

## My Fassifern Folly 2018

I find one of the major attractions of riding Audax events is to get to areas where I would not normally ride. If it is scenic, so much the better, although I am not overly keen on routes cocooned by trees, except maybe on hot sunny days, when the shade is welcome, particularly on climbs. Then, I can focus more on the physical challenges of the route rather than the views or, occasionally, on survival. 'Fassifern Folly 200' is acknowledged to be visibly scenic and I did say I would enter last year but Mothers' Day took precedence. No such diversions this year and the forecast fine weather is a bonus. Even with the inevitable chilly start I looked forward to it. It's too early for the Scenic Rim's 'Eat Local' week but the ride is supported by Rosie and Anne, so we will not starve.

My normal practice is to compile a checklist of necessary equipment for the ride, to ensure that cycling shoes, helmet, bottles and front wheel (Don't laugh!) are in the vehicle. Being a longer audax, lights and reflective vest also had to be included, plus the bike computer, mobile phone, wallet and 'bonk food' for the jersey pockets. All very professional! However, it helps if you actually refer to the checklist, which I didn't. Consequently I was without my mobile phone and the bracket for my impressive (to me) new front light. I had my superseded front light as backup and one of those mini lights that tends to get lost among the cables on the handlebars. This meant I was Audax-legal. I also had arm and leg warmers and gloves.

To the first Control:

I set off slightly later than the main bunch of riders, as usual losing time starting my computer and, less usual, managing my legwarmers. I kept other riders in sight until the Amberley turn, where more attention to the legwarmers was needed, necessitating a stop. That sorted out, I resumed transmission but inadvertently took the direct road to Rosewood, thus missing out the Walloon section. I deviated into the township to retrieve a few kilometres, taking the opportunity to remove legwarmers, gloves, etc. Back on route, I made good progress and was really enjoying the experience. I passed a couple of cyclists at the roadside but they were not in need of assistance and soon rode past me. I was tempted to latch on but thought this would be impolite. They were in sight until I heard the familiar sound of a light hitting the road, so back up the hill to retrieve my front light, which surprisingly still worked. This incident demonstrates the sense of Audax's lighting policy. Pressing on, I soon reached the first Control, manned by Rosie and Anne. (Can we still say 'manned'?) Two colleagues were leaving as I arrived, then Peter J turned up. No shortage of appetising food, but we did save some for John M, apparently following after a late start.

To the second Control:

Soon after leaving the first Control, we rode onto a six kilometre stretch of gravel, which adds to the attraction of this ride. There were no bone jarring corrugations across the surface so it was fairly easy to find a safe path. I had fitted Continental Gatorskin 700 x 25 tyres which provided a comfortable ride. This is one of those sections that invite attacks by those so inclined, which we were not. Following the gravel, it was high revs to the Cunningham Highway, where traffic was fairly light and there is a reassuring white line to follow. I was going to turn left at the Lake Moogerah signpost but Peter advised me that the correct turn was further on. The scenery on this stretch is magnificent, with only a couple of kilometres to the ride's half-way point. There was another gravel section but again this caused no problems. Many more scenic delights as we neared Lake Moogerah,

where we met riders coming towards us from the Control in Haigh Park. The park was fairly congested with motorised visitors but they pay registration, so we cannot complain. We enjoyed more refreshment and conversation, a benefit of supported rides. Being a backmarker on a supported ride can cause the supporting crew to arrive at the next control after the fastest riders get there. Possible solution? Slow down!

To the third Control:

Peter and I left Lake Moogerah together, apparently as John M was arriving. The undulations from the Control seemed more undulating in this direction, due no doubt to taking on food. Not happy with the cattle grids but the climb towards Mount Alford is sympathetic, the descent exhilarating and the road to Boonah is flat. Once there, Peter and I felt a drink at a local café had been earned, in preparation for the Hoya Road stretch of the ride. This turned out to be lumpier than I anticipated but the views compensate. We soon arrived at the Kalbar Control.

To the finish:

John arrived at Kalbar shortly after us, so the three of us left together. Some roads looked familiar but maybe I have seen photographs from others' audaxes. I find this area makes for fascinating riding but the sudden arrival of darkness diminished its attraction. Leaving Peak Crossing, Middle Road is dead straight, with the lights of Ipswich acting as a beacon in the distance. I was grateful for Peter's light beam, in view of the inadequacy of my back-up front light, but I was impressed by my mini-light. Warwick Road carried a surprising amount of traffic for a Sunday, including heavy vehicles but it was all very friendly and not a major concern. We arrived at Lobley Park well within our allotted time and my computer when consulted said 'yes', I had completed the required two hundred kilometres.

I commend Rosie and Anne for organising and supporting the ride. It has achieved iconic status and should be on all riders' calendars. I am sure that the dozen or so riders who participated this year would agree.

David Booth