

## **An Oppy Adventure in 2015 by “A pair of Nicks with two Dicks”**

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This ride filled us with trepidation – we were attempting to break the Queensland record of 469 km set by Brian Hornby, Martin Pearson, David King and Roger Hawley in 2011. This was uncharted territory for us all.

Our team, “A pair of Nicks with two Dicks”, was named after the two Nicks - Fisk and Burnett, and the two sons of Dicks, Anthony and Chris Richardson. Joining us at the eleventh hour was Nick Fisk’s son Angus, flying up from Sydney at 10:30 pm on the Friday. Angus is a young bike racer, having done the Alpine Classic Extreme 250 ride 2+ hrs faster than his father, who, as we all know, is not so slow himself. So for any single sleepless foray, Angus had done 250 km before, the two Nick’s 400 km, and Chris and Ant 442 km (for the first overnight stop in PAP) – we each had our own ambitions and challenges.

Our secret weapon, beyond a blend of youth and experience, was the unbelievable course that Melvyn Yap had designed and allowed us to use. Thanks Melvyn for a great course – only a recumbent rider would be able to design a 500 km route around Brisbane, with only 2,955 m of climbing (Fig. 1)! However, this meant a fairly circuitous course, with our cue sheet running to 16 pages! Luckily we had our Garmins, and this was the first time I used one for directions – it was an awakening! We also had adult supervision to keep us on track – Nick B was navigator extraordinaire.

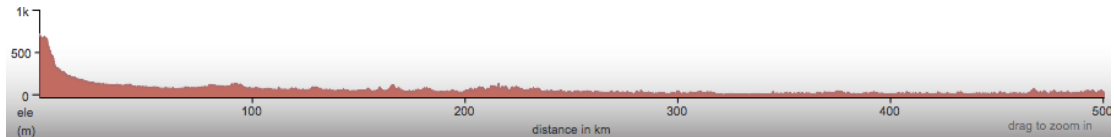


Fig. 1. How every Audax course should be (no offence Andrew Bragg and Roger Hawley!)

We started at Picnic Point Park. Thanks to Nick Burnett’s father Dick for dropping Nick B, Chris and Ant off in Toowoomba (we asked him to join us – would that make us “A pair of nicks with three dicks”? – but he wisely declined). Thanks also to Nick F’s wife, Ann, for dropping him and Angus. Melvyn’s course started with a great downhill section along Flagstone Creek Road. An exhilarating descent and averaging 35 km/hr for the first 20 km – could we just keep this up for the next 24 hours? I had not been down this road before – it was awesome!

We then traversed a lot of our old hunting grounds through the Brisbane Valley – Gatton, Glenore Grove, Forest Hill, Laidley, Coominya, and Lowood. Our thoughts always turn to Martin whilst riding these roads; Angus, who is a vet, spoke warmly of learning anesthesia from Martin. We had a 15-minute stop at Plainland at 94 km for water and a bit of food. The first of our four flat tyres was at Lowood. I stayed back with Angus – I found out that this was at mistake – and the others rode onto our first official control at Fernvale at 153 km. Angus changed the tyre expertly and then we were pulling 35-40 km/hr for the 8 km to

Fernvale. I decided that the next flat tyre we had I was not going to ride back to the group with Angus. Fernvale is always good for a pie or roll – we found, for the first time, a huge, shady garden out the back of the pie shop – every day is a school day.

We then tackled Rosewood and Willowbank. At the 230 km mark around Springfield, Chris had had enough – one Dick pulled out. This was disappointing for all, as he was travelling well, but after successfully completing the New Zealand GT Series 6 days previously, his head wasn't in the right space. We all ask ourselves the same question sometimes – “Why do we put ourselves through this”. On this day, Chris didn't have an answer.

We then travelled through Greenbank. As we neared Beenleigh, we were surprised to see a large and foreboding hill ahead – how could Melvyn do this to us? Thus far the course had been as flat as a pancake. Then suddenly just before the hill, we detoured through the suburbs and down a hill. A sweet mercy. Dramatically, though, a car cut in front of Nick B – that was crazy – it nearly wiped him out – he was so close he could touch the car. It reminded us that the main thing was to stay safe. Our dinner stop was at Beenleigh at 287 km at about 8:45 am. We were pretty tired and spent 10 minutes discussing the merits of McDonalds vs other “restaurants” that served food. Nick F found a kebab place – I had a lamb and beef kebab and it was the best I'd ever had.

We then rode onto Pimpama, where Angus decided to call it a day (and night) at the 310 km mark. It was sad to see him go, but he had ridden further than he ever had before. We would miss our domestique! We cycled on through the cane fields around Jacobs Well – this was 20 easy kms. At midnight we stopped at Cornubia at the 359 km mark for a snack. We found the road to the Bay quite hilly. Reaching the Bay, bl\*\*dy Melvyn made us ride down to each of the points – Victoria Point, Cleveland Point, Wellington Point, and Manly and Wynnum Esplanade – we were cursing him, but I am sure it would have been very picturesque during the day! We were now on our way back toward the city when we got another flat tyre – this was mine. Thanks for your help with changing it Nick B. Our last control was Tingalpa at 441 km at 4:15 am at a service station. We had a quick 20-minute stop and were keen to ride on.

The last of our flat tyres, Nick B's second for the day, was on the Centenary bike path at 469 km at 6 am. We were tied for the Queensland record, but we still had to do the 25 km in the last 2 hours, and time was running out. Hopefully we wouldn't get any more punctures. With a new tube fitted, we rode on, completing the last 31 km incident free and coming into Ipswich at 7:20 am. Nick F wanted to make sure his Garmin recorded exactly 500 km and rode around the block for 2 km. It brought back bad memories of Brian Hornby doing the same thing when I had been knackered on previous rides. I was heading for the shower. Well done Nick F, Nick B, and thanks to Angus and Chris for your help. It was great to share Oppy stories over a Brothers' breakfast and hear how everyone reached their different targets. Thanks Sandy for organizing the Oppy again and congratulations on your award for your Audax service – thoroughly deserved.