

Not the...

Spoke 'n Word

Volume 4 N° 5

NEWSLETTER

January/February 2003

MINUTES OF MEETING 18th NOVEMBER 2002

Present – 20 members. Merv welcomed Eric and Jean Barrett, Milton and Mavis Jones and Mal and Myrenne Bell back after their recent travels.

Apologies – Ray & Merrill Martlew, Myrene Bell, Paul Redmond.

Minutes of Previous Meeting – Read and accepted. Moved W. Edom, seconded Mal Buckland.

Matters Arising

Don Smith has name tags available for those requiring them.

Financial Report – Closing Balance \$2,451.93 Moved M. Buckland, seconded K. Ward.

Correspondence In –

➤ P. Harris tabled a letter and photo of an unusual cycle in Gingin.

➤ The Canberra newsletter is now in our library.

➤ A letter of appreciation from the Victoria Park Council for our participation in the New Causeway Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations.

Events

➤ The recent Midland Workshop fair was a great success.

➤ The Christmas Pageant 7th Dec will be similar to previous ones. Members to be at the CNR of The Esplanade and Barrack St by 6.30pm. They should be in the Langley Park area before 6.00pm.

➤ The committee has held a meeting to discuss future events, the proposed club shirts and club property. It was decided to adjourn the shirt matter until the January meeting. Mal Buckland showed some designs that would cost around \$2 each.

Show & Tell

➤ Phil Harris showed his pre-war Blackbird racer, of which has a good history and photos.

➤ Peter Wells showed a pre-war Malvern Star sports machine identical to the Austral displayed at the previous meeting.

➤ Eric Barrett showed a catalogue of a recent auction in England, where prices for early machines were astronomical.

➤ Dave Clark had five club machines for all to see, he needs club members to house these since he is about to change his address.

➤ Alan Naber and Peter Wells had some parts to dispose of, which Alan subsequently auctioned, raising \$48.50 for club funds.

➤ The meeting closed at 8.40pm and a lively evening and supper kept members happy for a couple of noisy hours.

BREKKIE IN THE PARK November 22nd

At very short notice six riders took to the streets and cycle paths for an early breakfast in the verdant parkland along the South Perth foreshore near the old Coode Street jetty. The occasion was a gathering of South Perth/Victoria Park cyclists for a continental breakfast supplied by Bikewest, but some participants came from much further a field – true enthusiasts.

Club members participating were –

Merv and Dawn Thompson – 39 German tandem

Walter Edom – 45 Swansea

Alan Naber – Modern tourer

David Clark – Swedish Itera

Peter Wells – 1945 Swansea

The weather was perfect for cycling, and there was a good turnout of riders of both sexes and of all ages. I was surprised at the large number of people obviously cycling to work in Perth CBD at such an early hour.

Peter Wells.

MORE BELLS THAN THE BELLTOWER December 7th

A perfect evening saw twenty members and friends gather on the Perth Esplanade for the annual Christmas Pageant, one of our most popular events, and also one that is popular with a good proportion of Perth citizens, the streets packed with cheering kids of all ages, from the cradle to those fast approaching their second child-hood.

Once again we had a great spread of machines, spanning a century or more of cycling history, from the early 1880's to the 1980's, with a mixture of two, three and four wheeled cycles, even an electric powered job. Yes, we gave Joe Public a good run for his money, and that could be easily seen from the amazed faces and gestures as the "Ordinary" riders leaped on an off as the marching groups slowed too much for anyone to stay upright. Then there were the early types ridden by Myrene and Merv, and the amazing Hercules Kangaroo of Alan, whilst the intrepid Sinclair pilot kept everyone on their toes, whizzing in and out among the other riders.

There are two trains of thought prevalent about decorating the bikes for the parade, but I must admit that the big wheels on the penny-farthings did look good and under the lights. Perhaps this occasion is one where decorations are in order, whereas static displays are ones where the machine itself is the main attraction, and should then be unadorned.

NEXT MEETINGS: 20th January Monday at 7.30pm
17th February Monday 7.30pm

VCC Club Rooms 6B Hickey Street, Ardross

WAHCC Committee - President: Merv Thompson 9450 2579

Treasurer: Don Smith 9573 1081

Historian: Ken Ward 9364 3601

Articles for Newsletter: The Editor Peter Wells

25 Constantine Court Thornlie WA 6108 (08) 9459 1750

Vice President: David Clark 6278 1048

Secretary: Merrill Martlew 9451 1186

Post Office Box 516 Bentley 6982

Events Co-Ordination: Phil Harris 9459 7146

Denis Gibbs 9398 2792 David Clarke 6278 1048

MORE BELLS THAN THE BELLTOWER *continued*

As the title of this article states, we had more Bells than the belltower, the Bell family making up 25% of our group, closely followed by the Martlew group. Anyway, thanks are due to all taking part in this event, which puts our club in the eyes of a big proportion of the Perth population. Merrill Martlew is still (mid December) getting over her recent illness, but sent along her daughter and two grandchildren to swell the ranks – or was it to keep an eye on Ray?

Participants were –

Merv Thompson – 1881 Perfection DD

Dawn Thompson – 39 Norman tricycle

Phil Harris – Malvern Star delivery

Dave Clark – C5 Sinclair

Don Smith – 1920 Armstrong racer (WA Made)

Shirley Smith – Our Banner bearer (thanks, Shirley)

Ken Ward – Avanti racer

Walter Edom – 45 Swansea Police bike

Ray Martlew – Steele Bishop racer (WA made)

Jodee and Tamara Brandis – Twin Spinner tandem

Rebecca Brandis – Foldup Dujuan Cuckoo

Alan Naber – Hercules Kangaroo

Peter Wells – 47 Swansea racer

Danica Cannella – The West ladies (WA made)

And the Bells - Mal, Peter, Ken and Grant and all on Penny Farthings

And Myrene, last but by no means least, on her Rudge Rotary

Peter Wells

DISCOVERING A GOLDMINE

Well you may ask what a goldmine has to do with old bikes, but let me tell you that gold can be found in many unexpected places, as many an old-time prospector would be only too ready to inform you. But the gold that I am talking about is not the auriferous kind, it is the gold of knowledge. The kind of knowledge that is gleaned from processing the pages of a 1916 – yes, 1916 Catalogue of Bicycle Accessories of the Armstrong Cycle and Motor Agency. This pioneer motoring and cycling firm had been founded in Perth in 1896, Percy Armstrong prominent in both motorcar and cycle competition.

Our worthy Club Librarian, Ken Ward, was able to get his hands on a very fragile copy of said catalogue, and has had it photocopied for the library. It is crammed full of very clear and descriptive information from lugs to build frames, to period lights, bells, saddles, tools, and just about any extra that the lady or gentleman cyclist could possibly need. But the part that I found particularly interesting was that BSA had been producing parts for sale to Australian riders virtually the same as those to be found on Malvern Star cycles in the late 1930's. For those of us who may have the remains of an early machine, this catalogue will prove to be invaluable, because it clearly shows the sort of parts that were available at the time. Luckily for us, these parts remained in vogue for many years, so it makes it easier to source suitable bits for that rebuild.

So, gradually, our library is growing, and items like this one of inestimable value to members rebuilding or even merely trying to source some parts that are known to be incorrect on their machine. Thanks, Ken, your efforts are appreciated by all members.

Peter Wells

FIXED REAR SPROCKETS

It is getting harder to find rear hubs made to accept fixed sprockets, since almost every bicycle built since the seventies has been fitted with hub gears or derailleur ratchets.

The early hubs had right hand threads for the sprocket, and a left hand thread to accept a lock ring, which stopped the sprocket undoing itself when the rider "back pedalled" in braking.

Older riders will remember that we often had no brakes on our bikes, but stopped by pushing back on the pedals, or, in dire emergencies, by placing a shoe on the rear tyre above the seat stays.

However, if you want to fit your bike with a fixed sprocket and do not have the correct hub, you can use the modern type. There is enough thread to fit a lock ring from the adjustable centre bracket-bearing cup. Just make sure that the sprocket itself is tight before tightening the lock ring. Just to make sure that all is hunky dory check the lock ring after going for a ride.

SERVICING RATCHETS

The humble ratchet has been around almost since the first bicycles, and is still basically the same today as it was a century ago. Like all other moving parts on your cycle the ratchet needs servicing. Lets face it, the chain and sprockets get pretty grubby in service, the lubricating oil attracting more dirt than small boys, which naturally gets into the inside of the ratchet.

Ratchets are held together with an outer ring, which usually has a couple of holes to accept a pegged tool for removal and replacement purposes. If you don't have a special tool, and very few will have, a good centre punch will serve the purpose quite well. But take note! The ring has a left hand thread. Once you have loosened the ring, place the ratchet or wheel over a clean area where any of the steel balls can be retrieved. Also check the pawls and tiny springs.

After thoroughly cleaning all parts with kerosene, check for any wear where the steel balls run, and any damage to the balls themselves. Usually there is little evidence of wear. If in doubt, replace the balls, they are not expensive. Use a light multi purpose grease to hold the balls in place, and reassemble all components, tightening the ring. Check that the unit runs freely, and that the pawls operate correctly.

27 INCH ALL BLACK TYRES

In pre WWII days, and until the mid 1950s most tyres were all black, the later white sidewalls not very common.

Times and fashion changed, and it has become hard to find black 27x1½ tyres, but they are once again on the market. You may have to enquire for them, but I managed to get a pair from Balmoral Cycles in East Victoria Park. No doubt your local bike shop can get them for you, the price was about the same as the better white walled type.

Peter Wells

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1960 Raleigh were advertising three different makes on a centrespread in the Motorcycle and Cycle Export Trader – Raleigh, Rudge, and Humber. No doubt these famous old well-respected names have now folded along with Raleigh.

BSA CYCLE COMPONENTS

A number of members have expressed surprise at seeing BSA cranks and pedals on Malvern Star cycles, as well as on other marques that are quite evidently not BSA machines. The answer is quite simple, and shows a side of the history of cycling in Australia that is unknown to many, but should be aired for all to know, especially our younger generation brought up with bikes emanating from various Asian countries.

The Birmingham Small Arms Company had been manufacturing arms for British armed forces for many years, and when the cycle craze took over Britain and the rest of the World in the late nineteenth century, BSA decided to expand into the cycle trade. They already had a good name for quality work, so it was only natural that their cycles and components should also be of a high standard. As suppliers of small arms to the British Government it was only to be expected that BSA should be given orders for military orientated bicycles for use as couriers, scouting, and general message carrying. There were special cycle units formed able to cover big distances quite rapidly over any, types of terrain. Of course, when motors began to be fitted to bicycles, BSA followed the trend and we probably remember these machines more than those propelled by human power. So much for the Company's background now for the reason why so many Australian machines have ended up with BSA components, which also include lugs, head and centre bracket fittings, as well as hubs.

As early as 1884, BSA began to market a range of standard parts, to be known as BSA Fittings. These components were made available to bicycle manufacturers at home and abroad, and soon earned a reputation for their high quality.

So it was not unusual to find their wares on the shelves of cycle shops around the world, especially in member countries of the British Empire - India, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, to mention just a few. BSA had a name for top quality products, so discerning cycle builders and owners know that they could rely on those items with the three piled rifles stamped on them.

Here in Australia in the twenties there were numerous firms building machines of near identical specification, all vying with each other for good quality parts. As the demand for cycles grew, it became important to have access to a good source of supply. Due to the huge success of Malvern Star, in part thru the achievements of Hubert (Oppy) Opperman, the firm was finding difficulty in obtaining a satisfactory parts supply. The company was refused admission to the existing Retail Wholesalers Association, and the right to import its requirements direct. Bruce Small, owner of Malvern Star, went to Birmingham in 1928, and made arrangements to buy direct for his parts.

Malvern Star was opening numerous outlets around Australia, with record sales of new machines, and other manufacturers now came begging for orders, but Small remained with BSA. In 1935 BSA appointed Bruce Small Australian distributors of their bicycle components. By this stage Opperman was riding in Britain, not for Malvern Star, but for BSA, his record breaking rides doing much for that firm.

So that is why you can find so many old bikes with BSA components, mainly on old Malvern Stars, but also on other makes. In addition to Malvern Star, the firm also made Austral, Pacemaker, Preston Star, Rainbow and in 1964 acquired the Moulton franchise. They also sold Raleigh Choppers and Philips Choppers. In post WWII days BSA acquired Sunbeam, Norman and New Hudson.

Peter Wells

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2003

Jan 20th Monday - MONTHLY MEETING

Feb 17th Monday - MONTHLY MEETING

Feb 21st - March 2nd

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

Feb 23rd Sunday - Rockingham Safety Bay Ride. Bring your bathers.

Mar 14th Friday - Bike to Work (Bike Week)

Mar 16th Sunday - Whiteman Park Classic Car Show - Club Display

Mar 17th Monday - MONTHLY MEETING

Mar 23rd Sunday - Melville Fair Display

Apr 15th Monday - MONTHLY MEETING

May 19th Monday - AGM

Jun 8th Monday - Pinjarra Festival (Tentative)

Jun - Riverton Forum Club Display (One week)

Jun 16th Monday - MONTHLY MEETING

FOR SALE-SWAP-WANTED

For Sale

Early thirties Malvern Star ladies, 28 inch wheels, BSA cranks. Complete with mudguards etc \$20.00
Peter Wells (08) 9459 1750

Swap

Aussie and Cyclops head stem badges for Gordonson badge, or buy outright. Peter Wells (08) 9459 1750

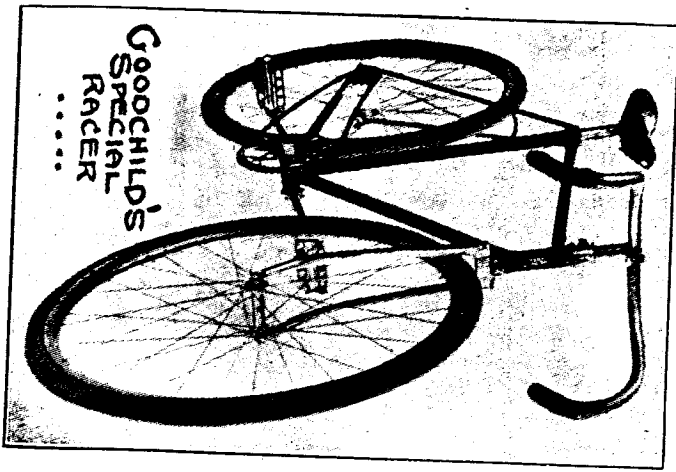
For Sale

The club has a number of complete bikes (ladies and gents) available at a ridiculously low price to members. Contact Merv for full details (08) 9450 2579

Wanted

Gordonson head stem metal badge.
27inch box section rims, 32 and 40 holes, to complete my 5 Swan racer. Peter Wells (08) 9459 1750

1934



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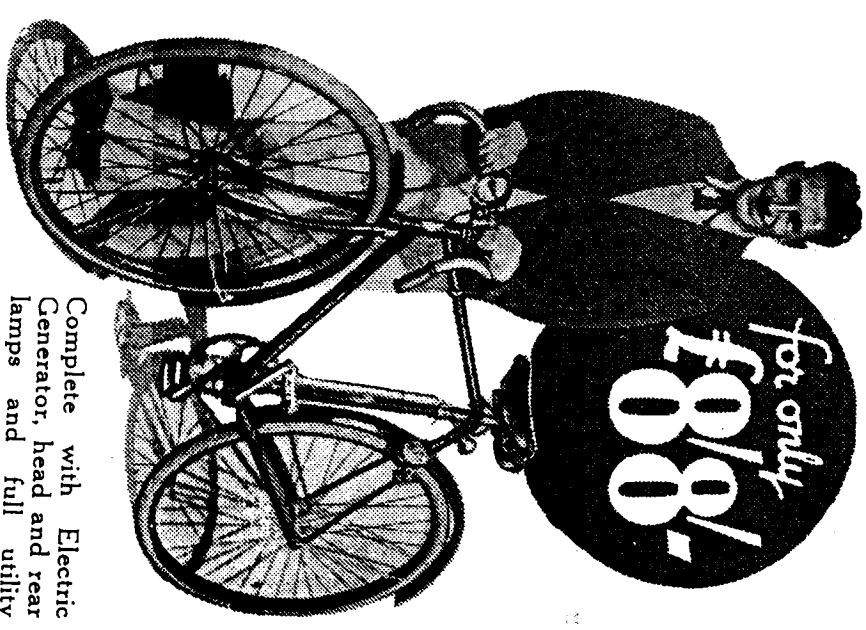
The disqualification of the leading road cyclist, Ossie Nicholson, was removed to-day, and he will be eligible to compete in the Centenary Thousand next month. Nicholson was disqualified for three months early in May, and the term was later increased to six months.

DUNCAN GRAY PASSES THROUGH.

Duncan Gray, the Goulburn rider, who has been representing Australia in the Empire Games passed through here on the mallboat last Tuesday on his way home. "Dunc" on his "Speedwell" added to the fame of Australian wheelmen in the old world, when he got away with the 1000 metre Time Trial at the Empire Games held at Manchester on August 11th. He looked like adding another laurel until he had the misfortune to puncture in the 10 mile race later in the day. "Dunc" and other Eastern States riders returning were met and entertained here by officials and by Mr. Howard, of Wyper Howard Ltd., whose firm has the West Australian distribution of "Speedwell Cycles."

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