



Loch Sunday 2nd September, 2012

Quinn Myers	Kawasaki ZX14	Ben Warden (leader)	Honda CBR1000
Rob Langer	Kawasaki ZX10	Tony Stegmar	Honda CBR1000
Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10	Dave Byrne	Honda CBR1000
John Willis	Kawasaki Z1000	Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR600
Bill Kennedy	Kawasaki Z750	Simon Wastney (rear)	Honda VFR750
Tim Walker	Kawasaki ZX7R	Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600
Denman Lombard (1 st)	Suzuki GSXR1000	Ramon Bizaroza	Honda CBR600
Steve Mudford	Suzuki GSXR750	Craig Winder	BMW S1000RR
Geoff Shugg	Suzuki DL650	Peter Fisher	MV Brutale 1090
Graeme Tattersall	Yamaha MT-01	Adam Wells (1 st ride)	Aprilia RSV4
Ronny Ronny (1 st ride)	Yamaha YZF600	Michael Henriksen	Triumph 1050
Brett Chambers	KTM RC8	Cindy Lee	Triumph 675

Dawn revealed that the BOM had got the weather forecast right. First ride of the official spring and it turned out to officially be a fine spring day. Throw Fathers' Day into the mix, and it was always going to be a stellar ride. I was again made to feel very welcome with a warm greeting from our fearless leader, Ben – I'm sure this had nothing to do with the fact that I still had to give him money for my membership...

The fine weather brought out a good size field of 24 - Dads trying to hide from having to insincerely thank their various family members for yet another pair of socks and a tie perhaps?

It wasn't long before there was some very appealing hardware parked at the servo – Aprilia RSV4, KTM RC8, BMW S1000RR, the usual compliment of shiny CBR1000's, and of course an absolutely beautiful ZX14R (cough).

The ride began with a 25km snooze cruise up the Monash. After turning off, however, it was on for young and old. There was a fair of some description at Longwarry, and those with particularly bold exhaust systems took pleasure in blipping the throttle, much to the joy of many young children. I'm sure I was grinning more than the kids though.

Further down the road the words of the pre-ride briefing rattled through my mind – 'possible flood damage'. This manifested itself in the form of potholes and portions of the road that were generally ripped to pieces.

Right before the first stop at Loch, the group was confronted with a 'Closed Road' sign – possibly from a land slip. A quick check revealed that 100m of cross-country riding would see us right, so on we ploughed. At this point, some less than ideal corner marking [*First time riders left the corner*

before the rear rider arrived ... Ed.] resulted in a handful of riders going astray when they zigged when they should have zagged. Fortunately, they *[2 of 4 ...Ed]* found their way back to Loch but this served as a reminder to all of the correct corner marking etiquette.

After morning tea, we made our way through... I dunno, some roads somewhere. Dark black rubber tracks on the road, including some masterfully executed donuts, clearly indicated that at least one person in recent history thought that this was a good road for adding a bit of spirit. And yes, yes it was. Around this time, the RC8 was reportedly devalued somewhat in a minor tumble. Rider okay, gear linkage... absent. A quick photo opportunity at the top of a hill at Woolamai overlooking Philip Island, and then we rode on to Korumburra for lunch.

The final leg rolled through some lush Gippsland pastures which put me very much in mind of New Zealand. I was feeling almost like I was home – except that everyone I spoke to had a strange accent (seriously guys, ‘dance’ does not rhyme with ‘romance’!). Gentle sweeping bends separated by stretches of straight road gave me a chance to stretch the 14’s legs – at one point I think I may have gotten close to 100km/h. A near incident with a car driver who swerved right while turning left in front of the ride leader served as a good adrenaline boost when I ended up locking the front wheel while trying to avoid rear-ending the bike in front. Witnesses reported tyre smoke and the bowel clenching sound of a bike losing traction while rapidly approaching from behind. Still... all good fun, eh?

The last portion of the leg headed through forest back to Powelltown. Shadows with many light and dark patches made it difficult to pick the line of the road. However, the fine weather combined with similar dry conditions the previous day meant that the roads were dry for possibly the first time in many months. This made the task of keeping the black round things on the grey flat stuff much easier than the last few times I travelled through there. All up, a total of approx 360km for the day.

Great day, great route, great company. And Fathers Day to boot!

I’ve also been asked to add a few words about my experiences so far with MSR. Impressions, pro’s, cons, that sort of stuff.

I was introduced to the group by a friend who was leading a separate ride on a Saturday. He asked me if I’d had so much fun that I could convince myself to do it again the following day. My response was of course a resounding ‘Hell yeah!’ so I rocked up to the florist at Yarra Glen the following morning.

My first impression was how well organised the pre-ride process was. Name, bike model, emergency contact number – all were noted. There was a first aid kit on board a bike and a number of people on the ride who were first aid certified. The route was planned out with accurate mileage and each stop pre-identified which is always helpful in the event of anyone getting lost.

Of the four rides I have been on so far, the number of them that have been brilliant is... well, four. The ride leaders know their routes (how does that happen without a GPS?) and seem genuinely interested in doing all they can to increase the enjoyment of all participants. There is obviously a lot of planning that goes into these. The pace of the rides is right on the money – the Club is pitched at sportbike riders after all, so a swift and spirited ride should be the expectation that any first time riders come along with.

Having not been riding for long myself (less than two years), I had heard talk of ‘those crazy MSR guys’. This led to a small amount of trepidation on my first ride. Thankfully, this didn’t last. While this perception may have some obviously negative connotations, it also serves as a filtering device to make sure that anyone considering joining an MSR ride will think twice about their skill set and hopefully assess their abilities realistically. I see this as a good thing that goes towards making sure that people aren’t getting in over their head. It also makes the Club something for people to aspire to: “Oh yeah, I’m good enough to ride with the MSR crew. Now, who wants to buy me a drink?”

This is the first group that I have been riding with that has used two corner markers at a time instead of just one. Definitely beneficial and works well. It also provides someone to talk to when the ride has gotten spread out or when there are delays.

It's hard to think of anything that could be done any better – although I was surprised that the previous weeks ride start point only had 91 octane or E10 fuel available, neither of which would be suitable for the majority of sportbikes.

All in all, I'm thrilled to be a part of such a great group of people. By far the best part of joining in has been meeting some really cool folk. I'm looking forward to a long spring and summer full of regular, well organised rides. And if we're really desperate – and I mean REALLY desperate, I may be able to lead one at some stage... so long as no one minds winding up in Alice Springs. Me and geography? – not so much...

Quinn Myers