



Eastern veterans cycling club

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Respecting the Rights of all Road Users

Newsletter October 23rd 2010

Graded Scratch Races – METEC - October 16th

Race report

As the race day phone said; “Racing on Saturday 16th of October has been cancelled due to inclement weather” - it wasn't the best of days for donning the lycra and riding a bike. This didn't stop a few though, four Eastern Vets members took on the classic 'Warrny' on a miserable Saturday - 35kph sou-westerly winds, rain and hail. And given that Warrnambool is south-west of Melbourne it meant a headwind all the way from start to the finish. Needless to say the attrition rate was high, mechanicals (50 odd punctures reported), accidents (according to Tony a dozen were blown over when the change hit 14k into the race) and the conditions all taking their toll. Of the 212 starters only 93 completed the course. Unfortunately Peter Howard and Evan Butler were two of the casualties although Peter backed up on Sunday to finish 14th overall (2nd in grade) in the Ship Wreck classic. But Tony Chandler and David Anderson were amongst the finishers; Tony finishing 59th at 0:14:40 (and that's against teams such as Drapac & Genesys Wealth Advisors)(31st was at 0:14:13), David Anderson finishing 76th 0:40:35 behind the winner.

Ben Schofield sent me a unique insight into the World Championships in Geelong so with no race reports for this week I'm giving you that.

MY PARTICIPATION IN THE 2010 ROAD WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, GEELONG

By Ben Schofield

There were pre-race nerves, and I wasn't even competing! I was about to help out as a VIP driver in the 2010 Road Cycling World Championships – the biggest ever cycling event in Australia.

And the nerves were not without reason – my job was to take sponsors and high level sports and government representatives out onto the road course and let them experience the race – the closer to the race the better. This is not without its challenges – riders can quickly switch from one side of the road to the other, depending on the prevailing wind and road conditions, and we have to make sure we don't get between the TV camera operator on the back of a motorbike and the riders – it is a live TV event after all. Fortunately, the event started with Time Trials which, involving riders starting at set intervals and racing individually around the course to set a time, meant an

easier introduction to driving the course than massed start road racing.

Wednesday, 29 September was the first day of competition. The Under 23 Men (who also have to be amateurs) raced first in the morning, followed by the women. My task was to follow 2 designated riders in both the morning and afternoon events. The first challenge was to place myself in the correct order for the start – I was to drive off after the team car – from which instructions and encouragement are yelled at the rider – telecommunications were banned for this World Championships. Eager to start, team cars were bunching up out of the team compound, where riders warmed up under a huge marquee. A flash of accreditation and communication in English and French and my place in the order was resolved.

Quickly, Rohan Dennis of Australia was away off the start ramp, immediately followed by the team car. I turned the corner onto the race course and pressed down the accelerator hard, and after a 2 second lag, the Skoda Superb took off, and just as well, as the rider was already starting to crest the rise from the start and accelerate to 60kph on the run down the hill. While not fancied to win, Rohan is still a star in the making and his speed was impressive – nearly 50kph on the flat. Following the tough climb up to Highton, Rohan sped down the descent, and I watched as my car speedo went up to 85kph. However, no sooner was this speed attained but it was hard on the brakes to follow Rohan to the left and then switching right onto the temporary bridge across the Barwon River – specially built for these Championships. Then another hard climb out of the river gully, surely it must be as tough mentally as it looked physically. Rohan then drove hard past the feed station, unattended as it was waiting for the road race later in the championships, and then left onto Packington Street. The slope downhill meant Rohan was in a big gear and driving at 70kph. Then a slight rise, the hard right hander over the main highway and down to the Esplanade, here there was a headwind, and Dennis slowed, hovering between 40 and 50kph. Turning right, Dennis climbed Moorabool St past the largest crowd on the course. One lap to go! Dennis kept up a good tempo over the Moorabool Street hill and plummeted down the other side towards the river. He was consistent, with a speed similar to that on the first lap. Two right handers and he was onto the base of the climb. Steadily, and in the saddle, he made his way up the climb, holding onto the bullhorn bars to open up his chest for greater ease in breathing – wind resistance was not the issue on the climb.

Cresting the climb to the cheers of the hardy spectator souls on the top, with a chill in the air and a hint of rain, Dennis descended

rapidly, churning a big gear. Then up the hard grind of the other side and back into Aphrasia Street. Then the left onto Packington – come on Rohan, not far to go! Again, speeds of up to 70kph down here, in the aero tuck using the aero bars to full effect. Right over the bridge and onto the Esplanade, and a hard fight into the wind, as a few spectators lined the route. Then after what must have felt an eternity, the final right hander into Moorabool St and the big crowd cheering him home. 350 metres from the line and my job was over, diverting to the left and off the course for the drive round the back, through the team compound and ready to follow the next rider. Here Corrine Baume of the UCI Lounge (for VIP guests) had teed up my next group.

The next rider I was to follow was a Dane; Rasmus Christian Quaade. My guests were Skoda customers who had bought from the dealership in Geelong – not the kind of VIPS I had expected! Again, a surprisingly fast start up the hill from the Time Trial ramp and we turned left as the rider and team car flashed past to follow them. This Dane looked like a time trial specialist – he was powerfully built and his calves flexed with each pedal stroke as he pushed a big gear over the crest of the rise and down the other side towards the Barwon. The cloud cover had thickened and the day was grey – perfect for a Dane?? We would soon know. Right and right again and onto the climb, which went up in three ramps with a levelling out between each one. Enough to recover? Probably not – this was the World Championships and everyone was at their maximum. Quaade kept a good tempo up the climb for someone of his size. He rapidly accelerated over the top of the climb, with sweeping views to the west. No time for scenery though, as the speed increased to 85kph. Then braking hard and onto the sweeping left hander of the bridge. But it was the following right hander actually onto the bridge that was the harder corner, as it rose and turned 90 degrees with no favourable camber. Then, suddenly, he was down! Catching his handlebars with the fencing the Dane fell, apparently not too seriously. Limping slightly, he remounted after his team car assistant had rushed to his aid. Up the steep initial road out of the river gully, but he was labouring. He then dismounted with a grimace – his race was over. The team car pulled up, and his assistant hugged him as a comfort rather than congratulations. He would not place today.

I parked my car on the right hand side, away from the racing line, at first not sure what to do next. An answer soon arrived as Taylor Phinney powered past up the climb with the US team car right behind. The American was going well. Over the top of the hill at Aphrasia Street and past the empty feed station, then left onto Packington, and the American's speed picked up quickly. 75kph! Then slowing as the road levelled off prior to the tight right hander and bridge over the highway. A switch left and then right onto the Esplanade – the American was carrying his speed well. Finally the right hand turn up into Moorabool Street and Phinney was out of the saddle, charging for the line. The 350 metre to go sign came up quickly, then it was a left turn onto the diversion and round the back of the course, but the cheers could be heard from Moorabool for the American star. Parking my car, I headed up to the top of the hill to watch the last finishers. Once the last rider was in the verdict was clear – Taylor Phinney was World Champion, to go with his Pursuit Gold Medal on the track. Definitely one to watch for the future.

In the afternoon, the Elite Women competed. My first rider to follow was the Ukrainian, Svitlana Galyuk. A tall, strong woman, she started strongly off the ramp. Over the crest of the hill and down past Kardinia Park, she hit approximately 55kph. Then down to the river, with the right hander decorated with a range of fans from all over the world. Alongside the river, her speed slowed a little, and then the start of the climb. She began in the aero position, but was soon on the bullhorns as she searched for more lung capacity up the tough climb – one of the toughest time trial world championship circuits ever! Steadily she made her way up, on the inside chainring. As we turned right onto the final part of the climb, the girl from Singapore was ahead, her red and white skinsuit bobbing as she rode out of the saddle up to the top of the climb. Svitlana stayed in the saddle here and wore her quarry down. Before the top of the climb, she had passed the girl from Singapore. We stayed back until the Ukrainian had more than a 60 metre gap in front of the Singaporean, then a blast from the horn and we accelerated rapidly past so as not to give any advantage to the rider being passed. Then we headed down the descent at about 75kph, with me keeping a watchful eye in the rear view mirror just in case the girl from Singapore started to catch us back up, in which case I would have to pull over and let her past. But it didn't happen. Svitlana then cornered expertly onto the temporary bridge across the river and headed up the hill, to the cheers of spectators alongside the climb. Then over the crest and onto Aphrasia Street with the speed picking up again. The left hander onto Packington and the run down the gradual slope, with the speed picking up to 55kph. Then right over the bridge and right again onto the Esplanade. Here the wind was evident in the trees, and there was a chill coming off the bay. Undeterred, the Ukrainian forged on in her aero tuck. Past the VIP centre of the UCI Lounge at the Deakin University Waterfront campus and past Moorabool Street. We then headed up to Eastern Beach along the road that lines the cliff edge. Through the park and down towards the beach. Here the roads were heavy, slow and bumpy, but the Ukrainian kept her speed above 40kph. Then a right and we were back towards the beach. Then left and onto Malop Street – the final straight before a right hander onto Moorabool. Here I took the diversion to the left and back up to the start to pick up my next guests.

This time we were to follow the Canadian, Anne Samplonius. However, we did not make it back in time! There was now a line up of team cars for the remaining riders, and I could not get in the queue. So the decision was made to follow the final rider, Judith Arndt. The riders are sent off on a seeded basis, with the best rider last – this meant that Judith was the favourite – at least on paper. The German started strongly. With half a lap complete, a car was seen ahead, the German was catching the girl who started 1 minute 30 seconds in front, Alexis Rhodes of Australia. Again, it was a case of waiting until the passing rider had gained at least 60 metres and then on the horn as a warning and racing past to take up position behind the followed rider. The drive then continued without incident, and then it was time to get back via the diversion to the top of Moorabool Street.

With driving completed for the day, I was off to a briefing with the UCI, and then finally back to my accommodation at Geelong College. We were housed in the dormitory, and while it was clean it certainly wasn't warm! I was fine though, as I had my minus 10 degree sleeping bag – others had been busy shopping for blankets after the race! There was plenty of chat amongst the

drivers and officials as we watched replays on the news and Channel One, then it was time for bed, in the knowledge that the speeds tomorrow would be higher – how would the driving go!?

Thursday dawned sunny and clear, an ideal day for racing. It was also an opportunity to take it easy in the morning, as the racing did not start until 1pm. It was an opportunity to head down to the Race Village Hub and buy a souvenir top, fill the Skoda Superb and give it a wash – it had to look good on TV! My first rider for the day was former Spanish Time Trial Champion, Jose Ivan Guitierrez. So he was going to go fast! Looking at the Start Sheet, the names were impressive: Tony Martin, David Millar, our own Michael Rogers and Richie Porte, and of course Fabian Cancellara himself. It was going to be interesting to see the increase in speed. My VIPs were also impressive, I was to drive executives from Tissot and the wife of the Global President Marketing for Shimano? The President even gave me his card – I wondered if I could ask for a cheap Dura-Ace groupset at some stage?!

So the VIPs were in the car and we found our place behind the follow car, a task made easier by the magnetic name plate with the rider's name on the bonnet. The crowd was definitely larger on this day, and the countdown for the rider was barely heard from the car with the cheering. Then, Jose was off, with Neil Stephens flashing past driving the follow car. Guitierrez was quickly over the crest of Moorabool Street and into his classic, aggressive time trial position. The speedo showed 70kph, not a bad start! As the road levelled off past Kardinia Park so did the speed – a little over 60kph. Crossing over the bridge and the right, the Spaniard took a tight racing line through the corners to the cheers of spectators. Then onto the climb. Interestingly, he stayed on the aero bars for the first part of the climb, and only changed to the bullhorns on the second ramp of the climb, as the speed dropped to about 25kph. Then he was out of the saddle, smoothly powering up the climb. Over the top and the speed quickly increased, with a decided press on the accelerator required to keep up. As we flashed past the light pole in the middle of the road the speed was up to 85kph, then just about 90kph. Guitierrez stayed in the aero position all the way down until the left sweeper onto the bridge and the flick right onto the actual crossing. Then left and up the ramp back onto the main road for the climb, here he was out of the saddle, carrying as much momentum from the bridge as possible. Spectators had a great view as he powered past, with a giant screen in the park giving them constant viewing even when riders were not in the vicinity.

The top of the hill was reached and immediately Guitierrez was back in the aero tuck, and rapidly accelerating to 55kph. It was amazing to see how he was able to increase the speed so quickly after the effort of the hill. He kept the speed on until the fast right hander onto Packington Street, and immediately the speed increased as the gradient headed downhill. 75kph! This speed was held for as long as possible, and he had only slowed to 65kph by the end of the Street. Then it was right and over the bridge and down to the Esplanade. Here the wind was in his face, but the Spaniard was maintaining 55kph – very impressive. Swooping down past the waterfront, he switched right then left up to Eastern Park. Then down the incline and a car was in view in front, he was catching his 2 minute man! As we sped over the rough roads in the park he rapidly gained

on the Serbian, Esad Hasanovic, who in comparison almost seemed to be standing still. Guitierrez sped past. However, the Serbian, seeing his capturer go past, increased his efforts. The gap was about 20 metres, and stayed like that. Consequently, I was not able to pass, but kept a close eye on the rear view mirror just in case we too were being caught. So the pursuit match continued all the way to the line, and while Guitierrez extended the lead, it took until the final kilometre for me to be able to get past the Serbian, and then almost immediately I had to divert off the course at 350 metres to go to pick up my next guests, who were to follow Sylvain Chavanel, multiple winner of the French Time Trial Championships and Tour de France stages. The Elite Men were covering two laps, but I did not have time to get around the course with Guitierrez a second time and be on time for Chavanel.

So I was early for my guests – but they were late! Chavanel duly started and I watched he and his follow car flash by. Finally, after about 10 minutes, the guests arrived and the question was asked, should we wait until Chavanel completed his first lap, or should we try and catch him? I decided to catch him. We were off! The tyres screeched and we were doing 100kph by the top of Moorabool Street. Down the hill at 130kph, with the police simply looking on – this was great! Then down to the river and slowing for the corners, followed by going hard on the accelerator. The Skoda was nippy and powerful, but the lag between pressing the pedal and action was an annoying 1.5 – 2 seconds. But when it picked up, it really picked up. Along the river at over 100kph and up the hill at the same speed, slowing only for the corners, blasting the horn at regular intervals to ensure spectators at crossing points were warned we were coming. Down the hill at 120 plus kph. Slowing to 40 for the bridge, then back up to 100 up the hill. Then over the crest and onto Aphrasia Street at 130, then the dip and hump at the crossing. Suddenly the steering wheel went light – we were airborne! Landing with a jolt, the wheels immediately centred and my passengers yelled out as a group. We charged on. Slowing the automatic to 80kph, we swept left onto Packington Street. Still no sign of Chavanel! Time to boot it. 150 down Packington – 3 times the legal limit! Police cars and bikes were passed. I used the horn often, well before the numerous crossing points on the Street. Then left at the end of the course, over the highway bridge and there was Chavanel at last! He was going well, powering into the wind. Calm came over our car, as we all settled down to a (relatively) slower pace. We then followed him all around the course, through the Finish line for the first lap and back until the 350 metre diversion came into view second time around and we veered left. Slowing around the back of the team compound, I breathed more easily. Parking the car, my guests got out, with my female guest apologising for her scream! Well you all did, I thought to myself. Then it was time to go to the barricades and take photos. The last wave of riders went off and I took a number of pictures. Cancellara was noticeably faster out of the gate than all the rest – he even came out blurry in my shot! The excitement continued to build among the spectators as the last wave first started and then came to the finish. Mick Rogers was in the 'hot seat' as provisional leader, but the times being announced showed he would not be there until the end. First Martin, then Millar posted fast times. Richie Porte was also doing well. But then, almost inevitably, the news came in, Cancellara was going even faster! We could see him on the big screen, powering up the climb. When it came to the main descent to the river, his speed was announced as 97kph! The fastest of

the day. Flying down onto the bridge, he almost clipped the fencing as he flicked right. There was a gasp from the crowd. But he continued with total concentration. Then Millar came up to the finish line, and everyone was watching whether he would beat the previous best time. He did, but then dismounted and collapsed past the finish line, as a UK assistant attended to him. But Cancellara was not far behind. Rounding the final corner, he charged up the finishing straight for a convincing victory, winning by more than a minute. It had been an exciting day. I went back to the team compound to try and get Cancellara's autograph, but his Manager was evasive – I couldn't get a straight answer! After waiting for more than 30 minutes with no sign of the man, I gave up.

The next day, Friday, was an opportunity to sleep in as well – the Men's Under 23 Road Race started in the afternoon. I used the time to have a wander down to the Graham Watson exhibition at the Woolshed and fuel up and wash the car. An easy morning. Getting to the start was now almost second nature. I needed to be up the road a little for the start, leaving enough breathing space for Commissaire 2 (who starts the race), the motor cycle Commissaire, Timing bike (with timing board), and some motor cycle scouts. In front of me was a police car, some police bikes and the Lead Car. As my race radio was not working, I tuned in to 88FM, a local station broadcasting non-stop commentary for the Worlds. This proved very handy to keep me up to date with the racing. The day was going to provide new challenges – the race would do 10 laps of the circuit around Geelong, differing from the Time Trial course in that it climbed up Challambra Crescent, with a whopping 22% final 50-100 metres! Although it was the same hill as used for the Time Trial, the roads leading up to Challambra started more gradually than on the Time Trial course, and then headed skyward at the top of the climb. Richard Reid, who was a Timing Motorcycle pilot, voiced concern to me that the hill would be too slow and steep for his BMW motorcycle, which tended to conk out under load at slow speeds! He was thinking of having to weave over the road or stop every so often to keep up with the race. At least the automatic Skoda would do its work with no dramas, I thought, however I would have to keep a keen watch out for Richard and how he decided to tackle the hill. The next challenge for me would be that I was to pick up new VIPs every lap until the 9th lap – VIP drivers were not allowed on the course for the final lap, as it would be too dangerous as the race hotted up to its final conclusion. Corinne Baume of the UCI duly arrived with my first guests, and I was amazed when Andrei Tchmil, winner of the World Cup and Paris-Roubaix, got in my car! The tension built prior to the start. With almost 160 kilometres to travel, it was unlikely the young guys would attack from the gun, but you never know! An elite cyclist can get up to 60kph in only a couple of seconds, so we needed to be ready. Sometimes, you can get a concertina effect, where you are frantically speeding up with your hand blasting the horn while the motorcycles and lead car dozily drive in front expecting a slow start! I was keen to make sure this didn't happen and spoke to the driver of the police car and Mike O'Reilly in the Lead Car to be wary of this potential. The police driver had been warned and Mike, as an old hand from the Sun Tour, was going to give us plenty of room to play with – 500 metres or so up the road. Before the gun we all began moving off – over the crest of the hill where the road widened to give us more room to play if the field sprung to life early.

And the race did start from the gun, but not in the way we expected. Ben King of the USA was seen cresting the top of the hill by himself, the bunch appeared moments later already 50 metres behind. King was going hard and so we started to move and were alongside him of the wide part of the course. Then, before the road narrowed, I gave the accelerator a squirt. 50kph and we had only just started! And this was a serious move, Ben had stayed away at the US Pro Championships a couple of weeks prior, basically riding the whole race alone! Leading the way, I listened to the radio commentary for any reaction from the bunch, and by the time we headed down to the Barwon it had come – from Ben King! So Ben King of the USA was being chased by Ben King of Australia!? Confusing. Anyway, the second King failed to make contact. I duly lead the first Ben King around the circuit until the start of Packington Street, where it was time to get on the gas and get away from the race, so as to give sufficient time for a relaxed and comfortable VIP changeover. This was done with no problem, and we were away for the next lap. The gap was getting out to over two minutes, so I was able to follow King around the circuit. He was impressive, powering away with 130 plus kilometres still to go. The race was fairly uneventful until the three quarter way mark, when the Italian bridged to King, who was then left behind on the climb. I stayed in front, as there was not enough distance back to the bunch, and sure enough it all came back together, although with a much diminished field. Finally, my last lap and it was time to relax, wait for the now aggressively moving bunch to speed past and then cruise to the deviation point on the course. Then back through the compound and parking near the finish line. I then found a large dumpster to stand on overlooking the finish line – prime real estate! Eventually someone saw my view and clambered up onto the other dumpster next to mine. It was a thrilling finish, with Michael Mathews bursting out of the pack and with time to look around and celebrate at over 60kph uphill! The crown roared its approval, and surged up the hill to get a glimpse of the new star at the presentation. 10 minutes later they were rewarded – with the Australian flag raised to the top for the first time in the championships. It was great to be there and I took a few photos.

Saturday dawned clear and cool, but when you know the day will warm. It was going to be a great day for the women's road race. The women would do 8 laps of the course, so I would have to drive for seven. Having managed the start easily the day prior we were more confident this time round. I moved to the start with my VIPs, but this time parked on the top of the hill, to give them a view of the actual start from the rear window and rear view mirrors. It was a gentle start, contrasting to Friday. The pack moved off as one, and so did we. Still, I had to move a little on the descent because even when not under pressure, the bunch would hit over 40kph on the run down to Kardinia Park. The women seemed to be saving themselves for the climb. And it came soon enough, with a real whack to the bunch! The speed dropped to 15-20kph up the top as some women weaved across the road to the very top of Challambra, where a large crowd cheered them on. Then a rapid descent to the river, only to get whacked again with the hard climb out onto Aphrasia Street. I was glad I was in the car! Then past the feed zone, with people from all the teams strewn out with musettes and bottles, ready to feed the riders. Even at this early stage, a few riders received things as they sped past. Then onto Packington and accelerating away to pick up my new VIPs at the marquee by the side of the

road. There were more VIPs today, and an additional driver to help with the workload.

The race was enlivened with the lone attack from the American rider, Curi Mattis. She stayed away for 3 laps, and we drove alongside and behind her as her lead went over three minutes. However, by lap seven it was over, and so was my driving, as I pulled up in the VIP area to drop off my last VIPs and then head for the diversion and parked to watch the finish. It was exciting. Looking up at the big screen by the finish line I could see Nicole Cooke's attack, followed by Judith Arndt. Two favourites and former World Champions were away! But it wasn't over. The headwind by the bay started to slow the two leaders, and a small group reformed before the turn into Moorabool Street. From the finish line, I could hear the cheering coming from down the road. Then the sprint and Georgia Bronzini came past my viewing point as the winner! I stayed by the presentation stage and took some good photos, including one of the entire team holding Georgia aloft – there was obviously great team spirit with the Italians. I then headed for the teams marquee to try and get her autograph, but she must have been busy with TV interviews, because while I saw her team members, placing Italian Flags on their backs, Georgia did not appear. I took a few shots of the rest of the team, and managed to use my year 9 school boy Italian to ask where Bronzini was. The team officials were great – really friendly, and they invited me back to the hotel after dinner to get her autograph, and, they said, that of Paolo Bettini! That was too good an offer to refuse! After dinner I headed over to the Comfort Inn and was amazed – the Italians had booked out the entire hotel! And you should have seen the makeshift workshop in the car park area – at least 50 bikes!! I watched as the Italian mechanics worked away, even placing sticky tape with numbers on it on individual spare wheels, every detail was being taken into account. The care and level of preparation was impressive. Finally, after almost an hour, the little man himself skipped down the stairs of the main building and was there! It was Paolo Bettini, light on his feet after the victory. In my broken Italian, I said to him “Il Grillo, benvenuto in Australia!”, or “Cricket (his nickname) welcome to Australia!” He nodded thanks and I presented the jersey for him to sign, and he did so straight away – no problems. If only Cancellara had been that easy!

Finally, the big day – the men's road race! I had been back to Melbourne overnight, it had been nice to sleep in my own bed. Then up early to pick up the Gospers in South Yarra, my VIPs for the start of the race and the trip down to Geelong. For those of you who don't know, Kevan Gosper was an Olympic Silver medallist in the 4 x 400 metres in Melbourne in 1956, and a former Vice President of the International Olympic Committee, of which he remains a member. Kevan was to travel with his wife Judy. I made sure I arrived ahead of schedule and rang the buzzer to say I had arrived. They were soon down and we were off to the start. Arriving there at about 8.30am, I dropped the Gospers off to sample the atmosphere as the riders signed on. Charly Mottet, Tour de France Stage Winner and former World Number One then directed me further down St Kilda Rd – he was anxious to ensure that the riders were not baulked by traffic at the start, should an attack go early, so we were giving the riders plenty of room. I then parked and went to find the Gospers, who were probably now wondering where their car and driver were!

The crowd at Federation Square was large and enthusiastic, and I saw Thor Hushovd and Edvoald Boassen Hagen ride by. I had a quick chat to some guys from Southern Vets and then it was time to get back to the car with my guests, who I found without too much trouble. Finally back in the car and counting down to the start. With 10 minutes to go, the lead car moved off – and we followed. The riders would not be blocked if they attacked from the gun. We moved slowly down to the Westgate Bridge and then speeded up. The race had begun behind and with the wide roads of the Westgate cleared for the race, we could watch the peloton in the rear view mirror. And by the time the Bridge had been crossed, there was already a break! Five riders away. The peloton was not reacting and moving slowly. The gap was already a few hundred metres, so we pulled over and let the leaders past. Kevan then told me he had never seen a big time road race in all his years in the Olympic movement! However, he had watched 6-day racing in Sydney as a boy. He and Judy asked many questions, and fortunately I was able to answer them! They were clearly enjoying the day out. The trip down to Geelong was uneventful, save for the crowds on street corners and the small towns as we made our way on back country roads to Geelong. The five riders were working well, averaging 44kph.

After two hours, we arrived in Corio. Here were crowds again on the street corners. We then headed south into Geelong and turned left onto Bell parade and the lap course. And there was the biggest crowd seen so far, and the day was still young! This was going to be a huge day for Geelong, probably it's biggest ever! Following the leaders around, I was not aware of the concern of some organisers – the leaders were 23 minutes ahead and in danger of lapping the peloton on the circuit! To save the embarrassment of being left with a World Championships with only five riders, frantic calls were being made to team officials to encourage the bunch to get moving! Unaware of this, I tuned in to 88FM again to get the race commentary, as my race radio still refused to work. The riders in the lead then hit Challambra Cres. Or it hit them! Immediately, on their first climb, the ascent took a toll. The Irishman in particular, was forced to zig zag up the final metres as the effort of a 90 kilometre breakaway started to show. On the descent, the speed did not go much above 80kph, as the riders coasted down to save energy. Then down and across the river, and the crowd was huge in the park and the climb back to Aphrasia Street. There was a real carnival atmosphere, with speakers blasting commentary and a huge screen showing the race. I went past the leaders quickly on Packington and then dropped the Gospers off at the VIP area – next customers please! And so it continued for another 7 laps, with the leaders being caught and the effort of the climbs reducing the average speed to 41kph. I drove more people from Tissot and Skoda, and quite a few others as well. Then, on lap 8, the guys from Katusha were back in the car – Andrei Tchmil and co! And my race was about to get more eventful. As we headed off, Andrei indicated he wanted to follow the main peloton, so we waited for the then leaders and the peloton to pass and slipped in behind them. But the race had now split into many groups and there was another strong group behind us. The pack in front of us was no longer working so hard, and on the climb the Chief Commissaire, standing up in his car, started to gesture urgently to us, the gap to the riders behind us was less than 30 seconds! I had to get out of there. I moved up the right hand side of the road as the riders were on the left, on the horn warning the riders. However the leaders suddenly switched across the road, and I had to jam on the brakes and park against the barricades as the riders flashed past

my righthand front bumper. A close one! I would have to try again. Greg Griffiths, the motorbike Commissaire waved me through again. This time, there was room. On the horn, I floored the car to get past before we came to the steepest part of the climb and it became too narrow to pass. Relieved, we then moved through the huge crowd on the crest of the climb and under the Tissot inflatable sign, and accelerated rapidly down the descent, as the race was now really on and the descent was being attacked aggressively. Only one more lap and my job would be done. Accelerating away on Packington again, I pulled in for my final VIPs. The guys from Katusha gave me a pat on the back and went on their way. My final guests were from the Copenhagen organising committee for the 2011 World Championships who had come over for some lessons on how to stage the event, and they were obviously impressed by the show we were putting on. I stayed ahead of the leaders now, as the race was getting complicated behind. Once more over the climb and down the descent with enough of a lead to avoid being caught by riders, and my challenges for the week were over. It was then simply a matter of dropping off the Danish guys, letting the race pass and heading into the diversion for the last time. What a week! I headed through the compound and parked. Walking to the finish line, a huge crowd was watching enthralled as the race played out. Gilbert attacked on the climb out of the river. The crowd then cheered as Cadel responded. The American commentator was getting carried away – “Oh the humanity!” he cried as Evans fought back, with the remaining few just hanging onto his

wheel. He was defending the rainbow jersey magnificently. But then, suddenly, he was caught! A larger group then headed rapidly for the finish, it would be a sprint after all. You know the rest – Hushovd came through magnificently for a thrilling win, and Allan Davis rounded out a fantastic week for Australian cycling with a Bronze medal. I would have loved to watch the presentations, but had to take the Gospers back to Melbourne. I drove out of the finish line and looked for a way to get back to the VIP area, complicated by many closed roads. When I arrived the Gospers were excited by the day – Kevan had actually planned to head back to Melbourne by 3pm, but had so enjoyed himself he cancelled all his appointments to watch the finish! We drove out and headed for Melbourne – Kevan proving himself the ultimate sports fan by putting on the NRL Grand Final broadcast to listen to on the way home! The Gospers thanked me for a great day and Judy congratulated us all for the event, which was a great note to end on.

There was plenty of traffic on the road back to Melbourne and quite a few cyclists making the long trip back as well. Our trip was uneventful, and saying goodbye to the Gospers, I turned back for Geelong in the Skoda. An hour later and I was finally able to park the Skoda for the last time and get back in the trusty Mazda! Another trip back to Melbourne and my adventures were over – what a week it had been!

Eastern Vets Program

Saturday	October	23	2:00pm	Kernot #	Royce Bennett memorial handicap *#
Monday	October	25	7:30pm	Maroondah Club	General Meeting
Saturday	October	30	2:00pm	Arthurs Creek #	Graded Scratch Races & Team's Race #
Saturday	November	6	2:00pm	Casey Fields	Graded Scratch Races
Saturday	November	13	2:00pm	Dunlop Road	Graded Scratch Races & Team's Race
Tuesday	November	9 16 23	6:00pm	METEC	Croydon Cycleworks Criterium Series
Wednesday			10:00am	The Loop – Yarra Boulevard	Scratch Races + post race coffee

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.

Tail lights are a requirement for all EVCC Road events.

Northern Vets Program

Sunday	October	24	10:00am	East Trentham	Pig & Whistle handicap
Sunday	October	31	8:30am	National Boulevard	DC cycles, Balwyn - Crit series, race 1
Tuesday	November	2	8:30am	National Boulevard	DC cycles, Balwyn - Crit series, race 2
Sunday	November	7	8:30am	National Boulevard	DC cycles, Balwyn - Crit series, race 3
Sunday	November	14	10:00am	Broadford	President's Mountain Goat Classic - 64k

Gippsland Vets Program

Sunday	October	31	10:00am	Kernot	Graded Scratch Races
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Victorian Veterans Cycling Council Program

Sunday	November	21	10:00am	Halls Gap	Grampians Open	10/11 - \$25
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Note : Entries can be made on-line through the VVCC website or are to be on the appropriate VVCC Open entry form (available on VVCC website) and are to be accompanied by the requisite fee.
