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WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



Wishing all members and readers a joyful and merry Christmas and a happy, safe and prosperous 2024!

NOT THE HALF MOON BAY – FISH AND CHIP RIDE 5 DECEMBER

Perhaps I had a premonition when I looked up the website of the Half Moon Bay Café. It stated the opening hours as Wednesday to Sunday. A phone call gave me the same information in a recorded message. Many of us had been looking forward to this fish and chips lunch. However, with such short notice, I decided to have Ian send out an email changing the venue to Brighton beach and asking riders to bring their own lunch.

Upon meeting at Jika Jika, I realized a couple of people didn't receive the email. One had some food, while Ian H was able to buy some lunch later, in Bay Street, Port Melbourne.

A large group of 15 gathered on a pleasant summer's day for the ride. Ed agreed to be tail, and half the group were left at the High Street lights. My first mistake of the day, after telling the group we would meet near the Zoo, to prevent further stops, was to 'lead them down the garden path' - or the wrong one! I got confused and did say 'you can tell I'm not a local'!



At Footscray Road, we could no longer cross over and had to turn left and ride towards the city to cross past Cosco. It was almost 11 when we stopped for morning tea at the rotunda in Port Melbourne. Pam Si had brought a treasured children's book called 'Our Granny', which she showed Pam St. I thought it was so good I ordered it for our grandson. Pam St left us, and we continued south towards St Kilda, Elwood and Brighton. With the expected temperature in the high 20s, many people were on the beach. Around St Kilda, we carefully dodged pedestrians blissfully unaware of our bikes.

We arrived at Brighton beach sometime after midday, to find Mandy waiting for us. She had ridden from Mordialloc to meet us for lunch. In fact, she had underestimated how fast she rode and been up to Elwood and back waiting for us. The large group spread out to enjoy lunch, some at the table with a view to the city and others under a tree seeking some shade. There are new toilets at this park which is a bonus. A group photo was taken, before Mandy turned south and we headed north with a tail wind.



A highlight on the return journey was watching sky divers land at the park in St Kilda. Coffee was at Bedgood & Co in East Melbourne. This was a welcome reward for a lovely day of cycling of roughly 50km, by the time we reached Jika Jika again.

Report by Nola

UPFIELD PATH 7 DECEMBER

The weather forecast was for low twenties with light winds, weather to look forward to. We took the long way around to get to the Trin Warren Tam-Boore Bellbird Waterhole in Parkville for our morning tea. The bellbirds were having a noisy time of it and a magpie with a young one stood very close to our picnic table and sang a lovely song to its family and friends. After morning tea we rode up Poplar Road and through to Park Street. Next stop was at Gilpin Park to see if we could find the Tawny Frogmouth family of three that has been nesting in the park. We were lucky and spotted them in a tree overlooking the dog park. It was turning out to be a very birdy ride. We did get to the Upfield path eventually and rode north turning off at Merlynston to get across to the Merri Creek path and Broadhurst Avenue. Taking a couple of different streets we got onto the Darebin Creek path just north of the Bundoora Park turnoff. Lunch was at the park in one of the picnic areas. This time it was the cockatoos serenading the seven of us. We headed back south going through Latrobe University and back onto the Darebin Creek path. Afternoon tea was at the Artiga Specialty coffee in Thornbury under a warm and sunny sky. No mechanicals or punctures. Another good ride. Distance 44km.

Report by Sue

MORNING RIDE AND CHRISTMAS LUNCH 12 DECEMBER

18 keen riders gathered at Jika Jika for the pre-Christmas-Lunch ride. As there are not many, if any, routes at least one rider has not done, the chosen route was a fairly well worn one. On leaving Jika Jika we headed to Westgarth Street and rode west. Crossing Merri Parade we took Union Street, South Park Street, Park Street and Clarke Street to cross to the St Georges Road bike/pedestrian path. Riding north along the path we took a right turn at Oakover Road and then turned left to take the path which runs along under the elevated rail line. After stopping briefly near Preston Station for me to point out the crossing where I was hit by a car, we continued on to Reservoir Station where we turned right and rode down Broadway, through some side streets to arrive at TW Andrews Reserve. Because of the need to stop at the many road crossings along St Georges Road it took nearly one hour to arrive. After a brief discussion it was decided to ride further to Norris Bank Parklands for morning tea. Morning tea was a brief affair as we were on a deadline to get back in time for lunch at the Grandview Hotel.

On the return ride down the Darebin Creek Trail the temperature began to rise noticeably and the cloud dissipated, these factors combined with the humidity meant that there was need for frequent water intake. The ride was without incident and all arrived safely at the Grandview Hotel with a few minutes to spare.

The lunch was enjoyed by those who had been on the ride and other members who came directly to the hotel.



Report by Colin

MAIN YARRA TRAIL EXTENSION TO WARRANDYTE 14 DECEMBER

It's being called PSAD (by me), and early research findings suggest it is closely related to Domestic Blindness. Public Service Announcement Deafness typically occurs when a person hears a message repeated over, and over again on the public address system at their local railway station (including the trigger words "until further notice") and fails to absorb that message or relate it to their personal circumstances.

So it was that continuous announcements at nearby Fairfield Railway Station pertaining to the Hurstbridge line being closed from Heidelberg failed to alert me to the ramifications for my Warrandyte ride, in terms of my promise that riders would be able to catch the train home from Eltham if they were tired or lame. I blame it on all the disruptions related to the track duplication and new stations at Montmorency and Greensborough. Turns out that, despite promises to co-ordinate the work, this time the line was closed to allow preparations for the extension of the Hurstbridge line tunnel under the Greensborough Highway.

After the huge turnout for the Christmas carnival ride led by Colin two days earlier, I wasn't expecting a huge turnout at Jika Jika, and ended up with five, some of whom had not made it on Tuesday. We did get to warm up helping Kathy and a truck driver unloading a pallet of hand sanitiser to be given away to residents.

I had planned to move morning tea from the advertised Possum Hollow to Wombat Bend, to give everyone a chance to warm up, but George had driven to Warringal Park and was perfectly happy to have morning tea there without having moved a muscle. We were soon joined by Barbara, who had definitely been moving her muscles to catch up after missing the train to Westgarth. George almost immediately made the stunning confession that he'd missed our "ride swap" email and had turned up a week early and ridden aimlessly around Banyule, possibly up River Gum Walk. Jon had his new Giant City Cross out for its first decent run, after being encouraged by product ambassador Sue to follow her lead. He'd bought it online but picked up from Ivanhoe Cycles and there was some discussion about whether he'd get a free service.



We whistled up the Main Yarra Trail towards Warrandyte but stopped at the confluence of the Yarra River and Mullum Mullum Creek to check out the fast-flowing water. The plan was to have lunch at Manna Gum Reserve near Beasley's Nursery and then those that wanted to could ride up and back on the new shared path to the top of the Warrandyte hill. Surprisingly, there were six takers, three on e-bikes and three unassisted. Barbara wisely stayed at our picnic table to continue her recovery from the race to Possum Hollow and the prospect of an enforced afternoon ride up the Green Gully Trail, rather than catching the train from Eltham.

Latest advice is that the next section of the "Main Yarra Trail" into Warrandyte is to be built next year although, disappointingly, it's going along noisy Heidelberg-Warrandyte Road rather than below the road next to the houses.



Definitely a chance for another ride late in 2024, perhaps with an alternate exit strategy. George left us at The Parkway to return to his car the way we had come, despite the Green Gully Trail being one we haven't done before. It's pleasant enough but a bit of a climb from there up to Doncaster Road. Fortunately there's now a shared path along Church Road past Doncaster Secondary College, probably for the school kids, but we'll take it. The Koonung Creek Trail took us to Hahndorf's chocolate shop in Bulleen Road, but not before we'd seen a "soil testing" crew preparing for work associated with North East Link. I better get my ears ready for more public service announcements.

Report byWolter

TRAIN TO MERNDA, THEN RIDE MERNDA TO JIKA JIKA VIA HAWKSTOWE PARK 19 DECEMBER

The smart people stayed home today. The others hoped that all of the projected 0-3mm of rain had fallen before 9am but they were very wrong. From when we left Mernda station till about midday the weather could best be described as s**t. Steady heavy drizzle and so cold for a supposedly summer's day. We found a dry morning tea spot under a shelter and waited out half an hour of rain till it eased off a bit whence we took off again, but it didn't properly stop till later.

Ian H's wheel slid out on a wet slippery boardwalk and he came down with a thud, hitting his head. We suspected concussion so headed to Hawkestone Station where Ian, escorted by Ian S and Roger who was mildly hypothermic by this stage, took the train home.

That left 3 of us to complete the ride, which we duly did with no further dramas. We had to manoeuvre through a graduation ceremony crowd at Latrobe University and still managed coffee at Artiga coffee house on the Darebin Creek trail, albeit as takeaways as we got there only 5 minutes before their 3pm closing time.

I intend to do this ride again sometime in the future so we can enjoy the scenery and lakes in hopefully good weather, but I will have contingency route variations in case of wet weather to avoid some of the scenic but gravelly/earthen bits.

Report byJopie

STATE OF THE UNION 21 DECEMBER

Sometimes all the ducks just won't line up and so what started out as an "ad hoc ride" on the schedule to end the year still ended up being a bit ad hoc.

The plan was to ride out on the Koonung Creek Trail, including the section that now runs through the landscaped garden on the roof (pictured) of the new Bulleen bus interchange building.



This is at least usable until they start building the North East Link busway along the Eastern Freeway.

Then there were a couple of gambles regarding the completion of the Union Station development and the Walmer Street Bridge upgrade that didn't work in our favour. There were six volunteers for this "interesting" adventure, notably Colin, riding tail for us as Linda continues her recovery.

We went via Wilson Reserve to the freeway, which was nice and dry, went under the freeway and then across it at Bulleen Road to check out the bus interchange. The "public" toilets at the Manningham Juventus soccer ground were only open to members of the public with a key so it was a bit of a rush to morning tea at the delightful Elgar Park in Box Hill.

Bushy Creek Trail and Box Hill Gardens took us up to Box Hill Central and then we started heading west towards town. There are quite a few obstacles to this becoming a railside trail to Hawthorn, some of which we got to experience.

Sadly, a section in the middle of the new trail past Union Station was still closed, forcing a detour onto Hamilton Street and (briefly) Mont Albert Road, where the new pedestrian crossing lights were still not working. The rest of the shared path to Union Road has been finished for weeks.

Canterbury Gardens is still the subject of a restoration project on its heritage buildings that somehow disabled the Exeloo, but the impressive Canterbury Precinct Building next door has nice new toilets and lunch was at neighbouring Chaucer Crescent Reserve, where Ed told us about the imminent arrival of their foster chickens in Clifton Hill.

The team voted in favour of going to see if the Walmer Street Bridge and Main Yarra Trail connections were open after a report from Bicycle Network Victoria the night before that it was

close. Ed had a slight misadventure riding up to street level from the MYT and you can imagine our disappointment when we arrived at Walmer Street to be told it was about half an hour from being opened.



No one wanted to wait, so we consoled ourselves with refreshments at the convent (third picture). Roger was just too disappointed to eat or drink and left.



Happy to run this ride again, with some OHS refinements, when the Union Station path is completely open. How much longer can it be? The station opened seven months ago!

Report by Wolter