

# WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



## MARRIBYRNONG RIVER 2 FEBRUARY

We had 12 starters plus Bruce who was running late so arranged to meet us at the cemetery or failing that, morning tea. The weather was cool, more spring than summer, but stayed dry so really a pretty good day. We did a long loop inside the Melbourne Cemetery, hoping to find Bruce as we came out but no Bruce!

Then a circuitous ride taking in almost every known path in Royal Park as well as two wetlands before arriving at morning tea in Footscray Park by the river but still no Bruce! Where's Bruce? Finally Bruce arrived. He had taken longer than I expected to get to the cemetery so we missed him there but finally we were all together. A zig-zag through the leafy greenness of Footscray Park, past the Victoria University and on to the new Quarry Park on top of the escarpment with a fabulous view over the Maribyrnong River, the Racecourse and the city skyline.



There was also a very interesting memorial to the Korean War which had only been there since May 2019. Judging by the skid marks, the local lads do wheelies with their bikes on the otherwise clean pavement. Then via High Point West to lunch by the Maribyrnong at Canning Reserve. From here we launched into unfamiliar territory, up a valley into the guts of Avondale Heights, past many McMansions and temporarily back in familiar terrain at Lily Street viewpoint overlooking the old munitions factory. More new territory in Aberfeldie Park and via some smallish hills to Queens Park in Moonee Ponds for a lengthy afternoon coffee at the cafe by the lake there. Unfortunately they have banned riding bikes in the park due to problems of bike/walkers interaction during covid so instead of my intended ride around the lake we had to walk. Then via Gilpin Park in Brunswick, the Upfield line bike path and the Capitol City trail back to base. No punctures, no accidents, no dramas, apart from

"Where's Bruce".

Jopie

### **WILLIAMSTOWN BEACH 4 JANUARY**

Ten riders gathered for a ride to the beach. Weather forecast was Max 30, becoming cloudy, winds northerly 20 -30 km/h

The ten riders included a guest Deirdre, who came along for her first ride with a group. As we rode along the Capital City trail in North Fitzroy we passed workers upgrading the crossing at Brunswick Street North. They were resurfacing and putting in a yellow section to indicate preference for the path users. They had put the yellow surface down on one side and were doing the other side as we crossed. I was a bit surprised they let us ride across. The smell of the chemicals was very strong and acid as we rode over the freshly laid surface. On our way back both yellow sides were complete and they had also resurfaced the Rae Street crossing, but no yellow preference there.

We continued along the Capital City trail along Moonee Ponds Creek to the Docklands to turn off onto Footscray rd path. Stopping for morning tea at Yarraville Gardens. Then on towards the Bay trail. As we were riding along the Bay trail we had to ring bells loudly at one point as there was a bit of a media scrum just near the path with cameras and police cars. Later we found out there had been an incident.

However we still made good time and got to Williamstown beach about 11am. We were a little early for lunch but that did not stop us and we called it a second morning tea or brunch. There was only a slight wind at the beach which seemed unusual but welcome. It was an overcast day and warm with beachgoers swimming but the heat had not really kicked in yet.

We returned riding through the back streets, turning next to the Williamstown Botanical gardens and then over the train line. Turning into Railway place and along through the side streets. Some slightly tricky crossings at Ferguson streets but generally along quiet streets. We returned back to the Bay trail at Newport near the Athletics field.

David Maunders left us underneath the Westgate Bridge to ride ahead and catch his train.



We continued on along to Yarraville gardens where we turned into Hyde St. Taking that street up until the turnoff the for Footscray Arts Centre café. We hit the cafe around their lunch trade so it was a little busier than usual. The sun was trying to come out and it was getting hotter so most of the group sat inside in the cool.

Roger left us after afternoon tea. We continued on past the café to get onto the Dynon Rd shared path towards West Melbourne. Luckily there are some traffic lights just before the river to get across very busy Dynon Rd. In West Melbourne we turned left off Dynon Rd at Lloyd Street. To ride along a slightly funny little bike lane that passes underneath a train line and through an industrial area that took us into Arden St and back onto the Capital City Trail.

Roy left us near Royal Park railway station to go north. The rest of us continued back towards Westgarth. A couple peeling off to go towards St Georges Rd. I turned back to retrace my way back home at Merri Crescent and the remaining four riders Colin, Ian, Wolter and Bruce went off the short distance towards High street.

The ride distance was approximately 43 km

Regards

Sue Hiscock

### **SATURDAY RIDE 6 FEBRUARY**

Being the first ride of the month and not doing our usual ride to Port Melbourne and return and in the light of a dismal forecast during the week of 80% chance of rain. I decided to keep the ride a bit short, ride to Abbotsford Convent and return, but the night before the ride this improved to 40% chance and a temperature of 24 deg.

We had 11 riders turn up at the start and set off at a brisk pace through Edinburgh Gardens, Napier St, to the MCG. We were aware that our usual route past the Tennis Centre would be blocked, and passing up the hump back bridge, went to the east of the MCG and crossed at Swan St / Punt Rd corner, then onto the Main Yarra Trail at Morell Bridge.

The Main Yarra Trail was fairly busy, with plenty of pedestrian and cycle traffic. We had moments of sunshine and moment of threatening skies, but the only rain I detected were a few drops just as we arrived at the Convent. Refreshments were taken and much relaxed conversation.



*Line up at Abbotsford Convent*

We headed back, leaving George engaged in an important phone call and rode the short distance back to Rushall Station, by which time George had caught up arriving a little after 1pm.

David Downing

### **MERENDA 9 FEBRUARY**

Knowing that several DBUG members were unable to attend today, we were surprised to greet 13 keen riders upon our arrival at Westgarth. Ralph explained that he had made the change from straight up the Darebin trail to St George's Road. It was a cool but sunny morning and the predicted maximum was mid-twenties.

Allan was on tail until morning tea, while Kathy was trialling a 'whiz bang' electric bike for the day. Our first obstacle was at Murray Road



where there was a detour due to the crossing works. We took a left and rode up the path all the way to Regent St – perhaps a right would have been a better option. Nevertheless we paused at Reservoir station for a toilet break and then cycled up the Cheddar Rd track to Dole Ave, where Ralph waited while everyone caught up. He rode east along residential streets until he joined to Darebin Creek trail and soon we arrived at Norris Bank for morning tea. Wolter briefly joined us here for a chat and then left for home.



Kathy showed us the latest Charlotte photos, while Glenys and I compared notes on grandchildren starting school. Ralph and Ian S discussed car racing and Alan departed for home. Much lively discussion followed and it took an effort on the leader's part to summon the group and continue the ride.

The next section took us to the Ring Road, into Murchison Way and onto Darebin Creek trail north. At Child's Rd we took the

Henderson Drain trail option and soon found ourselves on the track beside the train line to South Morang station. We passed Ian H's fall zone and memories of Kathy and her Auntie Peg helping on that day came flooding back. Lunch was at Hawkstowe Park, where David found a shady spot with a picnic table for some, while the rest of us sat under its broad branches. Once on the ground, many of us wondered how we would get up again – very carefully.



It was only a further 25 minutes cycling to Mernda bakery where we sat around a beautiful old wooden table in a large back room. Waiting patiently for our coffees and cool drinks, we compared notes on series or movies we'd been watching.



Thanks to Annie, we plan to try The Dig on Netflix. David had parked at the station so he left us while Ian H and Jopie chose to ride home. Kathy was riding back to South Morang to see Auntie Peg and the rest of us caught the train, alighting at various stations on the way home. A lovely day for cycling and around 40-45km in distance – thanks to our leader Ralph.

*Report by Nola*

## ELWOOD CANAL 11 FEBRUARY

Concerns of approaching hot weather led Ian, Roger and James (narrowly avoiding a dooring on Merri Parade) to set off for the rotunda on the Esplanade. Intending to return by lunchtime. Well that was the plan. Until receiving a phone call from Ed shortly after leaving- yes that Ed, with the altered visage, wondering where we were? Apparently he and Bruce had been loitering around the toilets even though we had left at precisely 3 minutes forty seconds past nine. Who was to know? We checked the time by chronometer watch and phone. Bruce is reliably early and Ed should have been resting.



Meeting up, 5 riders headed for morning tea. Unfortunately the rotunda was occupied by a kendo sword wielding man practicing to very loud hip-hop music. Not the place for us five elders. Luckily Roger's favourite pier was nearby but sans seating.

Plans were changed to complete the original route. Soon we were tootling past St Kilda Beach to Dickens St (named after Dickie's towels) to Blessington Gardens for lunch.



Just before leaving Bruce had a chinwag with an old riding chum amongst a few other riders, one of which had a super dooper electric road bike catching our attention. Down Acland St to Fitzroy St bike lane, skirting Albert Park Lake through the city, avoiding the tennis, up Fitzroy Gardens past Ed's lane in the wall to finally sit at a trendy cafe in Collingwood minus James and Roger.

Nearing home your esteemed leader had a flat in North Fitzroy. While Bruce and Ed continued on, I decided to walk my bike home.

The next day I received an Email from Marathon Plus man extolling the merits of said tyres and my lack of foresight. One of Rogers main tenets. He must have shares.

PS Unintentionally I led the group down the garden path which wouldn't surprise my wife who remembers many a short cut when we nearly ran out of fuel. As my wife is the editor she feels she is allowed a sentence.

Forgot about Elwood Canal.

thanks Ian



## SHROVE TUESDAY RIDE 16 FEBRUARY

The ride was cancelled due to the lockdown.

## KOONUNG CREEK TRAIL 18 FEBRUARY

It was a lovely day for a bike ride so at 9am four intrepid riders met and discussed the forecast of 32°C and whether we needed to shorten the ride. Roger had arrived on the yellow coloured, “Blue pony” electric bike borrowed from Carol. After setting off to the east we met Roberta near Alphington station and headed down the Darebin creek path across the 5 bridges under the freeway, and along the road parallel to the freeway to minimise the hill climings. We turned back through Hays Paddock to join up with the Koornung trail.

Riding was pleasant with a mild wind to cool off any sweat. The morning tea stop was at the near Doncaster playground. Soon after morning tea Roberta turned around to enjoy a tailwind and a downhill ride home, while the other riders cruised up the south side of the freeway. Along the way there were numerous lovely gardens and plantings to observe with some pretty flowers that local people were looking after. We also waved to 2 friendly people who were enjoying the park under a lovely yellow leaved *Robinia pseudoacacia* ‘Frisia’ tree.

At Springvale Rd we turned around and headed back down the north side bike path. The leader turned off at one point for the lunch stop but it was the wrong track and became a dead end near a sports ground. Undeterred we headed off over the hills and firm grass for some offroad riding, much to the consternation of the E bike riders, however we eventually made it back to the bitumen trail and found the correct playground lunch stop. On arrival Bruce (the birthday boy) decided it was too early for lunch as the clock had not struck 12 times, so we headed further down the trail until we found some

suitable seats in the shade for a lunch stop. One of the seats had a memorial plaque for Minette Russell-Young, a former work colleague of Ed’s. It was a pleasant stop in the bush setting and we had ample time for a chat.



Early afternoon tea was at the chocolate shop, mostly for milkshakes or chocolate drinks. Bruce indicated that his battery may run out, but on resuming riding was first up the steep hill by a clear margin. We continued back along the bike path until Chandler highway and then finally back to the starting point by 2 pm having covered about 42 km.

Ed

## **SATURDAY RIDE REPORT**

### **20 FEBRUARY**

After missing out on our ride the previous Saturday due to the Covid lockdown, we looked forward, during the week, to a forecast 33 deg, on the coming Saturday. This reduced to a somewhat more pleasant 29 deg by Friday night.

The reality was a somewhat overcast and cool morning, with a dozen riders turning up and one more joining us at Royal Park, then making it a lucky bakers dozen. The ride to Caps was uneventful and on arrival we found that they now provide brand new rather attractive outdoor dining settings. Sandra joined us at Port Melbourne.

On our return ride through the city six riders left the group. The remainder going via the MCG, where despite some misgivings there were no Tennis crowds.

Eight riders arrived back at Rushall Station. I would estimate the temperature wouldn't have reached 20 deg., during the ride.

David Downing

## **WILLIAMSTOWN BEACH 23 FEBRUARY**

It was pleasing to see that 19 riders turned up for the day's ride. The weather forecast indicated that we would have a fine cloudy day. This wasn't quite correct, as we started to get a light shower after we passed the Royal Park station. The light rain continued until halfway across Footscray Road. It stopped, just before we arrived at Yarraville Gardens, where we had our morning tea. We were very lucky as there was no shelter to protect us in the Yarraville Gardens.

After a pleasant break we headed down Hyde Street and around to the Park next to the Williamstown Information Centre where we had a toilet stop. We then rode around Battery Road, Point Gellibrand and along the Esplanade.

We cycled around the Williamstown Botanic gardens looking for a barbecue that was out of the wind. Unfortunately, there were none in the Gardens, so we rode over to the foreshore where we discovered a barbecue protected from the wind by a beach building.

This was our lunch spot, and Ian Singleton had arranged to bring along a supply of Pancake mix (because our Pancake day ride was cancelled) and he quickly got the barbecue going and started cooking up delicious pancakes, with the help of Roger and myself. A big thank you to Ian. We also discovered that Bruce had just had his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday so we all sang Happy Birthday to him!



After lunch it was the usual route back through Altona, up to Newport, along Hyde Street, and then across to the Footscray Arts Centre coffee shop for our afternoon tea. After our tea break we followed the Maribyrnong River, around to the footbridge where we crossed over the river and attempted to ride towards Kensington, but our usual path was blocked. We had to detour around various streets to finally get across to the Capital City trail (thanks to Ed) and then it was an easy ride back to Westgarth.

Ride distance approx. 53km

Report by Paul.

### **JELLS PARK 25 FEBRUARY**

Bruce was the only other rider at Westgarth Station. The prescribed train was cancelled so we boarded the one a few minutes earlier. No phone calls or texts from anyone apart from Roger who had decided to meet us at Jolimont. When we arrived at Richmond we found the next train to Ringwood only stopped at about 4 stations along the way.

We headed off along the bike path back towards the city and then south beside Eastlink. Bruce told me that the ride normally goes east and then south to Dandenong Creek so we got to

Dandenong Creek a bit sooner than expected. Had morning tea at Wantirna Cricket Ground in Koomba park. The weather was perfect; low 20s and very light breezes.

We saw that the very large hole in the ground that we pass between Eastlink and Jells Park is being converted into a landfill ie lots of trucks delivering the clay lining of the landfill. We had lunch a bit closer to the lake in Jells Park than usual because of the crowds.

After lunch we went around the south end of Jells Park and back to the Blind Creek Path, a short trip around the Arboretum and then back to the railway line. When we got to Boronia Station my fellow riders were concerned that the lifts were out of order and that we would have to carry our bikes down the stairs. There certainly was hoarding set up blocking off access to the lifts, but I did find a button on the wall to call the lift. We were chatting to an e biker in the train who pointed out that even though Boronia station looks fairly new ( it was upgraded in 1998 to put it into a cutting and eliminate a level crossing) it does not have a ramp. Something to do with an ex Premier who was also president of a football club.

Roger stayed on the city train, but Bruce and I got off at Richmond and rode via Lennox St to Clifton Hill and back to Westgarth Station.

James

