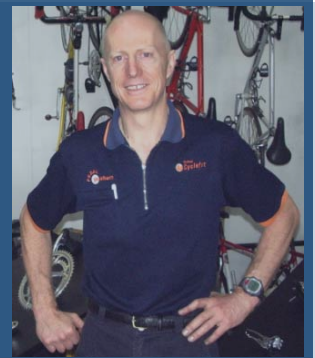


G'day All and welcome to September / October. I'm cheating here in that I was a bit late getting the September NL out so this one will do for both months. There is a bit of extra reading in it, so I hope that suffices.

I suppose Cameron Hughes has got to get first mention. Long time customer, ex pro and ex Randwick – Botany member Cam won the Grafton – Inverell which most consider the toughest one day race in the country. Cam won the way everyone wants to win it; that is solo, by a good margin and against the best riders in the country. For the details see <http://www.cyclingnews.com/road.php?id=road/2007/sep07/grafon07>



### 3T

On a recent Wednesday evening I had dinner with Rene Wiertz, the CEO and new owner of 3T. We talked about a potential collaboration regarding product design and while nothing concrete eventuated, do yourself a favour and have a look at their stuff when it hits the market late this year or early next year. As far as bar and stems go, 3T's new stuff is head and shoulders above most other offerings on the market in terms of design integrity and appearance. [www.thenew3t.com](http://www.thenew3t.com)

### Biomac

Those lightweight Swiss slippers mentioned in previous NL's are continuing to evolve. They are now available with adaptors to suit Speedplay for those wishing to use the midfoot cleat position, and have 'bumpers' on heel and toe. Still less than half the weight of anything else and available from you know where. [www.biomac.biz](http://www.biomac.biz)

### Tyre Specials

Michelin Pro Race 2's \$58 each and Vredstein Fortezza TriComp at \$55 each or \$100- for 2. I know that there are net prices that are cheaper, but for those of you who prefer to buy your tyres in Oz, those prices are far, far cheaper than you will find in bike shops.



## Virtual Reality Trainers

The demo Tacx Fortius in the shop is about to get a dedicated computer. So anyone who wants to try virtual cycling, organise a time and have a try. There are virtual courses, virtual competitors and if you don't steer around the corners you will have a virtual crash and give a virtual yell when you land on your virtual head. As good as it gets for indoor training.

<http://www.tacx.com/producten.php?language=EN&ftop=VR%20trainers&lvMain=16&lvSub=55&lvSubSub=77>

## Custom carbon

Bill Fernance is a bike shop proprietor cum frame builder from Yamba in northern N.S.W. He has built frames under his own label, Rigi, as well as for Teschner in the past. His latest venture is custom carbon frames. I am riding a prototype at the moment and should have a production ready version in the new future. Weight is 'light' and all going well, these locally made custom frames will be the first Australian made carbon frames on the market. Stay turned.



## Murrays' Beer Tasting

Murray's Craft Brewery is in small town outside Taree named Taylors' Arm. Some of the best beer in Australia is brewed there by a gent named, oddly enough, Murray. The 3 Weeds Hotel in Rozelle hosted a Murrays' tasting and despite a busy schedule, your correspondent found time to attend.

The two most commonly available Murrays beers, the Sassy Blonde Ale and the Nirvana Pale Ale, (and yes I know; full marks for the beers but not much for the names) were available along with the less common Pilsener, Icon IPA, Dark Ale and Belgian Tripel. All were good, more than good really, and were matched to food served to compliment each beer. If you are looking for a 'real' beer brewed in Australia, give Murray's work a try as you won't be disappointed.

A few weeks after the 3 Weeds night, I sampled a Murrays Grand Cru and reacquainted myself with the Icon IPA. Both are available from Liquor On Parade, (cnr of Bass St and Anzac Pde Kingsford) in 750ml with cork and wire. The Icon IPA is a Categorie 1 beer and the Grand Cru becomes the first Australian to make Hors Categorie. The Grand Cru is up there with the very best Belgian ales and in taste is somewhere between Tripel Karmaliet and the incomparable \$45 a bottle Deus. This is high praise, so make sure that you drink one before you die. [www.murraysbrewingco.com.au](http://www.murraysbrewingco.com.au)

## Red Oak

A group of us visited Red Oak in early October. Red Oak is a bar cum brewery in Clarence St in the CBD. They brew 30 odd beers of which a changing menu of 10 – 12 are on tap at any one time. They serve quality meals of wholesome food as well. We rated the beers as they were drunk with my intention being to include the scores in this newsletter. I have to say the judging process was corrupted. How else can one explain how the scores got higher and higher as the evening progressed?

All the beers at Red Oak are the real deal and worth a sip but special mention goes to the India Pale Ale, Bock, Irish Red Ale and Marzen lager. Most polarising beer of the night was the Organic Pale Ale. There were only two opinions of it; brilliant or awful. Red Oak gets my recommendation and Saturday nights are relatively quiet. Try the 100ml sampling glasses if you want to try every beer on tap and still be in reasonable shape by the end of the night.

[www.redoak.com.au](http://www.redoak.com.au)

We will be organising more 'real beer' nights at intermittent intervals in the future. If you are interesting in attending one, send us an email with Real Beer in the subject line.

Anyway; enough beer for the time being. I might leave the beer reviews alone for a few issues.

## MCCC ride

There is a serious, though unofficial club, on the Northside, called the **McCarrs' Creek Cycling Club** which is named after their meeting point near Akuna Bay. A couple of times a year, I convince them to venture over the Bridge and sample some riding on the south side of the harbour. This happened recently and the route was a hilly one; south through Royal National Park, along the coast road over the Seabridge south of Stanwell Park to the turnaround at Austinmer. Then back up the Stanwell climb and then up the rarely ridden Otford Hill. The highlight was past Masters World Champ Jayson Austin riding up the 15% grade at Otford with hands off the bars while eating. Just to show any challengers that he could.

## Australian Cycle Review

Some of you may know local track rider **Peter Carscadden** who has been out of circulation for a while. He's back, with a new venture, Australian Cycle Review. If you want the latest info about what bike bits are available on the Oz market, look at [www.australiancyclereview.com.au](http://www.australiancyclereview.com.au)

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

The book of anecdotes may have found a publisher. On the off chance that it does get published and because you have all been lulled by the 'feel good' nature of the last few stories of our time in the bike game, this month's episode is of a darker nature.

### The Man Who Chopped His Arm Off

Randwick – Botany, the cycling club that I belonged to at the time, had a regular training ride that left Centennial Park at 5.30 a.m on weekday mornings. These rides were tough sessions and there was a time when a few BRAT triathletes started to come out with us. They found it a challenge to finish with the bunch. One of the first of the tri guys to join in was Stan Venner. Stan showed up one morning looking pale and unwell. I commented that the day's ride was going to be hard and if he was unwell he would be better off in bed than on his bike. He explained that he was fine but still in shock from what had happened the afternoon before. A number of us asked what had happened and this is the story.

Stan lived with his parents in Maroubra. The house next door had been gutted for major renovations and there was a constant stream of tradesmen in and out of it. Stan's father had a well equipped tool shed and on a couple of occasions had lent tools to the building workers next door. Stan and his father were working in their front garden that afternoon, when a gent wearing dirty clothes came from the direction of next door and asked if he could he borrow an axe. Stan's father asked why he needed it. The building worker replied "I'm going to chop my arm off".

Stan's father thought "silly me for asking a stupid question" and told the bloke "Go up the side of the house to the tool shed. There is an axe in there with

a good edge on it so try not to blunt it too much".

The worker walked to the tool shed, grabbed the axe and came back to Stan and his father. He walked back through the gate to the foot path and while holding the axe said "You two don't believe me do you?"

"Believe what?" was the reply.

"I'm going to chop my arm off".

"Yeah, yeah, of course you are. The joke's not funny any more"

The stranger then laid his left forearm across the top of the garden fence and while holding the axe halfway up the handle in his right hand, gave three savage chops and severed his left forearm. He stood looking at the utterly shocked pair with a silly grin on his face. "Told you I'd do it"

Then the pain got to him and he started howling and ran back up the side of the house with the stump of his arm spraying blood aplenty. He ran into the rear of the house colliding with Stan's mum, and then ran around like a headless chook from room to room until Stan and his father crash tackled him and clamped off the blood flow with their hands. Meanwhile Stan's very distressed mother rang the ambulance.

The ambulance arrived and took the stranger and his severed arm away. Stan's parents are from the Malta and his father is quite swarthy. This was during the first Gulf War and when the police arrived at Stan's house, he and his parents were too shocked to say much at all. The police assumed that Stan's father was a Muslim who had administered some traditional justice to someone he'd caught stealing and arrested him.

He was released the next day when the self mutilator was found to be an escapee from the



psychiatric ward at Prince Henry Hospital. The wife of another customer of ours, Peter Shuetrim, was the insurance assessor for the case. Shuey told us that his wife found blood on every wall, ceiling and floor covering in all the rooms of the house except the bathroom. So the house was repainted and much of the furniture reupholstered.

This story isn't over yet.

Fast forward 4 years. Margaret, Derek and I are all in the shop, with Derek and I busy in the workshop. A gent walks in with a cheap, battered mountain bike. So cheap that it had solid axles with nuts rather than quick release levers. The owner of the bike said "Guys, I'll be up front. I have a puncture and no money. I'm in a hurry to get to my sister's place at Bronte. If I promise to come back and pay, will you spot me a tube and fit it please?"

I replied that at least he was telling me that he was broke before I changed his tube rather than afterwards, and that yes, I would do as he asked.

I took the bike, mounted it in a work stand and grabbed the nearest large spanner to undo the rear axle nuts. While I was working on this, the bike's owner lent on the corner of the workshop counter. I noticed that he had really nasty scar on his left forearm and his left hand was like a claw with his fingers contracted into a loose fist. I asked how he had come by the scar. He replied that he had chopped his arm off. Still not realising who he was, I asked how he had done it.

"With an axe" was the reply.

The penny dropped for me. "Was this in Maroubra about 4 years ago"?

"Yes it was. How did you know"?

"I know the bloke whose front yard you did it in. He wasn't very happy about it."

"Yeah, I heard that I caused a bit of a fuss. Do you know his address?"

"I'd like to go around and apologise".

"Look mate; I don't think they'd be very happy to see you. Anyway", I lied, "I only know where he lives, not the name of the street or the house number".

He seemed outwardly calm and curiosity got the better of me. "Why did you do it?"

The change was sudden. "I HAD TO!" he ranted. "MY MOTHER WAS THE WICKED WITCH OF THE WEST. WHEN I WAS NINE YEARS OLD SHE PUT MY HEAD ON AN OUIJA BOARD AND PROPHESED THAT I WOULD NEVER BE HAPPY UNTIL I CHOPPED MY LEFT ARM OFF!

AND I DID!

IT WAS THE BEST THING THAT I HAVE EVER DONE!

IT MADE ME FREE!" he screamed exultantly

His eyes were bulging and face red. Margaret,

Derek and I were rooted to the spot. Derek had turned around from the bike he was working on at this outburst while holding a long bladed screwdriver. It dropped from his paralysed fingers and rolled to a stop beside the feet of the maniac. I still had the ten inch spanner in my hand and was thinking "If this loony even looks at that screwdriver, I'll belt him as hard as I can with the spanner."

Derek slowly bent down and recovered the screwdriver, keeping his eyes on the maniac the whole time, while I kept a good grip on the spanner.

It was like being in a horror movie.

Our 'friend' calmed down and started telling us how the surgeons had sewed his arm back on but had told him that he would never have proper use of his left hand again. "But they were wrong" he told us. "Look at this" as he held up his claw like left hand and feebly moved his fingers slightly. "And check this out" he told us proudly. I don't know how to properly describe what he did next.

Hold your arm up and flap your wrist about. He was doing that with his left arm except that it wasn't his wrist that was bending but the middle of his forearm with the scar being the axis. Either the bones hadn't knitted or there was an artificial joint in there or something. The three of us found the sight of him flailing his arm around like an organic nunchaku off putting and more than a little disquieting.

While he was carrying on like this, I had replaced his tube, refitted the wheel and inflated it. "Your bike's ready to go now" I told him, perhaps less than politely.

"You people are terrific. Can I make you my bike shop?"

"Yes mate, whatever you reckon" I said with no enthusiasm at all. "Don't keep your sister waiting. You had better go now"

"Thanks folks. You've been great. Guess what I am going to do now?"

"Go to your sister's place. You told us".

"Guess what I'm going to do when I get there?" he said.

"Why don't you tell us?"

"I'M GOING TO CHOP MY OTHER ARM OFF!" He yelled in horror movie mode before quickly adding; "Only joking. Got you that time didn't I?" and left.

True story!

See you next month,

Margaret and Steve