

PHILLIP ISLAND 2008



The day finally arrived for us to be heading off for the island. I was up way too early as usual and felt excited and sad at the same time. I would miss the fact that Bryan wouldn't be with us this year but was sure he would be with us in spirit.

I had all my gear packed already and loaded on the bike so all I could do was sit and wait drinking way to many coffees until it was time to go meet the others who were coming to the island.

I arrived at the servo early and started going through the motions of fuelling up and checking tyre pressures when Steve rolled up. We did the same checks on his bike then sat back chatting while we waited for Denys, Alli & Paul to arrive. Denys was next to arrive and then came Alli. Paul unfortunately had gotten ill and rang me to say he wasn't going to make it, this was a shame as I knew how much he was looking forward to it.

Soon it was time to go and we geared up and headed up the freeway following the hundreds of bikes that had already gone past us and waving while we waited at the servo. First stop was Taillem Bend where we grabbed a bite to eat and said hi to some of the other riders heading to the island. Steve & Anne Marie were among some of the riders we knew heading over.

The ride through to Ballarat was uneventful apart from meeting yet more riders along the way and sharing their mutual excitement at what the weekend held in store. Oh and Alli swapped bikes with Stephen at Keith, looked funny to see Steve wringing the neck on Alli's 600 as Alli took off into the distance on the Kwaka1400 ☺.

We stayed overnight at the Big 4 Windmill Caravan Park again this year and as usual were greeted warmly by the lovely people that run this park. We had an awesome cabin ready for us upon arrival and they even rang ahead to book us in for dinner as they knew it would get busy and didn't want us to miss out. How good is that? This park is beautiful and the accommodation excellent, I enjoy staying there each time we head to the island.

We dropped our gear off the bikes and headed off for a feed in Ballarat then grabbed a couple of beverages from the drive through to take back to camp. During our conversations (over a

drink or 3) it was mentioned that last year the campground had filled very quickly, particularly along the fence line which is prime real estate for camp spots. I suggested that we get away as early as possible to get to the island soon after the gates opened and all agreed this was a good idea. We were all tired but still filled with nervous excitement about getting to the island so it was getting late by the time we headed off to bed. We got away on time as planned but the Melbourne traffic was shocking and slowed us down quite a bit.

The ticketing was excellent this year as they sent the wrist bands with the tickets so we could just roll straight on through to the trackside camp. We got to the campsite early but most of the Prime spots were already taken. After patrolling up and down a few times Steve found a spot we could squeeze into (just) but we would have no room for a fire or to park the bikes. We decided to poach some space the other side of the roadway for our bikes as no one had set up camp there yet so this solved one problem. We were just settling in when the people camped next to us came back from town and weren't too pleased that we had set up camp where they had planned to park their bikes. We had a bit of chat and suggested they park over where our bikes were which is eventually what they did so all was ok. Someone in our camp then suggested we move 2 of our tents over near the bikes to ease congestion and make room for a camp fire. This sounded like a great idea so we pulled the tent pegs from the corners of Alli & Denys tents then picked them up, carried them across the road and re pegged them. Easy way to move house at the island ☺.

After moving tents and finally deciding this was how it would stay, it was off to Cowes to get some coke, etc for the day/night ☺. Loaded up with ice and essentials we came back to camp, loaded the esky, built a fire and settled in. During the settling in we got chatting with our neighbours (the guys whose bike parks we pinched) and became good mates over the next few days. Our neighbours were Jeff, Wayne & Steve. Jeff and Wayne come from Mildura and Steve is from Queensland. We all had a ball over the few days we were at the island and even shared the one campfire as it seemed silly having 2 fires when we all gathered around one usually.



Wayne, Steve & Jeff (our neighbours)

Alli:



Well we were all asked to write a few lines so I put pen to paper but nothing legible came out at first, just all these words and images flying around in my head. But eventually I got going and then couldn't stop. A bit like the weekend actually! All these thoughts and images at first, but eventually, lots of talking sensibly, drinking, (responsibly!) then laughing and talking crap, eating crap, sleeping, more sleeping, watching, perving (on bikes AND bods) oh, and of course, racing!!!! So bugger the few lines, here's a novel of how I saw it.

Accommodation

Well our accommodation was great, 4 unique and individual Condo's with sea views – Allis` Taj Mahal complete with veranda, backdoor and sun room out the back; Grant's 100 man tent (I could be exaggerating a wee bit) BUT including shade house, water catchment area, sun deck and bottomless fridge; Steve's shoe box (no exaggeration) with its own foot compartment (he put his feet away in there every night.... REALLY!) and hills hoist, and Denys' all weather RED convertible with DOUBLE airbed (greedy!) converting to a li-lo as needed, and enough water in there to grow a vegi patch using hydroponics. Oh, and one hospital tent, housing the poor unfortunate and infirmed flu bearer, the elusive Paul.

Food and Drink

The nearest alco outlet (apart from the bottomless fridge) was about 60 seconds away. Took AGES to get there at times. Food was a bit further away, consequently we often didn't make it that far.....

Surrounds

The grounds were immaculate – sea and track views, hot water, free iced coffee each morning, firewood each day, little open fire places dug out at each camp (thanks guys) although some kind of 'grew' over the weekend, into 44 gallon drums on top of 44 gallon drums, washing machine tubs, a couple of grand canyons and the pretty ones in the sky – oh yeah, that was the .. umm... fireworks and flares!!! I think a few cannons or bombs were out there too. Smelling the fresh sea air on arrival was something I'll never forget, followed by the lingering smell of burning fires in my clothes, hair and phone... to this day.

'The Neighbours'

The neighbours were terrific! Jeff and Wayne from Mildura, and Steve from Rockhampton. They're a story in themselves, but in summary, Jeff (Jethro) must have been a boy scout in his

former life, he had it all, including a portable bath! Steve from Rocky was no newcomer either, travelling with his solar panel! (apparently it packs neatly into his gearsack), uses it to charge up the phone and camera etc (probably the shaver and toothbrush too!). (Capitalists the pair of them!). And Wayne – well he was a real trooper too, got around all weekend in his shorts (including when it was FREEZING and raining Friday night. A great bunch of lads and I couldn't have asked for a better group to camp with over that weekend.

Entertainment:

Brocky the green gecko – seemed to go everywhere Steve went and was always popping out from behind his clothing somewhere (I think Brocky could be gay).

Jethro the neighbour – becomes a mad screaming arm thrashing LOONEY whenever fireworks go off, he just can't get enough of them.

My personal Man Bags and Toy Boys – although they were quite lazy and wouldn't tend to my every need.

Squibs on toy dirt bikes daring to tackle the 'hill'.

Feeding Steve's Glands (he has many apparently)

Hearing Denys pine over missing his kids and the wife (um hello??).

Hearing Denys' Trumpi pine (or rather – object most profusely with a humungous backfire) over being starved of air from SLOPPY fuel filling. Not sure that was entertainment, but it sure was a heart starter!!

Talking Grant into going halves with a carton of Woodstock (well we only had 1 bottle of Bundy and 1 Vodka left by then!!) and finding out after that it cost us \$120, not \$60 as I thought when I was talking him into it (oops! And hee hee!)

Watching the boys collapse with laughter.

Downer

Having to say hello and goodbye to Paul in the same breath because he'd managed to haul his sick arse over to the island, was comatosed for a day and finally emerged from his 'hospital tent' to announce he was staggering home and taking his sick germs with him. He must have been REALLY sick 'cos we couldn't even lure him to stay with the very medicinal properties of spirits.

Waving Pete off at the Mount Gambier turnoff (oh, the power of FAMILY can be too strong sometimes), and not catching him again until the trip home (although I did sleep a lot, could I have missed something??).

So I reckon we just should do it ALL OVER AGAIN so Paul and Pete can be in the story a lot more next time. ☺

Strangest Phrase

"I have to go before I disappear up myself" – author will remain anonymous but it wasn't me (and it was very cold at the time)!

Bestest moment

Apart from the whole weekend, I'd have to say riding the ZX14!! Thankyou, thankyou, thankyou. Now I will no longer bag Kwakas as much as I used to.....and maybe never again..... (we thought Alli wasn't going to come back, never seen someone have so much fun with their pants on, lol [Grant])

I couldn't have wished for a better bunch of folks to travel with. They were all gentlemen as much as I was a lady (And I was!). I am so glad I went and recommend anyone who's thinking about going next year, don't think, DO!

A big thanks to Grant for making it all happen and to the boys for looking out for me and for each other. Xxx

Denys:



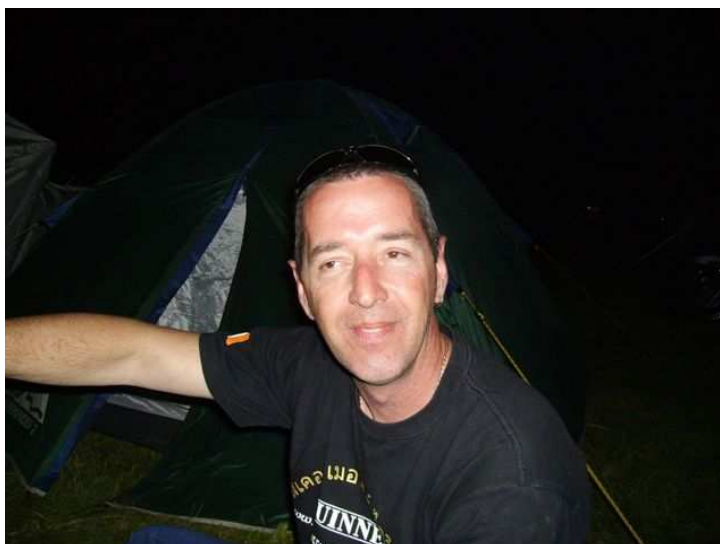
Trackside Campground Shanagans

It was hard to gauge whether some visitors to Phillip Island were there because of the fast and furious action on the track, or the shanagans of the campground after sun-set! In fact for most I think it was just a chance to get away for a few days on our bikes and rough it with friends. When talking to others who'd been to the island, they suggested I take an open mind, a new liver and don't expect much sleep – well that pretty much summed it up! A liberal approach was taken to smuggling in our favourite poison, unless you wanted to pay \$8 for a can of Woodstock. It was fortunate that on Friday morning the Big M ute was driving around despatching free Ice Coffee (it wasn't as good as the SA stuff!), and for some of us the plastic milk bottle became the ideal drinking vessel to disguise our favourite mixed drink...

It seemed that each day the campground filled up a little more and each night definitely got more entertaining! You had to admire the trackside campground veterans with their large tents, lounge chairs, 44 drum fire places, viewing platform, large projector screen, satellite TV and even a pool table. Various extras included a mono bicycle (which was pretty entertaining on the damp grass and mud tracks!), and check this, one group had brought along a 3 seater lounge mounted on a ride-on lawn mower complete with coffee table and reading lamp. This same group also had a dedicated burnout bike with 7 new nobbly rear tires for the weekend – the only problem was the gearbox broke the first night, bugger! At night, apart from the occasional burnout, the odd high revving (and valve bouncing) screams of bike engines, flying embers from the over zealous building of camp fires and colourful flares (being held by a pillion being ridden around the campground on a mini-bike); the thing that got everyone's attention was the amazing fireworks and big bangs. We thought it must have been New Year's Eve. The poor officials had no way of telling where or when the next fireworks display would be launched, and I'd suggest wouldn't have dared shut them down for fear of a campground revolt. The biggest display was saved for Sunday night and was only topped by an explosion that shook the ground – the biggest bang I'd ever heard, even bigger than Stoner's Ducati backfiring at the end of the straight as he hopped off the gas at 324km/h! It was all a lot of fun and hugely entertaining.

Denys Hornabrook

Stephen;



Now that I've recovered a few brain cells, I can put together a few words that make sense, without slurring, and start my de-tox.

After arriving early on Thursday and pinching the last piece of hallowed camping ground available along the fence-line, we found out later that we'd just set up camp in our neighbours bike park. A nod, a wink, and a couple of sly drinks had us accepted as standing our ground, and becoming good mates (or partners in crime) with our neighbours. What a bunch they turned out to be! One was a die hard Trumpy rider, another was an ex military drinking champion with a sad affliction of being a one eyed Honda rider (he he). While these blokes turned out to be a great catalyst for some serious misdemeanour, the funniest by far was a little dude named Jeff (alias: Mr Gadget). We were constantly astounded by his vast array of general camping equipment, and his dedication to cooking up assorted 3 course meals in his mess kit. While totally harmless, we all had to laugh along with his child-like antics whenever fireworks were let off. His vocal elations and fist pumping were often accompanied by apologies to other campers, and promises to keep him on a shorter leash.

Although I kept a very low profile all weekend, Grant, Denys and Alli were usually attempting to undermine my self control by ensuring that vast quantities of Bundy were poured down my reluctant throat. The bar by which we were all measured was set high, very early in the weekend. What could I say, I didn't want them to think that I was a MotoGP virgin, AND a snob. I could only do my best to keep up.

My little mascot "Brocky the gecko" managed to appear in most of the pictures taken, and seemed to have all the answers for making out with the scantily clothed ladies. While not accompanying me to the races, he was usually seen snatching kisses, and vice versa. Can I say that? Well that's what he did!

To state the obvious, a couple of drinks were consumed by all on the weekend. I believe there was also a motorcycle race on at the same time, according to some.

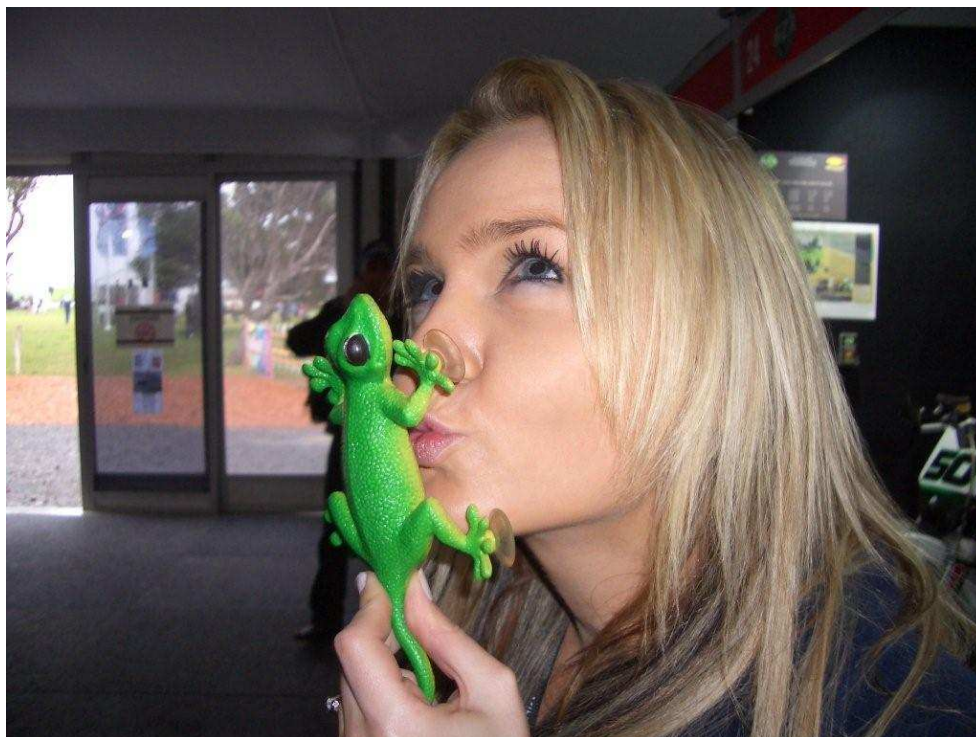
The wide assortment of characters in our little group made for hilarious campfire chin wagging, often until the wee hours of the morning. We were never short of a laugh either, even when Friday's wet weather attempted to dampen our spirits. The sub-group name of "The Soggy Bottomed Boys" was born. The solution once again was deceptively simple..... lowered spirits = more spirits, easy really!

Memories of the weekend seem a little sparse at the moment, but I still remember parts of the weekend, and will think back on them fondly whenever I'm short of a laugh. To the whole crew, my sincere thanks for a fantastic and memorable time. I've made a few good mates and added some more funny stories to my collection.

Best wishes to you all, catchya soon (if you're game to invite me again).

Regards,

Stephen.



Brocky in action ☺

Sadly we received a weather report from Pete on Sunday warning us that Monday was going to be a bad day weatherwise with rain and local hail forecast for Victoria. Peter and I had a brief convo about this and were both inclined to skip the Great Ocean Road if the weather was going to be bad. After discussion with the rest of the crew we decided it would be best to head straight back through Melbourne to Adelaide as Tuesdays weather was looking very ordinary as well. The traffic was once again very heavy going through Melbourne and the rain didn't help but by the time we got to Beaufort it began to clear up thank goodness as we were almost as soaked by this time as I was on the Robertstown run lol.

We had a great run all the way home after this and pulled in to Taillem Bend to say our goodbyes before heading home.

All up it was a great trip, no incidents, no speeding fines, awesome company and perfect weather for race day. Shame we missed the GOR but there's always next year ☺.

pics from the trip are on the website

http://www.sabers.com.au/gallery/gallery2/main.php?q2_itemId=55143