



Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters (leader)	Kawasaki ZX10
Tim Emons	Honda CBR1000	Andrew Newbury	Kawasaki ZX10
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Bill Kennedy	Kawasaki Z750
Ian Payne	Honda CBR1000	Ronny	Kawasaki ZX6
Simon Wastney	Honda VFR800	Phill Hotschilt	Suzuki Hayabusa GSXR1300
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Bill Simpson	Suzuki GSXR1000
Kurn Bridgeman	Honda CBR600	Paul McLeod (1 st ride)	Triumph 1050
Jesvin George	Honda CBR600	Ed Simonis	BMW R1200S
Stuart Hosking	Aprilia RSV4 Tuono	Geoff Dick (rear)	BMW R850

A grey morning greeted me as I wandered out for my wake-up coffee. Best to take the wet weather gear today I think to myself. I had the luxury of a later start this morning, as living in Docklands means only 15-20 minutes out to the Point Cook meeting point as opposed to an hour to get across to the more regular meeting points east of the city.

Riding down to Point Cook I didn't encounter anyone else en-route though I did see quite a few touring style bikes heading the opposite way across the Westgate.

A mix of the regulars and a couple of new faces were present at the pre-ride meet-up. One new face (for me) was Ed Simonis, the proud owner of a newly acquired BMW which he says suits his riding style better than a variety of other bikes he's owned. He was finding it a good blend of comfortable and fast. He'd also found the service he was receiving from the BMW dealer to be a notch more attentive than he'd become accustomed to elsewhere. The other new face was Paul McLeod on his pristine looking Triumph Speed-triple. I thought at a glance that there was a heavier mix of European bikes present to match the normally more numerous Japanese machines. On reflection, the mix was probably about typical for a Sunday.

The usual quick briefing from the ride leader (Cliff this week), with a tail rider nominated and a volunteer accepted for the write-up, and we're off.

It was a brisk ride out to Meredith. No sign of rain, and it started to warm up a bit as well. About half the bikes elect to top up with fuel here, as the next scheduled stop only has 91 octane available. Bill Simpson joined us on the outskirts of Werribee, bringing numbers up to 18 which is about the average number although 25-30 riders is more common on a summer day with a good forecast.

A large group of Ulysses riders rocked up while we were having morning tea at Meredith.

Onwards we head, including a few very short gravel sections. There were also a few sections of road where the verges had been burnt back to present a wide fire break against the grass fires which have been prevalent recently. I encounter a calf ambling across the tree-lined road and stopped to see if I can usher it back where it belonged. My parents used to have cattle that would periodically jump the fence causing a traffic hazard. I had concerns that one of the guys following through at speed might collect this one. There was a padlock on the nearby gate, so not much I could do about this one. It had a mate on the other side of the gate and seemed calm enough standing there as a couple of bikes came through.

The route consisted of lots of narrow single lane roads along the way. It was reassuring to have bikes ahead most of the time giving a heads up on any vehicle coming the other way.

Into Linton for the lunch break which was a good chance to catch up with a few people. I hadn't seen Jesvin for quite a while. It turns out we'd both made plans to do the Superbike rider training out at Phillip Island in the near future, but unfortunately on different days.

Time for a quick look over a few bikes. A couple of guys with naked bikes mentioned it might have been nice to have had a fairing on a day like this. Lots of straight roads or roads with broad sweeping corners out this way can tempt one to ride at fairly high speeds. Possibly too tempting!

Later on I was peering back at the bike out behind me on a long straight stretch. Bang! Hit a pot-hole or lump in the road and had the front end bouncing about. The speed limit at the time might have been 90 or 100 km/h. The bike seemed to be behaving normally afterwards and a check of the front wheel looked okay.

I saw a parked police 4x4 down in a tight gully where no-one would have been riding quickly. The officer seemed to have been poking around the bushes on police business unrelated to traffic duties.

We climbed up the Buninyong Tower which provided a good stretch of the legs. The tower provided great views over the tops of trees, and was refreshingly cool to boot. Billy was holding court, encouraged to share a few jokes, though they're not fit for repeating here lest I offend any catholic priests, nurses or people who like wearing shiny dance shoes.

After the photo shoot it was back to the bikes when who should we see coming up the hill but Phil on his mighty Hayabusa. Seems he had been corner marking at an intersection just down the road for at least 20 minutes. A bit of a mix up somewhere. He missed the 17 people who went past him including the rear rider. He thought no-one passed him! Not sure what happened there. I guess it's just a case of sitting there in your helmet and in a moment of distraction looking the other way. I know in the past I've ridden off the wrong way not noticing the corner markers.

Back to Buninyong for a coffee and bite to eat and where we chatted about the important pressing matters of life: tyre choices and wear rate, chain adjustment, tank bag fitment, the price of replacement mirrors with integrated indicators built into them, along with how thorough (or not) some mechanics are doing routine services tasks.

Paul Southwell and another three riders head home at this point. Meanwhile, two Gixxers and a Fireblade, non-MSR riders, park next to us just as we're about to leave. We hadn't seen any other bike traffic since early in the day.

Off to Werribee for the break-up point where we stand around and chat. Ben was doing a round-up to ensure we had enough members present to vote a few items through at this Thursday's Club General Meeting.

I got talking to the guy parked next to us at the servo with a 1960's or early 70's Peugeot ute. Apparently, it was a standard factory build, although I'd never seen one like it before and had assumed it to be a home built custom special. The owner thought that our 380 odd km ride sounded like a long one.

Anyway, a great ride, and an incident free one with all bikes remaining the right way up with no mechanical failures. Thanks Cliff for leading us for a good day out and Geoff for riding tail.

Simon Wastney