



Ballarat to Skipton Trail

To enjoy a bike ride without having to worry about sharing the ride with traffic, head for the Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail. This is an unsealed trail for walkers and cyclists following the line of the former Ballarat to Skipton railway. The line operated between 1883 and 1985. It was developed as a link between the gold towns west of Ballarat and the surrounding pastoral region. Initially the line out of Ballarat reached Scarsdale, then Linton before it was eventually extended to Skipton.

Whether you're into wide open grasslands, eucalypt forest, historic bridges, attractive nineteenth century towns or just like a few sheep for company, you'll enjoy this trail. The trail

was completely resurfaced in 2008, rendering it smooth, but it can get muddy. Information signs at each of the former railway stations tell you what you're seeing as you ride.

There are three access points in Ballarat. On the Ring Road as it crosses the railway line, off Blind Creek Road and off the Avenue of Honour in Cardigan. You can join the trail at any of the settlements along the route.

To ride the trail from Ballarat to Skipton and back to Ballarat is a long way. To make a weekend of it, overnight accommodation is available in Smythesdale, Scarsdale, Linton and Skipton.



Trail Highlights

1. Arch of Victory and Avenue of Honour

As you leave central Ballarat you'll pass through the 1920 Arch of Victory and along the Avenue of Honour. On part of the 22 kilometre stretch of road planted with a tree for each Ballarat resident who enlisted in the First World War between 1917 and 1919. Employees of the local E.Lucas & Co, textile factory planted the trees and raised the funds for building the Arch.

2. Smythesdale

A former gold mining town. The township is to your left, on the Glenelg Highway, with many historic buildings including the police station, stables and courthouse. Snacks are available at shops in town.

3. Scarsdale

A nice picnic area by the trail with a water tank and a small town just off the trail. The trail gets hillier from here.

4. Nimmons Bridge

The most photographed sight on the trail is a fabulous long trestle aged-bridge (which has been recently restored), best viewed from the track across the creek below the bridge. There is a picnic table at each end of the bridge - perfect spots to enjoy the valley views.

5. Dilapidated bridge

Look up and you'll see a partially intact bridge. You wouldn't want to be cycling on that one.

6. Clarksdale Reserve

You can glimpse a dam and much birdlife through the trees along this forested section of the trail.

7. Linton

A brief exit from the forest brings you to the edge of Linton. The township is to your left, and has many historic reminders from the gold rush era including a Chinese cemetery and public buildings from the 1860s, plus galleries and cafes. There's also a shop right beside the trail as it crosses the highway. On both sides of the town the trail passes through cuttings and crosses trestle bridges. As you leave Linton and head towards Skipton catch a glimpse of Mortchup Reservoir on your left.

8. Pittong

The trail leaves the forest with a descent to a kaolin mine; the white clay is used for porcelain. You are back to sheep country and rolling farmland.

9. Skipton

At the end of the trail lies Skipton, a picturesque town with a reserve by the Mount Emu Creek and many Victorian buildings. The hotel dates from 1857 and the bluestone church in the main street is of a similar vintage. The town was an important wool centre in the late nineteenth century with the best Merino wool in Australia. A newer local industry is eel farming, with eels bred for export. For accommodation options at Skipton contact the Ballarat Visitor Information Centres on 1800 44 66 33.

The route

0 km Ballarat Railway Station, turn left into Lydiard Street
 0.3 km turn right into Sturt Street
 4.5 km Arch of Victory and start of The Avenue of Honour
 6.2 km turn right into Ring Road
 7.6 km Rail Trail starts where Ring Road crosses railway line
 10.2 km Cardigan Station
 17.8 km Haddon Station and timber leaf sculptures
 25 km Smythesdale Station, skirt around the oval between Woody Yaloak recreation facility and the oval to rejoin trail and cross the Glenelg Highway

29.3 km Scarsdale Station
 33.8 km New Town Station and Nimmons Bridge
 36.5 km dilapidated bridge overhead
 37.8 km Clarksdale Reserve
 42.3 km Linton station
 50.8 km Kaolin mine
 62.6 km Skipton Station, turn left along Vowles Road, continue straight into Anderson Street
 63 km Skipton

Ballarat to Skipton Trail - *fast facts*

Start/finish

Ballarat Railway Station, Lydiard Street North

Distance

The rail trail is 55 kilometres one way. The ride to the trailhead from Ballarat CBD adds another 8 kilometres

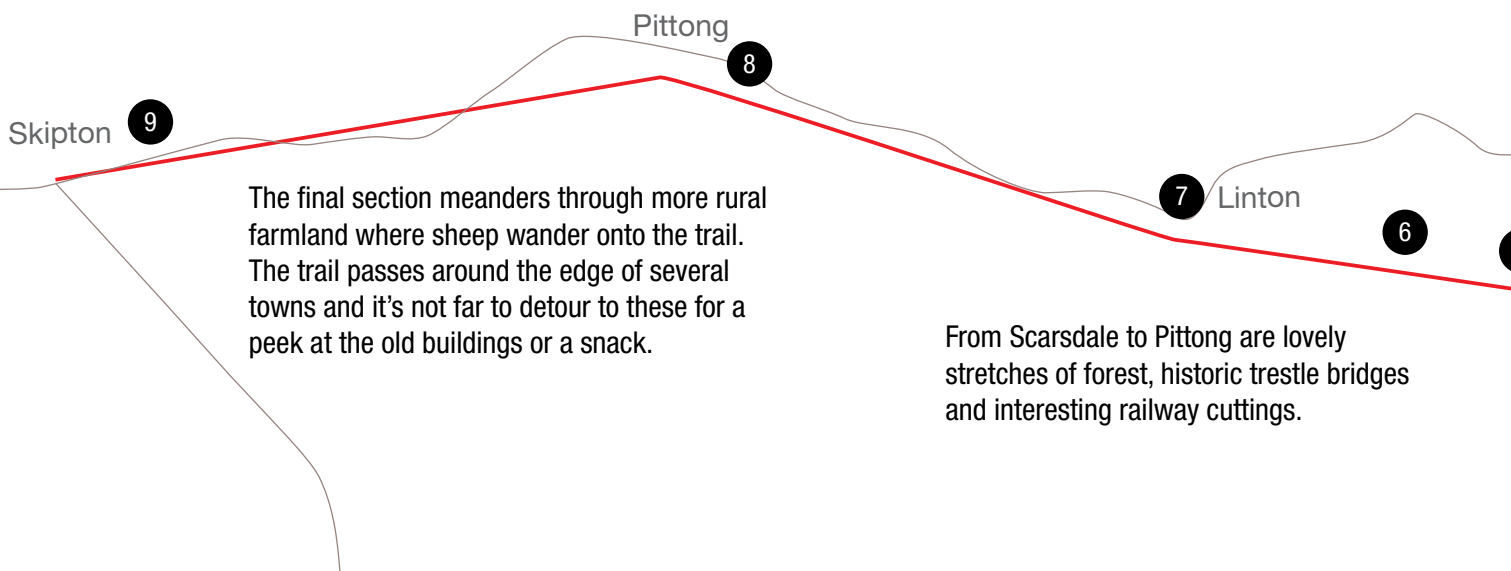
Trail surface

Unsealed; a mountain bike is recommended.

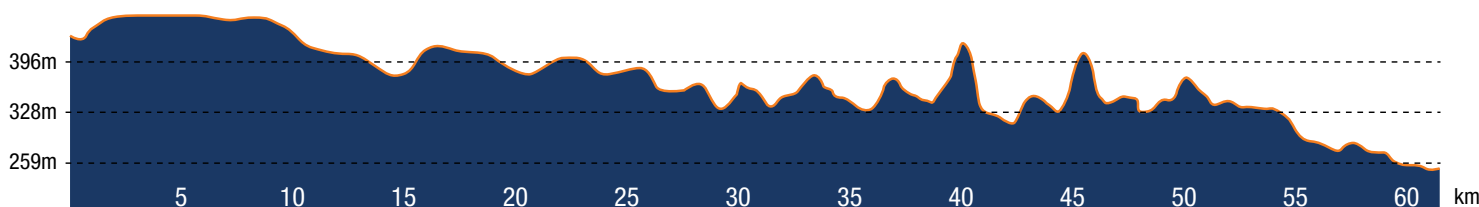
Difficulty

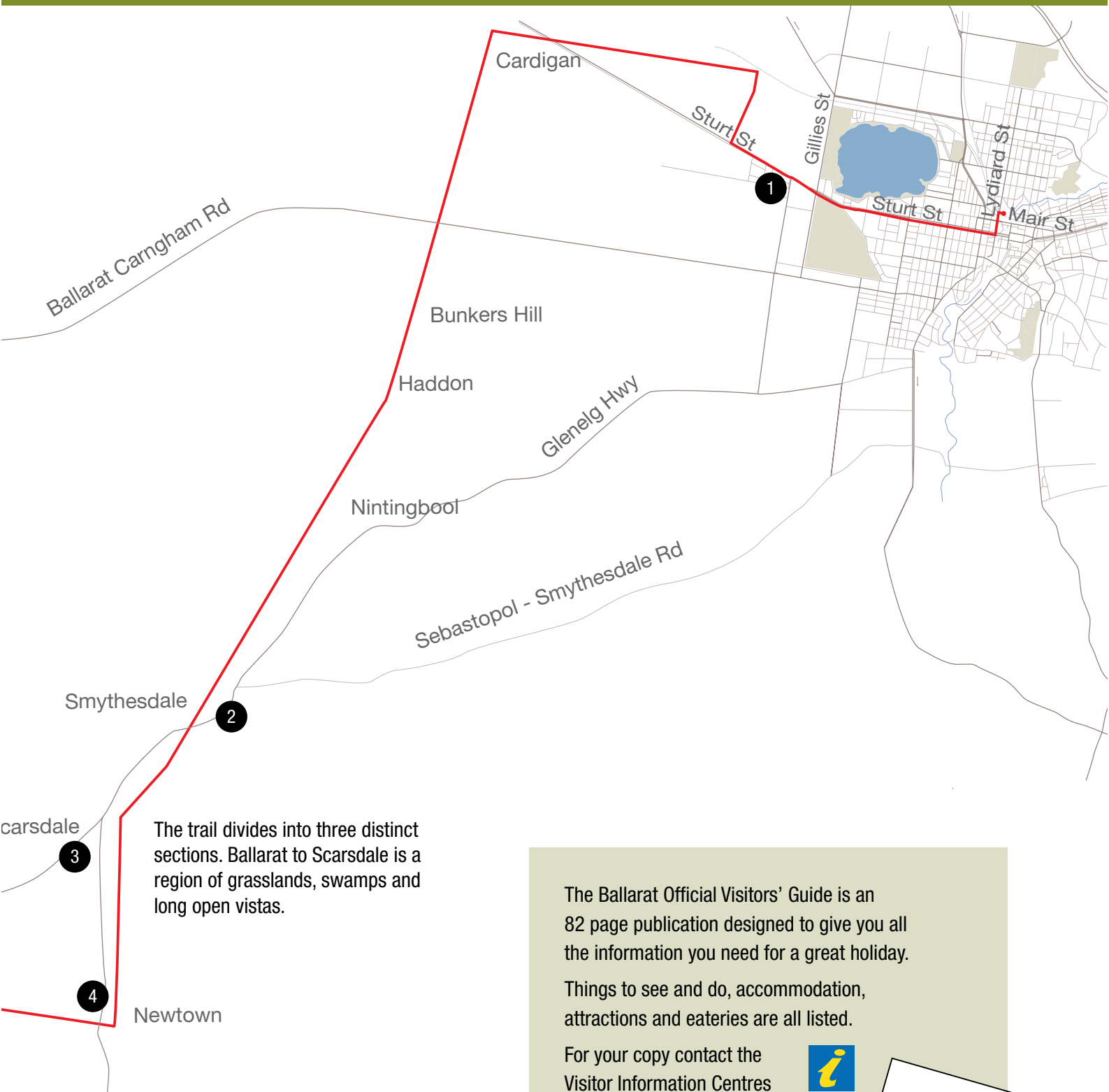
A moderate grade ride with a few gradual climbs and descents. The trail crosses numerous minor roads and crosses the Glenelg Highway several times.

● Ride Highlights



Ballarat to Skipton Trail - *ride elevations*





The trail divides into three distinct sections. Ballarat to Scarsdale is a region of grasslands, swamps and long open vistas.

Checkout the Ballarat Bicycle Users Group (balbug) website, you will find it a great resource for cycling in and around Ballarat. Print off maps for training or recreational riding. You can take a photographic tour of the Yarrowee River Trail or the Ballarat Skipton Rail Trail. The site also offers some hints on rider safety and codes of conduct and so much more. www.balbug.net

balbug ...building on Ballarat bicycling

The Ballarat Official Visitors' Guide is an 82 page publication designed to give you all the information you need for a great holiday.

Things to see and do, accommodation, attractions and eateries are all listed.

For your copy contact the Visitor Information Centres on 1800 44 66 33 visit www.visitballarat.com.au or visit the Centres at:



The Eureka Centre
Cnr Eureka & Rodier Sts

Art Gallery of Ballarat
40 Lydiard St North

Buninyong Information Centre
Warrenheip St
(Wed-Sun, 11-4pm)

