

Goat Track Gambol 24th June 2017 Peter Jenkins

Perhaps I should have followed my instincts when I saw the list of registrants on the online registration page.

I had a nasty feeling that I would be riding this brevet solo and that's how it turned out for about 95% of the ride.

The morning was crisp and sunny with little breeze; ideal cycling weather in fact but not helped by the fact that Anzac Park isn't where it was the last time I turned up there for the start of a ride. The time I took to find where it has been relocated caused me some brief concern.

After the usual milling about we set off to enjoy the conditions but I knew I was in trouble within the first kilometre. Apart from what is becoming a somewhat regular but unpredictable issue with my Garmin 810 (a new and different problem on every brevet) the climb from the bikeway bridge to Simpson's Rd came way too early for me. I was extremely grateful to Mark for dropping back and navigating me from Simpson's Rd. through to Waterworks Rd.

Once on Waterworks Rd., navigation ceased to be a problem and I tried (but failed) to settle into a rhythm while trailing Mark and Peter Watson as far as the right turn into Settlement Rd. I think I'd forgotten how hilly Settlement Rd. can be, depending on my condition on any given day.

Life improved for me once on Samford Rd. and I began to settle down although by now I had abandoned any forlorn hope of catching any of the other Gambollers. Once on Mt. Glorious Rd., I began to contemplate the prospect of ascending the Goat Track. Mark's description of the drop off the back of Mt. Glorious as a "gentle descent" had me wondering whether he had similarly understated the Goat Track. After all, it must be called "The Goat Track" for a reason, mustn't it? I've driven and ridden past both ends of it numerous times but never had any reason or inclination to investigate it until this ride.

In reality, I needn't have worried. The ascent of the unsealed 3 km track was probably the easiest part of the climb to the first checkpoint at Mt. Glorious Café. I did actually see Mark, Peter, Scott and Tara there briefly, which was a positive but they were away well before I had finished my coffee.

Setting off again, I was reminded of the horrible reality that the Mt. Glorious Village is not actually located at the summit and that there is still a bit of climbing until the commencement of the gentle, white knuckled, descent on the Northbrook Parkway. Having arrived at the foot of the descent unbloodied and unbowed I began to appreciate some flat countryside until reaching the first of what would turn into several instances of local authorities attempting to exhaust their infrastructure budgets before next Friday, which happens to be the EOFY.

To be fair, the temporary, unsealed surface was not too bad, but occasional traffic made picking the good bits a little tricky once or twice.

Left at the T junction to Fernvale and I was back on familiar territory, well-travelled on the Midnight Century and other rides in the area. Onward to Marburg, after being held up by temporary traffic lights marshalling traffic at the entrance to roadworks that are highly unlikely to be completed by Friday, and the customary pie for lunch. The shopkeeper assured me that the other Gambollers hadn't departed all that long ago, but I felt he might have just been making encouraging noises.

With half the distance and about 90% of the climbing behind me, it was off again to the final checkpoint at Yamanto. Those who read the route sheet will know that spell check spells this as Yamamoto. The combination of a genuine Outback Pie (pies so beefy we brand'em) and a light tail

wind made riding up Talegalla Hill feel like I was ascending in a lift; very different to most Midnight Century rides that I've done.

Turning right instead of left at Rosewood took to me some places I hadn't been for a long time and others that I'd never been at all; not that I remember, anyway.

It was all very pleasant, no hills to speak of, not too hot, no dogs or magpies and even the 2 kms of unsealed Mutdapilly Dip Rd came and went without bother. And then I was on Middle Rd, which features in a few brevets with its magnificent view of the range. The only difference was that Middle Rd. usually turns up towards the finish of a brevet rather than before the final checkpoint.

A quick stop at Macca's for a Coke and apple pie (my first and probably last Macca's apple pie) and it was off through Ipswich and more roadworks. There's something about the smell of hot bitumen, don't you think?

The remainder of the route was familiar, which was a great advantage once darkness fell but I was more aware than usual of the uphill nature of the Western Freeway cycleway between Centenary Bridge and Toowong.

It was along this section that I began to suffer the "Shooders".

I shooder given my car key to Mark so he could wait somewhere warm... or I shooder had a spot tracker so he could go home and shower before meeting me at the finish.

All good things come to an end and this brevet was no different in that regard. Thanks to Mark and Tara for hanging around waiting for me to finish. I was glad they hadn't shifted Anzac Park again while I was away.