

New Rider Impressions

Long, long ago, on a fine, sunny, summer morning of 15th January 2012, I went on my first MSR ride. It was those good times when stock motorcycles could travel at 250-300+ km/h with no speed limiting devices, no front license plates and the wearing of fluorescent clothing was not mandatory.

I arrived at Berwick on my pearl white and red Yamaha FZ6. I walked up to the group with excitement and started to spark some conversations. Talking to strangers is something I'm not really good at. I remember talking to Ben Warden, Ian Payne, Peter Jones, and Peter Ng. Seeing so many different makes and types of motorcycles, I felt like a kid in a candy shop.

I was a bit surprised to see the average age of riders. I was under the assumption that sports bike riding is for young hooligans and the rest ride Harleys. Do I need to say how wrong I was?

The lead rider, Tim Emons, gave the pre-ride briefing to the group which included four first timers. After the pre-ride talk I fired up my bike and joined the ride to Leongatha via Coalville. That was the start of a new Sunday lifestyle for me, and I have never looked back.

On the first break, Ben provided timely feedback on my mind-blowing riding skills, my safety his prime concern. He told me that some riders reported that I had run wide a couple of times. I didn't mention another two occasions. Or the fact that I had never ridden with a group. Or that I was having a cardiac arrest whenever riders overtook me on the corners like I was standing still. I never thought this group riding would be so fast. It was totally unexpected. Nevertheless, that didn't stop me from leaning more in the corners so as not to disappoint our photographer, Tony Stegmar.

I was really thrilled to ride in a group and see the speedometer like I have never seen it before. I made some typical newbie mistakes like looking at the speedo often, to evaluate my *performance*, or constantly watching my mirrors to give way to the overtaking rocket ships. I was scared that somebody would run over me if I didn't give way in the corners.

At the next stop for lunch, someone told me my rear brake light was not functioning properly. Before I knew it, Tim, Ben, Ron [and me to supervise] had the tools out relieving the tension on the brake light switch. Fixed in the blink of an eye.

At the next stop Ron Johnston commented that I was doing alright - for a 600. Thanks Ron. Your comment was gratifying for a first timer. In fact, I thought I was doing okay because there were 23 riders spread across the country so I could always find someone to ride with.

I was so excited after my first ride that I replayed the ride in my mind again and again before going to sleep. All I dreamed about was lean angles and motorcycles. On my second ride to Euroa, on Labour Monday, there were only six riders and I could hardly keep up. I felt sorry for slowing down Pina Garasi and Ron who shared the rear-riding duties. If I thought I was doing okay on my first ride, I felt like a slumbering sloth on the second one. Pride level lowered, I vowed to come back after more practice.

Since I acquired the Honda CBR600RR I have been riding more frequently on Sundays, attending Social Sips and General Meetings.

So what do I think about MSR? Super! The rides are well organised with sensible people on the Committee. The MSR riders are a nice crowd to hang around with and a ride every Sunday is great. Multiple overnight rides each year is also very appealing.

I am pleased to be associated with a club that has a strong history. Meeting Peter Philferan, one of the earliest members, was a real pleasure.

It is amazing to see how dedicated some people are. There are herculean tasks associated with publishing magazines, collecting and updating old magazines, organising events and so on. I really appreciate the efforts taken by the key members to get the tasks done and also the people working in the background like Barb Peters.



One important aspect is that MSR has got the right mix of discipline and fun. This is something hard to achieve in any organisation and harder to get right with motorcycling groups. I think MSR are doing it right. This was confirmed by a recent new rider who commented that he used to ride with another group which had heaps of rules reducing the riding pleasure.

So far, the MSR provides opportunities to meet like-minded people, hone my riding skills, and meets my need for speed. Seeing places is not on my riding agenda as all I see while riding is roads and white lines. I look forward to riding on more Sundays with the MSR. Keep leaning.

PS. I like the MSR logo too. Very creative.

Jesvin George