



April 2004

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Ramblings from El Presidente

It has been a busy start to 2004 for BWW with some great riding and an entry into the political arena. The riding has included a strong contingent to the Alpine Classic, a weekend to Pleasant Hills (thanks Geoff), the RTA Big Ride and our regular Sunday and Wednesday rides being strongly supported.

The recent council elections gave us a rare chance to get the attention of the candidates and we jumped in with a survey and information sessions to raise their awareness of cycling issues. Hopefully a few of the new councillors will take an interest in our issues. Your President was also dubbed in to be part of the panel for the candidates' forum - thanks Gordon. The Bikeways Steering Committee of WWCC is also showing some better prospects with the Mayor taking the chair for the last 2 meetings.

To keep BWW going with a program of rides and to advocate for better cycling facilities means we need an active and working committee. The current team is working well but is a little smaller than previous years. If you would like to join us and help your club make a difference and provide lots of cycling fun then talk to me and come to a meeting. The larger the team the easier it is.

The Ride Calender for 2004 is now in the cycle shops and all the latest info can be found on the website (if we can get Gordon off his bike occasionally to update it - thanks to Gordon and Ray during Gordon's absences).

Our public meeting for 2004 will be on 18 May and would be a good way to see what we do and get the feel of the possibilities. So come along with your ideas and work with us to make them happen.

Some great riding opportunities are coming up in the next few months so check out the rest of the newsletter and we look forward to seeing you along. Cycle safely.

Greg Fell

Bike Course

In June Bicycle Wagga Wagga in conjunction with Riverina Community College will be conducting a course '**Bicycle Riding For Beginners**'. This course is aimed at people who may have purchased a bicycle and feel they do not have confidence to ride on Wagga Wagga's roads and bikeways. Participants will learn how to ride safely in a group or individually on our roads. Also correct riding techniques, how to make basic adjustments to their bicycle and how to become a more confident rider on a bicycle will be covered.

The objective is to encourage people to ride around the block, the suburb or the entire city for fitness, weight loss and general well being.

Morgan Street Cycles' Tom Dawson is the tutor with the assistance of Geoff Marks. The cost is \$33.00 for four weekly sessions of two hours duration on Tuesdays at 10.00am. In true cycling tradition the course will finish at a local café.

If you know of anybody who would benefit from this course, have them phone the **Riverina Community College** on **6921 7663**.

RTA Big Ride

The adventure began on Friday as the bus picked up riders from Wagga Wagga, Albury, Junee, Temora and Parkes. It was good to catch up with the Goddess in Cowra. Setting up the tents for the first time in the dark at Bathurst was the first challenge.

The journey to breakfast on Saturday was shortened when the driver (Gordon) spotted a likely roadhouse well before the planned McDonalds at Lithgow. The fare was well received and we journeyed on putting in a long stint to be at Wyong for lunch. Gloucester appeared late in the afternoon but well in time for registrations, assembling bikes, settling in and renewing friendships.

Gloucester to Tuncurry on Sunday was a great ride with some challenging climbs to warm us up. All were in camp before the rain started. The rain continued through the night and we had one shower during breakfast and packing up on Monday.

Heading south from Forster the Lakes Way has some beautiful views but the rain set in and some heavy falls were ridden through. Arriving at Tarbuck Bay for lunch (10.30am - one of many early lunches) we saw hundreds of riders held up and awaiting the pleasure of the police. Eventually the police decided that it was too dangerous for the riders to continue into Bulahdelah and the remainder of the day's ride was cancelled. This was just the start of the day's difficulties – it took several hours to arrange buses for the riders and trucks for the bikes



The 2004 RTA Big Ride Team

into Bulahdelah. A number of riders suffered hypothermia while waiting in the rain.

In Bulahdelah we found the showground was uncampable and we were allocated to every hall, garage, home etc that could be found to sleep in. Most of our troop were camped in the old Courthouse museum. Showers were in short supply but the camaraderie was great. The greatest act of hospitality was from the local sawmill which donated the use of its workshed for 2 days for the catering and meals – a shed big enough for a thousand people!

Tuesday's ride was cancelled as well due to the forecast and the condition of the roads to be used. An unplanned rest day was enjoyed in Bulahdelah. Time to dry out clothes and tents and catch up with friends. The people of Bulahdelah certainly looked after us and deserve a big thanks.

Wednesday saw an early start (5am breakfast for 6am buses) as we were bussed through to Raymond Terrace to pick up the route again. A lovely day's

cycling was enjoyed through Morpeth, Maitland, Buchanan and into Newcastle from the west along cycleways as well as roads. The rest day campsite was very congenial but the troop was dispersed as they visited family and friends etc. Denise was a very commendable performer in the Red Faces competition.

Friday morning put us back on the road heading south. The new cycleway which includes a refurbished railway tunnel under the old Pacific Highway was a treat and had Gordon's camera busy again. The lunch stop (26km) set a new record, being reached at 9.30am! After riding through Swansea and the Munmorah State Recreation Area on a warm day the swim in the ocean at Bateau Bay was much appreciated. The jazz band with dinner made for a very enjoyable evening.

The climb up Dog Trap Road was before us on Saturday but only after a scenic meander around the north of the lakes into Wyong. The afternoon was cloudy and so not too hot as we climbed to Mt Penang, however

sadly it proved too much for one rider who suffered a heart attack and died - the first such event for some years.

The camp site at Mt Penang was spacious and comfortable. The final night party was loud with a performance from some islander dancers to entertain the hardy souls.

The final day included the downhill and uphill on the old Pacific Highway through Mooney Mooney Creek and the Hawkesbury River - long but not too steep. The morning tea stop was very disappointing with only Coke left when we arrived. Spirits were revived when the "Pie in the Sky" was found not much further on and a hefty contribution to its profit was made by certain ones of the troop. All too soon another ride was over when we arrived at Berowra.

After a bit of a wait to collect the bus from BNSW we were packed and heading home, having enjoyed another big ride with good friends (even if a bit shorter than usual) and looking forward to the next adventure - Kosciuszko to Sydney in February 2005.

Thanks to Ray for the bus organisation and all of the riders for making it a great week. Check out the Ride Gallery of pictures on the BNSW website www.bicyclensw.org.au

Bikeways Action Group

Bikeways are an issue in which many of the candidates expressed an interest during the recent Wagga Wagga City Council elections.

Bikeways are a facility that benefits most members of the community although the term 'bikeway' is possibly a misnomer. Bikeways are used by a broad cross-section of the community, from the young to the elderly, and not only cyclists as many people use these facilities to walk the dog, or take their child for a stroll in the pram. Bikeways are not a sporting facility. These are amenities that are there to be enjoyed by all, just like parks and gardens.

The community benefits of bikeways are well recognised. The most obvious of these is the health and fitness benefits that are gained from moderate exercise, be that by cycling or walking. As well there are environmental advantages by providing a sustainable and viable transport option. The tourism potential of a well maintained bikeways network is yet to be fully exploited.

In the lead up to the elections Bicycle Wagga Wagga extended an invitation to each of the 56 candidates to view a presentation and to discuss bikeways issues. Fourteen candidates took this opportunity including six that have ultimately been elected. A further five elected councillors, although they did not attend the meeting, were represented by one of their group members.

All candidates were also invited to complete a survey regarding their stance and views on bikeways. Half of the candidates returned these including nine of the elected councillors. Of the six other elected councillors five had surveys returned by one of their group members. In other words, Councillor Dale, for reasons best

known to him, was the only newly elected councillor who did not see fit to listen to Community concerns.

Given that the percentage of candidates who participated in the presentation and survey and were ultimately elected was significantly higher than the participation rate of all candidates suggests that Wagga Wagga has an elected council that will listen to, and be receptive to, the needs of the community.

This advocacy work by Bicycle Wagga Wagga is only the beginning of the huge task ahead in developing Wagga Wagga's Bikeways to a standard that is at least on par to, and hopefully surpassing, other centres.

To date the task has been carried out by a very small band of members led by President Greg. This task is only beginning. The elected council has to be held accountable and they have to be continually reminded of community views and needs.

It is one of Bicycle Wagga Wagga's mandates to foster cycling in the community. Advocating bikeways is one way we can achieve this. We need your help. If you believe you have skills in advocacy, marketing or speech, you are needed by Bicycle Wagga Wagga to assist in providing these essential community amenities.

Full results of the survey can be found on the website www.bww.com.au

Pleasant Hills

Geoff Marks organised the return to Pleasant Hills to perfection. A large group made their way via Mangoplah, Cookardinia and Henty to the hotel where some good old country hospitality was enjoyed.

This may well become an annual event. Thanks goes to Geoff of course, and his trusty support vehicle drivers, Jan who managed to get some riding in, and Leila, who wasn't disappointed that she didn't.

Dartmouth for Dinner

Les Sobey was extremely pleased with the turn out to this, the second, annual Dartmouth for Dinner ride. Riders came from far and wide to enjoy the cycling delights of north-east Victoria.

Les is now busy organising the Warby Wander which will be held in September. Contact **Les Sobey** on **6041 5460** to find out more about this tour.

Easter Rides

This year's Easter bike rides were well supported by local cyclists and a few from Victoria. Good Friday's Downside Discovery was a 35 km loop which included a dirt section. A group of five cyclists chose to cycle the Shepherds Siding route instead as they didn't want to risk damage to their lean, mean, cycling machines. Afternoon tea was at Ray and Lyn's and what a feast it was! The carrot cake, scones and chocolate slice disappeared so fast some cyclists didn't even know there were scones!

Saturday's 70 km ride was to Ladysmith via Gregadoo Hill and back via Elizabeth Avenue. Most cyclists rode the entire distance but some chose to alternate time in the car with time on the bike. One such cyclist was Naomi who,

unfortunately, had her bike fall off the back of a vehicle just as she was approaching Ladysmith. However some quick repairs by her husband had the bike roadworthy and she was able to cycle the return journey, tug-a-long in tow.

A social evening took place at The Rules Club. Most people had good things to say about their meals. As is so often the case with Bicycle Wagga Wagga functions, it wasn't a late night with most people heading home to sleep before 9.30 pm.

Sunday dawned grey and overcast but that didn't deter around 20 cyclists heading off to Junee via Pattersons Road. We were about ¼ of the way to Junee when the drops of rain turned into a steady shower. Leila met us with hot cross buns and Easter eggs for morning tea. Nicholas decided he'd had enough cycling on the tug-a-long because he "was freezing" and "my fingers are pink Mum". ("I'll start to worry when they turn blue son!") He hopped into Leila's car and was joined several kilometres later by Kimberley and Steven who had a spell from cycling on their tug-a-longs. It was just as well the children were able to travel in the car as the final 11 km into Junee from Harefield was very hard going. Uphill and into a head wind but at least the rain had stopped.

The newly reopened Railway Café was the venue for lunch. Barbara and Nicholas returned to Wagga Wagga on the XPT while the other cyclist rode back in bright sunshine. The return journey was decidedly faster with some riders recording averages to brag about.

A 32 km loop around the University and Bomen Industrial Area finished off the four-day program. The children were impressed with our incredible organisation skills that ensured we arrived at the Railway Crossing just in time to see a freight train race past! A celebratory BBQ was hosted by Greg and Leila, another feast was enjoyed by all.

About thirty-two cyclists participated in the weekend's activities including five young children. Many different types of bikes were represented including a tandem, folding bikes, a recumbent and the aforementioned tug-a-longs. Except for the shower on Sunday morning (and we can't complain about the rain as it's desperately needed) the weather was glorious and perfect for cycling. A special thanks to Leila for looking after us (and our stomachs) so well.

Adelong Adventure – 22nd / 23rd May

Gordon Moore has already checked out the gourmet delights that await those that take this opportunity to enjoy some cycling and some socialising at Adelong. Gordon will drive the support vehicle and has planned this ride to ensure it will be within the reach of whoever wants to do it. Contact **Gordon** on **6921 4444** to find out more.

Weekend in Leeton – 12th, 13th & 14th June

Some not so long rides are being planned to coincide with some Audax rides in Leeton on the long weekend. There's plenty to do besides riding. It is best to contact **Greg Fell** on **6922 3474** for details

Trial a Rail Trail – 24th / 25th July

Start at Bowser and ride to Myrtleford with the option of the 15km to Beechworth then back. Overnight at Myrtleford and then finish off with the ride to Bright. There's probably a bakery or two to visit. Contact **Greg Fell** on **6922 3474** about this ride too.

Safe cycling!