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Castles In The Air



Castles in the Air is a new ride which was run for the first time on 19 September.

This is the view from Harold Reid Reserve.

If it makes you wish you'd been there, check out the Rides Calendar for more scenic tours in the next couple of months.

Thanks to Ian Meller for the picture.

Calgary Cycling

by John Hunt

I had the opportunity to visit Calgary in Canada recently - population about 1,000,000. Temperature ranged from 0 to 1C with a powdering of snow at night. Ah! The balmy last days of summer. Lucky I took a jumper and vest. Did you hear the joke about what's the difference between summer and winter in Calgary? Nothing - except you can't ski in summer!

I noticed there was something strange when flying in. I could see an extensive network of concrete pathways skirting the urban areas, with bridges over the motorways linking them to urban roads. Could they be cycle ways? If so, a very rare beast (like footpaths) in North America, based on my extensive travels there.

So I went for a walk on the weekend through downtown to the Bow River parklands (near the junction with the Elbow River - I kid you not!). First thing I found was a community bicycle shop (the Good Life Community Bicycle Shop) in the Eau Claire Market. A shop front bicycle workshop that provides facilities for members to fix or maintain their bike and repair 2nd hand bikes that they're given for resale. Sort of like a tool library, except that you borrow on site. The membership fee = members must love their bikes and respect the space and those within. Services are by donation and members are encouraged to contribute in any way they can. See www.goodlifebikes.ca/



Next, I found a cycle shop selling electric and not so electric bikes. Mainly retrofits to stock upright "shopping" bikes including rear wheels with hub motors, front wheels with hub motors and motors fitted to the cranks. Batteries ranged from 600 to 2000 mls in size (in milk carton equivalents). Prices in Canadian dollars (about the same as Australian dollars) ranged from \$1500 to \$2500 without motors and \$2500 to \$3500 with motors.

Then I went for a walk along the river parklands and surrounds. The place was a network of well patronised SUPs (aka Shared User Paths - a bit like the Olympic Park) with lots of riders and walkers - a mix of road bikes in lycra and gloves and MTBs not in lycra (but also in gloves - not surprising given the temperature!). There is a universal speed limit of 20 kms per hour on the SUPs. Not all were wearing helmets - helmet use is compulsory only for the under 18s.

There was an article about cycling in the Calgary Herald that weekend. The basic infrastructure stats are 700 kms of SUPs, 318 kms of on street cycleways and 15 kms of marked shared lanes, with about 10,000 cyclists entering downtown each day and a large recreational contingent out on the weekends.

My host told me that the locals are fitness mad and keen on cycling. Some diehards cycle all winter, even though there's no light during commuting hours and the SUPs are not cleared of snow (or ice). A hazard for cyclists particular to North American onroad bike lanes is being "mirrored" (new verb for me) by the honking great hogs of trucks that pass for utilities over there - capable of towing 8 tonnes and looking like a Ford F100 on steroids.

All in all a pleasant SUPrise (with apologies to the concise Oxford).

The art of wheel building 101

by Ben Herman aka "Bucky"

I'd like to take this opportunity to share some thoughts with you about the joys of wheel building.

What's the big deal?

To master the craft of wheel building can take a lifetime of dedication, yet for the beginner enthusiast such as you and me, there is ample opportunity to get your hands dirty and build a wonderful creation that will return benefits back to you for many years to come. There is a tremendous satisfaction I get, when I front up to the peloton with one of my unique custom built wheels, and it immediately gets the jealous attention of my fellow riders. They will often poke, prod, admire the wheel, but are rarely moved to build one themselves. As we shall see further the skills needed to build your own wheel are well within your reach - all that you need is the desire!

Why build your own wheel, you may ask? Truth be told, it is a better question than you may at first realise. Bicycle wheels today are manufactured much better than they were in the past. Manufacturing techniques and processes have improved vastly, choice of materials have improved, and so the end product is typically lower priced, and consistent. Nothing wrong with buying yourself a truly good set of factory built wheels.

Wheel Building 101 continued ...

But what if you want something a little different? Are you a heavier rider? Do you need something especially strong for your commute on crappy Sydney roads? Are you a rider who is especially focused on climbing? Are you interested in getting a special aesthetic to your wheel to complement your funky new carbon-fantastic bike? All good reasons to consider a custom built wheel. While there is nothing wrong with a factory built wheel, custom-made provides the opportunity for you to bring out a special characteristic to your build, something you simply cannot do when manufacturers are aiming towards the lowest common denominator. There are simply not many options open to you when ordering a factory built wheel. You get value for money, but you sacrifice quite a bit compared to a purpose built device.

In many ways custom building wheels is similar to building your own PC (Dell), or perhaps ordering a bespoke suit from a tailor. If you have thought of doing something like this in the past, then you probably are ready to think about building your very own wheel.

What is a wheel, you may ask?

What is a wheel? It's actually a lot more than you first thought. It is an amazing device that was first invented at the dawn of time, but continues to amaze in the combination of simple and complex forces that it represents. For the bicycle rider, the wheel is the second most important component on the bicycle (the frame being the single most important). It is the thing that makes contact with the ground, and provides the rotational forces to propel you forward.

There is no debate about the following. A wheel must be:

- Strong - to counteract the considerable centrifugal forces at play;
- Light - to assist the rider in overcoming gravity and inertia.

But this is really an oversimplification. A wheel is actually a construction of materials that represents the best possible combination of materials for a given requirement.

It's important to spend more time on this, as it's crucial to the process. The first important thing you need to do when considering your own wheel project is to get an understanding of what your needs are for a particular build.

These needs will factor strongly in the selection of materials and building techniques. The wheel you are aiming to build is simply the best compromise you can possibly manage between money, materials, and natural forces at play. Here are some examples for your consideration:

- I'm a hill climber and I compete in local races. I'm looking to build a wheel that is as light as possible, and super stiff for getting up the hill as fast as practicable. Comfort is not an issue, and reliability is important, but I expect wheels to last only a season or two maximum.
- I'm a commuter. I need a strong set of wheels under me to withstand the pressures of crappy roads I have to ride on. Light racing wheels are too expensive and tend to bend (break) on these roads.
- I'm a heavier rider. I weigh upwards of 110 kg, and find store bought wheels will often break spokes while I'm riding on them. What gives?
- I love touring. Getting in the saddle and staying there for a whole day. I need a strong set of very dependable wheels under me, where weight is not the primary consideration. Comfort is key.



As we shall see the four very different requirements discussed above will result in *four very different wheels*. As you begin to aim for a specific kind of riding experience, custom built wheels will help move you towards your goals more quickly, no matter what they are. The materials you will select will be different for each of the 4 riders above; however the techniques of wheel building remain constant. More on that later.

[Wheel Building 101 continued ...](#)

Enough already, what do I need?

Good question. Moving away from the debate about whether a custom built wheel is a good idea, let's discuss the next most important issue. Materials.

A bicycle wheel is made up of essentially 3 x different items:

- Rim - This is the round thing that gives overall strength and shape to the wheel.
- Hub - The round thingy at the centre of the wheel, that provides the rotational capability.
- Spokes - These give shape and form to the wheel. They ensure your wheel remains round and true.

Much more needs to be said about materials since choosing materials is fundamental to the quality of the outcome you will get from the build. As you will soon see, there is a fine balance of forces that are going on inside the construction of a wheel. All you are trying to do is FIND THE BEST BALANCE BETWEEN COMPETING FORCES. More on this later.

Here is a brief discussion on each of the 3 materials discussed above. Think about this and what this might mean for your own build.

Rim

Typically, rims are made from aluminium, or in today's market, increasingly from carbon composites. Aluminium rims are strong, light and relatively inexpensive. The typical rim will have 32 holes drilled into it to receive the spokes. If you look closely these holes are offset from each other and not perfectly in the centre of the rim as you might think at first.

The deeper the sidewall of the rim (deep dish rims), the stronger the rim will be (and also heavier). If you are the hill climber or track cyclist, expect to have very thin and small rims. If you are a heavier rider, well you are going to need a deeper dish rim to support added weight. Carbon wheels turn this discussion on its head. Carbon tends to be very light but does not take well to compressive forces. Carbon wheels have deeper dished rims in order to make up for lack of the strength of the carbon composites.

Carbon wheels with deep dish rims may look great, but in a crosswind they can be downright dangerous. Wind will catch on the deep sidewall and blow you off the road.

There is an increasing move in the industry to drill fewer holes in the rim to reduce spoke count. For a discussion on this see the spoke section.

Hub

There are two different aspects to a hub:

The exterior part which receives the spokes and ties them securely. This is called the flange. There are two flanges: one on each side of the hub. The flange has holes drilled to receive the spokes. Typical hub will be a 32 hole hub, with 16 holes on each flange. The internal compartment of the hub has an axle, bearings, and gears. This is a complex arrangement of mechanical parts necessary to impart rotational force of the hub. These may require service from time to time, as bearings rub and wear out over time.



Shimano 3N-80 (Bucky Hub)

Hubs make a clicking sound as you coast (or freewheel). There is a system of ratchets inside the hub that help maintain its gearing.

[Wheel Building 101 continued ...](#)

Spokes

Typically made from steel, and increasingly available in carbon composites, spokes are the wonder material most responsible for the strength and riding characteristics of the wheel. The spoke is a wonder material, but poorly understood, and seriously underappreciated by the typical rider. Spokes are placed in the rim at one end, and in the hub at the other. Spokes are designed to be in a dynamic state of the tension, and must be tightened sufficiently to make the wheel viable.

When purchasing spokes there is much to consider:

- The size of the spoke needed is crucial to the build, yet fairly difficult to measure. There are special calculators available on the web, but best to learn measurement techniques yourself.
- On a rear wheel where your cogs are located, the spokes are typically different sizes between the drive side, and non drive side. Reason for that anomaly is discussed later.
- Spokes can come in straight gauge or double butted. A double butted spoke is thicker at the ends and thinner in the middle. This is done for strength and weight saving purposes.

Forget materials, how do I build a wheel?

Patience, grasshopper.

Having selected materials, you can start to think about the build. But before you do, there are a few things you first need to know.

A bicycle wheel is purposely built to be in a dynamic state of tension. This means the components are assembled and brought up to tension during the build. This is similar to winding a spring tighter and tighter. As you continue to wind up a spring, more potential energy is stored inside the spring. Same is true for a bicycle wheel. As you bring the wheel up to tension, it gets strength and form. A poorly built wheel has too little (or too much) tension in it, and soon enough spokes break, or the rim will taco (warp). The process of building a wheel is really all about accruing the essential feel behind getting the tension in the wheel up to scratch. This is a skill that can only be learned by doing. While I read as many books as I could about the subject, the skill never really came to me until such time that I actually sat down to get the feel for the tensions involved.

This is why wheel building is an art. It is not something that can be learned in a book. To do wheel building you must engage in the process of doing. Reading a book (or my instructions) will never be sufficient.

Now that you mention, it's kind of like riding a bike? Huh?

Summary

Once you come to appreciate the aesthetic beauty of a simply built bicycle wheel, you begin to realise that a wheel is in fact much more than an assembly of materials; it's a blend of subtle forces that bring together the best of human ingenuity.

In the Art of Wheel Building 102 I'll talk about tools needed and preparation for the build - stay tuned for January ChainMail.

Getting around more easily

by Craig Head

Recumbent cycling has been around since the late 1800s, though it was banned in 1934 by the UCI (Union Cyclist International) when Frenchman, Francois Faure rode the recumbent streamliner "velocar" 50.5 km/hour, to a new record. The ban was due to their 'unfair' aerodynamic advantage. By the way, Faure's record stood until 1984, 46 years later!

Double the fun is a recumbent tandem bicycle or tricycle. With a tandem bike you bring a companion who can help with balance, control and navigation.

This allows blind and visually impaired riders to enjoy tandem cycling with a sighted driver. An extraordinary example of this, which you may have heard about, is the "Blind Courage" ride earlier this year from Perth to Sydney, which was on upright tandems.

See www.blindcourage.com/

Or you may know of the Muggaccinos "Adopt a blind cyclist" initiative? See www.muggaccinos.com/

Three wheeled recumbent tandems can remove the challenge of balance for both riders. This can be especially important when cognitive or coordination limitations are factors.

Using tandems allows blind people to get out cycling, to improve their fitness and give them the sense of fulfillment that we all strive for. You know the feeling; the wind in your face, the smell of the countryside and the knowledge that you've been somewhere under your own steam.



To be politically correct the rides should be called "Tandem Rides for the Visually Impaired". To call the people I take out on the tandem "blind" would be a disservice. They all have vision to a limited degree; they can sense the outlines of people, buildings and trees and most can detect colour. But to cycle on their own would be impossible, and this is where the tandem really proves its worth.

[Getting Around continued ...](#)

My first co-rider was Mick. Mick's visual impairment has been caused by a head injury. I won't go into the details of the severity of the accident that befell Mick or the consequences that followed, suffice to say that, after five years of continued rehabilitation, he was prepared to give tandem riding his best shot. We met with a sense of trepidation - from Mick's point of view he would be stepping into the unknown, trusting a complete stranger to pilot the tandem safely. For me, Mick was my first visually impaired rider and to be totally responsible for a persons' welfare in such circumstances is serious. So we pedalled up and down his drive for a minute or two, with Barbara, his wife, watching in amazement. We all sensed that this was going to be okay. Then we found a quiet road on a nearby industrial estate; we went up and down this road four times and agreed that we would ride again as soon as possible.

That was seven weeks ago. Mick and I have been cycling nearly every week since then and his motivation for riding has grown stronger every time. His enthusiasm for getting out and about on the tandem is truly inspiring, and I use that word decisively. We've built up the miles little by little every time we ride. We have just completed our latest goal, a distance of 43kms. As a regular cyclist you'll probably be thinking "that's not far". Put yourself in Mick's shoes and it'll feel like a rock solid accomplishment, worthy of the spray from a bottle of fizzy wine.

Mick is by far my best success story to date, but I have a number of other back-seat riders who are progressing nicely and will soon be riding similar distances. So what's in it for me? Taking on this project has certainly shown me a different dimension to cycling, with the added bonus of making sincere new friendships. All that's left to say is that cycling has been good to me since I took it up in 1995 and it is very rewarding to feel that I can put something back into the sport by bringing the benefits of cycling to people, such as Mick, who really do appreciate what cycling is all about.

There are some advantages to a trike, the main one being the ability to stop in the middle of a hill to rest and start all over so long as you are in a low gear, regardless of the steepness of that hill. There really are no advantages from a blind person's point of view to a trike unless, of course, that blind person happens to be a bad stoker and throws off the balance of the tandem for the captain.

I think, however, that if you are dealing with a blind person who is older and/or has issues with balance and/or serious mobility difficulties, a tandem trike makes real sense. The very nature of a trike's stability significantly reduces the need for good communication because the worry of having to get the stoker to lean in and out of turns is just about eliminated so long as the blind stoker is not significantly heavier than the captain. Also, the advantage offered by a tandem trike to a blind stoker situation definitely relates to the fact that there is no effort required at the launch - i.e. it is unnecessary for the captain and stoker to coordinate in order to get moving from a stand still. There is a huge advantage if the blind stoker happens to be heavier than the captain - it is very very difficult for a light captain to deal with a heavy stoker who can't see when to lean into and out of turns (the result being that a light captain can very easily lose control of a two wheel tandem if the heavy stoker does not sit upright once the turn is completed).

A Week in the Country

by Keith Griffin

Part 1 - Secret practice

Mundane Monday: Cats delivered to gaol, bikes secured in the van which now points, on average, south west. Milawa was buzzing as we arrived... groups in the car park outside the newish and not so wonderful bakery, more people across the road at the cafes. It was a little too cool and breezy for the action in the pub to have spilled outside. The motel was quiet, until we arrived.

The familiarity of dinner at the pub (with an excellent red wine) served to remove any remaining stress from the long drive and put us in holiday mode, ready for tomorrow's ride.



Culcairn continued ...

My first glance of Tuesday morning revealed a superb day - bright and sunny. I walked outside and realised that, true to the forecast, it was pretty cool, there were signs of cloud on the horizon and the wind was just starting to get up. A while later, suitably dressed, we were cycling due west towards the Warby Ranges.

Providing a good warm up, the initial 16km is dead flat, apart from the artificial hill over the Hume Freeway. Then life gets interesting with the, at times, steep and longish climb through Taminick Gap. Naturally there is a good reward over the hill with a wonderful descent out onto the open plains, past Baileys winery and then onto another flat road heading north, parallel with the western side of the Warbys. Lake Mokoan's eastern edge actually contained water after the [greatly exaggerated by the media] floods of two weeks ago, and the grass everywhere was not just green, but tall, thick and lush.

Not long before the turn-off to the second crossing of the Warbys we stopped for a quick snack. Thankfully the wind would now be with us, not against us! This climb is much longer but never quite as steep, with the steepest sections being about 8%, and the reward is delayed by a series of rollers through the wonderful forest (Warby-Ovens National Park) before eventually beginning the fast and sustained descent to the plains behind Wangaratta.

We decided against a stop in busy Wang in favour of a wind assisted 21km time-trial ride back to Milawa. Shower, lunch... great morning's effort, average speed 28km/hr for 80km.

The afternoon was spent at a winery which, despite our 30 years of coming to this region, we had never visited. So we drove back over Taminick Gap and took the not so good dirt roads to Booth's. The wines were not only pretty good, but very well priced, and the view from the cellar doors... magic.

Then straight back to Markwood, just the other side of Milawa, to visit our friend Rick. He was in the process of completing a mandatory safety upgrade to his ultralight aircraft, so the hangar had wings on one set of long tables, fuselage in the middle with cockpit dismantled, engine covers off. He's been working on this since March and said he was "in the home stretch".

We had a cup of tea with him and agreed to return tomorrow to buy some of his outstanding Cabernet.

Wednesday saw another cold start with a strong SW wind. Our ride was difficult in these conditions as the 104km loop to Lurg began directly into the wind. I struggled to keep going while Fran appeared to be riding with ease. At Ryan's Creek we stopped to eat our pre-packed sandwiches and enjoy a few rare moments of sunshine while the clouds parted briefly. The countryside on this route is wonderful, with flat to rolling terrain, no long hills and no steep hills, yet somehow this ride is always difficult. The straight stretch of narrow road leading to Winton was easier than usual with the wind now partly behind us, and the next section parallel to and alongside the Hume freeway to Glenrowan was even better!



We were glad to arrive in Glenrowan for lunch among the tourists soaking up the Ned Kelly story. The final leg back to Milawa was also pretty quick and we finished the ride with average speed of 27.5km/hr, tired legs and a certain relief as tomorrow would not be a riding day.

Culcairn continued ...



Being in a "Gourmet" region, we felt it a requirement to participate in local culture, which for us is usually a matter of sampling local wines, olives, cheeses etc. However this time we had brought with us a camembert cheese Fran had made at home some weeks earlier. As our motel host Klaus is a superb chef and knowledgeable about food, and our winemaker friend Rick lived just down the road, we organised a small cheese tasting at the motel for later afternoon. Klaus and Gabrielle provided a 'supermarket' Tasmanian camembert and another soft cheese from the Fleurieu peninsula, SA. We provided a Milawa camembert and our own home made product, and everyone brought wine! We opened a merlot and a pinot noir (much the better wine with this cheese) and spent a good hour and a half eating cheese and drinking wine in the motel dining room.

At dinner in Oxley that evening we were in no need of an entree, but the food was, as always, superb!

Part 2 - Come to Culcairn

Thursday was driving day, but because we had only a short distance to cover to Culcairn, we took plenty of time to stop at various wineries, the Cheese Factory, have lunch in Rutherglen, "do" one more winery, then set off up the road to Culcairn to meet the Bike North crew.

It was amazing that by crossing the Murray and travelling only a short distance the entire culture changed. From Gourmet region with food and wine proudly paraded to visitors, to small ex-railway town with a big old pub, a new café and two hasty-tastys.

We checked in at the bar, collected our key and discovered that no-one else had yet arrived, except Phil who had arrived a few days earlier and settled in down the road at the caravan/camping ground. Shortly afterwards we were all assembled and having a drink and dinner in the dining room downstairs, eleven slightly mad people with nine bikes and one tandem.

Next morning we set out on the route agreed over dinner the previous evening. It was a beautiful day if relatively cool. Despite best intentions the group fractured on the road, but into sensible similar paced groups. At Cookardina (now a just shed both long standing and long abandoned) we stopped for a snack and allowed all to regroup. Pedals spinning again we headed back towards Henty where to our delight a café was still open. In a town this small, 11 hungry cyclists ordering all at once is major cause for panic and confusion. To be fair the ladies did a great job, and the food was wonderful, if a tad slow at arriving. After a long break it was a short 30 kms almost all downhill back to Culcairn.

Day 2 was agreed to be a 100 km ride, though Judy decided to take a different route. Our target was the pub at Pleasant Hills, despite the fact that, having made enquiries, we would not be able to get food or drink there. The day was warmer but very windy. The terrain threw a few short sharp hills at us, and a few longer not much less steep ones as well. Certainly there were hills and they looked pleasant enough (actually this is a beautiful ride!), but with constant howling wind we were more intent on getting through the ride with enough energy left for tomorrow.

Culcairn continued ...

This ride had begun less well. Phil was not so well and turned back, still getting a good ride for the day however. Ben had a spoke nipple on his rear wheel break, so we stopped while Ben and Richard did their best to adjust the wheel so Ben could ride it back to the start. He then took the bike to Albury (in his car) and had the wheel repaired ready for the final day's ride. Meanwhile all the other riders had gone past and were well in front of us on the road. Not far from Pleasant Hills we all came back together on the road before splitting again on the road back to the now familiar Henty. Being Saturday afternoon, the town's main street was deserted, though there was a hasty-tasty open. We were so spread out on the road that as each small group of us left, another would arrive in town, keeping the cafe working at a nice steady pace.

Richard and Simone were with us but elected to take the direct route back to Culcairn, along the Olympic Way, while we retraced yesterday's final leg - practice makes perfect. It took most of the afternoon for all riders to arrive back in town. Judy said her ride had been excellent but was less kind about the wind.

The final day began with the same strong winds, and as we had anticipated this, our ride was to be quite short. We had agreed over dinner to ride to Morgan's Lookout. Locals had been telling us not to miss this wonderful place, and for Fran and I who had been in Glenrowan only days before, visiting another bushranger site would round-off our trip in yet another way.

Richard was alone on the tandem today as Simone had other jobs to attend to, but without her on the back he found the chain kept coming off, and he returned to town early.

The road to the lookout was, as one would expect, up. It was also dirt, though in good condition. Several riders decided that on skinny tyres this was not a good idea, while others with fatter tures were quite relaxed and set off up the hill. I joined them and despite loss of rear wheel traction reached the end of the road. Then it was a bit of rock and ladder climbing, in cycling shoes. The view was grand, and the place quite odd, characterised by large granite boulders unlike anything within the extensive vista from the lookout. Fran and I returned in the car later in the afternoon to take photos.

Riding back down the dirt road was more challenging than up, and I was glad to be back on sealed road. A snack in Walla Walla and then we headed back the way we had come. Phil and Robert however took the other road from the lookout, added 20 kms to the ride and returned via Walbundrie. Jan and Margaret had left the lookout site well ahead of Fran and I, so we were now chasing them down. John and Judy were still in Walla Walla and Ben elected to ride with them on the way back, so again arrival back in town was staggered, possibly in more ways than one.

"Come to Culcairn" seems to have been a success. Fran and I have to thank our companions for the weekend; Margaret and Jan, Ben, John, Robert, Phil, Judy, Simone and Richard for making it such a great event.



For route maps and profiles of the rides in this article see:

www.franandkeith.com.au/cycling/oneday/warby.html
www.franandkeith.com.au/cycling/oneday/lurg.html
www.franandkeith.com.au/cycling/oneday/cookardinia.html
www.franandkeith.com.au/cycling/oneday/pleasant.html
www.franandkeith.com.au/cycling/oneday/morgans.html

Check Your Wheel Rims

by John Turton

One Saturday morning I was riding at about 25 – 30 km/hr down a hill in Newport Heights, on my way to Avoca via Palm Beach and the Ettalong Ferry - when suddenly I heard a loud explosion (I actually thought a car had backfired), as my front wheel locked up & I went over the handlebars onto the road.

Fortunately it was early morning and there was no traffic (& therefore no backfire!). After collecting myself & my bike from the road (& phoning a friend to pick me up), I noticed that part of my front wheel rim had peeled away & the tube had a large hole in it (the tyre was relatively new & seemed to be OK). The rim peeling open had obviously locked up the wheel instantly.



I spent some time trying to work out what had caused the wheel rim to fail and did an internet search on "bicycle wheel rim failure". I found a fairly small number of articles that described similar experiences to mine (both stationary & moving), that were put down to wheel rim failure due to excessive rim wear – generally in bikes that had been ridden for several (7 to 10) years.

The bike that I was riding on that day was a 3-year old

Hybrid (fitted with V-brakes) that is used mainly for commuting & that probably had done no more than 7,500 km - so it's probably worth checking your wheel rims even after fairly low mileages. I then fitted the bike with new rims (front & back) with "indicator dimples" in the rim that give a visual indication of wear (i.e. replace when the dimples are no longer visible).

About 2 years (approx. 6,000 km) later, I had to replace the front wheel rim again due to cracks appearing in the rim. On this occasion I had noticed the brakes catching on a short length of the rim - that on close inspection was bulging out. This time I replaced the rim & also replaced the V-Brake on the front wheel with a disc brake.

I believe that V-brakes could be a factor in causing increased rim wear, as my road bike (fitted with dual-pivot calliper brakes) has been ridden similar distances, and shows little sign of wheel rim wear. Conversely, lower tyre pressures on MTB's probably decrease the risk of rim failure (if not wear).

Note that both bikes have been regularly serviced (including brake pad replacement) by my excellent local bike shop & I had asked them to check the rims on the Hybrid bicycle about 6 weeks before the second rim failure.

Conclusion: The consequences of having your front (or rear) wheel locking up at speed & throwing you onto the road in traffic could be catastrophic. It is very difficult to accurately measure rim wear (regularly removing the tyre and measuring rim thickness with a micrometer gauge doesn't seem to be very practical). It is nevertheless important to keep a close watch for excessive wearing of your wheel rims (particularly the front wheel).

- Check for rim wear even at low mileages.
- Check for gouging &/or cracking of the rims.
- Keep brake pads free of grit & metal filings.
- Consider fitting disc brakes.



Calendar, December 2010 – January 2011

Note	Risk Warning	What to Bring	Ride Conditions
All ride participants are requested to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled ride start time (to get ready / dressed, get bikes out of cars, check bikes and sign on) at the designated departure point.	As a participant in this dangerous recreational activity, you may be exposing yourself to a significant risk of harm. Bike North, the ride organisers and leaders wish to warn you of the risks and hazards that are an inherent part of cycling, and 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, and you agree to ride in a safe and responsible manner and to obey all Australian Road Rules. Adult carers must sign this waiver for any riders under 16 yrs of age.	<p>A bicycle in good working order</p> <p>SAA approved bicycle helmet</p> <p>Water: 1 litre per hour of riding</p> <p>Snacks</p> <p>Money</p> <p>A pump, repair kit and spare tubes</p> <p>For night rides, have lights fitted with batteries charged for at least 4 hrs of riding.</p>	The rides are graded Easy, Easy-Medium, Medium, Medium-Hard or Hard depending on factors such as terrain, pace, traffic level and number of regroup points. Differences between grades can mean significant additional physical and riding capability is required by riders. Conditions can vary unexpectedly on a ride due to weather conditions. Please choose a ride that is suitable to your own fitness level and riding experience. Please always check with the ride leader before coming on a ride that you haven't done before or if you are tackling a ride at a harder grade than you would normally do.

Date	Event	Information
01/12/2010 Wednesday	Bays & Foreshores	<p><i>Grade:</i> Medium <i>Distance:</i> 35 <i>Pace:</i> relaxed</p> <p><i>Contact :</i> Bob Chambers 9449 9112</p> <p><i>Starts at :</i> 00:00:00 Meadowbank Wharf.</p> <p>Ride to Gladesville Bridge, then follow the bays & foreshores around to Concord for coffee. NOTES: Call to confirm</p>
04/12/2010 Saturday	City Circle	<p><i>Grade:</i> Easy Medium <i>Distance:</i> 35 <i>Pace:</i> gentle</p> <p><i>Contact :</i> Alison Pryor 9874 2383</p> <p><i>Starts at :</i> 08:00:00 St Leonards Station, concourse.</p> <p>Ride to the historical areas of Sydney CBD including Harbour Br., The Rocks, Darling Harbour, Paddys Mkt., Kings Cross and Woolloomooloo with coffee stop. NOTES: Featuring the new cycling infrastructure in the City of Sydney - route will go out to Sydney Park for the mid ride stop.</p>
04/12/2010 Saturday	Parramatta Park Parade	<p><i>Grade:</i> Easy Medium <i>Distance:</i> 35 <i>Pace:</i> relaxed</p> <p><i>Contact :</i> Philip Griffiths 02 9674 7347</p> <p><i>Starts at :</i> 07:30:00 Meadowbank Wharf.</p> <p>Ride along the PVC to Parramatta Park. Do a lap or two of the park before coffee, then return via M4 c/p.</p>
05/12/2010 Sunday	Akuna Bay and Church Point	<p><i>Grade:</i> Hard <i>Distance:</i> 80 <i>Pace:</i> fast</p> <p><i>Contact :</i> Doug Stewart 9874 5594</p> <p><i>Starts at :</i> 07:00:00 Eastwood Station, East side.</p> <p>Ride via de Burghs Br, Pymble, Terrey Hills, Akuna Bay, Church Pt (coffee). Return via Turramurra. Fast pace.</p>
05/12/2010 Sunday	Buon Appetito	<p><i>Grade:</i> Easy Medium [no data] <i>Distance:</i> 30 <i>Pace:</i> gentle</p> <p><i>Contact :</i> Eric Middleton 99582546</p> <p><i>Starts at :</i> 08:00:00 St Thomas Rest Park, West St , Crows Nest.</p> <p>Ride gently across 3 bridges to Leichhardt for coffee. Enjoy a loop around Blackwattle Bay on the return trip. NOTES: Cancelled if its raining</p>

07/12/2010 Tuesday	BN Executive Meeting	Contact : info@bikenorth.org.au <i>Venue:</i> 19:30 . All members welcome to attend our monthly Executive meetings. The venue is School of Arts Community Centre Hall Meeting Room 201 Cox's Road North Ryde. Walk down the walkway between the Community Centre and the Commonwealth Bank - the meeting room is part way along the right hand side of the building and up the 2nd ramp. Come and see how Bike North is run. Enjoy the fun of the meeting, and get a feel for what goes on behind the scenes.
11/12/2010 Saturday	Concord for Cake	<i>Grade:</i> Easy <i>Distance:</i> 28 <i>Pace:</i> gentle <i>Contact :</i> Debbie Edwards 9436 0969 <i>Starts at :</i> 07:30:00 Meadowbank Wharf. Ride along the Parramatta Valley Cycleway, over Silverwater bridge to Sydney Olympic Park, then on to Concord for coffee. Return via Brays Park and the John Whitton bridge.
12/12/2010 Sunday	Banana Pie	<i>Grade:</i> Medium Hard <i>Distance:</i> 67 <i>Pace:</i> moderate <i>Contact :</i> Doug Stewart 9874 5594 <i>Starts at :</i> 07:30:00 Turrumurra Station, East side. Practise your descending and climbing going both ways through Bobbin Head, and visiting Pie in the Sky.NOTES: This is a ride to the BN Christmas party. Start time may be adjusted to ensure we all meet up at the appropriate place at the right time. Doug
12/12/2010 Sunday	Cowan Calga	<i>Grade:</i> Medium Hard <i>Distance:</i> 52 <i>Pace:</i> brisk <i>Contact :</i> Darryn Capes-Davis 0406 380 862 <i>Starts at :</i> 07:45:00 Cowan Station. Ride through magnificent Hawkesbury River valley on quiet roads. Return with a stop for coffee.NOTES: After the ride we will head to Cowan Oval for the Bike North Christmas Party.
14/12/2010 Tuesday	Ryde Hunters Hill Meeting	Contact : ryde@bikenorth.org.au <i>Venue:</i> 19:30 . Advocacy at work. Good tea and coffee. Good company. A meeting for cyclists in the Ryde area is held on the second Tuesday of each month. If you have something to say, something to ask for, want to help, or just want updates, come along. Join in to "make cycling better" in Ryde. All welcome. Venue : Eastwood Women's Rest Centre, Hillview Rd Eastwood. (Near the station and just behind the Library.)
14/12/2010 Tuesday	Ku-ring-gai Working Group meeting	Contact : Bob Chambers, 9449 9112 <i>Venue:</i> 19:30 . venue is 9 Greenhill Crescent St Ives. All Bike North members welcome, esp. those who live or work in Ku-ring-gai.
15/12/2010 Wednesday	Metro Mangrove Meander	<i>Grade:</i> Medium <i>Distance:</i> 47 <i>Pace:</i> relaxed <i>Contact :</i> Bob Chambers 9449 9112 <i>Starts at :</i> 07:30:00 special start: Naremburn Shops, Willoughby Rd and Rohan St. Scenic loop ride via river foreshores, from Huntleys Cove and Gladesville Bridge to Kissing Point Bay crossing Parramatta River via the Putney Punt to Meadowbank. Return via back roads, Shrimpton's Creek and Epping Road/Gore Hill cycle paths. Includes quiNOTES: Call to confirm
18/12/2010 Saturday	Olympic Park Ride	<i>Grade:</i> Easy <i>Distance:</i> 25 <i>Pace:</i> gentle <i>Contact :</i> Alison Pryor 9874 2383 <i>Starts at :</i> 08:30:00 Meadowbank Wharf. Loop around Homebush Bay with a coffee stop. Suitable for beginners and children OVER 12 accompanied by an adult carer.
18/12/2010 Saturday	Meadowbank to Bobbo	<i>Grade:</i> Medium <i>Distance:</i> 50 <i>Pace:</i> moderate <i>Contact :</i> Malcolm Hart 9713 1994 <i>Starts at :</i> 07:30:00 Meadowbank Wharf. Hilly ride via Eastwood, Browns Waterhole, Turrumurra, & Bobbin Head. Coffee and return. Long climbs and descents.NOTES: cancelled if raining
18/12/2010 Saturday	Wend Your Way to Wyong Tortoise	<i>Grade:</i> Medium Hard <i>Distance:</i> 80 <i>Pace:</i> relaxed <i>Contact :</i> Robyn Tuft 9144 1325 <i>Starts at :</i> 07:30:00 Berowra stn. Long & hilly ride on country roads to Wyong via Peats Ridge & Yarramalong. Ret by train.
19/12/2010 Sunday	Miss Australia	<i>Grade:</i> Medium <i>Distance:</i> 38 <i>Pace:</i> gentle <i>Contact :</i> Ian Meller 0419 621 848

	Ride	<i>Starts at</i> : 07:30:00 St Thomas Rest Park, West St , Crows Nest. Ride on quiet roads to Spit Bridge, then on to Tania Oval at Balgowlah Heights. On return visit Georges Heights and Bradleys Head. 'NOTES: Will be cancelled if raining
19/12/2010 Sunday	Carlingford Rail	<i>Grade:</i> Easy Medium <i>Distance:</i> 20 <i>Pace:</i> gentle <i>Contact</i> : Darryn Capes-Davis 0406 380 862 <i>Starts at</i> : 09:00:00 Carlingford Station. Ride from Carlingford Station to Parramatta Park via Oatlands. Return via Rydalmere following Carlingford railway line back to Carlingford Station
19/12/2010 Sunday	Three Gorges Pies	<i>Grade:</i> Hard <i>Distance:</i> 75 <i>Pace:</i> fast <i>Contact</i> : Doug Stewart 9874 5594 <i>Starts at</i> : 07:00:00 Hornsby Park, opposite Coronation St, near pool. Hard, hilly ride through Galston Gorge, Arcadia, Berowra Waters to Pie in The Sky for coffee. Return via Bobbin Head to Hornsby.
29/12/2010 Wednesday	Naremburn to Cronulla	<i>Grade:</i> Medium <i>Distance:</i> 46 <i>Pace:</i> relaxed <i>Contact</i> : Bob Chambers 9449 9112 <i>Starts at</i> : 00:00:00 Naremburn Shops, Willoughby Rd and Rohan St. An interesting ride across Sydney using mostly quiet roads and Cycleways. Lunch in Cronulla before catching train home.NOTES: Call to Confirm
01/01/2011 Saturday	Olympic Park Ride	<i>Grade:</i> Easy <i>Distance:</i> 25 <i>Pace:</i> relaxed <i>Contact</i> : Doug Stewart 9874 5594 <i>Starts at</i> : 10:30:00 Meadowbank Wharf. Loop around Homebush Bay with a coffee stop. Suitable for beginners and children OVER 12 accompanied by an adult carer.NOTES: Start the year on yer bike
02/01/2011 Sunday	North to West Head	<i>Grade:</i> Hard <i>Distance:</i> 91 <i>Pace:</i> brisk <i>Contact</i> : Doug Stewart 9874 5594 <i>Starts at</i> : 07:00:00 Eastwood Station, East side. Hilly ride via Browns w/h, Terrey Hills, West Head, Akuna Bay (coffee). Return a similar route.
05/01/2011 Wednesday	Bays and Bridges	<i>Grade:</i> Easy Medium <i>Distance:</i> 45 <i>Pace:</i> gentle <i>Contact</i> : Bob Chambers 9449 9112 <i>Starts at</i> : 00:00:00 special start: Naremburn Shops, Willoughby Rd and Rohan St. Scenic loop ride via bridges and bays around Sydney Harbour. Gore Hill cycle path, Gladesville Bridge, Iron Cove, Blackwattle Bay, Walsh Bay, SHB and return to St Leonards. Cycle paths, quiet and a few busy streets, some hills.NOTES: Call to confirm
08/01/2011 Saturday	A to C and Back	<i>Grade:</i> Medium <i>Distance:</i> 30 <i>Pace:</i> relaxed <i>Contact</i> : Graeme Edwards 9436 0969 <i>Starts at</i> : 07:30:00 Artarmon Station, East side. Hilly ride to Balmoral and Middle Head. After coffee return to Artarmon.
08/01/2011 Saturday	Brooklyn Brunch	<i>Grade:</i> Hard <i>Distance:</i> 90 <i>Pace:</i> brisk <i>Contact</i> : Doug Stewart 9874 5594 <i>Starts at</i> : 07:00:00 Eastwood Station, East side. Ride Bobbin Head, then Brooklyn for brunch. Return via Hornsby & Turramurra. Fit, experienced riders only.
09/01/2011 Sunday	Hills and Surfside	<i>Grade:</i> Hard <i>Distance:</i> 80 <i>Pace:</i> brisk <i>Contact</i> : Malcolm Hart 9713 1994 <i>Starts at</i> : 07:00:00 Eastwood Station, East side. Ride to Pymble, St Ives, Oxford Falls & Narrabeen. Return via Warriewood, Church Point, Terrey Hills & Turramurra. Fit & experienced riders only.NOTES: cancelled if raining
09/01/2011 Sunday	Concord for Cake	<i>Grade:</i> Easy <i>Distance:</i> 28 <i>Pace:</i> gentle <i>Contact</i> : Debbie Edwards 9436 0969 <i>Starts at</i> : 07:30:00 Meadowbank Wharf. Ride along the Parramatta Valley Cycleway, over Silverwater bridge to Sydney Olympic Park, then on to Concord for coffee. Return via Brays Park and the John Whitton bridge.
15/01/2011	Covert	<i>Grade:</i> Easy Medium <i>Distance:</i> 24 <i>Pace:</i> gentle

Saturday	Operation	<i>Contact : Philip Griffiths 02 9674 7347</i> <i>Starts at : 07:30:00 Epping Station, East side.</i> Ride via Macquarie Uni and Epping Rd bicycle path to Lane Cove. Return via North Ryde
15/01/2011 Saturday	Akuna Bay and Church Point	<i>Grade: Hard Distance: 80 Pace: brisk</i> <i>Contact : Malcolm Hart 9713 1994</i> <i>Starts at : 07:00:00 Eastwood Station, East side.</i> Ride via de Burghs Br, Pymble, Terrey Hills, Akuna Bay, Church Pt (coffee). Return via Turramurra. Fast pace.NOTES: cancelled if raining
16/01/2011 Sunday	Paddington Green	<i>Grade: Easy Medium [no data] Distance: 25 Pace: slow spin</i> <i>Contact : Alison Pryor 9874 2383</i> <i>Starts at : 08:00:00 North Sydney station.</i> Ride through city and meander through Centennial Park and Paddington. Coffee stop enroute.
16/01/2011 Sunday	The Gorge and Berowra	<i>Grade: Medium Hard Distance: 45 Pace: moderate</i> <i>Contact : Darryn Capes-Davis 0406 380 862</i> <i>Starts at : 07:00:00 Hornsby Park, opposite Coronation St, near pool.</i> Ride through Galston Gorge, rural Arcadia & on to scenic Berowra Waters. After coffee, ride via Berowra & Pac. Hwy to Hornsby
19/01/2011 Wednesday	Breakfast Point Punt	<i>Grade: Easy Distance: 17 Pace: relaxed</i> <i>Contact : Bob Chambers 9449 9112</i> <i>Starts at : 00:00:00 Meadowbank Wharf.</i> Cross Parramatta river on John Whitton Bridge , ride through Rhodes and Concord West through to Cabarita Ferry Wharf then Breakfast Point for coffee. Cross the river on the Putney Punt and return to Meadowbank on the riverfront route.NOTES: Call to Confirm
23/01/2011 Sunday	Breakfast Point Punt	<i>Grade: Easy Distance: 17 Pace: gentle</i> <i>Contact : Darryn Capes-Davis 0406 380 862</i> <i>Starts at : 09:00:00 Meadowbank Wharf.</i> Cross Parramatta river on John Whitton Bridge , ride through Rhodes and Concord West through to Cabarita Ferry Wharf then Breakfast Point for coffee. Cross the river on the Putney Punt and return to Meadowbank on the riverfront route.
26/01/2011 Wednesday	Parramatta Park Parade	<i>Grade: Easy Medium Distance: 35 Pace: relaxed</i> <i>Contact : Alison Pryor 9874 2383</i> <i>Starts at : 09:00:00 Meadowbank Wharf.</i> Ride along the PVC to Parramatta Park. Do a lap or two of the park before coffee, then return via M4 c/p.NOTES: Australia Day Ride - Parramatta Ride featuring a historic buildings theme Coffee stop likely to be at Elizabeth Farm Cafe
29/01/2011 Saturday	Colonial Parks	<i>Grade: Easy Medium [no data] Distance: 31 Pace: gentle</i> <i>Contact : Philip Griffiths 02 9674 7347</i> <i>Starts at : 07:30:00 Castle Hill Heritage Park, Heritage Park Drive, Castle Hill.</i> Ride from Castle Hill Heritage Park, the site of the Irish convict rebellion, to Bella Vista Farm which was first established in the late 1700's and eventually sold to the North Sydney Tile and Brick Company
30/01/2011 Sunday	Mirambeena Magic	<i>Grade: Medium Distance: 72 Pace: relaxed</i> <i>Contact : Alison Pryor 9874 2383</i> <i>Starts at : 07:30:00 Meadowbank Wharf.</i> Head west along the PVC and the M4 cycleway (under M4) to visit the picturesque lakes of Mirambeena Regional Park at Lansdowne and on to Liverpool Plaza
30/01/2011 Sunday	Bobbo Banana	<i>Grade: Hard Distance: 55 Pace: fast</i> <i>Contact : Darryn Capes-Davis 0406 380 862</i> <i>Starts at : 07:00:00 special start: Eastwood Station, East side.</i> Ride to Bobbin Head via Kissing Point Rd and return.