

Ben Warden (leader)	Honda CBR1000	Jesvin George	Honda CBR600
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Marc Marais	Kawasaki ZX10
Ian Payne (rear)	Honda CBR1000	Pierre Ong	Aprilia RSV4
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Geoff Jones	Yamaha R1
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Michael Srb	BMW S1000RR

This was my first ride for a few weeks. The last few Sundays have been spent as goal umpire and water runner for my son's football team. Today was my day off and I was looking forward to catching up with the MSR.

I arrived at the Yarra Glen Caltex servo to find Scott Bowden sitting on his bike, helmet down, looking like he just got passed on the last corner at Monza in a World Super bike race. His key had snapped off in his fuel cap! Bugger. On the phone to his wife and she was on her way from Melbourne with a spare one. Sometimes things are not meant to be. Scott, you owe your wife a few foot massages!

A small crowd gather at the meeting point. It was good to see Marc out and about. He's been working over in South Africa for the last six weeks. Some of the other usuals were absent including Rob Langer off again trekking the world. This time he's going to England and Denmark on a 60 day adventure. What a life!

Ben gives his talk and we are off. The road through Chum Creek is reasonably good considering the rain over the last few days. The only disconcerting event was a b-double truck coming the opposite way. He was doing well and kept to his side of the road as much as he could, but it's always a worry when you meet these beasts head-on around a corner.

We stopped for morning tea at Yea and the weather was looking better. Jesvin posted a photo on MSR Facebook looking very autumn. I chat with Geoff and we talk about how far bikes have developed over the last decade. Most new bikes come with standard electronic packages seen on race bikes five years ago.

After morning tea we head out to Highlands, which has some great roads, but caution is required as gravel tends to turn up in unexpected places. I'm following Paul and his bike throws up a large rock directly at my face which hit my visor with a loud thud. No real damage apart from a few scratches on my visor.

Marc's on a mission and Misho jokes that he's been practicing on a race track in South Africa. Some very fast straights follow and I see \$2.25 on the dial with Michael on his BMW close behind me.

I approach Jesvin and I'm impressed with how far his riding has developed. He's carrying more corner speed and looking far more competent compared to 12 month ago. That's the good thing about riding with MSR. You never stop learning and improving.

On one section of the ride I'm sitting behind Ben and notice a large black bull on the side of the road, on the wrong side of the fence. The noise of my bike is making it nervous and it starts to buck and weave. Ben takes off while I slow down, wary that the noise of my bike is the problem.

The next hour is spent exploring roads around Strathbogie. We come to a dirt intersection and break for a few minutes while Ben checks the map. This is Banjo Paterson country, according to Ben, and it sure looks like it. It's magnificent countryside that you only see when you're off the bike. Pina is almost caught out when cars arrive. Talk about caught with your pants down!

Off again and we arrive at Euroa for lunch. The bakery offers good food for a small country town. Paul and Ian leave after lunch, both under the weather and Geoff takes over as rear rider.

The last leg takes us back through Caveat and Highlands. This is an extremely bumpy section and I'm glad to arrive at Broadford. Overall another great day. Thanks to Ben for leading and Ian and Geoff for rear rider duties.

Pierre Ong