

# RACE reports

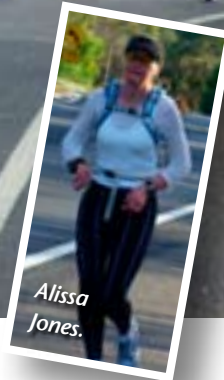
## 34th Annual "Percy Cerruty" Frankston to Portsea 55km Road Race, Victoria

Sunday 2nd April, 2006

Report and images by "Race Director", Kevin Cassidy



Peter Bignell took the lead in the early stages.



Alissa Jones.

**WE WERE** about to get underway in the morning stillness when I realised that three of our intrepid runners were still car shuffling back from Portsea, planting "special" drinks along the way. They arrived in a cloud of dust to the screeching of tyres, resulting in a slightly delayed start. With Peter Gray heading off early [5am], 18 runners hit the highway to Portsea at 7:12am.

The early stages proved uneventful with the notable highlight being the spontaneous appearance of a couple of rogues in the form of Kon Butko and Ross Shilston. These two shady characters are the original pioneers from 1973.

Mike Wheatley, Mal Grimmatt, Peter Bignell and Dan Thompson formed a quartet at the front of the field. By 10km Peter had surged ahead, dazzlingly gaining his Andy Warhol 15 minutes of fame.

Approaching halfway on the road into Dromana, things were starting to take shape. A consistent

Australian 100km representative on numerous occasions, Mike Wheatley, established a substantial lead over Mal Grimmatt and Peter Bignell with first time ultra runners, Shane Pettingill and Dan Thompson doing well. Also well to the fore was Steve Hyde. Further back Warren Holst, Brendan Mason, John Dodson, Garry Wise, Bruce Salisbury and Ben Cotter were all within sight of each other.

Driving back towards the tail of the field, I found Richard McCormick wondering if he was on the correct course while Andrew Herman and Richard Arney remained close together.

Progressing through Rosebud, I managed to track down the early starting Peter Gray. Peter is Australia's most prolific ultra runner with 187 races under his belt over a period of 20 years.

Mike Wheatley charged through the polished and attractive streetscapes of Sorrento with haste and again stopped the watch under four hours as he stole into Portsea. Just as he regularly pumps out 100km races under eight hours, his consistency over this course is outstanding. Mal Grimmatt also ran a superbly judged race for second, with first timer Dan Thompson impressive in third. I managed to find a couple of voice mail messages as runners started emerging over the final hill into the finish. Alissa Jones had called it a day suffering the after effects of flu, but the second message was of a substantially



Regular ultra walker, Brian Glover.



Brendan Mason manages a smile.

### RESULTS

1. Mike Wheatley	3:57.59
2. Mal Grimmatt	4:18.15
3. Dan Thompson	4:35.04
4. Peter Bignell	4:43.39
5. Steve Hyde	5:14.23
6. Bruce Salisbury	5:27.35
7. Shane Pettingill	5:34.47
8. Ben Cotter	5:51.11
9. Garry Wise	5:53.27
10. Brendan Mason	5:57.45
10. John Dobson	5:57.45
12. Richard McCormick	6:07.09
13. Richard Arney	6:37.55
14. Ernie Hartley	6:51.56
15. Peter Gray	9:31.58
DNF Andrew Herman	42km
DNF Brian Glover	42km
DNF Warren Holst	40km
DNF Alissa Jones [F]	31km



Australian 100km representative, Mike Wheatley. A comfortable winner.

urgent tone. Brian Glover's wife had managed to flatten the battery of her car, a fact to which Brian was oblivious. With the help of a phone from a nearby resident and the RACV, she finally got going but not before Brian had gone two hours without a drink. "Unfortunate circumstances" is the only way to describe his dehydration and resultant DNE.

Warren Holst arrived at the finish via the back seat of his family car having suffered an injury, while Andrew Herman called it a day at the marathon point having recorded a qualifying time for the Comrades Marathon. All others made it to the gates of the Portsea National Park to receive the traditional blocks of chocolate and mirrors. "The mirrors are bigger this year" observed Mal Grimmatt. "That's for our bigger heads" laughed Peter Bignell. Richard Arney wore an expression that strongly suggested the satisfaction of finishing his first ultra would be deep and lasting.

Steve Hyde dished up the days most memorable entertainment. Intensely gratified with his 5:14 PB, he stretched out exuberantly on the grass, sunk a large drink, towelled off the perspiration, engaged in a chat and sought some warmer clothes. He then expressed surprise with his time, "But My Watch Says 5:20" he grumbled in a confused tone. After much discussion and lamenting at the 'poor' quality of his newly purchased watch, he suddenly looked rather sheepish. Poor Steve had neglected to hit the stop button and the minutes were still happily ticking away! After a 55km run, I guess a degree of brain deadening can be forgiven!

**R4YL**