



Outings by Bike with Mike:

BY MIKE DAVIS

One of my favourite cycling routes, mostly because it's close to my home, is the Caledon Trailway, a multi-use trail for walking, peddle bikes and horses. It is a former rail line built in 1877 by the Hamilton & North Western Railway, which was abandoned and is now owned and maintained by the Town of Caledon. No doubt there was a lot of

CALEDON TRAILWAY



The Caledon Trailway passes through all of Caledon, starting at the border of Halton Hills and connecting with a rail trail in the next town, New Tecumseth.

environmental disruption at the time of the rail line construction over 140 years ago, but it is now a real gem, a fantastic corridor. It runs 35 km from the border with the Town of Halton Hills to the border with New Tecumseh at Highway 9 where it continues north. It is part of the Greenbelt Cycling Route and part of it is The Great Trail, formerly called the Trans Canada Trail.



▲ At Inglewood the trail crosses the active rail line, the Orangeville Brampton Railway.



▲ View from the prominent blue bridge that spans busy Highway 10.



► Great Blue Heron with fish caught in the wetland off the trail.

◀ The distinctive looking gates at road crossings are multi-purpose, allowing walking and cycling through one end without barrier and letting horses step over the low section, while keeping out large motor vehicles.



▲ Painted Turtles basking on a tree trunk in the wetland.

At the western end of the Trail, you can start at the mile zero marker at the border of The Town of Halton Hills. There is parking for cars at the end of Brick Lane, adjacent to the marker. Most road crossings have parking right at the trail crossing. At the Winston Churchill Road or Isabella Street crossings in Terra Cotta, just a short trip south to King Road, brings you into the village, with the Terra Cotta Inn for a nice meal at the end of the ride.

On the trail, approaching Mississauga Road, ruins of the Cheltenham Brickworks can be seen. The kiln

operation ran for 50 years from 1914 to 1964, and is now designated as a Heritage Resource Area. Just beyond, Brampton Brick Limited currently mines clay for use in their Brampton location.

When you cross Creditview Road, the Cheltenham General Store is just south of the Trail, where you can enjoy a break overlooking the Credit River. There is an interesting dip in the trail at Olde Baseline Road, where the Trail grade abruptly lowers to the road, the result of past road works. The abrupt drop can be a bit of a concern, because if you lose control you might end up in the middle

of the road! Fortunately, a warning light activates for trail users if road traffic is coming.

Inglewood

The next town is Inglewood, with McLaughlin Road running through the middle. The shop Caledon Hills Cycling is conveniently located just north of the trail. Interestingly, an operating rail line, Orangeville Brampton Railway, that runs between the two towns, crosses here too. There is infrequent train traffic, but you should always be aware. Also, pay attention when crossing the track and don't go at a shallow angle, or the wheel might get caught

in the rut and you'll go over.

The Great Trail connects from the north along McLaughlin from another rail trail in Cataract and continues east on the Rail Trail.

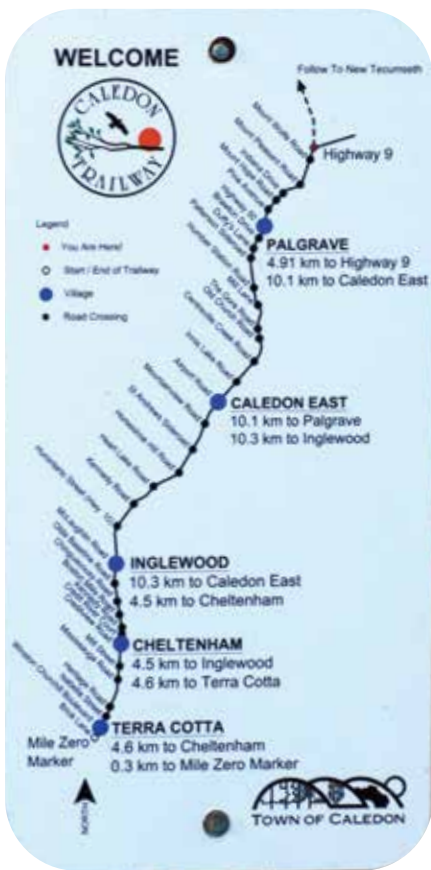
Next is an impressive blue-coloured bridge over the very busy and fast-moving four-lane Hwy 10. The bridge is distinctive from the road. From above, it offers a great elevated view for trail users.

Caledon East

About 10 km of pleasant rural and wetland scenery bring you toward the village of Caledon East at Airport Road. An impressive kiosk and parkette for The Great Trail are located



▲ Yellowlegs Sandpiper spotted from the trail, wading in the wetland east of Gore Road.



◀ Useful signs at every crossing give your location and distances to towns.

on the south side of the Trail, providing information about the trail and honouring its many donors.

You feel a little special at the Airport Road crossing, which has a “bike” crossing button with “bike” cross lights. Another spot to take a break for perhaps a cappuccino and gelato, is

the Four Corners Bakery Eatery, right next to the Trail. It is well worth the wander in the village to experience other retail establishments.

Continuing on the Trail you pass the Caledon municipal buildings and sports park, before getting back into more rural areas. There are many wetland

complexes along the trail, but my favorite is just east of the Gore Road crossing. The Trail provides an elevated platform to view an abundance of showy and unafraid wildlife, including the water birds Yellowlegs, Egrets, Blue Herons and Painted Turtles. This is definitely a good place to catch your breath and

take it all in. It is just like a big screen high-def TV showing a nature channel!

Palgrave

Next comes the village of Palgrave at Hwy 50, again with interesting village shops. After a few more road crossings you reach the end of the Trail at the Caledon



▲ The Caledon Trailway approaching Four Corners Bakery Eatery on Airport Road. The intersection has bike-friendly crossing lights.



◀ A Bailey Bridge crosses a stream on the trail. Used by the military, Bailey Bridges are easily and quickly constructed.

border under a bridge at Hwy 9, where the Great Trail continues into the next town on the New Tecumseth Trail.

At a leisurely 15 km per hour average ride speed, the end-to-end trip through Caledon and back should run about 4.5 hours plus breaks. For me, from my house, end to end and back, it is 6 hours and

88 km with breaks. The trail is well signed, giving the location at every road crossing and distances to villages, which is helpful should anyone need emergency response. **NEV**

Mike Davis is co-founder, co-publisher and accounts manager of Niagara Escarpment Views.



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