

This Week with the Ghostriders



THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GHOSTRIDERS

What's News ?

Cancelling a planned ride is never an easy decision but sometimes it just seems like the only sensible alternative. Last Sunday I was faced with such a decision. Although I was really keen to have a long awaited Beach Rd ride, I know that it is a relatively long drive for some and did not want to proceed unless we had at least reasonable prospects of an enjoyable ride.

When the weather on Sunday morning looked like it could go either way, a few hurried messages were passed back and forth among riders and eventually it was decided to "pull the proverbial pin". I am hoping that we will be able to schedule a replacement Beach Rd ride in the not too distant future.

Queens Birthday Ride Mon June 14th

This has historically been one of our most popular rides, giving all participants a great introduction to some of the fantastic network of bike paths that Melbourne possesses. There are several alternative starting points so that all riders can

choose a ride length commensurate with their fitness and experience. The ride is best suited to mountain bikes or hybrids. It is mostly on sealed paths but there are a few gravel sections. Morning tea will be at the Ivanhoe Golf Course and lunch at Studley Park Boat Shed.

Ross Bury will be the guide and convenor for this ride. Full details, including detailed notes and the Google Earth overlay for the ride, can be downloaded from our web site.

I would encourage all our riders to mark this date in their diaries now. We are also expecting some guests to join us for the day.

Future Overseas Adventure Challenges

Since the start of this year I have been quietly researching a few options for possible future Overseas Adventure Challenges. Thanks to the wonders of the Internet and to the power of email I have been putting together the early framework of another remote and challenging ride in the Chinese Himalaya. At this early stage I have not worked out any dates but I do have some cost estimates.

What I am seeking is expressions of interest from anyone who would like to be kept informed of future developments regarding this possible trip. Just drop me an email and I will keep you in touch. You are not making a commitment, just expressing an interest.

Mt St Leonards Training Walk Sat June 19th

Our next planned training walk is set for next Saturday 19th June. All Ghostriders, family and friends are invited to join us on a challenging bushwalk to the summit of Mt St Leonards. Linda House will be our guide for this walk. You will need good footwear and adequate clothing, as well as plenty of water and nibbles. See the web site for more details.

After the walk we will be adjourning to the Beechworth Bakery in Healesville for coffee and hot food.

Retro Ride—Sat July 3rd Charity Fundraiser

The AFL footballers have it, the Aussie cricketers have it, so why not the Ghostriders? For some time I have been thinking about running a "Retro Ride". What I am thinking of is a designated ride where we all return to our cycling roots. The idea is that we

Monday June 14th 2010

Contact Details

- Contact Person: Dennis Dawson
- Email: ghostriders@netspace.net.au
- Web: www.warbyghostriders.com
- Mail Address: PO Box 196, Emerald, Vic 3782
- Phone: 5968 3307
- Mobile: 0419 106 324

would get your oldest bike (if you have one) and dress in the type of gear that you wore to your first ride. Old trackie dacks, jeans, T shirts, jumpers, tennis shoes?

The point would not only be to remind us how far we have come, but also to have a bit of a chuckle at the same time. I would also like to see this ride be used as a fundraiser for a nominated charity. Each rider would pay \$5 to be a part of it but any rider not entering into the retro spirit would pay double as a fine. If you have a suggestion as to which charity we should support, please let me know. Personally I was leaning towards Oxfam, where Maggie has been a long term volunteer worker.

The date that has been set aside for this ride is **Sat July 3rd**. This will be a Jells Park to Carrum Ride. I would encourage all our riders to share in this fun and worthwhile activity. It would also be a great opportunity to invite a friend or partner. Mark this date in your diaries now.

Upcoming Rides & Activities

Monday June 14th—Queens Birthday Ride—Inner City Bike Paths Route

This is a very popular ride which will show you some of Melbourne's best bike paths. There are a variety of start points so that you can adjust your total ride distance between 45km to 90 km. Best suited to mountain bikes or hybrids. Morning tea will be at Ivanhoe Golf Club and lunch at Studley Park Boat House.

I would encourage all our riders to come along and join in the fun on this ride as it really has something for everyone. **Ross Bury** will be the convenor and chief guide for this ride as he knows all the paths thoroughly. The complete ride details can now be downloaded from our web site, as well as the eleva-

tion profile.

Thurs June 17th—Warby Trail Ride

Start at Woori Yallock at 12 noon or COGS at 1.00 pm or Woori Yallock at 1.40 pm.

Sat June 19th—Mt St Leonards Training Walk

Everyone is invited to join in this challenging 15 km walk. Watch out for more information and starting time.

Thurs June 24th—Warby Trail Ride

Start at Woori Yallock at 12 noon or COGS at 1.00 pm or Woori Yallock at 1.40 pm.

Thurs July 1st—Warby Trail Ride

Start at Woori Yallock at 12 noon or COGS at 1.00 pm or Woori Yallock at 1.40 pm.

Sat July 3rd—RETRO RIDE

Jells Park to Carrum and back. Charity fundraiser ride. 10.00 am start from Jells Park Kiosk.

Sat July 17th—Mid Winter Social Evening

Details to be announced in the near future. Keep this evening free. Suggestions also welcome. See note on base of page 2.

Tues July 20th—Tour de France—High Mountain Stage

Come enjoy the excitement of the biggest mountain stage on the BIG screen.

Regular Thursday Ride Details

Each Thursday we conduct rides along the Warburton Trail. Visitors are always welcome to join us. There are several alternative start times and meeting points to choose from.

11.10 am Early Group—Meet at Woori Yallock and ride the full distance down to Lilydale before meeting the second group at COGS at 1.00 pm

12 noon Main Group—meet at Woori Yallock and ride to COGS at Mt Evelyn to start the return ride at 1.00 pm

1.00 pm COGS Group leave and ride as a combined group to Woori Yallock where we usually arrive at about 1.40 pm.

1.50 pm Woori Yallock all riders regroup for the ride to Milgrove where we stop for lunch before the ride back to your chosen start point.

In this way all riders can choose a starting time and ride distance to suit their level of bike fitness. On the leg between COGS and Milgrove we expect all riders to stay



A Ride Story "In Which we Endure Six Degrees of Deprivation" (Thurs 3rd June 2010)

I would have to be the first to admit that the ride last Thursday was a dirty business. Although the rain held off for most (aka *some*) of the ride, the copious amounts of surface water and mud on the trail ensured that we all arrived back at the cars looking like failed refugees from the Kakoda Trail.

It was therefore with some trepidation that I set out from home on the following Thursday. Although the weather wallahs had promised an afternoon free of rain, my main concern was the frigid nature of the atmosphere. According to the outside temperature gauge in my car it was a miserable 6C. Not only is that well below the scientifically proven temperature at which a cyclist's nose runs like the Niagara Falls, it is just plain *&\$\$#@ cold!

I arrived at Woori Yallock and proceeded to layer up with long fingered gloves, ear, arm and leg warmers, a fleecy jersey AND a rain jacket—I was still cold. My mind started to wander away to calculate just how many sleeps it will be until the return of the sunshine.

Figuring that the only way to avoid frostbite was to start

pedalling and maybe build up some body heat, I set off towards Lilydale. I was still cold. The low lying clouds had solidified into ghostly apparitions that floated in front of my eyes. I could almost imagine that I was setting off to become the first Ghost rider to ride across Antarctica on a \$120 HASA mountain bike.

It would be plainly superfluous to state that there were not many other cyclists braving the cryogenic chill, however a short distance along the trail I did meet Gary Hall riding his single speed mountain bike. We spent twenty minutes or so catching up (and slowly freezing at the same time).

With the icicles building up on my bottom bracket I knew that I had better start riding again before the whole frame shattered in the cold. I girded my loins and resumed the ride. Soon my nose was too frozen to run—I suppose that was a blessing in disguise.

Ernest Shackleton may have sailed an open life boat from Elephant Island to South Georgia across the Southern Ocean, but he had never, not once, ridden an overlaid Chinese HASA the length of the Warburton Trail in the depth of a Melbourne winter. This surely must be at the very

extreme edge of survival exploits.

As a layer of ice formed over my corneas I started to have difficulty seeing the trail ahead. I resorted to blind navigation from one pile of horse manure to the next and somehow eventually reached the top of the climb at COGS. Since I have been riding on to Lilydale each week I did not stop but laboured on, over the summit and down the other side.

At least that gave me a few minutes to rest while I rolled downhill. The only trouble was that the faster speed only lowered the wind chill factor to a whole new level of suffering.

When Maurice Herzog and his team became the first to climb mighty Annapurna, they spent much of the return trip discarding frozen fingers and toes. I was starting to understand how they must have felt.

Fortunately the return climb warmed me up enough to thaw out the frozen digits and thus endure the pain of blood returning to the extremities.

At COGS I was joined by a few other winter diehards who had resisted the urge to migrate north for the winter. We looked hopefully to the heavens, pleading for a welcome burst of winter sunshine. There was none.

The ride to Woori Yallock was conducted at a quite fast pace as no one seemed keen to be out on the trail longer than was necessary. Since this was the first ride of the month the expectation is that we should ride the whole trail

and lunch in Warburton rather than Milgrove. Unfortunately the spirit of the peloton was flagging and many ran out steam at Milgrove and refused to proceed any further into the cold. This left a small but dedicated group of 4 riders to complete the ride as a matter of honour. We then proceeded to enjoy a long lunch, a laugh and a chat while we got up enough courage for the return ride.

I am pleased to tell the readers that the sun did belatedly appear on the return ride, sending the temperature souring to a balmy 8 or 9C. When my eyeballs finally thawed out enough to focus I had to admit that the beauty of the Yarra Valley in such late afternoons really is superlative. So what if it is one of the coldest places on the planet? In reality we really are privileged to be able to ride such a glorious trail every week. As John "Hooters" Seamons would constantly remind us "It beats working for a living".

We saw no further sight of those who had prematurely capitulated at Milgrove, presumably they had all rushed home to change into their winter pyjamas and sit down in front of their fires. On the other hand we had the satisfaction that we had faced the worst that the meteorological gods could throw at us and we had prevailed. In fact we had more than prevailed, we had emerged victorious.

If the truth were really told we had actually had a most enjoyable ride. After all, if all the seasons were the same we would never appreciate them for their individual nature. By the same token I must admit that I will be ticking off each Thursday until September with a great degree of relish. Roll on springtime!

Advance Notice—Mid Winter Social Night Saturday July 17th—Organiser Needed!

It has been a tradition to hold a **Mid Winter Social Dinner** each year near the middle of July. This year the function has been scheduled for **Sat July 17th**. Since I already have too much on my proverbial plate I am now seeking some person or persons to take on the responsibility for planning this event. This would involve choosing a suitable venue and then collecting numbers of those attending. It is not a hard job but it does need someone with some enthusiasm and organising ability.

If you are willing to become involved in this capacity please contact me on 5968 3307 without delay. With only a few weeks to go it is important that the ball is started rolling as soon as possible.

STOP PRESS—UPDATE FROM GLENDA

This evening I received this message from Glenda. Most of you would already know that she has been in the process of completing a "double crossing" of the Nullarbor Plain on her HASA bike.

"Hi Dennis.

Few altercations with road trains but I'm still alive. Back across the Nullarbor in Ceduna. So far done 2000 kms. Looking very sunbaked. I did 126kms yesterday. Legs have kicked in. Overall, truckies very considerate. I've met some incredible people doing amazing stuff. Lots circumnavigating the earth, Tired as hell tonight but just came in to civilization and 'range'. Sorry not enough stamina to report except to say I'm ok. love and best to all. Glenda"