

# WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



## STEELE CREEK

2 MAY

The 2/5/24 started out chilly and overcast but turned out to be a very fine Autumn day as six riders headed off from Jika Jika to do the Steele Creek loop. They were Ed, Michael, Jon, Roger, Sue and leader James.

We rode along Park Street in North Carlton, and then north along the Moonee Ponds Creek to the appropriately named Boeing Reserve; it's adjacent to Essendon Airport. This was our stop for morning tea. Fortunately the door on the Exceloo had been fixed. It was stuck open a week before.



Then it was up the hill to Melrose Drive and alongside the Ring Road before turning south. Went along Wonganella Drive to avoid Keilor Road on the way to the Steele Reserve where we stopped briefly to look at the lake. The next stop was at the top of the hill with the view over the river to Footscray. I noticed several small birds, like willy-wag-tails in the park there.

Lunch was by the river near Poyntons Nursery. By this time the clouds had cleared but there was still no wind. After lunch we continued downstream and decided against afternoon tea at the Boathouse. Afternoon tea was at Fruits of Passion in Bellair Street Kensington. Roger left us after his usual hot chocolate to catch the train from Kensington. Back to Jika Jika via Flemington Bridge and past the Zoo. One rider commented to me that "It was a good day's riding; no-one crashed and no-one fell off their bike".

Report by James

## ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE AND ST KILDA BOTANICAL GARDENS

7 MAY

The morning was fresh as the sun began to emerge from the clouds. Initially Mandy and I were the only females, until Barbara and Pam St arrived to boost our numbers. Jon kindly offered to be tail, and we set off to Westgarth Street, only to be stopped at the railway gates by two trains. Sue joined us here to make a total of nine men and five women.

Once we rode into Yarra Bend Park, you could see the cityscape in the distance, but all you could hear was the chirping, warbling, and squawking of the surrounding bird population. It certainly gave me an appreciation of the calm and peacefulness provided by this trail beside the Yarra River.

Our first stop was at the top of the hill near the convent, to catch our breath and have a drink. We paused again at the top of The Boulevard, then came sailing down the hill to the bridge. Our final stop was just past where the Gardiner's Creek Trail joins the Main Yarra Trail.

Sue guided us to the new morning tea venue in the Botanical Gardens, a refurbished rotunda on the north side. I directed Tim to the café and takeaway where he was able to buy lunch. Barbara was happy to be back riding after a troublesome time with her foot. She and Pam left the group after morning tea. Everyone enjoyed their refreshments for a good half an hour, then made their way back to the entrance, via the toilets.



Cycling along the Tan to the traffic lights and wending our way to the second set of lights, we eventually rode along Southbank. Surprisingly, the pedestrian traffic was light, and we headed out along the Light Rail Trail to Beacon Cove. The trip beside the bay was pleasant. The sea was calm, and we did notice two separate males in the water, perhaps for recovery purposes, as it really was too cold for a swim.

Lunch was at St Kilda Botanical Gardens, but a school group had already commandeered our usual spot. Andrew and Sue led us to another area where there was plenty of room, although it was in the shade.



Instead of returning the same way, I asked Ian and Sue to direct us out past St Kilda Community Garden. We successfully navigated our way across to Ackland Street and noticed Jon was missing. Fortunately, he soon appeared, and we continued to Fitzroy Street, turning right into the bike lane. With Ed's help, we entered Albert Park and took the path around the east side of the lake for a change. The sun was out, with little or no wind and the city buildings stood out in the distance beyond the water.

Roger and Andrew left before afternoon tea, which we enjoyed at Bedggood Café in East Melbourne. Others slowly peeled off on the return trip to Jika Jika.

A lovely ride of 44km, thanks to Ian for recording the distance, to Jon for being tail and to Sue and Ed for their valuable assistance.

Report by Nola.



## POINT COOK COSTAL PARK 9 MAY

The Bay Trail extension at Point Cook was completed and opened in January 2024. A 400-metre boardwalk was added so you can now ride on the Bay Trail from Williamstown to Point Cook Coastal Park. Plus, the picnic facilities and toilets at the park have been upgraded. It seemed time to go and check it out.

In total our group for the day was 9 riders some of which we gathered along the way. We took the train to Williams Landing on the Werribee line. Once off the train we rode the short distance to Boardwalk Park in Point Cook for our morning tea. It's a big park but I could only find one small picnic table.



After our break it was off to the Skeleton Creek path. We rode along the western side which has some parts gravel and narrow but shows a bit more of the creek.

We turned onto the new Bay Trail boardwalk next to the wetlands and the edge of Point Cook and Sanctuary Lakes. The weather was still very hazy so we unfortunately couldn't see the views across the bay. It was good weather for bike riding but not enough wind to clear the haze. I was hoping it would clear by midday and we continued on to Point Cook Coastal Park for our lunch.

As we were riding through the park, we saw a large bird of prey flying low over the paddocks hunting.

At the park the picnic areas are within about 50-100 metres from the beach and some riders went to have a look at the bay. We settled into one of the multiple picnic shelters to eat our lunch. Mike had a slow leak in his front tyre which he fixed with a bright orange ultralight tube, while we looked on commenting and asking questions.

We were getting quite comfortable but it had started to get cold, so it was time to move. Our trip back included visiting the Cheetham Wetlands Observation tower. On clear days you can see a view of the city skyline beyond the wetlands— except not today – unfortunately it was still hazy and we could barely make out the coastline at Altona. However, the group was keen to see how many DBUG riders could fit on a platform built for a lot less people. Roger climbing up the stairs as well to join in, showing how far his mobility has improved since his accident earlier in the year.



We rode back east along the Bay Trail through Altona and Newport. Near the Newport Station we stopped for coffee etc. Some of us decided to catch the train back and others rode on.  
 Weather – Very hazy but couldn't complain too much, as it was dry with barely any wind.  
 Mechanical – Nil. Punctures – 1  
 Another good ride. Approx. 50km to Newport Station.

Report by Sue

## **JACK ROPER RESERVE 14 MAY**

It was one of those days when it was difficult to decide what level of clothing was required to be comfortable temperature wise. The ride proceeded on South Crescent then north on Darebin Creek Trail to morning tea at Norris Bank Park, picking up a couple of riders along the way. Ed arrived during the morning tea stop.

It was then back onto Darebin Creek Trail to then turn west on the M80 Trail to Jack Roper Reserve. The popular option was to sit in the sun for lunch.

After lunch it was back east on the M80 Trail to the Merri Creek Trail to head south to the afternoon tea stop at Pentridge.

There were a couple of oopses heading south on the Merri Creek Trail. I normally ride Merri Creek heading north and missed two turns. On one we took the gravel path instead and the other was a U-turn on a short hill to nowhere. After afternoon tea it was back to Merri Creek Trail as riders dispersed heading for home.

Report by Ian S

## **WATTLE PARK 16 MAY**

It was a perfect autumn day when nine riders gathered for the day's ride. There was myself, Patrick, Ed, Pam, Ian, David, Roger, James and Kathleen. We headed off down South Crescent, across Victoria Road and into Clarke Street. Here we were given a welcoming salute by Wolter and his dog who were out for a walk. We detoured around some extensive road works in Clarke Street. After crossing Station Street we followed the Wingrove Street path to Darebin Parklands and onto the Darebin Trail.

We headed south to the Main Yarra Trail. Crossing the Yarra Trail we went through Hyde Park to the Anniversary Trail. It was an incident free ride along the Anniversary Trail to morning tea at Frog Hollow.



Pam left us after morning tea to make her way home. The rest continued on the Anniversary Trail towards Alamein Station, here James left us to get the train that was waiting there. (for him?) We left the Anniversary Trail here, turning left onto the Gardiners Creek trail and headed east. It was a lovely ride along the Gardiners Creek Trail through lots of parkland towards Wattle Park.



At Burwood Highway we had a small detour for roadworks, here Ed thought he could find his own way only to be turned around by road workers who sent him back to where we started. Continuing on past Deakin University we left the trail and followed Cadorna Street to Elgar Road. We crossed Elgar Road and entered Wattle Park, making our way around it to our lunch stop.



*I think these were play equipment, not bike racks!*



*The trams looked well past being restorable to us, replacement seemed a better option.*

After lunch we retraced our steps to Gardiners Creek and continued along the trail. After passing Box Hill Golf Club we left the trail at Hay Street. We basically followed this street all the way to the railway line at Rutland Road. We crossed the railway line and Maroondah Highway to Dorking Road. It was a rapid ride down Dorking Road to the Bushy Creek path, which we followed all the way to Elgar Road and on to the Koonung Trail.

Report by Andrew

## **MALCOLM CREEK – MOUNT RIDLEY 21 MAY**

We had nine as we boarded the train at Newmarket for Craigieburn. The seven of us who rode from Jika Jika got wet in a rain shower but after Craigieburn we had no more rain, just a cold overcast day.

Malcolm Creek with its contorted characterful red gums was as always a delight. The climb up Mt Ridley was handled with relative ease, the view from the summit was superb and the run down was exhilarating.



Lunch was at the recently renovated picnic area at the Whittlesea City Gardens where a large area was still fenced off due to ongoing works. Over the rusty brown Mad Max Bridge to our next highlight, a detour to the pretty Merri Creek Gorge where we found not one, not two, but 4 supermarket trolleys that someone(s) had gone to considerable effort to dump there!

Then via some industrial streets to the Ring Road and Merri Creek and home using a long whiz down McBryde Street in Fawkner to bypass some of the Creek to keep the whole ride down to a respectable 52km. Unfortunately we were too late to get to any of the 3 coffee options before they all closed at 3pm so we all finished the ride in a state of caffeine deprivation.

Apart from that last disaster there were no injuries, mishaps or other dramas

Report by Jopie

## **UPFIELD PATH RIDE 23 MAY**

It was a bit of a meandering route for the eight riders to get to our morning tea stop in Parkville.

Up St Georges Road to get onto Beavers Road and the Warrk-Warrk bridge, across Merri Creek then the East Brunswick shimmy through to North Carlton and Princes Hill.

Morning tea was next to the Ross Straw Field in Parkville, down the hill from the nature reserve, White's Skink Habitat, also the home ground of the University of Melbourne's baseball club.

After our break we rode through to Park Street where Pam left us. The rest of us continued on through two more parks and then onto Victoria Street to get onto the Upfield path. At Anstey station and Albion Street the seemingly endless building works there directed us towards Cassels Road. The prescribed detour was narrow and cobbled perfectly for "Melbourne Roubaix". It looked dicey and it was. Nola's bike tyre slipped and down she went, luckily no major injuries but a skinned knee to be first-aided.





Anyway, we all rode on and got back onto the Upfield path. Turning off at Merlynston we headed towards the Spry Street bridge taking us to the Merri Creek path. An artist is painting some of the park benches along the path and we were lucky to see one that looked completed.

Turning off and up into the vicinity of Broadhurst Avenue, we took a parallel Glasgow Avenue to Ruthven station.

Our lunch stop for the day was in one of the picnic shelters in Bundoora Park.



We returned via the bike path through Latrobe University and onto the Darebin Creek trail. A stop at a café on the path and then we all went our separate ways.

Weather – Dry and good for the season.

Another good ride. Approx. 45km

Report by Sue

## **SPORTING AND HISTORY TOUR 28 MAY**

On a cool, sunny late autumn morning, Ralph led the group of 12 DBUG members along the Inner Circle Trail, with me on tail. We turned onto the Upfield Trail and headed north. A few blocks later came our first stop, as we looked left across the train line to Millers Rope Works, which was established in 1863. It was an essential industry during the war and Ralph asked the group if we knew which VFL players worked here in the sixties. With a few hints, Tim guessed Ron Barassi and Norm Smith. We cycled on to the Alex Gillam oval, named after the Mayor of Brunswick.

From 1897-1991, Brunswick fielded a football team in the VFA. Ralph recalls big crowds, especially when Mark 'Jacko' Jackson played.

At Moreland Station, we stopped to enjoy morning tea before rejoining the trail until Harding Street, Coburg, where we turned right. A stop at the Coburg football ground brought more local memories, of Fergusons cake shop and Coburg market, where I recall going with my Mum and Grandma. Someone also remembered that Phil Cleary was once the local member for the area.

Pentridge was mentioned and how there were sporting teams inside the jail, who played all their games at home.

Continuing along Harding Street, we reached the Merri Creek trail and turned left, riding past the vegetable gardens and stopping at the toilets near Coburg Lake.

Further up this path, Ralph has issues with his bike seat, so he delegated Ed to lead to Broadhurst Avenue, while he remedied the situation. Aside from the hills, the riding was pleasant beside the creek. When Ralph finally joined us, an Alun key was needed to tighten the seat so it couldn't slip down. It was an easy ride until the turn off onto the track which led to Edwardes Lake, our lunch stop.

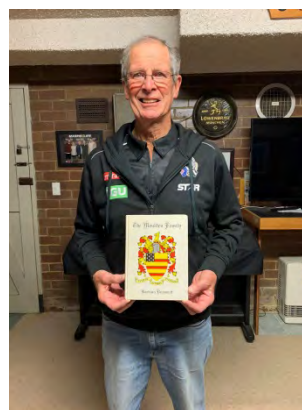


Most people sat on the tiered seating near the flying fox, while Mandy, Jon and I chose a spot in the sun to enjoy our lunch. After lunch 'professor' Ralph told more local history about Edwardes Lake and how he used to sail his Mirror yacht there in the 80s. We were in tiered seating, so it could have been a Uni lecture! He finished with a trivia question completely unrelated to Reservoir. Was it Ed or Tim, or Michael who answered correctly? Apologies to the winner. Pam left for home after lunch.

Our next stop was outside St George's church on the corner of Ralph Street. This was named after Ralph's grandfather, as his great-grandfather ET Moulden, leased and grazed cows on the Leamington Estate, which stretched all the way to the Merri Creek. This is where Leamington Street gets its name from. The homestead was where the Reservoir Post Office is today. At the station Ralph said the train stopped there; then you caught a diesel train to Whittlesea.



We took the Northern Pipe Trail south towards Preston, where we paused at the footy ground for more reminiscing about the former VFA side, then sailed down St George's Road, farewelling Sue, Kathleen, and Roger along the way.



Coffee and more chatting ensued at Four Beans in Westgarth after a very informative and pleasant day's riding 31km.

Report by Nola



## **WILLIAMSTOWN RIDE 30 MAY**

On a warm morning 4 riders turned up and were ready for a cycle to Williamstown when Graham in a bright orange top arrived, keen to ride.

It was a very windy morning and George indicated that when riding towards Fawcner he saw cyclists going past at 90 mph but when he turned south found that he was flying down the path also, so he nearly reached Jika Jika without pedalling.

For the rest of us cycling wasn't too bad (not much headwind) going on the Capital city trail but there were occasional blasts of a sidewind that caused cyclists to wobble a bit. We had to divert off the Citylink path at Dynon Road as we headed towards Footscray as the Footscray Road trail was closed. We reached the Yarraville gardens from Hyde Street after an easy ride and had a stop and chat over morning tea.

When we started again heading south the pedalling was very easy as the tail winds gusted up to 60km/h. When riding under the Westgate Bridge it was strange to see that the huge columns were surrounded in scaffolding and were wrapped in a white plastic. We soon arrived in Williamstown and then rode around the Point Gelibrand Lookout before stopping at the Williamstown Botanic gardens for an early lunch stop slightly out of the northerly wind.

After lunch we headed west and noticed 3 brave souls standing waist deep in the sea at Williamstown Beach before we shot off down Rifle Range Drive and through the Williamstown Linear Reserve until it joined up with the Ralph Willis Reserve.



Riding further west I took the wrong route and nearly ended up lost in the Williamstown Retirement Village. We were lucky that no one was around to keep us in there. Soon we found familiar tracks and headed up Maddox Road into a huge headwind before arriving at Newport where Roger decided to catch a train before any rain arrived. We continued back through Footscray and along Dynon Road and at Arden Street George headed off to catch the Upfield train while the three remaining amigos headed back along Abbotsford Street to Royal Park where Sue headed off north. Finally Graham left at Rae Street leaving only the leader to complete the circuit of about 48 km and arrive home early at about 2pm and before the rain.

Report by Ed