

The 1989 300 KM -AUDAX RIDE 23 APRIL 1989

The 1989 300km Western Australian Audax Randonnée riders were: R Adams, P Bombardieri, D Briggs, M Bullard, S Burton, K Claux, PCooksey, R Evans, C Farmer, T Farmer, P Giddins, L Hambleton, R Hillary, B Jones, S. Jones, D. Lidbury, J Martin, J Meakin, D Midolo G Najjar, C Neiryneck, K Pearmire, S Ritchie, P Steer and J Walker.

It was 3am in Midland, the weather was windless, clear skies and about 19°Celsius. Ride organiser Dave Midolo assisted by Peter Steer gave us a rough idea of the route to follow and the ever helpful extra super Randonneur John Martin added with that important talk to stick together and ride as a Club. After making sure that our day's food, spares, and special needs were loaded onto the support vehicle very ably handled by Ann and John Waters, Susan Midolo and Canadian visitor Vanessa Bridge, we set off into the night. John Martin's words were still echoing around the old Midland Town Hall clock when a group of riding wolves, out to better their previous times, went whining off into the full moon lit night.

The wind was warm on the hills and cold in the dips so it wasn't surprising to see parked cycles on the side of Gnangara Road as we headed towards Wanneroo. Just before the lights on Wanneroo Road we came across a car being driven, by somebody who must have been drunk; smoke and sparks came from a rear wheel and we were worried that it would come in our direction, it didn't so we rode on and left him to his fun.

It was still dark when we came to the secret checkpoint at Yanchep for a short rest and hot pea soup from Susan Midolo's kitchen. At this stage there were three groups and each left as they had arrived, some riders wearing bats as it was very cold and hard to control the bladder. I also found myself in the last group with David Midolo, Peter Steer, John Martin and Rob Hillary and about 15kms towards the first checkpoint we caught up with two breakaways in Colin Farmer and Lin Hambleton.

Guilderton on the Moore River mouth on this beautiful morning was the first check point and it gave us an opportunity to have breakfast and say farewell to what was becoming known as "Company A" (the first group). The surf was up but they still went howling off up the road to the Gingin turnoff; that was the last time we saw them for the day. Halfway along the road to Gingin, Mike Bullard, Ross Adams and George Najjar had stopped for a comfort break and were patiently waiting for our group to take advantage of a draft. George was with us for a few K's then went on alone but when he got to the 'T' junction he was seen to turn right instead of left. He wasn't carrying his direction sheet and had no way of knowing where we had gone and was unable to finish the ride.

The next checkpoint was on the 'T' junction on the Mudgumber Road and the leading riders had already gone on to other posts. Mike Bullard and Ross Adams; members of the Perth Christian Cycling Club must have heard about the "Devil takes the hindmost" race in cycling because they decided to leave with 'B' company led by Kleber Claux and John Meakin, thus using our group as a buffer between them and the men with the fork. No disrespect meant boys.

It started to rain as we left for Toodyay and the coats came out again to become part of our uniform giving us some protection against the wet and cold northwest wind. This was the day when cyclone Orson was crossing the North West coast and unfortunately influencing our area of the State. About 3km's out, Sue Jones was unable to carry on and her riding partner husband Barry was obviously disappointed for his wife. After her bike was loaded onto the support vans trailer he went on alone overtaking our mob on the Bindoon Hill.

Young Roland Hillary had some doubts about whether he would be able to finish this ride and as it was his third attempt at the distance we jointly gave him our full attention. He was

surely strong and fit enough so we pestered him until he agreed to give it his all. He and we were proud to see him complete and beat his personal best to the finish. After Bindoon we had a northerly tail wind and made goodtime into Toodyay; our final checkpoint before Midland. It was very cold sitting there under a rain noisy Main Street Toodyay shop veranda drinking hot coffee which seemed out of place had it not been for our support crew. Colin Farmer was eating his long await edrice pudding and Barry Jones, finding it too cold to carryon decided to join his wife in the support van.

Barry must have known more about the last section to Midland than the rest of us because there were at least six Bindoon Hills, a north westerly headwind, a cold rain and the oncoming night. Lin Hambleton had a broken spoke in his back wheel and with Sunday drivers doing their best to run us over, it must have been hard for him to concentrate. Colin Farmer and I had the pleasure of seeing John Martin change down from his large front gear wheel on one of the hills and the long downhill run into Midland was uneventful for most.

Peter Steer had a puncture at the top of the Toodyay Road hill into Midland and Mike Bullard had one on the stony road into Guilderton in the morning. Kleber Cloux, John Meakin, Rod Evans and John Waters were still at the finish getting ready to go home and they told of two riders; Keith Pearmine and Peter Cooksey having been hit by a car driven by a hit run driver. They were both shaken up, Keith with mild concussion and Peter with abrasions and a shoulder injury. Apparently the car was seen to swerve across the road glancing the two cycles. Kleber and his group came upon the scene and both were already receiving first aid from the St. John Ambulance people and traffic police. A following driver witnessed the whole accident and the offending driver was caught further away in another suburb after hitting other cars. Both riders visited hospital and were allowed to go home after the necessary checks. There must be a message here for those who don't wear helmets -only mild concussion??

At the end of 300km must be a real test for the support crew having to wait for riders to come into the control point and sign brevet cards between 4.45 and 7.00pm. It was still raining as we tried to dry ourselves down and load our cars to go home to locations warmer. Thanks to all for sharing the effort to finish. DON BRIGGS