

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



HURSTBRIDGE 3 MAY

It was good to have Roberta, who we haven't seen for a while, join in for part of the ride. On the train trip to Hurstbridge, it was noticeable that rail construction work is underway Greensborough to Montmorency and Diamond Creek to Wattle Glen. From Hurstbridge we set off on the new section of the Diamond Creek trail to Wattle Glen. A noticeable feature of new section is the number of bridges - there are 5 creek crossings.

Morning tea was at the Diamond Creek Rotary Tram Café. Most riders partook of the coffee and snacks available. It was then back onto the trail where instead of a generally flat trail ride to Eltham there is a detour, due to a bridge renewal, which involves a significant climb. The detour we took was signed as "ALTERNATE DETOUR ROUTE (Less Hills)"



It was still a significant climb but there was a reward of a longish downhill to then get back on the trail just before Edendale Community Environment Farm.



Continuing on the Diamond Creek Trail, there was a misleading detour sign at the Diamond Valley Miniature Railway which resulted in a small cross country excursion to get back on the trail and then over the Yarra River bridge to the Main Yarra Trail. A large mob of kangaroos was observed in Westerfolds Park as we proceeded to lunch at Finns Reserve. After lunch we took the Main Yarra Trail and The Boulevard to afternoon tea in Fairfield. With attrition along the way 3 of us finished at the Bean Counter Café.

Ian

WESTMEADOWS 5 MAY

The weather forecast predicted a very cold day with a very high chance of rain. I concede it was pretty cool all day, but there was no rain, no wind and lots of sun. In fact, a nearly perfect riding day.

I suspect the weather forecast explains why only three riders set off on this day's ride. They were myself, Barbara and George. I had thought about the route as described in our ride schedule and decided to vary it to a loop ride up the Merri Creek, across the Ring Road and down the Moonee Ponds Creek.

We rode beside Merri Parade and onto the Merri Creek Trail. We stopped at Coburg Lake for morning tea, where Barbara left us. Now only two, George and I left Coburg Lake and headed up to the Ring Road. After the swift descent of Jacana hill we took the relatively new section of trail through the Jacana Wetlands towards Westmeadows.

After lunch we had a fast ride down the picturesque Moonee Ponds Trail to Pascoe Vale. At Pascoe Vale Station we separated. George taking the Westbreen Creek Trail north towards Fawkner and me going east through the back streets towards Coburg.

George and I had nice day out in the late Autumn sunshine and were home early before it got cold and dark.

Andrew

BRIMBANK PARK 10 MAY

Another fine scenic adventure with Jopie....what was his little hint about there being a few interesting hills today and the possibility of a bit of walking? Hmmm.

Ten of us headed off in the cool and lovely sunshine to Pipemakers Park, with George very eager and doing a fine job in taking the whip role and looking after us with Jopie, since Roger was off gallivanting about overseas.

Pam left us at morning tea after the Moonee Valley Racecourse where 10 corporate vehicles pursued us around the car parks and whose occupants clearly assumed we would depart the road for their convenience. Sadly mistaken of course.

Later on we stopped for lunch and somehow resisted the pleas of the Le Brea Channel 9 film crew for us to star as time travelling intrepid bike riders in their next weird TV series. They were obviously not paying enough to interest such a talented bunch.

Plenty of unusual little side paths and lanes that Jopie always finds for us. At the top of one of the "interesting Jopie hills" and after quite a lot of uphill walking, we spied the munitions site stretching across the valley below us and considered how much pollution and toxic chemicals must be left hidden below. We also spied a couple of the local female birdlife on the path side wrapped in their towels and merrily tic-tocking or taking selfies we think. I think they were pleased to see us depart, as it must have been getting a bit chilly for them!

We enjoyed some really lovely autumnal parks, trees and gardens along the

Maribyrnong River, Valley Lake and Steele Creek until reaching the Queens Lake Park with its creative mosaics and gardens for arvo tea. George regaled us here with a sprinkling of his past adventures, bike crashes and ambulance rides before heading off home. Wolter took over the whip and helped us along a few more interesting Jopie hills and home we came along the Moonee Ponds Creek to Westgarth. We actually all really enjoyed this 52 km ride thanks Jopie.... Oh and did we mention the hills LOL....

Cheers David and Susan

JELLS PARK 12 MAY

This was originally scheduled to be a ride led by James, but he wasn't able to lead the ride, so I was passed the batten. The weather forecast a week out was for a day of heavy rain, but luckily on the day it was fine with a maximum of a few drops or spits of rain during the ride.

The ride program indicated to catch the train so a couple of minutes before 9.30 three intrepid riders, Ian Wolter and Ed headed to the opposite platform to catch the 9.32am train to Jolimont,. At Clifton Hill Barbara got on then we caught up with Allan and Sue at Richmond. Train to Ringwood then after getting on our bikes and finding the pedals it was time to stop for morning tea at the nearby Belford Rd playground. After a good chat we rode along the Heathmont Trail until we reached the Dandenong Creek, At the bridge there were 2 options, one along the gravel path or the other on the sealed through the local vegetation on a smooth gravel path. Riding was very peaceful with lots of fresh city air to breath in.

path, and the leader gave the riders no option but the gravel path, which proved to be a lovely ride. After the Dandenong Creek trail we rode to Jells park along the Eastlink trail arriving around 12.15 and found a large table under the trees for a relaxed lunch. A woman was humming on some nearby swings and when the leader complimented her singing she got back on her bike and cycled away.



After lunch back on the wheels down the hill and back to the Eastlink trail before turning off along the Blind Creek trail upstream, before deviating at the Tim Neville arboretum for a pit stop and view of the autumn leaves, then back along the railway line to Bayswater for a train ride home. All in all a pleasant day's ride.

Distance about 43 km.

Ed

CHERRY LAKE 17 MAY

It was a sunny but frosty day, when 9 of us hit the road. Sue joined us at Royal Park but we then lost George when he discovered he had a slow puncture. He decided to try for home rather than fix it and ride on.

A flower-arranging lesson was observed at morning tea in Yarraville Park. A florist friend was making a beautiful bouquet for her friend to give to a sick friend in hospital. Pam S left for home after morning tea so 8 riders headed off to Cherry Lake. We were happy to arrive at the lunch spot as we had battled a strong headwind across the Rifle Range and into Cherry Lake. However, the sun had now disappeared and the chill was increasing, so lunch was a short stopover.

The riders checked out the history of the old Williamstown Racecourse before we headed to Gelobar for a warming coffee. Sue departed at Royal Park station and Ian H left us at Lygon St crossing, so there were just 6 of us for afternoon tea.

A pleasant but testing ride of 57 kms.

Glenys

MERNDA 19 MAY

Seven riders gathered at Jika and Alan Garbutt had promised to meet at Norris Bank. We had some new riders, Pamela a friend of Pam Stiles and Linda. George and Michael completed the group.

We set off and had not reached Alphington when George let us know that his two batteries were not providing power assistance. It seemed there was some connection fault. He was not willing to ride without power and set off to find a train to take him home.

The resat of us carried on and with a few hesitations about the route, successfully arrived at Norris Bank where Alan was waiting.



New riders Linda and Pamela with Pam Stiles and Michael.

After morning tea, Pamela and Pam returned home and the remainder continued on. There was a detour leading to Childs Road and another after crossing Childs Road but we finally regained the trail.

As we approached South Morang Station we paused by the Ian Hamilton Memorial Bollard and gave thanks that our comrade has now recovered.



We reached Hawkestone Park for lunch and had a pleasant stop watching kangaroos watching us.

After lunch, Alan Garbutt left us to ride back and the remaining four continued to Turners Bakery. Everyone seemed unphased by trains terminating at Reservoir and Michael knew alternative rides to the closed St Georges Road.

I left the three riders at the bakery as I had to drive to Phillip Island.

About 40 km.

David

AD HOC RIDE 24 MAY

While a lot of the Bug were up around Yea doing the Great Vic Rail Trail, our small group of three, George, Roberta and Jopie ad hocked our way along a modified version of the Capital City Trail. We modified it by going via Yarra Bend, Kanes Bridge, the Boulevard loop above Dights Falls, the Brewery, Flockhart Reserve, the Hawthorn side of the Yarra, Fairview Park, Northbank instead of Southbank and a loop of Docklands. Tradition was upended when we stopped for morning coffee at Kanteen on the Yarra Trail opposite Herring Island. Part of the Yarra Trail in Richmond was closed so they could repair a retaining wall, forcing us temporarily into Victoria Street.

The weather was just perfect. Solid blue sky all day and still as still could be. I hope the Yea bunch had the same weather up there.

The attrition rate was severe. Roberta headed home after morning coffee and George, after the two of us had eaten our lunch sitting on a park bench in Royal Park, took off up the Upfield trail. I even got home in time to take off to Clifton Hill gym for a sauna and swim before the hordes of kiddiewinks arrived for their 4pm swim lessons.

A delightful day

Jopie

YEA RIDES 24-25 MAY

Seven of us: Sue, Mandy, Graham, Pam, Paul, Ralph and me, drove in the cold and fog in 3C temperature to arrive at Cheviot Tunnel past Yea to begin the ride. We were suitably rugged up with many layers, beanies and warm gloves. Pam and Paul had special lights attached to their helmets for riding the 200 meters through the tunnel, while Ralph and I had small camping lanterns we put on our handlebars. Once through the tunnel, there was a lot of downhill. I'm sure I wasn't the only one thinking 'we'll have to climb back up this on the return journey'!

After roughly an hour's cycling, we stopped at the toilet near Molesworth. A very friendly horse wandered over to greet us and enjoyed a few pats. He then galloped along with us as we rode down the hill to our morning tea spot in the picnic ground. The seats were damp, so some of us stood while others came prepared with mats or towels to sit on. We noticed children riding into the area on mainly BMX bikes and wondered 'where are the teachers?' Gradually more kids pedaled in accompanied by one teacher. There was also a small bus parked there with a trailer attached. On leaving we learnt there were three staff, and the kids were having their morning tea stop. They had ridden from Merton and were headed to Yea for the night. They were from a school in the Macedon ranges.

The ride to Yarck took us over several bridges, one of which crossed the Goulburn. Gradually the sun came out and revealed a beautiful late autumn day as we arrived at Yarck for lunch. Mandy and Graham bought lunch from the café on the same side as the trail, while others bought coffee, so we sat outside there under the shady trees. Later

we rode to the oval for the toilets and then had a look in the Dindi gallery and café, which is beside the trail, before our return trip.

Ralph made several stops along the way, so we could have drinks and blow our drippy noses. We had a group photo with our 'equine buddy' in Molesworth. This time Mandy treated him to some extra grass.



The warmth of the sun saw us take off coats, beanies and scarves while the final long haul up to the tunnel provided the biggest challenge. Ralph rested on the grass under some mistletoe about 2km from the top.



Here about 6 cyclists passed us – we thought it was like peak hour on the trail – and strange as we had only seen one other ride to that point. Ralph said for people to go at their own pace on the final leg. The ride was 41km. This worked out well, although he was tired and asked me to drive back into Yea. Sue departed from the car park and the rest of us headed for the Yea bakery for coffee and cake.

Suitably refreshed, Pam, Mandy and I browsed in the clothes shop next door and each came away with a purchase, pleased to have supported another local business.

Our accommodation for the night was cabins at the Yea Riverside Caravan Park. We had showers and a relax, then enjoyed happy hour in the Sierak cabin. Some went for a walk around the park and discovered that the school group were staying there in tents and using the camp kitchen to prepare their meals. Our dinner was at the Country Club Hotel where we all enjoyed our choices of steak, fish, schnitzel and chicken parmigiana. The fog was back and it was about 4C as we drove back to the cabins.

Next morning the others reported that the children's tents were wet from the dew and fog. They had slept well apparently, but we were pleased to be in our warm cabins. They were riding to Tallarook that day. We drove there and parked by 9.30 and rode along the trail towards Trawool. This was a pleasant ride with gently slopes and in some parts were beside the Goulburn River. We crossed the main highway, and it was roughly 5km more to Trawool. With renovations meaning the beer garden and its seats were roped off, Ralph found picnic seats near the tennis court. Paul was doing the gentlemanly act of cleaning the seat of bird poop for Pam, when he inadvertently flicked it onto Ralph's shoe and pants. Much laughter followed! Graham forgot a lighter, so they had food but no coffee.



Eventually we drew breath in our chatting, to put our helmets back on for the return ride. Arriving at the car park after midday we had cycled 27km and were ready for lunch from the Tallarook café.



We sat outside with our coffees, toasted sandwiches and pastry items, reflecting on a lovely two days and thanking Ralph for his great organization.

Report by Nola

TARRALLA CREEK AND DANDENONG CREEK TRAILS 26 MAY

Five riders finally sat down for morning tea at Ringwood Lake after sorting out train and destination issues. Ed, David, Sue, Michael and me.

Heads down under gloomy skies we followed the Mullum Mullum Creek trail to the end and skirted around the Croyden shops to meet the Tarralla Creek Trail that leads to the Dandenong Creek trail. From here we followed our noses to Jell's Park with impending rain.

With perfect timing the rain started just as we reached undercover shelter for lunch.



The choice after lunch was to shorten the ride or to continue on through the shower. Sensible heads prevailed and we carried on to Dandenong station to do the full ride. Once you're soaked the discomfort disappears and you can enjoy the ride - who am I kidding? The satisfaction is to complete the ride in clammy, gritty gear.

From Richmond station the famous five dispersed in all directions looking forward to a hot shower and dry clothes. And scones with jam and lashings of cream.

Ian H

WERRIBEE RIVER AND SKELETON CREEK 31 MAY

In the leadup to this ride the weather report was for freezing strong winds from Antarctica and lots of rain, so it didn't look like a good day for bike riding. The day before the ride had also been cold and rainy so I didn't expect many brave souls to turn up on Tuesday morning but was met by Ian H, Jopie and Colin who had bravely ventured out for some invigorating exercise.

So, the 4 riders with their rain and windproof coats set off along the Capital City Trail to the station. The train ride to Werribee was a limited express so it was a reasonably quick journey. Then on our bikes we set off along the wet Werribee river path, but fortunately there was no rain along the way while observing the lovely native vegetation on the river banks. After a small navigation error near the Princes Highway, we rode under the road then on the Werribee plains to Werribee Mansion for a welcome stop. We decided to venture into the café for a warm environment and hot drink and to escape the cold wind. We mostly had the place to ourselves. A check of the radar showed approaching showers so we stayed indoors while it rained. The temperature was 9.5°C but the mobile app said it feels like 3°C. When it cleared a bit we rugged or coated up and to ride back over the freeway where we were nearly blown backwards by the strong headwind, then onto the Federation trail. Heading east, we left the trail at Sneydes Road and headed on the local streets to the start of the Skeleton Creek Trail to find that the very rough bitumen trail had been replaced by a smooth concrete path, making it a lovely ride with a good tail wind.

We had to stop a couple for times along the way for Jopie whose chain came off and later when his panniers nearly fell off. The good news was that the rain held off while riding.

On the way we came across this fantastic new

mural near Palmers Road at Williams Landing.



It was a lovely ride helped by the tailwind and no rain while cycling through the native trees and alongside various grassland and wetland areas, until we reached Truganina Park with the 100 steps and stopped for lunch with the friendly magpies. One landed on Ian's bike and had a good look around but was obviously an amateur at riding as the bike crashed to the ground when it took off. Lunch came to an abrupt end when a freezing blast of wind hit.

A quick check of the weather app revealed a temperature of 9°C but feels like 0.9°C, so the wind felt very cold. Back on the bikes again to warm up by pedalling on the Hobsons Bay Trail we rode through Altona where a lot of works were going on to construct a new sea wall. Then on reaching the Kororoit Creek causeway, there was a chorus of groans on seeing the amount and depth of water over the path. I was thinking what would Roger do in this situation? The leader then boldly ventured through the freezing water getting wet shoes, but when Jopie and Ian were fording the stream, a car came past creating a large wave and even more water over the path. So, now with cold wet feet, we decided to head for home, all thinking about steaming hot showers, rather than afternoon tea. The route along Footscray Road or Docklands Highway was interesting with all the construction for the new elevated road occurring while the docks seemed to be a full house of stacked containers.

We finally made it back to Westgarth just before 4pm after a lovely 64km ride, mostly dodging the rain. It started pouring rain around 5pm so overall, we had a lucky day with the weather.

Ed.

SATURDAY RIDES

Saturday 7 May

A rather iffy weather forecast predicted rain the night before and later in the day but a fair chance we may escape a drenching during the morning. Being the first ride of the month we had decided to head down through the Edinburgh Gardens, Napier St past the MCG and onto the Main Yarra Trail, the Gardeners Creek Path, Ferndale Trail and coffees at Glen Iris Pantry, returning by the Anniversary Trail. After the predicted down pour early in the morning we had 5 riders turn up at Rushall Station, for the start. At 9.30 we headed off. Through Edinburgh Gardens and down Napier Street. or should I say up Napier Street, as we are so used to gliding down it on our regular rides, it was a bit of a shock going the other way and having to work our way up it. Never the less the small group moved along quite quickly. A toilet stop was had at the Tennis Centre and onto the Main Yarra Trail. It was pretty quite on the river, there were a few rowers and a few joggers, but cyclists were in short supply. On to the Gardener's Creek Path where we picked up one more rider, making us now a half dozen. On the Ferndale Path, I took one wrong turn but wiser heads sorted us out and we arrived at The Glen Iris Pantry, where refreshments were taken.

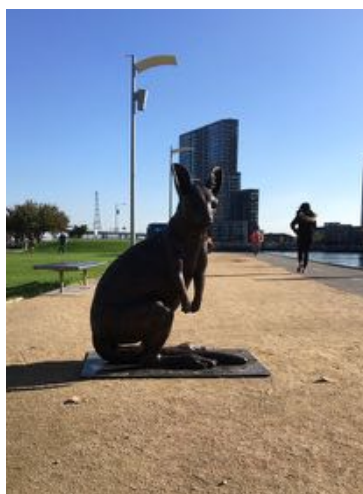
Rested and nourished we resumed our ride on the Ferndale Path. A little further on the path was blocked by cyclone fencing and we were directed onto the road. After a few suburban streets we arrived at the Anniversary Trail. One rider left us at Camberwell and the rest pressed on at a brisk pace. At Northcote two more riders took their leave and the last three riders arrived back at Rushall, dry. I bade my fair wells and headed home. I hadn't gone far before it started to rain.

Saturday 14 May

This Saturday was to be our regular Rushall Station to Port Melbourne and return. Forecast not encouraging, rain but not a large quantity, we hope to be lucky. For the start at Rushall we have 6 starters and as we head off we have misty rain.

At Royal Park we pick up one more rider, and on to our toilet stop where we were joined by one more ride make it now 8 riders.

Along Southbank there are a series of bronze statues of endangered species which were quite interesting by this time the wind had picked up and the rain though quite light is being driven. At Westgate Park we had a puncture to attend to and this being done we pressed on to Caps and the rain stopped. At Caps we were joined by one more rider, now we are 9. Having had our coffee we headed back, losing one of our riders in the City. It was Richmond v Hawthorn at the MCG, a fair crowd to battle through. Anxious to get back before more rain good time was made on the return journey. Some rain but we all came out dry at the end.



Saturday 21 May

A dry day with 15deg. maximum was forecast. Today was to be our regular ride, Rushall Station to Port Melbourne and return. The day didn't start out well, I arrived at Rushall and discovered I had one shoe and one sandal, both left foot. I have to wear cleated shoes, to prevent the chance of a foot slipping under the trike while riding. No alternative I had to go home to West Brunswick and get proper footwear. Leaving the group in George's capable hands, I headed off.

Including myself there were 8 riders at Rushall and 2 more joined at Royal Park. Having ridden 5 km home and down the Moonee Ponds Path to Flemington Bridge, I rejoined the group at the Docklands toilet stop. Heading off we got to the Eel Trap bridge where I discovered my wife had only one pannier, the other was missing. I headed back to the toilet stop, to see if I could find it. Alas no sign of it, so I resumed my ride to Port Melbourne. Opposite Marvel Stadium, on the path, I noticed, a shoulder purse, lying on the path. I picked it up and checked inside, and found an address, which was in Brunswick on my way home. Joined the group again just as they arrived at Caps for Coffees.

After discussion it was decided that we would ride back the same way that we came and keep an eye out for the missing pannier. Fully refreshed and nourished, we headed back, all 10 arriving back at Rushall, with further incident. To discover the missing pannier on the back seat of my car.

PS. Back at Rushall, the phone in the purse rang, it was answered, though I offered to home deliver the purse, the owner elected to meet us at Four Beans where we were taking refreshments. Very pleased to get her purse back, she had been following its journey on a "Find My Phone" app.

Saturday 28 May

The forecast was for 15deg. maximum and no rain. The ride was our regular Rushall Station to Port Melbourne and return. At the start was had 7 starters and picked up one more at Royal Park.

The air was very cold but the sunshine was very warming, good time was made to the Docklands toilet stop and onto our refreshment stop at Caps. At Caps we were joined by another rider making a group of 9.

Heading back the sky clouded over, most of the time, depriving us of that lovely warming sunshine. All arrived safely back at Rushall Station without further incident.

David Downing

EDITOR'S ENDWORD

We look forward to the return of Roger on Sunday after travels in Germany and Poland. He was able to catch up with many friends and stay well.

Ian and Joanne Singleton are off to the USA for a long delayed family visit. We wish them a trouble free journey and happy reunion.

Thanks to Sue Hiscock for stepping in as communications manager.

David