

G'day to all and welcome to August. There are a few things to mention but the best news first. I mentioned a couple of months back that **Alex Simmons** was in hospital recovering from a lower left leg amputation after a bike crash while training. He recently went home after more than 3 months on his back in a hospital bed. His recovery isn't over yet but he will be back on the bike in the foreseeable future.

Next, the anecdote about **Malcolm George** struck a chord and we received 30+ emails regarding that and offering to keep an eye out for him. Thank you for that and I hope that he eventually surfaces.

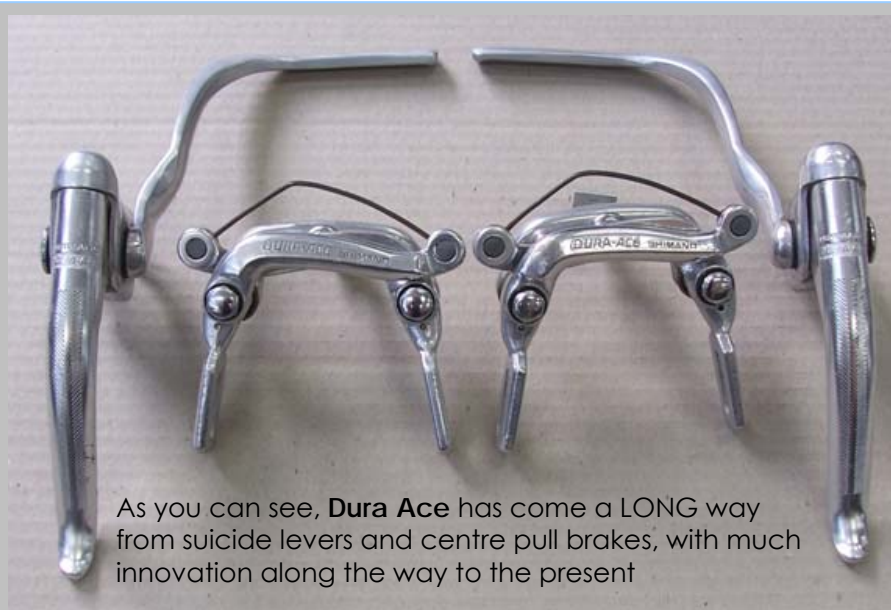


### New Shimano bits and bobs

I was at a Shimano product launch recently. The standouts in road gear were the new **Dura Ace** carbon crank set, new wheel sets and a range of heat moldable shoes. The carbon crank is more or less identical to the current aluminium crank in shape but is lighter. It will be expensive, around 2 grand, is hollow and unlike most carbon cranks, doesn't have internal aluminium reinforcement.

There is a new range of wheels of which I thought the standout was the 1340 gram Dura Ace road wheels which will sell for Ksyrium type money, possibly less.

The heat molded shoes were interesting. The shoes are put into a convection oven. Once at the correct temperature, they are placed on the riders' feet inside a bag and a vacuum pump attached that sucks all air out of the bag and forces the shoes to form more or less to the riders' foot. This is interesting technology and we are looking into doing something with it. **Dura Ace**, as you all know is Shimano's top of the line road equipment and the choice of many pro teams, but the name had humble origins. The photo at left shows just how humble and you can see **Dura Ace** stamped into both levers and calipers.



As you can see, **Dura Ace** has come a LONG way from suicide levers and centre pull brakes, with much innovation along the way to the present



While I'm on the subject of little known stuff, have a look at the photo above. This is a brand new pair of **Campagnolo** mtb brakes and shifters from the late 80's. As you can see from the 300mm rule on the left side of the photo, the gear is huge. My 260 kg **Moto Guzzi's** brake levers are smaller than that. How times have changed with **Campagnolo** leading the way in the usage of carbon and titanium to reduce weight.

## Do you have trouble fitting tyres?

Some combinations of rim and tyre make it very hard to fit the tyre. In a previous newsletter, I explained why. From time to time, we are been able to track down quantities of the gone but not forgotten and never surpassed **VAR** wishbone tyre levers. It doesn't matter how tight your combination of rim and tyre, the **VAR** wishbone levers will allow you to fit it and save time and irritation. We have stock again at \$28 each.



## Positioning Tweaks

If we have positioned you before, until the end of September we will tweak or refit for a flat fee of \$100-. New bike, improved function, whatever – it doesn't matter, same fee applies but only until the end of September.

## Token wheels and other bits

**Token** are Taiwanese manufacturer who make a lot of bits that sell for higher prices with other names on it. Carbon cranks, carbon wheels, carbon bars, carbon seat posts stems, ceramic bearing headsets, rear derailleur jockey wheels with ceramic bearings etc. I'm doing a review for Bicycling Australia on Tokens' carbon 50mm deep road wheels, 30mm deep aluminium road wheels, ceramic bearing jockey wheels and one piece ceramic coated aluminium cassette stacks. Have a look at [www.tokenproducts.com](http://www.tokenproducts.com) The stand outs for me so far are the 1590 gram, 30mm deep wheel set; bladed spokes front and rear (24 /

20) and the super smooth rolling hubs @ \$550- a pair. These are better than the cheapo training wheels the price suggests and disgrace plenty of \$1000 - \$1100- wheels in performance. The ceramic bearing jockey wheels @ \$98 a pair (\$220 – plus for most of their competitors) and the amazing 120 gram aluminium cassette stacks. Amazing because all 10 cogs are machined out of a single piece of aluminium with cutaways everywhere! They are ceramic coated for longevity and warranted to last at least 4000kms. I am 1000 kms into the test and will pass on the results. Stay tuned.

## Beer Reviews:

Most quality Belgian beers are brewed in Flanders, the Flemish speaking part of the country. Some centuries ago Flanders was a country but was subsumed into both Belgium and France. France is best know for its' wine but some seriously good Flemish beers are made in the north of France in French Flanders, properly called Flandre. In my constant quest to bring you the best information about real beer available, I reluctantly managed to sample a few.

Before I get to them and in answer to those of you who contacted me thinking that I only drink high alcohol beers, many Belgian ales have a much higher alcohol content (6.5% - 11% is typical) than most beers. With many strong beers from elsewhere, all you can taste is the alcohol. Carlsbergs' (very ordinary in my view) Elephant beer is an example of this. With the better Belgian ales and their imitators, it can often come as a surprise to read the alcohol content on the label because it is barely discernible in taste.

### **Vivat Dubbel 6.4%**

This is a good beer, very pale, with a thick, dense, exceptionally aromatic head and a bitter hop after taste.

It is reminiscent of Trois Monts (Hors Categorie and one of the worlds' great beers) but not in the same class. Still, well worth the trouble if you can find it.

It is fermented twice with the second fermentation being in the bottle to allow natural carbonation.

Rating: Categorie 2

### Gavroche 8.5%

A dark ale from Brasserie St Sylvestre, the makers of Trois Monts. This is the antithesis of Trois Monts in that it is as dark as Trois Monts is pale. Quite a reasonable drink if you like malty dark ales but it doesn't have the complexity of the incomparable Trois Monts.

Rating: Categorie 2

### Vivat Tripel 8.5%

Exactly the same comments as apply to Vivat Dubbel except the Tripel has gone through an extra fermentation to raise the alcohol content.

### Boucanier Dark 9%

Boucanier means 'buccaneer' in French and this Flemish beer comes in a distinctive white bottle with a pic of a gap toothed, eye patch wearing pirate on the label. The recipe for this beer is so old that it pre dates the addition of hops to the brew. It is dark and sweet with plenty of roasted malt flavour and is best appreciated sipped over some time. Each swallow leaves a tide line of dried head inside the glass highlighting the maltiness of this ale. At 9% it isn't quite as strong as the Boucanier Golden reviewed in the last newsletter and is a terrific winter beer. This is as close to you'll get to liqueur Muscat in a beer glass.

Rating: Categorie 1. If I drink another half dozen it might move up to Hors Categorie.



*Below is the latest tale from the book of anecdotes.*

### PETER'S STORY

The positioning business is a funny game. I see a skewed sample of humanity as most of the people that seek my help have a problem of some sort. I do my best to do my job well, but sometimes I just get lucky. This is a story of luck, both good and bad.

I had a call one day from a gent I will call Peter. Peter wanted to tell me about his chronic back issue and was seriously into the detail of his problem. 5 minutes into the conversation I still hadn't heard what the problem was. He was giving me a minute by minute description of 5 years of misery, starting from now and working backwards. I was really busy and so cut him short with words to the effect of "Whatever your problem is, I've seen it before and can probably come up with a solution. Let's organise a time and we'll proceed from there.

On the arranged date, Peter walked in. My first reaction watching him walk in was "I should have listened to his ENTIRE story". His gait was weird. He walked in an out of sync way with his knees bent and wasn't stable on his feet at all. His hamstrings and glutes were atrophied and he kept his torso absolutely vertical as he walked in his bent knee way, bobbing up and down with every step. He then told me his story.

5 years before he bent over to pick up a pen from the floor. Something went 'snap' in his back and he lost the ability to use his legs. He saw orthopaedic surgeons, neurologists, spinal specialists, psychiatrists and biomechanists to no avail. There didn't seem to be anything wrong with his spine but no one could diagnose the problem. He

corresponded with eminent medicos all over the world via the net, in an attempt to find out what the problem was. His spine was okay but for reasons no one fully understood, his legs just wouldn't work.

He was a creature of habit and into detail. Talking about his previous time as a triathlete, he told me that 3 mornings a week, every week; he ran 10 kms "in 35 minutes and 15 seconds, plus or minus 10 seconds". He told me that at that time, his cycling took up "8 hours 20 minutes per week, plus or minus 5 minutes". Every thing he did was identified, labeled and put into a box. Peter was a devoted to method, routine, and habit in the extreme.

His story continued; he had found a really good physiotherapist and working with her, he had been able to walk again, albeit not well as he still couldn't use his hamstrings or glutes but his quadriceps worked okay, though he couldn't 'walk' very far. This treatment had run its' course and she had suggested that the only other thing she could suggest to was to get his bike on an indoor trainer and ride at low intensity in an effort to try and develop new neural pathways. To date, he had made no progress and so the physio referred him to me to assess his position.

After 5 years with this mystery ailment, Peter was really excited about being able to more or less walk again and as he finished his story said to me "You come highly recommended and I'm looking forward to a full recovery. What do you plan to do?"

"I haven't got a clue" was my response. His face



fell and with his hopes dashed he slumped down in his chair. "Peter, I don't have a clue" I continued "and it sounds like I'm in good company. I haven't come across or even heard of a problem like yours. All I can do is position you as the person you are with the worlds' worst back. In simple terms, that's the story and the best that I can do for you".

Peter consented to continue, so I assessed him for range of movement and then put him on the bike. A couple of things stood out. He had an interesting method of mounting the bike while it was on the indoor trainer. He placed one hand on the bars, the other on the seat, hoisted himself into the air and then twisted and flopped onto the seat. Also of note was his radical forward seating position. I explained to him that if my task was to try and get his hamstrings and glutes working, I would have to move his seat much further back. 109 mm further back as it turned out! He had a forward position seat post and I turned it the other way and pushed the seat all the way back. I fitted mtb bars and lifted them so high that his back was near vertical. He protested at this and I told him

"Peter; this is about rehabilitation, not performance. If you beat this problem, come back and I'll refit your bullhorn and aero bars and all the other cabbage that I am removing at the moment."

Once I was finished, Peter left reasonably happy with the direction I was trying to take.

10 days passed and I got a phone call from Peter. He was emotional and crying with joy and telling me that he thanked God that we had met. That it must have been destiny or fate that brought us together. He was cured, totally cured and that he owed it all to me.

Like most people, I appreciate a pat on the head occasionally but listening to Peter I'm thinking "Yeah, I'm good at my job, but I can't raise the dead or make the blind see or the deaf hear. What Peter's telling me is TOO good."

So I asked him to tell me what happened.

He had returned home after our session motivated to do some riding on the indoor trainer and get those hamstrings and glutes working. His physio had given him some pelvic stabilisation exercises to do while on the bike. He realised that he wouldn't be able to see his pelvis in the hall mirror while on trainer, as the hall mirror was placed too high. When positioning people, I use a trick trainer mounted on a podium half a metre high, as it allows me a good working and viewing height. He thought that if he had a large wooden box like mine made up to mount his trainer on, it would raise his bike high enough to see himself properly in the mirror. He got a carpenter in and the box was made. Peters' box was wider than mine as he felt that given his poor ability to walk and stand upright, a wider box would

help while mounting and dismounting the bike. So, a week or so after his visit to us, with his new wooden platform ready and with some anticipation, he attempted to mount the bike.

Being the creature of habit that he is, he placed one hand on the bars and attempted to place the other on the seat..... BUT it was 109mm further back than he was used to and he overbalanced. He said that while he was falling, all he could think of was not denting his Cannondale. As he knocked the bike over, somehow or other he did a full forward roll and landed on his lumbar spine on the sharp edge of the wooden box. The impact hyperextended his lumbar spine and his words.....

"There was about 10 seconds of agony and then a blue explosion in my head knocked me out"

Some time later his wife came home and found him unconscious on the floor with the bike and trainer on top of him. She freaked, noted he was breathing and called the ambulance. The ambos came in checked him out, said that all his vital signs were okay and administered smelling salts to wake him up. Once awake he was fine AND COULD WALK NORMALLY!

The best guess amongst the medicos is that there was an undiagnosed band of scar tissue constricting a nerve plexus near his lower spine. This is what had been the cause of his long term disability. The heavy impact on the sharp edge of the box and subsequent hyperextension of the lumbar spine had torn the scar tissue and caused the agonising pain. The 'blue explosion' was the inability of his brain to cope with neural feedback from the lower body as it was 5 years out of practise. He finished his story with "I'm cured, totally cured and I owe it all to you!" I said "Well, if you are handing out credit, I'll accept it,..... but you hadn't even got on the bike!"

The postscript to Peters' story is this. After finishing the call with Peter, I told Khaliph, our mechanic at the time the story as he had seen Peter when he came in a week and a half previously. Khaliph has a degree Sports Science degree and Human Movement. He thought I was winding him up and flatly refused to believe me. Peter had booked in for a refit a week or so later and it took him walking in a fairly normal fashion to convince Khaliph of what I had told him. I refitted Peters' aero bars and last time I heard from him, his atrophied hammies and glutes had regained their normal size and strength and he was enjoying training for and competing in triathlons again.