

## Ride Report Berry Good 200 – John McMullan



Coming off my successful completion of the Yeronga Medley 300 I decided to participate in the Berry Good 200.

Last year at this time 200km rides were a bit beyond me and I was riding a lot of 100's. Vaughan would normally be the RO on this ride but last year was helping offspring move. Mark had asked me if I could do the support and once I accepted I found the nice gazebo that was also used for this year's supported control.

The start was much like any other - new riding shoes, all gathered for the pre-ride briefing, a photo then the sendoff as we headed northwards from Lowood. We soon found Vauhgan being our cheer squad for the tour de berry a few k's out (well, actually taking photos) and after a while David Booth and I kept each other company along the way. It is amazing how the time seems to go a bit quicker riding within eyesight or with some-one so we soon found ourselves coming into Ma Ma Creek just as the medium paced riders were heading out. Vaughan was kind enough to sign our Brevets, top up our water and then depart to meet James at Blenheim.

After a nice morning tea David and I headed off back to the crossroad, eastward then started the southward leg of the rear leg. We soon turned westward and encountered the Lost Tribe (Helen and Rob) who were trying to work out how they had ended up in the navigational mess they were in. Helen did say that she was no good at navigation and once they had established that we knew where we were going, they decided to follow us.

We worked our way around the hind leg as the sun came out, temperatures rose and David found it less than ideal to ride at the pace we were. We completed the leg and turned onto Manteuffell Rd on our way to Blenheim. I was telling the Lost Tribe that we may be dodging the hills but not to be. As we started the climbs Helen disappeared into the distance and Rob and I climbed and discussed me riding a 200 with new shoes (which needed the cleat position adjusted) whilst David brought up the rear. I was navigating for David and I so I made sure David could see where I was to save him getting the cue sheet out.

We soon found Vaughan at the control and stopped for a well-deserved rest. Food and conversation were good. Rob gave us insight into his journey with Lymphoma including his bike. I adjusted my cleats forward a bit then headed off while David rested up a little more and soon found myself at the turn around point. I stopped to take this photo before heading back:

I stopped briefly at Blenheim where David caught up and we continued on as a pair for a bit until I lost David who was still finding the heat of the day a little troublesome. The route profile showed the route to Rosewood to be basically downhill so I took advantage of that (and the fact that we were past the half way point). While riding, I found that I had adjusted the cleats too far forward with the resultant pain in the toes. I soon arrived at Rosewood to find the lost tribe finishing their afternoon tea. I had a nice snack consisting of some banana bread and lemon cake with the accompanying drinks when David arrived. I spent a few minutes re-adjusting the cleat position again whilst David finished his rest.

David and I headed off together after a nice rest and made our way through the remaining 40km with relative ease. We stopped to put the hi vis on a bit before sunset and made our way towards Vaughan who was patiently waiting at Lowood for us. The last half an hour was in darkness with David and I swapping the front as we finished the last few k's.

We got back in good time to find Vaughan ready to receive our brevets and who then headed off whilst David and I headed our separate ways - David to home, me to the chicken place across the road. (And why did the chicken cross the road? It was nicely cooked and carried across by me.)

This Audax had good weather and good company. Many thanks David for the company and thanks Vaughan for the organisation. Overall this one was a goldilocks ride.