

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



ANOTHER MONTH, ANOTHER LOCKUP

Or lockdown, lock away, lock in or lock out as you prefer. At least we completed most of the May rides. Sorry not to be able to join you but I have had to look after Pat who had surgery to remove a growth in her lung. Not cancer, fortunately but aspergilloma. Look it up if you are medically interested. I hope to join you when rides restart.

SATURDAY RIDE 1 MAY

An encouraging forecast of 24deg lured 12 riders to Rushall and the start of our ride to Williamstown and back. We set off at our usual time, diverting down The Avenue and past the Zoo car park, to avoid the path reconstruction work, still not open. At Royal Park, we were joined by Roy, Costas, Alf and a visitor Louigi. The group now numbering 16,, set of for Kensington Cattle Yards but varied the route by going through Debney's Park and High St. as opposed to our usual route via Stubbs St. Crossing the Cattle Bridge and onto the bike path along side the river. We followed the river up to Science Works where we were joined by Heather and Nick, who we hadn't seen for some time. Due to work at the Newport Power Plant, the path was blocked so we rode on the road, along Douglas Parade and North Road. Some elected to continue to ride on the road but most joined the cycle path, we all regrouping at the toilets near the sailing club. After our comfort break we pressed onto Schwabs Gallery where most had refreshments out the back, while some elected to have takeaways in Commonwealth Reserve. Feeling comfortably satisfied, we headed back, the way we had come, leaving Heather and Nick where we had found them. At Footscray we came back along New Footscray Road. viewing the massive construction work. At Flemington Bridge Chris, Faye, Judy and Christine decided to ride back through Royal Park and Princes Park. The rest of the riders decided to unofficially open the newly constructed pathway by the Zoo and 4 riders left us to go up the Upfield Path. All the remaining riders arrived back at Rushall Station without further adventure. David Downing

FAST TRACK TO THE CITY OF MELBOURNE 4 MAY

The advertised O'Keefe Rail Trail ride was cancelled due to bad weather. Three riders turned up for the ride. It was hard to believe but Roger called and said it was too wet at Gisborne for him to come for the ride. I suggested we head to Southbank using a route recently published in the May edition of *Darebin Loves Bikes* - Fast track to the City of Melbourne. This route is from Koonda Lat Bridge along Capital City Trail, Rathdowne Street, La Trobe Street, William Street and Queens Bridge Street.

Rathdowne Street for the full length of the Carlton Gardens is now a protected bike path with concrete kerbing between the bike and cars. This was the same for the majority of the on-road path along Latrobe St and William Street including Queens Bridge Street Bridge. Overall, the bike path felt well protected. Care was required at major intersections dealing with cars turning left.

Having arrived at Southbank, Bruce suggested we try the Immigration Museum café for morning tea. At the museum the front entrance is 8 or 9 steps. Fortunately, a very helpful security guide directed us to the ramp entrance and bike racks. It was a good idea until we found that the café is no longer operating. It was decided that as we were already there, we would visit the museum. The museum is very well done and easy to explore chronologically. There was even a new display based on the Covid pandemic. It was then time for an early lunch so we headed for the Southgate Food Court. The bike racks we used in the past

have gone. The whole promenade is covered with marquees to facilitate outdoor dining space for Covid. Many of the food outlets are closed including Muffin Break. There were very few people other than a few school excursion groups. The lack of people meant seating was freely available but the overhead gas heaters were not operating.



Although the sky looked threatening for most of the day there was only a light shower while we were in the Immigration Museum and we remained dry for

WESTGATE PARK 6 MAY 2021

The sun was finally shining again after some very wet weather earlier in the week. The forecast was for a mild and clear autumn day. Seven riders rode off heading for Westgate Park, in Port Melbourne via Abbotsford and the Capital City trail.

To get to the Merri Creek trail we went along next to High Street then down along the ramps near Heidelberg Rd to continue along to Dights Falls and beyond. Some work was being done on the cliffs along the river path after Dights Falls and we needed to detour along Trenerry Crescent for a short way to get back on the path and on our way again.

There was another short detour at Hawthorn Bridge/Bridge Road where we had to cross at the lights and go back down to the path. The bridge is being upgraded, which will take a number of months. However, nothing was denting our enthusiasm as it was a lovely morning. Some of us were needing to remove clothing layers to stop overheating. Riding along next to the river with no more detours before crossing at the Burnley/Grange Rd bridge to get to the southside of the Yarra.

Morning tea was at the Botanical Gardens. There were a few people around at the tearooms area, but the main tearoom wasn't open. No chairs outside but plenty of empty low walls for us to spread out and sit comfortably.

After our break we rode along the Tan track before crossing to the Alexandria Gardens paths. There were a couple of large school groups which we needed to get past, but they were well behaved and we got through without mishap. Taking it very slowly we rode along Southbank to Queensbridge Street. There was quite a lot of people strolling on Southbank just like the old days, so a bit of dodging and weaving was needed. We turned left onto

the Queensbridge Street separated bike lane to go south. We continued onto Moray street to take a scenic loop through South Melbourne and inner beach side suburbs before lunch.

There is a shared path skirting the edge of Albert Rd at Albert Park lake and from there we got onto Kerferd Road. This took us to the Bay trail to ride to Port Melbourne and Sandridge Beach and Westgate Park. The scenic detour meant we would get to our lunch stop closer to midday and the group seemed happy to wander. The day was a pearler with a blue sky, sun shining and barely any wind. Port Philip Bay was like glass and we were in no hurry.

We stopped at Sandridge Beach for Roberta to take a photo for a friend. I took the opportunity to take a group photo as the backdrop was better than I expected our lunch stop would be.



When we got to Westgate Park, we had a surprise visit from Harry who was waiting to have lunch with the group.

Roberta needed to leave us after lunch to go home but Harry continued with us back towards the Docklands.

After our lunch we rode back towards Beacon Cove to head back on the Sandridge Trail. I took the group on a short cut back to the Docklands, which meant navigating the very large intersection - Montague Street/Lorimar Street/Westgate Freeway. At first glance it's a confusion of busy roads and traffic but quite manageable when you stick to the pedestrian crossings and traffic lights.

At the Docklands we turned off Harbour Esplanade at Latrobe Street to go up the hill towards the CBD. They have put in separated bike lanes on the Latrobe Street bridge in the last 12 months. We turned left into Adderley Street to go past the Remand Centre and Festival Hall. Turned right into Abbotsford Street just before North Melbourne Railway station. Separated bike lanes have also been put into Abbotsford Street too.

Abbotsford Street took us to the west side of the Children's Hospital and Royal Park. Roy and George left us at the turn off to the Upfield line and the rest of us headed along the Inner Circle Rail trail towards Jika Jika. Bruce, myself and Ian H stopped for coffee at the Park Street Dining café, with Roger leaving us at that point. Harry had left earlier in Port Melbourne.

Distance approx. 43km back to Jika Jika.

Regards

Sue Hiscock

SATURDAY RIDE 8 MAY

Weather forecast was for a pleasant 20 deg, with rain in the afternoon and evening. On arrival at Rushall Station, we found the whole area around the station closed off, for rail works. So we congregated at the end of Falconer Sreet. Twelve riders turned up, including Octavio and Aida, who we hadn't seen for some time, due to Octavio having to battle serious medical problems (not COVID related). We headed off under a patchy sky and very cool temperatures. We were able to now officially ride the new path at Royal Park and very handsome it is. Now joined by Costas and Roy, making us 14 in number. On to our toilet stop in Pearl River Road, opposite the movie studio gate, then on to Caps and coffee, where we are joined by Sandra. By this time the sun started to make its presence felt, making the refreshments and company, more enjoyable.

Bruce had a better offer and left us at Caps. The rest of us headed for home, with Sandra leaving us a little further on. At the Tram depot, some wished to cross Spencer Street Bridge and ride the North Bank. It was agreed we meet at the Tripedal Dinosaur. Alas we that crossed at Spencer Street assumed the other group would cross the river at the Seaman's Bridge but such was not the case. They had stayed on the Southbank and ridden what had been the traditional route. We, contrarily to our undertaking waited in the park just off Spencer Street, until it became obvious we had been left behind. A few phone calls, some frantic peddling, and we regrouped at the Catholic University and then all peddled home. Myself somewhat embarrassed but wiser from the experience.

David Downing

MULLUM MULLUM CREEK 11 MAY

Where did it all go wrong? Things had been going along just nicely until our leader, Jopie, stopped us at the Wilson Reserve Path turnoff to inquire whether we wanted to stop at Ivanhoe Golf or The Alphington Foodstore for afternoon tea. Roger mentioned Phil's Bakehouse but Jopie was sure Alphington would be open until 3pm and that's where we headed.

But the Foodstore had changed their closing time to 2.30pm, so we headed to the Bean Counter, which closes later. Roger absolutely nailed the lights at Grange Road and took off in the direction of Phil's. Funnily enough, I had a mug of Roger's preferred beverage, hot chocolate, at Bean Counter and it was super-hot and delicious while Roger, who'd actually decided to head for home, missed his train and was stuck at Southern Cross for some time without one.

The morning hadn't looked too promising, with steady rain, and only five of us turned up – the aforementioned Jopie and Roger, plus Ian H., Sue and me. I had an ulterior motive as I was down to run a Mullum Mullum ride on June 3 and wanted to see where Jopie was going, besides riding in the opposite direction. He had been expecting 15 riders until the weather turned to custard and said he wouldn't have come if he hadn't been leading. As it turned out, the rain abated and, being few in number, we were able to ride fast enough to avoid many of the raindrops. We headed down the Darebin Creek Trail to the Main Yarra and under the Eastern Freeway to Kilby Road before hitting the Outer Circle Trail for the short ride to East Camberwell Station. Jopie explained that we were riding Camberwell as not many trains stop at East Camberwell during the day.

We missed one before riding the rails to Ringwood, using the time to remove wet weather gear, and then rode across the bridge over the "lake" of Ringwood Lake Park to morning tea. From there we finally headed to the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail but were thwarted briefly by what looked like some very boggy drainage works and resulting diversion. With Eastlink out of the way we could finally start whistling along the creek. Passed Heads Road and Park Road, where my ride was going to leave the trail and Mullum Mullum Reserve for a toilet stop. Location duly noted but Currawong Bush Park might be nicer for lunch on my ride? Jopie was heading for Westerfolds for lunch, which seemed a long way away but Beasley's Nursery and Petty's Orchard were soon behind us. Funnily enough, apples came up for discussion at lunch, with Ian backing Pink Lady apples against all comers.

We had the opportunity for another toilet stop in Finns Reserve (duly noted) before hitting the service lane up Templestowe Road and then Banksia Park and the Main Yarra Trail on the run home. Hope that barista is working next time we go passed Bean Counter.

Wolter Kuiper

RUFFEY PARK LAKE 13 MAY

Bruce did not get report in this month.

SATURDAY RIDE 15 MAY

Forecast was for 70% chance of rain, we had 5 starters at Rushall Station and the temperature was very cool. At Royal Park we picked up two more riders, making our number now 7. There were occasional light showers of rain, not enough to interrupt the ride or shelter from. The last underpass before New Footscray Rd was full of water, so a bit of backtracking and a detour through the rail yards, brought us to our toilet stop. Heading down Lorimar Street the skies started to clear up a little and by the time we had got to Caps, we were getting blue skies and a bit of warming sunshine.

Heading back just before the tram depot, the path was closed and we were directed down a ramp and under the Montague Street Bridge onto Normanby Road. From there past DFO, Southbank and across the Seafarers Bridge, thence across Spencer Street to Batman Park, where our way was blocked by a large protest, probably Arab/Israeli inspired. Discretion sent us back over the river to the Southbank, where we proceeded back to Rushall by our usual route without further untoward incident.

David Downing

**MARANOA AND BOTANICAL GARDENS
MEANDER 18 MAY**

It seemed that the forecast for a fine day after the previous week's rain encouraged a large crowd to join this ride. It was delightful to have 22 starters (7 of them women according to Bruce) and just around the corner from the start, Chris made it 23. With such a large group, we were strung out over more than one light change on the Capital Trail but happily not too far apart when we needed to follow detour signs rather than continue under Royal Parade as usual (tree lopping works). Sue took the lead and showed us a short cut back onto the trail just before the Zoo and all was well.

Cruising along to Docklands with no wind, but also no blue sky as yet, we hadn't quite warmed up by the time we hit Southbank. There were few pedestrians and our pace was very respectable (read slow) through this promenade, our only obstacle was a group of arrogant male cyclists who were blocking the thoroughfare with themselves and their bikes at the eastern end of the food court – no amount of bell ringing could move them. We chose the riverside route to the Botanical Gardens and



were very ready for morning tea when we arrived. Harry also joined us at this point, making our riding group 24 momentarily (although Jopi and Ian S peeled

off after morning tea). A few interested garden lovers explored either the Fern Gully or Arid Garden before we set off again.



The Yarra Trail, then Gardiner's Creek Trail proved quiet and uneventful and we turned off at Nettleton Park onto the Ferndale Track. This is a pleasant short cut from the GC Trail onto the Anniversary Trail (or vice versa). We climbed gradually towards Maranoa Gardens, turning off the AT and popping out at Canterbury Gardens beside Maling Rd. The final leg of this section was on quiet residential streets and the inclines of some had more than one rider mentioning Jopi's name – can't think why? We were all very happy to reach our lunch stop of Maranoa Gardens and the second pleasant surprise of the day. A violinist was practising in the memorial building near our picnic tables – great acoustics for him and a pleasant musical interlude for us.

The home stretch after lunch was mostly downhill with just one more gradual climb along Kilby Road heading towards the Eastern Freeway overpass. The familiar territory of the Darebin Trail, with the usual pop out onto Heidelberg Road and past Dan Murphy's rather than the long climb through the Parklands was the chosen route to our coffee stop of Nikos. Here we were welcomed, seated at two large tables with high stools and provided with excellent, friendly service (there may have even been baklava). Approx. 50 kms

Kathy Robb

TWO CREEKS AND A RIVER 20 MAY

I woke up . It's raining. Bugger. I am the leader, I have to go anyway.

I drove my car and trailer to St. Georges Road. Then rode to Jika met with Roger and Bruce. Changed my original route, so we only crossed The Merri Creek . We rode on the Brunswick, then Coburg bike paths.

Actually a zig-zagging tour of quiet streets. I rode Upfield path, Derby Street , then to my place. We had coffee, hot chocolate for Roger. Moving on we rode along Surrey Street stopped to talk to Mark Rice, Roger knocked on the door.

While stopped a young guy asked me are we a group. I said we are the three Musketeers I was thinking. I was thinking, one is single, two is a couple, three is a group We rode on to Moonee Creek downstream for a section, then west to the Maryibyrnong rRver. Stopped for lunch at the Rotunda. While there we met a single rider who said he was 83, had E/Bike that actually carried four batteries He wanted to make sure he got home. I thought I might like having two but I thought four was overkill , Didn't say that though. We rode down the river toward Docklands then on the City Link path back. No rain, lovely day. Thank for your company Roger and Bruce.

George

SANDRIDGE BEACH 25 MAY

As 15 of us prepared to head off on the ride curiosity was rampant with regard to the short notice surprise sausage sizzle. It was not a new Bunnings sponsorship for the BUG, it was in fact a celebration of my 70th birthday on May 24. Took Capital City Trail heading for morning tea at Ron Barassi Snr Park in the Docklands. Unfortunately, the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail, behind the Icehouse and Docklands Studio has been closed due to the construction of a new sound stage. Hopefully this is not a permanent closure. There was a strong wind at morning tea.

It was then off to Sandridge Beach via Lorimer Street and Todd Road. I was a bit distracted and took a longer than necessary route to get to Lorimer Street crossing the Docklands Highway with numerous traffic lights. At Sandridge we rode out to the lookout.



The wind was making quite strange noises interacting with the steel lookout structure. We then rode past the lookout and had a great close-up view of the containers activity loading/unloading containers and the specialty vehicles involved.



The short ride back to the lunch spot at Sandridge Beach was against a very strong wind. Fortunately, my wife had arrived with all the food and lunch was underway with plenty of volunteers to help with cooking of the sausages and onions. With a possibility of rain, it was decided to shorten the ride and not head to St Kilda and back around Albert Park Lake. Instead, after lunch the group headed to Beacon Cove and the Sandridge Railway Trail to Southbank for afternoon tea. We had the inside tables almost to ourselves in the near deserted food court. Unfortunately, heavy rain fell on the return trip. (36kms)

Ian

ROSSTOWN RAIL TRAIL 27 MAY

As far as rail trails go, the Rosstown one that stretches a very short 7km between Hughesdale and Elsternwick, much of it on roads, is far from epic. Coming from the 14km Outer Circle/Anniversary Rail Trail through the Urban Forest it was a bit of a culture shock, but it had to be done. Despite working in Oakleigh until 2020 I hadn't ridden the Rosstown for many years.

With Ed Smart out of action it was Ian H. leading us on this journey of discovery. With the dark, oppressive clouds of lockdown looming large once more there were only six of us, split evenly between e-bikes (Bruce, George and Roger) and regular ones (Ian, Sue H. and me). We thought there'd be more before home detention resumed but the weather forecast hadn't been great, with 14 degrees forecast.

Roger was less than impressed that the High Street toilets were still closed "until further notice" but it may have helped us to get away on time. With only five to keep track of, Ian soon had us whistling up through Hyde Park to join the Outer Circle trail. Morning tea was at Riversdale Park, where George was already discovering the limitations of his rain jacket.

Apart from Bruce taking an unauthorized detour along a shared path around the outside of the Urban Forest Reserve while probably whistling "If you go into the woods today be sure of a big surprise", once Roger's heart had returned to a rate closer to normal we made it to Hughesdale's new elevated station. What would Rosstown entrepreneur William Murray Ross have made of the level crossing removal project if he were alive today?

The insurance broker arrived in Melbourne in 1852 at the age of 27 and began to make his mark on Caulfield five years later, when he

purchased 20 acres. There was another 200 bought in 1859, followed by 1000 acres in the 1860s. Mr Ross was playing for keeps. Not only did he subdivide the land to produce a village modestly bearing his own name but built a massive processing plant in 1875 to produce sugar from beetroots.

The private railway line with four stations that followed was a complete disaster, being authorised by the Legislative Assembly in 1878 but not finished within the stipulated five years. It took a decade using worn railway tracks, rotten sleepers and no ballast to save a now-struggling Ross money and only ever carried one train, for the official "opening". The wagon loads of beetroot from Gippsland never came and the factory never operated.

As we rode the curved former railway alignment along Murrumbeena Cres and then Rosanna St, the site of the factory and Sugar Works railway station appeared on our right in Koornang Rd. In Oakleigh Rd, Bruce pointed left in the direction of Packer Park where there's apparently a velodrome. About then a



depressing text message came through "Lockdown for a week." We didn't stop for Bruce to do laps, continuing towards E.E. Gunn Reserve and the site of a second Rosstown station, called Booran Rd, for our lunch break.

This section of the trail had been widened and concreted since I was here last but the grandstand seemed to be parked on the old railway alignment and the trail squashed in behind it. By this stage George was really feeling the cold and headed for Elsternwick Station after lunch to catch the train home. That was a smart move as our run along Beaconsfield Parade featured a bitterly cold southerly blast off the bay and we were glad to head back inland to the Elwood Canal to the musical accompaniment of Bruce's rapidly loosening rear spokes.

Four of us made it the full 50km as far as Phil's Bakehouse in Westgarth for warm drinks, but not before Bruce got told to put on his facemask if he wanted to order anything and to scan in the QR code immediately afterwards. Good luck with the latter.

Wolter Kuiper