

MARANOA MEANDER
2 DECEMBER

I woke up at 3.45am in a cold sweat. In my nightmare, I'd put two morning tea stops in the ride and people were totally confused. My dream turned out to be half right.

It was rumoured that the BUG's royal couple, Paul and Pam Si, would be in attendance after Paul's recovery from knee replacement surgery, so I had removed some "Jopies" from the ride but probably not enough. Only the fairer half of Fairfield royalty showed up but the rumours had been enough to attract 18 people after a spell of pretty awful weather.

Getting that sort of crowd across town to the Botanic Gardens via Wellington Road involved lots of stops, with Colin cracking his whip again at the back following his return from Japan.

Next thing you know, he's lending some people from that part of the world his bike and helmet for a photo opp next to the Ornamental Lake. He didn't let the bike out of his sight and Kathleen managed to capture the moment in a photo.



It's not the same with The Terrace restaurant taking over that whole area of the gardens and one starving purple swamphen even tried to eat my notebook.

Jopie left us at the Gardiners Creek Trail turn-off (because of the lack of technical sections perhaps?) and we continued east before hooking a left up Back Creek and the Ferndale Trail.

Near the Glen Iris Road crossing, George got his foot stuck in a toe clip and took a light fall.

Several people were required to get the bike off him. George had already indicated he would leave us for Ashburton Station and made it home without further incident to continue the intricate preparations for his 90th birthday ride in February.

Roberta and Jenny were meeting us at Maranoa Gardens and by this stage I was worrying about making it by noon. Road repairs didn't help, with a traffic control person on their walkie talkie describing us as "like the Tour de France, sort of". Not very much like that, really. Our two guests were firmly ensconced in the park by the time we got there and it was reasonably warm by this stage so everyone was happy to catch up. Sadly, the yellow grevilleas that had given the ride a green and gold theme the week before had taken a hammering from the wind and rain.

Home was via the King Street Chain Reserve, which has had some work done but not enough, and Hays Paddock. Some stopped at Mr Wednesday but others seem to prefer going on that day of the week.

Report by Wolter

YAN YEAN AND LAURIMAR LAKES 4 DECEMBER

Ten keen riders turned up at Merri Station. It was forecast to be sunny with a high of 34 deg so we were keen to get moving before it got hot. Ed was already on the Mernda train making 11 of us. Once off the train we headed off from Mernda towards Yan Yeau reservoir on our bikes. A short steep climb got everybody ready for morning tea!



From the reservoir there were many twists and turns through the shady Laurimar Lakes, Wilton Vale Wetlands, and Hendersons Creek Wetlands to lunch at Mill Park All Abilities Play Space with a nice tail wind. It was starting to warm up but still not unbearable.



After lunch we headed to Plenty Road then Janefield Wetlands via some back roads and paths. Heading west on to the Ring Road path then south again on the Darebin Path with the nice tail wind.

A stop at Artiga Coffee for a cool drink was very welcome. It was starting to get a bit hot now. Riders started to peel off for home as we got back to Jika Jika. 56km

Another ride with challenging navigation. Thanks for coming along Gael, Ed, Steve, Jobie, Colin, Ken, Bob, Michael, Rodger and Kate

Report by Graham H

MORNING RIDE AND CHRISTMAS LUNCH 9 DECEMBER

If you enjoy resting and gazing about the countryside then this was the ride for you!

With over 2 dozen riders heading out from Jika Jika we scored frequent breaks while waiting for the entire mob to clear the many traffic lights on our ride north up St Georges Road.

Thanks to the cool but sunny conditions and to the prevailing Christmas mood no one seemed particularly perturbed by the slow pace.

Eventually we all made it to Reservoir then headed east towards the Darebin Creek Trail. On the way we sampled a new section of path near Kingsbury Bowling Club that ever so slightly reduced our exposure to Dunne Street and connected us to the creek. After a short burst along the creek path we left it immediately after riding under Plenty Road and headed into the La Trobe Sports Park that is, among other things, home to the Matildas. The Sports Park is blessed with quite reasonable paths for bike riders.

Morning tea by the La Trobe Uni rhinoceros sculpture "Run for your Life" was enhanced by the presence of a large duck family with extremely protective parent ducks. I felt very lucky to escape with all my limbs intact after a close call with Mr Duck.



Our journey southwards along the Darebin Creek towards lunch was very enjoyable due to the peaceful bushland and to the absence of traffic lights. Leaving Darebin Parklands we rejoined the road network for the short jaunt to the Grandview Hotel and all survived the one set of traffic lights on this short stretch.

Before we knew it we were safely ensconced in the Grandview Hotel eagerly awaiting our lunch.



Ride report by Gael

WESTERN PORT BAY TRAIL

11 DECEMBER

The weather was very pleasant, the early summer sunny day was perfect riding weather. This ride again is a slight variation to the initial Western Port Bay Trail ride, this time starting and finishing at Hastings rather than Pearcedale.

Roger again trained down from Gisbourne to Hastings and return! We had 4 riders.

Western Port Bay Trail follows the rail trail line in parts but we sidetrack 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

MYSTERY RIDE (RIDERS CHOICE)

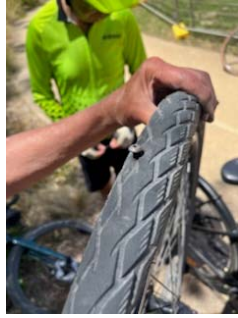
16 DECEMBER

I was scheduled to lead a Mystery Ride on Thursday the 18th so when Jopie had to cancel his ride I volunteered to lead since the forecast for Thursday was 35 degrees. The group decided to keep our destination a mystery.

It was overcast and a little chilly as we headed off. By the time we had ridden up the hill to Harp junction everyone was feeling a little warmer. The sun came out before we arrived for morning tea at Riversdale Reserve. The work at Frog Hollow appeared to be complete except for a fair bit of temporary fencing. After Alamein station we turned left towards the Gardiners Creek Trail and headed towards Deakin at Burwood. We saw many sheoaks in bloom and a lot of nasturtiums along the banks of the creek.

We went along Jeffrey Street just before our lunch destination of Blackburn Lake. Jeffrey Street is very pretty and a slightly easier climb. Several riders commented that the weather was ideal at this stage. After the lunch break we travelled west along the bike path beside the railway. Roger left us at Blackburn Station leaving us with 8 riders. We had to walk through the underpass and shopping mall at Box Hill before we were back on a bike path.

After Union Station we followed a few quiet streets before we arrived back on the Anniversary Trail near East Camberwell Station. We veered off that trail at Whitehorse Road and eventually picked up Kilby Road. I noticed we had lost Kathleen and Bob who was tail when we were in Wilsmere Park after going under the Eastern Freeway. I doubled back to find she had a flat rear tyre caused by a large screw- see photo. A spare tube was located and fitted. Just as we caught up with the others Ken found he had a flat front tyre. This was caused by a small piece of glass. He changed his tube after the piece of glass was extracted from this tyre.



We stopped for coffee at Mr Wednesday in Wingrove Street just before closing time and they were happy to sell us coffees. A few riders said to me that today had been a very pleasant ride even considering the two punctures.



As the eight of us were back riding on Wingrove Street, I heard someone call out and turned back to find that there had been an incident at the corner of Martin Street in Fairfield. Ian Singleton had been injured. Mick and Ken helped him off the road. We called an ambulance and he was taken to St Vincents Hospital. Later he was transferred to the Royal Melbourne where he is waiting for surgery. Ian was very appreciative of the help from all of the riders in Tuesday's group.

Report by James

NO OFFICIAL RIDE 18 DECEMBER

As Jopie had to cancel the 16 December ride James chose to lead the Mystery Ride on that day as 18 December was forecast to be 37C.

Therefor 18 December was designated a non-official ride day for anyone who wanted to ride in the heat! As it turned out the temperature in Melbourne got to 38C!

At the time of writing this I had not heard of any riders choosing to go out that day.

Maybe I will hear differently at a later date.

Ian was due to have an operation for his injury on Tuesday 23 December. We all wish him a speedy and good recovery from the injury from the fall.

**I wish everyone a joyous Christmas and a safe and refreshing holiday season.
Colin**