

# WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



## GISBORNE PENNYFARTHING CIRCUIT 1 APRIL

I arrived at Roger's house about ten past nine to find Bruce, Mark and George already there and ready to go. We were to meet Ed on the train arriving at 10.05. Bruce announced that he had to pay a bill and Roger agreed to stop at the post office. I seem to remember that he did that last time we came to Gisborne. He must save his bills for Gisborne rides. We soon set off and paused at the post office. Following this, we paused at the mural.



Roger led us up the hill towards the station, pointing out the site of the former hospital where his father-in-law, Charlie Flack, was born in 1920.

We arrived at the station at 9.50 just as the train arrived and Ed emerged. We set off on a historical tour of Gisborne. Roger stopped at the Rotary Park that he had helped to establish decades ago. We paused at the pioneer memorial, with school children tracking people on the plates. The Flack family were listed also. WE then stopped at the War memorial where two Flack brothers appeared having served in World War Two.

We were quickly back to Roger's house for morning tea. Roger produced hot cross buns with candles honouring my birthday of the day before.

In return for this generosity. I agreed to write the Wobbly report.



After morning tea, we set off on the penny farthing circuit. This was a route of 25 km devised by Roger to practice for a ride from Melbourne to Sydney. He once rode this route four times in one day. Unfortunately, before the ride took place, Roger was riding the penny farthing to work at the airport. Coming down a hill in Sunbury, the tyre parted company from the rim. Roger spent a week in hospital and missed the ride to Sydney.

I am not sure of the exact route. We passed landmarks that were familiar to me, Gisborne Peak Winery and the Cherry Farm. It was at this point that George complained that his brakes were stuck on but investigation did not support this. Soon it appeared that he had a flat back tyre, which meant dealing with his rear wheel motor.

Roger, Ed and Bruce assisted George. Mark was concerned that the verge on which they were working was too close to the road. Trucks were passing with alarming frequency. The work team refused to relocate to the other side of the road, which had a wider verge, so we waited until the job was done.



At last we were on the move again. We started on the 6 km of gravel road with Ed and Mark taking a track through the bush. Part way through we stopped for lunch in a clearing.

Finally we were back on bitumen. After a challenging zig-zag uphill, we arrived again at Roger's house for afternoon tea.

We continued home after tea. I had to negotiate a solid jam of pre-Easter traffic along the Western Ring Road, but finally arrived home.

About 36 km.

David

## EASTER SATURDAY RIDE 3 APRIL

Backwards through Pentridge

David and Faye had set off to spend Easter on the headwaters of the Murray, risking NSW weather and lockdowns, and leaving us to our own devices. Since the forecast was for a warm day (in the event it was warmer) we planned a short ride made up of legs we had ridden before, but changing the order and direction. From Rushall Station, west to Royal Park, north up the West Brunswick Shimmy to O'Hea St, east to Champ St and Pentridge, returning past Coburg Lake and along the Merri Ck path.

George, Ivan, Kerrie, Mary, Patrick, Sandra, Reg and Carmel set out fairly promptly at 9.30. Reuel caught up with us at St George's Rd, and we made fairly good time to Royal Park. Because the direct bike path was still closed, we reached Royal Park Station via The Avenue and Poplar Rd. There we found Alf, Luigi (visitor) and Costas. We stayed together until people started to peel off on the return trip.

We rode through the park to the West Brunswick Shimmy, which we followed from end to end, managing to lose nobody to the twists, turns, and traffic (some shouting required). At O'Hea St, we conferred and decided to make our coffee stop at Pentridge, where we could sit down, rather than at O'Hea's Bakery, which we like, but which is currently serving only take-aways. That worked out well: the gelateria at Pentridge gave us good coffee and treats, though the service was a bit slow and erratic. Sandra found a bunch of Easter Daisies, and gave us a spray of them each.

After rather a long coffee break, we left for Murray Rd and the Merri Creek path. A few people left at the Harding Street bridge, which is bad, but not that bad. The rest of us rode through to Rushall, arriving at about 1.00. The total distance was only 21 km, but it was getting hot, and nobody wanted to ride any faster or further.

David Downing

**WESTGARTHTOWN SUNDAY 4  
APRIL**

It's been a while since we did a Sunday ride, but a cool Easter Day was an opportunity not to be missed. The plan was to visit Westgarthtown - the German village in Thomastown. We'd ride up the Merri Creek path to the Ring Road, east along the Ring Rd path to Edgar's Ck, and up the creek to the village. After visiting the village, lunch at the Lalor shops and back down Edgar's Ck to a good gelateria near Edwardes Lake Park and down the Great Western Shimmy to the new bridge over the Merri at Ceres.

Four of us (George, Ivan, Reg and Georgie on the tandem) set off at 9.30, not quite as usual, since we were back on Standard Time. We found Alf, Luigi and Costas at the Harding St bridge, where we had left them the day before (they do have homes to go to). It was warmer than had been forecast, but all went to plan until we found the Ring Road path closed at Trawalla Avenue, for road widening works. The alternative was a diversion along Mahoney's Road - we took the footpath, intending to cross the Ring Road by the Blaxland Avenue footbridge to the detour along back streets to Edgar's Road. That was closed too, so we continued on the footpaths along Mahoney's Road and Edgar's Road, until we rejoined the path east of Edgar's Road. (This closure will evidently last some time.)

From Edgar's Road to Edgar's Creek is a short run, and the ride up the creek was pleasant. The gap in the path near Spring Street has been closed, and we were able to ride the path all the way to German Lane, on the edge of the

village. At that point, we caucused and decided to get lunch before doing anything more strenuous. We crossed to the Lalor shops, where the pasticceria and the Lebanese bakery we had variously had in mind were closed, but an Afghan kebab shop and a Persian cafe were interesting and satisfactory alternatives.

It was a long stop with coffee in the shade, during which urgent inquiries about the nearest train station were slowly replaced by contemplation of the long downhill run home. By consensus, we saved the village and the gelateria for another day. We retraced our steps (or tracks) as far as the Ring Road path, but then went west to Dalton Road, then south along the Cheddar Road path (the nasty gap after Keon Parade has been closed), past Reservoir railway station (nobody took the opportunity to exit) and south again along the water main (High Street and St George's Rd), dispersing one or two at a time, till there were none left.

The weather was warm and sunny but fairly still until a southerly arose to cool us on the ride home. We covered about 25 miles (40 km, if you are still using French units).

David Downing



**MOONEE PONDS CREEK TRAIL  
JACANA WETLANDS COBURG LAKE  
RESERVE TUESDAY 6 APRIL 2021**

There were ten of us gathered at the new meeting spot, our mission was to decide on a ride and a leader. The weather forecast was for 20 degrees and cloudy with slight southerly winds.

After a bit of discussion, it was decided to ride via the Moonee Ponds Creek trail to the Western Ring road. From there we would go via the Upfield path to Coburg Park lake for lunch. As it had been my suggestion, I was dubbed leader by the group who seemed a trusting bunch. Roger volunteered as tail.

Off we rode west to go via the Park Street shared path through North Fitzroy. After Lygon street we changed onto Park Street itself as a short cut to get onto the Upfield path. We then had a very short ride on the Upfield path before crossing the railway line just before Jewel railway station. Riding through backstreets to get to the western end of Union Street Brunswick where there is a small bridge across onto the Moonee Ponds Creek path.

Once on the MPC path we made good time to Boeing Reserve (Strathmore Heights) where we stopped for morning tea. Harry was with us but every now and then he took his own detours and would meet us at various points through the day. While we were stopped a small low flying aircraft reminded us how close we were to Essendon airport.



After morning tea, we rode towards the Jacana wetlands just near the Western Ring road. We did a circuit around the wetlands and a little further up along the Moonee Ponds Creek before coming back to the ring road path. We took the rather steep path on the north side of the ring road to get across to Jacana Railway station and the south side of the Western Ring rd path. The tunnel to get across over the railway station is quite narrow and I almost collided with a pedestrian coming around the blind corner and Robyn coming up behind me. However luckily all was well, just scared the wits out myself and them.

After our huffing and puffing up the steep hill and across the station bridge it was good to be on a flat path again before the turnoff towards Sydney Rd. We turned off the Ring Rd path before the Northern Memorial Park onto John Street to get to Box Forest Road. This took us to the Upfield railway line and path which goes through the Fawkner cemetery, with the Fawkner Railway station being in the grounds of the cemetery. The Upfield path is still closed at O'Hea street Coburg but we needed to turn left there anyway to get across Sydney Road to go to Coburg Lake Reserve.



The day was sunny now and it was very pleasant sitting in the park. However, we noticed that wasps were out as well enjoying the sun. Jopie was having to be very careful eating his lunch as at least one wasp was quite keen on his spoon and container. He needed to be very still as the wasp was buzzing around him. Luckily all was well with no wasp incidents at lunch.

Dragging ourselves away after a sunny lunch we rode along the Merri Creek trail south towards afternoon tea. Deciding on the café at the Islamic Museum just before Moreland Rd/Normanby Ave to stop. The café is at the back of the museum and was a quiet and relaxing stop on the way home. Milkshakes not as large as some but very tasty.

The group peeled off at various stops along Merri Creek trail to go home. Distance approx. 43km back to Westgarth. No mechanicals or flats as far as I was aware.

Regards

Sue Hiscock



## **EPHING TO HURSTBRIDGE 8 APRIL**

I had wondered about opting out of leading the ride as I had the Covid vaccine the day before. However I woke feeling fine and set off on the train. George had indicated that he would get to Epping earlier and Ed said that he was riding all the way there. The train time in the ride list was incorrect but early so I hoped no one was confused. Roger rang at 9 am as we passed Ivanhoe saying that he and Bruce were already at Rushall. I said I would be about 20 minutes longer.

I changed trains at Clifton Hill and an Epping train was there but I did not have time to get to the last carriage so I got the next. After several calls to Roger warning him of my arrival (he left the phone in his bag) I finally got him and arrived at Rushall. Unfortunately he and Bruce had waited at the front of the train and with difficulty worked through the internal doors to the back.

We finally got to Epping to find George waiting. We checked with Ed and he arrived a few minutes later having been delayed by a very large tiger snake basking on the path near Bundoora Park.



We rode on along the rail line and stopped from morning tea at Hawkestone Park. We continued on to Mernda passing the bakery and along Hazel Glen Drive. I then managed to navigate through the twists and turns of Laurimar (I had reconnoitred it) to Woods Road and the Yan Yean Reservoir. We rode to the top (a lot of picnic tables were taken close to the gate) and had lunch with a view.



After lunch, we took the Arthurs Creek Road with many long downhills and some uphill. We arrived at my house and an enthusiastic welcome from Cirque the greyhound. We found a shady spot on the patio and Pat joined us for afternoon tea. I was a bit worried that I had put too many bananas in the cake and it was stodgy but it disappeared quickly with Roger leaving with a slice for Carol.

36 km.

David



## SATURDAY 10 APRIL

In the face of a not very pleasant weather forecast, eight brave soles turned up to ride. Come ride time we headed off but my trike though indicating, proper function on the panel, gave no assistance to my peddling efforts. Once again the ride was under Georges control as I was left to correct the fault. I don't know why but a small magnet secured to the break electrical interrupt device, corrected the problem and I was away.

I rejoined the group at Flemington Bridge and we headed toward Docklands, having been joined by Alf and his friend Luigi. Now we were ten in number. Crossing New Footscray Rd, we were getting hit by large spits of rain. By New Key it was coming down in earnest. It was decided to adjourn to The Boat Builders Yard for coffees and wait out the rain.

We weighed up our options over refreshments and decided to return the way we came. In the light that City Link could provide a little shelter some of the way. The rain stopped so we headed off.

After crossing the Eel Trap Bridge, one of our visitors, Carl had a puncture and before I could decide where my tools were, he had the wheel, tyre and tube off and was putting in a new tube. I think he must have done it a few times before.



After this brief interlude, the rain having abated we continued back to Rushall, Alf and Luigi having left us at the Upfield Path.

David Downing

## BOX HILL AND DEAKIN UNIVERSITY 13 APRIL

We had 13 riders on this variation of the Blackburn Lake ride, without Blackburn Lake but with other variations and extras. We started by riding on the south side of the railway line to Alphington but then up to the Darebin Parklands toilet block and past the cute lakes to the Darebin bridges. Then via Victoria Park onto the Anniversary trail. Morning tea was at the playground/picnic area just before Riversdale Rd. Next variation was through Deakin Uni, and I mean through because as well as ogling at the buildings, we rode on elevated walkways and then had to wheel our bikes through the foyer of a building to get to the big steel bridge over the creek. Being school holidays we expected few students but there was some sort of orientation day happening so we had to weave our way through dense groups of students who seemed to have more on their minds than worrying about a group of old codgers wheeling their bikes. The bridge was most impressive and the buildings on the west side of the creek were interesting too.

Lunch was in a lovely spot overlooking Surrey Park Lake in Box Hill. Then through the Box Hill CBD where we had to wheel our bikes again through the pedestrian area but then we could ride again past another lake and over a bridge in the lovely Box Hill Gardens. Then down Brushy Creek bike

path and on to the best milkshakes in town at the Chocolate shop (good coffee and free chocolate too) and home. No punctures and only a minor graze on Ian's leg when he got tricked by a kerb. Also no rain that I can remember!

Jopie

### **BRIMBANK PARK 15 APRIL**

Seven riders set off from our meeting place, Andrew, Bruce, Roger, David, Ian H, Ed and Sue. This was a good number for a Thursday ride which are usually much smaller than Tuesday rides.

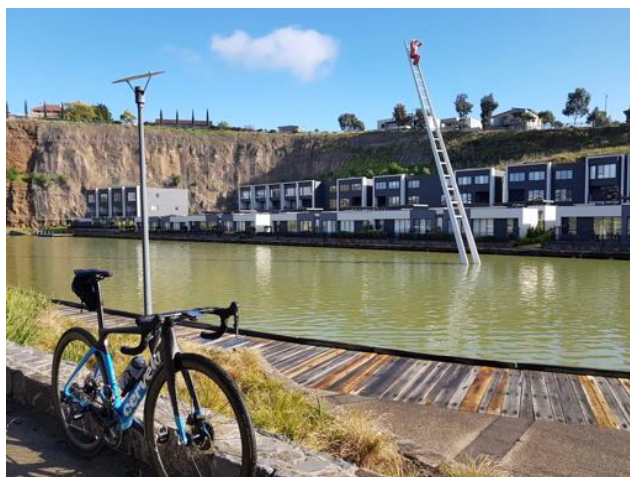
We made our way along Merri Parade, across the creek and onto the Inner Circle path. Our first incident for the day occurred when we lost Bruce as we approached Princes Park. I left the path and rode onto Park Street, the group followed except for Bruce who continued straight ahead. Ed chased Bruce and the group reunited in Park Street where it crosses the Upfield train line.

Continuing along Park Street we enjoyed the fast downhill to the freeway before the short steep section up to Brunswick Road. We crossed Brunswick Road and made our way down to the creek where there is a footbridge. I think this was a new route onto the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail. We headed up the Moonee Ponds trail towards our morning tea spot at Boeing Reserve. At Boeing Reserve we didn't have morning tea in the rotunda as usual, but at table in front of the sport's pavilion near the toilet block.

Leaving morning tea we headed along Mascoma Street toward Airport West Shopping Town before turning right onto Melrose Drive, crossing over the railway line and onto the Western Ring Path beside the Caterpillar factory.

We proceeded on the Western Ring Path to where it crosses under the Calder Freeway. Here there is a footbridge over the railway line which eventually leads to the Steele Creek Trail. The Steele Creek Trail is a short cut that avoids going to Brimbank Park and also avoids the gravel path beside the river from Brimbank to Essendon. It joins the Maribrynong Trail where the concrete path begins as you climb the switchbacks up Afton Street hill. Following a discussion we chose the Steele Creek route as it would be shorter and rain was forecast from mid afternoon.

After crossing the railway line we travelled along Woorite Place and into the top of Keilor Road. Riding on the footpath, because of the busy road, we passed Essendon Grammar School to the start of the Steele Creek path. The path meanders through pretty bush land beside the creek to the old Niddrie Quarry, now a lake and a new housing estate.





Leaving Niddrie Quarry we continued down the Steele Creek path through more pleasant bushland before joining the Maribyrnong path as it climbs Afton Street hill.



As we started to descend the hill Ed and Ian took the option to take the mountain bike route on the gravel track along the ridge line and down to the river via Afton Street Conservation Reserve. We crossed the river at the footbridge and continued on Chifley Drive to Coulson Gardens for lunch.



After lunch we headed down the river towards Footscray. At the stockyard's bridge we crossed the river, made our way to Bellair Street and on to Kensington Station. After a brief discussion we decided not to have coffee there but to continue on to Northcote for afternoon tea.

We crossed the railway line and took Stubbs Street to Racecourse Road. Joining the Moonee Ponds Trail we passed Flemington Bridge Station before arriving at Royal Park. Sue left us as we crossed the railway line at Royal Park Station. Here we had to detour via Poplar Road and the Avenue before rejoining the trail behind the golf clubhouse because of works on the path.

Arriving back in Northcote, David left us to get the train home. We had afternoon tea at Phil's Bakery. It started raining while we were having afternoon tea, so it was a quick ride home after that in the hope of avoiding getting too wet.



Andrew

## WESTERFOLDS PARK 20 APRIL

Because I was unable to lead last Tuesday's ride, Colin Finger kindly agreed to swap with me.

In spite of a wet weather forecast it was pleasing to see 13 riders join the ride. Fortunately, the weather was fine for the morning, so it was an easy ride along the Yarra trail to Possum Park in Heidelberg where we had a pleasant stop for a tea or coffee break. Roger had been looking at the weather radar on his phone and he estimated the rain would be arriving at 11.40am. We shortened our tea break and hurriedly rode to our lunch destination at Westerfolds Park. On arrival Roger was amazed that we made it just as the rain arrived!

While riding through Westerfolds Park, we were pleasantly surprised to see two large mobs of Kangaroos. One lot all hopped away from us but the second group were happy to just stare at us.



We continued up a long hill to reach the Manor house, which is now deserted. Everyone enjoyed the downhill ride to a lunch shelter for lunch.



After lunch the rain stopped for a while, but it looked like it was going to continue, so we decided to ride to Eltham and catch the train.

We arrived at the station just in time to catch a train back to Westgarth. Before arriving at Westgarth, we did a head count on those who wanted to have a coffee before heading home.



Six riders agreed with the idea, the others wanted to head for home. The six then rode around from the station to Phil's bakehouse in High Street for a nice quiet drink and chat.

Amazingly we were then able to ride home with no rain!

Report by Paul Approx. Distance 30 km

**HEDGELEY DEAN GARDENS.**

**22 APRIL**

Main conversation before start was the weather. Phones were consulted, decided showers ahead. Nevertheless, we set off. Six riders being Roger, Russel, Sue and Roy,

George and Bruce. We picked up Wolter in Clarke Street. Four e-bikes and three normal bikes.

Down to Darebin Parklands, pass the boon gate that has now been installed of late and onto the Boulevard. Next down the curving hill to the bike path. Pedestrian bridge crossing the Yarra heading for Hayes Paddock. Plenty of school kids, even queued up at toilet. It was a very brief stop.

Wrong turn made somewhere before Burke Road, eventuality found it and onto the Anniversary Trail. Morning tea at Frog Hollow. Continued on to Hedgeley Dean for a brief look. Then Raven Park rotunda as requested for lunch. Under the freeway to Yarra (first time for Russell). Crossed the Yarra, turned north, heading for afternoon tea at the Convent. Reach Jika before 2.30. Not a drop of rain 42k Jika to Jika.

Bruce.



## JACK ROPER RESERVE 27 APRIL

Sixteen keen cyclists set off from the start near Westgarth railway station. Except for an unscheduled detour, due to the ride leader missing a turn, we arrived at Norris Bank Reserve, instead of Bundoora Park, for morning tea. This location seemed agreeable to all the riders.

We pushed on to the Metropolitan Ring Road and headed west towards our lunch stop at Jack Roper Reserve. With the major road works in progress between Edgars and Sydney Roads, we were forced to do a detour through some back streets before being able to cross over the extended bridge to the south side of the Ring Road.

Along the way we were joined by Harry. All continued on without incident to lunch at Jack Roper Reserve. At the Reserve Ian S had already arrived, not being one of the original 16, and had kindly reserved some tables for us.



After lunch a number of riders left the group having other commitments.

The remainder continued on to the west to link up with the Moonee Ponds Creek which we did after the leader took a short wrong turn and had to turn back. Fortunately not all riders were close to the front and so were able to avoid the detour!

We proceeded on to Merlynston for afternoon tea, where we took over all the outside tables! After afternoon tea some riders went their own way while the remainder cycled on to return to our starting point.

For the last few kilometres of the ride we had the warm sun on our backs. A good way to finish a good 58km ride!

Colin Finger

## **BRIGHTON BEACH 29 APRIL**

In the cool and mild sunshine I waited for the avalanche to arrive. Four arrived with one on the way. Roger, Roberta, Wolter and Bruce. We had a little confusion with a wrong digit on the combination lock to allow access to the toilet,

Luckily this route only requires you to follow your nose and before we knew it we were passing the city on the way to our favoured rotunda in Port Melbourne alongside the water for morning smoko.



The famous five plus George skirted St Kilda and Elwood following the water to another rotunda at Brighton. We ended up at the outside table in the sunshine. Our return journey was via Albert Park Lake through the city to Fitzroy Gardens and ended up at a Collingwood hipster cafe where we fitted in very nicely.

Roberta had left at lunchtime and George left sometime afterwards. Roger, Bruce, Wolter and I trundled home thankfully without a puncture. The ride was around 50 kms.

Ian