

THE CHAIN LETTER

Newsletter of the CYCLE TOURING ASSOCIATION OF W.A. (INC.)

November/December 2011

Issue 221

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We have just seen the end of the annual On Your Bike Tour in the Wheatbelt—from Hyden to Midland. The weather held out and easterlies throughout the tour made the riding most pleasant. Especially good was going around the bottom of the hill from York to Baker's Hill instead of having to climb up and down following the 160kmAR route from York back to the Lake's Service Station.

On Your Bike was notable for many things. Initially it looked like we might be struggling for numbers. But the word went out and the numbers rolled in. We had a record 46 green dots (members new to On Your Bike) all of whom were also new members to the CTA!

Notable mention goes to those who achieved personal best distances on the tour—particularly the youngest official participant, Grace Brownsdon—see the photo below. Her previous PB was 40km. On day 2 she upped this to 87km and then a few days later, not content with the ride from Quairading to York, did an extra

loop to make it 100km. I know a number of others also did PBs but unfortunately I do not know all the names.

Special thanks comes from Ken and Marilyn Sim, Green Dots from Victoria. Despite being a couple of days from moving, Mal and Lynn Harrison opened their doors and made them welcome, providing a base for their OYB experience. Mal and Lynn who are leaving Perth and will be badly missed from the CTA.

On a slightly down note, we had a few cyclists not being quite as considerate to other road users as they might have been—the photo on page 11 was taken on OYB. The cyclists are almost four abreast of each other, one cyclist almost on a double white line and with a corner coming up. Please, this is neither safe nor sensible—and apart from anything two abreast is the maximum allowed for by law.

Planning has already started for OYB 2012 and it should be superb. Terry Bailey has offered himself as tour leader for the third

time in a row. (Two others, Ron Bowyer and Kleber Claux, have each led three tours, but no one has led three in row before). The tour, Rounding the Capes, returns to the Margaret River region, starting in Capel and following an inland route to Augusta before returning north up Caves Road. The provisional dates are 20–28 October 2012 (although these cannot be confirmed until camp site bookings etc. can be finalised).

This will be my last musings in the President's Report for the Chain Letter. I look back at the last two years and see a strong and vibrant organisation dedicated to cycling. I am quietly confident that the CTA has a great future.

Thank you all for the support I have had as President and I trust you will give the same support to my successor. Best wishes and take care on your bikes



Green dot Grace Brownsdon and Experienced Hand Kleber Claux on OYB 2011

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COVER PHOTOS

Front Cover: Grace Brownsdon showing off her odometer after a new PB of 100km on the recent OYB;
 Kleber Claux in front of a penny farthing at a coffee shop at Bruce Rock on OYB 2011.
 Rear Cover: Cyclists and the tea wagon approach Bruce Rock:
 All three photos from Bruce Robinson

HOUSE KEEPING

Contact a Committee member, or send us an email, if:

1. **Your contact information changes** (so we can keep our data base up to date.)
2. **You wish to hire equipment.** We have Rear Panniers, a small Rack Bag and a Trangia (camp stove). By hiring, you can sample cycling touring without investing in lots of equipment. And if you do decide to invest, you'll have a better idea of

what you want for yourself. Cost is \$5 per 2 weeks, \$10 per month, plus a bond.

3. **You wish to contribute to, or borrow from, our library** of cycling related books and magazines. Items may be borrowed for 4 weeks, and the library is available for viewing during social evenings.
4. **You have stories, pictures, or ideas for the newsletter.** Photos should be at least 500KB to ensure adequate print quality.

Email to editor@ctawa.asn.au

REPORTING CYCLING HAZARDS

All riders are encouraged to report path and road hazards observed during their rides. Your action may well later save a fellow cyclist from a crash or a serious injury. Please e-mail a clear summary, with a subject "Hazard report" including details of the location and the problem (with a photo if you have a camera at the time) to: Cycling@Transport.wa.gov.au and/or Enquiries@MainRoads.wa.gov.au. If possible, please also send copies of the e-mails to Bruce.Robinson @ westnet.com.au and BTA_WA@hotmail.com .

The "official" hazard report link is www.transport.wa.gov.au/cycling/2345.asp. Reports need to be sent to the appropriate authority. You will have to use the map provided to determine which of these authorities is responsible for the location at which the hazard is found. However, the Bikewest map is often inadequate for finding which authority controls major paths. As a rule of thumb, Main Roads is responsible for traffic lights, major principal shared paths alongside freeways, major highways, the PTA for anything on railway property and the local shire (if you can determine which one) for everything else. Along a single bikepath there may be three or four different organisations responsible for sections of the same path. For instance on the path from Perth station to Subiaco station is variously controlled by the Perth City Council, Main Roads and the Subiaco City Council. If the problem is a caltrop puncture vine growing through the fence, the PTA is responsible.

DEADLINES: Contributions for the next issue (Jan/Feb) should be sent to the Editors (telephone Sarah or email editor@ctawa.asn.au) no later **4 December 2011.**

DISCLAIMER: Opinions or comments from contributors and members do not necessarily reflect those of the Club, its committee, the Editors, or its membership as a whole.

Unfortunately, the web form does not give you a confirmation copy of what you sent, so you have no evidence that the hazard has been reported. Therefore, it is recommended to send emails as above rather than using the web links—or do both. You can also telephone Main Roads on 138 138.

Girlfriends' Excellent Adventure

By Mary Roglich and Hilary Beck

Discovering that we had Long Service Leave at the same time, we decided to embark on a challenging and interesting adventure. We surfed the net for a cycling Tour that suited us and found Monsieur Jean-Philippe of Native Planet Adventures with whom we struck up an email communication that lasted for many months, while we fine-tuned our trip. Our seven day plan became a fourteen day self-guided tour in the Pyrenees in June, just before the Tour De France.

We met up in Paris and spent two days sight seeing from the top of a bus wrapped in the tourists' essential 'I Love Paris' poncho in the rain. We travelled by TGV to Lourdes, and then on to Argeles-Gazost our main base. Our hire bikes had been delivered to the hotel for us. We changed the pedals and seats (brought from home) and set off on our first day armed with maps and directions provided by Jean-Phi.

First day we set off for Col D'Aubisque and Soulor, passing several small villages and enjoying encouragement from a little old lady whose job it seemed was to sit outside her house and cheer cyclists on. She was still there when we made the return

trip. It was a busy day out with many cycling groups, bus tourists, animals 'at liberty', orange dyed sheep with their minders, the Pyrenean Mountain Dogs, and donkeys, some of which tried to eat our lunches. Between Aubisque and Soulor the mountain roads had sheer drop sides, and tunnels. The descent was exhilarating, but tiring, with our hands on the brakes the whole way down, not being quite confident enough to pick up speed. We had to stop to rest as our hands were cramping up.

Dinner, bed and breakfast were included and our main goal for each day was to complete the ride and get back in time for dinner, fall into bed and get our nine hours sleep. We were up for breakfast early each morning, dressed to kill in our lycra, filled our pockets with ham, cheese, muffins, bread, in fact anything that we could cram in, ready for another day in the saddle.

Second day was 'The Mighty Tourmalet'. Once we'd done this, we knew we could tackle anything! We approached from the West, taking three hours to climb the eighteen kilometres, stopping for a dowsing under a waterfall on the way up. It was very hot until we neared the top, where

the weather cooled, and the wind blew up. We were already wet from the waterfall and the effort and retreated to the café after the obligatory photo shoot under the sign. We met a couple from Melbourne who told us they were visiting with relatives from Holland who were also cycling in the region. We donned the arm warmers and wet weather gear and made our descent carefully down the hairpin bends until Bareges and from there had a wonderful run downhill back to Luz-St Sauveur and then to Argeles-Gazost.

Our third day was to be our longest ride but the weather was miserable and after winding our way in and around the backroads of Lourdes, we ended up in a café under a dripping umbrella eavesdropping on an English group on a Honda Goldwing Tour (for couples only). They were having a rest day, and we wondered why they would need one!!! After some time, and several coffees, we realized the weather wasn't getting any better and being a couple of wimps, rode the 16kms back to Argeles. Hilary's elbow, which had been used previously as a brake, was used again on the wet road and needed Beta-dine (2 Euro, bargain!!) and bandages purchased on our way back.

On the fourth day we travelled from Argeles-Gazost to Vielle-Aure, via Hourquette D'Ancizan but discovered after leaving Payolle, that the road was closed to traffic due to resurfacing (for the TDF we assumed), so we took the route through Col D'Aspin. When we reached the Col, it was wet, misty and deserted except for a man in a little van selling cheese. Not being in the mood for cheese, we did the photo under the sign drill and headed off. Hotel Aurelia in Vielle-Aure was a welcome sight and we stored the bikes in the ski room. We found a bucket of water and managed to clean off all the mud and cow sludge. The food at this family run hotel was very French and wonderful. Breakfast included a solid bread and butter pudding cake that looked very much like a culinary failure,



Mary and Hilary reach Col d'Aubisque

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Girlfriends' Excellent Adventure

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but which was actually delicious and was stuffed into our pockets for the ride.

Lac d'Oredon, d'Aumar, Aubert and Cap de Long are mountain lakes that were reached after a challenging climb of 8-10% gradients. The views were spectacular, and the entire region pristine and clean, where randonneurs were in abundance, as well as a 'Garderie pour chiens' where dogs could be left for the day. Small buses were kept busy all day taking hikers up to the lakes so they could then walk down. The ride down was fast and straight so our braking hands had a rest. We felt a great sense of community in this area where everyone seemed to be simply enjoying the outdoors.

On our way from Vielle-Aure to Luchon, Jean-Phi and his wife Yumi (transporting our luggage) drove up to greet us. We chatted on the road and then continued up the Col de Peyresourde. Jean-Phi took a number of photos of us before meeting us at the top with coffee and crepes from the café at the Col. Facebook link (Climbing Col de Peyresourde)

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150234289924366.318060.168198059365>

We could have sat there all day, the conversation was interesting, and we discussed the somewhat difficult itinerary. He had provided us with a few options so we felt there was flexibility in the challenge.

A pleasant downhill to Luchon followed where Mary's chain broke a link and she pretty much just wheeled the bike straight into a bike shop next to our hotel. After a little rest Hilary accepted the challenge of climbing SuperBagnères, another 18kms and 1200m of climbing. Mary went shopping for the toothpaste (someone had to do it). She realised too late that she could have caught the chair lift up to SuperBagnères and surprised Hilary at the top. Many youths were using the chair lift to take their mountain bikes up for a



Mary—shouldn't be lost with this many road signs!!



Harpin bends are par for the course and make descending interesting

downhill rampage.

From Luchon the next day we rode to Col de Mente, Portet-d'Aspet and des Ares. While resting in the café at Col de Mente, a group of 36 French men and a few WAGS, accompanied by several vans,

arrived. They took their shirts off, took some photos, used the water fountains and the toilets at the café. Quite a sight, and they cheered us as we set off for Col Portet d'Aspet. Mary took the easy option

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The Art of Talking to Non-Cyclists

Lance Armstrong demonstrates the art of speaking to non-cyclists (© Getty Images)

The fact that you are reading this tells me all I really need to know about you. You're a cyclist. I'm a cyclist. We therefore both know what's really important in life (riding). We see the world as it truly is (a place to ride our bikes). If we were each to answer the question, "What would you do with a million dollars?" our answers would vary perhaps in what equipment we'd buy and where we'd go to ride, but in little else.

If we were to have a conversation, we'd have an understanding of how each other thinks. Maybe you're a Cat 2 roadie and maybe I'm a cross-country endurance geek, but we both know that turning the cranks in a perfect circle is the ultimate form of self-expression.

Sadly, not everyone is like you and I. I am sad to say that there are people out there who rarely - if ever! - ride bikes at all. It's possible you even know someone like this. A coworker. A family member. You'd be surprised at how common non-cyclists are, actually. You probably encounter them several times per day and simply don't notice them, because they aren't interesting.

Mostly, you can safely ignore these people, simply by riding away from them. Sometimes, though - at a company party, say - it is impossible to avoid non-cyclists. Surrounded, you have no choice but to communicate with them.

Don't worry. I'm here to help. Just follow these five simple rules.

Rule 1: Understand their bizarre world view

You need to understand that non-cyclists don't realize that cycling is the most important thing any person can be doing at any given moment at any point in the universe. Non-cyclists' eyes - and minds - are shuttered, leaving them to believe that things like friends, community, work, and even family supercede what they naively



call "just exercise." It's sad - OK, it's pathetic - but it's true.

To appease non-cyclists, when asked about what matters to you, you must from time to time mention friends, family, the environment, or some other such nonsense. Otherwise, they'll never leave you alone and it will be hours until you can get away, back to the comfort and kinship you feel when with your bicycle.

Rule 2. Use metaphors from "real life"

Non-cyclists aren't ready to hear about your exquisite existence in its unadulterated perfection. No, you will need to translate the sublime cycling experience into terms they might be able to understand. Naturally, you and I know that the following metaphors don't do the actual cycling event justice, but they'll have to do.

To describe how it feels to ride down perfectly banked, twisty forested singletrack on a cool autumn morning: "It's like that scene from Return of the Jedi where Luke and Leia are zooming on their flying motorcycle things. Except you're the one powering the flying motorcycle. And you're not being chased by stormtroopers. And you don't have to tolerate the con-

stant chattering of Ewoks."

To explain why you gladly get up at 4:30am each weekday morning to ride your road bike for three hours on an entirely unremarkable road: "You know how you have to drive your car in stop-and-go traffic to get to work every morning? Well, imagine if you didn't have to stop. And imagine your car going as fast as you can make it go. And imagine starting the day feeling perfect. It's kind of like that."

To explain why you pay \$200 to participate in a race you have very little chance in winning: "Ever play the lotto? It's like that, except much, much more so."

Rule 3: Pretend to be interested in their life

This one's going to knock you off your feet. Believe it or not, non-cyclists sometimes think they have something interesting to say, have an interesting hobby, or an interesting experience to relate.

This, of course, is utter nonsense.

Still, for the sake of propriety, you must act as if you care. Feel free, as they talk, to pleasantly daydream about biking. Just smile and say, "Absolutely," from time to

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Girlfriends' Excellent Adventure

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and headed off to watch cows in a paddock while Hilary climbed this big hill. Luck was on her side as the 36 Frenchmen arrived with her, and saved the day by sharing water from one of the vans. She struck up a conversation with one of the good looking ones when they suddenly had to go. No rest or fraternizing for these avid cyclists!

Next day was Col du Portillon on the border between France and Spain. We arrived at the top and struck up a conversation with two Dutch cyclists who said they were travelling with relatives from Australia. Mid baguette, we heard the strident tones, "There's those BLOODY Australians!!" and the couple we'd met on the Col de Tourmalet the week before, drove in and piled out with the Dutch relatives and bananas. Half way through a conversation with the cute Dutch guy, we were dragged

away to 'have a look at the camper van!!' Down on our luck again, we bid them all farewell and headed down the mountain to Vielha in Spain. By now it was oppressively hot, few spoke English but we struggled on with our limited French and managed to buy a ham and cheese omelette in a bread roll (not what we were expecting but...). We made the return journey to the very tourist oriented Luchon the way we had come. Our hotel was opposite the church and what a busy church it was, with bells ringing every hour and especially at five past seven!!

We left Luchon and returned to Vielle-Aure via Port de Bales, and Peyresourde where we encountered Charlie the black spaniel with his parents, randonneuring. This time at Peyresourde it was dark and misty and the coffee and crepes went down a treat.

From Vielle-Aure we returned to Argeles-

Gazost via Hourquette d'Ancizan (which we were unable to do previously because of the road works). Eerie mist followed us up the mountain. All seemed deserted bar a few motor cyclists. The day turned out fine and we finally shed the wet weather gear. The route was a mixture of forests, pastoral land, small winding roads, quaint villages and many dogs.

Over the last few days in Argeles we cycled to the ski centre, Hautacam and the peak, Tramassel. We also cycled via Lourdes and farming towns to Tourmalet approaching from the east, in beautiful weather this time.

Our last cycling day took us to Luz St Sauveur where we watched a Cyclo Sportif Event which included Tourmalet.

Our total distance was 1022kms and our total climbing was 22000metres. We were impressed and we hope you are too.

The Art of Talking to Non-Cyclists

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time.

Warning: It's entirely possible that a non-cyclist will say something with which you disagree. When this happens, do not engage. If you do, you will have unwittingly stepped into a non-cycling conversation, and who knows where that will lead, or when it will end.

Always remember: Be polite, be brief, be gone.

Rule 4. Act like their theory on doping in cycling is very interesting

A tactic non-cyclists will often employ, once they have discovered you are a cyclist, is to try to talk with you about cycling. This usually takes the form of trying to talk with you about doping in cycling.

You will, no doubt, be tempted to gouge your ears out rather than hear their simplistic, uninformed opinion ("Doping is

bad") to its rambling, incoherent conclusion. After all, as a cyclist, you have no doubt been pummelled with story after story after story about doping. You have heard so much about doping that you could now be called as an expert witness at the next doping trial. Or open a lab. Or be the next president of WADA (and you're rightly confident you'd do a much better job).

But if you point any of this out to your non-cyclist "friend," he will no doubt take that as a sign that you are interested in continuing the conversation. So, instead, repeat this simple phrase, "Yeah, doping sucks."

Your friend will feel like he has made his point, whatever it was.

Rule 5. Don't tell them the truth about how much your bike cost

Few people ever own anything that works, fits, or looks as well as a truly well-built

bike. And yet, when they find that your bike costs as much as their high-end computer or mid-range stereo, they will fake a heart attack, guaranteed.

The solution? Tell non-cyclists you paid \$499.99 for your bike, no matter how much you really paid for it. This number has been scientifically formulated to sound like more than a non-cyclist would pay for a bike, without otherwise drawing attention to itself.

No matter how you try, you can't always avoid non-cyclists. All you can hope to do is minimize contact with them - so you can get back to what's important.

And I think we both know what that is.

Elden "Fatty" Nelson blogs as The Fat Cyclist, where he says ridiculous things about bikes, biking, and bikers on a daily basis. Oh, and sometimes he gives stuff away, too. So that's something.

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Lift out Rides Calendar page for November/December 2011

Ride Guidelines

All riders are responsible for showing up with a well-maintained bike. You must wear a helmet, and we recommend you bring a spare tube, puncture repair kit, tyre levers, pump and, if your bike is not fitted with quick release hubs, a spanner that fits your axle nuts. Most importantly, bring water!

Rides are described using the guidelines below. *If you are unsure of your*

suitability for a ride, or if you feel it may be too long for you, don't be put off. Please contact the leader before the day to discuss your suitability, or to see if you can do part of the route.

Terrain refers to the hilliness of the ride, and can be "Mostly Flat", "Rolling", "Some Hills" or "Hilly".

Mountain bike rides (on tracks or unsealed roads) are described as "MTB".

Pace refers to the average speed on the

flat without breaks. Downhills may be faster, uphill slower. For rides with "Hilly" terrain, consider choosing a pace one level below your usual comfort level.

Social	Under 15km/h
Leisurely	15 - 20km/h
Moderate	20 - 25km/h
Brisk	25 - 30km/h
Strenuous	30 - 35km/h
Super Strenuous	35km/h or more

Contact: rides@ctawa.asn.au

LIABILITY DISCLAIMER: While every effort is made by CTA ride leaders to ensure the safety of all participants on our rides, individual cyclists (whether they are members or not) are **not** covered by the club for injuries if an accident occurs. We recommend that you obtain personal accident insurance before taking part.

Not the 10,000 in 8

Sunday, 6 Nov 11 : 8:45am

Slow end of moderate: 20 km/h. Hilly 55km but with hills makes this a reasonably hard ride. Meet at Kelmscott Train Station at 8:45am. You have done the 5,000 in 4 Achievement Ride and failed to see a psychiatrist before you have this strange idea that you might want to complete the 10,000 in 8. Experience the one and only Paterson Road and some of the other hills of the 10,000 in 8 achievement ride that you have only heard about and not been silly enough to try.....well not yet anyway. But overall we will only experience half the distance and half the climbs of the real thing.

Leader: John 9485 2330

Richards Legs Burn

Sunday, 13 Nov 11 - 9:00am

Moderate: 20 - 25 km/h, road Bike: Hilly . 50km. Meet at Gosnells Train Station at 9:00am.

Leader: Richard 9293 0398

Santos Great Bike Ride for Charity

Sunday, 20 Nov 11 - 6:00am

All speeds from leisurely to super strenuous, some lumps, for road or mountain bikes, This is NOT a CTAWA club bike ride. Details and entry are available at <http://greatbikeride.com.au>. The Santos Great Bike Ride for Charity is a fun way to do one or two 53km loops of the Swan

River including a blurt up the freeway from Canning Bridge to The Narrows with 7000 new friends.

What's a Pie Cost?

Sunday, 27 Nov 11 - 8:00am

60km, Moderate: 20 - 25 km/h, Road Bike: Hilly. A "bit hilly" (but we will wait) and moderate to brisk on the flat bit (yes there is one!). Join Jeremy at 8:00am at the Midland train station for a ride from Midland to Mundaring, just not the most direct way. We will head from Midland to Ridgehill Rd before tackling Kalamunda Rd. Once we regroup in Kalamunda, we will take the Mundaring Weir Rd (because I have never been down that hill) to the Mundaring Artisan Bakery for a well earned coffee and cake before returning to Midland train station via a slightly different route. Any questions?

Leader: Jeremy 0412 886612 (and yes you can do it!)

Annual General Meeting

Sunday, 4 Dec 11

Loftus Community Centre, Leederville, 10am. See notice on page 12

Christmas Party Cobweb Clearer

Sunday, 11 Dec 11 - 6:45am ,

80km, moderate: 20 - 25 km/h, hilly, Road or mountain Bike. Meet in the car park off Gillwell Ave near Albany Highway in Kelmscott at 6:45 so we can start at

7:00 as the weather may become hot. Shed any excess you may have acquired during the Christmas party season up Miills Rd East then continue through to the Bickley valley and return via Roleystone. We'll regroup at strategic intervals. A coffee stop is included.

Leader Don 0418 948 955

Through Yallagonga Reserve

Sunday, 18 Dec 11 - 8:30am

50km moderate, road or mountain bike, some hills. Meet at Edgewater Station for a ride through the Yallagonga Reserve and Wanneroo district. Coffee in the village at Wanneroo near the end.

Leader David: 0439 390 989

Merry Christmas to all

Sunday 25 Dec 11

No CTA ride today

And a Happy New Year!

Sunday, 1 Jan 12

And another week off

Whiteman Park Explorer

Sunday, 8 Jan 12 - 7:45am,

50km, leisurely: 15 - 20 km/h, Road Bike, Mountain Bike: Flat Leaving from Mt Lawley Railway Station and riding to Whiteman Park, with the option to explore once we are there. Start 7.45 for 8am

Leader Sarah 94438095 sar-cutts@inet.net.au

Combining passions – Cycling & France

By Lynda Nottle and Dallas Trowbridge

“Best four weeks annual leave ever “ – that’s a big claim – but when you combine two passions – cycling and France – you can understand why.

Each year we watch in awe the beautiful countryside, chateaus and villages along the Tour de France and talk about how great it would be to cycle there one day. Then during an information session at Alliance Francaise in Nedlands on canal boat holidays in France, we saw amazing scenery and heard about cyclists riding the tow paths along the canals. We thought that’s for us and began our search for more information. The Chart and Map shop in Fremantle specialising in canal maps (and lots of other maps) was a great resource.

With a map of France and several canal map books laid out on the table, we started planning. This raised many questions like where to go? What bikes will be need – do we hire or buy bikes there or take our own? What gear will we need? How long will we ride for?

Having been to France a few times and raced across the country by car and train trying to fit in as many of the popular

sights as possible, this time we were keen to take our time and experience the countryside and everything French.

Initially we thought we would spend some time in England too and booked our flights from Perth to London and thought it would be easy enough to book local flights to Paris. Easy enough it was, but did require more planning when you are travelling with bikes.

The more we studied the maps, the more we changed our minds about which canals and eventually decided to start in Bordeaux and cycle the Canal de la Garonne and the Canal de Midi to Sete then weave our way inland to spend a few days with friends in Manosque, near Aix en Provence. Where to go – tick.

We decided to take our own bikes but as we both have road bikes and as we would be carrying our own gear we talked to CTA members about their touring experiences and sought their recommendations. The members provided valuable information that you just can’t get from books and based on their feedback, Dallas bought a touring bike so he could also carry most of the weight. What bikes – tick.

As all cyclists know when pannier touring

you can only carry the essentials and we were able to fit all we needed into the bike boxes and our backpacks which doubled as cabin bags. We also decided to take older clothes so we could ditch these before flying home if Lynda got the urge to shop. We were keen to promote that we were Aussies and belonged to the CTA so we bought the new club jersey which also met our need to wear bright clothing. We believe wearing Club gear also helped us to meet other cyclists – but more about that later. What gear to take – tick.

Taking the bikes out of Perth was easy as we could buy the bike boxes from the airline. Dallas even made attachable wheels for the bottom of the boxes so that we could wheel the boxes to our accommodation in Bordeaux – a distance of about 600mts from the bus stop. This worked well enabling us to wheel the boxes into Perth airport but unfortunately the glue didn’t travel so well and the wooden frame inside the box came apart and wouldn’t hold the wheels. But still think there is a way to make this work – next time !!

Once we arrived at Heathrow, we took a National Express bus to Gatwick (bikes travel free of charge if there is enough room with the other passenger’s luggage – hint: get to the front and load the bikes first) then flew to Bordeaux and caught the Jet’Bus at the airport which also takes bikes free of charge.

Accommodation in Bordeaux was found in the Lonely Planet and was booked via email because of its bike friendly reputation. Although there was no dedicated bike storage, the hosts were very helpful in allowing ours and other cyclists bikes to be stored in their offices and they were also happy to dispose of our bike boxes.

After a couple of days playing tourist in Bordeaux and making sure the bikes were ready for the big trip ahead, we began our ride. The Canal de la Garonne begins about 60 kms from Bordeaux which can be reach by road or the recommended Piste Cyclable Roger Lapebie that took us



Dallas and Lynda on the Canal du Midi

In the background is the Ouvrages de l’Argentdouble bridge built in 1693

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Combining passions – Cycling & France

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along a disused railway line through vineyards and villages to Sauveterre de Guyenne – we thought we were in heaven and it was only day one. We spent our first night at a chamber d'hotels (bed & breakfast) that also provided an evening meal and drinks (at extra cost) with bike friendly hosts who have created a seven day cycle tour with accommodation that will be well worth doing. Please contact us if you want more information.

Fortunately a helpful person at the Bordeaux tourist office gave us a canal cycle map for the Voie Verte (green line), which has been produced in two stages – Bordeaux to Toulouse and Toulouse to Sete – that provides not only the route but also a range of accommodation and eating options and tourist offices along the way.

We were keen to stay in chamber d'hotels to enhance the French experience and had no trouble finding places within our budget with the help of the map, tourist offices and recommendations from our hosts. All our hosts were delightful and very accommodating with our bikes. We also took our GPS with France maps which was a great help in locating accommodation off the cycle path and as we made our way to Manosque.

The Voie Verte was fantastic to cycle - wide, smooth, safe and very well signed posted and every cyclist we passed wished us bonjour (good day). After a couple of days cycling we settled into a routine of starting each day's ride about 10am – gave us plenty of time to enjoy le petit dejeuner (breakfasts) offered and talk to our hosts, spend time exploring villages and sites of interest along the way, stopping for baguettes lunches in "post card" locations and after averaging about 60kms a day checked in to our night's accommodation between 4pm and 5pm just in time for aperitif - often provided by our hosts.

The cycle path from Toulouse to Sete could not be more different to the route from Bordeaux. Where we had enjoyed flat easy riding, we were now faced with nar-

row goat tracks laden with tree roots, pot holes, mud gullies and exposed rocks which made slow times and challenging cycling. On this section we both wished we had mountain bikes but fortunately our bikes and we survived.

The upside was that this part of the canal is more interesting with stunning scenery created by giant leaf laden plane trees overhanging the canal and the cycle path meandering through more villages and more ports filled with interesting tourist and house canal boats.

Finishing the canals in Sete was disappointing – maybe it was visions of the finish line for the Tour de France or the Lands End to John O'Groats that Dallas cycled in 2008 that we expected some sort of photo opportunity that would enable us to 'brag' that we had completed the canals. With the cycle path disappearing and having to cycle along a busy road into Sete – it just didn't give us that same sense of achievement.

After Sete we hit the roads and cycled inland through Arles and the breathtaking countryside of Provence and one morning cycled head on into the Mistral – a wind that is renowned for its destruction - "that was tough" then into the hills to the sanctuary of our friends in Manosque where it rained for the only time on the whole trip.

Our last day of cycling was mostly downhill from Manosque to Aix-en-Provence and along the way we stopped off at a little village for a coffee. This is where we met a small group of cyclists from the Cyclo Sport Provencal Club from Aix en Provence and despite the difficulties of language we spent a truly wonderful time sharing cycling stories and experiences. And as you do when you meet like minded people we exchanged contact details and



With a group from Cyclo-Sport Provencal Aix en Provence Club

made a promise to accept their invitation to return in 2012 to cycle with their Club. We believe it was our CTA jerseys and the similarities of our Clubs, or maybe their interest in two mad Aussies, that they wrote a story about us in their Club newsletter "Roue Libre" including, with permission, a copy of the front page of the CTA's July/ August 2011 issue of The Chain Letter. If anyone would like to read the article or if you want to come cycling with us in September 2012 with their Club please send us an email.

Returning home with our bikes was the next challenge. After exploring several options we chose train to Nice (bikes are free on the local trains but are not allowed on the fast trains) then fly to Heathrow to make our connection back to Perth. Before leaving we made enquiries to airports and airlines and found it impossible to obtain bike boxes, so decided to again take the advice from a CTA member to plastic wrap our bikes at Nice airport. This proved a good option and also enabled us to pack our panniers on the bike with the bike tools etc that added extra padding for the bike. Tho' the plastic tore in some places so we added another layer of plastic wrap at Heathrow. The plastic wrap did work well but unfortunately does not give the baggage handlers handle holes to load so some of the wrap had to be torn.

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Downsides of the Munda Bididi

by Doug Allen

This was the third time I have ridden a portion of the Munda Bididi trail. On the two previous occasions I had ridden sections of the trail involving 5 days of riding. This last ride was of 10 days duration. I have enjoyed all three rides very much, but there can be downsides and it is the downsides I experienced on this last ride that I now write about.

Roy Stone and I caught the Australind to Bunbury, then a TransWA coach to Bridgetown. Be aware that the Australind has a limit of two bikes only and TransWA only passes Nannup (the current end point of the Munda Bididi) three times a week. The first day of our ride was Bridgetown to Nannup. A picturesque ride, although in July the fog was still blanketing the countryside until mid morning.

In mid winter, plan your rides so that if you want a hot drink at the end of the day, make sure that you arrive in a town before 4.00 pm.

Our third night was in a Munda Bididi hut at Jarrahwood. The next morning a local resident came over to check on us. He was collecting firewood for his pot belly stove. Earlier he had tried to hose the ice off his fruit trees, but the water in the pipes and hose was, like me, frozen. The temperature was minus 1.7 degrees. My sleeping bag was inadequate for such temperatures as was my 120 cm X 50 cm X 2cm air mattress.

We planned the trip so that every second night was in a town so that we could have a hot shower, hot dinner, and buy food for the next two days. The alternate nights were in a Munda Bididi hut. I'm not sure if this arrangement makes us wimps or not.

By the time we arrived in Donnybrook at the end of the fourth day, and had showered, changed and walked around the town, it was 5.50 pm and we went back to the hotel for a hot meal. The hotel has meals every night except Mondays. Today was Monday. Jogging down the main

street looking for a take-away we began to realise we might be going hungry. We came across a closed pizza and another fast food outlet also closed, before finding a Chinese restaurant in total darkness, but fortunately the proprietor was still there and he opened up his premises for us.

The next three days the weather changed from very cold to very wet. Sections of the trail were completely flooded sometimes for more than twenty metres. The muddy waters gave no clues as to whether the water was 2cms deep or 20cms deep.

The huts were located in lovely areas of native forest, often in a valley with a stream nearby. Be aware that at this time of the year, in a valley, in the forest, the sun starts to set around 5pm. So if you haven't got torches, you need to have your cooking done early.

In hindsight, we should have planned a rest day somewhere in the trip. It would have made for a more enjoyable tour. On day nine, we were riding at a fairly slow pace. The track had some steep sections, but was in reasonable condition. I was surprised, that as we went over a nice smooth section of track, my bike went

from under me. Roy and I had fallen a number of times over the last 8 days, but I knew this time I was in trouble. To cut to the chase I had fractured my hip in three places, although at the time I only knew that I couldn't stand. We were about 15 kilometres from Dwellingup, on a narrow track, so I knew it was not accessible by 4WD. It was about 3pm and I was concerned that we would have to spend the night in the bush. I was able to get back on my bike and ride for about twenty or thirty minutes until we came to an unsealed road. Here we were able to contact the Shire ranger, who took us and our bikes back to Dwellingup.

In April 2011, on the Easter CTA ride, Roy and I had come across a young female rider, who was riding the Munda Bididi trail by herself. My experience on the track made me realise how dangerous this might be. Over the 10 days, we had not seen another rider on the trail.

I have written this article for the benefit of other inexperienced riders like me. Up until now my motto has been "Adventure before dementia", but I am thinking "Tortoise? Hare?" might be better.



One of the natural hazards to negotiate

Combining passions – Cycling & France

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Despite this the bikes travelled back well apart from minor scratches and although we had let the tyres down and turned the handle bars around we should have also taken off both sets of pedals as these were protruding from the plastic.

The experience and success of this trip has ensured that from now on our annual leave will involve cycling and hopefully many more trips back to France – the next one being in September 2012.

More information:

If anyone would like more information about our trip or information on our plans to cycle with the Aix en Provence Club in 2012 please email Lynda Nottle or Dallas Trowbridge on
lynda@sportsworks.com.au or

dallas@sportsworks.com.au

Key facts:

Travel dates: Thurs 12-May to Fri 10 June - all spent in France

Bikes: Dallas - Vivente World Randonneur & Lynda - Giant CRX2

Total days cycling: 17 days – others were tourist exploring days

Total kms cycled: 960kms

Punctures: 1 (Dallas' bike from a tack)

Bike repairs required: nil – amazing !!

Falls from bike: 1 (Dallas – fortunately no harm)

Most kms in one day: 81 kms (toughest and hilliest to Manosque)

Fewest kms in one day: 19 kms (cycled into Carcassonne on our rest day)

No of photos taken: 1200



Wouldn't you rather Cycle Instead?

See: www.transport.wa.gov.au/cycling/19885.asp

Radio & TV:

Keep up with the latest breaking cycle related news, whether your interest is in MTB's, Touring, Time Trials, Road Racing, or gizmos and gear. Let the experts keep you up to date on what is happening in WA and the world.

**Curtin Radio 100.1FM
Saturdays 7:40—8:00am**

**SBS (TV)
Sundays 11:30am—12:00noon**



CTA Riders should NOT be riding like this.

The photo above was taken on the recent OYB Tour. The cyclists are nearly four abreast, there is a double white line and they are approaching a corner.

Newsletter and Rides

We welcome articles and photos on

- Rides you have done, in WA or elsewhere in Australia or the world
- Articles on bicycles, cycling gear, maintenance or safety
- News of members—whether related to rides or not
- Health, physiology, exercise programs or anything else related to the rider
- Riding tips or techniques
- Cycling trivia or quizzes
- Anything else!

The Editors and other members will be very grateful!! Copy should be sent to: editor@ctawa.asn.au

New Members

We welcome the following new members—Green Dots on OYB

Gordon Birch	Kerry Holland	Beth Sawyers
Fiona Briggs	Penelope Jackson	Denis Sawyers
Harry Briggs	Alan Jackson	Jane Schmidt
Barry Brown	Ruth Lawrence	Brian Sercombe
Deborah Brownsdon	Christine Liddiard	Chris Sercombe
Grace Brownsdon	Julianne Martin	Ken Sim
Jan Chaney	Eric Mills	Marilyn Sim
Bruce Dalton	Ruth Moyses	Sam Smith
Penny Dufty	Steve Napier	Cliff Smith
Phil Dufty	Deb Pooley	Sue Urbianak
Liz Evans	Mike Pooley	
Robyn Harkins	Craig Quartermaine	
David Hibbard	Leanne Reid	
Marianne Hibbard	Craig Sanderson	

ACHIEVEMENT RIDES

We acknowledge the following members in recent achievement rides:

50km AR—Take 2—28 Aug 11

- Janice Bertram Mal Harrison
- Wayne Bertram Leanne Robb
- Bill Davis Miranda Stanton
- Lynn Harrison Charlie Trestrar

100km AR—Take 2—24 Sept 11

- Bruce Beecham Leanne Robb
- Bill Robb

200km in 2—24 & 25 Sept 11

- Wayne Bertram Stephen White
- Bruce Robinson

5000 in 4—2 Oct 11

- Wayne Bertram David Lewis
- Rob Ghilarducci Stephen White

Brevets

- 28 Aug 11—Peter Kornyschan—100km
- 10 Sept 11 - Stu Crombie—200km
- 11 Sept 11—Bruce Beecham—5000 in 4
- 24 Sept 11—Stu Crombie—300km
- 24 Sept 11—John Faris—160km
- 15 Oct 11—John Faris—10000 in 8

CTA CLOTHING



CTA Clothing

The CTA is holding the following stock:

New design CTA jerseys (\$85 short sleeve, \$95 long sleeve):

Short Sleeve Unisex: S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL

Short Sleeve Womens: 10, 12, 14, 16

Long Sleeve Unisex: XS, S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL

Long Sleeve Womens: 10, 14

Please note that the sizings for these Sprint Design jerseys are VERY small—most people need two sizes larger than their usual fitting.

The sizes above include a variety of shorter or longer backs, and shorter or longer zips. Any combination of back length, sleeve length or zip length can be ordered directly from the manufacture (12 week lead time). Our suggestion is that you first try on what we have in stock. To place an order, you contact Sprint Design directly via their website at:

www.sprintdesign.com.au/cycling-clothing/cta.html

CTA bib knicks and knicks are also available by special order through Sprint Design.

Old CTA Jerseys (sizing is more generous than Sprint above) Only TWO still available, \$50 each:

Short sleeve womens Size 12, Long Sleeve mens XXXL

CTA Orange Fluoro Shirts (sizing is very large)

Short sleeve unisex style only: sz 16, 18 & 22

CTA Socks

Red/yellow or new Orange/blue socks with CTA logo — \$10 a pair

Take-a-Look Mirrors

Unbeatable Take-a-Look mirrors. Attach to your glasses (and better than an eye in the back of your head) \$20 each

Adaptors available to attach mirror to your helmet instead \$4.50. Postage for up to 3 mirrors within WA \$2.60

Contact : Deb 9478 1571 (H) or email cloth@ctawa.asn.au for any enquiries or orders.



CTA Annual General Meeting

Notice is given for the CTA Annual General Meeting to be held at the Loftus Community Centre, Leederville, Sun 4 Dec 2011 10.00am

Business:

Apologies

Confirmation of the Minutes of last AGM

Reports: President, Treasurer, Clothing, Newsletter, Safety, OYB, Sustainable Tour, Rides

Awards: Achievement Rides, Newsletter article, Ride of the Year, Cycle Tourist of the Year

Election of Officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and six ordinary committee members. Nominations will be called for Newsletter editor, Rides Co-ordinator, AR Co-ordinator, Social Co-ordinator, Webmaster, Social Co-ordinator for the six ordinary committee members.

Notices of Motion

That the constitution of the CTA be amended as follows: Rule 2 Objects —last sentence to read : *The Association should endeavour to be clearly non-partisan in its dealings with governments.* To be moved by Bruce Robinson and seconded by Stu Crombie

General Business

Any other business should be sent to the Secretary, Bruce Robinson—see p2

The CTA Achievement Ride Series

Introduction

The CTA conducts a series of "Achievement Rides" (ARs) each year. These rides provide you with a graded set of challenges. Each ride must be completed within the set time limit, but is otherwise non-competitive in nature. Each ride is supported by a volunteer and the series is coordinated by the Achievement Rides Co-Ordinator

(See page 2 for contact details).

Background

The origin of the series was for set distance rides so that touring cyclists could train for loaded pannier touring. The philosophy being that if a rider could ride X kms unloaded in a day then they should be able to ride half X in a day when fully loaded. For example, if someone could do the 200 km ride then they should be also able to cover 100 kms on a loaded touring bike. The longest ride in the series is 300 kms on the basis that 150 kms per day is the absolute maximum that could reasonable be attained fully loaded.

Traditionally, the ARs have been run twice a year ("Take 1" and "Take 2"). "Take 1" rides are always run, but you should register at least 10 days beforehand. In line with the criticism at the 2009 AGM that the focus of the CTA is shifting a little too far away from "touring", the Rides Committee is to consider whether to have

Ride (Normal)	Time Limit
50km	3 hrs 20 mins
100km	6 hrs 40 mins
Century (100 miles/160kms)	10 hrs 40 mins
200km	13 hrs 30 mins
300km	20 hrs

Ride (Hills)	Time Limit
5,000 in 4 (5,000 feet of hills)	4 hrs
10,000 in 8 (10,000 feet of hills)	8 hrs

a "Take 2" this year or suggest that those who miss the "Take 1" should complete any missing rides using a brevet.

Ride time limits

To be considered "successfully completed"

Series	Rides
Merit	50, 100 km and 5000 in 4
Achiever	50, 100km. 5000 in 4 plus any <i>one</i> of 160, 200 or 300km or 10000 in 8 or 100km AR and a further 100km the next day
Challenge	50, 100, 160, 200 km, and 10000 in 8
Super Achiever	50, 100, 200, 300 km and 10000 in 8

a ride must be completed within the given time limit. Upon successfully completing a ride you are entitled to a badge. Contact the Rides Committee if you would like badges.

Ride series

The rides are grouped into series, and an award is available for "successfully completing" a series. A member can only nominate for one award per year.

A longer ride may be substituted for a shorter ride as long as it is of the same type (eg Normal / Hills).

Following the 2008 AGM, the Committee discussed the way ahead for the Achievement Series for 2009 and onwards. The main issue raised was that many people felt that there was too much of a jump from the Merit to the Challenge Series. The new "Achiever" series was added to fill this gap. This level includes all the rides of the Merit Series plus any one of the longer achievement rides. (See table above).

Note that the 100km AR plus the 100km the following day can only count for the 100km AR, or the 200 in 2, but not both. The two 100km rides of the 200 in 2 must be ridden on two successive days to count.

(The unofficial level of "Over Achiever" is awarded when you ride to and from the start of the 300km AR. Kleber is the only person known to have done it!)

Qualifying to start the 160, 200 and 300km ARs

Due to their length, difficulty and time taken to complete there are qualification criteria to be eligible to start the 3 longer ARs. See the following table.

160km	100km same year
200km	160km same year; or Challenge Series previous year
300km	160 or 200km same year; or Super Achiever Series previous year

If you have completed a ride of similar length and/or difficulty to those stated in the criteria e.g. Audax Ride or Over 55s Achievement Ride, and can produce some evidence as proof, then please contact the Rides Committee if you wish to be considered eligible to start.

Using brevets

If you are unable to attend one of the official CTA rides, then you can complete the ride using a CTA brevet card. Brevet cards and route descriptions are available from the AR Co-ordinator. You need to contact him before attempting the ride.

Completed cards must be returned to the Rides Committee as soon as possible after the ride (within 2 weeks) and absolutely no later than **four** weeks before the AGM.

Achievement Rides support

If you can help support any of the AR's, you will be reimbursed (at the rate of \$.50/km) for your mileage (the odometer reading from when you leave your house for the ride, to when you return). Other related expenses will also be reimbursed if you provide receipts.

Dates for 2012

The dates for the 2012 achievement rides will be published in the next issue of the Chain Letter



Cyclists and the tea wagon approaching Bruce Rock on the recent OYB Tour

MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

CTA membership is from January 1st to December 31st. New members joining after June 30th may pay the half year membership price (1/2 of the prices shown below).

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Renewal Adult membership | \$40.00 |
| (If paid by 31 Jan | \$35.00) |
| 2. New Adult membership | \$35.00 |
| 3. Full-time Students/Pensioners | \$23.00 |
| 4. Dependents under 18 | no charge |

Membership forms can be downloaded from our website www.ctawa.asn.au. Please send your cheque and form to the Cycle Touring Association, PO Box 174, Wembley WA 6913. **A receipt of payment is only issued on request.**

The CTA is a non-Government organization relying on membership fees, donations and volunteer labour to achieve our aims and objectives.

These monies help provide each member with six newsletters per year, a number of social evenings with suppers, weekend trips and tours at cost, and a library, to name a few of the material benefits.

If undelivered please return to
PO Box 174 Wembley 6913
Western Australia

