

August 2007

Outspoken

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The Official Newsletter of the Owen Sound Cycling Club



Short Course Fun

Plus

John Brown's Collingwood
OSCC Club BBQ
Tour de Cheat

It's Coming! It's Coming! It's Coming! It's Coming!

Don't call Trevor, Tom, Scott, Emil,
Tim, John, DeeJ or Jason...

Save this for your reference to Coming Events!

- Jul 31, 6:30pm - 21k TT, Kemble
- Aug 2, 6:30pm - Sawmill Trails MTB, Hepworth
- Aug 6, 6:30pm - Monday Rec. Ride, On Your Own
- Aug 7, 6:00pm - 15k TT, Shallow Lake
- Aug 9, 6:30pm - Short Course, Grey Roots
- Aug 13, 6:00pm - Monday Rec. Ride, Owen Sound
- Aug 14, 6:30pm - 13/26k TT, Colpoys Bay/Big Bay
- Aug 16, 6:30pm - Fast Group Ride, Annan South
- Aug 19, 10:00am - Interclub, Epping
- Aug 20, 6:30pm - Monday Rec. Ride, Williamsford
- Aug 21, 6:30pm - 19k TT, Annan
- Aug 23, 6:30pm - MTB Sawmill Trails, Hepworth
- Aug 26, 3:00pm - Trevor & Emese's, Williamsford
- Aug 27, 6:30pm - Monday Rec. Ride, Owen Sound
- Aug 28, 6:30pm - Hill Climb & Pot Luck, Epping
- Aug 30, 6:30pm - Short Course, Grey Roots
- Sep 3, 6:30pm - Monday Rec. Ride, On Your Own

The President

I could get into a big rant about doping! However I think I've heard enough about it and I'm sick of it. I'm just going to close myself off from all the garbage and stick to riding my own bike!

Speaking of riding bikes. Hasn't it been great for riding the last while. Nice temperatures and beautiful sunshine! So where is everyone on Thursday nights???? We have some great events happening on Thursdays but not that many people are attending. Any thoughts as to why not? Is it the type of events? Are people still nervous about riding in a group? I don't believe that... Look at how many people came for the Aussie Pursuit! Emil's Thursday group rides are very similar to the Aussie Pursuit. The biggest difference being that you will start in a group instead of having to ride yourself into one!

Rides at the Grey Roots Center are just pure fun! I like to think of it as games night. We "play" different games depending on the number of people who come out and what people feel like doing. The big hit so far has definitely been the "Granny Ring Race". Picture everyone spinning like mad trying to get speed out of their bikes! It's a great sight to see!

Let's not forget that we have mountain bike events too! The Sauble Beach chapter of the club puts on great events with well designed courses! If you have a mountain bike or can borrow one I highly recommend them. Usually there are two different lengths to choose from. So try the shorter one to start with if you're not too sure.

That's my two cents. I really want to see the two events per week format survive. I think it's a better way for the club to get more people out and active. See you on your bike, *Rody*

Trevor's Ramblings

Club BBQ – Sunday, August 26th

by Trevor Stokes

This year's club BBQ will be held at Trevor and Emese's place. Guest's can start to arrive around 3:00 pm. If there's enough interest, we could have a pre-BBQ road ride. I was thinking of the 60K route that Emil put together around Holland Centre, Lilly Oak, Berkeley, Dornoch and Mooresburg.

Please let us know (519 794 4322) if you plan to be there and what salad or dessert you plan to bring. Also, let us know your preference: hamburger or veggie burger. Bring a lawn chair and drinks of your choice. For detailed directions, call or email us at: Trevor.Stokes@sympatico.ca.



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Left Left Centre Left of Centre

Tour de Cheat!

by Tom Hakala

I know Rody said he was sick of the dopes doing dope, but I decided I had to say something.

Jody and I have been avid fans of the Tour for the last eight or nine years (since the glory days of Lance) and have actually garnered interest in the event in non-cyclists, like our brother-in-law. We were in Kalamazoo, Michigan a couple of weeks ago, before all the doping crap hit the fan, and I asked my brother-in-law, Larry if they got *Verses* (the U.S. version of OLN) on their cable. As it turned out, they did, so we switched it on and there was the Tour. At first Lar was a bit skeptical, "Aren't these guys all on dope or something?" "Oh hell no, nobody is that stupid! They wouldn't dare after that stuff last year with Floyd Landis. They know they can't hide it any more. Plus they all signed some kind of agreement that their entire team would be tossed out if they cheat," I retorted with all the confidence of an EXPERT on the subject. So we sat and watched, Larry asked questions about tactics and who was doing what, and before I knew it he was getting hooked. And this from a guy who the only time he touched his bike in the last 20 years was when he bonked his head on his vintage Sears 10 speed, hanging upsidedown in his garage, as he pulled out his riding lawn mower.

Then we moved on to my family reunion on the beautiful Old Mission Peninsula (great cycling) north of Traverse City. There, I continued to blab about the great Tour de France and how it was tactics and NOT drugs that win the race.

Now that I am back home, I'm sure all my relatives are thinking (if they think about it at all), "What the heck was he going on about, they're all an drugs!"

So there you have it. The Tour is turned upsidedown and I feel like an idiot. I heard that one of the teams is thinking of suing Vinokourov. Maybe I should add my name to the list for loss of face to my family.

In the end I know that the Tour will and should go on. There have been cheaters from the start. In the early days when riders went through the town of one of the competitors, the locals would through nails in the path of the other riders to blow their tires and help their guy. Every sport from baseball to tiddly-winks has had cheaters and they have survived... well maybe not tiddly-winks.

Michael Den Tandt had a very good editorial in the Sun Times called, "Find a sport and play it badly". In it he condemned all the major pro-sports for

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cheating and being paid too much. His take was to go back to simpler times and enjoy playing sports at the local level and forget the pros. This is certainly good advice and something we of the OSCC do on a regular basis... but I still like watching the big guys (and girls) play it right and not with an unfair advantage. Don't cheat!

Tour de France 10 Worst Ads for 2007

As much as the drug scandal was totally annoying, the ads on OLN came in a very close second. I recorded the Tour in the morning and then watched it in the afternoon, partly for my own convenience, but also so I could zap the ads. Even so they still drove me around the bend. So play the fanfare... tada... My picks for the worst ads during the Tour.

10 - Crest Pro Health - Stupid name, as if some other brand is pro cavity!

9 - Dairy Queen - This series of ads started with the waffle cone guy and the caramel girl not hitting it off. Now they are trying to have a baby. Way too silly.

8 - Rogers Cell Phones - First, the goofy guy stood gape mouthed in an elevator when the good looking guy's phone worked, now he is doing the same on an escalator. I think the other guy may be getting the wrong idea about his intentions.

7 - All Bran Bars - This is where everyone in the meeting is laughing at the doofus eating the All Bran Bar. It is just plain rude.



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Missing Link is Connected

The Tom Thomson Trail has finally forged through the Sideroad #24 road allowance and connected to the Tom Thomson Lane. All the swampy areas are high and dry and deep 4X4 ruts on the steep hill have been filled. There are still a few hurdles to contend with. Much of the fill that was used to fill the big holes consists of big loose stones (especially on the steep hill) so the ride is pretty bumpy and the hill is next to impossible to make it up without back slipping on the loose gravel. The section under the hydro line and the 28th Street road allowance need some fixing and top layering, but because of a problem with a dispute between the city and a land owner, the trail group cannot do any work on that area. The surface along the Sideroad 24 road allowance will be topped up soon though, so that will no longer be an issue.



The trail group has also proposed to the Municipality of Meaford that an interim road route should be used for the balance of the trail, therefore completing the entire route from Meaford to Owen Sound. The group will continue to work on the preferred route, but for now the road route would follow the Tom Thomson Lane north to Leith, then take the Bayshore Road north to Sideroad #23 east to Concession #6 North. The route then turns east onto Sideroad #30. That will take the route to the St. Vincent/Sydenham Townline Road south, cross Highway #26, continue on the road allowance to Sideroad #16 east, which turns into Grey Road #12 which takes the trail into Meaford. When approved, the new route will be marked and signed so riders can easily follow the trail for the best ride between Owen Sound and Meaford.

Annual OSCC Ride to Collingwood

By John Brown

It is that time of year, now that everyone is in shape to have our annual Owen Sound – Blue Mountain Ride on Wednesday, August 15. The plan would be to ride from Heritage Mall, Sears parking lot, leaving Owen Sound at 9:00 a.m. and ride the 75 kilometres to Blue Mountain Village by way of Bognor, Walters Falls, Beaver Valley, Victoria Corners, Banks and then down

6 - Bowflex - The same ad that Bowflex has been using for 10 years, but with different people. I miss the old Bowflex girl from the last couple of years.

5 - Honda - The guy with the high pitched, "Hew, hew, hew, hew," after he revs the Honda race car. Just plain annoying!

4 - Future Shop - I really don't get this one at all. It is the one where the skinny guy in the cowboy hat and obvious fake mustache bursts into the Future Shop showroom saying some indecipherable line about Smokey and the Bandit and the smarty-pants salesman rubs the guy's mustache and says, "I think we can help!?" Every time I see it, I think what was that?

3 - The Brand Power Girl - Another one I don't get? Some girl right out of the 70's, soap-boxing an array of unrelated products from bacon to toilet paper. The whole thing is oddly out-of-date, the logo, the graphics and her. Is it supposed to be a take-off of the 70's Show?

2 - All OLN Ads - Pioneer Quest, Angry Planet., Survivorman. They are all the same and the ads are repeated over and over. These shows all are so forced, like you can almost hear the OLN meeting, "We need to cash in on the reality show thing, any ideas?" "Duh, how about two couples using old stuff to survive." NOBODY WATCHES THIS CRAP!

1 - Heineken Beer - I'm always at a loss why a huge beer company like Heineken would spend millions on ad space and then only use one ad throughout the Tour. They must have spent a ton of money, because the ad was repeated ad nauseam 2 or 3 times per commercial break, during the tour. And that lame 80's song, over and over and over... "What's been goin' on, goin' on, goin' on." Now I can't get the song out of my head. I hear it when I ride my bike and when I go to bed. "Goin' on, goin' on." I was walking in a mall in Michigan and heard that song... AAARRRGGG, I came close to making a fool of myself and getting down on my knees and screaming, "SHUTTUPPPPPALREADY!"



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Travel time at a leisurely pace would be approx. 3 hrs. We will have lunch and rehydrate in the village before returning. To be able to provide for return transportation to Owen Sound, we need to know who is coming. Contact John Brown at: 519-372-2502 or email: jab-rae@sympatico.ca if you plan to join in.

Tour de France 2007

by Dermot Barry-Murphy

If there is one thing the Tour de France never is, that thing is boring. After another 3 week jaunt across the country it is clear that the Tour is not as healthy as it once was. This was the year of the scandal and did they ever come in droves.

Much ink will be spilled I'm sure over what went wrong and how to fix it so I'm not going to dwell on it. However it is worth pointing out that the easiest thing by far for the organizers to do would have been to keep sweeping the problem of doping under the car-

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pet as many other sports are doing but they decided to tackle it head on instead. Also, out of 189 riders that went to the start line only 2 have tested positive for any kind of illegal substance. Patrick Sinkewitz actually tested positive in June elsewhere and Rasmussen was withdrawn by his own team. Even though it is pretty obvious that current leader Alberto Contador is playing with loaded dice that still leaves the vast majority of the peloton in the clear. I for one applaud the current action and believe whole-heartedly that cycling shall emerge as the leading light in the fight against doping in sport.

There have been highlights however; the stages in England were fantastically well received and the fan turnout was amazing. Prologue winner Fabian Cancellara was a very worthy wearer of the yellow jersey and defended with much aplomb. I wouldn't be surprised either to see him come up with another stage victory in Saturdays time-trial as he is the current TT world champ. It being the Friday before right now, I predict that the overall will go to Cadel Evans which would be a first for Australia. Fair dinkum!

We were treated to some very entertaining sprints as well with Robbie McEwen continuing to show a top speed acceleration that is nothing short of phenomenal. Tom Boonen seems set to win the green jersey this year and a much-deserved victory it will be. A mention must be made also of Jens Voight and the way he continues to attack at every opportunity, however fruitless it may be. Apparently Jens is a guy who just loves to ride his bike and has far exceeded any potential his natural talent should allow him. I wish that there were more like him.

So that's it for another year. Despite the bitter disappointment in the likes of Vinokourov and Rasmussen, it can only go up from here. The countdown to 2008 has begun already.

Arrow Racing Update After Ontario Cup 5

by Fred Zottl

On Sunday July 8, Arrow Racing competed at the fifth XC MTB Ontario Cup at Buckwallow Cycling Centre. This venue was long, very technical and extremely rough on riders and tires. First place medals were earned by Connor Musselman of Creemore, in the under 13 male category, Caley Brooks of New Lowell, in the under 17 expert female category, and Scott Burgess of Meaford in the under 17 sport male category. Second place honours went to Julian Richardson of Flesherton in the under 17 sport male category, and Jacob McClelland of Hawkestone, in the under 19 expert male category. Earning third place medals were Mack Thomson of Owen Sound, in the under 15 male category and Amy Armstrong of Markdale, in the 19-29 expert female category.

Results

03/Jul Epping Hill Climb 5 Km

1	Joe Chappell	10:24	28.85	PB/CR
2	Matthias Purdon	10:49	27.73	00:25PB
3	Andrew Mason	11:26	26.24	01:02PB
4	Scott Thomson	11:33	25.97	01:09
5	Ryan Murray	11:39	25.75	01:15PB
6	Jason Rody	11:51	25.32	01:27
7	Justin Zottl	11:51	25.32	01:27 PB
8	Mack Thomson	11:59	25.03	01:35PB
9	Mark Avery	12:17	24.42	01:53
10	Fred Zottl	12:24	24.19	02:00 PB
11	David Starrs	12:24	24.19	02:00
12	Rich Fletcher	12:25	24.16	02:01PB
13	Fletcher Courage	12:25	24.16	02:01PB
14	Mike Campbell	12:37	23.78	02:13PB
15	Tom Sutton	13:02	23.02	02:38PB
16	Ian Miller	13:09	22.81	02:45
17	Trevor Stokes	13:43	21.87	03:19PB
18	Jen Wardell	13:55	21.56	03:31
19	Amy Armstrong	14:01	21.40	03:37PB
20	Karly Johnson	14:12	21.13	03:48PB
21	Bill Courage	15:17	19.63	04:53PB
22	Jeffrey Thomson	15:28	19.40	05:04PB
23	Sonya Mount	15:32	19.31	05:08PB
24	Emese Fabry	15:44	19.07	05:20PB

Conditions: Warm, with a light cross following breeze. Riders: 24 Riders with most having PB's (unless it was their first time) and a course record; Great meal with a view to follow. Thanks to starter Andrew Mason, assistant Leola, and Timer Scott Thomson

10 July - Annan - 19K TT

Jeff Thomson	10K	20:10
Stephen Laforest	10K	18:36 PB
Leola Fletcher-VanDolder		40:54
Don Wilkinson		36:01
Trevor Stokes		33:28
Scott Thomson		27:46
Andrew Mason		30:12
Susan Avery		34:38
Joe Lehmann		33:07
Ed DeLaplante		31:47
Fred Zottl		32:50
Justin Zottl		30:45 PB
Mack Thomson		36:10
Tim Murawsky		33:11
Dan Murawsky		33:51
Joachim Ostertag		35:01
Greg Nicol		30:29
David Starrs		31:47 PB
Joe Chappell		26:52
Laura Armstrong		34:17
David Latremouille		35:46
Scott Vining		30:04
Derek Smith		32:20
Rich Fletcher		31:20
Ken Avery		30:14 PB
John Brown		31:50
Fletcher Courage		33:08
Mike Campbell		30:32
Anne-Louise McArthur		36:12
Ryan Murray		28:09 PB
Martin Kerr		26:59
Tim Hill		30:59
Jen Wardell		33:11 PB
Ian Miller		32:25
Dennis Dalton		31:10
Brad Vokes		31:46
Jeff Wardell		29:54 PB

38 Riders: 25°C and mod SE breeze heading back into a tough wind; Thanks to Mary and Jane Thomson for timing and Tom Hakala and Melissa for Assistance; Impressive rides by Justin "roadie" Zottl, Ryan Murdog Murray, and Jen & Jeff Wardell (First time on this course?)

17/July - Walters Falls - 15/30K TT

Name	mm:ss	Km / H	At
1 MARTIN KERR	43:0	41.84	
2 GREG NICOL	46:53	38.39	03:52
3 JEFF WARDELL	47:12	38.14	04:11
4 BRIAN O'DOHERTY	47:23	37.99	04:22
5 MATHIAS PURDON	47:29	37.91	04:28
6 KEN AVERY	47:43	37.72	04:42
7 MIKE CAMPBELL	47:50	37.63	04:49
8 MARK AVERY	48:12	37.34	05:11
9 DENIS DALTON	48:29	37.13	05:28
10 JOHN BROWN	50:03	35.96	07:02
11 Lynne Vaughan-MacDonald	50:40	35.53	07:39
12 ED DELAPLANTE	50:57	35.33	07:56
13 BRAD VOKES	51:02	35.27	08:01

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14 FRED ZOTTL	51:31	34.94	08:30
15 MATT BARFOOT	51:32	34.93	08:31
16 FLETCHER COURAGE	51:48	34.75	08:47
17 IAN MILLER	51:57	34.65	08:56
18 TREVOR STOKES	52:07	34.54	09:06
19 TIM MURAWSKY	52:09	34.52	09:08
20 JEN WARDELL	52:51	34.06	09:50
21 JOE LEHMANN	55:09	32.64	12:08
22 BILL COURAGE	56:43	31.74	13:42
23 DON WILKINSON	57:00	31.58	13:59
24 JOACHIM OSTERTAG	57:22	31.38	14:21
25 JENNIFER AMES	58:52	30.58	15:51

15K			
1 JOE CHAPPELL	20:48	43.27	
2 RYAN MURRAY	21:22	42.12	00:34
3 JACK VAN DORP	24:00	37.50	03:12
4 JUSTIN ZOTTL	24:31	36.71	03:43
5 JASON RODY	25:57	34.68	05:09
6 LAURA ARMSTRONG	26:22	34.13	05:34
7 SONIA MOUNT	28:04	32.07	07:16
8 EMESE FABY	28:36	31.47	07:48
9 STEVE LAFOREST	28:37	31.45	07:49
10 AMY NICOL	28:58	31.07	08:10
11 CHRIS LAFOREST	31:37	28.47	10:49
12 LINDSAY AVERY	32:45	27.48	11:57

Timers: Kelly Zottl and Vic Michener
 Conditions: Warm, brisk breeze from the south made for neg. splits for all.

12/Jul MTB TT - Whispering Pines

One Loop/7.5 Km

	Name	mm:ss.d	At
1	Steve Nadjiwan	00:33:18	
2	Kristian Stanish	00:59:09	25:51
3	Jessie Stanish	01:00:00	26:42

Two Loops/15 Km

1	Jason Rody	00:41:50	
2	Emil van Dijk	00:43:34	01:44
3	Sean Calhoun	00:44:25	02:35
4	Scott Burgess	00:46:45	04:55
5	Jeff Wardel	00:50:02	08:12
6	Jennifer Wardell	00:56:36	14:46

Timer Margo Huelshof
 Track Set up John Huelshof

July 22 - MTB Race

	1st Lap	2nd Lap
9km/18km		
Jason Rody	24:17:00	47:57:00
Mathias	24:18:00	47:58:00
Emil van Dijk	26:29:00	54:36:00
Justin Zottl	26:44:00	55:54:00
Ken Avery	27:33:00	59:55:00
Greg Nicol	28:10:00	56:29:00
Dennis Dalton	28:24:00	
Vic Mitchner	33:18:00	
Lindsay Avery	39:54:00	
4km		
Doug Jones	DNS	

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Kirk Jones	19:26
Kerry Jones	DNF
Jackson	20:00
Steve	21:28

24 July - Aussie Pursuit & 26 July - FGR

It was Ladies Night again this week. On Tuesday Emese Fabry led the way at the Aussie Pursuit. On Thursday it was Jen Wardell's night to shine as she turned on the power in the final straight, cruising in with Rebecca Hilts following. Fletcher Courage attempted a first lap break-away but succumbed to the might of the peloton. The fast group ticked along like a well-oiled Swiss watch, but came up about a minute short. To quote Mike Hodgins, "Handicapping is a dark art." *Emil van Dijk*



Want Ads

Pace Women's Icon Cycling Shorts - Size Large (but really should be size Medium, maybe a women's size 8 or 10), Black. Brand new, mail-ordered but too small. A steal at \$20.00. Call Jody at 519-371-1450 or email: toad47@sympatico.ca

In order to raise a little more cash for the "walk in beer fridge" project, I am thrilled to offer the following items for sale to anyone with cash, or Belgian micro-brews. Pizzazz carbon fibre seat post, 27.2 diameter, 250 mm length, good condition, \$25 Cinelli "groove" stem, 130mm length, 1 1/8 threadless with adaptor for 1 inch stem, black and silver with removable two bolt face plate, good condition. \$20

I am also looking to buy the following items:
 Road handlebars, 38-40 cm width Threadless stem, 1 1/8, 110mm Shimano 9spd shifter/brake levers Shimano 9spd cassette 12-23 or similar Louis Garneau rocket helmet size medium To buy or sell call Martin @534-0799 or wmtvkerr@bmts.com

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- * food....food...food!
- * great on site family camping facilities
- * meet other cyclists, learn about cycling
- * learn about the trails and cycling routes of the area
- * no general admission (small fees for individual chosen programs)
- * an evening of cycling films, poetry and art. Submit a cycling related poem or painting to be featured at the festival.
- * get all the details from www.bikeface.com

MORE REASONS TO RIDE

Off the Beaten Track.

Editor's Note: This fellow asked Trevor if he could submit an article to our newsletter and after looking at it, we thought it was interesting so why not... plus Trevor and I will be heading to an exotic cycling adventure of our own courtesy of our new found friend, Dave. I knew this job would pay off some day. Bon voyage!

A biking adventure in East Africa.

By Dave Mitchell

Someone once said "its not the things in life you do that you come to regret but the things you don't do" So when the opportunity to visit Africa and in particular East Africa by bicycle came along I jumped on board. It was an Escape Adventures trip organised by John Etherington, a New Zealand dude with a wicked sense of humour. The trip cruises through Kenya from Nairobi taking back roads and trails into Tanzania and ends in Dar es Salaam. Apart from reading the ramblings in the Economist and watching the odd wildlife skit I was blissfully ignorant of Africa, but was sure it would be an adventure.

We had a back up vehicle named Turtle to carry the camping kit and food. Turtle and its trailer are probably the closest a vehicle has ever got to Swiss army knife status with its fold out kitchen, slide out pantry, pop up roof tent and hidden attachments to numerous to name. John was a motor mechanic in a past life, a useful trade for these remote trips. His sidekick Mandy was in charge of food and rode her trusty creaking Specialized FSR mountain bike. Tail end Charlie, Nash a local Kenyan, did the driving, interpreting and a bit of everything else. Lucy Ireland a London lass, Lynda Pedley and Glenn MacCrimmon a Canadian couple who have cycled most of the globe and myself made up the A team.

We left Nairobi taking the back roads through the gently rolling country to Amboseli National Park and our first breath taking view of Mt Kilimanjaro, its snow top just poking out of the clouds. The road surface was hard packed red dirt but we made the most of the local bike trails running parallel or short cutting the route. Giraffe, zebra and gazelle cruised across our path heading through the acacia forest and Masai villages we were encountering on the way. The local kids came running out of these villages to cheer us on, as if we were in a race.

At the edge of the Park we swap our bikes for the security of the 4WD and head out on safari with our cameras and binoculars at the ready. Its almost surreal watching herds of zebra, wildebeest, and elephant trundling around below the watchful eye of a hazy Mount Kilimanjaro. The hippos were doing what they do best, which involves mud and water. It was all too much to take in as we headed to camp for the night. We watched Kili clear of cloud as the sun set and the moon rose, as if on queue.

We left Amboseli National Park pleased to be back on our bikes. We rode the hard brown cracked earth that is the dry bed of Lake Amboseli. The mirage of water far ahead evaporated as we rode onwards. The bobbing heads of giraffe moved east above the heat haze on the peripheral edge of the lakebed towards the base of the mountains.

John has a knack for cultivation good relationships where ever he goes and our campsite below Ngararabuni rock's proved the point. We passed the rectangular shaped houses of the Masai village on the west side of this rock, the children were very excited to see us. We set up camp and were soon welcomed by our hosts and protectors.

We headed up onto the spine of the rock climbing to its summit for sundowners and an expansive view of the surrounding terrain. Below us goats were being herded into the protection of the village enclosed by a thorny acacia hedge. We could see groups of cattle and goats coming from far and wide. Their dusty progress illuminated in gold as the sun hovered hesitantly above the horizon. Sunset cast light upon the snow top of Killi and the last long shadows over the plains below.

We visited the adjacent village and were treated to a demonstration of the Masai matchbox, a spun stick of hardwood against a flat piece of softwood with dried goats dung as the initial fuel. Where there is smoke, there is fire, proved


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correct and in no time they had a blaze going. This proved a lot harder us to do with Glenn having the best technique.

With land and property a Masai man can have between one and four wives, they each build their own house out of a wooden frame and cow dung mixed with mud for the walls and roof. A fire inside provides cooking, repels insects and warms the cool nights. In the dry season they consume yoghurt made from cows blood and milk with the occasional BBQ goat thrown in. There is little spare water for drinking let alone washing.

A few of the men have acquired the black (Phoenix) Chinese and (Hero) Indian made bicycles and pedal the dusty tracks to the local villages, they look the part peddling around with their spears on the top tube and mates on the carrier. On a previous trip John had initially sold Mandy for 30 cows, but this offer was reduced when they found out about her post teenage status. We managed to sell Lucy for 15 cows but had to lie about her age.

We headed for the mountains winding our way through a variety of small settlements and a number of dusty mission posts with their attached schools. There was plenty of wildlife in this area, giraffe grazing the treetops and moving past the local herds of goats and cattle. The road became rough and sandy climbing up to a little town on the border of Kenya and Tanzania. A colourful café provided much needed refreshments before heading off down main street shopping. We bartered for purple skinned onions, bright red tomatoes, lady finger bananas and green peppers. The avocados were huge and proved delicious in our guacamole. We camped on soft lush green grass, enjoyed cold Kili Beer and South African red wine in the afternoon sun at our campsite.

We rolled across the border the next day and into Tanzania, a painless 30 minutes of officialdom where US dollars were extracted. A bit less English spoken was the only indicator that we had moved into another country. We encounter Masai youth with black and white facial paint herding their stock as we rode to the small town of Mto Wa Mbu at the base of the rift valley escapement. Massive trees of nesting cranes lined the road into town. We head to the market to soak up the colour and do some bartering where John picked up some new recycled tyre tread sandals after managing to trade his old ones in.

Before dawn we were off on safari to the Ngorongoro crater climbing up through shiny green rain forest caught in fluffy white cloud. The descent into the crater is steep and rough and as we emerged out of the mist into what would have been a lost world many centuries ago. To our west a soda lake of pink flamingos with herds of zebra and wildebeest making an early morning trek across the crater. We spotted Hippos going from mud hole to mud hole watched by a group of hyena. Time seems to compress as a female cheetah stalked a Thomson's gazelle, she accelerated and turns it before tripping it up. Her three large cubs come in for the final kill. This was exciting stuff and in contrast to the three lions we had observed earlier lazing in the sun. We finally saw a couple of rhino way off in the distance and a lone cheetah sunning itself. All to soon it was time to head back to our camp at Arusha.

We continued south below the ever-present peak of Kilimanjaro and into the Masai Steppe, a huge plain that stretches as far as the eye can see interrupted occasionally by the odd hill or depression. The huge trunk of the upside down Baobab tree with its leafless branches, dominate the savannah and can live for 1000 years. They look very much like they have been pulled out of the ground and stuck back in upside down.

Our ride took us beside a section of Tanzanian railway track that services the sisal industry. Disused water tanks and filler nozzles remain, not pressed onto service since steam trains plied this route. The sisal industry almost disappeared when synthetics became cheap but has managed a bit of a revival now natural fibres have become popular. We pass a series of old abandoned railway stations ten kilometres apart, the locals have moved in and were enjoying a siesta in the hot sun. Our destination the Pangani River camp delivers up a stunning sunset and a hot shower that evening, while monkeys jump between treetops above and crocs ply the river unseen.

We left the plains and climb into the Usambara Mountains biking on towards the old colonial town of Lushoto. German colonialists had built their homes in the European style in these beautiful cool mountains and amongst the local dwellings they looked somewhat out of place. The plains below stretched out endlessly and surrounding hillsides a patchwork of intensive cultivation with irrigation races crisscrossing these slopes.

The cloud was rolling in as we set up camp at Mullers Mountain Lodge. We enjoyed the warmth of a large campfire as the evening temperature dropped rapidly to single figures and we moved in closer to the fire. At 1400 meters this was to be expected. The next day we headed out walking through the village and up into the hills following local farm tracks to a high point and view across this rolling range of mountains we were in. The track down took us to the local school and the 400 pupils coming out to welcome us.

John had organised on the previous trip for local carpenters to build five school desks and Nash had been in charge of delivering them undetected. The kids soon spotted his familiar face and twigged to what was going on. Helping out the school in a practical way had become a project of Johns, one that was enthusiastically supported by people who had come on his many trips. Donations of stationary, balls, pens, chalk and money for desks had been put to good use. We were treated like honoured guests with the whole school turning out to sing and dance for us. A moving experience that sent tingles down the spine.

The next day we made full use of the network of tracks that permeate these mountains, riding single track between remote villages. It was a navigational challenge and John rose to the occasion. The ride turned in a few surprises the first one being how populated this area was. After lunch we rode up an old grass covered farm track to discover two groups of forestry workers pit sawing trees opposite each other in the valley. This was all by hand, one below and one above dragging a pit saw through the huge trunk.

Just around the next corner we ran into the Benedictine Monastery, the Fathers have been farming this piece of paradise for over half a century. We talked to Father Thomas who had come out from Switzerland in 1948. He explained how they were trying to lead by example showing the locals how to grow high value crops instead of maize. They had Quinine, coffee, macadamia nuts and a wide variety of grapes growing on the property along with cows for milk, cheese and butter. Their white wine proved to be not a bad drop and they also produce a cheeky red alter wine but we didn't indulge. We crammed our packs with bottles and nuts and headed onward and upward.

Following the ridge tops north it was time to descend and what a downhill it turned out to be. We discovered narrow gauge single track that proved both steep and gnarly. We were soon followed by local kids cheering us all the way. It felt like a world cup downhill race with Lucy enjoying her first gnarly single track and receiving the biggest cheer from the enthusiastic throng. The bottles of wine in our pack survived even after the odd tumble. The final 14-kilometre descent from the Usambara Mountains delivered us to a humid 30 degrees on the plains below. It was time to head for the sea.

A series of dirt back roads took us through sleepy coconut treed villages on our way to the historic town of Bagamoyo. An on-shore wind strengthened as we neared the coast but also kept us cool as we ploughed our way through the growing puddles of thick sand. Bagamoyo was once a major slave and trading route for East Africa sitting strategically on the Indian Ocean. Our shady beach camp retreat of white sand on this tropical coast greeted us. A seascape of sailboats streamed towards the beach from beyond the horizon as if an invasion from the movie Troy. They were the local fishermen bringing their catch to market and we were heading in their direction to get some for dinner.

We awoke the next morning to the call to prayer from the surrounding mosque and headed to the beach to watch the fisherman sail out as the sun rose. We biked through the old part of Bagamoyo, the buildings looking distinctly like those in Havana and headed down the coast to our final destination Dar es Salaam. Dar es Salaam is colourful vibrant and a fitting place to end the trip, it was founded in 1866 by the sultan of Zanzibar and its Arabic name means haven of peace. We finished on the beach just up the coast from town where the water is 28 degrees and just waiting to be swum in. It was sad to come to the end of such a good trip, to pack up and say goodbye to everyone and Africa. But all good things must come to an end so they can start again all over.

The myths of African travel

The myths of African travel abound, most are unfounded and like visiting any country of the world becoming informed and going prepared is the best strategy. The large animals are awe inspiring and rarely dangerous, if you use common sense. The local food is organic, fresh and much healthier than in many western countries. The water isn't contaminated by agricultural chemicals and pesticides and can easily be filtered or treated against bugs. Biting insects are localised and seasonal and thus can be avoided, or by using repellents, mosquito nets and usually just by simply covering up. It's not all hot either, with the cool dry season being the best time for biking. By sticking to back roads it is safer than many western countries. Good clean camping ground accommodation abounds and English is widely spoken.

John's idea was to show off the beauty of Africa in the best way possible, by bicycle. It adds a different dimension to travel, the smells, colours and feel of the wind that no vehicle can replicate.

The Detail

The ride: Organised by John Etherington of Escape Adventures
www.escapeadv.com

The Flights: Emirates Airline has the best and most direct route from Australia/New Zealand (Downunder) and most of Europe, modern planes and excellent service especially when handling bicycles.

Accommodation/Side Trips

John can organise your airport pickup and accommodation in Nairobi, upgrades along the way when available and post ride trips to climb mountains, visit Zanzibar Island or whatever takes your fancy.

Editors: Trevor Stokes & Tom Hakala • Thanks to this month's contributors: Jason Rody, Emil van Dijk, Scott Thomson, John Brown, Tim Koker, Didier Perin, Dave Mitchell, Dermot Barry-Murphy, Fred Zottl