



Ben Warden (leader)	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10
Misho Zrakic/Pina Garasi	Honda CBR1000	Ronny	Kawasaki ZX6R
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Geoff Shugg	Suzuki DL650
Tony Stegmar	Honda CBR1000	Raphael Alikakos	Suzuki SV650
Ian Payne	Honda CBR1000	Glenn Aspen	Suzuki GSXR1000
Jesvin George (rear)	Honda CBR600		<i>11bikes, 12 people</i>

The plan was for our intrepid leader Ben to lead us on another Gippsland adventure down to the Toora Wind Farm. He is into his educational talk, informing us rapt students of where the fuel stops are and how we will get to them, morning tea and lunch stops, distances etc. Volunteer scribe for the article time arrives. Ten arms shoot up, volunteers galore. Yeah, right! No one wants the job, as usual, so he picks out Raphael on the SV650. No worries. Jesvin is the rear rider for the day and he did a sterling job. Thankyou mate.

Paul rolls in late. East Link is closed due to a pushbike ride for people who are homeless. He had to rethink his route with the resulting 60, 70 and 80km/h zones slowing his progress considerably. Eastern Freeway to East Link to Berwick is all 100km/h zone from his place.

Eleven riders today with Pina pillioning with Misho. We head off down the freeway. Coloured flashing lights indicate a car driver getting a ticket, the second booking I have seen this morning since leaving home. We take the Tynong exit and continue towards Garfield where a divvy van waits for us to pass before slotting in behind and holding station at the rear for the 10km stretch to Longwarry where we went right, then left towards Drouin. He went right and kept going. Thank you very much, Officer. It's no fun with the Plod on your tail.

We take back roads out of Drouin to pick up the Warragul Korumburra road. This road is always fun though some of the corners are getting quite rutted! A semi-trailer wanting the entire road in one of the sharper corners had my heart rate up a notch or two ☺

We arrive in Korumburra for morning tea and sit around and yack about anything and everything. Our President, or 'el presidente' as Pina likes to call Ian, had Googled suspension settings and been given a bum steer. He could be seen adjusting said settings for the rest of the day. A twist here, another there, trying to make the bike turn. I heard someone say, that will do it, which brought a smile to my face.

Morning tea done, we head off towards Toora and shortly after we lose Raphael with a broken gear change lever. Jesvin later informed us that he had headed back home for repairs. That would be our only mishap for the day.

I haven't been on these roads for a while and I'm not sure exactly where we are. I know we passed through Fish Creek because I saw the sign! I also saw a Toyota Land Cruiser with two dead foxes attached. That is thirty dollars' worth of ears with the current government bounty. Anyway, it was uneventful with some nice roads.

We arrive at Toora and take the second left turn. I think we should have taken the third to go up past the wind towers and lookout. I hadn't been up this way before so I follow Geoff on his Suzuki DL650 showing me the way, especially as the road was damp. We had seen drizzle in the distance though no rain had materialised. Most of us had textiles on because the weather forecast wasn't that flash. A top temperature of nineteen degrees was predicted with a shower or two. I had left my leathers at home but a couple of the young blokes were wearing theirs. They had to be cold, though some riders wear leathers right through winter. They must be tougher than I am.

I pass Geoff and speed up a little only to miss the next turn (oops) on a bend which takes us to Agnes Falls. I turn around and go back with a sheepish look on my face, negotiate the turn successfully with the corner markers Pina, Misho and Paul smiling at me. Never mind me, fellas. I haven't been here before.

Agnes Falls is a pretty spot and would have been really idyllic on a good day i.e. sunny and warm. Apparently, the Club used to frequent this spot and Ben recalls sitting under the Falls on a 43 degree day, leathers and all, cooling off. Plenty of water going over now. I make a note to come back in the dead of winter when the falls should look even more impressive with the extra winter water cascading over them.

We take a few photos and then head back to the bikes, about a three minute walk away. Next stop Yarram for lunch.

A few kays down the road we stop at an intersection; right is sealed, straight ahead is gravel, and the signage is ambiguous. Ben walks over and asks me, "Does this look familiar?" I say "No" so Ben tells us to "Stay here I will go and check it out." Well Ian and I have an authority problem and follow anyway. I think Paul has one too as he is not far behind us.

I had only gone a hundred metres and knew we were on the right road; the views overlooking Wilsons Prom and the bay were awesome! We keep going till we hit the highway, about 4km away. Ben goes back for the rest, some of whom were already on their way, as it didn't take long for them to arrive. Then we rode the 28km of highway to fuel and lunch in Yarram.

After fuelling up we rode a couple hundred metres up the main street to park in our usual spot outside the bakery with tables and chairs. Last time I was here (on Tony's Balook ride) I was getting lightly dripped on from the heavens. Ben grabs his lunch out of his bag and sits down as I do with mine, as do Misho and Pina. Ben enquires whether anyone has ordered from the bakery? Yes, someone has. We were both feeling guilty about using the tables and chairs.

Ian, Ben and Paul keep us in raptures with their stories of their school years, i.e. leathers, whips and the odd three foot wooden ruler. The "Brothers" were mentioned, and something about another scandal everyday in the paper. I don't think they were very nice chaps, these brothers. Me being a little hard of hearing, I couldn't quite get the gist of who these brothers were, but I'm sure it wasn't the 'Two Brothers' car club or the Brothers Motorcycle Club either. Then Ben comes out with a pearler. Picture this: a classroom of very unruly boys driving the teacher nuts. Day after day, month after month. Finally the teacher cracks, yells at the class, goes and gets the principal who also makes menacing threats and then runs across the room and dives out the window, two stories up. The class goes, "Shit, we've killed him!" Unbeknownst to them the principal had stacked up gym mats to break his fall. Not funny at the time. But, it was on Sunday. Nearly had tears running down my cheeks.

Something is blowing down the road - a throat coat. Pina kindly retrieves it for Ben.

We pack up, mount up and head towards Tarra Bulga National Park. The road is damp and narrow with several slippery wooden bridges. Ben's gone and I'm riding on my own. Tony catches up and then disappears in front, me not liking the wet surface. Misho catches me as well, but doesn't pass.

We stop for a photo shoot at the top Balook Grand Ridge Road intersection. Then we head down the other side towards Traralgon. The road is nothing like I remember; it used to be really good but now it's all pot holes and gravel. I recall some fast trips up and down this road, the last behind Denis on his flying CBR600. But not today. They have logged all the trees and wrecked the road in the process.

We make it safely to the bottom and head towards Traralgon South, Driffield and Trafalgar for afternoon tea where I got lumped with the day's ride write-up because Raphael had headed home for repairs. Lucky him! Tony bought a bag of dim sims and shared them around. Very nice, thank you Tony. Some hot chips would have been nice too, mate.

We stand around chewing the fat for a bit before heading off on the last leg. At the lights we wait for the passenger train to Melbourne to go past and then push on for home via the Old Sale Road and Crossover with a few revs on board. Sniff my exhaust fellas! Misho and Paul are more than happy to try and show me theirs. Past the cow mail box, udder and all. Black and white so it has to be a Friesian.

At Neerim South we turn right and head for Jindivick. No sign of Ben. He knows what's coming, so it's catch him if you can. Final fang to Longwarry North and past the farmer on the tractor. I'm sure I saw him check to see he wasn't in reverse as we went past! Then the final trundle up the freeway to finish at Officer South. Total distance 460 km from Berwick to Officer South.

Ben's rides to Gippsland are always good, though this must be a first: no dirt roads! What happened, mate? Thanks all for a great day. I head home along a painful 135km of highway to Geelong. Total distance for the day 702.6km door to door.

Cliffy Peters

P.S. We didn't quite get to the wind towers after Agnes Falls as we ran out of time. Maybe next time we are down this way.