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WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Riders' Blog



Welcome back one and all. Here's looking forward to a great year of cycling together.

SATURDAY RIDING GROUP

3 JANUARY

The forecast was a bit iffy, a pleasant 33 deg. max, with chance of showers or thunder storms in the afternoon. We had decided the previous week to ride to Williamstown, weather permitting.

In light of the chance of precipitation in the afternoon, I decided to take the quicker route, via the Dixon Veloway, both ways.

The morning was a little cool, to start, so I optioned for long pants and a jacket. We had 7 starters at Rushall station and 2 more at Royal Park. Our next stop was a toilet stop at Docklands.

Then onto the Veloway which was admired by all, even though some had ridden it to our Xmas get together. The section from Shepherds Bridge to Hyde Street, was now open, also. At the punt crossing we were joined by a couple of visitors from Stonnington.

Then on to Williamstown. The intention was to go to Café Cirino but it was closed so we went to our regular Schwabs Gallery, where we dined and socialised in the back court yard.

Fully nourished, we headed back. No sign of rain and now noticeably warmer, we headed back over the Veloway, said goodbye to our Stonnington friends and headed up the Moonee Ponds Creek.

At Royal Park, Christine ran out of battery. I couldn't believe my eyes. The chain was going sideways through the rear derailer. The other riders headed off to their various homes and I went back to Rushall, grabbed my ute and collected Chris and trike and took them home. Christine has a small van to take her trike to her favourite mechanic for further attention.

A rather chaotic end to a very enjoyable ride.

Report by David D

MERRI-BEK SHIMMIES & UPFIELD PATH

6 JANUARY

In a last minute switcharoo of rides the first ride of the year started with a relaxed ride to look at some street art in Brunswick. Outdoor murals that building owners or who knows who have commissioned on the outside of their buildings or fences. We were as relaxed as a road train of 18 riders can be riding through narrow streets and stopping and starting. We did create a bit of a traffic snarl in Ewing Street.



We eventually got to Gilpin Park for our morning tea break after stopping about half a dozen times for murals. Plus, we were also following sort of closely the Merri-Bek municipality - Brunswick to Coburg shimmy streets, with some variations.

After morning tea we stopped at another couple of murals and then continued our way northwards. Turning off at Linda Street (a bit of a hill) to get onto the Upfield bike path just before Coburg station.

We stopped for a bit more street art – I think we had seen about 10 or so at that point, which was probably enough.

We turned off just before Merlynston Station to go across Sydney Road and down towards the Merri Creek path. Our lunch stop was at Bundoora Park. I had a specific picnic shelter in mind that is next to small lake opposite the café but unfortunately someone else had the same plan. We ended up all racing across the parklands looking for picnic shelters that were vacant. It's lucky that there are many to choose from in the park.

The weather was heating up and it was good to stop for a while for a lunch break and a chat. We returned to Jika Jika via Latrobe University Ring Road, Waiora Road, Heidelberg Heights and Ivanhoe.

No more murals but I managed to get another shimmy route in – Macleod to Ivanhoe. That took us through to Ivanhoe - Banksia Street, Donaldsons Reserve path and then the edge of Darebin Parklands.

It was a good day for a bike ride and good company. Just one flat battery but luckily near Ruthven Station so there was an escape route.

Approx. 45km back to Jika Jika

Report by Sue

DANDENONG 8 JANUARY

The Tuesday ride on 6 January was supposed to be an idyllic adventure with Jopie around Hawthorn and Toorak, but he'd hurt his knee in the lead-up to the Australian Open (in which he wasn't even playing BTW).

The Thursday ride set for January 8 around the amazing wall art of Merri-bek was subsequently threatened by extreme temperatures, so ride leader Sue snaffled the Tuesday slot and perfect weather for the first DBUG weekday outing of the year, which attracted a great turnout of 18 (see Sue's report before this drivel).

I picked up the Thursday ride and the prospect of having to cancel because of the heat or no one showing up but, by Wednesday night, the forecast had gone down to 31 degrees and I ended up with five volunteers heading out to Frog Hollow on the Outer Circle Trail for morning tea. Having swallowed the picnic area there, the almost-finished cricket and footy clubrooms provided some shade, and bench seats, but their facilities remain locked.

After the trauma of crossing Dandenong Road, we plunged into the urban oasis of Boyd Park to Hughesdale Station and the Djerring Trail, which provided some shade as we headed south-east past many railway stations offering early retirees the chance to head home in air-conditioned comfort.

A cool breeze sprung up briefly to cool our heated torsos, although some admitted they would have preferred a tail wind.

Lunch was taken at Noble Park's glorious Ross Reserve, an area that has been opened up by the elevation of the Pakenham/Cranbourne railway line that produced the Djerring Trail. After a relaxing repast and engaging conversation, we soldiered on a little further to Dandenong Station via the Yarraman Station overpass and Railway Parade. The Djerring Trail is going on the railtrails.org.au website shortly and I was looking for an alternative to the Dandenong Showgrounds and Cheltenham Road to get there, but Railway Parade's on-road bike lane definitely did not cut it. On to Plan C.

I'd hoped the trains would be running via the City Loop, so we could swap from Platform 2 to Platform 1 at Parliament Station (for possibly the last time before the Metro Tunnel becomes fully operational), but we'd arrived too early for one of those.

Given it wasn't that hot, it didn't really matter. We got off at Richmond and rode home via South of Johnson as usual, shedding riders as we went.

Bob left almost immediately for My Ride in Collingwood to buy something "under the counter" and by the time I got to Jika Jika I was all alone and totally unprepared for the demands of the Fresh Food Program volunteers that I take some produce home because no one would turn up in the heat on Friday. You should try it.

Report by Wolter

WESTGATE TUNNEL TRAILS

13 JANUARY

I started planning this ride last year, when we didn't know when the Westgate Tunnel or the associated shared paths and veloway would be open. It was possible to ride bits of the route but not others so you had to use nearby roads. When the tunnel opened on 14 December, the Harris Street shared bridge over Whitehall Road (next to Yarraville Gardens) still wasn't finished and Google Maps still had not caught up with some of the paths, but the ride worked out at about 50km so it was a goer.

I had 11 riders ready at 9am, including two who'd been minutes late the week before and missed out on making that one 20 riders. First stop was the "Rainbow Bridge" over the railyards next to Dynon Road and near North Melbourne Station. This has been open for months and doesn't really have a name but, as riders would soon discover, rainbow colours are a bit of a theme on the tollway.

Heading south along Moonee Ponds Creek we got to new bridge number two, the imaginatively named Footscray Road Footbridge which is a piercing shade of green somewhat like Shrek, because cyclists apparently love green.



It's a serious hook turn to head out of town from here past the former Costco warehouse and along Footscray Road. We had to sample the old before we sampled the new Dixon Veloway above, you understand. We took the traditional route to morning tea at Yarraville Gardens for the same reason but got to admire the glorious new toilet block, completed only slightly quicker than the tunnel. The shared path (Westgate Trail) along Hyde Street took us to the Stony Creek Reserve "walk" which was given an extension to link up with the extended Federation Trail. We took some pix but this bit of the ride, next to the freeway, is probably the most boring.



It was a relief to hit the original section of the Federation Trail, which has been resealed, landscaped and is away from the traffic.

At Kororoit Creek we took a left onto that waterway's trail down to poxy Barnes Road, where office warehouse developments have turned the shared path into a minefield which will have lots of truck crossings when they're done. It's great news that the federal government has announced \$5 million to avoid this area and get the Kororoit Creek Trail down to the bay, presumably via Cherry Lake. I did not fancy the trip down Millers Road to get to the lake for lunch so had unceremoniously dumped it from the ride, which was met with howls of derision.

With the informal path south of Paisley Park now concreted, we enjoyed lunch at the impressive Blenheim Reserve Playground, where stone birds on wooden plinths made appropriate bird calls when approached. Derision was replaced with awe. A bonus infrastructure project inspection came in the form of the Newport level-crossing removal, which will result in a relatively paltry 500m of railside trail and an elaborate shared bridge over the railway that sadly won't help us avoid the subway at Newport.

The tension was building as we resumed our journey north along Hall Street and turned east for the last section of the Federation Trail extension back to Hyde. The speed seemed to build as we tried the new two-way bike lane on the western side of Yarraville Gardens and turned down the hill to the Harris Street bridge over Whitehall Road. Inexplicably this bridge is black, not green, so I was expecting some confusion about whether we were allowed to ride on it.

The bridge takes you past a wetland (stormwater basin) to the Maribyrnong River Trail, which is now somewhat overshadowed by Westgate Tunnel exit bridges. Unfortunately, there's no direct link to the 2.5km veloway from this end (it would have been a bridge too far!!), but we were soon riding inside the serpent surrounded by greenness before hitting the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail for the ride home and refreshments at District 35.

My thanks to all those who attended with great enthusiasm and especially to Colin for going tail. This ride will obviously evolve as projects in the area progress so will be worth revisiting in due course or when Ian Singleton is up to it.

Report by Wolter

TAYLORS CREEK, KEILOR & BRIMBANK PARK

15 JANUARY

Ten eager riders headed off from Jika Jika for the ride to North Melbourne Station to catch the train to Watergardens. Jopie rode with us for just that segment then Roger joined us at Watergardens Station.

After leaving Watergardens Station morning tea was fairly swiftly had on the tree lined Taylors Creek. Continuing to enjoy a glorious summer's day we then rode towards Brimbank Park and on to Keilor for lunch. Most of it was moderate riding but there were a few steep hills and gravel sections.

Steve needed to adjust his saddle mid-ride so naturally lots of support was provided by the team.



Our return via Steeles Creek was shady but otherwise unremarkable. We rested briefly overlooking the Maribyrnong munitions precinct and contemplated afternoon tea.



Roger bailed out just before afternoon tea but the rest of us indulged in delightful refreshments at Autumn Leaves Café in the charming Pin Oak Crescent adjacent to Newmarket Station.

Full of caffeine and milkshakes with the odd cake thrown in we had the strength to pedal on home. Others departed at the usual junctures leaving only Colin and Graham to pedal with me back to Jika Jika, a distance of approximately 47km.

Thanks to our whip, Graham, and to Colin, David, Ed, Ian H, James, Jopie, Michael, Roger and Steve W for coming! Still trying to work out the term for a female leader of male harem...

Report by Gael

RINGWOOD AND LILYDALE LAKES 20 JANUARY

It was a perfect day for Bob's debut as a ride leader, with a predicted temperature lower than earlier forecasts. But riding towards Westgarth Station there were traffic jams as the boom gates had obviously been down for some time. A train was waiting at the station and more people were getting off than on. Not a good sign.

The PTV app revealed that there were four signal faults in the City Loop and Nola texted that she was stuck on a train at Heidelberg Station. Roger and Ed were going to be waiting at Richmond for a while ... We decided to ride there just before "our" train started moving and met Nola at Jolimont after "her" train had arrived. Love it when a plan comes together!!

After a quick morning tea among many young families at Ringwood Lake, we headed off to find the Tarralla Creek Trail, which proved easy once we went east on Eastfield Road. There's a beautiful new wetland area adjacent to this trail courtesy of Melbourne Water. At Norton Road we picked up the Carrum to Warburton Trail which is a pipeline track that is a bit hilly. The trail then follows the former Healesville Freeway Reserve, which is also hilly! There were regular stops to catch our breath.

At Lillydale Lake (the lake's name has two l's) the picnic tables were also extremely popular so it was onto the shaded grass for some, to be serenaded by bagpipe players in the carpark.



Nobody was interested in riding the short section of the Yarra Valley Trail to Yering that had been planned so it was on to Lilydale Station.

Robyn would have just made it onto the 1.39pm train, if she hadn't got on the 2.09pm one that was already on the other platform! After half an hour of delightful conversation, we were off.

Roger and Nola stayed on board at Richmond, while Ian H headed to Jolimont Station and Robyn rode straight home. That left four of us to boost the day's turnover at South of Johnstone.

Report by Bob and Wolter

NEWPORT LAKES 22 JANUARY

Sixteen riders headed off from Jika Jika on a sunny but chilly morning. It was quite a routine ride past the zoo and along the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail until we reached Footscray Road. There we turned left onto the new green elevated bike path that took us to a level just below the elevated Footscray Road. There were views of the traffic below, blue skies above and regular TV cameras. After we crossed the Maribyrnong we turned left and followed the river downstream to join the second new bike path for the day. This took us along the side of the new freeway past what looks like a large grey boot which is really the vent on the tunnel in disguise. This bike path continued above Whitehall Street and delivered us to the north side of Yarraville Gardens for morning tea. The new toilet block was open after a very long period of construction.



We all had to deal with a steady headwind on the way to Williamstown. The wind became a tailwind as we turned north along Maddox Road. There were road works to negotiate at the new rail bridge being built across Maddox Road. This was only a short distance from an early lunch at Newport Lakes. The two new bike paths made our journey faster since we spent less time waiting at traffic lights. The weather was now warm and sunny. After lunch we continued north crossing the freeway at Muir Street. We continued on the third new bike path for the day along the north side of the freeway crossing above Williamstown Road. Then a left turn and back to ground level near Stony Creek in Yarraville through some pleasant bushland on our way back to Hyde Street and then north to Footscray where we rested for coffee at the Footscray Milking Station. I noticed the staff have new uniforms with the letters FMS over an outline of a cow. Roger stayed with us for coffee and rode with us as far as Fitzroy.

The rest of the ride to Jika Jika was uneventful. The ride was about 50 km.

Report by James

WARBURTON TRAIL (WANDIN NORTH TO WARBURTON AND RETURN) 27 JANUARY

Due to the forecast temperatures or Northcote, Wandin North and Warburton being 45°C, 42°C and 36°C respectively, this ride was cancelled in line with Darebin BUG extreme weather policy.

LATROBE LINK 29 JANUARY

With the Tuesday ride called off due to the temperature we had 17 keen riders turn up at Jika Jika on a sunny but cool Thursday. Off up the Merri Creek path it was busy with school back. It got quieter as we got to Edwards Lake for morning tea. 2 riders left us at after morning tea as we headed to Ruthven Station then north to J.C. Donath Reserve and on to the Darebin Creek path. Up through Bundoora Park and past the 3 Rhinos in La Trobe University and on to Macleod for lunch.

Being so close to the train station, 6 more riders left after lunch to catch a train home.



On via some back streets to the River Gum Trail with a stop to check out the Eastlink hole in the footy field we joined the Yarra Trail back to Jika Jika with a coffee stop at Area 52. 46km

Report by Graham