



VAUDE HIGHLAND FLING

2007 VAUDE HIGHLAND FLING 10-11 November 2007, Southern Highlands, NSW THE WRAP UP

It started a week before the event, the rain we oh so desperately love to see: 30mm...10...15...14...33... 30...4mm said the rain gauge but the sky was the only place I needed to look. 'A few showers' said the Bureau. Repressed nightmares of the week before the infamous Polaris Challenge at 'Sunny' Corner in 2000 returned. With nearly 140mm falling, the rivers came up. We found it impossible to turn off the tap running into the *Early Bath*, ordinarily a 4 metre wide, knee deep wade. Wayne, our Course Director, bravely took this bath, sometimes twice a day, to check the level. Waist deep, chest deep, chin deep.....7m, 9m, 11m wide - the smaller riders would be swimming. By Friday all other alternatives were being considered and the office turned into a bridge building consultancy. The farmer who owns the property through which Boags Draft and Pigs Fly passes rang to say he'd 'found' a bridge in his paddock that he'd bought at auction decades ago 'just in case he had a use for it'. Another landowner offered a pontoon bridge from his dam.

The river crossing on Jefferies property was now a 30 metre wide, thigh deep wade. The Pony Club had 5cm of standing water where we planned to camp 500 and park 800 cars.

Then someone looked up and spotted it on Friday afternoon - a blue hole instead of uniform grey. The Bureau said 'Possible Shower, 22 degrees' for Sunday. The plug was pulled and the *Early Bath* slowly emptied. Wayne took his last tub on Saturday afternoon and didn't even get his navel wet. On Saturday the golden orb appeared and all was well in the world. In truth this area drains well and the conditions would only add to the superb mountain biking available.

The 3rd VAUDE Highland Fling MTB Marathon was on (there was never any doubt about that) and the Australian MTB Marathon Champions would be decided. Cars and bikes rolled into Bundanoon, past signs proclaiming Welcome to Vaude Ville and on past the old bikes lining the road into town.

1300 was set as the rider entry limit in 2007, a number reached nearly 6 weeks before the event. 444 finished the 110km long Full Fling, 123 tried their hardest but didn't make it to the finish line. 591 completed their 55km Half Fling and 14 didn't make it. 9 madmen and 1 madwoman bravely began their 100Mile Fling (161km) and 6 Flinging Threesomes teams rounded out the field. 94 poor souls didn't make it to the startline, a larger than usual percentage. One can only assume that some were dry weather riders, put off by the rain. They should be kicking themselves as they missed a perfect blue sky day offering a fast, tacky track drying by the hour.

2007 was notable for the fact that there were more Half Flingers than Full Flingers whereas in previous years the Full Fling has attracted 2/3 of the field. This is a trend noticed in other MTB Marathons and is, I think, a combination of the event attracting new riders to the sport keen to pit themselves against their first 50km+ challenge as well as keen MTBers who decide to enjoy the Half Fling within their personal limits rather than endure the Full Fling distance.

The Riding

The Bundanoon Dash...



Once again the Bundanoon Dash, sponsored by the locally owned and operated Telstra Shop in Bowral, formed the entrée to the weekend's racing on Saturday evening. 120 had entered this fundraising race but many chose to keep

eating and drinking rather than riding. A big crowd was there in the centre of town to watch 58 riders, many on demo bikes from Specialized, stretch their legs on a course running a loop of the Morton NP tracks before that oh so cruel finish up the spectator lined Constitution Hill. Is this truly the new Alpe D'Huez? Perren Delacour won the 3 man sprint to the line with Ben Mather and Shaun Lewis and his time of 00:10:12 broke the 06 record by nearly a minute. As a portent of things to come, Tasmanian rider Rowena Fry took the Women's Dash in 00:11:21 over Rosie Barnes and Maria Papadopoulos. There were 58 riders but only 57 bikes. Minutes before the Bundanoon Dash started, a young lady called Deb Warren arrived in Bundanoon to cheers from the crowd. Deb was on the Ride of Her Life, a 800km tandem ride from Armidale, raising funds for the Petrea King Quest for Life Centre. Deb, as most of you know is blind and a cancer survivor. The Bundanoon Dash would be the final 6km of her journey. What a cheer Deb and her rider Paul Traynor, received at the Finish Line.

The VAUDE Highland Fling

The Full Fling course was about 110km this year split between the *VAUDE Stage* (29km), *Forests NSW Stage* (54km) and final *Specialized Stage* (27km). The major differences in the course this year was the addition of another load of singletrack in Wingello SF and some rerouting in that forest. The beauty of the Fling is the variety of the course; native forest, pine forest, open farmland, village road. The reports of the spirit out on the track makes me proud to be a mountain biker. Encouragement, assistance with repairs etc. The rain ensured there was plenty of moisture out on the tracks but generally the tracks were damp but fast, the paddocks a little heavier. Some patches of mud could slow progress a little; the haul up *The Kick* a horror for many.

The VAUDE Highland Fling offered all mountain bikers the chance to take on their own personal challenge. To ride fast or slow, to see some great country. To win prizes for coming first, last or somewhere in between.



The Results



The stars were out when the first call went out for pancakes and coffee and a clear sky welcomed as the bagpiper piped in the dawn to rouse the masses. As always the Elite Full Flingers started with the Half Flingers half an hour behind the rest of the Full Fling field and 100Milers. They caught up with the tail enders soon after the Long Paddock and the elite train flew past riders to the waist high wade into *Early Bath* (sorry ladies, a little higher for some of you) and out

into Boags Draft. At the Wingello Transition Zone, 2006 winner Shaun Lewis (1:05:33) along with Dylan Cooper, Adrian Jackson, Matt Fleming, Jason English, Perren Delacour and Dirk Van der Walle were only seconds apart with Ben Mather and Aiden Lefmann less than half a minute behind.

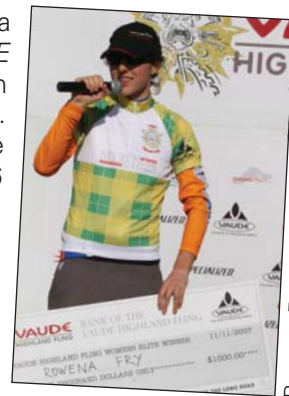


As always, it was the hills in the *Forests NSW stage* that split the pack. *The Wall* claimed a few with Dylan the only one to pedal all the way up it to lead the 6 pack into the *Great Wall* section of singletrack - built by Chinese volunteers (honestly!) to keep the rabbits out! By the time the *Virgin Blue Frequent Rider Lounge* was reached it was Shaun, Dylan and Adrian. Sadly Adrian flatted soon after leaving the other two to work

together through the deep gullies to the *Wild West* and back to Wingello to complete the *Forests NSW Stage* in 2:12:43. Into the final *Specialized Stage* and the two of them stayed wheel to wheel as far as the *Free Bike Wash* when Dylan got a tiny lead coming out of the water. Shaun reeled him back up through the *Great Sandy Desert* and pulled away as both went left at *Your Call*. With only 3km to go, Shaun Lewis pinned the final, mostly downhill, section and claimed his second VAUDE Highland Fling title in 4:22:47, a margin of 16 seconds over Dylan Cooper (4:23:31). Meanwhile a battle had developed for 3rd place with Adrian Jackson and Matt Fleming sprinting for the podium, which Adrian (4:32:22) took with a 5 second gap.



In the Elite Women it was Rowena Fry's big day. Only in the *VAUDE Stage* could anyone keep up with her; Rosie Barnes being the one. But Rowena opened up a lead in the *Forests NSW stage* although 2006 champion, Katrin Van der Spiegel, took on the chase after a slower first stage. However Rowena powered away on the *Specialized Stage* to win in 5:22:09, a solid 14 minutes over Katrin (5:36:14) with Rosie third in 5:43:30.



Rowena Fry on the money

As well as their \$1000 cheques both Rowena and Shaun go forth as the newly crowned Australian MTB Marathon Champions. As well as the coveted Maillot Tartane (the tartan jersey) they also received 2 return flights anywhere on the Virgin Blue & Pacific Blue networks to compete in events of their choice courtesy of our sponsor Virgin Blue.

A few more people changed to Singlespeed Full Fling in the days leading up to the event, worrying about destroyed drivetrains. Tom Knight stood on top of the one geared minds, finishing on 5:42:03.



Dennis does it again

The 100Mile Flingers had 2 loops of the *Forests NSW stage* to enjoy this year after the *VAUDE Stage* before the final *Specialized Stage*. With 9.5 hours allowed, it was a tough course to complete and only half the field made it. Dennis Van Mil showed once again what a tough endurance athlete he is by being first home in 8:05:34, a full half hour ahead of 2nd placed Andrew Fellows (8:34:48) with Craig Armour in 3rd (9:10:30).

Jason Mcavoy made it home with 9 minutes to cut off and Wayne Anderson crossed the line in 9:30:19. Officially we should list this as a DNF being 19 seconds over cutoff but given he was the only other 100Miler to finish the course, we could not be so cruel!

In the Half Fling late replacement rider Brian Price, riding in Open Mens, took the honours in 2:16:48 with Veteran riders Tim Bateman following in 2:19:30 and Dave Coward in 2:25:44. For the women it was Zoe King in 2:44:02 ahead of Claire Haugh (2:50:37) and Maria Papadopoulos (2:54:31)

All other category placegetters and full Results can be found on www.wildhorizons.com.au. Please note these are interims only. If you have a query on your time/place then please email timing@wildhorizons.com.au before 21 November.



Watch out for thistles



The Thanks

For the 3 years of the event it has been the VAUDE Highland Fling so a big thanks first up to **VAUDE** for getting right behind the event. Attach your free VAUDE Race Light underseat bags with pride and buy VAUDE kit when you need some outdoor or cycling gear. Our major sponsors in 2007 were the MTB fanatics from Ground Effect cycle clothing (4 of whom competed and competed well), Specialized Bikes (thanks Keith for all your hard work this year), Virgin Blue, GU Nutrition which kept many a rider going particularly from the Frequent Rider Lounge, Sonecca custom clothing and Forests NSW. Thanks to all!

Other sponsors and supporters included the Telstra Shop Bowral (sponsor of the Bundanoon Dash), Todds Real Estate (sponsor of the Kids Fling) Aquamann Irrigation (who kept you hydrated), The Australian Banana Promotions Company (who sent you bananas!), Tourism Southern Highlands, Australian Mountain Bike Clinics, Maxxis Tyres, Sigma Computers and The Outdoor Education Group.

Any of our events are nothing without the Dark Side. The crew who spend days putting out arrows, working on rego, building event centres, marshaling the course, transition etc etc etc. In our team there were 50+. 3 weeks before the event Wayne Byard, our Course Director had a big smash on the bike. A few visits to hospital and a few scans later and he was not looking good. In typical Byard fashion, he eschewed medical advice, put off an operation to re-attach some tendons in his shoulder, made Nurofen his friend and did as magnificent a job as ever. Adrian Reynolds worked in the months up to the event to ensure I kept on top of the Task List before he left to coordinate the Rural Fire Service brigades' involvement. The lovely Wendy looked after the administration and rego with typical efficiency and friendliness. Ant, Fi, Pete, Patrick, Roger, Zac, Jeff, Alisha, Grant, Mark, Nicky, Graeme, Warren, Sam all played key roles. Thanks to them and **ALL** the Dark Side.

The course you all enjoyed would not exist without Greg & Di Joice, Robert & Barbara Boag and Bob & Gladys Jefferies allowing us access to their properties. Please **NEVER** ride these sections of private property at any other time. Savour them during the Fling.

The local Rural Fire Service brigades had 50+ marshals on the course and did their usual magnificent job. St John Ambulance patched up those who hit the ground too hard, Supreme Cycle Avanti Plus kept bikes on the trail and Rock & Roll Lube kept you well waxed.

Carbon Neutral & Recycling



We made some effort this year to try and mitigate the environmental effects of the race. This included going Carbon Neutral, both for the event itself and by giving all entrants the opportunity to offset their emissions from travelling to Bundanoon. 40% of entrants offset their travel emissions and we thank you for that. Given it was offsetting for each vehicle, this is not a bad result as people sharing cars only had to offset for one person to cover it. The Pony Club reported that there seemed to be more people car sharing.

We ensured that all food stalls/suppliers used biodegradable plates (made from palm fronds), cups etc etc. Working with the local council Resource Recovery Centre we introduced a deposit based recycling system (that worked well thanks for helping there) and ensured there was only one collection point for rubbish and recycling at Ferndale Oval Event Centre. We put on a Shuttle Bus from Ferndale to Bundanoon village centre to encourage people to leave their cars in the Pony Club on Saturday (and it worked really well, with the added advantage of less traffic into and out of the still wet Pony Club)

We chartered a train, *the Flinging Scotsman*, to bring riders and bikes from Sydney to and from the event. This was not done until there were already some 900 entrants and a combination of lateness, cost (\$55 rtn) and awkwardness for some of getting luggage (bikes, camping gear, personal gear) to Central Station, meant that, not unexpectedly, we did not get enough bookings to make it happen. The exercise we went through was well worthwhile and hopefully in 2008 it will happen; it will become an integral part of the VAUDE Highland Fling. We can do this by ensuring the booking option is there from the day entries open, by having the train sponsored to bring down the cost, by having pre-erected camps with sleeping bags, mats etc as an option on the entry. We can only make it happen if we can get you to leave the car at home.

These were our efforts in 2007. In 2008 we'll try and improve upon them.

The Community, the Spirit

Our little town of Bundanoon became *Vaude Ville* for the weekend. Many of you commented on the community feel of the event; from the old bikes lining the roads to welcome you, to the superb catering efforts of the Bundanoon Rebels Soccer Club, Bundanoon, Exeter and Wingello School P&C's. We're passing all your comments on to them and I know all the various groups would like me to thank you all for being the most polite and happy bunch of people to head into the district this year. Collectively the groups raised some \$25000-\$30000 for local community projects.



While you were out in the mud, The Kids Fling was loads of fun. Promoting cycling to young kids guarantees the future of our sport and encourages the demise of the Xbox and the wastage of TV time. The kids were inspired by you and it all goes some way to developing the Southern Highlands as a place that welcomes the bike. Thanks to Todds Real Estate for supporting the Kids Fling and to Avanti Bicycles for some great prizes including a bike to draw. Young Amanda was spotted riding up and down her road on Sunday afternoon singing 'I've got the best bike in the world'!

Thanks to all of you for signing the *Don't Bore Bundanoon* petition. This utter madness is a plan by a company called Norlex to extract water from a spring near the National Park. To send it to Sydney to be placed into plastic bottles and sold at huge profit. If you think you can help us in any way then let me know.



Pre Ordered Tee Shirts and Maps.

forgot something?

For some reason this year, despite it being mentioned in the event Final Details and also told to you at Registration, a large number of people failed to pick up the T shirts they had ordered on their entry and an even larger number forgot to pick up their pre ordered MTB Trails of the Southern Highlands Map. Given it would cost us many hundreds of dollars to mail all these out and you forgot not us, we're asking those of you who want these items to:

1. Pre-ordered Map AND T Shirt - Send us a self addressed C4 size (A4) envelope stamped to the value of \$2-45
2. Pre-ordered T Shirt Only - As above
3. Pre-Ordered Map Only - Send us a self addressed envelope C5 size (half A4) stamped to the value of \$1

Flinging Memories



Photos are now up on www.cycle-photos.com so check out yourself in full ride mode!

Taking Orders for the VAUDE Highland Fling jersey

We sold out completely of the event jersey we had produced by Sonecca. Orders were taken on the day from some who wanted one. We are placing a top up order very soon so if you would like one then please contact Wendy on wendy@wildhorizons.com.au or 02 48836509 with your credit card details and size. Cost is \$95

The Australian MTB Marathon Championships



As most of you are aware by now we coined this term in December 2005 to use for the

VAUDE Highland Fling. Some months later Mountain Biking Australia (MTBA) used the same term for another event in 2006 and again earlier this year, causing some minor confusion in the MTB world. We maintain that we are entitled to use this title for the Fling and that MTBA does not 'own' such rights to do so. This is no different to the Scott 24 Hour Race being declared by the organizers as the Australian 24 Hour Championship. We make no claims about our title being affiliated to MTBA or offering such things as UCI ranking points. We do like to introduce new things at our events (such as a crèche, going carbon neutral, having our own beer brewed, encouraging cross dressing, being the first event to have the Teddy Bear's picnic as a theme etc etc). We would never claim the VAUDE Highland Fling to be any better than any other MTB marathons. I love to ride them all for their differences as much as their similarities. But I do believe that having conferred this title upon our event some years ago, MTBA might have better things to do with their time than try and copy it.

Mr & Ms Average



In the spirit of rewarding participation which is the lifeblood of this event, we have a special prize for the Male and Female rider who completed the Full Fling in closest to the average time for their sex. We will be sending these two people to the Kona Colville Connection race on March 8-9; flying with Virgin Blue with entry fees, transport to the event and accommodation all paid for

The average times were:

- Average Men's Full Fling Time 7:13:22
- Average Women's Full Fling Time 7:34:12

So here goes.....drum roll please.....

Ladies first.....Ms Average is the lovely Martine Robin in 7:37:42. And Mr Average is Dave Sutton in 7:13:20.



*Note: These are interim Mr and Ms Average. Should there be any major changes in the results then this could possibly change.

Wingello State Forest MTB Trails

All except the Half Flingers sampled the singletrack we've been busy building in Wingello State Forest. Judging by the comments it is meeting with your approval. In order to keep the project on track and to ensure there are more and well maintained tracks for all to ride all year, night and day; we'd welcome some help on the tracks. If you're prepared to put in a day or two in the coming months then drop me a note on huw@wildhorizons.com.au. The new MTB Trails of the Southern Highlands Map we've just produced shows in details the current trails. It is available from our website.

We have some prizes for placegetters who were not at the presentation. We'll contact you in the coming weeks to arrange collection. There were a few items of lost property handed in.

Thanks again to all of you for being part of the 2007 VAUDE Highland Fling. Stick 8-9 November in your new diaries for 2008. See you at the Urban Polaris!

Enjoy the ride. Enjoy the summer

Huw Kingston



The Final Polaris - 2007 Urban Polaris, 2 December, Canberra

**See you there!
Entries close on 29 November!**

