



Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters (leader)	Kawasaki ZX10
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Marc Marais	Kawasaki ZX10
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Neville Hoare (3 rd ride)	BMW K1200GT
Ian Payne (rear)	Honda CBR1000	Rob Langer	BMW F700 GS
Jesvin George	Honda CBR600	Jon Hoare (1 st ride)	Suzuki GSXR600
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Geoff Shugg	Suzuki DL650

Licola: this is a great ride and one I didn't want to miss. But then two unrelated incidents occurred which had the potential to jeopardise my attendance!

Incident 1: I had Dave Ward's new Kawasaki ZX14 parked in my garage that was due to be shipped to Tasmania on the Friday before the ride. I had fitted heated grips to the beast and took it out for a test run to ensure all was okay. For such a big bike it hides its bulk well when underway, has bucketloads of torque and is very quiet.

I was very pleased with the grips and was just cruising with the traffic through Frankston when a lane splitting, blinged-up R1 shot by. He got baulked in the traffic and I cruised past. He quickly lane split to get in front again. This 'seesawing' continued for a couple of kilometres and, although amusing, I was glad to turn left for Dandenong and head home. But then in the mirrors I see the R1 coming! Okay, clear road ahead. Let's see him get in front now! Up through the gears – 3rd, 4th, 5th. He's not coming, a quick glance at the speedo tells me why! Holy mackerel! \$2.20 No wonder. I quickly button off and sneak home the back way just in case the constabulary had noticed. I'm still amazed how deceptively fast this bike is. My Fireblade is no slouch but the ZX14 with its turbine smooth motor and quiet stock mufflers goes about its business very, very, efficiently.

Incident 2: I'd noticed one of our central heating outlets was not blowing any air. Unfortunately, the only way to check for a blockage is from under the house, something I wasn't looking forward to as the space under our house goes from minimal to zero and, after headbutting a wayward car many years ago, my neck and upper back are a bit temperamental. So crawling around under the house was going to upset it!

Naturally, the problem had to be at the lowest part which had me commando crawling on my stomach, then squeezing under the last floor joist. I almost got stuck and needed to exhale completely to get free! The problem was a flattened section of ducting. It appeared our cat had been

nesting on it (with this weather, who could blame him!) the duct finally collapsing completely. I quickly moulded the duct back into shape and success! Warm air flowed again.

By the time Sunday rolled around my neck was still quite sore, so rear rider duties would do me!

The Ride: At the Officer South servo the wind was howling but it was dry, rain not expected until early evening. We had the usual regulars plus a couple of newbies with Neville and son Jon on his first road bike!

Cliff gave us a rundown of the day's ride and then we departed down the highway to Garfield.

Boy, was the wind strong. You needed to counter-steer on the straights just to stay on the road! We continued on through Longwarry and Jindivick. At this stage, Jon decided his dad's pace was a bit slow for him and he headed off on his own. I was a little concerned as these roads are challenging for experienced riders, let alone first time Club riders.

We continued on to Willow Grove and then Moe for our first break. Pina was having issues with the strong wind due to her light weight and decided to leave her bike at the Tyers servo and pillion with Misho to Licola.

After our coffee break it was back on the bikes and we headed to Yallourn South, Tyers (fuel), Toongabbie and Glengarry. Then the back roads to Cowwarr, Seaton, Glenmaggie and the Licola road proper. At this point I stopped to clean my visor and felt the full force of the wind on this exposed ridge. Good decision, Pina, I thought.

I set off on this great biking road but didn't get too far before I caught up with Jesvin who was having trouble with the wind buffeting him all over the road. He waved me on. Next was Neville, also having issues with the strong wind. He also waved me on.

Now to enjoy this great road. Although the wind was strong, it wasn't enough to spoil the ride. I next caught up with Paul in cruise mode, again an issue with the wind. I passed him and continued on to the Licola junction where Cliff had indicated earlier that there would be the option of doing the extra 20 km along the Tamboritha road until the dirt! I continued on to the end to find only Cliff, Ben, Rob, Misho/Pina and Jon in attendance.

We had a bit of a chat and I learnt that Jon is an Australian BMX champion and has competed in international events. He tried to explain that riding a motorcycle is similar to riding a BMX bike!

As time was getting on, it was back to Licola for a late lunch. With only a couple of kilometres to go, I came upon the group stopped on a straight stretch of road having a chat, I thought. But then I noticed Rob's BM with broken fairing panels which Jon was securing with duct tape! Rob was okay so I headed to Licola to tell the others! When I got there Neville and Jesvin were the only riders left. Apparently, the store wasn't open so Paul, Marc and Geoff headed back to Tyers!

Eventually the others arrived except Ben who accompanied Rob to the nearest hospital for a check-up. Rob had crashed into a cow! Jon had seen two cows on the road and had stopped to alert the following riders but, unfortunately, when Rob approached, another two cows ran down from the hill to his left and straight across the road. Rob didn't see them until it was too late and collided with the rear of the second cow. The cow just kept going and Rob went sprawling down the road. Fortunately, he only sustained gravel rash, his bike still rideable. (Rob is currently negotiating with the cow's owner for payment for the repairs to his bike!)

After a quick bite to eat, we proceeded back to Tyers with the pace a bit quicker as the wind had subsided slightly - and dark rain clouds were coming! We stopped at Tyers for fuel and then pressed on to try and beat the rain but we only got as far as Buln Buln before the skies opened up. On to the freeway until we reached the Officer South servo.

Ben had caught up with us in Tyers just as we were leaving and reported that Rob was okay but was being subjected to all manner of checks at the Traralgon Hospital.

Thanks to Cliffy and all those who came out on such a challenging day.

Post script: My heating duct not-working saga resurfaced again, the culprit most likely the cat! This time I decided the only remedy was to lift the ducting off the ground and secure it to the floor joists. So after purchasing the necessary items (disposable coveralls, face mask and tape) I spent an uncomfortable six hours slithering around on my back under the house lifting ALL the ducting up off the ground! Although happy with the result, my body took a real beating. Unfortunately, I'm too sore for the next ride. Sorry Simon!

