

Rolling Rides

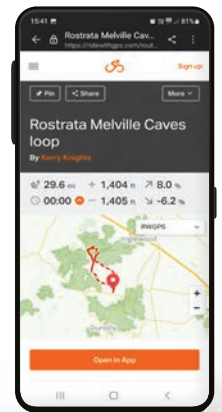
Ride notes

Rostrata Country House owners, Dot and Colin, acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which you cycle, the Dja Dja Warrung People, and pay their respects to Elders, past and present. As you ride about and explore the region, there will be scar trees and other indicators of the deep connection the Dja Dja Warrung People have to the land.

Dot and Colin welcome you to Rostrata, and trust that you find your stay comfortable, and rides enjoyable. The routes have been chosen to showcase the various environments and points of interest in the area. Should you add a ride to the 'Ride With GPS' app whilst you're here, they ask you to include Rostrata in the title. This will assist other riders in the future to find Rostrata and the Rolling Rides on offer.

Ride With GPS is a free App, which has the option to upgrade which brings more features. However, the free version is often more than adequate for rides.

The notes are provided by Kerry Knights, enthusiastic cyclist, are taken from the App comments section, and riders are most welcome to add further comments, sharing their perspective and experience.



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Rostrata Melville Caves Loop

Distance 47.6 km

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/40716142>

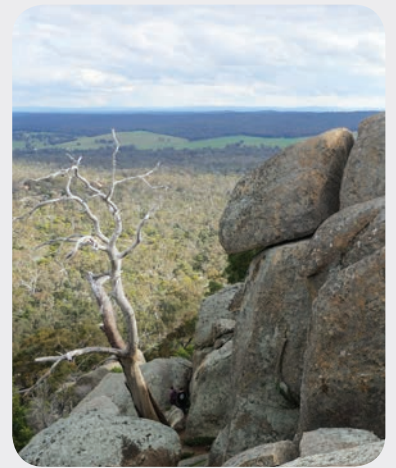
The ride from Rostrata Country house to Melville Caves is one not to be missed. The area has strong connections for the Dja Dja Wurrung First Nations People.

Leaving Rostrata, it's a gentle climb along firm gravel roads, past working farms at Hancock's Lane, and in to the bushland. Quiet roads are a feature of this ride, with there being no other cars on the road the day I cycled.

Rheola is a small community, site of Berlin Gold Fields (ruins) with a strong focus on sheep farming. I had a small mob of kangaroos bound over the road in front of me. I had to slow to avoid them.

The asphalted road to the top of Melville Caves reserve has some pinches around the lower camping ground/day visitor area, but once crested, the elevation gain is much kinder to the legs. The upper camping ground is popular, and also has a toilet and water tank. Keep your eyes out for more kangaroos in this area.

After enjoying the well earned views from the top, picking up Back Road (right next to the camping ground) will take you down the other side of the Reserve. Whilst the upper reaches of this road have



small washouts, once cleared, the road is a glorious free wheeling downhill, back to the road.

After turning left, it's not far to pick up the Inglewood-Rheola and start heading back to Rostrata. It's along here that there is a Culvert, and it's worth stopping for a scramble down the small embankment.

Once cycling again, the Rheola-Arnold Road is marked by a sign and has a small shed on the corner. This is premium gravel, and the downhill is a joy. Wide open skies, haystacks, and a surprise glimpse of a train carriage in the bush, before turning on to Allens Road. This surface is not as smooth but very manageable. Once crossing the Rheola-Llanelly Road, it's asphalt back to Rostrata.

Rostrata to Tarnagulla Waanyarra Nature Reserve Loop

Distance 33.8 km

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/40720501>

Leaving from Rostrata, it's a cruisy and gentle climb to Tarnagulla. A town which, for those who appreciate historic buildings, is worth a mosey about the streets. The Recreation Reserve and Reservoir is another brief detour, with lots of extra cycling available out the back of the Reservoir. There are limited options in Tarnagulla for 'fuelling up', with the Post Office being the best option. They have a mini mart, with 3 types of chocolate (Mars Bars, Snickers and Frogs) and some bagged lollies.

Leaving Tarnagulla, it's down generally downhill to the Tarnagulla-Laaneoorie Road. Paddy Track is pleasing, with a reasonable surface. It turns in to Hill and Dale

track, before meeting Loopy. From here, the track tends to be more in keeping with a bush track - fallen twigs, small rocks, and generally limited use by vehicles. German track is a brief exception. Lizard track is perhaps only ever used by Lizards - it will require more concentration on the road surface, but still very do-able on a gravel bike. The Ride With GPS app promptly advised when I was off route. Which, given the calibre of Lizards track, is easily done. Other tracks are very well signposted with obvious tall, orange markers. I saw 2 Deer, 4 Kangaroos and lots of wild flowers on this part of the ride. And the bird song is a constant. It's worth stopping and just taking in the sounds of the bush.

Poseidon Track soon arrives, and then that joins the Old Tarnagulla Road. A short climb to the top of a rise, and the township is not far away. Returning to Rostrata

down Scurry track is a little more of a two wheel track, but very pleasant. I rode after lots of rain, and long puddles were able to be walked around or rode through. An impressive collection of sculpted cacti are along the track. There were more kangaroos at the last creek crossing. Then, back to Rostrata for a well earned rest.





Rostrata to Bridgewater Hotel

Distance 37 km

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/40720696>

A mostly flat ride that leaves Rostrata, and concludes at the Loddon Bridge Hotel. Featuring quiet country back roads, mostly 'champagne gravel', brief areas of bitumen, which are "a cyclists dream". Historical locations, rolling pastures, ancient trees, hospitable pubs and cafes and a gloriously quintessential countryside. Sweeping skies make this a worthwhile and relaxing ride. And for those who don't want a Pub meal, the Bridgewater Bakery comes highly recommended, as does the Coffee Van (with outside seating) next to the Public toilets.

Rostrata to Inglewood Loop

Distance 62 km

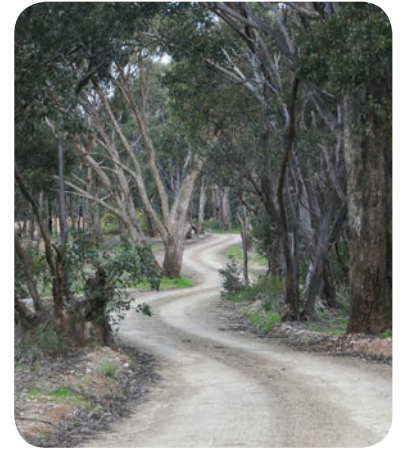
<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/40744805>

This is a longer ride from Rostrata Country House, with the lure of the cafes of Inglewood, and more rolling scenery. Mostly on premium gravel, the ride takes you through rural landscapes, past farmhouses and beside patches of bushland.

The Arnold West-Inglewood Road features around 5kms of scrubby bush, interspersed with the plantations for the local business which manufactures and sell Eucalyptus products. However, the reward (for this brief potential tedium) is linking in to Wet Lane, a beautifully picturesque ride through established bushland, with a pleasing surface.

Slip in to town to refuel and explore, before returning to Rostrata. Cafe 3517 comes highly recommended by locals. It has a range of foods and clean toilets. Cousin Jacks has fantastic Cornish Pasties, etc. The Empire Hotel is a solid Country Pub with great service and large meals. There's a range of antique shops which reveal curios from days gone by.

After leaving Inglewood, keep a sharp eye out for kangaroos on the Golf Course. Pucky Lane meets Chamberlains Road, and then there's an unavoidable, but short, section on the Calder Hwy. There are wide verges, but take extra care crossing Bulabul Creek bridge. You turn immediately right over the bridge, and get to enjoy the scenic and rolling road. Continuing more or less in a straight line, the next significant turn is Grahams Road. Then turning at Arnold, it's back on to sealed quiet back roads. For a bit of variety, turn off Simpsons Lane in to Reeces Lane, which picks up Allens Road and then it's straight back to Rostrata.

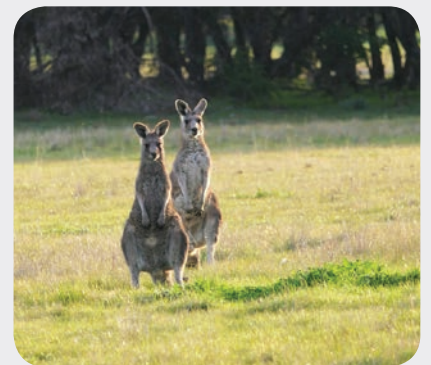


Bridgewater to Inglewood

Distance 10.8 km

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/40743981>

Leaving Bridgewater, taking the gravel road over from town, which runs alongside the Loddon River. Join Arnold Road briefly, before picking up Pondage Road. Spectacular ancient gum trees are a bit of a feature for the next few k's, both along this and Bulabul Creek Roads. At the end of Bulabul Creek Road is a potentially perilous bridge - take care! This is the Calder Hwy, but you won't be cycling on this for long. Turning in to Chamberlains, and following the App prompts, keeping an eye out for kangaroos which keep the Golf Course grass down. Turn up the Tarnagulla Road and in to Inglewood.



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Tarnagulla to Mortons Inn Ruins and Waanyarra Cemetery Loop

Distance 20.1 km

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/40720555>

Leaving Rostrata Country House, this ride can incorporate part of the Tarnagulla Waanyarra Nature Reserve ride, (to get you to the start) or you can drive to Tarnagulla and start from there.

Toilets are opposite the Police Station in the main drag. Mini mart at the Post office (if open) has a small selection of chocolate and lollies. Tarnagulla has a long history with gold mining, and a mosey around the back streets, as well as the main drag, gives some sense of what the area was like in its boom times. The Hall reputedly hosted Dame Nellie Melba, born 1861, who was Australia's most famous soprano at the time, gaining international acclaim on the Opera house. And it's known Lola Montez had a show there, with her scandalous 'Spider Dance'. Born in 1821, she is described by some as an Irish adventuress and "Spanish" dancer. Lola achieved international notoriety through her liaison with King Louis I (Ludwig I) of Bavaria.

Leaving Tarnagulla, it's a gentle downhill on bitumen to the Waanyarra Road turnoff. A street sign is road side. This is an agreeable gravel road. Follow the directions on Ride With GPS, turning right in to Mortons Lane (which becomes Waanyarra Cemetery Road) You will pass the ruins of Mortons Inn, and then further along is the Waanyarra Cemetery. Be aware of snakes at the cemetery, as advised by the sign. Return to Waanyarra Road, past the free camping site (drop toilets) and Mortons Inn. Follow the instructions on the App, as you cycle through the bush, be aware of changes in the track surface with twigs, unexpected rocks and wash outs all bringing a different perspective to the ride. At Tarnagulla-Eddington Road, turn left, and then right at the Tarnagulla-Laanecoorie Road intersection. Nuggety Track doesn't have a helpful marker, but have faith in the App and you should be right. This is more of a bush track, with some washouts, but all very manageable. It's not a long part of the route, and at the end, you will be back on the Tarnagulla-Dunolly Road. Expect to see (seasonal) flowering wattle, wildflowers and kangaroos in amongst Ironbark and Box trees.

Rostrata Dunolly Loop

Distance 38 km

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/40720608>

Leaving Rostrata Country House, it's a pleasing roll along quiet rural roads. Saffron is grown along Dunolly-Rheola Road, with the growing pods visible from the road. Riding past farmland, and entering the bush, the gravel road is very manageable.

At the next bitumen intersection is the Old Lead Reservoir. Gold was first discovered in Victoria in 1851. The Old Lead Diggings is the site of one of the largest and richest gold rushes in Victoria, and possibly Australia.

Mosey on in to Dunolly to enjoy a cuppa and delicious foods. The Gold and Grain cafe (check for opening hours) and the Bakery are highly recommended by locals. Retail outlets, showcasing local artisans, are a pleasant surprise. Dunolly embraces its gold mining past, and it's well worth cruising the back streets, as well as the main drag. The Museum is next to the Town Hall and toilets. The Anvil which was used to break up the Welcome Stranger Nugget (it was too big to weigh) is outside the Museum. There's a massive Cork tree at the Railway station, which is something you don't see every day.

Leaving Dunolly, it's back out the Bridgewater-Dunolly Road, turning off to go over the railway line again. At the Lead reservoir, take the road on the left and enjoy the gravel ahead. Spring brings with it an abundance of wild flowers and it's worth stopping to check out the roadside for Orchids and other less obvious plants. The Dunolly-Orville Road, which you are on, continues with a quick left then right at the Wimmera Hwy. The Shearing shed on the corner at the Wimmera Hwy is the site of the Welcome Hotel at Murphys Creek (back in the day). Take the right at Hancocks Lane, past working farms, and enjoy the

sweeping views. It's a right at the end of Hancocks, and Rostrata is around 3 km away.

