

# WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Mid-week Riders' Blog



## GISBORNE

1 MAY

I had a theme to this ride – my wife's father - my FiL, (father-in-law) connection with Gisborne. There was some confusion at the start, with new members, Bruce & Franca, not on the email distribution list and they didn't get the email that the ride would now start from Gisborne (New Gisborne) Station. However they realised that with some riders maybe coming by V-Line, they drove up to the station and met me there as the Velocity train was arriving. David M came by (electric) car and Trudy and Ian S were on the train. Soon on the road and 1<sup>st</sup> stop was 2km at the top of the town valley. The old mansion there was where FiL was born in 1919, when it was the local hospital. (more on that later)

On quiet roads to Macedon and down Honour Avenue to the Anglican Church of Resurrection, which replaced two churches lost in the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires, then across the road to Centennial Park for MT & wee. Continuing south a few Km with sealed shoulder to ride on, then along Hamilton Road passing a few hundred metres from Gisborne Station and on to Riddell's Creek for lunch. At lunch Trudy said she was freaking-out over the traffic on the last 5km into Riddell. As the Riddell Station was nearby, she took the option of bailing out and headed home.

After lunch it was under an historic bluestone railway bridge, along some unsealed back roads and back onto sealed. Then we had to join the rather busy main road between Riddell & Gisborne AND worst part was a couple of Ks of major road works, with Robot Traffic Lights allowing cars in one direction only. Cars held up with us 5 riders, were very patient. David decided to give the descent into Gisborne a miss, being familiar with the area. As his daughter lives in Gisborne, he headed off to his car back at Gisborne Station.

On descending into Gisborne, behind the Old Court House, we stopped at a bluestone wall with memorial plaques to historic Gisborne local families and here saw the Flack Family plaque.



A few hundred metres away was the Cenotaph, with all the wreaths from ANZAC Day just past and memorials to those locals who served in the two world wars. FiL and his elder brother were among the many who served.

Then up to Gisborne Cemetery where FiL and Mil now rest “together forever”. General consensus was that AT would be missed, so escorted back up out of the Gisborne valley to the Station. Ian said it was chaotic on his V-Line train.

Report by Roger

### **SATURDAY RIDE GROUP 3 MAY**

First Saturday ride of the month, we don't do the usual Rushall to Port Melbourne and return.

As decided the previous Saturday, this Saturday is was to be Macleod and return via Heidelberg and the Yarra River. Forecast for the day was a dry, sunny 22 degrees.

At Rushall Station we had nine starters including one visitor and we picked up two more riders, as we passed through Northcote.

South Crescent and Wingrove Street got us to Darebin Parkland where we took our toilet stop. Costas took the lead and led us down Darebin Creek Trail, while I took up the rear. We all made good progress along the path, except for me, who was held up by an electrical fault, due to a shoddy repair job that I had done during the previous week. After a slight delay we made good progress to La Trobe University. The University layout I find very confusing but I had printed out maps to guide me but alas I had left them at home. I did have some recollection of the layout and with Costas' own research, we managed to find our way through and on to Macleod and coffee.

The café was a bit crowded but eventually most of us found seats to dine as a group. Three riders left us here. The previous trip to Macleod we missed the chosen route and had to improvise which was not as good as it could have been, but this time we did our research and stuck to the direct path to take us to The River Gum Walk. This is a very pleasant ride, with open timber shading, grass lands and playing fields, either side of a concrete path.

Across Banksia Street and through Yarra Flats Park, we got onto the Main Yarra Trail. We were delayed a little by cramps troubling one of our riders. Over the golf links hill, with various degrees of ease. Followed the path to Chandler Highway and from here riders dropped off till three arrived back at Rushall.

A lovely ride 34.5 Km, 22 deg.at the end, sunshine all the way, arriving back at 2.15 pm.

Report by David D

### **WESTERN PORT BAY TRAIL – BIKES ON CARS/TRAINS 6 MAY**

The weather was excellent, the late autumn sunny day was perfect riding weather.

This ride is a slight variation on the initial Western Port Bay trail ride, this time starting and finishing at Hastings rather than Pearcdale.

Roger again trained down from Gisbourne to Hastings and return! We had 9 riders.

Western Port Bay trail follows the rail trail line in parts but we side tracked to coastal, mangrove, bush and beach areas.

Starting at Hastings, we rode to Stony Point via the mangrove boardwalk and beach tracks for morning tea then through Crib Point onto Somers beach for lunch and a rather idyllic bush setting and return via the Bittern path back to Hastings for coffee. Shorter day as the ride was about 39km.



Report by Jon

## **ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS MELBOURNE AND ST KILDA BOTANICAL GARDENS 8 MAY**

It promised to be a good day for riding and as it turned out we were not disappointed.

I arrived at Jika Jika to find Roger there; as usual he is the first to arrive. However, due to a train mix up Roger had trained out to Preston and had to train back. This meant that he did not have time for his customary hot chocolate at Phil's Bakehouse, so not a happy start for Roger.

Others gradually arrived and a set-off time there were 6, including James, Jon, Ian H and Ken.

The ride to morning tea at Royal Botanical Gardens Melbourne was uneventful and easy, except the pace I set was a little fast for some. We sat in the sun overlooking the pond, very pleasant.

With morning tea done it was back on the bikes to ride around the tan, a short stretch of Linlithgow Avenue, across St Kilda Road to the bike lane in Southbank Boulevard, left into Kavanagh Street, right into Power Street (on the footpath for the first block), then along the bike lane in Whiteman Street continue along the Light Rail Trail to Beacon Cove. Then it was a pleasant ride along the Bay Trail to the Elwood Canal, up the Canal to Broadway turning right at Dickens Street, left at Tennyson Street and into St Kilda Botanical Gardens for lunch.

With lunch done we made our way along Barkly Street, left into Grey Street, a crazy hook turn into Fitzroy Street then into and through Albert Park Lake. We then took Albert Road, along paths, to St Kilda Road bike lane and rode to Flinders Street Station. Here Roger left the group while the remaining 5 headed down Birrarung Marr, to the MCG then along Clarendon Street and through the narrow lane to Oxford Street where we stopped at South of Johnston for refreshments.

Having been refreshed we made our way to Wellington Street and back to Jika Jika, with riders leaving as they got closer to home.

A very satisfying day's ride with pleasant company and weather. 44km.

Report by Colin

## **POINT COOK COASTAL PARK 13 MAY**

Our group made good time riding the 8km to North Melbourne Station for the Werribee line train. It was a lovely sunny late autumn day. Roger met our train at Footscray and we were 12 riders.

Off the train at Williams Landing then lots of walking up and down long station ramps.

We rode next to Palmers Road on to our morning tea stop at Boardwalk Park. Point Cook has been invaded by large flocks of Corellas. We needed to do a bit of a birdy obstacle course along the path. Successfully reaching the park without incident we had our morning break near the skateboard area taking in the sun. Only a couple of shopping trolleys were using the skate park.



Our next route took us along the western path of Skeleton Creek. It's partly sealed but with some gravel parts. They have started to seal the gravel parts so we got detoured off the path about halfway along. With no detour signs as such but we hugged the edge of the area going in the same direction.

Luckily a helpful man walking his dog gave us some directions to get back to the path.



Back on the very new concrete Skeleton Creek path we continued along between Sanctuary Lakes and Cheetham Wetlands on the Wyndham Bay trail. Wetlands that sadly were looking very dry. Our stop for lunch was at the Point Cook Coastal Park/Playground off Side Entrance Road. We were within a short walk or ride to the water's edge and some of us made the trip to cap off our lunch.



The weather was still very pleasant, sunny with only light winds. For our return ride we diverted to the (Mad Max style) Cheetham Wetlands Observation tower which looks out across towards the CBD and the bay. Being a clear day with only a slight haze we had a good view. Stopping at Altona on the way back we had coffees and cakes, etc before most of us got on the train back. Only one valiant rider rode home. Another good ride. Approx. 40km to Altona Railway Station.

Report by Sue

## **HURSTBRIDGE – TRAIN THEN RIDE RETURN 15 MAY**

10 keen riders arrived at Westgarth Station on an overcast and cool morning. We welcomed Vangel, a new rider.

Arriving at Hurstbridge we set off on the Diamond Creek Trail towards Diamond Creek. It was a pleasant ride to Diamond Creek with hardly anybody else on the trail other than birds, black wallabies and kangaroos!

At Diamond Creek we stopped for morning tea in Centennial Park. By now the sun was starting to show itself.



Back on the trail we headed towards Eltham. At Eltham we crossed the Yarra and took a gravel diversion that hugs the Yarra, cutting out the climb and joining the Main Yarra Trail just before Westerfolds Park. Lunch was in Westerfolds Park.



After lunch we continued down the Main Yarra Trail towards Yarra Flats with another diversion around the north side of Odyssey House cutting out the steep climb.

To avoid the Darebin Parklands hill we left the MYT and joined the Boulevard in Ivanhoe, crossing Heidelberg Road we made our way to the Bean Counter Café in Fairfield for afternoon tea.

Following afternoon tea we split up, each making our way home. Thanks Ed, Gael, Kathleen, Ian, James, Jon, Roger, Sue, and Vangel for coming.

Report by Graham

## **WESTGARTHTOWN 20 MAY**

With Ralph at Donvale for rehab after his knee replacement surgery, and Pam and Paul away in Gippsland for the week, I caught the train to Westgarth for the start of this ride. It had been three weeks since I'd been with the group and that day, we only rode to morning tea.

It was a very cold morning with clear blue skies and a promise of warmer temperatures as the day progressed.

I was surprised to discover so many keen cyclists waiting at Jika Jika. Colin kindly showed me where the first aid kit is now held, offering to carry it too. There were three new riders to me, Jan, Mick and Vangel, but all had been on rides while I had been absent. Jon arrived as we were about to depart, making us 15 riders, with Colin on tail.

We rode east along South Crescent and were fortunate to all cross Victoria Road, with the boom gates down for a train.

After a further ten minutes, we were on the Darebin Creek Trail, enjoying the sounds of all the birds welcoming the day. We had several stops after climbing the steeper gradients, so we could catch our breath, have a drink and, in some cases, peel off a layer or two. I was certainly feeling the effects of not being on the bike for three weeks.

In Bundoora Park, I showed the group the scar tree, left by our original inhabitants, hundreds of years ago, when a lot of this park was a swamp. From here it wasn't far from the Bundoora farm café, where we had morning tea. We gathered in the picnic area for our refreshments and catch up on each other's news. Glenys is off with Bill, to Slovenia and Croatia in a couple of weeks. We mentioned how much we are enjoying the ABC show 'The Piano'.





Ed helped guide me towards Norris Bank, as it was a long time since I had come this way. Franca rode ahead around the road as we turned downhill on the grass. A few loud calls alerted her and a later reminder to stay behind the leader for safety eased my concern.

(Editor's note: A timely reminder to all to ensure the ride leader and person being the tail are informed about your intentions if you decide to leave the group or take an alternative route.)

We cycled up to the Ring Road Trail and turned west, crossing Dalton Road. Regrouping once we'd all made it across this busy road, we rode another km or so and turned north on the Edgars Creek Trail towards Thomastown.

I was feeling every incline today and was relieved to finally arrive at the old Ziebell farmhouse right at lunchtime. We were greeted by another member, Barbara, who had made her own way here. She informed us the concession cost was now \$5 to view the house. Some of our group had never been here before, or it was quite a while ago. Barbara negotiated that a gold coin would suffice this time. We sat on the logs in the sun of the garden for our lunch.



After everyone had the opportunity for a wander around the grounds and garden, we rode back to the Ring Road via Thomastown Football ground, farewelling Barbara at Main Street.

Then it was across the Ring Road trail to Merri Creek trail where we turned south for home, pausing for coffee at the Boot Factory in Coburg. People headed home along the way, after a pleasant day of cycling 46km. Thanks Mandy for keeping me company and Colin for being our tail.

Report by Nola

## **EXPLORE HAWTHORN AND CANTERBURY**

### **22 MAY**

Six riders were brave enough to endure the cold morning start at Jika Jika. We rode through Royal Park past the Children's Hospital and through some back streets of North Melbourne before starting on the Moonee Ponds Creek trail and used the new very green overpass across Footscray Road.

Morning tea was at the Docklands Park BBQ area; a nice spot but in the shade. It was still 8 degrees at the time. Then it was along the Yarra Trail to Bridge Road where Jon left us.

We crossed the Yarra and made our way through two parks and some quiet streets to our planned lunch spot of the Central Gardens in Hawthorn near the railway line. By now the weather had warmed up and the sun was out so all four of the tables were occupied. So we agreed to press on to see the stately homes in Harcourt Street, Hawthorn.



Lunch was a short journey away at Canterbury Gardens. Fortunately the bandstand was not occupied although the usual tranquility of the garden was disturbed by chainsaws and a chipper working in Canterbury Road. Those noisy workers also blocked our access to the facilities, but we found the rather swish Canterbury Neighbourhood Centre at the west end of the park. Some of the best houses of the day were seen along nearby Chaucer Crescent. Just on the other side of Canterbury Road we rode along Monomeath Avenue. It's still a prestigious address but a lot of building recently has given it a nouveau riche appearance.

Apologies to any BUG members living in that street.

Then it was a return to the Anniversary Trail with a diversion to Hays Paddock and finally coffee outside at Bean Counters in Fairfield. An easy 50 km of riding.

Report by James

## **CAULFIELD PARK AND RACECOURSE**

### **27 MAY**

The forecast was a bit iffy; cold & windy with likely showers from midday. The day wasn't too bad with only half an hour of drizzle in the afternoon which was enough to get us wet but we dried out over afternoon coffee at Frankie Says in Abbotsford and on our way home. Despite the forecast, 11 keen riders turned up. 2 left after morning tea at Riversdale Park, well before any rain. Lunch was in the middle of Caulfield Racecourse and Roger left us there to catch a train. Lunch was brief due to the wind chill. The remaining 8 of us wended our way around Caulfield Park and its ornamental lake and then via Malvern to Gardiners Creek and the Yarra Trails to afternoon coffee. We noted that the Gipps Street ramp was still not finished. As we reached Clifton Hill we started having the usual drop offs so that only 5 actually got to within 50m of Jika Jika. Everything had gone smoothly with no injuries, punctures or other dramas.

Report by Jopie



## MULLUM MULLUM CREEK - WITH TRAIN 29 MAY

It was a rather grey day but dry after a week of rain. First up we rode the 12km to Camberwell Station for the Lilydale line train and Heatherdale Station. Roger was on a train coming into Camberwell Station to meet us. We only just made it by a few minutes to get on the same train. From Heatherdale Station we rode the short distance to our morning tea stop at Schwerkolt Cottage which is next to the Eastlink Trail. The short gravel path to get onto the main path seems more and more degraded each ride.



After our break we continued onto the Eastlink Trail to then turn off onto the Mullum Mullum Trail just past Quarry Road. I was leading quite gingerly through the boardwalks and walkways of the first section of the trail as the surfaces looked slippery. Even with our slower riding, we got to our potential lunch stop at Mullum Reserve a little early for lunch.

Instead, we continued on to the picnic tables next to Beasleys Nursery on Warrandyte Road for lunch.

Next stop for us was the turnoff to the Diamond Creek path where David M left us. The rest of us continued through to Westerfolds Park, some of the group taking a detour along a single track to get there.

Coming through Westerfolds Park it was Kangaroo Day, with some lounging on both sides of the path. The large kangaroo closest to the path not bothering with us but hopping away with his small family.

Afternoon tea was at the Alphington Food Store.

Afterwards riders went their own separate ways as the group rode back to Jika Jika.

Another good ride. Approx. 55km back to Jika Jika

Report by Sue