

THE TMRA SOUTHERN TRIPLES RALLY IN GUNNING 12-14 MARCH 2021

RALLY REPORT

Attendees

Lorraine Litster	T150V
Bill Lewis	A75
Attilio Sciannimanica	T150V
Bernie Clark	Backup
Brian Eldred	Car
Rick Moss	Hinckley T'bird
Tim Tapsell	T160
Peter Wishart (Paki)	Hinckley T'bird
Dave Phillis	T150
Ron Allen	A75
Trevor Fowler	T150V
Steve Cramp	T150
Gerard Rowley	A75 R3
Peter Ellwood	Car
Barry Garner	Hinckley T'bird Sport
Ian Wishart	Hinckley America
Tony Eklom	T160
Ron Williams	T160
Ken Phelps	Norvin
Lindsay Goard	Hinckley T120
Len Skipper	Hinckley Tiger

There were 11 Triples entries to this; the first TMRA event since the Covid Lockdown in March 2020, three of which were BSA Rocket 3's. This was a grand turnout for this small event which had been arranged in short order back in Gunning NSW, where we had held the TMRA Southern Triples Rally in 2016 & 18.

After heavy overnight rain on the Thursday night Friday dawned grey but brighter. By this time however the SA members, Sydney entrants, the Wishart Brothers & heroic Tony Eklom (who was riding from QLD) were already well on the way.

The rain had cleared by the time I arrived in Gunning at 1330 to find others already there. It was a joyous reunion for us all after 12 month of no 'events to attend' & our bikes languishing in the shed. Actually I had busied myself during the lockdown doing an engine & clutch overhaul on my T150V, which now runs like a new one!

Several of us made our way down to lunch at the 'Old Hume Café', the venue for our evening meals both days. By this time it was warm & sunny & some bike cleaning was in order.

Everyone was there save for Trevor & Bernie by dinner time at 7pm. Xania the owner of the Café had set up a lovely long table for us all & served a delicious two course dinner, via the alternate drop method. It was a deeply enjoyable evening, in such fond company, with Xania's staff serving us as if we were in a formal restaurant. Bike talk went on well into the night before we made our way off to bed.

Saturday morning dawned sunny & warm & promised a grand day of riding. As we had done on the previous two Gunning Rallies, we displayed the bikes outside the old bank where the TMRA Committee members judged the best Rocket 3 & Trident.

At 10am we set off for Crookwell, a delightful ride of about 40Km. There we stopped at the Crookwell Hotel where the adjoining café had only just reopened after a long Covid shutdown. They were pleased to see us. After coffee we headed north out of town with Len Skipper the designated ride leader. I had asked Len to do this on his Hinckley Tiger as he could readily set a good pace. After Crookwell I asked Len to increase the pace by 5mph, which he did, resulting in a lovely spread out field of happy riders.

The road from Crookwell to Boorowa through the village of Rugby is very isolated, with almost no traffic but with the most glorious scenery, especially as we crossed the high ground east of Rugby. This really is a great road to ride. The older section around Rugby was seriously potholed but this did not mar our enjoyment at all.

At Boorowa we rode to the Boorowa Hotel, recently featured in Aust Old Bike, where the landlord, who was delighted to see, us gave us a talk about the history of Boorowa as we awaited our lunches. The food is extremely good at this Hotel, if you are ever passing Boorowa at lunchtime.

After lunch & refuelling we headed south towards Binalong another of my favourite villages. Storm cells were brewing up & our stop at the Binalong hotel was ideal to allow us to miss running into them! It was also a delightful stop for a cold drink.

The run from Binalong to Yass is a very well maintained highway with lots of interest. This allowed us to enjoy a fast run with all our Triples running at their sweet spot of 4,500rpm. I shall leave you to work out what speed that was! We passed through Yass & took the old Hume Hwy out of town. After a short boring spell on the new Hume Hwy. we turned off for the Dalton Road, to end our day's riding on a back-road instead of a dual carriageway. We had ridden 150 miles that day & it was beer o'clock. We all agreed that this had been a splendid day's riding. Bernie our backup driver had no business, which I had hoped & expected as we are all competent mechanics & riders.

The 7pm Presentation Dinner at the Old Hume Café was a wonderful affair with Xania offering us the truly delicious dinner. We awarded the Best BSA Rocket 3 prize to Gerry Rowley. This beautiful machine he told us had been built by ex TMRA President, Brian Eldred & now much cherished by him. The Best Trident prize was awarded to Tony Eklom for his T160. Not only was this a beautiful & completely sorted machine, but he had ridden it from Queensland, mostly in the rain. I would have loved to award a special prize to Ken Phelps who had ridden his delightful Norvin from Traralgon in Victoria (his A75 was not running). He built it himself in his early 20s, which I can confirm as I have known Ken for almost that long.

The evening ended in great friendship before we all retired to our rooms with the bikes tucked up in the machinery shed: some talked bikes until midnight.

Sunday was, sadly, a disaster as the Met' office had forecast. Rain swept in and showed no side of abating. So instead we had a companionable & leisurely breakfast as we decided what to do. The Wishart Brothers set off after breakfast confident that they would ride out of the rain, which I am sure they did. The rest of us hung around in the forlorn hope that the rain would pass through & allow the ride Goulburn to continue.

Unfortunately our hopes were indeed forlorn & by the designated departure time the rain seemed even heavier & by common consent we cancelled the ride. Tony Eklom rode off towards Sydney into even heavier rain & Len, Attilio & I rode off together into the steady rain & deep gloom heading for Canberra. I should mention Attilio's T150V which, after much heartache & hard work he has achieved a reliable bike.

I discovered on the way home that my rather elderly winter riding suit & brand new supposedly waterproof gloves were not 'fit for purpose' & I was wet to the skin & very cold when I rode into my driveway. A hot shower & a complete change of clothing sorted me out however. And, as Gerry had predicted, by 3pm the rain had cleared away from Gunning & Goulburn & if we had all still been there, the ride could have gone ahead: Darn it.

I think we all enjoyed ourselves despite the ruined Sunday ride. I am indebted to Xania for cooking & serving our evening meals at the Old Hume Cafe. & I should like to thank Len for being Ride Leader, & Bernie, who had very recently undergone a knee operation, for generously doing backup duties, even though he had no business all weekend!

I hope that in 2022 we can hold the Rally in Beechworth Victoria, which had been my planned venue for this year.

LORRAINE LITSTER for TMRA: 14 March 2021