

A Social History of the VMCCWA

LIFE MEMBERS
A RECOLLECTION
1975 - 2025

Compiled by Murray Barnard



**A SOCIAL HISTORY
OF THE VINTAGE MOTOR CYCLE CLUB
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (INC)**

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1975-2025**

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2025



Cover picture: Rex Edmondson (left) & Keith Perry (right) Busselton 2014 (Photo by Nic Montagu)

Introduction

Life membership is regarded as the ultimate honour which the VMCCWA can bestow upon a member who is considered to have rendered sustained and exceptional service to the Club. This publication captures photos and profiles of past and current life members.

It has been quite a journey getting this document together. I started to compile this document in June 2020 when I discovered that there was no considered record of the contribution of life members in existence. There was no single repository of information or photographs of the Club either. Considering the extraordinary combined contribution of these members to the Club over nearly 50 years I found this particularly surprising. Seeing as many of the founding members are no longer with us, it was more important than ever to capture their story now if at all possible. It was more difficult than I could imagine. Fortunately, I had taken photos over the last 4 decades which helped, but to complete the profiles was a real struggle. There are still gaps which may never be filled in any detail.

A primary source of information was Adrian's White profiles, which were compiled for the Vintage Chatter many years ago. Without this priceless resource, the stories of many of our earlier members would have been lost forever. Thanks are extended to Adrian for his initiative.

Murray Barnard - April 2025



John Moorehead & Murray Barnard (Photo by Nic Montagu 2015)

Acknowledgements

Without Adrian White's dedication in recording details and background for many members over the years, this publication would be very much the poorer. Thanks to Adrian, some of the colour and history of the Club has been captured.

Thanks to Nic Montagu for use of his fabulous photographs, which retain his copyright.

This document compiled and edited by Murray Barnard. Many of the photographs have come from my personal collection or archives I have collected for the Club over the past 35 years.



Adrian White 2014 (Photo by Nic Montagu)

Life Member Profiles

Life members, 1975 to 2025 are listed in alphabetical order in this collection.
Profiles and photos of life members follow.

Paul Armstrong,
Murray Barnard,
Chas Bayley,
Jack Berkshire,
John Boyd,
Ron Chave,
Ron Cherrington,
Norman Chester,
Jim Clark,
Frank Cocks,
Bill Cowlin,
Jack Cunningham,
Jim Douglas

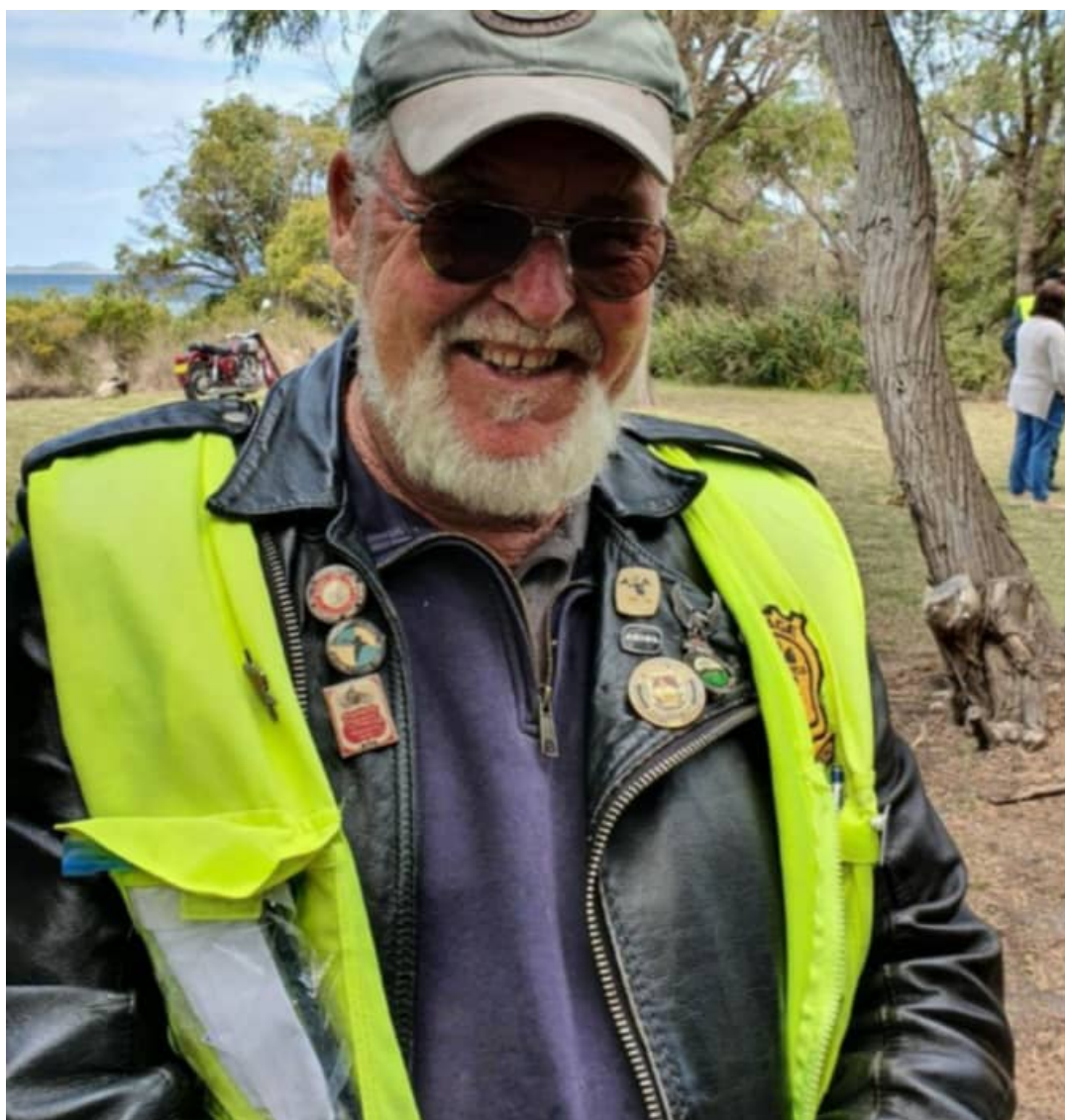
Rex Edmondson,
Bert Holmes,
Eric Langton,
Brian Lawrence,
Charlie Lawson,
Ernie Legg,
Max Madill,
Barry Makin,
May Makin,
Terry McKie,
John Moorehead,
Bill Morrell,
Shirley Morrell,

Ron Morrison,
Ray Oakes,
Barry O'Byrne,
Keith Perry,
John Rock,
Ern Serls,
Ed Shekell,
Peter Stocker
Ken Vincent,
Jim Wallace,
Dave Weeks,
Keith Weller, &
Adrian White

Paul Armstrong: *Paul was granted Life Membership at the 2022 AGM.*

Paul served for many years as the Chair of the Albany Section and under his leadership the Section has thrived and been a solid contributor to the Club. Paul saw the Section through many changes in the Club and he nurtured a sense of companionship, maintained a busy Club Calendar and promoted charitable causes.

The Albany Toy Run and the Flourish Cambodia being notable causes. The Albany Toy Run in particular being a popular event for many years, with a great turn-out and a significant donation being made to the Salvation Army. Such activities bring credit to the Club. Paul also embraced the Annual Gypsy Tour and helped make it a success. The Gypsy Tour is a collegiate exercise and does much to build and maintain the relationship between the main Club and the Albany Section.





IN HIS OWN WORDS - Paul Armstrong

1963 I started getting into scramble riding, using old 500cc British bikes, then a hotted up 250cc Jawa two stroke, I had no idea what a power band was then; but, it could be frightening at times, when it came on.

Pic on right: Paul at 17 years old.

Married at twenty, my father had told me to wait until I was thirty, so I listened, not really. Next motorcycle was an AJS 600cc , which I found and got going off a farm, had to fabricate exhaust pipes and rebuild the magneto. It was a real bush bike.

Next I purchased a second hand Honda SL 175cc twin, great bike you could get 12500 rpm out that motorcycle. This was about 1970. In 1972 I purchased one of only two new motorcycles I have ever bought, a Honda XL 250 road trail, great bike at the time, this is where I began to get back into motocross. We were racing everywhere off road as a group and decided to form a trail bike club. Meetings were called where we found out that the Albany motorcycle club was defunct. So Kevin Ferrell and myself with some others resurrected it, as all necessary things i.e. constitution and bank account details were still in place.



The next motorcycle I purchased was a brand new 1974 Honda Elsinore, a 125 cc two stroke, what a great fun motorcycle. The club was going strong. We had about 80 to 90 members and we were going to events at Noble Falls, Esperance, Herne Hill, Bunbury, Narrogin, Katanning, Denmark, Manjimup, York etc. racing.

I became chairperson and the Albany motorcycle club went on to run an annual State Title Road racing event, State Title trials event and also a State title Motocross event from about 1973 to 1984. I was chairperson for about ten years in that time, finishing up being in that position in 1982/83.

Next motorcycle was a 380 cc CZ motocross bike, following this a 350cc Honda trail bike, then a 1965 BSA lightning. Then in 1985 I bought a 1967 Triumph Bonneville. This is when I joined the Vintage motorcycle club, in 1992, so I could ride in the Mt. Barker Hill climb, as it was then twenty five years old, a modern bike as I was informed about it at the time. I still own this machine.

Hill climbs and touring, bike restoration, all followed, a member of the Harley Owners Group, Bike shows, won a few, with my Norton 750 cc Commando, my 1939 WL Harley Davidson 45 cii, then I restored a 1918 Harley Davidson J model F. 1000 cc twin, this did win some shows, and I attended the Albany, Kingaroy Queensland, Parkes NSW, Ararat Victoria, Nuriootpa South Australian and Manjimup biannual veteran rallies with this machine.



This is where I got into the Albany section committee in 2009 prior to the Albany veteran Rally. I became vice chairperson in about 2011 and chairperson in about 2015, helping Shirley with the Salvation Army charity runs and then organising them with all the help from the section for the next nine years until retiring from the chair in 2022.

Becoming a life member in 2022. mainly thanks to having such a great committee and club members surrounding me.



Murray Barnard: *Murray was awarded Life Membership in 2020.*



To start with, I'll tell what I was led to believe was my story up until I was about forty years old. I was born in Carlton, Melbourne in 1952 and my parents upped and moved to Perth when I was six months old. My Father came from an old Perth family and they were returning home. He worked at WD & HO Mills in Murray St. We travelled on the Stratheden from Melbourne across the Bight. The trip was rough and apparently my pram rolled out of the cabin and hit the rail, with me in it. That could have made for a rather short life story. My first memory is from the family home in Roberts Road Subiaco opposite the footy oval. The next is from Clearview Ave in Mt Yokine where my parents bought their first home, a two bed asbestos house. The streets were sand, no paths and down the road it was all bush. Nollamara was yet to be built & Wanneroo Road/North Beach Road was all egg farms. Not many shops, milk, bread delivered and a vegie truck came past once a week. We used to roam everywhere barefoot, Dog Swamp was a favourite place to play amongst the car bodies. We used to play around the North Beach Bus Terminal and walk the plank over the oil sump. Then one day my Dad came home early from work. He'd lost his job in the 1960 mini- depression. He was 56. Then we lost the house. We moved to a big rented house in Roberts Road Subiaco where my Mum ran a boarding House. Many of the lodgers came from Clontarf. Later I realised they had been brought out from England as kids and told they were orphans. I roamed

everywhere, barefoot, all over Kings Park, into the City & played with friends who also went to Thomas St State School. Most of the kids there were migrants from all over Europe.

Housing was cheap in West Perth, Subi and Leederville then. All was good until Eric Cooke decided to terrorise the City. We slept in unlocked sleepouts then. He murdered a woman in Thomas St and dragged her body up the lane and dumped it in Carolyn Noble's backyard. This was behind my best friend's place in West Perth. Living opposite the gates to Subi Oval it was pretty busy on weekends and my dog used to run on the oval and chase the ball. They used to chase it off and everyone thought it was a laugh. My dog used to race the cars from our place to Townshend Road. Kirwan Ward in the Daily News wrote an article about him one day and how he enjoyed having a race with him from May St to Townshend Road on the way home. Eventually, I started at Perth Modern School and boy was that an impressive place. I enjoyed school there, but the fun came to a sudden end. My folks packed up and moved us to a two bed weatherboard State Housing house in Scarborough. My Mum was sixty-five and running the boarding house was getting to be too much. On the positive side we did have a TV and a car, a Skoda, one of the cheapest around.

Scarborough was on the edge of the City even then. It was bush up the road, Karrinyup didn't exist. The only suburbs North of us were North Beach and Sorrento along the coast. The road ended at Sorrento. I went to Scarborough Senior High School and what a shock. Discipline was non-existent, the teachers could not control the classes, there were fights (rumbles) in the quadrangles every day and a lot of bullying. My education faltered then and barely recovered. My Father died in 1966, when I was fourteen years old, this really knocked me around and my confidence was shattered. I somehow stayed at school and finished Fifth Year and matriculated. My Mother worked at a factory in North Perth at times to help; but, basically we were very poor. I got my first pair of long pants to go to work. I couldn't afford to go to University. I passed the Commonwealth Selection test and started work at Swan Barracks, Headquarters Western Command in Francis St, Perth. The job was menial clerical work to start with but at least it paid something and I stuck to it like glue as we had nothing else to fall back on then. I was seventeen years old and my Mother was now seventy years old! The Vietnam War was raging, my hair was down to my shoulders and I was working arm in arm with enlisted men & officers. It gave me an interesting insight into the military & I soon knew I never wanted to be called up for National Service. A lot of my friends were Communist and marched against the war, I was more conservative than them and didn't share their views; but, I still wonder what my ASIO file looks like! My Mother drove us around in the Skoda, until my brother rolled it and wrote it off! My Mother was a terrible driver and I swore I'd never drive a car and put



people at risk as a result. Then when I turned eighteen, a friend at work said he was selling his motorcycle for \$200, would I like it. I thought, "well, it is not a car, I am only putting myself at risk, so OK!"

It was a 100cc Yamaha YL1. He taught me how to ride. I rode it everywhere & then finally got my license. I rode to Augusta and Katanning, freedom at last! The trip to Katanning killed it, the big end bearing went whilst sitting at 60mph coming home!

I wanted a Kawasaki. I was impressed by their rotary valve twins, so I went to Kevin Cowie's in Canning Highway. He was a good salesman, They had no Samurais in stock. "How about one of these new F7 175cc trailbikes instead," he said. I walked out with a new F7! I was a callow youth of 18. I took it for a blast along the South Perth foreshore, it was just grass fields then and the odd swamp. Tearing across the wet grass on a brand new bike a drainage ditch came up out of nowhere. Somehow, I pulled up in time without destroying myself and the bike. My best mate, Carl, bought himself a Triumph 250 and it blew up almost immediately after a run around the Herne Hill scrambles course! Herb Watson traded it in as a box of bits and sold him a Kawasaki F7. We went on our first big trip, to Kalgoorlie in July, it was bloody freezing. The chain link came apart near Coolgardie so my mate towed me into Kalgoorlie in the middle of the night. We came back by train.

Next big trip, we put the Kwackas on the train and shipped them to Melbourne. I had a pen pal in the Gippsland and we were going to see her. We rode out to Orbost (it was July 1972) and we bloody froze. From Orbost we rode to Bega in NSW and went up Mt Brown at night. As we went up, it got colder & colder. We stopped at Nimmitabel, hands and extremities freezing. We only had WA Winter gear which was useless. Next day in Cooma we bought some ski gear gloves to try and keep our fingers from aching! We headed up the Snowies to Smiggin Holes, it was blowing a blizzard. We got covered in snow and riding was a challenge. Snow got in my boots and we froze but it was the 1st time we had seen snow. On the way back down we had to stop and light a fire to thaw my foot out. We rode back to Orbost via the Cann Valley and thence back to Melbourne and Perth. The little Kwackas sat at 55mph all day but once back in Perth, whilst showing off to girls, both my mate's bike and mine gave up the ghost!

Jack Findlay had won the Ulster GP on a 500 Suzuki (the first two stroke to win a Senior GP) so I wanted one. My mate Carl followed suit. We were soon hitting the streets on new T500J Titans. Off to Geraldton and then to Esperance and Albany, the 500s were great tourers. We were riding into Esperance looking for a Caravan Park to camp at and a police-car pulled us up and checked us over. "We don't like your type here," he said! We both were Government workers and as ordinary as could be, so I guess perhaps he didn't like Suzukis? Maybe? We ran out of fuel at Jerramungup on Xmas Day, nothing was open, but we were bitten by the touring bug.

Come March 1973, we loaded up the Titans with everything but the kitchen sink, kissed the girls goodbye, and headed out across the Nullarbor. The road was unsealed from Eucla to Penong and was bloody rough, the road littered with broken down cars, burnt out trucks and rolled over buses. The Suzukis just droned on unperturbed. We got to Melbourne and my mate Carl asked to check his front brake. I rode off down the road and put the brake on hard, what I had overlooked was bluemetal on the road, the brake locked up and I went down hard. T-shirt only, no jacket and no gloves! My right hand was deeply cut, my elbow torn and bleeding and my back all gravel rash and bleeding. Went to hospital and was stitched up and patched as best as possible and then rode the next day on to Orbost & Marlo in the Gippsland. A very painful ride for me.

We went looking for a girl we knew at the Marlo Pub. At the pub the girls all wanted a ride, so my mate Carl agreed and took one out on the Cape Conran Road. He never came back. I found them on a sharp bend, he had run off the road, compound fractured his leg, the girl head injured, they were airlifted out to Melbourne. I was devastated and visited him in Austin Hospital. He was there for eighteen months. I went back to Orbost, rode up to Bega to visit my penfriend. She helped me soak my t-shirt off in the bath as it had stuck to my weeping back injury. I went on to Canberra and then returned to Melbourne. Carl & I never got to Bathurst for the Easter races.





Quorn SA



Omeo Vic



Mt Kosciusko Road NSW



Tom Groggin NSW



Bogan High Plain Vic

Back in Perth, I decided to go road racing. Safer than touring perhaps, who knows where my head was at that time? Bought some racing leathers at Lloyd Chapman's in Guildford Road at Bayswater. Rode to the track, took the lights off and sidestand and went racing on the Titan, then ride home again. Jim Howe at Pal & Panther in Angove St North, Perth sponsored me. He gave me 250 Hustlers and T500s to race. I raced at Geraldton, did four 3 Hour Production Races and numerous other events over the years at Wanneroo, mainly on 500s.

1974, two-up with my girlfriend, Evelyn, I headed off East, yet again. I loved exploring the dirt roads in the Flinders, the scenery was spectacular and also enjoyed the coastal ride from SA to Melbourne, Sydney and on to Canberra and the Snowies, to the top of Mt Kosciusko, over the Bogong High Plains, down the Tambo River to Melbourne and back to Adelaide and finally home. The T500 never missed a beat.

In 1975, Evelyn and I got married and we settled down in Gosnells, near where her folks lived. We bought a very old two bed Asbestos, weatherboard & iron house which previously had been a chook farm, The place was riddled with termites, despite having had it inspected before purchasing, but it was home, and we owned it, my first since my parents lost theirs in 1960. To get a loan then you had to have 20% deposit, interest rates were high, but even though we had 2 incomes (Evelyn was a school teacher) yet they wouldn't give us a loan for the full purchase price (\$21,500). We had to take out a second mortgage to get the property.

Meanwhile, I built a 125 Suzuki racer using Bultaco TSS fairing and seat & TM racing parts. It went quite well. Then Jim gave me a GT250 Suzuki to race. It was slower and heavier than the Hustler. Pushing it hard on crappy tyres in over 38C heat in a 3 Hour Production race, the back tyre let go and the bike cartwheeled off the track. I was out for a bit and had a broken collar-bone. I was encouraged to give it up for a while, being newly married.

So, time to retire the T500 & I bought a brand new 1975 GT750 M Model Suzuki. Went like stink, sounded great with a 3 into 1 Bromlech pipe and handled well, especially with a passenger. Rode it to Kalbarri one Easter and rode it back leant over nearly all the way, against the wind blowing in from the Ocean, when a cyclone came in on the way home. Later we put a Dusting sidecar on and loaded up, headed two-up for Ayers Rock. Near Salmon Gums the sidecar wheel bearing collapsed, so we unhitched the chair and headed over the Nullarbor without it, Evelyn on the pillion.

1977, I went a bit silly and bought a brand new Suzuki GS750 four cylinder four stroke. My first four stroke. "Best handling Japanese bike" the mags said. It was the only bike I've ever had that went into a tank-slapper at speed. That was no fun! I got rid of it quick smart.

I wanted something that handled. I was riding through town when I spied a glorious looking silver-blue 850 le Mans at a bike shop. I had always lusted after a big Guzzi. This one was resplendent in metallic blue with a fluorescent orange headlight fairing. I looked superb and shone. It sounded great, went great and handled great. I had found my dream machine! It took a while to get used to. It is said, ride a Guzzi once and you will hate it. Ride it for two weeks and you will never part with it! I still have mine, it is still a joy to ride 46 years later & has had no major work done to it.

By this time, I was the Military Secretary in HQ 5th Military District, responsible for the administration of Officer employment in WA, Army Reserve & Regular. It was great job & satisfying to achieve good outcomes for the senior command in WA. I had a team of Army Reserve Officers to assist me in Officer career planning and Captain Owen Page joined the team. What a great team we made. I enjoyed working with Owen and he encouraged me to join the VMCCWA eventually. I still counted Owen as a friend over forty years later.

The Guzzi was used as a commuter to the City every day (rain or shine) & on weekends as a tourer. Nungarin, Marvel Loch, Denmark, Stirlings, Black Duck Rallies, the le Mans went everywhere, often two-up.





Racing Suzuki T500 and
TR500s late 1980s-early
1990s



My first son, Michael was born in 1980 and having a newborn was a welcome distraction, but working full-time, often at night with the Army reserve and studying at Uni, also at night, during the week was too much. I wasn't that thrilled at Business Studies anyway, so dropped Uni. I didn't realise it at the time, but, Michael was the first I ever knew who was related to me.

1981, and a group of us from the West Coast Motorcycle Touring Club took off for a run to the Kimberley, Darwin and back. I took the le Mans. Carl took his Guzzi 850 T3, Clyde his Kawasaki Z650, Cathy her BMW R65 & Shane his Laverda 1000 Jota. A far cry from today's big road/trail adventure bikes which tackle sealed roads all the way. In brief, we burbled our way to Broome, then Fitzroy Crossing, where there was no fuel. Went to Geikie Gorge, a really sandy track, then on to Brooking Springs station where we got some fuel. Then onto the notorious unsealed road to Halls Creek. Halfway, Kathy fell off and was taken by a passing car to Halls Creek to recover. Shane rode to Halls Creek, hitched a ride back, recovered the BMW and we all spent a few days in Halls Creek & even saw Wolf Creek Crater in a plane, which barely got off the gravel strip with us all aboard! We continued on to Darwin and Kakadu and because of a fuel truck strike down the Centre had to return to Perth the same way. We survived the Halls Creek Road again and this time took off through the Oscar Range for Tunnel Creek. The road was just a track. Went to Windjana Gorge and then to Derby. Back to Perth via Broome and Dampier. The le Mans never missed a beat, was covered in red dust and I was glad to be home again in one piece.

Our second son, Graham, was born in 1983. We were now a nuclear family with a cat and a dog thrown in. We decided we needed a bigger house and preferably one without termites that would stand up in the wind. We bought a brick house in Parkwood for \$53,000. By now I was also busy at night studying Art and Design.

In 1985 I was selected to do a twelve month Commonwealth Management program which took me to Canberra frequently for long periods. Not long after this program I was selected for a position as Personnel Manager for the Australian Taxation Office at 1 St Georges Tce. Nick Gye, who is now a Club member was a member of my team. By now I was commuting on a number of cheap second hand machines. I had two Honda CX500s, a GSX750 Suzuki & a Yamaha XJ750. They were all good town bikes.

About this time I joined the VMCCWA as I had a brace of Panther 250, 350 and 600 Panthers, I also started writing for the Australasian Classic Motorcycle magazine run by Steve Hazelton. I did a number of articles on VMCCWA Club activities & Historic Racing & enjoyed test rides on Manx Nortons, BSA Gold Stars, Vincents, an NSU Sportsmax and a Bultaco TSS 350 among many machines. This of course kickstarted my racing career again and, still sponsored by Pal & Panther, we built a racing Suzuki T500 for historic racing. Soon I had a spare T500 racer as well & eventually a Woodley framed TR500 Suzuki.

My Mother, Betty, died in 1985 & soon after my life changed, markedly. I visited a very elderly aunt in hospital, with my brother, and she had a visitor we didn't know. As we walked in our very frail aunt said, "this is Betty's adopted sons, Murray and Ron." I was hardly surprised by my Aunt's outburst about being adopted. I had always felt that there was something odd about me. I shared no interests with my parents or brother, nor appearances looks, personality, or habits. People who knew my brother often commented on how different we were when they met me. My parents were also too old. I quizzed a much older "cousin" about being adopted and got the, "we thought you knew," response. So, I was intrigued but couldn't do anything about it as adoption records were not accessible.

Then, suddenly, in 1990, Victoria opened up adoption records. So I enquired and eventually received papers which included my original birth certificate and transcripts of interviews at the time. I was handed over to my adoptive parents at 6 weeks of age. Then started the long search for my birth Mother as I only had her maiden name. It took a fair while but finally I tracked her down in 1992 and she was welcoming and overjoyed. I went to Melbourne to meet her and four of my half brothers. When I met my Mother, I was aged forty, it was like looking into a mirror! Very disturbing but also reassuring in a way.

Looking back, this whole episode was stressful & unsettling, although at the time I didn't realise how much. I had been mislead all my life & I didn't know who the real me was. Who was my Father? The truth is, searching for your birth family comes at a cost, psychologically & personally.

I am going to jump over a few things here as the story is dragging. 1993, I was racing the Suzuki TR500 at Wanneroo and the bike was absolutely flying. Heading in the hairpin at over 80mph the bike hit the ground in an instant! I was fully leaned over and the bar hit the ground and slammed back into my wrist. The bike and I speared off the track. A Norton had dropped oil all around the track. It is invisible at racing speeds. I had fallen victim to it and so did 10 other riders. Bill Whitworth & I were carted off to hospital. The bike was badly damaged. 1994 and back racing, this time at Midland "Round the Houses, more a display than a race, but no-one told us. I hung up my leathers after that meeting. My pit crewman had retired and it just wasn't viable any longer.

Instead of going around in circles, Jacqui & I decided to travel overseas instead. First stop in 1996 was Bali, to acclimatise to the challenges of overseas travel. We spent time at Ubud and visited some really interesting temples. It

was a lot quieter there then than it is now. Next, in 1997, we flew to Thailand and then on to Kathmandu. Flying into Nepal was spectacular; but scary, as the approach is across high mountain ranges with a steep descent into Kathmandu. We knew we were in foreign climes as Nepal was nothing like anything we had experienced before. The temples and palaces were like a mystic land and services were primitive. After being urinated upon by monkeys at the King's palace and getting very sick with Kathmandu belly, we boarded a bus for a terrifying ride through the mountains to Pokhara, the home of the Gurkhas. From Pokhara we headed out to Baglung by taxi. The ride was equally terrifying, winding up mountain roads. The taxi was an old Corolla and I think the only thing that worked in it was the horn! From Baglung we commenced our trek up the Kali Gandaki, a sacred river which traverses the deepest valley in the world. We would walk between Dhauligiri, one of the highest mountains in the world, Annapurna and Nilgiri. We carried our own backpacks and stayed in teahouses at night. It was bloody cold at night. The trek was ever upwards and there were many Hindu pilgrims on the path. We reached as far as Kag Beni on the border of Mustang. Nearly 10,000' up, it was bitterly cold; but the snow covered Himalaya was spectacular.

Jacqui & I, were now living in Ferndale, on the edge of the Canning River reserve and a short walk to Kent St Weir. By now, I was a senior officer in the ATO with staff all around the country and doing a lot of interstate travel. In 2000 I received a mysterious email enquiring about the Dendtler family. Dendtler, I had discovered was my Father's name, but his whereabouts were unknown. In 1996 I had placed a request on a geneology site for any information anyone may have. Following up the email I found that it was from a half sister whose Father was actually mine! I could hardly believe it. There was a half brother and another half sister as well. All in Queensland! My birth father was living in Cardwell, opposite Hinchinbrook island. We soon flew over to meet him and my sisters. Fortunately he was overjoyed. he had never wanted me adopted and had employed a Private Investigator to find me at the time. He gave up when he was informed that my adopted parents had gone interstate. (In all likelihood they had fled back to WA, when they realised, as they were well overage to adopt).

It was amazing to meet my birth Father and siblings, we were all so much alike. Regardless it was stressful and distance to Cairns made it difficult.

Travelling in Australia, we did a run out to Mt Augustus in 2001 and up the Centre and through the Kimberley in 2002. In 2004 I quit my job at the ATO, as the interstate travel was gruelling and again, I was unsettled after the reunion with my birth Father. Jacqui and I went around Australia for six months in 2005, towing a campervan. To survive I did consultancy work for a few years. In 2006 I volunteered to maintain the VMCCWA website. It needed a complete re-design and I saved the Club \$600 a year in domain name and hosting fees, by negotiating a new package. At this time we also moved up to Roleystone. In 2007 we went on a fascinating tour with the Australian War Memorial to Gallipoli and the Western Front. We followed it up by a most enjoyable five weeks driving around the UK and exploring heritage sites. In 2009, I took up a position as Personnel Manager at the Immigration Department. I stayed there 4 years before retiring. Bitten by the European travel bug, in



2010 we travelled to Italy, Berlin, Wales, England, Normandy & Brittany. We enjoyed the Italian Moto GP at Mugello as well. Boy, the Italians sure know how to party! Went riding, for the first time, on the right-hand side of the road in East Germany as well on a Suzuki GT750. In 2012 we towed a caravan across the Nullarbor to visit family on my birth Mother's side in Victoria and Canberra. We also toured around Tasmania. By now I was retired. In 2013 we went to the Classic TT on the Isle of Man. It was an incredible experience and I recommend it to everyone. I was fortunate to meet Martin Crooks from Crooks Suzuki and also Frank Whiteway who won the 1970 Production TT on a Suzuki T500.

Nic Montagu and I shared a love of the Suzuki T500 and we soon had a bike on the track at Collie and another at the Albany Hill Climb. Soon a land Speed racer based on the T500, with TR500 specs, was built to take to Lake Gairdner in South Australia. In 2014 we travelled to lake Gairdner for the annual event. Despite the plus 40C heat and some teething problems, Nic took the land speed record for the class at a tad under 125mph. The biggest lesson was how hard it was to race on the salt.

All the rest is history, lots more travel, some of the most interesting being to Iceland (the landscape is amazing) and to Sicily where we went up Mt Etna and also out to Stromboli. In 2019 we went up the Great Central Highway to Uluru and then across the top and back down through the Kimberley. The Great Central Highway was rough as guts and I wouldn't recommend that to anyone. We broke a spring on the camper trailer and travelled 800kms to Alice Springs with a piece of wood keeping the wheel off the chassis!

2020 and Covid hit and we were housebound mainly. That gave me the chance to build the online technical library for the Club, which is massive by the way, with over 2,600 publications on there, as big as the main library catalogue! The Roley TT and Gypsy Tour, at Albany/Denmark, are now Club Calendar fixtures. I churn out the Vintage Chatter and maintain the websites and Club database. Twenty years on the job for the club and 10 years on the management Committee! Jacqui loves her gardening and I clean the cat trays. It all helps to keep the mind alive.

I have websites on classic motorcycling and riding and racing Suzuki T500s. These websites have had a huge following and have given me the chance to visit fellow motorcyclists overseas, especially in Britain and Germany. I have a website dedicated to the A-Z of Motorcycles which has taken 35 years to compile. There are over 8,000 marques of motorcycle on there along with pictures. I have written an 800 page book on the A-Z of Motorcycles as well. In 2024 I published a 300 page book on the 1926 Overland tour by members of the WA Harley Club. The book makes a great record of an extraordinary motorcycling adventure.

I also keep myself busy colourising and enhancing old photographs of Perth and Western Australia. I have done at least 4,000. They have been compiled into books which are on the NLA Trove site. I am now in the throes of writing a book on my experience of growing up as an adopted child and the traumatic experience of late adoption discovery.





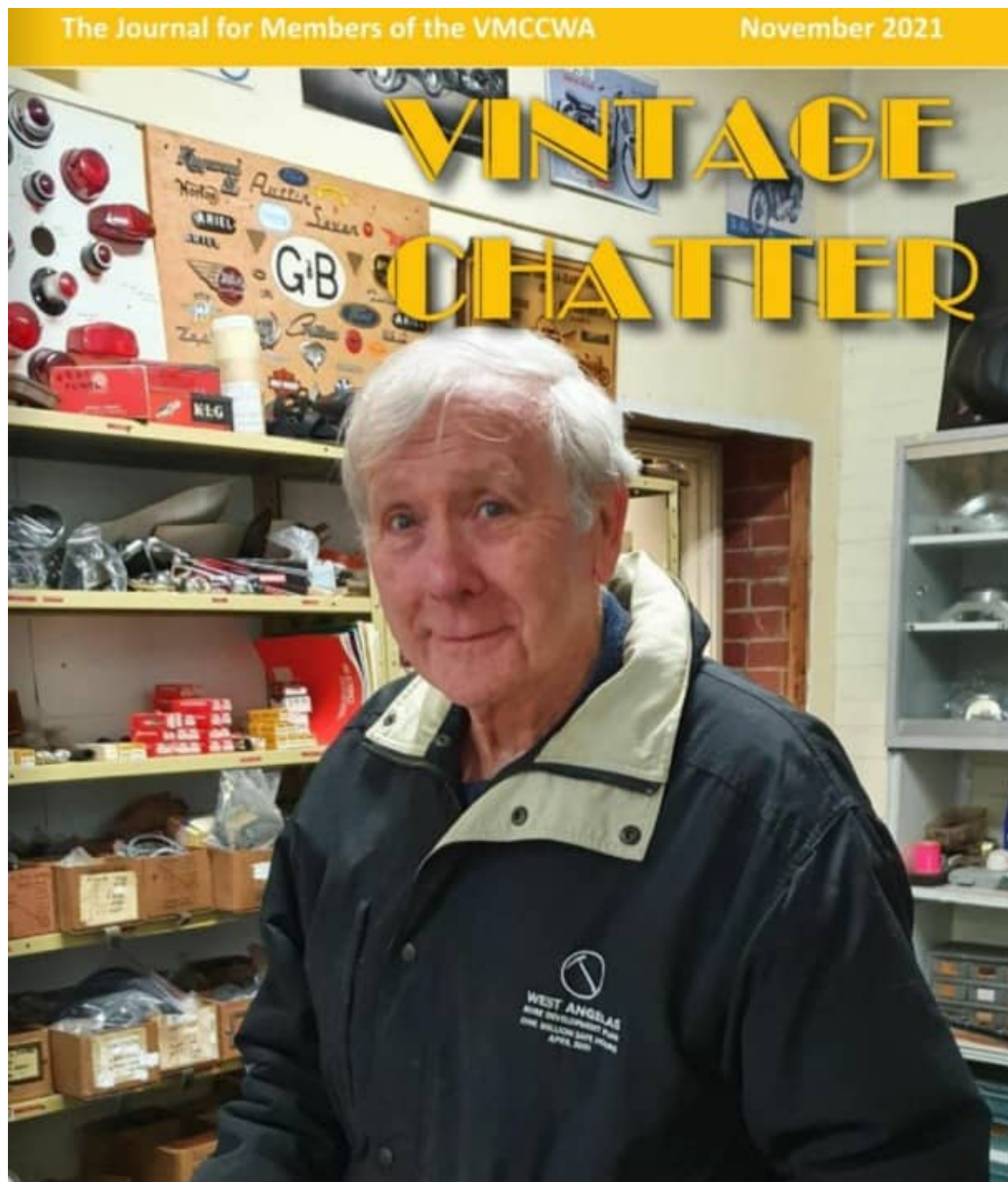
Old Iron 2024



Chas Bayley: *Chas was granted Life Membership at the 2022 AGM.*

Chas has been a steady hand in the Parts Store for many years bringing a wealth of knowledge to the role. Hard working and generous, Chas has been a pillar of strength in the Parts Store being good humoured, willing to help and putting in a lot of time to provide a service to all Club Members.

Chas has also run the Dam Early Run for many years and with the help of Karen has provided breakfast as well to the many happy riders on this event. Little more has to be said, Chas is a popular choice and deserving of Life Membership.



1957 was the era of my life with motorcycles. I was an addicted angler at the age of sixteen and it was usual for me to cycle, treadle eight to ten miles to local lakes and rivers in the Essex countryside in England.

I discovered through schoolmates that I could buy a motorbike and a provisional license and after attaching L plates front and rear on the bike I would be allowed to teach myself to control a motor vehicle in traffic on the road and go fishing with little expended effort in the leg department. Also I could go to school in the week, parking in a side street, not in the school grounds.

A school friend told me of a motorbike he had seen in an alley next to a local house with a piece of carpet covering it from the weather. At this time I had a newspaper round, starting at six o'clock in the morning before school, for about \$1 for seven days!

From this, I had saved five pounds, with money in hand, I knocked on the door of the house and became the proud owner of a 1934 Triumph Tiger 90. Painted black all over with white stripes each side of the guards and a letterbox slotted headlight, wartime modifications, soon removed with paint stripper, tank was chrome under paint. The bike started and ran well but the battery was cactus, a second hand battery was sourced and feeble lighting glimmered from the headlight! On starting the bike the lights went out the battery had been fitted the wrong way round, the dynamo sucked instead of blowing! Trap for the unwary. That was my initiation into motorcycling, it got easier!

A few more modern bikes later, a 1951 G9 matchless and a BSA B32 Goldie with clip-ons. It lasted 3 weeks, not good in traffic, too high first gear, big mistake! A 1957 Norton 88 dominator, see photo, traded in on car.

I became a car driver and was more successful with the girls, their parents did not seem to like motorcycles! Bought various makes of car, Austins, Morris, Jaguar, Ford, Mini Cooper and Cooper S, which I raced.

After meeting my last girlfriend who married me, we decided Australia was a good idea, as it turned to be!

While here in Perth the old racing bug bit again, I joined the WA Superkart Club bought a kart, told my wife it wasn't dangerous and raced at Waneroo. At the time we were two seconds a lap faster than Peter Brock and Alan Moffat!!!!



I was working a contract at Alcoa and met Les Webber who introduced me to the VMCCWA. I joined in 1986, I think, he loaned me a Yamaha RD400 and I went on the Brassmonkey Run to York and the rest is history, still a member.





Above: Chas and Chris Whisson on the Busselton Two Day
Below: Chas awarded his Life membership plaque by Les Voziatzakis



Jack Berkshire: Jack Berkshire was awarded Life Membership in 1991. Jack passed away in 2010.

John Eric Berkshire (aka Jack). OK, let's get one thing straight! The names Berkshire, Berk as in perk, shire as in wire. You're in Australia now, that's how we say it here! When I met Jack to gather material for his "Profile", I was given his scrapbooks which speak volumes about a wonderful life to date. Included was the following, written by Jack himself for some family members. So, here, with Jack's blessing, is his own profile. Jack was appointed as a Life Member in 1991.

The Years in Between 1922-2004 By Jack Berkshire: I was born at Goolwa in South Australia on 16/12/1922. I attended Goolwa Public School, I didn't like school much and left at age 13. I worked on a fishing boat (10/- per week + keep) during the hauling season, spending 3 months catching mulloway, jumper mullet, small sharks and the odd stingray. Most of the fishing was done at night with 4 men on the net. Doing a man's share was obviously very hard work for a 13 year old.

I turned 14 in 1936 and started work in Sharpe's garage where I stayed for the next 5 years, spending 2 and a half years as an Apprentice Mechanic during that time. Rex Tilbrook and Trevor Richardson were making motorcycle accessories, number plates, license holders and so on in the garage next door. Rex later designed the Tilbrook sidecar & motorcycle. My wages in the garage were better than on the fishing boat at 15/- a week. In addition to working at the garage I worked in the local town power supply one night a week, earning a further 5/-, washed the local hostel's 1938 Dodge automobile (earning 2/-) and cut wood for the local blacksmith (for a further 2/- and morning tea and cake). I also did a morning milk round on a push bike at 6am for 7/6 week – a bugger of a job, sometimes I'd help to deliver beer too. I didn't like the local cop much during this time.

Goolwa was a quiet town some 80km from Adelaide which gradually became busier and never looked back after building barrages to block out salt water from going up stream, a project that 'buggered' the local fishing industry but brought other benefits to the town. During this time I had enlisted in the 18th Light Horse Machine Gun Regiment, though I had never ridden a horse before, I joined up as a Motorcycle Dispatch Rider (Elect). I did three Army camps at Cheltenham Racecourse, Warmdale and Woodside. I used my 1938 250cc Royal Enfield for dispatch work, I could see my Army career as a 'chocco', a soldier going nowhere, so I joined the RAAF between 1941-45. My time in the RAAF included basic training at Laverton in Victoria, a course I didn't need as I knew all about rifle and machine-gun drill as well as marching from my Army time. Drill in the Air Force was a joke, I wasn't even sure the old .303s would fire a shot if they had to. I was then posted to Port Pirie, South Australia, a bombing station with Fairey Battles. Next I went to Mallala, also in South Australia, aircraft on the station included Avro Ansons and Airspeed Oxford trainers. I was then posted overseas as a fuel tanker driver, posted to New Guinea and the South West Pacific areas between 1943-45. I served at Milne Bay, Kiriwiwa, the Los Negros Islands and Hollandia in Dutch New Guinea. I received my discharge from the Air Force in 1945.

I worked in South Australia Railways before returning to Goolwa to work on the barrages there. In 1947, putting my trust in the Lord, I took my 1927 Rugby across the Nullarbor heading for Kalgoorlie. There were no roadhouses, no bitumen roads and I had 4 retread tyres and no money. 6 trouble free days later and I was there. I started on the Great Boulder Mine as an underground trucker, it was hard work for good money but ultimately not for me (living underground is for rabbits!). Leaving the mine I signed up with the WA Police Force on 02/07/1948 for 6 months. In the event I stayed with the Force for 34 years, retiring on February 1982. I did my recruit training in Perth, a 3 month course, then served at Mundaring for 8 months during the building of the extension of the Mundaring Weir walls. It was a busy time as we had a lot of migrant workers, some who hated each other based on wartime relations between their countries of origin.

My transport for Police work was my private motorcycle, a 1941 BSA ex Army M20. I was paid 6p a mile and it was possible to increase the mileage by spinning the front wheel while the rest of the bike was propped on a stand, but I ask you - would I do that? This was a good posting and a solid start to my Police career. In 1949 I was transferred to



Kalgoorlie as the other officer returned to work from sick leave (related to polio I believe). We were in Kalgoorlie for 5 years on General Duties and it wasn't terribly exciting aside from the odd fight to break up. One large event was the crash of an MMA Dove aircraft near Kalgoorlie, the crash claimed the lives of all on board. The scene was a mess but we had plenty of helpers called 'field flies', millions of them, they stuck to everything and crawled everywhere, eyes, nose and mouth included, growing worse each day.

In 1954 we were transferred to Boyup Brook, having sold the BSA I bought a 1936 Ford 10 Sedan and drove down from Kalgoorlie, For a quiet little town Boyup Brook was full of incidents - suicides, fatal traffic accidents, people lost in the bush at Wilga, bush fires, breaking and entering cases and one particularly tough case to deal with - a young school boy crushed to death by a log hauling timber truck. Being a small town we knew many of the locals and such cases were tough, as was the death of my car club friend, Philip Pasquale, when he 'wrapped' his Mark One Zephyr around a tree, extracting the body was very hard and just as sad. Speed was a factor in that accident and many others just as it is today.

More sadness was to come when a young farm boy fell in love with a lass while attending Church Fellowship meetings, unfortunately his feelings were unrequited and the young lady told him so. Shortly after he shot himself with a German Luger pistol, it was several days before we found him and the resulting job was unpleasant in the extreme. Perhaps the most memorable event during my time in Boyup Brook was shortly after my arrival in 1954 when a young butcher, named John Arthur Hannan, went berserk. He was a big, powerful chap who could hold out an axe at arm's length for a long time. The axe in question was always razor sharp - Hannan also loved to show school children how he could shave hairs off his arm with the blade, a trick known to log choppers across the country. Unfortunately Hannan was a mean drunk, one night he came home very drunk and after a huge row with his wife, grabbed his axe and proceeded to chop up his boss' weather board house, causing large amounts of damage both inside and out. His boss, Sam Webb, living next door, challenged Hannan at which point Hannan smashed down several small trees before chasing Webb down the street. I believe he intended to smash up the hotel and butcher's shop too. Sam, meanwhile, ran into the other Police house for protection. Constable Jack Thurlow loaded the Police revolver and then approached Hannan who stood his ground, refusing to drop his axe, instead swinging it around in circles. It was at this point I was called to the scene and it was immediately obvious John Hannan needed to be disarmed, what wasn't quite so obvious though, was how. I noticed a piece of 3x2 timber near a new building site and thankfully it was dark, slowly lined up poor John then charged him. I had only one chance to hit him before he reacted, my blow was true and the timber hit him in the chest, breaking two ribs and causing him to drop the axe long enough for Thurlow and I to arrest and handcuff him. Even without the axe he was a tough proposition and put up a big fight, injuring my back and causing me to lose plenty of skin from the gravel road as we struggled. He was subsequently dealt with in Bunbury Court, receiving a 12 month jail sentence, a sad case as his wife was a lovely lady, but it showed all too well what too much wine could do. Constable Thurlow and I were both awarded Police Commendations and later a Queen's decoration - the British Empire Medal for Bravery, becoming the first WA Policemen to receive the B.E.M (Civil Division). I had known John Hannan from my Kalgoorlie days when I had had to serve several warrants on him for maintenance for his first wife. He was always quite friendly and at first I thought I might have been able to talk him into dropping the axe, but he clearly had no intention of doing that, and as lives were at stake we had to do what we did.

After that Boyup went back to normal, we played tennis and badminton, a Repertory Club was formed and I started the South West Car Club to give us some fun on weekends. Reluctantly in 1958 I was transferred to the Victoria Park Police Station and then to the plainclothes Liquor Branch in Perth for the next 5 years. A very different type of police work and one I didn't enjoy as much as I did that of a country station like Boyup Brook. After this I was transferred to Bunbury as a Uniformed Sergeant, a good posting. This changed when my son Barry had a serious and life threatening motorcycle accident at Butterworth Airbase, Penang. My wife Betty and I flew to Penang Island immediately and spent 10 days with Barry, the cost was borne by the Army. He was later invalided home to Hollywood Hospital and a long recovery process. With Barry in a hospital in Perth I applied for the vacant Sergeant's position on Traffic Patrol in Perth so Betty & I could be close to him. I also served on the Used Car Dealers Squad and then took on relieving duties at various Traffic Offices.

Between 1968-69 I served on the island of Cyprus (Cyprus is a small island next to Crete in the Mediterranean Sea) with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force as a Police Inspector. This was an interesting 12 months liaising with the Turk & Greek Cypriots and trying to help with their on-going problems.

Upon my return to Australia I resumed duties in the Traffic Branch and then finished my career at the Police Transport Section in 1982. I suppose I should mention my motorcycles and cars - my first motorcycle was a 1925 Douglas which

I rode every day. All my bikes had to be 'goers' not 'showers' and I have owned many bikes from a wide variety of manufacturers. The best bike is one that starts first kick on the day I ride it.

I joined the Vintage Car Club in 1964 and for years was an early member of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club of WA (Membership No. 5), riding the late Ernie Legg's Big X Outfit and a 1912 Triumph for years. I have ridden in every major rally in WA and many in South Australia and New Zealand too. I've been President and Patron of the VMCC and have served on all the committees, in addition I have been granted life membership to the club. I have watched the club grow from 10 or 12 members in 1964, attending meetings in school rooms and other makeshift places until we found our present Hale Road home. I often smile when I hear members stand up and say, 'You chaps who didn't ride missed a good day out' - I've been there and done that. I sincerely hope you can all ride flat tank 1927 Nortons and 1924 Sunbeams when you're 82 and a half years of age - if you're still riding at all. What I really miss in this Club are the members who have passed on, taking with them vast amounts of motorcycling knowledge and stories. Their names are too many to mention but we know who they were and I do try to think of them as I ride in events. I console myself with the thought that the 'Great Club in the Sky' is much richer for their knowledge and so are we. This is a brief story of the years in between, I hope there are still a few more left yet. Remember - Nobody values anything until they lose it.

FOOTNOTE: Once upon a time a substantial parcel arrived, unaddressed and unannounced on the porch of the Berkshire home. Our fearless crime fighter gave Betty instructions "Don't touch it! Or even go near it! It's possibly a bomb, or more likely it's full of goodies and there will be some clown with a camera close by to capture the moment when the incorruptible Jack Berkshire joins those who accept payoffs" So the parcel sat in solitary splendour for several days, without exploding. Curiosity eventually prevailed; very early one morning Sherlock Berkshire went to investigate. Check-no one around - quick, have a look and BINGO! " it's a Christmas hamper which is quickly taken inside, emptied into various cupboards, box in the recycling bin, what a win! A few days later, a neighbour hailed Jack, explained he worked most of his life for a national company, who, in recognition of his long and faithful service, sent him a deluxe hamper every Christmas. Had Jack by any chance, seen such a hamper?

Adrian White/ Sheryl Johnson



John Boyd: John was awarded Life Membership in 1994, John passed away in 2003.

John Boyd was appointed as a Life Member in 1994 in recognition of his assistance with building and maintaining the Club Library. John was elected to the Club Management Committee in 1988. John officially became the Club Librarian in 1989 and held the position for many years. John was proactive in ensuring the Club procured an Honour Board in 1997. In 2000 new lighting was installed in the parts store by John Boyd.

John grew up in Brookton with his three brothers. They moved to the city where John met Noreen, and they were married, built a home in Lathlain where they lived for most of their life, having three daughters along the way. John was a motor cycle enthusiast, becoming a life member of the Harley Club before joining the Vintage Club in the late seventies. He joined the Committee in 1988 and became librarian in 1989. The club had just gained a new parts store with a large room for the library, where this had previously been a large cupboard in the corner of our first small parts shed. When Peter Groucott passed away in 1990 he left a large library to the club. Many of the older and rare books had come from Len Dean. Len was a member of the Harley Club and had taken part in that clubs 1926 – 27 Overland trip to Sydney and back, he was the treasurer and diarist on the event and it was his photo at Madura Pass that became the basis for the later black and white poster. He had a comprehensive library which passed to Peter and finally our club. John as the new librarian had the task of sorting through this windfall and sorting out the new room. He was assisted by Vic Richardson. John was a licensed electrician and the latter part of his life was self employed in his own business, and with John Rock also an electrician, did most of the work installing light and power to the new parts store and library. Always keen for a ride he took part on the 1983 New Zealand tour and the 1990 Overland tour sharing a 1944 Indian outfit with Jim Clark. John was a keen sidecarist and restored a 500 BSA with a Tillbrook sidecar and his pride and joy a vintage V twin Royal Enfield with a home-made sidecar. These two bikes took part in many national rallies throughout Australia. *Jim Clark*



Ron Chave: *Ron was awarded Life Membership in 2008. Ron passed away in 2024*

Ron's grandfather, Henry, immigrated to Albany W.A. by boat from England in 1911, included in the family was Ron's father, Cyril, then aged 5. The Chaves became farmers in Katanning, but farming the vast, hot acres of W.A. was a far cry from English farming practices and the venture was not successful. A move to Perth followed and Henry went into business as a general carrier with horse and cart. Cyril took over when Henry retired, operating from the family home in Mt Hawthorn which also had a stable behind the house. Swan Brewery was one of Cyril's clients, through good times and bad, there's a demand for beer especially in a port city like Fremantle, a daily stop for Cyril. The business moved into the twentieth century in 1935 with the purchase of a 1928 Chevrolet truck.

Ron was born on 29th July 1933 and his proud parents Maude and Cyril apparently liked having him around, as they went on to produce for Ron three brothers and one sister. The young Ron attended Mt Hawthorn State School and progressed to Perth Junior Tech; he quite enjoyed school and was an average student – his own assessment there! School days over, and Ron's first job was with West Cycles in James St, where he learned to assemble wheels and gained useful experience in the paint shop. This was a job, not a career, and in 1949 Ron was very happy to be apprenticed to builder Sid Oulds in Victoria Park, where he served his time as a carpenter. A reluctant appearance in the Perth Children's Court cost Ron the (then) princely sum of ten shillings (\$1.00). And to exactly what awful misdemeanour did this seemingly model citizen plead, guilty, your honour? Riding his bicycle on the footpath, no less! Ron was pretty keen on the push bike though and equipped with his new Swansea cycle he joined Western Districts Cycle Club. A leading light there was Jack Cassidy, in whose barber shop club meetings were held, and considerable guile was employed to sit in the barber's chair, the very best seat in the house. Ron did win one trophy with the club, after presentation to him it was taken away for engraving and he's still awaiting its return.



Pedal power gave way to petrol power in 1950. Ron was offered a 1937 BSA Empire Star for £50. The bike had been raced at Brooklands and was something of a bitzer, but Ron agreed to buy it, took it home, hid it in the shed and then asked father for the money. And of course, father initially said "No". Fortunately he later relented, after giving our would-be motorcyclist some anxious moments. In 1951, national service required Ron's talents. This proved to be a very enjoyable interlude and Ron's opinion, is that every eighteen year old should be so called up. The Empire Star made way for a 1949 Ariel twin. Anzac House in St Georges Terrace hosted regular dances, and after finishing "Nashos" Ron attended these and caught the eye of the charming young Trish Nash, a machinist for Mercier Modes. The attraction was mutual and they married in 1955. Trish's older sisters had already gone out with motorcyclists, thus breaking down the usual parental barriers somewhat, and Trish's dad had always said "marry a tradesman".

A 1937 Chev ute replaced the Ariel but not before Ron had a nasty spill. Working in Pantapin, he'd done some repairs on the bike and took it for a test ride on a local track (gravel), rounded a corner, hit a boulder and woke up in Quairading Hospital wondering where on earth he was, both Ron and Ariel battered and bruised. A trip with a mate, with his tuned up Matchless, for road racing in Bunbury didn't quite go as planned. They arrived hungry, and cruised the main street late on Saturday afternoon looking for a feed, but a U-turn saw the ladder rack on the side of the ute hook onto the awning of Cronshaw's Department Store, completely destroying said awning. Ron should have been a politician, "he can't remember" what they did next but admits its just possible they may have disentangled themselves and bolted.

Once married and wanting a home, this tradesman then made five thousand cement bricks! And built a garage, laundry and toilet on the block they'd purchased in Carlisle, living in this garage whilst Ron built the house. Their first son arrived in 1956, followed by two more sons and a daughter. Ron and Trish have eleven grand daughters and three grandsons. A BSA Bantam was pressed into service when the ute wasn't serviceable, but daily trips to a job in Rockingham with sugar bag over shoulder with nail bag, hammer, crowbar and handsaw didn't impress Ron one bit, and possibly was influential in replacing the old ute with a 1946 version. In 1964 Ron realised a dream and opened his own business and for the next 15 years was kept very busy contracting for State Housing Commission and Commonwealth Department of Works. Eventually Ron started as a supervisor with State Housing. The Carlisle home

was sold and Ron was rebuilding in Dianella, meanwhile renting in Bayswater. Rentals were in high demand and the awful place they managed to find in King William St (imagine a bath filling with sewerage through the plug hole!) prompted a hurried move. They'd built a double garage minus doors on the new block already so Ron decided late one afternoon to pick up materials in his trailer to frame up the garage opening to form a single door and window to make a mini house. Proudly he surveyed the finished product when the conversation went something like: "Um, ah, how are you planning to get the trailer out?"

Ron managed to manhandle the trailer in question on its side out of the single door. Ron and Trish moved to Derby SHC office in 1982. Trish enjoyed the freedom from looking after their now grown up family, but Ron didn't especially enjoy the change and they returned to Perth transferring to D.P.I as property maintenance officer. In 1984 a trip to the U.K. included seeing the Isle of Man T.T. (with Wayne Gardner on a 250) and Brands Hatch Historic Racing, also Biggin Hill, the famed W.W.II fighter base and now a museum. Ron knew a gentleman named John Boyd and found him to be a totally reliable and trustworthy electrician. John persuaded Ron to join the V.M.C.C. in 1990. There was a large quality steel framed building in Brown St East Perth which had to be demolished for the East Perth Redevelopment. Ron was impressed with the quality of the steelwork fabrication and hated the idea of turning it into scrap, so came up with the brainwave to have it relocated to Whiteman Park to house the wonderful collection of old tractors, then at the mercy of the elements. Officialdom were unimpressed but Ron was adamant, this was a fine building too good to scrap; this guy kept hounding the bureaucrats so eventually they gave the O.K. He arranged various quotes for these works and now Whiteman Park has a very fine asset. Ironically, when Ernie Bridge officially opened the building in 1992 one man didn't rate an invitation – Ron Chave.

It was a cold, wet and miserable 'flu affected Trish who asked Ron "How was it?" Ron's enthusiastic "Just so great, wonderful week darling!" was the last straw. Trish said there had better be a sidecar, and a sidecar there was and all is still well. There are in fact two sidecars for different occasions – a plunger BSA A10 for events affected by the twenty year rule and a Honda 750 with Goanna, a very comfy outfit. Also in the shed a 1951 Ariel Ron rebuilt and his Montesa 250 he rides in hill climbs. A mobile caravan has been added to the fleet and has provided some wonderful times, often in company with club members. Ron built the house in Noranda, placing the Dianella house on the market which produced a quick sale. Both keep busy, a woman's work is never done they say, and Trish finds time to produce beadwork for all the grand daughters and also makes some nice folk art and teddy bears. Ron keeps busy with his well maintained bikes and there are frequent calls for a carpenter from the family. Ron's very modest about being named "Clubman of the Year" at this year's trophy giving, but his name was not drawn out of a hat. He's a very regular participant in all club events, but much more than that, when there's chairs to be stacked, Ron does it, when there's the tent to be put up or down, there is Ron again and no one has even asked him to do it.



Norm Chester: *Norm was awarded Life membership in 2017.*

For many years Norm was active as the Club machine examiner, a role he conducted with aplomb. Heaven help anyone who didn't prepare their machine properly. Norm knew what was required and he was determined to protect the privilege of concessional licensing. Sadly Norm's wife passed away, a terrible blow after many years of happily married life. Norm has now retired from the machine examiner role and remains a valued Club member being seen at times at the Monthly Meetings.



Ron Cherrington: *Ron was awarded Life Membership in 2002. Ron passed away in 2018.*

Ron Cherrington served on the Management Committee in 1976, 1977, 1978, 1988, 1989 and also in 1991. The Life Membership awarded to Ron in 2002 speaks volumes for his long contribution to the Club. Ron will be remembered riding, with wife Merle in the the chair, his o.h.v. JAP engined Zenith outfit which twice took them to South Australia and back, and remembered too for his unfailing good nature and his willingness to help anyone, anytime. Lionel Bridle was Machine Examiner but this was always done at the Cherrington residence. Ron served seven years as Membership Secretary during which time he introduced the name disks we still use today. His motorcycling finished with the sale of the Zenith which was replaced with an Austin Seven sports car which featured a very pretty boat tail body built by Cliff Byfield. *Adrian White*



Jim Clark: *Jim Clark was appointed as a Life Member in 1992. Jim passed away in 2022.*

Jim is pretty modest and gives little in the way of detail about his model making talents. Some years ago he decided a model of the “Batavia”, to be about 2 feet long, would be an interesting project. Of course, no plans exist (or photographs) of this seventeenth century ship, but extensive research, in conjunction with Jeremy Green of the Fremantle Museum produced a design as authentic as possible. For the next five years Jim worked at turning his drawings into a museum quality model, but his pride was short-lived; Jeremy Green reckoned the stern of the model was incorrect for the period so Jim demolished the offending part and rebuilt it. Such patience – the rigging is a work of art and the whole ship beautiful. The sculptures he won prizes with are beautiful too, one such, a bronze young lady about 1 foot tall, seemed to be doing door stop duty in the house.

The sketch books Jim produced in New Zealand and on the Don Bowden Overland Tour truly capture the spirit, fun and camaraderie of such events, delightful keepsakes for all involved. The Club library has copies and it's worth having a look at this special record of Club activities. Son Ross also enjoys old motorcycles and can be seen on occasion riding one of Jim's bikes. Jim and Carol are very active club members, long may they continue so! I was born in Perth in 1937 and lived in Maylands till about 1947, when my father was discharged from the army. We moved to Geraldton where Dad was a builder. My parents divorced about 1950 and my mother and I moved to Cottesloe in my Grandmother's house – not with her though. Life was hard for Mum as a single parent with no support from the Government or my Father. Mum was working most of the time, so I spent my teenage years left to my own devices and Cottesloe was a good place to grow up. I finished my education, aged fourteen, at C.B.C Fremantle. I travelled by steam train to Fremantle and vandalism was alive and well in those days, with kids kicking out the wooden window shutters, peeing in the light fittings etc.



I spent twelve months as a messenger boy in Perth trying for a cadetship in commercial art. That didn't eventuate, and I finished up as an apprentice carpenter at a time when you were an all rounder doing roofing, cabinet making etc, and not many power tools! A fellow apprentice bought a Lambretta, a vast improvement on the treadly I was pedaling. So I had a Lambretta for 12 months and it was miles in front of the Bantams and Enfields at that time. With a group of mates I started going to the National Safety Council course at the Perth Markets. For 2/- per Saturday afternoon you learned to ride a big bike, loaned by various dealers, and at the end of 6 weeks had a license for over 125cc. John Rock was one of the instructors! The Lambretta went and I bought a 500 Matchless from Chum Taylor – a salesman for James Clay at that time.

I did my 3 months National Service in the Army and swapped the Matchy for a '56 Speed Twin and soon after a 1938 Dodge which was more useful, as not many mothers liked their daughters to be on the back of a motorcycle. Safer in the back seat? Somewhere around this time I joined the Harley Club, eventually being honoured with Life Membership. I had a '51 Alloy Matchless by now and although not a regular competitor I did manage the last two Harley Scrambles at the famous old ropeworks course in Mosman Park. We also spent many hours in the bottomless sand at Brooklands (Shenton Park) as the Harley Club had a lease on the ground. We moved to Claremont about 1959 where I met my future wife Carol, who lived across the road. The Dodge was exchanged for a 1954 Morgan which was my pride and joy for the next 5 years. Carol and I married in 1962, and in the next few years I built the house we still live in and had a son and daughter, Ross & Gail. Around 76-77 the VMCC had a display in the old North Beach bus shed in Tuart Hill.

Nostalgia kicked in and I joined the Club and tried to buy back the Alloy Matchy which I had sold to a fellow in Carnarvon some years before. Unfortunately he had died and the bike disappeared. I bought back some parts I had sold to Peter Groucott and scratched up some left overs in my shed, spending the next few years building the 52 Comp model I now have. In 1983 the Club had a tour in New Zealand. Carol and I shared accommodation with John & Noreen Boyd – good friends from 1960 in the Harley Club. I took a 350 Ajay I had bought and which now belongs to Don Fawell. This Ajay has been in fairly constant use since then and must be one of the most used bikes in our Club. I drew a sketch

book/diary and due to popular demand, had it printed so that all the West Australian entrants received a copy. Returning home, Jim Wallace pressured me into being Editor of the Chatter. The Makins took on the production side and we produced the Chatter for around the next 18 years. We developed a good friendship and from there on the Clarks, Boyds and Makins travelled together to many interstate rallies. In 1990 the Boyds and the Clarks took part in the Don Bowden Overland Tour riding a 1944 Indian Chief outfit generously loaned to us by the late George Nunn. I could have bought the Indian, and have since regretted not doing so. Again, I did a pictorial diary of which all of the entrants received a copy. Ray Oakes loaned me at various times his Sloper sidecar and Grindley. The Sloper ignited my interest in sidecars and the Grindley an interest in old V twins. I was building a sidecar for a '37 Matchless when a 1954 Gold Flash came along. The sidecar went on the Flash and I have been all over Australia with it. I also bought the rusted remains of a 1930 V twin Matchy which would never have turned a wheel without the generosity and genius of our Patron Ron Morrison.

Getting away from bikes, I worked as a carpenter, building supervisor and eventually a registered A Class Builder. Later I got fed up with the sun, flies and argumentative tradesmen and took a job at the Quadriplegic Centre doing all manner of art, craft and hobby activities with disabled people. I had been drawing all my life and dabbled in oil painting, sculpture (won a few awards for sculpture) and model making, in particular model ships, so this was right up my alley. I got squeezed out of there with fund cut-backs and my last years before retirement were spent as a bus driver/activity assistant at a Senior's day care centre. Neither of these jobs were financially rewarding however you meet many interesting people at a very unpretentious level and you are working in comfortable surroundings. I have often considered doing a comprehensive sketch book from the start of my days in the VMCC. It's hard to find the spare time when you are retired though!



Above: Jim Clark and John Boyd on the 1990 Overlanders re-enactment.

Jim, the gentleman, such a nice guy, always up for an interesting chat, sometimes with quite strong views too. A man of talents. Jim didn't manage to secure a Cadetship in commercial art as a youth, but to judge by work he's produced, the world of that discipline was the loser. Jim's first powered two wheeler was a Lambretta, his transport as an apprentice carpenter. That was an excellent machine, well ahead of the British ride-to-work two strokes of the time. Enjoying this, Jim took a step forward by participating in the National Safety Council's Saturday courses at the Perth Markets. For two shillings you were taught to ride a big bike, loaned to the course by various dealers. Six weeks later, Jim earned his full licence. One of his instructors was John Rock.

That prompted the trusty Lambretta to be traded for a Matchless 500. Chum Taylor did the deal, as salesman for James Clay. After his three months National Service, the Matchless was replaced by a Triumph Speed Twin. Then came a 1938 Dodge. This made courtship easier - not many mothers liked seeing their daughters on the back of a motorbike. But the motorcycle bug had well and truly bitten, so Jim joined the Harley Club, and bought a 1951 alloy Matchless. As an occasional competitor, he did race in the last two Harley Scrambles, held on the famous Ropeworks course. The Dodge made way for a 1954 Morgan, Jim's pride and joy for five years. His introduction to our Club came with a visit to a display, held in 1976 at the North Beach bus shed in Tuart Hill. He'd sold the alloy Matchy to a fellow in Carnarvon, and tried to buy it back, but the man had died, and the fate of the bike unknown.

So he repurchased parts he'd sold to Peter Groucott, dugout all the spares he could find in his shed and spent the next few years building a 1952 Compy model. Jim then joined our Club, becoming member #96. A highlight of this was the 1983 tour of New Zealand, sharing accommodation with good friends John and Noreen Boyd, riding a 350 A.J.S., ultimately sold to Don Fawell. Jim drew a sketchbook/diary covering the event.

Once home, Jim Wallace persuaded Jim to become editor of the "Chatter." Barry and May Makin took care of the production, and this team kept the Club informed the next eighteen years, an outstanding contribution. That, combined with his unstinting work for the Club in other areas, saw Jim awarded well deserved Life Membership. In 1990 the Boyds and Clarks rode the Don Bowden Overland Tour, on a 1944 Indian Chief outfit, kindly loaned by George Nunn. Jim since regretted not buying the bike. Another pictorial diary was given to appreciative fellow riders. Ray Oakes loaned Jim his B.S.A. Sloper outfit, and his Grindley V twin. This ignited Jim's passion for both styles of bike as a carpenter, Jim built a beautiful sidecar, intending to hitch it to a 1937 Matchless, when a 1954 Golden Flash became available. The Flash suddenly found itself married to the sidecar, and has subsequently carried Jim and Carol all over the country. Next project was a rusted and decrepit 1930 Matchless V twin. With great help from fellow Clubman Ron Morrison's generosity and genius, the bike was reborn. We've lost one of the early members of our Club. They set the ethos with their energy, passion and hard work. For this they should be ever remembered. *Adrian White*

In February 2023, Carol Clark kindly offered an autographed copy of Jim Clark's sketchbook of the VMCCWA's tour of New Zealand in 1983 to the Club, as the library did not have a copy. This copy has been digitised and the original will go into the Club Library to be preserved. The story of the Club's tour of New Zealand can be viewed in the Club's History 1957-2022. Carol also generously donated one of Jim's old helmets to the Club for safe-keeping. *Below: Murray Barnard with Carol Clark*



Frank Cocks: *Frank was awarded Life Membership in 2004.*

Most of the members in the Veteran Car Club of WA and probably some in the VMCC of WA would be aware that the 1929 Ford A that you have seen me driving originally belonged to my father, who purchased the car in Kalgoorlie early in 1930 'BRAND NEW' off the showroom floor from the then Ford agent Jack Hehier.

About two years after that event I was informed that I made my noisy arrival to this planet and I had my first ride in the Ford A when one day old to be shown to Grandmother who lived in a small house next to our family home in South Kalgoorlie. My next experience on wheels would have been in prams and pushers for a few years before graduating onto the three wheeler trikes & with the arrival of school days, my first 24" Malvern Star two wheeler. I still have some slight scars to show from cycling accidents, none of which were serious, but all part of the learning curve. With the onset of World War II, the airforce took over the Boulder Race Course and the Kalgoorlie Aerodrome and there was a lot of flying activity in and over both towns. As a school boy I would ride out to the aerodrome, now called the airport, sit on the fence, and spend hours watching all the aircraft, speaking to the personnel whenever possible and pick up any pieces of discarded aircraft parts which one would find in various dumps around the edges of the base. It was there that I resolved to become a pilot when possible, and besides the thrill and excitement of flying, would also have to master the art of taxiing an aeroplane, which because they generally have three wheels, can be quite difficult. With the process of growing up, and the arrival of teens, and pimples, I must have decided that if I were to fly aeroplanes one day, one should start with learning to drive a car, and after pestering my father nearly every day, he finally consented to teaching me to change gears in the old 'crash type' gear box, both the Ford and I survived. However, before getting my drivers licence I had completed my schooling to secondary level and decided to seek a trade in the building industry and commenced training as an apprentice carpenter.



My boss, a certain Cyril Wildy who incidentally is still alive and turns 80 this year, could not wait for me to get my official drivers licence, so for some months before going for my driving test, I was turned loose on the streets of Kalgoorlie driving a Ford B truck in picking up timber from the supply yard to the building sites, and frequent trips to the local rubbish tip. When I eventually fronted for my driving test with the Police Sergeant, who must have been a mate of our Patron Jack Berkshire, he made me drive Dad's Ford around various streets and back lanes of Kalgoorlie and was either satisfied or terrified out of his mind, because he approved my driving licence for car and TRUCK. I made comment to him that my father would not be happy at his beloved Ford A being classified as a truck, the Sergeant looked me in the eyes and said that he had seen me driving Wildy's truck around the town for at least 6 months previously, so to shut up and clear out, I have been checked out since, so it cannot be all bad! This happy state of affairs continued for some time until my master Cyril decided that work in Kalgoorlie after the war years was almost non-existent. He shifted to Applecross and I took the opportunity of following him to complete my apprentice training near to the coast. In 1952, National Service caught up with me, and to my great satisfaction I was accepted in to the RAAf for a 6 month period and drove many types of military vehicles, including an introduction to the Jeep, which I immediately fell in 'love' with and 30 years later had the opportunity to obtain one and have enjoyed driving it ever since. A further period of 5 years in the RAAf Active Reserve saw more chances to drive vehicles of all shapes and sizes, including the purchase of a BSA motor cycle to take me to Pearce Base, and also an introduction to flying, an exciting activity that I have been fortunate enough to continue to the present time. Following this period was the serious but never to be forgotten experience of marriage, arrival of family and running a building business from which I finally retired last year. The marriage and family have remained and I am extremely grateful for this course of events. During the latter years my hobby transport has been the Ford A followed by a Ford T Char-a-banc, various motor cycles, some of which I still own and ride, a Messerschmitt 'Bubble Car', the Willys Jeep, a couple of unrestored ex Army push bikes and last but not least the current restoration projects one 1937 Austin Ruby two seater complete with small dickie seat and a 1969 B.M.W. R/60/5. The BMW will never take the place of my preferred marque the ever faithful BSAs, but I am now in the 'Senior Class' I thought it was about time there was a touring bike in the shed with a starter motor and 'long legs' if required. *Frank Cocks*



Frank Cocks

Bill Cowlin: *Bill was awarded Life Membership in 2014. Bill passed away in 2016.*

Broxted, Essex, England. Builder of large cranes, Albert Edward Cowlin and his wife Sarah Gwen were delighted to announce the arrival of a healthy son, William John, on 24 April 1942 who, for the rest of his life would naturally be “Bill”. Some confusion existed over his father’s name; in some events he was Albert Henry. Under that false name, aged fourteen he enlisted in the army, trained and was posted overseas. He remained in the Army after the war as batman to a senior officer. Bill’s schooling was normal fare for the times. An average student, good with his hands, he left as soon as he was able, and found a job on a farm as stockman caring for pigs and sheep. He liked the work well enough, but the wages were minimal. However, there was one major reason for being there, the boss’s delightful daughter Val. The two became inseparable, courting on push bikes, and marrying on 12th October 1963. To improve the family finances, Albert, now working at Acrow, building cranes, managed to have Bill employed as a welder. He proved to be a good learner and with bonuses offered for quality and quantity of work began earning good money.

Work was five miles from home so Bill bought a tatty Ariel for transport, but a lifetime of abuse and neglect had taken its toll; the awful machine was replaced by a BSA B33 with a Burgess “silencer”, a compulsory fitment for a young man’s motorcycle as it was noisy! On a clear night Val reckoned she could hear her eager young husband from work to home. That journey involved a long downhill straight where Bill’s daily challenge was to see 100 mph on the B33. There was a trap at the bottom though, a hump back bridge which couldn’t be taken too fast. Fortunately Bill managed. Motorcycles were not yet of particular interest being only cheap transport, so when funds became available a car was an inviting prospect in an English winter.

Life was good – they’d bought a house together in Bishops Stortford and were earning good money. Their first child, Vicki, was born in December 1965. Also Bill’s brother Dave had married Carole, Val’s sister. Family life was good. However, TV was about to change all this by featuring a programme on Australia and the benefits of living there, very appealing. A random conversation with an Australian in a shop fired their enthusiasm to become “ten pound Poms”, the amount the subsidised journey half way around the world cost. The Australian helped with all the formalities and quite soon they were on a Boeing 707 named “City of Perth”, the flight taking two days. Bill was now 24, and the government got more value from that ten pounds than it ever has, before or since.



The year was 1966. Perth was then a big country town so Val and Bill settled in easily. Bill found work welding new agricultural machinery for Hughes and Co, and a house in Morley. He had by now had become a very skilled, and a hard worker. He asked owner Billy Hughes if he might be paid on a piece work basis. Hughes devised and implemented a scheme, which immediately saw productivity of the business soar to new heights. Everyone was happy. Two years later ability and work ethic saw him offered a position at Alcoa as plant operator. This was good work and good wages, so Bill happily accepted and found a house in Rockingham.

A Triumph 500 was purchased as transport to work. Shortly thereafter Val announced she was pregnant. Close to the baby's due date, Bill worked his normal day shift, then offered to do an extra four hours to finish some work. He got home at eleven am very tired, went to bed, only to be woken by Val at one pm ready to deliver. They made it to hospital OK, but Bill was so tired, he went to sleep in a chair, missing the birth of son Lindsay in August 1969. To earn extra money, Bill joined with Jim Quinn and set up as Morris Mini Minor experts. Ridley's Wreckers would phone when a scruffy Mini came in; Jim would attend to the paint and Bill the mechanics, with the cars being sold for a handsome profit. So busy were they at one time they had three cars for sale on the front lawn, then someone suggested the Tax Agent might be interested so some very hasty selling happened. Proceeds from this would later allow Bill to indulge in car restorations.

Both children were very keen on motocross so Bill bought each a new Suzuki. Naturally he was appointed chief spanner man, tuner, and general dogs body; they were a good team and both kids did well with Lindsay becoming Club Rider of the year. Val helped in the canteen – this was better than flagging and picking up kids and bikes after muddy falls. On occasion she also had to load the bikes and gear on to the one ton ute when Bill had a weekend shift. It was probably inevitable Bill's love of machinery would lead him to vehicle restoration, in the shape of a very hard used Model A Ford, which had to be dismantled in the driveway and carried piece by piece through the side (personal) gate. The car had been mutilated to become a ute; fortunately a complete back half body was found. Bill taught himself to spray paint, and it speaks volumes for his ability to learn, as the result could have been applied by a tradesman.

A workmate at Alcoa showed Bill a very scruffy early BSA A7; little wonder it was a mess having been used for mustering on a farm, and later had a sidecar attached as a scrambler in Kalgoorlie. Peter Groucott advised this was a rare bike, so Bill decided he'd restore it, a difficult task, but the end result was a credit to him. A Triumph Twenty-one, a very rough BSA Sloper, and a BMW and sidecar followed. His paint adorned many fellow Club Member's bikes, though his pricing for this work was very generous toward the bike's restorers. Typical Bill. "I like to help; if I can help someone in any way, I will". So true, and so lucky was the Vintage Motor Cycle Club to welcome him as a member. Soon he became a Committee member serving for many years.

He ran the spare parts store for eight years with all his natural enthusiasm. Every Wednesday morning he'd battle the traffic from Baldivis to Wattle Grove and home again, providing Club members with an invaluable service. He and Val organised an annual run from their house, the run was good and the food excellent. He rode in just about every run, and was rewarded with Clubman of the Year several times, and then awarded richly deserved Life Membership. His interest moved to older bikes. He was intrigued by the solutions designers had found to requirements on the primitive machines of the veteran and vintage eras, and restored beautifully a 1915 Sunbeam and a 1927 BSA V twin, both of which saw many Club events. He liked to take what was basically a pile of scrap, and turn it into something financially and historically worth a lot of time and effort. He toured the UK in 2013 with the Club, riding his 1929 BSA Sloper. When the 2016 rally was planned, his was one of the first names entered.

Then, in April 2015 a visit to the doctor for a persistent cough produced the awful news – "You have a shadow on your lung, we think it might be TB". The last bit was puzzling as ten pound Poms were checked for this before being accepted; further tests diagnosed an equally awful verdict – cancer. The affected part of the lung was removed; however hopes were dashed by discovering the disease had spread to his lymph glands. Bill was incredibly strong through all this, and the subsequent chemotherapy which remarkably didn't cause his fine mop of hair to fall out. Then Bill tried an alternate treatment which initially seemed very promising, but the disease was too aggressive and in April 2016 he was told that he would have only 3-4 months to live, at most. Inevitably, he moved to palliative care with full time oxygen and home care from Silver Chain soon after. The latter have been truly wonderful, the family are so grateful. Bill's tireless and generous years of Club Membership proved the adage "what goes around comes around". Members John Wightman, Roger Bowen, John Moorehead and Greg Boothey rallied round, sorting parts to specific bikes, advertising and selling the same. Many other Club members have also assisted, and Val, Lindsay and Vicki are truly grateful of this example of Club spirit. Bill was brave and strong to the end. *Adrian White*



Bill Cowlin & below with Val (Photo above





Bill Cowlin (Photos by Nic Montagu 2014)



Jack Cunningham: *Jack was appointed a Life Member in 1989. Jack passed away in 2024.*

A popular and valued member of the Club. Jack was active for many years and supported the Club events and activities. A capable man Jack built his own house when such things were possible and was a dab hand at restoring and maintaining his motorcycles. Sadly Jack's wife has passed away but Jack still retains a commitment and interest in the Club.

Jack pictured below with Owen Page during the 1990 Overlander re-enactment



Jim Douglas: *Jim was awarded Life Membership in 2024.*

Jim Douglas has been a pillar of the Club for close on 12 years, taking over as Secretary in 2015, at short notice, and serving in the role for four years. In 2019 Jim took on the role of Treasurer and has served in the role for seven years, retiring at the end of 2025.

Jim was active in organising events such as the popular economy run for several years and he has been active in supporting Club events such as the Gypsy Tour. Jim also was instrumental in launching the Two Rocks Social Meet for the Northern Suburbs which has become a well attended Club event providing an opportunity for members to meet mid-week.

Jim has also shared his expertise in strata management assisting the Secretary with issues of import relating to the management of the Maddington Unit.

In the role of Treasurer Jim worked to reform the Club's accounting records to ensure the main accounts as well as those of Sections could be maintained in an accountable manner, subject to audit and easy to justify in accord with Association requirements. In his time in Office, the Club has seen steady growth and stability in its finances and assets.



A man of few words indeed, at least on paper, Jim has supplied a short word picture of himself:

Started playing with motorcycle at the age of 12 with a Greeves and a DKW scooter. Used for racing across fields and hanging on for dear life. Left school at 16 with qualification in Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Geography.

Joined the RAF as an Avionic Engineer (Aircraft Electronics). In training for three years not allowed to own a motorcycle during training as would probably crash and the RAF would have wasted loads of money training me.

Once out of training started using motorcycles for transport again. Spent twelve years fixing Buccaneer aircraft in UK and Germany. Also continued to be educated going to college one day per week for all the time in UK. Left the RAF on my 30th birthday with a broken leg from playing rugby but incredibly well qualified in Electronic Engineering.

Spent the next two years teaching Electronics at a college of further education in Suffolk. Somewhere along the line I became a Chartered Engineer. Then went to University on a Masters course for Microelectronic System Design. (Making silicon Chips). Upon graduation went into research first for British Telecom then Plessey UK working on software for chip design. Spun out of Plessey with some software we designed that they did not wish to exploit.

Formed a UK startup with venture capital funding to attempt to exploit the software we had created. Ultimately the software failed, (too late into the market) but along the way we invented another piece of software which became very successful.. We licensed this to the major electronic companies world wide.

Eventually the company was floated at which stage I made my exit and came to Australia. That was 1998.

Joined VMCCWA in 2001 after purchasing a BSA Rocket 3 in UK and a BSA Rocket Goldstar replica in Fremantle. In the early years spent my time 50:50 between UK and Australia. Once I finally settled in Australia I became involved in Committee work for VMCCWA. Have been on Committee for 10 years and think it is now time to retire.

My interest in Motorcycle continues. I have two bikes under restoration, A 1958 Velocette Venom and a Norton Commander Rotary. I also have 8 other bikes which I ride subject to serviceability.

I have not mentioned anything about the things I changed/improved in the club since being on Committee.

Well, I will expand on that: Jim served several years as Secretary, followed by along stint as Treasurer. Both demanding jobs required a lot of time and application. Jim served the Club through a period of change when the Government introduced a new Associations Act and also new model rules for Club constitutions.



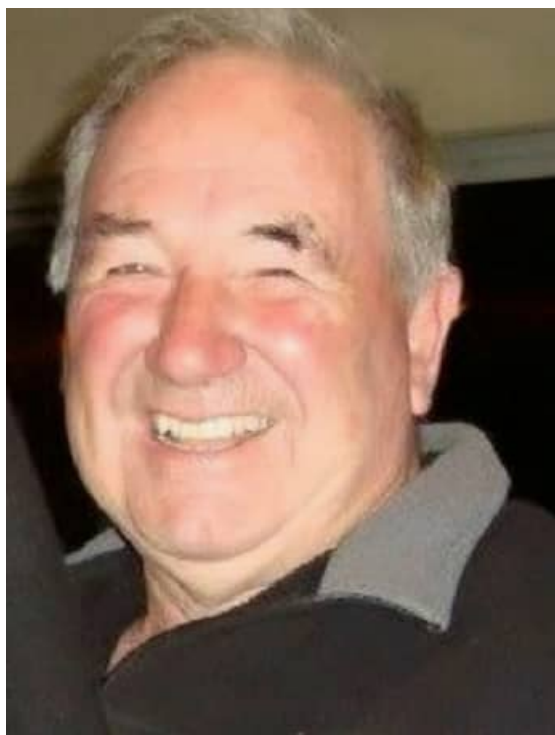


Rex Edmondson: Rex was awarded Life membership in 2013.

Rex's story, by Rex :

Rex was born at Koorda (Eastern wheat belt) in 1937 to George and Vera (Pommie immigrants) and farmers. He attended primary school at Koorda in hostel accommodation, as school buses were not available until about 1948. His high school education was at Northam High School, once again in a boarding situation. Rex left school at Junior Certificate level to return home to work on the farm as was expected in the 1950s.

By this time his father had taken up farming land west of Moora, and Rex worked at home and part time on a nearby farm and in part payment for that work took on the ownership of his first bike, an M20 that had been in the back of the shed for some time. A great indestructible machine, and the start of a continued ownership of non competitive bikes for Rex. Next a Bantam that he is sure he pushed further than he rode (a short lived ownership). Then an 1952 A10, complete with sissy bars, crash bars, lap rug, and wind screen, big time now! This was an era when you could get away with a trip to town at the weekend with the mufflers off, and do a "few laps" until Wally Legett, local Road Board traffic controller, would reluctantly leave his warm lounge chair, crank up the Harley and chase these young louts from town, with never an infringement notice.



At about this time Rex started work in shearing teams and stayed in that industry as a shearer for the next 15 years, between seeding and harvesting on his father's farm. Work in shearing teams was a good school to learn about life skills. As the shearer gets paid on "a per head" shorn basis, the harder you work the more you get paid, a good early lesson. A good team is fun to work in and there's almost certainly no other work that is physically harder than shearing sheep in 2005 and is possibly one of the only occupations that you take a towel to work to wipe the sweat from your eyes.

Bikes took a back seat during this time as travel in a shearing team required a four wheeled vehicle to carry a swag and gear, but back at the farm was always a bike including his one and only experience with Harley Davidson, a WLA with a very unreliable ignition. The shearing industry yielded enough funds to allow Rex to take up farming in his own right when he was allocated a bush block at Jerramungup where his parents were now farming, and started to develop 3000 acres of bush. The nose was well and truly on the grind stone now. While the work in shearing teams was overtaken by the need to be on the farm full time Rex did not lose interest in the shearing industry that had been a large part of his working life. He became involved in judging shearing competitions and attended events all over WA, and led teams to New Zealand to compete against the Kiwis, rated as the worlds Best. In 1986 he encouraged the Royal Agricultural Society to stage a World Shears in Perth to coincide with the Americas Cup being held off Fremantle, and in 1988 judged in the World Shears in Masterton, NZ, the world capital of competition shearing.

Rex married Vai in 1960 and they lived on the parent's farm in the shearers quarters of two rooms with a detached "wash house" and back yard "dunny". They have four children and eleven grandchildren. Rex spent 48 years at Jerramungup earning a living from agriculture and shearing and involvement in the development of that community, during an era of unprecedented agricultural expansion in WA. This development brought many opportunities and the need for services in many new communities. There was a need for communities to work together to develop sporting facilities, assist school development and medical needs, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Ambulance, Fire brigade, a local Hall and the establishment of Local Government (Shire). Rex was elected to almost every community position in his district from the Football Club, Golf Club, Progress Assoc, Farmer grower groups, Fire Brigade, Hospital Board, P&C Assoc etc and Local Government in which he served 13 years including a term as Shire President for the Shire of Jerramungup and a Commissioner for the development of the City of Albany, from the Town of Albany and the Shire of Albany. He was involved in encouraging farmers to take on sustainable agricultural practices or "Land Care" and this has taken him over the last twenty years to peak councils at State and National level. In 1992 he was awarded the McKell Medal, a National award for achievements in Land Care and the first farmer at that time to be recognised by that award.

He has been appointed to National policy advisory Councils, where advice and policy is given to Australian

Government and is currently Chair of Natural Resource Management Council of WA that has a similar role with the WA Government. The farming interests are now operated by his son Stephen, as they sold the wheat and sheep operations at Jerramungup eighteen months ago and now Stephen runs the farming business in Gingin. Rex still has to show his farming skills on the farm from time to time.

Rex has never ridden bikes in a competitive sense (his son Stephen has), but has owned a long list of farm bikes from 125 oil burning 2 strokes to gutsy 450cc quads and ag bikes. He says he has been up ended, usually in company of a sheep dog, off bikes as many times as any competitive rider! In his semi retirement Rex has returned to his interest in "real" bikes with a current stable of a TR6, Matchy G/3 and a AJS 500 twin (on the bench) and an M20 (in a box), he is also showing interest in a pre 31.

His involvement with the VMCC is relatively short when compared with many other members but is a keen member and has quickly become involved with Club activities and frequently recalls Charlie Lawson's words of advice "this is a bloody good Club, put a bit in and you will get a lot out of it". He has enormous admiration of the skills of many Club members who restore bikes to better than original condition. Adrian White





Above: Rex (left) on BBQ Duty at the Swap meet 2013 &
Below: being interviewed for Zoom TV in the display hall





Rex (Photos by Nic Montagu 2014)



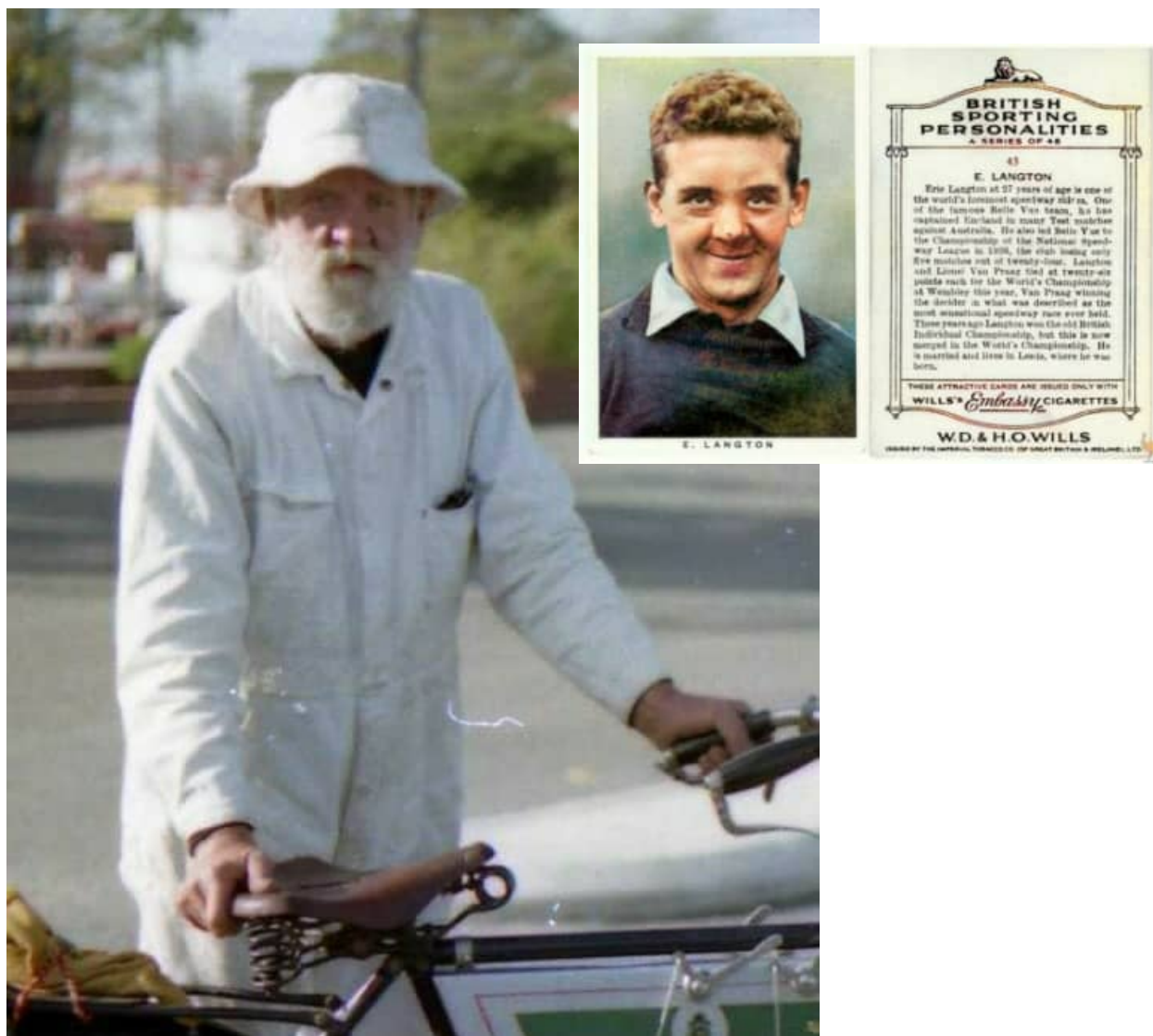
Bert Holmes: *Bert Holmes was awarded Life membership in 2002. Bert passed away in 2022.*

Sadly, we have lost another long term, influential and much loved member. Bert was born in Byford Hospital on March 21st, 1930, and lived his early days in Cardup, where his father was a burner at the brickworks. A carpenters apprenticeship provided Bert with a trade he really liked; thus he was very good at it. Eventually he became a registered builder, running his own business. Clients (and I've talked to a few) are full of praise for the quality of his work, equally, his ethics were admired, in this era when a lot of business was sealed with just a hand shake. Bert always delivered. Recently, Bert said to me his legacy would be in Dale Cottages, a large housing development for aged care built in conjunction with Jack Murray. He would have absolutely nothing to do with any building site with a union presence, and was never short of work. His early introduction to motor cycles was as transport. His hobby was speedboat racing, in an immaculate craft he'd built, powered by a Ford Cortina engine. His interest in motorcycles grew, his first restoration was several boxes of bits which emerged as a B.S.A. Sloper, others followed, including an Ariel Square Four and sidecar which served Bert and Pat well in many Club events, including trips to Adelaide and Tasmania. He was generous with his time, expertise and material, building our parts department. Such service by members laid the foundations of the Club we enjoy today. Several years ago Bert's life took a significant downturn; his eyesight deteriorated to the extent he handed in his driver's licence. No longer could he retire to his shed and do intricate work on bikes, nor could he go for a ride. This frustrated "hands-on" Bert intolerably. Then, adding to his problems, his kidneys stopped working, requiring frequent dialysis, which Bert hated. Friends persuaded him to try listening to Talking Books, which certainly helped. He told me repeatedly he'd had a wonderful life, a loving family, friends, a career he'd much enjoyed, and motorcycling. When his time came, he'd go with no regrets. He decided to cease dialysis, knowing this could be fatal. Five weeks later, Bert left us; we're grateful to have had this absolute gentleman in our lives. Rest In Peace, mate. Our heartfelt condolences to Pat, Peter, Robert, Stephen, and extended families. *Adrian White*



Eric Langton: *Eric was appointed as a Life Member in 1978. Eric passed away in 2001.*

Eric Kemp Langton (27 September 1907 – 2001) was an English motorcycle speedway who won the Star Riders' Championship in 1932, the forerunner to the Speedway World Championship. Born in Leeds, England in 1907, Langton began his career at the Belle Vue track. He rode for Leeds in the 1929 season before returning to Belle Vue the following year, remaining with the club for the rest of his career. He won the Star Riders' Championship in 1932 and also finished runner-up in 1934. He was part of the Belle Vue team that won the League Championship six times in seven years and the National Trophy five times in a row in the 1930s. After retiring from the sport he returned to Belle Vue in May 1946 to replace the injured Bill Pitcher, scoring a full maximum in his first match back, averaging 10.93 in his comeback season and finishing fourth in the British Riders Championship, the team also winning the National Trophy again that year. Langton lost the run-off for the inaugural Speedway World Championship to Lionel Van Praag in 1936 in somewhat controversial circumstances. The Championship was decided by bonus points accumulated in previous rounds. Despite being unbeaten in the final, Bluey Wilkinson was not crowned Champion. Bonus points accumulated by Langton and Van Praag took them to the top of the standings and into a run-off (Match Race). As they lined up at the tapes, Langton broke them which would ordinarily lead to disqualification. However, Van Praag stated he did not want to win the title by default and insisted that a race should take place. At the restart Langton made it to the first bend in front and led until the final bend on the last lap when Van Praag darted through the smallest of gaps to win by less than a wheel length. Afterwards, controversial allegations were abound that the two riders had 'fixed' the match race, deciding between them that the first person to the first bend would win the race and the Championship and split the prize money. Van Praag's overtake seemed to quash those rumours. Eric built bikes to his own specifications, which were in widespread use around the world for many years after his speedway retirement. He eventually emigrated to Perth, Australia. He died in Perth in 2001.



(Photo by Murray Barnard 1987)



Eric Langton on the occasion of his 80th. birthday riding his 1908 Triumph in the Beverley to Perth event of 1987. Photo taken at Toodyay during the lunch break.

Brian Lawrence: *Brian Lawrence was awarded Life Membership in 2006.*

Brian was born in 1941 in NORTON Road, Luton, England during the evacuation of London, all his family originating in the Hoxton/Shoreditch area of North London back as far as mid 1700's, Her Majesty was one of Brian's neighbours living just down the road - at Buck House!!! Brian was one of 6 children and sadly his father passed away when Brian was only ten. Brian left school at fifteen hoping to follow in his father's footsteps as a master tailor's cutter - but bronchial asthma from the dust and famous 'London smogs' ended that career. He was offered a job by the father of a friend as a piece master French polisher and owes a lot to an older polisher who took Brian under his wing and passed on a lifetime's knowledge to him. He worked on many bank and shopfronts as well as furniture and was fortunate to carry out work for her Majesty the Queen at her privy council chambers, the 'Green Room' in the cabinet office, Number 11 Downing Street, Lord Butler's office in the foreign office.



Brian's first motorcycle was a 1957 Ariel 350 which he very much enjoyed. Typically, he longed for a bit more power so a Tiger 100 replaced the Ariel. Then - inexplicably! - he purchased a Vespa GS scooter; maybe he had ambitions to become a Mod. This, however, was short lived. Cornering the Vespa as if it were a proper motorcycle saw the kick-starter dig into the road and dump young Brian on his backside. Back to a proper bike, this time a Honda CB 92 which Brian loved, even when he got his back brake and his gear lever mixed up and landed once more on the road. In 1964 Brian married Jean and moved to Haverhill in West Suffolk and lived there until 1972. During this period Brian took on a contract to polish Fitzwilliam Museum and St John's College Master's Lodge Cambridge. The last time a French polisher worked there was in the early 1800's and Brian received a good write up in the Cambridge evening news.

In 1972 Brian & Jean and their two children decided to migrate to W.A. They arrived at Fremantle at 2am 10 Nov 1972 and by 9am he had a job working for T.H Brown, Furniture makers at Belmont. They settled down easily in their beautiful new environment among Jacaranda trees in full bloom and the following March their little Aussie was born. Brian's mother was not well so the family returned to UK in 1975, finally returning permanently to W.A. in late 77. Eventually in 1978 after being a roof tiler/swimming pool installer/drainage contractor he managed to return to his trade and has carried out work for several well-known Perth families including Sir George Bedbrook, Lady Wray, Lady Giles, Alan Bond and even Rose Hancock!!

In 1983 Brian was flown up to Fossil Downs to carry out restoration work at the Macdonald Homestead for 'Mrs Mac' as she was affectionately known, when the house was under water in the great flood. He has worked on items for the Tourist Bureau at Pinjarra for 'Eden Vale' Homestead and also restored items in the Cockman House Museum in Wanneroo. In 1983 Brian worked on a polished barroom on the yacht Kisuka, which was here for the America's Cup.

Whilst working in Cottesloe he had Spike Milligan enter the shop where he worked and had a good laugh with him. Brian & Jean's contented life was dealt a rude blow in 1984. Brian was hit by a high-speed postman on a pushbike, suffering severe spinal and other injuries as a result. During his time in hospital, surgeons removed one of his kidneys and he found it ironic the first meal he was offered afterwards was kidney bean soup! It still tasted OK to a hungry man. Later, suffering an attack of flatulence he asked a nurse if anything was available for wind and was offered a trumpet. And later still, on his first post-op walk, complete with stand for drips, he noticed his fly gaping. "Nurse, my fly is open & everyone can see my wife's wedding presents! brought the reply "She didn't get much then, did she?" Brian's enduring love of humour had no doubt been tried on hospital staff- this was payback time!

He tried to continue his profession but the pain eventually became too much and Brian retired in the early 1990's and decided to focus on a hobby he loved - motorbikes!! A James Comet was followed by a brace of Douglas machines - a CW and a TS, both currently under restoration. Also in Brian's stable is a Coventry - Eagle J.A.P. and a couple of auto cycles, quite rare items these days.

He joined the Club in 1986 and became refreshments officer about ten years ago. He and his wife were also volunteers at the Motor Museum of WA in Whiteman Park for four years. Each April they hold a run to their home in aid of Cancer Research both of them being 'two of the lucky ones' to survive this illness. No "Life of Brian" would be complete without Jean, rather a self-effacing lady who wrote a goodly portion of this article. In her own words, she enjoys being part of Brian's interests and loves "Brian, her grandkids, old things and her very nice garden". The final words are Brian's: "We were ten pound Poms, what a fabulous bargain you all got!"

Adrian White

In 2022 Brian was awarded a Life Member badge by Richard Argus at a ceremony attended by club members (see below).



Charlie Lawson: *Charlie Lawson was appointed as a Life Member in 1992. Charlie passed away in 2018.*

Charles Walter Lawson was another to take a very early ride on his future passion - being a motorcycle and side box. When mother about-to-be Doris announced she urgently needed to go to hospital, the family Morris Cowley developed a chronic case of magneto-itis and refused to start. Father Walter cranked up his work vehicle, a 1924 Harley and with Doris comfy? among all the plumbing bits and junk in the side box, off they went. The acetylene headlamp went out in Beaufort Street and the police halted our hero's progress to chat about this! Charlie duly arrived in the world on 9th March 1928 and has never had much time for Harleys since then. The delivering doctor looked him in the eye and said, "Welcome to the world Charles! It's a bloody good world and you'll find you get a lot more out of it if you put a bit into it!" And the young Charles must have been impressed, he's certainly put his share of effort in; more on that later.

Walter Lawson was a lead lighter, a trade not much in demand in depressed times, so the family moved to Dwellingup to grow cows and apples. Educated at Dwellingup State School, Charles attained his junior certificate in six subjects by correspondence. Youngsters were expected to help at home on the farm and hand milking nineteen cows was a duty that frequently fell Charles' way. Aged fourteen he went to live with his grandfather who kept the Bathurst Point lighthouse on Rottnest Island and who also ran the local salt works. They lived on fish and chips, Dutch cheese and stout, but this splendid existence was rudely interrupted by mother visiting the island. Noting the odd deficiency in hygiene she scrubbed a very unhappy Charlie, and the whole house with Lysol leaving Charlie "half skinned and bloody sore!"

The belief that the Japanese were just over the horizon saw the island evacuated around 1940. Charlie didn't stay long on the farm though - he was packed off on a train to Perth to begin an apprenticeship as an electrical fitter. Thirst for knowledge encouraged Charlie to attend night school as well, studying trade mathematics, fitting and turning, diesel, automotive engineering, hydraulics, applied electricity, business management and public speaking. That impressive list led him to an occupation for which he was quickly recognised as being very talented. For the next fifty years specialising in trouble-shooting, selling and servicing auto wheat harvesters. So good was he in this, Allis-Chalmers took him to America and New Zealand to run schools for their service people.

Many a troublesome harvester in distant country areas had accurate telephone diagnosis from Charles, a huge time saving. Charlie and wife Betty celebrated many years of happy, married life in 2004. Between them they raised four sons, three of whom now are engineers and the fourth a headmaster. They in turn have provided Charles and Betty with ten grand children. All the sons rode motorcycles and Charles was a very proud man during the 2003 Busselton Two Day to have five Lawsons all riding the event.

Charles' first motorcycle was an Indian Super Scout, purchased for \$30 in 1945, providing Charles with both transport and a competition mount for club events. The flag race was especially suited to the Indian's left hand throttle - picking up the flag with the right hand was child's play! A 1936 Norton and then a 1939 version of the same make followed, When mother became very ill,

in Albany, Charles used his motorcycle to visit her every second weekend, making the return trip within two days. A huge collection of trophies, all in dire need of a polish and haphazardly stored wherever there is a space, speak of Charles' competition success. He has ridden at least once a month, all his life, one of the following - scrambles, trials, road race (solo and sidecar), point to point and all manner of club runs, mostly on Nortons and he set a club record of 287 mpg on a trials Norton in an economy run. Also, in company with Bert and Harry Holmes he attended the I.S.D.T. in Fort William, Scotland, went on to the Isle of Man, meeting Geoff Duke and Stanley Woods there and then, due to an airline stuff-up they were given a free flight to Helsinki, venue for the World Moto Cross Championships that year. To club riders from Perth, the level of dedication and professionalism among the top flight Europeans was amazing.



The AJS Club was Charles' first; he was a member for sixty years and was granted life membership. The same honour was given by the VMCCWA of which he is foundation member # 14. That first year saw the fledging club run its first show, in the North Beach Bus Company shed, with seventy three bikes on display. Members had to sleep there overnight to provide their own security. Jim Clark was so impressed by this show he joined the club forthwith.

Charles has served on the management committee in various positions for "at least twenty years". Perhaps his best held belief in that capacity is "If you're unhappy and have a problem, bring it out in the open; let's talk it through and fix it!" Several collections of bikes and parts have been purchased and re-sold by the club through Charles' diligence. Once he went so far as to borrow money on his own account to purchase a collection some conservative members deemed "too risky". The collection doubled its money before it was all sold. Charles still repairs the odd magneto and generator and has a fascinating, very old auto electrical test bench to check his efforts. He has the bones of an early Norton International he's trying to complete and in his spare time polishes his "immaculate Norton." He doesn't have a lot of spare time! Charles is a bit of a handyman too. Once whilst fixing a roof he had to drill a hole through said roof from inside. This simple task he completed very smartly, drilling through the roof and into the foot of his offsider standing directly above! Charles epitomises the meaning of club membership. Now 76, he rides more frequently and more expertly than many a younger member and still finds time and energy to chase collections of parts for the club.

"And I thank you for your attention."

Adrian White





Charlie Lawson (*Photos by Nic Montagu*)





Charlie Lawson - Norton 500T

Ernie Legg: *Ernie Legg was a well-known Fremantle motorcycle and motoring personality. Ernie was appointed as a Life Member in 1978. Ernie passed away in 1989.*

ERNIE LEGG. Patron of the V.M.C.C. of W.A.

Sergeant Ernest Legg "mentioned in despatches during the Battle of Bushmead". So the story goes, but Vera would only tell that story to people who knew where Bushmead was and what went on there. Vera and Ernie had a long and happy marriage and their cheerful sense of humour was an active part of their partnership. I'm sure that the i*pull the other Legg, it's got bells on" came from them. Ernie was 86 when he passed away peacefully on Friday 14 July, just a few months after Vera. Speed King Cycle Manufacturers was operated by Ernies' father in Fremantle at the turn of the century and here Ernie served his apprenticeship, which also included motorcycle repairs. This led him to start his own business in Perdrian Lane, Perth. When war broke out Ernie and his workshop equipment were seconded to the Army Transport Section at Bushmead, near Midland Junction. Here he was responsible for all the Army motor cycle maintenance. He told me once "it was a battle too". After the war Ernie returned to Fremantle and took up the family business. He and Vera ran this successful M/cycle dealership until they retired. Ernie was one of the Club's founding members and was always providing help, advice, spares, loan of bikes, prizes for raffles and trophies for events, a very generous man. The 'Ernie Legg Collection' of motorcycles and memorabilia has been vested in the Veteran Car Club of W.A. Thanks Ernie. JOHN ROCK.

ERNIE LEGG: A FINAL TRIBUTE by Peter Groucott.

When Ernie Legg died on July 14th, yet another of the positive links with the Vintage years of West Australian Motoring was severed. At the conclusion of the Second World War I came out of the R.A.A.F. and resumed my signwriting apprentice- ship in Fremantle and my daily transport was a B.S.A. M20 I'd purchased direct from the Commonwealth Disposals Commission in Darwin for £42/-/-. In the process of getting this Motor Cycle into Civilian trim, it was well-nigh inevitable that I would make contact with Ernie Legg. He had come into his Father, Herbert's small but very well-established Cycle and Motor Cycle shop in Elder Place, Fremantle ---- just across the way from the Railway Station - and was soon to assume the role there of Manager and later, with Herbert's retirement, Proprietor.

However, the career of Ernie Legg in the Motor Cycle Trade went back well before that and I recall him telling me of the occasion when he entered for a Motor Cycle Competition sometime in the late '20s or very early '30s and was successful enough to have his name published in the daily Press. His father saw this and gave Ernie a right old lecture along the lines of "if you want to do that sort of thing I don't want anything to do with you!" Ernie had enough respect for his father to heed this and so terminated his active competition career. Nevertheless, his interest in the Sport never left him and, in Post-War years, he sponsored at least one Annual Award in the Coastal M.C.C. When my B.S.A. M20 was eventually disposed of, I had a succession of — shall we say? — "unusual" Motor Cycles, beginning with a series of pre-War D.K.W. 2-strokes, followed by an English ABC and sundry other "orphan" models and my frequent contact with Ernie Legg must have registered. He regarded me as one who had a soft spot for older machines and I clearly recall the day when, like a kid with a new toy, he took me by the arm and led me through into his workshop to show me his latest acquisition---- the Veteran Triumph which is now in the Ernie Legg Collection. Ernie had known of the bike for many years and always hoped to, eventually, get it ---- and that great day had finally arrived. Please bear in mind that this would have been in the mid- FIFTIES (prior to formation of the V.C.C.) so it wasn't a case of "finding an old bike so he could join the Club." Here I must make one point clear; While Ernie always regarded his Triumph as a 1912 model, it is really a 1913 and, with all respect, I feel that this should be known and the descriptive plaque corrected in the interests of historical accuracy.

With the formation in the late '50s of the Veteran Car Club, a small band of enthusiasts with old Motor Cycles were accepted and very soon included E. E. LEGG (3% h.p. Triumph). Shortly afterwards the 1920 7/9 h.p. Excelsior ("Big X") sidecar outfit was acquired from Safety Bay and added to Ernie's expanding collection. In about 1960 Ernie buttonholed me one day in his shop and told me of this new Club and invited me to go with him to a meeting. We travelled to the Meeting in his early-50s Chevrolet----lovely car!-- and I'm afraid that I was not sufficiently interested or impressed to become a Member at that time. My motor cycling was then almost 100% competition-orientated and, besides, all the talk at the meeting seemed to be about CARS, of which I knew little and cared less. Meanwhile, I had purchased a 1925 Dot-Bradshaw sidecar outfit from the late Sam Harrison, another Fremantle Motor Cycle Dealer and had it stored in my shed alongside the 1920 French ABC which I'd bought in 1953 for £25/-/-. The Dot outfit had been sold new in 1925 by Ernie's father and its owner never rode it solo, a lightweight B.S.A. Sports sidecar being fitted before it left the shop. I knew this and was determined to keep it as a combination. However, I didn't really have space for a sidecar outfit and, when Ernie pleaded with me to sell him the outfit for purely sentimental reasons --- it still had (and has to this day) his father's brass name-plate on the front mudguard, I succumbed and it has been a source of regret with me ever since

that Ernie disposed of the sidecar - but he did a very nice restoration job of the Dot and it takes pride of place today in the Collection at Whiteman Park.

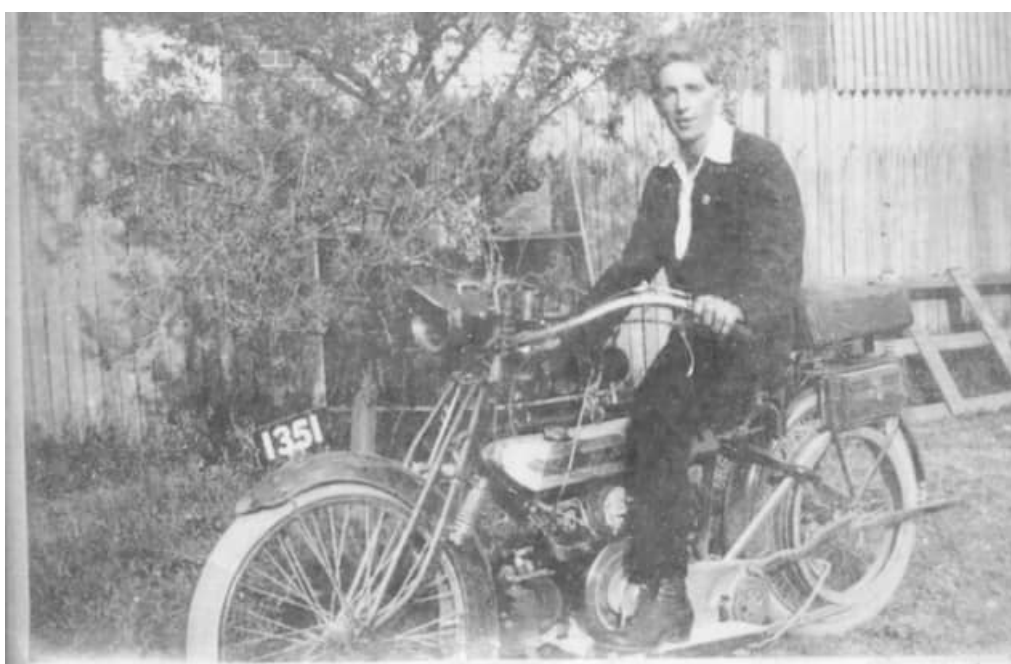
In 1968 the Vintage Motor Cycle Section of the V.C.C. was formed and one of its first events was a Fun Day at Caversham Airstrip, followed soon after by another Fun Day in the vicinity of the now-long-gone "Silver Sands Scramble" course beside Dixon Road, Rockingham. Ernie invited me along with a view to regaining my interest. I duly turned up and was intrigued by so many old Motor Cycles in one spot --- but my main interest was still in Scrambling and it was not until 1970 that I joined the Section. Having bought some new beaded-edge tyres and got my ABC mobile by early 1971, I began to regularly attend Vintage events and I was HOOKED. It was only then that, by regularly attending events and meetings, that I began to realise just how much time, effort and enthusiasm Ernie Legg was putting into this infant Vintage Motor Cycle group and, in his own quiet way, into the Veteran Car Club in general. His elevation to Life Membership in 1974 was fully deserved.

With the growth of interest in Veteran and Vintage Motor Cycles, it was really only a matter of time before an autonomous Club was formed and this came about in August, 1975. By unanimous decision, Ernie Legg was chosen to be the Patron of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club of W.A. and, in spite of his declining health, he continued to take an active interest in the Club. Over the years from the mid-60s, he was always willing to help others struggling to complete their restorations, to offer advice and to lend his own machines. Never a year went by without him contributing at least one trophy or prize for a raffle. As his riding days tapered off, he continued to develop his Museum at his home and many a happy hour was shared with Ernie by members on Sunday Runs, with Ernie's dear late wife, Vera, as a most gracious hostess. It is but a short time since Vera passed away and now she is joined once more by Ernie in everlasting peace. Our entire movement is poorer for their passing but blessed to have had their years of support and companionship.





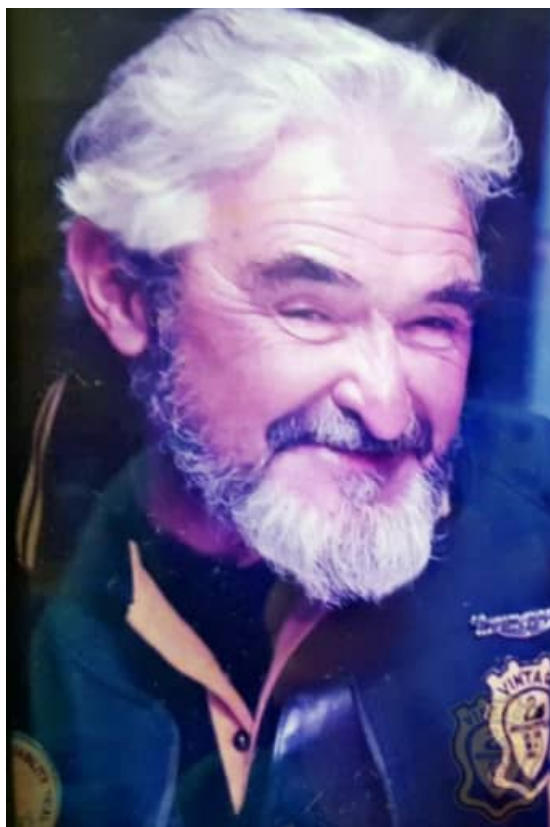
Ernie Legg, above, at a Xmas pageant and below in 1917



Max Madill: *Max Madill was appointed as a Life Member in 1992. Max passed away in 2008.*

Max was born “somewhere in Perth” -he’s never known where exactly – on September 6th 1932, and was named by his adoptive parents, Tom and Linda Madill, pioneer farmers, of Corrigin. Max wasn’t aware of his adoption until very much later in life, when 1st daughter Debra was born, though it’s now believed the good folk of Corrigin had an inkling of the truth. Tom and Linda eventually retired from farming and moved to Hollywood village but the outbreak of war saw the family return to Corrigin – there were three farms and several family businesses in the town to be run, and virtually all the able bodied men over eighteen had signed up and left.

That pretty much spelt the end of formal schooling for Max; correspondence schooling was available and it was probably intended that Max should pursue this, but on a farm there’s always plenty to do and farm kids are expected to make a contribution. A natural aptitude for things mechanical saw a very happy Max working on all manner of farm machinery, plus helping out at Hill Bros. Avon Gas Products where gas producers for cars and trucks were manufactured, the latter encompassing all facets of metal work. The young man had his first ride on a motor bike too and LIKED IT! even though the available mounts were only “old bombs”; a 500 Ariel belonging to a mate probably the best of them.



The family holidayed in Albany when Max was sixteen. Max and Tom were sitting on their verandah awaiting the cooling effects of the “Albany Doctor” when Max, as young men are wont to do pulled out a packet of cigarettes and said “Think I’ll join you in a smoke” “Fine,” said Tom, “but don’t muck around with those things, have one of my cigars, a proper man’s smoke.” “Oh, thanks” said Max lighting up but soon found to his dismay it wasn’t as nice as he’d expected. Father insisted he persevere and finish what he’d begun, Max did his best but wound up violently sick and never again felt the desire to smoke.

The war ended and surviving servicemen and women returned to pick up their lives from where they’d left them. Tom and Linda were able to resume their retirement in Perth, Max found work at Tough Engineering as a fitter and turner thanks to his learning during the long, hard and generally unpaid time in Corrigin. In recognition of his efforts, Tom said he’d finance a motor cycle if Max so wished, yes please! but mother, a somewhat old fashioned hospital matron said she’d “put an axe through it if you do!” To which Tom, absolutely out of character replied “you do, and I’ll put an axe through you!”

An LE Velocette was duly purchased -maybe the choice of such a docile machine went some way toward placating Linda. Ken George offered more interesting work than Tough’s so Max became rouseabout for a couple of years, especially enjoying riding the Indian 10/12 outfit delivery vehicle. Mortlocks had a similar vehicle, a Harley Davidson – naturally races up Wellington Street became almost daily occurrences. The Indian developed a vicious speed wobble at 30 mph but once above that behaved itself. About this time the trusty LE was traded for a Matchless 500. Winterbottoms, Austin and Chrysler agents in the Terrace offered work, and Max, with his varied mechanical knowledge and his easy manner with people quickly became service advisor. His eye, always (and still!) appreciative of a pretty girl fell upon a most delightful young typist working there, Shirley McDonald and the pair became friends, eventually Shirley asking Max if he’d like to accompany her to a friend’s wedding, but Max’s mother ruled this out demanding Max’s company that day. Shirley was cared for by her much older sister and as the friendship overcame mother’s efforts and became romance, Max had to very quickly build a sidecar for the Matchless – Big Sister forbade riding pillion but the sidecar was acceptable Of course, once out of Big Sister’s sight, it was straight on to the pillion, so much more cuddly! The Winterbottoms job was good, more so with the Shirley factor, but Max was restless and sought a truck driving job for the experience, though he’d driven numerous old trucks in Corrigin. “Suppose you think you can drive” said his prospective employer. “Show me the truck and I’ll drive it” was the confident reply so Max was led to an elderly Diamond T, and his competence in this rugged device with it’s evil gearbox saw him hired on the spot with the promise of a good truck the following day. Driving was OK for a while but Winterbottoms was far more interesting, so Max returned there as test driver at the end of the assembly line. Austin and Morris were assembled

on the same line causing little slip-ups like the Austin A30 which came through with a Moms engine – only the rocker cover needed changing! An Austin truck off the line had problems so Max, lying beneath on a creeper, removed the sump and asked his off sider, a redhead whose name Max can't recall, to remove the ignition lead, select neutral, and hit the starter. Known for his slackness the redhead, perched on the front guard, hit the starter, the engine fired first hit and the truck took off. Redhead panicked and jumped off, Max desperately tried to get out but the front wheel ran over his foot. Fortunately his military boots saved him from permanent damage, he had two weeks off and the redhead instantly became unemployed. These were far from boom times and Winterbottom suffered with a general down turn in trade and had to prune staff. Sydney Anderson needed a mechanic and found one in Max, who had great respect for his new boss and great liking for the boss' MGTC race car which he drove on occasion. Anderson's suicide broke Max's heart, the manager was a most unpleasant fellow so Max resigned.

The Matchless was now replaced by a Triumph Thunderbird outfit, a near new combination which started a liking for Triumph Max has to this day. Max and Shirley became engaged in 1952 and married in 1954. When Shirley, by now the ledger machinist, asked management at Winterbottom for leave to marry she was told, "no, you can't have time off for that!" so she found a job with Dunlop, and then gave notice at Winterbottom only to be told "You can't leave! We were only joking, have whatever time off you need". Unfortunately Shirley had signed a binding agreement at Dunlop, worked there and "hated every minute of the jail-like atmosphere." Their first child Debra was born in 1958 followed by Linda in 1961. They bought the home in which they still live, in 1952, and promptly leased it out to help finance the purchase. They lived for a time in a caravan courtesy of Uncle Keirle who ran a caravan sales yard; the newly-weds helped out round the yard and Shirley remembers the huge weight lifting those old van towbars.

Max now became Driver # 3 16 with the MTT driving trams, trolley and diesel buses, some of which featured reverse action crash gearboxes which Max mastered easily, impressing Ted Doyle the instructor who soon had Max as fellow instructor. Very late one night, Shirley, alone at home with the kids due to Max's night shift, heard a noise in the garage so grabbed a hefty lump of wood destined for the replace and, heart pounding, investigated. The "intruder" she nearly clobbered was her dearly beloved, coming home late, having been forced onto the soft shoulder of the road by an out-of-shape truck and jinker and his bus becoming thoroughly bogged. Adding insult to injury, Max was stopped by police demanding to know his business at 1.30 a.m. In Anglo-Saxon terms, an already irate Max told them! Eighteen years with Tramways provided very welcome long service leave which the family of four made the best of, by circumnavigating Australia in a VW Kombi camper, a wonderful experience lasting three months.

Back to work and Max became final checker of vehicles at Fremantle Ford dealer Mortlock's. One memorable day a blue Buckley's Liquid Salvage truck pulled up in the street and a very scruffy individual alighted and approached Max, asking quite searching questions about the dealership's quality control and vehicle preparation; the scruffy gent was Mr Buckley himself, millionaire, he liked Max's answers and bought six cars that day, including two G.T. Falcons. Bob Pilmer, a name well known in W.A. motoring circles worked at Tramways and he and Max had talked of having their own business. The pair formed a partnership and bought Car Protectors, in Myaree, a company which specialised in undersealing vehicles and preparing many for the rigours of North-West service. Quality work and good service ensured plenty of repeat business and a good income. The hard work came at a cost though. Max had a medical, aged fifty and his blood pressure was sufficiently high the doctor urged him to retire. Also, a Dutch gent had purchased a large area of Myaree industrial land which included Car Protectors and planned to rebuild the area so was not renewing leases, causing businesses to close or re-locate. Car Protectors chose the first and Max retired.

Very fond memories of Corrigin as a lad enticed the Madill family to attend the opening of that town's Pioneer Museum. Max disliked back seat travel in cars due to a tendency toward car sickness, so when he felt ill on the way down he assumed this to be the problem, nothing an early night wouldn't fix. However he continued to feel "off", sought medical advice to be told he'd suffered a heart attack and urgently needed a triple by-pass. The latter, and recuperation, complete, he was instructed by a rather nice nurse to "run up these stairs, I'll be at the top holding a pillow, grab the pillow & give it a big hug and we'll see how fit you are". Our hero raced up the stairs, said "bugger the pillow!", gave the nurse a giant hug and was promptly assessed as ready for home.

Club members noted Max's energy levels seemed to have doubled subsequent to the operation. Retirement was great, Max was able to devote his time to the numerous projects he had in mind, beginning with a replica sidecar for his 1917 Harley Davidson. The chair started life as a sheet of panel steel, tin snipped to the side profile, top and bottom welded in without distortion thanks to expertise gained at Hill Brothers so long ago. So good was the end product Willie G. Davidson, offered considerable dollars for it during his Australian visit; the offer was very happily received but politely declined. The outfit was Max and Shirley's mount for the 1990 Overlander's trip, a most memorable adventure.

Another project involved shoe-horning a 1200cc Volkswagen engine into a 600cc Earles fork equipped B.M.W. The engine, improved with twin carburettors proved too powerful for the B.M.W. clutch so a Volkswagen clutch was fitted. in. A trip for two across Australia and on to Tasmania, laden with camping gear demonstrated the quality of the outfit, which currently sits in an Albany V.W. collection. Madill's next door neighbour, his bedroom alongside Max's workshop didn't appreciate the often late night work noise, so in the interests of neighbourly harmony Shirley would remove the garage fuse at 9 o'clock each night.

Joining the V.M.C.C. was a good move too – so many friends there who'd finished with competition riding but still loved bikes. Max quickly became machine examiner and when these had to be licenced by Police Max began his twenty plus years term as #001. About this time Madill's phone number was listed as that of the V.M.C.C. and for over twenty years Max and Shirley answered thousands of calls. This very happy couple, in all the 52 years together have had but one real argument and that one lasted a whole week! Shirley had understood Max to have promised not to race again after they wed, but Max believed he'd made no such promise and for that week the atmosphere was frigid. Ultimately they kissed and made up, which is why we argue in the first place, and Max acquired a Triumph Tiger 500 and joined the Harley Club, riding in scrambles without notable success bar one wet day everything felt right and he became a winner at Heme Hill. Forrestfield speedway appealed to him also – it was kidney shaped and safer than a dirt oval so Max ran an Ariel powered sidecar there for a couple of seasons, with Stan Dyson assisting with mechanical matters. Billy McDermott rode a very compact, very twitchy ESO powered device built in the Eastern states; Max used Ariel power, 14:1 on alcohol, in a slightly longer than fashionable, very stable chassis and the pair regularly did battle. One race had Max first into the dog leg where he clipped a marker and upended the outfit blocking the track, but the engine being fuel injected kept running so they were able to right the machine and blast off, beating a very frustrated McDermott. Both these machines have regularly run in the Albany Hillclimb. Shirley made life long friends with many of the bike people, and upon joining the V.M.C.C. was delighted to find as members the Boyd, Clark, Richardson, and Clinton families.

Events at the Mt Brown circuit, built for the Harley Club were pretty social affairs, with a big bonfire on Saturday night, and with spuds in the ashes then on Sunday, "Shirley's Kitchen" was popular, with porridge and other breakfasts for all. The only Harley scramble Max entered saw him first into the first corner only to be dumped off by a charging Don Collins, breaking Max's collar bone and dislocating his arm. At hospital the matron pulled the arm vigorously to relocate it but hadn't checked for other injury; the collar bone suffered more damage, and ever since, that arm can only lift to shoulder height. Max by now was working for Kierle's contracting and building company and was told to take the company's ancient and decrepit Navvy up Red Hill and look for gravel, necessary in building the Starline Drive In. Max was sceptical, he's never looked for gravel before but sure enough found some and began excavating. A few days later Mick, a contractor carting the gravel had a Commer truck he kept pristine and was standing on the roof rack to direct Max's next shovel load. "I wouldn't stand up there," said Max "This bloody old wreck is likely to run out of brakes any time, everything else is worn out!" "Nah, I'll be OK" said Mick and shortly thereafter found himself on the bucket for the two and a half turns it took to stop from when Max shut it down. By good fortune Mick was unharmed, and Max refused to drive that machine again. The company then supplied a Caterpillar DC4 which Max said wouldn't pull itself through the creek, the company said it would and after the first attempted crossing the DC4 sat in the creek for months awaiting arrival of a big enough machine to pull it out.

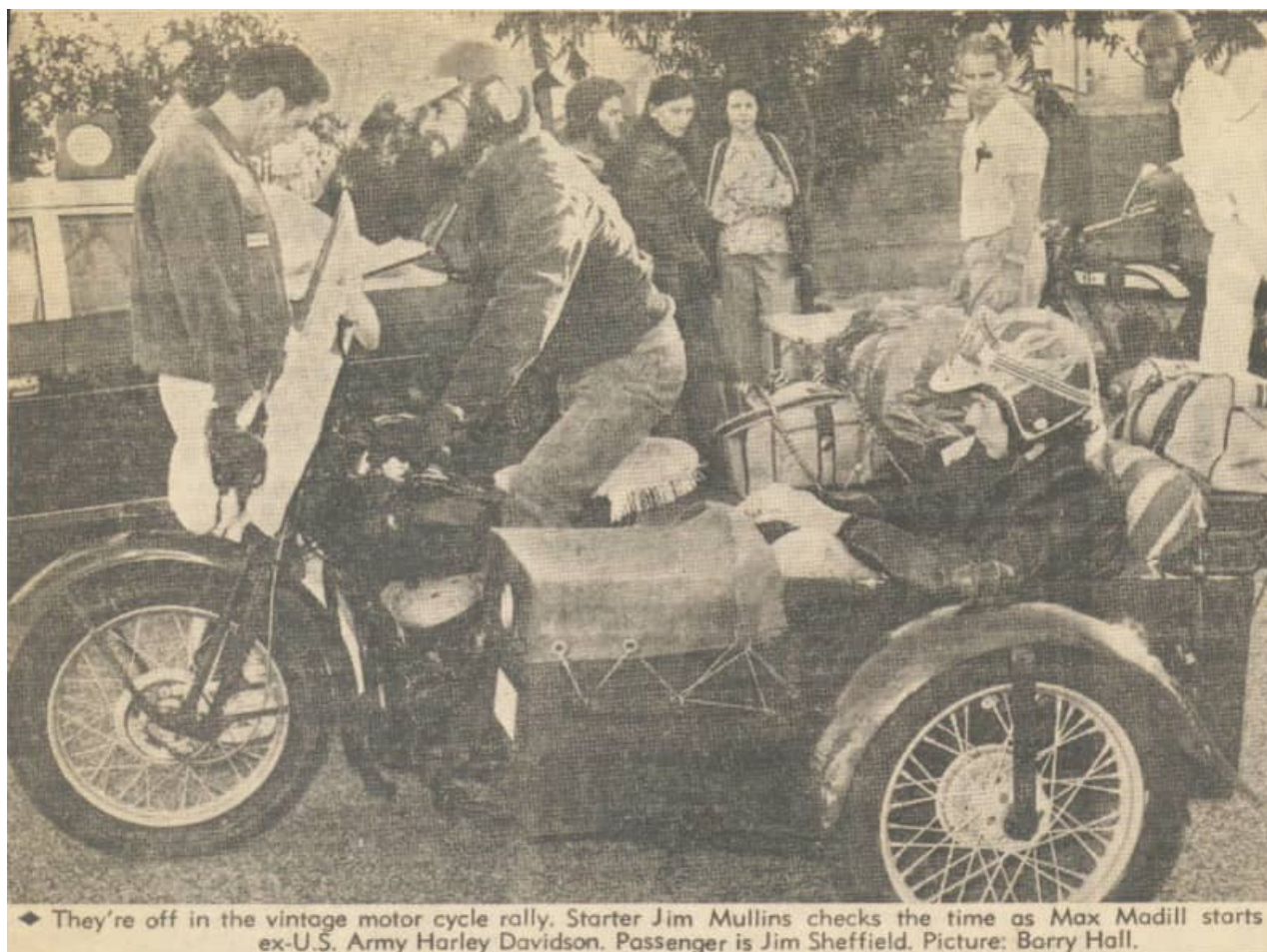
A load of rock was needed so Max loaded the company ex W.D. Blitz wagon with about 10 tons (on a 3 ton truck!) and set off down Red Hill with an Italian mechanic as passenger. They hadn't long started the descent when the 10 ton load caused the 3 ton brakes to fade to nothing, the extra speed and load now too much for the rear tail shaft which parted company with the vehicle. "We're in angel gear now!" announced Max; out jumped the mechanic, breaking his ankle. The Blitz was of course four wheel drive, but the front drive shaft had been long removed and was sitting handily on the cab floor. It was a terrifying fast and faster ride down that hill; for what seemed like forever Max fought the swaying unstable truck and truck and driver finally stopped when Max steered into a gutter on the North-West highway, nearly overturning the truck as he did so.

Red Hill seemed to have a bit of a grudge on Max. Heading upward on the Triumph outfit for an early start came to a very painful and frightening stop one morning. A stone lodged between the dual wheels of a descending truck chose the moment Max was passing to dislodge, hitting Max right between the eyes, causing him to black out. He came to, still on the bike, stopped, six inches from a very long drop.

Stan Dyson was a top class speedway sidecar pilot who appreciated Max's fastidiousness and knowledge, so the pair became a team, the Vincent outfit a consistent good looking front runner. One evening Dyson's passenger was late and the Vincent clutch needed testing so Max was persuaded to act as ballast. A wheel stand off the line followed by one and a half fast laps "frightened the hell out of me" recalls the reluctant passenger. Max also did some spanner work for solo rider Ken Chapman; sadly the latter fell off, was hit by a following rider and died. That was the end of

speedway for Shirley and Max for several years until Stan Dyson persuaded Max to fettle his machine once more. The partnership took up where it left off but Dyson went to a meet at Kalgoorlie, crashed, was hit by a following outfit and suffered a badly broken leg. A very slow healer, he retired.

Shirley, aged forty-two decided time was available for her to put together a family tree. On enquiring at the appropriate Government agency she was surprised and not a little nervous to be taken to the Registrar General's enormous, sumptuous office, given a chair and offered whiskey! Refusing the drink, Shirley was then told "It's quite unusual for two adopted people to marry". "What's that to do with me?" asked Mrs Madill "Well, you were adopted at birth! Would you like that drink now?" came the bombshell response and though it took some time for Shirley to come to terms with this news, she'd had a wonderful upbringing in a loving family. She was fortunate. Life was good.



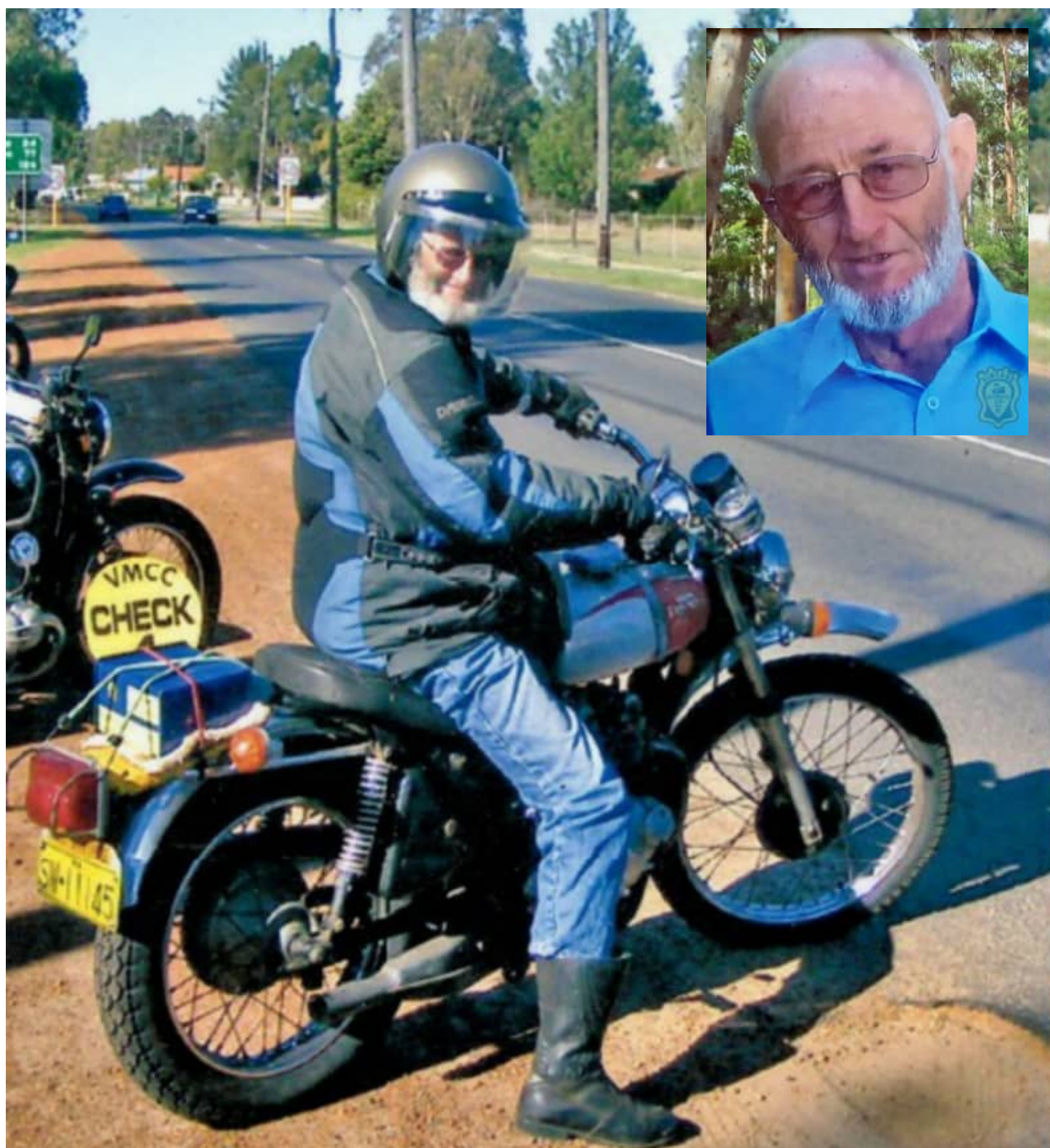
Sunday 18th September 2002. The day that would forever change the lives of Max and Shirley. The Northam Hill Climb had become a popular annual event. Take off slightly up hill to a at out left hand bend, on to a right hand hairpin, once through that in to a long sweeping left hander, the trickiest part, then to a gentle left hander, at out over a skyline, over the finish and into the car park. Total time for a fifties machine – a bit under a minute. Great fun and generally seen as quite safe, a few had done a bit of motocrossing over the years on the way up without much harm. Insurance companies at the time were reeling from an unprecedented flood of Public Liability claims, cover was hard to get and selective, so the decision was made to allow only road licenced bikes to compete. This of course thinned the entry out a bit but still over thirty bikes were to face the starter. Max on a road going Norton pushrod single was the only sidecar, and quickly found a keen passenger in Doug Firth. Practice runs proceeded. Max was paired with a rider on a big four cylinder Japanese machine who took off in most loud and dramatic fashion causing Shirley to remark "There goes an accident trying to happen," so when word came down there'd been a crash she never imagined it to be Max. Sadly, Max it was, going into that tricky tightening up left hander, with some mud on the road and the dual road bike handicaps of a bike with insufficient power to force it to turn, and a passenger in a sidecar which allowed no room to hang out. Over the edge they went, Max tipping the outfit to try and eject Doug who found himself on the grass, virtually uninjured, with Max himself spearing head first into a boulder, splitting his helmet wide open and jarring his spine top to bottom. He knew he was in serious trouble; he couldn't move and couldn't feel his lower half. At Northam Hospital he was told the shattering verdict – paraplegia. Shenton Park became home until December 18th; Max was deemed fit to go home though home had yet to be modified for wheelchair use so a camp shower was set up with a

blue tarpaulin on the back verandah. Ross Lowe concreted a hoist beside the pool to allow Max aqua therapy though this has since been disallowed. Initially, Shirley had the huge task (for someone untrained) to care for her husband but the Brightwater Care Group now attend daily, also a carer allows Shirley one free afternoon per week. It's a sad reflection on life today that when the house was modified the planners wouldn't allow any changes to the front of the house which might suggest "wheelchair" because of the propensity of criminals to seek out soft targets for home invasion. Max is seemingly philosophical about his life, as in, "this is the hand we've been dealt so let's make the best of it." There have been times of great depression but he's strong minded and Shirley's strength and humour provide vital support. Both draw some consolation from knowing they've had a full and wonderful life, much of it in company of Club members. He'd originally hoped to be able to get back into his workshop, tasks such as wheel building sounded feasible for a wheelchair bound mechanic but to his intense disappointment, this won't happen. Max absolutely denies any suggestion the wrong decision was made as to which bikes were able to compete at Northam. Pony clubs, boot scooters, scouts and the like, confronted with the insurance hurdle, were cancelling events so the Club was probably lucky to be able to run the hill climb at all. Typically, once Max's condition became known, offers of help poured in from Club members. It was wonderful and heartening at a most difficult time, Shirley and Max were forever grateful. *Adrian White*



Barry Makin: *Barry was appointed as a Life Member in 1989. Barry passed away in 2008.*

Barry Makin a Founding Member of the VMCC, a member for 33 years and a Life Member passed away 10th May 2008. At the time of his passing he was a Committee member of the Club. Barry was highly regarded by all members, and a tireless worker and participant of countless events over that 33 year period. He participated in no less than 30 Busselton Two Day events, won 17 trophies and in fact his name appears 13 times on a Class 4 trophy. He rode all those events bar one, on a vintage bike on the long course. We all have fond memories of countless enjoyable events with Barry riding the Raleigh (with a few oil leaks), his left foot propped up on the frame taking direction from May and always getting there. A quiet natured man dedicated to the well being of the VMCC, and who made a tremendous effort to attend committee member duties right up to the end. Barry's funeral was held on 15th May and was attended by a large number of people many of who were VMCC members. By the time you get this report, Barry will be sitting back on a comfortable cloud, whittling on a stick, after having oiled the hinges on The Pearly Gates, re arranged their workshop, planted some beans, rock melons and pumpkins, and organised a run. He will most certainly go down in the history of this Club. On all our members behalf I offer May and Family our sincere condolences and support. The VMCC is "a bloody good club" because of people like the late Barry Makin. *Rex Edmondson*



Barry James Makin first saw the light of day at St. Andrews Hospital, Midland on 30 May 1937. His proud parents, Jim and Win were very pleased about this and went on to produce two more children, both girls. The site of this long demolished hospital is now Midland Gate shopping complex. The family moved from Millendon to Vine St when Barry was five. This new address was grandfather's property, a war settlement for returned soldiers from World War 1. This area was cleared, planted, roads and houses were built and wells established as a group; then the blocks were allocated by ballot. The Makins' block of twenty acres was named "Somalia", for the ship on which Grandfather returned from the war. Both grandfather and father, Jim were vigneron. School for Barry began at the Heme Hill State School (where he met Don Fawell), followed by Midland High. Currently the Makin grandchildren are the only fourth generation pupils at Heme Hill School. Aged fourteen and a half formal education completed, Barry was indentured at Midland Workshops as an apprentice coppersmith, meeting fellow apprentices Allen Johnson and Alan Newby. His first pay contained the splendid sum of two pounds two shillings and sixpence (\$4.25) which probably seemed pretty good to the young Barry! It was much more lucrative when he attained his tradesman's certificate shortly before his twentieth birthday, and he continued working at Midland Workshops. Assisting father in the vineyard took up most of his spare time, he hadn't met motorbikes yet but he did meet one May Shaw who accepted the proposal to become Mrs May Makin, the wedding being on 17th December 1960. One acre of the family block was divided from the property; this is where the Makin house still stands. Sadly, at this time Jim Makin was diagnosed as suffering Multiple Sclerosis. At twenty-one years old, Barry had his first ride on a motorcycle - a Bantam, around a back yard. Allen Johnson was responsible for this stroke of good fortune and encouraged Barry to join the A.J.S. Club and compete in observed trials and enduros, his first trial rides being on Villiers powered machines. Driving the family Austin A40 to these events saw recently born son Alan wrapped up and placed in a washing basket on the back seat! Barry built up his first trials iron - a 350 B.S.A. and this machine provided transport during the working week and, with gearing and tyre changes, sport in the weekends. Many riders were only able to compete in this fashion. Barry is modest about his trials successes, claiming he and Vic Richardson waged a personal battle between them, only succeeding in "making the good blokes look even better." Several awards did grace the Makin mantelpiece though, including life membership of the A.J.S. Club. Much of that original B.S.A. is contained in the B.S.A. Barry rides in club events to this day. Both the Makin offspring, Alan and Michelle couldn't wait to be old enough to ride, with Michelle competing in the Busselton Two Day several times. Through all this May gave her total support. Work outside the Midland Workshops appealed, and Barry joined Scales and Engineering, precision boiler making, and meeting Colin Tie who also worked there. In 1969 he visited Kleenheat Gas making a technical enquiry; so impressed were Kleenheat with Barry's knowledge and personality they offered him a job on the spot! This offer was good, and thus accepted, Barry working there until retirement in 1999. From being Shop Foreman Barry gained the position of Installation and Maintenance Superintendent, this title conferred, according to the ever modest Barry, "So they don't have to pay you any more!" Design work was also part of his brief. Technical service matters saw Barry spend as much time away in both the Northern Territory and South Australia as he did at home; so highly were his services valued the company paid on several occasions, including one Christmas, to have May join him at these locations.

Barry competed successfully in events in most states, is the only rider to have competed in every York T.T. run and every Busselton Two Day, with a highlight being the 1983 Rally to New Zealand. Memorable at the last event was the accommodation at an old racecourse, holes in the walls covered only by pictures and no privacy in the showers. In 1974 the Motor Cycle section of the Veteran Car Club held meetings in the Applecross Kindergarten, with only kindy tables and chairs for members! Comfort improved with a move to full-sized furniture at Melville Council Hall. Barry attended these meetings and joined the V.M.C.C. at the inaugural meeting in 1975 as number 10. For seventeen years Makins printed the "Chatter". They were ably assisted by several regulars and those Thursday nights are remembered as much for eating and drinking as they are for printing! It always turned out OK though! Barry's main rides these days are on his 1928 Raleigh 500 or his 1928 Zenith 750V twin and sidecar, though a fairly recent addition to the fleet, a Triumph Adventurer gets a run occasionally. How Barry competes on vintage machines in the Busselton, a timed rally, without a speedometer is a mystery to everyone, and he does it so well! Barry has been a member of the Management Committee for many years, has set runs countless times and done this well, a great contributor. He doesn't like to see changes made without good reason - why fix something that's not broken? - and he very much likes to see the club run in accord with it's constitution. Scant mention has been made so far of the contribution made by Barry's wife May, without whom, says Barry, most of the foregoing would have been far less successful and enjoyable. May, modest as she is, says she only did what she wanted to do and supported Barry in all his ventures. This support includes driving the back-up vehicle countless times, the already mentioned "Chatter" printing, catering (very nicely!) for runs set from their home and being ready to assist in any capacity, even the ever popular task of washing dishes at meetings. Some support! Life Membership was fitting reward, in 1991

His are the final words..."Greatest loves of my life. My wife May. My children. My grandchildren. My Raleigh. Not always in this order" *Adrian White*

May Makin: *May was appointed as a Life Member in 1990. May passed away in 2023.*

May Makin was married to Barry Makin. May was very active in the Club for many years, including putting in much time towing the backup trailer at many events. May assisted with the Vintage Chatter for 17 years. .



May Makin - (Photo courtesy Bob Cary)

Sadly, May Makin succumbed to Alzheimers disease on July 16th 2023. May has been ill for quite a long time, and her condition deteriorated rapidly in the last couple of weeks, offering her no quality of life, even though daughter Michelle and her husband Scott have nursed her tirelessly through this sad, trying time. May will always be remembered for her adopting the essential role of Back-up driver. She would have lost count of the riders and their faulty machines she took home, often going miles out of her way. Sadly, another link to the past is severed. Rest in peace, May. Our condolences to son Alan, Michelle and Scott. *Adrian*

May's daughter, Michelle Baines wrote: Mum and Dads' lives were the VMCCWA. Dad was one of the first members who had their meetings at the Kindergarten on the kiddy chairs! Dad would borrow a bike from Neil Stephenson to start with before building his first bike. Mum and I would be backup. Once I turned 17, Dad had my first BSA restored for me and then when I was 18 I had my bigger BSA. So it was a family thing, Dad and me riding and Mum backup. She was a whizz with the trailer. She could reverse the car up pretty much dead on to our trailer and that was without a reversing camera.

Mum would never ride a bike or go pillion. She hated it. But when she volunteered with the road racing club, they had a media day and she was talked into "going for a slow ride around Wanneroo". They found some leathers and talked her into it. If I wasn't there I wouldn't have believed it, they went full pace around that track and she climbed off that bike with the biggest smile. Well, Dad had a sidecar built before you could say "wanna for a ride". So there started Mum's love for sidecars. Mum also loved doing backup on Club rides and having chats with the riders. She would always drop them home. They would say "oh, it is out of your way," and Mum would always come back with, "No, it is on my way home." Even if they lived in Rockingham, it was still on her way ho, until she actually got home. When Dad passed away Mum still did backup and attended every meeting until we had to stop her driving.

Unfortunately, Mum got dementia and so we took her to live with us in Newman 4 years ago and then in March this year she was diagnosed with terminal cancer. So Mum and I moved back to their house in Herne Hill. Mum passed peacefully Sunday morning and is now with Dad and all their VMCC mates going to the next rally in the sky.



Adrian White & May Makin at Karragullen. May performing backup duties. (Photo by Murray Barnard)

Terry McKie: *Terry was appointed as a Life Member in 2011.*

Born 24/10/35 Bruce Rock W.A. Parents sold the farm 1936 moved to 117 Victoria St, Mosman Park in 1939.

I was sort of educated at Mosman Park State School and Fremantle Boys High School. My childhood was all one could wish for as far as enjoyment was concerned. Immediately over the road from home was an old farm paddock, which had mostly returned to bush where one could do as one liked. To the East and around the corner was the Swan River and to the West about a mile was the ocean. To the south across bush land existed old lime stone quarries the Harley Motor Cycle Club's Rope Works scramble course, the Colonial Sugar Refinery, Mt Lyle Superphosphate Works and the State Implements Works which were all easily accessible to the kids in the area.

These facilities provided plenty of opportunities to go explore, in the bush picking wild flowers taking them home and preserving them in between pages of books (what else were books good for), trying to round up imaginary brumbies, crabbing, fishing, swimming, canoeing across to Blackwall Reach exploring caves by myself, getting or trying to get young pigeons from nests in the factory roofs. On one occasion, a weekend, brother Jim and his mate Evan from next door took an air rifle to the Super works (as it was called), it was winter (it used to rain then) so we had rain coats which we left at the access into the building, while climbing about the watchman turned up so we escaped into the bush leaving the coats behind. After some deliberation by my elders it was decided I should go and retrieve the coats, so with knees knocking I fronted the watchman begging the return of the coats. He wanted the kid with the gun I told him I didn't know who he was and somehow I got the coats and took off.

Toby my dog an Australian Wire Haired Terrier; well he really wasn't mine belonged to a neighbour, lived on street over; I sort of took him over, much to the consternation of the owner, he was a great retriever, bring anything back that you cared to throw. Anyway he was my companion on most of my adventures from when I could first remember till teen age when I got off on the m/bikes, about the same age as myself and lived till he was 19.

Around 1941 the Army established a search light battery in the paddock opposite to support the Leighton Gun Emplacement, while all this was happening and I should have been at school, I was able to mingle freely with the soldiers one of whom became my brother in law, Jack Warrington. During WW2 there were many exciting happenings from air raid sirens going off, the army girls lighting up the sky at night and sometimes they would drop the lights down and shine on the houses transforming the inside of the house from night into day, even with blackout material on the windows. Two doors down were host family to the American Submariners who often had rather late and noisy parties. Later during the war I would get myself down to Fremantle harbour to inspect all the war ships and submarines, although I can't remember how I used to get past the security I didn't seem to have much of a problem and quite often got on board some of them with the crew giving me sweets etc you couldn't buy. On weekends when my father was home from working in the country and he being a W.W.1 Gunner would be called out to the Leighton guns for firing practice. They would shoot at drogues being towed behind aircraft and some times at rafts out in Gage Roads. All wonderful stuff for a young boy particularly when you were supposed to be at school or doing homework.

At High School where I went for most of the compulsory two years (I left the day I turned fourteen) I had many adventures either riding the pushbike or going by train. The technical part of the school where one received trade type education, blacksmithing, metal work (turning and sheet metal work), woodwork and tech drawing was at a building in East St East Fremantle we (the students) probably spent about two days a week (some half days) there and rest of the time at the main school in Fremantle. To get there I would travel by train to Fremantle and catch a tram up to the Tech some 3ks away. To return to the main school if being only a half-day at the Tech you would either walk or catch the train. The trams were quite often the small single bogey crossway bench seat open through type which would sway quite dramatically particularly with a group of boys hanging out each side; much to the annoyance of the driver and other passengers. To go home from the Tech we would walk down to the river and cross over on the railway bridge and catch the train at North Fremantle. This course took us past a platform of old railway sleepers laid on the ground to support bags of oats; (wonderful home for mice). Segregation of the sexes existed even on the train, so a paper bag



of mice collected from under the sleepers always created a bit of fun when thrown into the girls compartment as the train moved along.

Second year at high school I lived at Tom Collins House Swanbourne. My Mother was the secretary caretaker for the Fellowship of Writers or something like that it was called. The following year we moved back to Mosman Park, I had started my apprenticeship as a carpenter to W. Fairweather & Son a mainly construction company. Jobs I worked on during the five years were the P.M.H. nurses quarters in Roberts Rd Subiaco, Telephone Exchange Murray St Perth, South Fremantle Powerhouse and many small commercial projects. Most of this work involved concrete formwork which I disliked intensely and didn't help me to overcome my reputation of being the worst apprentice in the company. When I turned nineteen I suddenly found I had some tool skills and could easily cope with my studies so finished my fifth year full of confidence for the future.

Back at Mosman Park as a 15 y/old I bought my first m/c a 29 Sloper B.S.A. from my brother Jim for \$10.00. It was all in bits and I didn't have a clue. My mate Ross McConkey used to pinch his Dad's (Old Bill) Model 18 Norton on which we had great fun. Before I had turned sixteen Old Bill took pity on me and we swapped the Sloper for the Norton. I can't recall how I used to get it licensed, anyway I rode it for two years on the road and over the scramble course. One day when I was still sixteen I rode out to Victoria Park to pick up a girl I was fairly keen on and brought her back to Mosmans to watch the Scramble, which was a pretty big event hundreds of spectators and speed cops directing traffic. I thought the motor had developed a new noise as I rode past the cops but realised later it must have been my knees knocking on the petrol tank. My next bike was a 1939 Triumph Tiger 90, a beautiful machine with black frame, silver guards, a chrome petrol tank and a huge 8" chrome headlight. It took no time at all to rip all that pretty stuff off, including removing the girder forks and replacing them with teles, then onto the dirt with it. Today you'd get locked away for that behaviour.

Next bike was a 1949 Ariel V.H. 500cc twin port with one blanked off with a cap. The single ex pipe had a teardrop megaphone type silencer, which emitted a great sound however the neighbours didn't appreciate it much. I used this bike for general transport as well as club runs and scrambles for two years. While still 17 and with a couple of mates Ross McConkey and Graham Tuxsworth (now deceased) met Pat Bathurst, Valerie Thompson and Marilyn Stubbs (now deceased) down at Leighton Beach. On our m/bikes the three couples went out to dances and beach together for a while. Graham and Marilyn split, Ross and Val as with Pat and myself eventually married. Pat was not allowed on the bike so had to park around the corner when picking her up and bringing her home. Pat also came to bike events on the pillion carrying the old army shoulder pack with tools and straight through extension in it and as sometimes happened helped me push the bike home when it broke down, we could coast down hills so that helped. The next bike was a 1951 Matchless G80 S, which I bought around the time I turned 19. The swing arm was a real armchair ride compared to the old rigid frame machines. I carried out my National Service training in the R.A.N. stationed at the Leeuwin Barracks at East Fremantle as well as sea time in HMAS "June". Apart from an occasional bout of seasickness a thoroughly enjoyable six months as a Stoker working in the boiler and engine rooms.

Rode in my last scramble 1955 Aust Championships at the Rope Works Course. The G80 gearbox parted company with its cogs and didn't complete the race. Thinking back over those years of motorcycling I wasn't particularly skilled at it but had a hell of a lot of fun. Completed my apprenticeship that year fixed the gearbox on the Matchy and traded in on a 1936 Ford V8 ute and took off in October just 20 to work in Corrigin for a builder Snow Gannaway. I quickly found out I knew next to nothing about carpentry but plenty about motorbikes so spent the next five years learning my trade as well as plumbing, bricklaying, plasterboard fixing, painting and electrical wiring in houses. About November 1955 we got engaged planning to marry in November the following year after Pat had turned 19. The old V8 ute wasn't much good on the gravel roads the shockies were bugged along with the steering which had about one full free turn from side to side and holes in the floor causing the cab to fill with dust and fumes; if you went too slow. It didn't take me long to get sick of that lot when travelling back home to Mosmans every second weekend. So off to the sale yard it went and I rode out on a 1949 Dominator Norton that served me well riding back and forth to Corrigin until we were married in November as planned. I used to push the Dominator a bit, cruising around 70mph. One night while riding toward Perth I momentarily drifted off to sleep only to wake up as the bike drifted off the road into the gravel; another lucky one, just a bloody great fright.

I boarded at Mrs Bell's (Snow's mother in law) while in Corrigin. Another bloke boarded there as well, a German, Bill Schopen worked for the local hairdresser. Got on pretty well with Bill, he bought his girl Marie out from Germany and married her while we were there. They still live there, retired now, we have kept in touch ever since. The Dominator was sold on terms to a local lad and before paying it off stuffed the motor and wouldn't complete the payments. So I took it back and gave it to Sambo (Ross McConkey) who rebuilt the motor and used it for many years commuting to the Harbour Trust where he worked. In the year and before we were married Snow supplied us with a new house which I built most of and didn't get much financial reward for only the promise of cheap rent. The house dunny was up

at the back fence where the Night Cart Man could exchange it once a week, wonderful; smelt like hell even with the old phenyl tipped in which didn't kill the maggots just made it smell better, or, maybe just different. The water supply was a 1000gal tank on a 3m stand with a 2000 gal tank at ground level to catch what little rain there was and to supplement the supply you either bought (had a carrier supply it) or do as I did and carted from the town well about 1k from town. I used a trailer and a little 100gal tank. The overhead didn't have a lid and the few birds about always sat on the edge facing out and you all know what birds do when they take off. Fluoride was something new so we used to put tablets in the top tank to help the kids with their teeth; we were probably the first in town to do so. We copped a fair bit of flack for getting married at 21 and 19 but being young you really couldn't appreciate what they were on about. Life generally was good we didn't have much money and seemed to live from one week to the next getting involved with country social life, for Pat she was involved in the Choir, Hockey and gatherings of mothers in similar social standing that seemed to be established. I played a little Tennis and Badminton. We both would go down to the Club for a drink once a fortnight when the Pictures were on otherwise. I didn't drink and very seldom had any beer at home. September 1957 saw the arrival of Big Bird our daughter Teresa Lea commonly called Terrylea. February 1959 saw the arrival of Erny our second daughter Erin Jane.

My working life in Corrigin was rewarding in developing skills of all facets of building mainly working out on farms building sheds and houses but not much of a social life being away on the Monday morning returning on Wednesday night and Friday night and usually working Saturday in the joinery shop getting gear ready for Monday. 1957 bought a 1949 Vauxhall Velox, which served us well until about 1963. One Danish family, Emil and Olsen were good friends. Emil worked for another builder in town and we planned to go into partnership building at Yealering in 1960. Emil backed out which was a little disappointing and left me pretty disgruntled with life in Corrigin so we moved back to Perth where we boarded with Pats Parents for a few months, then to a flat at the back of the Ocean Beach Hotel in North Cott.

For work I went and got a job as a chippy with a mob building Gadstones factory in Whitegum Valley or thereabouts, when that was completed got a job with Jaxons on a school opposite Fremantle Hospital doing formwork which I was pretty good at, became the union rep on site shortly after the manager Tom Matier came on site and sacked the existing rep, some bloke he didn't particularly like, Anyway collected the dues from the members then found out I got a percentage, which was a pleasant surprise. That didn't last long, the foreman, a bloke I went to Tech with at Fremantle during my apprenticeship, put me up to go and work with subcontract carpenter Keith Read on Jaxon's houses. I thought I was a pretty good worker but that guy put me to shame, he was like a machine. It would take me about two hours to hang a door using all hand tools when I started with him; after about six months of trying to keep up I got it down to one hour and felt good. Keith taught me a lot about hard efficient work methods and the need to keep going no matter what so by the end of the day you were properly stuffed but you knew you had made a quid. We eventually ran out of work and parted company. My stupid lack of confidence in having a go at roofing and framing reduced my opportunities for work, however the second fixing side was very satisfying and rewarding financially.

We tried to buy a house in the Melville area but had no hope with out any money. We still owned a block of land in Glen Forrest, which we had bought as teenagers for about 150 quid. Probably paid it off at about 10 bob a week. As I had been fixing on State Housing homes and thought one would suit us, we decided to put in for one. In the mean time the flat was pretty ordinary we had a kitchen and two sorts of bedrooms on the verandah and shared the bathroom with one other flat dweller. A house in East Cannington came up for rent so we grabbed that while we waited for the S.H.C. house. This was 1962 the Commonwealth Games were in Perth and a lot of resources were going into building the Games Village etc and it would seem it would be quicker to get a loan from the S.H.C. and build our own which we did. Borrowed \$5000 to build the 3 bed, lounge and kitchen S.H.C. design on our block in Glen Forrest.

After parting with Keith Read I got a contract to floor out a house and then some fixing jobs. I needed to have a mate and Keith had gone back to work with his brother so I asked brother George if he would be interested in learning a bit of Carpentry work and earn a little more than what he was getting as a wood machinist. George became my mate for a number of years; helped me get the frames up on our house and then worked with Keith while I finished the house; took a couple of months, moved in during December 1962. Fixing work became a little scarce when I had finished the house so I took on a wages job working at Pearce Air Force for a small Builder who had a contract to extend the Radio Communication Building for the R.A.A.F. He was a grumpy bastard however I got on ok with him as I knew what I was doing and could get a bit more done than the other carpenter who had never been a subbie. I was there about a month when some fixing work came up, so I pulled the pin which the Builder was upset about but didn't offer me any extra money to stay, so bad luck for him. George and I really got into some work from then on; we built up a reputation of being reliable quality fixers with several builders and seldom had any slack time, maybe a day here and there.

I must have been a bit of a bastard to work with; I would constantly look for ways to get the job done faster and would be very much aware of any other team that was quicker than us. I very seldom spoke while working other than what

was necessary to get the job done. I would push George to work harder, by virtually running and making it difficult for him to keep up. As far as I was concerned you would not go anywhere on the job empty handed; if you had to go to the vehicle to get something I would see if there was anything to take back that we had finished with for the day. We were one of the first teams to become mechanised by buying a 240V generator, electric plane, power saw and router. I suppose it took us a while to improve our speed but it certainly made the job easier and more accurate than by hand tools.

George and I worked off and on in the North West from the American Radio Base in Exmouth in 1965 to Tom Price, Dampier, Mt Goldsworthy and Port Hedland; working mainly on housing. Prior to that we worked at Albany on the Jail Screw Houses and Koolyanobbing where the iron ore town was developing. There we had to sleep in a tent, bloody freezing with ice on the ground in the morning. We also had to provide our own food, which was done by dobbing in with the other subbies to employ a cook who would go into Southern Cross to get the food each day. Mt Goldsworthy was the hottest place I ever worked, it was reputed to be hotter or equal to Marble Bar. Some days you couldn't work in the middle of the day it was just too bloody hot so we would sit in the shade somewhere until it cooled a little. We would work six straight days then go somewhere on the day off; at Goldsworthy on one occasion the builder took all the teams who didn't want to work to a pool on the River where I really hung one on, sitting on the bough of a ghost gum about 2m off the ground tried drinking a jug of beer straight off; got most of it down only to have it return immediately, fell off the bough onto the soft sand and was crook for further four days but still managed to work. I didn't drink again while there.

During all of this work our social life in Glen Forrest was developing, Pat with TL starting school in 63 got involved in the P&C. and because it was like a country town where you had to go to the Post Office to get the mail, Pat met a lot of people who were involved in all of the sporting activities. I joined the Tennis and Badminton Clubs and met Alex Lamont from Mt Helena there with a group of blokes got the Hills Basketball Comp going, travelling over to Kalamunda, Lesmurdie and of course Mundaring also had a team. I was 29 at the time and enjoyed many years playing both in that comp and at Perry Lakes later when I joined A.V. Jennings. The Badminton Club was pretty active, got involved with pennants and social games with other clubs. They were a great bunch of people and some of them we have been friends with continually over the past 40 odd years. 1963 my Father died aged 73. That year also saw the demise of the old Vauxhall; the motor started burning heaps of oil so went to the wreckers and bought a second-hand motor, which George and I rebuilt. The Vauxhall was good as far as the kids were concerned they were put in to sleep while we played badminton or at a dance etc, but it wasn't much good for work so I traded it on F.B. Holden van that did the job admirably until the local news paper bloke slammed into it one day as I went to work, tipped her upside down, no injury to me.

When repaired it was bent and crabbed down the road however kept it until 1966 when we bought a 1966 Toyota Crown Station Wagon, brand new, beautiful car but too big and heavy for the 1800cc motor. 1968 set off in the Toyota to drive to Darwin-Alice Springs-Port Augusta and home about 8 or 10 weeks. We were to meet Wendy, (Pat's sister) and Alan Henderson at Port Hedland as well as Pat's Mum and Dad. We decided to go to all of the places I had worked in the North prior to the meeting in Port Hedland. The bitumen had been extended from Carnarvon to Minilya during the three years I worked up there, which was only about 140Ks so it was all dirt to about 200Ks into W.A. on the Nullabor apart from a bit of sealed road from Darwin to Alice which had been laid during WW2 and had no maintenance since; some of the pot holes looked like bomb craters and required a bit of skill getting around them. There was also about 200Ks of sealed road from Pt Augusta West. The Toyota was a little worse for wear after that trip and traded it for a new Holden station wagon, which had a bloody awful column manual gearshift.

During those years working North and subcontracting at home we were able to carry out extensions to the house which ended up 4 bed and family room as well as the original kitchen and lounge being extensively altered. 1969 saw the arrival of son Jason 9 months after Pat's visit to the fertility cave at Ayers Rock,

That year I had had enough of subcontracting and thought I could try something else; in June I started as a supervisor with A.V. Jennings an Australia wide building company. After three months I was running into trouble adjusting to the pressure of the job and advised the construction manager I was about to quit, he talked me into staying. Within another 9 months I was promoted to senior supervisor which I enjoyed doing and had up to about 6 supervisors in my area run from a little old shop in Kalamunda. My lack of schooling when I was young caught up with me then, particularly with all of the written work required in the job so I had to make many phone calls home to Pat to find out how to spell and structure sentences etc; Roget's Thesaurus was a great help as well. A further 2 years I was Construction Manager responsible for all of the company onsite housing in the metro area and working from the main office in Subiaco. Again 2 years later I became the Building Manager responsible for the Estimating, Administration and Construction of the housing in the State. The Company had problems controlling outside contractors in Plumbing and Plasterboard installation both in work on site and cost. I set up two separate divisions to cover this with two

managers resulting in cheaper cost and more importantly control of work on site. During my time with Jennings I went back to night school and studied for the Builders Registration; this took about 3 years and then a further two years to complete my Diploma in Building.

Terrylea brought home her boyfriend Glenn McKenzie whom she was pretty keen on; his job at the time was driving a truck, which didn't excite us much and somehow I was able to get him an Apprenticeship with Jennings as a Brickie. Glenn excelled at it and was top apprentice over a couple of years. They eventually married giving us a Grand Daughter Shannon now married to a farmer Marcus Souness and Grand Son Liam now a student science teacher at Uni. Erin at 17 got a little too friendly with Jim Dolman and provided us with a wonderful Grand Son Lloyd now an Engineer. They also have a second son Calum who was a cheeky little bugger as a kid and now a law student at U.W.A. Because of Jason joining the Scouts and Pat a Club Leader I became a Scout Leader or rather a Group Leader and between us we restarted the Glen Forrest Group. All I can say about that experience was I did the job but couldn't get enthusiastic about it and was glad it finished after about four years in 1982.

During my time with Jennings there was a lot of social life both with the Company and with friends; a lot of dining out, drinking grog a lot of it good, a lot I didn't enjoy and events that happened that I'm not particularly proud of. Our private life was pretty full on in those days; out to parties, dinners at restaurants and dinners at friends etc, getting pretty full and driving when I shouldn't have. My working life at Jennings came to an end when after two years as a Divisional Manager running Jennings Home Improvements where I was responsible for the sales finance and construction I met my match. Advertising and pushing sales personnel I knew nothing of. The General Manager of the Housing Group asked me to return to the building management position but that meant someone I had promoted to that job was to lose his so I pulled the pin in June 1982.

During that year I bought a 21ft stink boat called the "Jackpot". We had a lot of fun mainly fishing off the coast out to the edge of the continental shelf in various areas from Jurien to Bunbury. Navigation consisted of a compass and visual remembrance of the coastline you left at 5am. Mostly we would be out of sight of land and with a strong wind it could take about 2 hours travelling East with a touch of South guessing on the Northerly drift when fishing.

That year still aged 46 I started on my own with a few small jobs mainly passed on to me from Jennings people; jobs Jennings would not take on. Glenn joined up with me, both of us working on the tools as needed. On reflection as I have always like working with the tools I would probably have been better off financially and with better job satisfaction on the tools, or I like to think so; who knows? After about two years son in law Jim Dolman left the Forestry Dept and joined up with Glenn and me to learn something different; building. This he did pretty well and after I retired in 1999 he took over the Company and still runs it today. In the first ten years we did pretty well financially and built some interesting projects from moving a window in a wall to a three storey timber framed extension on a house costing \$240,000 back in 1994. 1984 Pat and I went on trip to Europe, toured around the U.K. and a short trip to Amsterdam. We went back for two more trips up to and including 1990 when we toured part of Germany and Spanish Isle Majorca and then hired a canal boat with friends Pam and Greg Nicholas cruising one of the English canals ending in Wales. Unfortunately Greg and Pam had some problems, which ended when Greg committed suicide shortly after we returned.

After picking up a 1951 Matchless wreck from one of my clients I joined the VMCCWA and decided to sell my 21ft stink boat and restore the bike. I needed a bike to ride while the restoration of the Matchless took place so I bought a 350 Ariel from the estate of one of the deceased members. I developed a real passion for restoring and riding the old bikes and ended up restoring four other Ariels including a side car and another Matchless. At this date of typing 15/10/05 have sold the Ariel and side car and bought a 1979 Honda 900cc to which I will fit a side car and probably strip down the lot and repaint later. About 1992 Pat gave me a present in the form of a ticket on the Sailing Ship "Leeuwin" for a ten- day cruise to the Abrolhos. I got pretty hooked and became a volunteer crewman and sailed on one trip to Indonesia from Broome and returned to Dampier and another memorable one out of Esperance. Life on board was something special, the real world no longer existed, you became part of a new life in a rather new small world working with and mixing with in most cases people you had not previously met. You had to learn to endure some new experiences such as starting a watch at midnight and 4am during which you had to climb in the rigging with at times some pretty rough seas to adjust sails. You had no lights and had to adjust to star or moon light to get the work done. Sailing south of Esperance was at times some of the most exhilarating experiences of my life. I sailed several one-day cruises on the "Leeuwin" out of Fremantle and put in many hours in refits of the ship over about 5 years. I also sailed a couple of shake down cruises on the "Endeavour" after it was launched and prior to it sailing around the world. 1994 Pat bought me another ticket for a cruise this time to Antarctica. What a fantastic experience. I sailed on the "Kapitan Khlebnikov" a Russian Ice Breaker from Hobart on 31st December 1994 arriving at Commonwealth Bay to visit Mawson's Hut, which didn't happen because of very strong katabatic winds. We then rescued a French Ice Breaker, which had been frozen in for two weeks, then on to the Ross Sea where we visited the Dry Valleys and The American

Scott Base returning to Hobart via the Macquarie Islands. November 1998 I retired from the building business, with son in-law Jim starting his own company and using my trading name. I still had a couple of contracts to finish off which happened in March 1999 then Pat and I took off in the Caravan for about 7 months touring the East. Postscript: Terry now lives in Beverley



(pic: Lionel Rudd left & Terry McKie on the right) - Photo by Murray Barnard 2021



Terry McKie (*Photo by Nic Montagu 2014*)



L-R: Elliott Montagu, Terry McKie & Bruce Kirk (*Photo by Nic Montagu 2014*)

John Moorehead: *John was appointed as a Life Member in 2003.*

I was born in December 1941 in the country town of Baralaba, some 100 miles south west of Rockhampton, central Queensland. A wonderful childhood with activities in the surrounding bush and seaside towns. We all made our own fun and actually managed without TV, computer games and the like. My father was a Boiler Attendant and Engine Driver working in the local mines and factories. Steam engines were still in common use not only for trains, shipping etc. but for factory machinery.

When I was 14 years old my parents moved to Sydney to go into partnership with my uncle in a small farm on the outskirts of Sydney. The main activity was the intensive, high-density farming of Chickens. My uncle was friends with Bob Ingham and both my uncle and Bob believed that whilst at this time Chicken (chooks) were only enjoyed on special occasions and within a few years it would be a common meal. Long before Kentucky Fried and the like. The rest is history.

I completed my Leaving Certificate in 1958 and started work as an Engineering Cadet at Cable Makers Australia Pty Ltd (CMA) at Liverpool NSW. Whilst still at school I purchased my first motor cycle. It was a 1946 125 cc Waratah manufactured by William Brothers in Sydney. I restored this machine, licensed it, and used it in conjunction with public transport when I started work and also for attending night classes up to 4 nights a week for my Production Engineering studies. After this motor cycle came a BSA 125 Bantam, 1950 350 Royal Enfield and a BSA B31. After a year or so I could afford a car.

In 1963, CMA open a small factory in Perth WA and I was given the task to supervise the installation of the production machinery for PVC insulated cables. I remained to train the operators, set up the laboratory the test facility. I continued on as Factory manager until 1970 and then returned to the main Factory in Sydney as Chief Cable Engineer. Whilst in Perth I attended the WA Institute of Technology (now Curtin University) to further my Engineering qualifications in Production Engineering and Electrical Engineering. My leisure activities whilst in Perth included SCUBA diving and instructing with the Underwater Explorers Club of WA and social motor cycle activities with a 1955 BSA B31 machine.

After returning to Sydney, I was involved in many electrical cable projects not only in Australia but overseas. One interesting project was the development of the Barra Sonobuoy for the detection and identification of submarines. CMA was a subcontractor to the team designing and manufacturing this device. Over 30,000 were made and supplies to various countries earning Australia some \$300 million in export dollars. I continued with my SCUBA diving, underwater photography and historical ship wreck research in the Sydney area. Helen and I met in Sydney and we married in 1973. Our two children were born in Sydney. With the enjoyable phase of family life my activities expanded to netball, scouts, tennis football etc.



In 1982 our family moved to Perth and I was appointed as senior Cable Engineer based in Perth. I retired full time employment in 2000 as the Regional Manager for CMA. After returning to Perth my interest in motor cycles was rekindled. I have restored several motor cycles The first was a 1950 BSA Bantam and at this time I joined the VMCCWA in 1988. This machine has now travelled some 17,500 miles (28,200 km) on VMCC events.

Other machines followed including 1960 D7 Bantam, 1952 BSA M20, 1951 350 Ariel, 1953 BSA M21 and Dusting Side Car, 1948 T100 Triumph and a 1937 BSA M23 and Side Car. My enjoyment has always been restoring machines as near as possible to the original manufacturer's specification. After joining the VMCC I participated in as many events as possible and assisted with the operation of the Club in fulfilling various tasks, eg Committee Member, Treasurer, Spares Officer, Club regalia, Events/social organiser etc. Other like activities have included a vintage and classic car. Currently I work one day a week as a volunteer at the Aviation Heritage Museum in Perth.

Whilst age has meant some health restrictions that prevent me from participating in VMCCWA, events, I have fond memories of my membership of the VMCCWA. *John Moorehead - June 2022*

John arrived in this world on 30th December 1941, the first offspring of Percy and Bernice Moorehead, in the small country town of Baralaba, population about five hundred, south west of Rockhampton, Queensland. Two sisters followed but, sadly, neither lived past infancy. John's story nearly had an early ending too. Early one cool end-of-winter morning our two year old explorer set out alone to check out the local thick bush and became lost. His frantic mother alerted the town; the local mine and the whole town closed down and every able bodied man, including some Aboriginal trackers joined the search. Darkness was approaching when one small and frightened boy was found. John's only memory of this is of a large white horse beside a dam, which frightened him greatly.

Percy's work as an engine driver - boiler attendant necessitated a move to Rockhampton when John was five, and there John began school, where he did particularly well in the practical subjects such as manual arts. He enjoyed several sports but didn't become a star. Aged thirteen, he had his first ride on the back of a motorcycle. Dingoes were in plague proportions and John's Uncle Doug used an A.J.S. to transport the two of them into the bush to shoot the pests. So large was the problem with wild dogs a bounty of one guinea (£1-1-0 or \$2.10) was paid for each dog shot, a princely sum in 1954.

In 1956, when John was fourteen, the family made another move, to the outskirts of Sydney. Percy had a brother, Clarrie, a man of vision, and some courage, it would seem. Clarrie foresaw the time when chicken would cease to be a special treat, and would become what today is called fast food, so, following this idea he persuaded Percy to become a business partner and together they pioneered the practices, still in use, of high density chicken farming. This venture was a great success, being major suppliers to Inghams, amongst others.

At that time, an ice cream bought at the cinema was a small block of ice cream between two wafers. Uncle Clarrie (who began his working life as a hairdresser) thought it might be quite nice if he threw away the wafers, poked a small stick into the ice cream and then dipped it in melted chocolate. Thus the choc wedge was born.

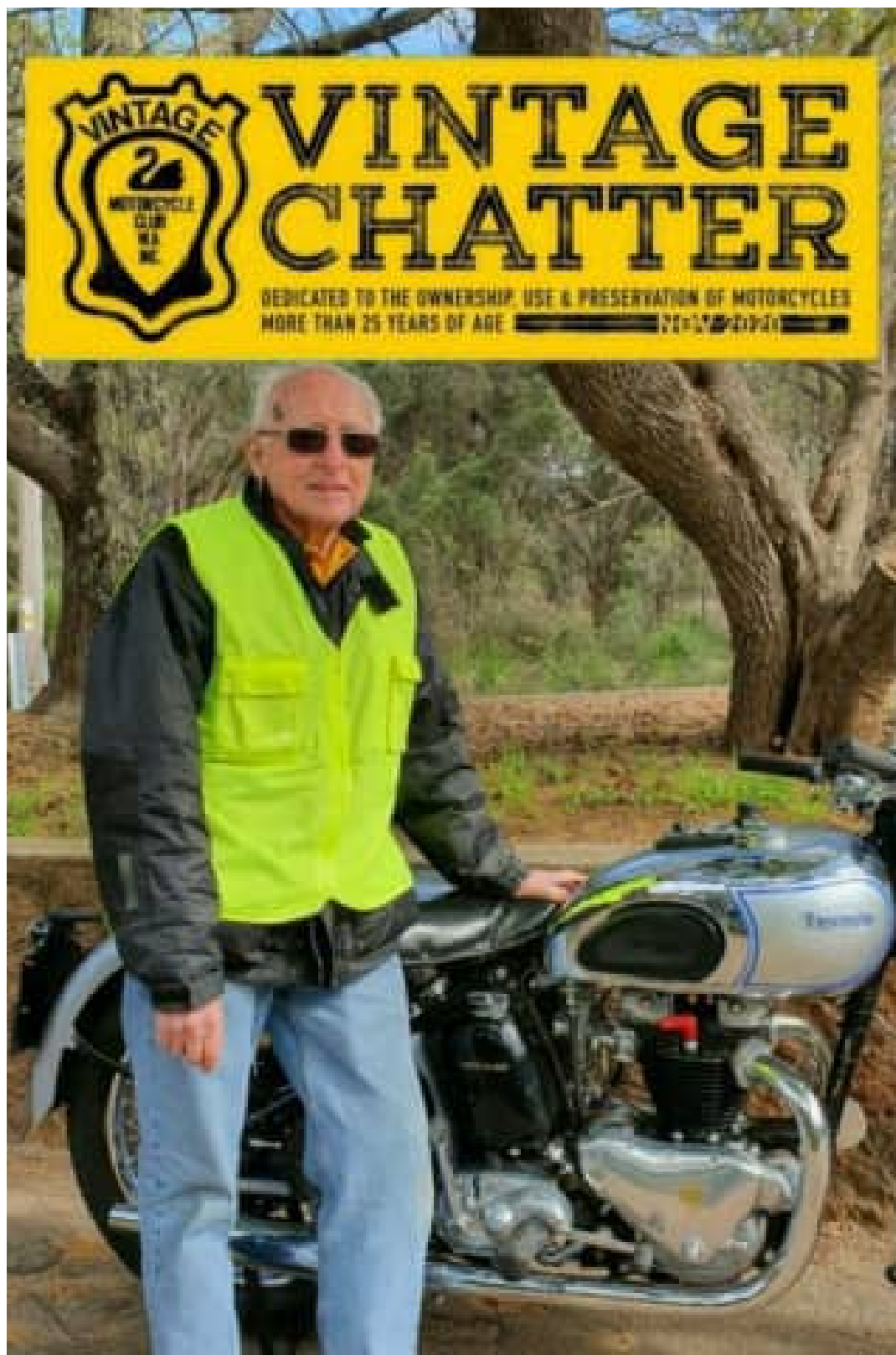
Meantime, John had completed his schooling at Liverpool High with his Leaving Certificate, so it was time to choose a career. He was very pleased to be given an engineering cadetship with Cable Makers Australia Pty Ltd. During his final time at high school he'd purchased a scruffy non-running Waratah motor cycle, an Australian made lightweight powered by a Villiers 125cc engine. The bike had the unusual feature of a hand change gearbox, the lever for which protruded through the centre of the petrol tank. John restored this machine and found it an enjoyable and economical means of transport. With the 20/20 hindsight many of us are blessed with, John wishes now he'd kept that odd little bike! A BSA Bantam replaced it and gave sterling service; John still rides an immaculate Bantam in Club events to this day. Next came a Royal Enfield 350 Bullet and finally a BSA B31 plunger model. That was the end of bikes for John for many years, he certainly enjoyed them but many times in a young man's life, a car is desirable!

John was still studying as well as working. Four nights a week he'd attend Sydney Tech learning production engineering, which he believed would help further his career with Cable Makers which was a pretty big company, employing twelve ' - hundred workers. Studies were finished, and all the hard work paid off. In 1963 the company opened a factory in Perth and John was offered the task of supervising the installation of all the machinery. This completed, the plant up and running, and John remained in Perth as superintendent, a big job as the operation worked twenty-four hours daily in three shifts; John had to be there when shifts changed, and was also on call for breakdowns. He still found time to develop a new passion - SCUBA diving with Perth Underwater Explorers, where he became an instructor and also a competent underwater photographer.

He bought a B.S.A. B33 scrambler, a converted road bike as was then the norm, and rode with the Coastal Scramble Club, Rockingham. On one occasion he rode at the famous Ropeworks circuit but found the B.S.A. a heavy and exhausting ride. John was still studying, in the evenings, at W.A.I.T. (Now Curtin University) and achieved Associateship in Production Engineering and was also admitted to the Institute of Engineers. Life in Perth was very agreeable but to capitalise on seven years study, John made the move back to Sydney, still with the same company, now with the position of Technical Marketing Manager for Australia. Not only did this new position require travel all over Australia but took him to Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, America and England. A highlight for John was working with the Royal Australian Navy to develop sonar buoys for submarine detection. This top secret work involved practical tests on board a destroyer and with aircraft, and his SCUBA experience was an invaluable bonus. Helen Parker worked at Cable Makers as a receptionist and typist, played A-Grade netball and much enjoyed handicrafts in her spare time. She and John found a mutual attraction, courted for twelve months and married in January 1973. They bought a house in Ruse, near Campbelltown and produced two children, Nicefe in 1974 and David in 1977. Nicole has now married and presented John and Helen with a grandson. David works as an electronic security serviceman. As a boy, he was given a Yamaha DT 125 by Vic Richardson, with Dad's help he restored and rode this. A later attempt to introduce Helen to the joys of motorcycling on the DT backfired - she fell off and still prefers horse riding.



In 1982 the family returned to Perth, John still with Cable Makers, and finally becoming Regional Manager W.A., from which position he retired in 1998. He was given a kit of a model replica of "Endeavour", to be about eighteen inches long, to help fill in his time. The term "Kit" didn't mean a pre fabricated plastic item but a set of plans and all the required materials. It's a beautiful model, double planked as per the real thing and a credit to John's patience and skill. To go back a little, the motorcycle bug had never left, and in 1988 John acquired a 1950 Bantam which was all there but painted black and pretty horrible. John and David restored this to an as-new standard and John regularly rides this bike still in Club events. This was followed by a D7 Bantam, a 1950 BSA M20 (later converted to M21 with Dusting sidecar), the 1951 Ariel 350 he still rides and finally his latest restoration, the 1948 Triumph Tiger 100. The latter was part of the Marshall collection originally. The M21 outfit was fun because Helen enjoyed the sidecar, but never liked riding pillion. Together they won the Busselton Two Day and covered many happy miles. John's restorations are among the very best for authenticity, detail and finish, but he says reliability is the feature he most values. He now has a 1928 Model A Ford 4 door Phaeton, purchased restored and very nice, but still undergoing finishing to John's standards. John is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Model A Restorer's Club and he and Helen enjoy outings with this group. Helen has two beautiful Border Collies which she trains for agility and obedience. The dogs have rewarded her patience and ability with competition success. Helen still enjoys handicrafts, examples of which adorn the walls of their home. *Adrian White.*



John Moorehead

Bill Morrell & Shirley Morrell: *Bill was awarded Life Membership in 2004 and Shirley in 2009*

First motorcycle ridden. A 1951 BSA Bantam at age 15. First motorcycle owned. A 1940s BSA WM20 (used for bush bashing), at age 15. 3 favourite bikes. 1974 Yamaha RD 350, 1975 CZ 175, (both were used as everyday transport for work), and a 1929 BSA 500cc OHV, (current bike). Motorcycles Bill would like to own. 1950's BSA B33 single, or a 1920's flat tank model of any make. Longest ownership of a bike, 44 years. Bill's favourite motorcycle rides are, anywhere around our area. Out through the Porongorups, back through Mt Barker to Albany. A ride out to Anvil Beach. A Sunday coffee ride out to Whale World. Bill Joined the VMCC in 1982 because of an interest in older motorcycles, particularly Veteran and Vintage, and for the camaraderie of other members. Also the information one could get to help in restoring early motorcycles.



The great escape

By Anthony Probert

Few motorcycle enthusiasts could claim a bonafide accolade for spending time tinkering around in their shed and restoring old bikes.

But Albany man Bill Morrell is one of the lucky few. The accolade – life membership of the Vintage Motorcycle Club of WA.

But he didn't just get it for spending time in his shed – there were the endless hours of dedication to the Albany section of the club to consider.

The recognition for Mr Morrell's dedication to the Vintage Motorcycle Club came as a surprise. He suspected something was up when WA president Keith Perry showed up at an Albany club meeting with a packet of biscuits.

Mr Perry presented the Tim-Tam to a puzzled Mr Morrell but confessed the real reason he was in Albany was to award his life membership.

"It was an absolute knockout," Mr Morrell said.

"It's something that you don't actually work for, so when I was presented with the award I was gobsmacked."

Despite the surprise, he still hasn't worked out what the biscuits had to do with it.

Mr Morrell first joined the Vintage Motorcycle Club of WA in 1972 and was a founding member of the Albany section in 1982.

Since then he has held most office positions including secretary, property officer and eventually graduated to machine examiner. The position of machine examiner is awarded by the head office in Perth and implies a detailed knowledge of vintage bikes and a lot of experience for those who carry the title.

Mr Morrell's first experience with motorcycle ownership was with an old BSA clanger. It cost him about three pounds.

"I was 14. It was an old bike to bash around in the bush with," he said.

The interest in the Birmingham Small Arms machines would continue and one of Mr Morrell's proudest vintage motorcycling moments was rolling out of the shed on a newly-restored 1929 BSA.

Although the moment was not on the same scale as Steve McQueen's efforts in *The Great Escape*, Mr Morrell felt much of the same thrill.

The bike is still awaiting its final touches – and it will probably have to keep waiting.

"I restored it so I could ride it and as soon as it was road worthy that was it, I was off. So the last few little things will have to wait," he said.



PENCHANT: Bill Morrell developed his preference for two wheels at an early age.

For every life member there is a partner who has had to endure some kind of sacrifice for their beloved's hobby.

Mr Morrell's wife of 35 years, Shirley, clearly recalls the early days when they would eat dinner while perched on the side of the bed in their caravan because the table was loaded with motorcycle parts.

She also used to ride but now leaves the thrill to Bill and their grandchildren who usually queue up to go for a ride in 'Poppy's' sidecar.

If a spin around the block is out of the question, then a peek in the shed that is laden with spare parts and memorabilia usually suffices.

Mr Morrell said the Vintage Motorcycle Club was about sharing common interests and some meetings resulted in two hours of chatting preceded by 20 minutes riding.



LOVINGLY RESTORED: Mr Morrell often escapes to his shed and has produced several works of vintage motorcycling wonder.



BEFORE: Bill's 1929 BSA before he put 15 years worth of work into it.



Shirley Morrell in front of her husband Bill's 1954 BSA motorcycle.

Shirley wasn't born to ride, but now she's in it for life

It could be considered strange for someone who is not really interested in motorbikes to become a life member of the WA Vintage Motorcycle Club.

But then again, Albany resident Shirley Morrell is not your average woman.

Mrs Morrell – a member of the Albany section since 1984 – was nominated by her associates and recently became only the second woman to be inducted as a life member of the club.

And it was not because of her two-wheeled passion.

"I don't really get into them," Mrs Morrell said from her Little Grove home.

"Every time I hop onto one it seems to break down, so I tend to stay away."

"But they've been a part of my family for a long time so, if you can't beat em' join em'."

Mrs Morrell has been the coordinator of the Albany Vintage Motorcycle section's Christmas toy run for the past

22 years and has also been secretary of the club for 16 years.

Her husband Bill said it was the behind-the-scenes work and charity drives Shirley did which contributed to her life membership.

"She puts in so much effort into the club and we love her for it," he said.

Despite all the kudos, Shirley said she does it for one reason and one reason only.

"Because I love it."

Ron Morrison: *Ron Morrison was awarded Life Membership in 2005. Ron passed away in 2022.*

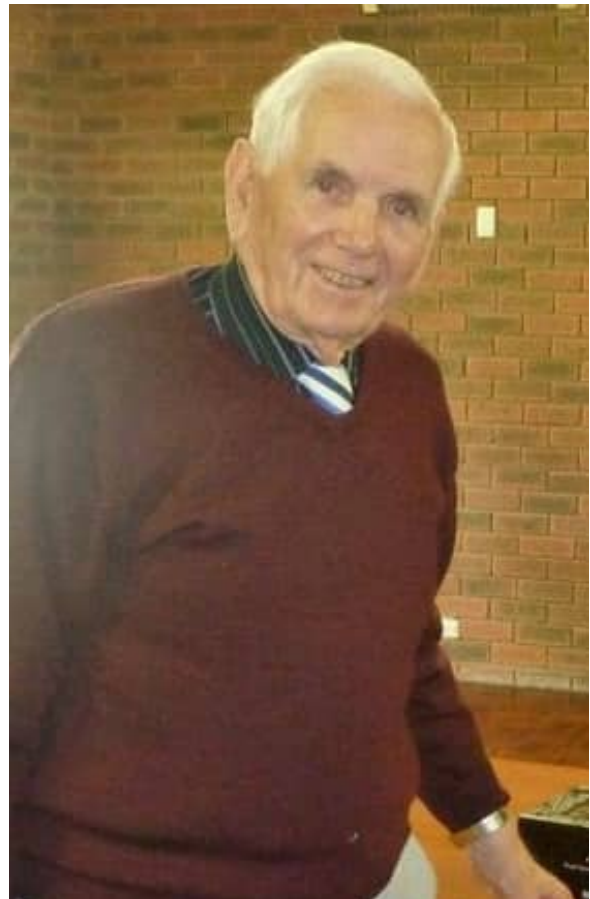
Born Hammersmith West London 22-08-1921, 2nd youngest of seven children. His father was employed as a gas bottle filler at Osram's gas plant. Immediately inducted into motor cycling when given a pillion ride from Haywards Heath in Surrey to Brighton and back over the South downs on a brand new Francis Barnett Cruiser at the age of thirteen.

There was no peace for me until I purchased my first motor bike at seventeen (a 1934 Triumph 350 H/W) against my fathers orders, but allowed to keep it when I said I had paid the full price of Fifteen Pounds ten shillings and I couldn't expect to get my money refunded!

Without a licence or any riding experience I wheeled the machine from Pride and Clarke's depot in Stockwell Road South London back to West Kensington (when I had recovered I tried the bike out in back streets and was quite confident I could ride it within twenty minutes!). I took the engine apart to see how it worked, rebuilt it and it started O.K. Then in tidying up I found a gudgeon circlip on the floor which made it necessary to re strip the engine and start again - but I learnt from it!

The second world war was a year and a half old when I gave up my reserved occupation as a fitter turner apprentice to try to get into flying. I had won a scholarship at school and had the necessary aircrew pass mark. I was told to join the Royal Air Force as a fitter turner trainee and then re muster once I was through my square bashing course. Alas then was told I was far too valuable to them in the engineering services (they said they could produce a pilot in six months but it took years to get the machinery skills). Although I was disappointed at not being able to fly, I guess on looking back it probably could have saved my life. I met my wife Emmie in the Air Force, and after only four months courtship, and not even engaged, we decided to get married and save up the marriage allowance as a start after the war. We had nothing towards a home, not even civilian clothing at that time, and were married in uniform (after a struggle, but that's another story!). We had three week ends together as man and wife when on Christmas Eve 1942 I and 17,500 other troops and airmen were put aboard the Queen Mary and as it ultimately turned out we were headed for the Middle East via Capetown. We were unescorted and steamed at high speed zig zagging every five nautical miles to deter submarines. Being heavily top heavy the ship rolled excessively and only one man was more seasick than I was, and he died and was buried at sea! I was stationed at several maintenance units at various times in the canal area where we serviced Merlins and radial engines as well as Hall Scott and Packard diesels for the air sea vessels. It turned out to be three and a half years before I was to see Emmie. Again, it was almost as if we were strangers, but we are still happily married and it will be our sixty third wedding anniversary in August. I was told many times that I had been put up for promotion whilst overseas, but I gave up believing the officers and warrant officers. I had worked hard, often in trying conditions, but it wasn't until my day of demob came, that I asked to see my personal documents. There were five promotions listed, but it was explained to me that base had stopped all overseas promotions from a certain date as the air force then had sufficient N.C.O's! When offered instant promotion if I stayed on in the forces, I told them what to do with their job!

I worked as a fitter turner for about two years but despaired ever getting a council house (we were living in my in-laws house in a small bedroom, with only room for a three quarter size bed and our daughters cot). Whilst overseas I had worked with many Australian machine shop men, all had said "Why don't you come out to Australia". This got me thinking and once Emmie was in the same frame of mind ,we made the decision to come out. I have never regretted it. I started working at Beecraft Engineering Sydney where I installed and set-up the first modern capstan lathe that the company had ever purchased, and it happened that I arrived just when they needed someone with my machine tool experience, so it was good for the company and good for me. After buying a block of land on Collaroy Plateau (overlooking Narrabeen surfing beach and Long Reef and with million dollar views) I built a garage and moved in, then proceeded to gradually build the house in spare time. Unfortunately our ideal start in Australia was not to last, our daughter Hilary developed chronic Asthma in the humid climate, and we were advised to move to a drier climate



or we might lose her. We then decided to sell up at a loss and come to W.A. driving over in our second car, a Hillman Minx 1936 sedan (our first car had been a 1926 Essex tourer - wish I had it now!). Stopping in Albury for the night, I enquired at a garage where we might find accommodation, when we tried to go where he directed us, the car wouldn't move, a rear axle had broken as I stopped! On being told that the garage could get me a new axle from Melbourne in three days, and worried about the budget for the trip, I asked the garage proprietor did he mind if I used his lathe and equipment, and could I get some multi-craft rods from him. Each half of the broken shaft was drilled and tapped, and a high tensile stud used to join them together, then Vee welded all round. The garage owner thought I wouldn't get too far, but on arriving in Melbourne I picked up a new half shaft, which was still in the boot when I sold the car in Perth!

I had to start all over again here in Perth, bought a block of land on which a couple had started to build a wooden frame house. They divorced and I decided that as all the materials were on the block, I could finish it off. Again, fitting out the back sleepout first, we moved in and I slowly once again built a home in my spare time. With my experience, I offered myself as a sales engineer to a small Non-Ferrous Foundry and Engineering works, was given a small 10HP Ford. I was able to get more work than the works manager wanted to handle, and he left the job in a huff. The managing director then said you had better come into the works and be works manager! I was invited to become a director and purchased a share holding. The managing director died suddenly eighteen months later, and I carried on as manager/Director for the board of directors, for a total of 29 years. I cut out the non-profitable work in the business and concentrated on building up the bronze foundry and machining.

The Cray industry was just starting, and every commercial propeller had to come from interstate. I saw possibilities here and started to gather expertise on propeller designing and pattern making. We had set backs like not being able to glean propeller calculations from the engine manufacturers, but persistence won and I was soon able to calculate for possible speed from a given horsepower, for a propeller size cannot be calculated without the power curve of the engine relative to the vessels beam draft, water line measurement, tonnage and hull design (chine or deep draught). On the pattern making side, we first generated our blades using a spiral staircase method, but later an American method which produced the almost perfect answer to our problems. While all this was going on the Morrison clan was increased by two more sons, so we were now a family of six. As our works turnover increased in propellers and all the other products in bronze, so did our melting capacity, we started with one half ton Tilting furnace and a small pit furnace, finishing up with nine half ton tilters and a twin electric furnace. Prop sizes were from twelve inches up to nine feet in diameter. Eventually we were selling props all over Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, even some to Canada! When I retired at 60 I had roughly 18,500 props that I had calculated and made. Four years after I retired, the business was sold to Veem.



I am slowly writing a book on some of the many stories I can tell of experiences which are well worth recording, the trials of achieving propeller satisfaction when not given all the facts to calculate from have all stayed in my head. I was once introduced by the then manager of Geraldtons Fishermens Co-Op after he had assembled the members as Ron Morrison, the man to see for a screw! I think this should be the title of my book!

Apart from my two machines - the mostly home made Brough 680 and the 500 O.H.V. James (of which Bob Currie reckons there are only five of them in the world - he didn't know that I had one!) I am currently building a 1925 replica J.A.P. motor which will need a bigger frame than the Brough, so I am gradually building that as well.

At eighty a late in life hobby also developed as a result of having use of Baptist Care Services, the carer I had 4 years ago also sang in amateur theatre, she heard me singing a French song I had learnt during my time in Egypt and said she would get me to sing at the next Baptist Care social. Since then I have been encouraged to sing more, it's surprising how people are pigs for punishment! Mind you, when you think about it singing in old age helps the memory as one exercises the mind. Memory is a bit like sex - if you don't use it you lose it! *Ron Morrison*

Ray Oakes: *Ray Oakes was appointed as a Life Member in 1992. Ray passed away in 2014.*

THE ORDINARY BLOKE: It was Dad's fault really; my earliest memories in England were riding on the back of his 1924 Rudge. Our sole means of transport was a bike and sidecar. During the 2nd World War at the age of 14 I had my first bike, a 1934 250cc Panther, but there was no driving licence or petrol. I joined my local MC Club because they were organising grass track meetings, and I had my first competitive ride on a bike. This meant pushing the bike to the railway station and after a 20 mile journey pushing it to the meeting. Until the end of the war I rode in every meeting that I could manage. With the war over we could then ride the bike to the meeting, take off the heavy bits and go racing. By the time Brands Hatch had opened I had my Big Port AJS grass tracker carried on Dad's BSA Sloper and sidecar flatbed. I enjoyed some good racing there until they sealed the track for road racing, in the meanwhile I had started riding in Observed Trials and Scrambles, our local BSA dealer talked me into buying one of the first Bantams and helped me set it up for trials riding.



My mates thought it very funny, but soon changed their minds when I had some good results. The dealer also set up another Bantam for scrambles and I had a few rides, but the front forks aren't up to the job. Two years in the RAF restricted my riding to road work and after the RAF, marriage and family kept it that way although I always rode a bike. After arriving in WA in 1967 I soon joined the AJS Club, and found myself riding trials with my 14 year old son Terry. Soon after the V.M.C.C. of W.A. was formed and my interest in old bikes began, I had to move on as my son was beating me in the trials, this should have been the end of my competitive riding, but the Albany Section first put on the Mt Barker Hill Climb later followed by the Albany Hill Climb. I know it is not racing but to have a go at the hill on a noisy bike still makes the adrenalin pump, even at my age. To my mind it's the best event of the year, and as I have managed a win along the way I can relax and enjoy the day, no hassle. So there it is, I made 70 this year and believe me I will be on the line raring to go, so I reckon the bug is still Biting. *Regards RAY OAKES*

Ray Oakes passed away early on the 10 March at an aged care home in Ellenbrook. Life had not been kind to Ray in recent years, as he had several unpleasant operations for cancer on the top of his head, and Joan (his late wife) had passed away 23rd July 2012 after a couple of years of bad health. Ray was a long time member of the Veteran Car Club as well as the V.M.C.C. of which he was made a life member in 1992. He was a machine examiner and dating officer and along with Eric Langton had been the driving force behind founding the pre- 31 Section. In recent years he had sold his bikes and joined the M.G. Car Club with an M.G.B. Ray was a keen events organiser who put on many one day events; the fuel consumption run, being one which is still going now. On a visit to New Zealand to see his daughter he met up with a Kiwi named Glen Bull, another keen m/cyclist. Together they hatched a plan for a trip to N.Z. by the V.M.C.C. of W.A. In 1983 15 bikes and 35 members travelled to N.Z. to tour the North Island for a couple of weeks and take part in several rallies. This ambitious event led to Wheels West 87 which was promoted as the first national m/cycle only rally and attracted 116 entries from all over Australia and including 25 from N.Z. Once again Ray had been the driving force to bring the event about. He was a generous man who loved to help members with restorations, and was always happy to lend a bike to encourage others. I discovered the joys of sidecar riding on Ray's B.S.A. Sloper outfit, and the novelty of an old Vee twin with hand change and lever throttle on his Grindlay/Matchless. Ray restored several cars and at least 10 bikes – all different – that I can recall. A unique man who did many good things for this club. *JIM CLARK*

Barry O'Byrne: *Barry was awarded Life membership in 2022.*

Doug and Gladys O'Byrne welcomed their second child (their final tally was to be five) into East Fremantle, on March 17th, 1954, naming him Barry. Father worked as a sales assistant for a menswear business in nearby Fremantle, eventually leaving that job in favour of work at Swan Brushes. Mother had her hands full with a big family to care for, but still managed to do some part time work to help balance the budget.

Barry attended Hilton Park Primary School, following that, South Fremantle Senior High School. At age fifteen, his formal education finished, and he became apprenticed as a book binding guillotine operator. This was to be his trade for his entire working life.

The trade evolved, with that came the need for learning about new products. High frequency welding of PVC stationery products became a main stream task, but was not without unforeseen problems. One day a very irate Police officer visited the premises, accusing them of operating a machine which interfered with the force's radio communication. Sure enough, the rogue machine was identified, and modified. Of more concern, some machines emitted radiation. This was promptly dealt with, under the auspices of Worksafe, and so far as is known, no one developed radiation sickness. The Channel seven helicopter also had communication problems, eventually traced to these machines. Barry did the design and development work on the various safety and novelty items

being produced. He also made the dies. These comprised an aluminium plate, with appropriately placed L section brass cutting edges to make the shapes needed. In the mid eighties the advent of computers required a lot of changes to this.

They became a victim of their own success. Swan Brewery was to launch a new brew to the market, involving stubby holders, ONE MILLION of these! The factory moved into 24/7 operation. The America's Cup in Fremantle produced a similar circumstance.

Barry was exposed to motor cycles from an early age, as his father had a Lambretta with sidecar, B.S.A. M20 with box sidecar (nicknamed "the coffin" by Barry, who loved riding in the sidecar), B.S.A. Golden Flash, Jawa 350 trike (the existence of this is frequently questioned, as many believe Jawa never produced such a thing. Barry is sure the family have a photo of the machine; we hope he finds this) and a B.S.A. M20, on which he fitted telescopic forks in place of the girders. Surprisingly, this was not a success, but that didn't stop father and son attaching a couple of crab nets to the side, and whizzing down to Mandurah for a feed. Watching the nearby Ropeworks Scramble fed Barry's enthusiasm.

In 1970, O'Byrne senior bought a car, and laid up the trusty M20, and there it sat, for twenty five years, until Barry unearthed it, and proceeded with restoration. Fortunately, father never threw anything out, so the original girder forks, and other sundry items were there. The bike proved its mettle in Wheels West, and Barry still has this bike. He still rides it in suitable events, though partner Carol, having sampled the luxury of Barry's Honda Gold Wing, finds the elderly M20 too bone-y.

Extra money is always nice, so when Barry was offered casual work at the Sunday Times, he grabbed the opportunity, and found himself working alongside John Rock (clubman and I.S.D.T. Bronze medallist), Ian Fleming (club member), Mark Wallace (father, Jim Wallace a founder member), and Bruce Williams, also a Club member, who became his father-in-law after he and Cheryl, who produced three children first, tied the knot in 1983. The marriage ended in divorce in 1995. Club member of note Ron Chave was Cheryl's uncle. Ron was then Events Coordinator, when he needed a holiday, he asked Barry to act on his behalf, to which he happily agreed, but Ron never volunteered to take



the position back, resulting in Barry doing the job (with distinction) for the next sixteen years! His book binding experience meant he was also in demand helping John Boyd, club librarian, mending some of the clubs valued books.

Ruce Williams suggested Barry and his kids might enjoy manning a checkpoint on the annual Busselton Two Day, then the Club's premier event, with entries above fifty. Bruce was right. When he finally joined the club, Barry turned up on his Honda 750, causing a storm. A group of members wanted all Japanese "plastic fantasies" to be banned from the club. Rumbblings of a similar nature still occur from time to time.

Barry and Carol met in 2005 at a singles club. Each found the other rather nice, and agreed to meet again, but Carol wouldn't let her new friend take her home as she didn't know him well enough to reveal where she lived. Highlights of their life together include the club's Five Countries in Five Weeks trip to England, riding a B.S.A. plunger B33, and a recent (rather wet!) trip in their caravan to the east coast.

Barry served three terms as President 2015 - 2018. One initiative was to create a new position of Welfare Officer, as he felt this needed some dedicated attention to find out when ill members might or might not want visitors, rather than just hoping someone would seek out such information. Barry has been a major contributor to our Club for so many years, and is still a committee member. Adrian White 2023



Keith Perry: *Keith Perry was awarded Life membership in 2006. Keith passed away in May 2025.*

Keith arrived in the world on October 23rd, 1940. He was the final addition to the three Perry siblings, and had his first motorcycle experience very early, being taken home from hospital in a sidecar. Father was an enthusiast. Growing up in Midland saw Keith attend Midland High School, where he was nominated as Class Prefect. It's easy to imagine Keith enjoying that role. He also enjoyed Army Cadets, rising to become an Instructor. Swimming became important to Keith, he joined and swam competitively with the Bassendean Swimming Club with success. Basketball also captured his enthusiasm, to the extent he played and enjoyed this at State level.

Finishing school, Keith's first job was just a continuation of his after school employment, with a boat builder. This entailed a multitude of tasks, from sweeping floors to delivering built racing boats, 4s and 8b on the river. He loved sailing Rainbow boats around Crawley, with older brother Don, in competitions. Times were tough, most of the wages he earned went (willingly) to his parents to keep the family housed and fed.

Father's interest in motorbikes naturally filtered down to Keith, so as soon as he could, he bought a bike, serving his apprenticeship as a rider around the eastern hills and country roads. The desire to compete proved irresistible so as time and money permitted, he rode at Claremont Speedway, with good results. Then Keith teamed up with fellow adrenaline junkie Cecil Sumption, the pair becoming a formidable sidecar team. Keith loved the excitement of hanging off the chair, knees and shoulders only millimetres off the road, trusting Cecil implicitly, this Cecil reciprocated. They rode as one, knowing each other's moves almost before they were made, truly a dream team.

Meantime, Keith had learned welding, and qualified as a P.M.G. technician. This led to him becoming a Teacher/Instructor with Telecom, at their Manning training centre. This suited him perfectly, thus he became very good at his job, leading to being promoted, becoming highly sought throughout Australia as a lecturer in telecommunications. At age fifty, he was offered a redundancy package by Telecom, which he accepted. On January 18th 1995 he registered Perry Training Consultancy & Engineering, finding plenty of work and new skills in the mining industry. From this, he eventually retired. Brother Don became a registered builder, occasionally calling on Keith when overloaded with work. This experience helped when Keith acquired a block in Gooseberry Hill, and set about building a 1 1/2 storey house. The land was solid hard rock, Keith did his own TNT blasting, having gained some knowledge of this previously. He did earn extra money performing blasting work for others. During living in Gooseberry Hill, two daughters duly arrived, Janet and Gail. He was a regular player at Kalamunda Tennis Club.

All his trade and engineering knowledge became very handy when he built himself an eighteen foot yacht, though later on, this had to compete for attention with his growing collection of motorcycles, which included B.M.W. and sidecar, Rotax Matchless, Aermacchi, Triumph, B.S.A., and Kawasaki. And if that wasn't enough to keep anyone busy, his electrical knowledge helped him design and build wiring harnesses for kit cars.

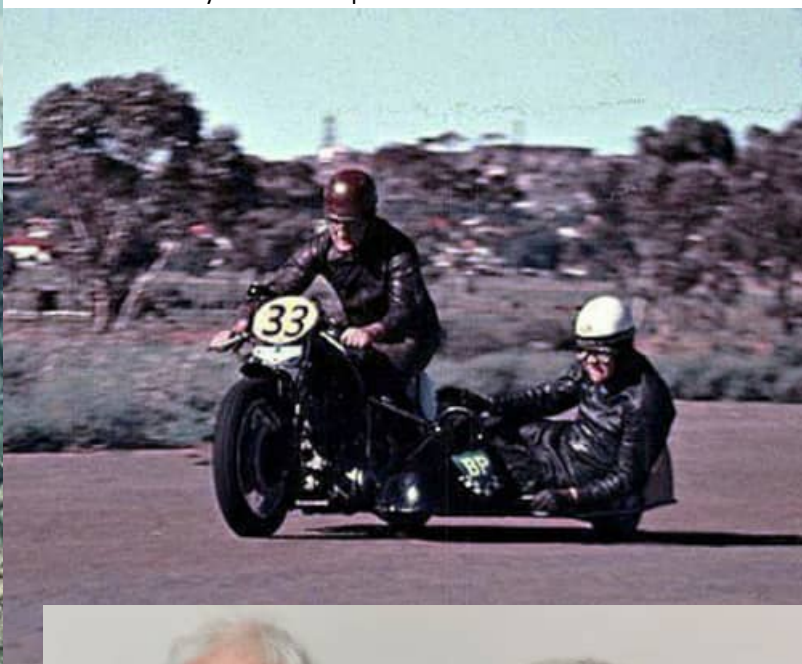
He became a tireless worker for the Vintage Motorcycle Club, serving as "Chatter" editor, printer, distributor. He ran a small loyal team comprising himself, Ron Gordon, Allen Johnson, John van Bockmeer, Mick King, Brian Higgs, Kevin Shugg, and on occasion, Ken Hopkins. This group gathered very early in the appropriate morning, and despite various hissy fits by the photocopier, had the magazine folded and stamped the same day. In typical Keith fashion, he declared himself C.E.O. of the photocopier, kept it locked, and woe betide anyone trying to use it. Then after years of hard work the day came where the team decided to retire. Members of the Committee arrived, bearing a cake acknowledging their last issue and dedication to the task. No willing helpers came to the fore to continue the task so the Vintage Chatter printing from then on was outsourced.

Two of our highly successful Wheels West five day events, which attracted big entries, some from the Eastern States, were organised by a group, which included Keith. He served many terms on Committee, culminating with being elected Secretary, then President, of the Club. He had a useful collection of machinery, some self built, at his home, and he was only too ready to help members with machining. He introduced a few to the pleasure of riding in a sidecar, with his B.M.W. Outfit. Keith was a major contributor to Club affairs, as is obvious from the above. He was a most knowledgeable man, and tended to go back to his lecturing days in manner when sharing that knowledge. Sometimes it seemed he might be "teaching his grandmother to suck eggs." That was just his way, he always was ready to help.

Adrian White November 2022



Below: Keith Perry & Cecil Sumpton on Vincent sidecar at Caversham





State Championship Caversham 1958, 1stSenior Sidecar M.C.R.C.	C SUMPTION
Australian T.T. Entitled Sidecar 1958, A.M.C.C.	C SUMPTION
State Championship Caversham 1959, 1stSenior Sidecar M.C.R.C.	K PERRY
Collie M.C.C. 1960, 1stSenior Sidecar W.A.T.T.	C SUMPTION
Collie M.C.C. 1960, 1stSenior Sidecar W.A.T.T.	K PERRY
M.C.R.C. Gold Star Meeting Caversham 5/11/1960, 1st Senior Sidecar	K PERRY
M.C.R.C. Gold Start Meeting Caversham 5/11/1960, 1stSenior Sidecar	C SUMPTION
Collie M.C.C. 1961, 1stSenior Sidecar T.T. W.A.T.T.	C SUMPTION
Collie M.C.C. 1961, 1stSenior Sidecar T.T. Passenger W.A.T.T	K PERRY
Australian T.T. Bunbury 1962, 2ndSenior Sidecar Passenger	K PERRY
State Championship Caversham 1962, 1stSenior Sidecar M.C.R.C.	E NICOLL & K PERRY
M.C.R.C. State Championships 1963 Caversham, 1stSenior Sidecar	E NICOLL & K PERRY
M.C.R.C. State Championships 1963 Caversham, 3rdJunior Sidecar	R DUNCAN & C SUMPTION
M.C.R.C. State Championships 1963 Caversham, 3rdJunior Sidecar	R DUNCAN & C SUMPTION
Collie M.C.C. Collie Grand Prix 1964, 1stSenior Sidecar Passenger	K. PERRY



Above: Keith Perry #2 at Caversham. Below: Keith and Cecil on the Vincent.



John Rock: *John Rock was appointed as a Life Member in 1990. John passed away in 2012.*

I suppose my life could be summed up quite simply. First, you make your own luck. Also you need to be in the right place at the right time and no man is an island. But most importantly, as Charlie (Lawson) frequently says, if you put a little bit in, you'll surely be rewarded." Thus spoke John William Rock as we began to write his "Profile". The life in question began on the 7th of September 1931 inside the old lime stone building of King Edward Hospital, alongside the rail line in Subiaco. Father John and mother Queenie were well pleased with their efforts, and in total produced three more sons Kevin, Patrick and Ray and daughter Margaret. John's schooling began in Leederville, at St Joseph's, where he "got his share of the cuts," because he was no angel. Then it was off to Christian Brothers in Mt Hawthorn.

All had not been well for the family though. John senior, a fitter and turner by trade, fought in the trenches in France during WW1, suffering serious wounds which saw him invalided from the Army. In 1942 those wounds took their final toll; John died, leaving Queenie and her brood in a precarious financial position. As he'd not died during active service, bureaucracy deemed Queenie ineligible for a War Widow's Pension. Queenie had learned to be resourceful, having been orphaned and sent to Australia as a displaced person toward the end of WW1, and now eked out a living taking in laundry and teaching dance. John (junior), as appropriate for the eldest son became man of the house whilst still attending school. Plenty of household chores fell to him, including getting out of bed early enough to make cut lunches for everyone. A few chooks in the backyard provided eggs and meat; to John fell the task of despatching the unfortunate birds whilst his younger siblings saw to the plucking. In post war times this was not an unusual state of affairs and John fitted into this role easily and with out fuss or resentment.

Brother Hyland of Christian Brothers, aware of the family's plight, said, in regard to school fees "Just send in ten shillings when you can." John's academic achievements were adequate, and he loved sport at school, being of a quite competitive nature, but some of his football team mates were less than impressed when he became confused at the beginning of the second quarter of a match and kept kicking the wrong way. He had to be a bit careful, too, aged six, he'd suffered rheumatic fever and been diagnosed as having a weak heart, though the latter doesn't seem to have slowed him up much over the years! The 110 and 220 yard sprints (anything longer was precluded by that heart) were favourite events though one Basil Worner always seemed able to push John back to second place. Little wonder – Worner ultimately became trainer to Herb Elliott!

John didn't worry about a Leaving Certificate – as soon as he was able he left school to become apprenticed to R.P. McInernie and Co, learning to become an electrician, which included armature winding and electrical fitting and also earning much needed money. He thoroughly enjoyed the work and made several friendships there, some of which endure to this day. Newly-weds and Ariel Club members Ron and Merle Cherrington moved in next door, beginning a life long friendship. Queenie remarked that they seemed to be a very compatible couple; Rocky wasn't sure what "compatible" meant but now reckons his mother was pretty smart! Riding his push bike through town one wet and miserable day Rocky came upon a policeman on point duty on the Barrack-Murray Street intersection. Seeing Rocky's outstretched right arm the policeman beckoned him to the middle of the road and then said "Go now!" Thinking to show the officer a bit of wheelspin, Rocky stood on the pedals and gave a mighty thrust, the crank broke and Rocky's tenderest bits landed forcefully on the cross bar. Bystanders were treated to the sight of a lad clinging to a policeman, crying his eyes out and fighting for breath.

Bill Stevenson and John became firm friends, both fatherless and both sharing a fascination with anything mechanical. Between them they bought a scruffy Levis two stroke, made it run OK and covered a good many fun filled unlicensed miles on the bike, mainly in the nightcart lanes. The National Safety Council ran a school, teaching would-be motorcyclists to ride. Originally the venue was the member's car park at Claremont Showgrounds, later the Metropolitan Markets were used, and it was here that John learned to ride. The motorcycle dealers of Perth loaned bikes to the school and these had to be ferried from the dealerships each Saturday in time for the 2 ½ hour lesson that afternoon. Arriving with a bike one afternoon Rocky was told one instructor was unable to attend – would he, Rocky, care to fill in? You bet! and he quickly progressed to permanent instructor, then to Captain of the instructors. Many top line riders readily volunteered their time to teach at the school, with excellent results. A broad range of matters were



addressed, too. Basic maintenance, including soldering cable nipples with a blow torch, chain care and puncture repairing were covered. The latter was particularly relevant; the Markets site was littered with nails as produce was traded in wooden boxes and the lids were not always carefully removed. Bikes without air cleaners, and fitted with manual ignition controls often backfired during starting and sometimes caught fire. A Norton 16H in the fleet was a regular offender and by lucky chance had a removable leather seat cover, so every pupil was taught "fire drill;" once burning, full throttle, operate the decompressor and keep kicking. An interesting starting technique for reluctant bikes was taught – engage first gear, back on compression, operate the decompressor and push without declutching. After five weeks the learners were assessed by John for their riding ability and the Police tested their knowledge of road rules. A pass in both and a licence was issued. You'd have to wonder why such a scheme doesn't operate today; apparently it produced quite capable riders.

The National Safety Council Executive Director was Leo Mayberry, a much respected and admired man. As a major in W.W. II he'd served with distinction in the Pacific, including the notorious Kokoda Trail. John credits Leo Mayberry with teaching him a great deal about life and considers he was fortunate indeed to have such a mentor during his formative years. Also very influential in young John's life was Professor Lindsay Wilkinson, teacher at the motor cycle school and Harley club rider of quality in several disciplines. The professor, who's other task at the school was to teach the instructors the basics of teaching rode an ex Army B.S.A. Saturdays John would ride his push bike to the professor's house and take the B.S.A. to school but was often invited to "go for a decent ride, bring it back tomorrow". Music to his seventeen year old ears! Speedway featured a motor cycle acrobat at interval; many would have been surprised to learn the acrobat was Professor Lindsay Wilkinson.

Ken George of Victoria Park was impressed with the effort Rocky was giving the school, and telephoned him one day to say he'd just traded a good BSA Sloper for eighteen pounds; would John be interested at that low figure? Most definitely! so Ken had the bike delivered forthwith but for some reason, minus exhausts. John promptly cycled to Georges' dealership and proceeded to ride home, no hands as both were holding the two exhaust pipes. The law took a dim view of this in Hay Street; fortunately the policeman was also involved with the rider training school so a "blind eye" was turned. Money for petrol at 3 shillings and 4 pence per gallon (the same price as a bottle of beer!) was often scarce but the Sloper happily digested Shellite which could be had for 1/- a large bottle. The Sloper needed a clutch pushrod. Rocky found a piece of round steel the appropriate diameter and made one, a simple enough task, but the BSA seemed to have an appetite for push rods, wearing them out in very short time, so Rocky made a couple of spares to carry with him. A blacksmith, Les White, who was courting Queenie at the time, heard of the problem, bought home some cyanide in a match box and using the gas stove, showed how to harden the ends of the pushrod and eliminate the problem. Les was a very large strong man with the most amiable disposition and eventually he and Queenie wed. The union produced three more brothers for John. It took a little time to adjust to these changes but Queenie's obvious happiness dispelled any doubts about their new step father.

John now joined the AJS Club and became very active, riding each weekend whichever branch of the sport was offered – club sports, hill climbs, scrambles, trials, even economy runs, and started road racing. The BSA sloper was his first serious mount but a ride on a 3T Triumph proved so good John bought one. He managed to win the Mooliabeenie Clubmans T.T. on this delightful but underpowered machine; almost inevitably with all the opposition on 500s the 3T was replaced by a 1949 spring hub Speed Twin. He also bought a 350 ZB Gold Star for road racing. The National Safety Council provided John with a 1951 AJS 350 for his private use and for teaching duties. This was a very good bike. Motorcycling was something of a Jekyll and Hyde business for John now – on Saturday, and on the roads weekdays riding in a most disciplined and defensive manner; on Sunday a fierce competitor of rapidly growing skill and daring. Naturally, exploring the limits of bike and rider produced it's fair share of crashes. Ray Thomas, a club member who had been through the war, became friend and mentor to John and the two of them would regularly check out the shed of fellow competitor and neighbour Charlie Lawson. One such visit saw Charlie seeming very on edge and agitated so after their late night cuppa they departed, unknowingly leaving Charlie to fit a high compression piston and alcohol settings to his Norton thus giving himself a nice advantage over his visitors next day, the last day of the Club championship.

Aged twenty, and John completed his apprenticeship. Perth at this time was changing its electricity supply from 40 to 50 cycles, a mammoth task requiring modification to virtually anything electrical. Electricians were in demand, more so if they had armature winding experience so John was snapped up by the S.E.C., given an Ariel VB and sidecar and spent the next two years helping effect the change. His first ride on a sidecar – Charlie Lawson's – was memorable, but for the wrong reasons. Charlie said "You'll probably crash first time you turn left, anyhow away you go" and John obliged by doing just that! During this time John had a ride on New Australian Norm Boston's 197 Dot scrambler and rated the purpose-built bike superb. Then he saw a Francis-Barnett 197 and ordered one, telescopic forks, swinging arm and four speed gearbox. The Francis Barnett was brand new so John spent the first weeks riding it to work and running in. He was very disappointed that one of the rear dampers was falling apart so he took it back to Brookings.

"I'm sorry" said the foreman, "it's a competition machine, no warranty". John was only a kid really and a bit taken aback, when one of the mechanics said "I'll have a look at it in my lunch hour Mr Ventriss." And that beaut guy was George Scott!

On this machine, standard except John had blue printed the ports, John emerged as a truly quality rider, winning virtually everything in his class, including the 1955 Australian 250cc Scramble title at the Harley Scramble course. Road racing was most enjoyable too, but appropriate machinery was needed so Rocky bought a Triumph T100, which had been fitted with a race kit and improved by Gibson Brothers, Harry & Wally, noted tuners of the breed. This was a rather expensive piece of gear and had sat in a dealer's, gradually reducing in price, for almost a year by which time it became affordable. The bike went like a rocket and even handled acceptably and John was confident and excited as he faced the starter at Geraldton. In Rocky's words "It was the 'A' Grade scratch race, so off we went in a hurry with Scotty in front as usual and that left Don Leadbetter and me to have fun together. I could still see Scotty after nine laps (that was unheard of for me!) and then he stopped and I got the chequered flag. All of a sudden road racing was easy!" A proud moment indeed, but the elation was short lived. The mighty Triumph did what many highly tuned Triumphs did. The engine later blew up leaving Rocky coasting to a dejected, silent, expensive stop. John didn't see much future for the machine as a race bike so he rebuilt the engine back to standard and sold it.

Late in 1955 fellow scrambler Ollie Strang (junior), Ron Edwards and Rocky decided to go to U.K. and see why riders there were so good. They took the "Orontes" in February 1956; Ollie decided to stay in London because the comp Matchless he wanted to buy would be happier near the factory. Ron and Rocky proceeded to Birmingham and took digs in Acocks Green. Ron got stuck into scrambling, bought a 350 Goldie, but had to earn an International competition license by coming in at least 5th in a National Event. That was difficult, because every time a National was held in England, all the fraternity of International riders who were making good starting money on the Continent would appear at home to protect their turf and keep other would be's like Ron out. But Ron outsmarted them. He went to the Isle of Man with Rocky and won the Douglas Head National Scramble and got a license. He did quite well on the 350, doing it the hard way, mostly on trains and ferries.

Late in 1956 the Suez crisis blew up and Ron said he didn't want any part of war, so he headed home to take up his C.P. land or he'd miss out. John had put a lot of time and effort into the rider training school, gaining the trust and gratitude of Perth's motorcycle dealers. Every dealer provided John with a letter of introduction to their English factory; in the event, the first letter he presented, that of Mortlocks, was all he needed. The James factory immediately offered John a ride in the Scottish Six Day, alongside their regular rider and top level competitor, Brian Povey. The James' handlebars were too wide for John's liking, so, encouraged by Povey and Co he sawed three inches off each end. Then it was gleefully revealed the bars actually belonged to one Billy Nicholson, a top level rider and a very large Irishman with a pretty tough reputation. John worked daytime in a service station; one day Nicholson arrived so John found plenty to do out the back, out of sight. Povey and Co had a wonderful time teasing John but their predictions as to his dreadful fate went unfulfilled. The bike was John's to use so he rode every weekend, gaining confidence and experience and improving all the time. The first Scottish John rode in had a pleasant finish to a fair first day. The last section was the famous Town Hall Brae in the middle of Fort William, very tough. As he was queued up for his turn, Norman Hooton, who was the Lodge plug man gave John a telegram. Dear Norman please give this to John before he goes up the Brae. "RIDING WITH YOU, BILL YOUNG AND AJAY CLUB". Into second and straight to the top! In total he rode three "Scottish", gaining 2 first class awards. Between each observed section of trials there were transport sections sometimes as long as ten miles and John was very surprised to find the riders all covered this distance "flat out". Then he realised this gave them maximum time to look over the next section and perhaps observe a few rider's lines. Also, it was good fun! In virtually any sport, much can be learned by following competitors of greater skill or experience and trials were no exception. During these transport sections Rocky would observe faster rider's braking points from behind by watching their left foot and this worked well for him until he followed a rider on a European machine and nearly ran into the back of him. Watching the left foot tells you nothing when the European brake pedal is on the right!

Socialising with other riders and factory testers filled many a pleasant hour. When the latter from various factories around Birmingham gathered during working hours for a cuppa, their bikes would all be left outside the caff on the centre stand, in gear with the engine running, to keep the odometer ticking over. No motorcyclist goes to the U.K. without a visit to the Isle of Man. Rocky planned to be there for the 1956 races and Lady Luck smiled on him. The "Green 'Un" ran a competition, wherein readers had to identify the subject of a photograph, usually a bike part pictured from an odd angle. A delighted Rocky won the prize offered – a trip to the island with a week's hotel accommodation included! His good fortunes continued to run hot. The island was a fabulous experience but better things awaited. He travelled with the Girling representative who had a girl friend on the island; the three of them got on well enough together but naturally the happy couple wanted time to themselves. After much persuading, one of the girlfriend's work mates at the local telephone exchange, Maureen Quine reluctantly agreed to partner "this Australian" for an evening as a blind date. At 5'8" Maureen was quite tall, so on went 4" stilettos – she'd tower above

“this Australian” probably and keep him firmly in place. That evening, two guys stepped from the car, one short the other tall. “Bet the short one is for me” thought Maureen, “Pity, as the taller one looks a bit of OK.” In the event she proved an ideal companion for tall gentleman Rocky, they had a wonderful evening together and Rocky decided he’d not be leaving the island just yet!

By virtue of their team’s winning the 1956 event, Czechoslovakia earned the right to host the 1957 International Six Day Trial. This presented the British Motor Cycle industry and their contracted riders with an immediate problem. Britain was not permitted to sell even a token amount of their products in Czechoslovakia, so why should they spend large amounts of money showcasing their wares there? Arguments raged back and forth – “Sport should be free of commercial control” and “Commercial activity underpins such sport – win on Sunday, sell on Monday”. “The whole motor cycle world follows the Six Days so you’ll get your exposure” and so forth. Ultimately the British industry met and unanimously agreed to boycott the event. Italy were runners-up in the 1956 event; they didn’t buy British bikes either, so that possible option had minimal appeal. George Lynn published a monthly magazine in Australia titled “Victorian Motor Cycle News.” West Australian Jack Herbert, in London, acted as the U.K. correspondent for this publication but Jack had to return to Australia. He nominated John as a suitable replacement and John agreed; mostly it was a matter of sending results from British events to George Lynn. After the British boycott of the Six Days was announced the Czechoslovak Consulate approached Lynn in Australia with the suggestion that an Australian team of riders might like to compete in the trial on Jawa and C.Z. machines. George Lynn thought this an excellent idea but immediately saw the danger to his magazine should it become known he supported the concept – by far the largest part of his income was provided through British bike dealer’s advertising. Quick thinking provided an answer. “Contact my agent in London, a Mr John Rock; he’ll arrange everything,” and Rocky was hastily appraised of the deal with the plea “for Heaven’s sake, keep my name out of it!” What an opportunity! Tim Gibbes had recently won “The Advertiser” 2 Day Trial in South Australia for the third time, had I.S.D.T. experience in the UK and was a formidable performer in scrambles. One phone call to London secured his enthusiastic entry. Finally, a toss of a coin saw Les Fisher given the third rider’s berth with Roy East to be team manager. John logically enough was named Team Captain and his first task in this role was to inform the British press of his team’s intentions.

The team entered as an Australian Club team; the regulations in force prevented entry as an Australian National team and their entry was made through the A.C.U. of Great Britain. Tim Gibbes had an Austin A40 utility which became the new team transport. The trusty Austin carried three of them to Turin where their fourth member, Les Fisher had ridden in an international scramble; now there were four squashed into the cab, it being too cold by far to ride in the tray. This somewhat cramped but good natured journey terminated in Prague, where hotel accommodation awaited, then it was off to Spindleruv Mlyn, venue of the trial, just South of the Polish border. The first tankfull of Czech petrol digested by the mighty Austin had so low an octane rating it rattled the big end bearings out of the vehicle. A telegram was despatched to R.A.C. in England requesting immediate supply of big end shells in all sizes; these duly arrived and were fitted by Roy East during the last day there. It was here, finally, the Jawa hierarchy handed over the team machines, suggesting the riders might like to prepare their own bikes. The Jawas were fitted with a gear pedal which, on first movement disengaged the clutch; the second part of the movement changed gear and re-engaged the clutch. Rocky (or ‘Aus’ as he was now being called) wasn’t sure he liked this feature and his suspicions were well founded when his lack of experience with the system landed him unceremoniously on his backside on cobblestones on the first day. That aside, the machines were well designed and engineered and rode well. Their material specification wasn’t up to scratch though and parts wore out in unexpectedly short time with chains stretching to unusable levels almost immediately. John paid particular attention to his machine’s electrics, including rolling wire ends into a ball Lucas style, and re-attaching, telling his team mates of his modifications. He also noted the throttle didn’t facilitate a quick cable change and so hacksawed a slot in the body, only to have a Jawa mechanic show how to quickly change a broken cable. It may have been a coincidence that John’s bike electrics performed faultlessly whilst Tim Gibbes’ suffered repeated electrical faults. The start of the 1957 I.S.D.T. was cold, wet and miserable, with near gale force winds. The organisers had at their disposal three time schedules designed to accommodate varying weather and terrain. Inexplicably, they declared Schedule ‘A’ to be used; this schedule was the fastest, designed for use in good conditions! Obviously it was the same for everyone but it meant the day was incredibly tough; fifty riders retired on that first day! John sat on the start line waiting his turn when someone yelled out “Hey Aus, that’s #140 just taken off, you’d better go!” so John took off like a rocket and still doesn’t know what “one hundred and thirty-nine” (his number) sounds like when it’s announced in German or Czech!

The day was exhausting, he fell off on the cobblestones as previously noted but John happily finished just on time or the day. Day two and the same Schedule ‘A’ was used, once more in awful conditions. More cobblestones, more mist, rain and mud. John approached the brow of a hill and noticed a heavy blue haze on the hill in front and soon learned to recognise the significance of this. It was two stroke smoke generated by dozens of riders, fallen, or stuck in bogs or trying to coax their machines up near vertical climbs. This scenario was repeated several times and John treated it the same way each time – wringing the bike’s neck, get into the highest gear possible, stand on the footrests at all costs to

keep weight on the back wheel for traction and GO! So nice to arrive above all the smoke and mist, into the clear air high up.



Interestingly, the Soviet riders took the opposite approach. Big strong men all of them, the product no doubt of State-sponsored training, they started paddling at the first hint of wheelspin and were seemingly happy to keep on so doing for as long as necessary. Even for these very fit strong men it must have been physically very demanding. Rocky was penalised one mark for lateness at the final check but protested this as he'd been baulked by two riders ahead of him at the checkpoint. He was informed next day his protest was upheld so he finished the day with a clean slate. Day Three, and the organisers declared Schedule 'B' to prevail. John nearly came to grief early. A bog had rail sleepers laid to make it passable but the sleepers were laid length-ways with gaps between. The Jawa front wheel fell into one such gap, wrecking the front mudguard. Officials agreed the mudguard should be replaced for safety, and Jawa had a guard on hand. John however had only ten minutes to fit this – not possible! The solution? – have your team manager distract the Jawa people, scrunch the guard up and jam it into place, line it up as best you can and secure. All in less than ten minutes! Then attach the old guard to your back; as a marked part, it had to finish with the bike. All major components of machines are marked at the beginning of the event, this being intended to prevent replacement parts being fitted. All marked parts must be present at the finish. Day Four and Five – more of the same – vile weather and very difficult terrain.

Tim Gibbes emphasised to the team "You must never, never, let anyone take your helmet, you can't ride without it and you won't get a replacement". Good advice! John had quite a hard fall near the top of a very rough hill and lay there feeling very groggy whilst the first aid crew removed his helmet in the course of checking his state of health. Gibbes' words were still prominent in his befuddled brain so he insisted he retain a grip on his helmet. In due course he began to feel human again and was able to continue. Day Six. "Kamikaze!" is how John describes the day. The riders were split into three groups for speed tests, John and fellow U.K. competitor Eric Chilton, riding a Triumph Trophy 650 both in group 3. A mile long downhill road was followed by a zig zag section. Riders were not shutting off and were falling and crashing all around. Rocky's road race experience proved invaluable, allowing him to press on fast and safe, "having lots of fun" as he put it. He was the only competitor the mighty Triumph of Chilton was unable to lap but the Jawa was a tired second hand old motor bike at the end. The Dukla Hotel in the very picturesque town of Spindleruv Mlyn provided a well deserved contrast to the six days of incredible effort, hosting the prize giving with a lavish dinner. Rocky and his team were delighted to find the organisers had made sure there were English-speaking waiters attending. Talk at the table was of two subjects. Rocky carried a photograph of Maureen which he proudly passed around. Subject one: how did one such as Rocky get to carry a picture of so charming a lady? Subject two: the Six Days. Each day covered about 250 miles – 400 kilometres. It's interesting to try and put a little perspective on these numbers. The distance is just less than that of Perth to Albany. Take a fifties motor cycle, no electric start of course, and pretty basic comfort then ride to Albany in fine weather. With varying traffic conditions and stops for bike and body fuel, you'd arrive well satisfied with a good day's ride, ready for a drink and a comfortable seat. You'd have been on

good tar sealed roads all the way. The Six Day competitors rode on terrain so rough and steep in places walking was impossible, through bogs so deep one exhausted rider stepped off his axle-deep bike and it remained standing – all this in foul weather and against the clock. And then of course the rider had to maintain the bike, so he could go out tomorrow and do it all again. And the next day, and the next No wonder contemporary reports tell of riders riding at snail's pace due to exhaustion. Rocky well remembers on numerous occasions thinking "Why the hell am I doing this? Why can't I get off this violently bucking bloody horrible machine and find somewhere dry and warm to rest my aches and pains?" It had been an exceptionally tough "Six Days", in part because the weather turned so foul.

Of 246 starters, 151 retired and only 26 competitors won gold medals for finishing without penalty. Rocky finished with the loss of 39 points and a bronze medal, an outstanding result for a first time competitor. In the final wash-up, general opinion reckoned this had been the toughest ISDT to date, but it hadn't been too tough, after all, it was an international event, and those 26 competitors did finish without penalty. C.Z. were sufficiently impressed by Rocky's talent to offer him a bike for the next "Scottish." Despite this offer being made by the export manager and the chief engineer, the bike never materialised. And even later, subsequent to Rocky's return to Perth, a promised C.Z. duly did arrive but local agents, Brookings, placed such unrealistic and costly demands on Rocky he politely declined to take the ride. John had some time before he decided he'd finished with road racing – a fortunate decision as Maureen, a Manx woman, was too familiar by far with the dangers of that branch of the sport and wouldn't marry a road racer. That sorted, they became man and wife on 10th June 1958 and moved to Perth shortly afterwards.



The newlywed's arrival in Fremantle aboard the "Strathaird" was not without drama. The vessel was anchored in Gage Roads to take aboard Pilot and Customs when Mr and Mrs John Rock were summoned to the Purser's office. Anxiously complying, they were greeted by no less than four Customs Officers, all of whom knew Rocky and demanded to kiss the bride! Maureen's parents were naturally sad their only daughter was now half a world away. John had taken a Gold Star 350 home in boxes; this he now assembled and sold, the proceeds paying for a trip home for Maureen. Her folks visited Perth in the early 70's, liked it well enough that they returned home, sold up and emigrated. Stepfather Les found John a job immediately with P.W.D. as an electrical maintenance engineer; it paid the bills but wasn't a life long career. Channel 2 advertised for an electrician which sounded much more interesting. Maureen wrote John's C.V., obviously writing it very well because out of seventy applicants, one J Rock was hired. Alan Hullett, one of the engineers conducting the interview said "I owe you thanks anyhow– you may remember kicking the wrong way in a footy match. I was in the other team – Highgate C.B.C.! and we won!

The A.J.S.M.C.C. naturally welcomed the return of Rocky who not only was an enthusiastic competitor in several disciplines, but also served as event organiser and then Vice President of that club for twelve years, working with such big contributors as Harold Hodgkinson, Alf Carstairs and Ern Serls. Then, in 1962 with a good local record in trials on the Francis Barnett, John decided it was time for a tilt at the first Australian Trials Championship, to be held in Melbourne, a long way away. Just as John was thinking the distance too much, Charlie Lawson came to the rescue with a truck driver who'd agreed to take bike and rider as part of a routine trip, with the proviso he receive some help with the driving. "I told him you could drive a 30 ton truck", said Charlie, "You can, can't you?" John could, and drove most of the way while the truckie enjoyed a rest, though a wrong turn in South Australia strained relations a bit, causing back tracking 20 miles. John won that Australian title on his trusty Fanny-B, but then faced the problem of returning home. He had enough funds to take a train for himself but the bike, to be carried in the Guard's van, was overweight for his luggage allowance. This called for a bit of Rock ingenuity. He removed the engine/gearbox unit, wrapped it in newspaper and fitted rope as a handle. The bike was now within weight allowance and accepted; John had to nonchalantly walk on with his "hand luggage" threatening to dislocate his arm! He succeeded.

VMCC member Ray Oakes suggested Rocky might find the activities of that club to his liking and offered a ride on his Grindley. This proved to be very enjoyable not least because he was able to renew a lot of old acquaintances so he

joined the Club forthwith, enjoying the activities and riding in several national rallies, Wheels West and the 1983 Rally to New Zealand organised by Ray Oakes, as well as regularly supporting local events. Riding in a VMCC event from Perth, John's 1925 P model Triumph performed well until Pemberton when the bike's piston, a very elegant thin walled cast iron item, collapsed. Most would put the bike on the back-up trailer and enjoy the luxury of a comfy ride home, but not Rocky. The Triumph piston shared diameter and weight with the alloy item found in the Chrysler Valiant "slant six" engine. Pemberton didn't offer a motor wrecker's yard so with plenty of encouragement from Barry Makin, John, Ron Cherrington and Barry boarded the latter's long-suffering Zenith V twin combination and set off for Manjimup. A wrecker there had a Valiant for wrecking but the car was still standing complete, on its wheels. The obliging wrecker offered the team a free hand, so, in very short order the Valiant was tipped onto its side and enough components removed to allow withdrawal of a piston and connecting rod. The wrecker was so impressed by the industry of the team he wouldn't charge for the piston and bade them farewell. Back at Pemberton, the Chrysler gudgeon pin proved totally incompatible with the Triumph con rod. Some hacksaw work cut both rods into carefully measured halves, some welding joined the appropriate halves, and, incredibly the Triumph was mobile again. The bike finished the rally without complaint and in fact still runs as well as ever on its hybrid con rod! A retired civil servant sought a live-in couple as housekeepers, a position the new Mr & Mrs Rock filled; this enabled them to live rent-free and save enough to buy the block they still own in Balcatta though in those days Balcatta was regarded as "South Geraldton."

In a move designed to prop up the building industry loans were only readily available for new houses so a new house was the logical choice, this being completed in 1961. In 1962 nappies on the line and the subsequent patter of little feet announced the arrival of son Michael, followed by Kathy and finally Linda. Michael is currently this club's Post Vintage Dating Officer and has just completed 29 years service in the Royal Australian Navy retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. Kathy, now too busy with motherhood, rode in many VMCC events during which time the club needed to raise money to build the parts department and library. With help from Ron Morrison's daughter, who ran a clothes shop, Kathy called in a few favours in the modelling world and staged a fashion parade, with emphasis on women's motor cycle clothing, at the Osborne Park Hotel. This raised over \$1000, a huge boost to the club's finances. The three children have now provided John and Maureen with 7 grandpebbles. Work at Channel 2 was all that Rocky had hoped it would be, presenting challenges as the relatively new medium grew. Outside broadcast equipment was purchased requiring power boxes to be designed and installed on power poles, in conjunction with S.E.C. Channel 2 had all this wonderful gear and not much to use it for so Rocky was asked if his motor cycle club had any events which might make good television. This resulted in scrambles at Herne Hill being televised; later on a ten minute clip of a trial in Mt Helena proved so popular a full trial was televised. This event was repeated several times.

One trial John set in 1969 had a difficult section involving steps going behind a waterfall; Bill Young took one look and said "you're crazy, that's far too hard!" but to John's delight, the last rider to attempt the section, Mike Thorpe, on a Tiger Cub recorded a "clean." One result of all this publicity saw a photograph of Don Fawell appear on the front page of the "Sunday Times." This was the first time such events had been presented on television in Australia, and presented live because video tape was not yet in use. One broadcast showed young Michael and Kathy sitting beside a section, beneath a tree; the following shot showed Chas Finch crashing into some trees and the crowd, but before detailing the outcome of this accident the broadcast cut to another camera, leaving Maureen (and no doubt many others) watching at home anxiously, sitting by the phone for five hours.

In 1992 the V.M.C.C and the Veteran Car Club commenced negotiations to build our current parts shed-library. Rocky was appointed VMCC negotiator, helping to thrash out an agreement in which VMCC and VCC would own the shed equally, but the VCC be allowed use of more than their half due to the bulky nature of their inventory. The shed was duly erected, a VCC member obtained all the required light fittings, John Moorehead, then manager at Cable Makers supplied cable and VMCC stalwarts Vic Richardson, Ian Fleming, Jack Berkshire and Mark Wallace teamed with Rocky to complete the installation. Bert Holmes contributed a lot of finishing work to the structure.

John's view of some of his contemporaries is interesting. George Scott, a truly nice man who was undisputed #1 in local road racing had a unique and awesomely fast cornering technique. Speaking of the 1953 Isle of Man T.T. where he recorded 14th in the Junior and 21st in the Senior on the same A.J.S. 7R machine, George said "You can't hope to learn the whole 37.5 mile course first time there, so you learn what you can and use that knowledge, for the rest, stick to the middle of the road and go as fast as you can." Charlie Lawson, who could always find a little bit more when really pressed – you had to sneak up on Charlie to pass him, no use following and planning, he'd leave you behind. Tyre chains (for traction) were employed in adverse conditions during winter. Charlie had used chains at a Parkerville event to advantage when one competitor protested the "chain season" was over. A heated argument ensued, Charlie had a bit of a dummy spit, took his tyre chain off and flung his machine, complete with bald rear tyre round the course to record the fastest time of the event. Bill Young, a champion who rode with supreme confidence in speedway, road racing and trials. Bill also turned "gamesmanship" into an art form!

Rocky arrived home one day in 1986 and announced to a surprised wife and family Channel 2 had offered staff a voluntary redundancy package, which he'd accepted. He didn't retire though. After two years as an electrical contractor he was very proud, as a fifty-eight year old, to be offered electrical maintenance work at the Sunday Times, which position he happily accepted, beginning a very fulfilling eight years in an excellent workplace. Retirement in 1996 provided the opportunity to work on bikes, attend the Bendigo Swap Meet regularly, make two trips to the Isle of Man, one on his seventieth birthday, and to ride bikes whenever the opportunity offered. In recent times a couple of age-related health hiccups, some possibly related to the five fractures suffered during his career have slowed him a little but he's currently restoring a Triumph T100 for Kathy and a fascinating 1924 Henderson 4 cylinder 1300cc. *Adrian white*

Tim Gibbes from Palmerston NZ has shared his memories:

I've just been on Google fishing about & found your site & even better found a profile about John Rock. We met first I think in 1957 when we formed the first Australian Team for the ISDT which was in Czechoslovakia, which John has related to very well on the profile. Couldn't remember how we came across the Jawa & CZ bikes, but this story tells it all, thank you. Later in 1958, the same group of Aussies went to the Isle of Man for John & Maureen's wedding, & of course we drove around the TT circuit while there. A couple of team photos attached & another of John carrying his front guard, what a hero. Probably met a few times since then but ones I recall were calling on John & Maureen at their home in Perth a couple of times, looking at the basement full of bikes.

Starting our International MX Series in Perth once or twice, when I met some great people involved with WA motorcycling sport at these events, from where we travelled across Australia then on to New Zealand, where I live. Wonder if any of your members remember these events?

John called at my home when he & some friends rode their vintage bikes around parts of NZ. John rode a Triumph about 1907 model single gear belt drive. Met John again at the MX des Nations event held in WA quite a few years ago, where the VMCC of WA had a display of bikes. I was with the NZ MX Team In my spare moments I've been able to find some old boxes of photos & clippings along with diaries so have been entertaining my self by piecing these together to entertain myself. These include that 57 ISDT & a few other bits of course.

I can not remember how, but 2 Jawa 250s & one CZ 125 bikes had been made available to us for the event, with factory support. The bikes were made in Czechoslovakia so it was good propaganda for the regime. The Australian team comprised of John Rock from Western Australia & Tim Gibbes from South Australia riding the 250 Jawas, Les Fisher (NSW) on the CZ, while Roy East (NSW) was the Team Manager. The event was held in the North of Czech near the Polish Border, based in the mountain town of Spindleruv Mlyn. That year the British had decided not to support the event, as they sold no bikes behind the Iron Curtain, but the Brits really did not like me being there, as I was already one of their ISDT team riders. I had been riding Jawas for the South Australian importer a few years before, so had a bit of an idea what the bikes were like, & with the local support as more than just helpers, it all looked good. The bikes were really just standard production street bikes with upturned exhaust pipes, cross bar on the handlebar, & knobbly tyres. The tyres were locally made Barum, which were not of high quality, as most Iron Curtain goods were in those days, almost like cardboard, they wore so quickly. Certainly the bikes were nothing like the factory units the Czech & other friendly Communist State riders had, which were very impressive.

Before we arrived at the event, we had slight transport problems. All 4 of us travelled all the way from England in my 1949 Austin A40 pickup, a distance of nearly 2,000 Kms. As the front seat was really only wide enough to fit 2 people, the 4 across was a bit of a squeeze, necessitating a revised driving format, driver #1 pushing the accelerator & foot brake, plus some of the time steering, driver # 2 the clutch operation & shared steering duties, driver #3 or #4 who sat on #3s knees, the gear change & general observation. Eventually we got to the ISDT HQ of the event at Spindleruv Mlyn, put the A40 up on blocks, so we could strip it as we got time. We will get back to that story 6 days later after the ISDT.

The ISDT itself was very, very wet, stormy & plenty of fog, possibly one of the toughest of all ISDT events. Spindleruv Mlyn, in the Krkonose (Giant) Mountains, is in the north of what is now the Czech Republic, almost on the Polish border, and well known as a winter snow ski resort & recreational area. In those days the chalets were all Trade Union run, so people from each area of an industrial town would holiday together, also an ideal way of having Big Brother keep watch! We were told by some friendly locals, that the normal population of the then Czechoslovakia was 16 million Czechs & Slovaks, & 48 million Russian soldiers, KGB police etc. That's 3 Big Brothers to every local not very comforting when Big Brother keeps order with an AK47 machine gun slung over his shoulder. We hardly saw any views as the cloud & rain blotted out any chance of that for the whole 6 days. Many of the marquees & tents had been blown down by the wind & rain, so conditions were unpleasant.

Our local Czech support group, Mr. Plachta, Stan Cerney & Dr. Zimmer, were particularly helpful to us. Any problem they would talk us through the repair routine, as well as set-up pickup points out in the bush, when our bikes needed more than just maintenance. In those days all parts of the bikes were marked so officially it was not permitted to change any thing, even though illegal running repairs had been going for years, & in fact is still very rife in the ISDE.

They also taught us how to shake hands frequently, so we could be passed so called illegal unmarked parts from hand to hand during the handshake. We realised quickly why so many Europeans shake hands frequently, especially during a major sporting event!

John Rock was a trials rider mainly, but relished the muddy conditions. The metal these bikes were made of was very low quality. His front mudguard brackets broke off, but as it was a marked part, had to carry it over his shoulder for 3 days, see the photo with this story getting all the mud & slush spat off the front wheel in his eyes & face. A tribute to the tenacity of the man, & he was rewarded with a well earned Bronze Medal.

Les Fishers CZ was not to get too far. The rear chain adjuster on the rear sprocket side broke, allowing the rear wheel to pull forward on that side, throwing off the chain. Regrettably a rare DNF for Les. My 250 Jawa also suffered electrical problems & metal fatigue. But we sorted our way through those, the electrics with good advice from our support crew. The ignition switch & main wiring loom were housed in a nacelle type compartment screwed into the top of the petrol tank, so some of the replaced wires from the generator & ignition system ran up the outside of the petrol tank. As well, the battery & tool box bolted to the rear left side of the bikes frame, broke off from metal fatigue, another case of very poor metal quality. Another marked part, as also was the battery. The battery was a very necessary piece of equipment, as the bike was coil ignition. So I wrapped the battery in a plastic bag, put it down the front of my jacket, took leads from there to the aforementioned switch & wiring loom on the petrol tank, & carried on, with varying degrees of pain from a big bust & an occasional acid burn from the battery, till I was able to repair the box with help from behind the bushes! Thanks to my very clever support crew & their helpers I got to the end & achieved a Bronze Medal, which possibly should have been more of a bravery award for the crew! Our first ever Australian Club Team at least finished the event with 2 out of 3 riders winning Bronze Medals, & under the conditions, with distinction.



Roy East, John Rock, Les Fisher & the photographer Tim Gibbes arrive at the Austrian - Czechoslovakian, ready to enter the Iron Curtain.

Ernest Serls: *Ernie Serls was appointed as a Life Member in 2000. Ernie passed away in 2018,*

ERNIE SERLS: Here is his story in his own words: I was born on 4/10/29 just as the world was slipping into the Great Depression. At that age this was not of great personal consequence although by 1934 I was aware that my father went away periodically to work on Government jobs. I was introduced to motorcycles around 1936 when my father bought a Douglas of doubtful mechanical condition on which I would occasionally ride pillion. In 1938 my father announced he was buying a new motorcycle and as I was by now an "expert" I told him he should get a DKW. This he denounced as a German machine and we had to "buy British" and promptly bought a WOLF two stroke. He also added that we wouldn't get parts if the threatened war started. As it was the Luftwaffe saw to it that British parts weren't available anyway when they flattened the WOLF motorcycle factory during air raids.

I was attending Como State School when war broke out and went to Kent Street High School in 1941 and set to work digging slit trenches on the school grounds as air raid precautions. This was a great start to an education. Teachers did not rank me as nuclear science material, for good reason, and I next went to Perth Technical College in St Georges Terrace where I went through the vocational stream. This ended in 1943 and when I turned 14, I registered for employment under the wartime regulations in force at the time, and assigned to a firm in West Perth doing war work. I started in what is known as Corrosion Engineering (electroplating and metal finishing) and offered an apprenticeship at the end of 1944.

As a 5 year apprenticeship this was completed in 1950. At the end of the war I bought a James model ML (ex army model) as the firm moved to Welshpool and I needed transport from Como. I got my license on my 17th birthday, which led the police to observe I was not wasting time about getting killed like many others at that time. In 1950 the James finally expired and I bought a Triumph Twin. I had joined the AJS motorcycle club earlier but on my apprentice wages, lack of resources and skill did not make for competitive riding. I remained with that club until I got married.

In 1951 I met my future wife (Phyllis) whilst at Floreat Beach. We both worked at Welshpool and I gave her a lift home from the beach. As housing was extremely tight at the time we decided to build a house before getting married. We still occupy that house today 50 years on. With work promotion and family responsibilities increasing, motorcycles had to take a back seat for a while. It became apparent that with lack of education, upward mobility would be slow, so a decision was made to return to study. This occurred in 1955 and I stayed in part-time study for the next 25 years. In that time I completed two degree level TAFE Associateships, Postgraduate studies in Education Administration and a Masters Degree in Business (Education Administration) from Curtin. These later studies resulted from a Menzies Government decision in 1959/60 to impose a credit squeeze on the economy. This gave true meaning to the term "business cycle" that I had been learning in Economics classes at College. The reason was, that the economy was overheating and out of control making consumer goods, and ignoring power, roads, dams, railways and hospitals. So what's new? I changed jobs and became Production Manager for an East Perth firm making electrical gear.

I was approached to apply for a TAFE lecturing position at Fremantle Technical School which I took up in 1964. Subsequently I saw TAFE service in Perth, Albany, Claremont, Head Office Rockingham, Perth again until I was assigned to Midland College in 1983. This was a new college where I became the Principal and after a restructure of the TAFE Division, the Director – a position I held until I retired in 1994 at 65 years of age. My interest in motorcycling after my marriage was revived by two things. The first was a ending a demonstration by Sammy Miller of trials riding where I met again some of my old friends from the AJS club. The second influence was dealers throwing away British motorcycles in the late 50's. I gave a home to a lot of dismembered bits and pieces because I hated to see the disregard for beautiful machinery. I rejoined the AJS club and served as the Secretary/Treasurer for 11 years. During that time I was involved in the securing of a long term lease of 20.25 hectares of land at Wanneroo and its subsequent development as a motocross circuit complete with power, water, WC toilets, kitchen and comforts of home. I was awarded life membership of that club for "services rendered".

My involvement with the VMCCWA started when I donated some parts that were deteriorating in my fowl house to the fledgling club. I joined soon after this and took an interest in club affairs whenever I saw that club needed assistance. I became more involved as time passes, serving in a number of capacities such as machine examiner, Committee member, President (2 terms) Past President & Vice-President. Over the years I have been active in other motorcycle affairs. Whilst in the AJS club I served as Delegate for the Albany Motorcycle Club and deputy delegate for the AJS club with the West Australian Motorcycling Association. This service was recognised by the award of the Castrol Trophy in 1982, "for services to Motorcycling in WA". This included representing this body on the Off-Road Vehicle Committee which was set up under statute to counter complaints from the public of the activities of Trail Bike riders. These activities were a threat to all clubs. Negative responses still persist in the attitudes shown by some local

authorities whenever the term “motorcycles” is mentioned. There are some in the club who may wonder at my choice of ARIEL motorcycles. It just so happened that a lot of the parts I collected were ARIEL and I was impressed by designer Val Page’s ingenuity in making so many interchangeable components for so many different models. So far as I am concerned motorcycles are motorcycles and as long as they at least two wheels and I am able to ride them I guess that is what I will do as long as I am able. People could do a lot worse than ride ARIELS – *Ernie Serls*

Ed. In 2010 Ern summarised his own contribution to the Club as follows: “I have been in motorcycling since 1946. I joined the AJSMCC in that year and was Secretary/Treasurer for 11 years. During that period I was heavily involved with development of Wanneroo Circuit that the club still operates. I was made a Life Member for long service to that club. I joined the VMCCWA in 1986 to ride motorcycles. This I have done whilst getting involved in administration serving in a number of roles and elected as Vice- President in 1994. I was elected President in 1995 and served two terms in that position. I then served Mr Perry and Mr Edmondson as Vice-President as they each subsequently served two terms. I was awarded Life-Membership in 2000 for long service to the club. During my service on Committee I have taken on many different portfolios including Raffle Officer, Swapmeet Gate organiser. Checkpoint volunteer to Busselton 2 Day, responsibility for the Affiliation with the VMCC UK as Overseas Liaison, and delegate to the Council of Motoring Clubs identifying policy issues for the Committee. I also served on CMC sub-Committee for 2009 Heritage Transport Day.”



Ed Shekell: *Ed was awarded Life Membership in 2017.*

Ed was 16 when he rode his first bike, a 1954 BSA Bantam, belonging to the workshop foreman's son. When he was 17 Ed's father bought him a brand new BSA B31 swinging arm so he could get to work. Ed paid it off at 4 pounds a week. The 3 favourite bikes Ed has owned are, his current 1956 BSA B33 swinging arm, a Sunbeam S7 he owned in Zambia in 1957 (he also had another S7 in Bunbury in 1961), and a Triumph Tiger T110 in Zambia in 1958. He would like to own 1955 Triumph T110 and a Sunbeam S7 with fat tyres. The longest he's owned a bike for is 25 years, that's his current 1956 BSA B33 swinging arm. This actually may be the same bike he owned in Bunbury in 1961. Ed says, of his favourite rides "All rides are a favourite", But he would like to ride from Lusaka to Harare as he did back in 1956. Also Bulawayo to Harare which he did whilst on a leave pass from Henie barracks one Easter. Both these rides were about 300 miles. Ed commented "They might have roads by now". Ed joined the VMCC to mix with like-minded folk and old bikes. He enjoys time in his shed spannering on old bikes to keep active and in tune with his trade.



Ed joined the Club in 1992 and was the Albany Section Chairman for nine years from 2002. Throughout his membership, Ed has been a very active Section member and is a good ambassador for the Club. He participates in Section events, whether riding, organising, or giving a helping hand. Ed can always be relied on. Many of our members would probably know how much work Ed has done for the Section. He joined the Albany Agricultural Show Committee so he could go to their meetings enabling the Section to have a voice at show- time when we exhibited bikes there. He was also the liaison member between the VCC and the Albany Section for National Heritage Day. Another event Ed is always involved in is The Relay for Life. He is there to erect the Section marquee and to pull it down. (Other members do help. We don't leave him to do it on his own.) He showed leadership and strength in guiding the Section through turmoil in 2009 when the Section was supposed to host the 2009 Veteran Rally. A quiet, honest and respected man, Ed is always there to offer advice to the newcomer, the novice motorcyclist or anyone who has an interest in motorcycling. He is a gifted restorer of motorcycles in every respect, making sure they conform to their original specs. He will always help fellow members having problems with their bikes. He will take their bike to his house and sort out the problems, whether it be mechanical or electrical. Section members have always been very grateful to Ed for his assistance. His comradeship is enjoyed by everyone. His other interests are the Veteran Car Club Military Section and the Sporting Shooters Association Muzzle Loaders Section. He has always been a credit to the VMCC and is very deserving of Life Membership. The VMCC and vintage motorcycling generally have an extremely staunch and loyal member in Ed.

Peter Stocker: *Peter Stocker was appointed as a Life Member in 1995.*

Peter Stocker #245L, an assertive, sometimes bombastic fellow, Peter joined the Club in the early eighties and made his presence felt quite soon. Through his active years he began as librarian moving on to events co-ordinator before a term as President and eventually Secretary. These events meant a place on the management committee which he held pretty much from 1983 to 1994. In 1995 I nominated Peter for Life membership. At this time he was an ordinary committee member; I was editor. The nomination was read out, un-named, by the Secretary where upon Peter thumped the table saying we have too many life members now! We don't need anymore – who the devil is it this time? It was him and the nomination was carried. In 1983 Peter started the Dam Early run which went past Canning Dam, through Serpentine and back to Peter's home in Stocker Rd. Kelmscott. Here we breakfasted on one of his favourites – baked beans. The house in Stocker Rd was an old



family home and this was apparently how the street got its name. The event ran for many years and was very popular. In the year 2000 a book – the history of the VMCC of WA – the first years – 1975 to 2000, was published. It was Peter's drive and a friend Bill Coackley that brought this about. It had been talked about for many years and Peter made it happen. This is a useful record of the Club and its officers etc., which sadly doesn't cover some major events and perhaps personalities to make it complete. Sad to say, Peter spent his last few years in an aged care facility before passing away early February 2017. Jim Clark #96L Peter's family remember him as a loving, intelligent man who didn't know how to do anything by halves. His daughters persuaded the family they needed a pony and although Peter had ridden as a lad, he took off to Muresk Agricultural College for several days to complete a course in equestrian management. This expertise and his early riding experience soon had him appointed Chief Instructor at Kelmscott Pony Club. Once enrolled as a Freemason he studied his craft hard and was rewarded with the position Master, the highest in the organisation. Peter sold real estate, mostly in the country. Endless travel on the often rudimentary roads- this was fifty years ago- was time consuming and often dangerous so in a typical Peter solution he obtained his pilot's licence and flew. Later in life he sold pest control with equal success. He put his usual energy and enthusiasm into our Club, serving in every Committee position over many years, plus running the popular Dam Early Run. He really enjoyed his Suzuki 125 twin; to follow him wringing the neck of this little screamer around the hills was most entertaining. Entertaining too was Peter's sense of humour, ever ready to share a joke or two and on occasion he delighted in winding people up. If he looked you straight in the face with his lively eyes and said "trust me!" you knew to be on alert for a wind up. Family and friends suffered the awful experience watching this loving and dynamic man succumb to dementia. He is survived by wife of fifty-nine years Alison, and children Shelley, Celia, Max and Linda, to whom we offer our condolences. Peter will be greatly missed, may he rest in peace. *Adrian White*

Ed. Referring to Club records the following was notated when Peter was nominated for Life Membership in 1995: "Peter Stocker was the member honoured this year. Peter may have been a "Johnny come lately" when compared with some of the previous recipients of this honour, but he had served the Club in many capacities during the 13 years he had been a member. He had held the Offices of President, Librarian, Events Co-ordinator and is the present Secretary. He had organized several events including the popular "Dam Early Run". He was worthy of the honour in every way.

Ken Vincent: *Ken was awarded Life membership in 2020*

Ken has been active as Librarian for many years. This is a time consuming task, obtaining books, registering and filing books and documents and making them available to members. The library is an asset to the Club and Ken's time and efforts have seen the resource grow and prosper. Ken has now opened the Library on Wednesdays which makes it even a more accessible resource. As well Ken has been tireless in promoting the Pre31 element of the Club and for 8 years has run the Roaring 20s event, a major event on the Veteran & Vintage calendar in WA. Ken also has taken the lead with the Beverley Run and the Old Forkers Display. Ken has been an active member of the Club since 1975.

Ken came into the world in 1945, in Pinner, North London. He schooled locally, leaving at fifteen to train as a chef, which he enjoyed well enough, but working two shifts each day, including Saturdays and Sunday meant his social life struggled to survive. So he quit after nine years. In his early teens .he'd become interested in motor cycles, having swapped a pair of binoculars for a 1934 side valve B.S.A. 250, which he gave a good workout in paddocks close to home. Then came a licence, and a 1960 A.J.S. 350 which became his daily ride to work in London. In a local motorcycle shop he noted several pre 1931 bikes stored there and enquired, were any for sale? For £10 he became the proud owner of a 1938 Royal Enfield XK 1140cc V twin, with sidecar. This he rode to the Dragon Rally in 1965 a memorable, experience.



Rockers were becoming a distinct social movement for motorcycle riders. There was no formal organisation, you just chose to join the fun. Ken loved his involvement, becoming a regular on his newly acquired Velocette Venom Clubman at the now famous Ace and Busy Bee Cafés. The Velo was replaced in 1966 with a new Triumph Bonneville; the twelve volt lighting on the latter meant at night, Ken was lead rider. Sadly Ken and Bonnie parted in the worst way, landing Ken a spell in hospital. Lying in a hospital bed gave him the idea of racing sidecars, so he sold his repaired Bonnie and bought a second hand outfit, which he raced for a number of years. Now buying bikes, refurbishing and selling them provided Ken with a very good living.

Ken and a mate watched the film "Easy Rider," this inspired the decision to travel to America, so with a bit of creative negotiation, student air fares were purchased, direct to New York. They stayed six wonderful months, hitch-hiking across America and included Canada in their travels. Back in England, Ken went on buying and selling bikes, making a very good living out of work he enjoyed. However, the travel bug had a firm grip on Ken, so, with two friends, he purchased a Austin J2 van and set off for India, via most of Europe. Unwilling to spend winter in Lebanon, they sold their van and made their way to Israel, living and working in a kibbutz. Ken's two companions then chose to go home. Ken was fortunate to meet a very nice American girl; they joined forces and travelled back to Lebanon. Explosions in the distance announced the beginning of hostilities in Beirut. They needed to get out to Jordan, with very limited options to do so. After four worrying days, they discovered there were three, and only three, aeroplanes leaving. They missed the first, which turned back anyhow, caught the second, and later discovered the third flight had crash landed. Then it was on to a bus to Iraq, across endless desert. The latter was a blessing; their bus driver was drunk, driving very erratically.

In the desert, there's nothing to hit if you do get it wrong.,Then on through Iran to Afghanistan. They made their way to Pakistan, noting it is a beautiful place, but discovered the British very much on the nose. After rough treatment in

the northern hills by the local police, and exorbitant exchange rates, they hitched and bused through India and Thailand to Malaysia. From there, they caught a boat, to then unspoiled and beautiful Bali, from there, a boat to Perth.

At immigration, in Fremantle, they were asked "What sort of visa would you like, holiday or permanent resident?" Naturally they chose the latter, which was issued on the spot. With only about five dollars between them, jobs were number one priority. Next day, Ken was on the end of a paint brush, getting paid for it, whilst his companion soon began teaching ceramics, at what is now TAFE, in Northbridge.

As funds permitted, they did travel more – Sumatra, India, Sri Lanka, Tibet, Japan, Taiwan, The Philippines, South Korea, Hawaii, then on to San Diego, where they finally parted, Ken returning to England. There he took a phone call from friend in Perth, Peter Jeans. "Would you like to be my mechanic in Manx Motorcycles, in Beaufort Street?" No second invitation was needed! Once settled in Perth, Ken bought a 1929 Velocette two stroke, and Peter a 1924 B.S.A. 500 and joined the Vintage Motorcycle Club in 1975. After working for Alron's Motorcycle shop, The Motobecane franchise became available, so Ken decided to "give it a go!" In this he was quite successful, but was constrained by lack of capital, reluctantly selling the business. Jobs in other motorcycle businesses followed, then an opportunity arose at Fastener Engineering. Twenty-seven years later, Ken retired.

Meantime, he'd married Adriana a West Australian girl, whom he's met when he was a riding instructor and brought up two boys who are also now keen motorcyclists. Peter Jeans and Ken had old bikes they were keen to race, but no club existed for this, so they placed an advertisement to see if any interest existed "out there." They were surprised by the size of the response, and set about forming the Historic Competition Motorcycle Club, with Ken as the inaugural treasurer. A glass jar contained the club funds. Ken was given life membership in 2012 which honour came with a very nice clock. The club still flourishes today, with Ken still a regular competitor racing a 1938 Mac Velo.

He became very active in the Vintage Club. In 2002, he put his hand up to run the library, which desperately needed a guiding hand. His last employment had given him knowledge of computer managed stock of thousands of different fasteners; this he wanted for thousands of books. A search revealed a program originating in Holland, the only one suited to the task, for which we signed up. We now have a professionally run library, a huge achievement. It helped that Ken reads extensively, and loves books.

The Old Forkers, The Old Hotels and The Roaring Twenties are Club events Ken has devised. They're successful in part because they are good runs, but also because Ken actively promotes them, phoning members, reminding them of the fun to be enjoyed. *Adrian White*





Ken Vincent & Gary Tenardi (Both photos by Nic Montagu)





Ken Vincent (Both photos by Nic Montagu 2014)



Jim Wallace: *Jim Wallace was awarded Life Membership in 1986. Jim passed away in 1988.*

Jim Wallace was a foundation member of the Club. Jim, who had been resident in Collie, became a member in October 1966, and later moved to Rockingham, bringing with him a 1924 Rudge, to become number three motor cycle owner, followed by Emie Legg and Jack Berkshire all took part in the Mandurah rally of October 1966. During early 1967 Jim Wallace with the Rudge had been travelling to rallies etc., in Bunbury while still resident in Collie.

The inaugural meeting of the Motor Cycle Section of the Veteran Car Club of WA was held on 5 September 1968. It was attended by 20 motorcyclists and officers were elected including Jim Wallace as a committee member. Jim Wallace represented the Section at VCC committee meetings. Jim Wallace organised the Section's first road run on December 15th 1968 which terminated at Rockingham Oval. The first A.G.M. of the Section was held in June 1969 and Jim was elected Secretary/Treasurer. Ernie Legg donated a perpetual trophy and presented it to Jim Wallace. In July the Section Cup for the most consistent Competitor was also awarded to Jim Wallace. It was donated by Ernie Legg.

In May 1973 a motion proposed by appointed members of the Section, including Jim Wallace, to amend the Constitution of the VCC to allow a Motor Cycle Club to be formed was put before VCC members. The motion was lost on a close vote. The Section AGM was held in March, 1974 and Jim Wallace was appointed Secretary/Treasurer. A special meeting was then held at the Applecross Kindergarten Hall on 13 March 1975 to form the "VINTAGE MOTOR CYCLE CLUB OF WA (VMCCWA)" and provide a Constitution to elect officers to enable the Club to be registered". Eric Langton was asked to chair the meeting and Jim Wallace acted as minute secretary. The first official General Meeting of the now incorporated VMCCWA was held on 21 August, 1975 and Jim Wallace was elected as Treasurer. In 1978 and 1979 Jim Wallace was appointed to the position of Vice-President and also Secretary in 1979. At the AGM for 1981, Jim Wallace was elected President and he also held the position of Assistant Treasurer. In 1982 Jim was again appointed President and Assistant Treasurer.

Jim at this time was recorded as participating on his Rudge at the popular Police Xmas parties organised each year by Jack Berkshire. Jim also helped by organising rides and games for the children.

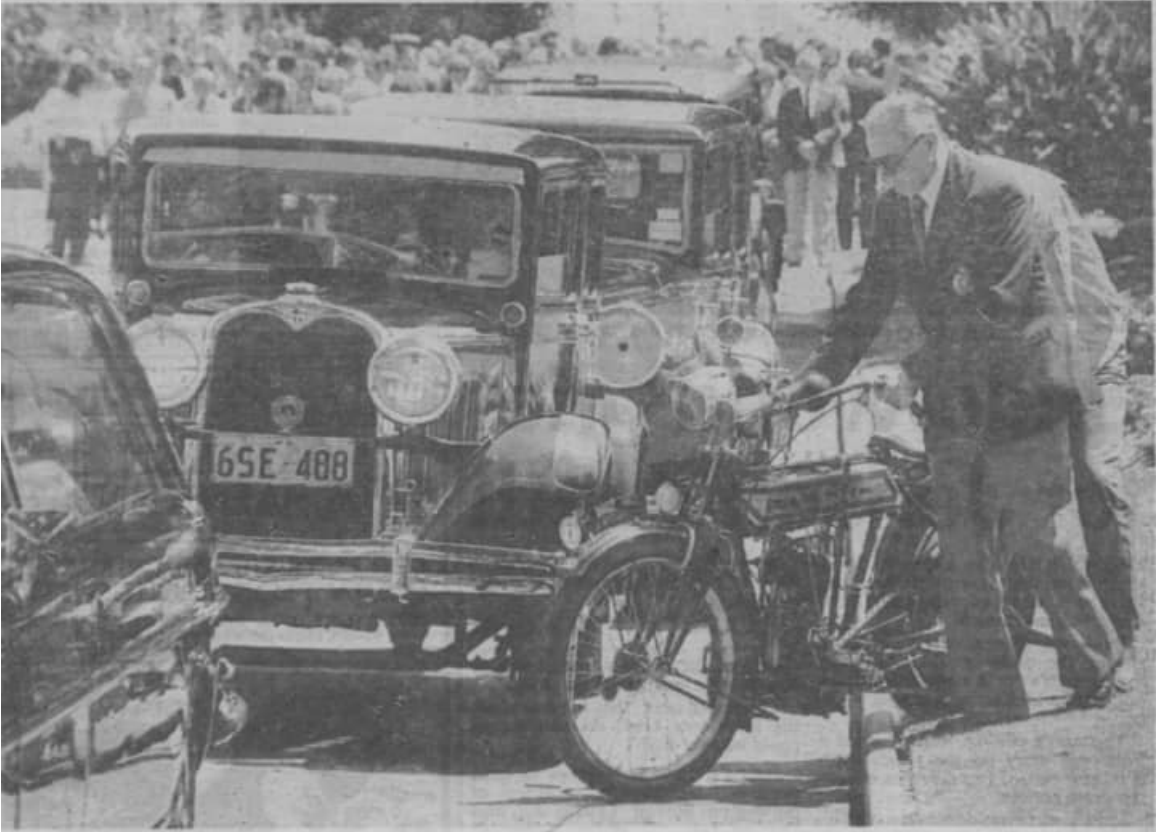


Jim Wallace on his 1912 Rudge Multi (Photo by Murray Barnard, 1988)

For both 1984 and 1985, Jim was elected Secretary for the Club. at the Annual General Meeting on 3 September, 1986 the members conferred Life Membership of the Club on Jim Wallace. Jim had been an active Club member for many years; he had held several offices and taken part in most club activities. The meeting confirmed that he well deserved the honour. Jim was also elected Secretary for 1986 and also at the AGMs held in 1987 and 1988.

Following the AGM, the Secretary, Jim Wallace found time to write the minutes of the meeting before he passed away 4 days later on 9 October, 1988, the night of the Gymnkana Event, an event he loved and in which he had been successful that day. Thus the Club lost a well respected and lovable gentleman. Perhaps a premonition of his impending fate caused him to give such an unusual Secretary's Report at the AGM when he reminisced about the past. Members were full of praise for Jim's work for the Club and his devotion to duty. Many ideas were floated to perpetuate his memory. At the General Meeting on 2 November, 1988 the President read out a "Letter of Remembrance" from Jack Berkshire about the late Life Member and Secretary, Jim Wallace. All members then stood in silence for one minute in his memory. A Jim Wallace memorial Fund was established to assist riders with travel and special event costs. The fund operated for the next 10 years.

History salutes club stalwart



Longstanding friend Jim Berkshire wheels Jim Wallace's favourite motor cycle in the procession at Karrakatta.
Picture: GUY MAGOWAN

JIM WALLACE, who died on Sunday night, would have been proud of the rally which took place at his funeral procession.

It was a tribute to his enormous, unflagging contribution to vintage and veteran vehicle clubs in WA. Riders on about 30 old motor cycles lead the cortege from a Subiaco funeral parlour to the Karrakatta crematorium, followed by about 10 veteran cars.

At the head of the procession on a 1925 Sunbeam motor cycle was Mr Jack Berkshire, a retired police superintendent who founded the Vintage Motorcycle Club with Mr Wallace 20 years ago. In that time, club membership has grown from three to 380.

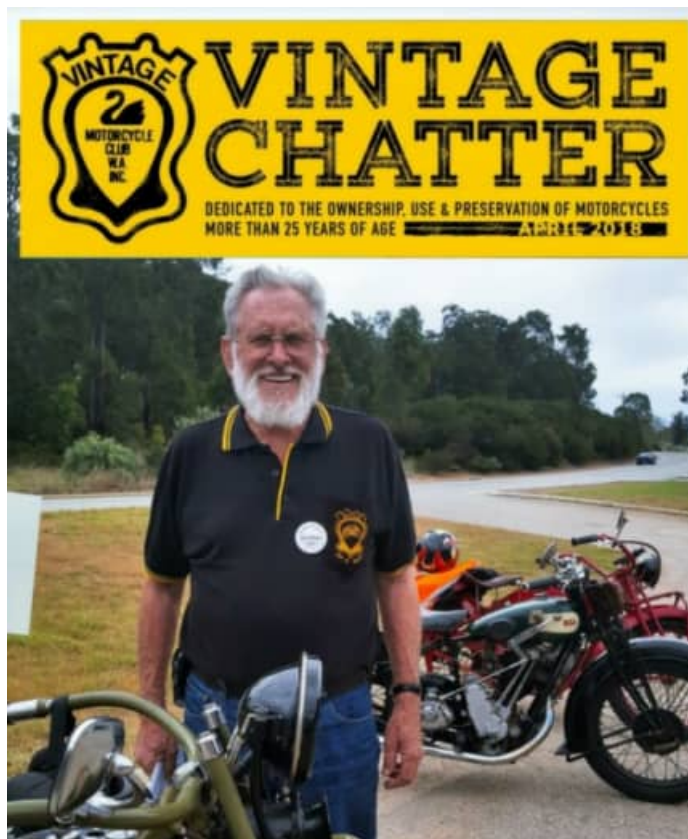
"He was a great person for assisting others — nothing was too much trouble for him," said Vintage Motorcycle Club member Dave Ferguson.

At the cemetery, Mr Berkshire wheeled Mr Wallace's favourite motor cycle, a 1912 Rudge Multi, in the procession and his scarf was placed on the coffin.

Mr Wallace was a life member and secretary of the Vintage Motorcycle Club of WA and a member of the Veteran Car Club of WA. "He was the most efficient club member you could get in the world — if he missed a rally he'd forgotten it or he was sick," Mr Berkshire said.

Dave Weeks: *Dave was awarded Life Membership in 2003.*

Dave was born in Dorking General Hospital on May 29th, 1942 but doesn't take a lot of credit for this. Father, Albert, observed this latest progeny "looked like a skinned rabbit, and none too big a one at that" and offered the nickname "Midge". More formally named, David Allen was the middle one of the three children ultimately in his family. Mother, Emma Susan ran the house and the kids. Father, Albert Edward, left his own childhood home at thirteen after never ending friction with his stepfather, and pretty much lived on the street before joining the army prior to World War II. Employment was almost impossible to find, particularly if you had no trade. Whilst Albert apparently enjoyed the army, there's a suggestion the feeling was somewhat one sided. Albert was a bit of a ratbag it seems, getting into all sorts of mischief. Despite several promotions - he was a pretty good soldier and took part in the D-Day landings on the second day, driving a Chevrolet Blitz wagon with searchlight and generator - he was discharged with the same rank as he entered service - "squaddie". Post war he became a long distance truck driver and drove trucks until retirement. Meantime, the family had been evacuated to South Wales, out of the way of German bombers. When war ended they moved back to South East London where Dave attended Catford School until aged seventeen. Emma had the dreadful misfortune to be diagnosed as suffering TB, a common ailment then affecting one in three women.



The boys were packed off to Dr Bamardo's orphanage and after six months, never wanted to see rabbit stew again! By now older brother Albert had motorcycles for transport, frequently changing makes and models. The young Dave fell in love with Albert's rigid Speed Twin in all its amaranth red glory and his interest in bikes was now established. Money was a prerequisite for owning a bike. Dave found work as a draughtsman's gofer, at the same time attending night school and attaining his Higher National Certificate. This took seven years, with a further two years required to gain endorsement and then become a member of the Institution of Structural Engineers. Now a fully-fledged engineer, Dave's first preference was for mechanical draughting but times were still tough so when work with concrete design was offered Dave grabbed it. In his words he "fell in love with concrete" and still feels that way, a fortunate chance indeed. This was the tail end of the era where steel construction still was mainly riveted which puts severe limits on shape and form but with concrete it was an engineer's dream - if you could envisage and draw it, you could almost certainly build it. From mid seventies his work was primarily steel design, of such items as aspects of an iron ore plant and other mining related structures. This occupation he practices to this day.

His yearning for a motorbike bore fruit when Dave was eighteen - a new Excelsior Talisman Twin, which our man pushed home four and a half miles from the dealership because he couldn't ride! This state of affairs was, of course, very temporary and Dave and the Excelsior shared three years of varied fortunes. A near new 1960 Gold Star 500 caught his eye and frantic saving produced the required 30% (of total price £267!) deposit and the Goldie had a new owner. Five days later Goldie and new owner had a 220km/h argument with a car in which Weeksy's knee took a beating, as did the Goldie. The insurance company said "not our problem" so Dave fixed the bike himself. About this time, Dave painted spots on his helmet "just to be different". Each subsequent helmet has had the acne treatment.

The Gold Star changed Dave's social life. North London had the famous Ace Cafe, South London had Johnsons where young men on fast bikes met young women who appreciated such things. Six nights a week, regardless of weather they gathered to eat road kill meat pies, drink tea or coffee (both tasted identical!) and exchange lies and improbable tales. Out of this, when Dave was twenty-three, came pretty young Wendy! sixteen years old, who found the dashing young man on the Goldie irresistible. They married forthwith and in time became proud parents of two lovely daughters. Ruefully, Dave concedes the union was far from ideal, and after seven sometimes stormy years the lady went to what she saw as greener pastures, leaving Dave as a single parent.

During the next few years, encouraged by his younger brother, Dave stripped every unnecessary item off the long suffering Goldie and enjoyed competing in quarter mile sprints. Then he had built a purpose-designed (by D.A. Weeks of course) sprint frame in which the Goldie engine was laid forward, lots of fun but not much faster than the stock bike. Each day Dave left his two daughters at a child minding centre whilst he went to work. One morning, dropping the kids off, he noticed a pair of high heeled strappy, cork wedges, which contained two dainty feet, which were attached to two stupendous legs and so on up to a very pretty face. "Got to get to know her!" vowed Weeksy, and by dint of careful timing, managed to meet Valerie. Fortunately, the attraction was reciprocated and they wed in 1976, Valerie bringing in to the family her 3 1/2 year old son.

Two years as an expat engineer in Swaziland, a beautiful place to work, convinced the Weeks family there were better places to live than London, especially for Dave who suffered breathing difficulties in the cold. Canada and Western Australia (then experiencing Sir Charles Court's boom times) were available; Perth was warm and was the obvious choice. At 3am, one morning late in 1981, having travelled on a 5000-ton ship through the tail end of a cyclone (and been appropriately sick!) the Weeks family arrived in Fremantle. After ten days at the very nice Noalimba Migrant Centre, rental accommodation and a car were organised and Dave began work. His first West Australian employer went bankrupt, the second paid up all right, but from a closed bank account!

Third time lucky and the family were happy and prospered, soon to buy a block in Willetton upon which they had a small house built. In 1986 they purchased a nice, older, family home in Cottesloe where Dave lives now. Tragedy struck in 1986. Valerie was diagnosed with cancer and died of this awful disease in 1993 leaving Dave and the family with the memories of seventeen wonderful years.

Weeksy has had his beard all his adult life. He shaved it off during his time with Valerie; she made remarks not suitable for this august journal and ordered the beard re-grown A.S.A.P! He likes dogs, rum and coke, and correct usage and pronunciation of the English language, which causes occasional conflict in Australia. Ask Jack Berkshire! Three Goldies in various states of dismemberment adorn the Weeks workshop along with a BSA Sloper he's restoring. One Goldie is to be hitched to a Watsonia G.P. sidecar, similar to the one tortured by Two Fat Ladies of T.V. fame.

Dave Joined the VMCC in 1988, became a contributor right away and was elected to Committee two years later, ultimately serving two years as President. From committee member of Wheels West 2000 he became Rally Director in 2003 for that highly successful event. *Adrian White*





Dave Weeks (left) & below (*Photos by Nic Montagu 2014*)



Keith Weller: *Keith Weller was awarded Life Membership in 2022.*

Keith has for many years organised a most popular Club event at his property. The BBQ at Keith's is one of the most popular Club events held all year. Originally the Up to 200cc Event it has evolved into Keith's Soiree. As well Keith is unsparing in his assistance to members with machine maintenance and servicing issues.

All this pales in significance compared to the years Keith has put into the parts store, ordering supplies, assessing parts collections, sorting and identifying parts and lately working to achieve a positive outcome for the Mammoth Sale.



Vintage Motor Cycle Club of Western Australia (Inc)

Life Membership

Awarded to
Keith Weller
2022

In appreciation of many years
committed service to the Club
and in recognition of your active
contribution as Parts Store
Officer and event organiser.





Gypsy Tour - Denmark 2023



Eighty years ago on May 25th, proud parents Gordon and Doris announced the arrival Keith, one of four children the couple produced, in Waroona. Gordon worked at the local Nestle powdered milk factory as foreman. And that's "Nestle", not "Nestlay" according to a Swiss worker there. Sounds like a good pub discussion in the making! In 1959 the company closed the Waroona facility, prompting the family to relocate to Perth. Keith wasn't too happy at the move, enjoying the country town life. He transferred to Hollywood High School, finishing his formal education there as a pretty smart student who detested history. He couldn't see how what happened in 1642 had any relevance to the present, seeing him permanently anchored bottom of the class in that one subject.

Next came an apprenticeship with the PMG as linesman/technician doing aerial line work. Once a tradesman, rules of the day dictated you'd be posted to the country, no choice offered. Keith and a fellow graduated tradesman had opposite postings, both wanted to swap, but no way. It was fairly common practice for the older members of the gang to slope off to the nearest town with a pub, leaving the new boy to mind the shop. On one memorable occasion, they forgot Keith. He spent a very cold and miserable night in one of those little tents linesmen still use.

About this time he began road racing on a Honda CB77 Super Sport, loving it. He was by now somewhat disillusioned with his Government employee, so applied for work at Mortlock's Motorcycles. His knowledge of electricity and general handiness with things mechanical saw him hired. He enjoyed his time there, but saw the "writing on the wall" as bike sales, especially British bikes diminished.

Up for a challenge, Keith decided to try his hand on the fast growing market for boats and outboard motors. Night School added to his already handy qualifications and he became Service Manager for Chrysler Marine, in Jolimont. Guardian Boats also used his services. He discovered speedboat racing, preparing his own equipment, and was a regular in the winner's list. To this day his record performance in the 75 cubic inch class still stands. Go kart racing was fun, as was figure skating. Keith was voted in as Commodore of the Power Boat Association of WA. Meantime, his family had increased by two, Shane followed by Troy.

Martin, his boss informed him he was thinking of retirement, and would Keith like to buy the business? The latter didn't have that sort of bank balance, so Martin arranged to lend Keith the funds. Yes please!

Premises were needed, a vacant block near Bunnings changed hands, planning began. It speaks volumes for the high regard clients had for Keith, as they variously assisted him in planning a building. The Shire lead him quickly and hassle free through the potential minefield that are building regulations. A builder put his name on the construction, whilst allowing Keith and the boys to do the actual building. Keith wanted this, as a lifelong believer of "you can do anything you put your mind to with the right attitude." Together they built the second tilt up building in Midland.

Thus began a long and very successful, well respected business. Sadly, tragedy was looming. Troy became quadriplegic following a motorcycle accident. The devastated family rallied round. Troy became a successful Murder Ball (aka Wheelchair Rugby) competitor. A spin off from this saw Keith become fixer-in-chief of the high tech titanium wheelchairs used.

Troy had a yen for motor sport, so the team built a Holden Ute for drag racing. Troy became the only quadriplegic drag racer in Australia, becoming a skilled driver, with the nine litre V8 propelling him to best figures for the quarter of 10 seconds at 136 mph. This was a whole-of-family affair, from high-tech attention to keeping the car spotless. In the circumstances, they were the happiest family, those days proudly remembered. Ultimately, sadly, Troy's battered body cried 'enough', Troy slipped away one night. Never before had so many wheelchairs been seen at Bowra & O'Dea.

Keith has been a major contributor to our Club. In his ten years as Parts Manager, along with Chas Bayley, the department was transformed from a jumbled mess to a place where everything has a place, and Keith knew where it was. Changing the open morning for Spares from a Wednesday to a Monday turned out to be a master stroke. Now for many, it's an opportunity to socialise over a coffee, and discuss how fast you were. Our Spares and Library are the envy of other motoring clubs. Keith also served two years on Committee. His Annual Soirée at his home, with Yanti's fabulous cooking, is hugely popular.

It's hard to put a measure on Keith's talent and versatility. A stroke has slowed him down a little, but he's fast coming good. On the bench he has the engine from a Suzuki Kettle, the innards of a very rare Norton Jubilee, and is close to finishing the only known Fuji 175 in Australia. All his restorations are museum standard, a pleasure to see. He's noted for his irreverent humour which never fails to amuse!

Adrian White, April 2025



Above: Midland Workshops, Below: Bean 2 Brook



Adrian White: *Adrian was awarded Life Membership in 2022.*

Adrian has for nigh on 20 years taken a positive interest in the club and the members. Adrian took the initiative to interview a number of members and write up their profiles for publication in the Chatter. Many of these profiles are of members no longer with us, as such they are a valuable addition to the Club heritage. Many of the profiles have proven invaluable in preparing the Life Member history which is why Adrian deserves equal billing in that document.

As well Adrian has served on the Club committee and was President during a most tiresome period, when a faction was determined to unsettle the Club, either to prevent change or to pursue selfish interests. This cut Adrian's term as President and must have been extremely disappointing for him. Adrian has continued to provide an essential service to Club in the role of Welfare officer, a role which is well appreciated by many members. Not to forget his dedication in collecting for the Xmas Cheer each year and the repair and donation of bicycles for the Salvation Army.



Vintage Motor Cycle Club of Western Australia (Inc)

Life Membership

Awarded to
Adrian White
2022

In appreciation of many years
committed service to the Club
and in recognition of your term
as Club Chair, Swap meet
organiser abd Welfare Officer.



I met the world on April 20 1941, in Marple, Cheshire, England. The meeting was in the front lounge of our house, as was normal practice then. My parents were so enamoured of my presence they tried four more times to replicate me; one sister and three brothers later, failed, then gave up. (!) Father was a rubber chemist, doing essential war work, living away in Manchester, so he wasn't required for active duty. Mother kept house, but was a talented artist with a degree in that discipline.

World War Two was in full horror, though to a child, this meant nothing. We saw contrails of warplanes high up, but had no concept of the brutality of it all. Brave men were dying horribly up there! Food was heavily rationed, but what you've never had, you don't miss, but it was very hard for Mother to keep us healthily fed. We moved to Dunstable. I did all the usual kid things. The pretty girl next door, about my age and I, made the remarkable discovery that boys and girls were not labelled thus purely by the length of their hair! We quickly developed a doctor - patient relationship in my surgery, the packing case by the side of the house. I was an avid collector of Dinky toys. Mother arranged for me to work for the milkman, delivering to front doors, for one shilling a day. That's ten cents! But an eight wheel Foden, the ultimate, cost eleven shillings. I learned a new skill. To drink half a pint of cold milk whilst the bony old Morris 8 van, smelling of milk and petrol, tried to make me spill it. The boss could do it, and drive!

I enjoyed shoplifting, more as a sport than a source of income. I could never take my ill - gotten gains home, Mother would have asked too many questions, but my friend Norman Bentley, from the displaced persons Nissan Hut village behind us had no such problems. I was allowed to walk into the centre of town, about ten minutes away. Woolworths was my prime target, all their wares were laid out on long horizontal counters, two of which were laid out parallel to each other, with a gap between for the shop assistants. Inevitably, I got caught. A hand grabbed me from behind, "gotcha you little pest, off to the manager," so off we went. For a store detective, she wasn't that smart. Her eyes were never still, not focusing on the junior criminal she was escorting, who quietly emptied his pockets before fronting the manager. "Right, empty your pockets!" came the command. So I did, to wit one slightly grubby hanky, one rubber band, and the wooden mouse I'd made. "Everything, lad, we know what you've been up to!" very growly now, right until I pulled my pockets out like elephant ears, nothing. Then came a fairly desperate pat down, which would have legal consequences today, before I was verbally thrown out, with promise of dire consequences should I ever offend again. This actually elevated the sport to the next level; the detective and I both gained an advantage, but I was not caught again. I always worked by myself. There remained one hurdle. We had to walk past the Police Station, and suspected the Police of having extraordinary powers for spotting miscreants, so we'd walk almost sideways to not be able to see the station. Any copper worth his weight name would have taken one look and said "that pair of little buggers are up to something!" Nerve racking stuff!

For the War effort, periodically the Rag and Bone Man, with his horse and cart would come round, seeking scrap metal, rags and bones, for which he'd give you a totally worthless trinket. By the nature of things, those trinkets were more precious than gold. We hardly, if ever, earned one, but I thought if I went on ahead of him, with a bit of luck the product of several houses might be enough. Armed with a big shopping bag, I set off. I did very well, still only just in sight of our house, my bag was filling up nicely, with me wondering where I'd get another, when I was finally caught up with by my frantic Mother. The R&B man was very grateful for the help, and offered me the incredible trinket, which I wasn't allowed to accept. Didn't matter, morally I had one.

I started at Burr Street School on turning five, bawling my eyes out first day, but soon settled down to be a good student. I absorbed lessons like a sponge, both in and out of class. Eavesdropping on a couple of older pupils in the toilet, I picked up a couple of impressive new words, so, at dinner that evening, choosing my moment to display my sophistication, I declared "I had a piss and a shit today!" Mother had a lifetime abhorrence of swearing, she didn't use physical discipline, but my worldliness got blown out of the water, well and truly!

We were warned to avoid any contact with the Gypsies who periodically appeared, with their horse drawn wagon. Apparently, they weren't to be trusted. One source of their legitimate income was carving clothes pegs. Against all I'd been told, I stood and watched this. The carver was friendly enough, but I couldn't understand what he was saying to me, so I wandered off, and didn't talk about it. Farmers were advised to keep a close eye on their sheep when Gypsies were around.

Father had two brothers who'd emigrated to New Zealand. They didn't keep in close touch, but such correspondence as they had painted a very appealing picture of living there. Poor war ravaged and battered England didn't stand a chance. We emigrated.

Both uncles were married, but produced no offspring. The rose-tinted vision of five darling, silent, immaculately tidy perfect children didn't pass the reality test. We were just kids, full of beans and with all the normal vices. It became necessary to find some where else to live. Tall, skinny, pale Auntie Marion told Mother "in all the forty years Harold and I have been married, never once has he seen me naked!" That might explain a few things!

We ended up on a magnificent old stone house which had been divided into four flats. The neighbours were fine, the landlord a miserable old sod who dressed the house's beautiful wood verandahs with used engine oil, because it was free. This was a nightmare for Mother. I enrolled at nearby Opawa School and settled in well, usually in the top ten percent of my class. I enjoyed school, but was bullied for my accent and good results. Peter Sowden, a tall skinny kid, much bigger than I, never missed a chance to show off his superior strength; how I'd like to have met up with him in later life! I was still happy at school, the bullying didn't play on my mind at all, but in hindsight may have contributed, late one afternoon, when the school was empty, to me, single handedly wrecking the toilet block. No plan, just did it, and got away with it. Caused problems for the school though. Any psychiatrist reading this is welcome to an opinion! My first lesson politics didn't turn out well. Sowden and his mates baled me up in a corner demanding to know who I'd vote for in the impending election. I didn't have a clue, but figured it out. I knew the contest was National vs Labor. I figured "Labour" meant work, none of this bunch of no-hopers would work in an iron lung, so obviously National was the way to go. VERY WRONG! Painfully so. You live and learn.

I discovered electricity. Within reach, above my top bunk, was an empty light socket, so naturally I had to stick my fingers in there. WHAM! Won't do that again!

I attended Christchurch West High School's professional grade class, and started where I'd left off in primary school, well up in my class. My attention to class gradually declined, model aeroplanes and girls were far more interesting, and particularly with all the maths disciplines which appeared to me to have no relevance to my life, and never was this likely to change. I could sit through a whole one hour maths period, and be unable to tell one thing that had been said. I was good at English and really liked physics and chemistry. Thus I spent the rest of my time at high school in the bottom half in several subjects, and nobody took me aside to explain how the work I was (or wasn't) doing affected my future. I was very immature I think. And then I had my first experience on a motorcycle; more daydreaming material!

Father worked with "that fool Elwood" who sounded like an interesting bloke, as he had several motorcycles. He'd regale his workmates with tales of all the fun he'd had with them in the weekends. As kids we reflected Father's belief that bikes were noisy, dangerous anti-social devices; this was reinforced when one of Elwood's friends died in a motorcycle crash. That was hardly the ideal prelude to my first ride, as a passenger. I'd somehow been left at the swimming baths in town, after life saving training, and home was five miles away. A guy I knew from a private school, who lived nearby, offered me a lift home on the back of his 125 James. A motorbike! What to do? Heart in mouth, I got onto the little spring seat, and off we went. Naturally, Chris my pilot was showing off a bit, scraping the footrests no less! but realising I seemed to be in safe hands, by the time he dropped me off, I was hooked!

After a totally undistinguished four years, I left high school. The only career I had a fancy for was as a forest Ranger, so it did the interview, and passed with flying colours. Then, typical government, they told me "sorry, you're a year too young", but offered me a job in a gang at Ashley Forest, which experience would ensure my acceptance as a trainee. This I accepted, and left home to live in the camp there. As the youngest in the gang, I took a lot of teasing, but mostly gave as good as I got. They were a very varied lot, from a non English speaking Dutch Army deserter, to complete no-hopers, to some nice guys. The resident entomologist was a particularly interesting man, in his late twenties, but queer, so although I was very keen on his insects, I didn't accept his invitation to learn more. If I'd been seen coming or going from his hut, with the mores of the times. I'd have been in trouble. Shame. I did time in the fire lookout, and learned to drive a bulldozer. I was looking forward next year.

The gang sat in a lovely, warm grassy hollow, eating lunch, when Swamphen (because he walked like one) sudden started clutching his throat and yelling what sounded like "maggots, maggots!" and that was it, his sandwiches, and ours were well and truly flyblown. Some threw up, but some of us realised the maggots were in more trouble than we were. We had to be union members, so our delegate, Snowy Orange, immediately contacted union HQ. As the biggest union in the country, they reckoned they had power to sort things out, but months elapsed with nothing resolved until Snow delivered some sort of ultimatum. Finally the union representative slunk into our morning tea break, to announce nothing could be done, as the cooks (if they could be called that) were under contract to the government. Quite how that was justice was never explained, and the matter died a natural death. The cook did have a few pigs, weanlings caught wild in the bush, which were destined, as they matured, to be bacon for the troops. Persons unknown let these pigs out one night, and they scampered off to safer pastures.

At the end of the year, I was told not to come back after the Christmas break, along with three other young blokes. Puzzled as to why, as I knew I was regarded as a good worker, I went to the Chief Ranger's house for an explanation. He with the steely gaze and pencil moustache told me no workers were allowed on the grounds and I was unsatisfactory, now go away. I then asked him if it was anything to do with money disappearing from our huts. The intense eyes lit up to maximum voltage. "How do you know about that?" he stormed. "Because I've lost money too" I replied, and if sacking the four youngest in the gang is your idea of how to operate, you can keep your stupid job." I heard later the cook's nasty little wife was doing the rounds of the huts whilst we were at work.

Almost as if it were a rite of passage, I started smoking. I didn't particularly enjoy it, had no peer pressure, best mate Paul didn't do it though Father did. Mother hated it, especially the plastic ashtrays, which combined with the hot butt to produce a particularly foul smell. Back to city life. I had no particular career ambition, work was easy to obtain, so I did a few menial jobs, including working for Mick Ash. He was the man behind the permanent advert in the classifieds, offering to dispose of unwanted or injured horses or cattle. I suspected Mick was prohibited from any involvement in the racing industry; he was a bit simple, and would have been an easy mark for a con man. That aside, he provided a thoroughly professional service. He had a not unpleasant odour on him, suggesting he didn't shower too often, maybe this was why animals totally trusted him. A feisty horse, in acute pain with broken bones would calm on his approach, and stand peacefully as Mick dispatched him or her with one expertly aimed shot from his .22 rifle. As an animal lover, I appreciated Mick. We'd then skin the animal, butcher the carcass down to manageable size, and load it into a horse float to trendy St Albans, and an up market pet meat supply shop. I sometimes served in the shop.

Model aeroplanes was very much part of life, and I enjoyed both building and flying them, with some success in national events. I was engine starter for Peter Stott's class B team racer with which we enjoyed great results. Peter ran the family farm in Kirwee, some thirty miles out of Christchurch, said he was looking for a rouseabout, was I interested. An emphatic "Yes!" saw me in a totally new job. And LOVING it! I learned so much in such a short time, sheep work, tractor work (we had the biggest tractor in the district, an International WD9, and I drove it!), fencing, grubbing nodding thistles, milking the cow, the list went on, this felt like the beginning of something really worthwhile. Peter told me how happy he was with my efforts.

We had three dogs - Boss, enjoying retirement, Brown (because he was), an enthusiastic teenager, talented but too keen, and black and yellow Mac, a sheepdog in the prime of his life, knowing more about sheep than the rest of us combined. We walked the track to the back of the property, to move a mob into another paddock. I opened the gate, we walked to the end of the track, to get behind the sheep, Mac knew exactly what to do, jumped the fence, and just hung there. He'd snagged a barb with his thigh. Fortunately, he didn't panic, that would have done huge damage, but I knew I was on my own, and had to somehow lift probably twenty-five kilos of unhappy dog, back over to my side to unwind the wire. Miraculously, and with other barbs not helping, plus a pretty efficient mouthful of teeth against my cheek, I managed, the barb virtually fell out and Mac was back over the fence with sheep to attend to. Eventually, I had to shoot Boss. Peter's father, old and retired came rushing past me. I thought the hard as nails old bloke looked like he was crying; he was. "Boss is on the road, his back is broken, get the gun and shoot him." I got the gun, and went and sat with the doomed dog. He obviously couldn't move, and was slobbering heavily. We talked a while, cried a bit, I'm sure he knew exactly what was happening; I stood up, took careful aim, he died instantly. I still loved farm life, but it was all about to come crashing down. The eldest son, about seven, determined to make my life difficult. Stupid spoilt kid stuff, kicks under the table, a nudge when eating soup, that sort of nonsense. I was wary of Rita, a perennially unhappy woman, so I let it be until one evening I was working on a delicate matter in the aero modelling shed when Mr Pest appeared, and threw a hammer at me. It hit my knee painfully, the delicate job wrecked, so took off after him. He was clinging to Mother's skirt, she's telling him what a good boy he was, I said "that little bastard threw a hammer at me!" and showed her the bloody evidence. But "how dare you call my son a bastard! I'll be talking to Peter about this!" She did, Peter reluctantly gave me a truly glowing reference, and I was on my way.

That reference ensured Dalgety's immediately offered me work in the rolling hills of North Canterbury, on a South Suffolk stud. Ian Thompson was a nice guy, very shy, but we got on well. This was a new aspect of farming. Animals were not sold en masse for slaughtering, but often singly, for surprising amounts of money. Some went overseas. These animals had to be shorn to exactly one inch all over; this was regularly checked with a ruler. This enabled a prospective buyer the chance to accurately assess the sheep. The value of the stock meant we'd go round the flock daily, usually on the horse. That was ok for Ian, he and the horse were in love, but when Ian was away, the horse would display what horsey types claimed was horsey humour. He'd dash round the paddock, with me trying to catch him, then come to me, once saddled he'd try and bite me getting on, once on he'd try to rub me off on the gatepost. Etcetera. So one day, I did the rounds on my motorbike. The sheep couldn't have cared less. Ian was sceptical, but watched from horseback as I did the rounds, and agreed it seemed a good way to do it. Take that, Mr Horse!

Overnight, the price of sheep meat plummeted. It was always going to eventually recover, but even with some cropping income, Ian was struggling. He gave me a glowing reference, reluctantly sending me down the road. Back to Dalgety's, who immediately placed me at Mayfield, in the shadow of the foothills, inland. This was a mixed farm, sheep and cropping. Tom Histen as the eldest son, inherited the farm. A nice enough guy, but not the hardest worker I'd ever met. A few reckoned this to be often a pattern when a property is inherited. Anyhow, I knew what to do, and just got on with it. Some boundary fence needed replacing, quite hard work. His elderly, retired, but still quite fit, father and I did the fencing. Like most Kiwi sheep men, Tom carried an aluminium crook, to easily catch the back leg of an animal needing attention. We had a couple of dogs, one mature and handy, one teenager called Brownie (because he was), who was still learning. Tom had neglected to move some ewes with lambs, always a difficult task, but they were low on food, so they had to be moved.

Tom was grumpy, knowing he should have been on the ball. Slowly, we managed to get them moving, when Brownie decided to show us how sheep should be moved, yapping and racing around, totally undoing our good work. Tom was furious, and called the dog, who hadn't realised he was in trouble and approached us. Tom called him unprintable names and took a huge vicious swing with his trusty crook. He missed the dog, who took off home, but had more of the crook above his hand than he thought, and this landed forcefully in his crotch, whereby he actually lifted himself off the ground before he fell, gasping and swearing. Fortunately there was a pile of tree rubbish nearby; I was able to hide behind this as I tried to stifle my laughter.

He gave up smoking, I teased him to the point he said "I've got a bottle of decent scotch that says I can last longer without a smoke than you!" Bet accepted. About a week later I arrived back at the house, desperate for a wee, barged into the outside dunny, and there was Tom, wreathed in smoke, naturally sounding off how "a man can't even have a quiet crap without somebody interrupting," ignoring my accusations that his arse was on fire. Remarkably, he paid up - he wasn't noted for this, just ask the shearers he'd had a bet with regarding how many they could do one day. His tardiness saw him blacklisted for a time. Anyhow it was nice enough scotch, and neither of us looked too good in the morning.

Most weekends, I rode my 1954 Royal Enfield J2 500 to Christchurch, about 70 miles. I had a leather jacket, and a pair of World War Two sheepskin fighter pilots trousers, given to me by the family of the pilot, flying boots, gloves, and a Cromwell helmet. In winter, it was a freezing trip, with ice forming on the jacket collar. One afternoon, knowing really bad weather was forecast I resolved to make the trip in daylight, but still suffered a hailstorm. Arriving in Ashburton, I stopped for a cup of tea, and was disconcerted by the looks passers-by were giving me, even the kids, who usually looked pretty interested. Passing a shop window, with a mirror effect, there was this guy in bike clothes, with his face covered in blood. I looked awful. The hail had produced dozens of pinpricks, I was too cold to feel them and looked like I'd been skinned. Back at the farm, I had trouble straightening my legs, so I luxuriated in the shower for a time. Eventually I turned the water off, to my surprise the hot wasn't turned on. So cold was I, cold water felt good. Dried off and into bed, I put all the clothes I had on top, went through a violent shivering session, my eyes cried of their accord, I went to sleep, and woke next morning brand new.

I learned about Dog Dosing, an annual Agriculture Dept event and designed to find dogs with Hydatids, a spreadable disease, via dog droppings. All dogs would assemble at some vacant land, each tied to a stake, and their poo picked up in sealed containers for testing. It was pretty much time off, you couldn't do anything but stand around chatting. The occasional scrap enlivened the day, as did watching some dogs seemingly aware of what was required, sitting there smirking. No one was going to tell them when to perform this most private of squats! Or so they thought. The operator had what looked like one of those old Redex guns, full of warm soapy water, one shot up the bum soon had Shep frantically searching for a suitable spot.

I enjoyed shearing, learning the skills of a rouseabout, especially picking up a fleece quickly and throwing it on the table flat all over, to pick off any rubbish. Shearers were paid on the number they shored, so the pace was always on, fuelled as well by the men's competitiveness. Rouseabouts were there to be teased, and I copped my share when they noticed I had a zip fly in my jeans, real new age stuff! They wrote a song, of only one line: "the rousie's got a zipper cos his girlfriend says it's quicker." They never tired of singing it.

We had a pair of McCormick-Deering Super BM tractors, good workhorse cropping machines. Travelling between farms on the gravel road, probably daydreaming, I arrived at a 90 degree bend way too fast, with brakes not an option, I had no choice but to turn the wheel and hope to avoid a disaster. To my surprise, that tall machine with its minimal front wheels went in to a very elegant and controllable broadside. What a relief! I'd had visions of being crushed by my machine. Naturally, I explored its capabilities further, when Tom wasn't around.

I was still loving the life, but working very long hours. Tom was forever "doing paperwork." This meant a lot of minor jobs fell to me when I needed to be putting in at least ten hours a day, preparing for seeding. I even did some night cultivating, for that I got a bottle of scotch, recognition, at least. I'd broached the subject of money with Tom, but come up against a brick wall. The law required I have a medical examination, prior to the annual ballot for National Service, so I went into town, peed in the cup (and the next guys cup, who couldn't) and had my knackers felt as I coughed. A quick beer seemed appropriate, and I found myself talking to Tom's bank manager I'd previously met. He volunteered that Tom was very pleased with me, I responded saying his happiness wasn't reflected in my wages. "The farm is going along very nicely. Ask him for a rise, he can afford it. Don't mention my name though." I did exactly that, with the usual "not a good time, maybe soon" vagaries my answer. Without thinking, I said I couldn't get by on what I was getting, so I'd have to leave. That sure struck a nerve! "Ah well, maybe we could manage a bit more. I'll talk it over with Maureen." I said "don't bother, if I wasn't worth more a couple of minutes ago, I'm surely not now. I'll finish up". And I did. Such a shame, I really loved the life. The inadequacy of a farmhands pay, and sure, they kept you, was illustrated by my taking a job at Crown Crystal Glass, in the factory. I received twice the money, for half the hours, and overtime paid if we needed to work late. It was quite interesting to see how a factory worked. All types of glassware was produced, including a team of glass blowers, the elite of the factory. Moulds for this are aluminium and need coating on the inside with a special paint, and sawdust, baked on in a big gas oven, to stop the glass sticking. The texture is similar to coarse emery. Timing is critical. That was my job, and I was told by all and sundry, for sure, I'd melt a mould. Everybody in that job did. All went well, I really concentrated, but one day, a leading hand asked me to help him, I said I had a mould due out, but he insisted, with the inevitable result. The German boss of the blowers screamed abuse at me, he was allowed to do this, I called him a square head, he jabbed his finger at his head yelling "look at my head, is it any different from yours?" and I got the sack. This was no problem, I was promptly employed by the tool store, learning all about left handed screwdrivers and apprentices who came asking for a long weight. I had several further jobs, and for a time, held the record for correctly dropping a glass the most times before it broke.

The assembly line for Land Rover, at Motor Assemblies sounded interesting, and for a time, it was. Once the chassis had been welded together, it was passed out to Austin Prattley, a friend from high school and me. We fitted axles, brakes, steering and other bits, then moved on up the line. The factory toilet was built over an always running underground stream, ending up who knows where? There were five cubicles, with doors, but only the downstream cubicle had a door without a hole, making it the choice for punters wishing to study form. Ronnie Renell was one such regular patron. He was a middle aged product of a Glasgow slum, and proud of his fearsome fighting reputation, ignited by a hair trigger temper. To this day, I do not know why I took such an unnecessary risk. I'd noticed Renell, with newspaper sloping off to the toilet. I balled up several newspaper pages, went quietly to the toilet upstream cubicle, lit the paper and dropped it in the stream. And bolted, busying myself with a steering box or something, all innocence. The roar from the toilet would have been heard ten suburbs away. Renell came roaring out threatening grievous bodily harm when he caught the culprit; fortunately he never found out. Claim to fame here - in his book, Billy Connolly did the same thing, never worked out who was first.

I transferred to the Triumph Herald - Vanguard Six line in the city, mostly in the trim shop, quite interesting. More toilet humour. Sitting on the throne, reading the extensive graffiti, my eyes were drawn to a downward pointing arrow which seemed to go right down; it did, just as you were about to fall off the pan, you were finally told "You are now shitting at the dangerous angle of 45 degrees". Knocking off at 4.30 meant a lot of staff stopped at the local pub before heading home. It became a habit I didn't want, so I decided to seek a different job post the Christmas break. That did mean I lost contact with three Hungarians I worked with. Their outlook on life was interesting, much the same as ours, but different. Pista, (not sure of the spelling) and the others had made a daring escape from their revolution-riddled country, by swimming a guarded and icy river; Pista had a line of bullet scars down one side. Lucky for him the border guard's sights must have been just off. Then they boarded a grossly overloaded Douglas DC3. Little wonder their take on life was different. Good guys, but hard. Building seats was not mentally taxing; building seats and learning Hungarian was better. Swear words first, of course!

Someone remarked the Atlantic service station not far from home was looking for staff, so I duly called in, to be told the boss was "round the back" and sure enough there was George Lees, ex B.O.A.C. trans Atlantic, with a mop, cleaning up the worst toilet explosion I'd ever seen. "cant use the toilet, what do you want?" he said. "I'm here about the job" I told him. "Clean this %#&\$@*/ mess up, the job's yours" said my new boss. Little did I know, this was one of life's milestones.

I became the driveway attendant, serving petrol. Self service was unheard of. Petrol often was sold as ten shilling's (one dollar) worth, which gave you three and a half a tenth gallons. Lubes were fifteen shillings plus oil etc. I really enjoyed the work. Atlantic Union Oil said the station was viable, but would be more so if we could increase our lube numbers, offering 200 as a very unlikely target.

George, Eric (the Lube man) and I sat down to look at ways we might achieve an improvement. I was to become professional, in clean white overalls. I was to offer to check the car's oil and water, which most, particularly women accepted. Under the bonnet, I'd whip out my clean white rag and wipe the dipstick. I'd comment the oil looked a bit dirty, which it usually was, so I'd offer to check the lube sticker. A surprising number were well overdue, all I had to do then was either to escort them to the lube bay, or book an appointment. Atlantic Union were astounded to note we'd done two hundred and two! And as a good team, we never looked back. I really liked the job, but had a yearning to be more hands-on with cars. Atlantic offered to shift me to Metropolitan Service Station, right in the centre of town as lube operator. It was a sad day I left George and Eric. George told me later they never hit the highs we'd produced again. That was a good feeling.

I didn't particularly like Tony Ellis, the manager, and the lube hoist was an afterthought, out in the open, awkward on a wet day. The station was unique in that it had one row of pumps diagonally across the corner, one pump from each oil company operating in New Zealand. Caltex's advertising "Caltex with Boron" sold more than all the others put together. Clever. I took a second job as a waiter at Warners Hotel, in Cathedral Square as I wanted to paint my Standard 14. The tips outdid the wages. We worked until the last drinkers left, which was often quite late with house guests, learning to live on minimal sleep. I found this no problem, and quite enjoyed the work.

All the oil company reps called in occasionally, including Mike Whatman, from Europa Oil, and he advised me they were looking for a relieving manager for their many service stations. He thought the job would suit me, I agreed, did an interview and the job was mine. Good move! I filled in for whoever was absent, not often a manager, but moved all over the place, including some rural stations, met a lot of people, a couple of which became life long friends. Clive McCall ran a big main road station very well. He was regarded as a tough boss, but all you had to do was do exactly what he told you. We'd had a run of bouncy cheques, so he decided NO MORE CHEQUES, end of story. Mr motorcycle hating magistrate came in, we filled the Rover, and out came the cheque book. "Sorry sir, we don't accept cheques" I told him politely. "Oh I'll be alright, I'm whatever his name was, the magistrate" didn't get him anywhere, but with the backup of the rest of the staff, we suggested he leave his watch as security, and go find some cash. This was a fairly common way of handling this sort of problem, he angrily handed over a very expensive timepiece, returning quite quickly with money. I told McCall about it later; he agreed we'd done right.

I got to know a lot of company reps, including Jack Norman, of Firestone. That company was the biggest, but Dunlop were having success with their C49, which featured rounded shoulders. Jack copped a fair bit of good natured flack over this, but whilst I was managing Cashel Service Station in the city, he got serious. Firestone was having trouble finding reps, so were about to start training their own, from scratch. He thought I might be suitable, was I interested? "To have a job like yours! driving round all day in a new car, dressed up like a pox doctor's clerk! Of course I'd be interested!" Firestone we're also interested, after the expected interview, I became an inaugural Sales Trainee.

The company had put a lot of thought into the programme. I was to work in the new tyre factory, hands on, doing every operation from unloading raw materials at the southern end of the factory, to loading tyres onto the train at the northern end. I found the whole process fascinating, and the hands on factor suited me fine. Even spending only a day or two at most stages meant I was in the factory for several months. Following that, I worked through the office, which entailed ledger work, monthly balances, picking up the boss's dry cleaning and doing factory tours, showing off my newly acquired knowledge. That was fun, we seemed to get more nurses and other female groups. I'd become friends with one of the tyre builders, the elite of the factory, named Zefferino, a young dashing looking Italian. I'd warn him when I was to do a tour, he'd be off to the rest room to do his hair. As one of the gun builders, he'd put on a truly memorable display, throwing in the occasional extra flourish. Whilst in the technical department, we had to examine tyres sent in for claims. Few were faulty but had been run flat, overloaded etc, but we did see a worrying number Triumph Herald tyres with flex breaks in the sidewall. I knew Heralds had swing axles on their independent rear end, very unusual then. With that set up, the track of the rear wheels was constantly changing, and that was the problem. I was very pleased to have been instrumental in solving the anomaly.

The factory became the subject of a time and motion study, which I found very interesting. The union didn't like this at all, "they're just trying to get you to do more work for less money brothers" etc but even the diehards had to admit, quite a few long established practices were made easier after analysis. I then worked through a retread factory which only took a few days. I was then declared ready to represent the biggest tyre company in the country.

I was sent to Dunedin to take over from Mike Redford, a young modern, just married, honeymooned in my almost new PBV Vauxhall which he'd thrashed using second gear to 85mph. I wondered what long term implications that might show up. He was a show pony with little product knowledge. He showed me around the traps, then left. I couldn't wait to get out there on my own.

I truly loved the job, from day one. The further south you go, the nicer are the people. I believed improvement in the territory only came from new business, so I called everywhere, and even in opposition accounts, I always offered to check their inner tube stock, which was frequently in a mess. More times than not, I found deficiencies and usually was told to send them. This opened several new accounts, which made us number two, there if a client didn't want the opposition product. Seemingly small gains, but they add up, and my tube sales were up 73% in my first year. That got noticed! Firestone were unique as far as I know, in that reps were also responsible for account payments. A lot resented this, I wondered about it but concluded this was better than one of my accounts receiving the usual snotty impersonal letter Accounts sent out. I found the best approach seemed to actually consolidate our relationship and did well with this, one year winning a decent cheque as number 1 in the country. I've always liked telling jokes, and always thought a laughing prospect was more likely to become an account. My technical knowledge wasn't called on often, but when it was needed, it was a blessing. Clutha Council became a 100% account just because I was able to solve a long-frustrating grader tyre issue. I developed several close friendships there. Life was good!

After about three years I was transferred to Christchurch, covering half the city, North Canterbury up to Kaikuora and the West Coast from the Southern glaciers to Reefton. Sorry to leave Dunedin, I nonetheless was very happy with my new territory and carried on as before, with good results. Each month, I'd spend a full week on the coast, loving it. I'd leave home Sunday evening for Hokitika via Arthur's Pass, quite an interesting trip, especially in winter, with snow a frequent feature. I had a few close calls with icy roads. I'd be talking to clients by 9am Monday, whilst all the others were looking forward to a nice lunch at their hotel, then a couple of calls just to fill in the afternoon. I wasn't lazy; quite a few were, then one day you'd notice they weren't around any more. You needed to be a self starter. Firestone were good to work for, they treated staff with respect, whilst paying as good as the best.

Eventually I was called in, to be told about the future of the tyre business. Most companies had covert involvement in retail / service outlets. Of course, the retail motor trade hated this, claiming rightly enough it took away some of their livelihood. But tyres were evolving, beyond the equipment and knowledge of corner service stations, as witness the hurried introduction of radial tyres, to accomodate the sensational newly released Austin 1800. Dunlop were first with these, much to their distress. I was quietly shown a full size railway goods van full of failures. We were slower but had few problems. Dunlop were the opposition I liked least, they did several unethical moves to secure business.

I was offered a place in our forthcoming transformation; I loved the job I was doing, but this was the future, and I understood this. Typically Firestone, they prepared me for the change by placing me as understudy to Barry Thompson, the highly respected manager of Taylor Tyre Service, our Christchurch covert retail outlet. This I enjoyed, and felt confident I was ready for whatever came my way.

I had a funny episode then. Their success rate training reps, as I'd done was nowhere near as good as expected, so would the three most successful please present at an employment agency to be analysed. The three of us turned up and did various manual and written tasks, then to finish off, we were to write down as many words beginning with m as we could, in five minutes. I raced into this - masturbation, menstruation, micturation, words just came. All too soon, a voice said "times up guys", but that wasn't the voice of the man who'd started us off. It belonged to a very attractive thirtyish blonde lady, who swept our papers up and disappeared. Trying to be subtle, I asked my fellow writers had they included any um, you know, words of doubtful pedigree in mixed company. They hadn't. Soon our now broadly smiling blonde reappeared to announce "Congratulations, Adrian, you've just smashed a long standing record for the most words. A few interesting ones in there, too. Well done!" The last with a bit of a look at me. The upshot of it all was I should be a salesman or a mechanic, then they took us to a very nice restaurant, where blonde did fire a few teases at me.

I thoroughly enjoyed my new station. Thompson was very knowledgeable, and a good teacher. I'd always got on with people, and thought I'd have no problem managing staff. Barry noted that the staff of Taylor's were treating me with respect, which he saw as very promising. He didn't condone fraternising with staff after hours, nothing snobby about this, just appropriate management. I learned a lot in a short time. I married one of our girls in the office, and despite everyone being happy for us, our rather humourless accountant, Roger Allred, promptly sacked Loretta. That was fairly normal practice then. Like many young girls, Loretta learned dance, in which she was "a natural". She enjoyed the work and the money earned on Friday and Saturday nights performing at the HeiHei Country Club, a cabaret. I was welcomed as an experienced barman. It was a pretty fun job. I got involved when a non dancing male was needed. In Bonnie & Clyde I had to be shot dead, then my lifeless corpse accident out by a couple of waiters.

The company had a tyre service shop in New Plymouth, which hadn't turned a profit for a very long time, and to there I was appointed. We sold up and moved, buying a house at 8 Skinner Street. I noted the street numbers went 2, 6, 8, and soon realised why. Worked it out yet?

I inherited a very competent lady in the office, and a fairly mixed bag in the workshop, but managed to weed out a couple of non performing types, soon we were motoring on nicely. The biggest impediment to profit was Dunlop offering free puncture repairs to retain the biggest truck business in the town. With providing roadside assist for this, we could have a serviceman and truck tied up for most of the day in non profit work. At an industry meeting, I moved we discontinue this ludicrous practice; all present agreed, though Dunlop weren't noted for sticking with it. Anyhow, with clean premises, a nice new waiting room, clean overalls on the guys and a real effort to provide excellent service, and selling the best liked product, we began making money. Very satisfying. I bought a new Suzuki TS125, and joined the local club. That was the best bike ever. I had a go at scrambles, trials, quarter mile grass, trail riding, road trials, and rode to Christchurch and back. I rode it in the Cold Kiwi Rally, a wonderful ride to the centre of the North Island, where we had several inches of snow overnight. I brushed the snow off, it started first kick, to the envy of the guy next to me, trying to get some noise out of a Vincent. It never missed a beat. I was not brave enough to do well in competition, plus I always disliked thrashing a machine, but I had a lot of fun. I wish I still had that bike! 🚲

Life was good, the shop was running along nicely, and New Plymouth was a nice place to be. Loretta had a good job, but our marriage was shaky. The highs were super high, the lows equivalently low; the latter saw us part company. I'd always had a yearning to travel, this seemed an appropriate time. Reluctantly, I said goodbye to Firestone, we sold the house, and I bought a ticket to Sydney. My plan was to buy a bike and head for Perth to meet up with a friend. After a seemingly endless, search for a suitable bike, I bought a 1968 B.S.A. Spitfire mk 4, strapped my sleeping bag and belongings on, and set sail. During that trip, I arrived at what looked like a town on the map, but was just a roadhouse. Not wishing to travel at night, I gratefully accepted the proprietor's offer to sleep on the workshop floor. I awoke from a beautiful sleep to cries of "oh ya bloody bastard, that bloody hurt!" and much more, in very basic English. I rushed out of my sleeping bag, assuming someone was knocking my host round, but he'd gone quiet and I couldn't find him. I called out, and received a reply from the toilet. "Sorry mate, forgot you were there, I've got a chronic case of the old "farmer Giles", the morning constitutional bloody hurts. My missus won't let me use the toilet in the house, can't stand the swearing!" The whole trip was a wonderful adventure.

Once in Perth, I needed a job, so I walked into a tyre shop in Osborne Park and was hired as a fitter. It turned out to be the worst run tyre shop imaginable. All worn out tyres were thrown in a huge heap in the back yard. Whenever the retread truck came in, there was a rush for the toilets, to avoid being the one who had to find a specific number of casings, which also had to be inspected for soundness. Tyres were full of water, and the rat population resented our intrusion. The wheel alignment guy was so out of his tree from the previous night's excesses he wasn't coherent till lunchtime. The manager didn't like me; the feeling was mutual. One Saturday morning, I rode in, five minutes late, followed by Mr Manager. "You're late" he said. "So are you", I observed. "You're fired." he said. "Good," I replied, "pay me up and I'm gone." He then told me I'd have to wait until knock off to be paid.

I quite liked Perth, it felt like a big country town. I'd re-united with a lady I'd met in New Zealand and we were having a marvellous time, so I figured I'd better get a proper job. One of the hierarchy from the tyre shop did contact me, with an offer of a managerial job at another shop, but Osborne Park had finished me with that company. There was always the homily that "if you think you're a proper salesman, you need to be able to sell cars or vacuum cleaners." I chose cars, and was fortunate to be hired by City Motors, very respected Holden dealers, learning the trade in their Inglewood yard. I liked the job, and quickly learned the nuances of that particular selling trade. Our manager received promotion to our top performing yard, Victoria Park, I inherited his job. I had three good salesmen, and our results were outstanding. I did receive a life lesson there, which is with me today. Salesman "Tricky Dicky" Gordon was good but lazy. Every so often, I'd pull him into my office, and give him a stir. One morning, I noticed he was deep in conversation with a customer, that was good, but some time later, the customer was standing alone. Assuming "Tricky" must have had an urgent toilet call, I spoke to our prospect who informed me he'd gone over the road for cigarettes! Talk about an addict, I knew he was a chain smoker, BUT! Once he'd finished with the client, I pulled him into my office to get a few things straight. I wasn't abusive, didn't swear, but gave him a real dressing down. To my surprise, he began to cry. He was well older than I, but I told him the stir up was necessary. He agreed, he knew that, and was grateful on pay day. But there was only one thing he didn't like, working for me. "When I do something like today, you give me a bollocking. But, when I do well, you never mention it." That fits so much of life, especially when children come into that life. Thanks "Tricky!"

I gave up smoking. Friend Phil and I attended the best ever stag party on a Sunday, which lasted well into the night. Monday at work, he was too hungover to smoke, and let us all know how healthy he'd become since "giving up". I informed him he was a weak dickhead, and it wouldn't last, whereupon he challenged me to last longer without a smoke than he would. Challenge accepted, I gave up on Tuesday, found it easy, and haven't smoked since. He resumed puffing away on the Wednesday. I'd often thought smoking seemed a silly, possibly dangerous habit, but I lacked the trigger to do anything about it. Thanks Phil. I believe I was not chemically addicted.

I moved into our Victoria park yard, the best, surrounded by endless opposition yards. One non-performing salesman complained bitterly we were exactly halfway up the strip, having counted the yards either side. I suggested we only had to be on top of our game, with the backing of City Motors and their solid reputation, to prosper. This we did, it was good, hard work, and we all made good money. More, in fact than I'd ever done. We bought a bigger boat. Money never was a big motivator for me, though I liked buying that boat!

Ultimately I became Used Car Manager, responsible for our four yards, with up to twenty salesmen. The promotion was gratifying, but the reality hard. Our head office yard, in Newcastle Street, which usually vied for top place with Victoria Park was seeing no traffic, due to a freeway re-alignment, and for no obvious reason, except Perth Yard, morale was low. Management offered me an assistant manager, good thought, but the candidate they selected was one John Rye, who I didn't want. He was ex English S.A.S., blue-eyed, blonde curly hair, ready smile but hard as nails with a funny way to enthuse staff. "I'll make you bastards hate me, you'll sell a lot of cars just to prove me wrong!" he famously told a sales meeting. I resigned, fortunately before they bought in several "experts" from the east, whose efforts nearly sent them broke.

I'd thought about selling new cars, offered my services to sister company North City Holden, and got the job. New car selling is different. There were twelve Holden dealers, all with the same product owing the same amount of money, so unless you were a good closer of a deal, it just became a sort of Dutch auction as your deal was shopped around. If you've a will to, you can always better another's deal; even a set of cheap rubber mats worth only a few bucks in accessory shops, can and did close a deal. One Italian gentleman, who lived a five minute walk away from the dealership took away the very good deal (and it really was that, I'd known where to find the best money for his trade) returned a couple of weeks later with a list of deals from every Holden dealership. I was beaten by Lance Gibbons Holden, nearly an hours drive away, by two rubber mats. He was sure I'd match that, I thought "sod you!" and told him to drive all the way back to Gibbons. I've never been the hard closer type salesman, I did all right, but didn't much like that aspect of the job.

A friend, who became a car salesman at my suggestion, and with my tutoring, and I opened White and Jewell Motors, in Oxford Street, Leederville. The business made an encouraging start, thanks partly to past customers and past trade workmates. Our rate of repeat or referred business was 83%, very high for a trade often regarded as highly untrustworthy. Part of this came from the fact we'd have an independent mechanic do a full service check on the car, and we'd then get him to fix them. In cases where he said, for example, "the muffler is on the way out," we'd replace it, rather than have the inconvenience of the statutory three months warranty. This limited our profitability. The big yard next door would often have a similar vehicle, which they would basically only detail, then on to the lot. Our car owed us more money, but looked the same. Trying to get clients to understand the difference was frustrating. Next door naturally claimed their offering to be workshop checked, when only any glaring faults were rectified. We had very few arguments about this, whereas from next door, it wasn't unusual to hear shouted arguments on the subject.

We were profitable, making a decent wage most weeks, but not the money a harder-nosed approach might have produced. Like most, our partnership developed a few cracks, so Jewell left the business, the manner of his leaving destroying any residual friendship between us. I was glad to see him go, though it was hard on my own to get out searching for stock, the core of the business. Murray Hutchinson came in, we worked independently but shared everything. After twenty plus years, I decided to sell the business, but the broker I consulted was very negative. His take was that we had quite a good business, dependant on our reputation, but new owners would not derive any benefit from this. He said it would not offer enough growth potential to attract a buyer. I found him a bit slippery, for want of a better word, in his very expensive suit and jewellery; probably I should have gone elsewhere, but I closed the business.

Meanwhile, long term girlfriend, teacher Valerie, and I married, enjoying life to the full. We had a boat, and spent many a happy weekend at Rottneest. We produced two beautiful children, Emma and Linda. Valerie was keen to have kids, I wasn't against it, but it happened anyhow. Lots of people had told me they understood my attitude, but that would change with having children of my own. How right they were! I soon realised when folk said they would die for their kids, they were right. I thought about that last, and just hope my courage didn't desert me if it ever came to pass. They, in turn have each produced four grandkids, living in Moora and near Carnarvon, so I don't see them as often as I'd like.

In the business, I'd used calendars as a Christmas giveaway, not usual in the trade. It was a long skinny calendar, same shape, different pretty theme each year. I figured once they hung it, our name was on display for a year. It's hard to quantify how much we got out of them, but did get anecdotal evidence supporting them. One year, the landlord was acting the fool about rent, I thought maybe I wouldn't stay there, so no calendar. I was gratified by the number of calls I took, "where's my calendar? Our friends bought a car off you after seeing it."



Above: Adrian at Ora Banda in the Goldfields. Below: Adrian was received an Outstanding Service Award at the December 2024 Monthly Meeting.

Vintage Motor Cycle Club of Western Australia (Inc)

Outstanding Service Award

Awarded to
Adrian White
 2024

In appreciation for your sustained contribution to the Club, over many years, in respect of your work in the restoration and recovery of bicycles for donation to the Salvation Army as well as the collection of food and toys for the Salvation Army's Xmas Appeal each year.

Your work in this regard and in the welfare role has been much appreciated.




The calendar agent decided to retire, so I took over his territory for Allen Calendars. I had personal experience with the product, and believed in it. It was a quality product and the company delivered when they said they would. One minor shock - for the first time since my twenties I had to buy myself a car! My territory extended as far as Carnarvon, I spent a week up there and did super well, also did well in the wheat belt, really enjoying the job. I was fifth in the country for new business that year, which surprised a few, but that only produced a living wage, less than my predecessor had shown me, and then I realised that several big accounts had been removed from those that I inherited from Don. I was told this was to prevent a newcomer from losing, through incompetence, such valued accounts. To no avail, I pointed out my obvious ability, so, unwilling to go through a couple of years lower than expected earnings, I quit.

I spent a few months as a wholesale buyer for Central Auctions, did ok but couldn't compete with those prepared to offer hidden commissions to dealer wholesale managers. I then did well at Paceway Mitsubishi as a fleet rep, but didn't like our dealer principal installing a new position of fleet manager, above the two competent reps, so I quit with some regrets, as I'd done well and enjoyed the job. I was head hunted by another Mitsubishi dealer, but they, unsurprisingly, were going bad, so I knew when my manager wanted to take me to lunch, it was a "last on, first off" situation. Then came a spell as a delivery driver for Quick Swift Transport, which I quite enjoyed. A lot of our product was stationery, which usually has to be received by charming secretaries in St George's Terrace!

A friend worked for a funeral director, mainly ferrying bodies around the country. Sounded like a job for me, so I mentioned to a friend's daughter, who worked at Bowra & O'Dea, my interest. Thus began thirteen good years in an industry I'd never thought of joining. Once more, I was lucky, working for the best. I was Road Crew, driving hearses and limousines, plus the transfer ambulances. I was happy, the job surprisingly similar to the car trade, all about people. Job satisfaction was gratifying; you'd know if you'd done a good job in families' darkest hour, and so nice to receive a handshake, and, surprisingly, quite often, a quick cuddle. There were sad times too, inevitably.

All my life, as a car salesman, I'd endured, socially, endless tales how poor old Uncle Fred had been FORCED by pressure to buy a car which didn't meet his incredible standards. Never mind that Freddy boy often lent the car to his teenage idiot grandson, and had towed a caravan, far too big, all the way to Broome. That never got a mention. Funeral work was similar, in that socially, once the party knew of your occupation, they had questions, usually starting with "do they burn the handles?" followed by "How do you know you've got the right ashes?" Yes, they are plastic, and are burnt. The system at the crematorium ensures the ashes are true to label.

I'd run with Hash House Harriers for twenty-seven years by now, still loving it, but Murphy intervened with his pesky law. Runs started 6pm Monday. For sure, every such day had me working out of the most remote branch from the run start. I did some very fast and stupid driving trying to get there; sanity prevailed, I stopped running. I still remain in touch with Hash, a wonderful organisation. Anyone wanting to run each week, with runs set so as to cater for runners of any ability would enjoy Hash. The exercise is so beneficial, the company great. Sheryl and I became a couple during this time, and married in 2010.

At the behest of long time car trade friend Colin Tie, who had particularly enjoyed the Northam Hill Climb, I joined our Club in 2000. I was immediately impressed by the many foundation members I met; they had all pulled together to form a great Club, and there was a very noticeable willingness to volunteer when a task was noted. No wonder the Club was a great success. Members participated, the annual Busselton Two Day attracted over forty entrants. We all did our best with navigating and maintaining prescribed average speeds. Socialising on the Saturday evening was icing on the cake.

I felt I might have a bit to contribute, so nominated for, and won a committee seat. They were quite a mixed bunch. Bill Cowlin, who was deaf and sat next to me and positively roared his suggestions in my ear, Ern Serles, very clever but guarded the Club's funds like a lioness with cubs, Keith Perry, never got over being a teacher, strong contributor but delivered lectures, Barry Makin and Don Fawell who insisted "we've always done it that way, can't change now" no matter what was up for discussion. Good blokes, all of them, and the Club hummed along.

Sheryl and I instigated "noggin and natter nights," offering members and family and friends a chance to socialise. Pretty simple format - Clubrooms at six on Friday, once a month. Bring your own drinks, we'll do supper, party pies etc. I put together a quiz to warm up on, then we had a guest speaker, Dennis Nash, Chum Taylor, speedway champions, Clem Dwyer who raced cars and bikes successfully, Jeff Leisk, world rated scrambles rider, in all a total of about sixteen interesting people. These were popular, but eventually attendances dropped off, so we gave it away. Probably should have promoted it more, I still like the concept.

I believed clubs should have a bit of a social presence; nice to give someone a bit of a lift, and it's handy to have that in your background if you are negotiating with local body councils. The latter are notoriously hard to deal with as soon as the magic words "motor cycle" are mentioned. I started having a Christmas Cheer Bin for the Salvos which the members supported very well. I also started a programme to rescue kids bikes from the roadside pick up, service them, and pass them to the Salvos. Our best effort saw over forty bikes, all ready to ride, delivered in time for Christmas. Interest has waned rather on this. I believe it to be a sign of the times. Volunteers are an increasingly rare breed, clubs of all types seem to be victim to this. This is written in 2024.

I always wanted to run a Poker Run, so put my hand up. I set an interesting run, which being on the flat of the Swan Valley, was suitable for bikes of all ages. I devised a scoring system, organised good hamburgers, organised the appropriate number of marshals, was good to go, then - Sheryl had to go east for work, partners were included so I handed it all over to a fellow clubman. The run was not really a success. I did a pig on the spit at the Clubrooms for a special event, pork, vegetables, apple sauce, gravy, with fruit salad and ice cream to follow. Rated excellent by everyone. I thought it would have been nice for the Club to pick up the bill, but Committee reckoned that would be contrary to the constitution, so everyone paid. Nat Brazzolotto and I did another, equally good, free to members, and very few turned up. Go figure!

We always much enjoyed the Club's #1 event, the Busselton Two Day, even had a bit of success one year. But over time, participation has waned, to the extent it's no longer viable, so it's extinct. How this can happen I really don't know, but I think our current crop of members would rather go for a short ride, to a coffee shop. Bunbury's Indian Harley Club Two Day has to cut off the number of riders, somewhere around a hundred. Once more, go figure. The latter is a superbly organised event, but no better than ours has been.

I was given the honour of becoming President of our Club, which I naturally enjoyed, until - typical club, of any colour, the report of a member's misdemeanour was reported in the Chatter in strong terms, causing one member not even involved, to appoint himself shop steward. The facts were as stated, the language a bit strong, but we're all adults. No obscene words appeared. The "shop steward" was invited to attend a committee meeting to sort it out. At that meeting, it appeared the crisis was over, but he went back to stirring, the Club became quite divided, very unpleasant. I was well involved, hating it, but figured I might resign, as a circuit breaker. This I did, and the result was pleasing, though I still resent that troublemaker.

I enjoy writing, so when Colin Tie suggested members might like to know a bit more about each other, especially about the likes of John Rock, International Six Days Trial bronze medal winner, I began writing profiles. This was time consuming but satisfying, and there are some historical notes in there which have been handy for Murray Barnard, who has put in endless hours writing the Club's history. Michal Rock commented "you know more about my Dad than I do!" I also started a column in the Chatter, "Numb Bums and Oil Leaks," and as Murray will attest, your efforts are only mentioned when you get something wrong, but I've still had a few compliments.

I believe we must remember our beginnings, and those that shaped them. Peter Groucott is one such, so I did some research, found a perfect photograph and wrote of his generosity to the Club in his will. Peter's generosity was the foundation of our present financial strength. That's now framed, hanging in the library. I intend to do the same for Ken Marshall, our second major benefactor.

The highlights of my time in the Club are many, some intangible, but the two trips to the U.K., with our bikes, stand out. Riding round the five countries on the first, then Lands end to John O'Groats just awesome, never to be forgotten. Sad to report, a rift in the Club saw many of those organising this formed their own Club. Early in 2015, then-President Barry O'Byrne announced the creation of Welfare Officer as an official position. I thought this a good move - with five hundred plus members, all with the median age well north of sixty, there's always something happening. In the next breath, he announced the position was mine. I was pleased, I'd have put my hand up anyhow, the task appealed to me. I'd never seen an original "gasket," and still haven't, the newly elected secretary, who resigned that position almost as soon as he was elected promised to hand over such material as he had, pertaining to welfare, but it didn't happen.

I soon needed a couple of cards. I obtained some firm yellow A4 paper, folded it in half, put the Club logo on the front, surrounded by black outlines of various Royal Enfield gaskets, all entwined. Office Works printed and folded them for about \$1.50 each; I was in business! I enjoyed trying to say meaningful words to bereaved families or ill folk, sometimes I didn't know them, and rang around for background. Some of our members surprised me by the achievements these often old and frail folk had accomplished, and it was a pleasure to write a Vale. On well known member declared "You know more about my Dad than I do!"

I'd never seen any value in newspaper notices, apart from the original statement of some unfortunate's demise, and flowers, while nice, only lasted a few days at best. I decided to spend the equivalent money on a donation to the most appropriate research foundation, with the family receiving a card from that entity. This has been favourably appreciated, without exception. As you'd expect, the Cancer Council was the main beneficiary.

I needed more cards. I took a photograph of massed forget-me-nots, so pretty, and such a nice sentiment. That was the cover, with the Club logo in the centre. Inside, on the left, a description of the help available from the Friends in Need group, with ample room for messages to the right. Once more, off to Office Works, and I'm pleased with the result.

The Committee agreed to my request to double the gratuity, from \$50 to \$100, in 2023. The total Welfare spend is about \$800 annually.

Postscript: Adrian's efforts as welfare officer and his charity work for the Club were further acknowledged in December 2024 with the award of an Achievement plaque. Adrian's numerous motorcycle adventures are captured in the Club's 50th Anniversary Social Histories.



Life Members

1975-2025

