

Unley to Crafers - The Tour

Down Run

orhow I should have led from start to finish.

by Leigh Johnson

The pre-race publicity for the Tour Down Under Run in May included an advice that I would't be preparing a detailed running sheet because I wasn't very good at it. But, as advised, I did hand out at the start the detailed instructions for Stage Three of the Tour taken from the Advertiser.

Now I'm sure there's a very good reason why most people *followed those instructions* as they headed down Cross Road towards the Goodwood Road turnoff and I didn't.

My story is that I was concentrating on the temperature gauge. This was because after years of running without one, I'd been persuaded to put in a thermostat and, as a result, the temperature gauge was performing some strange fluctuations. It had done it on the test run around Torrens Park and had done it again on the short drive from Torrens Park down to Heywood Park for the start.

The thermostat story is an interesting one. I was sure I put it in a few years ago when I bought the beautiful brass thermostat housing made in Queensland. I certainly recall going out and buying it, making sure it fitted snugly in the housing etc and then, for some reason, I omitted to put it in. I wish I could recall why.

This was all revealed when I had a small leak in the radiator repaired recently and the very helpful radiator specialist suggested that I do a backflush. I wasn't really looking forward to doing it because the housing was designed so that the thermostat didn't go in from the top but from the bottom with a circlip holding it in. So that meant that the housing would have to come off; a much longer job.

The other thing the helpful specialist said, pointing to the electric fan attached to the front of the radiator was, "Whoever put that on should be shot." I sheepishly owned up and sought his advice on why it was a capital offence. Pointing to the bolts that went through the fins of the radiator his specialist opinion was that it was possible for them to vibrate and rub up against the waterways and cause a leak. He suggested attaching the fan to a bracket which could then be attached to the shell of the radiator. I said that I had only *followed the instructions* to attach the fan but my explanation didn't stack up against the test of experience. It's now fixed.

To my surprise when I took off the top hose for the flushing there was a gaping hole. One bright person suggested that electrolysis might have eaten it away but I was a bit dubious about that.

So when we got back from Beechworth I went looking in the shed. And there it was sitting just where I thought it might have been if I had packed it away. A rare occasion.....to find something in my shed where I think it might be.

Off with the housing and in with the thermostat. I'd tested it when I bought it and it was working fine but when those

fluctuations appeared it worried me. It would reach operating temperature..... as it should and then sit thereas it should and then all of a sudden the temperature would spike from 175° to 212° for a couple of seconds and then return to normal. This would happen every so often. It was beyond my basic knowledge to explain it and still is.

But obviously something was not right so after the run, off came the housing again, out came the thermostat and a new one went in. The other one had opened at about 82°. The new one opens at 72°. An expert suggested that this was the right opening temperature for a Riley thermostat.

I'm not sure that the fluctuations have been fixed because I haven't had the chance to take Reg out for a long, long run but the early indications are good so fingers are crossed.

Back to Cross Road. The other reason why I might not have turned onto Goodwood Road *as required by the instructions* and was heading towards Marion Road was because I omitted to read the instructions. I had it in my head that Marion Road would be the right way to go. Clearly it was not so and when we got to South Road, Libby and Alan Austin who'd had enough of following the race leader by then, turned left and tooted. I decided I should follow them. After all, I was leading the run!

And so, unfortunately, within a couple of kilometres of the start the peloton had been clearly separated from the race leader.

The rest of the run was easy to follow. There was only one tricky bit about which the Race Director, Mike Turtle had forewarned the riders and that was the turnoff to River Road on the Echunga - Mylor stretch. I had a picture of it in my mind but I couldn't be sure that I knew exactly where it was so I'd set the GPS to find it. But when I turned it on at McLaren Flat, up came the announcement from the GPS, "No route possible". How this might be the case I've yet to work out. Perhaps it was too cloudy or perhaps the rain that had started by then was interfering with the reception but, despite yet another let down, I'm still a GPS fan.

That rain got heavier and heavier as we headed towards Crafers and by the time we got there it was pelting down. Not unusual for Crafers which, by that time, was well and truly in the clouds. So we scurried into the Crafers Hotel and brushed off the rain as we walked past the open fires into the hubbub of a Sunday lunch in the hills. The Crows were firing on all four. Veda was pleased and Mike made sure regular score updates were passed on.

It was nice and warm as we waited, and waited for lunch. We had plenty to talk about including thermostats, going the wrong way and the excellent show of autumn colours in the hills as we waited much longer than we should have for lunch. Seems the hotel was understaffed that day. But we did finally get our lunch and it was very good.

We should do that again one day. And maybe the Crows might win.