

MTB3113 Warrandyte trail explorer

WARRANDYTE MOUNTAIN Bike Club (MTB3113) members **JOZICA KUTIN**, **NATALIE PAPEZ** and **KARINA VITIRITTI** have collected feedback from the Warrandyte MTB3113 community and have compiled, a series of trail rides in and around the Warrandyte area.

This is the third one in the series and **MICHELLE ANDREWS-KRAJNC** came along for the (hilly) ride. These trails will eventually be turned into a book of local biking trails.

Gold Route 18km

Total distance: 18km
Elevation gain: 557m
Maximum elevation: 136m
Surfaces: Unsealed fire roads, postie tracks, sealed paths, sealed roads, unsealed roads.
Rating: Hard.
Facilities: Cafes, restaurants, pubs, bakeries, toilets, BBQs and playgrounds.

This ride takes you straight into the hills behind and around Warrandyte exploring the mining regions including Fourth Hill.

The start of the ride is at the Whipstick Gully Gospel Chapel carpark; the MTB3113 Trailhead.

0km: Map Point 1 Whipstick Gully Gospel Chapel Carpark

Two doors up from the trail head, on the river side, is the Warrandyte Historical Society (WHSoc), 111 Yarra Street — in the old 1889 post office — where you can grab a copy of *Digging into history. Goldmining in Warrandyte* (1995) by Diane Baird (it's \$8 and the source of most of my facts herein).

The WHSoc has lots of mining artefacts and informative displays, including the pre-mining history of the Wurundjeri People — a worthwhile detour. Cross the road safely, there is a pedestrian crossing between the Grand

Hotel and Warrandyte Community Bank, then head (west) back past the pub and onto the postie track near Whipstick Gully Road.

Turn left up Anderson Street, there's a bitumen footpath, climb to the top, then left into Brackenbury Street (unsealed).

Continue along Brackenbury Street until you see a Fire Access Track gate on your right — that's Brackenbury Track.

900m: Map Point 2 Brackenbury Track

Head up Brackenbury Track into Warrandyte State Park.

At the first junction (about 1.3km) turn right onto School Track, which becomes Beveridge Street.

On your right is Warrandyte Primary School No. 12, established in 1856 when the town's population was 250. Check out the original stone schoolhouse opened in 1875 which was built by two miners who were also stonemasons: William Masterton and James Sloan.

Follow Beveridge Street, which becomes Forbes Street and at the first junction (before the big downhill to Yarra Street and the police station), turn left onto Brackenbury Street.

Brackenbury Street runs along the back of Warrandyte but is blocked off to cars at several spots.

Luckily, not to gold-encrusted velopedes!

Continue along Brackenbury Street to Anderson's Creek Cemetery — there'll be some interesting graves to explore (it was established in 1866).

Now you'll think we're taking you into the cemetery, almost, but turn left into what is McCulloch Street, however the sign "Catholic Church" is more obvious.

Ride up this dirt road passing St Gerard's Catholic Church on your left. There's a sign for toilets and there'll be water taps in the cemetery.

Continue winding up McCulloch Street, yep, up, up, up, until you get to the end of McCulloch Street and head into the State Park and Cemetery Track.

2.7km: Map Point 3 Cemetery Track

Climb up Cemetery Track, veer right onto Brackenbury Track, then when it comes to a V, you'll see a sign "Bridle

Trail" so keep to your left, and this track becomes Betton Track.

Then 100m on your left, you'll see your first evidence of gold mining — the safely covered Fourth Hill Air Shaft.

Continue along in the same direction on Betton Track until you get to the big intersection.

3.3km: Map Point 4 Tunnel Street

Now you are going to turn left onto Whipstick Gully Track (at the end of Betton Track) — it's a hairy rocky downhill, so engage those golden MTB skills — to enter the Whipstick Gully Historic Reserve, the location of the next mine — Victory Mine — which achieved its golden peak in 1883.

3.8km: Map Point 5 Whipstick Gully Historic Reserve

Whipstick Gully is where most of the early gold mining occurred, there's a picnic table and an information board. In the 1940s, Warrandyte stone was also dug from a quarry here.

Now, turn around and head back up the hill you just came down.

Once you've finished climbing Whipstick Gully Track, head straight across to Wildcat Gully Track and follow it downhill, past the opening of Geraghty's Mine.

The mine is situated in a beautiful cool gully and there is an information board.

After the mine, at the next junction, veer left and uphill along Wildcat Link Track (5km, there's no sign) — if you miss the turning you will end up on Gold Memorial Road and at the Gold Memorial Cairn.

At the end of Wildcat Link Track you'll join Dead End Track.

5.6km: Map Point 6 Dead End Track

Continue down Dead End Track where you'll join Fiddler Gully Track. Zoom down and climb back up the beautifully groomed Fiddler Gully Track to the intersection with Webb Street (the unsealed section).

6.3km-8.3km: Map Points 7-8-7 Gutbusters

Now you'll do the Gutbuster Challenge Loop.

Fastest Male: 6:09

Fastest Female: 9:07

At the parking area where you've just come out of Fiddler Gully Track,



you'll see another park gate across the road (Boundary Track) and a track to your right.

Don't go through that gate, take the track on the right (Pigtail Track — named after the gold bearing Pigtail Reef).

Follow Pigtail Track down to the junction with Boundary Track and Pigtail Track.

Go hard left onto Boundary Track (south) and hard left again.

This is the start of the infamous gut-buster Strava segment.

0.79km 7.2 per cent gradient, 59m elevation gain, running from the bottom of Boundary Track to the gate.

Finish that climb without busting your gut and cross the gravel section back to where you started at the top of Webb Street (Map Point 7 — 8.3km).

Turn back onto Pigtail Track and follow it around until you see a hard right — Harding Road — follow this down to Ringwood-Warrandyte Road and join the postie track, turning left towards Warrandyte.

Cross Ringwood-Warrandyte Road at house number 402 to Johansons Road.

9.9km: Map Point 9 Johansons Road

On the left-hand side of Johansons Road there's a postie track — follow this up and turn left onto Haslams Track past the water tank straight to the park gate ahead.

11.8km: Map Point 10 Haslams Track descent

This is a steep descent with a couple of water bars — keep your riding under control descending here.

At the bottom, take a hard left onto a track (Haslams Link) that will bring you back to Centre Track in the Warrandyte State Park area called The Common.

Ride back past the water tank to the fence line and follow a track northwest, South Track.

Turn right onto Fire Break Track. This track then leads you to a park gate and Jumping Creek Road.

Take great care crossing Jumping Creek Road to ride a short distance north on a gravel footpath to turn left onto Nelson Drive (unsealed road).

14.4km: Map Point 11 Nelsons Drive

A steady climb up Nelsons Drive will take you to a gate: Warrandyte State Park — Black Flat.

Head through the gate and take the path left to follow the Circuit Walk, veering right at a junction, then left at the park boundary, to the main entrance to Black Flat.

Black Flat and Tills Drive were also mined for gold and used for rock crushing work.

This is where they discovered the diorite dyke in 1878, the line of which is still evident.

According to Heritage Victoria, the dyke is a vein of decomposed rock.

The dyke was mined on the Elliot Freehold Estate, where almost half of Warrandyte's gold was discovered. There are also mineshafts in this area.

15.8km: Map Point 12 Tills Drive — Black Flat

All the hard work has been done, you are on the home stretch now.

Enough gold, time for coffee, Warrandyte's new liquid gold.

Ride up Tills Drive, turn right to the Warrandyte Stonehouse Café on Ringwood-Warrandyte Road.

16.8km: Map Point 13 Tills Drive — Stonehouse Café

You can grab a quick coffee or toilet break here at the Warrandyte Stonehouse Café — otherwise ride along the front of the café and take the walking/riding path, right, down along the river.

This path will eventually come out at the carpark near the Warrandyte Bridge.

Here you'll find public toilets, playgrounds, BBQs, more cafes, some specialist shops, and even exercise equipment.

Head through the carpark and down the drive to ride under the Warrandyte Bridge along the river path.

Take it slow — there are people, dogs, ducks and children everywhere.

Meander up and down and around till you get to the concrete path on your left that takes you up behind the Warrandyte Historical Society building and back to the trailhead carpark.

18km: End Warrandyte MTB Trailhead.

I think you deserve your coffee now.

Next instalment:
 Winter Solstice Ride.



MTB3113 - Gold Route - 18 km

VicMap data has been used as the basemap - Feb 2021