

## Dave and Morris's Flinders Ranges Adventure

A few weeks ago Morris and I thought that it was about time to go on another road trip. Morris wanted to return to the Flinders Ranges / Wilpena Pound again and I thought of the nice open roads, so that was it. Whilst we were up that way I wanted to do the steam train through Pitchi Ritchi Pass. The steam train finishes running each year in late October so the weekend was decided and we going to head off Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> October, ride the railway on the Sunday and then continue onwards into the Flinders Ranges after that.

Saturday morning came and I was awake early, excited to be heading off for a few days of riding and relaxation. When I got to Morris's house, he was already packed, excited and waiting for me so we headed off on a warm but beautiful day towards the Flinders.

We travelled North, bypassing Gawler and heading towards Clare and our first fuel stop. Just before Clare we were cruising nicely and all of a sudden there was a swarm of bees. No choice but to head through it. Felt like we were going through a hailstorm with lots of little thunks. I was very pleased that I had my visor down so none got into my helmet, so was Morris. Neither of us got stung but our bikes and helmets were a buggy mess. Cleaning job at Clare was a must. Once we got to Clare it was still too early for lunch so Morris suggested that we visit Stone Hut for a gourmet pie and a proper rest, so with full fuel tanks we resumed our journey. Stone Hut came soon and we had a good break there. No decent pies left, so I had a Cornish pasty and Morris had a spicy pie.

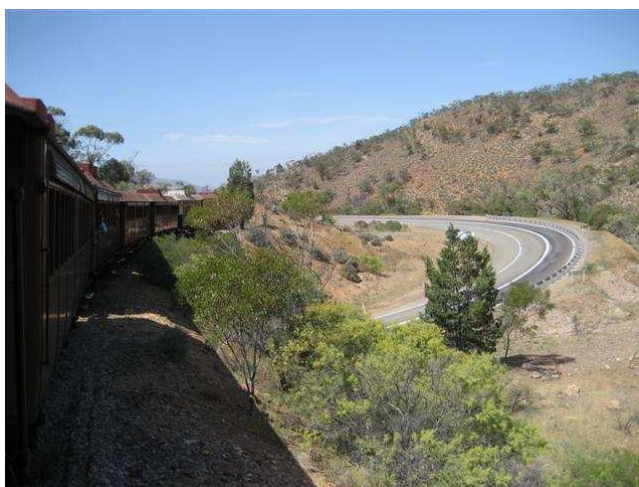


After lunch we geared up and continued our journey to Quorn. We got to Quorn at a good hour and checked into the Austral Hotel. Lovely old pub, hospitality was fantastic. We asked if we could leave our gear somewhere the following morning as we did not want it all on the bikes whilst we were riding the Steam Train and the publican said that as the room wasn't booked out for Sunday night, we could leave it all in there until we got back. That was great as it would give us a chance to change into our riding gear and pack properly. Tea at the Austral Hotel was incredible and after a few beers we headed back to our room for a well deserved rest. In the morning we could help ourselves to breakfast (cereal, toast and a hot drink) in the dining area, all included in the room price. I would thoroughly recommend the Austral Hotel in Quorn to anyone heading up to the Flinders Ranges. Good price, great food and exceptional hospitality. What more could you want.

After a good night's sleep and breakfast we headed over the road to the Pitchi Ritchi Railway's Quorn Station. It's an old steam train and one of the few remaining in service in Australia. At 10:30 am the whistle blew and we were off on our steam train trip.

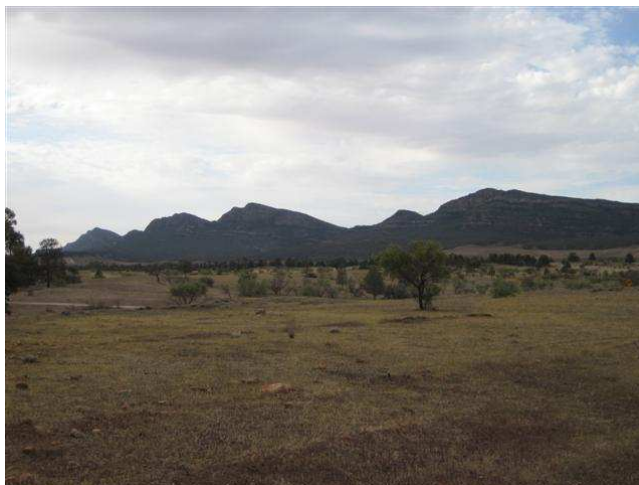


The county side was spectacular, the train not so fast but in our 1<sup>st</sup> Class Cabin we were happy, comfortable and taking lots of photos out of the windows. The train snaked its way through the pass giving us glimpses of the road that leads from Quorn to Port Augusta. Morris was drooling over this road and even though it was the opposite direction to where we were supposed to head (Hawker) we decided that we would have to ride it at least as far as Woolshed Flat, which was where the train turned around.



It was a very enjoyable train trip taking about 2 hours to return to Quorn. Once we were back we changed into our riding gear, packed the bikes and said a big thankyou to the hotel for their great hospitality. Then it was off to the lovely twisty road of the Pitchi Ritchi Pass. After about 20kms of lovely sweepers and a few tighter bends, we turned around, to do it all again on the way back and then continued through Quorn and onwards to Hawker. Lunch was had in Hawker and then Rawnsley Park was our next stop where we had a cabin booked for the night. It was only a short ride that day but the Flinders Ranges Scenery more than made up for it.

From our cabin we could see some of the Ranges but a short walk up a hill opposite our cabin and the outside of Wilpena Pound was there in all its glory. More photo opportunities, so the camera was keeping busy. A big grey kangaroo hopped past our cabin late afternoon and we were glad it happened there and not hopping across the road in front of us when we were riding. We had seen a few dead roos on the way, but luckily no live ones jumping out in front of us.



We had to cook our own tea that night as the Restaurant at Rawnsley Park was booked out. I cooked as Morris was having a break from his kitchen duties. Yes, it was edible!

After another good sleep it was time to head to the Pound itself. Morris had been wanting a aerial picture poster of the Pound since our last visit so he finally had the opportunity to get it. Luckily it came in a tube so he could safely get it back to Adelaide. The road is slowly being bituminised north of the pound now and is about 1/3 the way to Blinman. Once it is done all the way to Blinman I feel another Flinders road trip coming on.

On the way back towards Hawker we stopped at the same place as last time to get some pictures. Rawnsley Lookout. I don't think there is anywhere better to get some great shots of the scenery, and the bikes of course.



Photo time over, we were back riding again and heading down towards Peterborough where we had lunch and bumped into a few guys riding from New South Wales over to Perth. A bit far for my liking but they seemed to be having a good time. They weren't very talkative so we soon parted company.

Once lunch was over we headed towards Burra where our on-site caravan was waiting for us in the Burra Caravan Park. Tea was at the Burra Hotel, great meal as all our country meals seemed to be and then a well deserved rest and sleep that night.

Tuesday morning and the trip was almost over. Under 200kms and we would be home. Did that in a few hours and stopped off at GC Motorcycles on the way to get a new rear tyre. The original on the bike had not even lasted 4500km. GC did a great job as usual and I was home soon after with plenty of time to clean the bike as it was filthy.



In summary, great trip, awesome scenery and countryside. Country hospitality was excellent, everyone being friendly and some going out of there way to help us even more and make sure our trip thoroughly enjoyable. No incidents, no breakdowns, just a great time riding with a mate through some of the best countryside that has to be seen to be believed. Fuel economy averaged out to around 5.4 litres/100kms or 52 mpg. Not bad for 1100cc and 1250cc bikes.

I will enthusiastically look forward to our next road trip.

Pictures of the trip are online in the SABERS gallery at [http://www.sabers.com.au/gallery/gallery2/main.php?g2\\_itemId=55337](http://www.sabers.com.au/gallery/gallery2/main.php?g2_itemId=55337)

David

