

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



REMEMBERING ALAN HIGGINS

In the March *Wobbly* I asked if anyone had any photographs of Alan. Nerolie Cubitt and Norm Appleby provided some wonderful photos, some of which are included below.

1. With Bruce, Robert and Lorraine
2. With Roger, Bruce, Ed, Carol and David





First Phillip Island Ride, boule



With Norm, Robert Borden and Robert Bladier member in early 2000s



BUG Dinner



With Bruce, Nerolie and THAT helmet



Katherine Kemp. Bruce, Jopie and Nerolie



Katherine and Nerolie.

BLACKBURN LAKE 4 APRIL

The ride started after a bit of excitement. Roger was observed dropping his pants while talking to a woman.



Then while reviewing George's bike modification to lower the top bar it was noticed that there was a bolt missing where the carrier attaches to the rear of the frame. Roger broke out his spare parts collection and replaced the missing bolt.



The route to morning tea was South Crescent, Wingrove St, Darebin Creek Trail, Hyde Park and Outer Circle/Anniversary Trail. At the Burke Road

crossing it was realised that George and "tail" Roger were not with us. A quick phone call determined that George had a rubbing rear brake and did not want to hold the group up so he turned round to head home.

While at morning tea at Frog Hollow, we got an update from George that he had discovered his bike had a loose back wheel nut. A passer by directed him to a nearby bike shop who tightened the rear wheel. After morning tea continued along Anniversary Trail to just past Alamein Station to Gardiners Creek Trail and onto Blackburn Lake for lunch. The lunch area has been renovated with including new seats.



After lunch instead of going north on the back streets to Koonung Creek Trail took Springfield Rd east to Bushy Creek Trail and then to Koonung Creek Trail and onto the Chocolate Shop for afternoon tea.



After afternoon tea headed back to Westgarth via Koonung Trail, Yarra Trail and the Boulevard

Ian. Pictures: David Ellis, Colin Finger and Wolter Kuiper

CRANBOURNE BOTANIC GARDENS

7 APRIL

On 7 April several riders caught the train at Westgarth bound for Jolimont where we were met by Sue and Barbara. A short trip across to Richmond where we found George waiting on the platform. George did not look well. He had slipped on the autumn leaves in Yarra Park and fallen. We suggested he double back home by train, but he was keen to continue and knew that he could rest while we waited for the train and on the train journey of about 45 minutes. We caught the 9:27 train and all were impressed at the new train carriages with very informative digital signs inside about the next station and which side the doors were opening on. The train was also very quiet. Riders were Pam, Paul, Ed, Barbara, Sue, David D, Ian H, Roger and myself.

At Cranbourne we rode along quiet suburban streets west of the shops along the Highway and then on the bike path along the Highway beside the racecourse. A short while later we arrived at the morning tea spot in the SE corner of the gardens (Stringybark Picnic Area). It was a very pretty spot with lots of trees and birds.

I had planned for us to ride around the south border of the gardens but the path was closed, so we double back to the main road, past the main car park and on to the Woodlands Picnic area for lunch.

After lunch we turned back again to the main entrance of the formal part of the gardens. A worker asked us to walk and not ride our bikes just before the entrance. We agreed to meet at



the coffee shop at the entrance about an hour after our walk. I enjoyed the walk very much.

While walking in the gardens by myself, I ran into Sue and we stopped and chatted for a few minutes on a path. Out of the corner of my eye I saw some movement amongst the tan bark. I turned and we saw a bilby moving around quietly about 2 metres away. We watched it for a minute or two. I turned to get my phone for a photo and when I looked back it was gone. My first sighting of a bilby in the wild, and definitely the highlight of the day. Sue, being on the ball, reached for her phone first and took the photo.



We then had our coffee before heading west of the gardens onto Bullarto Rd. The gate to the bike path I was planning to take was locked, so we had an extra 3 km or so to get back on track along the bike path before heading north.

Things got a bit tricky when we came to cross Evans Road. There seemed to be an unending flow of traffic. I was last across the road after at least a 5 minute wait. After a short section of a busy road we were back onto bike paths on the way to Lynbrook station. We only had an 8 minute wait for the train back to Richmond where several people left the group. Ian was the only rider with me as we passed Jika. It was perfect warm weather with little wind all day.

James

ELWOOD CANAL AND CAULFIELD 12 APRIL

We had starters on this ideal, cool and dry Tuesday. Minor mechanical issues (chain off) were dealt with and soon we were cruising down the Exhibition Street separated bike lane and through the always interesting tennis centre. We had to wait at the Shrine whilst the mechanics worked out why Nola was having such a hard time getting up the gentle hill. Her brake was part on tripling the effort! Easily fixed with the depth of expertise at our disposal.

After circling the hidden fountain near the Shrine we had to navigate through the devastation which was the cleaning up after the Grand Prix. After being amazed by the rudeness of a high speed jogger who was obviously in a very bad mood we proceeded up Elwood Canal, round the lake in Elsternwick Park, over the big hill which is the overpass over Nepean Highway, through the untracked wilds of Gardenvale and finally through the big tunnel to our lunch spot in the middle of Caulfield Racecourse. Another tunnel to exit, a cruise around the ornamental lake in Caulfield Park, a complicated route through Malvern and we were soon cruising back in familiar territory up the Yarra Trail to afternoon tea at our newish cafe in North Richmond overlooking the tree-lined Yarra. Then to avoid the hills in Kew we took the recently opened trail on the south side of the river, past the brewery and the direct street route via Clifton Hill to home.

Minimum attrition this time, only losing Pam Stiles at morning tea and no more till Clifton Hill

A very satisfying and enjoyable day

Jopie

AUTUMN IN MACEDON 14 APRIL

How embarrassing, or dumb, for me not to tell those coming by car, about the major road works and road closures, with diversions, getting into and out of Gisborne.



The smart ones were Ed and Colin, who came by train.

In spite of the odds against them, the car drivers (David, Mark and George) did in fact arrive in plenty of time for the 09:30 deadline departure time. In fact we actually biked off five minutes early and that meant we were able to ride to Gisborne train station and arrived just as the train bringing Ed and Colin pulled in.

It was a cold but fine and calm morning as we headed off on a slightly modified way up to Macedon village and the Autumn Colours of Honour Avenue.



Due to the rather wet winter this year, the colours were not quite as spectacular as I had hoped. Maybe a week later might have been better.



Morning break was had in the park opposite the Anglican Church of Resurrection. This, ultra modern design and aptly named, was a replacement for two churches lost in the Ash Wednesday fires of 1983.

After the break we rode around and up past the Emirates horse training farm and continued to the high point of the ride passing the reservoir that was the original and only, water supply for Gisborne town when I first came here over fifty years ago.

Then it was generally down, past where, on previous rides, I had the lunch break. Mutually it was agreed that we should continue to have lunch back in Gisborne.

I decided to take a route back into town that motor traffic could not because of the road closures and also boast about how I got around the diversions on my rides across to Riddells Creek for my commuter train into Southern Cross.

Bikes can get through where motors can't. After lunch, more meanderings around the sports ground and parkland, before finishing back at Roger's house for afternoon tea. David left immediately to visit daughter living nearby. And yes, tea brewed in a pot with real tea leaves.

In spite of the modification to the original intended route, distance was the gazetted 35 km.

Roger

MERNDA 19 APRIL

It was hoped the ride would be uneventful but this wasn't the case.

The forecast was for a few morning showers which would clear as the day progressed. Well this didn't happen! It did clear a little for morning tea, but as the day progressed the rain was consistent.

Another addition to the ride was that we were going to meet up with Bruce Jager for afternoon coffee. Jenny Backholer came up with the idea and Ian Singleton arranged with Johanne to pick Bruce up from his home and drive him to the coffee shop.

When Pam and I arrived at our starting point near Jika at 9.30 am we were surprised to find six keen riders waiting for us including a new rider named Pamela. Together we all cycled around to Rushall Station where Sue was waiting. Altogether there were nine riders. We caught the 9.47 am train to Mernda. The trip took 40 minutes.

From the Mernda Station we began riding on the very smooth trail that runs next to the rail line until we got to the Middle Gorge station where we stopped for morning tea. After a short break we rejoined the trail and rode on to the South Morang Station. We regrouped here, only to find that Pam Stiles and Roger were missing. Fortunately Sue spotted them so she rode over to the other side of the railway line and guided them back to the group. Then we were off again!

After a short while I felt my rear bike wheel had become very bumpy. I stopped and was dismayed to find I had a flat tyre. My first puncture for several years! We wheeled the bikes a short distance to get in under a

railway tunnel out of the rain. Roger and Ian came to the rescue very quickly and had the back wheel off in no time. They found the cause of the puncture, which was a slither of glass, then they fitted a new tube.

We were then back on the bikes and followed the trail next to the railway until we reached the turnoff to the Darebin Creek trail just before Epping station. After riding along the Darebin Creek trail we came across a detour caused by bridge works, so we followed directional signs around numerous streets and eventually got back onto the Darebin Creek trail. Cycling along the trail we did notice a few kangaroos which was a bit of interest.

Our next surprise was when we reached the ring road. We headed east alongside the freeway a short distance to go through the underpass under the ring road only to find it was flooded and we couldn't get through. Fortunately, Sue remembered that there was a road bridge further along the freeway. We followed the pathway to the bridge and headed back along a couple of streets that got us back onto the Darebin Creek trail.

We kept riding on the trail back to Alphington and then alongside the railway to Fairfield where we finally ended up at the Bean Counter coffee shop to find Bruce and other BUG riders waiting for us.



Report by Paul (Approx. distance 40km)

NEWPORT LAKES 21 APRIL

The lovely autumn weather had changed to cooler days and very wet weather for the week. Thursday was the preferred ride day for some riders as the Tuesday had been very wet. Some of us mad fools still had some slightly damp gear.

The weather forecast for the day was early showers clearing during the morning but as the seven of us gathered the skies looked rather dark and foreboding. Off we rode taking an alternative route to Newport Lakes and hoping for the best – Colin, James, Ian H, George, Roger, Andrew and myself.

Through to Kensington and the stockyard route to the Maribyrnong River for morning tea at Footscray Park. Starting to think about taking the raincoats off.

We continued after our break to ride up past Footscray station and get onto the Sunshine/Footscray Path west. We turned left at Tottenham station to go under the rail bridge to cross busy Sunshine Road. We left the noise and traffic behind winding through the back streets of Tottenham to Geelong Road. We crossed the intersection into a park to get onto the Stoney Creek path. It appeared to be 'dogs off the leash' day so I was rather warily riding along the path, hoping the rest of the riders were doing the same. All went well with only one narrow escape of a dog darting out of the shrubbery.

When we got to the high walls of the West Gate freeway we crossed at the Muir Street bridge, a rather fortress like bridge with nice wide ramps for bicycles.

We wended our way through the back streets of Spotswood/Newport and on to Newport Lakes Reserve for lunch. It's not often that the lake is sighted on the ride, as bicycles are prohibited from riding around the lake. However, we wheeled our bikes to the lake for some photos.



Next stop was towards Jawbone Reserve, Williamstown via Maddox Road. We hit a bit of headwind along the coast and we stopped for a breather before Point Gellibrand.

Luckily, we had a tail wind going back along the bay trail which made up for it. We also we had a good view of the city and the bay. We stopped at the Footscray Arts Centre for refreshments. I think they might have been getting ready to close as we were all given takeaway cups.

Our return route was via Dynon Road, Lloyd Street then up Arden Street through North Melbourne. To add in some more scenery, we went around the edge of the Royal Park grasslands circle path and through to the updated cycle lanes along Princes Park Drive. A couple of riders peeled off at Royal Park and with other riders returning via the Inner Circle Path.

The showers held off but the skies remained grey for most of the day.

Another good ride. 52 km.

Report from Sue Hiscock

GASWORKS PARK 26 APRIL

Fourteen keen riders set off from Westgarth at 9.30am with Colin leading and Roger as tail. We were fortunate to have a great day, weather wise, for the ride; no wind to speak of and warm and sunny.

The ride was easy going, though with many traffic lights to contend with there were quite a few stops. It was a good route through Edinburgh Gardens, down Napier Street, around the MCG, across Olympic Boulevard (Swan Street) and on to the tan around Kings Domain, then via Southbank Boulevard and other streets to the Sandridge Rail Trail, finally stopping at the rotunda on the Bay Trail for morning tea. The leader had neglected to note that morning tea was meant to be at the Botanic Gardens!

After morning tea Jopie became the tail as Roger removed his hi-viz top due to the warm weather. Again it was a gentle ride along the Bay Trail to the turn off into Albert Park. As works were still going on to remove the infrastructure for the Grand Prix it took a couple of turns before we found our way onto the path around the lake then we headed towards Gasworks Park.

Again the riding was easy going, except that Roger was mauled (exaggeration!) by a dog shortly before we arrived at the Park and received a bite which drew blood.



After lunch we made our way through back streets to the Sandridge Rail Trail and headed towards home. Some confusion arose near Jeff's Shed when we lost sight of Jopie who had not followed the group past Polly Woodside to cross the Yarra. After a number of texts and phone calls we were eventually re-united and continued our ride.

A stop was made at Gelobar for afternoon tea, some riders had left the group to head home. In the end 4 riders were left on return to Westgarth.

As reported at the beginning, the weather was kind to us, not being too hot and not raining. Another good ride with no accidents, injuries (apart from Roger's), punctures or major mechanical failures!

Total ride distance 41km (Strava) approximately

Colin Finger

GARDENS RIDE 28 APRIL

When I arrived at the start there were 8 riders rearing to go and a text message from David indicating that his train was delayed, however he arrived punctually 30 seconds before the start time, then who should we see roaring up the road but Pam Stiles.

So we set off towards the Anniversary trail heading towards the zoo, then under the freeway through Docklands with the compulsory loo stop, then onto Southbank. There was a detour sign for cyclists which we followed and after stopping at numerous traffic lights we eventually went past the ABC and the National gallery before crossing onto the tan and riding up to the Herbarium gates and where we stopped for morning tea using the seats made from the fallen oak tree.



Morning tea at the Botanic Gardens

After a chat and rehydration we did a small walk through the gardens to the next gate, admiring the autumn colours along the way.

Then back on the bikes and heading south towards Fawkner park, and riding a circuit through more autumn leaves before heading back towards the Botanic Gardens and down Alexandra Avenue to join the Main Yarra Trail to Como for lunch.



There was a shortage of seats all in the same area so some riders found a nearby bench seat while others eased their creaking bones onto the grass near the kitchen garden. This meant that we did not stay to a long time as a number found the arrangement too hard and also found it difficult to get up after lunch. So we were soon back on the bikes for a bit of single track riding down the hill from Como and back onto the trail again before turning off at Burnley campus for a stroll around the gardens.



Autumn colours at Burnley

Then it was back on the bike to Abbotsford convent and we entered from Clarke st and walked through a small section of the gardens before ending up at Cams kiosk for afternoon tea where Roger gave the thumbs down for the hot chocolate.

Approximate distance 40 km.

Ed

SATURDAY RIDES

Saturday 2 April

Forecast was for 19deg. little chance of rain but a fresh South East to South wind. Being the first ride for the month, it was decided we would ride Rushall Station to Williamstown and return. At Rushall we had 15 riders at the start, picked up 1 more at Royal Park and another in Footscray.

We took the Capital City Trail to Flemington Bridge, then Stubbs Street, Smith Street, under the railway and through the Kensington Cattle Yards and across the bridge to Footscray and then followed the Westgate Trail. At Yarraville Gardens, 3 riders elected to use the toilets there, while the main group pressed on to the toilets near the Williamstown Yacht Club. Passing under Westgate and a little further we came into the open and tuned into a fairly brisk southerly in our faces. Fairly heavy going until we rejoined the main group at the Yacht Club but the toilets had been demolished. In their place were 2 tired, portable units, that appeared to be rejects from a building site.

On to Williamstown, where some chose the toilets in Commonwealth Reserve and some chose the toilets at Schwab's Galley, where we had our refreshments. About half chose to sit in the court yard and the rest chose out front.

Refreshed and nourished we mounted our bikes for the return journey. By this time the other side of the bay was being shrouded in a haze of misty rain. Off we went but before long the mist rain had descended on us. Sufficient intensity to start a scramble for shower jackets. A little further on it was no longer mist but rain showers but not enough to reach for the waterproof pants. This lasted for about 2 kms.

By the time we had reached Yarraville the rain had stopped and here one of our riders left us. Alas Faye's battery was showing

signs of exhaustion on the hills (I hadn't recharged it after a midweek excursion). Along New Footscray Rd we tailed the group, me pushing on the uphill bits and Faye still getting some assistance on the flats. This went on until Royal Park Station where she decided to head home along the tram track cycle path and another rider exited the group at the Upfield Path. The rest of the group arrived back at Rushall. Williamstown is a nice ride, though we were test a little by the weather.

Saturday 9 April

A promising forecast of 26 deg., warm enough to wear shorts. This was to be our regular ride from Rushall Station to Port Melbourne and return. At the start we had 9 riders, joined by 1 more at Royal Park and 1 at Dockland, making 11 total.

The weather was still a bit cool still and there were no incidents on the way down. Had our toilet stop at Docklands then on to Port Melbourne. Coffee and chat was had at Caps.

Refreshed we headed back. The weather was starting to warm up and the ride by the beach was very pleasant. On South Bank it wasn't football crowds but car racing fans but that was only alongside Crown. Passed the MCG with minimum pedestrian traffic. Off to Rushall without further drama. Don't think it got to 26deg.

PS.

After the ride there had been some comment on coughing and Covid symptoms. So I decided to do a RAT. Did the test and it came out POSITIVE, my wife was negative. Advised all the other riders and went into isolation. It transpired that my snooker partner from the previous Tuesday and his wife were also positive, could indicate something.

Saturday 16 April.

I didn't ride this day, no I hadn't been nailed to a cross beam somewhere. I was in statutory covid isolation.

George in my stead, took the ride and tells me that he started with 10 riders, picked up 2 more at Royal Park, lost one at Flemington Bridge, the rest going on to Bay Street Bakery for coffee and cake (Caps being closed).

On the return journey, lost one rider at the city and completed the ride without accident to riders or bikes. All having test negative to Covid after last weeks contact with me.

Saturday 23 April.

Forecast was for 19 deg., no rain, moderate UV. This would be our regular Rushall Station to Port Melbourne and return, ride. Come start time we had 11 riders. Off we went, the air was pretty cool but it was very pleasant when ever we emerged into the sunlight. At Royal Park just for a change, we didn't pick up any more cyclists.

On down to Docklands and our toilet stop, where we gained another rider. From here our usual route is pick up the southerly end of New Quay and ride down to the Harbour Esplanade. Not this day, there was some sort of funfair / carnival with lots of little people under foot. It was a case of walking the bike, with considerable care, and watch out for the wee folk. I took the cowards way and went down a parallel street. Eventually we regrouped at the Esplanade and pressed on.

Coffees were taken at Caps and here we were joined by another rider, now we were 13. Fully

refreshed we headed on our return journey, the weather now having warmed some what. At the city we lost one rider and the rest headed up past the MCG, which didn't seem to have a match on. Napier St, the Edinburgh Gardens and back to Rushall without further incident.

Saturday 30 April.

This Saturday was to be our regular ride from Rushall Station to Port Melbourne and return. The forecast was after a rain sodden night with a moderate chance of rain in the morning and a maximum of 15 deg. At start time there wasn't a cloud in the sky but the air was very cold. We had 6 starters at Rushall, including 1 visitor; at Royal Park we picked up 2 more.

The small group moved along at a good pace and at our toilet stop, 2 more had caught up. Now we were 10. Along Lorimer Street we had a fresh wind in our faces and dark clouds were started to covering the sky. By the time we reached Caps, our coffee spot the cloud cover had broken up, giving patches of warming sun light. While waiting for coffee service, a slow leak was attended to and we all enjoyed the refreshments and conversations. At Caps we were joined by another ride. Rolling stones gather no moss but Saturdays ride sure gathers cyclists.

Fully satisfied we headed back. By this time the weather was starting to show a bit of warmth. At the City we lost 3 riders and the rest pressed on to arrive back at Rushall without mishap and in good spirits.

David Downing

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ian

Just to let you know I always enjoy your Wobbly Wheels newsletter.

Kind regards

Mary Collier

Hi Mary,

I only do the easy part of distributing it. The hard work of putting it all together is done by David Maunders.

Regards Ian

Thanks Mary and Ian. Editor.

All good wishes to David Downing, hoping his recovery is complete. Thanks to him for continuing to report even in isolation and providing five reports for this month..