

# BOROONDARA

*Bicycle Users Group*

## Newsletter May 2010

Boroondara BUG meetings are normally held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month except January. Our next meeting is on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May. It will be held in the function room at the Elgin Inn, cnr 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 Victoria, Bicycle Federation of Australia 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](mailto:boroondarabug@gmail.com)

We also have a Yahoo Group: Send a blank email to: [BoroondaraBug-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:BoroondaraBug-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) to receive notification when the latest monthly newsletter and rides supplement have been placed on the web site and very occasional 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 this newsletter are embarked upon at your own risk.

## Features

### Bike Touring in Vietnam

Although I'd travelled in various Asian countries, the only cycling I'd done in Asia was three somewhat nerve-wracking days in the Kathmandu Valley back in the 80s. When some of my Whitehorse Cyclist friends, who had bike-toured in Thailand the previous January, urged me to join their next trip to Vietnam with the same company, Spice Roads, I was initially uninterested. However their reassurances about the support we would receive, with bikes provided and serviced, regular refreshment stops so that nothing need be carried, and above all the ever-present option of sagging in the accompanying bus, finally overcame my fears and so I embarked on what was to be one of the best holidays of my life.

A visit to the Travel Doctor gave me new grounds for alarm, with discussion not only of likely gastric problems, but of the various mosquito-borne diseases endemic to Southeast Asia, and of rabies, which can be contracted from a whole range of animals we'd be especially likely to encounter as we cycled through villages and agricultural areas. Fortunately I'd already paid for my airfares at this stage. In fact I enjoyed better health in Vietnam than I do at home and I didn't even get the cold that is my usual price for overseas travel.

On transferring from the airport into Saigon we had our first encounters with traffic Vietnamese style. The best piece of advice of the trip came from the guide on the bus, who said that when crossing the road the cardinal rule is to walk slowly. It takes a bit of nerve at first but sure enough, if you do this, the seemingly impenetrable traffic magically flows around and you arrive at the other side unscathed. After a couple of days sightseeing in Saigon we had all mastered the art of walking around town. The next step would be to ride in the traffic.

Our first meeting with our Spice Roads guides was at a welcome dinner on our second evening in Saigon. In fact we had a very sizeable staff for our party of twenty-four. Cycling guides included chief guide Tico, his assistant Thai, and bike mechanic Chung, a local cycling champion, who not only also acted as whip but frequently provided power assistance to those struggling on hills. In addition there were the bus driver and his assistant and the driver of the truck that transported our bikes, and extra specialist guides were picked up at several points along the way. Last but certainly not least was a young woman called Minh, who prepared refreshments for our frequent stops, deftly peeling and slicing huge quantities of pineapples, mangoes, dragon

fruit, oranges, pomellos and what looked like giant nashi pears with a seriously large knife. She also provided hand-wipes, chilled drinks, nuts, biscuits and dried fruit of various kinds, setting out all these goodies on low, blue plastic tables covered with white plastic lace tablecloths, and accompanied by matching stools. Definitely a highlight of the trip!

Our first day of riding did not inspire confidence. After a long drive north from Saigon we finally got our bikes quite late in the day. Rather than the expected hybrids they were mountain bikes, and the narrow saddles did not look at all suitable for females, the majority of the group. There was no briefing, though we had earlier received some printed sheets of advice on cycling on Vietnamese roads. We simply headed off, along a relatively quiet but quite hilly road. Darkness descends early in the tropics and especially in the hills, and most of us took refuge in the bus as the light faded. A few brave souls rode all the way to our destination, Dalat, finishing in the dark with no lights, and somehow managing to locate our hotel, which had changed its name since our itinerary was printed.

Cycling round Dalat's numerous roundabouts next morning provided a fairly hair-raising introduction to local traffic conditions. I never did find out what Vietnamese law has to say about who gives way to whom on the roads – in practice the weak give way to the strong. But as the days turned into weeks, and we cycled on highways, and more often byways of every sort, we learned to recognise the various horns which drivers and motor cyclists all use to signal their intent to overtake. We also learned that motorbikes may be carrying very wide loads and need as much clearance as a truck! Cars are relatively few in Vietnam, and most traffic travels at a relatively sedate pace, so being overtaken by trucks and buses is less scary than it is in Australia. We cyclists frequently had the satisfaction of overtaking motorcycles as many are both low powered and overladen.

The Trek mountain bikes turned out to be ideal for the local conditions. Even the sealed roads we rode on usually had rough, broken sections, and much of our riding was along the dykes between the rice paddies and fish farms that cover most of Vietnam's narrow coastal plain. The paths along the dykes vary from smooth concrete to muddy, pot-holed goat tracks. Even the narrow saddles turned out to be more comfortable than they looked, and my own wide, squishy saddle felt quite strange to me on my return. Our thick tyres made uphill a tad more challenging, especially the dreaded 10% variety, though a push from Chung more than made up for this. But these bikes really came into their own on long, steep downhill, where they provided a great sense of security. One of the highlights of the tour was a 28km downhill on the smooth new route 723 to Nha Trang. As it is still incomplete the traffic is minimal. I'd never really enjoyed long downhills before but this one really converted me.

Vietnam is a visually stunning country and cycling is the ideal way to see it. The amount of water both in the paddy fields and the numerous wide rivers we crossed, and the ubiquitous lush green vegetation is a constant treat to Melburnian eyes. We were able to observe workers in the paddy fields, and market gardens with all manner of vegetables, and a great variety of free-ranging domestic birds and animals crossed our path as we rode. Elaborate, Chinese style cemeteries were quite a feature as were the individual graves which dot the paddy fields in some areas. Riding through the innumerable villages always offered much of interest, from the manufacture of rice paper of the edible variety, to limestone kilns. Several times a day we were likely to encounter large groups of uniformed children riding to or from school for the two half-day shifts, a particularly picturesque sight when it rained and the umbrellas came out, sometimes held by passengers but often by the riders themselves. Children not at school rushed out to greet us as we cycled past their homes, calling 'hello' and wanting to do high fives. The Vietnamese are a very friendly people and many of the adults also smiled and waved.

Our first bus accompanied us as far as Hue. From here we travelled on an overnight train to pick up a new bus at Nam Dinh and travel inland to Cuc Phuong National Park where we visited a primate rescue centre and climbed, on foot for once, to see a thousand year old tree. From here we travelled to Haiphong. Our last ride was a very challenging 30km on Cat Ba Island, where Chung had his work cut out keeping the slower riders up with the group. From here we took a ferry for a magical luncheon cruise through Halong Bay before bussing to our final destination Hanoi.

Our tour was perhaps a tad ambitious covering most of Vietnam in only 17 days. (Cambodia's Angkor Wat, the Mekong Delta and Sapa were optional extras.) Even though we had non-cycling days to explore key attractions there were times when we felt that we had not had sufficient time to do them justice. Our itinerary proved to be only a rough guide and cycling distances in particular varied considerably from those indicated. Our longest ride of 110km shrank to 55km, which suited me just fine but disappointed some of the stronger cyclists in our group. However where Spice Roads truly excelled was in selecting routes that were both relatively safe and very scenic for us to ride. And in providing truly memorable refreshment stops!

So set aside any fears and when the opportunity to cycle in Asia comes your way jump at it.

*Julia Blunden*

## Trail Notes

### More detours on the Gardiners Creek Trail and beyond

Nothing wrong with a good detour if it results in improvements to the trail. We now have two new detours coming up - one beneficial and one not so. Starting with the latter.

### **Detour 1:**

The M1 tollway support structures from Glenferrie Rd to about Mary St are being upgraded to suit the extra lanes and the 68 tonne B doubles now using the tollway above. Works are being implemented by the Southern Link Upgrade (SLU).

These structures, some of which have been there since the sixties, are being re-enforced with ultra strong, ultra light, carbon fibre reinforced polymers. The fibres are literally glued to the concrete. You may have seen work already being done along the gantry just west of Glenferrie Rd. Works nearer to the CBD will result in detours being put in place on the Yarra Trail. The dates appear to be somewhat malleable – quoting from their website:

"... the SLU Alliance needs to close the Main Yarra Trail between Barkly Ave and Mary St from Tuesday 27 April until September 2010. A detour route via Barkly Ave, Allan Bain Reserve and Mary St will be clearly marked and has been used successfully in the past. ..."

The current concern is the Mary St underpass. The Alliance have agreed to cut back the nearby bushes, clean the underpass, repair the lighting and install a parabolic mirror at the 90 degree exit on the southern side. However, the hairpin bend at the bottom of the underpass access ramp could be dramatically improved by introducing a less tight tarred turn circle. This detour is often used by cyclists when the boom gates on the trail are raised at Burnley Harbour. Unfortunately, the SLU has not agreed to make improvements to the turn circle, although this would result in a worthwhile legacy from the project. We hope that people write in favour of such an improvement to the SLU. Money can be found to do the works on the tollway but none for the Trail itself? At least two thousand cyclists a day will be using this underpass, plus joggers and walkers – they deserve a bit more than a bit of a sweep and a prune.

Work on the section from Barkly Ave to Grange Rd will also result in closures, although the timing is vague:

"... Further strengthening works will be completed using a combination of trail closures during non peak times (9:30am to 4pm Mon - Fri, and weekends) and the installation of protective scaffolding to allow the trail to remain open whilst works occur overhead. ..."

It may be easier to leave the Yarra Trail at Yarra Boulevard, dodge the fire hydrant in the middle of the path, cross the Grange Rd bridge and use the Yarra Trail on the south side. You can then cross back to the north side at the Morrell bridge at Anderson St, near the botanical gardens.

### **Detour 2:**

The Gardiners Creek Trail will be re-constructed between Toorak Rd and the Hawthorn Velodrome. The detour should be well signed and all off road. A link to the detour map can be found on the main page of the BBUG's website. The trails just get better and better in Boroondara.

*Thanks to John Parker for the good oil on these detours*

## **Improvements to the Anniversary and Gardiners Creek Trails**

The large spoon drain on the east side of the Anniversary just south of Alamein Station and the Laurel St link has been filled in. It's now flat land covered in grass seed. No more risk of cyclists falling in!

Also work is to start on a major realignment of the difficult and dangerous crossing at the Laurel St link (Anniversary Trail - Alamein station) and the new crossing at Winton Rd (Gardiners Creek Trail) imminently - which, in Council speak, probably means in the next couple of months.

*Thanks to John Parker for these welcome news items*

## **New lights on Footscray Rd Crossing**

Traffic signals are to be installed at the hazardous intersection of the Footscray Road bike path with Appleton Dock Road, remedying one of the most embarrassing road engineering blunders in recent Melbourne history.

*From In the Loop*

## **Events**

### **4<sup>th</sup> Cycle Indonesia Trip**

In July 2010 the 4th Cycle Indonesia (South South Sulawesi) trip will run.

Trip features:

- 525km back roads, mountainous, scenic and non-tourist route;
- Bi-lingual Australian guide;
- Visits to markets, schools, tea plantation, ship building, salt making and mosques;

- Support vehicle;
- Bike mechanic;
- Quality accommodation;
- Indonesian food;
- Daily Yoga and swimming.

Details at: <http://www.cyclesouthsouthsulawesiindonesia.com/>

## Product News

### monkeysee - playful hi-vis and reflective clothing and accessories (Advertisement)

The gear we do is fun (not daggy!) - and affordable - yet truly effective. At monkeysee we get a big thrill out of innovating and collaborating too! We are very happy to take suggestions/feedback and product ideas.

We believe viable urban transportation alternatives in cities worldwide should be encouraged to help make cities more liveable and sustainable - and we are super keen to see a reduction of green house gasses and traffic congestion, and importantly a reduction in death and injury to our cyclists and pedestrian, whatever age!

So, I am contacting you to let you know what we do and see if there's an opportunity for you to let your members know too! We sell via the web to keep products affordable. Check out our website [monkeysee.net.au](http://monkeysee.net.au) - plus there's loads more on the drawing board geared to adults that I'd love to run past you (and members) that is new and exciting!

*Denise Straty, Chief Chimp; [monkeysee.net.au](http://monkeysee.net.au) ; PO BOX 1533, Potts Point NSW 1335; T. (02) 8354.1305, M. 0422.000.469*

## General News

### Vicbugchat

Vicbugchat is an informal discussion newsgroup for Bicycle Users Groups in Victoria, Australia. It's located at <http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/vicbugchat/>

This non affiliated newsgroup has been formed for individuals and groups involved with BUG's to have a friendly chat, exchange ideas and network. The more BUG members who join the group the more effective it will be as a means of exchanging information about cycling related issues around Melbourne.

## Minutes of Boroondara BUG Meeting, Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2010

Elgin Inn, Hawthorn

### Attendance and Apologies

**Present:** John Parker, Julia Blunden, Graeme Stone, Gordon Macmillan, Graham Ellis (Chair), Glennys Jones, David Leong, Ken Morrison, John Bales, Peter Campbell

**Apologies:** Alister Huth, Malcolm Faul, Betty Weeks

**Guest:** Cr Phillip Healey

### Correspondence:

1. Invoice/receipt for sandwich board.
2. Letter from Council offering workshops on writing applications for grants and tenders (Glennys J expressed interest in attending a workshop and will follow up.)
3. Form from Council for updating mailing list (It was agreed that we opt for email communications in future.)

## Matters Arising:

1. **Golfers Choice and Urban Bush Path:** John P reported that he has written to Greg Hannan, one of the Stonnington East Ward councilors, inviting him to a site visit to discuss the urban bush path but has not had a reply as yet.
2. **East Malvern Station Bridge:** Glennys J wrote to Roads Minister Tim Pallas, almost a month ago but has had no response. Cr Healey offered to talk to Stonnington councilors about the problems at the northern end of the bridge.
3. **Anniversary Trail at High St and Toorak Rd:** There were no new developments to report at High St. Glennys J showed photos of the pavement at Toorak Rd in front of the former garage indicating the presence of large fuel tanks. It was agreed that, while the removal of these will certainly cause temporary inconvenience, the main issue with any new development here is the long term outcome for the trail. Cr Healey suggested involving the local councilor, Kevin Chow.
4. **Display board for use at events:** This was unveiled at the meeting and met with general approval. John P is storing it for the present.
5. **Agenda items for next combined BUGs meeting:** Julia B reminded those present of the meeting and the need to RSVP if coming. Several of those present indicated that they would attend. It was agreed that the draft revised PBN should be added to the agenda.
6. **Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting:** Graeme S reported that the following issues were covered:
  - Use of colour on pavements. Jim Hondrakis reported that VicRoads appear to have no standards for this and he is writing to them for guidance.
  - Off-road signage. Jim mentioned that the logos circulated to BAC members will be used on totems and paths. The need for co-operation between councils to achieve consistency was discussed.
  - Anniversary Trail gap at Camberwell High. There had been no progress on this. The school now has a new principal. Negotiations will be required with both the school and the tennis club. Again Cr Healey suggested involving the local councilor.
  - Gardiners Creek reconstruction between Toorak Rd and the velodrome. A satisfactory detour has been put in place.
  - Construction of the new Anniversary Trail crossing at Laurel St near Alamein Station is to commence soon.
  - Pedestrian lights are soon to be installed on the Gardiners Creek Trail at Winton Rd.
  - Bike lanes are soon to be installed in Willsmere Rd between Kilby Rd and Princess St.
  - Fencing is to be replaced on rail cuttings along the Anniversary Trail.
  - BUG volunteers assisting with the Sustainable Transport to Schools project were thanked.
  - Bike parking has been re-instated at the Camberwell council offices.
7. **Meeting with Bob Stensholt:** This seemed to be a worthwhile exercise. Graeme S, John P, Glennys J and Julia B met with Bob on Friday 19/3. The meeting lasted 1 ½ hours and covered most of our main concerns both within Bob's Burwood electorate and beyond. Bob gave us a good hearing and seemed to be generally well-informed about cycling issues. It was agreed that a similar meeting with Michael O'Brien, Member for Malvern could be worthwhile. Cr Healey suggested that we speak to the Liberal candidate for Burwood, or better still survey all candidates for relevant seats prior to the State election.
8. **Status of Darebin Bridge:** Julia B reported that there has been no progress with this project since the VCAT hearing last July. The Parks Victoria officer in charge of the project has moved on and his replacement has taken a long time. The Community Coalition is following up on the delay and the suggestion, reported in the Northcote Leader, that the project will take another three years. Cr Healey suggested that the CC ask PV whether the money is still there for the project.
9. **Living for Our Future Sustainability Expo:** Peter C was present at this on the Lighter Footprints stall. Graeme S and Glennys J shared Julia Smith's Sustainable Transport stall and found this very satisfactory. Many TravelSmart maps were distributed and many queries answered.

## New Business

1. **Draft Revised PBN:** VicRoads have sent this to municipal councils for comment. BUG members learned of its existence through Jim Hondrakis at the BAC meeting. It has not as yet been sent to BUGs, nor has there been any indication of an opportunity for input from BUGs or the general public, although Bicycle Victoria has had input. It was decided that Tony Barton should be contacted to ask if BUGs are going to be consulted. If not Minister Pallas should be alerted to our dissatisfaction.

So far as Boroondara is concerned some issues are: the lack of an off-road route (Eastern Rail Trail) between Surrey Hills and Hawthorn, and the designation of Burwood Rd as a PBN priority route despite its dangers for cyclists; and the designation Ferndale Trail as a PBN priority route. Peter C suggested a special BUG meeting be convened to discuss our response to the document.

2. **Bus lanes:** Gordon M raised the question as to whether cycling is permitted in bus lanes. He said that on some roads, eg Stud Rd, this would be the only place they could ride. Graeme S said that it is legal, though not a particularly safe option. It was agreed to add this to the agenda for the combined BUGs meeting.
3. **Belford Rd Underpass:** Ken M raised this subject. Jim H already has a feasibility study for this on his list of projects.

Next meeting: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May.

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](mailto:tony@diacher.com)

Justin Murphy - email: [murphjj@au1.ibm.com](mailto:murphjj@au1.ibm.com)

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

### Banyule BUG

email: [banyuleBug@yahoo.com.au](mailto: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](mailto:jblunden@bigpond.com)

website: [www.keypoint.com.au/~bbwinc](http://www.keypoint.com.au/~bbwinc)

### Camberwell Downhill Gourmet Bike Riders

contact Elva Parker, phone: 9836 6392

Email David & Geraldine Powell: [dgpowell@internode.on.net](mailto:dgpowell@internode.on.net)

### 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](mailto: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](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](mailto:dougmorf@alphalink.com.au)

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

website: [www.darebinbug.org.au](http://www.darebinbug.org.au)

### Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre

Phone: 9890 2467

Email: [info@surreyhillsnc.org.au](mailto:info@surreyhillsnc.org.au)

Website: [www.surreyhillsnc.org.au](http://www.surreyhillsnc.org.au)

### Hawthorn Cycle Tours

contact Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre

phone: 9815 0988

email: [lexbishop@bikerider.com](mailto:lexbishop@bikerider.com)

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

### Knox Bicycle Touring Club Incorporated

email: [Mikeaatleisure@aol.com](mailto:Mikeaatleisure@aol.com)

website: [home.vicnet.net.au/~knoxbike](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~knoxbike)

### Manningham BUG

email: [seball@netlink.com.au](mailto:seball@netlink.com.au), [H.Edwards@bom.gov.au](mailto:H.Edwards@bom.gov.au)

website: [www.vicnet.net.au/~mannbug](http://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/](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~mbush/)

### Melbourne Bicycle Touring Club

contact Touring Secretary, Dave Cash, phone: 9817 3269

or email [info@mbtc.org.au](mailto: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](http://mbtc.org.au)

### Whitehorse Cyclists

email: [ejhopper@vicnet.net.au](mailto: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](mailto:rides@yhacycling.org.au) or mobile 0425-792 574

or Secretary Voula on [secretary@yhacycling.org.au](mailto:secretary@yhacycling.org.au)

website: [www.yhacycling.org.au](http://www.yhacycling.org.au) has free registration

## Boroondara BUG Contacts

Membership Secretary & Treasurer:  
Graeme Stone  
16 Jervis Street, Camberwell, Vic 3124  
email: [graeme\\_stone@optusnet.com.au](mailto:graeme_stone@optusnet.com.au)

Newsletter Editor & Minutes Secretary:  
Julia Blunden  
phone: 9853 5095  
email: [jblunden@bigpond.com](mailto:jblunden@bigpond.com)

Meeting Chair:  
Phil Crohn  
email: [philcrohn@ozemail.com.au](mailto:philcrohn@ozemail.com.au)

## 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 one-off payment of \$15 per household. Please send cheque (made out to Boroondara Bicycle Users Group) along with this form to:

Graeme Stone  
16 Jervis St  
Camberwell  
Vic, 3124