

Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Bill Kennedy	Kawasaki Z750
Jean Eldridge	Honda CBR1000	Jesvin George	Yamaha FZ6R
Mirko Strasser	Honda CBR929	Phil Hotschilt	Suzuki GSXR1300
Craig Morley	Honda VTR1000		<i>7 bikes, 7 people</i>

Paul briefed us on the route and when he asked for rear rider, Bill and I raised our hands. We both proudly claimed to be the slowest riders, though I found later we were both wrong. Bill took rear riding for Leg 1, long and fast sweepers to Seymour, and then I took over the rear rider position for Leg 2. My first time rear riding and I tried to recall the rear rider responsibilities I had once read.

It was pleasant weather and dry roads so everyone was riding really well. Soon after a corner mark I saw the Jean pulled over. A wasp had managed to get inside his boot and given a 'don't mess with me' warning. With the wound inspected and no sting detected, Jean continued riding in a slower fashion, his leg slightly painful. The second leg finished for lunch without further dramas. Jean got some medicine for the sting and then decided to continue the ride.

Now we were riding through farm land, the road mostly straight with ups and downs when I noticed a white vehicle appearing once in a while in my rear view mirror. It was at least two km behind me and if it can occasionally appear in my rear view, then it must be going at a fast speed which is quite unlikely for a normal vehicle on this peaceful Sunday. Two seconds in front of me was one rider. We were betting on around \$1.30 at this time. Thoughts going through my mind: Do I slow down? No idea. I haven't seen any speed signs for the last 10 kms. Maybe I should overtake the others and inform the lead rider? That meant overtaking that meaty Hayabusa and a bunch of 1000cc bikes. I'll need a nitrous kit.

After ten minutes of confusion, a police SUV appeared large in my mirrors, but not flashing its lights. So I adjusted my speed and continued. I positioned my bike a bit right of the rider in front of me and flashed my headlights a few times. The rider didn't seem to notice and continued apace.

I prepared to pull over as the police overtook me, still no flashing lights. Maybe they were on other business and not after us, or so I hoped. To be safe, I stopped and waited for few minutes. Then I continued the journey in a spirited fashion to catch up. A few kilometres away on a T junction I saw the SUV stopped, with two bikes pulled over. Thoughts again: what to do? Do I turn right and fall into the trap? Or shall I turn left and leave the ride? There is nothing much I can do to help.

Call it a 'survival reaction'. I turned left as if nothing had happened. I wish I could have seen everyone's expression. I rode for five kms and found a spot to hide in the bush. Talk about essential skills required for Club riding. After 20 minutes and no sign of anyone, I decided to rejoin the ride. Out of the bush and back to road where I sat behind a Range Rover so that potential oncoming police couldn't see me.

My ride continued on 'beat busa' pace hoping to reach the final destination before everyone has left. (I'm dreaming). Near Kinglake I saw Paul and Phil stopped at the side of the road with no sign of the others. I'm a bit embarrassed, having abandoned the guys, and pull over. I have a reputation now. Phil said he would have done the same, so thanks Phil for being on my side. Paul told me what happened after I left. The policeman asked for my name and rego but Paul told him no-one knew me and that I was not riding with them. The policeman continued asking for my phone number, but in vain. I don't know the exact words exchanged but there were threats of impounding the bikes. Luckily, no one got fined. If the police had had a radar detector, then all of us might have been walking home - in leathers. Another reason why I prefer my riding shoes to boots.

After this eventful ride, I got back home around 5pm, with 478 km door to door and an extra wide grin. It was our lucky day.

Jesvin George