

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



BUNDOORA PARK SENIORS WEEK RIDE 3 OCTOBER

While Ian S was in the United States, I'd been given the unexpected honour of leading the Seniors Week Ride and I wasn't giving it back upon his return. I'd done a bit of a pre-run on the Monday to flush out snakes and swooping-magpie locations but was ignored ... come to think of it, the Grand Final celebrations might have taken care of the latter.

We only had two newbies register for the ride and, despite the lousy weather forecast, Jeanette and Rob were both still keen when contacted the day before. What's more, they actually turned up. We ended up with 11, with Paul and Pam S. making it at the last minute after what might have been a bit of indecision. Paul decided to ride home and drive to Bundoora (which made 10 riders) but Pam forged ahead on her lovely e-bike. Never knew a free scone/muffin and coffee could have so much pulling power. Sue rode tail with James delegated to escort any riders who so wished home from the free morning tea at Bundoora Park.



Look, I won't say it was the most pleasant ride we've done but it was very enjoyable, and Jeanette and Rob proved more than able, with Jeanette a ride-to-work devotee and Rob racking up about 100km a week. No dust or half-flat tyres on their bikes.

Rob knows the Darebin Creek Trail pretty well and Bundoora Park was no surprise either, but the café was ready for us and got through the orders fairly quickly ... we were the only customers mind you. After a lovely time dripping on the floor, James headed home the way we'd come with four people. Rob was close to home so happy to head there. Pam declined the opportunity of a lift in the car and soldiered on.

I had a few hardy souls prepared to continue but we called it quits at Reservoir Station and headed home down St Georges Road, shedding Ian S, Sue, Jeanette and Ed as we went. Funnily enough I managed to beat Roger back to Jika Jika, who'd gone back down the creek, so I guess we know which is the quicker way.

Report by Wolter

AQUEDUCT TRAIL RIDE/TRAIN 5 OCTOBER

Six gathered at Jika on a cool but sometimes sunny morning. Roger, Sue, Ed, Jon and Ian H. We set off towards the Yarra Trail but avoided Wilson Reserve due to the threat of mud. As we approached Banksia Street with morning tea in mind, we caught up with George who had parked close by.

Possum Park was empty. Jon partook of coffee from the café and we had no competition for the tables.



After a pleasant tea break, we started to pack up. I noticed steam or smoke rising from Ian H's flask or was it his helmet next to it? He had left the helmet on the barbecue and somehow it has switched on. The hot plate melted a large part of the helmet and as we separated it, it looked like a bird scaring helmet. Ian had little choice but to wear it as we continued our ride.



The barbeque will take some cleaning!

We continued the ride through Westerfolds Park and into Eltham for lunch. We then took the Research Trail up hill to the aqueduct and risked a dangerous downhill along Allandale Road. Ed achieved an illegal 68.8 km/hr and I was close to that. The ride ended at Platters Café in Diamond Creek where hot chocolates, flat whites and the occasional iced coffee were enjoyed by all before taking the train back. Being seniors week, that was a free ride on the train. I headed home along the Diamond Creek Trail.

38 km

Report by David M

Photos by David M and Ed

SATURDAY RIDE GROUP 7 OCTOBER

Being the first ride of the month we didn't do our usual ride Rushall to Port Melbourne and return. It was decided to ride to Macleod and back through Heidelberg and the Main Yarra Trail. This time we wouldn't take the Donaldson Creek Trail but would stick with the Darebin Creek and take Latrobe University and Joint Street to Macleod shops.

Forecast was for a cool 15 deg. and little chance of rain. Start time at Rushall Station we had 9 riders. I was well rugged up but it was pretty cold. We took the usual route to Darebin Creek via South Crescent and Wingrove Street, our toilet stop was at Darebin Wetlands. A little further on George, who is suffering from some sort of non covid long virus, decided not to continue. Shortly after we were joined by Carmel, so we still had nine riders.

Along the Darebin Creek to La Trobe Uni, though I haven't ridden there for some time. I knew the general direction but was saved from leading every one astray by nice maps at all the intersections showing the way. The other side of LaTrobe was familiar territory, down Joint Street to the shopping centre.

The usual café we used to go to was now a vacant block but there was a promising looking café near by. A bit crowded so we sat outside. The food was OK but the service was a bit haphazard. Nourished we headed off, along a few suburban streets to the overpass over Lower Plenty Road, then the very pleasant River Gum Walk to Warringal Parkland. Across Banksia Street, then onto the Main Yarra Trail. Passing under the Freeway we took a scenic detour through Hyde Park to join up with the Anniversary Trail and back to Rushall. The general consensus was that it was a most attractive ride. We did 33.7km and were back at 2.00pm. The temperature had risen from cold to cool.

Report by David D

SKELETON CREEK RIDE/TRAIN 10 OCTOBER

Despite a rather bleak forecast and a few drops of rain, this turned out to be a very enjoyable ride. Seniors Week recruit Rob turned up, despite the absence of free morning tea, so the Spring Forward (clockwise) Ride had to be a good one.

I ended up with 11 volunteers, which made for quite an impressive line-up strung out along Westgarth Street. With Footscray Road being a complete mess because of the Westgate Tunnel-and-50-Flyovers Project we headed out via the shared path on Dudley Street to the Maribyrnong River before touching Footscray Road briefly to get across the waterway and ride to Yarraville Gardens for morning tea. Pam St. left us here for a leisurely ride home.



The southerly eased as we headed around the Bay Trail and ducked inland to Cherry Lake for lunch. By this stage it was sunny and everyone was either taking layers off or putting hats on. Some seemed to be able to do both. Then it was back onto the Bay Trail to get to Skeleton Creek for the ride to Williams Landing and the train home.

Dissatisfied with the piddly 48km we had done, Ed peddled off into the distance as we spread ourselves between the rear of the first three-carriage set on the train and the rear of the second set. This made getting off at North Melbourne much easier, although Roger had already got off at Footscray, leaving nine to lurch from the train.

Sue H kindly guided us up Abbotsford Street and through Parkville to Dr Dax Kitchen at Melbourne Uni before she headed home. We had a nice half hour sitting there before heading home ourselves. Thanks to all those who participated.

Now to find out who owns the Grunt Versa Strap that was wrapped around the first aid kit.

Report by Wolter

YARRAMAN TO JIKA JIKA TRAIN/RIDE 12 OCTOBER

A couple of days before the ride the weather forecast was for 40 km/h northerly winds and the ride calendar was to ride north into the wind. Luckily the winds had petered out before Thursday morning, however there was a lot of rain forecast and by the early start of 8.57am at Westgarth the sky had opened up so only 2 riders were mad enough to attempt a ride.

We caught the train to Jolimont then from Richmond to Yarraman. Along the way I received a call from Roger. Where are you, he asked as we were passing Murrumbeena station. Roger was patiently waiting at Jika Jika and hadn't read his ride sheet as it was raining and he didn't want it to get wet.

By the time we alighted at Yarraman it was raining heavily and there was some minor flooding at intersections but we ploughed on through. We rode through Dandenong and along the Dandenong Creek path before stopping for morning tea at a playground that had some shelter and seats under cover. While there the rain started to belt down but eased off when we were ready to get back on our bikes so we timed the stop well.

It was very quiet riding in the rain and by the time we reached Jells Park for lunch we had passed 1 cyclist, one person walking and one person sitting on a seat next to the trail. Luckily we didn't have too many diversions along the way around wet areas.



One underpass we bypassed.

When we reached Jells Park sopping wet but not cold we had a look in the café and decided that hot toasties and hot coffee were a much better idea than our packed lunch. Once again while we were under cover the rain became much heavier, but by the time we finished lunch it had stopped.



Peaceful lunch spot at Jells Park.

The ride back was largely uneventful except to Jon skidding while turning a sharp corner on the trail.

Report by Ed

**CRANBOURNE GARDENS
(ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS)
TRAIN/RIDE/TRAIN
17 OCTOBER**

Started with a small group at Westgarth Station with more riders joining at Jolimont and then Richmond Stations for a total of 12 riders. For a few of the riders it was a new experience on the new high-capacity trains used on the Cranbourne line. It is a longish trip to Cranbourne. It is the city's second longest metropolitan railway line at 44 kilometres (Pakenham is the longest at 57 kilometres). From Cranbourne station the ride proceeded through the quiet backstreets of Cranbourne and then bike path to the gardens. A detour was required due to construction on Bollarto Road which leads to the gardens entrance. An echidna was sighted on the way to the Stringybark Picnic Area for morning tea. It was then a ride on the gravel Wylies Creek Track to lunch at the Woodlands Picnic Area. The track is close to the outer perimeter of the gardens and passes through a mix of bushland and open grass land.



At lunch there were three Tawny Frogmouths, 2 adults and a juvenile, very well disguised in a tree adjacent to the picnic shelter. After lunch it was a very short ride to the Visitor Centre. The group dispersed to take in the Trig Point Lookout and stroll through the Gardens. The gardens are now very well established. Afternoon tea was at the gardens before heading out the back entrance. After a short section of the now sealed Bollarto Road it is onto bike path. Unfortunately, the access to the bike path is via a very poorly designed barrier making passing through difficult. The bike path is located in the high voltage power cable easement finishing at Breen Road. A short ride on Breen Road and a very rough litter strewn path comes out at the new bike path built as part of the Cranbourne rail line duplication. This path goes to the Merinda Station passing under the Thompsons Road rail line overpass. It was then onto Lynbrook Station via a mixture of bike paths and quiet roads through Marriot Waters, Lyndhurst and Lynbrook. A bit of excitement with the train! We arrived just as the train was pulling in with a rush to validate Myki cards. Had to hold the doors open to get everybody on. Most riders left the train at Richmond taking various options to head home.



Report by Ian S

FRANKSTON 19 OCTOBER

Meeting two other riders at Westgarth Station I ran through my prep routes. Not finding any choke points and sufficient cognitive bandwidth I exhaled and set the ride in motion. The fact of the matter was I ran out of time to physically check it out beforehand.

Roger, Jon and I met Ed at Richmond Station for the long haul to Frankston, meeting the ever reliable George there. We rode a short distance to the water for morning tea. I can't recall any subversive or interesting tit bits before heading along the Kananook Creek to Overton Road, the bike path along the railway leading to Carrum Station and finally the path following the Patterson River.



Leaving the river our group headed for the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands, through Patterson Lakes, Chelsea Heights, Aspendale to Mordialloc Creek and Mordialloc itself for lunch after riding our very pleasant green ribbon. Lunch was accompanied by the raucous sounds of high school boys - were we ever that obnoxious? I'm sure the others were ha ha.

Back on the familiar Bay Trail, past Albert Park, the city and our afternoon cafe in the Fitzroy Gardens to rest our weary legs. Chat chat chat we went.

After realising George had left us an hour ago and Roger somewhere else, the remaining three set off along Wellington Street to home.

64 kms

Report by Ian H



Ed's new bike gear, note no shorts!

PORT ARLINGTON TO ST LEONARDS BY FERRY 24 OCTOBER

Eight keen riders set off at an amazingly early 8.15 start from Jika Jika for the 8km, 40 minute ride to the Docklands ferry terminal. The howling north wind blew/flew us down Canning Street. After successfully battling the ticketing system we boarded the Port Phillip Ferry's trimaran for the 70 minute trip to Portarlington. After morning tea hiding behind trees to get out of the howling wind, we cruised down the good gravel bike path, pushed along by said howling north wind all the way to St Leonards and a bit beyond, enjoying the coastal scenery and marvelling at all the spanking new modernistic holiday/retirement homes lining the foreshore. Lunch was at St Leonards followed by a pleasant ride around a lake and then the fun started. We had to pedal back along the road to Portarlington, but this time said howling north-west wind was in our faces. It was slow and relentless, but eventually we triumphantly got to the Portarlington Bakery for well deserved coffee & cakes. Then with our remaining energy we did a shorter coastal circuit to Point Richards to the west and pedalled up a dirty big and steep hill to get the view over the town.

The ferry ride back started out rough but then the wind dropped and when we got back to Docklands it was almost still for the ride back to Jika Jika. A good if somewhat windy day.

Report by Jopie

HEDGELEY DENE GARDENS 26 OCTOBER

Seven silly riders gathered in the rain for the day's ride, George, Jon, Roger, Ed, David, Barbara and myself.



The rain slowed and we headed off along South Crescent, across Station Street and Wingrove Street into Darebin Parklands. From here we turned right and headed towards the Yarra Trail. At the Yarra Trail we crossed to the Anniversary Trail via the underpass below the Eastern Freeway. We had intermittent light rain all the way to Frog Hollow, our morning tea stop. We sheltered under the veranda at the rear of the building there for morning tea. After about ten minutes some asked "where's Roger?" "He's in the toilet (which was on the other side of the building)". Well he wasn't, after a quick phone call we found out that he had come out of the toilet, seen no one, and headed off down the trail without us.



Where's Roger?

After morning tea George left us and the rest of the group headed off down the trail after Roger. We eventually caught up to Roger at Ashburton where he had been sitting in a warm coffee shop drinking hot chocolate waiting for us.

After passing the end of the train line at Alamein Station we soon arrived at the junction of the Anniversary and Gardiners Creek Trails where we turned right towards the city. After a short ride down the Gardiners Creek Trail we turned left and crossed under the Monash Freeway onto Allenby Avenue, then Stanley Street, across Malvern Road and into Hedgeley Dene Gardens.

After lunch the showers had ceased and we now had a strong head wind to contend with. We retraced our steps to the Gardiners Creek Trail and followed it to where it joins the Yarra Trail. Here we could have gone either left or right to get back to Jika Jika.

I chose to go left in order to avoid the detours around Walmer and Gipps Street bridges. We followed the Yarra Trail to the Morell bridge where we turned right and made our way through the tennis centre, across the bridge to the MCG and onto Jolimont Station. Here David left us and we headed towards Victoria Parade. After crossing Victoria Parade we made our way to *South of Johnston* cafe for afternoon tea before all going our separate ways home.

Report by Andrew

LAKES, RIVERS AND MORE

31 OCTOBER

George is famous for his Four Creeks and a River Ride that got up to about 60km (no problem for his e-bike) before he lost interest. During that regular ride we got to explore a fair few back roads south of the Metropolitan Ring Road.

Back in February I tried to do a Readers Digest abridged version with Five Creeks, No Rivers, which was only 45km. With the Lakes, Rivers and More Ride, George was back to his old tricks, with a suitably vague ride description covering "approx. 45km". Coincidence? I think not.

With a group of 11 we hit the Darebin Creek Trail and headed north as usual. I'd arranged to meet Seniors Week-recruit Rob, who didn't feel like riding the Darebin Creek Trail north twice in one day, at Reservoir Station. Of course, George wasn't going to Edwardes Lake via that station but by the underpass at the rather-rundown Ruthven one.

I raced off up the footpath to Reservoir Station to collect Rob and we all arrived almost simultaneously at Edwardes Lake. Except Barbara, who was to meet us there, was nowhere to be seen. A couple of calls found her elsewhere in the park. There was a lot of chat at morning tea, including reference to me falling off. I can't exactly remember where we were ... pretty disorientated by that stage (it was a George ride) but the group was going slowly, and I was not paying attention. Apparently, my collision with terra firma was loud. Pam St was at pains to make sure I was okay before she headed home as usual.

Lunch was next to the newish wetland in Austin Crescent Reserve, on Westbreen Creek, Pascoe Vale, rather than Montgomery Park, as tummies were already rumbling. There was more idle chatter before Nola left us to catch the train from Pascoe Vale and we headed down the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail and along Park St towards home.

Some drifted off towards home, some stopped for afternoon tea at the Park Street Café, and I escorted Rob towards Fairfield as he prepared to re-enact our trip up the DCT from earlier in the day.

Pam Se rang in the morning to check I was okay just as I was preparing to email Pam St to report that I didn't even have a bruise on my shoulder, although my plated right elbow was a bit sore. I proceeded to back off the cleats all the way on my SPD pedals to avoid a repeat performance.

As they say, "nice ride, no incidents, no punctures" (except to my ego). Thanks to everyone for their concern.



Report by Wolter
Ride leader George