

# WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



*Happy New Year 2021*

*To all our riders*

Volume 10 means this is my 10<sup>th</sup> year of editing Wobbly. Please keep reports coming to

[maundersdavid@gmail.com](mailto:maundersdavid@gmail.com)

## **SATURDAY RIDE 2 JANUARY**

Being the first Saturday ride of the month our usual practice is not to do the regular ride but to substitute a ride of similar difficulty. As the forecast was 90% chance of rain with thunderstorms, strong winds and 26 deg heat, in consultation with George we decided to do the usual ride in the reverse direction. This would give us a degree of shelter on the home leg, under City Link. At the discretion of the group we would shelter or flee inclement weather.

Come Saturday morning the forecast had changed to 70% chance of rain and sun shining through broken clouds. To my surprise, despite my gloomy expectations we had 16 riders turn up ready to ride, including one visitor. Traffic was light, so the group's progress was quite rapid, down Napier St to Victoria Pde where Sandra who was having trouble with a leaky tube decided to drop out and have it attended to. We continuing past the South side of the MCG onto the Tennis Centre, opposite AAMI, where we had our toilet stop.

Then we crossed the Yarra at Morell Bridge and along the South side of the river, regrouping at Crown. We rode along the rail trail and the Beacon Cove-Sandridge Beach path, until we arrived at Caps. Due to the size of the group service was quite slow but conversation flowed freely. At Caps Pam joined us, bringing our numbers back to 16.

With Caps toilets closed and the public toilets at Port Melbourne not winning any laurels we took off stopping at Westgate Park but gave their new toilets a disappointing thumbs down. We returned via Lorima St. through Docklands (where Octavio left us) and onto City Link. Three riders left to take the Upfield Trail and Reg and Georgie having broken a spoke headed off home.

Ten riders arrived back at Rushall Station well after 1pm. The riding had been brisk but the conversations at Caps had been too engrossing.

David Downing

### **WESTGATE PARK 5 JANUARY**

It was a small but hardy (or perhaps foolhardy) bunch of riders for the first mid-week ride of the year. Weather forecast Max 20, Rain easing in the afternoon, chance of rain 90% and southerly winds.

By 9.00 – 9.15am the rain had eased to an occasional light drizzle so we were hopeful as we rode off but wet weather gear on or at the ready. Five of us rode along the Yarra trail towards the city via Dights Falls to go to Westgate Park. We thought we would ride into the city for morning tea and decide from there. It was myself (Sue), James, Roger, Richard and Bruce. Merri Creek, Dights Falls and the Yarra were all looking spectacular with lots of rushing water. We had drizzle off and on but we had a good ride to town. However, we were a slightly damp bunch that stopped for our morning tea behind Federation Square.

The remaining four of us did a bit of a loop through the park around one of the lakes and made our way to Lorimer St. Got our bikes a bit grittier and muddier going through puddles on the dirt paths to get out of the park. A bit of drizzle not putting us off we continued along next to the Yarra to get onto the Sandridge Trail. A little busier now next to the Casino with people coming out and about.

Once we got closer to the bay Richard offered to take us on a short scenic detour through Beacon Cove. It was a pretty route through the quiet streets and a lovely small park to come out close to Sandridge Beach. It was very windy next to the beach so we didn't stop too long here. We kept going along the Bay Trail to Westgate Park for lunch.

The rain/drizzle held off and we had tables and shelter out of the wind to have our lunch and a break. We were lucky to see some Blue Wrens (very bright blue) hopping around fairly close. By lunchtime the weather was still overcast but drier and not really cold, someone's aid it wasn't a bad day after all.



Richard left us after lunch as he was close to home. The remaining four of us did a bit of a loop through the park around one of the lakes and made our way to Lorimer Street. Got our bikes a bit grittier and muddier going through puddles on the dirt paths to get out of the park.

Along Lorimer St, the traffic was light so a good run along the road, but it's a bit of a rough ride at times. We turned off onto the River Esplanade across from the Docklands. Continuing along next to the river Roger left us at Spencer St to go up to Southern Cross station to catch a train.

James, Bruce and myself continued to cross Sandridge Bridge and then along Flinders Walk. James left us to catch the train at Flinders St and Bruce and I decided to ride up Swanston St. The tram stops that were usually very busy pre COVID-19 were a lot quieter but we still needed to keep stopping for trams/passengers. At the top of Swanston St near Melbourne Uni separated bike lanes have been put in recently and they make the trip much easier. Resurfacing work is being done now on College Crescent that goes past the Cemetery and the road has all been dug up but we still were able to get across to Princes Park Drive. Bruce and I parted company at the Park street shared path to go east and west respectively.

We all did different distances but I think the ride would have been about 42 km return to Westgarth. We were lucky the heavier rain held off. It was a good ride.

Regards

Sue Hiscock

## 7 JANUARY

Three starters, Roger, Roy and Bruce. To do the Saturday morning ride. As it turned out, with three detours. At Royal Park, did not cross the train and tram lines.

Roger leading, turned left. Bringing us out to the Flemington Road and Racecourse Road intersection before getting onto usual track at Flemington Bridge Station. Just after the station we had to make a de tour. It was flooded(memories of Rogers swim on his E bike. We crossed at Street level. Morning tea in Westgate Park(where the new toilet is). No ships at Port Melbourne. Returning homewards we left the usual route at second street crossing (Bridge St). Passed South Melbourne Market, joining usual path at Convention Centre. Passed MCG and used Wellington Street back to the start. Good weather and all enjoyed it.

Bruce

### **SATURDAY RIDE 9 JANUARY**

At the start of the ride, the weather was very pleasant with a forecast maximum of 26 deg. Thirteen riders turned up at Rushall Station, for our regular ride to Port Melbourne and back. We headed to Royal Park where we were joined by Alf and Costas. Pressing on to Docklands, Mary caught up with us, now making 16 riders.

Alas Christine had to leave us to fulfill another commitment and Bruce had to retreat back to Rushall as his battery charge indicator was showing low charge, back to 14 riders.

Docklands to Port Melbourne was without incident but "Covid" service at Caps allowed for plenty of conversation time. Toilets are still closed at Caps, and the public "Ladies" at the foreshore changing rooms are a bit less than basic. So our female riders are given a head start, to use more acceptable conveniences about half a kilometer along the path and we regroup at Beacon Cove.

At the City, Costas left us, and the remaining riders rode to Rushall and concluded a very pleasant half day ride.

David Downing

### **BLACKBURN LAKE 12 JANUARY**

We were indeed fortunate with the weather for this ride, 37C the day before and 32C forecast for the following day meant that the ride did not have to be cancelled or shortened, what a relief!

Fifteen eager riders assembled at the start and set off pretty close to 9am. There were no dramas along the way to morning tea stop at Frog Hollow, though Ed had forgotten the earlier start time and, Ed being Ed, rode furiously to catch up with the group by the time we hit the Anniversary Trail.

Tables at Frog Hollow were occupied when we arrived so we spread out as best we could, see photo, and some bike maintenance was attempted.



The ride on from morning tea stop was by the usual route except that at Canterbury Road leader Colin turned left and led the group over the overpass and along Bedford Street and Albion Road to get back onto Gardiners Creek Trail instead of the usual, and easier, route along Middleborough Road!

We arrived at Blackburn Lake about 12:25pm eager to rest and eat lunch. Again, there were many other people enjoying the outdoors so we spread ourselves about the available tables and seats.





Some riders took a short walk to look at the lake itself and after a decent rest and some more bike maintenance, Roger adjusting Robin's pannier and much attention and adjustment to Jenny's saddle which she had been sliding off, we again set off, headed for home with the sun beginning to shine through the breaking clouds.

But not before the obligatory stop at Hahndorf's Fine Chocolates shop for coffees, iced coffees, iced chocolates and milk shakes, all with the usual complimentary chocolate of choice! Yum!

A good day for a ride and a great bunch of riders!

Colin

### MACEDON RANGES 14 JANUARY

Bruce, David and Mark Rice arrived at Roger's house. We took a minor detour into the Post Office, where Bruce needed to pay an overdue account, before heading up out of the valley and through suburbia. The route then took us on a quiet road beside the freeway (it was the main road before the freeway), crossing under the freeway and on into Macedon town, crossing the railway line and down to a picnic reserve for morning break, with much discussion on our political system compared with that of the US.

We continued on past Emerites race horse stud and up to the water reservoir, which was the high point (altitude that is) of the tour. Down to a picnic area where, by mutual agreement, we had an early lunch. We came across two separate small groups also out enjoying the perfect weather for a bike ride, but virtually no vehicular traffic.

Crossing the railway at Gisborne Station, we then took another tour through the back streets of New Gisborne before descending on the shared path down into the Gisborne Valley and beside the creek into the world famous botanic gardens with the twin city of Gisborne NZ being the theme. Back to Roger's house, after 31km of leisurely riding, all decided on a cup of tea in a tea pot with real tea leaves with lots more solving the world's Corona problems. What happened to the Coffee Tragicos  
Roger



**CAULFIELD PARK AND  
RACECOURSE 19 JANUARY**

We had 12 on this ride and the weather was ideal with no rain.

Down Merri Creek we went, through the Collingwood Children's Farm and past the Abbotsford Brewery to rejoin the Yarra Trail at the new Salta Development near Ikea. M/T at Kevin Bartlett Reserve and then the new stuff started. Over the railway bridge into Toorak and we followed cute trails along the train line and then meandered our way through leafy and well heeled Malvern to pop out at Caulfield Park. We looped around a lake and playing fields in this green oasis and after a few more streets, rode through a wide gravel road tunnel under Caulfield Racetrack to pop out in the middle of it, where there is a largish public open space with loos and picnic tables and a lake that you can even fish in. No dramas yet at this stage. On through a much narrower tunnel and more magnificent Malvern houses, around Malvern Central Gardens and before you could say "Hedgeley Dene", we were there, back in familiar territory having lunch on the grass by the lake. About time too, most of us thought.

Then via the Hedgeley Dene Trail through the Hill'n Dale Park to the Anniversary Trail and the "Town & Country Nursery and Cafe on Whitehorse Rd where I had hoped to have afternoon tea. Unfortunately it was too infested with other people too close together all spreading their viruses to each other so we decamped to the far better option of the Alphington Food Store where we had a long leisurely afternoon tea seated comfortably out the back in the open air with almost nobody else there. And the coffee was good too. And Ian was able to get kombucha which I would have ordered too if I had known it was available. Still no dramas.

As we emerged for the last leg home, drama finally struck. Colin had a flat and spurning all offers from nearby residents in our group

to get a car, he valiantly proceeded to wheel it home as the rest of us wished him well and rode off home.  
Jopie

**NEWPORT LAKES 21 JANUARY**

I phoned Bruce the night before to ask him to let me join at Velos Cycles as my train got in after 9 am. If there was a problem perhaps someone could ring me. I may good time and arrive at Velos at 9.20. Surely Bruce could not get there before 9.15 and 5 minutes was not much to wait. He must be still on the way. I waited 20 minutes and decided I should carry on to the morning tea stop at Yarraville Park.

I made good time and arrived at 10.20 to find... just Bruce on his own. We had morning tea and continued to Newport.

The weather was clear and sunny. The forecast was for 30 degrees but it was cool enough by the bay. We arrived at Newport Lakes shortly after 11 am.

After a leisurely lunch was continued to the foreshore trail where there was a pleasant breeze. Bruce got me to ride in front as my horn was louder than the bell on his new bike. There were many walkers taking over all of the shared path and I managed to alert them. Bruce is thinking of putting the horn from his old bike on the new one.

We passed through Williamstown, under the Westgate Bridge and back to Docklands where we parted. Bruce continued along the Capital City Trail and I got to Southern Cross Just after 1 pm with only 20 minutes to wait for a train. I completed 40 km, Bruce a little more. A very pleasant ride. Where were you all?

David

### WESTGARTHTOWN 26 JANUARY

After Monday's hot weather, drizzle greeted us as we met on the corner of High and Westgarth Streets. Fortunately Pam and I had added the waterproof pants to our attire before we left home. Ten brave DBUG members arrived with various coats and in Roger's case, bread bags over his shoes. Sue joined Pam and I in the female group, while Ralph, Paul, Ian H, Ian S, Roger, Bruce and David accounted for the males.

We headed up the St George's Road trail, which becomes the Northern Pipe trail to Reservoir. Our morning tea in the park changed to under the shelter at Reservoir station due to the rain. Here we were able to temporarily dry off a little and enjoy our hot drinks. While it wasn't cold, those of us with glasses felt we needed windscreen wipers on them!



We continued on to the Ring Road, where we turned left and cycled to the Edgars Creek sign where we turned right and rode north until we arrived at Westgarthtown. Ralph and I had tried several times unsuccessfully to contact someone regarding this venue, including the council, who only had the same phone number we had. Imagine our surprise and delight to see a sign outside the homestead indicating it was open that day. Gordon, the volunteer manager, invited us in, showed us where to rest our bikes undercover and gave us a brief history of the area and the homestead. He even got out folding chairs for us to have our early lunch under the veranda.



William Westgarth went to Germany in the 1840s to encourage new migrants to Victoria. He had purchased a large amount of land, basically what is Thomastown and Lalor today. Westgarthtown was the largest allotment and was taken up by the Zeibell family, who initially wanted to grow crops. With all the rocks around, they ended up being dairy farmers, had lots of children and grew a magnificent garden around the home. There is a Cecil Brunner rose that dates back to 1860.



While some of us had been here before, this is the first time the museum or house was open, for a gold coin donation. For Sue and Ian H this was their first visit and they were suitably impressed. I personally love the garden as it reminds me of my mother's and grandmother's gardens. We promised to return with gold coins next time, as most of us only carried cards.

Once back at the Ring Road, Ralph and David turned left for home, while the rest of us headed towards the Merri Creek trail, via a detour after Edgar's Road due to the Ring Road Upgrade. The Boot Factory was really busy, being a public holiday and we queued for our coffees. Ian H left from here, while Sue decided to follow the Upfield track to home. We noticed that Roger doesn't wear bike gloves and he proudly told us that in all the falls, he's never hurt his hands. Ian S quipped that you've hurt every other place though!!

The rain finally stopped on the last leg home. We all looked forward to a shower and some dry clothes after a lovely ride of a little over 40km

*Nola*

## **TWO CREEKS AND A RIVER 28 JANUARY**

Well I forgot about the 9 00 start. While driving to our classic meeting place, the toilet.

I got a phone call on my car phone Roger, Are you coming, more or less. I am about 10 Minutes away. I arrived at 9 12 Jopie,Roy, Roger and myself to ride.

I brought my new Step through frame electric bike with me. I had lots of trouble recently getting on and off the bike My leg does not want to go over the frame. A couple of falls did not help. I retired my old yellow bike of 23 years to the garage, but I won't part with it. We rode up the Merri Creek to Coburg Lake for morning tea break. After we continued upstream till I did some of my wanderings to the Maribyrnong River where we stopped at a Rotunda for lunch.Very quiet on the river. We then made our way to Kensington shops, stopped for coffee etc. Then back to base.

It was a great day for a ride and I think we all enjoyed the day.

Thanks George.



## ANOTHER BRIDGE COMING



DBUG members sick of the on-road section of the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail (MPCT) up Vanberg Rd and McPherson St in Essendon will be pleased to see work in coming months on a new bridge across the creek. Yes, with Merri Creek getting its \$3.2 million concrete crossing near Ceres it was perhaps inevitable that Moonee Ponds Creek would be getting one too, albeit “only” costing about \$1.3m. It will cross from near Vanberg Rd to Hopetoun Rd in Brunswick West. Some of you might think that Moonee Ponds Creek has more than enough footbridges already but this one will be more cycle friendly. Bicycle Network Victoria excitedly reported that the bridge could be the beginning of a major shortcut for commuters wanting to avoid the major horseshoe bend in the MPCT of which Vanberg Rd forms part.

This would run from Hopetoun Rd (Melway 29 A4 for you analogue people out there) north along the western side of the Tullamarine Freeway, across Moreland Rd, past Morris Reserve and then rejoin the existing creek trail somewhere near Cross Keys Reserve. Some of this path already exists but improvement work that could have been done by VicRoads during the freeway widening project did not happen. Instead they made Winona Grove one of the widest and smoothest dead-ends you’re ever likely to see.

The shortcut would also require another bridge at its northern end, although The Boulevard footbridge is close by. The COVID-19 lockdown has seen major improvements for passive recreation on the eastern side of the creek, with long stretches of gravel laid after housebound locals turned the quiet creek path into a mud run. It’s now possible to ride up the eastern side of the

creek most of the way from Brunswick Rd to the Western Ring Road, preferably on a mountain bike, while avoiding the hoards of new cyclists on the official Moonee Ponds Creek Trail. The photo shows the site of the new bridge, with Hopetoun Rd in the middle background and Vanberg Rd hidden behind the tree on the left. The track in the foreground will be widened to 1.5metres but it's actually better than it was, believe it or not.

**Wolter**