



# Not The Spoken Word

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

## Five Sparkling Swans

Never look a gift horse in the mouth, particularly when the thoroughbred in question is a Swansea 5-Swan. I was extremely grateful to be offered this racehorse as a restoration project. However, the old girl required a fair bit of dentistry to bring her out of retirement.

This Swansea is a 1941 model. A large frame with a 23.5 inch seat tube. The geometry suggested a track heritage, with a steep head angle of 78 degrees. The seat angle is relaxed at 70 degree, common for the day.

When I received the bike in 2014, it appeared rideable. The 52t Williams chain set, hollow TDC bottom bracket axle, Brampton headset and dome top seat post were clearly original, so were preserved, polished and remain on the bike today. The other components were modern add-ons, and were given away. The wheels went to another Swansea restoration project, and got that bike back on the road. That small gift repaid itself many times over, but more on that later.

The frame was powder coated yellow when I got it. This thick lacquer had done a good job of protecting the frame from the ravages of coastal living for many years. However, it also hid a troubled past. Close inspection revealed a bent top tube. The ATP stem, almost certainly original to the bike, was also twisted. Gentle sanding of the top tube revealed crash damage, a handlebar strike to the top tube, maybe a racing accident on a velodrome. The large dent had been well repaired with braze, but the frame was twisted. Shot blasting to remove the rest of the powder coat found further damage. There was long crack through the length of the indent in the non-drive chain stay. The frame was now clearly unrideable.

I now found myself at that well know fork in the road of restoration. We have all been there and the choice can be difficult. Turn left for preservation, or right for complete reconstruction. With the frame bent, cracked, and with no original paint to left save, the direction was clear...I put her out on the curb for the hard waste collection.

Only joking. A bike like this was too important. So I began the process of trying to discover what a new Swansea would have looked like in 1941. What components were needed to get this bike back to "As new" condition? I also sold one of my kidneys.

Original printed information about Swansea is not easy to come by, particularly regarding paint. I visited quite a few Swansea's with original paint, to get some ideas, but their art deco styling wasn't for me. I did have some luck along the way though. During a visit to see the Swansea at Mercer Cycles in Freo, I got chatting with the owner. He was selling a collection of vintage bike parts for a friend, and let me buy an identical pattern ATP stem and handlebar to replace the damaged one that came with the bike. After a further six months of getting nowhere, a chance conversation at the club house changed everything. A guy living a few streets from me was after a pair of wheels for a Swansea he

had just found. I offered him my wheels and we arranged to meet. It was love at first sight...not with Gary Bush, but with the paintwork on his bike.

Things were moving again now. Peter Campbell carefully repaired the frame. The top tube and chain stay were replaced. Also, the drunken attempt to drill a hole in the fork crown for a front brake was filled. Cameron Smith resprayed the frame and hand painted the pin stripes and artwork, copying the original design from Gary's bike.



The search for components was now focused on wheels. Another six months of eBay watching went by, but no Australian made hubs came into VEV. So I settled on a pair of drilled Harden "bacon slicers". I had read somewhere that 500 pairs of these were exported to Australia, and that was good enough for me. I had my heart set on wooden rims, so a pair of Cherchio Ghisallo pista rims were

ordered from Italy. These are still made by hand in the traditional way on the shores of Lake Como. Poetry to my ears and eyes, but doggerel to my wallet.

Harden Hubs are drilled for 15g spokes, but these are not easy to find in Australia. The thought of drilling out the hubs to 14g was too frightening. So I called on some old friends in the UK to help me out. Soon, shiny new stainless steel 15/17g double butted DT Swiss spokes had made their journey half way around the world to my shed. When they arrived they didn't fit. They seemed to be too long. I was furious with myself. What had I done wrong? Ghisallo rims are supplied with special 1 inch nipples, longer than usual, to pass right

through the thicker wooden rim. But what I hadn't realised was that these nipples also have an unusually long 15mm internal thread. Standard DT Swiss nipples have an 8mm internal thread. DT Swiss spokes have a 10mm thread. I had measured up for a standard wheel build, with the spoke ends aiming to reach the nipple head. But this could not happen with the longer nipples, as the extended internal thread fouled the spoke, locking them up 5mm short of the nipple head. Having struggled to get any spokes at all, I decided to drill out the extra 7mm of thread from the inside of each of the 72 long nipples, a task I performed with a Dremel and X-rated language. In the end, the decision was a good one. In fact, the spokes were the correct length, and the wheel build was easy after that. The rear wheel was finished with an 18t BSA sprocket to give a reasonable gear.

The bike is dressed with gum walled tubulars, a honey coloured Brooks Professional saddle, a Brooks chrome seat clamp, Chater Lea Sprint pedals and Brooks leather toe straps. Newbaum yellow cotton bar tape was treated with about 25 coats of shellac (pre-mix bottle from Bunnings), until the colour matched the saddle. Cork bar ends came from the local brewing shop, only requiring a little bit of shaping for a good fit. These were also coated with shellac. New old stock 1940s chain tugs secure the rear wheel. Custom machined T-washers secure the front hub in the keyhole front fork dropouts. A modern silver chain was a practical choice, but looks fine. For a final flourish, and to complete this patriotic green and gold Swansea, the toe clips are Cyclo Oppy.

The build has taken 5 years, on and off. The majority of the time was spent worrying about the correct thing to do. Some would say just ride it, and they have a good point; that is what a bike is for. But I felt a strong sense of responsibility to this bike, to the previous owner, to its history, to get it right... whatever that might mean. The bike now lives in the house; a stable is no place for a thoroughbred like this.

#### Will Bugg



## Stuck in the Shed with Donald Main

### What are you currently working on?

I am about to start on a complete strip down of a 1949 Simplex Cross-frame with linked drum brakes. It is in a sorry state being very rusty with cracked mudguards and is beyond just a tart-up.

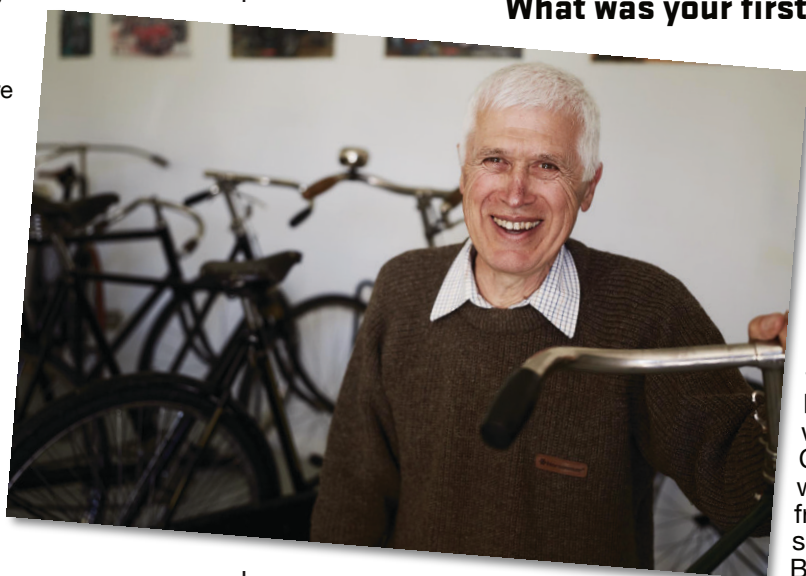
### How many rideable bikes do you have?

Depends what you mean by rideable? 6 are rideable but they won't all stop.

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

A 1926 Centaur Cross-frame, so light and nimble.

### What was your first bike?



A tricycle until I was 13, due to lack of balance. Then a hand-me-down Raleigh with 3 speed Sturmey-Archer. The first bike I bought new was a 1975 Carlton Corsa with 5 gears from a bike shop in Bristol, UK. Amazingly

about a year ago I discovered that bike in a friend's shed (who shall remain nameless) as he was heard to mutter "I can't ride that thing, it is too heavy and uncomfortable with only 5 gears".

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

An 1880's high wheeled tricycle or a new titanium flat bar bike with a silent and discreet electric motor.

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

Nothing man-made, just the sounds of nature's birdlife that fills our garden.



## Have A Go Day

Hot weather didn't stop a strong club contingent from showing up at Burswood. This year we had a staggering 30 bikes on show as well as a couple of our pull up banners.



## February Auction

The next club auction will be at the February meeting.

Items for sale (more photos on the club website);

- 1994 Giant Cadex ALR1 in very good condition, small
- 28" front wheel with Westwood style rim
- 28" rear wheel Westwood style rim & Eadie coaster hub
- 28" front wheel with wooden rim
- Partial frame with snail cam dropouts and BSA stamp on seat lug, probably pre-war
- 28" rear wheel with Westwood style rim and Sturmey Archer AB 3 speed braked hub
- Delivery bike bell, damaged
- Largish Malvern Star 5 Star frame



## Christmas Pageant

The club has been riding in the Christmas Pageant for many years now. 2019's event was held on a pleasant December evening with 27 participants, a record for us.

There are quite a few videos showing the WAHCC team on YouTube, try this one for starters; <https://tinyurl.com/rp6q46g>



FOR A REALLY SMART HAIRCUT

### Hopalong 2 Cassidy's

2 Chairs . . . No Waiting

397 OXFORD ST., MOUNT HAWTHORN

Phone Bj 2040

# Club Calendar

**Mon 17th Feb 19:30**

## **Monthly Meeting & Auction**

6 Hickey St, Ardross

**Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 9:00**

## **Bibra Lake Ride**

A leisurely lap or two of the lake. Meet at Bibra Lake Reserve Carpark, Progress Drive, just north of the Gwilliam Road corner.

**Mon 16<sup>th</sup> Mar 19:30**

## **Monthly Meeting**

6 Hickey St, Ardross

**Mon 20<sup>th</sup> Apr 19:30**

## **Monthly Meeting**

6 Hickey St, Ardross

**Mon 18<sup>th</sup> May 19:30**

## **Monthly Meeting**

6 Hickey St, Ardross

**Mon 15<sup>th</sup> Jun 19:30**

## **Annual General Meeting**

6 Hickey St, Ardross

AT **BOANS** OF PERTH  
"BLUEBIRD" Club Racers



£28/12/6

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## Flash Cycles

### Heart and Soul of Midland Cycling

Club marque days, focussed on Milton Jones and Swansea Cycles, held over the past couple of years have both been huge successes. They have given us the opportunity to vastly expand on the history of WA cycling in WA. Between them the two shows have attracted hundreds of people, an audience that has come specifically to see what the WAHCC has to offer.

This year over weekend of April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> we're digging into the history of Flash Cycles. To date we've spoken to Bevan Barron, the son of original Flash owner Eddie Barron, and to Bob and Shirley Reynolds, friends of Eddie's who bought the shop from him in 1980 and ran it for the following 20 years.

Bob and Shirley have kept a lot of interesting material from their time at Flash;

- a record of all the bikes sold, including serial numbers and buyers
- several recumbents designed by Bob
- novelty 'tall bikes' used to promote Flash at events like the Westral Wheel Race and the Christmas Pageant

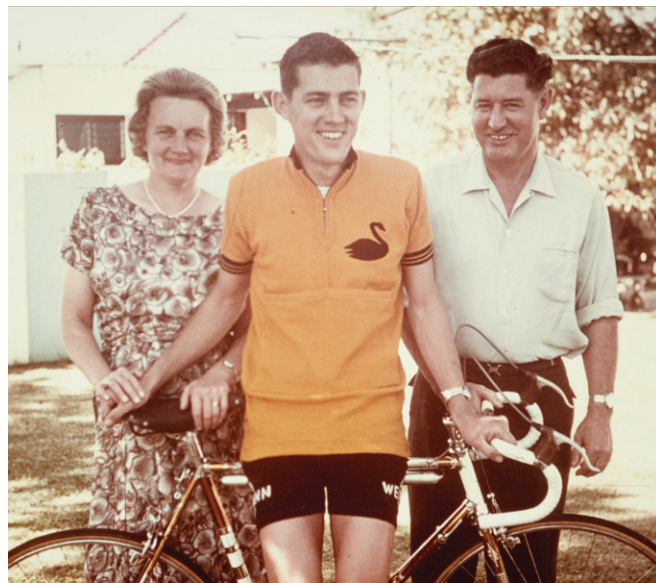
We have a Can You Help? Request going in The West Australian soon and hope to generate some more interest and information from that.

If you would like to be involved in putting the show together, displaying Flash bikes from your collection, or can help over the weekend please email or phone me;

[info.wahcc@gmail.com](mailto:info.wahcc@gmail.com)

0411555607

Robert Frith



Above; Bevan Barron with his Mum, Joy and Dad, Eddie.

Below; Interior of the Flash shop on Gt Northern Hwy, Midland

