

Damir Djikic	Honda CBR1000	Ron Johnson	Honda CBF1000
Ian Payne	Honda CBR1000	Rob Langer (rear)	KTM 990
Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Geoff Shugg	Suzuki DR650
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Phil Hotschilt	Suzuki GSXR1300
Tony Stegmar (leader)	Honda CBR1000	Marc Marais	Kawasaki ZX10
Chris Bouwmeester (2 <sup>nd</sup> ride)			<i>11 bikes, 11 people</i>

I arrived at Berwick and noticed a few of the usual suspects are here already. Phil, on the Hayabusa, even put in an appearance, as did Geoff Shugg, who I haven't seen for a very long time. Today Tony was leading the ride. I can't remember whether he has led ride before or not, but it's always good to see someone else step up.

Tony gathered his flock around and spoke to us about the ride. Then it was time to hit the freeway to Pakenham. I noticed that they are putting up walls along the freeway to reflect the noise, changing the face of the landscape.

We do the off ramp thing and head down back roads to Bayles. On other rides we have come back this way, but it was good going in reverse. From Bayles we travel to Poowong East, Arawata, Fairbank, and Mt Eccles.

I don't recall having been to Mt Eccles before so I was in for a bit of a treat. The road is steep, bumpy, narrow and twisty. I passed a car and then we got stuck behind a truck that took up the whole road. Eventually I managed to pass it on a short straight, having to hug the shoulder on the wrong side of the road.

At Mt Eccles (a few houses at the top of the hill) the road surface turns to gravel. Oh joy. Down we go. At the next 'T' intersection we go left, still on gravel, until we reach the sealed road to Hallston where we turned left and headed along familiar roads to Allambe South and finally in to Mirboo North for the first stop.

After the break we headed south to Limonite. I was following an empty log truck, contemplating passing. I looked at my speedo, and the dude in the truck was doing \$1.30. He wasn't sitting around. On one of the corners the trailer hit a bump and the left side wheels bounced about a foot off the ground, so thought I had better sit back and wait for a safe passing opportunity. Soon after he caught another empty log truck, so it took a while before I was able to pass the pair of them.

At Limonite a couple of the lads were supposed to be marking the turn to Boolarra, but just parked on the side of the road in line, chatting away, not using their bikes to point in the direction of the ride, oblivious to the confusion they were creating as some riders figured it out, while others sailed past. I came around the corner, saw two people on the side of the road, and thought something must have happened, and then realised they were corner marking. I hit the skids and shot past the corner, and ended up going down an exit road. In the meantime someone shot past me and continued on.

This rarely travelled back road to Boolarra is quite good. When I get to Boolarra, Ben and someone were corner marking so I catch up with Tony at the next intersection. While waiting, we see Paul down at the next corner. I asked Tony, "How did he get there when I got here first?" After a short while Paul came to see us and we had a few words. Paul wasn't happy and went off in a huff.

After a while everyone turned up and we regrouped at the turn off to Yinnar. Then we headed around the back of the Hazelwood Pondage, followed by the Loy Yang power station eventually picking up the Hyland Highway for 57 km to Yarram for lunch.

The servo that we used to go to has been replaced with a brand spanking new one which looks the goods. After fuel it was off to the bakery for a yummy lunch and a welcome rest.

On the return journey we take the Tarra Valley road heading for Balook and the Tarra Bulga National Park. What a beaut little road this is; it follows the river on the very picturesque valley floor before climbing steeply up to the Grand Ridge Road.

We wind our way out over the top, along the ridge to Balook and then down the other side to Traralgon South. This road is pretty rough in places, chopped up in the corners by the logging trucks. I hang on for dear life, and we finally roll in to Traralgon where Paul departs.

We continue to Tyers for fuel only to find Rod Silver (KTM RC8) waiting in the car park. I asked if he had missed the ride start. No, he had been to Sydney and was on his way back home. He had done a couple of thousand kilometres and his backside was sore.

For the last leg of our journey we head for Moe via Yallourn North. Rod has taken off on his own. From Moe we head up to Willow Grove and then back down to the Old Sale Road. By the time I get to the Old Sale Road Mr Plod has pulled Rod over and booked him for speeding. We continue on to Jindivick and Longwarry North where the ride finishes at the servo.

A good day was had by all. No incidents - other than the corner marking stuff up. A nice, leisurely ride. Thanks to Tony for leading and Rob Langer for rear riding.

**Ron Johnston**