



# Not The Spoken Word

Bi-monthly newsletter of The Western Australian Historical Cycle Club Inc.

## Keyhole Hetchins

Hetchins Bicycles have always been part of my life. Way back in the 1960's my brother Brian and I had some coaching from the eccentric Dick Swann who had been a manager at Hetchins on Seven Sisters Road Tottenham during the 1950's.

Dick was artistic and non conventional in his coaching and his bicycle design. His calligraphy can still be seen on some of those 50's bikes that sport their original paintwork.

When I was 13 years old Dick designed a track frame for me. I remember it having a 19 inch seat tube with 1 inch fork rake, 75 degree seat tube and 72 degree head tube. Brian and I travelled from the Midlands to the Hetchins shop several times. We met Alf Hetchins though we never set eyes on the famous frame builder Jack Denny who was in the back of the shop building frames. I received the Dick Swann designed Hetchins in 1965 and I went on to win the British Juvenile Track Championship on it. This bike now belongs to Dave Marsh and is currently on display in his shop, Universal Cycle Centre in Maltby South Yorkshire.

Hetchins built me another track bike when I was Junior Champion, it was a very special frame with Experto Crede lugs. Sadly I sold it in 1980 before migrating to Australia.

I also raced track on a Hetchins Tandem winning silver and bronze medals, I have no idea where the tandem is now but would be a sought after item.

Retirement re-ignited my interest in bicycles. I travelled to England in 2012 to recover my brother's 1956 Hetchins that had been resident in Leicestershire shed for 40 years. I took the bike to Dave Marsh who resprayed the frame. I brought the frame back to Australia and rebuilt it with period correct parts. This bicycle is now part of the John Kitchen Collection in Bathurst NSW.

More recently a member of our club, Frank West, told me of another Hetchins south of Mandurah. Fortunately for me Frank was more interested in the Milton Jones that was in the possession of the Hetchins owner. Frank kindly passed on the contact information and I visited the Hetchins owner and he told me a little of its history.

The bicycle was brought to Perth by Glen Parker in the early 1970's, I believe he may have ridden it himself but it ended up for sale in his Nedlands Shop where it was bought by Bill Grocott a Perth rider. Bill raced it in the local classics with some success and then, as is the way with so many bikes, hung it in his shed.

Bill still rides and wanted to sell the Hetchins to help fund an electric bike to aid his aging legs. The bike was rusted but came with most of its original parts. I stripped it down and with encouragement from my wife Bente it was decided to bring it back to original condition. The frame was taken to KD Chrome in Maddington and soaked in a caustic bath and then re-chromed. The frame was then delivered to Rod Gilchrist in Perth to have it painted and new decals applied.

I rebuilt the 28 spoke wheels and spent many hours cleaning up the rest of the parts.

As regards the design of the bike and its equipment I would say that Bill Grocott did well to road race on this bike especially in the hills as it really is a classic British road time trial design with very short wheel base of 38 1/2 inches very straight forks and no toe clip clearance. Furthermore the Zeus chainset had 54 and 44 chainrings with 5 speed close ratio block and the big chainwheel directly in line with the top sprocket. With the light 28 spoke wheels instead of the 32 or 36 spokes generally used for road wheels in those days this bike was designed for going fast in a straight line and not for road racing in my opinion. It is typical of the Alf Engers style of bike without all the holes he drilled for extra lightness. The lugs of the frame are of the "keyhole" design which Hetchins produced mostly in the 1970's. This bike may have been built at Tottenham or Southend during the moving to the new premises in Southend. The frame number H 10698 indicates it was made in the 1970's and referred to as the 10 series. There are no specific invoices on record for this Hetchins period so the exact year of manufacture can not be established.

The bike is fitted with typical mid '70's equipment; the front and rear derailleurs, headset, brakes and seat post are all Campagnolo. The wheels are Monthleroy singles on Zeus large flange hubs

The chainset and pedals Zeus. Cinelli stem and bars and a Turbo saddle complete the picture. More detail about Hetchins can be found at the comprehensive and well maintained enthusiast site; [hetchins.org](http://hetchins.org)

Alan Johnson





# Aero Cycle Works

Aero is one of a number of small volume bike builders from the interwar period in Perth. A few Aeros survive but little is known about the brand, and currently none are held by members of the WAHCC. Below is a summary of material available on Trove. (Trove list; <https://tinyurl.com/yx32wvpw>).

**1924** - Edgar Henderson, Architect, calls for tenders for construction of shops at 330 Lord St.

**1925** - Mr and Mrs A.K. Sanders of Aero Cycle Works are mentioned in a the funeral notice of Mrs Sander's brother, dead at 23 years by accident. The Sanders' home address is given as 349 Lord St. This is the earliest mention of Aero.

**B.**—The "Aero" Cycle is guaranteed Australia's best value at £4/10/-. Solely built of British material and manufactured on our own premises by Alan K. Sanders, a cycle builder of repute. No mass production methods entertained. Country clients specially catered for. "Aero" Cycle Works, 330 Lord-st., Perth.

**1926-36** - Advertisements for Aero bikes, built by Alan K. Sanders, as well as notices of race starts and race entries at Aero appear in local papers over this period. One advertisement proclaims Alan's 26 years of experience. Sanders is elected as one of the Vice Presidents of the Bassendean Cycle Club and is listed as an official at some events. He also provides trophies under the Aero banner.

**1934** - A fire breaks out in the unattended shop, likely in the brazing hearth. It is brought under control quickly and Sanders states that most of the damage will be covered by insurance.

**1937** - Premises suitable for the bicycle trade at 330 Lord St are advertised to let. To date no further mention of Sanders or Aero have been found.

*Robert Frith*



# Stuck in the Shed with Trevor Lee

## What are you currently working on?

Raleigh 1965 R.S.W. 16.

## How many rideable bikes do you have?

Eleven

## If push comes to shove what is your favourite bike?

No favourites. OK I'm lying, my 1960 Flash road bike

## What was your first bike?

26 inch Armstrong it gave me freedom as a Leedy boy to explore the outer suburbs of Osborne Park and Yokine.

## Pick a bike any bike.. in your dreams what are you riding?


My Armstrong. Parents in my time never did drop offs or pick ups. Without my bike I simply would not have played football or gone to the beach. Loved my mispent youth.

## Whistle while you work? Give us a tip on the sounds that fill your workspace.

I love early American folk blues. John Lee Hooker is a legend.



REDUCED PRICES  
OF  
HIGHEST  
GRADE  
BICYCLES.



ROVERS, £25 10s. RALEIGHS, £20 10s. to £25 10s. BEESTON-HUMBER, £32 10s. YELLOW FELLOW (Racers), £23; YELLOW FELLOW (Lady's), £20 10s. NEW HUDSON'S MOD. L., £20 10s.; NEW HUDSON'S MOD. K., £18. FLYING ARROWS, £14 10s.

Cash or Terms. Largest Stock of Accessories in the Colony. Repairs at Popular Prices

"ENDURANCE" RACER or ROADSTER (B.S.A. 1899 parts.)

ARMSTRONG'S CYCLE AGENCY, STEPHEN-STREET, BUNBURY.  
R. B. GILMOUR, MANAGER.



## Bibra Lake Ride

The first club ride for the year attracted an excellent, if eccentric, crowd, and bikes ranging in age from 90 years old to 30 years young. Colin Proctor, a Bibra Lake local, cast his discerning eye over the fit looking bunch and suggested we extend the Bibra Lake circumnavigation to include a turn around Yangebup Lake. All parties being amenable to the idea we set off to the south, passing the overflow parking area for Adventure World. At this point Colin gave a brief history of the Bibra Lake area and told us about Tappers and their house which once sat nestled beside the big Morton bay fig trees.

We rode south on the original North Lake Rd, now Prout Rd and Little Rush Close. North Lake Road was realigned to the west in the late 1980's to cater for the Southlakes Shopping Centre. On Prout Rd just before crossing the rail line, we were shown the original travellers homestead dating back to the late 1800's. The homestead was a stop for coaches and travellers back in the day.

From there we crossed over the current North Lake Rd to take in some hidden gems, firstly a lap of the Little Rush Lake, crossing Osprey Drive and onto a very quiet shared path taking us around the larger Yangebup Lake where there are some fantastic mosaic artworks of sheep on the western side of the lake; a subtle reminder of the Jandakot Wool Scourers which were constructed nearby in 1927, and demolished in 2003.

After retracing our steps across North Lake Rd and back over the railway we completed the lap of Bibra Lake, taking a couple of side trips to bird hides on the lake's eastern side.

No ride report is complete without a mention of the weather - it was stunning, the best that late summer in Perth turns on; low 20's, puffy white clouds and windless.

**Andrew Blackmore - c. 1980 Ricardo**  
**Bob Sommerville - c. 1980 Peugeot Premiere**  
**Viv Cull - 1984 Peugeot Avoriaz**  
**Felix Rosario - 1975 Peugeot Cadre Allege**  
**Karen Phillips - 1992 Bacini**  
**Robert Loughman - c. 1930 Flying Arrow**  
**Robert Frith - 1956 Rotrax Vel d'Hiv**  
**Robert Hunt - 1980's Record**  
**Trevor Lee - Raleigh SWB**  
**Colin Proctor - 1930 Swansea 3 Swan**

Above; Frogs out of water, Bob, Felix and Viv with their Peugeots  
Below; Colin, Rob, Felix, Viv, Bob, Trevor, Robert H, Andrew. (Photo by Robert L)



## Notes From A Big City

In May 2019 I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work in central London for five months. Keen to explore the city and beyond in my free time I bought an old bike and would like to share some of my stories with you. Happy cycling!

### Part 2 - Beyond London

It was the end of May and I was a little apprehensive about joining my first group ride on my '83 Raleigh. I checked and re-checked my bike and clothing and set off for the meeting point. A light drizzle began to fall as I passed the Palace, crossed Westminster Bridge and admired the huge spoked wheel that is the London Eye.

Arriving early at the meeting point on the South Bank gave me time to chat as riders and bikes of all types arrived. After a pre-ride briefing that identified first-timers we headed off.

Our destination was Maldon on the Essex coast, a distance of around 100km. And it was midnight. The Friday Night Ride To The Coast (or 'Fridays') run regular social rides that largely avoid the city traffic and aim to arrive at the selected destination for breakfast.

Weaving through the city at night is quite an experience but it's when we finally left the city lights and were cycling through the open countryside where the real rewards are.

Summer in the UK means it gets light early. The midway stop was at a village cafe that doesn't normally open at 4am but after a good feed and a warm drink it was full daylight by the time we left. By 8am we were in Maldon and after breakfast riders dispersed and made their own way home.

I headed off to Stow Maries airfield to their WW1 and 2 museum that recognised the important part that the airfields of Essex played. I held an image of having a snooze on the grass under the wing of a Spitfire but made do with a coffee and cake and a wander around their exhibits before heading off to catch a train.

The weather was perfect and I was encouraged to skip the train from Chelmsford and cycle closer to London.

Stops at small towns and villages kept me fed and watered and in the end I cycled all the way home. A stop at a local pub had me celebrating the longest ride I'd ever done on an old bike at around 200km. My beverage choice was simple - "a pint of Spitfire please".

The group was very friendly and very well organised and during my stay I joined in 2 other rides with The Fridays to Cambridge and to Brighton. The beauty of the English countryside at dawn is stunning and further enjoyed aboard a classic bicycle. Well worth a sleepless night.

*Richard Patenall*

*Photo; Vintage Thames sailing barges at Maldon. These were commercial sailing boats common on the river as early as 1600.*



# Club Calendar

**Sat. 14<sup>th</sup> Mar 8:00**

**Vincent Bike Market**  
590 Beaufort St, Mt Lawley

**Mon 16<sup>th</sup> Mar 19:30**

**Monthly Meeting**  
6 Hickey St, Ardross

**Sat/Sun 18/19<sup>th</sup> Apr.**

**Flash Exhibition**  
Old Midland Courthouse, 49 Helena Street Midland

**Mon 20<sup>th</sup> Apr 19:30**

**Monthly Meeting & Auction**  
6 Hickey St, Ardross  
Auction details below

**Mon 18<sup>th</sup> May 19:30**

**Monthly Meeting**  
6 Hickey St, Ardross

**Mon 15<sup>th</sup> Jun 19:30**

**Annual General Meeting**  
6 Hickey St, Ardross

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## April Auction

The next club auction will be at the March meeting.  
Items for sale include;

- Early Malvern Star with Cyclo derailleur and Major Taylor stem
- Bates Volante frameset c.
- Gitane racer with Arabesque group and tubular wheelset
- Gitane frame with web dropouts

more items and photos on the club website.



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Applecross, WA, 6153 email info.wahcc@gmail.com Chairperson: Robert Frith  
Vice Chair: William Riseborough Treasurer: Frank West  
Secretary: Robert Hunt Committee Member: Viv Cull

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# Trove

## A Service of the National Library

Trove is an online library aggregator; a free faceted-search engine hosted by the National Library of Australia, in partnership with content providers including members of the National & State Libraries Australasia. It is one of the most accessed gallery, library, archive and museum (GLAM) services in the country with over 70,000 daily users, and it is the envy of history and genealogy researchers the world over.

Trove helps users find resources relating to Australia. It's much more than a search engine though; it brings together content from collecting organisations big and small. A recent change to the way the State Library of WA handles club newsletters like this one has seen them added to and indexed by Trove.

Trove's origins can be traced back to a project to build a portal for the National Library of Australia's online discovery services. It was launched by the Library in August 2008.

Today it is transformed, growing far beyond its original purpose and becoming many things to many people. Trove is a platform on which new knowledge is being built.

As well as using Trove to find information, users can create and contribute their own content. Adding your own photos, tags and comments, helping to transcribe old newspapers, and creating lists are just a few ways you can contribute.

[trove.nla.gov.au/](http://trove.nla.gov.au/)



THE FREMANTLE AND CITY OF PERTH  
CYCLING CLUBS

## Electric Light Cycling Carnival

FREMANTLE OVAL  
WEDNESDAY NIGHT, DEC. 15th

Starring the Champions

**PROGRAMME - - PRICE SIXPENCE**

Under patronage the League of W.A. Wheelmen