

11 out of Eleven – Queensland's New Years Day treasure hunt

A ride report by John McMullan

Treasure hunts are normally associated with discovery of items of intrinsic value. The 11 out of Eleven is very much like a treasure hunt by way of a long series of written instructions that rival the longest list anywhere in the world. Nicholas Cage had it so easy in National Treasure. The reward at the end of the ride is the refreshing cold drinks at the pub and the knowledge that you have once again conquered the highly technical and sunsoaked route.

Like any new years day ride the one thing you get is a guaranteed warm day, the high probability of missing a turn somewhere and the ever popular zooper doopers at the control (singular because you visit twice)

The ride kicked off well with a group of 15 spreading out over a kilometer almost immediately with the usual suspects disappearing into the distance. By the time I reached Coorparoo I found Keith waiting at the lights with David closely behind.

Keith and I chatted as we made our way along Stanley St at which time Keith put me in charge of navigation. Soon our trio was out of the simple roads and into Southbank dodging the few early morning walkers and a speedster on a fat bike (not Justin or Scott) and found PJ at the Kurilpa bridge busily studying page 1 of the route sheet. With my first incorrect turn onto the grass path (lesson – turn into the driveway, not at the corner) two rode and two walked up to the Grey St bridge and then across we went in search of more turns. On the way across I spied two riders that were a couple of km in front of us as they went under the bridge on the riverside bikeway. We quickly made it to the Kurilpa bridge and back to where we originally found PJ, then onwards to the Victoria Bridge and the slow descent and u-turns to the cycleway.

Finally we could get some speed up along the bikeway as we made our way to St Lucia. Here I had a couple of missed turns that only made a difference to time as we corrected our course then finally made our way across the green bridge to the control to find other riders enjoying Simon's fare. Vaughan was attending to Brevet duties and making sure all riders had their cards endorsed. After partaking in fruit cake and watermelon, grabbing page 2 of the cue sheet I topped up the camelback and then Keith, PJ and I headed off.

I knew the sheet said clockwise river loop but the GPS said head up Gladstone rd – Confusion! At this point, PJ disappeared down the road while I checked the cue sheet. Keith headed off after PJ to no avail so I old schooled the navigation with a crumpled cue sheet in the jersey pocket. I caught up with Keith at the bottom of the hill so we rode and chatted along the unfamiliar territory of a clockwise loop. Navigating the detour around the tennis center we quickly made our way to the Indooroopilly bridge and with light traffic rode the road surface then headed out to fig tree pocket. Keith needed to attack the hills a bit to avoid the need to walk and was a bit disappointed when we got to the little pinch before Kenmore Road. Being courteous, we let a bus pass us as we waited in a driveway (cleverly disguising a short rest) then off to travel through Jindalee and onto Oxley where we caught up with David Booth somewhere between Oxley and Corinda stations (no, we weren't on the train). Being in familiar territory from the 50k river loops, I lightened the climbing for Keith by using sensible turns that didn't end up in a steep climb. We were soon back at the Indooroopilly

bridge and tackling the undulations in reverse order. Dave and Keith dropped off the back and I held my speed back at the entry to Sir William MacGregor Drive to let Keith catch up. Ten minutes or so we were back at the control to salad rolls, softdrink and Zooper Doopers.

I mentioned to David Foster that he had snuck away early at the first control – he wanted to try to get a bit of a head start. After filling the camelback with ice then water the six of us headed off up Gladstone rd to make our way across the next three bridges. It was pleasant riding to the Go Between bridge and on towards the Good Will Bridge. It got a little tricky with pedestrians near Gardens Point before turning onto the Good Will bridge and then we were at Southbank. A slight delay at the Kangaroo Pt cliffs and then on round to Kangaroo Pt where David Booth caught up. A few turns and onto the Storey Bridge and down to Ivory lane where we once again encountered slow traffic at the construction zone. Once we were clear and had a bit of space we passed the casual riders then on to New Farm Park. I thought I had heard Keith mention refreshments when we exited the Brisbane River Walk so when we got to the park we turned towards the coffee shop. It turned out I had overheard one of the other riders talking but we stopped for water and Keith and I continued as a pair. Like last year, the heat and humidity was climbing.

We found a lot of pedestrian traffic through Merthyr Park but were quickly into Tenerrife and soon over the breakfast creek bridge. I briefed Keith on the couple of hills we were about to encounter and up we went. Keith was having some leg strength issues and was going to walk the steep part of Queens Road rather than push too hard. I decided that I wanted to have a crack at the hill and would wait for Keith. The first went well and halfway up the second pinch I dismounted and walked the remainder. I thought Keith had gone mad and decided to try riding as I heard some serious heavy breathing only to discover some-one else riding up and Keith walking about 30m behind me.

Once in Ascot we were relatively hassle free except for Keith's rear light coming off his saddle bag. We made our way through the rising temperature and humidity to the gateway bridge and I tackled the climb in relatively good pace with Keith stopping to get water at one of the observation platforms on the way up. A quick photo at the top and we were off to finish the ride. The remainder of the ride went very quickly and we soon discovered Simon and Vaughan waiting at the pub. Brevets handed over, bikes put away and we then joined Simon and Vaughan for a quiet cold drink and chat at the end of the ride.

I will say that this ride is one that I consider to be a feature ride – despite the warmth it is a good ride to bring in the New Year. Thanks to Simon for the excellent catering and Vaughan for his assistance.