

C.T.A./Audax (W.A.) 400

Three am on Saturday April 11th saw 13 of the 14 entrants for our 400 km Randonee assembled at Stockman's Garage watching with dismay as the Easterley freshened and rain squalls came along. Long pants and wet weather gear were the order of the day as the bunch set off before the wind for Bullsbrook, the reflective vests and ankle socks making a brilliant display. We had heard that road works were in progress on the Brookton highway but assurance was received from the MRD that it was now sealed. However they are a crafty bunch, as Bindoon produced 13 light brown cyclists after travelling 1 km of about-to-be resurfaced Great Northern Highway which the rains had brought to the consistency of porridge! (how many wished mudguards were still mandatory?)

By the first control at the top of Bindoon Hill the bunch had already split in to three, the gusty winds making tight group riding hazardous. However at least the rain had gone. On through the undulating wooded section to Toodyay where John Martin was spotted with a broken spoke. First over the long climb out of Toodyay was our guest from Canberra, Nick Payne, with Stewart Stockdale both looking fresh. Nick Payne was a welcome starter as he was one of the first members of the CTA and it was great to see him again. Down the magnificent 7 km descent to the second control at Clacklone where Robert Minoo and John Meakin took the opportunity of a longer stop as Robert was suffering with cramp. On through Spencers Brook and Northam with a less welcome wind, at least it was from the tail up Monument Hill! The Secret Control at Grass Valley was at just half distance with all riders going well and enjoying the middle day warmth and the opportunity to refill bottles etc. John and Aileen Martin caught Phil Giddins and Kleber Claux mending Phil's puncture and continued with them to York. Nick and Stewart were first into Beverley at 15.22 with 273 km behind them, the others went by in twos and threes with Shane Richie, Peter Cooksey, Ron Masterman (our senior member) and Allan Booth riding their usual well programmed ride, bringing up the rear at 17.46 with light fading in the sky.

The lovely Dale road was pretty testing with the gusty winds and steepish climbs and the Brookton highway was a welcome sight. Support car driver Richard Evenett must have looked welcome as he dispensed water and food near the Lesley Picnic area as there are no shops for about 90 km on this lonely stretch. Unfortunately Lin Hambleton was forced to retire from the ride on the Brookton highway with extreme fatigue - more rice power next time Lin? The earlier riders were lucky with a light tail breeze on the Brookton highway but this abated as the sky cleared for a brilliant, though pretty chilly, night and the descent of Kalamunda Hill stiffened several aching knees!

First finishers were Nick Payne and Stewart Stockdale at 22.15. Shane Richie arrived with whoops of joy at 2.03 am and quote of the event must go to Phil Giddins who was asked how it felt to complete the 400, replied "I am glad it is only 400 km and not 401!" Allan, Ron and Peter arrived at 2.20 looking unbelievably fresh, showing the benefits of riding well within your ability; in spite

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of Allan's punctures. Aileen Martin gets special mention as our only lady Randonneur with the very creditable finish time of 22.43. Robert Min0o and John Meakin came in together at 01.25, Robert was suspected of falling off but was only kissing mother earth at the finish! John Meakin had a near accident when a rabbit ran across the road and jammed its self between his chainwheel and frame, he was lucky to stay upright. Our non starter, Bert Van De-Moosdyk was all ready to saddle-up for a 3 am start on Sunday morning having got his dates mixed!

A very successful event, in spite of mixed weather.