

The Vintage Motor Cycle Club Of W.A. [Inc]

The Busselton 2 Day Trial

We are indebted to Ray Oakes for providing us with his recollection of the origins of the Busselton 2 Day Trial. The notes published below are taken entirely from his recollections.

In 1971 the Motor Cycle Section of the VCC of WA was approached by John Daines of the Weekend Mail newspaper. John provided details of a long distance Vintage Bike Run held in South Africa called the "Durban to Johannesburg Road Trial". He thought that, considering our long distances, a similar trial could be held in WA. He offered to organize the event and the Section would provide the Bikes and Riders. As a bonus, the winner of the Trial would receive an all expenses paid trip the South Africa to take part in the next "Durban - Johannesburg Road Trial".

The Section agreed with the idea and riders were invited to a meeting at the WA Turf Club where they were informed of the great event being planned. The date was set for February 1972 and riders burnt midnight oil preparing their Veteran and Vintage Bikes for the first long distant Trial to be held in WA.

With a week to go before the event was due to be run, the Section had not received the final details. Peter Wells, [later a Founder Member of the VMCC], contacted John Daines who informed him that the newspaper had second thoughts and no trial would take place! Peter Wells thought otherwise and undertook to organize our own 2-Day Trial. The course would be Perth to Bunbury with a few detours along the way.

All the bikes entered were Pre-31 and among the 45 riders was the Section's first lady rider - Thelma Hoskins - riding a 1914 Triumph. On a Saturday morning in February, the first rider was flagged off from the Council House in St Georges Terrace. The overnight stop was at the "Rose and Crown" in Bunbury. The thoughts of the return trip to Perth the next day stimulated some of the riders and the amber fluid flowed somewhat freely. All the rooms at the "Rose and Crown" opened onto the Verandah and in the early hours a senior member was seen, wearing a policeman's hat, trying to find his room! Sunday morning saw some sore heads but everyone managed to get under way.

The return trip was via the inland route through Harvey and Pinjarra. It was plain bad luck that this Sunday was the hottest and windiest day of the year. The temperature reached 45'C and the riders had to face a gale force hot wind; it was a long and tough ride back to the finish at Armadale.

The 1914 Royal Ruby 293 cc Single Speed Two Stroke ridden by Jim Wallace was at times stopped by the force of the wind; he just found a bit of shade, waited until the wind dropped and then carried on to the finish.

The winner that first year was Bill Young on his 1928 Cammy Norton. It was the bike's first time out and it was a pity Bill did not receive the promised trip to South Africa.

There were a couple of amusing tales arising from that first Trial. Brian Hume arrived at the start with a large white kitchen clock strapped to the handlebars. It was a pity that each bump advanced the clock a few minutes and it showed that he'd arrived in Bunbury the previous day! There was agreement amongst riders that Geoff Raper on his 1914 Sunbeam had either repaired or patched up the whole bike before he crossed the finishing line at Armadale.

Ray Oakes travelled with Neil Stephenson on his mighty Racing Zenith Sidecar. They finished the course in the fastest time; on the Saturday from Roelands to Bunbury they raced and beat an MG Sports Car.

After about 3 years the Trial was extended to go to Busselton and went down via Collie and Donnybrook. Since then the route has changed many times but always sticking to Perth-Busselton and return over 2 days. One almost forgotten change was that after that first year the date was moved to April to avoid the hot weather.

After the Vintage Motor Cycle Club was founded in 1975 it took over running the Busselton 2 Day Trial and has continued to do so until the present time.

Compliments.
Jim Clark.