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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.

State Election, March 22nd

Carolyn New

The NSW State Election is on Saturday March 22nd. Over the next few weeks your political representatives are more open to your issues, they will be listening to you.

Right now is the time to ask your local electoral candidates where they stand on cycling issues and what they can do for you as a cyclist. This is an opportunity to raise the profile of cyclists with the electoral candidates and potential state representatives. So when they come knocking on your door, or you see them campaigning around your area, ask them, 'what can they do for cyclists?' and raise local cycling issues that are important to you. Alternatively write to them and the Minister/Shadow Ministers for Roads and Transport about cycling issues.

Bicycle NSW has produced a policy document that outlines the steps needed to improve conditions for people wanting to cycle for transport and recreation. This has been presented to those handling the Roads and Traffic portfolio on both sides of government but so far the response from neither side has been positive. For further detail refer to the next copy of Push On in Australian Cyclist.

CURRENT RECORD?

Conditions for cyclists in Sydney are not good. The environment on main roads is very unfriendly, motorists do not want to share, roads are often not designed or maintained with the interests of cyclists in mind and there are simply not enough good alternatives.

This situation is the result of a great many years of neglect by both sides of government. In 1999, the current government released Action for Bikes, BikePlan 2010. Included in this plan are a series of regional bike routes over Sydney. Bike North considers this plan would have been excellent if it were to be completed by 2003, not 2010. Far more regional routes are needed simply to catch up.

To its credit, the majority of projects listed are being completed on or close to schedule. Millions of dollars are being spent on some major engineering projects right now. For

example, check out the M4 Viaduct project with its underpasses of the Railway and bridges over James Ruse Drive and Duck River. What is especially refreshing is to see the vastly increased standard of this route to earlier routes such as the Parramatta Liverpool Rail Trail opened in 2000.

Here are some issues for you to consider raising with your candidates

OFF ROAD/ON ROAD

Off road cycleways are good and clearly the standard is rising. There are places where off road cycleways are much needed, but is this always the best and most cost effective way to improve cycling conditions? While off road routes offer separation from motor vehicles they raise other issues such as intersecting with road facilities and mixing with pedestrian modes. Resolution of these issues demands a high standard of cycleway, usually expensive, more so than if the cycle facility is built as part of the road carriageway. Are these major engineering projects perhaps at the expense of a great many more kilometres of much cheaper on-road facilities? Current policy appears to be almost entirely focussed on building off road facilities. On road facilities can be just as safe and in certain conditions are safer and more usable than off road. What do you think??

EASTWOOD TO HORNSBY RAIL TRAIL

BikePlan 2010 does not include any regional route from Eastwood to Hornsby. Pennant Hills Road is very cycle unfriendly and the alternative back roads are narrow, busy and very hilly which is not a good combination. Bike North has long advocated that the easement of the Main Northern Railway be used for a high quality cycleway. Why has this route not been included on BikePlan 2010?

CHATSWOOD TO HORNSBY RAIL TRAILS

A regional route is planned from Chatswood to Hornsby under BikePlan 2010 along the railway line, but not until 2009/2010. Why

do we have to wait so long? There are a great many cyclists living on the North Shore but, due to the rugged terrain, so few places to cycle that are suitable for the majority of cyclists. This is one place in Sydney where on road alternatives suitable for all cyclists do not appear to be feasible. This cycle route needs to be underway now before the railways sells off much more available land!!

BIKE LOCKERS AT RAILWAY STATIONS

Bike and train are a great combination for travel provided the facilities are there to support these modes. Bike lockers have been installed at many stations but very few in the northern areas of Sydney despite many requests. Those at Epping and Hornsby are very much in demand, whereas many lockers remain under utilised in other areas of Sydney. Bike lockers need to be located where they are needed and they are needed in Northern Sydney.

So chat to your candidates, talk about the issues and help raise the profile of cycling among our politicians. And finally, don't forget to ride to the polling booth!!

Cycling for Transport

My Commute

Caroline Smale

What a great way to start the day!

The alarm rings at 4.30am, but luckily I know that I can hit the snooze button twice before I have to jump out of bed. I wonder around in the dark – dazed for the first five minutes and eventually find my way to the kitchen for a drink of water, put on the cycling clothes and I'm ready to tackle the world. This is the story of my commute from my home in Glenhaven to the city.

My commuting to the city started a couple of years ago when I was talking to a co-worker, who also rides a bike, complaining about my 4.00am starts to get 30kms training in before getting ready for work. He looked at me as if I was mad and said, "why don't you combine your training with your travelling to work and you can get up an hour later". I thought to myself "this guy is mad – who'd ride a bike to the city?"

After badgering me for a couple of weeks, I finally gave in and met him at Beecroft Station

so he could give me the low down on safe commuting habits and show me the best way to get from Beecroft to the city. This was great – I found out about River Road, which meant I could avoid the Pacific Highway and was shown how to get to the cycleway on the bridge and then into the city. I was hooked – what a great way to start the day.

I now find myself two years later, usually riding two days a week from Glenhaven to the city and two days from Beecroft to the city. Unfortunately the person who got me hooked on riding to work no longer works with me so I now ride by myself.

Some of the lessons I have learned include the importance of having good tyres (I change my tyres as soon as they start to get a couple of punctures), servicing your bike frequently and having reliable front and rear lights. After trying cheaper less reliable options, I eventually paid \$250 for a good front light and I wished I'd done that from the very start. I also brought myself a reflective yellow vest – I used to think there's no way on this earth I'd be seen in one of those – however, this also was a great investment, I no longer get cars screeching behind me as my vest can be seen a long way off.

My journey starts from the hills district at about 5.00am (and they don't call it the hills for nothing). Within 30 seconds I hit this small but steep hill with cold muscles and have to suffer one minute of torture up. Luckily this year the magpie that liked my ear-rings last year isn't around so I no longer am trying to tackle the hill and the magpie at the same time.

I eventually find my way onto the Old Northern Road, and then turn into Castle Hill Road for the dreaded part of my journey, the tunnel that takes me onto Pennant Hills Road. Cars seem to think this tunnel is their opportunity to speed down the left hand lane to beat the cars that are travelling the speed limit to prove something to who-knows-who. Cyclists need to beware in this tunnel and ensure they stay well to the left – there is a bike lane there, but it is often littered with glass and junk.

After the km or so on the Pennant Hills Road, I turn onto the M2, for a quick spin down to Delhi Road. I turn off at Delhi Road and make a left onto the Epping Road. Even though you can turn left at any time with care, I wait for the traffic lights to turn red on the Epping Road and then put my bike into the hardest gear I have and spin like crazy to try to keep in front of the traffic. I'm never successful and the cars always catch me, but by that time I'm pretty much at my next challenge – the left into Mowbray Road and the steep climb. I keep telling myself as I'm grinding up the hill "hills are my friend, hills are my friend", but my huffing and puffing

and screaming muscles drown this out – luckily the hill is only about 700m long.

After a couple of kms on Mowbray Road I turn down Centennial Road and make my way to River Road. Hills definitely are not my friends and I hate them with a passion. Every morning I ask myself when I'm on River Road, why am I going this way, hill after hill after hill, but when I get to North Sydney I know the answer – it's a challenging route and I feel I've accomplished something at the end.

I finally make my way to the Harbour Bridge where I walk up the steps. Riding up or down the ramp is way too challenging for me and I wouldn't even consider trying. About 12 months ago I got to the bridge and there was this guy, a mini Arnold S., riding down the ramp – I always watch in amazement when people are crazy enough to do this. Anyway, this guy didn't look too confident and started to wobble, he then saved himself and the next thing I knew he was somersaulting over the handlebars of his bike. I picked up the very badly bent bike and offered to practice my first aid skills – I've never seen anyone get up off the ground, grab their bike and run up the road so quickly with a look of horror on their face saying "I'm okay"!

The best part of the ride is the cycle over the harbour bridge. During summer when it's light, the sun is shimmering on the water, you occasionally get to see one of the big cruise ships and you can dream you're heading off into the wild blue yonder. Then reality hits at the end of the bridge – the traffic and red lights.

I slowly make my way through the city to Goulburn Street where my office is located and when I get there my speedo says I've travelled 35kms. But in the crazy cycling world I live in 35kms is not long enough, so I zip past the office and head off to Centennial Park to do two laps of the park and then back to work with the speedo reading 50kms.

Work has been very bike friendly and we have showers/change rooms and they even allocated me a whole storeroom to store my bike and clothes. It's surprising what a good employer will do if you ask the right people. (Although maybe the offer of the storeroom in the car park came about because 7.30am is way too early to see someone in bright lycra walking through the office.)

Commuting is not for the faint hearted, you will occasionally get some abuse (I used to yell back, but I'm mellowing in my old age as I now just smile, wave and tell them to have a nice day) and of course riding in traffic can be hazardous. However, I can't think of a better way to start the day.

Does Lycra make you go Faster?

Hette Mollema

Of course it does, especially Bike-North lycra, everybody knows that – even if it is only in the mind. The breathable wicking surfaces keep you dry and cool. The skin tight fabric reduces air resistance.

Air drag is the major limitation on the ultimate sustainable speed you can achieve. The human body in an upright position is not very aerodynamic. At 32 km/h, 85% of the effort goes into overcoming air resistance. For the technically minded, air resistance goes up by the cube of the speed. So a small reduction in resistance due to clothing, will increase speed by only a fraction.

Aerodynamically shaped tubing of the bike frame will also improve performance. That is why you see time trial racing cyclists in the Tour de France, and on velodromes, wearing medieval hats and clothes to squeeze the last fractions of seconds out of their performance. The strange bikes are part of that. And don't the riders look good in that get up. You can see every muscle move, wow!

This then is the typical scene on the organised rides around Sydney and other places. Just

kidding. But we do don't the fancy gear to make believe we look cool and feel cool. However, at the speed of most bike rides, 15 to 20 km/hour, the reduction in wind resistance, or drag, is barely noticeable. Remember we are often doing it for fitness so the extra effort should be a bonus.

There is also a penalty to pay for looking the part. The cost of the uniform, or dress-up gear, can add up to half the cost of the bike by the time you include the hi-tech wind stopper, rain jacket, gloves, legwarmers, shoes and so on. But you will look like a member of the cycling set.

Walking around the shops in all that get-up makes people stare, which is fine if the shape is right but otherwise... well. If the bike is a mode of transport, then it should be suitable and acceptable to wear every-day clothing.

If you compare the situation here to countries where cycling is an established mode of transport, you will instantly see the difference the equipment and clothing style.

Mud guards and chain guards would be the first priority. Speed would not be an issue, but rather comfort and useability. An integrated secure locking mechanism would be mandatory. Most of the bikes and clothing promoted, and sold in Australia, do not meet

the requirements of alternative transport by a long shot.

Amsterdam Webcam

Hette Mollema

Want to see bicycles used as alternative transport? Then go to <http://www.amsterdam-webcams.com/Detailed/20.html>, select the Java link, camera 1, 2, 3, and see them zooming past on the webcam or just parked. Note the different bike style from what is sold, and bought, here. Mind you, there are no hills either. You may also note that this main road has a separate footpath, bicycle path, roadway and tramlines. What more could anyone wish for. Well – the weather over there could be improved.



MAKING CYCLING BETTER Advocacy

Lane Cove Tunnel Update

A new cycle route linking Naremburn to North Ryde moved one step closer in December, 2002 with the approval for the Lane Cove Tunnel and Associated Roadworks project, by PlanningNSW. Early this year we can expect the announcement of the successful tender.

The Tunnel project, (due for completion in 2006) includes an off road cycleway along the length of the Gore Hill Freeway (Naremburn to Lane Cove) and continues alongside Epping Road as far west as Wicks Road, North Ryde. This cycleway will be a vast improvement on the appalling cycling conditions along Epping Road and connecting to the Gore Hill Freeway, although not as good as we wanted. There is already a bike lane on the Gore Hill Freeway, which is quite suitable for commuter cyclists, though probably a little daunting to those less experienced, due to the narrow width. The

main problem with the existing Gore Hill Freeway bike lane is the link to Epping Road. This bike lane will be removed and commuter cyclists will be required to use the shared cycleway, a degraded facility for them, although great for walkers and inexperienced cyclists.

We are very disappointed that despite all the input Bicycle NSW and Bike North has provided to the project and all the submissions that were made, the cycle route remains an entirely off road cycleway, primarily shared with pedestrians and needing to cater for cyclists in both directions. It seems the RTA focus is on addressing the perceived danger of on road cycling by unaware potential cyclists rather than recognising the real dangers of driveways crossing paths, riding through intersections in the opposite direction to cars and two way direction cycling on hills where the speed differential is great.

Planning NSW approved a cycle route slightly modified since last reported. The planned off road cycle route has now been extended from Park St to the Naremburn shops area. The

freeway shoulders in this section are to be removed so as to retain the road carriage within the existing cutting at Naremburn. The commuter cyclist will now be forced off the entire length of the Gore Hill Freeway, unable to return until reaching the Warringah Freeway.

Establishment of a Ku-ring-gai Bicycle Consultative Committee

On Tuesday Dec 3, 2002 a motion was put to Ku-ring-gai Council by Councillor J Kitson and Ted Roach with regard to cycling for transport and recreation in Ku-ring-gai. This motion was carried unanimously.

This motion (see detail in box) represents a major step forward for cycling in Ku-ring-gai. Congratulations to our Ku-ring-gai Convenor, John Watts, who's persistence has made this possible. Also many thanks to Councillors

Jean Kitson and Ted Roach for putting forward the motion.

While there is still much to be done to effect the points in the motion, gaining this level of support of the elected council executive will give us much strength when working through the detail with council.

The first step will be creation of the Ku-ring-gai Bicycle Committee. While John has long been our representative on the Ku-ring-gai Traffic Committee, a Bicycle Committee will be more advantageous, as it gives us greater opportunities to be proactive on cycling issues and allows for wider consultation at the planning, design and implementation levels. The Bicycle Committee will be a key forum within which consultation on the other motion points can proceed.

For further information or to offer support for the Ku-ring-gai Bicycle Committee please contact John Watts on 9144-7656 or jonmar19@ozemail.com.au.

PREAMBLE TO MOTION RE CYCLING FOR TRANSPORT AND RECREATION

For health, environmental, town planning and air quality reasons, the State Government is supporting cycling as both a means of personal transport and as a recreational activity. Bicycles are recognised as legal vehicles and need to be afforded the same consideration as motor vehicles on Ku-ring-gai streets. The characteristics that make bicycles so environmentally friendly and practical for shorter trips also make cyclists more vulnerable to collisions and injuries when sharing roads with motor vehicles. Bicycles are more affected than motor vehicles by pavement conditions, poor visibility, the speed of traffic and width of the kerb lane. However, the current position is that the road environment is heavily oriented to motor vehicles and hostile to people who cycle. Any change to this situation will require overt and innovative action to achieve a better balance.

From the community, there is an increasing demand for the provision of safe cycling facilities for both recreational and commuter use. This increase in demand is for safe routes to schools, shops, sporting facilities and train stations. Connectivity with the cycle route network of adjacent Council areas is an essential requirement.

The topography of Ku-ring-gai with its ridges and valleys makes the provision of a first class cycling system on Council roads a challenge requiring an innovative approach. The most desirable key bicycle routes are along ridge tops which are already occupied by State/Regional roads and the North Shore railway. However, there are good alternatives emerging as outlined in the RTA's Strategic Planning document, Action for Bikes, Bike Plan 2010. The projects of most relevance to

Ku-ring-gai are the Chatswood to Turramurra Rail Trail and the route from Hornsby to Turramurra. These are anticipated to utilise idle portions of the railway corridor where feasible, a concept that has already been successfully trialed between Liverpool and Parramatta.

The Ku-ring-gai Bicycle Transport Plan adopted by Council in August 1995 identified some of the needs of cyclists in Ku-ring-gai, in particular, some of the major cycle routes and the priority of future cycleway construction. Cyclists seek to be able to cycle safely on all roads, but alternatives are required on main arteries, especially for younger and less experienced cyclists, given motor traffic speeds and volumes.

Council's Bike plan provides for approximately 81 Km of cycleways, but since 1995, less than 20 Km has been completed of which about 13 Km is shared pedestrian/cycleway. Usefulness of the completed sections of cycleway is limited by lack of connectivity to provide a comprehensive network. Considering the RTA's Strategic Planning for cycle routes across Sydney, there is need to revise the Ku-ring-gai Plan to ensure integration with the total network. At the local level, the Plan also needs greater focus on safe routes to schools. The availability of safe cycling routes to schools would encourage some children to ride thereby reducing traffic congestion around schools. It would also provide an opportunity for much needed exercise to address the growing obesity issue in children.

A further need is to ensure cycle routes are signposted to assist users and suitably marked to discourage motorists from parking on the cycle route. Awareness of cycle routes need to be promoted. As an example of good promotion, Willoughby Council does so with a brochure and map titled 'Wheeling & Walking in Willoughby' a copy of which is attached.

Funding for cycleways should be available from Council road maintenance and construction budgets. Further funding is also available on a shared basis from the Roads & Traffic Authority for agreed cycleway projects. There are many other avenues for funding cycleways such as Section 94 Developer Contributions, opportunities under government grants, Roads to Recovery Program and Community and corporate sponsorship.

This year, Bike Week as organised by the RTA, had a "Ride for Health" theme and sought to have each Local Government area run a program designed to get older members of the community to ride their bikes again for exercise as well as social enjoyment. For a

MOTION: CYCLING FOR TRANSPORT & RECREATION

1. That Council institutes a Bicycle Consultative Committee to advise on a wide range of cycling issues, such committee being drawn from the local Bicycle User Group, Bike North and such other community representatives who may have an interest in cycling.
2. That Council forms a steering committee to revise the Bicycle Transportation Plan of 1995 to be consistent with Action for Bikes, Bike Plan 2010 and emerging needs. That steering committee should include representatives from Council Officers, Councillors and the Bicycle Consultative committee. The scope of that Plan should be at least as documented in the RTA document "How to prepare a Bike Plan."
3. That Council investigate additional sources of funding for cycleway projects, in particular, the Section 94 Plan should be reviewed and updated to allow for the collection of developers contributions for cycle facilities.
4. That Council prepares a schedule for the implementation of the revised Bike Plan including the provision of signage, bicycle racks and lockers over the next 8 years.
5. That Council develop guidelines for best practice with respect to cycle safety and usability in the design, construction and maintenance of new and existing facilities whether on or off-road.
6. That Council develops safe routes to school for all schools in Ku-ring-gai such routes being selected to encourage students to safely walk or cycle to school
7. That Council develops a plan for the promotion and encouragement of cycling for transport and recreational purposes. This plan should include the development and distribution of a map of existing and proposed cycleways throughout the Council area together with connections to adjacent Council areas

variety of reasons, and despite an offer to help Council to conduct the event, Council chose not to do so.

Ku-ring-gai already has a significant cycling population largely represented by a Bicycle User Group (BUG) known as Bike North which is affiliated with Bicycle New South Wales. The majority of members of Bike North are of mature age and include representatives of just about all professions. Most cycle for reasons of healthy exercise as well as social pleasure. Apart from weekday cycling for transport, Bike North organises graded social rides on most Saturdays and Sundays offering rides at all levels within the physical abilities of participants. Safety is the major consideration in choice of routes.

To ensure that Council's program for cycle facilities is well focussed on developing a safe and useful cycling environment, it is desirable that we have a bicycle consultative committee to provide advice and guidance to Council. We already have a representative of Bicycle New South Wales on the Traffic Committee but the need is to have wider consultation at the planning, design and implementation levels.

Draft RTA NSW Bicycle Guidelines

The RTA is developing guidelines for roads authorities to use when planning and installing cycling facilities in NSW. The guidelines are designed to supplement the standards set in AUSTRROADS Guide to Traffic and Engineering Practice Part 14 by:

- giving specific information about practice in NSW; and
- clarifying some issues.

The RTA circulated the draft guidelines for comment in December 2002. Bike North has had an opportunity to look at the document and provide some feedback which, hopefully, will be reflected in the finished guidelines.

For more information about Bike North's submission:

- send an email to Carolyn New, Bike North's Advocacy Officer at carolynn@ihug.com.au
- look for new postings on the Bike North website

Ever thought of joining Bicycle NSW?

...and never got around to it?

Here's one good reason for making the effort. All Bicycle NSW members get third party property and personal insurance coverage to the value of \$20 million. You may not think you need it, but if you accidentally collide with a pedestrian, a motor vehicle or another cyclist, you may be held liable for their personal injuries or damages.

A \$1,000 excess applies on all claims made under this policy.

Access to public liability insurance isn't the only benefit of Bicycle NSW membership. Other benefits include:

- Access to optional insurance coverage that provides weekly or lump sum benefits in the event that you are injured while cycling
- Discounts on Bicycle NSW cycling events
- Discounts in a range of bike shops
- Push On, the Bicycle NSW newsletter
- Free copies of Australian Cyclist

For more information contact Bicycle NSW:

- Phone: 9283 5200
- Email: info@bicyclensw.org.au
- In person: Level 2, 209 Castlereagh Street, Sydney
- In cyberspace: www.bicyclensw.org.au

WORKING GROUPS

Hunters Hill

More good news. The Hunters Hill Traffic Advisory Committee has accepted the report prepared by the Hunters Hill Working Group following its October saddle survey.

The Working Group is hopeful of the Committee voting to adopt the report. Once this happens, the report will be formally submitted to Hunters Hill Council for approval.

For more information contact Alistair Sharp on 9879 3664 or by email on jollshar@zeta.org.au

Ryde

Good news! The Ryde Council has expressed interest in developing new cycle routes once the work on its current schedule is completed.

The Ryde Working Group is investigating possibilities for the future. It recently surveyed a route from Cressy Road, through East Ryde to Putney. Feedback from the saddle survey was positive, so there's some chance this might get into gear.

For more information contact Wayne Spencer on 9874 6977

Some Stats

- Most households (51%) have at least one bicycle (Australia - ABS)
- 37% of the population (over 5 years of age) have ridden a bicycle in the last year (Australia - ABS)
- Research in Australia shows that only 20-30% of cyclists are women (Australia - RTA)
- Data collected in Dubbo supports this, with women observed cycling on the Tracker Riley Path making up only 19% of all cyclists on the path (Australia - Macquarie Area Health Service)
- Most cyclists use their bikes to just 'ride around' (Australia - RTA)
- It was 1988 when women were first included in cycling in the modern Olympic Games. They made their first appearance in track cycling in the 1000m sprint. In that event, German Christa Luding-Rothenburger, a Winter Olympic Games gold medallist, was narrowly defeated by Soviet Erika Salumae. (NSW Sport & Rec)
- At the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, women competed in a greater variety of races, including sprints, time trials and pursuit events. (NSW Sport & Rec)
- Bicycle riding has declined steadily over the past 50 years.
- Cardiovascular disease has increased steadily over the past 50 years, partly because of a more sedentary lifestyle.
- Cycling is excellent for good health, pedalling for 30 minutes on most days will halve your risk of heart disease and reduce the risk of diabetes, some forms of cancer and mental illness.
- In Australia cyclists are usually young males (under 55 years of age)
- In Holland 24% of all trips made by people over 75 years old are made by bicycle, in Germany the figure is 6%, in the United States (for people over 65) is 0.6%. This lower figure is likely to be the same for Australians.
- Cycling instead of driving is an excellent way to look after the environment, as bikes produce no air pollution."

Big Ride 2003 Evening

Well its on again – Big Ride 2003, Warragamba to Cootamundra. If you are thinking of coming on this year's ride, why don't you come and meet up with some others planning to go:

Date: Wednesday, February 12th

Time: From 8pm

Place: at Yaffa and Geoff's 14/55 Garland Rd Naremburn
Ph: 9966-9262 or yaffa@sdr.com.au

Joan will bring along her video from the Tweed Heads to Sydney Big ride.

We had lots of fun last year, it's a great way to see the Australian countryside!

Daily Itinerary RTA Big Ride 2003 March 15th – 23rd

Start – Warragamba

Day 1 – Camden

Day 2 – Bowral

Day 3 – Bundanoon

Day 4 – Goulburn

Day 5 – Goulburn (Rest Day)

Day 6 – Bungendore

Day 7 – Yass

Day 8 – Harden

Day 9 (finish) Cootamundra

Riding through some of Southern NSW's most scenic terrain, the route is varied and visits a wide cross section of regional towns. It covers some 570km over the nine days. In 2003, Bicycle New South Wales invites you to travel with us from West Sydney to Cootamundra. From the



outskirts of Australia's largest city, through the picturesque Southern Highlands and on toward the Western Plains district surrounding Goulburn and Yass, the route offers a wide variety of cycling terrain, scenery and towns to explore.

With the full on-road support of the NSW Police Service and the RTA, The RTA Big Ride is the safest and easiest way to enjoy cycle touring. Riding each day along designated routes between host towns, you can view the countryside at your own pace, assured by the back up medical, mechanical and transport services on hand should you require them. The route is chosen along well maintained, quiet and scenic back roads, travelling distances between 35 and 98km each day.

The experience of The RTA Big Ride continues long after each day's riding is complete. Townships along the route, small and large, welcome the enormous influx of cheerful tourists, and go all out to impress. Take a tour, visit wineries, cafes or nightlife, or simply enjoy the atmosphere and camaraderie each night on the self contained campsite – the entertainment program provided offers something for everyone.

Transport to and from the event is available, making The RTA Big Ride the complete, hassle free, cycling adventure package. From the exhilarating days on the bike, to the unique lifestyle of exploring new towns with new friends, you won't forget the experience of The RTA Big Ride. Brochure available at most bike shops or at <http://www.bicyclensw.org.au/>

Tips for first time tourers

1. Doing some training before the tour is a good idea. It means you spend more time on the tour enjoying yourself and less time wondering why you ever thought touring by bicycle would be fun.
2. Cycling in the country involves just as many hills as cycling in Sydney. Training on the Cooks River or Parramatta Valley cycleways isn't good preparation for a cycling tour (although any preparation is better than none at all).
3. Program regular 'snack stops' into your day. Eating small amounts regularly will help you to maintain your energy levels all day. Forgetting to eat guarantees that you will experience extreme hunger and inability to keep pedalling, and probably won't be able to ride day after day. If you are new to bicycle touring, you might need to stop as often as every 10 to 15km for a snack.
4. It is essential to carry snack food and plenty of water with you. You might cycle all day without seeing a shop or even a tap. Or, in the case of a Big Ride, you might find that the food on offer at lunch, morning tea or afternoon tea isn't what you feel like eating. Always carry more water than you expect to use, if you don't need to drink it you can pour it over yourself to cool down.
5. Be careful about what you eat. Some foods, although yummy and satisfying, are not easy to digest on the run (or wheel). Although this is very much a matter of personal taste and experience, the types of foods that touring cyclists commonly snack on include: dried fruit, bananas, breakfast or muesli bars, sandwiches with fairly simple fillings and sweets, and when you are really flagging - chocolate!
6. Pack less luggage than you need rather than more. If you find you really miss something that you didn't bring, you can always buy it, but if you bring something you don't use you will curse its weight for the whole tour but not have the heart to leave it at the campsite. The exceptions to this rule are food, water, toilet paper and spares of course.

TIPS FOR FIRST TIME BIG RIDERS

1. Pack wet, gooey or breakable things carefully. Your luggage needs to be able to stand up to being:
 - crammed in a truck, possibly underneath luggage of 10 or 15 other Big Riders
 - thrown about and dumped on dusty, wet or muddy ground
 - dragged (by you) to the place where you plan to put up your tent for the night.
2. Big Riders like to get up early in the morning. Expect to be woken by rattling, banging, clunking or the sound of people tripping over your tent's guy ropes somewhere between 6:00 and 6:30 am. The early morning starts aren't all bad - late risers miss out on the bananas provided at breakfast time as snack food for later in the day.
3. There is a queue for everything. It's best to accept this and put your energy into striking up amusing conversations with strangers to help pass the time.
4. Life in the campsite is much more enjoyable if you bring a folding stool with you. This piece of equipment not only allows you to maintain dignity at mealtimes, it saves you from close contact with wet or muddy ground and makes it possible to luxuriate outside your tent in the afternoons.
5. Forget all the rules about camping you ever learnt - especially the one about letting the tent dry before packing it up.
6. Theft does happen. Bring something to lock your bike up with. Also, try to avoid camping on the perimeter of the campsite.
7. Cycle at a pace you feel comfortable with. Whatever pace that is, you are sure to find yourself in the company of other cyclists.

Cycle Queensland Report

Ross Thomas

The starting point was Bundaberg. As with any NSW Big Ride the logistics of getting to the start by own steam can be tiring. At least I was able to start this ride and not be delayed by transport ordered by the organizer. (RTA Big Ride 2001). Bicycle Queensland had contacted the same caterers and amenity people so essentially the ride would be the same as a NSW Big Ride only in Queensland.

There were eight Bike Northers on this journey through Queensland.

DAY ONE TO CHILDERS.

A rather flat ride of about 50kms. Temperature 30 degrees and little wind, back roads and scenery of cane fields after cane fields. The area is famous for sugar and the other by product, although none of the latter



was sampled at the local watering hole. (Ok I may have had a can or two on this ride.)

DAY TWO TO HERVEY BAY.

Again a Flat ride with the first leg on the Bruce Highway. Evening camp – the usual football oval. Being a Sunday nothing was open other than the hotel. It seems the local council was not advised of our presence in town (oops I forgot we are in Queensland). The mayor didn't turn up either (orrrr no Danny Boy). However there were tours of whale watching available.

DAY THREE TO MARYBOROUGH.

This town knew we were coming. There were historical tours of the town, even the local miniature railway was running. All for Cycle Queensland.

DAY FOUR TO GYMPIE.

The longest ride of the week. Cane fields were replaced with pine forests. Again a flat, hot day was enjoyed. We camped beside the Bruce Highway just down the road from the Big Pineapple Roadhouse. Guess what was on the menu at dinner?

DAY FIVE TO NOOSA.

An easy day for some as they took the steam train for the first 20kms. A great option. Let's face it the train was running and some people had to take it. That afternoon Noosa was in my sights. My favourite place and a well earned rest day.

DAY SIX REST DAY.

Noosa has many cycle paths, the best would be a path that follows the beach to Coolum about 30 kms. The other paths are on the roads, however the attitude of drivers is the same if not worse than Sydney. Noosa is a place for rest and lazing on the beach. Choice of many beaches or a great bush walk around Noosa National Park.

DAY SEVEN TO MALENY.

This was the day of the hill climb. Flat and scenic to lunch, then the hills. Day seven was Tribes day. Bike North was entered, with the day beginning with a team photo then the Bike North Chant. (BIKE BIKE BIKE NORTH NORTH NORTH GO GO GO). At lunch a trivia competition. At the top of the Hill, a song, "The Hills are Alive with the

Sound of Music". How did we find the lungs to pitch the high notes? Any body know the tune?

DAY EIGHT TO REDCLIFFE.

What went up the day before, must come down today. Almost back to the reality of cars



owning the road in the city. The drivers in northern Brisbane were definitely not sharing the road. The end of ride party was to be held on the beach that night. Due to a downpour of rain the local hall was used instead, complete with Latino band. Who were the Bike Northers leading the Macarena?

DAY NINE TO BRISBANE.

All good things must come to an end. The final day was mainly on back roads ending at



Kalinga Park. Time to say final farewells and think about next year's ride – nine days of cycling in Queensland, from Warwick to Cooloolo (near Noosa), late August early September 2003.

Would I do it again?? If I could get the time off from work, yes. The weather was fine and the riding was fun. Services were the same as the NSW Big Ride. Just how do I get the trike to Warwick and have a week to recover in Noosa afterwards?? Where there is a will there is a way.

Capital Punishment: 3rd Urban Polaris - November 17, 2002

Kin-Yat Lo

Whilst most Bike Northerners were leisurely enjoying the sunshine on Cycle Sydney, Chris Smith and myself were receiving "capital punishment" around the streets and forests of Canberra competing in the Urban Polaris. In retrospect a lethal injection would have been quicker and arguably less painful than 7 hours of all-out effort...

So what exactly is the Urban Polaris? It is akin to orienteering on a mountain bike, except in an urban environment – checkpoints of differing value can be located anywhere within a 20x20km area, and you have a total of 7 hours to score as many points as possible, by riding or using public transport.

After two years battling bureaucracy in northern Sydney (the previous editions were held largely inside Bike North territory), the event was shifted to a much friendlier Canberra. The event even coincided with Canberra's Festival of Cycling and received promotional support from Canberra Tourism. Canberra also had a plethora of mountain biking trails within easy riding distance of the city centre, and had many landmarks to boot – not to mention big hills! No wonder it was promoted as "Capital Punishment".

Why did we go? Mainly because we were out to defend our Under-21 category win from last year. I've never ridden in Canberra before (a scouting excursion many moons ago doesn't really count), and, with the huge local mountain biking contingent turning up, it was going to be a challenge. There was going to be no local knowledge to fall back on this time.

Nevertheless, we gave ourselves a crash course in Canberra geography with the intense studying of topographic maps beforehand. We also completed a recce on Saturday afternoon with a long session atop Black Mountain Tower with binoculars and maps, as well as a drive to the Stromlo Forest and Observatory to check out trails and elevations.

The morning dawned bright, clear, and bitterly cold – not unlike the coldest of Sydney winter mornings. The start site at the cricket oval of the Australian National University was already well packed by the time we got there at 6:20am, with the 190-odd teams all spreading maps on bonnets to mark checkpoints and cook up strategies. Mike Tomalaris turned up with a cameraman to interview a few riders – and this all ended up in a somewhat funny segment on SBS World Sport the following evening.

We had our maps marked and cooked up a few possible strategies, subject to change on getting our scoresheet. Our start was 9am – and we lined up on the second row behind the eventual Womens and Mens category winners. We were determined to come back as winners of the U21 category, and I felt a touch more nervous than I did last year.

By now it was getting very warm, a prelude to the intense heat of the day. For the second year in succession I managed to drop the scoresheet at the give out! Never mind, we marked the map (alongside the very pretty Lake Burley Griffin – although we didn't notice) and decided that we would do the north, then the south in a figure of 8 circuit of around 130km. Talk about shooting yourself in the foot!

We went northwards to checkpoints all requiring hefty climbs on dirt. To add to this, our lack of local knowledge contributed to many stops and slight detours. An example of a "slight detour" consisted of a long, steep climb when we could have just ridden along a flat bitumen road! The Canberrans definitely had the advantage here.

Lack of local knowledge also meant attempting to read the map on the run, ie at about 50km/h downhill, whilst taking in the street names, elevation changes etc. Without the aid of topographic maps I had to quickly guess these in order to find the best route to take between checkpoints. Often this meant setting off in a general direction and worrying about the exact route later.

How many green park benches are there on Mt Roger? And how high is it? *gasp, pant, gasp, pant, gasp* At least it was a nice downhill to the shores of Lake Ginninderra.

I had my first inkling that our strategy wasn't achievable at around this point, when we were having a short break alongside the lake – it seemed too hard! From here we decided to head east towards the checkpoints at the Bicycle Museum and bike shop Mal-Adjusted before crossing the lake to do the south side.

We crossed the Lake just before midday, but at this point we were still travelling quickly and not really noticing any of the attractions and sights. We then headed west towards Yarralumla Nursery. This cycleway was a lot longer and more undulating than I thought, but we nevertheless pressed on. I was starting to feel the heat now, with a bit of tiredness creeping into my thighs after 50km. The greenery of that nice café at the nursery was a very pleasant change. Onwards we went after a quick refuel.

From here we got a little lost, turning left when we should have gone straight ahead. This meant a long detour through someone's horse paddock (shhh!) under the baking sun. We really had spent waaay too long locating this checkpoint on the Molonglo River – worth barely 10 points.

Further west we went, hoping to get to checkpoint 9 in the Stromlo Forest, but decided against it as we were both starting to feel tired and still had a fair way to ride – not to mention the time spent being potentially lost inside Stromlo Forest trying to find that checkpoint!

And so our next stop was Sean Fitzgerald's house. Sean is a paraplegic who received his horrific injuries in a mountain biking accident, and is now trying to raise funds to buy a special vehicle to get around in – the successful 4Wheels4Sean fundraising dinner and auction were held on the night prior to the event.

We were both feeling the effects of the heat at this point and very thankful for the downhill cruise to Duffy's local shops for lunch and a bit of a rest. Not fewer than three other teams were also refuelling there! It was here that we knew that our strategy was, uh, utterly useless, and that we should have done it differently. We now know we wouldn't reach many of the checkpoints we thought we would and a realisation that our goal of winning the U21s might not come true after all.

We struggled to reach the saddle at Mt Taylor – 'twas an evil climb that started long ago on the cycleway from Duffy. The sight of a kangaroo hopping up the hill much quicker than we were riding (and swiftly disappearing into the scrub) didn't help our morale one little bit... At least the evil climb was followed by a good downhill. I, however, felt a slight cramp building up on the descent, and it made me fall over into a bindii-covered lawn at a set of traffic lights. OUCH!

The subsequent loss of power from my thighs didn't help me climb the steep pinch to the barren checkpoint at the site of the Arab Embassy. I was really struggling at this point and Chris was quite a bit faster up the hills.

From here we made another dumb mistake as we missed the pipelines under Hindmarsh Avenue – we both kicked ourselves as we had been fully briefed at our lunch stop by another team! Luckily, it was only worth 10 points.

Next stop was the front of Parliament House. The downhill there was very nice! 1 hour and 2 minutes to go until our finishing time of 4pm.

Quote of the Quarter

From Grant Peterson of Rivendell Bicycle Works (provided to Bike North via Michael Chow)

"The best use of a bicycle is commuting, it's not racing or competing or recreation or anything like that. Ultimately, its best use is getting cars off the roads but governments are not sympathetic to that idea at all".

We headed eastward to the checkpoint on the bridge in Jerrabomberra Reserve. My spirits were lifted somewhat by the thought of almost reaching the finish and the lack of hills in between. I was really cramping badly coming over Kings Avenue Bridge but I kept on spinning – not long to go now! A quick stop at the Carillon and a short ride back to the ANU finished our Urban Polaris for another year. I don't know why but on that short section was the first time that day I had appreciated how nice it was to be riding in Canberra.

Upon finally reaching the finish (after a race time of 6 hours 45 minutes) we were glad to head towards the car. A quick check of the computer revealed that we had ridden 107.5km at 5 hours 11 minutes, averaging only 20.7km/h – Chris's altimeter showed that we had climbed in excess of 1000m.

I had thoughtfully stashed some beer in the esky and was most certainly looking forward to that! At least I still had some sense to drink a few bottles of Gatorade before hitting the beer. Soon after, Chris's mum Dana Skopal came back with team-mate Peter Hillig and told their success stories. It turned out that Peter had good local knowledge and the team ended up taking short-cuts that Chris and I could never have guessed!

A quick calculation showed that we both ended up with 300 points, although Dana and Peter had done 30km less than we had! Ouch. We only found out later that Dana and Peter had overscored themselves and we had underscored (in my exhaustion I forgot to add one checkpoint) – and we actually had 330 points. That was little consolation as we saw ourselves slip lower in the overall standings – eventually finishing a disappointing 66th. It wasn't until the final results were posted (when I was just finishing my third Corona) that we found out we had indeed won the U21 category. I was overjoyed, to say the least. At least we salvaged something out of a bad day.

More importantly though, it was a fun event and we both learned a lot about Canberra in the process – that we should have scored at least 50 more points riding the distance we did. We also had a great opportunity to road-test the Canberra cycleway network and I think it is brilliant. I also learned that re-applying sunscreen over the day might just be a good idea, as is drinking and eating a little more.

Chris and I are looking forward to making it a hat-trick of category wins next year. Wherever that may be.

(Check out the Polaris web-site <http://www.polarismtb.com.au> for more on the Urban Polaris and information on other fun mountain biking events.)

TOUR DE COWRA 2003

Eight days of superb cycling: April 18 – 26

The Tour de Cowra is a chance for cyclists to experience the joys of riding scenic routes without the frustrations of dealing with traffic. The more continuous riding on Tour de Cowra can be challenging to those who may only be used to city cycling, which is very stop-start.

The chance to experience cycle touring without the worry of packing your life into panniers is a great way to expand your cycling and to challenge yourself. Riding day after day is quite different from doing the odd weekend ride. Pacing yourself to be able to ride again the next day, being a little more self-sufficient for minor repairs, coping with cattle or sheep on the road, and watching for hazards such as wooden planked bridges can all add new dimensions and skills for those who have not experienced touring before.

Then of course, for Bike North members, what a great way to train for the Bike North Century Challenge!

Further information:

Everything you need to know is on the website at <http://galifrey.triode.net.au/cgi-bin/rides.pl?ride=80>. A full colour brochure is downloadable from the site and there is also an online registration form. If you don't have internet access please phone Fran or Keith on 9614 0777 (ah) to request a brochure and to register.

Registration:

Please register if you are planning to come along this year.

Accommodation:

At Easter accommodation can be in short supply in Cowra despite the large number of motels, caravan parks and pubs. BOOK EARLY!

Bike North Century Challenge – May 4th

Are you ready for the challenge? The Bike North Century Challenge that is.



After last year's very successful inaugural event, it's time to get training again. The BNCC is quite different from a normal Bike North ride. In the Challenge, participants will ride in groups of 2, 3 or 4 riders, and can choose one of three riding options - 60, 100 or 160km. At all three distances, the route is deliberately challenging and each group will follow detailed directions and need to collect stamps at designated checkpoints. This is not a competitive event!

The aims of this event are to:

- provide a ride which will challenge every member;
- encourage self-sufficient riding and navigation skills; and
- use and learn new cycle routes across the Bike North area.

When Will My Membership Fee Fall Due ?

Historically Bike North had a policy that memberships were for a calendar year and membership fees would always fall due at the end of December each year. New members joining during the year paid a pro rata membership fee. BN changed the policy about eighteen months ago in order to make the membership administration a little easier.

From that time, membership renewals fall due on the anniversary of the joining date. This means that everyone joining BN has 12 months membership from the time they join.

Of late it has become apparent many members cannot remember when they joined BN. To make life a little easier for those who cannot remember, we will be including your membership expiry date on the front of the Chainmail envelope. You will find it under the Bike North logo in the top left hand corner of the envelope. For those members who receive Chainmail via the web you can contact the membership officer via email if you want to know your renewal date.

Thanks!

Thanks to all my friends in Bike North who visited me in hospital, wished me well, and called me after I got out. Having a big crash is not much fun, and it really helps recovery to have the support of family and friends. I hope to be back on the road soon - on a trike!

Simon Rock

For Sale

Cannondale Road Bike. 56cm, CAD3, Saeco red. In very good condition, just serviced, new replacement cables, tubes, liners etc. 16 speed full Shimano 105 with 600 rear derailleur, action Kevlar tyres. Just right for someone wanting performance at a budget price. \$1250.00 ono. Telephone Trevor on 0421 213 440 anytime. Inspection at Thornleigh. Bikes for sale: surplus to current Sharp family's requirements. Contact Alister or Sheila Tel 9879 3664, e-mail jollshar@zeta.org.au (photos available by post or e-mail)

Child's bike: 'Giant' 20"-wheel, boy's bike (red). 6-speed gears with Gripshift shifters. Excellent condition. Fitted with 'Slick Willy' semi-slick tyres. \$160. Contact Alister or Sheila Tel 9879 3664, e-mail jollshar@zeta.org.au (photos available by post or e-mail)

Child's bike: Trek 20"-wheel boy's bike (yellow/purple). Very light. 6-speed 'Mega-range' gears, with Gripshift shifters. Good condition. Semi-slick tyres fitted. \$150. Contact Alister or Sheila Tel 9879 3664, e-mail jollshar@zeta.org.au (photos available by post or e-mail)

Trailer-bike: Isla Trailerbike: a superior trailer-bike made in England by Isla Rowntree (as described in Encyclopedia). 20" wheel with mudguard. Suitable for children aged from around five until 10 or 11 (handlebars adjust along top tube to adapt for reach). Reynolds 531 frame (red colour) and Sturmey Archer 5 speed hub gear. Mounts to special rack using full ball-race bearings. Racks also fit normal panniers. Price \$350 complete with two racks. Contact Alister or Sheila Tel 9879 3664, e-mail jollshar@zeta.org.au (photos available by post or e-mail)

Child's scooter: 'Holstar', 12" pump-up tyres, blue, suit 5 10 y.o. Little use, excellent condition. \$50.

"Candy" – **Trek 1000**, 2001 model **road bike**, 56cm, good condition - excellent entry level road machine. Shimano components, 52/42 Ultegra front, 12/23 Sora rear, new front wheel. \$800 Keith Griffin 0414 187 427, keith@galifrey.triode.net.au.

Bike North Gift Certificate

Need a gift for someone but you can't think of what to get. Do they ride a bike? If so, why not give them a Bike North Membership.

The Bike North Gift Pack consists of

- a Gift Certificate complete with the recipient's name
- a 12 month subscription to Chainmail - our bi-monthly news and views magazine
- access to Bike North clothing
- access to special Bike North events such as the Bike North Century Challenge and Picnic Rides
- access to free maintenance workshops run by an accredited bike mechanic
- access to Email lists for discussion, views and communication
- a Rebel Sport 5% discount card for discounts store wide
- a Rebel Sport 10% discount card for discounts on all cycling items
- Bike North Business cards so they can tell their friends about Bike North

All that just for the price of an individual membership!

For more information contact Bike North bikenorth@galifrey.triode.net.au

ROAD RULES: 247 RIDING IN A BICYCLE LANE ON THE ROAD

- (1) The rider of a bicycle riding on a length of road with a bicycle lane designed for bicycles travelling in the same direction as the rider must ride in the bicycle lane unless it is impracticable to do so.
- (2) In this rule 'road' does not include a road related area.

February 2003**Date: Sat 01/02/2003**

Ride: Parramatta Park Parade
 Grade: Easy Distance: 25
 Contact: Col Lambert, 9637 0746
 Starts at: 07:30. Meadowbank Wharf. Ride along the Parramatta Valley cycleway to Parramatta Park. Do a lap or two of the park before coffee at the Wharf Cafe, then return via a similar route.

Date: Sun 02/02/2003

Ride: Botany Bay Bacon
 Grade: Medium Distance: 65
 Contact: Eric Middleton, 9958 2546
 Starts at: 07:30. Meadowbank wharf. Ride via Homebush and the Cooks River cycleway to Botany Bay. A refuel at our favourite cafe at Brighton, then we retrace our tracks to the start.

Date: Sat 08/02/2003

Ride: Hop-a-long to Skippy's
 Grade: EM Distance: 30
 Contact: Ian Houghton, 9440 0467
 Starts at: 08:00 St Ives Car Park Mona Vale Rd opposite Stanley St. Ride out to Waratah Park, home of Skippy the bush roo. Passes through gently undulating horse country roads of Terry Hills and Duffy's Forest.

Date: Sat 08/02/2003

Ride: Akuna Bay and Church Point
 Grade: Hard Distance: 77
 Contact: Doug Stewart, 9887 1478
 Starts at: 07:00. East side Eastwood Stn. Ride via de Burghis 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 Turramurra. A hilly ride at a brisk pace.

Date: Sun 09/02/2003

Ride: Little Italy
 Grade: Medium Distance: 40
 Contact: Ross Thomas, 9481 0724
 Starts at: 08:30. Meadowbank Wharf Cycle over Gladesville and Iron Cove bridges to a cafe in Norton St Leichhardt. Return via Five Dock.

Date: Sun 09/02/2003

Ride: City Circle
 Grade: Medium Distance: 40
 Contact: Joan Kerridge, 9909 8925
 Starts at: 07:30. Artarmon Stn east side or Cycle steps Milsons Point. 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: Sat 15/02/2003

Ride: Concord for Cake
 Grade: Easy Distance: 26
 Contact: Michael Chow, 9874 1461
 Starts at: 08:30. 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: Sun 16/02/2003

Ride: A to Z and Beyond
 Grade: Medium Distance: 30
 Group: Bike North
 Contact: Rick Mockridge, 0418 284 052
 Starts at: 07:30. Artarmon Station 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: Sun 16/02/2003

Ride: Down 'n' out? Then up 'n' back!
 Grade: Medium Distance: 47
 Contact: Keith and Fran Griffin, 9351 1253
 Starts at: 07:30. Sw cnr Pennant Hills Rd and M2 (for parking tips call us). Speed down the M2 to Seven Hills, then tour around Toongabbie, Westmead, Wentworthville, do a lap or two of Parramatta Park before a stop at The wharf Cafe. Continue along Victoria Rd (short section only), the PVC, Chatham Rd up the hill to Eastwood and back roads to the starting point.

Date: Sun 23/02/2003

Ride: St Ives to West Head
 Grade: Medium Hard Distance: 55
 Contact: John Williams, 9988 4478
 Starts at: 07:30. Starting in the car park on Mona Vale Rd opp Stanley Street St Ives. Moderate paced ride via McCarrs Creek Rd to scenic West Head. Bring your own morning tea to savour with the magnificent views across Pittwater and Broken Bay.

March 2003**Date: Sat 01/03/2003**

Ride: Olympic Park Ride
 Grade: Easy Distance: 25
 Contact: Col Lambert, 9637 0746
 Starts at: 07:30. Meadowbank Wharf. Loop around Homebush Bay with a coffee stop. Suitable for beginners and children over 10 accompanied by an adult carer.

Date: Sun 02/03/2003

Ride: Tour de Hills
 Grade: Easy to Hard Distance: 20 35 70 105
 Contact: Steve Hillier, 9899 5432
 Starts at: Starts and finishes at Dural Country Club. Annual ride supporting local charity. Join the Bike North team for this great rural ride. See BN News and Chain Mail for details.

Date: Sat 08/03/2003

Ride: Meadowbank to Bobbin Head
 Grade: Medium Distance: 49
 Contact: Doug Stewart, 9887 1478
 Starts at: 07:00. Meadowbank wharf, Eastwood stn and Browns Waterhole starts by arrangement. A hilly ride from the busy waters of Meadowbank up to Eastwood and Browns Waterhole, then to Turramurra, and on to the peaceful waters of Bobbin Head for coffee and return.

Date: Sat 08/03/2003

Ride: Meadowbank to Bobbin Head Tortoise
 Grade: Medium Distance: 25
 Contact: Carolyn New, 9438 1903

Chain Mail

Starts at: 07:30. Turrumurra station (east). Pedal to Bobbin head, enjoy the exhilarating downhill run before meeting with the hares for coffee. Tackle the climb back to the start.

Date: Sun 09/03/2003

Ride: Pie in the Sky

Grade: Medium Distance: 38

Contact: Graeme Edwards, 9476 3624

Starts at: 08:00. Hornsby Station west side ride along the old Pacific Highway to the café overlooking Brooklyn for morning tea and great views. Back track to Hornsby. Some moderate hills.

Date: Sat 15/03/2003

Ride: Olympic Park Ride

Grade: Easy Distance: 25

Contact: Doug Stewart, 9887 1478

Starts at: 07:30. Meadowbank Wharf. Loop around Homebush Bay with a coffee stop. Suitable for beginners and children over 10 accompanied by an adult carer.

Date: Sun 16/03/2003

Ride: Botany Bay Bacon

Grade: Medium Distance: 65

Contact: Eric Middleton, 9958 2546

Starts at: 07:30. Meadowbank wharf. Ride via Homebush and the Cooks River cycleway to Botany Bay. A refuel at our favourite cafe at Brighton, then we retrace our tracks to the start.

Date: Sun 16/03/2003

Ride: Whale Beach and Akuna Bay

Grade: Hard Distance: 81

Contact: Phil Johnston, 9312 3319

Starts at: 07:15. Starts St Ives car park Mona Vale Rd opp Stanley St. A brisk ride via Terry Hills, Church Point, Mona Vale and Newport for brunch at Whale Beach. Then a second brunch at Akuna Bay. ETR St Ives 12:20pm

Date: Sat 22/03/2003

Ride: Exploring Castle Hill

Grade: Easy Distance: 25

Contact: Pam and Col Kendrick, 9872 2583

Starts at: 08:00. Car park Mileham Av Castle Hill, to left side of Baulkham Hills pool Explore Castle Hill's parks and cycleways with a coffee stop.

Date: Sun 23/03/2003

Ride: North Shore Olympic Grand Tour

Grade: Medium Distance: 60-70

Contact: Carolyn New, 9438 1903

Starts at: 07:30. Chatswood station west side An easy paced ride via Lane Cove NP and M2 to Eastwood, Meadowbank then cross the river to Olympic Park. After a visit to Concord's famous patisserie, return to Chatswood via ANZAC and Harbour bridges.

Date: Sun 23/03/2003

Ride: Cowan Calga

Grade: Medium Hard Distance: 58

Contact: Graeme Edwards, 9476 3624

Starts at: 07:40. Cowan Stn. Fast paced ride through magnificent Hawkesbury River valley on quiet roads. Return via Brooklyn with a stop for coffee and cakes.

Date: Sun 23/03/2003

Ride: Quatre Montagnes

Grade: Hard Distance: 90

Contact: Phil Johnston, 9312 3319

Starts at: 07:15. Wahroonga stn N/E side. Via Galston to Breakfast at Berowra Waters cafe and brunch at Pie in the Sky

Date: Sun 30/03/2003

Ride: Yarramalong Manor for lunch - Wyong Iron Horse

Grade: Hard Distance: 93

Contact: Phil Johnston, 9312 3319

Starts at: 07:30. Starts at Hornsby Stn west side, Jersey St Nosh Stops at Mt White, Peat's Ridge & Yarramalong Manor (lunch) onto Wyong for train home. - ETR 2:10pm

Date: Sun 30/03/2003

Ride: Treasure Hunt

Grade: Easy Distance: 20

Contact: Ross Thomas, 9481 0724

Starts at: 09:00. Pirates Wanted! Gather at Meadowbank Wharf solve the clues, there is treasure to be found! It might be a sunken treasure or it may be found in them there hills. As an easy ride, the hills will be small, and no one in their right mind would find treasure in Homebush Bay or the Parramatta River.

WHAT TO BRING ON RIDES:

- your bike should be in good working order
- water – 1 litre per hour
- snacks, money
- Puncture repair kit, spare tube, and pump
- for night rides have lights fitted and batteries charged

RISK WARNING

As a participant in this recreational activity, you may be exposing yourself to a risk of harm. Bike North, the ride organisers and leaders wish to warn you that there are risks and hazards inherent in cycling activities. You are responsible to take care to prevent putting yourself, your fellow participants and/or others into danger. By signing this form, you accept the warning as to risk, you agree to ride in a safe and responsible manner and to obey all Australian Road Rules.

RIDE CONDITIONS

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 should be accompanied by a cycling adult. A Standards Association of Australia approved helmet is legally required, under state law, by all participants on all rides. Essential equipment also includes a bicycle in good working order, water bottle, snacks, tire pump, tube repair kit and appropriate tool kit. For Night Rides you must also have a HEADlight and tail light that will work for at least 4 hours. In the rides program the rides are graded Easy, Medium or Hard depending on the terrain and speed. Please choose a ride that is suitable to your own fitness and experience. If in doubt please check with the ride leader.