

Not such a hard job

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Ride organisers are the backbone of Audax. Some people come forward and contribute in this way only a year or two after their first Audax ride. Then there are others, like me, who might ride for ten years with Audax before taking on this role. It's not that there's a moral expectation that everyone should do this; it's just that if some people don't step forward, we get fewer rides and less variety.

I organised my first ride recently and found that it was not difficult or onerous, so I've even got a couple more in mind. Experienced ROs including Brian Hornby, Peter Jenkins (calendar organiser), Peter Watson (who lives in my area) and John McMullan gave me all the necessary advice.

One could most easily start by taking on a ride that's already established, but my initial motive was that I could see the potential for certain rides centred on my area of Beenleigh. This area between Brisbane and the Gold Coast is not so well covered by Audax as, say, the Scenic Rim.

The first step, then, was to design an initial ride in detail. This involved getting to use the RideWithGPS software, the basics of which are quite easy to learn – although like most applications it does have its quirks, which can be frustrating until one learns how to work around them. Designing the ride is quick and easy, and fun, once you know how to make changes. This step ends with the pdf file of the route. The next step is to make the cue sheet. The turn-by-turn directions are automatically generated, but they will need editing to make a fully useable cue sheet. That's fun too.

Then the ride is presented to the Audax Queensland President for socialisation with various committee members as required and is good to run it past another RO who knows the area well.

Once the thing is ready, it's a matter of consulting with Peter J to get it on the calendar. If it's a BA, it can go into this year's calendar; if it's a BRM it can only be submitted for the next calendar year all BRMs need to be registered with the governing body in advance – BRMs are advertised globally.

So, the ride is on the calendar – and as RO you get to choose a date of your own convenience. From there on, the admin is pretty much automated. Beyond that, the RO has to:

- get a pile of brevet cards from Vaughan Kippers, the brevet secretary;
- write them up by hand (though some wizards can print them from the computer), and there's even a little spreadsheet to work out the Control opening and closing times;
- a day or two before the ride, email the cue sheet and tcx file to all riders (the latter is generated by one click in Ride with GPS);
- dish out the cards on the day;
- give a briefing just before the start;
- collect the brevet cards at the end;
- send the cards to Vaughan;
- and finally, complete the online ride report.

For me, a major benefit of being RO was that I got to meet every rider before the event. And what would it all be without the riders?