

Jindabyne MK III



Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Rob Jones	Suzuki GSXR1000
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Bart Hutchinson	Suzuki GSXR1000
Nigel Oman	Honda CBR1000	Geoff Dick	BMW R850
Dave Byrne	Honda CBR1000	Rob Langer	BMW F800GS
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10
Peter Feistl	Ducati Panigale		<i>11 bikes, 11 people</i>

Day 1 – Berwick. Everyone that’s going is here. Ben tells us the route, stops, fuel, distances and so forth for the day. Then we are off up the freeway, steadily passing traffic, till we come upon two trucks that didn’t want us to pass, hogging both lanes. Each would speed up then slow down and leave no gap to get through. I could see the driver in the right lane watching us in his mirror, the moron. Robby’s not having any of this and uses the outside lane. (Well, it is an emergency and the leader is getting away.) Said truckies saw a few birds as we all file past and settle into a steady pace to Longwarry where we turn off for Jindivick, Neerim South and Crossover It’s always fun through here and better than the Robin Hood short cut.

Down the Old Sale Road to the turn that takes us across to Hill End where Bart and I corner mark. Wait, wait, wait. Bart goes back to see what’s up. A minute or two latter Robby arrives. Rob Jones has had a run in with a fence post, he informs me. “He broke it off at the ground with his head, splitting the helmet in the process.” “Is he okay?” Yes, fine. Rattled, maybe, but okay. Tough as he looks, eh? The bike was okay to continue. (A new helmet is called for so Rob and Bart take a detour to Bairnsdale later on and catch us up at lunch time in Bruthen.) A few minutes later Rob arrives with the rest of the gang in tow and we continue on to Tyers.

It had been raining lightly since Willow Grove, so at our morning tea stop at Tyers some people put their wets on for the next leg to Briagolong. And yes, 5km out of Tyers the sun comes out. Quite often the way, (A silent thank you to the big man upstairs.)

We continue on our merry way, hoping to go down around Glen Maggie where the bush fires have been, for a look. I read the sign, "Road Closed", as we all sail past. Looks like we are at it again. I recall another road closed sign the other side of Trentham a while back and having a chat to the local copper when caught on the other side (but that's another story). Then there was the time up on the Whitfield Road, oh, and the Mount Hotham fires? What fires? Back to the ride.

Brake light, blinker, Ben's doing a U-turn. A cop is charging across the paddock with lights and siren blaring which might have something to do with the U-turn. So we take a detour to Heyfield bypassing the burnt area, leaving the copper to do whatever he was doing before we arrived on his patch, and continue on to Briagolong for fuel and a short stop.

Next is Beverley's Road, then right on to the Dargo road. Left to Iguana Creek and back roads to Bairnsdale where we join the Highway to Bruthen. About 6 km down the highway we take a side road to Tambo Upper and enter Bruthen from the south. A far better route than the highway. (Thanks to Tim from Dargo explorations for showing us this piece of bitumen.)

Lunch. We sit enjoying the sun and admiring Peter's new Ducati Panigale, which is missing its rear brake lever, it having decided to part company somewhere along Beverley's Road is one theory. Never use the back brake, so don't need it, was heard from several people. Hmm. Strange. I use mine.

Rob and Bart arrive, a new helmet having been acquired. There were three bike shops with a choice of two: this model or the old model. And very expensive. That's the country for you.

With Rob and Bart back in the fold and lunch over, we head off to Orbost. There's only the 66 km highway route so we trundle along at a little more speed than most cars. Just before you top the rise heading into Orbost at a place called New Merela a police four wheel drive does a sharp U-turn right in front of Ben and stops on the side of the road. I thought it looks like a chat coming our way but he pays us no heed.

We stop in Orbost for fuel before tackling the Bonang race track, er, highway. Well, there must have been a good wind storm through here in the last day or two as the road was covered in an amazing lot of sticks, bark, and branches. Crap everywhere. Even fallen trees in a spot or two with only one lane available. (It was mostly the same on the way back though a little cleaner.)

Steady was the go for me. After 85 km we take the turn off to Bendoc, and take a spell for a few minutes at the end of the dirt road. When leaving, Robby's bike didn't want to start. The side stand cut out switch was playing up. A few twists and wiggles and away she went. Left at Bendoc, right at Delegate and on to Bombala for fuel and coffee.

Time is getting away and a BBQ is waiting so we head off up the Monaro Highway for about 20km and then take the good road to Dalgety and Jindabyne. It was a good run all the way. At Dalgety Peter and I corner mark where he realises his gear change lever is trying to do the same thing as his brake lever and part company with the bike. A few turns with the Allen key put paid to that and we are away to play catch up, having waved the rear rider Nigel on a few minutes before.

Peter and I arrive at Jindabyne not having caught the others. Ben says suggests I fire up the barby, while he tracks down the meat and sausages supplied in the price of the rooms, along with salads and orange and apple juice. A very nice feed was had by all. We sat about and talked about the day's ride up and the days to come. By this time it was almost dark.

I stowed my gear away, watched a little tennis, and then crashed for the night, dreaming of the days to come.

Day 2 – Breakfast of Vita-Brits, milk, and a cup of tea all transported from home on the back of the bike. Most riders have brought something for breakfast along with them. I remember we had

brekky in town last time. This time we ate breakfast while watching a family of kangaroos going about their business about twenty metres away, munching away on the grass.

Pina and Misho had been kept awake most of the night by a barking dog that sounded like it was under the window sill, but was miles away in fact. I never heard a thing; slept too soundly.

All the Honda riders were up before day light so the rest of us wouldn't see them checking their two strokes' oil level: 500ml here 2 litres there ☺

Has anyone got any lock tight? Bloody hell! Who was that? Some red Italian beauty has a loose screw or two that needs locking in place?

Today's ride is to Tumut it will be around 500k for the day. We head into town for fuel and to pick up Rob, Bart and Dave who are staying in a motel in town and apparently aren't getting much sleep due to an Irish get together that goes all night. I can imagine the racket.

Fuelled up we go back past our camp to Dalgety where they are still working on the bridge. Did I mention the road closed sign? We pull up and Robby walks down and chats to the fellow who is keeping an eye on things. Apparently they had just put a sealing coat on the bridge deck and it wasn't dry. Otherwise he might have let us cross, thus avoiding the 80km of gravel road with 35 stock gates. (Well, it seemed like that.) It was actually 16 km and three stock gates.

We emerge from the dust in Berridale just in time to meet and mingle with the Indian Motorcycle Club who are on their annual run. We pass quite a few on our way to Adaminaby, our morning tea stop.

From Adaminaby we head up the Snowy Mountains Highway to Kiandra and then left and up past Cabramurra before plunging down to Sue City where there's just a camp ground and pond connected to the Snowy Scheme. What a terrific ride. Indians everywhere, motorcycles that is. Some on the road, some not! They're either out of fuel or broken down. They have a convoy of back up vehicles in tow. We pick our way through and continue on to Tumbarumba

After fuel we hit the log truck route to Tumut for lunch. This is an awesome road with not a car in sight. At Tumut we have lunch and get ready for the fang up the Wee Jasper Road and back. But not before Misho gets a lecture about riding on the footpath from the local TOG driver. Misho is extremely lucky not to be fined \$600, and earn six demerits on this double everything long weekend.

You have to love this road, sweepers galore, steady climb all the way to the end of the bitumen – fantastic 35 or 40km then turn around and do it all again. Hope no one saw the silly grin on my face when we got back to Tumut!

Then it's back to the log truck route to Tumbarumba for more fuel. Peter had to top up at Tumut so as to make it to Tumbarumba. The duke is a thirsty beast. I think we all had high fuel consumption to Tumut and return. I can't understand why!

The final leg was back to Jindabyne via Khancoban, and Thredbo. There was a fair bit of it in the rain and it was very hard to see as it was also very humid. We catch the Rebel Motorcycle Club and blast past. Misho, pressing on, got me wondering how fast do we really want to go in the pouring rain. It's still pissing down. Whoops, there's Ben. We corner mark and wait for the others. Everyone comes by including The Rebels and their recovery van! I'm not sure how happy they were to have us all blast past again. They were probably thinking unkind thoughts.

A short stop in Khancoban before the run up to Thredbo and home to Jindabyne. I thought I'll lead for a bit till Ben comes past. The rain had eased to a gentle drizzle but visibility wasn't good at all. It was still very humid and it was like trying to see the road through a bottle of water. It was worse with the visor up, the rain stinging my eyeballs.

Misho and I get to Dead Horse Gap and wait for the others to catch up. I'm soaked to the skin from the last 110 odd kilometres of rain but I'm not really cold. Gradually everyone arrives. It's all downhill to Jindabyne. So after Peter offers Pina some dry gloves we head off for another night's BBQ at camp. Another great day of riding.

Day 3 Fish and Chips in Eden.

A short ride today of 350km or so. We are told Dave has headed home, family commitments to take care of. Hope you had a good trip back mate.

It's into town to pick up the boys. Rob and Bart. We all get fuel and then head off to Dalgety and Bombala for morning tea. Misho and Rob disappear into the distance, the lads on a mission. Me and Peter plod along together with the others further back. We all manage to avoid any damage from the oncoming local 4WD policeman on the highway before Bombala.

After morning tea we head out of town, still on the highway, eventually taking another logging truck route through to the coast. Another fun piece of road. We emerge at the other end with smiles all round. Everyone managed to miss the roos and a deer along this stretch. After a warning from our leader to watch out for the plod on the outskirts of Eden we head off for lunch of fish and chips on the water front. Yummy. Rob Jones keeps us all amused with his wise cracks and stories.

After lunch we head out of town and back to Bombala passing through Wyndham and Cathcart. Another good run on another good road. Seems to be a lot of them in this neck of the woods.

I corner mark at Bombala with Peter. He asks, "Do you think it will rain?" Silly me says, "Na". Pete puts his wets on. We get five kilometres down the road and it's bucketing down. I pull over. Pina pulls over as well. Pete goes past, no doubt laughing in his helmet. So there's Pina and I trying to get our wets on. It's pouring and there's water going into my boots and down my neck. It's almost a waste of time putting the wets on now as I'm already half soaked. After this deluge the sun comes out strong and warm 10 kilometres down the road. Off with the wets! I dry out with the sun and wind on the way back through Dalgety to Jindabyne.

There's only six takers on the Kosciuszko run to Charlotte Pass and the lookout. Ben, Misho, Pina, Peter, Rob Langer and me. I can't say much more than it didn't take long and that little six hundred Honda CBR is certainly being well ridden on this trip.

Tea tonight is in town at the hotel. You pay \$20 they give you a steak and you cook it on the hot plate provided. Sounds a pain, but is quite relaxing trying to decide how many minutes on each side before it's cooked the way you like. When cooked to your liking, you go back to the buffet and load up with vegies and chips, or salad and such A very good meal for the price. I had mine and went back to the camp with Robby, watched a little of the tennis on telly and called it a day. The others weren't far behind either. I think having this much fun is quite tiring.

Day 4 Homeward bound. Bugger!

The trip home was pretty much the same as the way we came up. Back through Dalgety to Bombala for morning tea where we watched plod booking locals for doing nothing wrong from what I could see. Better them than us I guess.

Morning tea done, we trundle out of town passing another victim getting a ticket or lecture. Once out of sight we picked up the pace a little. The last of us to leave had plod follow for a bit, we were told later when we stopped for a breather at the end of the gravel section heading to Orbost on the Bonang. The road was a little cleaner today having been swept by cars in the past two days.

I try to remember where those trees were across the road. Yep, still there. One was in quite a dangerous spot just around a blind corner so Misho stopped to warn the rest of the riders as they came through. Well done, mate.

Fuel and lunch at Orbost before we press on to Bruthen for a five minute stop. For one reason or another [*Misho ordered a hamburger ...Ed.*] we split into two groups, me leading the second group, with around a five minute delay behind Ben. We took all the back roads we came up on, except Tim's side route. We ran into Peter still looking for his brake lever on Beverley's Road. I think he gave it away as a bad joke as we went past and he followed us into Briagolong where Ben's group were getting fuel.

Together again, we head off towards Glen Maggie. Maybe the road is open now and we can go through? But no, *Road Closed* and some red *Do Not Enter* signs as well. Ben gives us a "what do

you reckon” look. I point back the way we came, so we take the same Heyfield detour in reverse. We have had such a good four days riding there is no point in getting a lecture or worse from plod.

Ben leads us back to Heyfield and on to Tyers for another breather. Then the last fang through Willow Grove, Jindivick, Longwarry North, and up the freeway to Officer where the weekend came to an end. Four awesome days of riding on some of the best roads you will see anywhere.

Thanks everyone who came along and made the trip such an enjoyable one. I loved every second, rain included. Thanks Ben from all of us for organising and leading the trip.

The countdown to Melbourne Cup weekend has started; I can’t wait.

Cliff Peters