



Strathbogie Ranges

Sunday 26th August, 2012

Quinn Myers (3 rd ride)	Kawasaki ZX14	Ben Warden (1/2 rear)	Honda CBR1000
Andrew Newbury	Kawasaki ZX10	Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000
Cliff Peters (leader)	Kawasaki ZX10	Misho Zrakic/Pina Garasi	Honda CBR1000
Mark Copeland	Kawasaki ZX10	Tony Stegmar	Honda CBR1000
Rob Langer (leader)	Kawasaki ZX10	Mick Canny	Honda CBR1000
John Willis	Kawasaki Z1000	Ian Handforth (1/2 rear)	Honda XL1000
Rod Merrett	BMW S1000R	Jesvin George	Honda CBR600
Pierre Ong	Aprilia RSV4R	Nigel Holden (1 st ride)	Triumph ST1050
Dave Williams	Aprilia RSV4R	Jim Tynan (1 st ride)	Yamaha R1
Steve Mudford	Suzuki GSXR750		<i>19 bikes, 20 people</i>

A Sunday ride quickly becomes a fading memory. It is a collection of interwoven interactions between the people I spoke to, between myself and the natural environment, and between myself and the machine. Its best to get your thoughts down on paper as soon as you can before the short term memory fails and you can't remember where you went or what happened.

Sunday night after the ride, looking at the long list of names instantly inspires a memory, some incident, something unusual, noteworthy or amusing. Incredibly, I seem to have had an interaction with almost everyone, a shared experience of the ride. Those experiences are now my Club ride.

Sunday morning **Julie Warden** has long gone kayaking and I am half an hour ahead of time. How about 10 minutes cleaning the bike, now cloaked with three weeks of seven-day-a-week riding in rain, mist and mud. Up on the stands, easier to rotate the wheels, all packed, ready to bolt. Underneath the grime is a white bike, I discovered, radio for company, time dissipating at an alarming rate. First go with the hose and chisel, second with a bucket of warm water and rags, third time with a can of polishing wax Lyn gave me. (You know I would never purchase such a thing.) Gosh! Is that the time?

Heading at brisk pace along Donny Brook Road, through the Epping Road roundabout at a fair clip, around a four wheel drive, hard left, watch the gravel, on to the Eden Park Road, check mirrors. I

don't remember that blue Commodore ... Slow down. It pounces. Christmas tree lights up, spirits go down. Helmet off, wallet out, pleasantries exchanged, been chasing me since the roundabout, 4.5 km back. Then the sound of a wailing CBR comes wafting over the crest as **Misho Zrakic** and **Pina Garasi** pull a big mono, also running late for the Whittlesea start. "Get the gun! Kill the lights!" Mad scramble. I hear Misho throttling back, still not visible. Crest the hill. 124 km/h, thanks for coming. "You do him, I'll do him", they divvy up the paperwork. Which threw a spanner in the works as I was all prepared to negotiate down from 116 to 109 and the consequent saving of dollars and points. But they saw a pattern emerging, figuring out we were together. I never got to run the, "I'm just an old bloke, enjoying the scenery, not concentrating, I'll pay better attention, humble apologies" routine. Bugger.

I got to thinking about this Misho character as I dawdled along at the rear of the ride and yes, a pattern is emerging. Like the last time I got booked by a person (rather than a machine) was heading along the Kinglake West to Kinglake Road, Misho has done a mono past the copper hiding in the bushes who has set off in hot pursuit just as I wizz by. Bang, 3 points. Then there is the time we were coming into Mansfield with the blonde reception committee waiting for us courtesy of the cars calling ahead and nominating the colour sequence of white, yellow, orange and green bikes. [954, CBR1000, ZX10, ZX10, you figure it out] Misho crested the hill and took one for the team (well, me), the first time he had lead in 2,000 km! Then there was the time he followed me in to the viper nest at Eden, as I speared off the road straight towards the flashing lights, assuming it was me they were after (it was, but they let me off for being honest. They went and got Rob two minutes later on the big dipper.) Then there was the on-coming bike cop that did Misho on the Marysville Buxton Road with me right behind Misho. That makes five incidents! A nasty pattern of association.

So I arrive at Whittlesea and the ride is just about to set off with **Rob Langer** leading and **Ian Handforth** rear rider and a couple of new riders. I corner mark and with the last few bikes dribbling out, Misho arrives, needing fuel. I organise with Pina for them to turn left at Flowerdale and quip, "You'll catch the ride". Good plan; failed dismally.

After fuelling up Misho got mixed up with a car diving into a parking spot, driving over the top of him. Misho managed to almost come to a stop but bumped up against the door panels, a la **Paul Southwell**, doing damage to the car but saving the bike; good effort. Delayed with name and address exchanging and appropriate levels of talking in foreign tongues to disguise his feelings saw them eventually arrive at Strath Creek. Right or left? Checking his PDA, last reloaded on Wednesday, indicated Yea first stop. But Rob and I had updated the web page on Thursday to reflect the new morning tea stop of Seymour. Misho arrives at Yea and figures we have already left, but Pina manages to contact Rob to work out that we are at Seymour. Off they ride, catching us just as we are leaving! Did I mention his bald tyre? The Club Captain would have surely sent him home if Misho had been at the start. The copper was lost for words, so let his pen do the talking! Just the one ticket.

First half rear rider, **Ian Handforth**, typically doesn't ride with us anymore, or so I thought, though he generously continues to pay his membership. When queried, he noted that he had brought along his work colleague **Jim Tynan** on the R1 because he thought he should be riding with us. I think it was a bit of a culture shock for Jim given the tough road conditions – bumps, gravel, unsignposted road works mid-corner, long distances, narrow dangerous, tree lined roads, speed. He finally ran wide, not long after lunch at Euroa, and retired hurt, ripping off a bling footpeg. Ian accompanied him home and I took up the rear riding station.

I signed up **Quinn Myers** on the ZX14 at Yarck, on his third ride. He seems pretty keen. Rob notes that his last bike was a Kawasaki ER-6 and he purchased the ZX14 by auction at the Brighton Kawasaki closing down sale. It is a big bike and when it came to make the 90 degree sharp turn at Caveat, just near the statue of Our Lady shrine (I kid you not) he thought better of it and went straight up the exit ramp. We lost a couple of minutes trying to figure out how to turn the beast around! Rob notes there may have been another incident as he had more scratches to the lower fairing than when he started.

At Yea **Pina** informed me that a few bikes were up at the petrol station refuelling. I did the same, telling **Andrew Newbury** it was the first time for the day (blatant lie) but I knew it would tie him in knots! Sure enough at ride finish at Kinglake West he checked again. I think the truth was probably worse – 268 km and 14.5 litres, and not sparing the horses, as Ronny would say. Andrew is back to running 42 psi in the rear tyre and 36 psi in the front, trying to improve tyre wear as his last set only lasted 3,500 km. I didn't have the heart to tell him I'm running 36/34 and expect to get in the vicinity of 8,000 km front and back. But then again, he is a tad bigger and heavier.

I caught up with **John Willis** at lunch in Euroa. He had put Julie in touch with his son in law Jason who is the highest educated brick layer in the world. He is really a horticulturalist by qualification but there is more money in laying bricks. Sad but true. Jason and labourer Anthony spent all Saturday starting at 7.30 am building five vegetable gardens and a letter box (well, he ran out of daylight, so next Saturday will complete the letterbox), another one of Julie's projects. She was off to the theatre and I was project manager in charge of digitally recording the day's events and checking up every now and again between typing up November 1975 magazine which pretty much took all day. I have even more admiration for **Barb Peters** who typed up well over a hundred magazines. John has been working too hard, buying and renovating a house, and occasionally flying his giant replica model radio controlled planes. There were nearly more Kawasakis on the ride than Hondas – nearly.

Dave Byrne (Honda!) would have been on the ride and made it as far as Whittlesea only to realise his mate had gone to Yarra Glen, so he set off to catch up with him, the plan to meet us at Euroa for lunch. He didn't get too far as Rob saw him having a deep and meaningful chat with a bike mounted policeman just outside the Whittlesea Plenty Road motorcycle establishment. Rob and Dave are bonding well, having been out on a ride the day before to run in Dave's new black 2011 CBR1000. That demo 2012 one he was riding last week had a holey radiator and stone chips galore ... The Husqvarna Nuda 900 is just a bit too hard work for our type of riding so was traded on the CBR.

Rob caught up with Dave and reports that Dave only had a licence check and in fact did get to Euroa without his mate who didn't want to go! Change mates.

Rob also did a pre-ride earlier in the week with our elusive President **Ian Payne**, running in his new 2012 Blade. That ride led to the change in morning tea venue.

Dave Williams, formerly riding a CBR600, turned up riding a new Aprilia RSV4R, making two riders on RSVs, **Pierre Ong** on the other. Dave has been working 7 x 24 and had to quit to get his life back! He bought a bike and came riding with us as proof he owns his life. Pierre is looking forward to Dargo and facing his demons! He crashed his 1098 on the Omeo Road last time.

Tony Stegmar, having completed three months licence suspension, has wiped the slate clean and has a full 12 demerit points available again. He feels much less stressed. When looking at Andrew's right angle tyre valve bling he complained that they charged him \$50 to change the valves on his CBR. When I picked him up on it, suggesting that removing two wheels, removing two tyres, swapping valves, refitting tyres, and reinstalling the wheels would likely take the best part of an hour and that \$50 was in fact cheap, and why didn't he do it himself? "Too much work!" was his reply. Case closed.

Rob Langer was working on the ride route all week, seeking advice, doing a pre-ride, talking, thinking. He thought it was all going badly when Ben, Misho and Dave were all booked – and that was before the start of the ride! Then the coffee shop in Seymour was shut and the desperados had to go elsewhere to get a cuppa. Misho and Pina and Dave were still chasing the ride and lost. New riders and some very occasional riders increased the risk; no-one to do the writeup. A crash. Finally, a bunch of riders in Yea searching for fuel. So much to worry about.

In the end it all went swimmingly well, the weather stayed dry, no-one crashed (bar Jim running off down a ditch but at least he stayed on the bike and gave a big thumbs up when he finally pulled up),

most of the roads were good. (Mental note: never go on the Ruffy to Euroa Road if avoidable – road surface is too bumpy for too long. No fun. Better off doing Strathbogie to Euroa coming and going.) We got back before dark and there was lots of positive feedback on Facebook that evening and next day, including first time rider Nigel Holden on the Triumph ST who sent his praise of the ride organisation and road selection to myself, Rob and Paul. All new roads to him. Very happy.

Misho asked for a second opinion on his chain at Kinglake West. Yep, slightly red rose look about the links means rust and the end is near. **Paul Southwell** managed to get 49,000 km out of his last chain which is a fine effort. The secret: don't run it too tight. And I think Ian Payne traded his bike in at 46,000 km, still on the original chain. I've adjusted mine twice in 38,000 km, once at 13K, once at 20K. Rotated front sprocket at 32,000 km. Materials technology is coming on in leaps and bounds. If only they would invent a decent chain guard that prevents chain lube being flicked onto the wheels.

I asked **Mark Copeland** about the onboard radar the police have as it seems they had some issues getting a reading on me due to the other vehicles in close proximity. Only when they used the handheld radar and got a clear view of me when I passed the 4WD did they have a confirmed reading. Mark reckons that his on-bike "technology" could have aided me in this instance.

After leaving Kinglake West, Misho and Pina, **Steve Mudford** and I formed a convoy in that order for the final blast down to Whittlesea. Misho pulled off for fuel and Steve and I headed back through the Eden Park section to the scene of the crime. Just as we turned on to Donnybrook road and were coming up to speed I caught a glimpse of a kangaroo coming from the right at full speed, floating over the fence, one bounce on to the road directly in front of Steve, another majestic bounce and he sailed across the next double fence and into the paddock and gone. Very impressive. Never deviated. We didn't exist. Could have been very ugly.

Another set of tyres greeted me at the back door when I arrived home Monday night, thanks Misho, c/o Pina delivery services. Pina ordered a set of Pilot Road 3's last Tuesday for me and they were delivered Friday night – from America. Phenomenal. And Misho sold me a set of Pilot Road 2s, surplus to requirements. Tyre rack is looking very healthy at the moment.

Mick Canny, friend of **Marty Thompson**, said he would report back on Marty. We haven't seen Marty for a long time and were concerned. Mick reported back via text the next day. All good. Thanks Mick.

At lunch I gave **Jesvin George** a USB stick with all my 2012 Club ride photos for him to add to the current magazine articles from January. That should keep him busy for a day or two! Thanks Jesvin. It was also his suggestion to put the Google Map reference of the ride starting point on the itinerary, after the Westgate/Point Cook and Whittlesea issues where our favoured service stations closed down. After a bit of refining it is now just another line of code which I can cut and paste. Looks good, easy to deliver, and provides excellent service to the reader. Good outcome.

Last but not least, **Cliffy**! Always chasing ride leaders, I decided that he needs to lead a ride once a month, and we locked in a few dates on the paperwork I produced at lunch. Cliff, you may get a break with the MotoGP on the 28th October; this event was overlooked, but now a short ride followed by a BBQ at Rob Langer's is organised.

Cliffy traded a chocolate nut bar for some chain lube, which reminds me that was a fair swag of unsignposted roadworks just out of Broadford around a blind corner. Not only did it strip our chains of lube, it could have been far worse for those travelling at the "normal" entry speed along here. Luckily, all survived unscathed.

Thanks Rob for an eventful day. Twenty people had a great time, one way or another!

Ben Warden