

# Simpson Desert Bike Challenge Newsletter Dec/Jan 2007

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Race dates for 2007: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> October

Christmas has been and gone ..... and that New Year's Resolution to get out on the bike preparing for the 2007 Simpson Desert Bike Challenge may well be sagging under a belly full of mince pies and plum pud.

Maybe Santa brought you a new bike on which you will have a better chance of evading the dreaded Sweep this year..... although the race is definitely overdue for some tough sandy conditions with increasing numbers of riders achieving the glory of a 100% finish in recent years.

Those of you residing in the southern states will no doubt be rejoicing in those stifling hot summer days with scorching north winds ..... no point lying under the air conditioner whimpering when this is a heaven-sent opportunity to get out there on your bike and experience Simpson Desert -like conditions!

## Event Update:

2007 is set to ring in a few changes in race organisation behind the scenes. Since 1995 the race has been organised in association with the Paraplegic Benefit Fund. However PBF have now decided to end their association with the event.

This has resulted in a name change – the race will now be known as the 'Simpson Desert Bike Challenge'. The present web address ([www.sdcc.org.au](http://www.sdcc.org.au)) will still access the website; with the new address [www.desertchallenge.org](http://www.desertchallenge.org) gradually taking over. The race will continue to operate as a non-profit charity event, organised by a committee of volunteers - the Desert Challenge Association. Four time rider Ed Bourke takes the reins as Race Director in 2007 ..... perhaps a relief for those planning to challenge for line honours this year.

## Training Tips:

With nine months to go, now is the time to get some road miles under your tyres. Building endurance is the goal. The key is to maintain a steady speed and rhythm over a period of several hours. Over the next few months try and build the time spent on the bike up to a continuous six hours. Start with several short sessions and aim for one longer one each week. Once you are comfortable with this you can begin to add hills and off-road training to the mix.

Remember that during the race you will be out on the bike for anything up to 6 hours 40 minutes for the morning stage and a further 4 hours in the afternoon for five consecutive days - it helps if you are comfortable with long stints in the saddle.

The summer months are also a good time to experiment with any food/drink supplements that you are planning to use during the event. Check out how different products survive the hot conditions and what you can tolerate. Anything that is complicated to prepare is probably going to be way too hard once you are out in the Desert.

It is worth reading the information on endurance cycling in hot conditions on the MTBA Association website – there are useful articles produced by Sports Medicine Australia on managing hydration and salt depletion. See [www.mtba.asn.au](http://www.mtba.asn.au) (click 'Club Resources' then 'Policies and Documents' and scroll down to view these).

Multi day cycling trips such as the upcoming Great Tasmanian Bike Ride (10-18 February) run by Bicycle Victoria can be useful for building base fitness – they provide an opportunity to get out on your bike each day and the contact with other cyclists can help to spur you on – see [www.bv.com.au](http://www.bv.com.au)

**Profile: Dr Ian Bowmaker**

The race relies heavily on volunteer medical crews to monitor the health of riders as they tackle the harsh Desert conditions. Support crews are not immune to the effects of the Desert, particularly dehydration, and can also require medical assistance. Over the twenty year history of the race, several doctors have volunteered repeatedly to spend their precious annual leave tending to a bedraggled bunch of obstreperous, exhausted, half-cooked, bruised, dehydrated, and distressed riders in the middle of nowhere. Often their only thanks was to be dunked in the Warburton Creek by a passing pack of riders looking for some diversion.

One such medic was Dr Ian Bowmaker. Dr Ian always kept an eye out for the less competitive riders, those who were slower, less focused on results and more focused on survival. He quickly established a reputation as the medic responsible for the rear end of the field. He wholeheartedly embraced the creation of the revered concoction known as 'Sheep Dip' (the secret recipe for which had been masterminded by his medical cohort Dr John Hill), and encouraged riders to regularly anoint their battered buttocks with this magical salve. The concoction, although of a repugnant appearance, is regarded by many race veterans as largely responsible for them surviving the course with most of the skin on their butt intact. Thus for many riders Dr Ian became affectionately known as 'the Bum Doctor'.

He made an enormous contribution to the race over the eleven years he was involved. Sadly the 'Bum Doctor' made his last trip out to the Desert in 2001 and passed away from cancer in August 2002. His legacy, and that of fellow medic Dr John Hill, lives on in the continued production and application of 'Sheep Dip' (with the secret recipe now safely in the hands of Medical Coordinator Louise Hill); and in the mindless chant of officials and medical crew – 'drink more water!'



Doctors Hill (left) and Bowmaker with the infamous 'Sheep Dip'. Oct 2001

**2006 Photos**

In 2006 photographer Andrew Weller from Vivid Adventures Photography Tours accompanied the race. The resulting photos from Andrew and his client Mark are fantastic – see the website [www.vividadventures.com.au/SDCC-Galleries.htm](http://www.vividadventures.com.au/SDCC-Galleries.htm)

**Help required**

Simpson Desert Bike Challenge flyers will soon be appearing in bike shops around Australia. We are looking for people to help with distribution – if you are able to assist, particularly in Tasmania and the ACT, please contact [gaye@fastedy.com.au](mailto:gaye@fastedy.com.au).

Volunteers are also sought for a number of support roles during the race. If you are interesting in helping out please contact Ed or Gaye on (03) 5263 2142.

See you out there ...

**Gaye (Flipper)**