



Mirboo North

Sunday 22nd July, 2012

Ian Payne	Honda CBR1000	Quinn Myers (1 st ride)	Kawasaki ZX14
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Aiden Baker	Kawasaki ZX10
Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Andrew Newbury	Kawasaki ZX10
Tony Stegmar	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	John Willis	Kawasaki Z1000
Tim Emons (leader)	Honda CBR1000	Ron Johnston	Suzuki GSF1250
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Mark Rigsby	Suzuki GSXR1000
Jesvin George (rear)	Honda CBR600	Geoff Shugg	Suzuki DL650
Matt Considine	Honda CBR600	Fred Stolk (3 rd ride)	Yamaha R1
Pierre Ong	Aprilia RSV4	Yvette Stolk (3 rd ride)	Yamaha R6
Peter Balas (1 st ride)	Aprilia RC8	Tamzin Knight	Yamaha R6
Stuart Hosking	Aprilia Tuono	Rob Langer	KTM 990
Dave Byrne (1 st ride)	Husqvarna 900	Tony Ripepi	KTM 990

This was my second ride since I crashed the Duc 1098 a few months ago. The replacement bike, an Aprilia RSV4 Factory, is almost run in and I was hanging out for some decent weather. Unfortunately, that has not been the forthcoming.

I'd been watching the five day forecast and Sunday looks good. I made my way to Yarra Glen to find a large group of riders congregated around the usual meeting place. Mr Plod was lurking a few metres up the road so I decide to do the right thing and use the round about to turn right into the meeting point.

The usual chit chat for a few minutes with other riders and it's good to see some familiar faces and not so familiar faces. Pina points out the ENI sticker on my bike used to be AGIP. Apparently the Italian multinational gas and oil company has changed name. The things you find out on these rides.

We had a few new people on some interesting rides. Dave Byrne rode with us 15 years ago on a Honda CBR1000F. Tamzin turned up on an R6. She did a few rides with the club about 6 years ago and lives around the corner from Ben.

Tim starts his talk and then it's time to depart. Fog stayed around for the first hour or so and it was wet through Chum Creek Rd. This is one of my favourite roads and is still fun when it's wet. Whilst corner marking just outside Healesville, I heard the dreaded sound of a bike sliding past me. Our president Ian had lost the front end coming out of a roundabout. No oil or diesel on the road so this was an unusual crash. Ben and Misho wondered if it was due to low or high tire pressure. The Michelin Pilot Powers were warm to touch. Ian continued on to Noojee minus one left footpeg, then decided to call it quits. I'm still not sure how he made it that far with no footpeg.

I was passed by a red Fire Blade just outside Powelltown and didn't know who it was. Later I found out was Paul Southwell. He has two sets of different coloured fairings. I'm convinced Paul is the "Tony Mokbel" of our club and is trying to keep a low profile with Mr Plod.

Morning tea was now at Noojee but I decided to follow Andrew to Neerim for fuel. Stuart, on the Aprilia Tuono, came too. I'm glad I'm not the only bike with high fuel consumption. Back to Noojee for hot cuppa and a chance to thaw out by the open fire at the local cafe. I chat with Aiden and he tells me his enjoying his new ride, a green ZX 10. Another menacing green machine in our club! More on that later.

Time to go and we are off on the second leg. Fred and Yvette caught up with us at Neerim South (expecting us to have morning tea there as per the itinerary but we went to Noojee instead due to the number of riders – two cafes at Noojee). Ben stopped in Healesville to try and let them know of the change in plans – defeated by technology; just hoped they would eventually contact him and they did five minutes out of Neerim South. They thought we must have had a serious accident.

We continue on through a number of back roads which included some mud/dirt finally arriving at Mirboo North for fuel and lunch. At the fuel station I joke with Tony Ripepi that I wish I was riding his bike. The seat looks really comfortable compared to my thin piece of foam. Stuart and I talk about the gearing on our Aprilias. We have both done the same mod and gone one tooth down on the front sprocket. The Aprilia RSV4 and Tuono have a very tall first gear and one of the first changes to these bikes is the gearing.

I hadn't seen Mark Rigsby for some time and he was telling me about his crash up at Falls Creek. The local council painted white lines in the middle of the road which were extremely slippery, catching Mark out. Turns out a work colleague just happened to drive past and assisted with the crash recovery. Small world hey! He's now riding a GSX-R1000K9 and transforming the telecommunication network into a global phenomenon in his spare time.

After lunch we left for Leg 3 to Darnum via Bona Vista and Longwarry. I chased Yvette on her R6 which has loads of power for a little six, and pass her. Actually, I'm convinced it's an R1 in disguise. Cliffy comes by and shows no sign of "lack in confidence" after his horrendous crash, followed by Aiden and Andrew. A bit like Biaggi getting swallowed up by Sykes in WSKB. The sound of RAM air on a big green Ninja at high speed is amazing. I owned a 1997 ZX-7 for many years and have a soft spot for these machines.

Ben recently asked me how the Aprilia compared to the Ducati 1098s. I'd have to say the Aprilia handles better but you need to work it harder through the gears. I had become rather lazy riding the big L twin as you can sit in 2nd or 3rd gear through most bends and not have to change gear. Both

bikes are thirsty and I haven't noticed any difference in suspension with all bikes running Ohlins gear.

Overall I probably like the Aprilia better though I haven't really had a chance to ride it hard as I'm still running her in. Who would have thought 10 years ago that a bike could have all this technology as standard equipment? Ride by wire, traction control, launch control, wheelie control, power shifter, slipper clutch and time travel capability. (Well, perhaps available by the time my great, great, great grand children are riding.) And the best part of this is with inflation running at around three percent for the last decade, bike prices have actually come down. Amazing!

The last leg of the ride included some roads that were semi-dry to dry.

It was good to see Ron back on his new bike after his crash a few months ago. I didn't get a chance to talk to him but he's still riding super smooth and fast. It was also good to see Geoff Shugg. He rides with the Ulysses Club and tells me that they are fading in numbers.

Unfortunately, I had to pull into the Shell servo which was about 10 to 15 km from the finish of the ride which was a good move as the tank only had a splash of fuel left. After filling up I decided to head home as the light was fading and I didn't have a clear visor.

Thanks to Tim for another fantastic ride. Your ability to navigate on a bike is outstanding and for this, I hate you very much. I would like to thank Jesvin for rear duties. Brilliant job.

Pierre Ong