



Willem Vandeveld (rear)	Honda ST1300	John Willis	Kawasaki Z1000
Ben Warden (leader)	Honda CBR1000	Jason Wilson	Kawasaki ZX 9
Dave Byrne	Honda CBR1000	Mark Rigsby	Suzuki GSXR1000
Tony Stegmar	Honda CBR1000	Glenn Aspden (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Suzuki GSXR1000
Alistair Sobotker (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Honda VTR1000	Raphael Alikakos (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Suzuki SV650
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Michael Henriksen	BMW K1200S

Wow! Watching Casey Stoner during the free practice sessions and then qualifying confirmed how talented he is, even when he is carrying an injury and the weight of expectation from all his fans to win a 6<sup>th</sup> successive Aussie GP at the Island. After checking the weather forecast for Sunday which looked good and watching all the action at the Moto GP on Saturday I was not going to miss this MSR ride.

As I was making my way from Glen Waverley down to Berwick via the M1, keeping my speed under control, wary of all the police that could be lurking along the freeway, waiting for unsuspecting MotoGP fans making their way south. Sure enough, as I approached the Cranbourne turnoff, a police bike appeared out of nowhere and flashed by me. A quick look at the speedo – 102kmh – wheew!

I arrived at Berwick at about 9:40am and not a soul in sight! About 9:45am Willem appeared in his bright orange jacket and then everyone started trickling in to top up their petrol and join the group.

Willem volunteered for rear rider duties and our leader Ben gave us the ride brief and covered the route details which were pretty much the same as last year's MotoGP BBQ ride – make our way up to Warburton for morning tea via Gembrook, a quick trip up Mt Donna Buang and then back via a similar route to the M1 and on to Rob Langer's for the races and food.

There were some new riders I had not met before so good to meet Glenn (love that new GSXR1000!), Raphael, Michael and Alistair. The first leg of our ride took us up the well worn track

of Harkaway, Upper Beaconsfield, Cockatoo, Pakenham Upper, Gembrook and on to Warburton after 85 km. Jason managed to get a puncture along the way and retired from the ride.

We stopped at the bakery cafe at Warburton for food and drink where I had a nice chicken pie and fruit juice to recharge for the run up Mt Donna Buang. We were joined at the cafe by Tony Stegmar, Geoff Shugg and John Willis. John relayed to us that he was on notice for the day as his daughter was just about to make him a grandfather for the first time – congratulations John!

After morning tea, we started up the mountain with Tony and I corner marking at the Acheron Way turnoff that takes you to the summit. We waited for about five minutes as our crew went by, but no Willem. It turned out Willem was still back at the cafe and the corner markers at the Warburton highway turnoff went back to the cafe and rustled him up. After about another five minutes Tony and I took off up the mountain assuming no-one else was coming, only to be joined, once we reached the top, by those behind us including Willem.

The road from the highway turnoff to the Acheron turnoff was a bit tricky with some corners quite slippery where new bitumen had been laid requiring full concentration if taken at speed.

On another note, I recently put a new set of Pilot Power 2CTs on my bike. I tried a new product called *Counteract Beads* to balance the tyres after seeing it online. I read feedback from the US with the overwhelming view that they worked pretty well but, of course, some think it is just another gimmick. The product is very small glass beads covered with Teflon which are poured into the tyre via the valve stem. Approximately 2 oz are used for each tyre and when the tyre rotates the beads are statically charged and attach to the lightest part of the tyre to counter balance the heavier parts. As the tyre wears over time the claim is the beads will continue to move to balance the tyre.

I have been out twice since installing the beads and the bike is smooth with no vibration. So I guess they are working. If you are careful at the next tyre change, apparently, they can be reused a second time. The only issue I had was they are a pain to get down the plastic tube to be used to get them into the valve stem – it took a good 5-10 minutes with plenty of vibrating the valve stem to eventually get them in. At my next tyre change I will probably go back to balancing the wheels using the traditional balancing weights as it is much quicker than installing the beads though it is always interesting to try advancements in motorcycle technology!

Back to the ride. Ben took the ride group photo at the top of Donna Buang. Then, as we saddled up to leave a number of riders declared they would be peeling off at Gembrook to head home while the rest would continue on to Rob's for the BBQ.

The ride from Warburton back to Gembrook was great - good vision, dry road and nice weather made for a spirited pace along this great piece of road.

As I arrived at Gembrook I gave John and Ben a wave goodbye and took off for home to attend to family duties and catch the MotoGP. When I got home, the excitement started to build when I heard Arthur Sissis came third in Moto3 and then watched Ant West hold off Marquez to clinch second in the Moto2 (Westy, what have you been doing all season?). And of course, our man Casey did the business in the Moto GP which was a great way to cap off a fantastic day.

I hope everyone had a great time at Rob's MotoGP BBQ. I hear he is always a fantastic host and I offer my apologies that I could not attend. Thanks to Ben for leading such an enjoyable ride and Willem for looking after us at the rear.

**Mark Rigsby**

