



### Overture

The Tour de Canberra is an annual three day affair, generally over subscribed and eagerly awaited as a lead up to the annual Snowy ride a month later. Commencing in the Southern Highlands, the tour rolls around the Nation's capital and concludes with riding back to the starting point on day 3. The 2010 Tour, while following the general format provided new sites and challenges for everyone who pumped up their tyres and lathered on the sunscreen to take on the 300 km 'Tour de montagnes ? la mer'

### Friday Day 1.

TBG arranged for the group to leave TC at 7am on Friday for the run to Braidwood, the meeting place for the first ride down the hillside to the beach. It was only 68 kms from Braidwood to Batemans Bay so everyone was not only in good spirits but perhaps even a touch complacent about the soft first day.

OHA and Tiger left late but managed to latch on to the wheels of UF and Luke on the trip down the Hume. Fester had Green P and Drastic and together were no doubt plotting the weekend tactics.

Braidwood is an historic town. Apart from being old that means it has things of interest. The Bakery, cafe and pub all rate mention along with the Old Curiosity Shop which has an amazing array of 1960's and 70's furniture.

English Andrew had just flown in from UNZED, the land from which Tony hails, and was assembling his bike (now where he hides the engine remains a mystery) so the group was rallied for a brief warm up out and back along the Araluen road.

TBG had arranged the routes using his new Garmin (every bike should have one) and the peloton resplendent in the shop's newest of new lycra, rolled out along the road leading to the south. A mild head wind presented no problem to Rob Mac and Terminator who seems to have a permanent booking for the front seat. The first down hill drew a few comments about having to ride back up it, but little did we know that was the least of it. A dead fox laying in the middle of the road miraculously moved - perhaps it was playing possum! Or just foxing but no matter the return along this 30 km loop was up hill, not to mention the headwind! . Toby was full of beans, Mat was feeling his legs after returning from the UK and not having enough time to get his legs back, Matty H displayed techno wizardry with his fancy camera mount and OHA narrowly escaped a big spill when his front wheel ran into the gap between two boards on the third short picket plank bridge, and Chardonnay was simply cool, as ever.

Having picked up Andrew on the return into Braidwood we then stopped to take a photo on the steps of the church. TBG provided a briefing "enjoy the ride down hill to Nelligen, there's a bit of a bump in the middle, stay left and have a good time".

At a steady 32 kp/h the peloton left Braidwood along the Kings Highway towards the coast which is only 68kms away.

There is a lot of traffic on this road and after about 10 mins the call went out to move to single file. Roadworks meant that everyone received a short spray of wet concrete. It wasn't the start we all expected nor the finish – it took 2 hours to clean up. At 30 kms the group was still together but then there was a grade. OHA dropped a wheel which saw Green P move forward with Simon and Nathan to close the gap. At 32kms there is a sign that says "STEEP" – most hit over 70 km/h somewhere on this long down hill section. Then there is a series of hair pins tightening to 25kp/h and even less. After seven kilometres the down hill section ends and the climb up to the coast (go figure) begins. There was so much discussion about just how far the climb is that anyone over hearing the conversation could have been forgiven for thinking we were the National Congress of road designers, but it was somewhere between 1600 and 2500 metres of vertical climbing.

Thank goodness it was only 68kms!!! The front runners averaged over 37.5 kp/h and finished the run from Braidwood in 1 hour 50. OHA was last to roll in behind Ooowen, Matty H and Fester and that was in just over 2 hours. A very hot, fast and HILLY ride for day one.

Everyone looked forward to getting into the hotel and off the bike. That is everyone except Tony who clearly hadn't had enough and decided to ride around town for a further two hours.

An exceptional dinner of risotto, pasta, salad and fruit salad and gourmet yoghurt was enjoyed by all. Renee not only cooked but also drove the back up vehicle with the necessary supplies of spares and water. Thanks for a great job!

## Day 2

The ride brief was that we'd all roll out together, 100 kms along the coast and a bit of a run around some of the road course that is to be used for the NSW State champs later this year. Not even 100 metres past the woodfired pizza place and we struck the first hill.

Simon made every hill look easy. Steve A had come down late in the evening and joined in for the fun. The hills just kept on rolling as we cycled through Maconnell Bay, Broulee and on to Moruya. Over the bridge and a left hand turn saw the first attack, TBG led this and was backed up by Green P, Terminator, Tiger, Drastic, English Andrew, Simon, Toby and anyone else quick enough.

The 'B' bunch while not so fast made up for the lack of speed by latching on to the back of TBG and following "he who had the navigational device" to Moruya Heads look out and the local shop at which we emptied their fridge. That's right it was HOT...and hilly.

Back into town and then we re-grouped with the rest who had turned a little earlier.

Ooowen was a tad confused at the new turn of speed he gained by finding himself in front of the A group but then realized that if you take a short cut it gets you to where you want to be faster. Out onto the course that will be used for the state titles and stubborn OHA decided to use the draft behind the support vehicle just to get a little help up the hill and noticed that Mc Muscle was inside the van applying lotion. As the road turned to dirt, the peloton turned and rode back down the course into Moruya. Once more across the bridge and onto George Bass Drive (did you know he piloted a small row boat over 160 kms of this coast line) back towards the hotel.

The heat was high, fluids low and the hills somewhat relentless. Just on 110 kms for the day and everyone enjoyed lunch by the river Clyde. Dinner was again a classy slap up affair with the TC crew of TBG, Trémain, Renee and Nathan making sure everyone was well fed and cared for.

Conversation centred around just how long it was going to take us to ride back up the hill we'd flown down on Friday.

### Day 3

The B group of Fester, Tony, Steve, OHA, Oowen, Matt and Mat decided to leave half an hour before the A's in order to get a bit of a start to the climb before the heat of the day set in. The A's planned to leave at 8.30 am but McMuscle and ToTo also decided to leave early and departed only five minutes after the B's.

The B group set a steady pace, with Fester taking the lead. The down hills were longer than remembered and that could only mean one thing... the rises would also be longer!

At 28 kms everyone felt strong but then the hills hadn't started. A 25kph advisory sign issued the first warning that the climb was about to commence. At Governors bend, Toto and Rob Mc caught us and at that point we simply waited for the avalanche of A's but it didn't come. The climb is long and steep. At its meanest the gradient is just in 18.5% and runs for over 8 kms. Once at the top the B's became strung out and with now less than a run back from Pie In The Sky each of us wanted to see if we could get to Braidwood before being scooped up by the A's.

Luke and Tiger had chased hard up the hills and caught Toby. English Andrew caught everyone including the B's, Toto and Rob Mc with time to spare – he can certainly ride!

Green P and Simon were sprinting hard into Braidwood and somehow OHA managed to suck a wheel (for which he is eternally grateful) for the last kilometre into town.

General consensus was that the short 68kms run today was the hardest ride of the Tour, but no one was complaining. The riding, company and experience gained was terrific along with the chance to get to know other club members. The Snowies is in four weeks for anyone who feels like a great time, lots of good riding, food and camaraderie.