



**April 2012**

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**Bicycle Wagga Wagga**  
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**Next Club Night**

**Where: Sportsmen's Hotel, Kincaid Street, Wagga Wagga**

**When: Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

**Time: 6:30 PM**

**Guest Speaker: Sarah Hulands – Touring for Beginners**

All members and any prospective members are invited to attend.  
Any questions or further information required?  
Contact **Ray Stenhouse on 0418 400 455**

**President's Ponders**

The year is flying already. Easter is done and dusted even before the April Newsletter has been released.

Once again BWW conducted rides over the Easter break. Each of the rides was well supported and our thanks go out to Ray Loiterton, Lyn Wilson and David Neil for leading these rides.

Our next Club Night will be held in a few weeks. Our guest speaker on 18<sup>th</sup> April will be Sarah Hulands. I know we have had past speakers tell us of their trips overseas. All of these have been seasoned cyclists who have set themselves goals and headed off with serious kilometres in their legs.

Sarah's story is quite different to these with one of her training efforts just before leaving for overseas was walking her bike up the hill at CSU. I'm looking forward to hearing more about Sarah's experiences which I think will open the doors to many people that have previously thought that cycle touring was impossible.

Graeme and Jane Buchan spent a year in France. Graeme volunteered to provide an article for your reading pleasure. Seeing articles can be sometimes hard to come by this offer was snapped up without hesitation.

But how do you compress 12 months of experiences into a single newsletter article? Well the answer is you don't.

In a first for the BWW Newsletter we have an article that will stretch over two editions. I'm sure you will enjoy the first instalment and will be eager to read the second in the following edition.

This newsletter also contains a report written by Chris Rosval about the 2012 Hills Ride that was run in late March.

Chris regularly travels to Wagga Wagga from his home near Albury and had

been enjoying the B4 breakfast Ride of a Saturday morning. When Chris heard about the Hills Ride he immediately registered for it.

The report published here is taken from Chris' Facebook page. We all ride for different reasons and take pleasure from many differing things about cycling. I hope you enjoy the read.

Chris is very high in his praise for the organisers of the Hills Ride and rightly so. Lindsay and Lee Wilson together with Anne and Kiwi Fewson have done a fabulous job once again.

We are very thankful to anyone that puts up their hand to organise a ride. I would like to encourage you to have a think about a ride that you may like to share with your cycling friends. It's doesn't have to be a weekend ride, it can be a day ride. Then speak with David Neil about it and he will be able to assist you with getting it up and running. David can be contacted on 0419 211 137.

In late March Roberta Bailey represented BWW at a meeting called by Chris Fitzpatrick. Chris has recently been appointed as CEO of the Committee for Wagga (C4W).

Chris sees an opportunity for C4W to drive an initiative to foster cyclists' safety and this meeting was the first of many designed to engage interested stakeholders.

Chris is hoping to implement a "SHARE THE ROAD" media campaign using the community based advertising of Win TV, the Daily Advertiser, ABC radio, and 2WG. He also hopes to see a local "Cyclists' Code of Conduct" prepared and taken up which will raise the profile and credibility of road cyclists.

We hope to be active participants in this initiative. We will keep you informed.

- Ray Stenhouse



## Ride Reports The Hills Ride

Well, I've returned from the "2012 Hills Ride" that started on Saturday at 6.30am and ended today at about 5pm today...

And it was THE BEST BICYCLE RIDE I've ever done... with some of THE BEST RIDERS I've ever shared the road with!

On Saturday we headed out from Wagga to Holbrook, via Mangoplah.

After morning tea and a coffee at the Submarine Cafe, we headed towards Jingellic via Chinaman's Gap... Let me tell you, this is one of THE STEEPEST pieces of road I've ever attempted... about 700m of pure muscular HELL! I wasn't the first person to have walked their bike to the top, nor will I be the last.

Onward to Jingellic, with rolling climbs and descents through stunning countryside.

Lunch and a chance to prepare for the gruelling climbing ahead... 60+ km to Tumbarumba!

Climbing back out of Jingellic, we proceeded with a valley on either side. The range on either side closed in... and the road took a decidedly nasty turn skyward, up the valley wall.

It was at this point that a psychological wall came crashing down on me... I was, honestly, gutted... and my cycling slowed to an abysmal crawl.

The support bus has pulled over and I took an opportunity to have a banana, replenish my drink bottles and to have a couple of magnesium tablets to alleviate the onset of the cramps that were twinging at my legs.

I progressed slowly, making periodic



Chris conquers Chinaman's Gap

stops, just enough so that I could regain composure to continue onwards... and upwards.

Up to Mannus Correctional Facility and the road still climbed. Thirty kilometres of glute, hamstring and calf muscle agony... but now the road had some great rollers, with swift descents.

My body was in complete agony! With 10km to Tumbarumba, I was at the end of my endurance. Over 150kms of riding and there was still the "12 Steps" to Laurel Hill. So, I made the decision at Tumbarumba to put the bike on the bus and be ferried to our overnight accommodation... A move that I would be thankful of the following day!

Laurel Hill Lodge was our accommodation on Saturday night. A former prison farm, I stayed in the "Long Bay" lodge (all lodges are named after closed Australian prisons).

After a great meal in the dining hall, it was off to sleep on old jail cots. It's amazing how comfortable the bed was after a hard day in the saddle.

So, up at 7am, breakfast at 8am (cereal, bacon, eggs, toast, and orange juice), on the road at 9am and now a return to Wagga via Rosewood and Humula.

Rolling out of Laurel Hill, it was a brisk morning and it was hard to get the legs spinning. There were a few short climbs before turning off the main road towards Rosewood...

Oh the joy... this was my territory! Rolling hills and descents that I could use...

But that wasn't to last...

The landscape became barren as the road climbed up through hills of forestry plantations, recently cleared. Still, there were some good descents and I was able to really "open the taps" on the way down.

That was, until the climb to Rosewood...

While none of the climbs were as hard as Saturday's, it was the length of these that slowed my going.

The drop into Rosewood was swift. Rolling into town, it was a delightful morning tea at "Gone Barny".

I was feeling really strong today... The hills weren't slowing me down as much as they were on Saturday.

We rolled out as a group to Humula... However, the road soon became undulating and, never to miss an opportunity to use it, I was on the drops and had rolled off the front and had left the group behind...

The turn off to Humula arrived and it was 13km to go and some brilliant riding.

Stopping for lunch at the park just down the road from the Humula Citizens Sports Club, I made the decision to forgo the 13km ride back along the same road we had just come.

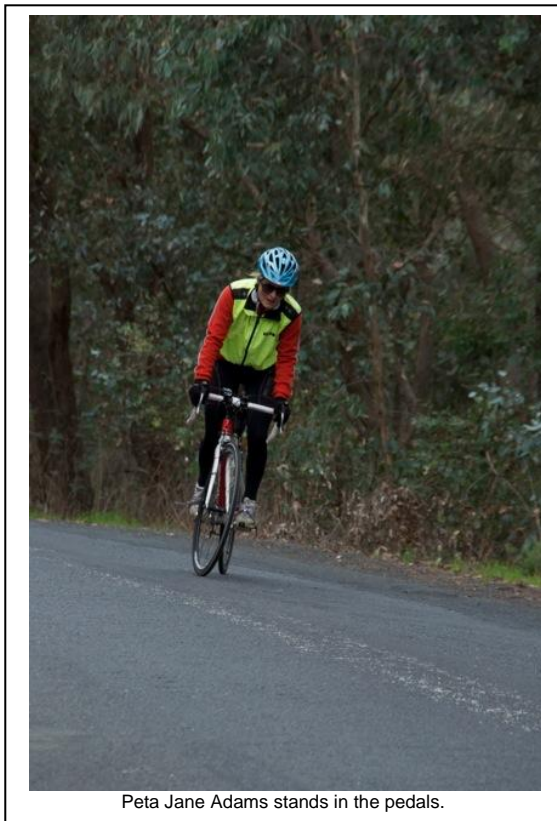
I was feeling really strong, but was aware that I could easily burn out... So I put the bike on the bus and sat tight until we were back at the junction and the road to Wagga Wagga.

The road to Wagga Wagga was an experience. Filled with climbs and descents, it was a relief to know that I was on the final leg of the journey... and I really wanted to push hard towards the finish.

Rolling over the Hume at Kyeamba, I pulled in at the bus to get my bottles



A neat bunch near Cookardinia.



Peta Jane Adams stands in the pedals.

filled (water and pseudo "sports drink") and off I went.

My average speed was pushing 28km/h so far and I didn't want to back off, knowing too well that if I slowed down that I may be overrun.

At the Gregadoo East Road turn off, I rejoined the bus at the intersection (the bus was bunny hopping and regularly moving up the road for supplies and replenishment)... I grabbed a banana before I realised that there were riders coming up fast behind.

So, off I went... Head down, bottom up.!

There was a headwind blowing... but I kept my average up, pushing 40+km/h where I could. I also had a carrot somewhere ahead of me in the form of the woman riders who had ridden out from the Kyeamba stop.

It was a relief to see the Elizabeth Ave sign appear. Keeping on the Gregadoo Road, I knew the hill would be ahead... and lo, there were the girls, spread out on the incline.

I quickly rounded them in, and tore past them on the way down.... Another short climb near the tip, and then it was all downhill until Lake Albert Road and the stop at the Thomas Blamey Tavern at Lake Albert.

First to arrive, I was really stoked with myself, knowing that I had just completed one of the most gruelling rides I have ever undertaken.... and THE BEST RIDE I have ever been part off!

Big props to Lindsay and Lee Wilson, Kiwi and Anne, and Bicycle Wagga Wagga for organising THE BEST BICYCLE RIDE I have ever been part off.

Also, big thanks to all the "support crew" for organising and preparing delicious food to fill the appetites of the throng of hungry cyclists.

I have never been part of a ride that was so well planned, that was so well catered, and so well supported as the "2012 Hills Ride".

It's a testament to the dedication of the organisers and those behind the scenes that allowed this ride to go without a hitch or drama.

Of note, it was awesome to experience a ride where there was no aggression or reckless driving displayed by other road users during the two very long days in the hills on some winding country roads.

- Chris Rosval  
2012 Hills Ride Survivor

### Velo la France

To live in another country for a year and experience that country's culture is a very special event in one's life.

To have this experience in "France on a bicycle" is even more special, particularly when 10 years ago there were doubts I would ever cycle again. Thank you to all of our special Bicycle Wagga Wagga friends who

have given both of us encouragement and inspiration.

Our year in France began many years before 2011, firstly to convince Jane that a year was required to experience the "culture", secondly to arrange our lives to enable such a venture and then to actually leave Paradise at Lake Macquarie for a year !!

Our year in France began January 6th 2011, arriving in Paris having spent 2 weeks visiting friends over Christmas and New Year in Norway. Europe had just experienced one of the coldest winters in history with many of the major airports being closed prior to Christmas, we managed to dodge most of the problems !!!

Paris, Paris, Paris a simply irresistible city, even in winter, just a very special city to visit with its iconic landmarks, historic galleries and that wonderful River Seine meandering through the city, not to mention the wine, food and cycling !!!

Our aim was to live in ten regions of France, to experience the culture of each region and to cycle as much of the country as we could.

Our first Gite (cottage) for a month was at Banyuls Sur Mer in southern France, almost on the Spanish border by the Mediterranean coast. A wonderful village positioned at the eastern end of the Pyrenees where the mountains meet the sea, with some of the oldest grape vines in France. Banyuls was a great village to begin our French experience with friendly locals and a very layback coastal lifestyle!!

One of the classic cycle tours high on our list was the 800 km Canal du Midi cycle path which crosses France from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. We cycled the Canal du Midi in two parts, firstly Toulouse to Sete, taking around a week on a cycle path which was mostly gravel interspersed with axle breaking "tree roots", but following a beautiful manmade waterway which was once a very important freight link with many barges transporting food and freight across France.

Now it is more commonly used as a tourist route with thousands of River Boats, traditional Peniche and of course touring cyclists however we were told by the locals it was way too early to be out cycling in March with cool brisk mornings, but wonderful warm sunny days. A week to cycle 400km afforded



Ray Loiterton looking for more hills.

us plenty of time to take in the historic sites along the way such as the Medieval walled City of Carcassonne with the excellent wine, food and hospitable accommodation, made for a very enjoyable time.

Our next region was to be on the edge of Western Provence and Pont d' Gard at the small rural village of St Hillarie, a Boulangerie (bakery), a Bar, a Church, a weekly market and three wineries with Degustation (free tasting) and very reasonably priced local wine. Cycling was very easy with rolling hills, as is much of France, don't be put off cycling in this beautiful country by the Tour de France Alpine climbs !!

Day rides of around 80km were undertaken to Avignon, Orange, Uzès, Nîmes etc. At times we jumped on a bus if the weather was not so good or simply curled up in our cosy Gite with a good book. The "supamarche" was 4km down the road in the village of Remoulins, along with free WiFi at the local hotel.

Our communication with family and friends was via the internet, we found it very easy to find free WiFi at most Tabacs or bars. This also proved to be an excellent way of meeting the locals. We found it a real plus to become regulars and introduce ourselves as Australians. The French love Aussies and we gave them lessons in our native language "Kangaroo". Yes, they too have a great sense of humour. They are not rude and are mostly very happy people. Parisians are busy, like most city folk, so have a bit of a reputation, we had several trips to Paris and loved the place !!

The famous Pont du Gard was visible from our bedroom window on a clear day, this structure is a bridge (pont) built to support an aqueduct which ran water through an open duct for 50km through mountains and over rivers to supply water to the ancient city of Nîmes. It is no ordinary bridge, being a magnificent



Pont du Gard – What a stunning backdrop!

engineering masterpiece built from stone with several huge arches capable of taking vehicles as well as its water duct.

We returned to our French home with our host Marie Claude in St Julia for a few days before heading off to complete the Canal du Midi crossing of France, Toulouse to Bordeaux then on to Arcachon for a quick dip in chilly Atlantic water at 13c, I didn't stay in long !!!

This leg of the crossing proved to be much more enjoyable with fantastic cycle paths, flat cycling with mostly tail winds, what more could you wish for?? Yes an "ecluse station" turned into a coffee shop/restaurant plus B&B, wait there's more! Gelato !! Yes this is cycling heaven !!

The next five weeks we lived in and cycled the Dordogne region with Easter in the wonderful hilltop Hamlet of St Avit-Senieur, then on to the rural village of Thenon. A very old civilization is traced back through the caves of this region with some very old and interesting exhibitions, excellent cycling on the rural roads with unbelievably patient and understanding motorists, sooooo so different from motorists here in Australia.

This was a time of "training" for we had David and Lisa Glastonbury heading to France and we planned on cycling the Burgundy (Bourgogne) region, a 10 day Lonely Planet Ride from Auxerre to Dijon with just a few hills in Parc Naturel du Morvan.

A delightful ride with great friends, great Pinot wine and great food, the weather on this occasion was a bit ordinary at times, but "never bad weather, just bad cycling gear" so we were very well equipped and thoroughly enjoyed our adventure with the Wagga Wagga connection.

Whilst David and Lisa headed off to challenge Mont



Graeme enjoys some local fare with the Glastonburys.

Ventoux, we headed to the Vendee region of France for a month near Pouzauges, with the Tour de France stage 1 passing 700 metres from our Gite. Oh my, could life as a cyclist get any better???

We were only a 25km cycle from Le Tour launch in Les Herbiers with introduction of teams, Tour Village, historic display etc. We watched the first three stages roadside and the rest on live BBC television. The highlight of our entire year in France had to be at Le Tour finish on the Champs Elysees to see the first ever Australian winner cross the line, sooooo proud of Cadel Evans, sooooo proud to be an Aussie!!

Next issue we will talk more about the French way of life, Paris-Brest-Paris & being Velo Gypsies.

Cheers

- Graeme and Jane Buchan

**Remember: Be safe, Be Smart, Be Seen.**