

Autumn 2016

## Bruthen Station Platform Saved

Thanks to a magnificent effort by the volunteers of Bruthen Landcare over the last year, the once degrading and inconspicuous former platform has been brought back as a valuable asset for the trail.

Despite the difficulties of planting into rubble and hard ground most of the ground cover plants have done remarkably well, thanks also to a 'kind' summer and January rains.

A seat and table unit has been added and a bike rack, with a gravel path leading across the full length of the platform and ramped at each end. At a working bee on Sunday 10th of April all the protective covers were removed to reveal a swathe of green.

Everyone present then adjourned to the platform table for a generous afternoon tea and a chance to admire the handiwork



Weeds were removed and an interpretation board donated by the Bruthen Lions was formally installed.



*Michael Oxer*

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## Green Army to Plant Thousands of Understory Plants and Trees

A major revegetation program is under way now with the third Green Army team planting out several thousand tube stock Across four sites and with some additional small locations.



*Looking east along the north boundary fence at Nicholson, route for a new 250m long path and Revegetation.*

### These include:

- a new pathway route being established on a 250 m long x 7 m wide corridor on the north boundary of the Nicholson station ground, between Sarsfield Road and the river
- a section of the Mossiface station ground;
- the trail entrance area at McEacharn Street (Bairnsdale),
- infill plantings east of the Nicholson River Bridge.

### Other small locations include:

- west of the highway crossing at Broadlands (Bairnsdale);
- east of Sanford Lane (Nicholson),
- and near Newmerella.

The first two locations will also include significant fencing works by the Green Army. Funding has come from Green Army resources, a 25th Anniversary Landcare project, Nicholson River Landcare, and the Friends Association.

*Michael Oxe*



## Snowy West Landcare Group Mulching at Burn Road



*Photos from May Leatch*

The incredibly vigorous growing season this last Spring and Summer has left the trail with a major problem of heavy verge vegetation growth, especially through forest areas between Bruthen and Nowa Nowa. With very little money in the bank the management committee is hard pressed to cope with such a situation but has committed up to \$8,000 from its meagre remaining funds for an edge slashing effort.

The plan is to follow up with herbicide spraying to try and delay regrowth, which if left unchecked undoes all the slashing effort. This has been an ongoing dilemma - not enough money on hand to do timely slashing then to follow up with spraying. An offer has been made by Sarsfield CFA Brigade members to assist with spraying so we hope that this time the situation might be more positive.

*Michael Oxer*

## Clearing the Path in the Colquhoun Forest



**Overgrown verges of the trail west of Nowa Nowa**

## Older Bicycle Riders Give The Trail a Workout

Over nearly four days in April a group of 36 older bicycle riders from the Waverley LAC Cycle group explored the rail trail and byways.



**Waverley LAC Cyclists at Sarsfield Rd gate**

*Michael Oxer*

It was quite a sight to see them gathered at the Sarsfield Road gate at Nicholson and watch them head off for Bruthen. The oldest rider was 92 and many others not far behind. A great effort. They also reported that their contribution to the local economy could have been about \$13,000. That is no small support for local businesses.

**Is it not time for a more visible and direct support from the commercial sector for this trail? At present the almost total volunteer management effort is barely sustainable, given lack of funding; let's at least hear the voices from local businesses.**



## Snowy River Viaduct Restoration Finds Strong Community Support


Two recent Orbost events – the Orbost Show and the Orbost Railway Centenary Exhibition - have provided opportunities for individuals to sign up their support for restoration of the Snowy River Viaduct.

The Orbost and District Historical Society's display of the history of the show attracted many people particularly interested in identifying individuals in the collection of photographs from early shows.

The display of the East Gippsland Rail Trail with focus on the Snowy River Viaduct attracted interest from persons with an interest in preserving railway history and some with a personal association with the railway.

2600 folk attended the Orbost Railway Centenary exhibition. Visitors were presented with a train ticket, stamped at the entry. This was an outstanding presentation, including a working model of the Orbost station. Many items, from uniforms, newspaper articles, lamps, plans, brought the history of the railway alive.

We have 550 persons who volunteered to put their name to a list supporting the restoration of the viaduct



It could become a CYCLING & WALKING TRAIL like this bridge near Traralgon.

### SAVE OUR HISTORIC ORBOST RAILWAY BRIDGE

This historic bridge is an icon, a *"Welcome to Orbost"* which we all love. This is the longest wooden railway bridge in Victoria and possibly in Australia. Its neglect is a tragedy.

**WHAT FUTURE DOES IT HAVE?  
WHAT CAN WE DO?**

Other historic bridges have been restored to become walking and cycling trails for local people and visitors to enjoy. This would be a positive for Orbost.

We need to make a move now before it's too late.

**Please add your name to the list of people who believe that our historic railway bridge should be saved and restored.**

Poster by May Leatch

A meeting was held with Tim Bull to inform him of the project and request advice on how to proceed. He provided useful contacts and suggestions and we are now in the process of following these up.



Another interesting development has been the study undertaken by Victoria University on the engineering history. This study recommends that the Bairnsdale to Orbost Railway is nominated to be awarded recognition under the terms of the Engineering Heritage Australia Recognition Program.

“State significance can be claimed for this railway considering the railway as a linear site consisting of many elements. This railway involves four significant and spectacular structures which are recognised by the National Trust. They are Nicholson Railway Bridge, the Stony Creek Trestle Bridge, the Bogy Creek and Snowy River Floodplain Bridge. Each of these structures has an individual set of characteristics which can be found rarely in the state.”

They recommend a ceremony should be held on Sunday Aug 21<sup>st</sup> at Stony Creek Trestle Bridge to mark the history of the railway line with an interpretation sign and historic marker. Further information will be provided as arrangements are confirmed for this event.

*Sue Peirce*



## An International Note

In the USA, **Rails to Trails** is the not-for-profit organisation which has delivered a truly remarkable achievement in trails development. This year they turned 30 years, and report in the Spring/Summer newsletter that R2T today has 160,000 members, and the nation more than 22,000 MILES (= 35,200 Km) of trails! Many millions of dollars have been invested, many cities have been endowed with new life based on superbly built trail networks, and hundreds of small towns have been rejuvenated by tourism based the trails. Dozens more old lines are being converted and thousands more miles planned. Key concepts include ‘networking’ existing trails into a web of routes to generate and sustain tourism. A founding policy was the notion of ‘rail banking’, that is, protecting old line reserves for future use rather than selling them, or else when any are sold the money goes back into trails. Another really important project is a research program called T-MAP (Trail Modelling and Assessment Platform) to measure trail-system connectivity, demand and potential impact. The intent is to precisely forecast returns on investment related to health and transportation. Of course, rail trails in the USA are now encouraged not just by counties (local government) and States, but at the federal level also.



## ORBOST RAIL LINE CLOSES

**The Bairnsdale to Orbost line in East Gippsland was closed on Friday, 25 August 1987.**

**Block trains, carrying timber from Orbost and limestone from Nowa Nowa direct to Melbourne, were the principal traffic on the line.**

**The line had been allowed to deteriorate, until, at the time of closure there were 40 serious faults on the line which could derail trains. Some faults were on or near bridges. Some sections were restricted to 15 kph.**

**This line was one of many that had been recommended for closure by the 1980 Lonie Report.**

**However, the year-round trains carrying timber and limestone - non-seasonal commodities - were a major factor in deciding to continue the line after that report. (from P.T.U.A.'s Transit News and Views Sept. 1987)**

Despite public protests the last train left Orbost on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August.



**Public Protest at Orbost**

**Next Issue: Who Worked on the Railway?**

**According to the Snowy River Mail (3.6.87) the closure had been originally scheduled by 26<sup>th</sup> June but was postponed till after the election. (Federal elections were held in Australia on 11 July 1987, following the granting of a double dissolution on 5 June by the Governor-General Sir Ninian Stephen.)**

The State minister visited Orbost Tuesday May 26<sup>th</sup> and gave the news of the decision. He claimed that **'the line is in need of major repairs and would take some millions to make it safe and up the standard'**



**Ron Hayward passes over staff to Bill Buckley**



**Last train crosses the flats at Orbost**

From a report in the Snowy River Mail on September 2 1987

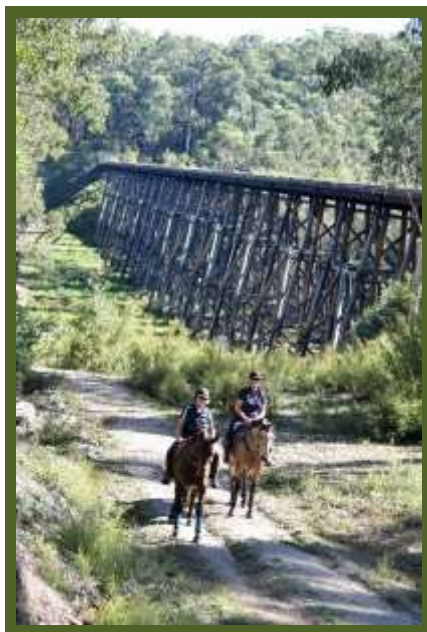
**On August 27<sup>th</sup> V Line dismantled sidings at Orbost Station –as they were not prepared to take the risk of somebody “pinching” the sidings at the defunct Orbost railway station. They were carted away to be used elsewhere.**

## Hinnomunjie Riding Club Navigation Ride

Twenty-two adventurous riders took advantage of a glorious 27 degree day on 30<sup>th</sup> April to participate in the Hinnomunjie Riding Club inaugural HRVAV Official Navigation Ride. The two rides were 12.8 km and 23.8 km.

The riders headed off from the Nowa Nowa Recreation Reserve, enjoying the scenic views of Lake Tyers before heading up the East Gippsland Rail Trail. The riders then headed into the Colquhoun Forest. Recent Planned burning (2 weeks ago) by DEWLP luckily had little impact on the ride we had been planning since January. It had been quite a worry for us when the notices appeared in March.

Riders continued along roads and tracks through the bush including the Nowa Nowa Banksia Walking Track. Rejoining the rail trail, riders were awed by the majesty of the Stony Creek Bridge taking the opportunity for a photo.



Participants were challenged with a variety of questions. However the most challenging aspect for a small number of riders was knowing their left from right! This resulted in both too many and too few kilometres travelled for some pairs.



The East Gippsland Rail Trail provided a safe and easy link between the township of Nowa Nowa and the Colquhoun Forest. The surface was suitable for both shod and unshod cyclists and walkers. They were thankful for the considerate cyclists who slowed down and warned of their approach from behind the horses. There was only one near miss when a cyclist surprised the horses and their riders with a fast and silent approach. Hinnomunjie Riding Club held a raffle with all tickets winning a prize with proceeds to the East Gippsland Rail Trail. \$184.50 was raised thanks to the generosity of the riders and families.



*Janice Preston*

## CORREA REFLEXA

At this time of year, we are very fortunate to have many wild flowers in bloom along the East Gippsland Rail Trail. One of my favourites is *Correa Reflexa*, sometimes known as the native fuschia. It is closely related to the boronia.

It was named after the Portugese botanist and friend of Sir Joseph Banks - Jose Francesco Correia da Serra.

*Correa reflexa* has some twenty or so distinct forms many of which have been given varietal names, the most notable being *C. reflexa* var. *reflexa*; var. *nummularia*; var. *cardinalis*; and var. *coriacea*.

The plant is usually erect growing to approximately 0.5 – 1.5 metres. It is frequently straggly in appearance.

Flowers are roughly surfaced, tubular to bell shaped. The petals are joined and the tips are turned back or reflexed, with eight slightly protruding stamens. These are usually pendulous with two or three together on short, slender terminal or axillary stalks. Flowers are frequently crimson red with yellow to green tips however yellow green specimens are also common. Stamens are tipped with large yellow anthers.

Flowering time is chiefly between May and November, and intermittently throughout the year.

**References:** *Provincial Plants and Landscapes* ; *Australian National Herbarium* ; *South Gippsland Word Press Gardens On*

Janice Preston



For the gardener, there are many forms of *Correa Reflexa* which can be found in nurseries. They are very hardy preferring well drained soils in full sun or part shade. They can be pruned to maintain shape and are drought, frost and salt tolerant.



### **The meeting dates for 2016 are:**

**Saturday July 9th** : Bruthen - AGM and Ordinary meeting Lunch at 12 followed by meeting(s) at 1pm

**Monday Oct 11th**: at Orbost time and place time and venue T.B.A.

**Please join us.**



**MEETINGS AND  
ACTIVITIES**