

TDCC TOUR OF NEW ZEALAND 2018

12th to 24th SEPTEMBER

Keith was the first to arrive on the 9th followed by Pedro and Kerry plus Peter and Sue from Newcastle on the 10th with Carol, Mike and Azy plus Marjorie from Brisbane arriving on the 11th to make up the group. We were staying at a new venue this year- All Stars Inn on Bealey.

Sunday 11th. Keith rode around Christchurch (ChCh) whilst Kerry and Pedro rode off to Tai Tapu followed by a tour around the suburbs. 68km Weather sunny but windy.

Monday 12th Whilst the rest of the group went off to collect their bikes, Keith, Kerry and Pedro set off for a ride to Sumner and back. 60km. Weather great. In the evening our tour operators Caroline and Nigel (C&N) collected us and drove us to Taylors Mistake Surf Club where we went for a cliff walk to Boulder Beach to work up an appetite for dinner. Dinner was taken at an Indian restaurant in Sumner before we were driven back to our accommodation.

Tuesday 13th An 8.00am start saw us all ride out of the Inn where we were quickly riding along the bank of the Avon river through the most devastated part of ChCh's earthquake. All the houses in this once delightful suburb had to be demolished and the land is now totally unusable. The roads are still in place but where the houses were is now parkland. It was then on to Brighton (by the sea) for coffee. Leaving Brighton we rode along trails through sand dunes and forests taking a diversion to Kaiapoi to visit C&N's home for more coffee. Peter and Pedro managed a ride on Nigel's pennyfarthing bike before we then set off to the trails leading to Woodford Beach for lunch. After lunch more trails to our finish point at Waikuku. The bikes were loaded onto the trailer before driving off to Gore Bay. Our accommodation was two large houses located metres from the beach and very comfortable. Today's weather was perfect clear blue skies. 60km today.

Wednesday 14th Another glorious sunny day with a spring nip in the air as we rode out of Gore Bay along a country road to the village of Cheviot. From here it

was back onto the gravel roads and dirt tracks. After leaving Cheviot it was up hills and great descents until we reached Winchester Station (farm) for lunch. After lunch we loaded the bikes back onto the trailer and drove to Kaikoura, the scene of another earthquake that occurred whilst we were touring the west coast 2 years ago and should have visited as part of that tour. After a quick tour around the town we drove back to Gore Bay and dinner at the local pub. 55km today.

Thursday 15th Leaving the houses behind we retraced our previous day's ride to Cheviot and hit the gravel and dirt again. From this point on for the rest of the ride we only saw the occasional farm as we steadily climbed up unkempt tracks. The scenery was fantastic with views of the Hurunui River, Lowry Hills Range and the Cheviot basin. Eventually after a great downhill ride we emerged from the hills to meet Caroline at the van where we loaded up and set off for the journey back through ChCh and onward to Akaroa for the next 2 nights. Akaroa is located at the end of an inlet from the sea and is presently used by cruise ships to off-load passengers for a trip to ChCh. One such liner was just leaving as we arrived. Accommodation was again in 3 different time share units but right in the centre of the village. Today's weather was again sunny and cool. 38km (hard).

Friday 16th Our first rest day!!! Only Azy and Kerry used their bikes today for a ride to a lighthouse that Azy was interested in seeing. From all accounts they spent as much time walking as biking due to some wee hills. Carol managed to do some paddle boarding. Pedro thought he might get in a game of croquet but the lawns were not open that day so he had a game of lawn bowls instead. The remainder of the group spent the morning walking around the village. After lunch we boarded the bus and were driven to the Otinarito Reserve for a pleasant downhill walk through the forest before being driven back to Akaroa. Weather again sunny but cool.

Saturday 17th Leaving Akaroa we were driven to the top of a very high hill where we unloaded the bikes in thick cloud. Visibility approx. 50/100 metres and bloody cold. Summit Road wends its way along the top of a range of hills and is very undulating, some parts very steep. Could be nerve-racking in the clouds. Due to the cloud we were not able to see the surrounding countryside for the first 20-30

kms The last section of the ride before reaching the main road into Little River was a very steep loose gravel descent to be taken very gingerly if one was to remain upright on the bike. By now the weather was fine and sunny. Distance today 37km (hard). After a coffee stop the bikes were loaded and we set off for Timaru for our overnight stop at the Ashley Motor Lodge. Having arrived mid-afternoon some of us decided to do a short ride around the town. We found a nice narrow track following a stream for about 8km then it was into the suburbs for the ride back to the lodge. 14km. Dinner tonight was held in a private room at the Speights (brewery) Ale House.

Sunday 18th Leaving Timaru by van we headed off for Elephant Rock outside Duntroon where we off-loaded the bikes. This ride was part of the A20 track which alternated between dirt tracks and country roads. It was very well signposted and took us through many farms including the 'Elderslie Estate'. Again plenty of up and down plus walking up's. Three hours into the ride the skies turned black and after plenty of boom crash opera the first of the rains began. The 'Bolters', Kerry, Azy and Peter managed to miss the rain but the rest of us got wet. The ride finished in Oamaru on their festival day. During lunch the rains came again and it was unanimously decided to continue on to Dunedin and forgo time at the festival. Arrived at Dunedin and settled in at the Leith valley Holiday Park in various motel style rooms. Dinner was taken at an Irish Pub in town. 48km

Monday 19th Today was our second rest day of sorts. Nearly everyone decided to spend the morning exploring Dunedin except Kerry and Pedro who opted for a ride along the river to Port Chalmers. They had all the seasons in two hours. The sun shone as they left the park but there was still a cold wind. Before the port the rain came and they sheltered at the marina watching the shipping. The weather eased so they set off back to Dunedin only to have to shelter again due to hail/sleet. During this time thunder and lightning occurred. When they finally got back on the river bike track it was covered in frozen icy sleet that crunched beneath the tyres as they rode over it. Finally arriving back at the Park the sun was back shining. 33km. After lunch everyone except Mike and Marjorie met at the railway station to take the train trip on the Taieri Gorge Railway up to Pukerangi. The views were spectacular and due to the recent rains the river and

its tributaries were running full bore. All agreed that it was a worthwhile trip. That evening Caroline provided dinner at her apartment.

Tuesday 20th The morning arrived without any rain so after breakfast we were driven a short distance out of Dunedin to the start of the day's short ride. We rode along sealed roads adjacent to the ocean until we arrived at Taieri Mouth village and loaded up the bikes before the intrepid trampers (Kiwi for hikers) set off into the bush. By this time it was drizzling and we all had our wet weather gear on. The walk was flat along the edge of the river to start with but soon started to gain elevation. The going was very muddy and slippery which made the going fairly slow except for, you guessed, Peter, Azy and Kerry. Mike and Keith had decided to forego the walk. We came across a fast-flowing stream that required serious effort to get across safely but we all prevailed. Then a very large tree had toppled over right across the track and we had to fight our way through all the branches to find the track on the other side. Up and down, slipping and sliding, we eventually emerged from the bush expecting to find Nigel waiting with the van. NO van and NO road. The river had burst its banks and covered the road to a depth of some 300/400 mm of water which we now had to wade through for 2km+ to reach the van. We finally made it only to be told that the police were very concerned for our safety and were on the verge of organising a rescue mission as the river had not yet reached its peak level. Nigel phoned the police and advised all were well but wet. Quite an adventure! After a change of gear we set off for our next stop at Lawrence passing many flooded fields and roads. Again a large rambling old house was our place to stay tonight. It had a large wood-burning stove which our pyrotechnician Mike had going full bore in quick time so enabling us all to dry out our sodden gear ready for the next day's adventure. Dinner that night was in the local pub. 24km riding, 10/12km walk

Wednesday 21st During breakfast Nigel advised that due to overnight flooding and land slippages the roads out of Lawrence were closed. However by 10.00am we were given clearance to continue on our way. We should have been riding the Clutha Gold Trail but due to the flood and wash-outs the trail was impassable so we were condemned to the road. We set out from Lawrence and rode to Beaumont which included a short off-road excursion through a disused railway

tunnel before having to return to the road. At Beaumont we loaded the bikes onto the trailer and drove to Millers Flat for lunch. Then back on the bikes for the ride to Roxburgh. From Roxburgh it was a drive to our final destination of Frankton an outer suburb of Queenstown. Accommodation in various units at the Assure Gateway Apartments. Today we rode 40km instead of the 65km.

Thursday 22nd Today we started our ride at the old fashion village of Arrowtown. It still looks like the days when it was first built. After coffee, with Caroline in the lead, we set off on the trail back to Frankton via a roundabout route. Very well signposted trails and great scenery along the river where the jet boats ply their trade. Plenty of up (walk) hills and exhilarating down hills on dirt tracks. Arrived back at Frankton in time for a pizza lunch. The weather was fantastic and, with the surrounding mountains covered in snow, the views were spectacular. After lunch some people rode into Queenstown but Keith, Azy, Kerry and Pedro decided to do a bit more biking so set off to visit the other side of the lake and Kelvin Point. This took us along narrow tracks beside the lake and any slip would have meant a cold dip in the lake. After reaching the point and riding round the golf course we headed back along the same track back to Frankton. Not finished yet, we rode the 8 km trail into Queenstown around the botanical gardens and back. Dinner that night was cooked by Caroline at the motel. As usual with in-house cooked dinners, it was followed by a sing-along with Nigel showing off his prowess on the guitar. This was Keith's last night. Total days ride 63km.

Friday 23rd. Our last day of riding and the best saved for last. We rode from the motel along the trail to Queenstown and caught the steam vessel 'Earnslaw' for the journey to Walter Peak Station (farm). Keith joined us on the boat trip but had to return to Queenstown to catch his plane back to Sydney that afternoon. From the wharf we cycled along gravel road alongside the lake for about 10km before we began the 4km climb (walk) to the plateau in the mountains. On reaching the plateau again the views were fabulous being completely surrounded by snow capped mountains. From now on the ride was up and down but gradually going downwards. One section you could get into the big ring and roll down the track with a tail wind at speed even though it was a very bumpy ride (ask Mike). Finally came to our second ford crossing with water fast flowing and well over knee

deep. We all made it safely and by the time we had reached the van at Mavora Lakes we had dried out. The 'bolters' on this ride, Kerry and Peter did an extra 30km and 20 km respectively and were back at the van only ten minutes after the rest of us. Loading the bikes onto the trailer for the last time we headed off for dinner at the Brown Trout cafe on our way back to Frankton. 61km for the day.

Saturday 24th Leaving Carol and Marjorie behind the rest of us left Frankton at 7.20am for the long drive back to ChCh. Stopped for coffee then lunch before arriving into ChCh at the hire shop at 2.45pm. Dropped off all the bikes then drove to the airport to drop off Kerry, Azy, Mike and Pedro for their flight back to Sydney. Peter and Sue remained in ChCh for another day.

Finale: This trip is probably the most memorable, exhilarating, hard and enjoyable of any of the 5 tours that I have done with Caroline and Nigel. They put a huge amount of effort into the organisation of their tours and I cannot thank them enough for making this tour so enjoyable despite the problems that occurred during the 12 days.

I would also like to thank ALL the members of the gang that participated for their cheerfulness and camaraderie throughout the tour. I did not hear one murmur of complaint, except from me and those wee hills, during the whole trip. Thank you all for making my efforts worthwhile.

CHEERS PEDRO.