



## SOUTHERN TRIPLES 2020 DAYLESFORD RALLY REPORT

As I am sitting here writing this report 'Virus Mania' has engulfed us all & running the Daylesford Rally either this weekend or next would be close to impossible, or even illegal!! I worried that this might be the case & I hoped that the Rally might be finished before we were severely curtailed. This is exactly as it occurred.

I left Canberra with my A75 in tow on Wed 11 March as I had some more reconnaissance to do before you all arrived on Thursday. I was about to drive off on Thursday Morning to go to Maldon Station when Ian & Carolyn Matthews arrived. Melissa at the Inn was kind enough to book them in early. My task at Maldon was to set up the photo shoot with their steam loco for the Sunday ride. That done I returned to the Central Springs Inn to await everybody arriving.

I should now summarise those who attended & what machine they rode, as this was a most unusual Triples Rally with Rocket 3's predominating. There were six Triumph Tridents entered, but no less than 11 Rocket 3's. There were also three Hinckley machines there too. Several outstanding machines need a mention: first Jerry Rowley who brought a freshly built Rocket MII & faultless in every respect. We had two 'Grey Frame' Rockets owned by Steve (Diesel) Mobbs from SA & Maurie Edwards from Melbourne. Of the Tridents I must mention Tony Eklom & his T160 which he had ridden faultlessly from Queensland. Ron Williams who had restored his T160 in retro style from what had been a rust bucket & Ian Matthews with his lovingly prepared T150. Did any of you notice the unusual feature of Steve Kelly's T160? I am sure you did.

With almost all on board a jolly reunion in the bar was the first business. Everybody knew each other from last year so a relaxed atmosphere existed from the start. I had intended for us to eat together at the Bowling Club next door but they were closed for the evening so instead we ate at the Royal Hotel.

Friday Morning the serious business began: the days ride. Doug Gorie, a local A75 rider had helped me plan the days ride & he had kindly offered to lead. It was a lovely warm day but with a change due to arrive in the early evening with rain. We hoped we would be back by then.

Doug took us first to Mt. Macedon, where we had visited last year. It was very windy up there & the first problem occurred. Attilio from Canberra riding his

T150 was having obscure problems which he investigated whilst we walked to the Memorial Cross. Also Paul Wilcocks was waiting for us on a Triumph America: Too late to join the Rally he came just to meet us all.

After our windy walk we were ready for refreshments at the Top of the Range Tea House. Now revitalised, we rode on with Doug in the lead. Attilio had got his bike going after a fashion & he completed the ride without further fettling. This segment of the ride took us north of Hanging Rock into pleasant country & over Mt Alexander to the village of Harcourt & the General Store Café, owned by a husband & wife team, both BSA Rocket Gold Star owners. It was still warm so we ate outside on the verandah.

After lunch we refuelled & headed to the peak of Mt Alexander. This peak is just a comms' mountain with no real official lookout so we scrambled down some rocks to see the view. That day the air was extremely clear giving us superlative views from both mountains. However we could see shower activity in the distance in advance of the change. The road down the Mt to the south was fast & bendy & obviously well known to Doug who left us for dead on the descent. Doug peeled off for Romsey on the way back so Lorraine led the rest of the ride back to Daylesford. We indeed beat the 'change' & its promised rain however by the time we set off for the Bowling Club for dinner it was perhaps 10C cooler & windy. The rain came after dark but not much of it.

Dinner in the Bowling Club was a fun affair as the Club was very crowded. However the food was very good & everybody enjoyed themselves.

Saturday morning brought a sunny but very cool day. We all rugged up & indeed I put on my winter suit brought for the occasion. I felt sorry for Tony Ekloim our heroic Queenslander who was ill equipped for such weather, I saw him shivering. Attilio fiddled some more with his bike but seemingly every change made it worse & it wouldn't go at all in the morning. Brian Eldred had a flat tyre on his Hinckley so neither he nor Attilio rode that day. Instead they towed a breakdown trailer for us, a luxury we had foregone the previous day! It was not required.

We rode first to lovely Clunes where 'Toe-Cutter' and his evil gang terrorised the town in 'Mad Max': A peaceful coffee stop today however! After our stop we rode west past Talbot to Avoca where half the town seemed to be out playing 'patonk' (Boules). This led us north into flat farming country. I have to admit that I never cease to be surprised at the variety & rapid changes in the Victorian countryside. I love it more each time I visit. This road led us to Maryborough & its lovely, & enormous, railway station, commented on by Mark Twain on a visit to the town.

Here we had a well served lunch in the heritage café & a photo opportunity in front as last year. It was time for fuel as our two 'Grey Frames' have tiny tanks & ranges only matched by Hurricanes in their shortness. Here it all went a bit off the rails: one bike wouldn't start, Bernie Clarke's I recall. With the rest of us at the nearby petrol station those remaining convinced themselves they had been left behind & headed for Maldon with the breakdown vehicle. We never caught up with these fellows who continued their delusion that they were behind us all. We visited the fire tower lookout outside Maldon then came into town. Here Lorraine had a Rocket specific problem. She rolled her A75 backwards a few yards & upon going forward again a ghastly clanking was emitted from the chain guard area. Rod Gorie & other experienced Rocket riders soon diagnosed the problem. A75 chainguards have two ears at the front which have a habit of getting caught by the chain if the bike is wheeled backwards: most A75 owners cut them off. Some roadside metal working was required before the ride back to Daylesford.

Back at Daylesford Lorraine attempted to do a better repair & up to her elbows in grease found that the chainguard could not be removed without first removing the wheel!! Another 'Triumph' of BSA Design!! Jo Fallon helped her & a good enough repair was affected. The grease was removed with the help of Bernie's hand cleaner & Lorraine's frayed nerves recovered. A very jolly time was being had in the Inn's bar & it was difficult to drag them away for the Rally Dinner in the Royal Hotel. At the Royal I had reserved the entire front room to allow us to do our business undisturbed.

We had only three awards to give: the first for the furthest ridden & this went to Tone Eklom who won by many a mile by riding his T160 from Queensland. I recall he did the same last year but was then accompanied by other Queenslanders. The other two Awards were for the most desirable Rocket & Trident (in the eye of the beholder). The Rocket Prize was awarded to Jerry Rowley: the voting was close with Maurie Edwards' lovely Grey Frame MKII coming second, one vote behind. (Due to a TMRA error this award said 'King of the Rally' but so it was!) The Trident award was also close but was awarded to Ron Williams for his retro-style T160. Due to the same error this award said 'President's Choice' but Ron was not concerned. Also a vote behind was runner up Ian Matthews for his lovely T150. We stayed late into the evening at the Royal enjoying good company.

The last day of the Rally dawned & several left us before the ride including Tony, however the majority set off for Maldon Railway Station & the Victorian Goldfield Railway. Upon arrival 2-8-0 J549 was in steam & about to shunt the carriages to the platform. I was told that it was the youngest steam loco ever to run on Victorian Railways, built in 1954 by Vulcan Foundry in Manchester England. When the shunting was complete we rode our bikes into their yard &

lined them up beside the glorious loco belching steam from its cylinders. Wonderful photos were taken & we all became quite excited.

When the train left for Castlemaine we followed it expecting to have to wait some time for it to arrive. But no! We had only been there five minutes before J549 romped into Castlemaine Station. I might mention here that Ron Williams had spent most of his career working on Steam Locos. I was able to take a close look at J549 & considered it a wonderful example of utilitarian design & it would have likely been easier to maintain than a Rocket! At the station most of the Victorians left us before we had lunch at the nearby Railway Hotel. This is a lovely high class pub by the way, which was well known to Steve Kelly.

After lunch those of us remaining rode back to Daylesford & began packing for a morning departure. Seven of us had a delightful dinner at 'Jackies' Asian Restaurant on the Daylesford Main St & those there generously paid for Lorraine's meal in thanks for her effort.

**Lorraine:** On Monday morning I had breakfast alone before bidding our Hosts Melissa & Michael Adamson goodbye. They had been wonderful hosts & the majority of the SA & Vic riders expressed contentment to return to the Inn in Daylesford in 2021. However there may be another venue for 2021: Beechworth. I visited there on the way back to Canberra, just as the awful restrictions were being imposed. Beechworth is a town at least as charming as Daylesford & is surrounded by wonderful mountainous riding country. I have found a most suitable accommodation venue which I will tell you all about once the TMRA Committee approves of the plan.

As I complete this Report, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia & Queensland have closed their borders to those of us in NSW & Victoria & the ACT & presumably to each other: A most unpleasant development. Today all Clubs & pubs, churches & every other social venue have been closed in the ACT. We face a bleak future. The Lord be with us.

Hopefully by this time next year the Corona Virus will be just a very nasty memory.

Lorraine Litster  
TMRA Rally Director  
Monday, 23 March 2020