

A Social History of the VMCCWA

Volume 1
1957 - 2009

Compiled by Murray Barnard



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

Compiled ed by Murray Barnard

2025



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Murray Barnard
(Pic by Nic Montagu)

Acknowledgement

This record of the early days of the VMCCWA would not have been possible without reference to the following:

1. Tom Welch who published his memoir "THE HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE VINTAGE MOTORCYCLE CLUB OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA" in 1994
2. Peter Groucott's memoir on the foundation of the VMCCWA from 1978.
3. Bill Coackly & Peter Stocker who published a documentary History of the VMCCWA in 2000
4. The primary source for documenting the social history of the club since 1975 has been the Vintage Chatter and Management Committee minutes where available. These are copyright VMCCWA (Inc)
5. A major source of photos and other ephemera has been my personal archives.

Other published sources are:

- a. The West Australian TT 1912-15, 1919 by Murray Barnard
- b. Rally Rousers - Life Members of the VMCCWA by Murray Barnard & Adrian White
- c. The Overlanders - 1926, by Murray Barnard, published in Classic Motorcycling Australia
- d. Across Australia by Harley-Davidson 1927, by Murray Barnard, published in Classic Motorcycling Australia

Photograph sources are predominately care of Murray Barnard & Nic Montagu. Regrettably some sources are unknown and unattributed. Photos of Neil Stephenson are care of Trevor Stephenson as lodged in VMCCWA archives. Also Ian Curtis & Maurice Glasson. Many others are from VMCCWA archives or my private collection.

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Introduction

In a way, this publication is a personal view of the Club's history as I have been solely responsible for the selection, compiling and editing of source material. At times I have added a personal view on matters, which may or may not be agreed by all, but then I am the one writing the story from my perspective and anyone who bitterly disagrees is welcome to write their own account.

The story is very much dependent on personal accounts written by members over the past six decades and the focus is upon the people of the club not the administrative minutiae of running an association. As such this publication is not an account of events run week in and week out. It was very much a process of sifting material out and only the bigger bits remain which require more digesting or were caught in the plughole.

Many matters big or small may have escaped recollection in these pages, either through lack of source material, detail, lack of relevance to the members overall or just plain tedious reading. To give the Club's activity, year by year, full credit would require a document a metre thick. Thus some names may be lost in the process, some Section activity unacknowledged due to lack of source material and some significant events not given the weight they may have deserved.

I do not claim credit for all of the material in this publication. The material largely was written by the members themselves. I think we are lucky they took the initiative at the time otherwise so much Club memory would have been lost.

The opinions expressed in the Social History of the VMCCWA are the Editor's and not those of the VMCCWA (Inc).

Murray Barnard - April 2025



PREFACE

The inaugural meeting of the Motor Cycle Section of the Veteran Car Club of WA [Inc] [VCC] was held on 5 September, 1968. The Section grew quickly and before long it was clear that a motorcycle specific club was both desirable and achievable. Thus in March 1975 a constitution was derived, a committee elected and the name Vintage Motor Cycle Club of W.A. (VMCCWA) registered and the association formed. The inaugural committee was Eric Langton, Neil Stephenson, Peter Wells, Ron Morrison, Jack Berkshire, Jim Wallace, Max Sharpe, Bill Young, Charlie Lawson, B Drake. & Tom Welch.

The first official Committee Meeting of VMCCWA was held on 31 July, 1975 and the first official General Meeting on 21 August, 1975. Initially pre-1955 machines were eligible for the club register. In 1983 a lot of debate ensued when it was decided to amend the eligible machine date to a "rolling 25 year" rule. The motion passed but not without a degree of dissension. During the debate a vote was taken on the question of excluding Japanese machines from the Club and this resulted in a majority voting against the exclusion. At the same meeting a "Vintage" section was formed. Of interest was the motion to ban smoking at meetings, this was passed as well.

Another notable decision in this year was the contribution towards a clubhouse and spare parts facility at Wattle Grove in partnership with the VCC.

In 1985 the Club suffered a grievous loss when the President, Max Sharpe passed away. 1989 and the Club lost Ernie Legg, long term proprietor of a motorcycle shop in Fremantle. In 1990 the Club lost another stalwart when the "walking motorcycle encyclopaedia" Peter Groucott passed away.

In 1990 the Club held the Overlander's re-enactment in which a large number of members rode to Melbourne & Sydney and return. Organised by Don Bowden and Rob Veitch the event commemorated the WA Harley Davidson Club journey across the continent in 1927.

In 1999 the Club lost its first President and 1920/30s speedway rider, Eric Langton.

During the 2000s the Club has grown markedly as machines from the "motorcycle mad" 1970s became club eligible. Concessional licensing has proven very popular and well over 1800 machines are on the club register with 700 financial members being the norm.

The club moved into the digital age in 2005 with a website established and the Club newsletter became full colour and available by mail and email by 2016. A Club unit was purchased in Maddington to provide storage for club assets which could not be stored at the Wattle Grove clubrooms. The unit is actively used for committee meetings, section meetings and social events.

Sadly the Club has seen some "pioneers" fade away" and we have lost Jack Berkshire, Lindsay Cooke, Bill Cowlin, John Rock and Charlie Lawson among many others. Still, the Club continues to grow and evolve. 65 years of motorcycle community and many more to come as the Club faces the challenge of internal combustion engines being phased out and electrical phased in! Still the maintenance of old machines and their restoration will appeal to many a motorcyclist. The Club will continue to grow and thrive even as the composition, focus and membership will change. We have seen the Club evolve already, it is not stranded in the past nor does it abandon the past. The Club is focused on a love of motorcycles, their development, history and the people who rode them.

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Chapter 1: 1957 - 69



Eric Langton

The story starts in 1957 when Perth was a quiet small City, far from anywhere, in a time when air travel was expensive and arduous. The population of Perth was 378,000.

Well known motorcycling identity, Peter Groucott (VMCCWA member #6), a foundation member of the VMCCWA, suggests that the inspiration for a vintage motorcycle club in Western Australia was sparked by the unlikely arrival in Perth, of a dour unassuming motorcycle enthusiast, from Yorkshire, who just happened to also be a famous champion speedway rider.

In Peter's appealing hypothesis, the link to the VMCCWA starts many years previously in damp, dark Grimsby, Yorkshire, where there was a motorcycle shop owned by Freddie Frith, OBE, who was also a famous champion motorcyclist.



By way of an aside, Eddie Frith was famous for winning the 1949 350cc class of the FIM World Championship in the competition's debut year on a Works Special KTT MkVIII Velocette.



As the story goes, Freddie Frith sold Eric's brother Oliver a 1903 3¹/₂ hp Humber for a song. Later Eric

swapped some machinery with his brother and took charge of the diminutive machine.

Now chance steps in and come 1957, Eric, his wife Mary, and their two sons, Max and Simon, packed up their belongings, tools, bits and pieces and left their home in Fernhill Road, Shipley, West Yorkshire, and moved across the world to warmer climes in Western Australia to set up home in the beautiful riverside suburb of Applecross. Eric had travelled to Australia in the 1930s for Speedway events and thus had an idea of conditions in the country. Why he came to Perth specifically is not recorded. Fortuitously Eric brought the 1903 Humber with him to Australia. (Note: the humble Humber will later play a significant role in this story as a catalyst for change!).



Eric Kemp Langton (1907 – 1999) 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 year 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.

From the earliest days of speedway, Eric and his brother Oliver realised that a short wheelbase single gave more traction and drive out of the corners than

a long wheelbase twin. The wildly sliding Douglas was more spectacular, but, by 1930, Ridges and JAPs were winning more races.

However, a speedway tour of South America during the 1930-31 Christmas break, appealed; but, they stipulated that only twin cylinder machines would be eligible. The Langton brothers were Rudge experts by this time, but for a lucrative contract in the English off season, it was time to switch camps; temporarily at least. Eric started collecting Douglas bits and pieces in order to build a Douglas to his own liking back home in Leeds.

He had tried a DT Douglas previously, but found the frame was too flexible and prone to losing its drivechain. To resolve this Eric acquired a TT frame and gearbox, a DT crankcase) and crankshaft assembly and began to build a racer. To get more traction, Eric shortened the frame and shortened the rear chain stays. A set of Webb speedway forks was added, and the Langton Douglas was born.

In Eric's words, "The wheelbase was shortened to give better handling, i.e. less broadside angle. I was never one to like to have the thing on full lock and in that respect, it was quite good. However, even with Webb forks it wasn't easy to control a front wheel slide and demanded a 'power-on' entry to the bend. The only time I fell off it was at the River Plate, which was fairly deep brick dust and the exhaust pipe dug in and tipped me off going into the pit bend. I bent up some fancy equal length exhaust pipes, which gave more lean before grounding, as well as cleaning up the carburation. By the end of the season, most of the Douglasses had found new homes with local riders. By Grand Final night I was the only one still on a Douglas, the others having gone back to Ridges but I was determined to keep faith with the promoters and finished up collecting all the trophies."

When he returned to England, Eric also reverted to Ridges and, later, JAPs, on which he was runner-up on equal points to Lionel Van Praag in the first World Speedway Championship in 1936. (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 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; Langton led into the first bend but was overtaken by Van Praag. Van Praag reportedly paid Langton £50 "conscience money" after the race for going back on the agreement).



Pic is of An unhappy Eric Langton (left) congratulating Van Praag after winning the 1936 World Final Race off.

Eric never stopped modifying his JAP motors for more performance, even to the extent of casting his own cylinder head to achieve a narrower valve angle while retaining the looks of the standard item. He took great delight in leaving the bike in the pits with the head removed to expose the low crown piston; fooling other riders into believing he was using a very low compression ratio.

(Acknowledgement is warranted to Sheldon's EMU Speedway Workshop Archive for elements of this profile)

1958: and tram services finish in Perth, thus in one foul swoop reducing the incidence of tram-lining for Perth motorcyclists! The population of Perth hits 388,000

Leaving West Yorkshire, where veteran and vintage motorcycle clubs were in abundance, to a place where his beloved hobby was a relatively amateur affair probably came as a surprise to a motorcycle enthusiast such as Eric Langton. We may well imagine his dismay, soon after arrival in W.A. to discover that the pastime of Veteran and Vintage motorcycling in any regular, well organised form did not exist. In casting about, however, he did find some mild interest being expressed, by similar

minded people in the formation of a club for old cars. As it seemed the best opportunity to further his own vintage motorcycle interests, Eric became involved. In fact, he was a foundation member when the fledgling Veteran Car Club of Western Australia was formed after a meeting with Ampol, the Weekend Mail and the Automotive Chamber of Commerce at the Ampol Theatre, Adelaide Tce, Perth on the evening of 3rd December 1958.

The objective of the December meeting being to foster support to form the Veteran Car Club of Western Australia (VCCWA). Eric was as much interested in a club that catered for motorcycles as he was for Veteran and/or Vintage motor vehicles.



Eric soon found that despite the apparent camaraderie, there was a strong anti-motorcycle element in the new car club. This took concrete form when he entered the little 1903 Humber in an open-road rally. Eric was firmly asked by the Rally Organisers to confirm that his Humber was incapable of averaging more than 17 mph. Not long afterwards, he discovered to his dismay, that the minimum speed class for the rally had been set to 20 mph! He did not think that this was a coincidence.

Despite this, Eric persevered on his Humber in other events and the October 1960 issue of "The Visor" in its report of a Rally to Northam recorded: "Eric Langton deserves special praise for his magnificent ride on the 1903 Humber motorcycle ... only five points behind the winner of the Golden Fleece Trophy".

1963 and Eric Edgar Cooke roamed the streets of Perth randomly murdering people. Most people locked their doors rather than ride at night. The population of Perth is 450,000

Despite all, Eric Langton was a very active member of the VCCWA, open minded about cars and bikes and in 1963 through his efforts and others, the club was able to obtain a concessional licensing agreement for veteran vehicles used on club events.

This was achieved through a meeting with the Minister for Transport attended by Eric Langton (VCCWA Club President), Stan Cook (Club Secretary) and Tony Smith (Club Member). Introduced in 1964 this initiative continues until this day, to the advantage of all Club members.

1964 and Eric Cooke meets his maker, being the last person hanged in WA. Coincidentally, hanging out in car parks at night with your girlfriend comes back in favour. The population of Perth hits 466,000



Eric Edgar Cooke's serial killings terrorised Perth

Peter Groucott wrote in a memoir dated 1978:

"Being of Yorkshire ancestry, i.e. obstinate, determined, stubborn, even pig headed if you like, Eric persevered in his efforts to gain recognition for old motorcycles and the people who rode them on at least equal terms with their four-wheeled brethren. It was a long, hard, uphill and VERY lonely battle and many a lesser man would have quit. But not E. K. Langton. This entry became a regular one in VCC events and then, suddenly one day, Eric was no longer alone."

He was joined by Ernie Legg, a long-time motorcyclist and dealer in the Fremantle area. Ernie brought along a complete, ready-to-ride, one owner 1912 3 1/2 hp Triumph in original trim, by which I DO mean unrestored and, thereafter, very slowly, the tide began to turn. Some of the car-owning VCCWA members obtained bikes, others joined "from scratch" with yet more motorcycles and the VCCWA suddenly found itself with an "Enfante Terrible" on its hands.

This lusty babe would not be denied and the VCCWA had no option but to accept the fact that Veteran and Vintage motorcycles did actually exist and, what was more, some of the folk who rode them were actually quite nice people, once you got to know them! By the late 1960s, the number of motorcycles registered in the VCCWA had grown considerably and many of their owners were not at all car-minded."

From here we can let Tom Welch (VMCCWA Member #30) take up the story.

"By early April 1964 there were at least two motorcycles owned by members of the Veteran Car Club actively taking part in rallies organised by the Club. These were Eric Langton's Humber and Ernie Legg's 1912 Triumph (with geared rear hub). Jim Wallace, 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 the number three motor cycle owner, followed by Ernie Legg's 1920 Excelsior (Big X) and sidecar outfit With Ernie Legg having two machines this brought Jack Berkshire into the circle as a rider of either the Triumph or the 'Big X', and all four 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."



Ernie Legg and the 1912 Triumph

Peter Groucott recalled:

"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. LEGG (3 1/2 hp Triumph). Shortly afterwards the 1920 7/9 hp Excelsior ("Big X") sidecar outfit was acquired from Safety Bay and added to Ernie's expanding collection. In about 1960 Ernie button holed 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/-/-. 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." (Written by Peter Groucott in 1989)

1967 and indigenous Australians are granted human status and will be counted in the census and allowed to vote. A start to a long process of addressing disadvantage. The population of Perth is now 542,000

In February 1967, Tom Welch addressed a Car Club meeting of the need for those interested in 'Vintage' motorcycles to make haste in collecting them before they too were lost to the scrap metal industry. At this time many old machines were being cannibalised or being used on farms to run equipment. Membership numbers of those with solely motorcycle interests began to rise during 1967. The next motorcycle to enter the Club was Tom Welch's 1929 Harley-Davidson 1000 model.

As Tom recalls, "this was officially dated in September 1967, and in October joined in its' first run. The run was a social outing with cars, from Beaufort Street, Inglewood to the War Veteran Homes at Mount Lawley. It was here that the writer first met up with Jim Wallace which began a great friendship bound by mutual interests.

The Triumph, Excelsior, Rudge and Harley-Davidson were entered in the Mandurah Rally of November 1967, and judging by the newly found interest and enthusiasm towards motorcycles, it could be said that this was now the nucleus of the Vintage Motorcycle Club of the future.

Discussions taking place amongst various motor cyclists now centred on difficulties encountered by solo riders, without the assistance of a navigator, and the security of four wheels, attempting to compete in competitions where the route sheet was written for car drivers who had a navigator.

One rider likened his situation as 'battling to make control on time, in pouring rain, with the route sheet between your teeth, not even knowing if you are in the right locality. However it was generally conceded that in order to provide for organised rallies with the attendant route sheet to suit the needs of the solo motorcyclist, it was essential that motorcyclists organise for their own needs.

The final conclusion was, that it would be more appropriate to have our own independent Club. The views of the motor cyclists were very soon telegraphed through to the Car Club establishment.

So commenced opposition to any 'break-away' movement, this beginning as early as November 1967. The opposition came from some members of Office Bearers and Committee, from their sycophants, and even a negative comment from a motorcyclist who believed a separate club 'could not work'.

This member later became a Patron (Ed. Ernie Legg). Interestingly the first Patron (Ed. of the VMCCWA) was the most outspoken opposition also, until he realised the inevitable.

As for myself, the one who 'forged the irons' which resulted in the Club we now have, I was never, either invited to, or offered any representative 'post'.

One official of the Car Club urged all persons who attended the motorcyclists' meetings to 'keep the interests of the Car Club in mind at all times.' There is no doubt that such opposition was intended as intimidation in an attempt to dissuade many from going ahead with the development

At that time I held a senior position in the State Government as Chief Engineer of the Forests Department. In this position I was required to be out of this State for two or three times per year in addition to tours of the South West at regular intervals, and so could not be available at every meeting. Because of this, one or two newer members made statements, suggesting that they spoke for all members, and in some instances being prepared to accept a 'watered-down' version of a 'Section'.

My insistence was, at all times, that nothing less than an autonomous Club was acceptable. It had been agreed from the beginning of discussions, that an autonomous Club would remain affiliated with the Veteran Car Club."

Peter Groucott later recalled, "nevertheless, the time was not yet right to form a separate motorcycle Club and, therefore, a compromise was reached which was to lead to the formation of a motorcycle section of the VCC. The small band of devout motorcycle enthusiasts began holding informal— dare one say, "clandestine?" — gatherings.

Although strictly unofficial as far the VCC was concerned, these gatherings were nevertheless tolerated and, occasionally, reported upon in the Club Magazine. For example, the September, 1967 edition of "Early Auto" carried a report of a film evening "for Motorcycles" at the home of member Tom Welch and, in other subsequent issue of the period, there were brief mentions of informal meetings of the motorcycle section being held, usually at various members' homes.

An organised Motorcycle Swap Day and Picnic Run was held at the now defunct Caversham Motor Racing Circuit, near Perth and some informal sprinting was indulged in."

1968 and Meckering is shattered by an earthquake and motorcyclists everyone check their bikes are still on their stands. The population of Perth is now 587,000

By July 1968 the number of motorcycles in the unofficial Motorcycle 'Section' totalled fifty-eight. Finally in August 1968 the VCC recognised the formation of a Motorcycle Section. It allowed for members who were solely motorcyclists, and did not wish to have a veteran car.

Once the Motorcycle Section had been formed it rapidly gained in strength, both in members and machines. As might have been expected, friction quickly developed between veteran car owners and owners of vintage motorcycles and some car members were openly hostile.

Regardless, the inaugural meeting of the new Section was held on September 5th 1968 at the home of Kevin Joyce, 1 Kent street, Wilson. Twenty motorcyclists attended. Rules were drawn up and approved by the Management Committee.

Election of Officers was held which resulted in Eric Langton being elected Section President. The following were also amongst those in attendance: Jim Wallace, John Gloyn, Peter Wells, Kevin Joyce, A. Selley, G. Henley, K. Windsor, J. Kuppens, R. Selley, J. Berkshire, P. Groucott, E. Legg, T. Welch, V. Rule, N. Stephenson, N. Bromilow, G. Raper, R. Thornton, R. Minorgan & C. Foster.



Peter Groucott

Tom Welch recalled, "I was again in the Eastern States at the time of this meeting and so was not included in the list of Foundation members, that is one of the twenty (20) said to have attended. On my return I found that by now twenty nine (29) membership numbers had been issued, and so I was admitted as number 30.

Again, we see that membership number one (1) was issued to the original antagonist to the formation of a Section or Club, and in addition he was (eventually) installed as the first Patron, and awarded Life Membership i.e. Ernie Legg

(Ed. ironically, after Ernie passed away, it is notable that his motorcycle collection was bequeathed to the VCC, where it remains until this day).

In some acknowledgment for the effort expended in the foundation of the motorcycle Section and ultimate Club, one can refer back to the 'Editors' Notes' in the VCCWA's 'Early Auto' of October 1968.

'A lot of solid backroom work has taken place since that meeting nine months ago, and the VCC owes a lot to those stalwarts who kept the Club's interests at heart. I don't intend to list all those who took part in the struggle to achieve our goal, but without the initial impetus from Tom Welch, this movement would have wasted perhaps some years before we decided to do something for ourselves, and much valuable machinery was lost forever.'

The second meeting of the Section was held on October 21st at the home of Ernie Legg at 7 Curtis Road, Melville. Jim Wallace organised the Section's first road run on December 15th 1968, which terminated at Rockingham Oval."

Peter Groucott also recalled these early days, the "Early Auto" of July, 1968, listed in the "Coming Events" column: "A Film Evening for MOTOR CYCLE SECTION members at the home of Jim Wallace" ... so there was tacit recognition of the group IN PRINT!

The usual groundwork, drawing-up of rules, etc was done and the VCC granted approval of the group's application to form a Motor Cycle Section. The date was September, 1968, and the "Enfante Terrible", after several pre-natal kicks, was finally officially born

and organized. Vintage Motor Cycling in W.A. had successfully cleared its first hurdle.

Although still answerable to the VCC on major matters, the M.C. Section—as it became generally known—was at least free to run most of its own affairs of a minor nature.

The first of these was a Picnic Run to the Rockingham Scramble Course Car Park on December 15th, 1968 and attracted 14 starters, although several of these machines were trailered to the venue, being rideable; but, not yet licensed for use on public roads.

1969 and man lands on the moon but Lucas electrics still defy the best efforts of amateur motorcyclists



The Section soon began to form a regular calendar and Sunday May 4th was the first Annual Inspection Day for motorcycles held, with six machines offered.

The first A.G.M. of the Section soon followed in June 1969 and Eric Langton was elected President again. Jim Wallace was Secretary/Treasurer. By July 1969, 20 machines of 9 different makes dating from 1912 to 1930 were under restoration. The Section financial report showed that the final Bank Balance was \$71.75

Peter Groucott reminisced in more detail, that "1969 was a year of progress and it was possible to report in May that six vintage machines had been approved for licensing at the Inaugural Section Annual Examination

On June 3rd, 1969. the Section held its first Annual General Meeting. Founder- President Eric Langton—who else?—was returned unopposed and was, in fact, destined to remain Section Ernie Legg President throughout the Section's eight years of active existence.

Founder-Secretary/Treasurer Kevin Joyce handed over the reins to Jim Wallace, who also thereafter remained in office until the Section's activities ceased in August, 1975.

By this time, considerable thought had been given to a suitable Section Badge design. A design, featuring a right-hand side profile of a 1904 Triumph encircled by the letters and words: VCCWA VINTAGE MOTOR CYCLE SECTION was approved by the VCC and it was very soon afterwards that these badges, in the deep gold and black of club colours, were being proudly fitted on members' machines.

Of course, all major rallies were still promoted and controlled by the VCC and, with mainly car entries it was hardly surprising that these events tended to favour passenger vehicles in which drivers were able

to let somebody else do the route-card deciphering and navigating, thus leaving "le pilote" free to get on with just one job. Not surprisingly this put motor cyclists at some considerable disadvantage in such events.

In spite of this, there were many occasions on which the premier award went the way of a solo-riding motor cyclist and, in fact, one major event was scooped by a solo rider, one John D'Arrietta on his newly-restored 1925 2½ h.p. A.J.S. in his first-ever attempt at such an event."



Above: Jack Berkshire

Chapter 2: 1970 - 74



1970 is notable because I started work with the Army as a clerk at Western Command Headquarters, Swan Barrack, Francis St, Perth. Less important was the news that the Standard gauge railway finally went all the way to Sydney

Tom Welch recorded that at the July 1970 monthly meeting Ernie Legg presented a Trophy to Ray Selley, a founding member of the motorcycle section. The Section now had 26 financial members with 19 roadworthy machines. At this time it was noted that interest in the motorcycle section was increasing in country areas.

Jim Wallace reported at the A.G.M. of July 1970, that over \$850 value of tyres had been imported for resale to members, also a quantity of Vintage and Veteran mudguards. In addition to this the Official Badge for the 'Section' had been produced. This was in the form of a round plastic badge, coloured Black and Gold, showing a 1903 Triumph with a 'clip-on' engine. At the top were the letters 'V.C.C.' indicating that we were still part of the Car Club. At the bottom were the words 'Motor Cycle'

Tom further noted that August 1970 saw the section host a film night and Trophy presentations provided by Castrol Oil Limited, of O'Connor. Castrol film nights were a popular pastime for motorcycle clubs into the early 80s when video took over. If it wasn't for Castrol films we wouldn't have seen anything of the GPs or Isle of Man races.

1971 is notable because Hungry Jack's was established. The first store opened in Innaloo, on 18 April. The population of Perth was 745,000

Tom Welch reported that: "the February Motor Show at the McFarlane Pavillion, Claremont Showground, saw the best yet display of vehicles, under the auspices of the Veteran Car Club and the Vintage Motor Cycle Section. Motorcycles were displayed in all phases from fully restored to 'as found' condition, and some in rustic or 'bush' settings reminiscent of either where they were used or found.

The floor plan and also the compilation of the Guide Catalogue were in the hands of Tom Welch who ensured that an equal opportunity prevailed for motorcycles to be seen in ideal situations. The Editor of 'Early Auto' in the March issue made favourable comments on the efforts so employed."

25 YEAR RULE: In July 1971 it was agreed to admit machines which were a minimum of twenty-five years old. In March it was reported that a further eleven machines had achieved road worthiness.

FIRST TWO DAY RALLY: In August 1971, eleven members met at the home of John Gloyn, to meet John Game from the West Australian Newspaper. The Daily News division, wished to sponsor a motorcycle Rally, based on the 420 miles, 'Two day' event from Johannesburg to Durban, in South Africa.

After some work and coordination it was decided to run the two day Reliability Trial on February 19th and 20th 1972. The course for the Vintage Class to be over 370 miles total, to Busselton with an overnight stop at Bunbury. Veterans were to cover a 250 mile course. The two day event later became known as the Weekend News Trial."

1972 and the Xmas Pageant was held in Perth and there was Ernie Legg and his 1912 Triumph being prominent



"The Briefing Night for the Two Day Trial was held at WA Newspapers, St Georges' Terrace on February 17th. The fleet of motor cycles in the Trial were flagged away by Perth Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas Wardle, at Council House on Saturday 19th February 1972.

TWO DAY TRIAL 1972:

The machines made a tour from Council House to La Plaza Shopping Centre Bentley, where the timed section commenced. There were twenty two starters, and fifteen finished the Trial.

Finally, a Trophy presentation Night was arranged at the WA Club, Barrack Street. WA Newspapers organised the donations of prizes from several organisations.

Herewith are the winners etc.

Best trial performance: - 30 MPH - Bill Young 1928 Norton

Best performance: 30 MPH runner-up - Tom Welch 1929 Harley-Davidson

Best performance pre-1925 24 MPH - Brian Hume 1924 Rudge

Runner-up 24 MPH - Alex Selley 1925 Triumph

Best performance sidecar - Neil Stephenson 1927 Zenith

Oldest rider to complete the course - Harold Braund (Bunbury) 1912 AKD

Oldest motor cycle to complete the course - Ray Selley 1909 Triumph"



Ray Selley (above) rider of the oldest bike on the Two Day Trial - a 1909 Triumph

Notable Club member Neil Stephenson (Member #28), won an award on the first Two-Day Trial. Neil was also a founding member of the Motorcycle Section. Neil, an ex-WW2 Bomber Pilot, came out from the UK with his son Trevor and a collection of seven vintage motorcycles and a long history of racing and participating in Western Motorcycle Club &

VMCC (UK) events. Neil Stephenson was presented with a DFC during the war, worked as a policeman, a mechanic, an engineering representative and finally became a garage proprietor before deciding to immigrate to Western Australia at the age of 55. The picture is from a local paper in the UK at the time of his emigration to Australia.



All lined up for a photograph—Mr. Neil Stephenson and his seven motor bikes.

(Photo courtesy Trevor Stephenson)

Peter Groucott wrote a good account of the two day event as follows, "the key which opened the door to a whole new aspect of Vintage Motor Cycling in WA was held in a most unexpected hand. The sole Saturday evening newspaper in Perth, WA is the Weekend News and its Promotions Manager in 1971 was John Game. One day, while scanning some files on overseas activities in hopes of finding inspiration for something new in the promotional field, Mr. Game came upon a report of the long-established South African event, the Durban-Johannesburg Run for Vintage Motor Cycles. Therefrom came John Game's big dream: to promote a similar event in W.A. with lots of publicity and its resultant added income for his paper and the lure of an all-expenses-paid trip to the Dur/Jo Run for the winner. Question was, was there any active Vintage Motor Cycle group in W.A.. And, if so, how did one get in touch with it? Having had brief contact at odd times with the VCC, John Game went there first and was, of course, directed to the Vintage M/C Section of the Club . . . all ready and waiting for just such an opportunity to prove itself worthy of conducting an event such as this.

Following the usual preliminary negotiations, a course of approximately 350 miles was decided upon, a date was set and entries were invited. In total 31 and the pre-Trial publicity added up to more than the entire Vintage and Veteran Vehicle movement in W.A. had received for many years. Considerable public interest was aroused and having the Lord Mayor of Perth as an Honorary Starter wasn't exactly a bad idea either! From His Worship a Special Message of Greeting was taken by the rider of the oldest machine, Ray Selley (1909 Triumph) to the Mayor of Bunbury and people turned out all along the route to see—and hear—the old bikes go by. Unfortunately, the results in public reaction and added income for the promoter did not meet expectations and no lucky winner ever did get that trip to the Dur/Jo Run, but The Weekend News Two-Day—as it came to be known—DID put the Vintage Motor Cycle movement on the map in W.A. and it has never looked back. The inaugural Trial was run during an incredibly hot weekend causing the first of three major changes to be made in the format of the event."

1973 and the Bus Station on Wellington St opened as did the Concert Hall on St Georges Tce. It was a toss-up which had the best acoustics!



The second Two-day Trial was run mid-May to avoid the Summer heat, however a combination of fewer hours of daylight and heavy threatening rain clouds resulted in premature darkness and some riders had serious worries due to lack of sufficient light to complete the first day's course.

In May 1973 nominated members of the Motorcycle Section, i.e. Eric Langton, Jim Wallace, Alex Selley and Peter Groucott, put forward a motion to the VCCWA to amend the Constitution to allow a Motor Cycle Club to be formed.

Peter Groucott noted that *"by mid-1973, however, there was an undeniable feeling in the Section that a concerted effort to form an autonomous club would have to be made soon.*

There were many owners of desirable motorcycles sitting on the sidelines simply because they were not interested in joining a CAR club in order to ride old motorcycles and there was a very real danger that a rival club might be formed. Some members even stated openly that, should such a club be formed, they would leave and join it.

The threat gained concrete recognition with the placing of a motion to form an autonomous club before the 1973 A.G.M. of the VCC However, due to the totally unexpected tabling of a similarly aimed motion with wider-reaching scope, the Motorcycle Section's motion was set aside pending consideration of the alternative motion.

This, unfortunately, became hopelessly bogged down in pseudo-legal gobbledegook and red tape and thus,

the embryo Vintage Motor Cycle Club was denied a whole year of life."

The motion was lost on a close vote.

1974 and the road from Carnarvon to Port Hedland is finally sealed thus making camels redundant

A Special General Meeting of the Motor Cycle Section was called in February 28th to award Life Membership to both Eric Langton and Ernie Legg.

To return to the story of the Club's evolution, the first published minutes of the Section were those of a Committee meeting on 9 December, 1974 followed by a General Meeting on the same evening. At the Committee Meeting the name of any future Club was discussed and it was agreed it would be the Vintage Motor Cycle Club of WA (VMCCWA); this was approved by members at the General Meeting.

At the General Meeting Jack Berkshire reported on a Police Xmas Picnic which was well supported by Section Members. Jack handed over a donation from the Police Social Club. It is of interest that Jack was still involved with this annual Christmas Police Party (25 years later and it was still well supported by the Club motorcyclists).

Peter Groucott commented that. *"two very good things came out of the 1973 A.G.M. of the VCC These were the extremely narrow margin by which the alternative motion was defeated and the election of a new President who had the wisdom to see that motions defeated on minor technicalities, as this one had been, should not be swept under the carpet and the matter closed when it was patently obvious that so many members felt that a change was needed.*

Consequently, Frank Cocks took a firm hold on matters, called round- table conferences with many Section leaders and, within a few short months had an acceptable motion ready for presentation and adoption by an overwhelming majority at a Special General Meeting.

Immediately upon acceptance of the new Constitution, the Motor Cycle Section's representatives re-presented the motion that it be permitted to become a club. This was accepted and approved in very short order and the way was clear at last!

All this was a token gesture really as an embryo "club" has already been started with the election of a Committee comprised of the original Section Committee plus six other members. The paperwork was all done, the Constitution had received the blessing of the VCC Committee and the final step—the V.C.C.'s formal approval to form a Motor Cycle

Club affiliated with the V.C.C. was taken at the 1975 A.G.M. of the V.C.C. in early July.

So, whilst jumping ahead of ourselves slightly, thus the final step had been taken to form the VMCCWA, at last!



Club Pioneers: L-R - Peter Groucott, Ian Fleming, Ray Oakes, Brian Reynolds & Jim Wallace. Lots of Ridges



1974 - Preparing for the two Day Trial: Left to right - Peter Groucott, Dave Reid, Barry Drake & Charlie Gunther

WEEKEND NEWS VINTAGE

MOTOR CYCLE TRIAL



360 miles in a weekend for the 'oldies'

by Kim Murray

With a bang and a roar, this year's Weekend News Vintage Motor Cycle Trial will get underway next Saturday.

The two-day trial, which is among the longest in the world, will cover 360 miles on a Perth to Dunsborough route.

Some of the States colour and post prepared machines will take to the road from La Piaz, Bostley at 7 am.

The early start is to ensure that they will arrive in Bostley before dark on the first day.

Twenty-eight of the entrants, on their vintage and post-vintage machines will travel to Armadale, Pinjarra, Waroona, Roolands, Culle, Picton, Bordenup, Dunsborough, and finally to Cape.

31 TAKE PART

The return route is via Roolands, along the Australind road to Harvey, Waroona, Old Coast Road to Mandurah, then to Pinjarra, Armadale and Kalamunda.

The 20mph group will take a shorter route by riding direct from Harvey to Bordenup on the South-West Highway.

The trial is fought essentially on flats with each contestant negotiating a speed over the route. There are three speed sections, 20, 24 and 32 mph.

The entrants will encounter five controls on the first day and four on the second.

Several of these control points will be kept secret to check consistency of speeds.

The trial is being organised by the motor cycle section of the Vintage and Veteran Car Club of WA.

Sponsors apart from Weekend News are the Bank of New South Wales, Carlo Brothers, and the Swan Brewery.

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John D'Arrietta on 1916 BSA 500

FEATURE: MY UNAPPROACHABLE NORTON by Eric Langton

It was in Adelaide, while there for the 1974 National Rally that I first saw the Norton. Quite a large contingent of members of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club of Western Australia had made the 1,750 mile trip across the Nullarbor Desert to attend the event which was run as a Hub Rally, so we were all back in Adelaide each night.

It was late in the week that Doug Bennetts, the president of the local Vintage Motorcycle Club, invited all motorcycle entrants to his home for a barbecue evening. There was lots of food and gallons of grog, but his shed and bikes were firmly under lock and key when we got there. However, as the night wore on, and the hospitality was soaked up, Doug was prevailed upon to let a few of us into his shed.

There was a splendid array of beautifully restored Nortons up to about 1930, but what caught my eye was a belt driver, obviously an early one, lacking an engine, but otherwise just about restored. It had a straight top tube frame, separate lug where the lower tank rail joined the front down tube. I had only ever seen one other Norton with a similar frame, a 1908 model that Reg. Hancock, of Adelaide, was riding in the rally. It had a trailing rear brake shoe and the Norton name embossed in the tank—a la Rem Fowler Norton—and lamp bracket Druids. I couldn't take my eyes off it.

When I did, there, hanging on the wall behind the workbench, was another one just like it but unrestored. I just couldn't believe my eyes, but immediately resolved that I had to have it. When quizzed later about the hold up with the belt driver, Doug said that he had two engines but only one crankcase, and that was useless. I straightaway said, "How about I make you a crankcase and you give me the unrestored bike?" and he agreed just as promptly. Back in Perth with what remained of the old crankcase, I got a quote for a set of patterns—\$400 whew! That's £200 and just the beginning, so I decided to have a go myself.

Way back in the mid-1920s, while serving my apprenticeship as a toolmaker, I had done a two-year stint in the pattern shop and enjoyed every minute of it. During my racing days I had kept my hand in making crank cases for my own JAPs in better alloys,

and also narrow valve angle cylinder heads. More recently I have made C.I. pistons for most of my veteran and vintage restorations. The patterns took about two weeks, the most time consuming bits were the capital letters for the timing side name. I got two sets of castings by Christmas, about 10 weeks after making the rather rash offer, and then it was how to set about machining them on my 51/2 inch centre lathe.

For a start I made four detachable, adjustable jaws to fit my 14 inch faceplate to turn it into a four-jaw chuck. That took care of the mating faces and bearing bores. The next move was to make a dummy timing case cover in C.I. about 5/8in. thick, with drill and reamer bushes for the cam- wheel centres and locating from the main bearing bore. Having no access to even a milling machine, the jig boring had to be done using the time honoured method of toolmakers buttons, something I hadn't done since apprenticeship days.

The drill plate for the cylinder holding down stud holes had to be done in the same way, locating from the cylinder spigot bore, which I did on a Buma cylinder borer—a leftover from my speedway engine maintenance days. I had the finished job bead blasted and, though I say it myself, "It looked like a bought one". I packed it up and railed it off to Adelaide and awaited developments.

A couple of weeks went by without even an acknowledgment of arrival, so I sent off a tentative enquiry and still nothing. A few weeks later I wrote to a bloke whom I knew did some restoration work for Doug, and weeks later got a letter from Doug's wife, at least it had arrived, but no mention of my Norton bits. By this time five months had gone by, and we were due to leave for a trip to the U.K. to take part, among other things, in the International Rally based on Harrogate.

Our six-month holiday being over we returned to Perth, and after sleeping off the jet lag, I couldn't wait to get at the packing case which had arrived unheralded in our absence. There it was, all that I had expected though the belt rim looked too small and the good looking tank had later looking filler caps, and a bonus of a 1910 Bosch mag., but no carburettor. And then on to the engine, the 82mm. bore cylinder was in excellent shape needing only re-boring and new guides, and one fin had to be built

up. I had already made a pattern and core box for an 82 mm. piston for my 1907 82 mm. x 86 mm. Triumph—still not completed as the cylinder is very sick—and had had several castings made, so I machined up one of these.

The con-rod was a problem, the small end bush had worked its way out and forced the rod against the drive-side flywheel and the rod was worn away almost to the centre web. I decided to try to recover it by welding. Making a pair of flywheels is one thing but making a new one to match an old one is something quite different, and I had to very carefully measure the stroke. The original mudguards which came with the machine were battered but substantially sound, and I was able to recover them using a wheeling machine that I had made years ago in order to make a set of mudguards for my 1914 Swift Cyclecar.

The belt rims, however, are unobtainable here, and when in England for my brother's funeral, I talked to two people who offered them for sale without learning very much from either. I was completely in the dark when I started to have a go. I decided to try the method I had used to make the mudguards, i.e., welding a flat strip into a hoop and then proceeding

to roll in the form. So with most of the problems ironed out it was just a matter of getting it all together which I managed with a week to spare before our 360-mile Two-Day Trial.

I put the finishing touches to the bike during the week, but of course at 73 couldn't push start it alone from cold. On the Saturday morning I got a push from a neighbour for the one mile run to the start of the Two-Day and that's all the running it did before setting off for the 360 mile event. Well on the way back with about 300 miles up, I gave the motor a bit of a burst only to be disappointed with the seemingly sluggish response.

I soon forgot about that as with about 30 miles still to go the threatening rain came down, and the belt slipped and slipped. The bike had run perfectly, however, I had been concerned that it seemed to be consuming far more oil than the half pump I was giving it every 15 minutes.

All was explained when I drained the oil next day and almost a quart came out of it, no wonder it was sluggish. The spring-loaded ball valve under the hand pump was being opened by the crankcase depression, the breather had worked too well, and the engine was helping itself to oil. Simple cure, stronger spring.

And now what about dating it. Well, I have definite proof that it isn't a 1909, that had pedals, an external hand oil pump at the front of the tank and a clip on the front down tube for the magneto platform support rod. Now "Old Miracle" has a 79 x 100 engine, an internal hand oil pump at the front of the tank and a head lug which extends below the lower tank rail. Its engine number is 50100 and that is presumed to be 1912.

So mine with its 82 x 94 engine numbered 347 and frame number 976 must be earlier, i.e. 1910 or '11. Reg Hancock's engine number is 327 and that must be an '08 or '09 as it conforms almost exactly to the adverts in "Motor Cycle" of '08 and '09. Dick Platt tells me that there is no photograph in the Club's Photographic Records of a 1910 model other than the Big 4 with "Nortorac" hub and there is such a model here in Perth and its frame number is 995.

Until more definite information is available I feel I am justified in dating mine as 1910.



Vintage Motorcycle Club of WA (Inc)

1910 Norton 500

England Owner: Andrew Repton



This Norton 3^{1/2} hp 500 cc single for 1910 is one of a handful of survivors from this era. First restored in 1975 by former 1930s speedway star Eric Langton and since ridden in many rallies and events in Australia and the UK. Eric retired to Perth, W Australia and died there in 2001 aged 93. As well as being a very good rider in his day he was also a time-served engineer and the skills learnt as an apprentice in the twenties served him in good stead in his Norton restoration. It had corroded crankcases and Eric went so far as to make a pattern and cast new ones.







Chapter 3: 1975 - 79



1975: The Nullarbor is finally sealed and generations of motorcyclists are saved from buckled wheels, mufflers falling off and flat tyres. Colour television also arrives.



At a General Meeting on 16 January, 1975 it was highlighted out that the name of the new Club - VMCCWA - should be registered as soon as possible to prevent the name being adopted by any other group.

At about this time it was passed that the VCCWA Constitution be amended to allow Sections to form themselves into Clubs and become affiliated with VCC. The Motor Cycle Section immediately handed in its application to form a Club.

The Section Committee held a meeting on 20 February 1975 was informed that the VMCCWA name could not be registered until a new group was formed with a full committee and a constitution. The date of 13 March, 1975 was set to form such a club.

At the General Meeting held after the Committee Meeting, members endorsed the Committee's decision and formally decided to form the Vintage Motor Cycle Club of WA [Inc]. A call was made for 12 volunteers from the floor to form the inaugural committee and the following responded :- Ray Selley, Selley, B Drake, T Welch, Peter Groucott, Eric Langton, Jim Wallace, Ron Morrison, Peter Wells, Max Sharpe, Neil Stephenson, John Berkshire, Bill Young and Charlie Lawson.

The Section duly met at the Applecross Kindergarten Hall on 13 March 1975 to "form the Vintage Motor Cycle Club of WA [Inc], provide a Constitution and elect officers to enable the Club to be registered." Eric Langton was asked to chair the meeting and Jim Wallace acted as minute secretary. It was formally moved by Tom Welch and seconded by Max Sharpe that, "we form THE VINTAGE MOTOR CYCLE CLUB OF

WA [INC]". This was put to the vote and carried. Officers were then elected:- Eric Langton as President, Neil Stephenson as Vice President & Peter Wells as Secretary.

Until the new club was officially sanctioned the VCCWA Motor Cycle Section continued to meet. There was a Committee Meeting on 17 April, 1975 when concern was expressed over the transfer of Section Funds to the new club. It was decided to form the club first and then request clearance of all funds and property. Frank Cocks, VCCWA President attended the General Meeting which followed but matters under consideration only concerned the 2-Day Trial and Trophy Night.

The Section Committee met at Eric Langton's House on 14 May 1975 and Max Sharpe reported on a VCC Management Committee Meeting which had been favourable to the VMCCWA Affiliation. Frank Cocks was praised for his outstanding efforts and assistance in getting the Vintage Motor Cycle Club off the ground.

There was a short General Meeting the next day at which it was unanimously agreed that the VMCC would become affiliated to the VCCWA. Then followed the Annual General Meeting when the Section Office bearers were re-elected en bloc. It was agreed that all members of the Section intending to join the new Club should be made honorary members until the Club formation was finalised. The Vintage Motor Cycle Club of WA [Inc] was now an officially constituted body, allowing vintage motor cycle owners in WA to manage their own affairs and rule their own destiny.

Final Meeting of The Motorcycle Section: We now arrive at the last Committee Meeting and General Meeting of the Motor Cycle Section of the VCCWA on 17 July, 1975. At the Committee Meeting the dates were set for the first official meetings of the new VMCCWA; a Committee Meeting would be held in the Applecross Kindergarten on 31 July, 1975 followed by a General Meeting on 21 August at the same venue.

All foundation members would be invited to attend. The VCC would be approached to provide a list of all financial members of the Section in preparation for nominations and acceptance as members to the VMCCWA.)

FOUNDATION MEETING: Peter Groucott observed, *"The August 1975, General Meeting of the Vintage Motor Cycle Section of the V.C.C. was convened in the usual manner, some essential formalities observed and the President of the Section—Mr. E. K. Langton—yes, he of the 1903 3 1/2 h.p. Humber and many more since—then declared the Section to be henceforth in recess and, as President-elect of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club of W.A. (inc.), invited all persons present to become members forthwith.*

Just two days later the VMCCWA. conducted its first event. This was a two-day Vintage Motorcycle Show, at which over 100 machines were displayed and, in spite of unfavourable weather, attracted a good response from the public and helped the infant club to achieve a reasonable state of solvency. From the VCCWA just one month later came a further boost to the club's funds, along with the tacit recognition of the club and expression of friendly association in the years ahead."

Further details of the Foundation Meeting follow: The Inaugural General Meeting of The Vintage Motor Cycle Club of WA (Inc) was held on August 21st 1975 at Applecross Kindergarten Rooms. Midway through the meeting a recess was called. A vote of thanks was conveyed to the outgoing officers of the original section, then all members were invited to become members "in fact" of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club of WA (Inc). The senior office bearers now were Eric Langton, President, Peter Wells, Secretary, Jim Wallace, Treasurer.

The first event to be staged under the name of the new Club was the Two-day Motorcycle Show held at Osborne Districts Youth Centre on August 23rd and 24th. Listed were 80 exhibits, which included some engines only, a Vintage gramophone and seven (7) "very welcome ring-ins" (and 4 non starters).

Overlooked in the records is the fact that the second Two Day Trial was held earlier in the year, some press extracts follow:

HE COULD HAVE PART OF HIS OLD ONE BACK - Weekend News 12 April 1975



In 1940 Mt Hawthorn newsagent Ken Hicks became the proud owner of a Norton Model 25 motor cycle for which he paid \$14. Then only 17, he soon sold the old machine and moved on to newer and more exciting two-wheelers. Two years ago he heard that somebody at Narrogin had some pieces of a 1926 Norton 25. A few weeks later he began reconstructing the motorcycle he will ride in the trial next weekend.

He said: "I don't know what happened to my first machine— for all I know, some of the bits in this one may have come from it." Mr Hicks said that he collected parts to complete the motorcycle from other enthusiasts. Some of the parts were still available new. The gleaming fully restored machine has cost him more than \$400 and hundreds of hours of hard work. He values it at more than \$1000.

It's basically as good as a modern motorcycle apart from the springs. It would probably do 85mph (136kmh) if anybody were game enough to sit on it at that speed. There is only one inch (2.5cm) travel in the front springs and none in the back. It has a 500cc engine which gives about 144k'm to the gallon." The trial next week will be a nostalgic ride if maybe not a comfortable one for Mr Hicks.

TRIALS GET YOUNG LOOK

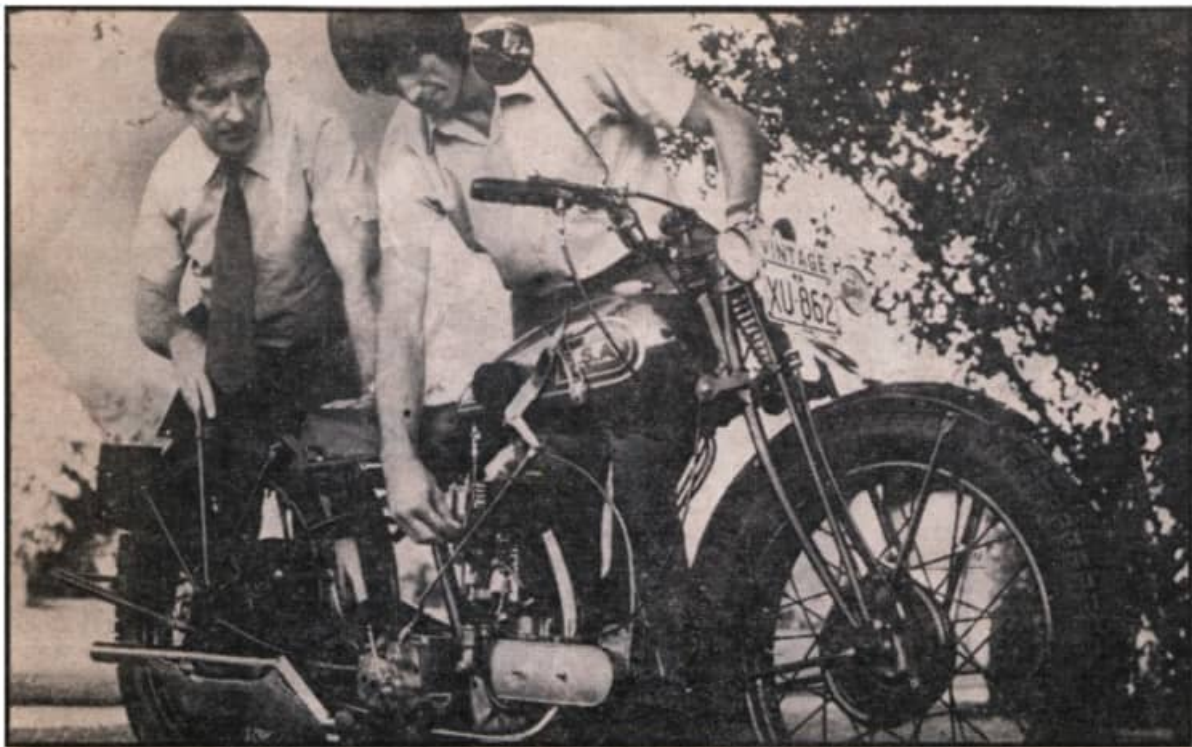
Daily News 17 April 1975

Vintage motor cycle trials are no longer the exclusive province of people in the veteran class. The excitement of restoring and riding machines which were part of the State's history is attracting more young people than ever, say WA Vintage Motor Cycle Club members. The club will hold its annual two-day trial, sponsored by Weekend News, on Saturday and Sunday. The 40 machines entered this year will begin leaving La Plaza shopping centre in Bentley at 7.30am on Saturday and return on Sunday evening. They will travel through south-west towns - to Busselton where they will stay overnight. Checkpoints manned by officials will keep a record of competitors' progress on both days. *(Continued on next page)*

For one 17-year-old schoolboy, the 1975 Trial will be the first chance to give his pride and joy, a 1929 BSA, a long run. To the delight of Steven Foster of Coode Street, Dianella, his 17th birthday and driver's Licence came just in time to allow him to ride the machine on road tests and in the Trial. The BSA frame, tank, gearbox and half the engine were bought from another enthusiast but the wheels and all the controls were missing. "Some of the parts came from other club members and some from people known

by club members," he said. "I had to scrounge for them." Rebuilding the bike took Steven about 18 months, working mainly at weekends. It cost about \$200. "At first I worked on it after school but when I went into my fifth year I couldn't afford the time," he said. The BSA passed its first real road test with flying colours. "It went very" well but it got a little hot going up hills," he said. "I hope it wears in enough in time for the two-day trip." Last year, Steven could only watch enviously from one of the check points as the competitors put-putted past. Among them was his father, Mr Ken Foster, riding a 1924 Indian which he will ride again this year. "My father has been interested in vintage cars and motorcycles for a long time and has taught me a lot," said Steven.

Another teenager watching enviously' from the sidelines this year will be Peter Lawson (16), of Cosgrove Street, Balcatta. He has spent six months restoring a 1935 Triumph but will be too young to ride it. His father, Mr Charlie Lawson, will ride it instead. Peter acquired his machine from the Vintage Motor Cycle Club who had invited tenders. They asked members to include a reason for wanting the machine in their tender. Peter's offer was far below the highest bid but his desire to "do up" the old motorcycle convinced club members that he should have the chance.



◆ Ken Foster (left) and his son, Steven with their 1929 BSA motor cycle.

BITS AND PIECES IN THE LOUNGE

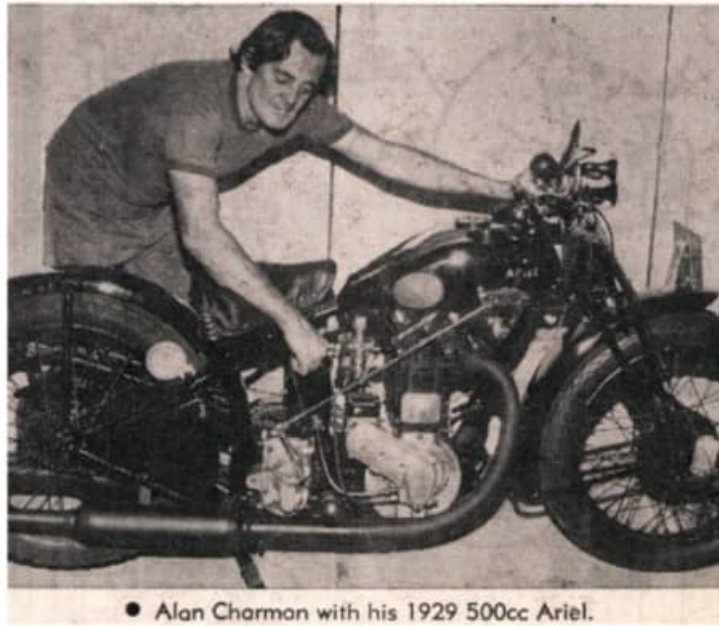
Weekend News 12 April 1975

Few wives would allow a husband to assemble motor cycles, and bits of cars in the family lounge-room.

Mrs Coralie Charman, of Narrung Way, Nollamara, not only allows it, but helps her husband tinker with the family's ever growing collection of old vehicles. Sheds behind the house are filled with Vintage cars and motor cycles in varying stages of restoration. Among them is the 1929 Ariel

which machinery fitter Alan Charman will ride next weekend. The 1929 Harley Davidson he prepared for last year's Weekend News Vintage Motor Cycle Trial let him down at the last moment.

He has spent a year preparing the Ariel and he is sure that it will complete the course for 1975. Mrs Charman said it had been lovingly prepared in the lounge-room. "The next project is a 1951 Matchless then a 1948 Ariel," she said. "We hope to ride them round Australia when our two children are off our hands," she said.



● Alan Charman with his 1929 500cc Ariel.

WA TT: Peter Groucott noted, "Throughout all this time of amateur politicking, one member, Alex Selley, had been quietly researching and generally laying the foundations of an event which was to find ready acceptance from the very moment of its introduction to the members.

Alex's idea was that a Commemorative Run should be held over the 150 mile course used for the original series of West Australian T.T. Races in 1912-13-14 and 15. Following several years of painstaking research, investigation of lay press reports, interviews with past competitors and/or their families, Mr. Selley considered he had enough of a re-constructed picture of these early open-road races to put on some sort of Commemorative Run over the old course.

To say that the rank-and-file club members thought it was a good idea is a gross understatement. The Club Committee gave its blessing and Mr. Selley and the writer undertook to organise what was to become the INAUGURAL WA TT.

This was designed to be a non-competitive run over the original 150-mile course with the only conditions being that Traffic Rules be observed and that, in order to gain a Finishers' Award (Certificate) machines in

the various speed/age categories must finish within their respective—and very liberal—time limits. The machine which everyone really wanted most to see complete the mildly-hilly course was the afore-said 1909 Triumph owned and ridden by Ray Selley but fate wielded a cruel club during the first two years of the event. With only about 20 miles to go in 1975, the big end failed and in 1976 BOTH tyres failed at a distance.

As a matter of interest, the Oldest Finishing Machine Award in 1975 went to another Triumph, a 1912 Roadster ridden by the only lady rider in the field, Miss Thelma Hosking and owned by club patron Ernie Legg."

Lindsay Cooke was one of the small group that formed the Vintage Motor Cycle Club of WA (Inc) when they separated from the Vintage Car Club in 1975. This Photo was taken on the 1975 York TT Commemoration Run. Lindsay completed 20 WA TTs this bike. 1996 was the last time the "Inter" did the York TT. From 1997 - 2008 he completed the Run on his freshly restored 1951 ES2 Norton, apart from in 1998 he rode a 1956 350 model 50 Norton. (Pics overleaf)



Lindsay Cooke (above) on 1948 International Norton & right: Barry Makin and Peter Rule 1975 York TT – pics courtesy Christopher Cooke. Colourised by Murray Barnard



FEATURE: THE WA TT - the "150 MILE TOURIST TROPHY RACE of WA"

On Sunday, October 26th, 1975, a short time after the Club had been founded, the VMCCWA ran the "Inaugural W.A. TT Commemoration Run." This event was to stay on the Club calendar in one form or another for the life of the Club as at 2022.

Peter Groucott and Alex Selley produced a booklet called the "The 150 Mile Tourist Trophy Race" which described the original race series from 1912-15 in brief and was used to collect commemoration run results for many years.

In 2019 a full illustrated history of the WA TT was produced by Murray Barnard to commemorate 100 years since the last WA TT and a copy of the booklet was provided to all club members. This history also recorded that a final TT race was run after WW1 in 1919.

There were 14 starters in the 1912 event and they set off over intervals on a handicap system. The winner was Mr C Lewis on a New Hudson from a handicap of 9 mins. 45 secs who finished the course in 4 hrs 23mins 58 secs. 8 starters finished the course.

For the 1913 Race there were 17 starters but only 7 reached York. H Norton on a Triumph was the winner completing the course in 3 hrs 50 mins 57 secs Only 3 bikes, one with a sidecar, finished the course.

There were 33 entries in 1914 demonstrating the growing popularity of the event. This race was run in extremely bad weather with severe hailstorms and heavy rain; several riders suffered facial cuts and broken goggles. C Lewis was again the winner this time on a Sunbeam in 3 hrs 32 mins 50 secs. followed by H Norton on a similar machine in 3 hrs 36 mins 20 secs.

The first World War, already under way in Europe, was probably the reason that entries were down to 18 in 1915. The winner was L Perry in a time of 3 hr 7 min.50 sec An attempt was made to revive the event after WW1 in 1919 but, the event run was plagued by racing incidents. Accidents, growing speed and a reluctance by the authorities to allow racing on public roads meant that this was the last WA TT race to be held.

The full history of the WA TT was published in 2019 by Murray Barnard.



Lord Street, Perth
finish line 1914

1976: The Bunbury woodchip bombing took place. More than 1000 sticks of gelignite were planted at the site. The population of Perth was now 846,000.

In February it was agreed that the Club should start its own newsletter, written by P Groucott and duplicated by P Wells, being known as the 'Vintage Chatter', the first issue being published in April 1976. It was said that after a long haul, the "Phoenix" had risen from the ashes. 'Vintage' motor cyclists were here to stay. Club membership was now 80 persons.



The Annual General Meeting held on 3 June, 1976 was chaired by the Vice-President, N R Stephenson in the absence of the President, Eric Langton, who was overseas. He gave a brief resume of the main activities of the past year.

Nominations for members of the Committee were called from the floor; the following were nominated and duly elected:- President: E Langton, Vice President: N Stephenson & Secretary M Sharpe.

The report later, on the AGM, in the Vintage Chatter criticized members for their lack of participation from the floor in the affairs of the Club, especially as many of them intimated later that they were not satisfied with the way the meeting was managed.

Peter Groucott got quite "Bolshie" and wrote that *"when no-one took the opportunity to voice approval or otherwise it must be concluded the majority were*

satisfied. Thus when 50 odd men sit silently through a meeting with which they are not satisfied they forego the right to say so afterwards."

Presumably the AGM was a concern as at the first meeting of the new Committee it was decided that in future AGMs would be conducted in a more formal manner.

There are no records of Committee Meetings from July 1976 to January 1977 so record keeping, as usual, leaves something to be desired.

Peter Groucott was a very conservative chap but also a bit naïve at times. An embarrassed Peter wrote in the August Chatter that, *"there has been an appearance on local newstands of an East Coast magazine called Spokes in which there is a brief history of the veteran and vintage motorcycle movement in WA written by myself earlier this year.*

At the time I wrote it I had no idea it would end up in a publication such as this. I mean that it is a publication which is not above printing material which can only be classified as filthy. Largely through my own carelessness the way was left open for my east Coast contact to channel my material into such a publication and for that I consider myself to blame. I hereby tender my apology." (Ed. Sadly we have not been able to source the "Spokes" magazine to assess it!)

1977: ABBA played in the Perth Entertainment Centre. The Entertainment Centre was later demolished, perhaps to exorcise the ghosts

Tension rises as the Club stretches it's wings, having parted from the VCCWA, any discomfort now belongs within the Club and for the Club to resolve. Early in the year, a letter was received from Max Sharpe resigning from the Committee and the Secretary was instructed to ask him to reconsider. The President pointed out that his remarks had been intended to apply to all latecomers and not directed at any one person.

In March a further letter from Max was read to the Committee Members and they agreed that his resignation would have to be accepted with regret. (Max would make his own mark on the Club in years to come). Still, the Annual Two Day Trial beckoned to distract members from Club politics



◆ Ed Padgett (71) with his grandson Jason (4) on the Vintage 1930 "sloper" BSA and the trophy which Ed won last year in the vintage motor cycle rally from Perth to Busselton.

ED REVS UP FOR RALLY -Weekend News 19 March 1977

When Ed Padgett kicks his "sloper" BSA motor cycle into a low rumble next month, his 71- year - old legs Won't flinch at all.

Ed, a motor bike buff since 1924, is the oldest entrant in the WA Vintage Motor Cycle Club's annual two-day rally over April 23 and 24. But the former taxi driver says he is fit and will be out to repeat his surprise form in last year's event.

"It was a bit surprising, I suppose, as it was only my second major rally," said Ed, of Carrington Street, North Perth. Since receiving his motor cycle licence in 1924, Ed has owned several machines, including a belt-driven Douglas, a model P Triumph and a James. But his 1930 BSA is the machine which has carried him to success in the vintage motor cycle field.

Next month, Ed and his son John (27), will be among 46 cyclists who will file out of Garden City, Booragoon, at two-minute intervals for the two- day rally.

The Weekend News is donating trophies worth \$50 for the annual event which is from Perth to Busselton and back. Starting at 7.30am, an array of veteran and vintage bikes will travel to Busselton via Byford, Pinjarra, Harvey, Bunbury and Collie, arriving on Saturday afternoon for the overnight stay.





1977 Two Day Trial - Dr. George Nunn on a 900cc AJS outfit, Neil Stephenson (#22) and Ray Oakes (#25)

Again, there are no minutes retained for the April Committee Meeting, however, at the General Meeting there was a lively discussion regarding an article by Peter Wells in the Vintage Chatter dealing with later model machines. Many members took part, some agreeing that a cut-off date should be set [say 1955] while others preferred to keep to the present '25 year' rule.

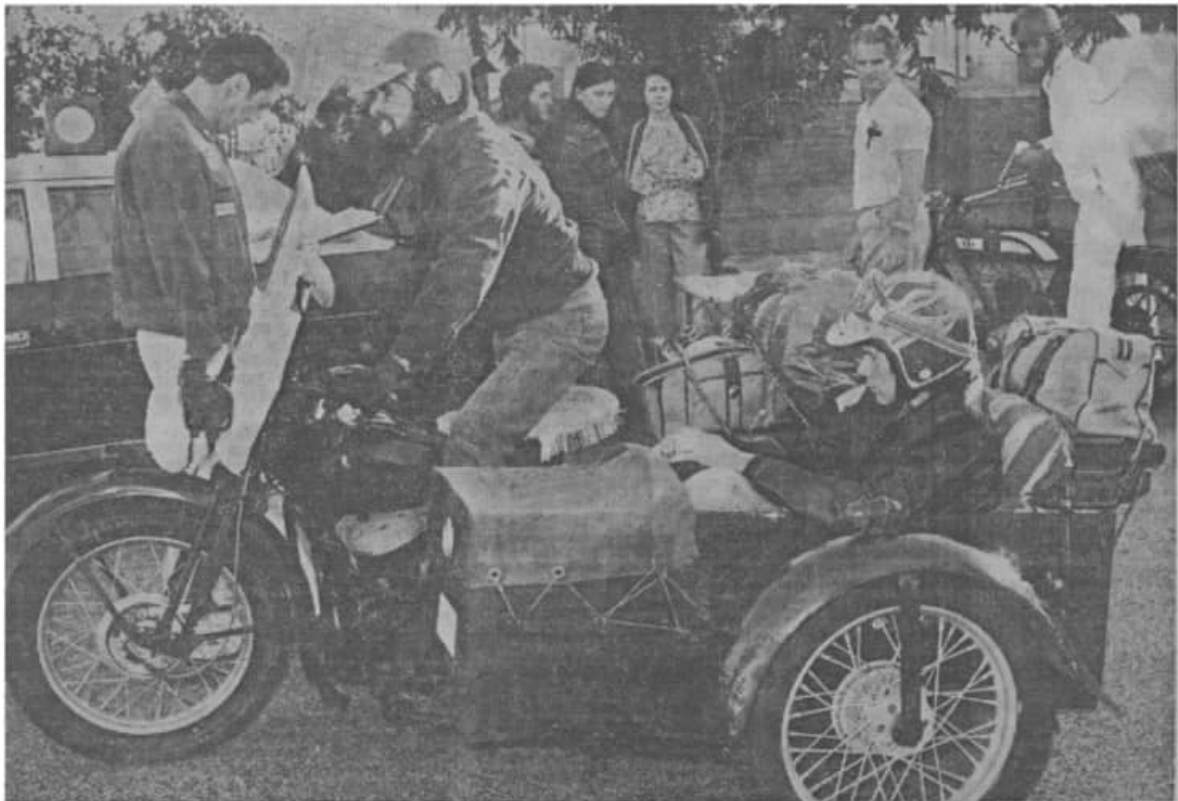
A bone of contention raised its head in the Chatter, namely making new members welcome. One prospective member got the impression that due to his choice of machine he was not welcome. Peter Groucott wrote that this highlighted the "unpleasant side of the usually good-natured teasing that goes on at meetings".

Peter Wells in the March 1977 Chatter raised this thorny issue:

THOSE TELE FORKERS: At present this club caters for machines more than 25 years old, which means that

anyone with a 1952 model is eligible to enter most of our events, A number of people have spoken to me recently, disturbed at the thought that we shall soon be seeing plastic motorcycles alongside flat tankers and belt drivers in our events. There is a British Enthusiast's Club catering for the later machines, say some of our members, so we should be considering cutting off our date for eligible machines, possibly at 1955? There was much debate at the next Monthly meeting on this matter which was later discussed at the AGM.

Evidence that not much changes, a heartfelt appeal was made in the August 1977 Chatter, namely: "there is a large streak of apathy running in our ranks as witness the overwhelming silence when an appeal was made for someone to take charge of the Picnic Run. An appeal for an organiser of the Two Day trial also fell upon deaf ears! The event has no chance of being held at all unless somebody gets off their butt and begins to take an intelligent interest in the affairs of the Club!"



◆ They're off in the vintage motor cycle rally. Starter Jim Mullins checks the time as Max Madill starts his ex-U.S. Army Harley Davidson. Passenger is Jim Sheffield. Picture: Barry Hall.

Max Madill at the start of the 1977 Two Day Trial .



*The
1978
Motorcycle Show*

CLAREMONT SHOWGROUND — 20th, 21st MAY





PRICE 400



Proceeds to
W.A.'s JOHN WAYNE CANCER APPEAL



FEATURE: GEORGE BEST - AN EPIC TALE by Charlie Lawson - Nov 77 Chatter: Reportedly Charlie Lawson talking to Ted Scott of Albany.

"George Best--he's a tough old bloke; in 1938 when we were all going to Lobethal, South Australia for the Australian T.T., George said "I've got' to put the crop in; you take my bike (1936 Manx Norton) on the boat with you and I'll come over on the Ariel when I've finished. There were Doug Booth (Norton), Arthur Hopkins (B.S.A.) and me on the Black Manx (Excelsior Manxman) of Billy Spence. So George finished his cropping project, shoved a loaf of bread and a tube down his Army overcoat and came over. The road was tarred only to the Midland Hotel at the bottom of Greenmount.

He rode up the street in Lobethal just as we were starting practice, after riding 2500 miles. You could just see the whites of his eyes. He gave his old Norton carbide a tickle and off he went as if he had just come around the corner. He came about seventh or eighth, Doug was fifth—I blew up after two laps.

Three weeks later at Koorda, W.A. talking to George Best: "Ted Scott tells me you rode over to S.A. in 1938 to ride in the TT, because you had to put the crop in or something."

G.B.-- That's nearly right, actually I had to take off 900 acres before I could get away. The T.T. was on Boxing Day. I finished harvesting about the 15th Dec. and got going. I checked the old Red Hunter over (winner 1934 North Beach TT) I did take a spare tube, a canvass water bag encased in leather. I wore Army breeches and leggings, a heavy storm coat, a leather cap and a felt hat. It was eight in the middle of summer.

C.L.-- Did you have any trouble?

G.B.-- Yes, about ten punctures each way and ruined a tyre on the stones and flint near Madura. I broke a footrest and made a stirrup out of my belt till I could effect repairs. On the way I lost my Water Bag -the only container I could get off Roy Gurney (Eucla Pass sheep station) was a metal Billy can which I hung around my neck on a rope and tucked inside my coat.

Actually I arrived on Xmas Eve, a day before practice- my face was nearly burnt black with the wind and heat. Arthur Hopkins had blown the bottom half of his Gold Star (first one in WA; but, old Harry Hinton had enough spares to build another motor up on Xmas day for him. In the race, Arthur fell heavily at a sharp left-hander as he had fitted a metal guard over the exposed clutch which fouled the ground when he banked.

The 500cc race was won by a chap called Hannaford, he drove a steam-roller or something for the Melbourne City Council. Minnet was second on a Velo. 350. Mussett was third on another Velo – these were factory KTTs on alcohol. Doug Booth was fifth. I was eighth at about 80mph. We (West Aussies) were hopelessly outclassed as we were on Pool (Std petrol) They (the rest) were all on "A" (Alcohol).

The straight was three miles long and it was depressing to be flat on the tank and have a 350 pass. We had to ride blazes on the twisty bits to make up. Those on "A" had to refuel- they had special 4 gallon tins with a bath plug and chain in the bottom for a quick fill.

On the way back, I was within sight of home (Koorda) after 5000 miles, when the old Red Hunter started smoking like blazes. After checking the usual things I found that over the years I had polished the ports right through to the rocker-box under the valve springs."

POSTSCRIPT: George Best (1901 to 1983) won the 1933 WA Motorcycle Association Championship at the Perth Royal Show. He also was the 1934 TT winner on WA's North Beach circuit. Sadly thieves stole George Best's motorcycle memorabilia, speedway frame and Rudge Whitworth motor from his farm at Koorda in 2017.

1978: Cyclone Alby swept through Perth & the South-West rattling the valves out of most machines and riders!

Concessional licencing for pre-1950 machines was now awaiting RTA approval. Once RTA approval was received stating officially that concessional licencing had been approved for machines up to 1950, permits for use specifically by the VMCCWA would be produced.

VINTAGE CHATTER 1978 saw a new Vintage Chatter cover produced which remained in use for another 28 years.

Vintage Chatter



THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VINTAGE MOTOR CYCLE CLUB OF W.A. (INC.)

OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THESE PAGES ARE THOSE OF OUR CORRESPONDENTS AND THE EDITOR AND THE V.M.C.C. OF W.A. DOES NOT NECESSARILY AGREE WITH THEM.

AGM: June 1978 and Peer Groucott was scathing that no-body but nobody, remembered at the May Committee meeting that the AGM was due in June! Seeing Peter was the Chair of the meeting, hard to understand how this happened. The AGM was eventually held a month late in July.

At the AGM held in July: Messrs E K LANGTON and E E LEGG were accorded Life Membership of the VMCCWA in recognition of their past services to the formation and operation of the Club". Alex Selley aid that without the foresight and tenacity of purpose of these two gentlemen, the VMCC may well not have been created in its present form. The motion was carried with enthusiasm by all members present.

Both recipients gave a short address of appreciation and thanked the members for the honour bestowed on them.

It was recommended by the Committee that the annual subscription be raised to \$10.00 but on amendment this was reduced to \$8.00.

The next motion to be considered concerned the 25 year rule for inclusion of machines into the Club. It was passed that 1 January 1931 to 31 December 1945 be known as post vintage; 1 January 1946 to 31 December 1955 be known as Post War; 31 December 1955 be known as the cut-off date.

YOUR NEXT ATTEMPT MAY BE YOUR LAST by P. Lunstond

In retrospect, I can only consider myself a Novice in my first attempt at Rally Riding but I would like to record my observations - and perhaps remind you veterans of the trauma the new competitor experiences. I arrived at the appointed pits area and to my dismay, the place was deserted so I gave the Service Station attendant my best "No, I'm OK mate" leer and rode off to the first side-street, thinking, "For Gods sake, It's the wrong b-----y Saturday.

"Having lit a cigarette, I sat back and took a furtive glance towards the Service Station still trying to convince myself that it was the right day and I was at the right place. Suddenly, I hoard a noise not unlike that heard on the occasion when my brothers and I let a washing machine fall off the back of a truck at about 80 k.p.h. and into view came a '42 ex-WD Harley which wheeled into the appointed place. This machine was closely followed by further machinery and I felt gloriously relieved that my timing was alright after all.

Joining the rapidly-growing band of not-so-young motor cycles and parking my own machine, I was soon peering into the power plants of various motor cycles and enjoying the company of fellow enthusiasts.

My composure had returned so I decided to get myself organised, beginning with checking up to ensure I knew just where we were going. The official I spoke to was very tolerant while I fire half a dozen questions at him at which time he told me on no uncertain terms that I would have to wait until briefing for answer.

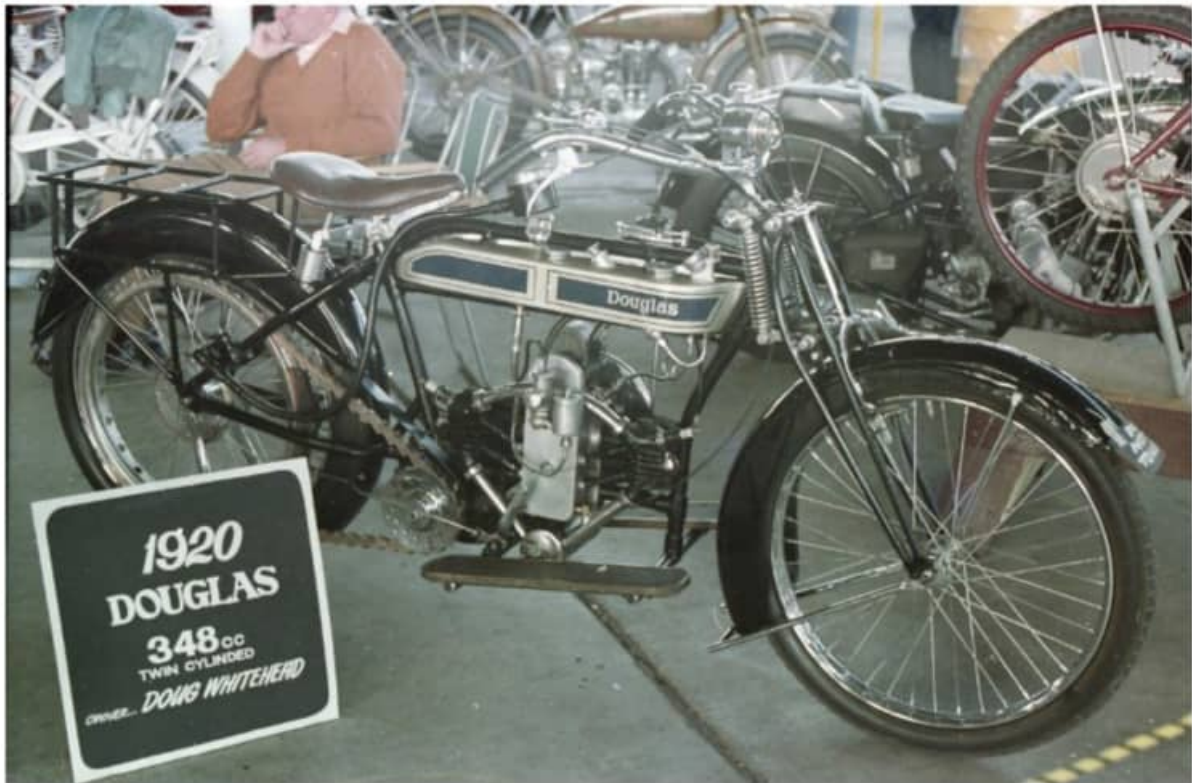
Chapter 4: 1980 - 84



1980: The average wage in 1980 was \$13,458. The median house price was \$39,500. The average Japanese 750/1000cc motorcycle cost under 2 grand. A Moto Guzzi however set you back over 4 grand!

The Club won the "Best Club Display" at the 1980 Motor Cycle Show for which it received a cheque for \$200.00 and a Trophy. All who had helped to make the Show Display' such a success were thanked by the event organiser Neil Stephenson. (Photos by Murray Barnard)





The Annual General Meeting was held on 3 September, 1980 in the middle of a General Meeting, commencing at 8.10 pm and finishing an hour later. The minutes of the meeting are very sparse. When the President, Jack Berkshire, was asked if he was going to table his Annual Report he replied in the negative stating that he hadn't prepared one!

The Police Xmas Party on 14 December started at 9.30am at the Police Academy, Maylands. There was a much better response from members this year and there were many machines on display. Eric Langton taxied-in Father Christmas [none other than Jack Berkshire] in his 1914 Swift.

FEATURE STORY: BRANDED IN A SIDECAR by Charlie Lawson

Around about 1950 we decided to send Bill Young to England to show the English gentlemen how we colonials ride motor cycles. To help him on his way a monster barbecue was organised out near Lake Karrinyup, on Goodeki's Dairy Farm. There was organised gambling _ beer stalls _ dancing girls _ the works - anything to raise money. It was after this event that this true yarn took place.

At this time I was an Auto Electrician and it was my allocated job to supply lights for the toilets, bar stalls, etc., these were from a swag of 12 volt car batteries that I had borrowed from work. When the night was drawing to a close I started picking up my boss's batteries with my 1939 Norton and side-box; along the way I also picked up several toasting forks and a young chap much the worse for wear (boozed) whom I offered to drop home.

After I had chained the gate, we headed for Perth like Eric Oliver (who was World Champ about then). As we were negotiating Lake Gwelup we came on two young females of the opposite sex who were walking to Perth as they had missed the special bus and had no offers to be taken home. On hearing their tale of woe I offered them back-side room in the side-box with the young fella, batteries, barbecue forks etc.

This they eagerly accepted and we took off through mist to the metropolis. After a couple of miles about where the old Roselea nursery used to be, the females, and Mitch started to scream and holler like the end of the world was in sight. It appeared that the toasting forks with the ample female posteriors pressing on them had shorted across all the batteries and became red hot, burning their lower crank cases.

I examined them in front of my Lucas 24 watt headlamp closely and administered first aid in the shape of castrol R. I then stowed the forks safely and delivered the girls to Newcastle Street, so if you ever see a member of the female sex with the bottoms of her crankcases branded plus or minus or a trident it's a safe bet that she was in Charlie Lawson's side-box about 30 years ago.



1981: Prince Charles and Diana Spencer get married; but , the dress made more headlines!

In May the subject of "A Possible Future Home" for the Club was raised for the first time. This concerned the possible involvement of the Club with the development of the VCC'S leased property at Forrestfield.

The June General Meeting was marred by having to be conducted during a strike by power workers and therefore under blackout conditions. Members arrived carrying torches and lanterns and "the show went on" but it was of short duration. "Prof" Wilkinson was not deterred and he showed some of the films he had demonstrating his unbelievable stunt driving.



The Annual General Meeting was held on 2 September, 1981 with Jack Berkshire in the chair. The retiring President's Report was accepted as read as it had been published in Vintage Chatter. The President wished to personally convey his thanks to Ron Jewell, Auditor; Eric Langton and Peter wells Dating Officers, and Committee Members and apologized for omitting them in his report. He also thanked all members for their support during his term



in office. In his report he followed his predecessor's lead and gave a special vote of thanks to the Ladies who are always there to help during rallies etc.

There was a barbeque for members at Ray and Joan Oakes home on 19 December, 1981 attended by about 80 people. Music was provided, there was room to dance and a swimming pool was available for hardy souls. There were also 3 films of TT Races. The event was described as "excellent."

Much heated discussion took place during the year about the lack of willing volunteers to run events, the lack of attendance at some and administration trials and rallies. One item that was quite controversial was whether the Club should be seeking it's own Clubhouse. This was initiated by the VCC choosing to build a Clubhouse on the land they leased from the Kalamunda Shire at Forrestfield. The discussion tailed away when the VCC advised that as the VMCCWA was an affiliated Club it would be able to use the proposed Clubroom at no cost. More clarity on this was to come in coming years.

Peter Groucott was outspoken in the final Chatter for the year when he wrote about Quality versus quantity. *"A small number of machines in the WA TT were downright SCRUFFY and one in particular had obviously had NOTHING done to it to make it more presentable. This represents a serious lowering of standards"*, he wrote.

1982: Tony Barber somehow still was on Sale of the Century making him likely to celebrate his 100th birthday on TV if he keeps this up!

One of the members who objected to Peter Groucott's opinion in the Vintage Chatter was Dave Rixon and his complaint concerned standards required for Club machines.

At the January General Meeting several members put forward their views on the treatment of Dave Rixon and his "scrappy" machine which had led to his resignation from the Club. After lengthy discussion it was decided to write to Dave Rixon advising that "his resignation not be accepted and apologizing for the needless attack on the standard of his machine".

One member unwilling to vote for this motion was Peter Groucott, Editor of the Vintage Chatter, who asked that it be recorded that he abstained from voting. Eric Langton came to Peter's defence in the January Chatter stating that the machine concerned

FEATURE STORY: WHEN I TOOK THE GIRL HOME FROM THE DANCE by Charlie Lawson

In the forties every motor cycle club used to hold an annual dinner and presentation of trophies. On this occasion the Harley dinner was being held at the North Perth Town Hall and as I had come about 7th or 13th that year in the Harley Scramble, I went along to collect my finishing certificate.

Now, I have a mate who had more girls on a string than Rudolf Valentino and on this particular Friday night he had got his wires crossed to the extent of taking two separate girls to two separate venues. To overcome this situation, he had another mate, who had a HILLMAN 1938, pick her up along with his own date and say, "Harry has a bilious attack, so come along with us".

(The plot thickens).

At this time I knew all about cams, pistons, valves, gear ratios, but little about girls. I owned a couple of ES2 NORTONS and a 250cc EXCELSIOR MANXMAN IOM Genuine TT racer. The last mentioned machine is the one that featured in this true tale. I had fitted a push bike head lamp, which ran direct off a 6v M/C battery. The tail lamp was from a War surplus life jacket and used to cost 2/6 with battery.

As I had to respond on behalf of the A.J.S. Club (being Club captain), I attended in my dinner suit, bullet proof shirt, patent leather shoes, gabardine overcoat (ideal motor cycling gear). During the medley I was dancing with this girl (Harry had slipped his timing with), when she said: 'I'll have to go home with you, Allen has taken Flo home and I've no transport.'

At this I didn't know whether to be happy or not, as I've already mentioned my total experience of the female species. I explained that I only had my racer, which had a pillion 8" x 4" , no foot rest, open chains. But she explained how she loved M/C, so I steered her outside to my machine, tucked my pants in my socks and ran down the street to start her (she was a bump starter). I rode back to the young lady, who was at this time coiling 8 yards of tulle skirt around her waist ready to mount the rear of the machine. (This was safely accomplished eventually) and we took off, blowing Shell M (10 x 1 CR) and Castrol R down View Street.

As we were trickling along Oxford Street, she exclaimed, "Oh I've lost my purse." So I wheeled around like Geoff Duke and returned to North Perth, where I retrieved her purse from the gutter at our original departure point. By now the light was about as bright as a tin of apricot jam. As we were crossing the Loftus Street Bridge at about 8,000 r.p.m. in third gear, the machine suddenly slowed as the young lady screamed blue murder.

I dragged my beloved machine to the bridge rail, then surveyed the young maiden. Her rocker boxes were almost of the open type (pre 1936) while her bottom end was just held together by a pair of racy black strides. This was all semi enclosed in a short tiger skin coat. I then realised why the machine was pulling so heavy. It was her blue dress in the transmission.

Right at this time the street lights went out, which caused the young girl to start howling like blazes. I wasn't too bloody happy either. I walked the girl home and told her to tell her mother, the dress had slipped through the floor boards and got caught around the tailshaft of the HILLMAN, also gave her six pounds towards a new garment.

On returning to my machine, I levered on the spokes with a picket to reverse the wheel and retrieve the dress, which kept us in polishing rags for at least twelve months. To this day that girl has never married.

was a "heap of rubbish" and in addition it hadn't been dated and thus should never have been on the TT event.

Dave was vindicated later when he was congratulated for his work in running the Two Day Trial.

The end result of all this contention is that Peter Groucott took umbrage and resigned as Editor of the Chatter at the Club's January meeting. Barry Berkshire stepped into the breach. Bob Veitch as Secretary did his best to heal the wounds.

The President asked that it be recorded that the Editor's resignation had been accepted with deep regret and thanked Peter for his efforts in producing the magazine and assisting generally in the Club.

One immediate benefit was vastly improved typesetting and layout. Peter may have disliked "scrappy" bikes but his typing was erratic, but as he did everything from writing, typing to printing and mailing the Chatter this can be forgiven.

After consideration, followed by a vote the decision was taken to move the venue for meetings to the new VCCWA rooms at Forrestfield. It was further agreed that consideration be given to the VMCC participating financially in building a proposed storage shed at the same venue.

The new VCC Club Rooms at Forrestfield were officially opened on 15 May, 1982. All VMCC members were invited and approximately 20 were in attendance. It was a good day except for the rain!

At about the same time the new Mt Henry Bridge was opened and 9 machines went along. They were welcomed by the crowd but had a little trouble with marshals who were not aware that Motor Cycles

were attending. The first Monthly Meeting at Forrestfield took place on 7 July 1982.

ALBANY SECTION FORMED: For many months Neil Bromilow had been endeavouring to form a section of the VMCC in Albany. He was asked to forward a formal application together with the names of 10 foundation members, a suggested name for the section, a list of proposed office bearers and an official address. He satisfied all these demands and formal approval was granted to form the Albany Section of VMCC in July, 1982.

Barry Berkshire resigned as Editor in July and , ironically, the Club was fortunate to have Dave Rixon take over as Editor.

A major change which met with resistance from some members was that the Club abandon the "hard & fast" cut-off rule for Club machines of 1955 and adopt the RTA's new advice of a rolling 25 year cut-off for concessional licensing. Jim Wallace took the Chair and commented that the change in the rule will allow many more motorcyclists to participate in Club activity.

Mr B Seens felt moved enough to express his fear that the Club would be over-run by the son of Nippon. Greg Boothey wrote that he hoped the Club would maintain a focus on the older machines and not split into Sections. David Rixon expressed his view that he wished the Club to remain a Vintage Motor Cycle Club!

(Of course that view did not leave much room for Veterans, Post Vintage and Post War machines, but I think his intention was clear).

The Club ended the year with 200 members and \$9,000 in the bank.

From a letter in The Vintage Chatter in Sep 1979: "Surely it is a fact of life that this year's Japanese multis will become a part of our history and will be restored, displayed and run in exactly the same way machines manufactured before my Father was born are lovingly cared for today".

1979 also saw the need to establish of register of Club machines, one significant advantage being the ability of the Club to verify ownership of machines, whether licensed or unlicensed in the event of theft, something which was seen to be prevalent at the time, Australia-wide.



Sounds apocryphal but it is said that one member left a pile of exotic parts displayed at a swap meet with a sign "Swap for anything Indian" Upon return he found laid out on his patch two hockey sticks and a tin of curry powder!!

FEATURE STORY: TROUBLE ON THE ROAD by Charlie Lawson

In the forties my pride and joy was a 1939 ES2 Norton and it was with this machine that this particular tale took place. I had just repaired and fitted a new piston and gudgeon pin prior to the Friday night when I set off for Albany to see my folks. When I set off. It was cracking like a cannon but during the night she started to lose power and began running like a nose.

On investigating, I found the breather to the rear chain working overtime indicating broken rings or piston. I immediately cut 20 feet of wire from a fence and waited for a tow. An hour later I hailed a honeymoon couple in a 1926 Austin 7, who towed me into Albany, arriving at 3 a.m. I rose at the crack of dawn and dismantled the Norton to find that the piston (Aust. Polson) had cracked up through the bosses and across the top and then burnt through.

I then called on Ted Scott, an old-time MC enthusiast to chase up another piston. He said no-one ever had Nortons in Albany with 79 mm bore to his recollection then chased up another local who said a Murray Smith used to have a lamp post Norton years ago but he was away in the Navy. On the off chance I called to this chap's address in case he had ever had a spare piston and his father may know of it.

Well as luck would have it, the chap had only just come home on leave that morning from Perth on the train. He said he had had a spare piston that he had tried to raise the compression on by welding, but he had left it at the Auto-electricians where it had been used under the drill press to drill copper contacts. So off we went to the electrician. They said, yes, they remembered the piston but had thrown it out about a week ago; so we went around to the apprentice who had cleaned up the workshop and he took us to the local dump where after an hour of digging the piston was located. This was found to be oversized, so it was round turned and then cam ground with a bastard file. The ring bands were turned to take Essex car rings and the whole lot was reassembled.

On Sunday at about the five mile peg, I met a chap with a MAC Velo who had a broken conrod and punched a neat hole through the front downtube. I cut another fence and towed him to Bayswater -



Charlie Lawson

1983: The Fremantle rail-line re-opened after much protest about the closure.

At the beginning of the year many items occupied the attention of Committee Members. One was the possible formation of a Vintage/Veteran Section within the Club and the other was the composition and duties of an Events Sub-committee.

A large contingent of members plus 15 machines left Perth on 11 February to take part in the New Zealand Rally and returned on 10 March. They came back full of praise for the hospitality of the New Zealanders, the beautiful countryside and the "best motor cycling roads in the world." Jim Clark kept busy with his pen:



The Management Committee got a little dictatorial in February when it decided that members **MUST** wear Club name badges on Club events or be fined \$0.20! *(It is possible this requirement did not last long)*

In the Chatter Mr Seens asked if members would like to be surrounded by Jap 2 Strokes on the York TT. Also in 20 years time, when the Club comprises 90% Yamazuki owners, who will give a hoot about his 1923 Norton? *(As well as being quite racist, the remarks did not take account of newer younger members joining the Club and keeping it alive as older machines became less accessible;; but one can understand his concern was more with the present).*



At the Special Meeting on 2 May 83 matters were brought forward for finalising, these were the "25 year rule" and the formation of a Vintage Section. A long discussion and much hot air expelled about the 1955 cut-off date versus the "25 years rule", before the vote was taken which resulted in 56 votes for the "25 year rule" against 25 for the 1955 cut-off date. Albany Section participated with 8 postal votes counted.

Eric Langton shared a 1913 Colonial BSA with John Gloyn



(Presumably those voting against the rule did not consider if successful that they were depriving members of access to a concessional license for machines they may have had older than 25 years but younger than 1955).

During the debate a vote was taken on the question of excluding Japanese machines from the Club and this resulted in a majority voting against the exclusion.

FEATURE: THE DEGREE TREE by Bill Young

This is the tale of a tree. Not a tall stately Karri, reaching skywards, majestic in the forest of the sou-west, or even a green leafy beauty resplendent with early spring blossom. No, but a twisted khaki coloured hunchback of a tree, battling for survival, its knotted trunk bent double from the constant ocean winds, its rheumatic branches coated with the grey dust of the limestone. If you happen to be a green elf or a gardener, you, no doubt, have heard the story that plants respond to sweet words and soft music. Unfortunately I cannot vouch for the truth of this, most of my digging has been done with an under-inflated 400 x 18 and the words often levelled at its motive power have seldom been kind. But then I remember the day when I should have doffed my lid and thanked that bent caricature of a tree, but I must confess at the time that courtesy was completely over-looked.

Before suburbia encroached on the old Harley Scramble Course at Buckland Hill another even was held annually in that vicinity, the Ariel Freak Hill Climb. The hill is still there today, towering up to the local reservoir 400 yards of sand and limestone. A hands and knees climb with the last half almost vertical. It was my custom to always compete there. The winner was decided by furthest up or if one was lucky enough to surmount the hill, fastest time. The year of the tree episode, I decided to have a big go. A motor was built with all the good bits and on a compression ratio which now I shudder to recall. This machine was completed a couple of weeks prior to the event, tested and modified. Funnily enough it worked best on an ignition lead of 47 V2 degrees, which sounded too much but this is what it liked, so that is what it got. For good measure it was christened 'Summit Seeker' and this inscription was painstakingly painted on both sides of the tank, which was a total waste of effort, as the special fuel sloshed out and completely washed it off first time out. We arrived early on the big day for practice, donned a hat, pointed the potent beast at the hill and was rewarded with a series of violent explosions and very little forward motion. Plugs were changed, all the usual remedies and suggestions failed to cure the complaint and in disgust I flung the bike into the twisted branches of that tree, as a faulty magneto was diagnosed. It looked like I was an instant onlooker, no time to go home for spares... or was there? Worth a try. I might manage it at the lunch break. Helping hands started to extricate the bike from the bush and remove the mag while I tore home. Before I got back to the course I could hear bikes being warmed up, and as I was number 3, it was to be touch and go! They weren't quite started when I slipped the new mag on - but then I heard the first rider on the line. I spared a quick glance over my shoulder, he was away, a crescendo of sound, a high rooster tail and he was up and over. Sprockets on, the number 2 rider is called up. In my haste I had left my timing disc at home, break a gnarled finger from one of the hands of that twisted tree, down the plug hole, points just opening, about right, nip up the nuts and number 2 rider is away...straight up and over the top.

Now the pressure is really on!! They were calling for me, fuel on, hat on, off compression, a push from willing helpers and she burst into life with the exhaust note crisp and clean again. On the rollup to the line I could feel the vibration. I liked the vibration, not for me those silky smooth turbine-like engines, those meek motors usually had performance to match. Then the hill and I faced each other, a bit of good unused ground on the right, third gear engaged, wheel-grip all important, the flag dropped and the hill rushed up like a huge white wall. In previous years I had been over the hill but this time it was different, the old Norton just didn't slow down. One moment I was looking at the speeding sand and stone, the next, blue sky. I forgot to shut off. The rear wheel must have hit the ledge at the top, the bike and I did a complete forward somersault and landed most untidily in the fence around the reservoir. I picked myself up and promptly fell down again; my knees didn't work, then came the announcement over the loud speaker... fastest time and a new record for the hill. It was quite late when we got back home that night, but as soon as I had unloaded 'Old Summit Seeker', I put my forgotten timing disc on it. Ignition timing exactly 4714 degrees. Must go and thank that old tree sometime.

(Bill Young ran a motorcycle service and wrecking shop in Charles St North Perth for many years)

BILL YOUNG'S NORTON: This 1948 Norton ES2 Special was built by Bill Young, who was trained in the Norton factory in Birmingham, England and was a factory trials rider. He was locally known as "Mr. Norton" in the 50's, and this was his personal bike.

The bike has a "gardengate" ES2 plunger frame with International "Road Holder" forks and larger International oil and fuel tanks. An 8-inch SLS hub is laced to a 21 inch front wheel and 19 inch rear. The 500cc engine features a high-compression piston and pre-war high-lift camshaft and a Brooklands exhaust. It was dyno'ed at 29hp, and the gearbox is a Norton 'works' close-ratio unit.



There was little discussion before the voting on the motion that "a Vintage Section be formed" which resulted in 56 votes in favour and 21 against.

Other points of interest were that a majority of members were in favour of smoking being banned at all meetings and on that some members thought Monthly Meetings were far too lengthy.

In May Committee members signed a legal document on the proposed storage building at Forrestfield, by which the Club agreed to pay half the cost of the building.

It was recorded at the July, 1983 General Meeting that \$5,000.00 had been paid into the General Building Fund leaving \$1,492.07 in Club coffers.

The President was able to report in May that the 'spare parts' building was progressing, with the footings and the walls being constructed. Many Club members had attended a 'busy bee' on 14 May to help clean up the site. The area for the caretaker's cottage was cleared Jim Wallace thanked members who helped.

Jim Clark advises that "The parts shed was contracted out except for the roof frame which was constructed by Bert Holmes and Jim Clark. Bert supplied the hardware free of charge. Dave Reid VCC and VCC volunteers did the labouring." The cost of the building is \$16,000 of which the VMCCWA is paying half of the cost.

PRE 31 SECTION FORMED: The "Pre-31 Section" was officially formed on 8 June 1983.

1984: Death penalty abolished which would come as a relief to Harley riders with open exhausts! Perth's population cracks a million! At 1,020,000

Club Committee minutes went missing from April 1984 to March 1987, so it is anyone's guess as to what went on.

The VMCC Annual General Meeting was held on 5 September, 1984. The Vintage Chatter had a new Editor; Dave Rixon decided he could no longer continue and Jim Clark took over. For the first time the 'content' and the 'production' side of the Vintage Chatter was divided into two separate responsibilities. Barry Makin became Publisher.

"Wheels West '87" was introduced to members at the end of the year. This was a major undertaking by the Club, to promote a National Motor Cycle Scenic Tour. The date of the event was given as 6 - 22

FEATURE: AROUND AUSTRALIA BY MARTINSYDE

At the July 1984 General Meeting, Neil Bromilow gave a talk on his around Australia epic which he undertook on his 1922 680 cc Martinsyde. He undertook his journey of 15,985 kms with no support vehicle or commercial sponsorship. He completed the journey in 35 days and amazingly he found the time to participate in the Australian Motor Cycle Grand Prix 60th Anniversary Rally on his way round.

Peter Groucott wrote: "LATE in the afternoon of July 5th, 1984, in the tiny settlement of Elleker on the south coast of West Australia, history was made. Neil Bromilow had returned from his "ride around the block". Some block!! It's called Australia, and Neil's ride on a 1922 678cc Martinsyde vee-twin had covered no fewer than 9,933 miles. Moreover, he had done it almost entirely alone, with no involvement of any form of commercial or governmental support.

Why? Two reasons, really; Neil had wanted to attend the 60th Anniversary Rally at Goulburn, New South Wales, commemorating the first Australian Motor Cycle Grand Prix — but above all, 1984 marked the 60th anniversary also of the first round-Australia journey by ANY kind of motor vehicle. That trip had been made on a 348cc Douglas by fellow West Aussie, Arthur Grady, of Freemantle; and Grady really had done it the hard way. Entirely alone, and

October, 1987. Ray Oakes was in charge of the Organising Committee. Naturally many members would be required to make this venture a success.



almost entirely on bush tracks and unmade roads, it took him five months.

Since then, however, his name had become largely forgotten and Neil Bromilow thought it about time some form of proper homage was paid to the man.

To go back to the beginning, in 1974 Neil had discovered a frame which he thought might have been a Martinsyde. Writing to the VMCC in England, he received confirmation that it was indeed from a Martinsyde 678cc Sport; from England, too, he obtained an engine, gearbox and tank, and with the aid of Brampton Biflex forks from an AJS twin he built the model up to rolling chassis level —but before he could complete the machine he got wind last year of a complete 1922 678cc Martinsyde for sale in Lincoln.

Chris Tait, of the Martinsyde Register, bought it for him, broke it down into large lumps, made a crate and shipped it out to Australia together with a mechanical oil pump, and the oil tank of a 1923 Martinsyde Quicksix. At that stage the bike was hand-oiled and bog-standard, but Neil rebuilt it to mechanical oiling.

With the marathon ride in prospect he made a pair of oversize pannier fuel tanks to the original Martinsyde style, and painted these in the correct colour and lining. The only other deviation from original spec was the substitution of a pair of 19in BSA C 10 wheels, thereby at one swoop disposing of

the problems of vee-block brakes and hard-to-find beaded edge tyres. The small change in effective wheel size reduced the ground clearance slightly and, of course, lowered the gearing but with a fully-laden bike this last proved to be an advantage.



Throughout the trip the Martinsyde returned over 50mpg in spite of the load it was carrying and a cruising speed usually in excess of 40 mph. In the far north-west of West Australia there still remains an un-tarred section of National Highway 1, and for about 170 miles the surface is of intermittent patches of bare rock separated by stretches of deep red dirt and sand. One of the Martinsyde's less endearing features is its steering geometry, for the exaggerated fork rake makes it a pig to navigate at low speeds. So when Neil reached the dirt highway he found himself forced to take a very firm grip on the handle-bar, retard the spark, and just chug along in top at greatly reduced speed. The bike responded by giving 90 mpg! The bare rocky bits played mild havoc with the rear wheel, and when nine spokes were found to be broken, Neil lost three hours carrying out a roadside wheel rebuild.



Due to several last-minute equipment problems, the Great Ride had started a day late, which meant that getting to the Goulburn Rally — 2,441 miles away — was quite a serious task and, of necessity, some very

long days were spent in the saddle. Remember that the machine had no lights, making all travel a daylight-only business. Towns — or even roadside petrol points were in many cases over a hundred miles apart.

There were treeless plains, arid rock, spinifex-covered desert, tropical rain forests, jungle, farmland, town and city riding, and just plain old Aussie bush country. It took him eight days, mostly at around 350 miles a day, to reach Goulburn — and he arrived with less than 30 minutes to spare before the event got under way.

The first part of the Rally was a run "to blow the cobwebs away"; he hadn't the heart to tell the organisers that HIS cobwebs were already well and truly accounted for! At the end of the two-day rally he was given a nocturnal lift to Sydney where a new rear tyre was fitted, but the only prior need to open the toolkit was 2,330 miles earlier, when new valves showed signs of sticking.

Leaving Sydney on Day 11, Neil put in his shortest one-day mileage of the whole trip, only 73 miles; but Day 12 found him well up the east coast with another 260 miles covered. Next day, 234 miles took him to the southern border of Queensland; then 234 miles more to Brisbane.

Neil's overnight stop beyond Brisbane was Maryborough where, too late in the day to travel further, he was refused permission to spend the night in a local caravan park because, said the manager; "We don't want any bikies here!" That sobering experience meant a roadside kip in the ol' sleeping bag — certainly no new experience, but the only time in the whole ride that an alternative choice was denied him.

At Rockhampton, 15 days gone and 3,673 miles from the start, the Martinsyde was showing small signs of distress, and a valve-grind was carried out.

Day 20 on the Barkly Highway got him to Richmond, 301 miles on and all fuelled-up for another dawn start. Next day Our Hero got into Camooweal at 6pm, thoroughly stiff and sore after a bone-jarring 405 miles. There, he was so demoralised that (he says) had there been a railway station, he would have put the Martinsyde on the train and come home! Still, from Camooweal it was not so many more miles further to the Northern Territory border, and much better roads.

Cheered, he was able to notch up a much more enjoyable 384 miles on Day 22, to reach Wauchope Hotel. That's right, HOTEL! Not a town, not even a settlement, just a pub in the middle of nowhere. From there it was an 800-mile detour to Alice Springs, but Neil was determined to get there, and it all proved very worthwhile. He chanced upon members of the local Veteran and Vintage Car Club, where he was made most welcome and was given the opportunity of qualifying, officially, for one of the club's highly-prized Overlander awards. For that he had to travel a documented minimum distance to or from 'The Alice' of 1,500 kilometres. As he was aiming for Darwin, 1,507 km away, it was all fairly straightforward.



By Day 27 he was looking forward to meeting friends and seeing the sights of Darwin, but following Murphy's Law every-thing went awry. Hoped-for contacts couldn't be reached, much needed extra funds were not available, and dealers who (he had anticipated) would have fitted an air cleaner for the dirt roads ahead, didn't want to know anyone who wasn't on a Japanese bike.

Totally disenchanted with Darwin, Neil retraced his tracks to Katherine after 354 frustrating miles, but there a friendly garage owner boosted his spirits with the loan of workshop facilities, and Neil was able to rig up a makeshift air filter (a woollen sock) and do some routine maintenance on the magneto points. In the closing hours of Day 27, he crossed into the home territory of West Australia, and one day later he was heading down the North-West Highway to Hall's Creek — site of the first gold discovery in WA but, also, the beginning of the Dreaded Dirt Road. To say that section of the highway added to his aches and bruises would be a massive understatement. It accounted also for the broken spokes, yet despite the hard going he made remarkably good time, and put

the dirt road behind him before calling it a day at Fitzroy Crossing. At the Crossing there were only three broken spokes, and Neil decided to press on through Day 29 and take a chance.

However, when another very rough patch broke a further half-dozen spokes there was nothing for it but a roadside rebuild, a three-hour delay which played havoc with his time schedule. In order to reach the home of club mate Cyril Eames at Karratha, Day 30, he reckoned, would have to be the longest yet — as indeed it was, with 478 miles of quite literally concentrated dawn-to-dusk riding.

When no Martinsyde appeared at sundown, Cyril went out to find the missing rider (not too difficult, as there was only the one road!), and for the last few miles the Martinsyde was groping along behind the headlights of the Eamesmobile. Why the urge to press on? Well, July 5th was Neil's birthday, and he had made up his mind to complete the run by then.

Day 31 took him to five miles short of the banana-growing capital of Carnarvon, then it was 310 miles onward to the home of club mate Bob Robinson — but before that was reached there was a meeting with a Perth TV crew, which had been sent out especially to meet Neil. The resulting footage, and Neil's very good commentary were featured in a Statewide programme the next evening. Day 32 meant a relatively easy 282 miles to Perth, and a group of VMCC of WA members had arranged to meet him and escort him for about 30 miles into the capital. But the other Perth TV station had a crew out to meet him, too — and Neil arrived so well ahead of time that he all but caught everybody on the hop.

Still, all worked out OK in the end. It just happened that that night was the club's regular meeting, and as the Martinsyde stood in the clubroom begrimed with dust of all the mainland states of Australia, Neil kept the crowd enthralled with the tales of his exploits. Next day, his 33rd, Neil knew he was on the home stretch to Elleker, for the further he went the colder and wetter it became. Then, at last, the Great Ride was over— 9,933 miles of it, on a bike which steered so chronically that there was no chance to relax at any time.

It was a little while later that he received the most pleasant surprise possible; a congratulatory telegram from the son of Arthur Grady, the man who had made his round-Aussie ride 60 years before:

"CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ACHIEVEMENT AND FOR RE-KINDLING FOND MEMORIES OF MY FATHER'S SIMILAR ROUND AUSTRALIA ADVENTURE. BEST REGARDS. E.W. GRADY"

Oh, and about the Goulburn Rally. In that event Neil was the winner of two awards. One was for the most technically interesting machine. The other was for the entrant who had travelled furthest to the meeting; well . . . he would be, wouldn't he?

BUILDERS of the Martinsyde bomber of WW1, Martin & Handasyde, of Maybury Hill, Woking, Surrey, turned to peacetime motor cycle manufacture to keep their works occupied. Designed by Howard Newman, it was a 678cc vee-twin with unusual exhaust-over-inlet valve operation. Later the range expanded to include a 348cc single, 498cc twin, and the sporting Quicksix. A merger with the old-established BAT company came in 1924, but production ended a year later. Fifteen motor cycles (and, in Finland, one aeroplane) are known to survive."



Chapter 5: 1985 - 89



1985: The face of motorcycling changes with the release of the Suzuki GSXR750 and the RG500. Both machine raised the bar on street performance.

Note: There is a general paucity of information on Club activity at this time due to the loss of records.

The "Wheels West '87" event was in the news mid-year with a letter in Vintage Chatter. Ray Oakes was able to divulge that 50 registrations had already been received, 25 of them from New Zealand.



Ray Oakes - Wheels West event organiser

The Club suffered a grievous loss when the President, Max Sharpe died on the eve of the "Brookton Brass Monkey Run", an annual event which Max organised. The Club lost an excellent President and Club Member; he was highly regarded and a genuine friend. There was a large attendance of Club Members at his funeral demonstrating the affection in which he was held.

MAXWELL AYRTON SHARPE. It's been said that anyone who has a friend is a rich man. Well, Max Sharpe must have been in the Millionaire class, for he amassed a large number of people who were more than just mere acquaintances, but good friends. Max spent his boyhood days in Bunbury, at that time before the war a pretty quiet little town, much like Busselton is today.

When later his parents moved to Perth, Max was able to further his interest in cars and bikes, although far too young to own one. Like many young lads intrigued with things mechanical he took delight in being able to recognise the make and model of anything that moved along the pre-war and early wartime streets, and was also able to tell many of them by their distinctive sounds even before they came into sight.

When he was old enough he joined the Air Training Corps, which trained lads in similar fashion to the School Cadets, but with the aim of inducting them into the R.A.A.F. when they turned eighteen. He duly joined the Airforce serving in Darwin, Gove, and other bases in the far North of Australia. At that stage of the war conditions were pretty rugged for the servicemen, but Max was later to look back on his time there and recall the good times, and the good companionship that active service seems to generate.

He was also able to pursue one of his hobbies there, namely photography. He retained an interest in that subject throughout his life, and many of his photos how he had above average skill in the art. After the war Max joined Wesfarmers, then agents for Fiat and Nash cars, and he also bought a Red Hunter Ariel outfit from Alan Dawson, thus beginning his long interest in the marque.

Soon Max began to realise that courting was not made any easier without a hood, so the Ariel was pushed aside for a rather special Austin Seven affectionately known as "Penelope." This little car remained in Max's affection for the rest of his life, exerting considerable influence on his activities several times.

In later years Max suffered from heart trouble which prevented him from completing all his car and motorcycle projects but he still found time to help organise Club activities and run as President. His time in the role was so appreciated that an Annual event - the Max Sharpe Memorial Run - was held for many a year.

Peter Stocker stepped in to the breach as President as John Rock as Vice President had work commitments and couldn't maintain the role. The first thing Peter did as president was raise the issue of the 25 year cut-off for Club machines and put it to the vote.



As Peter was of rather conservative trope he felt the Club identity would be lost if the 25 year rule remained in place. Peter felt the availability of pre 1960 machines and parts was such that there were plenty to keep the Club in good stead for years to come. The highly combustible matter was apparently defused on the night by some wise words from Ray Oakes and the matter was laid to rest and the 25 year rule remains in place to this day.

BEVERLEY RE-ENACTMENT: The Club is indebted to Alex Selley for promoting the idea of a re-enactment of the first road race held in WA, the Beverley to Perth race held in 1904. In 1984 the "Pre-31 Section" of VMCC decided it would like to run a re-enactment of this first road race and it came to fruition on the weekend of 12/13 October 1985. There were 15 starters in the event and they each received an "Inaugural Medallion". The oldest bike on the Run was Ray Selley's 1903 Victor, at the time the oldest known complete Australian-built Motor Cycle. Since then the run has been held yearly, restricted to Pre-31 machines.

FEATURE: WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S FIRST LONG DISTANCE MOTORCYCLE ROAD RACE - 1904
Distance 116 miles - A short history:

The idea of a long distance road race for motorcycles was first mooted in the "Western Australian" some time in August 1904. The race was instituted and organized by the League of W.A. Wheelmen and was to be run on the same day as the Annual Beverley to Perth Cycle Road race which had been started in 1897. On the day of the Beverley (as it was known) the rain had taken its toll of the road. This being the 10th of September and the report was that the event was postponed on the day of the Beverley Road race owing to the treacherous nature of the roads being deemed by the starter Mr. A Ford as too dangerous to risk life and limb. Another report mentions the good time the riders had coming home on the train, eating up all the chocolates left over from the cycle race. The course start is at Beverley Post Office and proceeded to York where a time control was set up at the Post Office. The riders continued straight through York, following the railway line to Northam Post Office.

Leaving Northam they again followed the railway line through to Clackline - Chidlows and down Greenmount to Midland Junction Post Office where there was a time control. Continuing down

Great Eastern Highway, through Guilford and over the Burswood Railway Crossing Rivervale, then via Duke Street, Kingston Street to Albany Road (Albany Highway) to finish at the Victoria Park Hotel. The distance was 116 miles. The first prize was a bicycle valued at 30 pounds, donated collectively by Messrs Mortlock Bros, Dunlop Tyre Co., Indian Tyre Co., and Mr. R.B. Gilmore. Three pounds three shillings entrance fee donated by the League of Wheelmen. Second prize was five pounds, five shillings donated by the Armstrong Cycle and Motor Agency. Third prize, a set of motorcycle tyres was donated by the Dunlop Tyre Co. Fastest unplaced time the prize was a travelling bag donated by Mr. F. Mallabone and a piece of silver plate donated by Mr. J. Levinson. Three weeks later (1 October 1904) the big day had arrived.

The riders and machines having travelled to Beverley on the train from Perth the previous day. Because of the delay, interest had subsided and out of the original 17 names nominated only 6 started, those being: Cato - 1.5hp Clement Garrard, Mallabone - 2hp Minerva, Ward - 2.5hp, Jewell - 2.5hp Home made with Sarolea parts, Henley - 2.25hp & Gilmour 2.25hp De Dion. Saturday morning at Beverley broke with the prospect of unsettled weather, with banks of dark clouds and intermittent bursts of sunshine to cheer the little band of Pioneer Motor Cyclists on their way. At



Frank Cato was an entrant in the inaugural Beverley to Perth motorcycle race in 1904.

9:00 AM Cato, was sent off on his solitary journey.

Mallabone and Ward set off at 9:30 AM. At 10:00 AM Gilmour set off to overhaul the leaders. The bad road conditions were covered without any undue trouble to York and Northam, but Jewell had left Henley behind and as he pushed on was surprised to find he had run into private property, the occupants of which directed him to the road that he should take, but his detour cost him 15 minutes. It was stated that Gilmour was 'laying down to it' and the machine simply flew along.

Having such wide knowledge of motors and motoring he was placed in a better advantage of knowing how to handle his motorcycle. Gilmour rode on, a dip in the road came into sight, and the rider quickly sat back behind the saddle and waited, when a yard or so from the ditch he pulled the front wheel up a little from the ground, so that it would miss the

drop altogether, leaving the back wheel to encounter the obstacle. As a result of the jerk on the handlebars they broke clean off and were pulled right

out of the head stem. Balancing the machine until it had slowed down to about 5 m.p.h. he was able to slip off backwards and hold the machine. He then walked his machine 2 miles to York.

No backup in those days. The other competitors had safely reached Northam. In the meantime Gilmour had fitted a normal pair of push bike handle bars to his motorcycle and had carried on. Cato had passed through Northam and was about 5 miles out when he hit a ditch, similar to Gilmour, and smashed his front wheel. He walked back to Northam and caught the train to Perth.

We don't hear any more of Henley after Northam so we presume he pulled out also in that town. By this time Mallabone had taken the lead and had passed through Northam at 1:10 PM after a hasty meal. He had a problem with the oil pump but wrapping tape around it repaired this.

Jewell passed through at 1:22 PM. Mallabone was pressing on at considerable speed with Jewell close behind. A thunderstorm hit the competitors as they passed through the Mundaring area but apart from this the race was trouble free to Victoria Park.

Nearly an hour after the advertised time of the finish the alarm was given that a motorcycle had been sighted turning into Kingston Road and shortly afterwards Mallabone peddled over the hill and rode into the finish point at 3:50 PM amidst cheering and applause. Eighteen minutes Jewell finished and these were the only two to finish while the League Officials were there. Somewhere about 6:00 PM Ward finished and at 7:10 PM Gilmour reached the Hotel.

Actual riding times for the 116 miles were: Mallabone - 5 hrs 44,5 mins (20mph average), Jewell - 5hrs 59.5 mins, Ward - 7hrs 50mins, Gilmour - 8hrs 40mins (13.4mph average), Cato & Henley - DNF.

1986: Perth's new Perth International Airport opens.

There was a certain amount of unfavourable comment after the 1985 Motor Show concerning the predominance of later-model Motor Cycles on display. There was a big change this year with only 7 post-vintage models amongst the 23 machines on display. The reaction from the public was most gratifying.

It happens in most clubs - new members are welcome when they pay their membership fee but are then forgotten and left to fend for themselves. This had been happening in VMCC but was due for a change. In future a new member would be introduced to an established Club Member who would introduce him around, put him wise on Club customs and events and make sure he meets other members who have the same or similar machines. *(This initiative, like many others, faded away from a lack of commitment).*

A Busy-Bee called for 4 July, 1986 to tidy up the Parts Store and erect some shelves was not overburdened with workers leaving those who did attend a fair amount of work.

A couple of new positions were created in the Club list of Officers, namely a Membership Secretary to look after all areas pertaining to new members and a Stores Secretary to handle deposits, payment records of spares etc. Dave Ferguson became Membership Secretary and Dave Daffen the Sales person.

Peter Stocker had his President's Annual Report published in the September 87 Vintage Chatter. He wrote that the past year has seen quite a few changes, including the 2 new officers mentioned above. The Club now had about 300 members and numbers were steadily increasing. Meetings were well attended and would continue to start promptly and finish early allowing members to enjoy a cup of tea and a 'natter' with other members.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP - JIM WALLACE: One of the most deserving *(and timely)* events to take place at the Annual General Meeting on 3 September, 1986, was the conferring of Club Life Membership on Jim Wallace. Jim had been an active Club

member and officer for two decades. He well deserved the honour.



1987: Fremantle hosts the America's Cup. Median house prices for the year were \$61,225.

Wheels West '87: There was an objection to a couple of entries already accepted for the "Wheels West" event. Ray Oakes stated their entries had been found acceptable by the "Wheels West" Committee but the Rally Rules covered their expulsion if the rules were broken. This did not satisfy the objectors and 2 well-known Club Members withdrew from the event *(but the matter was not over by any means).*

The Black Duck Rally was held in July 1987 and the VMCCWA endorsed the rally as Club event. Several Club members made the journey to lake Dumbleyung including a detachment from the Albany Section. The rally was a boisterous affair and cold.



Clive Bairstow from Albany with his 1928 AJS 350
(Photo by Murray Barnard)



Above: Murray Rudler at the Black Duck (Photo by Murray Barnard)



Above: Don Bowden on the Busselton Two Day Rally



Above: Spencer Sheffield on the Busselton Two Day Rally

The AGM saw John Rock appointed as President. The Treasurer advised that the Club assets were \$18,086.

Composite Machines: Members turned their attention to a Notice of Motion to change General Rule 16 of the Constitution. This Rule concerns Machine Classification, Definition of 'Composite' and 'Other than Composite' Motor Cycles and Dating of

Composite Motor Cycles. This brought forward a lengthy discussion which was eventually called to a halt due to the time factor. A vote was taken resulting in 65 votes in favour of the change and 22 against.

(The notion of a composite machine was somehow intended to overcome the Club's fixation on originality on older machines, primarily Pre31. The intent was to allow a machine to be cobbled together from various items true to the period. A complex formula of what % of parts was acceptable was applied. The notion of a composite machine conflicted with the Department of Transport's requirement that a concessionally licensed machine be "as manufactured." The complex concept of a composite machine was dropped 2 decades later and the matter was left to the judgement of dating and appraisal officers).

Wheels West '87: A Committee member again brought to the fore his dis-satisfaction with one of the entries in "Wheels West '87". This had last been aired in Committee at the beginning of the year. It was obvious that some enmity existed among a few of the members.

By the time of the General Meeting on 7 October, visitors from outside WA had begun to arrive for the "Wheels West" event. Those who attended the meeting were made most welcome.



Above: Jim Wallace during the Wheels West Rally

By the next General Meeting in November the "Wheels West '87" Event was past history; it had been held from 10 - 25 October.

Ray Oakes, Chairman of the Committee which organized the event, reported that it had been a very satisfactory event with everything going according to plan. All the visitors had expressed satisfaction with the programme and were happy with all arrangements.

The last Monthly Meeting of the year was not a very pleasant affair. Members had to consider a Notice of Motion from a Committee Member which read, "That the organizer and committee of "Wheels West '87" and the Management Committee of the Club, in accepting and approving respectively the entry of _____ for participation in "Wheels West '87", did, with full knowledge of that person's record of conduct prejudicial to the good name of the VMCC movement and also with full knowledge that the said person had been expelled from the VMCC, put the name of the Club at risk."

The Motion then continued in a similar manner before proposing a vote of censure on the "Wheels West '87" Committee and a motion of 'no confidence' in the Club Management Committee. It was read out to members by the President.

It was pointed out that the eligibility of the entry had been discussed previously by the "Wheels West '87" Committee and also by the Management Committee. Members were allowed 2 minutes each to speak on the motion. The seconder was the only person to speak for the motion. Other speakers opposed the motion either because they thought the matter had been dealt with previously in a proper manner; or because they found it unbelievable that such a motion could be brought against the Club Committee and the committee which had conducted such a well organized event; or because they had always found _____ to be a keen motorcyclist and Club Member.

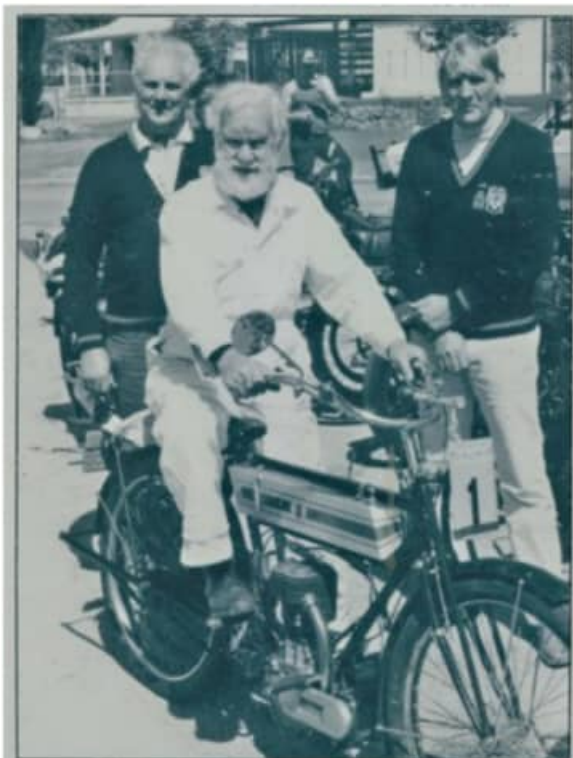
There were only 2 votes for the motion and all other members present voted against. It was then proposed that the ban on _____ from membership of VMCC be lifted. A vote of confidence in the Committee ended the discussion.

(It is extraordinary that this matter was conducted in this matter as under the Association's Act, the matter should never have been put to the members; but handled. within the Committee, in confidence, with the privacy of individuals protected and the appropriate dispute resolution process followed, under the auspices of the Association's Act. The process; however can be derailed by those determined to create controversy.)

At the December Committee Meeting a letter was received from Ray Oakes resigning from Senior Examiner due to the unworkable situation and stress he had suffered as "Wheels West" Director. Despite apologies, and the efforts of the President, John Rock, to smooth things over, Ray would not reconsider his decision. *(Thus the matter left a bitter taste for a senior, active member who had initiated and implemented a successful international rally.)*

The failure of the motion in 1986 to reverse the 25 year rule had provoked discussion about changing the name of the Club. This move was clearly motivated by a faction who from their point of view understandably wished for the Club to remain somewhat exclusive. The matter however was less clear cut. Jim Clark took to the Chatter to settle the matter and the issue went into abeyance for now. Jim explained that the term "Vintage" was not exclusive to one element of the Club. In the general community it was a generic term applied to older and collectable machines. Whilst the Club applied the term to one period of machine, the Club had always accommodated machines outside of that narrow definition and would continue to do so. In fact he reiterated that when the vintage movement started many of the vehicles were less than 25 years old!

Frank Cocks wrote in the Chatter..."*After reading some of the articles that have been appearing in the pages of the Chatter over the past few months, some of the more recent members of our Motor Cycle Club, particularly those who own and ride any machine that is post vintage, from 1st January 1931 right up to 1961, may be wondering if they, or their motor cycles are welcome in the Club. I'm willing to wager that a lot of people including myself are more than happy to be, amongst all the bikes that the Club is supposed to cater for, but most importantly those of us who enjoy the company of each other don't really care what our friends are riding, or for that matter what year the motor cycle was made!*"



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.

In October an auction was held of parts from the late Bob Robinson's collection. Some visitors from new Zealand were heard to say that the parts were over-priced, thus NZ must be the place to go to get parts for your machine, gentlemen!



1988: Bi-Centennial Year or more correctly NSW Year. Perth now had a population of 1,134,000

At the General Meeting on 6 January there was an undercurrent of unhappiness still lingering from the stoush over Wheels West 87. At the Committee Meeting on 20 January, Peter Groucott resigned from the Committee.

After the flurry of acrimony, things quietened down and Jack Berkshire and Ernie Serls offered to fill the gaps as Vehicle Examiners. It was agreed that a letter and nomination form should be sent to _____ from the Committee. The President said he had received good references from people on _____. The nomination form was immediately signed by Committee members and he was formally accepted as a member at the April General Meeting.

FESTIVAL RALLY: Being the Bi-Centennial year a number of events were held across the State to commemorate the moment. One was the festival Rally at Busselton and a number of members were in attendance. The run was fairly long and the weather was quite hot being the Australia Day weekend. Kevin Best came out on top in the rally on the late Max Sharpe AJS. The event was published in the Australian Classic Motorcycling magazine by yours truly.

(Below: Tony Davis on his 1937 Harley-Davidson)





John and Maureen Boyd Ponder the route instructions at the start on their 1000cc 1928 Royal Enfield.



Don Bowden at the start on his 1928 Harley Davidson.

Above: John and Maureen Boyd on the 1928 1000cc Royal Enfield

Left Don Bowden on his 1928 Harley Davidson

(Photo by Murray Barnard)

Below: Kevin Best on the 350 AJS at the Festival Rally



Motorcycle Class winner Kevin Best on the 1940 AJS 500cc.

Gymkhana- 9 October 1988. A gymkhana was held at the Royal Perth Hospital Annexe Shenton Park . At least 20 Club members were present and engaged in a variety of fun events, unaware they would lose Jim Wallace that night. Below: Ron Cherrington on the Zenith. (Photos by Murray Barnard)





GYMKHANA 88 - Left:
Charlie Lawson & Norton

Below: George Nunn and
Henderson



VALE: JIM WALLACE: The Annual General Meeting came round again on 5 October 1988. The President gave a report on the past year.

He was followed by the Secretary Jim Wallace who started his report on past happenings from the first meeting of the Section of the VCC in 1968 and gave details of how the Club had changed course over the years including a complete change in focus.

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 Gymkhana Event, an event he loved and in which he had been successful that day.

And so 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 and all ideas were to be further considered.

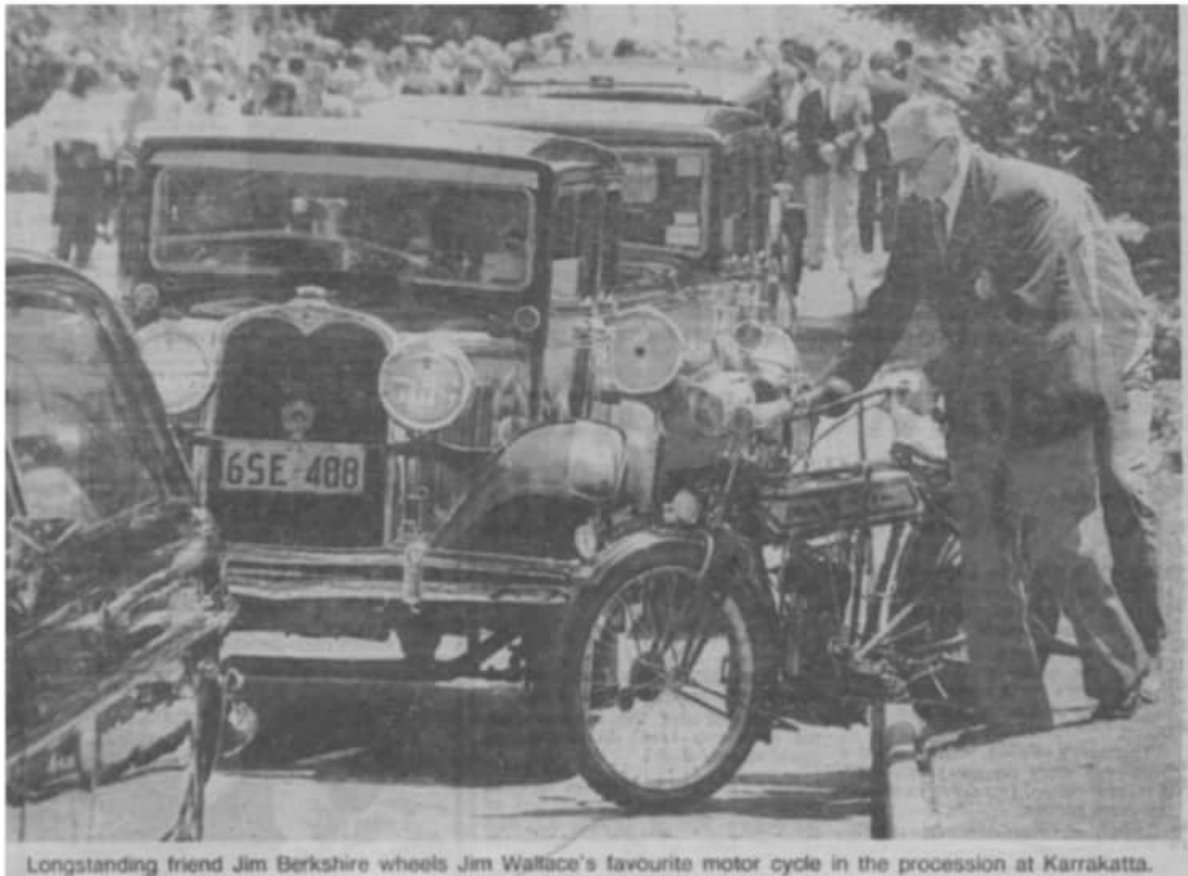
In the meantime, Peter Stocker agreed to carry on as Acting Secretary. At the General Meeting on 2 November, 1988 the President read out a "Token of Remembrance" letter from Jack Berkshire about the late Life Member and Secretary, Jim Wallace.

All members then stood in silence for one minute in his memory. You can read more on Jim in the Club's Life Members Supplement.

Photo taken at the Gymkhana of Jim Wallace on the day he passed away (Pic by Murray Barnard)



JIM WALLACE FUNERAL: Oct 1988 - Jack Berkshire wheels Jim Wallace's favourite motorcycle in the funeral procession at Karrakatta. Over 50 VMCCWA Club members were present on this sad occasion.



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

1989: Perth Markets closed in West Perth.

At the November meeting a letter was received from Peter Groucott stating he no longer wished to carry on as Trustee and advised that 2 new Trustees should be appointed to the VMCC. The Club wasted no time in finding 2 new Trustees and Peter Stocker and Jack Berkshire were nominated and unanimously accepted on 7 December, 1988.

There was a proposition from the Pre 31 Section that the following "Historic Motor Cyclists" be made Honorary Members of VMCC - Norm Cunningham, Ted Cracknell and Arthur Pidgeon.



These gentlemen had taken part in the original Overlanders Expedition in 1926. It was moved by Don Bowden, seconded by Charlie Lawson and passed by the members. Above L-R: Ted Cracknell, Norm Cunningham & Arthur Pidgeon. (Photo by Murray Barnard)



Above: Neil Stephenson (Photo courtesy Trevor Stephenson)

It must be expected as a Club gets older, but it is always a sad occasion when it loses one of its older respected members.

Regrettably it was the turn of **Neil Stephenson** to pass away. A courageous man and a hard worker for the Club he would be sadly missed by the members.

The chain of bereavements continued with the death of the Patron and Club Life Member, **Ernie Legg**.



He died at the age of 86 years just a few months after his beloved wife Vera. Ernie was one of the Club's founder members, appointed its first Patron in 1976 and provided many prizes for raffles and trophies to the Club. He left to the VCC the "Ernie Legg

Collection" of motor cycles and memorabilia which was stored at Forrestfield originally but was moved later to Whiteman Park.

Some happy news from the AGM was the conferring of Life Membership of the Club on Jack Cunningham and Barry Makin, the highest honour the Club can bestow. Jack has been contributing to Club affairs for many years as Auditor and on Committee, had donated a beautiful Trophy Cabinet to the Club and had made all the Two Day Rally Trophies in Jarrah wood since the rally started. Barry had been printer of Vintage Chatter for many years and promoted 2 excellent annual runs. Jack Cunningham (below). (Photo by Murray Barnard)



Vale - Neil Stephenson by Frank Cocks

It is with a heavy heart and stumbling hand that I attempt to write a fond farewell to Our dear and widely known friend. How does one begin to try and capture the spirit of such a colourful and outspoken character Neil was born in Liverpool, England and after schooling, trained in engineering, but with the outbreak of World War 2, volunteered for service in the Royal Air Force, and was subsequently sent to the United States for training as a pilot.



This probably accounts for his interest in Harley Davidsons and Indian Motor Cycles, although few may have known that about him. He successfully passed his Course and returned to England where he was posted to 44 Squadron and flew Wellington and Lancaster Bombers over Europe, receiving a well earned Distinguished Flying Cross.

I discovered this some years ago when I took Betty and Neil to Bunbury in a Cessna Aircraft, actually Neil did most of the flying, and when he signed the visitors book at the Aero Club, he placed the three letters D.F.C. after his name. When I asked him how he earned such an award, he only said 'Because I kept on bringing my aircraft and crew back, didn't I!'

After the war he formed a business in England and returned to his love of racing motorcycles applying the knowledge of engineering to his machines and by then a strong competitive attitude to the race tracks of England. However, another enemy made itself known to him in the form of arthritis and this led to the decision of coming to W.A. for a more acceptable climate and then the Vintage Motor Cycle Club came to meet and learn from him.

Betty, Neil's loving and devoted wife watched over him and became accustomed to life where various members of both Clubs usually covered in engine oil and grease, with their hands full of rusty and distorted parts were frequent and welcome visitors and many a cup of tea and jam cakes were eagerly devoured in the garden just outside the rear shed, commonly called by many "The Factory". This happy meeting place seemed to go on for years with many

a motor cycle coming to life again after what would seem an impossibility to the owner and although Neil's main favourites were his beloved Sunbeams and after he told me how he hated B.S.A.'s maintaining they were designed and built by a committee, not engineers, he still helped me rebuild three of them, and was never surprised that they did not break down or stop whenever I rode them, often cleaning out his old pipe on the handle bars as he limped by, ..saying half to himself, "Tuned by Stephenson of course. What else would you expect."

However, as time progressed those of us that knew him as 'Old Grumpy', a term of endearment, realised that his long fought enemy arthritis was causing him a lot of pain and this in turn began to affect his health in many other ways, with frequent trips to hospital for relief of the pain that racked his body and brain. A few weeks ago, in between such bouts of illness, he expressed a desire to me to take him to see one of his old friends of years gone by, the Lancaster Bomber at the Air Force Museum and as I placed Neil under the nose of that magnificent aircraft, I detected a tear in those old eyes where he remembered his comrades and crew of 44 Squadron and now that I reflect on that very special afternoon we spent together he was really saying farewell. Never the less, further deterioration and greater pain made it necessary for him to enter Fremantle Hospital where his days on this earth ended on Saturday 17th June, 1989.

Brian Fitzgerald captured the feeling in his tribute:
"Mentor, motivator and special friend, gone but never forgotten." (Photos courtesy Trevor Stephenson)



.Earlier in the year the Busselton Two Day had been run, but a report was not published. All that is known is that Don Bowden, to his embarrassment, dropped his Harley at the start. Some photos below (Photos by Murray Barnard)



George Webber earned his moment in the sun when Hervé Dangla toured Australia taking photographs for an exhibition he held. He had hoped to sell a book of the photographs of vintage machines and people across the country, but Hervé only got 23 orders so the idea was dropped.

The Beverley Re-enactment was run for the 5th time in 1989 with a good turnout. Norm Cunningham travelled in Spencer Sheffield's sidecar. (Photos by Murray Barnard) Also Ron Morrison, George Nunn a & Eric Langton below



The Club participated in the Xmas Charity Run later in the year. The vintage bikes lead the run, with Father Christmas up front in a sidecar. (Photos by Murray Barnard)



Owen Page on AJS 350 above Doug Whitehead below



Charlie Lawson with Bill Young's Norton 500T



John and Barbara Forbes



Chapter 6: 1990 - 94



1990: An old favourite, the Grand theatre was demolished.

A sad start to the year: Bill Young - passed away in hospital on 27 March 1990 after a long illness. Bill was a founder member of VMCCWA; he was present at the meeting when it was decided to form the VMCCWA and was elected a Committee Member at the Inaugural Meeting in 1975. "Youngie" as he was affectionately known, would be sadly missed around the Club. Bill had a motorcycle shop on Charles St in North Perth for many a year.



Bill Young, scrambles and trials rider in 1953

YOUNGIE --A FEW PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS. By Peter Groucott

When Bill Young left us on March 27th, the West Australian Motor Cycling movement lost one of the best. Well-known in the Motor Cycle Trade since the very early Post-War years, initially as repairer and dismantler for the ---predominantly ---wrecking firm of Crosse & Lee in Hay St., Perth, and later with his own wrecking, repairing and, in a small way, tuning shop, Bill was a familiar figure in his grease-stained grey dustcoat. As any of us who knew him travelled along --- first - Oxford St, Leederville and, later, Charles St., North Perth. We would look out for him

and he was often outside his shop, chatting to a customer, either dispensing words of wisdom or haggling over a machine which had wildly different values, depending on whose side you were!

Bill never had an easy life. An only child who lost his father at the age of four, he battled through his early years, having been brought up by his aunt and, despite having to leave school at the age of twelve, he managed to self-educate to a remarkable degree. Not many of his close circle of friends knew that Bill was a very talented writer, artist and orator--- and a brilliant self-taught Motor Cycle Engineer.

While his personal favourite was always Nortons, he could -- and did --- prepare other-brand bikes on odd occasions for just a select few, for one had to ~earn Bill's respect as a person and a rider before he would accept such an assignment. And all his preparation jobs were not for pure speed either. He coaxed some incredible mileage out of such things as a 250cc Panther, a 500 Matchless sidecar outfit and a rare Italian miniature 4-stroke Ganna.

There was the 500 all-alloy-engined Matchless "Special" which he built for his lifelong mate, Ken Hicks, to ride in Trials. Bill and Ken had read all the British Press reports of how Sammy Miller had built his incredibly-light Ariel and they decided they could do better. The end result was the 500 Matchless Special -- over TEN POUNDS LIGHTER than the Miller Ariel. For himself, Bill built several highly-individual Nortons over the years. They never LOOKED too wonderful but, my GOODNESS, they WERE effective for their selected work.

West Australia has the world's oldest established Speedway Track -- the 600 plus yards-per-lap Claremont Showgrounds track and, when this re-opened in late 1946, it wasn't long before "W. YOUNG (NORTON)" became a regular listing in the Friday night programmes. Yes, Norton, for there were no J.A.P. engined machines for the first couple of seasons and everyone rode a highly cut-and-shut device which had once been a road bike.

Aided by methanol fuel, some remarkable performances were obtained and the one I'll probably remember most is that by Bill on---I think--- his final night as a Speedway Rider. All the races then were handicaps, on a basis of yards behind the Starting Line, according to the handicappers opinion of how fast one MIGHT go. Bill had always been a "thinking" rider and his early days had taught him a great respect

for money so he became the ultimate fox at such a game and was known to become quite annoyed if he won, as he knew he would then be re-handicapped. Therefore, he always endeavoured to pick up minor place money on a regular basis and reduce the risk of being handicapped too far back. It was a different story on his final night though: On that night, I recall, his name wasn't in the programme so, when the announcement came over the P.A. system to add "No, so-and-so. Bill Young off 40 yards" to our programmes, we did so and Bill obliged with his usual canny place-money effort-- until the final race of the night. In those days the final solo race was over 6 laps of the giant oval -- and nobody saw which way Bill went: With his great height --well over six feet --- he had the least suitable build for riding a Speedway Solo. He coped by never riding beyond his limits and gave the appearance of just sitting there and steering the bike around the track in a truly armchair ride. That final ride was only different in one way -- it was done FAR faster than any of us had ever seen him travel before and he took the Feature Race top money with almost a quarter of a lap lead.

I really don't know how many Nortons he built up for Club Sports, Scrambles and Trials prior to his departure for England in the very early '50s but they could all have taken first prize in a Concours de GROT, for his interest was in how they performed-- NOT how they looked. With all his versatility, however, it was in Observed Section Trials that Bill Young was the TOP rider in W.A. for an incredibly long time and it is at this point that my own personal memories are aided by personal contact with the man.

The time was Winter (about June/July) of 1948 and I was a raw novice at the Sport, having recently joined the Coastal M.C.C. in Fremantle. It was a strange new World to me, as I had never even been interested in such activities until then and did not even know that such forms of Competition existed. The C.M.C.C. IS THE OLDEST ESTABLISHED M.C.C. in W.A., with roots going back to 1912 and it used to conduct 2 Open events per year, for which entries were invited from other Clubs. One event was a Solo and Sidecar Observed-Section Trial and the other was a Solo-only Pillion Trial.

The seating accommodation on some of those bikes does not bear thinking about: My introduction to the first Trial was on possibly the most unsuitable and unlikely bike about the place -- a 1937 500cc twin-

cylinder 2-stroke DKW. Too long, too wide and too heavy --- but like so many others, it was my one and only bike and, besides, it was easy to waterproof and it had an electric starter in case I got stuck somewhere awkward so I entered and had a lot of fun - a LOT of fun.

However, among the visiting riders were some who obviously took this Trials lark very seriously indeed, as a quick look at their bikes and the way they studied every Section showed. Foremost among these was Bill Young. I'll never forget the Sight of that lanky figure in ordinary trousers tucked into Wellies, with dark brown sleeveless cardigan over a shirt with rolled-up sleeves literally squeezing his slowly-chuffing Norton through the Sections with never a sign of a foot departing from a footrest. It was truly educational but I'm afraid I was never to dedicate myself to Trials and only treated an occasional Trial as an excuse for a bit of fun. Goodness knows how many Trials were won by Bill over the years.

Later in the U.K., as a semi-Works Norton rider, he also performed creditably against the acknowledged World's best and the high point of his Trials career was probably his outright win one year in the National Cambrian Trial. At the time, the Norton Works (Trials) Team included another Young, first name Rex and not related to Bill. When Rex was unable to ride in the Scottish Six Days, Bill Young was promoted into the Team and did a thoroughly good job, gaining --- as I recall a Silver for his efforts.

As already said, he was a tall man. He was also inclined to be somewhat taciturn and not given to smiling a lot and some people interpreted this quite wrongly, for behind that stern and silent manner there lurked a wonderful sense of humour and a wealth of good commonsense knowledge which was readily available ONLY if Bill did not consider his time wasted by passing it on.

I've also said he was a 'thinking' rider and, therefore, a clever race tactician and I only ever saw him "out-fox" himself.

English-style Scrambling was brought to West Australia in 1928 by two local riders, Roy Charman and Aubrey Melrose, who had attended the early Southern Scott Scrambles in England and saw the possibilities. A sprawling Course of over 2 MILES per lap was set out in a disused limestone quarry area

near Perth and the Harley Scramble was born -- so-called for its organisers, the Harley Davidson M.C.C. Until the late '50s it was the Blue Riband event of W.A. Motor Cycling and he who won "the Harley" was King.

In 1953, with his U.K. sojourn behind him and a MOST impressive new swing-arm framed Norton Special with an ES2 engine tuned well beyond any such engine produced at Bracebridge Street, Bill was all set to have a really serious go at taking the honours. His most likely opposition was expected to come from up-and-coming youngster Peter Nicol, IF his 350cc Royal Enfield Bullet held together.



Peter Nicol

Indeed, 2 years earlier, Nicol had confounded the pundits with a convincing win on such a machine. In 1952 he transferred to a 500cc Matchless and came an almighty purler on his first lap, thus ending his chances. Now, in 1953, here he was, back on the R.E. and his practice times had made him a firm favourite.

In typically foxy fashion, Bill Young recorded mostly insignificant practice times, saying "It's the times in the RACE that matter let's wait and see, eh?". As always in those days, riders started in pairs at 10sec. intervals in the morning, stopped for a lunch break, then re-started in the order in which they completed the morning section, thus giving spectators a chance to see the aces working through the "field" as the race went on. By midway through the afternoon section it was down to a two-man struggle.

With his 350cc R.E. really working hard, there was Peter Nicol with Bill Young on his MUCH slower-revving Norton about 100 to 150 yards astern. Lap

after lap after lap they went round and, caught up in the heat of the battle, Bill was dismayed when the "one-lap-to-go" flag was shown and he was just not QUITE close enough to overtake. Talking about it afterwards, he was his own worst critic, saying "It serves me bloody-well right really, from about 100 yards back I could hear that flaming Enfield rattling and I just KNEW it wouldn't last the distance so I decided there was no point in passing him and then having HIM push me. I honestly thought we had a few more laps to go and I was all set to overtake him before we started the last lap ••• but the last lap came up sooner than I expected and bang goes my best-ever chance to win a Harley Scramble. •• Aaargh!

Then there was the "Berini incident". Nothing to do with Italy this but concerning a wee Cycle-motor, produced in Holland with the very un-Dutch name of Berini. They were of 32cc, mostly alloy, with a serrated friction roller which transferred the power (eh?) to the front wheel of a bicycle. A notable feature of these little clip-on units was a gloss black-enamelled egg-shaped petrol tank directly above the engine.

Among all his more normally grotty-looking bits 'n' pieces on display in his Leederville shop window, Bill had a Berini and it shone like a jewel among all the other stuff. I was standing in the shop chatting to Bill when 2 schoolboys entered and asked, how much is that little engine with the black tank? and how fast can it go? Bill's replies were, respectively "£25.00 (sorry £25/-/-) and you'll never get one cheaper boys!" and "Well son, that depends on how steep the hill is". Totally nonplussed by these replies, the lads left. Meanwhile I developed an ache in my side from the laughter, but Bill allowed himself the merest suggestion of a smirk.

He could tell a tale himself too, like about one of his English Trials; it was a relatively fine day and lunch time. Bill was with a group of riders, lounging against a grassy bank having lunch when short stocky John Draper strutted past, saying in his inimitable Gloucester dialect "Oi be roidin' real gude today and isn't nobody going to beat Oi".

Bill's reaction was not made known to anyone else but he said to himself "You cocky little so-and-so! We'll SEE about that". He told me that he then went out for the afternoon session and got so serious about it that he lost more points in ten Sections than he'd lost in ten Trials all through trying too hard.

Mention of building a Trials 500 lighter than the Miller Ariel reminds me of that Norton on which Bill so nearly won the Harley Scramble. At that time it had an ES2 engine in it but there was a lot of work going on very quietly to complete it as Bill wished it to be with a 500 long-strong Manx engine. The great pity of it is that Bill was well past the time of life when he may have been able to consistently challenge the younger riders and he had the sense to acknowledge this. Therefore, his irregular rides on his Manx-engined Scrambler were never serious ones, but just for a bit of fun and relaxation.

On a couple of odd occasions he let a couple of trusted Clubmates ride it and it usually got them into the awards list. Bill had seen and studied the Manx-engined Scramblers raced with considerable skill by Les Archer while in the U.K. and decided he could do better. We will never now because, of course, the bikes never met on a track — but if appearances are any guide, the Young Manx Scrambler certainly LOOKED much better-built. While I never rode it, I did see it in action plenty of times and it handled beautifully. It pulled an incredibly-high gear and had stump-pulling torque. Its precise fate is unknown to me.

After Bill finally retired from Scrambling to concentrate (it MUST have hurt) on learning to ride a Bultaco in Trials, saying "If I can't beat 'em I'd better join 'em" the Manx Scrambler sat in his shop as a conversation piece for a considerable time, then one day it was no longer there.

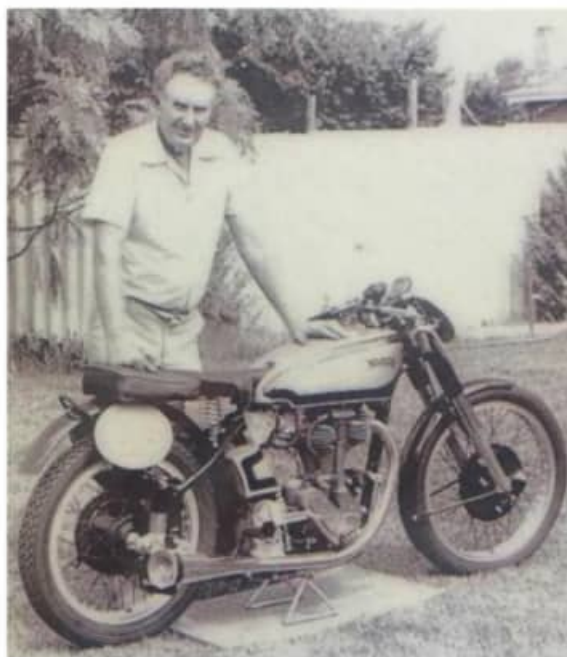
Whether somebody bought it as a plaything or to get the Manx engine, or whether Bill himself dismantled it and sold the parts I know not. What I do know is that Bill Young, self-taught Motor Cycle engineer

FEATURE STORY: YESTERDAY I RODE BEHIND THE NEW IMP! By Bill Young

"So what, says you. What's so wonderful about a middle aged, portly, greying, Grandfather chugging up the highway behind an old single cylinder bike almost as ancient as himself?

Well, it wasn't always like that. Pull up a chair, fill your glass and listen to a wondrous tale so poignant and unbelievable it will bring a lump to your throat and a tear to the eye.

Picture the scene, half a lifetime ago, early one morning in the Swan Valley: the first rays of the



built a 500 4-stroke Scrambler AT LEAST as good as the best Rickman Metisse. Now both are gone from among us.

In 1972 the Vintage Motor Cycle Section of the W.A. Veteran Car Club conducted its first two-day Rally. Over a 300-plus miles course, with riders losing points for being early or late at en route controls ... and Bill Young won it on his restored 1928 CS-1 Norton.

When the V.M.C.C. of W.A. was formed in August, 1975, Bill was one of the first to join and his remaining years were spent as a V.M.C.C. Member riding the Nortons, the CS-1 and a 500r, a 350cc GP New Imperial and a 750cc ohv vee-twin BSA Combination. His memory will live on.

morning sun peeping over the range, bringing wraiths of mist drifting off the barren vines. A tall engine camshaft Norton thundering up Great Northern Highway, a blue uniformed figure crouched on the rear mudguard pad in the approved racing position of the thirties I was in the Air Force at the time, it was the early stages of the War and my usual thirty minutes estimate for progress Perth — to — Pearce left no time to admire the beautiful spring morning.

It was my boast in the pre- R.T.A. days that nothing passed me if I didn't want it to. So it was with astonished ear that I detected another exhaust note blending with that of the Norton.

No time to wonder! It was alongside and past in a flash, a sleek black machine, narrow tyres, wheels perfectly in line, engine so low that it almost caressed the road, twin Brooklands fishtails, the rider tucked in so he almost appeared part of it.... a fleeting, wonderful impression heightened by the exciting aroma of Castrol R. I spurred the Norton to greater effort. She nobly responded, dilated her nostrils, lengthened her stride and I tucked in behind until we swept into the gates of Pearce Airforce Base. A brief halt at the Guardhouse, a crescendo of sound echoing back from the brick archway and he was gone. I was left to wonder.....

For once I was early for Parade but I must confess my motions on the drill square lacked the usual smart precision, my heart just wasn't in it. I still itched to learn more of the remarkable machine. It wasn't long before the opportunity to disappear from my usual duties presented itself. I soon located the owner, a fellow Airman and the machine, a genuine 1928 TT New Imperial... Close ratio gearbox... twin float carb... racing square ML... strutted duplex frame... the lot!

REMEMBER this was 1939... a very desirable machine indeed. Several times during the next few months I was privileged to follow the New Imp. Somehow it didn't seem right to lead, something like a commoner following Royalty, if you know what I MEAN. Then, with the so called Cold War hotting up, our paths parted, I was posted away and never saw my friend or the New Imp again.

October again, but this time 1976. The home phone jangles and a voice, strangely familiar, introduces itself. I'm afraid if the owner of the voice could have seen me he would have noticed a quizzically raised eyebrow. "Don't you remember me? I was in the Air Force with you in 39."

I hastened to assure him that when it came to mathematics I was well off the leader board, but by removing my boots and counting fingers and toes I could subtract 39 from 76 and the answer was a long, long time for sure. The voice said it was forced to agree, but then... did I remember the New Imp?

Making a noise like a Trials Bike with its' exhaust submerged in a swamp, I gasped; "You haven't still got it?" "In the backyard," replied the voice, "and the BSA as well". This was unbelievable news. I hastened to arrange a look which had to be postponed for

several weeks because the BSA had savaged him when he tried to start it, breaking his ankle. He would ring me later when he was mobile.

Time dragged on. It only flies when you are having fun. I was fast running out of patience and at last, could wait no longer. Knocking on his door, I was invited inside and for the next two hours we drank tea and talked about old times. Then AT LAST. "Would you like to see the bikes?" WOULD I? More meetings followed. He told me he would never ride them again but he didn't want to part with them. 'They are part of my life.' Being a little bit funny that way myself, I quite understood, but that didn't help much!

We met regularly, exchanged plants and literature and an occasional fat fish found its' way to his 'fridge, but I was beginning to feel like giving up. If a vacancy had occurred in the Diplomatic Service, I'd have qualified easily. No risk. Then with the thought that "Faint heart never won fair turkey, I rang him again. It was Grand Final Day... I remember it well. "Come and pick up the BSA" he said. "I can't get my car in the garage, it takes up too much room."

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO GET A HAND ON GRAND FINAL DAY? Everyone it seems is at the football. The BSA and sidecar was huge, my trailer was small, but somehow I got it on.

During the restoration period, I picked him up to inspect progress for 'way in the back of my mind I suspected that the BSA was really a sort of Trade Test. At last, with the help of my friends, it was restored to its magnificent conclusion. I once again picked him up and waited tremulously for the verdict while he did his inspection. "Better than when I first got it 40 years ago." I sighed with relief. Perhaps I still had a chance of getting the New Imp?

Time passed. Grand Final Day again. Another phone call. "Come and pick up the Imp." I was gone in a flash. Together we pushed it out, wobbling on flat tyres, rusty, dusty, cobwebs and all. But the most remarkable thing of all, after all the chase, the prize was MINE but I didn't feel that I'd won.

I felt almost ashamed to take it. Then as I rolled down the hill and checked the rear vision mirror, I saw the New Imp lashed firmly on my trailer and an old man, back bent away from me, picking a weed — where I am sure no weeds grow."

1990 AGM: At the Annual General Meeting held on 5 September, 1990, Charlie Lawson remained as President and all other Officers were re-elected unopposed. The President stated that membership of the Club now stood at 408; that monthly meetings attracted an average of 200 members. He thanked the Committee members for their great help, especially Past President John Rock. The total liquid assets as revealed in the Treasurer's Report were \$12,902. Club Property was valued at \$14,289.07.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP: John Rock and May Makin were honoured by being made Life Members of the Club. Both had worked hard for the Club and fully merited the honour.



John Rock & May Makin



York Flying 50



The Club again participated in the once popular York Flying 50. This event was a great opportunity for people to see the old bikes in action.

Above, Charlie Lawson on his Norton. John Turner on his Gold Star on the right

(Photos by Murray Barnard)



George Webber



Allen Genge - 1913 Bradbury

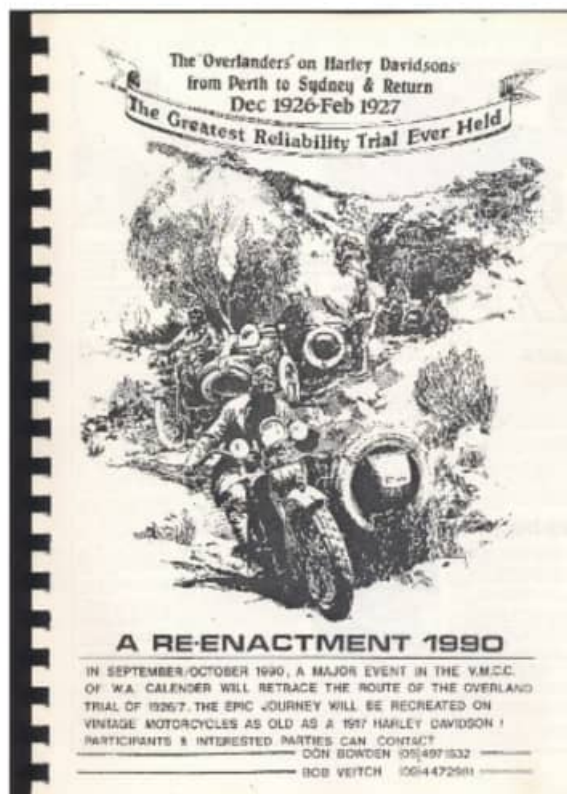


Ken Vincent - 1929 Velocette USS - a very rare machine

(Photos by Murray Barnard)

THE OVERLAND TOUR - 1990

Held to commemorate the epic ride by the WA Harley Club across the Nullarbor to Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney and then back again in 1926, the 1990 re-enactment has been a major exercise with credit going Rob Veitch & Don Bowden for their super-human efforts to make it happen. The tour was sponsored by the local Harley Davidson distributor and backup provided by a massive support truck.



A report by Frank Cocks: "As planned, and working to schedule, the intrepid Overlanders are on their way after a most impressive send off by the Lord Mayor of Perth on Thursday 20th September. Led for the first 100 metres by Joy (Wallace) playing the bag pipes. The proud and relieved face on Don Bowden, the main organiser of the event, was very moving. The spectacle and noise of the rest of the machines made quite an impression on most of the assembled crowd of on-lookers and well wishers.

After a short display at Midland Junction, Don again led the group away at High Noon to really make a start on the journey, again to the cheers of a group of Club members, some on bikes and a course of 090 degrees (East) was set with the first of the many hills, Greenmount, being successfully climbed.



Photos above: Jack Cunningham and Owen Page at the send-off (Photo by Murray Barnard). Bob Veitch below



Above: Arthur Pidgeon and Kevin Cass

I managed to capture the feeling of all the true motor-cycle riders by briefly speaking to young Chris Gielis just as the team was about to leave Midland and he said something on the lines of "I can't stand anymore of this, as 'it is really too much for me to take!'"

And with that, and I suspect a tear in his eyes, he went off away from the starting place. I can tell you Chris, I'm sure every Club member felt the same."

The tour was a massive undertaking, enjoyed by a large number of members, with much publicity and public participation along the way. The tour was a fantastic achievement by Rob Veitch, Don Bowden, Owen Page and the riders. To cross the continent on older machines is a rare treat and of world status. The event deserved greater recognition by the Club. Some photos of the tour follow, largely taken by Ted Green. Sadly Ted Green's van was broken into, after the tour's return and all his camera gear stolen along with all the negatives of the tour. Murray Barnard in 2023 edited a comprehensive book on the Overlanders and the re-enactment.



Chris and Linda Whisson



Max and Shirley Medill







Thumb's up ... Neil Earl (in sidecar), Robin Webb's and Mark Allen happy to be on the Central Coast.



Norm, the old road warrior, is still riding high



Norm Cunningham takes a pit stop on the way to Perth August.

Vintage bikes, riders found the going tough

It was far from easy riding for a 69-year-old Bayswater couple recently.

Sprightly Emmy and Ron Morrison were part of a re-enactment of a 1926 trans-Australian overland rally by Harley Davidson motorcycle enthusiasts.

"We got back five days ago and my backside is still sore," Ron said.

"It was a great adventure and we wonder what's going to happen next," Emmy said.

The re-enactment was undertaken by 53 members of the Vintage Motorcycle Club of WA, whose ages range from 25 to 87.

In fact the eldest member, Norm Cunningham, of South Perth, was one of the original 1926 adventurers.

Though he mostly travelled in the support coach, Norm did enjoy spells as a pillion passenger.

The club retraced the rally's trail — which was then over rough terrain — starting out from Perth on September 20.

From there it was across the Nullarbor to Adelaide, on to Melbourne, Sydney and Gosford (NSW) and back via Canberra, Cooma (in the Snowy Mountains) and Adelaide.

"The hardest parts were the long sections," Ron, who returned to



Ron and Emmy Morrison ... a great adventure.

Perth two kilograms lighter than when he left, said.

"Over three consecu-

tive days we averaged 510kms per day.

"Besides the road conditions, the main differ-

ence between our trip and the 1926 rally was the fact that they were young people on young bikes and we were older people on old bikes."

VALE PETER GROUCOTT: Peter died suddenly at the relatively early age of 65 on 27 November, 1990, whilst preparing to go to work. Peter had been involved in all aspects of the formation of the VMCCWA, was a founder member and served as President in 1977/78. He was a 'walking, talking encyclopaedia on motor cycling in WA and a most dedicated motorcyclist. Certainly he crossed swords with some people but only when he believed it was best for the Club. He was a frequent contributor to Vintage Chatter and his articles were always full of interest and well worth reading. His final article, a tribute to Bill Young, was written just before he died. Peter left a wealth of books, bikes, parts and material to the Club



Peter & his Coventry-Victor (Photo by Murray Barnard)

VALE: PETER GROUCOTT - passed away suddenly at home on 27.11.90 aged 65. A single man, Peter devoted his life to motorcycling. He made enough spare time to earn a living as a signwriter. He would rather help out friends by doing gold leaf on petrol tanks or handpainting dukes on Bradbury tanks than paint some land sale signs which paid him real money.

Over the years, Peter was a rider, organiser, helper and a writer of all motorcycle sport, scrambles, fuel consumption tests, trials, speedway, short circuit and road racing and vintage motorcycling. Demobbed from the Air Force in Darwin after the war, Peter bought an Ex WD M20 and rode it home to Perth - some feat in those days. In 1950 he held the Australian petrol economy record on a 125 CZ". He loved all bikes from a 'Nera Car' to a 'Metisse'.

I will always remember him as a larger than life character on his big 'Coventry Victor' or on his tiny 'Dot' Scrambler.

Peter was the man behind my 'Around Australia Ride' in 1986 on my 1922 'Martinsyde'. He made contacts, wrote letters, and during my trip was on the phone to all of Australia to help me on my way. When I arrived home again, Peter put my notes and thoughts together for our club magazines and for the press. All his efforts made my journey a lot easier. Peter was part of the epic journey.

Peter Groucott will be missed by all in the vintage motorcycle movement, especially the country members. I know he crossed swords with some people, but it was always because he believed he was doing best for the club. Many bikes in the country would not be going but for his help. We could always phone Peter for information on who had, who would swap, where to buy, which chrome plater, where the next event was, who could pick up my shipping etc. etc. etc. Peter's death is the greatest loss in the Club's history. *Neil Bromilow, Elleker, W.A.*

1991: Stricken oil tanker threatens oil spill off WA Coast. Cub Ch7 journalist Stan Grant to the rescue!

AGM. At the Committee Meeting prior to the AGM it was decided that the annual subscription should be increased to \$20.00 and to \$25.00 for families.

The President, Charles Lawson was due to resign his position and Don Bowden was to consider taking over, with John Boyd as Vice President.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP - JACK BERKSHIRE: The Club now had 6 Life Members when the honour was bestowed on Jack Berkshire at the 1991 Annual General Meeting. Jack had been a long and active member of the Club since its early days (Foundation member #5), was President in 1979/80 and was the current Patron.



PETER GROUCOTT AUCTION: It was agreed that the Peter Groucott auction would be held on Saturday, 19 October 1991. The auction would be co-ordinated by Charles Lawson. The auction was a great success but caused a lot of headaches for the organizers. The financial return had been gratifying because the total liquid assets of the Club rose from \$16,601 in October to \$45,186 in November.

LIGHTS ON: Quite a bit of energy went into opposing the "lights-on" law for all vehicles during the year. Graham Prall wrote two pages in the Chatter arguing why it was a bad idea. Ernie Serls went to the trouble of writing to the Minister of Police. The Minister replied explaining that it was a Commonwealth design rule requirement not a State matter. The new rule would apply only to vehicles manufactured after March 1991, thus no Club eligible machines would be affected.

PITHARA DISPLAY: This was a successful and enjoyable display with 10 bikes on show. The locals were extremely friendly, took a keen interest in the bikes and the Organisers - Dalwallinu Tourist Committee - grateful for our efforts. Two heroes, Peter Stocker and Mal Campbell rode there and back - 250 KLMS - and it was pretty cold both ways in spite of fine weather. The others, not so brave, trailing their bikes, were George and Bev Stephenson, Owen and Val Page, Jim and Carol Clark, Linton Summers with Ron Chave and Bruce Williams on site as they had been touring in the area in their camper bus.

The background to this is an interesting story. The day was to dedicate a memorial to John Cowe McIntosh who was an Anzac veteran from Gallipoli. In 1919 McIntosh and Ray Parer entered the £10,000 England to London first flight competition. They were late starters in a D.H. 9 and took 206 days, the longest trip on record and the first for a single engined plane. Apparently their flying time was eight days and the rest doing repairs. Parer was the pilot and McIntosh the mechanic (he earned his living as a timber cutter!) Late in 1920 McIntosh bought an Indian outfit in Melbourne and rode back to Perth across the Nullarbor, a historic ride, probably the first East to West by motor cycle. His passenger had enough by Kalgoorlie and bailed out leaving McIntosh to complete the trip on his own. McIntosh next decided to start an airline and bought a plane from Sir Norman Brearley, took delivery at Langley

Park, Perth, did his first take off and set about flying passengers. On 28th March 1921 he 'was taking joy-riders up at Pithara. Among the crowd was a couple of troublesome drunks who he took up reluctantly and next a couple of farmers in a paddock witnessed a brawl in the plane passing overhead. Someone appeared to hit the pilot with a bottle and then the plane came to earth in a power dive killing the pilot and a young woman passenger. The first fatal air crash in W.A. McIntosh was buried at Karrakatta with full Military Honours. John Harper Nelson has written a book "A need for Glory" to tell John Cowe McIntosh's story. He was at Pithara as part of the service and gave a talk outlining much of the above. Also on hand was Brian Edwards who a year or so back flew from England to Australia in his Tiger Moth "Matilda". Brian also gave an interesting talk on his adventure and was a marvellous fellow to talk to privately. I had a conversation with Brian where we discussed getting hold of bits for old machines. The problems were the same except for price - would you believe \$500 each for exhaust valves. Jim Forster's son does much of the work on the Edwards Tiger Moth. The icing on the cake was when the R.A.A.F. did six or more very low passes over the site in their new trainers. I don't know what the trainers are but they resemble WWII fighters with their outstretched wings and propellers and a beautiful engine note. Skimming in at what appeared to be 60-70 feet above the flat open paddocks they were a sight to behold. It was satisfying to be part of the day and we are to be presented with a copy of Harper Nelson's book for the library - they ran out of copies on the day and were quite apologetic and will forward a copy as soon as possible. Thanks to the Members who participated, it was, I feel, a good, if not widely publicised image builder for our Club. *JIM CLARK*



1992: City of Joondalup founded. Not much else happened.

There was also a new face as Pre 31 Dating Officer. It was hard to appreciate that Eric Langton had held the position for 25 years, back to the days of the Motor Cycle Section of VCC. At 85 years of age he had decided to hand over the reins to somebody else and who better to take on the job than Ray Oakes.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP: The granting of Life Membership to Charles Lawson, Max Madill, Ray Oakes and Jim Clark had been a well kept secret and came as a big surprise to the recipients. All thoroughly deserved the honour for they had worked long and hard for the Club over many years.



Jim Clark



Charlie Lawson

VALE WILF PARKER: He was in the A.J.S. Club at the time, we picked him up as he closed his Shell Service Station, corner of Thomas Rd and South West Hwy, Byford on a Saturday and spent the rest of the day plotting trials sections at the Hawker Siddley Quarry and clay pit behind the townsite. He was always enthusiastic, clever too! Looking at a daunting hillside, he would say "If we move those rocks and cut a landing here, we could make a beautiful Devils Staircase". After about an hours work, we could all see what he meant and in use, it turned out to be a good section, taking marks from the best, without being dangerous.

In 1973 we moved the A.B.C. T.V. O.S. Trial from Turner Road to Byford, and we needed a really super section to finish off the days programme. Something spectacular was the request from the Channel 2 Producer. The Trial was a month away and when Wilf found out, he took us up the stream to an area covered in vines and fallen trees below a waterfall, where the rocks were so numerous the water didn't know which way to go, it was like the groyne at City Beach in Winter. We just followed his directions, not really believing what we were doing. It took all afternoon for four volunteers to get rid of the vines, remove the trees, roll rocks and level camera platforms, we were soaked and shattered and it was still too deep to ride.

Wilf said "In a months time the water will be down and with a bit of luck there should be at least one clean ride". It was simply called the 'Waterfall' but on the day of the telecast with the water down to rideable level, so exposing more awkward rocks the riders just shook their heads and called it "Bloody impossible". It would have been too as most dropped threes and fives except for the last rider, Mike Thorpe on a Tiger Cub who was several marks behind Youngie before the waterfall. Well, he actually rode the section non stop, feet up, a clean ride, and he won the trial, what a finale. Wilf had a grin from ear to ear. The crowd loved it. The commentator Jim Fitzmaurice was ecstatic and afterwards thanked Wilf for providing top class material, for the National T.V. Audience.

In the U.K. years before most of us had kicked our first bike, he had accumulated vast motorcycling experience as a trials rider, course plotter and organiser. He was actually Clerk of the Course for the Wye Valley Auto Club's National Trial for many years. As a motorcycle dealer Wilf sponsored riders in Open

to Centre, National and International events. Locally, after migrating in the late '60's Wilf started business in Byford then on to Kwinana Small Motors followed by a larger set up in the new Dixon Rd area as Rockingham Motor Cycles selling Yamaha. His ever supportive wife, Wendy remarked then that "Wilf was happy now because he is with his motorbikes again". In his spare time he was building a yacht and stimulating locals form the Rockingham Kwinana M.C.C. then he saw the need for a trials only club and all of a sudden the Pathfinders M.C.C. was born and is still going strong. Later on Wilf inevitably became involved with old friends in the V.M.C.C. restoring his beloved motorbikes. There were several times when the Chairman would call for an organiser for a Club Event and the usual silence was the stern reply from 200 members, but even though he wasn't well, Wilf would volunteer. In the last six months he was cross with himself for spending too much time at the hospital and not able to put together the "Economy Run" which he wanted to run for the Club. Wilf has gone to another Club now and I am sure he will be helping there too. *J. ROCK.*

VALE: PROFESSOR WILKINSON: In the early fifties when I was a schoolboy living in Cottesloe, one of the high lights of the year was to cycle over to Mosman Park to see the Harley Scramble. I can still see a rider with a big grin, pointy nose above a dapper little moustache, all topped off with a green pudding basin helmet. He was charging up and down the limestone slides on an old Harley. "That's old Prof. Wilkinson" my mates said. In retrospect he was then a good deal younger than I am now. He was also one of the blokes selling programs as you came in before the race - a real club man. I rarely went to the Speedway then and these were Professor Wilkinsons big days as a clown and trick rider at the intervals. To me his riding is just a dim memory but others could tell you how this man, who had been a champion gymnast in his youth, could ride a bike facing backwards, climb a ladder fixed to the seat (or stood up on the ground), be a drunk driving from the sidecar, fall out, stumble across the field and fall back into the sidecar while the riderless bike potted around in a big circle. He could ride his bike up to a tree, run the front wheel up the trunk till the bike stood vertical on the back wheels roll back and ride off. The modern trials bike may do that but it's not so easy on an old Ariel. In one series of photos Lindsay is dressed in a suit and tie, posed on a moving Harley, sitting side saddle on the pillion reading the

paper, standing on the seat - hands in pockets, hands on handlebars and body doubled over with his feet around his ears etc.

I joined the Harley Club in the late fifties and Lindsay was then Managing Director of British Tractors and used to charge up and down the steep ropeworks slides on a Fergie tractor, preparing the scramble track. He used to do the same at Brooklands, another Harley Club ground which was bottomless sand and is now buried under the Shenton Park tip. By now the Harley had been changed for a 1954/55 comp. Matchless on which he used to charge through the heavy sand with a big grin and glowing red face. We never saw much of him after the ropeworks track closed in '64 and he became heavily involved in stamps.



Some years back Lindsay was a guest speaker at our Booragoon meeting place and later at Forrestfield. He was an extremely interesting speaker and showed colour film of some of his stunts. Among them was a late twenties tourer (car) with rims he had set up eccentric to the hubs causing the car to lurch and lollop along. Somebody apparently stole this through the years of WWII.

Through the thirties he was a rep for Mortlocks and by doing his stunt riding on a Harley at showgrounds around the country he used to sell plenty of bikes - see it wasn't the good bike, just a super salesman that inflicted all those old Harleys on us.

It was marvellous to hear his stories of having a fast burn around Mt. Bay Rd while Perth's two traffic cops were out to lunch (12 - 1 each day was it?).

Those days are gone in this city and the characters who added so much colour to life are going too, never to be seen again in our changing society.

I have only scratched the surface of this admired and respected man's story. For those of you who don't know, Lindsay (Professor) Wilkinson passed away shortly before Christmas after a lengthy illness and several amputations which must have been cruel to such an active outgoing man. I am proud to say that when I was made a Life Member of the Harley Club it was Lindsay who made the presentation. JIM CLARK

TERRY'S TALE by Terry Germein

Born in England of Cockney parents and within the sound of Bow Bells on September 29th 1933, my first introduction to vintage vehicles was at the age of 3 years when my father, a struggling coal merchant in the streets of London, put me, with a cushion for comfort, on the petrol tank of his Rudge Multi and took me for a ride. From there we progressed to a Rudge Special, then a Brough Superior and various other bikes until dear old Dad went up in the world and progressed to a very early Morgan of approximately 1934 vintage. Now, this beast had, as you all know, a very noisy twin cylinder engine and on my first hearing of this devilish noise, when dad swung the handle and brought the motor into life, I took off at a fast rate of knots and my poor mother, pregnant at the time, finally caught hold of me after a fair distance which must have seemed like miles to her.

However, this didn't deter me from getting to know old machines in any way because I started owning a string of old wrecks from the age of twelve. First of this exotica was a square tanked beast which, if my memory serves me correctly, was a Royal Enfield. That is the only description I can give you as at the age of 12 all one is interested in is putting fuel in the correct filler, getting it started and riding the thing with legs and scarves flying in all directions as one's behind and the minimal springing on the bike took a beating as we raced across the field (Paddock).

Food, clothing and girls were of no interest at all when you have found your first Motorcycle. Only after it is too dark does one venture home, totally covered in grime and dog tired, in search of sustenance and sleep. I remember well my mother's words as to what my father would say if he knew how inconsiderate I had been, but by this time dear old Dad was in submarines fighting the war in the Pacific, and I had no worries about a clip around the ear at that time.

Being war time, petrol was totally unavailable to young lads even if they did try to bribe the local garage owner by sweeping the forecourt or polishing his old Hillman. But needs become a must and the local tobacconist had 1/2 litre bottles of lighter fuel on the counter (lighters had big flames in those days). A day or two of potato or pea picking at the local growers farm made it possible to purchase 4 bottles of this terrific stuff, and, this is where lesson number one comes in! Bottle number one, all one shilling and sixpence worth, was poured into the tank, which promptly poured out again through the myriad of pin holes which had rusted through along the edges where the metal was thinnest.

I won't go into the gory details of how we glued up these holes from the inside with some thing we found in Dad's shed and boiled in Mum's best milk saucepan, but will cut the story a bit shorter by saying that it worked for a while and that frugality was the order of the day. Fuel became a mixture of paraffin (kero), metho and lighter fuel mixed in various quantities until there was either less smoke or the head and barrel didn't get red hot. Starting the steed was via the very scientific method of removing the float chamber top, filling said chamber with lighter fuel, top back on, kick the kick start heavily, wait for the engine to falter when lighter fuel was almost used up, switch on petrol tap (renamed mixture tap), a few deft movement of hand and foot and we were off.

All my pals had to make sure they had money in their pockets before asking for a ride, and many a lad broke his first tooth when laying over the tank going flat out, with his cap reversed in true Brooklands style, when she suddenly seized and his head snapped forward onto the levers and lids on the front of the petrol tank. Incidentally, it became big business for the local tobacconist to look for old motorcycles to sell to the lads and therefore sell more lighter fuel.

He probably sold more lighter fuel than pipe tobacco in those heady days. My teenage years saw many interesting pieces of machinery pass through my hands, all financed by farm work, pea picking etc in the long evenings, weekends and school holidays. Starting with B.S.A.'S, Nortons, Vincents, Triumphs, the occasional two stroke such as Bantams, Excelsiors, James and the odd M.G. here and there. When you remember that in the late 40's and early

50'S a rough but serviceable B.S.A. for five quid (\$12) a 500cc H.R.D. of the 1930's vintage would set you back seventy five quid (\$160). Nortons were not that much more expensive than B.S.A.s and I bought my first 'Black Shadow' for just over two hundred pounds (\$463).

Those were the blissful days when we rode motorcycles in all weather and on snow and ice covered roads with both feet down and sliding. Of course, we didn't put our bikes away for the winter.

I did however, put my Gold Star B.S.A. away in the shed along with a 1936 M.G. to spend a couple of years in Germany chasing the Russians out of the British sector of Berlin. But that is another story, I will tell you about it some time, and of the speeds obtained in Humber Staff cars along the Autobahn in Germany whilst carrying out missions with 'SOXMIS' (Soviet Military Mission in West Germany).



Terry Germein

GIL FORD. Gil Ford passed away during June 92 at the age of 90. Gil was a fine gentleman and great rider and sportsman. He wasn't tied to any make of machine that I can remember but he liked the Indian and his mention of P. W. Armstrong is correct. Gil came to Forrest Place to see us all off in Sept. 1990 for the re-enactment so he was still keen. I have a photo taken with Gil, Ted Cracknell and myself.

I also still treasure the telegram I received back in 1927 wherein Gil wrote Congratulations to Ted and myself on beating his time. Charlie Watson (Gil's partner also deceased) also sent a telegram. Ted Clarke and Len Stewart had an unsuccessful try in 1926. Both are passed on. Len was a great rider and competed in the Isle of Man TT later.

Another great rider of those days was Stan Catlett. Stan was killed in a plane crash near Bunbury many years ago. I ring Ted now and again and he's keeping well. By the way, my old sidecar mate on my Albany to Perth record George Blundell is still alive. That was not his death but another George Blundell. Old bikies take a lot of knocking off. NORM CUNNINGHAM.



Norm Cunningham (left) Arthur Pidgeon (right).



Below; Gil Ford (Photos by Murray Barnard)

Gil Ford made four attempts at the record and Ted Clarke made an attempt in 1926 at the age of 44.

Gil Ford claims Mr Clarke was not the first. He said the honour went to Percy (P.W) Armstrong and his co-rider Karl Schiller.

THE MISSING NUT by Charles Lawson.

Everybody knows that the appearance of my machines leaves a little to be desired but I counter this by saying they are all goers not show-ers. This happening took place on the Annual Boxing Day run to Mundaring Weir.

I leapt out of bed, grabbed a pair of sausages, a roll and cool drink, kicked my trusty 1938 Norton sidecar and headed for Mundaring. As I accelerated into Benara Road the revs rose to a crescendo but no power was being transmitted to the back wheel.

I examined the machine and found the primary chain had come adrift. On checking for tools in the side car I found a battered 8" shifter and a pair of multi-grips.

These were used to remove the foot rest and chain case. It appeared the nut holding the engine sprocket had come off allowing the sprocket and chain to drop off. After looking up the street for the nut, without success, I set off for home to get my ute and trailer. After walking about a mile I found a nut on the footpath.

This I knew was off my Norton (covered in chain lube) so I hurried back to the bike, made a key from a Whitworth nut by rubbing it on the concrete kerbing with the multi-grips, to reduce its height. Re-assembled the machine and off like Eric Oliver (several times World Champ) to Mundaring.

I didn't bother to cook the snags.

1993: A 10LH APC is stolen and flattens the East Perth lockup, couple of Police bikes and cars..

KEN MARSHALL COLLECTION: The Club, negotiated with Ken Marshall to buy his Kalgoorlie Collection of approximately 22 motor cycles and associated parts. Charles was given approval to make an offer of \$55,000.00 for the collection. Permission was granted to keep a 40ft container at the Clubrooms to house the bikes. Below: Ken Marshall.



Much ado at the start of the year about the long term status of the Wattle Grove clubrooms. Main Roads was proposing to build an overpass which restrict access and encroach on the leased area. Main Roads eventually backed off from the plan (however, it is back on the planning board again in 2022). The Club approached VCCWA about buying a one third share of the clubrooms and to help pay for extensions. The

approach however was voted down by the VCC. As it is a 21 year lease was obtained by the VCCWA and the VMCCWA is a sub-lessee). *(It should not be forgotten that the VMCCWA made a significant contribution when the facilities were initially built).* Not much to report this year apart from the normal club-runs. A sure and steady pair of hands had taken charge with Frank Cocks in the chair. Minute books from 1984/85 could not be found and the Club Seal was also lost.

Jeff Sieber found time to grizzle in the Chatter about club fees and in particular Club Officials not having to pay fees *(something which died a death eventually).*

TO THE EDITOR - CLUB FEES

I am one of a few that is having a little grizzle, re Club Members that hold Official position, and not have to pay Club fees. I believe you work for the Club because you want to do it, and not for money or gain, and I don't believe this has changed the position at all within the Club as we had hell's own job getting a President as you would well know, as I was asked by 2 different Club Officers. There are quite a few of us that have done a lot of work in the Club in the past and are still helping a lot.

I for one was on Committee for many years, I was a delegate from the Motor Cycle Club to the Veteran Car Club. I have also assisted on other rallies, and with the help of my wife am running the Peter Groucott Remembrance Run, also I have assisted to run the 2 Day Trial for quite sometime, have also assisted on other Rallies.

We also helped load and cart the parts left to the Club by Peter Groucott and stored 1 ton ute loads of parts in our garage, all of this was done because we wanted to help. I think the Club is going down the wrong path at present, the entry fee for the 2 Day Trial is far too cheap in my opinion, also they offer a free meal on Saturday night, plus offer of \$30 for fuel is just not on in my opinion. I don't have a problem with the Club Fees going up but, why should the general members have to carry the can all the time. The Club fees should be put up slowly i.e. a little each couple of years. Regards JEFF SIEBER.

NOTE. The free meal and \$30.00 petrol is only offered to people who run a vehicle in an official capacity such as back up trailer - not personal back-ups or competitors - and would by no means cover an individuals costs for an overnight stay and close to 400 miles of travel. JIM CLARK

FEEDBACK IN THE CHATTER: Richard Faulkner felt motivated to write to the Editor with his concerns in June 1993. (At the time there was quite a bit of antipathy to the Overland Run by some members and even from the Chair at the time.)

Dear Jim, having been encouraged in past issues to give feed back regarding the club I am sufficiently fed up to actually voice an opinion. Generally there is a common bond between motor cyclists whatever their particular interests which I have experienced through out three continents. This has ranged for me from an evening in the south of France with a B.M. rider from Finland (the only way we could communicate was through drawing pictures of engine designs in the sand) to a conversation near the Arctic Circle with the owner of a Red Hunter on the hazards of hitting Maribou Storks in Kenya. But never have I encountered such a bunch of negativity as I have encountered in this club.

There are a number of aspects to the problem. Nobody enjoys public ridicule from the platform of a meeting and I am no exception. The person responsible for the attack also has sufficient arrogance to make the remark 'don't argue with me' (the subject matter being that the further you go along two convergent lines the closed they become to each other - he thinks otherwise). And no', I will not argue or anything else with the venerable worthy. indeed like so many others I will be taking no more active part in proceedings

since I do not enjoy going to meetings just to be criticised by people spluttering out the last of their testosterone in an orgy of self indulgence.

I for one do not share the opinion that certain senior members invented the motor cycle, never mind the wheel, as they would have me believe. It is evident that those most self opinionated in fact are very disappointing when actually questioned on specific points. I, and I am sure others too, are heartily sick of the eulogies concerning the Overlanders as one after another addresses the assembled throng to squeeze out another tear as they insert themselves further up each others egos. Apart from the unseemly spectacle of it all, the venture was no big deal. At the age of twenty I went across a continent by myself on an M21. No back up, no truck, no organised camp sites no sweet Fanny Adams, just six and a half thousand miles over twelve countries in five weeks on a very limited budget and a motor cycle that the venerable member recently failed for amongst other things having a marginally worn rear chain. And so my unsightly, slow, leaking, disreputable M21 and Bursmar side-car will not be gracing the rallies for some time to come. Nor will Pat, my wife, be taking out the equally scruffy C15 with our four kids and I am sure there will be a loud sigh of relief from certain quarters. However I would put forward some ideas:-

Every Chatter there is a list of new members and yet the total size of the club seems to stay fairly static. If in a business situation there was this amount of fall off it would need nationalising to stay viable.

Secondly it appears from the Jim Clark article in the last Chatter that the numbers are dropping off at club events. Excuses are being made but it just could be that some elements just make them no fun, so less are turning up. Pat and myself are amongst that number. If the usual turn out is forty machines there has just been a decline of 5%. It is a shame since we will certainly miss them as there have been some really magic runs over the last five years that have left a lasting impression.

Finally, whether the current hierarchy like it or not, people like me and indeed my kids are the future of the Club with its ethos of keeping totally impractical relics in working order. However, there

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will be no future for the club if the current regime disenchant the active membership at the current rate. We shall therefore be giving it a rest for the time being. Au revoir to those on the side of the angels, thanks for the helpful and correct input - hope to renew acquaintances in due course. Thanks also to those responsible for the Chatter which must be a most demanding task but is very much appreciated.

Yours,
RICHARD FAULKNER 18.5.93

In regard to the Overland Tour I doubt that any of the Re-enactment participants regard themselves as heroes. To take part in any large Rally of this nature builds bonds of comradeship which people do like to talk about as anyone who took part in the NZ Tour, Wheels West 87 or any of the Rally Wests etc will tell you. The heroic part in any of these events is organising them.

It will be easier to get riders for next years Busselton Two Day than an organiser. I stand by my comment about members not being able to afford to attend all of the growing number of events. There are many members who are on limited incomes these days and they will tell straight out "I can't afford it" and I am one of them. I don't have anything of Richard's personal conflict but it is unfortunate that he feels the way he does. JIM CLARK

FROM THE CHATTER: Dear Richard, I have read of your exploits on bikes throughout the World and I take my hat off to you, however these trips were done on your own behalf and you took the responsibility for the outcome. When you joined the VMCC of WA you agreed to abide by the rules of our Club. The aims are to acquire, restore and ride bikes 25 years or more. To encourage the movement the Police Dept allow us to examine our own machines for roadworthiness and on being passed fit provided us with a cheap licence, this places a great responsibility on the good name of our Club. To ride your (I quote) unsightly, slow, leaking, disreputable BSA is your right, but not on Club events where it could jeopardise the respect and favours enjoyed by the VMCC of WA. You were asked to rectify the faults on your machine and you chose

to ignore the advice given, don't blame the Examiners, they do a fine job, just look at the bikes that attend runs.

Regards
RAY OAKES

Also in the Chatter:

Dear Sir, as a staunch advocate for the rights of left handed people we must congratulate Bill Haseldine for his insight and forethought in putting the Chatter staples in the right (?) place. Perhaps every second Chatter could be stapled thus to cater for us lefties? The next step would be to have the print running from right to left! Is there enough interest in forming a left handed section of the VMCC? (American bikes only, for obvious reasons!). Yours sincerely LEFT RIGHT OUT.

Bill claims that it is an old tradition for the April issue of Mags (April Fools Day) to be put together back to front! ED.

1994: Whiteman Park Motor Museum established. Population of Perth is 1,295,000

The Club was grateful to Tom Welch who donated 3 copies of his book on the 'Birth of the VMCC' to the Club. Tom had researched, typed and printed the book at his own expense.

At the March 1994 Committee Meeting members were informed that the missing 1984/5/6 minutes were still missing!

John Boyd was elected as a Life member in recognition of his commitment to the Club, the events he had organised and the work he had done to improve the Club Library.

Under General Business at the October General Meeting Charles Lawson gave details of the purchase of the "Ken Marshall Collection" for \$65,000.

The first auction of motor cycles and memorabilia was held on 30 October, 1994 at Club Headquarters. At the November meeting Charles gave a report on the highly successful auction and thanked his helpers. A large quantity of bits and pieces remained to be sorted and disposed of. The following motion was moved and carried with acclaim:-

To record the great achievement of Charles Lawson in conducting the purchase and disposal of the "Ken

Marshall Collection" for the VMCC; negotiations extended over 3 years placing a great responsibility on Chas. Many of us would have fallen by the wayside but he went ahead, ignoring the doubts and criticisms. The very successful sale to Club members has fully vindicated his single minded approach and it only leaves us to say, 'Good on yer mate!'

The President made mention of Greg Boothey who had unselfishly borne personal costs in transporting the collection from Kalgoorlie and Bruce Williams for

securing the containers at a commercial rate. Other members of the sub-committee had cut their travelling expenses to Kalgoorlie to an unrealistic figure.

The amount taken at the auction is not given but the liquid assets rose from \$44,416.07 in November to \$113,185.08 in December, a difference of \$68,769.01. In February, 1995 after some remaining items had been sold the Treasurer was able to announce that the Collection had realized \$30,154.65.

AN UNPAID CLOWN by Charlie Lawson - The recent Royal Show brought back memories of a happening about 40 years ago. In those days the Royal Agricultural Society would get the West Australian M/C Assoc, to put on grass track events on the Show Grounds at Claremont - Mini T.T., track race, flag race, relay race etc.

It was in this last event that this schemozzle took place. In those days I was a riding member of the A.J.S.. MCC along with current V.M.C.C. members Bill Young, Fred Hopkins, I think Harold Gascoyne was in the Ariel Club and Max Annear in the Indian Club.

I had not entered as I was getting over a dose of the mumps (downstairs) but went along to watch.

The set up for the relay was that each club fielded a team of 4 riders who had to complete a lap, up and back the length of the show grounds, stop at a designated line, dismount and run 50 yards and hand over a batten to the next rider, the last rider to continue right through. Everybody was running the bikes on methanol - Shell A as there was prize money involved. I was seconded to catch the bikes when the rider jumped off to run with the batten.

I stood to the left and grabbed the bikes, left hand on the clutch lever while my right took the throttle. The first two riders went O.K. and then came Bill Young.

Bill was riding his 1936 Norton (breathed on juggernaut) and had fitted cork clutch inserts as they grabbed quicker off the line but were prone to swell and not free up very well when hot. Well Youngie charged towards me at about 20 m.p.h., leaped off like a circus acrobat and left me with the Norton.

The trouble is as he jumped off he dislodged the throttle cable in the twist grip which made the engine run up to about 4,000 revs. With a dragging clutch and a compression ratio of umpteen to one the Norton was off with me hanging on to the bloody machine and taking strides of about 25 feet all over the show grounds, and in my best fawn suit.

Eventually I managed to pull the plug lead off and collapse in a heap on the ground. As I wheeled the silent machine back to the pits some professional drunkard of unmarried parents called out "Hey mate! do you do that act again termorra?"

The A.J.S club blokes gave me 10 bob to get my suit cleared.

DON BOWDEN "is a man on a mission. His task: to ride around Australia, raising money for the Diabetes Research Foundation. Not so unusual, you may say. Lots of people walk, cycle, drive around the country raising money for charity. But he's probably the first to do it on a 1928 Ariel motorcycle. Mr Bowden, 46, of Bedfordale, has spent the past few years restoring the vintage bike to its former glory, with a 1928 frame and gearbox and a 1930 overhead valve motor. The trip is the result of years of planning and contacting

roadhouses and Rotary clubs around the country. He said he chose to raise money for diabetes research because it was a subject close to his heart — his nine-year-old son is an insulin-dependent diabetic. "I feel very strongly about it and I wanted to do something," he said. He set out to raise \$15,000. He raised \$10,500 before leaving Perth and said he expected to exceed his target on the road. Mr Bowden left Perth on Sunday and plans to follow Highway 1 around the nation, returning to Perth on October 3.

He averages about 64kmh and travels in the day because the motorcycle does not have lights. Mr Bowden passed the Karratha turnoff yesterday and was expected to reach Port Hedland last night." A tremendous effort from Don Bowden to commemorate Arthur Grady's ride around Australia in 1924. On 7 August, 1994 Don Bowden started on

his "Around Australia" Trip to celebrate the 70th anniversary of Arthur Grady's similar trip on a 1924 Douglas - the first circumnavigation by a motorized vehicle. Don was to collect donations for the Diabetic Research Foundation on his journey. He returned safely on 2 October, 1994. Later Don was presented with a Plaque to commemorate his trip.



Marathon man: Don Bowden checks his vintage Ariel motorbike on the road to Port Hedland. PICTURE: DIONE DAVIDSON



Earlier in the year Kevin Cass had conducted his own ride from NSW around Australia on a Douglas as well, to commemorate Arthur Grady's achievement.

FEATURE ARTHUR GRADY: Arthur Grady, the self-reliant adventurer who rode a 350 cc Douglas twin from Perth across the top of Australia to Brisbane and back through the state capitals in 1924-25 becoming the first person to circumnavigate the country by motorised transport. Grady's exploits, a publicity stunt organised by the West Australian Douglas agent Armstrong, achieved worldwide recognition for the reliability of the new chain drive bike.

After completing the lap of Australia, Grady was immortalised by a small, pen and-ink-illustrated book produced by the factory. It included an introduction by the editor of *The Motor Cycle*. Part of it read: "Very few can appreciate fully the magnitude of the achievement, the dangers encountered, and the difficulties overcome, for in this modern world of ours it is hard to realise that parts of an island continent like Australia remain unexplored and so out of touch with civilisation that failure of the explorer's mount would mean certain death."

But if anyone was up to the task it was Grady. A 25 year-old motorcycle racer toughened by years of combat as a teenager in World War 1. Grady was described in the book as "A tall good looking chap, with auburn hair, and to quote an Australian newspaper— 'Enough to make the average girl envious -he is a typical British character'.



Arthur Grady arrives back at the Fremantle Town Hall.

Grady travelled alone, without any support. His swag consisted of an army oilskin ground sheet and mosquito net, bound tightly to the front forks. A toothbrush was carried in his pocket. Enough fuel was held on the rear carrier to supplement the one-and-a-half gallon petrol tank. An extra gallon of oil was carried to supply the prodigious

thirst of the total-loss, plunger-pump oil system. An ammunition box mounted on top of the carrier contained essential spares and a tyre-mending kit. Grady also carried a medical outfit and basic army hard rations. Perhaps the most vital item was a two gallon waterbag, the bare minimum for crossing such arid countryside.

Just four days after a rousing send-off from Perth in October, 1924, Grady literally ran out of roads and had to use his wits and a compass to follow little-used bullock tracks. Not an experienced bushman, he soon realised the enormity of his undertaking, especially with the north-west of the continent in drought. He had fitted oversize Bates tyres to his wheels and they soon became invisible, so covered were they with three-pronged seeds from the area's spiky grass. However, in 8000 miles the tyres never suffered a puncture.

As he headed north-east into the edge of the Simpson desert, the station homesteads were 80 miles apart. In one district he travelled 14 hours a day without changing out of low gear. It was tough country. One station bunkhouse he dosed down in had the beds suspended by chains from the roof. "Snakes are very numerous and when I wake at night I can hear them crawling about on the floor," the owner told him.

Station owners often gave Grady vague instructions, such as "Ride across the paddock until you reach the fence, then turn right". Often the fence would be a morning's travelling. In a flat landscape where the outline of a sheep on the horizon took on the proportions of a buffalo or a clump of bushes resembled a vital hillock, it was inevitable that Grady would get lost.

Perhaps the worst incident was when he spent a day retracing his steps and found his waterbag had sprung a leak, emptying its precious contents. "Everything was hushed and awfully still" he wrote. "I would reflect a little faintheartedly on my journey, solitary and melancholy, in that vast, rugged interior. Mile after mile of dreadful riding — it seemed to be maddening."

Grady was also racing against time, for although he had run out of water, the weather was shaping up for a major rain. He wrote later: "When the big wet sets in, all human affairs come to a standstill.

The country is one great bog where neither man nor horse may travel." Eventually he abandoned the bike, tying his mosquito net on the end of a stick as a marker, and set off on foot to follow a dry creek bed. Darkness and rain stopped even this effort and he sought refuge under scrubby bushes from a two-hour deluge. He had been lost for two days.

In the dawn light he returned to his bike. started it up and stumbled over the faint marks of a buggy track. Miraculously, he was safe. Now a new problem faced Grady. How to cross the swollen creeks. "Collecting a few handfuls of grass I stuffed them tightly into the exhaust pipes and, with a piece of fat, kept for lubricating the chains, greased the carburettor and magneto and plugged up the end of the carburettor with a piece of greasy cloth. Then smearing grease over the petrol tank cap.

I cautiously started across. In mid-stream the handlebars were just visible." Once over the plugs were withdrawn and the grand little machine started up with a healthy roar. On another occasion he found it easier to cross a major riverbed by dismantling the bike, carrying the engine across, then the rolling chassis, and reassembling it.

He also experienced fuel problems. At one point in the journey across the continent petrol was available at the astronomical price of 10 shillings a gallon! On one occasion he rode 73 miles using kerosene (paraffin) in place of petrol. His oil supply dried up once, and he made do with a home-brew of six bottles of medicinal castor oil, half a gallon of beef dripping (always semi-liquid in the summer heat) and two pints of windmill oil. "I made it myself and any motorcyclist is free to use my recipe." he wrote later.

One station Grady crossed was 14,000 square miles. Loneliness was not a problem as he befriended some Aborigines, who taught him how to harvest the desolate landscape for edible plants and berries. But perhaps the most bizarre incident was when he met a bullock wagon team whose driver seemed to have a knowledge of motorcycles. It transpired the man had a belt-drive Douglas strapped under the wagon between the axles. When an incredulous Grady asked why, the bullock master said: "When I get 15 miles from a pub I get on the Douglas and ride ahead. This gives me an extra two days drinking time before my Aboriginal offsider arrives with the wagon."

By the time Grady struck Brisbane the worst of his trip was over, despite the fact he was only halfway home. He received civic receptions in the state capitals of Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

The journey home across the Nullarbor from Adelaide was still a daunting experience, but Grady made light of it saying it is a known road and has been travelled many times by motorists and motorcyclists.

The Douglas purred along contentedly day by day until on the 14th of March 1925 "I had the great pleasure of riding down the streets of my native town of Fremantle and the Douglas registered the last beat after billions of beats, in front of the town hall which I had left five months and 14 days before.

The great journey is finished and I am quietly satisfied with the honour of being the first to do it. To the Douglas and Bates tyres I cannot give too much honour. Not one spare part was used on the machine, which never once failed me and the Bates tyres never once punctured."

The Douglas was eventually returned to England and put on display but what happened to it after that is unknown. Grady was later offered a large sum of money to repeat the trip on an Indian but declined.

He later raced speedway motorcycles and continued riding motorcycles until the late 1970s. He died a few years later.



WITH GRADY & HIS DOUGLAS AROUND AUSTRALIA

Unfortunately no camera can reproduce the trials set the rider and machine. The awful three days and nights spent sliding through a mosquito infested bog—the two days and nights of uncertainty when lost in a trackless waste—the consuming bush fire that all but meant death to the intrepid rider.



*A touch of Tragedy
Drought's grim harvest*

*All built to stand up to
Australian Conditions*



*A welcome Artesian
Bore at a Desert Oasis
(Note the Pack)*



*Two great overlanders
meet on the fringe of
the Never-Never....*

**GRADY & HIS
DOUGLAS**



*Mary's new Bungalow
quickly detachable*

*No tracks
here—
lost for
two days*



*A good feed
for Jacky
Note—Panic
Instincts*

Sole distributors for Western Australia—

Armstrong Cycle & Motor Agency

PERTH, FREMANTLE, KALGOORLIE.

IN ALL TESTS OF ENDURANCE—DOUGLAS EXCELS.

Chapter 7: 1995 - 99



1995: John Tonkin, ex Premier passes away and the roses in East Fremantle will never be the same. Perth population is now 1,319,000.

It was thought that the Club should now become more involved with Community projects to make itself better known to a wider public. In furtherance of this idea it was agreed to donate a maximum of \$2,000.00 to the Kalamunda Bushfire Brigade to assist in equipping its new fire tender.

The building extensions were causing the Committee some anxiety; work was proceeding before the licence was signed and registered. The VCC was requesting an extra contribution for gravel and a brick enclosure to the inspection area. \$5,000.00 progress payment was made in May 1995. The building agreement documents were signed by the VCC and VMCC the same month. Extensions to the Parts Shed, under the supervision of Ross Chamberlain were started at the same time. From then on things progressed in a satisfactory manner.

The Treasurer, in his report, stated that the Club's Accumulated Funds at 30 June 1995 stood at \$148,687.00. This was represented by cash in hand, cash management account, j Wallace account, stock in hand and property, plant and equipment. The major sources of income were annual subscriptions and events such as swap day and bike displays. The purchase and re-sale of the "Ken Marshall Collection" resulted in extra-ordinary additional funds. During the year the Club entered into an agreement with VCC to contribute to the extension of its building at an estimated cost of \$30,000.00.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP: Peter Stocker was the member honoured with Life membership 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."

MY NORTON STORY - by the late Jim Wallace

My first long trip away from Melbourne was at Xmas 1951, with the Norton fully laden with sleeping hammock, spare tubes, chain and 2 gallon tin of petrol on a special carrier, and all my clothing, following the Hume Highway to Sydney, then inland to Parks, Forbes etc. and up to near

the Queensland border. It was there I ran into flooded country near Walgett. There were long stretches of road covered by water, at first I walked through to find how deep the water was, usually just over 1 foot deep and with the comp Norton I could ride through with no trouble. Then came the soft clay muddy stretches between the flooded areas, which kept blocking up the wheels completely, the wheels would not go round, or if it did it eventually started burning the rear tyre smoking and the smell of rubber, the rear wheel was taken out many times and the mud dug out with a tyre lever, as for the front wheel it did not matter if it turned as it just slid through the soft mud.

When I had walked through the first 5 or 6 flooded areas and finding them all rideable I just took it for granted that this was the general pattern and stopped walking through to check, just put the Norton into 2nd and went through, for quite a few miles of this country, still taking the rear wheel out at quite regular intervals.

I started off that morning about 7 am and now about 4 pm and only approximately 20 miles travelled and nothing to eat all day but plenty of water to drink. I came to this rather short stretch of water approximately 30ft long, into 2nd gear approximately 15 mph but surprise this was where the bridge had been and the water was over 6 ft deep, so the Norton and I just about disappeared, with the little bit extra speed I had been travelling seemed to carry the Norton and I just past the deepest part and I managed to scramble up the other bank hanging onto the front wheel, only half of it was showing above the water, struggling for 10 to 15 minutes the Norton was lying on the bank, water running out from everywhere, oil tank, petrol tank, chain case and even the cylinder.

The plug was taken out, empty it by kicking the bike over, also my clothes were wet and muddy,, with all my clothes spread over the road and bits of the Norton also to dry, it was now near 6 o'clock, I spread the wet hammock on the road and got inside to get away from the mosquitos and slept there for the night on my little island section of the road and nothing to eat from breakfast time and a total mileage that day approx. 24 miles. At daylight next morning and when the mosquitos had disappeared I put the various parts

back on the bike again, dried and cleaned, rounded up all my clothes which were all the same colour now, a red muddy colour.

One kick and the Norton was on it's way again, thanks to the waterproof mag. I came across more flood areas and from the previous experience I walked through them first - with my luck there could have been two bridges. I got into town about 8 am and had a good breakfast, very welcome as I had nothing to eat from breakfast the previous morning,

I also bought a blue shirt from the local store, as all the others were a mess and all wrinkled. I checked at the Police Station the best road out and they said do not take such and such a road as the mail truck had not been through there for over 6 weeks, yes that was the road I had come through. The main road south was open and I had a very nice trouble free trip back to Melbourne although 90% of the roads were unsealed.

CONFESSIONS OF AN AMATEUR PILLION RIDER

Forty-five years between rides qualifies me for amateur status. Except for a short jaunt to Whiteman Park some weeks ago, the Busselton Rally became my "Baptism of fire". That first long gone experience was a disaster. I came from a sailing family and having "messed about in boats" from a very early age, was prone to lean out against the downside. Not a welcome practice on a motor cycle.

Throughout the generations mothers have been warning their daughters against riding on those dangerous machines. Mine was no exception. Dire consequences were in store for me if I dared to disobey her. I often wondered why mothers took this stance. The Busselton Rally encounter gave me the answer in part. Leaving Forrestfield I thought: "What am I doing in this predicament? All the way to Busselton? I must be crazy!" Further down the track I was beginning to feel the exhilaration of a fast take-off. Flying into the wind, machine against the elements. This wasn't half bad: in fact it was downright exciting. Could almost be on a par with sailing.

As time wore on, innovation came into play while trying to avoid a sore "bott". One way was to grasp the carrier behind, lift up and allow my hands and arms to take the weight of my body. Another was for my legs to do the same thing. I found my legs were strong enough to hold me in this position for up to a

of connotations rolling around in my head. This one, I believe, is maybe the reason why mothers throw up their hands in horror at the thought of little "Darlene" riding pillion.

Unlike our male counterparts, the female anatomy is not encumbered by protuberances. While hugging close to the driver and keeping a straight back we are able to sit directly atop that big round pelvic muscle. This position relieves under-padded buttock bones and as the posterior is resting, the mind is running riot. If conjecture boosts the imagination, all sorts of erotic? possibilities suddenly evolve. It is a wonder more riders and their passengers don't abandon rallies and head for the bushes. But we all know the reason this will never occur.

Bikers have a few great loves in their lives. Their motor cycles head the list and who can blame them when every time they speed off from a standing start the adrenalin goes charging through the system. Sweethearts, wives and families are all subordinate to those dearly-loved machines, many of which were nurtured out of the rusty rubble of a swap meet.

MORE ON MOTORCYCLE SEATS by Jim Clark

Motorcycle seats, or more correctly pillions, have been of interest lately and here's a bit. more humour in a different direction but still to do with sitting on bikes so I guess you could say it's related in a round about way,

I was recently talking to a retired auto electrician who started in the trade in the late twenties, at a time when motorcycles were pretty much every day transport. One of his favourite tricks was to run a wire from the magneto to a small contact slipped through the seat cover. Of course most of the bikes were started in traditional old four stroke fashion, standing" up for a long swinging kick, and when the bike started the maggie sent a good spark up through the seat just waiting for the unsuspecting bottom about to descend on it.

The last time this trick was performed was on an Ajay that for some reason had no kick start. The owner - a workmate - pulled the bike back on compression and took a run and jump and as it fired up leapt on sidesaddle and very rapidly leapt off again. The bike took off on it's own, in through the back door of the workshop, causing several people to smartly jump out of the way, over the footpath, across the road dodging the small amount of traffic in Wellington St, Perth, at that time and demolished the front wheel

and forks on a wall that got in the way . Needless to say there was not laughter on everyone's lips, especially the owner and the boss , so George had his already low apprentice wage , reduced still further for a couple of months.

COCK O' THE LIGHTWEIGHTS by Fred Golding

It all started in 1965, I had been a member of the Bunbury Vintage Car Club. For many years I had restored a 1926 T Model Ford Run-About and my son was doing a 1926 T Model Tourer Car. We spent three years working countless hours, many hundreds of miles, to find those hard parts to finish the cars off. As my son was being apprenticed as a Motor Trimmer, it was very handy to get the seats finished off the right way. At last, both cars were complete and we had many years driving them. Then came the year 1982. I was , looking for a 125cc D1 Bantam. It proved hard to find, but I was looking for a special one - it had to be black and have chrome rims.

It turned up, a 1950 model. My reason for this was, in my younger years I worked for Mortlock Bros in W.A. They were the agents for BSA Motor Cycles. My job was doing the complete wiring on new cars and utes in their assembly works. Vanguard 8. As I think back to the days after the war years, in the early '1950-'s, after returning from service in the RAAF, cars and motor bikes were assembled with pride and workmanship, They were tuned up to perfection. It was a great feeling to see so many lovely English bikes ready to be sold.

I started restoring my Bantam in Dec. 1982. The bike had been in a farm shed for many years. It had been covered, all over, by super phosphate. The speedo said 20,130 miles. There was no head lamp, tool box, tail light or muffler. The rear sprocket on the back wheel was in excellent condition. The frame nice and straight, handle bars were good, both guards OK. The tyres were U.S. and the wheels were buckled. After taking the motor apart, and checking gears and clutch plates, I had no reason to think that the miles on the speedo was not right. I was lucky to be able to get two new chrome 19 inch rims from England, still in the BSA paper. Also a new clutch and brake cables, new gearbox, driving sprocket, locking tabs, new engine seals and a complete set of engine bearings. New Magneto points and new driving cab and key. Also a brand new BSA Piston, complete 20/0S, as there was very little wear in the cylinder and had it rebored to suit. Also a complete set of BSA transfers, new fork gaitors, brand new set bonded brake lining

and shoes. It took me 14 months to finish the bike. I did my own spray painting and rebuilding. The wheels I cut blank, spokes to size and : had new threads done. After rebuilding the engine I was lucky to find a fish tail muffler and the right head lamp. I spent many hours repairing the switch. I had a stainless steel strip cut to replace the old chrome type that fitted on the tank. My son reupholstered the seat. I fitted a Victa Lawn Mower coil as the old type were not so reliable, and rewound the lighting coils. I had all the parts rechromed by a local from in Bunbury.

To finish the bike off, I was lucky to obtain the Wico taillight and lens. Also a brass name plate which said Mortlock Bros Ltd, 914 Hay Street, Perth W.A. Just the ones we fitted on the bikes when I worked there years ago.

It has not yet let me down. I have covered well over 4000 miles and have ridden it many miles, apart from events. Just as a matter of interest, in my younger days, during the war years, our bikes were taken over by the Army. A 1939 new Imperial was used as a Despatch bike, ridden from Northam to Karrakatta. We were never reimbursed by the Government.

THE PATRON WRITES - Jack Berkshire

I was very interested in the article. written by Fred Golding, Cock of the Lightweights, especially the final chapter of the war years when private motor cycles were taken over by the Army. In 1939-41 I joined the 18th Light Militia unit in South Australia, as I believed they were going to mechanise the unit and private vehicles already used would be increased and some would be taken over by the Army, especially motor cycles. I purchased a 1938 250cc Royal Enfield placed it on Army strength and became a dispatch rider, hoping to retain my machine when I left the Army. I used the Enfield for six weeks on Army manoeuvres. I received 5/- a day for using my private bike, petrol, oil and repairs carried out by Army, if needed. I joined the RAAF in 1941 after completing two more Army camps at Warradale and Woodside and retained my Enfield which apart from those pressed steel forks, gave no real trouble. The Army were now riding 16H Nortons and M20 BSA all khaki and brand new, but I did see many civilian bikes that may have been, as Fred said, used by the Army in those early days. Although I was issued with a full Light Horse uniform breeches, leggings, slouch hat, plume etc I never did learn to ride a horse. After my discharge from the Air

Force in 1945 and a couple of other jobs, Railways in Adelaide, a mining in Kalgoorlie, I joined the Police Force in W.A. and the rest is history I suppose.

After my initial training, (less technical than today) I was transferred for a few months to Mundaring and asked to use my private motor cycle, a 1941 X Army M20 BSA to do police work. In those days (1948) most police stations in the country used private vehicles for police inquiry work and were paid mileage. I was quite happy to use my bike on the mileage set down and think I was better off than the chaps with their cars, mine was sixpence a mile. Our main problem at Mundaring was the ethnic groups of people employed and living at the Mundaring Weir.

Their job was to raise the height of the weir wall and believe me there were plenty of racial fights and arguments. I did teach my police workmate, Bill Cornell to ride the BSA but I never did learn to ride the police horse. Like the Army the Police Dept slowly phased out private vehicles, and we know what they all have today. I "believe I was the only policeman to ride a private motor cycle on police work for that short time (8 months) at Mundaring.

I later took the BSA to Kalgoorlie and fitted a sidecar purchased from Ken Marshall. The BSA was used as family transport for several years. Anyway, thanks to Fred for reviving memories of the early days and private-vehicles, used by the Army and Police Force. So next time you see a white Commodore covered in lights, siren, etc parked in a police station think it may have been a Ford Prefect. in 1948.

TED CRACKNELL by Norm Cunningham

Although getting - or rather having GOT old, the white ants have not yet got into my memory department and I recall 70 years ago meeting Ted Cracknell who was a salesman employed by Mortlock Bros. in Perth. Ted was always a cheerful person to talk with and he talked me into buying a Harley. As a member of the Harley-Davidson Club, a lot of discussion took place about a tour to Sydney. Both Ted and myself were interested as also were about 25 others although only 16 ended up going.

We had talks with a Mr P.W. Armstrong (who by the way was the agent for Indian Motorcycles). He generously offered to lecture us on the dangers of the overland track for there were no made roads between here and Port Augusta. Old PW had recently travelled the route in an Indian and I thought how sportsmanlike it was for him to help the opposition

make a successful tour. Well, the 25 dwindled down to 16 and after twelve months of planning and organising the tour started. The rest is history. I had followed the record rides of Ted Clark and Len Stewart (Harley) and Gil Ford and Charlie Watson (Indian), and the idea was born that their times could be bettered.



Norm Cunningham (left) & Ted Cracknell (right in 1927

During the Overland tour copious notes were made and a cache of stones were placed in certain places and they were still there a year later and proved helpful. I could not have chosen a better partner to attempt the record with for Ted was meticulous in preparing our outfit - my bike and his sidecar. We both spent several weekends preparing for we had to carry water, petrol, food, clothes, spare parts, spare tyre and battery and plugs. We never used the battery or plugs. Thus we had a large amount of gear on board. Each took their turn in the saddle and we had a system during any stop one would attend to certain things and the other would do his bit. If a puncture happened one would get the repair outfit and the other the pump, alternating at each puncture which fortunately we had few. We had to apply to the Traffic Dept. to permit us to exceed the limit and Sergeant Smith told us he would send a Traffic Cop ahead of us and we were not pass him until after

Midland. (The Cop was named Fletcher and we couldn't catch him (he was a member of the Harley Club).

AT Kellerberrin we were flagged down by a Harley member and his wife. Tinny Walker who lived there at the time. They had prepared a hot meal for us. We had planned to eat whilst driving but this was too good to refuse. Tinny filled our oil and gas and tested the pressure in the tyres whilst we ate. Sorry to say Tinny has passed on. All this had been covered before but I had to mention Tinny. During the whole of the trip I could not speak more highly of Ted who was so tolerant and he would calm me down if I got a touch of S.O.L. when a flat tyre happened or the engine appeared to sound weak but no worries, the plugs never missed a beat. On return, a trophy called the Cunningham/Cracknell trophy was awarded for an event which ended" at the Waterwheel Restaurant in Albany Highway. I took Ted to two of these events and he got a kick out of presenting the trophy and attending the lunch, The last one held in 1994 he was too ill to attend and he had been on the down grade since.

When the news of the Overlander re-enactment reached me, I was interested and ended up going

with them. I spoke to Ted about it but he could not make it. However he came to Murray St. to see us off and I have a picture of Ted and the late Gil Ford standing by our Harley as Mayor flagged us off.

After the 1990 tour ended and Jim Clark kindly picked him up and drove him home after, Jim said Ted didn't want to go home as he was having too good a time . I have had many motorcycle friends during my Harley days but Ted certainly stood out.



Ted passed away in 1995, aged 90

Messrs
Cunningham & Cracknell

who recently broke the ~

PERTH-ADELAIDE RECORD	by	19 hrs.
PERTH - MELBOURNE	"	22 hrs.
PERTH - SYDNEY	"	33 hrs.

and Established the **SYDNEY-CANBERRA & BUNBURY - PERTH RECORDS.**



Will deliver an
Illustrated lecturette
on their
rovel experiences.

At this Theatre **NEXT**

1996: Claremont serial killings terrify night clubbers.

TAMMIN SIDECAR RUN - Regards Ray Oakes



We had 14 sidecars on the run and enjoyed a cool Saturday journey. Sunday warmed up a bit but it was the short leg so all went well, Phil Penny lost his sparks near Chris Whisson's and had a short trailer ride Chris provided a spare mag as Phil had to ride the outfit back to Albany. John Sinclair's Panther lost most of its teeth but with a little T.L.C. made the trip home. Jim Clark had his pen out for this run.



DAYS GONE BY Sheila M. Green
One day, we were preparing for our annual Church Ball. My mother, with some of the Guild Ladies, was busy making sandwiches for supper, and we young folks had been given the job of decorating the hall, and polishing the dance floor. After the streamers and the balloons had been suitably put up, we turned our attention to the floor. The usual procedure was to grate candle wax and scatter it over the floor, and encourage some of the small fry to pull one another around the floor on old sugar bags or wheat sacks.

Often, the sacks were tied behind pushbikes, and both the cyclist and the passenger on the bag had a wonderful time! After the wax had been rubbed in, the next step was to scatter sawdust all over the floor, and sprinkle it with kerosene. Then the bag-pulling process would be repeated once more, until the floor was like glass, and it was hard to stand up - right on it.

On this occasion, when we came to the sawdust part we found we were short, so Web (that was the owner of the 1927 BSA and I climbed aboard, and rode over to the parish hall, to pick up a bag of sawdust, which we knew to be there. Now, the Church was at the top end of the block, which was very gravelly, and, at the lower end, was the old parish Hall, which originally served as the Church. There was quite a steep rise in the ground, up to the Church and the gate. It started to drizzle with rain, as we left the hall, and mounted the bike, with the bag of sawdust between us.

The old bike seemed a bit reluctant to move in the gravel, but, as I rose slightly off the "pillion", to tuck the skirt of my overcoat under me, it suddenly took off, and left me sitting in the gravel, with the bag of sawdust! I must have just tipped the corner of the number plate, as I fell off, because when Web looked round, he was shocked to see blood pouring from a cut, near my nose, and just above my mouth.

He produced from the depths of his greatcoat pocket, a very rusty-looking hanky - the only one we had between us, - and I held it against my face, till I got home. The cut was only tiny, but I had a job to stop it bleeding, so Web went back to the hall with the bag of sawdust, while I patched myself up with sticking plaster. Then I got back on my old pushbike, which I normally rode everywhere, and I returned to the hall, to continue to lend a hand. When my mother caught sight of me, she demanded to know what had happened.

"I fell off the motorbike". I replied, calmly.

I think she was too stunned to say anything in reply. She never said I wasn't to ride pillion any more. She probably thought it would be useless, anyway! Before I went to the ball that night, I managed to reduce the plaster to about the size of my little finger-nail, and my wound was hardly visible, but I still felt rather self-conscious about it, and tried to camouflage it with face powder!

WHICH MACHINES? - Ern Serls

Members may be aware that the issue of the types of machines used in club events has been raised on a number of occasions. On the recent Busselton 2 Day a dissatisfied competitor took issue with the organiser, issue was taken with a decision that machines had to be pre-1966, some Albany Section members have queried the need to have "modern" fully licensed machines examined so they can participate in club runs. There seems to be a common thread throughout. There is the view that as a Vintage Motor Cycle Club there is no place for those machines that are seen to be "modern". Again there is a view that we are losing our identity in Vintage machine use if we admit the more modern machines.

Opponents to these views point to the Constitution (section 2a) and quote the 25 year rule as gospel to support their viewpoint that "moderns" 25 year and older have to be recognised. There are some inescapable facts that need to be accepted. Very few veteran or vintage machines are available on the market for new members to access. Road conditions with more and faster traffic flows make the use of older machines less attractive. Owners of veteran and vintage machines are getting older and hold on to their machines but do not wish to ride in the traffic these days. Most younger riders possess mid 50's and later machines and do not wish to be held at 40-50 kph limits particularly on longer runs whilst those riding older machines cannot keep up sustained higher speeds.

The problem facing us at the moment is to address the opposing viewpoints and accommodate all members. As President I have been accused of not assisting club members with older machines whilst having to answer comments about trying to maintain a "pre 1966 club". Either way I find this a no-win situation. It would seem that perhaps one solution would be for the older machines to have one stream of events for them alone and another set of events for modern machines. This has the drawback of splitting club loyalties as experienced in the past with pre 1931 and post 1931 riders.

Frankly I am unsure of which way to go and this is the task of the Management Committee to debate the issue for a recommendation with a possible referral to a General Meeting to be raised with members. It would be counter-productive in my view to ignore the matter as we have some well defined opinions from each end of the spectrum.

LETTER TO EDITOR by Brian Fitzgerald

There seems to be some concern about the 25 year machine cut off date, having just read Ern Serls' letter in Sept. V.C. Our club has a rule allowing machines 25 years or older, eligible for entry in club events and concessional licensing. If this rule is working toward the demise of our club we should change the rule but if as I believe it is building our club in membership and strength, leave the rule in place. Road conditions & traffic density will force more of our old riders and older machines off major highways as we move into the 21st century. With the appalling record of fatalities on W.A. roads our greatest challenge is to ensure we all survive.

Vintage motor cycle riders have an outstanding safety record which we must maintain, perhaps at our cost and inconvenience. In the event of anyone of us being involved in a major accident on a Veteran or Vintage machine, politicians will feel bound to make their mark, if they can gain a few votes, by enforcing new rules and restriction on our type of activity. If and when that happens we will need every members voice - and the more the better - to support our cause and that includes our new and young members of their "modern" machines irrespective of machines country of origin. That's what I think - what do you think? A

Although I was a foundation member of the Pre 31 Section I don't think it has achieved anything other than pacifying the disgruntled few who hate Jap bikes and anything else that's over reliable. I enjoy the challenge of riding and finishing on old bikes but I have no problem being passed by a 1971 "Whatever" I always feel I get greater value for my money in the longer events because I am riding for 6 hours in the York T.T. run while the riders of moderns only get 3 hours fun -!!!

* * * * *

The Treasurer reported that all accounts for the Extensions had been paid in full and the liquid assets of the Club at the beginning of the year were \$107,048.

The Parts Shed and Library were officially opened on 28 January 1996 by Jack Berkshire ably supported by Charles Lawson, Ernie Serls and Ray Oakes. It followed a BBQ breakfast which concluded the "Brekky Run". John Rock who had been the Chairman/Negotiator for the Club's section of the

END

building was presented with a "Certificate of Appreciation" for his sterling efforts. At the formal inspection of the new building Maureen Rock produced a cake, nicely decorated with a bike with a Flying M on the tank.

It was agreed by members that the 1996 Charity Donation of \$1,000.00 should go to the Tourettes Syndrome Association [Tourette Syndrome is a neurological disorder]. This Association had been thoroughly investigated by Chas Lawson and his report was favourable. The President commented on the lack of interest by members in charitable projects.

The Swap Meet was a little disappointing with fewer Stall Holders and with attendance down by about 300. However a net profit of about \$1,759.00 was achieved.

Although the Club was now occupying the extensions to the Forrestfield building, the Shire of Kalamunda was approached to ascertain the possibility of leasing suitable land in its area for future Club premises. An application by the Club to lease land in Hartfield Park was rejected by the Shire.

1997: the population of Perth was now 1,359,000, 1 million more than in 1957 when Eric Langton arrived in Perth looking for a vintage Club to play with.

The plans for the Club's future seemed dependent on a Native Title Claim which could affect the Forrestfield site and also on the possible resumption of the land by the Main Road Department. As the Club was not party to the VCC lease it could not become directly involved with the Native Title Claim but offered its support to VCC. There was little the Committee could do about the Main Road Dept. It was agreed that the Club should continue its approach to Kalamunda Shire for suitable land on which new Club premises could be built, possibly in Pioneer Park, should this become necessary.

Ern Serls was re-elected President for a further 2 years, the first time this had happened since the Club was founded.

A LONG STAND - Charlie Lawson

Everybody knows my 1922 164 Norton and the fact that it has no rear stand, well this tale will explain the reason for this discrepancy. About twelve



□ Brian Fitzgerald tightens filler caps after "topping-up"

or so years ago when we used to meet in the Council Lesser Hall at Booragoon I happened to be seated along side a young prospective member; on introducing ourselves he mentioned he had the makings of a model 18 1938 Norton, but was stuck for a rocker box. I mentioned I could let him have one so we arranged for him to come out on the following Saturday to pick it up, This he did but whilst he was there he saw a rear stand which he borrowed for a pattern to make one, along with the special stepped stainless pivot bolt. That was 12 years ago so if you see a person of doubtful parentage on a model 18 Norton he's got my stand.

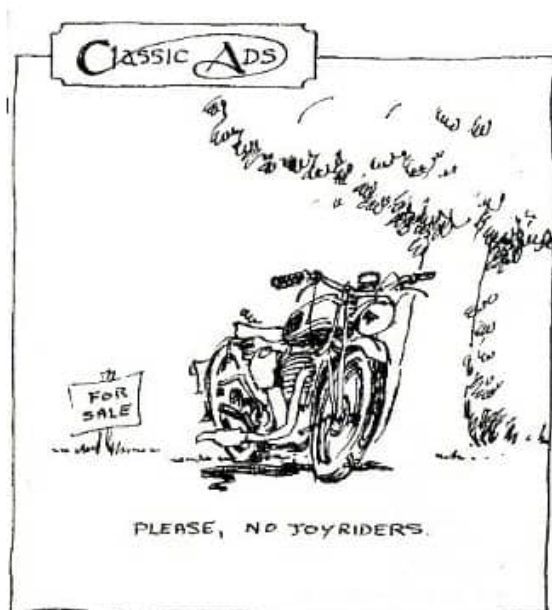


Bruce Lenegan organized a run in November, titled the 21st Birthday Run. It started at the Sandringham Hotel car park on Sunday 9 November 1997 at 8.30 am and finished at Shannons where sausage sizzle and drinks were provided.

There had been a decline in the number of members attending the Annual Dinner and in an attempt to make the occasion more attractive a questionnaire was sent out to those who attended the previous

dinner. The replies indicated that members were prepared to pay more for dinner and would like coffee served after the presentations. Peter Stocker who has taken on the task of organizing the next dinner made an agreement with the caterers to provide a better meal, pre-dinner nibbles, a good coffee with dinner mints and a glass of port plus a corsage for the ladies. The cost was to be \$22.50.

The Treasurer informed the Committee that he had a quote from Shannons to insure the Library against Damage/Burglary at \$209.00. They needed a complete list of books and this was already available. It was agreed to proceed as soon as possible as no cover existed.



THE TALE OF THE FLOODING CARBURETTOR - Dave Weeks

It started imperceptibly - erratic starting, high fuel consumption, black plug. It advanced rapidly to dribbling - the carb and me. It reached the point where I had to turn the tap off to start the bike. I tried changing the float and float needle, needle and float - did you know that there are 3 different types of float and 3 different needles for the Monobloc? That means 9 different combinations and I tried them all. And no, I didn't have a washer under the needle seat. So I bought another carb - not new - 389's aren't being made yet - but less worn than the old one. I fitted it out with the best bits from my spares jar - and it flooded. I was defeated - went through the old routine of swapping floats and needles and getting grumpier by the run. One night

I was grizzling to a mate on the phone and he said "have you checked the tickler?" Stupid bugger I thought, but I took the end off the float chamber for the umpteenth time, lifted the float till it touched the tickler and I could move the needle! The tickler was 40 thous. longer than the spare in the jar. So when a smart arse offers obviously stupid advice, listen because he may know something you don't.

I have to own up to a related problem. On a run I was beset with a new case of flooding carb and checked the obvious causes, dirt on the float needle or a punctured float that was no longer floating. It took half a dozen dismantlings and checks before I found that old age and wear and tear had allowed the return spring on the tickler shaft to work its way down into the bowl (separate bowl carb) and was keeping a constant pressure on the float thus preventing the float valve from closing! I replaced the tickler shaft with a new one I had and found the normally easy starter quite reluctant to fire up. A close look revealed that the tickler fully depressed didn't reach the float so that no matter how often you pressed it there was no way it raised the fuel level. This is easy to check by taking the cap off the float, turn on the fuel and bend a piece of soft wire so that it rests across the top of the bowl and touches the top of the float. Take the float lid, depress the tickler fully and compare the reach to the wire you have just bent and you will soon see if the tickler is the right length. It only needs to move the float down a small amount. Of course this is related to a bottom feed Amal with separate bowl. Jim Clark

1998: Median house price in Perth was \$140,000.

Committee agreed that Maurice Glasson should proceed with the preservation of photographs and file suitable ones in albums. From time to time the more interesting ones would be displayed in the Foyer. Committee members inspected the foyer and library areas and decided the Foyer should be cleared out, the old carpet removed and the floor and walls painted in light colours. An Honour Board featuring Presidents and Secretaries since the foundation of the Club would be prepared and hung in the foyer.

Later it was suggested that Life Members should be included in the Honours Board. Jim Clark started to compile the list of names and the final layout would be decided later.

The search for suitable land for possible future needs of the Club which had been restricted to the Kalamunda area was expanded to take in the Midland area.

It was decided by Committee to make only limited use of Internet participation at this stage. The Club aims and objectives, together with information on the Wheels West 2000 Rally would be put on a web site on Internet by a friend of Owen Page at no cost to the Club.

1999: Moora was flooded this year which was unusual. Nothing else happened.

The yearly summary of the Club's financial situation was presented by the Treasurer and it was an good news! There was an ongoing membership growth, income comfortably exceeded expenses and there was no reason to increase the annual subscription for the year 2000.

The Treasurer recommended that the "Jim Wallace Travel Account" be closed and the monies transferred to the general fund. Taxation rules prevented the Club giving Club Funds to members. The matter was discussed with Ray Oakes who was responsible for founding the account and although he was sorry to see the name dropped he agreed that a change should be made.

At the AGM it was proposed and seconded that, "The VMCC expresses its appreciation of the excellent work and dedication carried out by the President, Ern Serls, during his four years as President". This was carried with acclaim.

VALE ERIC LANGTON: In November the Club lost one of its founder members and its first President, Eric Langton. Eric was still able to pass his driving test [for motor cycles] at the age of 92! His motor cycling history started in 1927/28 when he rode a works Scott in the Isle of Man T.T. and then turned his interest to the new sport - solo speedway - or 'Dirt Track' as it was known in England. Later he won the British Speedway Rider Championship. Eric moved to WA in 1957 and became a founder member of both VCC and VMCC. He worked hard for both Clubs and had a love of restoring impossible wrecks into outstanding cars and bikes. As a tribute to this outstanding gentleman, the Club placed a larger than

usual funeral notice in the "West Australian" and sent flowers to his funeral cortege.



ERIC LANGTON - 1907-1999:

With Eric's passing our Club has lost a foundation member and our first President, I have lost a good friend and mentor. Eric was disqualified from his first motor cycle win, he was underage, having taken over the entry of his elder brother who was hurt. From that time he was a winner in all forms of our sport, in most cases riding bikes that he had built and tuned.



In 1927 and 28 he rode a works Scott in the Isle of Man Senior TT, during the same period winning the Scott Trial, still regarded as the toughest event in England. This was on a Scott machine and it was only won once more on a Scott. He then turned to the new sport of solo speedway and soon became a top points scorer. He won the British Speedway Rider Championship and in 1936 missed the first World Championship in a run off. For many years he was captain of the Bellevue Speedway Team, and when he retired from riding set up a workshop repairing and tuning speedway engines, building frames and for roadwork building sidecar chassis. In the late 50's the move to W.A. was made and with his ever

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increasing interest in early machinery he became a founder member of both the V.C.C. of W.A. and the V.M.C.C. of W.A.. Over the years he has taken a great delight in restoring impossible wrecks into outstanding cars and bikes. His pride and joy was his collection of single speed veteran Triumphs, on which he rode many rally miles. He had vintage bikes but scorned clutches and gearboxes and rode his single speeder well into his eighties. Over the last thirty years I have ridden with Eric and feel I have learned something new on every trip. A remarkable gentleman who will be sadly missed by all that had the pleasure of knowing him. *Ray Oakes*



Above: Eric Langton, Peter Groucott & Barry Makin in 1986

LETTER TO THE EDITOR by Michael Rock

I read with interest your suggestion regarding a Marque Specialist program for assisting members with restorations. Bob Veitch has showed his hand and I'm sure many people will benefit from his experience. I think this is a good move and is one of the many little things that make this club so successful. I have been a member of VMCCWA for some time now, despite my many interstate moves, because it is probably the best run club I have come across and enjoys the support of a large number of active and enthusiastic members. Over the last five years as I have moved around the country I have been a member of five interstate clubs and I would have to say that the VMCCWA is exceptional. We have a lot to be proud of but our greatest asset is our people. Our people have a lot to offer each other even though at times we might think we know very little. There is always someone who would desperately appreciate our encouragement and experience. I have often (five times to be precise) been in the position of joining a new club, not

knowing anyone, and not knowing where to turn for advice. It is all too easy to become discouraged and push the unfinished bike to the back of the shed. I have spent months seeking out the person who can show me why something isn't working or who can answer my usually simple questions or just identify a part. I think the Marque Specialist idea is great, particular model specialists even better. I have received so much help from so many people that I sometimes wonder if I will ever be able to do them justice. My 36 B.S.A. Empire Star is finished and racking up the miles (and speeding tickets). I enjoyed the process so much I've started again with a 51 Ariel Red Hunter (more speed). The 29 Harley is next.

LETTER OF INTEREST from John Burn

I wonder if you would consider passing on the following story to the Editor of your newsletter. It concerns a well know member of your Club - John Rock - and I am sure will be appreciated by all.

Last night John and Maureen came to our place for coffee after being out to dinner and John spotted a new book "Ninety Years of TT Magic" and, as is usual for him, immediately became engrossed. After reading for a while he commented "That's wrong", and showed us a full page of photographs of John Hartle's MV Augusta catching on fire at Governors Bridge in 1958 and John Hartle looking at the fire. When questioned John told us that the dates in the book were definitely wrong as he had seen the fire and it had to be 1956 as he was not in the Isle of Man in 1958.

John went through the book to find anything else about the fire with no luck. He continued to maintain it must have been 1956 because that was when he saw the fire and he definitely was not in the Isle of Man in 1958. At that stage he was ready to get all the books on the TT out to show how the new book was so wrong.

Maureen remained quite throughout, until after there had been much discussion, then she commented that John was correct, he had seen the fire because she had been with him when it happened. It was a Friday morning and they got married the following Tuesday, finally commenting to John "In case you have forgotten we got married in 1958." It was John's turn to be quiet.

TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR KULLACK - Hans van Leeuwen
In his notice about the sudden passing of Arthur in the last Chatter, Jim C. admits to not knowing much

about him. He does however remark on the qualities that endeared Arthur to many, that he was an open and friendly fellow and a keen motorcyclist. He was not far from the mark. I would like to share with you my personal knowledge and observations about a now departed friend.

I first met Arthur in February 1974, the 5th of February to be exact. I remember the date well because we had been transferred to Kalgoorlie and arrived in town on the 4th. The next evening two guys arrived at our new house looking for the "model aircraft expert from Perth" and asked if I would join their club and help them with my expertise. One of those was Arthur. As you can see, my reputation had beaten me to town. I was at that time heavily involved with "free flight" model aircraft and radio controlled model gliders. I was actually going to have some time off from this hobby. I had devoted the majority of my spare time to it for some ten years, which is the sort of time one needs to spend if one is going to be competitive at the national level, which I was at that time. I had not brought any of my aircraft or equipment with me. I promised that I would meet with them on the next Sunday at their "control line" field. That was the start of a friendship, which was unexpectedly terminated with his sudden, passing in January last, a friendship, which had lasted almost twenty-five years.

Our friendship, which started with model aircraft, soon included motor cycles. Arthur has always been a motor cycle nut and I have also been involved with two wheelers since I was about twelve years old. Thus we had a lot in common. We also had families of similar age and all of us became friends. I had no model aircraft equipment or motor cycle at that time. That soon changed. The Kalgoorlie mob, with Arthur the greatest stirrer, prevailed on me to bring aircraft and gear from Perth on my first return visit. I also found a trail bike, a 175 "F" model Kawasaki, which needed some TLC. This it promptly got. Arthur found a 125 Yamaha and off we went trail riding at every possible opportunity. Those who know the Goldfields will know the wonderful opportunities for this sort of activity if you like that.

One of the great things about a town like Kalgoorlie is the social atmosphere. If you have not experienced living in a country town you need to appreciate that no one in town is more than ten minutes away. So it is easy to visit and call by to talk or "dribble", as

Carol used to say, about your model aircraft or the latest in the two wheeler world or what we would or could do if we had unlimited cash. This dribbling used to get I better as the quantity of beer consumed increased. That actually happened to be another hobby we both seemed partial to in our younger days and which hardly changed with time. The only concession being the change from "super" to "unleaded" beer. In September 1975 we both bought new and identical TS185 Suzukis to give us a bit more comfort in our trail riding endeavours. By this time we had gathered together a group of people who would come riding with us. We would also, often take one of our youngsters with us on the pillion or, if they were too small on the tank, or both (horror).

All too soon, after two years, the van Leeuwens were deported back to the "big smoke" for promotion. In retrospect it may have been worth staying at Goldfields, but that's another story. The Kullacks are those sort of people who, once you know them and know them well, are always friends. It doesn't matter if you don't see them for a time, next time you "catch up" it seems like you last met yesterday. It has been like that with our families since we left Kalgoorlie. Latterly, the Kullacks stayed with us for the Busselton two day. It was particularly important for Arthur to have Carol attend some functions of the V.M.C.C (WA) Inc. and he was especially pleased that Anna was able to persuade Carol to join us for the first time in 1997. This became an accepted event and we had made some plans for the coming "two day" when he last stayed with us for the historic road racing championships. Sadly, this was not to be.

Arthur was a remarkable man. Some may have noticed that his personality changed as soon as he had a twist grip in his hand. I reckon he used to grow horns when he was astride a bike because his easy going personality changed to the daredevil he was on two wheels. He was probably the most guileless and the least political and person I have ever known. He had no pretence but was a genuine and determined competitor. When it was time to do things they were just done. It did not matter whether it was to do with model aircraft, motor cycles or cars, buildings or whatever. If he didn't know how he would find out or just have a go anyway. For those in the motor cycle fraternity, the

quality of his restorations speak for themselves. He was not a particular "stickler" for authenticity but tried to make things work with what was available at the time, with a view to changing if and when the occasion arose. However, his workmanship was always "Par Excellence" and like most of us he did a lot of learning along the way. Similarly, if you wanted to go somewhere you went. There was seldom any question about distance or time, only if you needed to be back at work or some other special place or occasion. Machine reliability was never an issue with either of us. Many are amazed that he regularly rode to Perth or to events anywhere, including South Australia. People may or may not know the Arthur enjoyed motorcycling at all times. He generally rode to work at Kambalda on his road bike, whatever the weather and he did that for as long as I can remember. He has ridden to Ayers Rock, the Gun Barrel Highway and the Canning Stock Route. He never considered those any special achievements. They were just good motorcycling fun, that's why you did it.



Arthur Kullack & AJS (Photo by Richard Argus)

I'm afraid that it is impossible to do justice to the person in a short article such as this, or perhaps in any article. I could continue with any number of anecdotes but that could lead to a book. One is perhaps worth mentioning because of its funny aspects. We had some of those pressurised puncture repair pressure packs taped to our handlebars, just in case. One Saturday afternoon we were riding somewhere out the back of OraBanda and had arranged to stop for a smoke at the old derelict pub in town. I caught up with Arthur, who was always in front of me anyway, he was on the side of the road groping about in his pockets. When I had a closer look he was covered in this gunk from the pressure pack. I mean he was covered. He couldn't see and

he was sticky all over. The thing had chafed through on the bars and he wore the lot. We wiped enough from his goggles so that he could see and carried on. Few will appreciate what he looked like when we got to my place with all that red dust stuck to the puncture repair gunk lumps that covered him. I have always been sorry that we did not take a photo of that spectacle.

VALE CLIFF BAIRSTOW: Cast your minds back a few years to the days of the Mt. Barker Hill climb. Do you remember the little man with the dustbin, that he used to stand on to take footage with his video camera. Cliff Bairstow had been a member of the Albany Section of the Vintage Motorcycle Club of W.A. for a number of years. All through Cliff's life he has been a sentimentalist, he has brought things, used them, sold them, then brought them back and restored them back to their original state. This passion of Cliffs has seen him restore a pedal organ and a car that he gave his wife for a wedding present. Cliff has also restored farm machinery, furniture, his A.J.S. and many other things. Cliff was well know in Dumbleyung and all points south, for his work in communities that he lived in. A quiet little man with a big heart and an infectious nature. In later years being ill prevented Cliff from being able to ride his motorcycles, still encouraging others to ride and enjoy them. The last few years saw Cliff in a nursing home unable to care for himself. Early this month Cliff slipped away from us One can only hope, he has found a place where he can continue to find the challenge of restoration that he loved. RIP CLIFF R.K. Bromilow Albany.

Below: Cliff's AJS (Photo by Murray Barnard)



THE ORDINARY BLOKE: It was Dad's fault really; my earliest memories in England were riding on the tank of his 1924 Rudge. Our sole means of transport was a bike and sidecar. During the 2nd World War at the

FEATURE: THE HIMALAYAN HEIGHTS ON AN ENFIELD BULLET by Maurice Glasson

I have just returned from 25 days travelling in India on an Enfield Bullet and what a trip. It was an organised ride through a Sydney travel agent specialising in motorcycle rides in India. Although I had read up about India there was a bit of "heading off into the unknown" about my holiday. When I finally arrived in New Delhi no amount of reading would have prepared me for the trip. Sight, sounds and smells just don't come out of a book.

Eight riders had booked the trip so after a day of playing at tourist in Delhi and a trip to Agra to visit the Taj Mahal we were all eager to get on the bikes. That's what we had all come to India to do, ride the Himalayas on motorcycles.

I had a bit of advantage on the others in that riding my Brit bikes I didn't have to adjust to the swapped brake and gear changes. All of the other riders owned

Japanese bikes so a bit to get use to for hitting the emergency brakes rather than an unwanted gear change.

The trip was to take us up into the Western Himalayan mountains through the province of Himachal Pradesh near the Indian Chinese Tibetan border across to Kashmir and Jammu near the Indian Pakistan border and back to New Delhi. We covered approximately 2700 kms on the ride and climbed to an altitude of 5600m or 18,380 ft. I don't know how to describe the scenery it was just so big you just can't get it into the viewfinder of your camera.

I tried nearly 500 times and the photos I took just don't give the full picture but as I view them the eyes glaze over and I drift off back to India. The mountains are enormous and you just constantly swivel your head from side to side trying to take it all in. Roads that are cut out of the sides of mountains that take you alongside flowing rivers in the gorges below while the mountains tower above. Through the green lower mountains up into the lunar rocky landscape above



the snow line, it was breath taking scenery and what better way to view it than on a bike.

It is impossible to try and describe the whole trip in an article like this but some of the highlights which come to mind are the ride through the Jawahar Tunnel. Two and a half kilometres of tunnel, single lane big enough for a truck, no lighting, no ventilation and six inches of water hiding the potholed road. The military reverse the traffic direction every hour so you form up into a convoy and wait your turn. Luckily on bikes you can creep up to the head of the line but one thing is for sure you can't hold your breath for the 2.5 km ride and avoid the diesel fumes. What amazed us all was midpoint in the tunnel there was a military guard, how they survive a day there had us all beat.

The 21 switchbacks on the Gata Loops to allow you to climb 466 metres up the side of a mountain (the zig zag in Perth has 4 switchbacks). A lot of the mountain roads are built along the same lines. You just keep traversing back and forward as you climb higher into the mountains then you may break out into a high mountain plateau.

Some days you may want to fang it along with the rest of the group and others you feel like a day of setting your own pace. It was on one of these days where I just pulled over and sat and just looked in

awe at the magnificent valley below me and the mountains which rose straight up above, no people or traffic, no noise except the wind and just awesome scenery A magic moment

Indubitably for me having ridden the second highest road, the Taglandla, at an altitude of 17582 ft three days before, the ultimate was to ride up the highest motorable road in the world. The Khardung La pass at 18,380 ft. To wrestle the Enfield to the top over a very rough road, both bike and rider struggling to get enough oxygen, was the absolute tops. The Mount Everest of motoring.

The roads in India vary from rough to smooth, wide to narrow, straight and winding and all this can happen just around the next bend. The traffic is incredible, rules seem to be non existent, but they have a system of waving other traffic through on bends, curves etc which has got to be experienced to be believed.

I crossed paths with pedestrians, camel carts, pony carts, bicycles, pedicycles, motorcycles, various hybrid 3 wheelers cabs, cars, jeeps and the dreaded TATA trucks and buses, the kings of the road Well they are nearly the kings of the road, even they have to give way to the sacred white cows which take great delight in sitting in the road. It amazed me when crossing a bridge about 300m long which spanned a



fast flowing river between green grassed river flats to encounter a herd of about 20 cows sitting in the middle of the bridge. Maybe they couldn't decide which side of the valley had the greenest pasture, personally I think they were just "sticking it up" the motorists.

All of the traffic comes together on the ride down the Grand Trunk Road, our mad back to Delhi. The busiest highway in India which traverses the country from Calcutta and ends in Afghanistan. What a road, it can be a dual highway of 3 lanes each way which without warning changes back to both directions squeezed into one side of the highway as they seem to either have not finished the other side or have it under repair. A real bun fight and a little like Australia as they all want to drive in the right hand lane which is a bit scary as no road lanes are marked.

The bike, a 500cc Enfield Bullet. Easy starter, comfortable although any bike will stretch the friendship after a long day. A very forgiving bike which took a fair bit of punishment from the roads and at times the riders. I found mine handled the diet

roads, some a cross between a scrambles and ISDT course, really well. A couple of bikes were thrown down the road sideways on oil spills, riders and bikes all surviving. The Indian Enfield has been subject to a bit of ridicule on the motorcycle scene in Australia and did give me cause for a bit of concern before I left for the trip.

I now have a fair bit more respect for them and certainly some affection after the trip. The other riders (owners of Trans Alps, Goldwing, Harley, Ducati, Kawasaki etc) who had no experience on riding bikes of that type were all rapped in riding a single thumper and I know from now on their heads will be swivelling trying to pick up the bike when they hear a British single or twin on the road.

Back in New Delhi and as we celebrated with a few drinks and thought about heading for our respective homes there was consensus on one thought. What were we going to do for a holiday next time round. How would we find a holiday to top what we had just done. Maybe I might just go back and do it again.



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 reopened 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 weren't up to the job. Two years in the RAF restricted my riding to road work and after the RAF, marriage and a 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's 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 racing to go, so I reckon the bug is still biting. RAY OAKES

THE EGGMAN: Kelmscott Vehicle Examiner David Ferguson is known as the "Easter Egg Man" at Fremantle Public Hospital. That's because David is the organiser of the annual Bikers and Friends Easter Egg Run. He has given up his Easter Sunday for the

past seven years to deliver Easter eggs to people who can't be at home with their families because they are hospital patients or workers.

The first year he bought all the eggs himself and delivered them to the children in Princess Margaret Children's Hospital, but the next year he switched his attention to Fremantle Public Hospital, which has a large children's wing. He also began to get other people interested in helping, both as donors of eggs or cash and to help deliver the eggs.

"I suppose we would have more than 20 donors now, both businesses and private individuals," David said. "I also get a special deal on Easter eggs from Coles and there are a lot of delivery helpers — motor cyclists, car drivers and even a bloke with a prime mover this year.

"I really get a kick out of it - I'm about a foot off the ground by the end of the day." David and his helpers deliver between 500 and 600 Easter eggs each year. The majority go to Fremantle Hospital, followed by Stan Riley Nursing Home, Skye Nursing Home and Woodside Maternity Wing, all in Fremantle, with the Armadale/ Kelmscott Hospital receiving any left over.



Many of the helpers are former patients who received David's eggs and, of course, a few of the donors are from the Kelmscott office, where he has been a vehicle examiner for about 18 years.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR. From Eddie Preston.

As a new member to the VMCC I noted in my first edition of Vintage Chatter a tribute to Arthur Kullack from Hans. I would like to add a short piece, as there

was a reference to his trips to Alice Springs & the Gun Barrel Highway. Both of these trips Arthur and myself did together. The ride to Alice Springs for the Ulysses AGM was via Ayres Rock along the Warburton Road was the first time I met Arthur five years ago.

Another friend, Brian Pringle and myself rode to Kalgoorlie in order to ride together to Alice Springs. Arthur afforded us the hospitality of accommodation and a BBQ. At dawn we loaded the bikes and headed off along the 300km bitumen to Laverton which is where the gravel starts. Having not ridden with Arthur before was not sure of his style of riding. I was very apprehensive at this stage as he kept to a steady 80kph in a 110 zone, and was thinking to myself if he rides at this slow pace on a clear bitumen road, what on earth is he going to do when we come to the trickier stuff. I was soon to find out, as he maintained

this speed all the way irrespective of deep sand, washouts etc. Needless to say he led most of the way!

Among the many amusing events was a demonstration of his versatility was on the way back from Alice, near a place called Curtin Springs, Arthur's Honda NX650 broke down with a faulty coil. After a friendly banter re the reliability of my Triumph Tiger 900 over his Honda, I suggested I give him a lift to Ayers Rock to recover his bike. No way was Arthur going to do this. We found a homestead close by where Arthur found a coil from an old wrecked Holden which he adapted for the Honda, and to this day is still running well with this modification. Good on you.



Eric Langton & Zedel

Chapter 8: 2000 - 04



2000: The New Millennium, despite forecasts of doom, the world survived, at least for now!

VALE KEVIN JOYCE: The Club lost a Foundation member at the end of 1999. The passing of Kevin Joyce was announced at the Monthly Meeting in January. Kevin Joyce had been appointed Secretary/Treasurer at the Inaugural Meeting of the VCC Motor Cycle Section back in 1968. Kevin died on 15 December, 1999.

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Following a meeting with John Power, the Department of Transport representative, the Club was now appointed the sole first time examiner of concessionally licenced motor cycles in the metropolitan area. The only examination area permitted would be the VCC premises at Forrestfield. Max Madill indicated that he was not able to carry out this duty. Mr Power indicated that a qualified deputy would be acceptable. Norm Chester agreed to accept the task and was appointed "First Time Examiner."

The Busselton 2 Day Trial came under discussion at the April General Meeting when Terry McKie reported the receipt of only 19 entries for the event. A motion was put forward that "In view of the small number of entrants for the current Busselton 2 Day Event, it is moved that this event be cancelled for this year and subsequent years until the level of rider interest is confirmed that the event be financially viable". This motion was lost on a show of hands. However it stimulated 5 members present to support the run and Terry McKie stated that he would run this year's event but would have to cancel the bus because of the low numbers. The Trial duly took place and proved to be a good event although entries were in the low 30'S, an all time low. Each year entries have dwindled and perhaps the future of the event needs close scrutiny. In this anniversary year the main prize went to Hans Van Leeuwen who received the "Bill Young Trophy."

The Club was officially invited to provide motor cycles for the opening of the Graham Farmer Freeway and there was a good roll up of bikes for the great occasion. The Event Coordinator reported

the chaos which seemed common at this type of event.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP - ERN SERLS: At the AGM Life Membership of the VMCC was granted to Ern Serls. Ern Serls had served 2 terms as President and continued to serve the Club in many ways. His unremitting efforts to improve the Club and his diligent work relating to the Authorized Inspection Station Status were noted. He was a very caring Club member and well deserving of this, the highest honour that the Club can bestow on a member.

WHEELS WEST 2000 RALLY: In 1998 Bruce Williams put forward his ideas for a 25th Anniversary Run to be held in the year 2000. The Committee agreed in principle and the first intimation of the forthcoming Rally was given to members in the Vintage Chatter of July, 1998. A sub-committee was formed to organize the event consisting of Bruce Williams [Convener and Rally Director], May Makin [Secretary], Barry Makin, Charles Lawson, Jim Clark, Dave Weeks, John Rock and Ray Oakes. This sub-committee did an excellent job, supported by many members, and the great day - Saturday 2nd September 2000 eventually arrived. On that day those who were to participate in the Rally met at Rally Headquarters and the "Wheels West 2000 Rally" began. Altogether there were 58 participants. The oldest bike in the Rally was the 1923 A.J.S. of Glen & Maureen Bull from New Zealand. In fact there were 9 Pre-31 cycles taking part. At the other end of the scale was the 1973 Honda of Royce Loveland. The 14 day Rally was organized to enable riders to enjoy a trip through the beautiful South West countryside. The route went via Northam, York, Beverley, Brookton, Narrogin, Williams, Darkan, Collie, Balingup, Capel to Busselton. The 4 days spent in Busselton allowed for trips to Dunsborough, Cape Naturaliste, Margaret River and Augusta. On the 9th day of the Rally there was a Gymkhana Day in Busselton. From Busselton the Rally proceeded to Nannup, Kirup, Donnybrook, Dardanup and on to Bunbury. Sadly all good things must come to an end and after 14 days of camaraderie and good fellowship, riders returned to Perth on Friday 15th September 2000.

But that was not the end of the Rally. There was still the Final Dinner and Trophy Night held at the VMCC Club Rooms, Forrestfield on the Saturday night. This

entertaining evening was attended by at least 90 people who enjoyed the polished performance of the MIC for the night - Frank Cocks. Many programmes were passed around for autographing and Trophies were presented by Bruce Williams. Some people probably felt a little 'under the weather' the following morning. A sad note must be inserted here. At the dinner each rider was presented with a trophy due to the generosity of Lionel Bridle who offered to cast the trophies. Unfortunately, Lionel lost his battle with cancer and died a few months previous to the Rally. This made the trophies very special to the participants, especially those from WA.

2001: The movie did not eventuate, although at times riders went on a personal odyssey

WOT WE TAKE FOR GRANTED: Sunday 28 January 2001 Weeksy's Brunch Bash and I arrived at the clubhouse to find our first breakdown of the day, poor b....., but due to the busted BMW I had the privilege of a bloody good navigator and decent back up driver I sat back watching the mighty machines fire up and take off. Only when the third last got rollin' we locked in our seat belts, turned the ignition key and slowly followed the last bike out of the club's driveway. And that's the pace, slowly and keep behind the last rider. .. 60-70% of the road rebels took the long route (mainly to enjoy the ride). I drove the short route and found our T-junction to pull over and wait for all to pass (Weeksy would do a round loop to make sure no-one had blown up or thrown it down the road

After some 20-25 minutes the roar of someone's love and joy came thundering to our ears then every 10, 15 or 20 seconds a proud rider astride his heap of bolts or pride and joy flashed past. Only three of the riders gave us a glance or thumb or odd finger. What a worry if we, the club backup, had broken down Most riders with their noses in the wind couldn't have cared less who the hell we were, parked on the verge. Then a wonderful sound came to our ears - as most club riders know this unequalled sound, a hissin - spittin - fartin - backpoppin - grubby Goldie slowing down (Weeksy, our considerate President).

"Okay you dreamers, follow me!" he yelled out. If you have a reasonable, reliable machine no worries keeping that noisy Goldie in sight but

strapped in a four wheel metal ute pulling 16 tonne of vintage trailer - no way ya gunna keep an eye on that fartin - grubby Goldie ..Slowly he disappeared in the distance. Thanks again to my navigator (Les) for knowing which trees to miss and what track to go down (he's done this run before), catching up to the last bike and following him into the half way stop parking area where most of the riders had been for the past 20-25 minutes or so. It looked like they were itching to roll.

We parked the metal beast and hadn't walked ten metres when bikes began linin' up and most were bucklin' chin straps and jacket zippers were going skyward. Sh... , no time for, tough if nature called. I soon got back behind the wheel and then it hit me - it's like missing the bloody boat, bus or whatever, arriving just a fraction too late as all the jokes and funny stuff had been told, not to mention the bulldust, etc. As a third of the bikes had moved out I then witnessed a situation where some poor buggar kicked to life his heap of beauty and powered forward trying to jump the kerb - and his pride and joy came to a sudden halt!!! Front and back wheels rotating freely his feet firm on the pegs (you could read the look on his face) - a rod through the side!? No, not this time, his sump had come to grips with the concrete kerb! Then came his grin as he climbed off to free the vice like grip on his little beauty. A push and a shove and he lost himself in the distance.

A sparkling prepared black and chrome machine with a disgruntled looking rider in brand new shiny leathers was quietly cursing as he kicked, kicked, kicked to no avail (most of us know that feeling!) A local fat guy in flip-flops who had been perving on this bike or rider gave his assistance by pushing bike and rider some 100 metres down the road till it fired up and away the black beauty went. By this time some five bikes were left and some tall grey headed ol' fella was kickin his guts out on some skinny ol' roarin' 20's machine. A few minutes later and off he thundered.

Once again, slowly following the last rider and hope he doesn't take a wrong turn! Ten minutes further on two riders and bikes are tinkering on the side of the road - poor buggar, the second casualty of the

day. This one we loaded on the trailer and now there were two navigators. After some 25 minutes or so we arrived at that Goldie workshop and found some big boys playing with big boy toys - two remote controlled bikes and riders doing donuts, jumps and slides, wheelstands and the odd somersault. Bloody fantastic fun for all!

But no so for Ole Grumpy Guts the barbeque chef who was cursing as a toy bike skidded through his array of buns and sizzlin' snaggers and then did a wheelstand to jump off the hot plate and clear the urn. Yes, we were the last three hard workers to line up at the barbeque table to share the bun crumbs, skidded-on burnt snaggers and left-over onions from last year's barbeque (He!He!). All bullshit aside, I would like to express my appreciation to the people who devote their time and energy and run the backup vehicle (who we all take for granted). I feel all club members should at some time make themselves available to drive, not ride, then, and only then they will really appreciate riding. It's great to know that back there someone is followin' up to help ya!!

As a means of making monthly meetings more motor cycle orientated members Keith Perry and Charles Lawson have been organising one make motor cycle nights at each of the past March and April meetings. The March meeting was DOUGLAS night with three machines shown by Brian Lawrence and George Stephenson. It went down well with members staying to the last talking and looking at the well turned out machines. The April meeting had three Indians on show (BIKES THAT IS). Ken Terry a 1942 Indian Scout, Graeme Finn a 1928 101 Indian And Chris Gielis a 1934 Indian Chief nicely turned out and a credit to the owners.

HAVING A RIDE ON A BSA: After attending every Black Duck since 1987, in 1993 I rode our Ducati 350 to the Black Duck rally and enjoyed every minute of the trip. On the Sunday, I decided to leave the rally site and ride home via Brookton hoping to meet up with the VMCC Brass Money run on their scheduled stop. Well, after riding as hard as I dared, (I'd never used 5,500 revs for so many miles and that's what

I needed to sit on 100 kph), I met up with members on the run at Brookton only to be waved in by Chas Lawson - something he often does to this day if he witnesses my arrival on the Ducati. Long may he continue to add his special touch to our meetings and rallies. Anyway, on with the story. 1995 came around with the Ducati undergoing a rebuild and me being without a bike for the Black Duck, so I didn't attend. By 1997 I had the loan of an original and only partly restored BSA M21 with a Dusting replica sidecar. The outfit belongs to a friend and when asked he said, why not!

So began one of my most enjoyable rides on an outfit. In typical fashion it started to rain as I kicked the Beesa into life but I love riding in rain, my dislike is strong winds or 40 degree plus heat.

Ernie's M21 is a beauty with a good motor, gearbox and cycle parts; it wouldn't win a concourse event but it goes anywhere comfortably and reliably. I fell in love with the outfit as soon as I rode it and rode out of Roleystone that day as happy as is possible while clothed. The rain increased. By North Bannister I topped for fuel and a stretch. To my surprise the tank was almost full so I headed for Williams. I knew the lights worked and although created by the Prince of Darkness they would be good enough to light the way if I didn't arrive before dark. I pressed on as the rain increased. The lights were turned on as the clouds grew darker and the traffic seemed faster.

Being dry inside my waterproofs (which really are) and the reassuring beat of the 600cc side valve made me wonder why anyone would want to be inside a wretched death bringer anyway! The Beesa and I witnessed one of those breathtaking views we usually see recorded by someone's camera and publisher in calendar form. There in front of me was a sweeping view of vivid green paddocks topped by an eerie dark grey sky and a jet black road with stark white lines disappearing away to the best rainbow I have I have ever seen. Breathtaking!

A quick stop for fuel in Williams and I was on my way to the Tarwonga turn off I always take to avoid trucks, etc. At last I wheeled round the corner and I was alone on the road with more clouds above and steady light rain. The Beesa thumped away beneath

me sounding far more sporting than it is but never failing to impress its rider. At last Wagin appeared and I stopped to top up the tank before heading out to the rally site. The dirt road was smooth and well wet down by the rain but as light was starting to fade my speed dropped and I used high beam to check for wash outs or wildlife. After what seemed like ages, I arrived at the gate and made my way through the paddocks realising as I went that a good shower must have fallen before my arrival.

The then slogging old side valve came across its real test. The long dirt track leading up to the control tent was quite muddy already and while various modern bikes slipped and slithered up the track ahead of me, I simply left it in second with a lightly retarded spark and climbed straight to the top using some opposite lock. I camped with the Albany Section, had a great time as usual talking about bikes, drank enough red to keep warm and looked forward to the journey home and made a mental note to thank Ernie for allowing me to use his faithful Beesa. Attending this rally proved to me that although overhead valves, overhead cams, multi cylinders and other modern engineering advances are highly desirable it is still possible to gain satisfaction from the humble side valve.

Douglas Firth

2002: Bali bombings made cheap holidays unattractive for a while

MEMOIRS OF A MOTORCYCLIST

Mr Ferber was a thin man of medium height and Mr Farr was the exact opposite, a man of ample proportions. They reminded me of Laurel and Hardy. These two ran an illegal vehicle spray paint shop on the other side of London airport, a place called Feltham. Mr Ferber was a kindly man and a very hard worker. On the other hand I soon found out that Mr Farr was quite correctly named as when there was any work to be done he took on a managerial role and stayed as far away from the shop as possible. This never seemed to bother Mr Ferber and as my role in the business was to help out at weekends, the situation has nothing to do with me.

I would ride my 57 Tiger 100 to Mr Ferber's house at seven on a Saturday morning where we would

Then onto Feltham where we would work for most of the day. I must explain that this workshop was only used in the evenings and at weekends. You see Mr Ferber and Mr Farr both worked for a very large car hire company during the day, where their job was to maintain cars that were hired out and damaged.

Mr Ferber's house, where I would leave my bike, was directly across the road from Heathrow's main runway. Not only did the incoming planes have their wheels down ready for landing as they flew over Mr Ferber's house, you could actually wave to the pilots. Can you imagine the noise and vibration as a craft went over? The tiles on the roof would move one way and then the other; no double glazing then! Conversation between myself and Mr Ferber during the air raids was impossible but I did notice that after a few weeks I was beginning to get very good at lip reading.

On one fateful Saturday morning, Mr Ferber received a late phone call from Mr Farr explaining that the van had broken down and it would be ages before the fault could be corrected, so would I mind giving Mr Ferber a lift to the workshop on the back of the Triumph. Mr Ferber had one of those, "Please say no" looks on his face, but realising that there was no alternative to my "Yes" reply Mr Ferber accepted my offer. I duly got the bike ready and Mr Ferber, after tucking his long trousers into his socks, climbed on the pillion seat behind me then grabbed the back rail with a white knuckle hand grip. He then sat bolt upright and became a carpenter's delight, stiff as a board. Mr Ferber was now ready to die! On the other hand, I wasn't looking forward to the journey either. Well, the first two roundabouts were negotiated without a problem and I deduced Mr Ferber was starting to relax a bit as he had started to lean with me into the bends. "Good" I thought, "only one more large roundabout to go and we will be home and hosed."

Then it happened. Half way around the last large island, with just a little more speed than the previous two and with Mr Ferber in a wonderful right hand lean position, I hit an unseen oil slick. Zip went the Triumph as it started to slip from under us. This caught us both completely unawares. The Triumph, now in a horizontal line, doubled its speed

and Mr Ferber was gone off the back. Stunned at the happenings, which all seemed to be going in slow motion, I managed to throw a quick look to see what had become of Mr Ferber. Mr Ferber was spinning on the ground like a top on the cheeks of his bum, his mouth was wide open and horrible "AAHHH" was coming out of it. "Shit, what have I done?" The bike hit the curb and stopped with me still attached to it, owing to front and rear crash bars which kept the machine off the ground. I hopped up and put the bike in a safe position and quickly checked for damage - 'first things first!'.

I noted only small scratches on the bars and then set out to help Mr Ferber, who by this time had made it to the centre island of grass. He was standing with his legs apart, his knees bent and his arms stretched out like Jesus Christ. His mouth was still wide open and the "AAHHH, AAHHH" noises were still coming out. "Mr Ferber, what have I done to you?" I cried. "You've worn the cheeks of me arse away and all the blood is running down me legs. I'm not a moving until ya get me an ambulance. AAHHH!" "Don't move, don't move, let me have a quick look at you." I stammered.

I then walked to the back of Mr Ferber expecting to see a bloody mess, but there was nothing! On closer inspection all I could see was a worn part of Mr Ferber's trousers right where his back pocket had been. "Please Mr Ferber, move your right leg and give it a little shake." He did so. There was a jingling sound. All now was revealed. To the great relief of both of us, it turned out that during the cheek spin, Mr Ferber's back pocket was worn through and the money therein ran down the back of his legs when he had stood up, hence his feeling of blood running from his numb bum!

With the carpenter's delight on the back of the bike again, we made it to the workshop going at a steady 10 miles an hour. Mr Ferber was very quiet all day and he didn't talk a great deal. I knew he had something on his mind. Time to go home and Mr Ferber came up to me and said, "Look, Don. I know it really wasn't your fault this morning and I know the oil slick wasn't your fault either. I also know that in a couple of weeks we'll have a bloody good laugh about it but, sorry, I'm going home by f... ing bus!"
Von 'Rogers'

GIVE US A PUSH-START WOULD YOU MATE?"

With the Machine Examination Day on soon I invite you to reflect on the past experience of a friend of mine, let's call him Pete (because that is his name). Pete was considering joining the VMCC to share the benefits of about 10 000 years experience in rebuilding, maintaining and riding vintage motorcycles. Pete is the proud owner of a MkII Square Four Ariel. I suggested he come along to the Machine Examination Day to cast his eye over some superb machinery, Namely other Ariels, and meet some of the members and see how things are conducted. Pete, being a generous soul, dragged another friend, Scotty, along and they turned up shortly before I had my bike examined. Being a typically hot February day Pete and Scotty were attired in the fashion of the day, stubbies shorts, singlet and thongs.

Both men are long term motorcyclists and were very impressed by what they saw, row upon row of gleaming classic motorcycles. I think we all share the same enthusiasm. Being friendly, obliging, types Pete and Scotty didn't hesitate when a member was having trouble kicking his machine into life and asked "Give us a push start would you mate?" I won't say which stable the errant cycle came for fear of offending Mr Charlie Lawson.

Pete and Scotty each found a suitable purchase point at the rear of the bike and off they went through the gravel car park. The owner jumped on the seat, dumping the clutch as one does at there desperate times. The bike let a horrific backfire. Scotty owns a Ducati so he wasn't at all perturbed. Pete on the other hand jumped higher than Greenmount, losing his thongs on the way up.

By the time he came back to earth the bike was making noises like it might actually start. Scotty was pushing strongly and Pete bravely chose to keep up stride for stride, adopting an unusual hobbling sort of gait. His normally leather clad feet were subjected to the nasty gravel stones as he ran, pushed, hobbled and swore. Naturally it was still some fifty metres before the old bike finally burst into life. The owner was very pleased as he rode off waving over his shoulder. Pete was last seen limping through the carpark with a couple of broken thongs in his hands. *Don Talbot*

VINTAGE CHATTER - Address by Jim Clark

Our Constitution states that the club is "To publish a magazine which shall report upon the activities of the club". I interpret this as meaning a newsletter primarily aimed at keeping members informed on the details of club events, past and future and embracing information on invitation rallies from outside the club that members may wish to enter. The General Rules of the club note that a club magazine sub committee shall be responsible for the publication and distribution of the magazine. In other words the Editor will have assistants to help with the production of the magazine and not be expected to do it all himself.

As also stated in the General Rules, "The magazine shall include within it's contents such notices and proceedings of meetings as may be directed by the Management Committee, or as may be defined by the club rules. In all other respects the Editor's decision as to the content of the magazine shall be final".

Of course, there is always room for improvement. Perhaps more co-operation and less interference will put things back on an even keel. *Jim Clark*

A HOT MACHINE

Have you ever looked at the fence around the Claremont Speedway track? If you had, you may have noticed it's all blistered and burnt. This came about in 1948, on a Tuesday practice night. The culprit? My old friend Bill Young. Young'y had decided to build a "world beater" speedway machine, for which he used the following components: Tiger 90 frame and back wheel, '23 DT Douglas front wheel, Scott tele forks, Scott water cooled 500cc twin engine, Bantam tank, quick action twist grip, Norton clutch, twin straight through 2 1/2 inch exhausts and running Shell A methanol with Castrol R for lubrication. The noise the machine emitted when they pushed him out of the pit gates, was louder than four B52 bombers taking off. People from Fremantle to Midland huddled under their beds in fright. As this was before modern "plumbing", you could imagine the chaos that followed, phone calls to the Police, dogs barking, kids howling, etc. Young'y was doing nicely but the flames from the twin exhausts were getting longer

and longer the faster he went. Eventually, he had a 600 yard circle of orange and blue flames almost all around the speedway track. He then needed to shut the thing off as his goggles started to melt. About this time he had emptied the Bantam tank anyway and silence prevailed. The speedway directors said, "Take it home and leave it there." *Chas Lawson*

THE FRONT END

The VMCC is a great club that began more than twenty five years ago by a dedicated group of fellows bent on preserving the essence of the golden age of motorcycle racing and riding. And so far they have done a pretty good job with a fantastic number of beautiful machines lovingly restored and preserved for ail to admire. But twenty five years is a long time and the club has grown in membership and facilities to have over 400 members and a beaut library and spare parts Store.

Now, with all these new members and growth, we have had, not only new ideas and directions, but also new needs, facilities and conditions to accommodate the diversity of the people who make up the membership and the variety of machines they ride. So it would be fair to say that the original foundation group of members are now a small minority when compared to the much larger majority of members who have joined, say in the last ten years.

This is natural evolution as the club grows inexorably into the future, however, we all, I'm sure, admire and respect the efforts and solid hard work these foundation members put in to establish this fine club and indeed, some of them are still the hard working souls on our committees today. In spite of all this though, we still hear comments from newer members that it's hard "to break in" to the inner circle, or group of core members, to get to know people and find out about the club and it's members.

Many newer members feel isolated and excluded from the real goings on, sometimes for years. Some long term members seem reluctant to embrace the growing membership and share their knowledge and histories. Others are doing their best to

welcome new people, but there still seems to be a growing divide. If the club is to grow and prosper into the future the older and wiser members need to embrace the newcomers and pass on their knowledge and histories. There are not many Pre 31 riders who pre date their machines and we have to realise that with our rolling 25 year rule and the natural mortality rate, this statistic will move on into the future as well.

At present I ride a 1972 Suzuki, club eligible, but as a direct result of being in the VMCC and mixing with people who have these glorious old machines, I would dearly love to acquire and restore an old Pre 31 machine, as a contrast to my "modern crutch rocket", as some of you may call it. The club needs new blood. Embrace our new members, ask about their dreams. You may find they are no different to yours 30 or 40 years ago. The club needs these youngsters to replace the oldies who drop off the perch with increasing regularity. *Ron Henzen Editor*

(This editorial attracted an avalanche of comments about the need for more Sections and the threat of "modern" bikes, Dave Dumble from the VMCC Victoria provided perhaps the most sensible response.)

I hope your Club will continue to cater for all "over 25's", and avoid the situation we now have in Victoria, where we have separate Veteran, Vintage and Classic Clubs - 3 groups all working for the same outcome, with 3 committees, 3 magazines and 3 bank accounts. Also, enthusiasts here with a wide range of bikes must pay multiple membership fees. I see no reason why events cannot be organised for pre 1914 or pre 1931 bikes, or any other agreed limitation.

Owners of more modern machines can join in the fun by volunteering for marshalling duties, which often involves a long period of standing around, followed by going like the clappers to reach the next checkpoint - what could be better? But please be circumspect when overtaking the oldies - being passed by a rice burner doing 100 kays when you are plugging along on an old banger at 50 kays, can be disconcerting! Anyway, good luck to your Club and I hope common sense will prevail. *David B Dumble VMCC Victoria*

The debate goes on....

I joined the club in the mid 70's, and the argument still goes on..... Vintage/Veteran versus "Modern", i.e. Post Vintage.

The first bike I restored was a 1956 Ariel 600 SV, VB for the uninitiated. I recall a very high ranking official of the club turning up his nose and saying "hardly worthwhile restoring". When the twenty five year ruling was pointed out, and that eventually Japanese machines would be club eligible, the statement was made, "The day a Japanese bike turns up at a rally, I will resign"!

I guess that is how a lot of us thought in those days. But in the enlightened 21st Century, this type of thinking is unfair, selfish and very short sighted. As was pointed out at the last meeting, thinking this way will legislate the club out of existence! Face it, there will never be enough Veteran and Vintage machines to go around. New blood into the club needs to be encouraged, turn people away and we're lost.

Also pointed out, anyone can ride along at any event and so they should be able to. We do not own the roads! Most interest generated will be positive. Bloody pathetic to sit at home sulking, "Not gonna ride my Vintage or Veteran cos a modern bike may be there"... Grow up!! Let's forget our differences and enjoy our bikes. *JIM FARLEY*

MEMORIES OF PETER GROUCOTT: by Jeff Seiber
I first met Pee Gee (Peter Groucott) around 1970. It came about when a mate of mine, Brian Allen and I were interested in building and racing a scrambles sidecar outfit. Peter had raced sidecars in the past, but at the time he was well into racing solos in scrambles events. He lived with his mother in a caravan park in Parkin Street, Rockingham and was a member of the Harley Davidson Motor Cycle Club.

Peter put me in contact with Max Madill, who was then building and racing scrambles and short circuit sidecar outfits and was a great help when I built my own outfit. While riding stock bikes at the Claremont Speedway, Peter wore a specially made boot on one foot due to injuries he received in an

earlier accident. The boot was made by the Civilian Maimed and Limbless Association, who Peter would remember in later years.

In the early 70's, Peter was the Editor and Printer of the HDMC newsletter, Harley Happenings & with the help of John Boyd, organised a very successful "Grass Track" event at the Osborne Park Show, much to the delight of spectators and show goers. I managed to flip my outfit in one race at this event and Peter noted in the next issue of Harley Happenings, "Special contortionists issue for Athletic Sidecar drivers who get it all arse-up".

After drifting away from the HDMC, I joined the VMCC on 7 March 1976, where Peter had already been a member for a while and was also Editor and Printer of the Vintage Chatter, a position he held for many years.

Around 1983, I was considering the purchase of a very sad, round tank BSA, and during the negotiations with the seller, a 1930 Six Port Levis presented itself and Peter's advice at the time proved very beneficial. "The Levis would be heaps better than the round tank BSA", he said. However, after purchasing the Levis, I had a great deal of trouble getting it to run right. I tried this and that, but in the end brought it over to Pete's place.

We took off the timing cover, cylinder head and maggy sprocket and Pete waved his hand over the dormant machine. We replaced the parts, tickled the carby and she burst into life first kick and ran sweetly. Later, Peter dated the Levis from the frame number we managed to find with some difficulty. He also lent me a rear main stand from his 1929 Six Port Levis so I could make my own from his, as my bike didn't have one.

As Peter's trade was sign writing and painting, for Ampol for many years, he re-did the lines on my tank and other little paint jobs for lots of people. After being demobbed from the Air Force, after World War Two, in Darwin, he rode a BSA M20 down to Perth. A considerable ride in those days. Peter was a walking encyclopedia on early motorcycles and cars and was able to easily identify the make, model and year of a number of veteran cars in a series of photos I had. He was also very supportive of the Pre

31 Section, owning mainly mainly unusual machines such as, Hazelwood, Rover, Premier, Hercules Victor, ABC, Coventry Victor and Neracar to name just a few.



After moving into a new home in Rockingham with his Mum, Peter organised a new club ride called the Rocko Run, mainly for Pre 31 machines which finished up with lunch at the Ocean Clipper Inn in Rockingham. When my wife and I built in Golden Bay we all saw more of each other as we dropped in on each other for the odd cuppa, but he also had somewhat of a short wick on occasion, especially when it came to trouble with bikes.

On one occasion, during a tea break at The Lakes roadhouse on the TT run, he had been trying to kick start his stubborn bike for some time when I asked if I should have a go. "You couldn't give a cow a kick in the arse", was his reply. My wife even copped a load of swear words once, when she pulled over to where Pete and Eric Langton were standing by Pete's broken down bike, to offer any help. @#%&* was his reply, so she got straight back into her car and left him for the backup.

When Peter passed away, he left his property and work vehicles to the Civilian Maimed and Limbless Association and all his bike parts to the VMCC, but the chap from the association was about to throw all the bike bits on the tip when Pete's stepsister, Noreen stepped in and put the chap right, so a whole lot of parts came to the VMCC/It took five members using utes and trailers over three weekends to shift all the bits to the club.

COMBO ANTICS - By Den Rogers: Before taking my newly painted Triumph Tiger 100 and my newly

repaired Stieb sidecar on the road, I rang an insurance company to get a cover note and to my surprise was given a cheaper rate than when I had the Triumph solo. It was explained to me that the insurance companies considered combination motorcycles the safest vehicles on the road.

At the time I think the insurance people thought that the only combos on the road were the family "Westonians" which carried an adult and two children and were usually pulled by an Ariel Square Four. The insurance companies could not have been aware how lethal a Triumph with a Stieb sports sidecar could be, especially when handled by an inexperienced 23 year old like me.

I had had my outfit for all of two days and just about lived on it. By this time I was pretty much "Cock a Hoop" at handling it. On a Saturday morning I decided to ride through Hayes Town shopping area to let the world see me and my new outfit. Saturday morning is also the best time to cruise as the girls are out and about. I went through the town twice, just in case somebody had missed me the first time, then headed out on the old Church Road, leaving the shops behind.

Church Road had a long right hand bend and as I progressed around it, at a steady 30 mph, I suddenly remembered a road on the left hand side which would give me a longer ride home. I had just enough time to signal a left turn as I approached the corner and without thinking swung the bars over. "Low and behold" the Stieb's wheel came off the ground. I hoped that, whatever was running down my leg, was sweat. Panic wasn't the word. I was now about to die.

The wheel had left the ground to a height of two feet or so. Hmmm, somebody had forgotten to transfer body weight, hadn't they? Once the sidecar wheel had left the ground all my steerage was lost and the machine went in a dead straight line. All I could think of, as I headed over to the wrong side of the road, was to brake as hard as I dare and hope to stop before I did any damage to myself or anything else. The combo hit the kerb on the other side of the road and that shock brought the Stieb's wheel back down to the ground again with a bump.

We, the outfit and me, carried on over the kerb and footpath, which luckily was a very wide one and now with all brakes operating we came to a halt, just nudging a low picket fence and the front gate of a house. I looked around and thought, "somebody up there likes me". Usually at that time of day, 11 o'clock on a Saturday morning, there were double decker buses and push bikes everywhere, but at this particular time, as I was doing my circus act, there was nobody about. Once stopped I sat there with my heart pounding like mad in my chest, vowing to go to church again on Sunday.

Looking up, once my shock had died down, I had the feeling of being watched. There inside the bay window of the house, not ten yards in front of me, was an old lady. She had her arms by her side and was standing bolt upright, her eyes bulging with her mouth wide open. Not knowing quite what to do I slowly got off the bike and walked hesitantly to the front gate. I peered at the number on the front door and then the number on the gate and gestured to the lady that I had actually come to visit but had got the house number wrong.

With a shrug of my shoulders I turned away but the old girl still stood there rigid, eyes and mouth still wide open. My God, I thought. What have I done? Pushing the combo back onto the road and not daring to look at the house again, I fired up the bike and then having checked the traffic, nonchalantly drove away.

After a couple of miles my conscience got the better of me. "What if the old girl has had a heart attack or maybe even a stroke?" No good. I just had to go back and check. Approaching the house and slowing down somewhat, I gave a casual glance at the bay window. Thank Christ, she was gone. With a sigh I headed for home.

Thinking again at what had happened I started seeing the funny side of it. I thought of the old lady's husband coming home and upon entering his lounge, finding her on her back, arms by her side, stiff as a board, staring up at the ceiling with her mouth wide open. There was no way in the world he would ever find out who had done such a dastardly deed.

AGM 2002: Life Membership Nominations: From P Stocker nominating Bert Holmes for his support over many years and in particular the construction of the parts shed, the library and the Ken Marshall room. Seconded C Lawson.

From M Makin nominating Ron Cherrington for long membership in the club during which time he had held many positions including Committee Member, Membership Secretary and organised and participated in many events. Seconded J Boyd.

Voting slips were issued resulting in full acceptance. Bert Holmes addressed the meeting thanking members for the honour. Ron Cherrington was not in attendance.

MAX MADILL ACCIDENT - Oct 2002: On a sad note is the terrible accident at the Northam Hill climb with Max Madill and Doug Firth in the Norton sidecar crashing off the road into scrub and rocks, resulting in Max sustaining a very serious condition.

Doug received considerable bruising on his right shoulder and a bit of shock but is otherwise alright. At this time it would appear Max suffered a severe spinal injury resulting in, at last report, paraplegia. Keith Perry has the latest information as to Max's location and condition. Our thoughts go out to both Max and Shirley at this most difficult time.

DAM EARLY RIDE, OBSERVATIONS - from Mike Leathendale: Well another successful run completed by the old M20. I would have liked it to go without a hitch, but it wasn't to be. I should have guessed. A couple of days before the run I had decided to fix a problem with the float. Every time I tried to tickle it, no fuel. The reason, too many dents in the top. The tickler wouldn't reach the float. So after a couple of chats with Terry from Busselton, I decided to turn the float upside down which meant that I had to unsolder it and redo it the other way up.

Well it all seemed OK so I gave it a run to Pinjarra and then checked it. There didn't appear to be any leaks. On Saturday afternoon I decided to try it again, dam, petrol all over the place. After a quick phone call the problem was fixed. (I couldn't have tightened the lock screw on top of the float chamber

enough). That was the first thing I lost on the run but the second took a lot more thought, which is a bit of a worry when you're getting on a bit.

I started to have trouble changing gear. I know that the BSA gearbox is more than a bit agricultural and there is a neutral between every gear but this was ridiculous. I didn't seem to have any revs (anyone following must have thought that silly old fart is having a seizure). I finally engaged the brain and used my eyes and found that the adjusting screw on the throttle had been left behind on a bumpy section and what I was left with was one inch of slack on the twist grip, so every time I grabbed a hand full the slide didn't move.

I managed to arrive back at Chas Bayley's place in one piece. I congratulate Chas and his wife for their hospitality and a magnificent breakfast. (I hate to think what the neighbours thought with all those old bikes turning up early on a quiet Sunday morning). I changed a couple of things since the first run I did. The first was the handlebar grips. I found that after a few miles the vibrations gave me pins and needles in my right hand.

In fact after 200 miles I thought of offering them to Barbarellas. The second was the small mirror I put on to comply with the law. I changed it for a much larger one after a truck came up behind me and scared the living daylights out of me. (I didn't hear it due to the noise of the combined harvester under my fuel tank). I changed these things as I thought if I'm going to be vibrated, deafened and scared to death, I might as well do it in comfort. Hope to see you all on the next trip. They are great to be on.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR - From Richard Faulkner: Firstly, may I thank you for your efforts as editor? The Chatter is a very appreciated aspect of the Club. Secondly, please may I open further debate on the building fund? As I understand it, there is some \$165,000 in the building fund which has been an entity from the time that I first became aware of it, some twelve years ago. In that time the price of land has doubled twice which therefore means it has a purchase power today of one quarter that it had twelve years ago.

Extrapolating into the future, it is more than likely that its specified purchasing power with regard to land will continue to erode at a significant rate to such an extent that within twenty years, \$165,000 may be insufficient to buy any property at all. At this point a wonderful asset to the club will have been totally lost. How will club members feel in twenty years time when they work out that we, as current members, put the issue in the "too hard basket" and let our legacy go, by default? This would seem to be less, a matter of opinion, but rather more of a mathematical fact. I feel this issue is like teeth, just ignore them and they go away. In fifty years time the building fund may well have the purchase power to relegate it to petty cash. Waste like that goes very much against the grain. As current members we have a long term obligation to the club and those who follow us, to prevent any waste such as this. Time and tide waits for no man.

(How will members feel 20 years later? Cheated perhaps, as there was no movement on this front until the Unit was purchased in 2017.)

2003: Lake Ballard populated by stick figures

MY FIRST MOTORCYCLE - by Peter Stocker: First, let me tell you how I became interested in motorcycles. I was a 15 year old school boy when I had my first pillion ride on an M20 ex Army BSA. A little later I was taken for a burn on a new International Norton owned by the late Jim Chivers.

It was a summers evening when he opened it up on Welshpool Road and the lamp poles seemed to be flashing past like a picket fence as I hung on for dear life. It was a mixture of fear and exhilaration. When I dismounted I was hooked, I could hardly wait till I was 17 and old enough to get a license. Well I duly turned 17 and got my car driver's license and with it I was entitled to ride any motorcycle! This is the way it was in 1949 and I believe it changed shortly after. Getting a motorcycle license did not qualify you for a car license.

Well, I scraped up as much money as a 17 years old could in those days, looked in Saturday's West and set out to get one. I was so green that I was fair game for the first one I saw. The seller saw me coming and must have chortled in his joy. I became

the proud owner of a pre-war 149cc Excelsior two stroke which I quickly found was a near wreck. To a young man who had spent his life being driven at someone else's good will, riding push bikes, catching trains, trams, trolley buses, ferries and mounted on shank's pony, it was heaven!

The bike was good for about 35mph under favourable conditions but was happier at 25 to 30. The brakes were the best part of the machine that had a bald back tyre, a wheel with a wobble that made a low crunching sound as it turned. The sprockets wee hooky, the chain was worn and would hop over the teeth with very little provocation. The headlight was like Charley Lawson's tin of marmalade jam! I give all this information because in my first bliss and ignorance I rode it up to a friend's farm at Bowgada that is 250 miles from Perth and between Perenjori and Morawa. It was bitumen all the way to Carnamah then corrugated gravel to Bowgada.

It took me 11 hours of continuous riding and I had plenty of time to see the changing countryside and de-whisker the plug from time to time. For those who came into motorcycling later I must tell you that we were still on petrol of about 70 octane and we mixed half a pint of Castrol XL in each gallon. You can imagine the carbon build up and of course it bridged the plug gap. Many of you would remember the joy of unscrewing a stinking hot plug, removing a whisker then trying to screw the plug back in without getting burnt.

Lord knows that the almighty looks after fools and drunks and two weeks later I rode the thing back to Perth. The only problem I had was when the exhaust pipe and silencer fell off near Pearce Air Base. I cut a length of soft wire from a fence that was as dilapidated as the bike, lashed things up and continued on my journey. There was very little traffic in those days and if something had gone really wrong T would have been in considerable trouble!

VALE JOHN BOYD (1932 - 2003): Today I lost a very good friend, as did many other club members who were close to John and Noreen. The club, as a whole, has lost a tireless worker. John was a life member of the V.M.C.C. of W.A. and also the Harley

Davidson Motorcycle Club and you don't achieve that easily. I knew John for 38 years and never once saw him in a bad mood. It must be said that he was a talker as well as a worker. He will be sadly missed on both counts. Good bye dear friend. *Vic Richardson.*

VALE JOHN BOYD: I met John at Navel Base 44 years ago on a club run with the Harley Club. He and Noreen had been married for about twelve months. Over the years the friendship between Carol and I and Noreen and John grew and our children grew up alongside each other at club runs and camping trips. We started off in the Harley Club in the days of the ropeworks course in Mosman Park. In later years the Harley Club went into decline and it was largely John's efforts as President, and a Life Member, that kept the club alive. Later a small group of us from the Harley Club joined the Vintage Motorcycle Club in its early years. John was an active and enthusiastic member who contributed greatly to the club, most obviously as Librarian for many years. Less obvious was the time devoted to lighting in the parts shed, organising tables for the Annual Dinner and many of the 101 other jobs that keep a club going. He is also a Life Member of this club. As an electrician he did a lot of work for club members, usually undercharging if he charged at all, but it didn't stop there. He was always doing all manner of odd jobs for friends, neighbours and family. A more caring, honest and genuine man you could not meet. So many of us will miss his friendship and enthusiasm for life and motorcycling. *Jim Clark*

2004: Tsunami hits Sumatra and Thailand

COMMUNICATION : Peter Bennett took on the role of Editor in 2004. Mick Tait set-up the Club's first webpage.

VALE TED GREEN:

Ted died in a tragic road accident on 5/2/04 whilst driving a Telstra vehicle south of Mount Barker Ted's was a life of service - 'Scouts Australia', Apex Club of Vic Park, Vietnam Veteran's Assoc., Vintage Motorcycle club and the general public as he worked with Telstra. Ted held Glider Pilot's license and a powered aircraft license. In the V.M.C.C. Ted held the offices of Club Photographer

and Treasurer for the Albany Section. In 1990 Ted drove a back-up vehicle on the Overlander Run to Sydney. He always had a cup of tea and words of



encouragement for riders when things were going wrong. Above all Ted was always a gentleman, I do not remember him using profanity at any time, he used his smile to defuse disagreements. He liked a humorous joke. Style was something that Ted had, though maybe not in the usual way. In August last year Ted rode and photographed the 'Wheels West 2003' 14 day Motorcycle Rally. South of Busselton the exhaust system fell off Ted's bike, this didn't worry Ted, he just coasted to a halt. Then, somehow Ted persuaded a nearby group of roadworkers to help him refit the exhaust. Ted watched - they

worked - now that's called style.

SWAP MEET 2004: The President, Keith Perry, called for an official vote of thanks to be given to Ken Duperouzel. Ron Morrison and Don Fawell seconded this. The President went on to say Ken had in the organising of this event, put himself through hell and probably his wife Audrey as well when having to put with Ken's pressure moods created by small problems which are always associated with this type of event. The President went on to say Ken took another 3 days after the event to finalise everything. The motion was put; carried with resounding applause. Ken responded with a short story on the morning of the event around 5am he noticed the Council bins provided the day prior had been filled by others, he then rang the Shire leaving a message on their answering machine, reporting this and asked for additional bins to be provided, in a short while to his amazement a Council truck arrived with the bins. Ken sent a letter of appreciation much to the Council workers satisfaction.

HARRY GIBSON - First West Australian to hold the Australian land speed record: When Jack Ehret of N.S.W. set a new Australian Land Speed record of 141.509 mph on a "Black Lightning" Vincent, four local super-enthusiasts reckoned it was a challenge they could not resist. They were the three Gibson brothers, Harry, Reg, and Wally, and their long time friend Clem Dwyer. Reg built an electric timing device, and surveyed a quarter mile of road at Muchea, to check their many tuning modifications to a variety of motor cycles. Harry purchased a second hand Series "C" Vincent Rapide and altered it to be more suitable for road racing. The rear suspension units were replaced with aircraft air legs and later a Norton front brake. Then the serious tuning started.

Running on petrol-benzol for local road races, Harry could obtain 138 mph through the quarter mile consistently. Progressively the Vincent now on methanol, was tuned to be the equal to that of "Black Lightning" racing models. Harry had contact with Phil Irving designer of the Vincent, and assistance from Tony Tapper and Reg Bell for welding and machining. Speeds of up to 150 mph were obtained without any form of streamlining, although Harry's above average height, did not help.

On the 29th. March 1953 all was ready for an attempt on Ehret's record. The first two runs were missed by the timing officials. An unfortunate situation as they were recorded by the Gibsons own timing, showing higher speeds than subsequently obtained. On the second attempt a mean figure of 144.92 mph was successful.



Above: Peter Nicol on the left, Harry Gibson on the right

Then Clem Dwyer took over to break the quarter mile standing start record with a mean figure of 12.775 seconds. Harry thinking that he could better the flying figure, prepared to have another attempt when Clem noticed the rear tyre was throwing the tread off, thus ending any further record attempts.

Eventually Harry sold the Vincent to Cecil Sumption who used it to win the 1958 Australian Sidecar Championship at Albany with Keith Perry as passenger. Cecil remembers Harry insisting he should give it a run through the quarter mile to sample what he was buying. Cecil recorded a speed in the high 140's mph to receive a sharp rebuke from. Harry, for thrashing the machine.

COOLGARDIE TOUR - (By Elsie Turner): The VMCC organise great bike tours. Coolgardie in 2004 was no exception. Organised by Bill Coote with assistance from local historian Dave Hurst, the tour took in not only local attractions, but included little places that are not well known, but each with a story to tell. The Coolgardie Caravan Village provided caravan, tent sites, cabins and rooms for more than 50 riders. Some members stayed at the Caltex Motel across the road from the Village. Each brought their bike, sidecar or trike on the trip.



Coolgardie Display - Photos by Richard Argus

Included in the number were nine Indian Harley Club members from Bunbury. Some rode all the way. Others loaded their bikes or bikes & sidecars onto trailers or utes. One bike and sidecar even travelled inside a caravan. On hand to greet all of us when we arrived were Bill & Margaret Coote.

Day one was an 80k car trek on gravel roads to Ora Banda. En route Dave Hurst enjoyed showing us some of history- and tourism's best kept secrets - abandoned goldmines, ruins of man made dams and Kunanulling's Premier Hotel. Once a thriving mining town, a plaque outside the ruins told a delightful story of local ladies and girls knitting socks for World War 1 soldiers. Two girls included their names and addresses inside the socks. The soldiers who received them not only appreciated their parcels, but two also came to Kunanulling after the war to claim the girls as their brides.

The Ora Banda Hotel brought back modern memories - recollections of the hotel being bombed after the shooting murder of a Coffin Cheater bikie. Back on tarred roads we went to the historic Broad Arrow Hotel with its walls covered with the signatures of thousands of visitors.

'Coolgardie Day' was a wonderful day - a carnival of street parades and displays of Vintage Motorcycles and Cars. Land yachts, Scottish and Country and Western Bands, Boot Scooters, Merry Go Rounds, Jewellery and Clothing Stalls, food & drink stands selling such mouth watering delights as strawberries & cream, kebabs, hot beef rolls & Barbecued Sausages from Cullen's Coolgardie butchers.

Monday took us to Kalgoorlie to display our bikes in St Barbara's Square. We saw marvellous Gold Rush architecture and then on to the Big Pit. A day later we even looked like miners as we were dressed in overalls, boots, hard hats, miner's lamps, rescue breathers as we motored down underground to see a gold mine in action. A delicious luncheon on the top of Red Hill (near Kambalda) was provided by the Coolgardie Shire Council marking the end of a great visit to Kambalda. Other meals during the holiday included barbecues at the Coolgardie Bowling Club, dinner at the Bullabulling Hotel and a picnic at Kalgoorlie's Hammond Park.

A Wednesday tour of Coolgardie included a visit to the Railway Station Museum and a ride out to the

site of the old Westralia mine at Bonnie Vale. Modesto Varischetti was rescued from this mine in 1897 by divers after this shaft was flooded by rain.

Thursday's evening meal at the Coolgardie Bowling Club was the last chance for us to be together and to reminisce about a great week in the Goldfields.

LIFE MEMBERS APPOINTED: at the 2004 AGM Frank Cocks and Bill Morrell were both awarded Life Membership for their service to the Club .

PROFILE: COLIN TIE - by Adrian White

The origin of the name "Tie" dates back to the great gold rush of 1893 and a Chinese miner. No details of that gentleman are known though he's accepted by the family as great-great grandfather. Colin was born in Kalgoorlie in 1942 and rode pillion on a motorcycle shortly before birth. His father, Stan (known to most as "Bruiser") took mother Thelma (including Colin) to hospital on his BSA. Colin must have been a nice enough infant (!), his parents went on to produce for him a brother and a sister. He was, however, cut from end to end just following birth, by a Perth surgeon, to correct a twisted bowel.

"Bruiser" Tie worked as a diesel fitter to the mining industry. On Saturday mornings he worked for the local B.S.A. agent and was recognised as a very capable builder and repairer of bikes, setting up flywheels for most of Kalgoorlie's motorcycle fraternity. He raced, quite successfully, a variety of bikes, at Lake Perkolilli. Colin rode pillion with his dad from an early age, thoroughly enjoying it and naturally itching to ride by himself. Mother, Thelma played tennis on weekends and a couple of her tennis friends had Malvern Star auto cycles which they (foolishly!) parked at the Tie house. Thus Colin's first two-wheeled powered solo was aboard one of these "borrowed" machines and he became adept at riding them round the paddock adjoining the family home. A very underage ride on the inevitable Bantam also excited him - the latter may have been reward for programme selling at Goldfield's M.C.C. events.

Colin ended his schooling at Eastern Goldfields High School and enrolled at the School of Mines to study engineering, working also as a junior labourer on mine sites whilst seeking an apprenticeship. His

ambition was to become a boilermaker but no apprenticeships for this were available. By a stroke, of what he now realises was good fortune, he was offered, and accepted, a fitting and turning apprenticeship. Half of this he served at Lake View and Star in the goldfields (an American Miner), and he completed his trade certificate at Hadfields in Bassendean. By now he had a B.S.A. Road Rocket for transport, which replaced his swinging arm BSA 500 he'd ridden round Kalgoorlie. The local law took an interest in the young Colin's riding and several times chased him - he managed to evade being caught by knowing intricately all the back lanes, and by his bike being fitted with scramble tyres. When the R.T.A. eventually took traffic matters from the local authority the retiring officer sought out Colin and shook his hand!

By now Colin had a BSA Gold Star 350 which he campaigned regularly in Goldfields M.C.C. events. Unfortunately a 350 was probably a bit light for his riding style - "wring it's neck!" and although he enjoyed some racing success, he blew engines at an alarming rate. His best day out resulted in 5 wins from 5 starts. Road riding saw him equally keen with inevitable results - his groin pierced by a clutch lever (ouch!) and his leg ripped open by a footrest.

A bit of variety in life appealed so Colin left Perth and found work easy to get in various country towns - in addition to his trade, his C. V. lists sawmill hand, shearing rouseabout, truck driving, clover harvesting, mechanic, petrol attendant, and concrete worker on the Wagin swimming pool. In 1968 the position of car salesman at Wagin Holden was offered and accepted. Easy going socially but meticulous and professional at work, Colin was very successful in this. When the Holden HT was introduced in 1969, he sold 5 cars on the evening of the release. He married a local girl but this union was short, divorce followed, and he moved on. The lure of big money took him back to the goldfields and his trade, where he became foreman at a Coolgardie nickel mine. He planned to accumulate sufficient money to move to the city and open his own used car dealership. He moved to Perth and spent six months at Motorama (then a major used car operator) to gain experience, and then, in 1973, with partner Lindsay Illingworth opened North Perth Motors on Fitzgerald St.

He married his wife, Maureen the same year and between them they raised four children. The balance of his working life was spent as a respected, successful motor dealer, at several locations. Motorcycles remained an interest and Colin had great fun thrashing a couple of Bultaco Pursangs around Pippidinnny with a few mates, but business and family pressures saw bikes take a back seat for five years. Kids grew, business prospered and twelve years ago Colin bought a pile of B.S.A. bits which he transformed into a very nice 350 Gold Star. Several more "Goldies" followed, as did VMCC membership. Colin rides most club events and very much enjoys the camaraderie. Now retired, he still has a lathe in the Mundaring workshop, and, more importantly, the skills to use that lathe. Many a club bike is now complete and running through his expertise, he's always very ready to lend a hand to members' problems. Visitors are welcome at his workshop to enjoy a beer and Colin's sense of humour. If you can survive that you can survive anything! *(Note: by 2022 Colin had retired the workshop and health issues have also stymied riding for now.)*



Chapter 9: 2005 - 09



2005: Western Australia pop'n 2 million people

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - REX EDMONDSON: On the 15th August 1968 the Veteran Car Club of WA wrote a letter to the Vintage Motor Cycle Section of the Car Club. This letter said that the Car Club had agreed unanimously to a request from fourteen members of the Motor Cycle Section to form a vintage motor cycle club and so began a most successful journey for the Vintage Motor Cycle Club of WA.

Thirty years latter the Club has grown to a well known and respected organization with 470 members who have 700 machines listed with 326 vintage and post vintage motor cycles road worthy and so fulfilling the Clubs first objective "To encourage the ownership ,use and preservation of motorcycles and other similar motor vehicles more than 25 years of age".

On the weekend of the 17/18th September members gathered to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the event of August 1968. This celebration consisted of a run on Saturday along the hills and a pleasant lunch at Parkerville and return to the Club. A celebration dinner held that night was well attended in a relaxed atmosphere and entertainment enhanced the evening with a number of recitals of song and verse.



Founding members: Ron Morrison, Charlie Lawson & Jack Berkshire cut the 30 year Anniversary cake.

During the evening presentations were made to three founding members who attended, Chas Lawson, Jack Berkshire and Ron Morrison, Ron was also presented with his Life Membership. The Club congratulates these outstanding members. Frank Cocks gave an address on the clubs beginnings and Jim Clark produced a booklet containing 30 years of Club events in cartoon sketch that I am sure is a collectors item. A further run through the hills to the south of

Perth was held on Sunday, this was well attended and rounded off a weekend celebration. VMCC members of today owe a vote of thanks to those many people that have built this Club into what it is today with a large membership, a good management system and sound base. This very healthy position has been achieved by responsible yet bold management and support by a large number of people over the 30yr life of this Club and we salute and thank you.

For those of us that are members today lets not let that 30yr effort be lessened, we need to keep our eye on the road ahead and support the Club in whatever way you have to offer and I know that every member has something to offer. Em Serls put this celebration together and we thank him and his good lady Phyl for there effort. Well done. VMCC, congratulations for the past 30yrs, lets keep going forward in the spirit that has got us to here.

PROFILE - COLIN ANTHONY MCKEE: by Adrian White Napier, New Zealand (East Coast, North Island), 7th May 1941. Horrie and Hilda (known to everyone as "Tiny") McKee are proud to announce the arrival of their third (and final, it turned out) child, Colin Anthony. Mother and child both well, many thanks to the staff at Bethany. Tiny was a nurse aide so she probably knew a thing or two about childbirth and Horrie was a confectioner. Things were hardly booming in Napier; the misery of Depression was still being experienced, and, as if that were not enough, Napier suffered a major earthquake in 1931, the effects of which lasted many years. In such a Spartan economy, confectionery didn't rate very highly so Horrie became a tobacco blender for Rothmans and worked there until retirement. Colin attended Port Ahuriri Primary School, then Napier Intermediate and finally Napier Boys High. An average student, he loved sport and despite being of very short stature played for the school's First 15 (Rugby, the game played in heaven!). When annual photo time came around Colin had to sit on a cushion to make him look big enough! By his eighteenth birthday he's grown to average height.

The local BMC dealership employed Colin as an apprentice motor mechanic where he showed aptitude for the trade and enjoyed the work. He passed his final exams in 1962. Meantime, he'd found motorcycles. Aged sixteen he was a regular passenger on the successful road racing sidecar of Pat Connolly. At the same age he rode his first scramble on a James Captain, Villiers 197 powered, with some success.

Eighteen months later he purchased a BSA Gold Star BB32 and road raced during summer. This produced his first serious injury. Road racing at Ardmore had riders sitting up at the end of the straight to negotiate the following bend; Colin thought he could perhaps go round this bend flat out on the tank. He couldn't and broke his left wrist to prove it. Twelve months later he did exactly the same at Levin with exactly the same result. Came the Autumn and the Goldie was converted to scrambles trim; in both disciplines the name Colin McKee featured frequently as a winner.

This happy state of affairs continued until he was nineteen when he decided to try his talents on speedway. Apart from the fact he thoroughly enjoyed it, speedway provided decent prize money at a time when you might win a major road race and be rewarded for all your time, talent and expenses with a first prize of £5 (\$10).

One of speedway's most revered competitors, Ronnie Moore saw talent in the young Colin and gave a great deal of help to his fledging career. Colin's attitude as a professional race competitor matured with the switch to the dirt ovals. Always competitive, he developed single minded mental aggression, became very "wound up" on the night, regarded his opposition not as the chap you might have a chat with in the pits but as the opposition, to be beaten, fair and square for sure, but beaten. Regarding the last, numerous opposition riders told wife Trish they liked to race Colin, hard, competitive but always fair and clean, despite what he calls his "angry" state of mind. Moore also ran a "Wall of Death" at shows around the country and tried to persuade Colin to ride with him, but the offer was graciously and firmly declined. Colin became Manawatu champion and was well enough recognised by Western Springs (Auckland) promoter who paid him appearance money, prize money and return air fares to compete there.

In 1963 English speedway beckoned, so Colin packed his bags and was able to immediately secure a ride with Hackney. The smaller tracks took time to learn but Colin quickly established himself in Provincial League as a fast and able rider. One promoter believed in preparing really rough tracks; this he said gave spectators more thrills and kept them coming through the turnstiles! This dreadful thinking backfired - one evening the track was so awful the riders, including Colin, walked out. This meant an appearance before the governing body, the F.I.M., a very serious matter but the riders were exonerated,

their being "no case to answer". After a year in Provincial League Colin progressed to First Division, the top echelon of speedway and rode at that level for the balance of his career. To describe a six year career, at the premier level of speedway, would take several complete "Chatters" and could well provide very entertaining material for a future Noggin and Natter night, but some highlights follow. Rode for New Zealand in the "Golden Helmet" series, that year held in Holland. Rode for the Overseas Team vs U.K. Rode for Scotland vs Russia, Scotland vs England thus becoming one of a very select group who have performed international duties for more than one country.



Selected as a member of the first official team to compete behind the Iron Curtain, which meant riding seven meetings in nine days in Poland. Polish riders were state employed and only worked part time, were able to practice and prepare bikes as necessary and were thus good riders on home soil. Under Soviet control the country was desperately poor. The only Poles to speak English were those who'd been Resistance fighters in W.W.II. Each race meeting was held in conjunction with a civic reception where the food, even allowing for poverty and for culturally differing tastes, was awful. One dish comprised a doughnut-sized ring of raw mince with a raw egg in the hole; apparently the Poles thought this pretty good but visiting speedway riders weren't impressed. Injury is an ever-present threat; it's a dangerous sport, but skill and a little luck were on Colin's side. 1964 at long Eaton saw him hit the hurricane fencing surrounding the track, then hit a lamp standard and wind up in Nottingham Hospital where he made a

complete recovery from concussion and face and mouth damage.

Then in 1970 at Halifax, his Jawa throttle jammed open so Colin opted to put the bike down but in so doing man and machine tangled with man sustaining a nasty gash below his knee. The track doctor enjoyed speedway - he could sit and watch and have a few drinks! This night he was worse for wear, the few drinks had become many, so he promptly dropped all his sterile gear on the dirt pit floor and then sewed Colin up, without anaesthetic.

Most unpleasant, and the whole wound became septic, taking quite some time and treatment. A professional speedway rider in U.K. would cover at least twenty thousand road miles in a season, attending meetings. Colin's first transport there was a Morris 1000 van, a great workhorse but a bit slow, so eventually a Jaguar 3.8 II replaced the Morris. Until 1966 there were no speed limits in Britain so the performance of the Jaguar dramatically lessened the time spent travelling. 1966 was notable for an even more important event - Colin met a charming young secretary at a carnival.

Her name was Trish, she wasn't totally impressed with speedway but still consented to become Mrs Colin McKee. Fortunately, her folks were very happy at the union. Colin and Trish raised two children, Sandra and Darren. The time finally arrived to put down some roots, so after a final UK season with Halifax the McKee family settled back in Napier where Colin bought a Mobil service station which he ran quite profitably for two years, after which time he sold out and opened a used car operation - Col McKee Motors. He still liked racing so when Go Karts introduced the "Gearbox" class, Colin imported a 250cc engine from Suzuki, built a Kart and blew away the local hot shots with his 125 m.p.h. projectile. One such hot shot was international road racer Ginger Molloy. Also, jet boating up flooded rivers provided plenty of excitement.

Despite this very agreeable lifestyle, the McKee family believed there may be better places to live than Napier. Perth appealed as a nice place; they'd visited during the days of the Americas Cup. Colin could have obtained a Green Card and taken the family to U.S.A.; speedway was just beginning to grow there and the Americans would have made it quite tempting for top line experienced riders. The decision - Perth.

After a very short time working for a major Cannington motor dealer, Colin obtained a Real Estate licence but he didn't like that much either so he opened a motor wholesale business. From this he retired in 1995. The family McKee has grown since settling in Perth. Both Sandra and Darren have married, and made proud grandparents of Colin and Trish, each couple producing two children.

Colin has restored several bikes, including the ex U.S.A. Bonneville he usually rides. Also in his stable are: Norton Commando, A.J.S. Model 18, 1956 B33, and a 1966 B44 Victor. He is active with Historic Speedway and restored the ex Keith Mann SESCO speedcar. Son Darren rides a Weslake solo in Historic events and Colin now has an ex Tony Matta speedcar which has sat untouched for twenty-three years. This he is restoring. Colin has been a V.M.C.C. member since he arrived in this fair city and enjoys club activities. He served as treasurer for fifteen months.

LONG WINDED TALE OF A SIDECAR by Charlie Lawson

In the mid thirties three prominent members of the A.J.S. Motor Cycle Club went to England where they attended the Isle of Man T.T. Races and the A.J.S. Motor Cycle Works at Wolverhampton. There they acquired 3 A.J.S. Isle of Man 500cc T.T. o/h. cam machines. These were the first of the saddle tanks, huge diameter exhausts with the usual Brooklands can muffler - these were always known as 'Denley' A.J.S. after Bert Denley who had done well at the Isle of Man and Brookland circuits. They also purchased a couple of A.J.S. racing sidecars, these were called Graysley sidecars, and were the top of the engineering spectrum including 4 point mounting, straight spokes, cane wicker work, body nose etc. The riders were Larry Metcalf, Roily Fardon and Alf Tchan, they rode these machines with success at Lake Perkolilli and all round Australia, up to the 2nd World War. It is said that when the machines arrived they were tried out in Beaufort Street on an early Sunday morning, all illegal, starting at the Police Station about Bulwer Street, with cotton and timing, speed of about 90 mph electrical timed was attained.

This tale concerns one of the sidecars as I can remember - Alf Tchan was a tailor and captain of the A.J.S. M.C.C for about 25 years. He had the sidecar on the A.J.S. licensed around Perth. The bike and sidecar always chrome and red, wherever the outfit was parked, old and young would stop to admire. About 1938 the A.J.S. passed as a solo to Jack Rowe of Albany, whilst Alf purchased a 1938 600cc ES2

Norton Special, 4 gallon tank, 21 inch front wheel etc, quite a bit of chrome as I remember. At night in Perth we would park in Hay Street outside Levingson the Jewellers whilst at the movies or dancing at the Town Hall. "Just imagine leaving it there now".

In 1948 Alf acquired a Vincent H.R.D. again with sidecar fitted, still parked most nights in Hay Street, later the lot was sold and M.G.T.C. taking its place, the sidecar was fitted to a Vincent Comet. In later years it languished under a tree near the old Scarborough Bus Garage, Bill Young acquired it and sold it to Neil Stephenson who fitted it to a 1930's Sunbeam then to Barry Makin's 750cc Zenith, still giving good service after 70 years at most V.M.C.C. rallies.

FOOTNOTE. In the fifties I observed the Denly A.J.S. on the top of a Sims Scrap Metal semi trailer on the way to Fremantle and Japan - what a sad ending.

VALE HERB WATSON: 1920-2005

Herb arrived out from England as a two year old and grew up on the family farm at Moorine Rock. A move to Perth as a sixteen year old, it didn't take long to find a job and started with James Hardie in Welshpool. With a short time in the army and then returning back to Hardies.

Some time later, Herb was involved with motorcycles and in due course, started working at Ken George Motorcycles at the Causeway Shop. Eventually, he was promoted to Workshop Foreman. The next venture was formed with a friend and became known as Forbes + Watson Motorcycles in Albany Highway, opening a shop along from The Balmoral Hotel. The next move was when Jack gave the game away and Herb eventually purchased a shop opposite the Victoria Park Hotel and remained there until he retired in 1982. Herb Watson Motorcycles was taken over by Peter Wallace, who now runs the Honda Shop.

The early fifties had seen Herb involved helping the Hurst Bros with sidecar racing at Claremont Speedway and continued with a lot of topline riders in this state. For many years. Herb always supported the English Test Teams and became close friends with Nigel Boocock and Scotsman Ken McKinlay. Then the years with his Gold Star BSAs at the Harley scrambles and the many other venues.

His two sons raced motocross for many years in which Herb was kept really busy. Road racing was also another involvement in building the "Herb Watson

Special Triumph" fuel injected and a first ever possibly, front wheel disk brake, which on one of his several trips across the rough Nullarbor Plain for the annual Bathurst races with his long time mate and rider John Rova. They said many photos were taken of the new innovation. The same bike won a state title at Caversham in 1959. Herb enjoyed riding his Triumph outfit up until two years ago when his drivers license was revoked. *We will miss him one hell of a lot.* Ron Chave

LIFE MEMBERSHIP - RON MORRISON: Nomination was read from E. Serls seconded Dave Weeks for Ron Morrison sen. Em stated Ron had been one of the original Committee members when the Club was formed from the V.C.C., and had participated as a rider and competitor since. The President called for any speakers against, as there was none called for a show of hands to confirm the vote. Carried. Ron responded saying it was a pleasant surprise, was very honoured and thanked the members.

PROFILE - VICTOR ROY RICHARDSON:

Vic was born on August 26th, 1926 at 42 Portland Place, Stockwell, South Lambeth, London, fourth of five children. His parents Charlie & Victoria, moved round the country to wherever work was available. Times were pretty tough but 1936 saw the family settle in Egham, Surrey as Charlie had steady work in his trade as a mechanic, specialising in engine building and repair. The young Vic, now ten years old, suffered frequently from chest troubles, including bronchitis and pneumonia. War was declared in 1939 and this ended the already meagre (five half days weekly) education Vic received, so at fourteen years old he began work at Lagonda Motors as a shop boy in the toolroom. Eighteen months later, he progressed to the service department making flame throwers, and also joined the local Home Guard where he learned rifle and bayonet technique, as well as live training with senior members in such serious matters as his ammunition battle inoculation and night patrol duties.

The Richardsons did have one piece of good fortune during the war - a German incendiary bomb crashed through the roof of their home one night, but failed to explode! In March 1944 the Army became Vic's full time occupation, and he was sent to Scotland to receive basic training. However, the cold damp weather upset Vic's chest and double pneumonia laid him up for three months, convalescing in the

beautiful home of Sir George and Lady Stirling alongside wounded soldiers.

Vic recalls he now realised why Scotland was known as "the Land of the Brave" - the men ran around, wearing kilts, in the snow! Fit once more, and basic training completed, Vic was posted to the Royal Artillery Transport School where he became a fully trained motor cycle orderly (in plain English, a Dispatch Rider!). The Army provided a variety of bikes - B.S.A. M20, Norton 16H, Ariel 350, plus Royal Enfield and Matchless of the same capacity; all fairly mundane machines which Vic enjoyed riding hard nonetheless. His talent as a rider was noticed by Army officialdom, and Vic was posted to a Royal Artillery training unit to "train other poor souls to go over to the fighting", as Vic puts it. By 1947 he was a member of the prestigious display team in the 124 Field (Training) Regiment. He managed to fall off a tired BSA M20 during this time and broke his left wrist, which left Vic unable to ride a conventional British bike. No problem to the keen young Vic - he borrowed a Harley Davidson equipped with a foot clutch, and kept on riding. That experience was a bit of a milestone, more on this soon.

England, and the rest of the world breathed a huge sigh of relief when the war finally ended and Vic, along with thousands; was demobbed in 1947. With brother Eric he attended a November 5th Guy Fawkes bonfire that same year and the two brothers spied two delightful Land Army ladies there, Phyll and Amy. Fortunately these ladies also noticed Vic and Eric; Vic and Phyll married in June 1948. On his wedding day (!) Vic purchased his first Harley Davidson, in London. This machine was a W.L.C and cost £100. Several brothers and one brother-in-law soon followed suit all, buying Harleys, and Vic saw the need for organised runs and social outings to liven up the post war austerity, so he and brother Sam formed the Harley Davidson Rider's Club of Great Britain, the January 1949 inaugural meeting of which attracted over forty riders. The club has gone from strength to strength, Vic is still a much respected member with well deserved life membership. Phyll and Vic produced a daughter and five sons, all of whom rode motorcycles. Vic admired particularly Andy's ability to tame an early Honda Elsinore 250 with it's "light switch" throttle and peaky power; Steve was a pretty good scrambler too.

During this time Vic was still riding bikes. Long distance trials, starting on Friday night and finishing

on Sunday were popular and tough, with frequent icy conditions. Vic always finished, with his best result a second class award in the Derbyshire Trial. He also played motorball which was wonderful FUN!

Despite being sufficiently fit to remain in service, in the Territorial Army, (known here as Army Reserve) Vic's troublesome chest still gave him a hard time in the cold and wet. One of Vic's sisters, Rose had emigrated to Perth, W.A, and her glowing accounts of the weather and lifestyle persuaded the Richardson family to do the same. They arrived in Perth in 1960, complete with Vic's current Harley, in pieces, in a box.

Cloverdale became their new address and Vic was quickly employed by Alma Engineering as a fitter and turner despite having no formal qualifications in this trade. There he worked for fourteen good years, but one day, a foreman pushed very rudely past Vic and the man to whom he was talking. Vic didn't like the foreman, an arrogant fellow, so Vic packed his tools away, gathered his belongings, turned off his machine and walked out, never to return. He'd become friends with Kevin Kerr by now, and Kevin, on hearing of Vic's unemployed state, hired him on the spot and there he remained for fourteen years until arthritis forced retirement.

Friendship with Kevin Kerr resulted from mutual interest in motorcycles. Vic joined the Harley Club shortly after arriving here and rode a Francis Bamett in trials with the A.J.S. Club. The Harley Club was quite strong financially and in membership but had no ground to ride on; the BSA Club had ground but no money. Vic was much involved in the very logical merger of these two clubs. The Harley Club locally awarded him life membership. In 1951, Vic lifted an item which was far too heavy for one man, no matter how strong, and crushed a disc in his back. Doctors told him for sure he's never ride again but a few years later Vic had a variety of very lively scramblers (400 MX Yamaha, 390 Husqvarna, 440 Maico) which he campaigned; he and John Boyd had many memorable contests.

At sixty-seven years old (young?) he rode in an "Adventure Rally" Enduro - this was a day long event. He broke a collarbone in a similar event known as Wood's Weekend, near Brookton and had to ride five rough and very painful miles back to the start in this condition. Another year, he won the same event. The

family moved to a new house in Maddington in 1986. They'd bought nearly an acre of ground with orange trees covering most of it, but the cost of water and chemicals, and the time required to apply same became too big a burden so the trees went and a house built. Vic and Phyll still live there. In 1999 Vic travelled to the U.K. with one very special goal - he rode in the four rallies that comprised the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the club he'd founded all those years ago - the Harley Davidson Rider's Club of Great Britain.

Vic joined the V.M.C.C. in January 1987 and was a regular rider on his Harley Davidson and sidecar, scoring a notable last place in the annual economy run to Gin Gin with a figure of around 20 M.P.G.! He was the Club's Points Recording Officer using a formula devised by Barry Makin during that system's first year and also gave many valuable hours to the Club Library, initially as assistant to John Boyd, and upon John's sad passing, Vic took over the role of librarian. Health problems have curtailed Vic's riding of late though he attends most meetings and social events. He has a very positive and strong attitude to ill health which goes a long way to keeping him going and happy.

PROFILE: JAMES MORRIS FORSTER by Adrian White
Kellerberrin gained one more (small!) citizen when, on October 13th, 1918, Sydney and Frances Forster announced the arrival of their second child, to be christened James Morris. Two more boys were to be born to this pioneering family, on the farm, and today these four children are all aged 80 plus, quite an unusual achievement.

In 1918, times were tough. Children at a very early age were expected to do a share of the work around the farm and education in any formal sense was often a low priority. Jim's education, in his words, was "woeful." Glen Luce School was nine miles south of Kellerberrin and Jim didn't begin there until he was ten years old. One lad at school was the proud owner of a pushbike. He and Jim were pretty good mates and this amiable boy was happy to share the bike with Jim to and from school. Eventually he offered the bike to Jim for £3, and after a family expedition to "check out how good this bike is," the £3 changed hands and Jim was mobile! There was a down side though. With typical parents' logic it was decided that, as Jim could get to school so much more quickly, he had time to daily chop a barrow load of wood before school.

And then, adding insult to injury, the bike seller turned up at school on a very old, single speed belt drive Triumph motorcycle. It went well, and the lad purchased it locally - for £3! Naturally Jim had a ride on the Triumph and loved it. A horse driver on the family farm had a Douglas which Jim observed parked, with the owner way out on the farm. This was an open invitation to a budding motorcyclist, so, with mother in town shopping, Jim did a lot of miles up and down farm tracks, brushing out the immediate tyre tracks with a leafy bough. A much faster Norton replaced the Douglas - Jim enjoyed that too!

By now, the country was sliding rapidly into the gloom of depression, money was almost non-existent and out of necessity, Jim was told, at fourteen years old, to take two weeks from school and help with the shearing. The two weeks shearing completed, Jim never did return to school but instead became a full-time farm worker, driving a seven horse team among the other myriad tasks involved in farming. Sydney suffered a very nasty cut to his leg during this time, it became septic and to save the leg had to spend quite some time in hospital. Meantime, the crop was fit and had to be harvested or lost, so fifteen year old James took the crop off with a cranky old harvester drawn by five horses. His natural mechanical aptitude enabled Jim to keep the machine operating, but when father returned from hospital Jim told him he'd only take off next year's crop with a new harvester. This machine, a Sunshine, was duly delivered and next season saw five hundred acres harvested in fine fashion.

Running teams of horses was time and energy consuming. The farm was three miles long so working near the extremities meant camping out rather than waste time travelling. Tractors became quite common and after plenty of urging from Jim the Forster farm purchased a rather run down, non-going Twin City which Jim then had to strip down and repair. This he successfully did and their £35 tractor served well enough.

By 1937 the original farmhouse was beyond economic repair so the decision to build was made for the family, but if you're the Forster family you don't just find a builder. You make your own cement bricks, all six thousand of them, any time you have a spare moment, and then find a bricklayer, a carpenter, a plumber, several shovels (worn out making cement for bricks), your sons as labourers and £600. House built!

By now it became obvious that war was inevitable so Jim joined the C.M.F., his unit the 25th Light Horse Machine Gun Regiment.

Jim had been driving the family model T Ford since aged eleven, but as soon as he reached the minimum licence age of seventeen, Sydney insisted he go and apply for a driver's licence. Jim drove into town, parked the car around the block and walked into the Police Station. "Can you drive?" barked the sergeant "A bit" said James. "Of course you can boy, I've seen you heaps of times, where have you hidden the car this time?" Licence obtained!

The motorcycle bug had bitten though, and Jim managed to persuade father it was time he had a bike. An expedition to Perth produced a B.S.A. 2 % with saddle tank and total loss oiling. It was time for a holiday so Jim asked for £10 holiday pay, got £6 and set off on the trusty B.S.A. for a fortnight's tour of the South West, going as far down as Albany and having a wonderful time. Shortly after returning to work he traded the B.S.A. on a Calthorpe sloper 500 but the £30 price tag on the new bike meant his farm income needed to be topped up. He'd learned to shear sheep as part of farming and so put this skill to profitable use earning £1.5.00 per 100 sheep. At eighty sheep per day this was very hard work, but very good money and the Calthorpe was soon paid for. That bike was then traded on the only new motorcycle he's ever owned - a VB Ariel 600, a beautiful machine costing £99-10/-.

Sadly, his pleasure was to be short-lived. The War Department resumed his pride and joy, gave him £60 and he never saw his beautiful bike again. Many such machines, particularly those models the Army didn't use, were broken up to render them useless to an invading army. Before losing his Ariel, he and around eight other local lads often met in the town on a Sunday and together went for a ride after the style of a club though there was nothing formally arranged. These young men also noticed a distinct lack of enthusiasm from mothers of young women once a motorcycle appeared, and several potential romances never got off the ground as a result of this prejudice. There was little opportunity for competitive riding in Kellerberrin and anyhow Jim was too sympathetic with things mechanical to enjoy "wringing a bike's neck".

Jim used his bike on the farm as transport and during sheep moving. Father was somewhat apprehensive

about the latter, believing the sheep would be unduly frightened by this noisy machine but soon saw the virtue of a two wheeled horse and eventually bought a James. His favourite sheep dog proved a very willing passenger on the tank and the bike was pleasingly economical. The Forsters were then first in the district to use motorcycles in this fashion, today the norm. Jim's mechanical knowledge had him repairing bikes for others not so gifted.

One notable character in Kellerberrin was the local power line maintenance man who used a BSA Sloper solo as his transport on the job. Remarkably, he carried an eighteen foot ladder on one shoulder whilst riding; the ladder moved around a bit but he was never known to have fallen off the B.S.A.!

Aged nineteen, Jim enlisted in the Army; surprisingly they didn't make a cook out of him but recognised his mechanical talents and soon he was a Lance Corporal in a Transport Regiment who's brief was to fix and maintain a fleet of vehicles and to teach everyone in the regiment how to drive the various vehicles. This lasted two years, then Jim transferred to the Air Force as a founder member of 77 Squadron, to become an airframe fitter, a job much suited to his abilities. He worked on an enviable array of aircraft, including Tiger Moth, Anson, Kittyhawks, Swordfish, Battle, Vengeance and worked assembling the first MK VIII Spitfire in Australian service. 77 Squadron still exists.

Posting to 86 Squadron took Jim to the war, to Dutch New Guinea, servicing Kittyhawks. The Japanese were making a determined effort to reach Moresby, they'd been stopped at Milne Bay, and on the Kokoda Trail after bitter fighting and were intent on a very sneaky move down the West Coast where they brutally took over native villages and installed their own garrisons. This move was spotted so the Americans built an airstrip on a swamp in a strategically suited place and General McArthur himself requested 86 Squadron be posted there to deal with the menace. This task was accomplished - the Kittyhawk carried a 120-gallon belly tank and the most effective technique was for the lead aircraft to drop its full tank on the Jap garrison, the following aircraft would then strafe with incendiary bullets and thus wipe out the target. But it was twelve very hard months living on a swamp in a tropical area with all the vermin and disease you'd expect was bad enough, without the Japanese frequently bombing and strafing the camp.

Eventually, sanity, and peace, prevailed. By then Jim was working with a squadron of Dakotas ("Goony Birds") and these wonderful aircraft were fully employed ferrying medical supplies and food to New Guinea and Japanese occupied islands up as far as Singapore, and returning with about twenty-four sick, beaten and emaciated ex prisoners-of-war each trip. Seeing the results, first hand, of Japanese inhumanity to other human beings profoundly affected Jim, and this sad procession of battered and broken men haunted him for a very long time.

While Australia went wild celebrating peace, the hard working Dakota squadron were totally absorbed with their given task and so completely missed out on the euphoria. When, finally, Jim was discharged four months later the country had settled down to a normal, but very spartan way of life.

Sydney Forster died during the war, leaving Jim with a one third share of the farm. However, despite the best efforts of his mother and brothers, it was no longer the farm he'd left to go to war. Reluctantly, Jim abandoned his hopes of studying diesel engineering (he'd done some study by correspondence) and returned to the farm. The challenge to revive the run-down business was absorbing and Jim settled down. During 1950 he fell in the shearing shed, seriously damaging his elbow which required a spell in Kellerberrin Hospital. There was a very silver lining to this cloud though - Jim was cared for by a delightful young nurse named Chloe, who became Mrs Forster, farmer's wife, that same year. They produced a son and a daughter with the latter giving Jim and Chloe seven grandchildren.

It was decided to sell the now very viable farm in 1974 and from the proceeds Jim and Chloe bought the house he currently lives in at Safety Bay. Jim had ridden motorcycles as farm transport throughout his life but now he was able to truly indulge his passion and restore some old bikes, with one priority to build an Ariel VB identical to that he lost years ago.

One 10/12 Harley he restored has an interesting, if sad, history. The original owner and his fiancée were both killed when they came off second best in an altercation with a car. The distraught family threw the severely damaged bike in a shed where it lay for years. A neighbouring farmer eventually acquired the wreck and "straightened it out" with the back of an axe and a blowtorch for use on the farm. One day in the paddock the Harley sank up to its belly and there

it stayed for twelve months. Jim's opportunity to buy the machine came when its owner was holidaying overseas and needed money. It's been a good bike to Jim after a very major restoration, and a WLA and sidecar he also restored took him across Australia on the Overlanders Rally. He's built his Ariel VB too, totally authentic and a handsome machine it is.

Jim became a VMCC member in 1979. Chloe became an enthusiastic sidecar passenger and together they were very much involved with the club. Sadly, Chloe succumbed to illness almost two years ago, leaving a void in Jim's life.

Townsville, North Queensland staged a huge celebration during August to commemorate the Japanese surrender, sixty years ago. Jim attended and he and his peers were feted as "Living Heroes". The event lasted several days, a wonderful and appropriate reward for Jim and his mates who'd been too busy sixty years ago to do more than say "Thank God it's over". A particularly nice colour photo of Jim appeared in the Townsville Bulletin.

The final words are Jim's — "The club people have been wonderful friends, through good times and bad and I'm privileged to have made friends among such quality people".

"I've always believed you mustn't fight nature. Work with nature, things will go well; try and fight it and you're in deep trouble before you know it".

A Couple of anecdotes from one of my spies

Riding home in the early hours of the morning, Jim's bike suddenly died. The cause was quickly established - the nut securing the float bowl of the Amal carburettor had fallen off, along with the float bowl and frantic searching in the dark failed to find either component.

The local service station nearby left the air hose out in those days so our stranded hero "borrowed" a few inches of hose, attached one end to the tank outlet and the free end pushed on to the jet now exposed on the bottom of the carburettor. Judicious juggling of throttle and fuel tap got him home, albeit a trifle erratically!

Farmers, post-war bought General Grant tanks as Army surplus, and used them for scrub and bush clearing. Jim purchased a tank - twenty-seven tons all up, powered by a 450 horse power radial aircraft engine running on petrol - for £50 and went

contracting. In very entrepreneurial spirit Jim bought up all the spare tracks available. This turned out to be quite a "nice little earner".

2006: Desalination plant opened South of Perth

THE VERY SHARP END: March Chatter and the Editor, Peter Bennett, had a few home truths to say... "Welcome to the world of quandaries! Feedback via the committee indicates that some members feel the Chatter could be "more interesting", ie more articles. On t'other hand, feed back makes it blindingly obvious that some members never read the first page or possibly never open the magazine at all! SO I do not intend to turn the mag into a version of Mothers Day etc, putting in articles for the sake of it, which using my judgement do not warrant inclusion for various reasons. If I have the requisite odd number of pages nicely filled, putting one more item in means filling two more pages to be an odd number again, which just isn't on considering the dearth of good material. So over to you, to supply material." (Ed. Some things never change!)

WEBSITE: Matter of great note in March 2006 as well, Murray Barnard assumed responsibility as webmaster as the Club website was in the doldrums. 1st thing done was to update the site and transfer it to a new hosting site which saved the Club over \$600/year.

PROFILE -JIM CLARK: Adrian White published a profile on Jim Clark in April which is published in full in "Rally Rousers", the sister publication on the Club's Life Members. The introduction follows:

"Jim Clark. Such a gentleman! We agreed we'd meet and put together a "Profile; some little time passed before we were able to do this and meantime Jim had written his own story. Try as I might, it's very hard to take any credit for this, though I did find the odd spelling error! Typist Sheryl did more.

Thank you all. 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. Jim and Carol are very active club members, long may they continue so!

FUN WITH THINNERS: I guess at some stage all members of the club have mucked about with thinners during the spray painting of their bikes? Well



I'm going to tell you about how dangerous thinners can be for the unwary. I had been a spray painter in England and had my own panel and paint shop in Australia for over thirty years. So I'm going to relate a couple of instances I've had in that time.

Thinners in itself seems to be, though very inflammable, reasonably safe to work with. I know this owing to the fact that in England and in Australia I've seen countless guys lighting up and smoking at the paint bench during mixing of the same. It's never stopped amazing me, that no bastard ever blew himself up?? But they didn't! Even on the hottest of

days! The fumes are a different story. My wife Joan and I rented a converted flat in the old Swanbourne cinema. The kitchen was at the bottom of the stairs to the God's, and where the toilets had been on the landing, a bathroom was fashioned. The water heater was a cast iron contraption 2.5 ft high, which I hasten to add worked bloody marvellously. All you had to do was put kindling on paper at the bottom inside, place a cone funnel about 1.5ft long inside for a really good draughting effect; place the lid on top, and voila, in fifteen minutes hot water.

ONE day after work I tried to light the fire. It was winter and had been raining for most of the day. The kindling wouldn't catch hold. Knowing some what of the danger of thinners and not having any kero, I thought a little on the wood might help the fire along. I poured just an egg cup full on the timber, stood back a pace, I wasn't that silly!!!. I threw in a lighted match and waited. But not for long "BOOM" went the thinners. Out came the draft cowl at a rate of knots heading for the moon. Luckily it only went as far as the ceiling, this was followed by a red, white and blue flame which rolled up my body and burnt off all my facial hair. Eye brows, eye lashes and the front of my head hair. Lovely smell it had ! During this time the whole of the heater had left the ground but only a few inches. This caused the chimney to totally collapse in pieces and in turn covered the bath room and me in soot. Looking like one of the black and white minstrels I went out on the landing in answer to Joan's call. She had heard the sonic boom! I couldn't talk for laughing. Knowing I was basically fine, Joan too started to laugh with me. One of the funniest, though silliest parts of our lovely marriage. In the next mag I'll tell you about showing an apprentice the power of the thinners. *Den Rogers*

THANKS: I would like express my thanks and extreme gratitude to the members of the V.M.C.C.W.A. Albany section. As a member in Perth, I have for the past three years, travelled to Albany to join in the V.C.C. Easter Rally, this year I was almost unable to start because the bike I had intended to ride wouldn't run, I had taken both my bikes down with me and stored one of them at Colin Butlers place, (secretary of the V.M.C.C.W.A. Albany section) with help from the backup vehicle I was able to retrieve the second bike and join in the rally at the morning tea point. I was able to follow other vehicles for most of the run but found myself following someone who was also

lost, so I headed straight for the next rendezvous point, without following the route sheet and met up with the rest of contestants, one of which was my boss from work, neither of us knew the other was attending the rally. From there I was able to follow the route sheet and finish the rally in the correct manner, where we had lunch and chatted about the rally.

Two weeks latter I received a parcel in the post from Albany, after missing the first section of the rally and then being lost, I had some how run in third place for motor cycles and received a trophy, running third in a field of four I had won the hard luck award, but the most important win was the friendship, respect and comradery of the club members of the Albany section, to them I can't express my thanks enough. THANKS FELLOWS.

PS. When I returned to Perth I took the flywheel off the stricken bike, suspecting a broken wire in the stator, it was soaking wet from being out in the rain the night before the rally, I wiped the water away with a cloth, stood the bike in the sun for an hour and gave it a quick spray with CRC, it started first kick. ROY BARTHOLOMEW

PROFILE: GARY TENARDI: Leno Tenardi, father of Gary, left his birthplace of Lucca, North Italy in 1950. The plan was simple – encouraged by Gary's uncle Charlie, who had already made the move to Western Australia, Leno intended to work hard, make good money for a year or two and then return to Italy and marry his fiancée. Bunnings Timber in Manjimup were experiencing boom times and to fill their manpower needs, were offering passage to Western Australia to those prepared to work in the timber mill. The money was good, far exceeding that which Leno could earn in Italy even after allowing for the fact his original passage cost had to be repaid.

The money was good, so was the climate and the lifestyle and when Leno met a charming Welsh lady, Elizabeth, Italy came a very distant second as a place in which to live. The couple married in 1955 and moved to Bunbury. Gary was born there, their second son, in 1957, to be followed later by the couple's third and final child, a girl.

Gary's grandparents had arrived in W.A. at the same time as Charlie and had a farm in Manjimup. In 1959 they decided to retire so Gary's family became

farmers. Gary grew up on the farm and like all farm kids, was expected to help around the place. One of his tasks was to steer the tractor (at walking pace) whilst Leno, on the trailer, would dish out feed to the cattle. Unfortunately for Leno, his use of the throttle had been noticed and understood by his son who yanked it full open on one occasion, tipping a surprised and angry Leno off the trailer and causing him a frantic chase – the tractor was heading for a well! Fortunately, even on full noise, a tractor doesn't go very fast in low gear and father and son were soon discussing the merits of leaving the throttle alone. Gary also managed to hit a tree with the same machine. His steering has improved since then.

School began at St Joseph's School in Manjimup where the young Gary got an early taste of discipline – he broke cricket stumps fooling round whilst in Grade 1 and received a severe strapping from a nun for his efforts. He and a mate obtained some gunpowder and, "for a laugh" set some off in the priest's garage. Much noise, much smoke and much trouble! More trouble came when Gary and a mate climbed into the ceiling of the school for a quiet smoke and inevitably got caught. Despite the mischief, Gary was an average student and liked school well enough. He enjoyed playing Aussie Rules football with the Manjimup Imperials, and during the school holidays had various paid jobs with stints digging potatoes and working in the local timber mill. It's hard now to imagine a thirteen year old being allowed to do this but at the time – 1970 – it was accepted. During that time he had a very short spell as a brickie's labourer. The brickie assumed this big strong lad had a bit of experience in the trade – maybe Gary had even indicated this in his job interview. The brickie didn't speak too clearly and told Gary to get more mortar, which Gary heard as "more water" and promptly filled a bucket and presented it to the boss. "I said more mortar, more mortar, are you deaf or something?!" and the bucket of water was emptied all over the somewhat nonplussed Gary!

Gary and good friend Terry Cutts volunteered to become altar boys at their church which must have pleased their parents and the church. However, our cunning young men had noticed that altar boys were annually taken on camp to Windy Harbour for a week, so there was a suspicion that their sudden piety had more to do with the latter than any sudden religious fervour. Drinking a bottle of pilfered altar wine

between them further eroded any illusions anyone had about our religious duo, and resulted in them both being "grounded" for two weeks.

About this time, Leno, who had a few motor cycles – a C11, Matchless 500, Indian Chief, and his favourite, a Triumph Thunderbird – took Gary for his first pillion ride, with strict instructions "not to tell Mother". The farm had farm bikes and Gary rode and enjoyed these on the property from age thirteen. Farm life finished when the family were unable to meet the terms requested by Gary's grandparents who still owned the farm, so the family bought a house in Manjimup with Leno finding work as a driver for Cutts Transport, often taking Gary along for the ride. Gary soon moved to Maida Vale, and in third year high school there Gary attained his Achievement Certificate. Gary was very handy with things mechanical and would have liked work in this field, however, in 1973 jobs weren't too plentiful so when a job offered at Whittaker's timber mill, Gary took the offer. This paid the bills for a time, and then came a welcome change to more interesting work as a surveyor's assistant with Kalamunda Shire. And then finally, four years later came the mechanic's apprenticeship Gary really wanted, still with Kalamunda Shire. He served his time there, and very interesting it was with the many and varied machines that authority operated. He's there still, now workshop supervisor with several staff.

Gary went one evening to a dance at Pickering Brook and there met Jill Annetts, Carmel orchardist's daughter and clerical worker at H.B.F. They got on famously and married in 1984. They have two children, Aaron aged 17 and Catherine 14. Jill obtained her 250cc licence early in their marriage but the arrival of children put motor cycles on the back burner, for Gary too, though he did use Jill's Honda 250 as cheap work transport. Once bitten by the bike bug though, it's likely to be long lasting and so it was with Gary, as an Ariel VB 600 became available – it wasn't complete but Gary restored it, learning to panel beat and paint in the process, at night tech. He'd already restored a 1938 Ford V8 utility which he bought fairly complete and running (just!) and it's a good restoration, authentic and original looking. Then came a 1937 Ford V8 coupe which the Tenardis drove until the arrival of their first child – coupes are not too practical with kids so this nice old car was replaced by a scruffy Holden HQ with four doors. Ray Selley encouraged Gary to become involved with vintage bikes, the VB Ariel having been sold, (locally,

and it's still around) so a 1929 Ariel in pretty sad condition became Gary's next project. It's a credit to Gary, he even made the mufflers from scratch and did everything including panel and paint, himself. He joined our club in 1976 but wasn't very active, still children's activities took time but at one meeting he attended, John Rock suggested to members that if they had any old basket cases around they could assembled and used in the annual gymkhana. Gary had a 1930 Ariel ideal for the purpose, built it up and won several gymkhanas he entered. And then when Northam hill climb became a fixture the trusty Ariel was given a very successful series of performance modifications; it's now a fast, reliable bike with a beautiful exhaust note, and features in many club events.



Ken Vincent & Gary Tenardi

Gary enjoys a challenge and a 1935 Ariel Square Four 600cc o.h.c certainly provided one done. It's fortunate this machine found a home with a mechanic of Gary's ability and talent, it's complex and provided plenty of problems but now it runs very nicely, a bit loud on straight pipes and quite quiet mechanically. A lesser restorer could well have given up and pushed it aside and a very interesting machine could have become just one more basket case. It will be nice when finished.

There's plenty of restoration work in the shed; there's the Square Four to finish and also the Indian Gary purchased at the Club auction but he also has a yearning for a V8 Torana so hands up anyone who has one lying around! And if there's no V8 Toranas left, a Ducati Desmo has heaps of appeal.

One very enjoyable facet of the annual Albany Hill Climb is the camp on Frenchman Bay Road where many enjoy quite basic facilities and great socialising. One Friday evening Colin Tie (who else?) and several of the usual suspects drove into Albany for a Chinese meal, a drink or three and a lofty intellectual

discussion. Returning to the camp in relaxed and even playful mood Mr Tie suggested that as the sleeping occupants of the large dormitory were probably dreaming about motor bikes anyhow, their dreams could be much enhanced by suitable sound effects. This was deemed by all to be a Very Good Idea, so the trusty Goldie was backed into the doorway and fired up. Always raucous, it sounded doubly so, shattering the peace of a still country night.

Fast forward, one year and one day. Same venue. The Saturday Rally is finished, the barbeque lit and Mr Tie has numerous cans of ale inside him, enough, apparently for him to be very tired and decide to go to bed early. Hours later, there's a good party happening around the fire when someone, possibly a victim, remembers last year's noisy awakening. A committee is formed and a Very Good Idea produced. Gary Tenardi's Ariel has a beautiful (and loud) exhaust note rivaling Gold Stars and Velocettes for purity of sound. A quick survey determines behind which bit of wooden wall will be Mr Tie's head and the Ariel is bump started and backed, idling, into place and then given great fistfuls of revs, beautiful sound! Letting the engine return to idle, Gary asks "Is that enough?" "No, give him some more" the predictable response, more noise! Mr Tie exhibited considerable *savoir faire* in the morning, thanking all concerned for what he termed "music to my ears. *Adrian White*

FUN WITH THINNERS 2: My Vehicle paint repair shop was in Jersey St Jolimont along with other little small businesses. Behind the workshops was a laneway for cars etc. On the other side of the lane way was a large yard full of new Rover cars waiting to be cleaned and sold for the company of 'Fauls of Subi.' Now it came to pass one day that I caught my apprentice smoking at the paint bench. Knowing the extreme danger of this I proceeded to bollock him, and suggested I give him a demonstration of this danger. Now in the small yard by our back door we kept a 44 gallon empty drum for the purpose of burning the old and used news paper which in those long forgotten days, was used for masking the cars prior to painting. With this drum at the time being full to the brim, I thought the perfect place to give the demonstration. After removing half the news paper from the drum I place an egg cup of thinner on the other then replace the paper. The apprentice and I now hid behind the toilet wall where I proceeded to throw in alighted match. Well, the paper started to flare up, mainly due to the paint already on it. Other than that nothing happened. We emerged from behind the wall and



the apprentice said, "Well I'm very disappointed " So was I !! Then 'BOOM' The 44 gallon drum lifted into the air about a metre and at the same time fired the newspaper like a cannon shot high into the sky, and I mean high. 20 meters no less. Guess where the burning paper started to land ?? It was fluttering down well in flame all over the brand new Rovers. For the next few moments the young lad and I were running around like scalded cats pulling off the burning danger and stamping out the flames. Once we had accomplished this act, and breathing ever so hard, we turned to go back to the shop still shaking some what to be faced by a mob from out of the other workshops. All were asking what the hell was happening as they thought a bomb had gone off. I was quick; as I said "I haven't a clue," and that someone must have put something in the drum over night. The Rover people clapped us and thanked us for our quick reaction. "Not a problem" said I, hoping they didn't notice my trembling hands!! *Den Rogers*

VICTOR RULE: Vic passed away peacefully on 23rd May 2006 at Sherwin Lodge in Rossmoyne. Vic was one of the founding members of the Club. His interest was in Triumph and AJS motorcycles. He lived in the Rockingham area throughout his long association with the Club. He was one of a group of members from the Rockingham area. This group included Jim Wallace, Peter Groucott and Alex Shelley. They took an active part in the Club during its early years. Vic's health deteriorated rapidly in the last few years, and he was unable to continue his membership of the Club, or with his interest in motorcycling.

LIFE MEMBERS: At the 2006 AGM Two Life Members were installed ; Keith Perry and Brian Lawrence. Both these members have given outstanding service to the VMCC and I congratulate them for their past efforts, and feel sure they will continue to build on the recognition they have been given by this award.

Brian Lawrence, the nomination was made for the past 12 years service Brian and his wife Jean had given to the Club in organising and preparing refreshments for the members at meetings, and other major events. Also each year they host a luncheon at their home after the annual two stroke run. They provide all the refreshments & food, not to mention the work involved. All the proceeds are donated to Cancer Research on behalf of the Club. This event has raised considerable funds over the years.

Keith Perry, the nomination was made for the past 9 years service to the Club during tenure of office he has been President and Committee member contributing greatly to further enhancing the success of the Club.

A THOUGHT FROM A CLUB ELDER: No longer an attender of meetings I read my monthly mag very thoroughly, and reading the Sept. issue, I am impressed with the forward thinking and energy shown by our management committee. In particular the new rules for Club bikes concessionally licensed are crystal clear and generous in the manner of permitted use. Our Pres's report is informative and reassuring, and through good housekeeping our club is in a strong financial position. Some feel the club is not the same but it cannot be, as, with the large membership we have, and the rules and regs imposed by the authorities we have to be organised. We are well geared to stand erect for years ahead, and all that is due to the willing workers past and present that make it so. I am proud to be a member of the VMCC! **PETER STOCKER**

,MORE STORIES OF THE LAWSON "LEGEND" by Adrian White

Charlie, as a young man, spent a fair bit of time in Albany. Local legend said if you wanted to catch a shark, it was easy, as they were plentiful down the ramp by the Whaling station. All you'd need was a length of chain, a big hook, bait and an inner tube, all to be anchored to terra firma by a vehicle with a towbar. Charlie's cohort in this venture had access to his father's new Ford F100, a very treasured piece of gear, so that was the vehicle source. The rest, including a quarter of a very dead cattle beast from a farm, was easy, so off went our heroes to catch the world's biggest shark. Bait the enormous hook, attach the chain and float it out with the tube. All went to plan, including the large and increasingly angry creature caught. Only one problem, the creature – unidentified to this day – was so big and unhappy it started to drag the prized F100 down the ramp. Some frantic spanner work on the 'D' shackles released the whole issue, the F100 stayed dry and the inner tube etc was last seen heading out to sea.

Charlie and a mate were collecting firewood and loading it into a large van. Charlie discovered a tiger snake in some wood he was picking up, and promptly despatched said snake to reptile heaven with a few blows. Being a man of humour, and with his mate out of sight, he thought of a harmless little joke, and

arranged the snake in the van on top of the wood already collected. Then, probably giggling already, he selected a vantage point from where he could observe his mate's reaction. The mate, though, was very cool, and dumped a couple of arm loads of wood into the van without incident, so Charlie reckoned he'd better rearrange the snake in a more fearsome pose. But, back at the van, where was that bloody snake!? Very tricky. One alive and seriously unhappy snake in a van full of firewood, makes a needle in a haystack look easy! And from that point on our informant is not sure what happened!

2007: Mandurah rail line opens

BACKUP: At the January meeting Keith Perry advised members that those who were concerned about the reason for the \$2.00 back up trailer charge, need to understand that when a bike broke down, the bike and the owner were returned to their home with out additional cost, and this happened frequently. Today's fuel costs are pretty high and the \$2.00 doesn't always cover it. Further, it is the responsibility of the rider of a broken down bike to tie it to the trailer.

Eric Gibbons reported problems using standard unleaded fuel in high compression motors and difficulties in the use of the tie downs on the trailer. John Laurance the trailer custodian, apologised for the missing instruction sheet on the use of the tie downs, however was confident that the tie downs were very good if used appropriately. Suggested a demonstration be arranged at a club meeting. John also advised the need of five days notice to enable him to retrieve the trailer from storage, take it home and kit it up for use.

GEORGE KEVIN KERR: by *Adrian White*

Known all his life as Kevin as the extended family contained four more "Georges", quite confusing. Kevin was born on 9th March 1937, in Perth, the third of four children born to Eileen and Harry Kerr. The family managed a dairy farm in Belmont, which in those days was quite rural, with dairy farms, piggeries and racing stables. The farm chaff cutter was powered by a cut-up Harley-Davidson J model which was attached to the shed wall. Harley restorers, eat your heart out! Until age fourteen, Kevin was "horse mad". His words. He'd do any task around so long as the reward was to ride a horse, and in this pursuit, he herded 125 cows from the Kewdale area to Belmont each weekend. Aged ten, he was enjoying

swimming at Springs, a local riverside venue. Obviously a quite fearless kid, he perched on an adult's shoulders whilst the adult dived into the river, the sandy bottom of which was closer than anticipated. A very sore and suffering Kevin retired home to bed, more on this later. The dairy cattle were fed periodically on very nutritious used hops obtained from the Swan Brewery on Mounts Bay Road, and Kevin has very funny memories of one batch of hops that were more wet with beer than usual, and weren't quite so innocuous as expected. Result – a herd of drunk cows all competing for the available fence posts to lean on to remain upright!



Kevin enjoyed school and the mandatory sports of football and swimming; he attended Belmont-Rivervale, then Subiaco Senior State School and finally Forrest High. The slog on a push bike from Rivervale to Subiaco and home again didn't impress him too much though! School buses had yet to be invented. Aged 14, school finished and Kevin was pleased to become an apprentice fitter and turner with Alma Engineering. Aged 16 saw the next milestone – the purchase of a B.S.A. Bantam in boxes; stripped to the last nut and bolt. This Kevin built up over a full winter to road race specifications, learning as he went, largely from books. The result bore witness to his emerging talents – the bike went like a rocket and surprised quite a few down at the salt flats in Mandurah, then an unofficial track. The original Belmont race course, which was situated on the opposite side of the river from it's current

location was close to home but the constabulary chased the ace turner off with a few harsh words. So unfair!

National Service called when Kevin was eighteen, and he was very fortunate to be one of only two selected to go to Sydney with the Air Force as an acting air frame fitter, a very good choice by the military. He also played in the bugle band having inherited musical ability from his family. Eileen was a concert pianist and Harry played cornet. His time in the R.A.A.F. was "some of the best 154 days he ever had".

Returning home Kevin resumed work in the same engineering shop. On his arrival in Australia Vic Richardson, who had a Harley-Davidson, worked at Alma Engineering. Friendship grew, as did Kevin's desire for a motor cycle, so when the pair were told of a W.L.A. looking for a good home, a deal was done.

Canterbury Court was a popular dance venue. Attending one night in the spring of 1957 Kevin met a very appealing young lady, Barbara Anthony. During the evening Barbara agreed that Kevin should take her home but an obstacle arose; the mate Kevin had gone to the dance with had met a girl who would only allow herself to be taken home if her friend went along also, so Kevin had already been elected her partner. Loyalty to his mate saw Kevin most reluctantly tell Barbara he was forced to go to plan B, but the lady had made a very nice impression, and a bit of detective work saw Kevin arrive on her doorstep a day or so later. So pleased was Barbara that whilst talking to Kevin she put away dishes which hadn't been washed! Barbara was a senior Girl Guide, a Ranger, and went to Melbourne for the National Jamboree. Kevin and a mate had driven to Melbourne independently; Kevin and Barbara spent an enjoyable time together there. Barbara's parents wouldn't allow their daughter to marry until she turned twenty one, and also insisted she and future husband Kevin have a house before tying the knot. Both requirements met and they became Mr & Mrs Kerr in September 1961.

Kevin's enthusiasm for bikes grew. The W.L.A. sold, three of the same model, but "bush hacks", filled his shed. He joined The Harley Club, which was well organised. Kevin joined as a capable motorcyclist but soon realised during inter-club events that really talented riders – Charlie Lawson gets a mention here – made him (and others like him) feel somewhat inadequate. The clubs recognised this lack of

experience in newer members, and set up a course where good riders could pass on some of their knowledge, a great scheme. Ultimately, Kevin was appointed Club Captain. He rode a W.L.A. in club runs before progressing to scrambles, initially on a Yamaha Twin. Next came a James 197cc with a Ray Tillbrook 250cc head and barrel which ran on alcohol. Trying very hard at the Rockingham scrambles, Kevin managed to get all crossed up over a jump and landed on Peter Groucott's handlebars. Peter had a damaged foot at the time and said "If you've bugged my foot, I'll kill you!". A major prang in Northam Motocross broke Kevin's left leg seriously enough to require five and a half months in plaster, and ended his career as a competitive rider, also providing he and Barbara with the unpleasant taste of financial hardship.

Their children, Scott and Alison joined the world in 1963 and 1965 respectively, and Scott eventually became a quite respected rider both in sidecars and solo motocross. He'd retired from competitive riding, but Kevin's talents weren't lost though; he then turned his attention to helping other riders, and numerous top class competitors owe at least part of their success to this help. The list includes Colin Metcher, 500 Matchless, in Speedway stock bikes, Dud McKean 500 Jawa solo, Tom McQuade and the Joyce brothers in sidecars, Wayne Cover's speedcar, the sprint car of Bob Kinnear, and for Bruce Davis, who was a very able road race sidecar pilot, Kevin built a revolutionary outfit with hub centre steering. This major project, most unfortunately, was destroyed in a massive crash and never reached it's obvious potential. B.M.X. and Sidecar B.M.X. became very popular and Kevin and Barbara's son Scott showed promise, which was realised on a Kerr-built machine, which combination produced two Australian and five West Australian championships. This in turn produced demand for replicas of the light and strong winning machine, which Kevin duly built and sent all over Australia.

Short circuit racing, using mostly modified road bikes was run at the Forrestfield Hot Rod Track to fill the time between Hot Rod events but when the bikes were there the spectators turned up in droves. Ray Long was a very able rider so Kevin designed and built a race bike around a 500 Gold Star engine. The critics had a field day – tube diameter too small, too light, won't last and so on. First day out at Mandurah short circuit and Ray was T-boned by Stan Read so back on the trailer it went. But, in 1969 Kevin's design skill was vindicated. Against all the Hagon and Elstar

mounted hotshots from the East Coast, Ray Long won both the 350 and 500 National Title and Bob O'Leary won the Unlimited, on Kerr machines, along the way setting both fastest laps and race times. The bike collected five Australian titles that year. Forrestfield became an early victim of urban sprawl and was closed due to noise and dust complaints. The Slow Learning Children's group promoted that venue and were major losers in the closure.

Multiple World Speedway champion Ove Fundin put in some hot laps on a Kerr at Claremont, and despite not being used to having gears and brakes put in some very fast times, afterwards heaping praise on the bike. Suddenly everyone wanted a Kerr. Kevin's shed became a nightly hive of action as he and a crew of helpers built ten bikes in the year. Barbara gave wonderful support but the hours became too much, with orders arriving regularly from the East Coast, as well as local demand. Time to get serious, or give it away. July 1970, and Kerr Engineering commenced business in Star Street Carlisle, where it still operates. For a year building bikes was the main activity, but gradually general engineering took precedence. A run of a hundred quick action Kerr twist grips nicknamed "The Switch" was happily snapped up by racers, and several of these throttles adorn club machines still. Kevin sold the business after thirty years, to one of his apprentices.

Kevin very much valued time with his family and with Scott and Alison aged eight and seven, bought a Land Rover and joined the Land Rover Club. Their first major trip was over the Canning Stock Route, then it was off to the East with its snowfields and big cities; a wonderful time of life for the Kerrs. The 4 x 4 fleet grew to two. This gave the carrying capacity to allow motorcycles to accompany them so Peter Stocker and John Boyd went to Mount Beadall on the Gunbarrel Highway for the opening of the Len Beadall Memorial. Five further bike – 4 x 4 trips followed, each of around two thousand kilometres and left the Kerrs with delightful memories. One such concerns Vic Richardson, who managed to cook steak with the plastic packing still attached to the underside. Was Vic just dodging being nominated cook in future? Japanese tourists on motor bikes all regarded Rawlinna, on the Trans line, as a very special place. Apparently, many years ago one such rider was given assistance there, way beyond what he expected and the word quickly spread amongst Japanese riders. By the time the Kerrs were thereabouts, Rawlinna hardly existed, with just one family living there, so

disappointment awaited those expecting a thriving community. Once, well out in desert, Kerrs found a back pack and a motorcycle type bag. Worried, they spread out as far as possible but found no sign of bike or rider. Much later, eight bikes and a late model Land Cruiser arrived, the Cruiser having become bogged and the bikes having back-tracked to assist. The cold drinks offered by the Kerr family to this very under-equipped crew didn't touch the sides!

Another trip, they met a Japanese rider, on a 250cc machine, who's mate, on a 650, had broken down. The 250 wouldn't tow the bigger bike (Murphy's Law works OK in the desert too why couldn't the 250 have the problem) so Mr 250 would ride on a kilometre, park the bike and then walk back to help push the bigger bike, and then do it all over again. And again...And again..... They were very glad to see the Kerr family! Particularly as Kevin was able to get the stricken bike going.

2002, Kevin was reversing his 4 x 4 up the driveway. Unable to see gull wing doors open on a service vehicle, the Unimog came to a crashing halt, trapping itself and it's frightened occupant. At hospital Kevin was diagnosed with a broken neck and had to immediately sign several documents as there was a very real danger he'd seize up any moment. The doctor also asked "When did you last break your neck?" Kevin assured him he'd not done so but the doctor informed him he most certainly had. How close a call was that diving accident, all those years ago?

Around 1964 Kevin figured it was time he did more for himself so he bought and restored, with Bruce Williams, the Harley W.L.A. he still rides. He joined the V.M.C.C. then also, and has been an active member ever since. He's still working hard on several projects – his Toyota Coaster motor home, a 1923 V-twin A.J.S., a 1927 Ace four cylinder, a 650 Yamaha – B.S.A. A10 special and a 250 Ossa trail bike. The latter is very smart but Ossa spare parts are only sold by the local agent for hen's teeth. Result – Kevin has made from scratch the complete front brake lever, and has rebuilt the back sprocket, a dished aluminium alloy item with "Ossa" stamped on. Both jobs are well worth a look, they're beautiful. Currently he's repairing his faithful W.L.A. which ran a big end on the recent Albany rally. With so many projects in hand Kevin regrets he's not able to ride in Club events as often as he's like, but, hey you can't do everything!

"Dashing" Dud McKean was a rider of exceptional natural ability who always gave 110% and was much liked and respected by Kevin. Dud had never ridden a motorcycle when he and some mates visited Melbourne Speedway. "Looks fun. I could do that!" said Dud. "Oh yeah, sure you could!" said his mates and managed to set up a ride for Dud. To their collective amazement, he went fast and loved it, and regularly featured in Speedway results. A ride in Short Circuit at Forrestfield became available and Dud was keen, but short circuit is not an oval. Dud had never ridden on the road or turned right so on his first right hand corner he fell off badly, ending the day in hospital. He talked his way out of hospital, ostensibly to go home but in reality to ride in a meeting which Dud considered important. He rode his usual "take no prisoners" style but at race end he became unconscious with pain then returned to hospital. A truly dedicated rider! *Adrian White*

SECRETARY ROLE: In February 2007 Chatter the Chair noted that one of the most important official positions in the Club is that of the Secretary. *"Our very efficient and popular secretary Terry McKie has indicated he would like a spell after almost seven years in that position, a task he has carried out in a most efficient manner. It certainly makes the President's job much easier when we have people of the calibre of Terry holding such a key position. It has been a pleasure for me to have had the experience to work along side Terry, and on behalf of all our members I thank him and his wife Pat for a job well done. We will of course see just as much of Terry and Pat as we have in the past, at events, but he will not be lugging a large secretary's case with him."*

The Secretary position is by appointment (general rule 3a) and the Management Committee has had Elliott Montagu (278) offer to take up this position. We have had discussions with Elliott and he has been duly appointed to the position of Club Secretary and I look forward to working with him. Elliott is retired and has a background as a Commercial Airline Pilot".

THE SAGA OF SPEEDY GREEN: by Frank Bevilaqua
After reading about Bill Young's timing trick I decided to tell this tale which also involved a different technique in the art of timing motorcycles. When I was young and had no sense, I took a girl behind the fence, Bla Bla Bla, I also, by the time I was 18, had bought or traded and sold over 50 motorcycles. The disease had started! We were riding all sorts of old things around the bush and having Club Sports Days

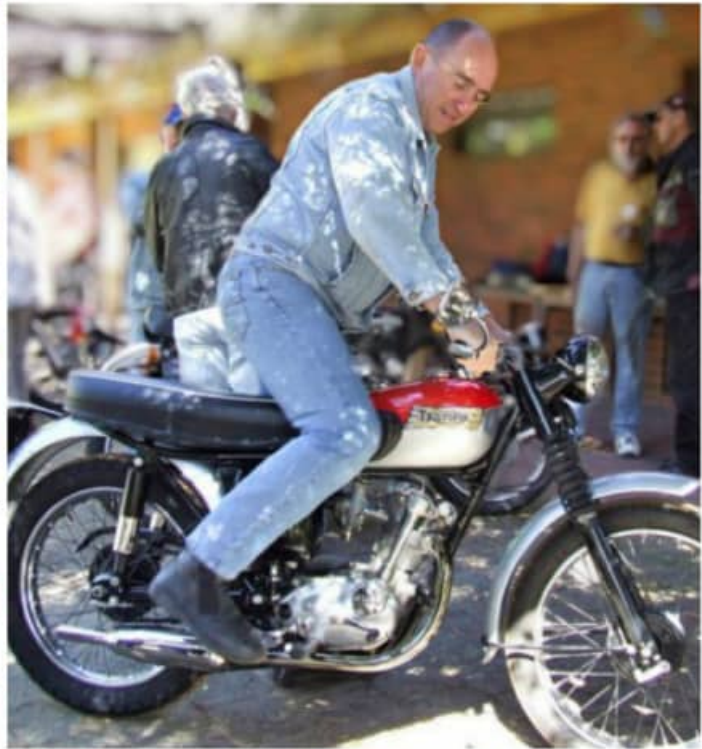
etc when into my stable came a well neglected and well modified 48 Speed twin. It had been lying outside for many years but the basics were all there. It had originally been built by Lex Kinnear whose father old Ted Kinnear is said to be the man who started Speedway in Australia. Anyway this particular bike had been well converted, a Matchless swinging arm unit had been grafted on, complete with a set of Jam Pots, It had a dual seat, a Jawa Petrol tank, a completely open primary chain and clutch, and to finish it off were two single pipes running along the left hand side. To a young Scramble rider this bike had it all, and the next Albany Cavalcade at the Albany Oval was fast approaching. The bike was immediately stripped, the barrels honed, Some oversize 10 to 1 were sourced, turned down to fit the bore and cam ground with a file. Next the big ends had the caps filed till they were nice and snug, the valves were done and as the magneto was dead, the coil spent a night in my protesting mother's oven and the whole thing assembled. All I needed was some heat resisting paint to finish the job, and as money was scarce this would have to come from the Albany PWD Workshops where I was an apprenticed Diesel Fitter. All that was available at the particular time was David Brown Green so the head and barrel were dutifully painted, the motor was fitted, a clutch and chain cover was fashioned out of some mesh, the two single pipes were fitted along the left hand side and the bike aptly christened Speedy Green by my old mate and confidante.

The day of the Cavalcade arrived, the football field was a mass of colour, there were Marching Girls, Horses and their riders Clowns, Side shows, School Kids and anyone who thought they were important enough to be out there. Around the edge of the football oval the gravel road had been graded and some drums put in the middle of the back straight to make a sharp chicane. A white line had been painted across the middle of the Grand Stand straight, and we, the star attraction 'or so we all thought' were in some cow sheds out the back, in the shit as usual. I was not happy there, no Marching Girls were going to come in here I reckoned, so with a show of bravado I shoved my bike outside on the grass. A couple of kicks to fire it up for practice but there was nobody home, a quick check by holding the plug lead assured me that my mothers oven trick had been a very quick fix indeed. In desperation I decided that the only thing to do was to race home and take the magneto off of my road bike, a twin Matchless with a Lucas on it and

2009 Inspection Day (Photos by Murray Barnard)







Above: Owen Page, Right: Richard Blackman, Lower right: Lindsay Cooke



a great bulbous end cap with a stop button in the middle of it. Back at the pits and the job was going on in record time when disaster struck, I couldn't get the maggy cap off because of the primary chain cover I had fashioned and also I didn't have a plug spanner of any kind. Preservation of my pride took over so I rocked the pistons on TDC and brought them back against the suction, that had to be between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch I reckoned, if it backfired when I kicked it over I'd just change the plug leads. Then with the plug lead in hand I gently flicked the maggy and felt the pulse as I watched the inside of my left forearm, gently, gently, till I could just see the muscle twitching. That's it, on went the cog, and then the timing cover. The instant experts who had stood back criticizing this procedure and saying it couldn't be done were silenced as on the second kick it snarled into life as crisp as ever. My old and trusted mate #140 who had stripped mine while I had gone for the maggy had a smug smile on his face, he had never doubted me, and he knew that we'd talk about this when the tongues were loosened tonight.

The racing was going well, two wins from two starts and the man I'd come to beat was coming in second. This crafty old fox was unbeatable on a club sports day, he was as nimble as a cat on the point to point and the cloverleaf was his speciality, Ted Scott was his name, and Triumph twins were his game. He had pointed out to me while the maggy change was taking place that two nuts were missing from the barrel flange studs. This was true, as in my haste during the week I had tightened it down without feeding these two nuts on. He had warned me that I would blow the barrels off, I took no notice. Three Marching Girls had started to hang around old Speedy Green, their short skirts showing off their creamy thighs. The King of the Cavalcade Trophy was well within my grasp, and I realized there could be two Trophies here today, one for the Cavalcade, and, if I played my cards right one tonight as well. We were on the second lap of the third and last race, one lap to go, the crafty old fox was ten yards behind as I came into the Grand Stand straight. The three Marching Girls were hanging over the fence waving like mad. I thought I'd really excite them, so I went wide and headed down about a yard from the fence, the tap was wide open and it was making a beautiful sound.

The girls straightened up, their eyes wide with fear as old Speedy Green let go about a yard before them. The barrels had lifted off and were hammering on the bottom of the fuel tank, I was instantly covered with

hot black oil, and as I sailed past and looked over at the girls I saw the oil splattering the front of their smart red and white uniforms. They also had funny spotted faces as they ran back from the fence. I coasted to a stop, then with a leaden heart I pushed old Speedy Green back to the Pits. I knew there'd be no trophy today, or tonight. That crafty old fox took the day, two seconds and a first. I heard afterwards that the three marching girls were severely reprimanded and sent home in disgrace, and that they were to keep away from motorcycles and the blokes who rode them as both were highly dangerous.

Speedy Green was taken home and rebuilt, and many a happy day was had on it, especially since it then had all its barrel bolts. It eventually went the way of all the others in favour of a ZB Goldie, but it may be that those barrels and head are still around, so if anybody has seen them or the frame let me know, maybe old Speedy Green still has a tale to tell.

THE PRIDE AND THE PASSION: the passion of motorcycle riding is alive and well in the W.A. Vintage Motorcycle Club, I am glad to say...Whatever these mature devotees have got in their blood, give me a dose right now and make it a big one. April 1 was swap-meet day for the club and it combines with a vintage motorcycle display that is a treat for the eyes. The bikes are old and, in many cases, the riders are older and look like they will outlive whatever they're riding this year.

My riding mate and I were looking over the carpark display on our way out and were intrigued by a couple of lovely old Beemers when this older gent came up and offered us some gems of wisdom based on the fact that he had one at home. Not quite the same, mind you, but close enough to know these ones inside out. I noticed he had a limp and I commented to the effect of "got a bit of a buggered leg?" He replied: "No, just a bit of fluid on the knee, but it is coming a bit better now, I had a battle riding here this morning." My mate and I looked at each other. Riding? You can hardly bloody walk, we're quietly thinking. "That's my Sunbeam inside" he says – the year of which I can't recall, but it was comfortably in the vintage era and a credit to him, I might add. He chats on relating his obvious knee problem and commenting that he has an aged drinking and riding test in a couple of weeks. He offered us the assurance

that he could ride no problems, but couldn't kickstart his bike with the offending knee being on his right-hand side. The obvious question gets asked and the reply was perfectly logical. "I get off and kickstart it backwards with my left leg." The next obvious question was: "So how old are you?" "Just turned 85," he says and adds, "I was a copper for 30 years on bikes and in those days you could either bloody ride or you couldn't." The thought of losing his licence and not being able to ride was simply just not an option and getting the knee right was the mission at hand because he freely admitted having to kickstart the bike backwards would probably give the game away.

Let's all look out for the passion this old rider has and make sure we share it around all we can. Keep riding something with two wheels. *Dale Hall*

T.T. MEMORIES: I first went to the Isle Of Man in 1955, and witnessed the great Geoff Duke attain the first 100 mile an hour lap on his Gilera, he held the record for a whole 40 minutes, until it was decided, that according to re-calculations, he had only managed 99.97 m.p.h. I was there again in 1957, for the Golden Jubilee, when Bob McIntyre raised it to over 101 m.p.h. I have just returned again from the centenary race in the I.O.M. where I was privileged to see the record lifted to 130, and have found it interesting to compare the two races. In 50 years the speed has risen by 30 m.p.h, from 22 minutes for the 37.75 mile lap down to 17 minutes. The main reason of course has to be the machines, 1000cc as against 500cc, tyres and suspension in particular. Speeds have risen dramatically; one man was clocked at over 205 m.p.h through one speed trap, and as in places they pass within 6 feet of you it is most spectacular. They seemed like missiles going down Bray Hill at over 180. There have been improvements to the roads also. Having competed there personally in 58-60 in the Manx Grad Prix, I can see that the course has been straightened out in several places, corners eased and widened where possible. The road surface is far better now, but surprisingly is still quite bumpy in places. However, there are still places that are still exactly the same, through the towns and villages for example, where the stone walls and buildings tend to sober you up, and there are still the pavements to contend with.

One little point I found interesting was that in 1957 at the end of practice week a definite racing line had appeared on the road all around the course. It wasn't

apparent this year. Obviously modern tyres allowed them more leeway in the choice of lines. Looking back I felt that the 57 races were more interesting, having more diversity of machines. This year all the machines sounded the same and apart from the paint jobs, looked the same. You had to see the number to see who was riding it. Whereas back then there was the big Matchless and Norton singles, the Guzzi V8, BMW twins, Gilera and MV fours, plus the odd Triumph and Gold Star. You had a good idea who was coming before you saw them. Then, the senior race was 8 laps instead of the normal 7 with only one pit stop. This year it was 6 laps with two pit stops. Having said all that, the atmosphere this year was fantastic, the island was heaving with spectators and bikes, over 17000 was one report I heard and 5000 didn't get there because of ferry problems.

The whole promenade in Douglas was one mass of machinery, with hardly a Harley in sight – bliss! The Manx Government really put on a top show with entertainment for everyone, from pop concerts, air displays, beach motocross, even a vintage tractor display. Part of the promenade was closed off every evening for stunt riders and drivers to perform. There was even an enlarged quad bike fitted with a jet engine. Imagine the noise that made and how would the residents of Scarborough have liked it. The Manx Vintage Motorcycle Club put on two very good shows and rides with some magnificent vintage and veteran bikes on display. There was a contingent from the Italian branch of the Moto Guzzi association of about 20 machines, most with the external flywheels, all in identical red colour schemes with the riders in red and black riding gear. They had gone to a great deal of trouble and looked very impressive. The Manx people go out of their way to make you feel welcome considering the disruption to their normal lives during this fortnight what with the noise and road closures for up to 6 hours every day. Mind you, those that don't like it take their annual holiday at this time. The police, including the couple of Italian motorcycle police that I saw, were very tolerant and joined in the party. Talking to people and asking nicely to stop whatever they were doing sorted out most problems. This usually worked and everyone parted the best of friends, and not a weapon in sight. Having been privileged to attend this special week I have to say that we as a club should continue to preserve all our old machines as these have character that modern machines don't have as yet. One of my highlights was examining the Norton that won the

very first TT race, which actually participated in the re-enactment of that 1907 race that unfortunately I didn't get to see. *Brian Betts*

2008: Gas pipeline fails leading to supply crisis

FOXES: by Jim Forster

During the World War 2 period the fox population throughout the wheat belt multiplied to almost plague proportions, mainly because farmers could not do much about them because of the lack of guns, ammunition, man power and poisons. These were well restricted in case of Japanese invasion, besides the rationing of fuel. The first year I was back on the farm the foxes killed almost all of the lambs born to the flock of 30 ewes so I decided it was time to declare war again, this time against the fox.

We first started by chasing them at night with a three ton Dodge truck and twelve volt spotlight. This was successful to a point, but too many foxes were escaping because the truck was too slow on picking up speed, rough to shoot from and not manoeuvrable enough. If a fox escaped we were only teaching him to be more careful next time. So I decided to build a special vehicle for the purpose. We acquired an old 1934 Ford V8 car with a chassis but rusted body and blown engine. This was stripped of the body excepting the cowl and windscreen. A bigger Ford V8 engine from an army armoured car was fitted with its bigger radiator. No bonnet or guards were required. A special body was designed and fitted to accommodate two shooters, one left and right and a man in the middle with the spotlight - this was a 24 volt ex aircraft landing light powered by two 12 volt (300 c.p. lamps) batteries and an auxiliary power unit each ex army surplus of course. The four wheels were fitted with the heavy treaded tyres from hay making machinery not in use at the time. The brakes were modified and made to work well. A rare looking vehicle but proved to be very good for the purpose. My youngest brother elected to be driver, he began by taking it out in a paddock and practiced with it and in no time he learned to turn sharply by throwing it on full lock and tramping the motor, the back would spin around and put us still with the fox. When being chased foxes keep turning sharply hence the reason for a pursuing vehicle doing the same.

We teamed up with a young ex army sergeant who was farming next to us and in a matter of weeks his and our properties were virtually cleared of foxes. Our success was soon known throughout the district

by bush wireless of course, and other farmers were ringing up and asking us to come and deal with their fox problems, which suited us because their foxes would only migrate back to our farms. We were well compensated for our efforts with petrol, ammunition, and maybe a few bottles of ale; also we got five shillings for the ears and tail of each fox we killed from the local council. The first season we used this vehicle we shot 300 odd foxes with our biggest kill being 16 in three hours of one night. Soon many people throughout the wheat belt took on the idea of chasing and shooting foxes with all types of cars etc. A lot did it just for the sport- especially the town folk. We enjoyed it also and got a lot of pleasure in seeing a dead fox. As time went on the Agricultural Protection Board commenced using 1080 poison for the rabbit extermination which in time reduced the fox population, and also because the foxes ate the poisoned rabbits. Our special vehicle which we named a Fox wagon was pensioned off, and was eventually scrapped. Something I regret now, and I don't even have a photo of it. I believed the fox population is again increasing because there are not many rabbits to poison, and what kind of weapon will be used against the fox in future remains to be seen. I think that young farmers of today do not learn to use guns, and I don't think they would resort to our methods.

VALE BARRY MAKIN: Club President Rex Edmondson wrote, "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.



October 2008 has seen the passing of two of our longstanding and valued members. On September 7th at Ellenbrook Speedway, Tom Green died tragically as the result of an accident while he was giving service to others as he had done for many years as a willing worker at the speedway, and a long standing member of this Club, as well as other organisations he chose to willingly help. Tom was a quiet natured man who ran his own driving school. He was always ready to help on any of our major events. He was a regular attendee at our general meetings and his presence will be sadly missed.

TOM GREEN: How unfortunate for Mrs Green to have lost both of her sons in vehicle accidents. Ted some years ago in a road crash and now Tom run over by an ambulance at Ellenbrook Speedway. The Greens are obviously a very community spirited family as Ted was involved with the scouts amongst other organisations and Tom had a huge commitment to speedway. The respect and affection with which he was held, particularly amongst the Juniors is borne out by the huge number of bereavement notices in the paper. Also a special and separate service was

held by the Motor Racing chaplain, to "Honour Tom's many passions and hobbies". Tom rode a WWII military model which I have been told was a genuine war surplus bike bought new. He never confirmed this to me but used to say with a twinkle in his eye "What do you reckon?" As a driving instructor he addressed several general club meetings on the subject of defensive riding, and how to survive with a bike on the road. I can recall him riding the Harley at our Shenton Park gymkhanas and the way he handled that heavy bike with a foot clutch around the obstacles was a treat to behold. Tom was a participant in the 1990 Overland Re enactment and rode the Harley to Sydney and back with a quiet confidence and no machine problems. The only time I remember him losing his cool was in NSW when he had set up a military system of corner marshals as used by army convoys. Unfortunately some riders ignored the procedure and Ron and Emmy Morrison, Jim Clark (me) and John Boyd along with Tom spent a couple of hours circling the back blocks of Wongavilla trying to find Kevin Cass' home. He had a glint in his eye that day. We will miss you Tom. JIM CLARK



MAX ANNEAR another long standing member passed away peacefully on Monday the 15th of September. Max attended Club meetings on a regular basis until recently, his membership number is 59 and he joined this Club in 1976. Prior to his involvement with VMCC he was a member and Chairman of the Indian Motorcycle Club. He has a long history of competitive racing and rallying and I understand gave up solo

racing in 1948 after an accident at Yanchep on his Velocette where he collided with a tree and broke his leg. He then moved to sidecars and went on to win the National side car Championship at Archerfield Queensland in 1963 riding an Ariel Red Hunter that was; I am told "red hot". He also participated in car rallying in home built machines. Max was a member of the Institute of Automotive Engineers, and worked at Duncan Ford in Murray Street, where at a very young age he became Service Manager. Next he ran his own business in North Beach, and later West Coast Autos specialising in auto transmissions.

2009: Daylight Saving referendum fails

Rex Edmondson used his Chatter President's Report to comment, I regularly quote you something from our Constitution when a point needs to be made. Our objectives are 2a."To encourage the ownership, use and preservation of motorcycles and other similar vehicles more than 25 years of age". Objective 2b "To organise, or assist in the organisation of rallies, sporting events and other events that may be in the interest of the objects as defined in 2a". I think we fill both of these objectives reasonably well.

However within those objectives we have bikes listed as Veteran, Vintage and Post Vintage, a span of pretty close to 100 years and all Club eligible. So with this in mind we try to cater for bikes that fill the above requirements, and have Club eligible bikes participating in runs as described in my first two sentences. Members need to be aware of that and treat this large range of bikes with respect when they are on a run. We continually get complaints of later model bikes going through the field at speeds that don't reflect courtesy, or in some cases road rules, and we have requested consideration on a number of occasions. The Management Committee has reached the stage that conditions will need to be put in place to curb this style of riding on Club events, and that of course means there will be winners and losers, but there seems to be no other way.

Vale: BRIAN "PERCY" CHAPMAN (5/03/2009) - I was privileged to know "Percy" for many years and he was a great friend, a mentor and a motor sport associate. Brian had a passion for all things mechanical and his favourite toys were his BSA motor cycles, his Mustang, his Formula Ford racing cars and the Mini Cooper S race engines he prepared for a mutual friend. He was an extremely well read

and fastidious operator and his workmanship was always superb. He loved his motorcycles and participated in Club events whenever he could, but he was severely handicapped with arthritis and that prevented him from enjoying his riding the last few years. Despite his illness he still visited the various venues, where the racing cars he was so passionate about competed, as often as he could. He also still tinkered as much as possible whenever his ailments allowed that. His passion for BSA motorcycles dated back from before the Second World War and as I'm aware his transport then was BSA bikes, and when he was courting Mabel and early on their marriage the bike had a sidecar attached.

His memory will always be with our family as will two of his bikes, an M21 he restored for my brother and a B40 he restored for himself and used to ride in Club events and then gave to my nephew for his 21st birthday. In earlier times he was a fierce and avid go-cart competitor and prided himself on his ability to build extremely competitive engines and machines. He was an exponent of BSA Bantam engines in the early go-cart era and was renowned for his ability to make them extraordinarily competitive. The passion always remained and manifested itself in all the endeavours he engaged in. It is not possible to describe the life and the endeavours of people, particularly gifted people, in a short article. Suffice it to say that those who were privileged to know Brian will always remember him for his sincerity, his ability to make a difference and his honest personality. I'm honoured to have been among those who he classified as friends. His passing will leave a gap that will never be filled and I will no longer be able to pick up the phone to run something by him. I was fortunate enough to spend a significant amount of time in his company, the company of quiet achiever, a man who I fondly and proudly called a friend. So long mate and thanks for your company and your wisdom. HANS

BARBARA FORBES: sad to say, passed away last July. She was a bright and chirpy lady who organised the meeting night rabble for many years. With her husband John, through the 80s and 90s, they were active participants in Club events on a Triumph outfit and were always bright and cheerful company. As Barbara's health deteriorated, bikes made way for cars, firstly a Singer then a Ford A and the A Model Club. JIM CLARK





END VOLUME ONE

