

# Wilderness Bike Ride

## B<sup>2</sup>O Rail Trail Epic

### Bairnsdale to Orbost In A Day

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup>, Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> & Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2008

## Rail Tales

Hi there fellow cyclists,

It is fair to say that there was a degree of nervousness on Friday night as I lay in bed listening to the howling winds and thinking about their impact on the B<sup>2</sup>O. Thankfully, we were blessed by the "weather-gods" with almost perfect conditions on Saturday morning.

108 cyclists registered for the inaugural B<sup>2</sup>O Rail Trail Epic. It was great to see the variety of cyclists ranging from a school group, MTB racers, first-timers as well experienced cyclists in their 70's. Around 75 cyclists started their Epic adventure at Howitt Park while the rest began their ride at Bruthen. The first cyclists stormed into Orbost at about 1:30pm. It was great to see so others taking their time and enjoying a pie at Bruthen or a coffee and cake at the Nude Fude Café at Nowa Nowa.

Logistics and timing worked almost perfectly with the return bus pulling into the Howitt Park at 5:30pm. Saturday night featured the Epic Dinner hosted by the Orbost Club. Forty cyclists enjoyed a fantastic meal, great company, a couple of quiet "refreshments" and an early night to bed.

On Sunday, 15 Double Flogged cyclists made the return trek to Bairnsdale while those staying on another day, met with May and the SNOBS riding group for a historical and interpretive tour of Orbost and surrounds. Thanks to Doug for his perseverance in trying to fix a flat tyre which refused to cooperate. The Double Flogged cyclists endured hot conditions and with the exception of one fall and a disintegrated rear wheel bearing, all cyclists had an enjoyable ride. Thanks to Lisa and Janet for driving an injured Tom back to Drouin.

There was a degree of skepticism as our Triple Flogged cyclists departed Forest Park in a torrential downpour on Monday morning. The rain soon disappeared but was replaced by a strong headwind as they slogged from Bruthen into Bairnsdale. Notwithstanding, all cyclists had a great day and again, coffee and pies were the winners.

There is an age-old saying that "what happens on camp, stays on camp" but I cannot resist. There were some great individual stories which emerged from this years' event as well as some classically funny moments (and people). On behalf of Wilderness Bike Rides, thank-you for your support and I hope you enjoy some of these lighter moments.

Happy cycling,

**Simon Rothwell**  
Epic Event Manager



## B<sup>2</sup>O Lesson #54

Just because it looks like a stick doesn't mean you should ride over it!

Our sweep riders were deep in conversation on Sunday and failed to notice that the 4 foot stick in the middle of the trail had eyes and a flicking tongue.

It is hard to determine what happened quicker...knees around ears or the escape of the snake. Suffice to say, every stick from this point forward was approached with caution.



## Remove me at your peril!

Before the start of the B<sup>2</sup>O, Gwen Jackson (the 60-something year old mother of Australian champion cyclist, Gary) made it very clear that having trained for this event, under no circumstance would she be removed from the course if the cut-off time was enforced.

After riding the first 20km a clearly struggling, red-faced Gwen ditched her pannier believing its weight was holding her back! In fact it was....husband Fred had fitted it the day before and left it resting firmly on the rear wheel (evidenced by the 4mm groove rubbed into the aluminum pannier frame by Gwen's back tyre).

Now unhindered, Gwen stormed along the Rail Trail finishing well before many cyclists her junior. Apparently, Fred has been sacked as Gwen's bike mechanic.

## The next event

Wilderness Bike Rides will continue to bring you more events throughout the year. To keep up to date, visit their website [www.wildernessbikeride.com.au](http://www.wildernessbikeride.com.au).

## Nigel, the human GPS

One of the features of the Rail Trail is that it is a single track that (for most) is not directionally challenging.....simply follow the arrows. None-the-less, Nigel (our human GPS) still managed to lead his small band of followers up the wrong path on at least four of occasions.

After a coffee in Bruthen, Nigel and Co. were stopped 2kms along the trail heading back to Bairnsdale. Redirected in the right direction, they resumed their ride. 10km further on, they were spotted by the Support Vehicle emerging from an obscure bush track adjacent to the Rail Trail. Once again, Nigel was put on the right track.

Thankfully after 108km, Nigel and Co. made it to the finish in Orbost and was good humored as others laughed at his expense.

Vowing to make amends, Sunday started poorly for Nigel as he missed the turn (again) and lead his team under the bridge and off towards Marlo. Later, Nigel was seen emerging from a side-street in Nowa Nowa after yet another directional sojourn. (He had been abandoned by his team at this stage due to a distinct lack of faith).

Last reports indicate that Nigel and Co. did make it home to Bairnsdale (eventually).

## Our sincerest thanks



Organising the Epic was a pleasure but even more so because of the band of enthusiastic volunteers who helped all weekend. My thanks to:

- ☞ Anita and Thalia for coordinating registrations and luggage
- ☞ Mark and Jim for sweep riding on Saturday, Sunday & Monday
- ☞ Jeff, John and Bruce for organising the bikes and providing rider support
- ☞ Eddie and Vicki for ensuring cyclists were hydrated at Nowa Nowa
- ☞ Staff at the Orbost Club for a great Epic Dinner
- ☞ May for leading the Sunday SNOBS ride
- ☞ Keith for maintaining the B<sup>2</sup>O website
- ☞ David Perry (our coach driver) who is only too happy to transport cyclists back and forward along the Rail Trail....call him on (0427)957778 to arrange.
- ☞ Garry and the Orbost Chamber of Commerce for their sponsorship
- ☞ East Gippsland Shire Council for their financial support

Last (but certainly not least), thank you to the cyclists who participated in this year's Epic and we will see you for another in 2009.



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