

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



Breakfast at Tony's - Kathy Brunning & Heidi Marfurt

As a lead up to MBTC's 30th birthday in 2003, I would like to highlight the invaluable work of some individuals or teams, who endeavour to keep cycling in the public eye and make it more accessible and pleasant for us all. If you have any nominees, please let me know; they don't have to be club members.

My first candidates are recently joined MBTC club members Heidi Marfurt and Kathy Brunning, the founders and co-conveners of the Darebin Bicycle Users' Group (BUG). Kathy grew up in Bulleen and when she saw my Balwyn High School mug on the table, she gave a wry smile, as that is the school she attended; her memories are unfortunately not as fond as mine. She was definitely not a "sporty" type at school, but all her family had bikes and her dad was active in jogging and tennis. After High School, she went to college for a year and a half before leaving and entering the work force. She subsequently completed three TAFE courses and qualified as a Community Development Worker. Her parents were involved in the trade union movement, so she has a strong sense of social justice and she even remembers being on a picket line. She is a keen reader and remembers constant encouragement to go outside and be active. She and her partner Simon live in Northcote and have a son, Lukas; Simon is not really a cyclist, but she's going to change that!

Heidi grew up in Glen Waverley and attended Glen Waverley H.S. Also definitely a "non-sporty" type; she was on the affirmative team of a debate "Sport is bad for you" and won! Her Swiss father regaled her with stories about how much cycling he did as a child. Her mother's strong interests were in social justice, the environment and politics and she always encouraged Heidi to be confident and active about changing things for the better; her father's legacy was for her to be an active community member and "do her bit". She is now the sales and marketing manager for Explore Australia Publishing and really enjoys her work, as she fully endorses the travel books they publish.

Heidi entered the adult cycling world about five years ago, when a work colleague encouraged her to participate in Bicycle Victoria's Ride To Work day. As she lives in Thornbury and was working in North Ringwood at the time, it seemed out of the question; the colleague worked out a mixed mode (i.e. public transport + bike) plan to reach work and after a nervous night before the big day, she found it very satisfying. Within a very short time she was hooked and completed a Great Tasmanian Bike ride the next Christmas.

She and Kathy met through friends of friends and did some cycling together. Richard Smithers from Bicycle Victoria encouraged Heidi to establish the Darebin BUG and she asked Kathy to assist her. Kathy, spurred by seeing the cycling facilities in other municipalities and her knowledge of the Union movement and despite being "probably too busy", agreed to help. They organized a public meeting at the Preston Town Hall and had a very good response.



Heidi Marfurt and Kathy Brunning, founders and co-conveners of the Darebin Bicycle Users' Group (BUG).

Subsequently, with their tireless work, the support of many members, a very committed committee and Bicycle Victoria, they established an extremely active, successful and highly regarded BUG group; they each spend upward of ten hours a week on administration and meetings.

They both find it very exciting, as they have been very successful in terms of getting the ears of the politicians at all levels of government, being heard at VicRoads, witnessing the great diversity of their membership, helping people to broaden the use of their bikes (one lady had never ridden at night before), establishing a mechanical teaching program with Ian Christie and uniting with an already established riding group, which meets twice a week.

In the pipeline is a program titled "Ride your bike confidently and safely" aimed at helping people into cycling and more meetings with the various levels of government to improve cycling. They are a really enthusiastic and hard working pair and take great delight in helping people enjoy cycling: "I love getting people enthused about cycling", said Heidi. So even if you don't actually live in Darebin, you are very welcome to join and be part of a very vibrant group. Or how about starting your own BUG group ... !

You now know about them ... now support them!

Darebin BUG contact details are...

Heidi Marfurt: (H) 9484 5912; Kathy Brunning: (H) 9489 4275
darebinbug@yahoo.com.au
www.darebinbug.org.au

Riding Groups: Tuesday 9:45 am; Thursday 9:30 am
Meet at the Jika Jika Community Centre,
1A Plant St., Northcote.

Norm Appleby (member & co-convenor): 9484 4767

SATURDAY RIDING GROUP

1 March

Being 1st Saturday ride of the month we didn't do our usual Rushall – Port Melbourne – Rushall ride but after discussions on the previous Saturday we decided to do the Main Yarra Trail and the Anniversary Trail and back by Chandler Hwy.

Forecast was good, no rain and 27 deg. At Rushall Station we had 10 riders and very pleasant weather. We headed off through Edinburgh Gardens then down Napier Street to the MCG. Here we usually take a toilet stop at the Tennis Centre, it's a toss up if the toilets are open or not. Some luck the Men's and the Disable were open but the women's were not. Another hick up there was no paper in the Disable, so paper was provided from the Men's for our lady riders.

On to the Main Yarra Trail, the path was quieter than usual, so we made good progress along the Yarra. At St Kevin's boathouse we were joined by a couple of visitors from Stonington, making our group now 12. Along the Gardiners Creek Path, under the freeway and beyond Glenferrie Road it's a concern that riders will take the wrong path but being close to Stonington our visitors new the correct turn offs and pointed the Darebin riders in the right direction.

Turned off onto the Ferndale path, through the park land then the Anniversary Trail. A short distance along we arrived at the Golden Child Café near the Burwood Station. Refreshments were taken and much conversation was exchanged.

Having had our fill, one rider decided to avail himself of our rail service and our Stonington riders headed back along the way we had come. 9 riders headed along the Outer Circle Rail Trail, through Camberwell and Kew. Chandler Highway was the usual shambles, being ungrouped by traffic lights and diversions near the old paper mill. We hesitated in Northcote as one rider recovered from cramp. Then the last 3 went back to Rushall.

A lovely ride on a lovely day. We arrived back at 2.30, the temperature was 24 deg. and we had done 34.5 km.

Report by David D

PANCAKE DAY RIDE

4 MARCH

A cool sunny morning saw 14 keen cyclists congregate at Jike before 9am. With Ralph and my panniers full of pancake mix etc, Colin agreed to carry the First Aid kit and go tail as well.

We welcomed Franca and Bruce back from Connecticut; in fact, they only arrived back at the weekend, so were still somewhat jetlagged. The aforementioned, plus Pam Si, Sue, Glenys, Mary, Roger, Ken, Ed, Jon and Jopie rode off towards Westgarth Street, past the cricket ground and turned right, to take us out to Heidelberg Road. We crossed with the lights and rode along to join the Main Yarra Trail to the city. The track was fortunately open near Dight's Falls, so down the hill we sailed in the shade of trees, and then went uphill to the Abbotsford Convent, our first drink stop. Crossing the Yarra again and then riding up The Boulevard, we paused at the top, to sip drinks and blow noses. Once back on the north side of the river, we rode in beautiful cool shade, to near the beginning of the Gardiner's Creek Trail. The journey to the gardens was uneventful and sunnier as we neared our destination. The Tan provided more shade, and the air was still cool as we cycled towards the Shrine and the main entrance to the gardens.

The Botanical Gardens was very popular this morning and we walked our bikes to the old oak lawn where, conveniently, seats had been fashioned from old oak trees.



It was a delightful area to partake of morning tea and much lively conversation ensued. Eventually we reconvened outside the entrance and headed downhill to St Kilda Road from the Shrine. A couple of road crossings later and we were on the bike path beside Albert Road, noticing all the activity with fences, grandstands, catering, and lots of trucks, all in preparation for the Australian Grand Prix in ten days. We turned into Albert Park near the athletics track, rode along the front of the rowing sheds and out onto the track. Pedalling in the opposite direction to the way the cars race, we enjoyed our trackside view of the course under a blue sky with little wind. Ed marshalled the group for an historic photo on the track.



Soon we rode under the light rail line and crossed with the lights, heading out to Beaconsfield Parade and turning right for Sandridge Beach. Upon arrival our usual spot was taken by a large school group doing some lifesaving activities. Luckily another BBQ was only 100 metres back along the path, complete with picnic tables in the shade. By now most people had packed away their jackets, as it was becoming warmer. Glenys, Pam and Nola set about cooking pancakes, with help from Ed and Ken. Franca even had real maple syrup for us to taste. A delicious lunch was had by all.



Deciding on a coffee venue, some of the group were departing 'en route' to home, so we settled on Four Beans in High Street. We returned via the light rail trail and alongside the Yarra, past the MCG and up Clarendon Street. Once we turned into Wellington Street, I could feel the north wind in my face, and I found it harder to pedal against the wind. Seven of us – Mary, Ken, Pam Si, Ed, Glenys, Ralph and me – enjoyed a refreshing coffee, after a great day's cycling of 42km.

Report by Nola

FINDON CREEK, EDGARS CREEK AND GALADA TAMBOORE 6 MARCH

A very drizzly morning waiting at Merri Station for our train. More riders meeting on the train. A grey day when the nine of us arrived at Hawkstowe Station but luckily the drizzle had eased off. Good weather for riding.

This was a newish ride, covering some known paths like South Morang and Darebin Creek paths, etc going north on the Findon Creek path but crossing to the west through part of Epping past a northerly Edgars Creek path to the Galada Tamboore path.

The paths and wetlands through the suburbs to morning tea had lots of birds out and about on the damp morning with various parrots, cockatoos and herons flying off when they saw us. The usual kangaroos hopping off and away. The All Abilities Play Space at Mill Park was our morning tea spot which seemed just perfect for all our abilities.



Continuing on we back tracked a little to turn off onto the South Morang rail path. The path in spots has a decent road tyre width crack down the middle (see photo) – a case for SnapSendSolve. Was it a minor earthquake or the path parting ways – who knows. Hopefully it will get fixed thanks to Gael's SnapSendSolve.



Turning off to link up with the Findon Creek path my cycle computer gave up giving me any assistance so it was down to memory and some brief paper notes. We rode to the northerly edge of Wollert and then turned south west until we almost hit the Hume Highway without getting lost. Off the Galada Tamboore we stopped at the Whittlesea Public Gardens for lunch. At lunch a sharp-eyed fellow rider spotted a broken spoke on James's bike. As per the usual much advice was given by the group and ended up with the broken spoke being cable tied to the next spoke for safety. We stopped for afternoon tea off the Merri Creek path at the Ceres Café just next to the carpark. By that time the sun had come out. Another good ride. Approx. 50km

Report by Sue

NEWPORT LAKES 11 MARCH

With a BOM forecast of 33 degrees and clear sky it was going to be a hot ride! A group discussion at the start of the ride agreed we'd go to morning tea at the Yarraville Gardens and decide the course we'd take depending on the heat.

Morning tea brought a suggestion to shorten the ride to Williamstown back beach for lunch and return back along the water's edge for the visual cooling effects of the water! Coffee was taken at the Footscray Milking Station on return. After a relaxed cuppa under the trees we heading back via Dynon Road and Arden Street where the heat of the day started having more of an impact. However the shortened ride had us back early!



Report by Jon

100 STEPS OF FEDERATION 13 MARCH

A sizeable group for a Thursday followed the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail under the new veloway fly over, suspended from the elevated roadway. After the massive construction works surrounding us we were relieved to find a peaceful spot for morning tea at Yarraville Gardens.

We followed the Bay Trail from Newport around to Williamstown along the strand, reaching the Jawbone Sanctuary to the ford across Kororoit Creek. Well that was the plan until a new bridge under construction forced us to detour along the very busy Kororoit Creek Road and Millers Road to reach our familiar path. After a slight wrong turn, I won't mention the culprit only that his name starts with an M.

Past the Altona Esplanade we overshot the last toilets before lunch and again I won't mention the rider who distracted me, the name ends with a B.



Lunch finally at the 100 Steps only to realise that we had to follow the same detour to Maddox Street and Newport for arvo tea at Pango Cafe.

Gail suggested a group photo in front of a mural of bird portraits across from the cafe and if you ask nicely she will name them all, so please make sure you do.



Sooty Oystercatcher and Royal Spoonbill

From the Bay Trail to Footscray we went along Dynon Road to Lloyd Street, Arden Street, Abbotsford Street and through Royal Park eventually reaching the Capital City Trail and home. I lost track of the many riders who peeled off on the way and needless to say they knew the way home. 55km - ish

Report by Ian H

ROSSTOWN TRAIL AND ELWOOD CANAL 18 MARCH

I was riding towards Jika Jika when I was confronted with the sight of 18 crazed Darebin BUG members riding towards me. I have to say it was a bit intimidating. Things had not started well. Due to one of my increasingly common seniors moments, I'd decided we were already starting rides at 9.30am. I was ready when Jopie rang, but not at Jika Jika.

Nola says everyone was milling around at the community house, chatting, when she asked where the ride leader was. It had been a tough few days, bike stolen, dog not eating, our Interior Minister returning from visiting flood victims in Hawaii ...

Jopie picked up the first aid kit and I met them coming along South Crescent. It was a great day for a ride, after a seven-balloon morning (they must land at Yarra Bend Park sometimes?) and we set off towards the Anniversary Outer Circle Trail at a gentle pace with some new faces and returnees. The morning tea location was a bit of an issue, with Frog Hollow engulfed in a totally unnecessary clubroom replacement, which included temporary toilets and clubrooms but nowhere to sit. Riversdale Park was too early, and East Malvern was too late, so I'd settled on Back Creek Reserve on the Ferndale Trail.



There was an awful lot of chat given the number of people involved and some of them were reluctant to head back up the gravel afterwards. George had no such qualms with his e-bike and left us for an Alamein Line train towards home, while we went down to Gardiners Creek to rejoin the Outer Circle at East Malvern and thereby to Hughesdale, where Barbara left us. After we'd admired the wonderful new sharrows and speed humps on the Rosstown Trail it was on to lunch at the E.E. Gunn Reserve, where another Exeloo was out of action. Why does life have to be so hard??

There was another breach of protocol on the run to Elwood Canal, when some missed the turn to the pedestrian bridge over the Nepean Hwy. Another phone call and they beat us to Elsternwick Park. We avoided Albert Park after the weekend's grand prix and continued on the Bay Trail to see a couple of cruise ships at Station Pier and a bunch of their passengers wandering along the Sandridge Trail using their shopping bags as trail hazards.

Afternoon tea through the alleyway at South of Johnson, at which point people started heading in all directions. Nothing new.

Report by Wolter

CAIRNLEA – TRAIN RETURN 20 MARCH

On 20th March 2025 five riders set off from Jika Jika. The forecast of 31 degrees may be an explanation for the low number. It was a warm and overcast day. The temperature was not an issue; the wind did prove to be a bit of a nuisance from late in the morning. After going past the Zoo and down the Moonee Ponds Creek we rode through the old Kensington Saleyards and stopped briefly at the underpass at Epsom Road to admire the mosaic of the sheep and sheepdogs. Then it was morning tea at Footscray Park on the river. We turned back briefly to ride from Footscray Station to Sunshine Station and then down to the Kororoit Creek path where we turned north. We left Kororoit Creek to stay on the path beside the Ring Road and stopped for lunch in the Ken Flint Reserve in Cairnlea on Furlong Road.



Although it was nice to stop riding into a strong north wind, it was still very windy at our lunch spot. We thought the roof of the shelter was going to break away during several strong gusts of wind. The wind did ease off a little after lunch as we went past some lakes and the Iramoo Wildflower Grassland Reserve. By then we were a short ride from St Albans Station where we caught the next train to North Melbourne. The driver tried to close the door on the back wheel of my bike. There was no damage done. The wind was still there after North Melbourne and we chose to sit inside for coffee at the cafe next to Velo in North Carlton. About 45km. A total of five riders.

Report by James

CARNEGIE LANEWAYS AND GARDENS 25 MARCH

Because 18 riders turned up for this ride, Ralph suggested we form two groups, for at least the first section of the ride, which was down the Anniversary Trail through Kew to the East Malvern Station, then along the Urban Forest Reserve. After this the groups merged so that I could lead the rest of the ride to the Laneway Gardens. On the way we stopped at Riversdale Park, Canterbury for our morning tea.

Once we arrived at the laneways we walked slowly through them so that we could observe all the paintings and art decorations. After exploring through the laneways, we headed east over to the Reflection garden next to the Dandenong Railway line just south of the Glen Huntly Station. This garden was started by a local resident and had lots of seats, which was a perfect place for lunch. A Gardening Australia segment featuring the garden laneways can be found by Googling gardening Australia laneway gardens Melbourne. The segment should then appear at the top of a list.



After lunch we headed North through Caulfield, over a very busy intersection at the Princes Highway onto quiet back streets that led us to the Hedgeley Dene Gardens in Malvern East. After riding through these gardens we rode over Malvern Road to Glen Iris Station. We then rode over a high footbridge to get us to the Monash Freeway and then put us onto the Gardiners Creek Trail. We then headed to the Yarra River Trail and followed this trail upstream to the Gipps Street bridge. We stopped at a coffee shop in Gipps Street for a well earned coffee. After our coffee stop we rode through Fairfield Park back to Jika Jika. Approximate distance 48 km.

Report by Paul S

BRIMBANK PARK 27 MARCH

On a pleasant coolish day seven riders rode along the Merri Creek, aiming for the Queens Parade turn-off leading us to the Moonee Ponds Creek, but not before a natter at Westbreen Park for morning tea.

From Boeing Reserve we crossed up and over the Tullamarine Freeway following the Western Ring Road Trail to Brimbank Park.

We plummeted down the park to reach the river and our lunch spot with a thankfully open toilet block, to my relief. Lunch was restful after leaving the noisy freeways behind.

The upgraded path along the Maribyrnong River is the highlight even though encroaching housing is doing its best to lose the wilderness feeling it once had.

After Canning Reserve and quite a bit of climbing we descended back to the civilised part of the river and the winding route through the old sale yards to Flemington, for afternoon tea at Autumn Leaves for coffee, etc.



I was relieved to rest after grappling with the complex route that was demanding for the leader and riders, a sense of accomplishment after the rewarding ride – just joking. Past the zoo and home for a good lie down after 63km.

Report by Ian H