

# TRAIL TALK

2018 – June Edition



## WHY DO I RIDE ?

Because when I look at my horse, I see my hopes and dreams.

When I touch my horse, I feel joy and serenity.

When I ride my horse, I connect with my soul.

When I am with my horse, I am who I am meant to be.

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Karen Ringin	Kate Wingad
Tracey Atkins	Donna Watt
Paul Herdman	Annette Currie
Chelsea Peterson	Jenny Barnes
Mel Williams	Jane Saddington
Len Giddins	Christine Kempers
Amber Pope	Julie Lodge
Sue Baillie (Associate Member)	Rhianna Cook

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We now have Club Stickers available, Small (car size) \$5, Large (Float Size) \$10, club polo shirts \$30, Caps \$15 & Full Zip Polar Fleece tops \$45, Club Beanies are on their way, should be available by the end of May, please contact Lloyd Fletcher for more information and availability.

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## YOUR COMMITTEE HERE FOR YOU

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Kim Sinclair, Ron Eddy and Mick Thompson



**Lloyd Fletcher**  
Membership & Merchandise Officer

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## NEW CLUB A-FRAME



Our new Club A-Frame has arrived and will be positioned close to the parking area or last turn on each of our future club rides. Keep a look out for it and you won't go wrong.

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## RIDE REPORT – WEDNESDAY 21/03 TO SUNDAY 25/03 SNAKE ISLAND RIDE – OUR GREAT OVERSEAS ADVENTURE

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March** – Finally **S.I. Day** had arrived, I found myself driving in company with Nat to the Truck Stop on the Freeway east of Warrenheip, where we arranged to meet Lauren, Marg, Karen and John. They were all eagerly awaiting our arrival, we handed out radios for communication and were soon heading to our second rendezvous, the BP Servo near Melton. Fifty minutes later, and with Julie, Kim and Annette in tow, Lloyd (official “send-off party”), was waving farewell and wishing us a great time.

We travelled without incident at a steady pace until about 3 kilometres before the Westgate Bridge, where traffic was almost at a standstill due to an earlier accident in the Tunnel. We had no idea about the traffic jam and there was nothing to do but sit it out, almost literally. Once through the Tunnel the traffic began to flow more steadily and we eventually arrived at Macka's (before Cranbourne), where we unloaded horses for a well-earned break and had lunch. Refreshed and relaxed (horses and riders), we re-loaded and resumed our journey, arriving without further incident about 2.45 p.m. at our camp in Gelliondale.



We met our wonderful host Barbie Beau and another Yarram Club member Yvonne McNeal, who will both ride with us tomorrow. We set up camp and paddocked the horses together, then sat back to watch as they sorted themselves out. Our theory was that they would all be together on Snake Island and the sorting was best done under supervision, and this proved mostly uneventful. We then cleaned up and headed into Yarram for a pub meal and a few drinks. Returning to camp, we crammed into my float for chocolates and a cuppa before retiring for the night.

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March** – Most of us rose before 8 a.m., fed and watered horses, and then had breakfast. We were joined by Barb and Yvonne and at 10 a.m., headed out into the Alberton West Forest for our day's ride. We would be riding over my old training tracks which Barb and I know like the back of our hands. The going was excellent underfoot, mostly firm sandy tracks, great for a canter to blow out the cobwebs. We encountered some very steep hills and took in beautiful panoramic views of the coastline, including Snake Island and Wilsons Promontory, all managing very well. Barb picked out a great lunch spot on a grassy hill above Welshpool and overlooking Corner Inlet. It was an idyllic setting, shaded trees for the horses, and the hill protecting us from the wind. I suspect I noticed a few members taking a discreet "Nanna Nap" as they lay back after lunch. We reluctantly remounted and set off on the return trip to camp, arriving there about 3.30pm, after riding 30 kilometres.



We strapped horses and headed to Barb's place for showers and a cuppa, and I took the opportunity to visit an old neighbour and catch up with local news. Back to camp we fed and bedded down the horses before heading into Yarram to try out the other pub. We were joined by Barb and husband John, and other Yarram members Jenny Bland and Swampy Thomas. (Jenny and Swampy were to join us on the Island.) We headed back to camp after another very enjoyable meal and socialising and packed up

what gear we could for our very early start on Friday morning. We all went to bed happy and satisfied with our great day.

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March** – Up at 5.00 a.m. to pack up gear for Snake Island. We were very fortunate that Mel McKean, (Snake Island Cattlemen's Association organiser), agreed to collect our gear from camp for transport to the boat, which had to leave on high tide to negotiate channels to the Island, hence the early start. We fed horses, had a leisurely breakfast, packed up camp and by 8.15 a.m. were in convoy and heading to the yards at Welshpool.

We arrived to a hive of activity, Cattlemen and other riders who were to accompany us to Snake Island, saddling up and making final preparations, with a constant flow of arriving floats. We saddled and re-checked our gear, making last-minute adjustments and preparations. Members even found time to purchase Snake Island merchandise before the pre-ride briefing.

35 riders headed out at 10 a.m. with sun shining and light winds, almost perfect conditions for the crossing. I am pleased to report that all B.S.T.H.R.C members had taken note of our pre-ride discussions, and were riding in perfect position in the group, not straggling at the back and in danger of getting into deep water. This attitude prevailed for the entire Snake Island trip and was especially important during what was to become a “hairy” and exhilarating return crossing on Sunday, but more on that later.

As with all crossings, there is generally a rider (or 2) who get a little wetter than others. About 30 minutes into the crossing, during a stop to allow stragglers to catch up with the main group, Nat Strachan’s “Bella” staggered sideways with vertigo, which can occur when a stationary horse looks at the water. Nat ended up sitting neck deep in water, Bella running a short distance before coming back to the group. In true spirit Nat laughed it off, and even though her phone had died, and she was totally soaked and getting cold, managed to maintain her dignity and sense of humour for the rest of our adventure. It would be remiss not to mention a rider from the other group who went completely under,

unfortunately for her, in the “Middle Ground” and in much deeper water.



Remember, the conditions for this crossing were perfect, in contrast to the forecast for Sunday’s return crossing with strong winds and possible rain predicted, so many were thinking this was just a prelude of things to come. Lloyd had jokingly predicted 100 kph winds and a tidal wave in a text, (spooky).

We rested up on Little Snake Island for toilet breaks and removal of coats/clothing, because now we were free of the water, conditions were becoming quite hot; then crossed the Swashway, a channel between Little Snake and Snake Islands, and started the 1-hour long trek on sandy tracks through stunted vegetation to the Cattlemen’s Huts. About 200 metres short of our destination another rider, a guy wearing shorts and work boots, (not permitted on ATHRA rides for safety reasons), was dislodged from his saddle, his foot became lodged in his stirrup, the horse lashed out, grazing his nose, coming ever so close to a disastrous situation with potential fatal injuries. The lesson being that these things

can happen anywhere, any time, so appropriate footwear when riding is vital. (Sorry, couldn't miss an opportunity to emphasise safety issues).

We arrived at the Huts about 1.30 p.m., found a bunk and settled in. After lunch we all chilled out waiting for happy hour and our evening meal. We were lucky to see the occasional Hog deer and some roos come into the night paddock to graze and get water. About 5.30 p.m. I was joined by Karen, Julie, Nat, Kim, Margaret and Lauren on a walk of the Island, down to and along the beach, and then back inland via the bush to the Huts. I had the girls convinced that we were lost when suddenly the Huts were there in front of us. Shower time, (beautiful hot showers were very welcome), and drinks etc. before dinner. The Cattlemen & women had prepared a BBQ with the lot, and some very tasty salads,



no one went hungry.

By now everyone was very well acquainted and there were many horse stories told, and much reminiscing with old friends, and also some serious "socialising". Some of our group played cards, a game called "Cards against Humanity" or similar but can't remember the name, which was seriously funny, rude and crude. Can't say anymore because what happens on the Island, stays on the Island. I didn't realise that such games existed, leading such a sheltered life in my autumn years. It was a lot of fun though.

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March** – I am reliably informed there was a great deal of loud and unusual snoring in the main hut overnight, so some non-snorers didn't sleep as well as others. We rose at our leisure and brought the horses in for their morning feed, and then had a hot breakfast of chops, sausages, hamburgers, bacon and eggs (poached& scrambled) in sumptuous quantities. With light rain falling we saddled up for a ride. Being an old cattleman from way back, John Austin joined the Cattlemen to move cattle, whilst the rest of us joined Jenny Bland for a ride along the beach. We left the Huts with light drizzle falling, (this kept up for most of the ride, but did not detract from our

experience), and riding over undulating sand hills through native grasses and stunted vegetation to the beach. Some played with their horses in the water, others cantered and jumped driftwood, the rest of

us simply walking along socialising and enjoying the view & experience. With the tide out and with Wilsons Promontory just across the grey water, we rode along the pristine beach for several kilometres, eventually heading back inland across the vegetated dunes.



We eventually found the “Big Waterhole” and caught up with the other riding group. Some of our members joined them for a faster ride back to the Huts. They had finished lunch by the time we arrived, but there was still plenty to eat. Our Late lunch over, some socialised with a drink, soaking up the ambiance of Snake Island. The sun had come out by then and conditions were most pleasant, the smell of recent rain obvious in the air. Others showered and prepared for the evenings socialising. The Cattlewomen went to no end of trouble to prepare a very enjoyable hearty roast dinner, followed by more cards, games and socialising. I retired about midnight, but some played on into the early morning.

***Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> March*** – An early rise was in order today because, once again the boat had to catch the high tide, and our gear had to be loaded. We filled in time feeding horses and chatting before sitting down to another enormous breakfast. It was noticeably windy making us think the return crossing may be a little tougher than the trip over, and this proved to be the case.

We left the Huts about 11 a.m. and headed out to the Swashway before crossing over to Little Snake Island. The wind had strengthened to the predicted 35 kph or so, but without hesitation we headed into the water with a strong wind at our backs. It was noticeably colder over the water and the wind was relentless. We negotiated the shallows and then turned left to cross the Middle Ground where we experienced much deeper water than before, but again all riders safely negotiated this without incident. With all horses/riders safely through, we commenced our last leg of the crossing, turning left again to travel west, parallel with the coast towards Port Welshpool.

The wind was now much stronger, the sky very foreboding, there was an eerie feeling as Mother Nature was about to show us her force. Suddenly we found ourselves riding headlong into the middle of a gale, hats and even a rider’s beanie blown off, riders even holding onto helmets. The wind was stinging with a hint of fine hail, the howling wind causing a constant turbulence across the surface of the shallow

water. The gale persisted until we reached dry land and then, quite suddenly died. Amazingly all horses and riders managed it all in their stride and without incident.

We arrived back at the floats about 2.35 p.m., a little windblown but none the worse for the experience. I heard members talking about the thrill and excitement of the crossing, some even wishing to do it all again. I arrived home to a dark and stormy Magpie about 7.45 p.m. after one of my most enjoyable and exciting Snake Island adventures. Thanks to all the BSTHRC participants for their enthusiastic corporation and company.



Alan Salter

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## RIDE REPORT – CALAJERO CAMP 8/04 – 14/04

Wow, wow, wow, another week of riding was had in the foothills of the Dargo High Plains in Gippsland. A small group took the plunge and had an amazing week to remember.

Our hosts Ron and Annie of the Barn at Calajero looked after our group with spectacular daily rides, great accommodation, facilities and wonderful company. The group were treated to sunny days and fireside nights. The pizza oven was put to good use, as was the ping pong table and jukebox.



## RIDE REPORT – TUESDAY 24/04 NAPOLEONS – NERVOUS NELLIES – HOST: NATALIE STRACHAN

Eleven members attended this ride including our newest, Tracey Atkins who was warmly welcomed into the group. She was riding a great looking chestnut mare (Ginger) which performed wonderfully. It was great to see Donna Thomson back after a break, (on a new & green horse), and all the usual crew. We assembled at Natalie Strachan's property in Nine-mile Road where there was plenty of room for floats and warming up horses. Introductions and briefing over, we headed off and, after sorting out a short hiccup with a saddle problem, all horses settled down well and we were cruisin'. It is always easy to tell when everything is going well, there is a constant drone of friendly banter and conversation, so my job as Trail Boss was relatively easy. The weather Gods seemed threatening, with a promise of rain in the air, but they smiled upon us, making for great riding conditions. The ride took in some peaceful bush tracks showing evidence of past fires, gravel roads and even some bitumen.

We returned to the floats about 2.5 hours and 12 kilometres later, very satisfied and hungry. After unsaddling etc., we all sat around enjoying sandwiches and "horsey" stories. Everyone agreed to do it again soon. (Another ride over slightly different tracks is scheduled for June 7<sup>th</sup>).

One lesson learnt from the day is to ensure that your horse has access to water after a ride. We had a small scare with one horse found slightly distressed after lunch, but after a short time walking and after drinking, it quickly returned to its normal happy self, and travelled safely home. It pays to remain observant when it comes to our equine friends, they cannot talk to us. Thanks to a very attentive owner and prompt attention to its needs, the day ended well for this horse.

Light rain started falling as we all departed for home, well satisfied after a great ride and some excellent company. ***Thanks to Nat for hosting this one, and also for taking on another on June 7<sup>th</sup>.*** I hope to see you all there.

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## RIDE REPORT –SUNDAY 29/04 LAL LAL RIDE – HOST: THULE BOWMAN

On Sunday 29th of April members of the Ballarat Social Trail Horse Riders Club met at a personal block next to the Lal Lal Bungal Historical Area. We rode out at 9:50 am and faced a long ride consisting of long steep hills and creek crossings adding up to a final ride of approximately 15.78 km. The ride was very challenging and one of the best rides experienced. We stopped at a picnic ground and had a barbeque lunch that was gratefully provided to us and had a quick break. We got on our horses and head the short way back to the horse floats. All riders had a very enjoyable day and no serious accidents occurred. Thank you to the club for providing an amazing day.

Madalen Webster

*Thanks to Madalen (one of our juniors) for taking the trouble to prepare this report. Thanks also to Thule Bowman for hosting this ride and planning such a great track for us. Thanks to those who took the trouble to attend and prepare the lovely BBQ lunch, Lois, Natalie (Bevvy) and Mick.*



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## RIDE REPORT – WEDNESDAY 16/05 - MAGPIE NERVOUS NELLIES

We enjoyed a NN ride hosted by Alan Salter on Wednesday May 16th. Eleven of us rode out for a couple of hours in the Magpie pine forest, with minimal wind and no rain. As Ian and I live well away from main roads, crossing the Midland Highway was a little daunting, but uneventful with Alan's excellent guidance. We headed up a semi-rural road complete with houses, sheep, alpaca, hairy Shetland ponies and a few interesting ground objects for extra stimulation.

In the pine forest, Alan took us on a 'snakes and ladders' course; up and down some ditches with much weaving, around and around through the trees. We confidently followed our intrepid leader, looking for the elusive tracks in the pines. It certainly made the horses (and riders) watch where they were going



There were some new members to the club, horses who had done little trail riding, and everyone managed very well. Lovely pine needle footing underneath, and dozens of yellow-tailed black cockatoos made for an enjoyable ride.

Ian and I started the day with a 'floating issue', so we arrived with one horse instead of two. Alan generously lent me a horse and I had a fabulous ride on his beautiful Arab, Duke with plenty of bounce to the ounce!

Many thanks to Carole for hot lunch and beverages after the ride. We enjoy coming along to these rides very much.

Kate & Ian Knox

## HANDY GUIDE TO RUGGING REQUIREMENTS

Temperature	Stabled/Clipped	Stabled/Unclipped	Turned out/ Unclipped
15C and warmer	Zero fill	Nothing	Nothing
10C to 15C	Light weight (100g) or zero fill	Nothing or zero fill	Nothing
5C to 10C	Medium weight (250g)	Light weight (150g)	Nothing or light weight (100g)
Zero to 4C	Heavy weight (300g)	Medium weight (200g)	Nothing or light/ medium weight (150-
-10C to zero	Heavy weight (300-400g)	Medium weight (200-300g) with liner	Light or medium weight (150-300g)
-10C or colder	Heavyweight (300-500g) plus liner and	Medium or heavy weight (300-400g) and	Heavy weight (300-500g) and hood



### Contact Us

#### **BSTHRC Inc.**

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### HAVE MORE TO SAY?

Sure, this is a Newsletter, not a novel, and we want to keep it short, sweet and informing without bogging you down. If you would like to sell or say something that is of interest to members, please let us know and we'll give it our best shot.

***Our Ride Calendar is attached*** for your information and as you can imagine we are always looking for new and interesting places to go. If you have any suggestions or would like to host a ride, please free to contact Alan directly.

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*“This is your Club. Together we will make it the best ever experience for you, our new members, and our horses.”*

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