

Damir Djikic	Honda CBR1000	Chris Pointon	Suzuki GSXR1000
Misho Zrasic/Pina Garasi	Honda CBR1000	Ron Merrett	BMW S1000RR
Paul Southwell (rear)	Honda CBR1000	Sumit Narang (1 <sup>st</sup> ride)	Yamaha R6
Geoff Jones (leader)	Yamaha R1		<i>7 bikes, 8 people</i>

Dry on the south side of the Macedon ranges as I head for Whittlesea to lead Cliff's ride due to previous events near a paper mill in deepest Gippsland. Weather forecast typical of this year's winter: cold and wet

Paul did a better job than I at the start rider pre-ride brief; it seems I mentioned recent events too often and may have been creating a wrong impression.

First stop Trentham so it's off through the Eden Park twisties, washed clean by the recent rains, and on to Wallan to pick up the flowing road to Romsey. Dry road conditions along here allowing some exploration of grip. Across the main road at Romsey and on past Cameron's corner to Hesket and in to the wet. Steady rain and suddenly the grip is gone. Time to adjust as we turn up Straws Lane. Sumit loses the front here and is helped by Chris, the R6 surviving the drop well. Some delay at the end of Straws Lane, then in to Woodend at a very sedate pace, although I noticed a camera flash from a parked 4x4 just before we regrouped.

Paul convinced Sumit, who was in jeans and not equipped for the wet, to leave and head for home. Hope to see him again; more Yamahas needed to correct the current Honda bias. Damir seemed keen to visit the bakery but I was following Cliff's route so it was on to the sodden and slippery Ashbourne Road following a local car as the chance to overtake was restricted by the wet. Gloves slowly absorbing moisture and various leaks in the riding gear noted. Visors no longer clear as the temperature drops and the rain persists.

Trentham at last and the place is packed, cars everywhere. Pina heads for the coffee place in the lane with Misho. Paul, Damir and I join Chris and Rod in the bakery which is nice and toasty. Pastie consumed, I wander down to the lane to find Misho and Damir out having a smoke. Also some eye candy noted as four ladies exit the café. Pina's coffee order takes forever as the place is packed but eventually the caffeine hit is completed. Pina, now thawed out and sparking requests a change in the ride route: anywhere that is dry will do, but don't tell Misho who requires a long riding fix on Sundays it seems. I was not wanting to vary Cliff's route but conceded the thought of dry roads at lower elevations was tempting. So we turned left at the end of Trentham's main street and headed south through the Wombat Forest to Blackwood and Greendale, past Cindy's site at Dales Creek and out of the rain. Chris headed home from Trentham.

Dry but still the chance of rain as we blast along the Pentland Hills road through Myrniong and drop down to Bacchus Marsh for fuel and lunch. Paul intervened as the talk "crossed the line", as he put it.

Rain clouds threatening so on to the bikes and off to Gisborne via the Bullengarook road, through Riddells Creek to Clarkefield and the start of the Wildwood road. Not too wet here except for the single lane bridge that had no grip at all - seems to have been resurfaced with glass. Ride end at Bulla servo after about 240km. Thanks for the ride route Cliff; I hope to do the full ride sometime. Thanks to Paul for rear riding and noting how clean Rod's bike looked compared with the others. Better aerodynamics maybe.

Talking about clean, I have fitted a full set of Chinese fairings to the R1. Not quite a complete copy, but close; a different shade of red and no pearl in the white, some extra ducts and matte black bits but shiny as. The decision to improve the cosmetics due to Val buying up big at Focus Furniture and so gifting me the fairing.

The May issue of Performance Bikes fitted a set to a current model R1 and seemed happy with the result. They costed original equipment replacement of the plastics at 2044 GBP, the Chinese option was 410 GBP. My cost was \$608 delivered and some shed time to remove the original, swap all the fasteners and fit the new units.