

## Melba Shed - May2013 - Myrtleford Rail Trail Trip

[Murray to Mountains Rail Trail \(http://www.murraytomountains.com.au/\)](http://www.murraytomountains.com.au/)

### Planning

The Easy Riders planned to cycle along the rail trail from Myrtleford to Bright and Wangaratta in Victoria between Wed 15 May to Sat 18 May 2013.

We decided to stay where some went before at [Ardern's Caravan Park](http://www.greatalpinevalleys.com.au/accom_result1/arderns-caravan-park/) ([http://www.greatalpinevalleys.com.au/accom\\_result1/arderns-caravan-park/](http://www.greatalpinevalleys.com.au/accom_result1/arderns-caravan-park/)) at Myrtleford, Vic. Myrtleford is central to all the bike trails going to Bright, Wangaratta & Beechworth. The Caravan Park is close to the Ovens River and close to shops in Myrtleford (has a Coles). Not only bike riders but all Shed members were welcome to join in but had to arrange their own accommodation at the caravan park.

Bookings were by Phone (03) 5752 1394 or by [email](mailto:arderns@internode.on.net) on arderns@internode.on.net. Contacts are Alana and Geoff Scott. To book they needed your credit card details but we could pay cash when we got there. Ardern's had reserved 5 double cabins for us with 2 Br, kitchen, TV etc. One of the 2 Brs had a double bed the other Br had single beds or bunks. Tariff for 2 people in a cabin was \$95/night plus \$10 more for an extra adult. Queen Cabins start at \$120 / night.

We needed to bring our own linen and towels but could hire them if we wished. We also took sleeping bags or blankets.

Bike hire was available in Myrtleford at the [Myrtleford Cycle Centre \(http://myrtle.giantbyte.com/\)](http://myrtle.giantbyte.com/)

### Wed 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013

7 of us gathered at Ardern's Caravan Park in Myrtleford, Ovens Valley which is on the eastern end of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail that stretches from Bright to Beechworth and also to Wangaratta.

Several members such as Terry and Steve had been to Myrtleford and cycled on parts of the trail before. Phil and John had also been to Bright in January 2013 and cycled in some wet weather to Wangaratta.

Most of us drove down the Hume Highway to Wodonga and then took local roads either via Beechworth or Yackandandah to Myrtleford. Phil Hoare was first to arrive, followed by Greg Hutchison then John Arundel and then Bill and Rita Murray with Steve Mawer and Noelene close behind.

Originally Terry was coming with Phil and sharing but dropped out late due to sickness. Greg and John shared but drove separately as Greg put his bike in the back and John was going down to Melbourne after cycling to visit his daughter.

Originally we planned to get there earlier and do some local cycling to get ready for the longer rides. However the day was quite wet with persistent light rain, clouds and cold weather.

That night we dined at a local club spot the Savoy Sporting Club, originally founded by a group of soccer loving Italians. Several of us had the 'pensioner specials' washed down with liberal amounts of local Merlot and Cab Sav.

## Thu 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013

We started cycling (5 lads and one lady) about 9.30AM in cloudy, overcast and cool weather and headed out from the caravan park across the main road and straight onto the Rail Trail. We continued on and didn't really stop until we reached the Eurobin old train station which is set out as a comfort stop and rest station.

We then continued on towards **Bright** with misty rain starting and lovely autumn colours becoming very common with deciduous trees becoming quite pronounced as we approached Bright.

We stopped at **Porepunkah** at the appropriately named **Rail Trail café** where we were met by Noelene who was in the car this day. The rain was now quite persistent and heavier although not torrential.

After a coffee break we continued on to Bright which I think was the most beautiful part of the trail especially with the autumn colours in full display.

We reached the centre of Bright which appears to be the big roundabout which contains a large returned services display and a small piazza in front of one hotel.

We bumbled around in drizzling rain looking for a luncheon spot and the good advice of Bill and Rita we headed down to near Centenary Park to the Ginger Baker Cafe near Centenary Park. This was a great place in the conditions. See <http://www.gingerbakerwinebarcafe.com.au/>

We then headed back (although Steve was lifted by car to Porepunkah, ostensibly to see the lovely alley of trees on the road to Mt Beauty) with rain coming straight into our faces and a small headwind all the way. It felt like we were climbing although in fact it was slightly downhill.

All went well although Steve was again picked up for the last 5 km stretch into Myrtleford. Shame Steve!

Unfortunately Rita and Bill were slightly late as they stopped to help a lady with a flat tyre. This meant they were hit was a storm downpour just before they reached the caravan park.

Some of us learnt from Bill and Rita to use the showers in the little used common amenity block as they stayed hotter longer than the one in the cabin.

We ended up eating at a cheap and nasty Chinese restaurant where Steve didn't want to eat but seemed to eat an awful lot of everything. We probably should have gone to the Indian restaurant. Samosas and Chapattis anyone!

We had left Myrtle at 9.30AM, reached Bright about 12.25PM, left Bright about 2.10PM and reached Myrtle about 4.10PM over a total distance of 60.5Km. We also did another 2Km around Bright.

## Fri 17<sup>th</sup> May 2013

Well the weather was much better although still cloudy and cold. We had arranged with the caravan park owner for him to lift us via a mini bus and trailer up to Beechworth for \$12 a head. His trailer was quite smart and each of the bikes was tied down through their drive pedal and a rope chain. We left about 10.30AM and reached Beechworth old rail station about 11AM. Rita and Bill decided to cycle back as they had explored Beechworth before. The weather was cold, slightly wet and a bit cloudy all around. We did a quick exploration and then gathered in another great choice, the Pantry Cafe Beechworth - very nice and recommended. Great tart lunches. See

<http://www.beechworthpantry.com.au/>. Most tours etc seem to go to the very popular Bakery around the corner but it was very crowded.

After lunch we mosied back to the station and then headed off on the trail for real. It's a bit of a drag up a slight incline to the top of the valley then a long downhill run for nearly 10Km. Some of it was quite spectacular passing through cuttings and also high banks with large drops on either side.

Its 16.2Km from Beechworth Station down to the junction with the Wangaratta – Bright line.

Then we did a 150 degree turn and headed east towards Myrtleford. First we stopped at the memorial from 1924 to commemorate the passing of Hume and Hovell in 1824. Then it was a long slow slog across open fields of the lower Ovens Valley.

Phil and Greg stopped at the Bowmans Forest Cemetery and noted prominent names of the locals who are still being interred there.

Then just past Bowmans Forest old station the long slow rise to Taylors Gap began. It's a rising gradient that went on for 3Km or so. Even Phil and Bill were somewhat peeved by it.

A nice rest at the top then a long beautiful ride downhill for another 3Km before reaching Myrtleford again. Surprisingly we caught up to Bill and Rita just outside the "Myrtle". It turns out they had left Beechworth early and made a great choice to stop for lunch at the [Gapsted Winery](http://www.victorianalpswinery.com.au/) (<http://www.victorianalpswinery.com.au/>) which is on the left near the bottom of the run down from Taylors Gap.

We left Beechworth Station at about 12.45PM and reached our caravan park about 4PM. Total distance 45.5Km (the official track says 43Km but that's to the centre of the Myrtle, not out CP)

That night we had a BBQ in the CP and used a small tin they had to burn wood for fire as it was quite chilly.

## **Sat 18<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

We arose at a nice early hour and Greg headed off to Canberra via Bright, Mt Beauty and Wodonga. The others went for a ride around the Myrtle Town loop.

John then left and went to Melbourne.

The others went for a drive to Lake Buffalo 26Km south of Myrtleford.

Bill, Rita, Steve and Noelene stayed overnight and returned via Mt Beauty the next day.

It was cloudy and misty up high on the hills. It was dry and sunny north of Wodonga

## **Cycling Distances**

Thu 16<sup>th</sup> May - Myrtle – Bright return 60.5km

Fri 17<sup>th</sup> May - Beechworth – Myrtle 45.5Km

Myrtle Loop 7.2Km from the Caravan Park

Around Bright about 2Km

Around Beechworth about 3Km

**Total 118Km**

## Notes

Recommended you carry water as whilst rest stops may have some water its quality is not guaranteed.

Canberra to Myrtleford is about 450Km one way. Myrtleford has three petrol stations and two supermarkets. Bright is similarly served. It's about a 5 hour drive to Myrtleford plus stops.

## Diagrams, Pictures and Docs Available

Pictures of the trip are available on [Picasa](#).

(<https://picasaweb.google.com/melbashed/20130517MyrtlefordRailTrailTrip>) The GPS map extracts are 1900 pixels wide.

## Shared Google Drive folder

(<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B3KACTzeu2IAeEdFdWxreHMwczA&usp=sharing>) with gpx, kmz files and map jpg files

## One Google earth kmz file

(<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3KACTzeu2IASkIRbVZGUGR2MDQ/edit?usp=sharing>) covering the route available on Google Drive. Note opening this link will go to Google Drive and open the route file in Google Earth; you do not have to install Google Earth. You also have the option to download the file or view in Google Maps. Put your mouse over and click on a waypoint and it will bring up a small description.

## Rail Trail Links

The general Australian site is [Rail Trails Australia](http://www.railtrails.org.au/) (<http://www.railtrails.org.au/>)

Others Trails that may be of Interest are:

[East Gippsland Rail Trail](http://www.eastgippslandrailtrail.com/) (<http://www.eastgippslandrailtrail.com/>) 94 Km Coarse gravel, Fine gravel, Sealed between Orbost and Bairnsdale

[High Country Rail Trail](http://www.railtrails.org.au/trail-descriptions/victoria?view=trail&id=83) (<http://www.railtrails.org.au/trail-descriptions/victoria?view=trail&id=83>)  
Wodonga and Old Tallangatta 37Km coarse gravel (will grow to 112km)

[Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail](http://www.victorianrailtrails.com.au/) (<http://www.victorianrailtrails.com.au/>) (might become River High Line) 134Km of fine gravel surface between Tallarook and Mansfield