

Over 55 Cycling Club Nannup Camp 2013



Nannup Camp, Sunday 17th - Friday 22nd November

Nannup, on the Vasse Highway, about 270 kms/3 hours south of Perth, is a perfect, small town spot on the Blackwood River. Club members (51 this year) descended on Nannup on the Sunday and set up camp (tents, campervans, fancy caravans) in time to be ready for the obligatory Happy Hour sundowner in the small, part-alfresco communal kitchen and to receive notes from our trusty organisers about the next day's rides commencing 8.30am daily. Because the area is renowned hilly country, there were always choices between short, medium, and long rides.

Monday 18th - Keen cyclists rode away early for the first part of the day's itinerary and then met the rest of us slower members at the Secret Garden of the Lavender Farm on Vasse Highway, for devonshire tea/coffee, a maximum for the day of 40 kms. The Nannup Hotel opened at lunch just for us, with very good choices worth the wait - also memorable were the photos at the entry with before & after pics of floods in the town. Another happy sundowner at 5pm, then more taking turns at cooking dinner on the two available "burners".

Tuesday 19th - Balingup on the South West Highway is a bit more buzzing than Nannup. The route to get there is quite hilly, follows the Blackwood, and has restful vistas of farms (the denuded hills for pine plantations looked much less attractive). Lunch was at "your choice" of cafés in Balingup, and morning and afternoon refreshments were served roadside from our fabulous new, bright yellow trailer. Maximum ride 80 kms, minimum ride about 12 kms.

Wednesday 20th - Many of us organised a members' lift up the first big hill south of town, before cycling on to the Donnelly River one-time timber mill settlement built in 1933 and now a village with 26 timber cottages for rent to tourists. With the big old mill as backdrop, groups of wildlife visited our alfresco coffee tables - the wallabies were polite in wanting tidbits, but the emus were downright rude, reaching over our shoulders to steal our cakes. From Donnelly River (aka Wheatley) was an easy, scenic ride to very busy Manjimup for lunch (but the pies couldn't beat Balingup's). Long-time member David Taylor (and his wife) invited us to his rammed earth home and vegie gardens, just a few k's out of town, for afternoon refreshments. Then it was time to return back to camp, after a maximum 50-km ride. After the usual sundowner, we dressed up for dinner in the pretty, shaded garden of the Templemore Tea House in the main street of town - again open just for us and excellent value for \$35.

Thursday 21st - Again a choice of cycling distances (to a maximum for the day of 60 kms), but we all ended up for great devonshire tea/coffee at the Mythic Mazes and Karakia Alpaca farm adjoining its small art gallery. A different route back to Nannup for lunch led through the quiet lands of Cundinup, still green after unusual September/October rains. Some of us wandered along part of the nearby Munda Biddi Trail or along the Blackwood River, prior to sundowner and dinner at camp.

Friday 22nd - Well, what a surprise! Just as we all wanted to pack up our tents, campervans, lean-to's, etc. down came the rain, not too heavy but enough to be a nuisance. Anyhow, we were all pleased with our five days in the countryside and left for Perth feeling very contented, just like the many cows we saw in the region!

Just a couple of hints for next Nannup camp. The beautiful big trees rustle very noisily with the high winds at night, so take earplugs. And summer doesn't seem to arrive in Nannup till later, so take warm clothing for after sunset. Oh, and take saucepans and cooking utensils, because there ain't any in the camp kitchen (but there is a big fridge and a good barbecue).

Many thanks to the organisers for everything - Peter Mayall, George Olney, & James Carpenter.

report by Robin Garbutt