



Willem Vandeveld	Honda ST1300	Steve Mudford	Suzuki GSXR1000
Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Tony Stegmar	Suzuki GSXR1000
Ian Payne (rear rider)	Honda CBR1000	Michael Chan (1 st ride)	Suzuki GSXR1000
Nigel Oman	Honda CBR1000	Tony Ripepi	KTM 990
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Aiden & Rosemary Baker	KTM 990
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	Rob Langer (leader)	KTM 990
Adrian MacGeraghty	Honda CBR600	Geoff Jones	Yamaha R1
Jesvin George	Honda CBR600	Glenn Aspden	Triumph 675
Simon Wastney	Honda VFR800	Marc Marais	Kawasaki ZX10
John McGuinness	Ducati 1200S	Michael Srb	BMW S1000RR

"What do you want to do for your birthday Mum?" An innocent enough question, but Aiden had already mentioned a couple of times what a perfect day it would be for an MSR ride. "Oh, why don't you go on your ride (serious); I'll come too (not serious). Of course Aiden jumped at the chance and here I am writing this wrap up.

The last time I'd ridden pillion for a substantial length of time was on a Kawasaki 750 triple widowmaker, which had unfortunately lived up to its name for the next owner. Aiden's dad was partial to a bit of speed. Pregnant with Aiden, the doctor advised me to stick to cars and until today I wisely followed that advice.

After swift preparation time, the cruise to Yarra Glen was quite sedate, but the chill factor and thoughts of safety made me wish I'd had time to squeeze into Bernadette's kevlar jeans. Cloud shrouded the valley, so we had a quick photo stop and Aiden pointed out Pina and Misho as they headed past.

At Yarra Glen it was lovely to meet everyone and their bikes. A few discussions ensued about what Aiden was riding since his mishap a few weeks ago. I'm glad it was the KTM rather than the Kawasaki as it offered slightly more comfort for a big bummed pillion.

From reading a few ride articles I know I need to say that Rob gave us a briefing, introduced myself and new rider Michael and was leader for the day. After that however this is written from a purely tourist's point of view. Talk of sweeping curves, zig zag bends and long straights will be severely limited as even though I resolved to remember the individual sections and riders, that resolution was soon a blur lost amongst the beautiful scenery.

The manicured countryside from Yarra Glen to Broadford was a contrast to the rather unkempt subtropical growth of the Sunshine Coast. Sheep, grapes and quite prolonged lower speed limits were all points of difference. Missing were the multitude of weekend drivers that frequent the most popular bike ride areas around Cooroy. The pace and tempo of the ride was a good match for the countryside. I had imagined the riders in more of a pack and was surprised by the solitary nature of the ride. We did follow Pina through the Kinglake area, where the still eerily scarred hillsides led to another comparison to the cyclone ravaged hills of NQ following Larry.

By the time we stopped at Broadford I had become a little complacent and relaxed. Hanging on tight, I knew, was necessary after passing corner markers, when there was always an explosion of speed but when we hit the bump on the one lane bridge my grip was loose and consequentially the troll under the bridge almost had his moll. As we hit the rather bumpy road from then on I was glad of this wake up call. I'm sure that the landscape of beautiful boulders had failed to yield and the road makers had given up on their quest for smoothness. I started to pay more attention to the road as Aiden had gotten to know his borrowed bike and apparently the tyres were now worn in sufficiently for extra speed. I recall yellow bike, green bike and white leathers flashing past us several times. On the straights I tried to glance over Aiden's shoulder to determine our speed, and what he tells his mother is TRUE: he never exceeds the speed limit.

After fuelling up in Kyneton lunch was enjoyed in warm sunshine and with pleasant company at the Pig and Whistle Hotel at East Trentham. The group's rear rider changed and off we went on the final leg through the stunning contrast of yellow spring wattles against deep green grasses. The road out from here was a pleasant blend of straights, curves and a few tighter sections to complete the picture.

I was relieved when the group pulled into Bulla, as the ride had been just slightly longer than the perfect distance for this novice. I had achieved my wish of seeing wombats; a pity they were deceased; observed the truly rural scene of a man, his dog and his sheep walking along the roadside and learnt why Pina has short hair as I untangled my knots at the end of the day.

Thanks everyone for your welcome. Apologies for all the references to Aiden: but you know what mothers are like.

Rosemary Baker