

Home and away

Horizons Unlimited

10th Anniversary traveller's meeting

In September 2013 around 220 seasoned adventure riders met to celebrate the amazing group known as Horizons Unlimited. When it comes to adventure riding, these guys are the real deal. Mick Jorgensen thought he'd have a look and see.

Top: Stories were being told and knowledge shared while ever anyone was awake.

Top below: A likely looking crew, and all keen to share their experiences and hard-won knowledge.

Below: Wonder who was camping in the 44.



Distances don't scare Australian riders much. The size of this enormous continent invites long-distance touring. But have you ever considered crossing another continent?

Some years ago I got the idea I'd like to travel overland from Australia to Europe, and I started to let Google and the Internet help. In my searching I came across an organisation called Horizons Unlimited, set up to help motorcycle travellers globally.

The website is very helpful. It has mountains of information and people with experiences

they're willing to share, as well as travellers on the go seeking clarification on visa issues, local contacts and a host of other things.

Show time

Horizons Unlimited holds yearly get-togethers all over the world, and in Australia a meeting has been held annually for the last 10 years. I decided to go to the 2013 event in Dayboro, Queensland, in the last weekend of September. For me the opportunity to meet and talk with people who'd planned and completed overland travel was very exciting.

A lot of questions arise when you try to get your head around what it entails to travel overland to Europe. Which route to take? What spares would be recommended given some sort of balance between probability of failure and space available? What time of year to travel? How are visas issued? And so on.

So with a head full of questions I arrived on the trusty KLR650 with tent and sleeping bag, and as it turned out, so did over 200 other interested folks. The event was held at the showground and there was ample space for camping and an excellent facility for presentations and meetings.

Words and images: Mick Jorgensen

Crack up

A detailed program was on display and it outlined the various forums and presentations planned for the weekend. That meant you could join the forum most relevant to your travel plans or interest area, and Horizons Unlimited had arranged a knowledgeable person to head the forum in each section.

These sessions were excellent. For example, the forum I attended was headed up by Richard Winter. Richard had travelled by V-strom across Russia, China and Indochina to Australia, and he was able to advise on what and what not to do. Interestingly, many of the travellers started with small trips that then grew into major excursions. Peter and Kay Forward started with a trip on their Harley Davidson Electra Glide to Malaysia and Indonesia 15 years ago and have now had the motorcycle to 193 countries, clocking up 640,000km. That probably deserves a spot in the *Guinness Book Of Records* and potentially a Sore Backside award.

Good stuff

It was also an eye opener to walk around and look at people's bikes and equipment, particularly



Left: Luggage and camping gear were big features of the gathering.

to identify which of the many manufacturer claims of equipment longevity actually proved to make the distances. Several luggage suppliers were represented with particular focus on aluminium panniers and mounting systems to suit various bikes, from the large 1200GS to smaller rides. A lot of goodies had been donated to a charity raffle and the Pader Orphans Project received more than \$1000 as a result.

The beginning

Horizons Unlimited was founded by Canadians Grant and Susan Johnson, and they entertained the crowds with tales of the many continents they've travelled on their trusty R80GS as well as every kind of tip on how to live on the road for long periods. They have continued to help travellers on a daily basis via their Horizons Unlimited website where global travellers meet every day. It's quite amazing to realise just how many people actually travel the globe on two wheels, and just how many are Australians.

Up to you

So after three days of inspiration, entertainment and fun I realised it doesn't really matter what bike you chose, how skilled a rider you are, your age, your preparation or any other limitation you can think of – someone has proven it can be done.

A bloke from Sydney ventured cross-country and rode from Sydney to London on a Postie bike. A lady aged 60 circumnavigated the American continent, and a fellow crossed Russia on a 1948 Indian.

Ultimately the only limitations you have are the ones you place on yourself.

ADV


Log on

For all the up-to-date info and discussion at Horizons Unlimited, log on to www.horizonsunlimited.com.



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