

Tasmania 4th – 14th March 2011 Part 4

Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000RR	Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10
Boyd Witzerman	Honda CBR1000RR	Mark Copeland	Kawasaki ZX10
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000RR	Dave Ward	Kawasaki ZX6
Ian Payne	Honda CBR1000RR	Rob Langer	KTM 950 SE
Ron Johnston	Honda CBF1000	Marc Marais	Triumph 675 Street Triple
John Willis	Honda Varedero 1000	Julie Johnston	Ford Fiesta
Ben Warden	Honda CBR954RR	Julie Warden	Magna station wagon
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600RR	Barbara Peters	Holden Commodore
Kurn Bridgeman	Honda CBR600RR		<i>14 bikes, 3 cars, 17 people</i>

Day Nine, Sunday. Beauty Point. Up bright and early this morning. Cliff had to change a rear tyre on his bike and I had to change a front on mine. After tyres were changed, Cliff started fitting the wheel in his bike. He needed a hand but I told him that he hadn't balanced the wheels. So we dropped the wheel back out, balanced it, and installed all over again.

Soon it's time to hit the road. From Beauty Point, we rode to Beaconsfield, across the Tamar Bridge avoiding the dead possum. Tassie is the road kill capital of Australia, with dead animals everywhere. We cruised down the East Tamar Highway to Launceston via some interesting back roads, stopping for fuel.

From Launceston we headed for Scottsdale stopping at Sidling Range Lookout. The road wasn't too bad. (*Ever the one for understatement, some considered this one of the best roads on the trip ...Ed.*) Just what a bike rider ordered, apart from being wet in places and some of the road needing work, it wasn't too bad.

At the lookout the views were quite good. A few motor homes were parked there as well as caravans. I hadn't been here before. Rob Langer pulled into the car park and parks with the rest of us, except he got off on the wrong side of his bike, lost balance and fell over. Rob was alright, but the gear lever punched a hole in the side cover, oil everywhere. What a mess! We picked up his bike, bent the lever out, and Ben temporarily repaired the hole using silver packaging tape. Started up the bike and it didn't leak... amazing... Seeing is believing. Rob said he would go to Scottsdale and then head back to Beauty Point.

Paul and Ian left us at Scottsdale for the Beaconsfield Mine Tour. Rob was so pleased with his bike he decided to do the rest of the day's ride.

The main street was empty apart from a couple of cars. We pulled up outside a shop and made ourselves comfortable. Someone went in and bought a hamburger with the lot for \$5.00. It looked the goods, so everyone else did too. Yummy.

Soon it was time to go again, but it was trying to rain, so Pina parked her bike and pillioned with Misho. Smart person, saving wear and tear on her bike's tyres.

Scottsdale to Derby. Long and winding roads. Stretch your legs on this one. From Derby we took a trip out to Gladstone where we stopped for a little while. We even surprised an on-coming policeman in a Pajero but he was on a mission and not concerned (or not carrying radar). Not a bad road from memory.

On to Moorina and through the Weldborough Pass. What a brilliant road this is! John Willis was following me for a while, mucked up a corner, and I did not see him till we reached St Helens.

There was a very fast black VE Commodore, HSV, 325Kw. I thought I would follow him for a little while. How wrong I was! After about three corners he was gone. It must have been a local to handle the car so well, and at that speed. Cliff, Ben and Misho had the same idea, but it blitzed them too. Cliff said they couldn't maintain the same corner speed, better grip with four wheels compared with two.

Misho was trying to pass me near the end of the twisty bit, but I wouldn't let him pass. He said to me at St Helens that he was getting tired with riding two up and it was taking its toll on him.

At St Helens we stopped for fuel and refreshments, reliving the ride when we noticed the same black Commodore parked across the road up the side street opposite the servo, complete with girlfriend in the passenger seat. Even more impressive.

About half an hour had gone by, and it was time to head back to Beauty Point – back through Derby and Scottsdale. About 26 km out of St Helens we visited the Pyengana Cheese Factory. It was an interesting place, and obviously very popular judging by the number of tourists.

Not far from the Cheese Factory was the Pub in the Paddock. We didn't visit; save that for next time. Instead we continued on to St Columbia Falls, another 10 km down the tight and twisty road. Most of the crew went for a walk to the Falls, while a few of us stayed behind and relaxed. Apparently, we missed a good walk and view of the Falls. Maybe next time.

Back out to the Tasman Highway, through the Weldborough Pass again to stop at Derby. Coffee for Misho and Pina. Final leg of the journey: Scottsdale, Lilydale, Tamar Bridge and back to Beauty Point. That evening we dined on fish and chips, hamburgers, eating at the tables by the foreshore. Very pleasant.

Later on, it was back to the motel to get organised for the trip home tomorrow.

Day Ten, Monday. Back to reality. Most of us were up early, with the women driving cars leaving at different times for the 90 km drive to Devonport. The bikes left just before 7am. The weather was cold and foggy. At Beaconsfield we turned off and went the back way through Holwell to Frankford. It was slow going in places due to the cold weather and poor visibility. Thank god for heated hand grips. The fog was creating havoc with my visor. From memory I took my glasses off as well, it was so difficult for me to see. I had to wait for Robbie a couple of times for him to catch up.

We all arrived safely at Devonport, got ourselves on the boat, and the rest is history. I enjoyed myself, travelled a few more roads than last time, and spent more money on food than I did on fuel. Hard to believe, but true. That evening we arrived back in Melbourne to harsh reality.

A special thanks to Ben who organised the trip, for all his time and effort he put into it. I hope everybody else enjoyed themselves and each other's company. Until next time then.

Ron Johnston