



Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Tony Stegmar	Suzuki GSXR1000
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Billy Simpson	Suzuki GSXR1000
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Steve Mudford	Suzuki GSXR1000
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Geoff Shugg	Suzuki DL650
Ed Simonis	BMW K1200S	Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10
Rob Langer (lead)	BMW F700	Mark Copeland	Kawasaki ZX10
Cindy Lee	Triumph 675		<i>13 bikes, 13 people</i>

Overcast and damp. Oh well, not every day can be dry and warm, hey? The troops are assembled at Yarra Glen ready for the ride to Castlemaine. Robby is leading on the twin cylinder Beemer. We get the low down on which way we are going, stops and such. Then we are away but not before Raman is sent home with a sticking front brake calliper. Apparently, the calliper pin was rusty or dirty causing the pads to bind. He was seen on Monday's ride, all fixed.

We ride up through Christmas Hills to St Andrews where the roads are wet: mostly single file, right up to Kinglake. It had been raining though we didn't see it, just the after effects i.e. wet and slippery roads.

I came up behind Paul in the twisty section just out of Kinglake heading downwards towards Glenburn. He was going around the corners with both feet on the ground. No lean angle at all. (Okay, I may be exaggerating a little here but definitely on tippy toes). I thought "Hello, hello what's going on here then?" He waves me past. There's nothing like trying to scrub in new tyres on a wet road, hey? Never mind, the plod is waiting for you at the next intersection mate. Apparently, a Police Officer turned up while some members were corner marking and did a licence check on the rear half of the group. Bent number plate? How did that happen? Yes Officer, I will fix that. Said plate was back to its unnatural state again at morning tea time. Well done, mate.

We head on to Glenburn, Flowerdale, Strath Creek and in to Broadford for morning tea. The Classics are racing at the track today. Some of us top up with fuel, while Ben takes some out. The servo has reopened now after the recent renovations. About time too, I reckon.

We are joined by members Ed Simonis and Mark Copeland. We stand about doing the usual: talk, laugh, talk, laugh. My back is extremely painful today for some reason. I have an exercise routine I do twice daily since my last accident and I may have been a little over zealous last night.

Next stop Castlemaine via Pyalong and the Burke and Wills track. I was the only one to see all the kangaroos cross the road. I had to virtually come to a stop as they went across. There were around 30 in all. Hop, hop, hop in single file. They disappeared into the blue gums. I've hit three of the blighters in my biking days so far.

The first was a glancing blow to my left leg as I went past. The second was on a narrow limestone road going shearing one morning. I was running late and going too fast and the roo hopped the fence and another hopped into the centre of the road. Before he could take the next hop I nailed him. Dead centre. You don't believe Kawasaki GPZ's can fly? Well, my old 1100 did. Just on twenty five feet before she touched down leaving a black rubber mark on the road. How I kept the thing upright I'll never know. Pure luck. My hands gripping the bars, my feet waving in the breeze above the tail light. (I kid you not.) Bang, and back on to the road. My body's come down with a bang as well; my groin has impacted the seat and fuel tank. I could barely walk let alone shear for the rest of the week. The roo was dead as a maggot and the bike had a broken front blinker and a cracked nose cone. Bugger me! That was lucky.

The third kangaroo incident ended in tears at Mount Beauty. It jumped off a cutting into the front wheel. Arse up I went, sliding down the road. Losing paint, metal and skin. Lesson learnt: never ride in jeans, and wear full leathers, even if it's just around the corner. Dead roo, damaged new bike - only 6 months old ("What, you've crashed it already?" was heard mostly from family members.) I spent two days in hospital, in sheer agony having the dinner plate size gravel rash cleaned each day and for almost three weeks thereafter. Not to mention concussion as well. I better get back to the ride.

Next it's on to Emu Flat (Paul heads home) and Sutton Grange to Castlemaine for lunch. Here Steve commences to change his fork springs. I'm guessing the ones going in will give a softer ride. Maybe you flat spotted those other ones back yonder while pulling monos! LOL And no, Misho "Biaggi" Zrakic, I missed your mono because Steve was in the way blocking my view!

The local hoons are cutting laps in their cars: Holdens, Fords and Nissans. Good, good. Keeping the boys in blue distracted. Thank you!

Lunch done, well mine was; it managed to unwrap itself somewhere between Broadford and here. It started out a salad roll from home; I'm not sure what you would call it now – a MESS, probably. (Shaken, not stirred.) I'm glad I washed the container last month. Otherwise I wouldn't be able to lick the cheese, tomato, ham, capsicum, pepper and salt out of it! Next stop Woodend.

A fun, uneventful run to Woodend along narrow but good roads. Just one question: how many Steves are here today? There seems to be one going past every five minutes or so. What the &^% is going on here?

Woodend. Well, the old town is rocking today, quite literally. Seems Bruce Springsteen is in town for a two day concert up at Hanging Rock. There are people everywhere.

The bakery is chockers as per normal; it's a very popular place. I ask Ben "Have you put any fuel in since the start?" He smiles at me. I do the sums in my head 110, 130, 100 – he must have. It's too far even for Hondas. I saw you sneak past at Castlemaine. You found another servo while we had to wait in line. Crafty bugger, you. LOL.

Two minutes is called and we are gone on the final fang to Bulla where we watch the planes land and take off for a while. A TOG copper goes past, lights and siren blaring. Accident maybe? He's in a hurry, anyway.

We say our farewells and head home. It's about an hour and twenty minutes for Billy and me. That's another good ride and a good day. Thanks all. See you next time. Thanks Rob for leading and Geoff for rear riding. It was 401 km from start to finish at Bulla.

Cliffy Peters