

This month's ride took us to the small town of Rathdowney a stone's throw away from the NSW Border (this is a beautiful loop that takes you into NSW before returning to QLD) and was 1st ridden 6 months earlier by 5 riders (Andy, Phil, Paul, Andrew and myself). Andy being the course designer had truly exceeded himself on this one and I could not wait to extend the invite to even more like minded riders, so I added it to the Audax Calendar ASAP and became the Ride Organiser for it and managed to entice Andy to assist with the support prior and on the ride.

Three things made it unique it was being held on a Sunday, it was the 1st of the Lazy Sunday series rides (160km as a maximum distance) and it was also being held as a charity event for my Smiddy fundraising for the Mater Foundation this year. With this in mind leading into the event there were 30 plus expressions of interest. Unfortunately due to the weather conditions and sickness levels a couple of days before the event, the numbers did drop drastically. Andy and I where confident that the weather would clear by ride day and sure enough it was a cracker for those that did turn up as can be attested to by the Photo's enclosed in the e-mail.

Riders Mick; Mel; Tony; Angela; Rowen; Tony; Kym; David; Brett and myself (I was suppose to be there to support only and Kim was going to ride but at the last minute she requested the swap, I suspect it was due to the rather cool 5 degree temp that greeted us at Rathdowney along with the clouds that initially threatened to drop rain throughout the morning) whew this did not happen and it warmed up quickly.

Support.... Kim and Jocelyn drove the full course taking photos and encouraging the riders from different spots on the course. Andy (he drove from Brisbane up to Urbenville to feed the Pelton for the lunch break and ensured that no one missed the turn to take in the sights of Mt Barney) – HUGE THANKS TO ALL

Ride Stats

Distance: 160km

Climbing: 2225m

Ride time: 8hrs

Average Speed: 25.3 km

Sunshine: All 8hrs

Rain: 0mm

CHARITY FUNDS RAISED: \$625.00

I thank you and tilt my Helmet to you ALL for getting behind supporting this event. The ride has already been added to the Audax calendar for next year and weather permitting the numbers will increase again.

Below is a review by one of the Riders:

Rathdowney Rumble

Sunday, 14 August 2014

It's always exciting to take on a ride you haven't done before and the Rathdowney Rumble looked interesting to me, particularly after an enjoyable drive up that way a few years back and Roger's enticing promo photos. The ride delivered on the promise and is one to add to your calendar for next year.

Ten riders turned up, most of them Roger's non-Audax cycling buddies that he was hoping to enthuse with the pleasures of Audax riding. The dismal riding weather from the day before had cleared (unlike Crazy Canungra held on the Saturday) and the day ahead was looking promising.

I was running late to start and agreed to catch the main group at Woodenbong. The 40k first leg along Mt Lindsay Highway, had me wondering about traffic, but the 6.30am start along with being a Sunday ride, meant that it was not an issue. The road was quiet and enjoyable (as Roger say's, there are Highways and there are HIGHWAY'S in Australia).

The climb to the top of the range was excellent and memorable for a few reasons. I heard the first bellbird about 10kms in and they didn't stop all the way up. The ascent was steady and winding with terrific views, so it appeared to be little effort. Mt Lindsay loomed large up ahead and is such a big landmark, that it seemed to take ages to pass. Turn a bend, and there it was. Ride further, turn another one and it was there again.

From the top of the range and the 530 metre climb, it was a steady decent to Woodenbong where I caught up with the group for the coffee and snacks. Woodenbong doesn't only have the unusual name but some quaint sights and buildings that give it an identity. The cafe owners were bright and helpful, they even remembered Roger from the previous ride making comment that the group had doubled in number and would look forward to next year's ride. I'll make a point of stopping there again.

The group gathered for a photo, before heading off on the second 70k leg to Urbenville via Tooloom Lookout. The group stayed together for much of this leg and there was some great lead riding into a slight head wind by Tony, Rowen, Mick and Mel to haul the group along this undulating part of the ride. Two flat tyres at the same time caused a short stop, but gave us time to enjoy the mountain and Farmland scenery, this landscape continued as we made our way towards the Tooloom turnoff. The bitumen surface along this stretch is patchy, and you had to keep a close eye on your line. It was hard to believe that this is a main Highway with a Dozen cars' only having past us since Rathdowney.

From the turnoff, we had a challenging 7km ascent to the lookout with grades up to 15% but as usual, the effort was well rewarded with some great views over the ranges. David took out the KOM on this stretch of the ride with a time over 22min 25sec to complete it, a mountain goat in another life I suspect. For some reason, I thought there would be a rest break at the top, but not so. After a quick photo at the Tooloom Lookout, the group pushed on.

At the top of the mountain, the landscape changed suddenly to rainforest for a few kilometres and a fully shaded road. We went straight into the 400m decent for 12km (should the route go the other way next year this climb would be interesting) and later at lunch, I heard Angela express concern about the dappled sunlight, the patchy bitumen and the speed causing some concerns on that leg. Her comment made me think about it and is something to watch.

The rest of the ride to Urbenville was reasonably flat and fast with the group enjoying a very nice tail wind. Roger had warned everyone about the two wooden bridges with plank gaps but fortunately, they didn't seem to present problems.

The lunch stop at Urbenville and the 100k mark was well catered for by Kim, Jocelyn and Andy (he had driven up from Brisbane to add further support to the riders). With great pre-made sandwiches, pasta, boiled eggs and plenty more on offer the riders were treated to fine dining. Having boiled eggs on a ride were a first for me and I give them the thumbs up.

During the ride a few riders asked about Audax riding and commented that I seemed to be carrying too much. I certainly had more gear than others and possibly a bit much for a supported 160km ride. I also had an interesting discussion with Roger about the merits of heavier bikes and the comfort they offer, versus travelling light and fast over long distances. A good discussion among Audax riders over a few beers, I think.

From Woodenbong, we had a small ascent up the range again. The 20km decent that followed was one of the most memorable I've ridden. It's a great road surface and the route is windy, scenic and fast. I'll be doing it again.

The ride concluded with a bit more work in a 20km scenic diversion along Barney View Road. It offers some terrific views of Mt Lindsay, Mt Barney, Mt Maroon and Mt Moon with Spicer's Gap in the back ground. I've climbed Mt Barney a number of times over the years and I enjoyed riding this leg and having a long view of Barney's various ridge ascents. Great memories!

The final leg along the Boonah Rathdowney Road was a flat, fast cruise and a suitable end to a great ride. We arrived back at 3.30pm and there were plenty of smiles. Everyone seemed to enjoy the day.

There is value in having some Sunday rides on the calendar. The finishing time of 3.30pm also suited me and meant I could get home for other things. The 160m distance is not a BRM and that may cause issues for some but on the other hand, it's a great way to induct new but experienced riders into Audax. Besides, it's just a good day out with like-minded riders.

Like so many other rides in SE Queensland and NSW, the scenery and the terrain were memorable. Rathdowney Rumble is up there with the best. See you next year.

Thanks to ride organiser, Roger Hawley and volunteers, Kim, Jocelyn and Andy you 3 did a superb job all day feeding, watering and encouraging the riders.

Kym Raffelt