



DAILY DIARY FROM RIDE DIRECTOR GEOFF KENNEDY

Stage 8

Day 190 – Saturday 26th Adelaide Rest

Wonderful home hosting with Dick White and Alan Grady to do all the airport pickups.

Day 189 – Friday 25th Adelaide Rest Day

Cold and wet. A lunch time meeting with Adelaide South Rotary Club and an evening social function

Day 188 – Thursday 24th Kapunda to Adelaide 75km

12 new riders join us for the day with some serious hills, troubling the inexperienced. We passed Gawler into the outskirts of Adelaide. Going through Elizabeth with road accidents, roadworks and traffic jams to assemble at the state's sport centre at Depp's Cross. Now the good bit - a police escort and all the traffic lights and pedestrian crossings synchronised green. This makes for an exhilarating into Adelaide at the Torrens Parade Ground. It is an amazing sight to see crowds of pedestrians waiting at crossings as our riders and ten vehicles of our convoy pass through. An afternoon session with the sports psychologist gives us an insight into life after the bike ride. We have reached the end of stage 8. We've had some amazing sights and some wonderful hosts. Some awesome riding, some shocking weather but a huge achievement to come from Perth to Adelaide and to cross the Nullarbor.

Day 187 – Wednesday 23rd Clare to Kapunda 71km

Six extra riders join us for the day after an inch and a half of rain overnight. It is fine but cold and we have a picturesque ride. We ride through the Clare Valley, the towns of Saddleworth and Marrabell. After lots of undulation and hard work riding they all make it safely into Kapunda. Lunch and dinner is had at the football ground and a joint dinner meeting with Kapunda, Gawler and Barossa Valley Clubs.

Day 186 – Tuesday 22nd Peterborough to Clare 117 km

It's fine but there is a cold wind. We take over the kitchen and dining room of the Railway Hotel for our breakfast. The Mayor Ruth Whittle farewells us in her full Mayoral Robes - another first of the trip. We ride towards James Town, with a gale force tale wind with some riders reaching over 60km per hour. Queen Gonny is upset at being taken off the ride to do an ABC radio interview and missing the best of the tale wind. We take a break at the cricket academy, before heading to Spalding. There is lots of wind damage in both James Town and Spalding. We are in the northern agricultural region of South Australia with huge expanses of lush crops even some of the roadsides are planted to eat. The weather deteriorates to pouring rain and the riders arrive for lunch very wet and cold. More amazing home hosts from Clare Rotary and a very well attended dinner at the showground.

Day 185 – Monday 21st Port Augusta to Peterborough 133km

More TV interviews before we leave and a big storm is coming. Some rain but strong, strong winds. We turn east to climb Horrocks Pass and the wind is fearful. Only Ross Andrewartha completes the climb. Too dangerous for the main group. Deep gorges, gnarled old gums, steep rolling hills. A hard but scenic welcome to the Flinders Ranges. On to Wilmington with news of

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extreme storm damage in Elliston where we were 5 days ago. It's a different day on the other side of the Range. Sunshine, clear blue skies but still the wind - very slow going. It was soon time to load up the riders and transport into Orroroo for lunch beside a humongous gum tree with another storm approaching and dust clouds building. We transport into Peterborough with just enough time to garage bikes before the rain and hail. And it's raining mud. There is no power, so most retire to the Railway Hotel for showers and accommodation. Our generators, lights and power lead keep the hotel operating for the Rotary dinner. Only 65 km ridden today.

Day 184 – Sunday 20th Whyalla to Port Augusta 75km

A leisurely Sunday morning ride with a tail wind for the first 60 km. Toots of greeting from the goods train beside us as we race to keep pace with it. Into Rotary Park for a lunch time barbeque. We packed tyres on bikes and buses before we head to the navel cadets training unit for our overnight stop. Tony Caruana excels himself with beef bourguignon and Rae Walker's apple crumble was magnificent. Clive and Rae Walker leave us tomorrow to return to Myrtleford to be with Clive's father Jack. We had our last meeting with the Japanese ride group as they now head south to Adelaide and we go east into the Flinders Ranges.

Day 183 – Saturday 19th Arno Bay to Whyalla 153km

A fine morning and the wind has dropped, a slight change of direction gives assistance. Gone are the heavy crops of wheat and barley that were abundant near Port Lincoln. Replaced by sparse crops, scrub and fault bush. We stopped at Cowell for coffee and cake. Those signs near towns showing which community group is looking after sections of the highway is appreciated. Cowell Lions Club members are out on the Saturday morning removing the rubbish from the roadside. We reach Whyalla by 2.30 pm and ride into the caravan park on the foreshore. Dinner at the showground with Whyalla Rotary was a huge barbeque feast.

Day 182 – Friday 18th Port Lincoln to Arno Bay 117km

The great weather is back. Tony Baj and Fiona of McDonald's in Port Lincoln have been very generous and our arrival at 7am to McDonald's was impressive with all our breakfasts lined up and waiting. T.V. interviews with Southern Cross News and we are joined by more local riders for the departure. A hard day we are headed north east toward Port Augusta into a very strong northerly. All riders have worked together in rotation to push through the wind and up and down the constant undulations. Even the down hills are hard work, past Tumbly Bay an idealic seaside village and into arno bay, with a great caravan park and generous hosts. The hotel is very busy and excellent walking what boardwalks at Arno Bay.

Day 181 – Thursday 17th a rest day in Port Lincoln

To McDonald's for breakfast. A Rotary tour of the marina then the town lookout and Glen Forest Winery and Animal Park. An amazing evening meal at the Boston Bay Winery with more monies raised from raffles and auctions.

Day 180 – Wednesday 16th Elliston to Port Lincoln 173km

Originally this was planned as the longest day of riding, however, the distance was exceeded long ago. Rotarians of Port Lincoln were concerned that we could not possibly ride the distance in time for their planned program. Lesson - never give this lot a challenge. They arrived an hour early... The weather deteriorated with constant rain, but no one gave up; they just pushed harder. A lunch at Coulter Public Hall. Well, if they leave their public buildings unlocked we will use them! But we did sort of get permission and they even made a donation. Again, sadly the Reverend Geoffrey made another appearance. A stage, a lectern, a font and a copy of the "Book of Common Prayer" was too much of a temptation. The baptism of the infant Rossina and the supercharged arrival from Ross and Chippolini concluded with a baptism into the faith. The news of the safe arrival of Emily Grace in Perth, the third grand daughter for Geoff and Jennifer,

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was a happily received. Into Port Lincoln, in the rain, to a wonderful welcome by Rotary. Out to the Lion's Hostel and a huge rotary meeting with many other local groups attending.

Day 179 – Tuesday 15th Streaky Bay to Elliston 125 km

More wonderful riding conditions with the old codger having another rare victory of 1st into Port Kenny for lunch. A visit to Port Kenny Primary School with 16 students. A very impressive school with many questions by the students. Jennifer has to sit in their wishing chair for her 60th birthday. Into the Elliston Caravan Park with the absolute best hosts. Tonight is a birthday celebration but also a regimental dinner of 6 courses. This includes the salmon caught near Bookabie, oysters, roast lamb and strawberry crepes. An amazing night only saddened by vicious allegations of theft levelled against the padre. Actually it was the queen (Madge) who stole the regimental mascot. Some interesting dress ups by those officiating. Sadly the padre made another appearance and Queen Madge, in her op shop frock, was a delight. The queen was accompanied by her loyal consort Phil.

Day 178 – Monday 14th Ceduna to Streaky Bay 110 km

A fine morning with light winds. We ride through more cropping and sheep country with the sea and the sand dunes just off to our right. Magnificent seascapes as we journey towards Streaky Bay and the Foreshore Caravan Park.

Thursday 10th Eucla to 60km from Nullabour Road House

At last we've entered south aust. The wild life is back but only snakes, lizards and flies. On the Nullabour, which is certainly a treeless plain, Totally flat not a tree in sight. Unfavourable winds, gale force northerly's 33 degrees and an uncomfortable days riding. Many side trips to the Great Australian Bite. Cheryl Chipindall photographed two whales.

Day 161 – Friday 28th Munglinup Beach to Esperance 108km

A cloudy day today. Some sun, more undulations but a favourable wind. We are back into serious crop country with big trees replacing the Mallee scrub. For some days now we have been meeting up with Stan and Shaun. Two riders on recumbent bikes from Albany to Adelaide.

Day 160 – Thursday 27th Ravensthorpe to Munglinup Beach 114 km

More undulations but a beautiful sunny day. Past the now closed Ravensthorpe nickel mine and down a side road to Munglinup Beach. We were intercepted by Police to remind we are going in the wrong direction... An effective practical joke on the Ride Director. A beautiful secluded beach with very soft sand and vehicles easily bogged. Especially Robert Gwynne's. We had to tow him off the beach!

Day 159 – Wednesday 26th Jerramungup to Ravensthorpe 115km

It's cold. Power goes off at 6 am... but it gets better. The sun shines with a blue sky and no wind – magnificent. Undulations through marginal farming country and Mallee scrub but we are warm at last! A rustic caravan park at Ravensthorpe and another cabin with 16 for dinner at Shez Clize. Hopefully the authorities have not closed it before tomorrow's breakfast. At last I have managed to ride two full days in a row and make all the phone calls. Even got up to 68 kilometres - down hill of course. We organised the accommodation over the Nullarbor to avoid all camping.

Day 158 - Tuesday 25th Gnowangerup to Jerramungup 95km

At last we have turned east towards Esperance! It's cold but the rain has gone and there is even a westerly wind behind us. Now into Mallee scrub country with Mallee fowl but still vast areas for sheep and cropping. Some late afternoon sunshine and fine dining in cabin 7 - all 16 of us seated in one cabin for dinner. We have had the best weather since Geraldton, 18 days ago.

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Day 157 - Monday 24th Albany to Gnowangerup 134km

Yesterday was Sunday, and I missed the opportunity to deliver my weekly sermon. Recently I pontificated on the subject of rubbish. But the particular issue now is shoes. Why do we find at regular intervals on the road countless lost and abandoned shoes? Work Boots, thongs, ladies shoes, children's shoes only ever one at a time but then 100 s of kilometres later there seems to be the matching pair. The rotary youth camp has an excellent kitchen. Fridge has been prepared, meatloaf cooked and ready for some cold days to come. We uphold our usual standards by taking all the leftover food from the rotary meal, even the homemade sauce. Other standards are slipping however... We drive to the Civic Centre for a Mayoral send off we drive to McDonalds for breakfast and we drive to Caltex Woolworths for fuel before we even consider getting on a bike! A cold and wet day through the Stirling Ranges to Gnowangerup and some great home cooking from our Rotary hosts. Here there are huge sheep and cropping properties with very large farming machinery.

Day 156 - Sunday 23rd August Mount Barker to Albany 60kms

A challenge to dress up, to ride 7kms to the cattle sale yards, for breakfast with many of our support drivers, who are riding as well. Chippy emerged from the hotel wood shed resplendent in pink lycra and pink walled tyres on his ancient bike scavenged from Canarvon, Irene Sprigg in red lycra and football colours of some minor AFL Team from Perth, and Bill Hollingsworth safely negotiated the 7km ride to breakfast. After a huge breakfast, it was too cold, far too windy and too late, to ride to Denmark so we took the shortcut direct to Albany and Rotary youth camp, a great spot that would have been even better in non- arctic weather, but a huge fire and generous Rotarians from Albany Port made it a memorable spot.

Day 155 - Saturday 22nd August Katanning to Mount Barker 125km

More hills, more rain, more wind and damn cold. A hot lunch at Cranbrook with the cooking trailer on the footpath and under the veranda of the Op shop, vehicles parked together to protect us from the wind, into the Plantagenet Hotel at Mount Barker - another welcoming host and fantastic Rotary club, Irene Sprigg their fun loving president, determined to inject fun and frivolity into her club, took up our challenge.

Day 154 - Friday 21st August Boyup Brook to Katanning 126Kms

The Boyup Brook hotel is like a rabbit warren but very welcoming with every comfort possible and VERY Obliging staff, heavy frost, three riders from Kojonup to join us, a big hill to start then constant undulations and unfavourable winds, great lunch by Kojonup Rotary at Kodja Place, and an assurance that the next 40kms to Katanning was flat. Farmers have a strange idea what is flat, more hills, wind and rain, stayed at Katanning Residential College - a fantastic place, where we were made welcome by Bruce and Carol Williams with gifts for us all. It was great to see a new Great Australian Bike Ride Newsletter out today, a wonderful photo of Cheryl Chippindall with Gonny Rundell and her embarrassing fall at Kings Park and even a photo at Boyup Brook taken this very morning.

Day 153 – Thursday 20th Alexandra Bridge to Boyup Brook 142 km

Torrential rain over night. Hills, more hills and flooded rivers. The Blackwood River in early flood was a magnificent sight. Forest plantation, lush farming land and the ride in Nannup and Bridgetown made this a hard but interesting day. We finished up in the Boyup Brook Hotel.

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Day 152 – Wednesday 19th Margaret River to Augusta 55kms

Torrential rain over night - surprise surprise... An easy morning but we had two flat batteries. A winery visit to Cape Mentelle and lunch with Rotary for an afternoon ride through suspended farming and forest to Augusta and the Baywatch Hostel.

Day 151 - Tuesday 18th August Bunbury to Margaret River 101 km

Torrential rain overnight. Conditions for riding are ok but is cold with strong headwinds. Rain does interrupt the ride with 30km to go. But we had great hosts and a meeting with Margaret River Rotary.

Day 150 - Monday 17th August Mandurah to Bunbury 97kms

A fond farewell from McDonalds with a donation from Mandurah and Mandurah Districts Rotary, an expensive tyre blowout for David Brown, but excellent riding through coastal scenery and massive forests to Bunbury. A joint meeting of three Bunbury clubs with three guest speakers being – John Farrugia, John Rundell and Cheryl Chippindall, Cheryl's maiden public speaking effort was exceptional, a heartfelt tale of the role of a support driver.

Day 149 - Sunday 16th August Kings Park to Mandurah 75kms

First day of new stage - extra riders - some new support drivers - dodgy weather - traffic intersections all = potential trouble, but safety must be paramount. Farewell by the Lord Mayor of Perth, Lisa Spaffidi. How embarrassing, when a disaster strikes before the riders have travelled two meters. A gap in the paving and Gonny Rundell falls and badly damages the wheel. Bill Shore, our Shimano mechanic, replaces the wheel and we are under way. Morning tea with Fremantle Rotarians and Fremantle's Mayor - Peter Tagliaferri. Another incident near Rockingham with raised railway lines bringing John Farrugia down, the abrasion marks on his sunglasses are a reminder of the need for helmets. A huge lunch with Rockingham's Rotary club, even included chocolate. On to Mandurah, to some fantastic hosts and an excellent Chinese meal.

Day 148 - Saturday 15th August Still in Perth

Rain, hail and cold again, morning function in Burswood Park was cancelled, more time to spend with the grandchildren – evening dinner with Rotarians, who have done so much for Australian Rotary Health & the Great Australian Bike Ride, was excellent.

Day 147 - Friday 14th August Rest Day in Perth

Perth - rain, hail and cold - breakfast with the Rotary Club of Swan Districts at the headquarters of WesTrac, a great sponsor. It was a profitable morning for Australian Rotary Health. Driving the course through Kings Park to Fremantle to Mandurah before I can have any time with the grandchildren. The evening function was cancelled due to the bad weather.