

Chain Mail

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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.

Have you cycled the Prospect Loop?

Carolyn New

Not many months ago a few extra kilometres of cycleway was opened around Prospect Dam.

This cycleway was eagerly awaited by many Sydney cyclists, with regular excursions to the 'gate' which prevented further discovery. Expeditions were made through unpleasantly busy industrial areas to get around this blockage and explore further territory. But eventually word was out that the gate was unlocked and everyone can now enjoy around 50km of off-road sealed cycleway, mostly of excellent quality.

The Prospect Loop connects Guildford and Canley Vale on the Parramatta-Liverpool Rail Trail with the picnic areas of Prospect Dam to the north and Abbotsbury, the site of the Olympic Games Mountain Bike events, to the south.

To ride the Prospect Loop you first need to find the Parramatta-Liverpool Rail Trail. If you can find your way to Olympic Park then check out the last Chain Mail (October 03) which tells you everything you need to know about using the new M4 Cycleway to cycle between Olympic Park and the Rail Trail. Alternatively you can always take the train to Guildford Railway Station and start directly at the Rail Trail on the eastern side of the station.

GUILDFORD TO PROSPECT DAM

The Loop itself starts from the Pipeline bridge overpass of the railway line just south of the Guildford Station. Don't cycle south on the Rail Trail, instead cross the road and follow the cycleway along Trenton Road which parallels the pipeline. The first few kilometres are pleasant but not stunning as you cycle along widened footpaths, through land easements and cross quiet roads.



Cycling gets decidedly better once you reach Pipehead. Here the cycleway deviates from the Water Supply Pipeline and follows the old disused canal from Prospect Dam. The cycleway runs on top of this canal with periodic dives down and under all the busy roads. There is not one road crossing from Pipehead to and beyond Prospect Dam,

and cycling on a smooth, wide, well cambered cycleway is quite a treat. The old Boothtown aqueduct provides an interesting diversion but do watch out for the bollards on the approach.

The Prospect loop follows a ridgeline with sweeping views of the area. Eventually the backdrop of housing disappears as you enter the bushland and quarry surrounding Prospect Dam and you can look down on yet another cycleway snaking along in the valley below and see the connection developing. The beginnings of a real network of cycleways!

Prospect Dam picnic grounds provides conveniences and water but you do need to BYO food. A short detour up the entry gives you a view over the dam itself. To leave the picnic area, follow the road and car park to the continuation of the cycleway around Prospect Dam. After a short sharp hill you cross your first public road for many kilometres at Chandos Rd.

PROSPECT DAM TO ABBOTSBURY

From the Dam you follow another water supply channel but now the terrain and character of the surrounding land have changed. The rolling hills unfold



view back along cycleway

a truly delightful experience of old tumbletown cottages, abandoned trucks, small farm dams and animals.

After the signalised bike light crossing at The Horsley Drive, the little hills become even more persistent as you ride through the Western Sydney Regional Park and past sections of the Equestrian Centre, Cross Country Course. Eventually you crest a hill to see the town of Abbotsbury beneath you and one more major downhill run and sharp hill to tackle. After this you enter suburbia again to the



Cowpasture overbridge

sounds of sheep at Fairfield City Farm. Follow the well marked cycleroute to the IGA supermarket, a newly emerging coffee/lunch spot for Bike North rides.

ABBOTSBURY TO GUILDFORD

From Abbotsbury the terrain changes remarkably again as the cycleway follows the Orphan School Creek. The amble through Stockdale Crescent Reserve, after leaving the IGA, can be hazardous in magpie

season but even more amazing is the monstrosly large overpass that has

been built over Cowpasture Road. Some engineer had a wonderful time designing that bridge, but it is a shame they included several hairpin bends rather than rounding the ramp like the Anzac Bridge.

The cycleway along Orphan School Creek is much older than other sections and this shows with some sections fairly narrow. The route winds along the

creek, through many parks, over many roads, behind Fairfield Showground and eventually links into the Rail Trail at Canley Vale.. This is a flat and fairly open ride, but quite pleasant.

The loop is completed along the

Parramatta-Liverpool Rail Trail back to Guildford. An interesting alternative is to do this ride in reverse. We suggest you chose your direction based on the prevailing winds. Its always better to come home with the wind behind!!

THE VERDICT

This is a delightful recreational ride which is very accessible from Bike North territory, the return journey from Meadowbank Wharf being around 75km. Shorter options are available by starting from one of the train stations along the Liverpool line.

Better still, the Western Sydney community has received a wonderful present in terms of community pathway access that offers continuous walking and cycling corridors for transport away from the busy, noisy roads. It will be interesting to see whether, over time, these pathways change the way we think about the physical and cultural linkages between Northern and Western Sydney.

Cycling for Transport

Cycle to Work! Two New RTA Publications

Maria Theobarous

Like many Bike North members, I:

- avoid riding in the rain because it ruins my hair;
- am concerned about riding on busy roads with drivers who talk on mobile phones, use their rearview mirror as their second bathroom mirror;
- fear aggressive drivers.

I'm also slightly taller than 5 foot, so I'm easy to miss or can be mistaken as a dwarf on two-wheels. But, according to the recent Bike North survey, I'm part of the 36 percent of Bike North members who commute to work at least once a week.

For the 60 something percent of Bike North members who love cycling but who have yet to try riding to work, here are two new RTA publications that might make it a bit easier.

CYCLING TO WORK WORKS! FOR EMPLOYEES, FOR BUSINESS AND FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

This is a helpful guide to use when you're planning your regular bike commute and need to organise showers, clothes storage and bike storage at work.

The guide contains:

- good health information to support your aim of cycling into work,
- a discussion of the potential cost savings to you and your employer and
- environmental reasons that will help your employer support your bike commute.

Many office buildings have bike parking, showers and clothes storage facilities but you'll need to make the initial enquiries if you're not aware of their existence. The details in this guide can help you negotiate these facilities with

your employer. The support you have at work will make this easier.

However your workplace may not have any facilities available. This guide provides smart alternatives like approaching the local gym to use their facilities. It would have taken me some time to work out alternatives if my employer didn't have these facilities.

Bike parking in the CBD area is scarce and I've found that you will find a safe parking solution if you ask around either at work or amongst your Bike North buddies.

I went to the first RTA reference <http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au> and easily found the link to bicycle riders on the home page. Well done RTA. Cycle networks, maps, bike events, improvements to bike networks and basic bike safety can be found on the website.

The bike maps link listed in the brochure doesn't work but you'll find bike maps, once you're in the bicycle section of the RTA internet site.

OFF TO WORK? ON YOUR BIKE! A GUIDE FOR EASY AND ENJOYABLE CYCLING TO WORK.

This guide is aimed at helping you plan your bike commute. Sometimes it's good to be reminded of the basic details about how to make your ride safe and comfortable. A safe comfortable bike, comfortable riding clothes good lighting at night, testing out your cycle route and what to do in the wet are some of the hints in this guide. The idea of using or forming your own bike bus is one that Bike North has been active in supporting.

This guide is a starting point for new cycling commuters and for those who need to consider how to maintain their cycling commuting habit. After speaking to a few cyclists, when you've stopped cycle commuting for a period, you really need to take a reality check and make that commitment to get back on the bike for commuting.

I use the start of daylight savings as my personal excuse to get back into bike commuting so all the best to everyone who gives bike commuting a go. I might even make a few phone calls to see if there's a local bike bus.

Ciao for now.

Commuting Story

Suzy Jackson

When I was a child growing up in suburban Canberra, our bikes were our transport. If you wanted to go to a friend's place, or to netball practice, or school, or what have you, then you either bugged mum for a lift, waited half the day for the bus (and you thought Sydney public transport was bad!), or rode your bike there. The bike shed out the back of the school was typically filled with a hundred or more bikes.



Of course when one turns seventeen, thoughts turn to motorized transport, and many a bike gathers dust in the shed. Mine was no exception, though I did manage to commute on and off for the rest of the time I was in Canberra on an old 12 speed racing bike, and also occasionally entered in criteriums, only to pull out half way through because I was stuffed.

Everything changed when I moved to Sydney, shortly after the Liberal government was elected. I'd lost my company car (along with my job), and decided that updating my qualifications

was the ticket. I rented a teensy one bedroom flat in Cremorne Point, which had nowhere for a car, so naturally I turned to two wheel transport to get across the harbour to Uni.

With my redundancy money, I bought myself a “sensible” bike, a GT hybrid, and equipped it with all the recommended commuting accessories. On went the rack, a pannier bag for carrying my books, mudguards, and a light for those evening classes.

I rode that bike for about a fortnight, and hated every minute of it. The first time I tried to bunny hop a pot-hole I nearly killed myself, as my feet weren't clipped to the pedals. The front mudguard caught my foot when turning and imploded, and the gears *always* made noises, no matter what I threatened them with. Not to mention the weight! Carrying it anywhere was a major chore. Next time I visited my old place in Canberra, I returned with my battered old roadie on the train; racing slicks, silly gearing, clippie pedals, and everything. This became my primary mode of transport (discounting rollerblades) until I ended up employed once more, and bought myself a new racing bike.

Fast forward to 2003. I've (finally!) finished my degree (though have foolishly started another) and I'm now working in Marsfield, and living in Lane Cove (near the Great Northern Pub). The old “sensible bike” is now on permanent loan to a workmate, sans rack and extras. Now I commute on either my new Italian full-on aluminium road bike (which I race on most Saturdays), with 23mm wide slicks, ultra narrow seat, narrow range racing gearing, and handlebars way too far below the seat, or else my new fixie, which I built up by putting a track wheel on my old road bike after encouragement from Tom Addis a number of weeks ago.

My commute has a variety of flavours, depending on the weather, my mood, whether I'm running late for work, and how long it's been since I last checked that Bobbin Head was still there.

At a minimum (usually when I'm late for work), it's a fast paced 12km dash. Straight down Mowbray Road, then right at the end onto Epping Road to cross over Lane Cove river. Then across to the M2 entrance and continue on the shoulder of the M2 through the tollgates to Vimiera Road. Through the gates and up Vimiera road to work (CSIRO Radiophysics).

The more pleasant option is to wind through the back streets of West Chatswood, down the back of the high school to Fullers Road, then a quick downhill blast to Lane Cove Park, and a lovely ride through the park. I avoid the steep bit at the end of Fullers Road by sticking to the main road (is it Delhi Road at this point?) and matching speed with the cars. Take the path after DeBurgths Bridge up to Fontenoy Road, then under the M2 and along Talavera Road, past the mall and uni, and finally to Vimiera Road and work.

One of the nicest things about working for CSIRO (no, not the pay!) is that they take cycling seriously. I occasionally cycle down Vimiera Road in the evening with our director, who commutes on a battered old Trek mountain bike. We have half a dozen showers scattered through the complex, and a bunch of

bike lockers. Over summer, there are often as many as fifteen or twenty bikes parked about the place. Our canteen staff lay on plenty of sausage rolls and cakes for famished cyclists to wolf down at morning tea and lunch.

Having tried to outfit a bike specifically for commuting, only to hate it and go back to a road racing bike, I simply carry my clothes in a backpack each morning, and only wear clothes that don't need ironing. If I'm planning to take a longer route home (eg. via Bobbin Head or even Akuna Bay), I'll carry a second set so that I can ride home with nothing on my back. My cupboard contains a disgraceful array of jerseys and knicks, which are worn in rotation and then discarded on the bedroom floor, until a big enough pile has gathered to warrant washing.

The only time I wish I had a car is rainy days in winter. Summer rain is fine, my work clothes stay nice and dry in a plastic garbage bag in my backpack, while I get thoroughly drenched. I have a good deal with the cryogenics tech at work, where he lets me hang my cycle clothes next to the fan on a helium compressor, which dries them out right quick. Winter rain, on the other hand, leaves me shivering cold and dripping wet. These are the days when I'm most likely to wimp out and hop on the bus, only to be bored almost to tears while the bus sits in traffic.

An interesting facet of riding every day is that after a while it becomes a real habit, and it becomes almost impossible not to ride, if only because that would mean you'd have to write “0” on the calendar.

Food tastes better when you cycle. Life is more fun. There's nothing better than pulling on the jersey and nicks after a day staring at the screen and going out for a quick ride. Tensions accumulated through the day vanish in sweat, exertion, and pure, unadulterated speed.

Suzy Jackson is registered with Link-Up. Check out www.bikenorth.org.au for more info.

Australian Road Rule

Nº 255

Riding too close to the rear of a motor vehicle

The rider of a bicycle must not ride within 2 metres of the rear of a moving motor vehicle continuously for more than 200 metres.

Member Profile: Michael Chow

On top of a long stint on the Executive, Michael Chow is probably best known to Bike North members for his legendary Concord for Cake rides. Have you ever wondered why Concord for Cake turns up so often in the rides calendar? This interview with Michael answers that questions and a few others as well.

1. How long have you been a member of Bike North?

Oh, I don't know ? probably about 7 years. I think my membership number is 4.

2. When did you lead your first ride?

Yes, probably about the same time, 6-7 years I suppose. I have absolutely no recollection of what ride that might have been. I don't think Concord for Cake was up and running yet. Perhaps, an Olympic Park ride or a Lane Cove Park ride.

3. What influenced your decision to become a ride leader?

I don't remember. I guess I thought it was a good idea at the time. Up till then, I had only done one BNSW ride, a MTB ride through the Lane Cove Valley - and perhaps thought that organisationally I could do better.

I keep doing the rides because I think it serves as encouragement for people to ride and make cycling a regular part of their lives, and of course, to eat Mario's cakes.

4. What is the strangest thing that has ever happened to you on a Bike North ride?

That depends on how you define "strange", I guess. But no, nothing unusual comes directly to mind. I don't think I've ever had an accident on any of my rides.

Oh wait, just last week, David Bond buckled a wheel on my Concord ride

and Mario brought out a spare wheel for him ... is that strange?

5. If you could give one piece of advice to potential ride leaders what would it be?

Be sure that the ride you are going to lead is one that you have done before and can ride comfortably.

6. What is the best thing about being a member of Bike North?

Leading rides of course!



Willoughby Spring Festival Bike Ride

Carolyn New

There was something for everyone at the this year's Willoughby Spring Festival Bike Ride and Fun. More than 100 people participated in the various activities on offer.

The day kicked off with a brisk ride for the fit and energetic to explore the hilly districts west of Chatswood starting with a lovely morning ride through Lane Cove Park. Half an hour later, a more sedate group of cyclists took off for an eastern meander of Willoughby's natural scenic delights. Later still, Joan Kerridge and her helpers shepherded a large group of cyclists on a similar but easier route.

For a brief moment, a rain squall threatened to disrupt the day but no risk of that! By co-incidence all three ride groups had descended upon Castlecrag for a well deserved coffee break, and sheltered briefly. No stopping the treasure hunt organised for younger children either! All participants were then invited for a 'sausage sizzle' in the children's playground at Bicentennial Reserve and entertained by the skills of the stunt team Rapid Descent.

Many thanks to all those from Bike North and the North Shore Bicycle Group who helped to make the day a success.

DO YOU REGULARLY COMMUTE BY BICYCLE?

HAVE YOU REGISTERED FOR LINKUP YET?

It's really easy. Just go to www.bikenorth.org.au, the Bike North website, and then...



Step 1: click on "Cycling for Transport" on the navigation bar at the top

Step 2: click on "LinkUp" (4th from the left in list of sub-topics below the navigation bar)

Step 3: click on "Register your commute" (if you want to see who else has registered a commute, click on "Browse the routes", this will take you to a list of everything that's been registered already).

Step 4: fill in the on-line form. The questions ask about your contact details, so a potential commuting buddy can make contact with you, and the details of your commute (when you do it, how often, where it starts and ends etc)

Step 5: click on "Register" to register your commute

MAKING CYCLING BETTER

Bicycle Facilities on Pennant Hills Road?

Catherine Stuart and Carolyn New

Possible route options for the planned M7 joining the F3 (Newcastle Freeway) and the yet to be completed Sydney Orbital Link were released for comment recently. Bike North was disappointed, but not surprised, to find that none of the options envisaged an integrated approach including expanded provision for public transport, rail freight, cycling and walking in addition to improved facilities for motor vehicles.

Further examination of the four options presented showed that none of them offer an opportunity for bicycle facilities to be included as part of the new road, so Bike North has suggested that dedicated bike lanes established on Pennant Hills Road instead. Doing this would have a number of benefits including:

- filling a 'missing link' in the regional bicycle network;
- contributing to the State government's environmental policy of reducing the overall number of kilometres travelled by all motor vehicles each year;
- encouraging better health and less obesity;
- enabling the community to take advantage of the cost savings and social benefits associated with replacing short car trips with bicycle trips;
- consistency with State Government commitments to provide cycling facilities as part of all major road construction; and
- ensuring traffic on Pennant Hills Road reduces and stays low in the long term, following the opening of the M7.

In making this proposal, Bike North considered other possible 'back road' routes but found that in most cases these roads were hillier than Pennant Hills Road, narrow and busy with traffic. Dedicated bicycle lanes on Pennant Hills Road really does look like the best option.

Contact Carolyn New (phone: 9438 1903, email: carolynn@ihug.com.au) if you are interested in a copy of Bike North's full submission in the response to 'F3 to Sydney Orbital Link Study'.

What's happening locally

LOCAL AREA WORKING GROUP MEETINGS HAPPENING SOON

All of Bike North's Local Area Working Groups will be holding meetings over the next few weeks. All members are welcome.

If you're thinking about getting more involved in Bike North's advocacy activities attending one of these meetings could be an excellent way to start.

Contact the contact the convenor for the group in your area (Ryde, Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai or Hunters Hill) for more information about upcoming meeting dates.

BIKE NORTH EXTENDS SUPPORT TO THE MOSMAN AREA

Catherine Stuart

Bike North has agreed to help cyclists in the Mosman Local Government Area get organised so they can work more effectively with Mosman Council. Bike North will provide assistance in the form of infrastructure and resourcing for a Mosman working group. This will help local cycling advocates participate fully in the activities of Mosman Council's new Mosman Bicycle Advisory Group from the very beginning. If you live in the Mosman Local Government Area and want more information about the new working group, contact Carolyn New (phone: 9438 1903, email: carolynn@ihug.com.au).

RYDE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Wayne Spencer

Bike North participated once again in the Granny Smith Festival at Eastwood on Saturday 18 October. Many thanks to all those who helped with our efforts in the Parade and also with running our stall. Particular thanks to Alison Wong who stepped forward to coordinate our stall for the day and also to Doug Stewart who was our parade leader.

We were more organised than in previous years with the parade as Doug drilled us all into formation. No more random oscillations of uni cycle riders! We were strictly grouped as our collection of bicycle music blared from Doug's ghetto blaster.

Bike North's theme for the day was family cycling. We had various family cycling accessories on display, such as bike seats, trailer bikes, and children's trailers. We also launched our series of family cycling posters, many thanks to Ian Houghton, Alistair Sharp and Michael Chow for their contribution in assisting with the preparation of these. There was the usual steady interest in both family cycling and our other brochures and information at the stall as Bike North continued to promote cycling in the community.

KU-RING-GAI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Hette Mollema

Update on activities of the Bicycle Advisory Committee

The inaugural meeting of the Ku-ring-gai Bicycle Advisory Committee took place on 17 September 2003 in the Council Chambers at Gordon. Following discussion, it was resolved to take the following actions prior to the next meeting:

- the RTA to check and advise whether any of its Bike Plans are being updated.

- the Council to contact adjoining Councils and obtain copies of their Bike Plans to ensure future continuity of routes.
- the Council to obtain a more detailed map of its cycleways from its GIS system, showing schools and contours that would allow the Committee to review the network.
- Committee members to review the existing Bicycle Transport Plan and provide comments to Council staff prior to the next meeting.

Bike North and Bicycle NSW committee members, with the help of Carolyn New (Bike North's Advocacy Officer) have written a submission relating to the Bicycle Transport Plan. The main issues covered in the submission are:

- the hilly topography of the Council area which is an important consideration when deciding preferred routes
- recommendations that children's or beginner's tracks be constructed around parks and sport grounds as a way to promote cycling
- the potential impacts of the council's proposed new medium density housing plan (Draft Local Environment Plan 194) on the area's cycling infrastructure.

Some of the key points raised in relation to the medium density housing plan were:

- cycling and walking activity is generally higher in higher density residential areas
- without careful planning, the higher traffic volumes associated with higher density residential areas can reduce the effectiveness of existing bicycle access routes
- the need to include conditions for the provision for bicycle parking as well as car parking
- the need to ensure that the regional railtrail routes committed to by the RTA are able to be implemented.

The size of the submission is too large to reproduce here, but anyone interested can obtain a copy by contacting

Carolyn New (phone: 9438 1903, email: carolynn@ihug.com.au)

HORNSBY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Graeme Edwards

To bring everyone up to date in what is happening in Hornsby.

New Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Officer

Hornsby Shire Council (HSC) has created a new Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Officer position in the Traffic Department. The purpose of this position is to monitor and take advantage of any opportunities for funding cycling and pedestrian infrastructure as well as playing a role in deciding how Council money should be spent on these things. This position relieves some of the workload from Gary Kennedy which should be a boost for cycling as Gary Kennedy had many competing priorities and cycling was not at the top of his list. The new position will have a better focus for us and will be able to work across departments in HSC, another plus.

I have been in contact with the traffic department over the last month and the filling of the position is on track. When I last spoke to HSC they were interviewing applicants. HSC has indicated that they expect the position to be filled soon.

Upcoming BN Hornsby Working Group Meeting

I have arranged with HSC, for the new Pedestrian and Bicycle Officer to come to a BN Hornsby Working Group meeting

some time during the second week of December. It is intended to use the meeting as a get to know you event and to explain what we do. It is also hoped that we can sort out some general ideas on a way ahead for HSC. This should be a good opportunity to get things moving again in Hornsby so I hope that most of you will be able to clear your calendar for the second week in December so we can put on a big show. The bigger the group the better, up to a point.

Cycleway plans

The next item of news is that the plans for the cycleway linking Timbarra Rd Westleigh and Bellamy St Pennant Hills via the fire trail in Berowra Valley Park are now on display for comment. Some members of the Hornsby Working Group did a saddle survey of the proposed route back in February 2001 and made some suggestions to council at the time. It would seem that some of those suggestions have been incorporated. I urge anyone living in the area that might have an interest in using this new facility to have a look at the plans and make any comments to HSC. It is much easier to get things changed or fixed before the path is in place!

LOCAL WORKING GROUPS

Council	Convenor	Email Address	Phone No
Ryde	Wayne Spencer	ryde@bikenorth.org.au	9874 6977
Ku-ring-ai	John Watts	kuringgai@bikenorth.org.au	9144 7656
Hornsby	Graeme Edwards	hornsby@bikenorth.org.au	9476 3624
	Kevin Mason	hornsby@bikenorth.org.au	9868 2904
Hunters Hill	Alister Sharp	hhill@bikenorth.org.au	9879 3664

You can also subscribe to your local workgroup email list. You do this by sending an email to membership@bikenorth.org.au. The email should include your full name as shown on your membership, your current email address, the workgroup list eg the Hornsby list, Hunters Hill list etc.



Crank Rites

Compiled by Hette Mollema

RIDE ETIQUETTE

Group cycle ride etiquette often shows the experience of the cyclists in sharing the road with other users. Some hints for safe cycling, particularly when in a group ride, are given in a number of web addresses.

Whether you are stopping because of mechanical problems or to regroup with your companions, move well off the road or cycleway so you don't interfere with traffic. From Oklahoma Bicycle Society at <http://www.oklahomabicyclesociety.com/hintstips/groupride.htm>

Ride single file or double file as appropriate to the roadway and traffic conditions and where allowed by law. Even where riding double is legal, set a good example and be an ambassador for cycling. From Oklahoma Bicycle Society at <http://www.oklahomabicyclesociety.com/hintstips/groupride.htm> and University of Texas Medical Branch <http://www.utmb.edu/cycling/Cycling%20Etiquette.htm>

Stay to the left when in front to allow room for other cyclists to pass safely on your right, particularly in traffic. Pass other riders on the right hand side whenever possible. From Canberra Cycling Club at http://www.canberracyclingclub.org.au/ccf/club_info/etiquette.shtm

Follow the directions of our experienced ride leaders. They have been well trained in leading rides and know of the dangers and hazards on the route of the ride.

Can you do these 10 things on a bike?

Doug Stewart

You can ride a bike right? It's easy, just hop on and pedal. You never forget. But having a few extra skills can help sometimes. How many of these things can you do easily and confidently? Just to keep you challenged, a second more advanced skill is given for every item as well - don't try any of these in the traffic though until you are sure of your skills.

1. Can you...

- (a) ride along a straight painted line on the road without deviating?
- (a) follow the line around some bends?

2. Can you...

- (a) drink from your water bottle while riding along without wobbling?
- (a) do this with either hand?

3. Can you...

- (a) turn around and check whether there are cars behind you, without wobbling?
- (a) do this over either shoulder?

4. Can you...

- (a) do a hill start on really steep hill?
- (a) do this on a gravel road?

5. Can you...

- (a) brake and signal a right hand turn at the same time?
- (a) do this going down a steep hill?

6. Can you...

- (a) brake really really quickly for traffic lights without locking up your wheels?
- (a) do this and change down to a low gear ready to start again?

7. Can you...

- (a) ride between two obstacles only just wider than your handlebars?
- (a) still do this if the constriction was 20 metres long?

8. Can you...

- (a) ride down over a footpath kerb confidently?
- (a) then ride up the kerb again to the footpath?

9. Can you...

- (a) come to a halt and then move off again without putting your foot down?
- (a) balance in one place for 20 seconds without putting your feet on the ground?

10. Can you...

- (a) ride with no hands and still balance your bike?
- (a) do this and continue around corners? (Don't try this on a public road, see Australian Road Rule 245(b).)

If you can't do all these things, then a little bit of practice can go a long way. If you want some advice ask an experienced hand at the next Bike North weekend ride.

Riding & Touring

Nutrition Fact Sheets

Debbie Edwards, Dietitian

A range of excellent and well researched nutrition information sheets are available from the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) website www.ais.org.au/nutrition. The information has been developed by the Sports Dietitians from the Department of Sports Nutrition at the AIS in Canberra.

There are about twenty of these sheets providing sensible and easy to read information, nutritional analysis and comparisons of a wide range of foods and fluids commonly consumed by sports people as well as information about how to incorporate these into everyday meal and fluid intakes.

The "Nutrition Facts For The Fittest" sheets cover a wide range of topics including:

- Carbohydrates - are you getting enough?
- Fluids - Who Needs It?
- Eating Before Exercise
- Sports Bars
- How much do athletes sweat?
- Cramps and Stitch
- Supplements in sport
- Protein - are you getting enough?

It is well worth visiting this site for information if you are planning to:

- increase your level of riding and fitness by doing the longer and harder rides,
- ride in events such as Cycle Sydney, The Gong Ride, and Around the Bay in a Day
- do Tour de Cowra for the first time
- cycle tour or just want a good source of accurate and up-to-date information on nutrition for sports.

My Accidental View of Le Tour

Stephen Hillier

In April my wife Denise decided it was time she visited Europe, not all of it of course, but a few of the more interesting parts. We decided to try and get at least one Qantas seat via frequent flyer points. The search resulted in Paris being the only destination available in Europe during the July school holidays (Denise is a teacher). The first departure date available was July 4, an interesting date for Americans but otherwise of no particular interest to us. The booking was made.

Weeks later I was looking on the Internet for information on the progress of the Giro Italia and I started thinking about the Tour de France and its starting dates etc. To my amazement, it was due to start the day we were to arrive in Paris. Wow!

I mentioned this to Denise, she was genuinely pleased by the coincidence and we agreed that we would try and get to the prologue and perhaps even watch the race as

it passed through Paris on the following day.

Arriving in Paris early on Saturday morning (July 5) we headed for our hotel in the Les Halles area via the RER train service. There were a few obstacles



along the way, like bomb scares and train station turnstiles that were not designed for people with suitcases - but we finally made it around 9:00 am. As check-in wasn't until 3:00 pm we left our luggage at the hotel and began our Paris adventure.

Using our Metro and Museum passes, we slowly made our way to the Eiffel Tower (the starting point of the 2003 Tour de France) via the Louvre and other fascinating Parisian diversions.



We arrived in time for the start of the Prologue, but were surprised at how low-key the event was. Yes, there was a compound for the sponsors under the tower and two L'Equipe vans selling "show bags" but that was it. No big banners flying, no helicopters, no free handouts, other than hot coffee on a humid 30 degree day. The starting platform was placed on the Pont d'Iena which crosses the Seine between the tower and the Trocadero. Great location, but it was very crowded and hot.

After waiting for 45 mins we saw the first riders depart and decided that, seeing as our feet were tired and we didn't have much water left, it was time to beat a retreat to our hotel. There we found air-conditioned comfort and live TV coverage of the continuing Prologue. We were a little disappointed that we didn't see Brad McGee on his way to his win, but we were really excited at being Australians in Paris on a day when Australia seemed to be on everyone's lips. In fact, thanks to Brad, Baden Cooke and Robbie McEwen this continued for quite a few days.

After a very interesting evening in Les Halles, where we finally ate dinner at around 1:00 am, we were up relatively early and headed off in the general direction of the Boulevard Beaumarchais. This was one of the roads that formed the route of Le Tour on the actual Day 1. It was only about 1.75 km away but



it took us about two and a half hours as we wandered through a fascinating but quiet part of Paris. We walked past some amazing buildings (that turned out to be apartment blocks), cosy little markets, pretty little parks, museums, galleries, buildings about to fall into the street and beautiful old stately homes. In other words, just a normal Parisian suburb.

When we reached Boulevard Beaumarchais the riders were still about half an hour away and the road was about to be closed. We found a little café, ordered coffee and ended up sitting next to an interesting American couple that had no idea what was going on. In fact there were many tourists and Parisians who had no idea why the street was being closed.

When the road was finally closed the procession began, or should I say the "caravan" arrived. For over 20 minutes "official" cars made their way down the boulevard, so many in fact that it looked like peak hour. Well, not quite, but it was amazing how many Fiats and Lancias they had put Tour de France stickers on!

Finally the riders appeared in the distance. I got

out my large Australian flag and waved it as they approached.

Brad McGee as the holder of the Yellow jersey (after his Prologue time trial win) was given the honour of leading the field. This was a non-competitive

section so the guys were just cruising at about 20 km/h. As Brad approached he looked up at me and smiled. No doubt, it was only because he hadn't seen too many Aussie flags that morning but, whatever the reason, it sure made my day.

Within seconds the riders were gone and replaced by even more cars and the gaudy team buses. The cars behind the riders included the team cars carrying the spare bikes. What a bizarre looking vehicle they become, adorned as they are with their very expensive carbon fibre, rubber and aluminium toupees.

That should have been the end of the Tour de France for us, but it wasn't. Denise and I had chosen to visit a small French town called Troyes (160 km east of Paris) purely for the architecture and the food. The town turned out to be a departure town for Le Tour, unfortunately, on the day we too departed which meant we had to leave before the riders arrived. Even so, we witnessed the town preparing for the big day and we shared our hotel with race support staff and TV crew.

Over all, I would have to admit we didn't have the excitement of watching a truly competitive stage, or one of the epic mountain climbs, but for a couple who planned a trip to Europe without a thought for the Tour de France, we got a pretty good look at the major sporting event and the very mobile circus that is, Le Tour.



Note: All ride participants are asked to arrive ten minutes **before** the designated ride start time to get ready (bikes out of cars, get dressed, check tyres etc, etc.) and to allow time to sign on.

DECEMBER

Date: Sat 06/12/2003

Ride: Macdonald River Meander
 Grade: Medium, BNSW Grade: OU Distance: 44
 Group: Bike North
 Contact: Steve Hillier, 9899 5432
 Starts at: . Ferry Kiosk, Wisemans Ferry. Ride back through Wisemans and cross river via Webbs Creek ferry and then on to St Albans for coffee, via the western side of the Macdonald River. Bring your own cakes etc. Ride back to Wisemans on the eastern side of the Macdonald and the Wisemans Ferry. This very picturesque ride is 50% dirt road, hybrid & mountain bikes only. Call prior to ride for transport assistance or if raining.

Date: Sun 07/12/2003

Ride: Christmas Brunch
 Grade: Easy Medium, BNSW Grade: Nul Distance: 15
 Group: Bike North
 Contact: Bike North Special event,
 Starts at: . We are again going to have a BYO picnic brunch at Auluba Reserve cnr Vernon St and Kissing Point Rd, South Turrumurra. The park has grass, some shade, kiddies playthings and toilets. Bring everything that you need for a picnic brunch (there are Kissing Pt Rd shops just up the road though), and a bit of fun. Once at the park we will spend time eating, drinking and socialising, and just being at our leisure. Decorate your bike, if you wish, and get into Christmas mode. We are running a number of easy/medium rides from different directions (Hornsby, Meadowbank, Chatswood, Carlingford) to help everyone get there. All rides will pick up along the way so contact the ride leader for times and places where you can join on.

Date: Sat 13/12/2003

Ride: Olympic Park Ride
 Grade: Easy, BNSW Grade: CPS Distance: 25
 Group: Bike North
 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: Sat 13/12/2003

Ride: Brooklyn Brunch
 Grade: Hard, BNSW Grade: OTH Distance: 91
 Group: Bike North
 Contact: Doug Stewart, 9887 1478
 Starts at: 06:30. Eastwood stn east side. Ride to Turrumurra, Bobbin Head, Mt Colah and Brooklyn for brunch, returning via Cowan, Hornsby and Turrumurra. Fit and experienced riders only, but medium paced, av 20kph.

Date: Sun 14/12/2003

Ride: Further Down 'n' out? Then up 'n' back!
 Grade: Medium, BNSW Grade: OTX Distance: 61
 Group: Bike North
 Contact: Keith and Fran Griffin, 9614 0777
 Starts at: 07:00. 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, Guildford, Merrylands, Lidcombe, Strathfield, Meadowbank, Maquarie Park

Date: Sun 14/12/2003

Ride: Botany Bay Bacon
 Grade: Medium, BNSW Grade: OP Distance: 65
 Group: Bike North
 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 20/12/2003

Ride: Meadowbank to Bobbin Head
 Grade: Medium, BNSW Grade: OHT Distance: 49
 Group: Bike North
 Contact: Doug Stewart, 9887 1478

Starts at: 06:30. 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 Turrumurra, and on to the peaceful waters of Bobbin Head for coffee and return.

Date: Sat 20/12/2003

Ride: Christmas Lights by Bike Lights
 Grade: Easy, BNSW Grade: Nul Distance: 30
 Group: Bike North
 Contact: Kevin Mason, 9868 2904
 Starts at: 18:30. Meadowbank Wharf. Ride through Concord via John Whitton bridge to Halliday Park Five Dock where we will have a byo picnic dinner in the park at dusk. Marvel at the array of lights in the immediate vicinity before regrouping to return to Meadowbank a similar way. Bike Lights Essential

Date: Sun 21/12/2003

Ride: Pie in the Sky
 Grade: Medium, BNSW Grade: OTW Distance: 38
 Group: Bike North
 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.

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

Date: Sun 21/12/2003

Ride: Bays and Foreshores
 Grade: Easy Medium, BNSW Grade: PST Distance: 33
 Group: Bike North
 Contact: Pam and Col Kendrick, 9872 2583
 Starts at: 07:30. Meadowbank Wharf . Ride to Gladesville Bridge, then follow the bays and foreshores around to Concord for a coffee stop.

Date: Sun 21/12/2003

Ride: Brekkie at Bayview Marina and Brunch at Akuna Bay
 Grade: Hard, BNSW Grade: FXH Distance: 95
 Group: Bike North
 Contact: Phil Johnston, 9312 3319
 Starts at: 06:30. Starts at St Ives car park Mona Vale Rd [opposite Stanley St.], via Duffy Forest, West Head, with Brekkie at Bayview Marina Café. Return straight to St Ives [85km - ETR 12:10pm] . Or via Akuna Bay for Brunch, thence St Ives [95km - ETR 1:45pm].

Date: Fri 26/12/2003

Ride: Yacht Race Ride
 Grade: Easy Medium, BNSW Grade: OHT Distance: 25
 Group: Bike North
 Contact: Joan Kerridge, 9909 8925
 Starts at: 10:30. St Leonards station concourse. Take the scenic route via Spit bridge to Tania Park at Seaforth for a BYO picnic lunch to see the yachts heading to Hobart.

Date: Sun 28/12/2003

Ride: Northern Beaches and Back Roads - Hare
 Grade: Medium Hard, BNSW Grade: FHX Distance: 75
 Group: Bike North
 Contact: Malcolm Hart, 9713 1994
 Starts at: 07:00. Turrumurra Stn east side. Ride via Terry Hills, Church Point to Mona Vale, then follow the coast to Manly for stunning views and coffee. Ferry to the Quay then ride to Turrumurra via cycleways, Lane Cove NP, M2 and Brown's Waterhole. Many variations available. Some hills and traffic. For fit and experienced riders.

Date: Sun 28/12/2003
Ride: Northern Beaches and Back Roads (tortoise)
Grade: Medium, BNSW Grade: OHX Distance: 45
Group: Bike North
Contact: John Williams, 9988 4478
Starts at: 07:00. Turramurra Stn east side. Ride via Terry Hills, Church Point to Mona Vale, then follow the coast to Manly for stunning views and coffee. Ferry to the Quay then train back to Turramurra. Some hills and traffic but at a moderate pace.

JANUARY 2004

Date: Sat 03/01/2004
Ride: Twilight on the Harbour
Grade: Medium, BNSW Grade: OTH Distance: 35
Group: Bike North
Contact: Joan Kerridge, 9909 8925
Starts at: 17:00. St Leonards Stn west side. Ride the back roads and cycle ways to Manly and North Head for a BYO picnic dinner while watching the sunset. Then to Manly wharf for a sparkling harbour ferry crossing to the Quay before returning to St Leonards via the Bridge. Bike lights essential.

Date: Sun 04/01/2004
Ride: Parramatta Park Parade
Grade: Easy, BNSW Grade: CPS Distance: 25
Group: Bike North
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: Sat 10/01/2004
Ride: Olympic Park Ride
Grade: Easy, BNSW Grade: CPS Distance: 25
Group: Bike North
Contact: Carolyn New, 9438 1903
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 11/01/2004
Ride: Akuna Bay and Church Point
Grade: Hard, BNSW Grade: FHX Distance: 77
Group: Bike North
Contact: Doug Stewart, 9887 1478
Starts at: 06:30. 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 Turramurra. A hilly ride at a brisk pace.

Date: Sun 11/01/2004
Ride: Go Wollongong Wandering
Grade: Easy Medium, BNSW Grade: OP Distance: 50
Group: Bike North
Contact: John Williams, 9988 4478
Starts at: . Travel by train to Thirroul for a fairly flat, very scenic coastal ride to Oak Flats, mostly on cycle ways. Lunch at historic Windang Bowling Club. Phone for details.

Date: Sat 17/01/2004
Ride: Pie in the Sky
Grade: Medium, BNSW Grade: OTW Distance: 38
Group: Bike North
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: Sun 18/01/2004
Ride: Botany Bay Bacon
Grade: Medium, BNSW Grade: OP Distance: 65
Group: Bike North
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 18/01/2004

Ride: Willoughby Wander
Grade: Easy, BNSW Grade: SEW Distance: 20
Group: Bike North
Contact: Carolyn New, 9438 1903
Starts at: 07:30. Starts from Chatswood Station, west side. Showcases the natural and historic highlights of the City of Willoughby. Mixture of cycleways through parks and quiet backroads. Walkable hill at Harold Reid Reserve.

Date: Sat 24/01/2004
Ride: Concord for Cake
Grade: Easy, BNSW Grade: PST Distance: 26
Group: Bike North
Contact: Michael Chow, 9874 1461
Starts at: 08:00. 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 25/01/2004
Ride: Eastwood to Bobbin Head
Grade: Medium, BNSW Grade: OHT Distance: 40
Group: Bike North
Contact: Keith and Fran Griffin, 9614 0777
Starts at: 18:00. Eastwood stn, west side. A few hills in Browns Waterhole, then to Turramurra, and on to the peaceful waters of Bobbin Head for coffee and return. Bike lights essential!

FEBRUARY

Date: Sun 1/2/04
Ride: Triple S Ride
Grade: Medium Distance: 55
Group: Bike North
Contact: Joan Kerridge 9909 8925
Starts at: 7:30am. St Leonards stn concourse. Cycle North Shore bike routes and quiet roads to Spit Bridge and Seaforth. (hills? - yes). Follow Wakehurst Parkway to coast, then cycle paths around Narrabeen Lake (2km dirt) to Dee Why for coffee/brunch. Return by ferry to Quay and ride via Harbour Bridge to start.

BNSW GRADINGS

Slow, mOderate, Fast, Easy, Child friendly, some Traffic, cycle Paths, cycleWays, significant Hills, eXperienced riders, Unsealed or dirt roads, Mountain bikes

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, tyre 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.