

Misho Zrakic/Pina Garasi	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters (leader)	Kawasaki ZX10
Ben Warden (leader)	Honda CBR1000	Marc Marais	Kawasaki ZX10
Tony Stegmar (rear rider)	Honda CBR1000	Jason Wilson	Kawasaki ZX9
Ron Johnston	Honda CBF1000	Gordon Heydon	Kawasaki ZX6
Cindy Lee	Triumph 675		<i>9 bikes, 10 people</i>

Well, what to wear on a day like this? Hmm. Thick socks, plastic bags in boots, leathers top and bottom with no air vents, long johns, tea shirt, long arm skivvy, all covered with plastic DriRider! I find it hard getting on the bike in the morning with all this gear on. I lean over on to the seat, roll down the driveway, force my legs up on to the pegs, two clicks up into third gear, let the clutch out and roll around for a bit.

So it's off to Yarra Glen for Ron's ride to Eildon. Sometimes I go over the top of Mount Dandenong to get there - heaps of twisties and no traffic or lights. Not this morning though, as there will be too much rain, mist and cold up there. Instead I go around the base to the west and do the traffic light thing with the ever present danger of a car parked on the side of the road with a crew cut dude sitting in the passenger's seat, bored stiff, just waiting for a 4 by 2 to be smacked up against the rear window.

I get to Yarra Glen and there is no one there. I fuel up and then I find I have no wallet, and hence no money to pay for fuel. Great! No wallet, no money, no riders, no bikes, no sun, no hot chocolate. No good. All I have is rain! I tell the Indian dude in the petrol station that I have no money. He is pretty cool about it. I ask him if I can pay later when I get money from someone when they come. He says okay.

Ok, ok, so the truth is I realised I had no money just before I put the fuel in, patting myself down, feeling empty. Then I started to think about things: if I tell him I have no money, he won't let me put the fuel in. If no one turns up for the ride, I will be stuck here. I won't get any money, so how will I get home? I ride to the other side of the road and wait in the rain, feeling eyes from the petrol station burning holes in me.

Gordon rocks up on his green Kwaka. We have a chat for a bit. Then Ron pulls in to fuel up over at the gas station. I go over to say hello. After a bit I hit him with the money thing. He is kind enough to give me a fifty to keep me in order for the day. Thanks Ron.

Soon a few more people turn up and Ron does his pre-ride talk. Cindy is talking about pulling out if it keeps raining so I was asked if I would go rear rider. We head south, to my surprise, along the Highway, then peel off past the Lilydale airport, then left and across the Highway at the gas station heading east. It is a good short cut if you are going to Warbie.

I am just riding along, not thinking about where I am. I rise over a hill and see a bridge down ahead. Then I notice several bikes pulled up on the other side of the bridge. Wet roads but not raining at this point. I think to myself, someone may have crashed!

After I cross the bridge I see Ron's bike lying on the road with people around. Ron's okay, just a bit sore on his right side, pissed off though, swearing profusely. There is fuel and oil everywhere, my boots slipping as I walk. A few people try to lift the bike up and I hear, "Woe, woe, woe! It's Ben getting out his camera sizing up a shot. Snap - -- now you can pick it up.

Once up, you can see a hole in the engine casing where the Oggy knob bracket was. Ron's not going anywhere today. He's up at the bridge having a look, saying something about a step in the wet, wooden planks on the bridge causing a loss of traction. There are a lot of petrol splashes around, which may be from the overflow of a full tank when the bike went down. *[Or pre-existing diesel ...Ed.]*

There is a house right where we are. The gate and driveway up to the house looks about a quarter of a km away. Maybe we can leave the bike here? After a talk it's seen as best for Pina to go up to the house and

see. Ben says he'll drink Ron home, and for me to lead the ride. I say I don't know where I am. Ron says to head down the road and turn left at the T intersection, and go to Warbie for morning tea.

Pina comes back. No one home, so we open the gate and leave the bike inside. We line up behind the bike for a group photo. Smile!

One minute I'm rear rider the next I'm the ride leader! I roll in to Warbie's X Servo Café, the last stop on the left through town and who do I see? None other than Jason and Marc on their Kwakas waiting for us.

Marc was with us at the start of the ride at Yarra Glen where he was returning a jacket to Ben he had borrowed for a ride with his missus. He was going to go home, but the twisties got the better of him, so he rejoined the ride, rain holding off a bit.

I order my drink and cake, have a chat for a bit, then go down to the bike cafe down under at the back of this one, taking my mug and cake with me. Cindy, wet through, says she might go home. Then Ben rocks up. Ron's been delivered home and Ben now leads the ride to Eildon changing the finish to Broadford.

So it's off up the Reefton in the wet. It's not raining though. We have lost the ride leader but rider numbers are increasing as the ride goes on. I'm back rear again.

It's all good up the Reefton. We regroup at the top, then its past Marysville and up to Eildon for petrol and lunch. Fuelling up at the servo I see Paul and Cliff rock up. This ride is getting bigger by the stop! Cliff stays with us and Paul goes home.

We ride around to the lunch spot. The car park has an exit where many think the entrance should be. I'm feeling lucky, so in I go. One time on a ride with another club, a rider did this and a copper saw him and went to talk to him. The rider starts to argue with him so the copper gives him a ticket!

We have lunch and a bit of a laugh, then it's off over the Fraser National Park and we head to Broadford via Caveat, Highlands and Seymour. We stop in the main street and say our goodbyes. Some go home on the Freeway and some go back ways home. Then the rain pours down. It might have been hail at one point, or at least that is what it felt like.

Thanks to Ron and Ben for leading the ride. Sorry for Ron. I hope you mend well and we see you on a new bike soon. See you next time.

Tony Stegmar