

CRAIGIEBURN AND BROADMEADOWS VALLEY TRAIL 1 SEPTEMBER

Weather was quite sunny and pleasant but with a strong northerly wind. Heading north up the Merri Creek Trail helped shelter from the wind, then across to Gavin Park for morning tea.



Then journeying to the nearby Pascoe Vale Station to catch the train to Craigieburn. The trip back along the valley trail was greatly assisted by the now gusting northerly wind as well as considerably downhill trail requiring very little pedalling into lunch at Gowanbrae Riverwalk.



Cycling back to Pascoe Vale and up a steep hill to Ohea Street bike track straight into Pentridge for afternoon tea!

Report by Jon

SANDRINGHAM TO SEAFORD

3 SEPTEMBER

On a grey September morning Bruce and I met Ian, Roger, Bob and David at Westgarth Station. As we stood there we all kept looking at the sky hoping the rain would hold off as the clouds rolled in. We took the train to Jolimont where we met David and rode to Richmond where we also met Colin and Alison.



We got off the train at Sandringham and rode south along beach road where we stopped for morning tea along the way.



At Mordialloc we took the Longbeach Trail to Carrum where we stopped to admire the beach. After the viewing of the beach we stopped for lunch along the Patterson River near the boat launch before continuing on to the Seaford Wetlands Trail which circumnavigated the Seaford Wetlands area. We then rode back to Mordialloc via the long beach trail where we had afternoon tea at a nice café near the station. We then caught the train back with some of us heading back to Parkville via Malvern Station and others going back to Richmond and then riding back to Northcote. Total length of the ride from Sandringham and back to Mordialloc was 47.1 km with 252 m of climbing.

Report by Franca

SATURDAY RIDE GROUP

5 SEPTEMBER

As forecast, we received a considerable bucketing of rain just before ride time but by 9.30 at Rushall Station the weather had cleared. Alas I only had one starter to ride with me, Patrick.

Weather, cool, dry and overcast, we set off. No one joined us at Royal Park, so being just 2 in number, we made quick progress.

Through the Kensington Cattle Yard Estate, along the Maribyrnong River and in warming sunshine, we arrived at Williamstown, in record time where we were met by Sandra from Stonnington, who joined us for coffees in the sunshine on the street.

Appropriately nourished, we headed back. Sandra leaving us at Docklands, Patrick and I headed down the Moonee Ponds Creek and back to Rushall.

Report by David D

GEELONG RAIL TRAILS AND RIVER

8 SEPTEMBER

You never know what's going to happen when you travel with V/Line, and so it turned out on this occasion. The earlier train to Geelong, which I suggested some people catch to avoid the crush, was on Platform 16, not the usual Platform 7 or 6 or 5.

James managed to get there in time but Nola missed it due to having to get across the whole the station. When the rest of us arrived, we weren't allowed on the 9.04am at Platform 7, which seemed to have a problem, so we had to go back upstairs to Platform 16 for the next one. Nola was, by now, exhausted and we had to check if James had brought a book to while away the time at North Geelong. Luckily the guard on Platform 16 let all eight of us pile on the three-carriage train and put our bikes in the substantial disabled seating area, which is usually off limits.



It was rather pleasant to have a breather on the train as we headed south around the bay admiring the massive fields of yellow canola flowers (but not the yellow capeweed ones). Roger thanked the guard profusely and we all bowed.

From North Geelong there is a wide shared path along the Princes Highway before it jams cyclists onto a narrow path over the railway lines, so you can't even admire the view before reaching the start of the Fyansford Rail Trail.

Predictably the promised public toilet at Bell Park was locked so, short of going back to the station, we rode another 4km to our morning tea stop at Kevin Kirby Reserve where the toilet was open and the wattle flowers were blooming in rich profusion ... but not in the toilet. It was here that rumours started circulating that someone in our midst had celebrated a “major” birthday at the weekend and that skipping afternoon tea was not an option.



Past the Fyansford cement works site and down the hill to the Barwon River Trail we went without incident, for the most enjoyable stretch of the ride towards Newtown via the criterium track on the other side of the river. There we did a lap before crossing back over to the river trail, but not before Bob had seen another cyclist and led our brave tail gunner, Jopie, straight ahead instead of right. The concrete railside trail after the rail bridge to Waurin Ponds was new to most people and is a substantially more pleasant way to get to South Geelong than the old on-road options. Hanging a right at the Geelong Showgrounds we headed towards our lunch stop on the Bellarine Rail Trail. Mindful of the previously mentioned delays and Jon’s growling stomach, I tried stopping at a bench seat before Leopold, but our birthday person wouldn’t have a bar of it, so we continued on with the tailwind.

The Fred Cook Reserve is a much nicer spot with a shelter, picnic tables and the most elaborate bike rack you could wish for, but only for seven bikes.



It was decided that coffee should be in Geelong, in case the prices went up while we were on the train, but this was not an easy task. The First Chapter café on the Bellarine Highway, which is primarily drive-thru, was not open but Jopie googled Bean Squeeze, which was also primarily drive-thru but reluctantly accepted our entrance and Robin’s money. Yes, it was Robin who had turned 80 on the weekend and shouted us afternoon tea. Why anyone would want to pretend to be that old is beyond me.

I managed to navigate us back from Fyans Street to the new twin-track South Geelong Station, where we had a less accommodating guard to deal with in regard to our nine bikes but at least we were all on the same train until Southern Cross, where everyone headed home.

Report by Wolter

KOROROIT CREEK TRAIL

10 SEPTEMBER

Fourteen eager chums left Jika Jika on time and headed westwards along the Capital City Trail. Franca, Bruce and a David joined the ride at Royal Park station. Morning tea was enjoyed on a bank of the Maribyrnong River in Footscray Park. There we farewelled Franca and Bruce who were returning to their other home the next day and had a few things to organise before then...! Impressed that they came for even a quarter of the ride.



Onwards through Footscray to Sunshine, and finally onto Kororoit Creek. It was pleasing to see a massive swathe of fresh revegetation along the creek. We lunched at Newport Lakes Reserve then continued on through Yarraville, giving the new Stony Creek overpass (adjacent to the Westgate Bridge ramp) a try. Quite satisfactory. The ride group got a bit discombobulated on Hyde Street but we all reunited to ride on through Footscray towards Kensington Stockyards. Afternoon tea was had at the delightful Autumn Leaves café opposite Newmarket station. Ian H donned this charming headgear at the café.



Thanks to Graham for being tail and to everyone else for coming along: Bob, Bruce, Colin, David x 3, Ed, Franca, Ian H, James, Jon, Kate, Meg, Michael, Pam.

Report by Gael

BOTANIC GARDENS MELBOURNE AND ST KILDA

15 SEPTEMBER

We had brilliant Spring sunshine for the start of our ride and there were 17 starters. There was a south wind and unfortunately I didn't hear the rail crossing go down stranding Colin, who was tail, along with several others in Westgarth Street. We regrouped at Heidelberg Road and enjoyed a lovely ride along the Yarra to the Melbourne Royal Botanic Gardens.

Some of the group were interested in visiting Guilfoyle's Volcano but there was a lot of grumbling as we pushed our bikes up the steep hill parallel to Anderson Street. Fortunately the Tecoma Pavilion provided an attractive sheltered spot for morning tea. Part of the group then ventured through the Arid Garden to the volcano. Unfortunately the walkway to the top of the volcano was being maintained so we didn't get to see the floating vegetation and magnificent views from the top.



Ken, Paul and Pam left the group and the rest of us exited the gardens using the Tecoma Gate and swooped down Anderson Street. By the time we were around the Tan Track past Linlithgow Street the rain was coming down sideways. Roger, James, Nola, Ralph, Jenny and Steve decided to escape the unpleasant weather. Now we were eight (Kathleen, Ed, Jill, Ian H, Robyn, Jon, Jopie and Colin). After we got into our rain gear the wind and the rain abated and we could see blue sky and we decided to continue to Albert Park lead by Ed. At Albert Park we were greeted by sunshine and saw many black swans with their adorable silver-grey cygnets.



Ed continued to lead us on an inland route around Albert Park Lake down Fitzroy Street to Acland Street then via Barkly Street to Blessington Street to the St Kilda Botanical Gardens.

As we finished lunch a few drops of rain came down and we had a quick visit to the glasshouse before the sun came out again and we took Dickens Street to the foreshore.

There were whitecaps on the bay, and few pedestrians so we made good time to Port Melbourne despite persistent wind. We got out of the wind when we turned onto the Sandridge Trail, rode past the Tea House and Flinders Street Station and to South of Johnston. Just after we parked our bikes at the cafe the rain started again and we decided to enjoy the cozy ambiance inside the cafe. Total distance just over 40km but extra points for riding with wind and squalls.

Report by Kathleen

AQUEDUCT TRAIL TO DIAMOND CREEK FROM JIKA JIKA (TRAIN BACK) 17 SEPTEMBER

11 riders headed off to the Darebin Trail then through Sparks Reserve, along the Boule and then on to Yarra Flats where you could hear the water gurgling through the black snake pipe (temporary sewer) beside the trail. On to Possum Park for morning tea.

Before we left Possum Park another group came in. They weren't with a BUG - just friends out for a weekly ride.

On to Westerfolds Park we passed the Whitehorse BUG going the other way.

Over the Yarra River and on to Eltham we stopped at what was going to be the lunch stop. We were way too early for lunch, and it was packed with kids, so David suggested a spot on the Aqueduct Trail for lunch. Sue left us at Eltham.

A bit of a climb to the Aqueduct Trail got the appetites going and we found a nice spot with benches and rocks to sit on for lunch.



After lunch we continued on the Aqueduct Trail with great views over the city and to the west. Everybody successfully conquered the short sharp hill soon after lunch then survived the fast run down Allendale Road. We momentarily lost the trail as we joined the Diamond Creek Trail, but Ed found her.

On the Diamond Creek Trail we felt we were in the country with lots of ducks and ducklings beside the trail.

We reached Hurstbridge around 2pm and some riders went straight to the train, some to the café for afternoon tea before catching the train home. Two rode back to Eltham to catch the train and one rode all the way back to Jika Jika to drop the first aid kit off.

A lovely dry and warm day after a cool start. 45 km

Report by Graham

FRANKSTON TO JIKA JIKA (TRAIN / RIDE)

22 SEPTEMBER

An early start from Westgarth Station and 5 riders were waiting when I arrived. It was a perfect spring day for riding with a clear sky and a light breeze forecast from the south when we were mainly riding north. This ride was a train to Frankston and ride back to Jika Jika.

On the train and along the way more riders appeared with Nola on the train, Robin at Clifton Hill, Graham and Roger at Richmond while David and Mandy were waiting for us at Frankston.

Morning tea was at the unscheduled stop at Frankston by the sea and there were 13 riders ready for the next adventure.

We rode along the Kananook walking path then later for about 3 km on a small and occasionally rough and slightly sandy path beside the sea. The vegetation was quite high so there were no sea views which is just as well as riders had to concentrate on riding the narrow path. We emerged from the shrubbery and made our way towards the main concrete bike path beside the railway line and then headed to Carrum before diverting along the long beach trail towards Mordialloc. It was lovely riding as we had a slight tailwind and the path was smooth and even. The lunch stop was at the pavilion in Mordialloc.



Back on the bikes, the ride along the beach trail was nearly perfect as there was a tail wind, the sun was shining in a clear blue sky and the sea was flat and a lovely colour. We seemed to maintain a good pace due to the tailwind and given the choice at St Kilda riders chose to ride beside the beach rather than inland. The further we went the smaller the group became with David the first to leave at Sandringham then others at Southern Cross so that at the late arvo tea stop at South of Johnston there were 7 riders who stopped for refreshments and a chat, while only James completed the circuit to Jika Jika with the leader.

In summary it was a lovely day and a great ride with no incidents or mechanical repairs needed.

Ride distance about 60 km, average speed slightly over 16 km/h.

Report by Ed

FINDON CREEK, EDGARS CREEK AND GALADA TAMBOORE 24 SEPTEMBER

A small cluster of us waited patiently for our train with several going past. Finally, our train arrived dead on time. Being school holidays the carriage was empty apart from us.

At Hawkstowe station we were joined by three more riders.

Before we even left the station the first aid kit was required with one rider arriving with a bloody leg. Again, still at the station two riders one after another had difficulty exiting the toilet, needing to press the emergency exit button to get out. I had started the day with a slight apprehension about magpies after three swooped me on my reccy ride. What would the day bring.

Our morning tea stop at a Mill Park park was busy with school holiday crowds taking advantage of the weather. The weather forecast was for a warm Spring Day of high twenties. After morning tea, the plan was to follow the South Morang rail path south to meet another rider. Then turn towards the Findon Creek path and head north for a leisurely ride next to creeks and wetlands to the Galada Tamboore path.

The wind had picked up a bit after morning tea and our riding, while still pleasant, was a little less leisurely. I think we were all relieved to turn south with a tail wind onto the Galada Tamboore path. Lunch was at the Whittlesea Public Gardens, also busy with school holidays crowds enjoying the day.

All tables busy we perched on a concrete wall near the skateboard area to eat our lunch.



As we headed towards the bridge over the Ring Road to get to the Merri Creek Path, we waved goodbye to David and Roger. The rest of us stopped at the Islamic Museum café for afternoon refreshments then onwards home.

It was a good day for a bike ride and good company. This time no birds swooping.

Approx. 50km back to Jika Jika.

Report by Sue

EAST BRUNSWICK SHIMMY

29 SEPTEMBER

How long does it take to build 1.2km of concrete path with solar lighting? This question has kept users of the Upfield railside trail awake at night as they wondered when they would be able to ride or walk to the M80 Ring Road trail unhindered by large steel gates and construction vehicles.

First Melbourne Water remembered that they had to replace a drain pipe to the neighbouring stormwater retardation basin/wetland. Then the construction company had to resume work on the trail, then it was “only about two weeks more”.

Having gone through a whole three-month ride calendar, it still wasn't ready by September 29. Not even the concrete. People have started pushing over the barriers and using it anyway in their impatience. The Darebin BUG does not do that sort of thing.

Despite the obvious distress caused by this first-world problem, we ended up with 13 on the ride, all with stiff upper lips. Dave S met us at Nicholson Street to bring us above the unlucky number, knowing how wildly superstitious we are.

The shimmy was as pleasant as ever, despite a rather chilly northerly that would hopefully push us home.

Having found the facilities at Richards Reserve, next to the Coburg Velodrome, to be in appalling condition on our last visit, they were checked on Sunday's recce and found to be clean, but Hoskens Reserve up the road offered TWO toilets and a much shorter walk to the picnic area, so why upset the stiff-upper-lipped people any further?

The sun was out, there were minimal school holiday children in evidence and lots to talk about.

Here Pam S, Jan and Stan (sorry, Steve, I've got a side hustle promoting a streaming service) left us, although we had only done 10km. We rode further north into a slightly warmer wind and through the Fawkner and Northern Memorial cemeteries via a slightly different route, but still past George Bailey's house. I yelled out but not sure he heard me. At Tom Roper, I was imposed upon to go on to Seabrook Reserve for lunch so that we had at least covered 20km and that the noon hour had chimed on the town hall clock. Here there were a lot of kids but it was still pleasant.



Somehow, obviously deliberately, the wind was now coming from the north-east as we headed for home along the M80. It was a relief to get on the Darebin Creek Trail and have the traffic noise gradually recede into the distance and the wind provide some assistance. A white butterfly kissed me on the lips and fluttered away with some degree of difficulty. No one was attacked by magpies, although it was noted that their favourite target had left earlier.

More talk at Artiga, where we went for afternoon tea. There it was agreed that I'd managed to drag the ride out to 45km and Colin was kind enough to take the first aid kit back to Jika.

Strava told me I'd done my fastest 10 miles in 2026. Woohoo!

What's a mile?

Report by Wolter