

Coalville Sunday 15th January 2012

Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Cameron Bower (1 st ride)	Kawasaki GTR1400
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Andrew Newbury (1 st ride)	Kawasaki ZX10
Tony Stegmar	Honda CBR1000	Marc Marais	Kawasaki ZX10
Damir Djikic	Honda CBR1000	Jason Wilson	Kawasaki ZX9
Ian Payne (rear)	Honda CBR1000	Aiden Baker (3 rd ride)	Kawasaki ER6N
Tim Emons (leader)	Honda CBR1000	Rob Langer	KTM 990
Alex Nadelyaev	Honda CBR1000	Peter Ng	MV Augusta 1078
Peter Jones	Honda CBR1000	Steve Mudford	Suzuki GSXR750
Ron Johnson	Honda CBF1000	Cindy Lee	Triumph 675
Steve Cowburn	Honda CBR954	Martin Ruschena (1 st ride)	BMW K1200
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Jesvin George (1 st ride)	Yamaha FZ600
Dennis Lindemann	Honda CBR600		<i>23 bikes, 23 people</i>

It has been at least six months since my last ride, with the loss of licence for three months, other duties as required and procrastination getting in the way, I know I have missed some fantastic rides. Every week I would look on the Club web site and see where the next ride was that Sunday and when free I would think should I or shouldn't I. Well this Sunday I did and it was great.

I was up early, with much anxiety, getting ready for the ride; we were heading down to Gippsland so I knew the roads would vary between, rough, smooth, technical, plenty of sweepers and gravel. Tim was leading so I knew it would also be fast. This led to some self doubt and that question deep in the back of my mind "would I be coming back from this ride?" It's been a long time since my last ride so my condition and concentration will be down. I told myself to just take it easy; no need to go dicing with the boy racers on my first ride back.

I decided to put a bit more air in the tyres on the Blade, 38 back and 34 front, hoping this would conserve the tyres for the very coarse roads down in Gippsland. The bike has had a number of modifications since its last outing getting lots of TLC. The mods included a full Akra exhaust system, 520 drive chain conversion with two extra teeth on the back sprocket, 30mm Ohlins internals to match the TTX rear shock, a Power Commander and a Brembo RC19 brake master cylinder has all helped to produce a very sweet ride.

I rode out the front gate at 9.00am heading down EastLink and on to the Monash Freeway eventually getting to Berwick by 9.30am giving me plenty of time to catch up with everyone.

As you can see by the attendance, it was a popular ride, the good weather bringing many out including four new riders who kept Ben busy. Tim started formalities advising everyone of the route to be taken, corner marking etc. Tim actually came up from Rye while on his family summer holiday to do the ride which shows great commitment to the Club and a love of riding. Very admirable, Tim. You're a great asset to the Club.

Leg 1: We headed out of Berwick along the highway then turned off to the right at Tynong North taking back roads eventually crossing the freeway at Longwarry North to start the formal ride. We headed along the fast straights and some nice blind sweepers near Jindivick. This is where I could see we had some fast riders among us as they flew past in a hurry to get to the next corner. Some of the bikes were unfamiliar so I thought I would keep a steady pace and work myself into the ride.

Eventually I found myself at Willow Grove behind Tim and some familiar sweepers heading down into Moe. I followed Tim for a while trying to keep up through the 60 to 70km/h sweepers, trying to be smooth, but spending too much time looking at my speedo rather than the road, braking too early and taking bad lines in to the corner. As I was stuffing up the entry, I would focus on the exit and drive the Blade out of corners like a train. It felt like it was on rails and stable as a rock. I could keep Tim in sight, sometimes getting closer but I knew he wasn't pushing hard, so I spent the time trying to get my rhythm right and being smooth.

We eventually arrived in Moe for morning tea. I can't say Moe is my favourite place for a break. It doesn't have the greatest atmosphere or facilities for socialising or eating. As usual, the group splits with some going to Subway, others going to the coffee shop and the rest wandering the streets like

zombies. I got the opportunity to have a chat to Steve Mudford and Cindy Lee. I think they confused me with my separated-at-birth brother as they kept calling me Rob. Understandable, as you rarely see two Geek gods like us in the same place at the same time. It was good to see Cindy recovered from her broken arm, loss of licence and back on a new bike, a very well sorted and excellent looking Triumph Speed triple.

Steve was on the Gixxer 750 with some nice suspenders. It was interesting to hear about his working in the Yamaha race team when Stauffer was dominating the Australian Superbikes.

Leg 2: We left Moe and headed to Coalville. These roads were not familiar so I needed to keep focused and get back into the groove. I was at the back of the pack slowly working my way through the group, gradually getting more confident. I was picking up my pace and came upon Steve on the 954 on a beautiful uphill left hand 90 km/h sweeper. Steve was tight on the inside and gave me room to make an outside pass while remaining on my side of the road. It felt sensational passing round the outside at pace with both bikes cranked over. I felt like Casey Stoner passing Jorge around the outside at Laguna Seca.

I then came up to a 5 or 6 corner markers riding together, “a group within the group”. I think this because this was the third time I’d seen them gathered together; whatever rocks your boat I guess.

From here I passed some more bikes, then Martin on the big K1200. I remember this because he had passed me earlier in the day. I then found myself in the esteemed company of Paul the Master Southwell whom I tried catching with enthusiasm. I eventually got on his tail when we came upon a series of sweepers that went for about 20 km maybe 40 km. Who knows; it was over too quickly.

As I trust Master Southwell with line and pace, I tried with all my ability to keep up. The pace increased as did lean angles. Plenty of gas out of corners and plenty of pace into corners. I could see Pauls Shinkos struggling with grip and lean angle. I felt I could lean more with the B003s and drive out of corners harder, my Blade rock steady. I had the pace to pass but not the confidence. I know I would have gone to pieces had I made the move. I was having flash backs to 2010 Tumut pine forest roads and the very memorable ride behind Dave Ward behind Paul run at \$1.60 to \$1.80+. Mind blowing! It was a pleasure then and now.

We made it to Leongatha far too quickly. We stopped for lunch and a well earned rest. Leongatha, being more conducive to conversation, I had the opportunity to meet some of the members and talk to the new riders including Andrew Newbury riding a new ZX10. He had been riding with Net Rider and the notorious Stewy so he obviously new his way around a bike. I had a chat to Rob, who is very attached to his KTM, preferring it to his new ZX, and Mark on a new ZX10 far more appropriate than the Speed Triple he previously rode. After an hour break I decided to call it a day and head home rather than take on more unknown roads. Saying my goodbyes, off I went via Korumburra, Cranbourne and home by 4pm.

Fantastic ride. Sorry to leave early. Thank you Tim for leading and Ian for rear riding. See you all again soon.

Peter Jones

The rest of the ride followed the script as defined on the itinerary. **Leg 3:** Leongatha, Hallston, Mirboo North, Thorpedale, Childers, Yarragon for afternoon tea. (85km) **Leg 4:** Yarragon, Ellinbank, Lardner, Drouin, Longwarry, Officer, finish. (64km)

I remember the Childers dirt felt half as long as Tim had warned, the roads and weather at 24 degrees made for perfect riding conditions and the Officer finish put me 40 km closer to home which made the final drone down the freeway much more bearable.

But the biggest contrast was with the riding conditions the week before with nine riders battling Mt Baw Baw fog and fallen trees versus this week struggling not to get sunburnt! And 23 riders is a lot of riders forcing a certain level of patience and civilised riding.

Ben Warden