

## **SAMRATS Ride Report – Melrose October 15-16, 2011**

**Ken King – SAMRATS Coordinator**

Samrats Members Birthday Celebration Weekend  
Ride Leader and trip organiser Ian Lewis

I am sure all the participants would agree that we had a great time on our weekend away in Melrose. This is a traditional Samrats trip which has been going for many years and is an opportunity for us all to celebrate our birthdays at the same time.

The main activity of the weekend was laughing at the many jokes told, especially those by Dr Phil who, once he gets going, is a treasure trove of hundreds of jokes, most of which are, thankfully, suitably and totally politically incorrect. We all got on like a house on fire and it was great to get to know some of the members we didn't know very well before the trip.

Seven of us rode up to Melrose together leaving Bolivar at 9am, and three more met us at the Melrose Caravan Park bunkhouse. The trip up was about 260 kms via the excellent route planned and led by Ian, and was a great journey except for the wind, which was moderately strong at times and made for interesting cornering at speed.

We took the Freeway, bypassed Gawler, went through to Marrabel for a quick stop, then on to Saddleworth and Burra for a petrol stop and morning tea. We continued on the Barrier Highway to Hallett where we turned off to Jamestown. All along this route there are huge wind turbines which are quite a sight whether you like the look of them or not.

Then on to Gladstone, Wirrabara and Melrose. We arrived about 2pm and set up camp in the bunkhouse and commenced our festivities. The sun was out, the mountain protected us from the wind and the liquid refreshments were plentiful, in greater volume for some than others, and we swapped stories and laughed until we nearly pissed ourselves or worse. A group went walking around the town to see the sights and find some proper lunch and another group went for a short bush walk a little way up the magnificent Mount Remarkable which surrounds and overshadows the whole town. Some of us stayed on the verandah the whole time as we are getting old and did not want to damage ourselves. Silvia even went for a run on Sunday morning while all the blokes were still asleep or nursing hangovers, showing us all up as the lazy sloths that most of us probably are.

In the evening we retired to the pub where some of us played pool and some attempted to play pool. Dr Phil was as usual the life of the party and in very affable mood by this stage of the evening, and we decided the pool winners would get his Bergman Scooter as a prize.

Dinner was at the pub and took an age to be served, which nearly caused us to riot but left more time for the lewd, very adult and "let's offend everyone" jokes to flourish. The food was excellent so we didn't riot after all – shame, really. The staff and the other

patrons, including a victorious cricket team, were all friendly, and we will be back there again next year for sure.

We retired to the bunkhouse where some of us stayed up talking and others were called to the land of nod. The absence of Jock was palpable as he would have stayed up late regaling tales of past and present, and we wish him all the best in his battle with serious illness.

Master cook Ian made the breakfast on the barbie of eggs and bacon while a team of helpers managed to make a mountain of toast without burning down the bunkhouse.

We packed up, fuelled up the bikes with a suspect-looking 91-octane excuse for petrol, hoped the bikes would still run and said good bye to Melrose for another year. The trip back to the first stop, Burra, was led by Ian who, using his trusty GPS, navigated a route across from Laura towards Jamestown which hit a dirt road. Three of us including me on a Fireblade were not enthusiastic about going on dirt so I phoned Ian and his bluetooth actually worked.

We decided to meet them in Burra. We went via Gladstone to Georgetown and then turned off at Gulnare and discovered that the Gulnare to Spalding to Burra route was an excellent motorcycling road with good surface, big sweepers and banking turns as the road wound its way around the up-hills and down-dales. We met up in Burra almost at the same time, had a quick break, fuelled up and then headed for home via the World's End Road to Robertstown, Eudunda, Kapunda and Gawler where we split off on our different ways home.

Many thanks to Ian for organising the trip, booking the accommodation, cooking the breakfast etc. Ian booked the bunkhouse for next year before we left, for a week later in October to avoid clashing with the MotoGP at Phillip Island. We hope to get a bigger group next year as the bunkhouse can sleep about 20, with two to six beds per room. A great time was had by all on this trip, and for all those guys who said they would probably come along but didn't make it, you did miss out on an excellent trip and you should definitely make it a priority to get there next year.