



Unchained

Queensland's Big Wheel News #3
13 February 2013

Greetings to all and welcome!

There has been some interest in the club as news of our formation begins to spread through the networks and we delightedly connect with people throughout Queensland who own penny farthings and other historical bikes. You are welcome to forward our newsletter near and far.

This week the club's bank accounts should be finalised thanks to the work and care of Max Robbie our treasurer.



The joy of the high ride! 25 December 2012 L- R Rooke, Shane and Noel enjoying the cycle-friendly paths of Woody Point. Nice shirt Noel!

February Calendar

14th and 15th *Reckhampton "Cup on wheels" cycling carnival*

Six people and pennys will be attending this event at the Kenrick Tucker Velodrome to display and ride during the tea breaks. Anticipate a report and or photo in the next newsletter.

23rd *Evandale Village Fair and National Penny Farthing Championships*

The annual National championships are on again! Good luck to all the Queenslanders heading down to race. There's quite a few of you and we're proud of you all.

March Calendar

16th to 24th *Bike Week*

The annual Bicycle Queensland week of festivities is announced including the [Great Brisbane Bike Ride](#) (two distances - 30km and 50km) route travels over the Gateway Bridge.

24th *Practice Day for 12 hour ride (see April listing)*

Time is TBA. Giving people the opportunity to try out the circuit and plan for the event.
Venue: Lakeside Park, Lakeside Road, Kurwonbah.

April Calendar

20th *L'Eroica in the Tuscan Hills of Beechworth*

Part of the *Gran Fondo* Beechworth weekend in Victoria, this event is a period cyclosportive rally for riders and collectors of classic racing bicycles built before circa 1980. Celebrating both Italian culture and the heroic times of bike racing it is based in the "Tuscan Hills" surrounding Beechworth. Modeled on the hugely popular L'eroica event held in Tuscany it is not a race but an opportunity for riders to experience the rugged conditions, gravel roads, punctures and minimal support that was the lot of racers in the era of "heroic" road racing.

28th *Ride for Daniel Day Fundraiser Lakeside Park*

A 12 hour team ride raising funds for the Daniel Morcombe Foundation. Live music food stands etc at event. Consideration is being given to placing a Penny team – indications of interest to Shane Rush please. To make a registration or for more information please telephone 3480 6625 or 0418 878 514. Venue: Lakeside Park, Lakeside Road, Kurwonbah.

** A practice day for the Penny Team will be held on 24th March. Shane and Andrew co-ordinating the team.**

News

- 🕒 Places are still available for those cut of finer cloth to **build their own** Penny farthing under the expert tutelage of a renowned local bike builder through the auspices of a local skills school. Please phone 1800 654 447 for more details.

- 🕒 Our esteemed colleague in Tasmania, **Di Sullivan**, has been recognised for her years of hard work in service to the community of Evandale with an Australia Day honour. Congratulations Di! To read more, see the article following this segment.
- 🕒 The club has initiated contact with the organisers of the annual **RNA** about the possibility of a display and participating in a ride. Our query was warmly received and more detailed discussions are planned. Security for the bikes on display is a key element of talks. The possibility of a ride in main arena is an exciting idea. As discussions progress and more news is available, we shall share it here.
- 🕒 Last issue we mentioned that **Terry Kay**'s bike museum is apparently open in Gympie! Your intrepid reporters are following this lead in person this week and so promise a report in the next issue.
- 🕒 Did you know that **Clive Palmer** has an ordinary? We received the following tantalising description from Geoff.

“In a prominent position in the auto exhibition at his Sunshine Coast resort, stands a rather lonely 48-50” Ordinary (not safety) bicycle, recently imported from a museum in Europe (part of a job lot I think). She has radially a spoked ball bearing main wheel, apparently an original, but with a few broken spokes and hydraulic tube tiring bolted to rim at join. The forks appear solid, with a steering head very similar to a Rudge, but no marks or numbers on the backbone headplate. The Bars, Backbone, Rear Forks and Step appear to be original, and again similar to a Rudge.

Unfortunately from there it goes downhill!

The rear wheel is a large pram style, too small and obviously not original (although well worn?) There is no seat spring, only an older vinyl seat held to the backbone with a hose clamp. Worse yet, the steering head has been welded to the hinge pin, fixed straight ahead. The incorrect fit, and the presence of a large amount of 'packing' attaching the bearings to front forks indicates that the wheel and backbone have been cobbled together for display at some stage, possibly by the previous museum (now closed). An interesting rarity to the wheel is that the cranks are held on with large nuts on either end of the axle. The steel 'rat trap' style pedals (L intact, R nearly so) are excellent examples, again original. The whole package gives the impression that a newer (post 1880 with ball bearings) wheel has been put together with a possibly older solid fork frame. The forks and tips bear no resemblance to a Rudge, and the many minor differences may point to a period copy. Nevertheless, this cycle stands proud amongst some very distinguished motorised company, and shows some fine features.”

(a photo of this exotic beast is on the Unchained 'Wish list')



Trevor (L) and Paul C (R) both looking resplendent at the stack on 24th November 2012 at Sandgate

Di Sullivan - a Medal of the Order of Australia

In honour of our friend and inspiration, we reprint excerpts from the article [“Turning the community wheel”](#) by Julian Barnes that appeared in The Examiner on the 26th January 2013 (photo also from The Examiner).



Evandale's Michael and Di Sullivan

PENNY farthing racing at Evandale has been a 30-year family affair for Di Sullivan. She is a founding member of the organising committee and has been the co-ordinator of the Evandale Village Fair and National Penny Farthing Championships since 1982. Her husband, Michael Sullivan, has competed in the penny farthing races every year and son Ryan won the penny farthing road race in record time in 2000.

With her many other community involvements, Mrs Sullivan has made a considerable contribution to Evandale. Her penny farthing roles have included serving as treasurer and secretary, but for many she is the face of the annual event.

"It's never been a solo job - we've always had a strong committee and there's always a lot of local people involved," Mrs Sullivan said.

"I'm just the stayer really, I'm the one who has stuck with it. That's probably because Michael rides every year, he's ridden in every year.

"So we're a good team: he rides the bike and I talk it up!

"I'm a bit embarrassed really, but I'll get through it."

Penny farthing racing has given Evandale an international profile and there are few busier towns in Tasmania on a Sunday morning for the popular weekly village market.

"We've had a lot of fun and satisfaction and still do because the events continue," Mrs Sullivan said.



Spoke and Wheel (adventure one) by Hamish Lamb©

'Next track left' came the call from behind - my bellowing companion, who although assumed our leadership on these forays, always liked to ride behind me. Perhaps for reasons to push me at his regulated pace or to have time to think our course, I do not know, but our order had become our organised and regimented norm. I, a mere stripling in years compared to my wise owl partner on these adventures, was the proud owner of a new camera, which I cherished. It being on its second outing was sure to capture more of that dramatic landscape on the edge of the Great Dividing Range. But oh! -it's odious weight perched upon my back, the only place to house such a treasured piece. Our handlebars fitted with day packs left our high wheeling bicycles with not an inch left for luxuries.

I took that left track and so too did old Mrs Ferguson's mutt, he had followed us from Warwick and now, at least 10 miles gone, his tongue hanging low, showed no signs of abandonment and turned as well. Always up for an adventure made the three of us kindred spirits for what was planned as a day's outing.

The dust settled a little way down that track as we drew up, James on his original 52 inch Coventry which he'd brought with him from the old country where it had seen many miles. James being a native to Scotland and me a local, my battered old steed was of unknown brand or providence. A curious feature unique to my cycle was a bullet hole neatly flaying the metal aside. I exaggerate a little as the hole is more of a splat of metal and the tiniest spot of light peeping through the mangle, made visible due to its location close to the rear fork,

not more than two inches above. I fancy in my idle hours as we bowl along how this scar occurred and what an extraordinary life the prior owner had. Strike! -could he even have been killed? None of this was transferred to the details tag of my cycle as I surveyed Mr Bank's mechanical emporium and happened upon my vehicle to adventure those months ago.

I digress, we are on the dirt track, the three of us, the sun is in it's first quarter and the sky is blue, it is September and our worries were left back in Warwick, mine at the Government Surveys Office and *Jim* as he prefers, at the Town Constabulary Station. Jim being a Sergeant in rank sees life red in tooth and claw and the cycle he claims is his way of clearing the mind and stretching the legs. He'd grown up with his bicycle, a gift from his wealthy father to mark his son's completion of a demanding university degree (worth a King's ransom to be sure). Jim took a ship around the world with his ready transport and could turn his hand at anything he wanted. Those Edinburgh days saw Jim explore vast country sides and way out villages with his chums in his Gentleman's Bicycle Club. Today he wears his jacket from the Club. A beautiful crest and gold embroidered figurines of a deer and large wheel sit wonderfully on the pocket of a navy blue woollen blazer. He says his club was thirty strong....struth, all too much for this colonial lad to comprehend!

The track leads down to a cool spring and onto a rocky cliff, well known by locals but rarely visited being a remote location from town. We surveyed the descending fall of the track and assigned it impossible to cycle any longer. A ride on the big wheel meant we were accompanied by Mr Walker. Mr Walker is the big wheels' *'silent partner'* -he is included in the purchase price of this style of machine! 'The banshees would wish us to come a cropper....but not today' I announced addressing the silent bush. 'You know it's a suspected hideout for Slippery Jack this valley below?' Jim let this news casually drift off his lips as he turned to me. My eyebrows raised and my eyes opened upon hearing this as Slippery Jack was a notorious criminal and was on the run. He could be close... by jove and even watching us no less! Just as a watchmaker sets the sprockets in motion so too my mind elinked into gear and it dawned on me Jim's motives on taking the dusty track to the left had more to do with his day job than finding solace from it.



By this time the cradled lump on my back was assembled into what would be recognised as a camera and I had a sweeping view of the hidden valley. A rocky cliff bubbled with refreshing liquid and the sun disappeared into some woolly clouds. As if on cue a figure appeared at the distant tree line moving toward our direction. Being still and already set we were able to observe the figure emerge in range to reveal a number of cattle being herded by the lone rider into a make-shift yard of prepared saplings. 'It's Slippery Jack' whispered Jim not moving as he spoke. 'Quick take a photo' he ordered. Like an obedient sub-altern I let off a flash. As a reflex to danger Slippery Jack jolted his head to our direction, sensing discovery. His quarry now garded his attentions turned to capturing his next prey it seemed. Slippery Jack and his horse engaged in wild purpose and we incredulous to our dilemma mounted our cycles and powered up that dusty track. What seemed like an arduous slope when first encountered now whistled by. The image of Slippery Jack galloping towards us compounded

by the flash of metal around his belt gave me the willies to say the least. More doom arrived with the barking of Jim's voice detailing how Slippery Jack despatched his last victim at the mill only two weeks ago whilst caught stealing a horse and some flour. Vivid images of strangled corpses and mad eyes punctuated my minds eye as the bumps of that track mereifully turned into formed road, the road to home. By now we were at full rivet and Mrs Ferguson's mutt, bless him, galloped valiantly ahead, seemingly sensing danger too, huffing and puffing like a pig with asthma. Without warning a shot rang out and I heard a hiss close to my ear then saw a eucalypt loose some of it's bark. Great scissos....too close! The rider and horse was loosing ground given it had been at full gallop for what seemed an eternity and our legs, powered by excitement and fresh air alone, gave us a welcome gap.

A weary three bowled into town without halt until the Constabulary was alerted to the villain's whereabouts and reinforcements sent.

In all the bally-ho I worried what had become of my prized possession. The thought of Slippery Jack stomping over my camera, knocking it off its tripod, splinters and brass knobs springing away as it were dashed off rock, made me sick with worry.

It was only the second round of black beer at the Imperial when a crowd grew and became noisy outside spilling onto the street to reveal the said outlaw being towed behind Sergeant Murphy on his horse. Slippery Jack looking as fierce as a storm snarled and hurled abuse at the peering voyeurs not least Mrs Ferguson's mutt whom grinned like a winner. The vagabond found his lodgings compliments of the Crown that evening. The following week he saw the law administered, and as aid to evidence a photograph of a sweeping landscape surrounding a lone figure on horseback behind missing heaves was tendered. The camera stood in command of that mound for two days before I could retrieve it and was untouched save the remains of it becoming a new perch to the local birds as a novelty item.

It wasn't until the December drew in that Jim and I discussed another outing. Me kept occupied with some new land developments to survey and he taking on more responsibilities at the station delayed our eyele. We both thought about what location we should next explore as the Fin de Siècle would be upon us. Jim's face broke into a picture of enlightenment and announced 'what about heading up to Toowoomba next week?' 'Crashingly splendid!' I replied with Jim's brogue resounding in my ears before remembering vaguely of hearing about some syndicate running a racing seam up that way.....



Submissions accepted

Unchained accepts unsolicited material and suggestions.

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A club song

by Hamish Lamb ©2012

Verse 1

... Now the bicycle of fame comes close to
per-son-ified perfection,
But riding one must be-a-choice of per-son-al
election.

It's won-der-ful design and curves of
backbone rounding,
Many eyes a-boggle and mouth-a-mutter as
we pass in manner quite confounding,

Chorus (loud and may be assisted by the
consumption of a pint of cider)
OH, we love to ride and talk and mess about
our Earthly-cravings,
With our big and mar-vell-ous, Penny-
Farthings!

.....repeat

Verse 2

The wheels bowl round and spokes a-spindle,
Perched above the world our view causes all to dwin-dle.
But just take care the tiny bump or concrete gut-ter,
The obvious result... the worst of all to come-a -cropper!

Verse 3

Now an artful eye will see a bicycle most ele-ment-ary,
And a safety, tri-cycle and recumbent supp-lemen-tary.
But with no chain, brakes, air or derailleur,
We have advantage over all of me-chan-ical fail-ure!

*In commemoration of the commencement of
'The Queensland Penny Farthing and Historical Cycle Club' 2012*



For Sale

The owner is pleased to offer the following two fine items for sale. Queries welcome, inspections available. Contact Brett Richardson by email (Brett.rich@bigpond.com) or mobile telephone (0407 345 451).

1888 Columbia tricycle (repo) \$4 500



Penny Farthing 52" \$3 500

Velocity alloy rims 60 spoke front wheel. Cro-moly backbone and fork blades.

