

## Over 55 Cycling Club Wildflower Tour

28th. August - 5th. September 2004

Thirty one members of the Club took part in this very successful tour which was conceived and planned by Helen Cooksey and Brian Smith. The cost was \$300 per head and the tour was open to current members of the Over 55 Cycling Club exclusively.

*from Helen Cooksey*

My husband Stuart and I and Helen Were drove to Geraldton on Saturday 28th August. We arrived at the Sun City Caravan Park at Bluff Point to find many other members of the Over 55 Cycle Club - many had arrived before us. Tents were already erected and the camp kitchen was being put to good use. Some of us took time to witness the sunset from the beach with a glass of wine and nibbles.

For Helen and I our job before retiring for each night was to start the porridge cooking in the crock pots. The quantities were a bit of trial and error, with the first brew being thick enough to stand your spoon in. However, I think it was appreciated.

### Sunday morning:

All 32 of us rode up to the HMAS Sydney memorial on a hill over looking the city and harbour. The silver metal dome covering this magnificent memorial is made up of symbolic seagulls representing the souls of the people who drowned when the Sydney sunk. A few more hills eastwards to the morning tea van at the Greenough Shire offices then south to the mouth of the Greenough River for an early lunch.



*Ross mending a puncture*

We returned via the highway for a short way then followed the coast around to the light house, through the city centre and along the water front back to Sunset Beach to the caravan Park. In the late afternoon we shuffled as many cars as we could up to Northbrook farm stay north of Northampton to wait for our return on Saturday afternoon.

### Monday morning:

Riders struggled as they rode out on the Chapman Valley Road - struggling up the hills into an easterly wind to Nabawa where the Club van was set up with a scrumptious morning tea laid out, as it was every day at the half way point. Everyone donated a home-made cake. I couldn't resist trying all the different cakes and

biscuits, so ate far more than I should. From there it was a dream ride with the wind now behind us into Northampton.

When I did the reconnoitre for this ride last year with a few friends we camped in the caravan park which is beside and below the main highway through the town. All night long the trucks powered through the town sounding as though they were going to lob right on your tent, so I negotiated for us to camp on the football field and use the Northampton Country Club's facilities. What I didn't realise was that there are two huge hills to climb up to get to it. That was a bit of a struggle, especially after we had stopped and had lunch in town. My plan had been to have a walk around the historical buildings in the town, but everyone was too exhausted to tackle another hill after the 62 km ride.

### Tuesday:

After a cooked breakfast at the Country Club, we headed north on the hilly highway to Riverside Sanctuary Farm Stay on the Murchison River, south of the Galena Bridge, 68 km. The owner, Bob Porter, has won several awards for rehabilitation of his land. Part of the reason he has achieved this has been by selling off all sheep on the property. He took us for a walk down to the Murchison River in the afternoon and gave us a slide presentation after dinner explaining the improvements he had made.

The shearing shed has not had any sheep in it for quite a while and fortunately has lost its sheepy smell. It has been converted into a camp kitchen and display area. Most people, including Stuart, put their mattresses on the shed floor and slept in the shed. Not being snorer tolerant, I chose to put my tent up outside along with a few others. I was snug and warm in my tent and had quite a good sleep although my feet did feel a bit cold if I stretched them down the end of my sleeping bag in the morning.

When I got up in the morning, I found there had been a frost. The condensation on the inside of my tent fly was frozen, as was the dew on the outside. Most of the shed sleepers were walking around grumbling about the snorers and early risers. Stuart reckons campers should be divided into snorers and non-snorers, early risers and late risers. Mike and helpers cooked us bacon and eggs for breakfast on the BBQ to sustain us for the long ride ahead.

### Wednesday:

We set off to do the 80 km ride to Kalbarri. The easterly wind got up and assisted us as I had planned, until about 12 noon, when the sea breeze came in. The wild flowers all along the way were beautiful, especially on this stretch. Some of us opted for the luxury of a bed in an on-site cabin at the caravan park for the next two nights.

### Thursday

was a lay day. Some people took a flight out to the Abrolhos Islands. We had done that before, so we took a flight up the coast along the Zuytdorp Cliffs. We saw dolphins, turtles and whales in the ocean and thousands of goats camped along the cliffs. We turned south when we could see the bottom end of Sharks Bay to the north, before flying over the spectacular Murchison River Gorges on the way back.



*At the memorial*



*Morning tea time*

**Friday:**

It was time to saddle up and back on the bike again to ride south to

**Port Gregory**

, 70 km. It was a bit hard climbing the hills out of Kalbarri, but after that we had the hand of God on our back with a north easterly behind us. Fortunately the sea breeze didn't eventuate as it had the previous two days. We felt the full force of the wind when we turned around the south end of the Hutt Lagoon pink lake into the wind for the last 5 km. It was beautiful and warm when we arrived and we had an invigorating swim in the cool clear ocean on arrival.

**Saturday:**

We inspected the ruins of the convict hiring station on Lynton Station on the way out and Captain Sanford's house up on the hill overlooking the pink lake (where beta carotene is harvested), the green crops, the white sand hills and the blue ocean. Once again we jagged a tail wind to blow us to

**Northampton**

47 km, then 6 km north to North Brook Farm Stay.



*Riding to Horrocks*

Four hardy riders, Colin Pearse, Ben Jones, Norm Cook and David Taylor chose to take the long hard ride to Horrocks. I think they were sorry they did. When we arrived rain was threatening. We could see space was going to be tight because they were expecting another back packer tour in as well as us. I could see a tempting delicious looking pig turning on the spit for dinner but we decided to opt out and drive the 5 hours to Perth.

We arrived home in rain, tired but satisfied after a great week.

## The itinerary for this tour:

**Saturday, 28th August:**

Drive or bus to Sunset Beach, Geraldton and set up camp at the Sunset Beach Caravan Park after 14h00. Sites 1 45/1 46 by Camp Kitchen.  
18h00 - Evening meal at Red Rooster.

**Sunday, 29th. August:**

07h00 Breakfast by Over 55s at Sunset Beach

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 Short ride ( 53.9kms) to Greenough River mouth and return.  
 Long ride (85.9kms) to Greenough Hamlet and return  
 18h00 - Evening meal at Geraldton Camp School.

#### Monday, 30th August:

07h00 Breakfast by Over 55s at Sunset Beach Camp Kitchen.  
 Ride (62.5kms) to Northampton via Chapman Valley Rd.  
 Afternoon set up camp at Northampton Country Club.  
 18h00 -Evening meal provided at Northampton Country Club.

#### Tuesday, 31st August:

07h00 Cooked Breakfast provided at Northampton Country Club.  
 Ride (68.7kms) to Riverside Sanctuary Farm Stay.  
 Afternoon set up camp at Riverside Sanctuary.  
 16h30 Guided walk to Murchison River by Bob Porter  
 18h00 -Camp Oven evening meal provided at Riverside Sanctuary.  
 Evening - Landcare presentation and slides by Bob Porter (45mins).  
*Riverside Sanctuary are the 2004 Rural Landcare Award winners.*

#### Wednesday, 1st, Sept:

07h00 Riders cook own breakfast provided at Riverside Sanctuary  
 08h00 Riders prepare own lunches provided at Riverside Sanctuary.  
 Ride (80.2kms) to Anchorage Caravan Park at Kalbarri.  
 Afternoon set up camp at Anchorage Caravan Park by Camp Kitchen.  
 18h00 Evening meal at Jakes, (Vouchers provided to value \$15.00).

#### Thursday, 2nd. Sept:

0700 Breakfast by Over 55s at Anchorage Camp Kitchen.  
 Rest day in Kalbarri take a tour to the gorges, hike in the gorges, go kayaking down the Murchison, fly to the Abrolhos islands, take an evening cruise up the river or along the coastal gorges, go fishing, have an evening horse ride along the river flats-or just rest! (Riders to organise their own day tours).  
 18h00 Sausage and Soup Sizzle at Camp kitchen (Vouchers Required) Riders can organise own evening meal in Kalbarri if required.

#### Friday, 3rd. Sept:

07h00 Breakfast by Over 55s at Anchorage Camp Kitchen Ride (70.6kms) to Port Gregory Caravan Park.  
 Afternoon set up camp at Port Gregory Caravan Park.  
 18h00-BBQ provided by Over 55s at Camp Kitchen.

#### Saturday, 4th. Sept:

07h00 Breakfast by Over 55s at Port Gregory Camp Kitchen.  
 08h00 Riders prepare own lunches provided at Port Gregory C/Pk.  
 Short Ride (53.7kms) to Northbrook Farmstay at Northampton.  
 Long Ride (90kms) via Horrocks Beach (very hilly).  
 Afternoon set up camp at Northbrook Farmstay  
 1800 Evening meal "Sheep on the Spit" provided at Northbrook.

#### Sunday, 5th. Sept:

07h00 Cooked breakfast provided at



Route - Geraldton, Greenough, Geraldton, Northampton, Riverside, Kalbarri, Port Gregory, Northampton

Northbrook.  
09h00 Depart Northbrook Farmstay for  
Geraldton and Perth.