

This Week with the Ghostriders



THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GHOSTRIDERS

What's News

Less than a month to go till Christmas and still the rain keeps pouring down from the skies. I guess this means that we can finally say that the ten year drought has officially finished. While that might be good news for our water storages, it is not such great news for those currently participating in a (rather water-logged) Great Victorian Bike Ride.

Last Thursday we did get seriously wet on the Warby Trail ride, although at least it was not cold so we did not have to worry about hypothermia. There are now only three more Thursday rides remaining for 2010—the final ride will be held on **Thursday Dec 16th** and this will take the form of our **Annual Christmas Celebration ride**. All riders are encouraged to don some Christmas gear, dress up their bikes and share some smiles along the trail. Seeing it is the final ride before Christmas I would like to suggest that we actually ride the full length of the trail, all the way from Maroondah Hwy through to Warburton. This would also give everyone a chance to see what progress has been made on the Lilydale overpass. I will publish

more details in next week's newsletter.

We also have an exciting new ride planned for **Saturday Dec 4th**. This ride was detailed in the "Where to Ride" handbook from Bicycling Australia and is called the **Belgrave Loop Ride**. Five of us trialed this ride a couple of weeks ago and had a lot of fun in the process.

The ride will officially begin in Belgrave at 10.00 am sharp. We will begin in the car park next to the Cameo Theatre (opposite Safeways). (See below for an alternate start option).

The ride initially follows the bike paths down to FTG and then across to Churchill Park and on to Lysterfield Lake Park where we can try out some of the single track paths. There is also a bike/coffee shop here where we can stop for a break before the harder section back to Belgrave. The return route follows the Dargon Track back up to Belgrave Heights. Since the route passes by Glenda's house she has invited us to drop in. As

an alternate start you could leave your car at Glenda's at 9.00 am and ride back to Belgrave to join the main start at 10.00pm. Those who choose this option would then finish the ride at Glenda's. You could even leave some goodies there to enjoy after the ride.

Since some of the paths are unsealed and rough you must have a mountain bike for this one. It is not suited to beginners, although it could be made easier by an alternate route over the final section. **All those intending to complete this ride need to let me know by 2nd Dec.**

The final ride for 2010 will be the **Bellarine Peninsula Loop on Wednesday Dec 29th**. This is a road ride that starts and finishes in Queenscliff. After the ride you are all invited to stay behind and share a meal at the Chinese Restaurant in Ocean Grove. This is a great ride that takes in a variety of fantastic scenery and some great ocean views. A perfect way to work off those Christmas calories.

Results of feedback and changes for 2011

Over the past couple of weeks I

Monday Nov 29th 2010

Ghostrider 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

have been inviting you all to send me feedback regarding the Ghostriders and asking for any suggestions you might have. I would like to thank those who took some time to put their ideas down and send them to me. I have carefully read everyone's input and tried to summarise the opinions later in this newsletter.

One obvious thing is that, as the group has grown and become much more diverse, it will never be possible to find an approach that will satisfy everyone. I have tried to look for common themes that appeared in multiple replies and draw conclusions accordingly. On page two of this newsletter I have tried to bring together the diverse input that I received and make some decisions for the future direction and organisation of our group. Can you please take some time to familiarize yourself with some of the changes that will be taking place with future rides and activities?

Upcoming Rides & Activities

Tues 30th Nov—Tuesday Fitness Group

Bushwalk starts at 10 am in Emerald. Everyone welcome. Walks last for approx 1 hour.

Thurs 2nd Dec—Warby Trail Ride

Ride starts at Woori Yallock at 12 noon.

Sat 4th Dec—Belgrave to Lysterfield Loop (NEW)

This is a brand new ride which takes in a collection of bike paths and dirt tracks. The ride will start next to the Cameo Theatre in Belgrave at 10.00 am sharp. (As an alternate start option, some may choose to leave their cars at Glenda's house in Mt Morton Road and ride back up to Belgrave. If you choose this you would probably need to start at 9.00 am at Glenda's). Mountain bikes required. This is a reasonably chal-

lenging ride with a fair degree of climbing. Not suited for beginners. All those planning to attend are asked to RSVP no later than 2nd Dec.

Tues 7th Dec—Tuesday Fitness Group—Mountain Bike Ride

Starts at my place at 10.00 am and takes in some delightful forests and tracks before heading up to Gembrook for morning tea. Usually finished by 1 pm. MTB essential.

Thurs 9th Dec—Warby Trail Ride

Ride starts at Woori Yallock at 12 noon

Tues 14th Dec—Tuesday Fitness Group

Bushwalk starts at 10 am in Emerald. Everyone welcome.

Walks last for approx 1 hour.

Thurs 16th Dec—Warby Trail Christmas Ride

This is the final Thursday ride for 2010 and your chance to spread some Christmas smiles along the trail. Grab your reindeer ears and some tinsel and have some fun. I would like to encourage you all to complete the entire trail from Lilydale to Warburton—more details next week.

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).



Where To Ghostriders ??? (Review of Rider Input)

As I mentioned earlier in this newsletter, I have been reading the comments sent in by a number of our riders over the past few weeks and have been endeavouring to look for common themes. Detailed below are some of the points and suggestions that have come forward.

General Ethos of our Group.

One very common theme is that our people believe the Ghostriders should be *much more than simply a cycling group*. For many people the social interaction and friendships are as important (or more important) than the riding. Several commented that cohesion within the group is of paramount importance.

The age demographic of our group means that we often have riders who are struggling with various issues associated with mid life and ageing. I have always felt that we had an important role to play in providing all our riders with an enjoyable and safe place where they can escape the pressures of life for a few hours each week. The mental health advantages are just as important as the physical health advantages.

When the Ghostriders was first formed, this was easy as we only had a very small group, all of whom were very likeminded and happy to ride together. As the group has grown and become more diverse, this has become a much more difficult prospect. One response lamented these early days when we were all on the same wavelength. Another commented that it will never be possible to satisfy everyone and that I should stop trying to do so.

In spite of this I would like to see our group always be a place where people can feel secure, make friends, share problems and mutually support each other. If this takes priority over the riding, then so be it. By the same token, we are a cycling group and this will always be the central theme for our being.

Safety on Rides

Another point that was mentioned was that *rider safety* should be paramount on all rides. We have never had a serious accident on any of our rides and I would like to see this record maintained. In order to maintain the safest environment several items in particular were mentioned. On **trail rides** we need to ride at a safe pace, keep a reasonable separation between riders, point out potential dangers to those following and not ride in an aggressive manner. All riders also have a responsibility to mentor and encourage less experienced riders in safe riding etiquette.

When riding on **public roads** the key point is that all riders need to be *highly visible*. All riders should wear bright coloured fluoro clothing (such as the yellow Ghost rider jersey or similar). Rear tail lights are highly recommended. For most roads, riding should be done in *single file*. Riders need to point out potential hazards to each other and warn of approaching vehicles. Safe road riding is a skill that needs to be learnt. All road rules should always be obeyed.

Weekday Rides

Although Thursdays do not suit everyone it was by far the most popular choice and therefore this will remain our day of choice for the next 12 months. Some did suggest that we should occasionally run our Thursday rides on alternate routes other than the Warby Trail for variation and to avoid boredom. This is a good idea and something for future discussion.

Tuesday Morning Group

This has now become an important and enjoyable part of the Ghostriders activities. On the first Tuesday morning of each month we conduct a mountain bike ride through the trails and forests from Emerald to Gembrook and back. On other Tuesdays we conduct a bushwalk instead. I would encourage other ghostriders and their friends to join us.

Weekend and Special rides

Our current approach has been

to offer about 2 weekend or special rides each month. According to most responses, this was regarded as being about the desired frequency. Several people did comment that they find it difficult to attend these rides due to family or other commitments. Attendance is also harder for those with a non riding partner.

Another problem we have had with special rides is that the convenor has had no idea of how many people will be attending any given ride. On two occasions this year, poor weather meant the convenor was the only person to attend! If they had known this in advance, the rides could have been cancelled.

To avoid this problem in the future we now ask that anyone intending to attend a weekend ride contact the convenor beforehand to "book in". This means that if there are insufficient starters (say less than 5), the ride can be cancelled or modified. This process is a simple courtesy which should make running of rides easier. It is also a common process in many similar groups. It can also give advance warning of when a large number of riders may be intending to participate, in which case special arrangements may need to be made.

Wangaratta to Bright Rail Trail Weekend

I had several comments of how much people enjoyed this weekend so it will be definitely on the agenda for 2011. The weekend of April 1st, 2nd and 3rd has been set aside for this purpose so you might like to add this in your diaries now. In fact it looks like we will also have several of our interstate riders also joining us for this ride.

I also welcome the suggestions I received for other possible rail trail rides and weekends. We will be introducing one of these new trails later in 2011.

GARMIN

A valued supplier of GPS equipment for our rides.

For more information refer to www.garminoutdoor.com.au

GOLDCROSS cycles

Generous discounts for Ghostriders at all Goldcross Stores throughout Australia. Check out their website www.goldcross.com.au for the store closest to you.

Huge range of bikes, accessories, clothing, helmets and bike repairs—everything for the cycling enthusiast.

Rides Calendar

For the past three years I have produced a printed ride calendar, but due to the cost and amount of work involved, this has now been discontinued. The schedule of rides for 2011 has been decided and details of rides will be progressively posted on the web site during the year. In addition, I will probably produce a 2011 calendar in pdf format that can be downloaded from the web site. This will show all rides for the year.

Annual Awards Night

Ever since we began 8 years ago, the so called "Awards Night" has been a part of the annual program. This was intended as a light hearted opportunity to share a dress up dinner with our partners and recognise some outstanding people within the group.

The majority of responses I received indicated that they enjoyed the Awards Night. The problem is that the amount of work involved in locating and booking premises and then getting bookings from individuals, has grown enormously. It is now likely that the Awards Night will no longer continue in its present form. Another alternative is that we simply meet for an informal family picnic/BBQ at Emerald Lake Park.

Assistance Required

I appreciate the offers of help from several within the group. I would love as many people as possible to get more involved with the running of our group. Some of the tasks that I would really appreciate help with include:

Acting as a ride convenor for a particular ride or rides.



This Week with the Ghostriders

Continued from Page 2

Planning and trialling new rides for the group to do.

Writing ride stories or taking pictures for the newsletter or the website

Assisting with planning/running special events (such as the Wangarratta weekend).

Each year I also invite all those who would like input to the following year's program to meet with me to plan our future rides. These meetings are always open to everyone. If you would like to become more actively involved this is a great place to start.

Joining with Other Groups

One very interesting suggestion was that we should sometimes join with other like minded groups to do a joint ride. I think this is an excellent idea and would love to hear from any of our riders who also have connections with other cycling groups. I am sure that we could make some great new friendships in this way.

Overseas Adventure Trips

While these are not part of the "core activities" of our group, the fact that so many have taken part in one or more of these trips clearly indicates that they serve a real need. A little known fact is that the number of people who have now taken part in one or more of our trips is probably

about the same as the total number of people who have ridden with us.

Several people expressed the opinion that they would love to come but are prevented by financial and family concerns. Of course this is understood and I hope that no one ever feels pressured to do something that is out of their reach. On the other hand I have had such amazing feedback from people who have found that the experience really has changed their life, that I cannot help being enthusiastic about future trip options. I have learnt that a dream can take you places that you may never have thought possible. Many of our participants have originally felt that it was not possible for them to be a part of it, but once they made that all important first step, the rest of the steps somehow fell into place.

One important point is that every trip we have conducted has been openly promoted throughout the group so that every Ghost rider has the option of participating. They have never been intended to be an "invitation only" or secret event that was only open to a select group. I am always looking for possible future options and, if you have a suggestion that you

would like to see developed, I would love to discuss it with you.

Ghost rider Sponsorship

Currently our group receives support from two companies—**Garmin** and **Goldcross Australia**. Neither of these support with cash but they have provided practical support in other ways. Garmin Australia have provided us with a mapping GPS to use on our overseas trips and to help prepare our rides database for the website. All Goldcross stores across Australia offer all our riders significant discounts on new bikes, clothing, spare parts, accessories and repairs. Both companies are fully supportive of what our group is about and their support is most appreciated. Of course, if there are any other businesses who could also provide practical support I would love to hear from them. All day to day running expenses for the group are paid for out of my own pocket.

Final Comments

Running the Ghostriders over the past 9 years has always been a labour of love for me. Since I discovered the joy of cycling I just wanted to share my passion with some of my closest friends. Since then I have made such amazing friends and shared

some incredible experiences that I cannot begin to thank you all for sharing this personal journey of discovery with me.

I have to admit that at times the task has not been easy and there have been a few occasions when I have almost felt like just tossing in the towel and riding away solo into the sunset. It is usually at one of those times that someone unexpectedly shoots me an email to say how much they have enjoyed being a part of the group and I can begin to believe that maybe we were doing something right after all.

I know I have made many mistakes and at times my passion may get in the way of patience. I can only ask you all to forgive me if I have upset or offended any of you and ask you to continue to share our two wheeled adventures long into the future.

P.S. I even had someone tell me it was time to change my motto from "Now Get Pedalling" to something else. Maybe I need some suggestions as to what the new motto should be ?

Big Kev's Ride—Nov 21st

(by Kev Henley)

The old saying goes "third time lucky", in my case 3 times lucky. For the third year running we were blessed with a warm, sunny, wind free day in which to tackle an at times challenging, 86 km ride.

Eighteen hardy souls travelled from all parts of the globe, some even as far as Emerald and Pakenham, as we set out on our meandering ride through Hurstbridge and Nutfield. The constant rainfall through Spring ensured the countryside was visually at its finest with green, lush pastures

and fat cows.

After regrouping in Arthurs Creek (home of Cadel's Mum), we set off for our first testing climb and we all cruised over, well our version of cruising .

Past the Yan Yean Reservoir and onto Plenty Rd. for the heaviest traffic section of the ride, but with a wide bike lane we were quite safe.

Once through the picturesque town of Whittlesea we turned off Plenty Rd. and commenced a

very peaceful 7km climb up Humevale hill. A fraction less than a Toolangi gradient meant a reasonably comfortable ride for most of us while some chose to hammer it to the top. At one stage we even saw a car.

The fun part now starts as we turn back towards Whittlesea on one of the best downhill runs in the area, just perfect for tucking down on the drops and going for it .

A 45 min ascent and 10 min descent put us back into the local

bakery for a well earned coffee and mouth watering selection of cakes, we deserved it .

On the road again for the final 25 km home to complete a really terrific ride. A few hot snags , a cold drink/s and a pleasant reminiscence of the day and it was time to head home.

A BIG THANK YOU to all riders who travelled to Diamond Creek to make the ride a TOP DAY.