

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



WATTLE PARK 1 SEPTEMBER

There were seven who set off for Wattle Park, Andrew, Ian, Sue, David, Roger, Robyn and Steve. We hadn't seen Robyn and Steve for sometime as they had been away cycling in Spain and Portugal.

We rode along South Crescent, into Clarke Street, and then Wingrove Street. Arriving in Alphington we turned into Darebin Parklands. Here we joined our first bike trail of the day, the Darebin Creek Trail, and turned south. We crossed under Heidelberg Road and onto the new section of trail beside the Yarra. Arriving at the junction with the Main Yarra Trail, our second bike trail, we turned right before immediately turning left. Passing under the Eastern Freeway we took the unnamed trail, our third for the day, through Hyde Park and onto our fourth trail of the day, the Anniversary Outer Circle Trail.

Crossing under Burke Road the Anniversary Outer Circle Trail becomes the Anniversary Trail (our fifth trail of the day?), I don't know why the name change and Mr Google doesn't seem to know why either. We followed the Anniversary Trail, without incident, to Frog Hollow where we stopped for morning tea.

After morning tea we continued along the Anniversary Trail to where it meets the Gardiners Creek Trail, trail number six, at Alamein Station.

We followed the Gardiners Creek Trail north towards Burwood. The path meanders through some lovely bush land.

Crossing busy Burwood Highway is a bit awkward, we diverted onto the footpath and crossed a busy intersection before rejoining the trail beside the creek. After a further kilometers of pleasant riding through parkland beside Gardiners Creek we left the path and made our way through the back streets and after crossing Elgar Road reached Wattle Park.

After riding around the Park on a loose gravel path including a short, steep and slippery section we arrived at the trams for lunch.



After lunch, it was down the slippery gravel path, back across Elgar Road and through the back streets before rejoining the Gardiners Creek Trail slightly north of where we left it.

Heading north we soon encountered Boxhill Golf Course, which occupies both sides of the creek and forces cyclists to detour through back streets before rejoining the path on the far side. We travelled along the path for a further kilometer before leaving it at Hay Street which brought us to Canterbury Road. Unfortunately, there were no pedestrian crossings anywhere nearby so we needed to make a well timed dash across the busy road. From there we made our way along Bedford and Barcelona Streets to the railway line. We crossed the line near Linsley Street before crossing Whitehorse Road at the Fire Station, then on to Dorking Road via the service road.

Dorking Road took us on a fast downhill run for about a kilometre to Bushy Creek Trail, trail number seven. Bushy Creek was a lovely ride taking us to Elgar Road and onto trail number eight the Koonung. We had an uneventful ride down the Koonung Trail. David left us at Bulleen Road, the rest of us went for afternoon tea at the Chocolate Shop.



Leaving the Chocolate Shop we avoided the steep hill back to the trail by going back to Leonis Avenue which is much gentler slope. Arriving at the bridge that crosses the Yarra and leads up to Kew Boulevard I chose to go straight ahead instead and up the hill beside Kew Golf Club before turning onto the Darebin Trail at Willsmere Park.

Retracing our steps from the morning we went back to Alphington via the Darebin Path, Heidelberg Road and Yarralea Streets before getting back to Joka via Wingrove Street and South Crescent. Ian left us at the underpass just before Station Street, and Steve and Robyn at Victoria.

Andrew

WARBURTON TRAIL 6 SEPTEMBER

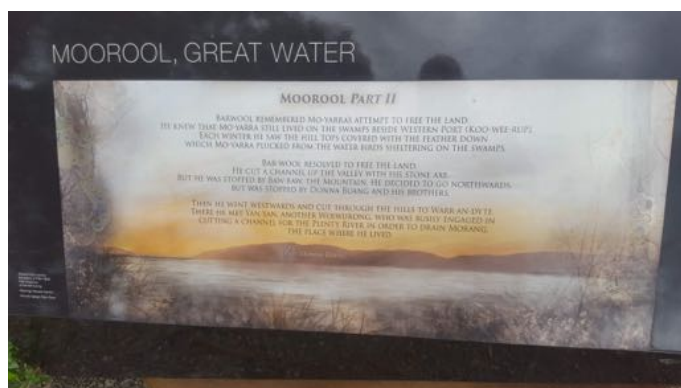
Eight riders turned up for the ride on a day that was nice and dry. Unfortunately James was only able to ride for a short distance because he was unwell, and so he headed home early.

Our first stop was for morning tea at a couple of picnic tables next to the Killara station. After our morning tea break, we kept riding to Woori Yallock, where we admired the photos.



Then Launching Place, Yarra Junction, Wesburn, Millgrove and then finally to Warburton, where we found a table to have our lunch right next to the Yarra River.





After a pleasant break we headed back on the trail, with the “Carriage Café” in Seville being our destination for afternoon tea. Fortunately we phoned the café before we left Warburton to make sure they stayed open for us. The staff even cooked up a batch of hot scones for us. We arrived at 2.30pm which was enough time to have our refreshments before they closed the café at 3pm.



After a pleasant afternoon tea we rode on the short distance back to our cars at Wandin North, packed up our bikes and then headed home

Report by Paul Approx. distance 55km

MULLUM MULLUM LOOP 8 SEPTEMBER

Things didn't look good for a ride. It was pouring rain in the early morning and further rain was forecast for the day. On checking the radar it seemed to be pouring rain just north of Melbourne and it was moving south. So it was no surprise to find Roger at the starting point with all his wet weather gear on as he had ridden through the rain on his early morning ride to Riddells Creek. More surprising was that other riders turned up. First Linda then Ian and Wolter. Luckily the temperature was warm and there was no rain. When consulting the weather app Norway on my mobile phone (YR which is a weather service from the Norwegian Meteorological Institute and the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) it showed rain starting between 2-3pm. So what to believe?

So we set off at a brisk pace towards the Darebin Creek trail then onto the Main Yarra Trail for a morning tea stop at Possum Hollow where some of the riders took off their wet weather gear, but luckily not Roger as he said if he did so it would bring on the rain. The riding was good however an occasional headwind slowed us down a bit. When we arrived at Possum hollow, there was no one else in the playground, however by the time we left there were quite a few children playing who weren't scared off by the old folks and many grey whiskers.

Back on the bikes we soon passed the Waringal parklands, Banyule Wetlands, and then through Westerfolds Park then Candlebark Park, and onto an early lunch near the Mullum Mullum stadium.

Along the way we saw lots of wattles in flower.



This was not one from the ride

From here it was a uphill ride to Park Rd then up again more uphill to join the bike path near the Eastern Freeway and back downhill towards Doncaster. When asked the riders weren't keen on an early milkshake at the chocolate shop so we kept pedalling back to Jika. At 1.50pm I felt a few drops of misty rain so we made haste to Phil's bakery arriving about 2.15. Luckily there was no rain on the ride and only an occasional blast of a strong headwind. Roger explained that with the weather coming from the north the clouds rose up over the dividing range and would drop most of the rain on the northern side leaving little to fall further to the south. So lucky of us riders. All in all, a good day's ride.

Distance about 54 km. Total elevation about 600m, average speed 15.5km/h.

Ed

JACK ROPER RESERVE 13 SEPTEMBER

With Ralph still not riding, I offered to lead a different ride to the original program. When I arrived at Watsonia, I realized that buses were replacing trains from Macleod to Hurstbridge, so I made a quick call to Pam, then hotfooted it downhill to Macleod station. Fortunately, I arrived in plenty of time. Sue introduced a new member in Steve to everyone. Wolter offered to be on tail and we set off, meeting Ian H at the Westgarth Street corner.

I said to Mandy how out of practice I was being leader, as I hadn't done the head count. She did a quick check, revealing we had ten cyclists, including four women. It was cool, but sunny at the beginning as we turned north on the St George's Road track. Along the way we caught sight of the new stations at Bell and Preston, which looked very impressive. Morning tea was at Reservoir station, where Steve told us of the magpies in Cheddar Road. The sky was now grey with clouds as we braved Cheddar Road. Apparently one nosey magpie came close to Mandy and me, but we were fine. Steve on the other hand decided to go it alone up the road and the magpies found him! We cycled on towards the Western Ring Road at Dalton Road and turned left. The sun periodically poked its head out from the clouds, making for pleasant riding.

Arriving at Jack Roper Reserve at 11.50, we were all hungry enough for an early lunch. We had the picnic area to ourselves.



Wolter left us after lunch to do a reccy for a future ride. Mandy offered to go tail for the remainder of the ride. I asked Sue to lead us back to the Upfield trail, which she did very capably. However, we did have three young boys roughly 13-14, on bikes without helmets riding erratically in front of us. I commented to Sue I wonder why they're not in school, while Steve thought they were acting like boys he used to teach. We stopped a couple of times to let them get ahead, while to our dismay, they also paused about 50 meters in front of us. Ed rode with Sue to prevent them passing and as we got to Hilton Street alongside a truck, one of them rode straight across without looking. It was very disconcerting, and we worried we might witness a crash. Steve left us near Box Forest Road and Sydney Road while the boys finally gave up at Fawkner station. From here it was smooth riding with a couple of short detours along the way. We paused at both Coburg and Moreland stations to admire how the new blended with the original and the extensive landscaping with cliveas at Moreland.



A very pleasant afternoon tea at the Lux factory in Hope Street Brunswick, although Roger's almond croissant tasted very dry. Sue turned for home a bit further south and the rest of us continued onto the Capital city trail to Westgarth. Our group was Sue, Pam, Paul, Mandy, Ed, Roger, Ian H, Wolter, Steve and me. Thanks to everyone for a lovely ride of 41km.

Report by Nola

BOTANICAL GARDENS 15 SEPTEMBER

I arrived at the starting point with some trepidation as I was leading James' ride and the forecast was for cool showery weather, so I didn't expect to see many riders. At the start there were 4 other brave or foolish souls rearing to go. We started riding alongside the Hurstbridge rail line to Grange Road, before turning south to start on the Boulevard. Riding around the Boulevard was quite pleasant as there were a number of wattles in bloom and the occasional waft from flowering *Pittosporum undulatum* trees along the way producing their strong distinctive scent, however they are regarded as weed species in some areas. We had to divert over the Gipps Street bridge in Abbotsford as the normal Walmer Street bridge was closed for repair. It was then onto the back streets around CUB before riding the sometimes muddy trail around the Yarra River where I heard some muttering as riders negotiated the small section slippery mud.

We continued around the river on the bike path to the Botanic Gardens for morning tea with more comments about the distance before the first stop (approximately 20 km). On arrival near the café, workers were repairing some of the bitumen paving. So we had a lovely scent of hot tar during morning tea, and then they cranked up the mechanical vibrator disturbing our peace with a very loud noise while we tried to remind ourselves of the normal peaceful rest.



Our peaceful and quiet morning tea with the compactor operating in the background

After the break we walked through the gardens to emerge near the herbarium then rode around the Tan and Southbank Boulevard shortcut going up a dead end street near Crown casino then finally back onto the bike path near the Exhibition building. On passing station pier we saw the first cruise ship that had berthed, after the pandemic with its huge "I love Melbourne" sign on the front.

It was a pleasant cruise around the bay before turning off to the St Kilda Botanical gardens, where we temporarily lost George as he took a shortcut to divert around a truck blocking the entrance.

Note the official names of the gardens are the Royal Botanic gardens, and the St Kilda Botanical Gardens. For the adjective meaning *of or relating to botany or the cultivation of plants*, **botanic** and **botanical** are both acceptable, and there is no difference between them, but *botanical* is more common in 21st-century English. *Botanic* was more common up to the 20th century but has gradually faded out of use. Today it is preserved mainly in the names of botanical institutions founded over a century ago. (Source www.grammarist.com)

On arrival at the lunch stop a local couple asked George if he was a chess player, probably expecting him to play with the large chess pieces stored under the seats. They seemed disappointed with his answer that he didn't play much chess. So George then told us about the time on one ride where Bruce stopped for lunch and put his helmet down on the BBQ. When Bruce returned after lunch to put on his riding gear, it was securely melted onto the BBQ. George wasn't sure who had turned on the BBQ but it had certainly melted the plastic in Bruce's helmet and then cooled over the lunch break so that it took quite a bit of pulling to budge it.

One of the garden beds had an interesting planting. A lot of coloured silverbeet. Who would have thought it could be used as a display plant. Back on the bikes again we rode through St Kilda streets passing the Vegout community vegetable gardens near Lunar park, then around Albert Park Lake where we saw quite a few baby swans on the lawns and in the water.

Riding through the city we started to lose riders, first George then Sue while Roger and Wolter headed off at Smith Street Collingwood to leave the leader to complete the circuit on his own finishing back at Jika after about 50 km of riding at an average speed 14.9km/h finishing at 2.30 pm and not a drop of rain for the whole ride

Ed

ELTHAM 20 SEPTEMBER

It was an early start to the ride. Roger phoned at about 6:45am to let me know train services. The radio news bulletin at 7:00am mentioned delays on the Sunbury line. A status update at about 8:30am was that train was moving at walking pace around Diggers Rest. By 9:30 we had Nola, Sue, Robin, Ian W, and Wolter ready to ride. An update from Roger was that he was passing Albion station. It was quickly agreed that it was going to be too long to wait for Roger. Instead, the plan was put forward for Roger take the train to Eltham to meet up with the group at lunch time.

The ride proceeded on the Boulevard and Main Yarra Trail to Possum Park for morning tea. Ralph met us for morning tea having driven to meet us. Nola left the ride. The ride continued on the Main Yarra Trail and then the Diamond Creek Trail to Eltham for lunch. Some section of the Main Yarra Trail had largish puddles and the river was very high. As we arrived for lunch, phoned Roger whose train had just arrived. Having been tail for so long Roger had trouble getting his bearings to the park opposite the library. Got Roger to find the unmissable trestle bridge and I rode to meet him. Robin had some gear shifting problems so Roger spent most of lunch time inspecting/testing and liaising with Abbotsford Cycles who had serviced the bike recently.

Sue headed for the train after lunch. The remaining riders ride returned the same way we had come. The Wilsons Reserve Trail was avoided due to the WATER OVER ROAD sign.



Afternoon tea was at the Alphington Food store.



Ian

DJERRING TRAIL TO CARRUM 22 SEPTEMBER

The weather forecast was excellent for a bike ride. It was a public holiday so not quite sure what to expect but thinking it could be very busy on the trails and in the parks.

By 9.30am a larger than expected group had gathered with some members taking advantage of the public holiday and not having to work. Plus, we had some visiting riders as well. There were eleven riders to start, with the prospect of another rider meeting us on the Anniversary trail.

We got safely through to East Malvern station still in our little peloton. The path was much busier than usual mid-week. At some points I seemed to be almost constantly ringing my bell and shouting "12 bikes passing, thank you". We stopped on the way through at the usual morning tea spot.

Through to Hughesdale station to meet up with the Djerring trail.

The Djerring trail going east is reasonably well marked in most places. However, there is a tricky bit without signage where you need to walk the bikes through the Oakleigh station underpass. The next tricky bit is finding the trail again on the other side. It's at the end of a carpark.

All was well and off we continued to our lunch stop at Ross Reserve just past Sandown Park station. Located very close to the Djerring trail, the reserve has a huge playground with lots of fabulous facilities which today was chocker block full of holiday revellers. Not a lot of available space for us. Some of our group choose a sunny table outside the playground and the others of us opted for a shady spot on the grass.

With lunch eaten and facilities used we continued the short distance to the end of the Djerring trail at Yarraman station. The trail very neatly meets the Eastlink and Dandenong Creek trails to go south to the bay. The trail south is concreted in parts but then becomes a narrow gravel track. The wet winter has made the track a bit rough, luckily it had been dry weather the previous few days. The track that the Eastlink project forgot.

It is however lovely when you get to the wide Patterson River. With the larger group I forgot completely about taking photos but I have included some of Patterson River and environs from my reccy ride.



We didn't have to wait long at Carrum for a train, but then sat at Edithvale station for 15 minutes due to animals on the line past Aspendale. Its still a mystery what animals could have been on the line.

A good day's riding with excellent weather and the bonus of no swooping birds.

Distance 58 km back to Jika Jika.

Report from Sue Hiscock

The main garden bed at Werribee Mansion. It must be the current garden fad that the garden display was coloured silver beet

When we were about to leave Ian H picked up his coffee cup and moved to place its in the other Ian's cup and as he did so there was a warning shout..... "No stop", but too late as the other Ian hadn't finished his very hot coffee and it erupted like a volcano all over the table causing some consternation to both Ians but luckily no injuries.

After a quick view of the sky the leader decided not to put on any wet weather gear as we had been lucky so far. Back on the bikes we rode back to the Federation Trail and then headed off to the start of the Skeleton Creek Trail. It was great for riding with a lovely tail wind to help us cruise along the trail.

Along the way we again encountered the community art near one of the underpasses



It started to lightly rain, luckily only about 2

WERRIBEE RIVER – SKELETON CREEK 37 SEPTEMBER

With another cold wet day forecast it was a surprise to find 6 other riders at the start of the ride. We set off towards North Melbourne station on a cool calm overcast morning. The leader seemed to catch all the lights along the way but at some points, the rest of the group arrived to see the lights change to red. After a short wait we caught the train to Werribee with only one other person in the carriage. The ride along the Werribee river was pleasant as usual, amongst the river red gums and wattles and other plantings. After crossing the freeway and a pleasant ride across the Werribee plains with only a very slight wind (an unusual occurrence) we arrived at Werribee Mansion for a morning cuppa or coffee, and a chat.



minutes before the lunch stop at the 100 Steps so we made lunch still relatively dry. While having lunch we were fortunate to be under cover during a heavy downpour which made the local friendly magpies look very soggy. Once again one of them tried to ride Ian's bike by grabbing the handlebars with its feet, but it couldn't seem to make the bike move, as its legs were not long enough to reach the pedals.

It was soon time to put the wet weather gear on and set off to Altona where we could see some sun shining over near Elwood or Brighton but not on us. We encountered a couple of drops of rain along the way before reaching the normal Footscray Arts Centre only to find it closed as we were late arriving.

We headed down the popup cycle route in Footscray Road before heading towards Arden Street North Melbourne and past the footy ground. We made a tactical error riding up Arden Street and not turning off along the Moonee Ponds Creek trail as it was under cover and the rain finally caught up with us. We were saturated by a heavy downpour. So the seven soggy riders headed up towards Princes Park and back to the Capital City Trail where Sue headed off, and soon Robyn headed home to thaw out and dry off. We made it back to Northcote where Ian H headed home while Ian S, Roger, Wolter and Ed had a warm coffee at Phil's bakehouse and reminisced about the ride.

PS Ian finished his coffee without incident.

Ride details. Finished about 4.15 pm. Distance approximately 65 km, average speed 15.9km/h, elevation gain approx. 210m.

Ed

WILLIAMSTOWN 29 SEPTEMBER

I counted Sue, Rodger, George and James on the ride to Williamstown. Morning tea at Yarraville for snacks and a natter.

Lunch is normally at Williamstown which doesn't allow us to digest our morning snack. So with a little trade craft for leaders using encouragement, compassion and the odd joke I suggested heading to Newport Lakes for lunch.

Checking my map and notes we set off on one of Jopie's favourite routes through back streets (if only) to Hyde Street in Footscray close to our normal cafe. Our little table resonated with too little! too cold! and too expensive! Just the conversation for these old farts.

From Dynon Road across to Arden Street we powered on to Queensbury Street and Swanston Street where we eventually passed Melbourne Uni and the Princes Hill football ground to the capital city trail.

Sue left leaving only me, having left the other three along the way.

Also a shout out to Sue for this route.

50 kms

Hurricane Ian

SATURDAY RIDES

Saturday 3 September

A reasonable forecast of 14 deg. with little chance of rain. It being the first ride of the month we planned to ride to Bundoora Park via St Georges Rd and return via the Darebin Creek. Trail. Come start time we had 8 riders at Rushall Station.

We headed of up St Georges Road. and picked up another rider at Oakover Road, making us now 9 in number. The air was pretty cool but the sunshine made for very pleasant riding conditions and fortunately the clouds seemed to keep out of the way of the sun, most of the time. We were detoured at Murray Road and sent up William Street to Regent Street where we rejoined the cycle path. Toilet stop at High Street, Broadway corner, Then past the velodrome, onto Bundoora Park. It was decided we would coffee at the Homestead. Good selection of drinks but the food menu was very limited.

Having had our sufficiency, the group headed back to the Darebin Creek. The day had fortunately warned somewhat by this time so we weren't troubled so much by the shaded creek path. Good time was made getting back to Rushall, having had 2 riders leave us in the Northcote area. Usually we do this ride the other way round, as the St Georges Road route seems quicker, but this time the Darebin Creek route home seemed quicker! It makes me wonder, are we driven by a desire to see the end of the ride. A pleasant ride, no one froze or got wet.

Saturday 10 September

Forecast was for showers but the radar painted a different picture, indicating little shower activity. Our regular ride from Rushall Station to Port Melbourne via Capital City Trail and return via the MCG. At Rushall we had 8 riders, for starters and picked up 2 more at Royal Park. Heading off at Flemington Bridge a few large drops were detected but not enough to wet anything.

At our toilet stop we were joined by another rider, dark clouds in the sky and a few more drops of rain were detected in Lorimer Street. On to Caps where we had our coffees and were joined by 2 more riders.

A messy get away, let the group get some distance ahead as George and I left Caps to catch up. At our regroup point at Beacon Cove there was no George. After waiting a reasonable time, I sent the group on to the next regroup point and headed back to Caps. There I found George In the last stages of tyre repair. We both headed off and rejoined the group at Jeff's Shed. By this time it had started to warm up and all arrived safely, warn and dry back at Rushall Station.

Saturday 17 September

Rain in the late morning was forecast and the radar indicated intense precipitation centres would with some luck pass to the North and the South of us and spare us their presence. We were doing our usual ride to Port Melbourne and back. At Rushall Station we had 9 starters and the sky looked quite pleasant with lots of blue and a few white cumulus clouds about. By the time we got to Royal Park, where we were joined by 2 more riders and the sky had become overcast with lots of dark shading.

By our toilet stop the wind had picked up considerably and it felt quite cold. A few drops of rain fell in Lorimer Street, but not enough to wet anyone. The Lifesaving Organisation had some sort of event on, so Caps was busy but we still huddled inside to get out of the cold.

Heading back one rider left us in the City and the rest, now a bit warmer rode back to Rushall with out incident.

PHILLIP ISLAND RIDE 23-25 OCTOBER

Could anyone wishing to take part please contact David 0407540292 as soon as possible.

Saturday 24 September

It was decided, due to the Grand Final event we would ride our usual Rushall Station to Port Melbourne but in the reverse direction, thus hopefully avoiding the crush of people on the William Barak Bridge and the MCG environs. Forecast was encouraging, with little chance of rain and a temperature max of 16 deg.

At Rushall, come start time, we had 7 riders and headed off in cool but sunny weather. Through Edinburgh Gardens and up Napier Sreet. After some debate we decided on Lansdowne Street then Jolimont Street to avoid any crush near the MCG. This route proved quite good, having to skirt some road barriers, we found ourselves at the base of the William Barak Bridge, pretty crowded with pedestrian traffic. Never the less, we found our way through and had a brief toilet stop at Birrarung Marr after which the conflicting traffic eased a lot. Being a small group, there was no need for regrouping and good time was made to Caps at Port Melbourne.

Warm enough to dine outside for a change, we enjoyed our refreshments. Heading back to Rushall via the Southbank and the Capital City Trail, we all arrived back after a very pleasant ride, without further incident.

David Downing