

Trip Report – 2011 March Madness

With a name like 2011 March Madness it comes as no surprise that this one nighter happened in March 2011. What was MAD about this 1 nighter was that it happened over 2 nights. Having had Monday, March 21 off as a public holiday helped a lot to accomplish that.

A great deal of time was spent with the weather god's electronic cousin – Accuweather.com - as there were great rumblings and lots of rain during the preceding days. I am happy to report that in keeping up with traditional weather predicting practises - the forecasts were wrong. We actually experienced almost no rain on the trip.

Early Saturday morning saw the loading of the boss and the luggage onto Scooter and we raced off to the Dross where we were met by 18 grown-ups, 4 children, 11 other bikes and one car. Our children accompaniment was 4, 7, 10 and 12 years respectively. In Pretoria we believe in starting to canvass for new members early.

We formed a formal line with Scooter (the boss and me) in front with FatBoy2 (PlusOne and Sarie) in the rear, and off we rode towards a blissful weekend. For those of you who do not attend One Nighters, Rallies, Harley Nights and Breakfast runs: PlusOne = Johann Weideman).

DAY 1

Just to get everyone back into the groove we initially stayed on the familiar road past Delmas where we swerved right and the rode past Balfour and Heidelberg to the Bikers Museum at Deneysville. Lunch was followed by a quick visit to the museum. The museum focuses on racing bikes and many a racer from the old days can be seen as well as photographs and memorabilia from past racing champions. It is a very interesting collection and well worth a visit.

In the west towards Parys – the direction we were heading – a most ferocious thunderstorm was busy building up. We decided to suit up in order to give the message to the rain to leave us alone. It listened and we rode to the right of an indescribable downpour of rain. One of our couples took a detour and to their dismay ended up smack right in the middle of it.

We arrived at the SUNWA Adventure lodge and had to manoeuvre a little bit of wet dirt road to get to the camp. Scooter took one slight slide but all the other riders were well equipped and up to the task. We were allocated little log cabins in the bush camp (oversized Wendy houses) but it was neat and the bed slept like a cloud.

Our dinner was served in our own venue which was located next to a boma where we enjoyed a late night night-cap next to a bush fire. During dinner there was one lost soul who enjoyed the Stormers beating the Bulls but all of the rest (knowledgeable rugby supporters) were not too happy. There was eating, drinking, laughter and as much merriment as one can try to visualise. We even had our own local songwriter in Deon, except he didn't write any words, he sang them to us.

All went to bed, and then much, much, later the Other Three also did – that is Deon, Derek and Jannie Tsak-Tsak. You can ask Jannie about the name which, as I recall, had something in common with Jägersdrift.

Day 2

To my amazement the Other Three were almost first for breakfast the next morning. They were not all that hungry though, they just consumed copious amounts of liquids.

We lost some members of our troupe at that time as Chris and Marjan had to attend to an earlier scheduled engagement and Deon, Annetjie and their children had to do some urgent shopping in Pretoria.

So we set off to the west again (no wonder they used to call the place West Transvaal). This time we were in search of the origins of mealiepap. We did not find any mieliepap but boy did we find the source – rows and rows of mielies as far as the eye can see. And to complete the list of Flora on display was sonneblom and cosmos.

We rode through little towns and even smaller towns, always within easy reach of a mealieland. The roads were in a pretty decent nick with only a couple of potholes every few kilometres. I don't know if anyone else noticed – but for most of the trip on day 2 and day 3, almost all of the traffic was against us. Seemed like no-one wanted to go where we were going.

And then towards the middle of day two, at the enclave of Wolmaranstad, we turned east and started the journey back towards home. We almost missed two more small towns and then we had lunch at the Dros in Klerksdorp. As we mounted you could see the mother-of-all-storms hanging towards Potchefstroom.

The storm was moving east and we were riding east. Towards Potchefstroom we really had to ride slowly to miss the tail of the storm. We later learned that what we missed had been a cloud burst with lots of hail. We managed to get to Oudrift dry. The Harleys didn't get off so well and by this time they were actually very dirty.

Oudrift, what can one say – it is divine, and romantic and rustic. Some couples, newly-weds and so forth, were pretending to be tired and said they fell asleep. The rest of us were enjoying the beautiful gardens right next to the fast flowing Mooi River. The evening was spent with lots of laughter over dinner. Two of the original Three tried dearly to keep up the pace of the night before but it was soon clear to everyone that the heart of the trio (Deon) had been removed.

Day 3

Two more heroes left the pack. Their excuse was that they live to the east of Pretoria in JägerMeistersfontein, or somewhere close to Benoni, and so Derek and Jannie Tsak-Tsak rode East while we all headed North.

On the way to Ventersdorp and Derby guess what we saw: You're right, more mealies and sonneblom. Then came Magaliesburg and the Cradle of Mankind and all too soon we were at the end of our 918 km trip through the platteland. We rode through 4 provinces, namely Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Free State and North West, through 14 towns and 2 cities and crossed the Mealie Triangle. We had fun, became good friends and enjoyed a wonderful camaraderie. Maybe one day we will do it again.