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

MUNDA BIDDI TRAIL - WESTERN AUSTRALIA

September 12th - 28th, 2017



The Munda Biddi trail is a 1,000 + km long dedicated bike route /trail from Mundaring on the outskirts of Perth through to Albany in the South West. There are few places left in the world where a 1000km trail could be “built” through an undeveloped natural corridor.

The Munda Biddi bike track parallels the more well known Bibulmun walking trail with its “walkers hut” system, but though they often cross each other they are otherwise completely separate.

The Munda Biddi Trail mainly traverses the forests and National Parks along the way by using forest tracks, jeep tracks, unmade minor and (sometimes) major roads, existing recreational trails (eg rail trails). There is a little bitumen (where there is no other alternative) and a lot of single

track, often newly constructed to join the other older established bits together. It is fairly well signposted throughout so you don't get lost at the **many** intersections along the way (**but** unless you are careful you can miss an important signpost and go a lot out of your way before realising your mistake; not so nice when that mistake takes you downhill for a few kms and you have to retrace your steps!) The trail oscillates wildly from the trajectory of the point to point journey on the highway, (perhaps twice the distance) always attempting to keep you off main roads but often crossing them as it seeks a more interesting way forward.

Along the way there are dedicated hut/shelters at regular intervals (about 50 km) these offer, sleeping platforms, table and seating benches, water tanks and toilet but not much else. They are usually open to the elements at both ends. No showers and no electricity of course! As an alternative to the huts are the towns along the way where you can get commercial accommodation, in caravan parks, hotels, motels etc and a hot meal at the inevitable pub! However, there are sections where the towns are too far apart (say over 50 -60 kms) and if you are travelling slowly with a full load of gear you will have to use a hut. On this trip we aimed to ride about 50--55 kms per day and thus needed huts on night 1 and 3 and they were scheduled for nights 10, 11, 13 and 14.



In 2009 I did the first 350 km section of the track from Mundaring with a friend. At that time the track ended in **Collie** and they were working on defining the rest of the trail to Albany. Since then it has been completed and another 700 Km has been added. So, for this trip, Russell, Tony and I planned to do the “new” sections from Collie to Albany over 16 riding days. We were self supporting with own sleeping bags, mats, cooking gear and food. These goodies plus our clothing changes were carried in 4 panniers (saddle bags) each, 2 in the front and 2 in the rear. Approximately 12 + kgs of luggage to add to the heavy weight of a mountain bike.

Back in 2009 I characterised the ride as “No Country for Old Men” after a movie of that name current at the time. I remember it as being tough, but I conveniently forgot just how tough it had been. This time, now 8 years older and with insufficient training under the belt, it did not take me long to realise how hard the new ride would be.



Day 1 we picked up our hire bikes from Erik's bike shop in Collie (what a fabulous bike shop, chock a block with bikes and gear and related rider goodies, just like an old hardware shop!) We rode out at 9.30 so confident at the start of our adventure but, by the end of that first day, after about 7.5 hours in the saddle, over very undulating and varied rough terrain, we finally reached the destination hut and wondered **what the hell we had let ourselves in for!!** After falling asleep on my sleeping bag, I woke to find myself totally locked up with severe cramp all down the inside of

my thighs and legs. In reality I had not given my legs such a constant workout for many years. I did seriously wonder whether I would be able to continue. I walked around a bit and luckily was able to unlock and get back to sleep. The next day was not quite as hard and I survived, riding into Donnybrook town and making a priority visit to the pharmacist for \$45 worth of magnesium powder!

The track itself is so varied in topography and degree of difficulty. Really tough days are interspersed with easier sections but it is always undulating and almost always through thick Karri and Jarrah native forest. The trail was often strewn with forest debris, trees down across the track, saplings bent down in your face, bushes growing across the single track. We often had to lift our bikes over big trees which blocked the track or port them around and through the surrounding bush (despite the efforts of the track maintenance people). Often the single track was rough; rock and boulder strewn, with sharp twists and turns. There were an enormous number of bird chewed gum nuts along the way, quite a bit of pea gravel (gravel particles the size of peas) which was not so nice to ride on and at times some sand, but always there was the undulation and the dense forest, the “hills” (sometimes rideable at 5 to 7 km an hour), often requiring you to get off and push. The difficulty was constant. There were few long, level sections in the whole 16 days, but when we did get them and the gentle down hills they were wonderful! In the end we got used to dismounting and pushing as part of the experience and towards the end it ceased to be noteworthy, just part of the territory!



The track has its own beauty, riding through thick forest, along picturesque lush green farming land, exquisite wild flowers a sense of timelessness and natural beauty. Despite this we experienced just 3 other riders over the 16 days and only one on the track, no one else used the huts while we were there, maybe with school holiday time would be more crowded!

Day 2 we spent a fair bit of time off the bikes pushing them up steep sections, then coasting downhill, then pushing up, then down. Speeds up to 50Kms/Hr downhill on a gravel road were reached. But lovely downhill was, unfortunately, a rare occurrence. We took a wrong turn and had to navigate along bitumen roads into the town. It was then I realised another of my shortcomings, poor map reading skills, even using the very good dedicated map set put out by the Munda Bidji foundation! Nevertheless, we survived!

Day 3 brought more single track, extensive pine plantations and track diversions due to timber harvesting. We over-nighted in another hut (Mala Mia Hut). This one unusually situated in the small historic township of Jarrawood with about 20 houses but no commercial activity.

Day 4 we had 30 KMs of fabulous rail trail all the way (half slightly down, half slightly up), crossing the bridge over the Blackwood River before finishing up in Nannup and the Black Cockatoo Lodge. Our “room” turned out to be a large tent set up under a “lean to” with comfy beds, electricity and the comforts. A nice pub meal at the Nannup Hotel, whilst watching the AFL finals was a perfect finish to the easy day.

Day 5 we had lots of difficult single track and again missed the directional sign causing us an extra 5 Km of riding on dirt road. In the end we got to our destination (Donnelly River settlement) and a 6-bunk bed room in the tourist accommodation lodge (Ex Primary School. We arrived just in time for a free wine tasting, very nice double samples was very happy that Russell doesn't drink, but they didn't know that did they?! That night was footy finals, with TV room chock full of West Coast Supporters which thinned out remarkably after half time when West Coast were getting a flogging!!



Day 6 was mixed, during morning. “smoko”, we stopped at One Tree Bridge”, a single Karri tree, that had fallen over the Dunnolly river. It was a very hard ride/push up a 4-km zig zag (series of switchbacks) with over 30 turns but rewarded by lunch in one of the huts (Karta Burnu), which sits in a cleared patch high in the hills, with great views over the paddocks and forests. The afternoon was typically undulating and we arrived in Manjimup at our motel, very tired, with the last 6Kms over a rail trail. A good pub meal fixed that!

Day 7 was on to the “eco” village at Quininup, heaps of kangaroos lolling about! Late in the day when approaching our destination, we took a “short cut” along the bitumen but got absolutely confused as to where we were on the map, unfortunately the pub at Quininup had recently burnt down, no solace there, no beer either!

Day 8 On to Pemberton, our destination for a well-earned rest day on day 9, and by all accounts a great little place to explore. I was hanging out for a day off, but during our ride we got a spattering of rain with the promise of more to come, much more! After much discussion we changed plans and gave up the rest day, which was forecast to be the last dry day before a big patch of rain.

Day 9 Onwards to Northcliffe. Started typically with a big 1 km climb out of the caravan park to the township nestled on top of the hill and then back on the trail to the famed “Gloster” tree. Our big climb was rewarded by about 8 kms of glorious continuous down-hill jeep track with multiple zig zags. We were very glad we weren’t riding the other way! The usual 20 kms of undulations followed before we took a bitumen short cut into Northcliffe and stayed at the pub. The next day (Day 10) was our new designated rest day and we expected rain, buckets of it!!

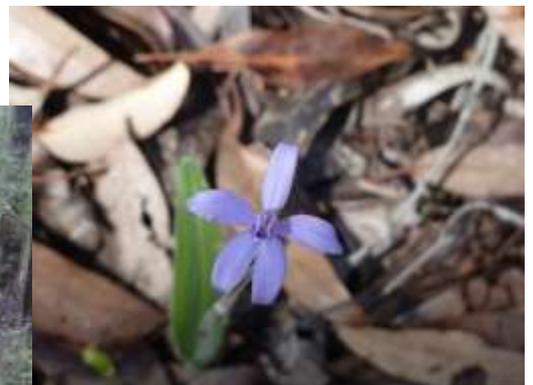
This was now our great dilemma. Our next 5 days involved staying at 2 huts then one town, then another 2 huts. Huts have no amenities, are well away from civilization and are cold places, not an ideal destination for a group of exhausted cold and wet riders. The weather forecast was for 25-50 mls of rain. We could only imagine the condition of the trail after a big wet! We decided to vary our plans and leave out the huts, a difficult decision but in retrospect the correct one. So we arranged an expensive uplift of us and bikes from Northcliffe to Walpole where we bunkered down for 4 days seeing out the huge cold front that rolled across the south west and dominated the local news. The Coalmine Caravan Park and the YHA were good and the local pub a consolation. Russell and Tony did a side trip to the famous Karri forest, “Valley of the Giants” treetop walk.

Day 15 we ventured out from Walpole in drizzle along the highway, hardly ideal, but guaranteed us to arrive at our original destination of Denmark that night, provided that we didn’t get hit by a truck. We stopped for morning tea at a café (only the second time we found any food selling premises along the trail during the day), and had lunch at the Elephant Rock Cider Company, but didn’t tell Russell that the cider was alcoholic, in fact twice as strong as beer. He enjoyed his bottle, seemingly with no side effects! The last 12 km that day was an enjoyable heritage rail trail into the town, dodging many puddles on the damp gravel surface and it had stopped raining!

Day 16 After a lovely 15 km ride along the “foreshore”, we again took a “shortcut”, this time along a bitumen minor road into Albany. It was great to get to the end after a very tough ride full of good memories. Only one problem, our room for 3 was in fact a double and a single bed, sleeps three though. Tony, as ever the unselfish one, took the couch!

This was one hell of a tough ride. Rarely did we spend less than 6 hours per day on the bike and mostly averaged 8-10 km hour. It was hilly and undulating with poor surfaces about one quarter of the way. Overall we managed it well. We had no injuries (apart from one set of bruised ribs after a fall), we had no punctures, no mechanical problems and no major disagreement amongst us. Russell proposed to about 5 women, all who seemed delighted by his advances. Tony kept the weather at bay for the first 9 days, as usual, but faltered in the face of insurmountable odds at the end. Both of them showed great strength in riding in hard circumstances. Tony “iron quads” Grasso and Russell “the accelerator” Shallard. As usual, I distinguished myself by drinking the most beer!

Personally, I am frustrated that we had to vary the Northcliffe to Denmark section and accept that to get my Munda Biddi “T-shirt” I will have to come back and do that 280 km section over 6 days with 4 nights in huts Any takers ???????????



Hike 2 Camp - Great Ocean Walk

During September Barb and Jenny walked the Great Ocean Walk from Apollo Bay to the Twelve Apostles over 6 days. Not wanting to carry full packs and set up camp each night, or pay for an expensive gourmet pick-up drop walk, we went on a supported hike with a company called Hike2Camp. We had an amazing group of people hiking with us with 6 others starting Day 1, and 3 others joining us on Day 3.

Hike2Camp is run by a young man, Wilson, who is supported by his wife Jean and father Bill. Wilson books all the camp sites, provides a PLB, First Aid Kit, tide chart and maps for each group. Each morning he provides an update on the days walk route, track condition, tides and delicious packed lunch, fruit and snacks (too much for us to eat). When we got to camp each night the tents would be set up, sleeping gear and our night bags in the tent, and cooking and eating gear in the shelters. Delicious meals such as spaghetti bolognese, butter chicken, chicken/vegetables and rice were supplied each night for us to cook on the camp stoves.

The support and guidance from Wilson was amazing. Jenny lost her prescription sunglasses on the track the first day (she thought while they were covering up as it had started raining when we were nearing camp. That night when we got to camp Wilson had Jenny's glasses – he had walked back along the track and found them! For the first three nights they drive in to camp, but for the last two - Ryan's Run and Devils Kitchen they have to wheelbarrow all the camping equipment in from the closest access point – sometimes 500m!

Report by Jenny & Barb



Day 1

Walk from Apollo Bay and camp at Blanket Bay. (Skip Elliot Ridge Campsite) Distance 22km.



Day 2

Walk from Blanket Bay and camp at Aire River. (Skip Cape Otway Campsite) Distance 21km.



Day 3

Walk from Aire River and camp at Johanna Beach. Distance 14km.

Day 4

Walk from Johanna Beach and camp at Ryans Den. Distance 14km.

Day 5

Walk from Ryans Den and camp at Devils Kitchen. Distance 13km.



Day 6

Walk from Devils Kitchen and finish at 12 Apostles. Distance 16km

CANOEING LAKE BITTERANG IN FLOOD WATER

Sunday 22nd October



A great rollup of 7 vehicles and 16 canoeists met at Centro car park for an 8.30 departure with 9 canoes – does this constitute a fleet?



It was a pleasure to welcome Simon, Tina, Patsy, Michael & Pamela to our group who went to swell the numbers to such a large group ably lead by Noel. Members present were Noel, Dick, Russell, Michael, Judy, Neil, Alison, Greg, Bill, Tony & Roger

It almost goes without saying that a great day was had by all with no spills or accidents although there was a case of musical canoes as we were one short on canoe seats so a passenger was transported in one of the Canadian canoes.

A small hiccup occurred when our intrepid leader was not visible amongst the trees on our return to where we had entered the lake after coming off the floodplain. A short wait and Noel reappeared to lead us back to our launching place.

The photos tell the real story of our adventure.

Report by Roger





CALENDAR

2017		
Nov 1st	Meeting – Hiking	
Nov 19th	Merbein Common Billabong Walk PLUS Morning tea at Kym's	Contact: Peter 0458935239
Dec 3 rd	Christmas breakup 4.00pm River bank below Lock 10, Wentworth	Contact Peter 0458935239
Dec 6th	Meeting	
Dec 8 – 16th	Melb City to Walhalla Trek 7 Day Pack carrying Hike	Contact: Bill 0408231984
2018		
March 3rd - 9th	Bike ride along the Western Vic Rail Trail Start from Maldon - ending Port Fairey	Contact: Peter 0458935239

Note: All activities and dates are subject to change. Always contact the Leader to register your attendance.