

Volume 14 | Issue 4

Date: April 2025

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



JACK ROPER RESERVE 1 APRIL

Being the beginning of our next quarter of rides, the starting time has moved back to 9.30am. A couple of people arrived for a 9am start and thought they had missed the group – they had time for a pleasant chat before the rest of us appeared at Jika Jika on our coldest morning for a while. Sue returned after her bird watching holiday, where she endured a toothache and had a tooth removed a week ago. Robin and Mary joined the female count, while 9 men (Ralph, Ed, Ken, Ian, Jopie, Roger, George, Steve and Michael) made up 13 riders, with Steve offering to go tail. We headed off along South Crescent towards Fairfield. Six of us made the Victoria Road crossing before the boom gates came up. We befriended an old dog, whose house we waited outside. His barking caused his owner to open her door – she said he is very friendly! Once past Station Street, we cycled on to Alphington and joined the Darebin Creek Trail north. Even though it was cool, we soon warmed up riding and we found it very pleasant along the creek, with the many birds calling to each other. We stopped a couple of times after ascents, to have a drink and catch our breath. As the sun came out, those wearing shorts were glad of the attire they had chosen. I took a detour along Rathcoun Road and rejoined the trail just after the bridge. By 10.45, we were at Norris Bank Park for morning tea. A saxophone player, with a microphone, was occupying one of the tables closest to the toilets, so we selected picnic tables where we could hear ourselves talk. Sue decided to head back after this, so that made us twelve. A few people peeled off a layer or two, as the day was becoming warmer. The main 'incident' was at Dalton Road, where we all made it across, except George. The rest of us gathered on the side of the track near the intersection and there was a man sitting at the end of the median strip with his head down. A couple of our number wondered if this man was all right. Ralph and I, being familiar with this area, knew it was a man who cleans windscreens of cars. However, he took offence at what he saw as staring at him and gave us a mouthful of his best obscenities! Time to head for the hills! A good ride across the Ring Road Trail and even crossing Sydney Road was easier than usual. What a great surprise we all had as we cycled under the Ring Road to enter Jack Roper, ready to hop off our bikes to get through the gate – Gone! A brand-new concrete path awaited us and took us right to our lunch spot. The noise of the Ring Road was louder than the corellas, but once we settled into chatting over lunch, we barely noticed.



George led us out of the park and through both the Northern and Fawkner Cemeteries, before leaving for home, while Roger left for Fawkner Station. The rest of us rode south on the Upfield Path to Hope Street, with Steve and Jopie departing for home here. Coffee and chat continued at the Lux Foundry, and people peeled off along the way back to Jika Jika. A lovely ride of 47km

Report by Nola

CRAIGIEBURN AND BROADMEADOWS VALLEY TRAIL 3 APRIL

Eight riders assembled at Jika Jika on a morning that promised to give a good day for a ride. We made our way, by the usual route, along the Inner Circle Rail Trail towards the Upfield Shared Path. Thanks to Sue having ridden nearby we diverted to ride along Park Street as the Shared Path was closed adjacent to Royal Park Tennis Club. It was then a straightforward ride north along the Upfield Shared Path before turning to the west at Shorts Road, just south of Merlynston Railway Station. The ride west followed a route which I had previously mapped and met the Westbreen Creek Path a little north of Gavin Park, the section with the toilet, where we stopped for morning tea.



After morning tea it was a short ride to Pascoe Vale Station where we waited for the train to Craigieburn. We also bid farewell to Pam St who caught a train going in the opposite direction. On arrival at Craigieburn we set off on a little adventure. Thanks to Sue and Graham giving me detailed instructions I was able to upload a course for the ride to my Garmin. I believe the course is one that Glenys had mapped. The ride was along part of the Aitken Creek Trail before turning south to meander through back streets and small parks and join the Broadmeadows Valley Trail for a very pleasant ride. This trail is along a wide, open reserve and was easygoing as it is all downhill. The trail ends at Jacana Reserve where we switched to the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail to continue south. The lunch stop was at the shelter in Adelaide Boulevard Playground which also has toilets. The bar-b-que adjacent to the shelter was supposed to have a charging point however when Roger tried it there was no power connected! After lunch it was an easy ride towards our starting point. The 5 riders who wanted to stopped at Park Street Café, near Velo Cycles, for refreshments. We were just in time to purchase coffees, etc in takeaway cups as they were in the process of closing up. Riders dispersed as they got closer to home. All in all it was a very pleasant day's ride of about 52km.

Report by Colin

SATURDAY GROUP 5 APRIL

Being the 1st Saturday ride of the month, it wasn't going to be the usual Rushall – Port Melbourne and return. Over coffees on the previous Saturday it was felt, given a pleasant forecast, that a ride to Williamstown might be in order, Williamstown ride is best as a fine weather ride and delaying to a later date could find us in cool and wet conditions.

Come the Thursday before the Saturday the forecast was not very encouraging. A maximum forecast temperature of 19 degrees, cloud but no rain. Not the forecast I wished for but others thought we should stick with Williamstown.

Come Saturday morning, I donned my thermal undies and riding gear and headed to Rushall, where I was joined by 6 other riders, the temperature 16 degrees but pleasantly sunny.

At 9.30 we headed off and at Royal Park we were joined by 3 more riders. Our usual route takes us through Kensington Cattle Yards estate, I find it a really pleasant ride, even with the cobble stone bits. Cross the Yarra at the Cattle Bridge and follow the Maribyrnong River.

Toilet stop at Yarraville Gardens, was taken up by 4 of us but the toilets had been demolished and there was a single mobile toilet to service our needs, while reconstruction work was being carried out. 3 Stonnington riders joined us at Westgate, having come across on the punt. The toilets near the Yacht Club are still in a very destroyed state.

On to Williamstown, where we decided to frequent Café Cirino. Café Cirano has a large room out the back, not very sunny but plenty of room. Having had our fill, we headed back.

At Shepherd Bridge the path was blocked, so we went on to the cattle bridge and crossed there. At the other side of the bridge the Stonnington trio, left us and followed the river back to Dynon Road.

We went Hobsons Road and Childers Street to pass the big park and enter the Kensington Shopping area.

Then down Smith and Stubbs Streets to Moonee Ponds Trail and Flemington Bridge. None of the riders had ridden through that part of Kensington and they found it quite interesting.

Back at Rushall Station, thanks to the sunny day, no one had got cold. The temperature was 19 degrees, it was 2.15 and we had covered 36.1 Km.

Report by David D

RUFFEY CREEK TRAIL 8 APRIL

Eleven riders, including a new boy Mick, gathered at Jika Jika for the day's ride.

We set off along South Crescent towards Darebin Parklands in perfect riding weather, not too hot and little wind.

Arriving at Darebin Parklands we turned right and followed the Darebin Trail under Heidelberg Road and onto The Boulevard. We turned off the Boulevard at Eaglemont Tennis Club and, after passing under the Burke Road bridge, rode through Yarra Flats Park to Banksia Street.

After crossing Banksia Street it was a short ride to our morning tea stop at Possum Hollow.

After morning tea we headed across Banyule Flats towards Westerfolds Park. We left the Yarra Trail at the suspension bridge crossing to Finns Reserve and onto the Ruffey Creek Trail.

After several busy road crossings and some hilly sections we arrived at Ruffey Lake Reserve our lunch stop.



After lunch we did some steady climbing through quiet back streets of Doncaster and through Schramms Reserve to Doncaster Road. After crossing Doncaster Road it was a lovely, long downhill run to Tram Road.

We crossed Tram Road and the Eastern Freeway to get to the Koonung Creek Trail. Between here and Bulleen Road there were two long detours for works on NorthEast Link.

We left the trail at Bulleen Road for afternoon tea at the Chocolate Shop.

Rejoining the trail we continued towards the city. Rather than go under the Eastern Freeway near Burke Road we continued straight ahead to Hays Paddock. We crossed Hays Paddock and turned right onto Kilby Road. We followed Kilby Road all the way to Hyde Park where we turned right under the freeway and onto the start of the Darebin Creek Trail at Willsmere Park. We followed the Darebin Creek Trail to Heidelberg Road where we crossed into Alphington.

From here we made our way along the usual route of Wingrove Street and South Crescent to Jika Jika with rider departing along the way to their homes.

Report by Andrew

MERENDA AND BEYOND 10 APRIL

As we were meeting at Merri Station for the trip north, I went past Jika Jika just in case someone hadn't read the ride schedule properly, but there was, surprisingly, no one there. Back after a long break, David M. had texted to say he would ride to Middle Gorge and Trudi had texted to say she would also meet us there.

As we rolled north, we picked up Graham and Gael and ended up with 13 setting out from near Marymede Catholic College. It would soon be 14, as Ed had blotted his copy book by catching the only-slightly-earlier train from Clifton Hill and then wondering why we were sitting at Merri Station as he rolled past and then got off at Hawkstowe instead of Middle Gorge!

Sadly, the renovated picnic area at Hawkstowe Park was still not finished. More specifically, the Exeloes were still fenced off, despite appearing to be completed, so we had to use the old toilets some distance away. But it was good to see people using the new BBQs and play equipment. The new crushed-granite path from the road was not very satisfactory for our group when I tried it the day before, so we went up via the asphalt road but got a bit lost getting on the gravel path north, which Parks Victoria hasn't started to turn into the Plenty River Trail yet.



After squeezing our way between the rows of houses north to Hazel Glen Drive, we headed west and then south back to Middle Gorge, careful to avoid most of the way we'd gone up and the way recent rides have been. Lunch was at Meadow Glen Reserve, coming in the back way from the Henderson Drain Trail and leaving via the Darebin Creek one.

The rot had already set in at Hawkestone, where George left us for the comfort of Metro's First Class lunch service. We lost more at lunch and by the time we got to Bean Counter, there was only four for drinks.

Hopefully we can organise a better route through Plenty Gorge Parklands when they've built some of the new paths.

Report by Wolter

AVONDALE HEIGHTS AND MARIBYRNONG RIVER 15 APRIL

14 riders met at Jika Jika to be confronted with renovation hoardings and not a first aid box in sight. It was evidently somewhere inaccessible behind the fence. All riders were consequently instructed not to fall off their bikes, although I believe we did have some bandaids. Everyone did as they were told and we had no medical dramas.

The weather was fabulous, sunny and still, with a top of 28, heading for drought but great for bike riding. George bailed out early with rear disk brake issues and we lost Pam St after morning tea at Footscray Park. The remaining dozen completed the ride, not losing any more till well after coffees at the Boathouse when the usual staggered peel offs occurred.

Highlights included the beautiful sealed path down the true right bank of the Maribyrnong upstream of Medway Golf Course, which we rarely do, the great whizz down Woodswallow Entrance to the Maribyrnong, lunch at toilet free Solomon's Ford, several lesser downhills and some fabulous views, especially from the Korean War Memorial in Quarry Park and the usual great view to the CBD from Lily Street lookout.



Against this were 5 climbs out of the river valley, none of which were too steep and which elicited barely a grumble, especially from the E-bike riders who relished showing off their speed up hill. All in all a pleasant ride of 52km with some interesting new or rarely done bits.

Report by Jopie

SCOTCHMANS CREEK, VALLEY RESERVE AND THE WAVERLEY TRAIL 17 APRIL

A tight band of 8 riders opted to take on this warm ride of approximately 50km with about 470m elevation gain.

We started with a pleasant amble south along the Merri Creek and Yarra River towards the Gipps Street stair replacement project. Progress of this project is still being made at a glacial pace but hopefully we might be riding this new piece of trail before 2025 is over.

We continued along the Yarra Trail to Gardiners Creek Trail and morning tea-ed at the Hawthorn Velodrome. Bruce considerably got a flat tyre just before our morning tea stop so that the rest of us could rest up in the shade while he wrestled with his tyre. We had a visit from 3 very friendly non-English speaking Chinese riders who insisted on many photos of us all together! Despite none of us speaking a word of Mandarin or Cantonese we all got on famously!

Following this break we pedalled along the Gardiners Creek Trail and along the particularly shady Scotchmans Creek Trail all the way to lunch at Valley Reserve (see pic).



After one last small rise after lunch up to Mt Waverley station the ride was largely downhill on our way along the train line back towards the city and then north up the Anniversary Trail. A welcome afternoon tea was had at Hartwell to power us up for the final push in the increasing afternoon heat.

As usual, numbers dwindled as we got closer to Jika Jika but the first aid kit and all the riders made it home safely.

Thanks Graham, Franca, Bruce, James, Ed, Steve and Michael for your company.

Report by Gael

WATTLE PARK 22 APRIL

The day started with difficulty opening the lock for the first aid kit. Colin indicated it had been getting difficult. Roger applied some oil. Eleven riders set off towards the Anniversary Trail to Alamein. Picked up one more rider waiting at Fairfield. Morning tea was at the shelter just before Riversdale Road as Frog Hollow is still closed for construction. At Alamein Station Roger and George opted for the train as the group headed for Wattle Park on the Gardiners Creek Trail.



After lunch it was a bit of an adventure. I had tried to recce the ride on Monday but my phone and hence my google map had failed shortly after leaving the Wattle Park picnic area. With help from Ed and Ian we wound our way to Union Station and then Hays Paddock via Burwood, Surry hills, Balwyn and Kew. This missed the original intent of joining the Koonung Trail at Elgar Park and on to the Chocolate Shop in Bulleen Rd.

Unfortunately, there was a drama at the on-road bike lane on Balwyn Road. Shortly after turning onto Balwyn Road Michael B hit a largish depression in the middle of the bike lane and fell hard onto his right side. Michael was winded and needed a short break before having to spend about 10 to 15 minutes repairing his bike back to rideable.

Afternoon tea was at the Alphington Food Store before people headed home in various directions.

Report by Ian S

PLENTY RIVER TRAIL 24 APRIL

Fourteen keen riders turned up at Jika Jika in spite of a strong northerly wind and we huddled around in the limited space due to the ongoing building works with the area being fenced off.

Gayl volunteered to ride at the tail of the group, then we headed off to the east and rode to the Darebin Creek Trail up to Norris Bank park for morning tea where we spied a lonely rider sitting under the shelter. It was George, as he calculated it was only 14 km from home so it was a shorter ride than having to meet at Jika Jika and ride back up the creek.

On the ride north we were met with strong northerly headwinds on some sections of the ride, while other sections in the valley were sheltered and the lack of wind meant ideal riding. Like most morning tea stops there was plenty of chatter at the 2 tables.

After the r&r Colin left the ride and it was back on the bikes to the Ring Road then heading east. The path was closed after Plenty Road so we diverted along the street and then headed downhill on the steep switchbacks at the Newbury Walk Track before riding across the boardwalk at Janefield wetlands. It was very dry and there was hardly any vegetation riding through Plenty Gorge parklands on the main track. The ride did go in a circle at one point as the leader lost track of the numerous path options, and some of the riders commented that it was like being on Jopie's rides. The track ended at a gravel road and we rode along this for a while before turning off onto a goat track which soon turned into a steep downward ride on uneven dirt. Some people were terrified by the route so they sensibly walked down the hill until we reached the safety of a road. At the bottom of the steep hill we crossed the Plenty River and joined the smooth wide bike path to Kalparrin Gardens for a welcome lunch stop.



After lunch David, Roger and George headed off to the Greensborough Railway Station while the remainder continued down the Plenty River Trail. We soon reached a sign "Bridge closed ahead" and there were no obvious detours so we headed back up the trail and up a few hills until finally reaching a steep narrow path down through the Yallambie Park and back onto the trail along the river.

Report by Ed

SUNSHINE, KOROROIT CREEK 29 APRIL

Something like 15 riders rode to Footscray Park along the Maribyrnong River for morning tea. We were joined by the recovering Sue for a short while.

From Footscray we followed the railway line to Sunshine Station, crossing over to reach the Kororoit Creek path with a mixture of bushland, industry and arresting statues.

Travelling through Altona North we reached Newport Lakes for lunch.

After a tiny navigational error we headed through Yarraville to the Miking Station Cafe for delicious Padre coffee and engaging conversation.

Along Arden Street to Abbotsford Street we rode through Royal Park to Princes Park and the Capital City trail to home, not including sundry others who dropped off beforehand.

50km or so.



Report by Ian H