

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



MERENDA RIDE 3 SEPTEMBER

A cool beginning wasn't enough to deter 13 keen cyclists from today's adventure.

Diane came along as a friend of Kathleen to join us for the day. I was keen to chat with Kathleen about her canoe trips in Canada. Ralph led off, on his new e-bike, with Ed on tail, heading towards St Georges Road. Somewhere along this trail beside the tram tracks, Gail and Graham joined us as we rode north.

At Reservoir Station, we stopped for a toilet break and Pam St left us here, making our numbers 14. Cheddar Road saw our first magpie swoop of the season, just letting us know he had returned for another year. Fortunately, he didn't swoop too low and there were no injuries. Ralph turned right at Dole Avenue, following Dumbarton Street to the end, then a couple more right/left turns and we joined the Darebin Creek trail a short distance from our morning tea stop at Norris Bank Park. Two of the picnic areas were already taken, so we scored the one furthest from the toilets.

Today was our first ride for a while, as I recently had cataract surgery and can now read without glasses. Consequently, Ralph was telling everyone how he was being 'nurse on call' with the drops regime. The sky seems bluer, the grass greener and the clouds fluffier now I have 20/20 vision again. The group enjoyed their food, drinks and conversation for half an hour until it was time to move on.

North to the Ring Road Trail, and then west to Murchison Way where we turned right to rejoin the Darebin Creek Trail north. For a change Ralph led the group around the BMX track and sports grounds, along the way to Childs Road. It was on the Henderson Drain path that Roger had issues with his battery cutting out. He soldiered on until South Morang Station, where he reluctantly bid us farewell. He later messaged to say he'd arrived home safely, and the issue was a slight malfunction, now fixed.

By now the sun was out and several riders removed some layers of clothing to suit. Hawkestone Park beckoned for lunch. Again, the closest table was taken by a small bus group, so we split into two tables quite a way apart.



Conversation turned to holidays, as we heard about Sue's trip to NZ in November and Jon's trip to South America and Antarctica. With part of Jon's trip being a motorbike ride across the Andes, we wondered if he was hiding any tattoos under his bike clothing!

As we cycled out of the park, several kangaroos were spotted on both sides of the track. In roughly half an hour, we arrived at Mernda, where several people decided to ride home, or to a station along the way. Seven of us [Ed, Glenys, Diane, Kathleen, Jon, Ralph and me] enjoyed a pleasant coffee at Mernda Central shopping Centre, before catching the train home.

A short ride of about 35km, plus the distance from the appropriate station to your house. Thanks to Ralph for a great day's ride.

Report by Nola

MULLUM MULLUM TRAIL 5 SEPTEMBER

Roger was awake at 4am listening to the thunder while most other riders waited a few more hours before deciding whether to venture out for a ride. There was a thunderstorm over Northcote/Fairfield in the early hours, however five brave souls that turned up at Jika Jika by 9.30am to venture out after the week of wild winds. At least it wasn't windy. Roger even turned up ready for action even though he had intermittent motor power on his last ride.

So Sue, Pam S, Roger, Ian H and Colin headed off to the east then along the Eastlink Trail around the freeway construction diversions to stop for morning tea at the Koonung Creek Reserve playground, and have a friendly chat. After the break Pam headed for home while the remainder rode along the trail and up a couple of hills before joining the Mullum Mullum Trail just past the freeway tunnel entrance.

It was a pleasant, quiet and reasonably slow ride along the wet Mullum Mullum creek trail. We stopped for lunch near Reynolds Road and put our bikes under cover to avoid the few spots of rain. Luckily they had disappeared when we were ready to start riding again. It was some more pleasant riding with a slight diversion just before Beasleys' Nursery as the bitumen on the trail was being replaced. We also took the diversion around Odyssey House to Bonds Road only to have to skirt around fallen tree branches from the recent winds.



On the way back we were trying to beat the approaching rain but a couple of riders had to stop to put on rain protection and by the time we reached Alphington it was raining constantly but lightly. It was a good day's riding covering about 57km with only slightly damp conditions at the end.

Report by Ed

NEWPORT LAKES 10 SEPTEMBER

Another perfect Spring Day for bike riding, so 15 keen souls set off at 9.30. Pam S joined us along the way, and it was an easy ride to morning tea at Yarraville Gardens. The garden beds planted with pansies and clivias were looking very colourful. Pam left for grandmother duties, and we were back to 15.

The sea was sparkling as we headed around the bay and the ride across the rifle range presented no problems. We headed up the slender bike path on the road once we were across the range before taking a turn right into a quieter side street that led directly into Newport Lakes Park. Our usual lunch spot had already been claimed but there was another spot further around the park.



I happened to mention that Andrew had led a more scenic way home but that I had not had a chance to recce the way. Sue assured me that she knew the way and would assist with navigation. We therefore headed off through the park and thanks to Sue and Ed made it safely back to Footscray Arts Centre for afternoon tea. Roger and George had both headed to the station rather than afternoon tea, so the numbers were dwindling.

We slowly had riders head directly for home on the way back to Jika Jika so the group slowly diminished. I would like to thank Sue and Ed for their assistance with navigation, Paul for carrying the medical kit and Jopie for being whip.

A pleasant ride of 47 kms.

Report by Glenys

WESTERN PORT BAY TRAIL 12 SEPTEMBER

Leaving from outside Somerville Station (Mornington Peninsula) at 10am for the ride start. Unexpectedly there was plenty of parking at the station. The weather was coolish with patches of sunshine intermittently, but generally quite good for riding.

The Western Port Bay trail runs mainly along the active rail line to Hastings. MT at Hastings on the foreshore at the end of the jetty. From there we took the boardwalk through the marshes around Sandstone Island and stopped at Jacks Beach Reserve. Some wire on road and bush tracks to arrive at Stony Point for lunch. Continue on via Crib Point and back on the Western Port Bay trail through bushland, up through Tyabb to Hastings for a cuppa in the coffee shop at the end of the pier. Then return to Somerville via the same trail.

If we do it again could consider starting at Hastings and having lunch on the beach at Somers.

Special mention to Roger who trained down and back, a big day!



Report by Jon

WATTLE PARK VIA HAWTHORN AND BACK CREEK 17 SEPTEMBER

'There was movement down at Jika Jika for the word had passed around
That a ride to hilly Hawthorn's on today.
There was morning tea at Fairview, and then lunch at Wattle Park,
So 17 riders had gathered to the fray.'

(apologies to Banjo)

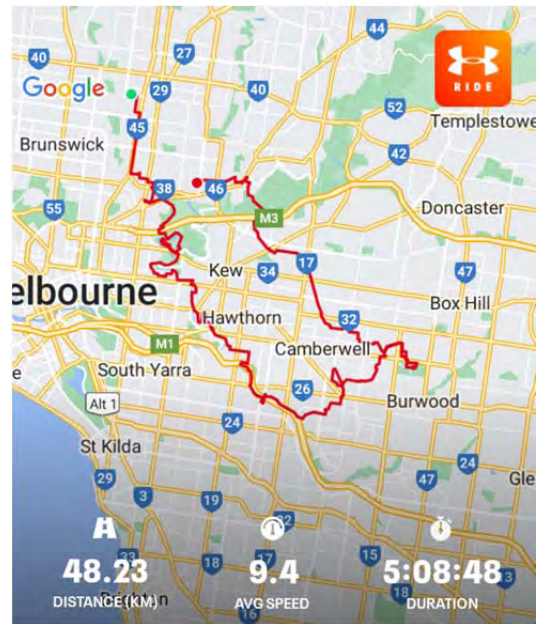
We only lost one permanently from morning tea and one temporarily as Di rejoined us at Wattle Park for the rest of the ride.

The weather was kind; a bit cold to start with but slowly morphing into a beautiful day to the extent that some bare arms and legs made an appearance. The grumbles about the few smallish to mediumish hills were kept down to a tolerable level, probably partially due to the sprinkling of Ebikes and there were no punctures, crashes or other dramas to mess us round, other than a minor detour caused by a landslip along Back Creek which did add in a slightish smallish uppish section but I don't think anyone noticed.



We visited the Gipps Street Bridge site to ogle at the amazingly strong and expensive looking ramp that is now progressing steadily and everyone seemed to enjoy the incidental tour of the huge and expensive looking houses/mansions in both Hawthorn and Canterbury too.

We were too late for coffees at the Alphington Food Store but the Bean Counter in Fairfield, which stays open till 4pm now, comes highly recommended and the milkshakes and carrot cake are pretty good as well.



Overall a goodish day.

Report by Jopie, photos by Ed, ride map by Ken

WERRIBEE RIVER AND SKELETON CREEK 19 SEPTEMBER

Three souls, Ian, Ed and Michael set forth to North Melbourne Station to rendezvous with Roger and David M at Werribee Station. From here we followed the Werribee River Path to the beginning of the Federation Trail to head towards the mansion for MT.

As the leader it was incumbent upon me to be attacked by the same magpie that greeted me last week at the same spot. Due to my heroism the rest of the party were bird free.

From the lovely mansion grounds we trundled along Duncans Road battling strong winds across the freeway until we met the Federation Trail with the wind behind us - a collective sigh was heard from all.

We returned the way we came because the bridge on the lower southern grounds that we normally cross is out of action after floods, and restoration is way down on the council priority list.

Leaving the federation trail we traversed some Point Cook streets until we reached the Skeleton Creek trail and the wetlands leading us to The 100 Steps Of Federation for lunch.

David and Roger left us along Altona Esplanade to catch a train leaving the remaining three to follow Maddox Street to Newport and some delicious coffee at Fat Controller Coffee cafe.



We followed the well worn trail back home and finally left the wind behind.

A transcript of the afternoon coffee break conversation is available on the latest bug podcast. 65km

Report by Ian H

CRAIGIEBURN TRAIL (TRAIN TO BROADMEADOWS) 24 SEPTEMBER

Six keen riders were ready to ride on an overcast windy morning. Wolter turned up to say hello and show off his snappy ebike but indicated he only came to wave us off and not come on the ride. We rode out along the Capital City Trail past the zoo around the Flemington Bridge but tried to take a short cut through Debney Park high rise only to find the way blocked by construction barricades however, we found a way through then soon arrived at Kensington Station to catch a train to Broadmeadows. Sue joined the ride there. At Broadmeadows George and Andrew met us and we set off for a short ride to the Johnston Street Reserve for a cuppa and chat.



After the rest we started down a relatively steep hill to the Broadmeadows valley, but soon found that the strong headwind made riding a strenuous slog as the ride was also slightly uphill for a long time. Wolter's bike would have been a bonus on this section of the ride. Along the way we passed plenty of magpies who seemed unconcerned by a group of elderly cyclists. We had a number of stops along the way for rest and recovery, but by the time we reached the top of the long incline the wind had eased. Roger and George with their ebikes were not troubled by the wind or the uphill ride, while the remainder were happy to ride on flat surfaces to Craigieburn.

We continued through Meadow Heights and Roxburgh Park on bike paths and local streets before reaching Craigieburn. At the shopping centre George and Andrew suggested a nearby park near the sports stadium would be a good place for lunch. After the easy ride George had some energy to burn and tried out the playground equipment.

After lunch we made our way for a short ride along the Malcolm Creek Linear Park Trail then headed toward the Galada Tamboore path where the tailwinds and slight downhill made riding a breeze. Along the way George had some electrical problem while the leading group sailed away downhill at high speed. Eventually the wiring on George's bike was fixed and he caught up with the waiting riders near the Melbourne Freight Centre at Epping.

We soon got onto the Merri Creek Trail and headed towards Pentridge for our coffee stop, but on arriving there at 2.58 found that the suggested coffee shops were all closing so it was back on the bikes for more downhill riding with various riders departing along the way so that only Roger and Ed ended back at Jika Jika after riding about 62 km.

Report by Ed

ANNIVERSARY AND GARDINERS CREEK TRAILS 26 SEPTEMBER

9 riders gathered at Jika Jika for what, on paper at least, looked like a cruisy ride.

We set off on the familiar route east along South Crescent, Clarke Street and Wingrove Street then through Darebin Parklands to the Darebin Creek Trail to go under the Eastern Freeway, across Kilby Road, through Hyde Park to join the Anniversary-Outer Circle Trail. We took this trail, which becomes simply the Anniversary Trail at some point, all the way to Frog Hollow Reserve for morning tea.

After morning tea we continued along the trail heading towards Gardiners Creek Trail. At Ashburton Station George saw a train heading towards Alamein Station and decided to leave the group here and wait for the train to return and carry him homeward.



The remaining riders continued on and turned right to head north-west along Gardiners Creek Trail. We arrived at the designated lunch stop at TH King Oval/Pavilion quite early and all agreed to ride further to Sir Zelman Cowen Park for lunch, which was still a bit early. After lunch we continued west along Gardiners Creek Trail to join the Main Yarra Trail and head towards home.

As we got closer to Jika Jika riders peeled off to head home more directly.

It was indeed a very cruisy ride of 40km which ended earlier than most other rides. A very pleasant day's ride.

Report by Colin

Apologies to those who submitted photos which do not appear. Many do not convert well to pdf so I have had to leave them out.