

Volume 15 | Issue 3

Date: March 2026

WOBBLY WHEELS

Darebin BUG Riders' Blog



ST KILDA BOTANICAL GARDENS 3 MARCH

Memo to self: next time you are faced with 21 riders, listen to Mary and split the group into two! Colin was wearing bright colours and agreed to go tail. As I headed off into South Crescent, I hoped people would follow. Much traffic, including a truck, caused a delay here, as did the boom gates, with two trains going through. We turned left into Westgarth Street, rode east until after the housing tower street, then turned right and cycled out to Heidelberg Road. We seemed to be missing some of our group, so we paused for a while on the south side of the road and still had no riders. I phoned Colin who reported that some had turned right into Westgarth Street so he was trying to locate and redirect them!

Eventually we had our correct numbers, so we joined the Yarra City Trail towards the Melbourne Royal Botanic Gardens. Points to note here: a couple of walkers appeared annoyed that we were on a designated bike path, the Yarra was fast flowing at Dight's Falls due to yesterday's rain, looking quite spectacular, the ride around the Collingwood Children's farm (thanks Sue) was very pretty and took us to the new Gipps Street bridge, certainly an engineering feat.

It was very peaceful further along the Yarra, with kookaburras laughing, a lone kayaker sending ripples through the calm water and later a group of women rowers practising on the tranquil river. We had a couple of drink stops, our last being under the bridge, near where the Gardiners Creek trail begins. Glenys left from here to find toilets and met us at morning tea. We arrived at the Melbourne Royal Botanic Gardens around 10.20 and found a few seats and a shelter not far from the Anderson Street gate.





With the Australian Grand Prix the coming weekend, the plan was to avoid Albert Park at all costs today. Pam Stiles departed after morning tea and the remaining 20 rode around the Tan to Linlithgow Avenue and Southbank Boulevard, where we joined the bike lane, riding down past the Recital Centre and the ABC studios to the end and turning right, ending up beside the Yarra, with stalls set up for the Grand Prix teams. This took longer than usual, as it's impossible to get 20 cyclists across the traffic lights at once.

We rode the bike path beside the Beacon Cove Tram out to Port Melbourne and turned left onto the Bay Trail towards St Kilda.

Being cloudy and cooler, there were only a few people at the beach, so easier riding around St Kilda. At 12.05, when we arrived at the St Kilda Botanical Gardens for lunch, our usual seats were available, so we spread out into various smaller groups to enjoy our lunch.

Eventually the sun came out, so sunglasses were worn for the return trip back the way we had come. Franca, Bruce, David and Roger left us first, followed by others including Sue, as we rode via the river towards the MCG, then up Clarendon Street and through to South of Johnston for coffee. Ralph and I cycled on from here as we had open classrooms at our grandchildren's school. Many thanks to Mandy and Mary for keeping me company at the front and to Colin for being tail; also, to Paul for returning the first aid kit and to Sue for her valuable assistance.

A busy ride of 46km – next time two groups definitely!

Report by Nola

YARRAMAN 5 MARCH

Thursday morning was a lovely temperature for a ride. 9 riders met at Jika Jika and we headed off to the new Parkville Station via Canning Street. With 2 lifts to get us down 2 levels it was no problems.

Bruce and Franca back from USA joined us at Parkville Station. The train was full but emptied out at Town Hall and we enjoyed peace and quiet for the rest of the journey.

It was a short ride to a lovely morning tea spot in Greaves Reserve. On to lunch in Jells Park. Bob showed us his work shortcut from Dandenong to Dandenong Creek Path.

We came across a lovely copper coloured snake sunning itself on the East Link Trail just before Jells Park. It was in no hurry to move.



Lunch under the trees at Jells Park was lovely.

On from Jells Park on the East Link Trail it was starting to warm up.

David had an incident and required some patching up.

On to Heatherdale Station beside the Eastern Freeway. It was getting hot now so most of the riders got the train home at Heatherdale Station. (45km)

Three of us carried on to Jika Jika with a lovely afternoon tea at Gourmet Girl Café in Laburnum.

Report by Graham

SATURDAY GROUP 7 MARCH

This Saturday after some discussion, it was decided to do our regular ride along the Yarra Trail and onto the Anniversary Trail, stopping at The Golden Child for refreshments and continuing back to Rushall along the Anniversary Trail.

At start time we had 11 riders, including 2 who intended leaving at the Yarra. Weather was mild and overcast and shortly after leaving we were joined by one more rider. We moved along at a good pace to what was supposed to be our toilet stop at The Tennis Centre but alas the doors were locked, so alternate toilets adjoining AAMI Stadium were used.

Unfortunately, only one was in a semi-civilised condition but just sufficient to cover any urgent needs.

Onto the Main Yarra Trail, where 2 riders now left us and the remaining 10 made good time along the uncluttered path until at St Kevin's boathouse, we were met by 3 riders from the Stonnington area.

Now 13 in number, on to Gardeners Creek, Ferndale Trails and finally the Anniversary Trail, where we as we arrived at the Golden Child Café the sun came out.

Seated under the veranda at a long table on the street side of the café, we were joined by Roberta (a Tuesday rider, from past times). Food and drink was well received by most and after having had our fill we continued on the Anniversary Trail, with 4 riders leaving at Camberwell and with Roberta leaving at Kew. The Stonnington trio left at Chandler Highway and the other riders dropped off until myself and one other arrived back at Rushall. A pleasant and interesting ride.

Report by David D

HEATHCOTE-AXEDALE AND RETURN 10 MARCH

A blue sky and 19C greeted us on our arrival at the car park between the primary school and the dog park. Roger was already there. Mick and Mary appeared with their camper, having stayed the night in the local caravan park, while James and Bob came together. Ralph and I had spent the night in Huntly with his brother Doug and sister-in-law Beth, so it was a 40-minute drive to Heathcote.

Ralph led the group off following his safety briefing before 10, with James on tail. It was pleasant riding with no wind and plenty of shade provided by the trees either side of the track. The birds were out with plenty of lorikeets, crows and magpies to be heard and it was very peaceful in the forest. I did comment to Mary as we sailed downhill, that this would be uphill on our return journey! We reached our morning tea destination beside Lake Eppalock within 40 minutes, with the lake nowhere to be seen. The seats were in the sun, which we didn't mind, though Bob opted for some shade and took the photo of the 'absent lake'.



Lake Eppalock March 2023



Suitably hydrated off we rode towards Knowsley, a small town along the way and then entered Knowsley State Forest. We had a few stops for drinks and soon we were crossing the McIvor Highway a short distance from Axedale. After the protection from the trees, this open area felt exposed. Just before the famous big hill, Ralph pointed out a shady spot to meet on our return trip. So down we sailed [me on the brake], turned right and crossed the Campaspe River. Cycling alongside the water, we followed the trail to a sharp righthand incline towards the township. Lunch at a picnic table in the park under large shady trees was very welcome and water bottles were refilled. Mary told some funny stories about her Irish father, while Bob and I chatted about the Children's hospital in the 80s. Sunscreen was reapplied and it was time to leave.



The big hill was its usual challenge and I gave up early. Ralph and Roger had their electric power, while our other riders did very well. James stopped near some shade and waited while I caught up, then we had a drink and made our way to the main group. It was warmer, but still ok and when we stopped at Knowsley Mary kindly found some paracetamol for me, as I felt a headache coming on. I kept drinking and that seemed to do the trick.

Around 8km from Heathcote, Ralph ran out of puff and had to rest. As he sat down, he said he felt dizzy, so he rested for a good 15-20 minutes. Meanwhile I'm wondering if we'll make it to the Bakery before they close at 4pm. People asked what he had for breakfast and it was felt that toast was not enough fuel for a bike ride. Mary found a lane 200m away where he could wait safely.

Bob and I rode ahead, past that lane to a road where I could bring the car. After waiting quite a while, I phoned Ralph who said he was ok and the group would soon be with us. With all this drama, I forgot about the uphill, though there was one section where Mick waited for me to catch up. Finally, back at the car, Mick put my bike on the rack by 3.45, so I drove straight to the bakery after thanking everyone for their assistance. I bought an iced latte, a cold bottle of water for Ralph and some pies for our dinner. Back on the road, I found Ralph further on past Derrinal.

It took a little while to load the bike onto the rack and safely secure everything else in the back seat. Ralph was worn out, though appreciative of the cold drink, while I was eager to start the drive home. Mary phoned to make sure we were ok. We arrived home at 6.15 and received texts from Roger and Bob. What an adventure! Needless to say we were both tired after this eventful afternoon and went to bed at 9pm.

PS Next morning Ralph tells me he didn't take his tablets away with us, one of which is a blood pressure tablet!!

Report by Nola

WATTLE PARK 12 MARCH

A group of 12 riders were assembled for the ride at 9am. Jon joined us along the way. It was to be a fairly standard ride to Wattle Park by way of Darebin Parklands, the Anniversary Trail with a stop at Frog Hollow for morning tea.



After morning tea we continued on the Anniversary Trail as far as Alamein Station where we turned east along the Gardiners Creek Trail. We continued to just north of Burwood Highway where we headed west along Stott Street and crossed Elgar Road to enter Wattle Park. Making our way along the gravel paths we arrived at the play/picnic area for an early lunch. The 2 replica trams have been completed equipped with access ramps and tables and seating inside. These were much appreciated as while we were having lunch a persistent drizzle of rain arrived.

When it came time to commence our journey back to home the rain had eased and indeed we did not have any more rain for the rest of the afternoon.

The route towards Koonung Creek Trail was via many back roads in an almost completely northerly direction. We arrived at the Koonung Creek Trail diversion near the intersection of Belmore and Elgar Roads then made our way onto the Koonung Creek Trail proper to head west towards home. There are still a number of diversions along the Trail due to all the road works still in progress. Finally we arrived at the Main Yarra Trail where David M and Roger left the group near Eaglemont Tennis courts to find a train. The remaining riders continued on to Wilson Reserve and Chelsworth Park to make our way along The Boulevard, across Heidelberg Road and into Alphington where some stopped at Area 52 café for refreshments while some continued on their way to do awaiting chores.

A good day's ride with all staying safe. Ride distance approximately 46km.

Report by Colin

GEELONG AND BARWON RIVER 17 MARCH

The day started with light drizzle which persisted on and off till late morning but that didn't deter everyone. We had 9 keen riders. 6 met at Westgarth station, 2 took an earlier train from Southern Cross and George drove to Lara. We could have had 2 more starters but Wolter was crook and Bob had to head home before he got to the station. Southern Cross threw us our first curved ball. The Geelong train can leave from several platforms and the PTV app won't tell you which. You have to work it out when you get there.

I asked an official there and was told platform 7A. We got there and found it not to be so, so asked a different official who told us the correct one, 16A. By the time we got there we had of course missed the train so had to wait for the next.

Luckily there is one every 20 minutes. The train was a three carriage one which will only take 6 bikes. Luckily we were only 6 and there were no other bikers so we had a win! We all met up at Lara and in the drizzle, cruised down to Limeburners Bay, our intended morning tea spot. Here we got our second curved ball. A gaggle of teenagers had commandeered the picnic shelter so not wanting to start any wars (We'll leave that to Dear Donald) we rode on to the shelter at Moorpanyal Park on the foreshore at North Shore, a lovely spot.



Then via the Fyansford to Port of Geelong Rail Trail and a great whizz down a super smooth road descent to Fyansford. We crossed the Moorabool River twice and the Barwon once and followed that beautiful river to our lunch spot at Queens Park. After lunch there was lots more beautiful riverside riding and a hellishly steep but short up section to a pedestrian bridge over the Barwon before more riverside riding and finally via some streets and beautiful Eastern Park to Eastern Beach for coffees etc at the cafe there. Roger and George missed out because they had pulled out to South Geelong Station for an earlier train home. The rest of the ride followed the lovely Geelong Foreshore past Cunninghams Pier, Western Beach, Rippleside & St Helens Parks to North Geelong Station. To our delight, this time we had a 6 carriage train so all 7 of us remaining were able to easily get on. From Southern Cross Robin and I managed to squeeze onto the crowded peak hour Mernda train and I think the others rode home although that is as yet not verified.

A good day was had by all, or at least so I am led to believe

Report by Jopie

MULLUM MULLUM CREEK PATH 19 MARCH

Eight of us left Heatherdale Station for the short hop to Schwerkolt Cottage picnic ground, adjoining the East Link Trail for morning tea. It looked like rain but luckily not on our parade.



I neglected to warn riders that we would leave the East Link to join the not very obvious Mullum Mullum Creek junction and lo and behold some riders continued past the junction to confuse the leader with their whereabouts.

Luckily Wolter managed to reunite us again and so we happily pressed on to the MainYarra Trail to Westerfolds Park for lunch. Poor Franca had to wait for Bruce to arrive with lunch. Don't ask me why because I neglected to ascertain the reason for his delay.

From a pleasant lunch we sped through Lower Eltham skirting past the famous sink hole to the Yarra Flats and past the Ivanhoe Golf course to Alphington for Area 52 cafe, and a well earned coffee to shoot the breeze.

A short ride home for most of us.

40kms

Report by Ian H

JACK ROPER RESERVE

24 MARCH

13 riders had assembled for the 9am setting off. It was great to have Ed join us for his first DBUG ride since his hip op!

We rode east along South Crescent only to find that we couldn't continue across Victoria Road due to the road being closed. We crossed the railway line and continued east along Cain Avenue, through the car park at Alphington Station and along Railway Place to cross Station Street. Fortunately a train came which meant the boom gates were down so we were all able to cross safely. Continuing along Railway Place and a couple of shared paths we made our way back to the shared path on the north side of the railway line just before Grange Road. The rest of the ride to Darebin Parklands was straight forward so we had an easy ride to the Darebin Creek Trail. While riding up the Darebin Creek Trail Ian S rang me to find out if the ride was still to Jack Roper Reserve, I told him yes and he said he would meet us there at lunch time.

Morning tea stop was at Norris Bank Parklands. After morning tea we continued to the Western Ring/M80 Trail and rode west. The wind had got up and was now quite strong and gusty. As we were passing to the north of Northern Memorial Park a small mob of Kangaroos was spotted and to our surprise one was white! Unfortunately we were not fast enough to get a photo.

We arrived at Jack Roper Reserve quite early so we relaxed and enjoyed a leisurely lunch. To everyone's joy Ian S arrived, his daughter having brought him by car, and was quickly mobbed with questions probing his recovery. He had some setbacks but seems to be in reasonable shape now, except that it looks like he will need a hip replacement fairly soon. We were also joined by Franca for lunch.



Having caught up with Ian the bulk of riders continued on. Franca returned as she had come and Ralph and Nola stayed to chat with Ian before returning home by the route we had come by.

We left the Reserve at the south west corner to cross over the Western Ring Road and make our way along numerous back streets, passing George's place along the way, to go through Fawkner Memorial Park and on to the Upfield Shared Path to head towards home. We turned east at Park Street and the 8 riders left stopped at District 35 for refreshments, other riders having left or continued on.

After District 35 some left for home while the few remaining headed east, some more leaving along the way, so it was only James and I who made it all the way back to Jika Jika.

It was a very pleasant day's ride of about 47.5km which was enjoyed by all.

Report by Colin

100 STEPS OF FEDERATION – TRUGANINA PARK 26 MARCH

Nine of us arrived at Yarraville Gardens in anticipation of David Maunder's delicious blueberry muffins to celebrate his upcoming eightieth birthday. The recipe was from his daughter and was enjoyed by all.



Passing Point Gellibrand Coastal park through Jawbone Flora and Fauna Reserve we passed Altona Coastal Park and followed Altona Esplanade to Truganina Park and the 100 Steps for lunch. It was even more welcoming after some serious head winds as everyone would attest. We headed along Maddox Road and all the railway construction to arrive at Newport Station where a number of us departed. That left four of us to head along Hyde Street towards the Footscray Milking Station cafe. Colin and Bob declined coffee leaving Michael and myself to enjoy the delicious Padre coffee and manage to miss a massive rain storm. Abbotsford Street led us through Royal Park to The Capital City Trail in the rain and home. 65km

Report by Ian H

UPFIELD BIKEWAY EXTENSION

31 MARCH

Many of you would have read about Melbourne Water's successful efforts to further delay the completion of the Upfield shared path to the M80 ring road and our decision to avoid the trail as much as possible in the meantime. What started out as a very straight-forward ride, even for me, turned into a wiggly one along the much-improved East Brunswick Shimmy and Sanger Reserve shared path. We'd show them.

Fourteen turned up for the ride, on what turned out to be a beautiful day after some atrocious recent weather. Ed showed up last on his "old" Bombtrack after a glitch with his new e-bike, so he went tail as punishment.

Everything went well until we got to Richards Reserve for morning tea and discovered the toilets were a disaster zone. We enjoyed the new picnic area before Kathleen left us and Franca arrived as a replacement for the ride on north through Sanger Reserve, where one resident has stopped the trail being completed to Boundary Road. The plan had been to go into Fawkner cemetery, ride around the back of the King George (Bailey) castle and have him wave to us from the royal balcony.

Turned out he didn't have a balcony and that he was going to be at the dentist. What a let-down! He said he'd try and meet us for lunch. We seemed to miss all the toilets in the cemetery before James lost patience and Googled some at Martin Reserve, which were clean and plentiful.

Crossing Box Forest Road took us into the Northern Memorial Park, where there were heaps of toilets and more mausoleums than you could poke a stick at. It really is an eye opener for people who haven't been there before.



Lunch was north of Jack Roper Reserve, which had been frequented the week before, at a place called Seabrook Reserve, which is nowhere near the sea and has a creek, not a brook. The picnic area is excellent and you can ride north from here towards Coolaroo. We did not. The vote went in favour of coming back via Merri Creek rather than the Darebin one. Nola and Ralph abstained from the vote as they wanted to head home via the M80 and Plenty Road. Before they left us, we got to check out the little bit of new concrete on the

Upfield trail and the contractors still messing about with the stormwater drain in the distance.

Afternoon tea was at the Islamic Museum, rounding out a pleasant 40km day. We even got to see Gael and Graham coming back from a pre-ride.

Report by Wolter