

Mud, Dust but smiles all round is the Key for the 21st KTM Sunny Corner

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Sunny Corner is the premier rally of the NSW riding fraternity, and the organisers promoted this one as the coming of age celebration for one of the big guns of the trail bike calendar. Ironically, the first rally was initiated to support a fledgling local enduro scene, and grown from strength to strength of the last couple of decades.

The "21st" Sunny Corner went off with a bang, and certainly didn't disappoint in delivering one of the favoured weekends for avid dirt bikers.



I have attended every rally since 1998 (except the cancelled '01 event), and each and every time it delivers a unique riding experience. First timers at this years event wouldn't believe the quagmire faced in previous years. The recent drought delivered a new adventure, with new stories.

My first rally was an intimidating affair. Hundreds of bikes herded between flags, with Glen Partridge and his Dad, Joe controlling the bull run. Looking around at this years rally, it was quite obvious who were rally virgins. Their faces told everything. On with the show.



The EMD crew for the day was Rob Mendham (TM530), Dave Lincoln (WR250), James Rensen (KTM380EXC), and myself (Berg FE450), with Trent Johnstone and Brett Monaghan playing interference with us throughout the day.

First impressions count. We all know they do. With nearly one thousand bikes someone has to have the first get off, and obviously no one likes to be the bloke everyone talks about in the post- rally bench racing.

I thought long and hard about how to prevent this from occurring, and came to the conclusion that I should do my bit for charity. So

..... five hundred metres into loop one, rather than follow Rob's line around the rutted out swamp, I decided to deviate a little to the right. Believe me, it was always my intention to bury my front wheel in a hole masquerading as a puddle. My cartwheel over the bars was timed to perfection - as planned. Then proving my versatility, I impact tested the ZacSpeed backpack, which cushioned the landing perfectly. Two corked thighs (from the bars) was a small price to pay in my continued endeavour to make all the punters out there feel at ease, no matter how average your riding ability. If I perform some Husaberg induced gymnastics, it puts the rest of you at ease. No thanks required.

A little dampening of enthusiasm proved beneficial, because dust was the "Catch of the Day". No matter how well organised an event is, if there's little rain, dust will be an issue. Open fire trails were minimised, and some strong winds assisted with trail vision.



1Rob in full flight on the TM 530





The first loop of the day consisted of a variety of terrain. Some fast free flowing fire trail, lots of forest single trail, and a couple of technical rocky hill climbs were included. There was enough variety to please all levels of rider with a multitude of Easy/Hard sections. The hard sections weren't in themselves difficult, but with the amount of bikes and riders in various states of disarray, had their tricky moments.





In following Dave up one such rocky hill, I noticed him starting to get a little messy, and he appeared to be heading for a fallen tree. My best option was to try to maintain momentum, and steer around him. At the last moment he decided that "my" line was a better option than a pine tree, and attempted to lay across the track, still semi-coupled to his bike. He then got up close and personal with my Motoz Tractionator front tyre. The meeting didn't go well for him, the resulting damage used for sympathy purposes throughout the day, particularly with our "EMD Pit Chicks".



. 2 "Oh did he, naughty boy"

Due to the ever present dust, the amount of riders, and personal safety, overtaking opportunities were relatively scarce. Considering the range of riding ability, I found that most riders worked in well together. Slower riders were quick to move aside, and faster riders passed with as little roost as possible (generally).

On return to the meet area, a quick refuel and maintenance session was needed. Pity help the those that forgot to bring a spare air filter. I took two, and both of them look very ordinary.

Lunch was once again provided by the Wallerawang Public School P&C. It's a huge weekend for these guys and gals, who cater over the entire weekend. They did an awesome job, thankyou.

The Expo area did appear a little smaller than last year, surprising considering the excellent marketing opportunity for any distributor, manufacturer, or retailer. There aren't many opportunities to make contact with nearly one thousand shoppers of bike related products, so

those that attended reaped the fruits of their labour with strong sales. Sponsors that had stalls included, Roc Stompa, Technik Suspension, Sutto's Motorcycles, Orange KTM, Highway Performance Motorcycles, Undecided Clothing, Acerbis, ADB, & Torque Motorcycles.



A big thankyou must go to Todd and Team from Torque Motorcycles in Lithgow. Robs TM250 developed a last minute electrical problem, and Todd came to the rescue in the form of his personal 2007 TM530. You couldn't keep the smile from Rob's face the entire day. The big girl (the bike, not Rob) has a reputation as a bit of a handful, but Rob reports nothing but praise in all aspects of the bike. He is champing at the bit saving up for the 08 version. I'm glad he enjoyed the ride, because his Mrs. Has a policy – if you ride the rally, there's no riding Sally – if you know what I mean. Her names Meg, but that doesn't rhyme with rally!!

Robs elation with the TM must have triggered his charitable nature, because he pulled on a fluoro jersey, and helped with scrutineering and sweep riding. With the unexpected record numbers, the CTMCC was welcoming all assistance

The social aspect of these rallies is as big a drawcard as the rally itself. To some it is an annual getaway with some old mates, while to others it is a bike fraternity reunion, reuniting friends from previous rallies and places. Campers were spread through the surrounding forest, with Sunday morning giving some strong indications of heavy partying. From Roxby Downs, to Meadow Flat we all came for the same purpose. A great ride, awesome people, and a safe trip home. Hopefully there's a tick in each of these boxes for everyone, although there were a number of casualties, but none flagged as serious.

The lunch break is also a great opportunity to catch up with some friendly faces. Chris "Slim" Sutton was there, as was the legendary "Bobsled Dan", the super salesman from [Sutto's KTM/Husaberg](#). He had some extended partying on the Saturday night and looked like he had danced to the tunes of band "Camel Toe", for a touch too long. A broken "heartlidge" prevented him riding loop two. Classic scene of the pits was his girlfriend stirring his coffee so he didn't have to overexert himself. Service with a smile.



Ever present photographic extraordinaire Max Sullivan, from [motorcycleconsulting](http://motorcycleconsulting.com) was on hand, and trackside throughout the day capturing the excitement. Max even became the emergency coordinator for one unlucky rider who decked himself on one of the more rocky downhill sections. He was in a pretty ordinary way at the time, but hopefully came through without anything serious. Check out Max's website and take a look at yourself in full flight.

The afternoon loop was met with enthusiasm, and a casual start time meant riders were a little more spaced out. The first twenty kilometres was pretty rocky, no make that very rocky. A single track of relatively clean rock existed, but anything outside of that foot wide track was full of loose rocks of various sizes from marbles to footballs. I made numerous attempts on overtaking, each time getting past numerous riders only to end up beaten by the terrain. I ended complying and following the line.



Due to injury, I hadn't ridden for a number of weeks, and this rough track sapped me. The next twenty km's was more recovery than riding, but involved a lot of single trail, some of which was pretty technical. Big Trent overtook me in one section. Looking like Knighter at the A4DE, he went past like I was standing still, with balance and control that I will always envy, but never have. When this man is on fire, man is he quick. Mind you, Brett wasn't far behind. I can't comprehend how they maintain speed in the dust, I'd be scared stupid.



The last twenty five km's of loop two was fun. In these dusty conditions, the pine forest always seems to provide a bit of relief. A couple of creek crossings also washed the dust from the bikes, and gave me a photo opportunity. I think also the riders seemed a little more spaced out, which improved conditions heaps. A mixture of open trail, and single track was a great way to finish the day.



My lovely wife and kids were waiting in the pits on our return, so joy rides for the littlies occupied up to presentation time. After all it is a sport for the whole family!!



The prize draw was huge, and how good were the prizes. I don't know of any rally with this level of industry support. Roc Stompa Steering Dampers, Staintune Exhaust system, a helmet camera system, ZacSpeed Armour, were just the tip of the iceberg for this prizefest. In total the draw must have lasted over an hour!!! That's huge.

EMD is always ready to acknowledge the sponsors of these events. Without their support, these rallies couldn't operate. This years major sponsor KTM threw away their invoice books, and trailered up two KTM giveaways. The KTM50 mini adventurer for the raffle prize, and the 2008 450EXC for the major draw prize.

My little fella was extremely disappointed he didn't hook the KTM 50 raffle prize, but the winner was very pleased to accept it. The big draw of the day, the 2008 KTM450EXC was eagerly anticipated and the big fella was stoked to be the newest owner of this fine machine. "Banana's in Pyjamas" got he best dressed award.



Other sponsors of the event were ADB, Airtime Motor Clothing, Alloy MX, Barkbusters, BRT Racing, Black & Gold Country Cabins, DSMRA, Galfer, Highway Performance Bikes, Kelly Enduro Off Road Equipment, Kenda Tyres, KTM Trail Tours, Matrix Helmets, MMC Sports Photography, Motoz Tyres, MSC Steering Dampers, Multi Air Foam Filters, Forestry NSW, Putoline Oil, Raceline, Setup, , Sunny Corner Trail Tours, Undecided Clothing, Whipps Alloy Products, UniFilter Australia, Ballards, Bridgestone, Goldfren Disc Brakepads, Motorex, NRMA

Careflight, Recross Tyres, Staintune Racing Australia, TM Racing, VOR Motorcycles, Lithgow Visitor Information Centre, Orange KTM Polaris, Terra X, Tony Vickers, Mullholland Motorcycles, TJ Automotive, Watagans Bash, Watagans Tours, and finally my three favourite local bike shops Lithgow Bike Stop, Suttos Motorcycle Supply Penrith, and Torque Motorcycles Lithgow.



Rally sponsor from way back - Dave Wilson from Lithgow Bike Stop

The amazing Undecided Clothing rig once again was centre stage and used for all the official blurbs.

Well, done and certainly dusted for another year. Thanks to the organisers and volunteers for a job well done. I know there will be over 900 people ready to sign up for Sunny Corner 2008. Count me in.

Shane Corney
EMD Rally Raider