

Horizontal 100 Jan 4 2018

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Never in my life had I considered doing more than a single 100k ride in a month (after all, a guy at my age needs to conserve as many heartbeats as possible) but a conversation with John McMullan over post ride drinks on New Year's Day saw me lining up 3 days later for the Horizontal 100 as a "recovery" ride.

Peter Whitton joined us as well for the session. Deep down I had doubts that I could keep up with John and particularly Peter but they very kindly allowed me to draft for 99% of the way. Peter mentioned that he had seen the ride speed listed as moderate, I had to think that moderate meant two different things for two different people.

Starting at 4pm, the temperature was dropping nicely although a headwind for the first half didn't bode too well but with the drafting and the flat course I could keep up. Sections of the bikeway were littered with the detritus of the recent king tide but we managed to keep a pretty good pace throughout and I'm not sure if the water over the path through the Boondall Wetlands was a leftover from the tide or recent heavy rains but riding through certainly cooled the feet.

Peak hour traffic on the Peninsula was well behaved and where there was a potential for conflict, the wide shoulder kept us well separated for the most part.

Control ended up being at Deception Bay Macca's and after a re-fuel of essential carbs and fats we were off again heading back to the water. Life down that way must be pretty intense, in the space of 15 minutes there were two police cars in different directions with sirens wailing and three paramedic vehicles on full noise. Eventually we came on a scene with an ambulance outside a pub in Scarborough so somebody's night wasn't all that good but fortunately things didn't look too distressing for all concerned.

One of the more pleasant aspects of riding this route at night is the lighting in the trees outside the little retail strip in Landsborough Avenue. "Liquid light" is how I would describe it and it is well worth a look so kudos to Council for the public art.

By this time the headwinds were coming in at an angle so it made my life a little easier but I was still grateful for the shielding created by the other two and I was making sure that I kept hydrated which I believe helped enormously over previous efforts.

Ted Smout bridge came and went, with a few pedestrians wandering in the cycle lanes dressed in dark clothing however any collisions were avoided. The Esplanade at Brighton is always the low point of the ride for me, it never seems to end and it was here that I started to flag. I called out to John that I needed 5 minutes off the bike at the toilets at the Southern End but I didn't think that he heard me so after a very quick drink of water and a gel I jumped back on board and found him waiting for me at the end of the street.

Peter had soldiered on it seemed and it was here that his tail light became smaller and smaller as he put some distance between us and it became the John and Dave show. We stopped briefly at Curlew Park while John monitored my light setup against his, it seems he's doing an evaluation of lighting systems for a future report, so I was comparison number one. Hardware details are on the way John!

The cruise back through the wetlands is a study in concentration at night (bloody cane toads can bring you down) but it wasn't long before we finished back at the criterion track with an elapsed time of a shade under 5 hours including stops which for me was a pretty solid effort even if I do say so myself.

Thanks to John and Peter for the company, looking forward to the next one!