

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



NEW LAYOUT

All the responses I have received thus far are in favour of the new layout, so I will continue to use it for future issues of WW.

Thanks

Colin

CHERRY LAKE 1 AUGUST

8 riders headed off in the momentary sunshine and blue skies before disaster struck. We had just crossed over Westgarth Street and got to High Street when George discovered he had a flat tyre. He decided to change it at his leisure and then ride home rather than proceed with the ride group. Our blue skies and sun disappeared, and we had a chilly cold head wind as well as a few raindrops as we headed to Yarraville Gardens for morning tea.

Barbara decided to head to Yarraville Station and the 8 were now 6.

Steve left us at Williamstown so we were now a tight group of 5 which made keeping together easy, although Ralph and Ian H were lagging when we got to Cherry Lake.

A quick lunch at the grey lake before we again set off, luckily this time with a strong tail wind.

Given we were all a bit cold we had an early afternoon tea at Pangos in Newport for an excellent warming coffee.

Sue left us at Royal Park and Ian, Nola, Ralph and I rode on to Jika Jika.

A pleasant, if somewhat chilly, ride of 58 kms.

Report by Glenys

TWO BOTANIC GARDENS ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE & ST KILDA BOTANICAL GARDENS 3 AUGUST

It was a lovely sunny morning when we gathered for the days ride.

A group of seven riders left Jika Jika. We turned left onto Westgarth Street, then right into Westfield Street and crossed Heidelberg Road into Studley Park.

Here we joined the Main Yarra Trail following it past Dights Falls to Abbotsford Convent where we left it and followed back streets to Gipps Street bridge. The bridge is still closed so we followed back streets past the brewery and IKEA's warehouse to near Walmer Street bridge.

In the past I have used a back street here that took us under the closed Walmer Street bridge and back onto the Main Yarra Trail. Unfortunately, this route is now closed too. The whole area around Walmer Street now being closed off. So it was more "scenic touring" through the streets of Richmond. We eventually rejoined the Main Yarra Trail just before Bridge Road at Crown Street. From here we followed the Main Yarra Trail to Morell Bridge and across to the Royal Botanic Gardens, where Roberta was waiting.



After morning tea we headed along the Tan and onto Southbank Blvd. We followed Southbank Blvd to Southbank Promenade. Here Colin left us. We crossed Queens Bridge Street and Spencer Street and passed the Casino and Jeff's Shed. At the end of South Wharf we turned left and after a few "wiggles" arrived at the start of the path to Beacon Cove beside the light rail. Heading towards Beacon Cove a rider coming towards us looked familiar, it was Richard, we got a wave as he went past. It was a pleasant ride along the Bay Trail past Port Melbourne and St Kilda beaches to St Kilda Marina where we turned onto Dickens Street, which we took to the St Kilda Botanical Gardens.

A large group of school kids were occupying the seating near the lake so we had lunch in a pleasant area in the corner of the gardens.



After lunch we headed for Albert Park, taking Carlisle, Greeves and Grey Streets to Canterbury Road. Here we turned into Albert Park. After crossing Albert Park, it was Moray and Queens Bridge Streets to Southbank. We crossed Sandridge Bridge and rode along Flinders Walk to Birrarung Marr, where Roberta left us. We then passed the MCG on our way to Clarendon Street. After crossing Victoria Parade it was then a test of bike handling skill down the narrow lane into Oxford Street and onto the *South of Johnston Cafe* where Wolter left us.

After coffee we made our way to Wellington Street and followed it all the way to Clifton Hill. After crossing Queens Parade we rode along Michael and Falconer Streets to near Rushall Station where we all went our separate ways.

Report by Andrew

SATURDAY RIDING GROUP 5 AUGUST

Saturday 5th August was cool and breezy, but dry. The party was initially David (1), Ivan, Mary, Reg, Octavio, David (2) and George. Octavio dropped out at Moreland Road, but Alf joined us at Harding Street, which made up the numbers.

We rode from Rushall Station to That's Amore Cheese at 66 Latitude Drive, Thomastown, a cafe and shop (cheese and other delicatessen, mostly Italian), just off the Ring Road path, about midway between High St and Dalton Rd (= Cheddar Rd).

The outward route was up the Merri Creek path to Moomba Park, east on paths and back streets through the Central Creek grasslands (an open area just south of Mahoney's Rd - views and 'roos) to Hughes Pde, over Mahoney's Rd, north on Blaxland Ave to the Ring Rd path, then east again, about 20 km. George mostly led, but the pace wasn't quite scorching, and we arrived just before noon.

Morning tea was substantial - more like lunch. But it was excellent, as was much of the conversation. We resolved some of the finer points of Italian grammar raised by the menu.

We also agreed to return via Cheddar Rd, Reservoir station and the new elevated railways along the Mernda line. Reg, Alf and David (2) left us as we reached their respective latitudes, but the rest of us made it back to Rushall. The return leg was more direct than the outward one, and the total was about 35 km.

Report by George Durbridge

GREENVALE AND ATTWOOD CREEK 8 AUGUST

It was a cold morning but with the promise of a lovely day ahead, and indeed that is how it turned out. Five of us turned up at Jika Jika and with Sue meeting us at Newmarket station making 6.

Toilets were a feature of this ride. I had planned for there to be 5 on this ride but we discovered 2 more so this was a 7 toilet ride. Great value for older bladders!

From Roxburgh Park station we rode past some lakes and to the historic Roxburgh Park Homestead for morning tea where a lady from the Community House there (their Jika Jika) told us we were welcome to get hot water from inside. We'll come here again. Then some streets, over a grassy stretch, through a couple of narrow fence gaps, past another lake with beautiful big red gums, more smooth roads, past some Greenvale mansions to lunch in the new picnic area at Greenvale Reserve.

We next entered the eastern end of Woodlands Park, along some dirt tracks, luckily dry, a gravel road, more mansions and ordinary houses and down Attwood Creek to toilet number 5 at Westmeadows. Down Moonee Ponds Creek to Gaffney Street where we cut across to The Boot Factory in Coburg for afternoon tea via a new fairly direct route that minimised the hills. Here the group split with 3 heading on home and 3 staying for coffee and then heading home.

A lovely day's ride with no dramas, no punctures, despite having to dodge some northern suburbs broken glass, and no spills.

Report by Jopie

NOT BUNDOORA 10 AUGUST

Roger rang me at 7.30 to say that there were train problems and he was not sure if he would arrive on time. I said we would wait and keep in touch. In the end, he arrived in plenty of time.

Six of us gathered: George, Ian H, Roberta and Sue, with Roger and myself. I explained that I had not had time to reconnoitre the ride and, in spite of living in the Diamond Valley region for 45 years, I had never been to Gresswell Forest and Springthorpe. I was also unsure of how to find the bike trails. I suggested that we could try, or take another route, suggesting Mernda. The group agreed to ride to Mernda and we set off.

I had not seen Roberta for a couple of years so we had a pleasant catch up chat for the first part of the ride. We stopped for morning tea at Norris Bank and as we were about to continue, I had a text from Barbara, saying she had gone to Reservoir Station and where were we. Apparently, she had tried to phone but could not connect. I apologised for changing the route but it underlies the point that if anyone is likely to be late joining a ride, they should contact the leader as soon as possible so that we can wait or arrange to meet up at a certain point.

Roberta and George decided to head back after morning tea. We were all about to set off when the rain came down hard. We waited for it to ease and rode on in rain gear. We arrived at Hawkestone Park for lunch with the weather looking very uncertain. We decided to ride down the hill to the Le Page Homestead. We found a sheltered spot on the veranda and had a pleasant lunch.



After lunch, we rode up the hill and Sue and Ian headed for Epping, Roger rode with me to Mernda and then took the train. I continued home.

About 40 km

Report by David

EASTLINK TRAIL SOUTH TO NORTH 15 AUGUST

It was an early start as we had a train trip to Yarraman Station near Dandenong. The weather forecast could not have been better for late winter – still cold of course, but light winds, no rain and mainly sunny (even some sunscreen recommended!).

Tim (a newbie) joined three of us waiting on the Westgarth Station platform. As we boarded the 8.57am train I spotted bikes already there. Wondering where our bikes could go as well, I was pleased to see it was Nola and Ralph. At Richmond Station we were joined by George and we were seven riders.

The train for Yarraman was one of the newer trains with lots of space for wheelchairs and so for bikes and riders too. Not bad for our 35 mins trip. If only all metro trains were like that.

With no toilets at Yarraman Station, we set off fairly hastily to ride about 10 minutes up the Eastlink Trail to Oakwood Park where we stopped for our break.

Leaving the park, we rode past a house where the back porch was covered in hundreds of parrots. It was a real cacophony of colour and noise.

The trail follows closely to the freeway for a while but then turns off onto the quieter Dandenong Creek Trail which goes more through wetlands and bushland. It's a pretty ride.

It's not far to Jells Park - about 14 km. We got to the park in time for a ride around the lake before lunch. Lots of ibis in the middle of the lake.



After our lunch we continued on the Dandenong Creek Trail through Shepherds Bush and Bushy Park – more quiet wetlands and parks.

When we got to Ringwood we turned left onto the Box Hill-Ringwood path. Riding through Blackburn North we stopped at a different branch of Hahndorf's Chocolate shop for some refreshments.

Riding back along the Koonung Trail, Ralph and Nola left us just past Bourke Road, the rest of the group continued on along the Main Yarra Trail to turn off to Fairfield at Chandler Highway.

The weather was pretty much as advertised - perfect winter riding weather all day. No mechanicals or punctures.

Another good ride. Distance 53km.

Report by Sue

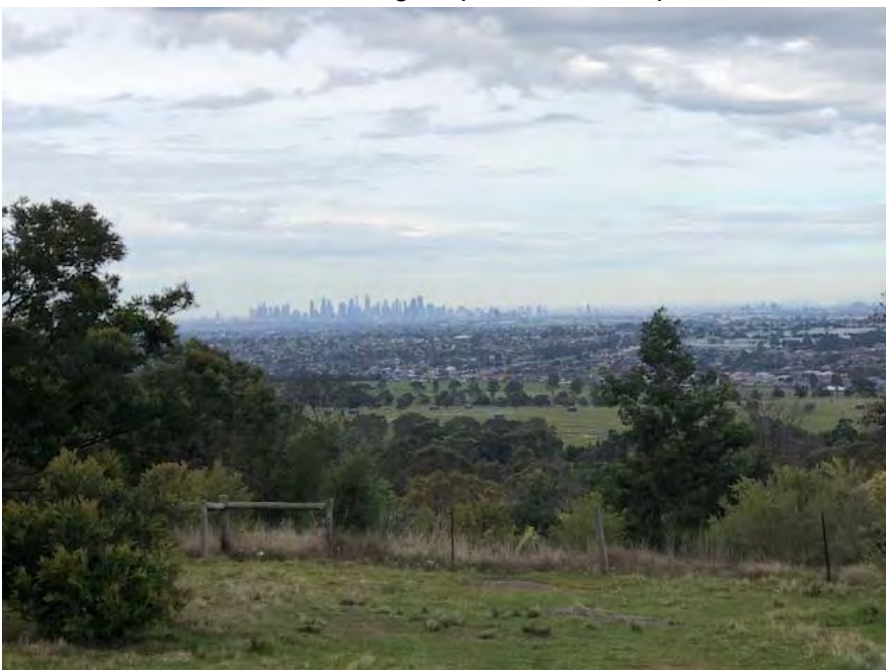
WOODLANDS HISTORIC PARK 17 AUGUST

On a cold winter morning 5 keen riders set out from Jika Jika heading west towards Newmarket Railway Station where we met Sue and caught the train to Jacana Station where George, while well rugged up, was patiently waiting in the cold wind for the riders to arrive.

On the bikes and heading towards the large downhill, 2 riders didn't see the black Mercedes car approaching and were lucky that it had good brakes. The driver stopped and gently suggested that the elderly riders look up the road before crossing. After that excitement it was time to whizz down the big hill at over 40 km/h, cross the Moonee Ponds Creek and head towards Westmeadows. This was the end of the exciting riding for the day.

The riding conditions, apart from the wind, were lovely as the Wattles were flowering and the grass had recently been cut since the council knew that there was a BUG ride scheduled through the area. Morning tea was at Westmeadows and suitable seating was found after sighting a number of nearby tables and seating. It wasn't long before a number of riders were getting restless in the cool wind and hinting that we should be back on the bikes riding.

So onto the bikes it was, and we continued on the gravel path through a number of small gates and including one swing gate similar to those used for sorting the sheep. It was then up the hill and on reaching the far eastern corner of the he fenced Eastern Barred Bandicoot Sanctuary, Sue and Ian decided to take the harder rougher path and ride up to Gellibrand hill.



View from Gellibrand Hill (photo Sue)



While riding on the soft gravel path George developed the wobbles and ended up at right angles to the path but luckily stayed on his bike. We soon reached Woodlands homestead and found a sheltered spot to stop for lunch. George ordered a beef pie which took some time to arrive, but he indicated that it was one of the best he had tasted, but it may have been that it was quite hot and filling on a cold winter day. Meanwhile we were still waiting for the explorers to arrive, hoping that they hadn't become lost. Luckily they arrived before we were ready to leave.



Lunch at Woodlands

So once again it was time to get back on the bikes for a lovely ride downhill along the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail, with lovely wattles and redgums in view. Although close to Tullamarine Airport it was a quiet peaceful ride and out to the strong wind, and around the boundary of the bandicoot sanctuary and back to Westmeadows where we continued down the trail to Brunswick and back to Jika Jika with various riders heading off along the way so that only 4 completed the circuit back to Jika Jika around 3pm.

Distance approximately 50 km.

Report by Ed

INNER URBAN DELIGHTS 22 AUGUST

Unfortunately we struck the only bad forecast day for the week and yes we did get rained on. Eight hardy souls turned up hopeful but prepared for the worst. All was well as we circled and weaved our way through the Melbourne Cemetery but as we crossed Royal Parade the sky opened up. Luckily we were able to get under shelter. Once it eased off after 15 minutes we took our chances and off we set, only getting a little bit wet with the persistent drizzle as we wheeled a loop or two through Royal Park. By morning tea the rain had stopped. I had planned for wetness so whipped out my jiff cloth and to everyone's amazement, soon had the table top clean and dry and the seating passably so. It proved useful later in the day when it drizzled while we were afternoon teaing at Kerri Kerri in Fitzroy Gardens and I was able to give our remaining 4 riders the pleasure of dry bike seats to ride home with. From morning tea it was through the old Commonwealth Games Village site, the Racecourse, around the Walker Street Reserve lakes and over the Pipemakers bridge to lunch at Footscray Park. Down the east side of the Maribyrnong and then Footscray Road, being amazed by the amazing progress being made on the elevated carriageways for the Westgate Tunnel Project. On to the beachfront for a while and through Albert & Fawkner Parks to finally get to the Fitzroy Gardens for afternoon tea. One rider had left after morning tea, one more at Southern Cross (she needed to get home to check on snuffly hubby who wasn't feeling too well) and two opted not to stop for coffee. It drizzled quite a bit during the afternoon, but nothing a few determined DBuggers couldn't handle. Nobody had a puncture, breakdown or injury and I've had no reports of disasters on the way home but Roger did say how misty and damp it was riding from the station back to his house.



Report by Jopie

AD HOC RIDE KOONUNG TRAIL 24 AUGUST

Seven of us gathered at Jika Jika. Roger, George, Ian H, Susan with James and Pam Stiles. I suggested that we ride the Koonung Trail, along the Eastern Freeway, returning on the other side with afternoon tea at the chocolate shop. We had not ridden this for some time. Everyone agreed, though James and Pam Stiles declared that they would return after morning tea.

Weather was cool but generally sunny. We rode along the Boulevard in Ivanhoe, not risking the mud prone riverside trail. We soon arrived at the playground for morning tea. The toilet was a bit temperamental with doors opening unbidden but everyone used it without problems.



We set off with five riders and crossed the freeway at Springvale Road. It was then largely downhill to the second playground where we had lunch. After lunch we crossed the freeway and returned along the other side.

We encountered Roberta who told us she had got up too late to join the ride but had hoped to. We invited her to join us at the chocolate shop and she readily agreed. We had a brief stop at the

playground toilet and soon arrived at the chocolate shop. Though it was lunch time there were few customers. We sat outside enjoying the sunshine with Roberta catching up with others. After a pleasant chat, we continued on. Roger and I headed for Ivanhoe Station in search of trains. Others returned to Jika Jika along the Yarra Trail. About 40 km.

Report by David

HURSTBRIDGE TRAIN TO / RIDE RETURN 29 AUGUST

Ralph was meant to lead this ride but had a fall from his bike on our way to Watsonia Station. Fortunately, nothing was broken, but it was a shock that produced a skinned elbow and a few bruises. He decided it was safer for him to turn back.

So, when I greeted 9 BUG members in the train, they all wondered, 'Where's Ralph?'

With me, Sue, Glenys and Pam Stiles, there were 4 women and George, Roger, Ed, Jopie, Wolter and Ian H, made 6 men.

After a comfort stop at Hurstbridge Station, Ed directed us to the start of the Diamond Creek Trail. Wolter kindly opted to be tail. This track is a very pretty ride, winding around the creek, with many bridge crossings, towering gums, and flowering wattles. We passed a few people walking their dogs and mums with babies in prams.

By 10.30 we arrived at Diamond Creek Park, where people from Araluen learn retail skills by working in the old tram café. Ed had noticed a noise on my bike, so told Roger and after some repair work, it was fixed. Some of us bought coffees. The sun was out so we sat on the rock ledge for morning tea. Another group was having coffee on the deck. I recognized one of the men as Pam and Pauls' son Warren's father-in-law. After a chat with Norm and his wife Ruth, we headed towards Eltham, where Pam Stiles left us to catch the train.



Before we reached the Main Yarra Trail in Eltham South, we stopped for a drink. As some hills were approaching, I encouraged anyone to overtake me while I navigated the bumpy track, complete with exposed tree roots. A straw poll for our lunch venue was awarded to Finn's Reserve. The weather by now was cloudy, with the odd light sprinkle of rain, so we were pleased to sit under the shelter. Glenys told us about her upcoming trip to Greece, leaving on September 6.

After a couple more climbs, we reached Bond's Road and crossed into the Banyule section where I happily let others lead on. I reasoned that others could decide which way/hill to return to the Boulevard. At Wilson Reserve, 6 chose the challenging hill, while Glenys, Ed and I said: 'we're not going that way'. We rejoined the group a few minutes later. As my bike went to tip over, I quickly jumped out of the way. Wolter and Ed commented that I was about to go out in sympathy with Ralph!

Back in Fairfield, 5 people departed for home, while Wolter led Glenys, Ed, and me to The Three Locals in Station Street.

A good ride of 44 km.



Report by Nola

HEATHERDALE TO DANDENONG TARRALLA CREEK AND DANDENONG CREEK TRAILS TRAIN TO / TRAIN RETURN 31 AUGUST

From Heatherdale Station Sue, Jon and Rodger accompanied me on the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail to a park for morning tea.

Heading for Croydon we met James and the Tarralla Creek Trail to reach the Dandenong Creek Trail. Riding to Jells Park we managed to escape any showers until it started during lunch.

We rode along the Dandenong Creek Trail until the Lower Dandenong Creek Trail. Under light showers we rode all the way to the cafe near the Dandenong Station - a welcome relief!

Rodger and James remained on the train after Jon, Sue and me left from Jolimont. Sue departed at Albert Street near Fitzroy Gardens leaving Jon and me to ride up Wellington Street. Jon vanished at Clifton Hill leaving me to follow the Merri Creek home alone.

All the fabulous insights and cherished memories have evaporated. I am going to take a leaf out of Wolter's notebook technique next time. And I promise to take photos as well.

55km

Report by Ian H