



Not The Spoken Word

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

Boans Bluebird

A complete Boans Bluebird was recently donated to the club by Marilyn Collett, widow of the the bike's one owner Des. Marilyn's account of the bike's history follows.

The story of the Bluebird bike which belonged to Des Collett.

The bike was purchased when Des turned 13 years of age. (in the early 1950's)

His father worked for the Midland Railways. They lived at Hannamah, a siding on the Midland line about 80 miles from Perth.

The bike was purchased from Boans via the catalogue system. (I have also given you a copy of a Boans catalogue).

Because of the isolation of where his family lived, high school was only available if your parents could afford it or believed in higher education. The children either had to go to boarding school or live with a family where high school was available.

Des's parents did not make high school available to him and he left school aged 13.

He paid for the bike himself, possibly originally funded by his parents. The bike would have travelled to Hannamah via the railways.

Because of the isolation and limited work options being the Midland Railways or farming Des had no option but to work as a farmhand.

The Bluebird was the means by which Des was able to get to work.

He rode the bike several miles daily until he was old enough to buy a motorbike and get his license.

The Bluebird was a valued part of Des's history resulting in the bike surviving until 2020 in the possession of his family, when it was given to the historical bike club.



Left: Des Collett's Bluebird is part of the July Club Auction.

Below: 1953 Boans advertisement.

Bluebird CYCLES from

BOANS OF PERTH

10% DEPOSIT (Balance in easy payments) **SECURES IMMEDIATE DELIVERY**

Inspect the magnificent range of "Bluebird" Cycles in Boans Cycle Department. A model to suit every member of the family. Only the very best in material and workmanship used in the construction of "Bluebird" Cycles.

BOYS' MODELS

(Coaster Hub)
£20/19/6

GIRLS' MODELS

(Coaster Hub)
£21/12/6

LADIES' MODELS

(Coaster Hub)
£22/19/6

MEN'S MODELS

(Coaster Hub)
£21/12/6

SEMI RACERS

(R. and Brake)
£23/17/6

CLUB RACER

(27 x 1 1/2 in. wheels)
£23/19/6

SPECIAL LOW PRICED

MEN'S CYCLE

£17/17/-

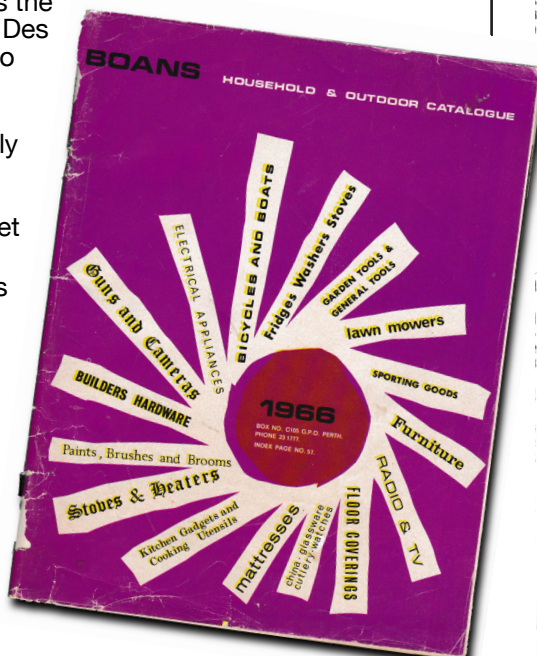
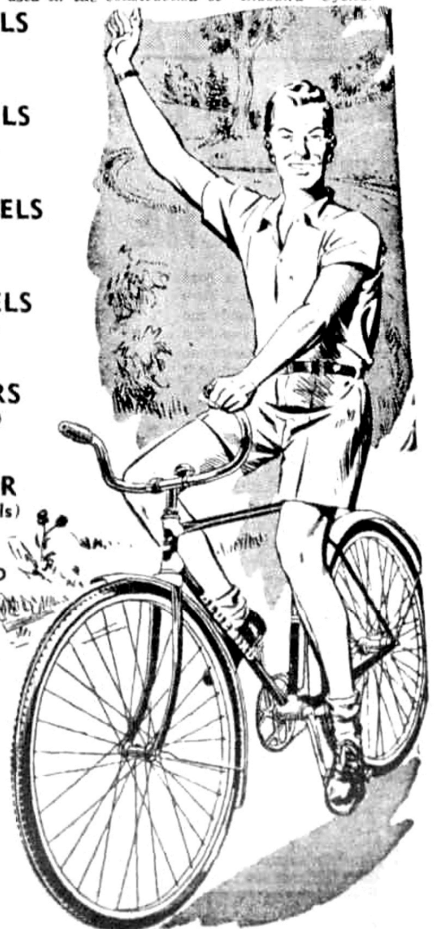
LADIES' CYCLE

£20/7/6

BOANS CYCLE DEPT.

Lower Ground Floor has a large stock of cycle parts and accessories always on hand at prices hard to beat

THE NEW "ACTON" CYCLE VALVES 1/3
"ACTON" Cycle Valves make pumping up cycle tyres childs play. Available once again at only 1/3 each.



Cycling The Old Coach Road

A RECORD CYCLING RIDE. ALBANY TO FREMANTLE IN 30 HOURS 53 MINUTES.

FINE RIDE BY ARTHUR WYATT. The West Australian Monday 8 October 1900

The convict-built road from Albany to the metropolis is now practically deserted. Winding away through mountainous country inhabited solely by kangaroo hunters and timber getters, travellers doing it are few. Prior to the construction of the Great Southern Railway, it was used as a coaching road from the capital to the southern port, and the wayfarer who ventures along it in these latter days finds now standing only the skeletons of what were at one time busy wayside hostelries. Cyclists rarely frequent this road further out than Armadale, for there you enter the hilly country and the road is rough, while accommodation within 100 miles is unobtainable. Several wheelmen on a pleasure seeking bent have climbed the hills, crossed the marshes, and tramped the stretches of dreary sand.

The last cyclists who made the trip were those who took part in the relay ride originated last year, which was a comparative failure. In July of last year a Fremantle rider named Kerr essayed to establish a record ride from Albany to Fremantle. He made the 273 miles in 49 hours 55 minutes. He had rough weather and the resultant swampy and heavy roads to contend with, and, as few wheelmen then knew what the road was like, his ride was considered a creditable one. During the ensuing spring Messrs. Mather and Gollan made the journey as tourists and their actual riding time for the distance being but 28 and a half hours, wheelmen with an inclination towards the securing of records have had designs upon that established by Kerr.

On Saturday Arthur Wyatt, a well-known Perth cyclist, of standing in athletic circles, commenced an onslaught upon Kerr's time, and, so well did he perform under climatic and road conditions similar to those experienced by Kerr, that he reduced the latter's time by 19 hours 2 minutes. Wyatt, having ridden down to Albany earlier in the week, started on his journey at 5 a.m. on Saturday.

He set out from the Albany Post Office accompanied by Messrs. Wright, Gribble, and Nesbit, three local wheelmen. Rain was falling, and there was every prospect of its continuance. During the whole of the day, in drenching rain and covered with mud, Wyatt plodded on, over hills, through temporary lakes, along sticky, muddy, and rough roads, and across heavy sand patches, at an average pace of 10 miles per hour.

Daylight broke shortly after he commenced his trip. The 33 miles to Mount Barker means traversing some fine running tracks and some heavy sand and on to Tenterden stiff hills are encountered. Crossing the Gordon sand plain Wyatt was forced to walk some miles, but once across the river, and arriving at Tunney's homestead, a fine road was traversed right up to Kojonup-96 miles-where he arrived at half-past 2 p.m.

Partaking of some cocoa and other refreshments provided by the Kojonup postmaster, Wyatt re-commenced shortly after 3 o'clock, and, after a good run of nine miles, entered the famous Kojonup sand lake, the road stretching across it in a white streak for seven miles. This patch much dreaded in the coaching days, necessitated walking nearly the whole way across it. Once on to the macadamised road again, Wyatt began to recover lost time, but the low lying land up towards Arthur River was exceedingly soft and somewhat heavy. The devastating fire which raged in this district at the termination of last summer demolished the bridge across the Hotham River, and it has never been rebuilt. With his machine held above his head, Wyatt waded the stream, now so considerably swollen with rain that the water reached his armpits.

Prior to reaching Arthur River, Wyatt's first misfortune overtook him. A broken telegraph insulator, half buried in

the mud, cut a deep gash in the tyre of his machine, and the necessary repairs cost him an hour of precious time. Darkness was setting in as he reached Spratt's Hotel at Arthur River. Here a welcome tea and a companion-Burville-were awaiting him. Re-commencing shortly after 8 o'clock, the rain having ceased, the rider had the advantage of a good road and moonlight to Williams just 100 miles from Perth. This place he reached at 10 o'clock on Saturday night, and, merely waiting for a drink, he continued along good roads for 10 miles. As far as the Williams, Wyatt had run parallel with the railway line, but now the latter veered away to the eastward. Crossing the Warrakine Creek -10 miles from Williams-Wyatt and his companion struck into marshy country, rendered exceedingly heavy by the rain. For 12 miles this trying and exhausting condition continued, but, once out of the valley lying between the Warrakine Creek and the Hotham River, undulating country with fair roads were met.

The nine miles to Bannister was accomplished after several falls, occasioned by the ruts unobservable in the indifferent light, and that place was reached at 1 o'clock on Sunday morning. Waiting here for the record breaker were Carrick, Bulkid and Solomons, three Perth wheelmen, and, the five riders having partaken of an early breakfast, continued city wards at about 2 a.m. So rough was the going along the mountainous roads leading to within 18 miles of the city, that in the darkness now prevailing riding was absolutely impossible.

For upwards of two hours the five travellers tramped up hill and down dale, awaiting daylight. Morning broke just as the branch road to Wandering was reached--67 miles from Perth. Even now progress was rendered very slow, for the timber jinkers had literally ploughed up the road, and had made riding possible only on side tracks. A timber landing stage 37 miles from the city was reached at 9 o'clock, and the timber getters having generously provided breakfast.

The journey over the hills on indifferent roads was continued the run down the hillsides to Armadale landed the riders, now joined by Brigatti at that place, at 10 o'clock.

A couple of raw eggs and some cocoa so refreshed Wyatt that he led the party of cyclists, to the number of about twenty, awaiting him there, to the city in about an hour, passing the General Post Office at five minutes past 11 a.m. The run to Fremantle was accomplished in 48 minutes. Wyatt arriving at the Port Post Office at seven minutes to 12 a.m., thus accomplishing the ride in 30 hours 53 minutes during the whole of the ride.

Wyatt rode unpaced, those accompanying him following behind. His ride must be classed as the finest long distance performance yet accomplished in the colony. The coaching record for the journey is 26 hours, this time being recorded during a special trip made by Governor Broome and for which special arrangements in the shape of relays of horses were provided.

The machine ridden by Wyatt was an Armstrong's, one of the several dozens manufactured weekly. Armstrong's Cycle Agency in their extensive work shops in Hay-street. It weighs nearly 291b. being of the roadster type, and is fitted with Dunlop tyres. The rider carried with him a supply of eggs and egg sandwiches, raisins, and chocolate. He finished quite fresh, and declares that he feels none the worse for his long and trying ride.

Wyatt forms a somewhat interesting study as an athlete. Formerly of spare build, by a judicious training under Sandow the famous athlete whose system of exercising and writings upon the subject have produced wonderful results, Wyatt is now a sturdy, muscular fellow, whose chest development is little short of marvellous. Though short of stature, he perhaps has no equal in weight lifting and other forms of strength demonstrating in the colony. Some three years ago he met with an accident, which caused paralysis on one side. From this he completely recovered by a careful training under the Sandow system.

Stuck in the Shed with Bob Sommerville

What are you currently working on?

I am working on finding, refreshing or restoring components for four bikes before preparing to paint the frames and assemble. They are 1975 Peugeot U08, 1983 Swiss Cilo, 1980s Benotto and a 1995 Olmo. I have been learning to build wheels and how to unbuild them to re-do them correctly. I am hoping to be competent at it by 2099.

How many rideable bikes do you have?

I have 9 Peugeot bikes here (with another 2 in Paris). Most will remain unrestored but tidied up as well as can be, while retaining the originality and patina. Another bunch of various brands and ages are regular users. Contrary to what friends and family think I am not a collector but many of the bikes I have rescued from the local recycle yard or have been donated - many have been passed on for another life.

If push comes to shove what is your favourite bike?

My favourite bike varies according to rides, Currently an 80s Peugeot Premiere which was destined for the verge before finding me is my favourite. It cleaned up very well and rides smooth and reliable. The Olmo is fantastic to ride faster over longer distances. My legs are metres too short so the ride becomes more a low level drone flight.

What was your first bike?

I have had a bike as long as I can remember. Mostly hand me downs - without brakes. Kalgoorlie hardened sandals worked well on the back tyre - I still have gravel embedded in elbows and knees. Another hand me down was a racing bike from my uncle Ray Felton, who was a significant rider and later official in WA cycle racing. I got rid of the brakes pretty quickly on that too. A significant purchase in the 80s was a used Peugeot mountain bike. Later I learned it was a factory replica and so equipped with the best Shimano gear. I had that over 30 years and apart from regular lube and adjustment it was low maintenance and reliable in the street or in the bush...it was stolen about 3 years ago, but I still look for it. I replaced it with the first model Peugeot MTB - Canyon Express.

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

Dream bike? Any bike that I've finally finished before I die.

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

I listen in the shed to an iPad plugged in to many on-line international radio stations. No specific music genre but lately FIP Paris Groove seems to be on more often than not. I keep going to the Wisdom of Trump channel but I soon get bored with the total silence.

Fremantle History Ride

Sunday June the 21st saw 25 riders turn out for a spin around Fremantle's cycling hotspots of yore. Club members were joined by friends and members of the public for the ride which took in the past locations of significant bike shops like Speed King (photo below), Grants Cycle Agency, Brickhill Brothers and Swansea. We also stopped by Captain Walkers and Mercers, both serving customers in 2020. Mercer's wonderful 'rafter museum' never fails to astonish the uninitiated.

The old grandstand at Freo Oval and the old Beaconsfield Post Office feature in photographs of races from the 1890's to the 1950's - it's great to see them still standing.

Especially gratifying was the fact that so many riders were pedalling machines that had originated in Fremantle.

Take the tour anytime: <https://tinyurl.com/ydhsi593>



Covid-19 meeting update

Some good news at last! The VCC (who are the head lessee of the Hickey St clubrooms) have let us know that we are allowed to recommence our in-person meetings.

As of this writing we are only permitted 17 people in the meeting room and 3 in the kitchen. In addition we will have to bring our own cups, hand sanitiser and wipes.

The state government is due to announce Phase 5 on August 1st, however as we've seen these dates are not fixed.

Phase 5 is expected to do away with all restrictions except cross border travel, so there is a chance that we may return to 'normal' by the time our August meeting rolls around.

For the time being we must plan for a maximum of 17 people though.

Please let committee know if you'd like to attend in person - preference will be given to those who have been unable to join our Zoom online meetings.



Club Calendar

Mon 20th Jul 19:30

Annual General Meeting

In-person at 6 Hickey St (only 17 people though so let us know if you'd like to be one)

Online Zoom Meeting ID 862 0750 8770

check your email for the clickable link and meeting password close to the date.

Tour de Ruste - sometime in August?

This year's TdR is a work in progress.


Mon 17th Aug 19:30 General Meeting

In-person at 6 Hickey St (maybe only 17 people though so let us know if you'd like to be one)

Online Zoom Meeting ID 825 4136 8344

check your email for the clickable link and meeting password close to the date.

★ **W.A.'s First World Six-Days' Bike Race—**
£5,000 PERTH "SIX"



★ **Featuring top Overseas-Aust. Teams**

VELODROME

(LAKE MONGER)

● **Gasparella-Solari** ● **Barry Waddell-Lawrie**
(Italy) (W.A.) (Q'land)

● **Peter Panton-Stefler** ● **Pinarelllo-Perejuan**
(W.A.) (Germany) (Italy) (W.A.)

John Green—John Young

(Australia's most prolific "Six" Winners)

STARTS Sunday Night 8pm.

★ **A thrill-packed week of cycling sensations.**
★ **408 points sprints in thrilling day and night sessions between 12 Ace International Teams.**

ITALY'S MIGHTY GASPARELLA!

(Twice World Title Winner)

Western Australian Historical Cycle Club Inc. PO Box 224, Applecross, WA, 6153 email info.wahcc@gmail.com Chairperson: Robert Frith Vice Chair: William Riseborough Treasurer: Frank West Secretary: Robert Hunt Committee Member: Viv Cull

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.

The Truth Sat 8 Aug 1903

Scorching Skunks - Slaughtering Cyclists

There is do doubt about it. The bicycle as an implement of torture is as firmly established in Westralia as in any of the other States. The majority of the cylists of the male persuasion amongst us conduct their gyrations with a due regard to their obligations to people who merely walk.

They also pay some slight attention to the probable value of human life and limb, and suffering. But there are a great many who do not; they conduct their bike operations in the manner of a Boer baiter robbing a hen roost. It would, be unsafe to entrust most of them with a revolver, a bull pup, or even a sausage machine.

In the busiest parts of Hay-street the writer witnessed no less than three accidents quite recently through the furious riding of some cowardly fiends on wheels. The first victim was a young girl evidently returning from school. The scorcher glared, contemptively upon the prostrate form of his victim and rode on. In the second case another alleged man on a bicycle knocked a lady down like a ninepin. In this instance, however, he certainly went the length of assisting his victim into a chemist's shop, but he got quick and lively after that. The third unfortunate happened to be a man, and the cyclist, after half killing him, cursed him for getting in his way. The reply of the other individual as he picked himself off the roadway was characteristic of his nationality, as he drawled, "By God, stranger, if I had my gun here, I reckon you'd stop to inquire after the state of my health."

Just at this point "Truth" has a suggestion to offer. Let the City Council license bicycles. It cannot be a hardship, as the man or woman who can afford to keep a machine can certainly afford-the payment of a small registration fee. It seems anomalous that a man is compelled to pay a registration fee for his canine friend while his bike is on the free list.

The benefits of registration to the cyclist are many and apparent, while the various councils throughout the State would reap a large income from a legitimate impost.. It is estimated that in Perth and suburbs-alone there are in active existence some 8,000 bicycles, which, at a nominal fee of five shillings, would produce an annual income of £2000. There you are, Harry Brown, bring in a bicycle tax, and you won't have to stint the corporation laborers in their miserable pittance.

Jul/Aug Auction

The July August club auction is being conducted online via Bidding Owl. The auction items will be at the club rooms for the August meeting and members will be able to bid in person there. The auction concludes at 9:15pm on August 17th.

<https://www.biddingowl.com/Auction/index.cfm?auctionID=21151>

If you require assistance in placing a bid please email info.wahcc@gmail.com or call 0411555607.

Items for sale include;

- Boans Bluebird (see front page story)
- Avocet Frameset



AGM & Renewals

Many thanks to all who have renewed their memberships. As at this writing we are still 22 members down on last year. If you haven't renewed please do so at your earliest convenience.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties please call the club treasurer, Frank, on 0404 060 289 and we'll work something out.

Every member of the club is encouraged to consider standing for a position on committee. If you plan to nominate someone else please be sure to get their permission. You may nominate yourself.

If you wish to vote at the AGM but are unable to attend you may appoint a proxy. Please get in touch if you need any assistance.