

16th March 2013 - Rainbow Rage

Today was huge. Out of bed at 5.am , picked up a friend just after 6.am and then met up with the rest of our team of twelve Camera Club members. At 6.30 nine of the team departed in Will Parson's ten seater 4x4 bus and three of us drove off in my 4x4 Suzuki.

We drove up to the Rainbow Station which is near the Nelson Lakes National Parks. We were on a mission. We had been tasked with photographing the annual Rainbow Rage. The Rainbow Rage is a big mountain bike race which runs through from the Rainbow Station paddock on the main road right through to Hanmer, a distance of about 112 kilometers.



There were hundreds of participants. It is a hairy, scary course going right into the high country on a very rough, narrow shingle road. And it is rough... we bounced around on it as we drove in to take up positions for our photography. The organiser, Mike Gane, was keen for us to record the event as best as we could and to submit a selection of images to the Nelson Mail newspaper.

We set off an hour ahead of the start of the race, dropping our team off in pairs at particularly picturesque but hair-raising spots along the route.

Steep inclines and descents and water filled fords were favourites.



Then we waited, covered in insect repellent to ward of the clouds of sandflies. Emily, had to abandon her blue clothing as the bumble bees, who love the colour blue, were flocking around her. And she is allergic to them. Luckily she did not get stung. She and I were stationed on the other side of O'Connors Ford.

Luckily for the riders the fords were all running low because of drought conditions. Unlucky for us as we were hoping for some dramatic spills into the water. Only two people fell off into the ford... a young woman who was most embarrassed and an older male participant.



It was great fun and really stretched out our camera skills. I found I am not the gun photographer I imagined myself to be. Sports Photography is not my forte at all. But I did manage to get maybe half a dozen shots that satisfied my standards ...just...

I was surprised to see just how many older riders there were on the course. People who looked as if they were well into their fifties and sixties .. there were a few who looked even older. They weren't all trim and sylph-like either. A lot were carry a fair bit of condition. They were most impressive, particularly as they had the infamous "Hell's Gate" to negotiate and later the Island Saddle ahead of them to cross...all 5000 feet of it! Good on them.... We salute them.

We did not have to go all the way through to Hanmer. Once the Tail-end Charlie vehicles went through we were able to back-track along the road and head home. We stopped off to stretch out legs and walk across a swing bridge.



Our team had a wonderful day out. We worked well together . Our oldest member is a spry woman aged 85 and her grandson was the youngest at 16. We are hoping that we will be able to carry out the same mission next year. Please see field trip images [here](#).

Cheers,
Liz