

WHAT A WAY TO CELEBRATE YOUR BIRTHDAY BY VANESSA BRIDGE

1989 Checkpoint

We had already sent Aileen Martin and her 'men' Dennis Stallard, Henk Kapiteyn and Ron Wake, off on their 6am start for the over 60's 200km Randonnée, and we were just waiting for honorary over 60 Rod Evans to show (it's that bike that slows him down you know) before getting the second group of Bill Clues, Reg Braddick, Ken Ward, Colin Farmer and Rod Evans away at 7 am.

It was a truly international crowd in Ron Masterman's kitchen that morning, myself and Shawna, from Canada, Reg Braddick from Cardiff Wales, and our birthday boy Bill Clues sounded as Aussie as they come. We certainly had the Commonwealth covered!

The sun rose bright and clear as Ron Masterman, Shawna and I drove the van to the first control at Pinjarra 63km. The 6am starters rolled in looking very strong, and they hardly had time for a cuppa before Dennis Stallard was up and jumping, eager to start the next leg. By the time the 7am starters pulled in (about 20 mins later) the 6am people were well and truly gone. Heading south out along the old Bunbury Road to Lake Clifton I was reminded of Sunday's 300km, as the rain started to sprinkle on the windscreen and I hoped it would fare better for this lot.

The second control at Lake Clifton 98km saw the actual meeting of the two groups, although Dennis' enthusiasm had his bunch on the road a few minutes before the second group. The rain and that dreadful hill on the Old Bunbury Road had virtually no effect on these keeners'. The rain continued to sprinkle on our crew on and off all the way to the third control at Peter the road bike shop in Safety Bay 161km.

Again the 6am starters were in first, although the gap was significantly less this time. Everyone was pleased to see Peter up and about despite the dislocated shoulder he suffered in his unfortunate accident on the 300km. Everyone set off, at Dennis' urging, on the last leg together, heading for the tea and sausage rolls kindly prepared by Ron Masterman's wife. All faces were smiling in the rays of the evening sun which decided to make a cameo appearance now that the event was over. Bill Clues had never cycled that far before and I think that in years to come it will be one of the most memorable birthdays of his life.

*EDITORS NOTE; The author Vanessa Bridge and Shawna Brown are from Vancouver Canada and are in Australia to help Rod Evans with his Around Australia record attempt. Vanessa is a member of British Columbia Audax Club and has worked as support crew for riders in the Paris-Brest-Paris and the North Road 24. I wonder if Vanessa is the daughter of Harold Bridge who was until recently the Editor of the B.C. Randonneurs Newsletter????