

YERONGA 4 109 klms and the World's Rarest Bicycle Part

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I pencilled in the Yeronga 4 2019 ride because it ticked all the appropriate boxes. It starts close enough to home to make riding out feasible; 109 klms. on a flattish route is low on my BTI (Boredom Threshold Index); the route is on roads I know fairly well; and there are numerous railway stations providing back up, if required, assuming no line closures for infrastructure maintenance. The weather forecast is not too bad either.

I allowed way too much time for the ride out but, with a following wind and a traffic free route, I enjoyed it, except for a chain derailment in the middle of the fourth most dangerous road junction in Queensland. Hopefully that reputation is derived from records of peak hour collisions. Brevet handout at Yeronga was handled efficiently, as I expected from previous rides.

If I were riding on my own I would have had to refer to my cue sheet to get to the river bridge. Most serious cyclists will be familiar with the 'river ride' but I rarely use these roads. However, with this number of multi-distance ride participants I merely had to follow the bunch which, having crossed the river, fragmented into manageable groups. There was a reformation at the traffic lights in Indooroopilly but no congestion on the narrow bike path, even though it is a popular route for recreational cyclists and bicycle riders. I arrived at the Wacol Station level crossing as the barriers closed to let a local electric and a coal train through. Coal trains are very long! This led to a minor regrouping as we moved towards Springfield. The next sector was uneventful apart from a minor upset when I optimistically attempted a track stand at traffic lights. Fortunately my Shimano Click R pedals performed as intended and prevented an embarrassing fall. Springfield has handy toilet facilities which I accessed in preparation for the forthcoming undulations. I then resumed the ride, with a nod of recognition towards Springfield Hospital.

The highway to Yamanto is rural and the wide shoulders make it bike friendly but the area is a prime target for development and 'growth' and will no doubt be subject to increased traffic congestion, so enjoy it while you can. I noticed that the white line separating the nearside vehicle lane from the shoulder has been upgraded to give drivers an audible warning if they drift too far to the left. It is not a problem on this road but cyclists need to be wary of this 'pave'. Turning off the highway I noticed that bridges and roads still carry the names of discredited politicians. I chose to walk the last steep hill to give following traffic the chance to overtake safely, arriving at the Control as the faster 109 kilometrarians made their way back towards Ipswich, meaning there was no problem getting served quickly at the Control, where the staff was also happy to top up water bottles.

After a short break, four of us made our way back towards Ipswich. I truly believe that I have at last subjected this part of the route to memory. The traffic was fairly light meandering through Ipswich, although the right turn at the Salisbury Road roundabout could be a concern. Our small group opted for a short break at Redbank, opposite the 'School of the Arts' building that I used to frequent. I suppose such facilities will regrettably eventually disappear. During the stop, we entered into conversation with an off-duty train driver, who explained that he was a kindred spirit, a regular cyclist. I have heard similar tales many times before but this time I am sure he is the 'real deal'.

Not far to go now but as I set off I noticed that a part of my transmission had, not unexpectedly, become loose. [I had actually lost this same part on the descent of Campbells Pocket, on the previous month's Roller Coaster Ride.] Now, you would think that bike parts would be easy to find, in these days of the internet, but in fact it was quite a problem. I was lucky and managed to locate the part in Brisbane after an epic search. My research has identified that losing this particular part is not an uncommon occurrence, due in my view to a design error, and users who have also been subjected to the problem recommend that the thread be secured by Loctite Blue 242. Those in the know consider that the parts shortage is in fact because the manufacturer's entire stock has been depleted by warranty claims. These same gurus say that the manufacturer will in future provide Loctite with replacement parts. My 'belt and braces' philosophy has compelled me to source two more spares from overseas but at Redbank I was equipped with an appropriate Allen Key, in anticipation of the inevitable. Once it was sorted, I continued the ride, meeting up with my colleagues when they were delayed by traffic lights on the bike path.

Riding the bike path can be monotonous and there is a particular junction I still find confusing but at least heat was not the problem it has been in previous years. Entering Indooroopilly, I blended into the Saturday traffic, opting to walk the last short hill. Having crossed the river on the cyclists' bridge the traffic became so processional that I was only able to cross the main road with the assistance of a considerate car driver who held up the vehicles following her. I am familiar with this last stretch, but where have all the magpies gone? Leaving the Tennis Centre my transmission projected its chain into the rear wheel. "Oh dear", I thought, it sounds as if spoke(s) replacement might be called for. Fortunately not, more music than substance, but why did it happen?

I arrived back at mission control after an elapsed time of six and a half hours, full of admiration for those officials and organisers who devote so much time and resources to the Audax cause and yet can still offer empathetic sympathy and cold drinks on completion of rides. Just as well, I still have to ride home.

Thank you!