

A ride into pub history

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LOCAL cyclists are gearing up to tour Darebin's hotels but the emphasis won't be on beer.

Instead, the history of the grand old dames, some dating back to the 1800s, will be recalled at each stop before riders retire to Northcote's Peacock Hotel for lunch.

Darebin Bicycle Users' Group member Marcus Ellard came up with the idea after browsing through Gary Edge's work *Surviving the Six O'Clock Swill: A History of Darebin's Hotels*.

"I thought it'd be interesting to do a brief five minutes on each pub, especially as so many of them played a part in the cultural and political development of Melbourne's inner north," he said. Mr Ellard said the three-hour ride was open to the community but not suitable for beginners.

"We'll be riding along bike trails, quiet roads and cycle lanes," he said. "It'll require above average to moderate fitness."

Pubs on the itinerary include: **Commercial Hotel,**

301 High St, Northcote, est. 1854

In 1891 it was the meeting place of the Trades Hall Progressive Political League, which played a part in the formation of the ALP.

Croxton Park Hotel,

607 High St, Thornbury, est. 1844

In the 1870s, the hotel had a race track and grandstand at the rear



Marcus Ellard outside the Peacock Hotel in High St, Northcote.

and played host to international athletics meetings, pigeon shooting and deer hunting.

Olympic Hotel,

27 Albert St, Preston, est. 1955

Named after the 1956 Olympic Games. The owners were forced to remove their distinctive rings by

the Australian Olympic Committee in 2005.

Junction Hotel,

1 Plenty Rd, Preston, est. 1861

Prospered in the 1860s as a way station for the Cobb and Co. Stage Coach.

Grandview Hotel,

429 Heidelberg Rd, Fairfield, est. 1888

The only Darebin Hotel to have had a runaway camel in its main bar.

■ The tour will depart from the cnr Union and Plant streets, Northcote on Sunday, February 3, at 9.45am.

Details: 0417 537 669.

Pictures: JOSIE HAYDEN N31PT/408



Albion Hotel, Northcote.



Tower Hotel, Alphington.



Grandview Hotel, Fairfield.