

trail & track

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Our own local four day trial

It was finally about that time of year again to plan another trail ride. This time we wanted to do something different from previous rides. Other times we were only doing one day trips to places like Enochs Point, Big River etc. from base camp, Woods Point; this trip was to be a couple of days out camping on the trail.

Woods Point was to be the starting point and turn around at Eildon. Checking maps carefully a route was chosen which would be all on trail with no roads as three of the bikes to go were not road registered! Six bikes were chosen, Yam 250, two Yam 175's, RL 250 Suzuki, a "beautiful motorcycle" an SL 175 twin and last but not least a Yam 80 MX, small but that little bike really goes with its rider.

The tracks were marked on the maps so we knew the track exactly. Early Friday morn, 4 a.m., we left in a ute and car with a trailer. Arriving at Woods Point at about 8.30 all was unpacked and loaded on the bikes, in general each bike had a sleeping bag, a gallon of petrol and a pack on the rider's back.

Leaving Woods Point we travelled along the main road for about a mile to the turn off up the back to Mount Matlock. It's an easy climb, third gear most of the way for about a mile or two. This track brings us to the base of the mount, we turn right here on to the Matlock track. For about ten miles this is very easy going. Along there it was slow as we got used to the packs and loading.

Our first trouble was sorted out too. The 80 was running rough and dying when the throttle was opened; a small stop fixed it. The SL got a fuel blockage and rough running. Russel on the 175 was having trouble with rough running also. Sorting out these little problems was no sweat. Finally down to some travelling, Warren on the 80 took the lead as he was slowest, but a fair pace of about 40 mph was kept up.

Using the buddy system to keep track of each other the feel of the track got to us. Soon some nice curvy trail came our way so "dirt track" riding began. Hanging the back out on bends, until John noticed that Russel was no



The RL Suzuki getting a tow.



longer behind him; no worries though Peter had found him just around the corner . . . over the edge of the cliff. Apparently he failed to take the bend and instead of laying it down decided to take the easy way out and go over the side only to find himself sailing clear through the air! The tow rope was pulled out and the bike heaved up the slope; no damage just a little hurt pride.

We had travelled this track many times before and so knew it fairly well but some nice road makers had decided to change it a bit since last trip, a new trail veered off the right track so making the wrong turn we travelled 5 miles or so before this trail became so chopped up it was realized that it was the wrong one. Turning around we gave our "infallible navigator" a kick in the pants, not that it was his fault but we had to blame someone. Backtracking the proper trail was found and we were on our way again.

Then almost came our next disaster. Warren leading again came around a corner only to find himself facing the Bull Bar of a logging truck, down a couple of gears and full brakes; he just missed. The rest of us saw him brake hard and so were alerted. The semi driver was not very polite as he hurled abuse at us, telling us that we were likely to be killed riding bikes (haven't I heard that line before?)!

Anyway, continuing on deeper, bush surrounded us and left any chance of finding another one way behind. Coming across our first intersection the infallible navigator said right. I wasn't sure that I remembered the trail coming to the intersection of the Enochs Point track and Mt Terrible trail, but anyway we turned right. Time was getting on and this Moonlight Jeep Track was not rousing any memory of being the right way so we stopped for lunch.

The country was beautiful, really green for summer, but the flies were in their millions. Checking the maps found us on the trail to Knockwood and not Jamieson, turning left at that intersection was the right way.

Lunch over we started backtracking, only one steep hill was to give us trouble as it was very steep coming down. A straight before the hill proved a good run up, hitting the hill in third flat out I drifted on the slight kink half way up, cogged back to second as my 400 knobby got traction. A little further up where it got steeper again with a sharp left hand turn Russel had dropped it, time for first gear as the last 20 or 30 feet was about 45 degrees and over the top. Back down the slope to help Russ I could really feel how steep that section was. Back on top again the other guys slowly made their way up. Neil on the RL plonks up in third gear and pulls a smooth wheelstand over the top just to make us feel bad, but his time would come. Finally on the right trail, clear riding ahead.

Ha, the SL started playing up again until it finally stopped, this time it was



The first uncomfortable night.



To prove we made it.

only firing on one cylinder. The fault was traced to a bad HT lead and so another half an hour was wasted. Off again. Russel leading now, we started up the Mt Terrible track. It started easy but we soon found out why this was called Mt Terrible. The trail was heavily overgrown and large branches almost stopped us on this climb. Two miles later and still battling the trees, this hill was getting steeper and steeper. Suddenly it cleared and left us facing what could only be termed a CLIFF covered with rocks and debris with deep ruts on either side.

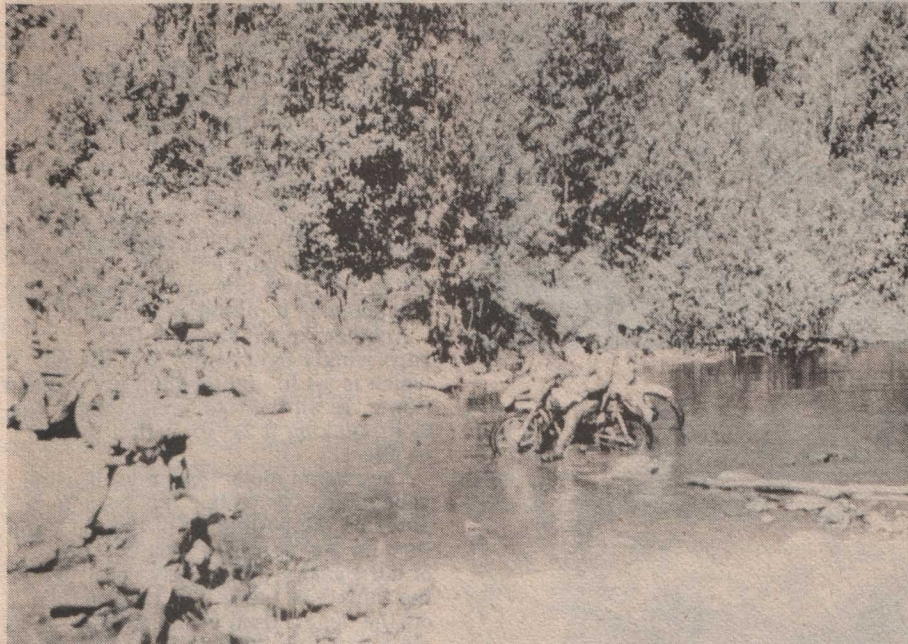
Wow, into second and open it up. Unfortunately I didn't get far; mother earth and I came to grips. Russel on the other 175 was just a little further up.

Well this would take some beating as it went climbing at that rate for a good mile. Peter on the SL had a go, blasting through only to get a third up when he dropped it. Clearing a slope of bikes one at a time we had a go. Getting behind the 250 it got moving but without momentum it just wheelspun until John dropped up further. My bike and the other 175 went to where it levelled a bit about a quarter-mile below so as to get a good run. Neil on Russel's Yam went first. I listened for about ten minutes as it died and came back again, it finally stopped and I guessed he'd made it.

Now it was my turn flat out in first and holding on as hard as I could just to stop myself coming off the back.



Changing a broken lever.



One of the many creek crossings.

Trying to miss rocks and ruts was hard work. Fighting the mountain for six minutes or so like this was exhausting. Ten feet from where it eased a bit I relaxed a little, hit a rock and dumped it. I lay there for a couple of minutes to get my breath back. Starting again was murder as I had to walk beside it to keep going; the bike virtually dragged me along until I couldn't go any more. In a last effort I hopped on sidesaddle and in this manner made the rest of the way.

Ten minutes later after I had regained my breath Warren on the 80 came up proving its worth; he too was exhausted. Slowly the rest struggled up. Neil went down for his Suzy and came back with a couple of the packs

that had been left, he too had had a very difficult climb. In the distance the lookout tower could be seen. Following

along the ridge to it, only one more hill that left us gasping for breath we made it. The view was incredible as it was above all the other mountains. Filling our canteens we headed down to camp near Jamieson for the night.

Sleep was good that night as we were really tired. Morning came with a little maintenance. Starting again we went down the road a bit, crossed Big River, looking for our trail, couldn't find it, so a small trip up the main road was made to an alternate route. John had a bad spill here on the bitumen without

gloves and so his hands were chopped badly. After patching him, Russ and John went to Eildon by road as he was in no fit condition to ride trail.

Finding the track the rest of us left, it was not long before an intersection not on the map came up. We took the left way as it pointed to Eildon. It was easy except for one hill that was steeper than Mt Terrible; fortunately we had to go down. In fact Neil came up it on the RL in second gear and stalled; it was a first gear hill for a 250 trials bike! Once down the Pinnacle track it was easy riding along Knowles track and Jerusalem track. Until the SL got a flat that is; we were so sick of that bike's continual breaking down it was ridden flat until some campers helped us fix it.

The track eventually became the main road. According to the map a trail that would take us real close to Eildon was just up the road. The track could not be found and as a few cars were appearing it was decided to stop instead of paying big fines. Myself, on the only road registered bike, went on to get the two in Eildon. You wouldn't believe it, around the very next corner was a Cop car. I turned around to make sure the others were okay only to find he had turned around to check on me, so I pulled up. He checked my licence and told me I was unroadworthy. As he was about to go the last thing he said was "that bike's a heap". I was very indignant about that but I guess I looked mighty dirty after two days on the trail. He continued on to the others, he asked if they were lost. Neil said yes, Peter said no. He asked if they were licenced, Peter said yes, Neil (who wasn't) said yes. The officer was so confused he told them to get the bikes roadworthy and left. The funny thing was they weren't even registered. Anyway I found John and Russel, got food and headed back to camp the night at Jerusalem Creek. My Yam got a flat as the tube was pulled into the tyre, so that had to be fixed.

Next day we were to head for home but the SL didn't feel like it; the battery was dead. Hooking the two Yams' batteries together gave it sparks, it was about 11.00 a.m. by the time we left. Coming home took the rest of the day; the only problem being Neil's RL, it sheered every bolt off the rear sprocket and so had to be towed (I said his turn would come).

The route back was along Jerusalem track to Enochs Point, then up Campbells logging track to the good old Matlock track. There are some great creek crossings along these tracks. Home in time for a counter tea and a post mortem of the previous days. Next day after lunch we went to the Triangle for some riding then pack and home. With memories of such a great ride we look forward to the next trip. The only damage was one lever and 5 bolts. Apart from John we were unscathed.

**David Lehman
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