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Old Men's Social Club Ride

Todd and MikeR at the top of Kings and looking pretty happy.

Trying to think what it was about today's ride that made me feel like I've been at this for so long that I'm getting old. Oh. Right. It was Kevin the pilot, asking on West Old LaHonda, how many years I've been doing this ride, since he's been doing it with me for 20 years or so.

Too many to name this morning, but I'll try to get most. Kevin, Kevin, Karl, Chris (who works with Karl at REI), Todd (fast younger guy, younger being less than 40, not sure how much less), Mark P (tri-guy) and MikeR, a former regular who's been turning heads on Strava but was relatively-kind to us this morning.

Not deathly pace today, which was nice, and just warm enough that we didn't need leg warmers, the fog dutifully burning off just ahead of us as we rode. Highpoint for me was probably the Sky Londa sprint, which I did a bit differently than in the past. Instead of trying to control the pace by keeping it relatively slow at the start of the sprint, or sucking wheels until the opportune time, I rode hard on the descent prior to the sprint, trying to keep the speed so high that nobody could come around. If Todd were with us, this wouldn't work, but he wasn't, so it did. No tactics, just raw speed, as much as I could manage.

I'll also note that I'm unquestionably being helped by adopting a modified version of Graeme Obree's 3-phase breathing technique. Obree is known as the "Flying Scotsman" for his hour record successes on rather bizarre home-made bicycles. I actually came across him in-person at the Tour de France some years back. Kind of a crazy guy, perhaps especially so after too many pints in him (as was the case when I met him), but you could tell he thought everything through, every little detail that might make him faster. So when I recently read about his special breathing technique, I thought hey, maybe it would help my wheezing lungs. And, it has! Read all about it here; in a nutshell, it involves some shallower breathing followed by a deeper exhale/inhale cycle. The theory is that you're not getting much oxygen through your lungs with normal breathing, but it's not possible to deeply inhale and exhale with each breath. The solution is to inhale/exhale deeply every third breath (modified in my case to every-other breath). It takes a bit of getting used to, but I'm going faster doing it. Could just be because I feel like I have something positive to concentrate on rather than being frustrated by the effort it takes me to breathe. Who cares why, if it works?