

Yeronga Medley 200km – 20 July 2019

Last weekend, I quit a 150km permanent 31km in. The weekend before, I was forced to abandon a 100km permanent when I discovered the Moggill Ferry was closed. I've spent the week leading up to today on a work trip, with no riding. Rolling out from home at 5:15am for the ride to Ant's place, I'm not feeling like today is going to be a good day. The temperature display on my Wahoo tells me it's 6 degrees. Not helping.

Nobody seems to be in much of a hurry, and it's almost 6:35 before we're away, with what seems like much fewer than the 32 people who had registered. I spend some time chatting to Paul, who has completed a couple of 100km brevets, but would like to take on some longer challenges. I never expected to be someone who could offer advice on achieving that goal, but here we are. "Break it up into chunks. You just rode 50. Easy. Ride another 50. The 50 after that? Well, you've already ridden 100, the next 50 is only half that." I probably need to work on my advice.

I ride the first part of the route just about every day, so always like to challenge myself over the St Lucia hills. With a bit of a kick, I pass Paul on the first of the rollers with a cheeky "come on!". I'm not sure it's appreciated.

I make the mistake of checking the temperature again as we roll down the Centenary Highway towards Wacol. Bad idea. It's three degrees. The cold is being felt by everyone, and the peloton is a symphony of sniffing and nose blowing. Someone complains that there are too many people around and they've been wanting to blow their nose for the last 20 minutes. A gap opens up and it's just the two of us, so they take the opportunity. "I figured it was only you." Mm. Thanks, I'm flattered.

As the sun rises, there's a beautiful golden light shining through the mist over the golf courses. I'd love to stop for a photograph, but my phone is in my back pocket under my vest, so I decide to keep this one for myself. Did I mention the cold?

I'm surprising myself with how good I'm feeling, and Springfield and the Centenary Highway towards the first control at Yamanto pass by quickly. Paul's back with me and as we round the corner into the steep Pisasale Drive climb, I turn to him with a big grin and a "surprise!". I'm not sure it's appreciated. Ant passes me part way up, but I keep pushing, and end up with a new PR for the climb. Tara complains that she had to drop to the small chainring. Show off.

I'm about to leave McDonald's when Brian and PJ roll in. They're both doing the 200, so I decide to wait around for them. I've been in a bit of a funk recently, doing a lot of solo riding, so I figure it'll be nice to have some company. I get into a good rhythm though, and accidentally ride away from them somewhere along Middle Road. One minute they were right there, and next thing I know I'm on my own. Turning towards Peak Crossing I see David, one of the 600km riders, on the side of the road. He's just shedding some layers, so I continue on and he catches me and sails past on the Limestone Ridge hills. Still no sign of Brian and PJ, so I'm alone again.

I think this is the third time I've ridden this route, and each previous time I've taken an extra stop at Harrisville. The segment between the two controls is 74km long, so Harrisville makes

for a nice intermediate stop. But today I want to keep riding so, apart from a brief pause to top up my water, I continue on.

Around 20km out of Rosewood, I hear something behind me and to my right. It's getting closer. Ahh crap, it's a dog. I start to sprint, but it's gaining, and it crosses behind me and approaches my left ankle. A bit more power and I manage to make it through unscathed. I have two disappointments – that I don't wear a heart-rate monitor, and that my recently purchased cameras were faulty, so I won't be able to review the footage and hear the noises that I made. The word 'guttural' comes to mind.

I have just long enough to recover before I have that dreaded feeling of something flying up behind me. A magpie? In July? Climate change, hey? It comes in for five or six swoops before I'm out of its range. It's still winter, but I suspect it's going to be a long summer. With those couple of adrenalin shots, I'm into Rosewood before I know it, and join Tracey, Doug and Peter at the bakery. Brian and PJ roll in about ten minutes behind, so I decide to wait again and ride out with them.

PJ's starting to flag, so we take it easy towards and through Ipswich. He tells us he's okay, and not to wait, but Brian's in no hurry, and I'm glad to have some company. Stopped at some lights in East Ipswich, I notice in my peripheral vision a car door opening and someone getting out. My hackles are up, assuming I'm about to be abused or worse. I feel something touching me and turn around to find a dude dressed in tennis whites and a headband poking at me and my bike with a large, black, rubber sex toy. I offer a few choice words, and he tells me "we're on a buck's party!".

"Mm," I say, "what a lucky girl."

Brian looks at me with a smirk. "Ipswich" is all he needs to say.

About 20km from home and I start to pull away again. I've enjoyed and appreciated riding and chatting, but I'm feeling strong and figure that they're fine without me, so ride off at my own pace.

I'm starting to think about buying a new bike soon. Specialized and Ridley are options I'm considering, and I find myself wondering if Studio de Velo at Sumner is still open. Maybe I could drop in and take one of their demo bikes for the ride to the finish. Do the rules allow you to switch bikes partway through a brevet? It's all moot though, as they're closed by the time I get there. Looks like that's a job for next weekend.

I end up rolling back into Ant's place around 16:25. Later than last time, but not too bad considering the extended breaks and slow going through Ipswich. Peter, Tracey and Doug are still there, and Brian and PJ arrive around ten minutes later, followed by Jeff who's finishing the 600 he started the day before. The beers and banter are much appreciated, before I mount up again for the 6km ride home, via the bottle shop to pick up a well-earned shower beer.

212km for the day. Considering the lead up, I've felt good all day, and am pretty pleased with my effort. Today was a good day. What's next?