



Not the... Spoke 'n Word

Volume 4 N° 3

NEWSLETTER

September/October 2002

WHO ARE WE?

How about some sort of uniform for our club? Even a T-shirt with the club logo on it would let others know who we are, and we should even get a few more interested in our activities. Give it some thought, and we can discuss it at the September meeting. I think we need some form of identification.

Editor

MINUTES OF MEETING 15TH JULY 2002

There were thirteen members present. With four visitors subsequently joining the club.

Apologies – Ray & Merrill Martlew, Mal & Myrene Bell, Milton & Mavis Jones, Eric & Jean Barrett

Minutes of Previous Meeting – Read and accepted. Moved P. Harris, seconded D. Clark.

Financial Report – Closing Balance \$1,910.04 at 30th June. Moved K. Ward, seconded A. Naber.

Correspondence In –

- Flyer re Bicycle Down Under 2003
- Cheque from Guildford Heritage Festival \$200.00
- Receipt for Public Liability Insurance

Correspondence Out

- Merv Thompson is sending a form to the Guildford Heritage Festival group with comments on the event

Events

- York Festival of the Car was a great day, with 27 machines on display.
- Our next event is the ride around the bridges on Sunday August 25th.

General Business

- Alan Naber asked the President to check whether our insurance cover covers committee members.
- The cabinet for our library books is now ready for use and is lockable. A vote of thanks to P. Wells for modifying the cabinet.
- Alan Naber volunteered to give a demo on bicycle maintenance at the August Meeting.
- Phil Harris told of many parts for sale in Brookton. Contact him for info.

Show & Tell

- Scott has a delivery bike frame, wants part and info.
- Harold had ridden to the meeting on a bicycle he had recently acquired. It is probably an early 20's machine.
- Theo has a 1975 Moulton.
- Saskia was a member of cycling club in her native Scotland.
- Alan had a selection of carriers and brake blocks available.
- Ken had a selection of unusual photos, illustrations, and history of early cycling.

MINUTES OF MEETING 20TH AUGUST 2002

There were thirteen members present. Visitors Paul Redman and Bill Cerfontyne

Apologies – D. Smith.

Minutes of Previous Meeting – Read and accepted. Moved A. Naber, seconded D. Clarke.

Financial Report – Closing Balance \$2,260.04 Moved P. Harris, seconded P. Wells.

Correspondence In

- Have a Go Day
- Back to the Bush Day – 13th October Wickepin.
- The Radiogram Organization is also going to Wickepin and has offered seats on a bus @ \$15.00 per head.
- More information is required on 100 years of Victoria Park Celebration.

General Business

- Phil Harris suggested the club purchase a First Aid Kit. M. Buckland moved, S. Anderson seconded. Cost of \$50.00 P. Harris is to attend to the purchase.
- Malcolm Buckland advised that the Canberra Museum is open 7 days a week, and that 700 bikes are to be seen in the storeroom, which is only opened on Wednesdays.
- Saskia Leithman was welcomed as a new member
- The library is now operational, thanks to Peter Wells for his efforts.
- Merv Thompson passed on a box of items, which may be of use in the library, and also spoke of the book "The Bicycle & the Bush" which he is currently reading.

NEXT MEETINGS: 16th September Monday at 7.30pm
21st October Monday at 7.30pm

VCC Club Rooms 6B Hickey Street, Ardross

WAHCC Committee - President: Merv Thompson 9450 2579
Treasurer: Don Smith 9447 3003
Historian: Ken Ward 9364 3601

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Denis Gibbs 9398 2792 David Clarke 6278 1048

Show & Tell

- Peter Wells showed modified parts
- Phil Harris showed a miniature bike made of wire, which came from Africa.
- Saskia has a gents bike with 28-inch wheels – 1947 – brought out from Scotland.
- Paul Redman showed a 5 Swan Swansea cycle.
- Harold Perry also showed an interesting bike.
- Bill displayed a very interesting recumbent made from three bicycles.
- Merv Thompson showed parts for a Malaysian Trishaw approx 25 years old.
- At 8.40pm the meeting broke up for coffee and then continued with Alan Naber who displayed and talked on 2 bikes, a Swansea and a 1906 Triumph. This developed into an interesting and interactive discussion, after which he auctioned a number of interesting items raising funds for the club.

A GREAT NIGHT FOR EVERYONE

What a great night the August meeting was, with a smattering of new faces, and a couple of members along from Mandurah, but to top it all off, a very interesting lecture cum display by Alan Naber. And of course the usual Show and Tell brought to light some hidden talents of our members. If you weren't there you missed a great night. Don't miss out on the September meeting.

\$3 MILLION FOR 3KM OF CYCLEWAY

The State Government copped a bit of flack over what seems to be an expensive bit of what amounts to little more than a glorified footpath, but since we don't know just what is involved in the project we cannot really pass judgement.

However, it must be better and safer than those white lines that various councils are putting about a metre out from the kerb.

The poor old cyclist has to dodge drainage grills, rubbish thrown into the gutter, and puddles after rain or residents allotted sprinkler days. Of course, that doesn't include dodging around parked cars or sprinkler systems out of adjustment. Our shire councils have a long way to go before cycle ways are suitable, and only then will our love affair with the car start to cool. If you are not happy with your council, let them know.
Editor.

TWO BRIDGES NOT TOO FAR

The weather on Sunday 25th August looked pretty threatening for a ride around the Swan River including the Narrows Bridge and Causeway, but although overcast, it turned out to be ideal for cycling, cool, and bracing, without the usual glare often experienced with stretches of water.

Phil Harris really stirred members up, so that there were sixteen riders, and no two machines alike. There was one extra machine, Merv's newly restored tri-shaw, but he didn't use that on the ride. It was great to see several of our newer members taking part, their bikes quite interesting, and I think we can look forward to great things from them. The bike that really took everyone's eye was Saskia's 1926 Sunbeam, very original and interesting. Thanks Phil, for another great day out.

Those taking part were –

Dennis Gibbs – 1970 Indi 500
Ann Northam – Hercules
Dave Northam – 1951 Malvern Star
Mal Buckland – Penny Farthing
Julie Buckland – 1984 Moulton
Gareth Buckland – Recumbent
Alan Naber – Hercules Kangaroo
Scott Anderson – Strida
Merv Thompson – 1982 Raleigh Superbe
Dawn Thompson – 1971 Ladies Raleigh
David Clarke – Bickerton Foldup
Harry Perry – 1937 Hartley
Saskia Leathan – 1926 Sunbeam
Phil Harris – 2002 Billabong
Peter Wells – 1951 Swansea
Alan Naber's friend Eddy also rode on a bike specially built for him.

APPLYING DECALS

For sixty years of the last century Australian bicycles were decorated with transfers and beautiful pinstripe lining. Unfortunately both these items are now a thing of the past, and it has become hard to find anyone capable of performing these art forms.

Alan Naber has been busy having decals produced for Malvern Star and Swansea cycles, these of course done in the modern manner, and not of the original transfer type. I have used these, but had trouble getting them into the correct position, so thought there must be some way to make things easier. I remembered that we wet down the painted surface before applying transfers, with a slightly soapy water mix, so tried the same idea with a modern decal. It worked perfectly. I was able to slide the decal exactly where I wanted it, and had no difficulty getting rid of any air bubbles. It was only necessary to wipe over with a damp cloth later to remove any watermarks.

Peter Wells.

AUSTRALIAN CYCLE MANUFACTURERS

Ken Ward provided me with a list of Australia frame builders compiled by the Canberra Bicycle Museum, but with only one West Australian name, Swansea, so I think it only right and proper that we should do something about this sad situation.

Although any list drawn up after a century of cycling in this vast State will probably contain errors and omissions, at least we can make an attempt to set the record straight for posterity. Should any reader know of any errors in my list, or the names of others that should be included, please let me know.

Of course, all those firms selling cycles did not always make their own frames, but simply bought them from another builder, and had their own transfers applied as necessary – a case of badge engineering long before the car trade thought of it. The great Bruce Small empire even made frames for a number of other firms.

There will certainly be more names to be added to this list as more details come to light, for in the early years of the last century most West Australians relied on the humble pushbike for transport and leisure. It wasn't until some years after World War II that the motorcar really took over our roads.

I can recall riding across the Causeway just after the war in a constant string of cyclists heading to work, making an extra lane of traffic between the wooden fence and a line of cars. On the way home we rode between the cars and the trams that rattled and swayed in both directions along a single line on the northern side of the roadway. There was a passing loop on the island halfway across the Causeway. Usually the cyclists beat the cars across the river, as it was congested at both exits from the Causeway. And didn't we have fun negotiating the myriad tram tracks at the East Perth Car barn, and where Albany Highway and Canning Highway met, especially in the wet!

So, here goes with our first attempt to list West Australian cycle builders. I might add that several of them, notably Aussie and Swansea also made many trotting spiders for the horsy types.

As far as I can ascertain this list contains details of firms who actually built their own frames, not those who had them built by someone else and then had their own names added.

Peter Wells

Arthur Grady, proprietor of Kookaburra Cycles, was also a keen motorcyclist, and was the first person to ride a motorcycle around Australia, a twin cylinder Douglas. He finished his epic ride several months before the Citroen light car completed its journey, but never got the credit for being the first to motor around this big continent. His home still had bundles of frame lugs in it in the late 1970s.

Cooper and Legg (Speed King) were in business in Fremantle in 1906. On Cooper's departure Herbert Legg continued on until he retired, his son Ernie finally closing the business in the 1980's. They made bikes until just after W.W.II.

MAKE	MANUFACTURER	ADDRESS
Armstrong	Armstrong Cycle & Motor Agency	Perth & Fremantle
Aussie	Aussie Cycles (J.T. McDonald)	269 William St Perth
Arrow	Arrow Cycle Co	278 William St Perth
Ascot	Ascot Cycles	Gt Eastern Hwy Ascot
Gordonson	Gordonson Cycles (Tommy Gordon)	342 Wellington St Perth
Goodchild	Goodchild Cycles	Perth Rd Bassendean
Kookaburra	Kookaburra Cycles (Arthur Grady)	Market St Fremantle
Sprint	Sprint Cycles (Harry Elsdon)	554 Albany Hwy Victoria Park
Swansea	Swansea Cycles (H & L Baldwin)	9 William St Fremantle
Speed King	Cooper & Legg Cycles	9 Elder Place Fremantle
Pilot	W. Jackson	Perth

Lucas	W.J. Lucas Ltd	Hay St Perth
West	West Cycle Co	511 Hay St Perth
Regent & Wheelman	Fry's Cycle Works (Laurie Fry)	80 Rokeby Rd Subiaco
Runwell	Geoff Pianta	Collie

DATING - BIKES, NOT GIRLS

If any member has a machine that can be positively dated, would they please let me have details of it, make, type (Roadster, Racer, etc, ladies, gents) and especially frame number. It would also help if any unusual equipment is listed. I intend compiling a list to forward to Canberra Bicycle Museum to boost their records.

Peter Wells

MEETING TIME CHANGE

The monthly meeting now starts at 7.30pm, but the area is open at 7.00pm for those enthusiasts who want a chinwag before Il Presidente gets things cracking.

AUSSIE CYCLES

Can anyone help me with a photo, drawing, what have you, of the decal used on Aussies? The one that I have in mind was in capital letters with shading. I need this information for my 1935 gents roadster that I am rebuilding.

Peter Wells - 9459 1750

GEARING 1993

1933 was a big year of development on the racing cycling scene. For sometime free wheel drive was not permitted for racing due to the danger of bunch riding with a mixture of free and fixed wheel competitors. The main school of thought considered the fixed wheel was necessary to control speed and braking. The 3 speed Gear was presented and the Professional League and the Amateur Union were pressured to grant permission to use the gears in road races. There seemed such an imbalance with the fixed wheel rider's verses the free wheel riders who now had a range of gears to accompany their free wheel drive.

The following is an article from the Cycling column by "Little Gidgie" 21.6.1933

In view of the fact that as far back as 1929 the officials of the League of West Australian Wheelmen permitted a competitor in the Beverley to Perth race to use a three speed variable gear on his machine the controversy at present raging in Victoria regarding these devices is of particular interest to local followers of the sport.

A competitor in the last Beverley to Perth also used a 3-speed gear of the same type that is now causing so much discussion in Victoria. In a recent 30mile race in Melbourne a competitor who gained actual fastest time was disqualified by the referee of the League of Victorian Wheelmen for using a 3 speed variable gear. From press reports it appears that before the race the competitor was warned by the referee that disciplinary action would be taken against him if he used the device.

The matter therefore became a test case as the ordinary type of free wheel permitted.

On a subsequent appeal by the disqualified rider the League endorsed the Referees action, but for reasons not clear, deferred for twelve months any further official action regarding the use of the gear in dispute.

The three-speed gear device under discussion consists of three sprockets of varying sizes mounted abreast on the chain side of the back hub. To change his gear the rider manipulates a small lever affixed to the top bar of the frame and the chain is guided from one sprocket to the other. A rider thus has at his command the choice of three different gears. A special attachment below the back fork is an ingenious contrivance, which takes up the slack of the chain and no matter whether the gear is increased or lowered keeps the chain at an even tension. In this type of variable gear, the middle gear is the centre sprocket and this is the only one, which is in correct chain line.

A device is now on the English market however in which the three sprockets are mounted in such a manner that no matter which one is used the chain line is still true.

Although Australian racing cyclists would immediately condemn a machine on which the chain line was not absolutely true, the fact that the "Three abreast" type of variable gear is used extensively by French riders proves that they do not mind a slight misplacement of chain line.

In the world famous Tour de France the tourist-routiers use these gears extensively and according to Hubert Opperman when they ride in with the "aces" as the big professional riders specially chosen by the promoter of the race are termed, the variable gears gave them a big advantage.

So far as the "aces" are concerned their machines are proved by the promoter M. Henri Desgrange and to avoid the necessity for providing the sprockets necessary for so much gear changing on the 40 machines used by the riders, he has prohibited the use of the variable gears.

It is a significant fact, however that in the 1931 Paris/Brest the return race of 750 miles in one stage which Opperman won, the powerful Aleyon trade team rode machines fitted with variable gears.

If the use of freewheels is permitted by the controlling authorities, it is not clear why the use of variable gear devices should be prohibited. So far as Western Australia is concerned freewheels were first used in the Beverley to Perth in 1924 and quickly proved their superiority over the "fixed" wheel so far as speed was concerned. The variable gear has yet, however to prove its worth so far as the big local professional road race is concerned. In view of the fact that the officials here are evidently agreeable to the use of these devices it will be interesting to see whether, if ridden by a rider of outstanding ability who has trained on it assiduously beforehand, the modern variable gear would represent still another advance on the type of freewheel now in general use in the Beverley to Perth race.

25 July 1933

One month later in the "Little Gidgie" cycling column he reports on the progress of variable gears as follows:-

At the last meeting of the League of W.A. Wheelmen it was officially approved for the use of variable gears in Professional road races in Western Australia. This developed great interest for the following long distance road races - Bassendean York Return - Collie Donnybrook Return - Beverley to Perth. They all cover rugged country courses and should be ideal testing grounds for variable gears.

Although freewheels were permitted for the 1925 Beverley to Perth the West Australian Amateur Cyclists Union would not permit freewheels for Amateur races until the North Perth Amateur Cycling club got permission for their new 100 mile Perth to Pinjarra and return on August 10 1933. The first variable gear used in Amateur races was in the 1936 Northam to Perth. It was suggested that entrants to races should state if they intend using a variable gear to assist the handicapper.

Ken Ward.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2002

Sept 16 Monday - MONTHLY MEETING

Sept 22 Sunday

Causeway Spring Carnival, 50th Anniversary of the opening of the new Causeway. Ride and display at McCallum Park. We will ride to Windan Bridge then return via East Perth.

Oct 6 Sunday - Picnic and social ride - river views. More details later.

Oct 13 VCC Autojumble Cannington

Oct 21 Monday - MONTHLY MEETING

Oct 29 Tuesday Have A Go Day - Burswood

Nov 18 Monday - MONTHLY MEETING and SOCIAL EVENING

Dec 7 Saturday - Channel 7 Christmas Pageant

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

2003

Feb 21st - March 2nd

Historic Cycles Downunder Rally, Evandale, Tasmania. Are any West Aussies attending?

FOR SALE-SWAP-WANTED

For Sales

Gents Super Elliott roadster, complete, with decal. \$25.00
Peter Wells (08) 9459 1750

Swap

New 52 tooth Williams chain wheel for similar condition 48 tooth Williams chain wheel.

New Chater-Lea chain wheel for similar condition 48 tooth Williams chain wheel.

Peter Wells (08) 9459 1750

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR SUBS?

THE HISTORICAL CYCLE CLUB.

MEMBERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS



SOCIAL RIDE AND PICNIC

SUNDAY 6TH OCTOBER

TIME 10.30 START

VENUE HESTER PARK

LANGFORD

BRING YOUR OWN PICNIC LUNCHEON AND DRINKS



IF THIS FALLS APART YOUR IN TROUBLE MERV!

