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WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



Vale George Durbridge

A sad loss, on Monday 21st October our friend and fellow Saturday rider, George Durbridge, passed away after a couple years of declining health. Our sincere condolences to Christine, son Gavin and daughter in law Tobii.

George had ridden with and at times lead the Saturday group for a couple of decades and endeared himself by organising many non-riding social events, as well as our regular Saturday ride, George would organise impromptu rides, he would call for participants in the face of a pleasant weather forecast or a long weekend, including even one trip to New Zealand.

He had the skills, knowledge and sometimes even parts to solve most bicycle problems.

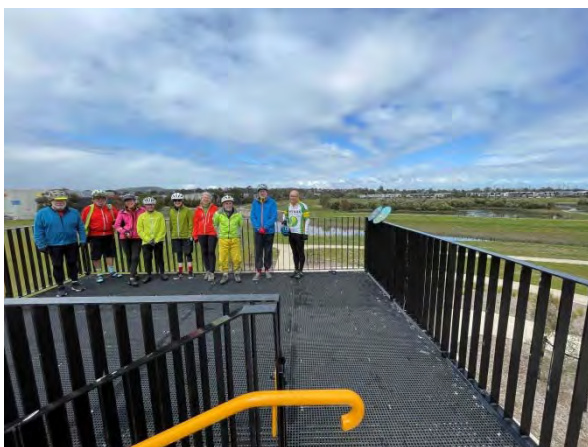
My first contact with George was through our common interest in recumbent cycling, at that time I was riding a long wheel base "linnier" and he a tadpole trike. In recent years we swapped, I on the tadpole, he on the "linnier" but he, unlike me, provided his own motive power while I availed myself of pedal assistance.

I personally have lost a beautiful friend, good humoured, generous to a fault and always fun to be with. He will be so missed.

By David Downing

CARIBBEAN GARDENS & SCOTCHMANS CREEK 1 OCTOBER

The day started with a minor hiccup re what station we were departing from and one member had to get the next train from Richmond, but eventually 10 of us were assembled at Upper Ferntree Gully and very soon were enjoying a leisurely morning tea. The heavens opened with steady heavy drizzle as we sped down Ferny Creek and past both Waterford Valley Lakes and Rowville Lakes to the newly opened Stamford Wetlands by which time the rain had stopped for the day, letting us enjoy the paths, bridges and lookout there in dryness.



Next was the very interesting cruise around the Caribbean Business Park with its huge factories and interesting architecture. Lunch was at Jells Park and then the long, steady but not too steep climb up to Glen Waverley. The payoff was a long wonderful downhill run down Scotchmans Creek, a lovely creek valley, and then homeward on the much ridden Anniversary Trail.

Afternoon tea was to be in Burwood but we got there too close to their 3pm closing time so a quick look at google maps told us that Fordhams opposite Hartwell Station was open till four. Five of us stopped there and found it to have excellent ambience and have it earmarked for future use. Roger had left at an earlier station and the other four had kept going sans coffee. The path over Chandler Highway was closed on the east side yet again and I was the only one to go past Jika Jika as that was on my direct way home.

An interesting, longish day with only 20 minutes of crappy weather and a new coffee shop.

Report by Jopie

ROSSTOWN TRAIL 3 OCTOBER

With a Spring forecast of 23C and school holidays there were lots of people and dogs enjoying some off lead time.

Our route took us south along the Anniversary Trail to East Malvern Station. Morning tea was at a familiar location with one rider vying for the brightest hi-vis of the day. The photo tells it all.



Across busy Dandenong Road and along to Hughesdale Station to the Djerring Trail.

Turning towards the city we rode past Murrumbeena and Carnegie Stations. The Djerring Trail is really well set up, but I was guessing a bit on the day as to which stations we were passing. They are enormous stations without much signage from ground level.

A bit further along we turned south onto Cosy Gum Road. Making our way down eventually to Oakleigh Road still in Carnegie. Just after Grange Road and getting closer to our lunch stop, we started to see a few Rosstown Rail Trail signs. The trail was where there are now residential streets. We stopped for lunch at the EE Gunn Reserve.

We returned to Westgarth via Elwood Canal (tide was very out), St. Kilda & Albert Park Lake (no young swans as yet) and then rode along the St Kilda Road separated bike lanes to Princes Walk. Our afternoon coffee stop was in Collingwood.

Another good ride and a very pleasant day. Approx. 50km

Report by Sue

BUNDOORA PARK AND COBURG LAKE – SENIORS WEEK RIDE 8 OCTOBER

Despite countless hours of preparation and the BUG's attendance at the City of Darebin's Seniors Springtime Launch at Preston Market to drum up business, you never know how many you're going to get for these newbie rides. So, it was great to see a clear sky on this particular morning. That was a good omen.

The Subaru driver crossing the raised median strip on Victoria Street to get around stationary vehicles at the level crossing, now that was a bad omen. Community Development Officer (Food Security and Social Support) Charmaine Cauchi was at Jika Jika as arranged to talk to riders about the council's support services, so that was good.

We'd rung the four "willing volunteers" for this ride and one of them, Brian, was unable to come because he'd done something to his shoulder, which was sad. But the other three showed up at Jika Jika, plus an unannounced replacement for Brian, so that was good. Their tyres were even pumped up, which was also good. Last year we only had two volunteers, which was bad. The year before, one newbie had a flat tyre and pulled the pin at Ruthven Station even though we offered to fix the puncture, which was bad.

This year there were 20 riders standing around including our mobile mechanic, Mike, which was good. Twenty people? I had no idea the coffee and muffins at Bundoora Park Café were so delicious but, free is free, right?

There were members coming out of the woodwork.

I'd already switched my bike to the small front chainring to avoid any sudden bursts of speed and so we made a gentle departure from Jika Jika along South Crescent, which was good. We were hopeful that the forecast top of 14 degrees would be exceeded, but the southerly wind seemed uncooperative, which was bad.

It turned out to be a great group with a good mix of skills and riding experience. James was running tail with the first aid kit but there were no dramas as we rode up the Darebin Creek Trail at a moderate pace. With a lot of chat going on it's probably just as well we weren't going faster, which was good.

We hit Bundoora Park bang on 11am, as arranged, and the cafe staff were ready for us, which was also good. So was recently repaired El Presidente Ian Singleton, who'd been expecting his coffee voucher somewhat earlier, which was bad.



After a lengthy break, 13 "stayers" headed off to Coburg Lake for lunch, including newbie Trudi, who'd decided to ride her well-travelled e-bike home to Lalor after lunch. Ed continued his tail gunner role. We'd offered the newbies the option of going up Purinuan Road with us and catching the train from Ruthven Station, as Pam St. was doing, but there were no takers, which was bad. Pam's departure did leave us with 12 instead of unlucky 13, which was good.

The other seven headed back down the Darebin Creek Trail with James, in search of their next free mocha latte no doubt. Council Travel Choices Officer Heidi Marfurt reported seeing a number of rowdy cyclists near the southern end of the trail in Alphington, which is bad, but this meant they must have made it back, which was good.

Thanks to Ed and James for running tail and to those who helped with shepherding the big group. Couldn't have done it without you.

Report by Wolter

MAIN YARRA TRAIL AND MULLUM MULLUM CREEK TRAIL 10 OCTOBER

Originally planned for Diamond Creek (train return from Eltham) however the Hurstbridge line was closed for almost all of October. (we think to widen the railway bridge under Greensborough Road.) Instead we did a non-train day with a return ride to Beaselys Nursery on the Mullum Mullum Creek. On the journey out via the Main Yarra Trail, which was dry and firm, we had morning tea at Possum Hollow Playground. Further out we stopped at Pontville homestead. This is the first homestead in Doncaster/Templestowe and the most easterly home in Melbourne when built in the early 1840s. Then lunch at Beasleys Nursery and early coffee at Petty's Orchards on return. Around 45 km



Report by Jon

WERRIBEE TO JIKA JIKA 15 OCTOBER

It was another early start on a calm day. Fourteen keen riders were ready for the ride from the west to Jika Jika. We set off towards North Melbourne Station and lost or left behind most of the group at the first traffic lights. This happened a number of times where the leading riders made it through the lights while the others had to wait. We rode past the Zoo then along Abbotsford Street to the station and had to wait 8 minutes for the Werribee train. Roger jumped on at Footscray to make 15 riders who alighted at Werribee.

After a wee stop we were on our way around the river but diverted just before the start of the Federation Trail to avoid the pesky aggressive magpie and stopped for a cuppa at the Soldiers Reserve Playground next to the Werribee High School in Duncans Road.

While there the wind came up and Nola's bike blew over. Back on the bikes and riding along the Federation Trail alongside the old open sewer we had to ride into a reasonable headwind, however we soon turned east and the wind wasn't so bad. Ken left us near Williams Landing and rode to the station to catch the train home. There were a number of new sections of the path and some of the landscaping was still being completed in the sections before Williams Landing. Luckily the path had a number of bridges over busy roads but each of these required a bit of a slog riding up the slope and into the headwind. Ralph, Pam and Paul and even Wolter were smiling as they cruised up the hills with their epower bikes.



Along the way we saw hundreds of brand new trucks waiting to be sent to the showrooms or to be consigned to new owners. At Kororoit Creek the Federation Trail was closed so we diverted along the Kororoit Creek Trail and stopped for lunch at the relatively new seats and tables at the GJ Hoskin Reserve in Altona North.

After a lengthy stop on the sunny day many riders applied more sunscreen before we headed off under the freeway and into Braybrook, then along the newly re-opened section of path alongside the Freeway until we reached the path along the Stoney Creek, then turned off towards Yarraville and rode alongside the railway line to Footscray where Roger headed for the station.

The remaining riders stopped at the Footscray Milking Station Café for refreshments. Luckily there were 2 spare tables outside and we arrived not long before closing time. When we were getting ready to go a couple more Apple Danish pastries appeared as they would otherwise be thrown out. Pam on one table ended up with the knife and had to work out the angles to make up 8 portions, (45 degrees) so that all had a fair share.



On the bikes again in sunny weather we headed along Footscray Road to check out the latest freeway construction before turning off and riding up the Moonee Ponds Trail and then the tiring riders headed past the Shinboners footy ground, through Royal Park and past the Carlton footy ground before riding back to Jika Jika on the Capital City trail.

Along the way Wolter and Ed peeled off leaving Pam, Paul, Mandy, Nola, Ralph, Jon, Ian, Colin and Michael to compete the circuit by about 3.45pm.

Ride distance about 60 km.

Report by Ed

MARANOA GARDENS 17 OCTOBER

Another Thursday mission with five elite riders: Sue, Ed, Michael, Colin, Roger and me coming up the rear or should I say leading.

Leaving Wellington Street and Powlett Street we skirted the MCG and Gosch's Paddock crossing the railyards and the Yarra to the Botanic Gardens for MT. We had the company of an overly friendly duck who was convinced that we were hiding food. Correct.

We followed the river until we hit Gardener's Creek, where the Ferndale path reaches the Anniversary, wandering a few backstreets to Canterbury, Balwyn and our lunch destination Maranoa Gardens. Not finding suitable seating we walked to nearby Beckett Park and our familiar lunch spot.



After lunch it was a long downhill ride through a few suburban parks, Kew High and finally Wilson Reserve. We continued along the Yarra until we reached the Alphington Food Store for afternoon tea.

We sat outside and discussed early computers and a master class from Michael on the printing business over a relaxed coffee.

Most were nearly home except for Sue and Roger who had further to go.

A 46km ride.

Report by Ian H

RUFFEY CREEK TRAIL 22 OCTOBER

I was surprised on arriving at Jika Jika for the beginning of the ride to find a large group keen to enjoy the day. Quite a few of these were new faces, some of whom had been on the Seniors day ride and others who had found us on the web page. When we set off there were 18 riders.

Not knowing the ability of some of the group I kept the ride at a fairly easy pace, everyone seemed to cope well.

The usual route was taken through Darebin Parklands, around The Boulevard, along the NE and SE sides of Chelsworth Park to the Main Yarra Trail, to Possum Hollow Playground for morning tea. The large group spread out to the various seats available.

Continuing on we went around the Banyule Wetlands to the bridge across the Yarra River where Ruffey Creek flows in. All riders coped with occasional short, steep parts of the ride, particularly the climb up Eumeralla Avenue to Montpellier Reserve.

We arrived somewhat early at Ruffey Lake for lunch which was ok as the weather forecast predicted 30c temperature for later in the afternoon.

Lunch completed, we rode towards Doncaster Road past Schramms Reserve, behind the Municipal Offices, then via the Doncaster Road underpass, which some were not familiar with, before riding down Whittens Lane to cross Tram Road and join the Koonung Creek Trail.

Along the Koonung Creek Trail we had to make a significant detour due to the works which seem to expand and encroach more each time we pass.

As we got close to Hahndorf's Fine Chocolates some of the group elected to continue on towards home, thanks to Sue for guiding this group back, the remainder went for coffees, iced chocolate, milkshakes, etc, and the complimentary chocolate.

After the refreshments we rode back the way we had ridden out, but avoiding the steep climb to Darebin Parklands. As we went along riders left the group as they got close to home and just 2 made it back to Jika Jika.

A ride of about 40km with no untoward incidents.

Report by Colin

BUNDOORA AND SPRINGTHORPE 24 OCTOBER

A kangaroo caused a slight delay in setting off from Jika Jika this morning. This inconsiderate marsupial managed to damage a Metro train near Calder Park Raceway so badly that the train was unable to proceed. Roger was held up for about an hour on the train but made it to Jika Jika only a few minutes late. He had rung to let me know what was happening.

We rode north along the St Georges Road path to Reservoir Station where the group voted to press on to Norris Bank Park for morning tea. When checking out the ride earlier in the week I was swooped about five times, but not struck, by a persistent magpie, As a result we took a detour along Borrie Street, Reservoir where I had a brief disagreement with a traffic management person, but magpies were avoided. We arrived at Norris Bank Park about 20 minutes later in bright sunshine. Pam left us to ride home down the Darebin Creek Trail. It was an odd day weather-wise in that we were too hot in the sun and then cold in the shade a few minutes later for most of the day. Then along McKimmies Road and another slight detour to avoid the lack of the bike lane. The bike path is still closed along the north side of the Ring Road at Plenty Road. We went around the back of Parade College and were pleasantly surprised to see Nola when we stopped for a short break. Lunch was at the west end of the NJ Telfer Reserve.

A little later we enjoyed a short walk in the Greswell Forest which would have been very peaceful except for some raucous music. Then a brief ride through Springthorpe which is a fairly new residential area built on the grounds of the old Plenty Hospital. Then through La Trobe Uni and onto the Darebin Creek Trail and it was early enough to get coffee at Artiga in Thornbury.

An easy ride of about 48km. Other rides were: Ian H, Michael, Sue, Wolter and Jon.

Report by James

BRIGHTON BEACH 29 OCTOBER

A decent sized group met at Jika Jika ready for the ride. I counted 17 cyclists as we were about to leave, then Ian H arrived, and Pam St joined in. Soon after, Bruce, Franca and Graham appeared, so at 22, this was our largest number since Covid.

Steve volunteered to be tail, and I announced that we would regroup near the zoo, as it was inevitable that not all of us would be able to cross major roads in one set of lights.

It was cool and cloudy as we began our journey, and I regretted not wearing a coat as protection from the wind. However, the sun slowly came out and we warmed up by our first stop just after the zoo. Roger rode ahead and Wolter left to 'hide in the grass', taking our photo as we zoomed downhill.



An easy ride on the capital city trail took us to Harbour Esplanade, where we made a toilet stop. From here, it was a further 15 minutes, via the light rail trail, to the rotunda at Beacon Cove, our morning tea spot. Steve told us Ian H had left and Pam St was intending to leave us at the Elwood Canal. Ken would find a station after lunch he said. Much lively conversation followed while we tucked into our food and drinks.

Then it was literally straight down the Bay Trail to Brighton. But wait – there were detours and concreting happening along the path; the first being as we turned off The Esplanade to ride towards the pier. Apparently one of the traffic wardens was not happy with me as I pedalled on the wrong side of the road. Thanks James, I was completely unaware of this! Near the St Kilda Pier renovation, a further detour took us off the path briefly. Before Elwood, we had to detour onto the walking path and be extra careful of the pedestrians. Eventually we arrived at Brighton Beach on the clifftop which overlooks the bathing boxes.

Being a big group, we needed to separate to fit around tables, which were scattered around this park. Some people chose the cliff area, even relaxing on the grass, while others found a seat with a back and another table near the shelter shed, as you'll see by the photos.





During the return journey, several people left for home. We noticed a solitary swimmer at St Kilda, as we cycled towards Albert Park Lake.

Roughly 12 riders had afternoon tea at Fitzroy Gardens, where I discovered they only take card payments. Many thanks to Michael for coming to my rescue! A lovely day's ride of 50 km.

Report by Nola

MULLUM MULLUM CREEK TRAIL 31 OCTOBER

Six riders set off down South Crescent towards Darebin Parklands. From here we went down the steep downhill and then onto Ivanhoe Boulevard. We soon left the Boulevard and rode down to the Yarra Trail near Ivanhoe Grammar.

Arriving at the bridge over the Yarra we crossed to join the Koonung Creek Trail. It was then a long uphill ride on the Koonung Creek Trail. We stopped for morning tea at the usual playground.



Not long after we resuming our ride we encountered a trail closure which necessitated a long detour through some hilly back streets. Rejoining the trail it was time to tackle the series of big hills at the end of the Koonung and on the Eastlink Trails.

We turned onto the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail and started downhill return journey. It is a lovely ride through the forest beside the Mullum Mullum Creek, albeit with a few short, steep sections.

Lunch was at the Mullum Mullum Reserve. After lunch we continued down the Mullum Mullum before joining the Main Yarra Trail near Petty's Orchard.

We continued on towards Westerfolds Park and then into Banyule Flats. At the junction with the Diamond Creek Trail David left us heading towards the train at Eltham. At Possum Hollow Playground we stopped for afternoon tea.



Following afternoon tea we continued along the Main Yarra Trail through Yarra Flats and onto Ivanhoe Boulevard at Eaglemont Tennis Club. After crossing Heidelberg Road we arrived at Alphington Station where we concluded our ride and each went our separate way home.

Report by Andrew