

# Freewheeling

Issue 54 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1989 \$3.00

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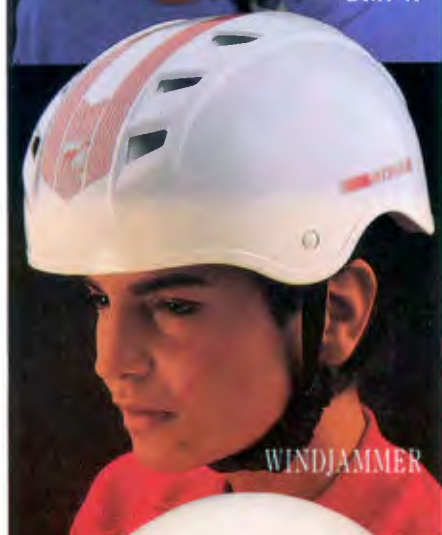
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Regular columns

- 66 CALENDAR**
- 66 CLASSIFIEDS**
- 9 JOHN DRUMMOND**
- 8 PRO DEALERS**
- 64 DON HATCHER**
- 5 WARREN SALOMON**
- 30 PHIL SOMERVILLE**
- 7 WORLD AWHEEL**

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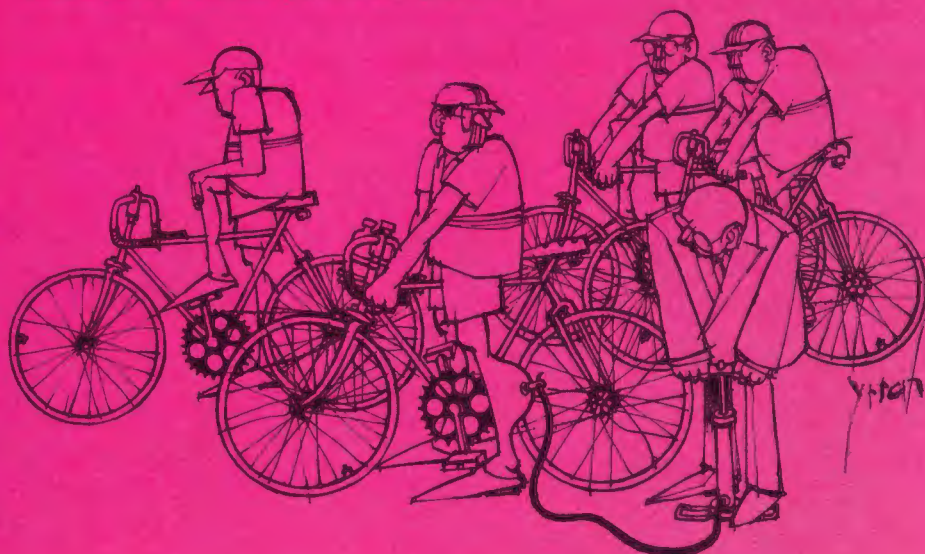
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Cover design and art direction for this issue by Warren Salomon. Cover photography by Robert Bolger of teams in the 1988 Repco Sydney to the Gong ride. Top to bottom: The Gunyah Bicentennial Convicts; Woolys Wheels Super Heroes; Lagoon Restaurant Corrimal.

# Freewheeling

Number 54 January/February 1989



## • Contents

Mountain bikes

### **22 HOW TO BE A MOUNTAIN BIKER**

*A Freewheeling guide*

### **47 TAKING ON THE WORLD**

*An Aussie athlete races in the big European events*

### **13 AN AUSSIE SKETCH BOOK**

*How other cyclists see us*

### **51 DOWN UNDER**

*Two yanks find Oz different*

### **58 A FINE MADNESS**

*Cycling in Paris*

Travel and touring

### **CYCLING'S BIG EVENTS**

### **30 PHIL SOMERVILLE**

*Our cartoonist is off on a mass bike ride*

### **36 THE BURSTON & STOKES RIDE**

*Penny farthings in an epic reenactment ride*

### **34 ONWARDS TO SYDNEY**

*The Caltex Bicentennial ride*

### **26 THE GONG RIDE ARRIVES**

*A pictorial coverage of our own big ride*

Sport and fitness

### **16 GET FIT FOR THE ROAD SEASON**

*A new training guide*

### **54 DRUGS AND THE SPORT**

*Is it out of control?*

### **62 LONG IN THE SADDLE**

*Riding an AUDAX Randonne*

Special feature

### **12 BUSH ON BIKES**

*An old interview sheds light on the new president*





*Leigh Nilsson, Woolly's Wheels  
star rider, hurtles to the finish  
to claim third in the 88 Nationals*

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## A hard act to follow

*The Bicentennial aftermath: is there life after 1988?*

**A**T THE START OF 1988 I WAS impressed by the number of cycling events planned for the year ahead. A look at our calendar at the start of 89 is a little disappointing. Sure, the silly season is a difficult time of the year to plan new events but it seems that this year after a very big all-year party organisers are possibly wondering if they have the strength and courage to face another year as frenetic as 88 has been.

On the whole the year was a bumper one for both competitive (see John Drummond's column) and recreational cycling. Most of the regular events experienced a big boost in numbers and nowhere was that more apparent than in Sydney where the Bicycle Institute's annual event, the Sydney Spring Cycle went over the 4000 mark and our own Repco Sydney to the Gong Ride attracted between five and six thousand participants.

Meanwhile in Victoria, Bicycle Victoria's Swan Hill to Melbourne Great Victorian Bike Ride attracted 4400 riders and over two thousand people (including a 500 strong contingent of riders from the USA) braved rainy weather to complete the two week Caltex Ride from Melbourne up to Sydney.

Earlier on in the year the South Australian Touring Cyclists' Association conducted a very successful Festival of Cycling rally in the Adelaide Hills and the West Australian touring club ran a small but successful ride between Albany and Perth. In November thirty penny farthing riders completed a marvellous reenactment of a one hundred year old epic journey between Melbourne and Sydney and World Friendship rides took the cycling spirit beyond the shores of Oz and made many new friends for the country. Only Bicycle Australia's brave but flawed attempt at a cross country ride seemed to lack a happy conclusion.

In a year of mass events there were also many outstanding personal achievements like Phil McDonald's amazing solo penny farthing circuit via Highway 1 and the numerous rides by individuals from state to state.

Though we have such a vast country it is obvious from the 1988 experience that we still take its size for granted. Perhaps it is because we have accepted it too readily. It may be a huge effort to ride a 1000 km in Europe but in Oz it's no big



deal. Cross the Nullarbor, ride Adelaide to Darwin – no worries mate.

If anything has left a question mark in my mind at the end of 1988 is the future of bicycle touring – or as we now tend to term it: bicycle travel. The mass recreational events of the past few years have introduced many people to cycle touring but do these same people still cycle out into the country on weekends or annual holidays.

Certainly the mass rides have established a style of event that is almost uniquely Australian but this doesn't necessarily mean that this is the best way to continue in the future.

After five years of very large summer rides some of the organisers I have talked to have said that they would like to rethink their events along smaller lines perhaps like the British End to End or Great British rides which are limited to 200 people each.

I do hope the big events that are currently with us continue but I am sure that the large numbers of old hands who yearn for an end to the queues and the crowds would gladly line up for something more intimate.

The problems of large scale long term events are enormous. On my one day Sydney to the Gong event last year we had a record three hundred volunteers and professional staff working to ensure everybody had a good day. This year to ensure greater route safety and control of reckless and careless riders we will need three times that number.

The long term events have an even bigger problem. Not a lot of people will give up a week or two of their time to stand out on a country road flagging down cyclists so you have to admire the community spirit of those who do.

Now that we have developed a taste for such events the only way forward is for organisers to develop more. Though it is easier to call for more events than to find the people who will put them together the need is a commonly voiced one within the cycling community and needs to be voiced often.

There are risks however. Organiser burn out is a common ailment in the event management field.

It's any wonder then that the calendar for 1989 looks so bare. This may have more to do with the nature of blockbuster celebrations such as the 1988 shindig – everyone has been so preoccupied with 1988 that little thought can be given to what lies ahead.

Now it's 1989 and life continues. The cycling scene has grown enormously in the past year. Retailers have had one of their best pre Christmas seasons ever and what's more, the passion for cycle equipment now continues into the winter thanks to the mountain bike.

Mountain bike racing has at last got its act together and new clubs are starting to pop up all over the country. Still the non competitive mountain bike users are crying out for organised events and a few more talented event promoters would not go astray in this area either.

So the challenge lies ahead of us. Eighty eight has been a great year for Aussie cycling but the real test will be in 1989 when we have to consolidate these gains.

I hope all the successful events continue and I hope that even more (small scale) ones commence as well.

I wish our event organisers every success for 89 and a very good cycling year to all our readers.



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6 Freewheeling



# The World Awheel

## London cycling group turns ten

In the past couple of years a number of cycling organisations (including this publication) have celebrated their first decade. Now it's the turn of London's major lobby group the London Cycling Campaign.

While other volunteer groups in the city have come and gone the LCC's professionalism and commitment of its members has ensured that the LCC has had more than its fair share of successes. The group began its life with a commuter race between bikes, cars, bus and train travellers – of course the bikes won! The unfortunate public transport competitor on that auspicious occasion is now the Campaign's treasurer.

The LCC is also known for its rather theatrical direct action campaigns such as the one we reported last year where a number of members attempted to lock themselves to the roadway along a dismantled cyclist route using high security Kryptonite locks.

We wish the group well in its efforts to secure London's cyclists a better deal. For Aussies wanting to explore one of the world's great cities in the best way possible – by bike – we highly recommend the LCC's excellent cycle guide *On Your Bike* now in its tenth (or is it eleventh) year of publication. Send £3.50 to LCC sales 3 Stamford St London SE1 9NT (add another quid for air mail).

## School champions

In November last year the 28 finalists in the 1988 Safe-n-Sound School Cham-

pionships gathered in Parramatta to decide the winners in four categories. The defending boys under 16 champ Brett Harper this year took second place to John Watkins of NSW. The winners from over 10,000 participants across the country were: Under 14 girls – Christine Brockwell NSW, Tracey Verbiest WA and Loretta Talty SA; Under 14 boys – Tony Crawford VIC, Robert Turner NSW, Mark Cottam QLD; Under 16 girls – Alison Kingsland NSW, Nianh Kinahan WA; /under 16 boys – John Watkins NSW, Brett Harper SA, Daren Kay VIC.

## NSW Staysafe Committee releases report

The New South Wales parliamentary committee which deals with all aspects of road safety has recently released its report and recommendations resulting from its special enquiry into bicycling safety. Among the many recommendations including those relating to helmet usage *Freewheeling* editor Warren Salmon and the Newcastle Cycleways Movement's John Mathieson were commended for their advice to cyclists and their parents on suitable helmets for use on the roads.

The report contains a number of important recommendations and has been generally well received by cyclists in spite of sloppy reporting on its possible findings by the Sydney media. *Freewheeling* will present its usual detailed analysis of *Staysafe 12* in our March/April issue.

## Individual cycle touring banned in China

Since January last year China has officially banned entry by individual foreign bicycle tourers. Iain Dacre of Hong Kong based Bike China Tours has informed us of the regulation and has said that it has caused some concern and difficulty for his company.

According to Dacre various reasons were offered by minor officials such as the security of cyclists, insurance problems, worry about accidents and getting lost but it seems that the most likely indication was given in an unofficial remark by a senior Public Security Officer in Canton concerning bloody minded cyclists who refused to listen to orders about going to places they shouldn't go.

However, at the moment it seems that for some inexplicable reason a lot of individual cyclists are getting through the Macau border post. Elsewhere in southern China foreigners with bikes are not being allowed in.

Iain Dacre warns Aussie cyclists who do make it through that one of the worst places to get caught is the road between West Canton Province and the popular tourist area of Guilin. Cyclists who do get stopped should not try to act smart as Dacre says that the local PSO is not the slightest bit impressed by who your father is or how many other countries in the world you have cycled through. More importantly he has more power than the local police in western countries.

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## A year of triumph

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Australian bicycle racing has had a year of remarkable success thanks to a combination of actions involving the positive thinking of the Australian Cycling Federation, the initiatives of the Australian Institute of Sport, the Australian Sports Commission and the dedication of the cyclists themselves.

The gaining of third place in the teams section of the Commonwealth Bank Bicentennial International Cycle Classis behind Poland and Italy by Scott Steward, Jeff Stewart, Paul Swadling, Leo Gomez and James Watson highlighted Australia's best international competitive year since the heady days of Sid Patterson and Russell Mockridge.

It started back in March at the National Championships in Shepparton when West Australian Tony Davis established a new world outdoor record for the 4000 m Pursuit of 4 min, 36.57 sec. That great ride sparked off a period of international success that elevated Australia to the fourth rated cycling nation in the world in the aggregate of competition on both road and track.

First to be inspired was the junior team of track and road cyclists who attended the Junior World cycling titles in Ordense, Denmark. The Aussie boys

emerged from the championships second only to Russia with a tally of three medals.

It was easily the best result since the days of wonder boy cyclist Dean Woods in 1983.

The current Australian road champion, Eddie Salas, who finished fourth in the recent Bank Classic, was the first rider to receive ratification by the Australian Olympic Federation for the Seoul Olympics. He returned to Italy to ride the early European cycling season with his adopted Italian Club in its sponsored team.

The Australian finished mostly in the top ten in every international event he rode prior to returning to Australia where he competed with outstanding success in local Classics prior to winning the National Title with a brilliant ride in Brisbane.

When the road squad of Scott Steward and Stephen Fairless both of Victoria, and Clayton Stephenson and Bruce Keech both of NSW left Australia in April to join Eddie Salas, already in Europe it was clearly a question of proving to the AOF ratification committee that Australian road cycling had returned to reckoning in Olympic competition.

criterium action on the 1988 Commonwealth Bank Bicentennial Classic Flagstaff Point Wollongong. Photography: Warren Salomon.

They proved their class beyond all doubt in a barnstorming tour of Europe and the North American continent. It's possible that they may be regarded as one of the most successful Australian international road racing teams that has ever toured.

The official team joined compatriots Steven Rooney of Queensland and South Australian Ian McKenzie as a team in the Giro Delee Regioni of Italy where they finished a creditable fifth. This was followed by a 7th in the Baltic Sea Friendship race in Finland. Next the Australians finished 2nd in the Italian Classic Tour of Umbria. They won the Tour of Abruzzo Classic held also in Italy, before travelling to Canada to win the seven stage Tour of Yourk, with Scott Steward, Stephen Fairless and Clayton Stephenson filling the first three places in that order. Salas finished in 15th place and Bruce Keech was 40th.

On a triumphant return to Australia the teams concerns were ended when the AOF ratified the whole squad to represent Australia at the Seoul Olympics.

They need not have worried for the results were there all along the line.

Australian women's cycling took a giant leap forward with the involvement of women in an international tour of Europe. Liz Hepple, Kathleen Shan-



non, Donna Rae-Szalinski, Robyn Battinson and Donna Gould represented Australia in the inaugural women's Giro of Italy with great distinction with Hepple finishing second after winning the Sinalungo stage. The win came after a break from the peloton with Italian star Mareia Canins of Italy, for more than 70 km.

Canins went on to win the Tour and to declare that Hepple was very strong throughout the Tour and she owed her winning overall lead to the Australian rider. She also thought the Australian team was the strongest in the race. The team finished third overall.

The five Australian girls were joined by Kathy Watt of Victoria and Marissa Gori of Queensland for the Tour De France Feminin.

Elizabeth Hepple in the top three for most of the 900 km Tour ultimately gained third place to France's Jeannie Longo who won the Tour for the second year in a row 1 min, 20 sec. ahead of twice winner Maria Canins of Italy. Kathy Watt was 7th, Donna Gould 11th, Kathleen Shannon 19th, Donna Rae 27th, Robyn Battison at 31 min, 45 sec, and Marissa Gori at 34 min, 24 sec.

Australia finished third in the teams classification behind Italy and France and were the only nation to have all seven members in the top 35 which was very impressive.

The eight men of the track racing squad left Australia for pre Olympic training and racing in Europe in mid-June. The team took part in competitions in Belgium, Denmark, East Germany, Holland, Italy and England before returning to Australia prior to departure for Seoul.

All riders had varying success the star performance being at Bassano, Italy when the pursuit team finished second to Russia in a world class field. During the competition the Australian rode a World record breaking time of 4 min, 17.40 sec, during the semi-finals, thus beating the world record of 4 min, 17.70 sec. The Russians, not to be beaten came back with a 4 min, 17.28 sec, shortly after. In the final the Aussie cyclists led at the bell, but ultimately lost by 0.32 sec.

In the Olympic Games in Seoul it was a similar performance with the Australians setting a new world record of 4 min, 16.32 sec, in the qualifying round only to again see the Russians reduce it by .22 of a second. This was blow to Australia as it probably meant a difficult ride to the Gold Medal. It proved such, but nevertheless Australia ultimately won Bronze.

The Games cycling team had the best result of any sport, finishing with two silver and two bronze medals won in five mens track events. In total the track

team placed in four of the events and came fourth in the other. Julie Speight came fifth in the sprint the only women's event on the track programme.

On the road Australia also excelled coming ninth in the 100 km Time Trial in the fastest time ever achieved by an Australian combination, at home or abroad. Eddie Salas finished sixth in the sprint in the individual road race, easily the best performance since Clyde Sefton's second at Munich Olympics in 1972.

All three girls finished a disappointing road race in the sprint without success. Not even France's World Champion, Jeannie Longo could get-up. She was given 22nd, one place ahead of Australia's Elizabeth Hepple.

Meanwhile Australian professional cyclists were mixing it with some success on the roads and tracks of Europe and the continent with Phil Anderson again finishing the season in the top ten.

Most success however came in the World Championships when Stephen Pate of Shepparton, Victoria, won the Sprint championship, thus breaking an 11 year long mortgage on the title by the Japanese. Danny Clark also foxed his way to a win in the motorpaced championship.

It was a great year for Aussie cyclists abroad. But what of the future at home? This column will have something to say about that in our next issue.



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# Letters to the Editor

## Been there - done that!

I've read with much interest your published story by George Spearing and John Tuke of their Nullarbor *Freewheeling* 51 - Sept/Oct 1988.

They were the opinion that it hadn't been done before, or at least there was no record of such a ride. At the Frankston Scout Jamboree over the New Year of 1934-35 I learned of four Rover scouts who rode across to attend this event. It subsequently turned out that one of these lads came to stay with relatives in my home town and then went on to live in Sydney.

I remember very plainly his bike was a standard Malvern Star Roadster with a back pedal brake. I do remember him talking about getting supplies from pedalers camps as they called them, I think maybe it should have been fettlers camps and as the Jamboree commenced on the Boxing Day they must have ridden over during that time of the year. I don't remember any mention of any serious breakdowns or illnesses.

I do know that this fellow is now deceased and if any of the other Western Australians are still alive, they would have to be over the age of 73.

Should anyone be interested I have one contact: a cousin of one of them.

Jack Hephner  
Railway Pde  
Bundanoon NSW

## Information

I wrote to you last week requesting information on mountain biking and requested an article on the same.

I am writing this week to apologise for being out of place. When I went through our back issues of *Freewheeling* I found many articles devoted to what must be all aspects of mountain biking as a social as well as competitive sport. The only one of my questions that you have not already answered was the one about whether a 35 year old mother of two, like myself, could find a place in mountain biking, both competitively and socially.

With the help of your latest issue devoted to women and cycling, it would appear that a Shogun Mountain bike would probably be my best buy. I have written to the AMBA to find out whether there is a club in my area.

Sorry about jumping in without checking up on back issues first.

Thankyou for a great magazine.

Sue Hunt  
Nambour Q 4560

To add to Sue's letter: you will find even more information about mountain bik-

ing in this issue. We pride ourselves in the high quality of information we publish. As all of our efforts is channelled into producing the magazine it is difficult to personally answer the phone enquiries and letters we receive every month.

Some times a simple answer can be given but like the person who wrote asking for a complete itinerary for a camping/touring trip around Australia it would take as much time to compile a proper reply as it would to research a full feature article.

As Sue found out much of the information that people seek on cycling has already been published. If you have cycling info problem call the editorial office and we will advise you on the back issues that will be of help to you. If you have a credit card you may even order them over the phone. ED.

## Veterans fundraiser

I have recently held talks with the National Heart Foundation regarding a fun ride for the over 60's from Sydney to Adelaide (or vice-versa) with a view to raising funds for the Foundation.

Support was promised and planning is underway for an event to be held in September/October this year.

I envisage an approximately 50 km per day average, and a total ride of some 26 days. If there are any readers who are interested in joining the ride please contact:

Jack Holmes  
47 Cox's Road  
North Ryde NSW 2113  
phone (02) 884 275

## The Womens issue

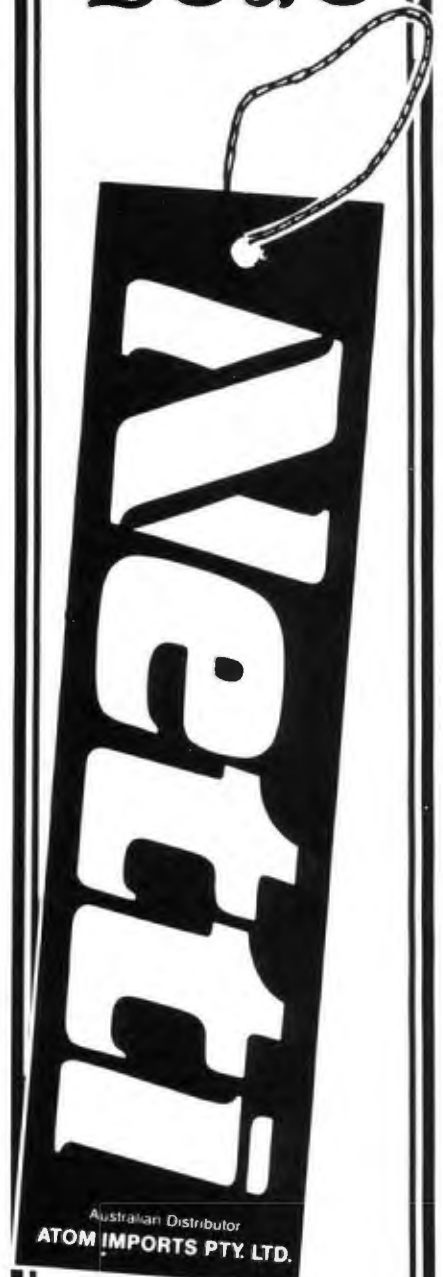
I would like to congratulate you and your women writers on producing the *Freewheeling* Special Summer Edition concerning women and cycling.

I only wish that it had been available in 1984 when I was in Tasmania and intending to cycle around parts of Australia. Despite predictions of doom and gloom, I had a wonderful time and encountered very few problems. I would recommend solo cycling to anyone.

Pauline Adams  
Abbotsford VIC 3067

Thank you Pauline and thank you to the many women who have written and phoned the office to congratulate all who worked on that important issue. As I said in my introduction I hope that the issue will be seen as a landmark in Australian cycling and introduce many more women to our wonderful sport and recreational activity. ED.

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# BUSH ON BIKES

An old interview with the new US President offers hope for embattled US cyclists.

**BY JOHN DOWLIN**

**T**his short interview was conducted by mail with George Bush in 1975 while he was Chief Liaison Officer with the US embassy in Beijing, China. It reveals a person deeply affected by the role of the bicycle in that country. Whether Bush can apply his knowledge of the extensive usage of the bicycle in China to his own country remains to be seen but US bicycle advocates are optimistic at the start of the new Presidency.

**As Pennsylvania and a number of other states are now considering bicycle registration, could you explain how — and also why — bikes are registered in China?**

Bikes are registered in China, much as automobiles are registered in the USA. They are the principle means of transportation — certainly in Beijing. They are treated as important family possessions and each cycle carries a license plate fastened to its back fender. Each cyclist carries a registration card.

Though one hears little of theft, I am sure the reason for registration is to readily identify a misplaced cycle or a cycle involved in an accident.

**To what extent do the Chinese appreciate their bicycles as optimum transportation? More precisely, what importance is being assigned to the bicycle as their transportation develops? i.e. will bicycles be accommodated on the new underground railway in Beijing? Will cyclists be protected by providing cars with a special lane (as in Nanking and some of the newer cities)? Is the bicycle considered a personal or a social form of transportation — or both?**

The Chinese fully appreciate their bikes and indeed they treat them as we would a car. They are washed; sometimes, though not often, decorated. They are ridden by husbands, wives, and often you'll see some little guy whose feet can't even reach the pedals out on what obviously is the borrowed family bike.

I don't know if the underground will accommodate bikes. Having been on the underground I am inclined to doubt that. The trains have baggage cars which transport bikes at very little cost.

The bicycle is used for getting to work, for going to games, for every possible kind of transportation purpose. There are only a handful of cars in Beijing, and few if any privately owned cars.

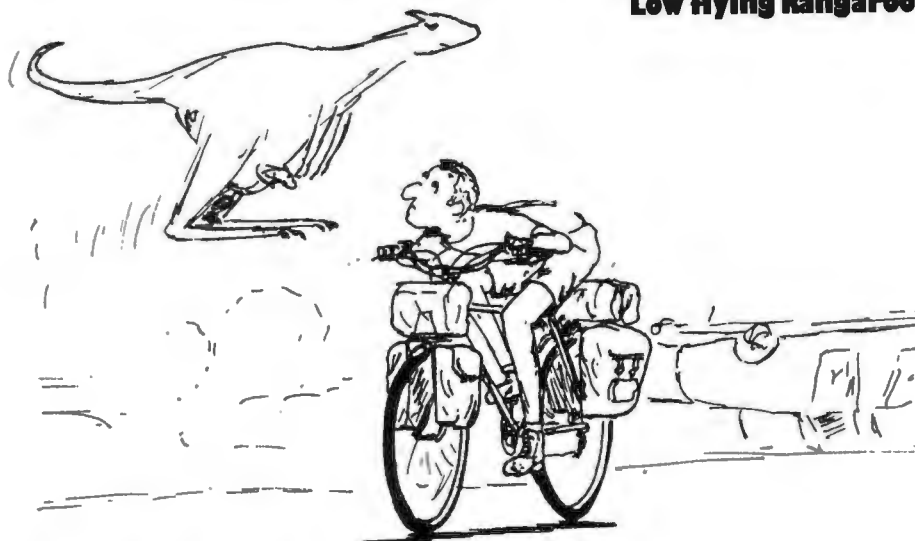
**Finally, as an American, how would you evaluate the quality of life in Beijing? In terms of development, is a city of bicycles preferable to a city of cars? Obviously we think so, but do you?**

*Your last question about quality of life in Beijing is exceedingly difficult. Beijing is flat, thus it lends itself to the heavy, no gear-shift cycles, that are the mainstays of transportation here. The more I think about our US domestic transportation problems from this vantage point of half way round the world, the more I see an increased role for the bicycle in American life. Obviously some terrains make it more difficult, obviously some climates make it more difficult; but I am convinced, after riding bikes an enormous amount here in China, that it is a sensible, economical, clean form of transportation and makes enormous good sense.*

*In a way I wish I had brought an American bicycle to Beijing to show it off in this country, but I must say the big, heavy, no nonsense bikes made here in China are very stable and good.*



## Low flying kangaroo



# AN AUSSIE SKETCH BOOK

BY ROSS MACKINTOSH

**R**OSS MACKINTOSH IS AN englishman who arrived in Australia recently having cycled extensively in asia. During his cycle journey through the Outback he found the aussie scene just as weird and wonderful as anything he had seen in Asia. Some things, however were even more bizarre and he has compiled his observations in a series of wonderful words and pictures.

## Signs in Oz

THERE ARE A few entertaining signs out west. Of course none of the distance signs ever agree – cycling into Mildura from the West, there is a sign telling you that Sydney is 1050 km away. Cycle 10 km further east and somehow Sydney is now 1080 km away. Maybe they haven't got the hang of this metric system yet! I mean, all the kilometre marker posts are divided by 7 intermediate posts. Then there are all the information signs –

signs telling you that there is a sign ahead, signs telling you about floods, ice, snow, fire. No doubt there's one warning you of plague of locusts somewhere.

There are also signs telling you that the flood signs are in metres. Looking at the posts, they're normally in such flat country that if the water rose anywhere near the top, you'd need a boat to read them. Or how about the roadwork signs, always good for a laugh, especially the one telling you to watch out for the guy holding out a bucket or something. And of course the true blue Aussie sign is the one telling you to watch out for low flying Kangaroos.

About the only thing these signs have in common is that they are all riddled with bullet holes. It must be a tough life, being an Australian road sign.

## A fat tired swaggie

STOPPING BY AT a small post office, we bumped into what I guess you'd

call a dinky di, true blue Swagman. He wore a bush hat, enormous pair of old shorts, rolled up swag and a battered and stained old billy. Only this guy wasn't trudging down the road, oh no – he was happily pedalling along on a rather natty mountain bike with ex-army haversacks strapped onto his racks for panniers. Probably the most travelled of the various cyclists we've come across – he certainly looked it.

While waiting in the queue, he regaled us with stories of cycling rough in the bush. He advised us to get a couple of rabbit traps when we were crossing the plains, reckoning that settling down to a good rabbit stew and a camp fire was an excellent way of spending an evening. I hate to sound a wimp, but buying a can of beans from the store is a whole lot easier, if a trifle less glamorous. I'd agree about the fire though.



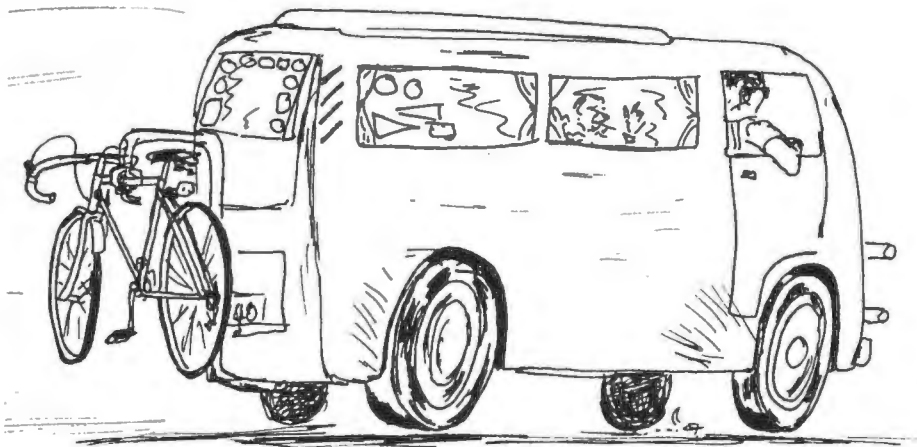
A jolly swagman

## Where are all the locals?

AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS in Asia, we have to admit that the cyclists out here seem very keen – they zoom around on very smart bicycles with all the gear – furry seat covers, very tight and bright clothes and crash helmets too. A far cry from the rusty wrecks and sarongs we saw in Asia. Perhaps they need the tight trousers to stop flying ants going up them? But I just wonder what they do to keep all the flies off.

They all seem very competitive, zooming round at great speed. the competi-





## Touring in Oz

tion? Well, maybe they try racing kangaroos – we tried, and they certainly hop along at a fair old pace! But when it comes to bicycle touring? Well, we've met several cyclists touring Australia – Canadian, Americans, English, German and of course the Japanese... Australian? Hmm, we have seen several touring with bikes, only they're driving along in campervans and the bicycles are stuck on the back. I know it's a big country, but...

## Wildlife

THERE'S SOME PRETTY funny birdlife out here, not always very friendly and it pays to be well protected. The worst by far are the magpies – cyclists are obviously fair game for them. Initially we just suffered the occasional dive bombing attack, with the magpie zooming overhead. Not so bad when the sun's behind you – you can spot the shadow. Evasive action however still

saw me crashing off the road more than once.

These mock attacks were only for starters and it wasn't long before one of them had scored a direct hit on my head with its claws. cycle helmet? I reckon you need a steel helmet! As we had neither, we were reduced to carrying a branch and fending them off with that. Oh for a machine gun or something...

At ground level, you've got the dogs to contend with – every garden that fronts onto the road seems populated by a horde of enormous shaggy wolves. These race up and down the fence and if they can get out onto the road... Nope, steel toed boots and maybe some sort of protective cage bolted onto the bike would be the answer. And of course that machine gun...

Fortunately not all the wildlife is aggressive. I suppose you haven't really experienced bush camping until you've had to chase the Currawongs away from your sandwiches, lured kangaroos away from your tent with kibble'n'rye bread and biscuits or counted yourself lucky that the possum currently bouncing up and down on the end of the branch just out of reach of your tent doesn't seem to want to cross over on the ground.

And then of course we have those birds that seem to think we're some sort of a joke. First of all there's the laconic "haw haw haw haaaw" of the crow and then the maniac of the bush, the kookaburra cackling and gibbering away. I guess someone has to find slogg-ing up a long hill with a loaded bicycle funny on a hot day.



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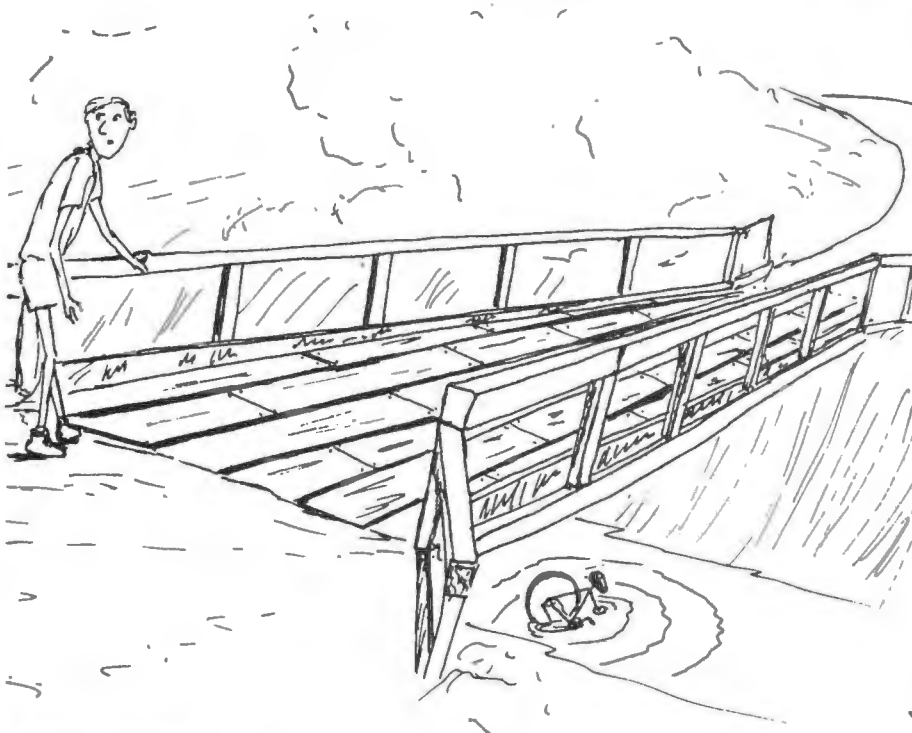
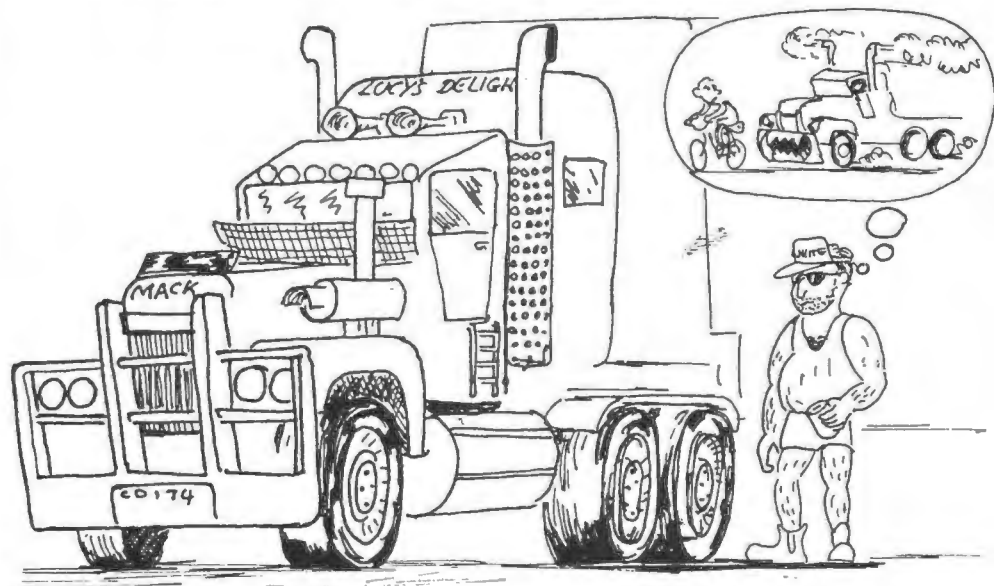
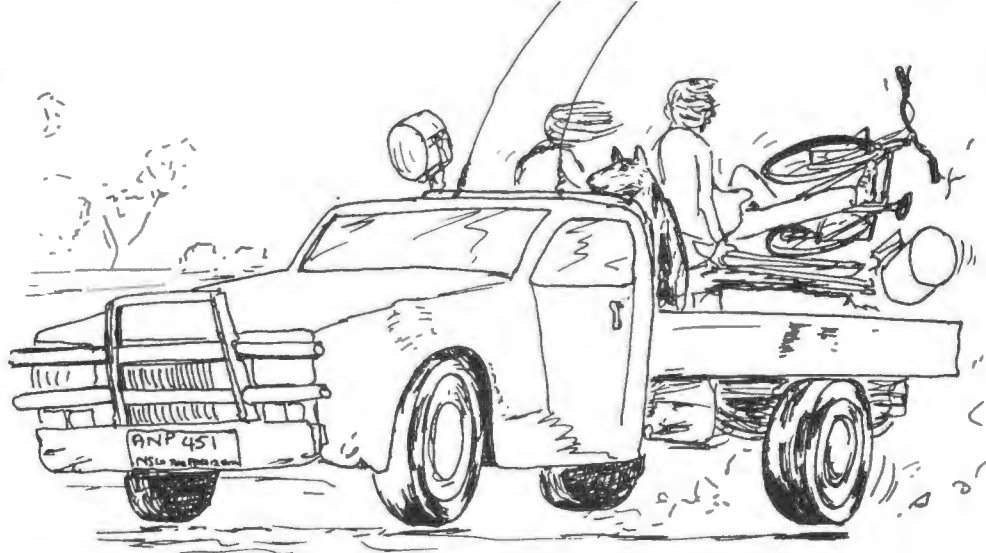


## Truckies

APART FROM THE wildlife, the out-back cyclist faces a few other hazards. On the main roads, the trucks are the most intimidating. Hearing the drivers themselves tell of long runs – 6 days without sleep, living off Mars bars and Coke, 3200 kilometres a day, 160 km/h etc doesn't fill you with confidence. And the way some of them drive you'd think their sweetest dream was to hassle bicyclists off the road. In fact most of them haven't been too bad – it's just that 40 tonnes of truck half a metre from you elbow is rather more threatening than 1 tonne of car at the same distance.

All this doesn't mean that they're unfeeling – we've had several lifts from them. I have to confess to experiencing the odd twinge of guilt to start with, but it was soon squashed, especially as our first offer of a lift was while repairing 2 punctures in the middle of the Hay Plains one cold and very misty morning. Even though the lift had us sitting on a pile of oily gravel in the back of the truck.

### Lucy's Delight



### Bike muncher

## The long planked bridge

ONCE YOU MOVE onto the dirt, the problems take on a different dimension. The traffic's not so bad, apart from those rats who blast by in a cloud of dust and stones. The roads themselves are pretty rough of course, cycling over all those stones and corrugations gets to you after a while, especially when you hear the ping of yet another broken spoke. If it's not that, it's the back wheel sliding in the sand or the graceless topple into wet clay.

Of all the hazards of the bush road though, probably the worst is the bicycle-eating plank bridge. These monsters must just love the taste of bicycles – I reckon the gaps grow wider as you cycle up to them. Even on fat tyred mountain bikes we weren't immune, coming across one bridge that dined quite happily on Emma's front wheel. And heaven forbid you should be on one at the same time as a truck. Maybe a parachute would be a useful extra. And floats for your bike.



# GETTING FIT FOR THE ROAD SEASON

## A Freewheeling guide

BY CYNDI HOLMES

**D**ID WATCHING Australia's Eddie Salas finishing 6th in the Olympic road race give you the shivers and make you wonder if you could cut-it as a road racer? If you would like to give road racing a try this year, now is the time to get on your bicycle and start training.

Now is also the time to join a racing club, organise your equipment and start a weight training program, if you choose to.

Although the road racing season runs from April through September, you'll need the next three months to lay a foundation that will prepare you for the heavy demands of racing.

### Beginning Racing - equipment

What kind of a bicycle do you need for racing? Probably the best answer to that question is not, as you might expect, the best bike you can afford. But, rather, the most suitable and dependable bike you can afford.

The components on the bike must work well and the frame must fit you. In fact, racing cyclists tend to choose the smallest frame upon which they can still obtain their proper position. The reasoning here is that a smaller frame is slightly lighter, stiffer and more manoeuvrable.

Many a cyclist has started racing on a mid-priced, off-the-floor model. If that fits your budget, consider investing in a pair of light wheels to use just in races.

It'll cost you a couple of hundred dol-

lars, but these wheels will last and you'll be able to use them if you get a custom racing frame someday.

Standard race wheels are built around a high quality hubset - don't skimp here as good hubs can last easily a life-time.

Among the pros and top amateurs, wheels built with 32 stainless steel spokes, triple crossed, with 340-420 gram rims are par for the course.

For tyres, choose a dependable brand name cotton or silk single around 260 grams.

Singles (also called sew-ups or tubulars) have a casing which is sewn around a tube. They are glued onto the rim. Most bicycles are sold with "high pressure" tyres which have a bead that holds them onto the rim. HPs are popular for use as training wheels among most racers because they're not as vulnerable to flats as singles are. Whereas wheels built for single tyres are lighter than those built for HPs and therefore they're preferred in races.

Quickly becoming the standard the 42 x 52 front chainrings are good for beginning racers and early season riding, coupled with a freewheel of 15/16/17/18/19/21/23. For seasoned racers and those sincerely capable of pushing a 13 or 14 tooth cog, a freewheel of 13/14/15/16/17/19/21 will handle most courses.

Even if you think you can afford the latest lightweight marvel, remember the story about the cyclist who once asked Tour de France champion Greg Lemond if he should purchase a lightweight \$4 000 bicycle. LeMond's reply was that he'd never notice the weight difference

in a race and that he was better off spending the money for racing and training in Europe. That's what you could call priorities!

### Beginning racing - weight training

You're only as strong as your weakest link. Cyclists often don't realise this and think that if their legs are strong then they'll have no problems. But what about your arms, shoulders, back and abdomen? When you climb, sprint or time trial, you're using all these muscles, not just your legs.

Weaknesses in these areas can affect your cycling performance. You'll be a much more efficient cyclist if you have a stronger upper body, as well as lower body. You'll simply use less energy and will be able to hold-off fatigue for that extra bit longer.

Because cycling on its own does not develop the upper body and abdominals, a weight training program will develop a more balanced body with less chance of injury.

But if you think that weight training can develop your aerobic capacity, think again. Recent studies have shown that even strenuous circuit workouts, where you do weight work then run for a minute between exercises, have very little effect on your oxygen uptake. Better to supplement the weight work with continuous aerobic exercise.

There are many methods of weight training, one method that has been proven to show good increases in strength and power is the cyclic method.

This method is much like the early season cycling training that starts out with lots of riding at weak to light intensity, then progresses to riding at high intensity.

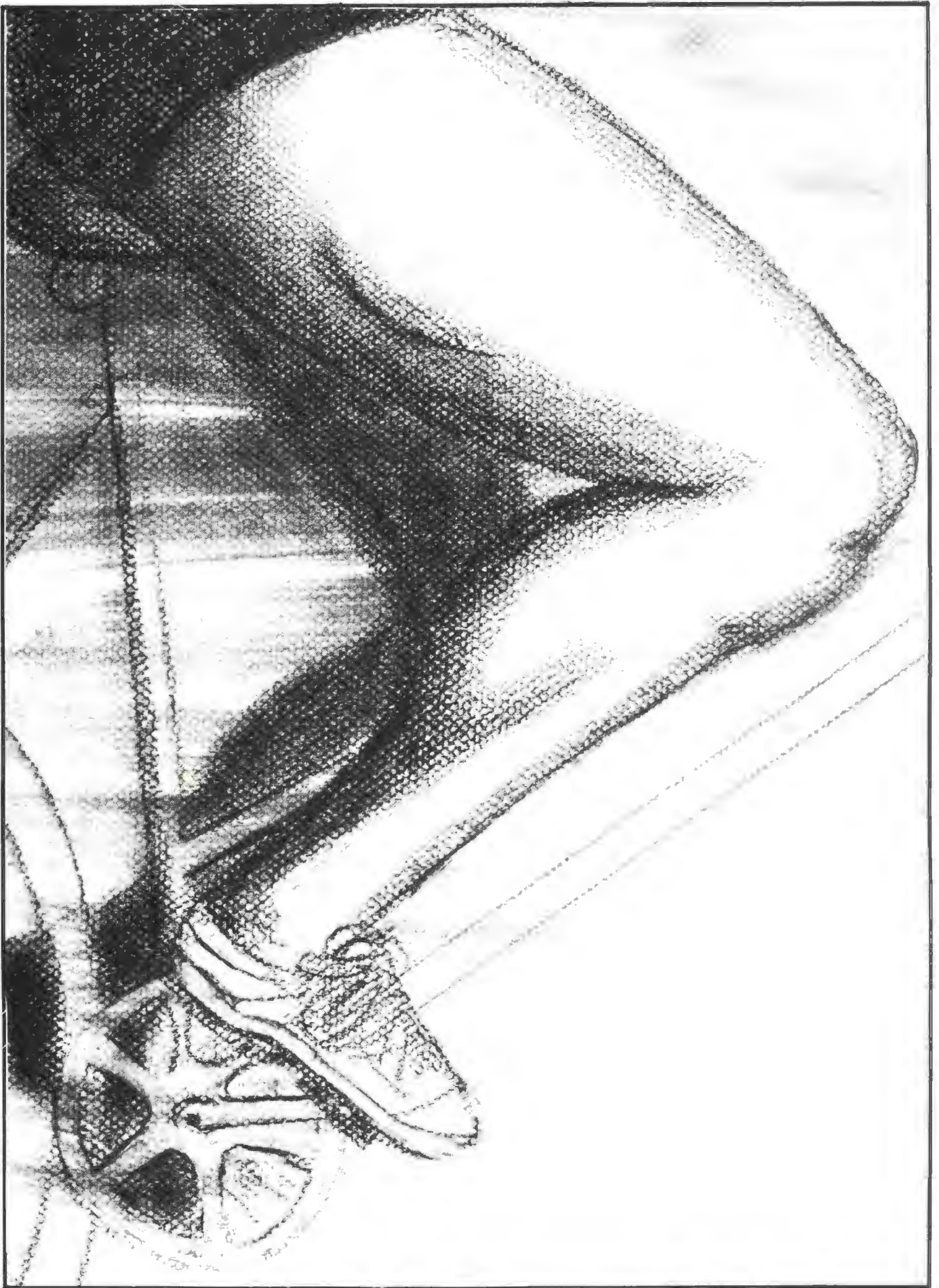
To prepare for a cyclic program, you should do two to four weeks of low intensity weight work (one set of 12 - 15 repetitions).

Then, over a ten-week cycle, you start with three sets of ten repetitions for the first three weeks. Then, work down to three sets of five for three weeks, then three sets of three for the final weeks.

To choose the exercises, you should visit a knowledgeable weight trainer. It's important that you learn how to do the exercises properly to get the most out of your program and to prevent injuries. For the road racing cyclist, December through March is a good time to maintain your strengths and improve on your weaknesses.

Whatever program you follow, reduce the frequency and intensity of your sessions in mid-March. But don't totally cut-out the weight training when the racing season arrives in April. Even one set of exercises each week will help you maintain the strength you gained.







## Beginning racing – training schedule

	December/January	February	March
Monday	Rest	Rest	Rest
Tuesday	1 Hour weak intensity plus sprints	1 Hour weak intensity plus sprints	1 Hour plus sprints weak intensity
Wednesday	Rest Weights or other aerobic exercise	1.5 hours Medium intensity 8 – 15 km T.T. or hill climb	1.5 – 2 hours Medium intensity 8 – 15 km T.T. or hill climb
Thursday	2 – 3 hours light intensity	2 – 3 hours light intensity	2 – 3 hours light intensity
Friday	Rest weights or other aerobic exercise	Rest weights or other aerobic exercise	1 hour weak intensity
Saturday	1 – 2 hours medium intensity	1 – 2 hours medium intensity	1 – 2 hours medium intensity or club race
Sunday	2 – 4 hours light intensity	2 – 4 hours light intensity	2 – 4 hours light intensity or club race or group ride

NOTE: Intensity Levels

Weak: Talking pace rides, comfortable.  
Light: Brisk pace with a few hills.  
Medium: Long climbs or time trials, tough.

## Training Schedules

The emphasis during the next several months will be to gradually build up a mileage base. Consistency is important and will prevent you from stressing yourself too often and getting sick later in the season.

Although you won't be ready for hard interval training until you've been riding for three months, you can work on your sprinting. Sprints require intense effort, but because they are so short, they are not that stressful.

Pick one of your training days to do six to ten 200 metre sprints. Select a big gear, like a 52 x 14 or 52 x 15 and start at a slow pace, like 50 to 60 rpms.

Pretend it's the finish of the state championship road race and burst towards the finish line with the intention of winning the sprint. Stand-up all the way on the first three to five sprints. On the remaining ones, choose a smaller gear and stand for the first 70 metres then sit down and pedal as fast as you can for the last part.

It's important to recover between each sprint. It may take two to five minutes for your heart rate to come down. During the wait, pedal around in a low gear, concentrating on pedalling 90-100 rpms.

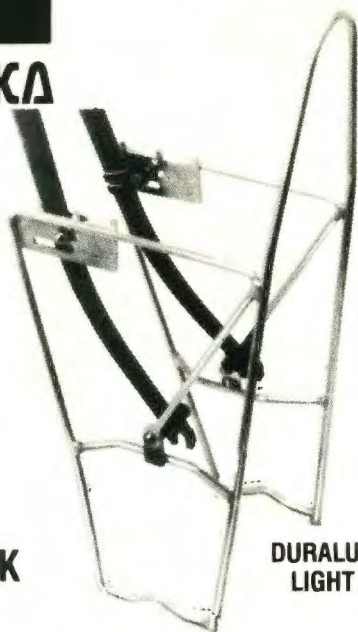
Beginning in February, you'll be spending more time on the bike. The emphasis



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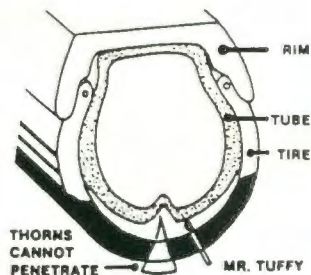


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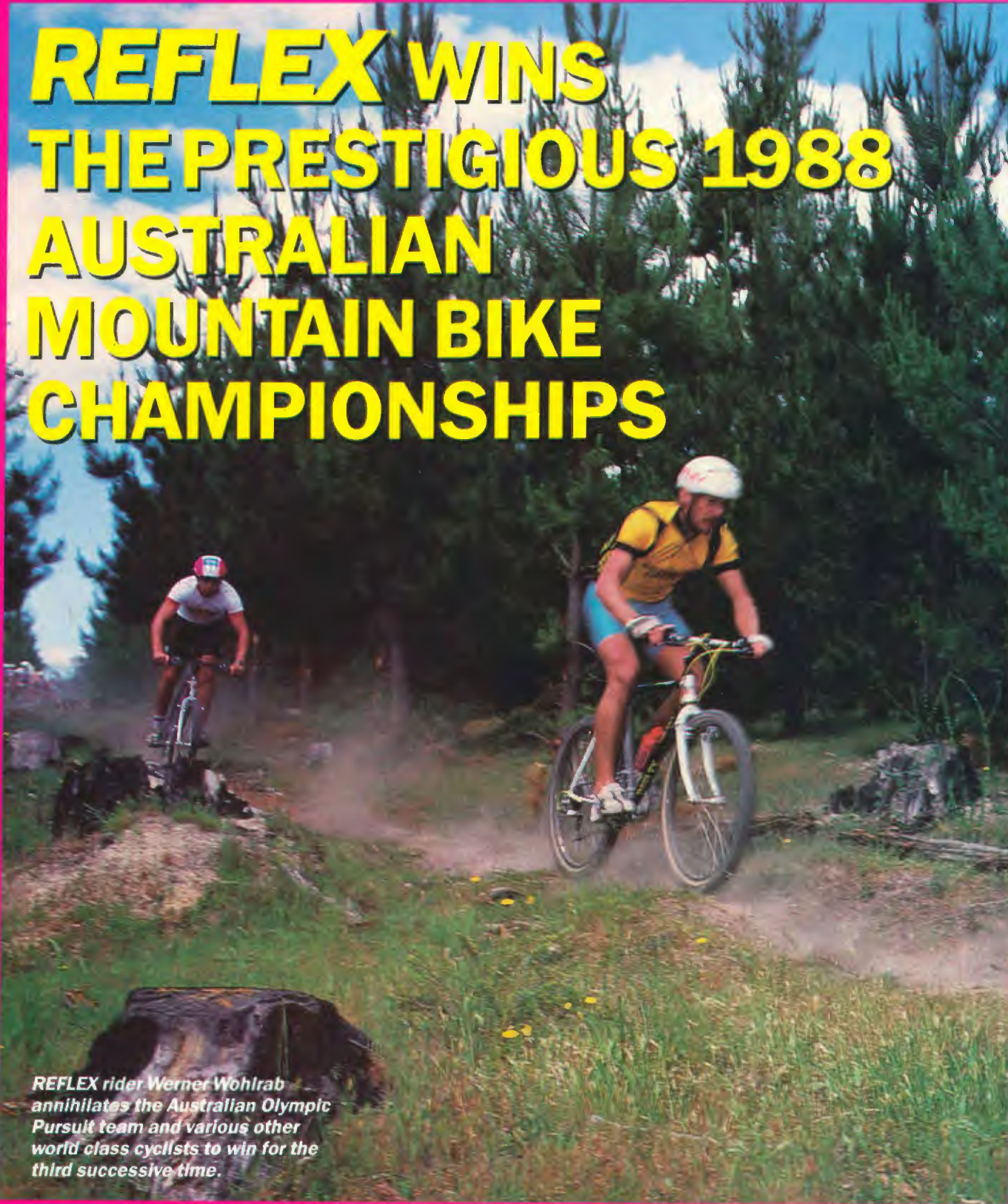


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It takes time and consistent training to raise your anaerobic threshold. By doing so, you'll enable yourself to work at a higher intensity while competing.

### Join a club

There's a bit more to getting started in bicycle racing than simply entering the first race of the season. First, you'll need a racing license.

Every sport has its governing body; in cycling, it's the Australian Cycling Federation.

The ACF looks after the administration of the sport in Australia and selects the amateur teams to represent Australia overseas.

On the international level, the ACF is affiliated with the world governing body of cycling, Union Cycliste Internationale. The UCI has a branch governing international amateur cycling (FIAC) and professional cycling (FICP).

Back in Australia, each state has an association or federation affiliated with the ACF.

To get your racing license, you'll need to join a racing club. One good way to find a club is to ask at one of the local bike shops or you can ring your state association. Your best bet is to join a club whose members live in your area. That way it'll be a lot easier to join in on training rides.

As a new racing cyclist, you'll have a lot to learn, so take advantage of what ever your club has to offer.

Most clubs have club training races on the weekend and either organised or informal training rides during the week. Usually you'll find a coach, or at least some rather experienced racers, you can go to for advice.

Once you've joined a club and received your license, stay on your bike and make the most of it!

## State racing associations

New South Wales Cycling Federation  
Room 206, Level 2  
Sports House  
7 Gloucester Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
ph: (02) 241 1870

Northern Territory Amateur Cycling Association  
PO Box 38066  
Winnellie NT 0821

Queensland Cyclists Association  
Sleeman Sports Complex  
Tilley Road  
Chandler QLD 4155  
ph: (07) 390 1489

South Australian Cycling Federation  
14 Homington Road  
Elizabeth North SA 5113  
ph: (08) 255 1639

Tasmanian Cycling Federation  
35 Brougham Street  
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# HOW TO BE A MOUNTAIN BIKER

Everything you wanted to know about mountain bikes and mountain biking

BY WARREN SALOMON

**T**HE MOUNTAIN BIKE HAS got to be the best two wheeled machine for Aussie conditions but what happens after you make the big purchase? Where do you ride and what

can you do with your bike? This article aims to put you in the picture and is written for those who want fun and adventure in the great outdoors.

If a skinny tyred racing bike is best for

speed then a mountain bike has got to be best for comfort. Mountain bike frame geometry is designed to give smooth and effortless performance. Whereas a road bike has to be guided through tight corners a mountain bike almost steers it's self - well almost. Mountain bikes are equally at home on the city streets as well as the mountain fire trails but the best performance can often be obtained by choosing the right equipment for the purpose.

Let's look at the different types of riding and see how the mountain bike handles them.

## Country touring

Mountain bike sales have all but killed off the traditional touring bike. This bike has somewhat similar geometry to a mountain bike only its 1 1/4" wheels and tyres are halfway between the MTB and a lightweight racer. Both the MTB and the tourer have wide range gears and extra mounting holes on the frame for racks and mudguards.

On bitumen country roads the touring bike is easier to push than the mountain bike but on unpaved surfaces the wider tyred mountain bike leaves the tourer for dead.

Not everyone can afford to have two bikes for each type of road so most opt for the more comfortable (but slower) fat tyred bike.

Touring is an absolute delight and is not hard to do. All you need to do in advance for a weekend trip is get together with your riding mates and plan out your route on a good map. Plan a short day first and that way you will give your body time to adjust.

If you live in the city you can either catch a suburban train out into the country or pack your bikes into a car or van. Depending where you live the railways can usually get you into the good touring territory fast and you won't have to worry about security for your vehicle.

However, it is wise to check with the railways first. In Brisbane, for example, they are oh so precious about their suburban electric trains and won't let cyclists on with their bikes. If you can't catch a country train, bad luck.

Once out into the country you should have selected quiet country roads and a place to stay at the end of your day. Country hotels are often a pleasant alternative to boring sterile motels and if you like camping there are many National Park camp grounds as well as the usual caravan parks.

For longer adventures away from towns you will need racks and bags to carry your belongings. Low rider type racks and bags for the front give stability to your bike handling. Cheap racks break when you least want them to so be wise and buy the best. The same goes for bags. As these items of equipment are expensive you should make sure you



buy the kind of bag to suit your needs. Larger bags may not be the most useful for short day type rides.

Back packs though popular with city cyclists are NOT recommended for long trips. Carrying even light loads in a backpack puts an unnatural strain in your spine and could give you back problems in later years. Let your bike do the work and get a good rear rack and pannier bags fitted.

## Rough road riding

If you like a little adventure the bush is the place to be. State forests in most states are criss crossed with rideable fire trails and are excellent for day and weekend adventures. In some areas the forestry departments even provide camping and picnic facilities and details of these are easily obtained from the department offices in your town or city.

Before you plan a trip into a forested area you should first get hold of a detailed map of the area. The forestry departments usually produce good maps which show all their trails and roads. However, it is always important to check the date of the map as road conditions change more rapidly in a forest which is being logged and managed on a long term basis.

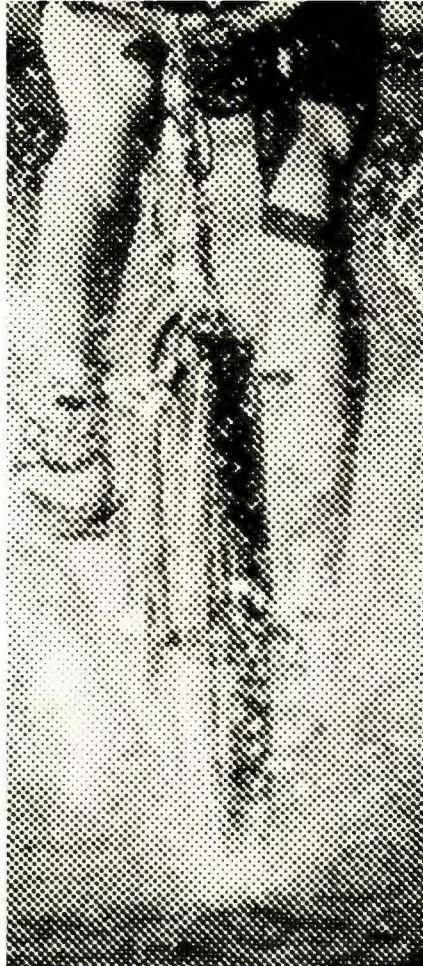
National parks are also good places for riding though it appears that in some states the pressure on some parks is becoming so great that the park authorities are frowning on all types of wheeled vehicles. Though the mountain bike, carefully ridden, does as little damage to tracks and trails as a walker, ill informed park managers are tending to lump mountain bikes in with that dual scourge of the wilderness: the four wheel drive and the trail bike.

In any case national park authorities will not like you riding on walking trails though there are often many many kilometres of fire trails and access tracks which are generally suitable. Maps and information brochures on all the more accessible national parks can be obtained from the National Parks Department office in your capital city or regional centre.

## There may be trouble ahead

Riding bush trails should be done in a responsible manner otherwise you will give our new sport a poor reputation. Most mountain bikers are people seeking adventure away from the madding crowd. If the yahoos take to cycling we could all end up a banned majority.

In the United States of America these days the hiker versus biker issue has really hotted up with the Sierra Club one of the nation's biggest conservation groups still opposing the use of MTB's on walking where horses are permitted. Because of the scarcity of true wilderness in that country the battle for access



to these areas is turning into a long drawn out legal wrangle. More and more rules are being applied to land use and in places like Marin County near San Francisco cyclists are banned from a number of the once popular bushland areas where the modern era of mountain biking began.

The newly formed Australian Mountain Bike Association has its work cut out for it in making representations to all the many authorities and organisations which control the rapidly diminishing bushland areas. As clear felling of the forests continues at a pace and the development of rural land to serve industrial needs quickens the same situation will arise here as it did in the USA. There may indeed be trouble ahead for mountain bikers unless they actively support AMBA now and participate in its work to educate the community on the benefits and not the down side of cycling in the bush.

## The off road code

● **ALWAYS GIVE WAY** even if at times it seems inconvenient. Being sensitive to how others perceive you will assure a positive image for the sport and minimise the restrictions and confrontations that follow confrontations and bad encounters. Remember, bicycles in the bush are a new experience for horses and bushwalkers so always be on the lookout for others using the roads and tracks.

● **PASS WITH CARE.** Let others know of your presence well in advance. A hello or a bell chime is good enough. It is easy to startle someone out of their wits if you roll up silently from the rear. Be especially carefully when passing a horse as each will react differently. It is best to ask the rider if their horse is spooked easily. This way you will show them that you are sensitive to their problems and they will treat you more as an equal and less as a threat to their existence. In some instances it may be necessary to dismount and lift your bike off the trail to let others pass.

● **STAY ON THE TRACK** provide and don't ride out across country. This can cause erosion especially if others follow your line. Never cut hairpins on steep down hills. This also causes erosion of the track. After rain avoid using tracks in areas with soft clay like soils as your tyres will cut up the track surface. Wait a few days to let the surface dry out.

● **CONTROL YOUR SPEED.** Safe speeds are relative to terrain and your experience as a rider. Approach hairpins and steep corners in anticipation of someone being around the corner.

● **DON'T RUN LIVESTOCK.** Give them time to get out of the way. Cattle will often run for kilometres if you continue riding behind them. Stop and let them settle down.

● **DON'T LITTER** Take out what you bring in. Use the bushwalkers creed: take only photographs and leave only wheel marks.

● **GET A PERMIT** In national parks and state forests you will need a permit to camp out in the bush overnight as well as in the official camping grounds. It is always good politics to get the correct permits for any wilderness area as you may visit. Check with all landowners regarding private land access. If you ask first you will usually be welcome. If you don't you will usually be thrown off the property. No trespassing always means **ASK FIRST**.

● **PLAN AHEAD** The mountain bike will open up new horizons to you, some of these horizons should be approached with respect. If distances are involved **DON'T** travel solo. Who will go for help if you injure yourself? Expect weather changes. Leave word where you plan to go and when you plan to return.

● **MINIMISE YOUR IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT** The practise of minimum impact camping is the philosophy of the responsible off-road cyclist.

## City cycling

I used to ride a 1" skinny tyred road bike to work. Sure it was fast on the good sections of road but the jarring over the frequently poor urban road surfaces almost destroyed my back. In desperation I took to fat tyres and have never looked back.



The mountain bike makes an ideal city machine. All you need is smooth tread tyres like the Avocet Fasgrips or the Tioga City Slickers. Another essential item especially in winter is a generator driven light set or clip on battery powered units. Mudguards are also good if you are the type of person who is not discouraged by wet weather.

With a second set of wheels (fitted with nobby tread tyres) your city bike easily converts to a bush basher on weekends. The only problem you may experience when changing wheels is that the chain may be worn in to the most used freewheel and will not run smoothly on the other. In this case it may be best to replace the chain or swap wheels on a regular basis so that the chain wears into both freewheels.

### Join a club

If you are new to the world of mountain biking and want to learn the ropes then the best thing to do is to join a club. In the past mountain bike clubs have often been appendages of older touring clubs but now they are branching out onto their own and are giving their members the kind of activities that only a specialist club can provide. Most groups have both recreational and competitive events and the life of the club revolves around the rides

This means that the club functions best when its members are racing or riding for fun. Of course some organisation is essential to produce the program of rides that most groups maintain and this usually produces a regular newsletter to keep members informed and educated.

The list of clubs we have provided below is growing all the time. If you are starting a club please write to us so we can put yours on it. If you publish a newsletter we would like to swap copies for *Freewheeling* on a regular basis. Please get you secretary to drop our Publisher a line so we can enter you on our mailing list.

**Victoria** The Fat-Tyre Flyers club operates out of Melbourne. The club organises its own calendar of events covering the complete spectrum of fat-tyre riding from touring to racing. Their big annual event is the Fat-Tyre Classic (see Calendar in back of this issue for dates) which includes a trials course plus a race. You can contact the club at PO Box 137 Carlton Nth VIC 3054 or by phoning (03) 560 0969 AH.

The Essendon Mountain Bicycle Touring Club aims to cater to the non-competitive side of the sport. They offer members rides off-road around Melbourne as well as the mountains country further afield. You can contact them by phoning Vince Atkin on (03) 337 1379 or

Bill McHardy on (03) 375 1861. Both are home numbers.

**New South Wales** The Hunter Valley Mountain Bike Club is based in the Newcastle region. The club's big annual event is the Winter Classic held at Pater-son in late winter. Contact: Bob Jones (049) 38 5380 or Ken Wells (049) 43 1271 or Bruce Richards (049) 32 7820.

The North Shore Nobbies is a club catering for off-road racing, trials and touring enthusiasts on Sydney's north side. Paul Barnes is the club contact and you can reach him on (02) 449 1978.

The Bicycle Institute of NSW has a section within its organisation called the Back Road Cyclists which organises rides and activities for its fat-tyre enthusiasts. The group's contact is Russell Moore and you can contact him on (02) 608 1125.

**Queensland** A low key Brisbane mountain bike club has been formed. For details contact Mike Roberts (07) 359 1244.

**South Australia** The recently formed Adelaide Mountain Bike Club caters for both the recreational and touring aspects of the sport. The club produces a terrific little newsletter called *FAT CHAT* which contains a very good program of rides and competitive events. *FAT CHAT* often contains cartoons by our own Don Hatcher who, for some time, has been bitten by the MTB bug. Club contacts: Peter Heal (08) 263 3605 (AH); Andrew Field (08) 271 5152 (AH).

**West Australia** The Cycle Touring Association of West Australia is your best contact point for mountain biking in the West. They organise all sorts of events and can be contacted on (09) 330 3659.

If you live outside one of these areas you could consider contacting AMBA for information on how to set up a club and tie in with other groups.

### Competitive riding

After five years and four national championships the sport of mountain biking has finally arrived but there is still severe shortage of events.

There are now a number of clubs around the country organising regular recreational rides and races for their members but apart from the odd public race (usually once a year for each club) the sport is still struggling to give its supporters and participants regular competition.

Even though the Nationals, held in Canberra during November 1988, were a great success the sport is still in desperate need of a race series based on the major eastern cities which would provide a proper build up for a national title event.

In Canberra during the Nationals the National Mountain Bike Association held its first annual general meeting and

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from now on all racers affiliated with it will have insurance cover during events and will have to race to its rules and guidelines. Already a number of clubs have indicated that they will be affiliating with AMBA.

Racing in Australia will be conducted in future on three levels: National/international; open inter club events and club only events.

To find out what happens at an open inter club event (in which riders from many clubs compete) I went out to the Dargul motocross course at Lower Portland on the banks of the Hawkesbury River north west of Sydney to witness the Shogun Nobbies Enduro.

An enduro is a race run over many laps of a loop course usually in the bush somewhere so that it provides the competitors with a wide range of surface conditions.

Club members arrived at the track early in the morning to mark out the course. Coloured tape is used to define the track where it is not completely obvious and the finished circuit is then ridden by the race director to accurately measure and check the route for possible dangers.

Other club members by then had set up a registration desk and by 9 am the competitors were beginning to arrive and sign in. Race numbered bibs were issued to all competitors and a register was compiled to be used later to identify riders as they approached the finish line.

It's always a good idea to take your mountain bike to the races even if you are not competing. Often the courses are five or more kilometres in length and a set of wheels allows you to get to the best vantage points quickly. Of course you can't ride on the course – that's only for the competitors.

The Shogun/Nobbies event was a good course for onlookers. A very muddy section through a swampy area seemed to attract most of the onlookers – it's better to watch others play in the smelly mud than to do it yourself!!!

A good roll up from the Hunter Valley club and Brookvale provided stiff competition in Expert, sport, women and novice classes. Current Aussie champ, Werner Wholrab won the expert class with R Style, Grant Cruise and Lawrence Vignes runners up.

Results in other classes were: Sport – M Rotunno, P Clark, L Huntsman and J Conly; Women – P Thompson, L Rotunno, H Nesbitt; Novice – D Dodsworth, R Carroll, A Langford, J Purcell.

Inter club meets often have only one or two classes and depending on numbers some categories will be raced together often with a different number of laps being raced for each group. Our muddy pics only capture a small portion of what was a great day for competitor and spectator alike.







# THE GONG RIDE ARRIVES

In 1988 the Repco Sydney to the Gong ride becomes a true mass event.

**BY WARREN SALOMON**

Photography by Robert Bolger

**I**F YOU STAYED AT HOME in Sydney or Wollongong on Sunday November 20 last year and listened to the radio news you may have been excused for believing that thousands of cyclists were throwing themselves lemming like under cars and semi trailers.

The truth of the matter (behind the beat-up of a slow news day) was that between five and six thousand people had taken to the roads on bicycles for a thoroughly enjoyable days ride between Belmore Park in Sydney to Belmore



Basin in Wollongong.

For the first (and last) time the ride commenced with a mass start shortly after four semi trailers were unloaded of



their cargo of bicycles in nearby Eddy Avenue and Wollongong riders joined the waiting Sydney cyclists in the park adjacent to Central station.

Four thousand riders registered but more than a thousand freeloaders took advantage of this years organisation which involved some 350 staff and volunteers some working a 14 hour day to ensure the safety and success of the event.

At 8:30 am the ride was flagged off by the Attorney General, John Dowd, who deputised for the Premier (unable to attend at the last minute). Most said the start was great, but... All enjoyed the spectacle and electric atmosphere but few enjoyed the walk to Redfern until the leaders got far enough along the road to allow the tailenders space to ride.

Weather conditions were nearly perfect with cool overcast skies and a brisk tailwind to assist swift progress on the more exposed and flatter sections of route close to the finish at Flagstaff Point in Wollongong.

Riders came from far and wide. Two large groups from Brisbane joined in and the teams competition attracted entries as never before. Even *Freewheeling* got into the act with our Dirt Ryder and his Imperial Guards team of five who zapped almost all the riders with their laser pumps.

The seventh Gong ride offered prizes in four team categories: individual non-sponsored; bicycle industry sponsored; schools and corporate and the winners were presented with their prizes by one of the ride's greatest supporters Wollongong Lord Mayor and MLA Frank Arkell.

The Gungah Bicentennial Convicts brought the 1988 theme to the ride and gave the participants a good giggle as did the runners up of the non-sponsored individuals category: the Black Tie Team. For the first time the highly professional efforts of the team from Woollys Wheels (still remembered for their hands-on-the-buttocks costumes some years back) had some competition in the form of the bright orange All Cranked Up Team from North Shore bike shop Cranks.

Woollys this year went all out and decked its riders in super heroes costumes. Shop proprietor Michael Kamahl lead



Opposite page: More than 5000 riders line up for the mass start in Pitt St near Central. Fun but slow; Below - The Freewheeling Car Wars Team - Dirt Ryder and his Imperial Guards; This page: Top - In spite of preparation riders still needed the expert help of David and Roy from Spearman

Cycles in Wollongong. Centre - Riders easily produce smiles for our photographer on the Bikelift shuttle bus between Flagstaff Point and Wollongong Station. Bottom - Riders of all ages participated in the event.





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**NUMBER ONE ON TWO WHEELS.**



the team as Batman and managed to repair the odd bike on his way to supervise his spectacular fashion parades – a feature of the carnival at Flagstaff Point.

Pat Drummond kept the crowds at the finish entertained and he even managed to keep the rain at bay while the people from Breeze 'n Eeze Kites flew their magnificent creations in the stiff north easterly breeze.

In the team competition, given for the best outfitted group of five or more, the two new categories (schools and corporate) were won by GyMEA 12 and the Westmead MS Busters teams. The Westmead crew resembled the cast of MASH on bicycle vacation and GyMEA guys? all had lovely legs... Runners up in the schools category was Oakhill College while the numerically impressive Lagoon Restaurant Team came second in the corporate class.

A fun day indeed.

As from 1988 ride entrants will receive a quarterly edition of *Bicycle Rider* magazine which will keep them up to date with the event as it develops and will help them prepare for next years big day: Sunday November 26. If you haven't yet participated in a Gong ride send \$8.00 to The Sydney to the Gong Bicycle Ride, PO Box K26 Haymarket and we will enter you on our *Bicycle Rider* mailing list.



GyMEA 12



The MS busters







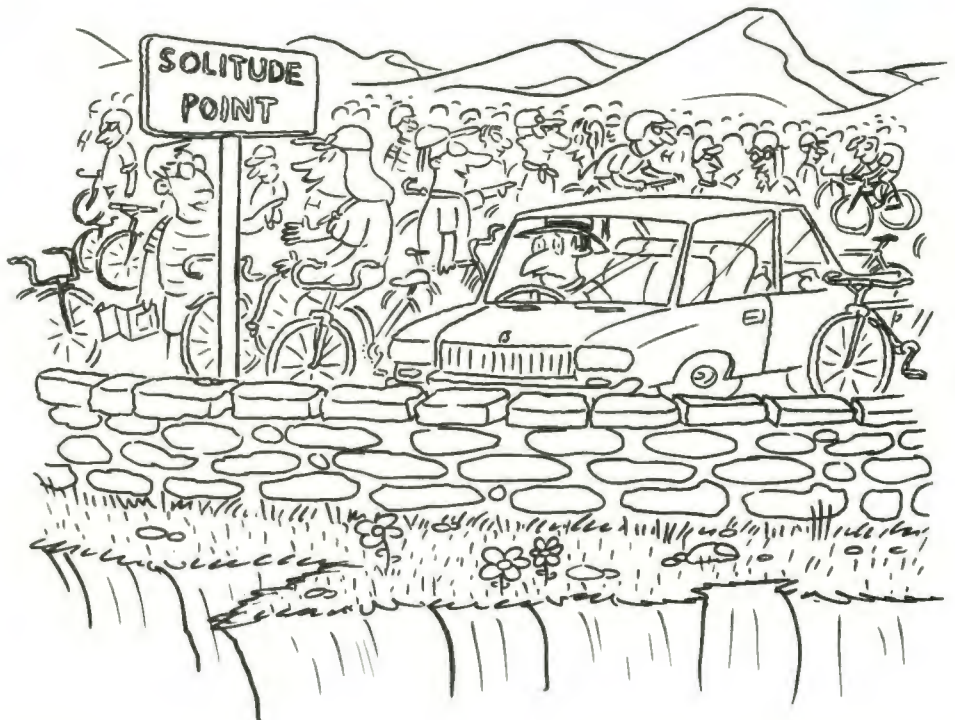
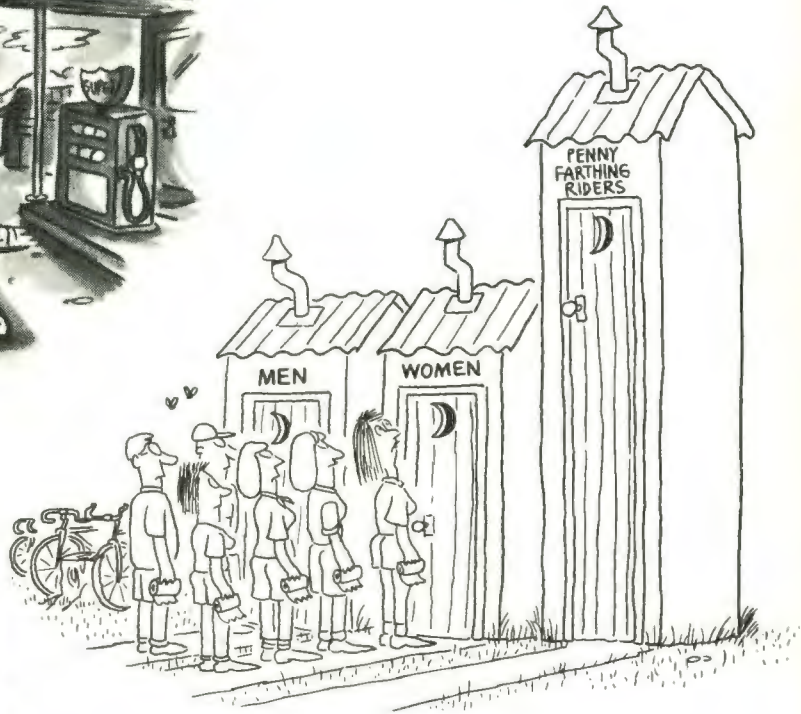
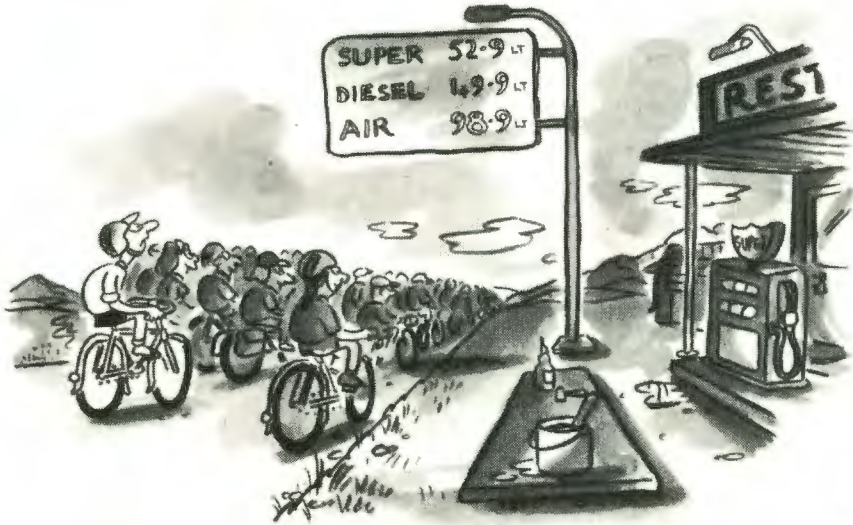
*"This could take a while son. Tell your mother to leave my dinner in the oven."*



*"I've come for the caterer."*



# Mass bicycle rides







*Repco Cycles*





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# ONWARDS TO SYDNEY

## The Caltex Bicentennial Melbourne to Sydney Bicycle Ride

**PICTURES BY DAN BURDEN**  
**WORDS BY WARREN SALOMON**

**T**HERE WILL PROBABLY never be another event like it. Two thousand two hundred cyclists battling cold headwinds and torrential downpours to arrive safe and happy in Sydney represents a real cycling and logistical achievement. When the Caltex riders return to their homes (as far away as the USA and Europe) they will probably forget the discomfort of wet and soggy clothes and remember only the companionship and camaraderie that develops when a large group of like minded people takes to the road with a common purpose.

Just over 500 riders from the United States, one of the largest contingents for any sporting event outside of the Olympic Games, flew in for the event and many will return one day to renew friendships and explore the rest of the country.

For many people it was their first experience of an Aussie mass bike as the Caltex sponsored event had been widely promoted as the major recreational cycling event of the bicentennial celebrations. Some of the riders, like Don Lemin of Melbourne who rode his penny farthing bike the full distance, had been on previous rides when the



Riders in Gippsland. The rain began in Melbourne and increased as the ride progressed. These two girls retrieve their gear at the end of a wet days ride. In the background are two of the huge trucks which transported the riders belongings. Five hundred riders from the USA joined the ride including Donna Clark and her 4 year old daughter Sarah from Columbus Ohio.

event was run as a one week ride through the state of Victoria.

This year for the first time the ride broke out of its home territory and headed via Gippsland and Canberra to Sydney on a demanding two week schedule.

A hot sunny and humid day greeted the riders as they arrived within sight of Sydney Harbour – a pleasant change from the night before when they experienced a 50 mm downpour as they celebrated their last night on the road at Camden.

Even so the inclement weather was in the past as the riders met friends and made plans for their eventual return home.

A memorable experience and one that will be talked about for years.





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# THE BURSTON & STOKES RIDE

BY WARREN SALOMON



Photography by Nick O'Brien



**W**HEN GEORGE W BURSTON, captain of the recently formed Melbourne Bicycle club and Harry R Stokes set out from the Melbourne GPO in 1888 they probably never imagined that one hundred years later the first leg of their epic round the world journey would be commemorated by a dedicated group of 24 riders and support crew riding vintage machines – many over a hundred years old.

The tight knit group consisted of riders from most states and a rider from England. The oldest member was 62 year old Harry Clark, president of the vintage Cycle Club of Victoria who rode a 50 inch 1884 original. Five women participated – four rode penny farthings including ride organiser and president of Bicycle Victoria, “Charlie” Farren who rode a 50” Dillon replica.

The 1100 km reenactment began the Athenium cafe in Collins St Melbourne near where Gunslers Cafe, the scene of B&S’s farewell dinner, had once stood a

Top: Mark Sorrell riding a one hundred year old 52” penny farthing breaks the oncoming breeze outside Boorowa NSW. Below: Riders enter Katoomba on the second last day of their epic journey.



century before. Riders and their friends in period dress gathered as members of the Melbourne Bicycle Club had done and gave the assembled riders a rousing send off. Descendants of Burston and Stokes also attended.

The next morning at 7:30 am the riders left the GPO to retrace the original route but with the benefits of modern roads and a restored semi trailer made available by the Mayne Nickless transport company acting as back up and catering vehicle.

For the most part the ride went without serious incident except for one rider's encounter with a couple of motorised Bathurst yahoos who opened their car door at speed onto the unfortunate penny farthing cyclist.

Despite injuries and hospitalisation the intrepid rider was able to join the group as it made its triumphal entry into Sydney finishing at the Powerhouse Museum.

In spite of the relatively small number of participants the Burston and Stokes ride probably achieved better media coverage than any of the large scale participant oriented rides run throughout 1988 thus proving that thousands of

people out having fun does not make news – only death and destruction and a few people doing amazing things on some very unusual machines.

Three cheers for the intrepid Burston

and Stokes riders. Maybe some one a hundred years hence will perform a reenactment of the reenactment. Who knows? Is anyone in the future reading this?



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# THEY WERE GIANTS IN THOSE DAYS

## THE PLUGGER MARTIN STORY

BY JOHN DRUMMOND

**C**YCLE RACING in Australia officially commenced with the first National championships held in Adelaide in 1888. Dick Davis won the event on his penny farthing.

Cycling first became a serious form of transport with the advent of the High Wheeler machine, otherwise known as a Penny Farthing, in the Autumn of 1871. The activity quickly grew and the first Bicycle Club in Australia was the Melbourne Bicycle Club, which formed in 1878 for the purpose of organising club runs into the countryside. They were so successful that the newspapers would advertise the details of the rides in their Saturday editions.

The first organised straight out bicycle race meeting was conducted by the Melbourne Bicycle Club on the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 1884.

By the year 1886 cycle racing was a major medium of entertainment for Melbourne's sporting community. Mr S Geddes, of the Melbourne Bicycle Club, advocated the creation of a race that would attract cyclists from overseas, in addition to promoting Australia among sporting nations. That same year saw the staging of a three mile event – the Drummond Trophy – for which prizes worth £200 were offered. It was a profound success and was won by C Sawyer.

In 1887 the question of staging another race arose within the Melbourne Bicycle Club and a positive decision was reached, but controversy arose over the choice of a name. As a result of this discussion, the name Austral Wheel Race was born. At the naming of the event, the distance was determined as two miles, being the same distance as the premier event of the turf, and so the two

great handicaps of Australia's sporting world – the Melbourne Cup and the Austral Wheel Race, were destined to figure on this day in the annals of Australian sport.

For Dick Davis, of South Australia, the latter part of the 1880's were momentous. He was the undisputed champion of the High Wheel in addition to winning the first official Australian championship he annexed the "Austral" of the same year.

The first four Australs were promoted by The Melbourne Bicycle Club and were conducted as open events as there was no controlling body outside the general sporting groups who promoted multi-sports gala carnivals at various sports grounds. However, the scene changed dramatically when promoters, the Melbourne Bicycle Club, offered cash to the 1890 Austral prize winners. Some members objected to the change and it was the reason for a group of cyclists and their officials leaving the Club. Nevertheless, 305 riders contested the race and 40,000 people saw it. As a result professional cycling began on an organised basis in Australia.

With betting as an impetus professional promotion grew rapidly and crowds flocked to cycle race meetings all over the country. By the turn of the century the safety bicycle fitted with pneumatic tyres had arrived. This new technology added a further boost to the new sport.

In Australia these were rumbustious days with argument abounding in the young developing nation. But on sport there was no argument, it ruled supreme and the professional cyclist strode the scene like a colossus.

North America became the Mecca of professional cyclists as promoters on both continents sought the best riders to satisfy a cycling hungry public. Thus a constant stream of champions travelled between the Antipodes and North

America. Among the riders two names shone like diamonds on a black cloth, they were the first official World Champion Arthur Augustus Zimmerman and the World unofficial long distance champion. "Plugger" Bill Martin. Martin made two tours of Australia, once in 1896 and again in 1901. Zimmerman toured in 1896.

Born in Dublin, Bill Martin migrated with his Irish parents to America at the age of three. Like any ordinary American boy of the late 19th century, he was eager to test his power at sport so started his sporting life as an athlete. With the development of the bicycle as a practical machine America in line with the European world came under the influence of the wheel.

The machines were heavy and cumbersome inventions and although not given to great speed cycle racing developed in most American Cities and tracks were built to accommodate the new sport. These early races were contested over long distances on all manner of tracks with emphasis on stamina, rather than speed.

Bill Martin discovered cycling and gave up foot running in 1885 to compete in his first cycle race. It was a 100 mile (160 km) track event at Omaha, Nebraska. A field of 12 riders lined up for the start mounted on 25 kg (56 lb) boneshakers. The capacity crowd went berserk with excitement as Martin, a novice rider in a field of tried performers won the race by miles.

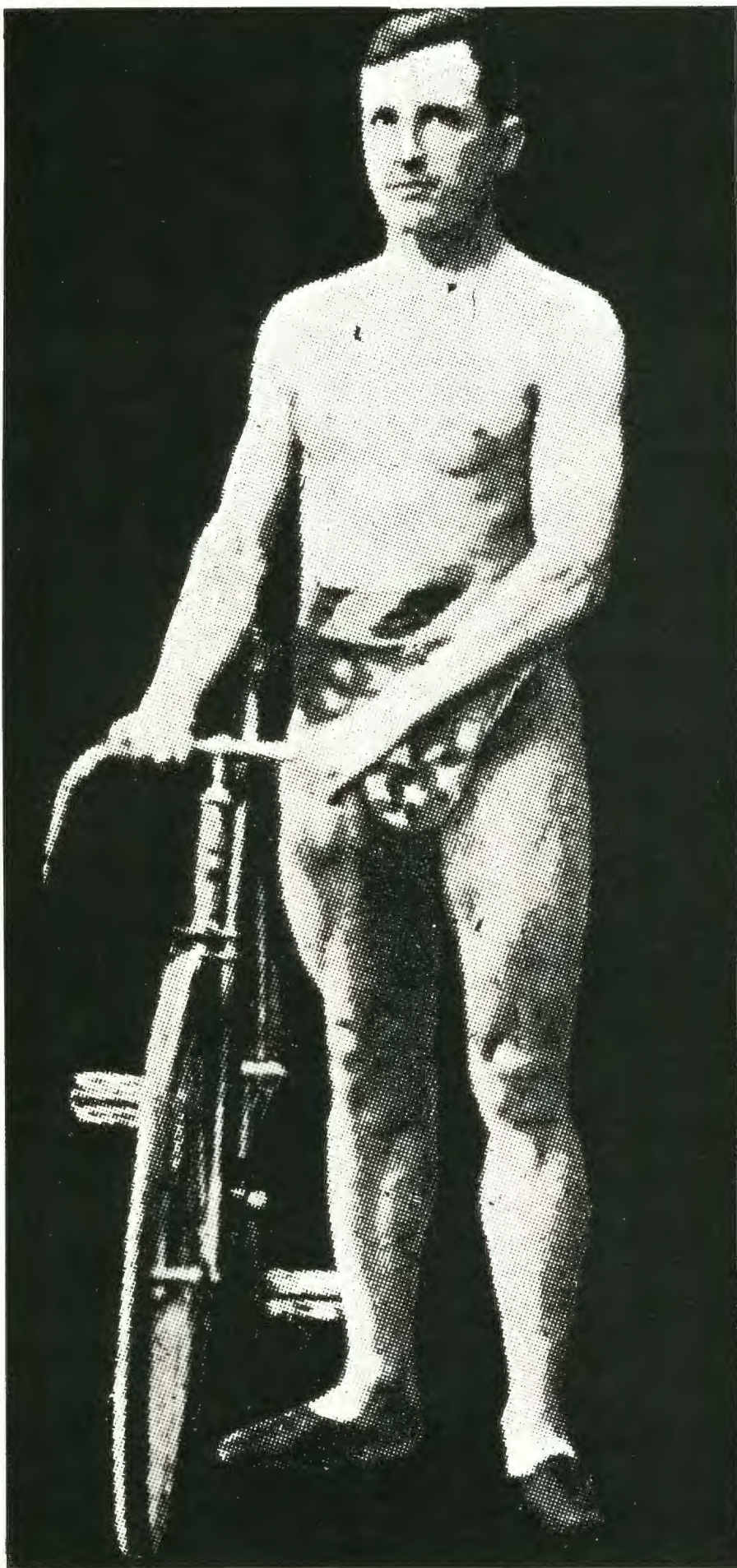
The thrill of winning so captivated Martin that he decided the sport for him would be cycling and he set about improving his ability at every opportunity. Thus five years later Bill Martin, a 170 cm (5ft 7in) perfectly trained athlete weighing 81 kg (12 st 12 lbs), entered his first professional bicycle race: the 100 mile championship of Nebraska, at the Coliseum, Omaha.

By this time the boneshaker had given way to the high wheel machine or Penny Farthing as we now call it.

The championship race was held on a ten-lap to the mile wooden track restricted to the top riders. With 20 odd riders mounted on high bikes whirling around the narrow banked track the sport held a peculiar fascination for the American public, particularly as some were destined to fall. Martin did and another rider ran over him. Although bleeding from a cut eye and suffering bruising Martin remounted and caught the leaders. At 50 miles he raced away from the field and gained a lap. From his lofty position he toyed with the opposition and eventually won the championship by 3 miles (4.8 km).

Two months later Martin challenged Ned Reading, 100 mile champion of the world and Albert Schill another famous rider of the High Bike to a triangular match. Both men eagerly accepted the





challenge feeling confident they would have too much experience for Martin. The venue again was the Coliseum, Omaha, the distance likewise: 100 miles. Each rider was to put up \$100 with the winner to take all plus 60% of the gate takings.

The day of the race arrived in brilliant sunshine and the turnstiles clicked merrily as a huge crowd poured into the stadium to watch the battle for supremacy of three giants of the wheel. The match started quietly with Schill and Reading hanging back content to allow Martin to lead. Unable to upset the tactics of his more experienced opponents Martin adopted a policy of jamming (applying surprise pressure by increasing speed to gain a lap) every few laps. At 50 miles Schill had had enough and dropped off his machine exhausted. After vainly urging Martin to cease his tactics Reading rode off the track in disgust leaving Martin to complete the distance to claim a win.

After a rub down, Reading noticed Martin was distressed, so he returned to the track to make up lost distance. He immediately attacked the tiring Martin, but Bill hung on by sheer grit and determination. The crowd went wild with excitement at the sight of the struggling Martin. Every time Reading attempted to open a gap the cry went up "Stick to him Billy" and Billy stuck. Reading retired finally at the 88th mile.

**I**N MOST developed countries of the world the High Bikes caught the attention of a transport-limited population but in the United States of America they were an absolute sensation. Cycle racing was 'King of Sport' and the crowds flocked to the tracks in search of the thrills of organised bicycle racing. The hero of the fans was Bill Martin, who earned the soubriquet of 'Plugger' because of his ability to hang on to his opponent when under pressure.

America was fast becoming the centre of world cycle racing. As yet there was no international control and the American promoters were seizing the initiative and advertising World Championships for various distances, ranging from five mile upwards. Thus the next great event at Omaha was the 50 mile Championship of the World for 1891.

Eighteen contestants lined up for the start but it became a Reading - Martin contest after the first hour. Martin was in the lead having covered a then sensational 10 and a half miles in the hour. At 50 miles the two champions were equal and went wheel for wheel to the line. The judges' decision was a dead-heat, but Reading lodged a protest and the verdict was reversed.

Six-day racing had come to New York and later promoter, Jim Kennedy ar-



rived in Detroit to conduct a race of 3 hours nightly for six nights. Favoured to win was Martin but soon after the start on the first night Plugger's tyre rolled off, before he picked himself up and resumed he lost several laps, on Tuesday night he regained 5 of the lost laps within two hours.

Promoter Kennedy urged him on to the delight of the crowd and one of his admirers even handed him a bouquet of flowers. A few laps later the flowers fell, and as Martin attempted to retrieve them he skidded and toppled. "Get up you fool," screamed Kennedy. Plugger attempted to remount but found he could not stand on his legs. He was rushed to hospital where he was found to have a broken thigh bone which would have to be set in plaster.

He remained in hospital for the next six weeks. To his disbelief, when the plaster was removed, one leg was 25 mm shorter than the other. Doctors warned him against racing for 12 months, but exactly six months later he started in the long distance championship of the world at Madison Square Garden.

Bill Martin's old rival, Albert Schill, and a long distance champion of renown Charles Ashinger, were among the entrants along with several European stars.

It was a torrid affair, a race to nowhere over six days. As much as \$750 was paid for boxes by business groups. The terrible grind began to drive riders mad for there was no rest. As soon as the leading rider retired for sleep a lesser light would attempt to make up ground, so on it went, day and night.

Ashinger 'became queer' and was temporarily withdrawn. A German cyclist, Schock, became disorientated whenever the band started to play. Lamb, an acknowledged English long distance star, wanted some imaginary snow taken off the track. A trick cyclist who had given a display left steps standing in the arena. To everybody's amazement Lamb, who had never attempted a trick in his life, rode full pace at the steps and cleared them. Lamb kept calling out as he was dragged from the arena "Bring out some more steps".

Martin won the championship after covering on his High Bike a distance of 1466 miles 70 yards (2359.29 km) in six days to defeat Ashinger. At the race end the crowd inundated him with bouquets and bicycles made of flowers.

Wealthy New Yorkers and leading actors and actresses lavished their idol with gifts.

**T**he appearance of the Safety Bicycle, basically the bicycle we know to-day, brought many changes. The Penny-Farthing was no longer a serious racing bicycle, speed replaced distance as the dominant factor. The sport took a giant

leap forward in Europe and elsewhere with the formation of a world controlling body in 1892.

The first World Championships were conducted in Chicago USA in 1893 over realistic distances of one and ten miles (1.6 km and 16 km). Both were won by the American cyclist Arthur Augustus Zimmerman.

Racing was now much faster and the American six-day grinds grew in popularity and huge amounts of money were bet on the top riders.

As is always the case where big money is involved in sport, unsavoury elements became involved and many top riders were innocent victims of illegal practices. Bill Martin was no exception. While training in April, 1893, Plugger developed some inflammatory trouble which reduced his weight by three stone.



He had not completely recovered when he started in another six-day race at Madison Square Garden.

In those early cycling days the six day races were individual contests with the winner being the one to ride the longest distance. The word spread that Martin was sick and the bookmakers bet odds against him of 10 to 1, but his trainer, a fellow by the name of Griggs, backed him to win \$5000. The 23 starters included Ashinger, another American Six-Day star Frank Waller, and several European champions.

On the fourth day, "Plugger" was 50 miles ahead after riding 72 hours without sleep. When trainer Griggs was having his first sleep since the start, Plugger called for a drink, and a spectator handed him some grapes. Shortly afterwards Martin had to retire with severe stomach pains. When he had sufficiently recovered to resume he was in third place and remained so until the race end.

On medical advice Plugger took a trip to the South of France. The warmer climate revived his tired body and he raced there and in Italy, Belgium, Spain and Switzerland. His nett results showed 30 firsts, 19 seconds and 10 thirds.

Returning to New York on a Sunday in 1894, he competed the next night for the 25 and 10 miles (40 km and 16 km) championships of the world. The championship field featured the world's foremost cycling stars including Arthur Zimmerman, who was now the sensation of international cycling scene. He was the idol of New York where he was well known for his unusual ability to pedal small gears.

Martin took both titles. It was a rude shock to Zimmerman, who showed his displeasure after taking second place in the ten mile championship.

Shortly afterwards, in Philadelphia, Zimmerman was billed as the star attraction of a cycling carnival. On the first night he set an unpaced flying start one mile record time of 2 minutes 23 seconds on a 72 inch gear. The promoters then offered Martin twenty pounds (sterling) to lower the time. Griggs made it known that Plugger would ride better than 2 minutes 15 secs.

The track was a wooden and indoors with 18 laps to the mile and almost perpendicular bends. Martin on a 96 inch gear, set a world record for indoor tracks, clocking 2 mins. 13.5 seconds. Zimmerman was enraged and scratched from all remaining events held during the carnival.

Martin then demanded one hundred pounds appearance money at all tracks. Promoters agreed to refuse his request, so in March 1895, he embarked again for France.

It was a tremendous tour. He downed the French champion and then 'cleaned-up' all over Italy. At one meeting in Turin he was personally decorated by the King and Queen of Italy after winning every race on the programme.

Following wins over Pontecchi, champion of Italy and also Fischer, sprint champion of Belgium, Martin was matched against one of Italy's most experienced sprinters in Milan. His opponent found Martin was too solid and resorted to unfair tactics to produce a short sprint. Plugger deftly slipped his right elbow under the Italians's left, and tossed him in spectacular fashion high in the air.

The hot blooded Italian crowd went berserk at the sight of their champion laying on the track. They broke up seats to obtain weapons and stormed onto the arena. It developed into an ugly scene. Back to back with Griggs and Porta (a little Italian rider whom he had befriended) Martin fought with torn clothes and blood streaming from his injuries. Italian soldiers called to the



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arena rescued the two Americans and their friend from further serious assault.

Martin was upset by the attack and the episode decided him on a spell. The tour had netted 10,000 golden sovereigns, which represented a huge amount of money in the early 20th century.

He decided on New York. But fate intervened and he found himself and little Porta Australia bound for new glories.

**T**he face of Arthur Augustus Zimmerman, ex-professional cycling champion of the world, turned white and then slightly red. He was standing outside the Hotel York in Adelaide at the time, surrounded by numerous people in the cycling fraternity and lots of small boys.

The object of his concern was the sturdy figure of Plugger Bill Martin. He had least of all expected to see his arch rival in Australia, thinking he was still in Europe.

The two great champions of the times greeted each other without enthusiasm. Then, Zimmerman, recovering his composure sufficiently, suggested that Martin join him as a team. The offer was politely rejected.

Martin had discovered in the latter part of September 1895 that Zimmerman planned a racing tour of Australia.

Following the frightening episode in Milan which had persuaded him to return to America, Martin found himself stranded in Italy. All of the ships to New York were booked for weeks ahead by tourists. This meant going back to the south of France to relax or remaining on in Italy pending a passage home.

American cyclists had gone to Australia and reported on the generous nature of the colonials. Now the great Zimmerman was going to share in the loot. "And what's good for Jimmy", as Bill confided to Griggs, "is good enough for me."

So the fateful decision was made to sail for Australia, a decision that neither he nor the Australian sporting fans ever regretted.

Just as Plugger was embarking on a ship named (appropriately enough) the "Austral" Porta arrived and announced his intention of coming also. Porta was a diminutive Italian rider of quite some ability who was continually "chopped" in races by other Italian stars, but after Plugger taught him how to deal with this problem he won the 100 mile unpaced championship of Italy. The little Italian was so grateful he became Plugger's shadow during that first Australian tour.

"The invincible champion arrives," screamed the Australian press when Arthur Zimmerman had landed. The glamorous American was regarded as

the world's best racer by the Australian press and had been treated as such. Was it any wonder he turned green when he saw Martin in Adelaide.

When Martin landed in Melbourne with Griggs and Porta there were no press headlines, no welcoming party or no representatives of Australian cycling. Despite his 10 and 25 mile world title victories over Zimmerman he was virtually unknown to the Australian public, and his quiet manner did not attract attention.

Martin's first action was to study Zimmerman's itinerary, after which he decided to ignore him.

It was certain that the two would soon meet and the first clash came at a carnival in Melbourne put on in Zimmerman's honour. The result was a narrow win for Zimmerman.

Plugger's first appearance with Griggs on the Melbourne Exhibition track for a training session aroused comment among local trainers when he pumped his tyres hard, such a thing had not been done before on an Australian track, it being normal to race at three-quarter pressure. Trainers and riders gathered around the American. The centre of interest was his gear, but they gasped with astonishment when he mounted and Griggs strapped his feet to the pedals. "What if he falls", they asked each other?

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"Who is this man Martin?" asked the excited crowd at the Exhibition track. After only a few days off the ship he won his heat and the final of the One Mile Professional Championship of Victoria from the then Australian Champion.

After a tour of country carnivals, Martin returned to Melbourne and in top form he took the five mile championship of Australia. Then followed a trip across the Tasman to New Zealand where he netted a series of wins at two meetings. At one of these he won six times in the one afternoon.

In those days, a smart young Melbourne cyclist named Jackie Parsons was the idol of Australian sporting crowds. Parsons had shown all opposition his back wheel. His name was on the lips of every sportsman in every pub or sporting club. Parsons was incredibly fast and had even downed the great Zimmerman in a match. He had no peer in Australian cycling. Plugger was under no illusion, he knew that to really establish himself in the minds of the press and Australian public he would need to clearly dethrone Parsons.

Griggs analysed the situation: he was aware of the speed possessed by the dapper Australian cyclist so he advised against any direct clash with Parsons. But Martin would have none of it.



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"Never mind about reputation. I want his number. There can't be two number one's and Parsons must go down."

The newspapers who were pro Parsons took up the issue, saying anyone who could down Zimmerman was invincible. And so was arranged the greatest match race to be held up to that time in Australia.

The match was arranged for £25 a side and a purse of £40 given by the St Kilda Cricket Club. The date was April 28th, 1896. The races consisted of a one mile unpaced, and a five and ten mile paced, at the cycling track at St Kilda, Melbourne.

The first race of the match was scheduled for 3 pm and Martin appeared on the track a picture of fitness and health in a red and blue silk racing jersey, a present from the New South Wales League of Wheelmen.

It was a capacity crowd for Australia then took its cycle racing seriously, not being diverted by the likes of horse and dog racing. The Americans received a good reception, but when Parsons appeared and circled the track he received a tremendous ovation, as the conqueror of the great Zimmerman he was considered unbeatable.

At the start the two riders crawled around the track the experienced Martin trailing to the rear. At bell lap Martin jumped, but Parsons was no slouch and went with him, the pair rode wheel for wheel for the whole lap. Martin just managed to push his wheel in front right on the finish line.

The five mile was almost a repeat of the first heat. Martin moved immediately the human pacers left as he now knew he had to defeat Parsons with stamina.

Again they went wheel for wheel, with the judge being unable to separate them on the finish line and declaring a dead heat.

Rain was falling by time the ten mile event started, but the excitement was so high that the crowd ignored it. Martin won by a wheel and from that moment Plugger won the heart and mind of every sports loving Australian.

Sportsmen from all over Australia wanted to see the man who could beat Jackie Parsons and invitations to the American arrived from all States. An endless stream of success followed: in Adelaide, in New South Wales, in Queensland where in one string he broke all existing national records from 2 miles up to 1 hour. He was undefeated in match races, so a Queensland promoter persuaded Martin to contest a match of 25 miles against five local professionals who rode fives miles each — and lost.

The American was simply unbeatable. He was challenged by fellow American A V McDonnell who arrived in Aus-



tralia with an imposing list of world road records to his credit. The match was arranged for Sydney over 25 miles unpaced. McDonnell was so confident of success that he put up £150. Martin collected this with ease.

His winnings were enormous. One reference contends he pocketed £6,000 cash in appearance money alone, and that was real money at the time. Plugger set his sights on winning the richest handicap of them all, the Austral Wheel, in Melbourne.

**T**WAS IN Adelaide that Martin ran into his first serious trouble in Australia. Smarting from his defeat in Sydney, fellow McDonnell 'chopped' Martin in a one mile scratch race. After the finish he rode after McDonnell and swiped him across the face. This resulted in a two months suspension following an official inquiry.

This ended his dream of winning the Austral of 1896. But Plugger was the most popular sportsman in Australia and the most sought after, so he gave no thought of returning to America.

Following the suspension, Martin was again matched with Jackie Parsons who had consistently claimed he could beat Plugger in a rematch. He backed his claim with £150 cash which Martin matched and they agreed on a winner take all basis. The distances were a one, five and ten mile paced. Plugger won every event.

As the Australian season was now ending he competed for a short season in New Caledonia.

Then the twilight gathered over his first stay in Australia. It was in October early in the 1897 season. He started in a scratch race and considering early season form limitations decided to concentrate on lap prizes. When Joe Megson, another champion of the era defeated him in the final sprint he was called before the stewards and accused of not trying. The outcome was a disqualification from racing in Australia for one year.

He departed for America and home after being showered with golden sovereigns in two years of endless success.

Bill Martin returned in 1899. After a year back in America Plugger felt the magnetic appeal of the Australian sporting public who on his previous visit had adopted him as their very own idol.

Martin was now approaching the end of his great career, but his appeal to the fans remained and heightened at the approach of the Austral Wheelrace.

Although it was only launched as a professional race in 1890 the Austral had already achieved the proportions of a great classic of Australian sport, and as the richest handicap of them all was naturally the most sought after.

The 1901 race was promoted by a dashing young Melbourne promoter, who was to later become quite notorious. John Wren's Austral was raced on the Exhibition track and Plugger was called on to give away an almost impossible start.

Newspapers ran sporting columns prior to the event writing Martin off as being finished at 42 years of age, but nothing could shake the faith of the huge crowd in their old favourite. He was backed as the favourite after riding a good heat to qualify for the final.

The capacity crowd trembled with excitement as he surged home to win the race. He was hoisted shoulder high by the crowd and presented to the Prime

Minister Edmund Barton and the Governor of Victoria, Sir John Madden. Meanwhile the band blared out *See the Conquering Hero Comes*.

Reporters dashed off to catch late editions. Punters searched for betting tickets, the bookmakers had gambled against the 42 year old American winning the Austral of 1901 and had lost badly.

Plugger Bill Martin had ridden the greatest handicap race of his remarkable career (and his last ever in Australia). Now on shaky legs the stolid mask of his face cracked. "Guess this is the proudest day of my life," he said, for winning the Austral Wheelrace, had become his obsession.

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My first big break came when I met Laurie Cranley and Brian Johnson at the Edward Street Bicycle Shop in Brisbane. After winning my first 3 mountain bike races, they contacted Diamond Back boss Eric Munns. The next day I had a top of the range Ascent EX. I was ecstatic! All that had to be done now was to formulate a plan leading up to the championship. We agreed on picking up a few races in Great Britain before attacking the higher level racing on the Continent.

In the UK Shimano have sponsored a six-race series of mountain bike events. After arriving in London I travelled north to the Yorkshire Dales for the 5th round. The race consisted of 8 laps of a gruelling 3.2 km circuit in the Stran Forest. After coming 26th/198 and then winning a very low key local event the following weekend it was off to Switzerland for the tough stuff.

I arrived on the Thursday before the championship and was amazed to find the Americans and many of the European teams had already spent 2 weeks acclimatising in the Alps. The reasons became apparent the next day when I had to struggle against the high altitude and stiff competition simply to qualify for Saturday's final. The course consisted of 2 x 22 km loops climbing to a height of over 2600 metres (above the Aminona Ski Resort) and back down. Although it was summer there was abundant snow at the top of the course.

After a worried night's sleep over 500 mean looking riders lined up on their lightweight custom built machines, with the lone Australian placed on the grid so close to last it wasn't funny.

The atmosphere was unbelievable, with some 6000 cheering spectators, a massive Swiss Police and Army contingent stationed around the entire course and sponsors banners that literally went for kilometres.

The start was absolutely frantic with everyone jostling and positioning themselves for the 3-4 hours of punishing climbs and rocky descents that lay ahead. By the 1/2 way mark I had managed to fight my way into 23rd position. In the second lap I simply pushed myself beyond the limit and costly mistakes began to creep in. After boldly trying to overtake a group of Italian riders in a 60+ km/h descent, I crashed, snapping my seat clean off and began sliding down the Alps bikeless.

With a severely buckled back wheel I had no option other than to run, carry-

# TAKING ON THE WORLD

Mountain bike racing is well established in Europe as one Aussie athlete recently found out.

**BY TONY SMITH**

**W**inning Brisbane's Central Plaza Run - Up 88 provided me with the chance to fulfil my real ambition: to represent Australia in the 2nd World Mountain Bike Cham-

pionships. The first prize for the race up the city's biggest staircase was return trip to America. Immediately my plans were made to go the long way round, stopping off in Europe to compete against the best off-road riders in the world.



ing the bike the last remaining kilometres coming over the finish line in 99th position. Although I was disappointed at losing so many hard fought places in the final stages, I finished knowing that I had done my absolute best.

The eventual winner was Mike Kloser from Vail, Colorado, with last year's winner, Ned Overend (USA) in 2nd place. Tim Gould, the British Cycle-Cross champion, came 3rd ahead of the legendary John Tomac. Sarah Ballantyne (USA) won the women's section ahead of last year's winner Cindy Whitehead (USA).

That evening, the Winning Club's dinner party and presentation ceremony was one social event not to be missed. Thousands of exhausted riders and support crews turned up to be entertained by a live band, Swiss dancing and a carbo-load for the American style Grand Prix the following day.

This was held over a kamikaze 1 km course. It was purely an aerobic circuit to be completed 3 times. After surviving the very competitive heats and semis, a broken chain brought my good progress in the final to an abrupt halt. Only 8 riders made it through to this final showdown, with John Tomac being too strong over the shorter distance.

At the completion of this race, all riders, technical crews and supporters



Mike Kloser 1988 European champ from Colorado. Great guy!

jumped into buses, cars and planes and set off for Torbola in Italy for the final round of the Mountain bike World Challenge.

Grundig, the German TV/Hi-fi company, had organised and sponsored this series of events, a special championship held over 5 legs, including different disciplines such as circuit racing, uphill



Sarah Ballantyne 1988 women's champ.

climbs, downhill runs, parallel slaloms, trials events and sprints.

It started in June in West Germany, moving on to Belgium in July, and then Switzerland and Austria in August. The Torbola event began on Tuesday with all riders racing in preliminary rounds over 5 laps of a rocky 3.2 km circuit. Later that day, the semi-finals were held with

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only the 20 fastest riders (I qualified 12th) going through to Wednesday's final. This was held over 8 laps. The 25.6 km of highly competitive racing and sweltering conditions caused many spectacular crashes and nervous riding. I finished a credible 17th with absolutely nothing left in the tank.

With greater strength and the race lead-up that the Europeans and Americans had, I feel that next year I can improve markedly on these performances.

During the final I was so tired and sore from qualifying, I could hardly squeeze the brake levers and found the constant mental concentration the hardest aspect. What is needed is simply more time spent in the saddle and consistent high level racing.

Competition complete, that night the Italians put on the biggest pasta party and ski show ever seen. I sat and talked to Francesco Moser for 1/2 an hour and then he awarded the finalists with prizes and certificates.

The next day, Jean-Claude Garot president of the Winning Club and publisher of *Winning* magazine got us a bus to go to Milan Airport. I flew off to England to catch a flight to Canada and then to the States for the U.S. Worlds in Mammoth Mountain Ski Resort, California, and NORBA Championships at Sun Valley, Idaho.

More later.

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# DOWN UNDER...

Two bicycle travellers from the USA find that life (and the language) in Oz is, well, somewhat different

BY GAYLA PHELPS

**T**HERE IS MORE TO Australia than kangaroos, meat pies and bush flies! While nearby New Zealand outranks in mountain scenery, Australia definitely has the atmosphere. Where else could you get away with bicycle escalator riding? A new sport? Not really, but when there is no other way of getting into Sydney's underground railway then you have to treat the wild escalator ride with loaded touring bike as an adventure.

Or how about being surprised by a concerned motorist pulling alongside at 40 km/h to offer you a beer and make sure, "Are you alright mate?" Or pulling up for a **schooner, pot or middie** at the end of the day to find the same dog that chased you halfway through town sitting next to you on a bar stool!

There are no limitations to having a good time in Oz. It's what Aussies do best. And it's the **no worries mate** attitude that makes it possible.

Not unlike the vastness of the Arizona desert where we come from, touring cyclists going ride-about in the Australian bush may find themselves about as rare as a kangaroo in Tuscon. And like the back roads of Arizona, used frequently by cyclists and less by motorists, Australia has some good bicycling routes. Among these we found the Southern Cross Cycle Trail, Alpine Way and Pacific Cycle Trail to name a few.

With growing interest in touring, these routes are ready to take even the most novice cyclists from one small community to another.

Undaunted by the **never never** cyclists have even been known to cross the Nul-

lbor, over 3200 km of treeless plain, to reach the west coast. In 1982 one **bloke** made it across on a unicycle!

**S**QUEEZING THE BRAKES and holding on tight, we escorted our 15 speed touring bikes onto the down escalator in Sydney's Kings Cross station. Through a series of uphill and downhill escalator rides we eventually reached the outer suburbs. Australia is full of surprises and – bush flies!

It was December, summer in the Southern Hemisphere, when we gathered up our local motor club maps, four back issues of *Freewheeling* magazine with preferred bike routes, stocked up on Aeroguard fly repellent and hit the road.

Where proper cycling shorts were always our number one necessity when touring, what would make this ride more comfortable was keeping the millions of bush flies from sticking to our face and crawling in and around our eyes and mouth. (Some of the locals prefer small nets worn over the helmet to cover the face.)

We filled up at the Hi Diddle Griddle Cafe and began our 1300 km tour ending up in Melbourne at the Yummy Tum Cafe. The inland route would take us up over the Snowy Mountains and away from the summer holiday crowds headed for the more populated coastal areas and beaches. With only 16 million people on a continent about the size of continental USA we were relieved to discover accommodation and food never far away.



Conveniently placed **caravan parks** supplied us with camping spots, or **on-site vans**. All we needed was our own tent and sleeping bags. Cooking stoves were supplied and an **ablution block** nearby, housing all washing facilities, made life on the road a comfortable pleasure.

We got right into the meat pies at convenient **take-aways** and **pub grub** at local pubs with everything from **bangers to rissoles** but never subjected our higher gastronomical palates to the vile yeast extract **vegemite**! We passed up **Spag Bol with Cab Sav** at the Pickled Parrot restaurant in **Khancoban**, turned in through **Tangamabalanga** and on to **Yac-kandandah** where we did stop off at a famous strawberry winery to refresh our spirits.

Wine country, old gold mining towns restored to originality of the **Ned Kelly** days, sheep farming and wool producing areas with Ye Olde Wool Winkle wool shop attest to the varied countryside a cyclist observes en route. But no one depicts the flavour of the **bush** as well as the famous artist May Gibbs with her stories of the **Gum Nut Babies** – Snugglepot and Cuddlepie.

Freewheeling along through the forests of yellow **wattle** blossoms entwined with the pungent smell of **eucalyptus** trees, we could almost visualize the imaginary gum nut babies

bursting from the seed pods. Australia's unique wildlife; **kangaroos, wombats, echidnas and wallabies** are only a few of the other surprises we encountered as we silently glided along.

Most of all, our favourite companion that encouraged us along the furthest stretches, pulled us up the most difficult ascents and carried us through every last puncture change, was the light hearted laughter of the **Kookaburra** in an old gum tree.

There were times when only two cars passed us in a day. Assuredly thinking us **yanks** a bit **crook in the head** or perhaps that we had had a **fair suck of the sauce bottle**, the **locals** would pull alongside.

"You right mate?" they'd shout. This saying became as familiar as kangaroos and koalas.

"If you wait here a transport will pick you up," we were reassured as we stopped for a break next to a roadside **rub-bish bin**. Watching out for their fellow countrymen has always been a common courtesy in the **outback**, now extended to everyone. They just couldn't imagine what possible pleasure could be derived from what appeared to be such self sacrificing behaviour.

We had our doubts at times. Weather conditions change in the extremes from dry fierce headwinds on the high plains to the muggy tablelands where the air gets so thick your front wheel cuts

through like a knife. **Blue metal** (not the name of a rock band) but big rock chip roads, can wear down the tyres like the infamous **wheel munching** old wooden bridges.

With proper gear, good tyres and thorn proof tubes we eliminated many hassles. One time we wondered if chains or snow tyres would have been more appropriate. On Christmas Day we pedalled 58 k's up Mt Kosciusko, shouldering our bikes the last 500 feet through ankle deep snow to reach the summit of Australia's highest mountain.

Having felt we reached an ultimate high, we literally flew down past mountain ash and rare snow gum trees. As we entered the **scrub** the trees appeared to jump out at us with vivid colours. Crimson rosellas, mountain parrots with red bodies and blue wings, came at us head on. Flocks of white cockatoos with yellow crowns lifted up in unison and disappeared into the azure blue sky. Purple wildflowers made a pathway along the road sides leading us back to **Jindabyne**, the town where legends of the Man from Snowy River live on.

Exhausted and hungry we were immediately **bulldogged** by a local group of genuine cowboys known as **jackaroos** and **jillaroos** to join them for a wild Australian **barbie**. The clever wit of the Aussie humour came out in an impromptu **skit**. We were hysterical with laughter



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when they mounted our bikes pretending to be the TV characters in Chips, racing their cycles in pursuit, helmets on backwards while flossing in my tiny rear view mirror!

Laughing at each other is never taken seriously and they love to mock themselves as well as us yanks. One T shirt reads... In America they have President Ronald Reagan, Johnny Cash, Bob Hope and Stevie Wonder – In Australia we have President Bob Hawke, no cash, no hope and its no bloody wonder!" The outback pubs are where we encountered almost anything including the last remnants of the real **ockers**. Pulling up in a dusty **Holden ute**, bare footed, wearing a pair of **stubbies** a **singlet** and a pair of **thongs** we were once asked to move down a seat to make room for a dog. "She be right mate, no worries." We were reassured.

"Blue heelers are trained to nip the heels of cows not blokes on a push bike."

We weren't so sure!

It was not the first time I'd been mistaken for a **bloke** and my thoughts wondered if, sweating up through the Great Dividing Range, muscles straining as we crossed over a stretch of dusty corrugated dirt road, I had become a product of bi-cyclisation! I was jarred back to the present when descending from Dead Horse Gap into Geehi Valley we spotted a herd of **wild brumbies** escorted by the **dinki di** men from Snowy River.

Riding up in a cloud of **bulldust** we brought our metal horses to a halt. There in the fading red sunset we swapped bush flies and tales of our rides and learned how these men make their living

by selling wild horses they had spent months rounding up. It was over an hour before they tipped their **Akubra** hats in parting and disappeared back into the hills.

After a refreshing dip in the cool waters of a rocky mountain stream we camped out that night under the twinkling stars of the Southern Cross. Like the aboriginal walkabout we had wandered out beyond the big cities with nothing but our trusty **treadlies**, a couple of **swags** and a bit of **tucker**. We had become part of that atmosphere so unique in Australia.

Cycle touring is like that. The freedom of the road, wind at your back and a **no worries, mate** attitude can take you far beyond your own **never never**. "She be right mate, no worries", for a real **bonzer** experience give Australia a go.









# DRUGS AND THE SPORT

The era of the artificial sports star

BY JOHN DRUMMOND

**B**EHIND THE VICTORY smiles, the champagne and the happy crowds that make up the incredible European road racing scene there is another story. A story that the magazines television and newspapers do not show. A story that the majority of the sport's most devoted followers know and a story that the riders don't want to talk about.

It is a story about artificial strength and tragedy.

How widespread the use of dangerous drugs such as anabolic steroids is, no one is quite sure. But what appears certain is that the usage is growing (not only in the cycling world) and it is alarming the coaches and health experts who have started to make their findings known. Concerned by last year's death of heptathlete Birgit Dressel, Yuri Vlasov, a former Olympic weightlifting champion joined the crusade against the use of anabolic drugs. At a press conference in Paris he drew attention to the dangers of a philosophy of letting one's health go down the drain in order to get a gold medal.

Medicines, mainly anabolic ones, were first applied in top class sport late in the 1960's. Anabolic drugs are hormonal bio-synthesis simulators, that is they build up muscle super-intensively and sharply boost the organism's energy.

In general medicine they are usually prescribed for patients to regain their strength after operations.

This type of drug has a negative side to it. It increases aggressiveness and creates sexual problems for the user. Moreover, the long term consequences are even more serious – unnatural hormonal development often of an irreversible nature.

The steroids have spawned a revolution in sports results and have made it possible for an athlete to do in six months, what used to take two or three years of training to achieve.

Of course, this has opened up a whole new area. Old training methods in all sports became obsolete and old method coaches have disappeared. Coach/pharmacologists have appeared in their place.

In one American newspaper an article appeared about a new preparation, not an anabolic preparation but a growth

hormone, which is now used in the sports world. There are no tests for it as yet, nor has it been listed as a forbidden preparation.

Unfortunately, at this moment, the people involved in doping are in a strong position. Athletes, coaches and interested companies all have a strong influence in this area.

Another problem is that corporations make millions out of all this drug taking. Athletes and coaches can also make a packet if they're successful. The life and health of athletes has become quite a business and a vicious circle. The drive to make money becomes stronger than everything else – health, sporting ethics and fairness.

This was well demonstrated when the 1988 Tour de France leader Pedro Delgado from the old Spanish town of Segovia was not scandalised but made to be seen as an unusually talented sportsman, when he was able to ride so easily through the Union Cycliste Internationale's (the world governing body for cycle sport) drug controls.

For all the tub thumping of officials and would be reformers, the fact is that the vast majority of front rank athletes from both West and East are currently using drugs as never before.

There is just too much money involved in top ranking sporting promotions like the Olympic Games and Tour de France, and of course there is always some no-good person responsible when the culprit is caught.

Following the penalty for doping imposed on Denmark's Kim Anderson, who became the first professional cyclist to be banned for life following three positive dope tests. Anderson's positive was taken after the Tour of Limousin in August last year.

Next to be caught out was Womens World Road Champion Jeannie Longo who was said to be deeply shocked by the UCI decision not to ratify her World records at three, five and ten kilometres and one hour set at Colorado Springs USA last September.

Longo gave a positive dope test after the ride when traces of the drug Ephedrine were found. On UCI instructions Longo was suspended for one month.

Next came the Tour de France debacle, or should I say bungle. The Delgado-is-positive-rumour hit the Tour caravan like a whirlwind, starting a press stampede straight to the Reynolds Team Hotel at Le Lac, not far from that day's stage 17 finish.

From behind his bedroom door, head showing through the opening to a barrage of photographers and reporters, Delgado neither confirmed nor denied the accusation, saying that a statement would be made in the morning.

By 9 am that next morning, the nasty rumour had become a fact. The Tour organisation had officially told Delgado





**With the crowds clinging to the mountain side of Luz-Ardiden in the Pyrenean mountains during the 1988 Tour de France he would be a brave rider who would accept one of the many proffered drinks.**

that he had been found positive and that he was entitled to make his own second test to see if the analysis was correct. That would take two days, in the meantime, nothing would be done. So Delgado was still in Yellow Jersey.

The second test confirmed the first result. Traces of Probenecid were found in his sample. Probenecid helps the kidneys eliminate uric acid – which racing cyclists, especially when dehydrated, are prone to build up in their system.

Probenecid also masks steroids, preventing them from being detected. Delgado, who admitted to taking that particular drug had committed no offence in the eyes of the World controlling body, technically, as it was not yet included on its proscribed drug list.

The irony for Delgado was that none of this business would have come to light if normal procedures had been followed i.e. – that a rider upon being advised of a result of a first test, is allowed to have a second before any news is released.

Somewhere, in the original laboratory testing of the Spaniard's urine sample, there was confusion between the edicts of the UCI and the International Olympic Committee.

So it was realised that the Tour de France Yellow could not and would not be penalised because its wearer took Probenecid.

Not long after, Xavier Louy, joint director of the tour, walked into the press room with a further statement from the international jury. Dutch star Gert-Jan

Theunisse was found to be positive after the Dutch teams sensational climb up the slopes of the French Alps. Through 21 hair-pin bends climbing some 14 kilometres to L'Alpe d'huez with each attack stripping the leading group down to four riders Holland's Steven Rook was first across the finish line, ahead of team mate Gert-Jan Theunisse and Pedro Delgado, with the Spanish star taking over as Tour leader.

Theunisse was demoted to last on the stage, given a ten minute penalty and was fined. The press were not told what the drug was that Theunisse was alleged to have taken but that night at 10:30 pm the Tour Control issued a statement saying the Tour was ashamed that teams should allow the reputations of their riders to suffer in this way, the sport in general, and the Tour de France in particular.

In consequence of all this illegal drug involvement the UCI advised that riders attending to ride in the World Cycling Championships in Ghent would be required to provide two urine samples. Under Belgium government ruling, they have their own testing for all sport in Belgium, but the UCI will only recognise testing done at Utrecht in Holland.

Despite the warnings the titles were

apparently riddled with drugs. Italy's Claudio Golinelli and Vincenzo Colamartino were banned from racing for two years by the Italian Federation after failing drug tests. Golinelli won the world professional Keirin championship while Colamartino took the amateur motor-paced title.

Both riders protested their innocence.

The ban follows the disqualification of other world stars: Belgian Stan Tourne from the silver medal position in the professional motor-paced championship for doping; and the suspension of Italian Patrizio Rampazzo for one month for failing to take a dope test after he finished fourth in the amateur tandem event.

There was a further blow when the Spanish Federation confirmed that the official world's number 1 racing cyclist, Irishman, Sean Kelly, would receive three months suspension following a positive dope test.

Following the world title doping problems came the news that British pole vault star Geoff Gutteridge and top rated American swimmer Angel Myers, had both missed Olympic selection when found to have used anabolic steroids during their Olympic training.

Steve Hegg, a gold medallist at the Los Angeles Olympics, lost his position in the American pursuit cycling team following a positive dope test. Hegg failed a medical test after one of the selection events held in America in August. He was found to have taken caffeine.

The exodus of athletes from Seoul, among them Australia's pentathlete Alex Watson, substantially proved the claim that athletes in high powered and competitive sports have been using drugs and stimulants to increase prowess and boost their performance for years. In some countries its the rule rather than the exception.

It's known and apparently accepted by athletes in the USA and Russia (and now Canada and Bulgaria) that the conscientious use of stimulants such as caffeine and anabolic steroids for body building and improved muscle power is part of achieving the ultimate goal. Certainly it was in the case of Canadian Ben Johnson.

At great events such as the Olympic Games and the Tour de France most of the drug and stimulant users ease off a week or so before competition allowing no traces of the drug to exist in their system while the benefits remain.

There's a great risk involved but when the pressure is on people are prepared to take a chance.

Arguably the most misused word in sport is drugs. In the mind of the public familiar with the current drug scene through the media, it conjures up vis-



ions of an addiction, hypodermics, wasted bodies, death and courts of law. Yet it is rarely any of these things. What has happened in sport is that a completely different set of values has been established which affects the genuine intake of a medicament compared with a prescription which GPs might hand across their desks to non-sporting types, to whom drugs, are not a vice. Their taking may even allow relief of pain.

I believe this was so in the instance of the Tour de France rider Pedro Delgado, for he was already in Yellow when he admitted to taking a particular drug that helps the kidneys to eliminate uric acid.

Drug abuse was rife in professional cycling in the fifties and sixties. The sport has since fought valiantly to put its house in order. Doping has not been eliminated, it never will be, but it's fair to say that many sports now have a greater drug problem than cycling, which was one of the first to introduce properly regulated tests.

Despite the perverse nature of cycle racing – for example the Tour de France this year lasted for 22 days when riders were soaked in rain, burned by sun, climbed as much as 20,000 feet in one day, scarred by crashes – the athletes still maintained a record setting average speed of 40 odd km/h along the 3200 km distance. It is their living; a living that requires them to be in the saddle for more than 200 days a year. No other sport is as demanding in such a variety of environment.

To take a publicly legalised drug, which may contain a proscribed drug such as caffeine (found in many cough mixtures or sprays used to clear the nasal passage) immediately puts them at risk of suspension, a fine or the ultimate: having their licence to race withdrawn – in other words forced unemployment.

Racers are well aware of the penalties from taking proscribed medicines. That is why the wise ones shun the tempting drinks offered by the fans who hug the narrow mountain roads on the peaks in temperatures often nudging 100 degrees fahrenheit.

That is not to say they don't take stimulating drugs, some do, but under the control of team doctors. Those that do are probably correct when they say they need the help provided by the drugs. Such is the unbelievably hard world of European professional cycling.

Admittedly, there is room for improvement in the UCI's handling of drug control, as illustrated by the Delgado Tour de France bungle. The system of testing needs changing- professionals in Europe must quite seriously begin to clean up their backyard with a view to improving a tarnished image.

Then perhaps when sports writers are seeking symbols of cycle sport and its

approach to drugs they might cite the case of Dane, Kim Anderson, rather than Tom Simpson the British champion who suffered a drug related death on Mont Ventoux 21 years ago.

There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that the use of anabolic drugs is the cause of a shortened competitive career and possibly life. I believe that the vast majority of front rank athletes, from both East and West are experimenting with drugs as never before.

The word 'cheating' has a nasty connotation but it is totally apt in the case of the Bulgarians and Canadian Ben Johnson. The glory of the Olympic Games has been tarnished.

From now on the athlete who competes at an international level should be monitored for drug abuse by intensive, regular and long term testing. Countries, coaches and sporting officials and the athletes themselves must agree to abide by an equitable system of competition – in the true spirit of our modern Olympiads.

Dr Norman Gardiner sums it all up in his history of the ancient Greek athletes: "Nowhere is excess more dangerous than in athletics."

The nemesis of excess in athletics is the drug related cheat. It was for this reason that Theodosius I abolished the Games in 394 AD.

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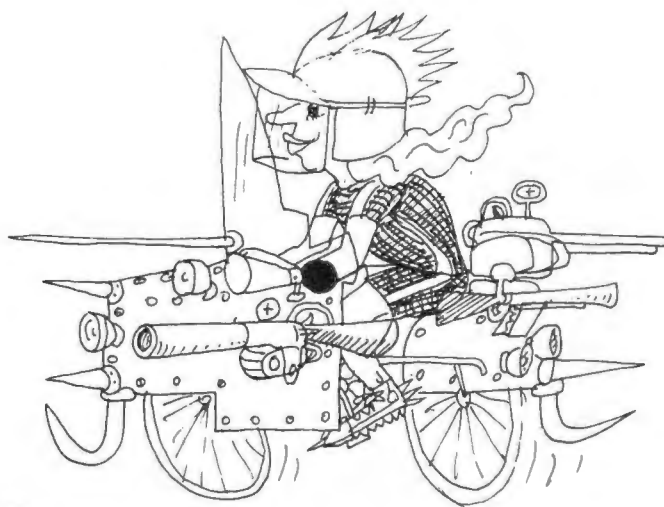
Illustration by Elizabeth Mackie



# A FINE MADNESS

Paris for the bicycle traveller

BY MARK JENKINS



**W**HEELS SQUEAL, EN-gines throttle and the earth rumbles. Suddenly, "Ca va pas tete, non?" flies out some window like a slap in the face. Shaking fists slam a shrill little horn and you shoot off the street onto the footpath dodging pedestrians, lampposts and a poodle. Ah, bicycling in Paris. It's everything Paris herself is...incomparable, ineffable, sometimes joyful and always maddening.

Cycling in Paris, unlike cycling anywhere outside perhaps Manhattan, Sydney or Rome, is a specialized skill: one part combat, one part ballet and two parts utter audacity. Surprising more Parisians don't bicycle isn't it?

The first rule, the last rule, indeed the only rule for bicycling in Paris is as old as human conflict – they who hesitate are lost. More accurately, they who hesitate get hit. In careening Parisian cobblestone, timidity means going nowhere at best, at worst you'll end up as a bloody hood ornament. Aggression, like it or not, is the name of the game (just as it is for motorists).

To survive, even more, to get from Le Louvre to the Eiffel Tower, you must ride like taxis drive: just as fast, just as efficient, just as outrageous. Into the fray like a soul gone berserk, cutting off

mopeds, carving through parked cars, slicing through pandemonium like a knife through beurre.

In the Tour de Paris it's do or be done to or done for. The true Parisian cyclist can accelerate like a cheetah and keep on like a gazelle, always up with or ahead of the traffic.

Alas, animal aggression, essential though it may be, is not enough. It is not the taxi with the most horsepower that reaches the Eiffel first, nor is it the bicyclist with the biggest thighs. Nay, it's the velo master with an almost Machiavellian elan, an ability to see the chance and take it, somehow glide as effortlessly as the Seine through the fickle heart of Paris.

Cycling in the city of light is a kind of dance, the dance of the street, frightfully rapid, irrevocable, inimitable.

Animal aggression and elan combined, even still, is not enough. The missing element is nerve – intrepid daring. Flinging oneself into a roundabout a little short of stepping into a den of lions, or, entering the coliseum as but one small combatant against many well-armed gladiators. Even a hint of qualms or collywobbles beckons disaster. To triumphantly wheel around the Arc de Triumph, you must have the sang-froid

to lean into a slippery cobblestone, cross directly but deftly into the erratic paths of several dozen motorists in sinister collusion, avoid catapulting into the rear window of every car in front of you, and do it all at top speed.

Mortal bumper cars, but of course you are driving just two thin wheels on nothing but the will to power. Ingenious audacity, with an almost imperceptible pinch of courtesy, such as what it takes to be brave and bicycle in Paris.

In the end, quite appropriately for a city of such romance, it all comes down to passion. A passion for cycling. A passion for Paris.

And the rewards are great. In simple city terms, you'll arrive long before the metro, inevitably beat the traffic and always have a parking space. You'll also get a moderate aerobic workout and actually see the city – the Seine, the insane, the incontrovertible architecture – instead of the inside of a dirty windsheild or the underground walls of tile.

Few people bicycle in Paris because they feel as if they are taking their life into their own hands. They are. Ah, but they're also taking the life of the city into their hands. Whether pedalling slow and silent down a path in the Bois



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de Boulogne, exuberantly winging up the Champ Elysees, darting down dark alleyways, sweating up the Montmartre or just gliding home in the rain, to bicycle in Paris is to know Paris.

The rush that comes from bicycling in Paris can be instantly transformed into horror by one tragic incident. Therefore, some tips on expeditious pedalling are apropos:

- Have eyes in the back of your head.
- Use your arms. Throw your arm violently out and a bit down, in whatever direction you're heading, turning, falling or just hope to go. A quick, authoritative arm signal will usually notify at least the motorist directly behind you what you're about to do. What they are about to do is, well...
- Learn to breathe exhaust.
- If possible, don't ride at rush hour. A little before in both the morning and during late afternoon is preferable.
- No matter what the time of day, every street is a gauntlet.
- Cars in Paris seldom ever really stop, they just slow down.
- Yellow lights are green lights.

- Always carry a patch kit, always keep your brakes and derailleurs finely adjusted.
- If you ride at night, ride with a light and reflectors.
- Realize that almost every Parisian driver, vegetable trucker to madcap scooter rider, is practising for the Paris-Dakar road race.

● Any car, but especially any taxi, will stop anywhere at any time on a coin. Your hand-brake-eye coordination must be honed or you'll wind up on their boot.

● If a car stops in the middle of nowhere, it's likely someone is about to get out. Look through the back window; which side will the door open on? No one will be looking out for you, so, if you don't want to wind up flopped over a car door like a broken doll...

- Learn to love cobblestone.
- Learn to love to curse. En français, évidemment.
- Learn to love mopeds that go too slow, Mercedes that think you're pencil thin and motorcyclists who want to race.
- Having a fine racing bike is like having a fine Porsche: fast.

● Parisian motorists find using turn signals a bore.

● Most pedestrians like to step out about a metre onto their street. This is the same metre that bicyclists ride in. Scream and use your brakes. (Also practice whistling like a European ambulance.)

● Carrying du Pain, (bread) and pedalling at a vicious pace, is possible.

● Expect nothing from the police if you are wronged; they, like most Parisians, don't believe you belong on the street.

● Don't believe the green striped bicycling paths are for bicycles. Trucks, cars, taxis, etc. don't believe it.

● Riding up a one way street is possible. It is also possible to die riding a bicycle in Paris.

● Learn to hop curbs without bending a rim.

● Never, never wear a portable cassette player with headphones.

● Velo thievery is rampant. Expect to lose your bike the second it is locked.

● Dog excreta is everywhere. Everywhere. Beware.

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# LONG IN THE SADDLE

The challenge of an AUDAX endurance ride

BY PAUL CHAPMAN

**C**YCLING CAN BE A WAY of life, even a living. The French touring club, Audax, encourages the sport as a life-style. For one day I first gained a real feel for cycling when, with twenty-five others, I rode from Pakenham to Wilsons Promontory and back in an Audax Randonneur 400. This is the story of my long day in the saddle – a precursor of many to follow.

To get into the spirit of the event I visited the club secretary to look at photos of Paris-Brest-Paris, a 1215 km race run every few years by the club. As my ride was to be only a third of this distance my intention was not to race, but simply complete the ride in 26 hours with the solid confidence of a lengthy training to back me up.

Setting off at eight o'clock Saturday morning I am glad all the preparation is

done. The weather is predicted as hot but with a support crew things will be made easier, especially with an assisting north east wind.

Just before Druin, heading south-east, we reach the first of many hills. Red Hill grinds on and this breaks up the group as better riders go ahead. The one way riders on immaculate machines surge forward on the numerous hills that follow. Reforming as a pack, I find we are riding a typical Victorian country road with trees that act like a ceiling. We follow the rough back roads (as only the organizers know how to find them) and thereby avoid the traffic.

Poowong is the first stop or check where I produce the brevet or card which Audax riders must carry with them to be stamped as validation of their journey. A 20-30 minute rest follows before the next few hours to Meeinyan. To keep interest I circulate around fellow riders and find out the news and general happenings of friends on the ride.

Back on the road and with the sun at its hottest we squirt each other with water from our bidons as we reach Meeinyan. Countless calories including five yogurts have already been consumed



and I'm not even halfway there.

Along the road I find a trio who are riding at my pace and we travel through monotonous, undulating country. The rider beside me points to an unusually unsteady rear wheel on the bike in front.

"Thirty-four spoke buckle," he comments.

"How on earth do you know that?" I respond.

"Don't you count them?!" he replies as we spin along.

Drafting to save precious energy, we approach the looming Promontory. A sinking sun gives way to dark immediate surroundings which contrast with the reflected light of the higher mountains which we still have to climb.

Entering the reserve the horizon narrows because of thick scrub on both sides of the road. I take the next hour to climb the hill and am rewarded by a picturesque scene of the sea and a quick sweep down to the turnaround point. The views are glorious.

Tidal River is heaven as it signifies only 200 km to go. Colourful parrots and other birds mingle freely with the holiday makers in a camping/kiosk area. I enjoy a shower and start on my way back after nine and a half hours on the road. At the start of my return journey, Tony Bolduan, my solo companion joins me for the remaining distance.

Passing comrades going in the opposite direction, my partner calls "Courage to the Audax rider" as we fly by. Shadows elongate to form giants, and we pass the last group still heading south, about four hours behind. It would be a long night for all.

The town of Fish Creek marks a loss of time and distance for me. I simply sit behind the leader. Sanyo generators hum and light the endless white line. I cannot wait to taste Melbourne water.

Realizing this activity is not the usual Saturday night out, and for the sake of boredom, I fantasise over a motorised bike. I wish my brain would turnover like the cluster I aimlessly follow. I wonder if there would be any roads if Australia didn't have a bicentenary to celebrate by building more roads.

With my morale at a low point I feel helpless crawling up Holmes Hill. My companion, more experienced than I says in a jovial fashion that the bad thing about riding back was that you discover all the hills you never went down. When I ask about the next hill he replies: "Oh this one's measured in hours!" Pulling into the next checkpoint I overhear an organizer saying "I'm trying to do two things at once and it isn't working." I consider riding and sleeping simultaneously. Barely eating, I once again lose perspective of distance.

It is now only 67 kilometres to go so we power through a sudden mist that is cold in comparison to the mild night.

This was the best training for the future 600 kilometre ride which would complete my Super Randonneur series, so we speed up the countdown and to sprint into high gear. I suddenly notice that I have been fortunate in being physically and mechanically trouble-free – no lactic acid build up, punctures or saddle soreness.

Back in civilisation I knew all training had paid off. My preparation had consisted of a daily ride from Mont Albert to Lilydale along with 20 km of commuting, plus a 130 km ride on Saturday.

I did all this, increasing slowly the ride on Saturday for seven weeks, hence my pleasant, pain-free ride at the time.

We were the second pair to reach the

final stop. I knew others would ride to see the sun rise. One of the first pair had ridden on via Cockatoo to the Basin to participate that morning in the MAD One Hundred, a ride through Kinglake National Park.

I thanked my leader Tony Bolduan and felt the great sense of achievement and completion that only those who put in the effort to anything know. I also have to praise the club for making the ride possible and allowing me a little self-discovery while in transit.

I had thoroughly enjoyed myself and this was my unstated aim. In time, the last ride of the series, from Geelong to Warnambool via the Great Ocean Road would prove even more fulfilling.

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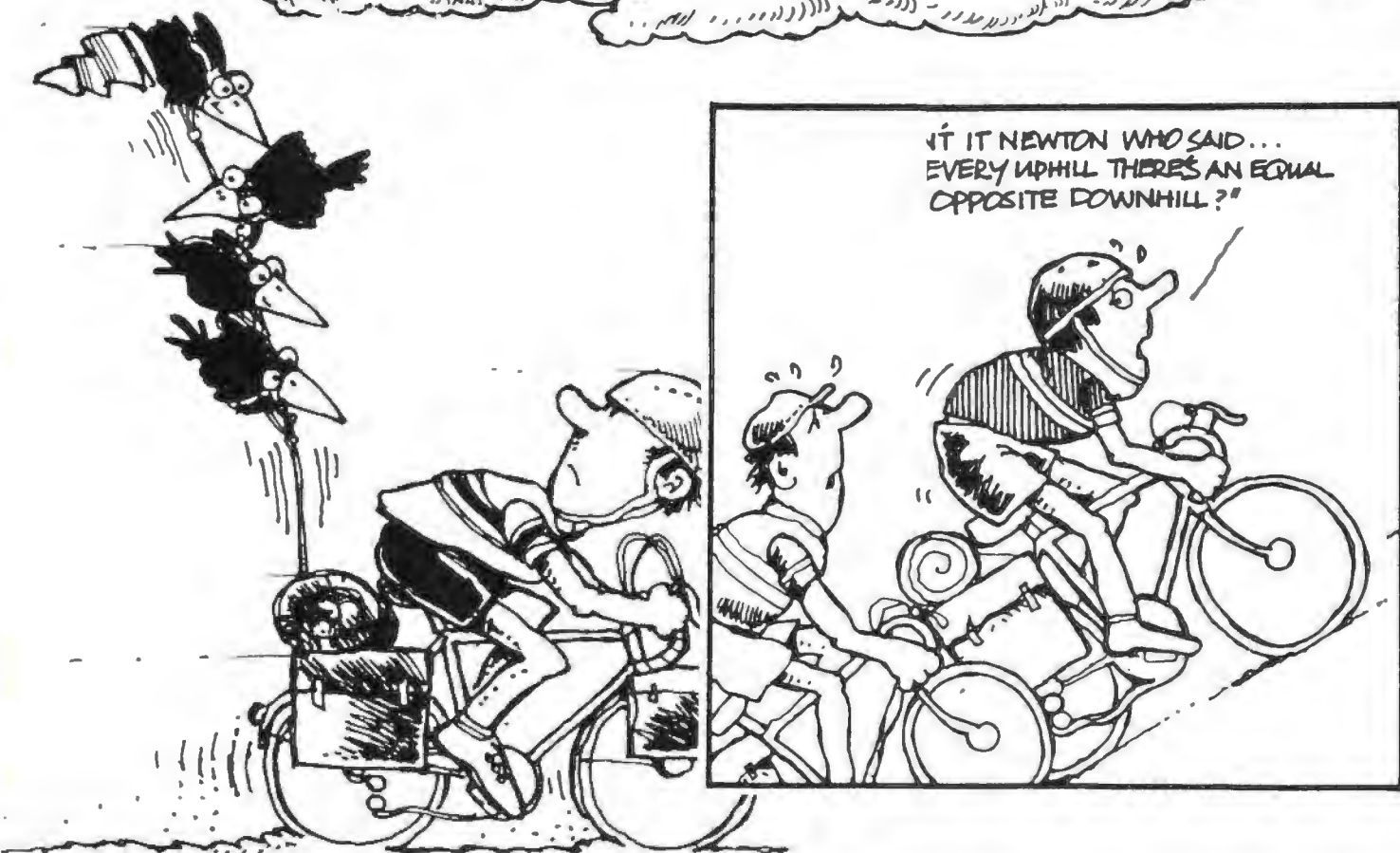
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# New Products and Ideas



## Reynolds 531

Over 50 years ago the Reynolds tube company developed its famous 531 manganese molybdenum steel bicycle tubing with butted (thickened walls) at the ends for greater strength. Reynolds says manganese moly is stronger than chrome moly for three important reasons: firstly after brazing or welding the chrome steel alloy gives the steel a more annealable quality and thus it loses strength. Manganese moly drops in strength after welding from 42 to 45 tonnes whereas chrome moly drops from 52 to 38.

Secondly the chrome in steel makes it more susceptible to work hardening. This makes handling more difficult and also makes the tube more likely to fracture. Thirdly manganese moly can be hardened and tempered to achieve characteristics well beyond both 531 and chrome moly tubing to give the *King of the Road* tubing: Reynolds 753 – 80 tonne tensile steel; and 653 – 60 tonne steel. Reynolds also make chrome moly and this is their 501 tubing.

Though the bicycle industry uses Reynolds tubing it has also found use in wheelchair framing, go carts, ultralight aircraft frames and racing car frames. More recently Reynolds have introduced a range of tubing especially for mountain bike users the 753 ATB, 700 and for the triathlete: 525 Triathlon.



## Helmet manufacturer increases insurance cover

Who said that there is no such thing as a free anything? Well here's an offer from Australia's largest manufacturer of SAA approved safety helmets that seems almost too good to be true. Rosebank Stackhat have recently increased their unique free insurance cover to \$25,000 and all new Stackhat owners are eligible.

Rosebank were the first safety helmet manufacturer in the world to offer free insurance to cyclists. Many bike riders are glad to be automatically covered and see it as a sign that Rosebank has great faith in their product by offering what amounts to an indirect form of performance guarantee in case of an accident.

What value do cyclists put on their heads when buying a helmet. Perhaps it is best to look at the real value of a helmet and the protection it offers and not just at the price tag say the people from Rosebank.



## Skate bike

French designer Yves Garel has produced a new skate bike with a specially designed saddle manufactured by Selle Royale of Italy. The Le Run skate bike is a fun machine and is ideal for recreational use, more serious cross training or turning heads where ever you care to use it. Its safety features include a brake, front suspension and quality componentry and it sells for about \$199.

## See the light

Union Frondenberg, the German cycle component manufacturer has recently

released a new lighting system that brings bicycle lighting as close as possible to motorbike and car based systems. The heart of the system is Union's low drag high output bottom bracket mounting generator which is electrically connected to an electronically controlled smart 6V battery unit. The battery maintains the light output even if the bike is stationary. What's more, like car and motorcycle systems, the generator can supply power to the battery system when travelling above a certain speed. The lighting set was released last year at the Cologne bike show and will sold in this country sometime during the year.

## Odyssey Aerator

How do you carry a pump on a mountain bike without losing it on rough roads? Simple, carry it in the seat tube under the seat pillar. Better still the Odyssey Aerator *IS* the seat pillar. The pump device is built into the seat post and with a flick of the quick release seat clamp – hey presto – you have a small but useful pump that screws onto a standard schrader valve. The Aerator has a small fold up handle and is available to fit most bike tube sizes.





# Calendar

# Classifieds



Club secretaries, race directors and event organisers help us to publicise your event by sending details to us early. If you are planning a ride in the coming twelve month period you should send your notice to **Freewheeling National Bike Events Calendar** now. We publish advance notice of all bicycle events both competitive and non competitive but because of our publication lead-times we need your copy at least two months in advance. Send your copy to **PO Box K26 Haymarket NSW 2000** or phone it through on (02) 264 8544.

## COMPETITIVE EVENTS

### APRIL

**Sunday 30 World Cup Triathlon** Swim 3 km, cycle 130 km, run 30 km. Held on Queensland's Gold Coast. Contact (075) 50 3617 for details.

### CLUB CONTACTS

The Australian Cycling Federation and the state cycling federations will direct you to a club in your area if you want to get involved in bicycle road or track racing. Phone numbers and contacts for each state are: **NSW** Margaret Balmer (02) 241 1870; **VIC** Ruth Birznies (03) 328 4391; **QLD** Mike Victor (07) 390 1489; **WA** Mike Poyner (09) 384 4130; **SA** Bruce Quinn (08) 381 2398; **TAS** Joy Bestwick (003) 31 2712; **NT** Shirley Davis (089) 208 798.

Riders wishing to take out a professional licence should contact the National Secretary of the Australian Professional Cycling Council, Reg Marriner, PO Box 329 Torquay VIC 3228 Phone (052) 61 4067.

Mountain bike enthusiasts interested in contacting a local MTB club should contact the Australian Mountain Bike Association (02) 27 2977 AH (02) 92 1922.

## NON COMPETITIVE EVENTS

### MARCH

**Sunday 5 Hills Cycle (Grade Easy to medium)** 30-50 and 90 km routes through Sydney's beautiful Hills

district. Entry fee funds to Diabetes Australia. Starts at Mt Wilberforce lookout, West Pennant Hills. Food and drinks available at end of ride. A souvenir of your participation will be issued. Entry fees \$8 single \$20 family of four. Contact Ron Jamieson (02) 872 3000.

### NOVEMBER

**Sunday 26 Eighth annual Sydney to the Gong Bicycle Ride** This year bigger and better than ever. A one day fun and fitness ride through Royal National Park. Some say its the London to Brighton Ride with scenery. This year a time trail option will be available for sports riders. It's a ride not a race. Don't miss it. Details throughout the year in Freewheeling magazine.

### CLUB CONTACTS

These clubs regularly run rides in their cities and welcome new comers. Some even publish touring calendars listing forthcoming rides. Contact them for details.

**Armidale** Community Cyclists (067) 72 8951. **Audax Australia** (03) 435 4437 (02) 608 1125. **Bathurst** Bicycle Touring Group (063) 31 9459. **Bicycle Australia** (046) 27 2186 (after 9pm). **Brisbane** Bicycle Touring Association (07) 369 9326. **Brisbane** Mountain Bike riders interested in forming a club should contact Mike or Kelli on (07) 359 1244. **Canberra** Pedal Power ACT (062) 49 7167. **Geelong** Bicycle Touring Club (052) 75 6661. **Illawarra** Touring Cyclists' Club (042) 83 6524. **Melbourne** Bicycle Touring Club (03) 818 4011. **Melbourne eastern suburbs** - **Knox** Bicycle Touring Club (03) 754 4069. **Eastern** Bicycle Touring Club (03) 762 7928. **Victorian Pedal Clubs** provide fun and training in bike handling skills for children of bicycle riding age. Call for information on a club near you: (03) 337 6399. **Newcastle** Cycleways Movement (049) 46 8298. **Bicycle Institute of New South Wales** (02) 212 5628. **South Australian** Touring Cyclists Association (08) 272 6406 (08) 388 8331. **Sydney** region bicycling clubs can be contacted through the Bicycle Institute of NSW (02) 212 5628. **Tandem** Club of Australia (03) 241 4453. **Cycle Touring Association of West Australia** (09) 330 3659. **Darwin** Huffers & Puffers (089) 81 2141. **Wagga** Bicycle Touring Group (069) 21 6787. **Vintage Cycle** Clubs **Vintage Cycle Club of Victoria** (03) 527 5759. **Southern Veterans** (Sydney Vintage Cycle Club) (02) 587 8017.

### TOUR MATES

**TOUR MATES** is a **FREE** service for readers wishing to find companions for bicycle trips and holidays. Entries are limited to thirty words and there is a charge of thirty cents per word for any long entries exceeding the limit. Payment (if applicable) must accompany your listing. Name, address and phone number should be attached for verification purposes.

**MELBOURNE TO CAPE YORK** Young companion wanted for low budget tour heading north on mountain bikes. No time limit. Leaving early 1989. Please contact Brett (03) 725 0319 after 7 pm.

**TASMANIA** January 1989. Flexible itinerary - no rush tour - nothing over 100 km per day. Camping in caravan parks. Interested? Then contact Patrick Van Dyk, 68 Hopewood Cres, Fairy Meadow NSW 2519.

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**BICYCLE TOUR SERVICES** provides rentals, itineraries, accommodation and tours. Box 11-296, Auckland, New Zealand. Phone: 591 961. Telex NZ61208 "PWAKLTLD". Fax 594 957.

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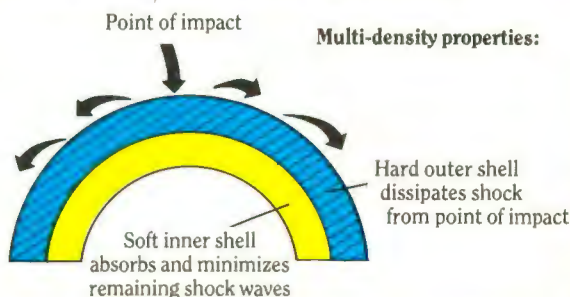
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Head injuries are life threatening. The only cure is prevention, wearing and ANSI and SNELL approved helmet can greatly reduce the risks of concussions, lacerations or even skull fractures. So why not wear the safest helmet you can buy? The LT 700's performance far exceeds the requirements of both ANSI Z90.4 and SNELL standards as evidenced by independent engineering/testing services. \*(See chart)

HELMET	TEST	AVERAGE "G"
LT 700	ANSI	84
LT 700	SNELL	131

## LOW = SAFETY

under 200 G = Comfort & Safety (The lower the better)  
 200 G - 300 G = Discomfort/headaches  
 300 G - 400 G = Possible brain damage  
 400 G and up = Permanent brain damage

The LT helmet meets the impact energy attenuation requirements of Clause 6.2, AS2063.1-1986.

Check the energy rating of others to satisfy yourself that the LT has the lowest G rating of any soft shell helmet on the market.



## LT is also...

**LIGHTWEIGHT** - only 184 grams.

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**WASHABLE** - foam sizing pads and helmet covers remove easily to wash with fine washables

**STYLISH** - LT provides a wide variety of helmet covers. You can even personalize a cover to match your club or team. Standard colours available are red, black, yellow, blue or green

Finally, perhaps one of the nicest features besides safety is the price. The LT 700 will cost you significantly less than its competition. How many more reasons do you need to choose the LT 700?



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