

January's PERFECT was perfect in every way. Covering a distance of 70.5 km in a clockwise loop, the ride had 1,079 m of climbing, with a gravel accounting for 96% of the route and the only bitumen occurred within the Mt Pleasant township itself where we started. Commencing at 8 am it was a refreshing 16°C. However, the temperature gradually rose to a comfortable 25°C by the time we concluded the journey at 3:20 pm. Throughout the ride, we encountered a mere eight passing vehicles, but four were motorcycles – do they count?

Embarking on this adventure were four riders – Peter H, Pete B, Kevin B, and Chris J. Our ride began in a northwest direction, taking us through Mt Crawford Forest's northeast section. The highlight of our route awaited just beyond at the 20 km mark, where we reached the ride's peak elevation of 545 m. Crossing the main ridge separating Pewsey Vale and the Flaxman Valley, we were treated to some fine views as the clouds dissipated. Along the way, Peter B remarked on the vineyards perched atop these hills and Kevin B enlightening us on the necessity of cold winter weather for the Riesling variety to thrive. Notable discussions ensued, touching on topics ranging from bike parts and touring adventures to personal histories and the occasional joke. Anticipating the challenges ahead, we strategically incorporated regular drink and chat stops, amounting to 1.5 hours throughout the ride. Lunch was a well-deserved thirty minute break at the halfway point, chosen where the lush western ranges transitioned to rockier, drier eastern slopes. As we turned south, the landscape surprised us with its verdant valleys, particularly around Saunders Creek. Returning to Mt Pleasant, we conquered a 336 m ascent over 13.4 km, followed by a delightful stretch of rolling hills to the east of Springton.

Halfway through our adventure, Chris J disclosed that this was his first group bike ride in over four years. He tackled the ride with determination, and even though weary by the end, his good spirits prevailed. We look forward to welcoming him on future rides. Concluding the day with a cool drink, we relished the sense of accomplishment and the camaraderie forged during this perfect PERFECT ride.

Pete B captured our journey with 55 photos which can be found on RWGPS at <https://ridewithgps.com/trips/143188554>



