

# MY FIRST AUSSIE AUDAX

With a ride scheduled to start in Middle Park, Brisbane 3 days after my arrival in Australia I had no hesitation in contacting Chris the organiser to arrange a place on the event. What a great opportunity to ride in a new land! Needless to say it will be more than a bit hotter in Australia than the Braziers Run Ridden on my last weekend in the UK, and with any luck, a little less windy.



## Middle Park Medley 2 - 2016

Flattish course away from the traffic of Brisbane with distances of 100, 200, 300, 400 & 600km taking in the scenic rim & the Brisbane & Lockye Valleys.

Start: Middle Park

Contact: Chris Richardson Tel: 0433210996 Email: [sales@richardsonremovals.com.au](mailto:sales@richardsonremovals.com.au)

| Dist / Brevet | Start | Details | Map                 | Cost                     |
|---------------|-------|---------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 100km<br>BA   | 6AM   | -       | -                   | \$6 (mbrs)<br>\$16 (Non) |
| 200km<br>BRM  | 6AM   | -       | <a href="#">Map</a> | \$6 (mbrs)<br>\$16 (Non) |
| 300km<br>BRM  | 6AM   | -       | -                   | \$6 (mbrs)<br>\$16 (Non) |
| 400km<br>BRM  | 6AM   | -       | -                   | \$6 (mbrs)<br>\$16 (Non) |
| 600km<br>BRM  | 6AM   | -       | -                   | \$6 (mbrs)<br>\$16 (Non) |



# PREPARATIONS

There was a ridiculous level of worry on my part related to this ride!

Here is my list:

- It's hotter than the UK in the middle of summer;
- I am not riding my bike;
- I have jet lag,
- and finally I am riding with people I don't know in a country I do not know and where snakes and other critters are a clear and present danger (or so I am told)!

Another consideration or two of value are ... wear a lot of sun cream, drink a lot of water and tell people who think me mad to shut up!

To prepare I have been out every day since I arrived ... The jet lag is helping on that front as getting up early is really very easy when you naturally waken before 4am.

The heat is intense for me but I appear to be fine as long as I keep moving, albeit moving slower than I would normally would in the chill of the UK winter. Final preparations have meant the bike has had a few adjustments. My seat from UK has been installed and handlebar height adjustments have helped on the comfort front but it's still not great ... Numb hands is the worst of it so a pair of nice padded gloves have been sought ... Let's see how it goes and with all the necessary preparations completed I set my alarm for a 4am start.



# EARLY STARTER

The 4am start did not seem difficult, it would have been traumatic in the UK but still suffering jet lag has helped a lot. I was awake enough to drive for an hour to the start with no sat nav and little recent driving experience in Aussie.

Anyway, what better way to make use of jet lag can a cycling addict think of. I pondered the situation as I unloaded my bike in Middle Park, dawn was fresh in the sky, I felt good and I felt lucky that Chris was happy to have me along. The sun was up and it was looking like a good day - not too hot, not windy and not too sunny. Everyone was very welcoming and chatty and in contrast to a UK audax a 1litre tub of sun cream was the early morning offering ... Nope no tea or bacon rolls for this hardy crew!

On the starting line it looked like I was the only taker for the 100km route, the others all looking serious and were doing either 200km or 300km distances. Not for this softy. 100km seemed like enough of a challenge. Lucky for me another 100km contender, Joe, turned up right near the start time on his amazing and beautiful hand painted bike.

The group shot off at a great pace, I kept up for a short while, everyone was very friendly and chatty and I felt included ... the only problem was that maintaining their blistering pace - it would see me melting and I soon fell off the back of the group trying to get into some sort of 'comfort zone'.

The route took us through some pleasant residential areas with lakes and plenty of space and then out onto a highway. I was filled with trepidation when I saw the on-ramp thinking I had gone the wrong way and was actually going to be cycling on a highway. Thank goodness another cyclist whizzed past me ... I had been tentatively pedalling towards to on-ramp prior to that but felt happy enough to proceed onto the road and pick up the pace a bit. It was fabulous, so wide and smooth and hardly any cars passed me as I headed on toward the Peak Crossing turnoff. Apart from some slight inclines I felt like I was flying! Passing multiple letterboxes made from old milk cans, a great sign for dingo and a rusty disused fuel station before I knew it, Peak Crossing was in the bag and Joe was waiting for me.

After a nice refreshing break we headed off into the wilderness ... Well, not quite but it was a lot more rural than the first part of the ride.



## THE HEAT IS ON

Heading in toward Ipswich I felt the heat a bit more, Joe kept the pace up and we were making good time. I was a little hotter than the sun by this time ... Pouring a bit of water on my helmet seemed to help and I tried to keep my meltdown status hidden from Joe. He was not even breaking a sweat. Still, we got in toward Brisbane and had done 95km and it was only just 11am. I was dying for a little break (which is not my usual style) and insisted Joe and I stop for a refreshing beverage at a pub, the Royal Rail. Joe went in for the drinks and I sat out on the veranda with the patrons. That jet lag is a funny thing, I did not even think about it being 11am and that I was at the pub! I realised however upon a trip to the facilities that Joe may have known more about this venue than I did. It's not my experience for barmaids to be wearing so little ... Just a g-string. It was hot and perhaps she was from the UK?!



# FINITO

Refreshed and ready to go again! Joe and I took off past a prison opposite a state of the art RSPCA hospital and I was on the lookout for kangaroos. Chris' brother, a 2015 PBP finisher had informed me that these native beasts may be present en-route and I was on high alert. No such luck however I did manage to locate the car and brevet cards were deposited in Chris letterbox! I call it a success, really enjoyed myself and would be very keen to ride another Aussie audax ride in the future.

