

# Out of Our Depth

**O**UR TEAM met at Park Rd, Milton. As this was the first time some of the guys had met, we got to know each other and also some team strategy.

By the time we got to our second checkpoint at Jacobs Well at around the 120 km mark, the enormity of what we were undertaking was starting to sink in. Scheduled food and drink stops were becoming more of a focus and goal. Turns on the front were being well rotated and shared between the group.

Getting to Coolangatta at around 4.30 pm presented us with an unexpected problem: most cafes and bakeries were closed and/or closing and most other places were restaurants setting up for the night trade. We spent around 30 minutes looking for somewhere to grab some food as our next stop was at Coomera, some 60 km away. So we found what could be best described as the dodgiest carvery in all

Coolangatta. Bevan's Carvery will not be forgotten. All were surprised that serious illness was avoided.

The next part was to navigate the traffic on the Gold Coast especially from Broadbeach to Southport. A near miss with a taxi was the only altercation and while hair-raising for Simon, we felt this was fairly well negotiated.

Once at Coomera at the service station near Dreamworld, we enjoyed some pasta from Shaun's wife, Lucy. Even this wasn't without incident with the shop keeper getting upset at us using his bench seats without buying anything inside. We informed him that this was a bit hard to do when his doors were locked. We moved on quickly after he turned the lights off on us.

Coomera to Brisbane was our main part of night riding. We got a few cheers from a restaurant near the strawberry farm. We also crossed the other Audax team

on the same route. At East Brisbane, we rested, showered and refuelled with Megan dishing out some great food.

The next morning we were off at 5 am to Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary, our last checkpoint before finishing. Here we scoffed down some of Kim's quiche before heading out to the finish line.

When Brothers Leagues Club came into view, it was hard to believe that we had done it. It seemed so far away when we were at Park Rd.

At the finish line, I think everyone was pretty impressed with themselves. And even though we didn't know everyone when we started, I think we all had a pretty good bond by the end.

Thanks again for organising everything and we look forward to the next Audax challenge.

*Brett Kerwick*

## The President's Men

**T**HIS YEAR was my first as an Oppy Team Captain. A team of four formed after discussions on an Audax ride late last year. I wasn't in the mood for an all-night ride and none of the other riders had more than 300 km under their belt and one hadn't done more than 200 km (albeit one was a UAF on a mountain bike).

The team was finalised: Brian Hornby, Chris Richardson, Anthony Richardson, Chris Groves with Chris Ellis confirmed in the month leading up to Oppy.

As the course developer, I had to develop a course of 300 km, a sleep control, with 60–65 km in the morning. Beer had also been mentioned in the brief. The route was mapped and agreed having minimal controls, but Chris G still stipulated we stop every 50 km to eat and drench ourselves with water (as hot weather was predicted). I agreed to any concession to keep the team enthusiastic and on-board.

Basic route: Start at Brothers, go south past Peak Crossing, head north to



Coominya, southwest to Ma Ma Creek, east to Fernvale, then to Middle Park for a sleep via Ipswich, out around the Centennial Highway back to Brothers.

This is the first year that we had Facebook to advertise to interested people, communicate with the RO, and keep the conversation going. This gave us a sense of where and how the other teams were travelling. I also noticed a few armchair voyeurs reading posts and staying connected with the event.

The day turned out very hot and humid with temperatures in the mid-30s, so hydration was very important. All handled the conditions well but a couple of us faded after lunch for a couple of hours. Bakeries can force you to eat too much sometimes, Especially the Fernvale one (yum). All riders were feeling strong when we arrived at the sleep control (Chris R couldn't finish his second beer, but in his defence was recovering from the flu).

Next morning saw us all back on the road around 4.30 am (some with an extra boost on their bike). Chris was certainly ready to go (see photo on previous page).

Chris R had a flat early due to what he thought was an impact so didn't check the tyre. This turned out to be his downfall as 25 km later when a softened tyre caused him to crash on a roundabout. We fixed the flat tyre (finding glass in the tyre) only to discover the rear derailleur broke off when changing down for the next hill.

We continued on to finish within time after leaving Chris to catch a taxi to Brothers. We had plenty of feedback on Facebook that we should have converted the bike to a single speed and continue. We all lacked the knowledge and skills to do this and as it turned out the cracked frame could have been unrepairable if he had continued.

The team was exhilarated by their achievement and have indicated they wish to try for something more challenging next year.

*Brian Hornby*

### **Facebook transcript for The President's Men:**

- 10.23 am The President's Men are traveling well. 60 km done at 10.20 am
- 12.02 pm The President's Men are having lunch at Fernvale bakery. 90 km done.
- 4.20 pm The President's Men are having a sandwich at Ma Ma Creek. 178 km. Shop closing on Monday. Going to become a back packers.
- 7.15 pm 7.10 pm. The President's Men are at Fernvale. 236 km, 60 km to sleep stop.
- 10.45 pm The President's Men arrived at sleep control at 10.25. 60 km in the morning.
- 5.03 am The President's Men are on the road. First flat of the day. 50 km to go at 5 am.
- 6.08 am The President's Men are at Camira at 6 am. 35 km to go.
- 7.53 am The President's Men finished at 7.50 am

## **Doctors and Nurses**

**W**HAT WOULD be considered by most nurses as a nightmare (spending 24 hours in the company of doctors) turned out to be a great 24 hours of riding with friends. Our team of five was made up of Rosie Goodwin, Vaughan Kippers, Mark Riley, Martin Pearson (doctors) and myself Anne Latimer (RN).

We set out from Lowood heading towards Toogoolawah. The highlight being the rolling hills of Mt Beppo road. On our return to Esk we were entertained by the antics of a mob of kangaroos. The heat of the day was starting to make its presence felt as we rolled into Atkinsons Dam with empty water bottles. After refuelling we headed off towards Mia Mia creek.

It wasn't until we had reached Gatton that the temperature started to drop. It was a relief to see the shadows lengthening across the road. We pulled out of Mia Mia creek with lights and reflective jackets on. The next two kilometres certainly posed a challenge for me as we rode over a loose gravel road which included a steep descent. However thanks to the encouragement of the team I managed to get through it.

There was now only one obstacle that stood between us and Mulgowie, our next checkpoint—the annual Gatton street burn-outs. However all was in hand as we detoured around this activity. The pace picked up after Mulgowie. We were pacelining into Laidley at average speed of 32 km/h. With only five kilometres to go before sleep we encountered a lot of glass on

the road which resulted in a puncture of my back wheel. Once again thanks to a team effort of bike and light holding we were back on the road heading towards our sleep stop at Sandy and Martin's place in Lowood.

After food, shower and sleep we were back on our bikes by 4.30 am as we started the final 68 km run into Ipswich. After conquering Tallegalla hill our last climb, spirits lifted. The downhill run into Brothers Leagues Club was simply amazing as we pulled in around 7.30 am.

Lastly on behalf of the team I would like to sincerely thank Sandy for her awesome unfailing support. Truly a unsung hero of the 2014 Fleche Opperman All Day Trial.

*Anne Latimer*