

CYCLING MEMORIES BY RICHARD JEFFERY

Prior to about 1990, I used to be a Marathon Runner. General wear and tear on the legs prevented me from continuing with the running. Fortunately this did not prevent me from cycling. I then decided to become involved in the enjoyable activity of bike riding. Since 1991, I have participated in approx. 60 organised 9 day bike rides in all states. This enabled me to visit a lot of places I had not been to, and in fact some I had not even heard of. There is a tendency to stick to main highways when driving. Most of the rides avoid these, which means visiting lots of interesting, smaller towns. The fellowship on the rides is excellent, you meet many people with a common interest and make lots of new friendships.

GREAT TASMANIAN BIKE RIDES

I did six Great Tasmanian bike rides. These were organised by Bicycle Victoria. My first 9 day ride was from Devonport to Hobart via The West Coast in February 1991. Weather was good which is unusual for the West Coast of Tasmania. After disembarking from the ferry we rode to Sheffield the first day. A nice town with lots of murals painted on buildings. Day 2 to Cradle Mountain was fairly tough with a lot of climbing. Camped at a rough bush site for the night. Day 3 was to the old mining town of Roseberry.

Next day we cycled to Strachan, A lovely sea side resort on Lake Macquarie. Then it was on to Queenstown. This mining settlement is a fascinating sight, as it is devoid of all vegetation because of the smelting. I wonder what the pollution did to the health of the residents. Camped on the hard gravel oval that night. Many of us bent our tent pegs whilst hammering them in. An interesting fact about Queenstown is, until the 1930s, the only way into and out was by the ABT railway from Strachan. It featured a cog rack railway for the steeper parts. This was necessary, otherwise the engine wheels would have slipped on the gradient of 1 in 16. It closed during 1962, but has since been restored. I took the journey on it in 2012, a very scenic trip. Queenstown has an excellent museum, at which the women attendant had a wealth of knowledge of the early history.

Day 6 started with a steep 6 km climb out of Queenstown. This was followed by plenty of ups and downs to Derwent Bridge camp site. Derwent Bridge has a pub, general store and not much else. Day 6 was a very scenic ride. Most of the ride was like that. Day 7 was to Tarraleah a settlement built for the construction workers on the Tasmanian Hydro Scheme. Then it was mainly downhill to Ouse which was our camp site for the night. Day 8 we cycled to New Norfolk then to the finish at Hobart. Camped at the Cenotaph, which is a delightful sight overlooking the City of Hobart with Mount Wellington in the background. The next day we were bussed back to Devonport for the overnight ferry trip to Melbourne.

I did two more West Coast rides but was not so fortunate with the weather. The West Coast has a very wet climate. Rode through one place where it rains on 300 days of the year. Camping at Cradle Mountain, it was so cold the water in the toilet trucks

froze overnight. On another West Coast ride we rode from Lake Burbridge to the lunch stop at Derwent Bridge. This was a cold wet day with plenty of tough hills to ride up. We were able to use the Hotel for lunch which was very welcome, as there was a roaring fire inside. The meagre lunch provided by Bicycle Victoria consisted of one sandwich and an apple. Not much when you consider it was after a hard 60 km ride. The Hotel did very well as it sold plenty of food to supplement the small lunch. The camp site was at Bronte Park, another 30 km.

Did two East Coast rides. These were also very scenic but not as hard as the West Coast. Also the East Coast has a much drier climate. I remember one day riding up to Wells Borough Pass. This was a fairly tough climb and it was cold and wet. Wells Borough Pass is between St. Helens and Scottsdale. There is nothing there except the hotel. It was full of hungry and thirsty cyclists. I ordered coffee and a couple of muffins. After a long wait it was finally delivered. I said how much do I owe. Was told just tell them at the door what I had, and pay there. Trusting souls, but I suppose most cyclists would do the right thing.

One of the other Tasmanian rides was down the centre to Port Arthur. We were able to take in this very scenic location, and a tour of the ruins of the convict settlement. Riding back from Port Arthur to Hobart we camped at Dunalley. That was the worst night I experienced on all the rides I did. Gale force winds and torrential rain all night. A lot of tents blew down. Even if they weren't blown down most got flooded out. The next morning I did a bit of a survey and those with Mac Pac tents survived. After that ride I bought myself a Mac Pac tent. They are expensive but worth it, because I always kept dry on future rides. The ride still had the final day to go. After the bad night it was decided to finish the ride there, and everyone was bussed to either Hobart or Devonport. Surprisingly, the weather changed quickly and the next day was fine.

GREAT VICTORIAN BIKE RIDES

I did 12 or 13 Great Victorian Bike rides. First one was from Stawell to Melbourne via the Great Ocean Road. After travelling from Melbourne to Stawell by train (trains were used in those days) we rode to Lake Fyans which was the first night camp site. I was overwhelmed by the numbers (over 5000) on the ride. After finding it difficult to find a camp site, and with so many people on the ride, I thought I am not going to enjoy this. I seriously considered riding back to Stawell the next morning and catching a train home. Next day I thought I was being a bit silly and changed my whole attitude. Accepted the fact there is a lot of people, and I enjoyed the rest of the ride. It shows the difference a change in attitude can make.

Day 2 was through Halls Gap and the Grampians to Dunkeld; a delightful days ride. Camped in the middle of the Dunkeld Racecourse. Went for a shower after tea just before darkness. It was dark when I went to return to my tent. Had a silver dome type at the time of which there were thousands. Took me about an hour to find the tent. I learnt a lesson, always make sure you know where your tent is before you leave it. After that I would line up two items on either side of the camp site. It was

easy after that, as you only had to walk a straight line between the land marks to find your tent. Day 3 was Dunkeld to Port Fairy followed by a rest day. Plenty to do at this historic seaside resort. Day 5 was a fairly long day. Rode through Warrnambool and on to Port Campbell, where we camped. Another nice seaside resort.

Day 6 was over 100 km from Port Campbell to Apollo Bay. Included Lavers hill followed by another steep ascent. Passed a lot of cyclists walking the hills. Apollo bay is an ideal place for an overnight stay. Day 7 from Apollo Bay to Anglesea, along the scenic Great Ocean Road was a lovely day's ride. The camp site at Anglesea was in a large caravan park which was adequate for the numbers. This section brought back memories of my boarding School days. We would ride from Geelong to Lorne and back on a Saturday. The road was not as good in those days, but the traffic not as heavy. Day 8 was from Anglesea to Bacchus Marsh via Geelong. A reasonably long day to a good camp site at Bacchus Marsh. Day 9 was to the finish near Government House in Melbourne. Probably the most uninteresting day of the ride.

I did two more Great Victorians taking in the Great Ocean Road. Once, after a rest day at Apollo Bay we rode to Torquay and it rained all day. Lorne was the lunch stop. All the cafes and coffee shops were full of very wet cyclists. Just after arriving at Torquay the rain stopped, and the last two days of the ride were in fine weather.

Other Great Victorians included from Swan Hill to Melbourne. Riding from Cohuna to Echuca on one of the days the temperature was 41 degrees. There was little shade and I thought if I get a puncture, I would probably die fixing it. Fortunately that did not happen. Echuca was the rest day and the camp site was on the oval with no shade. It was next door to the caravan park. I hired a camp site with shade for the two nights. Cost \$10 but was money well spent. Echuca is an interesting place for a rest day.

The 1998 Great Victorian was from Buchan to Brighton Beach. Experienced gale force head winds, on the day from Paynesville to Sale. The wind was so strong, you had to be careful mounting your bike, from fear of falling whilst moving off. I still had about 30 km to go, when someone driving a van I knew offered me a lift, which I accepted. This was the only time this happened on all the rides I did. The wind was so strong it was impossible to erect the catering tent. I thought if it was as bad the next day I would catch a train back to Traralgon. Fortunately, it was only a normal wind the next morning so I rode on. I thought after that experience, I would never complain about a normal wind again.

I did two Great Victorians with my good friend, the late Jim Merrett. One from Rutherglen to Lilydale. This was via Toowonga Gap, Bright (rest day), Mansfield and Yea. The other from Macarthur to Moonee Ponds via Warrnambool, the Great Ocean Road, and Apollo Bay (rest day). Both very enjoyable rides. My last Great Victorian was from Mount Hotham to Mornington in 2003. I did this with my son Bruce. It was via Omeo, Briagolong, Glengarry, Yarram (rest day), Inverloch, Phillip Island and Crib Point. The cyclists were ferried from Cowes to Stony Point and the bikes by

truck the long way. The day from Glengarry to Yarram was via Mount Tassie, Balook and Tara Valley. This is a lovely and challenging ride which I have done many times.

WEST AUSTRALIAN BIKE RIDES

Organised by the Cycle Touring Association of W.A., these were the most friendly I participated in. Numbers were limited to 130, and as I did at least 10 you got to know, everyone quite well. It was nice to catch up with them all every year. Most of the country was new to me which made the rides more interesting. In fact I visited many towns I hadn't heard of. Camping was on sports ovals and the evening meal catering done by community groups. John Abery, Pat Williams and I did at least three together. We flew to Perth a few days before the rides started. Those days were spent riding the bike paths of Perth. One good ride we always did was from Perth to Fremantle and return. This is a lovely ride on both sides of the Swan River. It is mainly on sealed paths, with a few sections on quiet roads. Fremantle was a nice place for a lunch stop.

My first ride was from Preston Beach to Binningup. On the first day after being bussed from Perth to Preston Beach : about 120 km South of Perth on the Indian Ocean, we rode to Yarloop. This was a very attractive tourist town. I say was, because sadly most of the town was destroyed by bush fires during January 2016. It had a huge museum in the old restored timber and railway workshops. On another ride we rode through Yarloop. On arriving there it started to rain heavily. As there was only 20 km to go to the next camp site, I decided to stay, keep dry and inspect the museum (now totally destroyed). I resumed riding after the rain had stopped. John and Pat kept riding and got wet. I arrived at the camp site nice and dry. Day 2 was from Yarloop to Australind a distance of only 57 km. Most of the distances were fairly short on the W.A. rides.

Day 3 from Australind to Collie was followed by a rest day. It is a gentle climb all the way to Collie. Collie is a reasonably large town which has an aluminium refinery and black coal mines. There was plenty to do on the rest day. Day 5 was from Collie to Boyup Brook. 81 km through farming and timber country. Boyup Brook is quite a pretty little town. Day 6 of 95 km was from Boyup Brook to Donnybrook. Donnybrook's industries are fruit growing, general farming and timber. It is a medium sized town about 200 km south of Perth. Day 7 was 74 km from Donnybrook to Busselton. A feature of Busselton is the 2 km long wooden pier in Geographe bay. It had to be that length to allow ships to berth. Geographe bay is very shallow. Busselton is a fairly large tourist and commercial centre.

Day 8 was 51 km from Busselton to Bunbury. Bunbury is one of the larger provincial cities in W.A. and has an impressive port. The last night of the W.A. rides is the concert night. Cyclists are encouraged to perform acts. This was usually a very enjoyable evening. The last day after riding 43 km to Binningup, we were bussed back to Perth. I visited a lot of interesting places whilst participating on W.A. rides. These included York, an old historic town which has an excellent motor museum.

Northam on the Great Eastern Highway, Narrogin where we camped at the Agricultural College, Wagin, Katanning, Mount Barker, Kojonup and Albany.

2 rides I was on went through Albany. Had rest days on each. A lovely City on the south coast about 420 km from Perth. Rode to the whaling museum, about 30 km from Albany. This overlooks the ocean from a cliff top. You get a lovely view whilst eating lunch in the restaurant. The museum is very interesting. Lots of things to do in Albany. An ideal place for a rest day. Denmark and Walpole (two visits), also on the south coast. Camping at Denmark once late in the day, the hot water in the women's showers had run out. The men's showers still had hot water. The women were waiting for us men to finish, so they could use the showers. They kept yelling out for us to hurry up. We replied saying we did not mind them coming in. With that they did, stripped off and showered with us. Probably thought they were safe as we were all getting up in age.

This lovely area is full of majestic Karri and Jarrah trees. They grow up to 80 metres high. There is a treetop walk near Walpole which was well worth going on. Other places to ride through included Pemberton, Bridgetown, Manjimup and Margaret River. Pemberton has the famous Forest Discovery centre and the Glouster tree. This is a very high tree with steel rods driven into the tree trunk going to the top. If you are game you can climb it. I climbed to about half way then looked down. It was a long way to the ground so I decided to descend. It is quite safe as you are enclosed in a mesh cover. Another ride was 2003 Heartland Heritage Tour starting and finishing at Walebing Homestead approx. 100 km north of Perth. On the way to the start the bus took us past the New Norcia Monastery. This is where the Monks are said to be examining the heavens with the aid of a big dish.

Day 1 was a short day of only 33 km to Moora the largest town between Perth and Geraldton. Then it was on to Badgingarra a distance of 60 km followed by a rest day. Day 4 was a longer day of 89 km to Cervantes. Day 5 was another rest day (sometimes there are two on the WA rides). Cervantes was an interesting place for a rest day. Being on the coast it has plenty of lovely beaches to explore. Also a short ride of 25 km is the Pinnacles which I visited. It is said the Dutch explorers saw these from the sea over 300 years ago and thought they were the ruins of a town (something quite unique in Australia). However it is now realised that they are a kind of geological formation. Sand on the seashore was formed from broken sea shells. The sand blew inland to form dunes. Rain leached lime from the sands. Upper layers developed silica acidic sands. Below calcrete layers formed. Roots from plants on silica sands penetrated the calcrete. Erosion removed the silica sands. The results are pinnacles of calcrete, which are most unusual and give a remarkable atmosphere to an area which otherwise resembles a desert. I was fascinated at the sight of these and considered it well worth a visit.

After Cervantes the next day was 90 km to Green Head then back to Jurien Bay. Jurien is a popular sea side resort and has a reasonable sized shopping centre. Day 7 was a ride of 69 km to the delightful camp site at Waddi Farm Resort. This

included 5 km of loose gravel which had to be taken carefully. It was then on to Moora for the second time on the ride. The last day was Moora to Walebing prior to being bussed back to Perth. Breakfasts on the W.A. rides are catered for by the group and consisted of porridge, other cereals and toast. They used to make the best porridge I have ever tasted and there was plenty of it. I have always believed you can ride all day after a large bowl of porridge. I have many fond memories of the W.A. rides. I suppose that also applies to the rides in the other states.

NEW SOUTH WALES BIKE RIDES

I classed the NSW rides as being better quality than the GVBRs. The food, showers, toilets and camp sites were all a little better; less numbers of cyclists – never more than about 1000. The cost was more, but I believe worth the extra. I did about 10 NSW rides. First one was in 1991 from Mudgee to Sydney. After taking the overnight train from Melbourne there was a bus waiting at Sydney Central Railway Station to take us to Mudgee. The bikes went separately by goods train from Traralgon. You guessed it – they did not turn up in time. The bus took us from Mudgee to Gulgong and the bikes turned up later in the day. Gulgong is an old gold mining town about 200 km from Sydney. It has a magnificent museum which has taken over 5 shops which had previously closed down.

Day 2 was 79 km from Gulgong to Coolah. Coolah is a small town with not a lot going for it. Day 3 from Coolah to Merriwa. Plenty of hills and some gravel roads over the distance of 88 km. Merriwa is a pretty town with a reasonable shopping centre. Day 4 was 62 km from Merriwa to Denman for a rest day. Included some short sharp hills and a section of rough gravel road. The camp site was next to a busy rail line, with several long coal trains going past during the night. Denman is the centre of a large winery and grape growing district. A ride, and tour of a winery, where I had lunch filled in the rest day well. Day 6 was from Denman to Singleton : distance was 71 km. Fairly flat with just a few hills and scenic country. Singleton is a medium sized town and centre of a coal mining area.

Day 7 was 68 km from Singleton to Wollombi. Wollombi is a historic and very pretty town in the Hawkesbury River district. Day 8 was a hilly ride from Wollombi to Brooklyn for a distance of 87 km. Part of the day was on the old Pacific highway ; quiet and smooth bitumen. It was a tough day finishing with a long down-hill ride to the Hawkesbury River and Brooklyn. Brooklyn is a fishing village at the mouth of the Hawkesbury. Day 9 from Brooklyn to Sydney started with a long uphill to Cowan. From there it was either flat or downhill to Sydney. It was interesting riding into Sydney. There were marshals at all the intersections, and the finish took us over the Harbour bridge to Darling Harbour. That was the finish of a very interesting and tough ride in places. I caught the overnight train to Melbourne followed by the train to Traralgon.

One NSW ride was from Mount Kosciusko to Sydney. Started on a downhill day, from the Mount to Jindabyne. This was followed by another downhill day to Cooma. The next day was hard. About 120 km into a head wind to Canberra followed by a

rest day at the National Capitol. A very interesting place, to spend a rest day. Other overnight stops were Goulburn, Bundanoon, Picton, and Stanwell park. Finish was at Darling Harbour in Sydney. The thorns are very bad in Western NSW. Had overnight stays at Canowindra on two different rides. Got three punctures, wheeling my bike from the bag pick up area to a camp site. I carried my bike over grass in the future.

One NSW ride started from Bundanoon and it rained most of the time for the first three days. Whilst riding from Moss Vale through Robertson to Kiama, the weather fined up and it was good for the rest of the ride. Other overnight stops included Huskisson, Kangaroo Valley and Sussex Inlet. Finish was at Milton on the NSW South Coast. Travelled up and back for this ride with Beth Lochiel, Sue Cooper, Joan Benson and Ray and Mel Beaton. We were bussed from Melbourne to Uralla for another ride. Was with the late Barry Wolfe and the bus arrived at Uralla at 3 a.m. It was pouring rain at the showgrounds where we were dropped off. We could not stay in the bus until morning, as it was returning to Sydney straightaway.

Found a sheltered place where we rolled out our sleeping bags for the few hours left of the night. That was another good ride. Overnight stops included Dorrigo, Berrigan, Kempsey, Macksville and Newcastle where the ride finished. We were bussed back to Melbourne and we asked the driver to delay the departure time. This was so we would not arrive in the middle of the night. Rode through many towns, on the NSW rides. Apart from the ones already mentioned these included – Albury, Wellington, Nowra, Wagga, Bathurst, Oberon, Junee, Tamworth, Werris Creek, Deniliquin, Balranald, Moama, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Barraba, Inverell, Binnaway, Cumnock, Forbes, Grenfell, Blayney, Cootamundra, Finley, Armadale, Guyra and Holbrook.

QUEENSLAND BIKE RIDES

My first Queensland ride was a loop route starting and finishing at Cairns. It was the first time I had been to Cairns and the plane arrived at midnight. On riding into town I eventually found the camp site at 1 a.m. Day 1 was from Cairns to Port Douglas, a distance of 66 km. Port Douglas is mainly a tourist town and is where the cruises for the Great Barrier Reef go from. Day 2 was a short ride of 36 km from Port Douglas to Karnak Playhouse, a delightful setting in the middle of a rain forest. Visited the Mossman Gorge, before riding into Mossman. This is sugar cane country and you needed to be careful crossing the rail lines at the many crossings.

Day 3 from Karnak to Mareeba was a hard day of 94 km. Started with a stiff climb of 8 km up to the Atherton table lands. The humid weather did not make it any easier, although not as noticeable after leaving the coast. Mareeba is a reasonably sized centre with a population of 6614. Plenty of things to do, whilst inspecting the town. Day 4, 74 km from Mareeba to Atherton. Terrain was flat for 7 km followed by climbing further up on to the Atherton Tableland. Rode past an American air force base. This was used during the second world war, as the centre for the battle of the

coral sea. This battle was the turning point against the Japanese. Plenty to do at Atherton (population 4639) on the rest day.

Day 6 Atherton to Malanda, a short day of 51 km. Much more pleasant riding on the tableland as there is less humidity. Mainly fruit and nut growing, and dairying country. Visited the Wongabel botanic walk, and the famous Curtain fig tree, followed by Lake Eacham for lunch. Malanda is a small historic town with several large hotels. A feature of these hotels is the big covered veranda's. I inspected one these of over 50 guest rooms. It was an old style luxury hotel, with beautiful timber furniture and doors in the rooms.

Day 7 was a long day of 104 km from Malanda to Babinda. A lot of down-hill, as we rode down from the Tablelands. We were in "World Heritage Wet Tropics" country. It lived up to its name as it rained heavily for most of the day. Very humid, but not cold. I got wet through but did not feel cold at all. We were now back in sugar cane country and Babinda has a large sugar mill. The heavy rain flooded the camp site. We were able to use an empty nursing home for the night. Day 8 was back on the busy Bruce highway from Babinda to Cairns, a distance of 61 km. On arriving back at Cairns after inspecting the city, I rode to the airport prior to flying back to Melbourne. This ride had everything: scenic, interesting, challenging riding and only about 400 cyclists.

I did two other rides in Queensland: from Bundaberg to Brisbane and the Gold Coast to Noosa. The Bundaberg to Brisbane went via Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Tin Can Bay. On riding to Tin Can Bay it started raining just before lunch and did not stop until late morning the next day. I believe Tin Can Bay is a lovely place, but I did not see much of it because of the rain. Riding to Noosa the next day, after the rain stopped it fined up quickly and was a lovely day. The ride finished at Brisbane after an overnight stay at Dayboro. The Gold Coast to Noosa ride was run by a private group. Not well organised, but a very scenic ride. Rode from Southport to Mount Tamborine the first day; a very steep climb. Rode through the, Glass House Mountains, which included a lot of tough Climbing. Had a rest day, at the historic tourist town of Maleny. Maleny is high up in the Glass House Mountains and an interesting place for a rest day. We were bussed back from Noosa to the Gold Coast Airport at the finish. Other Queensland places I rode through included Bargara, Childers, Dayboro and Noosa Heads.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BIKE RIDES

I did three bike rides in SA. The first was from Wilpena Pound to Adelaide. After arriving on the overnight train from Melbourne, along with our bikes and bags we were bussed to Wilpena Pound. Wilpena Pound is the greatest single feature of the Flinders Ranges National Park. Day 2 was to Hawker only 52 km. As the distance was short, I was able to spend some time cycling in the National Park before leaving. The Flinders Ranges are quite fascinating with its huge natural amphitheatre covering an area of 75 square kilometres. Sandstone is in abundance and passed a lot of farm houses made from it, also plenty of ruins from deserted farms. Very dry

country not good for agriculture and not many trees. The route of the old Ghan railway used to go through Hawker. Not a lot to do in Hawker although quite an interesting town.

Day 3, 66 km from Hawker to Quorn. An old railway town, which has now become a popular tourist attraction. For 20 years (1917 to 1937) Quorn was an important junction for both the east-west and north-south trans-continental rail journeys. A volunteer group has restored the railway line called "the Pichi Richi railway" from Quorn to Port Augusta. The group runs steam tourist trains with old restored locomotives and carriages. Quorn has a lot of old large historic hotels, railway station, school, banks, court house and town hall. Experienced a very cold night and woke up with my tent frozen stiff. Day 4 was 58 km from Quorn to Melrose. Plenty of old historic buildings, in this small town. Melrose is the oldest town in the Flinders ranges. Melrose Inn was built in 1857 and has been purchased by the National Trust for future development.

Day 5, 78 km from Melrose to Jamestown. Rode through Gladstone, it has a large railway station complex which is on the standard gauge line from Perth to Sydney. Visited, an old historic maximum security gaol at Gladstone. Gladstone is a medium sized town with plenty of places to visit. Arrived at Jamestown fairly late after spending a bit of time at Gladstone. Like most of the towns on the route, it has a lot of old historic buildings. These include the National trust museum housed in the old railway station and goods shed.

Day 6 & 7, 75 km from Jamestown to Clare. Clare is a scenically attractive historic town, in the midst of the wooded hills of the northern Mount Lofty ranges, and at the head of a plateau. Had a rest day here, with plenty of things to do. You could visit winery's, historic buildings, explore the town or relax in the many coffee shops. Tours were organised to many places of interest, including the historic building of "Sevenhill". This was used in making of the movie "Picnic at Hanging Rock".

Day 8 was 88 km from Claire to Nuriootpa. Nuriootpa is the largest centre in the Barossa Valley. Winery's and vineyards abound with plenty open for inspection and offering tastings. There were also tours of Winery's offering, but I did not have time to do any. Day 9 was 77 km from Nuriootpa to Adelaide. It was a scenic day riding through the hills, with a few decent climbs and descents. We were into the popular parts of the Barossa with plenty of vineyards and restaurants. Towns we passed through included Lyndoch, Chain of Ponds, Cuddle Creek and Williamstown. Started a steep descent, around the side of Kangaroo Creek Reservoir. This turned into Gorge Road, named because of its narrowness and steep wall on one side. Soon after, we were into Suburban Adelaide and to the finish of the ride. After a look around Adelaide, I cycled to the Railway Station and caught the overnight train to Melbourne.

The other S.A. rides I did were from Sedan to Adelaide and Mount Gambier to Adelaide. Tim Guy and the late Barry Wolfe were with me on the one from Sedan. It again went through the Barossa Valley with a rest day again at Claire. The day to

Tanunda was a short ride of only about 20 km. The thought behind this was to give cyclists plenty of opportunities to visit wineries. A lot did just that, and arrived at the camp site in a very merry condition.

The late Ron Bunston and Barry Wolfe were with me on the ride from Mount Gambier to Adelaide. Rode through Penola, Millicent, Kingston, Robe, Coorong National Park and Strathalbyn. The rest day was at Lake Alexandra. This is a very large lake near the mouth of the Murray River. I went on a bus tour to the mouth of the river, where we were able to inspect the barrages. These were built to prevent the salt water from entering the Murray at low tide. Other places we visited included, Hahndorf and Strathalbyn. The ride finished at the seaside suburb of Glenelg after a lovely downhill ride through the Mount Lofty ranges.

ROTARY RIDES TO CONFERENCE

As a member of Rotary I participated in 7 or 8 of these annual events. They have been going since 2002. You ride from a point in Gippsland to the town where the annual Conference is held. The first one was from Portsea to Bairnsdale. Others have been from Korumburra to Bendigo via the ferry from Sorrento to Queenscliff, Cowes to Cowes via Warragul, Traralgon and South Gippsland. Orbost to Geelong, also via the ferry at Sorrento. Two others were loop courses from Shepparton and Ballarat. The Rotary rides are harder than most, as you do over 600 km in 6 days.

They are charity rides as the cyclists raise money through sponsorship, which goes to Rotary charities. The rides are more regimented, as everyone starts at the same time and stays together during the days. Although different, I used to enjoy them. A good thing I liked about the Rotary rides, we did not camp. Overnight accommodation was provided in homes of Rotarians or Caravan Park cabins. Numbers on the rides are low compared with the other rides. Generally about 50 members of Rotary and exchange students. That was also a plus.

LOCAL, T.R.A.M.P's AND S.A.D.S.A.C's RIDES.

Tramps and Sadsacs are excellent clubs for social riding and beginners, and fill a great need. Both groups have a couple of weekend rides during the year. One I used to enjoy was the Sadsac's Bairnsdale to Buchan weekend. Stayed at Buchan overnight, then back the next day. Distance was about 140 km. Tramps also have some interesting weekend rides. Particularly, the Bright ride. There is an excellent sealed rail trail to Beechworth and Wangaratta. Others which have been done include, a tour of Phillip Island and one from Foster to Wilsons Promontory.

Traralgon has it made for a choice of interesting and challenging rides. Favourite rides of mine were – Traralgon to Walhalla and return. Sometimes we would return via Moe. This was either 92 or 130 km. A circuit to Glengarry, Gormandale and return, about 100 km is one I used to do often. Traralgon, to Mirboo North, via Boolarra. Return was via the Grand Ridge road to Boolarra South then down to Boolarra and back to Traralgon. Distance was about 120 km. The 15 km along the Grand Ridge Road has magnificent views. Traralgon to Yarram and return via

Balook and Tara Valley Road. This is a long challenging ride of 138 km, crossing the Strzelecki Ranges twice. For a shorter ride of 72 km to Tara Bulga Park and return is a nice ride.

AROUND PORT PHILLIP BAY IN A DAY

Organised by Bicycle Victoria, I participated in this on about six occasions. It is now a very popular event attracting about fifteen thousand participants. Half the cyclists go via Geelong first and the other half via Sorrento first. I always chose to go via Sorrento first. One of the more memorable rides was with the late Evelyn Hassler and the late Ron Bunston. We rode together the whole day. It was exhilarating riding over the West Gate Bridge, knowing you only had to roll down the other side to the finish. This was the only times I have seen the bike computer register over 200 km in a day.

I rode with many friends over the years – these included John Aberly, Sandy Drummond, Richard Froomes (dec.), Evelyn Hassler (dec.). Graham and Bridie Keene, Colin and Maree Langshaw, Gillian Murray, Helen Orr, Mandy Smits and Pat Williams. I thank them for their company and for someone to share the enjoyment of cycling with. I wish I could still do the long rides. I am thankful I was able to retire from work early, and had the health and fitness to do all the cycling I did.

Richard Jeffery