



President's Report - 2008

ATTA reaches another important milestone this year – on November 9th it will have been in existence for twenty years. Things continue to change.

State of the nation

Last year ATTA-Tas disappeared, this time we report that ATTA-Vic despite a good start in 2007 and an apparent demand for our sort of event over there, has vanished. The reasons seem to be some difficulties with permissions to hold events, the cost but mainly, it seems there were organisational problems with too few people trying to do it all. We can't be certain of the reasons as the people responsible for ATTA-Vic, after announcing there would be no events scheduled this year have ceased to respond to emails or phone calls.

However, in NSW things are going very well with rider numbers well up – see below. In October they will begin a trial affiliation with Cycling NSW but also wish to maintain their association with us. We'd welcome this in the sense that we want to support Time Trialling throughout Australia within our capacity to do so but there may be some problems with the nature of future association with groups in other States as a result of changes in the Act governing the Incorporation of Associations in this State. We are currently looking into the situation.

In the Saddle

Locally, to this point in the season we have a slight decrease again in rider numbers (about 2.8%) that was similar to the comparison of seasons 2006 & 2007 and the whole year comparison between 2005 & 2006. This represents about 50 riders in a total of about 2000 rides each year. The decrease was certainly noticeable in the Early-Bird series this year; and the 40km Championships. One Early-Bird ride attracted fewer than 60 riders and the 40km Championships had only 88 starters – just over half the size of the 2006 field. But the popularity of the 16km 'Champs' on Good Friday was undiminished and the only occasion it was necessary to use the 'Reserves' checkbox on the registrations database; and the numbers riding the bread-and-butter events comfortably averaged about 47. There were some pretty awesome performances at events this season even if there were fewer people there to appreciate them.

Memberships: the number of full memberships has actually increased this year and is currently 185.

For completeness we can report that NSW numbers showed an increase of about 45% this year (cf: +11% between 2006 & 2007).

The future of the Early-Birds series is a problem: does it have one? After twelve years of EBs (eight in Kings Park) it is very difficult to face the possibility that we may have to abandon them but if the Kings Park authorities are unwilling to review their policy, imposed this year, to allow events only on a closed section of Lovekin Drive, this may be necessary. On the basis of the several events held on this course recently it would seem too hazardous to allow the rider-density on the course that 30sec start intervals would create. One-minute intervals might, perhaps, make the field size self-limited because of other time constraints: the need of riders to get to work; the nature of the sausage-course would also assist.

With the continuing prospect of losing courses due to increased motor traffic we do have one potentially bright prospect of a new venue: Champion Lakes Regatta Centre in Armadale. A perimeter track around the lakes will be completed soon and we should be able to test it out. We have already had discussions with the Facilities management; they are very keen to have groups such as ours using the centre. It will be a new sort of experience but perhaps this is the future? Some very large (eg 300 riders) TT events are held in the USA on closed (motor racing) circuits. We have considered a couple of new courses near Geraldton but have yet to try them out with scheduled events.

The increasing demands of the Local Government bureaucracy made us resort to relying on professional Traffic Management for our two largest events this year: the 40km Championships at Wandi and the 16km Bibra Lake Classic. It took a bit of a load off our shoulders but is costly. Fortunately we still don't have the same requirements for Traffic Management as massed-start road racing events. Nevertheless the process of applying for race Permissions is becoming more tedious across more localities.

At the moment we are making a fairly significant modification to our technological arsenal and introducing 'Chip' timing. We have considered this for quite a while; it is a logical extension of our timing methods and offers opportunity to develop more advanced approaches to timing and dissemination of results. It is entirely consistent with the approach to innovation that has enabled us to be proud of our recognised ability to manage events efficiently and reliably. So we have dipped into our reserves to finance the basic equipment and are also relying on the generosity and commitment of members to support the venture. We do particularly want to avoid any change to our fundamental egalitarian outlook and not impose any great burden on riders' participation in our events. The development in integration of the system will probably take some time but we have made a start.

ATTA on the Web

I promised last year that we would introduce on-line prepayment of registrations for some events. This was done. Credit card renewal of memberships almost doubled and we are continuing to encourage the use of EFT for this too – all done through the website, of course. The site is due for a major rewrite and this will happen in the next year but probably will not involve any major functional alterations. The hosting arrangement has continued to be fairly reliable but of course the corollary to Murphy's Law dictates that when something goes wrong it will choose the most inconvenient time to do it; although to be fair on Murph, when things did collapse when I was away last year and only able to observe, there was nothing I could have done anyway! There have been a few more downtimes but they probably don't occur sufficiently often to justify moving the hosting.

I reinstated the NSW results to the database once they started to provide the necessary rider details and various scripting changes have been implemented to facilitate the handling of results. So, we haven't just sat back feeling pleased with ourselves.

Acknowledgements

Once again I thank all the others who have been involved in driving the ATTA machine and particularly Lorraine, Susie and Nicky. But there are other people on the committee regularly contributing and others offering to do so when needed. It's all part of what has made ATTA worthwhile being associated with for so long.

Let's look forward to our Birthday party in a few months and then the next decade or so...

*Peter M
July 2008*