

## Walhalla      Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> August , 2011

Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Matt Considine (1 <sup>st</sup> ride)	Honda CBR600
Tony Stegmar	Honda CBR1000	Marc Marais (leader)	Kawasaki ZX10
Damir Djikic	Honda CBR1000	John Willis	Kawasaki Z1000
Tim Emons	Honda CBR1000	Jason Peters	Kawasaki ZX9
Ian Payne	Honda CBR1000	Roman Biaroza	Kawasaki GPx250
John Rousseaux (rear)	Honda CBR1000	Chris Pointon	Suzuki GSXR1000
Nigel Oman (2 <sup>nd</sup> ride)	Honda CBR1000	Steve Mudford/Cindy Lee	Suzuki GSXR750
Ron Johnston	Honda CBF1000	Paul Sorrenson	Suzuki SV650
David Sansom (1 <sup>st</sup> ride)	Honda VTR1000	Dave Chisma	BMW F800ST
Ben Warden	Honda CBR954	Rob Langer	KTM 990 Adventure

Nothing like a forecast of 19 degrees and no rain predicted from six days out to entice all the regular riders, a few irregular ones and even a few new riders. 'Twas a magnificent sight.

At Berwick I fuelled up under the new process where you don't sign anymore for transactions less than \$35 (Coles and associated service associations), I set about capturing the list of riders. Luckily Marc was well down the track capturing ICE numbers and helped out with the three new riders. Pina added the bikes and it was all organised: 22 bikes and 23 riders. Even bigger than last week's 20/20.

And weren't there a lot of Hondas: 13 of 22, eight of them late model CBR1000s. Next most heavily represented mark was Kawasaki with four different models.

It was good to see **John Willis** back from riot torn England, safe and sound, on his "first" ride. Yes, we really are the lucky country. Must catch him later to talk plumbing, now that I have ripped off all the tiles and plaster and made a big mess. I just need someone to fix it!

**Paul Sorrenson** was back for his second ride of the year on his SV and so I reminded him of his overdue membership at Moe which he happily forked over. Thanks Paul.

**Damir** had been in **Tim**'s ear about leading another Dargo Epic early in December, a month after Towong. It was news to Tim but we negotiated for him to lead a week later. Now to organise the accommodation – the multiple houses variant and breakfast at the General Store. Keep your eye on the web site.

**John Rousseaux** staked his rear riding position early and had **Kate** there to ward off any threats. She hopes he will behave himself at the rear. All he does is develop strategies to go as fast or slow as he wishes, just like the rest of us, but while doing the rear riding position. More than once he arrived at a corner before the rest of the ride. As he is getting married on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November (Remembrance Day!) and building a house which is in the approval stage, he is making the most of his "free" time.

**Roman** rang me yesterday to confirm his suitability to complete this ride, given the technical challenges and length. We agreed riding to the first stop at Noojee after 110 km of twisty roads, and getting home again, was a fair day's work. He kept his end of the bargain. At morning tea he confirmed he was intending to purchase Dennis' old CBR600. Dennis was making the bike as safe as possible by putting new tyres on, installing new chain and sprockets, new front and rear pads, new steering head bearings and an oil change. Should be good for another 100,000 km! It's a Honda!

**Marc**, on his trusty new ZX10, lead a faultless ride with all the stops and starts in the right places. Technology is his friend as he plots previous challenging routes into his GPS for later retrieval and use. All the good roads and no incidents. By definition a good ride.

**Pina** is still struggling with confidence after The Crash and, there is no answer. Tight twisty, a smidge of gravel and wet corners through Powelltown didn't help. But the second leg offered drier, more open cross country style roads, better for building confidence. Her vain attempt to wrest the rear rider position off John failed. Lucky he had a logical argument to dissuade her.

**Steve Mudford** is battling the Suzuki's brakes, with too much lever travel and not enough span adjustment, to the point of potentially squashing his fingers. He bled them that morning before the ride but after 50 km was chasing steering issues. It looks like the brake fluid expanded causing the pads to bind on the disks. He recalled later that when racing Suzukis he learnt never to fill the master cylinder more than half full. He left the ride while diagnosing this issue but rejoined us at Noojee and completed the rest of the day without incident.

Google + is the Facebook killer, if you read the popular press. And the take-up has been phenomenal. I discussed this with **Cindy**, currently going through the throes of implementing an MSR Facebook page, soon to go live. Better the devil we know in the short term, it was agreed.

I had a chat with first time rider **Matt** on his CBR600 with a noisy exhaust system. He was looking for more power and considering a Power Commander but balking at the \$1000 to fit and retune. His aftermarket exhaust system was stealing power from the bottom end and throttle response was "fluffy"..

**David Sansom** on the VTR had been recommended to us by **Mark Copeland** (fellow VTR rider). He was quiet, not a normal redhead attribute. It turned out we knew lots of people in the Quarter Litre Club, where some of our members have ended up over the years.

Completing the trio of first time riders was **Nigel** (second ride, actually, but it has been over a year since his last ride with us). Riding a red CBR he blended in with the other red CBR amongst the other eight CBRs. As the day progressed, he worked his way towards the back of the ride as the members kept on keeping on while fatigue and survival became the friends of the new riders.

**Damir** wound up **Jason** before the start after Jason noted that he had to replace his battery before venturing out on the ride. Unreliable Kawasaki crap bike, etc. Sure enough when it came time to leave Noojee, Damir had no electrics whatsoever. Battery? Battery terminal? Or worse, stator/regulator. We left **Misho** to investigate with instructions to meet us at Moe for lunch. Damir never really let on but it seems that he left his ignition on, including heated grips, which in no time flattened the battery. It took a struggle but they eventually found some jumper leads, disconnected the headlight, and made rapid time to meet us in Moe only ten minutes after we had arrived.

President **Ian** is still suffering after three weeks with a wretched cold. At least he has finally gone to the doc and is on antibiotics to clear up the chest infection. He left at the first stop to celebrate his daughter's birthday.

Looking over the list I see a couple of names I didn't catch up with during the day. I came up behind the Ulysses brigade (I qualify too, so I can say it), **Paul** and Ian dawdling along up the Gembrook to Launching Place Road. Wanting to maintain momentum, I slipped around Ian (he saw me coming), and then Paul (who didn't see me coming). This sounds okay, but it was in the middle of a tricky uphill off-camber ess, with an on-coming 4WD that appeared out of the shadows. No issue for me but possibly not a good look. Sorry Paul.

**Rob Langer**, as usual, added colour to the plethora of black bikes, by riding his bright orange KTM. Recently back from Europe, he was entertaining us with his holiday highlights.

Which brings me to the 954 odometer reading (if it had a functioning one) clicking over 250,000 km on the ride. I keep track of the mileage via the trip meters, logging the numbers later at home. Rumour has it that the bike is producing a decent white cloud of smoke on down changes, consistent with valve guide seals perished or worn. Of course, I can't verify the rumour as I never see the smoke. But, the motor is burning 300 ml of oil every thousand km or so, so there could be something in it. I did get Ronny to confirm that it was white smoke, not black (fuel). I changed the motor at 172,000 km so this one has already done 84,000 km, if you include the original 6,000 km it had on it. It just has to last another 18 months and I'll start looking for a replacement bike, probably another Honda.

Not your standard writeup. Suffice to say we did all the good roads, took a few photos at Thomson Dam, visited Walhalla, got mixed up with the Harleys wobbling and grinding their way around corners, didn't see a policeman all day (road selection helped), did the Hill End section twice, finished at 5 pm heading into the blinding sun from Longwarry North, and generally had a great day. Thanks Marc.

**Ben Warden**