



Ben Warden (leader)	Honda CBR1000	Mark Bell (2 nd ride)	Suzuki GF1200
Ian Payne (rear rider)	Honda CBR1000	Glenn Aspden	Suzuki GSXR1000
Misho Zrasic	Honda CBR1000	Steve Mudford	Suzuki GSXR1000
Scott Bowden	Honda CBR1000	Geoff Shugg	Suzuki DL650
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	John Marshall	BMW K1200RS
Paul Gilmartin (4 th ride)	Honda CBR600	Michael Henriksen	BMW R1200ST
Roman Biaroza	Honda CBR600	Tim Walker	BMW S1000RR
Adrian MacGeraghty	Honda CBR600	Michael Srb	BMW S1000RR
Stuart Hosking	Triumph 1050	Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10
Cindy Lee	Triumph 675	Mark Copeland	Kawasaki ZX10
Rob McDowall (3 rd ride)	Yamaha R1	Rob Kolbeck	Aprilia RSV1000
John McGuinness (3 rd ride)	Ducati 1200S	Rob Langer	KTM 990

A few weeks ago I was in London for work. Together with my colleague, also a keen biker with a few Ducatis in the shed, we booked a track day at Brands Hatch racetrack. I was impressed by the handling of his twin-pot Ducati 916, having only ever ridden four cylinder Japanese bikes, so I when I got back to Melbourne I took a new Daytona 675 for a test ride. The handling and torque were incredible for a small engine so I ordered a new 'R' model immediately!

I picked the Triumph up on my 40th birthday, last Thursday 29th August. I took it straight to Motologic and had it run in on the dyno. I went for a quick spin on Saturday after installing the frame protectors and other accessories. It was awesome and I couldn't wait to give it a good thrash on a Sunday with MSR. The last thing to do, to make it perfect, was to adjust the gear lever to fit my riding boots better. I rose early, went to undo the nut on the rod, and the rod snapped! My heart sank. I was so looking forward to today's ride - even more than usual!

Pictures of the Triumph on Facebook and confessing to breaking my new toy led to numerous jibes about English reliability.

Back on the trusty Suzuki, I headed to the Officer South meeting point where I spoke with everyone including some guilty fathers who'd ditched their family on Fathers' Day. The first fine day in quite

a while brought out a few new faces to me, all very experienced riders. Some fair-weather-only riders were out too – you know who you are – good to see you back.

The normal briefing occurred with even more normal avoidance of volunteer article scribe. After numerous calls for an article writer - I could see Ben wasn't going to give up until someone volunteered - so I did, just to get on the road. I probably shouldn't admit to that because he now knows my weakness.

We set off on the long straights and bumpy roads to our first stop at Loch. The Warragul Korumburra Road was a mess in places – pot holes and gravel on the apex of corners and bumps worse than a pubescent teenager after a pizza-video all-nighter. I find it hard to see all the indentations in the road. A few times I was heading for a sharp corner, braking reasonably hard, leaning over reasonably far, and the road suddenly dropped away beneath me. I think I'm so focused on my line that I've got no capacity left to scan the road for height deviations. I can spot the pot-holes and gravel okay after learning the hard way a few years ago – it's amazing how quick you learn to spot gravel when you're wearing out your leather suit on the bitumen and picking pieces of your bike out of the gravel. But the variable road height is more difficult; there's no obvious colour difference – or maybe I'm just not looking hard enough.

John McGinness, on the Ducati Multistrada 1200, had a small issue with his right hand side fork seal. A paper napkin and cable ties saw him fit to continue. Rob McDowall, John Marshall and John McGinness all signed up for MSR electronic membership.

We all came through to the Loch meeting point okay and had various discussions on the usual topics: poor state of roads, MotoGP being taken over by young Spaniards, World Superbikes being the poor cousin with more riders than bikes, Pirelli versus Dunlop, distrust and dislike of Police, Suzuki versus Honda - all the essential elements of our love for all things bike (as long as it's not a big fat shiny cruiser, of course).

Misho and Pina joined the ride about halfway into the first leg, having missed the start. I started giving Pina a hard time for being late. Without saying anything she pulled out the oh-so-familiar thin-sheet pink-coloured small-font *infringement notice*. 118 in a 100 zone, 3 (more) points, \$289. On the Freeway, not far from the start. Poor Pina. We feel your pain.

A couple of us got a telling off for things wrong with our bikes. Ben spotted someone with a very bald rear tyre and Cliff spotted my chain was too loose (again).

I caught up with Tim Walker, a long time Club member with over 170,000 kms on his old Kawasaki ZX7R. Tim was riding a brand-spanking new black BMW S1000RR. He seemed to be taking it very easy and I mentioned I couldn't hear that normal fantastic scream of the ultra-short-stroke-wide-bore BMWs are famous for. It turned out the bike was so new it still had the rev-limiter set to 9000 rpm because he still hadn't had the first 1000km service. Fantastic bikes those Beamers. I'm looking forward to hearing it scream in the future.

The next leg of loops within loops was a blast. I was corner marking at the back of the group with Steve Mudford (black GSX-R1000) so when he took off I tried to keep up. That was a lot of fun - while it lasted. I know I'm getting better because now it takes quite a lot of twisty roads before his tail light disappears and I give up and go back to a safer pace. Following someone that skilled is great for learning. Later on I was overtaken by Misho (yellow CBR1000RR). He came out of nowhere as usual, followed quickly by Steve. I tagged along and we caught up to Scott Bowden. Scott saw Misho and Steve in his mirrors and then rode like a man possessed. I struggled to keep

up with the three of them. It's so satisfying to be the fourth bike in a row, leaning all the way over, bend after bend, following the others in unison. Such a great buzz.

I'm always completely disorientated by the time we get to Korumburra Bakery – directly related to the “loops within loops” section of the itinerary. I've been to Korumburra quite a few times now and I still couldn't tell you which way is North. No chance at all. I can, however, tell you that the chili pie is very good. It's surprisingly hot.

Englishman, Gil Martin on his CBR600RR, joined us in Korumburra after a series of debacles with our famously poor train system. On top of that there was an accident in the Burnley Tunnel and they'd blocked a lane. He missed us by only a few minutes at the first stop. Luckily, he'd joined us for the best part of the run, the final leg to Powelltown.

It was a bit of fun getting to Neerim South but then the real fun began. It was nothing but twisty roads getting better and better all the way to Powelltown. It just never seemed to end and the road condition got better and better the further we went.

Geoff Shugg's chain snapped at the intersection of the road up from Darnum and Old Sale Road and the RACV were called for a tow. It was great to see everyone sticking to the Club's rule of “only the rider directly behind the incident, the rear rider and the Club captain should stop, all others should keep going”. It meant the ride continued uninterrupted for the rest of us – the system works. The Corner Marking System worked too when Cindy overshot and had to be chased down. Tim overshot at one point but just waited for everyone to catch up.

Cliffy was having (more) troubles with his Kawasaki ZX10R, an intermittent fault with the key and security system. He should just give up and ride his better bike, the Suzuki GSX-R1000.

Canadian Scott Bowden on his CBR1000RR said he had a moment on one of those nasty mounds in the middle of the road the size of a squashed AFL ball. His bike bucked like a bronco, jumping from front to rear to front and back. He thought his time was up but for a reason unknown to him he stayed on the bike and the bike stayed on the road.

When we got back to Powelltown everyone was buzzing. We finally had a break from the cold, nasty, winter weather. It was very windy on top of some of the ridges but at 25 degrees no-one was complaining.

Scott and Gil were wondering where the heck Powelltown was and which way to Melbourne. They felt like riding some more twisty roads so we travelled home together on my normal long-way-round route to the freeway. It was a lot of fun going up Chum Creek Road to Toolangi, through Christmas Hills to Kangaroo Ground and then dropping over Warrandyte to the Eastern Freeway. By that time it was getting dark and we were all exhausted.

The positive feedback on Facebook was evidence of a fantastic day. It was the best ride for a long time. Summer is nearly here and I'm sure the best is yet to come. Thanks to Ian for going rear rider and thanks to Ben for leading.

Glenn Aspden