

The 2009 Brooweena Twinshock and Classic trial (near Maryborough, Queensland) once again brought together people from all over who share a common interest in old trials bikes. This year the weather was kind and we only had a tiny sprinkle of rain, no wind, and mild overnight temperatures. The Saturday night bonfire was a treat and as usual was quite a magnet for the many kids who were there.

There was a bigger roll-up (thirty-something riders) this year and we almost had to break the field up into two groups. As well as the usual tricky gravelly gully with off-camber turns and rocky bed sections upstream of the camping area, another group of sections was set much closer to the main creek in a rolling, grassed section of the same creek line. This provided some great fun jumping up and down the steep banks with amazing traction on the loamy soil.

One of the sections in the gully above the camping area had been "enhanced" with some strategically located log barriers, spaced at just more than one bike length, making it a bit like a stadium section, and catching a few people out.

We set up a group photo opportunity on the Sunday morning, and had to make two lines of bikes to fit them all in. There were many more bikes than riders as can be seen in the photos. I didn't actually count the total number of bikes, but made sure I counted the Montesa (2 x 348 and 2 x 247), Kawasaki (7), Suzuki (3), Honda TL125 (2), Honda TLR200(1) and Bultacos (M124, M198A, M199 with Sammy Miller frame and Steve's mid 1970s 250 Sherpa T). There seemed to be lots of Yamahas - someone told me there was 19. It did seem like they were everywhere.

This year the bike age rules were brought into line with MA Twinshock/Post-Classic rules while previously only pre-1980 bikes were allowed to ride at Brooweena. This change made very little difference to what people rode there, with Frank Van Heerden's recently-acquired white model TLR200 being the only post-1980 bike there.

There was lots of sparkle at the unofficial concours d elegance this year. Metalwork wizard Mark Levinge brought his luminous metallic blue TY250C again, and also another amazing restoration - a TY175 done in orange which he rode this year.

I'm sure no one could have missed seeing the photos of Ben (Scorps) Reed's amazing pair of recently completed KT250s on the Trials and VMX forums a couple of weeks ago. One is museum standard original and the other (his ride bike) allowed his creative urges to run riot, producing a bike that has a very refreshing and wild look, but still managing to be instantly recognizable as a KT250.

Jeff Eckert has obviously been busy restoring a TY175 and like Lev's TY175, looks fantastic despite being very different to the original TY175 look. The black frame and slotted tank stripe reminded me of some of the Yamaha MX and road bikes of the era. This is Robyn's bike and Jeff rode his beautifully finished TY250 with the red tank stripe this year, that featured in last years Brooweena photos. He changed to his beautiful TL250 near the end.

Wayne (Starky) and Helen Stark's pair of TY175s also sparkled beautifully at Brooweena.

Bogwheel's 325 Bultaco Sherpa T was also very well presented and drew lots of interest with it's plated Sammy Miller frame. It is another ex-Richard Marken bike.

I was impressed that Mark Reed's well-presented and custom-colours RL250 matched his riding gear perfectly. It must be something to do with maturity (or getting older anyway) because I did the same, wearing period-sensitive riding gear in colours that matched my bike.

A couple of bikes were only just finished in time for Brooweena. Two TL125s fell into this category - Steve (Smack) McIntosh's from Tasmania and Martin Rohde's from a lot closer (Mary's Creek). Both rode well despite having teething issues with their bikes.

Something of a record at bike preparation was achieved by Cedric Van Heerden in getting Mc Hosking's new TY250D ready to ride. Mac bought it locally (Gladstone) only a week before Brooweena and it needed lots of work. Somehow Cedric and Mac got it going in time to leave for Brooweena on the Friday afternoon! I'm impressed. The bike seemed to go very well and Mac looked more at home on it than on his Scorpa (well, when he wasn't crashing anyway). The "tree falling over" crash (and the big one) are both on the DVD.

I only get to see the riders from Maryborough riding a few times a year, but each time the improvement in their riding skills is amazing. This time the Maryborough riders who seemed to have improved most in my eyes were Conor Flynn and Warren Stackman. Wayne Stark also continues to improve each time I see him ride, but had bike problems this year, ending up riding Helen's metallic pink TY175, much to the delight of the rest of us seeing him ride a "girly" bike.

Another with bike problems was Lindsay (Hagsta) Haig, whose Cota 247 lost spark. Cedric then lent Lindsay his 348 to ride, and I think Cedric had quite a fight making sure it went home on his trailer and not Lindsay's trailer.

Lindsay's two KT's were ridden well by his riding buddies who don't have their own twinshock bikes, and they obviously became more and more familiar with riding the KT's as the riding progressed.

Frank Van Heerden has been riding his Dad's bikes in twinshock events for a while now, but has just bought his own - a white TLR200 that went beautifully at Brooweena and easily would have won the quietest bike award, if there was one. So much so, that the slightly squeaky brakes seemed to be loud (they weren't). You could barely tell if Frank's bike was idling unless you were standing alongside, and even at full blast, it still made little noise. I was impressed.

I heard a good story about Steve Hall at Brooweena. The background info is that Steve had a TY250A for a few years from new that he rode quite a bit. Recently, he and the person telling me the story were walking past where someone was working on a TY250 with the ignition flywheel removed. Something caught Steve's eye there and when he had a closer look at the ignition and saw the ignition points he said "Look at that - I thought TY250s had (pointless) electronic ignition!" I think that says something about the reliability of the Yamaha points setup.

The two Suzukis that were ridden both seemed to go very well. While Warren's retains the standard frame geometry, he seemed to comfortably manage the many tricky turns, while Mark Reed's RL went like it was on rails - beautiful to watch.

Young Daniel Telfer rode a standard TY175 with an incredibly smooth style and quite differently to the older "smooth" riders and also to younger riders who have been brought up on modern bikes. I won't try and describe it, but there is plenty of footage of Daniel on the DVD so you can work out what he is doing all for yourself. It clearly worked because he left everyone else for dead in the score department.

I was on the lookout for who seemed to be struggling with the no-stop rule at this event and while all the riders managed to adopt a flowing style most of the time, you could see a few who had an internal fight on their hands at least some of the time. Again it is easily seen on the DVD.

Ben Reed's at-times showy style was greatly appreciated by the spectators and other riders and reminded me that most of us ride our old bikes at a mere fraction of their true potential.

Once again we had a single observer format with everyone riding a section in both directions in turn before moving to the next. This works very well for riders coaching other riders and for socialising. Because there were more riders than last year, a second person

started the next rider and observed them while the score was being recorded. This greatly reduced the gap between riders attempting the section.

As in previous years, there were three lines set in each section. The easiest line was for young kids and learner riders. The next line (Clubman) was a bit easier than Clubman would be at open events while the Open class line was set a bit harder than what would normally be found in Clubman class at open events.

There are two galleries of my Brooweena photos on Trials Australia. There are more Brooweena photos on Tharyn Thomas' Facebook page, including one with the bikes all in one line!

DVDs made with the video footage taken by Pat Ven Heerden (2 hours), Leonie Treagus and myself (30 minutes) will soon be available for sale as a fundraiser for future Brooweena rides. I expect to finish editing the DVD later tonight.

A big thankyou to the Maryborough trials people and the Gympie MCC for this terrific event once again.

David Lahey
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