

Simon Wastney – grey motorcycle (Honda VFR800)

Jesvin George – black motorcycle (Honda CBR600)

Raman Biaroza – red and black motorcycle (Honda CBR600)

Our bravest and boldest Club members went to Towong. They have a lot of free time and very relaxed wives. Or maybe they know the black art of negotiation. The other members, not so lucky, left behind, but not so lonely. Special leftover ride was planned for them on Sunday.

Personally, I think MSR rides are long and weary. Occasionally, when I see Ben’s cry for a leader, I think of what ride would I do if I was a leader. And that would be a short one. Half a day on a weekend is much easier to find than the whole one. You would be able to squeeze in birthday parties, kids dancing presentations, home renovation, et cetera. Short ride would also attract more novices – the *fresh meat*. Those, in front of whom we would feel ourselves almost like gods of motorcycling. And the only destination I could think of for such a short ride would be combination of Black and Reefton. While I was thinking, Simon has already put it into action. Fantastic! I am in!

The attendance could be better. Only three of us – Simon, Jesvin, Raman. I was expecting more people, especially first time riders. I blame for that slightly confusing itinerary. If our ride was the first position in the calendar on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, we would see more people. It is counter-intuitive for first-timers to read the huuuge Towong plans on 3<sup>rd</sup> and keep reading to find another ride on same day. Even I get caught into that trap – simple human psychology. Nevertheless, less people – more oxygen! Water, petrol, pee, helmet on – let’s go!

Very quickly I lost the sense of geographical location, so forgive me for not naming the roads we were on. But they were great! I especially remember very strange gravel-mud-puddle trail somewhere in the rainforest. We were riding very slowly, in thick fog, and it was freezing. It felt like in parallel universe, or on the other planet. Very special feeling.

Simon mentioned something about “stuff up”, “missing the turn” – he probably went not the way he expected, but I couldn’t care less – we had fun, which means we were on the right roads! As it was three of us – we had plenty of role playing – everybody did front, rear and middle riding at different times.

Eventually I recognized Reefton road, and it was in good condition. Slightly wet, but no tree litter. Very unusual. I hit light reflectors (in the middle of road) really hard couple of times and that ruined my confidence. I started to look in front of the bike and that ruined my cornering. Thankfully, we passed that section and I started to enjoy the ride again. Couple of slight slides over the wet organic dividing line doesn’t count! Lake Mountain has also fantastic surface; I didn’t know that as I never been there in summer.

After a break in Marysville we went to Black Spur and that was the first time in my experience when I didn’t get stuck behind a slow vehicle. We were lucky to pass most of the Spur with no traffic! I must tell – the Black Spur without traffic is fantastic! Lot of cops around, but not after us.

Quickly enough the ride came to the end. And it wasn’t enough for me and Jesvin. So we decided to take unusual twisty road to Southern suburbs to get some more. And we get lost, but I didn’t care, because the road was fantastic.

By the time I get home the ride was everything but short ☺ 4 pm. That is pretty much normal MSR ride, but as I said – I am happy with that. Will learn the route and lead someday. I still think short rides should be in the menu of the Club.

**Raman Biaroza**

P.S.: A small mechanical note to add more meat into the article: I am the one who cannot “feel” the suspension – I cannot tell the difference between good and bad shocks. I am the one who cannot tell the difference in tyre grip. I hardly recognize flat tyre. At some point of my city commuting I started to “feel” the front end. It was bit... bouncy and softy for me. Pumping up and down – as I said – I cannot tell the difference. But more often than not during the braking I wanted the front to be firmer. Checked the maintenance history – last fork oil change was 40,000 km ago. Ok, let’s try to change it. Not sure how used oil should look like, but it certainly shouldn’t smell like rot. Yuck!

After the change I again, cannot tell the difference, but more often than not – I don’t “feel” the front end. Which is, I suppose, exactly how it should be.