



Newsletter of the **CYCLE TOURING ASSOCIATION OF W.A. (Inc.)**

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EDITOR: Steve Blackbourn

PRESIDENT ON PAGE ONE

Greetings and felicitations! I hope you are all well and fighting fit, ready to get out on your bike as the weather warms up and the rain becomes less frequent.

Noel Eddington is to be congratulated on his organisation of Christmas in July - nice work, especially the weather! Although I did hear some people had a bit bad weather on the way back, as I left with the later (latest!) group, we had perfect sunshine all the way, and an extremely nice lunch at Blinkbonny Cottage. I believe there is an article about that weekend in this newsletter, so keep an eye out for it.

The Saturday rides got off to a wet start. Even with storm clouds lurking, eight people turned up (meaning that I could slack off, and actually had to lead the ride!), and despite wind, rain, failing light and Woodbridge being closed, I think they had a reasonable time. I mainly did, as it gave me an opportunity to catch up with some old friends.

The weather probably wasn't the best either for the 200km Achievement/Challenge Ride. I didn't take place in it personally, but I was out driving that day, and the conditions seemed horrific! Congratulations to all those who participated - you can feel especially proud that you did 200km the hard way. My thanks must also go to the support people that day, who braved the elements, but don't even get a badge!

The Waroona weekend was very enjoyable, although numbers were down this year. It is a shame, as the weather was superb, the location very attractive and the company — well, I was there, so need I say more? Although I stuck to the roads, many of the mountain persons found tremendous slopes and locations that they could really ~~kill themselves suffer a permanent disability on be certified for attempting~~ enjoy.

I have received a few enquiries on CTA clothing. Presently, all existing stocks and transfers have been used, and we are currently thinking whether there is enough demand for it for us to continue with it. Please read the article inside, and tell the committee your feelings.

The AGM is on it's way (Sunday, December 10th) and we are

looking (we're always looking!) for people to help the club out. To provide the number of events and services that we do, we need people to assist us. These people need not be on Committee, ~~don't~~ need to be ratified at the AGM, and don't need to work for the entire year, so anyone who feels they can contribute some time or want to help in some event, let me know.

Another issue we feel may be of interest to members is insurance. The Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA) is currently surveying it's members about their insurance needs. How do you feel about it? Please find inside a survey form (thanks BTA!), and return it to a committee member.

Some information that may be of interest is a public workshop being held on Monday, 21st August 1995 at 7:00pm in the Park Room at the Freeway Hotel, 55 Mill Point Road, South Perth. BikeWest and The Main Roads Department are hosting this event, and would welcome your involvement in improving Perth's cycling facilities. The more people who turn up will show cyclists' commitment, and that they have an important place both in the community and in commuter traffic. For further information, contact Mike Maher at BikeWest on 430-7550.

Upcoming events of note are the Blinkbonny Cottage Farm Stay on September 9th and 10th (the last rides calender said it was on September 2nd and 3rd, sorry). After sampling their delicious wares on the Christmas in July both to and from Toodyay, that weekend promises to be truly memorable. On that ride we also investigated camping sites, and found a superb one, on high level ground, just near a creek. Please contact Stan Wiechecki early to secure your place.

The 10 000 in 8 is on the 17th September, through the hills and dales of Roleystone again. Anyone who has been on the ride well tell you of it beauty, although that's not what it's famous for. A formal mystery dinner somewhere in the wilds graces the long weekend in October. Details have not yet been finalised, but see inside the newsletter for more details. The "All the President's" ride has been changed from the 15th October to the 26th November, and has been incorporated into "The Great Perth Bike" ride. This will allow the clubs to reach a wider audience, as well as providing support for a very worthwhile venture which benefits everyone. To conclude
continued on page 3

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Just a reminder that at the last Annual General Meeting held on 11 December 1994 fees (full year) were set for membership as follows:

1. Individual membership \$30.00
2. New members \$25.00 (\$12.50 for rest of '95)
3. Full-time students/Pensioners \$15.00 (\$7.50)
4. Dependants under 18 no charge.

The CTA is a non-Government organisation relying on membership fees, donations and volunteer labour to achieve our aims and objectives. These monies help to provide each member with six Newsletters per year, a social evening venue and tea and coffee making facilities, weekend trips and tours "at cost", a library, an indemnity to cover property to name a few of the obvious benefits.

MEMBERSHIP PARTICULARS

All members are asked to confirm their current address and phone numbers with Committee members. If you are lucky enough to move to a bright sparkling new place of abode, please share your good news with us - it makes it so much easier to ensure you are kept up to date with the important things in life!

NEW MEMBERS

A hearty welcome is extended to the new member who has joined since the production of the last Newsletter.

Tanya Staude

Hope to see you "on your bike" on one of the announced rides in this calendar..

INFORMAL RIDES

For those who do not wish to join the organised ride of the day but would like still some company, a time and place will sometimes be given for informal rides. This is generally the Causeway car park (number 2, near the bike hire shed). It is up to those who turn up on the day to decide where and for how long to ride. This may mean that separate groups may decide on a short, easy or long, hard ride etc. Try it out if none of the rostered rides appeal to you - you may like it!

AUDAX AUSTRALIA

Audax is an international long distance cycling club. The first club originated in France in 1904. The name is a loose translation from the latin and means "courage". All rides are non-competitive and conducted over specified routes and distances within set time periods.

At the successful completion of each event the rider is eligible for a certificate and medallion. Rides range from 50km to 1500km in length and are open to all CTA members, though membership of Audax Australia Club is encouraged if you envisage participating regularly. Thereby you are able to gain the very generous personal injury and income protection cover afforded from such membership.

PLEASE NOTE - Notification of participation is required at least one week prior to the event and there is a cost to enter dependent on the distance to be travelled. Further information and a program of events is available by contacting Mr Don Briggs on 458-8175(H) or checking the Events Calendar.

SOCIAL EVENINGS

These are usually (but not always) held on the first Friday of each month and the current venue is the Ernest Johnson Oval Guide and Scout Hall. Turn right off South Terrace into Fortune Street, then right again into Pilgrim Street in South Perth. Ample parking is available. For further details contact the Social Secretary, Sally Stobie on 275-4417 (H).

ACHIEVEMENT/CHALLENGE SERIES

The second of the Challenge/Achiever rides was incorrectly reported last newsletter with respect to the successful candidates! My apologies to those who were missed or incorrectly included. Those riders who successfully beat the clock were:

Craig Abernethy	Jose Arregui	Graham Blackwell
Dennis Braddon	Don Caplin	Bob Clapp
Janet Deverill	Mark Elliott	Bob Hetherington
Tony Humphreys	Simon Koek	Glenys Maddison
John Maddison	Birgit Modrow	Neil Porteous
Max Talbot	Mike Waters	Bridgit Woodroffe
Mark Wilcox	Anne Wilson	Neil Winter

CTA LIBRARY

For new members and those of us who did not know the CTA has a small library of books and magazines relating to all facets of cycling and cycle touring. These are available for all members to borrow or just read at each of the social evenings. The books may be only borrowed for 4 weeks by contacting your Social Secretary, Sally on the night. Contributions to the library would be greatly appreciated so do not dispose of any cycling literature which you feel may be relevant. We also propose to expand the library from time to time from club funds, and new titles will critiqued in the Newsletter.

EXCEED SPORTS NUTRITION PRODUCTS

The following products are available to club members at reduced costs and can be ordered by contacting Neil Stooke PH: 222-8134[W]. Payment prior to ordering of the goods is required.

Fluid & Energy Replacement, 600g tin*

High Carbohydrate Source, 512g

* note that we are currently buying the 600g tins until we can get stocks of the 1.5kg bags (we are paying the same price per gram for the tins as for the bags!)

FOR SALE/WANTED

Members can place advertisements under this heading free of charge and may include anything cycling related including even "Arnold Schwarznegger" male riders for feminine cyclists wishing companionship.

★ FOR SALE: Radio Intercom Set - Collett Electronics

A helmet to helmet communicator. Hardly used - still under guarantee. \$650 ono (cost \$860 new)

Call Steve on 574-4381

★ FOR SALE: Mountain bike Diamond Back

Near new, Shimano top range gears and , clipless pedals, gel saddle. \$500 or nearest offer. Phone Jenny Knight on 339-3196 (H) for details as to size, colour etc .

continued from President on Page 1...

October on a high, the "On Your Bike WA - Beach to Bush Tour '95" is on from 21st to 29th of October. I suggest you encourage anyone who enjoys riding their bike to join. The route is particularly scenic, and as it's supported, cyclists of all conditions can participate. However, book soon, as places are filling up fast!

As one may have noticed (and I certainly did!), the CTA Progressive Dinners have been absent from the Ride Calendar. Fortunately, this situation has been rectified with one on Saturday, 11th November. Check inside the newsletter for details.

I hope that as the weather warms, you take the opportunity of Spring to get out on your bike. Already, blue skies and sunny days are making themselves felt, so get out there and enjoy them! I hope you do, and when you do I'll hopefully see you on your bike!

Simon Koek

100 MILE CENTURY CHALLENGE

On June 18, 1995 the 100 mile (160km) Challenge Ride was held. It was a fine, sunny but cold day without a trace of excessive breezes. On arrival at the Lakes, the 7.15 indicated on the clock was probably higher than the temperature on the thermometer! Because of the extreme cold, everyone was inside the dining room to have a cup of tea or coffee to warm up in preparation for the ride. Fourteen members eventually turned up to participate in the ride.

The car park was now getting crowded as the Australian Time Trial Association (ATTA) was having a mountain bike time trial in the same area and on the same day! The CTA ride was due to commence at 8.00am and ten riders departed on time with a ten minute gap to the remaining four riders. No prizes for guessing whether Simon started on time or not!

The route was from the Lakes to Toodyay via Bailup Road for the first control point. In Toodyay, the facilities of the Shell service station were used. As it was a Sunday, there was not much traffic on the road but the riders still complained that there was not much heat in the sun either! It was bitterly cold going down the hills and also when in the shadow of the trees along the road.

The next stage was from Toodyay to York via Avon Drive. The second control point was outside the York Town Hall, which is on the main street in York and consequently reasonably traffic prone. It will probably be moved to a quiet local park for future rides. The riders by now were starting to feel tired but determined to finish what they had started. This was helped when they discovered the York Bakery where they fueled up for the final leg down the Great Southern Highway. Everyone arrived back at the Lakes - on time but exhausted! Evidently the riders must have more stamina than the support crew though since they had arrived 20 minutes too early for a control point! - they had to wait next to the locked vehicle until Neil and Maria came back from doing whatever it was they had been doing! There was one complaint of traffic on the final leg and next year may see a 7.30 start on a Saturday to give people time to recover for work on the Monday!

The support vehicle had a car v car accident on the way home (corner of Tonkin Highway and Guilford Road in Bayswater) *[our beloved President was so tired that he went past the accident on his way home and didn't even realise that it was Maria and Neil being loaded in the ambulance!]*. Thankfully both members are back on their feet but Maria was a bit of a question mark there for a while (isn't she always though?).

A big thank you to Maria Antonas and Neil Stooke for their hard work.

CTA CLOTHING

Due to the problems associated with our previous clothing supplier, and the fact that all remaining stocks of clothes have been sold, the committee are interested in whether the club should provide more club clothing. Prices from another supplier:

Tops	\$78.00
Knicks	\$80.00

These suppliers are in New South Wales (there does not seem to be a supplier here in Perth!), and so any order would take 4 to 6 weeks delivery time.

Another option mentioned to me is an Annual CTA Shirt. The club would have a different one each year, hence members could demonstrate their longevity with the club by their collection of shirts. It could also serve as a memento, showing your membership of the club in that year. Ideas???

Dear Editor,

Despite the massive public outcry over the continued destruction of the last of our old growth and high conservation value forests, not one extra tree has been given permanent protection - NOT ONE!! Moratoriums will run out and areas not released for logging last year are on the chopping block this year. Community concerns are being utterly ignored as CALM and the native timber industry press on with their attack on the very best of the very last of our magnificent forests (Jane, Hawke, Giblett, Sharpe, etc.). We need to cry out louder, much louder - this rally will be the single biggest environmental gathering this state has ever seen. To be this big, of course, it needs people; lots of them. And by riding in, we will not only be protesting against this insanity but also showing, en masse, a greener way of getting about as well. The rally is on at the Perth Esplanade, on 24th September, 1995. Six rides will be occurring, each about 30km long. Below are details of the meeting points and start times. Most legs will have a halfway point, where riders may join that ride at the stated time.

North of Perth: Meet at Whitfords Train Station, east side at 11.30am. The halfway point is at Stirling Train Station, east side at 12.15pm.

The contact person is Andrew Woodroffe, phone 444-5098.

West of Perth: Meet at Cottesloe Train Station east side at 11.30am. A meeting point is Claremont Park, corner of Stirling Hwy and Bay View Terrace at 12.00pm. Another meeting point is UWA Boatshed Carpark, corner of Mounts Bay Road and Hackett Drive at 12.40pm.

The contact person is Richard Stallard, phone 470-4007.

East of Perth: Meet at The Midland Town Hall at 11.15am. The halfway point is opposite The Bicycle Entrepreneurs Shop on Great Eastern Hwy, Belmont at 12.00pm.

The contact person is David Parkinson, phone 458-3366.

South of Perth: Meet at The Raffles Hotel Carpark at 12.30pm. The contact person is Graham Blackwell, phone 339-7571.

Near the Hills: Meet at the Kelmscott Railway Station at 11.30am. The halfway point is The Carousel Shopping Centre, near the footbridge at 12.30pm.

The contact person is Andrew Woodroffe, phone 444-5098.

Fremantle: Meet at The Rossini Coffee Shop at 11.30am. The halfway point is The Raffles Hotel Carpark at 12.30pm. The contact person is Graham Blackwell, phone 339-7571.

SERPENTINE 3 DAY PANNIER TOUR

The weekend of 2-4 June being Foundation Day, a group of us jumped on our fully laden bikes to see what could be found on the plains and in the hills to the South and East of the city. The crowd was small, only 7 people, but still, as always, a really nice bunch. The starting point for the ride was Deep Water point on the Canning River, only 8km from home, so I rode over. The finish point in Fremantle was only 5km from home so access to the ride could not have been easier (although Janet only had less than a kilometre to ride to get to the starting point). We took the new bikepath heading South down the Kwinana Freeway out of town and were quickly onto the flat rural plains to the West of Perth's hills. In the whole day we probably didn't climb anything higher than 20 metres. Our Ride Leader, Peter Lundy, is an avid (rabid?) Dockers fan, so just before getting to our campsite for the night we had to stop at the Serpentinepub for an ale and the final 15 minutes of the game against St Kilda - and of course the Dockers won! It was organised that we would stay the night at a campground (clean, comfortable but typically characterless) but, only after we had paid for the night and pitched our tents, we found a really nice bush campsite up at the nearby Serpentine Falls. There wasn't a 'No Camping' sign so I guess you could stay there. Oh well, we'll have to remember that for next time.

That night we all cooked our gourmet delights together in the camp kitchen and, after scoffing that lot, we wandered back down to the local pub and met a few of the 'interesting' locals (T-shirt, flannel-ette shirt and a thick wool lined jacket, set off with *thongs* seems to be the winter fashion statement in vogue in rural WA at present. Beards are long, hair is optional, an earring is a must.) Janet wasn't too impressed with the 'talent' but then neither were we.

Day two started with a 15km slog down the busy South Western Highway before we took a quiet road leading through forests, over streams and up into the hills heading towards Dwellingup. We had lunch up there after chatting with Steve and Jenny out on their bike built for two... (200km/hr!). After lunch we headed out on a different road, through the same beautiful hills and forests and more or less across the same streams, but this time in a downwards direction, and at far greater speed. Yahoooooooooooooooooooo.

In Pinjarra a loo break was needed, so that seemed a good reason to stop in at the pub and visit their verdant beer garden, lay on the warm grass and sip a (light) ale. Our winter weather was being very kind to us, two superb days... (but wait for day 3). Then it was back on the road to Mandurah, our destination for the night. As our group wasn't large, Peter very kindly let us stay in his 'families' holiday shack. This place is a classic. It was originally built by his grandmother in the 20's and passed onto the four kids, who have now passed it on to their kids. Peter has a 1/32 share in it - but it's all very ordered - incredibly so. There are four cute little kitchen tables in the long, largeish kitchen, each with four chairs around it. The orange chairs are the Lundy's, the blue ones the O'Malleys and so on. The whole place colour coded! There was only our cycling group that weekend, but apparently Christmas is just incredible with bodies everywhere. The best part was the view, being right on the ocean. The only thing interrupting your view of the sunset was the beer can in front of your face!

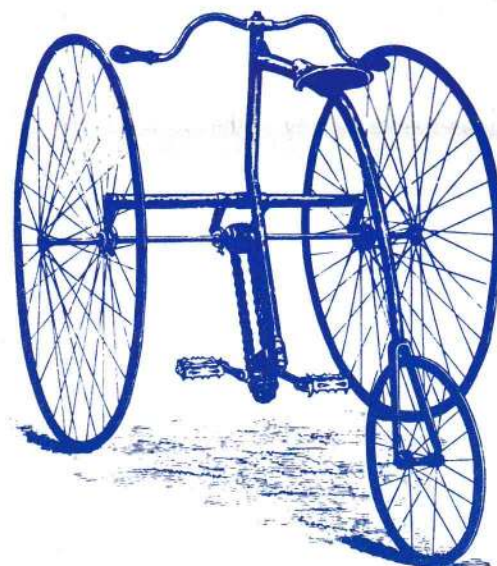
That night we walked down to a large local Chinese restaurant and had the 'all you can eat' buffet which, after all that riding, was quite a lot. Well yes, probably too much but I was stocking up for the hard day ahead.

And what a hard day it was! From Mandurah back to the city does not seem to have a quiet road, so it was straight up the highway into

a howling headwind with heavy traffic and occasional cold showers. The great weather of the previous two days was over! The four strongest (maddest) riders in the group took turns 'breaking wind'. We only let the leader break wind for about a kilometre at a time before someone took over at the front. Our favourite leader, of course, was Mike. With the profile of a brick wall, tucking in behind him you hardly knew the wind was blowing (although he did whinge a bit when I took the lead).

Lunch halfway at Barry's favourite cafe in Rockingham of large lasagne, chips and salad was very welcome (plus we missed a freezing downpour). Once we got back to Freo, we had a final stop for coffee and cakes and then it was off home and, this time, a *steaming hot* shower.

Graham Blackwell



SOUTH AUSTRALIA TOUR 1995 - A SWEDISH VIEWPOINT -

Being such an epic journey, the story must be broken into segments. Here is segment one (not in chronological order).

This day we started out from MacLaren Vale, all refreshed & rested, some still full of Chinese take-away from the night before. We enjoyed a very scenic ride on a bikepath that used to be a railway line, passing a couple of vineyards we had visited the day before - the day was fairly clear and a bit chilly.

After about one hour's ride we all thought something was wrong with our bikes, had someone tampered with the brakes during the night? No, it turned out we were negotiating a very long upward slope, hardly noticeable, apart from the bike computers which said the average speed was 12km/hr.

After some daring photography by the roadside, we turned a corner to negotiate a hill. It did look quite OK and Brian and Di passed with glee and speed, disappearing from sight. Well there was another corner with yet a further hill - no problem, the day is nice! Then there were some more corners, and more hill, steeper and steeper. After some 20 minutes riding, there were still corners, and hills. Yours truly was always thinking the next one will be the last. After a brief rest on a flat stretch I had a chance to look back, and we had indeed climbed quite a distance - little did I suspect that we were only halfway up this ridge! Continuing up the hill, sweating and wondering why I was doing this, when a bunch of kangaroos bounced right across my path, totally unaware of me or the bike - then I realised why I was doing this ride.

Eventually my glasses fogged up so I was forced to hop off my bike. When the fog cleared I saw the end of the hill (Himalayas) at last, with only some 15 metres to push to reach the top. Stan, Simon and Paul were there, and it helped a lot to notice that even these three accomplished riders were also suffering the effects of this hill climb. The view from the top was breathtaking, the surrounding nature very pleasant and tranquil.

Then it rained, and rained - but it didn't matter now since there was no more of this hillclimb where one thinks the next corner is the last! Suddenly my rear brakes gave up the ghost. I had worn them quite a bit with the previous day's downhills and had forgotten to do my usual morning check. This was easily fixed with my good friend and chief mechanic Peter helping me to adjust the offending brake such that we could continue in a considerably safer manner.

On top of the mountain ridge the nature was very beautiful. The rain and cold weather did not matter much and soon I was enjoying the usual world of my own.

Clarendon, the end of the days trip, saw us all dining at the local pub where we had a room of our own, a roaring log fire, and a sumptuous meal which had been laid on by the boss and his wife (or was that the boss and her husband?). We all had a very pleasant evening - what can be better than a good days ride with nice scenery followed by good fellowship amongst happy holiday makers.

Tom Wall



ROCS IN HER HEAD

The road wound between the rocky scarps and dipped down into the gullies. There were no cross roads, houses or even fences - just the spectacular ranges and spectacular birdlife.

We were cycling the Gibb River Road over the King Leopold Ranges and it was fantastic! We had the wind behind, some smooth road to sail across and some rough road which demanded concentration. That morning I had woken up when dawn broke as we had slept under the stars. Our group was camped on the top of the range and had watched the sun set and colour fade from the hills the night before. We had eaten a beautiful meal (cooked by someone else) by the camp fire and enjoyed the peace and quiet, the bush and the company. As soon as Dave and I had had breakfast we were on the bikes and off on our own.

We were on a two week mountain biking tour from Darwin to Broome, and no, we did not ride all the way! Our trip was supported with a 4-WD troop carrier and the mountain bikes were carried on the roof (when we weren't riding them). The trip was run by Ross who tailored it to the requirements of the group, and Helen, who cooked for us - which was a good thing as we were pretty tired at the end of the day!

From Darwin we had driven to Kakadu where we had a few cycles but were limited by the traffic, which was heavy, as Kakadu is extremely popular with international visitors. However, we did lots of walking and swimming in rock pools and gorges. The highlight of Kakadu was a boat trip on the large wetland where there was vast amounts of birdlife and crocodiles. Then followed a drive to Lake Argyle with a cycle for the 70km from the dam site into Kununurra. This was a sealed section of road and the scenery was rugged and red. From Kununurra we drove to Turkey Creek and hopped on our bikes at the beginning of the 70km 4-WD track into the Bungle Bungle ranges. We rode the first half in the afternoon and camped in a small range. This road had traversed both dusty cattle country into the range, and spinifex country. The following day we rode into the Bungles which were the highlight of the trip. The ranges were so red and the sky so blue. There were palm trees clinging to the rocks, gorges and caverns. We then travelled to the start of the Gibb River Road where we cycled various sections of the road (avoiding the corrugations where possible) and visited the many gorges in the ranges. All these gorges are different and are great to explore. Our days usually involved having breakfast and riding off along the road. After a few hours Ross would catch us, load the bikes onto the truck and we would go and explore a gorge and have a swim.

Our trip finished in the hustle and bustle of Broome which was a bit of a shock to the system after the bush camps, remoteness, beauty of the bush and the stars.

Looking back, we had had a fantastic time - we saw some great country, did some great cycling and all in great company. The trip was run by Remote Outback Cycling tours who provided Trek mountain bikes with front suspension, camping gear, truck, cook and guide. Ross, the guide, who owns and operates ROC tours is extremely enthusiastic and tries to provide for all requirements. Trips are available from Perth to Alice, Alice to Darwin and Darwin to Broome. Highly recommended.

Jenny (Mosquito) Bailey

THE CTA PROGRESSIVE DINNER ON SATURDAY, 11TH NOVEMBER

For the uninitiated, a progressive dinner where each course is held at a different venue, and the dinner 'progresses' from place to place, course to course. The CTA progressive dinner follows that line, but participants cycle from course to course. The year's first progressive dinner hopes to recapture the flavour and spirit (although you will need to bring your own) of the previous events. With the balmy evenings usually associated with this time of the year, and a course taking in the quiet roads around Inglewood, Mount Lawley, Mount Hawthorn, Glendalough and Joondanna, the ride should be very pleasant. Once again, Heather's Hutch is providing the food, so it will be a gourmet's delight.

The event is to be held on Saturday evening, the 11th November and will cost \$20 to \$25 dollars. Four courses are provided (but everyone should take the same one, otherwise you might get lost!) in the price, but this does not include drinks. You will need to bring these yourselves, but there will be pannier space available for their transport. The pace of the ride will be easy, and the total distance will be about 30km.

Tickets must be purchased from Simon Koek (271-2959[H] or 326-4971[W]) who can also provide more details. Places are limited, so please RSVP early.

XMAS IN JULY

What was Simon doing under the table with 3 women and Joslyn? What was Stan doing in bed with 5 women? What were the women doing? When Sue, Janet and Deanne said they had their hands full, just what exactly did they mean? What were Simon and Graham doing in the women's showers? What's this club coming to? Who's responsible for this moral degradation? And why didn't Santa come?

Still, the weather was great, the cycling fantastic, and it was really good to see that the Freemason's Hotel (where we drank, ate, drank, partied, drank and finally slept) and its beautiful jarrah staircase had survived the recent fire.

In the brisk early morning air at Midland Town Hall, Stan, Glenys, John, Barry, Janet, Graham and Mike stamped their feet, jumped up and down, soaked up the few pitifully weak rays of sun, and finally, deciding no more riders were coming, set out to attack Greenmount Hill. And what was the best part of the hill? Of course the stop at the top at Mundaring for cakes, coffee and even more food to weigh down the panniers. After Mundaring the tour left the busy highway and took to the quiet roads of Stoneville, Mt Helena, Chidlow and onto Wundowie. Quiet that is except for the dickhead leaning out of the car yelling "get off the bloody road ya pack of wankers!!!" Don't you love 'em?

After lunch at the Wundowie Police Station (no, not in the lockup) the early morning riders gracefully allowed the afternoon softies, Sue, Bridget, Andrew, Noel, Deanne, Ross, Brian, Mark and Wayne to join them for a lovely lap around Wundowie's scenic smelter - thanks to the remarkable navigation skills of co-leaders Noel and Stan. Then it was off through the warmth of the afternoon for a pleasant ride over gently rolling rural lands to the much anticipated stop at the Blinkbonny Tearooms for coffee, scones, pumpkin soup or whatever else you could steal from your neighbours plate.

From Blinkbonny the race was on! Forget prize money, glory and fame - the reward at the end of the race was something far more valuable... hot water!! So while many of the fittings at the pub didn't survive the fire, the bloody hot water system did. Bugger it! It was just as efficient as last year, giving the late comers the cold shoulder - and head, and back, and privates, and...

With pre-dinner indulgences over, we awaited our chrispy dinner by pulling on our neighbour's bon-bons and hoping we'd get the better end of the bang. Dinner was served and everyone got into the yummy food, but hungry cyclists need just a little more tucker than we were given. Still, this didn't stop the dancers from hopping and bopping and not dropping until late.

Early next morning a mysterious thing happened. Well before civilised wake-up hours, half the group just disappeared. Poof! Swallowed up by the mist. Not to be seen again for another couple of weeks or more. Spooky.

The rest of the crew however, fell out of bed (much later), picked themselves up off the floor and staggered off to brekkie. They say they were waiting for the day to warm up, but, looking at that bedraggled lot, I think they were waiting for one or two brain cells to kick in. Finally, with much bravado, and this time joined by Ann (no E!) and Simon, they jumped on their bikes for the (slack) 15km recovery ride back to... Blinkbonny Tearooms!

Two hours and 11 bowls of pumpkin soup later they eventually set off into the sunshine. Further down the road they paused briefly, and wiping crocodile tears from their eyes, the Wundowie Weaklings and the Midland Mightys traded fervent farewells (and ignominious insults). The Midland Mightys were, of course, delayed on their homeward haul by a quick stop for a Gidgegannup gorge.

Finally, I would like to thank Noel for his efforts in organising a great weekend. Thanks also go to Stella and John, who endured the heartache of restoring their Freemasons Hotel, only to have it damaged by fire and having to redo all their efforts again.

Joslyn and the King St. Cafe Crew

Editors Chit

A funny thing happened to me after the last newsletter - I had to go into the 'Murdoch Hotel' and have a bit of abdominal surgery. Nothing serious, but enough to keep me off work for a month and, what is worse, off both the leg powered and the petrol powered bikes! Nothing could be worse than that you say. But wait... there's more! Because it was lower abdominal I wasn't allowed to belly breathe - so I wasn't allowed to play the saxophone!! How can life be so cruel? After the neighbours had finished their big celebratory party they all rallied around and helped me with my garden chores and other aspects of life that you suddenly realise are extremely difficult to carry out when you are restricted to bed. With the expert help of young doctor Jen I was soon on the mend and looking forward to being able to walk around the garden or local park. It is at times like these that you start to understand the value of good neighbours and good friends. I thank all the members who sent cards and good wishes - it was definitely appreciated. Of course, now that I have started practising on the sax again, the hate mail and threatening phonecalls have restarted - but I guess that's life!

In my forth week of convalescence I started to do small rides on the Klein - I was so happy when I did a 16km circuit and it only took 2 hours! Gradual improvement occurred and I decided to do my first CTA ride with Stan's Power Station ride and tour. You cannot imagine what it was like to be able to get out in the sunshine and enjoy the stretch after being cooped up in the house. I probably overdid it, but I guess that's me trying to take chunks out of life rather than enjoying a regular mealtime of living! It was worth the later soreness however, with excellent company, great weather and a very interesting tour of the facilities at Kwinana. Thank you Stan for a job well done!

The touring season is now well under way and I hope you have all dusted off your sleeping bags and swept out the spiders from your tents. Blinkbonny is this weekend but there are plenty more weekends to come. The On Your Bike week is in October - and this is one week of the year not to miss. Although Tasmania '96 has been booked, there is Velo Australis, Tour de Ireland, All the President's Ride/Telstra Great Perth Bike Ride etc. still to come - so don't complain that you never go anywhere!

On a sadder note, I want to pass on the best wishes of all club members to Bob Clapp on the recent loss of his wife. Every rider who has dropped in for tea and cakes at the Clapps will understand how much she will be missed by us all. Jenny Knight was a pall bearer, and Carole and Maria went down to be with Bob at the funeral. The local Over 55 cycling club formed a guard of honour and everyone said it was a great send off for a great little lady. Rest in peace Nel.

On a slightly happier note, this will be my second last newsletter since I 'come up for retirement' at the AGM in December, and you will soon be free of my drivel. It's been great fun (at times) and has given me an opportunity to have my say on a number of issues - but basically just to be able to communicate with the range of people that makes up our membership has made it worthwhile. As editor

I have had the power to modify every story, ride description, advert, letter etc before final print. With some, this has meant total rewrites, but I do try hard to keep the language and 'flavour' (if not the spelling) of what the writer is trying to express to you, the club member. Hopefully each author recognised what they originally sent in. Some have been miffed that I changed their story, some have asked "gosh, did I really write that well?", and some didn't notice that their article had been changed. I hope the majority fell into the third category! This newsletter is an important aspect of the club - but it can only display what it is supplied with - please help the club help you and support the next editor in a positive manner. People sometimes forget that the committee are volunteers!! , not paid positions that you have the right to moan about. Your chance to have your say is in December at the AGM - but every member is encouraged to keep the committee informed on changes and directions that you feel are important for the club to take. A better alternative is to volunteer for a committee position at the December meeting!!

Cheers, Steve Blackburn



Bikewest

Encouraging Cycling, Promoting Safety

Keep up with the latest breaking news on all cycle related matters - whether your interest is in MTBs, Touring, Time Trials, Road Racing, or gizmos and gear. Listen to the experts (and occasional CTA dumbos) as they bring you what is happening in WA and the world.

Tune in to Radio 6NR on Thursday nights

6.45 - 7.00pm

Put a smile on your dial and tune to 927kHz

Rides Calendar — September/October 1995

For any cyclist coming on a ride for the first time, it would be wise to start with an 'Easy' ride. If you are unsure of your suitability for a particular ride, please telephone the Ride Leader. You will need to wear a helmet and bring a spare tube, puncture repair kit, tyre levers, pump and a spanner [to fit the axle nuts if your bike is not fitted with quick release hubs]. Most importantly, bring water!

SEPTEMBER 9-10

BLINKBONNY COTTAGE FARM FULL PANNIER TOUR

80 km (one way), touring pace, hilly terrain. Meet at Midland Town Hall at 8.00am for an 8.30am start. Camping will be on the Blinkbonny Cottage Farm in Beautiful hillside setting. Limited shower and toilet facilities are available as well as a restaurant which can provide dinner and breakfast at an approximate cost of \$15 and \$10. There will be no charge for camping. There will be the usual (riotous) port parties and singalongs. Tents and Trangias (stoves for the uninitiated) required. Booking ahead essential.

Leader: Stan Wiechecki Ph: 448-2335

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 10 THE SPRING HAS SPRUNG

80km, hilly terrain, moderate/fast pace, 8.30am start. Meet at Midland Town Hall for a bounce up Red Hill to Gidgegannup, a spin through the hills to enjoy the wildflowers, then back via Greenmount. Guaranteed to remove the spring from your step.

LEADER: David Uren Ph: 368-1993

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 15

SOCIAL EVENING

Meet at Ernest Johnson Guide and Scout Hall off Pilgrim Street in South Perth at 7.00pm. Tonight we have Terry Bolland coming to speak to us - that adventurer extraordinaire, returning from canoeing adventures in Malaysia. You name it, Terry's been there and done it, so it's bound to be an interesting evening - don't miss it!

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 17

10,000 IN 8

120km, hilly terrain, moderate pace, 8.00am Meet for 8.30am start. The club's most difficult ride this year, completing 10,000 feet of hills in less than 8 hours. Required for both the Challenge Series and the SuperAchiever Series. Come along and test your mettle!

ORGANISER: David Uren Ph: 368-1993

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 17

INFORMAL RIDE

Meet at the Raffles Hotel Carpark at 9.30am. See page 2 of the newsletter for details.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 23 A WEIRY ATB RIDE

30km, moderate pace, hilly terrain, 9.30am start. Meet at the Mundaring Weir Hotel. ATB Bikes and knobbly tyres are required. Bring money and some food, and be prepared to explore one of the trails from the recently released offroad maps done by...

LEADER: Noel Eddington Ph: 470-6797 (H)

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 24 THE 'NO STRINGS ATTACHED' HILL MUSEUM RIDE

40km, easy pace, moderate terrain, 1.00pm start. Meet at the Raffles Hotel Carpark for a ride to the Wireless Hill Museum and return. Bring \$2.00 for museum entry.

LEADER: Neil Stooke Ph: 364-3899 (H)

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 24 FOREST RALLY RIDES

North of Perth: Meet at Whitfords Train Station, east side at 11.30am. The halfway point is at Stirling Train Station, east side at 12.15pm. Contact person is Andrew Woodroffe, Ph: 444-5098.

West of Perth: Meet at Cottesloe Train Station east side at 11.30am. A meeting point is Claremont Park, corner of Stirling Hwy and Bay View Terrace at 12.00pm. Another meeting point is UWA Boatshed Carpark, corner of Mounts Bay Road and Hackett Drive at 12.40pm. Contact person is Richard Stallard, Ph: 470-4007.

East of Perth: Meet at The Midland Town Hall at 11.15am. The halfway point is opposite The Bicycle Entrepreneurs Shop on Great Eastern Hwy, Belmont at 12.00pm. Contact person is David Parkinson, Ph: 458-3366.

South of Perth: Meet at The Rossini Coffee Shop at 11.30am. The halfway point is The Raffles Hotel Carpark at 12.30pm. The contact person is Graham Blackwell, Ph: 339-7571.

Near the Hills: Meet at the Kelmscott Railway Station at 11.30am. The halfway point is The Carousel Shopping Centre, near the footbridge at 12.30pm. Contact person is Andrew Woodroffe, Ph: 444-5098.

SEPT 30-OCTOBER 2 MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

A two night extravaganza in the bush. Ring the organiser for further details.

ORGANISER: Simon Koek Ph: 271-2959 (H)

SUNDAY OCTOBER 1 THE POINT TO POINT RIDE

40km, easy pace, flat terrain, 8.30am start. Meet at the Causeway Carpark for a pleasant jaunt along the river at an 'along-the-river' pace, stopping at Point Walter for coffee and cakes.

LEADER: Neil Stooke Ph: 364-3899 (H)

FRIDAY OCTOBER 6 SOCIAL EVENING

Meet at Ernest Johnson Guide and Scout Hall off Pilgrim St in South Perth at 7.00pm. We all know that exercise is "good for us", but what do we do when we appear to suffer from it? Tonight we have an exercise physiologist from Lifecare coming to answer our queries and provide some valuable tips for us. Hope to see you there!

SATURDAY OCTOBER 7 YOU SCREAM, I SCREAM, WE ALL SCREAM FOR...

50km, easy pace, flat terrain, 2.00pm start. Meet at the Causeway Carpark for a ride that was a screaming success last year. The ride encompasses beautiful riverscapes to Midland, stopping for afternoon tea at the Ice Cream Junction.

LEADER: Simon Koek Ph: 271-2959 (H)

SUNDAY OCTOBER 8 THE 'ONE YOU MISSED'

50-200km, moderate pace, hilly terrain, 7.00am start. This ride is intended for all those who have missed a ride required for the CTA Cycle Challenge Badge. All participants must register with Simon Koek, indicating the ride they wish to do. They will then be notified of the start time and limit.

ORGANISER: Simon Koek Ph: 271-2959 (H)

SUNDAY OCTOBER 8 'ON YOUR BIKE' PRELIMINARY

30km, easy pace, flat terrain, 9.00am start. Meet at the Raffles Hotel Carpark for an opportunity to meet both the 1995 'On your Bike' participants and other CTA members. The route will be Mount Pleasant, Kardinya, Bibra Lake the return.

LEADER: Ross Cussons Ph: 317-2588 (H)

SUNDAY OCTOBER 15 INFORMAL RIDE

Meet at the Causeway Carpark at 9.30am. See page 2 of the newsletter for details.

OCTOBER 21 - 29 THE ON YOUR BIKE WA BEACH TO BUSH TOUR

For details contact organiser.

ORGANISER: Sharon Veleff Ph: (097) 97-1883

SATURDAY OCTOBER 21 ATRIUM BREAKFAST RIDE

120km, moderate-fast pace, flat terrain, 7.30am start. Meet at Carriage Coffee Shop for a fast ride to the Atrium Hotel in Mandurah for breakfast.

LEADER: Andrew Woodruffe Ph: 444-5098 (H)

SUNDAY OCTOBER 22 CAROLE'S CRUISE PART 1

15km, easy pace, flat terrain, 8.30am start. Meet at the UWA boatshed carpark, adjacent to Hackett Drive and Mounts Bay Road intersection, for a ride to the Consumer Home and Gardens Exhibition to check out some new ideas to freshen up your home or "someone else's".

LEADER: Carole Czermak P: 382-1275 (H)

SUNDAY OCTOBER 22 CAROLE'S CRUISE PART 2

50km, easy pace, flat terrain, 12.00pm start. Meet at the UWA boatshed carpark, adjacent to Hackett Drive and Mounts Bay Road intersection, for a ride to participate in the festivities, street procession, entertainment and Blessing of the Fleet (although that doesn't mean you can throw champagne bottles at anyone with a boat and more money than you!)

LEADER: Carole 'Amazing Stamina' Czermak Ph: 382-1275 (H)

SUNDAY OCTOBER 29 CALORIE REPLACEMENT RIDE

80km, moderate pace, hilly terrain, 8.00am start. Meet at the Kelmscott Railway Station for a ride up Brookton Highway through Pickering Brook and Kalamunda for a Calorie Transplant at that well known establishment, The Gooseberry Hill Patisserie, retiring via Canning Rd.

LEADER: Jenny Bailey Ph: 368-1993 (H)

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 4 AUDAX 300

ORGANISER: Brian Hawes Ph: 398-4724

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 5 CITY TO SURF CYCLE

40km, moderate pace, flat terrain, 9.00am start. Meet at the Kings Park Log Carpark for a pleasant spin through Perth's inner suburbs for some refreshments and a swim for those wishing to brave the elements. Bathers and bicycle lock essential if the weather is fine.

LEADER: Janet 'skimpy bikini' Deverill Ph: 316-3864 (H)

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 10 SOCIAL EVENING

Meet at Ernest Johnson Guide and Scout Hall off Pilgrim St in South Perth at 7.00pm. Most of us love to ride out bikes, but how many of us fear maintaining them? Tonight we will have the services of a couple of suitably qualified mechanics to share their wisdom with us, and cover some of the more 'nitty gritty' aspects of bicycle maintenance.

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 11 PROGRESSIVE DINNER

30km, easy pace, a 'few hills' 7.00pm start. See newsletter for details.

LEADER: Simon Koek Ph: 271-2959 (H)

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 12 F-F-F-FREMANTLE FESTIVAL

50km, easy pace, moderate terrain, 9.00am start. Meet at the UWA boatshed carpark, adjacent to Hackett Drive and Mounts Bay Road intersection, for a ride of adventure to the Fremantle Festival to experience a blend of comedy, music, magic, dance, drama, craft, film and sport. The ride will return after lunch.

LEADER: Carole Czermak Ph: 382-1275 (H)

Typesetting: Steve Blackburn

Printing: Terrace Print

C.T.A. COMMITTEE - 1995

PRESIDENT: Simon Koek	271-2959 (H)	EDITOR: Steve Blackburn	313-2814 (H)
VICE-PRESIDENT: Maria Antonas	444-3951 (H)	RIDES CO-ORDINATOR: David Uren	368-1993 (H)
SECRETARY: Mark Elliott	382-1961 (H)	TOUR CO-ORDINATOR: Stan Wiechecki	448-2335 (H)
TREASURER: Peter Lundy	247-1625 (H)	SOCIAL SECRETARY: Sally Stobie	275-4417 (H)
ADMINISTRATION: Neil Stooke	222-8134 (W)	AUDAX REPRESENTATIVE: Mark Nilan	397-0804 (H)

CORRESPONDENCE To P.O. Box 174 WEMBLEY 6014

For MEMBERSHIP DETAILS CONTACT THE TREASURER

BRISBANE TO KATHERINE

by the Travelling Vet - Marion Mayes

Part 1

I flew from Perth to Brisbane on 21.5.95 with the intention of riding from Brisbane to Darwin via Cairns. This was all part of my great plan to ride solo round Australia, but due to heavy work commitments, I am having to do it in stages. This is the third stage and I was feeling very unfit and apathetic but hoped I would improve in due course. I only had five weeks in which to do this section and was not too concerned if I only rode as far as Katherine, since I had already ridden from Katherine to Darwin twice before.

I had been led to believe this was the dry season, so I decided not to take my good goretex raincoat. At the last minute I threw in an old plastic cycling raincoat as I heard it was raining in Brisbane. It is ironic that I have carried my good coat half way round Australia and had limited use for it, but on this trip because I didn't take it, I encountered more rain than on any other tour. Late that Sunday afternoon as I stood gazing at the Brisbane river with the rain running down my neck I was thinking "Beautiful one day. Perfect one next"? This was not quite how I had pictured Queensland.

The next day, I encountered my first major obstacle: i.e. finding my way out of Brisbane. The main northbound road was prohibited for cyclists, but I finally found a way out, after spending most of the day riding in circles. My computer indicated I had travelled 72kms that day but the map said I was only 45kms from Brisbane. I had planned on taking it easy for the first few days, as I had done no training at all over the past few months.

The weather was pleasantly warm and mostly sunny for the first few days. I was disappointed in the roads which were quite narrow with no shoulder for the most part but carrying a very heavy volume of traffic. There was never a moment when there was not 20-30 cars in sight. The first few days were dominated by hills and I was quiet tired and having difficulty getting myself motivated. Some of the hills were long and winding with spectacular views from the summits.

I chose to stay at motels where possible, but on the fourth day I found I was still 40kms from my intended destination with only about an hour of daylight left, and I was very tired from all the hill climbing. It had been raining for a lot of the day, so when I came to a rest area I decided to stop. It was quite well set up with tables, toilets, lights and a windmill and water tank. I spoke to some caravaners who were very enthusiastic about the rest areas and told me they were a feature throughout Queensland. I acquired a map next day which showed all the rest areas, but I found they were mostly near towns, which rather defeated their purpose from my point of view.

From the fifth day, the country became flatter and there was more open farming land with lots of Brahman cattle. The terrain was quite similar to the south west of W.A. Most days I was riding in shorts and short sleeved shirt and was getting a little bit sunburned. On the eighth day I had my first sight of the Pacific Ocean, and later reached Mackay. I had been riding with a good tail wind all that day so I covered 166 kms.

After leaving Mackay I encountered a lot of rain and cursed the fact that I had not brought my good raincoat. It was quite humid and was uncomfortably hot wearing a raincoat if it was not actually raining. The country became hilly again, and the vegetation was more tropical looking. As I approached Proserpine, it was once again flat with lots of water lying round; a haven for water birds. I began to feel concerned about my tyres as I had planned on buying spares when I could, but so far had not found a bike shop open.

When I reached Homehill I was quite tired but there was no accommodation as the local show was on, so I had to stay at a camping area. This was the first time I had experienced difficulties in finding a place to stay. Next day, after leaving Homehill, I crossed the Burdekin River where a lot of vegetables are grown on the floodplains. It was very pretty country with lots of pineapples, cane, and other vegetables.

On day eleven, I had expected an easy day as it was only 100kms to Townsville, but I had a puncture with only 10kms to go. It was caused by a slash in the tyre in which a piece of glass was embedded. I thought I removed it, but after changing the tube I was still unable to pump it up so I threw the tyre away and used the folding spare I had. Then the chain became jammed, and altogether I was held up for about an hour sitting in the rain trying to sort things out. I had two offers of lifts but I didn't accept. If this had happened in an isolated place I would have to sort it out myself so I was determined to do so now. I should have learned my lesson about always carrying enough spare tyres on my last trip, but I really thought I would be able to buy them easily in Queensland. I finally arrived in Townsville and began the hunt for a motel. I had relatives there, and had the offer of staying on their yacht in the marina but I needed to be in town, so we agreed to meet later. I finally found a hotel room on the seventh floor, so had to take the bike up in the lift.

Later that evening I was picked up by my friends and taken to dinner, and later back to their yacht. It was quite warm and very pleasant on the harbour, gazing across the water at the lights of the casino. I had planned a rest day in Townsville, and Lester picked me up next morning and drove me to a bike shop where I purchased four tyres.

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The One Stop Bike Shop

(I never had another puncture.) Then he drove me up to a spectacular lookout on a hill overlooking Townsville. There was a magnificent view in all directions, and I could see right out to Magnetic Island. I spent the afternoon changing the tyres on my bike and doing some shopping. Later that night I went back to their yacht for dinner. This was the only full rest day I could allow myself on the five week trip. I left Townsville before daylight and was well out of town by 9 o'clock when a strong wind picked up. By the time I arrived at Ingham, at midday, the wind was so strong I was wondering whether I should go on. It was a crosswind and it seemed to be swinging to the west. If it swung any more it would be too strong to deal with. I decided I would go on and was later glad that I did. The wind didn't get any worse but there was a lot of rain. I passed through lots of cane, pineapples, bananas and mangoes. There was a large mountain range on my left, all misty with rain, and the vegetation was typical rainforest. There were a lot of birds and butterflies but it was not very practical to stop in the rain to try and identify them. Postcards and magazines do not do justice to the beauty of this area. There was a large hill to climb and when I reached the top there was a lookout with an impressive view through the misty rain to Hinchinbrook Island. The country was mostly flat after descending that massive hill and the rain hardly let up at all. I stayed in Cardwell that night, and Babinda the next.

On the fifteenth day I reached Cairns at about 9.30 in the morning. I only stayed long enough to take a photograph of a "Welcome to Cairns" sign and have something to eat in a shelter in a park where I could escape the pouring rain. Early in the trip I had decided to catch a bus back to Townsville from Cairns to save time and prevent having to repeat that stretch of riding, but by the time I reached Cairns I had decided to abandon that plan in favour of riding back. I had found the countryside delightful along that stretch but the rain had marred my complete enjoyment of it. I had been unable to take many photographs or stop for any serious birdwatching. I had convinced myself it would be sunny on the way back, and I could experience the pleasure to the full. Not so. It rained all the way back as well and I now had a headwind to contend with.

I had some trouble with the gears on my bike and was unable to use my granny gear. I was concerned about having to climb that massive hill again without the benefit of a low gear, but I did locate a bike shop in Innisfail and had the problem remedied. The proprietor of the bike shop seemed a little in awe of the quality of my frame and components (i.e. bike frame), but apparently the problem was only caused by grit and mud and the offending parts were quickly cleaned and replaced at a low cost.

I had a rather disconcerting encounter with a "weirdo" between Cardwell and Ingham, which made me more aware of my vulnerability on lonely stretches of road. Fortunately this was not a lonely stretch of road and a police car happened to come along at the right time after I had been stalked for about an hour and a half. Further time was lost at the police station making a statement. The incident rattled me a little and for the rest of the trip I was worried about vehicles that passed me more than once and about locking doors at night.

The constant danger of riding on such a narrow road with such heavy traffic in the rain was beginning to get me down. The few centimetres at the side of the road which they were prepared to concede to me was frequently full of rocks and potholes and any attempt to avoid them would have placed me in the traffic or down a ditch. I had many near accidents when my wheels slipped on rocks and I nearly went over. On top of that, there was the danger of the cane railway which repeatedly crossed the road at impossible

angles.

After reaching Townsville again, I turned west and almost immediately things began to improve. The rain stopped, there was no longer a headwind, and the road was much better with less traffic. I began to experience the isolation and tranquillity that I enjoy on cycling trips. I spent that night at a very old hotel in a place called Mingela. The informal friendliness of the proprietor, staff and the other guests was refreshing after the indifference I had noticed towards tourists on the coast.

The next few days I experienced some strong tailwinds and made good time over mostly flat country. It was quite overcast at times but there was no more rain. Near Torrens Creek I met two other cyclists who had started at Sydney and gone round the south coast and up through Alice Springs. They had experienced heavy rain in Coober Pedy, where it apparently only rains about 4 times a year. The town experienced half their annual rainfall on the day they were there. They mentioned another cyclist who had stopped at a roadside toilet and had his bike stolen while it was unattended for a few minutes. Bike theft seems to be the national pastime in Queensland.

I was now passing through flat open plains with occasional cattle grids to be negotiated. I later encountered "Claytons" cattle grids where the lines were only painted on the road. The road was so straight and flat that I could watch vehicles until they were tiny specks disappearing in the distance. I had counted on a tailwind along this stretch to try and make up some time but in fact I had a crosswind on most days so it was not much help. Some days the wind was barely noticeable; other days it was quite strong.

Somewhere along this stretch I began composing poems for a children's book about cane toads. I amused myself by happily dreaming of the profits I would make from tee shirt sales, hat sales, film rights, Internet rights etc. They would be bigger than Ninja Turtles: bigger than Bananas in Pyjamas. Well, you have to dream about something when the country is so unchanging. I also started work on a short story which I later entered in a literary contest. I spent my evenings writing: trying to capture the illusive and diverse paths my mind follows during the day.

The nights were colder here than they had been near the coast and I found my space blanket a very useful item. Most mornings I was starting out in long pants and jacket, but stripping to shorts later. There were long stretches of open plains without a tree in sight where camping would have been impossible. I saw some emus, brolgas and a few kangaroos. There were always black kites circling overhead: They are a constant feature throughout Queensland and the Northern Territory.

One memorable morning as I left Cloncurry while it was still dark, there was a large eerie moon hanging low above the surrounding hills. There was total silence except for an occasional crow calling, but as it began to grow light the birds became more active. Then the sun began to splash golden light on the tops of the hills and the trees cast long shadows. Slowly the hills began to turn purple and I heard a dingo call not far away.

Later that afternoon I passed through Mt. Isa but the solitude of the outback had made me impatient to put the large town behind me. After replenishing my water bags I set off, to cover as many kilometres as possible before camping in the bush for the night. The following day was much the same, with a strong cold cross wind blowing all day and it was quite late when I arrived in Camooweal.

To be continued...