



Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters/Ron Johnston	Suzuki GSX1250
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Glenn Aspden (lead)	Suzuki GSXR1000
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Steve Mudford	Suzuki GSXR1000
Ian Payne	Honda CBR1000	Chris Pointon	Suzuki GSXR1000
Simon Wastney	Honda VFR800	Rob Kolbeck (3 rd ride)	Aprilia RSV1000
Roman Biaroza	Honda CBR600	Pierre Ong	Aprilia RSV4
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Aiden Baker	Kawasaki ZX10
Jesvin George	Honda CBR600	Jason Wilson	Kawasaki ZX9
Stuart Hosking	Triumph 955	Michael Srb	BMW S1000RR
Cindy Lee	Triumph 675	Geoff Jones (rear)	Yamaha R1
			<i>20 bikes, 21 people</i>

It was with much anticipation that I arrived at Yarra Glen on a mostly grey but fairly warm morning. I have fond memories of this route being my first trip out with the Club about nine months ago, though I think that I was a bit slow for the group back then.

I arrived at Yarra Glen 25 minutes early and coasted past Glenn and another early arrival up the road to the toilets. When I got back to fuel-up across the road from the meeting point, numbers had swelled to ten or more riders, a mix of mostly the usual suspects. The ride was listed on the web-site as not suitable for first-timers.

Cliff was back looking like a new man. He was sporting fresh new leathers (replacing the scuffed up, decade plus old, green, one-piece suit) and a new bike. Not really a new bike. He was astride Ron's blue Bandit, licence-suspended Ron the pillion. Steve was back, having made an impressive job of taping up his damaged fairings after a minor crash a few days earlier on the Anzac Day ride.

The group eventually swelled to 20 bikes with a mixed bunch of motorcycle brands present. Glenn gave the brief pre-ride talk noting that everyone present was already familiar with corner marking, etc. And we're promptly off. Too promptly for Jesvin who'd just arrived but still needed to top up with fuel. And was that Aiden fuelling up on the outskirts of Yarra Glen as we rode by? The pre-planned morning tea meeting points make it possible to catch up with the group if you're late.

The first leg involved a quiet run over the heavily policed and trafficked Black Spur and on to Marysville where Ben was seen busily signing up Rob Kolbeck as a new member. Aiden became the centre of attention when his chain was observed to be clearly too tight, the result of his early morning tinkering and ultimately his late arrival. It was adjusted in quick time with Misho's help.

Our large gathering of bikes didn't grab as much attention as usual. That part was played by the equally large number of classic bikes chugging into Maryville just after us, in ones and twos. We had passed a few of them along the way, a varied mix of old Nortons, Harleys, Triumphs and an Indian that must be the oldest road-going (non-museum piece) I've seen with what appeared to be leaf-springs for suspension.

What had started out looking like a potentially rainy morning had cleared to a bright, sunny and surprisingly warm day with many riders peeling off layers of clothing.

Onwards to the Eildon turnoff we head, initially at a measured pace, presumably due to the more experienced Club riders recognising this section of road frequently having a police presence.

Once we hit the turn-off through to Jamieson the fun really starts. This is an uninterrupted 55 kilometres of twisties with very little traffic and no cross roads. A couple of stretches of very fresh stone covered bitumen were present near the start, with the residual loose-chip bringing most riders back to a tentative pace.

I'm soon riding near the tail of the group. I'm sure that I'm quicker than I used to be, but most of the group have many more years riding experience and soon pass.

There's a brief stop at the lookout overlooking fast drying Lake Eildon just before the final run down to Jamieson. Ben had been intending to take a photo for the magazine but the light was too bright and contrasty to get a good shot. We're just about to set off when Stuart flies back up from Jamieson and joins our group. He missed leader Glenn pulling into the lookout area earlier and ended up down in Jamieson wondering where everyone was.

We lunch in Jamieson. It's always a pleasant place to stop, and was looking particularly picturesque with the early autumn trees in a blaze of fading greens, yellows and reds. The usual mix of bike talk and people catching up was in progress. Aiden performed another impromptu chain adjustment. Clearly the chain is at end-of-life after only 15,000 km, the axle a long way back in the swingarm. Misho again provided his impressive looking tool-kit: proper chromed tools rather than the tinny looking set of tools that came standard with my bike.

We fit in a group photo, posing with an old Yamaha scooter which looked like a cloned copy of a classic Honda Cub.

The ride back to Eildon was mostly incident free, with the exception of Aiden having a very close brush with an oncoming car that was on his side of the road by a fair margin. Car minus one side mirror and a minor scuff to Aiden's shoulder padding as a memento. According to Pina, Aiden was just being a pretty-boy and had been trying to get a good look at himself in the car's mirror as he breezed by. It's often said that a bike will steer towards where ever the rider fixates. No serious consequences involved, though he didn't stop for a chat with the lady driver, who was last seen stopped dead in the middle of a corner, making a mobile call.

A couple other riders mentioned seeing a live wallaby, in addition to the dead one everybody else noticed. Wildlife is always a hazard to watch out for in areas like this. There was also a branch the size of a broom stick in the middle of the road at one point which at least one rider rode over the top of without incurring any damage.

Back in Eildon we filled up with fuel. Most of us did anyway. A handful of bikes had filled up earlier in Jamieson with the 218 km (according to my trip-meter) ride through to the scheduled fuel up in Eildon being beyond the range of some of the more vigorously ridden machines. For once I remembered to take note of my mileage: 218 km using 13.42 litres, so consumption of 6.13 litres per 100 km. Something comparable to a Corolla which is capable of carrying the typical family, so motorcycles (middle and larger capacity ones at least) are nowhere near as fuel efficient as many non-riders seem to assume they are.

The final run takes us over the scenic Skyline Road overlooking Lake Eildon, down to Alexandra and then through a series of fast sweepers, once we are back on the flat, through to Molesworth. Now we're on the highway with the accompanying heavy traffic for the ride through to Kinglake West, our final stop point.

Ben gets a phone call from Pierre (who has continued on to Kinglake) giving us a heads-up warning about a police radar trap a kilometre up the road. Thanks Pierre!

The weather has cooled dramatically and with what looks like looming rain, most of us took off for home quite quickly.

It was another great day out riding with the Club. Many thanks to Glenn for leading and Geoff for undertaking rear-riding duties.

Simon Wastney