

# This Week with the Ghostriders



THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GHOSTRIDERS

## What's News ?

Just when we thought that it could not get any wetter, the rain stops and the hail starts to fall. Last Thursday's ride was completed on schedule, albeit in rather "trying" conditions. In the 8 years that we have been riding the trail I can honestly say that I never seen it so waterlogged. Much of the surrounding farms and paddocks are now looking like lakes. The amount of surface water really is quite amazing. All the creeks are now running over their banks, making quite an impressive sight. We can only hope that some of this runoff might be finding its way into our water storages.

In spite of the ongoing trials of the trail we still had 7 hardy souls who braved the conditions.

As previously announced **Andrew Dunne** will once again be overseeing this year's **Donna Buang Lungbuster Ride** on Sat Sep 25th. He has set up a dedicated web site for the event. The address is

<http://www.ard65.com/lungbuster2010>. I would ask all of our riders to check out this site for all details pertaining to the event.

As with previous Lungbusters, riders will be started off in groups according to their level of experience and fitness. The slowest riders will be leaving at around 8.00 am with subsequent groups leaving in 10 minute intervals. The aim is to get all riders to the summit at about the same time.

All participants are invited to bring along warm clothes for the summit and downhill. These should be packed into a small backpack which will be transported to the top for you. They will be waiting at the summit when you arrive.

Also waiting for you at the summit will be hot teas and coffees and an assortment of sandwiches and nibbles. All riders are asked to contribute \$5 towards the cost. Any surplus

will be put towards the cost of the Annual Awards Evening. Past proceeds partially covered the cost of the CB radios which have proven to be so useful on our rides.

Andrew also needs volunteers to help him with running the event. If you are unable to ride, please consider assisting in a volunteer capacity. **We also need all those planning to ride to let Andrew know so that we know how much food and drinks will be required on the day.**

We would anticipate that all riders will be back down the mountain no later than 1.30pm—in plenty of time to watch the Grand Final.

### From the Sick Bay

A couple of weeks ago **John Bird** underwent a hip replacement and he would now like everyone to know that he is making excellent progress. He is already walking without assistance and should be back on the

## Monday Aug 23rd 2010

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bike within a few weeks.

Last week I also had great news from **Helen Riethof**. Most of you would know that her husband John has been suffering acute leukemia for the past year. Helen informed me that he is still in remission and has just bought a new bike. They are both heading up North to do some riding in the Murray River region. This is fantastic news and I am sure we all wish them well.

Several of our riders, including **Terry Drummy and Tom Partel** are still escaping the Melbourne winter on their Annual Northerly migration. The migration will reverse direction over the next few weeks.

### Tuesday Morning Fitness Group

Each Tuesday you are invited to join us for a brisk and scenic walk around the tracks of Emerald. Each walk starts at 10 am and is finished soon after 11 am. On the first Tuesday of each month we have a bike ride, instead of a walk. For more details give me a call on 5968 3307.

Everyone is invited to participate.

### 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 re-group 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 together as much as possible (ie no bolting).*

## Upcoming Rides & Activities

### Tues Aug 24th—Tuesday Fitness Group

Walk starts at 10 am sharp. Everyone welcome.

### Thurs Aug 26th—Warby Trail Ride

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

### Tues Aug 31st—Tuesday Fitness Group

Walk starts at 10 am sharp.

### Thurs Sep 2nd—Warby Trail Ride (First Ride of Springtime)

Start at Woori Yallock at 12 noon or COGS at 1.00 pm or Woori Yallock at 1.40 pm. Lunch at Warburton rather than Milgrove.

### Sat Sep 4th—Special Weekend Ride—Belgrave to Jells Park

This will be our first weekend ride for Springtime, so we want it to be a celebration of the end of winter. We will be following the bike paths from Belgrave Station to Jells

Park and back again, 9.00 am start at Belgrave.

### Tues Sep 7th—Tuesday Fitness Group—Mountain Bike Ride

This is a short (30 km) but challenging mountain bike ride taking in some local hills. We begin at my place at 10 am and ride through the forests to Gembrook and back again. Mountain bikes required.

### Thurs Sep 9th Warby Trail Ride

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

### September/October 2010

Our team of Ghostriders heads to South America and the Sacred Valley of the Urabamba River to undertake a challenging cycling/trekking trip in the Andes. This will be longest and most ambitious trip we have thus attempted. Not only will we find out whether our training has been sufficient but also whether or not

all the Spanish lessons have been a waste of time.

### Sat Sep 25th—Annual Donna Buang Lungbuster

This is our biggest event in the cycling year and something that we encourage all our riders to participate in—either as a rider or as a volunteer.

**Andrew Dunne** will again be overseeing this year's event and he has set up a special web site which will give you all the info you need. The address is <http://www.ard65.com/lungbuster2010>

All participants are asked to contribute \$5 towards cost of catering at the summit. Any residual goes towards costs of running the Annual Awards Night. Previous proceeds also partly paid for the CB radios we use on many of our rides.



## Thursday Aug 19th In Which we Stage an Aquatic Ride

Paul Keating may have infamously proclaimed the “recession we had to have”. After yet another sodden Thursday ride I fear that this year we are experiencing the “winter we had to have”. On the news this afternoon John Brumby was proudly announcing that, from next month, people will be free to return to their profligate water wasting ways by deluging their gardens with water whenever they feel like it. Judging from the amount of surface water sitting in the Yarra Valley I suspect that it will some time before any of those residents need to touch a garden hose.

Since the previous ride was cancelled due to torrential rain and gale forced winds I was really hoping for more benign conditions this week. My wish was half granted—at least the wind had abated. I had made the suggestion that riders join me at Woori Yallock 1 hour earlier than usual and ride the full length of the trail to Lilydale to observe the progress in the Maroondah Hwy overpass.

Unfortunately when I pulled into the Woori Yallock car park there were no other Ghostriders in sight (probably due to the fact that the rain was bucketing

down from the heavens). In fact I would not have been surprised to see an old guy with a long beard shepherding his animals into a big boat. For a few minutes I sat in the car pondering what my next move should be. Unfortunately any chance I had of reneging on the ride went out the window when Henk pulled up and announced his plan to join me on the ride to Lilydale.

After “thanking” him for his support, I unloaded the bike, donned my wet suit and the two of us paddled our bikes out onto the lake that used to be the Warburton Trail. It was truly amazing to see the transformation that has taken place in this area over the past couple of months. In the eight years that I have been riding the trail I had never seen it like this.

We made it as far as Killara before the rain stopped. That was the good news. The bad news was that it then started to hail! With hail stones pounding their way through the holes in my helmet (and the holes in my hair) we tried to pretend that we were enjoying the ride.

Fortunately the hail only lasted half the way to Mt Evelyn, stopping just in time for us to enjoy

the final climb up to the top of the hill. We then continued down to Lilydale, expecting to see some significant progress in the bridge. There was none. I suspect that the weather had not been conducive to construction activity. I tried to take a picture but my mobile phone had apparently become water-logged and would not work.

We turned around and headed back to Mt Evelyn, wondering just how many others would be abandoning common sense and joining us for the ride. This question was answered when we pulled up at COGS and discovered NO ONE else there. It was looking like we might be headed for the smallest peloton in many years.

While we were waiting we were met by a travelling cycling jersey salesman who was riding the trail and hawking his wares. I am sure his gear was really good but I had to tell him that I simply could not afford to pay \$300 for a new rain jacket. He was forced to pedal on his way without making a sale.

Just as we were about to leave we were joined by Dave McMorran. He had driven to Woori Yallock but had pulled the pin when the rain would not stop long enough for him to unpack his bike. He had been driving home when he saw Henk and me at COGS and decided to join us there.

Our peloton of three (does 3 constitute a peloton ???) rolled down the hill under a sky which showed some signs of improvement. The downpour had stopped and occasional bursts of sunshine served to tease us with a reminder of what good cycling conditions are like.

About halfway to Woori Yallock we spied another three riders in the distance coming towards us. It turned out to be Bob Andrews, Bob Patterson and Mal Bowmaker. This swelled our aquatic group to 6 riders—just enough of a crowd to ensure that most riders could be covered in mud thrown from the tyres of the rider they were following. A little further on we were joined by our final intrepid rider—Steve Warburton.

We had not gone far before



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we encountered a group of council workers standing alongside their truck. They made no comment to us as we passed by, so we assumed that they were just taking a break. It was only after we had ridden a further 50 m along the trail that we noticed why they had stopped working.

They had obviously been in the process of felling a large tree (trunk diameter of at least 40 cm) when their chain saw had jammed. It was only as we rode past that we saw that there was only a couple of cm of trunk that was still holding the entire tree upright. Any small gust of wind would have brought the entire thing down on our heads. We could not believe how irresponsible the workers were not to warn us of the obvious danger.

Fresh from our near death experience we pedalled on under a leaden sky on to Milgrove. Part way along David said that he had had enough and turned back to Mt Evelyn and his waiting car. Our biggest fear was that the bakery would have shut early because of the conditions. Fortunately they still had some hot pies left so the day was not an entire disaster after all.

After a lengthy break to eat pies and cakes and to fill ourselves with caffeine we wearily donned our wet gloves, sat on our wet saddles and pedalled on through the gloom and drizzle back to Woori Yallock.

If you think that I am looking forward to springtime and some sunshine you are dead right. But I guess if we did not have winter we would not appreciate the joys of warm riding as much.

