

MAKING CYCLING BETTER Advocacy

Why we must advocate for cycleways

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Rumour has it that Santa is bringing lots of bikes and bike bits this year, so let's hope we all get to take advantage of this

The views expressed in Chain Mail articles are those of the authors only and do not necessarily represent either the common views shared by a majority of Bike North members or Bike North policy as formulated by the Bike North Executive Committee.

Introduction

Last issue, Wayne Spencer argued that advocacy is about more than cycleways. In this issue Carolyn New responds that cycleways are important to get more people to cycle.

Cycleways provide far more than a pleasant place to ride recreationally. The provision of more and better quality cycleways is necessary to getting more Sydneysiders to use their bikes as transport although it is not the complete solution. We also need to show people where they can ride safely, work for special facilities on targeted roads and ensure all roads provide a safe cycling environment. All road users – especially motorists, but also cyclists, need education on sharing the road. But, if we are ever going to make any significant increase in the numbers of people cycling for transport, first and foremost we need a network of quality cycleways, lanes and quiet roads that link the places people live to the places they need to go.

What is a cycleway?

It's important to define what we mean by a "cycleway". Strictly speaking, a cycleway is a path or road that is dedicated for the sole use of cyclists. There are very few of these in Sydney, with the Sydney Harbour Bridge Cycleway being the prime example. Pathways designed and built for pedestrians and cyclists to share are the more common.

A lane on a road with nothing but a white line separating the cyclist from the traffic

is **not** a cycleway but a cycle **lane**. However, if the lane is separated by a narrow median strip or barrier from the traffic then it would be considered a cycleway. This type of cycleway can provide the safest and most efficient usage with separation from cars, pedestrians and also contra-directional cyclists.

Who uses cycleways?

Nearly **all** cyclists use a cycleway at some time. Many vulnerable cyclists and those only interested in a recreational ride may use cycleways almost exclusively. Experienced cyclists will sometimes use cycleways as a far less stressful alternative to negotiating a series of highly trafficked streets. The degree to which more experienced cyclists would use cycleways depends on the road environment with respect to car speeds, volumes, the existence of dedicated lanes and/or other cycle facilities, the need to make "interesting" merges, as well as the cyclist's own skill, their time pressures, and confidence on busy roads.

Why do we need cycleways?

GETTING STARTED

There is a widespread perception among non-cyclists that cycling on the roads is dangerous. Anyone who has served on our stalls at local fairs can report that there are many who say they would love to use a bicycle but it's just too dangerous

on our busy roads. These people believe that it's only safe to ride on cycleways.

Surveys also back up the anecdotal evidence. For example, in a recent pilot survey of 41 women in Sydney who had access to a bicycle but who did little or no cycling, 80% of respondents said that the provision of safe cycleways was the major deterrent to cycling. However, 36% said that a lack of bicycle facilities and 32% said that a lack of on-road safety were the major deterrents. (Source: *Women and Cycling in Sydney – Determinants and Deterrents, Results of Pilot Survey by Cycle Planning*)

In addition, most parents believe it is too dangerous for their children to ride to school and some schools even encourage this perception by banning their students from cycling to school!

There is no way these people are going to get out their bikes and ride on the roads; the only way we can change these perceptions and encourage people to choose to cycle is to ensure there is a network of cycleways and lanes linked to quiet local streets. This allows people to experience the pleasures of cycling recreationally on cycleways and progress gradually into adjoining quiet streets or bike lanes. The more cycleways we have, the better integrated they are into quiet road systems and the closer these cycleways are to their homes, the sooner people realise that they can use these pathways and routes for useful purposes, not just recreationally.

LOW STRESS ALTERNATIVES

While there will always be "road warrior" cyclists prepared to ride any road at any time, many cyclists do not find it pleasant to ride on busy streets. Many will always prefer to use bike routes that are a combination of cycleways and quiet back streets. With increasing skill and confidence, cyclists may take on more challenging roads and broaden their choice of route(s) but many will always prefer these lowest stress routes.

CRITICAL LINKS

Even the most hardened "road warrior" would not be ashamed to use a cycleway which provides access where no car can go. Shorter cycleways can provide those important short cuts or links between roads, and even between suburbs! These critical links add to the attractiveness in choosing a bicycle for transport. For example, Browns Waterhole brings South

Turrumurra within minutes of Marsfield, impossible by car but a just a short pedal away by bicycle.

Are cycleways safe places to ride?

Accidents can happen anywhere – walking, riding or driving your car – so nobody can guarantee that there won't be any accidents on a cycleway.

Certainly, if they are of poor quality (or narrow with tight, blind corners), there is a high risk of collisions or even "single bike accidents". But speeds are likely to be low in these situations and, as a result, accidents are generally not serious.

A high quality cycleway should be designed to eliminate most of the risks and would be a far safer place to ride. The safest cycleways of all are those that effectively separate cyclists from pedestrians and are one-way traffic only, particularly important in hilly terrain where the variations in speed can be enormous. Contrary to popular belief, a painted white line does **not** effectively separate cyclists from pedestrians.

Shared footpaths with many driveway crossings are also dangerous because they give a perception of safety – while they actually **increase** the risk of conflict with cars. Unexpected and badly placed obstacles such as poles, trees, signposts, and letterboxes can also result in a high risk of accidents. To increase safety crossings, intersections and obstacles should be kept to an absolute minimum on shared footpaths.

Can we build enough cycleways?

The opportunities for more cycleways are all around us.

With new urban developments the potential is high, provided we are vigilant, creative and possess the will to demand them from among those with the power to do so. Corridors such as along railway lines, power lines and drainages, through parks, along harbour and river foreshores provide excellent opportunities for pleasant and stress-free cycling.

While the building of new vehicle motorways is not promoting sustainable transport, the upside is that cycleways can also be provided within that transport corridor. New public transport corridors can and do increase their sustainability by

the inclusion of high-quality cycleways running parallel.

BIKEPLAN 2010

The RTA's BikePlan 2010 is not the sum total of cycleways and lanes in Sydney, rather it is merely a plan for the regional routes – the ones that link the regions of Sydney. These should be the highways of cycling that serve both vulnerable and experienced cyclists. When they are off-road cycleways, they need to be of the highest quality to meet all needs, although there are places where dedicated, separated cycle lanes would meet all needs far better. The network of routes in BikePlan 2010 is inadequate, but that's not because we can't find good places to plan and build cycleways. There are plenty of other opportunities, with their establishment dependent on a higher budget allocation and the will to build them.

LOCAL ROUTES

It is council's responsibility to plan, design and build the local bicycle routes to integrate with the RTA's regional routes. These will be a mixture of cycleways and quiet back roads where all that is needed is a signpost to major destinations. If the provision of cycle routes is integrated into the planning process, opportunities will continue to present themselves. In older areas urban consolidation is increasingly creating new redevelopment, providing opportunities for safe stress-free cycling. New housing developments provide a good opportunity to build the cycle infrastructure along with the housing and roads.

Why do people cycle for transport?

There are lots of reasons why people choose to use a bicycle as transport:

- It's a cheap form of point to point transport – It overcomes problems in parking.
- You can get around traffic jams.
- It is an environmentally-friendly sustainable form of transport – Cycling can keep you healthy while you're just getting places, saving another trip to the gym! [And the exorbitant gym fees – Ed]

Bicycles are an ideal form of transport for short journeys, where the overheads in starting up the car are environmentally and economically high. Bicycle

commuting can also work well in mixed mode with trains, but is dependent on the availability of secure parking.

Who are the people who cycle for transport?

While those who cycle for transport span all ages and genders, studies show that highest proportion are young males. I also speculate that many commuter cyclists have either used a bike throughout their childhood, grown up in a bike culture or have spent time in a country or city where cycling is considered an acceptable option for transport. The number of people who cycle for transport here in Sydney is in contrast to the situation in many overseas countries where a far higher proportion of women cycle for the full range of everyday trips.

I believe that in Sydney, it is a very rare for an individual to suddenly decide to "bike for transport" without having grown up in a cycling culture. The rest of us need to have a significant amount of time using "bikes for fun" and then gradually learn the routes and gain the necessary skills and confidence to ride for transport.

Why not just use roads?

Quiet local roads are great places to ride. Contrary to common perception, Sydney is covered with these kinds of roads. They are and will continue to be the basis of cycle routes for all but the most vulnerable of cyclists.

Unfortunately, these quiet roads ultimately connect to busy regional roads and eventually to the system of highways! These unfriendly roads can often come between our home and our destination. The greater the volume of traffic and the higher the speed of cars, the less cycle friendly the road becomes. Cycleways or lanes are essential for most of us to negotiate our way through these extreme hazards.

Conclusion

So, while cycleways are not the only answer, they are an integral part of the solution to getting more people to cycle. It is only by advocating for more cycleways to be built that we will get more cycleways and, ultimately, of achieving our aim of getting more people who don't currently ride bicycles to do so.

Great opportunity for cyclists

John Watts

Planning NSW (Previously Department of Urban Affairs and Planning) has released a draft policy for comment that is designed to help meet the aims of the Government's air quality management plan and their transport plan. The policy proposes to do this by influencing town planning in such a way that there is greater encouragement for people to ride a bike, walk, or use public transport to meet their transport needs instead of using a private car.

How are they going to do that I hear you say? Well, they have all kinds of ideas, but the problem is that they only seem to apply to new 'greenfields' developments. We believe that the policy should make it equally applicable to developed urban areas like those we live in.

We would like all cyclists to write congratulating them on their initiative in sponsoring a program that will help limit air pollution in new areas but also requesting that they make provision for a similar program in the already built up urban areas. You could say that in your local area the air is already polluted and we need their assistance to create an environment where people will be encouraged to ride bikes as a regular means of transport. The deadline for comments is 14 December.

Please write in your own words to The Director, Metropolitan and Housing Policy Branch, Planning NSW, GPO Box 3927, Sydney, NSW.

The Lane Cove Tunnel EIS

At long last the Lane Cove Tunnel EIS has been released with public comment invited by December 19. You can view it on the web and at several locations around Sydney or if you prefer buy your own copy on CD or book format. See below for details.

What's in it for cyclists?

Cycling within the tunnel would be very unpleasant and alternative arrangements being proposed for cyclists are quite significant. In summary, seven kilometres of continuous low stress cycleway is proposed from Naremburn to North Ryde. From Park St Naremburn to the Pacific Highway a 4 metre wide two way shared path is proposed alongside the Gore Hill Freeway. From Wicks Road, North Ryde to Pacific Highway primarily a 4 metre wide two way shared path next to Epping Road, but in higher pedestrian trafficked areas where there is sufficient space, a two way 3 metre wide dedicated cyclepath separated from the footpath is proposed. The shared pathway continues under the Pacific Highway with ramp access also provided to the Highway. Strong commuter cyclists would have access to the Bus Lane alternative between Wicks Road and the Pacific Highway.

Are we satisfied with this proposal?

Bike North members have represented cyclists in Community Focus Groups for this project. The EIS proposal, while not yet fulfilling all our needs and expectations, appears to be significantly better than we had feared at the outset. Our issues primarily lie in the separation of contra direction cyclists on hills, treatment of road intersections and minimising intersections between the dedicated cyclepath and footpath. We will continue to ask for even better facilities for higher speed travel.

The RTA has displayed a willingness to consider cyclists needs and compromise with other users and stakeholders and we must congratulate them for that. There is no doubt that competing interests mean we will need to work hard to simply maintain what is already offered and we need your support to do that. A simple letter supporting high quality cycle facilities along this corridor from every member could make the difference. In the meantime your representatives will continue to work through the Focus Groups and any other ways possible to attempt to gain the safest and most useful cycle facilities possible.

How can you help?

- Read the EIS, or at least the summary. It is a very large document.
- Respond positively and constructively to the address shown below.

Chain Mail

- Ask that cycle facilities not be watered down in any future amendments.
- Write a brief note to the Minister supporting the cycle facilities that are included in the EIS.

Please watch email news for reports on our progress and suggestions for how you can continue to support. Our web site will also be updated with further information about the proposal as it unfolds and hints on how you can help us get the best outcome possible.

Submit your comments on the proposal:

- By post to the Project Manager, Lane Cove Tunnel EIS, RTA, PO Box 558, Blacktown, 2148
- By e-mail to lanecovetunnel@rta.nsw.gov.au
- By submitting comments via SKM website www.skm.com.au/commcons/lanecovetunnel – By facsimile to (02) 9830 5513

The e-mail facilities are for submitting comments/representations only. For questions to the study team freecall 1800 500 410.

If you would like to Write to the Minister:

Minister Roads and Transport, Level 34, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, SYDNEY NSW 2001 or email: carl.scully@transport.minister.nsw.gov.au or fax (02) 9228 4633

For more information about Bike North's view on this proposed cycling facility contact Carolyn New (94381903, carolynn@ihug.com.au) or Doug Stewart (98871478, speedwell74@yahoo.com)

EIS Exhibition Information

Information Brochure (free). EIS (\$20). EIS plus Working Papers (\$25). EIS and Working Papers CD (\$10).

Copies of the EIS are available Mon-Fri, 8.30am – 5.00pm from:

- RTA, Community Relations, Grd Flr, Centennial Plaza, 260 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills.
- RTA, Ground Floor, 83 Flushcombe Road, Blacktown.

EIS will be on exhibition until 19 December 2001 at:

- RTA, Community Relations and RTA Blacktown (see address above).
- NSW Govt Information Centre, Goodsell Building, Cnr Phillip & Hunter Streets, Sydney
- NSW Environment Centre, Level 5, 362 Kent Street, Sydney – Planning NSW (was DUAP) Information Centre, Grd Flr, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney
- Willoughby Library, 407 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood
- Lane Cove Council, 48 Longueville Road, Lane Cove
- Lane Cove Library & Information Centre, 139a Longueville Road, Lane Cove
- North Sydney Council, 200 Miller Street, Nth Sydney
- Stanton Library, 234 Miller Street, Nth Sydney
- Ryde Central Library, Devlin Street, Top Ryde
- North Ryde Library, 201 Cox's Road, North Ryde
- Willoughby Council, 31 Victor Street, Chatswood

The EIS is also available on the internet and can be downloaded from:

- www.rta.nsw.gov.au
- www.skm.com.au/commcons/lanecovetunnel

Visit the Lane Cove Tunnel Information Centre (Shop 2, 91-93 Longueville Road, Lane Cove), open at:

- Wednesday 5 December (9am-1pm)
- Thursday 6 December (5-9pm)
- Saturday 8 December (9am-1pm)
- Monday 10 December (1-5pm)
- Wednesday 12 December (9am-1pm)
- Thursday 13 December (5-9pm)
- Saturday 15 December (9am-1pm)
- Monday 17 December (1-5pm)

How Do Traffic Signals Know You Are There?

Graeme Edwards

The intention of this article is to give some insight into how traffic signals detect a vehicle.

Most of you would have seen the sensors at the lights (see photo) and you may be wondering how they work.



The sensor is no more than one or more loops of wire embedded in the road surface. When you loop wire in this way you get what is called an inductive loop. The loop exhibits some electrical and magnetic properties called inductance and this inductance can be measured.

More importantly the inductance of the loop can be changed. The most common method of changing the inductance is to bring a metal object into close proximity to the loop. Metals that have a magnetic quality are best. Steel is good and aluminium is bad. Stopping a car over the sensor places a large metal object into close proximity to the loop thus making a significant change in the inductance of the loop.

The larger the metal object and the closer it is to the loop, the greater the change in the inductance.

Other things also affect the inductance of the loop for example, water, loose gravel, steel belts in tyres and other road debris but their effect is less than that of a car.

Now that we know how the sensor works, how does that traffic signal controller (large grey box near the lights) make use of the inductance provided by the sensor.

When traffic signals are installed the Traffic Signal Technicians measure the inductance of the loop when there are no cars present and measure it again when there are cars present. Once they have this information they tune or adjust the controller so that it will sense when a car

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is present but will not sense a wet road or road debris or, in some instances, when a bike is present. Each installation is different and each set of sensors has to be tuned or adjusted individually. That is why your bike may be detected at some sets of signals and not at others. It is also possible that your bike could be detected at a set of signals when travelling in one direction but not when you are travelling in the opposite direction (different sensors different adjustment).

So if you come across Traffic Signals that have been adjusted to ignore cyclists how can you improve your chances of being detected?

One way would be to ride with a friend that has a heavy, steel framed bike. The more steel the better.

Ride with a group of friends and all gather together inside the loop of the sensor. Once again the more steel you can get in or near the loop the better.



If you are on your own, place your bike directly over the wire on one edge of the loop. Most pedals have a steel axle in them, so move one of the pedals down as close to the road and near the loop as possible. If you are wearing metal cleats then place the cleat directly over the wire, preferably in one of the corners. All of these methods will get what little metal you have with you into a position that will have the most affect on the sensor.

Remember, we are trying to convince the traffic signal controller that we are a large metal object like a car.

If none of these things works then you should take a note of the precise location, noting the Traffic Signal Number which is marked in large numerals on the housing of the traffic signal controller, the large grey box usually located on the footpath adjacent to the signals. You should also note which approach road and the lane in question.

Pass this information on to Brad Donaldson on 9831 0961 or Brad_Donaldson@rta.nsw.gov.au, he can then arrange to have the detector checked to make sure that it is working or have the RTA's Traffic Signal Technicians try to adjust the traffic signal controller to make it more sensitive to bikes.

[Acknowledgements to the RTA for providing basic information used in writing this article.]

WORKING GROUPS

Hornsby

YEAR IN REVIEW

Graeme Edwards 9476 3624 graeme@idx.com.au;

Kevin Mason 9868-2904 kevmason@triode.net.au

For the Hornsby Working Group, the year started with a meeting with the Hornsby Mayor / General Manager to discuss cycling facilities in the Hornsby Shire. The important things to come from the meeting were undertakings to provide us with information on:

- the current budget for cycling facilities;
- how the money has been spent so far; and
- the overall timetable to complete the Hornsby Bike Plan.

Although they have made these undertakings, this information is yet to be provided! At the meeting there was also mention of establishing a Cycling Facilities Working Group that would work with the Planning Division. This is still under review almost a year down the track. According to Garry Kennedy, Manager of the Road and Traffic Group, they are short-staffed and this explains why they have not had a chance to look at the establishment of the committee to date. The Federal Government's Roads to Recovery money was announced earlier this year and Hornsby Council will use some of the money to build an off-road cycle path between Westleigh and Pennant Hills. This project is now well under way.

By far the biggest project for the Hornsby working group this year has been the Cherrybrook Integrated Transport Plan – which was accepted by Council in July. You may recall that Bike North was named in the report to Council as a group to be consulted on the building of cycle facilities in the area. Some of the cycling facilities proposed for the plan have already been included in the budget for 2002/03.

There was also the upgrading of Galston road which, while not a Bike North initiative, we were able to have our say on the proposed cycle facilities.

So where to from now? The next step is to get all the proposals that have stalled and to give them a kick start! By the time you read this it is hoped that Councillor Matthew Benson will have put a Question with Notice to council asking why some of the proposals have not proceeded and why the information has not been forthcoming. We hope that will raise their priority and move things forward.

As always, you can help by informing local working group of any concerns or ideas using the contact details above or speak to us on a ride. With your help we can focus on what you believe is important to cycling in the Hornsby Shire.

Ryde

Wayne & Louise Spencer 9874 6977;

W-L_Spencer@rocketmail.com

Bike North once again successfully participated in the Granny Smith Festival in Eastwood this year on 20 October 2001. We had about 20 cyclists participating in the parade and we ran a stall throughout the day, where we talked to the public about Bike North and cycling in Ryde in general. Some of our members had a very busy morning first escorting a cyclist riding on the Hornsby – Sydney CBD leg of a fund raising ride from Cape York to Sydney and the cycling back to Eastwood just in time to participate in the Granny Smith parade. We also gained some publicity for

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Bike North with photos of the purple flyer and two other trikes (plus riders) being published in one of the local papers.

In other matters Bike North has been liaising with council and the RTA on the design for the Concord West to Eastwood rail trail. We recently conducted a site inspection with RTA and council staff shortly to look at options for the rail trail route and will follow this up with a report.

Bike North has also been active in liaising with other stakeholders regarding design issues associated with the proposed development of the Epping to Chatswood rail line.

We sent a submission to Ryde council concerning the draft development plans for Meadowbank Employment Area. The documents included several references to providing access for cyclists which is heartening as Bike North has contributed comments to Council to an earlier Masterplan for the area.

We received positive feedback on our submission to council on the Top Ryde and Eastwood Urban Village Development Control Plans and may attend a future meeting with Council's town planners to discuss issues further. For members wishing to find out what Bike North is doing in Ryde and contribute please contact Wayne or Louise Spencer on 9874 6977.

events!

Cycle Sydney

Raincoats at the ready

*Pam and Col Kendrick,
Rides Coordinators*

The weather reports for Sunday 18 November 2001, issued in the week before, were quite mixed – showers clearing, a fine day Sunday, and a late southerly buster. For once they were right – all of them!

We noticed the sky darkening as we crossed the Harbour Bridge by train on the way to the start, but the few spots of rain on the windows were no cause for concern. Emerging from North Sydney Station however, we were greeted with a wall of water. The choice of our meeting place at St Leonards Park's "Sound Shell Stage" proved popular because it was the only dry spot around, and coincidentally, was the chosen place for the photographer.

At about 7:15am the rain eased and we grouped for our team photo to be taken. The prizes for entering as a team were drawn by Ivan from the Waratahs Veteran's Racing Club.



The heart rate monitor was won by Kin-Yat Lo and the free entry was scored by Mark Kendrick – congratulations to both.

Furry friends adorned many helmets and back pockets as per the Bike North theme, and was accompanied by jibes of "road kill" from other riders, cops and vollies alike!

By 7:30 we began moving towards the starting line. The drizzle persisted as we crossed the Harbour Bridge and continued until we were around the Pymont rest stop, when the pearly flood gates opened! Some pedalled bravely on; some flattened themselves against walls or hid under bridges; others huddled under totally inadequate trees as the cops and vollies smiled bravely on.

All then went swimmingly, until the Iron Cove Bridge. Glenda the gorgeous glider, who was captaining Max the Tandem, ably stoked by Steph Groves and Doug Stewart, had to abandon due self-destruction of the sidewall of the rear tyre. Thus ended her dream of reaching Parramatta to be with the rest of the menagerie, who had all been soaking up water (See Debbie's advice on hydration later in this issue.)

The rain miraculously stopped between Five Dock and Concord, and some riders wrung out their squelchy socks and the cops and vollies steamily waved us on. A welcome break to visit the ever smiling Mario for morning tea again caused consternation for a hard working vollie who rapidly learned that, "No. Coffee is THAT way!"

By this stage, blue sky appeared in ever increasing patches and the temperature soared, as did the humidity. We were well and truly into home territory now, whizzing past the familiar Meadowbank Wharf, along the Parramatta Valley Cycleway and up the hills of Dundas, with cheerful cops and vollies urging us on. The heat and humidity were taking their toll – many other cyclists succumbed and walked up the steeper sections.

Into the leafy back streets of old Parramatta we went, with the pleasing sight of cyclists travelling faster than the cars as we neared the Tudor Gatehouse and our goal. One last hill, a wonderful coast to the finish line, and a welcome from the Bike Northers who already

congregated underneath the trees. Tales were told, furry friends re-fluffed and lunch was devoured between stray spots of rain and menacing claps of thunder.

Unfortunately we missed the presentation of the grand prize for being the biggest team in our category, but by the time you read this the prize should have already arrived and will be drawn soon.

Many thanks must go to Bicycle NSW and the RTA for their wonderful organisation of the event, to the patient police, the ever-present smiling vollies; and a special thank-you to the huge contingent of Bike North members and friends who made our team the biggest and the best!

Mention must also be made of Huey up there, who gave us a bucketing that we won't forget for a loonnnggggg, loonnnggggg time.

Sydney to the 'Gong 2001

[Although Bike North did not have an official team for the annual Sydney to the 'Gong Ride, many members rode the 92km from Moore Park to Wollongong in what was ideal cycling conditions – warm and sunny, AND with a nice tailwind! Here's a story of a memorable Gong Ride for the Houghtons – Ed]

Caroline Houghton

We planned it all in great detail – we were going to ride the whole thing as a family. Unfortunately, my husband Ian had to go away to Japan for work at the last minute. I thought I wouldn't be able to do the 'Gong Ride!

Then, a good friend, Richard, said he was doing the ride so I asked him: "How would you like to do it with Andrew (6) on the Tag-along?" I would ride with Michael (4) on the child-seat. He bravely agreed.

We set off from Moore Park at 7:30 and were making good progress to the first stop at 15km, where we saw a few Bike Northers. Mark Grimmond raced past, without stopping, but unusually, he'd

snuck an adult (brother Craig) onto his tandem! After a quick play-stop, we set off again.

We'd gone barely 10 metres when disaster struck. Somehow the bolt on the Tag-along either broke or came out and suddenly Andrew was ploughing face first along the road! He was very shaken up with multiple grazes and cuts to his chin, cheek, forehead, head (from helmet strap indentation) and fingers. Luckily the St John's Ambulance were right there to patch him up. Unfortunately they didn't have any children's Panadol. Andrew was crying and saying he wanted to go home – I must say it seemed a most reasonable request!

I thought the best option would be to repair the tag-along so Richard could ride with it on his own to the end, while I got the 2 boys and my bike to a railway station. The mechanic offered to drive Richard to the local BBC Hardware store. Richard enticed Andrew out of the St John's ambulance tent to come with him. Meanwhile, I cycled to a chemist on route to pick up some Panadol and arranged to meet the others at the hardware store.

When I met them, a transformation had occurred. By some undisclosed means – probably something of engineer Richard's doing (patent pending) – Andrew was now keen to carry on, even before I gave him the Panadol.

We lost at least an hour there. Then, at about Sutherland the Tag-along got a puncture and we lost more time. From then on we seemed to be about last in the field. At lunch they were giving away all the uneaten morning tea muffins. Halfway up that big hill – you wouldn't believe it – the tag-along got another puncture! Again the stragglers overtook us. We finally made it to the end after 92km at about 4pm – what an epic!!! Via train, bus, and car, we finally got home at 8.15pm after leaving home at 5.45am!



Summer Hydration Special

Many cyclists simply do not drink enough fluids when they ride – and this could be a major problem in the summer heat that is fast approaching. This hydration special looks at why and how you should hydrate your body and how best to carry an adequate amount of fluid whilst cycling.

Hydration Part One – Why and how to hydrate – A Dietician's Perspective

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE, BUT NOT A DROP WAS DRUNK!

Debbie Lillenthal, B.Sc.HEc (Nut & Diet) – Accredited Practising Dietitian

With summer fast approaching, it is a good idea to develop good drinking habits (of the watery kind – not the alcoholic variety). Water is an essential nutrient in the prevention of dehydration in your everyday life and especially whilst riding your favourite bike.

Thirst is NOT an indicator of your fluid needs. Maintaining optimal hydration at all times is **always** the best remedy. Dehydration is more pronounced in hot weather and is caused by a number of factors:

- Poor hydration to start with,
- The duration and intensity of the activity,
- Weather conditions (e.g. a dry warm day will often mask sweat losses due to the rapid drying of sweat from the skin and clothes),
- Lack of or insufficient fluids during and after the activity to replace sweat losses.

Impairment to exercise performance occurs when dehydration exceeds 2% of body weight. Extreme dehydration with fluid losses between 6-10% of body weight lead to heat stroke and exhaustion which can be life threatening.

The following are examples of the effect of dehydration on exercise performance:

- Impaired muscle endurance,
- Reduced aerobic exercise performance,

- Impaired mental functioning in areas of complex decision making and skill,
- Reduced gastric (stomach) emptying rate with an increased risk of stomach upset or discomfort. This in turn can further reduce actual consumption of fluids,
- Impairment of core body temperature regulation.

You can check your level of dehydration during a bike ride by weighing yourself before and immediately after the ride – the difference in your weight is the amount of fluid loss! You will need to replace this!

SO HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN HYDRATION AND PREVENT DEHYDRATION?

Water does the job in general for non-endurance sports – however research has shown that in fact it does not provide the most rapid form of water replacement for the body!!! Why? Small amounts of carbohydrate (glucose) and electrolytes (sodium and potassium) will deliver water faster to the body as both enhance water absorption from the gut.

The development of "sports drinks" was based on this research. They were designed to prevent dehydration during and after exercise in elite athletes, who exercised at high intensity for many hours. These drinks are now readily available for the serious and not so serious athlete. [And lots of couch potatoes too. Ed]

Sports drinks generally contain 5-7% carbohydrate as glucose, glucose polymers, sucrose and fructose, electrolytes, and particularly sodium. The sodium in the drinks serves two purposes. Firstly, it increases intestinal absorption of water thereby improving fluid replacement and secondly helps to prevent hyponatraemia (low blood sodium) due to excessive sweating which can occur in ultra endurance events (high intensity sports of more than three hours duration).

Water is still the best drink for the recreational athlete. The sports drink is useful for activities in excess of 60 minutes and where a flavoured fluid ensures that more fluid is actually consumed.

Guidelines for maintaining fluid intake and preventing dehydration whilst on your summer ride are as follows:

Before heading out for a ride make sure that you have had plenty to drink – about 500mls, – Make sure that you carry plenty of water with you on your bike, – Refill when empty. Experienced riders always know where the taps are to replenish empty bottles, – Aim to drink 150 – 250mls every 15 minutes. – On extended rides take made up sports drinks and/or sports drinks powder with you (to add to water) – do not double or triple the strength recommended by the manufacturer – you may develop stomach cramps and/or diarrhoea!!! – At the end of the ride make sure that you drink plenty of fluids – water, sports drinks, juice, or cordial.

Sports drinks can also assist with the replacement of muscle energy stores of glycogen but that's another story. So watch this space! In the meantime – good drinking!!!

Handy tip. Wash out the plastic film container next time you take happy snaps and store your sports drink powder in there. One full package makes up one bottle, and fits neatly inside the back jersey pocket of your Bike North jersey.

Hydration Part Two – how to carry that fluid

Kin-Yat Lo

In the previous article, Debbie explained why you should drink more when you are riding. But, just how do you carry your drinks? There are two normal ways: (1) in water bottles or *bidons*; and in (2) hydration packs or *CamelBaks*.

WATER BOTTLES

I'm sure you are all familiar with carrying drinks in water bottles – the most common and cheapest method. Bottle sizes are 500ml (small) and 750ml (large) and cost about \$10 each. There are usually two standard bottle cage mounts on a bike frame and, if you install the cages, you can carry around 1.5 litres of water, i.e. two large bottles. (On some small frames the larger bottles won't fit.)

If you want more water bottle capacity, then you can purchase single or double water bottle cage mount that attaches to the rear of your seat post. You can also replace a cage with a large bottle cage that can fit a 1.25-litre PET bottle. Some

bikes have a third cage mount under the down tube.

Water bottles are usually adequate for most Bike North rides, where there are usually stops at taps en route, and you can always purchase water or sports drinks at morning-tea stops. As Debbie also noted, most cyclists know exactly where taps are on their regular routes.

However, there are some disadvantages using water bottles. It can be difficult to drink while on the move, and sometimes impossible when commuting in traffic or riding on a bumpy off-road trail. When drinking, you will only have one hand on the handlebars and you could lose concentration, and balance, momentarily when you retrieve or replace your bottle, which could lead to an accident.

The capacity can also be a problem. Debbie's recommendation of 150-250ml per 15 minutes means that with 1.5 litres you will need to refill your bottles every one and a half to two and a half hours.

HYDRATION PACK

Hydration systems consist of a plastic bladder with a long delivery tube that has a rubber bite valve to control the flow on the end. The bladder is carried inside a backpack or bum bag.

A hydration pack's strength lies in its ability to carry much more water (starting at about 1.5-2 litres) than with bike-mounted bottles. And, you can also use a hydration pack in conjunction with water bottles to more than double your water-carrying capacity.

Hydration packs are often referred to as CamelBaks – this is because CamelBak was the first manufacturer of hydration packs in the early-1990s (remember Kleenex tissues?).

There are now many packs on the market in various styles and sizes – some sit very aerodynamically on your back but do not have any cargo capacity while others are very large and carry enough water for an all-day epic or even an overnight trip. However hydration packs are expensive, starting at around \$100 for a 1.5-2 litre bladder housed inside a minimalist backpack and up to \$300 for a 3-litre bladder inside a very large backpack.

There is also a large variety of brands – but be aware that different products vary greatly in quality, especially in the "bladder" and "bite-valve". The most

popular brands include: CamelBak, Blackburn, Ultimate Direction, Cannondale, Bigfoot and Ground Effect. Also, you can purchase a bladder and fit this inside your regular backpack – many cycling backpacks (such as those made by Deuter and Tatonka) are also equipped with a compartment for bladders and tube guides on shoulder straps.

One of the biggest advantages of hydration packs is its "no-hands drinking" capability. The drink tube is situated directly underneath your chin or on your shoulder, and drinking is only a matter of lifting the bite-valve to your mouth – and you simply release it when you have had enough.

It also encourages you to drink more (and more frequently) because of its easy accessibility. 150-250ml per 15 minutes might sound like a lot but not if you take frequent sips.

One of the disadvantages is that it can get hot wearing a hydration pack. This is compounded by the fact that hydration packs are most needed and commonly used on hot summer days. Nevertheless, it should be noted that many hydration packs have a back made of a wicking fabric or are raised above the back. Actually, when my CamelBak Classic is full, the backpack hardly makes contact with my back due to its curved shape – but it is definitely a lot sweeter than using bottles only.

Perhaps the biggest problem with using hydration packs is hygiene – or lack thereof. Many users complain that bacteria gets built up inside the bladder and especially in the drinking tube and bite-valve. This is not only unsightly but can also be unhealthy! Keeping it clean takes much more effort than to clean out your water bottle. This problem is compounded if you use sports drinks inside the bladder instead of plain water. It is recommended that you clean with a dishwashing liquid after each ride and then dry it. The tube is harder to keep clean, but you can purchase special bottlebrushes for this purpose.

Personally, I use my CamelBak (an older Classic model with a 2-litre bladder) on shorter rides and then simply slot the bladder into a Tatonka Easy Rider backpack for longer rides (or bushwalks). I only use my hydration pack on mountain bike rides or for touring, where I find the water carrying capacity a must. On such

rides I fill my bladder with plain water (chilled with ice cubes, of course!) and my water bottles with sports drinks. Wonderful way of refreshment! A hydration pack is also excellent when you need a backpack to carry food, extra spares and first-aid kit.

But I find that it is unnecessary for shorter road rides such as most Bike North rides. This is because you can usually find a tap on the road and, for me, it is not too difficult to drink from a water bottle while on these rides. It also keeps my back well ventilated, and I don't suffer from a sore back.

But the most important criteria are its water-carrying capacity and your ability to drink. I certainly find that I drink more with a hydration pack (sometimes even too much!) than with water bottles. If you feel you are not drinking enough, or you want to carry extra water (and extra snacks), then hydration systems are definitely the way to go.



Building Custom Touring Bicycles

Ian Houghton

I recently had two custom touring bicycles built up and I thought that this might be interesting to other riders in the User Group.

Why a touring bike, and what is a touring bike anyway?

The classical touring bike is designed to be fast, but comfortable and stable on the road, and will take luggage and cope with rough roads and the odd bit of dirt if needed. It is also very good for commuting. It traditionally has:

- Dropped handlebars (better if it is windy, and arguably more comfortable than straight bars).
- Tyres around 32mm width, which is narrow enough to be fast, wide enough to handle the odd dirt road without sinking too much.
- Wide range low gearing to climb those monster hills.
- Long wheel base in the frame so the bike handles easily (not twitchy).

- Steel long rake front forks that absorb road shock, but don't waste energy.
- Lots of attachments for panniers mudguards and water bottles.
- Relatively low weight.
- Durability: must be able to take a bit of knocking about, and still work well.

For the sort of riding I do, and expect to do over the next 20 years, which is how long I expect the bike to last, this is pretty much what I figured I wanted. And while I was at it, I'd get one for my wife, Caroline.

Interestingly, this is pretty much an ideal bike for many of those Bike North day rides. Touring bikes are not fashionable right now. Manufacturers don't build component sets for them. A consequence of this is that to get a good tourer you need to mix road and mountain bike components. This takes a bit of knowledge.

I had a brief look at buying off the shelf, but it was soon clear that this wasn't the way to go. The bikes seen most commonly in the shops are mountain bikes and road racing bikes, neither of which get very close to this. Hybrid bikes come closer, but have straight bars, and most are fitted with average standard components that in my experience don't last so well – I didn't see any equipped with good quality components. Some companies sold top quality touring bikes, but their gearing was typically 52/42/32 on the front, and which I think gives too many useless high gears for touring. Also the cost is very high for what you get, dearer than going full custom, interestingly.

There are several ways of going custom. One is to take a standard bike, and ask the bike shop to change some components round – maybe upgrade this, change that etc. Most people do this to some extent, even if it is only changing the tyres and saddle. The next level is to buy a standard frame, and specify every bit to put on it. The top level is the full custom level – have a frame made for you, and specify every component that goes on it. This is what we did.

I'd built a custom bike before, in 1981. This happened somewhat by chance – I bought an off-the-shelf tourer, but the bike shop sold me too large a frame – after a while I bought a custom frame

that was the right size, and moved the components over. That time I put all the bits on myself. Over the years, I changed many components, learning in the process, and in 2001 was still riding it, having done well over 100,000 km. By this stage it wasn't too daunting to consider going full custom again.

Most mid-range standard production bikes nowadays (road and mountain) are made in aluminium alloy – it is light, and easy to mass-produce. Contrary to what you might expect, a good steel alloy frame weighs much the same, but being a springier material can give a smoother ride.

The main advantage of going with a custom frame (usually steel alloy) is that it can be built exactly for your individual body proportions, flexibility, and pedaling style. Some people will fit standard bike frames exactly, but most have some variation that means that a custom frame can be made to fit better. It is a bit (a lot) like being measured for a suit/dress, but even more involved. With a frame made for you by a good builder who loves his art, and knows what he is doing, it will fit like a glove – the reach, the angles, everything will be spot on – which means more comfort, and more power, both at the same time. Done properly it will feel "right" as soon as you get on. Such frames here cost around \$900. This is cheaper than anywhere else in the world I know of, incidentally. This means that to make it worthwhile you have to be thinking of a bike with total cost of around \$1800, or more. The main requirement is to have been riding for long enough to know what you want.

Much time and thought went into each component of these bikes. I tried to choose bits that worked together, apparently with success. It would take too many words to describe it all, but those who are interested can contact me for more. I will say that the most difficult bit was the gearing, and brakes combination. Caroline's set-up has super-low gearing. (22 to 34). But when she carries a 20kg child up a steep hill, she needs it! I gave my bike (Ian's) closer spaced gears than Caroline's, but they don't go quite as low (22 to 25). The gear changers differ as a result.

CAROLINE'S BIKE

Steel Frame-set, Reynolds 531ST tubing, custom built by McLachlan's in Newcastle, with

hand-cut Dragon on headset, colour Bianchi Aqua. – Headset: Shimano Ultegra Cartridge

Brakes: Shimano XT Cantilever (V brakes don't work well with road levers) – Brake levers: Shimano Ultegra STI 9 speed (combined brakes and gear changers) – Wheels: Shimano XT hubs, 700C Velocity Dyad rims, Sapim spokes 36 x 3 cross. – Tyres: Continental top touring 32x700C – Pedals: Campag super record with clips (my old ones, light and super quality)

Chainset: Shimano XT Mega Hollowtech 44/32/22 – Rear Cassette: Shimano XT 9 speed: 12-34 – Front changer: Shimano XT bottom pull. – Rear Changer: Shimano XT, long cage – Bottom Bracket: XT cartridge – Chain: Shimano XT – Saddle: San Marco Rolls – Seatpost: Microadjust alloy – Handlebars: Deda Ergo dropped bars – Stem: Deda alloy – Rear rack: Blackburn Expedition – Front Rack: Blackburn custom low rider – Computer: Flight Deck (shows the gears) – Pump: Zefal HPX – Mudguards

Cost about \$3300.

IAN'S BIKE

I decided to keep my old but very good frame, and had it modified for modern components. Apart from the frame, brake arms, and racks, I changed everything else.

Steel Frame-set, Reynolds 531DB tubing, originally custom built by Argos in 1981, modified by McLachlan's in Newcastle to fit modern components – Headset: Shimano Ultegra Cartridge

Brakes: Mafac Tandem Cantilever (from my old bike) – Brake levers: Shimano Ultegra STI 9 speed (combined brakes and gear changers) – Wheels: Shimano XT hubs, 700C Velocity Dyad rims, Sapim spokes 36 x 3 cross. – Tyres: Continental top touring 32x700C – Pedals: Time ATAC

Chainset: Shimano XT Mega Hollowtech 44/32/22 – Rear Cassette: Shimano Ultegra 9 speed: 12-25 – Front changer: Shimano Ultegra triple bottom pull. – Rear Changer: Shimano Ultegra – Bottom Bracket: XT cartridge – Saddle: San Marco Rolls – Seatpost: Microadjust alloy – Handlebars: Alloy dropped bars – Stem: Alloy, split design – Rear rack: Blackburn SS Custom (from my old bike) – Front Rack: Blackburn low rider (from my old bike) – Computer: Flight Deck (shows the gears) – Mudguards

Cost about \$2700 including frame modifications.

CONCLUSION

So there you have it. The result – well they are both dream bikes, really. Smooth, quiet, fast, comfortable, and very strong. We can get up the hills with the childseat or tag-along. Not cheap by any standards. but they should give us a lot of pleasure, and last a long time.

If you are thinking about buying a top quality bike, custom building is well worth considering. It is not quick though – expect it to take about 4 months. Find a builder you trust, preferably by recommendation. (I met the McLachlan's on a tour) It is also best to discuss progress regularly with the builder.

Letter to the Editor

"TIME FOR A CHANGE"

Keith Griffin

A few drinks with colleagues at work...Friday afternoon and all that...some really nice cheeses as well. My boss had left early so she could collect her kids from child-care and get them to various other engagements. Early, because Critical Mass was going to block the Harbour Bridge, and like so many people she drives to the city every day.

My trusty new road bike was locked up in the car park (on the bike racks I asked for during the building planning phase). Eventually I felt it was time to go home, before I overdid the drinks and couldn't be trusted on a bike. As I emerged from the car park I saw a cop at the top of Bridge Street directing the traffic jam, so far as was possible. Bridge St was a parking lot! I rolled my way between the cars and exited the city on the harbour bridge bike path. About halfway across was the tail end of Critical Mass taking at least 3 lanes of the bridge; a long, almost motionless snake of cyclists flanked by cops and velocops. I pushed on through Milsons Point.

At North Sydney I emerged onto the Pacific Hwy straight into another large group of massing revellers. By comparison with getting through the traffic jam in town this manoeuvre was extremely dangerous and difficult – cyclists riding very slowly, and not keeping to any particular line. They turned up Blue St. Great, I can move along now. Wrong. At the Miller St lights the intersection was corked and the front end of the mass was crossing. Cyclists, holding me up on my commute home! I waited for a wide enough gap and luckily managed to clip my other cleat in fairly quickly and cross the group.

Now I was free of the bunch and could ride at my own pace. After several blocks a two-wheel recumbent and rider passed me. I stayed with him as far as possible, but the drinks and cheese were beginning to take a toll on me. But in Australia, the land of the level playing field we can always rely on something to cut down any tall poppy, in this case traffic lights. I caught him again at Chatswood where I turned down Fuller's road and he continued up the highway towards Turramurra.

That was the last cyclist I saw for the rest of the journey home. The M2 was quiet by the time I reached it at about 7:15 pm.

During the day I had had conversations with several work colleagues who were aware that the Critical Mass ride would be on. Was I going to join it? Why did they make it so difficult for everyone on a Friday evening? What was the point of it anyway? I found myself defending cycle transport and the need for better recognition and facilities. Most agreed with me but deplored the behaviour of critical mass.

I used to support the idea of critical mass. But in my view that 'protest' or celebration as they call it is tired. Its time to move on to the next phase. While some motorists understand and even support the mass, most do not and are openly critical. To these people all they see on a 'massive' Friday afternoon is a large group of cyclists riding very slowly and badly, inconveniencing other road users. If critical mass is a celebration of cycling then why does it not travel at cycling speeds?

Perhaps this large mass can still be done once a year, but on the other days why not try some groups of 30 or so riders riding properly at sensible speeds, obeying road rules and actually commuting. The best possible advocacy for cycle transport is to have motorists see that it is being done by others all the time. Cyclists must demand their rights on the road, but must also share the roads with other users.

Yes, people should not be driving into town every day. At my workplace, having achieved secure cycle parking for staff, and bike racks for students and visitors on the forecourt, I am now working at getting more of the members of staff to cycle in, just one day a week. Which will encourage them more and do more for cycling; a monthly slow ride in peak hour, or seeing me arrive and leave every day on my bike?

Date: Saturday 1 December

Ride: Pennant Hills to Cheltenham by Bush MTB
 Grade: EM Distance: 16
 Contact: Andrew Elliston, 9686 4113 (h) elliston@optusnet.com.au
 Starts at: 8:15am Pennant Hills stn Yarrara St side. Ride to Cheltenham and Epping, returning via Pennant Hills Park and Whale Rock. Very scenic ride, takes in path along Devlins Creek.

Date: Sunday 2 December

Ride: BN Annual Christmas Party Brunch
 Grade: EM Distance:
 Starts at: Ride or drive to Auluba Reserve, cnr Vernon St and Kissing Point Rd, Sth Turrumurra for Christmas Brunch at 10:00am. BYO everything for a sociable morning. More details in Chain Mail and BN News. Join one of the rides to the venue. North: Hornsby via Turrumurra with Graeme Edwards. 9476 3624(h) South: Meadowbank via Eastwood with Doug Stewart. 9887 1478(h) East: Chatswood via Lane Cove Park with Yaffa Gould 9966 9262(h) West: Carlingford via M2 with Pam Kendrick 9872 2583(h) Northwest: Pennant Hills by MTB with Kin-Yat Lo 9980 7143(h)

Date: Sunday 2 December

Ride: M2, Windsor, Sackville, Glenorie, Galston
 Grade: H Distance: 137
 Contact: Phil Johnston 9312.3319, Brian Willis 9807.6439 H
 Starts at: Turrumurra Stn, N/E side at 7:00am, Kissing Pnt, Rd, M2 Johnston Rd, alongside Riverstone rail line to Windsor, Sackville, Windsor, Maraylya, Galston, G-Gorge, Hornsby ETR Turrumurra 4:30pm

Date: Saturday 8 December

Ride: To Concord for Saturday Gelato
 Grade: E Distance: 25km
 Contact: Michael Chow, 9874 1461(h)
 Starts at: 8:30am Meadowbank wharf. Ride along the PVC over Silverwater bridge to Olympic Park, then on to Concord for Gelato / coffee / cake. Ride back to Meadowbank a different way. Don't forget your Le Palme cap if you have one!

Date: Saturday 8 December

Ride: Valley Heights to Glenbrook MTB
 Grade: MH Distance: 25km
 Contact: Dave Harrington, 9680 0885 (h) daveh2@iprimus.com.au
 Starts at: 8:45am Glenbrook stn stairs. Links two fire trails to Blaxland, then a run down to some single track/fire trail at Glenbrook. Then on to the "Bakehouse" for pastry and coffee. Experienced MTB riders only. Ring to confirm details.

Date: Sunday 9 December

Ride: Olympic Park Ride
 Grade: E Distance: 25km
 Contact: Doug Stewart, 9887 1478(h) speedwell74@yahoo.com
 Starts at: 7:30am Meadowbank wharf. Loop around Homebush Bay with a coffee stop. Suitable for beginners and children over 10 accompanied by an adult carer.

Date: Sunday 9 December

Ride: www.4coffee.u.come.2
 Grade: M Distance: 50km
 Contact: Ross Thomas, 9481 0724 (h) 0412 314 735 (mob)
 Starts at: 8:30am Manly ferry wharf. Ride up the Wakehurst Parkway to Narrabeen, then Warriewood and return via the beaches. Some cycle ways and main roads with some hills. Coffee stop at ww.

Date: Sunday 9 December

Ride: Breakfast at Brooklyn on the Pier
 Grade: H Distance: 85/55
 Contact: Phil Johnston, 9312 3319 (w)
 Starts at: 7:15am Turrumurra stn NE side or 8:00am Hornsby stn Jersey St or 8:35am Cowan. Brisk paced ride with brekky at Brooklyn. ETR Turrumurra Noon.

Date: Saturday 15 December

Ride: Early Christmas Pie.
 Grade: M Distance: 40km
 Contact: Mark Grimmond, 9456 5291(h)

Starts at: 8:30am Hornsby Station west side, ride along the old Pacific Highway to the "Pie in the Sky" café overlooking Brooklyn for morning tea and great views. Back track to Hornsby. Some moderate hills.

Date: Saturday 15 December

Ride: Looong Way to Early Christmas Pie
 Grade: H Distance: 60km
 Contact: Kin-Yat Lo, 9980 7143(h)
 Starts at: 7:30am Hornsby stn west side. Ride via the hair pins of Galston Gorge and Berowra Waters ferry to "Pie in the Sky" to meet the slower group. Return via old Pacific Hwy. Fast pace with two long climbs.

Date: Sunday 16 December

Ride: Sunrise by the Sea
 Grade: H Distance: 80km
 Contact: Keith and Fran Griffin, 9614 0777 (h) 0414 187 427 (mob)
 Starts at: 4:00am Eastwood stn west side. Travelling via Terrey Hills and Powderworks Rd to the beach for sunrise and breakfast. Return via Church Point. BYO weetbix and thermos. Bike lights and a sense of the ridiculous essential.

Date: Sunday 16 December

Ride: City Circle ride
 Grade: E/M Distance: 25/40km
 Contact: Joan Kerridge, 9909 8925(H)
 Starts at: 7:30am Artarmon Stn east side or Cycle steps Milsons Point 8:00am. Ride the historical areas of Sydney CBD including Harbour Br., The Rocks, Darling Harbour, Paddys Mkt., Kings Cross and Woolloomooloo with coffee stop at Cook & Philip Pk.

Date: Sunday 16 December

Ride: Cinque Montagnes (5 Hills)
 Grade: H Distance: 103km
 Contact: Phil Johnston 9312 3319, Brian Willis 9807 6439 H
 Starts at: Turrumurra stn, N/E side at 7:00am. Via Bobbin Hd, Brooklyn Rd, Pie in Sky, Berowra Waters, Green Shades Galston, G-Gorge, Bobbin Hd, to Turra ETR 1pm. Or start from Hornsby at 7:40am Cowan 8:15am 65/50km ETR 12pm

Date: Saturday 22 December

Ride: Peacocks at Auburn
 Grade: EM Distance: 35km
 Contact: Doug Stewart, 9887 1478 (h) speedwell74@yahoo.com
 Starts at: 7:00am Meadowbank wharf. Ride via Homebush to Rookwood, then to Auburn Botanic Gardens to see the peacocks. Then north to Parramatta for coffee before heading back to the start along the PVC.

Date: Saturday 22 December

Ride: Christmas Lights by Bike Lights
 Grade: EM Distance: 35km
 Contact: Kevin Mason, 9868 2904 (h)
 Starts at: 7:00pm Meadowbank wharf. A night ride to see the sparkling Christmas lights of the Five Dock area, returning via the Gladesville bridge with a refreshment stop along the way. Bike lights essential!

Date: Saturday 22 December

Ride: Cowan to Calga
 Grade: MH Distance: 60km
 Contact: Graeme Edwards, 9476 3624 (h)
 Starts at: 7:40am Cowan Stn. Fast paced ride through magnificent Hawkesbury River valley on quiet roads. Return via Brooklyn with a stop for coffee and cakes.

Date: Sunday 23 December

Ride: Botany Bay Bacon
 Grade: M Distance: 65km
 Contact: Vicki Bell, 9649 3792 (h)
 Starts at: 7:00am Meadowbank wharf. Ride via Homebush and the Cooks River cycleway to Botany Bay. A refuel at our favourite café at Brighton, then we retrace our tracks to the start.

Date: Sunday 23 December

Ride: XMAS Brunch at Warriewood Bch,
 Grade: H Distance: 96km

Chain Mail

Contact: Phil Johnston 9312 3319, Brian Willis 9807 6439 H
Starts at: St Ives car park, Mona Vale Rd opp Stanley St at 7:00am. Via Terry Hills, Duffy's Forest, West Head, Church Point, Warriewood Bch, & return. ETR St Ives 1pm.

Date: Sunday 30 December

Ride: Turrumurra to Mt White
Grade: H Distance: 100km / 70km
Contact: Brian Willis, 9807 6439 (h)
Starts at: 6:45am Turrumurra stn NE side or 7:30am Hornsby stn Jersey St. or 8:05am Cowan. Brisk paced ride to Mt White for coffee and return via Pie in the Sky. ETR Turrumurra 12:30pm.

JANUARY 2002

Date: Tuesday 1 January 02

Ride: Brunch at Bayview,
Grade: H Distance: 86km
Contact: Phil Johnston 9312.3319
Starts at: St Ives car park, Mona Vale Rd opp Stanley St at 7:30am. Via Terry Hills, Duffy's Forest, West Head, Church Point, Bayview, & return. ETR St Ives 1:30pm.

Date: Saturday 5 January

Ride: St Leonards to North Head
Grade: M Distance: 45km
Contact: Joan Kerridge, 9909 8925 (h)
Starts at: 7:30am St Leonards station concourse. Stretch those muscles on some north side hills – mostly on quiet roads and cycle paths through Beauty Point, over Spit bridge to Balgowlah and Manly. Admire the view from the coffee shop at North Head then return on a similar route.

Date: Sunday 6 January

Ride: Pie in the Sky.
Grade: M Distance: 40km
Contact: Graeme Edwards, 9476 3624 (h)
Starts at: 8:00am Hornsby Station west side, ride along the old Pacific Highway to the "Pie in the Sky" café overlooking Brooklyn for morning tea and great views. Back track to Hornsby. Some moderate hills.

Date: Sunday 6 January

Ride: Peat's Ridge and Somersby "Bellbirds"
Grade: H Distance: 125/95km
Contact: Brian Willis, 9807 6439(h)
Starts at: 6:45am Hornsby Stn. Jersey St or 7:25am Cowan. Fast ride with stops at Mt White (2), Somersby, Pie in the Sky. ETR Hornsby 2:50pm.

Date: Saturday 12 January

Ride: Olympic Park Ride
Grade: E Distance: 25km
Contact: Doug Stewart, 9887 1478 (h) speedwell74@yahoo.com
Starts at: 7:30am Meadowbank Wharf. Loop around Homebush Bay with a coffee stop. Suitable for beginners and children over 10 accompanied by an adult carer.

Date: Saturday 12 January

Ride: Meadowbank to Bobbin Head
Grade: MH Distance: 50km
Contact: Andrew Elliston, 9686 4113 (h) elliston@optusnet.com.au
Starts at: 7:00am Meadowbank wharf. Eastwood stn and Browns Waterhole starts by arrangement. A very hilly ride from the busy waters of Meadowbank up to Eastwood and Browns Waterhole, then to Turrumurra, and on to the peaceful waters of Bobbin Head for coffee and return.

Date: Sunday 13 January

Ride: Ticket to Ryde
Grade: EM Distance: 40km
Contact: Ross Thomas, 9481 0724 (h)
Starts at: 8:00am Eastwood stn west side for an easy paced Ryde through the Ryde Council area on mainly back roads, parks and cycle paths, with a social coffee stop.

Date: Sunday 13 January

Ride: Springwood to Glenbrook MTB

Grade: H Distance: 45km
Contact: Dave Harrington, 9680 0885(h) daveh2@iprimus.com.au
Starts at: Springwood, linking a number of fire trails all the way to Glenbrook, some fun downhill and some slippery steep uphill. Experienced MTB riders only. Ring for details.

Date: Saturday 19 January

Ride: Cowan to Calga
Grade: MH Distance: 60km
Contact: Graeme Edwards, 9476 3624 (h)
Starts at: 7:40am Cowan Stn. Fast paced ride through magnificent Hawkesbury River valley on quiet roads. Return via Brooklyn with a stop for coffee and cakes.

Date: Sunday 20 January

Ride: A to Z and Beyond
Grade: M Distance: 35km
Contact: Rick Mockridge, 0418 284 052(m)
Starts at: 7:30 Artarmon Stn east side. A pleasant morning ride through parts of Artarmon and Willoughby for magnificent coastal views at Balmoral. After coffee climb to Middle Head for a fast coast to the Zoo Wharf, hop on a ferry to the Quay then ride back via the Bridge, North Sydney and Willoughby on designated cycle routes.

Date: Sunday 20 January

Ride: Turrumurra / Galston / Brooklyn
Grade: H Distance: 105 / 75km
Contact: Phil Johnston, 9312 3319(w)
Starts at: 6:45am Turrumurra stn NE side or 7:30am Hornsby stn Jersey St. Brisk pace, stopping at Galston Nursery and Pie in the Sky for coffee. ETR Turrumurra 1:45pm.

Date: Friday 25 January to 28/1/2002

Ride: Audax Alpine Classic Long Weekend
Grade: H.HH Distance: 130.200
Contact: Phil Johnston, 9312 3319
Starts at: Muggaccinos annual trip to Bright Vic. For sight seeing, hiking, restaurants and Audax on Sun 27 Jan. Climbs Tawonga Gap twice, Falls Creek and Mt Buffalo. Please ring for details.

Date: Saturday 26 January

Ride: Akuna Bay and Church Point
Grade: H Distance: 80km
Contact: Doug Stewart, 9887 1478 (h) speedwell74@yahoo.com
Starts at: 6:30am East side Eastwood Stn. Ride via de Burgh's bridge to Pymble, St Ives, then to Terrey Hills, Akuna Bay and Church Point. Refuel with coffee and cake for the return ascent via Terrey Hills and Turrumurra. A hilly ride at a brisk pace.

Date: Sunday 27 January

Ride: Pedal to Parramatta
Grade: E Distance: 25km
Contact: Pam or Col Kendrick, 9872 2583(h)
Starts at: 7:30am Meadowbank wharf. Cycle the Parramatta Valley Cycleway to Parramatta Park, bypassing THAT footbridge. After a lap or two of the park and refreshments, we return the same way.

Date: Sunday 27 January

Ride: Northern Beaches and Back Roads
Grade: MH.H Distance: 50.80
Contact: Graeme Edwards, 9476 3624 (h)
Starts at: 7:45am Turrumurra Stn east side. Ride via Terry Hills, Church Point to Mona Vale, then follow the coast to Manly for coffee. Ferry to the Quay then ride / train to Turrumurra. Many variations available, please ring for details after 5:00pm.

All persons joining our rides do so as volunteers in all respects and as such accept sole responsibility for any injury howsoever incurred and Bike North and the appointed ride contacts cannot be held liable in respect of any injury or damage resulting from participants engaging in any such ride activity. Riders under 16 must be accompanied by a cycling adult carer. An SAA approved helmet is legally required by all participants on all rides. Essential equipment also includes a bicycle in good working order, water bottle and a good sense of fun. Money, tasty snacks, a tyre pump, a tube and/or repair kit and appropriate tools are recommended as well, but you can usually borrow them if necessary.