



Not The Spoken Word

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

Swansea Register Update

Club member Peter Wells began a register of Swansea bikes some years ago. Peter has also wrote a short history of Swansea Cycle and Motor Company. Much of the source information came from oral history recounted to him by the widow of one of the proprietors.

The register and history have been a part of the club website since its inception. In that time there have been close to 50 contributions to the register (for a total of 72), including 5 bikes with known purchase dates. In other words a mind boggling runaway success!

The vast majority of these contributions have come from non members, mostly people who have just bought a Swansea or are selling one.

About a year ago it was decided to add a Flash register. It has just eight bikes on it, all but one owned by non members.

Swansea frame numbers are usually stamped on the bottom bracket or just to the rear of it on a chainstay. Flash serials are usually on the seatpost lug.

So, here's an idea; when you have a minute check to see if you have any old Flashes or Swansea's in the shed or hiding under a sofa. Make a note of their frame numbers and distinguishing features and either submit them via the website, email them to info.wahcc@gmail.com or bring them along to the next meeting.

Robert Frith

Personal History; Percival William Armstrong

Born in Stratford, Victoria on 13 September, 1866, the Son of Louis Armstrong and Martha Matilda (nee King).

Armstrong and was enrolled at Scotch College, Melbourne from his home in Levuka, Fiji on 9th October 1882. In the 19th Century the usual enrolment was for 12 months and Percy was enrolled until 1884 and is mentioned at the Speech Night in December 1884, as gaining awards for instrumental music and rowing.

The Age newspaper has two articles in October 1884 about his prowess as a rower. October 13, p6 and October 17, p7 which lists the achievements of the

Scotch College Head of the River crew.

In the early 1890's, Percy went to the Croydon goldfields in Queensland. Croydon is 156km from Normantown on the south side of the Norman River. Normantown is located on the south east corner of the Gulf Carpentaria and 718km west of Cairns. Percy came into cycling folklore with an epic ride with R Craig in 1893, when they rode their bicycles from Croydon to Sydney, a total of 3,200km.

A couple of newspaper articles are worth recording:

The Northern Miner (Charters Towers) July 8, 1893, p2. — The Croydon Mining News says, that P Armstrong and R Craig are leaving Croydon for Melbourne overland on bicycles. The North Queensland Register (Townsville) carried the same story on July 12, 1893, p10.

Brisbane Courier, July 20, 1893/135 — Georgetown July 19. "Two cyclists names P Armstrong and R Craig, who en route from Croydon to Melbourne, passed through today, leaving a dinner for Townsville, which place they expect to reach in seven days. They anticipate to be in Sydney in seven weeks."

The following newspapers carried the same story. The Melbourne Argus on same date, p6; The Queenslander, July 22, 1893, p153.

The Queenslander, July 29, 1893, p206 added more to the story of a week earlier — "The trip is a very hazardous one, and should be it be accomplished, of which I have no fear, it will prove to what a cyclist with a good machine can do in the way of travelling. Both wheelmen, I presume, to come through Gympie and Brisbane, can rely on getting a right royal welcome from the Brisbane boys."

The Capricornian (Rockhampton) August 26, 1893, p31 added to the Georgetown information — "They have undertaken a trip from Croydon to Melbourne via Townsville, Ravenswood, Blackall, Roma, Goodiwindi, and Tamworth." This is at variance to the presumption in item 4.

The best article is in "The Queenslander" September 23, 1893 p3. The notes are in a diary kept by R Craig, a member of the Redfern CC in Sydney. On arrival in Sydney, The Dunlop Rubber Co management were so impressed that they offered Percy the use of their new tyres in lieu of the heavy cushioned safety tyres used in

the trek from Croydon to Sydney. Percy accepted the offer and the Sydney-Melbourne record was his first solo record attempt. He was able to break the record on September 30, 1893 by 26 hours. Completing the 930km in the remarkable time 4 days, 3 hours and 45 minutes. An article appeared in the Brisbane Courier Jan 8, 1894 p6, which stated that Percy had visited Brisbane on the 17 November 1893 on his way home in Croydon.

The Queenslander Feb 17, 1894 p302, reported that Percy had arrived by steamer to Brisbane following his return visit to Croydon. The article commented that Percy was on his way Western Australia.

In 1894 he had established a cycle depot in Coolgardie. A business man asked Percy how an urgent letter could be delivered to Kurnalpi, as all the camels and buggies were out of town. Percy offered to ride his bicycle and return the next day, this being a round trip of 164 miles. The business man thought Percy was joking, but when Percy said, "no delivery, no pay," the businessman accepted the offer and duly paid the agreed fee, the next day. Within an hour of Percy returning to Coolgardie, another offer to deliver a letter 45 miles from town, thus Percy gained two fees in two days. And a new service was born and soon Percy had several agencies operating in the Goldfields and later, in Perth and Fremantle. His cycling friends found gainful employment as express couriers or managers of the cycle shops.

1897 was good year for Percy. On the 16th of June, Percy married Grace Ethel Throssell at Northam with 250 invited to help celebrate the occasion. Grace being the 6th daughter of George Throssell and Mrs. Throssell. George was the local member of Parliament, and Commissioner for Lands and a former Premier. The Perth newspaper, the West Australian, gave a very comprehensive summary of the festivities. The last paragraph is worth quoting: "The bride will be greatly missed in Northam, where she was born and has spent the whole of her life. In all objects connected with the church, temperance, or social organisations she was ever to the front, and her cheerfulness and willingness to help, particularly with anything connected to music, will make her departure felt far and wide." Several times the local press reported on her attributes on the piano. Strange, but true, the bridegroom was a talented pianist. While they may not have ridden a tandem together, one can imagine that they could harmonise at the family piano in Perth.

On the 25th September 1897, he promoted the first Beverley to Perth Cycle Race of 116 miles and Menzies Bike shop Manager, John Beck, gained first and fastest from a very liberal handicap of 45 minutes. While the race was promoted as the Rover Road Race, as Percy had the Rover Cycle Agency in Perth, the LWAU agreed to recognise the event as the inaugural Beverley to Perth.

At Coolgardie, on December 26, he promoted the first Westral Wheel Race, though under the name Coolgardie Austral over 2 miles, the winner being Jack Boydall, Kalgoorlie on 110 yards. That event is still being held today, though it did lay dormant on occasions. The completion of the transcontinental railway

link, Perth to Coolgardie, a sporting promotion was held in Coolgardie with Percy winning the 10 mile Championship.

This is brief summary. Percy was as passionate about motor cars and motor cycles and with his cycle agencies, he organised businesses in the other two. Transcontinental records in both car and motor bike were achieved by Percy. He crossed the Nullabor 18 times and his last was in 1940, when he was 75. He had a motor cycle accident and the doctors had to amputate one of his legs, but he was soon back in the saddle, such was the determination of the man.

He was founding member of the Royal Auto Club and served on their governing Council. He retained his interest in cycling as did at least one term as LWAU President. He died at his home in West Perth on August 8, 1942 and was cremated at the Karrakatta Cemetery.

George Nelson

Jim Fitzpatrick Spoke

The club was graced with not one but two visits from author Jim Fitzpatrick, one in Perth and then a few days later in Albany. Whilst in Albany Jim also spoke to a couple of bookclubs.

He gave members and visitors a fascinating insight into his early research for his first book (and PhD thesis) "The Bicycle and the Bush". In the light of the importance of his books it was particularly interesting hearing about the prejudice and scorn that his thesis proposal was met with in academia.

Robert Frith

WAHCC August 2017 Meeting Minutes

Opened

7:30pm Monday, 17th Aug, 2015

Present

Mal Buckland, Mal & Myrene Bell, Dave Clark, Viv Cull, Robert Frith, Phil Harris, Alan Hind, Robert Hunt, Kym Murray, Alan Naber, Harold & Judy Perry, Merv & Dawn Thompson.

Apologies

Tim Eastwood, Cameron Smith, Peter Wells

Visitors

Will Roseborough

Next Meeting

Monday 21st, September 2015

Announcements:

Rob Frith moved for honoraum for Jim Fitzpatrick for his July talks to both the Perth & Great Southern chapters of the WAHCC. Unanimously accepted with a show of hands.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes for June's AGM - Mal Buckland moved. Seconded Dave Clark.

Robert Hunt objected stating that the AGM minutes could only be accepted at the following AGM and that a separate motion be put at a general meeting endorsing the new committee.

Treasurer's Report:

Balance at at hand, statement dated 17th August 2015 less outstanding accounts; \$9,465.52 Petty Cash on hand \$80.00

Matters Arising:

The club's new logo to be put on the agenda for the next committee meeting.

Correspondence Inward:

City of Fremantle - Alex Marshal regarding Arthur Grady Day for May 7th 2016

Graeme Cox query about possible information or history of a Dussart & Accou motor pacing tandem

Richard Rennie of the Light & Sound Museum is chasing information on some historical model steam engines possibly made by Duncan McDonald in Kalgoorlie in the '20's.

Insurance Invoice in.

Correspondence Outward:

Nil

Events Co-ordinator Reports

Recent Events Attended or Held:

20th July - Jim Fitzpatrick's talk for the July Meeting being well attended and received in Perth. Jim was presented with a copy of "Velo-City: Cycling in Western Australia" by Debra Mayrhofer as a Thank You on the evening.

Separate reports back from the Great Southern of Jim presenting 2 separate talks and an a Radio Interview.

26th July - Bibra Lake Social Ride. A pleasant ride reported, despite the small matters of Judy's mechanical and Tony fainting. A follow up call that evening revealed everything OK with Tony however.

15th August - Collie - Donnybrook Race Display, Collie. Attended by a number of members with a good representation of bikes, including Mal and some of his treasures.

A highlight of the trip being a visit to the informal local museum set up in an old shop space in down town Collie. The local paper, the Collie Mail also interviewed members and took a number of photos.

Upcoming Events:

27th September - Bus Trip to Donnybrook Museum. Robert Hunt discussed.

(Stuart Donetta Contact) Probable \$20-25 per head to cover cost.

14th October (Wednesday) - Ride to Work Day. Possible club participation and small display at the Perth Concert Hall. Likely early start ~6:30am Details TBC.

25th October - Tour de Rust. (The weekend following the October meeting). Early tentative guest hosts are Merv and Rob.

11th November - Have A Go Day.

29th November - Christmas Wind Up

1st Week of December Christmas Pageant

General Business:

Alan Naber has recently sourced a copy of the TV Mini Series "Tracks of Glory" partly based upon Jim Fitzpatrick's book "Major Taylor Down Under" and has suggested a viewing evening for the club.

Alan has also recently completed the London to Brighton Charity Ride and also is offering a slide/photo night Ride Report.

Mal Bell encountered modern day Penny Farthing builder Dan Bolwell at the Perth airport delivering one of his bikes locally.

Suggestion made to present Club details to Dan to pass on to the new local owner should they wish to make contact and join.

Show and Tell:

Robert Frith presented a mystery item earlier in the meeting, and later revealed to be a map sheet holder.

Phil Harris showed a bargain Bianchi branded jersey picked up at the Winter Track Gran Prix

Meeting Closed: 8:35pm

Check your membership status

As of the August meeting the club has 40 members on its books, however only 22 are currently financial.

A separate reminder has been included with the post version of this newsletter for lapsed members.



Western Australian Historical Cycle Club Inc.
PO Box 224, Applecross, WA, 6153 email info.wahcc@gmail.com
President: Robert Frith
Vice President: Merv Thompson
Treasurer: Malcolm Bell
Secretary: Kym Murray
Committee Members: Alan Hind, Malcolm Buckland, Murray Gomm

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.

Club Calendar

Meeting - Monday Sep 21th 7.30pm

Applecross clubroom - Speaker George Nelson

Bus Trip - September 27th

Donnybrook and environs

Club contact Robert Hunt 94440071

Meeting - Monday Oct 19th 7.30pm

Applecross clubroom

Tour de Ruste - Sun. Oct 25th

Meeting - Monday Nov 16th 7.30pm

Applecross clubroom

Have A Go Day Display - Wed Nov 11th

Burswood Park contact Merv

Thompson

Christmas Party Nov 29th

Kings Park, Club Contact Judy Perry



photos;

this page, Billie Samuels leaving to ride to Melbourne on a Malvern Star bicycle, 4 July 1934, by Sam Hood

previous page, c. 1913 Reggie 'Iron Man' McNamara (1887-1971) was a champion Australian cyclist

Photos courtesy State Library of NSW