

26. Intense Sensations

Bicycling constantly surprised him with new impressions while motoring had ceased to be anything more than drudgery. Al took in what many may have never felt. Turning in a tight radius, he seemed to pivot on rear wheel, sort of tucked back and spinning round front as if hurling a hammer. This was because turning usually meant leaning, not actually steering, since bike took up so little of road and corners could be angled, that is, started from edge of a lane then shooting across to same edge of lane turned into, all done unconsciously by simply shifting one's weight. This was stimulating in a physically gentle but mentally intense way, requiring concentration and poise. Trying to do so in a much wider car he'd likely lose control and probably wind up in an accident. Minimum, he'd be pummeled and tossed about. Contrasted as being shoved around by a mob versus being intimately caressed by a compassionate lover. Unquestionably, bicycling's angelic intimacy reigns over motoring's craven anonymity.

Similarly, there's a slight whup while downshifting from big chain ring and engaging small. Some never notice, but on long hilly rides you constantly need to shift gears and spin up just to stave off increasingly insistent thigh burn suddenly maxed during a whup. This transient spike, thrust of an internal knife, seems like an insult deriding your inferior body's poor physical state, harassing your inherent limitations, taunting your perpetual shame. Engines and trannies always get to sense this, but no longer motorists, after so many so called technological improvements. Somewhere they must already have appropriated or coined a term, but it still bore describing, even if not terribly clear.

Cars are generally designed to shut World out. Sun's warmth is abated by air conditioning, without which a vehicle's internal temps can soar to unhealthy, even fatal, levels. Unless parked in shade, a/c sometimes took longer to cool a mo-ve than a drive's entire duration. On hottest days he'd point bike to routes with plenty of shade and relied on convection to whip up cooling breezes, especially afternoons when most appreciated. Surely, you can overheat on a bike between BTUs generated by pedaling and external temperatures, but somehow being outside amidst flowing air currents regulated comfort. When it got too hot and humid to sit indoors, he'd sometimes ride just to cool off. Bicyclists even complain of being chilled by gliding after a long, sweltering, uphill grind. Neither driving nor walking was as refreshing.

Hard to enjoy a confined, tense commute by car. By bike he felt chill and warmth, smelt fragrances of dew soaked mornings, fresh mown lawns, flowery blooms, salty harbors, smoky wood, and tingled to deep breaths, excitement, and uncertainty. Baking bread gave way to afternoons of cabbage, garlic, spice and vegetables being accentuated and caramelized in any of scores of local Asian woks, or chops, sausage, and steaks sizzling on backyard grills. Rivers held a complex mix of automotive runoff, human excrement, industrial effluent, all mixing into a dilute tarry slurry, impossible to describe but distinct. You can taste acrid exhaust with its sulphurous after bite, heavy skunk, and sharp creosote. Bicycling is just a magnifying glass for all that exists outside, just as an apt phrase or good lyric captures essence, intensifies delight, synthesizes. Those who drive miss all this, along with boxwood in heat, delicate wafts of camphor, English phlox, lilacs, privet, and some other blossoms which greet as an unidentifiable surprise.

Cold? He rode about 4 miles once when nobody would, below 0° on both scales, when breath turns instantly to ice though face coverings, down to a cove with mists rising like tortured wraiths made all the more eerie through yellow tinted lenses. It was an adventure going out for just a few chores. Felt fortunate—or was it good planning—to be within a stone's throw of a bakery, bank, bread store, city hall, churches, fire barn, gas station, hardware store, library, liquor store, post office, restaurants, and a supermarket, a veritable village as it were. Supported all by attending, donating and spending. About the only thing it lacked was somewhere to work in his field besides self employment; then again, writer with a pad and pencil can set up shop anywhere. Purposeful riding is usually short, but saves money on both bike and mo-ve upkeep. Easy when you are inside, sheltered, under a company's wing; hard when you are out in the cold, fallen by wayside, yesterday's rubbish. Makes sense to habitually job hop nowadays. Idiots adore a new guy and hold nothing but contempt for loyal, steady workers, as if all they were were noisome nipple suckers. Hoppers never get on board, never produce anything, yet get paid increasingly more. Everybody out there is better than you are, even if you prove your worth over and over. The relative lack of warmth of a Winter's day is nothing compared to the absolute zero of man's inhumanity.

With correct apparel and equipment, cold can be made bearable. Not so routes that were designed to humble and intimidate. Randonneurs classify rides as Rambles (typical club rides), Cruises (much harder) and Challenges (extreme, involving mountain summits). There ought to be a new category of pointless torment:

rides with several, mile-long, stand-up-steep hills, unreliable descents on bad pavement or steep into busy crossroads that might prove fatal on a stormy day. Once he wore out a set of brake pads, and some cleats from dismounting and walking. Was ecstatic to find a long repaved rollout, day's only, losing 500 feet in less than 2 miles. By the end of that long, hot, hilly tour he was wasted, practically couldn't drive home from start. Sat apart on tailgate, as if dead, only to slowly rouse himself and move on long after club crowd had dissipated without concern for his exhausted condition.

Having done many long rides, people would email him for advice before taking on such a ride themselves. A ride of 100 miles is nothing to sneeze at, or even 100 kilometers. Centuries start out excitedly fast, return exhaustedly slow. You just have to take it in stages, point to point, planning ahead to your next stop yet staying alert to pain. Managing moments is the most important thing about bicycling, being aware of sphere surrounding you: branches hanging, cars encroaching, cracks gaping in pavement, what's ahead, what's coming from behind, when to take a breather. How hard should you pedal to go as far up hill as possible before you need to downshift, keep up your cadence, never bog down?

It's so easy to lose attention when you're exhausted, forget to drink, just want ride to be over, take careless chances. When sugar's depleted and you're really weary, brain doesn't work well. That's when you must take a rest, even if it's just a few minutes in shade at a nice overlook. Often he'd just unclip, bending from waist over handlebars with legs straddling top tube. A full rest for him might include sitting on a curb, fence or stoop for 15 minutes. Then he had to get moving again to avoid stiffness. Plan to be out for an entire day. After all, you ride to enjoy yourself, not compete with pelaton, feel obligated to companions, impress anyone, or please club bosses. During statute centuries he generally took his first break around 35 to 40 miles out, a good long breather, then, in later stages, took a lot of short rests, even taking advantage of coasting as course offers. Roadside rest stops, in general, have earned a bad reputation as gathering spots for those up to no good. Ignored club organized rest stops every 25 miles; food is bad, long lines, unfriendly people. Rather buy snacks at convenience stores, and stop at gas stations with clean restrooms and no lines. Better than carrying a lot of heavy food, although always carried a Clif or granola bar, just in case. Sometimes patronized a nearly dependable donut franchise if he missed breakfast. They never seemed to mind if he brought his bike inside, as long as there was room enough.

His fastest centuries had taken around 6 hours. Have to go like hell while you can to do that, hang on someone's wheel, hitch tows in slipstreams, because there are always long inclines or winds that slow. It's all arithmetic. If you average only 10 mph and throw in at least 6 stops of 10 minutes, you're already at 11 hours, 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM. On a particular century, he made it to halfway stop in 3 hours, averaged 17 mph, but took 5 more to finish. Your last 25 can be really hard if you don't take care and pace yourself, especially if it's hot. One seeks that compromise speed that doesn't quickly deplete yet shortens saddle time, which varies by rider's fitness.

Everyone gets drained along a ride then finds a 2nd wind. A lot has to do with correct apparel, fitted equipment, gradually acquired muscle tone, pedals with cleats, proper hydration, shoes with orthotics. Once he went out with brand new shorts worried they wouldn't perform. Wisely, he had bought exactly the same brand and model as those he usually used, but you can't be certain if they're a misery until 50 miles out. Conditioning and planning is how you survive the gruesome *last 10*, when all you can do is hang on and pray it would soon be over, when duration dilates and end point seems to move in opposite direction, as if in Alice's Wonderland, when every step forward puts you 3 steps behind.

Before rides longer than an hour from May to October he'd slaver on SPF 36 hour sunscreen. You do sweat it off, so have to reapply lightly every few hours to any patch of exposed skin, particularly nape of neck and nose. Sunburn is a bad idea. Besides damaging and wrinkling skin, can lead to dehydration, heatstroke, and melanomas. Moles that turns black or have irregular borders should be looked at immediately by a dermatologist. If it wasn't too hot, he'd wear long sleeve thin jerseys to protect arms. For buggy venues or night rides, he'd mix cream repellent into sunscreen, carry in a small container, reapply if he had to stop for a flat, which is when fleas, mosquitoes and ticks attacked. Never use water backpacks, since your back is among body's biggest areas of cooling. They do encourage drinking, but add a lot of discomfort, weight, and wind drag, and are a pain to fill and keep clean. He opted for a particular type of clear container, an empty Smart Water one liter polyethylene terephthalate bottle: can be frozen, cheap to replace if you decide to jettison, easy to clean, fits nicely into cage, holds a lot, is very light, represents no suspected health hazards as does polycarbonate or Polyvinyl Chloride, and retains no odors. Fluid that came in it didn't raise IQ, though, as readers can attest. Otherwise, he'd use bottles with wide tops to shove in crushed ice; cool water is more easily absorbed. After 3 hours of

midsummer heat, any ice will have melted and water become unpleasantly tepid but still better than none.

To stave off bonking, if pressed, he'd choose nuts—chocolate covered, plain or salted—raisins, salty corn chips, or a whole grain bagel as substitutes for his usual Clif Bars. He held no opinion on myriad other power bars, for the most part really candy; might as well grab peanut brittle or Snickers. Other riders opted for gel packs, glucose goo you squeeze out of a foil wrapper. There's always fruit: Apples, bananas, figs or peaches are choice, even pastry squares filled with figs from a bakery. Seasoned riders value them for their potassium, along with salty snacks and sports drinks which similarly replace electrolytes including sodium. Calcium can become toxic; potassium must accompany it, otherwise you can't metabolize it to fight off thigh burn. But, he always ate as little as necessary while riding hard, as this diverts blood away from legs and lungs into digestion. Some serious pedal pushers chew gum or suck on hard candy, a little sugar drip, but you could choke and it didn't seem all that effective when he tried it.

Those who want to ride far always bemoan discomfort of their saddles. They either don't ride enough or wait too late to break in a leather selection, best done during early Spring when it's rainy. There's no such thing as a saddle that's comfortable; padding doesn't seem to help; only bicycling enough, building up muscles, and desensitizing works. Padded saddles can actually bunch and cause numbness. Saddles should be firm and smooth; press between fingers and make sure there is nothing like a rivet or stuff that can be displaced. People who go far often use a Brooks, a firm sling of breathable leather which develops no hot spots, remains kind of springy, and transfers thrust, especially while climbing. Speedsters don't like a Brooks, because it's heavy by comparison to their thin carbon crack carriers. But leather ultimately conforms to your anatomy, hollows for your sit bones, so you can't get anything else as comfortable, custom made for your contours, like an old shoe. It takes about 500 miles to soften, which can be hastened by repeatedly wrapping with boiling towels before ever using (takes faith), then repeatedly applying branded saddle soap that they sell. Some go to the extreme of soaking entire saddle in special oil used for baseball gloves or shoes, which tends to bleed out leather dye onto your clothes, one of the reason cyclists wear black. In either case, you have to resist urge to tighten adjuster, which, if overdone, will pop rivets and thus destroy unit.

Balmex diaper cream over all soft tissue not only heals a rash but nicely lubricates. The main culprit is bunching seams or lumps

in biking shorts, which are not all created equal by any means. You have to find a pair that suits your anatomy. Spandex at least flexes with you, but pads can irritate. These are issues you thrash out during daily rides. On century day, you'll use only your most comfortable gear, nothing brand new. Wear a loose jersey of Cool Max, lightweight polyester, or thin silk or wool. Some prefer aerodynamic tight fitting jerseys, but, if you're not going very fast, staying as cool as possible should be your priority. To avoid blisters, wear light peds, that is, below ankle socks, dusted in cornstarch. Travel light, but, don't carry anything on your person. Attach it to bike in a bag, basket or carrier. Things you put on eventually impede good technique or wear a hole in your skin. Good to put everything—car keys, wallet, cell phone—in a plastic zip-lock inside a bike bag away from rain, splashes and sweat. Of course, carry tools and tubes. Sag arrangements on centuries you pay for are generally ineffectual. Having driven sag himself, he knew it took forever to drive the same roads bicyclists take, all narrow country lanes. Driver may be helping someone else or not have the right size replacement. As always, be prepared to help yourself.

A roadie bike puts rider at a more forward angle than a hybrid. Feet and hands should be carrying $\frac{2}{3}$ of weight; if not, your butt will let you know. While pedaling, sit lightly. If saddle is optimal, you can slide further forward to change sit positions, or straighten your spine to curl your pelvis for the same effect. This requires developed quadriceps, as your knees strain to handle increasingly more of your weight. Pedaling with knees out misspends a lot of your quads' power. If you watch pelaton competitors, their knees are in, heels down and out, which squares thighs above lower legs and thereby delivers more power each stroke. Feet in stiff soled shoes act like levers, whipping around, as if machinery, when done correctly. In a few years your legs begin to feel like powerful metal springs. Hands, right through padded gloves, forearms and wrists will ache or go numb if you don't move them frequently. Find several comfortable handlebar positions: at various angles, down in drops, further in or out laterally, although too close to your body restricts breathing. Palms directly upon brake hoods extends your back and positions you nicely forward while riding on flat or slight inclines.

You see some riders with a water bottle in a back pocket, okay for about 5 miles, no more. Attach some extra bottle cages to bike if you need them. However, small groups stop and buy a gallon to split among themselves, rather than carry all that extra weight. Plain cool water, which absorbs quickly, is fine, but Accelerant

powder which takes little room in a rolled up baggie and weighs little, adds carbs, electrolytes and protein, and so nourishes better. Use both. Learn to know which your body prefers at any given point in a ride. He'd eat a good breakfast before long rides, then didn't eat much during, so drinks were how he maintained, although ades can have an aftertaste or cause indigestion. During a ride in Vermont's mountains, he sloshed down 7 liters of fluid and still got dehydrated; weighed himself that morning, then returned 7 pounds lighter, the most he ever lost in a single day, likely all water weight. Compared to sports drinks, bottled or tap water is cheap.

You should take a few days off altogether before a century to build glycogen in muscles, not deplete it, and thoroughly hydrate. Beans, pasta and/or rice are good for a carbo load. He'd sometimes took a few short fast rides earlier in week before a long ride, but rested those last few days to recover. You'll notice a lot of riders pulled over in a century's final 25, suffering because they tried to take it all on without nourishment or proper preparation. Muscles are engines that burn glycogen, collect burning lactic acid, and rely on water to cool and lubricate. Run any machine without lubrication and it'll seize, or the anatomical equivalent, cramp. You don't ever want to be half way out and start cramping. No cab or sag can ease that pain. Drink before you need to. Contrary to popular myth, stretching muscles before riding is not smart but too ridiculous to contemplate. Pedaling easy for awhile automatically stretches them and avoids all that straining and twisting associated with hastily performed yoga.

After any intense activity there's always a let down. Whether it's watching your team lose or win, there a sudden realization that the party's over. The farther one rode, the more one wanted ride to last, forever, tempting steroid use to lengthen rides indefinitely. Perhaps it was a way for some to evade post-ride blues, both a mental and a physical fact. Not uncommon to suffer a recoil after having all that oxygen saturated into your blood: hot flashes, heart congestion, odd muscle aches, possibly anxiety or serious depression. Being aware of this is important to avoid the latter. Some people get right back into saddle next day for a short *cool down* run, as if "hair of the dog", like an alcoholic taking a drink to ease a hangover. Only frequent riding builds stamina to endure long rides. Once you start you're chained to bicycling for health; it restricts your autonomy as much as motoring did, since you had to feed your Jones either way, both addictive habits with persistent costs.

He often wondered how much physical abuse his body could take before simply shutting down altogether, or whether he was

causing irreparable bodily harm. A blank mental state, deep exhaustion, kidney slowdown, postpartum shallow panting, semi-paralytic stiffness, taste of lung all occurred to him as verging on deathlike. While riding, body became an efficient cardiovascular and chemical engine, feeling of clean flowing juices that others take amphetamines or cocaine to glimpse without discomfort or effort. Aborigines achieved something similar by days of trance dancing. Afterwards resting heart rate became so low, down into 40s, as to risk sudden stoppage. There were worrisome spells of narcoleptic blackouts and neuromuscular cramps so severe that he could hardly walk them off, those that turned you headlong out of bed and had you crawling along floor to medicine chest for lineament. Yet he always gradually recovered his usual placid body, regular mental mania, and steady inner dialog. On saddle, you experience a rush; off, you soon forget suffering. Advice about RICE—Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation—was wasted on him. Ice makes cramps worse. Compression causes clots. Elevation does help, but who has time for rest with legs above their hearts? A hot shower and warm clothes worked best year round.

Bicycling is analogous to exploring, efforts and risks endured for insights and memories. You earn a unique perspective: how attractive some scenery is if you have time to actually see it, how motorists drive mercilessly fast, how much trash is tossed all around, how much you're like a squirrel trembling by roadside. Some homeowners fix up their property to greet themselves and visitors by motor, but, seen from a back angle by cyclists, doesn't look so inviting with collected clutter, mulch piles, sports equipment and toys lying about. He was sometimes tempted to go into yards, plop down on an lounge chair, and savor better views from garden shade. Things that would never occur to you as a motorist might become thinkable as a struggling bicyclist, a dangerous lack of propriety, inner demons surfacing, presuming you're owed something, or you're a creature integral to a landscape and, therefore, social restrictions no longer apply.

Safety is never assured, even on lightly traveled country roads. Yet from the saddle traffic isn't so menacing. It's a wrong assumption common among cyclists, even avid ones. Randonneurs often say, "We find neither the city nor country as dangerous as the suburbs." He considered this every day dodging minivans, soccer moms, and SUVs, yet traffic itself seldom worried him, more human malevolence, overexertion, and rabid dogs. Streets collectively are more often empty than not. Lounging around is definitely riskier. Diligence and riding sensibly are your best defense, some-

thing to drum into riders along with, “Wear helmets to avoid serious head injuries”. A visit to your favorite local bike shop for a maintenance checkup should include replacing any worn brake cables or pads. But you could bring on a heart attack or stroke and kill yourself by overdoing it. Sometimes after a brutally long ride he’d lie or sit, arteries pounding all over, arms, back, neck, legs, and sweat suddenly flowing from every pore. The first several times it frightened. Even when he used to run, he never felt so totally consumed by physical exertion. A nap regulated autonomic bodily functions, but a residual warmth persisted, as if normal state of one’s limbs is cool and inert. On chilly evenings he enjoyed the warmth of his lean toned tissue, especially when snuggling with the chill of feminine flab softened by lush living. For her, he was like a bed warmer, electric blanket, or potbelly stove. Nothing in life is more delightful than snuggling under bed covers, as so lovingly and lyrically described by Bruno Schulz, long since dead after heinous, inane Nazi purge of Poland.

You can ride cityscapes or countryside, but dangers lurk everywhere, so you must remain attentive. On a certain club ride he noticed 4 bad spots: 1) Where he turned off on a long downhill, there was a cavernous pothole a few blocks in, right where you’d least expect and most resent, because it would have ripped bike right from under you. Took all his dexterity at speed to avoid. Washouts along road edges occur often enough, but only bicyclists close to edges fret over them. 2) Frighteningly named Doghill Road descended steeply to a stop sign at a busy crossroad. When worse comes to worst, you might have to drop bike and slide, a maneuver bound to result in injury or road rash but better than a skull crushing collision. 3) Immediately after, Rock Avenue had a terrible set of bone rattling RR tracks, which distracted him from paying closer attention to a couple kids, just off road, who were spinning around shooting shotguns in all directions. Pedaled on in panic looking for cover. 4) Much later, near end, was another very sharp descent to a screaming stop at a hard 90° turn. “Who picked this route?” he asked aloud. You could picture ride scouts studying topographical maps telling themselves, “No, that way is too easy. Let’s take this longer, uphill side road.” Any ride can be made more difficult if you’re sadistic enough.

No other movement through space, except perhaps barnstorming in an open cockpit biplane, came close to the exhilaration of descending a long steep incline at full speed. At 25 mph, you feel focused and peppy, gingerly avoiding debris and slicing around

breaks and cracks . At 35 mph you're intense and jumpy, pre-picking clean segments well before you meet them with hardly any time to avoid what you might have overlooked, skipping lightly over minor bumps and undulations. At 45 mph you're cutting out into middle of travel lane with mo-ves unlikely to catch up, exceeding limit, hanging on for dear life to a frame that has gained weight suddenly and sticks to asphalt as if tires had magically turned adhesive. Tunnel vision commences; peripheral vision that might detect dangers is switched off. Any speed higher is sheer panic, all of the above plus an odd feeling that frame has become liquid, softened like a watch in a Dali landscape, squirming under you as if alive; at such speeds anything can happen, including: break fade, crossing traffic with unavoidable consequences, frame breaks, overheated rims causing blowouts and hysteria. Many riders can't muster such concentration and simply hit brakes repeatedly, as if ABS, to steadily descend. You can never fully go wild unless very sure route offers no surprises, like loose gravel, or surface scarring for repaving, or sheets of ice. Uncertainty made racing downhill unthinkable in Winter. It's disappointing when so unfamiliar with a road you feel you must descend slowly instead of enjoy its rush.

Snow is lovely, though, soft and white at first, or granular, like vermiculite. As you shovel it it gets stickier. Cracks between clogs show a beautiful pale blue, robin eggs that presage Spring. Melt you cause by piling and pushing refreezes into grayish ice. You'd think with all the tons of cruel snow he had moved he'd be totally sick of it. Not really.

Social Psychologist Brilliant extols the virtue of *opening yourself to joy*. Most people don't know how to 1) Share positive feelings, 2) Create warm memories, 3) Pat yourself on the back, 4) Fully use your senses, 5) Count your blessings, 6) Dive wholly into what you're doing, 7) Enthuse even when you don't feel like it, 8) Be in the moment, 9) Avoid buzzkill, and 10) Show gratitude. To be sure, this is in Brilliant's best interest, but is it in yours?

He had a problem with 10-point panaceas and Pollyanna platitudes that deny dark emotions. Anger, craving and delusion are real. To deny they exist is ignorant and wrong. But, according to the Dalai Lama, they are sources of all unhappiness. Getting off the roller coaster of highs and lows brings stability, lets you get on with your life, keeps you out of morgue, prison or rehab. Yet extremes of emotion present interesting insights, as long as you remain alert to them, not blinded by adrenaline. Some people report a sensation of

feeling outside themselves as if observers. If you learn from your mistakes or wintry trials, you'll grow smart and strong. Shoveling snow breathes fresh air and builds muscles, which defeats depression, improves mood, and provides hope of better days. About the same can be said of any activity you try, especially those you feel afraid and unsure of. Russell went as far as to urge, "Move in the direction of your fears." Confidence comes only from doing, duly repeating, and making smart decisions.

Often on rides he heard booms and saw flashes in distance. Do lightning flashes behind single hue signlights result in intense colored shadows? You'd have to be quick to catch. Some phenomena is too fast for almost anyone to notice, constitute a whole realm just out of sight, like angels and devils hiding in periphery. Small flickers and sputters, shadows darting darkly across your coordinates, symptoms of malaise and malfeasance are what draw people in, what they present on nightly news, not news at all but exactly what's been going on throughout history as if fulfilling a biblical prophesy. Initial curiosity may be the most human of all emotions, fascination to feel, probe, try anything unfamiliar, and use every sense for unique input. You can never relive emotion of a special experience. At that time you absorbed energy of that moment, became extremely attentive, examined something meaningful to you, intercepted all correct conditions in time/space, then moved on, momentarily satisfied but with a new appetite already started. Almost everyone moves from 1 peak to another with dull research in between.

After months of slogging through rain and snow, sand and slick, stuck in leggings and overgarments, and worrying about frosty weather, his first Spring bike commutes that year were simply glorious. Could have attributed it to the copacetic ambiance and light breeze in which he didn't even break a sweat, or ease of single-ply polyester jersey and shorts, first time since October, but most likely it was simply the sudden shift in seasons with its spice of variety. After Memorial Day it was supposed to be Summer locally. This day in May it was for sure, Fahrenheit higher than average age of club members, what some claimed they'd never ride below. He pitied anyone stuck inside an SUV during Bicycle Month. Even if he had to get up at dawn to ride before going about his daily drudgery, it was *the* morning, just too fine not to spin. Rain scrubbed pavement with strands of wisteria draping down in full bloom strewing petals in his path and sunrise glistening on the bay all added up to ephemeral bicycle heaven. Didn't even mind

that dreaded circulator and its usual panic. Southbound was relatively easy anyway, just negotiating center with double lanes of cars passing on both sides. Upon return, Northbound on this supposed Bike Route was an ordeal, downhill pinched into grates with drivers crowding breakdown lane, and head-on into 5 lanes tapping constantly into 3 different directions, a tragedy with paranormal implications waiting to happen. But that was something to deal with later, not to spoil this fantastic, memorable morning.

