



## WIMA News August 2017

WIMA Estonia: thanks for a brilliant week of fun and games!



## WIMA International Rally, Estonia 2017 Report by Kathy O'Donnell

I've been to international rallies before and looked forward to this rally with much excitement. My husband, Al, found cheap Vietnam Airlines flights for \$1100 return. We flew into Frankfurt and caught a train to Claudia Fehrer's. Claudia, the International President, helped us buy a bike as Al worked out that it was cheaper to buy a second hand bike than to hire a bike for three weeks. We bought a 1984 Honda VFR. Al serviced it, packed tools and we added panniers. We had three days to get to Estonia to attend the pre-rally. We packed up the next morning, leaving a suitcase at Claudia's.

The weather was not kind: it was raining. Luckily we had wet weather gear. We rode around and around for about an hour and a half as we didn't trust the TomTom, but finally we were on the right route. The main highways were full of big trucks. Don't think I've ever seen that many at the same time. The speed limit certainly wasn't 100 kph. It seemed we could ride as fast as we liked. After a long day in the saddle (ooh my bum!) we arrive in Wroclaw, Poland. I had booked a fine hotel before we left home. We were very relieved when the bellman collected the luggage from the bike and carried it to our room. We dined in their dining room, decided on hamburgers and were asked if we wanted them with beetroot. Yes!

The next morning our destination was **Kaunas, Lithuania**. At our second stop the bike refused to start. Al had a volt meter and checked the battery. It was kaput! The voltage regulator was broken and the battery had cooked. This explained why Al's new boots were corroded: they had been covered with battery acid. A service station had free WiFi and I rang Maura Raniecka, WIMA Poland national president. She explained our problem to the staff. Since they did not sell batteries, Maura sent me a Google map with the location of the nearest motorcycle shop. I asked the staff to call me a taxi. Instead, they called a friend; two young men drove me to the motorcycle shop! I purchased a new battery for 300 zloty and new boots for myself for 400 zloty (Al got to wear my old ones). With a new battery onboard, we arrived in Kaunas late that night. We had trouble finding the hotel, were both tired and cranky and there was no nice young men to carry our luggage to the room. It was so late the kitchen was closed so we had hot chocolate from a machine and a stale croissant for supper.

Next morning our destination was the capital, **Tallinn, Estonia**. We were to meet Lee Skinner there. She was coming from Helsinki, Finland and sharing our accommodation that night. We left Lithuania in good weather but when we saw rain clouds we stopped to put on wet weather gear. We were joined by two women and a guy who were also riding. They donned their wet weather gear, put on plastic bags and secured them with gaffa tape. We introduced ourselves and said we were from Australia. They were from Russia. There was a car behind them with the other parent and children. The rain was so heavy! I have never had rain permeate my wet weathers but I did that day. Al said the rain was coming under the VFR windscreen. Our gloves were soaked. I had an idea to put on plastic gloves under our gloves as local service stations provide plastic gloves for people filling their cars with diesel. Another long and trying day in the saddle. We arrived safely in Tallinn. We had trouble finding our accommodation again. I used free WiFi to ring Lee on Messenger and she came to the street to fetch us, and got hot food for us. Thanks Lee.

### Pre-Rally Event

Lee and I rode off together the next day to attend the pre-rally. You can't blame the TomTom for taking you to the wrong place if you don't program it correctly. I had put the wrong town in the TomTom. We had a lovely ride in the country side, but we missed the first group. We came upon the second group by accident; I pulled into a service station because I saw bikes there and found the Japanese WIMA members. Hugs, smiles and greetings all round.

We ate and talked until the English WIMA members arrived, followed by WIMA Caracao members. I knew some of these people as I had met them at previous rallies. More smiles and hugs. Then the Estonians arrived to guide us to the ferry. An hour's sailing brought us to Kihnu Island.

### Kihnu Island

What's so interesting about this island is that the men leave the island to find work and an income for the family. It may be as a long distance sailor or building bridges/dams in another country. They're only home for a couple of months of the year. The women look after the house and the family in their absence. The island is so small that they find riding motorcycles and outfits is ideal. None of them have a motorcycle license or wear helmets. They kill seals and steal eggs to feed the family. The women carry on the traditions and ceremonies which involves lots of singing. There is three days of singing when a couple get married. We met group one and partied. I found Elsbeth Stussi from Switzerland, Uli from Austria and Terry and Anna from West Australia.

The next day we went on an open lorry tour of the island. We visited the light house, climbed to the top to admire the view, and visited a museum. Our guide told us about the culture of this very small island. We went to her house and had lunch: raw fish, caught that morning, barbequed beef, salad and rhubarb slice that her daughter had made. Back at our accommodation, we packed the bikes and returned to the mainland. We stayed in a motorcycle friendly hotel - lots of pictures and paraphernalia decorated the walls. We walked to Trahter Postipoiss, a Russian restaurant for dinner. Things were very lively and we enjoyed wine with our dinner. At our table we decided our name was Beth. ElSBETH from Switzerland. LisBETH from GB, KeikoBETH from Japan, UliBETH from Austria, LeeBETH and myself KathyBETH from Australia. Then sometime during the night we decided it was our birthday. Wished ourselves happy birthday numerous times during the rally and sang happy birthday as well. Giggled all night.



### The Rally

We broke into small groups and rode to Janeda, about an hour away. More old friends to greet. There were just under 200 participants at the rally. Al picked up Ange, NSW, from the airport in Lee's hire car. Moira and Margaret, Victoria, rode to the rally from Poland with the Polish WIMA members. Liv, SA, was already there. We ate at the tavern a la carte. The small kitchen had trouble coping with so many, but we were kept busy enjoying each other's company. We had a live band that night and every night thereafter. The sun didn't go down until 11 o'clock each night and sunrise was at 4.30am. There were many activities planned for the week ahead. Al and I didn't do everything so I'll mention some highlights.

The **bus tour of Tallinn** was very popular. There were three bus loads. Our guide told us about the history and culture of Estonia. Did you know that the Tallinn harbour does not freeze in the winter and that Estonia is the gateway to the rest of Europe? That's why the Germans and the Russians wanted it. To get rid of the Soviets, the Estonians staged a peaceful protest in the 80s, and used singing to pressure the Russians to leave. In the early 90s they were finally successful.

Estonia grows trees and has lots of rocks. But since this doesn't make a lot of money the Estonians have invested their time developing internet programs like Skype. They welcome immigrants but don't get handouts. Estonians don't give money to those wishing to build a church so there are no mosques.

We had a lot of food at the **Welcome Dinner**, Estonian of course – herring, pressed meats and very flavoursome vegetables. Claudia our international president was unable to attend the Rally. Asa Ohqvist, as Vice President, presided. Entertainment was Estonian dancing and good music.

We went on a 100 kilometre motorbike **Treasure Hunt** using written directions and a list of questions. Our first stop was an art gallery, where we had to count the concrete suitcases outside. It's called "100 suitcases" but there aren't 100 there. Each time you counted it you came up with a different number. The correct number was 78. In the gallery we had to find particular pictures and discover who painted them. Next stop, a maritime museum. In the back room was a "rug" made of rope wound around and around itself in a circle. Guess how many metres long the rope was? We then had to look at the statue behind the museum. What kind of animal was it? Dog, deer or rabbit. It was a deer. Then we had two manor houses to visit. There were six pictures on the question sheet. We had to discover where the pictures were taken. All in all a lovely day, fine weather and interesting way to explore the Estonian culture.

**Trash Night** was as entertaining as ever. GB played drums and made music out of household items like bins, room keys and washing up things. We all had a sing along. Australia read a poem by Banjo Patterson. The Estonians wore tutus and did ballet. Sylvia from USA recited cute American poems. We "visited" the opera in Vienna and waltzed with each other. The Germans, all 75 of them, sang a song about WIMA that they had written themselves. The even wheeled in a motorcycle. The Japanese danced. Great fun.

We had a free day during the week. However there were activities available if you were interested. Some lucky people **test-rode BMWs**. Some people did **off road training**. Some people rode their own bikes **on a race track**. We did a **tour of the Janeda mansion** and heard the story of Marie Zakrevskaja Von Benckendorff. A woman before her time, courted by Gorky and H.G. Wells. She turned them down every time they proposed! I attended the National Presidents meeting. There was some angst this year. Asa had proposed herself as our new international president. Much discussion ensued. A vote was taken. Asa is now our International President. Congratulations Asa.

The **Parade Day** was spectacular! We rode to Rakvere Castle. Open this link and go to minutes 21.20 – 24.54: [WIMA Rally parade and visit to the Rakvere castle](#). It is just a fabulous sight to see all WIMA members from all over the world riding together. We had admission to the castle included so after parking the bikes we wandered across the road to enjoy it. However, a couple of Australians went searching for coffee first and found a quaint bakery with cups and saucers as light fittings. They also sold liquor and cigarettes!

The **Farewell Dinner** was again, a great feast. The Finnish women put on a great performance, in sailor uniforms and blond wigs, to invite us to the rally in Finland next year. We are planning and saving for it already! Al and I left the next day in the company of three Swiss women. We rode with them to Poland and then to Austria. We caught an overnight train from Vienna to Feldkirch, Austria and rode to Elsbeth's home in Switzerland.

If you haven't been to an international rally yet I hope you go at least once. It's an experience that very few people have.

## Estonia Rally

### Watch the action

On the local TV channel TV3: [WIMA Rally parade and visit to the Rakvere castle.](#)

The link above contains interviews with Keiko, the national president of WIMA Japan, Elsbeth, member of WIMA Switzerland, Liv, member of WIMA Australia and Anneli, President of WIMA Estonia. It starts with an advert, then scroll forward to minutes 21.20 – 24.54 for the relevant section of the programme. (From the blog of the WIMA President Asa Ohqvist)

**How many suitcases?** Below: UK members Sheonagh & Pat on the treasure hunt



## Sites for travel and adventure

### Horizons unlimited

<http://www.horizonsunlimited.com/get-inspired>

See where UK WIMA and Horizons Unlimited members Sheonagh Ravensdale and Pat Thompson have travelled through Asia and South America <http://new.horizonsunlimited.com/tstories/dusty-old-bags>

### Linda Bootherstone-Bick

WIMA Life member. Read her story at <http://www.horizonsunlimited.com/events/snowy-2016> (scroll down)

### Women ADV riders

<https://womenadvriders.com/the-woman-behind-the-elektrogirl/>

### General advice for Australian riders

[www.motorbikewriter.com](http://www.motorbikewriter.com)

For those travelling interstate the website [australia.gov.au](http://australia.gov.au) has links to road rules for all states and territories. Some are explained in videos as well.

<http://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/transport-and-regional/roads-and-road-transport/road-rules>