

BVRTease: Peter Jenkins(c), Vaughan Kippers, David Taylor, Dean Tummers, Bob Wagner

Ride Report: Peter Jenkins

It was a dark morning in Lowood as five intrepid adventurers disappeared into the mists on a sojourn to places unknown. They were serious athletes with a specific goal in mind.

From our cars, we watched them go before sleepily climbing out and dragging our bikes onto the footpath for 194km of rail trail. Bob and David had opted for gravel bikes with Peter, Vaughan and Dean on MTBs. It was apparent Bob and David would spend some time here and there waiting for the tractors to catch up.

We (Peter, mainly) had done some serious planning. We had pre-ordered food, planned stops with back-up plans should the queues be too long, and enough carb bars to embarrass even the most enthusiastic gym-junkie.

Coominya, Mt Hallen and Esk disappeared behind us as we headed west, sticking together for the most part (each of us having described himself as 'the slowest in the group') before we hit Toogoolawah for the first stop. David, our resident mathematician, explained the importance of symmetry, with the stops being a third, half, and two-thirds along the way.

At the 'turn-around' point at Moore we found our meals set out for us, each individually named, drinks just poured. Such was the care we were half-expecting to have our lunch money tied into the corners of our handkerchiefs for the trip back.

The Kai Lounge has now become our preferred venue in Moore

It was at this point that the ride split into two distinct cohorts. About 20 seconds after Bob, David and Dean pedalled off, Vaughan became distinctly unwell. You could even say spectacularly so.

While Vaughan was having a five-minute rest in the shade PJ texted the three escapees suggesting that he would follow with Vaughan at a more leisurely pace. This went well enough until Vaughan punctured, and although it didn't take any longer than usual to replace a tube it was the straw that broke the camel's back in terms of Vaughan's chances of finishing before the cut-off.

There was still a slim chance of PJ being able to finish so it was decided that Vaughan would continue to Esk and David would drive there from Lowood and collect him. (It doesn't seem *that* long ago that we rode without mobile phones and other electronic gadgetry and now it's hard to imagine how we would cope without them)

We won't bore our reader with PJ's adventures, dodging macropods and youths on BMX bikes but suffice to say he finished with about 10 minutes to spare, having been one of the last customers at the Red Deer in Esk before it was significantly damaged by fire in the early hours of Sunday morning.

The gang of three reported that the return trip was in the heat of the day and took its toll, and by Esk they were comparing aches. It was agreed that those with a lack of suspension were likely to come out four or five inches shorter than when they left. A few ravine crossings later and conversation was at an end as they'd run out of cuss-words. They hit Lowood as the sun was setting and most certainly did NOT partake of Dean's Bohemian Pilsner as they were in a public place and such activities would have been frowned upon by the folks walking past with cans of Jim Beam and cola.

The BVRT is 161km of dirt, sand and grass, making it the longest rail trail in Australia. And with more than that distance under our belts by the end of Day 1 we'd done the equivalent to the full length and then some. So we celebrated with a slap-up meal at the local pub before settling in for a rest to prepare us for the last leg the next day. Again the weather was kind and it was a cool morning. It wasn't a race, but for some reason everyone was sprinting. From there it was a matter of getting ourselves to breakfast.

No mechanicals, no great dramas, all in all a great ride. Our team leader has some ideas to make next year's ride a little different. As long as it doesn't involve penny farthings we're all keen to go again.