



FOREST HILL HAPPENINGS

No 32

President: Stuart Williams

26 March 2020

When I put out the mini-newsletter last week I made sure it went off to our 'old' exchange students and was then thrilled to get a response from Sebastien in France.

Things are obviously a bit tighter there than here. Something to look forward to!!

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your kind message. I'm grateful to have been sent the Rotary bulletin every week, it has been a most enjoyable read. Please accept my apologies for the lack of response on my behalf, I'm sorry about that. I hope that you are well. I have been staying at home for about a week as my country has taken measures similar to those of other European countries to corner the spread of the virus. I only go out to get groceries and a written statement and ID are required even to do such a small thing. The lockdown is still on for another week and may extend if the situation gets any worse, which, according to the news, it will. I try to remain positive about the situation and devote my time to reading and listening to music.

Kind regards,

Sébastien

Ron's Rotary Ride for Medical Research 2020 Sun 15th March to Fri 20th March

Although the Conference was cancelled, luckily the bike ride was not. This year the plan was to ride from Lake Bolac to Lake Dalesford, indeed it was nicknamed the "Lakes Ride" as each day we passed a number of lakes and how good to see so much water around and a fair bit of greenery for this time of the year. The route planned to see the painted silos.

The good news was there was a full complement of riders in the three teams- about 35 plus about 15 support staff ie drivers who pay the same amount of money as riders but do all the hard work while we riders just have to get "on yer bikes!!" Perhaps even better news was we had about 20 non-Rotarians riding (so it wasn't just dipping into Rotarians pockets for fund raising). And definitely the best news was we raised \$44,000 (our contribution was \$800, half of that from Stephen & Diane Fisher). Riders were split into the yellow fastest team, blue middle team, and green coffee culture team who had three electric bikes this year. What a great idea as we are all getting older.

The weather all week was warm & dry, the bad news was it was blowing a strong northerly which made some days very difficult. We stayed three days in Horsham, one in Ararat, and one in Ballarat. It is customary to have Club chardonnay at the motel after a day's ride. Gonny Rundell and Nicole Osner have traditionally provided wine and beer (courtesy of Wolfgang who donates it) and nibbles. We all sit around and chat after our shower and

washing out our bike gear before dinner. The profit from drink sales goes to Health Research. Best part of the day! Well, actually the best part is going to bed..... early.

Day 1 (Sunday) 18-25degC

Bayswater to Lake Bolac by car. Started riding at 11.30am. 25kms to Willaura for lunch where the local baker had specially opened for us & provided fantastic sandwiches and home-made vanilla slices. We had a long and hilly 63.7kms in the afternoon to Halls Gap then were transported to our motel in Horsham. Total for day 88.7kms.....ready for that shower.

Day 2 (Monday)

Murtoa to Sheep Hills then Warracknabeal to Brim 11-34degC

61.8kms in the morning. There are no hills around Sheep Hills but there were painted silos. Then transport to Warracknabeal before the short 20.8kms to the painted silos at Brim. Transport back to Horsham (with the wind!). Rode 82.6kms into the wind all day.

Day 3 (Tuesday) 25-35degC

Patchewollock to Lascelles then on to Beulah

51kms in the morning to Lascelles for lunch then 51.4kms in the afternoon via Hopetoun. From Hopetoun to the finish at Beulah Lakes only four of us from the middle team rode the final 26kms. Most gave up 'cos of the heat but it was with the wind luckily. 102.4kms for the day.

Day 4 (Wednesday) 16-33degC

Horsham to Stawell then on to Moyston

We were not allowed to ride on the Western Highway, so we rode from just outside Horsham to right near the BIG koala then transported a few kms and dropped off again at a side road to ride to Stawell for lunch via Illawarra. Then back on the bikes to go through Pomonal to Moyston. Total bike ride for the day was 103.0kms.

Day 5 (Thursday) 20-29degC

Ararat to Raglan then Beaufort to Lake Learmouth

We rode hard into the wind all morning completing 53.2kms then as we turned to go with the wind the final 9km to Beaufort we were picked up as we were running late for lunch which was put on by the RC of Beaufort. Who was front and centre in handing out sandwiches and tea? Yes, PDG Jenny is now a member there. About 10 of their Rotarians had provided a free spread for us- fantastic. Then it was on our bikes for the final 35.8kms to Lake Learmouth which had about $\frac{3}{4}$ dried up. Total ride today of 89.0kms.

Day 6 (Friday) 12-22degC

Ballarat to Lake Dalesford

A late start today as we only had 48.8kms to ride until lunch. It was a jacket on chilly day. We started just east of Ballarat at the start of the National Park which held the White Swan reservoir. The best part was the long run down Leonards Hill at the end of the ride. The end of a tiring, enjoyable **514.5kms** on my new LOOK 765 road bike. Some very early mornings (up at 6:15am and 6:30am..... not my style). So glad it wasn't cancelled. The country people need all the support we can give them and boy, do they know how to make large tasty meals. We were fed very well and generally looked after by the drivers. Each team had a large car out front and a car and bike trailer behind guiding and protecting us.



Blue Ride Trailer



Willaura Bakery



Rupanyup "two locals" by Julia Volchkova



Brim-Guido painted this 1st silo



Patchewollock "local farmer" by Finton Magee



Rosebery the "Mallee spirit" by Kaff-eine



Lascelles Geoff&Merrilyn Horman local farmers by Rone





Beulah only 4 kept riding



Giant Koala (mini Pome)



Lake? Learmonth jetty over no water

Looked like a fantastic ride, Ron. Well done, to all who took part. I have been planning to do the 'silo trail' for a while. Your photos will spur me on.

COVID19 has certainly changed life for all of us and has been absolutely devastating for those who have lost their jobs or have had to close down their business. In many cases never to open again.

While it is hard to see the positive side, I think the more we can laugh together and talk together the better. Rotary will have an enormous task in front of it as we help people put their lives back together at the end of this crisis – and there will be an end.

At the moment many of us are coming to appreciate Zoom as we stay in touch with family and friends. I believe a Board Meeting is Zooming up on us shortly.

So as you are 'marooned' in your home have a giggle with the survivor on the island below.

I look forward to more contributions next week. Thanks to Sebastien, Ron and Glenys for their contributions this week.

