

# Freewheeling

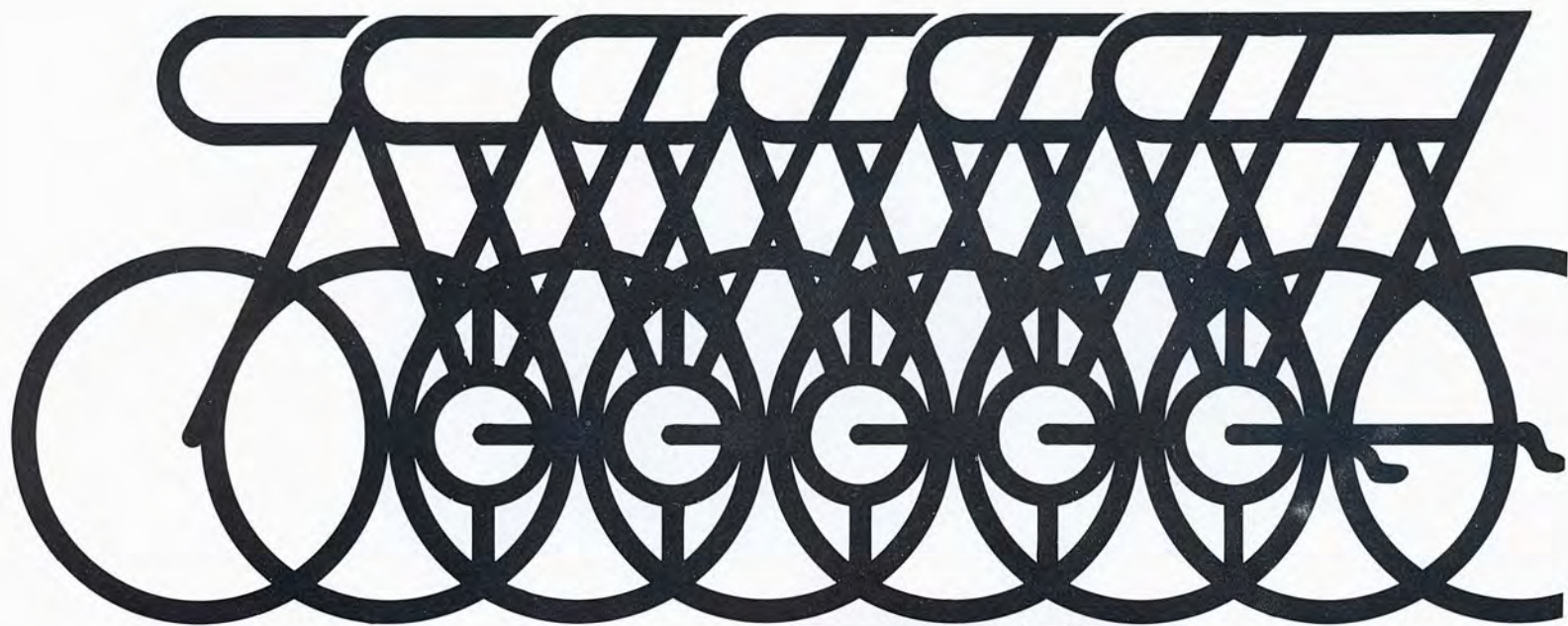
NUMBER 8 \$2.00\*

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in the 1890's



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# 8 Freewheeling



AUGUST 1980

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Our cover photograph: Francis Birtles atop his bicycle (c.1909) rigged out for one of his  
around Australia journeys. Birtles' exploits were featured in *Freewheeling* 6. In this issue we  
feature his contemporary Jerome J. Murif. *This page*: Birtles ready to leave Darwin and the  
tropical north. Both photographs are from Birtles book *Lonley Lands*. See *Write on* column  
in this issue for more about this interesting character.

## CONTENTS

Write On	2
Reclaim the Road	5
The Man with Rubber Pedals	7
The Epic Ride of Jerome J. Murif	10
Cycling Energetically	12
Riding Tasmania's East Coast Road - a bicycle traveller's guide	15
Your Freewheeling Subscription form	25
Brisboys to Binna Burra	27
Beyond the 'Pub With No Beer'	28
East Coast Bicycle Route Bulletin	30
Into the Eighties — Bikecentennial leads the way	33
Bicycle Life in the Outback	36
A Spanner a Day Keeps the Repairman Away	38
Books	40

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# Write On

## Lights and the Law

Two weeks ago while riding at night, wearing a reflective safety vest and flashing leg light, a car came from a "GIVE WAY" sign and into me.

Not only have I collected a crumpled bike, a broken nose and dislocated shoulder but am also being charged for having no lights.

So, night riders if you are unaware, like me, that legally lights must be attached to your bike — be warned. Otherwise you might find yourself uncovered legally and therefore financially when some negligent motorist collects you.

Amanda Holt  
Glebe 2037

## The Water Board Backwash

I refer to your December 1979 edition of *Freewheeling* and in particular the article entitled "Forbidden Fruit" by Mr. Jim Smith.

That article, apart from describing what is in fact an illegal trip, presents

several misconceptions regarding entry to the area. I wish to present the Board's comments in point form hereunder.

1. Access to the area is via seven commonly used routes only one of which the Board has placed out of bounds, i.e. that fire road running along the foreshore of Lake Burragorang.
2. The "forbidden zone" referred to in the article, is only that area within 3km of stored water of Lake Burragorang to which the Board prohibits entry. Otherwise the Board does not limit entry to the area.
3. The descent down the Wild Dog Mountains and up Mt. Cookem passes through the 3km zone. However, as this is a recognised walkers track, the Board allows free travel along such corridor (overnight camping is prohibited here, as elsewhere).
4. Fishing in the Board's inner catchment area is prohibited by the Board's By-Law 13 and unless the person had an Inland Fishing Licence, would also be against the Fisheries Act.

5. The route from the Wollondilly River to Picton passes through the 3km zone and thus entry is prohibited.

6. Should cyclists wish to clarify any of these points or others regarding entry to the area they should contact the Board's Forestry Office on (02) 632 0311.

S.R. Smith, Secretary,  
Metropolitan Water Sewerage  
and Drainage Board.

## Birdwatching by Bike

Sydney's recent petrol shortages put a restriction on many birdwatchers' weekend jaunts. So dependent have we become on the motor car, particularly as some of the spots are miles from trains and buses. But a shortage of petrol need not necessarily mean no birds and, so, with a bicycling mate of mine we set out to prove it.

We cycled from Greystanes to Blacktown railway station and caught the train to Richmond. Alighting at Windsor, we cycled back to McGrath's Hill sewer farm to start watching. Here we saw many birds including the Wood Sandpiper. It was 9.30 a.m. before we knew it. We cycled along through Scheyville to Mitchell Park and further out to O'Brien's Rd, Cattai for lunch on the banks of the Hawkesbury River. The sun was hot and being thirsty, any money saved on petrol was devoured on soft drinks. How welcome were the lemon squashes at McGrath's Hill pub!

Many calls of feeding parties of birds were easily heard, and to stop, and lift the binoculars was so much easier than parking the car and climbing out to look. Also, birds of prey were much easier to spot. As a matter of fact, the only disadvantage I thought was that if we found an area "dead", it was a fair hike to another area.

Our 60km took us from a sewer pond and surrounding swamp, to ironbark forest, rainforest, heathland, riverside areas, grassland and agricultural areas. We crossed Hawkesbury Sandstone and Wiannamatta Shale country to river flats. With this variety of area we were rewarded with 103 species and the last one being the Brown Songlark in a lane-way near Bakers Lagoon.

We went through Richmond and a tour of some historical buildings normally given scant regard from the window of a fast moving car, down around Bakers Lagoon and on to Richmond station for the 4.30 p.m. train.

Certainly, it was tiring. We cycled just over 60km birdwatching and 10km can be added to and from the station

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so that meant 80km for the day, hardly a long way for 11 hours cycling. Perhaps we weren't fit enough, but a bicycle certainly is a marvellous way to go along. This was just an experiment, but I'm sure, if done continuously, new areas would be discovered and would be more intensively searched.

Trevor Qusted,  
Greystanes 2145

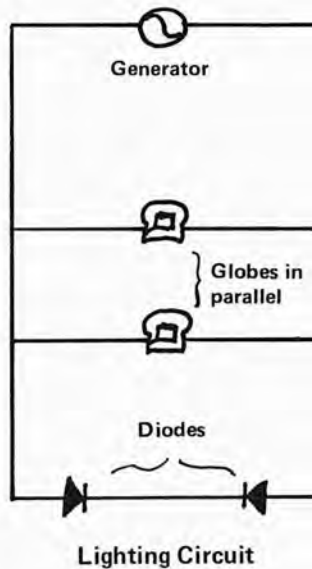
## Technical Tit-Bits

In return for much enjoyment in reading your magazine, I offer the following suggestions for your readers.

### Lighting

The legal standard for bicycle lights is not very bright. Try the following for really powerful lights, relatively lightweight, and next to zero running costs. Hatsune generators are rated at 6 volts/6 watts, but easily produce 8 watts. Wire one up to two Berc or Eveready headlights with two 7.2 volts 0.55 amps flange base globes. It may seem expensive but if you ride in night time traffic the results are impressive.

A simple way to reduce the incidence



of blown globes is shown in this circuit (see diagram). Use two 6 volts/5 watt Zener diodes (cost about \$1.00).

### Touring Wheels

When touring with a heavy load, considerations of rolling resistance and

bicycle responsiveness (sic.) are not very important. So try 26 x 1 3/8" tyres. They cushion road shocks well and the rougher the road the more you'll like them.

### Rear-view Mirrors

People ask, "Do they work?" Obviously a mirror cannot fail to reflect! What is meant is, "How much can you see?" Consider a 1" diameter mirror attached to the helmet 2 1/2" from the eye. By simple proportion one can see across a width of 10 feet at a distance of 25 feet, or a full lane width at 2-3 car lengths behind. They are worthwhile.

Anyone interested in coming along to the Paris-Brest-Paris in 1983?

Alan Walker,  
Elwood 3184.

It always strikes a jarring note when I ride through any city and rarely see rear vision mirrors on bicycles being ridden by "mature age" cyclists. Just stop and think how much a motorist relies on a mirror. There are many safety devices being employed by the cyclist today — including flags, and fluorescent jackets and ankle straps. The mirror provides the conditions under which the cyclist is not reliant on the good judgement of a following car driver. Especially in heavy traffic, the advantage of a mirror can readily be seen. Even on stretches of country road, where traffic is light, a mirror enables a rider to keep a continual check on what's happening behind without having to physically look behind.

Let's have more mirrors! John Correy,  
Hobart, 7000.

### Some Notes on Francis Birtles —

I read with some interest your article on Francis Birtles ('Lonely Lands' by Jim Smith) in *Freewheeling* No. 6. However, a few points made in the article were in error.

For one thing, the lead-in suggests that the 13-month ride was taken as a major epic, and at the end of the article Jim Smith said that Birtles 'didn't care to repeat his trip'. In fact Francis Birtles had already crossed the Nullarbor at least twice (once after intense heat forced him to abandon a Kalgoorlie/Alice Springs direct crossing). After the journey described in *Freewheeling* he then proceeded to cycle clear around the continent, and later pedalled yet again into the northern parts of the continent on one of the earliest cinematographic expeditions in that area. The film, made by a Gaumont photographer, was shown in Melbourne and Sydney in 1912. Unfortunately no known print still exists.

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# Write On

Also a very unfortunate statement was that 'Most of the route was over roads, stock routes, bullock tracks and bridle trails which had not been used by a bicycle before'. Quite the contrary. The route had been pedalled by numerous cyclists before. Frank White had done so by early 1900, and various parts had been ridden even earlier (the first Adelaide/Alice Springs ride was in 1896). In the book Birtles himself said that parts of the route were well-travelled, and in fact devoted only 4½ pages to the entire stretch from Alice Springs back to Sydney (via Adelaide and Melbourne).

Also Francis Birtles was *not* 'a modest fellow'. He was in fact a great publicity seeker, both for personal reasons and in attempts to raise money for his various ventures. He carried a camera with him and published the pictures with articles in numerous Australian magazines of the era. And, as I and other researchers into Birtle's life have found out, he was inclined to stretch the truth — so that one has to be careful to sort out the chaff from the wheat.

Nonetheless, I feel that *Freewheeling's* effort at reviewing a forgotten aspect of

Australian cycling history is commendable. You might have helped out your readers by pointing out that the book is now *very* hard to get. Copies are held in the Mitchell Library and National Library, and it is well worth reading. It is a little classic of Australiana.

Jim Fitzpatrick,  
Nedlands, W.A.

## Another Bicycle Club

I am pleased to inform you that a bicycle touring club has commenced in the North Shore area (of Sydney), called the North-side Touring Cycle Club. It offers cyclists the opportunity to be involved in recreational rides for pleasure and health as well as co-ordinating activities for improved conditions and facilities for cyclists in general.

The club officials are:

Doug Southern	85 4489	Pres.
John Cox	477 2080	V.Pres.
Glenn Allen	456 1266	Treas.
Paul Hulbert	456 2650	Sec.

all of whom can be contacted for further information.

Paul Hulbert,  
Berowra Heights 2082.

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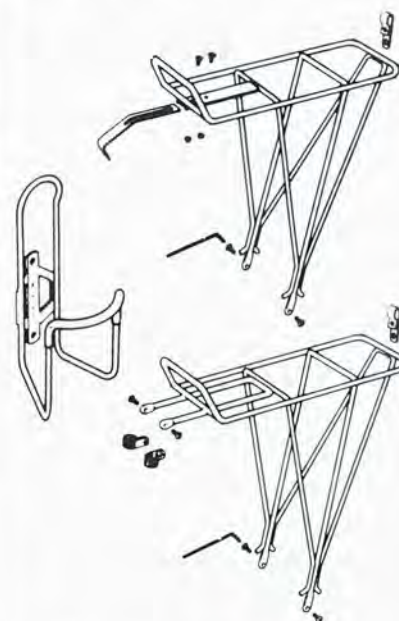
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# RECLAIM THE ROAD

## A WASTE OF OUR GOOD MONEY?

In New South Wales public money is at last being spent on improving the lot of the urban cyclist. We now have, it seems, our own State Bicycle Committee to oversee and advise on this expenditure. The Labor Premier Neville Wran has promised expenditure in the millions on the improvement of facilities for cyclists. Such promises seem hollow in the light of what has been happening in Sydney over the last few years.

For a start it is one thing for a politician such as Mr Wran who isn't a regular cyclist to promise that money will be spent, but it is another thing to see such money will be spent wisely and in the best interest to the actual bicycle riding public. Mr Wran should ensure firstly that bicycle riders are actively involved in any project. For example: when one looks at the composition of the recently formed State Bicycle Committee. The committee is composed of representatives from an amazing array of government departments and statutory authorities from the Department of Main Roads through to the *Health Commission*. In all, ten of these are represented with two local government people also on the committee. One would be excused of thinking that the motorised interests are overly represented to the exclusion of the cyclist. But you may rest easy as there are two committee members who are there to put forward the bicycle riders' views. The Bicycle Institute's seat on the committee is presently filled by Don Morrison and a ministers' appointee is Lennie Rodgers, a well known Sydney racing bicycle shop proprietor. Lennie Rodgers' shop is in Minister Cox's electorate.

So far the committee hasn't really shown much initiative or activity and looks like becoming bogged down in the usual bureaucratic morass. As the SBC is chaired (some might say controlled) by a ministry of transport official, it looks like becoming well integrated into what John Irwin calls the *industrial-bureaucratic-governmental transport system* — albeit bottom drawer.

Bicycle riders should object to this kind of treatment. Most of the SBC's members would have no idea what the real problems facing the urban cyclist are. Proof of this statement exists in the shoddy attempts at bike path design and construction evident in Sydney around Moore Park. The way the (non cyclist) designers overcome the problem of reducing the danger to cyclists in heavy traffic is to remove them from it entirely. One supposes that when those who actually use this path become sufficiently discouraged by the inadequate width (hardly enough to safely pass), dangerous posts in the middle of the path, broken

glass, and unresponsive and badly placed traffic signal equipment, they will stop using their bikes and the need to provide for safe cycling will disappear once and for all.

In Victoria, cyclists have seen the need to campaign for greater participation by actual bicycle users in any project by public bodies designed to improve cycling safety. This began with the Geelong Bike Plan and is continuing in the Melbourne Plan currently in progress. But activists there haven't had an easy time. Earlier this year cycle groups headed by the Bicycle Institute of Victoria struggled successfully to have control of their SBC wrested from the control of Transport Ministry bureaucrats and made into a genuinely independent body. Judging by the present composition of the NSW State Bicycle Committee such a move in this state would seem timely. Premier Wran should display his much vaunted political acumen by removing the SBC from Transport Department control by appointing an independent chairperson and restructuring the committee so that bicycle riders are at least adequately represented — say on a 50/50 basis. This would seem vital and in the long term interests of NSW bicycle users, especially as the Newcastle Bike plan progresses towards implementation stage and work begins in earnest on Sydney — after all who could say that anything has happened in Sydney to date? It is true that a lot of money has already been spent in Sydney so it is important that if more is to be invested then the actual users of the facilities provided should at least be consulted, and most importantly, *involved* in the planning process. Otherwise any hope of the bicycle becoming a viable alternative means of transport will be lost to this generation and probably others to come.

Future issues of *Freewheeling* will continue to review bicycle planning underway in this country in an effort to inform readers and hopefully activate bicycle riders into moving the administrators of the public purse in more useful directions.

Warren Salomon

## GREAT BLUNDERING BUREAUCRATS

The Melbourne Bike Plan discussed in *Freewheeling* 7 raises in me a certain disgust. There are a number of grounds for this:

Firstly it seems to represent a tendency to accept that the bike will be geared into the Industrial-bureaucratic-governmental transport system. If a few cyclists consciously want that, then we have a situation of unequivocal clinical lunacy, and nothing useful can be said about that here. If, however, a lot of cyclists are merely drifting towards accepting incorporation into the general transport system it might be timely to record a view which dissents from that acceptance.

For me, the great charm of the bike is individuality, mobility, and freedom from regulation. As things stand now, if you've got useable lungs and legs and the magic machine itself, you can launch out without prior permission from the bureaucracy. This is a rare and valuable and probably fragile situation. It probably results from official oversight. Getting noticed may well mean getting regulated. It could be a regulators ball —





compulsory helmets, luminous vests, pedal clearance, saddle height, registration and third party — the whole red tape wrapped catastrophe. Maybe Bike Plans make the sort of noises that attract that kind of attention.

Secondly, I'm not convinced that elaborate planning is necessary. I shouldn't be dogmatic about the Bayside area because I don't know it well. I do know the Northern and Eastern aspects of the city intimately, and I can say (with, I suppose, the usual dead certainty of contradiction) that this is very good for bike travel. Riding daily from Ivanhoe to the University, there is no difficulty in finding five or six quiet, pleasant, and very lightly trafficked routes. There do seem to be a lot of cyclists who don't object to riding in heavy and dangerous traffic. On the odd occasion when I must drive to work I travel on Heidelberg Road and Princess Street — the only practical car route. I see this same route is used by many cyclists. Dozens of them, pedalling earnestly through the fumes, equipped with safety vests, helmets, fluttering flags, some even in respirators. An extraordinary sight. A few hundred metres to the north is a complex of quiet suburban streets which are barred to main stream traffic by the providential occurrence of footbridges, pedestrian underpasses beneath the railway, narrow back lanes and so on. These agreeable alternative routes add about seven minutes of biking time on the main car route. Why then do cyclists prefer to join the reeking avalanche on Heidelberg Road? The studies seem to show that cyclists tend to follow the geographically direct route — compelled perhaps by some perverse instinct instilled by years of contact with the car world.

Thirdly, there is the tragic question of casualties. The great majority of these seem to be sub-adolescent children riding on main roads. Are these at risk really cycling — or are they experiencing childish fantasies of joining their elder brothers and dads who swell the stream of lethal juggernauts in their Super Roos and on their Honda Cold Wings? The tenor of the society at large encourages these fantasies — and the kid's bike manufacturers capitalise on it by decking out their wares like toy motorbikes.

So, some critical questions formulate themselves.

1. Will Bike Route Planning invoke bureaucratic regulation of cycling in general?
2. Will cyclists use the quiet backways (which already exist) when there are formally defined and mapped?
3. Will the Bike Plan ameliorate the casualty rate — not in the old and wily survivors — but among the at risk group of sub-adolescents and teenagers.

John Irwin

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I was riding down the Old Coast Road one morning, about 8 am. Second day of a long bike ride. Bike all loaded up, about 40kg of gear spread between front and back panniers, a bit of a sore backside because I was still trying to get the saddle in exactly the right place.

The Old Coast Road runs from Manjuran to Bunbury, south of Perth. It is a beautiful road to ride a bike along: about 100 km of good, wide bitumen with lots and lots of trees that keep it well shaded. I had started riding at dawn, to avoid the strong sea breeze that comes in like clockwork at 2pm each day.

Heard a shout, "Giddy mate!" Looking across to my left I spied another bicycle parked amongst the trees. A fellow sitting by a campfire was waving to me. I waved back and almost kept going, but a little voice came in my ear and said, "go back and see what he wants".

So I turned around and rode into a clearing amongst the trees, parked my bike against one of them. "Have you got a cup?" the bloke asked. "I've got a pot of coffee brewing here if you want some."

Morning coffee amongst the jarrah trees on the Old Coast Road.

"I was so surprised to see another cyclist, I just had to yell out. You're the first bloke I've seen riding a bicycle loaded up for travelling. Have you done much riding like this?"

We talked about bicycles and bicycling for a while, and I examined his machine. At first glance it had looked like another touring bike loaded up, but on second glance I could see that this was not so.

It was an ordinary, common or garden variety bike. Man's frame, 28" wheels, upright handlebars, back pedal brakes, no gears, rubber pedals, wide, padded



John Robinson

# The man with rubber pedals

by John Robinson

saddle. The sort of bike I rode to school when I was twelve and anything with turned-down handle bars was called a "racing bike".

His carriers were made out of an old suitcase and some angle iron: the bottom half of the case at the back and the top half at the front. Resting on or in these carriers were a collection of bags and boxes. "I wanted to keep the load up

high so as to minimise wind resistance," he explained. "By having it up high here is no more resistance than that created by my body." The one that he had slung low was there because he got sick of carrying it on his back.

George was his name, "George Smith and that's the truth." Used to be a printer, but gave the game away when he was divorced a few years back. Has been

drifting around ever since. Plenty of time to think, hasn't been on the dole. I picked him up as 50 years old. Turned out later he is 49.

Last autumn he got sick of sitting around various Perth doss houses filled with "bloody winos and no-hopers", so he got himself a bike. Picked up his "old tourer" for \$45 and made the carriers from an old suitcase he found some-



where. Got on it and proceeded to ride 1000 km around the southwest of Western Australia during September and October. "Got a bit cold at times, but I tell you what, its better than sitting in Perth."

I sat there drinking his very good coffee (proper grounds, none of this instant rubbish) looking from my bike to his. Here's one in the eye for all us cycle freaks. This bloke can ride 1000 km on an old crate with back pedal brakes and no gears, while I'm mucking around with ten-speed gears, narrow tires, dropped handle bars, etc etc etc.

"Do you mind if I ride along with you?" asked George. Not at all. For the next day I enjoyed some of the most interesting conversation I've had in months, and I tell you what, there is nothing like an interesting conversation on a bicycle to make the miles slip away.

When the sea breeze came in, it was hard work and at times I was bent over, working away in a low gear against the strong gusts. But every time I looked up, there was George in his long trousers and long sleeved shirt, bushman's hat and leather shoes, sitting up in his saddle and plugging along at the same steady pace.

His one gear was just a little higher than my low gears and just a little lower than my high gears. In short, just right for the sort of terrain we were riding on. When we got to the hills, he demonstrated for me his other gear: if it gets too steep, get off and walk. "Gives the bum a rest, and what's the big hurry anyway?"

We camped the night in the bush near Donnybrook, cooking a stew over a campfire and talking about everything from trains to dole bludgers to vegetarian diets. I found George a living proof that you don't have to be a young radical to see clearly what is going on in the world . . . all you have to do is get out of the rat-race and do some thinking. This is what George is doing, on his old crate travelling about 35 or 50 km per day.

I left him the next morning at Donnybrook. I was travelling down towards Bridgetown, but there was a strong easterly blowing, and at Donnybrook a turn off to the west. "Might as well follow the wind" he said. "Head back to the coast and see what happens after that."

He let me take his picture and then I waved goodbye, heading off for some very hard work up and down the hills of the Darling Range.

Talking to a friend of mine down at Maranup Ford, another cycling enthusiast with a bike even better and lighter than mine, I mentioned meeting George Smith. He said, "I've got a poem here that you would probably like". This is one of those poems that came from a friend who got it from another friend. I don't know who wrote it, maybe someone can tell me . . . its called:

## THE MAN WITH RUBBER PEDALS

Author Unknown

*It has all the latest fixings, barrel hubs and narrow tread,  
It weighs 20 pounds or under, is as rigid as the dead.  
It's the very newest pattern, and the very latest grade  
And it cost you all the cash that in the last three months you'd made.  
You lead it from the agent's, and your bosom swells with pride  
As you lift it from the kerbstone and you start its maiden ride.  
Like the lightning past the trams, cars and everything you've sped  
When you see a man with rubber pedals plugging on ahead.*

*He is 40 years of age, and of an antiquated stock,  
Sitting upright as a soldier and as bandy as a jock.  
He is wobbly, he is shifty and he scarce knows how to ride,  
His gear is less than fifty and his handle bars are wide.  
From crank to crank his tread is eighteen inches and his frame  
Is a pattern that was popular when first the safety came.  
And as you gain upon him, you are thinking, I must show  
How a good man on a jigger that is up to date can go.*

*You fold your arms and pass him in an attitude of grace  
When the beatific upon his open whiskered face  
Makes your conscience somehow smite you as across his track you whizz,  
Lest you show him perhaps too harshly what an utter mug he is.  
And when you think that he's about 100 yards behind  
That man with rubber pedals goes completely from your mind.  
Till a darkness at your elbow and a rattling in your ear  
Shows the man with rubber pedals is still battling in the rear.*

*Then you think with some resentment: "this is not as it should be,  
This man with rubber pedals taking all his pace from me.  
Such presumption is opposed to all the honors of the game  
And if I show him up he's only got himself to blame"  
So you drop your arms and lightly touch the neatly nickled head  
With some ankling calculated just to kill that fellow dead.  
But after half a mile you are astounded still to feel  
That man with rubber pedals hanging calmly on your wheel.*

*You argue out the questions, and you're busted 'o confess  
That the man is what is technically knows as NTS.  
Still, for such as he to push you is a thing you can't allow —  
He has asked for pace and Holy Moses! won't he get it now.  
You drop your head twelve inches, grip your handles tight and lift  
As your calves and biceps swell, by jingo! don't you shift.  
Then you reckon that you've left him and its nearly time to slack,  
When you hear the cussed rattle of his mudguards at your back.*

*He can hold his own at sprinting — that he proved beyond a doubt,  
So the only way to beat him is to simply wear him out.  
You set a nice two-forty beat, and to yourself you hiss  
That man with rubber pedals can't stand many miles of this.  
Then the townships travel past you and the milestones rise ahead  
Till your thighs are working stiffly and you're feeling pretty dead.  
Still you force your pedalling even and your handle-tips you clinch,  
But that man with rubber pedals hasn't shifted, not an inch.*

*At last in view of business and the fast approaching night,  
You decide its best for you to take the turning to the right.  
And as you swing around he passes upright as the just  
With that beatific smile of his still glowing through the dust.  
Are you riding to Sans Souci? He'll be there to do you bad.  
He is on St Kilda Road and on each Western Camel Pad  
Be you cycling in the country, be you cycling in the town,  
That man with rubber pedals will be there to take you down.*



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# The Epic Ride of

by Jim Smith

In the late 1890's Jerome J. Murif was possessed by a vague longing to do something. He consulted a book of Human Achievements (the equivalent of our Guinness Book of Records) to discover something to be done that no man had yet even dared.

*There inscribed were the names of the heroes who had sucked the most eggs, eaten the most dumplings, drunk the most liquor, chopped the biggest tree, drawn the most teeth, vaulted the most horses.*

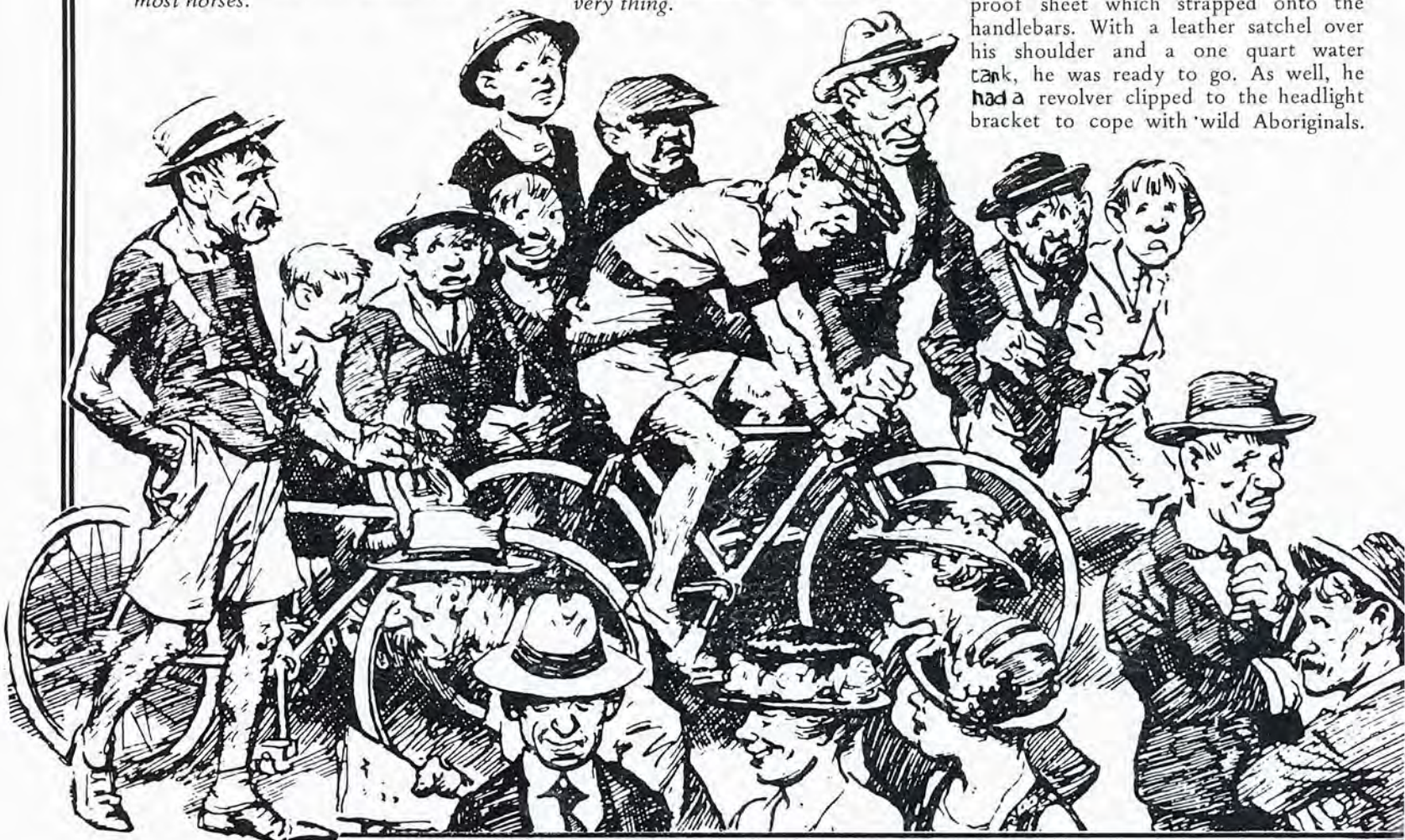
*I passed these dizzy heights with a sigh. They were far above me. Besides cui bono?*

*And then my brain revolving many things, speeding from one to the other, passing as the bicycle-scorchers pass the mileposts on the roadside...*

*Of course! Why, what else could it be? To cross Australia on a bicycle, piercing the very heart of a continent, facing dangers, some known and more unknown — this was the very thing.*

Acting on this inspiration Murif rode from Adelaide to Darwin via Lake Eyre, Oodnadatta, Alice Springs and Tennant's Creek. He recorded his adventures in the book *From Ocean to Ocean* published by George Robertson & Co. in 1897.

His bicycle was an Electra No 6 (£22.10s) without gears. On the hind wheel was an extra thick tandem tyre. On the front, a strip of rubber was glued over the tread. His modest store of equipment was rolled onto a waterproof sheet which strapped onto the handlebars. With a leather satchel over his shoulder and a one quart water tank, he was ready to go. As well, he had a revolver clipped to the headlight bracket to cope with 'wild Aborigines.





# Jerome J Murif

His acquaintances pressed him to take more equipment such as an inflatable mattress, shotgun, camera, tent, sextant, pocket telegraph instrument, cyclists' cape and riding suit, aluminium water canteen, flint and steel and touch paper, a medicien chest (the larger the better), snake poison antidotes and brandy (doubtless to make me see 'em), the Bible or a few works of my favourite author, a small "handy" spirit lamp, a field glass, much woollen underclothing, rice, oatmeal, cream of tartar, dried this and pressed that; stock, taps and small pie plate, bombs for scattering obnoxious niggers, a recently invented apparatus for extracting water from damp earth by evaporation and condensation, sponge for gathering up the dew from the tree leaves, a hammock, mosquito curtain . . .

Disregarding these suggestions and the dire prophesies of his friends, he set out alone with a glad feeling of being alive, untrammelled, free. And so we gaily sped along. It was a very dance on wheels.

The difficulties that his friends had predicted soon occurred in abundance. Three cornered jack burrs stick in the tyres. Clouds of flies caused eye problems. Sand hills: red, loose, and sometimes very steep indeed – make travelling, no matter how one may creep very wearisome and laborious. When you have struggled to the summit of one of them you take a view of the surroundings. As far as the eye can see (and alas! very much further) an unbroken stretch of the same formation. You wade ankle deep on descending; and when pushing a bicycle up, you have to "tack", planting each foot sideways in the sand to get the necessary grip. There were high winds. As the wind beat wildly into my face I heard it warn-

ingly cry "Go Back! Go Back!"

But Murif struggled on, over an incredible variety of impassible terrain: Bay of Biscay plains, crab hole ground, Gilguy and devil-devil ground as well as the more familiar swamps and bogs. Thirst was always present. Several times he used the last of his strength to stagger to a waterhole.

Directions between waterholes and homesteads had often to be obtained from passing Afghans, Aborigines and Chinese, with varying results.

The Afghan "slyly leads you on to make a guess for yourself – and at once cheerfully agrees".

"The Aboriginal says "Byen bye you catch 'em all right".

"The Chinaman listens very politely to all the questions you put to him and then remarks with his most guileless smile "No savee" .

The racism of the whites that Murif met seems extraordinary to our minds today. Murif experienced none of the anticipated problems with Aborigines and did not have to use his revolver. For most of the Aborigines it was the first time they had seen a bicycle and Murif records some of their pigeon English efforts to conceptualise the strange phenomenon: *picaninny engine, one-side buggy and kangaroo engine.*

Murif appeared to suffer severely from loneliness and often talked to his bicycle. When it fell over "with what anxiety, with what eagerness, did I examine my companion! And what blessings were poured upon it when it proved staunch still." He soothed its bearings with oil after a hard day and imagined its "ill contained inward joy" when it was carried on his shoulder. In the desert at night, he would sing to himself, accompanied by a tune played

with a stick on the bicycle spokes. He listened to the different musical notes made by the tyres on different types of terrain. He experimented with various inventions to keep flies out of his eyes and burrs out of his tyres.

Loneliness, silence, enforced fasting and the desert landscape had their effects on his mind. Like other explorers he felt *indescribable sensations.*

*Mystic sensations of a hushed expectant awe, as in the presence of something living, breathing, but unseen, intangible.*

*It was a restful feeling – a feeling of peacefulness, as though one had awakened from a long, long sleep, to find oneself in a calm and weird existence somewhere beyond the state of life; a borderland arrived at after death.*

Murif, like Birtles\*, became fervent about the need to develop Northern Australia. Ironically for these two patriots and defacto energy conservationists, development was to come in the form of foreign owned cattle stations and uranium mines.

On his arrival in Darwin, the various components of the bicycle were examined by engineers:

The rims were "undinged and if re-enamelled would appear as new". The spokes "every one taut, bright and alike, not a sign of a bend or strain in any way".

The frame "rigid not a hair breadth out".

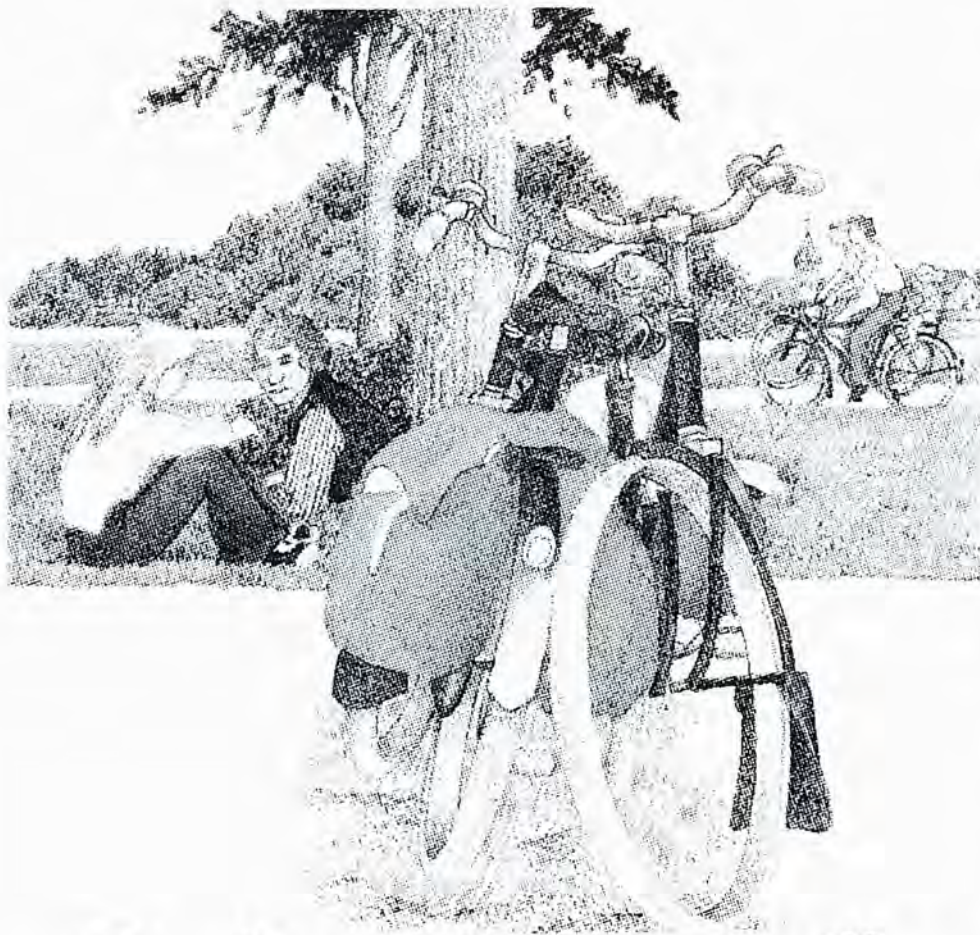
The shafts "unbent as indicated by true running of wheels".

Chain and gear wheels "show little or no signs of wear", etc. etc.

They don't make them like that any more.

\*See Lonley Lands, Freewheeling 6.





# Cycling Energetically

by M. Foster

## Cruncho-Bars

A couple of years ago, *Cycle* magazine, an American motorcycling monthly, ran a tongue-in-cheek touring article submitted by a Honda 90 rider. Accompanied by a friend on a road racing bicycle he toured, quickly, several hundred miles on the Labour Day holiday weekend. At the end of the trip, the cyclist ruefully discovered that he'd spent more money on chocolate and milkshakes than his partner had on petrol.

This came as no surprise to me since my cycling tours generate an insatiable appetite for cruncho-bars and like rubbish that I would otherwise never touch. However it did set me thinking about the energy (in the scientific sense of work, or heat) used in cycling.

I am disturbed at the rate that cars are guzzling our petroleum reserves and I naively assumed that the energy consumption of a cyclist was of the order of a thousand times less than the average family sedan. A few hours at a technical library and some minor calculations revealed that this is surprisingly not so. Owing to the inefficiency of the human body as an engine and the energy-intensive nature of our agriculture and associated processing and marketing chains, food as

a bicycle fuel is an energy expensive proposition.

Before demonstrating this, I shall sketch a background of mechanics, work physiology and bicycle physics so that my reasoning can be followed.

## Some Basic Mechanics

The units used in the following are SI units, adopted by Australia as the basis of its metric system of weights and measures.

A **FORCE** is a push or a pull and is measured in newtons, symbol N.

**MECHANICAL WORK** is done when a force displaces a body through a distance (work = force x distance) and is measured in newton-metres (Nm) called joules, symbol J. A kilojoule (kJ) is a thousand joules and a megajoule (MJ) is a million joules.

**ENERGY** is the capacity to do work, and so is measured in joules, or for convenience, kJ or MJ.

**POWER** is the rate of doing work, measured in joules per second (J/s) called watts, symbol W. A simple expression for the power used by a body moving against a force can be deduced from the above:

Power = work/time = force x distance/time = force x speed.

THE FIRST LAW OF THERMODY-

NAMICS states that energy cannot be created or destroyed; or paraphrased, to do work, energy must be used.

## Some Basic Work Physiology

The first law of thermodynamics applies to the human body. Energy is present in the foods we eat and many experiments have been performed to draw up an energy balance-sheet of how this is used. Of the digestible energy consumed, a small amount is excreted and the rest is used to digest food, carry on body maintenance, generate heat and mechanical work. Any surplus is stored as fat.

For a sedentary person, the maintenance energy used (known as the basal metabolism) is the largest fraction. At a given age, the basal metabolism is constant and so for an individual to maintain a constant body weight, his dietary energy intake must be varied to suit the demands of exercise and heat production.

As an example, standard Australian dietary tables show that a 70 kg male has a basal metabolism of about 7 MJ/day. On an average desk-bound day he will eat about 10 MJ of food energy so I want to know how much mechanical work he can produce with the 3 MJ surplus. Dieticians have drawn up tables of the energy expenditure of various activities which are used to estimate the daily energy requirements of people on controlled diets. To calculate how much of this expenditure is work and how much is frictional heat due to muscle contraction, I shall turn to the physiologists. Gangong<sup>1</sup> states that "isotonic (moving) muscle contractions perform work at a peak efficiency approaching 20%". This means that only about one-fifth of the excess available food energy can be transformed to mechanical work.

## Bicycle Physics

What happens to the power that we apply to the pedals? A negligible amount is lost as friction in the bearings and chain, significantly more in overcoming rolling resistance (flexing of tyres) and the largest fraction in overcoming wind resistance (force). What fraction? At walking pace, virtually nil, but at racing speeds (40 km/h) around 90% of the cyclists mechanical power output goes into moving the air. Experimentally, an excellent approximation is that the rolling resistance can be neglected and the wind resistance increases as the speed squared. Thus the power required at the pedals (power = force x speed) increases as the speed cubed. For this reason, road racing cyclists travel in a pack, the leaders "breaking the wind" for those behind. Note, however, that the energy used to cover a given distance increases as the speed squared. This is because energy used = power x time and the time to cycle a given distance is inversely proportional to the speed.



## Bicycle Energy Consumption

I now return to the calculation of bicycle energy consumption and comparison with other vehicles. Direct comparison of the megajoules in a cyclist's diet and a litre of petrol is meaningless, since these energy contents do not reflect the actual resource cost to the community. Since virtually all the energy used in our society is ultimately derived from fossil fuels ("primary energy"), it is more sensible to compare the transport energies on this basis.

Whitt and Wilson<sup>2</sup> have compiled data on power requirements for cycling and their findings are reproduced in Fig.1 (converted to metric units). Consider a touring cyclist travelling at 25 km/h. Their mechanical power output is 110 W and therefore the work done per kilometres is:

$$110\text{J/s} \times 3600\text{s/h} - 25\text{km/h} = 16\text{kJ/km}$$

approximately.

With a muscular efficiency of 20%, the food energy expended for transport is:

$$16\text{ kJ/km} \div 20\% = 80\text{ kJ/km}$$

It is necessary to know the amount of primary energy expended (as fertilizer, fuel, pesticides, processing and cooking) getting food from the field to the table. A discussion paper published by the AIAS<sup>3</sup> states: *For each joule of digestible food energy eaten in Australia at least*

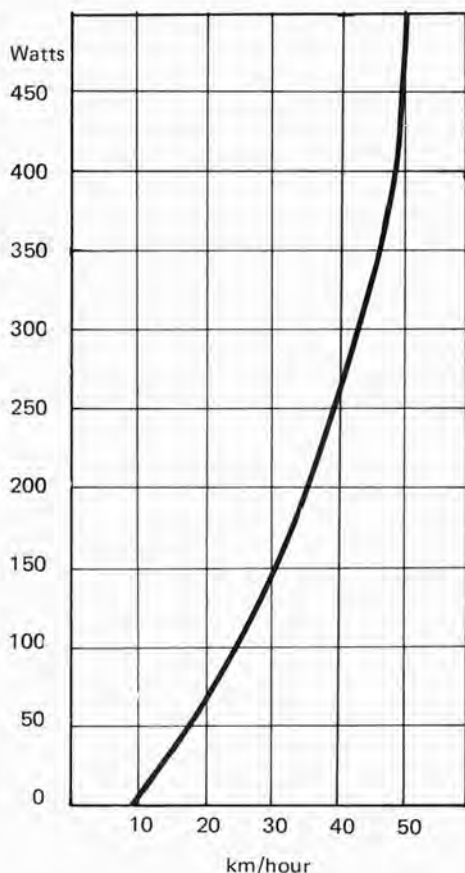


Fig. 1  
Propulsion Power required for cycling. Whitt and Wilson 1974.

five joules of fuel are expended in making it available. Thus, conservatively, the primary energy used by the cyclist for transport is:

$$80\text{ kJ/km} \times 5 = 400\text{ kJ/km}$$

Remember this figure.

## Bicycle Versus Petrol-Powered Vehicles

The Honda 90 mentioned earlier had a fuel consumption of better than 70 km/L. With the energy content of petrol at 34 MJ/L, the chemical energy expended for transport is:

$$34\text{ MJ/L} - 70\text{ km/L} = 500\text{ kJ/km}$$

approximately.

There is, of course, a loss of energy in extracting, refining and transporting crude oil to the petrol pump. Corbett<sup>4</sup> estimates the efficiency of this operation as 72%. Therefore the primary energy consumption of the Honda 90 is:

$$500\text{ kJ/km} - 72\% = 700\text{ kJ/km}$$

approximately.

This is uncomfortably close to that of the bicycle, if you are under the happy illusion that cycling is a low-energy mode of transport. Aha, you say, but cars use much more petrol than this. True, you are justified in feeling outraged at the kid with the large-displacement V8 squandering our fossil fuels. However, if you see five people crammed in a VW Golf diesel (20.2 km/L in the 1979 Total Economy Run), stop and consider: each is probably using less transport energy than you as a cyclist.

## Conclusions?

There are a few omissions in this comparison. The first is that of relative speed, and makes the car an even better proposition. I have been comparing energy consumptions at different speeds, which seriously disadvantages the car. If cars were designed to operate at bicycle speeds, their substantially reduced weights and engine sizes would lead to a severalfold increase in fuel economy.

The second omission is that I have considered the vehicles in isolation, without accounting for the energy used in their construction or in building their associated road systems. The energy required to build a car and its generally disastrous impact on the urban environment far outweigh that of the gentle bicycle.

But if you want to feel smug about your low-energy cycling, you had better grow your own vegies (no pesticides or fossil fertilizers, please) and eat them raw.

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4. A.H. Corbett. *Energy for Australia*. Penguin 1976.

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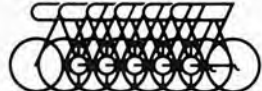
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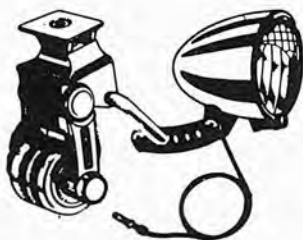
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# Riding Tasmania's East Coast Road

## A Bicycle Travellers Guide

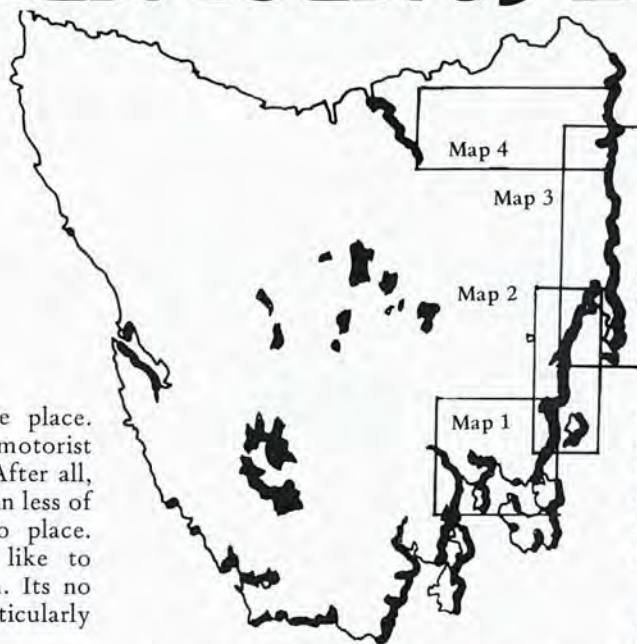
by Warren Salomon



The East Coast Road offers many coastal vistas all easily seen from the saddle. This photograph shows riders looking southwards to the small town of Bicheno which is somewhere in the haze created by heavy surf. The countryside here is mostly open coastal grazing lands.



# The East Coast by Bicycle



Key to Maps:  
Sealed Road:  
Unsealed Road:  
Scale 1cm = 5km

Tasmania is a very hospitable place. Usually even the alienated motorist gets into the spirit of things. After all, everyone is on holiday and are in less of a hurry to get from place to place. Tasmanians themselves don't like to hurry — except to keep warm. Its no wonder some of them are particularly kind to bicycle riders.

Last summer in Scottsdale a woman invited our group of ten into her front yard for bowls of freshly picked raspberries and cream. We all sat in the sun and made tea on petrol stoves with water she gave us. Such generosity was also evident in the man who offered us his hay shed to shelter by during a particularly wild rainy night.

Tassie during the summer months is definitely the place to encounter people you know, or people you didn't know before.

Last summer we chose to travel southwards and ran into head winds, rain and smug faced bikers heading northwards with the same wind behind them all the way.

In the north the countryside was green and lush, while on the east coast the rain we experienced was the first that area had received for many months. The Tassie east coast (unlike the mainland east coast) is mostly sheep and grain and fish country. This can sometimes present problems for finding suitable drinking water. The most lush and fertile areas are in the north and north east. The Lilydale area and Ringarooma River Valley are two areas that stand out. In the north east we bought vegetables from roadside stalls and even fresh crayfish from one stall near the bottom of Elephant Pass.

While some Tasmanians are self sufficient in home grown vegetables, others feel that the state has an over-sufficiency of trees. We were amazed to see to what extent some Tasmanians are shipping out their trees as raw materials for the packaging and paper industries of Japan, Europe and North America. There is a wood chip plant at

Triabunna and huge trucks cart logs from as far north as the slopes of Elephant Pass. I saw a whole valley near Lilydale which had been cleared, felled, burnt, and replanted with geometric rows of pinus radiata.

Though Tasmania has a lot going for it, it still has many of the usual late twentieth century contradictions and delmmas. Still, I couldn't help feeling that Tasmania is better suited to cope with the post petroleum age than the gas guzzling place I come from. They have ample hydro electricity (some say too much) and fortunately if not belatedly, a growing awareness of the need to preserve for future generations a few things more than the straggled remnants of the chainsaw blade of progress.

In the summertime Tassie is an ideal touring environment. There are lots of bicycles loaded up and on the road. Maybe next summer you will be one of them. Good cycling and fair weather.

## The East Coast Road

There is something in me that finds the ocean a truly wonderful thing. As a bicycle rider this can be expressed as the lure of an ocean road. So it seems strange to me that in a country with so much coastline there are very few coast roads at all let alone ones that could be called great roads. Victoria can boast of its Great Ocean Road from Geelong to Warrnambool while Tasmania has its East Coast Road. Not such a grand title but very special just the same.

The great ocean road of this guide is the East Coast Road from Hobart to Launceston. The total distance between

those centres is 430 k and the road is sealed all of the way. It can easily be travelled in a week or so but if you want to soak up the wonderful countryside along the way then more time will be needed.

This guide describes the road from south to north. This is usually the best direction in which to be travelling as winds can be experienced along the whole of the coastal sections. The best time of the year to cycle the road is the summer months and it is not uncommon these days to encounter many people doing likewise.

As Tasmania lies in the direct path of the *roaring forties* (cold westerly winds that bring torrential rain and snow to the west coast and central highlands in winter) cyclists are well advised to take warm clothes and tried and tested rain gear even during summer. The prevailing westerly turns more towards the north on the east coast and on shore SE winds are common.

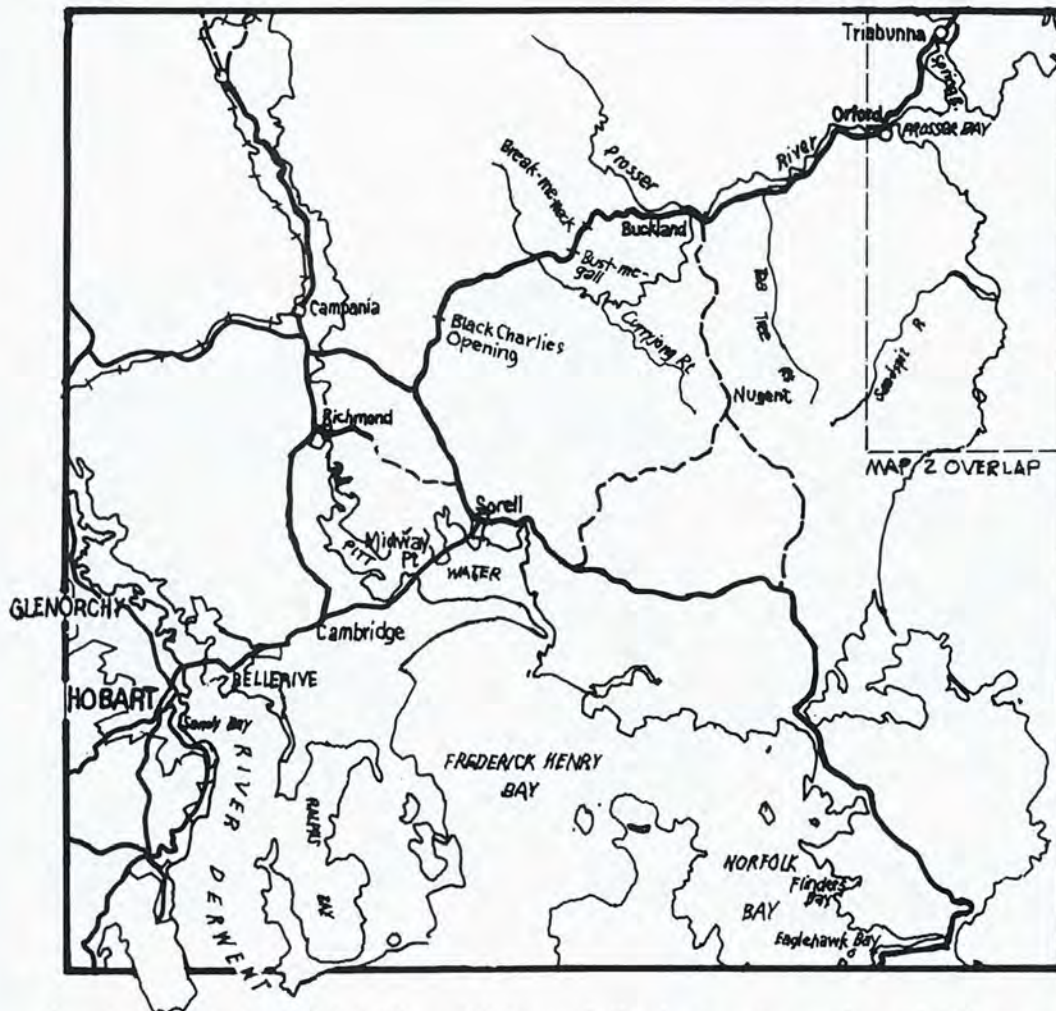
Tasmania like much of Australia is sparsely populated. The coastal towns of Oxford, Swansea, Bicheno and Scamander have permanent populations all well below 500. Most of these only have one or maybe two general store type shops. Larger centres with better facilities are Sorell, Triabunna, St. Marys, St. Helens and Scottsdale. If you rely on banks to get cash to buy food etc. then you will find these few and far between along the east coast. The most common is the CBA or the Commonwealth via post office agencies. Butcher shops for the carnivores are also scarce.

All of this can only add to the wonderful feeling of isolation the road has — except for the hordes of mainlanders in hire cars. The best camping spots are to be found away from the main centres of population. Land owners are usually friendly, if approached. Stories of Tasmanian hospitality abound. Camping areas are described in each section but there are many more to be found along the way.



# Along the road

Map 1



Lunch on the beach at Orford. The surf looks good, if only the water wasn't so cold! The mountainous bulk of Maria Island sits out to sea behind Quarry Point in the centre of the photograph.



## Hobart to Sorell 26k

From the Tasman bridge in Hobart the road begins on a long slow 140m climb over a low saddle in the Meehan range. This road is a freeway type road until the airport is reached. Winds can make this section very arduous and boring.

The countryside between Cambridge and Sorell is flat. Once past the airports the road crosses the Pittwater via two long causeways. Wind can make this crossing very unpleasant too. A more inland diversion is through the historic town of Richmond (turn north at Cambridge). This route bypasses Sorell and joins the East Coast road 9.5k north of that town. Both roads are bitumen. The Richmond diversion is longer and has at least one small hill. (Cambridge to Richmond 13.5k, Richmond to East Coast Road 12.5k.)

Progressive distances in kilometres: Hobart 0, Top of Hill (Meehan range) 10.5, Cambridge (Richmond turn off) 14, Midway Point 23, Sorell 26.

Food and accommodation: Hobart has all the facilities and resources of a city including hotels, youth hostel, bicycle shops, camping and outdoor shops, food of all kinds, camping in caravan parks towards the outskirts. (Glenorchy Elwick) department type stores and good community services.

Sorell is a small town and is a good food supply place and is at the turnoff to Port Arthur and the Tasman Peninsula (which is well worth a visit). Camping is available in the local caravan park.

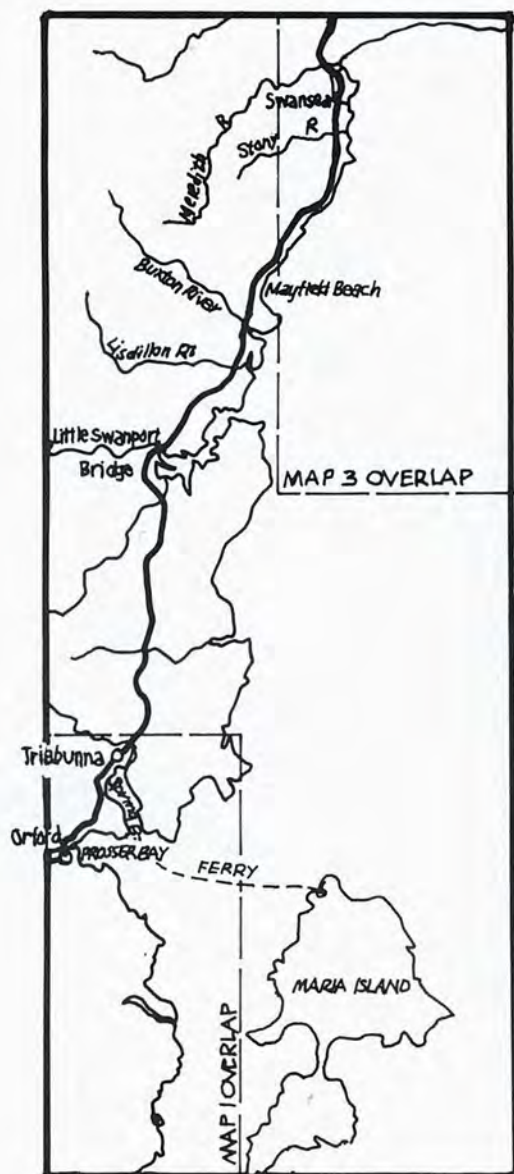
## Sorell – Orford 55k

There are two good climbs on this road both are steeper if you are travelling north. Winds aren't so important as there are good forested sections. The first climb is called Black Charles Opening and commences not far north of the junction with the road from Richmond. The climb is 160metres over 2 kilometres. On the northern side the rise (or fall) is only 60 metres over 2 kilometres. (Tasmanian mountain roads especially the East Coast Road are usually well graded and all climbs can be done comfortably with a good low gear of around 30.)

The other hill is called Bust-me-gall Hill if you are heading north, or Break-me-neck Hill if coming from the opposite direction. *Bust-me-gall* is shorter and sharper (150m in 2k) *Break-me-neck* climbs 240m in 7.5k.

After the *Best-me-break-me* hills the road enters the Prosser river valley and follows the river through firstly open undulating countryside past Buckland then through the beautiful Paradise Gorge to reach the sea at Orford. On the other side of the river through the gorge is to be seen the remnants of the





In parts the road comes close to the ocean. *Above:* A rider pedals south in the wind and on to Bicheno. *Right:* This photograph was taken south of Swansea. On clear days the mountains of Freycinet National Park appear out to sea on the horizon.

old coach road. Its conversion to a rural cycleway including riverside camping grounds could be a wonderful project for Tassie cyclists and their friends. With an early start the 80k from Hobart to Orford can be travelled in a long day though this would not allow for any diversions along the way. Buckland seems like a good place to find a camping spot.

**Progressive distances in kilometres:**  
 Sorell 0, Turn off to Richmond 9.5, Top of Black Charlies Opening 16.5, Top of Bust-me-gall hill 28, Buckland 37, Orford 55.

**Food and accommodation:** There is a general store and hotel at Buckland and at Orford there is a good general store, fish shop, and a camping area on the beach (Raspins Beach 1k on from the Prosser river bridge.) The road south to Spring Beach and beyond may open some more remote spots.

#### Orford – Swansea 58k

The bitumen road between Orford and the larger town of Triabunna is usually

busy. There is a wood chip mill operating south through the town on Spring Bay. So in either direction of Triabunna all roads lead to town. The frequent passing of log trucks on rapidly deteriorating road surface proposes a potentially dangerous experience for touring cyclists and other road users. The truckies are usually courteous but in their hurry create fierce ripples in the air stream with their vehicles.

Between Triabunna and Swansea the bitumen road is good in sections and falling apart in others due to overuse. The road is often straight for a few kilometres though dipping and rising over the undulating coastal plain. The water in the river at Little Swanport bridge is salt. Otherwise it is a nice stopover spot. Between Mayfield Beach and Swansea the road closely follows the coastline and is a wonderful experience all the way with ocean views south to Maria Island and north to Schouten Island and the Freycinet peninsular.

**Progressive distances in kilometres:**

Orford 0, Triabunna 7, Little Swanport River 29, Mayfield Coastal Reserve 42, Swansea 58.

**Food and accommodation:** Triabunna has most kinds of shops though it is a very small town. You might be able to buy fresh caught seafoods there if you are lucky as fishing boats operate from the port. The boat to Maria Island leaves each morning for the one day return trip.

The island is a national park and is a good place to visit even for a day. The camping reserve on the beach at Raspins Beach is good but suffers from overuse in peak season. Mayfield Beach Coastal Reserve also offers on the beach camping, though a fresh water supply could be a problem. In Swansea camping is not difficult for those yearning for a night out at a Swansea restaurant and a hot shower before bed as there are two caravan parks in town. There is also a Youth Hostel in Franklin Street. The Morris General Store in Swansea is a wonderful place to stock up and should not be missed.





Orford to Swansea can be covered in a short day with lunch at Little Swanport River. Allow longer if the surf at Mayfield is up.

#### Swansea — Bicheno 42k

It is open and easy riding between Swansea and the Swan river bridge (Cranbrook). Between the Swan river and the Coles Bay turn off further on there is a climb of 180m over Cherry Tree hill with the steepest grades on the Bicheno side. The bitumen is good along this section and most of the old concrete mile posts still remain. The distance can be easily travelled in a half days riding. The Swan river sometimes dries up or flows under the round rocks and gravel in its bed. A house nearby might know of a campsite on the river further up.

Progressive distances in kilometres: Swansea 0, Swan River bridge 17.5, Top of Cherry Tree hill 23, Coles Bay turn off 31, Bicheno 42.

Food and accommodation: There is a youth hostel in Bicheno and also one at Coles Bay 29 sandy kilometers down a

gravel road. Coles Bay is a sleepy little fishing village. It is the break with civilization when exploring the Freycinet Peninsular on foot. There is a camping area of some sort in Bicheno. Bicheno also has a large general store and a few other shops including a delicious seafood take away for the tourists and hungry bikers.

#### Bicheno — St Marys 45k

The road north from Bicheno keeps the coast line in good view for about 23k up until the foot hill of Elephant Pass is reached at Chain of Lagoons bridge. The coastal countryside is undulating and this part of the road has some wonderful ocean views — depending on the weather. As the terrain is very open winds along here can be either a boom or very tedious.

Elephant Pass is a wonderfully graded 11k climb up a timbered ridge to the pancake and tea house just past the top of the climb at 396 metres. Though it is at a lower elevation, the tea house is situated closer to the actual watershed. The climb up from St. Marys is not as

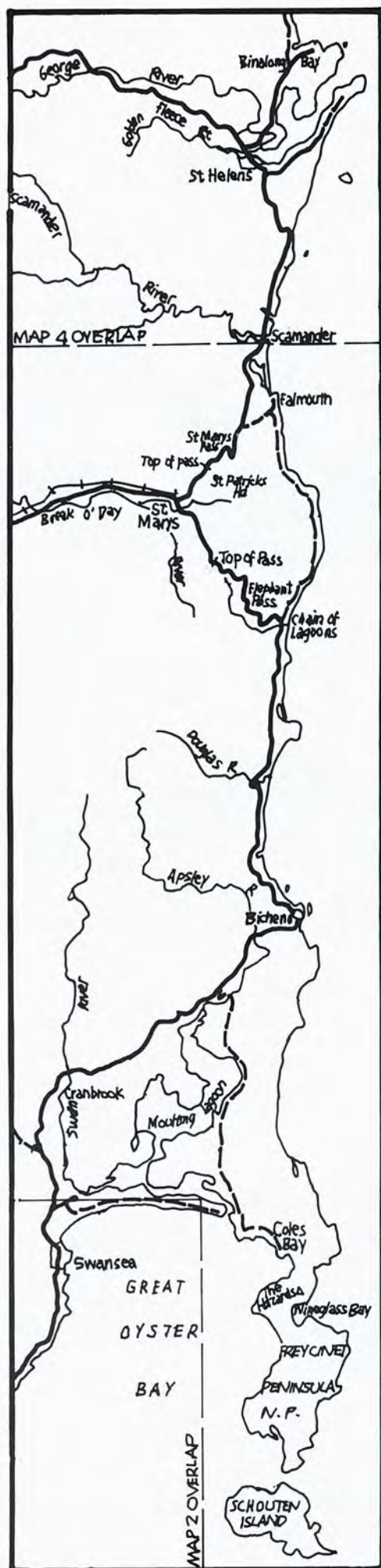
great as that from the coast. (St. Marys is about 255m.) This climb has at least one steep pinch. There are wonderful views of the coastline down as far as Bicheno on a clear day from Elephant Pass.

Progressive distances in kilometres: Bicheno 0, Douglas River 13, Chain of Lagoons bridge 37, Top of pass 36, Tea House 37, St. Marys 45.

Food and accommodation: The food on this section of the east coast is very good. In season scallops and crayfish can be bought as both are fished locally. There is a house at Chain of Lagoons which sells fresh crayfish. The pancakes at Elephant Pass are a must and St. Marys has a bakery and general store. Camping on private land is possible at Douglas river, and there is a camping area in St. Marys. There is also an unofficial youth hostel in the hills behind St. Marys at Germantown.

If heading southwards the road between St. Marys and Bicheno can be quickly covered in a half day. In the opposite direction it is considerably





Two views of mountain climb. *Above:* Riders about to descend Elephant Pass in misty rain — a pleasant enough experience if you are rugged up. The view south to Bicheno is obscured by cloud. *Below:* The start of St Marys Pass climbing upwards to the town of St Marys. The prominent mountain is St Patricks Head.





longer depending on how long it takes you to climb the pass and how long you spend over tea, coffee and pancakes at the top.

### St. Marys coastal bypass

A dirt road exists between Chain of Lagoons and Falmouth. The condition of this road varies but it is usually passable to bicycle travellers. This road is the old coaching road north and offers some wonderful scenery and remote countryside. Camping and water is usually possible at one of the creek crossings along the way, depending of course on how dry the climate has been.

This section though rough going in parts has no major climbs and avoids the passes into and out of St. Marys. At least a day would be needed if this road is to be taken. Traffic along it is virtually non-existent except for the occasional fisherman.

### St. Marys — St. Helens 37k

This section is roughly the same as the preceding section in general topography, only reversed. That is: mountain pass then coastal road with extensive views.

St. Marys pass at about 325m is lower than Elephant Pass. The distance from the top to the bottom is about 6.5k. Northwards the road traverses open coastal plains providing wonderful views and better access to the beach as much of the fore-dunes is a coastal reserve. Progressive distance in kilometres: St. Marys 0, Top of St. Marys pass 3.5, Bottom of pass (Falmouth turnoff) 10, Scamander 19, St. Helens 37.

Food and accommodation: At Scamander there is a general store, youth hostel, camping in caravan parks or along the coastal reserve sections which can be crowded during summer. At St.

Helens there is also a youth hostel and camping in either of the caravan parks. There is a good camp ground and a general store 11k north at Binnalong Bay. St. Helens caters for the summer tourist and there was even a bicycle hire business in the main street last summer. The seafood is good and St. Helens has a good baker and general food type stores including the not so ubiquitous well stocked supermarket. The road between St. Marys and St. Helens can be easily covered in a half day if heading north and a longer half day if going south.

### St. Helens — Derby 66k

Much of this section involves climbing the 583 metres Weldborough Pass, the high point of the east coast road. From St. Helens the road turns westward and heads up the George river valley to the foot of the pass. Pyengana saddle (100m climb) is the only hill worth mentioning on this section. The bitumen surface is good in all weather conditions.

The climb up the pass begins at the North George river bridge which is also a good watering spot. The road up the pass climbs 440m in about 7 kilometres. On the other side of the pass the road begins in earnest after the Weld river is crossed and climbs 190m in 4k. Much of this is through ancient myrtle forests. The village of Weldborough is at about 370m and there is a long slow climb of about 250m up to it from the bridge on the Ringarooma river at Moorina. Along this section there are a couple of cold springs beside the road to cool down hot pedallers.

Between the river crossings at Moorina and Derby the road climbs out of the sunken river valley and traverses the undulating countryside surround Winnaleah. There is always evidence (though some-

times overgrown) between Derby and St. Helens of alluvial tin mining and the landscape surrounding Derby has been wholly altered as a result of extensive mine workings carried on there early this century.

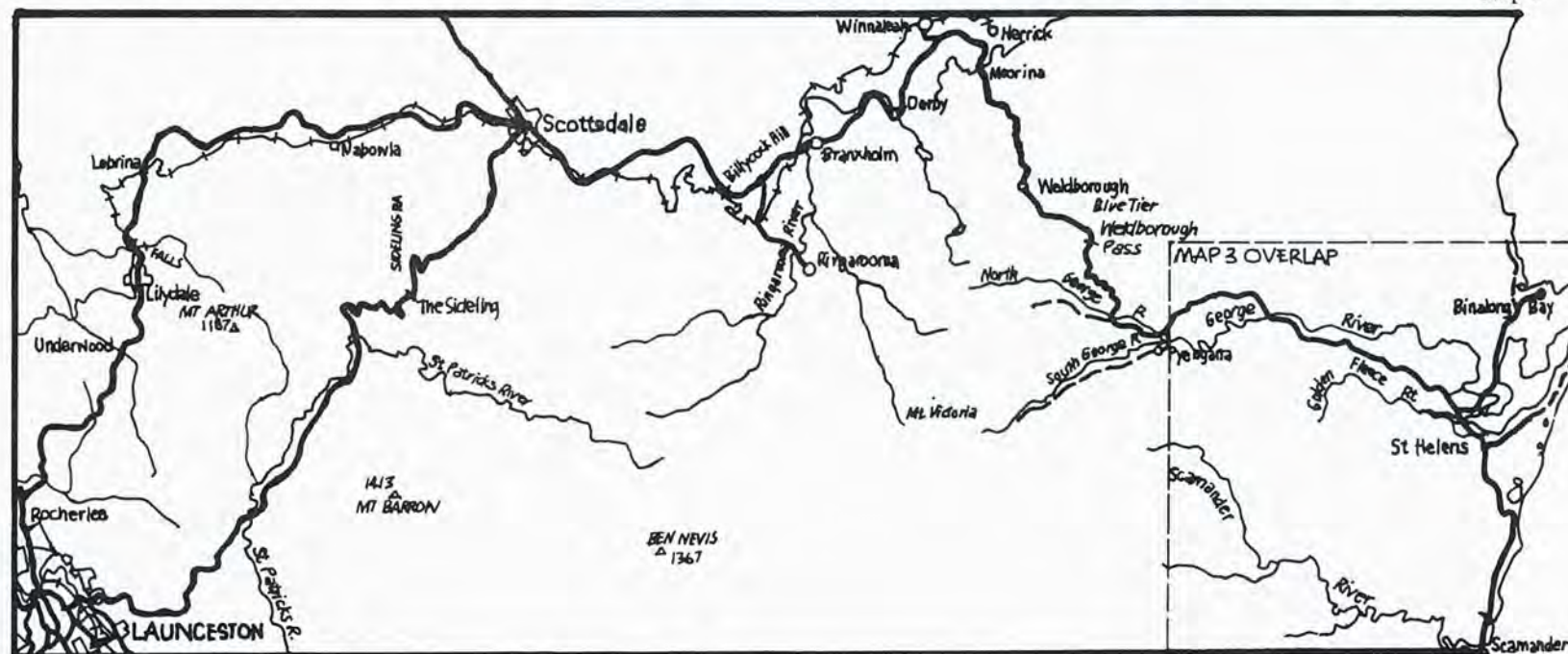
Progressive distances in kilometres: St. Helens 0, Pyengana (turn off to St. Columbia falls) 26, North George river bridge (bottom of pass) 30, Top of pass 37.5, Weldborough 45, Ringarooma bridge (Moorina) 55, Turnoff to Winnaleah (Tusons Jct.) 59.5, Derby 66.

Food and accommodation: Pyengana is a cheese making area so you may be able to hunt out the farm where it is made and purchase some. Camping is possible near the North George river bridge away from the road or on private property further up the river (off side road).

At Weldborough there is a hotel and small general store with limited food supplies. This shop mostly caters for passing tourist traffic. The hotel serves meals. There is also a camping spot near the town. In Derby there are shops, a hotel and camping is permitted on the flat beside the river in the town. As this spot is adjacent to the main road it could be a little noisy. Other spots can be found outside of the town. There is a swimming pool on the creek near the road bridge on the SE end of town. Derby and its adjacent mine workings are fascinating sights and well worth the time spent in staying around to explore them fully.

If you are travelling this section in either direction the distance can be covered in a long day with an early start. (Allow at least two hours to climb Weldborough pass, more from the eastern side.) It is better to take time and split this section up over one and a half to two days camping out either in Weldborough, Moorina or the George river near to the foot of Weldborough pass.

Map 4







Some of the most interesting things are grown in Tassie. Here a rider pauses next to a field of opium poppies grown commercially for the soft drugs market. Mt Victoria is on the horizon behind the gate.

### Derby — Scottsdale 34k

The road between Derby and Branxholm is a delight. In most parts it closely follows the Ringarooma river. There are plenty of places for resting spots by the river. The only major climb between Branxholm and Scottsdale is Billycock hill (340m). From the top views of almost the entire NE corner of the island state can be obtained. To the south west is the prominent peak of Mt. Victoria an extinct volcano supposedly responsible for much of the basaltic soils of the rich Ringarooma valley and the Scottsdale areas. The climb up from the Branxholm side is 80m in 2k. From Scottsdale the climb is greater, spread over a longer road distance, and in two distinct sections. The first climbs 120m in 2 k and the second climbs slowly up the valley wall to meet the railway at the top of Billycock hill (160m in 3k).

Scottsdale is situated on higher ground than its surrounding district and so from all directions there is a bit of a climb up into the town.

**Progressive distances in kilometres:** Derby 0, Branxholm 8, Top of Billycock hill 16.5, Top of first hill 21.5, Scottsdale 34. **Food and accommodation:** The town of Branxholm is a good stop-over place. There is a shire camping area in town near the swimming pool on the banks of the Ringarooma river or more secluded and idyllic spots can be found on private property (along a dirt road which leaves the main road next to the bridge on the SW side of the river). This is through a wire gate (close after you) near the pump house. Camping is possible down on the river flat just before a derelict farm house is reached. This spot is known locally and is recommended. The general store in Branxholm is well stocked and is opened on weekends.

Scottsdale is a larger town by Tassie standards and is the centre of an agricultural district. There are at least two food shops open there on the weekend. Camping is available in the caravan park located on the outskirts of town on the Branxholm side.

The 34k from Derby can be easily travelled in a half day if no stopovers are made along the way.

### Scottsdale — Launceston via the Sideling 65k

This road climbs over the 567m pass and travels through more myrtle forest along the way. From Scottsdale the climb begins at the Bird river crossing and rises 380m in 7k. From the Launceston side the pass is eventually reached after a much shorter 160m climb over 6k up from the St. Patricks river. St. Patricks river to Launceston is hilly but most of them are down. Heading out of Launceston there is a long slow climb (360m over 14k) up into the elevated St. Patricks river valley before the actual Sideling climb is reached.

### Scottsdale — Launceston via Lilydale 67k

The northern road through the lovely Lilydale district skirts the Sideling range to the north. Hills along this all bitumen road are generally smaller though the ones worth mentioning are: the 100m climb into Scottsdale (travelling west to east), the 120m hill west of Lebrina which is steepest on the western side, Halls Tier 120m rise Lebrina to Lilydale. This hill is however higher and steeper if travelled from west to east. The climb begins at the Lilydale Falls reserve and rises over 180m in 3k.

Between Lilydale and Launceston the

terrain is generally hilly and there are some short steep sections of road. The highest point along this road is about 400m and is roughly the half way point. Lilydale is at 170m elevation whereas Launceston is at about 20m.

**Progressive distances in kilometres:** Scottsdale 0, Bird River 10, Top of Sideling range 17, St. Patricks river 23, Nunamara 44, Launceston 65.

Scottsdale 0, First Lavender Farm turnoff 15.5, Second Lavender Farm turnoff 19.5, Lebrina 32, Lilydale Falls 38.5, Lilydale 41, Launceston 67.

**Food and accommodation:** Scottsdale to Launceston via the Sideling, is a straight run through with no regular camping or provisioning spots along the way. Camping in emergencies could be possible along the St. Patricks river.

On the northern route the Lilydale Falls Camping Area is recommended. The government tourist guide states that camping is free however this is not the case. There is a small fee collected by a very friendly caretaker who lives up the road a bit. There are also coin operated hot showers and a deposit payable on the amenities block key. The grounds are usually well kept and there is possible shelter for sleeping undercover in very wet weather. The two sets of falls are only a short walk along a bush track. There are food stores at Lebrina and Lilydale though the Lilydale shops are only open during usual shop hours. The store at Lebrina is open on weekends. The Lavender Farm near Golconda is in bloom during the summer and is worth visiting.

Launceston is a large town and is well appointed to service all bicycle tourers needs. Recommended are the excellently stocked outdoors shops and the large bike shop. There is a good youth hostel with bicycle and pannier hire available from there also. Launceston also has restaurants and cafes and pub bistros for those weary by now of camp cooked food. The city park (Tamar and Brisbane Sts) is a wonderful place to sort out gear, pack bicycles, and relax in the sun. There is at least one caravan park offering camping within the city limits. An actual campground may exist, perhaps the tourist information centre may be of assistance to campers.

For mainlanders starting or finishing their journey from the ANL terminal in Devonport there are two possible roads between there and Launceston. The Bass highway via Deloraine (101k) or the road via Exeter (92k). Both are sealed and liable to be busy in the summer months. Camping in a caravan park is possible in Deloraine, however there doesn't seem to be a regular camping ground along the Exeter road but spots can possibly be found on private land. There are camp grounds and caravan parks on the north side of Devonport as well as a youth hostel in Victoria Street.



# ACCESS & RESOURCES

**Getting there by boat:** There is a regular ferry service between Melbourne and Devonport with three 7.30pm departures from each place per week. (Melbourne Monday, Wednesday, Friday; Devonport Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday.) This journey usually takes about fourteen and a half hours. The ferry is usually booked out for at least 6 months before the summer season. I received the impression last summer that this service is considered a bit of a joke so far as the stimulation of tourist access to the island goes. Perhaps the airlines with their hire car companies have secret share holdings in ANL, (a Commonwealth Government company incidentally) for air transport seems to have a virtual monopoly on travel to and from Tasmania. If you wish to go by ferry and don't have a booking you can usually get on board by turning up at the terminal a couple of hours before departure as there is always space. You will probably end up with what is called a deck chair (inside) and will resemble one of those economy class interstate train journeys with a bit more space to move around in and a different kind of rocking sensation.

The food (breakfast is included in the ticket price) is much the same as well. These days the ferry is geared more towards servicing the occupants of the cars

on board (it is a vehicular ferry) than acting as a genuine form of public transport. It is still however the cheapest way to the island of Tasmania but your bicycle will travel at half the adult fare — make sure it gets breakfast too.

**Getting there by plane:** Both domestic airlines plus at least two other smaller companies have regular flights in and out of Tasmania from the mainland. The cheapest fare is between Melbourne and the northern airports of Wynyard (Burnie) Devonport and Launceston travelling stand-by, though there are reduced rate direct flights from Sydney once a week and advance purchase economy fare schemes. The airlines will usually carry your bicycle free as luggage. It seems that no fixed policy exists on the shipment of bicycles as luggage and a lot depends on the counter clerk at the airport or city terminal. The full procedure for taking your bicycle with you on the airline is described below. As the Launceston and Hobart airports are a good distance from the town centres and the roads between heavily trafficked it is a good idea to hop onto the airport bus into town. This way you can prepare your bicycle for its journey at the city terminal and avoid the usual airport scramble.

**Handy hints for taking your bicycle with you:** Firstly accept no nonsense such as your bicycle *must* be wrapped in either a box or bag. Your bike is your transport and your luggage. To fit into the cargo hold of an airplane it needs to be made reasonably flat and some parts immobilised. This is best done by removing the pedals, loosening the handlebars and handlebar stem and turning the bars side on and folded under the top tube. After retightening, the handlebars can be taped to the tube to immobilise the steering. Usually the front wheel can be left in place as this enables staff to wheel the bike instead of carrying it. You will need to remove any protruding objects and loose items such as pumps, headlights and delicate oddometers to avoid loss or breakage. You will also need to have handy the tools to do all of this (usually a shifter and/or small pedal wrench and hex key.) Lastly deflate your tyres as the cargo hold is not pressurised and will rupture your tyres.

Remove and tie your pannier bags together. Take tools and other heavy items with you in front panniers or handlebar bag as cabin luggage. This way you should end up with yourself an item of cabin luggage your rear panniers and your bike. Be prepared to cope with

Camping in the Tasmanian climate can be an invigorating experience. A group of riders eat breakfast after a cool nights camping on the Ringarooma River near Branxholm. This spot is mentioned in the text.





the unexpected delay when one of the afore-mentioned items goes on another flight and gets lost along the way, it often happens.

### Additional Transport on the Island

In Tasmania there are railways but since they were sold off to the Commonwealth government all of the passenger services have been discontinued and replaced with buses. It is possible to take your bike with you as freight on most buses that operate over the Tasmanian highways.

### Information

It is useful to obtain copies of the official visitors guide and tourist map before setting out. These can be obtained free from Tasmanian Tourist Bureaux in mainland capital cities or from information centres on the island. In some cases there may be a small cost. The guide is very informative and outlines the attractions of each town and area accessible to the tourist. There are local information centres in some of the larger towns. These are particularly good for locating camping and eating facilities as well as items of interest.

### Maps

The Tasmanian Lands Department has produced some very good maps of the state. The best map to take with you is the Official Tourist Map (1:600 000 50 cents). The state map 1:500 000 is also very good but is more useful as a wall map than a touring map. For a

journey along the East Coast Road a selection of 1:100 000 maps offers the best detail yet available, the only trouble being the number required and the cost and weather proofing problems. The 1:100 000 maps needed to depict the complete East Coast Road are: Derwent, Prosser, Little Swanport, Freycinet, Break O' Day, Georges Bay, Forester and St. Patricks, with Tamar and Forth needed if you start or finish from Devonport. All of these maps are available from the Lands Department offices at 134 Macquarie St, Hobart, 90 Cameron St. Launceston or from newsagent/general stores along the road (St. Helens, Bicheno, Swansea). The 1:100 000 series maps are also available from the National Mapping Centres in the mainland capital cities. Very good maps of the two National Parks (Freycinet and Maria Is.) are also available from the Tasmanian Lands Department.

### Bicycle Resources

The large, and to the most extent the only bicycle shops in Tasmania are in Hobart and Launceston. In an emergency you will usually find that in smaller centres some motor garages will sell a limited range of parts and in difficult cases can provide a welder or use of specialist tools. These places are usually the source of parts for the local children and others who use their bicycles on a day to day basis.

### Bicycle Hire

For friends who you meet along the

way, bicycle hire is available at the youth hostels in Launceston and Hobart. Panniers are also for hire. These bicycles are usually heavy but reliable 10 speed machines with reasonable (but not mountain) gearing.

If you have time in either Hobart or Launceston pop into one of the environment centres there and contact Pedal Power, Tasmania. There is talk that they will one day produce a bicycle tourists guide to Tassie. I hope they do.

For now, some useful info on touring the rest of Tasmania is contained in a one page magazine article by Doug Snare of the Launceston Hostel. If you send him a S.A.E. he will probably send you a photocopy — Doug Snare, Launceston Hostel, 138 John St, Launceston, Tasmania.

Another magazine article to be recommended is Greg Bousfield's account of his round the island trip in *Freewheeling* 5. Reading it will give you the feel for what you can expect. Greg rides like the wind and to some his times might seem a little fast (St. Helens to Launceston in a long day!!)

### Shopping

Shops in country areas of Tasmania sometimes shut for lunch. Usually shops will shut at 5.30. In some areas shops are only open on weekends for Saturday morning. Shops mentioned in description are mostly this kind with the possibility of opening on Sunday morning as well.

Some of the most beautiful rural landscapes are to be found on the road through Lilydale. Here riders admire the view on a stretch of road just above the Lilydale falls camping area. The town is to be seen in the mid distance to the left. The road from Launceston enters the valley through the low point in the hill centre distance.





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*Freewheeling Australia Offprints* are reprints of single articles featured in issues of the magazine. They have been printed in booklet form and are available at a low cost.

### From Issue 4

*Sydney and the Bush:* A guide to the Central NSW section of the East Coast Bicycle Route — Maitland to Goulburn. Covering directions, camping areas, food supplies and access to Sydney. 12pp magazine format. 80 cents.

### From Issue 3

*Getting Started in Bicycle Touring:* A simple guide to beginning bicycle touring. Gives good basic info like: what to take, what kind of bike suits best, plus hints on where to go and what food to carry. 8pp magazine format. 50 cents

We are out of stock of the *Geelong Bike Plan* offprint from *Freewheeling Two*. This offprint will not be reprinted, though we may be able to do another run of *Freewheeling Two*. Watch this space. Meanwhile, refunds are being sent to those who have sent money for the offprint.

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# Brisboys to Binna Burra

Binna Burra is situated in the south western corner of Queensland, on the Lamington Plateau. It is 45km from the Gold Coast via Beechmont Road, and 89km from Murwillumbah via Chillingham. The tour described provides a scenic route from Brisbane via Tamborine Village and Canungra (91km). It is an ideal trip for any cyclist willing to spare a 3 day weekend.

Waking up at 4.30 is not good at any time, but being a must for this sort of trip, bolting out of bed to wake up brother Neil just had to be done. Fierce whispers pleading him to wake up meant he only snuggled in further. Hauling him out, sheet and all, was the only answer. With a brief breakfast just settling in our stomachs came the arrival of Steve and David. Perhaps introductions are now due: Steve is 190cm (6ft 2ins), and built of something hard, David is 172cm (5ft 8ins), and built of something more flexible. They are both 14. Neil is 16, red-headed like me, and I'm Julian (I'm not a girl, so cut out the comments). I, too, am 14.

Setting out we were heavily laden. Neil had 13kg on his back in a rucksack. He almost folded back permanently. We started off at the speed of Tour de France riders, heading for the first town of Beenleigh, 35km south of Brisbane, along the Pacific Highway. David's intelligent suggestion that we slow down lead to a steadier pace after that.

The ride to Tamborine Village from Beenleigh is interesting except for the bridges which are conveniently situated around every blind corner. Apart from having 15cm craters in them, they were also shoddily constructed with deep ruts, hence they had to be approached with caution. The roads are scenic routes and are very narrow and old, although you get the occasional good stretch. There is something special about riding along a country road at 5.30 in the morning, perhaps it's that those four wheeled bullies aren't around.

We arrived at Tamborine Village just on 6.30. (Beenleigh to Tamborine Village is 26km). The next stop was to be Canungra, the home of the army's jungle training centre, which was 24km away. The first three kilometres out of Tamborine Village proved to be a delight for the tenth gear. The going was beautiful and uneventful apart from one lady almost running us off the road. Things to see along the way are basically rural sights which requires keeping a look out for cattle on their way out from the morning milking. Faithful bells came in handy.



The riding before Canungra was good, the land being almost flat and the two lane bitumen providing a smooth surface. There were less cars too, the land use being more on the agricultural side. The enjoyment was fine.

Nearing Canungra, the vista of the ride to come spread out in front of us. I let out a cry of horror. Mountains were everywhere. Steve tried to console us by suggesting there would be a road somewhere in the middle, he hoped.

Local information seemed to be what we needed so an enquiry was made of a lady who also invited us to fill our water bottles. She said the road was almost vertical for 20km and pushing would be the order of the day. We, being of bright spirit, scoffed that off and started pedalling.

The road although steep was very good for the first five kilometres. Then we came to the army base, to find the guard standing at his post saluting all who

entered. We didn't go in but saluted anyway, watching the red of his face form an unusual contrast to the green of his uniform. After the army base, we encountered 1km of very bad road and another 5km brought us to the picnic and rest area. There was a water tank but no taps. On the whole, not very logical.

The uphill ride began. Two kilometres of uphill saw us off and pushing. Now the steep climb signs appeared to mock us around every corner. Thoughts of never-ending hills floated across our minds. We began to ask these people who travel by four wheels just how far it was to the top. Only one answer proved to be accurate — 'I don't know mate, but I hope you've got lunch.'

After many stops and half-hearted attempts to ride we did however reach the crest of Lamington Plateau, still with 10km to go. It was 12.00pm. Two kilometres and a valley opened to us, stretching into the beautiful green distance, with those crisp Lamington Hills circling around us. The 17km we had just ridden brought us to a height of about 1000 metres and we were just about to sail down 500 metres on the other side of the hill.

After the pure exhilaration of 500 metres downhill, we passed the Nerang turnoff. Two more kilometres and a cafe brought a refreshing stop and a chance to replenish our water bottles. We were told the remainder of the climb, except for the last 200 metres should be managed with ease. This we found to be essentially true, only the 200 metres being more like a kilometre of hard climbing effort.

One thirty saw us cresting the hill and entering the lost world of Binna Burra. The hunger pains were strong. We ate and pitched tent. The rest of the afternoon was spent breathing the cool, clean air of a tropical rainforest, and viewing the Coomera River Valley.

Binna Burra itself is of great interest. We were to spend the next day exploring pools and forests along the tracks laid out by the Forestry Dept. The first night, however, we took in a film which was free and very enjoyable. This apparently does not occur very often. We were just lucky. Binna Burra provides many facilities — Guest House, camping grounds, restaurant, kiosk and very nice showers. The camp site must be booked before arrival, and once there, milk and bread orders must be in before 2.30pm for the next morning.

Julian Barry  
Daisy Hill, Qld.



# Beyond the 'Pub With No Beer'

by Joss Davies and Jamie Benyei

The Pub With No Beer doesn't really match its reputation, or my image of what it should look like. Outside, on the worn boards of the spacious verandah, Jamie sat yarnning with two of the local lunchtime drinkers...

"I suppose you grow good pumpkins up here," he said.

"Pumpkins!" came the reply. "I found a pumpkin vine growing by the cowshed one year. It grew along the front of the shed, around the side, and all the way out the back. In the end it covered the whole paddock, and we picked four hundred pumpkins off that vine!"

So this was Taylors Arm. A few houses and The Pub in a narrow green valley — rainforest cleared for dairy flats and steep banana plantations. The river of the same name joins the Nambucca River at Macksville to flow to the sea at Nambucca Heads, on the mid North coast of NSW, and at the southern end of the big banana belt of caravan parks, beach towns and kitsch tourism.

Behind the seaside veneer, the valleys reach back into forests and a rich folk tradition, from cedar logs and bullock teams to "The Pub With No Beer."

The pub was well stocked when we arrived — out of the hills on bicycles. Half a dozen weatherworn men leant against the verandah rail, watching the road go by, and two cyclists were welcome game.

"You'd better put a shirt on," Jamie garbled as I parked my bicycle. (The oldest of the patrons had appeared round the corner to have a look at us, and my striped singlet was obviously one reason for his quick interest. Old timers don't often move that fast, at least around this part of the country.)

I pulled on my windshirt, and went inside the bar — wooden walled, and decorated with the leather and metal hardware of bullock teams and horses, with photographs of big logs and old schools, faded news clippings and, framed in leather harness at the end of the bar, a photo of a youthful Gordon Parons — writer of *that* song.

A cocky we had met further up the valley, an hour or so before, had quickly detected our powerful thirsts. He assured us that "The Pub With No Beer" at Taylors Arm has plenty of beer these days. "Its about 6 miles to the bitumen, then a couple of miles on, on your right," he said.



He too was bemused to see us so far from a main road, and was surprised to hear we'd come from beyond the logging tracks and logging trucks, from that suspicious enclave, New England National Park.

Back at the pub, we drank beer on the verandah, and told the other drinkers our story.

We had ridden from Coffs Harbour, via Bellingen and Dorrigo, to New England National Park, and were heading back to the coastal train line. We had a choice of interesting routes, but when the rain cleared from Point Lookout long enough to reveal mountains dropping ridge after ridge through the mist to the Bellingen Valley and the coast, 1500 metres below us, we opted for the Robinsons Knob Fire Trail, through the centre of the National Park.

"Its not really downhill all the way," the Ranger informed us. "It drops steeply, and then starts to climb up to Robinsons Knob."

This was all too clear from Point Lookout, but we were undaunted (possibly because our Forestry Commission Project Map didn't show contours.).

So down it was. At first, rolling from Point Lookout to the start of the fire trail, near the National Park entrance. Then rough and rocky to Wrights Lookout, through antarctic beech and hanging moss. After a short walk to the lookout to further survey the view (and our route), we continued, carrying out bikes around the side of the locked gate.

Beyond the gate, the track surface improved to firm soil with an inch deep layer of dead leaves and twigs on top. It was certainly pleasant cycling, and very easy on the bumps, but so steep that the gullies rang with the whine of brake pads on wheel rims, and we had to stop frequently to let the whole system cool off. Still we went down, to the low point on the Snowy Range, in wet sclerophyll forest: giant trees and tree ferns, and the inevitable leeches.

The climb up to Robinsons Knob was just as steep. Hauling our bikes up the leafy track, and screeching down into rainforested gullies, each time gaining overall only a few hardwon metres. Everything in the forest was damp and glowing softly after the rain, but it was growing so quickly and lushly that we could find little surplus water to drink. So we kept cycling, and looking for ~



From Banksia Point a series of peaks and ridges slope down to the coastal plains and the sea beyond.



campsite.

The eastern boundary of New England National Park, about 15 kilometres along the fire trail was marked by another locked gate, and by a change of scenery. Suddenly there were gaps in the forest, and we could see the escarpment we had ridden from, and the full length of the Snowy Range, which we had followed for the past five hours. We were in the Nulla Five Day State Forest, and the gaps in the canopy were often filled with tree stumps, and chaotic regrowth.

The forest was not being logged at the time, and we met no-one as we rode

valley cleared maybe a hundred years ago.

The next day, after riding 30 kilometres down the broadening Taylors Arm Valley, we came to "The Pub With No Beer", and met its incredulous patrons.

A big man in his middle years, shook my hand vigorously. I was somewhat abashed. He told me that he'd lived all his life at Taylors Arm and had never been up into those hills, mate.

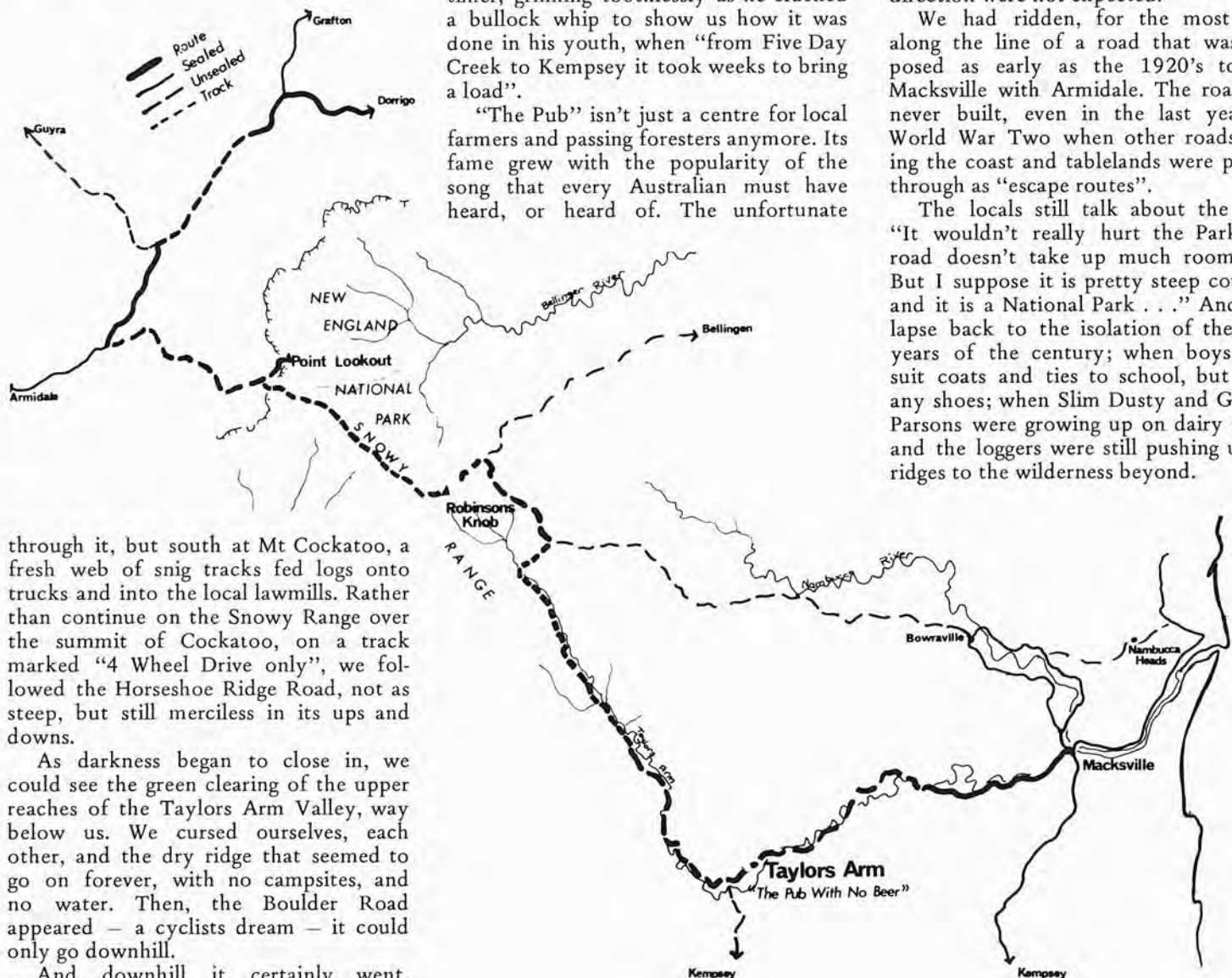
Others had been bred in them. Foresters, young and old, and the real old timer, grinning toothlessly as he cracked a bullock whip to show us how it was done in his youth, when "from Five Day Creek to Kempsey it took weeks to bring a load".

"The Pub" isn't just a centre for local farmers and passing foresters anymore. Its fame grew with the popularity of the song that every Australian must have heard, or heard of. The unfortunate

shortage of our national refreshment that once plagued the publican, has guaranteed the pubs livelihood today. But only because the country music tradition of the Kempsey hinterland produced Gordon Parsons to write the song and Slim Dusty to make it famous. Groomed lawns, log fences and a barbeque now wait for tourists who see the sign post on the Pacific Highway at Macksville, and make the 30 kilometre pilgrimage. But on a Monday morning, bicyclists travelling from the wrong direction were not expected.

We had ridden, for the most part, along the line of a road that was proposed as early as the 1920's to link Macksville with Armidale. The road was never built, even in the last years of World War Two when other roads linking the coast and tablelands were pushed through as "escape routes".

The locals still talk about the road; "It wouldn't really hurt the Park — a road doesn't take up much room . . . But I suppose it is pretty steep country, and it is a National Park . . ." And they lapse back to the isolation of the early years of the century; when boys wore suit coats and ties to school, but never any shoes; when Slim Dusty and Gordon Parsons were growing up on dairy farms, and the loggers were still pushing up the ridges to the wilderness beyond.



through it, but south at Mt Cockatoo, a fresh web of snig tracks fed logs onto trucks and into the local lawmills. Rather than continue on the Snowy Range over the summit of Cockatoo, on a track marked "4 Wheel Drive only", we followed the Horseshoe Ridge Road, not as steep, but still merciless in its ups and downs.

As darkness began to close in, we could see the green clearing of the upper reaches of the Taylors Arm Valley, way below us. We cursed ourselves, each other, and the dry ridge that seemed to go on forever, with no campsites, and no water. Then, the Boulder Road appeared — a cyclists dream — it could only go downhill.

And downhill it certainly went, dropping 600 metres in 3 kilometres to where rainforest is slowly reclaiming a



# The East Coast Bicycle Route BULLETIN

1

## Brilliant suggestion!

by S.R. Shepherd

The suggestion is that a long-distance bicycle ride be held during the bicentennial year for both Australian and visiting cyclists. The purpose of the ride would not be competitive, but would be rather to encourage a large number of ordinary people to cross part of the Australian continent at a leisurely rate, by their own effort, and thus personally discover the extent and diversity of our countryside.

The idea is taken unashamedly from the United States of America. During the celebrations held there in 1976, the largest single official event was Bikecentennial, the inauguration of the Trans-America Bike Trail. This trail consists of a 7000 kilometre route across the United States on carefully selected, low-trafficked rural roads, from Oregon on the Pacific coast through Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and Kentucky to Virginia on the Atlantic coast.

More than 4000 cyclists of ages from 7 to 86 rode all or part of this route during 1976. The total distance they pedalled was 16 million kilometres — equivalent to 20 return trips to the moon! A majority of the riders were from the United States itself, but there were also contingents from Australia, Canada, Holland, Japan, Mexico and the United Kingdom, as well as individuals from numerous other countries. Most of the cyclists travelled in small organised groups which covered from 80 to 100 kilometres each day. Other cyclists travelled independently. Some groups had accommodation provided for them in hostels, hotels, school gymnasiums or community halls; others pitched tents in campgrounds each night.

I organised a party of 33 Australians who rode in Bikecentennial in 1976. Although we received no sponsorship from Australian governments, we acted as unofficial ambassadors for our country, and fostered a considerable

amount of goodwill and friendship. Our members came from most Australian States and Territories, and included people whose occupations were as diverse as architect, housewife, journalist, nurse, plasterer, restaurant manager, radiographer, student, and teacher, to name but a few. Without exception, we regarded the trip as a unique and memorable experience.

Is such a concept feasible for the Australian bicentennial celebrations too? I believe that it is, for it offers many advantages, and does not have excessive planning requirements. In brief, the advantages of staging such a bicycle ride (which could be called PEDAL AUSTRALIA or BIKE AUSTRALIA) are:

- it will produce a ready response from interested participants in Australia;
- it will attract visitors from other countries;
- participation will be possible for people of any age, although the greatest response could be expected from young people;
- it will encourage people to discover the diversity of Australia's countryside
- it will have important links with





- Australia's history; and
- its emphasis is on healthy outdoor activity.

To elaborate on each of these advantages:

**Ready response from Australians:** There are active organisations concerned with non-competitive cycling in each Australian State, and also in the A.C.T. These organisations could be expected to enthusiastically support the concept, to popularise it, and to provide advice and assistance in planning and running such a large event. Four of these bicycling organisations have members who rode in the U.S. Bikecentennial in 1976.

**Visitors from other countries:** Both at the time of Bikecentennial in 1976 and since, there have been many enquiries from the U.S.A. and Europe to the effect of, "Will you be holding a big bike ride in Australia sometime in the future?" It is likely that groups of cyclists could be attracted from Canada, Holland, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Also, provided that adequate publicity in the appropriate languages was launched, riders from other countries such as France, Spain and Italy might be expected. Bicycles can now be carried as normal baggage on international flights, and with the expected reduction in air fares to Australia in the future, getting here should be feasible for cyclists from most parts of the world.

**Participation open to all:** The U.S. experience demonstrated that a long-distance bicycle ride can be completed and enjoyed by anyone of average physical ability, regardless of age, sex or previous cycling experience. Virtually all of the Bikecentennial riders completed their chosen trips.

**Discovering Australia's variety:** The most practical route is probably down the eastern side of the continent from Cairns to Melbourne. This route would enable riders to see forests, canefields, pastures, coastlines, beaches, cities, mountains and snowfields — in fact, much of the best scenery in Australia. The ride would also help participants to get to know the life of country towns. The American townships which provided accommodation for Bikecentennial riders were enthusiastic about the prominence the ride brought to their towns, and residents established excellent relationships with the visiting cyclists. Many communities organised special celebrations to coincide with the time of the cyclists' visits.

An alternative trans-Australia route from Perth across the Nullarbor to Sydney has been proposed by some enthusiastic cyclists. In my opinion this route would provide less variety, less contact with the Australian people, and



would present problems in the provision of services for the cyclists.

**Historical links:** There was a remarkable period at the turn of the century (from about 1890 to 1920) when the bicycle was an extremely significant mode of transport in Australia's development, particularly in the outback. It was the conveyance of shearers, gold prospectors, postmen, boundary fence riders, evangelists, and many others. This little known facet of our history has been documented by James Fitzpatrick at the Australian National University in Canberra. On quiet rural roads, the participants in PEDAL AUSTRALIA could feel some links with this bygone period. They could experience the serenity of slow, silent travel across a vast countryside, and the sense of discovery felt by the pioneers but unknown in the high speed, space annihilating forms of transport used today.

**Healthy outdoor activity:** Bicycling is regarded by physiologists as the ideal

exercise, as it avoids the sudden stresses of jogging, yet may be indulged in at any level from gentle wandering to Olympic competition. Many of us who rode the Trans-America Bike Trail in 1976 started off as average, unfit people, but completed the long ride with a marvellous feeling of physical and mental well-being. I lost several kilograms of fat, and my formerly high blood pressure dropped to normal.

Particularly for young people, such a ride also gives a feeling of personal achievement not only in the physical sense, but of having been able to plan and carry through an extended undertaking by their own efforts. To do such a trip you not only have to pedal your bicycle, but know how to repair it, read maps, be alert, arrange your accommodation each night, look after your health and nutrition, care for your belongings, and interact successfully with a wide variety of people along the route. These may be things which young people will be challenged to do for the first time,





and will contribute to their resourcefulness and self-confidence.

The requirements for staging PEDAL AUSTRALIA are not excessive. They are:

1. Survey and selection of a suitable route and accommodation sites.

This would take at least a year for a small group of people. It would require considerable travelling and liaison with experienced cyclists, Commonwealth and State Departments, and with local councils and service organisations. The survey would have to be commenced by 1985.

2. Decision making and commitment to the event.

This would be required by 1986 i.e. 2 years before the bicentennial. Such advance notice would allow time for publicity, and for intending participants to plan to take holidays etc. at the time of the ride.

3. Publicity within Australia and overseas.

Posters and information pamphlets would need to be prepared, and articles written for cycling and other recreational magazines. Contact would have to be made with cycling organisations, and youth groups in Australia and in overseas countries. An organisation would have to be set up to handle enquiries and bookings.

4. Preparation of maps and route guides.

I estimate that this planning and publicity would cost in the vicinity of \$80,000 mostly in salaries for the employment of perhaps 3 or 4 people for 2 or 3 years. Much of the cost would have to

be borne by the Commonwealth and State Governments. As the proposed route would pass through three States and the A.C.T., the planning expenses could be shared amongst the four governments involved. Some of the cost could also be covered by sponsorships from commercial firms, or recouped from entry fees levied on the participating cyclists. Fortunately, the Bikecentennial organisation has continued beyond 1976 to establish and maintain a network of bicycle routes across the U.S.A. Its staff could provide well-documented details of all the planning requirements, including staffing, lead-times, priorities, and funding of a long-distance bicycle ride. Their address is: Bikecentennial, P.O. Box 8308, Missoula, Montana, U.S.A. 59807.

The above text is from a letter written to the Minister for Administrative Services and the Chairman of the Australian Bicentennial Authority by Ron Shepherd. Ron's proposal can only receive *Free-wheelings* whole hearted support. Readers will already be familiar with the concept of a rural bike route, so the staging of large rides along that route in 1988 seems a natural extension of the concept.

The Australian Bicentennial is now seven years away. Those of us involved in getting the ECBR going would like to see the route used for the Bicentennial celebrations. It seems that with the

amount of time available so much more can be possible. When the initial planning and survey of the route was commenced we envisaged doing all of the survey work by bicycle. Given the time available it will surely be possible for the survey of the route to be undertaken this way. A Bicentennial bike ride event would be a wonderful occasion for bicycle touring in this country — so lets get to it.

In the meantime much remains to be done. It seems also likely that a large mobile gathering of cyclists will be arranged long before 1988 probably when the East Coast Bicycle Route has its inauguration, possibly by 1984. (That year again!) By then a guide book will have been published and the major work of urging the bike route into existence will be complete. Is anyone out there listening?

#### Whats in a name

The term *East Coast Bicycle Route* has always seemed to be quite a mouthful to those of us involved in it so far. Perhaps readers of these bulletins will be able to suggest something else.

In the preceeding letter Don Shepherd suggests for the Bicentennial event the title *Pedal Australia* or *Bike Australia*. Perhaps if the name Bikecentennial were used we could be accused of copying the Americans. Anyway, whats in a name mate. Perhaps in our next issue you might like to air your views on this.

Warren Salomon



# Into the Eighties - Bikecentennial leads the way

"Americans are ready to accept the bicycle as a recreational vehicle," says Dave Prouty, director of the Bikecentennial organization. "With the cost of motorized travel increasing at such a steady rate, the bicycle has become a very realistic alternative form of transportation for individual or family vacations. People have taken more of an interest in physical fitness and sports in the past few years, and many have turned to the bicycle for health reasons. Bicycle touring combines healthy exercise with the excitement and adventure of travel."

Bikecentennial received more than 12,000 inquiries during 1979 for information about bicycle touring and the organization's programs, healthy evidence

of America's interest in bicycle travel. The membership rolls of the organization swelled this year with 4,200 new members.

Bikecentennial has been putting both novice and experienced cyclists on the road for five years. In the summer of 1976 the organization gained national attention when it opened the Trans America Bicycle Trail as a celebration of the nation's bicentennial. More than 4,000 cyclists rode all or part of the 4,450-mile cross-country route, the longest recreational trail in the world. Since that inaugural summer, thousands of additional cyclists have used the TransAmerica Bicycle Trail and other routes developed by the Bikecentennial organization.

"We've discovered that bicycle touring is the perfect sport for people of all

ages and athletic ability", said Prouty. "The major requirement is not strength, but the patience to travel at a slower pace. You've got to get used to the idea that you're not going to be able to click off a couple hundred miles a day (50 miles/day is an average pace for touring cyclists).

"With bicycling, travel becomes an end in itself, rather than a means to get to a particular site. There's nothing surrounding you; you can get wet and dusty and sunburned. But you also experience the land, its contours and smells and peoples, in a way motorized travellers never will."

Each summer the organization offers a wide range of tours on the routes it has developed. Groups of eight to ten cyclists are joined by a trained leader for trips ranging in length from 275 miles (12 days) to 4,450 miles (90 days). The nine

BIKECENTENNIAL remains the leader in the development and production of specialized publications for cyclists. The organization has gathered a publications staff of well-trained professionals who are cyclists themselves, and who know what cyclists want and need in a cycling map or resource publication.

Of first importance to cyclists traveling on BIKECENTENNIAL's long-distance trails are the map/guide sets for the **TransAmerica Bicycle Trail**, the **Great Parks Bicycle Route**, the **Great River Bicycle Route**, and the shorter loop trails. The maps, which are designed for use specifically by cyclists, feature clearly marked intersections, route and terrain descriptions, and other useful cycling information. They are the only bicycling maps of their kind.

BIKECENTENNIAL also publishes a number of other publications helpful to the touring cyclist. These include:

- **Trail Directories** that list available services and facilities along developed Bikecentennial routes. These are updated frequently.
- A series of **Tips Brochures** covering topics such as buying a bicycle

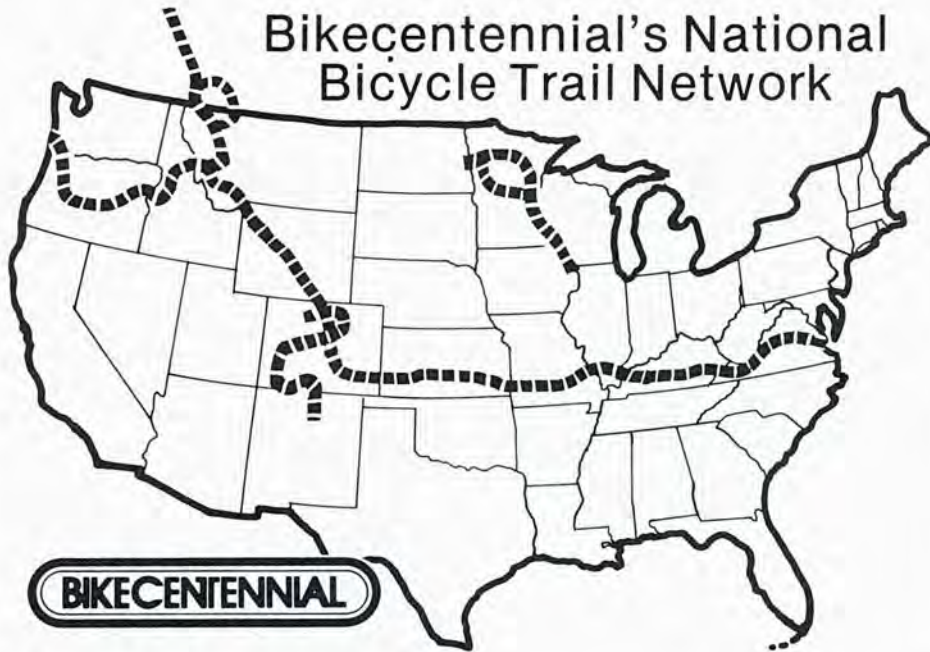
for touring, packing the bicycle, equipment for camping, and transporting the bicycle via public transportation. (Tips Brochures are free to members.)

Resource booklets for tour planning including the **Cyclist's Yellow Pages**, **Planning Your Own Bicycle Trip**, and the **Bicycle Tourist's Cookbook**.





## Bikecentennial's National Bicycle Trail Network



travelling. This is largely a member service, but we will be glad to send any cyclist a catalogue of the information we have."

Through offering these types of services to cyclists, Bikecentennial has become known as the "AAA of bicycling."

What's next for the organization? "With gas prices the way they are, I think more and more people will be turning to the bicycle for both around-town transportation and recreational travel," said Prouty. "And when they do, Bikecentennial will be waiting with all the information and resources they'll need to enjoy this sport of bicycle touring to its fullest."

For more information about Bikecentennial programs and services for bicyclists, write: P.O. Box 8308, Missoula, MT 59807, U.S.A.

tours being offered for the current summer are detailed in the brochure, *Bike Back Into America*, available upon request from Bikecentennial.

Bikecentennial has researched and mapped an average of 1,200 miles of new routes annually since it was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1974. The goal of the organization is an entire national network of routes chosen and developed especially for bicyclists. They now have five completed trails, ranging in length from 300 miles to 4,450 miles. A sixth trail, which runs parallel to the Mississippi River, is now under development.

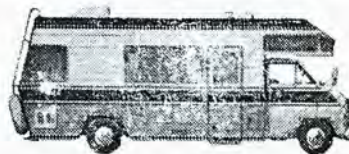
Because of the nature of this two-wheeled recreational vehicle they advocate, Bikecentennial designs its routes around quiet country and secondary roads whenever possible. The routes themselves use existing roads, and are not separate bikeways (although these are occasionally encountered in urban areas through which the routes pass).

Incorporating rural roads is a very important aspect of our routes, Prouty explained. "We take cyclists through the heart of America — the small town, the general store, farms and ranches — it's all there for the traveller who can slow down and look."

As the director of a member-supported organization, Prouty is always looking for new services that Bikecentennial can offer the American cyclist. "Our latest program, the Bikecentennial Routing Service, had a very successful first year."

Prouty said. "What we've done is collect and catalogue local and regional cycling routes prepared by cycling clubs, organizations, and individuals around the

country, thus far more than 25,000 miles of long-distance routes have been collected in our files. When a cyclist is planning a tour, we invite him or her to contact us. We send a listing of the routes we have available for the particular area in which the cyclist will be



**Some recreational vehicles are expensive.**



**Some aren't.**

The gas shortage has had a definite effect on the vacationing habits of Americans. People are seeking alternatives to the standard drive-and-park trip they've taken in the past. Many have been surprised and pleased to find that the recreational vehicle they've always wanted has been sitting in their garage for years.

**The Bicycle.  
The RV of the 1980s.**

**BIKECENTENNIAL**

P.O. Box 8308, Missoula, MT 59807



### RECLAIM THE ROAD

On Saturday 11th of October, Sydney cyclists (and others who can make it) will ride together to reclaim the space we are constantly denied. Are our rights on the road recognized? As a silent minority group will we continue to be forced off the road or into the cutter?

This is an opportunity to voice the problems that daily confront us as urban cyclists.

Meet at Moore Park corner of South Dowling and Cleveland Streets (near cycle path) on Saturday, 11th October at 10am

Bring helmets, gas masks, and city survival gear.



## SYDNEY BICYCLE SHOW 1980

An increase in fuel prices and the swing to interest in health and sporting activities has given rise to a rapid increase in bicycle usage. This coupled with the dramatic development of the sport of BMX (Moto Cross Cycling) has created an upsurge in the cycling industry.

The organisers of the Sydney Bicycle Show have been amazed by the response which exhibitors have shown to the fair. All major Australian manufacturers will be represented as well as most specialists and importers and retailers.

The range of exhibits is the most comprehensive ever to be displayed in Australia. Anyone who has the slightest interest in any facet of cycling will find the show exciting. Included in the displays will be the latest in touring bicycles and equipment; the most up-to-date developments in BMX; many innovative and lightweight specialities for the sporting enthusiasts; as well as some great ideas for the family cyclist.

As well as equipment, Bicycle Show visitors will be able to obtain advice and information and see demonstrations which should prove invaluable in any future cycling purchase.

To add to the general exhibits, the organisers are providing some general attractions. On Sunday 31st August, there will be an attempt on the Guinness World Record, 12 hour Roller distance by a four-man team. On the same day, an exciting race around the Rock featuring some of New South Wales' top amateur riders. An historical display will trace the history of the development of the bicycle from the nineteenth century to 1980.

Of particular interest will be the beautiful scale model of the Gossamer Albatross, the first man powered plane ever to fly the English Channel. This model is en route to a museum in Adelaide and this will be the first and last opportunity for Sydneysiders to it.

A major feature of the Bicycle Show will be the installation of an indoor BMX track. The track will be used for demonstrations of BMX skills and techniques by some of the top riders from the United States and Australia. The organisers will also be running a series of competitions for kids who visit the show with some very valuable prizes for the winners.

Door prizes and other various competitions will all add to the excitement. On Saturday 30th August the Sydney Bicycle Institute will hold its annual rally in conjunction with bicycle show and more than a thousand bike riders are expected to converge on the Rocks to culminate their ride.



Ten years ago a group of kids were filling in their weekend riding beatup dragsters over southern Californian sand dunes. Nearby, on location, were the film crew and stars of the film 'On Any Sunday', the story of a group of professional moto-cross riders. Spurred on by the performances of their motor powered heros, the kids on their dragsters began to emulate their tricks and expertise. These antics caught the attention of the film's director who went on to use the dragster kids in the introduction to his film.

The publicity generated by this except in "On Any Sunday" led to the small scale organisation of a track and competitions for kids in the immediate area. The concept of these competitions was a direct spin off from moto cross with its large high powered machines. The kids were able to compete under the same conditions and perform similar tricks and feats, but they used bicycles instead of motor bikes.

Much to their surprise, the organisers were soon swamped with kids wanting to take part in these competitions. And the idea spread rapidly. Tracks sprang up throughout California. At the same time came the development of a bicycle with particularly designed suspension to cope with the punishment that this style of

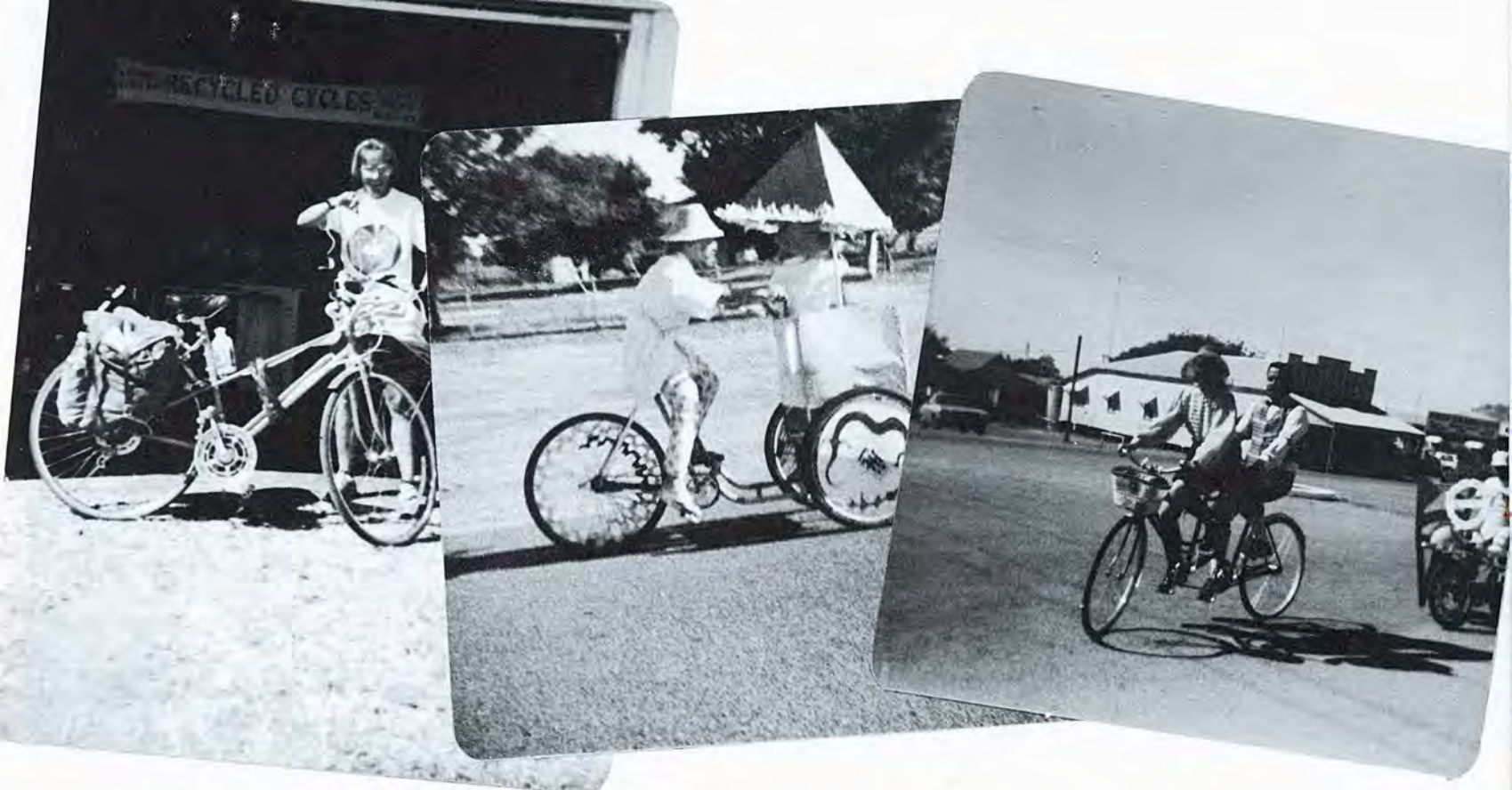
riding imposed on ordinary bicycles. The Bicycle Moto Cross phenomenon had been born.

Bicycle Moto Cross spread rapidly throughout the United States particularly in the southern states where the climate allowed year round competition. In one decade BMX has grown to become one of the most popular sports in the United States.

Australia, with a climate similar to California, is now experiencing the same rapid growth rate. Three years ago a company called Competition Developments first introduced the BMX bicycle to Australia. A BMX club was formed in the Ryde area of Sydney, racing on land provided by the local council. Today there are about forty clubs throughout Australia, but these numbers are being added to every month. The clubs have now banded together to form a National Association with guidelines and rules for racing which will be uniform throughout Australia. For the first time this year, National Titles have been held.

With the dramatic increase in popularity of the sport in Australia, sales figures for BMX bicycles have rocketed. A recent survey by the bicycle industry has put BMX at an incredible 43% of the total national bicycle market and the sport is still growing.





# Bicycle Life in the outback

by Lenore Simpson

It's not just the big cities and populated areas that have a bicycle world. People in small communities also keep the love of bicycles alive as a vibrant part of life. After twenty years of living without a bicycle, I have begun life again; (life begins at forty), in a soul satisfying way as well as economically and physically. That the bicycle scene can be play, study, work and spiritual is my experience.

It all started in 1975 when my children needed bikes for school transport, so I found that my experience as a teenage commuter, riding to work in the city, and the knowledge acquired, came in handy. Other children needed bicycle repairs so I started "Recycled Cycles", not only doing general repairs but rebuilding old bikes and selling them. Now three years later, I sell as many new bikes as second hand. Back to the recycling business, it's amazing what people will give you. One day I received a tandem frame made from a ladies and gents bicycle and after much brain tingling and obtaining supplies, finally (just in time) had a tandem worth riding in the 1977 Hughenden 100 Years Festival Procession.

Every year the Lions Rodeo conducts a procession with floats, rodeo queens

and, of course, the decorated bicycle. This year my son, Peter, and his girlfriend won the event with a tricycle dressed in the Chinese style. This tricycle came from the Hughenden dump so I'm told, and eventually came my way from a customer. It was in terrible shape, but with paint, new front wheel bearings and a coaster wheel at rear, we can ride on the level. Don, 4, asked me to ride up a hill. Any suggestions for a brake and gear arrangement will be most welcome as I have not had complete success. I tried a three speed hub with disc brake but the frame lugs at rear stays did not suit.

The touring scene is not without its surprises. One day my dog was barking and a very distressed American lady asked me for assistance to service her mixte 10 speed tourer. If you know where Hughenden is, then you know how far she rode from Sydney. After a day's stopover she was on the road again and the last I heard from her, she was in Katherine, Northern Territory, making her way for Perth. An acknowledgement is needed here. A bicycle shop and wholesaler in Sydney made it possible for me to supply her with the necessary carriers and panniers which enabled her to carry on. Thank you city folk for looking after the country.

Being a community where the school teaches to Grade 10, most children ride

dragsters, which brings us to the subject of road safety. The Queensland Road Safety Council has available a very good "Safe Cycling Course" at reasonable cost. Many children have benefited from this through the school and church youth groups.

The mod thing to do today is the motocross bicycle. It is exciting and challenging and could be the scene in the town of Hughenden in the future. Adults are again finding it is cheaper and healthier to ride to work. They seldom need worry about rain and are very grateful when it does. Even though it is hot, the town is so small it's not far to go home anyway.

Providing a retail and repair service to a small community has been both rewarding and discouraging. It gives you the insights into the problems of the country dweller as well as the wonderful experience of a less pressurised environment. If the flight to the cities could be reversed, I'm sure it would benefit all Australians both socially and economically.

My being a woman has never been a deterrent to anyone seeking bicycle sales or service. This is very gratifying and I would be most pleased to know if there are any more women in Australia who prefer to delve into grease and grime instead of cleaner occupations.







# A Spanner a Day Keeps Repairmen Away

by Genie Melone

So, here you are, facing your bicycle and it needs a grease and clean up or, a puncture change, new gears — someone just turned you on to a great gear ratio — gear ratio??? A broken spoke needs replacing and brakes need adjustment, or you're into complete re-building

If it's none of these, you've either got a brand new bicycle or you're content to ride it as is.

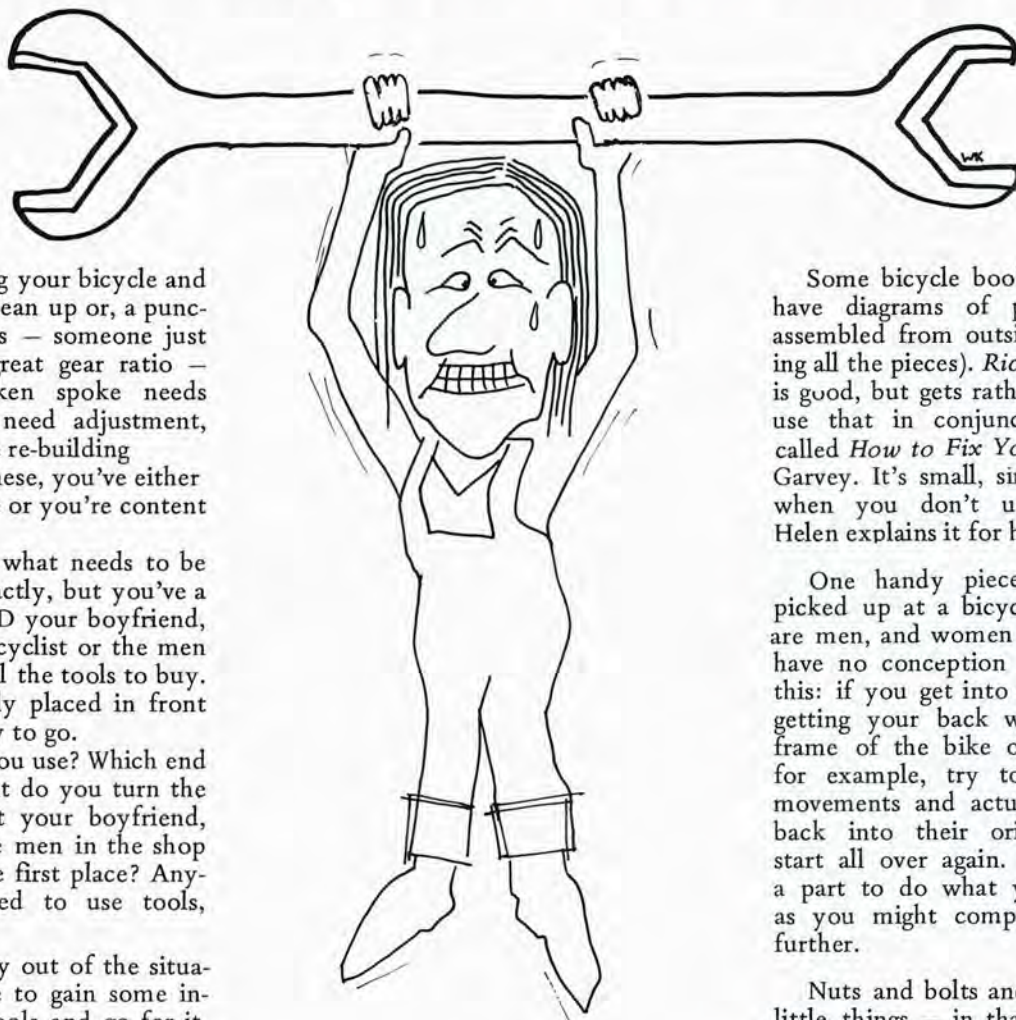
Right — you know what needs to be done — maybe not exactly, but you've a sneaking suspicion AND your boyfriend, neighbourhood (male) cyclist or the men in the shop told you all the tools to buy. You've got them neatly placed in front of you and you're ready to go.

But, what tool do you use? Which end do you grab? How tight do you turn the bolt? And why didn't your boyfriend, the male cyclist or the men in the shop do it all for you in the first place? Anyway, males are trained to use tools, females aren't.

Well, that's one way out of the situation, but if you'd like to gain some insights, pick up your tools and go for it.

I can't tell you how to build your own bicycle step by step — I haven't done it — yet — but several women friends have and it's relatively easy once you catch on. I can pass on some handy hints, learned through experience (mine and others) which will help along the way, and I can guarantee that after a fair bit of practice, you'll be able to tackle any repair to your bicycle.

The first and most important thing to remember is TAKE YOUR TIME. The temptation is to finish it all in one go, but don't fall into that trap. Most repairs use commonsense so if you take it slow and easy, it should come out right. In some cases, you may need to sit down, look at the situation for a while then go to it. OR you may need to get away from the situation all together — it's surprising how an answer might come in the middle of listening to a record or watching a movie. Sounds very zen, but a friend advised this and



it does really work.

It's best to have another bicycle handy to look at every once in a while so that you can tell if the chainwheel is on the right or wrong side, or if the brake cables have the correct curve to them.

If you are repairing an existing part or changing it for a new one, remember the order and direction that all of the nuts, washers, bolts etc came off of the part so that when you put it back on all the components will be in the right place. If you have an absolutely useless memory — as I do — one trick is to lay the parts on a bench (or in a box) in the order they go onto the bicycle from outside (left) to inside (right). This means you put them down from the left and pick up from the right. If you have to leave in the middle of a repair job, cover the parts with a note for friends who can read, asking them to please not touch.

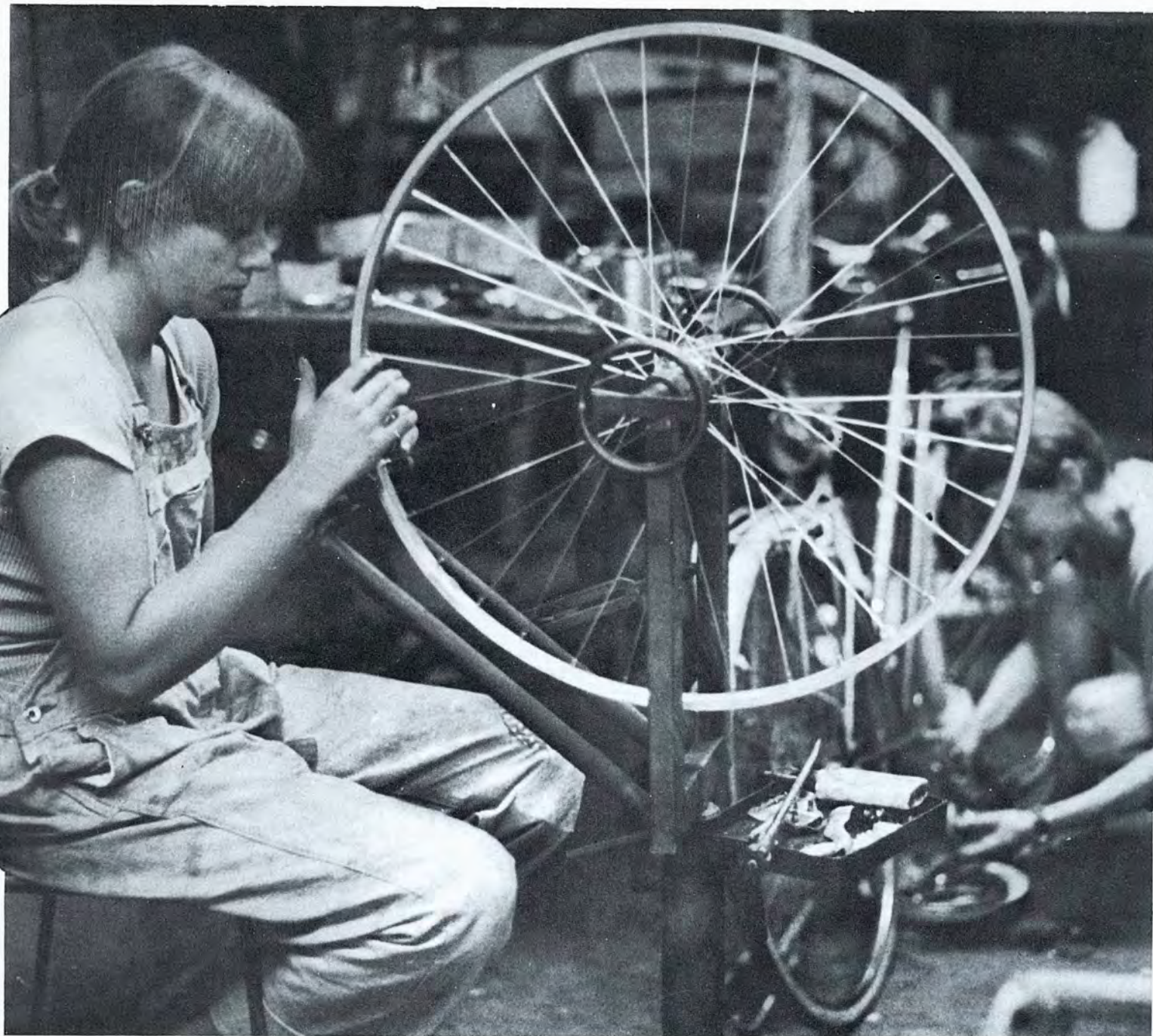
Some bicycle books help in that they have diagrams of parts that are disassembled from outside to inside (showing all the pieces). *Richard's Bicycle Book* is good, but gets rather complicated, so I use that in conjunction with a book called *How to Fix Your Bicycle* by Helen Garvey. It's small, simple and cheap and when you don't understand Richard, Helen explains it for him.

One handy piece of advice that I picked up at a bicycle shop where men are men, and women so the theory goes, have no conception about bicycles was this: if you get into a jam — literally by getting your back wheel caught in the frame of the bike or the chain caught for example, try to re-trace all your movements and actually put the part(s) back into their original position and start all over again. Never try to force a part to do what you think it should as you might complicate matters even further.

Nuts and bolts and washers are tricky little things — in that sometimes they'll move when you apply a spanner and sometimes (more often not if you're bicycle's old) they won't. GENERALLY, all threaded parts (nuts, bolts, caps) tighten clockwise and loosen anti-clockwise. If you can't get one out or off, put a little penetrating oil on them and wait for a while. Forcing these little buggers strips threads and faces and other parts — I've stripped many a bolt by forcing them to come off (which of course, they don't, and then you're in a double bind). Always hand tighten them but not too tight. If brakes, for example, are tightened too much, they 'freeze' up and won't spring back when released. All the parts need to flow a bit — but then again not too much or they will fall off.

Spanners (used to tighten and loosen bolts) come two ways. Shifting spanners are moveable and you can adjust them to the size of the bolt. Or open ended spanners come fixed and in different sizes so that you can choose the right size for the right bolt. On open ended spanners one side appears to be long





and the other *short* or angled. They are angled so that it is easier to fit them into places (with the *small* end) where larger tools won't fit. There are a few places where it might seem impossible to get at in the bicycle — i.e. the brakes or brake levers, but again take your time and think about it — if the bicycle was put together once, it can be taken apart and put together many times thereafter, so there has to be a way.

When you put a new tube in to change a puncture, try to put the tyre back into the rim by hand. If you use tyre levers, chances are the new tube will be perforated and you're back to square one. Take it easy, and gently push the tyre around the rim until it *pops* on. If you stand in front of the wheel or facing it, and push into it, this eliminates the fear that you

will rip off all of your finger nails in the process.

If you're in doubt about changing any part or stuck getting a part on or off, there's probably a tool that does the job. Ask your local bike shop — they're sure to have it. BUT remember to insist that you use the tool yourself, after they've explained how — men have this annoying habit of grabbing the spanner or whatever, off of you and doing it themselves. This may seem an easy answer to the problem, but it doesn't show you how, and you might get stuck somewhere without them and not remember how to do it.

Finally, (though there's nothing final when learning a new skill) always keep a rag in your tool kit. This may sound unnecessary but until you can fix a part

without getting covered in grease — its a handy thing to have and saves spreading grease from one part of the bike to the other and then to your body and clothes. (ie: from chain to handle bars to shorts to shoes etc.) I don't think I own one piece of clothing that doesn't have chain grease on it, so either wear the same thing cycling and carry extras or resign yourself to being a bit of a greaseball.

No matter how you approach the problem, persevere — and don't take any guff from others who tell you that you can't handle a spanner or screw-driver, just be proud of the fact that you've got it in your hand and you're trying. I know this from personal experience . . . it's more meaningful to ride a bicycle that you can repair — and the buzz you get from knowing it's your skills that make it operate is incomparable.



# BOOKS - blue mountains

*The Blue Mountains - A Guide for Bicyclists* by Jim Smith. Published by Jim Smith, Wentworth Falls NSW, 1980, 64 pages. \$2.50. This compact bicycle touring guide to the Blue Mountains is designed to be used with the *Blue Mountains and Burratorang Valley Tourist Map* (\$1.50) found at bush walking gear suppliers or from agents of the NSW Central Mapping Authority. Unless you are reasonably familiar with the streets of the region you will also need a corresponding street map, such as Robinsons, UBD or Gregor's (about \$1).

The guide marks a milestone in bicycle touring in NSW as it appears to be the first regional guide to be published for cyclists since Joe Pearson produced his

*Cyclists' Touring Guide for NSW* in 1896 - eighty four years ago. Jim's book is written in the readable down-to-earth style of his *Freewheeling* articles, rather than the formal writing of Pearson. In fact, Jim has done a remarkably good job of making his book more readable by adding handy hints, nostalgia, humour and an excellent bibliography of the Blue Mountains.

The book includes over 30 rides, commencing at railway stations from Glenbrook to Bell. Many are day rides, but weekend rides are also included. The ride descriptions are brief as most of them are easily determined from the *Tourist Map*. Where the rides are not easily followed from the map Jim has

provided a detailed description. I would like to see a more comprehensive description on some of the easier rides to help inexperienced bicyclists.

Perhaps the next edition could include distances and heights of the major climbs undertaken, and an explanation of the grading system which has been adopted. Grading is a good idea, but this seems designed for the experienced tourist. The inexperienced rider could find an easy rather difficult! But the difficulties are few while the rewards of bicycle touring in the beautiful Blue Mountains are many - not to mention the adrenaline surges on unexpected patches of loose sand or gravel.

Jim's remarks on bicycle design will unquestionably start a heated debate. Very few bicyclists would seriously consider the contention that the three speed hub is a viable alternative to the ten speed derailleur for mountain touring. One feasible alternative would be a three speed hub with two rear sprockets married to a widerange rear derailleur. This combination uses standard width chain with a master link, giving six useable gears - which is all the gears you will get on a cheap mass-produced ten speed bicycle.

His praise for flat handlebars instead of downswep bars won't be taken seriously by most cyclists. True, they can give slightly better control on rough roads, but the 'racing' bars are far better. They provide several different riding positions, which enable easier hill climbing, riding into headwinds and a safer braking position.

Most would agree when Jim complains that some of the latest bicycles are featuring non-standard parts, such as ultra-narrow chains, with six and seven speed clusters. The reliability and durability of these components are not proved. Jim stresses that you need not have the newest ten speed to go touring. You can repair your old 'clunker'. True again, but you will have to get off and push a lot more than our friends on their ten speed machines. When it is necessary to portage (carry) your bicycle across an obstacle you will soon realise why lightweight bicycles have become so popular for touring.

*The Blue Mountains - A Guide for Bicyclists* is an indispensable book for the touring cyclist who is interested in the byways and skyways of the Blue Mountains of NSW. It is highly recommended to the experienced bicyclist and great value at only \$2.50. It is available in a number of Sydney bicycle shops and bookshops or direct from the author/publisher at 65 Fletcher St, Wentworth Falls 2782.



Bicycle riders at Jenolan, April 17th 1903.



# BOOKS - fixit

Reviewed by Wilf Hilder

*Anybody's Bike Book* by Tom Cuthberton, Ten Speed Press, California. (Reviewed in *Freewheeling* No. 6). The fully revised 1979 edition is now available at Sydney's better bicycle stores at around \$6. It has been enlarged to 202 pages. The other essential maintenance book — *Richard's Bicycle Book* (reviewed in *Freewheeling* No. 6) has been raised in price one dollar by the local distributors to \$6.95. Both these books have comprehensive trouble shooting information to help you cope with common maintenance problems, especially set out in an easy-to-find format. These two classics are often sold out, and I would suggest you acquire one now as new shipments have recently arrived.

*How to Maintain and Repair your 5, 10 and 15 speed Bicycle* by Zy3yx Information Corporation USA, McGraw Hill Publications 1978. (28 pages, illustrated, costs around \$9). This book claims to be written in an easy to follow style and designed to make maintenance a simple task. In view of this claim, and its high cost, the book is a great disappointment. The illustrations are overall rather poor, and the text is so condensed that it reads like a telegram. The experienced mechanic might well cope with the abbreviated information supplied and sort out any hassles arising in the process, but I'm sure they would soon tire of the book's constant references to other pages to complete a repair, and the incessant use of numbers to refer to bicycle components. You shouldn't judge a book by its cover — but in this case the yellow cover confirms my belief. This book is a real lemon. Definitely not recommended.

*It's Easy to Fix Your Bicycle* by John McFarlane (USA) Foulsham & Co., 1972 edition. (122 pages, copiously illustrated, \$4.50.) McFarlane wrote this book in 1947 but has revised it several times since. He uses numerous photographs with a brief but informative text — superbly written — to cover every repair. Starting with saddle and handlebar adjustments, he moves onto punctures, pedals, cranks, forks, etc before dealing with back pedal (coaster) brakes. Six different types, including the popular Shimano type, and their problems, are described in considerable detail. The Sturmey Archer three speed hub is also fairly well illustrated, but the dismantling and reassembly instructions are very brief, really only useful to the experienced. Cotterless cranks don't appear in this book, but there are fairly comprehensive sections on adjusting Huret Allvit, Simplex Prestige, Shimano Lark and Campagnolo Neuvo Record derailleurs. Recommended as a supplementary book to

*Anybody's* and *Richard's* Bike Books, as these do not cover hub gears or back pedal brakes.

*Fix Your Bicycle* by Eric Jorgenson, Clymer Publications USA, 1975. This is an interesting book which starts with metric thread and bicycle tools. Excellent line drawings are accompanied by a brief text written at the experienced mechanic. Most front and rear derailleurs, with the notable exception of Suntour, are covered in this book. Some of the types have been since replaced with more modern designs. The 'exploded' diagrams and the accompanying text for derailleurs are most useful to an experienced mechanic. The same can be said of the back-pedal brake and hub gear sections, which include Shimano and various Sturmey Archer models (including the FW four speed and the S5 five speed). These two hubs, plus the Shimano disc brake, are not covered in any other maintenance book. Recommended as a supplementary source for the mechanic.

*Glenn's Complete Bicycle Manual* by Clarence Cole and Harold Glenn (USA), Crown Publishers NY, 1973. (340 pages, around \$9.) This large book has not been revised since 1973, resulting in some poor illustrations following the inevitable wear of the printing plates. The book seems aimed at people with a good mechanical background — perhaps unfamiliar with bicycles. It contains quite a few useful hints as well as some 'trouble shooting' information. This workshop manual

covers backpedal brakes, two and three speed hubs in considerable detail. The derailleur section is equally comprehensive, but not as easy to follow as several derailleurs are covered together. Fortunately, the SunTour rear GT is covered separately. Most popular modern types are omitted.

Brakes, hubs, pedals and headsets are also covered in detail, but popular modern — since 1973 — are omitted. The wheel building section is reasonable, but much of the remaining general information is out of date or not applicable here. Like most maintenance books, with the honourable exception of *Richards'*, *Anybody's* or *McFarlane's*, it does not pass on much of the expertise or short cuts that one would expect from an expert. It is a useful book if you are ready to dismantle a rear hub and brake — but for the rest of it, stick to *Anybody's* or *Richards* which are up to date, and represent better value for money.

*Building Bicycle Wheels* by Robert Wright, World Publications USA, 1977. (46 pages illustrated by Karen Lusebrink, \$2.35.) This little book is widely recommended in the USA, as a great book, but the wheelbuilding experts here favour Chas Coin's method (*Freewheeling* No. 3), together with his instructions on making and using a truing jig. Wright's book is interesting though, and I am sure that any bicyclist who is keen on wheelbuilding or truing will buy this book for its useful background information.



From *Anybody's bike book*



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