

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



A NOTE TO ALL CONTRIBUTORS

Not sure what my computer was doing for this edition, nothing seems to be working as it should. For this edition I have had to leave out a number of photos because they were too large, bite wise that is. I did try reducing them but to minimal effect.

In future could photographers please reduce photo sizes significantly to ensure their inclusion.

And perhaps no more than 3 photos per report. Even then some may be omitted.

Apologies if anyone feel aggrieved.

Thanks

BREAKING NEWS!

My appearance on the Chanel 9 show Emergency will be shown Thursday 7 December at approximately 8.30pm. Should give everyone a chuckle!

WILLIAMSTOWN BEACH 2 NOVEMBER

Was a coolish day and mainly overcast. As the Footscray Road bike path was posted as open a few weeks back we tested our luck and headed via the capital city trial down to Footscray Road. It was indeed open and quite a site with all the civil works under way for Jacinta's big build. The path included boom gates and lollipop workers.

Mourning tea at Yarraville Gardens. Then through Newport on the Bay Trail for lunch at Williamstown beach. We returned via Newport Lakes running up a quiet side street. Through onto Dynon Road after coffee at Footscray milking station.

Report by Jon

SATURDAY RIDE REPORT 4 NOVEMBER

Being the first ride of the month, it was not going to be our usual ride to Port Melbourne and back. It was intended to be a ride to Williamstown and return but the cold and windy forecast put a dampener on that. Instead I decided to do the Main Yarra Trail, Gardiners Creek, Anniversary Trail loop, back to Rushall Station.

Come 9.30 start time, we had 11 starters at Rushall and George was there to see us off, he is still suffering from an energy sapping virus (not Covid). Weather was cold, windy and overcast. Through Edinburgh Gardens, Napier Street, past the MCG to our toilet stop at the Tennis Centre.

Now a bit more comfortable, we resumed, through Goschs Paddock to the Main Yarra Trail.

Not too many other riders or pedestrians, we moved along at a good pace. Turned off at Gardiners Creek, under the freeway, to emerge the other side of Glenferrie Road. From here the traffic on the path, thickened up a bit. After Hawthorn, Kooyong, Glen Iris and a few other places, we arrived at the Malvern Valley Golf Club, where we turned off to the Anniversary Trail. This follows the disused Outer Circle Railway but joins the existing line at Alamein Station. The ride progressed well until we reached High Street, Ashburton, where every one did their own thing in getting across but we regrouped in the Ashburton Station car park. A little further on we stopped at The Golden Child Café for morning tea.



The general opinion was that the food and service was good and we even got the occasional glimpse of the sun. Here we were also joined by Roberta, who had ridden the opposite direction to join us. After moderate food consumption and inordinate tongue wagging, 9 of us resumed our ride, the other 3 electing to take the train option.

The remaining ride was uneventful, Roberta leaving us in Kew and 5 others dropping out at various points as we passed through Northcote. Three of us arrived back at Rushall at about 2pm, after 33km.

Report by David D

CARNIVAL RIDE 7 NOVEMBER

I'd been waiting for months to get a shot of a cruise ship at Station Pier for the Rail Trails Australia website. Some of you will know that the Port Melbourne light-rail line once carried "new Australians" directly from ships on the pier to migrant camps as far away as Bonegilla. These days it only carries passengers as far as Box Hill and doesn't even go on the wharf, but the Sandridge Rail-side Trail follows the route pretty closely.

To do this as a BUG ride, with suitably compliant persons for photos, I needed a cruise ship on a Tuesday or Thursday and that took a bit of waiting. The Sydney-based Carnival Splendor was a suitable vessel to be in the background on November 7, with a passenger maximum of 3012, 1150 crew and gross weight of 130,000 tonnes.

Being a public holiday, this date gave us the chance to use the subsidised punt from Westgate to Newport, which normally only operates during morning and afternoon peaks during the week (\$3, no cash) and 9am to 5pm weekends and public holidays for an extra \$2. I wasn't expecting a big turnout, but we ended up with 13, with Harry Houdini texting to say that he would magically appear at Port Melbourne, thus increasing our total from the "unlucky" figure.

Being a public holiday with a hot afternoon ahead, the crowd voted for Wellington Street's Copenhagen bike lanes, which mercifully were not subject to construction detours, for now. Birrarung Park was covered in food stalls but these were not yet open. We even made it safely across the Sandridge Bridge and past Crown Casino. Too easy.

On the rail-side trail itself Tim had an unfortunate collision with a wandering cycle child by the name of Hamish. Pam St. reported the kid was okay but dad, who was riding out front, was somewhat shaken. Approaching Station Pier, I couldn't see any cruise ships through the trees and was wondering for a moment whether there'd been some holdup.

But, finally, we could see Carnival Splendor and there was an unexpected bonus – P&O's Pacific Adventure on the other side of the pier and Pacific Encounter berthed in the distance at Webb Dock to take in the Spring Carnival. These sister ships carry "only" 2600 passengers and have a gross tonnage of a trifling 109,000 tonnes.



After morning tea at Sandridge Beach we rode on to the corner of the Webb Trail, which runs alongside the dock, for more photos.

The sculpted Sandridge Lookout here emits a piercing wail from its profiled "blades" when the wind is up, just in case the wind noise itself isn't enough for you.

More good luck came for us with the punt being at its Westgate Berth, so we were able to cross to Newport as soon as everybody had "tapped" away their \$5. We got to see the Endeavour sailing vessel and a massive cargo ship during the crossing and did not collide with either!



The temperature was getting up by the time we got to shady Yarraville Gardens, and we managed to commandeer a table for lunch. Some preferred the grass.

We caught glimpses of the Flemington Racecourse as we rode through Newmarket but didn't strike any crowds. Jon's faithful old steed had been having chain issues and, on the way home, the derailleur let go of the frame, taking one of the spokes with it. Roger was on the scene and caught up with Ian S. to let him know, but catching the train was the only answer for Jon. We'd already started losing riders, with Sue subsequently leaving us at Royal Park and Ian S at Merri Parade. We were down to four by the time we got back to Jika Jika and there was Roger, who'd ridden ahead to make sure I'd got the message about Jon. Phil's Bakehouse wasn't even open!!! Thanks, old mate! Everyone should have been home by 2pm. Hopefully there is no damage to Jon's frame.

Report by Wolter

MERENDA 9 NOVEMBER

Ten of us assembled at Jika Jika, a good number for Thursday. The weather was cool and cloudy but fortunately dry. It was great to see Kathleen after a number of years absence and Colin riding again. Some people had seen the Age article on Banyule BUG, boasting a 96 year old rider. George seems to be our veteran at 88.

We set off with Colin as tail. After a regrouping break we continued to Norris Bank. Just before we got there we passed Allan Garbutt but he declined to join us.



After a pleasant morning tea break we continued without Colin and Jon who had other commitments. Wolter took the tail. Lunch was on the patio at Le Page Homestead.

Roger had brought a cake to celebrate his 81st birthday on Monday. He could not take on Tuesday as he bought it from Phil's which was shut on Tuesday. The cake was an iced sponge with strawberry jam. It so distracted me that I forgot to take a photo and only remembered as we were leaving. All you can see is the left over for Roger's neighbours.



We continued to Mernda Station where five took the train. The cake had filled people and discouraged them from having afternoon tea at Turner's Bakery. Barbara, Ed and I did relax there. Ed had a vanilla slice. Not as good as the one he had in Harrietville last week but good all the same. Barbara and I just had a drink.

The weather warmed up considerably at the end of the ride. 40 km.

Report by David M

PLENTY RIVER TRAIL 14 NOVEMBER

Oh no, when getting up I heard rain on the roof, not a good sign for a bike rider. Time to dig out the wet riding gear. It was raining while riding to Jika Jika, however by 9.30 the rain had stopped and there was only a bit of fine mist. Surprisingly 13 riders showed up at the starting point, so we headed off towards the Darebin Creek Trail picking up one more rider along the way for our journey north to Norris Bank Parkland for morning tea where we had a good chat and rest. In the meantime Nola had lots of suggestions and advice about how to get her speedo working. Some riders can't ride if they don't know their speed. It is like being in a bus in India. If the horn doesn't work then you have to stop until it is fixed, it doesn't matter if the brakes don't work and there are holes in the floor. No horn, no go.

The bad news was that none of the suggestions worked so, no speedo, but Nola bravely decided to continue riding. After the break Paul headed back home as his battery wasn't fully charged and neither was he fully charged to complete the ride. Back on the bikes after about 20 minutes of chatting it was cooler riding without a coat but at least there was no rain, and it was slowly warming up. We turned off at the Ring Road and headed east past Plenty Road then headed off the main trail to ride through the Janefield wetlands and around the small lake, then joined the trail through the Plenty Gorge parklands past a number of curious of kangaroos that seemed to stare at the strange looking bike riders.

At one stage I heard a call to stop riding and found out that Jon had lost his pedal. The crank had fallen off his bike making it a bit hard to ride. Luckily he wasn't too cranky with this occurrence, but after some quick mechanics the crank was reunited with the bike and we could continue riding. We headed off the trail and onto the road for a big downhill of up to 50km/h ride to the Plenty River, then joined the Plenty River trail and pulled in at Kalparrin gardens for lunch.

The route home followed the Plenty River, with a couple of rough bits on the trail near Montmorency Secondary College. Finally we crossed the Plenty River near Old Plenty Road and stopped for a photo shoot.



Note the smiles on the faces of the ebike riders

Then through the Banule Flats Reserve and up the long hill to see recently cut hay near the Viewbank Silos before a lovely ride down and over the speed humps to meet up with the Main Yarra Trail.

Some of the riders stopped for a rest and fluid top up at The Alphington Food Store before heading for home. From the comments, most riders seemed to enjoy this ride

Ride distance about 52 km.

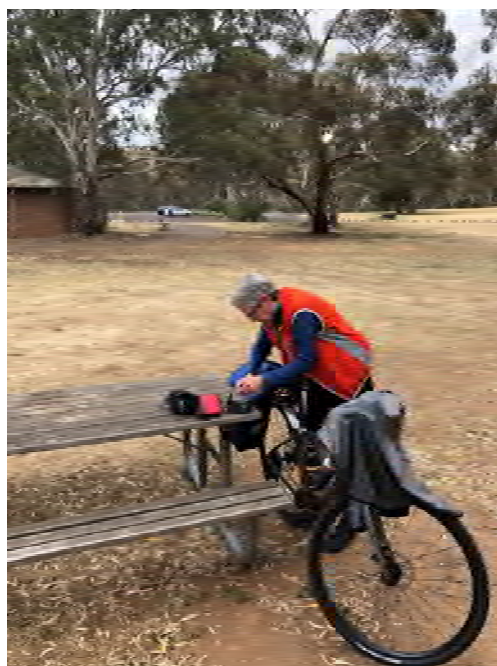
Photos Ed & Sue

Report by Ed

BRIMBANK PARK / STEELE CREEK 16 NOVEMBER

Malevolent, despondent and gloomy weather greeted Ed, Jon, Sue, Jon, Barbara, George and whip hand Roger. So it looked like no paradigm shifting creativity would be evident in yours truly.

From the Merri Creek Trail we skipped across back streets to reach the mighty Moonee Ponds Creek to Boeing Reserve for morning break. Trivia turned to the woes of the ABC being under funded. Discussing TV shows restored our mood, ready for the climb up to the humungus Caterpillar Factory and that steadily deteriorating trail littered with its history of rubbish. Passing the large balloon sign, with its never ending bathroom sale, we crossed the freeway to Brimbank Park. Away from the road we followed my new Shimano chain hitting every single tooth spinning my Merrel bike specific shoes (any product placement endorsements anyone?) along the path following the Maribyrnong to our newly refurbished lunch spot. The old wooden seating was now covered by new wooden structures. Following bike talks Sue and George ministered to their steeds in preparation for the long haul back out of Brimbank Park.



Following the busy footpath along Keilor Park Drive and the quiet Noga Avenue we hit Steele Creek and Valley Lake. From here we passed the former explosives factory from up high to descend to the Maribyrnong River and through to Flemington for arvo tea at Autumn Leaves. Over coffee we discussed all and sundry but more particularly the merits of various sunglasses. So good to talk away from miserable local and world events. The familiar path to the Zoo and home. 60km

Report by Ian H

POINT COOK AND SANCTUARY LAKES 21 NOVEMBER

We had 11 riders on this enjoyable ride. The weather was ideal: no rain, cloudy at first but sunny periods in the afternoon and a gentle southerly breeze. We rode to North Melbourne and caught the limited express to Laverton where, after coping with the too small lifts and working out which side of the train line was north, we were off. Down the broad reedy & open water expanses of Laverton Creek with all its swans & cygnets & maybe some ducks, to our first stop; morning tea at the 100 Steps of Federation. Then a long way up Skeleton Creek and via Point Cook streets, parks, boardwalks & paths to a lunch spot with no loo! Luckily we had stopped at a singing loo en route which only had one cubicle causing somewhat of a queue. Then more streets, lakes and little bridges with views of the CBD across the salt pans of the Cheetham Wetlands. A major loo stop at the Sanctuary Lakes Shopping Centre and through Sanctuary Lakes with wonderful views of the lakes, sandy beaches and oversized houses which eventually brought us back to the 100 Steps for a brief afternoon tea stop.

Most of the group stopped for afternoon coffee in Altona and trained it back to North Melbourne while Ed in his usual fashion rode all the way, catching us at Flemington Road for the final leg home.

Report by Jopie

BLACKBURN LAKE 23 NOVEMBER

Seven riders Sue, Jon, Roger, Ian, George, James and Andrew met at Jika Jika. The weather was pleasantly cool and the day was forecast to be quite warm by the afternoon.

We headed along South Crescent and across Station Street to Darebin Parklands. Turning right we headed down the hill, under Heidelberg Road and onto the river flats beside Alphington Grammar and Latrobe Golf Club. Arriving at the Main Yarra Trail we crossed under the freeway and made our way to the Anniversary Trail. We followed the Anniversary Trail to Frog Hollow where we stopped for morning tea.



Today I ensured Roger stayed with us for morning tea and that he didn't take himself to Ashburton for hot chocolate.

After morning tea we continued on the Anniversary Trail. George had said that he would be leaving us at Alamein Station and getting the train home, however, at Hartwell a train passed us heading towards Alamein. So, to catch this train on its return trip to the city George left us at Ashburton instead.

After passing Alamein Station we turned left and followed Ashbury Grove and Markham Avenue to join the Gardiners Creek Trail heading east towards Burwood. We followed this trail until it peters out at Canterbury Road. We then rode briefly beside Middleborough Road to some parkland. Here we followed some gravel paths beside the last of Gardiners Creek (aka the Blackburn South Drain) to Blackburn Road. After crossing Blackburn Road it was a short uphill ride along Alandale Road to our lunch stop at Blackburn Lake. It was now quite warm so we found a shady spot for lunch.

After lunch we retraced our steps through the parkland to Canterbury Road. We crossed Canterbury Road and followed Albion Road to Barcelona Street. From here it was onto Rutland Road, across Whitehorse Road and onto Dorking Road. It's a lovely long downhill from here to the path beside Bushy Creek. The Bushy Creek path continues downhill through pleasant parkland all the way to the Koonung Path at Elgar Road.

Here we had our discussion about where to stop for afternoon tea. The chocolate shop or Alphington Food Store? It was a very brief discussion. The Chocolate shop was the unanimous decision, no debate was entered into.

Following afternoon tea it was back to the Koonung Path. At the underpass just before Burke Road I turned left and skirted through the edge of Hays Paddock to Kilby Road. Kilby Road gave us a gentler uphill than the Yarra Trail beside Kew Golf Club. Here we rejoined the Yarra Trail, then turned onto the Darebin Trail and made our way through Alphington and back to Jika Jika by the usual route.

Report by Andrew

ROSSTOWN RAIL TRAIL VIA BAY TRAIL 28 NOVEMBER

The weather forecast was for 25 C, with storms later but the morning start was drizzly and cool. A good turnout of 15 riders not put off by the morning's weather.

Our little convoy took off slowly with a bit of a detour past Merri station to avoid some road works in South Crescent. Down through Clifton Hill to Wellington Street and the MCG. Usually a reasonably 'quiet' route for a busy time of day, we stuck a number of trucks and other vehicles trying to go the same way as us.

It was a bit of a relief to get to the quiet of the MCG precinct. Around the stadium and on bridges and down ramps we were in Swan Street and heading towards the river and Southbank Boulevard. It was an unintended tour past large building sites of Southbank along the way. The group got through fabulously while being lead down little No Through Roads to Moray Street.

There was barely any wind and Albert Park Lake, our morning tea stop, was calm and mirror like. The swans were looking very serene and picturesque. Students at the Albert Sailing Club were having to learn how to deal with becalmed boats. One student having to jump in the water to manoeuvre their boat. The drizzle had stopped by that time. Pam left us after morning tea and the rest of us took the scenic route around the lake. I took a touristy photo at the south end before we headed to the Bay trail.



The bay was also mirror calm and as it was still misty on the bay there was a strange effect of the sea and the horizon being the same colour with no break. Dragging us away from the sight we turned at Elwood Canal. The canal was at very low tide and definitely not a lovely sight.

Going through Gardenvale and Caulfield South we followed along the streets marked with the blue

signs for the old Rosstown Rail Trail. We stopped at the EE Gunn Reserve for lunch and by that time patches of blue sky were starting to appear.

We got onto the Djerring trail just before Carnegie station to ride through to Hughesdale then cross to East Malvern. With the leader's prerogative we returned on the Gardiners Creek and Capital City trails instead of the Anniversary trail.

Somewhere around Hawthorn, I had to call out "goats on the path". A change of shift perhaps with 3 or 4 goats on the path being loaded onto a trailer. Other goats still behind the fence on the creek side chomping away. Lots of weeding to be done.

We detoured off the Capital City trail just before Victoria Street in Richmond as the path after that has been closed since May 2023 for path works at the southern end of the Walmer Street bridge.

From the Yarra Council website (I'm not completely confident about their finishing dates):

Salta Properties Walmer St Bridge works (southern end)

Construction works began at the southern end of the Walmer Street Bridge in May 2023.

As a requirement of their development permit, Salta will be completing the reconstruction of the southern end of the bridge, including ramp and stair access to Walmer Street Plaza. Works will also include revegetation of the riverbank.

The bridge was closed in mid-August 2022 as the City of Boroondara undertook the reconstruction of the bridge's northern end. Boroondara's works have been delayed and will be completed by early November 2023.

Salta anticipates they will complete their works at the southern end of the bridge by December 2023 when the bridge will reopen.

Afternoon tea was at the Abbotsford Convent bakery under a warm and sunny sky. No mechanicals or punctures. Another good ride. Distance 51km.

Report by Sue

CRAIGIEBURN 30 NOVEMBER

One of the good things about going on one of George's rides is that he's ridden large parts of Melbourne. He can't remember many of them, but that just makes each ride a new adventure!

Being as how the weather looked kind of nasty, he only had six volunteers for the "about 50km" ride to Craigieburn and back, with train interlude. I brought up the tail. The expected silt on the Merri Creek Trail near St Georges Road did not materialise as the creek had not flooded and even the Coburg Lake weir was not running that fast. There were birds still sitting on top of it and a bag of ice (or bag that previously contained ice, if you insist), but no sign of any Northern Brewing Company products chilling in the rapids.

Apart from stops for the removal of excess garments we made good time, so George forced us on northwards past Moomba Park, where we were allowed to stop to admire the new wetland/stormwater retarding basin/swamp, and on to the Whittlesea Public Gardens for morning tea. Here there was already a large crowd of mature adults, but the new picnic facilities include a second area where we set up office, closer to the new toilets. Sue and Ed even tried out the mini trampoline that is part of the abundant play equipment.



In a sign of the times, security fencing was going up again in the car park area, which we assumed was for the water/sewer pipe replacement project we'd passed on the way up the Galada Tamboore Pathway, with the noise of the hydraulic hammer we'd seen breaking up the basalt further south now accompanying our morning tea.

We continued north to Craigieburn Gardens for lunch, where there was more noise from the Craigieburn Stadium expansion next door that was due to be finished in June. How inconsiderate. We rode out the other end of the gardens via the Atkins Creek Trail, from which George had an easier way to get to the railway station, via Bainbridge Close rather than the Hothlyn Drive one I've used. This trail is currently the subject of a "public consultation" so hopefully some of the issues with it will be fixed.

From here we caught the train to Glenroy and, when I say we, I mean not including Roger, who stayed on the train to Southern Cross to head home in the opposite direction. Then there were six. We used the shared paths on Glenroy Road and Cardinal Road to get around the massive Northern Golf Club and stopped at George Jones Eatery in Pascoe Street for afternoon tea. Here we were close to the more familiar Westbreen Creek but could not send our George home as he'd driven to Jika Jika.



Sue left us at Brunswick Road, so then there were five. Ed left near Rushall Station, George near his car and Ian at Victoria Road. Leaving John and I to wend our way home.

Ride leader George

Report and photos by Wolter