

Hi gents

A small article for the Club mag.

Last year my brother Malcolm made a lot of changes to his WLA race bike and it has been performing better than we expected on the race track. With this in mind my mother suggested we all go to Lake Gairdner and have another attempt at the records on the salt.

A little bit of history first; just like the "Class C Rules" when we road race our Indians and Harleys, it directly follows USA rules. Salt lake has been using the same rules for most of last century. In the USA they use four Salt lakes with Bonneville being the best well known.

In Australia we only use Lake Gairdner in S.A. This lake is 180 km long however only the southern tip is used.

My first visit to "the big white dyno" was in 2005 when I was assisted by Malcolm and Richard Nicholls. I was fortunate to be able to set a record of 112.923 mph using methanol fuel and to this date that record hasn't been beaten in Australia or the USA.

The following year I couldn't get a pit crew so my mother assisted me although she couldn't push the bike fast enough with a 36T engine sprocket to start the runs. Fortunately Ray Isles and Hairy Mick were there as spectators and assisted me all the time.

It is most important to have a pit crew at the salt, the work load is immense and the gear you have to carry is considerable. You have to camp in a sheep paddock and you need to be self sufficient, water, food, garbage disposal, generator, bunding tanks under fuel drums, drop sheets under all vehicles and shade tents are but a few issues to manage. In fact my van and covered trailer were packed full.

My 86 year old mother was aware our bikes were going OK and that last year some attempts were made at the records for our class so she suggested the three of us take the long trek back to the salt.

On the first day, Thursday we drove to Mildura and the following day to Port Augusta. Early on the third day we headed west to Iron Knob. From Iron Knob you head NNW on VERY dusty, rutted and rocky roads for about four hours until met by the beautiful white salt lake.

Because the event is run by volunteers all entrants are expected to assist in the running of the event. Mal and I completed the tasks allotted to us on the day of arrival.

Finally on Monday morning racing gets underway! But not so fast, the timing gear isn't working. Following more technical delays we finally get under way but there is a tail wind so records can't be set. After waiting all day Malcolm and I both make one pass each at over 110 mph.

Tuesday was hot and we waited seven hours in the sun to have one run each Mal ran 112 mph but they botched the time keeping and it didn't stand. My bike ran 105 mph which is 1 mph slower than my 2006 record on petrol. I was unable to improve on that record.

Mal was running his bike in different classes to me and he set a record of 109.5 mph in the vintage 750cc petrol class.

I ran my bike with one cylinder disabled and got a speed of 63 mph which got me into a smaller capacity class.

Peter Birthwhistle was running Lindsay's latest creation and they were assisted by Toni and Hairy Mick. Peter ran 150 mph on his second run however they struck electrical trouble and a cam lobe came loose so they left early.

The weather this year was very kind as the temperature did not exceed 40 deg. (the temperature is generally in excess of 40 deg.); it was 8 deg. at night.

On the return trip we decided to travel back through Broken Hill for a change of scenery however it still takes two and a half days.

If you want to learn more about salt racing look up the DLRA web site Dry lake Racers Association.

OH! Mum still can't push the bike fast enough to start it.

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