong Valley Way
- Weekend taking in the Hunter, Putty and Wisemans Ferry
- Weekend to Sofala and Tarana; Hill End Pub; and more.

*The White Rabbit*



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# Ride Calendar - Sept/Oct 2009



Runs marked with 🐸 in the heading means the group will depart at the appointed time. If there is no 🐸 then you should make your own way to the event.

When not stated otherwise, rides depart Shell West Dubbo. Informal rides may be arranged at the Macquarie Inn on Friday evenings.

## Ride Calendar Sept 09

🐸 6th Sept– Sunday  
Depart Shell West Dubbo 8.00am  
Sandy Hollow via Bylong  
Return to Orient Hotel, Mudgee for Lunch

🐸 20th Sept– Sunday  
Depart Shell West Dubbo 8.00am  
Morning Run - back by lunchtime  
Mudgee for Breakfast/Brunch

🐸 26th-27th Sept– Saturday-Sunday  
**WEEKEND AWAY - Hunter Valley**  
Depart Shell West Dubbo Saturday 7.00am  
Lithgow via Mudgee, Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong to Putty Road & 17 K bends into Hunter Valley. Lunch at Wollombi Pub then on to Neath Pub for a night of embibing.  
Sunday - Wisemans Ferry & Sackville, lunch at Tarana Pub then home via Bathurst/Euchareena.

*If you are interested please contact Ian Simpson to book a room on 0427 661 034 or email [ian.simpson@rabobank.com](mailto:simpson@rabobank.com). Rooms ased on a first in first served basis.*

## Ride Calendar Oct 09

🐸 11th Oct– Sunday  
Depart Shell West Dubbo 9.00am  
The Long way to lunch at Royal Hotel Yeoval Wellington-Euchareena- Molong (coffee break)- Cumnock-Yeoval-Obley Road back to Dubbo.

🐸 17th -18th Saturday-Sunday  
**WEEKEND AWAY - Tarana**  
Depart Shell West Dubbo 8.00am  
Great roads abound as we head to the Tarana Hotel via Mudgee & Sofala with coffee break along the way . Lunch at O'connell Pub then a fun way via some great sweepers to Tarana Pub.

*We have all 3 cabins booked they sleep 5 (1 dbl & triple bunk). \$150 divided by number in cabin, includes continental breakfast. Please contact Sandy Lambert on [mbdubbo@bigpond.com](mailto:mbdubbo@bigpond.com) to book a place. Same basis first in first served.*

24th Oct - Saturday - Wellington Soup & Stew

🐸 1st November– Sunday  
Depart Shell West Dubbo 9.00am  
Hillend Pub. Route by consensus



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## Follow the leader

*The White Rabbit explains  
why it is not easy being the bunny in front*

I'd gotten distracted on a few domestic projects - hadn't ridden the bike in ages when word came through that the Ag Riders were putting on their annual Soup Challenge in a few weeks time.

"You should do that" said She-Who-Must "It'll do you good".

"Yeah." as I tried to straighten up yet another course of brickwork. A few days later I managed to get the bike started to kick some life into the battery - just in case.

A couple of weeks later and it's Tuesday. Ed sends an email - they're leaving at 8:30am Friday and go via Bylong.

"Think I'll take Friday off!"

"Oh. You're going to go, are you?"

"Yep. It'll do me good".

Thursday. "Mmm .. Better go get some fuel. A trip to the servo oughta put as much life back in the battery as starting it takes out". It only just started, and when I got to the servo I realised I'd have to start it a second time. It started fine, the engine was hot and the bike was in the mood. But had the two starts taken more out of the battery than the short trip would put back in?

Friday morning and ... it started - just! "Beaudy!!" Met up with Ed (R1150GSA aka "Sheila"), Greg (GSX500) and Jammo (Burgman 650 "The Scoot").

Ed had never ridden with Greg or Jammo before, he and I had been on a couple of rides together, but it was a long time ago. So other than Jammo and I, no-one really knows how the rest of the group rides.

Time to go - who's in front? Ed's organised the run, so we wait for him to take the lead, then Greg, then me, then Jammo, with a cold sun shining on a damp road as we head for Muronbung, Goolma, Mudgee, Rylstone and Denman.

After a while we are sitting on 95Kph. I read my speed off Doris (the GPS), it's much more accurate than the speedo which is hovering just on 100. Greg starts to drop back a bit so Ed eases off the pace. Mmm ... everyone's a bit nervous about

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David Mendham

Plod doing his early morning donut and coffee run along the Golden Highway, but, Guys we ain't gonna get booked along here at 85.

Anyway, it's a lovely morning and I haven't been on a bike in zonks. Be a good idea if I just took it easy and see if I can remember how to ride the thing. Maybe I'll give it a squirt when we turn for Goolma.

We turn for Goolma. "Nah ... That'd be a bit rude". But as we're toddling along at speeds varying from 80 to 95 I start to realise what's happening.

It's the voices in Ed's helmet - I've heard them before. You're the lead bike in a gaggle of riders and you hear these voices yabbering away in your helmet:

"You're going too fast," yells one "Someone will fall off and sue you."

"You're going too slow." moans another "They think you're a pussy."

"There's a copper coming. It'll all be your fault."

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## Follow the leader

... from previous page

“Are they all there? Count the headlights.”

“Ya shouldda gone a different way.”

“They’re all watching to see if you’re any good.”

“How fast ya goin’ now?”

“Ya stuffed that corner! They all saw it!”

“Jammo’s gunna getcha!”

They just go on and on, squabbling away like a bunch of Gremlins, all yelling at the same time, and all trying to out do each other. Bloody hard to keep a constant speed with all that going on.

I used to think it was just me, but I now know others (everyone?) have the same problem. Explains why most guys won’t take the lead – they’re more than happy to sit in the pack.

Years ago we couldn’t get anyone else to lead the Sunday Rides, so I decided I’d just have to do something to shut the voices up. Actually I did several things:

I installed an electronic cruise control. That solved the problem of trying to ride at a constant speed. Bonus was that it solved the sore-wrist problem and somehow made boring highways much more enjoyable.

I put in a UHF radio and conned some of the other guys into doing the same. That way I could get feedback from the tailenders without having to count headlights. Bonus was that the truckies give the Gremlins some competition.

I did a few courses to improve my riding technique.

I bought a good set of NRMA Regional Maps and studied them so I knew where every bitumen road on the eastern seaboard was. This idea led to purchasing Doris which has turned out to be the best of all the accessories on the bike. She’s paid for herself several times over.

One time in Victoria a copper tried to book me for the 138 that came up on his radar. I was able to convince him that the GPS, cruise control and UHF meant his radar was wrong. He let me off. Actually I was only doing 100Kph at the time – true!


I digress. The other thing happened as I got older. I just don’t give a shit no more. If I’m going too slow for the guys behind, they can pass me; if I’m too fast they can slow down; if they get lost they can find their own way home. I really don’t care, and I’ve come to realise they don’t either. Bikes are a personal thing - we like to do our own thing our own way.

So, back to Ed and his Gremlins. By Goolma I was getting in the groove and my wrist was hurting. As we came out of town I gave it a squirt and set the cruise control at a comfortable pace. “I’ll wait for them in Mudgee”.

But they all followed me! I slowed the cruise down as we hit the highway and we all rode into town, together, at the speed limit, waving to Plod and his donut as he popped over the rise in his battlecruiser.

Anyway, that broke the ice. Ed and I took turns in the lead for the rest of the day and everyone was riding in a much more relaxed fashion. I can tell you I wasn’t interested in passing him again, Shiela can really motor along when she lifts her skirts.

*The White Rabbit*



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## Addendum:

Some points raised above can do with further explanation:

Bike speedos are not terribly accurate. ADRs require they should be "accurate within 10%" plus or minus. Most tend to read over, but I have seen some that read under. They are a mechanical device that works either off the front wheel or the transmission and rely on the effective circumference of a wheel at the time. This can vary depending on tyre pressure, tyre wear, atmospheric pressure, road surface, etc.

A GPS uses trigonometry to calculate speed based on exactly where it is at any point in time (measured in poofteenthths of a second). Doris can detect movements as small as 100mm. I've spot checked her against RTA, VicRoads and the coppers and found her to be spot on.

When comparing my speedo to the GPS I find that the speedo tends to read over by 5 to 10Kph around 80-100Kph and is sometimes accurate around the 40 and 140 marks. Results are not consistent and vary from day to day.

The GPS and cruise control combine beautifully to ensure you can travel at a speed limit without worry.

In the episode with the Victorian copper, his radar was accurate but he had picked up the speed of a bike that was passing our group. When he saw that both Dave and I were using GPS and cruise control and were comparing numbers via UHF he realised he would lose in court so he gave up.

I asked Ed how he felt about the above story. His only worry was that I knew exactly what he was thinking.



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## Irish Heaven

I was testing children in my Dublin Sunday school class to see if they understood the concept of getting to heaven.

I asked them, 'If I sold my house and my car, had a big jumble sale and gave all my money to the church, would that get me into heaven?'

'NO!' the children answered..

'If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the garden, and kept everything tidy, would that get me into heaven?'

Again, the answer was 'No!' By now I was starting to smile.

'Well, then, if I was kind to animals and gave sweets to all the children, and loved my husband, would that get me into heaven?'

Again, they all answered 'No!'. I was just bursting with pride for them.

I continued, 'Then how can I get into heaven?'

A six year-old boy shouted out "YUV GOTTA BE FOOKN' DEAD....."

## Why do men die first?

This is a question that has gone unanswered for centuries, but, now we know.

It requires a bit of explanation, first:

If you put a woman on a pedestal and try to protect her from the rat race ... you're a male chauvinist. If you stay home and do the housework ... you're a pansy. If you work too hard ... there's never any time for her. If you don't work enough ..... you're a good-for-nothing bum. If she has a boring repetitive job with low pay ... this is exploitation. If you have a boring repetitive job with low pay ..... you should get off your lazy behind and find something better. If you get a promotion ahead of her ... that is favouritism. If she gets a job ahead of you ..... it's equal opportunity.

If you mention how nice she looks ... it's sexual harassment. If you keep quiet ..... it's male indifference. If you cry ... you're a wimp. If you don't ..... you're an insensitive bastard. If you make a decision without consulting her ..... you're a chauvinist. If she makes a decision without consulting you, she's a liberated woman. If you ask her to do something she doesn't enjoy ... that's domination. If SHE asks you ... it's a favour. If you appreciate the female form and frilly underwear .... you're a pervert. If you don't ... you're gay.

If you like a woman to shave her legs and keep in shape ... you're sexist. If you don't ... you're unromantic. If you try to keep yourself in shape ..... you're vain. If you don't ... you're a slob. If you buy her flowers ... you're after something.

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Why do men die first?

Because they want to!!

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# In the soup with Ed

*Ed Joshua reports on the Ag Riders 2009 Soup Challenge*

The 2009 Soup Challenge has been run and we Dubbonians had a good one! We congregated at the rest area on the Dunedoo road just 5 km east of Dubbo at 8.30 am. There were 4 riders The White Rabbit (TWR) on his Yamaha XJR1300, Ron on his Suzuki Burgeman 650 scooter, Greg on his Suzuki GS500 and me on Sheila (R1150GSA). We discussed the plan for the day and decided to stop for fuel at Rylstone and catch up with the Orange riders. The day was cool and there had been some drizzle early so the road was wet and it was overcast as we headed to Balimore and then Goolma. I was unsure of how fast our crew wanted to travel so I kept it fairly slow around the speed limit.

At Goolma I tried to turn left, a ute turning right wanted to use all the road on my side which made it difficult to get any road at all. After Goolma TWR took the lead and set his cruise control to ease the arthritis in his hands so we followed him through to Mudgee and

onto Rylstone. The day was warming slightly drying the road but as we headed higher into the mountains the air cooled and started to bite through the clothes and leathers to let us know it was still winter. The corners experienced were well worth the cold and such a pleasant change from the straights of the Western Plains.

We proceeded onto Rylstone for fuel and catch up with the Orange riders who were just heading off to Bylong as we arrived.

TWR and I chatted as Greg and Ron fuelled their bikes and then we to headed of for Bylong along the newly sealed Bylong Valley Way; it is a fine road with long sweeping corners and short straights, there are a couple of tight sections as you descend from the tablelands through the Murrumbo creator and into the Hunter Valley and onto the coastal plain. A wonderful trip through our ancient landscape on roads made better with the addition of some federal funding.

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## The Soup Run

... from previous page

We arrived at Denman just after midday and headed into the Denman hotel for lunch of soup and other menu items. It was great to catch up with old friends and make some new acquaintances with other riders from Orange and the Central Coast. The difficulty of the winter soup challenge was not terribly difficult this year as the weather was rather cooperative and delivered a fine cool day which turned sunny for a while during the day. Even so a bad day on the bike always beats a good day in the office.

So lunch of Fennel and bacon soup, calamari and steak, we fuelled the bikes said our farewells and headed up the Rosemount road to Sandy Hollow and back along the Bylong Valley Way to Murrumbo creator and then turned right to Wollar along a bit of dirt which was fun on Sheila but the Burgeman was a bit twitchy due to the smaller wheels. We then headed for Mudgee through the vineyards and nearing Mudgee headed back to Gulgong where we arrive just as the baker was closing but in time to get a cup of coffee thanks to the charming approach of TWR.

After afternoon coffee we headed through the gathering twilight along Lahey's Creek road to Flyblowers creek and along the Dunedoo road to Balimore and back into Dubbo arriving just on Dusk at the Macquarie Inn for a schooner and a quick debrief and then home to the family.

The 2009 Soup Challenge was a very enjoyable ride along a great road which I will no doubt revisit each time I need to travel to Newcastle for a major service, but it was not the normal challenge of bitter cold, ice, mist, rain and snow.

We will have to have a go towards the Taralga Hotel next year through Black Springs and Oberon to make the Challenge a tad more challenging than the cappuccino and rum in the sun experience by our coastal cruisers.

*Edward Joshua  
R1150GSA (Sheila)*

**Letters and articles are invited for  
inclusion in the Newsletter.**

**See back page for contact details.**

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## Wanna go for a Ride?

*From the Ride Committee*

Muffin Man and I were thinking it would be beneficial to have a list of email addresses of people interested in rides. This would enable the ride organisers to communicate with interested parties in a more timely manner. For instance we could update an existing calendar, or if we were going on a special trip we could put it out there for anyone that would be interested.

Therefore if there is anyone interested they could forward their email address to me on [aveagh@bigpond.com](mailto:aveagh@bigpond.com).

*Tiger*

## Wello Soup n Stew

The annual Soup n Stew will be on Saturday 24th October this year.

# It's a long road to Cape York

*Peter Hickey does some bonding with his son*

Son to father: "My mate Alex is doing his intern year for pharmacy in Cairns. We have talked about an off road bike trip, so what do you think about a ride to Cape York?"

Well what could I say, as I love off road riding, it is on my list of things to do before I die, and I am not getting any younger. I said "OK". Ben went back to uni in Sydney, I then looked at a map: and then realized what I had agreed to.

I rang a few mates I thought would like to come with us, but unfortunately couldn't get away; or thought me mad; "Rabbit doesn't do dirt" Chris informs me(must be why he tires out watching the bike races on the lounge that was purchased with the KTM insurance payout. It isn't even orange.)

A few weeks out from our departure date I realized that our casual organization was going off the rails. Firstly getting the farms XR400 through rego wasn't as easy as first thought. Ben had football and uni commitments. It needed all the things you pull off and didn't get from the last owner - blinkers, mirrors and wiring sorted out etc. Fortunately it passed a blue slip but the inspector thought it was for farm use so I said nothing about taking it away on a long trip. Also Ben had the slight imposition of obtaining a riders licence, so he got his L's a week before we left. (Ben thought all this a waste as we saw no police where we went)

I then met up with Stu Mitchell from lower Queensland who has won the 450 class in the Australian Safari, sets up rally bikes, and organizes off-road safari trips for BMW dealers. "I would be leaving your Honda TransAlp at home". What! I had it all ready to go. "Look you aren't young or fit enough so to do all the interesting rides on it as you will

struggle with its weight and size. Go out and buy another XR400 and you will enjoy it, and from having ridden with you, you will handle it with ease - s well as come home in one piece".

Now Ben and Stu were scouring the internet and dealers for another XR400 a week before our departure date. I couldn't find one with rego locally, so I brought an XR400 off e-bay in Brisbane with 3 months rego.

The carrier I had lined up to take Bens bike to Cairns let us down. Also the price to ship the bike to Cairns from Brisbane was huge. So I decided to leave the TransAlp at home (I was still planning on riding it as far as Cairns) and drive my Ford ute to Cairns with the bike from home and go via Brisbane and pick up the bike there.

I left on the 20th and stayed at the Royal Hotel at Tenterfield where we have stayed on the Wild Roads Run (Basil is still booking out rooms!!) . As I tried to lock the lock fell to bits Not a good omen as I made a trip to Dubbo especially to get it repaired the previous week. Next morning onto Brisbane via visiting a cousin in Lismore. I got to pick up the XR just before dark. It had no rattles, but it was pouring rain so I loaded it up and then went to Beaudesert to spend the night with an old friend originally from Dubbo. Next morning it was bucketing rain. It really brought home how dry it has been at home the last few years, as I couldn't remember how long it was since I last drove in such heavy rain. I couldn't see anything going over the Gateway bridge.

I left the bikes at Beerwah to have the suspensions upgraded for our weights by MPE Suspensions, as recommended by my friend Stu. Appar-

*... to next page*

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## Long road to Cape York

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ently they mostly do off-road safari bikes and have suspensions sent from all over Australia as well as from overseas.

All was going to plan and the ute going well . Ben had his last uni exam on Tuesday morning, and flew up to meet me. I picked up the bikes and we were set to go!

A 6.30am start saw us on the road to Cairns. Australia is a big place. Looking at a map doesn't do it justice. It was 1,745 Ks from Budrim to Cairns - we arrived at 2:30 am. Google maps and their times are pretty well spot on, as we made a point of sticking to the speed limit, and not wasting time at stops.


Up at 8:30 and meet up with Alex's dad Malcolm and his uncle Phillip, who head off to collect the camper trailer and 4 wheel drive he has hired. We loaded up our gear and jerry cans and food and hit the road.

Up through Mareeba and followed the bitumen through to Palmer river. The boys enjoyed the thrill of the adventures start. Lesson one: if there is a good camp site left when most sites are taken, there has to be a reason. We camped next to the generator shed. It stopped at midnight. Camped next to us was Uki from Japan, who is riding a pushbike around Australia. Fortunately his father puts money into his ATM account; but he devoured the meat we gave him as a change from the noodles he was used to.



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The views are terrific as well as the aboriginal rock art we saw, on our next day to Coen. . Dirt at last!" Dirt means dust. Fortunately being early in the season the graders were out on many sections of the roads we traveled on. The second night we were better at getting set up and getting into a routine. The Sexchange Hotel was nearby so we tried a XXXX bitter or two. .

From Coen to Bamwell junction, with a stop at the Archer River for lunch. At this stage we commented that all the crocodile warning signs were in German in big letters. Maybe they are the tastiest of the tourists!

The road along here is graded gravel with the occasional bitumen stretch to overtake trucks.

Camping at Bramwell Junction was the most expensive campsite and fuel we struck. We also met up with three other bikes on an organized tour and got some travel tips from their guide.

Now the adventure begins. The old telegraph track started from Bamwell Junction. The first creek crossing was 4 k's out. The track is just 2 wheel tracks in the sand. I would have thought that 4 wheel drives breed up here if I hadn't seen them getting off the wharf at Darling Harbour! We crossed

about 12 creeks ranging from extremely difficult to moderately easy. The depth of the water was the greatest problem, with the creeks all being passable till we came onto a ford that wasn't highlighted on our map. The TTR250 drowned.

Next travel tip is to make sure the carbie jets aren't frozen into the float bowl. We hid the TTR in the scrub as the day was getting on as we had spent a long time trying to dry it out, and made our way to Gun Shot creek, which all the 4wheel drive people whisper about in dark pubs.

There was a freshly drowned 4wheeldrive on the creek bank. Fortunately there is a log bridge to get bikes over as it is quite deep. From there we missed the turnoff back out to the main road (ie the 2 wheel tracks) and ended up on the banks of the Jardine River but couldn't get to the ferry crossing without backtracking to nearly GunShot creek. We reached the Jardine River crossing at 9pm. It had been a big day I was buggered. A feed and than sleep.

During the day we had stopped off and had a swim at Fruitbat falls, which was beautiful.

Next morning Ben Alex and I went back to rescue the TTR. I could see why the four wheel drivers loved the track as I did my best to drown the rental Landcruiser! We eventually got the drain plug out of the carby and got it going again. Fortunately Alex switched it off when he realized he was getting into deep water so got no water in the motor. We spent the rest of the day doing maintenance on all the bikes. One thing that had caused us



grief was the lack of signs, but talking to the locals, they commented that they don't put them up as the tourists souvenir them and the locals know were they are going!

The \$33 to cross on the Jardine ferry per bike is a top money spinner.

Then to The Tip. We rode to within a short walk and queued up to take our photo's at the sign which said we were at the most northerly point {boy was this one heavily bolted down} then had a great ride along the beach and camped at Punsand bay which is nearby. Next day a big ride to Weipa. (450k's) then straight across the gulf to Chillie beach, via the Frenchmans track. This was a tough ride and again no signs. Crossing the Pascoe river was deep, steep and rough. Again the 4wheeldrive nutters were in their element. Chillie beach is exactly what

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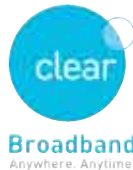
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## Long road to Cape York

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I envisioned a tropical beach to be. It is the home of lost thongs and 11 plastic oil bottles. The amount of plastic on the high water mark is amazing. We had a try at fishing but the large splash of a croc, sent us packing. Again riding the bikes along the long beach was great.

Back out to Lockhart river for fuel, a place which struck me as a Brewarinna with green grass. The road here was clay, freshly graded, and like a race track. We all had a fall going into or coming out of one of the many creek crossings. The fourwheel drives had the departure points wet, and by the time we came around a blind corner or rise, it was heart in the mouth!

From here a beautiful drive through Lakefield national park, to Kalpower crossing, to camp and have a maintenance day. We had booked ahead at another campsite near a wetland to look at different birdlife, but the rangers moved us on due to "crocodile management issues". We weren't going to argue. The road (if you can call it that) was sandy, rough and corrugated. No grader yet. A beautiful twisty and scenic run from here down to Cooktown were we got our first decent cup of coffee since Brisbane.

On to Helenvale, and camped at the Red Lion hotel. This place is a must see. We met with the tour guide we had previously met at Bramwell junction. Who directed us to Mount Misery. It is a 50k run up to a Telstra tower on a very high mountain. Again no signs, so again we were dependent on our odometers as well as looking for a very small pink arrow high up in a tree on our left hand side. Telstra had got a bulldozer and virtually went straight up the mountain, through numerous creeks and very steep inclines and declines. Then bugger, we had to go



back down again. Great! Breakfast, then back to Cairns, but the CREBB track beckoned. The first part was relatively tame and with us now thirsting for challenge were wondering what the challenge was. This changed dramatically when we went past a gate across the road a fourwheel driver had unlocked with his bolt cutters. Mount Misery was a warm up. The "track" which was put in to service a now disused powerline, was rough; steep; challenging; and tough. It would be nearly impossible if it was wet. It was wise - we had left it till we were on our return leg. It came out on a wide ford over the Daintree river. Past the road closed sign, to Daintree Village and then we spent the rest of the afternoon dodging tourist traffic heading back to Cairns.

We did 2800k's on the bikes, with no mechanical trouble except for a drowning. I had to replace a rear tyre on Ben's XR400, and a chain and sprockets on the TTR - It doesn't pay to buy cheap chain. If you

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had major trouble or needed something as simple as a clutch lever away from Cairns, you are up shit creek, literally. We didn't have any spare clutch leavers left, but didn't need to do any tyre repairs, which I had been told to look forward to.

We hardly saw another bike on the whole trip, except for the escorted tours. Most fourwheel drivers thought us mad. We thought the same of them, especially when they would pass us, shower us with dust and rocks and then slow down so as to keep showering us with same. The run to Weipa had our aircleaners clogged in the one day. We did keep running into the same people at a number of places. One lot of Irish and French backpackers were in a early model Pajero they had brought at Sydney airport, from departing backpackers for \$1700, and had done 10000k's in it. We met them in all the really challenging places. They had a \$40 toolkit from SuperCheap and 2 front wheel bearings. They were doing as well as the others who were laden down with recovery gear and spares.

Having Alex's dad and uncle traveling with us was great as we didn't have to carry any gear and we met up each evening and mostly rendezvoused for lunch and to refuel the bikes. The camper trailers are great, as they are fully self contained. I slept in my swag outdoors for the two weeks which I also enjoyed. There were few late nights and nobody had trouble getting to sleep! Next trip I will get a larger fuel tank and be a bit better prepared.

*Peter Hickey*

## Scottish Golfer

An 80-year-old Scotsman goes to the doctor for a check-up.

The doctor is amazed at what good shape the guy is in and asks, 'How do you stay in such great physical condition?'

'I'm Scottish and I am a golfer,' says the old guy, 'and that's why I'm in such good shape. I'm up well before daylight and out golfing up and down the fairways. I have a wee glass of whisky, and all is well.'

'Well,' says the doctor, 'I'm sure that helps, but there's got to be more to it. How old was your Dad when he died?'

'Who said my Dad's dead?'

The doctor is amazed. 'You mean you're 80 years

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old and your Dad's still alive. How old is he?'

'He's 100 years old,' says the old Scottish golfer. 'In fact he golfed with me this morning, and then we went to the topless beach for a walk and had another wee dram and that's why he's still alive. He's Scottish and he's a golfer, too.'

'Well,' the doctor says, 'that's great, but I'm sure there's more to it than that. How about your Dad's dad? How old was he when he died?'

'Who said my grandad's dead?'

Stunned, the doctor asks, 'You mean you're 80 years old and your grandfather's still living! Incredible, how old is he?'

'He's 118 years old,' says the old Scottish golfer.

The doctor is getting frustrated at this point, 'So, I guess he went golfing with you this morning too?'

'No. Grandad couldnae go this mornin' because he's getting married today.'

At this point the doctor is close to losing it. 'Getting married?? Why would a 118 year- old guy want to get married?'

'Who said he wanted to?'

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## A Redneck Love Poem

Susie Lee done fell in love,  
she planned to marry Joe.  
She was so happy 'bout it all,  
she told her pappy so.

Pappy told her, Susie gal,  
you'll have to find another.  
I'd just as soon yo' ma don't know,  
but Joe is yo' half brother.

So Susie put aside her Joe  
and planned to marry Will.  
But after telling Pappy this,  
he said, 'there's trouble still.'

You can't marry Will, my gal,  
and please don't tell yo' mother.  
But Will and Joe, and several mo'  
I know is yo' half brother.

But Mama knew and said, my child,  
just do what makes yo' happy.

Marry Will or marry Joe;  
you ain't no kin to Pappy.

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