



# Not The Spoken Word

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

## Flash Cycles

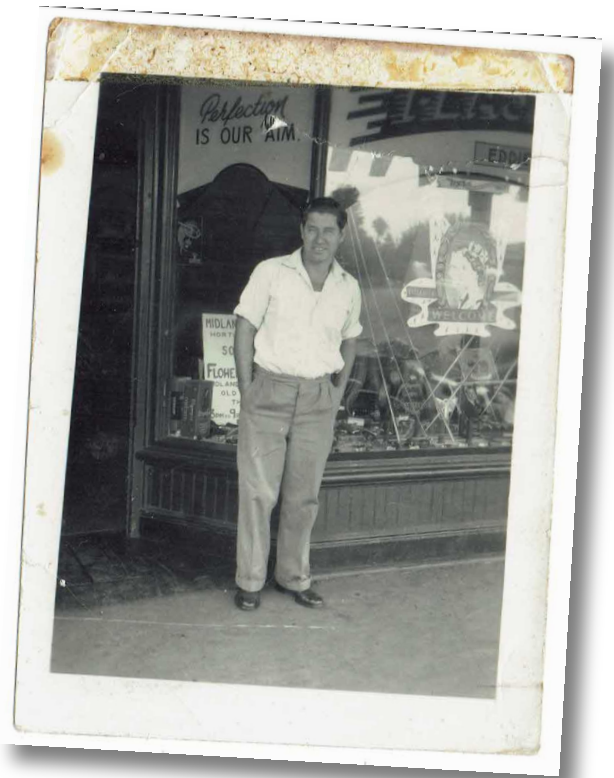
Late in 1947 an ad appeared for a new bike shop at 29 Newcastle Rd, Midland, until then home to Ajax Cycles. That shop, Flash Cycles, was a dream realised by champion road cyclist Eddie Barron. As well as the shop and bike building factory, the two storey building became home to the Barron family and headquarters of the Midland-Bassendean Cycling Club.

Capitalising on the area's massive post-war blue collar workforce Flash expanded to include stores in Guildford, Bassendean and Belmont. Proximity to the popular Midland Track was also a potential source of custom in the early days. At its height the workshop produced over 1000 bikes a year, building bikes for Mortlocks, Sandovers and Gordonson alongside Flashes.

Increasing prosperity of the 1960's and rising bike imports in the 70's saw the re-branded Flash Sports Depot diversifying into ball games, fishing tackle, guns and lawnmowers. Flash even became agents for BSA, Sunbeam and Royal Enfield motorcycles.

The line drawn by Eddie between business and bike club was indistinct - his generosity with riders' sponsorship was renowned. Retirement in 1980 saw the shop taken over by log chop champ Bob Reynolds and his wife Shirley.

The 80's saw a shift away from local production of the dramatic lightning bolt branded bikes to assembly of Japanese



imports. The period is also notable for the development of Flash recumbents, of which just a dozen were sold. By the late '90's rent hikes and a dwindling bike market were proving challenging. The introduction of GST was a bridge too far and the Reynolds closed the doors in 2000.

### Bike business gone in a Flash

FLASH Cycles, a WA cycling institution for more than half a century, is closing down. The sales and bike-making business, founded by cycling doyen the late Eddie Barron, was owned for its last 20 years by Henley Brook's Bob and Shirley Reynolds.

Bob is a prominent log chopper - he was WA tree felling champion for 20 years and recently won an event at the Kalamunda Show.

Bob has often hosted log chops at his Gnar-gara Road home of 32 years.

Last week, Bob, Shirley, a daughter and grandchildren posed with a four-seated shop heirloom for a symbolic trip out of the Flash era.

"We'll be gone by the end of the month - we're getting out before the GST," Bob said.

"We're going to Coral Bay for two weeks then I'll start working building retaining walls."

The Reynolds took over Eddie Barron's old shop in Great Northern Highway and continued employing a bikemaker in a shed behind it.

When the thoroughfare became Old Great Northern Highway they moved to premises further down the road and again, four years ago, to Farrall Road in Midvale.

Bob said old Flash racers from Eddie Barron's days were still being brought into the shop.

Flash Cycles' Bob Reynolds with daughter Nicole grandchildren Danyon and Jasmine and wife Shirley.

SURE!!  
It's easier on a

## "FLASH"

says Jim Taylor who won the 1947 Services Memorial Road Race.

So don't forget to take all your cycle repairs to "FLASH" CYCLES, the shop that all the champions have faith in.

Jim Taylor  
EDDIE BARRON, Prop.

# 'Flash' Cycles

29 NEWCASTLE ROAD, MIDLAND

Photo - Eddie Barron outside the Guildford shop, photo courtesy Linley Munro

# Northampton Museum

Clare and I recently set off North to visit some of the tourist sites we send visitors off to, but never actually visit - we prefer the cooler climes down south. Places like the Pinnacles, Lake Thetis, Cervantes and the Coral Coast. While in Geraldton we visited the Cathedral, designed by Monseigneur Hawes, the English born architect/priest, and its associated museum. Information we gained there encouraged us to spend a day in Northampton, where two more Hawes designed church buildings survive in good condition.

While there we visited the museum, where the caretaker guided us around some of the collection, which is interesting and extensive, but a bit of a repository of local artefacts. Her knowledge of the portraits, clothes, and wedding dresses was extensive; she seems to be able to trace her relationship to most of the population of the town, ancient and modern. But of the two bicycles I photographed, and a children's tricycle, and other mechanical oddities, she seemed somewhat lacking in knowledge.

The B.S.A. is labelled as such, but with no date or provenance. The other machine is clearly old but lacks any obvious markings. The label attached to it mentions only that W.A. was the only state to have number plates and registration requirements for bicycles. The plate is virtually indecipherable but with a little more time and removal of the flag I think it could be read. My guess is that both bikes are 1930/40's but I'd be interested to know more. Both appear to be complete and to have been well used before being left in a shed somewhere.

*Will Riseborough*



## Stuck in the Shed with Alan Johnson

### What are you currently working on?

My current bicycle project is a British Bates Volante track bike c 1958. It will have inch pitch chainset and Harden wheel hubs. The frame is currently at the painters. I have also re-covered a Mansfield leather seat for this bike, got the leather and rivets from a horse saddle maker.

### How many rideable bikes do you have?

My wife Bente and I have 16 rideable bikes between us in our very large shed and living room, all steel frames.

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

My favourite bike is undoubtedly my 1951 Claude Butler "All Rounder". It rides beautifully, I searched for a long time to find this one it was built the year I was born and Claude Butler was THE bike to have in the 1950's in England.

### What was your first bike?

A Hercules "Sports Model" 17 inch frame when I was eleven years old. My brother Brian put it together for me as he worked as mechanic in the local bike shop. It was meant for 24 inch wheels but with a bit of filing and no mudguards it was fitted with 26 x 1 1/4 Weinman wheels and a fixed wheel and front brake, because of the extreme high centre bracket I could really throw it around the corners. I won the school sports bike race over 1000 yards with ease two years in a row until I saved up and bought my first Hetchins at age 14.

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

Well, dream bike for me is my motor pacing bike. There really is nothing to compare with the adrenalin rush one gets when attacking at near 100 km an hour when at full steam behind the big old Grotte Motors on a velodrome, sadly those days and those motors have gone but still remain in my dreams.

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

In my workshop I am happy with my own thoughts and always work in silence and go where my mind takes me.

When I do listen to music it will be to great guitarists like the late Peter Green or bluegrass players like Steve Earle and if it is a female Joni Mitchell or Etta Baker come to mind.

# Daniel Sheehan 1899

Daniel Edward Sheehan was born at Lancefield, Victoria in 1864 and died at Hawthorn in 1928 aged 63 of diabetes.

The following article was published in the Western Mail published 19 May, 1899.

## OVERLANDING - A CYCLE TOUR FROM MELBOURNE TO COOLGARDIE

Mr. D.E. Sheehan, whose photograph we publish, gives the following opinion of "overlanding". Leaving Melbourne on March 14th [1899], I rode against a parching "three quarter face" wind, which opposed me until well over the South Australian border. I travelled via Geelong, Camperdown, and Coleraine, over excellent roads through fertile and pretty country, which, however, is mostly locked up in large estates.

On the fifth day I reached Mount Gambier, a very pretty old South Australian town, surrounded by rich agricultural land. The picturesque Blue Lake, situated on an adjacent range of hills, is a sight to be remembered.

Beside the precipitous bank is a monument to Australia's "sad, sweet poet," Adam Lindsay Gordon. It seems incredible that even this daring man could have leaped a horse over the precipice known as Gordon's Leap. Beyond Gambier the road to Adelaide runs north-easterly through some 150 miles of pastoral country, rabbit infested, lonely, and desolate looking. On the coast, about three miles distant, one can often hear the meaning of Gordon's -

White steeds of the ocean, that leap with a hollow and wearisome roar  
On the bar of ironstone steep, a cable's length from the shore.

The pipeclay lake beds alongside the sometimes bad road are reputed to be excellent for cycling when dry, but the showery weather which prevailed prevented me from using them.

After passing Wellington the country improves, and is well settled, and after some stiff hill-climbing and descending one reaches Adelaide. From the metropolis northward to Port Augusta an excellent road traverses 220 miles of prosperous farming land, with small townships at short intervals.

When 28 miles from Augusta the front fork of my bicycle snapped while crossing a gully. I sought the assistance of a roadside settler, who, with a few old tools and much ingenuity, contrived an excellent splint, and then he hospitably invited me to share his Sunday dinner, which had been kept waiting meantime. Being unable to find anyone in Port Augusta who could repair the damaged arm I took it to a blacksmith, who patched it up with a piece of an old shovel blade.

I then turned westward through the dessert country with the motto "Coolgardie or bust", nailed, so to speak, to the mast. Considering the immense extent, the country from here to the WA goldfield is of much the same pastoral character, barren looking and fairly level with monotonous miles of scrub, saltbush, and

scrubby eucalyptus, alternating with patches of sparsely grassed plain, and frequent patches of sand.

There are sheep stations of immense area at wide intervals, but they carry only from three to ten thousand sheep. Much of the station work, including the shearing, is done by aboriginals.

On Eyre's Peninsula a succession of rainless years has driven many of the squatters from their holdings, which are now given over to rabbits and dingoes. Eyre's Sand Patch, 165 miles west of Eucla, consists of 30 miles of loose fine sand, on which cycling is impossible, and a speed of two miles per hour fair walking.

When the tide is out nine miles of good riding may be had along the beach, which the road skirts. The overland route is fairly well watered by Government cemented tanks, roofed over to protect their being patronised by suicidally inclined rabbits and dingoes. The trouble is that the traveller is never sure whether the tanks ahead contain any water.

About Denial Bay an attempt was made to establish an agricultural settlement, but the drought has nearly ruined those unlucky farmers. An enterprising politician who started to canvass his constituency hereabout on a bicycle, got bushed, and after suffering much from thirst, was found "speechless", but otherwise little the worse for adventure.

On two occasions, at Madura and at Fraser's Range, I lost a day through taking a wrong track. The overlander should beware of the fiend who tells him, "You can't go wrong old man, you can't make a mistake if you try". From what I heard every overlanding cyclist has taken a wrong track at one place or another. and three cyclists have been reduced to abandoning their machines.

Beside the track, near the head of the Bight, a mound of sand marks the last camp of an unfortunate swagman who perished from thirst last summer. My cyclemeter registered the total distance covered between Melbourne and Coolgardie, as 2,200 miles, and I was 38 days making the journey, including time lost. My longest day's ride was 120 miles from Nullarbor to Eucla, and the longest stage without water 60 miles. My bicycle was geared to 60 and weighted, stripped, 33lb., kit and tools 10lb. extra.

I bought the bike, when new, five years ago for £15, from a well-known Melbourne firm of universal providers. I had it fitted with new tyres before starting on this tour, and it has proved to my satisfaction that a low priced bike is not necessarily an inferior one. I confess that I was not sorry when the tour was finished, and have no intention of cycling it again.

*Collected and corrected from Trove by Daniel's grand niece Lynette Hammet.*

**NO CHUMPS**

Are Employed at the

**Clipper Cycle Factory**

We have the Largest Staff of  
Mechanics in Fremantle, and **YOUR**  
REPAIRS

Will be Done  
**QUICKLY, CHEAPLY, & WELL.**

**E. J. Conduit,**

Agent for **Acme Bicycles,**  
New Shops near Town Hall.  
High Street, Fremantle.

# Club Calendar

**Sat/Sun Nov 7th & 8th 9am - 4 pm**

## Flash Cycles - The Soul of Midland Cycling

The Old Midland Courthouse, Helena St, Midland.

Help welcome. Spare bike stands especially welcome!

**Wed 11<sup>th</sup> Nov 9:00 - 15:00**

## Display - Have A Go Day

The club will mount a display at Burswood Park as part of Have A Go Day.

We are site 56 - same position as last year

We are only allowed one vehicle access so please plan to walk your bikes in. Those requiring vehicle access will have to co-ordinate with one another :-)

Setup is 6am to 8:30am, no vehicle access between 8:30 and 3pm

**Sun 15<sup>th</sup> Nov 9:00 - 12:00 Display -**

## City of Stirling Bike Jam

Provisional- City of Stirling have asked us to display at this event to be held at Bradley Reserve Innaloo... To be confirmed

**Mon 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 19:30 General Meeting**

**In-person** at 6 Hickey St (maybe only 17 people though so let us know if you'd like to be one)

**Online** Zoom Meeting ID 894 5813 0098

(Check your email for the clickable link and meeting password close to the date).

**Fri 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 18:00 Display - SpeedDome**

Another to be confirmed - club will mount a display as part of the Westral Wheel Race festivities... If the race goes ahead.

6pm setup for 7pm start.

Please email or call if you'd like to participate - treasurer.wahcc@gmail.com or 0404060289

**Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 10:00 Ride and picnic**

## Ride it Rusty - Whiteman Park

Meet at the shelter B1 near Revolutions Transport Museum. Bring your rustiest bike for a leisurely ride around the Whiteman Park trails. Stay for a picnic lunch and a squizz at the museum.

Any member with a a cleaning cloth or steel wool on their person will be counselled!

## Club Christmas Party

To be confirmed - likely early December at the clubrooms

## Christmas Pageant

To be confirmed

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Western Australian Historical Cycle Club Inc. PO Box 224, 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

DISCLAIMER The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the WA Historical Cycle Club and the accuracy of information published herein is not guaranteed.

# Five Flash Fellows

## Team Time Proves A Trial

This year's Beverley Classic had a new format - the 110 km road race was replaced with a 50 km team time trial. Each team could have between four and six riders, the team's finish time would be taken from the fourth rider and all riders had to finish regardless of team size.

The shorter distance made it at once easier for the organisers and more accessible to competitors. So accessible that four club members were emboldened to enter. Ian Barker, Rob Frith, Colin Procter and Frank West were joined by Clive Andrews and Bob Scott, both riders with great competition histories.

Bob, 74, informed me on our warmup ride that he was still recovering from a 5 metre fall out of an avocado tree. I've seen a few avocado trees in my time and that's quite a big one. I reckon a tree like that would have to produce some pretty good fruit.

Anyways Bob's only injuries were a couple of fractured vertebrae. And a cracked sternum. And a bruised heart.

Did I mention that we were all riding vintage Flash bikes from the 60's? Bob's Flash got a flat just before the race though so he rode the Churchill he bought new in the 80's. So five Flash fellows and a Winston.

We did quite well considering Ian suffered a puncture on the road and our median age was about 30 years higher than any other team. So, same time next year? *Rob Frith.*

*Below L - R Frank, Robert, Clive, Colin, Ian and Bob. Astute observers will note the ambulance waiting behind the riders.*



## "Golden Rules for Bicycle Rides" from the 1874 book 'Bicycling'.

Never buy a bicycle unless it is of the best quality, and by one of the best manufacturers.

Never attempt to ride a bicycle with a driving wheel too large for you.

Never fail to thoroughly clean and oil your machine before starting on a journey, and daily when in use.

Never use any oil but the best sperm.

Never tamper with the adjustment of the wheels, nor take the machine to pieces unnecessarily.

Never travel on a long journey without having your drawers lined smoothly and carefully with chamois leather or buckskin.

Never ride in the early morning fasting; a little rum and milk, with an egg beaten up in it, is an excellent sustenance.

Never fail if you are in a strange country to ascertain the character of the roads, from narratives of the district before starting.

Never fail, when resting on a journey, to place your machine beyond the reach of meddling hands.

*Mal Buckland is selling his 1970 reprint of the book for \$50.00 malcolm.buckland@gmail.com or phone 95279427*