

Preface

The 14th International Cycling History Conference was organised and conducted by the Canberra Bicycle Museum using the facilities of the Canberra Tradesmen's Club. Readers may be interested to know something of the background of these arrangements.

The Canberra Tradesmen's Club (the Tradies) was formed by an Australian trade union, the Building Workers Industrial Union, to provide amenities for the building workers and their families in the Australian Capital Territory. It has grown over the years to a membership of 52,000 people from all walks of life. The parent union is now the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. However, the focus on community and family wellbeing has not changed and the Tradies now sponsors and conducts a wide range of community-oriented activities. The Canberra Bicycle Museum is but one of those activities. Others include the Building Trades Group Drug and Alcohol Program, the Construction Industry Training and Employment Association, and the Canberra Observatory and Planetarium. The Tradies also provides direct assistance to various community groups, including cycling groups.

The Canberra Bicycle Museum was begun in 1981, when the Board of Directors of the Club decided to exhibit old bicycles in the club's premises. This was intended to stimulate family and child interest in the evolution of the bicycle, in its changing technology, its general usefulness and the potential for exercise and amusement.

The project grew apace. In 1998 the Club established the Australian Cycling History Resource Centre and provided the present quarters. These house a collection of some 750 bicycles, workshop facilities for repair and conservation work, as well as library and research facilities. The Centre has a useful collection of books on the history and technology of cycling and a collection of posters and cycling magazines from around the world. It has been entrusted with the archives

of some of the larger cycling groups in Australia as a source for research.

It is important that we document and keep our cycling history to pass on to future generations. Hopefully this conference will generate more interest in the topic and lead to more exchanges of information.

I would like to thank the following people :

- ◆ Paul Farren for his foresight, about five years ago, in suggesting that Canberra host this conference.
- ◆ Charlie Farren, Paul's wife, for her support and suggestions. Especially since Brno, June 2001, when we started working on this in earnest.
- ◆ Ron Shepherd and Paul Ratcliffe who have compiled these Proceedings.
- ◆ Paul Ratcliffe who produced a CD-ROM, a copy which will go to all participants, entitled *Highlights of the events of the Shimano Historic Cycles Downunder 2003*.
- ◆ Neville Reece for his assistance, in keeping track of the registrations, producing name tags, labels and certificates, and even designing the signage.
- ◆ Alan Stutter, who worked behind the scenes making lists of everything, and adding more lists on the database.
- ◆ John Widdup for designing the database to cope with the entries for all of the Shimano Historic Cycles Downunder events.
- ◆ Noel Butlin Archives of the Australian National University for the Dunlop display brought in especially for the conference.
- ◆ The National Museum of Australia for access to their repository.
- ◆ Shimano Inc for their contribution to help defray expenses, and for the concept bike, using Shimano parts, which was on display at the conference.

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