

Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Garry Boucher	Kawasaki ZX14
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Quinn Myers	Kawasaki ZX14
Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters	Kawasaki ZX10
Raphael Alikakos	Honda CBR1000	Marc Marais	Kawasaki ZX10
Simogn Wastney	Honda VFR800	Mark Copeland	Kawasaki ZX10
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600	John Willis	Kawasaki ZX10
Richard Hewson (2 nd ride)	Yamaha R1	Aiden Baker	Kawasaki ZX10
Ravi Gnanaiah (3 rd ride)	Yamaha R1	Phil Hotschilt	Suzuki Hayabusa
Damian Jones	Yamaha R1	Sid Marwah (1 st ride)	Suzuki Hayabusa
Rod Merrett	BMW S1000RR	Duanne Rafferty	Suzuki GSXR1000
Aydin Ulutas/Shito (1 st ride)	BMW S1000RR	Dean Bonthorne	Suzuki GSXR750
Rob Langer (rear rider)	BMW F700GS	Pierre Ong	Aprilia V4R
John McGuinness (2 nd ride)	Ducati Multistrada	Rod Silver	KTM 1190
Omran Shito (1 st ride)	Ducati 848	Stuart Hosking (leader)	Triumph 955

It was a cool and overcast morning, but the forecast looked great, so thoughts of not riding were quickly discarded. On the way out to the Whittlesea meeting point I met Aiden and a guy on an R1 that I didn't recognise so I joined up with them for the cruise out to the ride starting point.

On arriving it quickly became apparent that this was the weather that everybody had been waiting for after a long run of cold and wet Sundays. There was a huge turn-out. I counted 26 at the start with John Willis joining us later in Yea and another late-comer making it 28 riders for the day, the biggest turn-out we've had for months. Most of the regulars were present, a few new riders, and a few people (Ravi, Raphael and Damian) that I hadn't seen for ages. An impressive mix of bikes was on display with the major Japanese and European bike manufacturers all well represented.

Formalities dispensed with, we set off up the hill for Kinglake West, turning right towards Kinglake. Approaching Kinglake, another similar sized group of riders came towards us. It was not the Ulysses or Net-rider groups as they usually consist of mixed bikes but these were all sport bikes, the riders decked out in race-style leathers. It was almost like looking at a reflection of the MSR riding towards us.

At Kinglake we turned left and headed for Glenburn. A few kilometres down the road I encountered a couple of our riders stopped mid-corner signalling to slow down. Oh no! This is usually a sign that somebody has come to grief. There was nothing to see, but as we all learnt later it was Aiden who had run-off and gone down the bank. The story seems to be that his rear end slipped out with him then locking up the front brakes. He'd almost recovered control before running out of road and trickling over the side and running down the steep embankment. It was an overall drop of about 3 metres at a fairly steep gradient. He was unharmed with what sounds like only modest damage done to the ZX10R. The bike was retrieved back up to the black-top by Ben via an escape road just off to the side, and with a bit of help from Misho and Rod. The broken fairings were taped up and Aiden was able to make his way home.

In Yea we stopped for morning tea and waited for the riders who had helped Aiden. I gather that a couple of riders went to Strath Creek, a corner somewhere not adequately marked.

There were plenty of other bikes in town including the Melbourne Ulysses branch with a heavier mix of sport-touring bikes. They were parked directly across the road from us. There were also quite a few other smaller groups of two or three bikes dotted around town.

Early on my VFR didn't feel right. Suspension settings, steering, tyres? I didn't know what was wrong. It just felt skittish and unsettled. The cause, once out riding on the second leg, now seemed obvious. A cup of coffee and a piece of quiche back in Yea had dramatically rectified everything. Too much meaty Korean BBQ and beer last night had left me in a less than ideal state. Not overtly hung-over, just a bit sluggish. The bike was fine all along and was now flying, like it had been specifically made with me in mind for just this particular day. I still needed to be mindful not to get carried away.

Other people seemed to be relishing the day as well. Something about Damian's riding style seems to make him become part of the bike rather than being a separate entity, rider perched on top.

At Eildon we stopped for a scheduled fuel top-up. This break gets extended into an early lunch, as quiet back-water Jamieson isn't likely to have food for such a large group.

John McGuinness told me how practical, fun to ride and reliable his Multistrada was - just as Ben wandered over and pointed out that his front fork seals were weeping fluid heavily. John had just had the forks serviced earlier that week, so it looks like the seals hadn't been fitted correctly. Hand towel was cable-tied to the fork leg to reduce the fork oil blown on to the calliper (and wheel and motor) allowing John to continue the ride.

I was amused by the number plate on first time rider Sid's Hayabusa. '5loth' as in the famously slow moving animal, on one of the fastest bikes you can buy!

I had a chat with other first timer, Omran, whilst eying off his fancy white and red Ducati 848 that he'd just purchased. He was pointing out all the extra carbon fibre bits and aftermarket brake levers he'd decked it out with. I couldn't help but notice the colour matching Ducati branded jacket as well. Interestingly, he was wearing jeans rather than leather pants, as he proceeded to tell me about the various bones had broken when his previous R1 was totalled in a collision with a car.

I got held up corner marking heading out of Eildon and ended up having a lonely ride over to Jamieson with most riders starting the main stretch several minutes ahead of me. Ben and Cliff, corner marking the last turnoff, promptly outpaced me. I passed a group of four making slow progress through the first section of gravelly bitumen, and then saw no other rider for the next 50km. There were a few 4-wheel drive vehicles and a couple of Lotus sport-cars coming the other way that looked like they were having a good blast along this twisty road. I had a great ride with the bike feeling fantastic.

We had a long wait for stragglers in Jamieson. It turns out a couple of new riders turned back part way and then re-joined us later for the last leg.

Leaving Jamieson, I loitered a little before departing to avoid corner marking and waiting for the one person getting fuel or heading for the toilets at the last minute, as often seems to be the case. I wanted to make sure I rode with the main group so I'd have people to observe and write about!

I had a good blast up the hill easing up periodically to let the quicker riders pass. I was in front of a small group headed by Pina (and possibly Ravi and Quinn). They sat behind me for a while before dropping off part way along the first long down-hill stretch. I was then on my own again for most of the way, aside from passing one non-club rider on a Classic bike.

We re-grouped in Buxton and then made our way back over the Black Spur. The police were out in force) with a checkpoint stocked with cars (three marked and two unmarked TOG cars) near Narbethong. They looked to have their hands full already and paid no attention to us. We finished up in Yarra Glen, with a few riders departing back at Healesville.

Thanks to Stuart for leading us on a great day out that delivered lots of dry roads and happy faces. Also thanks to Rob for rear riding. This can be a trying task on a day with such a big group containing so many newer riders. Hopefully, all is well with Aiden and his trusty ZX10R.

Simon Wastney

Jamieson MKII

Sunday 11th August 2013

Simon felt that he didn't have all the facts on the crash with many exaggerated stories flying around and after sending me this article he asked if I knew anymore about it. First, a few details. And then my response to Simon.

Misho, Rod and I stopped to assist Aiden. At the time I think Phi Hotschilt was standing on the side of the road and I sensed something was amiss and stopped too, waving all the other riders on before "instructing" Misho to pull over (like a cop, sternly pointing to the side of the road). The corner was a left-hand turn around a cutting, smooth and relatively wide, about half way down from Kinglake West. It was bitterly cold (maybe 4 or 5 degrees), overcast, and the road was at best damp.

There were too many *looken peepers* at the site so I asked rear rider Rob Langer to continue on with the ride, taking the others with him, and Misho, Rod and I would catch up later. I didn't want to hold up Stu's

first time lead any more than absolutely necessary. The ride was already going to be difficult to manage with so many people, let alone unforeseen issues to deal with.

This is my response to Simon: *I also heard in Yea the new guys discussing an excited version of the crash, one of them behind Aiden at the time. Tank slapper? Not really possible on a modern bike with a steering damper. Talking to Aiden at the crash site he said the rear tyre let go, he braked with the front, the rear still not hooking up (rear brake on?), and then he ran out of road, ran wide, still thought he had it under control until the edge of the road dropped over a 3 metre embankment – which he slid down at low speed resulting in fairing and rear subframe damage. Bike looked rideable and motor fired first stab with no oil leaks. So we disconnected dangling bits including the left-hand side mirror and headlight and stored them in my big black bag for collection later in the week. Rod supplied silver packaging tape and Misho did a few laps around the fairings pulling them all into shape. I rode the ZX10 up the escape road (someone's driveway) which he had inconveniently missed, pronounced it fine (all levers still in place, handlebars straight, brakes working, steering unencumbered) and home Aiden rode.*

Misho, Rod and I set off to catch the group with Rod leading. First Glenburn, then Flowerdale, Strath Creek, Trawool and the Highway back into Yea. Both Rod and I thought this was the proposed route according to the web itinerary page but on inspection later that evening it was clear that the Club took the direct route from Flowerdale to Yea. We did an extra 40 km. Unfortunately, Stu was waiting for us – and we were an extra extra 20 minutes. Then half the Ulysses Club was on for a chat including former members Ray Thomas (Kawasaki Versys), Martin Bastock (still on his blue and white 1984 CBR1000 which I used to service for him) and Andrew Kennedy (Honda NX650 Silver Wing). The future awaits.

Cause of the crash? Who knows. But I noted to Aiden that the road surface was very cold, we had only been dawdling along in an 80 zone up until this point – for 30 km or so, and hence his tyres were most likely stone cold (and slippery), and the road itself is notoriously slippery as it rarely sees direct sunlight in the upper reaches, even in summer, let alone at 10.30am in the middle of winter, and it is usually damp. And of course, he had never ridden on the road before and so had no idea what to expect – or how hard to push. And he was chasing Deano.

...Ed.