

Ride 456 Report – 19-20 October 2013

Penang Bike Weekend!

Hares: Wet Beaver and Phone Sex, supported by The Knights Of The Round Table (KOTRT)
KOTRT: Lisa, Pang, ST, Azmi, Hock Huat

Location: Penang, Malaysia

SBH: Goes Both Ways, Gail, Ants in Pants, Chris, Copy Cat, TI Joe, Fat Stuck Bastard, Shut the F@ck Up, DIY, Coo Chi Coo, Wan King, Bob, Steve

Guests: Maya, Les, Pat and non-rider, No Good

After many announcements and sufficient warning, the SBH finally made it all the way across the two waterways to Penang Island.

The Friday early arrivals started off with a banana leaf dinner at Passions of Kerala. The food was good and plentiful, so in anticipation of an early start on Saturday the group rolled into bed before 10pm! Great Friday night out!

Saturday morning was marked by moans of “I need coffee!”, “Why so early?” and “Aren’t we on vacation?” at 7am. Rumour says that it was the earliest weekend start of the year for some... All bikes packed, the Hashers endured a 50 minute drive to Gertak Sangul at the south-western tip of Penang, where they were met by the friendly crew of KOTRT (Knights Of the Round Table – We ride to eat and eat to ride. www.kotrt.com.my).

The introduction of the trail was simple: follow the leader, no markings, regroup when the first riders stop, otherwise stop when you don’t know where you are, and you will be picked up. Do not get lost.

After a short warm up climb the wet and slippery trail wound its way around durian, banana and rambutan plantations. Scared of the narrow path with a steep drop off to the side, STFU saw a difficult passage, looked at it (as if that would help...) and her bike did what it is supposed to do: it went where she looked. A first check after STFU and her bike were pulled back up to the trail revealed a badly sprained ankle. Nothing too bad. But a second look and loud screams made everybody think there was some serious injury. Which apparently there was – a broken nail! OMG! Hysteria was quickly calmed down, and half- dead STFU and her group of saviours met up with the front riders 15 minutes later. The authors are glad to hear that the ankle was indeed only sprained and nothing was broken.

After more muddy jungle sections the group followed the concrete path down back to sea level without any more injuries. As our Penang friends though the group was still looking fresh and strong, they offered us a short bonus climb to an old Hakka village. The weather gods were playing along, which avoided climbing in the sun and sent a heavy thunderstorm shower to cool us down. The only complaints of the French (who else would complain...) were: what is the point going up and down the same trail?? De rien...

The ride continued a few km on a back road in Balik Pulau, and then the real climbing started going up Genting Hill. Short and steep climbs are a favourite in Penang, and many of the flatland Singaporean riders became pushers. Luckily nobody got left behind...

The ride finished with a great overgrown single track downhill, followed by a very slippery concrete farmers’ trail. Several warnings of “slow, slippery” went unheard and Philip had his first wipe-out of the weekend, followed by a few swoosh-boom sounds from Shirley at the back.

After a 4 hour, 26km ride with 750m climbing the Hash had lunch at the famous Leaning House hawker. Although it looked a little upmarket for the Hash from the outside (according to Co Chi Co), the food was great and finished quickly.

The afternoon ride on Mount Erskine was not met with loads of enthusiasm, only 4 riders (Shirley, Bob, Steve, Co Chi Co) and the guiding Hare set off after a very brief shower and change of clothes at the stylish G Hotel.

The drizzling rain when we left the hotel turned into a big thunderstorm, and the beautiful overgrown trail was dark and wet. A sweet 3km single track climb brought the group up to 220m, and as the thunderstorm seemed to be sitting right on top of the hill we opted for a fast turnaround and blasted across the downhill track, more by feel than seeing anything.

Special thanks go to Wet Beaver and the friendly G Hotel staff, who welcomed the riders with warm clean towels and drinks!

Dinner was at the famous Bali Hai restaurant (If it swims we have it...) where you pick your fish and have it cooked for you. Exhausted we returned to the hotel before 10pm to be ready for another early ride.

The final ride on Sunday started at 7.15am for the slower, and 7.45am for the faster riders. We do need to discuss where Co Chi Co should be counted as he needed to be swept a lot... Three riders chose to sleep in and explore Penang – maybe not such a bad idea!

The jeep track up Penang Hill starts at the Botanical Garden and winds its way 730m up on 5.2km road. After 300m I heard a disgruntled “I am not fucking around with this today” from Wan King, and seconds later he passed the group going back down the hill towards bed. Maybe another smart move. Bob was close to the same idea, but decided to continue on up.

After only 1.5 hours of riding we regrouped at the top, and began our hard earned downhill along Tiger Hill towards Iron Cross. Again the calls “slow, very slippery” were not heard, and Philip had his second wipe out of the weekend... We hope his thumb is back to normal shape by now!

The single track to Iron Cross offered another 300m of climbing, after which we were rewarded by the longest single track downhill in Penang on the Terrapin Trail. The Hares had ordered a few fallen trees to make the ride more challenging, so there were some complaints about being on a hiking hash ☺

Once back on concrete trails the first group went straight back to the G Hotel for good German food (it is possible for one person to eat half a pork knuckle!), while the second group had another hawker lunch at the Asia Café in Air Itam.

Fed, tired and cleaned-up everybody arrived safely back in Singapore!

Special kudos go STFU for riding the first day with a badly sprained ankle, Fergus for incredible determination after 3 weeks of travel, no rides, and a little bulge in front, and the Hares Wet Beaver and Phone Sex for getting the trip organized.

Special thanks go to the Knights Of The Round Table (www.kotrt.com.my) - Pang, ST, Hock Huat, Lisa, Azmi and their friends who helped organize transport and food and did a fantastic job co-haring!

Scribed by,

Wet Beaver and Phone Sex

Gertak Sangul – Hakka Village



Mt. Erskine



Penang Hill – Terrapin Hill

