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WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



NEW LAYOUT

Hello all DBUG members, and others who might be regular readers..

I am putting this latest edition of Wobbly Wheels out in a new format to get some feedback.

Please let me know which format, the previous or this new one, you prefer.

Send your responses to colinrfinger52@gmail.com

Don't miss the r in the middle of my name!

If I receive no responses then I will assume all are comfortable with the new layout and I will continue to use it for future issues of WW.

Thanks

Colin

RUFFEY CREEK TRAIL 4 JULY

This ride marked our return to using the Jika Jika Community Centre as our starting point, so it was a question of how many people would still be waiting near Westgarth Station for proceedings to commence. None, as it turned out, and five at the correct location parked inside the gates and across the footpath just like old times.

Even celebrity WW Editor Colin Finger was back in action with the BUG on his invisible bicycle after being collected by a car on a raised pedestrian crossing.

No appearance by Pam Sierak on her rumoured new Liv (Giant) e-bike but perhaps the drizzle scared them off ... all that power on a greasy surface could be tough.

Jika Jika administrator Kathy Brunning arrived in time to flag us away, although tea and scones would have been nice. Pam Styles joined us in Alphington for the big woohoo down the Darebin Creek Trail hill to Sparkes Reserve and on to Eaglemont Tennis Club to avoid the Wilson Reserve bog. Ed had his Bombtrack out for a spin but even he didn't go that way.

Possum Hollow looked empty but there were a couple of tables taken under cover near the café.



Here Colin and Pam turned back for base and the remaining five forged on towards the Ruffey Creek Trail.



No big surprises at lunch, with the main topic seeming to be the weather and whether it would get worse on the way home.

We skipped the chocolate shop and had everybody home in bed by 2pm, ready for the “major weather event” which never came. My bike went straight on the workstand to sort out a loose mudguard stay and that was it.

Strava said 42km.

Report by Wolter

PLENTY RIVER 6 JULY

Before the start of the ride I met George going to the old meeting point, while Roger was waiting at the Jika Jika Community Centre for more riders to arrive. I had difficulty reading the padlock numbers to get the first aid kit and George showed his skill after a couple of minutes fiddling with the combination to open the unlocked padlock and extract the kit.

Six riders headed off east towards the Darebin Creek trail for an uneventful ride to Norris Bank Park for morning tea and a chat. On the way there we saw a segway rider (an electric powered 2 wheel machine with no steering mechanism) roar past in the opposite direction, and later pass us just near Norris Bank park heading north. (A photo of George soaking up the sun did not convert) After the rest George headed off and the rest of the riders continued to the ring road then headed east before turning off near the Plenty river and riding to Kalparrin Gardens and up the hill for lunch in the sun.



Lunch stop at Kalparrin gardens

After lunch we headed down the Plenty River trail and encountered some rough and bumpy bitumen on the trail near Montmorency Secondary College. Apart from the bumpy section it is a lovely peaceful ride along the river through the trees and some of the wattles were starting to

flower. Just past the Heidelberg golf club the trail has been repaired and it is a long slog up the hill next to the Banule Flats reserve before glimpsing city views and a lovely descent back to the Main Yarra Trail.

We continued on the trail and back up to the boulevard just near the Eaglemont dirt jumps and tennis club for a gentle ride back. A number of riders had a close encounter with a large truck passing very close to the riders just past Dan Murphy's but luckily there were no incidents or injuries, just some racing hearts. We decided to stop for afternoon tea/coffee at the Bean Counter café in Fairfield while Roger decided going home was the better option. After the break we inspected Ian's recent landscaping works in Fairfield.

Back at Jika Jika I again had difficulty opening the locker until I realised that the combination lock was upside down making reading the numbers harder without magnification.

Ride distance around 50 km.

Report by Ed

IVANHOE, BALWYN & HAWTHORN

11 JULY

Lady luck shone on us today. Maximum temp was 17.8 which is about 4 above average for July, with sunny breaks and negligible wind. It attracted 12 of us. Paul and Pam were back after their medical break with Pam sporting her shiny new electric bike which she seemed to thoroughly enjoy, and it was good to have Robin who I hadn't seen in a while.

We avoided the wicked hill after Heidelberg Road by taking the ramp route, then down Merri, along the gravel track along the Yarra and a whiz around the Yarra Bend loop. Next along the gravel path past Rudders Grange, through the nasty v-shaped drain, up the stairs to Coates Park and via Alphington Park and more of the Yarra to morning tea at Darebin Parklands where Roger did his usual good samaritan by helping out 2 cyclists who had a flat tyre when the pump at the tool stop there didn't work. We wandered our way through the wilds on Ivanhoe, Balwyn and Deepdene before paying our due respects to the millionaires in Monomeeth Avenue in Canterbury and continuing on to lunch in Canterbury Gardens. Oh horror of horrors. The Exeloo there was out of order! We dashed round to Maling Rd where we made a long queue at the one and only cubicle there.

The afternoon saw us wandering through Hawthorn back to the Yarra but not yet the Yarra Trail. We took the much quieter gravel path along the Hawthorn side of the river which was nice except for the near vertical ascent that saw most of us walking up to get back into the street system. Afternoon coffee was at Frankie Says in North Richmond with a lovely backdrop of red gums lining the Yarra. Then home past the brewery and over the freeway with people peeling off at various points as per usual. There were a few hills as it's hard to avoid them in Balwyn but everyone seemed to cope ok, albeit with a few walkups for some.

A good day with no punctures and no accidents to report.

Report by Jopie

BLACKBURN LAKE VIA BOX HILL (CLOCKWISE) 13 JULY

With six riders for the day, we rode east and turned towards the Chandler Highway footbridge and the Main Yarra Trail. The weather was a little more wintry but still sunny and dry. We were headed towards the Koonung Creek trail and our morning tea break at the Koonung Creek Reserve Playground. All was well except for a cyclist who must have thought he was alone and was suddenly having fun zigzagging across the path ahead of us. My loud warning voice came out as it does at those moments when it is too late to ring your bell. He was startled to hear us and luckily got out of our way very smartly.

For our ride through the backstreets of Box Hill North we turned at the Frank Sedgman Reserve not far after Elgar Rd. The route does climb slightly as you would expect but the streets are reasonably quiet and the cycle route marked with council signs to Box Hill Central. We turned at the Box Hill Hospital towards Station St and then continued on to Dorking Rd. Crossing Whitehorse Rd, we were only a short distance from the Box Hill to Ringwood Bike path. We turned and continued on the path towards Blackburn station where Barbara left us.



Arriving at Blackburn Lake we rode part of the Lakeside Circuit to get a view of the lake before lunch.

Our curiosity satisfied we sat and ate our lunch in the sun outside the Visitors Centre.

The wind had started to pick up and it was very gusty as we got onto the Gardiners Creek trail going south for the loop back. At Ashwood we turned off the trail to head towards Ashburton station and connect with the Anniversary trail. After a short distance we turned onto the Ferndale Trail to connect with the Gardiners Creek trail again. Return was via the Main Yarra Trail.

Apart from the afternoon north-westerly headwinds and wind gusts it was another good ride. No punctures or mechanicals. Distance 53km back to Westgarth.

Report by Sue

WESTMEADOWS RIDE

18 JULY

When Pam, Paul, Ralph, and I arrived at Jika, Roger was already waiting there. It was his last ride before joining Ed on their Broken Hill Ride for the next couple of weeks. We were all thrilled to welcome Colin back riding after his accident. As he is building up his strength gradually, he decided to return home after morning tea.

Jenny cycled up with Jopie and it was lovely to see her. She only planned to ride 4 km and then peel off. As well as the aforementioned riders, we had Sue, Michael, Pam S and Robyn. When Robyn appeared wearing a beanie, she realized she'd forgotten her helmet. Instead of having to ride home, Roger retrieved a spare helmet from the locker, and we were set to go, with Jopie on tail.

While it was quite chilly, the sun shone brightly, and the sky was a brilliant blue. We cycled across the capital city trail, then Park Street to the Moonee Ponds trail and headed north. This is a long trail with parts in better condition than others and some work being done in the Strathmore area. Michael had ridden this path on the weekend and was a great help with detours. The further north we rode, the more clouds we saw, until the rain began to sprinkle about 2 km from morning tea. This was at Boeing Park, which fortunately had a sheltered rotunda. We were all ready to stop for a cuppa, snacks, and a chat, near Strathmore Community Garden.



George, Colin, and Pam bid us farewell here and we continued up the left side of the path under the high rail bridge and then crossing over to the right side of the track.

Once the rain stopped, we rode into the wind in the open area towards and under the ring road. We arrived in Westmeadows right on midday and Sue directed us to a table under cover, as our usual ones in the open were wet. Eight of us fitted around the table and Jopie sat on the ground nearby. As it was cold and bleak, we finished lunch in record time, headed for the toilets and turned south for home.

It was great to have the tail wind and the further south we travelled, the nicer the weather became. Sue showed us a slightly different return path before the ring road, which gave a new aspect to the lake there. It was lovely to ride beside the creek with all the trees, especially the wattles in flower, and birds singing. We turned off at Pascoe Vale and rode up to Merlynston station, where we joined the Upfield trail to ride back to base. We found a great little café called Acustico, right beside the bike path on Union Street, for coffee. [Note to Ian Singleton in US: Ralph left his water bottle on the table here!]



By this time the sun was shining again on a typical Melbourne winter's day.

An enjoyable ride of 52 km.

Report by Nola

FERNY/DANDY/BLIND CREEKS 20 JULY

The weather forecast for this one was so bad that Sue cancelled the night before, because of the wind warning, and even Roger didn't turn up, and he knows about weather forecasts.

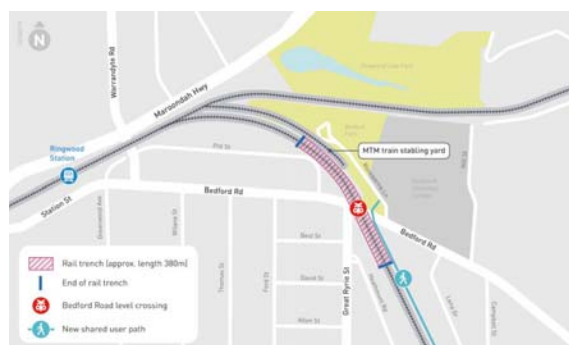
I figured it would only be bad part of the way and, because there hadn't been much rain, the notorious underpasses on the Ferny and Blind Creek trails would not be full of mud!

Our train to Jolimont was a bit late so we got to Richmond with only a minute to spare. Luckily there was only Ian H, David M and Mike to get on the train.



We got to Wally Tew Reserve for morning tea but didn't stay long because of the cold. The run up the Stud Road hill and across Tirhatuan Wetlands spillway to the Dandenong Creek Trail passed without incident and we found a relatively sheltered table outside Madeline's Cafe in Jells Park.

There was lots of talk over lunch but we pressed on fairly quickly because of the forecast for rain later. Mike even did some pace-making to give my legs a break from the wind. We made it to Bayswater in good time but had to wait ages for the train. No one wanted to push on to Ringwood and, besides, the last section of the Heathmont-Belgrave Trail is now blocked by level-crossing removal works at Bedford Road.



That project is supposed to include extending the Heathmont-Belgrave Trail as far as Bedford Rd, Ringwood, although that looks like requiring removal of the existing electricity substation [they were already preparing to put in a new one in the Bayswater Station carpark when we went past].

It started raining while we were on the train back to Richmond. We put on wet gear and David rode as far as Jolimont to catch the Hurstbridge train home. Ian also disappeared as the rain got heavier, so it was just me and Mike riding home. Funnily enough, I ran into a relatively dry Ian (not literally!) near Dennis Station. He must have had to wait for a train at Jolimont as well as Bayswater.

I'll revise the route for this one when the redevelopment of Stamford Park wetlands in Rowville (across from Caribbean Gardens) is completed, supposedly later this year.

Report by Wolter

STEELE CREEK TRAIL

25 JULY

Good to meet up at Jika Jika once again and not confusing the foot traffic along South Crescent. A sizeable crew were up and able to head along the Merri Creek Trail until we turned up a short steep pinch to follow the back streets to Merlinton Station, leading us to Gavin Park in Pascoe Vale for morning tea.

Trundling along Moonee Ponds Creek led us to Boeing Reserve, where we diverted up along Mascoma Street to cross over the Tullamarine Freeway to the bike path next to the massive Caterpillar factory.

Reaching Steele Creek we rode past the man perched upon the ladder rising out of the old Niddrie Quarry now Valley Lake, flanked by apartments.

Following the zig zag path we paused to look over the old munitions factory alongside the Maribyrnong. Reaching ground level we ate lunch in the sunshine by the river.

Heading to Flemington we once again sat in the sunshine at the Autumn Leaves cafe. Very amenable to a group of senior riders.

After discovering the route through the Flemington flats no longer available we made a slight detour home.

50KM or thereabouts

Report by Ian H

TWO LAKES AND A RIVER

27 JULY

Sue, Ian H, Michael and myself had a nice ride.

We covered 3 creeks, morning tea at Edwards Lake, lunch at Montgomery Park on Moonie Ponds creek.

Quite a few twists and turns on route. Then return to Jika Jika.

Thanks for having company.

Report by George