

## I met "The Man with the Hammer" on West Old LaHonda today



Nice layer of fog out on the coast that unfortunately didn't move in far enough to cool the shop. Pretty though! I wasn't sure what to expect this morning, following Tuesday's really strong (and not recorded by Strava due to computer eating the file) ride. Last time I had a great Tuesday ride, Thursday sucked. But I was thinking this morning could be different.

Tom, Kevin (kid) & Karen out there with me this morning. I held my own riding up through the park, riding stronger than I have in about a year. To be honest, in general, I'm tracking last year pretty closely right now. I would like to do just a bit better than that though. So what if I'm getting older, right? The fast time through the park didn't translate to a fast time up Kings though, as we stopped at Kings to remove the leg warmers that weren't needed. For what it's worth, that takes 1 minute, 20 seconds. Unfortunately that doesn't translate into a time that's just 1 minute, 20 seconds longer, because it takes me a long time to get my climbing rhythm back if I stop in the middle. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.



Not every inch of West Old LaHonda could be covered quickly today. It was West Old LaHonda that really surprised me. Kevin was pushing the pace a bit across the middle, and for that precisely 1-mile segment I ended up with 4:59, my fastest time since... Sept 1, 2015. This is a segment I have no real-time awareness of while riding; it's one of those Strava things that shows up when you download your ride. I might have gotten close to the time for the full distance of West Old LaHonda from 9/1/15 if not for a very recently downed tree lying across the road, a bit before you head into the forest. The harsh winter of 2016 still seems to be with us!

It's taken a very very long time, but I can finally ride hard enough that I really feel it in my legs later. For the most part my maximum effort has been limited by my breathing, but the new meds seem to be helping. I still can't talk, or at least not very much, while climbing, and it's still hard to drink, but that's different from a few months ago, when the difficult, or hard, were simply impossible.

Am I ready for France? Yes and no. I'm strong enough to take on the gnarly climbs again, but not at the speeds Kevin will want to. But I'm going to ride myself into shape, just like the "Tour guys do."