



## Contents

10 Years of Bike North	1
Congratulations to John Watts	5
Census Day is coming soon	5
Rides Calendar	6

## 10 Years of Bike North

### a conversation with the founding members

*To mark our 10th anniversary, current President, Graeme Edwards spoke to a range of the Bike North founding members about how it all started.*

### How did you come to be a cyclist?



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### Sydney to the 'Gong, 1996

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.

**John Watts** JW: When I retired in 1986, the Company gave me a retirement gift of a bicycle. The choice was mine but everyone thought I was nuts! I wanted to get back into cycling after being a petrol-head for some 35 years.

**Sue Saczko** SS: I had hurt my knee at squash and when the doctor said: "Ride a bike" I said: "I just want to get fit, I don't want to DIE!!" Needless to say, actually going on a Big Ride was pretty scary for me, especially on a twitchy little road bike, which I had just bought, and a great adventure. I was a pretty shaky new rider.

**Doug Stewart** DS: Not one to go in half measures Sue had bought a custom road bike which was a beautiful machine which she took straight to the Big Ride. However we never saw it much

because she didn't feel comfortable on it. She bought a top end Trek MTB which she liked much better. And of course there was the ill fated Cannondale Tourer which didn't make the grade either.

**David Durney DD:** My family has always had a bit of a bike culture.

### How did you come to get involved in the inaugural Bike North meeting?

**DS:** There was a note left by an un-known (at the time) person on my bicycle parked outside a building at Macquarie University where I work. Sounded like a good idea to me as I had previously written to Ryde Council with suggestions for routes to be included in the bike plan.



Cycle Sydney, 1997

about doing something more about getting better cycle paths,

**DS:** Just coincidentally at the time BNSW held one of their last Advocacy Workshops which covered how to do Advocacy, set up a BUG etc.

**Neil Tonkin NT:** I got together with Doug, Michael, John Watts and Sue Sazco and we felt that there were many cyclists on the north shore who did not seem connected by a common BUG, so we trawled the BNSW database, made contact with them and

got a good response.

**Craig Grimmond CG:** There was a small article in Push On regarding the Macquarie Uni working group suggesting that people

discuss things further. We then got together at Sue's house and thought it would be a good idea to see if we could get more people interested so we set up a meeting. I don't remember how we advertised the meeting but the first meeting was well attended with approx 12 people and Bike North was formed.

**Michael Chow MC:** At the time, I was a roadie and was sick of being abused, and having things thrown at me, by people in cars while I was riding.

I went to a BNSW advocacy work shop conducted by Eva Gerencer (BNSW advocacy officer) and Warren Salomon (BNSW president). There, I met Neil Tonkin and Sue Sazco, who told me that they were about to form a BUG - and the rest is history.

**Mark Grimmond MG:** My brother Craig and



Christmas, 1997

**DD:** I heard about Neil Tonkin through my daughter at Macquarie University and, being the kind of charismatic person that he was, and saying the sorts of things about the need for greater provision for cycling that we already believed in, he got us interested.

**Gus Gulson GG:** I don't remember exactly how I got involved, but maybe Andrew Durney invited me or perhaps Neil Tonkin. I was living in Epping at the time and so were they.

**SS:** Neil Tonkin, me, Tony Evans and Dr. Ian Davies met on my first BIG RIDE. Anyway, over a few drinks, I, as the world's woosiest

cyclist, suggested that we should have more bike paths, and that a track along the rail line would help me ride to work in North Sydney from Wahroonga. We all got excited



Cycle Sydney, 2000

contact Neil Tonkin who had been working on the Macquarie Uni cycle facilities. I phoned Neil and we got on very well. Neil talked about having discussions with Sue Sazco and suggested that we get together and

I were regularly commuting by bike to work. Craig had been talking to Neil Tonkin, I can't remember how that came about, and we heard about Sue's idea for a rail trail. Since this would have made our commutes easy,

we were interested and when the talk of a meeting came up we were in.

**DS:** At that meeting at Wahroonga at Sue's House were Neil, Michael Chow, Craig Grimmond and others. Neil was living at North Epping, Michael at Eastwood and Craig at Hornsby Heights. They lived in two adjoining Councils with Neil on the Boundary. They decided to join together covering Ryde and Hornsby. Sue was in Wahroonga and that involved Ku-ring-gai. Neil was quite aware of BNSW and their free legal advisor was Ron Gouder. Ron lived in Hunters Hill and that gave a person in that area. Thus the four council areas concept was born, both due to individual interests and a "BUG Black Hole" in the BNSW network. Many others who were involved at the first meeting or soon after were at Macquarie Uni such as Leslie Inglis and David Durney. David's son, Andrew and daughter Andrea came via David's involvement. I'm pretty sure Michael Chow involved his dentist from Epping (David Argent) while Craig Grimmond brought along his brother Mark. I brought along a work colleague from previous times Bruce Campbell who was riding with me on Saturdays. An early link, although not at the first few meetings was between Tony Evans and Alister Sharp from the CSIRO. Also involved was Peter Blaxland, who lived up north and knew people in the Hornsby area.

**SS:** I think there were around about 11 people there for the first meeting.

**DS:** Our Wahroonga member on the Ku-ring-gai council committee was John Watts. John was, and still is on the Ku-ring-gai Council Traffic Committee as a representative of BNSW. This is quite unusual as no-one else in BN is on a Council Traffic Committee which is always dominated by the police, the RTA and Council. We also had some contact with Russ Webber from North Sydney Bike Group.

### What were your goals for Bike North in that first year?

**MC:** Neil knew about the Macquarie Park regional bike plans and Sue wanted to have a rail trail built along the North Shore line. But, other than that, I don't think anyone necessarily had any goals for BN in that first year. I think it was just a collection of people

who wanted to try to make conditions better for cyclists in their area.

**NT:** My goals were: the Rail trails, applying pressure to Ryde, Hunters Hill, Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai Council to start implementing their bike plans, and starting up a rides program.

**DS:** The first meeting and subsequent ones were really energetic as we all got to know each other and described what we wanted from the group. We all met in a big circle of chairs in the front room of Sue's house in Kokoda Ave Wahroonga. I'm not sure off hand how many meetings we had at Sue's but we certainly got started there and met over many months. My recollection of our goals is that we wanted to:

- a grow a large membership
- b create good communication within the group
- c rides (as a mechanism to bring cyclists together)
- d do advocacy: especially to improve and promote the rail trail concept
- e create local advocacy groups

**SS:** We wanted to be more proactive and get more people like me riding bikes. Especially women... on that first Big Ride I did there were three guys for every one gal. So we wanted to run rides to encourage all sorts of people. We wanted to get more cycle paths for beginners and people like me. Doug had ideas for easy rides and bike maintenance. We used all the existing paths we could find, like at Bicentennial Park, along the Cooks River etc. We also wanted to get close to the councils and see what could be achieved. I remember Michael Chow came on board early. It was great to have a lawyer in the group.

**DS:** Within the first year we had established the prototypes of much of the infrastructure that we enjoy now as members of BN, some ten years on. The rules that we adopted were the model rules of BNSW. I think that Michael Chow went through the rules with us. We decided to fill an executive as per those rules with some differences. The rules specified President, Secretary/Treasurer, Rides Coordinator. Due to Neil's expertise as an accountant we combined President/Treasurer with Neil, Secretary was Sue.

We also decided we needed to publicise our new BUG via a pamphlet. I had some computer skills and so volunteered for this job, which because the Executive position of Publicity Officer. We filled the role of Ride Coordinator with Bruce Campbell (at my insistence) as it was in the rules and then decided to create the first rides program. It turned out that various people already did regular rides and they were put in the program. The first program was 4th quarter 1996 and had rides by Mark Grimmond, Mark Waugh, Neil Tonkin/Tony Evans, Ron Gouder and myself. Mark Waugh did the "block" every weekend and I also rode every Saturday so putting the ride on wasn't a big deal.

**GG:** One of our main goals was about the creation of more bike lanes/tracks. I did a bit of work with Michael Chow looking at the route for the proposed rail track between Meadowbank and Hornsby: we rode along there, checking out the terrain etc.

**DD:** My goals in the first year were to work on the Logo and attend a number of functions.

**SS:** I happened to live next door to Peter Crawford who helped us get an interview with Bob Carr, and Mick Watts, a friend from Uni, who worked at the railways gave us lots of contact names. I was a pretty good networker. You need people who are prepared to get on the phone. In the early days we met Brendan Nelson who was a supporter of the rail trail idea. A whole stack of us showed up at a meeting at his office. It turned out that his PA had a best school friend who had been killed cycling along the footpath, when a car reversed out of a drive. She was committed to helping us. It is all about personal experiences. Unexpected people related to what we were trying to do.

**JW:** We made the presentation to local member, Brendan Nelson on 1 April 1996 (I still have a copy) showing the benefits of cycling, current ownership and usage, potential bicycle usage, the future of car transport, overseas, interstate and local developments, the National Bicycle Strategy and our vision for the future. This was heady stuff! I seem to recall it was well received although the issues are much the same today.

**DS:** Sue is right to pin point that the people and links were the key. They got us many hearings but no real commitment to the Rail Trail concept at the time. However the concept did emerge in Bike Plan 2010 three years later so someone was listening.

**SS:** We heard about what was going on in other countries and other cities and didn't see why Sydney should be so backward with cycling. We wanted to just generally making cycling more accessible for the average person.

**DS:** Yes this was important to see those overseas examples. Very motivating.

**SS:** There were few bike lanes in Sydney at all and very few people rode to work. There was a lot of angst against cyclists on the roads.. there still is. Maybe even worse now. We wanted to see if we could get enough people together to cycle to the city regularly (normal people, not the road warriors). The Grimmond brothers from Hornsby were keen members and good riders. We made a Bike Bus. ( I recently heard about the bike bus idea going well via the radio.. well done!!) ...we started that!!

**DS:** Yes, I heard the same reference on the Radio. It was an interview on ABC breakfast program where a reporter rode along with the Marrickville Bike Bus. Fiona Campbell mentioned that the concept had started with Bike North, although she admitted that ours was different. We went the highway and she goes the back roads. I guess that is something that I am proud about Bike North, the Bike Bus is a great concept and needs to come back.

**CG:** As a commuter cyclist better on road facilities and more people riding.

**MG:** I didn't really have any goals for Bike North as such. It was just great to meet other people that shared similar ideas.

**SS:** Weekend recreational riders also struggled. Once you got up to St Ives there was a lane. Shortly after that they put a bit

extra in at Frenchs Forest. Nothing was connected. Just bits and pieces here and there that made riding on the roads too hard for the inexperienced or fearful. We got out and took photos of poor cycling conditions and gave them to the council to make a case. The police seemed to be interested in helping for a while. The RTA always seemed to be the biggest stumbling block, not interested really, just interested in the car. We tried to build relationships where we could.

**DS:** In terms of rides, I was familiar with the easy territory for cycling along the rivers. We also referred to the original Cycling around Sydney books. I certainly wasn't fit enough to do the hard rides we do today. I ran rides which regrouped all the time and

Patisserie, Brighton food hall, we tried lots of others before we settled on the best ones which suited group rides with bike parking. I remember when we got 20 people on a ride to Duck River it just became a nightmare because of the different fitness levels and paces. We had to come up with a system to deal with the problem so I introduced ride sweeps. Some time later I introduced the concept of "signposts" which made almost any size group manageable by just two people.

The bikes all seemed to be crappy then as well and we spent lots of time on maintenance. I would always come back with greasy black hands.

Ride	Leader	Date first run
Hornsby to Cowan	Mark Grimmond	October 1996
Hornsby to Bobbin Head	Mark Grimmond	October 1996
Epping to Bicentennial Park	Doug Stewart	October 1996
Epping to Parramatta Valley Cycleway	Doug Stewart	October 1996
Hornsby – Berowra – Galston – Hornsby	Mark Waugh	October 1996
Hornsby – Mona Vale – Hornsby	Mark Waugh	October 1996
Lane Cove River Valley – MTB	Neil Tonkin, Tony Evans	October 1996
Hunters Hill – Parramatta	Ron Gouder	October 1996
Faulconbridge – Berowra	Ron Gouder	20 Oct 1996
Eastwood – Cooks River Ride	Doug Stewart	15 Mar 1997
Eastwood – Duck River Ride	Doug Stewart	29 Mar 1997
Cowan – Calga	Tony Evans	20 Apr 1997
Easy ride starts moved to Meadowbank wharf	Doug Stewart, Bruce Campbell	24 May 97
Eastwood – Akuna Bay	Doug Stewart	2 Aug 1997
Eastwood – End of the M2	Doug Stewart	16 Aug 1997
Eastwood – Iron Cove – Concord Eastwood	Doug Stewart	6 Sep 1997
Pymble – West Head – Akuna Bay – Pymble	John Miller	14 Sep 1997
Turramurra – Church Point – Turramurra	Sue Saczko	11 Oct 1997
Pymble – Circular Quay – ferry to Parramatta – Meadowbank – Turramurra – Pymble	John Miller	12 Oct 1997
Eastwood – City – via north shore – return	Paul Williamson	25 Oct 1997
Wahroonga – Historic houses	Sue Saczko	26 Oct 1997
Windsor – Wyong (2 day with camping)	Wayne Spencer	15-16 Nov 1997

were very supportive. For the first couple of years I took along a thermos and one of the other guy's daughters used to cook pikelets for her pocket money. We just stopped in parks and had a good time with chats, jokes etc. When the groups starting getting bigger some people dropped off because they lost that really personal touch. We started to stop at coffee shops mid-ride. We found the Wharf Cafe at Parramatta, Le Palme

To give you a feel for how our rides started out, I looked back through the rides calendars and Push Ons and I have noted the first time that we headed to a destination even if the starting point changed later on. (see table)

**SS:** At the time Bike NSW was the only advocating body, and there were a few bike groups around, but not strong ones.

**DS:** We knew of other BUGS particularly CAMWest, Western Area Pedal Pushers, NSBG and Leichhardt BUG. I don't think we knew about MASSBUG or whether it existed at the very start.

**SS:** Critical Mass was just starting out... creating havoc in the city and on the bridge to make a point. It seemed to be necessary.

**DS:** Quite a few people went on CM rides. I recall meeting Michael Chow in the City on many occasions. I usually rode in. CM was a lot of fun and they were following the American West Coast model. Exciting times! They started to get into discussions with the RTA who really didn't want more harbour bridge closures on Friday nights. CM put out their 4-link plan which was just lines on the Sydney map as to where they would like to see a cycle network. I think as a response to this and the threats that Bike Plan 2010 was released in 1999. Additionally the RTA established their Bicycle and Pedestrian Branch. There was a bit of consultation that BN were involved in at BNSW.

**SS:** The North Shore people were trying for the bike path from Artarmon. I especially wanted something to help people stay off the Pacific Highway going up to Wahroonga/Turrumurra. There was no way I was going to ride on that, and I never have.

**DS:** There was never any good way to get from North Sydney to Wahroonga except the rail easement, and we tried consultation. The interesting part about the Rail Trail Project was that in the early days we investigated a whole lot of options. I and a couple of others surveyed the Main North line from Concord to Hornsby and by the time we put in our major submission it was for both railway lines.

**SS:** I really wanted to get a path by the rail line for the north shore. It is such a hilly environment that no one but the very fit can cope with those roads. That hardly encourages the beginner at all. Doug and I did a presentation at a State Government committee to try to get funding to get our proposal for the rail cycle path up and running. It fell on deaf ears though.

**DS:** A petition was presented to John Watkins on the steps of parliament. We looked at corporate sponsorship and had a few people interested in that but it never took off. Susie Gemmell had taken over

the project by then and we had a few think tanks. One problem was that we had more thinkers than doers! Few were willing to take on an active role. A more professional web site was established just for the Rail Trail and we started the postcard campaign.

On Monday 21 April 1997 we addressed a House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts: Inquiry into funding of Community Sporting and Recreational Facilities. Speakers for Bike North were Sue Saczko, John Watts and Doug Stewart. We claimed that a Rail Trail would be a great sports investment. I recall that others were asking for things like lights for their tennis court.

The trouble with our strategies at that stage (and no different now) is that they fell between the definitions. We made an argument based on "Pedalling Health" but the health people said it was sport. The sport people said it was transport. The transport people didn't want to know anything because we are not the main game.

**SS:** Doug carried our campaign to Ryde and Eastwood, and we moved over in that direction.

**DS:** While I was always an active member of the Ryde Working Group I was not the convenor until recently. First Michael Chow, then Wayne Spencer held the reins. In Ryde we didn't have a regular meeting with Council and we dealt with Barry Hodge who was the engineer in charge of major works. He was happy to work with us to build things.

**SS:** Neil got very serious and soon we were all at the Bike NSW meetings trying to make a point. We looked to find people that would lobby all the surrounding councils and get things going. Peter Blaxland tried to do a lot in Hornsby. We all went along to see North Sydney Council, and Doug made great inroads in Ryde. In some ways our early noise and success made it easier for other bike groups.

We got a strategy going for starting a bike group. We were new and we were lucky that the people in our group were committed and well organised, and prepared to speak intelligently and fairly calmly about the issues and tried to get things done by talking and in a spirit of cooperation which seemed to

## Congratulations to John Watts

On the Queen's Birthday holiday, John Watts was awarded OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia) for service to the community through bicycle and road safety education programs for children.

John has been the representative for Bicycle NSW on the Ku-ring-gai Council Traffic Committee since before Bike North existed, he has stepped into the breach in Ku-ring-gai several times (as he is doing again right now) despite his retirement from such activities and was instrumental in the setup and maintenance of the CARES facility at St



Ives. CARES are run by the Police and provides an environment where school children participate in a one-day bicycle/road safety session including bicycle skills and maintenance.

Well done and well deserved John - from all your friends at Bike North.

## Census Day is coming soon

How will you get to work on **Tuesday August 8th?**

Every five years the Census provides a snapshot of the characteristics and activities of the Australian community. The 2001 census provided the evidence that the number and proportion of people cycling to work is on the increase for inner Sydney residences and workplaces like North Sydney. Will you contribute to that cycling count in the 2006 Census?

**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.**

## AUGUST

**Date:** Tue 1/8/2006 **Ride:** Exec Meeting  
**Starts at:** 19:30. St Johns Anglican Church Hall, Coxs Road, Ryde

**Date:** Sat 5/8/2006 **Ride:** Beyond Barrenjoey  
**Grade:** Medium Hard, BNSW Grade: OTXH **Distance:** 60  
**Contact:** Peter Tuft, 9144 1325  
**Starts at:** 00:00. Medium hard ride from Turrumurra via back roads to Palm Beach, ferry across Broken Bay, superb scenery around Kilcare. Train from Woy Woy. Short gravel sections. Some hills, relaxed pace. CtoC

**Date:** Sat 5/8/2006 **Ride:** Pie in the Sky  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OTW **Distance:** 40  
**Contact:** Graeme Edwards, 9436 0969  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Hornsby Station west. Medium ride along Old Pacific Hwy to caf overlooking Brooklyn with great views. Back track to Hornsby. Moderate hills.

**Date:** Sun 6/8/2006 **Ride:** Fitness ride medium  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: O **Distance:** 1  
**Contact:** Fran Griffin, 9614 0777  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Call for all details including distance and pace.

**Date:** Sun 6/8/2006 **Ride:** St Leonards to North Head  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OHT **Distance:** 45  
**Contact:** Steve Hillier, 9899 5432  
**Starts at:** 07:30. St Leonards station concourse. Stretch those muscles on some north side hills - mostly on quiet roads and cycle paths through Beauty Point, over Spit bridge to Balgowlah and Manly. Admire the view from the coffee shop at North Head then return on a similar route.

**Date:** Sun 6/8/2006 **Ride:** Western Wander  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OPW **Distance:** 70  
**Contact:** Eric Middleton, 9958 2546  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Meadowbank wharf. Medium but relaxed paced ride via M4 c/p & Rail Trail to explore Prospect's canal routes. Coffee at Abbotsbury.

**Date:** Sun 6/8/2006 **Ride:** Concord for Cake  
**Grade:** Easy, BNSW Grade: PST **Distance:** 25  
**Contact:** Debbie Edwards, 9436 0969  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Meadowbank wharf. Easy ride along the PVC over Silverwater bridge to Olympic Park, then on to Concord for coffee. Return a different way.

**Date:** Tue 8/8/2006 **Ride:** Ryde Area Meeting  
**Starts at:** 19:30. Ryde Working Group meeting. Venue : Eastwood Women's Rest Centre, Hillview Rd Eastwood. (Near the station and just behind the Library.) Contact: ryde@bikenorth.org.au

**Date:** Sat 12/8/2006 **Ride:** Meadowbank to Bobbo  
**Grade:** Medium hard, BNSW Grade: OHT **Distance:** 50  
**Contact:** Doug Stewart, 9874 5594  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Meadowbank Wharf. Medium hard, hilly ride via Eastwood, Browns Waterhole, Turrumurra, & Bobbin Head. Coffee and return. Long climbs and descents.

**Date:** Sat 12/8/2006 **Ride:** Bobbo Tortoise  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OHT **Distance:** 40  
**Contact:** David Overall, 9874 2993  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Eastwood stn east. Medium, hilly ride at a relaxed pace via Browns Waterhole & Turrumurra to Bobbin Head. Long climbs & descents. Coffee stop included.

### WHAT TO BRING ON RIDES:

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

**Date:** Sat 12/8/2006 **Ride:** Wisemans Wander  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: O **Distance:** 50  
**Contact:** Fran Griffin, 9614 0777  
**Starts at:** 09:00. Wisemans Ferry Kiosk. Medium ride over undulating terrain at moderate pace to Spencer for coffee and return.

**Date:** Sun 13/8/2006 **Ride:** Motorway Madness  
**Grade:** Medium Hard, BNSW Grade: **Distance:** 80  
**Contact:** Scott Ratcliff, 0425 349 104  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Meadowbank wharf. Med / hard ride via Parramatta, Prospect Res. to cruise 20km on M7 c/p then M2 to Marsfield & Meadowbank. Includes coffee stop.

**Date:** Sun 13/8/2006 **Ride:** Parramatta Park Parade  
**Grade:** Easy Medium, BNSW Grade: PST **Distance:** 35  
**Contact:** Steve Hillier, 9899 5432  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Meadowbank Wharf. Easy/med ride along the PVC to Parramatta Park. Do a lap or two of the park before coffee, then return via M4 c/p.

**Date:** Sun 13/8/2006 **Ride:** Hills and Surfside  
**Grade:** Hard, BNSW Grade: FTH **Distance:** 80  
**Contact:** Malcolm Hart, 9713 1994  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Eastwood Stn east. Hard ride to Pymble, St Ives, Oxford Falls & Narrabeen. Return via Warriewood, Church Point, Terrey Hills & Turrumurra. Fit & experienced riders only.

**Date:** Sat 19/8/2006 **Ride:** Olympic Park Ride  
**Grade:** Easy, BNSW Grade: CPS **Distance:** 25  
**Contact:** Scott Ratcliff, 0425 349 104  
**Starts at:** 09:00. Meadowbank Wharf. Easy loop around Homebush Bay with a coffee stop. Suitable for beginners and children OVER 12 accompanied by an adult carer.

**Date:** Sat 19/8/2006 **Ride:** Fitness Ride for Women  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: FX **Distance:** 1  
**Contact:** Fran Griffin, 9614 0777  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Call for all details including distance and pace! Various routes, no coffee stop.

**Date:** Sat 19/8/2006 **Ride:** North to West Head  
**Grade:** Hard, BNSW Grade: FXTX **Distance:** 91  
**Contact:** Doug Stewart, 9874 5594  
**Starts at:** 07:00. Eastwood Stn east. Hard, hilly ride via Browns w/h, Terrey Hills, West Head, Akuna Bay (coffee). Return a similar route. Brisk pace.

**Date:** Sun 20/8/2006 **Ride:** Bike North Annual General Meeting  
**Grade:** Easy **Distance:** 15  
**Starts at:** 11:00. Bike North Members only. Bike North's Annual General Meeting contact Bike North for more details about this event.

**Date:** Sat 26/8/2006 **Ride:** Olympic Park Ride  
**Grade:** Easy, BNSW Grade: CPS **Distance:** 25  
**Contact:** Keith Griffin, 0414 187 427  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Meadowbank Wharf. Easy loop around Homebush Bay with a coffee stop. Suitable for beginners and children OVER 12 accompanied by an adult carer.

**Date:** Sat 26/8/2006 **Ride:** Western Explorer Max  
**Grade:** Medium Hard, BNSW Grade: FP **Distance:** 85  
**Contact:** Steve Hillier, 9899 5432  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Meadowbank wharf. Med/hard ride at brisk pace via M4 c/p and railtrail to Mirambeena Res, to Prospect Res canal routes with coffee at Abbotsbury.

**Date:** Sun 27/8/2006 **Ride:** There and Back  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OTH **Distance:** 55  
**Contact:** Joan Kerridge, 9909 8925  
**Starts at:** 07:30. St Leonards stn concourse. Medium ride via Spit Br, Wakehurst Pkwy, Forest Way and Mona Vale Rd for coffee at a nursery cafe and return.

**Date:** Sun 27/8/2006 **Ride:** Cowan to Peats Ridge  
**Grade:** Hard, BNSW Grade: FHX **Distance:** 80  
**Contact:** Fran Griffin, 9614 0777  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Cowan stn. Hard ride via Hawkesbury bridge to Peats Ridge. Coffee at Pie' on return leg.

**Date:** Sun 27/8/2006 **Ride:** Northern Beaches and Back Roads  
**Grade:** Medium Hard, BNSW Grade: FHXT **Distance:** 86  
**Contact:** Malcolm Hart, 9713 1994  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Eastwood Stn east. Medium/hard ride via Browns Waterhole, Turrumurra, Church Point to Manly for coffee. Ferry to Quay then to Eastwood via Lane Cove NP and M2. Fit and experienced riders only.

**Date:** Sun 27/8/2006 **Ride:** Big City Loop  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: O **Distance:** 60  
**Contact:** Scott Ratcliff, 0425 349 104  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Meadowbank Wharf. Cooks River Cycle Path, Mascot, Moore Park

Precinct, Return via southern CBD, Pyrmont and ANZAC Bridges before a well earned coffee break at Concord.

SEPTEMBER

**Date:** Sat 2/9/2006 **Ride:** Pittwater Circuit  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: STHU Distance: 45  
**Contact:** Robyn Tuft, 9144 1325  
**Starts at:** 00:00. McCarrs Creek Res. Relaxed medium ride circumnavigating Pittwater. Great scenery, a short ferry trip, some steep hills & section of gravel road. Hybrid & MTB only. CtC.

**Date:** Sat 2/9/2006 **Ride:** Concord for Cake  
**Grade:** Easy, BNSW Grade: PST Distance: 25  
**Contact:** Scott Ratcliff, 0425 349 104  
**Starts at:** 08:30. Meadowbank wharf. Easy ride along the PVC over Silverwater bridge to Olympic Park, then on to Concord for coffee. Return a different way.

**Date:** Sun 3/9/2006 **Ride:** Summer Hill Circle  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OPT Distance: 35  
**Contact:** Judy Engall, 0413 043 169  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Meadowbank wharf. Med ride via Concord, Five Dock, Hawthorne Canal c/p. Coffee at Summer Hill then complete the loop via Cooks R c/w.

**Date:** Sun 3/9/2006 **Ride:** Rooty Hill Rendezvous  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OPW Distance: 60  
**Contact:** Fran Griffin, 9614 0777  
**Starts at:** 08:30. Eastwood station, west side. Medium paced ride using M2, then M7 cycleway to Rooty Hill shops for coffee and return.

**Date:** Tue 5/9/2006 **Ride:** Exec Meeting  
**Starts at:** 19:30. St Johns Anglican Church Hall, Coxs Road, Ryde

**Date:** Sat 9/9/2006 **Ride:** Akuna Bay and Church Point  
**Grade:** Hard, BNSW Grade: FHX Distance: 80  
**Contact:** Doug Stewart, 9874 5594  
**Starts at:** 07:00. Eastwood Stn east. Hard, hilly ride via de Burghs Br, Pymble, Terrey Hills, Akuna Bay, Church Pt (coffee). Return via Turrumurra. Brisk pace.

**Date:** Sun 10/9/2006 **Ride:** Motorway Madness  
**Grade:** Medium Hard, BNSW Grade: Distance: 80  
**Contact:** Scott Ratcliff, 0425 349 104  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Meadowbank wharf. Med / hard ride via Parramatta, Prospect Res. to cruise 20km on M7 c/p then M2 to Marsfield & Meadowbank. Includes coffee stop.

**Date:** Sun 10/9/2006 **Ride:** Olympic Park Ride  
**Grade:** Easy, BNSW Grade: CPS Distance: 25  
**Contact:** Steve Hillier, 9899 5432  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Meadowbank Wharf. Easy loop around Homebush Bay with a coffee stop. Suitable for beginners and children OVER 12 accompanied by an adult carer.

**Date:** Sun 10/9/2006 **Ride:** Botany Bay Bacon  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OP Distance: 65  
**Contact:** Eric Middleton, 9958 2546  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Meadowbank wharf. Medium ride via the Cooks River c/w to Botany Bay. A refuel at our favourite cafe at Brighton, then return.

**Date:** Tue 12/9/2006 **Ride:** Ryde Area Meeting  
**Starts at:** 19:30. Ryde Working Group meeting. Venue : Eastwood Women's Rest Centre, Hillview Rd Eastwood. (Near the station and just behind the Library.) Contact: ryde@bikenorth.org.au

**Date:** Sat 16/9/2006 **Ride:** Wend Your Way to Wyong Hare  
**Grade:** Medium Hard, BNSW Grade: OHT Distance: 80  
**Contact:** Peter Tuft, 9144 1325  
**Starts at:** 08:15:00. Berowra stn. Medium hard ride at a relaxed pace. Long & hilly ride on country roads to Wyong via Peats Ridge and Yarramalong. Return by train.

**Date:** Sat 16/9/2006 **Ride:** Wend Your Way to Wyong Tortoise  
**Grade:** Medium Hard, BNSW Grade: OHT Distance: 80  
**Contact:** Robyn Tuft, 9144 1325  
**Starts at:** 07:45:00. Berowra stn. Medium hard ride at a slower pace than the hare version. Long & hilly ride on country roads to Wyong via Peats Ridge & Yarramalong. Ret by train.

**Date:** Sat 16/9/2006 **Ride:** Macdonald River Meander  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OU Distance: 45  
**Contact:** Steve Hillier, 9899 5432  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Wisemans Ferry Kiosk. Medium ride via Webbs Ck ferry to St Albans for coffee. Return on other side of river to ferry. 50% dirt road, hybrid & MTB only.

**Date:** Sun 17/9/2006 **Ride:** The Big Loop  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OTP Distance: 55  
**Contact:** Malcolm Hart, 9713 1994  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Eastwood stn west. Medium ride to M2, Winston Hills. Down to Parramatta for coffee. Return via M4 to Meadowbank & uphill to Eastwood.

**Date:** Sun 17/9/2006 **Ride:** Newington Ride for Women  
**Grade:** Easy, BNSW Grade: CPS Distance: 25  
**Contact:** Debbie Edwards, 9436 0969  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Meadowbank Wharf. Easy loop around Homebush Bay with a coffee stop. Suitable for women who want to get back in to cycling.rn'

**Date:** Sun 17/9/2006 **Ride:** A to Z and Beyond  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OTH Distance: 30  
**Contact:** Scott Ratcliff, 0425 349 104  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Artarmon Stn east. Med, hilly ride to Balmoral. After coffee climb to Middle Hd then to Zoo Wharf, ferry to Quay, ret. via Bridge & Nth Sydney.

**Date:** Sat 23/9/2006 **Ride:** Hawthorne Canal  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OPT Distance: 40  
**Contact:** Pam Kendrick, 9872 2583  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Meadowbank wharf. Medium ride via Cooks River c/p, to Marrickville, then Hawthorne Canal c/w stopping for coffee at Concord.

**Date:** Sat 23/9/2006 **Ride:** Pie in the Sky  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OTW Distance: 40  
**Contact:** Graeme Edwards, 9436 0969  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Hornsby Station west. Medium ride along Old Pacific Hwy to cafe overlooking Brooklyn with great views. Back track to Hornsby. Moderate hills.

**Date:** Sun 24/9/2006 **Ride:** Miss Australia Ride  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: STH Distance: 45  
**Contact:** Joan Kerridge, 9909 8925  
**Starts at:** 07:30. St Leonards stn concourse. Medium ride on quiet roads to Spit Bridge, then on to Tania Oval at Balgowlah Heights. On return visit Chowder Bay and Bradleys Head.

**Date:** Sun 24/9/2006 **Ride:** Concord for Cake  
**Grade:** Easy, BNSW Grade: PST Distance: 25  
**Contact:** Debbie Edwards, 9436 0969  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Meadowbank wharf. Easy ride along the PVC over Silverwater bridge to Olympic Park, then on to Concord for coffee. Return a different way.

**Date:** Sat 30/9/2006 **Ride:** Chester Hill Circuit  
**Grade:** EM, BNSW Grade: OTWX Distance: 50  
**Contact:** Steve Hillier, 9899 5432  
**Starts at:** 08:00. Meadowbank wharf. This medium ride will be replaced with another route, to be announced.

**Date:** Sat 30/9/2006 **Ride:** Meadowbank to Bobbo  
**Grade:** Medium hard, BNSW Grade: OHT Distance: 50  
**Contact:** Doug Stewart, 9874 5594  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Meadowbank Wharf. Medium hard, hilly ride via Eastwood, Browns Waterhole, Turrumurra, & Bobbin Head. Coffee and return. Long climbs and descents.

**Date:** Sat 30/9/2006 **Ride:** Bobbo Tortoise  
**Grade:** Medium, BNSW Grade: OHT Distance: 40  
**Contact:** David Overall, 9874 2993  
**Starts at:** 07:30. Eastwood stn east. Medium, hilly ride at a relaxed pace via Browns Waterhole & Turrumurra to Bobbin Head. Long climbs & descents. Coffee stop included.

**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 the registration, 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**  
 Riders under 16 should be accompanied by a cycling adult. A Standards Association of Australia approved helmet is legally required 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. 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.

work much better than what critical mass was doing. But it was slow.

Needless to say cyclists at the time were pretty angry. We were also lucky that we could access the Old Pacific Highway and places where you could really stretch your legs. We all got together to cycle up that way fairly regularly, and that was what I call a real ride. Easier to do it in a group, and heaps of fun.

**DS:** What Sue is referring to here is that the whole of BN, well those that were interested, did go on rides together. These rides were not the same as our current rides program which mainly caters to all and sundry who turn up. The rides Sue is referring to were just BN active people. I recall a couple on rural roads near Windsor or Wisemans Ferry. There were a few along the Highway to Cowan or Brooklyn. The rides built up a sense of camaraderie between those involved.

Actually it was a bit different back then to how things are now in BN. There were no Exec meetings. In the early days we just had meetings and everyone turned up. Sure, the office bearers had their roles, but everyone was invited and most active people turned up, especially the local coordinators. We had mostly active advocates in the meetings rather than just the Exec people.

**SS:** I guess because we had access to good riding country, (Old Pacific Highway and Big Rides) we knew how pleasurable good riding on roads could be. We also were fairly well informed about what other cities and countries had. We wanted better for ourselves and didn't see why we couldn't have it in Sydney. Where there is a will there is a way. We just had to find the people with the will, and band them together.

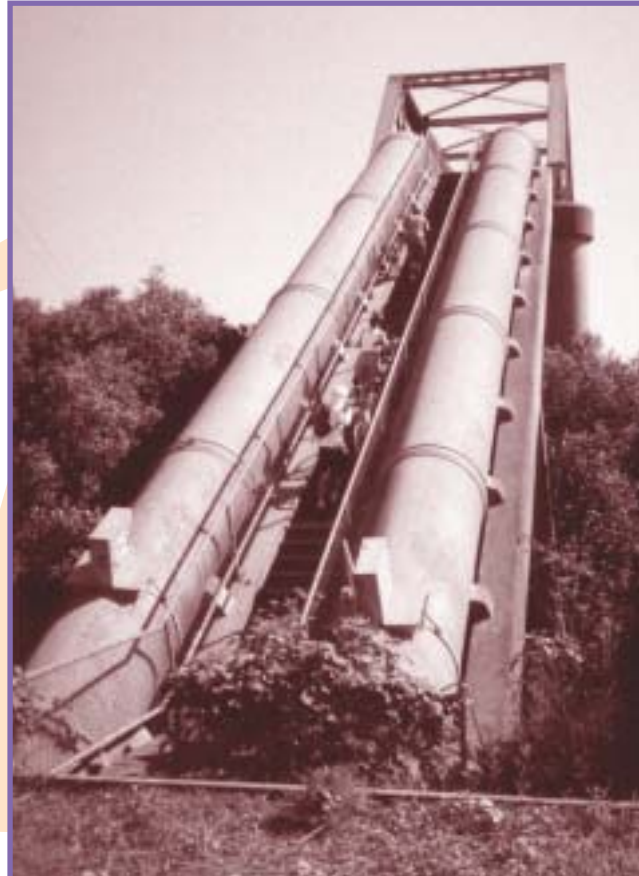
### What were your long-term goals for Bike North?

**NT:** I don't think I was sure at that stage about what the long-term might bring, probably more of the above.

**CG:** Long term it was about becoming a viable voice representing cyclists in the North Shore areas.

**SS:** We wanted to grow to have enough cyclists out there on the road to make a voice for cycling and to make the presence

on the roads felt. We wanted more people to be able to get out and enjoy the bike and feel that they could get around without risking their lives. We also wanted bike paths for those that didn't want to use the roads. We all felt that the benefits of the fun



Remember this? Thackeray St Bridge

and exercise would far outweigh the risks. We all believed that cycling is a feasible means of transport for individuals, more environmentally friendly and gives individual health benefits.

**DS:** Basically Sue has articulated our Ground Rules for Advocacy. The sentiments are no different to BN today, which shows that we haven't lost touch with our values. Perhaps BN needs to do some more strategic planning to decide what proportion of effort should go into each of our activities?

**SS:** We all believed that giving kids the mobility of bikes in a safe arena was a great idea for our whole community and we were prepared to lobby to do something about it. I guess we just wanted to spread the word, and believed that a mass of people who were like minded could do a good job of it. We tried to work with councils to get their support and use all the avenues available to us to make progress. Bike paths adjacent to

rail lines and highways that allowed some separation for the cyclist were long term goals.

**MG:** I hoped that BN would be able to influence decisions in the local council areas in which we chose to operate. I also hoped it would be able to achieve some commitment at a higher level to the Rail Trails project.

**GG:** At the time the bicycle was one of my main forms of transport, as I didn't have a driver's licence. The creation of better bicycling facilities and improving the lot of cyclists was generally what I hoped we'd do.

**SS:** In 2001 I went to Melbourne for a couple of years to work. I still don't see why someone in Sydney can't do what Jeff Kennett did for Melbourne and make this city more cyclist friendly. One morning walking along the Yarra to work I counted 100 cyclists going past in a 45 minute period. They even have bike paths suspended under highways. It looked easy enough to do.

When I was doing it, I found working with the rail people totally frustrating. We lost all the small windows of opportunity that seemed to be there (there was vacant land around Artarmon, and at Chatswood station, that could have been used for a bike path). The railways were so disorganised that they couldn't even tell us which bodies were the best ones to contact to get something heard. In the end, after a couple of years of trying, we were told to get our own feasibility study done and then it would be considered.

**DS:** No change there! The State Rail Authority, then Railcorp, then Rail Infrastructure Corporation all were not helpful. Ryde Council did manage to get a licence over the railway land at Darvall Park Eastwood and this seems to work well. The John Whitton Bridge happened later, but mainly at the prodding of the Rail's own heritage people who didn't want to lose the Bridge.

**SS:** We would have had to raise something like \$30,000 to do our own feasibility study. It became too hard and I got disheartened I must admit. Luckily others with more patience took up the cause.

**DS:** We did look to doing this feasibility study for the Rail Trail and that is when we wanted to get corporate sponsorship. We need engineers etc and that was probably do-able except we probably needed access to the rail land and cooperation. I think it still remains an option, to engage a transport consultancy to do the study. Dream on ...

**SS:** Later on, after I got preoccupied with other things, Carolyn New and Yaffa Gould did great work taking up the challenge. They have been monumental in keeping things going on that front. Carolyn has gone on to much bigger and better things I know. I think there is consideration of the opportunity now when new rail lines are made. I hope so.

**DS:** Yaffa was involved with BN quite early and took over the Rail Trail project when the postcards were on, from memory. Carolyn can tell her own story but when she joined she had enthusiasm and was keen to learn.

**DD:** I wanted to support wherever possible. However, due to pressure of work I was not able to continue in an active role.

**SS:** We also wanted to plan and carry out some weekends away so we could get the fun of the Big Ride and the fun of having days with our friends just cycling in the fresh country air with less traffic. This is a long term goal that has been achieved by BN. We did a ride around Bowral and Burrawang and it was great. We went out to Blayney and Millthorpe. Nowadays there are great times in Cowra.

**DS:** These weekends away were fun but they involved Sue doing all the planning and bookings etc. This is probably something that BN could do more of, but again it depends on a keen person.

### What is your view on the way Bike North has evolved? Is it going in the direction you envisaged?

**CG:** I am stoked that it has been so successful.

**MC:** I don't think that I ever envisaged the development and growth of the social riding aspects of BN. I also never saw BN as a club that just services members, or existed merely to promote cycling.

**SS:** In the last few years I have lost touch a bit with how Bike North has gone along. I haven't been on the bike anywhere near as much as I need to and have become fat, heaven help me! One thing I know is that there are far more bike paths around and cycling does get some consideration when road planning takes place. It was great to hear on the radio that cyclists were using the new M7 and that there are bikeways adjacent to rail lines happening more and more as well. Bike North has encouraged heaps of people to get on their bikes.

The fun activities that are planned out around Putney keep everyone engaged. The rides are great. The bike maintenance is great. I can't believe how much Doug has done and how long he has maintained his interest and energy for it all. I have great admiration for the committee members and the amount of work that they do and the number of years that they have been able to do it.

**DS:** Most of the original (and early) members of BN aren't active in bicycle advocacy any more, although most are probably still riding

their bikes for transport, fitness and fun. Those who ride bikes for a long time are committed to riding their bikes and don't change. On the other hand bicycle advocacy is a tough ask with slow rewards. There are a few really long term cycle advocates in Sydney and they must get their rewards in other ways than success.

**JW:** Looking at the minutes of BN meetings I see very few names that are still active in BN, notably Michael Chow and Doug Stewart and myself. Others are, as Doug said, still cycling, but apart from Neil Tonkin, I haven't seen any of the original members for quite some time.

Regarding the evolution of Bike North, I'm delighted at the way that it has come together. We have grown faster than any other BUG I know of, so we must be doing something unique, something right! I think it is largely because of the variety of rides we run. There is something for everyone. We have a well disciplined system for running rides and I think most participants are impressed with that.

**DD:** It is pleasing to see BN developing so much in numbers, which I think it should if it is to truly engage the community.

**DS:** BN has developed pretty much the direction I expected. It has been very successful. I, along with others, felt that too many BUGs lacked a pool of members that were needed in order to have a base to recruit the leaders that we needed and to provide financial stability and to maintain momentum.

We realised that not everyone would be a worker and some would be non-active members. The ratio of management to workers to visible members to non-active members is always important in voluntary organisations. Given that BN has grown and done many things I guess we are over the critical ratio, but I guess I had hoped that there would be more workers and managers.

One of the biggest benefits, which is critical to any organisation, especially a voluntary community organisation, is that the people form a terrific and supportive social group. BN has not disappointed in this regard.

BN now has a strong financial and administrative base with which to support



**MC:** I don't think I had any long term goals for BN at all. At the end of the day, we just want to ride our bikes safely and be treated fairly by drivers. If this could be done, there would be no need for BN or BNSW for that matter.

**JW:** As for long term goals at the time, I think mine were simply to do whatever it takes to enjoy cycling.

its many activities. The advocacy work has ebbed and flowed with convenors, available funds and political support. I had hoped for stronger advocacy groups and I still hope that this will happen. Everyone seems to think that others will do the job.

The rides program has matured over time, and seems to have reached a steady state, with the new replacing the old in both leaders and participants. And while new routes are coming on all the time, old rides are being dropped as well. Again I feel that many more capable riders could give something back by not only becoming leaders but also running rides.

**MG:** I think BN has gone in the direction I expected, rather than envisaged. I always thought the rides program would become popular and that is certainly the case. However, as at the very start, only a small group of people are actually doing much outside of the rides program. At the end of the day the advocacy side is the one that really counts. I have been just as guilty as the next person when it comes to inactivity in this area.

**NT:** I am very pleased with Bike North, it has evolved into a very professional BUG, and hopefully a sustainable one, provided plenty of new active members step forward.

### What do you feel has been the biggest change to Bike North since those early days?

**MG:** It now presents a far more professional front to the world. It is much more organised and obviously now has a great depth of experience from members.

**MC:** The biggest change is the growth of BN as a club, with all the accompanying bureaucratic processes.

**SS:** I can't believe how big it is. We started with a fairly intimate small group. We posted out Chain Mail. Not many members had PCs. It did grow very quickly.

**DS:** Prior to Chain Mail, Sue used to put out the minutes of the BN meetings, as Secretary. At the end of the minutes she started to add an "Updates" page or two.

Anyway discussions between Sue and I (as Publicity) decided that a newsletter was needed. Thus Chain Mail was born. The first Chain Mail went out in June 1997. The initial

editors were Sue and myself although Sue's dropped out for issues 2 and onwards. It was Sue who came up with the name Chain Mail. I had another option (which of course was much better and cleverer) but I've forgotten what it was.

It was meant to be sent out every two months to land in members mail boxes between issues of Australian Cyclist. Because of the rides deadlines in Australian Cyclist we could provide the rides program a month earlier.

Of course as you can see from the dates on Chain Mail it didn't even go out every two months. As I was the only one doing the writing, editing, layout or organising printing it was a big job with all other things. So it went out when I could get it out. I did the first 10 issues on my own, then from Issue 11 Keith took over the layout. Then from issue 12 Michael Chow and Kin-Yat took on the editorship.

**NT:** The rides program is now far beyond our earliest expectations.

**DS:** BN is now a serious organisation which I am proud to say was conceived and set up properly from the start by the early Exec committee. In the early days we wanted to have an effective organisation and the biggest change is that we now have one.

Because we started as a group there was no-one controlling the organisation and "making it their personal project/property" as is the case with some other BUGs which are driven by one or two people. Every management position in BN has changed several times and I think that this has made it a stronger organisation. We certainly need to keep getting new people involved and turning over the management to keep BN fresh, strong and able to take on the challenges ahead.

**CG:** It's the number of people in BN and the credibility that these numbers create when dealing with local councils, authorities etc.

### How do you see your future role in or relationship to Bike North?

**NT:** That depends on the future direction for my career, which is on hold at present, pending my Eastern Europe trip from June to August 2006. I was 'burnt out' after 8

years at BNSW and that needs to be taken into account by anyone getting involved in advocacy. Having said that, I may take a more active role in the future, depending on my time availability.

**SS:** I'm a painter now and plan to move out of Sydney as soon as I finish my degree. I'd like to get back on my bike to ride from my place to the shops. I like cycling and swimming and intend to do both for years to come. I love the Big Rides still, I'd like to do another couple of them.

**MC:** I don't see a role other than as a member/supporter - I think I've done enough in my 9 years or so as a cycling activist.

**JW:** I have to admit I'm getting too old and crochety to go on fighting the battles. I'm happy to do what I can but my primary interest now is just to enjoy cycling and the good company of those who participate.

**DS:** I have always been involved in both official and active capacities. I held a variety of executive positions from the beginning and when I moved out of the Exec I took on my local area coordinator's role. I have always run rides since the first program, except when I have been absent from Sydney. At this stage my plans are to remain involved in an active way, in advocacy and on rides.

**CG:** I am the returning officer for the Bike North AGM, and will hopefully get a little more involved as family commitments allow.

### If you could give one piece of advice to Bike North members thinking of getting involved what would it be?

**SS:** Do it. It is a great thing to be passionate about. The fitness that riding gives you is brilliant and if you can rally numbers you create your own safety. Safety and do-ability is what it is all about. Do Lobby. Do make your voice heard. There is a lot to be done in Sydney. Don't think you have to do it forever. Make a commitment for a short time, so you don't burn out. Who would have thought that just a chat over a few drinks could have ended up being such a well managed bike group that has brought fun and health to so many people? You will meet lots of great like minded people.

**DS:** I agree with Sue, "Who would have thought..." it is a great sentiment. Of course it was more than that and it needed a set of coincidences for anything to come of it. But those coincidences happened and we are here.

Individuals can make a real difference. In fact it is ONLY individuals that can make a difference. BN is a really effective and important way to make a positive contribution to the community, the environment and yourself. My advice would be to become involved, keep your eye on the big picture/challenge ahead and use that vision to guide you as you contribute as much as you have the resources to.

Importantly BN returns a lot back to everyone who is involved. So the benefits definitely flow both ways.

**DD:** Please do it if you can. But don't forget that life goes on after bikes too.

**MG:** Do it! Get involved! There are a fantastic group of committed people doing great stuff behind the scenes and you will have a good time.

### **Was there anything that was decided at that first meeting that you believe made Bike North so successful and the envy of all other bugs?**

**MC:** We had the good fortune in the early years to have the benefit of a great collection of very committed, hard working, enthusiastic and intelligent people.

**SS:** It was just the enthusiasm and commitment of the members. Maybe it

boys and girls on the racing bikes who had their groups already, but the mums, dads and kids. We didn't like it that people were getting injured and we wanted to help with that as well. I just believe that cyclists are nice people.

**DS:** At the first meeting we agreed to grow the membership to include as many existing and new cyclists as we could within the BN area. We knew that hundreds would belong to BNSW and that thousands of people in the area were cyclists, at least occasionally. The aim from the start was to have a big BUG, to share the work and rewards. Generally that was, and is still, different to most other BUGs.

**NT:** I think it was the wholistic approach we took to the importance of advocacy, membership and rides and the recognition that there was symbiosis between these three functions. It is important that above all, being involved is rewarding and fun.

**DD:** The important thing to emerge, I think, was the intent to undertake organized advocacy.

**MG:** The fact that such a committed group of people got together and decided to formalise things by forming the group was the big thing.

**CG:** I think the name was a great decision along with the logo that came along a little later. The colour scheme certainly created recognition from very early on. I still have my original purple BN shirt.

**JW:** I'd like to be able to say that our success was a direct

result of decisions made at the first meeting, but it really isn't so. We just grew and we were fortunate to have had a succession of good people who could manage that growth. Managing growth is a major challenge for any organisation. I think we have done that in a very professional manner and that has been the key ingredient of our success.



**Brown's Waterhole Cycleway construction**

**MC:** My advice is that the status quo (i.e. the predominance of cars, the power of the car lobby and the intransigence of Government, the RTA and the Police towards cyclists) is very hard to change.

**JW:** The only advice I can pass on is that the benefit is proportional to the investment!

**CG:** Go for it, you'll love it.

**NT:** Make sure you are aware of your time limitations, so that you keep the rest of your life in balance.

was the absence of a voice in our area and the challenge that we had to take up with our Sydney environment: hills, hills, hills. We also had a very well educated, strong group of people who gelled well as a group. We recognised that we were battling against political and local forces that weren't very interested in us and we had to get out and make contact with them to show that we were a valid part of the community. We also wanted to be all inclusive and welcome everyone, not so much focussed on the fast

## Has there been any defining moment when you thought, “Yes that is a win for cycling and it would not have happened if it wasn’t for Bike North”?

**CG:** For me it would have to be the cycleway to Kissing Point Road at Turramurra.

**SS:** Yes. We actually got things done right from the very beginning but it seemed small at the time. We got a bike path put in all the way along Bobbin Head Road that didn't exist, and that made access to Bobbin Head better. We got a bike path (that was a bit of disaster) up Killeaton Street, St Ives, but some people did use it. After that in the early days, small wins started springing up everywhere. The bike lane was marked out along the Old Pacific Highway. We got the link from Browns Waterhole that made access from

The work adjacent to the Railway line was Darvall Park. The entire Ryde Work Group was involved in these actions which included Michael Chow and Neil Tonkin.

**NT:** I think the success of the BNSW Rides Leader Program has to be attributed to Bike North. In addition I very much like the idea of visiting other BUGs, this is something that needs to happen more, and BNSW doesn't have the resources to foster this cooperation. I think the informal approach of BN on this is very good, and an efficient way of cycle networking.

**SS:** Doug got involved in festivals and we had stalls to promote ourselves. Councillors started to be riders. It's good that Tony Abbot is a rider now. Every little thing like that helps to gain support. Riding has to become fashionable for everyone. Perhaps we were successful because we are not outsiders, we are just normal, determined

people trying to have fun in a difficult environment.

**DS:** There were lots of wins. Some of those have been when something has been

Outcomes like the change in route of Browns Waterhole to make it less steep at the southern end (seriously!) and not take out any trees. The route from Lane Cove Park under De Burghs Bridge was a BN initiative. Even simple things like the moving of the planter boxes on Pentecost Road to give us at least some room was a win for BN.

Other wins are things like winning the biggest BUG/biggest team at events like Cycle Sydney or Tour de Hills. Or just getting 40-50 or more people out riding on any given weekend, or even on one ride. These are wins for cycling and wins for BN.

**MC:** Yes and it continues to happen - small bits of infrastructure. However, the wins are small and the battles are long and hard, compared to what could and should be, given the effort.

## Is there anything that Bike North used to do that it no longer does that you would like to see it do again?

**SS:** Just have fun guys!

**MC:** Run kiddies rides - the youth are our future.

**DS:** BN used to organise a riding Christmas party for all members. Ride to a location have a social party and ride home. Some

non-riding family members used to join us as well. I think that this was a good event.

We also used to organise meetings with guest speakers, which were interesting

but didn't appeal to large numbers. I still think that these may be useful. Perhaps we could do a survey of people specifically asking what topics would be interesting to members at meetings?



North shore to Macquarie Uni easy. That seemed very important at the time. Bigger things started to happen in Ryde where Doug was instrumental. He also got work done adjacent to one of the rail sections. We got the councillors to participate in group activities.

**DS:** Sue may remember the Bobbin Head Road and Old Pac Highway lanes going in but I don't recall them. But it wasn't in my backyard then (as it is now!). Certainly Browns Waterhole was a great achievement. I can't credit BN alone for this as the RTA, Council and Emergency Services were all on side. Having said that we surveyed the route and I made suggestions as to the best way to go. In general we stayed on the existing fire trail and didn't take out a single major tree.



built, but other times it has been when some event has taken place. So sometimes the wins have been outcomes and sometimes processes.