

President

Neil Hammerton 50235559

Vice President

Meryl Hale 50227676

Secretary

Peter Rhodes 50221898

Treasurer

Karl Sommer 50227676

Quarter Master

Roger Cornell 50257325

Newsletter Editor

Barb Cornell 50257325

Sunraysia Bushwalkers

April 2017

PO Box 1827

MILDURA 3502

Ph: 03 50257325

Website:

www.sunbushwalk.net.au



Affiliated with:



Membership Fees

\$30 per Person

Subs due 1st July

In this issue:

- ❖ **Echo Point Walk**
- ❖ **New Zealand Alps to Ocean
Bike Ride - Episode One**
- ❖ **Federation Weekend Info**
- ❖ **Trip & Trek News**
- ❖ **Calendar**



To view the complete calendar please follow the link:
<http://www.sunbushwalk.net.au/calendarofactivities.html>

Echo Point Walk 18th March 2017

We knew it was going to be a warmish day so gathered at Centro, organized which vehicles everyone was going in and set off just after 8.00 am to weave and find our way through the dreaded Redcliffs Spider's Web and then down to the river bank below Redcliffs.



We left the cars and began our walk following along the river bank. 'We', being Geof, Karl, Russell, Meryl, Kim, Noel (our leader for the day) and Barb (photographer)



One would hardly know that we had experienced a flood just recently. There was very little evidence that the area had been inundated with water other than the water mark on the tree trunks.

A Nankeen Kestrel's nest with a young one in the nest was



spotted. I was very fortunate to get his photo before he realized we were having a good look at him and he ducked down into the nest. His parents stayed close by making sure that we weren't going to give him any grief.



The trees and surrounds improved as we reached Echo Point itself (really just a large bend in the river). At this point we voted for a scroggin break to sit and enjoy the river scenery for a bit. The noise from all the water pumps on the other side of the river certainly does nothing to add to the ambience of the area. Nevertheless it is amazing how the mind can shut out such things.

Rather than retrace our steps Noel took us inland and along a 'chain of bongs' - water left over from the flood. Someone asked about whether they were infested with carp, the answer being 'no'. But as you can see by the photo there was a decided rim of very green green algae. At one stage there was a bit of a pong from one of the bongs but we soon skipped past that area!

I think it was about 11.00am and getting quite warm by the time we returned to the cars to enjoy a belated morning tea before setting off home. All up the pedometer said we had walked 7.94kms for our morning's effort. Thank you Noel for guiding us to yet another great part of the river to enjoy.



NEW ZEALAND ALPS TO OCEAN BIKE RIDE 2017

Michael Jobe, Russell Shallard, Dick Johnstone, Peter Rhodes, Tony Grasso and Roger Cornell



Tuesday 28th February

It's 8.30 am and we are all together in the bus outside Christchurch Museum and Botanical Gardens. Three of us being very weary from the overnight flight and 5.05am landing are not especially perceptive of our surroundings. Our route has not taken us to the very centre of the city where the Cathedral is located, yet still we see many of the historic stone buildings in various stages of restoration after the devastating earthquake some years ago.

Our destination is Lake Tekapo,

the alternative start of our five day ride to Oamaru on the east coast. Beyond the city confines, the vast Canterbury Plains stretch along much of our route. A flowing channel beside the main road delivers water to big pivot irrigators in the green fields. After a stop at Geraldine, we enter the McKenzie area beyond Burkes Pass that often ices in winter. The terrain seems to keep rising as we approach Lake Tekapo. Our lodgings at the Holiday Park on the shoreline is a one kilometre walk from the main township centre. All that the writer wanted for the



balance of the afternoon was time to remedy the sleep deficit.



Wednesday 1st March

Today is the start of the ride. Arriving punctually at 7.15am on a big trailer, we each are issued with a wide tyred bike, helmet and small carry pannier, whilst our large luggage gets loaded into the van for transport to Twizel, the day's destination. Lake Tekapo fronts the shoreline where pipes take water underneath and through a high ridge to a hydro power station. Back in the centre of town, the well signposted ride diverges from the main roads before descending steeply down a rocky, pebbly track flattening out at the start of the canal charged with waters from the power station set tightly at the base of the hill. We ride

beside the canal – sometimes the surface is bitumen and at other times coarse gravel. It is a major waterway, perched on the side of a natural valley. Some parts are cut into the mountainside, others carved through big hills and many sections are atop massive formed embankments. We come to a salmon farm where enclosures line the centre of the canal for perhaps one kilometre. We come to a wider water section, cross a causeway before a long steep curving road descent – the longest and fastest downhill ride this writer has ever enjoyed! On first reaching Lake Pukaki, a barrier of mist limits visibility to only a few metres over the water, but by the time we ride around to the visitor Centre we can look right into the length of the turquoise water body to pick out snow covered Mt Cook prominently in the distance. The final section to Twizel starts in undulating terrain before crossing dry open grasslands. Tonight we lodge at a motel with 'A' style units together with dinner at the pub in the main street of town.





Thursday 2nd March

This morning a thin mist surrounds us and the crisp air warrants an additional layer of clothing. The first few kilometres of bitumen road pass through farmland. We are fortunate to just avoid a farmer's roadblock set up for a travelling sheep flock. At the top of a rise, a wide bridge spans a canal far bigger than the one from yesterday. Coming from the glacial Lake Pukaki, the cloudy but azure blue water again flows rapidly. A sign cautions fishermen about the need for clean lines to limit the spread of Didymo, or Rock Snot – an introduced beige coloured algae that has not reached the North Island. Michael, Roger, Tony and

Russell are cheesed off after riding into the Cheese Farm only to find it closed. The track now turns beside a secondary canal that supplements the main waterway, so for the first time we are travelling in the opposite direction to the water flow. We ride beside another salmon farm and later stop to survey a large fish landed by one of several fishermen angling along the way. Reaching the Ohau Weir we talk to a fisherman and see a couple of fish caught, only to be released for being of insufficient size. We are told that when the water comes rapidly from the weir, that fish catches are abundant. A narrow gravel track hugs the lakes' edge until it joins the road taking us to Lake Ohau Lodge.

Dinner for us is served at a table on the outside boardwalk, giving a magnificent view over the lake with brilliant Mt Cook dominant in the evening skyline. Our spouses would love this part of the adventure!



Friday 3rd March

Michael has excelled. Not only did we dine well last night, but a full breakfast awaits us in the main dining room this morning. The ride begins from the Lodge entrance road where the stony track runs parallel to the towering ridge above. After a short undulating section through beech forest, the path rises gently before steepening further as it takes us in a long line up the side of the bare ridge. Investment of considerable energy is required to climb the 300 metre gain in elevation.

We get a splendid view of Lake Ohau set in a backdrop of bluish mist on the surrounding peaks giving the whole scene a picture postcard aura. It is in this section we appreciate the wide tyres on our bikes. Two hours from the morning's start, out of nowhere we reach the signposted high point for the ride.

Now begins the downhill reward, although great care is paramount in the beginning due to the winding rocky steep decline. Soon, the track straightens with a better surface thus permitting speeds only limited by the



riders' bravado. We are touring towards a vast open valley on our left hand side. After several more long downhill runs, a rising stretch brings us to Quailburn Road where miraculously a coffee van is waiting to serve us. We now have to share the gravel road with occasional traffic, yet still the aspect is downhill giving long runs of freewheeling. Thankfully we are free of any falls – if anyone came off their bike here, the consequences would be unthinkable. A few kilometres before Omarama we reach a main road. Rather than mix with traffic, our path winds through adjacent woodlands and a stream before we cross the Ahuriri River. Rarely



do we welcome wind – but today it now comes behind us. After a snack lunch in town we easily cycle beside the main road in open farming country. On reaching Lake Benmore we easily ride along the picturesque shoreline for a considerable distance until it ends where we begin to share the main bitumen road with other traffic. When we start with the wind behind us, the mild upward slope looks easy. But slopes can be deceiving as the energy needed to slowly travel the long rising road turns out to be pretty demanding. Had the wind been blowing in the opposite direction we would have found it much tougher.



On reaching the high point we stop to appraise the next stage. Ahead is a long downhill run where a faraway curve ends the line of sight. So it's off with the angels!! We freewheel downwards at enormous speed, concentrating on control as a fall at this rate would be catastrophic. This run would be the fastest ride we have ever had on a bike - no pedaling took place and on our arrival at Otematata we had to use our brakes to stop. Our bikes are not fitted with speedos but a rider we met later at the pub said he had reached 74kph riding as we did. Tonight's Lodge is old, perhaps from the hydro construction era, but we find our allotted rooms spacious and comfortable. In contrast with

last night we need to organize our own breakfast so we discover the nearby store stocks bread and baked beans. Luck is how you perceive it.

Saturday 4th March

Baked beans taste alright. With the air a bit on the cool side, we ride a gravel track beside a stream until joining a very steep bitumen road leading to the wall of the Benmore Dam. Only Michael pedaled the many revolutions astride his bike as the rest of us walked to the top. The wall is supposed to be the biggest in NZ and it certainly seemed wider as we rode across in view of the power station and lines well below. Next comes another speedy freewheeling descent in the cool morning air. At this stage, our journey mainly undulates closer to Lake Aviemore's edge. Much of the perimeter appears to be where caravans must go to die.

Hundreds of them are scattered around with no signs of vehicles or occupancy. 36 Kilometers from our start we cross Aviemore dam and take the bitumen road to Kurow. The town is a refresher stop for many



motorcyclists from a nearby gathering where we also stop for lunch. We learn that the Duntroon Pub has no beer – in fact it has closed completely and nowhere else in Duntroon will we buy dinner, so we get some eats and a couple of \$10 bottles of Jacobs Creek Shiraz to take with us for tonight. From the very commencement of the journey, we appear to have ridden through both public and private lands. A short distance along the way we ride through a private vineyard with a meager crop of immature grapes.



The gravel track now runs beside the Waitaki River. We see the water occasionally, but see more of the willows and other trees bordering the grey gravelly river bed. From our very beginning we have ridden within sight of towering ridges, so again we have the vista of the range across the wide water course. Several lateral river crossings on our track would render it impassable if they were flowing. Today is our longest distance to ride, totaling 71km and we are all happy to put our bikes in the rack for the night. We have no idea of what we are to find staying the night with "Father Ted." Located up a minor street in Duntroon, we arrive to discover we are staying at a delightful former church property.

The gravel track now runs beside the Waitaki River. We see the water



Our congenial host has transformed an old stone church hall into a fabulous modern fully equipped guest unit. Ted welcomes us with a couple of bottles of wine “left by yesterday’s women.” The clock had ticked a few times before he retired to the big church building next door, enabling us to prepare baked beans and eggs. By the end of the night, Michael turned us into skilful card sharps.



Sunday 5th March

Although it is only the beginning of autumn, a fog shrouds the outside. Bike seats need drying before we farewell Ted. Not long after a steady uphill ride, the mist lifts to reveal spreading valleys of farmland below and into the distance. round here we find various high sculpted limestone cliffs thereafter riding down between high walls where the end exit is a steep upward switchback track. Much of the track traverses private farmlands and the next descent demands some adept dodging of cowpats. On joining a gravel public road, the steep upward gradients re-emerge – some of them warranting walking our bikes. We walk through a long,

dark former railway tunnel. Just before Enfield, we reach a main road with an accompanying side track for bikes. With a gentle head wind against us, the riding requires a bit of effort. The final entry into Oamaru is on the old railway easement. The Alps to Ocean track goes through the magnificent public gardens for a considerable distance. Oamaru is an old port city with plenty of solid buildings remaining from an early era. Beyond is the ocean and the end of the ride. At this stage we farewell Roger who plans to walk at the north of the island. Our lodgings are located over the creek from the upper end of the public gardens requiring us to retrace our path this time carrying our full luggage. With little inclination for another lengthy promenade, we choose The Worker's Club just down the road for refreshments and dinner.



This wonderful report by Dick will be concluded in the next newsletter

2017 FEDERATION WALK WEEKEND

The Federation Weekend this year is to be held in the Warburton area, 75km east of Melbourne, in the Yarra Valley. The weekend will be hosted by Melbourne Bushwalkers over the weekend of 27 – 29 October.

Initial information is currently available through the Federation Weekend 2017 website at www.fedwalks.org.au. Other information will be provided on a progressive basis so it is suggested you keep up to date by checking this website from time to time. 20 walks will be offered and it is planned for these to be available for you to preview on 1st May. Registrations will open on 1st July.

Two venues will be used for the event. Arrabri Lodge for which an accommodation and meal package will be offered and where the Saturday social program will be held; and also the East Warburton Hall (200 metres from Arrabri) which will be used for all walk registrations, assemblies, departures and returns.

Trip & Trek News - latest news on trips and treks

More information on these items can be obtained from the SBW Secretary



PGL Adventure Camps provide venues and accommodation at Campaspe Downs (Kyneton/Macedon Ranges area) and Camp Rumbug (Wilsons Prom area)

Take a Walk Adventures are now promoting and providing information on their Andalusian Coast to Coast Walk.

Southcoast First National have information on their Inverloch holiday homes.

OYAT (NZ) are now promoting and providing information on their many trips and treks including Milford, Routeburn and Stewart Island.

Murray River Walk - Riverland South Australia now has information on a designated walk that is now included in the Great Walks of Australia.

Willis's Walkabouts has information on their next Kakadu Highlights Trek (Oct 24 - Nov 6)

Kokoda Trekking

Cameron James (www.1hundredpercentkokoda.com) specialises in trekking packages involving the Kokoda Trail. Check his website for details of packages and testimonials.



CALENDAR

2017		
April 5th	Meeting	Contact: Neil 0429865232
8th	Abbotsford Bridge to Cowra Day Walk	Contact: Roger 0488121648
29-30th	Grampians - Day Walks to selected sites	Contact: Meryl/Karl 50227676
May 3rd	Meeting	Contact: Neil 0429865232
21st	Hattah Lake Mournpall Loop Day Walk	Contact: Karl 50227676
June 7th	Meeting	Contact: Neil 0429865232
10 - 13th	Sunset NP - Mt Crozier Loop 3 day Trek	Contact: Meryl/Karl 50227676
18th	Lock Island to Apex Park	Contact: Neil 0429865232
July 5th	Meeting	Contact: Neil 0429865232
15th	Thegoa Lagoon Day Walk	Contact: Meryl/Karl 50227676
22 - 23rd	Mid Winter Dinner Shearer's Quarters, Ned's Corner	Contact: Peter 0458935239
August 2nd	Meeting	Contact Neil: 0429865232
13th	'Sextons' Kulkyne to Chalka Creek Day Walk	Contact Peter: 0458935239

Next Meeting
Wednesday April 5th at 8.00 pm
at Apex Park,
Life Saver's Club Rooms,
Mildura