

The Vice President's Quintet - a completed doublet of rides.

By John McMullan

Jeff has designed a series of rides for us north-siders that doesn't involve starting at Ferny Grove. My initial research told me there were five rides but in reality, there are seven, ranging from 50km through to 600km. I will stick with the Quintet as at the moment, the first five is about all I will be able to complete. We could probably call this a monopoly set of rides as all but one starts at the Strathpine railway station (and that one starts 200m away)

After spending a lot of time off the bike this year, a few DNFs and my doctor getting on my case about not riding enough I went searching for some gentle rides, well aware that Jeff had created some local permanents. Having looked through the range of options, thought that the first couple of Jeff's routes would be a really good way to kick off my riding.

Week one was what I would consider to be a nice breakfast ride called Anzac Loop which is a quick little loop from Strathpine out to the Peninsula via Kallangur and returning via Bracken Ridge. I wasn't aware of how much the local council has made things a lot more cycle friendly on the way through with the addition of a set of traffic lights and shoulder near the highway on the way out and the Kippa Ring intersection was a dream, particularly at a relatively traffic free 6:30am, well timed between the sport rushes and the shoppers.

The start is a pleasant little downhill ride for me to the railway station (less than 2km) and then heads northwards on the gently sloping roads with reasonable shoulders pretty much all the way to Scarborough, via some well planned main roads and familiar audax routes. The thing that was remarkable for me is the speed at which I cycled out to the peninsula, the very pleasant weather (nippy, requiring knee warmers and a wind jacket), no breeze to speak of and as a result some awesome views. On my way out I was passed by a number of similar minded riders enjoying the relatively peaceful ride.

Once on the peninsula the riding continued to be excellent as were the views of the dead calm water (rare at this part of the ride as wind is the norm). The traffic was minimal heading south and only a few early risers heading out for breakfast were out and about. I had thought about a stop for a coffee or quick break but I was making such good time I continued on, over the bridge, up through Brighton (Hello PJ) and out to Deagon. Amazed by the light traffic I maintained a good clip (for me) even over Norris road to the north side of Bracken Ridge. Here I made a slight adjustment to the route electing to use the quiet side road beside Bracken Ridge Road back to the highway where I re-joined the early shoppers to head back to the railway station to complete the ride.

Overall – top little loop to ride before breakfast and as an excellent recovery / returning ride.

Week two I decided to ride the next of Jeff's little gems – the Brendale loop. This one heads north from the Strathpine railway station via Narangba road to Burpengary, where it crosses the highway, out via the peninsula, down to Nundah and then back to Strathpine.

I signed up, letting Jeff know that I would need to use the new bikeway at Boondall as the wetlands path was closed for maintenance. Little did I know that Jeff had intended to join me for a ride, and in the best made plans of mice and vice presidents, I arrived a bit over five minutes late at the start. Jeff must have thought he missed me and rode on, messaging me from the railway overpass 5

minutes ahead of me. As I don't have alerts turned on except for SMS and calls, I wasn't aware of Jeff's message til I got home much later.

The ride from Petrie was similar to the weekend before with light traffic and breeze but a little warmer enabling me to keep a reasonable pace up. The road and riding conditions were pretty good, polite traffic and really good speed to Burpengary. As I look at the elevation profile, was basically down hill too. The highway crossing and push through Deception Bay had me feeling pretty good (and strong). The Peninsula provided a few really good photo opportunities - I make a habit of sending my wife a good morning photo from the early stages of every ride as she would like to ride with me but is not yet able to do so (here's hoping for the future) and sent the photo used in the newsletter banner. The breeze had picked up a little (a light head breeze – one of my 50 terms for air movement) which continued on southwards to Nundah. I was feeling reasonably strong and the breeze didn't cause me any grief on the way. I had already decided that I wouldn't be taking a break at the control instead choosing the rest area at Sandgate where a short break was in order before I set off for the last 40m of the ride.

I had to bypass the wetlands due to the path being closed and took the 'high speed bikepath' on the western side of the Gateway Motorway down to the Nudgee Road interchange then made my way to the Jim Soorley bikeway where I encountered a large stream of cyclists out on a fundraising ride. I was pleased to see people of all ages and families out riding on such a pleasant day. I'm not sure how far they were riding but there were signs back to the crit track counting down the kilometres. I soon arrived at Toombul, crossing Widdop St at the roadworks and then climbing the few small pinches through Wavell Heights and up through Geebung to Zillmere road. This is where I discovered that a car that goes into the bilke lane to turn left completely misses the sensing loop in the road and waits a very long time. A bit of footpath duty later and I was on my way again ready for the final stretch on Muller road and up to Deagon.

Just like the previous weekend, I almost powered up Norris road, merging in with traffic at the roundabout and finding myself with a green light to head onto Bracken Ridge Road. This allowed me to set a cracking pace on the downhill onto Hoyland St so I didn't annoy too many motorists on my way to the highway crossing. Traffic on the overpass was polite and I made good use of the shoulder on Strathpine Road, watching traffic and adjusting my speed so a large truck could pass before I needed to make my way past some parked cars. The descent across the flats is a nice reward at the end of a ride which once again, I completed in good time.

Its been a long time since I completed a sub 5 hour 100km ride and I was feeling very happy about it (noting that it is a pretty flat route.)

All in all, gem two of Jeff's collection of rides. I do plan to ride his next in the series - the Northside Meander – a 150km route that takes in the scenery of the 100 plus Dayboro and the Kedron Brook Bikeway. This one is a little lumpier so I may not break any speed records but I will enjoy the ride.