

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



SATURDAY RIDE 1 FEBRUARY

Not our usual Rushall Station to Port Melbourne and return, being the 1st ride of the month. This Saturday, after discussion over a cup of coffee the previous Saturday, we decided on a ride to East Keilor (even in the knowledge of it being a site of a gangster shoot out).

Forecast low 30's, no rain.

A pleasant day to start off. We had 6 starters at Rushall and picked up 2 more at Royal Park making us 8 in number. Past Flemington Bridge on to Stubbs Street and under the train line, past the old Town Hall and into the Kensington Cattle Yards Area. I always enjoy riding through this part of Kensington. Over the cattle bridge onto the West side of the Maribynong River.

But alas I got a puncture on the bridge. I sent the group on to the toilet stop just past Flemington Bridge. Changed the tube but was unable to find the cause, so rejoined the group at the toilet.

Stayed on the West side of the river all the way up to the Afton Street Bridge, where we crossed. The zig zag path up the hill took its toll on some riders and foot power had to be resorted too. At the top we spent a few minutes regaining our composure and admiring the view. The down side of the hill gave us our rewards for our efforts.

The Steele Creak path is very verdant, with interesting neighbourhoods, particularly the Quarry area with the big man up the very big ladder.

Coffees at the East Pantry where we enjoyed refreshments and each other's company. No shootings today so we headed back.

We stayed on the East bank of the river all the way back and crossed at the wooden bridge at Riverside Golf club. Back over the cattle bridge we joined the River trail to head to Dynon Road! Less hills. A touch of cramp delayed us a little. Those that had not exited earlier arrived back at Rushall at 3.30pm, the temperature then at 31 deg, having ridden 44 km.

I had grossly underestimated the length of the ride, thinking it would be equivalent to our usual ride. Having ridden the area during covid, familiarity had bred contempt.



At Lily Reserve

ST KILDA BOTANICAL GARDENS 4 FEBRUARY

With the weather predicted to be 36C, I decided to shorten the ride on the previous night, so Ian S put out an email to this end. I had already received notification of 4 people not riding due to the heat.

When I rode up to Jika Jika, it was cloudy and warm at 28C. Roger and Ian S were seated in the shade, waiting to see who else arrived.

Pam St came, but she was walking before it was too hot, and told us to make sure we drank lots of water – ‘yes Mum’ I replied. Jopie rode past initially as he hadn’t seen us, but eventually we were four.

The plan was to ride to the Melbourne Botanical Gardens for morning tea and then turn back. We had a relatively uneventful trip along the Yarra Trail to the Gardens. I stopped after each hill for a drink and we noticed many like-minded cyclists along the way, riding early before it was too hot. Ditto for runners and dog walkers. Thankfully the cloud cover remained and there was a good deal of shade beside the river. At the Gardens, we headed for the rotunda to the right. Upon arrival, there was a man with his mat doing yoga. I turned to mention this to the men and saw that Roger had fallen off his bike. As Ian S and Jopie helped him up, Roger said he’d felt dizzy. I noticed there was some blood and offered the first aid kit, but Roger said no. After ensuring Roger felt ok, we abandoned the idea of morning tea inside the gardens and retreated to a picnic table alongside the river.



Following a longer than usual tea break, Jopie headed for the city, while the rest of us rode towards the sporting precinct of AAMI stadium, the Tennis Centre and the MCG.

The sun was out, and the north wind could be felt, especially up Wellington Street, Collingwood. Ian S left for home in Westgarth Street and Roger did the same at High Street.

It was 11.45 when I arrived back at Sierak’s in Fairfield after 27km, and it felt like high 30sC.

Thanks so much to Pam and Paul, for the cool drinks and company, as we had lunch. This gave me enough energy to drive home.

Report by Nola

MARANOA GARDENS MEANDER 6 FEBRUARY

The phone forecast had been wandering around between 30 and 34 degrees, so I was debating how many would turn up. Mike had already texted that he wouldn't, but I was hoping there'd be six, because I'd already thought of my introduction for the Wobbly report: "Seven suitably sun-screened souls turned up for the ride to Maranoa Gardens".

This was a ride I hadn't led before and hadn't been on for a long while. With the ferocious weather forecast we decided to skip the Royal Botanic Gardens for morning tea.

We dodged the mobile-monitoring bipeds through Yarra Bend Park before coming on a crew setting up a construction yard for erosion repairs to the riverbank near Dights Falls. They hadn't been there the week before and who knows why they must do the riverbank repairs at the same time as the Gipps Street elevated path is being built.

So it was up onto Trenerry Crescent and across busy Johnson Street to get to Gipps, where there remains a big gap (see pic) at the top of the new elevated SUP (shared-user path) while the rest looked pretty much done, and landscaping work was underway.



It seems there are "drainage works" in progress on the south side of the bridge that someone must have forgotten to do before they started installing the bridge sections, but you all know how hard it is to get a plumber to turn up when you want one.

I have since stumbled on a report on the "Gibbs Street Bridge" across a freeway in Portland, Oregon, which was first proposed in 2005, the same year as Yarra BUG started agitating for something to be done about our Gipps Street. Work on the Oregon bridge started in 2011 and was finished in 2012, somewhat quicker than ours, but who wants to take their bike up several floors in an elevator on the way to work (see pic) If you look closely there's someone on the left carrying their bike up the stairs!



We went up Gardiners Creek and on to the Ferndale Trail to have our relocated morning tea at Ferndale Park. Here the Exeloo was about to overflow and no one seemed keen to investigate the blockage so I did a Snap Send Solve. The Exeloomobile had not turned up before we left in haste up Back Creek towards the Outer Circle.

We took the easy road up to Maranoa Gardens, had a relaxed early lunch and then headed downhill to an early afternoon tea at the Alphington Foodstore before the weather got hot. Thanks to Jon for going tail and Colin for taking the first-aid kit back to Jika Jika.

Report by Wolter

SCOTCHMAN'S CREEK, VALLEY RESERVE & THE WAVERLEY TRAIL 11 FEBRUARY

It seemed a long train of riders that set off with the prospect of a day in the low 30s.

Before Dights Falls we diverted to Trennery Crescent to skirt around the Yarra Main Trail erosion works at Abbotsford.

Still in Abbotsford we stopped at the Gipps Street/Colins Bridge to have a look at the progress on the ramp that will replace the steps. With no-one else on the bridge it seemed a good time to stop and have a look. Much of the new ramp has been built and looks great but some more to be installed to join it up to street level. Pam St said that she used to carry her bike and kids up the stairs and had been waiting thirty years for the steps to be replaced.

Our morning break was at the Hawthorn Velodrome/Patterson Reserve where there are multiple seats and tables to choose from in the picnic area. As is sometimes the case on BUG rides the public toilet was playing up. At least one rider was more than slightly surprised when the toilet door opened suddenly and others could not get the door to close.



After morning tea we waved goodbye to several riders that had just come for the first leg of the ride.

The rest of us continued on the Gardiners Creek Trail to East Malvern Station and the start of the Scotchman's Creek Trail. Lunch was at the Valley Conservation Reserve just off the trail. It's a 15ha bushland reserve located in Mount Waverley.

Our return trip was via the Waverley Rail Trail. At Holmesglen Station another few riders took advantage of a train home. The rest of us continued to the Anniversary/Outer Circle line back to Jika Jika.

By the time we got back it was about 26c but the heat was starting to kick in.

One mechanical - A loose rear rim brake, fixed near the start of the ride.

Another good ride. Approx. 52km

Report by Sue

RUFFEY CREEK TRAIL 13 FEBRUARY

The forecast for Thursday Feb 13, 37 degrees, is far too hot for the scheduled ride to Ruffey Lake. The forecast for 11am is 30 degrees with a north wind gusting to 70 kph. Too unpleasant even for a morning coffee ride.

All rides cancelled.

Reported by Andrew

LAURIMAR LAKES, MILL PARK AND DAREBIN CREEK TRAIL 18 FEBRUARY

What beautiful weather we had. Cool and mostly sunny with only a gentle southerly breeze. We started the ride with 15 at Mernda, 13 having come up on the train. This included two newer riders, Mary & Michael.

We wandered our way through the scenic Laurimar Lakes, stopping to admire the massive red gum there, before stopping for morning tea near the Laurimar shopping centre. The loos there looked permanently shut but the nearby community centre had better ones. Then more lakes, a brief A about T when a new path I chose turned out to be a dead end, still more lakes in South Morang and finally lunch at Redleap Reserve, which also had a lake which was being redeveloped and which, to several people's delight, had a takeaway coffee caravan! Some streets took us to the Ring Road where we joined Darebin Creek for the cruise home via one of our favourite coffee stops, Artiga cafe.

Reported by Jopie

JERRING, FRANKSTON, ELSTER TRAILS 20 FEBRUARY

This was a riders' choice day, and I offered up this one following the completion of the shared path along Queens Avenue, next to the Caulfield Racecourse, which was built as part of the level-crossing removal at Glen Huntly Station.



The council's consultation process with residents about the route was apparently so protracted that the Level Crossing Removal Authority ended up deciding on the route but made the council build it as they'd moved on.

The first problem with planning the ride was that everyone was getting sick of the detours along the Main Yarra Trail/Capital City Trail for the Gipps Street ramp and Dights Falls erosion works, so I mapped out a route via Napier Street. Sue was on tail. There were nine of us, who all made it through town via the MCG to Sir Zelman Cowen Park for morning tea, where George's new adjustable seat had to be attended to.

Gardiners Creek took us out to the Outer Circle Railway Linear Park and across towards Hughesdale, where we skipped a bit to get to the Djerring Trail and head northwest towards Caulfield and the new path next to the racecourse.



The transition from the Djerring Trail to Queens Avenue is not great, as that was obviously not part of the job. Despite that, and numerous other gaps, Google Maps is already calling it the Caulfield-Frankston Rail Trail further south.

After crossing the Rosstown trail and making everyone think we were having lunch at E.E. Gunn Reserve (sorry folks, that's on my next ride) we hung a right for the equally salubrious Allnut Park.



George and James left us here to backtrack slightly for the train back to town. Roger decided, very wisely, that he wanted to see where the rest of this ride was going.

It was going along the Elster Creek Trail, although there's no creek anymore just pipes and then a canal, to the Bay Trail before heading to Albert Park Lake for a look at the grand prix preparations. Riders were offered Flinders Street Station for the trip home as we'd nearly clocked up 50km, but instead we headed up William Street to "drop off" Roger near Southern Cross, where he managed to catch the 2.06 home, and Sue at the Upfield Trail junction for her ride home.

Report by Wolter

WOODLANDS HISTORIC PARK 25 FEBRUARY

An unusual Tuesday for this month - Not blistering hot. Ed made the 9am start with about 30 seconds to spare. Group set off pretty much on time taking Inner Circle Rail Trail/Capital City Trail and some back streets in Flemington to Newmarket Railway Station. Sue and Roger were waiting to join us at the station. It was only a short wait and we were on the train to Jacana.

From Jacana it was down the biggg hill to the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail. Ed got to the bottom first. It was then a short ride to Westmeadows Reserve for morning tea. It was then off to the Woodlands Homestead for lunch. The trail was all gravel. Overall the trail in good condition but care was required with some potholes, washaways and loose surface. There were a couple of gates which required dismounting to pass through one at a time.

There was a shaded picnic ground at the homestead for lunch.



After lunch we returned on the same path to the Ring Road. I had intended to “be mean” and lead the ride back up the biggg hill. Sue proposed the more humane alternate longer but more gradual climb back up to Jacana station. From Jacana station it was the Western Ring Road path to Merri Creek Trail and onto The Boot Factory in Pentridge for afternoon tea. Sue and Nola left the group to take the Upfield path. Surprise, surprise when we arrived at The Boot Factory there was Nola who had arrived 10 to 15 minutes before us. Merri Creek Trail is obviously the longer route but a bit more scenic. Fortunately, we had arrived with enough time before closing. After afternoon tea it was back to the Merri Creek Path towards Jika Jika with various riders breaking off headed for home.

Report by Ian S

ANNIVERSARY AND GARDINERS CREEK TRAILS 27 FEBRUARY

On a great day for riding 6 riders were ready and waiting to ride the local loop. There was no wind and the temperature was about 20°C, perfect for riding and a good start for new rider Jan. Because of the short route we set off to the east through the Darebin Parkland, then Hay’s Paddock before riding through North Balwyn towards the Anniversary trail. Just near Whitehorse Road Barbara had a flat tyre, and what do you know, Roger didn’t have his 100kg bag of tools on his bike as “buses replace trains” for a couple of weeks on his train line, this makes loading his bike on a bus easier without the toolkit. Roger did manage to get the tyre and tube off while Jon found a large rose thorn in the tyre. We fixed the puncture while the wheel was being put back on and were soon on our way joining the Anniversary trail.

We stopped for morning tea near Riversdale rd, at the playground and had a chat and cuppa, then looked at the Possum hollow worksite where the building and picnic tables were all removed. At Alamein Barbara decided to catch the train for an easier ride home while the reminder rode on to join the Gardiners creek trail and stopped at the George Pepperell Pavilion, Glen Iris for an early lunch.



A new photographer is needed as 2 people are hidden

On the way back it was lovely riding under the M1 freeway near Glenferrie Road as we were out of the sun, the temperature was perfect, there was no wind, and the riding surface was smooth. At the Yarra River we headed north then crossed over the Walmer Street bridge and then looked at the new unfinished ramp at Gipps Street Abbotsford before most riders stopped at the Convent bakery for more chats and refreshments before heading back to Jika Jika. Along the way all riders peeled off leaving only me to complete the circuit by about 2pm after 40km of riding.

Report by Ed