

BOROONDARA

Bicycle Users Group

Newsletter February 2013

Boroondara BUG meetings are normally held on the 2nd Thursday of each month except January. Our next meeting is on Thursday 14th February. It will be held in the function room at the Elgin Inn, corner Burwood Rd and Elgin St, Hawthorn (Melway 45 B10). Optional dinner at 6.30pm, meeting starts at 7.30pm.

The Boroondara BUG is a voluntary group working to promote the adoption of a safe and practical environment for utility and recreational cyclists in the City of Boroondara. We have close links with the City of Boroondara, Bicycle Network Victoria, and other local Bicycle Users Groups. Two of the positions on the Boroondara Bicycle Advisory Committee, which meets quarterly, are assigned to Boroondara BUG members.

Boroondara BUG has a website at <http://www.boroondarabug.org> that contains interesting material related to cycling, links to other cycle groups, recent Boroondara BUG Newsletters and breaking news. Our email address for communications to the BUG is boroondarabug@gmail.com

We also have a Yahoo Group: Send a blank email to: BoroondaraBug-subscribe@yahoogroups.com to receive notification when the latest monthly newsletter and rides supplement have been placed on the web site and details of our next meeting, and very occasional other important messages.

All articles in this newsletter are the views and opinions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of any other members of Boroondara BUG. All rides publicised in the Rides Supplement are embarked upon at your own risk.

Features

Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail

Never was \$14M of government money better spent than on this very scenic trail, at 134km, or a little more according to most odometers, currently the longest in Australia. Stretching from Tallarook to Mansfield the 121km main trail follows the very picturesque Goulburn River Valley for its first half, then turns north to cross the Brankeet Arm of Lake Eildon at Bonnie Doon, and finally heads east towards the high country with views across to Mt Buller. A spur line runs for 13km between the locality of Cathkin and Alexandra.

The trail mainly follows the easement of the broad gauge branch line which opened to Yea in 1883 and Mansfield in 1891. The branch from Cathkin reached Alexandra in 1909. The entire line closed in 1978. Unlike many of Victoria's rail trails this one was constructed over a relatively short period due to a large injection of Federal stimulus funding. Apart from the long bridge at Bonnie Doon most of the construction has occurred since 2010, with the trail officially opening in June 2012. It is managed by the shires of Mitchell, Murrundindi and Mansfield.

The trail surface varies being either chert (a compacted black stone that looks and almost feels like bitumen) or granitic sand, but is almost all unsealed and most suitable for hybrids or mountain bikes. Horse riders are allowed on the granitic sand sections but have a separate, rather overgrown, bridle path near the others. Some of the sand sections have reportedly been quite muddy and heavy going during wetter periods. They had dried out by the time I first rode the trail in mid-November, but there was evidence of wetter times in the form of longitudinal ruts, some of them deep enough to present a hazard to cyclists. There were 73 bridges on the old rail line, many of which have been restored or replaced, but in some places low level crossings have been substituted. A highlight of the trail is the 200m Cheviot Tunnel, the only tunnel on any Australian rail trail.

Although the gradients on rail trails are always gradual there are a few significant climbs on this one. If you start at the Tallarook end the first is the ascent to the Cheviot Tunnel between Yea and Molesworth. Then from Cathkin the main trail climbs steadily to its highest point at the Merton Gap, and the spur line to Alexandra climbs steadily for most of its length. The

rewards for these climbs come in the form of glorious views, some of which can be enjoyed at well-placed picnic shelters, and if you've planned your direction with care, an even longer descent on the other side.

Cyclists' needs are well catered for along the trail. As well as the previously mentioned picnic shelters, there's a wondrous variety of cafes at strategic intervals. There are nicely constructed toilets with water for hand-washing dotted along the trail, but drinking water can be in short supply, even at some of the cafes, so cyclists need to carry ample supplies. There are also two bike transfer services, one based at Yea and the other at Mansfield.

The trail lends itself to touring with both accommodation and eateries at easy intervals. Another option is to explore it from base camps at Yea, Mansfield, or Alexandra. In November 2012 I organised a four-day base camp at Yea for a group of 20. Most of us stayed in cabins in the Yea Family Caravan Park, which is within easy walking distance of the town centre and proved very satisfactory. On day one nine of us caught the Albury train to Seymour and rode from there to Yea. Some of those who preferred to drive to Yea rode out to meet us for coffee at Trawool and accompanied us back to Yea. On day two we used the services of Mark Spencer, based at Yea, to transport us and our bikes to Mansfield. Our stronger riders disembarked there to ride what turned out to be somewhat over 80km back to Yea, while most of us returned to Bonnie Doon for a ride that was about 20km shorter. Our destination on day three was Alexandra. Some rode all the way there and back, about 68km and quite a tough assignment, while others took advantage of the various cars available to ride only one way. On our final day the train travellers rode back to Tallarook to take their chances with the trains from Seymour. Our luck was in and thanks to a sympathetic guard we got eight cyclists and bikes onto a two-carriage sprinter.

In early December I was back on the trail again, this time in a group of four. We took the Seymour train to Tallarook and rode the trail to Yea on the first day. The next day we moved on with our panniers up, and it is up, to Bonnie Doon where we stayed two nights in the caravan park near the town centre. As extreme heat was forecast for our third day we got a very early start for the relatively short and easy ride to Mansfield and back, minus panniers, and then spent a lazy afternoon in the pool. Day four saw us transporting ourselves and panniers back up, first to the Merton Gap and then to the Cheviot Tunnel, and back to Yea. On day five we rode back to Tallarook and were lucky to get our four bikes onto the first train to appear, which was quite crowded due to buses replacing trains on the Albury and Shepparton lines.

Don't wait too long before you ride this wonderful new rail trail. At present after good rains the Eildon Reservoir is brimming full, and the wild life, including birds and insects, is splendidly abundant. Who can tell how long this happy state of affairs will last. Seize the day!

Access to the trail

Little over an hour away from Melbourne the trail is easily accessed by either car or train. One rail option is the Albury service which now includes power vans on all trains with ample room for a large number of bikes. Loco-hauled Shepparton trains also have a reasonable amount of space for bikes. Neither of these trains stop at Tallarook, but it is possible to ride from Seymour along the Goulburn Valley Hwy, which has a good shoulder, and move onto the trail approaching Trawool. Another option for smaller groups is the more frequent Seymour service, which stops at Tallarook, but which uses sprinter or velocity trains which don't accommodate so many bikes. The great advantage of this option is that you can get straight onto the rail trail, and the section between Tallarook and Trawool is both very picturesque and easy riding.

Further Information

The most authoritative sources of information on the trail are:

The official web site at: <http://www.victorianrailtrails.com.au/>

And the Rail Trails Australia web site at

http://www.railtrails.org.au/index.php?option=com_railtrails&view=trail&id=90&Itemid=15

Maps

At the time of my base camp there was still no entirely satisfactory map of the trail available. The best one I could find was the one on the Rail Trail Bike Tours web site at <http://railtrailbiketours.vpweb.com.au/Trail-Map-and-Distances.html> This is also available at information centres along the trail. It is not entirely accurate as regards the places where the trail crosses the road and the distances. I suspect it was prepared prior to the completion of the trail and without regard to the several places where the trail does not exactly follow the rail easement.

Rail Trails Australia has now produced an update to their publication *Rail Trails of Victoria and South Australia*, which includes the Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail. High quality maps and elevation profiles are included for the trail, as well as descriptive notes. This supplement will be included in all new copies of the guide. It is also offered separately for \$5 including postage.

Accommodation

There are caravan parks with cabins at Yea, Bonnie Doon, Mansfield and Alexandra. Molesworth has a caravan park and Yarck has tent sites. Motel and/or hotel accommodation is also available at all these centres, and at Trawool and Maindample. In addition there are various B&Bs dotted along the trail.

Tour Operators and Transfer Services

Rail Trail Bike Tours, Yea <http://railtrailbiketours.vpweb.com.au/>

All Terrain Cycles, Mansfield <http://www.allterraincycles.com.au/>.

Trail Notes

Maribyrnong Trail Reconnects to Brimbank Park

Flood recovery works to repair the Maribyrnong River Trail between Brimbank Park and Canning Street have recently been completed and the trail is now open again for use. The \$336,000 project was part of the Victorian State Government recovery program for damage incurred in late 2009. The restoration works included infrastructure and drainage improvements and surface works to the flood damaged path that runs along the banks of the Maribyrnong River. The surface has been restored to fine crushed rock, suitable for mountain, hybrid bicycles, generally bikes with wider tyres. The Maribyrnong River Trail is once again fully connected for 28km from the city through to Brimbank Park.

Moonee Ponds Creek Path

Moonee Ponds Creek Path is now open under the Western Ring Rd once again, albeit with some bumpy joints.

Walmer Street Bridge Re-opened

Emergency repairs to the Walmer Street Bridge on the Main Yarra Trail have been completed in record time and bikes have returned to this vital route for now. Support props have been installed under the cracked section of the bridge approach while engineers investigate the appropriate permanent repair to the bridge. Users will be given prior warning when it is required to close the bridge again when the permanent repair is undertaken.

Gardiners Creek Trail

Detour Removed

The Gardiners Creek Trail near the old gasworks site (the new Masters site) has been opened for path users and the detour is now removed. Note that there are still some other works remaining, which include replacing the existing temporary fencing with a permanent safety fencing on the creek side, centre linemarking and other minor path connection works. These works are scheduled to be undertaken in the short term.

Further Works Planned

Flood mitigation works planned by Melbourne Water will mean further closures/detours in the not too distant future.

General News

Darebin – Yarra Link Update

The most recent section of the link to be completed, the underpass under Heidelberg Rd to Sparks Reserve, is due to open in March.

The final section from Sparks Reserve to Willsmere Park in Boroondara, will be managed by VicRoads. It involves the construction of 1.8km of shared path and four bridges, including three bridges across the Darebin Creek and the bridge over the Yarra. Pre-construction works have commenced and construction will begin in the 2013/2014 financial year following finalisation of the detailed design and land acquisition. VicRoads anticipates completing the link in late 2015.

Monash News

A draft copy of the Monash City Walking and Cycling Strategy has finally arrived and you can access it by going to the link <http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay/walking-and-cycling-in-monash.htm>

Have a read of it and then make comments back to the council. Submissions to the council need to be done by the 1st of March and can be done by email at walkcycle@monash.vic.gov.au

Richard Adams has created a Facebook page for those who are interested in sharing news and comments about cycling in Monash. See <http://www.facebook.com/MonashCityCyclingNetwork?fref=ts>

Boroondara News

New Map App for Boroondara

The City of Boroondara is utilising advanced technology to help riders navigate the district. You can now get a map app for the iPhone and iPad that shows recreational bicycle pathways and other information to help you find your way around Boroondara. Riders install the free Avenza map app and then download the free Boroondara map to their device.

The Boroondara map shows a simplified version of the municipality, allowing users to clearly identify routes along the network of shared and unsealed paths. It also shows main roads as a reference point. Other visible local content includes water fill points, shopping precincts, playgrounds and train stations

Users can pan and zoom the map using pinch and drag gestures and find points of interest using the Google search feature. The map is available offline, so there is no need for an internet connection while using the map. The app is currently available from the Apple App Store, and Avenza are working on an Android version to be released in early 2013. A 'regular' PDF version of the map can be downloaded from the City of Boroondara website, but this version will not link with your device's GPS.

Minutes of Boroondara BUG Meeting, Wednesday 12th December 2012, Elgin Inn, Hawthorn

MINUTES

Attendance and Apologies

Present: Peter Campbell (Chair), John Parker, Julia Blunden, David Farrow, Glennys Jones, Gordon Macmillan, Alan Tonkin, David Leong, Graeme Stone, Malcolm Faul,

Apologies: Graham Ellis, Ken Morrison, Alister Huth, Hedley Finger, Ken Parker, Myf Parker, Hank van Apeldoorn, Carole Ingvarson, Mick Nolan (Lighter Footprints)

Correspondence:

In

- Acknowledgement from Tom Haysom, Stonnington Council's Sustainable Transport Officer of letter from 'Stonnington BUG' (aka John Parker)
- Email from Chris Hui calling for agenda items for December BBAC meeting
- Email from Chris Hui re VicRoads Bike Rider Safety survey
- Response from Ellisa Schmidtke, Parks Victoria, to David Leong's enquiry about sealing the path between Fairfield Pipe Line Bridge and Yarra Boulevard, Kew (It was agreed that a letter should be written from the BUG supporting the PV proposal)
- Acknowledgments from Cr Steve Hurd of both emails
- Acknowledgment from Cr Jenny Addis
- Acknowledgement from Cr Philip Mallis

Out

- Email to Cr Steve Hurd asking for details of attacks on guide dogs by other dogs
- Email to all new councillors introducing BBUG and foreshadowing a meeting invitation

Matters Arising:

1. **Hawthorn to Box Hill Trail:** The trail now appears on the revised PBN from Box Hill as far as East Camberwell. Concern was expressed that the underpass at East Camberwell has been effectively narrowed by the erection of handrails. **Peter C** undertook to write to Robert Clark and Ted Baillieu pointing out the need to implement the PBN route.
2. **Golfers Choice and Urban Bush Path:** Nil to report
3. **Gasworks Site Redevelopment:** A cord was tied across the detour, presumably by a prankster, creating a hazard for cyclists but fortunately no one was hurt. An issue with shade-cloth obstructing vision has been resolved. Glennys J has reported since the meeting that the detour will be in place somewhat longer than originally planned, ie until after Christmas, which means that it may need to be repaired/upgraded – an agenda item for the BAC meeting.
4. **Darebin – Yarra Link:** Those present all acclaimed the announcement by Planning Minister Matthew Guy of \$18M funding to complete the link after a two-year delay. However we agreed that the proposed timeline is too long and felt it is

reasonable to ask that the project be completed by November 2014. **Julia B** agreed to write a letter of thanks on behalf of the BUG, also requesting the shorter timeline, to Matthew Guy, cc'd to Ted Baillieu, Josh Frydenburg and Andrew MacIntosh.

5. **Belford Rd Underpass:** nil to report
6. **Dights Falls Trail:** David F advised that he had submitted three documents (concept options presentation, brochure and VicRoads submission) on the proposed Dights Falls Trail to Anthony Barton after discussing the idea with Alistair Cumming. The documents have been referred to the South East Metropolitan Region for a review from a regional perspective.

David mentioned that he had undertaken some very short term road traffic counts of the Eastern Freeway to help assess the traffic impact of the bike path proposal on the operational performance of the freeway. The counts showed that the pm peak hour e/b off ramp volume of 500 vph is far lower than that required for a 2 lane ramp exit suggesting that the 5 freeway lanes west of Chandler Hwy could be reduced to 4 freeway lanes with only a minor increase in freeway traffic congestion. The e/b on ramp from Chandler Hwy is carrying 1200 vph on its single lane entry which means that the freeway to the east of Chandler Hwy is carrying 700 vph more traffic on the 4 lanes that have been provided on this freeway section. If a freeway running lane east of Chandler Hwy were to be converted to an emergency lane and the emergency lane converted to a bike path then the need for an additional bridge crossing of the Yarra River could be avoided. However this would likely be opposed by the bus companies and has therefore not been included in our bike path proposal.

It was also mentioned that he and other BBUG members had discussed the idea with other cyclists at the Darebin – Yarra link rally, including a couple of Councillors from Banyule, the Mayor of Yarra and a retired senior VicRoads officer who could not see any flaws in the proposal.

7. **Stonnington Matters:** Glennys J reported that the Malvern Valley Primary School where she assists with Bike Ed has received the "2012 Ted Wilson Memorial Bike Education Award". Sadly one of their trainers has died and a replacement is needed. Julia B reported seeing a letter in one of the local papers criticising cyclists for riding counter flow in one way streets in South Yarra to which she intended replying.
8. **Proposed Changes to Local Laws re Riding through Parks:** Julia B reported that she did not yet know whether Mick Nolan had been successful in being selected for the Hays Paddock Advisory Committee that is being formed. It could be useful to have a cyclist on this committee.
9. **Anniversary Trail Pedestrian Refuge at Prospect Hill Rd:** Alan T reported that there have been no improvements for cyclists riding along Prospect Hill here despite his letter to Council. It was agreed that we should push for sharrows, signs and reduced parking at the BAC meeting. We will also request that in future BUG input be sought prior to the design of such refuges and other projects.
10. **Incorporation:** Alan T and Malcolm F had both scanned the new model rules supplied by Hedley F. They agreed that there are some minor issues with membership rules but no real obstacles to our plans to incorporate. We will need to elect a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. We won't need to have an annual audit and the cost of incorporation should only be around \$31. We agreed to go ahead with a vote on incorporation at our March meeting as planned.
11. **Domestic Animals Management Plan Review:** **Alan T** is still working on a BUG submission. A call for accounts of incidents involving dogs appeared in the December newsletter. **Julia B** offered to forward the response she received from Cr Steve Hurd, re issues with guide dogs and other dogs off-lead.
12. **Council Elections:** It was confirmed that Jane Addis in Maling Ward will be our first invitee for 2013.
13. **Treasurer's Report:** Malcolm F reported that the BUG currently has \$1,095.82 in the bank as well as our \$3,000 term deposit. **Malcolm** will invoice BNV for the two Super Sunday bike counters at \$120 each.

New Business

1. **HA Smith Reserve Bridge:** BAC members received a copy of an email from Jason den Hollander pointing out some issues with the design, mainly concerning the access from the Stonnington side. Graeme S reported that he had heard that these issues have been resolved. This is an agenda item for the BAC meeting.
2. **BBAC Meeting Friday 14/12:** **Glennys J, John P, Alan T and Julia B** indicated their intention of attending. Agenda items had already been sent to Chris Hui. Glennys indicated that she would also raise the issue of unnecessary fencing being erected on the Ferndale Trail.

3. **Council's Disability and Inclusion Plan:** Glennys J reported that she had not received enough approvals for her submission to go from the BUG but had sent it in her own name. This led to a discussion of the rules for sending items in the BUG's name and we agreed that it is enough to get approval from two other members, instead of three as previously, so long as there are no objections. It was also recommended that in all emails regarding letters or submissions from the BUG, all correspondents use 'Reply all' so that others are aware of progress or lack thereof with obtaining approval.
4. **Statistics of Accidents on Shared Paths:** There was general agreement that it would be useful if such statistics were kept as they are for road accidents. **Alan T** agreed to draft a letter to be sent to the new 'Minister for Cycling' when we know who this is. It was also agreed that this should be an agenda item for the next Victorian BUGs meeting scheduled for March 2013.
5. **Problem of Blinding by Cyclists Helmet-Mounted Headlights:** Alan T explained that his concern related to blinding of motorists alongside the Proposed Belford Rd Underpass. It was agreed that the problem can be addressed by means of appropriate screens.
6. **New State Cycling Strategy:** This is now available at <http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/projects/cycling/cycling-strategy>. It has a two year timespan and is mainly fairly general. The two specific projects included are the Darebin – Yarra link and the link to Docklands alongside the north bank of the Yarra. The funds allocated are \$30M per year.

Other Business:

1. **Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Strategy:** **David F** has prepared a BBUG response to go up on an online forum. A formal submission will come later, March 2013? Individuals can also respond in various ways. Go to <http://www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au/>
2. **BUG Christmas Cards:** It was agreed that these should be sent to Jim Hondrakis and his team, and to the staff at the Elgin Inn.
3. **Next meeting:** This is currently scheduled for Thursday 14th February.

Notes by Julia Blunden

Contacts for Rides

There are many BUGs, clubs and other organisations, several of them local, which organise rides. Below are some of their contact details. A separate supplement contains details of many of their forthcoming rides.

Ashburton Riders Club

Contacts:

Tony Landsell - email: tony@diacher.com

Justin Murphy - email: murphjj@au1.ibm.com

website: <http://www.ashburtonridersclub.asn.au/>

Banyule BUG

email: banyuleBug@yahoo.com.au

website: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~banylbug/>

contacts: Richard phone: 9459 8648, or Les phone: 9459 2701

Boroondara Bushwalkers

contact Julia Blunden

phone: 9853 5095

email: jblunden@bigpond.com

website: www.keypoint.com.au/~bbwinc

Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre Bike Riding Group

Contact: Robin Kendrick, phone: 9853 3126

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Cycling Group

contact Janet Bennett

email: janpeter@bigpond.net.au or COTA,

phone: 9654 4443

website:

http://www.cotavic.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/1006/cota_cycling_brochure_jul-dec_2007.pdf

Darebin BUG

Rides and Events Coordinator

Doug Morffew, phone: 9499 7325 (AH)

email: dougmorf@alphalink.com.au

Download the Darebin BUG rides flyer, with details of rides (Word doc)

website: www.darebinbug.org.au

Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre

Phone: 9890 2467

Email: info@surreyhillsnc.org.au

Website: www.surreyhillsnc.org.au

Boroondara BUG Contacts

Membership Secretary & Treasurer:

Malcolm Faul

Phone: 9853 1369

Email: malfaul@alphalink.com.au

Address: 38 Grove Rd, Hawthorn, 3122

Media Contact: Peter Campbell

Phone: 0409 417 504

Email: <http://greenlivingpedia.org>

Hawthorn Cycle Tours

contact Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre

phone: 9815 0988

email: lexbishop@bikerider.com

website: <http://www.geocities.com/perften/Hct.html>

Knox Bicycle Touring Club Incorporated

email: Mikeaatleisure@aol.com

website: home.vicnet.net.au/~knoxbike

Manningham BUG

email: seball@netlink.com.au, H.Edwards@bom.gov.au

website: www.vicnet.net.au/~mannbug

Maroondah Bushwalking Club

To obtain details of how to book on a walk and a copy of the current walks and activities program Contact information officers:

Sandra, phone: 9728 3833, Aileen, phone: 9876 1104

website: home.vicnet.net.au/~mbush/

Melbourne Bicycle Touring Club

email info@mbtc.org.au (Note that this email address doesn't get checked every day - so don't expect an immediate response!) website: mbtc.org.au

Whitehorse Cyclists

email: ejhopper@vicnet.net.au

website: <http://www.whitehorsecyclists.org.au/>

Finbar Neighbourhood House Rides

Contact Deb in the office on 9428 7668 or 0403 028 200

YHA

contacts: Ride Co-Ordinator Kathy

rides@yhacycling.org.au or mobile 0425-792 574

or Secretary Voula on secretary@yhacycling.org.au

website: www.yhacycling.org.au has free registration

Newsletter Editor & Minutes Secretary:

Julia Blunden

phone: 9853 5095

email: jblunden@bigpond.com

Boroondara Bicycle Users Group

Membership Application Form

Name _____

Address & Postcode _____

Phone (H) _____

Phone (M) _____

Phone (W) _____

Email _____

Member of Bicycle Victoria? Please circle: Yes / No

Membership requires a payment of \$15 per household which covers 3 years. Please send cheque (made out to Boroondara Bicycle Users Group) along with this form to:

Malcolm Faul

Phone: 9853 1369

Email: malfaul@alphalink.com.au

Address: 38 Grove Rd, Hawthorn, 3122