

Ride Report – Smashing Mee (200 km) – Saturday 28 March 2015

Anthony J. Richardson



Billed euphemistically by Andrew “the mountain goat” Bragg as a “scenic, hilly 200”, this was going to test us. This ride gives Andrew free expression to inflict the maximum amount of pain on innocent victims. Even though he is a sick and demented puppy, he was keen to submit himself to the torture also and ride with us, but decided to stay in support. This would prove valuable later on. We started with five of us – Chris, George, Paul W, Chris R and Anthony R. This was going to be my 200 km qualifier for PBP – was this a smart choice? Would I get through? Chris R and Paul W had done it last year, and were back for more. How hard could it be?

We started with Clear Mountain – I’d been up this before so not too bad. I reached 72 km on the way down and Chris 84 km – I need to eat more... George and Chris were back a bit but Paul W was passing Chris R and me on the hills, and we would pass him going down and on the flats. We seemed to go up every side road with hills, if they were steep enough. One was a hilly road off to the left from the road to Dayboro. We had to cross a stream that was over the road but luckily slowed down as car came from the other way. It was slimy but we go through. Passing through Dayboro, we were now about to tackle Mt Mee – I’d been up here before so was not too concerned as it is a long but consistent climb. Half way up though we took a turn to the right – Oceanview Rd. I was getting vertigo! Both our Garmin’s refused to tell us the gradient when they reached of 15-20%. It was a long and steep climb but we made it. Nice downhill onto the main Mt Mee road and then undulating to the checkpoint at about 75 km – thank goodness. Paul was already there and we had a good chat. Was a fantastic spread of gourmet sandwiches and Andrew’s tasty energy biscuits – thanks! At least he was trying to keep our strength up. We headed off after 15 minutes and had a great downhill to the west of Mt Mee. We were then riding around Neurum and quiet country roads and reasonably flat. Great fun. We thought Paul would catch us soon on the hills, but we had probably 45 km of normal riding – it was great. Chris R warned me that the next section was the hardest – we needed to climb Mt Mee again on a mix of very steep dirt and tar tracks, and it was

raining. This was crazy – gradients up to 25% on dirt!@#? Several choice expletives were used here (and intermittently throughout the ride) to describe our RO. They shall not be repeated here because this is a family publication... We almost had to stop in several places to walk our bikes, but decided to keep spinning on our bikes. Chris called out that he reached 6 km/hr on one of the climbs. This was scenic country on quiet roads – it is not surprising, I suppose, that you usually have virtually impassable roads to yourselves. We finally made it to the Control, at about 155 km, again atop Mt Mee. I had four bowls of spicy fried rice made by Cherry. Yum! We saw Chris and George there – both had pulled out unfortunately. Chris had slid out on the slimy creek crossing and was sporting a bloody arm. He was OK though. George had made it to Mt Mee for the first control but realized that he might time out later in the ride, so decided to call it. I hope I can still tackle Audax rides when I'm nearly 70 – truly impressive. Surely this last section of the ride back to Andrew's place at Arana was going to be the easiest – down hill – or so I thought. Every time we passed a steep road off to the side – you guessed it – we were heading up into the clouds again. With about 10 km to go I thought the worst was over. All of a sudden though we were turning up Bygotts Rd – never been up here – but OMG this looked pretty steep after already doing 4,500 m of climbing. Surely Andrew is taking the p*ss now! There was more to come – we merged onto Mailman's Track, pushing the climb up to 1.5 km long and sections of 20%. Thankfully we made it up and were rewarded with a spectacular view over Brisbane. The last 100 m was a relief – downhill to Andrew's place. Chris and I were pretty pleased with our time of 10 hours, but were stupid to write this time down – we should have made it 2 hours longer. For Andrew, our time was like a red rag to a bull: He said "I think I am going to have to tweak the course and add a few more hills for next year. I am already thinking about SM mark 3. Just to keep you guys honest 5000+m."

Well done Paul for also surviving the 4,800 m of vertical torture. Thanks Andrew for the warm hospitality and a challenging and rewarding ride. I'll see you next year – maybe...