



Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10
Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Andrew Newbury	Kawasaki ZX10
Scott Bowden	Honda CBR1000	Ian Payne	Kawasaki ZX10
Nigel Oman	Honda CBR1000	Mark Copeland	Kawasaki ZX10
Roman Biarozza	Honda CBR600	Marc Marais	Kawasaki ZX10
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Andre Drezga (2 nd)	Ducati 900
Neville Hoare (5 th ride)	BMW K1200GT	Rob Kolbeck	Aprilia RSV1000
Michael Srb	BMW S1000RR	Tony Stegmar	Suzuki GSXR1000
Dave Chisma	BMW F800ST	Chris Pointon	Suzuki GSXR1000
Rob Langer (leader)	BMW F700	Geoff Shugg (rear)	Suzuki DL650
John McGuinness	BMW R65		<i>21 bikes, 21 people</i>

It was one of those wonderful Sunday mornings: the sun was shining, the birds were singing, and I was having a kid-free weekend. I was excited to go riding as I can only remember riding in this area maybe twice before. I looked at the map and the suggested route seemed to have lots of twisties to make the ride very interesting.

I left early as I was riding to Yarra Glen along the Christmas Hills road where I hit the kangaroo. It still freaks me out and I slow right down. I was very glad I had extra time as the sun was swallowed up by dark clouds, all its welcoming warmth disappearing. I had to stop and change my gloves for warmer ones, and put on an extra layer. It seemed to get even colder as I approached Yarra Glen.

Cliffy, Pina, Andrew and Marc were filling up with fuel at Yarra Glen. They all mentioned the cold as well. Andrew showed me his coffee delivering skills by riding from the servo to the meeting point with a take away coffee. He has so many talents!

It was a great turnout with 21 bikes. I wasn't keen to be rear rider and glad when Geoff volunteered. There was the usual discussion about how I was going to win some fantastic free, yes free, tyres just for writing these words. Nice one, Committee!

Rob called us all together and outlined the route. During this period, one unlucky guy crossing the road opposite the group dropped his bike, while standing still. Not sure why. Maybe with 21 people, all in

leathers, and him wearing only a T-shirt, freaked him out, and he froze and fell off. With lightning speed he picked the bike up and got out of there with only his ego damaged. The sights you see...

I was told where we were going and for part of the day I roughly knew where I was. Just after Gembrook things started getting exciting. I heard someone say, "The ride starts here!"

The sky had changed with the sun starting to defeat the clouds, the temperature rising slightly and my tyres warming. I always find it funny riding with the Club; we coast through some towns, and then when the first of our crew opens up, it's on! Other towns I slow down only to have crew blast past...

The roads were amazing with a pleasant mix of tight twisties and open sweepers. I felt like I was riding a bit better than usual. Travelling at warp speed in the varied conditions on the Alp's Cup weekend increased my overall riding ability. However, there were a few tricky bits of gravel in some corners in the twisty area past Yarragon, before we hit Moe for lunch. John McGuinness crashed his old C plate R65 on Sunny Creek Road. And he was going so well. It did give me time to snap a few photos of the crew as they rode by. I normally don't get a chance to take action photos on Club rides.

At one point Scottie politely slowed to let a few of us pass. I don't get to do that much on Club rides either... that is, pass Scott. Earlier in the day, near Noojee, Ben had jump-started his bike. Flat battery.

After lunch we headed for Willow Grove. I heard Rob tell the others that if they wanted to overtake him they could. *[No-one could catch him ...Ed.]*

I'm sure this was the road one of our crew got booked on a few years ago and I can see why; it is a street race track. Lots of hiding spots for Mr Plod, but luckily none to be seen today. We stopped to regroup at the Icy Creek intersection, but we all knew it was really for the photo shoot.

Heading for Powelltown I suddenly saw Scottie's bike facing towards me, Scott waving to slow down. Rob Kolbeck had crashed his RSV1000 just after he passed a car and failed to take the next bend. He landed in soft mud so there was only very minor scratches.

It was great being part of the pack. The fast guys would blast past and I would try to match their lean angle and speed, and push myself out of my comfort zone. Mark was amazing to follow. I was behind him in some tighter stuff and he was just sweeping the road clean in front of me. I'm sure his footpegs were getting a workout as well. There was also Tony's late braking/overtaking just before corners and Ben's overtaking you around obstacles like cars. And so many more.

We finished at Powelltown which for me was like finishing at the Back of Burke. A group of trail riders had taken prime position in front of the Pub showing how muddy they could get, and had done a wonderful job. As the sun was in full swing by now, so I followed Ben under the welcoming shady trees.

Thanks to Rob for leading us through some juicy roads and Geoff for rear riding. It was another fantastic Club ride. And thanks to everyone for coming and adding to the day. See you on a ride soon. Ride hard and safe.

Nigel Oman