

HOG Ride – Sunday 26 March, 2017

Annual Midnight to Dawn ride

This ride will take us along Sydney's coastline firstly to the south and then northwards back through Sydney and then towards the northern beaches before returning to Kurnell back on the south side of Sydney for sunrise and brekkie.

This is a patched ride meaning those who attended will receive a cloth patch to sew onto their vest to celebrate the ride. This is a typical biker thing to do.

This newsletter contains images taken on the day of the ride as well as downloaded images, mostly from Wikipedia and Google Images.



Image 1 – We meet at a McDonalds restaurant in Five Dock from 11 pm and watch the numbers grow. Today about 20 bikes will take part with a couple of additional pillion passengers.



Image 2

Image 2 – Our complimentary story this time is on musician, singer-songwriter and composer Billy Joel. The above image shows Joel in 2009.

Born William Martin Joel on May 9, 1949 and known professionally as Billy Joel, he is a well-known American singer-songwriter and pianist. What is lesser known about Billy are his extra-curricular interests, particularly his love of motorcycles.



Image 3 – In November 2010, Joel opened a shop in Oyster Bay, Long Island, to house and exhibit his customised, retro-styled motorcycles. This motorcycle gallery named “20th Century Cycles” is basically a place to exhibit his current motorcycle collection which is open to the public.

The full address is 101 Audrey Avenue, Oyster Bay, NY, 11771. The shop is open on weekends from 10 am to 4 pm and admission is free.



Image 4 – Before the ride is always a good time to acquaint myself with new faces and introduce them to you. This time we meet Peter, pictured here in front of his Ultra model.



Image 5 – Joel's motorcycle gallery on Audrey Avenue transformed a decaying storefront to a gleaming showroom with the characteristics of a clubhouse/art gallery.



Image 6 – Departure time is looming and the road captains gather for their ride briefing. A ride is put together at the suggestion of a road captain who would have thoroughly researched the route and proposed it to the group.



Image 7 – Joel needed a permanent space that could house his motorcycle collection and a place to share his endless fascination with the motorcycle as machine, artefact, and lifestyle.



Image 8 – Just enough time to introduce another member before the ride. Seen here is U-Leak (Victor) in front of his Switchback model. U-Leak also has another Harley in his garage, a Road Glide model.

Road name derivation: Well this time it's a combination of events that resulted in this road name. Firstly the "U" because of a remarkable U-turn he performed whilst undertaking advanced rider training (it was very wide!), and secondly because he fixed a tyre leak on another members bike! Quite logical really!!



Image 9 – Joel's collection of over 90 bikes lined up in neat rows, includes all the top marques such as Harley-Davidson, Triumph, Moto Guzzi, BSA, Royal Enfield, Ducati, BMW, Honda Yamaha and others. They are all beautifully presented and are all registered and ready to ride.



Image 10 – We finally head out for a ride after so many previously scheduled rides were cancelled due to unfavourable and extreme weather. Even tonight's ride was in question with heavy rain the whole week leading up to tonight. As it turns out, the weather for the ride was fine with minimum overnight temperatures only dropping to about 18 degrees.

Opposite McDonalds is a Shell servo (service station) where we can fuel up for the ride. It's preferable to commence the ride with a full tank and an empty bladder!



Image 11 – 20th Century Cycles is the culmination of Joel's love of motorcycles and his passion for motorcycle design. In his opinion, he believes that vintage motorcycles look better, and is aware that modern motorcycles tend to work better so why not combine the two. Thus all of the bikes in his collection have been transformed in one way or other combining modern mechanicals with retro styling.



Image 12 – We arrive at our first destination at 1.30 am (Daylight Saving Time) in Cronulla, a beachside suburb south of Sydney. As we park our bikes in the carpark we noticed the possums had come down in their trees to check out our bikes.



Image 13 – Joel's shop was born out of necessity, a place to store and service his collection and a place to share his passion with the public.



Image 14 – We head for the Ice Creamery opposite the carpark for refreshments.



Image 15 – 20th Century Cycles does not sell or maintain bikes outside of the collection nor do they sell parts or accessories. However, it is a place to share with the motorcycling community. Here we see a local biker club visiting the gallery. Joel hopes his gallery will become a focus point for the many bikers of Long Island who ride about aimlessly on the weekends.



Image 16 – In the Ice Cream shop at Cronulla. Everybody loves ice cream and bikers are no exception.



Image 17 – Joel loves to turn modern motorcycles into retro looking customs. His official slogan is “A modern ride with classic pride” but the joke motto is “new scoots for old coots”!

His gallery is a cool hang, with cool bikes, a place to ride to, and a place to see and talk bikes.



Image 18 – The shop staff happily takes photos for us with our cameras/devices and partake in our boisterous festivity. We are a lovable lot!



Image 19 – This is actually a 2005 Harley-Davidson Springer Classic made to look like a 1940's Harley-Davidson Knucklehead. Joel adds, "I wanted this bike to be so perfect, so detailed, that it would fool an old-timer".

Joel continues to build one-of-a-kind, non-production motorcycles using bikes from the United States, Japan, Italy, Germany and Britain. He states "of course I love to ride, but I also enjoy tinkering, customising a machine, making something that used to be old new again. For me, as an artist, it's another means of creative expression".



Image 20 – Here's a chance to introduce another HOG member. We've met Bones (Mick) previously and here he is seen with his daughter Little Bec (Rebecca). Little Bec might look like she just left school but in fact has recently completed her law studies. We hope to see her going to the office on her very own Harley soon!

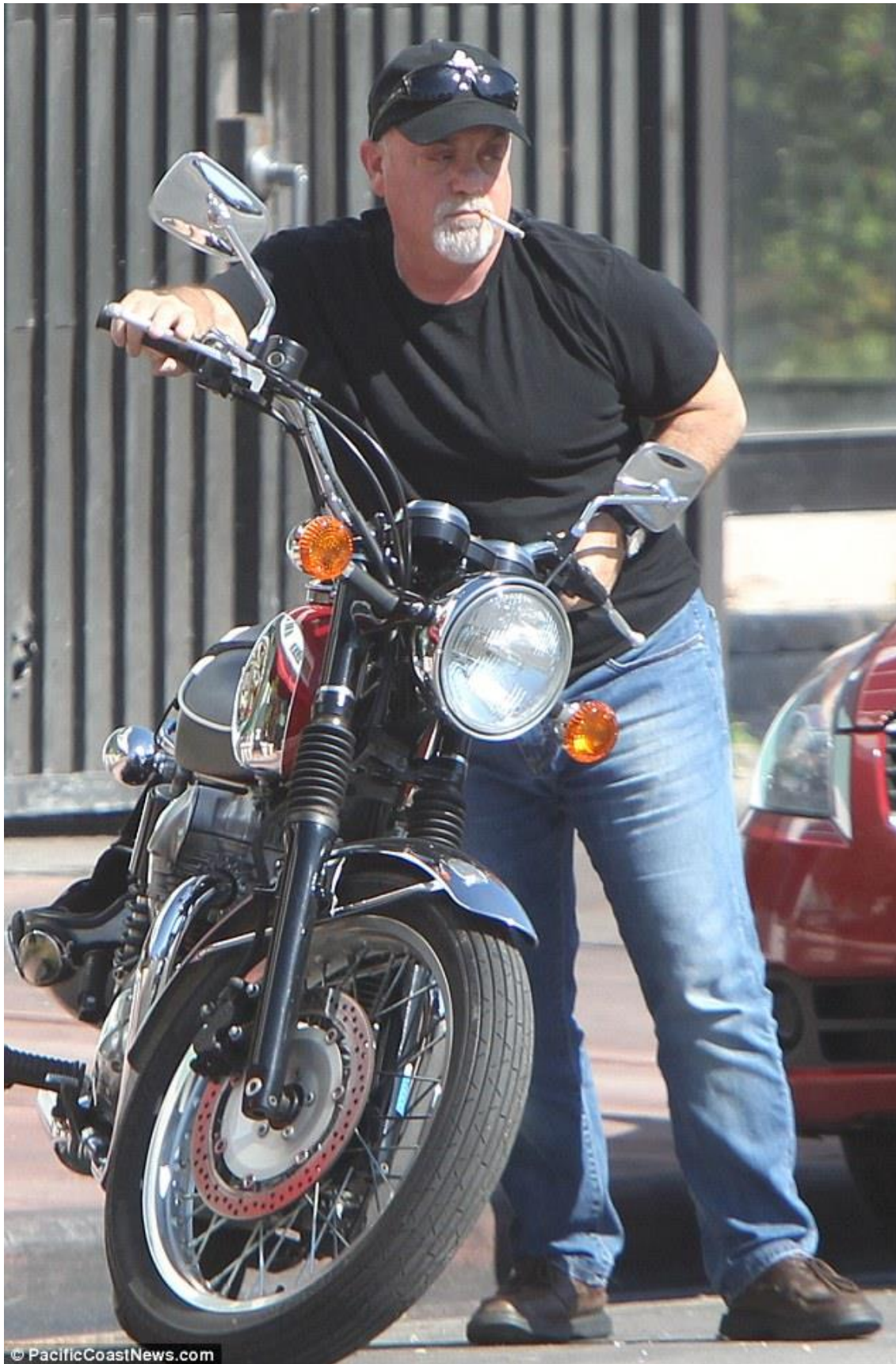


Image 21 – Make no mistake, the Piano Man is a true motorcycle enthusiast and has been into motorcycles since he was a kid. Billy picked up his first bike, a Triumph Tiger, when he was about 16.



Image 22 – It's now 3 am and we arrive at our second stop in Woolloomooloo for a snack at "Harry's Café de Wheels". We need to keep our energy levels up for the all night ride.

Here we see some of our bikes, all very well loved and looked after. Nobody ever breaks down due to mechanical failure on our rides!

Prior to arriving here we travelled through Brighton-le-sands, past the airport and eventually going through Bondi, North Bondi, Rose Bay, Double Bay, Kings Cross, and here to Woolloomooloo. The bit from North Bondi to Double Bay with all the twisty bits was particularly pleasurable and especially so without the usual traffic.



Image 23 – Joel also has a 2007 Harley-Davidson Road King that's been retrofitted to look like Elvis Presley's 1955 Harley-Davidson Panhead.



Image 24 – Now we introduce Hammer (Don) next to his CVO Ultra model (CVO for “Custom Vehicle Operations”, a tricked-up version of a Harley ex-factory). Hammer is also a Road Captain.

Road name derivation: Don is a carpenter so quite logical really, now you get it!



Image 25 - Joel's collection also includes special interest bikes such as the lead Police Moto Guzzi used at Grace Kelly's wedding in 1956 where she married Prince Rainier III of Monaco (not shown in above image).



Image 26 – Handbag (Mick), Chop (Wayne), and Tom look at the Harry's menu before making a selection. On offer are a huge range of pies, hot dogs and drinks.

The surrounding streets are whisper quiet even on a Saturday night so close to Kings Cross.



Image 27 – Joel believes the 40's to the 60's to be the golden era of motorcycles and takes many design cues from this period. He describes his custom bikes as being "faux-old"!



Image 28 – Next to Harry's is a wide footpath where we gather to eat, drink and be merry. In the background is part of Sydney Harbour with prestige apartments to one side and the Navy dockyards close by.



Image 29 – Joel: Sometimes on a nice day when I leave the shop door open, people will just walk in and ask “Is this a museum?” or “Are these motorcycles for sale?” and I’ll just say “Nope, this is my home”!



Image 30 – Lets present siblings Gypo (Rob), Susie and Bear (Chris). All siblings should get on like this trio! Gypo is riding a Fatboy, Bear a Deluxe and today Susie is pillion. Both Gypo and Bear are also HOG Road Captains while Susie is still feeling her way into the biker culture.



Image 31 – Joel, a secular Jew and an atheist, has been married 4 times.

After seeing the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show, Joel decided to pursue a career in music. In an interview he said of the group's impact, "that one performance changed my life.....up to that point I'd never considered playing rock as a career".



Image 32 – Meet HOG couple Chop (Wayne) with wife Vicky. We are always kept guessing which bike these two will arrive in as they have a garage full of Harleys! Today Chop is on his 2011 Ultra model and Vicki is on her favourite Deluxe model. I think this pair attends practically every HOG event and recently returned from a HOG Tasmania tour.



Image 33 – Joel: “I pinch myself every time I go on stage, and it’s funny, I feel the same way about my motorcycles; I still can’t believe I’ve collected this many bikes and get to keep them”.



Image 34 – Before leaving Harry’s we take another quick group photo but not everybody is in it.

We now are headed north across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, making our way to Sydney’s northern beaches.



Image 35 – Joel at far right on an Indian motorcycle.



Image 36 – Not far from Harry's we make a turn towards the Sydney Harbour Bridge. There is no traffic about but we still have to stop at the red light!



Image 37 – Joel with 3 of his beloved custom motorcycles.



Image 38 – Now 4 am. On our way to the northern beaches we stop at a servo for the splash and dash (toilet stop). The solitary station attendant is most obliging and we are also thankful as there were no facilities back at Harry's. Perhaps the Lord Mayer of Sydney could look into this lack of public facilities at Woolloomooloo!!

We spend about 30 minutes here giving everyone plenty of time to freshen up.



Image 39 – Joel with one of his pugs, Sabrina.



Image 40 – Before heading off again lets meet another HOG member, this time it's Tom next to his 2013 Road King model, his second Harley.



Image 41 – In August 1987, Joel did a live tour of the Soviet Union becoming one of the first American rock acts to play there since the Berlin Wall went up. These concerts were simulcast on radio around the world becoming the first live rock radio broadcast in Soviet history.



Image 42 – Our ride to the northern beaches ends at Avalon by which time we got to enjoy the many sweeping bends to get there. This roadway to the northern beaches is bumper to bumper traffic during normal hours. How sweet it is at 5 am on a Sunday morning!

We now stop at a 24 hour servo at Narrabeen on our way back to Sydney for more refreshments and a short break before going to our final destination for the ride, Kurnell for sunrise and brekkie.



Image 43 – Joel doesn't just collect bikes but rides every one of them. He keeps his staff guessing as to which bike he will ride so they all need to be ready and available at all times.



Image 44 – While at the servo we catch up with members familiar and unfamiliar.

This time let's introduce G-Force (Glenn) next to his 2014 Street Bob Special, his first Harley.

Road name derivation: Glenn couldn't stop talking about the G-Forces he experienced while doing an advanced rider course.



Image 45 – Joel with an Indian motorcycle.

Beginning in 1994, Joel toured extensively with Elton John on a series of “Face to Face” tours, making them the longest running and most successful concert tandem in pop music history. They grossed over US\$46 million in just 24 dates in their sold out 2003 tour.



Image 46 – Having a chat at the servo is G-Force (Glenn), Peter and Wendy all having arrived on their individual Harleys.



Image 47 – As Joel puts it, these motorcycles combine the reliability and performance of a new bike but with a great classic look, “a modern ride with classic pride”.



Image 48 – Hey, this beats lying in bed on a Sunday morning!

We depart the servo at 5.30 am for our ride back through Sydney and on to Kurnell.



Image 49 – Billy Joel and New York Governor Cuomo lead the 9/11 Memorial Motorcycle Ride in New York on September 11, 2015.



Image 50 – On the ride from Narrabeen to Kurnell we encountered many bicycle groups heading out for their Sunday morning ride, doing their thing.

Before approaching Kurnell we regroup so as to complete the ride together. It's impossible for the group not to be split up when travelling through countless sets of traffic lights. Also, travelling right across Sydney as we did tonight makes you realise how Sydney roads are now infested with speed and red light cameras. We do our best to help each other out by pointing to the camera as we approach so that anyone following is aware, and they in turn will point it out to the following rider.



Image 51 – Another image of Joel with the New York Governor. Joel is on a Harley-Davidson Sportster.



Image 52 – We arrive at Kurnell at about 6.30 am and as you can see from the photo it's very close to sunrise. It's a good feeling to reach your destination with your ride buddies. Total distance travelled tonight was 210 kms. We then realise that Wendy (seen above at Image 46) is not with us. As it turned out, she became separated from the group at a set of lights near Neutral Bay and then got into the wrong lane approaching the Sydney Harbour Bridge. That meant she had to cross the bridge instead of going through the harbour tunnel because you can't change lanes past a certain point on the harbour bridge approaches. Our tail end Charlie couldn't help in this instance as Wendy was committed to the bridge crossing. This is probably the only possible scenario where one could be separated from the group on our HOG rides. Little comfort to Wendy as she was devastated in missing out on the end point of the ride.



Image 53 – Here we see Joel with Rick Dale from the TV series “American Restoration” after Rick completed some work on this bike, a 1967 BSA Royal Star.



Image 54 – Here is an opportunity to introduce another HOG member Radar (Rob) with partner Courtney. Also seen in this image is Radar's 2014 Street Glide, his second Harley. Radar has been with the chapter for 6 years and is also a Road Captain.



Image 55 – Here we see Joel flexing his muscles before getting on his Vespa scooter after enjoying lunch with friends in Los Angeles.



Image 56 – Well we saw the sunrise and now for some brekkie at the nearby café, the Endeavour café.



Image 57 – Joel in his early years as an entertainer.

Since releasing his first hit song “Piano Man” in 1973, Joel has become the 6th best-selling recording artist and the 3rd best-selling solo artist in the United States. His compilation album Greatest Hits Vol. 1 & 2 is one of the best-selling albums in the US.



Image 58 – Our group in front of the café with its manager Helen at front. Again, café staff were happy to partake in our boisterous festivities and take happy snaps for us.

I have to say this was a great experience, and not just for the fact that you get to rampage your way through Sydney streets with very little traffic, a very rare experience indeed!

By 8 am when we all went our separate ways I began to feel the effects of sleep deprivation so it was straight home for a rest before enjoying the rest of a lovely sunny Sunday.

(more images follow!)



Image 59 – A more recent image of Joel performing at the Madison Square Garden.

Joel had top 40 hits in the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's, achieving 33 Top 40 hits in the US, all of which he wrote himself. He is also a 6-time Grammy Award winner who has been nominated for 23 Grammy Awards. He has sold more than 150 million records worldwide, making him one of the best-selling artists of all time.