

Phoenix Flyers (2014-2017)

in support of

The Phoenix Burns Project South Africa

Supported by:





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Preface

Upon joining Woodside in mid 2013, I was asked to share with the Exploration team some background on my interests and passions. Inevitably, after having participated in the first ABC Bike Challenges in 2011 and 2012, I referenced what had been a life changing experience for me. At Woodside, I discovered a culture that not only encourages individuals to do the right thing, but also a workforce of energised and determined individuals who continually rise to a challenge placed before them.

The engagement and participation of a team of motivated Woodsiders then started in 2014 and the Phoenix Flyers were born. Efforts were focused towards the training, fundraising and then ultimately, the participation. For the next 3 years (2015, 2016 and 2017), different Phoenix Flyers teams continued the challenge focused towards changing the lives of children and their families blighted by burns. None of this would have been possible without a band of loyal supporters and fund raisers each year who helped maintain the momentum and commitment to deliver. The creativity demonstrated in the ways in which teams continually came up with new fund raising ideas was remarkable and at times very entertaining! So many individuals have participated in so many ways to make this such a remarkable success story.

Witnessing these efforts and the results has been a humbling and heart-warming experience for us all, and I am incredibly proud of what these individuals, with Woodside's support, have accomplished. We set out in 2014 to make a difference and leave a footprint. What has been accomplished in the past 4 years has wildly exceeded all expectations and the Phoenix Flyers (2014-2017) and the many supporters should take personal pride in the knowledge that the children supported by the Phoenix Burns Project will benefit from their efforts for years to come.

Well done and my heartfelt thanks!

Phil Loader



A Memory from the 2017 Challenge

After the 2017 Hike and Bike Event bus departed the hospital following the last Saturday morning team visit, the hospital Communications Officer told us an eye-watering story of one of the older children in the ward with bad facial scars, who could not speak English, and who didn't quite understand who all these visitors were. He was embarrassed by his appearance and kept a low profile during the visit.

After the visitors left, he asked the hospital official in Afrikaans who all those people were. When the official told him that these visitors came from all over the world, that they had hiked and biked 400km for burns, and had just donated a laser that would be used to treat him to improve his scarring, his reaction was: "These people came from all over the world to help **ME**? This new machine is for **ME**?" And he started crying with joy.

Peter Martinez
(Phoenix Burns Project)



This is why we do it . . .



Fire ruins in a Township



Fire Prevention Workshop



Devastating Fires



Fire Safety Education





Family Support & Rehabilitation Group



Burns awareness & prevention training



Birthday party in the Red Cross Hospital



Donated Laser



Presentation by riders to the Red Cross Hospital Staff

A seven year journey in support of badly burned children of South Africa

Action for Burns and Children (ABC), formed in 2009 by Cripps Sears & Partners have experienced a remarkable 7-year journey. Woodside joined ABC in 2014 and have been wonderful supporters and participants for the past 4 years.

Together the organisations have reached extraordinary milestones in their mission to bring hope and medical excellence to children badly affected and deeply scarred both by the horrors of shack fires and by hot liquid scalds, mainly from within the townships in South Africa.

When introduced to the burned children in the burn unit of the Red Cross Memorial Hospital it was evident how much support was needed to help these children try and recover from their horrific injuries. The challenge was on!

Over the past few years, teams of intrepid hikers and bikers have encompassed a host of highs and lows while participating in an annual 400km Challenge along the Garden Route in aid of the Phoenix Burn Project, Cape Town which works alongside the Red Cross Burns Unit.

The ABC Charity Challenge with the support and unbridled enthusiasm of Woodside's Phoenix Flyers has also embraced other corporate teams along the way. These include Total Oil, Schlumberger, Wood Mackenzie, the European Burns Association (the EBA) and Cripps Sears & Partners.

The ABC – Cripps Sears & Partners' Challenge is hugely grateful to Woodside particularly, but also to the other sponsoring companies for their ongoing and committed approach, and looks forward to a long and successful partnership in seeking to overcome the great challenges in Africa in the areas of fire and burns prevention for children and their families.



Carolyn Cripps
(Action for Burns & Children)



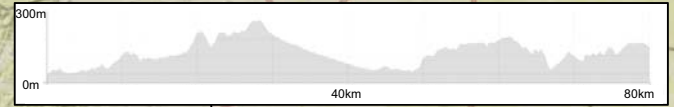
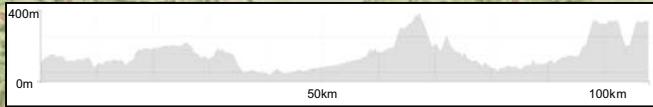
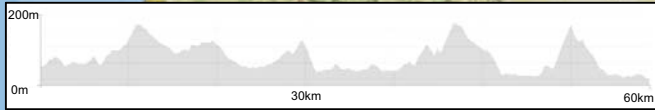
Phoenix Burns Project

The Phoenix Burns Project was formally established in 2006 in response to the devastating physical and social consequences of burn injuries on children in the Western Cape of South Africa. Phoenix serves burn survivors by helping to facilitate their physical and social rehabilitation, by advocacy on their behalf, and by raising awareness of their challenges. Phoenix is also contributing to burn prevention initiatives. Phoenix has a team of committed and highly specialized volunteers, drawing from fields as diverse as medicine, public health, business, media, marketing, academia and youth work. They are backed up by a large Board of Advisors comprising eminent persons whose broad experience and expertise the volunteer committee and body can draw from.

Many young burns survivors are lost to follow-up treatment for a variety of reasons, and this compromises their recovery process. Phoenix aims to support the follow-up care of young burns survivors and their reintegration into normal life, a process that can take years, through close cooperation with the Burns Unit at Red Cross Children's Hospital, where most serious pediatric burns in Western Cape are treated.

In order to deliver the full spectrum of support services to burns survivors, Phoenix has a long term goal to establish a dedicated Burns Rehabilitation Centre for children. This centre will cooperate closely with the burns units in local hospitals to provide a stepping stone between hospital and the community for child burns survivors and their care givers.

ABC Bike and Hike Cycle Route



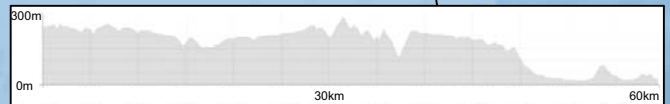
Day 5 - 70 km
Simons Town to Camps Bay

Day 3 - 100 km
Albertina to Honeywood Farm

Day 2 - 80 km
Hartenbos to Albertina

Day 1 - 65 km
George to Hartenbos

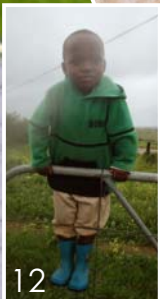
Day 4 - 60 km
Honeywood Farm to Malagas



2014 - Day 1



"Day 1 was summarised by beautiful scenery, tough climbs, and fun, fast descents."



George to Mossell Bay

Distance - 85km
Elevation gain - 925m
Stacks - 3

Today saw the first day of riding, and we covered 85km on undulating muddy dirt roads surrounded by amazing scenery. The weather forecast was bad and let's just say the weather man was correct. The special thing about mountain biking is that when it's wet and cold, it is perfect, with all of the riders starting the day, clean, dry and happy and ending the day covered in mud from head to toe, wet and even happier.

Many of us came thinking that seeing famous African animals was simply a pipe dream but unlike the weather man we were wrong! In just one day, we saw the first of the big 5, a water buffalo as well as zebras, waterbuck, wildebeest, eland, impala, bontebok, guinea-fowl, and last but not least, FLAMINGOES.

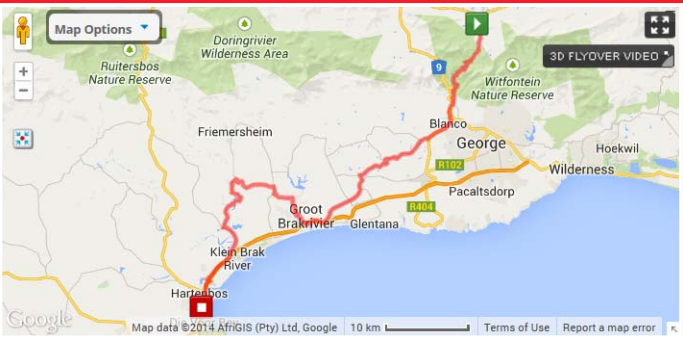
Who would have thought that zebras could be so dangerous? Fiona and Catherine found out just how unpredictable and wild they can be. As they were descending down a steep muddy road, a herd of 4 zebra decided to cross the road just metres in front of Fiona, before proceeding to jump over a fence and run hell for leather to chase Catherine! Catherine was surrounded on all sides, but luckily managed to escape and evade. Both were a little shaken, but miraculously throughout the ordeal managed to stay on their bikes. Others were not so lucky...

Day one saw three crashes with Catherine opening the account before Conrad and Barry were also overwhelmed by the forces of gravity.

Conrad made contact with the ground while ascending up a pretty decent climb. While all of us were crawling up the hill at 3km/hr, one of us, who shall not be named, heard a very loud, high pitched (girly) squeal, followed by a fairly substantial smash into the bushes. Unlucky for him, he forgot how to clip his shoes out of his pedals – but lucky for us, we had someone on hand with quick reflexes to snap the moment.

Barry encountered difficulties staying rubber side down whilst attempting a creek crossing. His previous career as a ballet dancer saw him in good stead as he executed a perfect reverse pirouette into the river, saving his camera from a good soaking. Tears were eventually replaced by a look of steely determination as he waded his bike to the safety of the far bank, with only grazed knees and a grazed ego.

Day 1 was summarised by beautiful scenery, tough climbs, and fun, fast descents.



2014 - Day 2

"Today's river crossing was long and deep. Even the privileged few that managed to stay rubber side down had wet feet by the time they reached the far bank."



Hartenbos to Albertinia

Distance - 75km
Elevation gain - 894m
Stacks - 1

Day 2 was a hard and sweaty 75km. Unlike the sideways rain and mud laced roads with zebra dung of yesterday, today saw blue skies and sunshine. Filth streaked grimaces gave way to red faces, excessive sweating and the craving for electrolytes. A poor clothing choice by Catherine meant a mid-morning outfit change from full-length pants to hot pants. See the elevation profile below for the evidence of how challenging today was.

Extremes in environments from mountain climbs and treacherous river crossings, to near impossible beach traverses left riders both challenged and entertained.

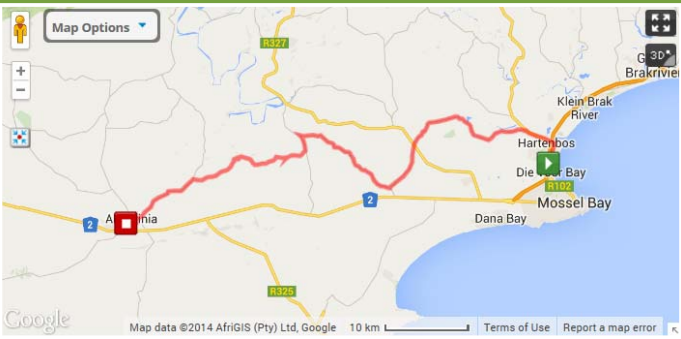
Today's river crossing was long and deep. Even the privileged few that managed to stay rubber side down had wet feet by the time they reached the far bank. Deep, fast running water and slippery rocks proved a recipe for disaster, with Manish promptly serving himself up a snack of face plant pie. Unfortunately for him, though lucky for us, he stayed submerged long enough for waiting cameras to capture his moment of shame for all eternity. Thanks Manish.

Dave today gets a special mention. He has now earned himself the title of "road runner". Unlike the rest of us slogging up the hills, Dave has mastered the act of cruising up behind everyone and yelling "BEEP BEEP" while casually riding through. Unfortunate for Dave however, his skills aren't as easily transferred in the sand traverses as he had two stacks, both within the space of about 3 minutes.

The afternoon saw mechanicals a plenty. Crossing a free-range game farm ****gulp**** laced with Devils Thorns meant the downfall of many a tubeless tyre. Unfortunately for the recipients of this dastardly flora, the only remedy was to pedal faster. The sealant in the tyres needs the wheel to turn in order to seal the holes from the thorns. The steep ascent following the game park meant many of the flyers had to live up to their namesake. Unfortunately some couldn't quite cut it, Barry had to roll in to lunch on just wheel rims and cramping legs.

We had many new animal encounters again today. The major ones including ostriches and baby ostriches running closely behind, a baby tortoise, porcupines (or at least the quills of a terrified porcupine), terrifying bumble bees who made a bee-line for Catherine, weaver birds and blue cranes. Slowly throughout the ride we are learning more and more about everyone's riding style, and one unfortunate trait is that the baby tortoise is probably faster up the hills than some of the riders (*cough Conrad and Fiona *cough)...

The day finished with double dropping magnesium pills, nik-naks, and Amstel (carb loading).



2014 - Day 3

"A relentless 7km climb with some sections greater than 12 degrees, the lungs, legs and emotion were running hot."



Albertinia to Honeywood Farm

Distance - 95km, 7 hours riding
Elevation gain - 1199m
Stacks - 0

Elevation shown below.

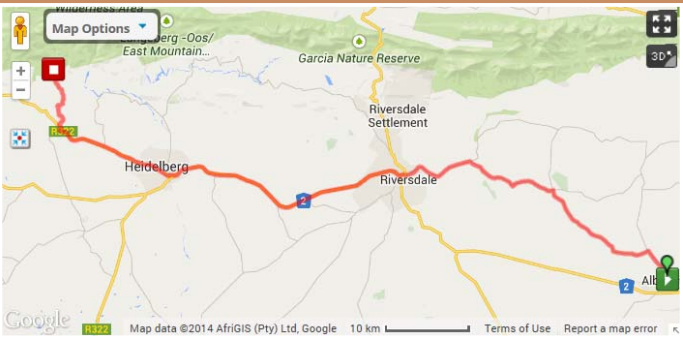
Absolutely shattered and too tired to blog. Will update on the day tomorrow. THE END.

While on the 95km crawl, we came across a group of kids coming home from school. During our rides, we are really starting to get some perspective about the local towns and the hardship families go through. The kids we saw were walking home in the heat of the day without shoes. As we didn't really need the extra bag of chocolate, jellybeans or energy bars, we gave all the goodies we had to the kids. They were all so grateful with smiles from ear to ear, and even a bit mischievous. After giving over a melted snickers to one of the happiest kids I've ever seen – he then quickly snuck it in his pocket and pointed at the crumpled up muesli bar in our bags. There could have been some very energized kids that night.

A man that we have to thank is Sele, the support driver. He manages to find what must be the only place in South Africa that is out of the elements that we are facing that day, be it driving rain, gale-force winds or searing heat just as people cannot turn their pedals around another rotation with a smorgasbord of energy drinks, power bars, lollies and Sele's specialty “Brown Cow” a combination of Coke and milk.

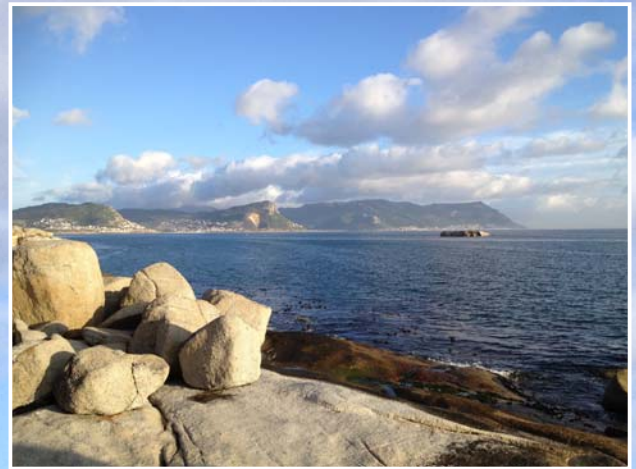
After 88km of a 95km day most people would be thinking that they have broken the back of it, but in the case of day 3, the day had really just begun. A relentless 7km climb with some sections greater than 12 degrees, the lungs, legs and emotion were running hot. Dave the hill climbing expert was even sucking in the big ones. It is safe to say that he didn't need to say BEEP BEEP as he passed people on the way up because you could hear him coming from 50m behind breathing like a steam train. The climb was heart breaking as you could see the other riders up the hill, kilometers ahead. A flat tyre when you are already at breaking point is enough to bring even the toughest flyer to tears, Fiona managed to hold it together though and grind her bike to the top.

Congratulations to Matt for having enough time to ride to the nights lodging, wait, realise no one was there, and then ride back to the top of the hill again.... (he has way too much energy!)



CLIMB DETAILS					Learn About Climb Ratings	Download Data
Rating	Start/End Points	Length	Start/End Elevation	Avg Grade		
1	9.21 km/19.72 km	10.51 km	156 m/273 m	1.1%		
1	23.33 km/25.83 km	2.50 km	184 m/251 m	2.7%		
1	37.44 km/44.15 km	6.71 km	105 m/236 m	2.0%		
1	68.98 km/90.71 km	21.73 km	76 m/447 m	1.7%		

2014 - Day 4



"Waking up at the picturesque Honeywood farm we enjoyed a home cooked breakfast while looking at the endless views across the valley."



Honeywood Farm to Malagas

Distance - 55km
Elevation gain - 666m
Stacks - 0

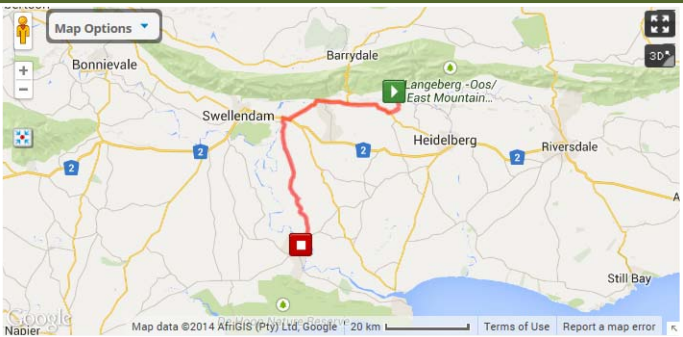
Waking up at the picturesque Honeywood farm we enjoyed a home cooked breakfast while looking at the endless views across the valley. Morale was high after the energy sapping 95km+ from the day before.

We left Honeywood and charged down the road as a powerful peloton covering the first 20km in 40mins. From here on the day got much tougher with strong head winds blowing everyone in the wrong direction, leaving riders desperate to find a wheel to hide behind. The 250km over the last 3 days have started to take a toll and many of us were well and truly in the hurt locker.

Conrad was having a tough day on the bike, but a friend in need is a friend indeed and the 50kg Catherine had no problem pushing the 115kg Conrad up one of the climbs. Her diet of spinach and energy gels is starting to pay off.

The final hurdle to cross was a pontoon crossing of a river. The pontoon was heavily laden with riders, bikes, and our support vehicle and powered old-school style by two burly locals pulling on a chain. The combination of the slow lumbering pace of the crossing and the promise of ice-cold alcoholic refreshments on the far bank proved too much for some. Matt and Lex ended up strapping on harnesses and giving the workers a much needed helping hand. So selfless.

Today's 55km proved to be far tougher than the label and fatigue has started to set in, after being battered by head winds all day, to the point you had to pedal on the descents. Today left the riders, tired, sore and looking for cover. A welcome sight at the finish line however – was PENGUINS. Some even braved the freezing cold ocean water (Matt & Lex) to get a close encounter to the cute little beasts.

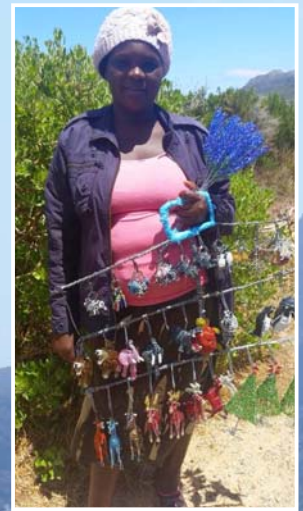


CLIMB DETAILS				
Learn About Climb Ratings	Download Data			
Rating	Start/End Points	Length	Start/End Elevation	Avg Grade
1	34.26 km/38.97 km	4.71 km	69 m/120 m	1.1%
1	40.98 km/43.28 km	2.30 km	77 m/137 m	2.6%
1	54.30 km/56.11 km	1.80 km	64 m/116 m	2.9%
1	57.61 km/59.71 km	2.10 km	84 m/152 m	3.2%



2014 - Day 5

"We have all been so privileged to be able to travel through such beautiful parts of South Africa on wheels, and this last day was a fantastic way to end the bike-riding journey."



Boulders Beach to Camps Bay

Distance - 70km
Elevation gain - 1460m
Stacks - 0

Our last day! After dragging ourselves away from the tiny penguins, we started our last ride, with extremely sore legs, along the beautiful South African coastline.

When we thought that day 4 winds were strong, we hadn't seen anything yet! While riding along the coast, the winds were so strong that some of us were being thrown around like twiglets, and even got knocked off our bikes. It was no match for our legs however, which are now well-oiled machines and we all reached the peak of Chapman's Peak in high spirits.

The final day showed us no mercy, with 3 serious peaks in between the finish line and us (and an ice cold beverage).

Hydration has been a key part of our regime throughout the trip, and the SCEE water bottles as well as jellybeans got us all through some tough and dark times on the ride. Unfortunately for the water bottles however, due to the tough terrain and weather extremes, they aren't looking as white and sparkly as when they first started!

To distract us while climbing the beautiful roadside cliffs, we couldn't resist the local crafts. While Catherine used some local knowledge to pick up a bargain of a zebra, Fiona paid double and then some for her animals, realized she had absolutely no bargaining skills, and was easily swayed into purchasing more than she actually wanted. Some pretty cool purchases regardless!

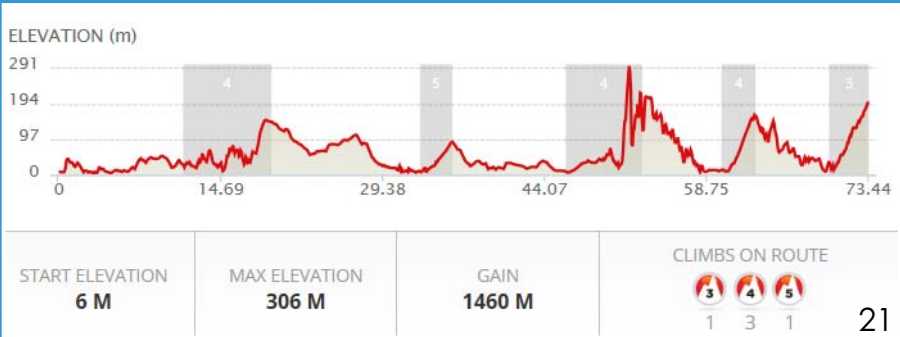
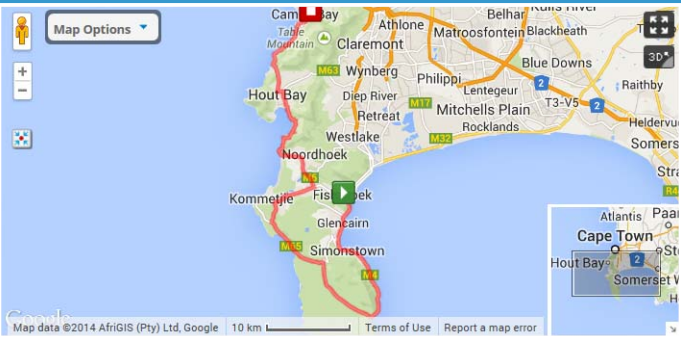
Someone that I think needs a special mention on this trip is Serena. Not only has she been our rock and captain throughout this 12-month experience, she also managed to pull an absolute magic trick out of the bag. Serena was only able to do 2 weeks of training before coming on the ride and while telling all of us that she would be "at the back of the pack, a slow Sally, and puffing all the way"....NONE OF THESE THINGS WERE TRUE! Each and every day, Serena smashed the rides without even breaking a sweat. She was also a really fantastic coach and mentor to Fiona and Catherine, teaching them the do's and don'ts of butt cream application, as well as supplying us with multiple carbo shots to keep our energy levels up.

Barry the ninja has also been a solid rock throughout the bike ride. He has proven that he, like Matt, has far too much energy. Even though we all finished the bike ride on Friday in ruins and exhausted, Barry had already signed himself up for another competition the following Sunday. How he does it, none of us know...

Now for some sad news. Throughout this whole bike ride, an animal that we were all so excited to see was a baboon. When we first arrived we were assured that we would see baboons everywhere, the signs throughout the roads also gave us high hopes that we would see some of the cheeky monkeys. Yet, throughout the 5-day of bike riding, we saw no baboons :(

The ride has been a real mix of extreme emotions, with so many highs and lows mixed in with a lot of muscle cramps and sore knees. We have all been so privileged to be able to travel through such beautiful parts of South Africa on wheels, and this last day was a fantastic way to end the bike-riding journey.

Although a lot of us are feeling extremely tired and exhausted at the moment, it is nothing compared to the hardship that some families in the local townships have been through. The day after we finished the bike ride we went to visit the Red Cross Hospital where the child burns victims are treated. This was such a humbling experience and something truly life changing.





Whiskey Master Class



Auction



Tasting



Competition



Cricket



Foosball Cup



Donated Teddies



Peak in a Week



Cake Sale



Sausage Sizzles



Locals

2014 - Fundraising

Whiskey Master Class - \$4,410



This idea started as a simple whiskey tasting at the new Perth CBD Whopper Snapper Distillery, then grew into a fully catered meal, whiskey and auction to increase the fundraising potential.

At \$200pp the entry price was a bit of a hurdle but we eventually sold enough tickets to make it worthwhile. Saxon Piggott and his army of helpers delivered a fantastic evening, with sales from the charity auction supplementing the ticket sales.

Explormazing - \$2,000



Six teams of enthusiastic explorers spent a day in Fremantle completing a series of treasure hunt challenges in a bid to win the noble title of 'Explorers of the Year' whilst raising a very impressive \$2,000.



Chocolate Sales - \$4,530



With a large marketing team and great coverage through a number of Woodside floors the Phoenix Flyers managed to ensure everyone got their daily sugar intake.

This was worked off through the team carrying the change down the terrace to be banked.

Sausage Sizzles - \$2,000



Sausage Sizzles were one of the top fund raisers for 2014, with a total amount of \$2000 raised throughout the campaign.

Numerous efforts from the team members in continual chopping of onions with wet eyes, BBQ'ing in hot sun and cold/rainy weather and above all involvement of families and friends.

However, all this effort was worthwhile after we saw the smiles on the faces of kids, silently saying THANK YOU.

Total Raised - \$80,608

Peak in a Week - \$3,050

Cycled the equivalent vertical height of Mt Everest (8900m) in 4 days (235 laps on the Mount Street).



2014 - Testimonials

Catherine Cregan



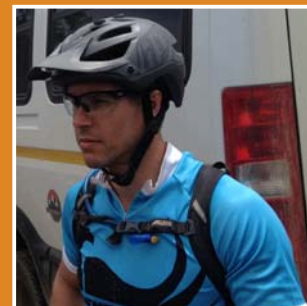
"A truly rewarding, renewing, replenishing and resetting life experience. It was such an energetic, exciting and emotional journey from the very start of the fundraising down to the last minute visiting the beautiful children in the Red Cross hospital after the epic bike ride through South Africa.

The ABC Bike Challenge experience for me, was a positive life altering one and one that I will take with me through life." - *Catherine Cregan*

"The strength and resilience of the injured children and their families was something I will never forget.

From the pure exhilaration of cycling through amazing landscapes, to the overwhelming empathy and admiration of the Red Cross Hospital, this was a humbling and very inspiring experience not to be missed." - *Matt Griggs*

Matt Griggs



Dave Tapley



"This is an experience not to be missed. If you have the opportunity to participate my advice is to grab it with both hands. You will learn about different cultures and people and help make a difference to someone less fortunate than your self.

The whole trip was great fun from beginning to end – there were a few challenging bits (involving rain, mud, hills and/or wind) but they quickly passed. The bike riding is organized by professionals and we felt safe and supported the whole way." - *Dave Tapley*

Barry Beasley



"Having previously lived and grown up in South Africa this was a great opportunity to contribute to a worthy cause.

While the ride, views and team were incredible the chance to represent the many people that had provided their support and being able to pass that on was a priceless experience." - *Barry Beasley*

"Spectacular scenery, wind and rain on the ride and an awesome display of team work - second to none.

Kids in Township make do with what they have, little girls playing games with little stones (throwing one up in the air and removing as many stones as they can from the circle and then putting them back in again) and boys running around with planks in tyres.

Although rough circumstances, quite a few smiles and people very welcoming. Great Team!" - *Conrad Steyn*

Conrad Steyn



Jason Attard



"Overall the experience was fantastic, I loved the variation in the weather, the hills, the views and even the headwinds. It was great to do it with this bunch, I can't recall one disagreement for the entire trip!"

"The residents of the Langa township were happy and seemed very welcoming to all of us. As we were being shown around by a local resident, our visit connected us directly with the income we would bring to the stops along the way. The kids were happy and active, and there were lots of them. The best part was the dancing girls and boys, they really enjoyed dancing for us and it was great to see the African Style they had retained.

The most confronting stop however was the little shack the beer was made and drank in. Earlier that morning we were told of the issues the communities face with alcoholism, and this being a major contributor to a side of what we had seen in the hospital that morning. I found this confronting as it seemed to be the major pastime of a lot of the males in the township." - *Jason Attard*

2014 - Testimonials

Manish Agarwal



"Gratification!! That's how I will describe my journey.

When I started building up on the idea of riding 400km in rough terrains of SA, motivation was low as I could vaguely relate to the cause.

After completion of the ride and striding towards the children's hospital beds, I realized the true objective and value behind Phil's speech at the start of the journey.

Was our contribution strong enough to support the young kids? Is not the question. It matters how we got connected to the great cause by becoming a small molecule in a large galaxy.

If I have a chance again, I will do it again to fulfill my life goal." - Manish Agarwal

"I had been nervous about the trip for months. I wasn't worried about the riding, but the hospital visit. Some people are scared of heights or spiders in my case I am scared of being burnt. After visiting the Langa township it became obvious why child burn rates were so high, with beds sitting under or adjacent to stoves.

At the hospital we meet a young boy, just a baby with severe burns. He was a tough little fella but was clearly scared and in pain. His mum sat beside him and had been sleeping on the hospital chair for days. She had lost every possession but still had her baby and that was all she was worried about. We handed the boy some small soft toys which put a smile on his face but I watched his mother and she was even happier to see a smile on her little boys face.

Things started to make more sense and by now the nerves had gone away. When you have lost everything, every little thing counts, be it donations of clothes or toys, they do make a difference.

Like any job, surgery can only be done to the highest level with the right tools. With support of many others, Phoenix flyers is making a real difference in contributing to the purchasing of a laser machine. This machine, in the hands of the highly trained doctors, will be life changing for the individuals, families and communities it helps.

We walk into a hospital and have access to the latest and greatest technology but just as importantly support, others don't and that is why this cause is important." - Lex Simons

Lex Simons



Fiona High



" This was an experience that I have truly cherished. Not only did I achieve something I never thought my legs could, but I also got to see the real effect of how something we consider to be so small (a stuffed toy), can have such a great impact on kids who have grown up with the bare minimum.

After visiting the hospital and talking to the nurses, mothers, and the children themselves who were undergoing treatment – this really put everything into perspective and was a really touching moment to see that all of the hard work we have put in to raising funds has gone to a terrific cause." - Fiona High

"This experience has reached my senses in ways I never anticipated. The physical and mental challenges of 400km cycling was overshadowed by the team dynamics we shared, to seeing into the lives of children living in true poverty and the life-long effect and impact this has in their community.

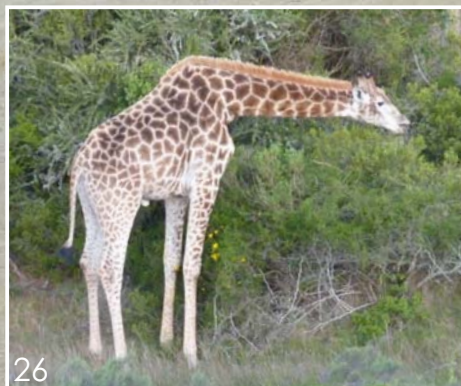
While the children we met in Langa township have no concept of opportunities outside a shanty-town life, they are bright, intelligent, creative and talented deserving children. It has been a privilege to be part of this experience - one that I cannot forget and hope to build on in some way in the future." - Serena Hone

Serena Hone



2015 - Day 1

"Winding our way through the farmland we were afforded dramatic views of the Outeniqua mountain range."



26



George to Hartenbos

Distance - 64km

Elevation gain - 650m

Stacks - 0

With the skies threatening rain we made our way out of George slowly getting out to the rural area where we made our first turn leading to the dirt roads that we will be apprehensively spending the next 5 days traversing! Winding our way through the farmland we were afforded dramatic cloud covered views of the Outeniqua Mountain range we were heading towards. The roads were still water logged from the previous 24 hours of rain which made passing traffic a mud bath hazard. Gradually the clouds began to part and the sun come out to warm us all prior to our first stop for the day.

Recent heavy rains meant that we bypassed river crossings, instead we took a gentle ride down the road between the game parks and got our first proper intake of the African wildlife such as zebras, wilder beast, buffalo, ostrich's and horses(...?) and a couple of giraffe off in the distance. Coming down off the hill we were on, the views opened up of Hartenbos and Mossell Bay with sweeping sea scapes before us, we had to slow our bikes down forcibly to take in the views.

The first wrong turn of the day saw a couple of eager beavers in front miss the turnoff for a short scenic tour down to the main road before correction by Sele. With what was thought all the 'hills' behind us the mood was positive as we trundled down the bitumen towards Hartenbos, lunch and a cold beer. But the road had other ideas and gave us a gruelling little unrelenting climb that took every last bit of effort from the peloton to make it over. A quick stop off for ice-creams was had by the leading group as they awaited the remaining riders before we rode down to the river and views of the ocean at our overnight accommodation, the Riviera. Awaiting us, lunch, beer and stunning views.

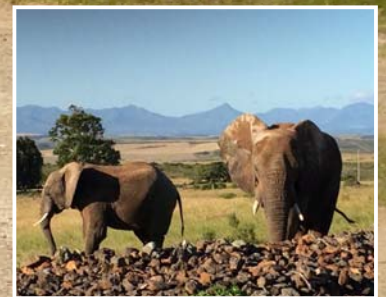
So we made it! 69km down on day 1 and a positive energy from the weary group. After a big 48 hours the energy levels were as low as the sunset and we enjoyed a traditional African spread for dinner time.



2015 - Day 2



"Onwards we rode, seeing all types of local wildlife."



Hartenbos to Garden Route Game Lodge

Distance - 80km

Elevation gain - 1224m

Stacks - 0

Waking up to the stunning beach view at the Riveria hotel in Hartenbos, the flyers made short work of breakfast before another tough day on our now trusty steeds. With our end destination in mind, one of the flyers decided to dress appropriately(?) for the day's riding in a safari suit. On the way to the first stop we amused ourselves with ostriches, a wheat field and of course the stunning views! We rolled into our first stop in relatively good time, where we were afforded a close up look of ostrich eggs.



We were afforded our first challenge for the day, a relentless climb up and over a ridge before we hit some bitumen and climbed higher into the foothills. Thankfully, the climbs subsided and our rewards were great views as we turned back off the main road and road past the entrance to Gondwana reserve. The peloton was really enjoying a fast descent but timing is everything in life and while we were enjoying our descent a baboon was seemingly enjoying stirring up a bees nest next to the road. Startled by the bikes he ran out onto the road followed by the swarm of bees that was subsequently ridden through by a pack of killer phoenix flyers. With arms flailing everywhere the rear guard of the peloton had thought the front runners had gone mad and begun some sort of African tribal dance, but alas they were soon also struck with African dancing fever. In the midst of the chaos, two flyers went down, but being swarmed by bees made short work of being on the ground and were up just as fast as they went down, running down the road. A few hundred metres on, we managed to break free from the bees and take stock of the situation. We had stings from head to toe with eyelids, ears, bellies and butts all bee-ing stung. The end death count of killer bikers vs swarm of bees: Flyers 0: Bees 37.

After collecting ourselves and having a good laugh about it all, thankful that no one was allergic, we buzzed off and made short work to get to the next stop to clean up. After recovering at the stop, we headed off again and towards our first river crossing of the trip. With the water flowing quite high, most crossed carrying their bikes bar two, one flyer rode across most of the river while another chivalrously carried a bike for another as the slippery rocks became somewhat perilous underfoot of a riding shoe for a fellow flyer. Some of the flyers took the opportunity for a quick dip in the river!

Stunning scenery continued until our lunch stop where we had the opportunity to attempt to dry our wet shoes and socks. We rode on and got to our steepest descent of the day, the flyers reformed and took off down the descent that was quite sketchy at times as the road was cut up. This did not stop a couple of flyers catching up to a ute that was making its way down the descent though! But alas what goes down must go up and we were soon climbing out of the valley over the final ridge before we made it to the back entrance of the game park to awaiting park rangers. On entry to the game park, we passed the lions (thankfully in a separate park section behind an electric fence) but these strange bike riding creatures began to pique their interest and they soon started paying some close attention to their potential prey. Onwards we rode, seeing all types of local wildlife with a highlight being a pack of baby ostriches running up the road in front of our vehicular escort following being abandoned by their parents who had fled for their own safety. We eventually rolled up to the Garden Route Game Park lodges and our accommodation for the night! Another epic day done and dusted, 70+ kms of excitement!

We quickly changed and bundled into cars to do a proper safari tour. We were afforded close up views from the comfort of the land cruisers of all the big animals such as rhino, giraffes, hippos, buffalo, lions, springbok etc.... After a quick warm up in front of the fire post tour, we enjoyed a dinner that included the choice of at least five animals, the picks being ostrich and eland steaks. With full bellies and weary bodies, the buzz had left the group and we disappeared for a hard earned rest!

2015 - Day 3

"We gathered at the bottom of the climb and with gritted teeth and a steely determination to do justice for all our philanthropists who have donated to this challenge, we set off."



Garden Route Game Lodge to Honeywood Farm

Distance - 100km

Elevation gain - 1600m

Stacks - 0

We woke up to stunning views of a game park and watched the sun set atop a hill, 100km away with 1500 gruelling metres riding up hills and some exhilarating down hill.

We made good time riding out through the township of Albertinia and into the surrounding farming land, our path taking us through rolling hills covered in crops. We hit our straps and were soon barrelling our way closer to the Langeberg Mountain Range, the halfway point just outside of Riversdale. We made quick time through town and were rewarded at the Die Kwekery Cafe with \$2 thick shakes packed full of much needed energy for the second half of the ride!

As the day heated up, shade was at a premium as we got ever closer towards the foothills and our first hill for the day, a long bumpy ride up a bush track posing for some thigh and heart straining efforts from the flyers as we muscled all our thick shake energy to pull ourselves up some of the more steep kick ups in the climb. Following the big effort, we enjoyed a barrelling ride down a steep descent that ended in a stop at a stream crossing. Welcome relief from the heat of the day the flyers made the most of the cooling water and a much needed recovery stop.

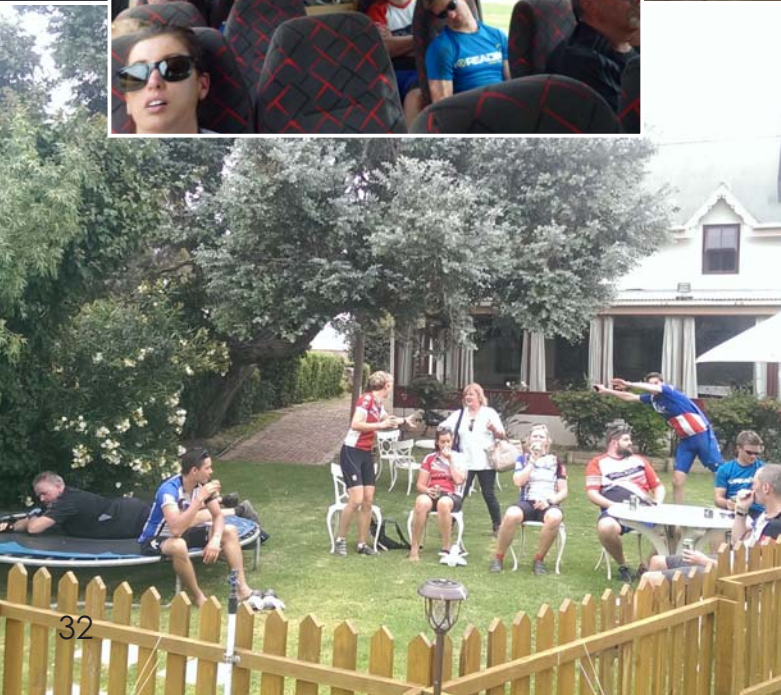
Knowing what was to come, there was a sense of nervous energy amongst the now tiring flyers as we made our way to the beginning of our final ascent to Honeywood Farm. We gathered at the bottom of the climb and with gritted teeth and a steely determination to do justice for all our philanthropists who have donated to this challenge, we set off. Soon, the crunching of gears, the beating of hearts and the occasional profanity could be heard up and down the slope as each flyer dug into their reserves and took their individual journey up the final ascent. A special mention for one flyer who got up the hills with a dicky knee, a knock-on from the infamous bee incident of the previous day. Once all were at the top, we had a moment of reflection and absorbing the breathtaking views before turning our minds to riding on into the welcoming committee at Honeywood Farm.

A well earned rest was enjoyed from the front of the farmhouse with expansive views of the valleys, rolling hills and Langeberg Mountains! Our prize for the day on top of a sense of collective achievement was an unbelievable sunset with colours changing endlessly in the expansive landscape. We then enjoyed the hospitality of our hosts at Honeywood Farm who had cooked up a storm in open wood BBQs. A fitting end to an exhausting day.



2015 - Day 4

"The first half of the journey resulted in a mostly quiet bus with the odd snore here and the odd drool there."



Honeywood Farm to Simon's Town

Distance - 60km

Elevation gain - 600m

Water temperature - 16°C

Burns - 1

Stacks - 0

Having slept like hibernating bears after the gruelling day 3, the Flyers were once again spoiled with the Honeywood Farm hospitality at breakfast that included tasting their own farm made honey, scrumptious! When we were handed our direction and profile cards for the day, elation set in with only 55 clicks to ride.

A few kilometres up the road and a short stint on the bitumen, the Flyers picked up the pace with a large leading group putting the hammer down. The pace was going strong with the group pushing hard to the start of a small climb, alas, as we crested the climb a beeping and flashing support bus approached us from the rear to inform us we had missed our turn off! A fun little team time trial for those involved, despite the moaning as we made our way back down the road.

The day was filled with rolling ups and downs, multiple dust sandwiches from passing grain trucks and some oppressive heat. Despite this, we were soon gathered at the river bank awaiting a hand pulled pontoon to make the crossing to get to the Malagas Hotel. With the promise of beer on the other side of the river the Flyers lent a few bodies to the two man crew who were pulling the pontoon to make the crossing in record time.

After recovery beers and lunch on the back lawn area of the pub, we piled into the bus for a 250km journey to our overnight stop in Boulders Bay, home of the African penguin. The first half of the journey resulted in a mostly quiet bus with the odd snore here and the odd drool there.

For the second half we were afforded spectacular coastal views as we made our way down the peninsula and reached our final destination in high spirits checking out the local wildlife before being treated to a delicious meal overlooking False Bay and the mountainous peninsula.



2015 - Day 5

"Riding up Chapmans Peak was simply amazing and words cannot do this spectacular piece of bitumen with expansive views justice."



Boulders Beach to Cape Town

Distance - 69km

Elevation gain - 804m

Stacks - 0



We left the “eeew awwwing” African penguins behind us and climbed up away from Boulders Beach to spectacular views across False Bay. We turned into the wind as we cut through the heart of the cape and started to head north towards Scarborough. Some exceptional team work was required by the Flyers with stronger riders [Ed.: or those that weighed more] becoming wind breaks for those struggling to push up into the wind. The slow climb towards Kommetjie gave some exceptional views, and as we rounded the corner heading downhill there was an extraordinarily strong gust that gave the feeling of being buffeted backwards up the hill. A regroup in the township and the Flyers formed a full peloton, demonstrating exceptional teamwork with stronger Flyers taking the brunt of the wind as we headed for a refuel stop just prior to the climb to Chapmans Peak. The kind of teamwork that is built on a foundation of 5 days of cycling together.

Riding up Chapmans Peak was simply amazing and words cannot do this spectacular piece of bitumen with expansive views justice. Needless to say, the non-stop views meant that riding up a hill was nowhere near the front of the mind as the eyes were focused on the scenery. If you are going to ride or drive one road in Cape Town this is highly recommended just for the sheer enjoyment! We made our way into Hout Bay for a lunch stop while looking back across the bay to the unbelievable road we had just traversed.

We remounted for the final adventure and turned towards our final challenge: Suikerbossie Hill. From the crest we had excellent views back on the coast looking down at Llandudno Beach and the small beachside community. After a cheeky coffee stop we made our final short run to the unofficial finishing location at a beachside hotel where we met the hikers who had been on their own adventure up and down Table Mountain. We had made it and after much congratulations and reflections on our wonderful journey as the Phoenix Flyers.



We finished! All in one piece and as a cohesive Phoenix Flyers team. Sad to say that 5 days of riding across amazing South African country side from George to Cape Town has come to the end but proud as punch as a collective team for the funds raised and making it safely and in good spirits to the end of our challenge.

Phoenix Flyers!
Aka finishers!

2015



African Bike Safari



Sausage Sizzle



Bring it on!



Teddies

Anything from African Bike Safaris, Bake-offs, Champagne Appreciation Afternoons, Trivia Nights and everything in between, it was on for young and old and a good time had by all.

Total Raised
\$71,976.23



Red Cross Hospital



Bake-off



2015 - Testimonials

Erica Gundersen



"Visiting the Red Cross Children's Hospital burns unit in Cape town was a life changing experience. It was incredibly humbling to meet children that had been through so much suffering and still had big smiles on their faces.

It was a great feeling to be able to help these brave children with our fundraising efforts. I'd do it again in a heartbeat! - *Erica Gundersen*

Travelling across the landscape of South Africa, and meeting children and staff of the Phoenix Burns Unit in Cape Town, was a unique and humbling experience.

Killer bees, baboons and ostriches were an added bonus." - *Dan Crosby*

Dan Crosby



Mike Hanlin



"A breathtaking and very rewarding experience from start to finish that created a dynamic team atmosphere through our shared experiences, the good and the bad!" - *Mike Hanlin*

"When I heard that the burns hospital laser was purchased after 4 years of fundraising and effort, I felt immense pride for being part of it.

It was such a beautiful ride through the country side. Remarkable views with a bunch of remarkable people. It was very easy to cast aside 5 days of exhaustive riding during the hospital visit. Seeing the smiling, shy faces of the kiddies with burns is something I will never forget. Hopefully we have been able to make their lives better as they certainly made mine better with their will and strength to recover." - *Aaron Day*

Aaron Day



Linden Blair



"The Phoenix Flyers challenge was an amazing experience on every level.

The cause, the fundraising, the team and the ride were all exceptional and I feel privileged to have been a part of the group. - *Linden Blair*

I am so incredibly lucky and grateful to have been given this opportunity to partake in this incredible journey. A truly remarkable experience that I will never forget.

I cannot change the world but together we can make the biggest difference. To build a child we can build a nation." - *Natalie Oakley*

"What an amazing experience! As a team, we pulled together to raise funds for this amazing cause; and the team bond was further strengthened during the ride.

Natalie Oakley



Holly Thomas



On visiting the hospital it really brought home what a worthwhile cause we were supporting. This bike ride was one of the toughest things I've done. We saw a beautiful area of South Africa with wonderful guides.

I found myself riding along with a massive smile and appreciating every minute and it was easy not to notice the distance with the fantastic scenery. Just occasionally I had to dig deep to overcome difficult climbs and steep descents, all of which I managed, and all of which made me proud." - *Holly Thomas*

"Being part of the Phoenix Flyers was the best experience of my life. The ride itself was challenging both physically and mentally. The scenery and people were beautiful and I could not think of a better cause to ride for." - *Richard Byrne*

Richard Byrne



2016 - Day 1



"This was an eventful day as punctured tyres, broken chains and gearing issues stung many members of the group."

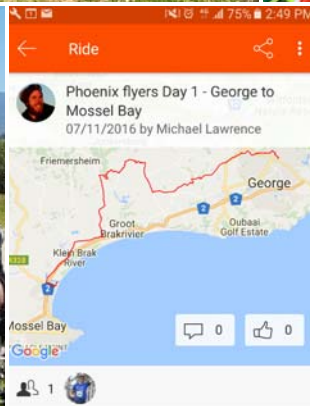
George to Mossel Bay

Distance - 63km
Elevation gain - 622m

After a long drive for many and a couple of days of sightseeing for others, we all nervously geared up for the initial day of riding.

To start our ride, we headed out as a large peloton from George to Mossel Bay (65km). As we all broke in our bicycles, some in a more literal way than others, we soaked up the new scenery.

This was an eventful day as punctured tyres, broken chains and gearing issues stung many members of the group. By mid-afternoon these issues had subsided as we entered the last hill climb to our spectacular waterfront accommodation.



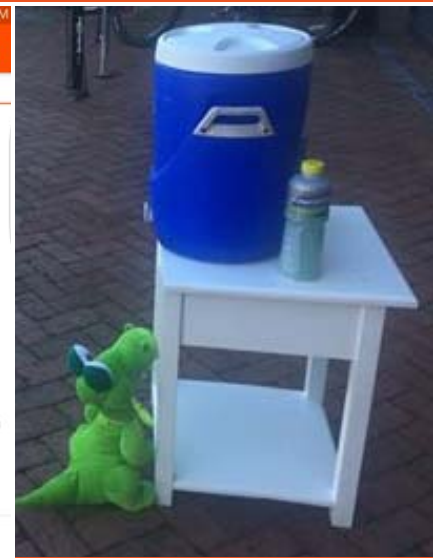
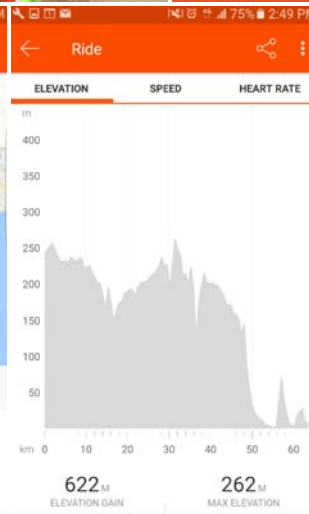
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MOVING TIME

63.4 KM
DISTANCE

10.9 KM/H
AVG SPEED

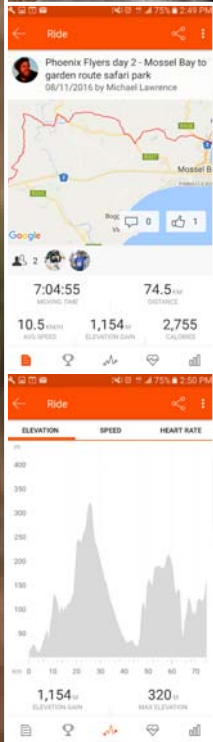
622 M
ELEVATION GAIN

1,776
CALORIES



2016 - Day 2

"At this point, the challenge ahead and the mutual pain we shared was beginning to form a bond between the team that only blossoms in times of physical stress."



Mossel Bay to Albertinia

Distance - 75km

Elevation gain - 1154m

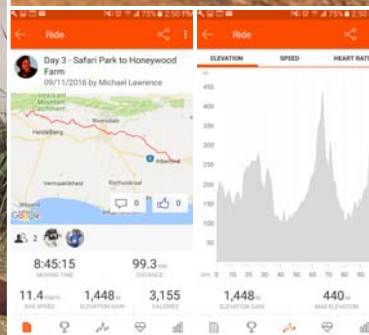
We headed off on what I consider to be the hardest day. It may have not been the most technical day or even the longest day, but psychologically this was always going to be the hardest day. This was the day of physical shock, that day that our bodies wonder why they are experiencing dejavu and our muscles protest at the lack of recovery time. Nonetheless, off we went on yet another spectacular day of riding in lovely mild temperatures.

At this point the challenge ahead and the mutual pain we shared was beginning to form a bond between the team that only blossoms in times of physical stress. This bond and the notion of being devoured by onlooking lions along the last 4km of track were what urged us along to the game lodge on day two. With great delight we were all treated to an evening game drive in the safety of one of the lodge's four wheel drives.

2016 - Day 3



"We were lead through many changing environments, beautiful snack stops, large open vistas and sharp, winding tracks."



Albertinia to Honeywood Farm

Distance - 99km

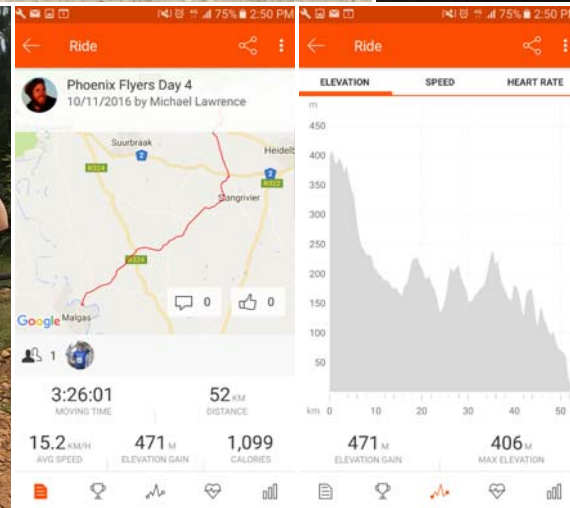
Elevation gain - 1448m

We were all prepared for this day. This is the day we were told, that makes people cry. We did not cry and all involved were surprisingly upbeat, but it was long. We were lead through many changing environments, beautiful snack stops, large open vistas and sharp, winding tracks. The final hill was very steep and oh so long. I remember stuffing my face full of sugary snacks at the last stop, half in nervousness and half in the hope that my sugar-fuelled muscles would gain a new lease on life. As we all approached the final hill and took on its lower reaches, I found solace in offering strained yet positive phrases of encouragement. This saw myself and my final riding companion for the day, Andy from Schlumberger, up and over the hill, gifting us the adrenaline needed to soar down the driveway of Honeywood Farm to a cheering crowd.

2016 - Day 4



"Ending our ride, we were offered a sprinkle of rain and delightful pontoon ride to get us, the van and our bicycles, across the river."



Honeywood Farm to Fish Hoek

Distance - 55km
Elevation gain - 471m

It's only 55km! This is what we said as we looked on to day four, at dinner on Wednesday night. Oh how far we had come. We were done by lunch after a large collection of undulating hills and as always, spectacular views.

We beat the van to the first pit stop, so cycled on to meet it at the next. Ending our ride, we were offered a sprinkle of rain and a delightful pontoon ride to get us, the van and our bicycles, across the river.

2016 - Day 5

"It was a truly humbling experience for all involved."



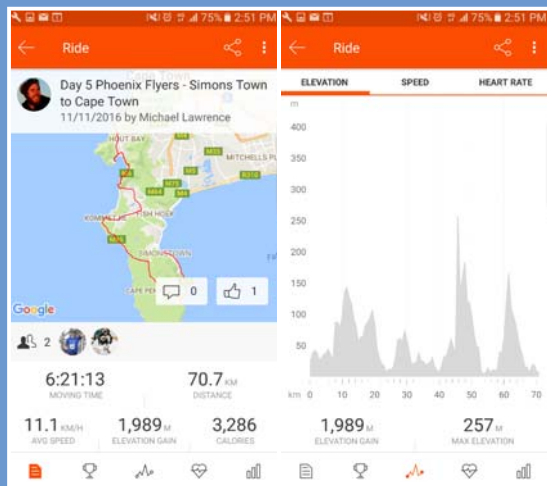
Fish Hoek to Camps Bay

Distance - 70km
Elevation gain - 1989m

After a long drive the previous afternoon we were up bright and early in the knowledge that the final day would be on tarmac, with three large hills to conquer and a little head wind to greet us heading out of Simon's town. To counter the head wind we were treated to spectacular views across the bay, which proved to be the default throughout the day. Despite the warning of large hills, the tarmac and the opposing downhill stretches were a delight, as we all journeyed together around the peninsular to Hout Bay for lunch. After a feast of fish and chips and an eagerness to see the finish line, we all raced over the last hill into Camps Bay, finishing with a triumphant dip in the sea.

On Saturday morning we were fortunate enough to be able to visit the children's hospital to hear about the value our donations are providing to those in need. Many of the child victims of burns at the hospital come from severely impoverished backgrounds. The treatment of burns victims not only involves the physical rehabilitation of the children, but the education, counselling and emotional support of the child and their families, to provide them with the skills to care for their child following release from hospital. Some children are also supported by the Phoenix Burns Project to be housed at St Joseph's Rehabilitation Facility to gain longer term support.

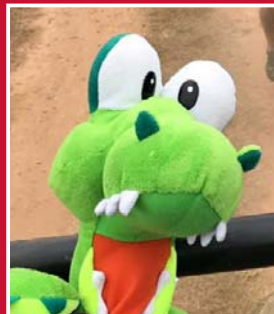
We were all given the opportunity to cycle through a beautiful country, with a fantastic team and know that the physical and fiscal support we worked for has gone to such an effective cause. It was a truly humbling experience for all involved. The journey provided us all with the opportunity to develop lasting relationships with those within Woodside and the broader Oil & Gas industry, while representing Woodside in supporting the recovery and development of those most vulnerable in South African society, through the Phoenix Burns Project.



2016 - Hospital Visit

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2016 - Fundraising



Whisky Tasting

An exclusive
Whisky Tasting
Event

Friday 28th
October 2016

5.30 - 7.00 pm

Tickets \$60



Candle Sale

Bake-off

Bunny Chow - \$4,000
Quiz Night - \$4,000
Just Giving Page - \$4,000
Teddy Bear Sponsorship - \$1,500
Whisky Tasting - \$1,500

Phoenix Flyers 2016

Sponsor a teddy to travel around South Africa with the Phoenix flyers, finally making a new home with one of the children that the Phoenix Burns Project helps.

<http://www.facebook.com/teddiesonadventure>



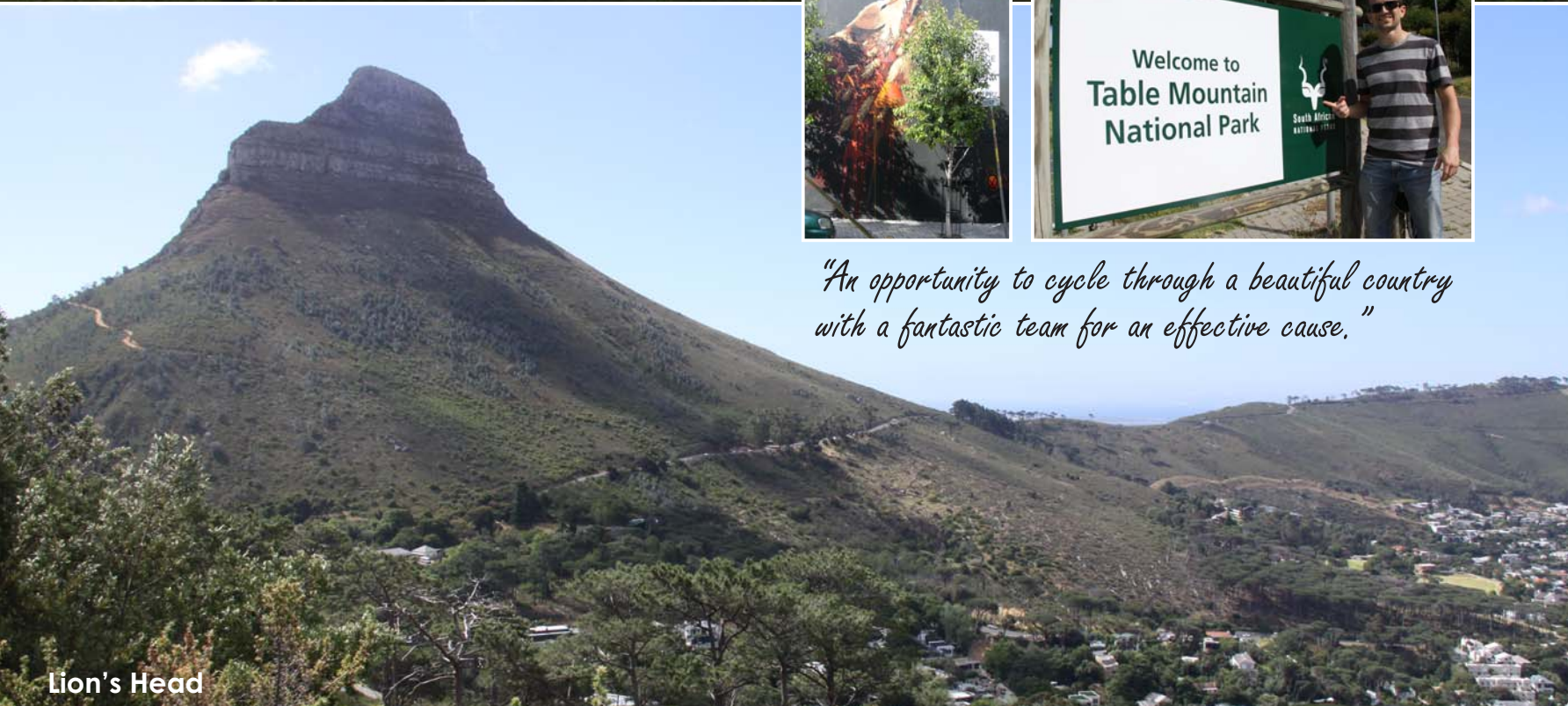
Bunny Chow



Total Raised - \$67,000



Cape Town



Lion's Head



"An opportunity to cycle through a beautiful country with a fantastic team for an effective cause."



2016 - Testimonials

Katie Shaw-Brown



Alias: "Keeping up with Katie"
Appears as: Environmental Adviser
Testimonial 20km from the finish line:
"morale is high and the views are amazing."...

Any last words?: "Taking on a physical challenge with your team mates in support of such a beneficial cause really drove us to work as hard as we could to raise money and seeing the benefits of this work made it all worthwhile." - Katie Shaw-Brown

Michael Lawrence



Alias: "Humpty Dumpty"
Looks like: Geophysicist
Testimonial 20km from the finish line:
"a confused cocktail of emotion."

Any last words?: "It was a privilege to be part of such a rewarding experience." - Michael Lawrence

Phillip Majuri De Barros



Alias: "Bazooka"
Last Seen: IT Analyst
Testimonial 20km from the finish line:
"Phil is feeling good."

Any last words?: "My lack of training was the biggest challenge of all, however it was all worth it in the end." - Phillip Majuri De Barros

Rick Shepherd



Alias: "The Captain"
Known as: Lead Production Technician
Testimonial 20km from the finish line:
"I am socialising again in lycra."

Any last words?: The fundraising and cycle through South Africa were hard, but even tougher was seeing the devastating affects burn and scald injuries had on the young patients and their family's at the Red Cross hospital in Cape Town. The smiles on the faces of the children when we gave out some of the teddy bears, the passion and love of staff at the hospital for their patients was all the reward required, I got so much more from this experience then I gave." - Rick Shepard

Dr Luke Smith



Alias: "Dr Legs Luke"
Last seen as: Chief Environmental Scientist
Testimonial 20km from the finish line:
"amazing coastline and looking forward to the finish"

Any last words?: "It was hard not to get misty eyed throughout this whole journey." - Dr Luke Smith

Laura Costello



Alias: Unknown
Last seen: Contract and Procurement Team
Testimonial 20km from the finish line:
"I can't believe it!"

Any last words?: "This was an incredibly life changing experience - from fund-raising, to the actual ride itself and finally meeting the kids and the doctors who are changing lives everyday with what they do. It was profound, sobering and truly eye opening." - Laura Costello



"Keeping up with Katie"

The A Team: (L-R)
Captain, Bazooka, Keeping up with Katie,
Humpty Dumpty, Dr Legs Luke, Laura



2017 - Day 1

"We came across a game reserve with seven amazing rhinos, including a mother and a calf."



George to Hartenbos

Distance - 64km
Elevation gain - 650m
Clip in fall stacks - 6
Snapped chains - 1
Rhinos - 7
Soccer games - 1
Electric fence shocks - 1



And so it begins, today we got out on the bikes. Nancy barely got out of the driveway before she broke her bike. After a quick bike exchange we ventured off on the first 24km leg which was a nice leisurely ride, only to be hit with a couple of killer hills over the next 17km that were long and hot! While some of us made it look easy, a few of us are slightly concerned about what's to come!!

After many lost and/or broken chains and a few walk breaks up the hills, at the second drink stop we came across a game reserve with seven amazing rhinos, including a mother and a calf, which were a welcome distraction from the heat and sore legs, not to mention the electric fence incident (Emma was quite shocked). After a few amateur dinosaur impressions, from there on, it was a pretty relaxed run into town.

On arrival at the hotel we were greeted by a blue infinity pool overlooking an estuary (unfortunately the promised flamingos never turned up... unless you count those on Nick's shorts), where food and beers were promptly ordered up.

Later in the arvo, after a couple of frosties, then a couple more false starts and general rustling by Thara, the team headed down to the beach for a swim and some soccer with the blue frogs (Team Total).

Back at the accommodation some more beers were had (surprise surprise) whilst we waited for dinner. We also attempted to do laundry, hanging it in the breeze on the balcony. Unfortunately Bee's pants were eaten by the birds nesting in the palm tree next door.

Stayed tuned for tomorrow when we do it all again....



2017 - Day 2

"The beating heat sucked the energy from our legs and by noon every turn of the peddles was a struggle."



Hartenbos to Garden Route Game Lodge

Distance - 80km
Elevation gain - 1224m
Noon temperature - 43°C
Stacks - at least two (self reported)



Day 2 in the saddle and already the signs of fatigue are starting show. The day began in hot and humid conditions as we rode out of the small coast town of Hartenbos. We had barely left the town limits before we encountered some zebras and a little further along some very inquisitive ostriches along a stretch of rolling hills. After taking a few happy snaps we were back on the bikes and making good progress.

It wasn't long though before the day went quickly downhill (or uphill to be more accurate). We had to slog our way up a 400m climb by the 20km mark and welcomed some cool drinks at the top of the hill. The hill also claimed a victim as Viv took a nasty fall.

As the heat of the African sun began to intensify through the middle of the day we continued to slug away up and down the foothills of the Outinequa Mountains. The beating heat sucked the energy from our legs and by noon every turn of the peddles was a struggle. As we made our way up a final set of hills before lunch, every shadow on the horizon was a teasing mirage of the support vehicle.

After huddling under the shade cloth and massively rehydrating at lunch we were back on the bikes for the final 25km of the day. The group nearly collapsed, completely spent after we finished the ride with a final few kilometres through the game reserve. A small group of giraffes at the entrance to the lodge helped everyone crack a smile through otherwise grimaced faces.

The game drive at sunset provided some well deserved respite for the weary riders and we enjoyed lions, rhinos, buffalo, hippos, elephants and bucks in their natural environment. The night finished with sherry and a multi-course buffet, providing everyone with some energy for the big day ahead tomorrow. A final night cap was accompanied by an impressive lightning show before everyone turned in, getting some much needed rest.



2017 - Day 3

"A small group of giraffes at the entrance to the lodge helped everyone crack a smile through otherwise grimaced faces."



"A sense of nervous energy was in the air as we rolled down the highway towards the biggest day the bike tour had to offer."



Garden Route Game Lodge to Honeywood Farm

Distance - 100km (106km for Thara)

Elevation gain - 1600m

Stacks - 3

The Phoenix Flyers woke up to a misty, humid yet atmospheric morning at the Garden Route Game Lodge on Day 3 of the ABC Challenge. Stomachs were full of Ostrich, Eland and Kudu steaks from the previous night's game-meat smorgasbord.

As was typical for the trip so far, the French, Aussie and UK teams were ready for the 8.00am departure by 8.30am. We proceeded to ride out of the game park and Nick's newly acquired zebra socks, which he was rocking with his zebra Lycra, caught the attention of one of the park's zebras who led a congregation of wilderbeast and springbok. Thankfully, there was no Mufasa-wildebeast-stampede moment, and all parties (including bike riders) ran off in their own directions unharmed.



A sense of nervous energy was in the air as we rolled down the highway towards the biggest day the bike tour had to offer, a whopping 100km which finishes at the top of a loooooong climb. To much of the team's dismay, we had another man down with a stomach bug within the first 20km. Having been chewed up and spat out by the relentless hills and 43°C heat the day prior, the tactic for most was to take it easy for as long as possible – and to conserve all energy for the day's grand finale. The group continued on towards the first, long, difficult climb of the day. This one was as hard as it gets. After 10 minutes of uphill, it hit you with the steepest of inclines you could possibly encounter. A road made completely of rocks meant traction was non-existent, and it even had the lightweight, pyrennees based French climbers struggling to keep forward momentum. By this time the heat had skyrocketed, to levels approaching the previous day.

Props to Thara for being one of the very few who managed to make it up the comically steep section without walking their bike... giving everyone a masterclass in clipping-in on a near vertical slope.

The tour leader, Steve had spent the past 3 days warning everyone of the climb up to Honeywood Farm. With burning legs and heavy chests we knew it would only be grit and determination that would get us up the 3km long windy climb. It certainly lived up to the hype. The climb weaved up the mountain range at an 8%+ gradient. It was every person for themselves up the hill. No conversations. No smiles. Just pain, grimaces and sore butts.

After far too long riding uphill, we arrived at Honeywood Farm in small packs of broken-bodied riders. As you all know, the perfect recovery drink isn't protein-based, it's beer. The tour leaders and accommodation hosts greeted us all with an ice cold beer before we'd even had time to stop pedalling.

A special mention must go to Thara, who upon reaching the top of the gigantic 3km long climb, found himself unsatisfied with the 100km ride in the hills. He ignored the sign directing us to Honeywood Farm and continued to ride several kilometres up and down hills in the wrong direction. While everyone was at the farm enjoying their beers, Steve the bus driver went off to retrieve Thara – only to have him refuse the bus ride and pedal-power himself all the way up to the farm. Congrats on winning today's best and fairest, Thara.

Yet again, we were hosted for a night of delicious and abundant food and drinks, with a million dollar view across the mountain range whilst a thunderstorm rolled through.

2017 - Day 4

"Meandering down the hillside, looking across the lush valley and distant undulating hills – feeling on top of the world."



Honeywood Farm to Simon's Town

Distance - 60km
Elevation gain - 600m
Water temperature - 16°C
Burns - 1
Stacks - None



With the tough Day 3 behind us, all awoke early, having enjoyed some much needed sleep, to a beautiful cloudy, calm morning (quietly praying the sun would remain hidden for the rest of the day). At breakfast, we enjoyed that spectacular view over the rolling hills one last time and said goodbye to our historic “share house” (quarters for the French and Oz gents), a large communal 8 bed mansion overlooking the dense forest with a well aged, yet fully functional, 90's sound system and a friendly, fluffy, white cat, all included.

So here we go again, Steve articulated the brief – “an easy day, maybe.... not long, maybe....of course there will be hills, you go up, and you come down”. With that comprehensive context we biked out of Honeywood Farm.

Starting at the hilltop had one clear benefit, the next little stretch would be downhill and what a scene it was. Meandering down the hillside, looking across the lush valley and distant undulating hills – feeling on top of the world. The downhill ride was immensely enjoyable – the kind of ride us “untrained” folk signed up for! However our blinding downhill run had led us astray – missing a turn and much to our dismay, adding an extra hill on return to our destined route.

We rode on, and true to Steve's eloquent guidance, up and down it was. Fourth day in, it was all hard work, every stretch. With the sun heating us up, the dirt track required energy and concentration to navigate. Every pebble felt like a boulder and the road corrugations shaking us out like rag dolls. Yet determined, we carried on conquering a number of hills and finally arriving at the river crossing. It was a long enough ride, at least for most of us. The “well trained/fit/Garmin” crew – Nick/Emma/Craig, decided to return on track and redo the last stretch to the finish (in my untrained layman's opinion – insane).

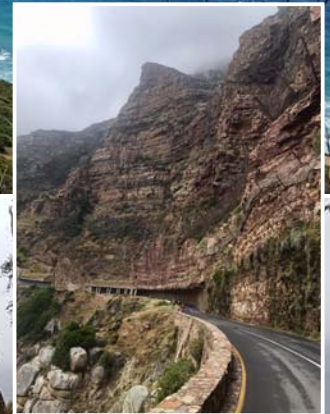
The river crossing was a non tech spectacle – a man powered barge, with bikes and bikers all onboard. Many hands made light work with everyone pitching in to pull us along. The crossing concluded the ride. We boarded the awaiting busses and headed off for the long journey to Simons Town.

We finally made it to Simons Town, with a much needed shower and quick change, it was now time for a drink on the boardwalk!

2017 - Day 5



"We made it to the top and stopped to admire the view, and it sunk in how amazing the adventure had been."



Simon's Town to Cape Town

Distance - 69km
Elevation gain - 804m
Broken spokes - 1
Stacks - 3

It was the final day of riding and it started off with a dip in the harbour at Simon's Town under a beautiful rainbowed sky. This would not be the only time we got drenched in icy cold water today, (but more on that later).



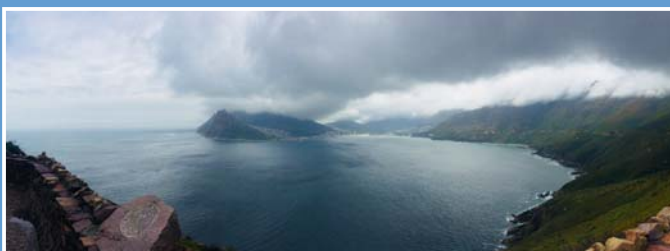
We started the ride following the beautiful rolling coast roads from Simon's Town towards Chapman's Peak. We were tired and sore but in high spirits as the temperature was cooler than what we had been experiencing and we were lucky enough to be riding on bitumen. A few of the group were treated to the sight of some baboons running across the road, and after some photos of us monkeying around things seemed to change. Everything started going downhill (and unfortunately not literally).

The rain came in thick and fast so by the time we reached our first pit stop we were all soaked through to the bone and there was no point of trying to dry off as it did not look like the rain would be stopping anytime soon.

We hit Chapman's Peak and as we started to ascend the wind decided to join the party. This was new for us and we found out just how hard it can be to ride along the side of a cliff with winds so strong we were almost cycling backwards. The hard slog was worth it and we were treated to amazing views across the coast from the top.

After a fish and chip lunch in Hout Bay we climbed Suikerbossie Hill, the final one for the ride which also proved a challenge to get up with the wind. Some of our windbreakers created parachutes to capture the breeze which probably didn't help things. We made it to the top and stopped to admire the view, and it sunk in how amazing the adventure had been. With only a 10km downhill run into Camps Bay our sore bums were soon forgotten about as we were met by the hiking cheer squad with congratulations and cuddles.

We had made it, the ride was finished and the margaritas were plentiful. After a quick freshen up, we headed to Groot Constantia to have dinner with everyone who made the trip possible. We had the pleasure of meeting some very special people associated with the Phoenix burns project and the hospital. We even received gifts prepared especially for us by Dr Roux.



After an evening of amazing food, delicious wine and great company we huddled back into our bus ready to tackle what tomorrow would bring.

2017



Barefoot Bowls

The team kicked off their events with a night of **Barefoot Bowls** at Mount Lawley Bowling Club. Everyone braved the cold and came dressed in their best costumes too.

The **Quiz Night** that was held at Floreat Athena was a great success.

Quizmaster, Andy from Andy's Old School Quiz was the host with the most.

Quiz Night



The teddy pen



**Total Raised
\$90,783**



"Let's Unwind" was a fabulous evening of wine tasting hosted by Liquor Barons Applecross, held at **CORE** Innovation Hub.

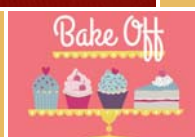


**G
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The mascot



Phoenix Flyers presented the movie premier of **FACE OFF**, starring Adam Nicholas who shaved his beloved masterpiece of a beard in return for donations.



FACE OFF



Whisky Tasting was a huge success! A journey through the Whisky landscape was enjoyed by all and in the process, converting many a layman to whisky patrons!



Phoenix Flyers

Guess the number of Jelly Beans!
Gold Coin donation.

2017 - Testimonials

Belinda West



"What a fantastic experience! This was made all the more special on the Saturday after the ride where we visited the Red Cross Children's Hospital to hand over the laser machine to the Burns ward. I was fortunate enough to visit the 12 children in the ward on this day to hand out teddies flown over from Oz and France. The last boy we visited was 12yr old Craig who wants to be a soprano singer when he's older. His full upper body was bandaged, he had limited movement in his arms and limited speech due to multiple operations, as well as severe scarring to his face which he's been receiving treatment on. After we left the ward a staff member chased us down with tears in his eyes, to let us know Craig was overwhelmed by our visit as he just realized we were the people who rode our bikes to buy the laser machine and he wanted to say thank you!

It was a pretty special moment realizing we'd made a difference & able to give these kids this small gift. Big thanks to our awesome team for the laughs along the way and everyone who donated & supported our fundraising. You all made a difference too!!" - Belinda West

Cassie Beattie

"Wow!! What an awesome experience the ABC Challenge was. To have the opportunity to cycle along the Garden Route, in South Africa is something I will never forget. The sights and the memories that were made are unforgettable and to meet all of the awesome people that made it possible was amazing.

It was a privilege and very humbling to be able to contribute to a fantastic organisation such as the Phoenix Burns Project who makes such an outstanding contribution to the lives of the children in the Red Cross Hospital." - Cassie Beattie



Nancy Nguyen



"Believe you can and you're halfway there. Scaling what felt like a million mountains without proper training proved that if I could do this challenge, any one can if they put their mind and heart to it.

The long journey was a good reminder about the challenges that kids with burns face.

Felt honoured to be able to lend a hand, like giving those in need a little push to scale the big mountain ahead." - Nancy Nguyen

"Having the opportunity to travel to Africa for the first time, to do an activity I enjoy and raise money for such a worthy cause was my inspiration to participate in this event.

Over the last few years I have competed in various mountain bike races, ranging from around 60km to 240km over 4 days. I have also raced in a team event that went from 'Dusk 'til Dawn'. None of these turned out to be enough preparation to easily manage the 5 day cycle across South Africa.

I have a Computer Science background and have worked for Woodside in application support and now data management for 12 years. I am a father of 3 children aged between 7 and 14. They all enjoy cycling and love riding the trails near the Camel Farm east of Perth with me.

I grew up in the Perth hills so mountain biking has always been a passion." - Craig Harper

Craig Harper



2017 - Testimonials

Nick Kennedy



"After months and months of fundraising, it was time for the ultimate team bonding experience, cycling 400km across South Africa! There was no better way to celebrate the successful fundraising than to participate in such an exciting physical challenge with a huge crew of fantastic people from all corners of the globe.

The emotions of the bike ride were quickly surpassed by those we experienced when visiting the Red Cross Children's hospital for the handover of the M22 laser machine. What a great day that was for all involved.

Seeing the positive spirit in the injured children, and being able to contribute to this milestone for the charity will forever live in the memories of us all." - Nick Kennedy

"It was a great experience to be part of the ABC Challenge story and journey. What made it extra special is that South Africa is my country of birth and it was a real privilege to sow something back benefiting the South African community.

The enthusiasm and energy of everybody involved is really impressive and inspiring – it feels good to be involved in something bigger. I believe that through this journey we made new friends, discovered something new about ourselves, benefitted the children suffering from horrible burns and had lots and lots of fun.

The ride was not easy – especially if you start the journey with gastro – but we somehow all pushed on and made it. Thank you for the privilege to be part of this amazing work and I believe the memories and friendships will continue in the years to come." - Lourens Jacobs

Lourens Jacobs



Chris McNamara



"Participating in the Action for Burns and Children Challenge as part of the Phoenix Flyers team was an unforgettable experience. The adventure began long before the ride with months of fundraising activities and events along with plenty of hours on the bike, training for what was to be a real test of endurance.

Our team raised funds through coercing donations from friends and family, as well as through creative ideas (bagel drives, bunny chow and book sales!), resulting in an amazing \$90k total! Our hard work was rewarded with a five day ride through some of the most incredible scenery and wildlife in southern Africa.

Bonding with my team and with teams from around the world during the event made the experience all the more special. Knowing we were fundraising for a worthy cause made all of the work worthwhile and to see the difference our efforts made was an absolute pleasure. I would recommend participating in this challenge to anyone who likes adventure and wants to direct their energy to a charity that makes a real impact." - Chris McNamara

"The ABC Challenge is not just a five-day bike ride, but also an adventure that spans the better part of a year. From organising fundraising events to riding through the amazingly picturesque South African landscape for 5 days, the sheer determination and comradery of the riders was phenomenal.

Constant belly laughter, shared stories and encouragement got us up the endless hills and has now left me with many friendships.

A memorable highlight was visiting the Burns Ward at the Red Cross Children's Hospital in Cape Town, where we were able to see how our fundraising efforts directly improved the lives of so many victims and their families.

I am both grateful and honoured to have had the opportunity to participate in such an extraordinary event and raise much-needed funds to help the children supported by the Phoenix Burns Project." - Emma Kiekebosch-Fitt

Emma Kiekebosch-Fitt



2017 - Testimonials

Ryan Evans



"I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to participate in the 2017 ABC Challenge and support the Phoenix Burns Project - the work they're doing to support the kids at the Red Cross Hospital in Cape Town is incredible.

It was a humbling experience and great to be able to contribute to something so worthwhile.

The ride itself was challenging, but amazing, with beautiful scenery and wildlife all along the way. It was great to bond with the team and make a bunch of new friends, and to celebrate the end of each day with a beer or three over dinner!

I'd highly recommend it to anyone who gets the chance to go!!" - Ryan Evans

"Thoroughly enjoyed the journey, the team comraderie and the exercise!

The ABC unit is changing lives for so many children, and their dedication and efforts are to be commended!

A fantastic cause, and I encourage support for this great project." - Thara Karunaratna

Thara Karunaratna



Viviane Nguyen



"I joined the Phoenix Flyers 2017 ABC Challenge because I wanted to, for the first time, do something great for someone else. It is very easy for all of us to live our 'Perth'ect lives and forget about the struggles in farawaytownships in Cape Town.

I felt inspired by the stories from previous Flyer's and wanted to be part of the bigger picture – to improve the quality of life of a child burn survivor.

I never owned a bike before and never even did any long-distance sports – and I thought why not start now! I fell over many times during this ride but tried my best to get up every time to finish the ride.

I was determined if everyone donated to see me in pain for 400km I would not fail them. I also have great memories of the Total team who were very encouraging and supportive." - Viviane Nguyen



The Legacy of the Woodside Phoenix Flyers in Aid of Burn Survivors in South Africa

Burns are one of the leading causes of childhood mortality in South Africa. Burns are largely preventable, but due to widespread poverty and poor living conditions, there is an extraordinary burden of burn injuries, with devastating consequences.

The Phoenix Burns Project works with local and international partners to alleviate the suffering caused by these injuries. We are extremely proud to count Woodside among our international supporters. Since 2014, the Phoenix Flyers, supported by Woodside have made a major contribution to burn prevention, burn care, and rehabilitation of paediatric burns survivors in South Africa.

The Phoenix Flyers have participated in four gruelling 400 km Hike/Bike events along the Garden Route in aid of burns survivors, organised jointly with the UK charity Action for Burns in Children (ABC). Other international partners in recent years in this annual event are Total, Schlumberger, Wood Mackenzie, the European Burns Association (the EBA) and Cripps Sears & Partners.

In 2017, a major dream initiated in 2015 by Phil Loader from Woodside, was realised when the Hike/Bike team presented a new laser for burn scar treatment to the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital in Cape Town. This new laser has already offered hope to many children with devastating burn scars that could not previously be treated effectively. The laser treatment procedure is relatively painless and the beneficial results are immediately evident and experienced by the children. For the first time ever, children are asking when they can come back for their next treatment!

In addition, the Phoenix Flyers have also enabled the creation of a major burn prevention programme among school children to address the root causes of burn injury at the source. The programme is presented by burns survivors at schools in communities at risk. To date, nearly a thousand children have attended this programme and are acting as burn prevention ambassadors in their schools and communities.

The funds raised by the Phoenix Flyers have also helped improve the quality of life for staff and patients in the burn unit at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. This included redecorating and furnishing the ward recreation room for parents as well as the therapy room, where art therapy and psychosocial counselling is provided. A new interactive games system was introduced to encourage the children to reach their physiotherapy goals through the medium of interactive virtual reality computer games.

The toys donated by the Phoenix Flyers provide much comfort and joy to the young patients, as for many, these are the only toys they have, and are therefore much cherished. Previously unknown to our African children, kangaroos and koalas have become a common sight in the ward! Art materials are also provided to support art therapy sessions. Every burns patient is issued with a colourful hat to protect his or her facial burns scars from sun damage. Over one thousand of these hats are issued annually. Wheelchairs are provided to children who lose limbs and are unable to walk after suffering a major burn.

Sadly, some severely disfigured burns survivors are abandoned in the burn unit as a result of parental poverty or drug and alcohol addictions. For these children, Phoenix works in partnership with the St Joseph's Home for Chronically Ill Children and the Paarl School for Disabled Children, to ensure that they are educated and accommodated in a supportive and nurturing environment. The care of these children, supported under the Phoenix Education Fund, is one of the major uses of donor funding. In South Africa, where disability support is severely lacking, a proper education is the only hope for these children with major burn injuries to have a hope of becoming independent and economically active citizens when they grow up. During the 2016 Hike/Bike event, the Phoenix Flyers visited St Josephs Home and presented a set of musical instruments. These instruments have become the cornerstone of a music-teaching programme at the Home, which is much enjoyed by the children.

For those unfortunate children having to spend their birthdays in hospital, Phoenix provides birthday parties. Funds were also utilised to assist patients to travel to the Red Cross Hospital and back home, as the hospital serves as a national referral centre for major burns. Some children unfortunately succumb to their burn injuries. In such cases, Phoenix provides funeral support to their families.

Shack fires are very common in South African informal settlements. Most families affected by such fires lose all their possessions. When such a family arrives at the burn unit with a child, Phoenix provides a Fire Recovery Kit that contains household essentials, food, blankets and toiletries. This allows the family to support their child at the bedside by relieving them of concerns as to where to get daily essentials.

Since 2014, the Phoenix Flyers, supported by Woodside, have enabled many children to rise like the proverbial phoenix from the ashes of their burn injury, and for that we can never thank you enough.

Phoenix Burns Project Team



Acknowledgement Riders

2014

Barry Beasley
Catherine Cregan
Conrad Steyn
Dave Tapley
Fiona High
Jason Attard
Lex Simons
Manish Agarwal
Matt Griggs
Serena Hone

2015

Aaron Day
Dan Crosby
Erica Gundersen
Holly Thomas
Linden Blair
Michael Hanlin
Natalie Oakley
Phil Loader
Richard Byran

2016

Katie Shaw-Brown
Laura Costello
Luke Smith
Michael Lawrence
Philippe Majuri De Barros
Ricky Shepherd

2017

Belinda West
Cassie Beattie
Chris McNamara
Craig Harper
Emma Kiekebosch-Fitt
Lourens Jacobs
Nancy Nguyen
Nicholas Kennedy
Ryan Evans
Thara Karunaratna
Viviane Nguyen

Supporters

Adam Nicholas
Chris Gorman
Ciaran Lavin
Deanne Combes
Elizabeth Mair

Fiona Tainsh
Gareth Parry
Jeroen Bruins
Lisa Padovan
Mark Thompson

Nicola Tonkin-Normore
Paula John
Randall Garbutt
Saxon Piggott
Troy Gourgaud

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Star World Framing
Starward Whisky
The Leagues
Whipper Snapper Distillery
Wood Mackenzie
Worley Parsons

Grand Total - 2014-2017
AUD\$310,367.23

