

Round the Mountains - Trip Report - Anthony Richardson



This was a very enjoyable and picturesque ride, and made all the better for the company. There were 3 of us: Nick Burnett, Mark Riley and myself. We are all in training for PBP, and this was going to be my 300 qualifier, but Nick and Mark had already done their 300. Mark

and I thought 300 km was a bit short for us (more truthfully, our wives needed the cars), so we rode to the start of the ride, setting off at 4:30 am for Ferny Hills for a 6 am start. Nick joined us there and we found him sleeping in his station wagon. Banging on the back window had the necessary outcome. Brian H was the RO (thx Anne for filling in!), but was busy conquering the peaks of New Zealand with my brother Chris and Gerry Egan. This filled me with trepidation, as unable to read a cue sheet or load a Garmin with a tcx file, I was concerned I'd be riding by myself... thankfully the 3 of us decided to ride together. I don't know what I'd do if I ever found myself on a ride just with Andrew Bragg and Gerry?#@!\$

The first part was riding through early morning traffic in the northern suburbs. Our first stop was unscheduled when Nick's water bottle cage rattled loose and we had to do some running repairs. We then picked up a friend Grover along the Coronation Drive bike path – he was joining us to Fernvale. Grover was to be our domestique! Unfortunately he was too fast up the hills and we kept being dropped, especially along Pine Mtn Rd. Nick got a puncture – that gave us some time for a breather. Great to be on a quieter country road after traffic and lights. Our first control was Fernvale at 81 km, and although I am usually risk averse, I devoured a pie, as did all of us. Thankfully we did not regret that decision.

Refueled, we tackled the next section. We have ridden around this area around Atkinson Dam quite a few times – pretty flat and rollers. It always brings back memories of water skiing as kids (when it had water anyway!) The Control was at Esk at 144 km and we had a filling lunch at the café. From Esk, we only had 3 turns to make to the next Control; even I could find my way without adult supervision! This is a picturesque part of the route, and the hilliest. Riding past Somerset Dam provides scenic vistas and brings back memories of camping growing up. We were feeling a bit tired, so we decided that our Control at Kilcoy at 196 km should be the Stanley Hotel. This was a decision – we each had a schooner of Gold and of Coke. The locals were amused about our diet and why we would ride rather than drive 300 km – a common question asked by non-Audaxers, and one that is often difficult to answer! There was a mounted deer trophy on the wall, prompting a discussion about the difference between a deer and an antelope. This meant it was time to leave...

The ride from Kilcoy along Neurum Creek Road and along the upper reaches of Somerset Dam is always a highlight. There were lots of cormorants and B52s (pelicans) to keep us amused, and the pyramid house, presumably built by stoned hippies in the 1970s, is a landmark, as are the wood carvings.

Our last control was the Morayfield BP. Mark and I got a jam filled donut for dinner, which went down a treat and providing enough energy for the 40 km to home. The way into the north of Brisbane was great – nice and quiet, keeping us away from traffic. Brian had us looping around near his place taking in extra hills – I'm sure to give us a very small taste of his efforts tackling the NZ alps. The 3 of us got in together at 8:30 pm, tired but pleased. Our final stop was the mission debrief and customary drink at the Ferny Grove tavern. Thanks for a great ride guys! On the way home (thx Nick for the lift, and the pictures!), I got a call from Mark, asking whether I'd seen the Brevets. I hope you've found them Mark – otherwise I'll see you on another 300 to qualify...

Thanks Brian for a great course!

Anthony