



# Not the... Spoke 'n Word

Volume 6 N° 6

NEWSLETTER

March/April 2005

## AGM - MAY 16<sup>th</sup>

Our AGM and election of officer bearers is in May, and all positions are vacant. We desperately need a Secretary, so give this serious thought. We can only progress if members come forward to fill all positions.

## SECRETARY NEEDED

Unfortunately our Secretary, Merrill Martlew has had to step down from the job, and she had done a good job, too, so the club urgently needs someone to fill her shoes. It entails taking the minutes, occasionally letter writing, and attending to any correspondence.

If you can help in this matter please let met know ASAP. The ability to type is preferable, but not really essential, as is the possession of a computer.

Peter Wells

## A VARIETY OF CLUB RIDES

As you can see from the Calendar of Events, your Committee has endeavoured to provide a wide selection of events, covering several areas, so that members can get to some fairly close to home. And we have tried to vary the terrain so that a greater mix of bikes can be used throughout the year.

But all this effort will be useless if you, the members, do not participate. There is nothing more disheartening to an organiser than a poor response from club members. So do the Club and yourself a good turn and take part more often - you may even find yourself feeling healthier and the company is always great.

## MINUTES OF MEETING 17<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2005.

*The meeting opened at 7.30pm*

*Present - 12 members*

*Apologies - Paul Redman, Alan Naber*

*Minutes of Previous Meeting - Read and accepted. Moved Merv Thompson, seconded Phil Harris.*

*Treasurers Report - Showed a credit balance of \$2,734.14 Moved Mal Bell, seconded Phil Harris Mal Bell made a donation of \$100 which he received for taking part in the Christmas Pageant. Thanks Mal.*

*Coming Events - As per list on back of Newsletter.*

## *Correspondence*

➤ It was agreed to send a letter to Nicky Armstrong..

## *Show and Tell*

➤ Phil Harris - told of a skate bike, showed a Unicycle with 20" wheel and demonstrated roller skates.

➤ Ray Martlew - showed a tireless bike, and a tandem which converts to a single bike.

➤ Peter Wells - showed a yellow frame - 5 Swan Swansea and a 1965 Flash which had only one owner, complete with spare wheel

➤ Merv Thompson told of an accident on route to their holiday destination - sympathy on the loss of the car, but all were pleased to see both Merv and Dawn were not seriously injured.

Meeting closed at 8.15pm

## MINUTES OF MEETING 21<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2005.

*The meeting opened at 7.40pm.*

*Present - 16 members*

*Apologies - 3 members*

*Minutes of Previous Meeting - Read and accepted. Moved Mal Bell, seconded Dave Clark.*

*Treasurers Report - Balance of \$2,846.14 moved Phil Harris, seconded Ken Ward.*

## *Correspondence*

➤ Dept of Planning & Infrastructure re Bike Week 2005 VCC re letter about the carpet in the Clubrooms.

➤ D.P.I. re Bike Week events

## *Coming Events*

➤ Phil Harris spoke of the Rockingham Ride Feb 27<sup>th</sup>.

➤ March 11<sup>th</sup> - Bike Week Breakfast, meet at Old Mill 6.30am

➤ March 13<sup>th</sup> - Club Ride and Sausage Sizzle. Meet at 10am - 6B Hickey Street. Merv Thompson to provide food and drinks. Phil Harris to provide barbecue.

➤ March 20<sup>th</sup> - Whiteman Park display at Mussel Pool. 8 members will display their cycles.

**NEXT MEETINGS:** Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March at 7.30pm  
Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm  
VCC Club Rooms 6B Hickey Street, Ardross

**WAHCC Committee -** President: Peter Wells 9459 1750  
Treasurer: Ray Martlew 9451 1186  
Secretary: C/- Peter Wells  
25 Constantine Court Thornlie 6108  
Events Co-Ordination: Phil Harris 9459 7146 Merv Thompson 9450 2579

Articles for Newsletter: The Editor Peter Wells  
25 Constantine Court Thornlie WA 6108 (08) 9459 1750

Vice President: David Clark 9255 1373  
Historian: Ken Ward 9364 3601  
Club Photographer: Ken Ward 9364 3601

### **General Business**

- Melville City will have a breakfast and ride for Bike week. Contact Paul Redman.
- Oliver Cycles Fremantle closing down.

### **Show and Tell**

- Phil Harris showed a ladies Hercules with cane basket.
- Tony Hall showed girls Aussie.
- David Clark showed a Gordonson delivery bike.
- Peter Wells showed string skirt guards for ladies cycles. \$40 pair. Pair 26-28 wheels also working parts of Sturmey Archer gears.
- Merv Thompson showed various miniatures and badges.

Meeting closed 8.30pm, followed by a talk and slide show of Sturmey Archer products courtesy of Alan Naber and David Clark.

### **MASON'S LANDING - CANNING RIVER RIDE**

January is a hard time of the year to guess what the weather will turn up, it could be quite mild, or it could be stinking hot. This year promised to be one of the latter for our ride around a section of the Canning River, so it was no surprise to find the number of starters down a little. Fortunately the real heat didn't arrive until we had returned from a shortened course due to near century temperatures, and our aging population (this scribe included).

Mason's Landing and the lower reaches of the Canning River were among the first settled areas of the infant Swan River Colony, the landing used for the transport of timber and farm produce by barge to Perth and in later years much of the surrounding land was used for farming and citrus growing, the last of which have but recently been turned into parkland or residential areas.

In hindsight, because of the probability of hot weather, we should have opted for an early start time, and no doubt this will happen next year.

The original intention was to ride along the well made cycle paths to Riverton, then return along the opposite side of the river, but this was shortened, to cross over the footbridge over the Kent Street Weir. Here we found that the bridge had been closed for maintenance, so had to back track to another footbridge before heading East to cross over the Nicholson Road bridge and return to the start point for lunch and a natter session in a pleasant park area. It was here that young 'Harold' gave us a bit of a scare with a fainting turn, but he soon was back on his feet.

Those who braved the heat wave were –  
David Northan – Malvern Star Skidstar  
Ann Northan – Mastercycle Standard  
Merrill Martlew – did not ride  
Ray Martlew – Steele Bishop racer  
Harold Perry – Lucas semi racer  
Judy Perry – Raleigh  
Douglas Hughes – Ricardo  
Peter Wells – 1945 Swansea 4 Swan

### **LEATHER SADDLES**

This month we feature an article by Paul Farron, who has a fantastic collection of veteran cycles in Melbourne. Paul does a lot of his own restoration work, recently turning to saddles. His article appeared in the Canberra Bicycle Museum Newsletter, and should prove helpful to W.A. restorers.

### **ROCKINGHAM-SAFETY BAY RIDE**

Heavy cloud cover and a slight drizzle greeted starters for the annual visit to the coastal resort south of Perth, but we had a day very suitable for cycling, cool with just a gentle breeze. So it was disappointing to have a small turnout, but hopefully we can expect better attendance at future runs.

Merv and Dawn were gadding about in sunnier spots, so Phil Harris took Merv's place by having bike trouble almost from the start. He had changed the pedals on his mount the night before, and soon experienced trouble with a loose one, and despite repeated efforts with spanners, had to admit defeat, remove the offending item, and carry on with one pedal.

Luckily he was riding a fixed gear, so was able to proceed reasonably well, and managed to complete the course.

Due to delays caused by Phil's efforts, we decided to stop at the tearooms opposite Penguin Island, where some took advantage of the food and drinks available. There was a line-up of old scooters for all to see, hear, and smell, a sight that is becoming more usual as fuel prices increase. At least we don't have that problem.

Young Desiree Harris was mounted on her \$5 – Giant, her first outing with us as a rider, and the oldest bicycle present was the 1896 Humber ex Eric Barrett, and ridden by Mal Buckland. Other notable machines were the 14 speed Moulton, and the 1934 Gordonson now fitted with a 2 speed fixed gear Sturmey Archer hub.

Those Members who came late, after we had left our start point were Harold and Judy Perry.

So, our starters were –  
Phil Harris – 1940's Ascot  
Desiree Harris – Giant  
Mal Buckland – 1896 Humber  
Julie Buckland – 1984 Moulton  
Gareth Buckland – 1934 Gordonson  
Bob Barrow – Malvern Star Ice Cream Trike  
Blanche Barrow – Shogun  
Tony Hall – 1969 Raleigh Record Mixte  
Peter Wells – 1945 Swansea 4 Swan

## **STURMEY ARCHER GEARS**

I picked up an old rear wheel that had been left on the verge with a lot of junk, mainly because it had a Sturmey Archer 3 speed hub/brake unit. The strange part was that all the gear control parts and the brake cable had been tied to the wheel. I recognised the top bar mounted change lever had as an early type, also that the brake back pad was black, so that indicated a pre WWII unit. From the look of the sprocket a lot of miles had been covered. Unfortunately the rim was beyond repair.

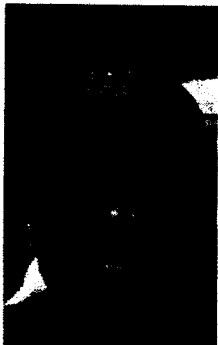
Before dismantling the hub I removed the actuating gear adjustment linkage, and found that the axle was hollow, with a long rod screwed into the linkage, and thought that perhaps it was a four speed unit. When I began to remove the gear assembly I noticed that the right hand bearing lock plate and cone were nothing like any I had encountered before and the gears were nothing like any that I had ever seen. It is definitely a three speed unit. The design of the logo on the casing reads Sturmey Archer gears, and is numbered KB7. I thought that the hub brakes were introduced in the mid 1930s, but another pre-war unit that I have has the usual mechanism that was around for many years.

Luckily, apart from a bearing cage that has collapsed, the internal parts are in good working order, and I suspect the main problem will be convincing the nickel plater not to destroy the engraving. Yes, it has been nickel, not chrome plated, which is unusual.

On discussing this hub with other members, it seems that the K series started in the early 1920s, continuing until 1938. Of course the B signifies a drum brake unit, and no doubt the 7 indicates manufacture in 1937. The more usual 3 speed units such as the AW were introduced in 1938/39, and continued until 1954, then reappeared once again some years later. Drum brakes also appeared in the 1920s.

Peter Wells.

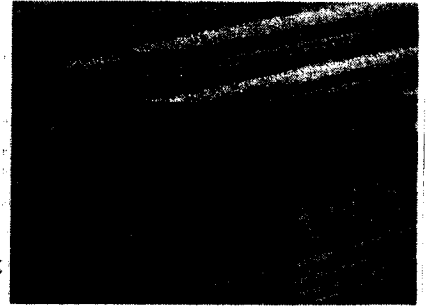
## **The Blazing Saddle**



For the last two months I have been obsessively engaged in the process of making saddle covers for many of my ancient bicycles. The last time I put tops on 1880 metal saddle pans was during the 1980s and I was so disgusted with my attempts I ceased production and determined to find someone to make them for me.

I found Tony Huntington in the UK and became a good customer of his when he was in the mood for making saddles which could be as often as once every 3-4yrs, Then came the problem of getting them to Australia! They were beautiful saddles, not cheap, but the closest to being what I wanted. But the waiting, oh the waiting ..... and I needed so many!

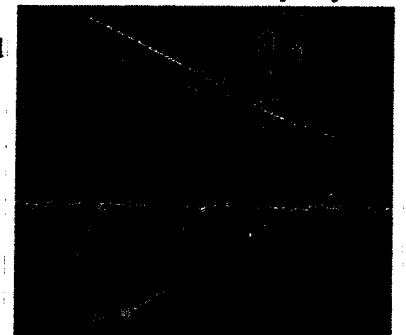
So I determined to have another go at making them myself, aided by determination, a desperate need and several very good sources of advice. The outcome is that I am now producing saddle leathers, which I am satisfied with, ride well and look good.



The first thing to say is it is not easy and even with a good workshop of equipment it takes about a day to produce one saddle plus drying time. I also had the good fortune to be having some stitched American saddles being produced by a Melbourne Shoemaker, Brendan Dwyer. He very kindly oversaw some of my early attempts and gave me some very good tips for handling the leather. I had purchased leather from Lefflers in South Melbourne



previously so knew where to go. This time I asked for help, I told them I needed it 4mm thick and what would they recommend for bicycle saddles. A skin was produced from way down the back and I was in business. For someone making a single saddle a whole skin is a lot of leather which will give you plenty to practice with. This stuff is tough, resembling sole shoe leather. It is easier cutting 6mm custom wood than this stuff. In fact the only way I had of cutting it was with my band saw until Brendan put me on to pruning shears which work well but have to be sharpened every so often.



So I've got the leather, I can cut it - more next issue on the intricacies of shaping and finishing. Ring me if you can't wait for the next installment and want a tutorial. - Paul Farren

## Blazing Saddles Part 2

### Making the mould that forms the leather

I would suggest making the wooden mould about three to four inches deep which means a lot of cutting. It is preferable to make the mould in a laminated form from perhaps two or even three one inch sheets of wood. The material used is not important so softer woods are easier to use as they are easier to cut and shape. The top inch of the mould needs to be based on the final shape of the saddle. The top can be in pine or other soft wood whereas the lower levels are better in some kind of ply which will accept self tapping screws. The lower layers are now screwed together to form one block. A band saw helps with the speed of cutting out a shape but the finishing and shaping of the top can be done with a rasp or file or belt sander. Now round off the edges paying special attention to the rounded corners at the front and either side of the cantle bar, making the surface smooth. The leather rests very heavily on the nose and either corner and has to do most of its stretching at these points.

### Shaping the leather

Draw the basic shape by tracing the outline of the nose of the saddle and the back of the cantle bar (the rounded bar at the back of the saddle the rivets go through.) Add half a centimetre to the front and the back and then with artistic license join up the back and the front with a sweeping curve.



If you have the old leather top you are in luck because you can use it as a pattern. Flatten it out on the leather and draw around the edges. Then add an inch all the way around and cut this out. If you do

not have an old leather some decisions on what the top is going to look like will have to be made and the pattern drawn using the tracing of the top of the mould plus about two inches all the way around. You could almost add a bit extra to the side panels.

You now have a piece of leather 4mm thick solid as a board and a wooden shaped mould. The leather will be rendered flexible by soaking in water for about 30 minutes. However prior to soaking in water holes will need to be punched around the perimeter every 1cm. A clear mental image of the shape of the saddle needs to be made at this point because a series of vertical cuts removing small

wedges need to be made in the regions the leather is to be contracted ie the nose and either end of the cantle bar and the rear of the cantle bar. At the apex of these wedges holes can be punched to assist further contraction of the material.

### Wetting the leather

A bucket of water is prepared with one or two drops of detergent to assist water penetration. The leather is placed in the water for about one minute and then removed. It is then placed in a plastic bag and left for half an hour removed and replaced in the water for a short period and replaced in the plastic bag. This can be done several times and means that the tanning and nourishing chemicals do not get washed out of the leather. A leather can be rendered ready for use in as little as half an hour but longer is more helpful. It will keep in the plastic bag for up to four or five days before going mouldy.



### Stretching the leather.

The wet leather is placed top surface down on the work bench on a clean towel. Any marks of the top will be on the finished article. The mould is placed down on the leather in the correct position and prior to doing this Baby powder is sprinkled on the back of the wet leather to act as a lubricant and allow it to slip. Using the previously punched holes the leather can be pulled up either manually using a handle with a hook or ideally using a car jack to pull up the front and back at the same time. Hooks joined by strong nylon rope are used for this part. Once the leather has pulled up to the side of the mould it can be attached to the base layers of the mould with hex head self tapping screws. In fact by directing the screw away from the top of the mould the leather can be stretched even further. Slacken the jack and moving from firstly front to back to eventually side to side the leather is pulled up all the way round and screwed to the base of the mould. This is the best written description I can give for this section but am happy to show the mechanism used involving car jack and hooks. The saddle now



formed over the mould is now allowed to dry. The way the leather is dried affects the finish of the leather. Slow drying produces the minimum affects on the surface. It is worth removing the leather from the mould before being at solid as some manual manipulation can be done to the final shape of the saddle. The self-tapping screws are best placed and removed using a battery powered drill with high torque.