

## 2015 Coral Coast Ride - Pilbara, Western Australia

Red Devil (BMW F650GS) and Red Dwarf (BMW R1200GS) pulled out of our driveway early on a Sunday morning in late August, both bikes dressed to the nines with camping gear, and Steve and I smiling from ear to ear in anticipation of a three week ride to North West Cape, the north-western tip of Australia. Sunday's aren't as quiet on the road as they used to be and we had fun snaking our way through the early morning traffic. The chilly 9°C had me switching my heated grips to full bore and within the hour we had made our way to the northern end of the freeway and were drinking tea and enjoying a bacon and egg roll at a roadside restaurant. Fulfilled and refreshed, we rode northwards amongst the wheat fields while bees made a mess of our visors and we developed a healthy respect for those who ride with no visor at all.

We camped for a couple of nights at Green Head to walk amongst the wildflowers in Stockyard Gully and Lesueur National Parks. Then it was onwards and upwards, taking the Indian Ocean Drive and the Chapman Valley Road, to the historic town of Northampton. In Northampton we met **Tim Spiteri** and his partner Jo Noesgaard. Tim is a modern day adventurer, currently riding a bicycle around the country. Last year Tim was part of a team rowing across the Indian Ocean; thanks for the inspiration, Tim, we need folks like you to remind us what is truly possible.



Green Head



Overlander Roadhouse

On the road from Northampton to Carnarvon, the bees were replaced with butterflies, and they made a mess of our visors too, but it didn't matter as we were enjoying our ride along the North West Coastal Highway. At times we had to slow down for the great wedge-tailed eagles that were pecking at the latest road kill. There are hundreds of travellers on the road these days and we had to queue for fuel at Overlander Roadhouse; \$1.80/lit for unleaded petrol made me smile in the sure knowledge that we had arrived in the outback. We stopped for a while, just hanging out with the bikes, and watched the road trains thundering by.

Apparently the fruit and vegetable farms around Carnarvon provide 70% of Western Australia's total requirement but more importantly, as a traveller, Carnarvon is home to one of the best fish and chip shops in

the state. We built our own seafood basket for two at **Westcoast Fish 'n' Chips** with one serve of snapper, eight prawns and eight scallops; all fresh and truly to die for.



Six-pack habit

We don't have refrigeration when we go camping with Devil and Dwarf so at around 4pm each day we would wonder over to the nearest grog shop and return with a cold six-pack to keep us amused and smiling until dinner time. This ritual became known as our six-pack habit and we enjoyed beers from the big brewers to boutique establishments, depending on what was on special.

#### Six-Pack Habit

I've gotta six-pack habit when I'm on the road,  
Where I headin' know body knows.  
When the sun goes down I'll be sittin' around,  
With my six-pack habit in some outback town.

At Minilya Roadhouse the road forks left for those travelling to Exmouth and this quiet run through the desert is interesting and fun with a few curves to keep bike riders amused. On the approach into town we were warned to lookout for sheep hanging around on the road verges and sure enough we spotted our first woolly inhabitant 50km out of town. This unexpected desert dwelling herd kept us on our toes for the last half hour of the ride.

We spent five nights in Exmouth enjoying Ningaloo and Cape Range National Park. We took Devil and Dwarf for a run to Yardie Creek and a swim at Turquoise Bay. Only Dwarf went on the 4WD only ride through the gorge at Shot Hole Canyon. Riding pillion, I could enjoy the towering gorge walls without the anxiety of dropping Devil in one of the stony creek beds.



North West Cape lighthouse

In Exmouth we met **Hini Krutzfeldt**. Hini shipped his BMW F800GS from Germany to Perth in July 2015 and will be riding around the country until November. Hini is an adventurer rider and street racer and we had great conversations at dinner time. I will always remember Hini whenever I reverse down a steep slope using the clutch (with the engine switched off) instead of struggling with the rear brake when the front brake won't grip.



Jane and Hini



The Red Dwarf, Shothole Canyon, Cape Range National Park

On our way south I fell in love with the snorkelling and the laid back lifestyle at Coral Bay. We didn't take a snorkelling tour; we just launched ourselves off the beach and let the current take us for a drift over the coral reef. We had anchored our Sparkman and Stephens 34 foot yacht, Roma II, at Pt Maud, one nautical mile north of Coral Bay, on 16th September 1993. We enjoyed a walk along the beach to the place where we had been before. According to our ships log we had waited six days for the wind to drop below 25knots.

With the sun behind us we had an easy ride back to Carnarvon, to restock the pantry pannier, and then took ourselves for a bikers look at Shark Bay.

We had our first bad travellers experience at **Hamelin Pool Caravan Park** (after over 100,000 kms of motorcycle travels). On returning from a short walk to the old shell quarry, there was a note tucked onto my bike asking us to "come and pay for our showers as showers are for paying customers only." We had not been near the toilets or the showers so Steve took the note back to the tea rooms and informed the girls that we hadn't had a shower. They accusingly replied, "Someone told us you had." They never apologised for insulting a couple of bikers, they just kept saying, "Someone told us you had used the showers." There was evidence that they had tried to take our riding jackets as ransom, fortunately they were locked onto Steve's bike. I hate to think about the outcome had they taken our jackets. Well, **Hamelin Pool Caravan Park**, we'll be spreading the word on your incompetent hospitality skills, and advising everyone we meet not to give you the time of day.



Compulsory photo of Dolphin at Monkey Mia

Monkey Mia is a must see for Western Australians and we were lucky, on the morning of our visit, seven dolphins came to play at the sanctuary. These days the dolphins are only fed a snack sized fish and it is wonderful to see that the dolphins visit Monkey Mia to enjoy the people interaction and nothing more.

The weather turned against us when we were ready to ride for home so we holed up in Kalbarri to let the wind and the rain pass through. Then we were on the road for our last days ride, looking forward to the comforts of home and at the same time savouring the last moments of a thoroughly enjoyable three

weeks camping with Devil and Dwarf; something deep within the soul told us "this is how we should be living."



Campsite on the beach at Denham, Shark Bay