

Newsletter

16 April 2016



Duty roster

16 April, METEC

John Thomson (R), Julian Paynter, Rob Amos

23 April, Casey Fields

Tony Curulli (R), Roy Clark, Steve Ross

If rostered for duty, you must be there at least 1 hour before start time. It's your responsibility to find a replacement if unable to do your duty, then advise Andrew Buchanan, tiptop2@optusnet.com.au

Editor: Nick Tapp

nick.tapp@detail-ed.com.au



The Newham VVCC Open, hosted by Eastern Vets, is done and dusted for another year. Well done to all those club members who worked hard to make it a successful event. Race reports are inside this issue, including one from the point of view of someone on 'corner duty'. This Saturday we're at METEC, and next Saturday it's the Club Championships at Casey Fields.

I hope you stayed up and watched Paris–Roubaix the other night. The last of the cobbled classics for 2016 delivered a great armchair experience – though, if you're anything like me, you were up out of the armchair well before the nail-biting final lap of Roubaix velodrome. A fantastic result for Aussie Mathew Hayman (OGE), of course. If you haven't seen it, Orica GreenEdge's 'Backstage pass' for the race is obligatory viewing at www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zxnA4asj44.

Also in this issue, John Williams's day-by-day account of the Wellington to Auckland cycle race concludes. Read on!



Adam Dymond (left), who finished 3rd, and David McCormack (right), who came 2nd, on the podium at Newham Mechanics Hall with Open handicap winner Greg Ley (Eureka).



VVCC Open handicap, Newham, 9 April

Place	Rider	Handicap
1	Greg Ley (Eureka)	21:00
2	David McCormack (Eastern)	24:00
3	Adam Dymond (Eastern)	24:00
4	Paul Beasley (Geelong)	24:00
5	Chris Shay (Geelong)	24:00
6	Tommy Gray (Northern)	28:00
7	Tamara Riddell (Northern)	24:00
8	Jamie Robinson (Geelong)	28:00
9	Tony Gherxi (Northern)	33:00
10	Vince Sinni (Northern)	33:00
Fastest time	Trent Stevenson (Goulburn)	Scratch

50:00

'Not even close? Close but no banana? Or did you seize the day and grab some of the pot?'

Well, errrr, none of that. A nice cool afternoon, little wind and starting off 50 minutes, we had time to stop off at a winery or two on the way.

Just me and Rhonda, we set off. On the first hill Rhonda was in trouble so I waited, and again on the next hill, then, just before the big drop down to Lancefield, I looked around and no Rhonda, so into top gear, speed up to 65 km/h and headed off up the road alone, trying to pace myself and

hoping to get around the first lap before being run over by fast men.

Brian Long (Geelong, 84 yo) and Neville Yuille (Grampians) passed me at the last corner coming home for first lap, but after riding alone I was not able to hang on for long. They also brought Rhonda up to me, but she didn't last long with the hills heading in to the finish line.

As I started the second lap I noted that Neville had pulled out, so Mr Long was off on his own in the hills. I had him in sight but didn't make it up to him, then down to Lancefield again and caught by several bunches. That was the story – jump on, drop off – until scratch passed with 4 km to go.

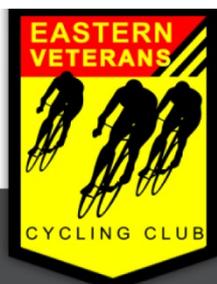
Put it down to good time trial training. An Improvement on Easter but still a long way to go.

Brian Farrell

28:00

I didn't realise how quickly one could get to Newham but the Calder and around the back of Macedon worked a treat, as did Neil's Subaru, so we had plenty of time for social discussions. It was amazing the change in Newham between 11.30 am, as quiet as, and 1.00 pm – bikes everywhere! Still a lovely little spot although the paddocks were pretty bare and the dams low. Go to the Mechanics Institute and sign on, fit the dreaded transponder and have a feed. That first hill kept looking bigger and bigger to a non-climber, but nothing to what it proved to be in the race.

Found the start/finish line – though for me and many others it only served the start function. The whole day was a credit to all involved with the running of it. Sadly, it only takes one mindless act to rock the boat, as we found out when a Dysons driver brought her bus to a halt and unloaded on Tom and Hylton about a rider warming up, who rode through a stop sign as she was doing a right turn in the bus. Hopefully, she got it all off her chest, but time will tell.





Our bunch had two scratchings but that didn't affect me or the two other Easterners, Ray Watts and Liz Randall. Our start was disastrous as we hadn't hit the front by the time we went 2 km. Ray and I were only a distant memory by the top of that hill, and I spent the next 28 km on my own. The ride to Lancefield seemed to take forever, with bunches and dropped Eastern riders passing me with regular monotony. About halfway back to the finish line I was caught by Doug Page and Ken Allan and managed to sit on the wheel for a couple of kilometres, but Doug decided to jump on a passing bunch, which saw Ken and me get blown away!

My only company at this point was a small grey kangaroo, who wisely stayed in the paddock as some largish bunches were really motoring at this stage. I was very relieved to complete the lap, hop off and adjourn to a comfortable chair to watch the finishers. My most useful act for the day proved to be waving the flag for the sprints, one of which was contested by a horde of about fifty. The day was rounded off really well with a tasty arvo tea and smoothly run presentations. Incredible, when thinking back to the previous year's freezing cold, to have been leaving Newham in late afternoon sunshine!

Congratulations to the VVCC and Eastern Vets on a great day.

Jim Swainston

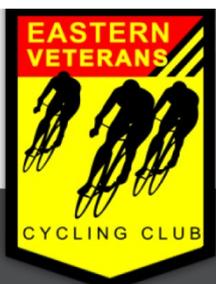
24:00

Handicaps are full of mystery. As you head out, you have many matters to ponder: what mark will I get, how many will be in my bunch, how strong are the riders in my bunch that I don't know, etc. Then, when you register, some of the mystery unfolds, but you know there's plenty more to come. I have to say I was surprised by the mark I was given. In the handicapper's defence, however, I did the Northern Vets handicap out at Kyneton the previous Sunday and got smashed, so I think he felt a bit sorry for me. I also noticed Dave McCormack and Neil Cartledge in my group with three riders from Geelong and Tamara Riddell from Northern, so I thought, if we had some strong riders there, we could be in the mix.

So off we rolled down Dons Road, with Tamara not hesitating to set a fair pace as we turned left at the general store into Woodend–Lancefield Road. After a few minutes we got organised and were all rolling turns nicely. It's a bit lumpy in that section and the pace was pretty frenetic. I noticed a few dropping back already and asked the rest to slow up a bit in an effort to keep the group together. This was heeded momentarily, but the pace was on up the next incline, and unfortunately we lost two or three quite early – which is disappointing for those who made the long journey.

My other question was being answered. It was clear that we had some very strong riders in the bunch, namely Paul Beasley and Chris Shay from Geelong, and Tamara was also doing some great turns at the front. I noticed around the 15 km mark that we were averaging 38 km/h, and I thought to myself, this is full on. The pace stayed on until we got around the back into Three Chain Road, where a slight headwind slowed us down a fraction. But there were six of us rolling strong turns, with Dave McCormack and Neil Cartledge contributing nicely. The last turn for the lap back into Dons Road, with that little 50 m pincher, saw our bunch string out a little bit. We were heartened though as we had already passed quite a few stragglers, and I got a real sense that we were in for a good race.

Past the start/finish for the first/last time, and as we turned left at the general store I yelled to Geoff Darroch (on duty), 'How many in front?' The reply was 'Not too many', so that gave us another boost. As we started up the inclines, Tamara, Chris and Paul were pulling away, and once we got over they seemed to be swapping turns and had a good 50–60 m gap on us. Dave Mc and I discussed this and agreed that if they wanted to do their own thing, then we might just wind them up and sit on. We did wind them in pretty quickly, and Dave made it fairly clear that they might be better off working with the whole group to give us a chance. We were still picking up a few stragglers and got no sense of anyone coming from behind as we turned into Three Chain Road for the last time. After a few kilometres I could see a bunch of eight or ten





riders ahead that I assumed was the 28-minute and 33-minute marks, as I could see the lead car in front of them. So I knew our quarry was in sight.

We got to them with about 5 km to go and most of that group sat on us as we went past. So now we had the conundrum of going hard enough to keep those chasing us at bay, but not easing up too much and giving those we had just brought into the group a free ride. At this stage Chris and Tamara really pulled out the stops and were both pulling strong turns, with Chris doing the lion's share – chapeau! I was trying to help them every second or third turn, but I was both a bit tired and trying to save a few pennies for the sprint. So we got to the last corner and the pace was on again up the little climb up Dons Road. As we got over, we knew with 2 km to go it would be a sprint. I was glued to Paul's back wheel.

At the 1 km mark, a total surprise as No. 77 flew past us. My immediate thought was that we were being swamped by the 21-minute group. I found out later that Greg Ley had soloed across to us and had been sitting in for a while by himself. We wound up to get on Greg's wheel and Paul, Dave Mc and myself gave chase. We got across to Paul with 200–300 m to go, and the sprint was on. I could see Dave and Greg to my left, but I was locked onto Paul. With 150 m to go I stood up and got around Paul to take 3rd, with Greg hanging on for the win, Dave a well-earned 2nd and Paul coming in 4th. The finish times reveal that there was 0.7 s between 1st and 4th, so we were all right there. Then there was a 10 s gap to Chris Shay in a well-earned 5th, Tommy Gray from the 28-minute bunch in 6th and a sensational effort by Tamara to take out 7th place. The rest of the top 10 was taken up by a combination from the 28-minute and 33-minute bunches, with Northern President, Vince Sinni, taking 10th spot.

Thanks to all those who organised the event, from both VVCC and EVCC. Also a huge thanks to all marshals and volunteers on duty, and thanks for the great spread afterwards.

Finally, thanks to Doug from VeloEx for the wheels, which will come in very handy.

Footnote: I was in the winning bunch here last year [as was *Dave McCormack – Ed.*], coming in at 8th. I'm fairly sure the handicapper will be onto me next year, so I'll have to keep pondering those unknowns and work a bit harder over the next 12 months to see if I can get in the money three years running.

Adam Dymond

13:30

I was in the 13:30 bunch with only one other Eastern rider (Mark Trounson). A look at the start list confirmed my worst fears that I had been penalised for displaying an inkling of form in recent races. I was giving 10:30 to my usual cohort!

So we rolled off the from the start and worked well to the first corner, rolling through a few quick turns. This is where I found myself on the front, just in time for the first hill. No one came through and it was left to me to drag the bunch up. Organisation returned over the top and a very fast working group powered along for the next few kilometres. However, an average pace of over 38 km/h for the first 10 km proved too much for me and I trailed off the back.

I rode the next probably 10 kilometres solo until the 10-minute bunch picked me up. I kept them company until the last hill before the finish line (still on the first lap), where once again my legs failed me. I retired after the first lap with dark thoughts about handicappers and handicaps. Average speed for one lap, even with getting dropped and just coasting for the last couple of kilometres, was still over 34 km/h. I've definitely had better days in the saddle.

Kudos goes out to the organisers, marshals, sponsors and volunteers who combined to make the day run smoothly and without incident. Thanks also to all who donated to the great buffet – which I am sure we all had a win over!

Peter Morris





8:30 (I)

The time trial is often well-named as the ‘Race of Truth’. Maybe the handicap should be known as the ‘Race of Attrition’.

With great weather and a testing two laps of a 30 km circuit that included undulations, long drags, fast descents and a tricky finish, an interesting race was sure to unfold. Riding off a mark of 8:30 meant we only had to catch nine bunches spread out up to 41:30 ahead of us. But discussions before the start, when it became clear some riders had never ridden a handicap, suggested things might not go quite to plan.

With the first climb only a few minutes after the start, it was a surprise to see some riders intent on pushing the envelope, right from the get-go. Steve Ross and I both started at the back and realised promptly this was no walk in the park. With Richard Taylor and Grant Dawson from Eureka keen to force the pace, Nick Tapp, Steve, a couple of others and myself all contributing to the pacemaking, it was not far into the race that our bunch’s numbers started to dwindle. One dropped, then another and another.

On reaching a fast descent halfway around the first lap, the 10-minute bunch was just becoming visible in the distance. Things were looking good. The gap narrowed, and on a flat fast section, it was a simple quick turn each and we were on – or should have been! Suddenly the number of contributors inexplicably dropped, the 10-minute bunch started to stretch their lead and it was obvious that our solid pace was starting to drop.

A quick look behind and the 7-minute bunch were coming fast, ably led through by Richard McCorkell and our own David Moreland, looking strong, fast and determined. Once in contact, the pace went up again and before the final corner of lap one, the three groups were together. An uphill drag over three short rises meant the numbers thinned again and as we passed the finish line, it was obvious there was a lot of work to do, just to be in contention at the finish. Again we tackled the testing undulations at the start of the lap, numbers thinned a bit more and the number of non-working passengers increased. Those remaining Eastern members kept coming through.

Another 80 km/h descent and, with 20 km to go, we started to finally drag back some more front bunches. One group, two groups, three groups and no one in sight behind. But time was quickly running out and, as we approached the final left-hand turn, even with a hard run to the finish, it was clear we were not going to be fighting for a place today. It always seems an anomaly where many riders seem intent on saving themselves for a sprint for 30th place, but I guess that is bike racing. *[As it turned out, it was 12th place that was at stake – Ed.]*

With 2.5 km to go, after having to jump the median strip on the final corner as riders rallied four and five wide, I decided to go for home and at least try to get the benefit of a heart-shattering, full-gas turn to the finish. It seems sometimes that the brain and the legs get their messages crossed, and I briefly thought I might hang on (for that 30th place!). But finally, at about 350 m to go, the inevitable charge of the bunch swooshed past on the right for a hotly contested sprint.

No money today, but a great day out and thanks to all those who marshalled, organised and fed us on the day.

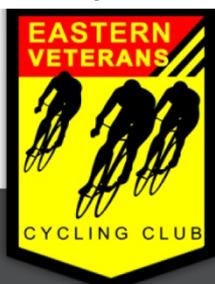
Doug Reynolds

8:30 (II)

It was good to have Quentin Frayne in the bunch on Saturday, back after a while away from racing. Brave man, though, to tackle an Open, and possibly not the mark he had hoped for, off 8:30, 4th scratch, giving limit 41:30 head start over two laps of 30 km.

It was full gas from the start in our group, with the likes of Steve Ross and Paul Webster plus some keen lads from Eureka, several Northerners, and former Eastern rider Ian Amsden, now living in Geelong. Quentin lasted 8.5 km or so, until the second and main ascent (1.6 km at max. 6–7%), and Walter Savini may have lost touch at that point, too. It seemed very early to be shedding riders.

I stayed with the reduced bunch over the top – in second wheel, behind Steve Ross, if my memory serves me – but lost contact on the very fast





descent, only about 1.5 km further on from where Quentin was dropped. I then chased the six or eight who had got away for about 10 km on the flat and didn't feel too bad, considering. I even thought I was holding them for a while, though in truth they were probably edging away the whole time. I was finally losing sight of them when about half of the 7:00 group (including Dave Moreland) came past, with a couple of 8:30ers on the back, and I jumped on.

From there I have to say I had a nice sit, albeit a quick one (I averaged 39.5 km/h for lap 1 and 38.7 km/h for lap 2), for almost the entire race. And I had to pay special attention on the descents, when the bigger riders always threatened to gap me. We soon caught and combined with the escapees from 8:30, then gradually picked up two or three more decent-sized groups and many stragglers, enough of whom jumped on to create a pretty huge bunch. We passed Rhonda and Brian, the two limit riders (no longer together), and I guessed we were close to the front of the race.

The final leg starts with a short, steep pinch, which let me move up towards the front of the megabunch, then there's a further uphill drag that goes on and on. Doug Reynolds made a bold bid for solo glory at this point and drove away to a good gap, but bit by bit his advantage came down and soon he was swallowed up again. At the crest, with 700 m to go, I was nicely close to the pointy end but on the inside, with riders on the outside of me. Miraculously, about 150 m out, as the sprint began, a nice wide space opened and I had enough in the legs to move through into the wind. Number 47 from the 10-minute group got both wheels in front on my right, but I was next across the line, and first from the 8:30 group, with Emilio Romano from Northern behind me and Steve Ross behind him. That put me 13th overall (yes, close!), not quite two minutes behind the winning bunch and about a minute behind 10th.

Thanks to everyone from the club and the VVCC who worked so hard to make the Newham Open a successful event.

Nick Tapp

4:30

As with all handicaps, the riders are at the mercy of the handicapper, who has no chance of knowing all the riders, so there will always be winners and losers even before the start. The bunches need to be evenly matched so everyone can roll through at the required pace. A look at the start sheet and ours looked like a good bunch, but Chris Ellenby knew he would struggle (the handicapper did not consider age) while Dave Moreland and Steve Ross got under the radar. The no-show of strongman Phil Smith would also be a big loss.

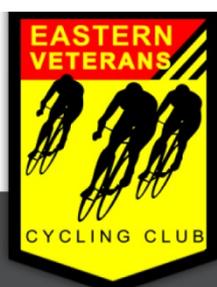
A good warm-up to get up that first hill had me rolling to the line, when I was stopped by traffic control. After a few minutes another rider said I was being called up. As I got to the line, 2nd scratch was rolling away. Perfect timing, I thought, but Tom stopped me as I had missed the briefing, so I had to start with scratch.

I knew I had no chance of matching them on the hills. I surprised myself by making it up the first hill, but it was almost as hard on the descents as I spun out my top gear. After 8.5 km of rolling turns, I cracked on the hill through Rochford and started a 52 km solo ride to the finish, averaging 35.6 km/h on roads that felt like Paris–Roubaix in places. I later heard that scratch blew off a couple more riders before the end of the first lap, and many riders did not complete the course.

Rob Amos

On duty

- 0700 Alarm, shower, breakfast, dress. Should I bring Maya (Labradoodle) to keep me company? 'Sorry, girl, better stay home.'
- 0800 Depart Mitcham, pick up truck and trailer.
- 0830 Depart Nunawading, refuel and check tyres.
- 0845 Eastern Freeway, Hoddle, St Georges, Bell, Tulla and Calder Highway. Hanging Rock turn-off.
- 1005 Arrive Newham, park and begin setup at primary school.
- 1020 Wander over to the cafe to find Nick and Hylton relaxing after measuring up the start/finish area. Purchase coffee, talk to a local cyclist.





1040-ish Return to PS, prepare signs and equipment for distribution around the course.
 1130 Wander back to cafe corner armed with broom to sweep stones from road.
 1200 Hylton conducts event briefing for TCs and marshals.
 1230 VVCC announces they require marquee and table at start/finish line. Colin scrambles those items onto his ute, he and Harry set them up.
 1300 Radio check. Everyone is in position for scheduled 'limit' starting time. Time for another coffee.
 1320 VVCC announces they require lead and trail vehicles. 'Oh shivers!'
 Colin and Peter prepare their vehicles to perform the task. Peter forgets to unhitch trailer. Oops! 'Can't lug this around the course all afternoon.' Return to PS, detach trailer and chock wheels. JC, filling in for Pete, assists Geoff at cafe corner.

1330 Did we make it in time? Some talk of a delay.
 1425 Scratch under way. Check rear vision mirror, lead car in sight. Early starters only minutes from completing first lap.
 1545 Placegetters finishing.
 1615 Last rider home. Return to PS to pack up.
 1640 Wander over to Mechanics Hall for presentations and food.
 1715 All done. Depart Newham.
 1830 Arrive Nunawading, park and detach trailer.
 1900 Arrive home. 'Sorry, Maya, no walk tonight, I'm stuffed.'
 2030 (or thereabouts) Asleep and dreaming of cycling tomorrow morning in the hills.

Congratulations to David McCormack on 2nd placing and Adam Dymond on 3rd.

Special mention to Pres. Hylton, Nigel, Nick and all those who made the event run smoothly.

Peter Gray

Wednesday criterium at the Loop, Kew, 13 April

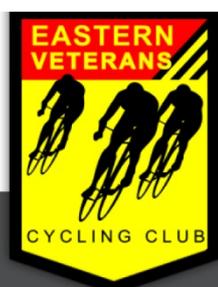
Division	1st	2nd	3rd
Division 1 (20)	Phil Thompson	Peter Ferrie (N)	Ray Russo
Division 2 (10)	John Hasouras (N)	Peter Morris	Quentin Frayne
Division 3 (8)	Andreas Weber	Dean Niclasen	Neil Cartledge
Division 4 (6)	Laurie Bohn	Ian Buckingham (N)	John Eddy

Thanks to Keith Bowen and his merry men for setting up and running proceedings.

News etc.

L'Étape Australia

A number of Eastern Vets riders have participated in the now annual L'Étape du Tour cyclosporatives, which follow the course of a mountain stage of the Tour de France some days in advance of the race. The event regularly attracts huge numbers of riders, mainly from the Northern Hemisphere. This year it comes to Australia for the first time, and the route (157 km in the Snowy Mountains of New South Wales) was recently announced. For details, go to letapeaustralia.com.





Wellington–Auckland cycle race, 14–20 February 2016

John Williams's account of the Wellington to Auckland race concludes here with the last four days.

Day 4, Wednesday 17 February

At the presentations last night, one of the 'jersey' riders described Day 4 as the 'hump'. Once you are past the hump, you are more than halfway and on your way home. There was another reason why he called it the hump. Only 104 km of racing in two stages, but three King of the Mountains stages covering 16 km!

We awake to rain and the news that we would catch the edge of a cyclone this arvo, and so we might expect wind, gusting up to 90 km/h. Departure from the ancient and picturesque Wanganui Cycle Club and Velodrome in drizzle was a sombre affair, and after 6 km of neutral we stopped at a river bank to get race proper underway – except 100+ riders (mostly, but not exclusively, male) took that as the opportunity to add to the river flow.

The first KoM at 17 km predictably saw a split in the peloton, the jerseys getting away with a few 'normal' riders, including our own Geoffrey, tucked in. I missed the split at the top of the climb by about 100 m, equivalent to about a million miles.

Two age-group yellow jerseys (Under 30 and 60–69) were also dropped just before the summit and gave me a target to chase, while Geoff cruised away on the tail of the Jersey group, Dave and Greg sought refuge in the numbers of other riders that missed the split.

Three kilometres of gut-wrenching chase and I was onto the pair of age-group yellows, just at the start of a massive descent. At the bottom, they were back to a 100 m gap again, and it took another 5 km solo chase before I was back onto them. Working together, we managed to get within 50 m of the main jersey group, but once they realised that it was two yellows behind that they could put time into, they decided to clear out and got several minutes on us. I clearly keep the wrong company.

As predicted, the afternoon gusts arrived, predominantly from three sides – head, left and

right! Rainy squalls didn't add to the comfort, but the wind and two KoMs, totalling 12 km in the first 24, was plain rude! Once on the plateau, we were fully exposed to the elements in an isolated group of four – Geoff, myself, Grafton John and Steffan, a young German with a cracked collarbone who lives near (and thinks he is) Jens Voigt.

We picked up a few riders on the way home but didn't really work all that well together. I slowly towed our small, weary group home into the headwind for most of the last 5 km. Leading up to the line, Geoff cleared out to put 8 seconds on the rest of our group for 20th on the stage, but we were well down on the leaders.

Our other riders were most collegiate. After Greg led the peloton into the first hill after lunch (2 km into the stage), he died in the arse and by the finish described the day as his 'worst ever on a bike'. Mostly wind related. Dave gallantly helped him home, sharing gels when he bonked, leading him into the wind, even turning back for him on occasions when he dropped his man. At the end they had an average speed of 19.5 km/h for the 52 km stage. Checking my Garmin, my average was only 23.

GC at the end of Day 4:

Geoff 15th (9th in 50–59 age group)

John 19th (4th, 60–69)

Dave 37th (9th, 60–69)

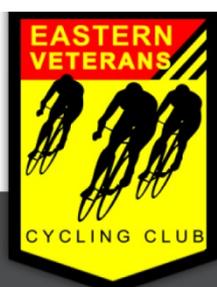
Greg 42nd (18th, 50–59)

Day 5, Thursday 18 February

Another tough day, a hilly 135 km into the teeth of a cyclonic wind gusting up to 100 km/h. Overnight the wind and rain were so strong that we were all woken at 3 am – the very building seemed to shake. For older readers, think *Key Largo*, starring Bogart and Bacall.

The early morning news was categoric: 'All racing cancelled.' Greg has never been happier!

It was just too dangerous. Imagine Casey on a windy day, double it and then add strong gusts,





hilly, windy roads ... You get the picture.

Really disappointing as I was planning on taking 10 or more minutes on the peloton, but a correct decision by the race organisers, and perfectly coordinated contingency plans saw all riders and support staff, bikes and luggage safely into Taupo by 1 pm.

Cyclists wandering around the place, wondering what to do. Wind has dropped, but still pissing with rain. I'm off to spin the legs.



It's a slow news day: Dave crosses the road.

Day 6, Friday 19 February

Taupo to Hamilton

'Rider crashes at 60 km/h!

'A cyclist was proceeding in a downward direction and failed to negotiate a sweeping right-hand bend. Loose gravel, wet roads, moss and rider incompetence were all contributing factors.

'When interviewed, John sounded just like the tortoise providing a statement to police after being mugged and robbed by two snails. "It all happened so fast", he said.'

Said incident occurred at 40 km into a 122 km stage. 'If you can't descend well, it pays to know how to fall.' Once I realised I was going down, I did enough to get the bike onto grass and landed quite comfortably. By the time the bike was righted, brakes adjusted to stop rubbing rims,

Garmin and bottles found and replaced, the pack had cleared out, and I threw the leg over for a solitary 80 km ride to the finish. Unexpectedly, a tandem went by. If only I could have hooked on to that! It went on to finish first.

Some 20 km down the road, a group containing Greg and six other riders caught up, and for the last half of the race the group worked well into relentless headwinds, accompanied by rain for the last 15 km. Just behind us, Dave was working well in another group, and finished around 6 minutes behind.

Up the road, Geoff, who had a metre's advantage on John at the time of the crash, hung in with the fast riders to great advantage, but then had two incidents in the last 25 km, one of which took him down – but again no damage to bike or body.

The leader of the GC, an Aussie called Phil Kesby, has hung on to the yellow by just 2 seconds since the first leg, despite being constantly attacked by the Thompson Twins (Mike and Greg), who ride in the green and polka dot jerseys. All are 50–59, with Phil heading into over 60s next year!

GC at the end of Day 6:

Geoff 18th 17:46:02 (10th in 50–59 age group)

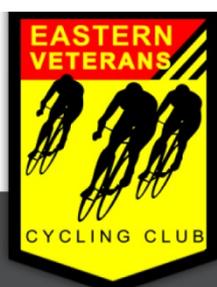
John 22nd 18:06:13 (4th, 60–69)

Dave 38th 19:17:12 (9th, 60–69)

Greg 40th 19:29:43 (17th, 50–59)



John at the start line at Taupo with a contemplative Steffan 'Jens Voigt' Lang.



Day 7, Saturday 20 February: The last day ...

John's race report

Last day of riding, and while some are winding down, with their positions secure, others still had much to prove. Phil Kesby, for instance was still race leader by just 2 seconds from Greg Thompson, and you just suspect that they might be working one another over to maintain or change that situation. The Melbourne riders were much more secure in their positions, yet I still felt I had a better ride in me than I had so far displayed.



Three variations on Eastern uniform, along with our own Jens Voigt, and David Williamson from Manukau (3rd, over 60) just before the start of racing on the final day.

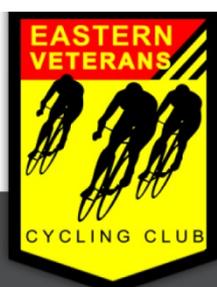
On the 73 km morning stage from Hamilton to Murray Bridge last year I had my best ride, finishing 6th overall, so I was keen to have a go. Starting deep in the pack of 40 riders, it was clear the pace was going to be fast over the undulating early first half, so to be better alert to breaks in the pack I firstly moved up to mid-pack, and then shortly moved forward to rub shoulders with the jerseys in the top 10. It was fast in short bursts as the leaders played cat and mouse, but both Geoff and I were attentive enough to not get caught out.

Into the last 15 km it got more lumpy, but they were sprinter's hills with downhill lead-ups that would carry you halfway up, and on many you could carry quite a high gear over the top. Twelve kilometres to go and David Williamson, one place ahead of me in my age category, had snuck off the front with a 200 m lead, and as we reached a

short summit I launched myself in pursuit. After catching him and rolling a few turns, I was surprised to hear the sound of other riders behind who had successfully bridged. Seconds later the pesky tandem flashed past with Geoff and another rider sitting sweetly in the slip. We jumped on and worked together, two Eastern riders (in full club colours) leading the break. Shortly, sanity returned and a much smaller lead pack bridged to us: adventure and dreams over.

Or was it? As we passed the 1 km to go marker at the summit of yet another climb, I decided to have another go, hoping the top riders might have more important wheels to watch. By the time I had got around the riders in front of me and wound up the pedals, Geoff had already pre-empted me and jumped to a 40 m lead. With 200 m to go, it was Eastern 1–2 before the yellow jersey flashed by alongside his challenger and two other riders. Geoff and I were given the same time in 5th/6th, the electronic judge giving Geoff the benefit of the doubt. Dave was only 20 seconds back, and although Greg was dropped from the main group early, he too had a great ride.

The afternoon stage from Murray Bridge to Pukekohe was only 37 km, but not the social ride that the tour final stage usually provides. Greg Thompson, still eager to get 3 seconds to take yellow off Phil Kesby, put the hammer down from the first pedal stroke, and within the first kilometre they were both out of sight. The first 22 km were pretty lumpy, and by all accounts they went at it hammer and tongs. During a short truce, three others bridged, mostly to support Greg we think, but Phil responded to everything they threw at him. I stayed close to the next leading group of 10 and we flew! By the finish line we all took around the same time. I was officially 15th but only two minutes off the stage winner, who failed to gain the 2 seconds he needed. Geoff came in around 3 minutes later, having missed an earlier break, and sharing the load with just one or two other riders. Greg and Dave were a bit further back, finding the bigger hills less to their liking than the morning stage, but well satisfied with their afternoon – and indeed their week!





Final GC:

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | Phil Kesby (NSW, Australia) 19:43:10 (1st in 50–59 age group) | 21 | John Williams (Eastern Vets) 20:56:01 (4th, 60–69) – 20th if you exclude the tandem, which I do |
| 2 | Greg Thompson (NZ) 19:43:12 (2nd, 50–59) | 38 | Dave McCormack (Eastern Vets) 22:18:00 (9th, 60–69) |
| 18 | Geoff O’Loughlen (Eastern Vets) 20:38:11 (10th, 50-59) | 40 | Greg Foster (Northern Vets) 22:36:36 (17th, 50–59) |
| 19 | Steffan ‘Jens Voigt’ Lang (Germany) 20:46:02 (2nd, under 30) | | |

Future events

Eastern Vets

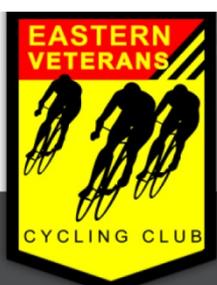
For other events, please refer to page 1 of this newsletter, or go to <http://easternvets.com/roster/>

Note: Graded Scratch Race entries are accepted on the day up to 15 minutes before the advertised race start time. Handicap entries close the Tuesday before the race. Riders entering a handicap MUST pay the entry fee regardless of participation. Fees are due on race day; entrants will NOT be allowed to start in any EVCC race until fees have been paid.

No late entries will be accepted for either scratch races or handicaps. Entries to handicaps can be submitted via e-mail to the handicapper or on any race day prior to the event.

Northern Vets

For more details go to <http://www.northerncycling.com/>





Training rides

Day/Time/Place	Route	Style	Contact
<p>Tuesdays 9:30 am (9:00 am during DST)</p> <p>Main Yarra Trail (meet under Burke Road overpass)</p>	Under Burke Road on Main Yarra Trail to Southbank via Yarra Boulevard and bike paths along the river and return	Social, bike paths and roads, coffee @ Southbank	Keithb33@optusnet.com.au
<p>Sunday mornings</p> <p>Beach Road Ride. Leave 8.00 am sharp. Meet at Peanut Farm Reserve, cnr Blessington & Chaucer Sts, St Kilda</p>	Ride along Beach Rd to Frankston. 10 min stop. Then ride back to St Kilda (approx. 65 km)	Social ride, coffee back at St Kilda	
<p>Saturday mornings (7.30 am) and Sundays/public holidays (8.00 am)</p> <p>Meet at Ringwood Clock towers, Maroondah Hwy, Ringwood</p>	Maroondah Hwy to Carlton for coffee, then return	Fast social	

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