



# The Trail Mail



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## Announcing The New E.G. Rail Trail Information Brochure - Third Edition

It has been a long haul to get this brochure and updated map to a reality but it is now in the hands of the printer, with delivery expected in the third week of May.

We are doing a print run of 40,000 copies, with half of that going to Bicycle Victoria for distribution to their members via their Ride On magazine in August/September. The remainder are for local and regional distribution.

Major outlets will be the EG Visitor Information Centres, Bairnsdale Railway Station, the Yarragon information centre, local businesses who have advertised in the new brochure, Council Corporate Centre (the Shire is a major sponsor) and other points of contact with the public.

A major new and very encouraging development has been inclusion of small text ads from 18 local businesses, and one from NZ - we are promoting internationally! Maybe the 4th Edition will have more names. The web site will play an increasingly important role, as we develop a set of Trail Notes (printable PDFs) which expand the brochure notes. Another new addition is inclusion of Side Trips information, to

encourage links to nearby additional tourism features in East Gippsland. The business advertisers are also listed on the web site.

Following representation to Cartoscope Pty Ltd last year, the Rail Trail will now be included in their East Gippsland map.



Visitor numbers are increasing and a number of upgrades are being carried out. Our ongoing seriously urgent need however is funding for a manager (even part time would be a great leap forward!) and for essential maintenance works. This project is too big for volunteers alone.

**With support from the East Gippsland Shire Council and 18 local businesses, 40,000 copies of the new map and information brochure have been printed. Half that number will be distributed by Bicycle Victoria in August in their member magazine. Visitor information centres in the region, the Valley and in Melbourne have been provided stocks. We now also need to get Trail Notes to complement the brochure. The notes will be available on the website as a PDF dropdown.**



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## Building a Stronger Friends Group.

Michael Oxer reports on a Friends training workshop.

Just how important are Friends groups in protecting and developing the 'common wealth' of public lands, and how can they better maintain their volunteer enthusiasm?

The answer to the first question is - without Friends groups public (Crown) land enhancement would collapse.

The answer to the second question was partly given during a one day workshop on March 14 held in the remarkable environmentally sustainable 60L building in Leicester St, Carlton (Melbourne). 70 people, from Friends groups, Parks Victoria, local government and the Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority took part. Brainstorming the theme "How to win Friends and satisfy people" produced some valuable insights and ideas. An obvious challenge for FOEGRT is the considerable distance encompassed by the Trail and consequent costs and difficulties for face-to-face meetings and various activities. SMART COMMUNICATION is a key. While email, a web site and printed newsletters are critical, the seminar highlighted the value of 'telephone tree' networking as an excellent way of maintaining personal contacts and for sharing the communications load.

Central to any group is the need for a PLAN which crisply defines the role and objectives in a contemporary context. Just as meetings need an agenda to keep things on track, so too is a plan of and for activities, setting out a timetable, tasks, coordinator contacts etc. Activities need to match the capacity, interests and resources of group members. A plan also needs evaluation to enable timely adjustments as situations change, not 'chiselled in stone'.

For the longer term viability and contemporary liveliness of a group it is essential to consider

### **SUCCESSION PLANNING.**

Burn-out of leaders is a hazard to avoid. Sharing tasks through delegation, encouraging newcomers and celebrating successes along the way can help foster new talent. Induction of new members into the procedures and objectives of a group is critical, as well as in a hand-over transition of office bearers or other roles. Training was also highlighted, both in terms of assisting office bearers to gain adequate management skills but also for the practical details of e.g. how to plant a tube tree, cut and poison weeds, identify plants, use a machine tool and other safe working practices during a working bee.

Another constructive idea was the value and importance of establishing and maintaining positive and strong WORKING RELATIONS with the land management agency e.g. Parks Victoria, DSE or a Council. It was emphasised that in the relationship between a volunteer Friends group and the Crown land manager (CLM) there is a responsibility for the CLM to provide strong and active support for the Friends group in the carrying out of agreed tasks and delivering their objectives. It is incumbent on the CLM to be pro-active in delivering relevant support.

Friends should 'demand' a contribution of reasonable and appropriate resources but this requires a pro-active approach, especially with a key person within the CLM agency. Once there is such a two way process, the CLM should also do everything possible to maintain continuity of the relationship if there is a change of officers.



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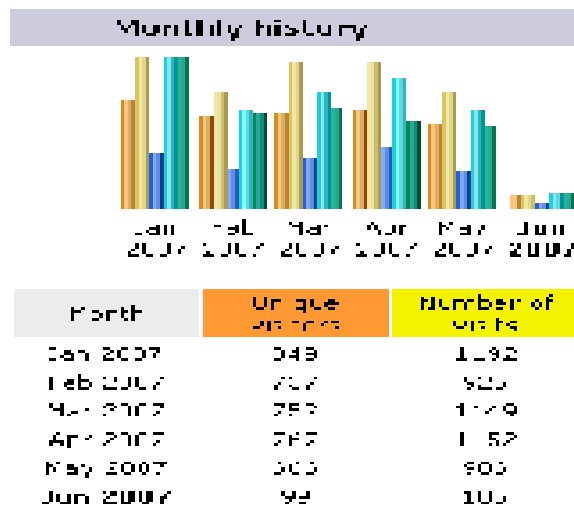


## Some other incidental points made included;

- activities which can expand membership through wider participation such as assisting in any fauna or flora research projects, gathering historical material etc.
- the 'Art of the Ask'. Don't be shy about asking a person for assistance on a specific matter (e.g. job sharing in the Committee) or approach another organisation to help in a project .
- review a group's membership list to find fresh talent
- Friends groups gain strength through relevant, achievable and satisfying events and activities
- 'ownership' of a group's activities is an essential ingredient for maintaining viability but activities need to be timely and of a scale and relevance to participants.
- use the extensive information and support networks are available through the wider Friends organisations such as web based resources e.g. DSE / Landcare or information about where and how to locate funding sources e.g. www.ourcommunity.com.au

Maintaining a Friends group is a big challenge and requires dedicated leadership to keep the 'wheels of volunteerism spinning'. Friends groups with clear objectives delivering satisfying projects done well, who ask for and receive support from relevant agencies of government, contribute to the store of regional social capital, play a key role in maintaining a viable democracy, and of course visibly change their landscape for a better physical environment.

## WEB SITE STATS



## Original Railway Signal Tower To Be Restored

Lying in a paddock at the back of Glen Herbert's Newmerella property is a rusting relic of the East Gippsland rail line. Following a conversation with Glen a request has been made to the local secondary school and it is hoped that students at Orbest Secondary College will be able to renovate this tower to make it suitable for installation at the Burn Road entry point. Already a signal tower has been sandblasted, painted and installed near the Bairnsdale entrance at McEachern Street. If more lost memorabilia can be located and restored they could be installed at appropriate points on the trail to add interest and perhaps attract rail history buffs.





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## EARLY TIMETABLES

*From 1916 there was a regular daily passenger and goods service from Orbost to Melbourne.*



In the early stages the train was a mixed train - passengers, goods, cattle, pigs or timber. Then there were special timber trains, cattle trains and occasionally, a special maize train. Later there would be just a passenger train with mail and papers.

It took 15 hours to cover the 370 km from Melbourne to Orbost. Breakfast was taken at Warragul, lunch was taken at Sale and dinner was eaten at Nowa Nowa. It must have been a long day. In early days the main railway stations offered refreshments, including substantial meals at a very reasonable cost.

### Time Table when line was opened:

Flinders St	depart:	7:52 am
Warragul	arrive:	10:30 am
	depart:	10:45 am
Traralgon	arrive:	12:10 pm
	depart:	12:20 pm
Sale	arrive:	1:26 pm
	depart:	1:46 pm
Bairnsdale	arrive:	3:25 pm

depart: 4:00 pm

Orbost arrive: 8:50 pm

Speed was 20-25 m.p.h.

The railway was of great benefit to the Orbost area economically when it first began. Trains carried produce such as beans, maize, potatoes and cheese and butter from the local butter factory. It also transported mail, parcels, newspapers and livestock; mostly cattle and pigs. In later years, every Monday morning would see from between one and two hundred boxes of fish arrive from Eden and once a month, up to 20 trucks loaded with cattle would travel from Orbost.

There were ideas of extending the line around the corner and up the coast to Sydney but it never reached NSW. The line didn't even reach Orbost because that town is on the east bank of the Snowy. A dray picked up goods from the train and transported them to Orbost. The townspeople were angry that the railway finished over the river because of the extra cost but there wasn't enough traffic to justify the cost of a bridge. So the railway never crossed the river to the township.

**RAILWAY TIME-TABLE.**

**TRAINS LEAVE BAIRNSDALE FOR MELBOURNE**  
 Daily at 2.21 p.m., and on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9.40 a.m.

**TRAINS LEAVE BAIRNSDALE FOR SALE**  
 On Fridays at 6.45 a.m., with car attached, arriving at Sale at 9.35 a.m.  
 On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 9.30 a.m., arriving at Sale at 12.15 p.m.

**SALE TO MELBOURNE**  
 Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 7.40 a.m.; and daily at 4.33 p.m.  
 Via Stratford and Maffra, Mondays at 6.20 a.m.; Wednesdays and Fridays at 8.10 a.m.

**MELBOURNE TO SALE**  
 Leaves Melbourne at 7.32 a.m. and 4.45 p.m.; arrives at Sale at 1.25 p.m. daily; 10.50 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays; and 11.25 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

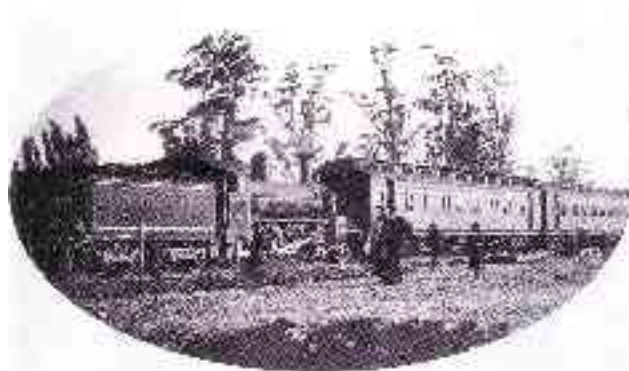
**TRAINS LEAVE SALE**  
 For Maffra and Traralgon line, via Stratford, on Mondays at 6.20 a.m.; Wednesdays and Fridays, 8.10 a.m.  
 For Bairnsdale at 7.25 a.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays; at 1.45 p.m. daily; and at 10.45 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

**ORBOST TO BAIRNSDALE**  
 Daily, Thursdays excepted, at 8.50 a.m.; Nawa Nawa, dep. 10.30 a.m.; Brothes, dep. 11.50 a.m.; Bairnsdale, arr. 1.20 p.m.  
 Thursdays, dep. 6.40 a.m.; Nawa Nawa, dep. 8.40 a.m.; Brothes, dep. 10 a.m.; Bairnsdale, arr. 11.30 a.m.

**BAIRNSDALE TO ORBOST**  
 Daily: Bairnsdale, dep. 4 p.m.; Brothes, dep. 5.20 p.m.; Nawa Nawa, dep. 7.15 p.m.; Orbost, arr. 8.50 p.m.

**FARES FROM ORBOST.**  
 Single.—To Bairnsdale: 1st class, 24 6d; 2nd class, 6s 4d. To Melbourne: 1st class, 36s 6d; 2nd class, 24s 2d.  
 Return.—To Bairnsdale: 1st class, 15s; 2nd, 10s 6d. To Melbourne: 1st class, 60s 6d; 2nd class, 40s 4d.  
 Holiday Recreation.—To Bairnsdale: 1st, 12s 10d; 2nd, 8s 8d. To Melbourne: 1st, 48s 8d; 2nd 32s 8d.  
 Week end tickets, available from Friday to Monday, issued at holiday excursion rates.

*This newspaper article from the Snowy River mail shows details of the fares and times of the journey to and from Melbourne.*



*First train to Orbost 1916*



*The trestle bridge over the flood plains at Orbost*

*Next issue: Stoney Creek Trestle bridge*



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## Nicholson Bridge Remnant Rainforest Restoration Project.



Details of the funding application were finalised in May and \$2113.50 was allocated to Friends of East Gippsland Rail Trail for this project by the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. The fence was constructed in April to separate the paddock from the remnant vegetation. Rabbit control using bait has been done regularly since Jan. upstream and downstream of the bridge. A working bee on April 27<sup>th</sup> installed a seat and planted 30 plants grown from local seed – limestone wattle, muttonwood, tree violet, Olearia, goodenia, limestone pomaderris, hopbushes. The rain came that night, and followed 40mm rain the previous day. The plants were protected by plastic jackets and mulch mats.

Quite a bit of regeneration of blackwood, boobialla, salt bush, native grasses is apparent since the fencing and removal of stock.

Blackberry is diminishing with systematic cutting and painting with herbicide.

The seat in this area was donated by Rail Trails Australia, in memory of Barry Holt, a supporter of rail trails and member of RTA.

A further donation from his widow will be put towards a table and seat, similar to the one installed near Simpson's Creek in 2006.

An information board will be erected and working bee times advertised. This is a busy section of the trail with many folk wandering/cycling by and access to this area provides an opportunity to enjoy the wonderful view, while sitting in comfort.

An estimated 45 volunteer hours has been contributed to the project to date.

### **Paying for Rail Trail maintenance - Who Will?**

Last year an Open Letter was addressed to Premier Steve Bracks by Michael Oxer spelling out the lack of State Government funding for the management (e.g. part time staff person) and maintenance (repairs and upgrades etc) for rail trails in Victoria. On May 14<sup>th</sup> a letter was written over the name of The Hon John Thwaites MP, acknowledging the 2006 letter. After telling us what we already know about who carries the burden - mainly volunteers!! - Mr Thwaites concluded: "Grants have been available under the 'Stewardship in Action' program for maintenance works on Crown Land in rural and regional areas. Nevertheless, I have asked the Minister for Planning, the Hon Justin Madden MLC, to consider the adequacy of this program in light of the issues you have raised."

Their next move? To date no response from Minister Madden. Our next move? We will be writing to the Minister, urging direct consultation on the issues as they affect this Trail, and especially the consequences of no paid staff management resourcing.

Friends might like to express their own constructive, positive views direct to Mr Madden.

Letters are best, to:

The Hon. Justin Madden MLC

Level 17, 8 Nicholson St, East Melbourne Vic 3002

### **CFA declares its position on RT fire matters.**

In a letter to the EG Shire Council Fire Officer, Captain Lyndsay O'Toole (Bumberrah FB) spelt out details of a new Standing Order regarding restrictions on brigades entry of appliances to the Trail. All are banned on Code Orange and Code Red days and by discretion on Code Yellow and Code Green days. With regards to assisting with small heap trash burns, the position now is:

"The brigade is still happy to help in any way to clean up rubbish and vermin havens, but we would have to ask for payment to augment our time and equipment."

So it's back to the money issue! Catch 22. Meanwhile volunteer Friends and Committee members will (under optimal weather conditions and with a fire pump and water on hand) tackle some of the long outstanding trash burns. Any help on these occasions will be much appreciated.



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## NZ has one major rail trail, but what a boomer.

The 150 km long Otago Central Rail Trail ( [www.otagocentrailrail.co.nz](http://www.otagocentrailrail.co.nz) ) offers the cycling visitor a spectacular and varied experience. Mountain ranges, wide sweeping valleys, tunnels, gorges, amazing cloud and skylines - and the fascination of many small towns along the way. The NZ government looks after the trail infrastructure through the Department of Conservation, but one truly remarkable aspects of this old railway line is the way in which local communities have taken up the challenge to provide all the services needed to meet the needs of literally thousands of visitors now flocking to the region. Formerly near -dead little townships are now flourishing. B&B facilities are being built or old buildings turned into comfortable accommodation. And it is all happening very fast. Barely 5 years ago the general response to the rail trail idea was negative. Now it is a boomer! NZ has a great capacity and skill in going to the max to handle tourism. Businesses are right into the web for bookings. Bus services are extensive, on time and fair priced. Many other tourism options are spinning off around the rail trail. Anyone keen to develop a rail trail related business could learn a lot by experiencing this rail trail first hand and talking to the locals. The Kiwis can teach us a thing or three!



Photo of new B&B places at a trail side farm - Three new cabins and a trail side coffee & local produce shop)

## Great Victorian Bike Ride Hits East Gippsland Next November.

The Rail Trail is being offered as an optional route for the expected 3500 riders who will stream out of Paynesville on Saturday morning December 1st, en route to Buchan. Rather than toil along the Omeo Highway riders can take the easy grade to Bruthen before heading back to the bitumen. We will be looking for assistance with marshals for road crossings, and a water point will be set up at Bumberrah. We are keen to encourage GVBR riders to come back to our region and experience a lot more of it in the future.

## Railtrails Australia Guide Book About To Be Published.

This definitive guide to rail trails in Victoria and SA is at the printers for the 3rd edition. It includes new trails and many updates for existing trails.

There is a special pre-publication price of \$33.50 including postage if ordered via the web site by June 30. **Go to [www.railtrails.org.au](http://www.railtrails.org.au) to order now.**



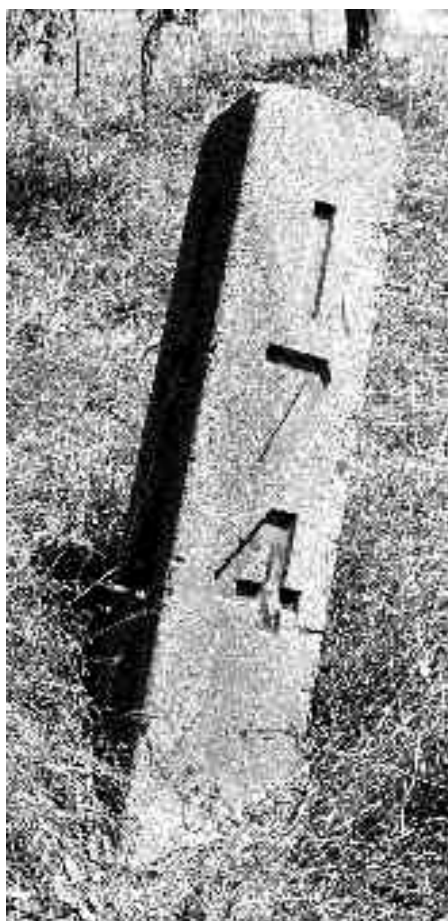


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**Please take your seat. Well, not quite - some generous folk have donated a seat!**

With assistance from the Mitchell Rotary Club the RT Committee has been able to add several way-side seats to the Trail. Railtrails Australia donated a memorial seat near the Nicholson River bridge and the Selwyn family have provide one which will be located just west of Morrissions Road (at the old 174 Mile post location - this historic artefact will be installed opposite the new seat). The Friends Association intends adding a picnic table /seat set at Nicholson and another is being donated for the Orbost end.



***Margaret Holt attended the dedication of the seat installed near the Nicholson Bridge in memory of her late husband Barry, by the Committee of Railtrails Australia. Barry had been President of Railtrails Australia.***

***Seat at Nicholson.***







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Check regularly at [www.eastgippslandrailtrail.com](http://www.eastgippslandrailtrail.com) for updates.

## BICYCLE RIDES



Date	Location	Contact
July 22	Ride from Nicholson leave at 10am	Sue 5156 8228
AGM	Ride from Nowa Nowa leave at 10am	
August 26	Around Nicholson -leave at 10 from Nicholson Jetty	Sue 5156 8288
October 14	Bruthen to Nowa Nowa	Sue 5156 8228
December	Tostaree to Lake Tyers	details to be announced

## Working Bees

August 26	Nicholson	Sue 5156 8228
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## Meetings

May 14	Bairnsdale, Grand Terminus Hotel 7pm
July 15 <sup>th</sup>	Bruthen AGM, Bruthen Inn 7pm
Sept 10 <sup>th</sup>	Nowa Nowa, 7pm
Nov 12 <sup>th</sup>	Nicholson Hotel 7pm

## Notice of Annual General Meeting 2007

**Friends of East Gippsland Rail trail AGM**  
Sunday July 22 2007, at 1pm Bruthen Hotel

President's report

Treasurer's report

### Agenda:

Election of office bearers

Attendance and apologies

Membership fees for 2007/8

Minutes of previous AGM

All positions become vacant – any members wishing to nominate please contact Janice Preston.





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## Riding the trail at 79 years young !



At the end of last year, just after the completion of Ride the Trail in a Day the Rail Trail Committee received a letter from Lorna Tiziani enclosing a letter from Graham Ayers describing his participation in this event. Even though it is some months in the past, it is still worthwhile reading Graham's account - "an inspiring story for any person who thinks that they might attempt a long trail ride even if you are not 79 years ". Here is an excerpt from Graham's letter:

*On Saturday 11-11-06 a week before my 75th birthday Lorna took Tony and I to Bairnsdale at 6:45 for start of Rail Trail ride to Orbost. (the longest Rail Trail in any state of Australia)  
 After checking in, Tony and I left at 7:40. 32 klm later we had a cuppa at Bruthen Hotel. .... A fellow from Melbourne, also named Graham rode with us for most of the way to Bruthen.  
 After our cuppa and cake Tony and i got on the trail for Nowa Nowa lunch stop - 25km away. The first 8 or 9 km is mostly uphill.  
 Tony as always riding at a pace that i could handle. When we got to Nowa Nowa I was surprised at how fit I felt.  
 Before the ride I had decided if I was overtired by the time we got to Nowa Nowa I would pull out of the ride.  
 I felt so fit I had no thought of pulling out. Lorna met us at the Nowa Nowa lunch stop with an esky with eats and a cold drink bottle each for the Orbost leg of the journey.  
 I found , when I took my haversack off my back that the spare drink bottle I had in it filled with milk, coffee and some sugar had leaked empty.  
 I had a spare shirt and undies in the haversack which were soaked.  
 Rolling along I had noticed that my shirt felt wet on my back. I thought it was sweat..... The trail is mostly uphill for 15 or 16 km out of Nowa Nowa towards Orbost.  
 About 25km from Orbost my legs started to cramp.  
 Tony was very good and slowed so I could keep up. A relaxing technique I had learnt from Ainslie Meares' book "Relief Without Drugs" came in very handy.....  
 I said to Tony I would be okay. He could ride on at his pace. He would not leave me. We got to Orbost at 2:30.  
 Except for my sore legs I still felt fit.....*

Graham and Tony arrived at Orbost in the first group of riders. Well done Graham on a significant achievement!

### A Friendly Reminder



If you see any rubbish on our railtrail pick it up, take it with you and dispose of it correctly.

Parts of our trail are becoming rather grotty!

