

Off Road Bicycle Rides

around Mildura



Compiled by Michael Jobe and published by

Sunraysia Bushwalkers

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1. Introduction

Mildura is a magnificent place for the off road rider. With off road riding largely centred around the River Murray and its environs, it offers over 100 Kms of long sandy, scenic tracks along the river and through inland lake and billabong areas, from Merbein to Redcliffs.

The following guide gives details of eight, (largely) off road rides whose departure points are within a short distance from the centre of Mildura. Most of the rides are also suitable for day walking. Although they are described as separate rides, many can be linked with other rides to increase distance.

There are 4 departure points.

- The Langtree Mall in the centre of the Central Business District (3 rides)
- The Bruces Bend Boat Launching Area (3 rides) About 10 Kms from the city centre
- The Winery at Merbein (1 ride) About 15 Kms from the city centre
- The Apex Caravan park (1 ride) about 6 km from the city centre.

These are rides for **Mountain Bikes or Hybrids**, not for road bikes with thin tyres.

Most rides are in the “easy” category in relation to distance and terrain, but there are some sandy sections in almost all of them and some rough slippery undulating surfaces in a few. Most should be avoided after heavy rain, as they can become extremely boggy.

Distances, although **seemingly authoritatively** expressed to 2 decimal places, are based on the compilers bike computer, so some caution (and common sense) is required in following them. Of course if you take detours from the ride path described you will have to make allowances for the remaining distance measurements.

Distances cited are cumulative from the start of each ride.

Water surrounds the tracks in many of these rides but is rarely for drinking. Cyclists are recommended to take at least one litre of water for each 20 ms they propose to travel. Cycling on these tracks in the middle of the day (between 11 and 4) during summer is also not recommended.

Maps

Maps of the rides are included as indicative of the routes only.

Standards

Bush tracks described in these rides are generally easy, but all have sections of thick sand or loose packed gravel in some places. There are very few significant ups and downs and where they are encountered they are mainly on the “moderate” rides.

In **some** rides there are fairly rough sections of tracks for parts of the journey and the track goes over very uneven surfaces and up short but steep inclines. **Mainly, however** the riding is on well-formed gravel/sand pathways. **Moderate** difficulty rides are not for beginners or the unfit!

The rides are designed for travel at a **very relaxed** pace (ie Ave 10-14 km hour) but 20 kms distance can be taxing for those with little bike experience **and** poor fitness, particularly if it is a bit on the warm side.

These ride notes have been developed to aid the keen cyclist or walker to access some of the natural beauty around Mildura. While every attempt has been made to make them accurate, there is no warranty that they are error free. They are produced as a community service and cyclists and walkers use them at their own risk.

This booklet of rides is produced and published by Sunraysia Bushwalkers utilising a matching grant from the Rural City of Mildura.

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Sunraysia Bushwalkers heavily in disguise on Butlers Creek

2. Overview of Rides

- **1. MILDURA RIVERFRONT HIGHLIGHTS** (approx 12.5 kms)

Easy

This is a great short ride along the riverfront between the Mildura Bridge and the Apex camping ground, with excellent river views along almost all of the distance. It passes many local tourist attractions including the Ornamental lakes (the working) Lock 11, the Art Gallery and original home of the founders of the Irrigation settlement, the Old Mildura Homestead and the Apex Caravan Park “river beach”

Start at the end of the Langtree Mall / corner 9th St in the heart of town.

- **2. THE MURRAY RIVER “CRUISE”** (approx 13.7 kms)

Easy (if you keep to gravel roads). Otherwise Moderate

This is a relaxing ride along the banks of the Murray from Apex Park through typical local bush reserve for some 8 kms before returning via “inland” tracks. Can be reduced in length to approximately 5 kms by doing only the first of the two “loops”. Can be combined with the “Riverfront Highlights” ride starting in the city to give a 26-KM ride

Start at the Apex Caravan Park (the “destination” of Ride 1)

- **3. KINGS BILLABONG RESERVE** (approx 16.2 Km from Nature walk car park)

Easy

This ride, takes in some magnificent, little known wetland scenery around the Kings Billabong Wildlife Reserve, including a creek, Murray river backwaters, floodplains, a beautiful living Lagoon, swamps, the Billabong itself and a Bird Hide. The reserve is reputed to contain 242 species of native fauna including 170 species of birds. Most of the ride is along well-defined crushed dust tracks put in by Parks Victoria. Can be done as two rides 7kms and 9kms respectively

Start at Bruces Bend Boat Launching Area or at the Kings Billabong Nature Walk Carpark Parking Area. (add on 3.00 Kms return from Bruces Bend car park)

- **4. KINGS BILLABONG PERIMETER** (approx. 15.5 kms)

Easy

This ride does a circuit of the Billabong, including some parts on a bitumen road through the residential area. It passes the historic steam driven Psyche Pumps next to the current Pumping station on the Murray. The ride includes excellent views over the Billabong from the main lookout and a visit to the Bird Hide on the Billabong proper.

Start at Bruces Bend Boat Launching Area or at the Kings Billabong Nature Walk Parking Area.

- **5. THE RED CLIFFS CIRCUIT** (Approximately 30 Kms)

Moderate

This longer, more difficult, ride has many beautiful river views as you cycle along close to the River. It also has a significant section of riding through stressed bushland and sandy inland tracks. Some of the journey is along a salty lagoon with a desolate landscape. It also has some patches of very rough undulating, uneven surface and some sandy sections. Another main feature is the historic Psyche Bend Pumps

Start at Bruces Bend Boat Launching Area.

- **6. INLAND BOTANICAL GARDENS SAUNTER.** (Approximately 21 Km) **Easy**

This ride features an easy but unremarkable ride across the Chaffey Bridge and on a bike track along the side of the River Road to the Inland Botanical Gardens. It has a pleasant return trip along river tracks on the NSW side of the river. The major ride feature is the destination the Botanical Gardens. Open 8 to 4.00 weekdays (10 to 4 on most weekends)

Start at the end of the Langtree Mall/ corner 9th St, in the heart of town.

- **7. THE IRRIGATION DRAINAGE LAKES.** (Approximately 21 Kms) **Easy**

This short ride gives a good view of the two major irrigation drainage lakes (Lake Ranfurly and Lake Hawthorn) it also follows the “nature walk” along the outlet

channel from Lake Hawthorn to the Murray River and has a short section of River track. It includes a visit to River Road Pottery (along the route) for Coffee and cake.

Start at the end of the Langtree Mall at the corner with 9th St, in the heart of town.

- **8. THE MERBEIN COMMON. (Approximately 26 Kms) Easy to Moderate**

This ride takes in a large section of the reserve along the side of the Murray River at Merbein. It includes two large Billabongs and many access points to river camping areas. Due to drought conditions it is currently a very stressed bushland reserve.

Start at the Winery, Merbein



Ducksfoot Lagoon, “Kings Billabong Reserve” ride

3. Details of rides

- **RIDE 1: MILDURA RIVERFRONT HIGHLIGHTS**
(Approximately 12.6 kms)

This is a great ride along the riverfront, with excellent river views along most of the distance. It passes the Ornamental Lakes, the public lawns on the side of the river, (the working) Lock 11, the home of the founder of the irrigation settlement, the old pioneer Homestead, along a crushed dust river side track to the Apex Caravan Park's "river beach"

Start in the heart of town (lots of cafes and coffee shops) at the corner of 9th St and Langtree Avenue.

Starting in 9th St, travel one street back to the main avenue (*Deakin Ave*), turn **left** and ride the short distance to the T intersection with 7th St (**0.6 km**). Turn **right**, travel approximately 200 metres and turn **left** through the railway underpass, veer **right** along the road and immediately ride past the Wharf parking area (embarkation point for Paddle Steamer rides) Continue along the road past the Ornamental Lakes on the right to the boat launching area under the Bridge across the Murray. On the right the early construction stages of the new Mildura Marina complex can be seen (**1.5km**).

Return almost back to the underpass but take the road to the **right** and travel along the riverside walking track (or along the bitumen road). Ride past the Rowing Club Lawns on the right, past Jaycee Park on the left, past the Lawn Tennis Club on the left, to the Lock 11 reserve and large carpark. (**3.7 km**)

<p>WALKING OPTION. Leave your bike (chained) near the gates and walk over the Lock Gate walkway and into the Lock Island reserve. Enjoy a short walk around this small island and then back to the main road.</p>
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Continue on the road up the very steep but thankfully short, hill, to the intersection with a Bitumen road. (**3.99 km**) Now take a brief "tourist" loop

Turn **left** at the top of the hill and ride either on the road or the crushed dust shared track about 250 meters to the historical "Rio Vista" (home of the founder of the irrigation colony) adjacent to the house is Mildura Art Gallery, on the right and the lookouts and Amphitheatre on the left. **Retrace** steps back to the top of the hill

Now, either travel along a crushed dust footpath (on the right hand side of the road) or proceed along the bitumen road itself. Go just past Mildura Homestead tourist site and take the signed River side walking/cycling crushed dust track on the **right** to Apex Park (**5.70 km**)

Travel along the well-defined grey crushed dust walking/cycling track along the Riverside. When the track joins back with the Bitumen inside the Caravan Park, **(6.60-Km)** turn **right**. Note the Caravan Park Store on the left (Coffee and light refreshments).

Cycle past the caravan area with the sandy beach to your right for about 200 meters till you come to the Boat launching area. **(8.00 Kms)**

LINKING INTERSECTION OPTION

Continue the ride by taking the walking/cycling track adjacent the boat launching area along the Riverfront as in RIDE 2

OR Continue with this ride as described below.

Retrace steps back through the park and along the cycle/walking track to the underpass **or alternatively** take the bitumen road back to the centre of the town. (follow Road past Rio Vista homestead, where it veers right and continues on to a T intersection with 9th St. Turn **Left** and ride to Langtree Mall **(12.57 Kms)**



River Beach: Apex Caravan Park

RIDE 2: THE RIVER MURRAY CRUISE (Approximately 13.7 Kms)

Start at the main store at the Apex Caravan Park.

Ride 150 metres or so away from the city through the park, on the bitumen road to the road's end at the Boat Launching area. **(0.18 km)** Take the signed walking/cycling track on the **right**. Ride about 250 metres to an intersection with “*Woodland track*” (on left) and “*River track*” straight ahead (**rightish**).

OPTION Take either track (but in this guide the **River track** is favoured for the ride out and the **Woodland track** (no river views) for the return. Both tracks end up on the main gravel access road where the bush reserve peters out and the private horticultural areas almost meet the river.)

Take the **River Track** and follow it for about 1.75 kms (either on the main dirt road when it becomes available) or along the more sandy narrower riverside walking tracks hugging the river to the right. These riverside tracks can be challenging to traverse in the summer (long sandy patches) or after rain (boggy, muddy). The made dirt road can be a safer option for the less fit. but not as much fun!).

When the River tracks finally come together as the reserve narrows, you meet the main gravel road, **(2.20 kms)**

OPTION You can now return to the starting point by **retracing** your steps along the River or by taking the “*Woodland track*”. To get onto the Woodland track turn left where the river track meets the well defined dirt road, then the right fork at the next intersection soon after and then, left about 50 metres later onto the well signed cycling and walking track. This will give you a total ride of about 5 kms.

Or Continue on this ridedescribed below

Continue **right** on the main gravel road up a little rise above the River.

Where the road swings hard left at a poorly defined T intersection **(at 3.39 km)** keep **right** to the minor road and go straight ahead. (Road is signed “*To Johnsons Bend*”).

Continue past fruit blocks and forestry areas (on the left) to an intersection with a bitumen road going to *Johnsons Bend*. (Gun Club, Motor Bike area etc) **(at 4.47 km)**

Turn **right** and ride down this road for about 150 meters, till you see sign to “*River Road*” on the left.

Follow this corrugated wide dirt road to the river **(at 5.33 kms)** and veer **left** along the river (again, either along rough tracks close to the river or on the well made gravel road a bit further “inland”). Proceed for about 2.75 kms, past the back of another caravan park until the bush reserve narrows, and the track meets cliffs (levee bank). This is the furthest away point of this ride **(at 8.09kms)**



Bend in the Murray: end point of “River Murray Cruise” ride

OPTION Join the **Irrigation Drainage Lakes** ride (RIDE 7), by continuing on a narrow rough track to the top of the levee bank till you come to the main bitumen road (*River Road*) between Mildura and Merbein about 300 meters further on.

Turn **left** onto the main bitumen road and ride for about 100 metres till you see a poorly signed track on the right. Turn right onto this *Lake Ranfurly* track and continue on this until you get to the railway line (2.1 kms)

OPTION 2 Alternatively, to get to River Road Pottery, Lake Hawthorn or the Merbein Winery (sorry no tasting or sales) turn **right** at the top of the cliffs when the track meets the Bitumen road and proceed along the road up a steep hill to the Merbein Winery. From here you can easily access the Merbein Common ride. (RIDE 8) Along the way you pass the Pottery (Coffee and Refreshments) at approx 1.7 kms. And then the track to the Drainage lakes on the left at a further 1.8 kms **Caution. This is a busy road to cross or ride on.**

OR Continue on this ride ...described below.

Return to *Johnson’s Bend* via the well-defined gravel road through the bush (no river views) as follows:

Retrace steps past the back of the Caravan Park.

After about 400 meters (At **8.45 Km**) take the track bending **right** past the wooden reforestation signs, follow the track leftish and at the next intersection go **right**, along the fence line. Sign indicates “Regina Ave”

At **9.56 km** come back to the intersection with the bitumen road going to *Johnsons Bend*. Cross the road retracing your earlier steps on the wide dirt road. At **11.09 km** you get back to the river track at the small car park. Continue along the road (don't go left along the river tracks unless you want to retrace your steps of the outward journey.) After about 80 metres take the **right** fork and then shortly after take the well defined and signed cycling/walking track branching off to the **left** (*Woodland Track*) back to *Apex Caravan Park*. (**13.68 km**) Coffee at Apex Kiosk/ Store

Difficulty? **Easy** if you keep to the gravel car track (River Car Track) as much as possible along the whole ride. However the scenery is much better if you try to hug the tracks close to the river. These tracks are rough in parts and sometimes very sandy and harder to ride making the ride more in the **Moderate** category. (and much more fun **and** scenic)

Note that while the whole riverfront bush reserve area, from Apex Park onwards, is criss-crossed with old car tracks, it is difficult to get lost as the reserve is narrow with the River on one side and residential development on the other.



A little bit sandy in spots!

RIDE 3: THE KINGS BILLABONG RESERVE: Approx 16.2 Kms (19.2 Kms from Bruces Bend Car Park)

This ride, takes in some magnificent, little known wetland scenery around the Kings Billabong Wildlife Reserve, including a creek, Murray river backwaters, a beautiful living Lagoon, swamps, the Billabong itself and a Bird Hide. The reserve is reputed to contain 242 species of native fauna including 170 species of birds. Most of the ride is along well-defined crushed dust tracks put in by Parks Victoria. The ride can be divided easily into two rides of approximately 7 and 9 Kms.

Start at Bruces Bend Boat launching area Car Park (or Nature walk car park). If starting at Boat Launching area, turn left along the River track. At 600 metres take the right fork to “Psyche Pumps”. After 400 metres take the right-hand fork, direction “Nature Walk”. The car park for the Nature Walk Reserve is at **1.49 Km**. Re zero trip computers.

At the car park commence the ride along the main track. Ride along a crushed dust track, **past** the first turn off to your left (30 metres), over a levee bank (with a lovely view of Kings Billabong to your right), to the **second turn off** on the **left** (about 250 metres from start.) Take this turn off to the **left** then meander along around Butler’s creek, (commencing at about 1.0 km) past the thriving Ducksfoot lagoon, (at 1.83 kms).



Ducksfoot Lagoon Kings Billabong

Continue on the track through bush, till, at 3.0 kms, the track come to an intersection with another crushed dust track.

Turn **right** and continue along track for another 350 metres till the track comes to a T intersection with another track.

LINKING INTERSECTION OPTION To continue **immediately** to Psyche Pumps take the dirt road to your **left** and travel around the edge of the fingers of the Billabong on the well marked crushed dust track. See Kings Billabong Perimeter Ride. (RIDE 4)

Turn **right**. Soon views of the Billabong can be seen on the left through the trees and bulrushes. Continue along the track, which is often immediately adjacent the bulrushes on the side of the Billabong till (at **4.50 kms**), there is an intersection with a small crushed dust track veering left. Take this track to the bird hide a hundred metres away. (bird hide view sometimes partly obscured by Bulrushes)



Bird Hide Kings Billabong

Continue on the track along the side of the Billabong (just viewable through the reeds), over the levee bank (with views of the Billabong on your left

At **6.88 kms** (just 20 metres or so before the carpark) there is a well-defined crushed dust track on the right.

OPTION Return to the Car Park for completion of **6.9 KM ride** or continue on this ride by taking the track to the **right** (Described below).

Take the track to the **right**. Follow this through the bush and then along Butlers creek (starting at approx **7.65 km**) to the intersection with the main *River Road* where it crosses over the creek via *Baggs Bridge* (**at 8.60 km**). Turn right and cross the bridge. Just over the Bridge to your **right** you pick up the crushed dust track again and follow it. At approximately **9.5 kms** you see the Creek again and soon after get good glimpses of the Murray on the left. Continue on the track, with both river and creek views, until Ducksfoot Lagoon can be seen in front, the track veers left till it meets the main *River Road* again (**at 10. 85 Kms**). Turn **right** onto the road and cross *Jennings Bridge*.

Pick up the crushed dust trail on your right **just after the bridge** (the starting point is becoming indistinct) and follow it along a low ridge inland away from the river, past the end of the lagoon. Continue along this well-defined track across an open area to the finger of water and reeds at the end of the Ducksfoot Lagoon. Go over a small culvert bridge up a small rise to the intersection with another crushed dust track (**12.48kms**)

Go straight-ahead till you come to another T intersection. (**12.79 kms**)

LINKING INTERSECTION OPTION

Turn **left** towards Psyche Pumps and its recreation reserve on the Murray River and the Kings Billabong lookout. See the Kings Billabong Perimeter Ride (RIDE 4)

OR Continue on this ride, described below.

Turn **right** and follow the track back to the car park, either the inner track via the Bird hide to the left or continue on the main “outer” track (through bush with no Billabong views). Both tracks meet up together a few kilometres down the track. Arrive at Nature walk car park at **16.20 Kms**. Another 1.4 kms to Bruces Bend Boat Launching Area.

4: KINGS BILLABONG PERIMETER

The ride does a circuit around the Billabong itself and includes a visit to a Bird Hide, the historic Psyche Pumps and the main lookout over the Billabong. A short section (the first 3.8 kms) is common to the “Billabong Reserve” ride. The ride to Psyche Pumps is all on a well-defined crushed dust walking/riding track.

From the Nature Reserve car park (**1.5 Km** from Bruces bend Boat Launching Area), go past a turn-off to the left and over the levee bank, past a second turn off to the left (the start of the Kings Billabong Reserve Ride). At **0.91 km**, at the Y intersection, take the right hand branch and continue to the Bird Hide situated on the Billabong.

Leave the Bird hide and after 50 metres come to a T intersection with the main track. Take the track **right** for a km or so till you come to a T intersection with the track to *Ducksfoot lagoon* going of to the left (**3.8 Kms**)

LINKING INTERSECTION OPTION

At this point to go left will take you to Ducksfoot lagoon or to the river Murray tracks (RIDE 3 or RIDE 5) Or continue on this ride, see below

Go straight ahead towards the *Psyche pumps*. Continue for some distance along the main track, which skirts the fingers of the Billabong. You can see Rushes at various points on your right. Other rough tracks lead off to your left but keep rightish on the crushed dust track. Travel through some car barrier posts and along tracks which veer leftish. Continue to follow the crushed dust along the main inlet channel from Kings Billabong to the Murray at the pumps. (**6.10 Kms**) Soon you come to a grassed reserve and the Psyche Bend Pumping station complex on the River (Both the historical restored steam pumps and the modern pumping system). (**6.58 Kms**) Explore the area.



Old Psyche Pumps

Cross the concrete Bridge over the pumps outlet channel and turn right along the main access road.

LINKING INTERSECTION OPTION

Go **across** the road into the open area of the desolate Horseshoe Lagoon, skirt it on its right hand side and travel on to Red Cliffs as for that Ride description. **RIDE 5**
Or continue with this ride as described below

Travel out on the wide, unsealed Road away from river for (almost two kms) and finally up a sharp steep hill to a T intersection with a bitumen road. **(at 8.44 Kms)**

Turn **right** and travel down the road through the residential area to the *Kings Billabong Lookout* (on the Bitumen Road) for a magnificent view of the Billabong and for walking tracks down to the water's edge. **(8.97 kms)**



Kings Billabong from the Lookout

Continue along the bitumen road. Pass the old brick pumping station on the right, then shortly after a T intersection with *11th St* on the left, then a little further the T intersection with *Cooke St* on the right. About 80 metres further on **(at 10.32 Kms)** there is a sign on the **right** to "*Kings Billabong Nature Reserve*"

Take the dirt track on your **right** at the side of the houses and continue until you meet the Billabong. Veer **left** and follow the well-defined dirt car track along the side of the Billabong till you get back to the *Nature Walk Car Park* area. **(12.49 Km)** It's another 1.5 kms to *Bruces Bend Boat Launching Area*.

Difficulty? Easy! One or two minor inclines, one moderate climb up a dirt road

RIDE 5: THE RED CLIFFS RIVER CIRCUIT: Approx 30 KMS

This “iconic” longer ride takes in the river from Bruces Bend to Red Cliffs and return and includes riding through considerable inland areas on narrow, sometimes poorly defined sandy tracks. The river sections are largely on main (but narrow) one lane car tracks used by vehicles to service the river camping areas or for sight seeing. Take care when riding. The ride has many beautiful river views. It also has a significant section of riding through stressed bushland and sandy inland tracks. Some of the journey is along a salty lagoon with a fantastic but desolate landscape. There are some patches of very rough undulating, uneven surface and some sandy sections. Another main feature is the Psyche Bend Pumps. There are a number of options for the return journey once back to the Psyche Pumps area.

Leave Bruces Bend Boat Launching area and turn **left** on the main car track, proceeding along the river. This road continues for almost 10 kms, much with a river view. It is the main car track along the river with reasonable volume of traffic, much of it 4 wheel drive. Some sections are winding one lane so some care is needed.

At 0.66 pass the turn off on left to Marina. continue on main track

1.08 At Y intersection with a sign... left to Psyche Pumps and right to Nature Walk.

Keep **left** on main track to *Psyche Pumps*. Pass glimpses of Marina

2.15 The track crosses a small bridge (Baggs Bridge) which is over the inlet to Butlers creek, with the Murray River to your left.

2.22 Come to a T intersection and take the main right hand track away from the river

Soon the track hits the river. There are a number of tracks in this area criss-crossing the main track and a few tracks running off to the left but keep to the main track.

The track hits the river again and soon you come to the junction with the crushed dust walking/bike track on the right and then 50 metres later you cross a bridge (**5.24 km**) (Stevens Creek). On the right are sweeping views of a lagoon and on the left the river. Watch out for kangaroos!

The track narrows and winds and follows the river. At about **6.15 km** you can see the beautiful Trentham Estate Winery across the river. Continue on main track for a few Kms through scenic river views. As you begin to approach the Pumps (approximately 8.70km) the track veers inland, follow it past a track on the left until a short time later you see buildings and a cleared area. To the right is the main inlet channel between the Murray and Kings Billabong. You will see it only if you had gone further right off the main track. **9.68** you are at the bridge over the inlet channel, the Psyche Pumps complex is just 50 metres or so to the left, on the River including historical and restored (but only occasionally open to the public) steam driven pumps Take time to explore the area.

The next 12-km section of the ride, particularly the first 5 kms utilises rough bush tracks in an area criss-crossed with secondary tracks. Keep to the main track except as clearly

indicated in this guide and you should have no problem. If you get off the track it is impossible to get lost for long as there is horticultural land and "civilisation" to the right and the river to the left.

Move out of the Pumps area **over the bridge** across the inlet channel. The wide gravel road continues out on the right. Immediately on your left is a car track heading to Red Cliffs pumps. Don't take this but continue about 200 metres to a second track **(9.85km)** on the left This rough track goes along the right side of a narrow expanse of water (Horseshoe lagoon) Continue over very rough tracks along the side of this lagoon. This is a desolate salty expanse of clay depression with dead trees ringing the area. You are riding the top of the depression at the edge of the bush. After a while the water stops but the clay pan continues. Stay on the main track keeping in sight of the claypan. Again there are many tracks branching off left and right. (Warning..do not take this route after heavy rain)



Desolation Row: Horseshoe Lagoon

At 12.45 you come to an open area where the main track veers to the right. At this point you take a track on the left continuing into the bush but still skirting the dry lagoon area on the left. You soon get into the bush again. There are occasional tracks off to the left and then right, but keep to the main track

At 13.70 come to a T intersection and take track to the right. For the next 900 metres or so there are again many tracks branching off on left and right. Keep to the main track

usually tending to follow the river. Soon you go up a short sharp sandy hill, now running inland on a sandy winding track.

At **15 km** you come to a SEC transmission line and a pylon just on the left of the track. Follow the track rightish (inland) along the transmission line till you come to a T intersection (**15.83 km**) with a major dirt road just short of the Power sub station.

The road has a sign. Turn left to go to the boat launching ramp on the river When you get there (**16.21 km**) you are at the half way point of the ride.



Secluded sandy tracks along the Murray on the way to Red Cliffs

Continue until you again hit the pylon and transmission line where the track veers hard left. Continue left on this track across the dry billabong area and up a small sandy rise. At the top of the rise you meet a track at a T intersection (**17.7-km**). Go **right** along the top of the dune along the main sandy track. Continue along this track in another area crisscrossed with secondary tracks

At **18.70 km** the track widens and you come to a Y intersection. Take the right hand track back towards the river. The track is well defined but sandy.

At about **21.31 Kms** the track swings left and a sign on the right points to "No through road " Veer left. Soon after you hit the main gravel car track. Follow this back to Psyche pumps coming out at the reserve this time on the other side of Horseshoe lagoon.

At **22.31 kms** you come back to the Psyche pumps area and the small bridge over the inlet channel.

OPTION

There are three return options:

- * **Retrace** your steps and go back as you came in, along the river.
- * Return through residential area via Kings Billabong Lookout (see the Billabong Circuit Ride)
- * Return via the path through the bush around the Billabong (see the Billabong Circuit Ride). Once over the concrete bridge continue on the main dirt road for a hundred meters or so. There is a well-defined marked, crushed dust, walking track on the left. Take this track all the way back (past the Bird Hide turn off) to the Nature Walk Parking area and then to the Bruces Bend Boat Launching area. **Described in this ride**

Continue straight ahead for about 90 metres. Take the clearly marked crushed dust track on the left. Follow this all the way back to the Reserve Car park. Billabong views start at **25 kms**; there is a turn off to the Bird Hide at **26.48**, At **28.67** at Kings Billabong Reserve Car Park. Continue right back to the river, then left to the Bruces Bend Boat Launching area (**at 30.17 Kms**)

Difficulty? Moderate

RIDE 6: INLAND BOTANICAL GARDENS (Approximately 21 Kms)

These rides goes across the Bridge over the Murray into NSW on the bitumen and then along a crushed dust bike track adjacent to the Road taking you to the Inland Botanical Gardens. It has a more interesting return trip, largely along rough river tracks on the NSW side of the River. The major feature of the ride is the destination,the Inland Botanical Gardens.

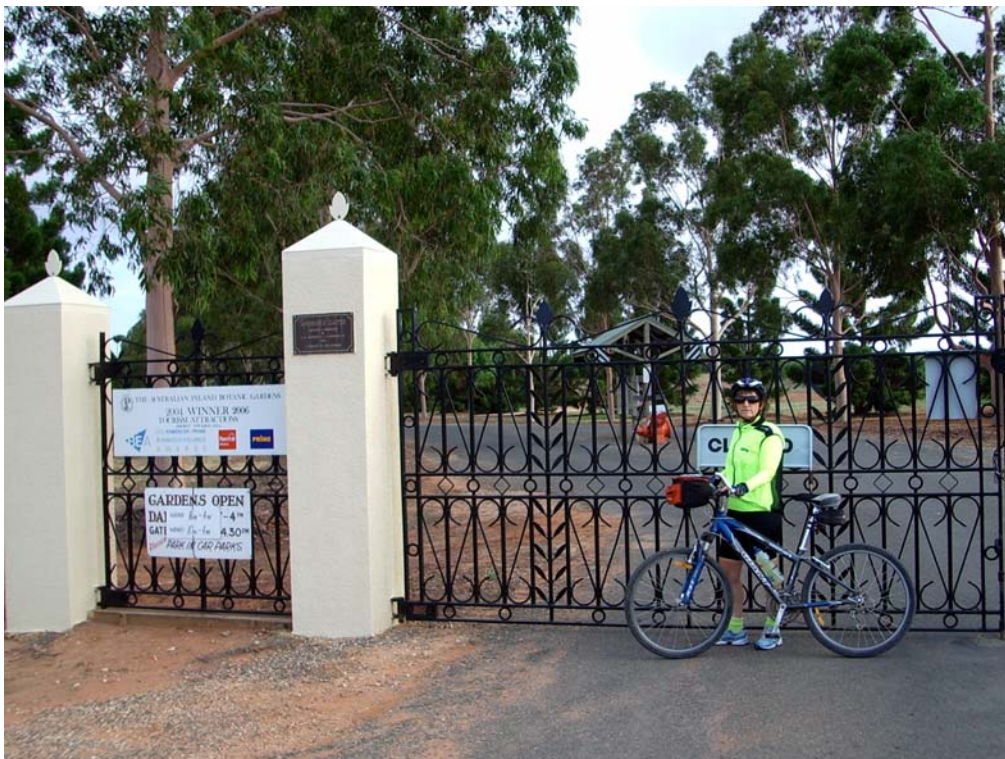
Start at the corner of 9th St and Langtree Mall

Ride up *9th St* towards the wide *Deakin Ave* and cross this Avenue at the traffic lights. Go to the roundabout at the Cnr 9th and San Mateo **(0.80 km)** Turn **left** and ride over Chaffey Bridge across the Murray to the small NSW town of Buronga. An option is to turn off the main road after the bridge span (on the bridge approach on the NSW side) and take the service road down past the roundabout.

At the roundabout at the end of the approach to the bridge on the NSW side (3.54KM) turn **left**

After 250 metres there is a Garden reserve. At this point join the crushed dust bike/walking track which runs adjacent to the bitumen River Road almost all of the way to the Botanical Gardens. The track is becoming increasingly run down.

At **7.80 kms** rejoin the road when the track runs out. About 300 metres further you come to the Botanical gardens on the right hand side. (**8.15 km**), Visit Gardens, have tea and coffee from the homestead. There are toilet facilities



The Inland Botanical Gardens

Note: visiting hours are 10 to 4 Weekends and 8 to 4 Weekdays. On first and third Saturdays of month there is a Farmers market at the Gardens commencing about 8.00 am

The return journey is via the River tracks (but options are to return via the Road or retrace steps along track).

Start at the gate. **Zero trip computer.**

Turn left and go along road for about 350 meters. Turn right down a dirt track with small sign “**Botanical Gardens Riverine Reserve**”. When the track hits the river turn **left** and continue until you come to a fence line on a property (**at 1.53 kms**). Go left and follow the fence line back to the road and bike track. After approximately 700 metres there is another distinct dirt road on your right. (**at 2.20 km**) Take this back to the River and again turn **left**. Follow these rough bush car tracks between the road and the river for some time until you again come to a property going down to the river (**at 4.90 km**).

Take tracks to the left going over the levee bank and follow those tracks until the track hits the fence line. Proceed back generally in the direction from which you came. After 500 metres it becomes a good gravel road. Follow it back to its start at the bitumen road and bike track. (**6.59 kms**). Turn **right** and retrace steps back along the bike track.

At the main roundabout, turn right onto the bridge approach (or proceed along the service road). Go back over the bridge to the roundabout intersection with 7th St (**at 10.9 kms**). Go straight ahead for approx 700 metres till you come to the 9th St intersection roundabout. **Turn right**. And follow 9th St over *Deakin Ave* and back to your starting point (**12.4 kms**)

Degree of Difficulty? Easy

RIDE 7: THE IRRIGATION LAKES: Approx. 21 Kms

This short ride gives a good view of the two major irrigation drainage lakes (Lake Ranfurly and Lake Hawthorn). It visits a bird hide and also follows the Nature walk along the outlet channel from the Lakes to the River. It includes a short section of track along the River. It can also include a visit to River Road Pottery (along the route) for coffee and cake.

Start ride on the corner of 9th St and Langtree Ave.

Ride in a north westerly direction down 9th St away from the town, for about 1 km till you come to the intersection with the railway line at a local primary school. Turn **left** and follow the railway line, first on a very rough railway ballast section (for 30 metres), then on poorly defined single track to the next cross St (*10th St*) and then continue on another rough track still along the rail line to the *11th St* Intersection (**at 1.41 kms**) Take care crossing this major road.

The well formed shared walking/cycling track “*Linear Reserve*” starts at this point on the other side of the railway track. At **2.07 Kms.** come to the intersection with *Ontario Ave* running diagonally across the rail line. Carefully cross the road and take the rough dirt road on the right of the line going away from Mildura, between the railway line and the fence line.



View of Lake Ranfurly from the track along the railway line

At **3.73 km**. arrive at a T intersection with a track running along the right side of the Lake (Ranfurly). At this point continue (left) on the track alongside the railway line. After approximately 1.47 kms take a side trip on a track on your **right** to a **bird hide** on the Lake (1.20km round trip), then retrace steps back to the main track, (**at 6.45km**) and continue (**right**) along this sandy track. It has some nasty sand patches and it may be necessary to carry the bike for 30 metres or so. Continue through a gate (sometimes closed. (and if so, lift bikes over it). and through substantial high tech horticultural areas till you come to a T intersection with a main dirt road near to the railway line. (**at approximately 8.76 kms**) Turn **left** (over the railway line) and go a short distance (about 600 meters) for a good view of Lake Hawthorn at a defined resting/recreation spot.



Recreational area overlooking Lake Hawthorn

Retrace steps for 600 meters back to the T intersection (**9.92 Kms**). Continue straight ahead and take the signed track about 40 metres on the **left**. This is a crushed dust 'Nature' walking/cycling track along the outlet channel to the Murray River.



Pelicans on the Outlet channel; Lake Hawthorn Drainage Lake

When you get to the Bitumen (the busy *River Road*) (**11.53 km**) carefully cross it and go left, 10 metres, to the main bitumen access track to the Boat launching area on the **right** (almost adjacent the end of the nature track.) The riverside is only a short distance away.

At the River, (**11.70 km**) turn **right** and ride along one of the many branches of the River tracks till they all bring you back to the Road opposite the ***River Road Pottery*** (**13.39 Km**) (which does coffee, cakes and reasonable meals).

Continue back towards Mildura along *River Road* itself (or get back onto the tracks along the river after about 500 metres.... for about one km of riding). The river tracks brings you back up close to the road just before the “cliffs” and the **turn-off required** on River Road

At **approximately 15.20 km**) you come to the not so clearly seen *Ranfurly Reforestation project* sign on your **right** (just after the sweeping bend with the River view and the “cliffs”), Turn right from the road into this reserve area (again with care as it is a busy road) Follow the rough track along the left side of the Ranfurly Drainage lakes, back to the intersection with the railway track. (**17.22 Kms**) Turn **left** along the fence line until you arrive back at the bitumen road (*Ontario Ave*) (**18.10 km**)



The Linear Reserve along the Railway Line 11th St to Ontario Ave.

Cross the road, turn left and pick up the Linear Track again (the bike/walking track on the right hand side of the rail track). Follow this back to 11th St, then across on the rough tracks to 9th St. Turn **right** and back to the starting point. **(20.96 km)**

Difficulty? Easy! Some sand patches.

RIDE 8: THE MERBEIN COMMON: Approximately 26 Kms

This ride takes in a large section of reserve along side the Murray River at Merbein. It includes two large Billabongs and many access points to river camping areas. There are some historical sites. Includes considerable travel on the return leg through open dry stressed bushland on rough tracks.

Start at the car park at Merbein Winery.

Take the bitumen road to your **right** for about 550 metres. Take **left** hand turn and after a few meters proceed through the gate. Immediately turn **left** on dirt track and follow across a little wooden bridge. At 1.50 arrive at a **lookout** over the River Murray. Proceed along the track through the reserve along the back of the Winery overlooking the river.

At **2.00** the track comes to an intersection with steps going down to the river. Dismount and carry your bike down the 100 meters to the bottom that is the **“Chaffeys Landing”** Picnic site. Take the main track **left** past “river access” signs till you get to an intersection with the main track (*Redgum Track*) at 2.80. Continue along this main track for all of the outward leg passing the following markers. NOTE there are 23 River Access markers along the outward part of this ride.

At **3.58** km pass the “boat ramp” and toilet.

At **4.15** km pass *Racecourse track* on the left.

At **5.05** km pass the *Lignum track*.

At **5.70** km see sign “*Catfish Billabong*” (currently dry). Turn into this area and make a loop (about 2.25 km) around the billabong (going either clockwise or anticlockwise) Resume along *Redgum track* (**7.95** km) About a 100 meters further cross a small wooden bridge.

At **8.82** km pass two tracks on the left (River access sign 18 and 19). The track passes through dry and desolate country. A considerable billabong is on the right at **10.7** km.

At **11.26** km there is a T intersection marked by many marker poles. Turn **right** for the continuation of the *Red Gum* track. (the track you have left continues on as “*Box Flat*” Track.

At **13.88** km the track reaches a large billabong on the left. It has a car park and nature trail. It is possible to cycle on the track along the billabong on the left but it is **very** sandy. Better to retrace steps 50 meters **back down** the main track and take a sandy track on the **right**.

At **16.95** come to a junction with another track (*Island track*). Continue ahead up a small rise to another intersection and take the **right** fork.

At **19.05** come to a T intersection. Take the track **left** (*Island Track*). After 500 meters take the **right** fork and continue until the track comes to a T intersection (*Box Flat Track*). Turn **right**.

At **21.13** almost back onto a main road take the *Lignum Track* on the left. The track continues but at times its not clearly defined with many other faint tracks crossing. Turn **right** at two consecutive Y intersections and at **22.75** Kms you get back onto the main *Red Gum* Track.

Turn **Right** and soon pass sign “River Access 11.” Retrace steps back to the end of this well-defined trail to the Bitumen. **(25.10)** Turn left on the bitumen up the hill for approx 700 metres till you get back to the start at the Winery Car Park **(25.80)**

Section 4. Equipment list

What to Bring for Riding

Essential

- Mountain Bike or Hybrid in reasonable condition. (road bikes, with narrow tires are **not suitable**)
- Helmet
- Sun glasses or other eye protection
- 1 spare tube for **your** tire, (note ; not all bike wheels take the same size tire/tube
- 3 tire levers (plastic best). Best to have some prior practice in changing tubes on your bike!)
- bike pump to suit your tubes
- At least 1.5 litres of water in water bottles (preferably in cages attached to your bike) or other hydration system (and don't forget to drink **at least** one litre per 20 kms if its warm)

*Nice but **not essential***

- A second spare tube and/or a puncture repair kit
- Bike "Lyra" pants (prevents chaffing)
- Bike gloves, (to stop the shredding of palms if you ever fall off your bike)
- legionnaires type hat to fit under or over helmet (if weather is hot or excessively sunny),
- muesli type bars or similar snacks,
- sunscreen lotion,
- lip protection cream
- some Allen keys to fit your bike or spanners if an older bike
- Small back pack to carry above in (or small pannier on bike or big pockets)
- couple of band aids
- a mobile phone (just in case)
- cycle accident insurance (Bicycle Victoria reputedly has a very good Insurance Policy which comes free with their membership. It is highly recommended that you look into this!)



Important maintenance tasks at end of Ride

Section 5. Contacts

Sunraysia Bushwalkers

Sunraysia Bushwalkers have a varied outdoor program of day and overnight walks and a range of other outdoor activity. They meet at 8.00 on the first Wednesday of the month. See their website at <http://sunbushwalk.net.au/> contact sunbushwalk@hotmail.net.au

Postal: PO Box 1827, Mildura 3502

Phone 5025 7325

Sunraysia Bicycle User Group (SunBUG)

SunBUG is a recently formed (Dec. 2006) association of local people interested in improving conditions for cyclists in the Sunraysia area and in promoting cycling generally. Contact mjobe@ncable.com.au, Post: PO Box 899 Mildura, 3502

Mildura Coomealla Cycling Club

Contact website www-ccc.com.au

Email info@m-ccc.com.au

Post P.O. Box 1355, Mildura, 3500

Coomealla Triathlon Club

Contact website www.coomeallatriclub.com/

Coomealla Mildura Mountainless Bike Club

The Mountain Bike club in the Sunraysia area. They organize a range of local competitive rides as well as participating in out of area events.

Contact itberuldsen@bigpond.com

207, 13th St, Mildura Vic. 3500

Local Bike Shops

- **Mildura Cycles**

154 Ninth St Mildura

Phone 5021 1584

- **Hodgsons Cycles**

106 Pine Ave, Mildura

Phone 5023 6041

- **Bicycle Superstore**

116 Eighth St, Mildura

Phone 5022 9350

Bicycle Victoria

The peak association for Cyclists, particularly recreational cyclists in Victoria. Particularly recommended for their Insurance Policy that comes with membership.

Contact them via their website www.bv.com.au