

100 STEPS OF FEDERATION AT TRUGANINA PARK 2 JULY

Having been soaked two days earlier on the way to Frankston (WW Vol. 15 Issue 6, P11), despite a gentle tailwind, it was only natural that we would cop a blustering headwind on the way to Truganina Park and its 100 Steps of Federation. One must get one's exercise, mustn't one.

David M, who is not averse to riding in appalling conditions, was at Jika Jika upon my arrival and Roger also appeared to be ready for the worst.

Four of us were still drying gear from Tuesday, with Ed wearing his Shimano SPD sandals rather than wet bike shoes while Colin had managed to get his racey shorts dry. My iPhone started working late on Tuesday night and everyone's brakes had stopped squeaking.

Bob, who'd stayed home that day and said we were all mad (I think you're only allowed to say "mentally impaired"), had decided the forecast for Thursday was okay despite the BOM, not resting on their laurels after Tuesday's great effort, predicting gusts of 30km/h. Perhaps the wind would blow us home?

Ed was wearing a golden fleece already, so he went tail. I was going to call us the "Dirty Half Dozen" but then Ian H turned up at the last minute and spoiled that idea.

As we made our way along Moonee Ponds Creek to the Bay Trail, I got everyone to practice a couple of U-turns, which went well. Despite some misgivings, the veloway had not turned into a wind tunnel and Transurban seemed to have fixed the big bumps at the city end.

From Williamstown, the city skyline stood out sharply against the leaden sky. No one was in the water except a couple of dog owners and their pets. We arrived at Truganina bang on noon despite the blustering and light rain but did not stay too long for lunch.



David and Roger peeled off to Altona Station on the way back while the rest of us were tucked up in bed with hot toddies by the time a brief downpour arrived.

With rain on Tuesday and strong wind on Thursday, could we get snow for the Saturday Surprise ride? Well, snow did fall but only in the High Country.

Report by Wolter

SATURDAY RIDE GROUP

4 JULY

When planning the ride, the forecast was a bit chancy, so route was chosen that would give an escape via rail for wimps like me, should it be found necessary.

The plan was to ride down Napier Street onto the Main Yarra, Gardeners Creek, Ferndale and Anniversary Trails. Coffee in Burwood and return via the Anniversary Trail to Fairfield.

Come start time, at Rushall Station, the weather was hazy and cold. Ten riders had turned up and I was pleased to see the familiar faces of a few mid-week riders. In all we had 10 starters and we headed off.

Down Napier Street, past the MCG and pulled up at the Tennis Centre, for our toilet stop, where fortunately the toilets were unlocked.

Past AAMI onto the Main Yarra Trail, we were moving along nicely on the pontoon section when at the section where Parks Victoria has their boats there was a road closed sign firmly blocking any further progress. No alternative it was a u-turn, exiting into Cremorne Street.

Intending to resume the Main Yarra Trail I planned to get back onto it at Loy Bros Paddock.

Not knowing the route, only the general direction, I discovered there wasn't a street heading east so it was through a park then a street, where a sign guided us back to the Main Yarra Trail, just past the obstruction we had detoured around. Past Loy Bros onto St Kevins Boathouse where, after a short delay, we met 2 riders from the Stonnington area.

Now 12 riders, it was down Gardeners Creek and the Ferndale Path, onto the Anniversary Trail and stop at the Golden Child Café for refreshments. At the café we were joined by more Stonnington people that had arrived by car.

Having had our fill, the Stonnington people headed south, two riders elected to catch the train and 8 others resumed the northerly route. Through Chandler Hwy to Wingrove Street riders dropped off along the way. With 4 riders left I took my leave at Vauxhall Road.

The warmth of the weather and the warmth of the company had made it a very pleasant ride.

Report by David D

BUNDOORA PARK AND MACLEOD

7 JULY

Only very hardy souls fronted up at Jika Jika to brave the bleak and chilly conditions and with George joining later, it was a total of 16 riders. The sun refused to show its face all ride.

My RWGPS route took us down a dodgy descent from St Georges Road to the start of the MCT. We seemed to have lost 5 riders after only 10 minutes but sensibly Ed had taken a few others further on to a safer route down to the trail and therefore ended up ahead of the main pack.

It was a somewhat dampish MT at Coburg Lake.

After riding east through Reservoir, we were greeted by a few kangaroos at Bundoora Park where lunch was partaken.



After riding through Macleod, we arrived at the gloriously scenic River Gum Trail. Mike's tyre (front this time) had a slow leak and he borrowed Ian's new fangled electric pump which worked fine till it didn't - stopping before reaching the preset pressure whereupon Ian recalled that he hadn't fully recharged it.

The MYT was muddy in places and yours truly duly slipped out. No damage done except to pride and muddied clothing. As Mike succinctly put it 'he took one for the team.'

A well- deserved coffee was had in Alphington with Pam confessing that she only does these rides for the coffee.

Report by Bob

CRANBOURNE GARDENS – THE RIDE THAT ALMOST NEVER WAS 9 JULY

The day before the ride, Vangel rang to let us know that the Metro Tunnel would be closed for maintenance. Instead of riding to Parkville Station as planned, Kathleen, Bruce, Franca, Jon, Caroline, Vangel, James, Ed, Bob, David and Meg rode to South Yarra Station on a cool, foggy morning to catch the train to Cranbourne.

The adventures began as soon as we arrived. Track works meant all trains were terminating at Dandenong, so while we were discussing changing the ride to start there instead, we discovered there had been a last-minute platform change. After a sprint to the correct platform, we just made the train before the doors closed.

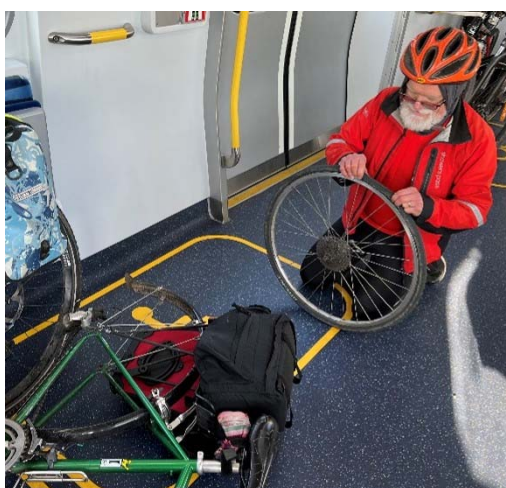
Then came another surprise. Partway through the journey, an announcement advised that the repairs had been completed and the train would continue all the way to Cranbourne after all. What an eventful start to the day! A brief burst of sunshine during the trip raised our hopes, but by the time we reached Cranbourne it was overcast and misty, and it stayed that way for the rest of the ride.



Despite the weather, we enjoyed a pleasant ride to the gardens, a walk to the Stringybark Shelter for morning tea, and then the "gruelling" 2.4-kilometre ride to the picnic area for lunch. After a leisurely stroll through the gardens, we finished with afternoon tea in the café. We rode to Lynbrook Station for the trip home, although not before lifting all the bikes over a fence to reach the bike path.



To cap off an already memorable day, I had a flat tyre on the way back, which Bruce kindly repaired on the train.



Despite all the unexpected twists and turns, it turned out to be a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Report by Franca

LAURIMAR LAKES & MILL PARK

14 JULY

Most of the group met at Merri Station on a surprisingly mild morning for mid July. Some rain was threatened. Our numbers swelled at Mernda Station to 18 and off we went to Laurimar where we followed waterways, rode around lakes and visited a magnificent old red gum.

Morning tea was near the Laurimar shopping centre where the previously open toilet was closed but luckily an alternative was found at the local community centre. Two riders left here, one of whom was George whose electric bike battery failed. Hopefully he made it back to Mernda Station without further mishap.

A few more lakes, a brief shower that scared us into all putting rain coats on, some rough and slippery bits through the Morang Wetlands and the soon to be replaced bridge over the M80 / North East Link works brought us to lunch at Binnak Park where fortuitously the toilets were both close and open.

Then via Macleod, Latrobe Uni and down Darebin Creek to one of our favourite and regular coffee stops, Artiga, for a relaxed and well deserved break.

The way back to Jika was the quick and direct route via Gooch and Rathmines Streets although it did take a while for all of us to get across Station St despite the half way medium strip sanctuary. Surprisingly we still had 8 riders when we reached Jika Jika. No other mishaps except for a minor unintended detour in and out of a dead end court (to check out the houses obviously) and we did lose 4 riders for a wee while but a phone call soon fixed that.

Report by Jopie

BLACKBURN LAKE

16 JULY

It was another good turnout for a Thursday with 15 riders ready to go at the prescribed start time, including two new riders Robin and Chris.

After overnight rain the roads were damp but riding was good as we set off for Darebin Parklands then to the Anniversary Trail, and picked up Jon along the way. We had a couple of stops to regroup after crossing at the lights, and it was an uneventful ride to Frog Hollow Reserve where we stopped for morning tea, while Robin and Chris headed for coffee at Fordham's Milk Bar.

David D showed a number of riders an easier way to get to Toorak Road, rather than riding down the steep hill, after crossing the railway line near Hartwell Station.

Wolter waved goodbye after Alamain as he was off to explore some muddy tracks while the remainder of riders headed to the Gardiners Creek Trail and then through the Blackburn Creeklands and Furness Park before climbing up Allendale Road towards Blackburn Lake.

On entering the lake sanctuary we rode a lap around the lake before stopping for lunch at the visitor centre.



Photo by David M

After lunch we headed north and along the railway line then diverted through the Cootamundra Walk before ending up beside Blackburn High School and then through quite a number of back streets before reaching the Koonang Creek Trail and then more diversions near Doncaster Road before finally stopping for refreshments at Hahndorf's chocolate shop.

On the way back to Jika Jika all the riders peeled off to make their way home so only the leader made it back to Jika Jika.

Distance 54km elevation about 500m average speed about 15 km/h

Report by Ed

BRIMBANK PARK 21 JULY

16 or so riders set off along the Merri Creek Trail to the drive-in screens indicating the turn off to Queens Parade and eventually Kent Road leading us to the Westbreen Creek and ribbon parks to our morning tea stop. Luckily there were enough tables to accommodate our raucous group.

From here we joined the Moonee Ponds Creek to Boeing Reserve and Mascoma Street to cross the freeways on to Brimbank Park and the dizzy descent to the river and lunch.

After a pleasant lunch in the sunshine we followed the Maribyrnong River to Canning Reserve. One flat tyre, a few hills and finally the main drag to a cafe finding a pleasant window seat for afternoon tea.



Jopie guided us through to Newmarket Station.

And onward home. 65km

Report by Ian H

CAPITAL CITY TRAIL - COMO AND BURNLEY GARDENS 23 JULY

9 riders (Jill, Dave, Mary, John, Jopie, Bob, me, Kate and Roger) set off on my inaugural ride as Leader. A 35k circuit along the Capital City trail travelling west, and down the Moonee Ponds trail for morning tea at Roy Barassi Park, but not the famous junior edition, but his father, Roy senior. From this vantage point we had a great view of 'Pam The Bird' on the Bolte Bridge pylons, either graffiti art or vandalism depending on your point of view. See Wendy's pic.



This could become a collector's item as you could see the abseiling ropes hanging down, obviously Pam won't be there for much longer.

Next was a tour of the Docklands and then onto Southbank, past the ABC and Arts Centre and a meandering course through the gardens up to the Botanical Gardens. At this stage we had passed 3 toilet stops with Jopie quipping that the ride should be called 'Steve's Toilet Tour'. We did a short walk through the Botanical Gardens, back on our bikes riding along the Tan and then onto the Yarra Trail. The group opted for an optional diversion through Como House gardens where yes, there is another toilet. Next it was a short 20 minute ride to lunch at Malcom Graham Pavilion near Burnley Campus. (Another toilet)



Considering the temperature at this stage was 9° and felt like -9° we didn't linger long and set off after a brief lunch stop through Burnley Campus, onto the Yarra Trail and a tour through the back streets around Carlton Brewery. I gave the group the option of skipping arvo coffee. This was met with howls of outrage, so on we pressed to the 'Dirty Apron' cafe (which we all thought wasn't a very appealing name) in Clifton Hill. Jopie and Kate's Chai and Dirty Chai looked amazing. Thanks to Mary for being an efficient and diligent tail.

From my point of view it was a good ride, a manageable number, no mishaps, and no rain.

Report by Steve M

ANNIVERSARY, GARDINERS CREEK AND MAIN YARRA TRAILS 28 JULY

How good are Melbourne cycle trails! This ride linked Darebin Creek trail to the Outer Circle, Anniversary, Gardiners Creek & Main Yarra Trails, meaning very little road riding. Winter rains have created verdant green vistas, complemented by the great amenity the various councils provide. No rain today, but plenty of wind, with gusts up to 60kph. Fine when it was at our backs, but not so fun on the Yarra trail section.

Our first time leading, it was lovely to have the support and encouragement of 14 cycle friends to share the ride. Jopie generously rode the route with us last month, sharing tips about leading, and pointers on toilet stops. Mick did a final reconnaissance on Sunday, and assured everyone he had checked, and cleaned, the loos (lol).



We remembered to collect the medical kit from Jika Jika, and learned the hard way what a handy tool the Uber app is. Unfortunately Pam and her bike parted ways on one of the humped bridges in Hedgeley Dene Gardens. The Uber Max was a perfect size for a single electric bike, which the driver lifted in. We wish Pam & her knees a speedy recovery so she and Paul may fully enjoy an upcoming holiday in Cairns.



Report by Mary & Mick

PETTYS ORCHARD CAFÉ TEMPLESTOWE 30 JULY

Weather was cool but the rain held off for the day and a pleasant riding temperature. Reported widely was that the Yarra Trail bridge over the Plenty River was closed for repair for all of June and July. The detour proposed for around the closure is quite a long way and has two very large hills to traverse! Luckily Graeme had pre scouted the trail and found it still open. It appears as though no work had been done but possibly it's structural work underneath, as it's meant to open from August.



The trail follows along the Main Yarra Trail and then returns with morning tea at Possum Hollow in the Warringal Parklands. Lunch is at Pettys orchard with some over partaking in apple pie and cream! On the return we tentatively rode the lower mud trail with those best experienced with falling into mud leading the way!



The distance is around 45km and relatively flat which made for a shorter day. If we ever need to use the detour this would go well over 50km with steep climbs.

Report by Jon