



# Not The Spoken Word

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

## Zenith Cycles

Bob Duschka bought his first new bike, a Zenith, in 1948 when he was fifteen. He worked as a telegram delivery boy at the Inglewood Post Office and would ride this bike for work, fun and sport. He raced the bike using a fixed gear on the flip flop hub.

He continued riding the Zenith until his death in 2016 aged 83.

Along the way it has had several updates, as many bikes do. Around 1970 the frame was stripped back to bare metal & repainted with an automotive metallic turquoise spraycan paint. Many of the original components were re-plated. The original Dunlop steel rims were refurbished and painted.

Later, possibly in the early 80s, Bob again repainted, this time with Keep's Synthetic Enamel for Writing. The 'Poppy' colour paint was hand brushed and this is the colour the bike retains today. Bob did all his own bike assembly and repairs. Some components were updated, possibly purchased from Speedlite of Maylands as the downtube now carries their branding. At that time it got new wheels - 27" Mavic rims laced to high flange Normandy hubs - as well as a Cinelli headstem and bars and Shimano 600 brakes. Bob fitted the new flip flop hub with a fixed gear and a single speed freewheel. The Brooks saddle, stamped "Genuine Butt Leather" also dates from this period.

The Williams chainring is coded AL for 1949, the Brooks saddle cantle plate is stamped A75 - January to March 1975. The frame number is 706. Top tube is 58cm CTC and the seat tube is 57 CTT.

There are some curious ties with other local bike brands. The decorative spears on the fork lugs bear an uncanny resemblance to those of Subiaco brand,

**BOY wanted. 14. will be taught cycle profession thoroughly under personal supervision. great opportunity honest lad. Zenith Cycles. 676 Beaufort-st., Mt. Lawley.**

Flying Arrow, where frame builder Milton Jones got his start. Zenith proprietor John Foy regularly advertised for young lads to work in his bike shop. It's possible Bob or a mate filed the lugs of this bike.

In the mid 1940's there was some alliance between Zenith and Speedlite as evidenced by the 25 mile Zenith Speedlite road race held in Osborne Park. The 1950 Beverley Perth programme includes a full page ad for "Zenith Speedlite Cycles - The State's Fastest Cycle".



Bob's son Paul, brought the bike to a club meeting back in 2016 looking for information about Zenith Cycles. Sadly as is the case with so many Perth manufacturers we were unable to shed much further light on the subject. It well may be that Bob's old Zenith is one of only two still in existence.

Paul is a design and technology teacher who dedicates much of his spare time to helping low income and homeless people get onto reliable bikes. He has decided that that is where his priorities lie and has generously donated his Dad's Zenith to the club. Bob Duschka's Zenith is a part of the September club auction.

**Rob Frith & Paul Duschka**

Top: Bob (L) and friend Harley in Inglewood.

Above: L-R Bob, Alan Robins, Brian & Merv Inions. All three bikes shown are Zeniths.

**A GRAND SELECTION.**  
**BOYS' 16in., 20in., 24in., 26in., and 28in. CYCLES.**  
**GIRLS' 20in. to 24in., with back pedal brake.**  
See us for satisfaction.  
**ZENITH CYCLES.**  
opp. Post Office, Mt. Lawley.  
Ring U1493.

# Pots of Gold - Rainbow Cycles

Founded in 1866 in Adelaide Harris Scarfe was a hardware store that ultimately had shops across Australia. It was a major supplier, and manufacturer of a broad range of household, agricultural and industrial items.

Harris Scarfe's Rainbow brand bikes were sold in stores and via catalogue. During World War II, when the Australian Government enforced price controls, it used the Harris Scarfe catalogue as the price guide.

Entering a partnership with West Australian business W. Sandover & Co in the 1930's gave Harris Scarfe's ambitions local clout in the WA market.

Ex-pat South Aussie William Sandover, assisted by his younger brother Alfred, had prospered when gold was discovered at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie in the 1890s. The period saw a huge demand for machinery and all kinds of hardware which W. Sandover & Co. was able to supply.



In 1921, Alfred Sandover donated the medal bearing his name as the West Australian Football League's annual award recognising the league's fairest and best player of the regular season, a tradition still alive today.

The date at which East Fremantle football coach Ossie Prowse started with

Sandovers is unknown, as is the exact nature of his relationship with them. In the late 40's and early 50's Ossie enthusiastically poached Perth's top riders sponsored by other bike shops, notably Geoff Baker and Bill Gilbride who had ridden for Swansea. Riders recall being sent to Aussie Cycles on Milligan St in Perth to be measured up for an Aussie built, Rainbow branded frame. Ian McKillop remembers Ossie paying cash for equipment vouchers given to riders by Sandover's competition in an effort to keep them out of the competitors' shops.

The Perth built Rainbows appear to have been the exception rather than the rule - the Rainbows sold by Sandovers and their agents were not exceptional. Touted as "All British" for much of its life, the Rainbow was mass produced in South Australia from British tubing and components. The parts fitted to frame number 10591, a typical survivor, while "all British" are unlikely to have found favour with sponsored riders like Bernie Fudger or Tom 'Tiger' Lyons; Defiance

hubs, Utility brand cranks and painted steel rims were strictly the province of the affordable transport oriented roadster.

Bikes featured a colourful rainbow decal on the seat tube inscribed "Harris Scarfe" for the South Australian market and "Harris Scarfe and Sandovers" for Western Australia. They had one or two raised "R"s brazed on the head tube. Frames and rims were brightly painted and a distinct Rainbow decal applied to the downtube. Filigree pinstriping for the forks, bicycle pump braze ons and crank oil filler were common.

The bikes were first available in WA in 1934 and in August 1935 the Rainbow bicycle range was officially "announced" in WA's Sunday Times. At the time the average Perth man took home £211 a year. £10 bought 1 acre in Bayswater and £50 got you 5 acres in Belmont. A Rainbow bike cost £7.

Sandovers wasted no time promoting Rainbow; in 1935 the winning float in the Young Australia League's "Youth and Motherhood Parade" was the Rainbow entrant. That same year star South Australian rider Dean Toseland broke the Perth Bunbury return record on a Rainbow. In 1936 they sponsored Billy Read's record breaking Perth to Sydney solo record. (Read and Gordon Jones had previously crossed the country in 1933 on an Aussie Tandem). And in 1938 the inaugural Sandovers Rainbow Ball was held - "Electric lights were festooned from the balconies, a large rainbow was painted above the stage, and pictures of cyclists were placed under the rainbow."

The ball ran annually until at least the mid 50's, however the Harris Scarfe name was dropped from advertising material around 1950, and in 1962 Harris Scarfe and Sandovers Ltd was taken over by Electronic Industries Ltd in a share deal as business jitters "pricked the prosperity bubble of the Brand Liberal Government".

The Rainbow story is a marketing spin - excuse the pun - a history of bicycle promotion that shone in the shops and made pots of gold.

Despite the backing of a statewide department store, national distribution, aggressive marketing highlighting British parts, and plenty of race winners there are remarkably few surviving examples of Rainbow bicycles today.

## Toby Hodgson

Right; Sandovers' Perth store in 1934

Left; 1951 promotional brochure; Ladies choose Rainbows, men too!



## Stuck in the Shed with Kerry Torpy

### What are you currently working on?

I am currently in the process of restoring my little 1956 Flash road bike. I am pleased I was able to acquire it through the club and have had several conversations with the widow of the original owner Kevin Moran. With the help of my old Kalgoorlie friend Bob Sommerville I have collected all of the period parts that are needed to keep it as close to original as possible. The Fiamme rims have been re-spoked and restored. Next job is painting the frame.

### How many rideable bikes do you have?

I have 13 rideable bikes. Nine Peugeot of various models - Mixtes, fold ups, Ventoux, Chenonceaux, and 1974-88 Record Du Monde models. Aside from the Peugeots there are a Raleigh Touriste, Swansea Wesporte (Taiwan built 1975), a 1980's Milton Jones (special build for Col Farmer) and a Fondriest Status. I like the Peugeot. While well made they are really not valuable as a collector bike because they were sold in such large numbers.

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

I would have to say that my favourite would be my 1986 Peugeot Ventoux road bike. I bought it new from John Mervan, the Peugeot cycle dealer in Subiaco at the time. It has been ridden in excess of 80,000 kms and is still in original condition - nothing has needed replacing. The Simplex Derailleur has never needed any adjustment. I fitted mudguards and a carrier rack as I rode it from Perth to Bunbury once. I am also fond of my every day all weather bike the Swansea Wesporte that I picked up at the Lion's Club shed in Busselton for \$10.00, it is a delight to ride.

### What was your first bike?

I remember it very well - Christmas 1952 and I had just turned five. It was a reconditioned 24 inch Runwell coloured red bought locally in Kalgoorlie. I was very small but being a 24 inch bike it wasn't too big for me. I remember it had a sloping top bar similar to modern bikes. It was the only frame built like this that I knew of then. The Runwell took my everywhere, to school and out the bush beyond Boulder loaded with camping gear in the company of my brother Murray and other friends. It served me well for many years until I finally grew out of it. The next bike was a new Malvern Star three star from the Malvern Star bike shop in Boulder. In Later years when Murray took up racing he was sponsored on Malvern Star bikes by Mr Gillespie, the owner of the shop.

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

Of all the bikes that I have owned there was one very special bike, my PT Stallard. I had it built specially for competition racing when I was a junior rider in 1964. Dennis Stallard measured me up and the frame was built by his brother Percy Stallard in Wolverhampton in the UK and shipped to WA. Dennis build the bike up using mostly Italian parts. He had a business operating from his house in Shenton Park and imported all the best gear available from Italy, the UK and other countries.

When I retired from competition I passed the PT Stallard on to a younger rider in the Eastern Goldfields Cycle Club. It was later passed on to the Kalgoorlie club. Hoping it is still around I have tried to locate it. I have had a lead on another PT Stallard that may be in a collection in Coolgardie. It could be one of my older brother Murray's bikes. Having just purchased the Milton Jones bike I am keen to ride it. It reminded me very

much of the Stallard. when I first saw this bike. Milton built several frames for Dennis Stallard after Percy retired. In 2010 I rode my Fondriest Status from Perth to Kalgoorlie, a three day ride. It is a lovely bike but I really wished I had been riding my PT Stallard!

If I'm lucky enough to find a 21 inch Stallard road bike I'd be very happy; it would complete my bike collection.

Finally there is one other bike that was beauty. It belonged to Fred Tedge and his younger brother Don. Don trained my brother in Kalgoorlie. Mr Tedge senior purchased the bike from an Italian miner who had brought it with him when he emigrated to work in Leonora

in the early 50's. It was a

Gloria and it was the most beautiful racing bike I had ever seen. Murray rode this Gloria when he won the under 14 Schoolboys Cycling Championship at Midland in 1959. Fred Tedge had the bike with him in Perth for many years after he left Kalgoorlie.

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

I do enjoy most music. The 1950 / 60'S and early 70's era is my favourite, because I am a Baby Boomer. I do like Leonard Cohen though Hip Hop or Rap to me is just meaningless. In my shed you will be listening to Fats Domino, Elvis, Roy Orbison, Little Richard, Neil Diamond, Chuck Berry and all the other greats. Music with a beat!



# Club Calendar

## Sun 20<sup>th</sup> Sep 8:30 Ride - Coffee & Cars

Bob Sommerville is cooking up a short ride from West Perth to the regular Coffee and Cars show at UWA. Meet at the corner of Parliament Place and Harvest Tce, West Perth.

## Mon 21<sup>st</sup> Sep 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 896 9863 1769

(Check your email for the clickable link and meeting password close to the date).

## Fri 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct 18:00 Display - SpeedDome

The club will mount a display as part of the Westral Wheel Race festivities.

6pm setup for 7pm start.

Please email or call if you'd like to participate - info.wahcc@gmail.com or 0411555607

## Sat/Sun 17th & 18th Oct

### Beverley Heroic Retro Bike Show

### Heroic Classic 55 & 100 Mile Rides

Beverley Town Hall

Further information <https://www.theheroic.com.au>

Or email info.wahcc@gmail.com

## Mon 19<sup>th</sup> Oct 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 843 9031 4996

(Check your email for the clickable link and meeting password close to the date).

## Sat/Sun Nov 7th & 8th 9am - 4 pm

### Flash Cycles - The Soul of Midland Cycling

The Old Midland Courthouse, Helena St, Midland.

## Mon 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 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 894 5813 0098

(Check your email for the clickable link and meeting password close to the date).

# Wanted To Buy

PT Stallard road bike 20 / 21 inch frame (Or any leads to anyone who may have one)

Contact **Kerry Torpy 0431 301 784**

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.

# Sep/Oct Auction

The September October club auction is being conducted online via Bidding Owl. The auction items will be at the club rooms for the October meeting and members will be able to bid in person there. The auction concludes at 9:30pm on Oct 19<sup>th</sup>.

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

If you require assistance in placing a bid please email [info.wahcc@gmail.com](mailto:info.wahcc@gmail.com) or call **0411555607**.

Items for sale include;

- Bob Duschka's Zenith
- Samurai A-Bike copy (ex Dave Clark)

## Jul/Aug Auction Results

Boans Bluebird	\$73.00
Brooks B66 Saddle	\$118.00
4 x Waterbags	\$30.00
Avocet Frame	\$20.00
Carradice Saddle Bag	\$70.00
Kerosene Bicycle Lamp	\$40.00
Carbide Bicycle Lamp	\$68.00

# Beverley Heroic 2020

In 1897 Percy Armstrong of Rover Cycle Agency created the "longest race in the Colony", 116 miles from Beverley to Perth. The race has seen many versions, routes, winners, and bicycles. It was always tough with plenty of hills, gravel and interesting weather.

The race was run for the last time in 1999. In 2014 The Beverley Heroic was born.

The Heroic is now a full weekend of events. It celebrates WA's racing heritage with a challenging classic ride, historic towns and quiet roads. The Retro Bike Show (run by club members) attracts over 40 fascinating old bikes going back to the late 1800's.

Come along for the history, camaraderie, the old bikes and stories. Stay the weekend and ride your classic (or whatever you want).

**More info at [www.theheroic.com.au](http://www.theheroic.com.au)**

