

# Chain Mail



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**Editor:** *Gloria Blonde*

**Production:** *Keith Griffin*

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.

## Thank you! Good-bye! Welcome!

Good news – we can welcome new members to the Comms team - more to follow. Sad news – we are saying good-bye and THANKS to 2 members of the Comms team.

Firstly to Stacey Ward, who capably filled Keith's shoes when she took on the Chainmail publisher role last year. Stacey was quick off the mark and had Chainmail up in record time. Work and life commitments have meant that Stacey couldn't continue in her publisher role. THANKS Stacey! We expect to see you around at BN events and hope you might return to committee roles in the future.

Secondly, to Jen Gilmore, Editor of Chainmail since March 2006 – a lengthy time of service to the BN cycling community. After taking on the very time consuming role of 'mom', Jen changed to job-share mode and has done so since 2008. This arrangement has worked really well with Jen being able to flex editions, as well as easily handing over and/or receiving back stories for alternate editions of Chainmail. Jen is moving to Germany with her husband and daughter. We hope she will keep in touch by telling us about cycling adventures and facilities while in Germany and possibly other European escapades. Good luck Jen – we are jealous!

These photos were taken at the Dunc Gray Velodrome and show riders who know what they are doing!



Looking behind in a sprint, Australia vs NZ



After the race, relaxed congratulations



Hammering in the sprinter's lane

## Pure Cycling

by Keith Griffin

Following at least two years of procrastination, the celestial bodies finally aligned such that I was forced to honour the threat I made to myself to ride a track bike on Sydney's Dunc Gray Velodrome.

Of course, this requires a track bike which has certain big differences (and several others not mentioned here) from the bikes most of us ride on roads and cycleways:

- the bikes have no gears
- the bikes cannot freewheel, so you pedal all the time
- the bikes have no brakes.

Cycling around a velodrome also means:

- navigation is really easy, and
- every 250 metres the scenery, such as it is, repeats.

Having watched the world's best rocket around, worked in the "Sky Box" (operating scoreboard) and done various other odd jobs around the track meant I was not intimidated by the venue.

After paying the princely sums of \$10 for bike hire and \$10 for use of the track\*, I chose a suitable Hillbrick track bike, fitted my pedals and adjusted the seat height, then waited for the "old blokes" I was with to get ready.

The guys were deep in conversation so I just held onto the railing, clipped in, and cycled up the ramp and onto the apron. A few laps slowly on the apron helped the voices in my head to raise their volume. The voices had to keep saying "Do not stop pedalling". After a while I zipped up onto the wooden boards of the track and did a few laps. Even right down at the very bottom of the track the corners (banked at 43 degrees) are VERY scary, and I quickly learned to accelerate into the corners to keep the bike fast enough.

The feeling of having no brakes took no time at all to master, but I did scare myself twice by attempting to coast! Odd how the brain works in such cases. It should have told me to start pedalling but instead it panicked and just did not want to pedal... argghhhh! Maybe I should have paid another \$10 for a track-oriented brain. Luckily this was a fleeting moment and I stayed upright.

After a while, the other guys were riding around, not too fast but neatly, just building distance. I was not confident to ride close behind so I sat 2 bike lengths back and kept the pace. It's so much easier than on the road as you know no-one can stop or even freewheel, there are no pot-holes, no wind, no cars, pedestrians or dogs, just pure cycling.

I took a rest - which may sound easy - but that means pulling off the track at the proper place, slowing the bike by not pushing the pedals, and even using leg power to slow it more quickly, and then pulling up to the railing still clipped in with pedals turning, and making it look as if you've done it before!

After a brief pause, I started off again and decided to build up some speed. It's so easy to get moving on the straights, and then in the corner the bike just turns itself. I moved up above the red line, and pushed harder. The corners are much less scary at higher speeds (under 30km/hr I was warned I would fall off), and I learned to look further ahead and not to worry about the steep slope under me. Passing slower riders who were lower down on the track is weird - they are just so far down. Then I decided to catch one of the more experienced guys who was riding above the blue line, half way up the track. To my surprise this was not as scary as predicted, and I soon caught and passed my friend.

A new piece of wiring was added to my brain and I began to feel easy about relaxing when I wished to slow, rather than freewheeling as I would on the road. The lack of clutter on a track bike is wonderful. There is nothing to play with or look at so you just ride.

It would take me several more sessions to become confident enough to ride in a close formation swapping turns on the corners, and longer still be confident to race, but, I am sure it would be great fun. If you've never tried the track and you have a licence, give it a go. If you've not seen velodrome racing, you've missed a very exciting spectacle. We have one of the world's great velodromes here in Sydney - so use it as a rider and/or spectator. See you there one day.

\* you must hold a CA licence to use the track

## Peter's Predicament

*A case study prepared by Debbie Edwards, Accredited Practising Dietitian*

It has been very interesting reading the wide variety of information and advice that has been so generously shared in response to Peter's predicament, from within our cycling fraternity and sorority.

To recap - this was Peter's experience sent out on BN Chat

*Today I had the infrequent but not unfamiliar experience of "hitting the wall" on Brooklyn Brunch. I know some of the prerequisites that set me up for this, but if I knew all of them I'd be better able to avoid it happening. One consistent factor is pushing the pace just a little above my comfort zone - I'll ride all day (160 km +) at my own pace, but raising it just a little too much leads to empty legs that I can't seem to refill. Another possible factor (not so sure of this one) is eating too much, which can be just as bad as eating too little (especially if I make up for too little earlier with too much later). Obviously general fitness and stamina help, but I don't think that was a problem today given my recent level of exercise (not all on the bike, but some pretty serious workouts of one sort or another)*

*What other advice do people have for avoiding the dreaded wall?*

He provided some further information in relation to some of the responses as follows:

*... It leaves me feeling very heavy in the stomach and empty in the legs, and my folk-science explanation to myself is that my body is too busy digesting to bother sending blood and energy to my leg muscles. However, I also note Debbie's comment about it possibly being the wrong sort of food rather than too much. I have an Aust Inst of Sport book on nutrition for sports performance which is mainly about "short sports" rather than the endurance activity that we do, but I did glean the valuable information that for endurance sports one should eat 30-50 g of carbohydrate per hour. When I've done that properly (not last Saturday) it's worked really well. On Saturday I ate nothing in the first 70 km (3 h) then ate up big - very badly organised, but there were unrelated minor incidents that distracted me from eating earlier. My personal experience is that once my legs have been emptied it takes a lot more than a bit of a feed to refill them - it also takes a lot of time (hours) so eating up and hopping straight back on the bike leads to Saturday's result. Maybe just my personal idiosyncrasy. Until I wrote this I hadn't realised quite how far I'd ridden without food intake, so perhaps that's the answer to my original question.*

I will try to put everything into perspective and will also draw on some of the excellent responses by way of example.

Firstly, hitting the wall is a sobering and, quite frankly, a scary experience that occurs literally when the athlete runs out of fuel eg has completely depleted muscle glycogen stores, forcing the body to depend on utilising fat stores and blood glucose for energy. Unfortunately the rate at which the muscles 'suck up' the blood glucose is faster than the liver can synthesise glucose from fat stores causing blood glucose levels to drop with the ensuing symptoms occurring - feeling of heaviness/deadness in the legs, and central nervous system fatigue which may include dizziness, mental confusion, and an overwhelming tiredness or desire to sleep. This is the body's defence to allow some catch up in glucose synthesis by the liver and to allow for glucose, the body's essential fuel source, to continue to support the vital organs. Obviously the addition of exogenous fuel (food and fluids) will assist in reversing the symptoms very quickly.

Peter provided us with some valuable insight into what factors most likely contributed to his predicament:

*pushing the pace just a little above my comfort zone*

This statement is very telling particularly when Peter has indicated that he can usually ride all day with no apparent ill effects. What is happening here is that his effort has increased, requiring a higher energy output which is not being matched with energy input (food and fluid).

*raising it just a little too much leads to empty legs that I can't seem to refill*

Peter, due to a series of events, did not commence re-fuelling until the 70km mark in the ride. Unfortunately this is way too late. It is not possible to "catch-up" in this instance and with the additional effort required pushed him into energy deficit prior to "hitting the wall".

*I can't seem to refill Re-filling is only part of the picture. What we eat everyday is just as important (see comment below).*

*..... general fitness and stamina help, but I don't think that was a problem today given my recent level of exercise (not all on the bike, but some pretty serious workouts of one sort or another)*

This statement brings in a number of other facets that need to be considered. The fact that Peter was doing a lot of other exercise (non bike) is telling. If the activities were things like day long bush walks, kayaking, strenuous gardening/house maintenance where a large amount of energy was used up – the same refuelling and hydration "rules" apply, to ensure usual energy needs are met (including extra energy intake for the activity), replenishment of muscle glycogen and hydration. This needs to be done on a daily basis and not left to the night before. Muscle glycogen stores need replenishing after exercise. The window of opportunity is within the first two hours after exercise where carbohydrate is converted to glycogen faster than normal. It takes about 20 hours to replace all the muscle glycogen used after endurance or training session. The recommended rate is 1-2 g CHO/Kg body weight within the two hours and then continue with usual eating pattern. For most people this would be between 50–100g of CHO (depending on their weight). This can be consumed as just fluids or a combination of food and fluids.

*It leaves me feeling very heavy in the stomach and empty in the legs, and my folk-science explanation to myself is that my body is too busy digesting to bother sending blood and energy to my leg muscles*

Digestion does increase blood flow to around the small intestine with less servicing the large muscle groups. However, it also depends on the composition of the food being eaten. Carbohydrate (CHO) foods are digested more quickly than protein foods with fats taking the longest. One of the respondents indicated that he avoids high fat foods such as muffins. I would also add to the list croissants, savoury pies, sausage rolls, big breakfasts that include fried egg, sausages, bacon, hash browns and other high fat takeaway type foods. Having listed these – there are riders who do eat these foods with no apparent ill effect ,however if they were to ramp up to a higher paced ride, they may find that they do suffer from gastrointestinal discomfort and notice a reduction in their usual energy levels – then again they just might not!!!



## Breakfast

High fibre carbohydrate foods can leave one feeling heavy in the stomach so instead of high fibre multigrain bread/toast or muesli (with every grain, nut and dried fruit under the sun added to it), try wholemeal bread/toast, or porridge (not the instant packet type) with fresh or dried fruit added. The change in fibre content alone (similar CHO intake) may be enough to alleviate these symptoms.

Also timing of breakfast can be an issue. One respondent stated that food should not be consumed 3 hours prior to exercise. This is not quite correct. Food can be consumed prior to exercise. Most of our rides start early in summer, so we would have to get up at 4:30am for breakfast for a 7:30am start. This is why most sporting events start at sensible times of the day allowing athletes to have a good breakfast and then eat and drink to their pre-event plans appropriately. The Tour de France riders don't start before 11:00am every day!!

We do need to eat breakfast but the trick is to ensure we eat AT LEAST 50g of carbohydrate if our brekkie is an hour or so before we start riding. Less than this and our physiological response to exercise can be a sudden drop in blood glucose level initially accompanied by heavy legs – this does rectify itself but is not good for fast paced rides or racing.

So what does 50g CHO translate into for brekkie:

- 4 Wheat biscuit cereal (Weetbix or Vitabrits) + 300mls milk or soy beverage
- 2 Wheat biscuit cereal (Weetbix or Vitabrits) + 300mls milk + 1 slice toast/marg + 1 tablespoon jam
- 1 ½ cups flake type cereal + 300mls milk
- 1 ½ cups cooked porridge made with water + 300mls milk
- 2 crumpets + 200mls unsweetened juice
- 2 slices toast with scrape marg/butter + 1 ½ tsp jam/marmalade or honey + cup of tea/coffee or glass of water
- 300ml chocolate milk + 1 slice toast with marg + 1 Tbsp jam
- ¾ cup fresh fruit salad + 200g reduced fat yoghurt + cup tea of tea/coffee or glass of water

There are many, many other combinations and permutations for breakfast. Many female riders would probably not eat quite this much but if they are riding the harder paced rides, they should be aiming for this.

Another comment was made about struggling to eat breakfast – a quite common issue – so experiment with different types of breakfast until you find one (or more) that sits comfortably with you. Use this as your platform for commencing energy consumption for the day.

Commercial liquid breakfast substitutes are also a good option although these can contain a fair amount of fructose (fruit sugar). This can cause wind, bloating and embarrassing flatulence for some people so again trial and error.

Check food labels – find out the "total carbohydrate" content per serve, not just "sugar" per serve.

Another respondent mentioned the issue of using low and high GI (glycaemic index) foods. There is another whole article on this – suffice to say low GI CHO foods provide sustained energy (slow release of glucose) whereas high GI foods provide quick release of energy.

*but I did glean the valuable information that for endurance sports one should eat 30-50 g of carbohydrate per hour. When I've done that properly (not last Saturday) it's worked really well.*

Now we get into the meat of the discussion. Peter states that when he eats (according to the current science), it works, and I would expect it to. In this scenario, however, the bad planning gods were in his court with the consequence of hitting the wall as a result.

The **general** rule of thumb is 30-60g of CHO per hour, but **for endurance events or the harder BN** rides such as the one Peter was on, the level is 1g CHO/Kg body weight/hour. So refuelling should start in the first hour of riding – and this is where Peter came unstuck. If, for example, Peter weighs 75Kg (I don't know what Peter weighs!), he would need to consume the equivalent of 75g of CHO per hour x 4 hours (duration of ride) = 300g CHO.

This can be achieved using regular foods but the judicious use of some of the sport drinks, gels and bars can be useful especially on long rides, as they tend to be lighter, easier to carry and often easier to consume (eg gels are very small amounts).

Eating familiar foods is best as long as you can carry them on the bike or in your jersey pocket (for ease of grazing whilst riding). Examples include:

- fruit, especially bananas
- sandwiches, could be Vegemite, jam, or a protein
- homemade muffins (that way you can control the fat content)
- fruitcake (Jane and Tamika swear by their fruitcake muffins)
- Anzac bikkies (mine are a bit like concrete and don't crumble too badly)
- Fran's rockcakes (recipe provided in Chainmail and on Chat)
- muesli bars (check for adequate CHO content)
- v-dried fruit and nuts
- space food sticks
- mini chocolate bars (not good in the summer), and of course
- jelly beans, babies, and snake type lollies.

Achieving maximum benefit from food and fluid intake means starting early, learning to eat and drink whilst riding (practice makes perfect) and using any regroup stops to eat and drink more.

At coffee stops choose good sources of CHO – sports drinks, flavoured milk, smoothies or milkshakes, scones, sandwiches, raisin toast, cakes (not with too much cream), ice cream, rice pudding (available at some of our favourite coffee stops that truly cater for their cycling customers), fruit salad and yoghurt – the list is endless.

A word of caution – be careful of what you are carrying in hot weather especially if you are carrying meat sandwiches or items that can be affected by heat - to avoid food poisoning. Also be aware of items heated by your body heat if carried in jersey pockets.

Of course coffee is allowed and contrary to popular belief, caffeine intake before/during exercise DOES NOT impair fluid delivery or hydration characteristics (fluid retention or urine output) during prolonged cycling (Millard-Stafford et al. Int J Sport Nutr Exer Metab 17: 163 – 77 2007). In fact caffeine can enhance performance in certain circumstances in cycling.

The trick is to graze whilst riding or as Fran succinctly wrote "ride and gobble". It IS hard to eat sufficiently well on the hard rides so it is important to drink and eat some carbohydrates whilst riding and then make sensible CHO and fluid choices at coffee stops.

*..Saturday I ate nothing in the first 70 km (3 h) then ate up big - very badly organised, but there were unrelated minor incidents that distracted me from eating earlier*

This statement describes succinctly what went wrong. No refuelling as described in above notes. Eating up big unfortunately will not compensate for or make up the deficit.

*Until I wrote this I hadn't realised quite how far I'd ridden without food intake, so perhaps that's the answer to my original question*

I rest my case – Peter has simply answered his original question.

Part 2 will follow in the next issue of Chainmail where I will talk more about hydration and a range of other issues to think about. Watch this space!

# Saddle Surveys

by Alison Pryor

This is one of the enjoyable advocacy jobs that work groups can take on. It is a simple task of riding a newly constructed path providing comments back to Council / RTA / construction company.



Alf checking the path meets the required regional path width



David at Epping Rd path saddle survey



Phil, Alistair and Ali on Cox's Rd saddle survey

Preferably, members of the cycling organisation will have been asked to provide comment at the preliminary and detail planning phases. The completion survey checks the new facility provides a good and safe cycling experience. Test riders note any aspects that may need rectification in terms of connectivity, edges, flush service covers, directional signage, logo marking etc.

Ryde work work group conducted two saddle surveys in the past 12 months: the extension to Epping Road cycle path / Wicks and Waterloo Rds to Macquarie Park Station, and earlier in the year , the M2 bypass implementing a mostly on-road local route on Cox's , Kent and Agincourt Rds in North Ryde.

For reference, this is the list of things to consider in a Shared Path design audit / saddle survey From [Dept of Main Roads in WA](#)



Checking connectivity to the overpass into Macquarie Park employment area

- **General items:** Landscaping / Reticulation / Parking / Temporary Works / Headlight Glare / Conflict Between Paths Users
- **Alignment and Cross Section:** Visibility, Sight Distances / Design Speed / Overtaking Readability by Users / Widths / Edges / Kerbs
- **Intersections:** Location/ Warning / Control / Layout / Visibility, Sight Distances / Intersections with roads
- **Signs and Lighting:** Lighting / Signs / Marking and Delineation
- **Traffic Signals:** Operation / Push Buttons / Sensor Loops
- **Physical Objects:** Fences and Guard Rails / Bollards / Chicanes / General Obstructions
- **Pavements:** Pavement Defects / Skid Resistance / Ponding

## Epping to Gosford

By "Flash" (aka Marjorie Au)

"Here's a different and challenging ride!" I thought as I scanned the BN Ride Calendar to see a Fran Griffin-led ride. "Mmm, graded Hard at a Brisk pace (ie. 22-24kph).....ouch!"

Well, nothing ventured is nothing gained, and worst-case scenario I would be turning around at Mt White and catching the train back from Brooklyn whilst the others pressed on, so, with a hint of trepidation, I fronted up at Epping Station at 7.15am on that fresh Sunday morning.

Fellow cyclists either had more than a "hint" of trepidation or took full advantage of the smorgasbord of other BN rides scheduled for that day, because Fran was only able to convince one other rider (her other half, or Mr Fran Griffin as it turned out) to participate. Nevertheless, we did indeed set out jauntily and with great intent to "Go North" just as the Bike North jersey proclaims in its vivid tangerine and lavender font.

Warm up, what warm up? We quickly descended Brown's Waterhole and not so quickly ascended the adverse side. From there, it was onto Kissing Point Road. This could be considered a climb of middling difficulty when compared to the other BN rides' favorite climbs, but has a nasty pinch of 17% in the penultimate stage....huff n' puff, wheeze n' splutter....pause to catch a breath or two (or call for paramedics) then a quick sprint up the Pacific Hwy to Hornsby.

Here we sailed past Ride Leader Craig NRS's inaugural Pie in the Sky entourage and despite our hails of "Anyone for Gosford?" no-one boarded the Griffin Train. Obviously they were enticed by crisp sugary bites into warm apple-pie-lusciousness at the coffee stop overlooking Brooklyn rather than by the physical and mental torture required to conquer Mount White....really, I couldn't see why...

Fran, Mr Fran and I stopped briefly to snatch some sustenance at the Pie itself (no relaxing pie-rific sweetness or meatness for us). We were soon cruising down to the smooth sweeping macadam curves towards the Hawkesbury River. Luckily I didn't stop to think too hard about it: this was going to be the last descent for a very long time...

Mount White loomed – kicking off at a 9% grind but then leveling off. The elevation at Road Warriors Café was in the region of 240m above sea level. Phew, made it! Time to grab some more water and continue on past Calga - for me, into "unknown territory".

We couldn't have asked for a more congenial day – toasty sunshine, bluebird skies and a cooling zephyr of a breeze. The terrain undulated as we entered the landscape that yielded the crystal spring water of Peat's Ridge and Mangrove Mountain. Suburbia gave way to the green fields of semi-rural farm holdings. Equines, bovines and ovines grazed and gazed in smug amusement at the trio of cyclists pedaling past.

Just as blood sugar levels were dipping, the Corrugated Café at Peats Ridge came into view and a well-earned respite was taken after climbing another 100m above Calga. The no-nonsense menu of burgers, sangers, and sweet treats was a revelation in portion sizes. Fran's pancake with golden syrup was the size of a pillow and just as fluffy. The cappuccinos looked like miniature UFOs in brown ceramic landed on the table. The burgers were real meat patties!



Is this pancake really big enough?

Tanks refueled we headed up George Downs Drive to Central Mangrove where we turned southeast along Wiseman's Ferry Road and then into the unusually named Dog Trap Road. Didn't see any Dog Traps but watch out for the "wheel traps" as there were a few potholes to catch the unwary along this otherwise peaceful route. Then glimpses of the Central Coast and Pacific Ocean emerged through the trees on our left as our speed increased and the elevation fell away.

Crossing over the F3 for the last time, the road dropped sharply into North Gosford. No time to check your brakes, just grip tightly, hang on and pray the rims and rubber hold; then you're home free on the last few pedal strokes to Gosford Station itself. Time to catch the 1 o'clock train back to Sydney and contemplate another satisfying day in the saddle. Another hill climbed. Another kilometer under the wheel. Another coffee consumed and another day enjoying the camaraderie of the Bike North cycling family.

# Ride and Gobble No 1 - Fran's Rock (aka concrete) Cakes

(not gluten free)

## Ingredients:

### Cement

- 250 g butter (or less if you want to keep fat content down)
- 1 cup brown sugar (white works too, so would honey)
- 2 eggs
- 2 large cups self raising flour
- 1/4 - 1/2 cup milk

### Aggregate

- 1 tbsp jam or marmalade (optional, this is a good way to use up those bits of jam that nobody wants at the bottom of the bottle)
- 1 cup mixed dried fruit (or more if it looks a bit mean when you mix it all up)
- 1 cup chokky chips (optional, but essential really)
- 1/2 cup nuts roughly crushed, eg walnuts, hazelnuts, whatever you like

Add anything else that you reckon might be interesting (not coconut in things like this - gets caught in your throat too easily)



Aggregate stuff ready, concrete mixed in the bowl



Ingredients must be added with panache

## Method:

Cream butter and sugar, add eggs separately and beat. Add sifted flour and milk alternately, until it looks like a nice cake mix (experience assumed here).

Add aggregate and mix well. Adjust quantities to taste. Spoon on to greased or baking paper covered trays (keep small if the cakes are for riding).

Cook in moderate oven until cooked through (about 20 - 30 mins).

These cakes are not feather light, and are rough and ready food, but they are yummy. The quantities are approximate, put in what looks and feels about right. Makes about 48 rock cakes



The cook gets to lick the beaters of course

Nutritional analysis prepared by Debbie Edwards.

Per rockcake (wt 33g)  
Carbohydrate 15g  
Protein 1.6g  
Fat 7.3g  
Fibre 0.8g  
Sodium 84.3g

Other good recipes can be found [here](#)



Ready to gobble

Ride and cook