



Dave Byrne	Honda CBR1000	Ben Fuller	Suzuki GSXR1300
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Ron Johnston	Suzuki GSX1250
Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Darryn Hutchinson	Suzuki GSXR1000
Dave Ward	Honda CBR1000	Rob Jones	Suzuki GSXR1000
Nigel Oman	Honda CBR1000	Chris Pointon	Suzuki GSXR1000
Matt Considine	Honda CBR1000	Craig Davidson	Suzuki GSXR750
Tony Stegmar	Honda CBR1000	Steve Mudford	Suzuki GSXR750
Ian Payne	Honda CBR1000	Robert Langer	Kawasaki ZX10
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Marc Marais	Kawasaki ZX10
Peter Fisher	BMW S1000RR	Mark Copeland	Kawasaki ZX10
Rod Merrett	BMW S1000RR	Andrew Newbury	Kawasaki ZX10
Damian Jones	Yamaha R1	John Willis	Kawasaki ZX1000
Ross McCurdy	Yamaha R1	Cindy Lee	Triumph 675
Pierre Ong	Aprilia RSV4		<i>29 bikes, 29 people</i>

Day 3 of this epic Melbourne Cup long weekend started with a coffee and stroll out to the magic back yard of Ron and Sarah's B&B in Towong. It was around 6.00am and I had the pleasure of watching the sun rise, overlooking some magnificent scenery. It doesn't get much better than this.

Within an hour or so most of the crew had surfaced and made their way to Khancoban to meet up with the other riders. Andrew tells me he was up at around 5.30am, like an excited kid on Christmas morning. Mitch decided to leave to spend time with his family and head home, which was a shame as I enjoyed his company, particularly after a few drinks. He came up with some very entertaining one liners that had us in stitches for the first two days.

Breakfast was slow in Khancoban due to the number of customers. I received my egg and bacon roll within minutes of Ben starting his talk for the day. Unfortunately, John gave up on his big breakfast and his money was refunded under a murmur or two from the waitress. Peter Fisher is enjoying his BMW S1000RR and considering a trip around Australia in a van which is on my *bucket* list of things to do. Robert Langer had returned from an interesting holiday in South America. He hired a bike and toured the country for a few weeks with an organised tour group. What a cultural experience.

Twenty-nine bikes roll out of Khancoban and the noise was exhilarating. Mark Copeland pointed out that Ben Fuller's Busa sounds unique with the aftermarket exhaust. I agree and he handles that bike well in the twisties.

The road through the Alpine Way is tight and there were lots of bikes coming the opposite way. Not as many as I expected due to a number of other clubs riding around this area. 3,000 riders was a number suggested but we certainly didn't see those numbers all weekend. I enjoyed going through the short canyons listening to the roar of bikes echoing in my ears. Leader Ben was taking it fairly easy through this section, (something to do with the police propaganda machine earlier that day) and I sit behind Cliff and Mark Copeland with John and Marc chasing behind.

First stop for the morning is Dead Horse Gap and time for a group photo. Pina sees a large stick on the ground and makes a prediction Rob Jones will be doing something funny with it. Sure enough Rob can't resist the temptation and uses it as a walking stick. Bravo Pina.

The weather suddenly changes from still calm to a roaring wind. Ron was convinced it came from us on our journey up the mountain.

We continue on through Thredbo and some of the group turn off to Jindabyne but I choose to ride to Charlottes Pass. This section of road is very fast with some sections reminding me of the road to Lake Mountain. Damian is giving his R1 a good workout and was hammering it in the straights. The yellow lines are extremely slippery and Tony Stegmar later asks me if I found some sections of the road slippery. Only the yellows lines, was my reply. I must have missed the dark patches he was referring too.

As we arrive at Charlotte Pass, Ron drops his bike. Fortunately, only cosmetic damage. It was amazing to see snow 1.5 metres deep. The wind was blowing a gale at the lookout.

I talk to a rather attractive red haired lady riding a new Blade. Turns out she lives in Melbourne and lost her licence a few days ago just outside Kinglake. I think it may have been the same copper that booked Rod Merrett on Day 1 of our ride.

Back to Jindabyne for lunch and then off to Dalgety. These roads were relatively straight and I saw \$2.30 on the dial. Rob and his crew shoot past but I'm not too keen to follow at that speed.

A dirt detour is required just after Dalgety on the Berridale Road for around 12km due to bridge works on the planned route blocking our path. Some confusion arose when two thirds of the group waited for Ben to investigate if there was any possibility of navigating the road works, while the other third took the detour immediately. We all managed to find ourselves again in Berridale.

We stopped in Adaminaby for fuel and ice cream. Rob and his crew depart at this point. Ian suggests its *beer o'clock*. Mark Copeland's helmet fell off his bike with pieces of visor going everywhere. Parts located and Mark was able to fix his helmet.

The ride continues to Kiandra and Cabramurra where we regroup. Rod Merrett overtakes me on a straight. That bike is fast in a straight line but I'm able to pass him in the twisties and sit behind Paul Southwell. Trying to overtake Paul is interesting. He never gives an inch and you really have

to work hard to overtake him. I really enjoyed the challenge though and we have a good laugh about it at Cabramurra.

More photos are taken on a straight just outside of Cabramurra overlooking a dam. The fires have turned the bush into an eerie sight looking like an atomic bomb has just gone off. New growth and trees are slowing rejuvenating the landscape although it will take some time for it to return to its original state.

The last leg of the ride takes us back to Khancoban to finish another magic day of riding. Back at Towong I crack open an Ice Corona which hits the spot and the next hour is spent cleaning bikes and sharing stories of the day with other riders. I think Andrew had the cleanest bike with the aid of Misho's chamois.

Highlights of the day and in no particular order:

- The roads. Never ending brilliant twisties in magnificent condition.
- Being carved up by Misho, Muddy, Mark, Cliffy and Dave Ward. A real pleasure to watch their smooth lines with no risk of being taken out.
- The accommodation at Towong. One of the best places I've stayed at for a long time. Hosts Ron and Sarah are the friendliest people you will ever meet.
- And of course, great company which really makes these days special. Also it's good to see Pina riding well after her crashes. I dare say not many women would have the confidence to take on this epic long weekend, so well done.

Thanks Ben for leading and Ian for rear duties. Bring on Melbourne Cup weekend 2013.

