

Harley Bikers Weekend Away: Saturday 25th – Sunday 26th November, 2017

A biker weekend away was organised to celebrate a newly acquired house of a fellow Chapter member, and the birthdays of two other Chapter members. This is not an official HOG members ride which is why the HOG Group Chapter is not mentioned as a header.

This ride is to visit Chapter member Joe Shaw's new house in Taree on the mid north coast of New South Wales (Taree is 310 km north of Sydney). Joe is a long serving Chapter member and Road Captain. We are also celebrating 2 birthdays these being for Hazza (Harry) who turns 70, and for U-Leak (Victor) who turns 55.

Of course what we are really celebrating is the camaraderie and friendship amongst HOG Chapter members.

Participation had to be limited as we are all staying in Joe's house. Bollard (Dave) did the organising and ride planning and it was decided to meet at Maccas (McDonalds Restaurant) along the M4 at Eastern Creek on Saturday 25th at 6.30 am for a 7 am departure.



Image 1 – Early to arrive are from left, Bollard, Hazza, Jono and Dano (Danny) and myself obviously (taking the photo).



Image 2 – Now we also see Gypo (Rob), second from left and U-Leak (back to camera) arrive. For his own birthday, U-Leak treated himself to a new bike! That's it right there, a brand new white 2018 model Harley-Davidson Road Glide Special. This is U-Leak's 5th Harley so he is very well acquainted with the marque. This will be the Road Glides first trip!



Image 3 – We never get bored checking out each other's bikes! Here Gypo shows us around his recently acquired Harley-Davidson Ultra Limited model.



Image 4 – Also participating today is Fred seen here on his new 2018 model Road King Special, a blacked-out version of the standard Road King. It's Fred's second Harley.



Image 5 – Now we meet Hardy, also on a 2018 model Road King Special which is his 3rd Harley.



Image 6 – We like group photos and in this one, from left is: Dano, U-Leak, Gypo, Bollard, Hazza and Jono, all very well acquainted with each other. In the foreground is U-Leaks new bike.



Image 7 – Bollard, third from right, gives the pre-ride briefing including information on route, stops and ETA (estimated time of arrival at destination).



Image 8 – We depart pretty much on time with weather conditions most favourable. Here Bollard will take the lead.



Image 9 – That’s Fred and Hardy practicing for the synchronized biker Olympics!



Image 10 – We head north from Eastern Creek to Taree basically via the M4, M7, M2 and M1. Some of the connecting roads will be slow and tedious, now typical of Sydney traffic.

So are we having fun yet? Of course we are, we are on our motorcycles!



Image 11 – Red lights don't bother me when I am surrounded by Harleys!



Image 12 – Jono always enjoys getting away with his Chapter buddies.



Image 13 – Our trips are always carefully planned with regular breaks to minimize fatigue. Here we stop at the twin servos (service stations on both sides of the motorway) along the M1 at Ourimbah, 78 kms north of Sydney and 12 km NNE of Gosford. Here you will find Maccas and various other eateries. We head straight for Maccas for a convenient and quick stop.



Image 14 – I go for the chocolate thick shake as I have already had a coffee this morning.



Image 15 – If you are wondering about Hardy’s numberplate 74-NER, it’s to do with his surname, Tanner. The 7 is like a T, and the 4 is like an A, get it? Motorcycles in Australia are limited to only 5 characters which is why there is no double N.

We are now approaching our next stop at Heatherbrae.



Image 16 – Our next stop is at the Heatherbrae's Pie shop in Heatherbrae which is at about the half way point of our journey today. Situated on the Pacific Highway 162 km north of Sydney and 23 km NNW of Newcastle, this pie shop is famous with highway travellers. It has a large carpark area.



Image 17 – Inside the pie shop is done as a federation style bakery with a warm, welcoming atmosphere.



Image 18 – The pie shop cooks and bakes all their products on the premises which include pies, sausage rolls and cakes. Here we see a tantalising array of products.



Image 19 – Still at the pie shop, part of our group enjoying Heatherbrae products. We are not on a schedule and will continue on when good and ready.



Image 20 – Still in the pie shop I quickly visit the men's toilet (female readers go to next image now!). Check this out, the urinal is made from a beer keg modified to suit its new purpose.



Image 21 – And still in the men's toilet, the hand basin uses real beer taps to dispense the water.



Image 22 – Next to Heatherbrae’s pie shop is a servo where we top up our tanks for the final stretch to our destination. As mentioned above, we are now about half way there.



Image 23 – U-Leak is absolutely delighted with his new ride.



Image 24 – Not far to go now but the lead road captain decides on a quick roadside stop to be sure everyone and everything is OK. We pull into a roadside bay and advise Joe by phone of our position and ETA.



Image 25 – Stop, go, I don't care; I'm with my biker buddies!!



Image 26 – Gypo removes a road snake from the roadway. These shredded truck tire bits are very hazardous to motorcycles.



Image 27 – We reach our destination with 360 km on the odometer and Joe is present to guide us onto his front lawn. Wow, check the house out, it's beautiful.



Image 28 – The view from the first floor balcony of the house.

How do you landscape your front lawn with half a million bucks? Park a dozen Harley's on it!!



Image 29 – We waste no time settling in and within minutes the beer is flowing! Seen here from left is Derek, Hazza, Bollard, Hardy, and Fred.



Image 30 – Fellow HOG Chapter members Smiddy and wife Linny also call in briefly as they are visiting nearby at Forster on their motorcycle. Chapter members always like to catch up with each other wherever possible. That's Linny seated at left.



Image 31 – Our host Joe (at right) chats with U-Leak.



Image 32 – Well the lure of the indoor pool on a warm day proved irresistible to some of us, myself included. And what a fabulous pool it is with a spa area to the left and over to the right a room with a toilet and shower, then another room with a sauna. Ahhhh! We’ve come to the right place!



Image 33 – Joe’s garage showing a collection of some of his older bikes.



Image 34 – On a quick guided tour of the house we see one of the kitchens. I reckon we should stay here for a month!



Image 35 – Well everyone is settled in and enjoying beers but someone has to get the food organised and here we see Bollard starting the BBQ. This beef will take a couple of hours to cook and we also have chicken to throw on later.

Well Linny and Smiddy have left meaning we are now without female supervision of us, so we are all free to run amok!!



Image 36 – While the meat is cooking some indulge in a game of snooker on a full size table (the balls are much harder to sink on a full size table).

Here we see Hazza and Bollard at the snooker table.



Image 37 – Gypo lines up a shot on the snooker table.



Image 38 – Gypo doing his best to distract Bollard from playing his shot!



Image 39 – Where better to eat our BBQ dinner then beside our bikes! The weather was perfect for alfresco dining.



Image 40 – The mood is most relaxed and convivial.



Image 41 – Time for a quick group photo.



Image 42 – There were no complaints about dinner, the food was plentiful and delicious.



Image 43 – Good food, good company and motorbikes! Life is good!

We all insist on paying our fare on food and drinks. It tallied out to only \$30 /head for all you can eat and drink for the weekend. Marvellous!



Image 44 – After a good feed we all adjourned to the informal lounge where we discussed politics, the economy, world peace and Nobel Prize winners. Then it was off to bed wherever that suited. Those lounge chairs look comfy enough.



Image 45 – Well I reckon Bollard was the last off to bed last night and the first up this morning. Here he is prancing about near the kitchen where his booming voice may not have been well received by some that early.



Image 46 – Here we see Bollard after he was gently assisted into the pool. OK, OK, he was persuaded to go for a swim! Alright, alright, we chuckled him in!!



Image 47 – Now everyone is awake and we see Knock-Knock enter the dining room. He loves this combination pyjama/sleeping bag thing and never leaves home without it!



Image 48 – The aroma of toast and coffee gets everyone up and it looks like yet another fine day for riding. All is working according to script!



Image 49 – Happy campers all round, breakfast also was delicious and plentiful.



Image 50 – The serving of breakfast ran smoothly as diners were rotated through the dining area.



Image 51 – After breakfast we adjourn to an outside eating area to chat and relax prior to our departure.



Image 52 – Our trusty Iron Steeds await us for the return ride. All the bikes are late model Harleys which performed supremely well on this trip. They cruise effortlessly at the posted speed limits.



Image 53 – Departure is imminent and we gather for our pre-ride briefing and to show our appreciation to Joe for his great hospitality. He was a most generous host.

And we all left feeling a greater level of respect for each other. Under normal circumstances we would never have met as we are a very diverse group of people but the love of motorcycling and the participation in the HOGS Chapter has facilitated our meeting.



Image 54 – Ahhhhh!! The sound of a dozen Harleys idling in the morning! We are ready to go.



Image 55 – As we are all a bit sleep deprived to varying degrees, we decided at the pre-departure briefing to go straight to the nearest Maccas for a caffeine top-up. We are still a long way from home.



Image 56 – Near the half way point we call in again to the Heatherbrae pie shop. It's good to have regular breaks and we also top up our tanks next door at the servo.

I also discover from our tail end Charlie (Knock-Knock) that a Police Highway Patrol vehicle had followed us most of the way from Taree and had also followed us into this carpark and was still observing us. Our responsible riding protocol meant that they had nothing on us and in fact never approached us at all. I reckon they just wished they were part of our group and enjoyed watching us!



Image 57 - We take our last stop on the way home and we are again at the Ourimbah twin-servos where you can find Maccas and various other eateries. From here its downhill all the way! On a Sunday this place is chockers with no parking spaces to be found so we just park along the exit lane adjacent to Maccas.



Image 58 – Here we see the sleep-deprived Bollard topping up his caffeine levels with a Maccas Iced Coffee Frappe. We kept a close eye on each other on the way home and all performed well.

So I hear you ask: did we really discuss politics, the economy, world peace and Nobel Prize winners, or did we just run amok being without the usual female supervision? This story may or may not reflect the facts as they actually occurred. If you really want to know what happens on these fantastic biker weekends away, come along to the next one but you will then be sworn to secrecy!

As they say, “What happens on tour stays on tour”!!