

# People

## Cycling for hip osteoarthritis

"The sense of well being and freedom that comes from walking is only really appreciated when you can't do it any more. That happened to me twelve years ago when osteoarthritis in my hip joint went from bad to worse," says Alan Parker.

He substituted cycling for most of his walking and regained a feeling of physical freedom. "I could pretend to be whole again because riding didn't hurt. With osteoarthritis the easy bit is the surgery to put in an artificial hip joint; the difficult part is coping with the years before and after surgery, because once the first hip is replaced the other usually slowly breaks down."

Why is cycling so beneficial for people with osteo in the hips? Alan says the upper body weight bypasses the hip joint. The pelvic bone sitting on the saddle takes the load. He also has some excellent advice on low-stress cycling.

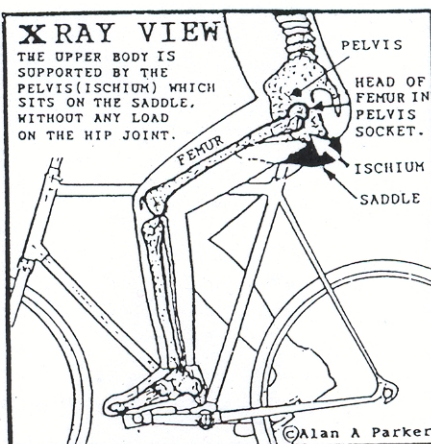
Alan is floating the idea of an orthopaedic bicycle club to promote the medical benefits of bicycling and encourage research into its remedial benefits. If you'd like more information about his alternative treatment he may be contacted on (03) 689 3693.

### David wrote a book

I am 61 years old and have had osteo since age 35. I joined AFV (RAAV) back in the days when it was in Collins Street.

Six years ago my worsening polyarthritis and painful ankles made early retirement sound sweet. A leisurely five month trip overseas with my wife visiting new places and old friends was managed by making travel arrangements as we went along. My judgment lapsed on the last few days trying to see too much of Vancouver Expo. I suffered accordingly.

What we are told is true — find a balance between rest and exercise. Then I lost a year or so while both hips were replaced and some heart plumbing was repaired, but the last three years have been absorbed researching and writing a book about a family



In 1992 with funding from the Department of Sport and Recreation, Bicycle Victoria modified or built bicycles for five people with physical disabilities, including two with severe musculoskeletal problems. These people are now able to ride a bicycle or tri-cycle independently and have gained considerable health and social benefits.

If you'd like further details of this rehabilitation program contact Ron Shepherd, Bicycle Victoria, GPO Box 1961R, Melbourne, 3001. Phone 328 3000.

More water exercise volunteer leaders are needed, so if you've got an hour or two to spare each week, why not put up your hand!

The AFV conducts 37 weekly water exercise classes for 430 people with arthritis in 10 pools located in Balwyn, Box Hill, Camberwell, Clayton, East Bentleigh, Essendon, Kew and Wantirna.

At present 94 volunteer leaders are involved as each class has at least two trained leaders in attendance. However with staffing difficulties due to holidays, illness and other commitments and the constant demand for new classes, we seek more volunteers.

Initially prospective leaders attend a 23 hour training course and following this ongoing support is provided. No prerequisites are necessary — just an interest in exercising in water and an hour or two to spare each week.

The next training course will be held from 18-20 June, so if you are interested in finding out more about becoming a volunteer leader please ring the Foundation on 853 2555.

### Did you know?

- You may be eligible for up to \$500 of home energy improvements free to help lower your energy bills. To qualify you must be receiving benefits under one of the following: Pensioner Health Benefits Card, Health Care Card, War Widows Entitlement Card, Personal Treatment Entitlement Card or be receiving Family Allowance Supplement.

Your total expenditure on energy must be \$250 or more in any quarter. If you believe you qualify for this free service phone the Home Energy Advisory Service, (03) 416 8188, for an application form.

- If you hold a Pensioner Health Benefits Card you are entitled to a ten per cent discount on each of your **first ten** phone calls **each month**. This concession is not automatic. Apply by ringing the Telephone Accounts number in your area. Have your pension card handy so you can quote your number.

business. I have not felt better for a decade.

Sandwiched in between community activities, the book project has taken my mind off myself. I have balanced the relatively inactive sitting at my keyboard with the more active research of 'walking the ground' and visiting helpful correspondents. The cordial business had factories in nearly fifty places in New Zealand as well as Australia, all of which I have visited and researched. At times I felt I was performing a social service listening to people relive old times.

It has been an interesting project which could be an option for people with arthritis.

Anyone interested in purchasing the book *Remember That Heavenly Ginger Beer? A History of Sharpe Bros* can contact David Sharpe on (03) 380 1503.