



Cycling Times

The B.B.T.A Newsletter

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For Sale BBTA Anniversary Polo Shirts



Maurice is modelling the polo shirt which commemorates the BBTA's 20th anniversary. These shirts are available at \$35 each by contacting Helen Adam on 3841 5940 or at secretary@bbta-au.org. The shirts are good quality and comfortable and are available in various sizes.



The BBTA Christmas Party is On Again!

Last year's party was a great success with two rides to choose from, lots of good food, a costume competition, prizes, and awards to members for club achievements or just plain notoriety!

The party is on again this year, with the same format. A subcommittee is working hard this very minute to make sure it all works.

Date: Sunday 7 December 2003

Place: Orleigh Park, West End

Time: 8.30 am

Cost: \$12



To ensure you get something to eat, please book with Elizabeth or Sheila by **Thursday 4th December**. More details in the rides calendar. The party is open to members and their partners only.

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Welcome to our New Members!

The following have joined the BBTA since the last newsletter:

Clive, Narelle & Rory BATEMAN	Debra, Travis & Laureen GROUT	Janice MORRIS
David & Robyne CARSELDINE	Katrina KOULOURIS	Lance O'BRIEN
Elizabeth COLLINS	Darren LATTIN & Jane CLARKSON	Rebecca RYAN
Dennis CONNELLY	Ken, Susan & Angela McCALLUM	Julie SCHRAG
Robert COOPER	Carmel McGRATH	John STEVENS
Stewart CRAIG	Steve, Trish, Amanda, Grant & Casey McLERIE	Andrew THOMPSON
Maeve CUNNINGTON		Mike WALLAS
Mary & Jim FORAYTER		Caroline WILLIAMS
		Lauren WRIGHT

Report from the President

Elizabeth Catchpole



Seasons Greetings to you all! I hope to catch up with lots of you at the Christmas Party on the 7th

(Don't forget to RSVP). However, if you are unable to make it, on behalf of the whole committee, have a safe and happy Christmas and we hope Santa brings some great cycling goodies this year!

It was great to see some brand new leaders on the calendar over the last couple of months. Congratulations to Deirdre and Richard for taking the plunge! If you haven't yet had a go at leading a ride, maybe that could be one of your New Year's Resolutions. The bonus is that you have great company on your favourite ride at the pace you enjoy.

If you haven't checked out the website

for a while, it is time to revisit! We have a new sub-committee that will be working to ensure the site meets the needs of our members. Matt – Recumbent Guy, Tom – rides coordinator and Kerry “I hate hills” Neighbour, make up our team of web spinners. Logon, have a look and send through some feedback.

The latest Jersey and Knick order closed on November 18th. SCODY have promised delivery by Christmas. However, if you missed the deadline we did order a small amount of extras to tide us over until we start the next order in the New Year. Let me know if you are interested.

Belinda, our librarian, has let it be known there are some new additions to our Library, including Lance Armstrong's latest. Come along to the next meeting and see if you can be among the first to borrow them. We have also or-

dered a copy of Cycle Queensland 03's Photo CD.

Soap Box Time. Unfortunately, I have had a few reports of some inconsiderate behaviour on rides. Firstly, turning up for rides without taking time to check the condition of your bike. Most of our members will be happy to help fix problems but two minutes before starting time is not the best time to discover your brakes don't work and your tires are flat. The next point is a reminder that as cyclists we do have to obey the road rules – stop at red lights and stop signs.

Lastly, although it is legal to ride two abreast, if we are part of a large group and there is traffic sharing the road with us it's neither safe nor considerate if we are holding up traffic. Same on bike paths, leave room for other users to pass us safely.

Happy (*and safe*) Cycling
Elizabeth

Rides Coordinator's Corner

Tom Mylne



My thanks go as usual to the ride leaders who have volunteered to lead rides in December and January. There are not as many rides as usual, but I am assuming that

the number will rise again after the summer holidays are over. There are some new rides and a few old favourites. I hope you participate in and enjoy at least some of them.

Saturday Arvo Ride moves up the track

The Saturday Arvo ride has followed the same route for more than five years, starting at Windsor Railway Station, and following bikeways and suburban roads to Woolloowin and back. The ride is intended to serve as the introductory ride for new members, and the route was carefully designed by Jeff and Judy with this in mind. The ride now also attracts a small group of regulars for whom the coffee afterwards is an essential part of the ride. The nearby coffee shop (Scoozi's) has given us great support over the years, but they are finding that it is not really economical to stay open on Saturday afternoons.

So the committee has taken the hard decision. The Saturday afternoon ride is moving up the line to Alderley Railway Station. Coffee will be at Coffee Matters, on South Pine Road, Alderley.

I have designed a new route, slightly longer than the Windsor route (about 20km) It follows the old route for part of the way but starts and finishes at the corner of Hall and Huddart Streets, Alderley. For those who have energy to spare, a couple of designated detours will allow for some hill-climbing, but the basic route is slightly less hilly (if that is possible) than the Windsor ride. A route map for the new Saturday Arvo Ride can be found on the rides calendar.

The ride will start on the north side of the railway station, at the corner of Hall Street and Huddart Street. Parking is available in Huddart Street or Hall Street. Alternatively, if you prefer, you could park in the railway station carpark in Railway Place, off South Pine Road, and ride around to the starting point via the pathway from the parking area up to the Alderley Avenue bridge (300 metres).

I hope that the new route will please regulars and newcomers alike.

Achievement awards

We will be presenting achievement awards as usual at the Christmas party. If you know that you deserve one and haven't already contacted me, you might like to do so immediately just to make sure we don't miss you. You can contact me at: 80 Royal Parade Alderley 4051, or rides@bbta-au.org or fax 3856 4166 or phone 3856 4019. And of course if you haven't booked your meal at the Christmas party, the time to do it is right now. Ring Elizabeth on 0412 875 980 or Sheila on 3800 8953.

This month's serve

I would like to remind members that both the law and common courtesy require us to ride on the left hand side of the road. On a recent BBTA ride the group of more than twenty riders stopped at an intersection to wait for a vehicle on our left. The driver wanted to turn right, but found three riders facing him and partially blocking his road. These riders had chosen to go to the right of the traffic island and to wait at the intersection on the wrong side of the road. You wouldn't do it in your car, and you shouldn't do it on your bike. Not when you're riding with us, anyway.

First Timers—Sandgate Saunter

by Deirdre Windham

Our “maiden leadership voyage” was on 2nd November, 2003. This is the trip Dave used to do on a regular basis. It started well. The weather was beautiful, we arrived at Sandgate Station in time, handed around the sign-on sheet and found out who everyone was.

I think I remembered to say all the right things in the introduction before sixteen of us set off through Curlew Park. We knew these 16 were happy to travel at an average of around 20 kph; otherwise they would have been up earlier and done Torben’s fast and furious ride through Redcliffe.

Sheila re-assured us with the route through Boondall Entertainment Centre then we cruised through the Boondall Wetlands and had refreshments at the Nudgee Beach shop (which is about to change hands again).

The fruiting Brazilian Cherry tree at Nudgee Beach won a few people over after which we returned through the

Wetlands and across Boondall Station and Sandgate Road to the bike path alongside the Gateway Motorway. Robert gets three stars for being the only person to obey the signs and walk across the crossing.

A couple of chains came adrift as we left the Bracken Ridge underpass and a particularly aggressive man with a child on a tag-along let El Presidento Liz know he was not impressed with the bikes next to the path, whose riders were helping the unfortunates.

I had a new toy, one of those cute, little digital cameras so despatched Richard on ahead to take a group photo in action to accompany this story. The only problem was everyone thought they had to keep up with him so the faster he went, the faster the group went. Instead of getting ahead, we managed to string everyone out! (First mistake!)

We grouped again at the southern end of the Hornibrook Bridge and set off on

the final leg along Flinders Parade with its lovely waterfront breezes. Some people left the ride to enjoy coffee at the restaurants that dot the area.

About half of us returned to Sandgate Station, amid complaints of the ride only being 37 km (and not the advertised 40 km). (Second mistake!)

The trip did end up being a bit quicker than anticipated but the solution there is not to take the camera. (Third mistake!) It can’t have been too quick for Liz because she then disappeared to do some solo riding.

We had some non-members riding so we hope they were impressed enough to look at returning. As Wim says, any ride is a good ride, but we enjoyed this one with the good weather and pleasant company an added bonus.

*Comment from Rides Co-ordinator:
Being a bit short on distance is much better than the converse!*

Brisbane to Grafton and Return

by Tom Crawford

This is my first article for the BBTA since becoming a member a few years ago. Most of my rides with BBTA have been the Saturday afternoon ride at Windsor, where I look after Frank when he rides. I am sixty-three years of age and have two artificial hips. I have done several distance rides – for example – Brisbane to Broken Hill, Brisbane to Sydney, Gold Coast to Newcastle. I have a good road bike and consider myself a plodder rather than a speedster. My training rides for the Grafton trip entailed riding from Eight Mile Plains out to the Ipswich Motorway and on to the Warrego Highway as far as the Esk turn-off, having a twenty minute break and return home. The total distance 90kms in around four hours.

Day 1 – 6 October 2003 - Brisbane to Kyogle – 180kms I departed at 6.10am heading for Kyogle via Mt Lindesay Highway. I had a short break at Beaudesert and then moved on to Rathdowney for lunch at 10.30am and had a one-hour break. I then did the mountain ranges in wind and rain, and turned towards Kyogle just before Woodenbong. I rode another 20kms to Terrance Creek

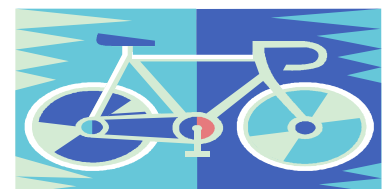
and had a short break. The downhill run out of the mountains was enjoyable except that the weather had set in and the wind always seemed to be headwind. With just 30kms to go I was able to reach Kyogle by 4.30pm and book into the Hotel for the night.

Day 2 – 7 October 2003 – Kyogle to Grafton – 130kms This was executed in three stages. It was not easy, as you would expect, as wind and rain hampered progress and I carried a small haversack, which added to the drag effect. Morning tea was at Casino – 30kms with a 20 minute break. Lunch was at Whiporie (halfway between Casino and Grafton). The rolling hills seemed to get steeper. The temperature was dropping and so was my average speed, barely maintaining 21kph. However, I made Grafton by 2.45pm, met friends for a cuppa, (following shower and change) and then on to my billet with more friends for the night.

Day 3 – 8 October 2003 – Grafton to Kyogle – 130kms I set off from Grafton at 8.50am, had morning tea at Whiporie and lunch in Casino at 2.15pm.

The weather was fine but the wind did not assist at all. Kyogle was a welcome sight, and I was billeted for the night with newly found friends.

Day 4 – 9 October 2003 – Kyogle to Brisbane – 160kms I departed Kyogle at 7.45am and had ridden 20kms to the Lions Road turnoff. I considered doing the shortcut via the border loop. I accepted the challenge knowing that the energy sapping mountain climbs might offset any benefit of the 20km shorter distance. The first steep hill I made halfway up and had to walk. The rest of the hills I rode over and made Beaudesert for lunch and a one hour break. I departed Beaudesert at 1.50pm and was home at 5pm having done a total distance of over 600kms feeling very tired but satisfied. *Tom asks that anyone wanting to do distance riding with him, please contact him on 3841 4198.*



Cooyar Campout Weekend 11-12 October 2003

by Heather Horne

Is it, I wondered, good form to throw your cycle into a ditch and lie down and have a good cry? We were half way up to the top of the Great Dividing Range on a dirt track and I was lagging behind, scuppered by lack of fitness and too much roast pork dinner the night before.

It hadn't started out this way; I dimly recalled feeling full of beans cycling out of Blackbutt the day before with the BBTA, who had organized a weekend tour of the Cooyar region. The tour took in Blackbutt, Yarraman, the Palms National Park, Cooyar and part of the Great Dividing Range before heading back to Blackbutt again.

The day was surprisingly chilly as we set out and remained so for the rest of the weekend but we were rewarded by the best of early spring weather – clear



blue skies and crisp mornings. We headed out of Blackbutt, with Terry, our Intrepid Leader, muttering darkly about headwinds. Indeed, as we climbed out of Blackbutt towards Yarraman, and our first bakery stop, we had the first taste of the headwinds that would be with us for the rest of the day. The beauty and clarity of the spring day were momentarily lost in the onslaught of traffic on the short ride into town, but once outside the town the roads were much, much quieter. The countryside out from Yarraman ranged from dry grassy cattle country to lush pastures to eucalypt and palm forests. Cows stared in a faintly bewildered fashion as we shwished by. We passed cottage gardens full of bougainvillea, spring flowers, flourishing vegetable patches and once, a goat tethered to a gatepost.

We stopped in the Palms National Park for a break after a demanding climb – the Park might possibly be the smallest

in Queensland at only 12 hectares, containing a mix of remnant rainforest and – you guessed it- lots of palms. Smallest National Park or not, it was a welcome oasis to brew up a restorative cup of tea.

Our camping site was in a pleasant little park next to the pub in town. While a few folk opted to spend the afternoon with their feet up at camp, the rest opted for a ride out to the abandoned Muntapa rail tunnel, which, for all you factoid freaks out there, is the longest single bore tunnel in Australia. As the tunnel is exactly straight from one end to the other it provides the optical illusion that the other end was only a few score meters away. It is, in fact, a shade under 290 meters long and it does get disconcertingly dark inside, only relieved by the patch of light in the distance from the tunnel's other end. The tunnel now houses a bent-wing bat colony. We didn't see or hear any of the tiny creatures but there was a distinct smell of bat droppings to remind us that they were there, somewhere in the darkness above our heads.

The post ride beer opportunity was provided by Alistair who kindly lobbed a few kilos of ice and several 6-packs into his BOB trailer and sold the rest of us beer for \$1.50 a bottle. Could this have been the cheapest beer in South East Queensland on that Saturday night?

A motocross rally in the town show grounds gave us the opportunity to have a nominally hot shower and roast pork dinner. We crowded round the barbecue pits, drooling with anticipation, like, um... the ravenously hungry crowd of cycle riders that we were! We reluc-



tantly tore ourselves away when we were told the food wouldn't be served until 6.30 and made the best of it by heading to the beer tent.

The next morning a few early risers were treated to the sight of platypus nosing around in the waters of the creek we were camped next to. The later risers had their opportunity for a bit of nature appreciation as a (quite possibly) barking owl had taken up residence in a niche in the big gum in the campground. He was picture perfect, framed by his hidey-hole and regarding all with a sleepy wariness. In fact the whole place was alive with bird life – sulphur crested cockatoos, honey eaters and galahs.

Our day started with an 18km stretch of "upness" out of Cooyar. The carcasses of numerous kangaroos, hares and wallabies on the road were a grim reminder that there were far too many strangers in town, driving their big cars far too fast.



I prayed we wouldn't run into any cars and their drivers on the ride out of town, and we did our best to avoid running over the roadkill. The dirt road wound relentlessly uphill, a real challenge for the toughest cycle tourer, and nearly impossible for me!

All of which brings me to where I was, up a hill and faced with the decision of whether to throw my cycle into a ditch and howl – or not. I eventually decided to compromise; my bike stayed with me and I leant of the handlebars and sobbed. I had thoughts of evil punishments for Terry, like tweaking his nose and filling his sleeping bag with cornflakes. Then I realized he was my lift back to Brisbane. I gritted my teeth and pressed on.

But the view, and the chocolate bar in my pannier, at our rest stop was worth all the pain. We noticed that the block of land where we were brewing our well-earned cups of tea had been recently sold to some lucky person. I envied them the view they would wake up to every morning.

Cooyar Campout (cont)

The rest of the ride was more or less downhill into Blackbutt from there. The last few kilometers took us through stands of eucalypts, rural properties and good quality country roads with very little traffic. The ride ended at Les Miller Park with a late lunch of hamburgers from a local take away. All in all, an excellent, well-organised weekend with the usual good cycling, good company and lots of laughs.

**Whirl around Wivenhoe**

By Kerry Neighbour

This 115km ride was held on Sunday 19 October, led by Maggie. Maggie had done a great job of the maps provided – they were even in colour! They were not really necessary as the route is fairly simple – straight out to Esk, then right to Somerset Dam, then back home. There were 13 in the group. We started off in leisurely fashion, but we had been given the ride leader's permission to go at our own speed as long as we stopped at Esk for the group to catch up. A visiting rider from St George took up the challenge, and we both moved up to around 35-40kph and cruised on out over rolling hills to Esk (40km away). We hit a bit of a rain spot, which made things look very dismal but it quickly cleared away. If you were of a religious bent, you could probably make something of it, but I was just thankful my bike did not get dirty!

Three of us pulled into Esk some 45 minutes (as it turned out) before the tail riders

Whirl around Wivenhoe—continued

showed up. I think the average speed for this section was around 28 or so. The pies at Esk were brilliant. The buildings around the bakery looked like they had just come from a Wild West movie – complete with picture perfect hills in the background. I could almost hear the honky-tonk piano in the background. We spent a long time here contemplating these sorts of things, but we became a bit restless waiting for the last riders to show up.

As soon as the tail riders hove into sight, three of us started off on our own again for Somerset House, the next stop. For some reason, this rather short stretch was very difficult. The first section had been used by a VERY heavy tractor, or perhaps the road was very soft from the heat or something. Anyway, the road was corrugated with the tread pattern of the tractor – which made it very hard to ride at any decent speed. And the wind seemed to have picked up as well. It was one of those funny days – as soon as you stopped to work out where the wind was coming from – there wasn't a sign of any wind at all. And you could not see any trees moving etc – but as soon as you started cycling, there magically appeared this mighty wind. Somerset House is a restored turn-of-the-century place that is well worth a visit. The view from the lookout there is brilliant. But then, at the time, I would have used any excuse to get away from the headwind!

It was only a short 10km run into Somerset itself after the stop, but it seemed further. About 5km short of Somerset, a few of the younger riders took off in a sort of break-away, so I tagged along. I was a bit surprised as they had been fairly slow getting into Esk, but perhaps they had cleverly been saving their energy. We almost got a paceline going, but the speed did not hold steady enough for that. Anyway, we kept up a fairly brisk pace into Somerset Dam (the halfway point at some 56km), where we all fairly well collapsed into the cool shade of the general store.

There was much fearful talk of the Splyard Creek hill to come in the next section. When I did the ride with James (from the other direction), I did not particularly make note of any extreme hill, so I was not unduly worried (I should have been, as it turned out).

We stopped at a small creek at around the 95km mark for a final regroup before the "hard bit". Since it had been fairly hard the

last 15km or so, this was starting to worry me a bit. We stopped there for some time (half an hour or so), so my muscles really cooled down. This is why long breaks like this are a very bad idea. I would have liked to have kept going, but riding etiquette dictates otherwise. Actually, when the last rider did eventually roll in, she said that she had been riding by herself for so long, and had seen no other riders, she thought she had missed the meeting spot. I can well remember being in exactly that same situation myself when I first took up cycling, which is why the mandatory "re-groups" are so important to keep the ride together.

The next bit was actually a fairly fast section – as long as you kept the speed up, you could actually "roll" over most of the hills. Actually, this is one of the great delights of bike riding for me (that and pacelines). If you get the layout of the hills just right (ie, not too steep, and not too close together), then I prefer this sort of riding to completely flat terrain. It has something to do with the fact that you see this great hill come up before you, and you think "oh no, not another hill...", but you have speed on the bike, you are in the right gear, and you climb the hill at speed – almost effortlessly. The idea is to change UP a couple of gears before the hill, and to keep your cadence up there. I am sure there is a scientific reason for how it works, but it seems to defy all common sense.

There were a couple of very long hills coming up to Splyard Creek, but since I did not know exactly which hill was the one to fear, I kept thinking that each steep hill was the one. This was a good thing, as Maggie assured us all that after this one big hill, it was "downhill all the way" after that. Eventually I came to Splyard Creek – I had no doubt about it when I saw it. I gave up in horror and walked. Stan did a good job and pedalled up with the great limitation of only having a double chain-ring on his road bike. A few of the others zig-zagged their way up, but frankly, I could not see the point.

I actually limped into Fernvale with fairly stiff legs – I was very glad I did not have to pedal much further! It seemed I was not the only one, as a few of us laid around the lawn for awhile resting our legs. My overall average for the 113km was 25.3 kph, not too disappointing seeing the mountains we had gone over.

SPARE SPOKES

Health Warning—Plastic Water Bottles

This email was circulated around my office. I do not know what to make of it, and whether the threat is really real, but I reproduce it here as food for thought and possible further research: *Many are unaware of poisoning caused by re-using plastic bottles. Some of you may be in the habit of using and re-using your disposable mineral water bottles (eg. Evian, Aqua, Ice Mountain, Vita, etc), keeping them in your car or at work. Not a good idea. In a nutshell, the plastic (called polyethylene terephthalate or PET) used in these bottles contains a potentially carcinogenic element (something called diethylhydroxylamine or DEHA). The bottles are safe for one-time use only; if you must keep them longer, it should be or no more than a few days, a week max, and keep them away from heat as well. Repeated washing and rinsing can cause the plastic to break down and the carcinogens (cancer-causing chemical agents) can leach into the water that YOU are drinking. Better to invest in water bottles that are really meant for multiple uses. This is not something we should be scrimping on. Those of you with family - so please advise them, especially children.*

James Trimmer has set a date for his supported 300 km ride—it is on Sunday 2nd May 2004—the Labour Day long weekend—on the Darling Downs. You might like to get in early and book a hotel for the Sunday night—you will have earned the rest!

28 happy tourers completed Gavin's Numinbah Valley ride on 15/16 November. Ed was the only camper—the rest of us stayed in the Imperial Hotel or other salubrious places. 7 of the group are relatively new to touring—good to see. The Mt Tomewin climb tested us on Sunday morning but the swim at Burleigh was an appropriate reward.

A Cycle Club Like Ours...



In late November I will be in Auckland for the weekend and I got the idea of doing a club ride, if I could find a club and a ride. A few searches on the internet revealed the existence of the Auckland Cycle Touring Association (website www.geocities.com/actanz). BBTA is rather proud of our 20 year history – but this club was formed on 24 February 1949! The club has a membership of around 100, catering for cyclists interested in riding in the company of others. The club arranges a ride each Sunday ranging from 50km to 100km. About once a month they have a Saturday ride and, in the summer, a mid week evening ride to a restaurant. On long weekends they go to places such as Coromandel, Matamata and Cambridge, and they also arrange social events.

Their website reports that “the Club offers easy paced non-competitive rides with frequent coffee stops” (sounds familiar!). Reportedly it was once suggested that the initials of the club stood for **Auckland Coffee and Tea Association**. The club prefers an alternative interpretation - **Away Cycling To Adventure**.

Lesley Anderson

For Sale Matt Trueman at trueman@vtown.com.au has a Cannondale RT3000 tandem for sale. This 2002 model bike has travelled only 200km. It is a large/small size, has ultegra/XTR components, trans-am saddles, spd pedals, and shimano flight deck computer. Matt spent \$6500 on the bike and would sell it for \$4500.



Bicycle Queensland Update

Bike Week Marching

Bike Week in Brisbane has moved to March 20-28, 2004, which may be different to what some people expected. The old springtime Bike Week was just too close to the Cycle Queensland event, and confusing for the public. Now they have 6 months separation, which makes some sense.

Bike Week will have its usual big events (the Great Brisbane Bike Ride on the 28th and Ride to Work Day on the 24th) and smaller events covering women in cycling, cycle film night,

planning issues, racing, and hopefully a touring tales night of some wacky wonderful tour in a volcano or the like. (Any takers?)

But just as much effort is going into planning for next year's Cycle Queensland 2004, from Miriam Vale to Kilkivan, featuring great coastal towns of Agnes Water, Bargara and Woodgate and rural gems like Biggenden, Gayndah and Goomeri.

BQ greatly appreciates that the BBTA have provided a good team presence on Cycle Queensland in both riders and volunteers - so please mark your diaries now! September 4th to 12th. This year's event survey had a rider satisfaction result of 90% so we must be doing something right!

Ben Wilson and John Franklin

Bicycle Queensland Everyday Cycling Every Day

BQ provides the following services to members:

- Australian Cyclist magazine and Queensland Cyclist Newsletter 6 times a year
- Insurance: third party & third party property cover when cycling
- Legal advice in the event of an incident
- Representation at state and local government level
- Discounts on BQ events & at participating bike shops

BQ supports the BBTA by providing public liability cover for the organization & ride leaders at no cost. Please help yourself & cycling by joining BQ. 12 months membership: \$50 single, \$60 household. See www.bq.org.au or phone 3844 1144.

The Confessions of a Novice Tourer

by Lindsay Fawdry

This is my report of the *Wonders of Woodenbong* tour held on 25-26 October led by Peter Brennan.

It was midnight on Friday 24th October 2003 and it shouldn't be this hard!! I've bushwalked in my previous life, B.C. (Before Cycling) and been on extended sea-kayaking trips but I've never before had this much trouble packing for a weekend away. The problem, it seems, is because I've changed my mode of transport to a bicycle, and everything has to fit into two dinky panniers on the back rack.

A few more trial packs, unpacks, lighten the load and repacks and to think I've got it sorted ... and its just as well 'cos I've got to get some shut-eye sometime tonight, - there's an early start in the morning, ready for my second weekend ride with the BBTA! As you can probably tell I'm a bit of a new chum to this cycling game. Don't get me wrong, ... I've ridden bikes all my life but have only just recently joined this fraternity of 'fair dinkum' cyclists ... and I'll be thinking that I've got a fair bit to learn ... and probably in a fairly short space of time!!

Now, I'm not normally a very good morning person, ... so, after the alarm went off and I packed the gear, loaded the bike, breakfasted and hit the highway, I reckon that I started to wake up somewhere between Ipswich and Cunninghams Gap. I do remember seeing the scorch marks of the latest bushfires on the eastern flanks of Mt Cordeau and Mt Mitchell as I approached The Gap. Next stop Warwick, veer left and a lovely secondary road to Killarney where I found the appointed meeting place at the cop shop fairly easily, to discover Stan and Jenny, Jim and Judy already there and getting geared up! Good, I've not embarrassed myself by being late, so that's a bonus point!!

12 riders eventually assembled and Peter B. gave his briefing on the intended trip and what to expect for the next two days riding. Now, I distinctly remember the spiel given by Terry, the leader on my first tour (to Cooyar) a couple of weeks prior, and I'm beginning to get the picture that these guys aren't to be trusted!! - all this talk of

undulations and gentle gradients and stuff just doesn't wash with me ... I know its going to be tough and I'm going to be doing a lot of sweating and heavy breathing ... and that's before we get to the gentle gradients!!

Like a well oiled machine we rolled out of town, across the Condamine River and ducking under the attacks of the maggie on the outskirts of town we, at our gentle tourers' pace, let the urban world slip away slowly behind us.

All too soon there is a highlight coming up - a border post! - we're crossing into NSW, but there're no guards and no need for passports or visas here so we cycle boldly on.

Next stop for a breather and a re-group is Legume where Peter tells us there's a bit of 'up' before big mobs of 'down' which should give us all a smile! Which it did, but after the great glide 'down' there was even more 'up' and this is where the sweating and the heavy breathing I was talking about before started to show itself.

Too many of my peers saw me, so I couldn't lie about the fact that I'd had to walk a bit of that 4km "gentle gradient" - and when I eventually joined up with the body of the group at the top for morning smoko they seemed to swallow my yarn about combining my love of bushwalking with my cycling ... and they even had the good grace to wait till my heart rate went down and I regained some colour before we headed off again, towards our lunch stop at Urbenville. I actually remember a lot about this section of the trip, and the next leg to our camp spot at Woodenbong. Pastures green from recent rains, spring foals, young poddy calves, loads of bird life and a glimpse of Mt Lindesay as we freewheel down into Woodenbong - what a beautiful country.



As a new-chum it was interesting to observe the group dynamics as we hit 'town', - how half the group somehow got deflected into the local pub while the other half headed straight for the campsite to set up camp and then just next door for a dip in the pool with all the local kids - I guess we all had different ideas on how to get cool after a long hot ride, some worked from the inside-out and others from the outside-in!!

Saturday night dinner at the Woodenbong Pub was a hoot - we didn't have to book, we had the place mostly to ourselves. Storm clouds had been building all afternoon and now there was an amazing light show going on in the sky and the power started to cut in and out. Luckily our meals were prepared by our hosts during these interruptions and the quality of the tucker was first class. After a night of merriment and lots of yarns and lies being told we retired to camp in dribs and drabs.

Sunday morning was like a military operation, - up, breakfast, break camp, and away by 7.30am in an attempt to enjoy the cool of the morning before the heat of the day zapped us. Today's going to be a challenge for me - I've been put on notice ... "no walking up hills today", I've got to ride the whole way - crikey, I dunno about that!!

As we head off from our smoko break at the bottom of the big "gentle gradient" Peter and Peter rode beside me briefly, giving me a few tips and words of encouragement and then disappeared quickly out of site. I put my head down and tucked in behind Terry, determined not to lose sight of his back tyre, not to look up at the never-ending climb, and NOT TO GET OFF AND WALK!! Somehow it worked, and when we reached the summit I couldn't help but punch the air - it felt like I'd just finished a leg of the Tour de France.

Back in Killarney for lunch and what a great weekend its been and what good company I've been in. I reckon I'll do another weekend tour soon (if they'll have me?) - only trouble is they'll probably expect me to ride up all the hills now!!*?

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Cycling Times is the Newsletter of the Brisbane Bicycle Touring Association Inc. It is published every two months.

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