

# Ride Report – Fassifern Folly

In stark contrast to recent mornings where the temperature had dropped to below 10 overnight, 31 riders presented for the inaugural running of the Fassifern Folly greeted with very mild conditions. Starting from Lobley Park, Churchill on the southern outskirts of Ipswich the forecast was light winds and low 20's combining for very favourable and indulging riding conditions.

The start list was impressive with all manner of members and non-members making up the group that would leave Ipswich and arrive back some hours later. For RO Rosie her first forte into hosting and running a ride event could not have been on a bigger stage with riders attending to pay tribute to our lost member Martin Pearson. Light & bike checks all done, the pre ride address completed the peloton set of for "a day on the bike".



Our support team for the day, Rosie, son Angus, Errol, Simon and Sue with a special visit from a truly special member at CP3, but more on that later.

It didn't take long for the domestiques from Kirsty Broun Cycling to take up their position and duties at the front of the peloton allowing the GC riders (well that's how we saw ourselves) to sit behind and go along for the ride. And I take this opportunity to welcome Kirsty and her riders for joining us on the day

even though at best we saw you all from either behind or as you heading in the opposite direction. Our perception of the Audax riders being the GC riders was nothing more than a poor judgement soon to be unearthed as we found ourselves being pulled along at between 35-40kph enroute to CP1 with no chance of getting to the front, not that we really wanted to.

There was the loud call of "attack" after the peloton was split at a T-intersection early in the ride, this just added to the event and set the tone for a ride that would possess so much difference and variance. For the record the 'attack' didn't last and was reeled in quickly by a very determined peloton.

Leaving Ipswich we headed west towards Rosewood with the group effortlessly making good progress and at one stage discussions on reaching CP1 before it opened were being muted around. I've never been in that position before so was quietly excited at the thought. This was certainly a novelty for me before BANG, a rear flat and all hopes of achieving this out the window just like that. I looked up only to see the vanishing group of riders I was once a part of leave me behind never to be seen again. A big thanks to Kim for stopping to give assistance, I think the opportunity of being able to have a break from the incessant speed was welcomed not that I was in disagreement. His decision was unknowingly a blessing in disguise for no sooner had I replaced my tube with my only spare being carried that a second flat occurred within 100 metres. A quick removal of the tyre and rim check found nothing sinister and with Kim's donation of a tube we were soon off again but not

before a handful of riders first went past. They were the first of the riders to allow the craziness of the starting speed to leave them before resorting to the "Audax" way of things. Richard and Vaughan then appeared alongside as we completed our second tube replacement enjoying a very leisurely ride through the countryside that was now featuring the sandstone escarpment of the range to our right and all manner of domestic farm animals ( and their aromas ) both sides. We even sighted a mob of kangaroos feeding on the dew laden grasses courtesy of an evening sky.

Just before CP1 we passed through Rosevale, a quiet country hamlet where from first appearances nothing much would appear to take place. The pub here is in fact QLD's oldest having being built in 1852 but more notably it was relocated 1 mile to its current site following the great flood of 1893. Taking 5 years to do it was completed in 1893 on the back of bullocks and wagons.

The Fassifern Folly will be remembered for many other reasons also. CP1 (Pioneer Park ) held one of them....a roadside park with a small table & bench seats under a roof amidst tall eucalypt trees, dry waist-high tinder grass and a cemetery....yes a cemetery with half a dozen headstones rising out from the grass. On a single ride before I have never passed so many final resting places, last count was 12. A reminder of the many small isolated communities that existed so many years ago during our countries foundation years.

Refuelled after a quick break stage two would be the most amazing stage of any Audax ride I have ever done. Fast approaching the 10,000kms mark confirms a statement made not that lightly but one that I am sure all riders would agree with. With the sandstone escarpment of the range now in full splendour it felt like our presence was forever being watched, it was like this lands ancient owners were affording us their permission to experience what they had done so many years ago. The bitumen road soon gave way to the first of the gravel sections, a length of about 6 kms. Well-manicured in comparison to some others ridden yet it still required attention to ride lines and corrugations to avoid any nasty and unnecessary occurrences.



A small creek crossing mid-way through this section provided the ideal opportunity for a photo and so decided to stop and wait for Chris, Kim and Anne whom I had left a little bit earlier. Kim arrived and photo taken. When told Chris & Anne were a little back we continued on.

The second memorable moment of this ride surfaced shortly thereafter with the first cattle grid crossing of the ride. With a passion, I dislike these immensely, the fears of doing some damage not a welcomed one but unfortunately there would be more yet to come.



With cattle apparatus in mind it seemed fitting we should find ourselves face to face with a

herd of fine looking bovine under the control of the drover heading our way.

Opting to hop of the bike and move to the side our politeness was rewarded with the cracking of the stock whip that awoken the still air. It was very reminiscent of yesteryear and with the range in full view one could easily have been forgiven for thinking of life back in the 1800's. Some members may recall that....( insert reference to joke ).



The herd now past we continued on to our next surprise. Just around the corner the forest surrendered its dominance to open farmland and a vista that was the Scenic Rim. Absolutely picturesque to say the least complete with a couple of excited horses that ran up and down the fence line at our presence. An opportunity not to pass Kim and I waited for Chris, Anne and Peter who had now joined the group for a team photo and a real advertisement for what Audax rides can offer and do deliver.

A collective moment enjoyed by all before we continued on towards Aratula with the only incident encountered being a small gravel section over a tributary of Warrill Creek causing my rear light to come off. No damage although I did note a small band of riders behind us that were Vaughan, Richard and Eric in receipt of a dust storm, a result I think of a passing vehicle, a Lexus I think ????.

Aratula reached, the decision was made to ride the 5km stretch along the Cunningham Hwy single file and together for safety reasons. Our execution however was poor as the small incline just out of Aratula separated riders. The left turn onto Lake Moogerah Road was a welcomed relief from the constant noise and volume of highway traffic, something until then not experienced on the ride and afforded the opportunity to own the road for a while.

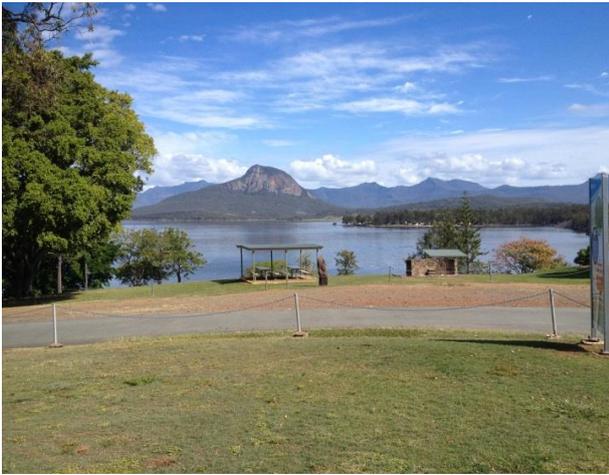
With Mount Edwards and Mt Greville silently presenting themselves the ride around the lake was rewarding. Eric, Hugh and myself had separated from the group soon joining up with Melvyn who was on his own after experiencing a loose spoke, a minor inconvenience for him compared to what was to come. A cautious approach to the gravel section that included a small but steepish descent was required before the final push to CP2 but not before one or two undulations that impacted on average speeds and a return of those bloody cattle grids. Yep they were back and more frequently this time. Even worse we would have to back track this section of road after the checkpoint.

And what about that delightful incline right after the downhill run as one turned left into the reserve that hosted CP2.....you know it had the cattle grid at the bottom, thanks Rosie for that one. I didn't hear one rider say anything bad about it and in fact I'm sure they were surprised at how infrequent those little hills were in the final few kms...love your work.



So 111kms done, 93 to go as the course distance was 204 and a bit and I don't think there was any riders that found CP2 to be one of the most visually pleasing. From an elevated position with an outlook of the lake itself and the imposing lumps of Mt Greville and Mount Edwards it was a hard decision to leave but one none the same necessary.

More lumps to come was the word and before long the climb up Mt Alford arrived but not before Hugh pushed ahead. On the climb MJ made a bold and gallant attack as he powered up to Hugh with relative ease before moving further along the road on his own, we would later see him at CP3.



The descent was high speed that saw Nick and I hit 80kph. Its moments like these that make the climb all worth it but when you do the maths one could argue the point, I mean 3-4 minutes of climbing for less than a minute of speed !!!!



Pushing along Nick, Melvyn and I had formed our own little group. Our little reunion as we all were members of the "Gym-Wich Flat Trakkers " in the Oppy and here we were doing what we loved yet again.

As we passed through Mount Alford township and the pub Nick raised the discussion point of stopping on rides for a beer. So when the Dugandan Hotel appeared there was no other choice but to stop and wet ones whistle and a salute to our lost member.

Ale's consumed we were back on the road and before long Boonah reached. I've never been to Boonah before but know of it from that character that appeared on Australian Idol a few years back, you know the lad with that voice and a liking for bling....he certainly had a special way of saying Boonah that's for sure.

Shortly after entering Boonah we turned left onto Hoya Road and the return of lumps. It was hear on the first set of lumps that a quick look behind saw Melvyn not there, he was there a second ago. We moved on over the hill and down the other side before Nick back tracked to find a broken chain link

had rendered his recumbent temporarily immobile. Nick's return resulted in myself going ahead to CP3 to raise the possibility of assistance being required as mobile coverage not present ( plug for Telstra not !!! ) whilst Nick being the more mechanically minded went back to assist Melvyn. My arrival at CP3 was greeted soon after with the lads arriving and in good time as Errol was getting ready to head back down the road to assist.

Errol's rescue mission was permitted through the presence of Sandy who had joined riders at CP3 and offered to hold the fort whilst Errol headed out. Thankfully not required and it allowed great conversation about all things Audax , the ride and general chit chat. Sandy's attendance was a lovely gesture with her wonderful enthusiastic and reassuring attitude emanating to a level that makes a riders challenges and difficulties simply disappear.

With a dropping sun on a day that had provided so much already the final 55kms home was there before us. The route would at first take us in the opposite direction to the finish before u-turning back towards Ipswich along quiet country roads that were free from traffic and noise of any substance and a reminder of the serenity that was offered and delivered on the course.

Nick, Melvyn, MJ, Peter and I soon got into a rhythm that would hold firm for the remainder of the ride despite those little undulations along the way. I think Errol mentioned something at CP3 that the last bit of the course was "as flat as you're going to get it" ....I mistakenly thought how good is that, an Audax ride that doesn't have a hill to finish on or with and moreso flat for the last 50. Now I know how Brian H felt when Martin called out '32' as he sat on the side of the road with a broken spoke or two. It's an Audax thing as it wasn't flat.

Cresting one of the many undulations we caught sight of distant riders with 'team time trial' mode entered in an effort to reel them in, our speed must have been around 28kph if not more as we pushed eventually catching Vaughan and Richard at the top of, you guessed it another rise.

The turn onto the Cunningham Hwy signalled 5km to go which passed very quickly and uneventfully and when Lobley Park was sighted the congratulatory verbals rang out at the conclusion of another successful ride.

Without a shadow of a doubt this ride was outstanding in so many ways and will remain as one I personally would recommend to others. The highlights for me : the flying start, the scenery, the Australiana, Lake Moogerah, the pub stop, cattle grids, cemeteries and as always my riding companions at various stages on the day, Kim, Nick, Melvyn, MJ, Peter, Anne, Chris, Vaughan, Richard and Hugh.

To Rosie a huge congratulation to you first ride as RO, you did yourself and the club proud at a time when a positive was needed. To your support crew of Errol, son Angus, Simon, Sue and Sandy at CP3 a big thank you from us all. A ride course is made that much easier by the quality of checkpoints, its food and drinks but more importantly your friendly and smiling faces and willingness to engage tired riders....hats off to you all.

For those that missed the ride, don't pencil it in next year, that'd be a mistake....ink it in as you'll want to do this one for sure.

For the record, all registered riders completed the course with the Lantern-Rouge group comprising George, Phil , Duncan and David coming in around 7:30 pm. At the other end Nick Fisk and brothers Chris and Anthony Richardson came home just before 3 pm.