

PeachyMee – 10/12/16 Liz Nelson



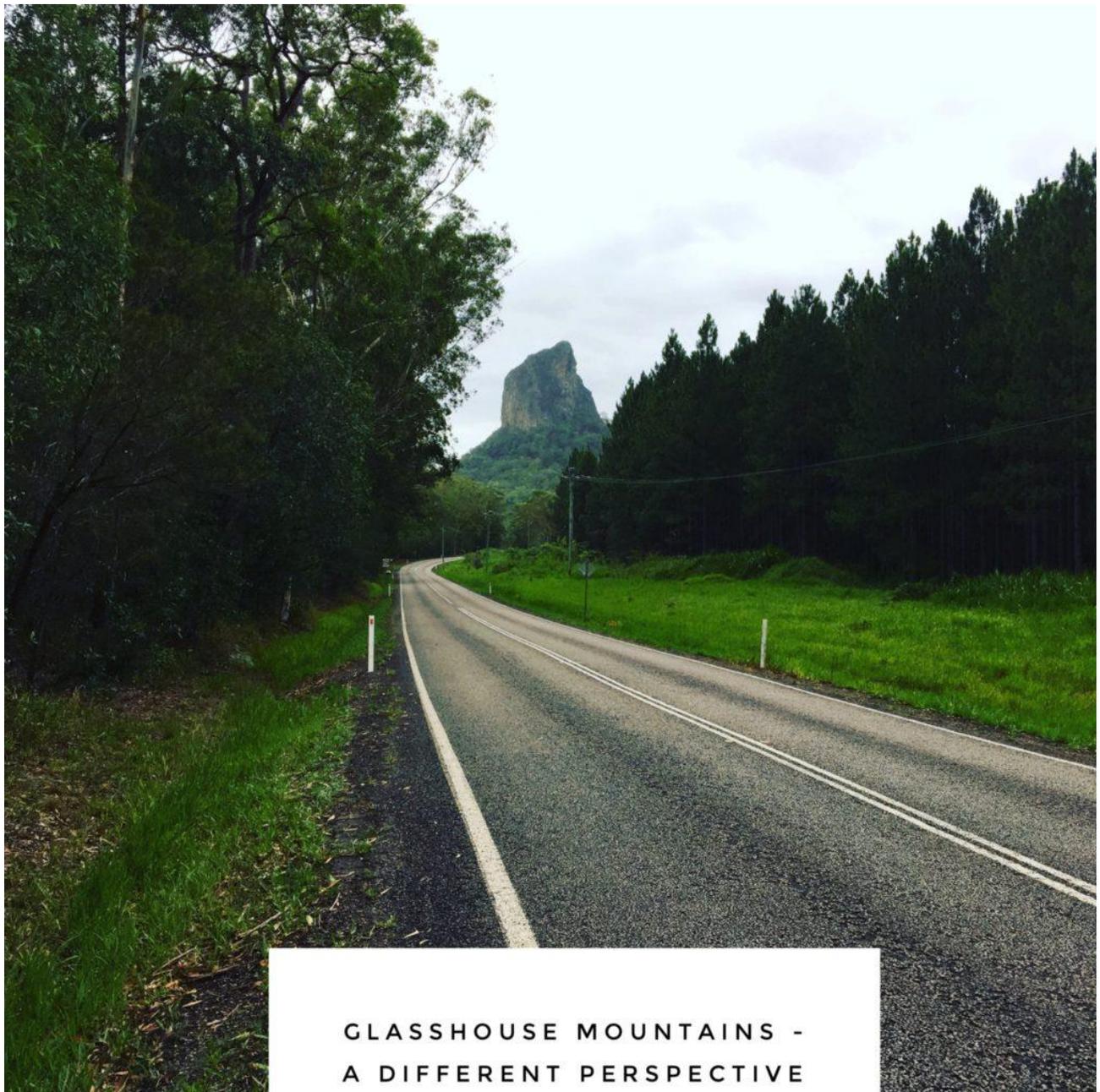
Thought it was time to resurrect this blog and what better way to do it than to tell some stories about my training leading up to the “Three Peaks Challenge” in Victoria this coming March. Not one to do things by halves, I decided to kick off the endurance part of my training with a sanctioned Audax ride, the “PeachyMee”. There are various incarnations of this ride – over distances of 100km, 150km, 200km, 250km and 300km. The Audax cycling club of Australia focuses on non competitive long distance riding, which encourages participation in the sport. The term “Audax”, is derived from the Latin language meaning to be “bold and courageous”. The English word, “audacious”, comes to mind!

As I hadn't completed a 200km ride since before I had my hamstring surgery, it was with some trepidation that I rocked up to the organiser, Brian's, home at 5.45am on Saturday morning, ready for a 6am rollout. Four of us started the ride, one rider chose 100km and the remaining three of us chose to ride 200km. We started via the picturesque Samford Valley Rail Trail and then wove our way into Samford on our way to Dayboro. Despite my nerves, I felt good physically and soon our bunch found ourselves separated as Hugh and I decided to take advantage of the undulating terrain to Dayboro, each taking a few hard turns up the hills and recovering on the descents.

Hugh and I parted company at Dayboro and the next order of the day was to climb Mt Mee, a winding seven kilometre climb dotted with farmland replete with cattle who seemed unperturbed by the toil going past them up the road. The top of the mountain and the first fifty kilometres down mark seemed to appear quickly and rather than waste time stopping, I pulled a couple of dates from my back pocket and continued. It had been raining at the top of the mountain and the road was quite wet. However, it didn't seem to limit the super quick descent down the D'Aguiar range towards Woodford. I did think, though, that the sharp pinch immediately after the descent was a little cruel, but that is cycling and you need to be mentally prepared for anything.

I rolled into the Woodford "control" point just after 9am, pleased that despite climbing a big hill, I was making decent time. It was now time for another snack, and after draining and refilling my water bottles, it was back on the road. Consulting the map, I found myself on the way to Peachester, which is a small town that sits inland from the Glasshouse Mountains. The road surface was rough and the shoulder on the road, slim. It seemed like every man, his dog and his caravan were on the road. Checking my lights were on, I felt relief as the traffic started to thin out towards the Peachester range. The Peachester climb wound its way up through bushland and I marvelled at how alone I was. Occasionally a car would pass me, however, I was essentially left alone with the bush and my thoughts. By this time, I had covered 100km and to my surprise hadn't experienced any mental lulls – I was feeling great, and I began to look forward to my descent off the range. As one of my good cycling friends, Anne, had suggested, it was a winner – long sweeping corners and no need to brake.

Soon I reached the right hand turn that would take me back to the Caboolture – Beerburum road. Turning that corner represented both the physical and psychological – I was officially on my way home. That I had about 80km to ride still didn't seem to matter. This particular part of the route afforded fantastic views of the Glasshouse Mountains and I focused on concentrating on the views, rather than on the dead, energy sapping road.



**GLASSHOUSE MOUNTAINS -  
A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE**

Now I was nearing the 130km mark and starting to ride through Caboolture and onto the next control point at the BP service station at Morayfield. The Brevet card had illustrated the control as a meal break and I was a little bit sceptical about the type of lunch a service station could offer. However, I couldn't have been more delighted to find the mini-cafe inside with fresh chicken and salad sandwiches waiting for me. I reflected how my mental state had turned from "nervous Nelly" to "intrepid solo adventurer" over the few hours I'd been riding.

The next forty kilometres, however, proved to be challenging, where I experienced a strong headwind on my way to Scarborough and Redcliffe. Embracing the wind, I decided that these less than perfect conditions were a gift for developing mental resilience – something that you need in spades to complete Three Peaks. Every time, I experienced a strong gust of wind, I'd express gratitude for it helping me to develop inner strength. Again, it was time for another snack – the last half Clif bar and a-worse-for-wear looking date. Suddenly, my Garmin was telling me that I had 20km or so left and I experienced a sudden burst of energy, so I decided to push it harder over the Hornibrook highway/Ted Smout bridge and then enjoy a caramel sundae at the Sandgate McDonalds.

My trip into McDonalds gave me a bit of a giggle. I ordered my sundae (and a Diet Coke) and stood at the counter waiting. The attendant was looking at me in what seemed to be an irritated way.

“Don't you know anything? You need to wait in that corner!” she snapped. I had to then sheepishly apologise and admit that I really didn't know the ordering procedures at McDonalds as it's not somewhere I usually visit.

Sundae consumed, it was off to complete the final journey home, my total riding time coming in at eight hours and fifteen minutes. I wondered if the internet community would like a “200km completed” happy dance – maybe next time! I could not believe how good I felt during and after the ride.

I attribute a good portion of it to appropriate ride nutrition – the take home message is that days where you ride 200km are not ones where you want to be restricting your food intake and that good quality carbohydrates are your friend! I also enjoyed doing the ride solo because it meant I was completely self reliant and couldn't start up any type of narrative about how I couldn't do it with anyone. It was also great to exchange “war stories” with Brian, and fourth rider, Peter, when they returned about 30-40 minutes behind me.

If you want to challenge yourself with a long distance ride, Audax is a great way to start. I am looking forward to January's ride already!