

Freewheeling

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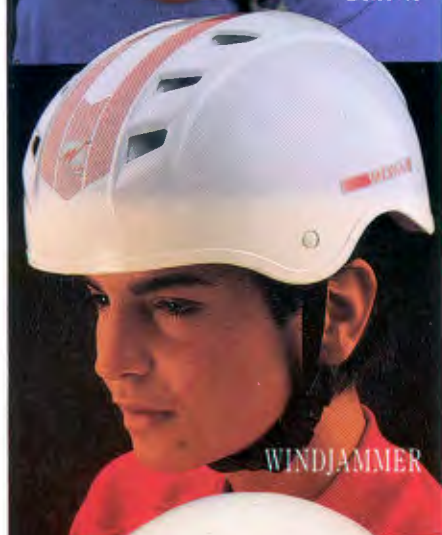
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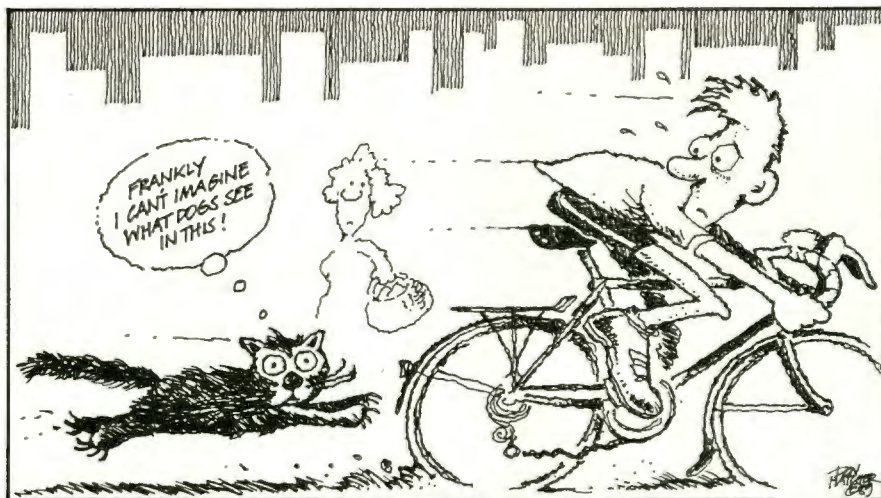
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At your service – the State Bicycle Committees

How each of our states controls its cycling programs

LAST DECEMBER I ATTENDED the final meeting for 1988 of the NSW State Bicycle Committee in Sydney. I had asked the committee chairman Roger Hogan if I could sit-in at a meeting to see how cycling affairs are handled by the NSW Government.

Every state with the exception of Tasmania and the Northern Territory has some form of SBC. As one would expect in a country which grew up from a collection of self governing colonies no two committees operate in the same way. And some are much more effective than others.

The Victorian SBC, the country's oldest and most established has been going through a rough spot recently mainly because of the indifferent (some would say downright hostile) attitude of a new Minister for Transport. The SBCV has had a number of its recent initiatives thwarted, key staff have not been replaced (Bike Week this year has been cancelled as a result) and its funds have not been ratified. To make matters worse a new part time chairman is overloaded with other work and wants to get out.

What's more the Minister has moved the committee out of the Ministry and into the Road Traffic Authority. Though that organisation has lost its old antagonism towards cyclists (the RTA even has an Unprotected Road Users Section) it is a very large and powerful institution and the cycling advocates are deeply concerned that they will be chewed up and spat out by the bureaucratic indifference of a very large organisation.

Victorian cyclists have fought hard to gain and maintain a committee with an independent chairman who has direct access to the Minister. The latest compromise to emerge from the rather protracted negotiations being held over the half limp body of the SBC secures the independence of the chairman but removes direct ministerial access.

Though the Victorians pioneered the professional approach towards SBC operations (with qualified technical staff to develop and oversee its programs) the NSW and the West Australians are now pushing further ahead.

In NSW where the state's largest roads and traffic departments have been merged into one gigantic organisation – the Road and Traffic Authority – the SBC

is also to be shifted from the Ministry. However cyclists there are less concerned for two reasons: the chairperson of the SBC will automatically become a member of the RTA's governing council and the RTA its self will for the first time combine the areas of road construction and road safety.

It is incredible to realise that the old Department of Main Roads did not have road safety as part of its charter. Any wonder that in the past five years it has been able to introduce dangerous S lane treatments to its main roads and stall or ignore the cyclists' campaign to have them removed.

The SBC's move to the RTA offers great possibilities for a full integration of bicycles into the road transport system but other important areas of education, enforcement and dual mode transit should not be overlooked. To maintain and extend the present work of the committee will require the unwieldy inter-departmental representative structure to be streamlined and higher level liaison properly instituted between the many government departments who are currently members of the SBC.

The SBCNSW meeting I attended had representatives from government departments with an involvement in bicycling and cycle safety: Environment, Motor Transport, Urban Transit, Sport and Recreation, Education, Health, Main Roads, Local Government, the Traffic Authority and the two main advocate groups – the Bicycle Institute and the Newcastle Cycleways Movement.

I thought it interesting that the two departments who have provided past resistance to the implementation of bicycling orientated policies within their spheres of influence – the State Rail Authority and the Police – did not attend this particular meeting.

A committee of this size can be a very unwieldy body and often, so I am told, meetings become bogged down in parochial side issues. Fortunately the present committee has an able chairman and a team of enthusiastic and competent executive officers whose job it is to provide technical assistance to the decision making process and implement many of its initiatives.

West Australia's SBC, which calls its self Bikewest has a management team consisting of a co-ordinator, education

officer, engineer and a Bike Ed co-ordinator. They have recently conducted a very successful helmet rebate scheme which encouraged almost 10,000 school aged riders to buy helmets.

The way the scheme operated was probably the biggest reason for its success. Bikewest deposited \$100,000 in an account with the R&I Bank (WA's state bank). When an approved helmet was purchased all the buyer had to do to claim the rebate was to take the claim form completed by the retailer to a local branch of the R&I and collect the \$10 rebate. Simple!

In other states where helmet rebate schemes have operated (often with dismal results) buyers have had to fiddle around with forms, obtain the retailers validation of sale and then wait weeks while bureaucrats processed the claim and sent out the cheque. The West Oz scheme is a model of efficiency and it did produce the results. Perhaps the bureaucrats in the other states didn't really want to give away their money in the first place?

South Australia's SBC is part of the Highways Department the state's road construction and road safety authority. It tends to emulate the Victorian model though it has not made the transition as yet towards a fully professional body with its own technical executive staff.

In Queensland speculation has been rife for some months that a state bicycle committee actually exists and has even met on occasion. Unfortunately the committee chairman is not Tony Fitzgerald QC otherwise we may have heard more of the committee's activities and real achievements. Instead the committee has managed to sit on its hands and get away with because of the lack of political motivation. I hope for the sake of Queensland's cyclists that they will write and tell me otherwise.

Tasmania doesn't have an SBC – it's too cold to cycle there. And the Northern Territory doesn't have one because it's probably too hot to even think about it.

On the national scene the Federal Government has managed to appear to be interested in bicycling but has resisted all attempts to establish a national bicycle committee. In view of the lack of a common and co-ordinated approach by the states it seems to me absolutely necessary that the Federal Government provide some leadership in this field.

Apart from the expensive Molly Meldrum helmet encouragement campaign (deemed a failure by the target audience according to some observers) and a national bicycle safety conference (with little action resulting) the Feds too have managed to do almost nothing and hope no one will notice.

On April 11 this year the executive officers and members of all the state bicycle committees will gather in Melbourne for a special three day workshop which hopefully will provide the kind of spark that may ignite further action. This type of gathering should be hosted by the Feds but the Victorians have seized the initiative instead.

I hope this gives the beleaguered SBCV some encouragement and the impetus to set its own house in order and get on with the job. I also hope that the gathering finally shames the other two states into establishing SBC's of their own and finally encourages the Queensland SBC to come out of hiding and do some real work for the sake of its constituents.

Why does the Labor Party dislike bicycles

The rise to power in NSW of a new Liberal Minister with very positive attitudes towards cycling, coinciding with the appalling downgrading of the Victorian SBC by the new Labor minister Ken-

nan, has set me wondering. Sure the whole bicycle scene was kick started in Victoria by a Liberal Minister, Brian Dixon, back in the Seventies but one would expect that as the bicycle is a solid means of transport for the workers its natural ally would be the Labor Party.

Not so in Victoria. As soon as the Cain Government came to power cycle advocates had to begin a long and difficult campaign to prevent successive transport ministers from destroying the State Bicycle Committee and its activities. The struggle is still continuing in Melbourne but in Sydney things look much better.

In Canberra the Labor shadow minister telegraphed his promises to all the bicycle lobby groups prior to winning power and apart from the occasional press picture of Hawke posing on a bicycle there seems to be very little interest in cycling on the part of Labor ministers.

My theory is that it is all a result of the Labor Party's attempt to win the political middle ground. In Australia that means the large middle and lower middle classes. In order to do this the old workers party has had to shed off the image of being too common and out of date.

Many elderly traditional Labour politicians probably did a lot of their

campaigning on bicycles before they won office and slipped into their chauffeur driven limousines but their younger associates (who are aggressively upwardly mobile) want nothing to do with bikes.

To the up and coming generation of Labor politicians the bicycle is a symbol of what they want to leave behind and they simply can't see what is really happening to cycling within modern Australian society.

Bicycling these days is a solid middle class activity. In a recent survey of the residents of Sydney's Randwick Municipality in the affluent Eastern Suburbs bike riding for pleasure was listed as a more popular recreational activity than tennis, golf, aerobics, jogging, and all the mainstream sports.

I would suggest that the current cycling scene in our cities is much larger than we would believe. And it does seem to me that the Liberals are more attuned to it than the supposedly middle ground Labor Party under Hawke and Cain.

The Party in Victoria dropped its commitment to the Melbourne Bikeplan prior to the last state election. If it wants to retain office at the next election it had better take a hard look at what is really happening on the streets. Oppositions don't win elections; governments lose them.



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John Drummond

A tribute to one of Australia's great cycling clubs

Following the amazing success of our cycling team in the Seoul Olympics many Australians unfamiliar with our cycling scene have no doubt wondered how a small nation such as ours can consistently produce world class cyclists of such high standard. This is even more astounding when one considers that cycling is generally considered as a relatively minor sport by the arbiters of our popular culture.

To better explain this phenomenon and to also provide an introduction to my major feature on the Johnson years (elsewhere in this issue) I have put together a short history of Victoria's oldest amateur cycling club.

When the Olympic Park Trust demolished the 1956 Games velodrome in 1971, to make way for a parking lot to service the nearby greyhound race track, it was significant that the only alternative venue in the Melbourne area was owned and controlled by the first amateur cycling club in the state of Victoria, the Brunswick Amateur Cycling Club.

In years of steady growth the club had acquired one of the fastest banked velodromes in Australia. When the Olympic board track closed Brunswick threw away the amateurs only sign and accommodated the professionals. For two years their track serviced the whole of Victoria until the League of Victorian Wheelmen completed their new headquarters at Coburg.

The name Brunswick commands tremendous respect in the cycling fraternity throughout Australia. It received extra special attention in 1970, favourite son, Gordon Johnson, turned professional at the 1970 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh and won the World Professional Sprint championship soon after.

That was a peak of success for a club that right throughout its history has produced more Olympic and Commonwealth Games representatives and Australian cycling champions than any other Victorian club.

Since its beginnings the Brunswick Amateur Cycling Club has developed some of Australia's greatest cyclists including numerous national, Olympic and Commonwealth Games champions.

among the Olympic and Commonwealth Games representatives the Brunswick names stand out: Vancouver 1954 Lindsay Cocks (gold in the Ten

Mile Scratch race); Rome 1960 Alan Grindall and Geoff Smith; Perth 1962 Joe Ciavola, Doug Adams (gold in the Ten Mile Scratch) and Tom Harrison (gold in the Sprint; Tokyo 1964 Tom Harrison, Vic Browne and Gordon Johnson; Jamaica 1966 John Bylsma; Mexico 1968 Gordon Johnson and John Bylsma; Edinburgh 1970 Gordon Johnson; World Championships 1970 (Leicester) England. Gordon Johnson; Munich 1972 P Sawyer, John Bylsma and Steele Bishop; Christchurch 1974 Rob Croker; Montreal 1976 Ian Chandler and Rob Croker (rode for Great Britain).

When World War One broke out in 1914 no amateur cycling clubs existed in Victoria. The Victorian Athletic Association controlled amateur bicycle racing and track events were only run once a month in conjunction with athletic track and field events with a road race each month during the winter season.

A year later in 1915 as the war gathered momentum and many of the runners and cyclists were enlisting in the services it became obvious that if cycling was to survive an autonomous governing body was urgently needed. Accordingly a meeting was held in a shed at the home of a cycle supporter, J H Evans, at Homer Street Moonee Ponds. Three meetings later it was decided to apply to the Victorian Athletic Association for registration as the Northern Suburbs Amateur Cycling Club. The application was subsequently granted and the first amateur cycling club in Victoria was born on the first of May 1916.

The club secretary, Dick Evans, had the honour of winning the first championship decided over 20 miles.

Track racing was conducted at the amateur sports ground situated where Olympic Park now stands. Despite a drain on members for war service the club prospered and strengthened and soon the Richmond, South and Eastern Suburbs Clubs formed. These four together formed the Victorian Amateur Cyclists Union which began in May 1917.

With continued growth came the need for a more centralised location so the club administration was transferred from Homer Street to George Gunston's cycle shop in Sydney Road, Brunswick.

The end of War in 1918 marked the return from service of many members, and in the process of rehabilitation many new members were recommended by the authorities to the club. The

growth in membership during this period was so large that on racing days there were not enough officials to conduct the events.

The situation became so acute that often the scratchmen acted as starter and timekeepers.

A great period of consolidation followed the increase in membership. The VACU organised the first inter club premiership for senior grade in 1918. Northern Suburbs won it outright for the first three years.

By 1923 many riders had retired from active membership and were appointed to official positions. This then overcame the chronic lack of officials who were by then required to conduct racing for over one hundred senior members.

By this time Gunston's shop could no longer fit everyone in when meetings were held so arrangements were made to rent a building in Barkly Street Brunswick.

It was from here that two decisions were made that greatly effected the future of the Northern Suburbs Club.

The first was to change the name of the club to Brunswick Amateur Cycling Club (with a change in club colours from red and black to black and white). The other was to admit to membership W J Harrod, a local businessman and an old racing member of the once famous, but by then disbanded, Victory Cycle Club.

With the admission of Harrod, a great administrator, came moves to purchase the club's own premises. Strenuous attempts were made to obtain the former clubrooms of the Victory Cycle Club, but the owner refused to sell. Instead the building recently vacated by Brunswick Anglers' Club was bought.

In 1926 Harrod stood for the presidency and won the position from foundation member J H Evans. Harrod then held the position for the next sixteen years, during which time the club prospered.

The silver anniversary celebrations were an auspicious occasion. An energetic team of officials had decided that the club would pay off its building loan by 1941 and as the club neared its 25th AGM the final payment was duly arranged. The objective had been reached.

To celebrate the dual occasion, a birthday party and reunion was arranged in the clubrooms and attended by a large number of former members. The title certificate was handed to the treasurer. Among those present were Mr and Mrs Evans, whose shed had shel-

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tered the club at its commencement. It was a very proud occasion as the president, Alf Bowden, called on Mrs Evans to cut the birthday cake.

The club's secretary at that time was Henry Hill, who had reached top class as a rider and was now proving himself an able administrator. It would be true to state that much of the recent successes celebrated on that occasion could be attributed to his organising ability. Henry Hill's organising abilities have also ensured the success of his bicycle shop Hillman Cycles a Melbourne landmark since the thirties.

During the Second World War the club raced with greatly reduced numbers. The war effort made increasing demands on Australian society and in 1940 the Club received an offer to purchase its premises for the purpose of establishing a factory. This was rejected but an alternate arrangement was negotiated whereby the club would rent its main hall for a factory while retaining the rear section for its meetings.

This rent ensured a regular income, stabilised finances and more than any other factor enabled the club to survive the repercussions of the war.

With the end of the war came a popular urge to throw off the years of restriction and there developed a great desire for recreation. Sports arenas were packed to capacity. The Brunswick Amateur Cycling Club grew to its greatest strength and by 1953 entries for club races reached record levels.

The Brunswick City Council, under pressure to provide more playing areas in the municipality, decided that Allard Park could carry two cricket pitches instead of one if the cycle track was removed. The council consulted with the bicycle club on a plan to develop Roberts Reserve as an exclusive cycling arena. The plan required a great deal of co-operation between the council and club if plans were to culminate in success.

A large amount of research was done in track development and finally a plan for a six to the mile velodrome was submitted to the council for approval. The city engineer revised the plan and eventual agreement was reached on a banked track of five laps to the mile.

Around that time the news that Melbourne would host the 1956 Olympic Games was made public so the club determined to celebrate the occasion. As a result they decided that every effort would be made to complete the track during the period of the Games. Once again the Brunswick Club achieved its purpose and the project was officially opened by the Mayor, Councillor J Gilligan.

The celebrations were, however, tinged with some regret. The first race on the programme was a memorium to

one of the club's greatest amateur riders, Lindsay Cocks, who died in a motor accident in France. He had just competed in the World Championships following the winning of a gold medal in the Ten Mile track event at the Empire Games held in Vancouver, Canada.

Soon after the official opening of the track and new clubrooms the old Lydia Street premises were sold. The club now felt itself in a position to proceed with the lighting of the track. An appeal to the council for a loan was approved and the following season Brunswick became the first amateur cycling club in Victoria to race under lights.

Disaster struck in 1966 when the filling under the surface of the banked track subsided during an extremely wet season. Attempts were made by club members to repair the damage but the deterioration continued.

Racing at that time was conducted on Friday nights and it became so unsafe the VACU banned its top riders from racing on the track.

After 50 odd years Brunswick was threatened with extinction if the track was not resurfaced. Once again an appeal was made to the city council and again they succeeded. Council recommended that tenders be called for resurfacing the track in concrete.

With a subsequent loss of two seasons of open cycling pending completion of the track resurfacing and considering the advised demolition of the Olympic Velodrome due to pressure placed on the Olympic Park Trust for more parking space, the Brunswick Club executive wisely decided to resume the Friday night Open meetings. Under the Presidency of the late Doug Branchflower new club rooms and canteen facilities were established and a whole new era developed.

It was a fantastic time and saw the Olympic venue replaced by Brunswick as the focal point for Victorian professional and amateur cycle racing. This period also coincided with the rise of world champion Gordon Johnson but that's another story.

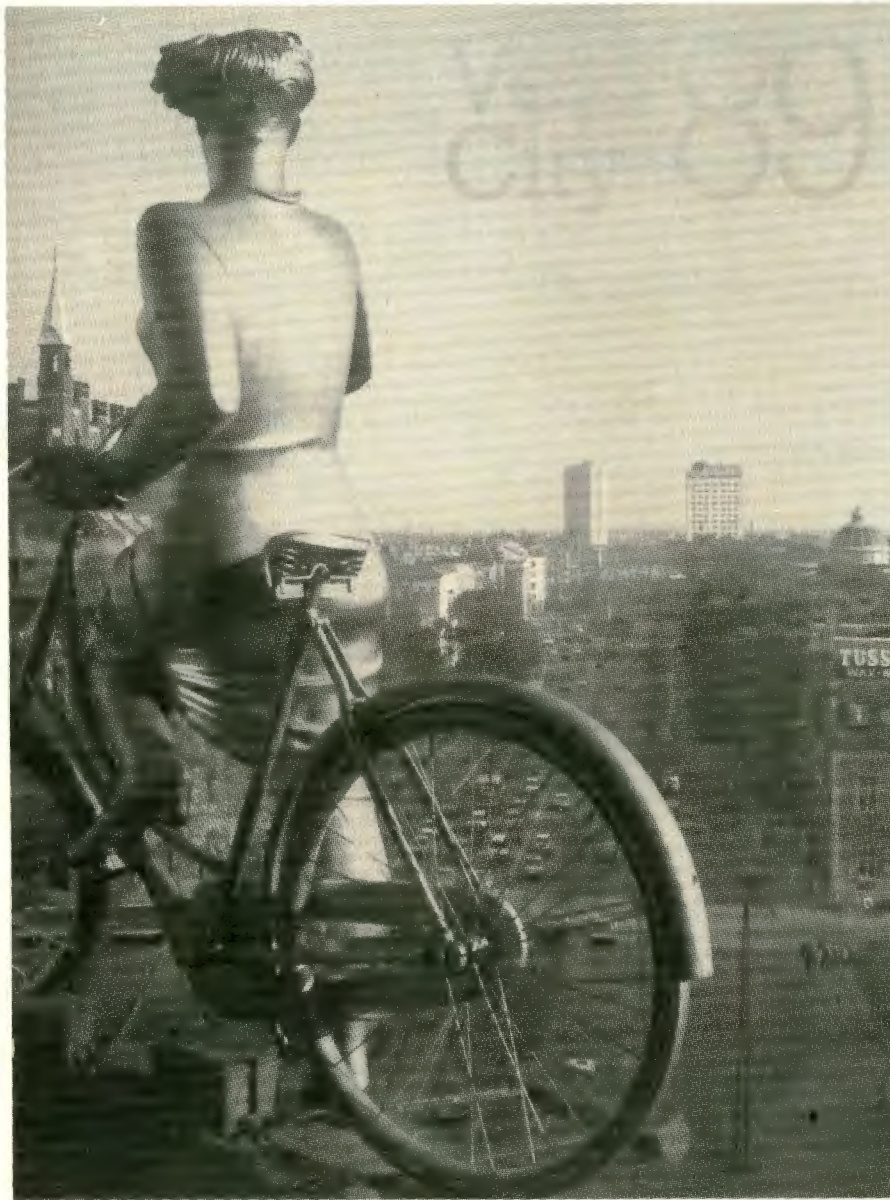
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Velo City 89

Copenhagen, Denmark is the venue for this year's international Velo City conference to be held from 21 to 23 August. This is to be the fourth such gathering and is open to politicians, planners and cyclists from all over the world. Between 250 and 300 people are expected to attend.

The theme of the conference is "How to make more people use the bicycle". The uses of the bicycle in combatting problems such as air pollution and traffic congestion in both the industrialized countries and the third world will be examined.

The conference will comprise workshop sessions on topics like cycle facilities, attitudes to cycling and prom-

The bicycle sculpture on top of a building in Copenhagen's Town Hall Square, an indication of how seriously cycling is viewed there.

oting the use of bikes in less developed countries, an exhibition of bicycles for city cyclists, and a detailed study of Copenhagen which is a city with a history of planning for cyclists.

Montreal mass ride claims record

Said to be the largest cycling event in the world, this year's Tour de l'Ile de Montreal takes place on 4 June. This has been an annual event since 1985 and in 1988 32,000 riders took to the streets.

The participants will pedal 70 kilometres around the island of Montreal along a route which combines the charm of great waterways and the landscape of a cosmopolitan city. Riders can choose whether to pedal at a leisurely pace, stopping for a picnic en route, or join the Tour de l'Ile Express which is an advanced start for those who have something to prove. The roads travelled are closed to vehicular traffic during the ride.

A registration fee of \$12 (Canadian) is charged and registration is limited to 35,000. You can obtain further information from: Le Tour de l'Ile de Montreal, PO Box 1000, Station M, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H1V 3R2.

Victorian Rural Freeways

The Victorian Road Construction Authority has brought out a leaflet announcing that Victoria's rural freeways are to be progressively opened to cyclists. This should be good news to cyclists who have found that in some places access to their desired destination was made impossible by the closing of freeway alternatives. \$350,000 is being spent to make these rural freeways safer and the work will include sealing road shoulders, replacing grates and signposting.

The leaflet contains information on the RCA's plans and also useful tips for cyclists using the freeways such as how to use the exit ramps.

To obtain the leaflet you should contact the RCA Bicycle Facilities Coordinator on (03) 861 5321, or phone the Victorian State Bicycle Committee on (03) 619 6692.

Cycling Calendar

Also from the Victorian RCA comes a 1989 calendar intended for cyclists. For each month this poster size calendar provides brief details of organised rides, triathlons, bike exhibitions, and club events. Useful phone numbers for Victorian bike clubs are shown and school holidays are highlighted. What a nice idea.

To obtain your calendar contact either the RCA or State Bike Committee on the Melbourne phone numbers given above.

Mountain bike routes in USA

Bikecentennial, the American recreational cycling organisation, has commenced working with the US Forest Service to develop mountain bike routes through national forests. The aim is to set up trail planning guidelines for national mountain biking routes and

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Great Victorian Bike Ride 1988

And it's on again this December!

The pictures on this page show some of the happy moments from the 1988 Bicycle Victoria GVBR held last December between Swan Hill on the Murray and Melbourne. A record 4200 riders participated including school groups like the well helmeted crowd from Coomoora High School.

Another highlight of the trip was a crossing of the Murray on an old paddle steamer.

On the final day riders were treated to a vision of the future when they were allowed to use the Westgate bridge to enter Melbourne. Our picture shows the riders safely using one of the brake down lanes thus dispelling the RCA myth that the bridge is dangerous for cyclists.



thereby pave the way, so to speak, for a network of off road touring routes in America. This is encouraging news for the fat tyre lover in a country where even the more secluded sealed roads have plenty of vehicular traffic.

Brisbane 18 March - Noon cycle rally

Anyone who rides an exercise bike would probably think that facilities are pretty good up here in the Sunshine State. As for the rest of us (the

headstrong and foolish ones) the situation is as plain as the graze on your knee. A few badly built unmaintained cyclepaths, a lack of respect from motorists, bans on bikes on trains and so on.

Come along to **Albert Park** on **Saturday March 18** and help give our government a collective slap on the wrist. Be there.

Around Australia Trails

Bicycle Australia now have sets of

bound trail guide notes available for purchase. These notes were compiled by individuals and groups riding the trails developed by Bicycle Australia and cover the following routes: Cairns to Cape York (938 km), Brisbane to Rockhampton (719 km), Sydney to Melbourne inland route (1000 km), Tasmania circuit, Melbourne to Adelaide coast route (991 km) and Adelaide to Perth via two routes.

The *Pacific Bicycle Route Guide Book* giving a route from Brisbane to Sydney



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3. By Izumi's original chain design, complicated adjustments can be done quite simply.
4. As the chain is of a bushless structure and the shape of the inner plate minimized, with the burring process, even while shifting the gears, running is very quiet.
5. With this lightweight parts design, the weight is reduced by 7 to 10% compared with our standard type.

In ordering, please write the things shown below.

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☐ A Pin hard treatment ☐ B Chain type ☐ C Type

Symbol	Description	Symbol	Description	Symbol	Description
800	Carburising	W	Wide type (pin length 7.6mm)	(blank)	Standard type
1400	Hard coating	N	Narrow type (pin length 7.3mm)	S	Lightweight type

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By special treatment, the surface of the steel pins is combined with metal compounds. The hardness of the pin surface is therefore very high, recorded as a vickers hardness of HV 1,400 (Diamond is HV 10,000). It has outstanding durability and wear resistance even in the endurance road races. What's more, its chain life is more than 3 times longer than the standard product. The change of the side bow due to elongation of the chain is very slight, so that a stable shift changing performance may be maintained over a long period.



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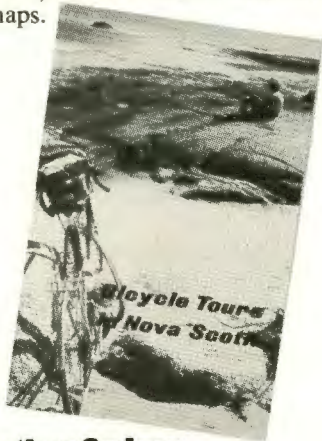
Head Office: 25 Hamilton Street, Huntingdale. Vic., 3166 Phone 568 0211

Remarks 1) You can make any selection from the above.

2) In accordance with your request, gold, silver and other combinations are available.

Specifications are subject to change without notice.

(1077 km) is also available with full colour maps.



The other Sydney

Next time you find yourself in Nova Scotia, Canada with a bicycle and a few days to spare you may like to take a ride around another Sydney Harbour. This harbour, which looks very much the same shape as ours, is in the middle of a historic coal mining district. What odds do you put on the residents there not knowing where the REAL Sydney is!

A suggested tour of the area, and a number of other scenic loop rides are contained in a booklet written and published by Bicycle Nova Scotia entitled *Bicycle Tours in Nova Scotia*. Just a quick read of the introduction makes you want to pack your bags and set off immediately. The rides follow the rugged coast and also venture inland through a relatively unvisited province, where the road surfaces are good, the climate in summer is mild and there are varied expanses of forest and farmland. You can get your own copy of the booklet by writing to Bicycle Nova Scotia, PO Box 3010 S, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 3G6.

But do they have an opera house?

Great Eastern Australian Rally

The Bicycle Institute of NSW is this year hosting its major cycling event, GEAR, from 24 to 27 March. The venue will be the charming Southern Highlands town of Bowral, where participants will camp for four days. Dormitory accommodation can also be arranged by BINSW.

Each day participants will have a selection of rides of varying lengths from 15 to 120 kilometres, taking in different aspects of the delightful Southern Highlands scenery.

The cost of the event is between \$75 and \$20. For further information contact BINSW on (02) 212 5628.

National Pennyfarthing Championships

On 25 June Evandale in northern Tasmania plays host to the Evandale Village Fair and National Pennyfarthing Championships. This should prove to be quite a spectacle. The programme includes the national one mile championship, the slow race which is the ultimate test of balance, the slalom and the sprint. Teams will participate in a relay, and a handicap race, obstacle race and other lighthearted activities are planned. A 30 kilometre road race will be held the next day. The event will incorporate a world championship pentathlon to be decided over the five main races.

Vision Victoria Fun Bike Ride

19 March is the date for this ride. The distance is 30 kilometres and participants will pedal from Mordialloc along Beach Road to Batman Park in Melbourne. After the ride there will be a family festival at Batman Park with displays, competitions, exhibitions, entertainment and refreshments. All pro-

ceeds will go to the Association for the Blind.

Entry forms are available from the Association for the Blind, 7 Mair Street, Brighton Beach, Victoria 3188. Telephone (03) 598 8555.

Around Oz relay ride

The Port Fairy Cycling Club's bicentennial relay ride around Australia took place between 18 June and 18 August last year. Five riders from Port Fairy Club, Dennis Lemke, Kevin Lee, Jim Fitzgerald, Bill Maclaren and David Hyland took part, and were joined by Brett Nutter and Peter Nelson from Blackburn Cycling Club. Each rider took turns to ride a 50 km stage alone, although on a few occasions several would ride together.

It took the riders 62 days to complete the 14242 km journey, which saw them battling fierce headwinds across the Nullabor, coping with unseasonably high temperatures in northern Western Australia, and benefitting from favourable tailwinds in the Northern Territory where speeds of over 40 km/h were maintained for several hours. They also had to cope with high rainfall in far north Queensland and northern New South Wales.

The riders had a comprehensive backup of four support vehicles towing caravans and trailers and spent most nights in caravan parks.

Not that it was all hard slog. The riders found time for sightseeing in various spots, including Cairns where they hopped across to Green Island and also took the delightful train ride up onto the Atherton Tableland to Kuranda. At Mataranka they relaxed by soaking in a thermal pool with a water temperature of 34 degrees. In Katherine Gorge National Park they toured the gorge by boat, and at Fitzroy Crossing they had a cruise through the Geikie Gorge courtesy of the park ranger who ran an unscheduled trip for them.

All riders rode the final 19 km into Port Fairy where the townspeople gave them a hearty welcome. The trip was felt to have been a great success, so much so that some of the riders are thinking of doing it again one day.

Bike planning in Perth

Bikewest, the Western Australian Bike Committee, announces the completion of two planning studies. The first relates to bike parking facilities at metropolitan Perth bus and train stations and its results will be taken into account when Transperth commences its electrification works. The second report examines bicycle routes along freeways and railway reserves between Mount Hawthorn and Perth, and between Subiaco and Perth. For more details contact Bikewest on (09) 222 0511.



Fighting bike theft

Bikewest also tell us that the West Australian police have come up with a new scheme to help recover stolen bikes and return them to their owners. When police stop a cyclist while committing an offence they will record the serial number and any identifying features of the bike on the Police Bicycle Safety Section computer. A monthly printout showing the serial numbers and surnames of the riders will be distributed to the anti theft squad.

Bicycle Helmet Campaign

In December 1988 an interim report by Bikewest on the WA government's bicycle helmet campaign was issued. The three year campaign commenced in 1987 and is based on the Victorian program which involves an advertising strategy and rebates on purchase of helmets.

Helmet wearing rates appear to have doubled in the first year of the campaign, but the advertising was rather more successful with primary school students than with students at secondary schools. In the next year of the campaign more attention will be focused on these older riders.

Further information is available from Bikewest.

Fremantle Bike Plan

The results of the evaluation of the implementation between 1985 and 1987 of the Fremantle Bike Plan are now available in a report prepared by Bikewest. The report concludes that the plan has been successful and accompanied a 12% annual increase in cycling in the city. Among the benefits of the plan, Bikewest cites savings in health and transport costs and environmental advantages.

It's good news that at least some city planners appreciate the benefits of two wheeled travel. Hopefully other cities will be following suit.

You can obtain a copy of the report from Bikewest, 32 St George's Terrace, Perth.

Bicycle Victoria moves

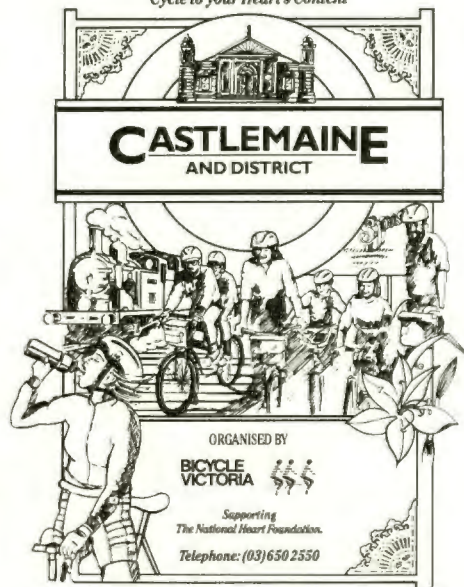
As from 15 January Bicycle Victoria is now located at 29-31 Somerset Place, Melbourne just off Little Bourke Street near the GPO. The new telephone number is 670 9911.

Easterbike 89

The second annual Easterbike is scheduled for 24 to 27 March and will be based at the same venue as last year, Castlemaine north of Melbourne. The event is organised by Bicycle Victoria to

EASTERBIKE '89

March 24, 25, 26, 27,
Cycle to your Heart's Content



support the National Heart Foundation and the theme is "Cycle to your heart's content". Following last year's pattern, participants will camp for their stay at the Easterbike site and each day select a ride from the list supplied that appeals



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Reynolds introduce its exciting new range of "designed for purpose" bicycle frame tube sets.

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For further information on the new range of Reynolds cycle frame products, send S.A.E. to the address below.

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to them. It's a nice opportunity to spend a few days at a pleasant spot and meet other cyclists.

Day rides are planned for all levels of fitness ranging from tours of the immediate vicinity of Castlemaine, the historic centre of the early gold rushes, through medium paced tours of up to 30 kilometres, with more challenging 85 kilometre rides for the keenies. There will be an ample selection of trips for riders to choose from each day, and rides will be led by experienced touring cyclists. Some rides will be aimed specifically at mountain bikers.

Non-cycling events include healthy heart cooking demonstrations and a healthy barbecue. There will be an emphasis on clean and healthy cuisine. Fitness testing and discussions on nutrition are to be conducted by the NHF, who will also give first aid advice.

On the lighter side there will be nightly film screenings, aerobics classes, a bush dance and broadcasts on Easter-bike's own FM radio station - news, gossip and music plus film soundtracks in stereo for the full simulcast experience.

The event fee (varies from \$80 to \$115) includes maps, meals, camping fees and full medical and ride backup. Transport from Melbourne to Castlemaine can also be arranged.

For further information contact Bicycle Victoria (03) 650 2550

Guide dogs run for mobility

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association of Queensland has organised a "Run for Mobility" around Queensland to take place during May and June. Gerard Cosens, who is 18 years old and himself congenitally blind, has played a major part in the organising of this event, and will participate in the run with fifteen other athletes. The event is being staged to create a greater awareness in the community of the work carried out by the Association and to raise funds for the Association's work.

The route covers a distance of 5200 kilometres from Brisbane through Mount Isa to Cairns and back to Brisbane, passing through all major centres. Brisbane to Cairns will be by tandem and Cairns to Brisbane will be run on foot. Estimated time to complete this is 27 days. Such an event is unique and unlikely to be repeated.

88 Gopng ride: a MS fundraising success

In 1988 the Sydney to the Gong ride was for the first time, but not the last, a fund raising event for the Multiple Sclerosis Society. As such it was highly successful and a total of \$50,000 was raised by the riders who took time on 20 November 1988 to "Ride for MS".

Gaby Bonello from Dee Why was the highest individual fundraiser, raising \$1750.40 by selling a huge number of raffle tickets and finding some excellent sponsors. In appreciation of her effort, Gaby has won a week's holiday for two at the Sheraton Mirage Resort in Port Douglas, North Queensland.

All those participants who raised over \$250 are eligible for entry to the "250 Club". More later about this new club, which is to be an ongoing feature of future Gong rides. These people raised \$250 in the 1988 ride: John Paradee, Keith Levett, Paul Buckless, Richard Lavis, Linda Monty, Vincent Moran, Joanne Laratt, Maro Buhler, Mrs Straub, Jennifer Barnes, Neville Day, Colin Hall, Jane Morrison, Ray Walsh, Carl Burzeo, Andre Andrews, Julie Porte, Henry Wakeford, Henry Scherer, Peter Alcock, Paul Murray, Ian Higson, Mark Boxall, Ian Stone, Robert Bailey, Dragi Pendevski, Greg Curtin, Gary Phipps, Simon Grierson, Hatem Mater, Fulvio Durazza, Frank Mackaway, Paul Stanley-Jones, Sue Mearns, Richard Horborough, Craig Warner, Leiat Morwood, Ian Charles, Wendy Andrews, Darren Farr, Dennis Schluter, Chris Maley, Alan Merton, Steve Phillips, Janett Clarkson, Melvyn Tuck, Michael Whicker, James Simmons, Eddie Olsen.

The "pedalling for MS Raffle" was extended for a few weeks and drawn on 19 December 1988. The winner was Sergeant Graham Weir of West Wollongong, and he has won a trip for two to Singapore, staying at the Boulevard Hotel.

Great work gang. Lets do even better that that on this years ride - Sunday 26 November.



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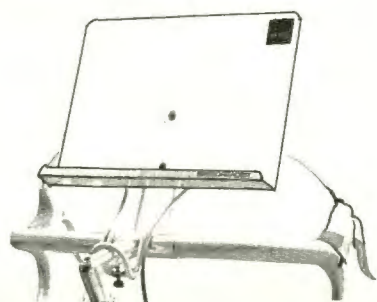
New Products and Ideas



Two new lightweight helmets from Bell

The Quest helmet is a lightweight expanded polystyrene helmet which boasts a number of safety features new to this type of headgear. The helmet weighs less than 255 grams and is fitted with an internal reinforcing ring to add strength to the EPS. Quest is covered by a lycra mesh cover and high volume cooling holes provide flow through ventilation. In the USA the helmet has passed the Snell and ANSI tests.

Streetrider is the first EPS helmet designed especially for younger riders. The helmet has a scuff resistant Shellac coating and is supplied with a set of decals for a customised appearance. An adjustable pad system ensures that the helmet will still fit as the user grows up. Streetrider is approved by the US Snell and ANSI standards. Wholesale distribution: Hanley Trading Pty Ltd.



Read and train

If you own an indoor trainer and are tired of pumping away at the pedals in a state of terminal boredom the Blackburn quick mounting Speed Reader may be the device for you. The white gloss finished stand fits easily to your handlebars and will hold even large books and magazines. Now you can do two things at once during the chilly winter months: give your body the work out it deserves and catch up on all that reading you wanted to do during summer but were too busy cycling to get into it. Trade distribution Leisure Bikes North Richmond VIC.



MKS strapless pedal

MAPS TAGE are high quality pedals and sell for less than \$100. They come with Look compatible cleat mountings and are fully adjustable both when initially fitting to the shoe and in actual use. Wholesale distribution: Hanley Trading Pty Ltd.

Hinault in Australia

The techniques of five-time Tour de France winner and top professional rider, Bernard Hinault, are now available to bicycle enthusiasts through a new book titled *Road Racing Technique and Training*. The book includes discussions on equipment, riding position, handling skills, training, diet and medical aspects of the sport. It is superbly illustrated with many charts and diagrams and almost 200 photographs. The book is co written with cycling expert Claude Genzling. Wholesale distribution Pace Sports Marketing.

Hot new MTB's

Named Bike of the Decade by the US magazine *Bicycle Guide*, the Specialized Stumpjumper, the mountain bike that

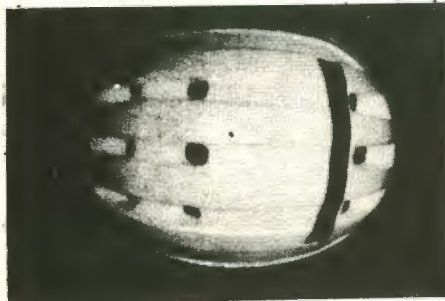


caught the imagination of a generation of North Americans is now available in this country along with a full range of Specialized MTB's. The Stumpjumper Comp features state of the art componentry and jazzy up to the minute paintwork and graphics along with hot equipment like Shimano Deore XT componentry, Ground Control tyres and a Tange Prestige frame with race proven geometry.

The Specialized Hardrock mountain bike uses SunTour's latest XCD 4050 componentry indexed rear derailleur and a quick release front wheel for easy packing into a vehicle. Hardrock Comp is also fitted with Hardpack 2.2 tyres. Check out the Specialized MTBs at your fat tyre retailer.



Specialized have also released a Shimano 105 equipped road bike featuring aggressive frame geometry, investment cast lugs, bottom bracket and fork crown. The Sirrus has a double butted chrome moly frame and is decked out in Specialized's latest colours. Wholesale distribution: Atom Imports.



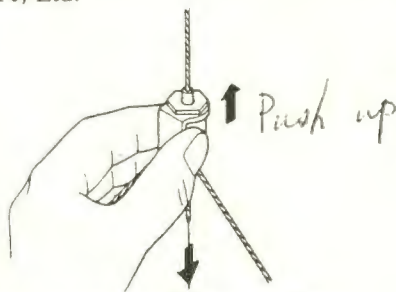
Atom Airlite helmet

A super lightweight EPS helmet designed for competition use this helmet exceeds the Australian AS2063 Standard impact test as well as the US ANSI Z90.4. The helmet has air flow channels for efficient cooling and is covered with a lycra mesh protective covering. The cotton towelling sizing pads are fully

removable to provide optimum head size adjustment. The airlite comes in small medium and large shell sizes and the covers come in a wide selection of colours. Wholesale distribution: Atom Imports.

One way cable lock

This clever little gadget is THE answer to the infuriating problem of adjusting the straddle cable on a cantilever or centrepull brakeset. Simply slip the one way lock onto the cable in place of the normal straddle cable hook, pull the cable through to the correct tension and the cable locks automatically thus enabling you to then tighten the actual cable clamp bolt without getting into a tizz. Wholesale distribution: Hanley Trading Pty Ltd.



Blackburn work stands

The Blackburn Workstand and Benchstand are ideal for the bicyclist who enjoys performing their basic bike maintenance tasks in the comfort of their own homes. Both stands feature the same rotating head clamp arrangement and smooth sleek contemporary design. The workstand is freestanding and can be easily folded up to store in a cupboard. The Benchstand is designed for workshop/garage use and is designed to be bolted to a convenient work bench. Both units allow a full 360 degree

rotation and will clamp almost every type of bicycle. Wholesale distribution Leisure Bikes, North Richmond VIC.



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Mountain bike clubs also organise club competition events as well as inter club meetings like this one organised by Sydney's North Shore Nobbies at Dargle last year. Photography by Warren Salomon.

THE MOUNTAIN BIKE YEAR

Mountain biking is an all year activity. Heres how –

BY WARREN SALOMON

FORGET THE SUMMER track or winter road seasons. Forget spring touring or sunday rides around the suburbs. The mountain bike is here and year-round bike riding has finally arrived in OZ.

The 1989 mountain bike season starts on January 1 and ends on December 31. Competition riding is now under way and in November or December (we will tell you as soon as the dates are announced) the nation's top fat tyre fanatics will gather in Canberra to decide who will be the Australian Trials, Uphill, Downhill and Enduro champions.

Off road racing is not for everyone but a large number of recreational riders are finding that a bit of friendly competitive riding every now and then adds a bit of zest to their bush bashing escapades. This light hearted guide to the 1989 season is dedicated to both the adrenalin pumpers and the more laid-back dirt road diehards.

January

All keen mountain bikers should get a good night's sleep on the evening of December 31. You need to be in good condition to start the new season so only one New Year party at a time and go

easy on the substances known for their damaging effect on brain cells.

Comforted by the knowledge that most of the mountain biking fraternity (and the entire population between 18 and 25 years) are drinking far too much alcohol for their own good you could find an all night gym and do a bit of weight training. Follow this up with a 60 km down ride over fire trails so rough that your 2.125 knobbies wear out their treads.

Non competitive riders can afford to wait until the next day before facing the daylight. In the searing summer heat your best bet is to head for the mountains or the forests if you have any close by. Forget the coast at this time of the year. The best trails have been taken by car campers crapping behind bushes.

February

The summer holidays may be over but that doesn't mean you don't have time to ride your mountain bike. February is usually the month with the most stable weather so make use of the long sunlit evenings before the winter months approach.

This month is also the time to do something about that desire of yours to become the new national mountain bike champ. The nationals may be ten months away but you need to develop your rough road skills over a long period if you are to give Werner Wohlrab a good tussle. Residents of Sydney can get plenty of rough road riding practice in and around the central business district at the moment. Dodging jaywalking pedestrians in George Street is also good for improving your reflexes and braking skills.

Melbournians can usually find plenty of wild cobblestones to ride if they can not get up into the state forests up on the Great Divide.

March

Easter this year falls early so you should not miss the opportunity to head for the hills for the full four days. Keep your destination a secret. You don't want Wohlrab and Trials champ, Glen Roche, bumblin in on your training camp with some flimsy excuse about taking the wrong turnoff at Balranald.

As Easter is the maddest time to be on the roads you couldn't pick a better time to go off-road. This Easter I plan to go base camping in the wilds with a few close friends. We plan to do day rides over a wide range of challenging tracks.

Plan the difficulty of your rides to provide a balanced program. Try hill



climbing one day (with ferocious descents to round off the outing) and follow the next day with level terrain with lots of trees and boulders to dodge. Take the right precautions and make sure you chose routes that are reasonably accessible so that it is inexpensive for the State Emergency Service to find and carry you out. The rescue helicopter may be a stylish way to travel but it sure costs lots of money.

April

The weather's getting cooler now so you can afford to do a bit of hard riding along those mountain trails. State Forest trails are ideal for all-round training as they usually offer a huge range of surfaces and some wonderfully tight corners. Look out for logging trucks. You have to end the year proud not pulped.

With the approach of winter it is good to sit down with your friends and plan

the months ahead so that you can be sure of having sufficient companions for your rides be they training or touring.

The winter months are the best time for mountain biking on the east coast north of Sydney into south east Queensland so plan your winter adventures now. There are some fantastic forest trails on the coastal side of the Great Diving Range and you will need at least a week to mount a proper exploration.

May

About this time of the year the really keen bike importers have landed their latest machines. Take time out from your riding to visit you local mountain bike dealer and check out Shimano's latest enhancement to its immensely popular index gear shifting mechanism.

It's called Hyperglide and its sure to send you into hyperdrive. (Or is it called Hyperdrive and it is bound to send you into hyperglide?) Anyway I can't wait to get my hub/cluster/derailleur ensemble before Wohlrab gets his.

SunTour also has new equipment in its MTB range and there is a whole swag of goodies on the way from the specialist USA manufacturers.

I made the suggestion last year that our importers and wholesalers need to get their act together, recognise that the MTB season starts **AFTER CHRISTMAS** and release their new ranges around about Easter or before. So far few have realised the tremendous potential for splitting off their fat tyred range and launching it at the start of the season not as it is drawing to a close.

Wakey wakey guys and gals. Your customers want bikes they can ride throughout the year so they can feel completely at home on their machines when they tour or race in the BIG ONE.

June

Winter's here at last. It's not cold enough to abandon those dawn training runs, yet! Except for when its raining this is one of the best months to be riding. The flies are hibernating and the day time temperature is ideal for raising a sweat.

In fact if you don't raise a sweat on your winter rides you are not riding hard enough. Health experts agree that proper exercise involves sweating. Sweat is good. Sweat is great. Don't forget to sweat on your next ride.

Perth and Adelaide tend to have wet winters so if you live there you should have your gear packed and at the ready through winter waiting for that break in the weather.

July

Unless you live in Antarctica it's still not cold enough to abandon your weekend runs up into the foothills. Check the snow reports first if the foothills nearest to you lead up onto the Snowys.



Winter nights can be spent around warm fireplaces lacing up that second pair of wheels you have always talked about. A second set of wheels is a good idea if you only own one mountain bike – one set for really rough terrain and one for more conventional surfaces. With two sets of wheels you can also turn your competition machine into a tourer or a comfortable city bike.

If you are slack like me you will want to not only own two set of wheels but two mountain bikes so that you don't

have to go through all the hassle of changing chains as well. This method tends to leave you with the cleanest hands but you will need to build an extension onto your house to avoid the two-sets-of-wide-handlebars-in-the-hallway syndrome.

(Technical note: Chains and freewheels wear at about the same rate. If the new freewheel on your second set of wheels doesn't like your worn chain you will also have to either use the existing freewheel – by taking it off one hub and fitting it to the other – OR fitting a new chain and using it only with the second set of wheels.)

Bikers with only one set of wheels can easily get by changing tyres for different types of terrain. Front wheels handle differently to back wheels so often you don't need a super large nobby tread on the front.

September

Ah spring at last! Time to go on country rides and feel the sun warming up. Speaking of the sun you should be careful in these uncertain times and look out for holes in the chromosome layer. Get your self a good pair of shades – all the top riders now wear them. Aggressive competitors especially need them to see through the dust – like when you are about to lap the reigning national champ.

With the chromosome layer developing holes like well made Swiss cheese you will need to find a good +251 sunscreen and ladle it onto the back of your neck. Rednecks don't race mountain bikes so don't get caught out this spring.

October

So you've rode right through the winter but your friends have found you impossible to ride with (maybe you sweat TOO much). You need some other riding companions as it's downright dangerous to ride alone on bush trails – who will phone the rescue helicopter?

The best way to get good technical knowledge is to seek out and join a club.

There are a number of MTB groups now forming in the cities in addition to the ones already established. The most important function of a club is to run rides. Armchair mountain bikers don't exist. Check the contacts list in our calendar section at the rear of this issue or phone the Australian Mountain Bike Association (02) 27 2977. AMBA also has printed guidelines if you want to start a club in your area.

November/December

Well, the time has arrived to show Woh-lrab, Roche and the rest of them that all that training you've put in over the last ten months has finally paid off. On race day don't forget tactics are just as important as stamina.

Position yourself at the start so that you can keep contact with the leaders and make your move at the right psychological moment. This doesn't mean kicking the national champ in the shins before the start or throwing tacks on parts of the course.

If you're not into S&M then you are probably planning your early summer rides over the Bogong High Plains or through Kosciusko National Park. Even so I would urge every breed of mountain biker to come along to this year's national championships. Last year the spectators had a ball riding their bikes through the scrub trying to get the best views of the competitors. Its also a wonderful opportunity to meet other fat tyre fanatics and followers from all over the place.

After the nationals the silly season is upon us once more. An endless round of chrissey parties mixed up with a pathological desire to get work finished for the year. If you have done your training throughout the year there's time here to relax and ponder the delights of the 1990 mountain bike year.

What ever you may want to do I know that on top of a trusty pair of fat wheels you are bound to have a terrific time of it. My compliments of the season.



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Wallace's Hut

MOUNTAIN BIKING THE HIGH PLAINS

A cycling adventure across the Bogong High Plains

BY WARREN SALOMON

BICYCLING IN EASTERN Australia during the summer is a bit of a problem. First there's the heat, the flies, the crowds, the dryness of the countryside – maybe even a bushfire or two – all to make me wish I had never ventured out of my cool terrace house into the Great Outdoors.

This summer I managed not one bicycle excursion but two. The first with my son was along the coast near the NSW towns of Crescent Head, Kempsey and

Telegraph Point. The beach was great but the traffic, the mosquitoes and the crowds... Yuk!

I vowed never again. Let the motorised maddies have the roads at that time of the year I say.

One week later I set out on another bicycle journey so utterly different in character and outcome that at times I wondered if I was still in the same country. At the end of it all I returned home refreshed, relaxed and revitalised – the true sign of a great holiday.

That holiday was a seven day mountain bike tour of Victoria's alpine coun-

try with professional tour operators Bogong Jack Adventures. The trip was fully supported by a 4WD vehicle so we didn't have to carry our luggage and all meals were provided.

As much as I enjoy camping I often find that shifting camp every night and cycling with luggage on a fully loaded bike during the day can be a bit of an ordeal. But when the tents are easy to erect tunnel-types and the cooking is done by an expert campfire cook pain is instantly converted to pleasure.

The tour

Bogong Jack Adventure's is one of Australia's most successful adventure travel operators and offers a wide and varied program of bicycle rides, bushwalks, ski tours and other outdoor activities throughout the year. Two years ago I had the pleasure of participating in their Grand Bicycle Tour of the North East – a five day food and cycling feast in some of Australia's prettiest countryside. I wrote glowingly of it in our tenth anniversary issue 45.

Their mountain bike tour of the alpine high plains is a new trip and I was pleased to be able to participate in only the second of what I think will be eventually become one of their most popular tours.

Unlike the Tour of the North East, which uses hotel accommodation every night, the high plains tour is a camping trip which includes a number creature comforts and organised with flair by the operators: Andrew and Carol Stenhouse.

All meals plus morning and afternoon tea breaks are provided in quantities to satisfy the hungriest cycling appetites. Daily distances are not great and allow plenty of time for the kinds of things I most like to do when on holiday (apart from riding a bike) such as: reading, writing postcards, keeping a journal, sightseeing in obscure and historic towns and sitting quietly in the bush as night descends.

My cycling friends expressed their concern about the daily distances when I showed them the itinerary. I remember thinking at the time that even on rough roads on mountain bikes that there didn't seem to be as much cycling as I was normally used to. Once on the trip I found each day's cycling to be excellent. Beginner riders should find the route and distances just as easy to manage and

A Bogong High Plains pictorial. Opposite page clockwise from top: Clean air and a big sky are only two benefits of the ride along the high plains road; Refreshment on top of Victoria. Our group pauses for morning tea near the Cope Hut; McNamara's hut. Cosy, inviting and a pity to leave it; White everlastings on top of Mt Nelse; Mt Feathertop from Hotham. Photography by Warren Salomon.





there is always the sag wagon nearby to retreat to with dignity.

Some of the meals (and Carol Stenhouse's walnut and banana cake I will remember with fondness. Most of all I will think of the fresh mountain trout on the first night and the chicken shish kebabs on the last evening (our only evening in fixed accommodation) as we sat under a cloudless sky on the grassy terrace in front of our holiday unit with Mt Bogong towering above us in the distance.

Then again the trip was filled with memorable occasions. Here are a few of them.

The mountain climate

By the time I reached the top of the ridge the clouds had thickened overhead and rain looked possible. Down the other side to the Kosciusko Lookout the road is wet but by the time the others arrived it had stopped. We regroup at the lookout and erect a tarpaulin off the vehicle just in case the clouds decide to drop their load onto us.

Far below us and off to the north is the tiny town of Omeo. Further on is the indistinct flattened shape of Australia's highest mountain. Very unimpressive I think as I munch into a tomato, salami, pickle and mayonnaise sandwich.

Jack Zagorski tells us over lunch that the correct Polish pronunciation for Kosciusko is Kos-schuss-ko. With a surname like his he should know. So from then on I try to correct myself every time I sight that distant hump and utter its name. Fortunately we don't see it too often but I am learning.

Later.

The storm clouds gather in the distance as we sit here in the Omeo camp ground under the relative luxury of our tarpaulin. Nearby dinner simmers on the stove. We are in Victoria's high country now and it is hard to believe that the rest of the country is sweltering in oppressive heat while we sit here in our fleecy jackets.

In the high country the weather can be so changeable. In my travel bag I have packed two jumpers and long trousers. Even though the jumpers will be both used by the end of the trip lycra cycling shorts and a long sleeved shirt is all that I will wear most days on the road. Out of Omeo the next day my jacket stays on until we cycle out of the valley and into sunnier skies.

Up on the high plains proper the air is decidedly cooler and most days I wear my lightweight synthetic pile jacket with a summer weight shirt underneath.

Cycling shorts are still the go but I rub sunburn cream onto all exposed bits of skin. At these high altitudes the air is clearer, cleaner and offers less protection from the sun than the smoggy skies of Sydney.

I wonder more than once if the hole in the ozone layer is up above us this summer?

The perfect mountain road

Almost at the top of the ridge we pause for one of our morning teas complete with table, tablecloth, fold up chairs and fresh home baked walnut and banana cake – a Bogong Jack specialty. Across the valley the mountain tops fade into the low cloud and Jean says that it re-

minds her of the Yorkshire dales in England. I recall a postcard sent to me by a friend from that part of the world and agree with her. The low cloud has a softening effect on the landscape.

About three kilometres on the road leaves the Omeo valley and crosses the cleared saddle into another more secluded region. A plain timber house appears on the cleared ridge line shortly after we cross a small creek but on from that as far as the eye could see lay the dark misty cloud topped mass of the mountains.

Beyond the farmhouse the road levels out and for the next fifteen kilometres before Anglers Rest it contours along

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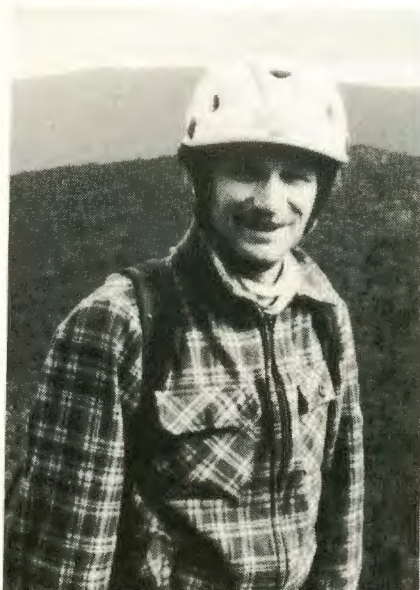
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On the road to Anglers Rest. A smooth flat surface with the river crashing on the rocks far below us. Photography by Warren Salomon.



Bogong Jack – Andrew Stenhouse

The newly constructed toilet at Wallace's has a barn door to allow the user to admire the view. Note the *Freewheeling* reading material.



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the side of the valley wall high up above a noisy mountain stream. Through this section the intoxicating smell of peppermint eucalypts is nearly overwhelming and every so often we are rewarded with a look through the trees at the Mitta Mitta river far below.

The road surface consists of fine decomposed granite like tennis courts once were before the advent of synthetics. Andrew assures me that the grader has been by recently as the surface was not as smooth on his last trip through here.

This has got to be one of the best cycling roads I have ever travelled on a bicycle.

McNamara's Hut

I'm sitting here beside the huge gnarled trunk of a black sally gum tree outside McNamara's hut. The trunk is about six metres around at the base and has two huge main branches each dividing into three more. It has lichen growing up the trunk and its bark is grey and striped ranging in colour from deep charcoal to silver.

The base of the tree has rotted out in the centre and snow grass is growing in the crevices. There are great bolls on the bottom huge and round. Under the major branches the bark is wrinkled. A tree that is so human is a wonderful place to sit beneath for a few moments of inspiration.

The leaves are small and round and in parts new growth is sprouting from the ends of the branchlets.

Our stopover point for the night at the end of our big days climb onto the high plains is this wonderful log cabin built originally by stockmen and rebuilt in the seventies by the First Hawthorn Scout Group. It is nowadays maintained by the Mittagundi Outdoor Education Centre who use it for their winter training excursions.

The hut is at about 1370 metres elevation and all around the vegetation is quite different to our campsites of the past few nights. Snow gums alternate with black sallys and over the way there is an alpine swamp where orchids are to be found blooming at the right time of year.

Soft tufts of snow grass grow beneath the gums and bright magenta trigger plants punctuate the ground cover of small heath like shrubs and white and yellow flowering herbs.

The hut is very well maintained and was swept and clean when we arrived.

Up at this elevation the clouds move quickly overhead and the sky is an intense blue. Today we had wonderful weather.

The hut environs are remarkably clean. No smell of people shitting behind bushes because there is a pit toilet off some 200 metres south west of the hut.



Nearby there is a little mountain brook with fresh clean running water. It is very noisy for its size.

McNamara's hut is too tempting and cosy to ignore so most of our group decide to use the hut in preference to our tunnel tents. Sleeping on the split timber boards in the main bunk room may not be everyone's idea of a comfortable mattress but we all sleep soundly just the same.

Must be the mountain air?

Nelse or else

The emotional high point of this Bogong Jack tour also coincides with the physical high point of the trip. Our one full day on the high plains was spent cycling up Mt Nelse (Victoria's third highest mountain) and returning to our campsite via the Langford aqueduct.

Our excursion began after lunch on day five at our campsite adjacent to the oldest hut on the high plains: Wallace's built in 1889. From there we cycle around the Rocky Creek dam impoundment and begin the slow climb up the Mt Nelse fire trail.

This track is closed to vehicles and our mountain bikes handle the often rough and stony surface with ease. Once on top of the main watershed the flat bulge of Nelse looms ahead of us with the fire trail marking its way across the southern face.

The road doesn't go completely to the top but continues north west towards Mt Bogong so we dismount and walk the remaining 300 metres to the summit cairn. The top of Nelse is covered in newly opened white everlasting daisies

Peaceful and easy riding along the Langford aqueduct.

while on the way back down on a different slope alpine mint bushes carpet the valley walls in mock snow.

On our return we pick up the Langford Aqueduct and follow it back to our campsite. This part of the route is a cyclists dream with level grades and grassy riding surface. Around every corner the forest offers an everchanging environment and every so often it opens up to reveal stunning views of the mountains and valleys to the east.

It's a pity that we will be riding back to the lowlands tomorrow and the day after that it will all be memories. I'll just have to come back here again won't I?

Tour information

The Bogong Jack Alpine Panorama Tour costs \$555 (\$616 for all 1990 departures) for seven days and six nights and includes: use of twelve-speed mountain bikes and helmets, camping equipment (tent and sleeping mat), camping fees, accommodation in Mt Beauty on the final night (outdoor spa and pool included), all meals, support vehicle and experienced guide. Sleeping bags and waterproofs are also available for hire and a discount of \$10 per day is claimable if you bring your own mountain bike. Departure dates: December 11 1989; January 1, February 6 & 27, March 25 and December 9 1990. Total distance 210 km with a daily average of 35 km. Bogong Jack Adventures can be contacted on (057) 27 3382. They are based in Oxley near Wangarratta.



CYCLING THE LAND OF OZ

Introducing a major series on using pedal power to help you appreciate your country

BY JULIA THORN

HAVE BIKE, WANT TO ride. But where? For some of us that doesn't really matter, all we do is set out and ride, maybe just around the block or maybe a century. For others it's one of life's little frustrations that there is only sparse information available on where the good spots are for riding.

You don't want to waste your valuable free time riding somewhere that is quite unsuitable for bicycles, whether because of the hills, the absence of water supplies or too much traffic. You don't want to spend your whole weekend taking your bike to some remote destination only to find that you've run out of

time for riding. And you certainly don't want to find yourself using a guide book that is chock a block with fabulous sounding places to visit that are annoyingly inaccessible by bike.

Hold tight, help is on the way. Over the coming issues *Freewheeling* will be running a major series on Australia's greatest cycling places. State by state we will be providing useful cycling information which is aimed at answering all the questions you would have loved to ask on where to ride your bike, but never had the right person to ask, whether you were contemplating a few hours of pedalling, an off road ramble or a month's touring holiday.

This introductory article is going to outline for you the sorts of topics we will be covering.

Let's start with the planning. To plan you need information and unfortunately obtaining information can be the first stumbling block. By now you're probably used to the blank looks you get in local tourist offices when you ask for information on places suitable for cycling. The staff there aren't used to such enquiries and let you know that's the case.

If you've ever tried to use a motorists guide to suggest trips you'll be aware of the problems that poses: such guides simply don't give enough detail on what facilities are available on the route or what the terrain is like or an accurate indication of distances.

And if you try just taking a map and heading off you run the risk of missing out on what historical or other interesting sights there are in the area. The map will show you where the roads are but it won't tell you about what there is to see on the way, and it can be most frustrating to come home from a long ride only to find out later that you missed fantastic views when you chose to ride along one road instead of a nearby more scenic one.

Fortunately there is information available which is specifically meant for cyclists. Like the needle in the haystack, it's just a matter of finding it. Several states have route maps which indicate the best routes for cyclists in the cities in terms of low traffic volumes, avoiding busy intersections and taking the prettiest roads. These maps can be useful whether you are looking for a route all the way across a city or trying to select a suburb to spend an afternoon exploring. And also there are route maps for rides out of the cities, into the country, suggesting tours you may like to make.

As well as showing routes, these maps intended for out of town tours give information on bike shops in the area you will be visiting, points of interest along the way and a variety of practical information. For some states the information is in the form of a route highlighted on a one sheet map. For others it is presented in the form of a booklet of strip maps. Using these maps you should be able to get to the most suitable cycling spots and see the best sights in the area you have chosen.

There are also specialised tour guide books. Usually these have been written by cyclists so they are well aware of what the readers' needs are. This is the place to turn to when you haven't decided where you would like to tour and want to find out about the pros and cons of various parts of the state you are heading for. Some of these guides are intended for cyclists planning a transcontinental tour while others contain an as-

sortment of shorter rides. What is important is that they are compiled by cyclists with local knowledge – a commodity that you as the reader would put a high price on.

Past issues of this magazine can be a useful guide. As we look at each state in turn we'll be mentioning touring articles that have appeared in *Freewheeling* that related to the particular state. You can obtain back issues from our editorial office. It's nice to read about other people's experiences of an area you are about to visit.

Many local bike clubs have their own magazines or newsletters in which members write about their tours. These articles can also give you ideas. More on clubs later.

Other sources of information which can be useful to cyclists are National Parks and Wildlife Service offices. They can either be visited in person or will send out leaflets to you as requested. National Parks have picnic and camping areas, and are scenic places to spend time in. The leaflets can suggest bushwalks and tell you about the history and vegetation of the park. The same goes for State Forest offices.

Despite my earlier comment, local and state tourist offices can be of assistance in providing general information and putting you in touch with a local bike club.

If you are planning longer trips you will of course also want information about where to find overnight accommodation. This could involve camping, staying in an on-site caravan or sleeping in the best motel in town or the local pub. Maybe youth hostelling appeals to you.

Then there are other peripheral, but nonetheless important, concerns – the weather for instance. What the prevailing winds are in the area where you plan to travel or more urgently, what is the weather going to be like this weekend? In which months does the rain fall?

Unfortunately we can't forecast the weather but we can tell you where to find people who think they can.

We can show you where to look for answers to questions about camping. If you are going to bush camp do you need to get a camping permit, and if so, where do you acquire such a document? Getting food supplies could be a problem if you are unsure of the local shop hours. Are the shops going to be open or closed on Saturday afternoons when you travel interstate?

In addition to touring routes which follow existing, trafficked roads, in a number of cities there are proper bike paths where you can ride your bike unhindered by motorised traffic. Often these paths parallel a heavily trafficked

road which would not be pleasant to ride on. This makes your ride safer and gives you an opportunity to look around instead of having to keep an eye on the cars all the time. We will give details of such paths.

We'll be taking a look at the parkland in our cities where bike riding is especially pleasant. We are fortunate to have beautiful parks in the cities and they are easy to enjoy with a bike. It's always nice to have a short ride in the park, maybe riding along a river or around a few lakes and then stop for a picnic or lounge about under the trees. Then you can watch the bike racers out training, doing lap after lap.

And for touring riders we'll be making suggestions of tours you may like to try alone or with friends. There's nothing like a tried and tested tour for giving you the confidence that it will really work out. These tours will be one or several day rides. If you have time for a longer trip you might want to link together a few of our tours and have a taste of more than one region.

Included in this we will highlight which places we think are best for a mountain bike rather than a touring bike. Since mountain biking is relatively new in Oz devotees have to rely on tips about good areas being passed about verbally. There is little written on the subject.

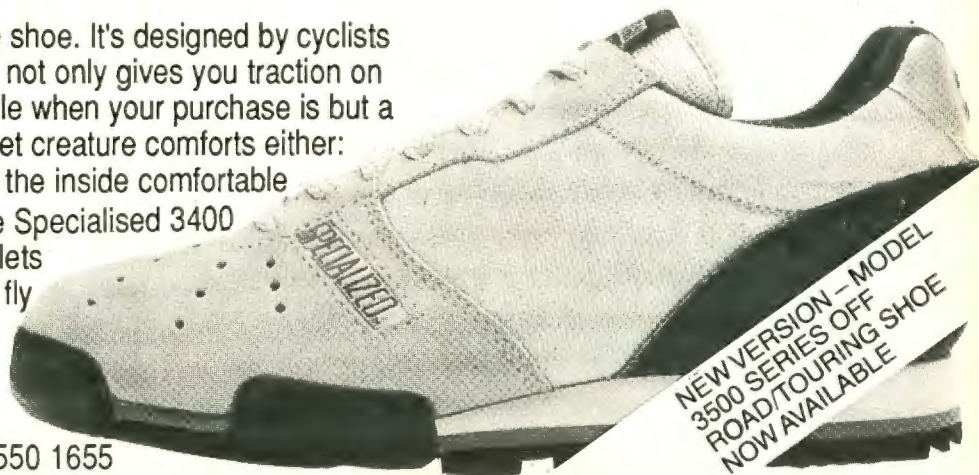
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All our states and major cities have active bicycle clubs which are there to encourage you to get the most out of riding your bike. They can be a source of all sorts of information, put you in touch with other riders with similar interests to yours, and make tour suggestions. The state bike organisation will be able to give you a contact number for a club in your area which may have regular meetings, social gatherings or workshops you could attend.

Many clubs organise social rides usually at weekends, of varying lengths and for all standards of ability or inclination. These provide a good opportunity for you to meet and ride with other cyclists and the leader usually has quite a bit of knowledge to impart about the area where you are riding. Even an area you think you know well can take on a new appearance when seen through someone else's eyes.

Bike clubs are also the best place to turn to if you want information on how to ride your machine to work. A growing number of people commute by bicycle and there are now certain recognised urban bicycle routes which allow you to escape the busier thoroughfares.

There are a number of commercial organisations offering accompanied tours to various parts of the country, including mountain bike tours. Some

are short day or weekend tours, others cater for those among us who wish to see the whole continent. Either sort can be a great experience, for the novice or expert tourer alike. It's another good way to meet like minded riders and the tour operators generally have a wealth of local knowledge about their area. As we cover each state we will be listing the touring operators and where they offer tours.

One of the aggravations of the cities is that they are so large. Some days you want to go for a ride on the other side of the suburban sprawl without wanting to spend a day riding across it. Or, having exhausted the delights of city cycling, you want to get out to the country.

This is when public transport can serve you, the cyclist. Putting your bike on a train, bus or ferry increases the area that is accessible to you because you can use the transport to enable you to reach a touring destination without having to ride all the way there. Unfortunately the regulations governing conveyance of bikes on public transport differ in each state and you will find that certain states are a whole lot more amenable to the idea than others. Often you are at the mercy of the railway guard or bus driver who happens to be there on the day, but it helps to be aware of what your rights are.

One good point about taking your

bike on public transport is that at the end of your ride you do not have to return to the place you started from – it is just as easy to start at point A and finish at point B. But if you take your bike in the car, you have to return to the place where you left the car once your ride is over. If you've taken the train, then when you collapse exhausted half way through your planned trip you may be able to get home from a point on your route that enables you to do a shorter distance than you initially intended.

If you are a casual rider who doesn't want the expense of buying a bike you may choose to hire one. There are bike hire facilities in all our cities with specialist bikes available for the off-roader, racer or tourer. This can also be a useful alternative if you are, for example, making a brief visit to another capital city and want to do a little riding without having to transport your bike there. Sometimes, for a short trip, the hassle may not be worth it.

Our aim is that by the end of this series you will be an expert on cycling in Australia. You will probably have a lot more kilometres under your belt, too.

NEXT ISSUE

*Your guide to cycling in
Canberra and the ACT*



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FAST FOOD

Healthy hints for the cycling foodie

BY JULIA THORN

CYCLING AT ANY LEVEL IS a strenuous activity. Far more strenuous than, say, watching television. To prepare yourself for the exertion you need good fuel to give you energy and strong muscles.

What makes good fuel?

The food we eat has as its main constituents protein, fat and carbohydrate. Until recently, sports enthusiasts thought that protein was the key to providing energy and strength for prolonged physical activity. Now they have realised that the main function of protein is to keep the body in a good state of repair, and its role in providing energy is secondary. Goodbye steak and eggs as the food of champions.

Fat is needed only in small quantities. When we exercise, our bodies don't burn fat very efficiently so it is a poor source of energy. Instead we store most

of the fat intake, and as muscles cannot store much fat, the bulk of it is stored as cushioning under the skin. That's the stuff some of us are trying to get rid of.

So the answer has to lie with the carbohydrates. Carbohydrates come in two forms, simple and complex. Simple carbohydrate is sugary and are not burned efficiently. But complex carbohydrate provides the body with the right fuel for efficient burning, and the muscles can easily store large quantities for use over an extended period of time. It is held in the muscles as glycogen, the stored form of glucose. In a nutshell, complex carbohydrate provides the most energy from the fewest calories.

If you had thought that cycling was going to help you lose weight by burning off excess fat, remember that fat will only burn well where there is also complex carbohydrate being burned at the same time.

If you were worrying that too low a protein intake would weaken your muscles, consider that if your body has enough carbohydrate to burn, it can use small amounts of stored protein for building muscle tissue. Most of us, even vegetarians, eat far more protein than our bodies need.

So having convinced yourself that complex carbohydrates are the key, you need to know where to find them and in what volumes they are to be consumed. The best sources of complex carbohydrates are foods we typically think of as starchy: potatoes, bread, cereals, rice and the cyclist's dream food, pasta. You can't really have too much of these. Vegetables (especially legumes such as beans and peas) and fruit are also an excellent source of carbohydrates. Even after a truly gruelling ride your appetite would be satisfied long before you over stocked with such foods.

Studies have shown that athletes always run out of glycogen before they have depleted their stores of protein and fat. It's the second bowl of spaghetti that keeps that undesirable sensation of complete exhaustion – the dreaded "bonk" – away.

Some recreational athletes have become confused by all the talk about "carbo loading" and could be excused for thinking of it as a license to eat as much as possible whenever possible. This is not strictly correct; it only applies



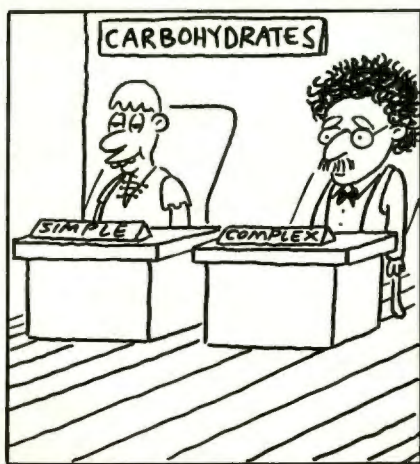
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if you are eating the right foods, ie complex carbohydrates.

So next time someone envies you for being a cyclist being able to eat as much as you like because you burn up energy, you can set them right. The so-called naughty foods (junk food) are naughty for cyclists too. You will find that when you are eating sufficient complex carbohydrate your chocolate cravings will lessen.

The perfect diet

As a rough guide you should be aiming to keep the constituents of your diet something like this: complex carbohydrates should take the largest share of daily calories at 70 per cent. You need to intake 10 to 15 per cent of your calories as protein and 5 to 10 percent as simple carbohydrates, and the balance as fat.

But while you follow the advice of the experts don't let them take all the fun out of your life. You don't have to deny yourself the foods you really enjoy so long as you don't go to excesses. If a hard ride makes you ache for a steak, then indulge. If the thought of a gooey pizza is what keeps you struggling up a tortuous hill, then make sure you eat one.



Drink is fuel too

The best drink is pure, cool, unadulter-

ated water. It is usually easy to obtain, easy to consume and a simple matter for the body to deploy it as required. Without water you will start to feel uncomfortable quickly and be unable to ride. Before you set off on a ride, check that your water bottles are full and be aware of sources of water along your route. You can ride a long way without food and the worst you'll feel is a bit wobbly in the legs, but once you dehydrate you become quite useless.

If you don't like to drink water, and I must say that it can be like force feeding to drink cold water on a winter morning, other soft drinks can be satisfactory, such as fruit juices or tea. Coffee is less advisable except in small quantities because the caffeine has a dehydrating effect. However I believe that a cup of coffee before a ride adds a certain zip to the first few kilometres. On an endurance type ride caffeine can be a benefit as it slows the release of glycogen from your muscles and your stored energy lasts longer.

Excessive amounts of caffeine can make you feel shaky.

Be sure to drink a lot even when it isn't hot. When you're sweating profusely your body is reminding you that you need to replenish your liquids. But when it's cold your body still needs liquid and if you don't drink you will become tired and find that you have insufficient energy to keep warm.



What to avoid

Perhaps you've been on a ride and wondered why you felt weak after stuffing yourself with Mars bars all day. I used to like riding up hills with a bar of chocolate in one hand for instant energy until I realised I was doing myself a disservice. I was giving my body something it couldn't readily or efficiently use.

Eating too much salty food can be much more dangerous. When we eat something salty the salt draws water away from the muscles and hastens dehydration. Don't worry about the salt that you lose in sweat, it is easily re-

placed in your usual diet; rather than taking salt tablets or eating heavily salted chips you should be concentrating on replacing the lost water.

Forget the highly spiced food too unless you have plenty of water available. I had a very unpleasant time once when I ate a packet of corn chips with a spicy chilli dip and then found I didn't have any water on hand.

Drinking alcohol after a ride rounds off the day nicely but is unfortunately not good for the body. Alcohol dehydrates you by making you lose more water in your urine and along with the water you lose valuable minerals. So if you do want a beer, have plenty of water first.

Fruit juice you should only take in moderation. Although fruit is good for providing fibre and is a healthier type of sweet food than cakes and chocolate, it is high in sugar (fructose) and juices are made with the ripest, sweetest fruit. Dieticians recommend three pieces of fruit per day, and a glass of pure orange juice will contain the juice of at least three oranges without the benefit of the crude fibre.

When to eat

Imagine an activity where your eating is encouraged even while you're doing it! To get the most out of riding, unless it's just an hour or so's trip, you have a reason to eat before, during and after the ride. By doing this you can supply your body with a constant source of energy so that it never runs out. On a day ride or longer trip have a good breakfast before you set out and at least half a litre of water.

Carry a few nibbles in your bike bag or jersey pockets for easy eating while riding or at a rest stop. Bananas, if you can manage not to squash them, are good and so are muesli bars. Some people like to carry a bag of Gorp (good ol' raisins and peanuts) but remember this is high in protein and peanuts are fatty. Take frequent swigs from your water bottles.

And every few hours stop for a small meal, maybe a brown bread sandwich with salad or a bowl of cereal. It is better to eat several small meals than one large one, as you avoid that awful bloated feeling and don't put such a strain on your digestive system.

Don't wait until you are absolutely starving before you eat. By that time your body will be so low on energy that you are riding in real hardship. Also you will probably compensate for the suffering by overeating.

The high point of the day

If you're out on a weekend ride or a longer trip, the evening meal is an important occasion. You may have been daydreaming about it all day. Now



you've set up camp by some idyllic gurgling stream in a clearing in the gum forest and out come the stove and billy cans.

The chances are you'll be cooking pasta. Despite all the jokes about eating pasta every day for three weeks and then being taken to an Italian restaurant on the first day home, this is the perfect cycling food. Rice is also popular but I find it a lot more messy to wash up after rice – it gets in everything. Pasta is easy to carry, whether you divide it up into portions before you leave home, or use one large plastic bag, and it is easy to cook so long as there is a water supply. Another alternative is those packets of

2-minute noodles which are cheap and light to carry.

Here are a few suggestions for what to do with the pasta.

- Mix together a tin of kidney beans (drained), tin of tomatoes and tin of tuna. Add a touch of chilli sauce, stir well and you have that well loved dish, chilli con pescado.

- Chop up an onion, a green capsicum, and some zucchini. Mix with a tin of tomatoes, add a sliced clove of garlic, pepper and hey presto, a vegetable sauce.

- Even the humble baked bean tastes good with pasta. Add a packet of freeze dried peas and slices of salami for a quick feast.

- Creamed corn mixed with a sliced fresh vegetable and a generous pinch of oregano makes a tasty pasta sauce.

Food to carry

When you go on longer rides you probably try to travel as light as practical. This includes carrying light food. It's often best to carry just the basics, such as a packet of pasta or rice, a few herbs or spices and an emergency supply of muesli bars or your preferred trail mix. Then try to buy the rest of what you need each evening before finding a campsite, which means you can get heavy goodies that come fresh or in tins.

You could also stock up for a day or two at a time with freeze dried and light-weight supplements. It may work out a little more expensive than bringing all you need for the trip from your kitchen shelves or local supermarket but you'll appreciate the difference on the hills.

But always carry at least one item of food that does not require cooking, in case of an emergency. As you shop around you'll notice that a lot of food comes in a form that lends itself to bicycle travel. Pocket bread, for example, doesn't get crushed in the same way as a conventional loaf of bread. Dried peas, corn, beans and quick noodles are available in most supermarkets and are compact. French style tinned cheeses don't get squashed and ripen nicely in the panniers, without that nastiness resulting from your lump tasty matured Cheddar turning into a yellow liquid. Whole salamis are easy to carry and have minimal packaging if you don't mind the slightly greasy feel they develop. Dried herbs are the lightest food in the shop and make a world of difference to an otherwise bland dish. I'm a hot and spicy freak so I like to carry a small amount of chilli sauce with me.

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Day riders can eat well too

If you're out for a day ride you probably don't want to take cooking equipment. In that case take some good bread, a selection of salad vegetables, a small pot of mayonnaise or spread and perhaps a chunk of cheese if it isn't too hot a day. You have the makings of a perfect sandwich. For desert have fruit or a muesli bar. Or take dry cereal with you and buy a carton of milk during the ride.

Another nice idea is to make up a dish of tasty dip before you leave home and take corn chips (unsalted if possible) or sticks of carrot and celery for dipping. My favourite dips are:

- Tuna, flaked, mixed with light cream cheese, adding a teaspoon of lemon juice and a pinch of pepper.
- Mashed smoked mussels or oysters blended with equal quantities of light cream cheese and sour cream.
- A ripe avocado mashed with half a tomato, a small amount of raw onion, a dab of mayonnaise and a pinch of cumin.

Of course it's always nice to try the local produce. Keep space for peaches bought at the roadside, locally made apple pies and other such taste treats.

Happy eating!

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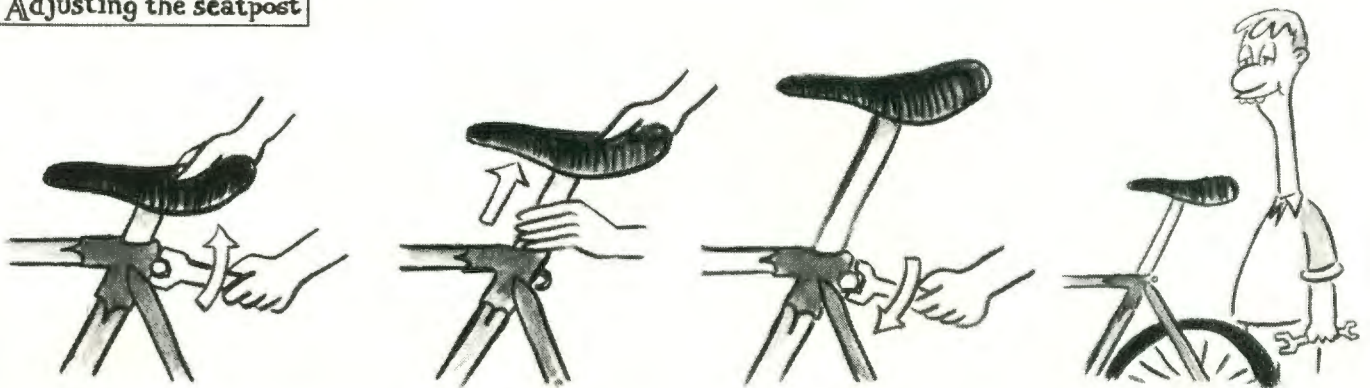

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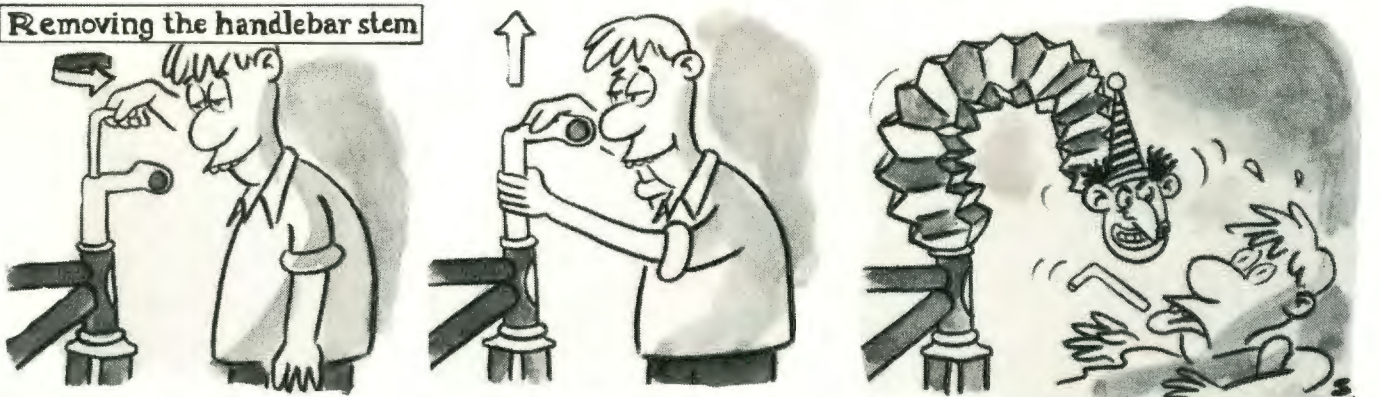
Adjusting the seatpost



Cleaning the ball bearings



Removing the handlebar stem



FREEWHEELING MAINTENANCE PLAN

A guide to practical bike care

BY WARREN SALOMON

IF YOU WANT TO GET THE maximum enjoyment from your cycling your bike has to be properly set up and well maintained. Unlike swimming or running where a pair of running shoes and swim-

mers is all that is needed bicycling depends heavily on hardware. So it's important that your cycle be in good shape otherwise you will find that a lot of your effort and enjoyment will be lost.

The fundamental mechanical princi-

ple behind the success of the bicycle is the ball bearing. Without those little balls running in their precisely machined grooves pushing a bike would be a difficult task. No matter how well these ball bearings may perform they (and other moving parts on your machine) need periodic maintenance to ensure that they keep working safely and efficiently.

Bike maintenance consists of three functions: inspection – to keep check of wear and to know when to overhaul at the right time; lubrication (of metal moving parts) – to keep the part operating smoothly and efficiently; and overhaul – which usually involves cleaning and stripping down the component to its basic parts so that lubrication and replacement can be carried out.

Almost every moving part will wear out in time but some components wear more rapidly than others. Well lubricated and adjusted bottom bracket bearings should last for many years because the parts are protected from the elements but a chain will need replacement at least once a year if the bike is ridden often.

The Freewheeling Bicycle Maintenance Program

Part	Each time you ride	Weekly	Monthly	Six monthly	Yearly
Tyres	Check pressure and tread wear		Rotate tyres front to back.		
Wheels	Check trueness of rims and bearing.		Check for even spoke tension and re-true rims if necessary	Overhaul wheel bearings	
Brakes	Check proper cable adjustment and the condition of the pads. Replace if worn		Overhaul and lubricate cables	Closely check operation and cable condition	
Chain	Check and oil if necessary	Check for wear	Rotate if using three chain method		Replace if badly worn
Freewheel			Check and oil		Replace when fitting new chain
Gears	Check adjustment		Lubricate cables and derailleur pivot points		
Chainwheel/ cranks/ bottom bracket		Check adjustment of bottom bracket bearings		Overhaul bottom bracket bearings	Check teeth wear on chain wheels and replace if badly worn
Headset		Check bearing adjustment. Replace if worn.		Overhaul	
Pedals		Check bearing adjustment		Overhaul	
Racks & mudguards	Check all fastening bolts are secure				
Lighting system	Check batteries or operation of generator. Check front and rear light bulbs				

To help you keep your machine well maintained I have outlined (in the main chart) a program which looks at each major part of your bike and recommends a frequency for both inspection, lubrication and overhaul.

How to read the chart

You will notice that I have divided the maintenance tasks into columns labelled: Each time you ride; Weekly; Monthly; Six monthly; and Yearly. The first column applies to every rider no matter how often you ride your machine. If you ride your bike every day regardless of the weather all the other column headings will apply to the tasks as shown.

Riders who only use their bikes once or twice a week should shift all the weekly tasks to the monthly column and the six monthly tasks to the yearly column.

If you only use your bike once a month you should consider moving to a better area where it is more enjoyable to ride your machine. For you the weekly and monthly tasks should be performed on a six monthly basis and the half yearly tasks done annually.

This maintenance program is primarily designed for derailleur geared bicycles from mountain bikes to lightweight road machines. I have also provided

some additional notes for owners of single speed back pedal brake bikes and competition machines.

The "each time you ride" check

Experienced riders who use their bicycles on a daily basis are usually in close touch with the mechanical condition of their machines so many of the tasks I have outlined will be ongoing and often performed on the road. Bicycles ridden less often (and are thus checked and maintained less often) are more susceptible to corrosion and breakage so a quick check over before you set out on a ride is important and will usually head off any major breakdown.

Correct tyre pressures are important both to prevent rim bottoming punctures (snake bite) and to give the best compromise between low rolling resistance and shock absorption. Too low pressures will result in snake bites in your tubes; too high pressures will jar your hands, arms, and, dare I say, your bottom.

Wheel bearings tend to loosen off rather than tighten but either condition is not good for the mechanism. Check for looseness by lifting the wheel off the ground and with your free hand jiggling the rim from side to side. A rattling feeling will mean that the bearing cones need adjustment.

Tight bearings will make the wheel slow quickly when spun. Check that the brake pads are not touching the rim when you perform this test.

To check that the wheel is true note the side to side motion of the rim as it passes the brake blocks. Badly buckled rims will reduce the efficiency of the brakes by requiring more take up in the cable movement. Dangerous.

Your brake levers should have enough travel before the pads contact the rim to allow your hands to operate them in comfort but the lever arms should never bottom out by touching the handlebar. Adjust the lever by screwing out the barrel adjuster: on the brake arm for side pulls; on the brake lever itself for mountain bikes; or on the cable hanger for other types of centre pull and cantilever brakes.

Brake pads should be checked for correct contact to the rim. The pads should be centred and run parallel on the rims. If the pads squeal try toeing in the leading edge of the pad so that it contacts the rim slightly ahead of the trailing edge.

Use a shifting spanner on the brake arm and extreme caution when doing this.

A dry chain (listen for telltale squeakiness) requires a lot more energy to power the bicycle than a well oiled one. Light oils and spray on substances need

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to be applied more often. Always apply lubricant to the inside of the chain so that centrifugal force will carry it into its innermost surfaces.

Before you set out ride the bike around your street to check the operation of the gears. If they worked well last time you rode then chances are that they will be functioning well this time. Often a little lubrication on the derailleur pivot points and bottom bracket cable guides will free up a corroded derailleur. If you live near the beach use a protective coating oil on these components and their control cables. Gear levers usually do not need lubrication but cables need a lot.

Checking racks and guards each time you set out may seem excessive but these things often work loose (if they have not been tightened properly when they were originally installed) or break unexpectedly due to metal fatigue. When you are speeding down a hill is NOT the time to discover that your mudguard stay has worked loose. Check first by giving each stay a shake near the fastening bolt.

You may not think that you will need lights when you set out in the morning but you could become delayed and a ride home at night without them is both illegal AND dangerous. Always keep your lighting system in good working order and maintain it preferably when

you arrive home NOT before you set out. Keep spare bulbs on your bike somewhere just in case and a spare set of batteries just in case.

Generator users need to regularly check their wiring to see that it doesn't become damaged or snagged in other moving parts.

Monthly maintenance

The major intermediate maintenance tasks for regular bike users usually involve a complete inspection, lubrication and an overhaul of high use moving parts.

Tyre life can be improved by swapping the front tyre to the back. Tyres wear out in their own time so replacement will more than often be carried out during a monthly checkout rather than during a major six monthly or annual overhaul. Tubes should only need replacement when they become badly holed.

A slight rim wobble can usually be tolerated for a month or so but the longer you leave this fault the greater the damage to your hubs and rims. Re-true the wheels at the same time as you are replacing the tyres or monthly as needed. Check for even spoke tension – they should not be so tight that you wreck your spoke key in the operation.

Though brake cables usually need a complete overhaul and lubrication every six months to a year it doesn't hurt

to check them over and dribble a bit of oil into the cable inners every month. Even plastic lined cable outers need lubrication. Squeeze the brake lever towards the handlebar with the tips of your fingers. If the lever does not spring quickly back to its rest position as you quickly let it slip from your fingers the cables and/or the brake pivots will need lubrication.

Gear cables and derailleur pivot points should also receive lubrication as for the brake system.

Was it Karl Marx who once said: "Cyclists of the world unite you have nothing to loose but your chains"? Chances are that you will need to replace your chain more often than any other moving part because it is open to the elements and is continually being forced from side to side by the derailleurs.

Because your chain wears out some of the sprocket teeth on your freewheel before others a new chain will often not run smoothly on a worn freewheel. Bikes shop mechanics usually recommend that you always replace your freewheel when changing your chain. Unfortunately the freewheel body is still okay at this stage; only one or two of its sprockets have been damaged by the old chain.

To get the full use from your freewheel you could try rotating three

family head gear



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chains on your bike changing them either monthly, bi-monthly or six monthly depending on how often you ride and the number of times you ride in wet weather. It's a messy business changing chains.

I have tried this method for a number of years but laziness finally set in and nowadays I ride a chain (and the freewheel) to death. More than once this slothful practice has seen me stranded when my chain finally gives up the ghost and snaps.

Chains that regularly produce stiff links should be thrown away before they do both you and the bike damage. High quality chains last longer and are a better buy if you don't want to own a large collection of chains and freewheels.

Lubricate the pedals by turning the bike onto its side so that the pedal faces downwards and running oil into the pedal bearings nearest the crank arm as you spin the pedal.

The major annual or six-monthly overhaul

The main purpose of this maintenance session is to service the major bearings and replace any worn componentry before it can damage other parts of the mechanism. Because parts of this overhaul (headset and bottom bracket) require specialist bike tools you may consider getting your local bike shop to

perform this service. That way if parts are needed for replacement the job can be done quickly and with minimum inconvenience to you.

Wheel bearings should be disassembled and cleaned. The ball bearings, cones and hub bearing surfaces should be checked for wear. Balls and cones (make sure you match your existing cones as they differ from hub to hub) can be easily replaced but if the bearing surface inside your hub is damaged you may have to, at best, rebuild your wheel on a new hub, or at worst, buy a whole new wheel.

Either way a bikeshop will tell you that the costs are much the same for top quality wheels though for cheap types a whole new replacement would be much less expensive than a rebuild.

The best way to lubricate break cables is to disassemble the cable and remove the inner wire. If the cable end has been damaged by the anchor bolt it will be tricky to reinstall so you might need a new inner wire handy in case it needs replacement. Oil the inner and the inside of the outer casing before you reinstall the wire. Check the brake pads for wear and replace if necessary during this servicing operation.

Rusty, dry and kinked gear cables can turn bicycle riding into a chore. It is a good practice to take out your gear cables and lubricate the cable guides, lever

mechanisms, derailleur pivot points and pulley wheels, inner and outer cables where they are used together and the rear derailleur cable adjuster on indexed gear shift mechanisms.

As with brake cables it is often only necessary to do this as part of an annual or six monthly overhaul but if your bike is used every day and in all kinds of weather it may be necessary to perform this task every one or two months. However, gear cables are usually easier to lubricate without the need for complete disassembly than brake cables.

The chainwheels should be checked for wear and replaced at the time the bottom bracket is overhauled. Usually chainwheels will last a good two years or so with average use but once again a badly worn chain will wreck the teeth and make it difficult for a new chain to ride on the chainwheels.

The bottom bracket bearings should be disassembled, checked for wear and reassembled. Replace bearings, axle or bottom bracket cups if there are any signs of wear – pitting and uneven surfaces. The balls should be a highly polished bright silver colour.

Disassemble the headset and check the bearings for wear. When a headset works loose it can easily become permanently damaged. Often a sharp bump can cause the balls to make an impression on the bearing surface. This makes the headset feel as if it has a 'click' stop. If your headset has been damaged in this way it will need to be completely replaced during the overhaul.

Pedal bearings should also be serviced during the annual overhaul. If your pedals are the non serviceable type (that is if the outside pedal caps are non removable) you will have to be satisfied with a regular oiling until they wear out.

Oil or grease

There are many lubrication preparations available to the modern cyclist. Most are designed for use on the chain and do their job very well. In other locations grease is preferred because it 'sticks' better and will not wash out.

Grease is really oil suspended in a thick sticky petroleum base. It is not the perfect solution. The problem with grease is that it also collects all other foreign matter entering the bearing chamber. Anyone who has serviced a badly worn bottom bracket bearing has seen the way grease easily becomes an abrasive paste.

High performance cyclists (track and road riders) often dispense with grease entirely using only oil. The problem here is that oil will easily seep out of the bearing chamber so it has to be continually replaced. However, an oiled bearing will always run smoother and last longer than the greased one. In his book *Effective Cycling*, US bicycle educator, John



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Forrester gives instructions for converting bearings from grease to oil. Some hubs come provided with an oil hole already so you should check yours.

Still to come

In future issues I will provide step by

step instructions (all clearly illustrated) for the major tasks described in our maintenance program. To secure your copies order *Freewheeling* from your newsagent or bicycle shop or subscribe direct using the introductory coupon included in this issue.



Cartoon: Steven Bloomfield

PRODUCT REVIEW

THE KIT

BY CYNDI HOLMES

HERE'S A GREAT IDEA to help with your bicycle maintenance. It's called "The Kit" and consists of a maintenance manual, chain rivet extractor, cleaning brush and lubricant. The advertising doesn't lie when it says you'll "learn how to properly clean, lubricate and care for your bicycle" with The Kit.

Written by Bruce Lott, a bike shop manager in Canberra, the "Home-Pro Cycle Care" manual in The Kit provides a wealth of information.

Even the contents page is a winner, especially for the new cyclist. It features a picture of a bicycle with all its parts numbered according to the section number covering that part in the manual.

For each part there a description, sometimes a picture, general comments about the part. Then follows a description of problems and their possible causes, maintenance tips and what tools you'll need to do the work. Especially helpful is the "Pro Hints" section. It contains helpful tips gathered over years in the bicycle trade. These tips can help you to fine tune your bicycle along with saving time and money.

The monthly, bi-monthly and yearly maintenance schedules in the manual are easy to follow and cover coaster,

three speed and derailleur bicycles.

For those keen to get their hands greasy, there's a section describing specialist bicycle tools.

To get your tool collection started, The Kit contains a chain rivet extractor with a spare pin, since you need to remove your bicycle chain to clean it properly or replace it. The manual advises us that chains used with derailleur gears don't have a joining link so you'll need this special tool to remove the chain.

To clean the chain and sprockets The Kit provides a two-sided brush. The manual recommends using kerosene to remove the grease.

To lubricate your clean chain a bottle of "Tri-Flow" is included in The Kit. Tri-Flow contains small Teflon particles that decrease friction to moving parts. It also washes away dirt, corrosion and other contaminants.

To make it easy to work on your bike, the manual provides a tip on using the car towbar-mounted bike carrier as a work stand. To save your car from scratches, make a mount for the carrier in your workshop.

It is hard to find fault with The Kit's maintenance manual which is packed with 123 pages of bike care information. Plus it is small enough to fit into a bike bag for emergency repairs on the road.

It even has a generous sprinkling of cartoons to keep you amused when you may be getting frustrated with removing a stem that won't budge!

The Kit retails at around \$25 at most bike shops. Our sample was supplied by Lifecycle, 276 Petrie Terrace, Normanby.

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ROAD SEASON TRAINING

A Freewheeling fitness guide to road racing

BY CYNDI HOLMES

THE ROAD RACING season is here. You can tell by that funny tan on your hand; evidence that you've been doing your time on the bike. Or maybe it's the increasing girth of your thighs? You can also tell when it's arrived when you find yourself chasing down increasingly challenging prey. First you seek out unsuspecting tourists; be warned as some can put up quite a fight!

Then there are various levels of triathletes. Some you can catch off guard before they go into time trial mode. Watch out for the fighters who won't want you to beat them at any cost. (Remember, this is helping their training too!)

Ah, but the ones you really need to watch out for are the seasoned roadies; they're the ones who know how to wear

their cycling caps properly. (Study the glossy racing mags and you'll figure it out).

When the racing fever strikes these lads, they are capable of various levels of mental and physical torture. If you too casually try to ride up next to one and match his pace, you may find yourself gradually going faster, faster and FASTER until BOOM! With sweat dripping and your tongue hanging you helplessly watch him disappear down the road.

Probably worse than that physical torture is the mental agony of chasing down one of those exalted roadies and woe be unto you, he's spotted you! He lets you close to within a few hundred metres, then picks up his pace just enough to keep you at bay for a while. Then he may let you get closer, maybe to within 50 metres. Then, whoosh, he's off like a horse out of the starting gates.

Do you give up or do you submit yourself to more of this fiendish punishment? The choice is yours. You've been warned!

Seriously though, off the bike or on an easy ride these roadies will be quite helpful with advice for new racers.

In our last issue we presented a program for the first three to four months of training for a beginning racer. This issue we look at the training you'll do from April to September, with particular emphasis on increasing your power.

To be ready for beginning racing and interval training in April, you would have ridden consistently for three months, since January. If you haven't been able to do this, it's important that you start the hard training and racing later, after you have built up a three month base of riding. Your first races may be especially tough, but towards the end of the season you should be going better.

As soon as you get your state's road racing calendar (see the information section at the end of this article if you do not belong to a club) identify two or three races that you want to focus on that season. If you have aspirations towards making the state team, your major goal for the season will be to have a good ride in your state championship road race.

With any of the races you select as goals, inquire about the course and distance. Will you need any particular gears? If you find you are a weak hill climber and the course has hills, you'll need to structure your training to remedy your weakness. And if the distance is more than you normally ride, you'll have to gradually increase the distance you ride on long training days and race days.

For the weekly program presented here you start with high intensity training. The intensity decreases through the week so you are better prepared to put in maximum effort on race day.

Weekly training program

The cycling week starts with an easy day on Monday. After a hard effort on Sunday, you'll need time to recover before you begin Tuesday's hard training. An easy ride is also good for helping to dissipate any lactic acid build up from racing activity. Most riders find it best to ride for an hour on Monday.

The real training begins on Tuesday. To be able to go hard in races, you need to train hard. Intervals are tough, but they can give you the power you'll need in races to bridge a gap, take turns in a breakaway group or time trial alone.

What are intervals? The term "interval" is often confused with "speed work". Intervals primarily develop the ability to maintain a high speed for at least several minutes or much longer. During an interval, you jump to a steady high speed and hold this through the duration of the interval.

During interval training, you don't fully recover between efforts. Between intervals, you pedal around 90 rpm in a medium gear like a 42 x 16 or 17. Your breathing rate should be close to normal before you jump again. But you shouldn't be fully recovered.

With "speed work", the objective is to be able to make a very quick jump to high or maximum speed. To be able to

do this, you need to fully recover between each effort. Speed work jumps will only be 50 to 300 metres long. Then you roll in a low gear (like a 42 x 19 or 21) until you feel fully recovered.

There are many different types of interval work outs you could do, depending on your objectives. Beginning racers will find that a set of 10 one or two minute intervals will be enough to tire you out. You should really be pushing yourself and hurting towards the end of each interval.

After you've completed your intervals, roll easily for about 10 minutes then do five or six sprints, with full recovery in between.

You'll feel tired after the intervals, so your top speed in the sprints probably won't be too high. Remember to sprint



Road season training at a glance

Monday

One hour easy or rest, no riding

Tuesday

One set of 10 one to two minute intervals of three to six sprints. About 1-2 hours, ie 8-10 km warm up then 20-40 minutes of intervals then sprints and ride home

Wednesday

AT training—2 hours with at least 20 minutes of time trial effort or climbing

Thursday

3 hours weak to light intensity—some efforts

Friday

1 hour easy

Saturday

2 hours with several jumps, if you race tomorrow. If you do not race: 2 hours like Wednesday's ride

Sunday

3 hours with group or race



with your maximum effort anyway, just like you would in a race.

Just as during your first three months of training (refer to *Freewheeling* issues 51 and 54), Wednesday is the day for anaerobic threshold training.

Spend at least a continuous 20 minutes of this two hour ride pushing yourself near your limit. You can climb a long hill, ride a time trial or push yourself over rolling terrain.

As you get more fit, add another 20 minute session. Don't ride a time trial every week as they are mentally very tough. Climbing is a good way to do this type of training without risking losing your enthusiasm for pushing yourself.

On Thursday, you get to have a fun ride. Ring some friends and plan to meet and ride at least three hours. Push yourself on a couple hills, but for the

most part you can roll along at a pace where you can still talk to your mates.

On long rides, it's good to get used to eating on the bike and not stopping (if you're in a long race, that's what you would have to do). Experiment with different foods on training rides before you try them in a race. Carry enough food so you don't need to stop at shops, except maybe to refill your water bottle.

Try to resist the temptation to buy Mars bars and Coke! Better still, take only 50 cents with you and you won't be able to buy anything!

If you want to maintain a weight training program you've had for the last several months, Thursday evening could be a good time to go through one set of exercises. Your legs should be getting enough work out from the riding, so concentrate on your upper body.

Friday is recovery day. Ride for one hour at an easy pace. Arrange to ride with a friend and try to talk about something other than bikes!

Most racers find that resting two days before a race is better than resting the day before. Many racers have found that resting a day before a race leaves your legs feeling stiff on race day. It's better to ride a couple of hours with a few jumps on the day before a race to get your legs ready for the effort of racing.

If you don't have a race on Sunday, join a club race on Saturday or ride for two hours like Wednesday's ride. If you are racing on Sunday, take some time to check over your bike and get your bag together so you're not rushing around on Sunday morning.

For race day try to do everything right. Get enough sleep the night before, eat properly the night before and on the morning plan your travel time so you arrive with plenty of time to warm-up (about an hour to one and a half hours). You'll perform better if you are confident that you've done your best to prepare for every race.

If you don't have a race on Sunday, try to find a group to ride with for about three hours. Ride as hard as you need to so you can stay with the group. A group of experienced racers may be difficult for you to stay with, but try to stay with them as long as you can.

Naturally if this program doesn't fit into your work or school schedule, you may need to alter it. Keep the program flexible and adapt it to suit your goals and fitness.

Racing is the best training, so take advantage of any opportunity to race. Plan to race through to September, especially if you have aspirations to make a state team in the future. It can take years of racing to reach the top, so make each year count.

Then just maybe you'll be one of those racers who know the proper way to wear a cycling cap and give new racers a tough time!



AFTER THE FALL...

BOOK REVIEW BY WARREN SALOMON

The Velodrome By Liam Davidson Allen & Unwin 137pp hardcover \$19.95.

In Liam Davidson's first book the old board velodrome of the title provides a fascinating setting as well as one of its central metaphors: that of going around and around in circles with no clear view of where one is headed.

The story is told through the eyes of a boy whose bike racing father crashes to his death on the boards above him while he is engaged in his first innocent and uneventful sexual encounter with a girl below. Like the most of other characters in this short book young Leon has a very limited view on life so to compensate for this the author sometimes takes over the storytelling rather than letting the people themselves carry the action.

After Leon's father dies his mother marries Eric a wheelchair bound victim of the book's original sin (and titled *The Fall*) – the bike crash on the velodrome. Eric works in the public records department and is a total obsessive spending unimaginable amounts of his waking hours recording every minute detail of his life.

Davidson's book is full of obsessives and obsession. One obsession which ultimately leads to disaster is a journey by car from Melbourne northwards to Queensland. On the journey with Leon, his mother, Eric and Eric's petulant adolescent daughter Jody, is Sam Ballard the sole intact survivor of the accident.

Sam is not fully intact and seeks to escape from the pressure cooker environment created on the long trip by riding his road bike along behind the vehicle. The cycling theme provides the author with the imagery to weave a fascinating story of the disintegration of family life in the fifties and sixties.

I know very little of the cycling scene of the sixties when bike sales collapsed, popularity disintegrated and it was left to the diehards to keep the sport alive. Paradoxically it was also a time of great athletic achievement the era of Mockridge and Johnson.

The Velodrome may even provide some insight into this long slow malaise which still threatens the sport even today. To survive and to do much more than to survive the sport needs to take the advice of Sam Ballard who says: "You've got to get above things to see them clearly. You've got to see how things fit together, and the further away you can get, the clearer things will be".

In order to see things clearer and to understand how cycling as a sport is to fit into Australian society of the nineteen nineties the people who run it need to improve their view point or else they like the characters in this novel will be condemned to riding the velodrome around and around always going in circles but never getting anywhere.

Don't buy this book if you are expecting some kind of romance about the world of cycling because except for the love of the sport expressed by some of the characters you won't find it. Instead you will find some fine writing by a promising young Australian writer.

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Photo Kevin Hoare

BMX RIDERS PREPARE FOR THE WORLDS

The forthcoming Australian championships will be hotly contested as riders vie for the right to compete in the Brisbane World Championships.

BY WARREN SALOMON

THE LOCAL BMX SCENE is currently gearing up for one of the most exciting years since the heady days of the late seventies when the sport WAS cycling. Defending open champion and

factory Robinson rider, Paul Addams, from Queensland will be aiming to defeat his closest opponents at the nationals without losing his form so that he can successfully contest the worlds later on in August.

The 1989 Commonwealth Bank BMX Championships will be held over Easter (Saturday 25 March to Monday 27) at the Croome Road Sports Complex Albion Park Rail south of Wollongong. The Southlake BMX Club will host the event which is expected to attract up to 2000 competitors and a considerable number of supporters.

NSW champ and Southlake rider Rus Robiella will compete against a strong field in the Invitation 508 mm Pro-Am class for a total pro purse of \$2000. Apart from a full program of boys, girls, cruiser and sidehack in all age categories the meeting will also include an Invitation 25 Years and Over Cruiser class and Invitation Girls 508 mm Super class.

Elimination heats will take place over the Saturday and Sunday and the finals in all classes will be run on the Monday.

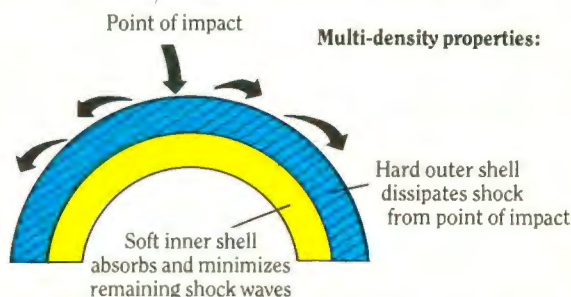
The sport is looking good for 1989 after many years in the doldrums partly due to organisational problems and partly as a readjustment to life after the heady boom days. Hosting a World Championships is sure to provide the sport with a boost of enthusiasm and current world class champs Jackie Wilson VIC (11 year girls) and Daniel Sprague WA (13 year boys) will be defending their titles on a specially constructed track at the Chandler Sports Complex on Brisbane's southside.

Membership of the state BMX bodies is extremely strong with around 1500 registered members in each of NSW, Victoria and Queensland. At a recent meet on Queensland's Gold Coast around 640 riders competed.

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HELMET	TEST	AVERAGE "G"
LT 700	ANSI	84
LT 700	SNELL	131

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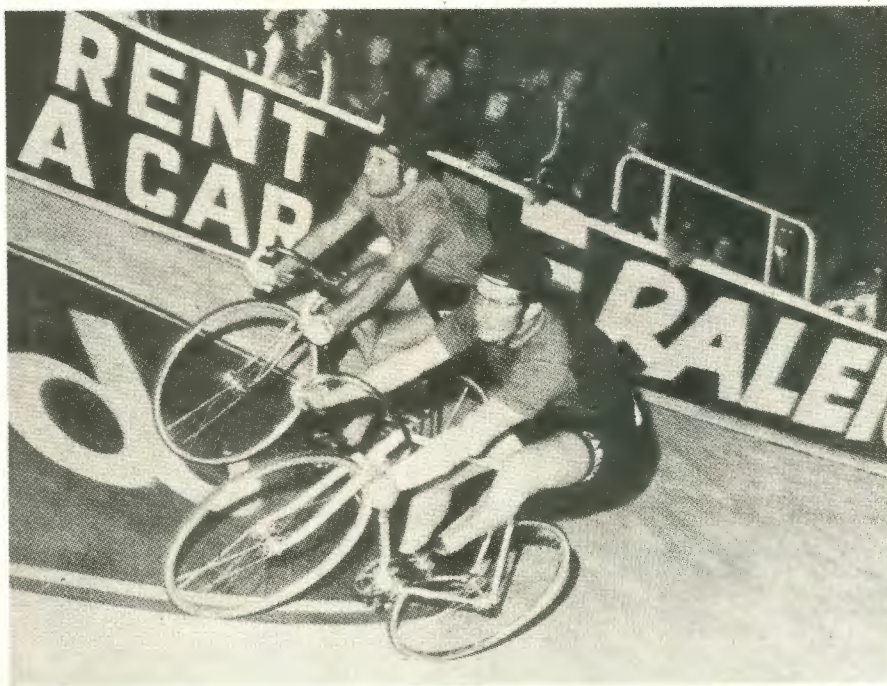
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Gordon Johnson leads Italian Sante Gaiardoni in the final heat of the 1970 world Sprint title. Note Johnson's bandaged arm.

THE JOHNSON ERA

Aussie cycling heroes

BY JOHN DRUMMOND

IT IS SATURDAY NIGHT THE 10 February 1973 and the former world professional sprint champion is in a vengeful mood. Above the dark outlines of the Brunswick velodrome the lamps blaze like tiny suns brilliantly lighting the racing surface. Amid the colourful group of cyclists speeding around the concrete strip one extraordinary figure is visible.

As the race end draws near he becomes agitated and is the focus of everyone's attention. This is Gordon Johnson and he is about to give a demonstration of cycling uniquely brilliant and moving.

The bell rings out a warning that the last lap has begun. The nation's top professional cyclists fight for position, Hil-

ton Clarke, a former olympian, streaks to the front with Philip Sawyer, another Brunswick club success story, sitting tight on his wheel. Clarke wilts and the brilliant Sawyer grabs the lead.

At 200 metres Johnson is searching for an opening through a wall of blocking riders. A gap appears and in a flash he unwinds a torrential amount of athletic energy and fills the breach on the outside. The silent crowd of spectators is delighted and then awestruck as he cuts Sawyer down on the line.

In eleven seconds Johnson emphasised his class and heralded his return as Australia's greatest cycling hero.

He salutes the field after most had teamed to beat him. He had just won his 26th consecutive scratch race. Such is the magic of a cycling paragon.

THE JOHNSON STORY really begins forty or so years earlier. 'Tassie' Johnson senior, a boy of 15 years decided to 'have a go' in the schoolboy cycling championship held around Albert Park in North Melbourne.

He was not successful, but the story is told (and I have no reason to doubt its authenticity) that a few days later young Johnson left on a training ride, met up with two prominent Victorian wheelmen and completed a 100 mile training run. Not only did he finish with them, but waited for them after topping the big hills.

Tasman Johnson joined the Essendon Amateur Cycling Club the same year: 1931. Riding against strong opposition within his club hardened and fashioned the youngster. The pay off came in 1933 when he had his first ride on the Melbourne Motordrome.

Tassie realised that the big track called for a big gear. So, using 99 inches he annexed the One and the Five Mile Victorian Junior titles. He followed with seconds in the corresponding national titles. In 1934 he moved into the elite of amateur cycling when he gained selection to represent his country in the Sydney Empire Games.

The year 1935 ushered in a purple patch for the Essendon amateur who was now firmly on the road to stardom. He won the Victorian 1000 Metre Sprint, then the One, Five and Ten Mile championships in brilliant fashion.

Next came representation at the Australian titles where he won the One Mile championship with a brilliant ride to defeat the great Duncan Gray, and top NSW pedallers Horrie Pethybridge and Stan Parsons. His greatest thrill in amateur cycling came when he learned he had been selected to represent his country at the Berlin Olympics.

On his return from the Games he turned professional and continued his impressive career. On one occasion he won every race on the card at Shepparton, which in those days was a powerful centre of professional cycling. The records reveal a sequence of wins in both city and country at all levels. His best year was 1941.

Only one word can describe his performance: superlative. He won 16 scratch races at the Essendon board track and five Wheel Races from scratch. He rode off scratch with the great Billy Guyatt and defeated him in the ANA Wheel Race final.

In 1944 he won Australia's greatest handicap classic, the Austral Wheel Race and continued winning races until

he retired at the age of 32 to concentrate on business.

Tassie died from a heart attack at his Essendon home on April 25 1981. He was 65 years of age.

As referee of the League of Victorian Wheelmen over a long period he built up an unenviable reputation for fairness. As an administrator his judgments were respected and as a supporter he was generous.

Such a man represented a tremendous loss to the sport of cycling. But that was not the end of the Johnson saga.

Tasman Johnson had two sons, Tasman Junior and Gordon, both were members of the Brunswick Amateur Cycling Club and also Junior National

Cycling champions. Gordon carried his class into senior ranks but Tasman never became a senior champion.

Gordon was an instant champion winning the Victorian schoolboy cycling championship in 1961 at the age of 15 years. He captured the Victorian junior titles later that year holding an absolute stranglehold on Victorian cycling for his age group.

At 16 years he had won 5 Australian junior championships, plus nine Victorian junior titles. By that time cycling commentators were already branding him a freak.

Some were even saying he would be on the way out at 17 years of age.

As a result of the controversy which surrounded him the youngster decided

to settle the issue by attempting to represent his country at the Tokyo Olympics. To do this he would have to make a premature move into the senior ranks as well as defeating his Brunswick club mate, the then Empire Games and national Sprint champion, Tom Harrison.

'Johnno' had outstanding success in the selection national title at Warragul straight heating Harrison, who he had previously relieved of his Victorian title. As two nominations were possible, both the Brunswick champions were selected.

In the Olympics, however, neither was successful. Cycling team manager Bill Young wrote in his report to the Australian Olympic Federation that Tom Harrison was too much of a gentleman and Gordon Johnson was too inexperienced for success in the vital Sprint championship.

During the next three years Gordon married and made frequent trips to Europe in search of racing experience. When he raced back on his home ground all opposition fell before his flying wheels.

He commenced the 1968 track season as a three-times national senior Sprint champion. The only flaw in his performance was in Adelaide in 1966, where the flat track did not suit his explosive style and he was defeated in the national Sprint by fellow Victorian Daryl Perkins.

But it was not to be Perkins who would challenge the Brunswick star. It was the arrival of a Dick Ploog protege in the guise of John Nicholson.

Nicholson made no secret of the fact that he was after Johnson's scalp, and the two met head on in the selection titles for the 1968 Mexico Olympics held in Sydney.

Nicholson was fast and had been trying to beat Johnson all that year, but his only claim to fame was in the Grand Prix of Melbourne when he scored a win in a one heat final. Since then they had met three times. When the Australian selectors announced the team for the Mexico both sprinters found themselves included.

By 1970 there was only a difference in technique between the two protagonists. Johnson was a complete cyclist with oodles of stamina; John Nicholson a pure sprinter. This was demonstrated at the Brunswick velodrome when the Australian championships were held to select the team for the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games.

After a week of intermittent rain the vital sprint final had not been finalised by Sunday morning and the selectors

A delighted Gordon Johnson achieved his last cycling objective when he won the 1972 Austral. Johnson is seen in this Ray Bowles shot punching the air with glee.



were unable to announce the team. A break in the weather permitted a hastily arranged final between Johnson and Nicholson. It was a battle of tactics with Nicholson successfully holding Johnson to a short sprint after the incumbent Johnson had made a panic move in the deciding heat.

Right throughout the season Johnson had observed a policy of avoiding any clash with Nicholson until they met in the Victorian title where he was the victor. Nicholson had now reversed that result thus creating a problem for the selectors. They avoided a decision by selecting both sprinters.

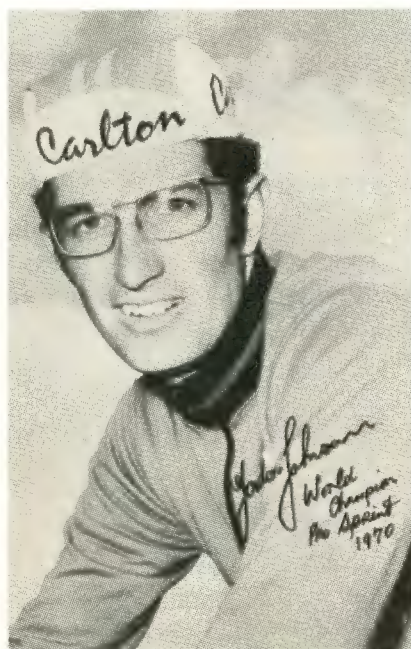
The battle of the giants was continued in Edinburgh where Nicholson won gold and Johnson silver. However, Johnson had consolation when he and Ron Jonders of South Australia combined to win the tandem sprint.

I was the Brunswick Club secretary promoter at the time and well remember a request from the Johnson family for an immediate clearance from the club to allow Gordon to transfer to the professional ranks so that he could contest the world professional Sprint championship to be held in England following the Games.

The world professional Sprint champion at that time was Patrick Sercu who is now involved in the Six-Day racing scene. It was highly unlikely he would retain the title. Most of the pundits were

tipping Sante Gaiardoni to regain the title (he won it previously at Rocourt France in 1963).

The big Italian had been showing sparkling form all season. Few gave



Following his world title Sprint win at his first professional ride, Johnson signed a contract to race for the season with the English firm Carlton Cycles.

Johnson, the beaten Edinburgh Games representative, any chance of getting to the final let alone defeating Gaiardoni.

Following a hectic round of preliminaries during which the Australian was flattened, damaging his left arm, Gaiardoni and Johnson emerged as the two finalists. Gaiardoni was a proud individual and smugness cost him the first heat against Johnson. When the second heat was called to the mark the Italian was determined to annihilate the Australian with sheer speed.

So eager was he to commence the process that he opted for a long sprint. This action was just what Johnson had hoped for. The two went wheel for wheel with Johnson throwing his cycle in desperation at the line as Gaiardoni gained ground near the finish, right on the line the Italian surrendered and the World again had an Aussie Sprint champion. The first since Sid Patterson won in 1949.

The news flashed around the world within minutes. The Melbourne Herald, never loath to publicise the deeds of Victoria's sporting giants, headed their story "Johnson seizes world crown" in 50 mm type and described the incident as an incredible performance matching the legendary Sid Patterson's effort at Rocourt in 1950 when he won the Pursuit after losing the Sprint – an unheard of feat.

Johnson stayed on in Europe fulfilling

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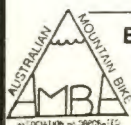
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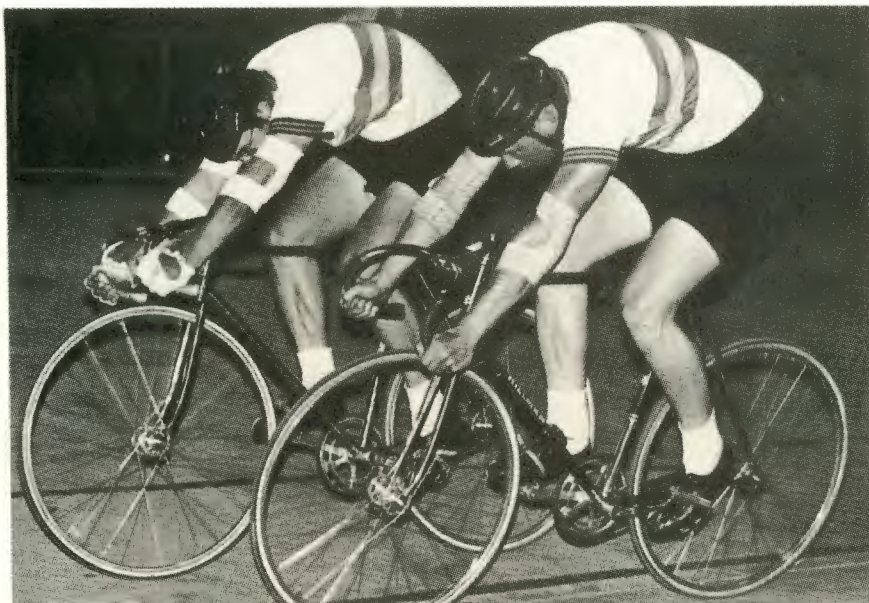
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contracts for the remainder of the summer season.

Like so many before him he now set his sights on winning the famous Austral Wheel Race which was first conducted in 1886 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

It had subsequently been run at the Melbourne Exhibition track, the North Essendon board track, the Olympic Velodrome and now Brunswick velodrome.

Gordon Johnson defeats John Nicholson (inside) in the 1969 Victorian Sprint title at the Brunswick velodrome. Photo: Ray Bowles

Gordon's father had won the great race in 1944 and Johnno had set it in his sights as a final objective in cycling. So he travelled 3200 kilometres to contest the 1971 Austral before the fans he so loved on his beloved Brunswick velodrome.

The excitement at the track was terrific built by superb commentary and the presence of a world champion. With three scratch riders working in unison it was obvious they would catch the peloton. Just as he felt he had the race was in his grasp fate intervened and his tyre went flat.

When the wind left the champions tyre it also left the lungs of 2000 odd fans. In a flash the mood changed. In a remarkable transformation all were now suffering with him.

Johnson dismounted. He flung his bicycle to the ground, removed his helmet and covered his eyes with his hands. At that moment all the drama of the race his father had won before him welled up in his breast and gushed in tears from his eyes.

Another year. Another race. In the final of the 1972 Austral he had the huge crowd roaring in delight as half-way up the finishing straight he swept to the lead in a last lap sprint.

It was a thrilling moment as Johnson surged ahead leaving Australia's top professionals literally standing and cutting them down on the finish line. His arms reached for the skies metres before the finish line. The mantle of "Tassie" Johnson had settled on his second son.

Authors note: - The most prestigious of all the track titles is the World Professional Sprint. This title was eventually won by Johnson's opponent John Nicholson in 1975 and again in 1976.

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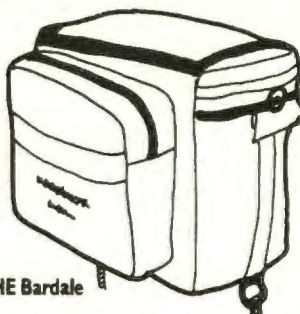
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WOMEN ON THE ROAD

A look at the epic travels of three solo women cyclists

BY JULIA THORN

IF YOU FEEL SPURRED ON to plan a solo bicycle tour spare a thought for some courageous female solo bicycle riders. Here's a resume of the trips that three of them have made.

Louise Sutherland has undertaken some adventurous journeys. In 1981 when she was in her fifties she set out to cycle the 4000 kilometre length of the Trans Amazon highway in Brazil. It isn't a highway in our accepted sense of the word, in fact a considerable length of it is unsealed.

Louise was repeatedly told by officials she visited before and during her ride that this trip could not be done because of the hazards of jungle life and the vast uninhabited stretches. But the discouragement often came from surprisingly ill-informed sources. As it turned out she did encounter many problems, but most of them were unrelated to the specific warnings she had received.

At times the road was so muddy that she had to carry her bike. At times she could hardly walk at all. The tropical rainstorms and ferocious insects were a constant nuisance. And once she was followed by a jaguar who leapt out of the jungle.

But such incidents aside, the trip was wonderful, and Louise was amply rewarded for her courage. She spent many nights with the local people, hanging up her hammock in some odd corner of what passed as a restaurant or in a villager's hut, and got a real understanding of life along the Amazon. She ate beans and rice day in, day out except when participating in some particular celebration or festival, when a chicken would be killed and maybe a bottle of wine drunk.

On several occasions it looked as though she may have to turn back but with amazing perseverance and help from many friendly people she met and

stayed with along the road, she triumphed. One of the most moving remarks she made about the ride is that it left her with a renewed faith in human kindness and generosity of spirit.

She was by no means a skilled mechanic, which is surprising when you consider where she was riding and that she travelled alone. Her bike was a Peugeot 5-speed rather than a state of the art tourer. But she enlisted the help of locals with any mechanical problems and the simple bike was in no way a liability.

The account of her adventure is related in her book *The Impossible Ride*.

Not that this was her first solo ride. In 1950 she set off to cycle from London to Land's End but instead found herself riding right around the world, finishing the trip six years later, after making several lengthy stops to work at her career of nursing. Her account of this ride appears in her first book *I Follow the Wind*.

One of Louise Sutherland's aims has been to combine cycling with fund raising. She hopes to raise funds from her account of her Amazon travels to finance a mobile clinic for the region she passed through.

Another solo female rider is **Dervla Murphy** who in 1963 cycled from Dun-kirk to Delhi at the age of 31. She tells the story of her experiences in *Full Tilt*.

The area she picked is not quite the sort of place one would expect a lone female to venture into, especially in those days when travellers were only beginning to explore the world's more "untouched" spots. She was bound to encounter problems in countries such as Afghanistan and Iran (then still Persia) where women are second class citizens and rarely even seen in public without a veil.

One can only admire her for having the guts to go there and to retain her wits about herself so as to come out smiling.

From the very start her book reads like an adventure story. She left home in Ireland during the worst winter in recent European memory and had to battle with problems caused by the huge snowfalls right from the start. For the first few days the weather conditions made it impossible for her to ride so she advanced across central Europe by bus. Her resilient character emerges strongly when she says that she had been looking forward to this trip for most of her life so she was reluctant to have any major delays at this late stage.

Then she had other problems, such as an over amorous Turkish policeman who lured her to the police station under some pretext and proceeded to try to do things that she can only describe as unrepeatably sordid. Another time she was attacked by wolves in the night.

To the question of male attitudes Dervla adopted a very sensible approach, wearing loose clothing and disguising her femininity as much as possible – so much so that on many occasions she found herself billeted in male sleeping quarters because the officials had not realised her sex! It wasn't that the locals had anything against women, it was just that they were completely unused to seeing them in public or seeing them lead an independent life.

And when romantic Afghan males weren't being a problem, there were the atrocious Afghan roads to contend with, tearing at her tyres. One morning she collected 11 punctures almost simultaneously and took the bus for the rest of the

day. But she did this with some reluctance since Afghan buses had to use the same roads she used and these buses were not only extremely crowded but lacked any kind of shock absorbers.

On one such bus journey a fracas developed when some passengers refused to pay their fare and Dervla ended up with three fractured ribs after being poked with a rifle butt.

After over five months on the road she had clocked up some awesome achievements, including several "first time by bicycle" mountain pass crossings in Pakistan – through snow and ice. She really pushed herself physically to the limit, losing a lot of weight in mountainous areas where there was literally

no food and one evening she became delirious with exhaustion and sunstroke.

She realised fairly early on in the piece that she would have to make certain concessions to the different standard of living in those countries, such as eating food which had been washed in not particularly clean water. The lurid pictures she paints of food being washed in the "jube", or stream running alongside the edge of the footpath are enough to give the armchair traveller a bout of Delhi belly.

Bettina Selby is another woman who likes to ride long distances alone. She has now written three books about her travels. In contrast to the two women I have written about above, she travels as a skilled mechanic and carefully plans the equipment and bike she takes with her.

She took up cycle touring seriously when her children had finally left home, showing once again that with determination it is never too late to take up this activity. Her first trip was an 8000 kilometre jaunt through the Himalayan mountain range. One can't get much more strenuous than that.

She started out from Karachi and immediately ran into problems with over-keen males. The contrast between the experiences she had in Pakistan and Dervla Murphy's experiences is noticeable in that the earlier rider was not harassed, perhaps because in those days the natives had had so little contact with western culture. Her account of this trip in *Riding the mountains down* is practically a catalogue of problems – over attentive followers, heavily trafficked roads, rough dirt tracks and the trials of slow paced Indian bureaucracy.

The worst experience she had was when a large gang of youths stopped her in her tracks and she was convinced there would be no way to get clear of them. In desperation she threatened to call the police, a gesture which she felt was probably no more than a nail in her coffin, but amazingly they were so surprised they let her go. Experiences such as this were far more alarming than having a puncture and finding she had no means of repairing it; on that occasion she stuffed all her spare clothes into the tyre and proceeded without too much difficulty.

But once she left the cities behind she found fantastic scenery in areas such as the Kulu valley and Kashmir. By the end she realised that the hassles were all part of travelling in an area where solo middle aged women riding bikes are not that common.

In Bettina Selby's most recent trip she travelled for five months in eastern Africa. We have reviewed her account of this trip, *Riding the Desert Trail* in this issue. She rode the full length of the Nile Valley, spending plenty of time sightseeing among the tombs of the pharaohs

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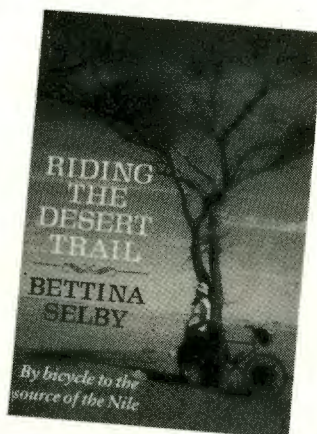
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and the pyramids, and through areas of extreme poverty that have suffered the ravages of war and drought. There were times when she despaired of surviving to tell the tale but by the end she too concluded that there is more to trust in people than to fear.

The near misses always make exciting reading. One day she was nearly shot by a Ugandan soldier when she inadvertently rode past an inconspicuous roadblock. Another time when crossing the Nubian Desert her bike almost disappeared into the soft sand.

A common thread running through the tales told by these long distance tourists is their conclusion that bicycling is the best way to go. Although you seem very vulnerable, you can get so much closer to the people you pass on the way, unlike when you travel inside a vehicle and cut off from the landscape. The people you meet are not afraid of you and let you into their lives, even when their background and way of life is so different from yours, so that you can learn quite a bit about another culture. And rather than just looking at the scenery, you are yourself a part of it.

Needless to say it takes considerable guts, resilience and a sense of humour to even contemplate this kind of trip.



BOOK REVIEW BY SUSAN GRIFFIN

Riding the Desert Trail by Bettina Selby.
Published by Chatto and Windus Ltd London
1988 Hardback \$49.95.

To travel the length of the River Nile from its delta in Alexandria, Egypt to its source among the Mountains of the Moon in central Africa, would be a difficult trip by any mode of transport. Bettina Selby chose to do it by bicycle. Her third travel book, *Riding the Desert Trail*, is the story of her adventure.

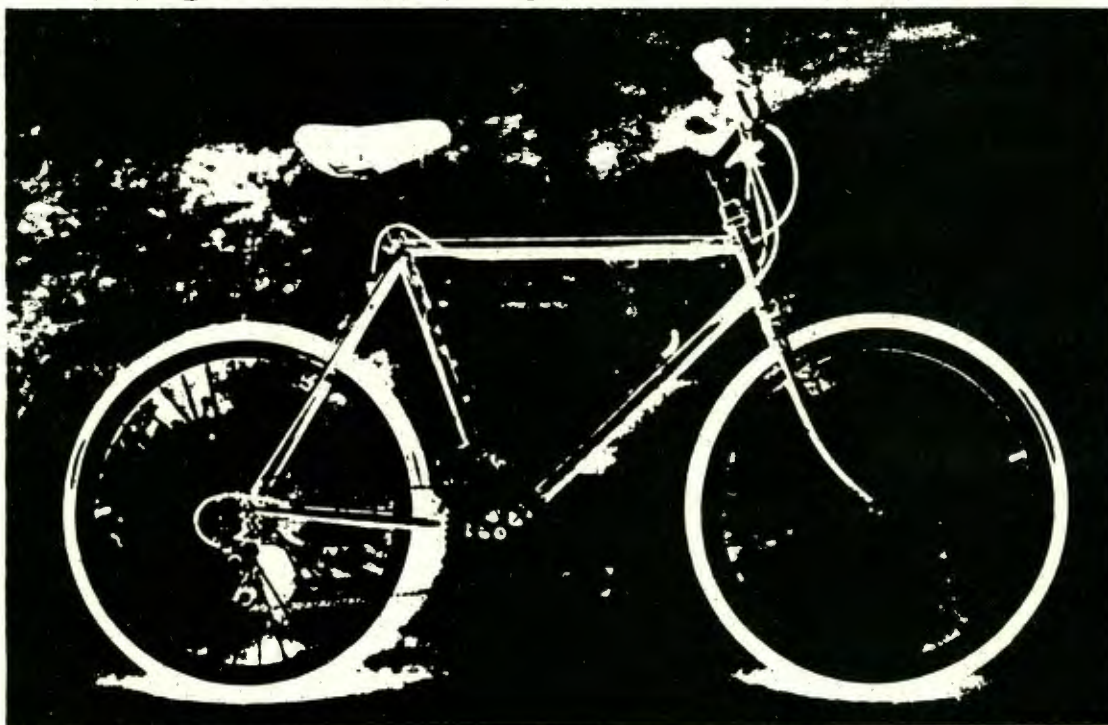
Her trip was inspired by a visit to the Egyptian room at London's British

Museum. From that point on she set about planning the journey, reading about other African travels, selecting a route, arranging visas, getting contacts, having a mountain bike built to her specifications and assembling the gear she would need. Included in her gear was a water pump and filter which proved invaluable as Nile water is disease ridden.

On arrival in Egypt Bettina's mountain bike is affectionately named Agala by the locals. Her trip starts in a deluge of rain and the great amount of kindness shown to her throughout the trip also commences. After extricating herself from a thigh deep puddle she is offered a lift to Cairo which she gladly accepts given that she is equipped for desert rather than wet weather travel.

In Cairo she has to organise all sorts of documents, visas etc which leaves her with plenty of time to explore the city and the nearby pyramids at Giza. As she rides south from Cairo the line of pyramids stretches for 100 miles, a magnificent sight. She is treated with great curiosity throughout the trip, being a woman and travelling alone on a bicycle. The Agala also attracts plenty of attention. Kindness is shown in gracious ways: Invitations to stay with Egyptian families lead to her receiving the best room in the house and a fine evening meal, plus the opportunity to gain great-

MOUNTAIN BIKE THINKING



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er insight into the lifestyle of the people.

The further south she travels the poorer the villages become and she has to put up with a variety of attempts to obtain money from her. Children form human chains to block her path, others thrust sticks through her spokes and have stones ready to hurl. At one point while taking a photo, a group of villagers attempt to take everything from the bike and it is with considerable determination that she gets it all back.

Bettina spends time exploring Luxor and the Valley of the Kings, and in Aswan the temples of Philae and Abu Simbel. In the book she gives a useful amount of history about these sights to put what she sees into context and her views are not those of the average tourist. In Aswan she encounters the problem of officials who wish to stop her continuing by bike. Several times in Egypt and Sudan this happens and on some occasions she resorts to other modes of transport which add to her experience of Africa.

She comes across aid organisations in Africa noticing the different personalities of the people that run them and the kind of help they provide. She provides an insight into how aid in less developed and war torn countries operates, the problems arising with government bureaucracy and the organisations' internal bureaucracies, and how they cope with the varying cultures.

She explains the difficulties of travel in some areas and the effect it has on her. The unrelenting physical effort in a hot climate, inadequate food, the strain of communicating in a foreign language or relying on the locals' poor English, and the nuisance of always being on show are some of the hardships with which she has to cope. The problem is knowing how hard she can push herself.

Bettina's book is not only the story of her ride following the Nile. It gives insight into the effects of war on a country and its people. She encounters the sight of homeless boys living in Khartoum, mostly mutilated and many runaways. She meets the people of Uganda and sees through their eyes what that country's previous rulers have done to the country. Her observations of the effects of colonisation on a country, the openness of people to a country's politics and the effect of World Bank debts are brought to the reader's attention.

The differing terrains through which she travels are described in a manner to which cyclists can easily relate. Also she provides sufficient information on the planning, equipment and types of difficulties to help other riders plan trips in this part of the world.

The book is not only of interest to the cyclist, but to anyone with a sense of adventure, curiosity about Africa and an interest in the political situation in Egypt, Sudan and Uganda.

RHYTHM AND BLUES

There's more to cycling than heavy breathing

BY MARK JENKINS

EVER RIDE with someone who's got it? Got that grace. Got that ineffable elegance where body, soul and machine are melded into one fluid motion. A cyclist who's as smooth as a whale carving the sea or a swan cutting the sky. No jerky leg thrusts, no heaving, oxygen-starved chest, no groaning and shaking like a tree in the wind.

According to scientists at the University of Zurich, what that person's got, is rhythm – a precise "synchronization" of breathing and pedalling.

Using thirty volunteers in a human physiology project, the Swiss researchers discovered that coupling respiration with pedal revolutions can significantly reduce energy expenditure.

In the study, each volunteer pedalled on an ergometer at 70 rpm for four different occasions (pedal resistance was determined by the subject's strength). In two of the four runs, subjects were allowed to breathe as they liked. In the other two runs, volunteers were asked to breathe synchronously with an acoustic signal sounding at a specified number of pedal revolutions. This number, or pedal revolution to breath ratio, was determined by each subject's spontaneous rhythm identified in the two "breathe as you like" runs. For most subjects, the induced pedal revolution to breath ratio was either 3 to 1 or 4 to 1.

To determine whether synchronizing of pedalling and breathing affected energy expenditure, oxygen uptake (VO₂) was measured. Basically, the

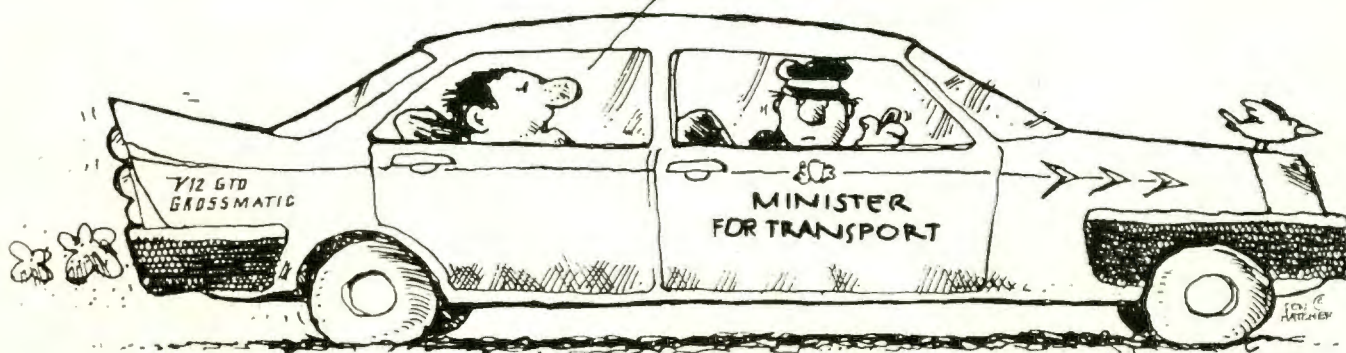
more oxygen each cyclist inhaled, the harder they were working.

Results were unequivocal: "It is concluded that coupling the breathing and cycling rhythms reduces VO₂." Reducing VO₂, oxygen uptake, in effect reduces the amount of energy it takes to bicycle. In other words, a conscious synchronization of breathing and pedalling distinctly decreases the difficulty of cycling.

To practice "coupling", first ride ten to fifteen minutes warming up to your desired speed. Once a natural pedal cadence of 70 to 90 rpm has been reached, take note of your revolution to breath ratio. Are you pedalling three revolutions for every breath? Four, maybe more? Whatever it is, try to synchronize pedal revolutions to breathing precisely. (A cycling computer that calculates distance travelled, miles per hour and rpm is extremely useful for synchronicity training). Ride at this ratio, an induced rhythm, for 10 minutes. The following 10 minutes, adjust the ratio, either adding or subtracting one revolution per breath. Ride at the new ratio for 10 minutes. During the next five or six separate rides, adjust the cycle ratio, noting which combinations produce optimum performance – which rhythm is at once most comfortable and least fatiguing.

In less than two weeks you will have found that amazing rhythm. And once you've discovered a coupling ratio that's right for... you've got it. Got that grace. Gotten rid of the blues for that riding rhythm.

ONCE AROUND THE BLOCK ROBERT,
I FEEL A PERVERSE NEED FOR EXERCISE TODAY!



VICTORIA LOSES DIRECTION

The state which pioneered government involvement in the planning and provision of better facilities for cyclists has run out of steam? One of this country's leading cycle experts looks at recent events in that state.

BY ALAN A PARKER

IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ANYONE with an interest in cycling to visit Melbourne these days to not be impressed with the range and quantity of government provided facilities designed to make cycling easier, safer and more attractive to the general public. What's more the facilities are being used and are drawing more and more people away from a sedentary lifestyle and onto their bikes.

While the Victorians have always been far ahead of other states there are signs now emerging that all is not well. This change has coincided with the appointment of a new Labor minister last year. Since then the state's major agency with an interest in bicycling affairs, the State Bicycle Committee, has been downgraded and the future of the Melbourne metropolitan bikeplan is in doubt.

In May 1986 the government was finally persuaded to commit 3.7 million dollars a year over a ten year period to implement the plan. Be that as it may the bikeplan, like any major ongoing public work, is now desperately in need of extensive revision to incorporate the latest knowledge and techniques.

Nearly every other government plan dealing with the Melbourne metropolitan area has been redone or revised during the last two years and now it should be the Bikeplan's turn.

A more ominous sign of the deteriorating situation in Victoria is the current state of ruling Labour Party's transport policy which, when it was revised for last year's state election, excluded a prior commitment to implement the bikeplan.

There once was a time when the SBCV would churn out forests of paper

promoting its achievements but now it is very difficult to find out what is happening even if you ask. In the past two years the SBCV has not produced a public document that tells the public what has been spent on bicycle facilities, what has been done and what has been built.

In contrast the State Bicycle Committee of New South Wales may have only a pitiful million dollars a year to spend but at least you know what has been done because that committee produces a detailed annual report setting out the facts about its activities.

At election time last year a lie was told to the Victorian voters that \$6.5 million was being spent on cyclists that year. This is total deception as many of the projects were federally funded bicentennial projects with only a nominal contribution from the state government.

The downgrading of the SBCV

During 1988 a new chairman was appointed to the SBCV but he will no longer report directly to the Minister. Instead the chairperson now reports to the head of Road Construction Authority.

The SBCV has effectively been downgraded and the new chairman, while being an able person, is on so many other committees that he can not spend enough time on SBCV work. The new Minister has totally ignored cyclists requests for a chairman who has time to get things done and trouble shoot problems that arise from having to work with so many other government departments.

I had a meeting with the new chairman last July and suggested to him that a proper business plan be prepared for the SBCV but as yet nothing has happened. The SBCV is now lacking direction and staff are demoralised. One staff member has recently resigned and another was transferred elsewhere in the public service. This has, according to one member of the committee, put back the work of the SBCV five years.

Most local bikeplans last year were done in a rush and only one local bicycle

committee was set up to follow-up the recommendations. The same thing is likely to happen this year due to staff shortages.

Private school opposes vital bike path link

BY ALAN A PARKER

THE MELBOURNE BIKEPLAN in its 1981 second stage report recommends a cross river link to join up the main Yarra bicycle path to other routes in the Gardners Creek Valley. Late in 1985 the cyclists advocate body, Bicycle Victoria, wrote to the Minister of Transport complaining that the State Bicycle Committee had not yet acted on this vital proposal. Tom Roper, the minister at the time agreed with the proposal and as a consequence a decision was made to employ consultants to work out how to do it.

The consultants recommended an expensive bridge and a bike path through private land owned by Scotch College who are opposed to the idea. The cost of the consultants proposal was over \$500,000 and because of its high cost the project will be abandoned and forgotten unless some pressure is brought to bear.

Scotch College do not want their land to be used for a bike path and have used a barrister to establish their legal property rights. This was a predictable outcome from the outset but the charade continued.

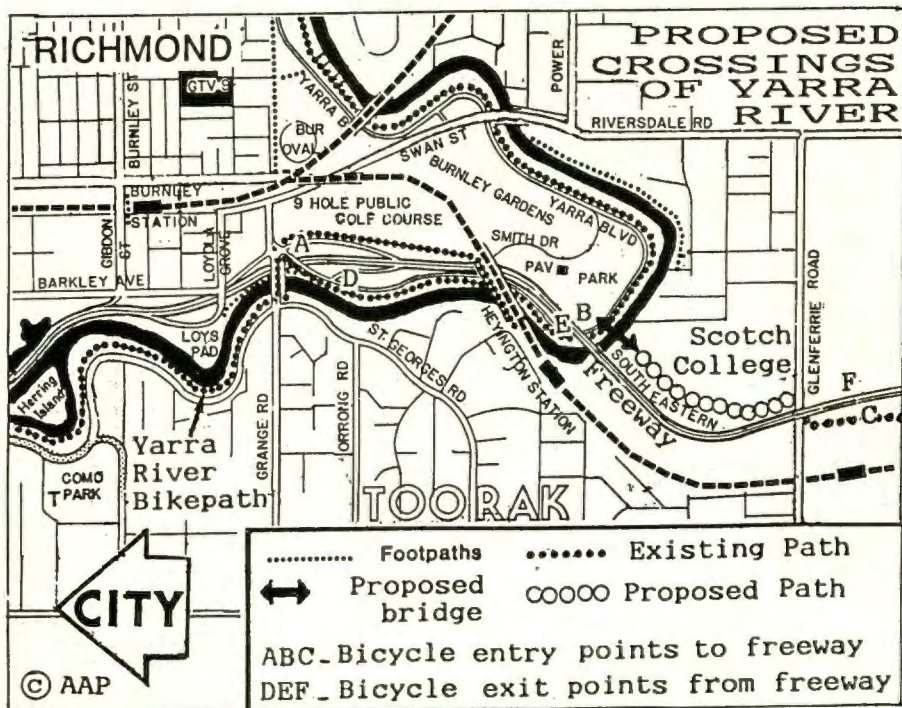
After eight years of bureaucratic bumbling cyclists still don't have access to where other road users can conveniently go. The bicycle paths built in the south east of Melbourne do not connect with the Yarra River bike path because of a one-kilometre freeway overpass which has been built without an alternative means of access for bicycles.

The easiest way in future to link up the paths is to use the three metre wide freeway brake down lanes from the Yarra River to the east side of Glenferrie Road.

Bicycle riders may never gain access because of the high cost of the proposed facilities. Worse still the Road Construction Authority and the anti-cycling lobby now have an officially endorsed report (see following story) which fails to recommend the only practical short term option for cyclists: the use of freeway breakdown lanes to bypass Scotch College property.

The interesting feature of this silly episode is that if the SBCV had briefed the consultants properly in the first place and told them to use the latest research materials on route selection then the on-freeway option would have been considered.

If the latest American guide to route selection had been used then the only direct low cost and convenient route along the freeway breakdown lanes would have been recommended as shown on the map at points A, B, C, D, E, and F.



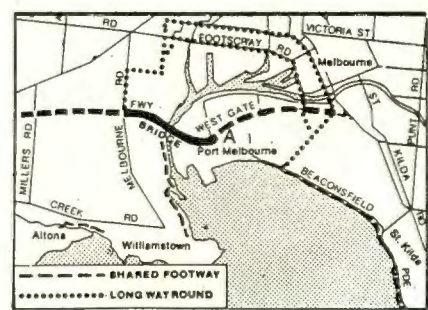
Freeway report ignores cyclists rights of access

BY ALLAN A PARKER

A NEW REPORT issued by the Victorian Road Construction Authority in association with the old NSW Department of Main Roads has been met with puzzlement in bicycle advocate circles. The report is a study of issues relating to cyclists use of free-ways.

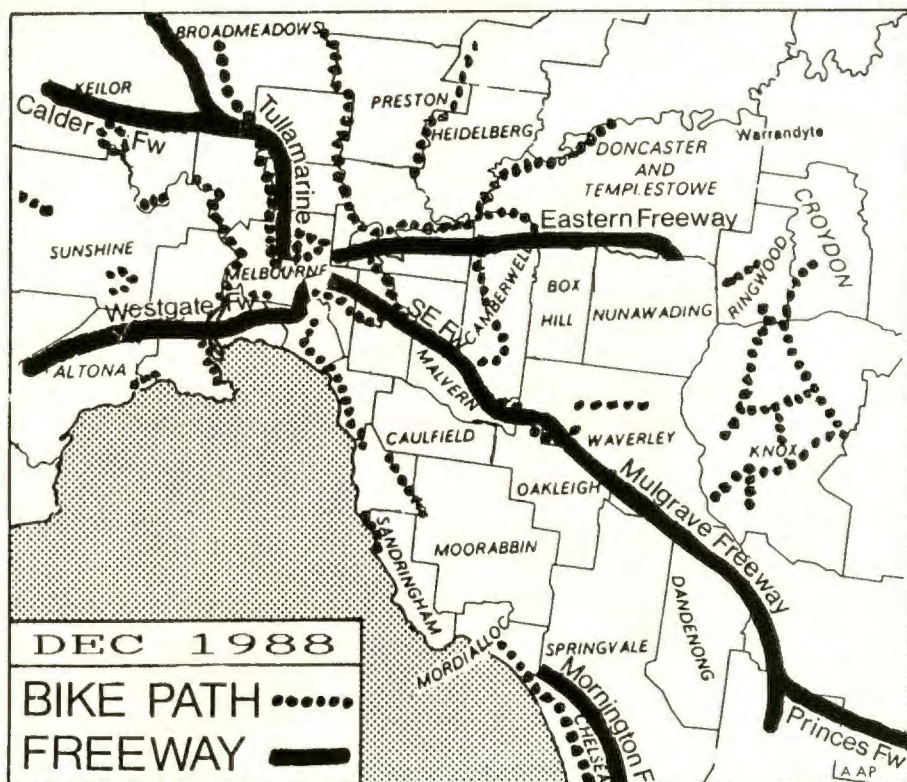
For many years the transport bureaucracy has ignored cyclists' access and mobility needs and produced narrow restrictive reports looking almost exclusively at bicycle safety. This latest report entitled *Urban Freeway Cycling Study* is also grossly biased towards safety and almost totally ignores the cyclist case for equal rights of access and enhanced mobility.

The report is full of generalisations and fails to examine the benefits and consequences of bicycle use on actual freeways in Melbourne and Sydney. Even the safety aspect is viewed narrowly and does not include a comparative accident study of the alternative routes cyclists are forced to use. It fails to report the **total lack of evidence behind the original decision to ban cyclists.**



The report also ignores the documented proposals for Melbourne's Westgate bridge and other vital freeway links. The importance of the Westgate Bridge for cyclists is shown on the map. The longer and more dangerous alternative routes can clearly be seen.

My technical articles in this magazine (issues 42 and 44) have not been referenced in the report even though they were recommended by to the editor when advice was solicited by the consultants. They were also tabled as basic working documents and formed part of my formal presentation to the SBCV when the report/study was originally mooted.



THERE ARE TWO very important reasons why cyclists should be allowed to ride the freeway brake down lanes. The first is that most alternative main road routes are more dangerous for cyclists because the roadway is usually of insufficient width and the outside lane is often in poor condition. This issue has been adequately recognised in the report.

However, the second reason, that the freeway breakdown lanes can be linked up with bike paths and potential back

road routes to create a continuous network of bikeways, is conveniently overlooked.

How Melbourne urban freeways relate to off-road routes is shown on the map. In that city such a network would make cycling far safer in the long term than it is ever going to be under the present policy of trying to make every road bicycle safe.

The report presents the case for cyclists being able to use the breakdown lanes citing mostly the excellent work of Bill Wilkinson in the USA which largely

relates to rural freeways. Unfortunately there is no innovative thinking about the special needs of cyclists in urban areas.

What is needed is a more positive approach that both integrates the breakdown lanes into a bikeway network and would require that they be properly designated as cycle routes. They should also be recognised as bicycle territory where drivers may only park their broken down vehicles.

It is very important that the rights of cyclists be clearly recognised, that severe penalties be introduced to deter motor vehicle drivers from driving along the breakdown lanes as they do today in certain places. They should also be called "Bicycle Freeways" and bicycle symbols be painted on them.

Additional access to these bicycle freeways from nearby bikeways and back road routes will also be necessary. In addition the Melbourne Bikeplan needs to be revised to properly determine where the freeway connections are best located.

What the report says can be boiled down to a proposal to copy USA methods and allow cyclists on and off at existing road ramps only. I think we can do a lot better than that because bicycle planning in Melbourne is way ahead of North American practise. What we should expect from this report are recommendations for the proper integration of all bicycle facilities within the strategic framework of a revised Melbourne Bikeplan.

Cyclists rights to use all roads should be reinstated by a directive from the minister and the report should be rewritten. As it also involves New South Wales there is also a possibility that it could be used as a means of denying cyclists in that state the access to freeways which they already possess.

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THE WAYWARD JOURNAL

Putting your travel experiences down on paper is not as easy as it seems

BY IAN TERRY

YOU KNOW THE FEELING, don't you? You are swooping down a mountain road, on air. The wind at your back. Sunlight is filtering through the trees, birds are singing. There is a hint of mist creeping around the corner of a mountain across the valley. You are halfway through a six month tour.

There is a smile on your face. Poetry fills your head, flows through your veins. Incandescent words, phrases, explode within you. Get them down and

you have a sure article for *Freewheeling*. An irresistible article. Bicycle magazines the world over will clamour to pay you big dollars to write about your worldwide travels. Memories of hours at an office desk dissolve into the never ending roads of the professional cycle tourer.

But you do not stop.

No way. The going is too good, too easy, to slow down. To stop and jot something down. The immortal words can wait a little longer. Until the bottom of the hill.

Wait! There is a sharp uphill ahead. Better keep going and not sacrifice all that downhill momentum. At the top of the next pass, forty-five minutes later, you stop at last. Exhausted. Certainly too exhausted to rummage around in your panniers to find that leaky biro and dog-eared writing paper. The words have gone, in any case. Washed away by the sweat pouring out of your forehead. If you mop yourself quickly you might still catch some of them, but it is unlikely. It is all you can do to wonder how far it is to the next town. To make sense of the map. To chew on some grit covered biscuits and swig down a mouthful of rust-coloured water from your bidon.

Everyone who has been on a tour and can hold a pen knows. The attempts to recreate the ecstasy, the despair, the emotions that are as ephemeral as the time spent in the saddle.

Most of us keep a trip journal. It might be casual, like letters home that are being kept for your return. Or something more structured. A separate book carefully written in day after day. A lot of journals are written in cafes, and are complete with grease and tomato sauce stains from a dollar's worth of hot chips. They are written with one eye on the bike leaning against the window outside, the other on the proprietor who thinks that three hours out of the rain over one cup of hot chocolate is too long.

Others are written at picnic tables over lunch, trying to hold down the paper against the wind, and shooing away hungry seagulls and wallabies.

Invariably it starts to rain and the day's description is hurriedly finished off.

I usually write mine hunched in my tent. Over a candle dancing in the breeze that somehow edges in under the tent flap. It is not a position I like to keep for long, back aching and eyes tired in the low light. Sometimes I lie propped up on my side, but my supporting arm soon goes to sleep and my hand tingles with pins and needles. All I want to do is get it over and done with, that accursed journal entry, write down the bare bones and get comfortable again.

So most journals end up reading like this:

Rode 63 kilometres today from Jabblewollaback to Quindynorgup. Scenery great. A fantastic downhill this afternoon, and the best milkshake ever at the Quindynorgup milkbar. The space invaders machine stole my money though. Or,

Bloody bugger of a day. Didn't stop raining or blowing a headwind. A blow-out ripped a gash in my tyre. I didn't have a spare or a knife so I had to sharpen a stone on the wet bitumen and cut a four inch by two inch sleeve out of my only spare tube, then glue it on the inside

of the tyre (had to rig up a fly so the tyre would stay dry and the glue would stick). Then my back gears broke and I had to get out my chain tool (lucky I packed it at the last moment) and Why aren't I at home watching "Sale of the Century" instead of holed up in this leaky tent.

But you just know that *Freewheeling* won't accept that.

The moments of truth are lost so easily. Images of beauty and clarity race past out of your reach before you can grab them and hold them steady. A bicycle tour is a bit like a haiku poem. A paradox. Clear, intuitive, yet just out of reach. Its essence is obvious at the moment, but impossibly obscured afterwards.

Next time, next trip, you vow, you will carry a notepad and pen in your top pocket. Then, when the wedge-tail eagle soars among the clifftop crags, when the dog in the back of the passing farmer's ute barks in your ear or the old salt in the pub tells you about the ghost on the town bridge you can whip out your notebook and jot it all down at once. Before the images, the feelings, can escape and slink off into some misty nether world where all the forgotten

thoughts of the world gather together and laugh at their creators. You vow to capture them first.

Ha! Sure enough, next trip, there are the pad and pen sitting, a little uncomfortably at first, in their appointed place. And there they stay.

Stopping is out of the question when the wedgie glides by at 5.13 pm, after 76 kilometres into a headwind and 11 more to go to camp.

When the old salt tells his story you are almost as drunk as he is. Walking back to the caravan park you are astonished to see two ghosts and fall into the creek. The biro floats off somewhere, the pad is soggy and next morning it is all a distant, embarrassing memory. And who wants to hear about a bloody rabid dog, anyhow? They aren't anything new. Every cyclist knows about them.

Back home, you notice that the notebook has remained unopened, and that all your shirts have dreadful ink stains around their pockets. And, somewhere, all those thoughts are having an uproarious time.

Next trip I'm going to take my Walkman and microphone.....

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Mapping the wilderness

BY WARREN SALOMON

Some months ago we ran a story about a new route being developed through the forested Great Dividing Ranges of eastern Australia. The scheme was hatched by *Freewheeling* editor, Warren Salomon and grew out of the Pacific Bicycle Route project. The Wilderness Bicycle Trail, when completed, will be a documented route through mostly State Forests linking Melbourne to Brisbane. Here Warren outlines the current state of the Trail project and the exciting work that lies ahead.

IT all started with blank space on a map. In a country like Australia you come to expect blank spaces as huge chunks of the inland are desert and barren spinifex plains; but not near the coast – not near the most densely populated areas.

If you look at a road map of eastern Australia you will see what I saw. The Hume Highway is the inland route to Sydney while the Princes Highway hugs the coast. North of Sydney the Pacific Highway follows the shoreline while the New England Highway parallels it many kilometres further inland. What lies between these two parallel highway systems is a vast forested wilderness cut only by a few roads and with only the faintest sprinkling of civilization in the form of small towns, farms and homesteads.

The advent of the fat-tired mountain bike has made wilderness cycling a challenging reality. One of my first wilderness bicycle trips was a three day journey through the Kosciusko National Park nine years ago. Riding our heavily laden skinny-tired touring bikes made the going very arduous for my self and my companions. At times we had to pull up on the handlebars to lift our front wheels over rocks in the road and so avoid damage to our equipment.

In the wilderness you don't want things to go wrong. Away from civilization you need equipment and information that is absolutely reliable. The mountain bike makers have fairly well sorted out the hardware problems: now its time for the software researchers to deliver the goods.

Even if the route were to be signposted with simple route markers you would still need a lot more information in order to safely travel the wilderness. Suitable campsites, water, trail hazards, difficult river crossings and supply points are some of the things you need to know before you set out. The wilderness can be a dangerous place if the right precautions are not taken. A tree branch caught in the spokes of a front wheel could be enough to produce a tragic accident. Where is the nearest phone and who can get there quickly to bring help?

Wilderness cycling is new to this country but it is one of the best ways of travelling through our forested mountain country. On a bike you can carry more than your own weight in gear and provisions. With careful packing and low gears it is possible to travel comfortably through the wilderness for seven days or longer depending on the climate and your taste for dehydrated food. In any case the big advantage for the biker that the bushwalker/backpacker doesn't have is the ability to cover a larger distances with less effort. The miracle of the ball bearing wheel is partly responsible.

At this stage the route is nothing more than a thin line pencilled onto a series of maps. Some sections have been ridden and so have been inked over but in other places there are still those blank spaces where lack of even fire trails prevents a direct passage through a mountainous region.

The Wilderness Trail will generally avoid major population centres and it is not anticipated that it will attract the amount of usage that the Pacific Bicycle Route is receiving. The aim of the Wilderness Trail project is to first find a suitable route then document it as thoroughly as possible storing all information on computer. No lavish full-colour maps are planned or glossy guide. When completed the route information will be continually updated and available on order along with sketch maps that will be cross referenced to the more detailed and accurate Natmap 1:100,000 series topographic maps. Current editions of the relevant sheets can then be purchased by the individual users.

Like the bushwalker venturing into a wilderness area users of the Trail will need to have basic skills in navigation and detailed maps as the forested areas have many tracks and roads criss- crossing the nominated path.

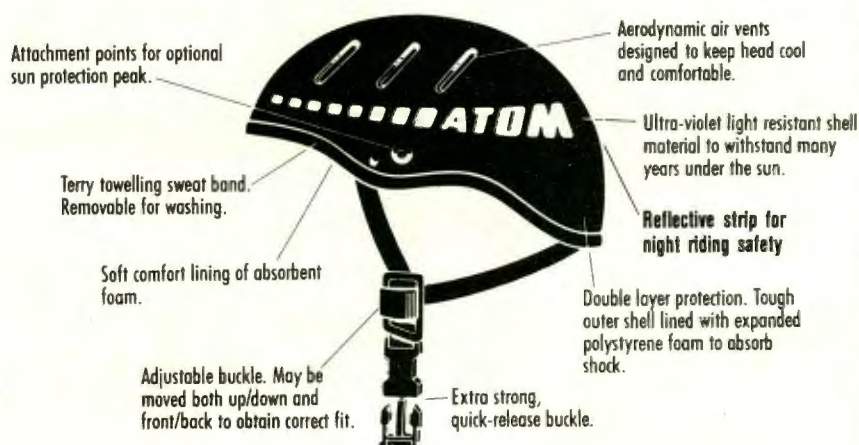
The lack of towns and villages along the proposed route presents additional problems for the wilderness biker. During an extended reconnaissance of the northern section of the Trail last year David Middleton found that in order to obtain food and other important supplies he had to leave the route for two days while he rode to the nearest town. Years ago this may not have been necessary but since the advent of the supermarket and car travel small towns have all but disappeared. At present the largest settlement on the proposed route is the New England town of Ebor which consists of a hotel, general store and a few houses.

To remedy this problem the Trail documentation will contain listings of local transport carriers and food suppliers in towns. With this information food can be ordered and paid for over the phone and by post then delivered to supply points on the Trail where it intersects with major highways and roads. These supply points would be friendly farmhouses, ranger stations or forestry centres.

Like the Pacific Bicycle Route project the Wilderness Bicycle Trail is expected to take years to complete.

If you can help write to me care of *Freewheeling* magazine, PO Box K26 Haymarket NSW 2000

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Calendar

Classifieds

Club secretaries, race directors and event organisers help us to publicise your event by sending details to us early. If you are planning a ride in the coming twelve month period you should send your notice to *Freewheeling National Bike Events Calendar* now. We publish advance notice of all bicycle events both competitive and non competitive but because of our publication lead-times we need your copy at least two months in advance. Send your copy to PO Box K26 Haymarket NSW 2000 or phone it through on (02) 264 8544.

COMPETITIVE EVENTS

APRIL

Sunday 30 World Cup Triathlon Swim 3 km, cycle 130 km, run 30 km. Held on Queensland's Gold Coast. Contact (075) 50 3617 for details.

CLUB CONTACTS

The Australian Cycling Federation and the state cycling federations will direct you to a club in your area if you want to get involved in bicycle road or track racing. Phone numbers and contacts for each state are: **NSW** Margaret Balmer (02) 241 1870; **VIC** Ruth Birznies (03) 328 4391; **QLD** Mike Victor (07) 390 1489; **WA** Mike Poyner (09) 384 4130; **SA** Bruce Quinn (08) 381 2398; **TAS** Joy Bestwick (003) 31 2712; **NT** Shirley Davis (089) 208 798.

Riders wishing to take out a professional licence should contact the National Secretary of the Australian Professional Cycling Council, Reg Marriner, PO Box 329 Torquay VIC 3228 Phone (052) 61 4067.

Mountain bike enthusiasts interested in contacting a local MTB club should contact the Australian Mountain Bike Association (02) 27 2977 AH (02) 92 1922.

NON COMPETITIVE EVENTS

MARCH

Sunday 5 Hills Cycle (Grade Easy to medium) 30-50 and 90 km routes through Sydney's beautiful Hills district. Entry fee funds to Diabetes Australia. Starts at Mt Wilberforce lookout, West Pennant Hills. Food and drinks available at end of ride. A souvenir of your participation will be issued. Entry fees \$8 single \$20 family of four. Contact Ron Jamieson (02) 872 3000.

Saturday 18 Brisbane Bicycle Rally To rap the Queensland government across the wrist. Albert Park noon. Contact Peter McCallum (07) 844 3420.

Easter Friday 24 to Monday 27 Easterbike 89 Victoria's big bicycle rally is to be held this year in Castlemaine. Day rides, meals, camping facilities and a full entertainment program are all provided by the organisers Bicycle Victoria. Contact (03) 670 9911.

Easter Friday 24 to Monday 27 Great Eastern Australian Rally New South Wales' major cycling event takes place this year in Bowral. Day rides and camping or dormitory accommodation are organised by the Bicycle Institute of New South Wales. Contact (02) 212 5628.

APRIL

Sunday 23 Mulga Bill's Wallaroo and Wombat Ride 35 or 100 km courses in the historic Hawkesbury area of New South Wales. Contact (02) 212 5628

JUNE

Friday 23 Michelin Century Ride Stay fit riding 100 kms of hills north of Hornsby in Sydney's north. Contact (02) 212 5628.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 17 Green Valley Twin Century Join the fun in Australia's longest running endurance event, riding 50 to 200 kms in the scenic Nepean valley south west of Sydney. Contact Russell Moore (02) 608 1125.

OCTOBER

Sunday 15 Sydney Spring Cycle Celebrate spring with thousands of fellow cyclists in a 35 km ride from Sydney to Parramatta. Contact (02) 212 5628.

NOVEMBER

Sunday 26 Eighth annual Sydney to the Gong Bicycle Ride This year bigger and better than ever. A one day fun and fitness ride through Royal National Park. Some say its the London to Brighton Ride with scenery. This year a time trail option will be available for sports riders. It's a ride not a race. Don't miss it. Details throughout the year in Freewheeling magazine.

DECEMBER

Saturday 2 to Sunday 10 Great Victorian Bike Ride A two week ride from Rutherglen to Melbourne. Organisers take good care of you, from entertainment to a sag wagon for your luggage. Camping, meals and full medical and mechanical support provided. Organiser is Bicycle Victoria. Contact (03) 670 9911 for entry forms and prices.

CLUB CONTACTS

These clubs regularly run rides in their cities and welcome new comers. Some even publish touring calendars listing forthcoming rides. Contact them for details.

Armidale Community Cyclists (067) 72 8951. **Audax Australia** (03) 435 4437 (02) 608 1125. **Bathurst** Bicycle Touring Group (063) 31 9459. **Bicycle Australia** (046) 27 2186 (after 9pm). **Brisbane** Bicycle Touring Association (07) 369 9326. **Brisbane** Mountain Bike riders interested in forming a club should contact Mike or Kelli on (07) 359 1244. **Canberra** Pedal Power ACT (062) 49 7167. **Darwin** Huffers & Puffers (089) 81 2141. **Geelong** Bicycle Touring Club (052) 75 6661. **Illawarra** Touring Cyclists' Club (042) 83 6524. **Melbourne** Bicycle Touring Club (03) 818 4011. **Melbourne eastern suburbs** - Knox Bicycle Touring Club (03) 754 4069. **Eastern** Bicycle Touring Club (03) 762 7928. **Victorian Pedal Clubs** provide fun and training in bike handling skills for children of bicycle riding age. Call for information on a club near you: (03) 337 6399. **Newcastle** Cycleways Movement (049) 46 8298. **Bicycle Institute of New South Wales** (02) 212 5628. **South Australian** Touring Cyclists Association (08) 272 6406 (08) 388 8331. **Sydney** region bicycling clubs can be contacted through the Bicycle Institute of NSW (02) 212 5628. **Tandem** Club of Australia (03) 241 4453. **Bicycle Victoria** (03) 670 9911. **Cycle Touring Association of West Australia** (09) 330 3659. **Wagga** Bicycle Touring Group (069) 21 6787. **Vintage Cycle clubs** Vintage Cycle Club of Victoria (03) 527 5759. **Southern Veterans** (Sydney Vintage Cycle Club) (02) 587 8017.

TOUR MATES

TOUR MATES is a FREE service for readers wishing to find companions for bicycle trips and holidays. Entries are limited to thirty words and there is a charge of thirty cents per word for any long entries exceeding the limit. Payment (if applicable) must accompany your listing. Name, address and phone number should be attached for verification purposes.

MELBOURNE TO CAPE YORK Young companion wanted for low budget tour heading north on mountain bikes. No time limit. Leaving early 1989. Please contact Brett (03) 725 0319 after 7 pm.

TASMANIA January 1989. Flexible itinerary - no rush tour - nothing over 100 km per day. Camping in caravan parks. Interested? Then contact Patrick Van Dyk, 68 Hopewood Cres, Fairy Meadow NSW 2519.

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