



Not The Spoken Word

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

Brothers in Arms

During the late 1900's and 1910's brothers Alex and Mick Wann were amongst the strongest riders in WA. Members of the Bullsbrook Cycling Team they were sponsored by Davies Franklin Cycles and rode their best racing machine - the 'Model 9'. They had success in races from the metro area to Mt Magnet and Kalgoorlie.

The brothers were close. As teenagers, following their mother's death, they left their Armadale home and lived rough in the bush at Bibra Lake. They survived by shooting wild pigs, ducks and rabbits and were known to visit the Fremantle wharf where they would filch fresh bananas and other fruit.

By their early 20's the Wanns were powerful men working for the Midland Railway Co. as sleeper cutters in Bullsbrook. Alex and Mick thought nothing of riding 50km down to Perth on a Saturday afternoon, riding an 80km race, before pedalling home again.

1912 Beverley to Perth Race 'Easy Victory for Alex Wann' Over 6000 people gathered at the Stirling Street finish line and Alex was carried shoulder high by admirers into the Shaftesbury Hotel. Alex started from scratch and passed the other 61 riders to claim victory.

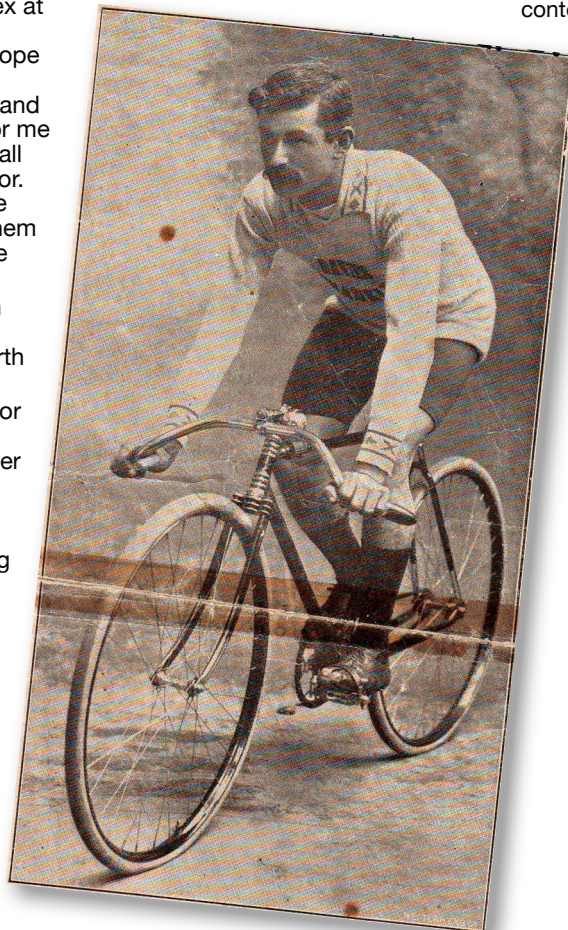
1913 "The Wann Brothers Finish First and Second. Mick wins outright and Alex Fastest Time". The Sunday Times interviewed Alex at the finish line:

"I knew before I started I had no hope of catching my brother" said Alex Wann, winner of the second prize and fastest time. "The only thing left for me was to try for fastest time. That's all the scratch man has got to hope for. The worst portion was easily those last three laps on the oval. I felt them more than the longest hill. Yes, I've had enough".

Alex continued to ride and he won almost all the races he entered, including the 1915 Northam to Perth Road Race.

In 1916 Alex and Mick signed up for the Great War, along with many other cyclists, 1908 Beverley winner Claude Peglar among them. After basic training in Perth, they embarked for the UK to finish training in Durrington prior to being despatched to France to fight the Germans. In 1918, less than two years after leaving Perth, both brothers were killed in France, six weeks apart. Aged 35 Alex was shot by a German sniper as his battalion headed for the Hindenberg Line. He is honoured at the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial. Mick died of wounds aged 30 and is buried at Daours Communal Cemetery in France.

Annette Kent.



Vale Mal Barker

I was very sad to hear of the passing of Mal Barker on 30 April 2022. Born in 1939, Mal was a champion road and track cyclist from the mid 1950's and 1960's and later again when riding Masters. He represented W.A. as a 17 year old in 1956 and would do so again for many years. In 1963 he won Western Australia's most prestigious track race, The Westral. His favourite race was the Collie-Donnybrook. In later life he continued, what appears to be a tradition of, "giving back" to cycling by mentoring young riders.

I first met Mal in 2018 whilst researching for an article on a 1950's contemporary, Noel Davey. It turned out he was a very close friend of Noel's, despite Noel being 5 years older. Riding at Fremantle Oval, he sought out Noel - at the time reigning Champion of Champions - and enquired how he might go about joining Noel's training group that was coached by the highly regarded John Harken.

Noel had a word in John's ear and he agreed to trial Mal one evening. Meeting at UWA with Noel and another rider, Harken said to the teenage Mal something along the lines of "If you're not behind the motor bike when we arrive in Perth, you can forget it." As the pace picked up, young Mal introduced himself by being the **only** rider behind John when they reached their destination.

Despite his lean physique, measured speech and gentle persona, there was a shrewd and fierce competitor underneath and many of the best racers of that golden age had to be content with following him over the finish line.

Despite that, I only heard of him being spoken of as a gentlemen, a great competitor, a true sportsman, a mentor and friend. A lovely man, I, sadly, last saw Mal in December 2021 to return photo albums that he and his wife Audrey allowed the club to document. They can be found in the club's Flickr site; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wahcc/albums>

Frank West



York Heritage Festival

The first year of York's Heritage weekend was very well attended by many WAHCC members with plenty of cycles, smiles and opportunities.

This was the first WAHCC event I've led and I was impressed with the tremendous support from both members and the York community over the entire weekend. York's Heritage Council stated from the beginning, turnout was unknown because they didn't have much money to spend and were not 100% sure it would be held due to COVID restrictions. When I went to York three weeks before the event I was impressed with their passion and location.

I arrived Saturday morning of the event weekend to set up with Rob F & Viv while Rick showed up to lend his recent acquisition, a York built Silent Avon. We had plenty of space under Avon Terrace's outdoor seating with a Penny, track bike, Joe Barron's winning Beverley to Perth bike, a Swansea along with a Post Master General and Rick's Silent Avon. Four of the club's pull-up banners completed the show. Although Saturday's traffic was low, the people stopping by were keen to talk and impressed with York's cycling history. My favourite moment was Chris Reynolds walking over to see his dad's Silent Avon. He was very emotional since he had never seen this bicycle. We also had one local come by with a 2 Swan bicycle found in the local transfer station to display.

Sunday was amazing! Mal & Myrene Bell showed up with most of the Bell family along with 6 bicycles and 3 tricycles. Robert Hunt showed up with 3 road bikes. Frank West came by with 3 early 20th century bikes. George Morris brought his restored Swansea. Alan Naber came in with his Raleigh, and Dave Scanlan rocked up with his newer Penny. Will Riseborough also stopped by for support. With so many bicycles, Avon Terrace's owner helped WAHCC take over three car bays in front of his business plus most of the sidewalk. There were about double the amount of people in York compared to Saturday and I was thankful more members were there to help. We had two group rides through the centre of town with the help of a local penny owner, Michael, who was dressed in a beautiful blue suit. Three ladies rode Mal's tricycles and we had one local join in the first parade with his Steel Bishop roadie. Smiles were seen all around York with plenty of cameras capturing the moment. We even had an impromptu Penny race after the second parade that had everyone on the edge of their seat.

The consensus from members was overwhelming to return in 2023 where we hope to see see much better marketing. I also look forward to returning to York and digging into more history.

Bill Raczkowski

Chris Reynolds visit

Out at York as part of the York Heritage Festival we were treated to a fascinating visit from Chris Reynolds. Chris came by to look at one of the bikes the club has on display; an

original (somewhat tired) Silent Avon owned by club member Rick Vershuren.

Silent Avons were a creation of Chris's dad Norm, and sold alongside Flash's in the Norm Reynolds electrical and furniture shop.

Chris has run the shop for years but never seen a Silent Avon until today - how many more are still out there? Who knows, maybe this is the only one!

From the Beverley Times, Thu 22 Nov. 1962

Focus on ... Norm Reynolds

Born in York in 1912, Norm Reynolds went to the State school until he was 13. He left school to take up hair-dressing and spent four years in Manjimup and Pemberton in his own hairdressing business. Norm then returned to York before spending four years in the A.I.F. He has been a keen sportsman, taking part in swimming, cycling and football. At one time he won the 220 yards at the York sports.

Norm conducted a gymnasium in York for many years, and at one stage more than 100 people were exercising throughout the week. At this time he also ran a boxing school — one of his pupils, Cyril Screaigh was runner-up in the schoolboy championships. Norm is a guiding hand in the cycling club, and also for 15 years a swimming instructor at York. So successful has been Norm's teaching that today, some of his earlier pupils, are returning to him with their children.

When Norm was younger he and three of his brothers rode for the cycle club. Now four of Norm's five sons are doing the same thing.

Photos from top; Sunday's Penny parade, WAHCC pop-up museum on Avon Tce, Chris Reynolds



Moondyne 2022

May 1st was a beautiful day to be in Toodyay. Pam and I planned to visit the Moondyne Festival for the first time, maybe spend a few hours walking around, grab lunch and go home.

The cool, crisp 8:30 am air made setting up easy with Robert and Mal. Pam was quick to lend a hand to raise the marquee and give great direction to setting up the Penny Farthing's and tricycle. As we were setting up, more people stopped by to admire the Penny's, even taking a few selfies and hoisting young kids with Mal's positive support. Will came by with another bicycle to add into the mix along with a few pull-up banners we brought from York.

It was night-and-day difference from York's weekend. This one-day show is well marketed around one central focus, Moondyne Joe. Many events were happening in the short period of time from the opening bagpipes and drums plus many side shows with stilt walkers, sheep herding and the townspeople walking around in period clothing. By the time Pam and I caught our breath talking to people, it was 11am and time for us to explore. Having their main streets closed with food trucks, hand made wares, singers and dancers really made the entire street vibrate with energy far beyond our expectations. And every time we came by WAHCC's display a person was admiring the Penny's. Although there wasn't a planned ride, Pam needed to show the tricycle and ride up and down the street which amazed many people.

The weather was amazing; 24C, sunshine and very little wind. Although hot in the sun, shade was abundant between the tree lined streets, vendor marquees or the shops. Like York, everyone was very friendly and open to talk. My favourite discussion was with Bob Armstrong, the son of Cyril ("Cec") Armstrong, who apparently won the Beverley to Perth in the 1930's with his head wrapped in bandages due to mumps. Note, I could not find his name in the records. And local generosity was overwhelming. One gentleman bought a May 1970 edition of The Australian Cyclist from a Toodyay op shop and donated it to WAHCC.

3pm came up very quickly and we never saw the entire event because we were happy to spend time in the booth and talk with people. Pam and I helped Mal and Robert dismantle the display along with Will. Pam and I are exhausted yet also excited to see such a great event and we hope York can get to this level in the coming years.

Bill Raczkowski

Stuck in the Shed with Kym Murray

What are you currently working on?

A locally built, circa 1980 Avocet racer with some nicer period Suntour and Shimano components. It came to me in pretty good 'survivor' condition but it does need a thorough strip down, clean and service.

How many rideable bikes do you have?

At time of press; two. An Early 90s Repco Olympic 14 (not in the least bit original) and a 2020 Kona Sutra. Both are commuter-cum-Audax bikes.

If push comes to shove what is your favourite bike?

The one that gets me where I'm going in the heat of the moment. I do still love them all in the morning, though.

What was your first bike?

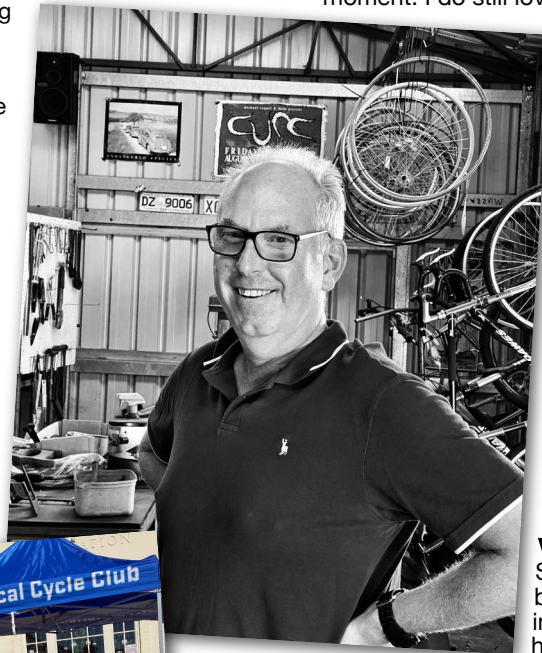
A refurbished oddball with a 24" front and 20" rear wheel. Matt black frame and a fake clip on yellow fuel tank over the top tube. It ticked most of the boxes of moto-cross pretension a 6 year old Gen-Xer needed.

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

Something with comfy, but not too lazy geometry in my sizing but otherwise has a lot of provenance before me.

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

Generally RTR FM is the default on the radio. Otherwise, I prefer to stream something with less talking. Soma FM has some good 'concentrating' music channels I keep returning to.



Vintage Track Night

Entering the Speed Dome building through the competitors' door is not without drama. As you approach, the door swings open automatically into an empty wide grey corridor that dips down and echoes every step. You climb a gentle ramp to the bike staging area and it's only then that the scale of the building hits you - like walking into an aircraft hanger or a European city train station. The track elegantly sweeps around you and the banking looms high, steep and daunting. My bikes may have been built for the track, but I was doubting that I was.

It was Friday 6th May and this was WAHCC's inaugural Vintage Track Night - an opportunity for club members and friends to exhibit and ride their vintage steel or just experience riding on a world-class velodrome.

I had brought two bikes along, neither of which I'd ever ridden but was keen to try them on their turf, so to speak. I hung the bikes in the racks alongside other member's bikes and acknowledged a number of familiar faces. Were they showing hints of nervous anticipation, or was it just me?

Recognising that there were a number of track rookies present Frank West gave us a thorough briefing and then let us loose, with experienced riders on-hand to make sure we played nicely and safely.

My first weapon of choice was a 1977 Raleigh Professional. Pumping the tubular tyres to 120psi and wiping down the tread I walked the bike up the ramp and strapped myself into my pedal cages (no clip pedals for me!).

Staying safely on the inside of the track I wobbled along trying to adjust my mind and body to having no brakes and needing to keep pedalling. Before long my confidence and speed increased and I moved on to the inner lane of the track.

It all felt good until trying to move on up on to the faster lane when my confidence slipped and my reaction to stop pedalling was met with a firm mechanical reminder that that wasn't allowed. Winding down my speed I headed back to the staging area and swapped bikes. My next bike had a lot more experience on this track ridden by veteran cycling legend Ray Craig. Built in Australia, possibly in the 80s, by Hillman it was finished by Wayne Roberts and is a bit of a looker sitting on high flanged Shimano Dura Ace hubs and gold Mavic rims. This bike felt a little more stable than the Raleigh but again my confidence prevented me from climbing the wall - disappointing given that everyone else seemed to be happily zooming around.

Rob and I swapped bikes and I happily lapped on his beautiful 1959 Swansea complaining only about the log-like saddle. After a short play on the alternative "kiddy track" I was pleased to be able to push myself a little harder and finally make it up on to the banking and put a big smile on my dial. I celebrated with pizza.

I was so pleased to have been able to ride bikes that had served only as wall art til now. Having ridden normal bikes for so many years it comes as a bit of a shock to try something so different and it felt good to change the game and extend oneself.

I'd like to thank Frank for making this event happen and for new member Andy Blane for bring no fewer than six vintage track irons along.

The assistance of track regulars Clive Andrews, Terry Skinner, Ross Denford, Jon Nelson, and track stalwart-ambassador Mick Russell who all came along to help and guide us and tease us with some very high-tech new bikes, alongside their faithful old steelies

I'm hoping that this will become a regular event, how high will I be able to climb next time?

Photos;

Top - Ian Barker rattling the boards for the first time since his 16th summer.

Centre - Supervised by Andy Blane, Richard Patenall finally gets his hair under control.

Bottom - Arthur Riddle's Flash heads up a daunting display of track iron.



Richard Patenall

Club Calendar

Mon 16th May 19:30 General Meeting

In-person at 41 Britannia Road, Leederville

Online Zoom Meeting ID: 896 2070 3705

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

Mon 20th Jun 19:30 General Meeting

In-person at 41 Britannia Road, Leederville

Online Zoom Meeting ID: 896 2070 3705

Tour de Ruste

Venues and dates TBC

Mon 18th Jul 19:30

Annual General Meeting

In-person at 41 Britannia Road, Leederville

Online Zoom Meeting ID: 896 2070 3705

Mon 15th Aug 19:30 General Meeting

In-person at 41 Britannia Road, Leederville

Online Zoom Meeting ID: 896 2070 3705

Mon 19th Sep 19:30 General Meeting

In-person at 41 Britannia Road, Leederville

Online Zoom Meeting ID: 896 2070 3705



HAYWARD'S OF BUNBURY

For Sale

1946 Swansea gents roadster. This 2 Swan Swansea was displayed at the York display by York identity Dave Freeman. He rescued it from the transfer station but has no use for it. It's in reasonable condition, not rideable exactly, but everything is there and it does have good original paint. Make an offer.

Dave's number is [redacted] He screens all his calls so leave a message and he'll ring back.

1960's Moulton Safari, one of the rarest of Moultons. This bike has been part of my collection for about 20 years and it has rarely been used during that time. It comes with a dynohub front wheel and 4 speed SA rear hub - and a 2 speed derailleur! The rear suspension is also fitted with a damper. There are both front and rear racks and an original front Safari bag and a Brooks saddle.

It has been repainted at some time in its life but the original green paint is underneath the yellow.

If you are looking for a unique Moulton then this is it, and it is realistically priced at \$1750.

Malcolm Buckland - [redacted]

Book Review

The book 'Road to Valour', about Gino Bartali's life, was written by Aili McConnon & Andres McConnon and first published in 2012. It starts with his birth in Florence in 1914. His early childhood was spent growing up in a poor Italian village. He and his younger brother developed a fascination for cycling. Eventually they both take up racing.

A week after winning the Giro de Italia in 1936 he was racing in the Italian Alps, when his brother, Giulio was killed in another race further south. This nearly caused his retirement from the sport.

In 1938 he won the Tour de France, though his sporting life was controlled by the Fascists.

During WW11 Bartali was approached by a Catholic Cardinal to act as a courier to help produce false identity documents for Italian Jews who had been made stateless and were being rounded up and sent to concentration camps. Training on his bicycle presented the ideal alibi for riding long distances required to deliver photos & documents required to produce these identity papers. They were hidden, rolled up inside his seat tube.

Bartali was arrested once, on suspicion of clandestine activities and was lucky to be released 3 days later.

After the war he resumed racing and was controversially selected as leader for the Italian team to contest the 1948 Tour de France over his younger rival Fausto Coppi.

He won the TdF, with a 10 year gap to his last win. Bartali is the only one to have managed this.

In his retirement he had several business interests but was unsuccessful.

Bartali never spoke about his wartime activities but in 2013 he was honoured in Israel as a 'Righteous Among the Nations' by Yad Vashem.

He died at home aged 85.

Paul Carracun

