



I can't believe it's been 12 months since the last MSR Melbourne Cup Weekend. Last year was epic so I thought I'd give it another crack.

I woke at around 6.00am on Day 2, relatively refreshed, and made my way down to the backyard of Ron and Sarah's B&B. Still full from their wonderful barbeque the night before, I was quite content to spend the next few hours watching the sun rise over Mt Kosciusko. Stu and Nigel joined me a short time later and Stu took some great photos which are posted on MSR Facebook. This place is highly recommended for anyone wanting some quality time away from the office.

Pina, Misho and I left for Khancoban to meet the rest of the Club. Cliff left to shear sheep and Garry Boucher hurt his back falling over on the way (allegedly) to the pub the night before and was unable to ride and left the group. The Jones' clan joined us as they did last year on Day 2. John Willis got in early to order his big breakfast and was having a few jokes with patrons regarding his experience last year. Breakfast arrived just as he was leaving last year.

I had a good chat with Oli Clack (love the name) and Toby. They seem to be good blokes and fitted in well with the Club. I hope to see them on more rides. Ben gave his talk for the day and, as we are about to leave, the lady from the shop warns us the 60km/h zones through the Alpine Way are heavily policed. Sure enough they were there with almost every rider coming the opposite way making the police signals. It was a slow ride up with three separate cop locations with hand held radar. I sat behind Scott Bowden and could see his frustration. The fine he received on a ride I lead through the Black Spur last year was still fresh in his memory and he was cautious all the way up the mountain.

First stop was Dead Horse Gap with the temperature dropping a number of degrees. Unfortunately, Mikey got booked again coming up the mountain so this was turning out to be an expensive weekend for him. I believe Rod Merrett is going to pay half of that ticket as Mikey passed Rod when he got fined and Rod was going a bit over 60 in a 60 km/h zone. Lucky break for Rod.

Taking off from Dead Horse Gap, a number of long black bits of tar (or slippery bitumen snakes as Ben calls them) caught a few riders out. My front tyre stepped out and I noticed Oli and a few other

riders pull over to check if their tyres were flat. Oli's bike was running a tyre gauge device which was reading a false pressure. Tyre pressure okay. Peter Jones had strap issues just as we left and he pulled over to fix it – and dropped his bike in the process. Only slight damage.

Fourteen riders turned off to Jindabyne for lunch while the remaining 16 riders including myself continued on to Charlottes Pass. The \$6 National Park entry fee allows you to sample some of the best roads on the planet. It was cold and blowing a gale at the top lookout and I was glad I left my thermals on. Thanks to Cindy for reminding me to bring them with her post on MSR Facebook before the ride.

After lunch at Jindabyne central plaza we headed to Adaminaby (Pina's pronunciation is somewhat different and you will have to ask her next time you see her) through some of the windiest weather I've ever experienced. Some gusts blew the little Aprilia's wheel off the ground. Not a good feeling when doing over \$150.

The last leg of the ride was my favorite. Brilliant roads through Kiandra, Cabramurra and down to where we stopped at the bottom power station (not sure of the name) for a breather. The road through to Cabramurra is tight and oncoming cars need to be factored into your riding as there is no room for error. Mark Copeland overtook Phil on the Hyabusa and I also passed him a few corners later. I think Dave Ward passed at some point but I must have blinked and missed the pass. Or was that Duane or Misho?

Towards the end I slowed down due to fatigue and Paul Southwell blasted past. I was tempted to chase but decided not to. Best to get home in one piece. I was very impressed with Cindy's riding. She has come a long way since I first saw her riding; her riding ability has become very competent. No doubt Steve will be taking the credit for that I'm sure.

Back at Towong I cracked open a few beers and shared war stories of the day's events. It's a good time when you're back and had fun and finished the day without incident. Dinner at the Corryong pub was magnificent and comedian Mitar was at his finest. Mark Marais ordered a steak sandwich but got more than he could chew. Marc made some comment about a clogged artery the next day which had me laughing. The ride in the blue bus to and back from the pub was a hoot. I'm sure Ben had the wheels sliding on the 30 year old van at one point. Stoimen followed us home on his Aprilia to stay with us. He was once a Club member many years ago (*current member now...Ed.*) and is one hell of a nice bloke.

In summary the highlights of the weekend:

1. Perfect weather due to John Willis's prayer the day before the ride.
2. Good company with a great bunch of blokes and gals.
3. Brilliant roads that often see me looking out of my office window daydreaming of the next bend.
4. Watching the fast guys ride past me like I'm standing still.
5. I have a new bike hero. Mick Doohan was my first. Now it's a young man called Andrew Newbury. To come back from a horrific crash in March and to ride the full four days and then to conquer Jamieson/Reefton on the way home is inspirational.

Thanks Ben for leading and organising the event. Your efforts are very much appreciated by the Club. Also thanks to all the rear riders and to Stu for capturing great photos loaded onto Facebook.

Finally I hope to see Aiden back after his incident on the first day. I wish Steve a speedy recovery from a slipped disc on Day 3. Wheelies at over 200km are not good for your health! Bring on Towong 2014!

**Pierre Ong** (Aprilia RSV4)