

Round-up from the regions

On the weekend of 19–20 March, the Fleche Opperman All Day Trial was held in all mainland states. Conditions were widely variable but all teams approached the event with the same resilience, determination—and sense of fun.

Queensland

Sandy Vigar and Dino Morgante

A dreary overcast and cold day, with just a tiny hint of rain, greeted the Opperman teams for this year. Four teams took part this year with two All Day Trial teams (Team Slo and Right Out Of Control) and two Petit teams (Miss Kitty and the Bearded Bikers, and The Folly), of which one was a foray into dirt riding. Three teams started from the Brothers Leagues Club at Ipswich, with the Petit Dirt team starting from Belmont. However, it was not long after the ride start when the wet weather soon moved in to make conditions just a little more challenging.

The dirt Oppy team, The Folly, experimented with riding half dirt/half road under the Petit Opperman ride rules in attempting a challenging 198 km expedition. This option included changing to MTB or road for the surface being ridden with a support vehicle transporting the bikes to various checkpoints. As it rained for most of the day the



Miss Kitty and the Bearded Bikers: Sue May, Dino Morgante, Peter Jenkins and Lawrence Hennelly

dirt section of the course was very wet and slowed down the riders considerably. After missing checkpoints due to the off-road conditions the route was changed to mitigate safety concerns raised over continuing off road. The ride was eventually abandoned at 104 km after an incident involving the loss of brakes on one rider's bike due to the volume of water on a section of steep bitumen road. Nonetheless, we applaud their pioneering spirit and look forward to seeing them having another go next year.

The Petit Oppy team, Miss Kitty and the Bearded Bikers, had a hoot of a time as usual, trying not to let the rainy conditions dampen the team's spirit on their 183 km journey. Apart from taking nearly one hour to travel the first 8 km, thanks

to several punctures, the rest of the ride seemed to play out without too much drama. With most of the ride travelling through areas like Rosewood, Lowood and following or crossing tributaries from the Wivenhoe Dam, there were many sobering reminders of the devastation and carnage left from the heavy flooding during January. Once pristine creeks and valleys were now left scoured and scarred, some still with whitegoods jammed in the tree tops. An overnight stay at the Country Comfort Motel provided them with soothing hot showers, a restaurant meal and a good night's sleep. The last day's ride saw the team leave Rosewood meeting up with other team members at the Brothers Leagues Club at Ipswich.

Team SLO commenced the day well with five riders quickly reduced to four after the team captain, due to sickness, pulled out before the ride start. If that was an omen for an interesting ride ahead, then the route added to that with some challenging and significant climbs, particularly in first half of the 368 km route. The weather did not help with rainy conditions most of the day and no support for riders except at 285 k control (Dayboro). One rider abandoned at the 243 km control and was collected along the way, eventually meeting up the remaining riders in Dayboro. The next stop for the riders was at Samford where, due to sheer exhaustion, the riders ended up sleeping on concrete drive at the servo, which meant there was no time to rest at 342 k control (Westlake). Riders became separated and had some navigation problems on bike path between Toowong and Westlake.

Team Right Out of Control had the aim of completing the first 500 km Oppy in Queensland. Unfortunately, the team were confounded by the horrid weather which involved severe thunderstorms and flash flooding, closing roads and requiring a route change as well as slowing the riders down. They did however manage a very creditable 469 kms (a new Queensland record), with three of the five team members finishing.

Most riders enjoyed the post Oppy breakfast at Brothers Leagues Club on Sunday morning (when the weather had, of course, cleared to a lovely day). All riders are looking forward to having another go next year.

Western Australia

Tony Gillespie

The Western Australian Oppy contingent for the 2011 event included 20 riders comprising three OADT teams and two Petit Oppy teams. Conditions were pleasantly mild, a welcome relief from the long, hot summer in the West.

The order of the day (and night) for the two Petit Oppy teams and two of the three OADT teams was for a congenial affair involving leisurely riding over an assortment of routes. The most talked about team was led by Eamonn McCloskey.