



Misho Zrakic/Pina Garasi
Ben Warden (leader)

Honda CBR1000
Honda CBR1000

Cliff Peters
Dennis Lindemann

Kawasaki ZX10
Honda CBR600

This ride was a spur of the moment suggestion by Pina earlier in the week; the weather forecast was fabulous (well, 14 degrees and sunny!), it was a public holiday, and I had no commitments with the next day off to recover/clean the gutters, or work in the garden as directed. So I advertised it in the Google Group – too late for the magazine, and posted it to the web site itinerary page.

The day before was the well attended ride out to Jamieson led by Rod Merrett on the all-conquering BMW S1000RR. Jamieson, with its never ending, concentration sapping, twisties wore out most people, so I didn't expect too many common to both rides. But as it turned out, just the absolute desperados turned up (Cliff, Misho and Pina sans bike) and Dennis with a rare day off from family duties, mum having taken the baby back home to show off to the grandparents in Caloundra, QLD!

There we were at Whittlesea in the freezing fog! At least radar doesn't work in fog, but neither do your eyes! We trundled off, no rear rider required, as we were unlikely to be out of sight of each other for most of the day – if we stuck really close together in the fog!

Out through Eden Park twisties, the roundabout at the end finally sealed, then along the highway (carefully) to Wallan, right at the lights and left at the Romsey Road. This road traverses a number of steep valleys with good visibility, as a general rule. Interestingly, today, every second valley was heavily fogged in. This continued all the way to Romsey at which point the fog cleared and we proceeded to make good time to Mt Macedon and The Cross.

At The Cross, a war memorial to those killed in World War II, the view was spectacular as the air was very clean and clear after three days of long weekend low traffic conditions meaning not much car generated or industrial pollution. Throw in a builders' RDO on either side, and a teachers strike on the preceding Thursday, followed by a pupil free day on Friday meant not much polluting activities for a quite a number of days preceding today which allowed us to see the city skyline.

Down the Mt Macedon Road bumping into a Learner on a giant yellow scooter, now pulled over staring at his rear tyre. Yes, the gravel resurfacing is much better than the last time we were along here, but has pooled in the middle of the lanes, a perfect storm for the Learner, who probably felt his machine sliding all over the place. Misho and I didn't stop and enlighten him, just confirmed our common thoughts at morning tea in Woodend at the usual bakery at the bottom end of town.

After the leisurely break we set off heading west along the off-camber and dangerous Ashbourne Road to Trentham and then with a couple of extra kilometres of highway, took the less travelled route through the very scenic tree lined Little Hampton and around to the Spring Hill cross roads.

On towards Upper Coliban Reservoir where I half expected water to be overflowing down the spillway but wasn't, and then into Kyneton. We turned left just before the railway line, now just riding on pure memory and instinct, out to Lauriston Reservoir. It has gone all commercial, wanting a \$2.00 entrance fee, which is probably the lowest fee in Australia, but then again, you don't get much for your money! We did a U-turn in the gravelly carpark and continued on.

Instincts deserted me at the next (not helpfully signposted) cross road where I should have gone left but instead kept straight and north heading for Malmsbury. It was an interesting road but meant 5 or 6 km of highway looping back to recover and find the back way to Vaughan.

The map showed about 3.5 km of dirt and I hoped they had made it by now. No they hadn't, but it was down to 2 km. The road was pleasant, meandering along a hard packed surface. An easy (but slow) ride. We could have been anywhere in eastern Australia, the vegetation typical of outback Victoria, NSW and Queensland.

Soon enough we picked up the good road through Vaughan which dips and rises and twists its way towards Guildford. I went past the normal left turn, remembering the road continued on for another few kilometres. The downside was we had an extra couple of km of (police blitzed) highway to negotiate. At Guildford, I again took the lesser-travelled route up the steep and inviting road towards Newstead running parallel with the railway, the road swapping sides every now and again with absolute dead slow 90 degree right angles. Easy to overshoot, so early braking required.

Hard left over the railway one last time and then south through Yandoit heading for Daylesford. At the final T-Junction at the cyprus hedge we turned left down and up the twisty section through Hepburn Springs until reaching the Midland Highway, and then did a U-turn and repeated this magic section – because we could!

Fuel at Daylesford, where I got a lecture for not taking my helmet off while filling up, or getting off the bike, or both. Of course, you can pour petrol all over a hot motor and it won't ignite – it needs a spark. And the static electricity theory has nearly been debunked.

Late lunch outside the pub on the corner of the big roundabout. Only single-man Dennis went off in search of sustenance; the rest of us opened up our lunch boxes and started eating. Pina bought all of us a very enjoyable mango ice-cream as we were perched right outside the ice creamery. Finally, we succumbed to temptation.

I recognised ex-President Keith Finlay, on his Harley, and partner Katrina (number plate Trina) on her BMW K series. We chatted for a while, Keith's last ride before an enforced 28 day break.

The troops started to gear up and I took the hint: time to go.

Back out through Glenlyon to the Spring Hill cross roads, this time continuing east towards Tylden, then back down through Trentham East, left at the Pig 'N Whistle, and around to Woodend, Straws Lane (famous for its optical illusion where typically people roll their cars *uphill*), and back to Bulla via Bolinda and Wild Dog Road with its tricky wooden bridge.

We enjoyed a number of planes taking off, rather than the usual landing. They were landing on the east west runway into a rather stiff westerly wind. They have built another car park to support the ever increasing numbers of sightseers. The big planes are still an engineering marvel up close.

We bade our farewells after 344 easy kilometres for the day, the light now fading fast, the cold creeping. We'll do it again soon, now that we have scouted out the route. Thanks team.

Ben Warden