

# WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



Just another reminder. Could those submitting photos for inclusion please reduce the file size to less than 1MB. However, there is no certainty that all photos submitted will be included.

## MARANOA GARDENS BALWYN 5 MARCH

Seven riders on a warmish Thursday wasn't a bad start. Sue arrived with her freshly minted thigh bruise after a recent fall. Gayle and Graham, our infrequent pair, joined the party.

This ride to Maranoa Gardens covers a surprising number of suburbs. From Jika Jika we rode though North Fitzroy and Clifton Hill to Collingwood to cycle along Wellington Street to East Melbourne. Circling the Swift Arena we crossed over to the Botanic Gardens and plonked down to look over the lake for morning refreshments. Our original position near the cafe has been fully commandeered and probably our ragtag ragamuffins with our own provisions wouldn't be welcome. A bit harsh?

Following part of the Yarra we rode through South Yarra, Burnley, Kooyong, Glen Iris, Camberwell, Canterbury and up that gruelling hill to Beckett Park which adjoins Maranoa Gardens. What a relief to sit in the shade. We even managed some volunteers to scale the tower.

Our suburban journey crossed North Balwyn, Deepdene, East Kew, Alphington, Fairfield and finally Northcote where there were not enough takers for arvo tea though I did spy the odd disappointed face. Home to shower and lie down, in my case anyway. Luckily we avoided the late afternoon sun and no falls or mishaps. Though I did once lead us up the wrong garden path but easily corrected thanks to a few wise heads. 45 kms

Report by Ian H

## RUFFEY CREEK TRAIL 7 MARCH

Started the day with very pleasant sunny but cool weather. Morning tea as Possum Park. Then along the Yarra Trail across the bridge then onto the start of the Ruffy Creek Trail. Winding up the trail to the lake a possible brown snake crossed the trail towards the front of the group. Lunch then over to the Koonung Trail and back to the chocolate shop. Back along the trail and under and up Chandler Highway, worked out well .



Report by Jon

## **BUNDOORA, CRESSWELL FOREST, MILL PARK AND SURROUNDS 12 MARCH**

After the very hot long weekend, 15 DBUG members arrived on a cloudy much cooler morning for Ralph's ride north. Newer members Michael and Ken were among the group. Ralph gave a short safety talk about riding single file and leaving enough distance to the rider in front, to allow for a sudden stop. I volunteered to be tail and we set off towards Fairfield.

At Station Street I noticed a familiar rider had joined the group – Mandy forgot it was still a 9am start until daylight saving finishes – so now we numbered 16. With such a large group, a few of us couldn't make it across the lights at Grange Road.

Eventually we reunited in Darebin Parklands, riding north on the Darebin trail. After a couple of stops to catch our breath and have a drink, we arrived at the Amphitheatre in Latrobe Uni for morning tea just after 10am. The group enjoyed chatting over their refreshments, seeing how everyone had survived the hot weekend. Sue left us here to ride home. Ralph led us out of the Uni and through Springthorpe, where we spotted the Ivanhoe grammar year 9s having recess. Wolter brought me up to date with all things Ivanhoe, as his twins attended this school.

Changing gears for the hill, we made it to Gresswell Forest, where Ralph noted we may see kangaroos [we have often seen them here]. Coming out near Bundoora Primary School, I commented to a few near the back of the group that this was where Ralph fell off his bike and broke his hip, 21 months ago. We followed a bike path and back streets, crossing Grimshaw Street near Andrew Place shops. More side streets, cycling around the back of Parade College to Plenty Road, near the Ring Road. We rode north to McKimmies Lane where we turned left onto the bike path.

Almost 2km later we turned on Darebin Trail north, then rode up the Yan Yean Pipe track to near Childs Road. A short distance west along here and then we turned south on the Findon Track to rejoin Darebin Creek trail. It was very open here and you could feel the southerly wind in your face. Fortunately, it was mostly downhill!

We arrived at Norris Bank Park for lunch at midday.



Shortly after lunch, the new part of the track was blocked off around those units which had extended over the path. Ralph managed to squeeze through a wire fence, while the others decided it was ok to use the path, by moving the sign. Kathleen was particularly cross with this signage and Colin had a brief spill off his bike onto soft ground. (Note by Colin – it was due to my impatience!) We eventually left this track and rode west to Cheddar Road where we took the path to Reservoir Station. From here we cycled along the northern pipe track and then down St George's Road bike path.

Along the way the following people left the group – Jopie, Steve, Michael, Kathleen, Robyn and Wolter. Ralph asked Glenys to lead us to a coffee shop near Westgarth.



Four Beans in High Street was a great venue, with good coffee, plenty of seating and delicious scones and muffins. Thanks, Glenys, for taking us there. A great ride today by Ralph, 47km.

Report by Nola

## **AQUEDUCT TRAIL 14 MARCH**

This was a 9.30 start but a couple of people arrived before 9.00. Roger came down from Gisborne on the train to see us off. When we got to start time we were five: Ian, David E, Michael and George. There was a lot of electric car discussion before we set off as three people were enthusiastic owners. Weather was overcast but brightened after lunch.



We made good time to Possum Hollow for morning tea. There was another group of cyclists occupying tables but we were only five so we found a table without difficulty. After tea we continued through Westerfolds Park to Eltham and had lunch near the library. We then climbed the Research Trail to the Aqueduct and paused at the rocks for a photo call. We managed to get all of us in. The rocks were the morning tea stop when we started the ride at Eltham Station in years gone by.





We continued to the end of the Aqueduct, had a rapid descent of Allandale Road and arrived at Platters for afternoon tea. We were sitting pleasantly outside until an Armaguard truck parked next to us and left the motor running while they collected cash from the bottle shop. George had to take a walk away from the fumes and eventually the truck departed. Everyone caught the 2.50 train back to Westgarth and I continued home on the Diamond Creek Trail. 36km

Report by David

## **TAYLORS CREEK, KEILOR AND BRIMBANK PARK 19 MARCH**

The forecast was grim. 31 degrees with strong, gusting winds and rain & thunderstorms in the afternoon. Nevertheless 6 adventurous souls up for the challenge turned up. It was warm and gusty and quite challenging racing down some hills with the strong gusting side wind, but it didn't rain and it only got to about 29 degrees. I had shortened the ride by leaving out the Horseshoe Bend Loop in the hope of completing the ride before we got drenched. This meant that we had a very early 11.30am lunch at Keilor and early 1.15pm afternoon coffees at the Boathouse, but everyone seemed perfectly happy with that. A regular decaf cappuccino is now up to \$6 there and heavens knows what a milkshake would cost. 12 months ago I paid \$9 for one there! The ambience is nice there though.

All otherwise went fine, with no accidents or other dramas.



The crew, minus leader/photographer, at the lookout over the old munitions factory area

Report by Jopie

## **SCOTCHMANS CREEK AND DANDENONG CREEK TRAILS 21 MARCH**

Organising this ride was a hassle from the start, following what was undoubtedly deliberate sabotage by PTV. The original idea was to run our famous Ferny/Dandy/Blind creeks ride after catching the Belgrave train to Upper Ferntree Gully. The Level Crossing Removal Authority proceeded to dig up Bedford Road in Ringwood, for some totally unnecessary level-crossing removal, and cancel all trains beyond Blackburn. Now that will get more people using Metro more often. Then my oldest brother had the temerity to invite me to New Zealand for his 80th birthday. That meant swapping my ride from the assigned March 5, with the generous co-operation of Ian H. Would the LXRA have finished digging their massive hole in Bedford Road and have the trains running again by March 21 for anyone that was still interested?

Like hell they would – March 29, the timetable said.

So I dragged out the old Scotchmans and Dandenong Creeks ride, did a pre-run (minus the trains), got Sue to amend the ride schedule and went off to NZ.

The day duly arrived and a group of five turned up at Westgarth's Platform 1. Ed had texted to say he was going to meet us at Richmond station (might try this next time). Then we saw Kathleen, who'd been in Japan and missed the ride list amendment, heading towards Jika Jika and yelled out. Not knowing the train was running late, she proceeded to carry her bike across the pedestrian bridge.

Realising that things now appeared to be in order, PTV made sure that we couldn't all get on the train in time so me and Jon had to catch the next one, which was running on time but then proceeded to slow to a crawl because of congestion in the loop. Without wishing to bore you further, suffice to say we ended up on a Lilydale train (terminating at Blackburn) minus Jon, who'd had issues with his Myki. [Notes to self: 1. Learn to read those glary TFT platform information displays. 2. Don't wait until you get off the train to nominate a trail rider. 3. Put Jon's number in your phone]



Once we got to Blackburn, we headed straight to the lake sanctuary for morning tea (it was supposed to be lunch), and some overdue stress medication. We were entertained mightily by a group of yellow-tailed black cockatoos, who were demonstrating their ready adaption to the removal and consumption of pine cones before dropping them on parked cars. It was tempting to shorten the route from there but, as Ian H had been "really looking forward" to Scotchmans Creek, we just reversed the original route with a detour to look at the former Boral brickworks site in Scoresby/Wantirna South, which appears almost ready for Mirvac to start building 1700

houses.

Shortly after 12.30pm we were having lunch in Jells Park, where Madeline's is being replaced with a new café, subject to a refit, by "mid-April". Good luck with that one. It was then off to the Jells Hill and Scotchmans Creek Trail which no-one seemed to have done "downstream". It was nice to experience the creek in this direction, despite a deliberate diversion by another government department, to the sounds of croaking frogs and birds chirping.

We got home via the Outer Circle Trail, which added to the total distance and discomfort for people who hadn't been riding for a while. Although Kathleen was tempted to catch the train at Hartwell, she soldiered on to coffee at Three Locals in Fairfield, where we were able to sit out the back.

I was amused to discover that Jon, who'd made his way home from the debacle at Richmond, had already been to the same establishment earlier, while walking the dog.

Report by Wolter

## **GASWORKS PARK 26 MARCH**

I think we were all very pleased to see Roger this morning at Jika Jika for the ride to Gasworks. It was his first day out with the BUG since the incident on the Koonung Trail over three months ago. Riders were Roger, Sue, Ian H, Glenys, Robin, Colin, John, Paul and Pam plus Pam S and James as leader. We rode through the Edinburgh Gardens and Napier Street, Fitzroy and past the MCG to the Botanical Gardens for an early morning tea with a view of the lake, but we sat closer to the Bridge Gate because of changes to the restaurant seating.

After morning tea it was along the Tan and then past Jeff's Shed. Because of the Station Pier Rail Trail, we went through some back streets until we reached the foreshore and then around to the Sandridge Lookout where some saw a car carrier make a U-turn with help from some tugs. The weather was ideal today. Very little wind and the sea at Sandridge was almost glasslike. We took a closer look at Webb Dock by going along the trail just past the lookout where we saw cranes loading and unloading from a ship to the dock.



Then it was back along the foreshore to St Kilda for a left turn and then into the extension of Richardson Street which led us towards the Gasworks Park for lunch. Despite the recent lack of rain the grass at Gas works was particularly green today.

After lunch we travelled north and found our way back to the Station Pier bike path and then past Polly Woodside and Docklands. We saw the incomplete bike path/bridge that crosses over Footscray Ride near Costco. It is a very bright shiny green colour. We turned north along the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail. There were many short detours or changes in this path and lots of road construction work. The path was all well made and fully fenced. In search of coffee, we left the path and went west along Macaulay Road to a coffee shop in Belair Street opposite Kensington Station. Roger and Glenys left us after coffee. All that remained was the rest of the trail and the two hills near the Zoo. About 46 km back to Jika Jika.

Report by James

## **WOODLANDS HISTORIC PARK 28 MARCH**

With this straightforward ride I was determined not to be baffled or flummoxed. So with this in mind three of us, Michael, Ed and me set off to gather up Sue and the indestructible Roger at Newmarket Station.

A pleasant ride from Jacana Station led us to Westmeadows for morning tea before embarking through the badlands winding through bush and open grasslands on the extremely hazardous loose gravel path. We arrived unscathed at Woodland Historic Park. We found a pilgrim and occasional rider Harry to break bread with us.



We managed to stay upright retracing our route back to Jacana. After the easier ascent to the top we had an action packed half hour with Roger toppling off his bike crossing the road and a puncture for me. Roger survived but decided wisely to catch the nearby train. Luckily we had gun puncture repairer Mike at hand, as my spare tube leaked as well. With Sue's spare tube we headed along Fawcner cemetery to Merlynston for afternoon tea. Somewhere George left us leaving the remaining four to chat very pleasantly in the afternoon sun.

Sue continued on the Upfield line to home and we crossed Sydney Road to Spry Street that led us to the very over engineered and expensive metal bridge that reaches the Merri Creek path to home.

60 or so kms

Report by Ian H