

The WOW TOUR REPORT 2026 (Worn Out Wander) - Julie Kneebone

CLASSIC RIDERS CLUB OF GOULBURN

On our first day ten intrepid riders with much anticipation gathered at Trappers Goulburn for coffee/breakfast and meet and greet for our 5 day, 4 nights trek around the country side. Originally it was twelve but sadly through injury Colin and Lois couldn't make it. It was an overcast day with a foggy and soggy demeanour as we left in spitting rain with a frosty temperature drop. Chris & Cherrie, Brad & Wendy, John and Soie, Greg M, Ross L, Howard and myself headed off on country roads towards Bungonia and on past Marulan towards Tallong and beyond.

This years theme of "**Mountains, Coast and Corners**" didn't fail to impress, however, I should've added, "**with Four Seasons**".

With various mixed stops on the way we eventually all ended up at the HARS museum in Albion Park with a few oopsies on the way such as carpark mishaps, forgotten clothing and imagining that bikes could run without fuel.

The boxed lunch and the tour around the hangars and planes was amazing especially with our generous and well-informed guide; the aircraft buffs loved it.



Our later finish and the awful weather that turned up meant that the wander around Saddleback Mountain, Jamberoo Pass, Kangaroo Valley, Berry and the Shoalhaven River was canned for safety reasons. So, we ended up heading down the highway to Nowra and having to tackle some wild rainy and windy weather. The evening walk and RSL dinner/drinks was very much welcomed.

The following day some group members went ahead to scout the road conditions to Braidwood with a report back that there was only 4 kms of roadworks of good quality dirt and some loose gravel. We met up with Rick H in Braidwood and continued down the coast, but excluded the old highway, back road from Narooma to Tilba due to a reported 7-8 km of not so good dirt. The coast road through Bermagui to Tathra was really pretty, the roads were quiet with limited traffic with the sunny weather and spectacular coastal scenery adding to the enjoyment of the day. Some of us

had a scenic lookout break at the Tathra headland overlooking the wharf. The Chinese restaurant at the Bega Grand hotel had very yummy food. The beds were ok but have seen better days. Note to self: Saturdays nights bring live bands, not so good when the bedrooms are above them.



On the following day two members of our group decided to head home due to health issues, and we sadly waved them goodbye. We covered some great roads down through Mt Darragh and Myrtle Mountain. However, the previous day had resulted in some storm shrapnel, many leaves and branches, only a taste of things to come for the Bonang. A few also took the scenic route via dirt roads and others the Snowy mountains highway. At least we all ended up at Bombala, phew. Onwards to Orbost for lunch with much dodging of the chicane that the Bonang had become, fallen trees, branches and slippery leaves were everywhere. Onto Bruthen, a stop at Swifts Creek while we waited for a member that had a slight mishap but all was good. Finally, Omeo at the Hilltop Hotel for the night was a welcome stop, and some running repairs made on one of the bikes. They shall remain nameless. You know – “What goes on Tour stays on tour” 😊

A fine Aussie dinner and the room cost included a continental breakfast...bonus. This hotel whilst well priced had shared bathrooms, something to reconsider for next time.

The new day started with a bit of fog, but the road was clear and windy, it went on and on but the views for us pillions was breathtaking. Next stop, Mitta Mitta for a well-earned coffee and snacks. We were now out of the Victorian Alps and with a bit more riding before Tallangatta for lunch. Sadly, Ricky headed back off to Goulburn for work, we were down to eight of us. The Granya Road and gap was next (with more corners) and then the Murray River road before the Jingellic Pub.

Interesting piece of information...On the Murray River Rd we came across quite a large contingent of police about half an hour from the Jingellic turnoff. We learnt later that it was the driveway in where the cop killer Dezi Freeman had been found and fatally shot that morning at Thologolong. It would have been a sobering day for all involved.

At the Jingellic pub we met some Goulburnites and friends doing their own little tour of the countryside, a very friendly group sharing their experiences – something that all motorcyclists can relate to.



Next stop - the Apple Inn at Batlow was a small motel, the rooms were immaculately clean and the bathrooms newly renovated with a nice addition of cereal etc for breakfast for a small fee. Although Batlow has an RSL and a hotel, we had another oopsie. The hotel was closed and there was no restaurant open at the RSL and the IGA supermarket was closed. Batlow is indeed a small place, I was starting to think we may be having cereal for dinner but a stroke of luck meant that the lovely manager at the RSL offered to cook some frozen pizzas for us all, what lovely hospitality and we were all full, washed down with some vino we were well sated.

Next morning, Chris and Cherrie headed home early for another commitment...so...Six intrepid riders headed off on the fifth day on a meandering wander back to Goulburn, stopping at the Adelong Gold Mill ruins, an interesting historical place along the Adelong Creek. North onwards across the highway at Tumblong we took a few detours ending up at Bethungra and Cootamundra for a fuel stop. Gotta stop following Google maps. A slight detour to Ross's brothers place for some 8 gauge wire to do some running repairs on the bike strapping the exhaust back to the frame. How lucky was that to have found the broken bracket on the frame a kilometre earlier.

Jacksons Bakery and Café at Harden was a welcome stop for lunch. Not only did Ross's lovely Norton Dominator hold together with the 8 gauge wire but he made a new friend – a macaw in a cage that loved his bird talk. Next stop was Crookwell, a farewell to Greg as it was his home stop and then there was five. We all arrived safely in Goulburn with thoughts of it was great to be out on the bike but home is pretty good too.

What a wonderful, interesting 5 days away with many laughs, incidents, weather worries, changes of plans but most of all great company with liked minded people sharing the experience. Thank you to all who came and made it so memorable.

Note: This trip was made even more possible by the kind offer and loan of Chris's BMW so Howard and Julie could ride 2 up. The Moto Guzzi was waiting on parts so Howard would have ridden something not pillion orientated. Julie was committed to driving back-up, however, with the escalating fuel costs it would have been a much more expensive exercise towing the trailer. With our very heartfelt thanks to Chris and Cherrie for the loan, we did indeed have fun.

POSTSCRIPT

In recent times this was our third Wander. I resurrected the Wander back in 2022 with many suggestions from my co-pilot errr.... Pilot.... how about Lead rider.

In the very early years Early 2000's.... the WOW sprung from an idea from Graeme and Sue Cramp to have a leisurely 4-5 day ride before the Christmas holidays to wrap up the rides for the year. Initially it was only for Classic bikes on historic plates.

The first wander started with 6 or so riders. No bookings were made and there was no backup car or trailer, and we stayed in cabins in caravan parks. We just meandered around the countryside, stopping when we felt like it or when someone broke down. Luckily breakdowns were few and far between but running repairs were mostly on the side of the road by many hands; tools came from all sorts of hidden pockets and lots of advice was given.

Many wanders followed, Howard and I have probably attended at least 10 Wander tours over the years. Some have been down the coast, several through the Snowy mountains staying at Jindabyne as a hub, or down the Murray with a day trip on a riverboat, country towns and villages, over the mountains into Victoria several times, several up north Mudgee way and as far as Tamworth and out west to Albert and many others usually with a couple of museums thrown in. The wanders have evolved with the addition of planning, bookings, back-up vehicles, tools, refreshments and more riders with a wider variety of bikes.

Many, many people have contributed to the planning of these wanders over the years, but one particular series was boosted by the able backup support by Bronwyn's dad Terry Hancock. Terry will always remain in my memory as a gentle, kind soul and the one who saved me on the highway north of Gundagai after a sudden deflating of my back tire on the little CB Honda, I really did have wobbly legs after that episode but amazingly I didn't drop the bike when I pulled up and being the last day I decided to take the free ride home.

Only time will tell how the WOW will evolve. The next bigger CRCG tour is being planned for 2027 to Tasmania of about 14 days total in around the end of February/early March. The last really big bike tour we had was also to Tasmania but that was back in 2003, definitely about time we had another one. There will be more information on this in the next few months so keep an eye out for it.