

November 2008



## Rail Trail - the top choice in East Gippsland!

According to the recent RACV survey the East Gippsland Rail Trail was the top ranked choice of all tourism experiences in East Gippsland. Ranked at number 22 of the 588 nominations it came in well ahead of all other Victorian rail trails.

Being ranked number 22 in the survey recognises the strong community spirit and dedication of the Friends group.

### Inside This Issue

Rail Trail - the top choice in East Gippsland!.....	1
Nicholson River Bridge Project Wins a LandCare Award.....	2
Bairnsdale Railway Station, finished in 1891, was in the news a year later because of a feather hat!.....	3
Management Committee Re-formed For Next 3 Years.....	4
Historic Mile Post Resurrected.....	5
Trail Bikers Claim They Can Use The Trail.....	5
Long Distance Cycling Visitors.....	6
Smashed Bridge Railing But No Culprit - Yet!.....	6
East Gippsland Rail Trail - 10th Anniversary of Opening.....	6
Out and About in Spring.....	7
Web Stats.....	8
Presidents Report 2008.....	9
Meetings and Activities.....	10
Make Riding For Fitness Your New Year's Resolution.....	10



**Sept 2006. Potential rehab site. Before work started.**

On September 2nd 2008 the Friends of the EG Rail Trail Association Inc. received a LandCare Community Group Award for a project at the Nicholson River Bridge. Discovery of an area of significant remnant temperate rain forest several years ago near the western abutment of the Nicholson River Bridge led to a rehabilitation project now being carried out by the Friends working in partnership with Catchment Management Authority (project funding grant), Nicholson River LandCare Group and the Rail Trail Management Committee.

Fencing, weed removal, indigenous planting specific to this location and ongoing management has turned a weed infested river side slope into a thriving native plant regeneration area. A memorial seat was added together with a picnic table and seats. Ongoing work is adding more plants and continuing weed and rabbit controls. A longer term project is to get a walking pathway northward along the river bank.

**October 2007. Volunteers planting the river bank site.**



**May 2008. Weeds going, indigenous plants thriving!**

The Award citation: This project has been awarded a Certificate of Recognition of a community project that has adopted sound land management practices on public or private land and has provided significant benefits to the broader river catchment and community.

*Michael Oxer*

## Nicholson River Bridge Project Wins a LandCare Award.

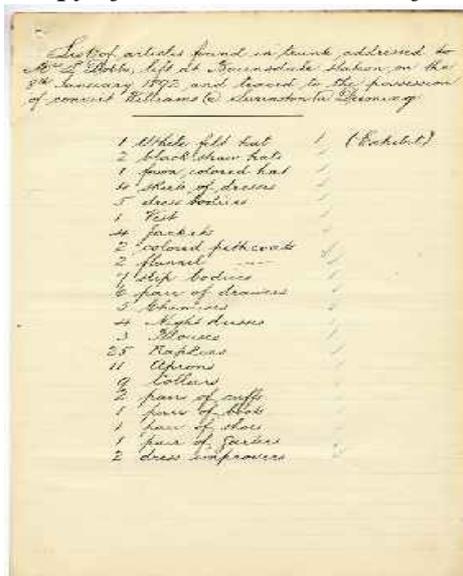


## Bairnsdale Railway Station, finished in 1891, was in the news a year later because of a feather hat!

The parcel office had had on its unclaimed list for some weeks a box addressed to a fictitious Mrs R. Dobbs. When the unclaimed parcel was eventually opened by railway officials it was found to be filled with a woman's garments - including a rather odd white felt hat!

Even featherless, the hat was recognised by a recent arrival from Britain as having been worn by a fellow female passenger on the *Kaiser Wilhelm II*. Other passengers soon identified the hat as the one constantly worn by the companion of one, Frederick Bailey Deeming.

### *This is a copy of the handwritten list of articles*



***found in the trunk left at Bairnsdale Station on January 8 1892. It was addressed to Mrs Dobbs and was traced to the possession of Convict Williams aka Swanston aka Deeming.***

He, an illiterate English confidence trickster, after murdering his first wife and four children, in July 1891, and cementing them down under the kitchen floor of Dinham Villa, Rainhill, Yorkshire, had married Miss Emily Mather. (Deeming had contended that his first wife and children had simply "gone away".) He took Emily to Melbourne by the *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, on which she often wore the odd white felt hat ornamented

with vulgar feathers. He arrived in Melbourne with Emily on December 15, 1891. On the *Kaiser Wilhelm* he was known as Albert Oliver Williams but was using the alias of Mr Drewn / Druin in his new lodgings at Windsor.

Before long Emily had been embedded in cement under the bedroom floor of 57 Andrew Street, Windsor. Again Deeming asserted to suspicious neighbours that his wife had gone abroad for business reasons. In the Christmas of 1891, Deeming left the house and the hat, stripped of its feathers, was on its way to Bairnsdale.

Meanwhile, the owner of the house in Windsor had begun to show prospective renters the lodgings, and they would often ask what was causing the repugnant odour in the dining room. Until neighbours informed him of Mrs Deeming's disappearance he had no answer. However, the police were then called in by the agent, John Stamford, to lift the floor and there she lay - Emily Mather, Deeming's second wife, her throat cut and the body rapidly decomposing! Victorian police traced Drewn/Druin to the name Deeming from photos and documents found in the house and contacted police in England asking them to look out for Deeming/Drewn/Druin/ Williams. When the police back in Liverpool were notified, the fate of his first wife, Marie James, and their four children was discovered. The bodies of the woman and children were found under the floors, which Deeming himself had cemented.

Deeming was caught and arrested in March of 1892 in Perth, Western Australia. On the day that Deeming was arrested, his new fiancée, Kate Rounsefell, whom he had met aboard the SS Adelaide as he fled Melbourne for Sydney, arrived in Melbourne. She was on her way to join him in Perth. When she learned about her intended, her ardour cooled a little and she ended up giving evidence in the court case. She had known him as Baron Swanson. Deeming was caught, taken to Melbourne and was nearly lynched by angry mobs.

At his trial Deeming (being tried under the name of Williams) stated that those present in the courtroom were 'the ugliest race of people he had ever seen'. That remark probably didn't

help his case, the jury taking little more than an hour to find him guilty and he was hanged on 23 May 1892.



*DEEMING, FREDERICK (BAILEY) (1853-1892), murderer, was born on 30 July 1853 at Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire, England, son of Thomas Deeming, brazier, and his wife Ann, née Bailey. Little is known of his early life but Deeming asserted that he had spent years in asylums (as had both parents) and that he was epileptic from the age of 18. (His brother Albert denied these claims.) He ran off to sea at about 16*

## Management Committee Re-formed For Next 3 Years.

A new three year term for the Management Committee has commenced when on October 23rd an officer from Crown Land Management convened a meeting of nominated members and new office bearers were elected. The new Rail Trail management team includes:

Michael Oxer (Chairman), Jacqui Martin (Secretary), Andrew Sharpe (Treasurer, and DSE representative), John Nelson, Bob Yeates, Brian Gustus, Michael McStephen, and Alan Mildren.

Jacqui Martin, Michael McStephen and Alan Mildren are very welcome new members, adding their expertise and enthusiasm to the efforts of the others who have all served previously for years past.

The job is a major challenge because although this is one of the two longest Trails in Australia, there is no provision for a paid trail manager position, even part time.

This is in sharp contrast to the Murray to Mountains RT which had a full time manager for the past several years. According to a recent AGE newspaper Travel report (2 pages!) that trail claims 8000 Easter period cycling visitors and 45,000 in a year (an amazing 123 a day) with considerable economic benefits to the region's businesses. More updates on the Committee at our web site. The department of transport and regional funding grant has finished so the Rail Trail will be back to surviving financially on savings. Annual income is down to \$1,600 from licence fees and \$450 from Shire annual allocation fee, plus some from bank interest.

## Historic Mile Post Resurrected.

Frank and Sheila Garden have played a major part in getting the historic 174 Mile Post which was found just west of Morrison Lane (near Bairnsdale) cleaned up and relocated in a more visible position.

It is now on the south side of the Trail but in the correct distance position. Consideration is being given to adding an information board to provide comment about the mile post and for updates for Trail visitors. The Bairnsdale - Nicholson section is very popular, with an average weekly visitor count of about 190.



## Trail Bikers Claim They Can Use The Trail.

During a recent inspection visit to the Fairweather Track crossing a Committee member happened on a group of seven trail bikers tearing up the sides of the cutting just west of the Track. They claimed they could use the Trail because that section had been bypassed (the cutting was too unstable to use for the new surface.) They were photographed and told to leave. Hooning laws can be applied in such situations. It was also discovered that fencing beside one of the chicane/gates had again been cut and a gate damaged.



## Long Distance Cycling Visitors.

An increasing number of well prepared and fully kitted out cycling tourists (tents, sleeping bags, cooking gear etc and even towing one wheeled trailers) are visiting this Trail, usually as part of a longer trip but often specifically just to ride here and explore the local region. The latter might be travelling a bit 'lighter' and rely more on local accommodation providers. Some are doing it solo but more often we see older couples 'living the dream' on two wheelers. Recent such visitors have been from WA and NSW, on multi-State long distance tours.



## Smashed Bridge Railing But No Culprit - Yet!

Vandalism damage to gates and fences on the Nowa Nowa - Orbost section is an ongoing problem but recently a timber section of the Schuler Creek bridge railing (between Phillips Lane and Morrison Lane) was wrecked by (we suspect) a tractor illegally driven on the Trail, to dodge the Highway. No culprit has been located yet, although the wheel track evidence indicated someone carting hay bales to a nearby horse paddock. Repair work will cost several hundred dollars. It is a sad comment on some locals when they don't have the courage (or honesty) to own up to this sort of behaviour. The matter was reported to the Police.

## East Gippsland Rail Trail - 10th Anniversary of Opening December 1998 (Bairnsdale - Nicholson)

On Saturday November 29th 2008 members of the public are invited to take part in an informal walk or ride from Bairnsdale (Rail Trail entrance at McEacharn Street, Howitt Park) to Nicholson River Wharf, for a Picnic BBQ. Walkers will be waved off at 9.30 am (modest pace group) and riders at 10.30 am (modest pace group). The bronze plaque which was unveiled at the Opening ceremony in 1998 will be installed on the Home Signal Mast near the entrance and again 'unveiled' at about 10 am.

This is a BYO everything for a BBQ lunch. Barbecue facilities will be provided. There are toilets and a children's playground at the Wharf. Drinking water available on site. Come and join the party atmosphere to celebrate the Anniversary of Australia's longest rural rail trail at nearly 100 Kms, in a single Shire, now fully open and attracting visitors from near and far.

## OUT AND ABOUT ON THE TRAIL IN SPRINGTIME

Cyclists and walkers are out on the trail in great numbers enjoying the clear, sunny spring days - and just as us humans emerge from the winter torpor so, too, do the local flora and fauna.

Sighted on the trail so far have been goannas, snakes, echidnas, a lyre bird near Nowa Nowa and emus near Simpson Creek. If you also thought you saw a cross cattle- koolie dog towing a trailer from Waygara to Bairnsdale you weren't quite seeing things. Tim Tam ,Vivienne Young's very friendly dog, escaped from his holiday accommodation at Waygara and followed Gary "Walkingman" Hause all the way to Bairnsdale!

Gary enjoyed his company but worried that Tim was lost and helped organise his return to Viv. Tim is now a celebrity in Orbost.

This is from Gary's web-site: [walkingman.org](http://walkingman.org) - it's an interesting web-site.

"A fellow walker joined me for a couple days on the rail trail from Orbost to Bairnsdale that goes for 100k(62 miles). Nice quiet dirt and gravel path through woods and farm fields with lots of shade and wildlife. He has been walking point 100 or 200 feet ahead of me looking for snakes, rabbits, kangaroos, trolls, orcs, and other wildlife. I hooked him up to the front of my baby jogger with a piece of webbing to see if he would help pull. He took right to it and was pulling pretty hard and a little too fast for me, so I unhooked him. He only had a single leather collar, and you really need a double chest and shoulder harness to pull with or you tend to choke off the oxygen and blood supply. I think he is half German Shepard and maybe some sled dog in him. Must be a farm or ranch dog out on a walkabout. I have been calling him Red Dog after the radio program I have been listening to on ABC radio about a Aussie dogs adventures. Red Dog has been sleeping outside my tent and eating some of my biscuits and I give him some of my oatmeal and eggs in the morning. Every time I stop to take a break I fill up a water bowl for him, but he keeps drinking out of dirty puddles when he sees them. When I got in to Bairnsdale I stopped at the police station and they called the Shire council and checked his dog tag numbers , called the owner, and his son who lives in town said he would come over and pick him up shortly. Tin Can was his name and he was a good walking partner on the rail trail, but I did not want him to follow me on the main road."

Look out for these plants while on the trail this spring.



pittosporum  
undulatum



kennedia prostrata

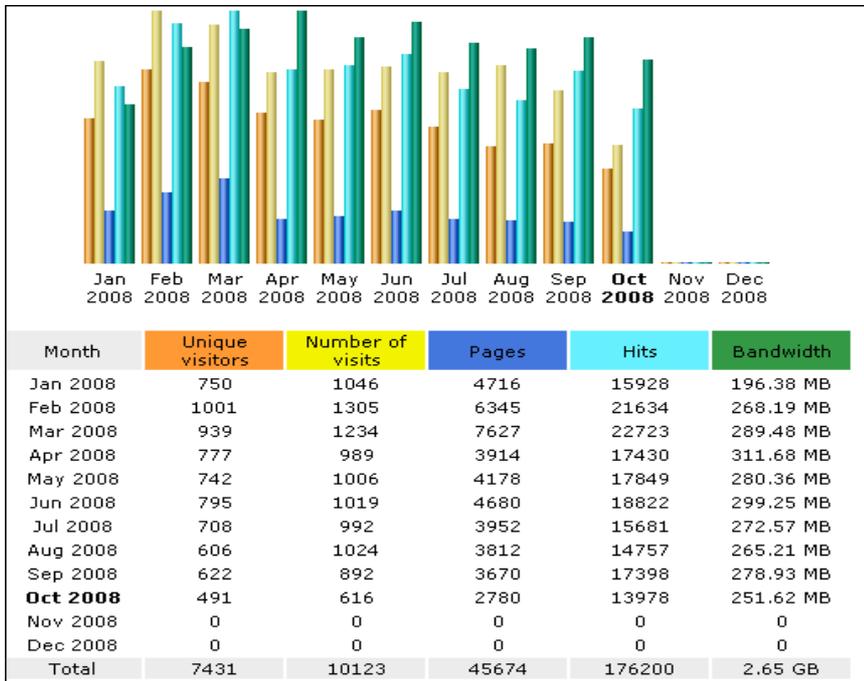


indigofera australis



clematis  
glycinoides

## Web Stats



The website continues to receive substantial support.



Please support our business friends whenever possible.



Friends of East Gippsland Railtrail are extremely grateful to Craig Ingram's office which has supported our group with the printing of this newsletter for some time now!

## Friends Of the East Gippsland Rail Trail

### Presidents Report 2008

Looking back over the 5 years since 2003 when Friends Of the East Gippsland Rail Trail was first formed, we can be proud of the numerous projects and improvements to our trail and its environs in which our members have participated.

Five years ago, the East Gippsland Rail Trail ended at Nowa Nowa. The Nowa Nowa to Orbost section of the trail was not completed until January 2006 when a spectacular opening event was held and supported by the Friends. We didn't need a link from Burns Rd to Orbost back then. This year marked the successful completion of the Burns Rd Link so now cyclists can enjoy our magnificent trail and scenery from Bairnsdale to Orbost. Successful lobbying to our local council has resulted in an assurance that the Burns Rd carpark will be developed to provide an appropriate environment for such an important feature as the start (or end) of our wonderful trail. Five years ago, there were no seats and tables along the trail to enable walkers and cyclists to rest whilst enjoying the wonderful scenery. Thanks to the many friends who have donated seats and tables and to the friends who have assisted in working bees to install them, we now have rest stops in several locations along the trail.

The East Gippsland Rail Trail Website was not envisaged in 2003. Today the site has received 13,123 hits as Friends and the visiting public seek information about our trail. The website also enables feedback from the public which is important to assist in planning for the future. The first Trail Mail was circulated in January 2004 to provide Friends with a newsletter of information and events related to our trail. In 2008, we have a greatly improved newsletter with regular articles informing friends of the history of the trail. Posting of the Trail Mail on the website also enable our messages to be available whilst assisting the friends group to contribute to greening Australia.

Two very important projects, the Nicholson River Revegetation Project and the Lees Rd regeneration project, continue to flourish thanks to the efforts of a small group of Friends. Kilometre signage and trail notes are another 2 projects which are a underway and will make a significant contribution to the enjoyment of our visiting public.

Other significant contributions which must not go unnoticed include the tireless work the many friends who quietly continue to monitor the trail, clean up the fallen branches and debris, and diligently continue with weed control, all of which will continue to challenge us.

Lastly, thanks to the Friends of the East Gippsland Rail Trail Committee. It is you who attend the meetings, organise the working bees, organise funding applications, lobby the local, state and federal governments, and contribute to all the various projects and business of the group, who enable this organisation to contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the East Gippsland Trail, for which we, the public are so fortunate to enjoy.

*Janice Preston, President.*

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



## **Meetings and Activities**

Nov 10 :Nowa Nowa . Meet at Preston's at 5:30pm for ride around Nowa Nowa and barbecue afterwards. All welcome for ride or barbecue. R.S.V.P. or more info to Janice. Ph:51557328 or email : [janicepreston@bigpond.com](mailto:janicepreston@bigpond.com)

Nov 29 :Anniversary Walk from Bairnsdale.

## **★ Make Riding For Fitness Your New Year's Resolution**

Thinking about losing weight and getting fit? Maybe gym membership? Perhaps an exercise contraption to clutter up your lounge room?

Unfortunately these seemingly easy solution often lose their appeal after a few weeks.

**Q. What's the solution?**

**A. Cycling!**

Taking up cycling will not require a huge lifestyle change. Simply riding to work or down to the shops a couple of days a week can make a big difference to your well-being. By substituting your bicycle for the car you also save in fuel and maintenance costs.

Cycling is a low impact exercise placing less stress on the joints than jogging (for those odd bods who don't actually like cycling walking is pretty good too).

Regardless of your existing fitness level, if you haven't ridden a bicycle for a while, take things slowly. Always warm up with a quick series of stretching exercises before each session and carry some water.

For day one, begin with an easy 10-minute ride over flat terrain. This should see you cover about 2.5 km. Repeat for day two and then increase to a 15-minute ride on day three. For the second week, start off with a 15-minute ride on day one, extend to a 20-minute ride on day two and then another 20-minute ride on day three. During the third week you can do a 20, a 25 and a 30-minute ride. Week four can be 35, 40 and 45-minute rides. From week five onwards, stay with three 45-minute rides, but introduce some small hills and try to cover more distance in the same time.



By this stage you will be burning over 2000 calories or 9000 kilojoules a week!

Try to stick with it. A habit takes about three weeks of continuous activity to form, and cycling is no different. The substantial health and fitness rewards will be worth the effort.

*Adapted from an article published by Dept of Planning and Infrastructure of the W.A. Govt*