



# Not The Spoken Word

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

## Discovered

How easily a significant connection to W.A. cycling history could have been missed if the recommendation “do nothing!” in the WAHCC’s Burra-Charter-for-cyclists had been ignored. On Monday, 16th June 2014, a visitor to the club’s monthly meeting, Roy Warwick, shared with attendees his restoration of a butcher’s bike. While he didn’t bring his butcher’s bike along that night, he did bring along an old “The Aussie” tandem racing frame, initially assumed to be anything from the 1920s to the 1950s.

“It’s got some history, but I don’t know what” Roy was remembered as saying. The frame and fork were in remarkably good shape and the patina was good for its age, though there was a lot of light-to-medium surface rust that cloaked what finer painted line-work there might have been. The only other parts on the bike were the headset a 3-armed front Williams crankset and eccentric bottom bracket.

Pre-war tandems, especially those built in West Australia, are rare beasts. The track dropouts suggest this bike survived the rough-and-tumble of racing and pacing. Not only that, World War II would see thousands of bikes scrapped and recycled for their metal.

Roy didn’t want to take the tandem home that evening and it was taken into the care of Tim Eastwood, an active club member and collector at the time. Shifting it around, always having a think about what to do with it each time, after 8 years Tim came up with a plan. Pass it on to someone else!

At a stage in his life when it was time to clear out a few bikes, in February 2022 Tim invited WAHCC members to his house after they had completed a club ride in Fremantle.

Shaking my head in disbelief that I would even contemplate restoring an old tandem, it came home with me once I figured out how to get it into my Falcon sedan. I couldn’t even really have a good close look at it; I had lent my reading glasses to someone and couldn’t really make out any detail on the frame apart from the colours, a couple of decals, “The Aussie” branding... and a lot of surface rust! But I had developed more than a passing interest in Aussie Cycles and this would motivate me to learn more. I remembered from an article on the WAHCC website that William “Billy” Read and Gordon Jones had broken the Perth-to-Sydney record in 1933 on an Aussie tandem, so that was a nice connection.

To remove the rust, the length of the frame at approximately 160cm made bathing it in oxalic or citric acid physically and financially prohibitive. Whilst I have had good results using this method, I have on a couple of occasions had some distressing outcomes and I was determined not to risk anything on this frame. You see, by this time I had run my jeweller’s magnifier over the frame and could just make out that the frame had the names of Billy Read and Gordon Jones painted on the top tube. I washed the old grease and dirt off it and removed as much rust as I dared without damaging the paint by going over the frame, centimetre by centimetre, using 1500-3000 grit wet and dry paper.

This was not the frame used on the across-Australia ride. That bike had a strengthening cross-member running from the headtube through to the rear dropout. The big question was, where did this frame fit into the picture? The chaining was dated 1934 so initially it was tempting to think it was built very soon after their record-breaking feat in 1933. Read and Gordon were hugely celebrated on their return and arguably triggered a huge rise in popularity for tandem racing, riding and record breaking. Indeed, the books for Aussie, Malvern Star and Swansea filled with tandem orders. Based on numerous newspaper articles and news photos, it seems that after Read and Jones returned to Perth, it was Billy Read who continued to ride the across-Australia tandem with people other than the younger Jones. Champion South Australian rider Dean Toseland featured heavily on record rides. Also relevant, tandems built during and after this period seem to all sport extra bracing.

For the moment, I believe this tandem was built prior to the across-Australia bike and used for racing and training. Determined not to be stiff and strong enough to reliably carry the two riders, water and equipment across the unsealed Nullarbor, a new, stronger bike was built and the original equipment possibly transferred to the cross-Australia bike, with the addition of 3 speed Cyclo variable gears.

I think that this frame was then partially or fully rebuilt in 1934-35 with the current crankset, for who and what purpose I don’t know. Further research is in progress and involves tracking down Roy Warwick and following up on family and friends of Gordon Jones.



Jones passed away in 2013 aged 102 years, just a year before the frame turned up at the club meeting.

This bike has been rebuilt using period components that are near identical to what can be gleaned from the one quality photo

(held by the State Library of NSW) of Billy Read and Gordon Jones on their across-Australia tandem (above). Most notably, those components include genuine 1930’s drum-braked 26” tandem wheels, 1930’s drink bottles, brakes, cranks and handlebars.

### Frank West

You can read more about Billy and Gordons’ epic Perth-to-Sydney ride on the club website ...

<https://bit.ly/3Qp96Fm>

More photos of the restored tandem can be found here ...

<https://bit.ly/3VZsnhl>

**Sporting Globe (Melbourne) Wednesday 20 March 1940**

## **WORLD'S RECORD TO W.A. GIRL**

### **Pat Hawkins Rides 1546 Miles in Week**

PAT HAWKINS, the 18-year-old Perth girl cyclist made cycling history at the weekend when, on her Malvern Star B.S.A. racing cycle, she achieved the following wonderful achievements:—

- Rode 1546.6 miles on the road, setting up new records for either men or women in West Australia and Australia.
  - Smashed the world and Australia records of 1438.4 miles made by Mrs. Valda Unthank of Victoria last November.
  - Bettered the figures of 1507 1/2 miles made by Ossie Nicholson when had established a men's Victorian record in 1938.
  - Smashed the men's W.A. record of 1149.3 miles made by W. Humphries in 1937. Made W.A. and Australian women's records for one, two, three, four, five, six and seven days.
  - Set up a W.A. record and bettered the Australian women's 1000 miles record made by Valda Unthank.
  - Was only 129 miles behind the men's Australian and world's record put up by Les Cecil in Queensland last year.
- It is amazing that a young girl could be capable of going through such a gruelling ride and come out of the ordeal with little or no effect. To have smashed the women's world record for a week is a brilliant feat alone, but when Miss Hawkins easily beats the

WA record for a man by many miles and improves on the mileage of such an endurance celebrity as Ossie Nicholson, it is indeed a distinctly meritorious performance. Less than 12 months ago Pat Hawkins was practically unknown as a cyclist, though since she was 15 she engaged in touring cycling for pleasure and health.

#### **INSPIRED BY "OPPY"**

When Pat Hawkins saw "Oppy" engaged in a world record-breaking ride from Fremantle to Perth two or three years ago, she became interested in endurance feats, and a few months ago expressed a desire to Bruce Small that she would like to tackle some records.

Just after Valda Unthank had had established her world's week record the Perth girl mentioned that while she did not think she could equal the feat of the Victorian, she would at least like to have the opportunity of establishing a WA record for a woman. The the Bruce Small organising machinery was put into action, and the stage was set for Pat Hawkins to set out on her big task from Perth on March 9.

Many expressed the opinion that the task might be too severe for her but as the days passed she was able to show by her consistently fine riding that they were wrong. She was stimulated in the knowledge that every day she was riding better than ever. So the stockily-built Perth girl continued smashing records in ruthless style. One of Bruce Small's best "finds," Pat Hawkins originally set out to cover 1000 miles in the week.

Actually she passed that mark in 104 hours 9min. — an extraordinary achievement — 9hrs. 53 min. inside Valda Unthank's effort. On Tuesday of last week Pat had the misfortune to contract stomach cramp through some slightly

tainted milk which was handed to her along the road. She recovered in due course, meanwhile pedalling along gamely, but the necessary stops for treatment meant a serious loss of time and mileage. After a "flat" period, which lasted throughout Tuesday, Pat enjoyed a vapor bath, which revived her considerably, and she rode the following day with renewed vigor. Thousands assembled at the Malvern Star headquarters at Perth when Pat completed her epic ride at 12:47 p.m. on Saturday. This little star richly merited the praise lavished on her. One of the first telegrams she received was from "Oppy," who wired his congratulations: "*Marvellous performance. Your ride makes my 24-hours record look easy compared with yours.*"

#### **POPULAR PERSONALITY**

Pat Hawkins is the second eldest in a family of 10 children. Stockily built, she scales a shade over 10 stone, although when she started to train she was 11.4. Fair-haired, with a nice, clear skin, she has a charming, unassuming manner and made herself immensely popular. Like other endurance champions, she has been wise in her choice, for she rides a Malvern Star machine specially selected for her by "Oppy" and built to the specifications he laid down. For touring she usually dons pleated shorts, silk blouse, and a pullover, while her headgear consists of a tennis shield with a cloth attachment which ties at the back of the neck. For winter she wears a divided skirt and warm pullover, with accessories to match. The Globe offers congratulations to the Malvern Star amazon.

#### **Study In Figures**

Following are the intermediate miles covered each day by Miss Hawkins in her week's ride.

		Interim Total
First Day—Sat.-Sun.	250.4	
Second Day—Sat.-Mon.	205	455.4
Third Day—Mon.-Tues.	184	639.4
Fourth Day—Tues.-Wed.	259.7	899.1
Fifth Day—Wed.-Thurs.	207.5	1106.6
Sixth Day—Thurs.-Fri.	236.4	1343
Seventh Day—Fri.-Sat.	203.7	1546.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>1546.7 (2489.2 km)</b>

**MASSEY-HARRIS CYCLE AGENCY,** 419 HAY-STREET,  
CYCLES, all MAKES, from £3; Cash or Terms. WE TAKE YOUR OLD CYCLE  
in PART PAYMENT for a NEW ONE. 1904 MODELS JUST ARRIVED.  
MOTORS and CYCLES REPAIRED.  
JACOBS and O'DEA, Proprietors.

## **Wanted**

**Westwood style rims suitable for an 1897 Triumph build** - either a pair of 28 x 1 1/2 (635) 32/40 hole or; one 28 x 1 3/8 (642) 32 hole to match the 40 hole that I already have.

Looking for rims that are ~33mm wide.

Please contact Rob Frith on

Used by—  
**MISS**



Prices from	
TYRES	TUBES
6/9	3/8

# **Pat Hawkins**

**. . . and Thousands of Other Cyclists!**

AVAILABLE FROM ALL LEADING CYCLE TRADERS

**GENERAL ACCESSORIES PTY. LTD.** - - Distributors

Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Hobart.

# Ride Reports

## Christmas Pageant

The Christmas Pageant has been a highlight of the club event calendar for many years. The 2022 event is memorable for a few reasons, mostly good!

The ride night was a pleasant temperature and for once there wasn't a icy gale coming down St Georges Terrace.

23 riders milled around at our usual meeting point at the corner of the terrace and Mill St. Some formation penny farthing riding was conducted to indulge a variety of photographers and videographers.

Aside from the pennies club members brought a wonderful array of rare and unusual bikes; Phil Harris had a delivery bike stuffed to the gunwales with 'gift' toys; Rob and Karen on a pair of Claud Butlers; Chris and his daughter on a pair of Malvern Stars; Birgit, riding a Pashley Guvnor, was bravely accompanied by Richard on his highly decorated Strida.

It was at Mill St that the first mechanical of the evening occurred; a ball joint on Alan Naber's Hercules kangaroo bike suffered a terminal failure, relegating Alan to the lowly status of a walker.

As group number 8 we were positioned very near the start of the parade. Shortly after getting underway two further riders were obliged to resort to shanks pony; a chain drop on the machine Pam Nichols was piloting, and a thrown rear tyre on Matty Bell's penny farthing being the causes.

Video and stills coverage of the event was great - follow this link for more photos - <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjAi6Jm>

attendance we perhaps should have been better prepared. A stop at the rather noisy Camfield was followed by another at the Royal in Claisebrook Cove.

At 9 pm there was a consensus for skipping the Narrows and heading back to the South Perth foreshore via the Causeway.

Once again it was great to see such a variety of machines out, and to be joined by riders who we don't often see on club rides.

Richard Patenall strode out on the Strida (still sporting its Christmas Pageant lights). There was a penny in attendance

(Dave Scanlan), a Cinelli (Rob Frith), Gitane (Gary Bush), Buzzalong (Frank West), Moser TT bike (David Ruane), Moulton (Viv Cull), Backshall (Dennis van Gool), and many many more, running the gamut from impractical to modern.

More photos and video here -

<https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjAnzUg>

Rob Frith



## Round The Bridges Night Ride

A couple of weeks after the pageant 20 or so members and friends gathered at the South Perth foreshore for a gentle spin around the CBD bridges.

The City of South Perth had helpfully corralled the wagons as part of their summer StrEAT Markets so the hungry among us might be fed.

The plan was simple and open ended. As in there was no plan; we would 'plan' on the night. With over 20 riders in

## February Auction

The next club auction is up and running on our Bidding Owl site. It will conclude at the February meeting and as always the auction items will be available for inspection at the clubroom. And you will be able to bid on the night even if you are not signed up to Bidding Owl.

Items will continue to be added between now and the auction close date; <http://bit.ly/3VTAhsV>

**Gordonson** 53 x 56cm (medium?). This bike is well preserved and in good working order (photo below)

**Malvern Star** 1980 Moscow Olympic Edition, again well preserved and eminently rideable.

**Flash town bike.** Very rough, possibly beyond redemption.

**Lights** - a collection of 1960's - 70s front and rear lights - perfect for the next night ride!



# Club Calendar

## Mon 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 2023 19:30 General Meeting

In-person at 41 Britannia Road, Leederville  
Online Zoom Meeting ID: 896 2070 3705

## Mon 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023 19:30 General Meeting

In-person at 41 Britannia Road, Leederville  
Online Zoom Meeting ID: 896 2070 3705

## Wed 15<sup>th</sup> Mar RWAHS - Guest Speaker

### Alan Naber

Alan will be presenting his "Social History of Cycling" at the Royal WA Historical Society's rooms. 49 Broadway, Nedlands (corner of Clark St)

## Mid March - Classic Bike Show and Swap Meet - unconfirmed

## Mon 20<sup>th</sup> Mar 2023 19:30 General Meeting

In-person at 41 Britannia Road, Leederville  
Online Zoom Meeting ID: 896 2070 3705

## Mon 17<sup>th</sup> Apr 2023 19:30 General Meeting

In-person at 41 Britannia Road, Leederville  
Online Zoom Meeting ID: 896 2070 3705

## April 21-23 2023 York Heritage Festival

More details closer to the date.

## Sun 7<sup>th</sup> May 2023 Moondyne Festival

More details closer to the date.

## What Makes Us Tick?

Over the next few issues of the newsletter your committee is going to draw back the curtain and give members a behind the scenes peek at what it takes to keep the cogs in the WAHCC machine turning smoothly. Many of the roles are low pressure unelected positions so if you see something you think you'd like to help with just let us know - info.wahcc@gmail.com

### Auction Coordinator

Responsibility for this role open to any club member - no need to be a committee member.

Depending on donations we have one, two or three auctions per year. The auction coordinator needs to liaise a little bit with the newsletter editor and donations officer, however the main tasks are;

- Arrange collection and storage of auction items ('arrange' is key - the items don't need to be stored at a single location)
- Photograph, or collect photographs, of items for sale
- Write up descriptions for auction items
- Add items to the Bidding Owl website
- Manage the Bidding Owl display on Auction Night



## The 'Right' Way

Growing up, my dad instilled his virtues of keeping the tools and shop in order. That applied to organising hand tools on a peg board to correct placement of the lawn mowers and other power tools in the shed to a 4-child household of various sports equipment: tennis racquets, golf clubs, ice hockey protective gear, baseball paraphernalia, skiing apparatus and various sized bicycles. When we drove to sporting events, there was a 'proper' way to load gear into and onto the car with various external racks and storage bins inside. Today, I value and apply those insights with my dad's voice inside my head, plus a Tetris-loving wife with incredible packing skills supervising my every move.

Thanks to Mal & Myrene Bell, the club has a custom-built rack that allows me to load the club's Penny and modern bicycles neatly on our Pajero that makes it safe and orderly to drive. At the recent WAHCC Annual Christmas Party and bike ride in Whiteman Park, after diligently assembling the Penny and two modern bicycles on the provided rack prior to departure, I looked over aghast at Rob's rig. It was literally the complete opposite to what I've learned and applied for 50+ years. After several quick breaths, a skipped heartbeat or two, possibly even a stagger and nervous laugh, I looked more closely and realised everything was safe and secure. After finding out later Rob had made it home safe and sound, I am reminded that although it's not how I would have done it, Rob's method worked perfectly.

The point of my story? No matter how I grew up or how I do things or how I was taught it doesn't matter. There is no 'right' way to do things. More often than not, seeing how others apply their knowledge and skills allows me to think outside my comfort zone.

Bill Raczkowski

