

Albany AGM

After a farewell breakfast at Sorrentos on Saturday the 27th February eight of our branch members headed off as a group to Albany. A small group had previously left earlier on the same day.

Our group consisted of Di McEwen, Judy Christensen, Trevor and Katrina Blackall, Gerry and Heather Kroon, Terry and Petra Seebohm. Jim and Hermein Coombe followed later in the day after overcoming tyre problems. First night was spent at Taillem Bend.

By day two Di and Judy had left us to pursue an alternate itinerary, as they were to eventually team up with John and Rosie Deer.

The end of day two saw the group camped at Melrose. Three couples in tents and the Blackalls in their more luxurious camper trailer.

We took two more days to cross the top of Eyre Peninsula, camping at Wuddina but had a pub stop at Penong Pub where we met up with other Ulyssians. By the time we arrived at Nundroo Roadhouse to fuel up we realized we would be sharing the road and servos with hundreds of other bikers all heading for the same destination. Each overnight stay and petrol stop took on a carnival atmosphere because of the large number of Ulyssians crossing the Nullabor.

The country we rode through varied from thick woodland, to open blue bush with stunted trees, to open plains bare of trees. The salmon gums near Norsman added a further dimension to the countryside. At no stage did we find the ride boring. The ride each day was enjoyable especially the morning section when the wind was light, the temperature cool and the light on the bush at its best.

After camping in the dirt for several more nights it was very welcome to have hard accommodation at Esperance where we stayed for three nights. We caught up with Macca who had crossed the Nullabor earlier. The group enjoyed a get together BBQ. The highlight of our stay was a boat cruise to Woody Is, one of the islands in the Bay of Islands; here we came in close contact with seals and seabirds including sea eagles.

We arrived in Albany and registered early afternoon on the Monday of the AGM then went to find our accommodation. Monica and Kym Riechelt Jon and Heather Von Stanke were already settled in the same park. As the park had a well equipped camp kitchen and was a large entertaining area the limestone coasters made good use of it having several BBQs and one get together breakfast. Although Helena and David Gritton and Rosie and John Deer were not in the same park they joined in the get togethers.

During the week we took part in test rides, visited the whaling station, walked among giant tingle trees and explored the region around Albany.

Jim reached the 60 milestone so a celebration was held at one of the local hotels for his birthday and we were all a buzz with the news that Jon was seriously considering the purchase of the Spyder.

Saturday morning the traditional parade was held. Perfect weather and crowds of friendly locals to cheer us on our way. The town of Albany by the afternoon was covered in smoke with ash drifting down on everything, a biker had crashed into the scrub and a bush fire was raging as a result. Fortunately the biker was not a Ulyssian. Apparently though some of our Ulyssians being fireys went out to help the locals fight the fire.

The Friday and Saturday night dinners in the huge marquee gave us the opportunity to catch up with other Ulyssians although we didn't see Jo Reato who had ridden over with her brother and stayed on site as did Macca and Brian.

The riders from our branch headed in different directions after the AGM. Some heading home for work commitments others extending their stays to further explore the southwestern corner of W.A. Each has their own tales to tell and I sure that they would gladly share them over a cup of coffee.

Heather and Gerry Kroon.