

September 2007

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## FRIENDS AGM

The third AGM was held in July and the office bearers for 07/08 are as follows:

President: Janice Preston  
 Vice president: Keith Law  
 Secretary: Sue Peirce  
 Treasurer: Geoff Preston

Committee members can be contacted at:

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John Websdale, our treasurer since the group was formed in 2003, has handed over the books to Geoff Preston. Thanks to John for establishing the procedures and for cheerfully taking on the responsibility. Thanks to Bruthen Inn for providing lunch – we sat in the sunshine on the verandah of the pub – a very pleasant setting for our meeting.

*Sue Peirce*

## New Table At Partellis Crossing



*John and Michael measure things ready for installation.*

*John was the only one short enough for this job!*



*The new setting.*

## Nicholson Bridge Revegetation Project

There has been a lot of activity here – the continued removal of blackberry is having results, and the rabbits are diminished judging by the regeneration of blackwoods.

All the plants put in have protective plastic jackets to protect against rabbit damage. There is evidence of active wombats barging about. It's good to see some of the tree violets and daisies growing up over their jackets. Our plant survival rate is 100%! The temperate rainforest species have been propagated by one of our members, Norman Broad. To date approx 180 plants are in – 120 of these are grasses - themedia, poa and lomandra.

Other species include dodonea [hopbush], olearia [daisies], muttonwood, blue limestone wattle, goodenia, pittosporum, myoporum.

The sign describing the project has been erected.

The spraying of the weeds continues – and more planting may be able to be done this year if the weeds are sufficiently controlled.

A picnic table has been purchased with funds from the Ride the Trail in a day held last November and will be installed shortly.



*Hopbush*

## Valiant start on Lees Road embankment re-vegetation.

On Sunday September 17th a courageous band of five Friends set out to plant 100 tubes on the embankment nearest the Lees Road bridge (south of Mossiface) where the recent floods had blown out three huge holes in the side of the rail trail cutting. Extensive major earth works, involving moving hundreds of tons of the old ballast stone to shore up the embankment, has left an extensive area needing re-vegetation as a way of holding the land from further such damage.

The planting involved lugging drums of water, tools and tube trays along the top of the cutting from near the bridge and later planting a few tubes close to the edge of the trail. The area is still quite wet and the trail surface was at the

time yet to be restored to its former easy riding surface. To help keep the new plants alive and thriving into the coming summer there will need to be a further watering expedition, and that means carting water to the site. There is still a very extensive area of restored embankment which needs to be planted but that will involve more than the 100 tubes already used and more 'hands' to do the work, probably now a task for next year.



## Bairnsdale to Eagle Point Cycle/Walking Track

Our earlier communications with the East Gippsland Shire Council regarding a safe trail to Eagle Point to join up with the Eagle Point- Paynesville trail indicated the Vic Roads upgrade of the Paynesville Rd would include a cycle lane. The work on the Paynesville Rd is now completed and although the road shoulders have been widened and improved in some places, this is not a suitable route for recreational cyclists – the road speed of 100kph and the squeeze points being hazardous. The council officers believe that the Paynesville road is not a suitable route and an off road route to Eagle Point should be investigated.

The council will do improvements to the Eagle Point – Paynesville trail and work on a Newlands Arm track as part of the cycling strategy for 07/08. A Bairnsdale to Eagle Point connection would be complete a link from the rail trail to Paynesville.

The advantage of having additional safe off road routes to other destinations, as already exists to Lakes Entrance, adds to the attraction of rail trail as a recreational experience.

At the last meeting the Friends group determined to write to Hon Peter McGauran to see if funds for a feasibility study can be made available for Bairnsdale – Eagle Point connection, and to write to Council to inform of our actions and encourage them to look seriously at providing an off road trail. This would be such a benefit for locals and tourists – 15k of lovely track – coffee or lunch and return!

### Aug 26<sup>th</sup> ride – around Nicholson

It was a perfect day for the Nicholson to Bruthen on the trail and Tambo Upper Rd and return to the trail. The flood damage is very apparent in many places along the Bumberah to Mossiface section. Major works were in progress – so it will be a while before we see the final result. There will be large areas requiring revegetation when large equipment has finished work on the trail.



*Sue and Jeff consult the map to find our way home.*

## Rail Trail Journeys

The South Gippsland Rail Trail runs from Leongatha to Foster with a section between Koonwarra and Meeniyan still not open due to the bridges remaining unsafe. There is a completed distance of 46 Km. On the first afternoon after arriving at our accommodation in Koonwarra we completed the Leangatha section a easy return 16 km journey.

On the second day to avoid using the highway between Koonwarra and Meeniyan we rode some hilly backroads for 7km before picking up the rail trail. From there we rode to Fish Creek and return about 44 easy kms for the day. The trail has a great surface and is quite easy to ride.



The third day we drove to Buffalo, parked the car and rode the trail to Foster and return. This included 8 km we had covered the previous day and a further 13 kilometres giving a return journey of about 42 km.

The ride over the Hoddle Range was spectacular with views of The Prom and Corner Inlet.



On the last day of our stay we decided to ride the **Bass Coast Rail Trail** starting at Wonthaggi. This is a 20 km trail but only the first 15 kilometres to Anderson is in a prepared condition. The last 5 Km from Anderson to Woolamai is unmade and slow going.

The section through Kilcunda was spectacular with ocean views as the trail passed very close to the beach.



*Keith Law & Marlene Robb*  
15 Sept 2007 to 19 Sept 2007

## Railtrail Trespassers!

We have a fair amount of trouble concerning unauthorised vehicles on the Trail, especially at the Wairewa and Newmerella localities. Some long term solutions to deal with the people who just don't wish to comply are required to be developed, but in the mean time a method of deterrence is to take legal action in the form of Police. Unauthorised use of a motor vehicle on the Rail Trail Reserve is an offence under various Acts and Regulations.

One such legislation is the Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Regulations 2003 which makes it an offence to permit or cause a motor vehicle to be on public land which isn't a road, parking area or free access area.

To ensure we have Police support we need to report in writing details of illegal activities.

Whilst no one should be put in a potentially volatile situation written documentation of what, when, where, who and how needs to be given to the Police, Photos are excellent. Hidden monitor cameras have been suggested.

I am happy to receive and collate details so they can be forwarded to Police.

*Andrew Sharpe*



## Working Bee



A working bee on Sept 16<sup>th</sup> planted 100 small trees and shrubs – near Lees Rd, to stabilize the area at the top of the embankment. Much work has been done above the trail to prevent water flowing through these sandy areas causing ‘blow-outs’.

## ***STONY CREEK TRESTLE BRIDGE***

*East of Nowa Nowa at Stony Creek is a railway bridge which claims to be one of the largest wooden bridges still standing in Australia.*



The very early railway bridges of Victoria were generally substantial structures built either entirely in stone or with wrought-iron girders on massive stone abutments and piers. In the 1870s, when construction of the 'light lines' was initiated, Victorian railway engineers turned to a cheaper style of bridge construction using either timber or iron plate girders supported on cast-iron columns. New standard timber bridge designs were developed making use of Australian hardwoods. During the early 20th century the Railway Construction Branch pioneered new bridge designs, adopting innovative combinations of various materials from steel and timber to reinforced concrete.

Several of this type were built for the Bairnsdale to Orbost Railway. The series of trestle bridges and viaducts on the Bairnsdale-Orbost Railway Line represent an outstanding example of timber trestle bridge construction, collectively exhibiting a high degree of integrity and innovation. Their presence demonstrates the ingenuity and skill involved in constructing a railway line over a long distance through difficult terrain, requiring numerous deviations, and crossings over gorges and river flats subject to flooding. The timber used in the construction of the bridges and viaducts is associated with the region's forests, being cut from local trees which proved to be well-suited for the durability and strength required. The bridges are all the more remarkable for their survival as a group, following the closure of the line to traffic in 1987

The Stony Creek bridge is one of the highest timber trestle bridges in Australia, is in near original condition, and is an outstanding example of construction technology.

It was constructed over Stony Creek in 1916 (although one picture I sighted dates it at 1915). It is a dramatic 27 span, 276 metres long, 18.6 metres high supporting a single railway track over Stony Creek and is built of red ironbark and grey box. In service for over 60 years the bridge was damaged by bushfire in 1980, with the last train crossing in 1988. The only other damage to the bridge occurred in June, 1964. There was an accident at 9.30 pm when 12 goods wagons carrying gypsum fell over the side of the bridge into the creek. Nine other wagons, although derailed, remained on the bridge.

As the largest standing bridge of its kind in the State, it is listed on the Victorian Register of Historic Sites. In 2002 when arguing for a funding grant from the State Government's Public Heritage Program, Craig Ingram said, "The bridge demonstrates the ingenuity and skill involved in constructing a railway line over a long distance through difficult terrain..... the bridge remains a tourist landmark."



*Stony Creek Trestle Bridge 4km west of Nowa Nowa*

*Next Issue: Nicholson River Bridge*

## Trail Riders Code of Practice:



- Ride only on designated trails
- Do not take short cuts or form new trails
- Avoid using trails when muddy or eroded
- Comply with signage
- Treat other trail users, residents and facilities with respect
- Politely indicate to other trail users how to pass
- Approach road crossings cautiously
- Ride appropriately to suit the terrain, visibility and possible interaction with other trail users
- Minimise impact on plants and animals by staying on the trail
- Take with you all rubbish, manure and excess feed from the float parking area
- Let others know of this Code
- **Keep trails open by setting a good example of environmentally sound and socially responsible horse riding.**

*Janice Preston*

### Web Stats

The updated website has continued to receive strong support.

The first column shows the number of visitors and the second page shows the number pages viewed.

I have been promoting the friends enhanced website and at this stage I have one new business friend (already has a website ) and Orbost Caravan Park has requested a enhanced website.

I expect as the weather warms up we will receive a lot of new traffic to the website.

*Keith Law*

01 Sep 2007	27	62
02 Sep 2007	28	86
03 Sep 2007	42	102
04 Sep 2007	30	109
05 Sep 2007	44	162
06 Sep 2007	35	104
07 Sep 2007	36	58
08 Sep 2007	28	121
09 Sep 2007	45	178
10 Sep 2007	45	100
11 Sep 2007	44	324
12 Sep 2007	32	149
13 Sep 2007	30	86
14 Sep 2007	49	199
15 Sep 2007	36	74
16 Sep 2007	49	175
17 Sep 2007	42	82
18 Sep 2007	41	150
19 Sep 2007	46	153
20 Sep 2007	34	229
21 Sep 2007	42	230
22 Sep 2007	29	81
23 Sep 2007	37	112
24 Sep 2007	46	245
25 Sep 2007	44	136

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



## BICYCLE RIDES

Date	Location	Contact
Sunday November 29	Orbost to Nowa Nowa Meet Forest Park trail head at 9:00 am	Vicki
Sunday November 29	Bruthen to Nowa Nowa Meet near bakery in main street at 10:00 am	Sue

### The Long Now Weekend 24 & 25 November - lots of activities to be part of.

Open For Inspection - artwork ; a petanque tournament ; fibre and textile art exhibition ; lake cruises ; music all weekend at Mingling Waters ; exhibition of "man-made" contraptions and inventions at the caravan park ; a photographic exhibition at the Nowa Nowa Hotel ; a nature/culture/ sculpture walk ; fishing competition and the Alpine Car Rally comes to town.  
(For info. on any of these events contact Janice and she will direct you to the person in charge!)

### The Orbost Rail Trail Link Track Head Marlo Road Back Of The Caravan Park

