

### 18-19 September 2004 - Ray Stenhouse

This year a record number of cyclists, a total of 23, presented at the Sobey residence in Albury. The weather, in contrast to last year, was superb with the sun shining and no rain in sight. With the trailer packed, and a few last minute instructions, the group headed south. They travelled pretty well until Barnawathwa where proceeding slowed, well actually stopped, while a punctured tube was replaced. From Barny, Chiltern was next on the itinerary where the local bakery was visited. As the cyclists consumed their coffee and edibles the town was visited by an historic vehicles rally which added to the olde world charm of Chiltern.

Using the back roads the group next made their way to Scribblers Cafe in downtown Wangaratta. Another stop was made on the way for another punctured tube, but with Les offering a helping hand the cyclists were delayed just a little longer but seeing the day was so pleasant no-one seemed to mind. The lunch at Scribblers was extremely good, as is the norm.

After lunch the decision time was reached. To loop the Warbies over Ryan's Gap and then back across Tamanick Gap or to just go to Ryan's Lookout and then back to town. Well, there was really only one choice, and that was how fast were you willing to go. There were some that wanted to test themselves on the climbs and there were others that took a more conservative approach. The rewards, as always when climbing hills, is the run off the top and cyclists were amply rewarded for their efforts.

The snacks and drinks were ready upon arrival at the caravan park. This allowed the riders to have a bit of a rest, and enjoy some banter while allowing riders to drift off and grab a shower when convenient. Before long we headed to the Sydney Hotel where a three-course dinner awaited. Some of the local wines were given the nod of approval and dinner was consumed with gusto.

Upon attempting to return to the caravan park the trip became the Wangaratta Wander as the group missed the turn onto the track to the park. They wandered for some distance before finally accepting that they were lost. Eventually they found the missing track and, at a racing pace, headed in the right direction.

Breakfast at 7:30 and on the road at 8:30 we headed south until we hit the Snow Road just past Milawa. Les organised a morning tea stop about 20km from Myrtleford where he laid on a veritable smorgasbord. It was a good spot by the creek but the bikes were beckoning. The bakery was supposed to be the lunch stop but it was too early for lunch when the group rolled in so the plans were amended with a second morning tea.

The riders then headed for Yackandandah. Along the way another decision point was reached with some continuing straight to Yack while the rest took the Tunnel Gap Road. All riders were pleased with their respective decisions at lunch at the Yackandandah Bakery. With all the bikes lined up outside the bakery one was clipped by an older gentleman whose electric car was wider at the back than he realised. This clash buckled both wheels with a broken spoke or two in the rear one as well. Despite this incident after lunch it was up the hill out of Yack with a right turn out to Osbornes Flat. From there it was back to Wodonga with a final climb up the Riverina Highway out of Albury to the Sobey residence.

Our thanks go to Les for his time and efforts in organising such an event. On the weekend we had the pleasure of Les' daughter, Ellie, who came along and rendered every assistance to her father and we're thankful for her efforts as well. Les has decided to move the event forward to march next year, so if you're up for a bit of a challenge, and you enjoy good company then get on the invitation list by e-mailing Les at [lesobey@tpg.com.au](mailto:lesobey@tpg.com.au).

The participants:

Ron Addison, Robert Alston, Shane Burkett, Paul Burns, Jon De Wit, Allan Dudderidge, Geoff Dynan, Anton Els, Louise Ferguson, John Geraghty, Tim Huggins, Ron Kerr, Mark Langford, Aaron Matthes, Norm McCann, Keith McCulloch, Peter Meredith, Graeme Miller, Annette Pattison, Garry Skeers, Les Sobey, Ray Stenhouse, Andrew White.