

# WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



## MELBOURNE CUP DAY – RIDERS CHOICE 5 NOVEMBER

No report was submitted for this ride.

## FERNY/DANDY/BLIND CREEKS 7 NOVEMBER

I pre-rode this one only to discover that Melbourne Water had closed the stormwater barrage we used to use to get across the Tirhatuan Wetlands Conservation Reserve from Illawarra Avenue in Rowville to the Dandenong Creek Trail. It's been closed before after major storms, but this time the closure looked permanent, with corflute signs revealing OHS concerns. There were protest notices as well.

Jopie had already beaten me to leading a ride through the new Stamford Park wetlands, would this be the final straw?

The only alternative I could see to get from Ferny Creek to Dandenong Creek in this area (without using a rough single track) was via Wellington Road's shared path and the Eastlink Trail. Not ideal. The subsequent recce revealed warning signs for a short detour off the Blind Creek Trail, due to paving works starting on .... 7 November.

As they say, every cloud has a silver lining, but I don't know who "they" are.

The due date arrived, and it was cloudy. Roger phoned to say the trains were a mess because of a trespasser on the Sunbury line but he would make it to Ringwood Station. Ed was going to meet us there as well.

Thanks to my PTSD after getting my front wheel stuck in a rear carriage door at curving Westgarth Station, we aimed for the middle of the train, which has disabled spaces in the back of carriage three and the front of carriage four.

We had a good run to Richmond, with tail rider Colin keeping track of people going through the Myki machines ... "leave no one behind". We were in time for the limited express before our train so decided to catch it and let Roger meet up to us at our Upper Ferntree Gully morning tea stop.

He actually managed to get on board the same train, but only at the last second.

Ian H. texted at 9.30am, from Jika Jika, to ask where we were, but then managed to find the West Brunswick Shimmy and Merri Creek Trail for his own 40km ride.

The weather ended up being pleasant after our morning tea stop at Wally Tew Reserve.



Lots of starlings around, purple swamphens and even some very tame sulphur-crested cockatoos at Jells Park while we were having lunch. Apparently, it's not real sulphur.

Hitting the Blind Creek Trail for the run back we rode around the new wetland behind Knox shopping centre, probably courtesy of Westfield.

There was a brand-new stretch of asphalt with a paving machine at the far end, well before the advertised detour, and the guy just let us ride on it! Love the smell of fresh hot-mix.

No sign of the advertised detour, but we figured it was probably the paving crew we saw who were running a day late.

On the Ringwood – Belgrave Trail we left James and Roger at Bayswater Station and continued on to Ringwood on the new section of the trail to Bedford Road, before catching the train.



Kathleen stayed onboard but Mike had talked the remaining three of us into riding home from East Camberwell via the Anniversary Outer Circle Trail.

No sign of Ed on our way home but Roger texted at 4.40pm to say he'd made it to Gisborne. Long day.

Report by Wolter

## **ROXBURGH PARK, WOODLANDS & GOWANBRAE 12 NOVEMBER**

10 riders joined for this rather challenging ride. 8 rode from Jika Jika, one (Roger) was already on the train we caught from Newmarket and George was waiting for us at Roxburgh Park. Weather was dry and fairly still but it did get a bit warm, probably up to 27, by the afternoon.

We left Jika Jika at 9.30am sharp as advertised and set a brisk pace to Newmarket to catch the 10.08 train. It took us 30 minutes. The 10.08 was delayed but the previous train was also late so we caught it at 10.06! Luckily Roger had caught the earlier train too from Southern Cross.

Soon we were enjoying morning tea at the Roxburgh Park Homestead. Next stop was Greenvale Reserve, a possible early lunch spot, but it was voted to continue on to a later lunch at West Meadows. James & George left us at Greenvale for a leisurely cruise home whilst the rest of us looped through the Eastern part of Woodlands Park and up to the top of Mt Gellibrand on some pretty rough gravelly and, at times, steep roads. An unnamed rider lost traction on a particularly steep loose bit resulting in some lost skin; our first casualty. After whizzing down Aitken Creek Path we had a leisurely lunch in dappled shade at good old reliable Westmeadows. Two more departed here while the remaining 6 of us deviated into new terrain in Gowanbrae for some great views over the creek valley below. Then down Moonee Ponds Creek and, via Westbreen Creek, across to Merri Creek and home. Unfortunately the Boot Factory cafe had closed as had Ceres cafe so the caffeine cravings in the group were unassuaged.

Report by Jopie

## HEDGELEY DENE GARDENS 14 NOVEMBER

Six riders left Jika Jika just after 9.30am taking the usual route through Darebin Parklands, south east along Darebin Creek Trail, under The Eastern Freeway, across Kilby Road, through Hyde Park, then on to the Anniversary/Outer Circle Trail heading for Frog Hollow for morning tea. Arriving at Frog Hollow we found that Arborists were hard at work trimming/removing a large Eucalypt and as the noise was deafening we rode further on to find a suitable table in Hartwell Station Reserve for morning tea.



Proceeding on we made a very slight detour onto Prosper Parade due to concreting works being carried out at the intersection with Dion Rail Link. We made good progress and arrived at Gardiners Creek Trail where we headed north west turning left at Moira Street to take the overpass at Darling Station and then crossing Malvern Road to head for Hedgeley Dene Gardens where we were to have lunch. The ride leader, yours truly, got completely disoriented on the way and had to double back to the correct route. We arrived at the Gardens at 11.30, which was too early for lunch.

(I must remember to study the maps more for this ride to add at least a half hour between morning tea and lunch.)

So instead of stopping for lunch Ed led us to, around and through Central Park where we admired the plants, including Orchids, in the Conservatory.

Then it was back through Hedgeley Dene Gardens, across Malvern Road, down Stanley Street, along Allenby Avenue, under the railway line and Monash Freeway to be on the Gardiners Creek Trail again. We then stopped at George Pepperell Pavilion for lunch.





The ride home was along familiar paths; proceeding to the Main Yarra Trail /Capital City Trail, having to make a detour along Crown Street, River Street, River Boulevard, Victoria Street then back on to the Trail via the southern end of Walmer Street. Then along Grosvenor Street, Southampton Crescent, S Audley Street, Nelson Street, Church Street, Murray Street, Victoria Crescent, Gipps Street, Nicholson Street, Marine Parade, Paterson Street and Yarra Street to Abbotsford Convent complex for coffee, cakes, ice creams, etc.

Finally it was back to the Main Yarra Trail /Capital City Trail and home for all.

A good, casual, stress free ride of about 42km.

Report by Colin

## **WILLIAMSTOWN BEACH 19 NOVEMBER**

Glenys phoned me on Monday morning, asking if I would swap my ride with hers, so Williamstown Beach became the destination one week early, and Glenys' Craigieburn ride would occur on Tuesday 26 Nov.

A cloudy morning with a promise of 19C saw 17 riders meet at Jika Jika at the allotted time.

It was great to welcome back Ian Singleton, after his prolonged absence due to back surgery. He has done his rehab, followed the doctor's instructions to the letter and has done a couple of short rides on his own. Trudi and Ken, who tried out our group on the Seniors Week ride, returned for this Tuesday's adventure. James agreed to be on tail and I informed everyone that we would regroup near the zoo as usual.

Near the North Carlton neighbourhood house, a small dome tent was pitched in some bushes and a little further along, I spotted a couple of rabbits scamper across the path into the scrub. While we regrouped near the zoo, Pam Stiles rode on ahead and waited near Flemington Station. People took the opportunity to have a drink and take off their jackets. Then we sailed down the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail, crossing Footscray Road on the city side of Costco, as that is where the trail currently ends. Here we turned west and, immediately after Costco, we were stopped by a boom gate, as a truck manoeuvred back and forth in a tight space. It was a very busy and noisy work site. Wolter emailed me later that the bridge we cycled across next had only opened that day.



*New bridge open to traffic [taken from Bicycle network website]*

*The new bike and pedestrian bridge over the Moonee Ponds Creek at Docklands opened for traffic today, giving riders their own car-free crossing for the first time. Previously riders travelling to and from the CBD on the Footscray Road route were required to cross the creek on the footpath of the extremely busy road bridge. It was narrow and there were tight, sharp curves at the connection at both ends—a source of numerous collisions over the years. The new structure is beside the road bridge with twin rails, copious space, and a gently curved connection to the path on the West side of the creek. There is still much construction activity underway on the adjacent road bridge structures, which are being strengthened and fitted with additional lanes while surrounding roads are being resurfaced and utilities being relocated. work that will continue into next year This bridge connects to the existing Footscray Road trail which will remain into the future as an option for riders after the Veloway now under construction is opened next year. Installation of remaining*

*segments of the Veloway continues, as does work to connect the local path network the vivid green cable-stay bridge over Footscray Road closer to the city.*

Footscray Road was a hive of noisy activity on the right and a sea of containers to our left at the docks. The hairiest challenge was in Whitehall Street, where the footpath was closed, forcing us onto the road with the trucks. Ian S had the right idea, riding two abreast, to prevent the trucks from trying to squeeze in beside us. On arrival at Yarraville gardens for morning tea, we discovered the toilet block under reconstruction, so more noise, but at least there was one toilet available. We spread out across two tables to enjoy our drinks and snacks.



Once suitably refreshed, Pam Stiles, Ian H and Steve departed, while 14 of us headed towards Westgate Bridge and Newport.

Listening to conversations behind me, Mandy and Kathleen were having a great discussion about various hikes they had been on or were planning. As we approached Williamstown, we noticed a large group of black swans having a drink near the water's edge, while still more were paddling nearby. After a brief comfort stop in the middle of town, we paused to look at what someone was calling a shot tower, but it was the Williamstown Timeball tower lighthouse at Point Gellibrand. It opened in 1840 and was automated in 1934. Roger explained how it worked. [feel free to google]. Lunch was in Williamstown Botanical gardens, which are very well kept and looking lovely this Spring. Some people had a stroll through the area, while others were content to chat over lunch. Paul showed us photos of the laneway gardens and artwork in Carnegie, which had recently been on Gardening Australia. He may be able to organize a ride to view this next year. Wolter kindly offered to take Ken to a station nearby, so now we were 12. Ian S helped me with directions from Newport, including the crossing with lights right near Westgate Bridge. As we waited for the lights to change someone spied a container ship sailing under the bridge.

Roger said farewell at Footscray Station, the rest of us stopped at the nearby Milking Station in Bunbury Street for coffee. Jopie decided to ride on and skip afternoon tea this week. The coffee was good, the cakes were delicious and reasonably priced, and the staff were hospitable, friendly and welcoming, even putting the umbrellas up in the backyard for us. Ian was so impressed; he gave them a tip. We returned the way we had ridden earlier, and people left the group as we neared their homes.

A good ride of roughly 50km.

Report by Nola

## **WOODLANDS 21 NOVEMBER**

We take off with little fanfare heading for a sometimes brutal ride on a hotish day. So hey, I may hopefully be able to lead this ride with the authority to get the job done.

That said we rode to Newmarket Station with a newbie, Brian, in tow riding to Westmeadows for morning tea. We were joined by Graham and Gael on the way thus making eight in all.

We were all glad to reach Woodlands homestead after bumping along the hot, dusty and somewhat loose gravel pathway.

Lunch was under a shady tree (obviously a gathering place) with frequent bird droppings to sweeten the conversation.



Thankfully the return was mainly downhill as we quickly reached the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail and some blessed shade. Leaving the trail at Ascot Vale we followed the Westbreen Creek to Kent Street and finally Queen Street to the Merri Creek Path sans afternoon tea as the riders were dropping like flies leaving only me to reach Jika Jika.

Around 54kms

Report by Ian H

## **CRAIGIEBURN 26 NOVEMBER**

It was cloudy and ominous when 16 rides set off from Jika Jika, but the raincoats were soon taken off and a fine but sultry day ensued. The ride up the Upfield Path was busy but uneventful, and we went through the rail line crossing at Shorts Road. Wended our way through the road closure at Kent Street and then enjoyed the downhill ride to the morning tea spot in the park before Pascoe Vale Station. It was then just a short ride to get the 11.19 train to Craigieburn.

An easy ride through the streets of Craigieburn with a quick stop at the new shopping outlet so that Cathy, a first-time rider, could pick up some lunch. Hit the bike path and again enjoyed the mainly downhill ride through parklands. We found George having his lunch under shelter on the top of one of the few hills.

Lunch was a bit of a way away and there were a few detours on the bike path that had not been there when I did my recce the week before. Luckily Michael helped guide us back to the bike path.



Rode through the magnificent blooming jacaranda tree lined streets to the park near the Essendon traffic school where lunch was had. The route also meant we could avoid the bumpy wooden pathway on the trail.

Several riders were close to home, so they headed for home after lunch rather than returning to Northcote. The losses continued as we headed back and there were only 7 riders for afternoon tea at Velo Café. The cool room, iced drinks and coffees were very welcome.

All up a ride just over 50kms at a speedy 16.4 kms/hr (that downhill really helps those of us on a road bikes) and the highlight for me was the beautiful purple flowered jacarandas we saw along the way.

Thanks to Pam and Paul for looking after the medical kit and Nola for keeping the group together as the tail.

Report by Glenys

## **HALF MOON BAY (THE FISH AND CHIP RIDE) 28 NOVEMBER**

Eleven riders, including newbies Kathy and Andrew, gathered on a glorious morning at Jika Jika for the day's ride. We set off towards the Capital City Trail which we took towards Footscray Road. On the Moonee Ponds Trail there was some detours but, fortunately, not flooding, despite there having been some very heavy rain the day before.

Arriving at Footscray Road we turned left and after some more detours arrived at Docklands. From here it was along Harbour Esplanade, across Webb Bridge and onto South Wharf Promenade. Almost immediately we turned off the Promenade and made our way behind the buildings and through the car parks to Normanby Road. After a short ride along Normanby Road we turned onto the trail to Beacon Cove at the tram depot.

Arriving at Beacon Cove it was a short ride to our morning tea stop at the band rotunda. While we were having morning tea Glenys stopped to say hello. She was doing a reconnaissance for her upcoming ride on December 10.



After morning tea it was onto the Bay Trail towards our lunch stop at Half Moon Bay. It was such a lovely day that there was a lot to look at on the beach and on the water.



After lunch I think we all felt the need to work off some of those calories. The steep hill (17%) out of Half Moon Bay certainly provided some exercise.

Andrew, Roger and George left us after lunch and headed off to the train station at Brighton Beach. We followed the Bay Trail all the way back to St Kilda before turning off it at Cowderoy Street to head for Albert Park Lake. We rode through Albert Park and onto Moray Street.

Moray Street took us to Queens Bridge Street, the Casino and onto Southbank Promenade. We turned off Southbank Promenade and onto Southbank Boulevard. This bike lane took us to St Kilda Road and onto Linlithgow Avenue. From here we were able to follow the Tan Track to Morell Street Bridge. After crossing the river we rode through the Tennis Centre to the MCG. From here it was through Yarra Park to Clarendon Street. After crossing Victoria Parade we went along the narrow alleyway to Oxford Street to afternoon tea at South of Johnston Cafe.



Following afternoon tea we made our way up Wellington Street, into Clifton Hill, across Merri Creek and into Northcote. By the time I got back to Jika Jika I was the only one left.

Report by Andrew D