



Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10
Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Mark Marais	Kawasaki ZX10
Scott Bowden	Honda CBR1000	Tony Stegmar	Suzuki GSXR1000
Ian Payne (rear)	Honda CBR1000	Stu Hosking	Triumph Speed triple
Simon Wastney	Honda VFR800	Glenn Aspden (leader)	Triumph 675
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Cindy Lee	Triumph 675

It's been a while since I've written an article, so when the call for a ride write-up came and there was the usual awkward collective shifting from one foot to the other and eyes looking down, I thought I might as well put my hand up.

So friends, it was a grim wet morning as I contemplated missing out yet again on my favourite Jamieson ride. I think I've skipped the last three for one reason or another. Should I? Shouldn't I? I'd spent weeks looking forward to this but felt betrayed by the dubious looking weather. Steve was working all weekend and my choice was to sit around at home with the big pile of laundry that needed to be washed and ironed or risk a sad day riding all by my lonesome at the back of the pack, picking my way through puddles trying to make out the road ahead through a fogged visor. Wow! Have I changed from being hard core to such a try-hard? – I sneered at myself. I decided to harden up and took off with the hope that my GP Racer tyres were going to hold up in the wet.

I knew I'd be lucky to get to Yarra Glen at 10, fill up and get to the meeting spot in time for take-off. Luckily, Ben was unusually late so I had a few minutes to spare to say hello to the 10 other hopeful riders and chat about the marvels of Nespresso coffee machines with Pina (an early Christmas pressie from me to Steve).

Glenn told us about his pre-ride the weekend before. He warned us that the first stretch of the Jamieson road was covered with invisible gravel which caused him to slide around. We were advised to watch out, especially for a left-hander, which really caused him grief. "Which one of the 178 corners?" Ben asked. Glenn reassured us that things got a whole lot better after that bad left.

The clouds were dark and heavy with grey mist covering the hills around us. Of course, it started raining just as we took off! We made our way at a very conservative pace (well, I did anyway) along Old Healesville Road which we usually fly along. The Black Spur traffic didn't seem too heavy but I still didn't like the look of the wet road so it was a very easy ride to Marysville where Simon joined the group.

As we were getting ready to leave Marysville, Pina pointed to a tiny patch of blue sky in the North-West. Not quite where we were heading. But the clouds opened up to reveal more blue sky on the way to Taggerty and we were all feeling pretty optimistic by the time we stopped for a two-second regroup at the start of Jamieson Road.

Sure enough as we started the climb, it started raining. Dammit! The fear of invisible gravel sunk in and I wondered if the next left turn would be that evil one that Glenn had told us about. I waved everyone past. Yeah, catch up with you at Jamieson!

I don't know if I passed that left turn but suddenly the road was dry again. So I picked up the pace a little. Everything felt vaguely unfamiliar. It'd been a while since I'd been to Jamieson and the first time with this bike setup with different tyres, so it took me a while to get into the groove. I started feeling better still when I used second and third gears instead of just sticking to third gear. More work, but I felt more in control of what the bike was doing and I started enjoying the ride a whole lot more.

We stopped at the lookout for photos and a debrief. The Jamieson Road offers all manner of twists and turns, a few straights for a fang if you like, changes in road conditions, and plus or minus gravelly stretches so there's always a need to debrief. Where was that gravel? Was it there? Misho suggested the best strategy for dealing with it was just to ignore it. What gravel? asked Cliff.

Lunch at Jamieson was a quiet affair. It was hot! It must've been over 10 degrees warmer than Eildon. There was hardly anyone about. I wondered if everyone had fled town to get away from the fly plague that had descended on the town. AeroGuard seemed to have no effect. Marc's bike received some attention. Leaking coolant I think.

After a relaxed break, it was time to head back. I was happy to put my helmet on to get away from those damned flies! The road back to Eildon felt smoother and easier. We regrouped at the servo to fill-up and I noticed a man with two dogs talking to Misho. It was Marty Thompson! I hadn't seen him for a while and he looked very different – taller and tanned. I thought he looked terrific! I said hello and admired his gorgeous dogs.

I had to race back home so I skipped the last leg through Fraser National Park. I waved goodbye to everyone leaving them to catch up with Marty while I set off on an unremarkable ride home. Thank you all for another great day on the road! Looking forward to the next Jamieson ride! Looking forward to Dargo! Looking forward to the Phillip Island ride day!

Cindy Lee