

Autumn 2013

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LANDCARE GRANTS TO ASSIST RAIL TRAIL ENHANCEMENT

On March 25 Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ryan Smith, and Member for Gippsland East, Tim Bull, announced that eleven East Gippsland Landcare Groups would each receive grant funding for environmental projects on public land.

Two of the successful recipient groups had applied for funding for restoration and enhancement of the East Gippsland Rail Trail.

The Nicholson River Landcare Group has received \$14,800 for rail trail restoration at Nicholson and the Snowy West Landcare Group has received a grant of \$22,700 for rail trail restoration at Newmerella. Both groups will undertake major weed removal and revegetate with appropriate native species.



At Nicholson the group will construct walking tracks and safety railings as well as install breeding boxes for native fauna and additional seating for users of the trail. The group also intends to improve the signage including interpretive signs in the area.

The Nicholson River Landcare Group has over many years transformed this area into a very pleasant site.

At Orbost/Newmerella the removal of weeds, in particular, Kikuyu grass, bridal creeper, thistle and sticky weed will be the principal project with the planting of hundreds of native species to replace them. In addition the threatened species *Acacia Maidenii* will be trial planted in several areas.

As well, Maria Cardoso, who has an extensive background in wildlife management research, will set up traps to ascertain the number and types of wildlife already present in the area. The count will be repeated as the vegetation grows and unwanted vegetation has been removed.



Tim Bull with Snowy West Landcare members

Historic signal mast gets armed!



On the last day of 2012 the signal mast at the Trail entrance in Bairnsdale was fitted with a replica 'home' signal arm and top capping. These had been fabricated and donated by Trail supporter Robbie Fraser, one time steam engine driver on this line. Committee member John Nelson and another great Mitchell River Rotary Club supporter Leigh Venables (Venables Precast - Crane Hire P/L), under Robbie's watchful eye, used a 'cherry picker' lift to reach the top of the mast and bolt on the new components.

The mast had been retrieved from near the Bairnsdale railway station several years ago and installed beside the Trail pathway and now forms one of the few remaining railway artifacts from the steam train era. This was the 'home' signal which was used to give the engine driver permission to leave the Bairnsdale yard and proceed towards Nicholson. A similar mast has been



installed at the Burn Road end of the Trail, forming the 'book ends' for this long rail trail.

The Bairnsdale mast also carries the bronze plaque which was unveiled at Nicholson on the occasion of the formal opening of the first section to Bruthen in December 1998.

The next phase of an upgrade for the western entry area is to review present vegetation in preparation for another round of planting and in readiness for the anticipated installation of a new visitor shelter which will have a roof profile modelled on an old goods shed located at Rosedale. The intention is to also replace the pine post and rails at the entrance with a traditional white picket fence.



PLACE NAMES ALONG THE TRAIL

What's in a name?

Juliet asks this question in Shakespeare's tragedy implying that a name isn't as important as the qualities of the object named.

Place names, however are different. They seem to evoke some controversy when their origins are in question.

The origins, meanings and history of many place names in East Gippsland are often uncertain. Research can often reveal quite diverse results.

Bruthen is a good example of this.

Bruthen, or Brewathan as the area was first called, is thought to be a word of Aboriginal origin meaning bracken or place of evil spirit.

Les Blake in Place Names of Victoria has Bruthen meaning *bracken*.

According to Alfred Howitt, the proper Aboriginal name for Bruthen was Murloo - meaning pipeclay and the same as for the location at the mouth of the Snowy River.

Yet other research shows it as an Aboriginal name of the Brabiralung tribe meaning long wooden point.

Bairnsdale's name is derived from the name of Archibald Macleod's family home "Bernisdale" on the Isle of Skye, Scotland. MacLeod took up the Bairnsdale run on the west bank of the Mitchell River in 1844.

An alternative account has Macleod returning to the station after an extended absence to find a number of new born babies or "bairns"

The Aboriginal name for Bairnsdale was Wy-yung.



The name **Nowa Nowa** is Aboriginal, meaning "mingling waters".

However, Les Blake has its derivation as an Aboriginal word for either hill of black stones or rising sun.

The naming of **Orbost** seems to be generally accepted as coming from the Isle of Skye. Peter Imlay established the Snowy River Station for grazing in 1842, and his brother the Newmerella run nearby. In 1845 the land was sold to Norman McLeod, who named the area after Orbost farm in the north-west of the Isle of Skye, in Scotland.

The **Mitchell River** was named by Angus McMillan after the surveyor-general of N.S.W. Sir Thomas Mitchell (1792-1855).

Mitchell did not cross the river at the current township but forded it upstream at Calulu.

Gippsland was named by explorer Pawel Strzelecki in March 1840 to honour Sir George Gipps, governor of NSW 1838-46.

Angus McMillan originally named it Caledonia Australis.

References:

Place Names of Victoria - Les Blake
More Colourful Tales of Old Gippsland - John Wells
Names Around Gippsland Lakes by P.D. Gardner

Next Issue: More Place Names.

Safe and scenic bike ride”



Reviewed 25 March 2013
Patrick Keogh Canberra



I have ridden the entire route from Bairnsdale to Orbost in a single day, but on this occasion the intent was much more social and less physically demanding and the trip was broken into three segments for three days. The surface is for the most part good and would suit touring bikes or mountain bikes. Tyres narrower than around 32mm would find the surface a little soft, but it is generally smooth.

The first day's ride from Bairnsdale to Bruthen is gently undulating and has lovely scenic views of farmland, with a nice stop off point at Nicholson for toilets and refreshments. When we rode it was unseasonably hot (high thirties) and so we welcomed a beer at the end. See my review of the Bullant Brewery.

The second day, from Bruthen to Nowa Nowa is gently uphill for the first half and then gently downhill for the second half. This section is almost exclusively in forest, with only occasional glimpses of country roads. There is a very photogenic wooden trestle bridge where the bike route makes a steep descent and climb for a couple of hundred metres, but apart from that it is fairly easy riding. It was hot again, so a visit to the Nowa Nowa pub was in order.

The third section is more mixed: forest and farmland and staying closer to the road, but once again the riding is easy and Orbost has all the amenities that you might need at the end of the day.
Visited March 2013



Liz Mitchell from Snowy River Cycling taking a well-earned rest after installing her storyboard at Partelli's Crossing

Sue Peirce has been Secretary of The Friends of East Gippsland Rail Trail for as long as the group has existed.



When Sue was asked to investigate the group's objectives to see if they had changed since the inaugural meeting, she took time to reflect on the group's purpose and achievements.

Legislation affecting incorporated associations has changed and at the March meeting of the FEGRT this generated discussion of our 'Purposes' as used for incorporation. The 'purposes' cannot be changed without consideration and approval of the membership – however this is an opportunity to reflect on how the purposes reflect the activities of FEGRT since incorporation 9 years ago.

The purposes of the Friends of East Gippsland Rail Trail submitted for incorporation are:

- “1. To support completion of the East Gippsland Rail Trail with full and consistent development of the Rail trail between Bairnsdale and Orbost via Nicholson, Bruthen and Nowa Nowa*
- 2. To support the Committee of Management of the East Gippsland Rail Trail in management of the Rail Trail through appropriate terms of reference.*
- 3. To promote the tourism, recreational, environmental and historical value of the East Gippsland Rail Trail to the community, governments and sponsors.*
- 4. To develop expertise in significant aspects of the East Gippsland Rail Trail including:*
 - Vegetation management*
 - Fauna and habitats*
 - Recognition and respect for the cultural significance of traditional landowners*
 - Conservation of artefacts*
 - History of the former railway*
 - Trail guide and interpretation signs*
 - Assistance with infrastructure management and tourism promotion”*



The Trail Mail



1. The rail trail was completed from Nowa Nowa to Orbost [Burn Rd] in 2005 and opened in 2006. The phrase 'full and consistent' in the purpose is useful, as this does include the sealed section between Bairnsdale and Nicholson, and if there was opportunity to extend this surface then it would be consistent with our purpose.

The efforts of the Friends and the CoM exceeded this purpose by the completion, funded by East Gippsland Shire Council, of a shared pathway from Burn Rd into Orbost.

The trail surface is always an ongoing concern – flood and fire have caused havoc on occasions but each time the trail surface has been repaired, with DSE funding and support, to a standard above the original.

2. Supporting the CoM is ongoing – Michael, Andrew and Kerry, Janice, and Gus are members of CoM and Friends are constantly conducting activities under the auspices of the CoM

3. Promotion of the tourism, recreational, environmental and historical value of the Rail trail has been aided by the marvellous website designed and maintained by Keith. This attracts many hits per month and frequent feedback on the usefulness of the site. Anyone planning a rail trail excursion in unknown territory knows how important a website is to get the information required to undertake the required planning.

The information boards, so carefully composed by May and Marlene, have provided historical and environmental information. Trail mail often features some history related to the rail trail. They have also worked hard together with Janice to obtain the not insubstantial funds required for production. Members have been involved in the installation of the signs.

Several years ago to celebrate the return of the

train to Bairnsdale a ride was advertised – not well – however we did meet a couple of women riders from Melbourne who felt the trail was a bit 'isolated' and lacked amenities. The installation of seats and picnic tables, kilometre marking posts has made the trail a more user friendly experience for out of towners.

These amenities have been generously funded by members or donors.

Several toilets have been installed by DSE, one perished in the Tostaree fire.

Both ends of the trail now have a piece of railway history in the form of reconditioned signal towers.

4. Perhaps some of the most amazing transformation has occurred in the 'vegetation management' category. Including removal of hundreds of dead black wattle turned into useful mulch or volunteers firewood.

Friends are also been actively involved in weed control and keeping the trail clear of fallen trees a very necessary task cheerfully executed by Eddie, Geoff, Frank and others.

At Burn Road the revegetation project, construction of car park with shelter and picnic table transformed a swampy, weedy, wasteland into a useful picnic area. This area is supported by the Snowy West Landcare Group who have been successful in obtaining grants for ongoing works.

At Nicholson Bridge the Nicholson River Landcare Group has also been successful in obtaining grants and undertaking rabbit baiting, revegetation and pathway construction to utilise the trail as part of a walk network.

Several revegetation projects on the trail between Bairnsdale and Nicholson involving planting of approx 500 plants – now well established and contributing to weed control as well as providing habitat and a pleasant trail-side environment.

So the purposes are not merely words – by cajoling, coercing, co-operating with other agencies –EGSC, Landcare, DSE, Rotary- and helpful individuals generous with their time and energies, the purposes have produced very visible changes.

Sue Peirce

Meetings and Activities



AGM

Bruthen Saturday July 20th at 1pm

Ordinary Meeting

Nowa Nowa Monday Oct 14th at 7pm, 6pm for meal

Further information contact secretary, Sue Peirce. Ph. 51568228 or email : peirces@wideband.com.au

Photo Gallery



Working on the trail head at Bairnsdale.



Some of the metal scraps which might be used for rail trail sculptures.



New sign at Newmerella.



Nicholson River bridge.



The Trail Mail



[Rail Trail Accommodation](#)

There is a large number of businesses that support the East Gippsland Rail Trail as Business Friends. Many of these are accommodation providers. Each Friend has a listing on the Rail Trail website with details of the facilities offered and links to their websites.

[Allambi holiday apartments Lakes Entrance](#)

[Bairnsdale - Kananook Heritage Cottage](#)

[Bairnsdale Mitchell Gardens Holiday Park](#)

[Bairnsdale Travellers Rest Motel](#)

[bairnsdalemotel](#)

[Beachside Loft at Eagle Bay](#)

[Bruthen Cozucan Self Contained Accommodation](#)

[Bruthen Inn](#)

[Gippsland Lakehouse Paynesville](#)

[Jumping Fish Place Nowa Nowa](#)

[Marlo Ocean Views Caravan Park](#)

[Mingling Waters Nowa Nowa](#)

[Mitchell On Main Bairnsdale](#)

[Nowa Nowa Caravan Park](#)

[Nowa Nowa Hotel](#)

[Orbost Caravan Park](#)

[Orbost Country Roads Motor Inn](#)

[Orbost Countryman Motor Inn](#)

[Rail Trail Farmhouse](#)

[Snowy River Homestead B & B Orbost](#)

[Stringy Bark Cottages Bruthen](#)

[Tambo Park Cottages Swan Reach](#)

[Tambo River Tourist Park Swan Reach](#)

[Tambo Trails by the Ringbark Johnsonville](#)

[The Grand Terminus Hotel Motel Bairnsdale](#)

[Tostaree Cottages](#)

[Waterholes Guest House](#)