

## Ride report: 6 Bumps and one Hill (Second time round....)

### John McMullan

This ride is a bit tricky for me so this year I just turned up and rode it. Being a somewhat chilly morning I set off with my rain jacket on and amazingly the riders slowed enough at the start so I could keep up almost until Marine Parade at Coolongatta. Ruth was setting a pleasant pace until her pump came loose so the rest of us continued on through Currumbin at a quicker pace until I dropped off the back. I did catch the group at a couple of red lights but in my usual fashion set my own pace and watched them ride off into the distance.

It soon warmed up so I stopped before climbing Bilambil Heights to shed the jacket. The climb up through the Heights was my fourth and amazingly each time it seems to get shorter. Once over the top I enjoyed the descent and made my way up Hogans road and looked at the amazing scenery. Once down in the gully I took a couple off photos to send to my wife who was unwell at the time and can always be a little cheerier with these nice photos.

The remainder of the section to Chillingham seemed in a lot better condition than last year because there wasn't many mud bumps on the road. The six bumps weren't any better for me than last year so I made my call early to not grind on a few of them to preserve my strength for the entire day. I did discover on one of the bumps that someone would have been in a world of distress when I found a securing bolt for a mountain bike cleat on the road. Not sure if it would be one of our riders I picked it up and carried it anyway. It is one of the characteristics of a good bike ride for me to see and take notice of unusual things on the way.

I found Vaughan shortly after at Chillingham getting his camera out of the car to find that I had appeared beside the control. To this point the wind had been kind and after some sustenance headed off with renewed energy towards Mooball. I had varying levels of success on the bumps but did finally ride all of the Burringbar range without a stop. Perhaps that section of the road suited me this time round.

At Mooball I encountered a plethora of cyclists preparing for a race. This made spotting PJ a little difficult to the point where I almost missed his directions to the control. The second encounter at Mooball was the originator of the 6 Bumps ride – for which he did apologise. PJ and Ann provided some welcome relief at the control. Once replenished, I headed to Wooyung on the coast for the ride up the coast to Cabarita Beach. This year the winds were favourable and the corner was soon turned inland and the sprint up the highway. My ride times were faster than last year and when I exited the highway I took a few minutes to eat and recover from my quick pace.

Once I got to Condong, I stopped outside the post office to put on the lights and hi-viz as it was getting close to sunset. I was a little concerned about riding into the setting sun but fate provided a simple solution. As I rook off from the post office, within 50m I had a rear wheel blowout that could not have picked a better location to happen – I was riding on flat ground at a lower speed *and* I was about 30m from the tables and chairs used by the mill smokers during their breaks. I set up a

temporary workshop at the table, swapped out the tyre (it had an amazing 9100km on it and had earned it's retirement even though it hadn't reached the wear markers) then headed in the dwindling dusk to catch up with Vaughan at the next control.

I had let Vaughan know why I was being delayed whilst at Condong so there was little surprise about my late appearance (also in the dark). I had anticipated my weariness by this stage and made peace with the steep section of Tomewin Hill – at a couple of points I turned off my front light and let my eyes get accustomed to the dark so I could see an awesome night display of the sky including the Milky Way which I don't get to see in its splendour very often.

Once at the top I picked up speed and made my way safely down the descents and turned onto Currumbin Valley way only to be greeted by cramps moving from one part of my body to another within minutes. I stopped at Durobby, set up another bottle of electrolytes and proceeded to consume half of it whilst stretching most of the cramps out. Heading off I found the descent slower than normal but surprisingly wind and rain free. As I approached the finish I noticed that the takeaway lights were turned off and once I finished and was greeted by Vaugan I was informed that indeed the takeaway was closed for the night (7pm? What a weird closing time for a Saturday...)

This was once again a good ride, easier (but a little longer) for me. Thanks to Vaughan, Peter and Anne for the support during the ride.