

## Let's Elope 300km & 400km 13 June 2020

"Let's Elope" used to be called "The Long Flat One" (for obvious reasons).

Then one year it was held on 14 February - Valentine's Day - and so the name was changed.

Ride report by Nick Mandoki



Perry, Gary, Sacha, Wayne (Nick taking photo)

Five riders successfully complete their Let's Elope routes on weekend 13 June. Perry and Gary completed the 300km loop from Deep Water Point down to Harvey and back. Nick, Sacha and Wayne completed the 400km loop down to Bunbury and back. Nick was on his fixie and Wayne rode his recumbent.

There were a few showers, but nothing too heavy or for too long. I packed my rain jacket but never felt the need to take it out of my saddlebag. In the morning

we were treated to some spectacular rainbows. Then the weather for most of the afternoon was glorious – beautiful clear skies and warm sunshine. Unfortunately, the spray from the road did take its toll. Myself and my bike both needed a good hose down by the time we got home.



The fixie resting in Harvey

We rode loosely as a group to Pinjarra. Some people stopped for water, food, or to take off some layers. But then we caught each other up again. The exception was Wayne who was out in front for a while but then somehow managed to end up behind. Sacha, Perry, and Gary stopped at the Dome in Pinjarra for morning tea, then rode together to Harvey where they had lunch. I chose to push on ahead for fear of falling asleep on the bike later that night. Wayne was still somewhere behind.

After Harvey the routes diverged, with Perry and Gary heading back to Perth (eventually finishing together at 8.45pm), whilst Sacha got on with the task of chasing me down on the way to Bunbury. The 400km riders followed Gary's winding route south of Harvey, before heading in to Bunbury via the new road bridge between Treendale and Eaton. Running alongside the Collie River there were a few short but steep hills that had me cursing on my fixie. Wayne was probably cursing on his recumbent too later in the day.

After a quick lap of Bunbury town centre we headed back via Australind and the Forrest Hwy, passing the white bike memorial to Shiva who was sadly killed on 3 June 2018.

Then across to Harvey again to retrace our steps for a while before veering off round the Peel Estuary and into Mandurah. I stopped for a break at the toilets across from the Leprechaun. To my surprise the toilets were locked but the taps are outside so I was still able to fill my water bottle. I then walked up the hill that

leads back up to Old Coast Road. There was no way I was going to attempt that on a 48X16 gear ratio with 300km already in my legs!



NICK MANDOKI started riding with Audax WA in 2017. In just the three years since, Nick has completed the 2018 PBP as well as two additional 1200km Audax rides, the February 2020 Wave Rock 1600km ride, and achieved the 2018 and 2019 Super Randonneur Challenges. Nick also rode a Super Randonnee (600km with 10,000m of climbing) in Germany/Austria/Italy as a warmup for PBP. "It was a lot of fun, but also quite tough!" Nick has almost ridden 4,000km Audax kms this year. To add to his Audax accomplishments, Nick often completes his rides on his fixie.

When I came through Mandurah (about 9pm) there were lots of people enjoying the nightlife. Wayne reported that a few hours later (presumably after pub closing time) it was hoon central.

The final leg up Mandurah Rd, Paganoni Rd, then the PSP was a real struggle for me as I became more and more tired, and my legs became weaker and weaker.

Just after midnight, Deep Water Point (DWP) and the sight of my car (the only one left in the car park by that time) could not have been more welcome. Meanwhile Sacha was still going strong, finishing just 45 minutes behind, and then riding back home to Armadale! Poor Wayne on the other hand needed to take some sleep in one of the PSP tunnels before getting back to DWP at 4.45am, then facing the ride back to Bedford.