

WA 400KM AUDAX 1989 - by Sam Burton

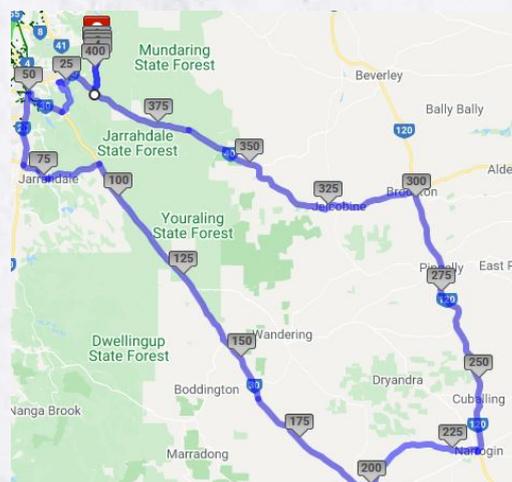
The Audax Club of Australia Journal June 1989

This year's (sic) 400km Audax ride was the near perfect solution to an otherwise uneventful Saturday on the 20-21 May. The course was a demanding one with a fairly even mix of flat, undulating and tortuous sections.

The start was John Martin's house in Pickering Brook, (on top of the scarp) and from there it was down Brookton Highway to Albany Highway to Armadale and on to the Jarrahdale turnoff past Whitby Falls. From there back to Albany Highway were some of the worst hills of the ride but a cup of soup at the secret control made it worthwhile.

The next control was at Crossman and from there to Narrogin. Rain fell for most of the final 181km through Brookton and then back to Pickering Brook via Brookton Highway. A 5am start to the ride on a cool morning was difficult but to see Phil Giddins riding to the start while I sat in a warm car was humbling to say the least. Raincoats were donned for warmth through the hills as Peter Bombarderi's floodlight illuminated the way for everyone else as he told stories of aggressive dogs which were "usually" chained when he trained in the area.

The stretch to the secret control at Albany Highway was fast at around 25km/h, and faster for John Martin and Lin Hambleton who didn't start until 5.30 after Lin overslept. A group of seven of us took turns to Crossman and kept up the good pace and everyone was in soon after us.



2020 map of the route based on article

We left Crossman, which consists of a service station/restaurant and a house, to go to the major agricultural town of Narrogin. About 80km later we stood soaking in the rain at the control. A friendly resident offered us the use of a one car garage (already containing one car) for a bit of shelter. It was not much but gratefully used.

After the rain had receded somewhat, we set out for the 70 odd km into Brookton and expected darkness. This stretch was unusual in that a cross/tailwind had blown us into Narrogin and now returning along nearly the same direction, only a crosswind remained, occasionally blowing from the rear. After a few sharp hills, the terrain softened to a constant uphill, although only rising a few metres in every hundred. This levelled out after Pingelly for the last 20km to Brookton. Once in Brookton, 4 punctures between 2 people (while their bikes were stationary!) delayed our departure by over ½ an hour; maybe it was a conspiracy! The best hamburgers in WA (according to Brian Hawes) and numerous chips were consumed at the service station. Brian was right.

The final 110km along Brookton Highway was hard with rarely a flat section but darkness concealed the hills and we made it home without incident. The ride finished at around midnight or later for most and a cup of coffee from Aileen Martin was much appreciated.

There was a WA record of 15 starters (13 finished) and the 400km of 1989 ended there and then for most of us. Not so for Kleber, Peter Steer and John Martin, who between them got a working starter motor into the support vehicle stranded on Brookton Highway. They didn't get to bed until around 6am on Sunday. Many thanks from all of us to Geoff Creighton for driving the support vehicle and making all those cups of tea and also to Aileen for the coffee at the finish of an eventful and far from boring day. The starters were: Don Briggs Peter Bombarderi Graeme

Burton Sam Burton Kleber Claux Colin Farmer Phil Giddins Lin Hambleton Brian Hawes David
Lidbury John Martin Jim Matthews David Midolo Shane Ritchie Peter Steer