

On the ride:

Ron Johnston (lead)
Ben Warden
Marc Marais
Jason Wilson
Tim Walker
Aiden Baker
Bill Kennedy
Mark Rigsby (rear)
Michael Zrb

Honda CBF1000
Honda CBR1000
Kawasaki ZX10
Kawasaki ZX9
Kawasaki ZX7R
Kawasaki ER6-N
Kawasaki ZX7
Suzuki GSXR1000
Suzuki GSXR1000

9 bikes, 9 people

At the BBQ:

Ron Johnston
Ben Warden
Marc Marais
Tim Walker
Ian Payne (1/3 rear)
John Willis
Tony Stegmar
Dennis Lindemann
Rob Langer

9 people

First, thanks to Rob for inviting us to his home for a BBQ to watch the WSBK on at Phillip Island. Unfortunately, I had other commitments in the afternoon and could not attend but very much appreciate the offer. I did record the races to watch later in the evening; that was a nasty off by Checa on lap 5 in race 1. I'm glad he fared better than the Ducati he destroyed! Indications from the Phillip Island round are that Checa and Biaggi could have a ding dong battle this year for the championship so long as Biaggi can keep his emotions under control. And it would be nice to see Sykes and the ZX10 get up for a few wins.

I left home a bit early to head to Berwick via Emerald and Gembrook. It was hot, even at 8am, and the forecast was for a scorcher so I ripped the winter and wet weather liners out of my DriRider jacket to allow the air to flow through the two mesh layers. It helped, but it was still hot.

As I was riding down the Emerald Beaconsfield Road I noticed something that looked like a huge rock with a bright orange X painted on it by the side of the road. As I approached I realised it was a quite dead and bloated wombat on its side. "So, what do you do for a living, mate"? "Oh, I paint orange X's on dead wombats." lol!

Considering the hot forecast, we had a good roll up with nine riders at Berwick. I volunteered to be rear rider and Ron gave us the ride plan which culminated in stopping at Rob's for those who wanted to go. As we rode through Berwick I got stopped by a red light. Everyone else had gone through. Little did I know that this was be par for the course for me towards the end of the ride.

The ride proceeded up through Harkaway and Upper Beaconsfield and then along Paternoster Road to the Gembrook Pakenham Road. Paternoster Road is good fun.

I recently traded my old K3 GSXR1000 in on a K9 in mint condition with low kilometres. The bike comes with three engine mapping settings and its interesting using the two lower power settings for corner entries and exits along this road. The K9 feels lighter, nimbler and more stable than the K3 and certainly still has the trademark freight train Suzuki acceleration. I followed Bill most of the day as he was taking it easy, still gaining riding experience on his Z750.

We rode to Gembrook and then turned off on to Milners Road for the short spurt to the Yarra Junction Powelltown Road. I was a bit puzzled when we turned towards Powelltown instead of Yarra Junction when I remembered Ron was going to take the back way via the Tarrango Road to bypass Yarra Junction and then on to the Old Warburton Road. I have memories of the last time I rode the Old Warburton Road, particularly a left hand turn towards the end as you come into the area where the houses start. This corner is virtually right angle with gravel on it from the intersecting gravel road and it sneaks up on you. That last corner has caught out many a rider

including me when the front lets go. Last time whoever was in front of me was lucky to stay upright with a big front lose and running off the right hand side of the road but managing to keep the bike up.

On to Warburton for a break. Lots of bikes and tourists everywhere. We had some tucker and drinks, watched the local constabulary cruise by and stop for a chat and sweated – man it was hot! I had a good chat with Michael about his K6 which he was really happy with. He mentioned he had been riding a ZX10 prior which took a fair bit of skill and focus to ride. He found the GSXR on the other hand, a better all round package and easier to ride quickly.

Ron made the call to arms and Ben and Tim swapped bikes for the run up Mt Donna Buang, Ben on the ZX7R and Tim trying the Blade . (From the animated conversation they were having just prior to departure, I suspect Ben was reliving his Kawasaki days.) The weather change, as we rode up Mt Donna Buang, was astounding: from scorching hot dry weather to cold, drizzling, foggy weather on the mountain. Michael called it quits half way up due to the wet roads and took off for home. After a quick stop at the top we returned to Warburton and then on to the Gembrook Road for the quick blast into Gembrook.

We then made our way along to Emerald and on to Belgrave weaving around the traffic. I got caught up behind a couple of 4WDs as the rest of the crew slipped away and of course I then proceeded to get just about every red light on the way into Ferntree Gully. (Sorry Ben, you had to wait so long corner marking in the heat. I gave Ben a toot and a wave as I sailed past the Ferntree Gully Road turnoff.

Thanks to Ron for leading. I really enjoyed the ride and I hope all who attended had a great time at Rob's and enjoyed the racing. Take care and stay upright.

Mark Rigsby