

Samrats ride report for Sun 25 March 2012

Ride leaders Jim and Chris / Tail End Charlie John

30 bikes and spyders met at BP Belair for Jim's ride to Meningie. The weather turned on a perfect warm autumn day with very little wind making for great conditions for motor cycling. Chris led the way for the first leg to Strathalbyn where we had the first rest stop. Chris took a meandering route through Belair past the national park and then moving south through some nice twisty semi rural country roads to come out at Macclesfield and then to Strath. After the rest stop Jim led the way to Langhorne Creek and then there was a free ride to Wellington for anyone who wanted to stretch their wings outside the official group ride. Thus a few riders arrived at Wellington ferry ahead of the main group to find the surprise of the day which was grey nomad caravans and motor homes banked up on both sides of the river.

The usual procedure is for the front group to wait for the main group to arrive before getting on the ferry but on this day the traffic and vans kept arriving and the back group were up the hill and out of sight and several ferry trips across the river before their turn. The ferry operator put about 15 of us on the first trip and we then waited on the other side for about 30 minutes for the main group to come across. A member of the constabulary (SAPOL) was waiting on the other side, not to see us but to cross the river, and we had a good friendly banter with him about motor cycling, HOGS and the misguided public perception of bikers. A grey nomad in the biggest Winnebago in the world was also good value for conversation. The 30 minute wait made lunch a bit late and as we had not stopped where there was food at the first rest we were pretty hungry to leave.

Down the SE Highway to Meningie where we went to the Museum restaurant which overlooks the lake Albert. Last year we came to the same place for lunch and they took an age to serve the food which would not have been so great for this trip. However they were well prepared with extra staff this time and as we arrived half an hour late they were able to serve very quickly. The proprietor was in fact quite relieved to see us as he had catered for a lot of extra lunches than usual. We did not disappoint as about 28 of us out of 30 ordered a meal. Our rides do help the local economy of the places we visit with the money we spend on food, drinks and fuel. The food was excellent as per the year before and the view of the lake quite relaxing. The lake is currently about 8 feet deep in the middle according to a local who was sitting near us and in the drought it was about one foot. There were a couple of sailing and ski boats out which is a contrast to the years of drought where no boats were to be seen for years on end.

Group photos with the lake in the back ground and then after lunch back to the highway to Tailem Bend for a fuel stop. Across the river at the Jervois ferry where again there was a line of cars. Apparently every grey nomad and Sunday driver were out and about on this part of the Murray on this day. Only a 10 minute wait as we could not get all the bikes on the one ferry and we were off to Murray Bridge, then to the Old Princes Highway through Callington, then Woodchester, Wistow and to Mount Barker for afternoon tea.

A great ride day which was about 300ks from beginning to end. Thanks to Jim and Chris for planning and leading the ride and to John on the black spyder for going Tail End Charlie all day.

Ken King Samrats Coordinator