

Teesdale Sunday 22nd January 2012

Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Trina Thompson (1 st ride)	BMW R1100RT
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Rob Langer	BMW R1150GS
Tony Stegmar	Honda CBR1000	Keith Finlay	Harley Heritage 1450
Alex Nadelyaev	Honda CBR1000	Ed Simonis	Moto Guzzi R1200S
Mirko Strasser	Honda CBR929	Rod Silver	KTM RC8
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Bill Simpson (leader)	Suzuki GSXR1000
Steve Mudford	Suzuki GSXR750	David Djuric (2 nd ride)	Kawasaki ZZR1100
Cindy Lee	Triumph 675	Gordon Heydon (3 rd ride)	Kawasaki ZX6
Geoff Jones (rear)	Yamaha R1		<i>17 bikes, 17 people</i>

The ride started in the little township of Anakie, North West of Geelong, better known for its huge bushfires a few years back. Anakie isn't one of the Club's regular starting points but because I couldn't see the point in riding all the way to Melbourne from Geelong only to back track almost all the way home again, this is where it started. When Ben kindly offered to bring the ride from the big smoke and meet me there, I was very fast to accept. Not to mention, I'd rather get out of bed at 8.30am than 7.30am on a Sunday morning.

I got a phone call from my old mate Tony Stegmar the day before asking me what time I would be at Anakie. His intention was to make his own way there and meet us. I told him I'd be there shortly after 10am, which I was, but because there was already a medium size group of bikes, including two VW powered trikes, Harleys and other two wheeled contraptions in the carpark, guess who went sailing straight past without stopping? You guessed it. I wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry. I thought to myself, "Bloody hell, the ride hasn't even started and I've lost someone!" As it turned out, Toe Nails (as I affectionately call anyone whose name is Tony) came chugging back shortly after he realised that there ain't much past Anakie. And then the fun began. One day I want Tony to write a book called "The Adventures of Tony getting to the Start Line". It would be a best seller.

After a brief brief, the ride got underway. This was the first time I'd seen a Harley Davison on an MSR ride and, as the ride leader, I must say I was a touch nervous. One thing about leading a ride is that you don't see a lot of the goings on behind you. Probably 'cos you're not involved in it! But going by the reasonable tempo of the ride from the get-go, I can only surmise that the pilot, (Keith) of said monstrosity, knew how to handle it. As it turns out, he's been an MSR member [*President, ...Ed.*] and riding motorcycles for a very long time. Later in the day Keith spoke to me about how he would love to do some of these roads again on something more nimble. Fair call too, I say!

Part of the ride, in its early stages, involved a short section of well groomed dirt road. As did another section later on. During the ride brief I quoted these bits as 900 metres and 3 km respectively. I'm the first to confess that my estimations were only that, but how long do you think it took for me to be told exactly how far out I was? **Not long**, believe me. Okay, it was 500 metres and one and a bit kilometress, Ben. SHEEES!

A short local loop that I took the ride on was slightly modified with a U-turn due to the bridge having major reconstruction work done to it. I knew this bridge was closed but the road to and from it is a lot of fun. Last time I lead this ride everyone liked the road so I kept it in. I meant to tell everyone about the U-turn in the briefing but forgot. As it turned out, Trina (1st ride), on a rather large BMW R1100RT, told me she was glad I didn't mention it. She only started riding again after a long hiatus. Anyway, her U-turn went without a hitch, as did everyone else's.

By this stage the weather was almost perfect with a slight easterly breeze blowing. We all enjoyed a fun run out to Meredith via Maude and through the old ghost town of Steiglitz in the southern part

of the Brisbane Ranges. At Meredith we topped up with fuel and, before I could say “only a short stop people”, coffees were ordered and leathers were off. Oh well, looks like a late lunch!

Mirko's bike didn't start back at Anakie and he had pulled out of the ride. Sorry to hear that, mate, but thanks for attempting to come on my ride. I'm told it was a fairly common electrical problem with that model. More on electrical problems later!

Back to business and zig-zagging around little back roads, some straight and fast, some tight and tricky, and some up and down are the hallmarks of my rides. We're not quite as blessed as the eastern part of the state when it comes to awesome twisty roads (with the exception of the heavily policed GOR) but I still think a fun day can be had nonetheless out west. For me, it's as much about being with like minded people, friends both old and new, and sharing the experience and a laugh at the end that makes a good Club great. I think/hope all those boxes were ticked on this ride!

We lunched in Inverleigh after which Pina and Paul bid us farewell to visit Cliff at his home in Geelong. I know Cliff likes people calling around to say “Hi!” and I think I speak for everyone when I say “We are all looking forward to seeing you back on the road again soon, mate.”

David Djuric (2nd ride) on his Kawasaki ZZR1100 also said goodbye for the day.

About half an hour later we pulled into my driveway where my beautiful wife and daughters had prepared a light afternoon tea for the riders to share. Of course, there's no such thing as a “free lunch” and so after the chocolate brownies, bickies and cheese, and cream sponge were all gone, washed down with coffee, tea and cool water, a little furniture moving was expected in return! Thanks for the help, fellas. Oh, and a special mention to Cindy. No one holds a door open like you. Thanks.

After that, Ben bid us farewell as he too wanted to catch up with Cliff. Geoff and Ed told me that they would be departing for home before the finish line. So Rod took over as rear rider.

About ten kilometres from the finish line I was thinking “What a great day it's been; the weather, people, roads and getting that bloody TV unit out of the lounge room and into the shed.” Then, for no apparent reason, my bike just stopped. Gosh! At first I thought it was a fuel problem but when I hit the starter button there was nothing. The rest of the crew arrived and with a wealth of ideas we set to work to get the bike running again. We tried the obvious remedies first (fuses), then the side stand switch, battery etc. Rod tried to tell me that the only thing wrong with the bike was the Suzuki sticker on the tank but that went through to the keeper without the reaction that he was hoping for. Don't worry mate. I heard ya! Lots of laughs.

Long story short: I called the RACV and sent everyone on their way with a warm adieu. Whilst waiting for the tow truck to arrive I decided to take a closer look at the fuses. Sure enough I found the offender. The labelling on the fuse box cap is kind of ass about in regards to the fuse positions. So when we looked at them earlier we were actually checking/swapping the wrong one. The problem was some residual CT18 truck wash which had built up on the blades of the ignition fuse and opened the circuit. Easy fix. Ten minutes later I'd cancelled the cavalry and was whistling past the You Yang's on my way home.

Thank you to everyone that attended. I hope you enjoyed the day/ride as much as I did. The feedback that I've received so far says as much. Until next time, take care.

Billy Simpson