



# Not The Spoken Word

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

## Fred Buzza and Swift Cycles

My Dad, Alfred William Buzza (Fred to all that knew him), was born on 12th June 1901 in North Perth.

His family moved to 2 Mint Street East Victoria Park in about 1902 or 1903. He was the youngest of four with a brother John (Jack) and 2 sisters, Vera and Olivia (Olive).

He attended the state school at Cargill Street Victoria Park and Perth Boys school in Perth. Jack was Killed in action in WW1 on the Western Front

When Fred left school aged 14 he went into the rag trade and served his apprenticeship as a tailor's presser. WW1 was in progress and while he was too young to fight he probably worked on military uniforms a lot of the time.

In about 1925 he started a garage business in what is now Rivervale at or near the corner of what is now Enfield Street and Kitchener Avenue. It was called Buzza's Garage. Fred was hit pretty hard by the great depression of 1929-31 and Buzza's Garage was closed at some point. Ever resourceful Fred worked on stations around Yalgoo in shearing sheds and on farms for a time.

Around 1932 he went into a partnership with Phil someone and they started Sprint Cycles on the corner of Gresham Street in Victoria Park. This partnership dissolved in about 1934 and Fred moved to a shop at 471 Albany Highway; Swift Cycles. Dad used the Buzzalong name for the bicycles and tricycles he

manufactured in-house and the Swift name on the bicycle stock he would purchase from the trade.

He married our mother on 10th March 1934, so there may have been a change in the structure of the business at that time. Mum was a highly qualified nurse, no office wallah, and I think she would have exerted plenty of say in how the business was going to be run from then on. The house they lived in was built in 1928

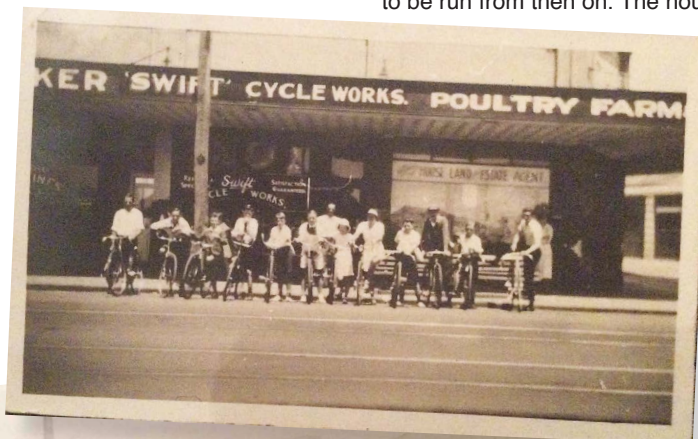
by Mum's parents and left to her and her sister. (Sister Melva lived with them for many years until she married and went to live in Manjimup)

I didn't come along until 1939, so all I ever knew during my childhood was that Dad had a bike shop and he made bikes. I spent a fair bit of time at the shop with Dad during the war years because Mum was in charge of a first aid post at the Cargill St school and attended there quite a bit. I saw Dad build the bikes from scratch. He used to buy all the components in; various tubing, lugs, rims, spokes, hubs, seats, handle, bars, bells, chains, sprockets, mudguards, ball bearings, brakes, brake rubbers and so on.

He had a forge and brazed the frames together with silver solder.

During the war years he went to join up and was "manpowered" because he owned a small business which could be set up if required to manufacture for the war effort. It never came to that, although he was asked to make 2 samples of a

small mechanism from a drawing supplied by the Dept of War. It was top secret and at the time he didn't know what it was. Years later, he recognised the chap who was from the DoW in the Broken Hill Hotel and was told the samples he made were a part of a 303 rifle bolt mechanism.



As children, Allen (4 and a half years my junior) and I used to build wheels in front of the kitchen stove while we listened to the radio. We would have been about 6 & 10 by then. Dad was meticulous about the spokes being in the right place. I don't know if it still the case but there were I think 32 spokes in the front wheel and 40 in the back. We could true the wheels and put the tyres and tubes on when we were quite young too.

Dad used to do all his own painting; he had an oven for baking the enamel. He used some decal transfers but all the lining and fancywork he did himself. He had a set of lining brushes.

He also made tricycles to order for disabled and geriatric people. These were tricky as they were specially engineered frames and had to have a split rear axle to enable cornering. I was a test rider on these on more than one occasion. They were tricky to ride too because you didn't need to try and balance them. They only had a front brake too.

The bikes he made to order were called Buzzalongs. The length of the seat pillar bar and inside leg measurement were critical. Racing bikes were a speciality. He had racing bike riders who used to ride for him in the big races like Beverley to Perth and Northam to Perth. The Northam to Perth came via Red Hill. I can remember going in the car early to Beverley.

Mum would pack thermoses and sandwiches. Can't remember breakfast but we must have had some. I think we went up Great Eastern Highway, branched off at the Lakes and went via York. I don't ever remember going via Brookton. It started outside the Beverley Town Hall.

We would then follow the riders down to the finish line in Maylands outside the Peninsular Hotel. As with Northam same thing started at the town hall came via Toodyay and finished at the Maylands Peninsular Hotel. They were exciting times.

His road racing activities was mainly sponsorship, although he did some road racing himself. I remember Lionel Felstead and Phil Kidd as two of the riders but I'm sure there were others.

Another scheme he had going was where you bought a book of 10 tickets and sold them for a pound each. That gave you 10 pounds to buy a new bike with. The people you sold the ticket to all came and got a book of tickets and so it went on. It would be illegal now as it is classed as a Ponzi Scheme. Back in those days it sold a lot of bikes.

In 1952 Dad sold the shop to Hi-way Cycles, owned by Les Andrews, whose brother had Swansea Cycles on the corner of Teddington Road and Albany Highway. Hi-way was a motor bike business as well. He had small bikes like BSA Triumph and Norton but I don't think he had any Harleys or Indians.

The bike business was tough in those days. Starting from Hampshire Street in East Victoria Park there was Balmoral cycles, Sprint, Swift, Malvern Star, Swansea - I may have forgotten a couple.

Fred Buzza passed away at the age of 74.

*This article is mainly recollections of Fred's son John Buzza, with some additional detail provided by Allen Buzza. Fred's Grandson Wes Buzza is keen to find out more about the history of Swift Cycles, please contact the club if you have any recollections to pass on.*

## PETROL RATIONING DOES NOT WORRY THEM



A few prominent members of the cycle trade. With the request of the Government to reserve Petrol over 70 years of age attributes his long and active life to the healthy sport of cycling. Don't let Petrol Rationing inconvenience you. Help the War Effort; save Petrol; Ride a Bike.

They are from left to right Messrs. J. Williams (Gov. Director of Charman and Williams Ltd.), R. Paddon (Atkins W.A. Ltd.), H. C. Elliott (W.A. Manager for Bruce Small Pty. Ltd.), H. J. Mortlock (Gov. Director of Mortlock Bros. Ltd.), H. Baldwin (Swansea Cycles), F. Buzza, (Swift Cycles), R. J. Campbell (Gordon Cycle and Motor Co.), S. Emery (West Cycles Ltd.), A. Horlin (Congress Cycles), L. Jones (Arrow Cycles), W. J. Lucas (Gov. Director W. J. Lucas Ltd.), C. Foy (Bradforas), J. S. Pocklington (Warehouse Manager Harris, Scarfe and Sandovers Ltd.), L. Andrews (Triumph Cycles), M. Rosenberg (Modern Cycles).

## Ian C Reid 1965

This classic 1965 Ian C. Reid was built in the current owners home town in Northamptonshire, UK and was originally built for racing for Roger Watson of the Mid Devon Road Club.

Ian was a top level cyclist and participated in seven Tour of Britain races during the 1960s and went in to business in 1962 with Roy Cottingham, a fellow racing cyclist, to build and sell custom built cycle frames. This beautiful example was built in March 1965 and painted by Ian Reid himself. It is completely original and features chromed hand-cut lugs and is fitted with first-generation Campagnolo Record cranks, derailleurs and hubs, MAFAC brakes, MAVIC tubular rims and of course a Brooks Professional saddle.

Ian only made a small number of frames and still has the last one he built in 1967.

You can find more photos in the Members' Bikes section of the club website.



## Wanted

**1 x 1" Head set lock nut** similar to below. Early 60's, with provision for an 'O' ring.  
Contact **George Morris**: g.j.morris2@bigpond.com



**Station bike.** Alan Naber is looking for a functional and inexpensive bike for trips to and from the train station. Nothing that will attract the magpies :-)  
email: oldcyclist@inet.net.au  
phone: 0415 873 862

Gary Bush is on the hunt for **Cyclops trike parts.**  
email: garybush64@gmail.com  
phone: 0402339652

## Club Auction June 18th

There will be an auction of donated items at the AGM - offered for sale are;

- Gents Swansea town bike
- '70's Dawes Lightning
- Damaged Nervex lugged frame
- Thornproof tubes
- New old stock rubber pedals

Check the club website and facebook page for details and photographs.

## For Sale

Swansea ladies bike with original paint. A good match for the auction bike.

Contact Dave Clark: 0402 837 574



# Club Calendar

## Ride - June 17th Penny Farthing Riverloop

Join Dan Bolwell, AKA Penny Farthing Dan, for an upstream ride and a coffee and/or a Vegemite roll. We'll meet at Mends St Jetty at 10am for a 10:15 departure. All bikes welcome!

## AGM - June 18th 7:30pm

### Guest Speaker - Penny Farthing Dan

Ardross Clubroom.

## Display - MH Jones Day July 14th 10am

John XXIII College Mount Claremont

## Meeting - July 16th 7:30pm

Ardross Clubroom.

## Tour de Ruste Sunday July 29th

Members only event - addresses TBC

## Meeting - August 20th 7:30pm

Ardross Clubroom.

## Meeting - September 17th 7:30pm

Ardross Clubroom.

## Ride - Sept. 23rd 10am Whiteman Park

Revolutions Transport Museum, Whiteman Park, Whiteman



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DISCLAIMER The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the WA Historical Cycle Club and the accuracy of information published herein is not guaranteed.

## In The Shed With...

### Cameron Smith

#### What are you currently working on?

As a frame painter and restorer I always have a lot of client work in the shed, right now I have;

- Mid 80's Colnago Master Gilco tubing, Candy Apple Red
- 90's Giant CADEX, full restoration in original colourset
- 90's Richard SACHS, full restoration in original colours
- Mid 80's Gianni MOTTA, full restoration in original colourset
- 2 pairs of Carbon Fork in 'titanium colour look alike'
- 1972 AB Gazelle, full restoration in original colourset
- 1970's Claud Butler mixte
- 1982 Rauler, full restoration in original colourset
- 1961 Legnano Gran Primo (under the TT seat pin model in Legnano lime green)
- 1948 MANX TT, full restoration in original colourset.

The last three are my own projects

#### How many rideable bikes do you have?

20 rideable bikes.

#### What was your first bike?

Aside from the Malvern Star dragster in 1968 my first racer was a top of the line Peugeot with Simplex groupset. I purchased this second hand in 1980 for the grand sum of \$900 from Kirrawee Cycle in Sydney. Alas it was stolen when I moved to Perth in 1986, I replaced it with a Concorde Colombo that I still have.

#### Pick a bike, any bike... in your dreams what are you riding?

A 60's Pogliaghi Intalcourse.

#### If push comes to shove what is your favourite bike?

This is a tough one, so many a favourites for specific reasons. 1978 GIOS Torino – my first find whilst living in Holland.

#### Whistle while you work? Give us a tip on the sounds that fill your workspace.

Mark Knopfler, Harry James Angus, Manu Chau, Dubliners, Johnny Flynn, Aaron Neville, Jerry Garcia, Carolina Chocolate Drops.

