

Checkpoint March 1995

Dinner to Breakfast 300km

By Don Briggs Audax WA

Ten riders started out at 5:00am from the Midland Junction Police Station with a temperature of 34°C and a very strong westerly wind. The first hurdle was the Greenmount hill to Clackline our first control point. The field had split into four groups of riders; Rob Keogh and Duncan Faux well out in front followed by Brian Hawes and Jim Matthews. When I arrived Brian tried to get me to ride on with them but the heat and hills had weakened my legs and I chose to wait for the next rider. Two arrived in Amanda Annells and Chris O'Brien and just as we were leaving Lin Hambleton, Brian Smith and Jamie Ingram strolled in.

The sun had set when we rode off toward Spencer's Brook and the next stop at the Pioneering town of York. Road-works only one kilometre from Clackline set us off on an old section of road where we actually went through some 44 gallon barrels because the detour would have been on gravel. As we rode on down the disused road, complaining about the surface we suddenly saw Brian Hughes go by in the back-up vehicle which was on the new road only 20 meters off to our left. Behind us we were later to find out that Lin Hambleton had actually crashed into one of the barrels and injured his knee. He retired at York.

The wind turned against us after leaving York, coming from the south-east as we pedalled on through the wheat-belt town of Beverley and headed on to Brookton. Only 10km to go and we saw some cyclists heading toward us which seemed a mystery until Brian and Jim came into view and they explained that the Brookton Highway had been closed by the Police and our only way home was back the way we had come. Reaching Brookton we found Brian Hughes with Lin asleep in the front seat, Duncan Faux and Rob Keogh sitting in the back with their bikes on the trailer. Brian the Ride Organiser agreed that they be transported to a point which would equal the distance travelled by the rest of us as they had already travelled 25km along the Brookton Highway before the Police caught up with them and bought them back to the Control Point at Brookton.

After stocking up, we went off back to Beverley with a tail wind, which made the late and warm night riding very pleasant. Amanda and Chris were riding strongly and when we arrived at Beverley there was five of us to return as a group to Midland via York and The Lakes. Strong cups of coffee were accepted from our very capable back-up crew of one. We five stayed as a group to York and along the very hilly section to The Lakes. Just before dawn everyone was falling asleep but as soon as the sun rose we regained new strength.

Somewhere before The Lakes, Chris O'Brien stopped on the side of the road to rest; his diet for the ride was mainly pizza; not much carbohydrates in that. Amanda and I left Brian Smith and Jamie Ingram behind at The Lakes, which is a 24 hour service centre and restaurant. They chose to take the remaining 34km a little easier after the hills. My rear wheel had a broken spoke and to take the wobble out I released the tension on the other side which left a large egg shape in the rim. This meant going slower downhill; I feared a complete collapse. Amanda had waited at the bottom of Greenmount Hill and we rode to the finish together. Thirty minutes later Brian and Jamie arrived and then a further half an hour saw Chris complete his struggle; much wiser.