



Ben Warden (leader)

Nigel Oman

Aiden Westrip (2nd ride)

John Marshall (1st ride)

Gordon Heydon

Honda CBR1000

Honda CBR1000

BMW S1000RR

BMW K1200RS

Kawasaki ZX6R

Cliff Peters

Bill Simpson

Ken King

Stuart Hosking (rear)

Suzuki GSXR1000

Suzuki GSXR1000

Suzuki GSXR1000

Aprilia Tuono V4R

9 bikes, 9 people

The outlook for today was great: cold, but sunny and clear. I left home in Diamond Creek for Whittlesea early via the back roads of Arthur's Creek to be sure I had time for a coffee.

I was first in line, along with a new rider John Marshall on his BMW K1200. As others admired his Beemer his first words were, "She handles better than she looks". A true sign of a man in love with his bike... I like it.

We headed north west from Whittlesea on what Ben called "the back back roads" considering the occurrence on the previous day's ride (see ride report for 9th June). Avoiding our friends in blue was a priority on this public holiday police blitz.

On the first leg, shaded roads were damp and, even though a nice pace was being kept up, Clifffy decided he wanted more excitement, passing Billy and myself in quick succession, only to find the first corner after the overtake quite wet! I could almost see the thought bubble above his bike as he lent it right over at speed into the wet corner, way faster than I would dare. "Uh oh ..." Of course all was fine. Out the other side and away!

The cold roads and surface caused a couple more slips and slides. After the turn up Mt Macedon the VERY first right hander had a lovely smear of fine gravel over it. I slid my way around and once at the top, several others mentioned the same "bloody gravel".

Billy, who I haven't seen since the Tassie trip, had his own dice with traction deficiency on the way up too, with a massive rear end slide in the wet. He blamed his "Damned Continental Tyres". Ben checked the heat and pressures of the tyres. They were barely warm to touch. Seems 42psi in winter

leaves the tyres not warm enough to grip well on these cold days. Five pounds pressure removed and no more complaints were heard from Billy, well at least not about tyre grip!

Next a short walk to “The Cross” lookout and a photo. Then down to Woodend Bakery for the morning tea break where we caught up with Ken King who missed the start due to an engine warning light needing a home visit to analyse. Nigel (not seen since Jindabyne) headed off home and I took over rear rider duties.

As we rode out of Woodend I spotted a Black BMW S1000 watching us. He took off after us, and being the suspicious type, I slowed down and waved him past. Was it an unmarked cop bike? The green P-plate flapping in the wind and the backpack indicated unlikely. At the first intersection, I had a quick chat with... Aiden Westrip, living a few houses away, who planned to meet us in at the Bakery for his second Club ride. He just caught us in time!

It's great to see new riders and regulars from far away (Geelong, Gordon, Woodend) making the effort to get to rides! I know I'm guilty of baulking at a long trip to the starting point. Some members, like Gordon, have good reason to make the effort. Today was his last outing for a while, after losing a round of double or nothing with VicPol. Between the licence issues and his baby due late this year it looks like Gordon will get plenty of time to work on his bike... in the garage.

The next leg had about 6km of dirt. (*Actually 3 km...Ed.*) which Ben would class as “highway grade” up to Middleton Creek and Vaughan, then the Hepburn Springs (sealed) goat-track and in to Daylesford to refuel the bikes and ourselves. The parking spot was littered with the Harley Riders Association, their bikes bedazzled in chrome, skulls and pointy bits to impale pedestrians.

After lunch, more coffee and an obscenely large French vanilla slice for Billy, the ride began to trim down a touch. New rider John headed for home and soon after in Trentham, Billy and Cliff departed on their own back roads. Turns out Billy's rear end problems weren't yet over with the vanilla slice wreaking havoc on the way home...

From here on the now svelte group of five kept close with no corner markers needed. We rode briskly, nose to tail, along familiar roads to the final stop at the Tullamarine Airport lookout via the wonderful Wildwood Road.

Another awesome day out with zero rain and damp roads only in the morning. During winter we need to make the most of the dry days and this was a beauty. Thanks everyone.

Stu Hosking