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British Columbia

Randonneur

Marathon Cycling

Observations on Randonneuring

E. W. [Wim] Kok

As a rookie randonneur - this is my first season - there are a few observations that I like to share after having successfully completed four brevets this year. [200, 300, 400 and 600 km]

On randonneuring;

What a way to explore and appreciate the world around us.

On mindset:

As a cyclist who also likes to race at times [time-trialing and road racing] I found it important to discard the 'racing attitude' during a populaire or brevet. It is the last kilometer, the last hill that determines whether or not a ride is be successfully completed. The saying that 'when the going gets tough, the tough get going' definitely applies to randonneuring. Then again, when the going gets tough, don't get too excited, relax and enjoy it. Keep on peddling and you'll get there.

On gearing:

Heed the advice for small gears. I never thought I would admit or even say this. Having been involved in bicycle racing, one tends to ignore the small ones, except for the uphills. Small gears are great especially toward the end of the day when that last hill seems to be almost insurmountable, or when that incessant headwind seems to sap all your energy. Small gears allow one to maintain a steady pace at a decent speed without getting too tired. They are like that extra powerbar in your pack.

On weather:

"Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it," [C.D. Warner, in Hartford Courant, c. 1890] Knowing that weather is always with us, we can talk and complain about it, and we can..... cycle in it. Yes, the winds can be a

help and a hindrance. As a help enjoy it, recite Shelley. As a hindrance I'd say ignore it. It won't go away. Having experienced very little rain during the rides in the Peace region, I can't comment on the wet part of randonneuring. Sub-zero temperatures with severe wind-chills and snowy conditions require one to dress warm. I am not sure how long distances under these conditions would be. I am sure that being well prepared will make a difference.

On cycling in remote areas without services or settlement.

In remote areas one must be very appreciative of the fact that no services [food or drink] may be available for long stretches of the ride. On weekends when stores close early at night and open later in the morning, extra provisions need to be taken along on these self-sufficient rides. This of course adds extra weight, but that is definitely worth its weight in gold when you are getting hungry or thirsty.

On wildlife and other critters:

Encountering wildlife provides an extra opportunity to appreciate the world around us. On the other hand wildlife also requires caution. During one of the early rides a group of eight white tail deer bounced across the road, a 7 % downhill section where we were cruising at speeds of 70 kph. We did indeed

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slow down to prevent a collision. Domestic dogs tend to chase cyclists, even when they are going at a moderate pace. Sometimes they [the dogs that is] may not recognize randonneurs for what they are: humans. However yelling 'go home' to them may achieve that they will indeed heed your human advice. Domestic livestock represent a different story. As you pass the crowd, they may continue to graze undisturbed. Then again, when one decides that the alien on wheels [you!!] looks too spooky, a stampede results. What a sight. I am not sure that the rural owner agrees.

And finally, on randonneurs.

Having read a number of event accounts from randonneurs, I can only conclude that they do strike me like a funny bunch. I guess sitting around for that long, one can't help but see humor in many a situation, albeit it black at times.

Busy in the Rockies

Harold Bridge

I've been back from Kamloops a week now & I'm still messing about with stuff related to the event.

The last control before returning to Kamloops was at Vernon Youth Hostel. When the goings on were explained to the the Warden, she asked for a map describing what all these strange, tired looking cyclists were doing. The map became a big job when I decided to add control info as well as the profile showing the contours. Mailed it to Vernon addressed to a friend who would deliver. That was on Friday July 21. Monday morning, 24th, there's knock on the door. The tube with my map in it was delivered to me! Big bold type for the recipient & skinny little "FROM" address didn't matter, I had put my address underneath! Lucky at the post office, there was a concerned postman who took it from me saying it would be in Vernon on

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Submissions: Please send articles to me. My preference is plain text files or Word and digital photos in JPEG format to stoker@telus.net. Or mail (preferable a diskette) to Susan Allen, 2356 W 6th Ave, Vancouver, BC V6K 1V9

Next publication deadline is sometime late October to mid-November.

Tuesday. It was.

Wed 26 - 07:00. Danelle, organiser & Karen, one of the riders, pick up 2 15 passenger vans from National on West Broadway. Go back to Danelle's near the Planetarium take out all but one of the benches. Load up with food, blankets, microwave ovens etc in one van & go up to Ted's in Coquitlam to pick up more food. He had only ordered it, off to Safeway to load up.

11:30: Eventually arrive at my place. Load up my microwave, cameras & clothing. Danelle & Karen get in the van that would be the lead vehicle & I get in the empty, sweep van. Stop in Maple Ridge to pick up MAC, a non-cyclist who enjoys being involved in this event.

17:00: Bike check & registration at Heritage House, Riverside Park, Kamloops. 40 riders entered. 39 registered, Bob Bose has returned to Surrey politics & isn't doing the required training. Apart from the 10 BC riders there were 1 Albertan, 3 Saskatchewan riders, 3 from Manitoba, 17 Americans from Seattle, Portland, Missouri, Wisconsin, Boston & Minnesota, 2 Germans, one Dane, the youngest at 31, one Aussie, & 2 Brits, including the oldest rider, Jack Eason, 75 (or will be later in August).

18:00-21:00 Loading lead vehicle with riders' drop off bags. Danelle had Majbrit Kunnigas, the Danish rider's girlfriend, with her, the only rider's support person who volunteered to help in the event. Danelle was also supposed to take MAC to his post at Tete Jaune Cache (TJC), the 338 km control. But there was no room. Danelle had to get to Clearwater ahead of the riders for the 122 km control before pressing on to drop off stuff at the other controls.

Thursday 04:00: I start the 84 hour scheduled riders after a night on a sofa in Heritage House where I managed about 30 minutes sleep. Stop & fill up with gas, \$47.00, & dash off to Clearwater to check in the riders. As anticipated the first 3 riders arrived at 07:38, 12 minutes before the control opened. It just meant they got their food plusses & minusses seen to before I signed their cards & they were away right on 06:00: I arrive at Clearwater with MAC who transfers to Bob Marsh's truck to be taken to TJC by the opening at 09:30. Bob's Sister-in-law runs the Sandman Inn at Blue River & Pat Marsh was there looking after the control.

07:50: We have always used the Petro Canada gas station as the control. But this time it wasn't open so water & toilet were not available. 09:00: The last rider arrives. He had punctured a little way down the road & was equipped with one of those stupid little mini-pumps & was unable to seriously inflate his tyre. He had hoped to use the gas station air or my floor pump. But I always forget one thing. This time it was my floor pump! He finished up going about 3 km into Clearwater itself to find a gas station & lost about 40 minutes as a result. Despite the fact the station was obviously closed drivers kept on coming in expecting service. It was just before I left at 09:30 I realised the problem. I was wearing my BC Randonneurs jacket which is black with red & white maple leaves all over it! The official closing time for the control was 11:40. But with all riders through I went for breakfast.

12:30: Arrive at Blue River. Tool box came out for Manfred who wanted to adjust the slop out of his bottom

bracket. Went for lunch with Bob Marsh across at the Husky.

14:30: Leave Blue River. Stop for a doze somewhere up the road & continue to monitor the last riders on the road.

15:30: Pop into Valmount to buy a belt, losing weight!

16:10: Arrive at the Tete Jaune Motel. MAC had everything under control but I took over while he went to the restaurant. Later we had dinner with Ian, a BC rider who turned back enroute to Jasper. He had been working too much & not training.

21:30: Went to bed

Friday 28th, 07:00: Woke up - Late.

Packed the van & headed to Jasper. 09:50: Got to the Palisades control 15 kms east of Jasper. Understaffed with just Tom & Janice Hocking. An accident in the previous week's 300 had left the Icefield Centre's controller with a broken Collar Bone & I had to move Chris & Arnie there from Palisades.

10:15: Head toward Jasper. But decided to stay on route & get breakfast at Sunwapta Lodge instead of Jasper.

11:30 (12:30 local time): Had lunch instead of breakfast & headed down the Icefields Parkway in showery weather. MAC asked how we were off for gas! AAARGH! Close to empty. Not a good road to run out of gas on. I decided not to stop at Icefields, but press on non-stop to Saskatchewan River Crossing where there is a gas station. Didn't fill up, just \$45 worth at 88.9 cents a litre!

14:15: Back to Icefields where the last riders were about to leave in cold wet conditions. They were in plenty of time as the control wasn't due to close until 15:40.

An added chore this time round was removing the reflective signs Danelle had put up to help people find their way into controls. It was a cold wet walk I had around the Icefields Centre finding them. It also meant we couldn't get too far ahead of the last riders as the signs couldn't come down before they had passed.

By this time Danelle's load was about half gone & we had accumulated it. 19:00: Arrive at Lake Louise. Bob Boonstra was there & he took us to the Youth Hostel for dinner. Good. As sweep it is part of my job to pick up riders in need of a ride. We had got to Lake Louise too soon. Up on Bow Summit Cheryl Lynch had decided her achilles tendon was too painful to continue. Fortunately, the Hindes were on that stretch of road at that time & were able to bring her into the control. Her parents were on hand complete with

"Toro", Cheryl's ferocious lamb dog & from then on Cheryl became part of the help when she took over from the Pater & Mjbrit at Revelstoke control so they could get to see their riders finish at Kamloops..

However, despite the theory about picking up riders, with the amount of stuff being carried it is very iffy whether or not both body & bicycle could have got in the van.

Saturday 29th - 00:00: Arrived at the Golden control. Frances & her son were supposed to be there but son went fishing instead. Michel Richard, who had planned to ride the event went with her instead. Michel had ridden the Millenium Project 2000 at the end of June. The 9 riders went from Abbotsford to Vanderhoof & back at a daily average of about 300 kms Michel crashed with some 500 km to go. But despite a broken arm & ribs he finished!

I forget why but we drove that road over Kicking Horse Pass twice, both times in the dark. We needed to get something to Golden but had to go back for the signs. We arrived at Golden at midnight the second time & had some sleep at Lake Louise in between.

Sat 29th - 16:20: Arrived at Revelstoke. We had been going up & down at fairly high elevations in varying degrees of cold & wet. We were tired, & had been travelling in an air conditioned vehicle. We climbed out at Revelstoke into 30 deg C weather. It hit us like a blast furnace. It is no wonder MAC collapsed on the bed with a throbbing headache. Some sleep & a meal at Denny's & he was okay.

23:00: Left for Salmon Arm.

Sunday 30th -04:35: Arrived at control closing time. We cleared our stuff out of the rec centre & were ready to drive to Vernon. But it seemed a waste to take the big van to Vernon when many of the riders who had already finished would be waiting for their bags. I suggested that MAC take Doug in the big van directly to Kamloops while Real & I went to Vernon. We were surprised to find a rider way out the back behind those we thought were last on the road. Brian, from Boston, had taken a motel room after leaving the control & seemed in very good shape. We found the hostel, loaded up the stuff in Real's truck; 7 went for breakfast. Retraced to remove signs after Brian had passed by & finally got going on Highway 97 for Monte Creek & Highway 1 into Kamloops. With the good weather & the prospect of the finish being so close everyone was in good humour

Coming Events

L. Mainland 200 km – Sep 17
Also 50, 100 and 150 km

7 am, Albion

Tim Pollock 939-8166

AGM Ride & Brunch (\$18) – Oct. 1

10 am, Fort Langley

Jude Morrison 879-3661

& looking good.

A nice touch was that the 4 tailenders from the 84 hour group had caught 75 year old Jack Eason along this stretch & they decided to escort him to the finish.

At Heritage House Lyle Beaulac had done a Trojan job from Midnight Saturday until Brian from Boston finished at 14:55 for a time of 88:55. Victoria's Ken Bonner, 57, was anxious to catch a Sunday night ferry & was unable this time to stop for the wrap up party. But as he finished Saturday @ 11:36 for a time of 55:36 he had had a good sleep before coming down to Heritage House to congratulate & be congratulated. Without a new Calgary-Vancouver record of 40:01 in his legs but 2 weeks before, he might have got inside 50 hours!

Four of us shared a motel Sunday night, MAC & I were joined by Young Doug, who had his own mattress & sleeping bag, & Jack Eason. I know MAC & Jack snore & they claim I was champion. Doug must have had nightmares about the Three Tenors gone bad!

A group breakfast at White Spot the following morning was a happy affair. Nobo was taking Andy Wimmer, one of the German riders, back to Vancouver in his Volkswagen van. That must have added to the sense of adventure Andy claimed he got from the event! Jack came back with us. I thought to stay with me. But when he found out how far out of town I lived he went to Cheryl's as he wanted to see Vancouver before flying back Tuesday night. Within 2 weeks Jack will be back this side of the pond; He's riding Boston-Montreal-Boston for the fourth time!

Another stop at Merritt for gas & Dairy Queen was the final split of the party. Quite an enjoyable, if tiring, few days.

From the Ashes of a 1/3x1200

Ian Stephen

So, my first attempt at a 1200km and I fizzled out like a cheap, soggy novelty on a rainy halloween. These are the sort of rides from which we are obligated to take lessons so that they aren't a complete loss, right? Not that I have any lessons of value to pass on to the other participants in this year's RM1200. To them I can only offer a bit of explanation to answer the quizzical looks I got as I headed back to Tete Jaune Cache from Moose Lake. The problem was my left knee. It was giving me that old "trying to do too much after having done too little for too long" feeling. I've ignored that twice in the past and paid for it. This time I got it right! It's Saturday now and I'm confident that the knee is going to be fine. Sincere apologies if I caused anybody any anxiety by suddenly appearing in a B.C. Randonneur jacket going the opposite direction. I should have removed the jacket so that the club colours wouldn't be seen retreating.

Now, what lessons can I pull from the ashes of dismal failure and offer up that future first-timers might avoid the same errors?

1. One can often drag one's sorry self through the "little" brevets on stubbornness, but there comes a point where real fitness is required. Reading a sport psychology book before an event, however good the book might be, is no substitute for lots of kilometers.

2. Having booked time off work for the event, then

gathering excuses instead of kilometers in the weeks (months!) preceding the event, there came a time when I knew the odds were against finishing. I could have had a much more positive experience had I volunteered instead of entering the event. That's what I'll do next time if I'm not confident of finishing. Harold told me that Karen Smith both volunteered and entered! Wow!

3. If you do gather excuses before an event like this, write them down, date them and take them along. Sitting dazed and despondent at the shore of Moose Lake I found that I couldn't recall most of the excuses. If I'd had them along I could have at least reviewed them. Speaking of reviewing things, if you keep a training diary (I expect most of us do) don't just write in it, read it once in a while to see just how much you might be slacking.

4. At registration and bike check, bring ALL the mandatory equipment (ie reflective clothing) or you will be forced to throw yourself upon the mercy of the bike checker. Thanks Harold. Also DON'T SET YOUR CONTROL CARD DOWN! Not ever. Not even for a moment.

5. Remember that the control card needs to be signed at the start too. It might be expected that I'd know that last point by now, but I usually arrive at starts as or after the other riders leave (see 6.) and scramble through in a tense rush. I guess I haven't had to think about it before. Thanks Danelle and all the volunteers at all the starts where I haven't had to think.

6. Arrive early! This also gives you time to check over your equipment before you go.

7. At no time should you be cranking away at a barrel adjuster and saying "shift you *@#&! " while the chain goes "click-click-click-click..." This is a sign that something else is wrong. Perhaps the quick-release that should have been checked at the start is open. (see 6.)

Having called it quits, I looked at my map and decided that Tete Jaune Cache looked like an easier place to get home from than Jasper. At Tete Jaune I had the pleasure of Harold and Mack's company for dinner, one of the highlights of my adventure. It may not have been apparent in my semi-catatonic state, but good company did lots to improve my mood. Thanks gentlemen. Later I put to the test an idea that I read somewhere. After a hot bath for me, I washed shorts, jersey, socks, jacket and pants in the sink, rung them out, then rolled each up in a towel and squeezed before hanging them up. Sure enough even the heavier garments were dry by morning. The roll-up-in-a-towel thing works great!

Friday morning I bicycle-limped back to Valemount at a sad 15-20 kph. Got some inspiration at the sign honouring Terry Fox. In Valemount I learned several things.

a) Greyhound does carry bikes, but the bike must be boxed. (Actually Harold had told me as much the evening before.)

b) Sporting goods stores, even in a town of 1300, may have a cardboard bike box that you can have for free as it would just go in the garbage anyway. Thanks Valemount Sporting & Clothing.

c) With the bus soon to leave, it is possible to undo cables and remove handlebars, saddle, wheels, fender, pedals and rear derailleur and stuff it all in a box in under half an hour armed only with a Topeak "Power 21" tool. I wouldn't recommend it

though.

That was about it for my adventure. The Greyhound was comfy...actually a couple more things I learned. People on Greyhounds will place objects in the seat beside them so it appears that the seat is occupied at stops. One must be a little assertive to find a seat on a half empty bus! Also, reading a newspaper on the bus passes the time, but wounds the spirit. My antidote for all that bad news was to remember some of the people I've met on this ride and rides past. I wonder if other sports attract as fine a bunch of people as randonneuring does?

Sincere thanks to Danelle and all who helped make this event possible. I had a great time in spite of things not going quite to plan. I look forward to reading the stories of riders who completed the 1200 and maybe some tips on what they did right!

STRUGGLIN' - a Profile of Jack Eason

Tim Wainwright

Introduction by Harold Bridge

The Rocky Mountain 1200 is now behind us for a while & has left those of us involved in it with a host of memories. The average age of the 40 entrants, 39 starters & 35 finishers was 46 years. The youngest rider, Stig Lundgaard from Denmark, was 31 & Jack Eason from England was the oldest, a month short of 75.

The current issue of "ARRIVEE", Audax UK's glossy quarterly magazine, includes a profile of Jack & I think it worth repeating in this publication. I asked the author if he could e-mail the article to Susan. But he had already erased it & gave me the go-ahead to copy the text. I can't do much about the 5 photos included.



Jack Eason during the Rocky Mountain 1200 (photo: Harold Bridge)

Anyone who meets Jack soon realises the sparkle in his eye is kept there with his love of long distance cycling and his dry sense of humour is often tongue-in-cheek, not to be taken too seriously.

Fortunately for me, I coaxed a few of his secrets to share with you:

You currently live in Potters Bar in Hertfordshire. Is this your hometown?

Yes

Which cycling club do you belong to?

Willesden CC

I believe you had a career in the R.A.F. For how long was this?

It wasn't a career, just had to join up halfway through the war. I was demobbed in 1947.

How long have you been a long distance cyclist?

Always, 30 miles was a long distance when I was a kid.

The vast amount of kilometres you ride are becoming legendary in AUK circles. Riding to and from events across the country each weekend is quite common for you. What total distance do you cover each year?

Approximately 20,000 miles (if I can afford the tyres!)

Your Brevet 25,000 is in the bag, how many kilometres left to reach your 50,000?

Nearly there, when I get some time to sort out the paperwork.

What is your maximum for a year and when?

I don't keep records, although I've done a thousand miles in a week a few times.

Over the last 5 years you have ridden LEL once, PBP twice, BMB three times, what ultra-long rides have you planned for this year?

I only think of the next ride - the others just materialise as the weather gets warmer.

You are one of AUK's most well-known members, recognised by auks countrywide after riding so many events. You have proved that you don't need the latest cycling equipment and clothing to be a successful long distance cyclist - I notice that it is only in the last couple of years you've added toe clips and straps to your pedals. Give us a few details about your fleet of bikes.

I have two bikes, one is green, so is the other one - one being a clone of the other. They have the same hardware but one gets favoured with the newer parts. I also have a "bitsa" bike (also green) used for off-road events (silly rides for the CTC DA competition).

You had a painful experience in PBP99 when a crank broke. Tell us what happened

The right hand crank broke in half a few miles short of Fougères. I scooted into the Controle and Mark Trigg and Bob Howell went off to a local shop for a replacement but it wasn't satisfactory. Found a local girl who was fluent in English to tell the "onboard mechanic" to get back to shop and have them send down another, which he then fitted. The (gear) ratios were a bit high but struggled through. No other damage but impact with top tube made my eyes water!

What are your favourite three events in the AUK calendar?

The Daylight 600, the National 400 and the Brevet Cymru

400 (and all the others if it doesn't rain)!

When you first went to America for BMB, the high tech North American cyclists on their carbon fibre and titanium framed bikes couldn't believe you, a pipe smoking granddad, had a snowball in hell's chance of finishing. Alongside you was Steve Abraham on fixed, which completed the picture of eccentric Englishmen. You completed where many of them failed. Can you recall your favourite memories from that event? Telling the local radio station you saved up for the trip by doing a paper round, which your mother was covering while you were away, comes to mind.

Too long ago to remember. But, I was cycling home, approaching Leicester, and saw a female having bike trouble on the opposite side. I went across to see if I could help. A puncture - no problem. Cover was pierced with a sliver of wood, which I removed.. I don't patch tubes insitu and told her I would replace tube with one of my spares, patched many,many times (I am not one of the "six patches" then throw away brigade). She was happy with this. All went well. No brake release so let tyre down to fit in bike, then skewer would not tighten wheel - too much axle poking through. Had a closer look - the locknut was missing. Searched around and found it on the ground in two bits. It had cracked in half, with rust. Tried to form a spacer out of a spare spoke, but couldn't make it small enough. She followed what I was trying to do. She unzipped her jacket, lifted her jumper and un-screwed or untwisted a ring from her belly button and said "Try this". It was a tight fit but went on with a struggle. Success- wheel tightened on fork. Pumped up tyre, had a test ride-all OK. She gave me a kiss and went on her way to Loughborough. Continued on my way with a tailwind and for a while oncoming lights all looked like a belly button.

What is the secret of your long-distance Riding success? Is it the slabs of chocolate and fruit cake in your bar bag? Spill the beans Jack - there are many of our members who would dearly love to complete a tenth of the miles you do.

Choose the right mum and dad Plus luck

What hobbies do you have outside of cycling?

I have an allotment (rented vegetable garden), enjoy reading, dancing, G3RVQ (call sign)

What television programs make you use the off switch?

I do not have a TV - no time. Also it's lots of fun when the licence chap calls, he's positive I'm cheating.

A Mari Usque Ad Mare - 7433.5 Km

Roger Street

Riding time of 293.68 hours, average speed of 25.31 km/hr, average of 151.7 km and 6 hours per riding day. An eight week trip, of which seven days were spent resting and playing. We started on Monday morning, June 5 at the salmon stream on Spanish Banks and finished on Sunday afternoon, July 30 at Cape Spear, Newfoundland. A full-service RV, driven by Sharon Street, was the key to enjoyment of our 2000 Ride Across Canada. Start time was 7:00 am, coffee break was at 50-55 km, lunch was at 100-110 km, Coke and cookies at mid afternoon and the finish at or about 4:00 pm. The BC Randonneurs 2000/cyclist pin design was prominently

displayed.

Maintaining cyclists is a non-stop process of food acquisition and preparation, special request searches, precise route timing, campground discovery, gas, laundry, home/RV maintenance and a general concern for their well-being. Adopting the moniker of Dolly Domestic, Sharon was ably assisted by her mascot, Marcel FlapJack Moose of Pancake Bay, Ontario. Both Dolly and Marcel have announced their retirement (is it temporary - what about the leg from Prince Rupert to Tete Jaune Cache?)

The first five weeks were spent in the company of Bob Lepage and Deirdre Arscott. After the big sky country of Alberta and Saskatchewan, the general dampness of Manitoba and the vast expanse of Northern Ontario to Ottawa, they chose to follow their own agenda of family visits and "unsupported" travel. As a result, I became the sole beneficiary of the huge amount of planning and preparation put into this trip by Sharon. It was a wonderful three week cycle through Quebec, the Maritime mainland, PEI and the impressive length of "Newfoundland"!!

When you, my cycling friends, get your inheritance, your lottery payout, your work package, your retirement, or just a bigger line of credit, what can you expect from cycling across our great country?

No two days are the same.

Mornings are different than afternoons.

BC and Alberta - ego boosting climbs at Golden, Rogers Pass and Kicking Horse and the big sky rolling country of the prairies.

The Drumheller Dinosaur Display - makes you feel really insignificant.

Ontario - the province you will seemingly spend your entire cycling life to cross.

Maybe boating with friends on the Lake of the Woods and a wiener roast on one of its 10,000 islands.

Maybe a visit to your support vehicle by a bear when no one is home.

Getting cluster trucked on the TransCanada Highway! "Group of Seven" scenery for free.

Quebec - more "For Sale" signs than the Hadassah Bazaar. I chose not to enquire about the displayed kitchen sink. The vertical nature of the wonderfully scenic routes along the river made it impractical.

Camping by the St. Lawrence, wakening to the whmmp/whmmp/whmmp of the passing freighters.

The Confederation Bridge.

PEI - just as nice as nice gets. I recommend that you not pass slow moving farm vehicles on the downhill. The iron monsters have a way of not slowing on the ensuing upgrade, resulting in some interesting heart rate readings as the potato machine closes in at the top of the climb.

Newfoundland - best roads and cycling shoulders in the country; likely the province in which you will cycle the second most distance. Lots of your tax dollars spent on upgrades in process, please keep remitting.

Ferry rides in Quebec, from PEI and to Nfld. (Did you know that the Nova Scotia/Newfoundland service has a high-speed wave-piercing catamaran ferry which carries 200

vehicles/800 passengers and it is leased for a try-out season from Denmark? Is the lease cost less than \$400 million?)

Rest days: Calgary - (the kids), Yorkton, Sask. - (not much), Kenora, Ont. - (boating and wheel repairs), Wawa, Ont. - (the Goose), Ottawa, Ont. - (A Scottish friend and his "cabinet"), Amqui, Que. - (see Yorkton), Port Hastings, NS. - (a motel & TV with Tiger Woods @ the British Open). All good places for a day off.

Thousands of waterfowl in the marshes and songbirds on the wing.

Butterflies and eagles and the "screee" of the hunting hawk.

Moose, deer, fox, beaver, elk - look left/right all day? (The purported 150,000 moose of Newfoundland/Labrador seem to all be in Labrador. The cow moose with twin calves sighted in Ontario was a real highlight.)

Tremendous tail winds - unforgiving head winds - interesting side gusts.

Lightning and thunder, real close, real wet.

Wildlife (big and tiny) and matching road kill.

Mountains, plains, forests, rocks, lakes, marshes, scrub pine, oceans.

Unending hills, sometimes magnificently downsloping.

Bag Balm - replaced with Co-op Udder Ointment, thanks to Shania Twain.

Lunches of lobster sandwiches, dinners of pork and beans (pork tenderloin, that is), bakery treats, fresh baked brownies - a no-cravings trip.

Long days & short days.

Construction - the Orange Zone.

Thump thump - Thump thump - Thump thump. Repeat as necessary until the road enters and emerges from the orange zone.

Wheel sucking and pull taking.

Dynamite and road closures - with a bicycle just walk up the ditch.

Nutters, walking across Canada with a wagon pulled by huskies.

The early morning before traffic.

Mosquitoes, black flies, noseems, nippers, deerflies, horseflies, dungflies.

Lobster, scallops, cod, salmon.

Beef, perogies, local fruits and veggies.

Tim Hortons.

Dennis Hack, a Saskatchewan farmer of 68 years, known to Grant McLeod of the Prairie Randonneurs and first met by us in Revelstoke. He took time off to spray his crops as he passed by home and, with a mid-August harvest deadline, was two days ahead of us in Nfld.

Cyclists completing round-the-world trips, cyclists crossing Canada in 2000, cyclists crossing Newfoundland as the finish of a Canada 1998 tour, cyclists sponsored for a cause, newlyb cyclists on a tandem taking breaks every 30 minutes, Italians without skills in English or French, Quebecois just heading for home in Trois Rivieres, cyclists circling the Gaspe Peninsula in two weeks, cyclists on training rides for a change of pace (ouch) - just enjoy it.

Cyclists apparently carrying everything (including the aforementioned kitchen sink). Cyclists with almost nothing

(except, of course, Dolly Domestic for support).

Unscheduled detours north, south and west - never east.

Friends on the phone with loads of support.

Calls to the office - "Just deal with it."

Naps at lunch.

Heart and soul climbs at the Cape Spear finish that will make your emotions overflow.

Champagne and pecan pie!

The finish, with your best friend!

First Annual Bicycle Swap Meet

David Poon

The Vancouver Bicycle Club cordially invites the BC Randonneur Club to attend our first annual bicycle swap meet, which will be held at SPEC (2150 Maple St) on Sunday Sept 24th from 11 am to 3pm. A free table will be reserved for your association for the purpose of promoting bicycle awareness. Thank you.

Randonneur members are invited to consign, sell or swap bicycle parts at the meet. For table reservation, please contact David Poon at 322-1742 or email dynamo@vbc.bc.ca

Please book with me in advance before Sept 17th. Thank you.

Pacelining For Dummies

Tom Hocking

If you caught any of the coverage of le Tour this year, you watched and probably admired those long lines of riders in the peleton moving across your TV screen with seemingly effortless grace. A line of trained riders working together truly is a thing of beauty as it traverses the countryside fluidly, like some variegated snake. We don't have to be Euro pros to do this, but alas, the majority of recreational cyclists, yes, even some randonneurs, do not know how to ride a proper pace line. After four years of riding brevets with our club and observing riders in action, I feel it's time to address this issue.

Done properly, pacelining (or "drafting") can increase a rider's efficiency by up to 30%. That means 30% faster or farther on a given amount of cookies--a significant difference when you're nearing the end of a long ride. I should stress the "done properly" bit because many times I've been part of ragged lines on our rides when less experienced members seemed uncertain of how to do what when. This article has arisen out of my frustration at the wasted efforts and confusion that resulted. I hope to clear up some of this confusion and allow us to develop a commonly agreed upon standard of practice.

I rode with Edmonton Velo during the 80s and we had a strict protocol for riding pace lines. Not to say that these road racers were a bunch of "pace line nazis", but when bikes are travelling inches apart at 40 kph, certain rules are essential for safety.

The ideal situation for pace lining is terrain that is flat to rolling and frequented by wind (e.g. The Fraser Valley). When things are going good and all cylinders are clickin' it's often possible for following riders to simply coast whilst the lead rider is doing his best to turn bananas into lactic acid. Not only

is a good paceline efficient in terms of distances travelled at high average speeds, it also happens to be one hell of a lot of fun.

So how is it done? First a bit of theory about aerodynamics. Scientists have determined that air resistance is an exponential function of speed (Editor's note: technically it goes as the square but the effect is the same). In other words, as you increase your speed, the effort required to overcome the resistance of the air increases dramatically. For example, increasing your speed from 12 kph to 32 kph increases the air resistance you encounter by a whopping 1800%! A recent study demonstrated that, at 32 kph, the energy requirement is reduced by 18% in a paceline compared to a solo cyclist travelling at the same speed. And that's in still air. The difference becomes even more significant if you're riding into a headwind. What all this technobabble means is that a tremendous amount of a rider's energy is expended just trying to push bike and body through the ocean of air that surrounds us. Wouldn't it be nice if we didn't have all that atmosphere to contend with? Of course, without any air none of us would be able to breathe, so forget bicycling. But just suppose that there was another rider in front of you, poking a hole in the air for you to ride through. That rider would be breaking the wind for you and, according to the eggheads, your efficiency would skyrocket. That's what drafting is all about. The lead rider in the line punches this hole in the air. That window only stays open for a short time before it begins to close up again, so there is a pocket of low pressure just behind the lead rider. That's exactly where you want to be riding so you can get sucked along in the draft. The same theory holds for every other rider in the line. I believe that the effort expended is even less for each additional rider who joins in behind.

OK, so how did those Velo boys work it? Here's how: Riders form up single file in a group of two to perhaps eight bikes and begin pedalling at a mutually agreed upon speed. This could be a comfortable cruise if the purpose of the ride is leisurely or, if the group was really pouring on the coal, the pace could become greater than that which could be sustained for any length of time by one of these riders alone. The lead rider assumes an aerodynamic position on the drops or aerobars and pedals hard, but is careful to avoid going anaerobic. A smooth, steady pace is paramount. No braking without plenty of warning and no eating or drinking. Even standing up suddenly can create chaos back down the line. The lead rider remains on the front for a predetermined period, which may be 3 km on easy rides, or, if the group is really hammering, it could be as short as 30 pedal revolutions.

Now here's an important part that, for some reason, people don't seem to understand. When the lead rider's turn at the front is over, he (or she) does a shoulder check for oncoming traffic, then peels off **TO THE LEFT** and begins to soft pedal in such a way that the rest of the line overtakes him on his **RIGHT** side. As the last rider in line passes by, the erstwhile leader accelerates enough to fall in behind, thereby becoming the caboose. Now that rider can recover, take a well earned drink, scratch his nose and grope for a broken cookie in his jersey pocket. As other riders complete their turn at the front they will fall back to the end of the line in turn and our original 'leader' (now hopefully well recovered!) resumes his place at the front

once again. In this fashion the entire line recirculates continually as it moves down the road somewhat like a bulldozer's caterpillar tread. Except lighter, quieter, faster, and more graceful.

The role of the second rider in line, and all subsequent riders, is to maintain the correct interval to the rider ahead and to remain alert to what's coming up. Don't fixate on the rear wheel of the next bike. Instead try to peer ahead for upcoming traffic signals and hazards. How close should you be to the rider ahead? That really depends on several factors amongst which are speed and your own comfort level. It can vary from, say 6" (15 cm) to about a wheel length. Certainly after a distance equivalent to a bike length, you will notice the window beginning to close down and the beneficial effect will soon be lost. You do not want to let this happen for, if you do, you'll find you have to work very hard to get back on. Should you allow too much of a gap to open up, your train will become uncoupled and you will be unable to regain contact. It's what we call "getting dropped". Sometimes this gap can occur due to a lapse in attention. Neither do the riders behind you want this to happen to you because of the "slinky effect" that follows, nor do they want to lose contact with the locomotive. A line of serious road racers will maintain a constant chatter and would not be shy about informing you of your lack of concentration. The kindest phrase you might hear could be, "Gap.....Gap!.....Hey, watch the **** GAP!!"

Randonneurs, being of a far gentler sort, would never speak so harshly. Should the gap begin to widen despite your best efforts, then you need to communicate this to the rider in front (presumably before it becomes necessary to shout in order to be heard). If it becomes evident that you're in over your head or that the rest of the group is constantly riding above your comfort level and you're not able to recover, it's fine to let the group go and resume riding at your own pace. Chances are there'll be another train along in a few minutes that might be more to your ability. You can hop on the back of any train, but it's considered good etiquette to ask permission first.

When riding in a line do keep your hands near the brakes, but try to avoid touching your brakes (see Slinky Effect). If wheels are getting uncomfortably close, stop pedalling, sit up, and maintain your interval. Remember: smooth and steady....

A **CARDINAL RULE**: You must never, ever, allow your front wheel to touch any part of the bike in front of you for, if you do, you will go **DOWN**. The rider ahead may remain blissfully unaware of your personal tragedy, but terror will reign amongst those behind. If you don't feel comfortable with your tyre (I used Harold's spell checker) directly in line with the wheel ahead, it's permissible to ride slightly to one side or the other while maintaining the gap. Do not overlap wheels or you may come to grief when the rider ahead swerves suddenly to avoid debris.

Another part of the protocol that seems to be troublesome for many riders occurs when it's time to take over at the front. When the lead rider peels off and begins to fall back, there is often a tendency for the next rider in line to speed up. Do not (I say again) do **NOT** accelerate. Maintain exactly the same speed that the line's been travelling.

Those are the basics. Follow these rules and you and your

group will be happy, healthy randos. There are more advanced methods such as double pacelines and echelon formations used to counteract the effect of wind from different directions. I hope I have sparked some interest for this exciting aspect of cycling and that eventually all members will become proficient. We simply need to agree on a standard method and put it into practice.

The spirit of randonneuring is co-operation and working together and a well ridden pace line personifies this. How about trying it on our next brevet?

Bon route!

Tim Pollock (on the Big Ride)

Clem Work, Gorp Riding Reporter

(reprinted from the Gorp website with permission)

He bounces along on his SoftRide seat near the back of the pack, leans over the aero bars on the bicycle he assembled mostly from used parts, and peers down the road through Harley-Davidson motorcycle goggles. While many riders travel in groups, Tim Pollock of Coquitlam, British Columbia, does his own thing, and, at age 75, he pretty much knows what he wants to do. He's also not terribly surprised to be in Ohio, just nine riding days away from the end of the 2000 RadioShack Big Ride Across America. Tim was well prepared.

"I freely admit I'm chasing a dream," said Tim. "It's something I had thought about for a long time." Although he's only been biking for 15 years, the kind of biking he's been doing in British Columbia as a member of the B.C. Randonneurs is geared toward long-distance cycling on an even more extreme scale than the Big Ride. Randonneurs go on rides of 240 to 360 miles, even as far as 1,200 miles, on a set course, and need to finish within a certain time with no help from any unregistered rider, such as someone in a passing car. For example, a 240-mile "brevet" or ride needs to be completed within 27 hours. The first time Tim did it, he completed the course in 26 hours, 58 minutes and took one short nap." It prepared me to look at the chore for a given day," he said. But the Big Ride is quite different in at least one respect, he notes. "You've got to get up and ride the next day, so you've got to let your muscles repair and take it easy a bit if you've had a grueling day the day before."

Part of Tim's discipline may have come from his military service. In World War II, he served as an anti-aircraft gunner with the Canadian Navy escorting convoys across the North Atlantic. In the Korean War, he joined the Canadian Army, busting enemy bunkers with 155mm mortar shells for 14 months. His competitive drive has also helped him excel in other sports. He started skiing on his 50th birthday. Now, he's a ski instructor at British Columbia resorts like Hemlock and Whistler/Blackcomb. He has also taken the same competitive spirit and done extremely well in Masters competitions. He won a gold medal in downhill skiing in the 1984 national finals, as well as bronze medals in the slalom and grand slalom.

Tim said he's been impressed by the vastness of the territory on the Big Ride. He'd seen most of it before, many times in fact, as a long-distance truck driver doing 72-hour runs with double trailers from Vancouver to Toronto, much of it

through the United States. In 12 years, Tim estimated, he drove perhaps 3.5 million miles, hauling manufactured goods west and agricultural commodities like beef, hogs, and seed to eastern markets.

Up close on a bicycle, the land may look the same, but the feel is very different, Tim said. For one thing, he's had opportunities to meet people along the route, both other riders and local people in areas or communities the Big Ride goes through. Just today, for example, he took a snooze under a big tree alongside the road and when he woke, the lady of the house invited him up to the front porch to get more comfortable. He fondly recalls the dinner he was invited to in Miller, South Dakota, where local game was served and where he got to sleep in a soft bed. "Now how much better can you get than that?" he asked.

Just the day before yesterday, Tim had his first flat. But a tour of his bike demonstrates that he knows it well and is attuned to all its little quirks. The basic frame he picked up from a junk shop in 1992 for \$2.50 ("And that's Canadian," he pointed out). Other parts such as the handlebar stem, derailleurs, brakes and crankset were salvaged from other bikes, some of them mountain bikes. Other parts were adapted to fit; only a few parts, such as the cantilevered SoftRide seat, were bought new. The goggles came from the Harley-Davidson shop in Missoula, Montana, replacing ski goggles he had been wearing. With a contact lens in his right eye, Tim found that the least bit of wind or dust "feels like a boulder."

With a twinkle in his eye and a kind word for all those who stop and talk, the grandfather of six is quietly proud of his accomplishment. "I haven't sagged since Wyoming," he said, "and I'm eating like a hog, just like everyone else."

Tim Finishes

Rita Pollock

Tim finished the ride today (August 6) at noon Washington time. The finish was written up in the Washington Post: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A44219-2000Aug6.html>

Tim still needs to raise about \$3,000.00 for the ride. If you know of anyone or company that would support the BC Lung Association on Tim's behalf please contact me. I have brochures and self-addressed envelopes for the Lung Association.

Tim Pollock/Triple Mountain/Grouse Grind Challenge

Danelle Laidlaw

It all started at a fitness conference. At the conference, Karen, a marathon cyclist met Rainy, an avid triathlete and spin class instructor. Together they hatched the idea of spin classes designed for marathon cyclists (aka randonneurs).

Over the winter, the weekly spin classes brought together a fluctuating group of randos. By spring Rainy and partner, Joe had bought Rando jerseys, had pledged to put mud flaps on their back fenders and officially joined the Randos.

Then Rainy had the idea of a bike ride that tackled the

north shore mountains, incorporating a hike up the Grouse Grind. The idea was cemented when she found a cause - one of the randos who had been a regular at the spin classes was raising funds to do a charity ride across the country - thus the Tim Pollock/Triple Mountain/Grouse Grind Challenge was born.

Thanks to the organizational skills of Rando, Danelle, approximately 25 challengers assembled at the Grouse Mountain Sky-Ride parking lot on June 3rd at 8 a.m. The sun was shining in a cloudless sky, camel backs and water bottles were full, route sheets were handed out and everyone was raring to go. The idea was to cycle over to Seymour Mountain (by way of the 29th St hill, just for practice), climb the mountain to the parking lot, down the mountain, over to Cypress (via Keith Road and Taylor Way for a little more practice), up Cypress to the Mountain Grill, down the mountain, along the Upper Levels, up Nancy Greene Way and back to the Grouse Mountain parking lot. But that was not the end of it - pack the bike away, get out the hiking boots and up the Grind, just to add to the "challenge".

You didn't get your pin (designed and hand-made by Joe) until you reached the top of the Grind. A post-ride/hike celebration was held in the restaurant. Tim Pollock himself had set off early to do the event and was at the top. Rainy presented Tim with \$410 collected from participants to the applause of the entire restaurant.

A great event which we may even see appearing on the rando calendar again but we are thinking of calling it The Triple Mountain and lots of little hills/Grouse Grind Challenge.

Island 300-April 22: Granny gears + duct tape + dog biscuits = Success!

Mike Poplawski

Here for your enjoyment is an account of the 300 km Victoria-Sidney-Colwood-Duncan-Sooke-Victoria brevet of April 22. The cast list isn't long (hint: the Victoria 300 km is not a group ride, a shame considering the beauty of the route) but the story is. I hope you don't get tired of me, I'm in all the scenes. Hang in there; I did!

What was I in for?

This is my first year of randonneur riding but I was well aware of the reputation of the other rider who would start with me. There's always the hope that you may meet another rider or few at an event who you'll see a few times during the ride and keep your spirits up during the day. Ken Bonner could not be that other rider.

I was also aware of the difficulty of the route. I had ridden nearly all parts of it in preparation for the day, save for Sooke. I felt pretty comfortable that I could cover the distance and the climbing, legendary as it was. (I would someday like to have an altimeter to see if the 10,000 feet of climbing was just a rounded figure. Down. To one significant digit.)

Early to rise, but who could rest?

I had been awake since 3:30 after having a hard time falling asleep the evening before. A lot was going through my mind. I have a trepidation about hills. Not going up them, mind you. As I'm not the greatest descender, I was worried about some of the

descents:

Prospect Lake Road is a roller-coaster, with one descent best ridden on the opposite side of the road.

I rode off the side of Munn Road on a wet day last November, narrowly missing a van coming up the hill.

A group of us had ridden over the Malahat Drive the week before with aplomb but I wasn't all that pleased with the road conditions before Bamberton (some nastiness on the shoulder), where riders hit 60 easily and oblivious drivers pass close by at 80.

Finally there was Humpback Road, where there is a sharp right turn at the bottom of a hill. The last time I rode it, I turned left.

I was hopeful that I would be able to keep it together during these parts and turn in a safe, and therefore, complete ride.

My girlfriend, Joanne (who's aiming for Rando 1000 honours this year herself), was not riding and was no doubt unamused by my rising at 4:30. I was pretty well prepared the night before, but I had to return to the bedroom for my wallet which resulted in Joanne being awakened for good. It was nice to have her see me off on my way to the start.

The first neutral start

I rode about 14 km to the start line, mostly on the open highway. I thought to myself that riding to the line could expose some mechanical problems that could plague my ride, giving me one last chance to bail out if there was something I couldn't fix. Happily, my bike was running smoothly and I was on time for the start. This would be the last time I would be ahead of Ken! (He arrived a few moments later.)

The second neutral start

Ken was gracious enough to keep up with me through Queenswood, about a half-hour into the route. We shared thoughts about the rando series, exchanged thoughts about how to successfully complete brevets and so on. Ken gave me a few pointers, such as to eat often (I'm pretty slim and don't have too much in the way of fuel reserve) and to not waste energy on downhills. These were two pieces of wisdom I was very thankful for during the entire day.

As we turned on to Arbutus, at the predetermined time, Ken was gone. I had enough brains to let him go without a struggle - he was about a minute ahead of me by the time I reached the next turn on Gordon Head! A day of solo riding awaited me.

The ride out to Sidney was fairly brisk for me. I took some pride in that I was not letting myself get held up. I think I may have been the most alert creature on the road as I had to shout at two drivers who were pulling into the roadway and my path, something I rarely find myself having to do during normal hours. By the time I reached the control in Sidney (the 7-11), I had spent less than 10 minutes off the bike in 1:40. This was very good! I had also averaged 24 km/h on the bike. This was great! Was this the best way to finish 300 km? The former, sure, the latter...not so much.

At this point I was happy to pull out my supply of duct tape to secure my BLT battery to my bottle cage and frame to keep it from rattling. A loose bottle on a short ride is one thing, but I wasn't going to let the rattling drive me nuts, or allow the cage to break.

Wait, it gets harder

Sidney to Colwood is getting to be a tough stretch for me. I think it might be the hills combined with what is usually a headwind. There was definitely a headwind this day and not surprisingly, the hills were present as well.

I had my first run-in with a dog along Land's End; a skittish Dalmation showed me some paranoid hyperactivity before disappearing into its yard. I was able to remount and ride on my way.

My tradition of taking a wrong turn would manifest itself soon thereafter. Riding on Madrona, my next turn was left on to Downey. Except I went up Cromar. Never mind that I've ridden up Downey several times before. Somehow Downey was missing. I rode back on Madrona looking for Downey. No Downey. I turned around again, realizing that Downey was, yes indeed, after Cromar and around a bend where it always was. No worries; now that had shaved a few grams by losing my mind it made riding a hilly 300 km that much easier.

As I was approaching 100 km, I was starting to feel the fatigue, but it was the normal fatigue I feel at that point. I was hoping it wouldn't hit until later, especially since I hadn't hit the big hill towards Duncan. Encouraging was that I had ridden through Prospect Lake Road without any problems, and had no real trouble with Munn or Millstream Lake roads where there was the potential to miss a turn. Not a wrong turn, but an aforementioned dump somewhere or other. My only nervous spot was, once again, a visit from a dog, this time a pair, actually, who weren't all that friendly but at least their master was around to call them in while I walked up a particularly steep part of Munn Road. At least it's pretty up there! Millstream was a nice relief with about 5 km of descending before hitting Colwood and the second control around noon.

The big hill

Now that I've ridden it twice, the Malahat is not quite as intimidating. It's pretty, and there are a few breaks where you can let loose and fly. Its reputation is no doubt mostly from the motor vehicle drivers who don't appreciate either the beauty or the danger of the route if you're not paying attention. It's very rideable, and in fact, my average moving speed for the day went up between the Colwood and Duncan controls, hard to believe since I was feeling a little down.

My last contact with rando folks happened on the climb near Shawnigan Lake when Carol and Stephen Hinde drove past in the opposite direction and got my attention. I caught a glimpse of two folks and their bike-rack equipped car as they rode towards Victoria and the control points for the riders who started the day in Duncan.

The reward for conquering the Malahat is riding the descent down Mill Bay Road to the water. What a delight, especially without any car traffic! It was the last treat until Duncan, with there being a constant headwind along the highway.

Wait, it gets harder again

After reaching Duncan and refueling with a sandwich and a Sobe at the 7-11 (please go through with changing this control point to the Tim Horton's, Stephen!) I was off again to the south towards Cobble Hill. The tailwind was more than welcome since I still was feeling a little down and the climb was fairly steady for quite a while. I found the stretch through Cobble Hill and Shawnigan a bit tougher and changed out of my jacket in

anticipation of the climb out of Shawnigan. The only other delay I faced was when someone from the Ba'hai school stopped me along the road to tell me about an upcoming save-the-trails meeting in Mill Bay that week. She accepted my excuse that I was from Victoria and I was on my way again.

I was looking forward to the big descent back into Goldstream Park when my bike began to shimmy shortly after getting back on the highway. Fortunately, it wasn't a bad load or a wayward rim, but unfortunately, still something I'd have to fix. As Dr. Seuss may have put it, a pinch puncture, or a Flat-on-the-'Hat.

I was pleased that I was able to get going again in 20 minutes, especially since I had been on the road 10 hours already and my workspace was a ditch across the road from the Malahat restaurant. I remounted and naturally started to take it easy the way I usually do when I'm wary of having another flat tire. I had used my jacket as a bench while fixing my flat, so I was a little frustrated when I had to put it back on again in Goldstream Park.

A little miracle for me was that I was able to ride up Humpback road without dismounting. My smallest gear is 30x25, but I expected to be too tired to push even that at close to 200 km into the ride. The ride through the woods was pretty, and I had plenty of company as I believe this road, which is about as wide as a driveway in parts, is a popular shortcut. Another little miracle was making the correct turn at the bottom of a little dropoff in the road! The big help was that I noticed the "Highway 14 right" sign on the approach.

By this time of day, the wind blows fairly steadily in your face heading west to Sooke, so I had to be pretty patient. By now, this was the longest day of riding in my life and it felt that way. Most of Sooke was out to watch their friends and family play sports and I had to wind my way through them along Charters, but it was nice to see some faces close up again.

By the time I hit Otter Point, it was raining fairly steadily. I felt it was just a squall, so I waited it out in the Otter Point grocery store. My taste buds had had enough of what was good for me throughout the day, so I decided to reward them: a can of Coca-Cola (caffeine's supposed to help tap stored energy, I hear) and a bag of nacho chips. They were nothing short of exquisite. I also finished off the sandwich I bought in Duncan. I turned down the storekeeper's offer of butter tarts.

The storekeeper and I kept each other company during the cloudburst; I explained what I was doing and I asked her whether I had passed Becher Bay. She said I was on my way there (it's in East Sooke). I expressed my desire not to have to take on any dogs there. She then enthusiastically reached behind the counter to produce a bag of dog biscuits that she often feeds to dogs tied up outside the store. She initially offered a kennel-sized supply, but I took about five biscuits, light enough to fit in my right jacket pocket, and with any luck, enough to create a distraction if I ran into trouble.

More duct tape, dead batteries, but no dogs

The ride east was wind-assisted, which was much-appreciated, as it was mostly uphill until the turnoff onto Gillespie. For the uninitiated, the Gillespie/East Sooke/Rocky Point stretch is beautiful, save for the awkward angle my bike was normally at. However, there is a point where each new hill

is no longer a surprise

Thankfully, the dogs on the Indian Reserve seemed pre-occupied. I'd have the biscuits to carry on another ride.

As darkness fell, I realized I now had two lighting problems, namely the front and the rear of my bike. As I went to reconnect my BLT system, I saw that I had my seat bag open. I was very relieved that I hadn't lost my phone, my tools, etc., but I could not find my BLT cable to connect my battery to my light.

I managed to cobble together a solution, plugging my BLT lamp into the top of my battery, and duct taping the whole mess so that the lamp faced forward. I rode the final leg with my headlamp actually on the back half of my bike, with a large shadow on the road in front of me which looked all too much like Bart Simpson (the hub making a set of ears) and my bike aglow. I realize I must have been easier to see from the side than from the front, but a little wiggle left-right every once in a while sent the message that I was coming. A simpler repair was made to my rear tail light--batteries were available from the corner store at Metchosin and Happy Valley for however much they asked.

I finished at the Oak Bay Payless at around 10:50; the person who signed my card in the morning arrived for work while I was sipping on a hot chocolate. He had a look on his face which said nothing less than "What on earth are you putting yourself through?". His partner nonchalantly told me "some other guy" finished a "few hours ago". Such is randonneuring on the Island.

Some important things I learned: Don't skip breakfast. You cannot carry too much food. Duct tape is an excellent tool to carry. It is possible to ride enough hills in one day that the next one you see doesn't faze you at all.

The body: My physical report was pretty good: other than overall fatigue and a bit of lower back stiffness (I only ride a road bike once a week) I fared okay. The days after saw some numbness in my right hand (after what, a billion shifts?) and a bit of weariness (a 12 km round trip to the grocery store on Monday was pretty gruelling) but no major problems. I clearly do need to eat a lot, including before the rides, and I will pack more Gatorade powder and gels for the calories.

Statistics: I completed the ride in a reasonable (by my own standards) 16:50 (17.8 km/h), consisting of 14:12 on the bike (21.4 km/h) and 2:38 off the bike (0 km/h). I had thoughts beforehand of finishing with a faster time (I estimated around 15 hours), but I am very happy to complete the event!

In reality, it turns out I never saw Ken again that day, but I did hear from him the following Wednesday (I presume he wanted to know if I was home yet) and we had a chat about the 300 and the upcoming 400 km out of Victoria May 13. I'm looking forward to the ride north--maybe I'll see some riders out of Ladysmith!

Breaking with Tradition

Harold Bridge

Over the past decade or so it has become a habit for me to organise the AGM and social at the Bedford House, usually at the end of Sept. This year, as you will know if you read your

green brochure, the date for 2000 is October 1. I shall be in Britain at that time, after riding the "Randonnee Of The Mountain of Reims" in Northern France the weekend of Sept 23/24.

Judy Morrison has gallantly stepped in to take over the job of refining the numbers to a better level than the "50 to 80" I used when I booked the date. She is a busy girl, so don't wait for her call, you call her & tell her you intend to be there. The price is \$18.00 per head with the treasury picking up the balance of the quoted price that includes tax & gratuity.

The regular routine will prevail I expect: Meet in Marina Park (east of the Bedford House) at 09:30 for a 10:00 start to the morning ride. Maps will be available showing a variety of distances to ride. And youall will be back in time for the buffet just after 13:00.

After the eats there will be a brief business meeting to applaud the new committee & probably the distribution of awards. Enjoy! People usually do.

Donna und Blitzen 300

Harold Bridge

Getting round my birthday 200 inside 10 hours gave me some encouragement to try a similar average in the 300. It's 1993 since I got round a 300 in less than 15 hours & it was only something to aim at, not mandatory. The promise of thunderstorms did not endear itself to me, but the change from Friday's oppressive heat did.

The drive, with Wayne Harrington, from PoCo to Albion was made spectacular for a few minutes by an incredible sunrise sky & I'm not sure that Wayne was happy with me looking sideways at the beautiful sight.

The rain was quite heavy, but as we arrived in Albion school parking lot it stopped. Ted had arranged for the school to be open for toilet access. But, as in the past, it wasn't. I don't know where the Janitor comes from, but probably from a society where crossing the palm with silver works wonders. However, the Albion Ferry toilet is only about 500 metres away & I was back in time for Ted's demand we be on our way at 06:00. Ted was planning to staff the start control for the mandatory hour & then start his ride with the aim of getting back first to sign people in. But his plan was thwarted when the other half of the Terminator Twins, Keith Fraser, turned up!

I have recently found that 26 kph is just as practical on the 64" gear (39x16) as it is on anything bigger, early in the ride anyway. There wasn't much wind but what there was seemed to be from the east & progress was fairly consistent with the other riders passing by in fits & starts. I'm not anti-social, I am quite willing to ride with others as long as they ride at a speed I want to ride. So, most of the time I ride alone. Most riders used to ride too slow, now they ride too fast!

I was perhaps lucky in that a major group of 6 riders got away from me enroute to Mission. On Nicomen Island I saw they had stopped in a rather big pile that suggested something other than a flat tyre. Val White was sitting on the verge holding her shoulder, Bob Bailey & Larry Voth were holding their arms. Cell phones are useful at such times & apparently Bob's wife came out from Langley & picked up the injured parties & took

them to Langley hospital. Bob & Val came out with their arms in slings, Val with a broken collarbone. But Larry stayed in to get a steel plate inserted in his elbow.

Before long most of the survivors had passed me & Ted did a remarkable ride to catch me on the first steep slope of Woodside Mountain at about 60 km in the ride, nearly 3 hours for me, nearly 2 hours for him! Feeling the need of something more than pocket food I stopped at what was once the Kent Hotel (where we once finished a Fleche) when I saw the cafe was open and empty. During pancakes & coffee the rest of the riders passed me by. But they stopped further into Agassiz & they caught me on one of those slopes beyond Sea Bird Island as I removed my undershirt in deference to the increased temperature. There was a definite tailwind by this time & it was a "float" most of the way to the end of #7.

There isn't much around there, it looks quite desolate. But what seems a long way from Hope itself there is a sign suggesting one is entering Hope. Did I imagine it, but was there a Randonneur Advisory there too? I'm sure I saw something that read "Enter Hope All Ye That Abandon Here!" Perhaps I dreamt it while blocking out the traffic along Hwy #1 later. My hopes of 4 hours for the first 100 were dashed by the stops I had & I signed in at the 106 km control at 10:51. I had thought of stopping at what was the Pancake House for another meal, but tempus fugis or something.

The thought of 50 or more kilometres along that main road flog was a bit daunting. But at least one is encouraged to get on with it & I managed to do it non-stop, except for one foot down on the very busy Young Road high speed turn off. I'll offer my thoughts on that elsewhere. Through the funnel created by the mountains there was a stiff punch into the wind & then the same funnel created quite a tail wind as one left it. That lasted until we cleared the mountains when the wind was not impeded or re-directed.

I was glad to creep up the Lickman Road ramp & signed in at the 161 km control at the Esso at 13:22. Seven hours 22 minutes for an imperial century was quite respectable I thought. My average was encouraging & I felt I could spare 20 minutes across the parking lot at the Copper Kettle cafe. A large bowl of cream of veg soup followed by apple pie & ice cream with very quick service set me up for the tedium of those flat roads across Sumas Prairie (been there, done that all too often). Roger & Alie caught & passed me along there & gradually drew away. They had lost Wayne on a Hwy #1 slope, but I knew he wouldn't be far behind. I had to stop again to put back on my undershirt; it was getting quite chilly.

Along Vye Road I observed the signs. Instead of ignoring the fact I was gradually riding myself into the ground I stopped & extracted my emergency rations from my bag, a cheese & honey sandwich. While sitting on the grass Wayne appeared in his unflurried way & although he stopped for a chat & to return my front door key (I intended to give him a key to the truck so he could sit in it while awaiting my finish) he was almost outa sight by the time I got back on my bike. I could see him as he approached the US Customs at Sumas. But after I was waved through with a, "They are waiting for you down the road", there was no sign of Wayne. I thought he had stopped to use the facilites, but he hadn't, he'd taken off like a rocket.

The major climb of the day is Reese Hill. I quickly got in bottom gear (37" or 39x28) and rode up there like, well, not quite Pantani. I was hoping to be inside 10 hours at 200. But as the 200 appeared at the top of Reese I didn't make it, about 10:03. Then an attack by vicious white dog that completely ignored its owner rather unsettled me as I was still grovelling up hill & couldn't sprint. By the time I had got my water bottle out the dog realised he was too far from home & returned. The passenger in the following car who tried to scare the dog off from behind was most solicitous.

Arrived at Kendall about 16:30, got card signed, filled up bottle with Poweraid & water & left. As I did it started to rain, & I left Wayne, Roger & Alie to catch me later. Before they did I had stopped to don my rather inadequate racing cape, But it does have a hood that stops rain running down one's neck. It was a change to do South Pass Road from top to bottom. I only remember going that way once before. But descending in the pouring rain wasn't all that much fun.

For some years I have been concerned about a little Bridge (not mine, honest) on Pangborn Road that we use frequently. There was a nasty wheel catching slot that may have created grief. As we rode up Northwood for the left turn onto Pangborn we were met by: "Road Closed - Detour" I saw Roger & Alie just ahead turn & I did too. Then Wayne caught me so he had too. Very often roads closed for motor vehicles are passable by cyclists & thus was the case this time. Anyone who has noticed the flaws in that little bridge will be glad to know they are in the process of rebuilding it.

As we approached the Lynden-Aldergrove border crossing the rain eased off & the skies gave the impression we were to have a dry evening ride back to Albion via Mission. The long line of north bound vehicles were no problem & the customs man who stamped, signed & timed our cards didn't even ask the normal questions. We used the fluid exchange station &, as usual, I was first away. But once more they went past while only 8 km beyond the control. This time there was no catching them. Those nasty lumps on Mount Lehman had me grovelling & their images got smaller & smaller until they vanished altogether. The route turns off Mt Lehman onto Hawkins & Olund to join Harris Road just before Mt Lehman's worst lump. Day dreaming or something, I struggled over that lump & realised I was descending toward the Harris Road cross. I was tempted, as I had done the climb intended to be missed, to press on. But being a purist at heart I turned round & took the official route.

Mission Bridge was built before they gave cyclists any consideration. If a cyclist wishes to use the northbound foot path & also needs to go west (s)he is out of luck & finishes up going to the east end of Mission, about a 3 km detour. The alternative can be hairy, depending on traffic volume. I took it steady climbing up the south side of the bridge & wound it up going down the north side. With the 94" gear (50x14) spinning at about 45 kph I felt fairly safe through the split with east bound traffic. It just remained to grovel up that 'orrid little slope away from the junction of Hwys 11 & 7 before I felt close enough to the finish to put the hammer down.

Ever since the Border control I had been aware I might well miss my 15 hour aim, but now it looked to be in reach & I didn't

want anything to disturb me (any more than I am). Another nasty is west of Ruskin, but it, too, is short. Some of the slopes I was able to swing a biggish gear out of the saddle. On others I just had a change down and survive. About 3 km from Albion it started to rain & was the worst of the day. Even the approaching 21:00 hour deadline couldn't induce me to ignore the fast descent in pouring rain with the Albion traffic light at the bottom. But I was lucky, the light stayed green & I almost fell off my bike by Ted's van to get a time of 14:57 recorded, 3 minutes after Wayne clocked in.

Ted sacrificed his ride to get back before Keith who did 10:09. I was slowest of the finishers with my ride & Ted was very glad he didn't have to wait until 02:00 the following morning.

The trouble is the ride was good enough to encourage me to ride the 400. I hate 400s! But another SR (super-randonneur) looms after a break of 6 years since the last of my 12 consecutive ones in 1994.

Take It To The Limit: Enumclaw 600, June 1999

Eric Fergusson

2:40 a.m. leaving Monroe marked one of those rare moments when I felt indispensable - I knew where we were going. The last time we rode this route, four years ago, Peter and I, and a handful of others, followed Jeffery Brain at lightning speed down a blind alley and it took a long time for us to realize we were lost. This time I made sure I was a little more informed. "Yeager Road, bear right here Dick". My moment of triumph!

Peter was here again, and this time Dick, Nobo, and Patrick. This ride had by now definitely become a 'go slow' 600. It was fast to begin with, really fast; we even rode with Keith for a while. But as so often seems to happen, one thing led to another... I think I'm safe in saying that by Saturday night (early Sunday morning) the mood of the group was something like: "Well, it's good enough just to finish...why are we killing ourselves...let's just sail in on cruise mode... nobody has to suffer here."

The next control was Granite Falls. I ate oatmeal cookies; Nobo napped on the cement sidewalk. Actually it was a miracle that Nobo was still with us. He apparently had barely slept for the two nights leading up to the ride - a sick child, then a sick wife - and here he was trying to will himself through a third night.

After another cement sidewalk nap for Nobo at dawn at a cafe near Big Rock, and then a lazy Burger King breakfast in Sedro Woolly, Nobo felt revived, we all did. We were ready to face the familiar stretch of Highway 9 through Wickersham, Acme, and Van Zandt, and then the Siper/Hopewell/Goodwin zigzag back to the border.

Isn't it funny how a mid-morning sun can change you. In those difficult pre-dawn hours you may feel spent and demoralized with legs like sponges, but then when the sun starts climbing into the sky something in you goes click - a solar-triggered adrenaline jolt. Suddenly the day has new possibilities.

It was around this sun climbing into the sky, solar-triggered

adrenaline jolt time on Sunday morning that someone decided that 25 km/hr wasn't fast enough...and very quickly 26 wasn't fast enough either. As we inched our way up the ladder of pain, I had no difficulty in recognizing what was happening. It was a familiar pattern - nobody actually wanted to hurt anyone or drop them per se, but no one wanted to be seen to be slowing down the train just as it was picking up steam either. And when it was my turn at the front I too was complicit - 33...33...34... Just as the panceline was getting ready to splinter we reached the Huntington/Sumas border crossing and the madness was at an end...for the moment.

Riverside/Farmer/McCallum...then we were back on good old Huntington/Vye and it was time for the whole insane charade to begin anew - 32...33...34 - but this time, I sensed, with a little more zeal: "look at that sun climbing a little higher into the morning sky."

And so I'm thinking, as the speeds get up into the high 30s, what's the point - we're already going to have a sluggish time, and there hasn't been even a hint in the last 10 hours that anyone present was in the slightest hurry. We've taken every possible opportunity to sit around in coffee shops, 7-11s, and Burger Kings discussing at leisure things like what the European pro peloton riders are using lubricate their chains (it's a mixture of gasoline and kerosene apparently), and it's not like there's anyone up the road that we're going to pick off at this point - Keith is already back in his Kitsilano condo and has been asleep for two hours, possibly more.

Just past Ross Road, Huntington tilts up, dramatically. Dick was at the front of the panceline at the time, and he wasn't observing the usual convention of slowing down and struggling once the hill starts. He just zipped up and over the crest - 63 years old, how was he doing this?

Back down the hill Nobo was cracking. What a relief - an excuse not to chase Dick. However this wasn't a usual slow down. It wasn't long before we realized that it was more than sleep deprivation or a standard issue bonk that was clobbering Nobo. (His son had been sick...his wife had been sick...we should have been able to put 2 and 2 together more quickly...) He started telling us to ride on without him, but I thought I recognized his trademark stoicism and we stayed with him for a time. Eventually though he pulled over and told the three of us to beat it, and though it has never been de rigeur to leave another rider behind to die in the ditch, it looked this time like he really meant it. We took off and left Nobo to face alone demons within.

With 25 kms to go all that remained was for Patrick, Peter, and me to sail in on cruise. But again, it was not to be. It wasn't long before Peter took a pull and then stayed up front for the rest of the ride. Once more, I found myself riding at my limit, though Patrick seemed to be faring a little better. At an astonishing pace Peter dragged us through familiar Langely country roads and eventually into Fort Langley. And there was Manfred in front of the Fort Langley Pub ready to stamp us in. Dick was there too of course, smiling as always, and as it turns out he hadn't been there all that long.

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But the story doesn't really end in Fort Langley. On Thursday I got an e-mail from Nobo:

"...I was so sick...that last 40 km was absolutely hell... and when I came back home my temperature was over 39 degree C - so definitely a fever. I could not get up from bed for over 2 days, and I lost more than 20 lbs all together in 5 days. No foods or liquids stayed in my system... it was a very bad stomach flu and one of the worst illnesses I've ever had.

Now finally I have managed to get up and walk around...

I know I have to do 600 km again, by myself, for my own sake..."

Well, if you say so Nobo.

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Postscript: Of the five of us only Peter, a veteran of PBP '91, was not actively riding that Enumclaw 600 as a PBP qualifier. At PBP, Patrick and I hadn't been riding together, but coincidentally met up towards the end and rode in together along with Michael Lau from Ottawa. Nobo and Dick found themselves finishing together as well.

It turns out that Dick 'the kid' Nichols was using PBP as a training exercise. In September, he turned in a phenomenal (6:18) 200 km (at the Fall Flatlander). Later that Fall he went on the Huntsman World Senior's Games in St. George, Utah with impressive results in the men's 60-65 year division: a gold medal in the Mountain Bike competition, silver in the 56 km road race, as well as a 3rd and a 4th place finish...smiling the whole time I bet.

As for Nobo, not wanting to make PBP too easy, he spent the summer off the bike 'resting up'.



"PBP? ...a piece of cake." Nobo and Tiptoe (on helmet) in France, August '99.
(photo: Denis Prefontaine)

1400km and 800km Randonnees 21-26 July 2001 in Britain

Sheila Simpson

Start/Finish:

1. Thorne, near Doncaster, South Yorkshire, England.
 2. Harlow (near London).
- Start time: 10:00 21st July.

Accommodation:

free bunks or blankets at approx 11 controls. Feeding: at cost AUK catering at approx 12 controls, commercial at approx 10.

Terrain/Scenery:

The northern 800 km is predominantly pastureland; initially flat fenland, slightly rolling through North Yorkshire, and then climbing over the Pennine moorlands to the Scottish border. From here there are gradual ascents across Southern Scotland through the picturesque Eskdalemuir and Ettrick Forests and over the Moorfoot Hills to Edinburgh. The southern 600 km is flat and rolling pasture and arable farmland.

Access to the Thorne start

Manchester Airport 110 km, Hull ferry 60 km, Trains 2 km.
Simple floor accommodation, showers, at the Thorne Rugby Club start. Further accommodation near the start can be accessed from: www.doncaster.gov.uk or by sending for the Doncaster Area Accommodation List from: Doncaster Tourist Information Centre, Waterdale, Doncaster DN1 3JE

Access to the Harlow start

London Stanstead Airport 20 km, London Heathrow Airport 60 km, London Gatwick Airport 86 km, Harwich ferry 94 km, Dover Ferry 130 km, Ramsgate Ferry (Sally Line from Dunkerque) 138 km Trains (Great Northern & East Anglian Co, 08457 818919) 4 km (no cycles carried in and out of the London, Liverpool Street Station, during rush hours)

Accommodation at the Youth Hostel start. Hotel and Bed and Breakfast accommodation list from the organiser or from www.harlow.gov.uk (includes town maps, cycle routes)

Regulations

The usual Randonneurs Mondiaux regulations apply.

The full 1400km event will run with a minimum average overall speed of 12kph.

The 800 km supporting event will be run at 13.3kph.

Mudguards are required, tri-bars (aero-bars) are allowed.

There are no qualifications required to enter or restrictions on age, although the organiser reserves the right to refuse the entry of unaccompanied juniors.

Entry

Organiser: Bernard Mawson, 64 Arklow Road, Doncaster DN2 5LD, England email: Bernie@powerhouse64.freeserve.co.uk

Entry fee: £50 (800 km £35) with an Audax UK Entry Form and 2 passport- sized photos.