

Ben's Honda CBR1000 – First 25,000 km

My 2011 CBR1000 sits in the garage with 25,025 km on the odometer after the Mt Baw Baw cold and wet ride, the destination abandoned due to the snow reports by vehicles returning from the top. It is the 10th of April, 2012. I've been meaning to put pen to paper for the last month or so before the kays get away too much!

My 954 went to God on 18th September 2011 after I crashed it coming down Mt Donna Buang. The odometer would have indicated 251,589 km, if it wasn't stuck on 99,999 km, a feature of 929 and 954 Hondas. Luckily I was able to keep track of the kilometres using the trip meters and writing down every fuel fill reading. This unhappy occurrence resulted in a brand new 2011 Honda Fireblade, the last of the model run, though the 2012 seems much the same apart from suspension tweaks – big piston forks and twin tube rear shock, much like an Ohlin's TTX I surmise.

I purchased it on the 30th September for \$16,000 ride away, with 12 months registration. My last new bike was a yellow 2001 Honda CBR929 purchased for \$16,020 in December 2000. (There was a 954 in between, of course.) So in 12 years the price of bikes has gone down! Bikes are really cheap at this point in time. Everything has improved dramatically in the period – centralised mass for better handling, overall lighter, motor is more powerful and yet more economical, radial calliper brakes, dual stage injection, suspension tweaks, electronic steering damper, slipper clutch.

But in a lot of ways not much has changed between the three models – they are all fuel injected, in-line 4 cylinders, 4 valves per cylinder, water cooled, aluminium perimeter frame, 4 piston brakes, 6 gears, digital everything. This 2011 model is relatively unsophisticated as it does not have traction control, ABS (an option), launch control, engine modes, or any of the lap timer functions, unlike the latest models from Japanese and European brands such as BMW, Ducati and Aprilia. The 2011 Honda is the last in the line.

So, crashing the 954 was a good thing, particularly as it was due for: a big service – valve shims every 50,000 km, tyres, chain and sprockets, and a stator any moment, given they fail every 50-70,000 km. The new bike, hopefully, has the stator issue resolved.

Tyres, tyres and more tyres. I keep a log, so here is a cut and paste:

	Life[km]	Odom [km]	Comment	Fitted
FRONT				
1 Dunlop Qualifier		0	original	30-Sep-11
2 Michelin Pilot Power	7508	2278	USA - \$125 landed	29-Oct-11
3 Dunlop GP A	2991	9786		16-Dec-11
1 Dunlop Qualifier	3881	12,777	original	06-Jan-12
4 Dunlop Roadsmart	4065	14,380	USA \$140 landed	24-Jan-12
5 Michelin Pilot Power	2043	18,445	s/h from Kurn	15-Feb-12
6 Bridgestone Battlax S20F		20,488	\$200 from 2012 Blade	10-Mar-12
REAR				
1 Dunlop Qualifier		0	190/50 (white rim)	30-Sep-11
2 Michelin Pilot Road2 2CT		2278	new 180/55 (white rim)	29-Oct-11
1 Dunlop Qualifier	4245	5018		06-Nov-11
3 Michelin Pilot Road2 2CT		6985	new 180/55 (black rim)	26-Nov-11
2 Michelin Pilot Road2 2CT	4818	9786	white rim	16-Dec-11
3 Michelin Pilot Road2 2CT	4821	11,864	black rim	29-Dec-11
4 Michelin Pilot Road2 2CT	8984	13,884	new 180/55 (white rim)	17-Jan-12
5 Michelin Pilot Road2 2CT		22,868	new 180/55 (black rim)	30-Mar-12

The current front tyre will do another couple of rides and the rear is going strong after 4,500 km. The table is slightly hard to read as I have tyre changing facilities which allow me to reuse old tyres, hence the

re-use of the #1 front and rear tyres. I have two rear rims, one black, one white. I try and use up all the half worn tyres over summer and use new ones over winter. The tyre rack in the garage has three new tyres ready to go and five second-hand partly worn fronts also ready for use. Clearly Michelin's are the flavour of the month but I am keen to try the new Dunlop Sportsmart, particularly on the rear, based on Misho's (slow) wear rate. Wear rate on the rear tyres is inconsistent – somewhere in the range 4,800 to 8,900 km. Ridden hard they wear out on their sides before the middle, and the trips away tend to promote that wear pattern. *[Three weeks later I have changed the front to a Pilot Power; #6 lasted 5,393km.]*

The bike has consumed 6 fronts (one second hand) and 5 rears in 6 months and 25,000 km, an indication of a lot of trips away: Melbourne Cup Weekend, Dargo via Omeo, Christmas Camp, Jindabyne, and Dargo again. And 500 km every Sunday.

Maintenance has been minimal as you would expect:

- Oil: 2,278, 14,380 and 20,488
- Oil filter: 2,278 and 20,488
- Front pads: 14,380 (s/h – ex race), and 22,868 (s/h – ex race)
- Fork oil: 13,206 (500 ml per leg) *[just replaced again at 27,144 km]*
- Air filter: cleaned 12,777 and 20,488
- Chain – adjusted twice only, once around 13,000 and the other around 20,000 km

Fork oil replacement is due now. It is easy enough to tip out the old and refill with new in about 90 minutes. *[Changed fork oil at 27,144 km]*

Steve Mudford looked after the rear shock, replaced in the first week with an Ohlins TTX. I expect to get it serviced around the 30,000 km mark.

Around 19,000 km I replaced the headlight after a hole the size of a tennis ball was produced by a rock flicked up by an oncoming 4WD. I found a good second hand one locally for \$200, otherwise \$629 new. The biggest issue was removing and then refitting the fairings. What an absolute pain. It took me two goes to get it right.

I expect to replace the spark plugs and check the shims around 50,000 km. My previous experience with the 929 (199,000 km) and 954 (251,000 km) indicates that the shims will barely move in anything less than 50,000 km. For peace of mind I could check them at 24,000 km as recommended, but it is just not worth the time or money. The plugs are good for 100,000 km, if you believe the Pommies, but 50,000km seems a fair compromise.

Chain and sprockets should last in the vicinity of 40,000 km based on Paul Southwell's and Ian Payne's experiences. I expect to get that at least.

Overall the bike is a fantastic piece of engineering. It is very easy to ride, very economical, and is a pleasure to get on and ride to work each day. It goes like stink and rides the bumps well, the electronic steering damper a magic invention. I can remember riding hard back from Licola on the Dargo weekend chasing Duane on the GSXR1000, Misho on my tail, 8000 rpm on board, and on one occasion the bike jumping into the air, driving hard across bumps, uphill. I expected some sort of tank slapper, bars flapping episode and a crash of the suspension. Nothing! Gripped and ploughed on relentlessly. Spectacularly good behaviour which I will remember for a long time. The bike inspires confidence allowing you to go into bumpy corners without fear, something which does take time to acclimatise to.

Did I mention economical? About every third tank is over 300 km and typically averaging around 18 km/l. The “fuel used” display is a very handy feature allowing you skip a refuel knowing you have 6 or 7 litres remaining, enough to the next fuel stop. All those years of trying to ride the 954 economically have finally paid off. The 1000 runs much leaner than the 954 or 929, though the throttle snatch has calmed down dramatically as the motor frees up, as Ian suggested it would. I really noticed the difference after the last Dargo ride where the final run-in process was completed – sustained high engine revs!

Ben Warden