

The Frosty 200

January 29, 2011
Tillsonburg, Ontario

The inaugural Frosty 200 km brevet was held on Saturday. Six Hardy souls started the ride from the Recreation Centre: David Pearson, Jerry Payne, Dick Felton, Carey Chappelle, Brian Brideau and Jakub Ner. I arrived at the parking lot in a heavy snow storm expecting to find no riders, as some had mentioned they would ride if it wasn't snowing! Jakub was in the parking lot get his "little" bike ready to go and mentioned other riders were in the rec centre getting dressed. They were in the entryway putting on long john's, wind pants, several pairs of socks and booties, balaclavas, gloves and heater packs.



Getting ready!



Left to Right: Dick Felton, Carey Chappelle, Brian Brideau, Jakub Ner, Dave Pearson and Terry Payne.

The roads were snow covered from the start and it was snowing quite hard at the beginning, With the snow on the parking lot I thought there would have been a crash before they got on the road. Given the superior bike handling skills of the riders they all kept the rubber side down.



The Parking Lot

On the road, going west on North St and then north on the Dereham Line the roads were treacherous and the snow was still coming down hard. I had checked the weather station before I left home and it said: "The snow will end by 9:00 AM." Something to look forward to!



The Dereham Line

There was a secret Control at 42 km cakes, coffee and tea was available and consumed with pleasure. A big problem was water bottles not only freezing but covered in road gunk. As predicted the snow did let up at about 9:15, but what the weather man failed to report was that it would start again almost immediately.



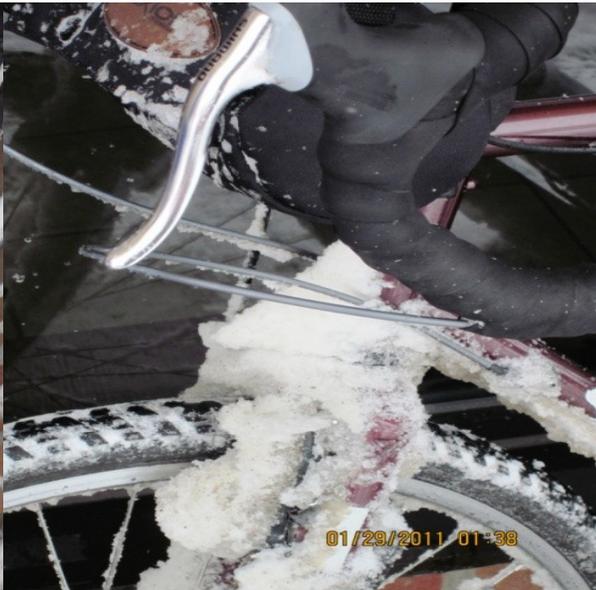
The secret control

At the secret control, Dick changing the gearing on his fixie. A bit of a task given the conditions. Dick changed the gearing from 44/16 to a 44/18 freewheel as the hills were starting in the next 20 km to Port Burwell. A snow plough did go through so the Richmond Hills weren't as bad as they could have been, but they were still treacherous. This is the same route taken by the TSWO. The problem was not only the road conditions changing from wet greasy pavement to slushy and snow covered but also the sand and salt make "mud soup" that sticks to everything and freezes on the bike. I think at one point

or another all riders were riding fixies as the derailleurs were frozen solid and brakes were another problem. Here's what some of the bikes looked like by the Pt. Rowan Control at 103K.



The Back Wheel



Front Brakes



Chappy's Mountain Bike with the bent fork. Notice the height of the saddle!



A bottom bracket

The choice of bikes was interesting. Dick rode his fixie and changed the hub to a 44/18 before the hills and kept it that way for the rest of the ride...his legs were going around quite well. Chappy rode a mountain bike. The tires and handling were great but that was offset by the fact that while packing the bike he forgot to put the seat and seat post in the car. Got to London and borrowed a seatpost that was a little bent and would not slide down into the seat tub. See picture above for the height of the saddle. He made it although I would imagine that every pedal stroke was a bit painful. Jakub rode his, well I don't know what to call it....see picture below.



Jakub in the snow

Jakub rode his bike with the little wheels and they looked like they are 12 inches and they had to go around a lot of times and they picked up a lot of "road gunk." From the outset, Jakub said that he would be slower than the rest of the riders and not to worry about him. By the 42 km secret control, Jakub was well back and he seemed OK with that. The group of five: Jerry, Brian, Dick, Chappy and Dave didn't waste any time at the first control. Filled up with some water had a snack, and gave us the frozen water bottles that would hopefully be thawed out by the next control in Pt. Rowan, about 35 km. It was difficult to eat or drink on the bike as taking even one hand off the bars was dangerous. Even looking behind was difficult. Pt. Burwell was a short stop of less than 10 minutes.

Believe it or not the hard part was yet to come. There is a spot on the Lakeshore Road east of Pt. Burwell that has been eroded by the lake and the road is closed and there is a short detour. However, most of the traffic now does not use the road. It was snowing quite heavily and there was about five to six cm of fresh snow on the road so bike control was a problem. The road was really treacherous for about 8 km. There was one mishap where Brian ended up on the ground, but the only good thing about the snow is he had a soft landing. Once past the detour the road conditions improved a bit but the road is exposed and there was a fairly strong east wind, something we never have down here. The speed dropped off quite a bit in this section. Chappy was following close behind Dick when Dick moved out to pass Dave who had stopped and Chappy ran into Dave's rack and came to a sudden stop and did a little header and roll in the snow. No damage to the rack or Chappy but a bent fork on the mountain bike and the handle bars were a weird angle for the rest of the ride. They did arrive in Pt Rowan at 1:30 ish and had a "lunch break" at the Blazing Burgers.

Now back to Jakub. We waited for Jakub at the control in Pt. Burwell and he was bonking a bit when he arrived and he needed to stop for something to eat. He was approaching the time limit and was still in good spirits and he said he was fine and not to worry about him. It was off to the next control in Pt. Rowan. The road conditions were a little better but it was still snowing and of course the head wind.



Lakeshore road. Snow and slush covered sections

The Pt. Rowan stop is 103 km and it was time for lunch and a bit of a warm up. The chili and the soup were excellent.



Dick arriving at the Pt. Rowan Control



Dave in Port Rowan, more snow on the inside of the glasses than the outside. His jacket below the reflective band is frozen solid.



Brian and Dave at Pt. Rowan

The group of 5 left Pt. Rowan with some time to spare. The ride from Pt. Burwell to Pt. Rowan was the most difficult and the slowest. Not that it got a lot better from Pt. Rowan to Pt. Dover.

Back to Jakub: We back tracked along the Lakeshore to see where Jakub was and when we found him he was still in good spirits but was obviously suffering a bit and he had already missed the Pt. Rowan Control closing time of 14:48 by about half an hour. He mentioned that his bike was hard to pedal and thought the bearings may have been freezing. In looking at his bike there was frozen snow in the fender rubbing on the tire acting as a brake. Those little wheels probably picked up a lot of stuff. When we told him that he was technically out of the ride he said that he wanted to continue to complete the route. It took a little convincing but we got him to take a short cut back to Tillsonburg and that he'd probably arrive at about the same time as the others. Had he continued I don't think he would have been in until after midnight. We agreed to meet in Pt. Rowan and I would draw a route back to Tillsonburg that was about 45 km. He said he would take it but needed some food. We then headed off to the Pt. Dover control, Jakub headed to a restaurant.

The Old Turkey Point hill was included in the ride which is actually about a 2.8 km detour off the Lakeshore road, down to the lake and back up the hill. I was a little concerned about the hill as it is quite steep and if it hadn't been ploughed there was no way they would have been able to get up it on the bikes. We drove the hill and it had been ploughed and sanded although it was still slushy and muddy but I thought it was doable. They all made it up the hill...we won't mention who had to walk! That's the trivia question! Who Walked????

Initially when setting up the route, the lunch break would be in Pt. Dover at the Norfolk Tavern, but due to the conditions they didn't arrive there until 16:37. With cards signed and a stop at the variety store it was back on the road to Delhi.



The bikes are a little cleaner here at the Pt. Dover stop but the problem was it was cooling down and the crude was starting to freeze hard.



Brian, Dick & Dave having the usual Tim' Stuff ...hey Dick even ate a donut.



Carey & Terry chowing down!

On the road again for the last 35 km. The hill did warm them up but by this point in the ride they were anticipating a direct route to the finish but north of Delhi the route went east for awhile when they all knew Tillsonburg was west. I learned this psychological technique from Isabelle and Keith, just when they think they are getting finished scare them a bit, it keeps the riders from getting too cocky!

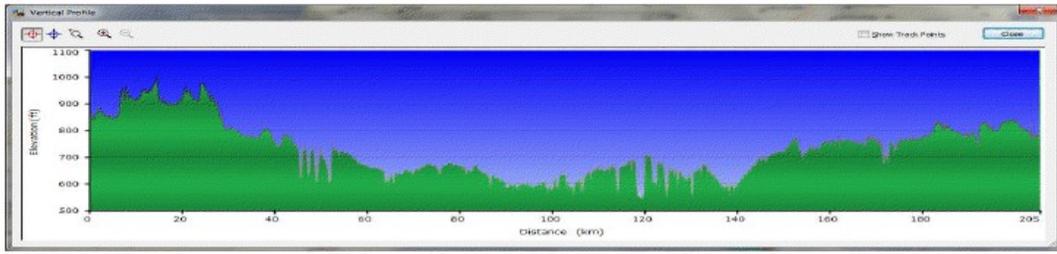
On the way back to Tillsonburg, I got a call from Jakub that he had arrived at about 20:25 and that he was heading home. That is when I learned that Jakub's last time on the bike was June of last year. Wow...he rode about 150 km in some of the worst conditions out there...I'm impressed, one tough dude!

The group arrived back at the rec centre at 20:48 with some time to spare. They were cold and wet but I think they all had a great feeling of what they had accomplished, Note this is the first time that I have organized a ride where everyone bought a medal and 4 of the 5 ordered theirs after the ride.

I was really impressed with the tenacity and the determination of all the riders and the bike handling skills required to cope with the conditions with no major falls or crashes. Terry Payne mention that he had never held onto his handle bars so hard. They over came frozen water bottles, frozen derailleurs, frozen, brakes, wet and frozen body parts. The riders did an incredible job...well done! Hopefully I'll be there next year. All the riders agreed this was the hardest 200 they have ever done.

I always thought it was flat around here but according to Dick's computer there was about 3500 feet of climbing. I said we don't have hills down here, but no one asked if we had valley!!!! See the profile and below here's Dave's Garmin Print out: <http://connect.garmin.com/activity/65813677>

A friend of mine, Grandpa Bob Williams, from the Silver Spokes Cycling Club rode with me. He was very impressed with the attitude of the riders, no complaining or whining about the conditions and the tenacity to keep going. I guess he doesn't realize that if a Randonneur complains, nobody listens! Well Done!



Profile from Frosty 200 - 3600 feet of vertical climb - total
205.93 KM
1hour24 stopped
11hours24 moving
12 hours 48 minutes total