



# Not The Spoken Word

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

## Phil Bristow-Stagg

Born in Northam in 1945, Phil Bristow-Stagg showed early talent for cycling and in 1960 joined Evan Strudwick and Dave Melvin as WA representatives at the Australian Schoolboys Championships in Adelaide.

Finishing school, Phil relocated to Midland to take up a fitter and turner apprenticeship at the Midland Railway workshops. He was reunited with Strudwick, also apprenticed at Midland. The duo often left their 'Flashes' in the bike racks and trained together on the Fremantle or Greenmount Hills loops after work.

Phil dreamt of getting a place in the 1966 Commonwealth Games cycling team which was only open to amateurs. This dream required single minded determination as well as family and employer support. Evan on the other hand, needed to ride as a professional to supplement his apprenticeship wage.

Phil was primarily known as a track rider, winning Track Champion of Champions in 1964, 65 and 66. He was also a brilliant road rider winning many road events including 25 mile, 50 mile and 125 mile Road Champion in 1965.

Phil gained a place on the Australian team by taking unpaid leave to travel to Adelaide. When lack of finance threatened, fundraising by Floreat Park Cycling Club, and a flagpole meeting organised by Midland Workshops shop steward and firebrand Communist, Jack Marks, saved the day.

The money combined with extra leave (plus more leave without pay!) granted by the Commissioner of Railways saw Phil achieve his goal of representing his country.

Phil, riding his Flash in the Kingston, Jamaica Games, took Silver in the 1000m Time Trial, second only to Trevor Gibbon, an unofficial world record holder.

*Viv Cull*



*Above - Phil Bristow Stagg on Flash #379, photo courtesy Pat and Bevan Barron.*

*Below left - Flash #379, the bike that went with Phil to Jamaica for the 1966 Commonwealth Games.*



## Membership Renewals Due Still Only \$25.00

Annual club fees are due on **June 1st**. The fee remains at a disturbingly low 25 Australian dollars.

Your committee members put in a mountain of time to ensure the smooth and enjoyable running of the club. "How can I ever repay them?" We're glad you asked - a great start is acting on the attached renewal notice ASAP.

You must be a paid up member to participate as a candidate or voter in the election of committee positions held at the Club's Annual General Meeting in July.

# Bicycle Restoration the Burra Way

## Part Two - Conservation Policies

In part one I introduced the radical notion of doing nothing to newly acquired projects. The key concepts are researching and understanding your bike's history and provenance. It may be that there is little or nothing known about the bike or there may be a wealth of knowledge that will help inform the next step.

We're drawn to machines for a variety of reasons. Rarity, nostalgia or attractive pricing. Design, be that aspects of frame design, engineering, embellishment or componentry is an obvious consideration. And of course there's provenance - design or prior ownership of a bike by a person or organisation of note is an undeniable attraction, be they a winning rider, a celebrity or just your old dad.

The next step on the Burra Charter path to vintage cycling enlightenment is to develop a conservation policy, and from this you can develop a plan of action.

'Restoration' is a catch-all term that gets enthusiastically bandied about the vintage and veteran bike scene whenever collectors are gathered together. Contrasting 'restoration' with 'conservation' is considered the height of subtlety and is only used by the most elite collectors. Understanding and applying the Burra Charter principles obliges us to define these terms more carefully, and to add a few more.

At the heart of the Burra Charter is the idea that items of cultural significance should be conserved. You and I are now conservators engaging in acts of conservation. The Burra Charter urges the adoption of a 'do no harm' attitude;

**"Conservation is based on a respect for the existing fabric, use, associations and meanings. It requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible."**

Five conservation strategies are defined in the Burra Charter, let's have a look at them. (Once again I've substituted the word 'bike' for 'place' in the original Burra text.)

**'Preservation means maintaining a bike in its existing state and retarding deterioration'**

Preservation is appropriate for extremely rare or unusual items, bikes that are unlikely to be ridden.

**'Maintenance means the continuous protective care of a bike, and its setting.'**

I love riding my bikes, who doesn't? The character of each is mostly defined by its age and original purpose. Does your collection include low value bikes? Roadside pickups with no provenance, transport bikes with unremarkable histories? Riding them incurs wear to everything from tyres and chain to bar tape, and wear requires maintenance.

**'Restoration means returning a bike to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material.'**

The word-part or prefix 're' has long been a part of English. Its roots trace back through Old French and Latin to the theorised Proto-Indo-European language first postulated five hundred years ago. 'Re's' meanings ring clear with the bike enthusiast; "back to the original place; again, anew, once more," also with a sense of "undoing".

As mentioned earlier the word restoration is used frequently in the old bike community. 'Restore' is often contrasted with 'conserve' - a binary choice about the future of a particular bike. Conservation is taken to mean that a clean and tidy is all

that's required. Restoration signals more significant work that would certainly involve the introduction of new or refurbished parts, perhaps including new paint. The Burra Charter introduces bike collectors to some new words - reconstruction is the first - and, as previously mentioned, it recasts the term 'conservation' more broadly.

**'Reconstruction means returning a bike to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material.'**

Restoration and reconstruction have much in common. Both begin with our favourite prefix 're' and both concern themselves with "known earlier states". Let's take a moment to tease them apart.

Restoration is limited to removing accretions; cleaning up rust and dust, and, if the bike's in bits, reassembling it. No new material means no new consumables like tyres or bar tape, no new paint and no replacement parts. Reconstruction allows us the introduction of parts and paint to meet the goal of returning the bike to a **known earlier state**.

The bicycle had barely been invented in 1865 when Lewis Carroll sent his young friend Alice "Down The Rabbit Hole" in Chapter One of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland". A century and a half later three words - known earlier states - have us tumbling in after her. There's no way around this; establishing a 'known earlier state' is hard. Given free reign the pursuit can

confound the mind and damage the soul of the most hardened collector. This is important though so we shall not waver. The obvious resources available to us are photographs, written descriptions, recollections and contemporaneous machines.

Photographs, where available, are good sources of information. Prior to the 1970's most amateur photos were black and white, poorly framed and blurry, nonetheless information can be gleaned from them and pieced together to form a picture of likely components associated with a frame.

Professional photos, rider portraits or advertising photos can be more detailed and informative.

The most common written descriptions contributing to 'known earlier states' are marketing materials from bike manufacturers, often brochures and advertisements promoting their products included detailed specifications.

Through the generosity of individuals and clubs like ours there is increasing access to material of this type. Locating an unmolested contemporary bike as a reference for components or paint schemes can be a huge help.

Recollections from a previous owner or someone familiar with the history of a bike can be invaluable if judged to be accurate.

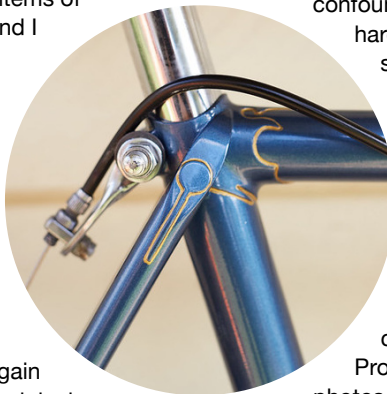
**'Adaptation means changing a bike to suit the existing use or a proposed use.'**

There will be times when a known earlier state is impossible to establish, and times when it is of no interest. Adaptation is appropriate in these instances. This policy gives the collector the most freedom. The possibilities range from returning a bike to an imagined earlier state, through to tribute and replica bikes and completely repurposed machines.

Your own aims as well as an understanding your project bike's history will be guiding factors when choosing the most appropriate conservation policy.

I believe that riding a bike is as much a part of its historical expression as its appearance. My preference for functional bikes suggest that Maintenance, Reconstruction and Adaptation are strategies that I should adopt, whereas a collector interested in static display may be best served by Preservation and Restoration.

*Robert Frith*



## What is The Burra Charter?

A conservation charter is set of principles adopted to create a widely accepted standard for heritage conservation practice. Being a statement of intent and guidance, and a vision of principles, it is not legally binding.

Western society's interest in old stuff is a relatively new phenomenon. John Ruskin was the leading English art critic of the Victorian era, as well as an art patron, draughtsman, watercolourist, a prominent social thinker and philanthropist. Ruskin's ideas on the preservation of open spaces and the conservation of historic buildings and places inspired his friends to found the National Trust in 1895 and it seems likely that he was an influence in the creation of the idea of a national park, the first of which was Yellowstone in the USA in 1877.

Ruskin saw himself as an educator and shaper of public opinion. He arguably kick started the widespread interest in previously ignored historical sites like the Colosseum and Stonehenge that today see thousands of visitors a day.

In 1931 the International Museum Office conference on the conservation of historic buildings, held in Athens, resulted in the Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments. The Athens Charter had progressive suggestions for its period and helped create conservation institutions. The 1964 Venice Charter was the result of a similar conference held in Venice. Both documents concerned themselves with monuments and monumental buildings.

The Burra Charter, adopted in the historic South Australian mining town of Burra in 1979, broadens the focus on historic buildings and monuments to 'places of cultural significance'.

Driven by practical requirements The Burra also gave historians, conservators and architects a broader palette and vocabulary than those articulated in the Venice Charter; tools that enable them to deal more readily with buildings and places that remain in daily use.

There are conservation charters that deal specifically with objects, such as the Riga Charter which concerns itself solely with historic railway equipment and the Barcelona Charter for traditional operational ships.

The Burra Charter's clear process and concise definitions offer great potential to guide conservation efforts on just about anything.

You can find a copy of it here - <https://bit.ly/3aLjxQ8>

## Stuck in the Shed with Lachlan Steele

### What are you currently working on?

Aside from keeping mountain bikes running, I'm currently working on a c. 1905 Police bike (or that's what I was told), a mystery track bike that came with a Major Taylor stem and 1950s Malvern Star trike that needs its axle straightened. Have a trishaw and a few others in pushed to the side and daydream mode working on, and also just picked up a 30's Swansea 2 swan track bike (#3959) that I'll look at getting mobile soon. Or a least think about it whilst moving it out of my way.

I'm not a restorer and more into 'rustorations' and like riding them that way. Feels like riding something with a past and a story to tell. If bits turn and have a possibility of staying together, it'll be rideable.

### How many rideable bikes do you have?

Around 15 or so with a few tyre changes. Maybe a couple of others that wouldn't take much to get moving with the odd creak and crunchy bearings

I have a few nice mountain bikes and a bunch of old rusty junk (except for the shiny chrome Flash recumbent). I quite like rusty junk.

Always think I should sell some, but then remind myself it probably wont happen and move on to the next silly idea.

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

My c. 83 Gordonson BMX that I got as a kid. Gordonson only made small batches of BMX's. Has nice Tange parts and custom ordered with 3spd hub for hills at home. Seen plenty of good stacks too.

Favourite to ride though, is my Enduro MTB. However, I just got an EMTB and I may never ride a normal bike again.

### What was your first bike?

A 16" Malvern Star dragster, which I still have and my kids ride. Though first I really remember is the Gordonson BMX.

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

Dream old bike has always been a Penny Farthing or one of the early big wheel tricycle, however, whenever I look at a hill, I'm always trying to find a cool ridge or line to ride and I'm always day dreaming of shredding some dirt trails and doing jumps and stuff I'd normally poo my pants over.

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

I like to sing whilst listening to rubbish 90s music and pretend to play the drums on stuff. I have been told I'm a most excellent singer, though can't remember who said it. There may also be the odd bit of swearing - the joys of loving old junk.

However, I don't get out to my shed enough and the most common sound is probably me grabbing something or pumping up another flat bike tyre.



# Club Calendar

## Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> May 10:00 Toodyay Display

We're back in Toodyay for the Moondyne Festival. The display location is in front of the old fire station on Stirling St.

## Mon 17<sup>th</sup> May 19:30 General Meeting In-person at 6 Hickey St (strict limit of 17 people)

Online Zoom Meeting ID: 833 8106 9046  
(Check your email for the clickable link and meeting password close to the date).

## Mon 21<sup>st</sup> June 19:30 General Meeting In-person at 6 Hickey St (strict limit of 17 people)

Online Zoom Meeting ID: 876 3299 3336  
(Check your email for the clickable link and meeting password closer to the date).

## Mon 21<sup>st</sup> July 19:30

## Annual General Meeting In-person at 6 Hickey St (strict limit of 17 people)

Online Zoom Meeting ID: 843 9299 2912  
(Check your email for the clickable link and meeting password closer to the date).

## Sat/Sun 18/19<sup>th</sup> Sep 10:00-17:00

## History of the Beverley to Perth Road Race Dome Café Community Hall and lawns. 219-221 Railway Pde, Maylands

## Wed 10<sup>th</sup> Nov 9:00 Have A Go Day The Seniors Recreation Council of WA hosts this wonderful event every year at Burswood - look out for details in in future newsletters and on the club website.

# Information Sought

## Schoolboys Championships

The national School Boys Championship ran from 1958 to 1978. It was one of the most prestigious events in the cycling calendar, requiring numerous races just to qualify for the finals.

This usually started at the beginning of August each year around the country, including WA metropolitan schools, culminating in local championships mid to late September. The national finals hosted by the Australian Cycling Association were held in late October.

In 1970 the nationals were held on the Gold Coast in Queensland. Peter Shewring was the youngest to win the trophy; at the time he was still only 14 years old. After winning the WA under 16 open title he went on to win a further 12 state titles over the following years.

Peter is putting together a history of the event and would like to get in touch with past riders, in particular WA state winners. He is also keen to track down the trophy.

If you can help please contact  
**Peter Shewring 0412 920 464 or**  
**peter@rusauscommerce.com.au**

*Below, Peter with the perpetual trophy, and at bottom, leading the 1971 finalists to the Perry Lakes start line.*



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.

# *Membership Renewal*

Club membership fees are due on June 1st. Membership of the club remains at \$25 per annum. Please either;

- **post a cheque** together with this completed form to;

WAHCC

PO Box 224

Applecross WA 6153

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ Given name \_\_\_\_\_

- **direct deposit**

use your surname as a reference and email a copy of the receipt to [treasurer.wahcc@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.wahcc@gmail.com)

BSB: 806015

Account number: 03307010

Account name : Western Australian Historical Cycle Club