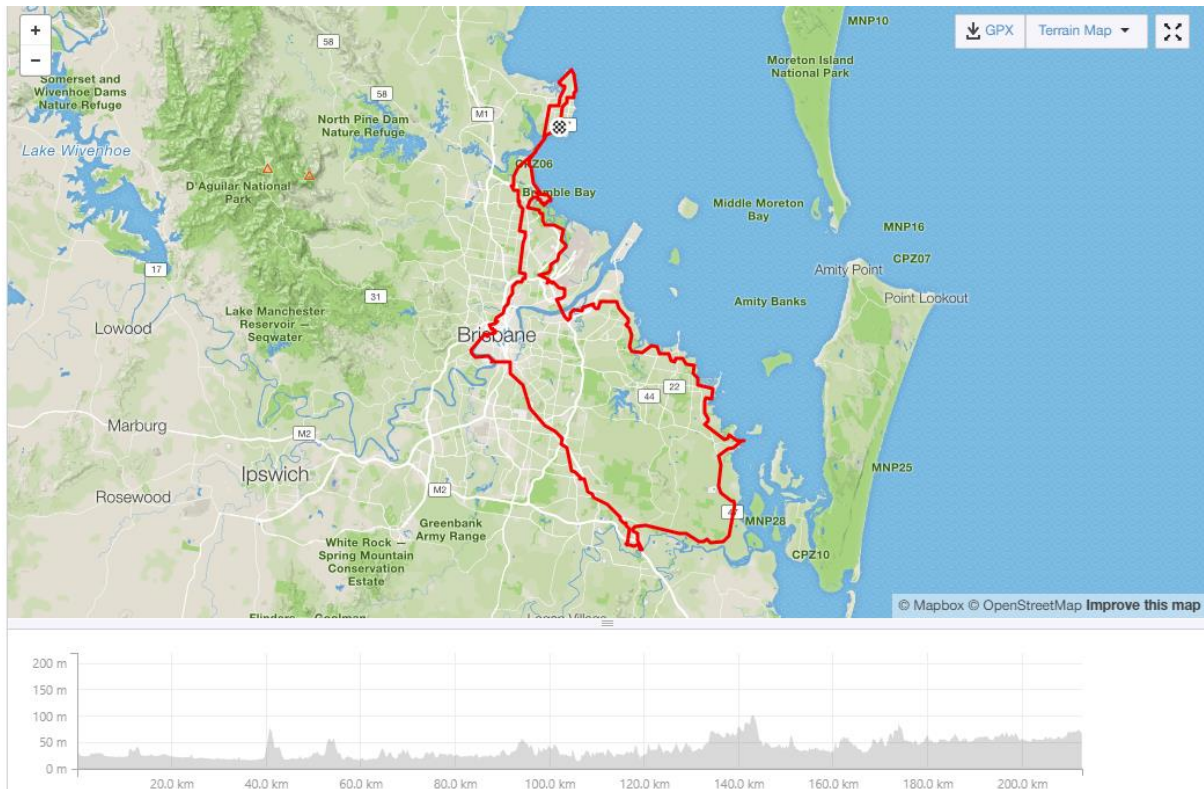


Ride Report – Every Which Way as a Permanent

John McMullan – February 2019



I have had a bit of a horror start to the current Audax season – bailed out of the Midnight Century, had to be rescued by my daughter and grandson on Marburg Warthog and cut short by 10km what I thought was a certainty – Mt Coottha Loops.

I kind of put some of it down to the heat (not much tho) but I think the real cause was the noriditis – a lack of riding in the preceding months (bit surprising really as I did the Peachy Mee 200 twice in December). All I can put it down to is the rider, not the ride.

To remedy my lack of a brevet for the year round randonneur, I elected to ride a permanent 200. I looked at the newly created local rides but upon closer inspection I had no desire to ride up Campbells Pocket Road, let alone down it so that counted out most of the northern rides.

I had missed Every Which Way in November due to the failure of a rubber o-ring costing 6 cents so that appeared as a suitable ride and selected the day after the NTAC. Decision made, I selected Woody Point as a starting location and 4am to avoid some of the heat. My logic behind this was that the least comfortable section of the ride also happened to be the least familiar – the southern end so I thought I would be better off riding the 7 sisters before the second control where there was less heat during the section. One of the Pete's wanted to do the ride as well, but with a different starting location which would have meant a 130am start for him for the day. I was a bit selfish for this ride and didn't waver with my needs.

The 3am wakeup for a 4am start is always a little rude but very necessary to make the most of the morning. I parked a little uphill from Katies to let customers park conveniently and when I got out of the car to get ready, the humidity was already pretty high. I kicked off at the start time and headed south with a pretty good clip. The downside of starting at Woody Point is the lack of immediately adjacent amenities so I stopped at Sandgate for the necessary break before hitting the little climb.

The roads were quiet, weather good, kilometers ticked away quite easily considering my recent performance. The wetlands only provided one really thin spiders web so no bulky hitch hikers once I got through. My first challenge was the traffic lights onto Kingsford Smith Drive – they seemed to take forever to change – then the climb over the bridge which surprisingly was my best effort to date so I was feeling pretty confident.

The section to Wynnum was pretty uneventful with only a couple of early risers getting up for coffee and the newspaper. Tingal road was the quietest I have ever seen as I made my way through and up the hill and thought that this was a slightly different route to the last time I rode it. I had a few text messages from Karen whilst she watched my progress from afar using the Wahoo live track feature.

I soon started catching up to the morning cyclists who were out and about as I got to Lota and after passing several (unusual for me but I think they were still warming up) I took advantage of my better form and made my way to Ormiston for the first control of the day. Being about 70km, it was a little further than I would normally ride in a section. In typical audax form I hit the bakery before continuing, on the lookout for the amenities that Peter was good enough to note in the route.

The view at Vic Point is always good so I took a photo and sent it to Karen before heading off again in search of a drink and icypole which fortunately was at the supermarket before leaving Vic Point (no icy pole, just a lemon callipo which takes longer to consume).

By this time, it was getting close to 9am as I made my way to Serpentine Road and the lumpy bit of road and found the climbs a lot easier than before, probably because they were in the earlier part of the ride and I wasn't too fatigued. Traffic had started to pick up which made the section from the Bryant's road turn-off to Cairns St a little trickier. I wasn't sure where all the cars came from but there were a lot of them. The temperature had started to climb as I navigated Clarks road at Loganholme to make the next control at the Drews road shops.

Morning tea consisted of the usual pie, coke and an added chicken strip to boot (which was tough and dry) before I made my way northwards to the Veloway. The nasty little pinch on Drews road is a bit rude after the control but it and all the other little pinches quickly disappeared as I made my way further north to Slacks Creek. What I hadn't counted on was the 20kmh+ headwind as I headed north.

The roundabout at Paradise Rd was easy to navigate but the Ikea traffic was abysmal and less favorable. Safely navigated, I continued on but stopped in the shade of the Watland St overpass for a tyre check, nibbly, drink and a brief rest before continuing on. I was still glad I rode the route this way, but the wind was constant and draining over time.

It felt strange being in the middle of Moss St at the lights waiting to turn right with drivers looking weirdly at me (it is not the only place – it happens on Beams road too – 5 lanes, where I need to be in the lane second from the right to turn – but I digress). The back roads were quickly navigated and

then onto Kingston road for the run to the veloway. Traffic was surprisingly busy – maybe the Australia Day hangovers were gone and as I headed into 8 mile plains extra care was needed as an ambulance headed north too.

Safely on the veloway and the heat started to take a bit of a toll as I made my way to Nathan. I decided then that I would stop for a drink and another icypole on Bapaume rd at the servo, top up the water then continue. I wasn't out of water, but thought it best to top up but soon discovered that the tap had non potable water. A bit grumpy, I headed northwards to re-join the veloway and make my way to the Uni where the bus drivers at the bus station were a bit surprised to find me filling my camelback then tipping bottles of water over myself as a cooling aid before disappearing onto the bike path to continue on.

The water and headwind cooled me quite well and I felt comfortable riding in familiar territory (it was my commute route) on the way to Eagle Junction and yet another pie plus an apple turnover (of which I took half with me for later). I left Eagle Junction a bit after 2 and used the lights to cross the road, much easier than fighting traffic. The ride was windy but rideable but as I got to Nundah the bit of climbing in the lee of the hill soon made it feel like the hot day it was. The climb on Bilsen road was a bit taxing as well but then I was on the descent and across the creek with another stop to wait at the railway crossing while the train departed the station.

Muller road is deceptively tricky as it has a slight incline but today had the added complexity of a gusty headwind and heat. Fortunately there were enough cars heading northwards to break the wind up a bit and ease my way to Deagon at which point I discovered that the crossings at the lights on Depot road had changed (cross depot road on the east side of the intersection now).

I was on the home stretch so to speak as I made my way along the Bracken Ridge section of bikeway towards the Houghton Highway at which point I ran into a wall of strong wind that had me down to 15kmh. Dreams of a quick finish dwindled as I pushed across the bridge only to find the tide in and the lower path under the bridge submerged leaving me to navigate the kids sheltering from the sun on the narrow walkway. I stopped to top up the water supply, drench myself with water again while taking the opportunity to recover from the bridge crossing. One step closer to the downhill stretch!

Elizabeth Ave provided a challenge as the wind had not abated and was now blustery and off the starboard bow occasionally causing me to weave in the well provisioned shoulder as I made my way further north. There was little respite until I reached Landsborough ave at Scarborough and headed south again. The bit of tail wind was a gift as I headed back to Katies and I was fortunate to arrive just before closing time to get the brevet signed, a large cold drink and two free pies as they were closing.

Total time was 12 hours 55 minutes. I can't take away from the hard ride that the NTAC riders had, but this was a challenge for me and a rewarding completion in more ways than one. Riding solo I had no other pressures and I did have ample time to complete the ride. It does highlight that even though I had a really excellent start to the day, the heat and wind can really make it a much harder slog on the home stretch.