

Spokesman

St George Motorcycle Club Newsletter
September 2015



What's coming up at the club.....

13 September:

Dirt Track Round at Nepean (PRE ENTRY ONLY entry forms available online)

25 October:

Dirt track Round at Nepean

7 / 8 November:

Honda RJays Road Race - Sydney Motorsport Park

29 November:

End of Year Presentation – Gymea Bowls Club

Club meetings:

All welcome, every 2nd and 4th Wednesday at Gymea Bowls Club.

100th Anniversary Gala Dinner

The Club would like to thank everyone that attended the Gala Dinner held in July to celebrate our 100 year anniversary.

The evening was attended by over 220 current and previous members and a great night was had by all.

We hope you enjoy some of the photos at the end of this newsletter.

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CLUB MEETINGS

– All Welcome!

Held at 8pm on the 2nd and 4th
Wednesday of each month at
Gymea/Miranda Bowling Club
at The Kingsway Gymea

The RB Racing 4 Hourfrom a first-time entrants perspective....

So, it was time once again for the St George Wakefield Park 4 hour but this time I would not be managing Stuart Kitson's team, this time I was riding. A team of three C and D grade riders consisting of myself, Ben Green and Matthew Shipp up against the likes of Glenn Allerton, Aaron Morris and many other A grade riders. Luckily they weren't in our class, but we are still racing against them on the track. I guess it would be decent of me to mention the other competition... the men with targets on their backs; Stuart Kitson (a.k.a Dad!), Rodney Whitney and Keith Wallington.

It's Sunday morning, with an early start after the Saturday sprint races and I have to say I was hoping for rain. My wishes were granted as we got closer to Wakefield Park, the heavens opened and it started to rain and rain and rain and rain. Now, I have wet tyres, I feel comfortable in the rain and wet weather reduces the gap between the riders, so I'm currently thinking that this is going to be a very fun day.



Let's skip to qualifying, it's still wet, very wet.....at least I won't have to worry about wearing my Camelbak! Soon I realise that riding in the wet at Wakefield is not like riding in the wet at Eastern Creek, there is very little grip on offer. I proceeded to qualify quite well and so did my teammates, although none of this really matters as the start to the 4 hour is like nothing else I have experienced. It had been decided that due to my tall, lanky stature that I was most suitable and had the most chance of getting a good start with the Le mans procedure. I have to agree that long legs do make a difference but at this point I am now very nervous.

After pulling up to the grid it was time to throw out a few stretches, blank out the competition of Stuart Kitson who was shouting encouragement from further up the field and it's time to get my race face on. The flag is lifted and off we go. After my slow reaction time, the swift 4 or 5 strides over to the bike (I told you long legs help), and the big push I received from Shippy, we made a fantastic start and gained a bunch of places.

Unfortunately this lasted until lap 2 where the nickname Tumbleweed once again became relevant! With a little oops moment from the bike in front, the "oh crap I'm in a puddle" thought, a hint of bike to arm contact, a slight throttle twist as my arm is pulled off the bars, and an "ooohhh look there's the sky" moment, I preceded to go for a tumble in the dirt at T4. My only thought apart from "**** * * * * *", was the last thing Stuart had told me, "don't crash at the start, the race is 4 hours!!".

Luckily at the age of 21, I bounce fairly well. At this point in time, I am now currently sitting in the garage, looking at a frantically fixed and still mud covered R6 that I do not own, that had just been pushed up and down pitlane to be re-scrutinized by the always helpful St George volunteers.

Matthew is currently circulating at a very competitive speed and for some reason all of our rivals are having their own issues. The conditions were appalling. Wet track with dry spots, dry track with spots and everything in between. Bike setup is no longer helpful, wet tyres on a dry track work just as well as dry tyres on a wet track and everyone is all over the place. But somehow with great teammates and a major dose of good luck our team is sitting pretty in 6th.

A couple of pit stops go by and it's my time to attempt another stint. This goes OK since I am on slicks, with semi dry/wet suspension settings and a track that is still quite damp with a few rivers. Then Stuart Kitson passes me. I am no longer happy. It happens again, my dad has lapped me. There was no way to know that my lap times were competitive, or to know that Dad's lap times were properly fast and at this point 30 minutes into my session my body was starting to hurt. I found out just how much I was hurting as I ran onto the grass on the outside of pit entrance since my body did not like turning right! Whoops. I kept it upright and performed a quick rider change before gracefully sliding off my bike and onto the floor, much to the befuddlement of the rest of my team.

Fortunately (for us) the weather did not improve, allowing my team to minimise the skill gap between ourselves and the A/B grade riders in front of us. We were moving up the positions and found ourselves in 5th place only a few laps behind the leaders and 1st in our class! After some great riding from Ben, Matthew and myself in every kind of track condition, every combination of tyres and suspension setup, we crossed the line in 5th place overall and 1st in class. After 4 hours of the most unpredictable track conditions, we came away winners and grinners!

It had turned out to be the tricky 4 hour race we are all warned about and we weren't the only team to have issues. There were many nasty crashes and racing incidents spread throughout the field of riders, from the inexperienced D graders to the super fast A graders, but that's the test that is endurance racing. Making the decisions, strategies and riding choices to complete 4 hours on a tight and technical Wakefield Park circuit. It seems that everyone is recovering well, bikes and bodies are well on their way to being mended and everyone is preparing to be faster and hungrier for next year.

I'd just like to thank everyone who helped me out during the weekend and who helped get the bike back together after my little incident. My excellent teammates; Ben Green and Matthew Shipp, with Marty Abrahams as our awesome Team Manager. Stuart Green, Josh Leonidas and Matthew Sinai for mucking in to help with wheel changes and mud collection. Also I'd like to thank Craig Stewart from C&M Motorcycles for tuning my bike to perfection, Craig White from Whites Racing Products for the Bridgestone Tyres, St George MCC for running the event and every single volunteer who took to the horrible conditions and roughed it out so that the 4 hour could go ahead. Also finally my parents, Stuart and Janice Kitson for letting me crash their bike once again and indulge myself in the world of bike racing.

Carl Kitson aka Tumbleweed

Graduated as a Marshal

I have always loved motorcycles, so it was very natural, when I turned 16, to start marshalling at club road race meetings.

That was 7 years ago now, and boy does time fly. I really enjoy the marshalling and now also do other clubs' meetings and some state and national meetings as well as some dirt track meetings. Compared to others around me, 7 years is just a drop in the bucket, but in that time I have been lucky enough to have had a number of roles including flag marshal, grid marshal, recovery, pit exit and chequered flag, some I enjoy more than others, but I am always happy to do whatever is needed and I will have a go at just about anything.

In the different roles I have done, I have come to understand how a meeting runs and I have nothing but respect for those who have to make the tough decisions, sometimes with less than a minute to decide. I maybe shouldn't say this, but I have also realised that the senior marshals are very clever at getting the "right people" to do particular jobs and keeping those that don't quite "get it" in roles that suit them, without jeopardising safety.

So, when I was asked to be a track marshal at the RB Endurance 4hr Race last year, I felt that I had really "graduated" as a marshal. Being asked to be a track marshal at the 4hr told me that they trusted my judgement, that they were confident that I would not put myself, nor anyone else at risk, that even in the event of a radio failure, they were happy for me to be out there looking after my bit of track without direct instructions. I am not a "senior " by any means, but being a track marshal at the 4hr means working independently with minimum instruction, but great responsibility and I am honoured they trust me in such an important role – I'm glad to think that I obviously did not let them down, as I was in that role again this year.

Graduated!

The Way it Wasa presentation given at the Club's 100th Anniversary Dinner

When I first joined St. George it was not unusual for 80 or more members to turn up for a club meeting. It was a very social night in those days before FaceTwitGram and computers, it was a way to keep in touch and exchange info. Everyone would mingle until start time then separate into different groups according to the type of riding they did.

Trials riders would sit at the front, the enduro riders behind them at one side and the short circuit riders at the other, behind them the MX'ers with the road racers filling the back rows. Each facet of the sport with give a report on recent results and upcoming plans and some of the speakers could be quite entertaining.

The Spokesman was full of these reports, often written under a thinly disguised pseudonym such as Crispy Bacon or Bengt Phorks but one writer started appearing who was unknown except to a very

few called MT Tank. He would talk up enduro riding at the expense of other branches of the sport but really gave a big serve to the road racers who he called a bunch of wood ducks who ride too fast dressed in advertising who are scared of getting dirty. No one knew who MT Tank was except a small close lipped group of Enduro riders and they refused to tell. Many others started referring to road racers as wood ducks and when reports were called, quacking sounds would erupt whenever a road racer stood up to speak.

It was all in good fun, and taken as such, but honour needed to be satisfied and the late Roy Denison came up with a plan. He stood up at a club meeting and when the quacking subsided he announced that an upcoming club road race day was on the figure 8 track at Oran Park which being a tight circuit would be suitable for dirt bikes. He then went on to say that if any dirt riders wanted to accept the challenge he and his fellow wood ducks, sorry road racers, would be happy to lend tyres and leathers to them to decide once and for all who the wood ducks really were.

The event would be called the Wood Duck Challenge and would be a Le Mans start and open to all riders irrespective of the bike they rode. It went on to become a much anticipated annual event. I was among the dirt riders who rode that first event and it was a learning curve for us all. All this kinky leather gear we had to wear, do we need whips as well and do we have to play Suzi Quattro tapes to go with it? The tyre pressures we were advised to use sounded insane, who puts 30psi in a tyre?

The noise test was also a worry as it was a new thing coming in in those days. The man with the meter was using a dab of paint to mark each muffler he passed and we knew Paul Falconers enduroised YZ400 wasn't going to pass. The problem was solved though when we were talking it over and my then girlfriend remarked "that paint is nearly the same colour as my eye shadow". With the aid of her make up purse Pauls' bike appeared to have passed if nobody looked to close and he rode all day with no problem.

The Le Mans start was another new thing to all of us dirt riders and we lined up with our back to our bikes and had to run uphill around the ambulance then back to our bikes. The Ambo's, caught up in the spirit of the event started reversing away from us. Once underway we discovered more new things like scraping the pegs and a strange never before experienced thing that we were to learn was called brake fade.

Warren Thorby won that very first Wood Duck Challenge and honour was satisfied all around as he was a Short Circuit rider. Short Circuit called Dirt Track today is on dirt but not unlike road racing in some ways so each side of the argument claimed him as one of their own. It went on to become an annual event as I've already mentioned, MT Tank kept writing about enduro riders being hairy chested spitting and farting he men while deriding road racers as blokes who probably dressed secretly in womens clothing and frilly knickers. He even took to ringing Roy up anonymously before each successive Wood Duck Challenge to tell him how he was going to blow him into the weeds.

MT seemed to have a bit of a following in the Spokesman, so much so that one year the Social Committee, made up of wives and girlfriends decided to make a special award to him for Meritorious Journalism. Peter Snow and I were on the Social Committee but weren't allowed to do anything, it was strictly the girls province. I think we were just there in case any heavy lifting was required, jays

needed opening or spiders needed killing. We happily went though as it was the era when every girl with a set of legs was wearing "Daisy Dukes" and we were happy to just sit and look. In those days the Social Committee gave out novelty awards at each annual presentation night for things like a big engine blow up or repeated crashing.

The committee knew MT was unlikely to come forward and collect it though, so they had an 8 year old Gary Blizzard waiting in the wings wrapped head to toe in a tablecloth topped with a full face helmet with dark visor. MT's name was announced, Roy shot to his feet looking everywhere and other heads turned around expectantly as well. Would they finally find out who MT Tank really was? Gary walked out from where he had been hidden, collected the award, turned to the crowd, gave them a thumbs up and then retreated into the kitchen locking the door behind him, just in time before Roy got there.

MT is here tonight, and has given me the award he won that night to display as club memorabilia, here it is. He's kept it all these years. It obviously means something to him, he's a sentimental bloke apparently. I've also asked MT Tank if he would like to finally reveal himself after all these years. His anonymity was an often talked about point when a new copy of the Spokesman came out with one of his reports in it. I presume many of the members here tonight who were active in those days still remember him and would like to know.

I'd ask him to stand and reveal himself now...

... and if you weren't at the 100th dinner then you'll never know who stood up.

MT Tank

Go Kart Report

Indy Karts in Revesby was the destination for this years' annual go kart social night. We had not been to Indy Karts for some years and there had been lots of changes, like a timber floor up and over a new section, not unlike the figure 8 on the old Oran Park North Circuit. It certainly added a new dimension to the night.

We had 15 or 16 entrants on the night with a couple of spectators as well. Milton Baker and his team ran all the drivers through their induction and licensing requirements. It was decided to run six 10 minute sessions. Those 5 who in the past had been quick, would go in sessions 1 and 4. Drivers who had little or no experience would be in sessions 3 and 6, the rest, well you know – sessions 2 and 5.

We were a little late getting started as Steve Wyres, Lloyd and Dennis, while en-route to Indy Karts, came across a lady motorcyclist in trouble. After rendering assistance, which included transporting the broken down bike back to Mortdale, we were set to start. As per usual, Michael R and Peter S brought along groups of competitors. Session 1 saw five of our top guns trying out the new layout. The lap record was in the 26 second mark, with Robbie S recording high 28 seconds while Rob W and Steve T were in the 29's.

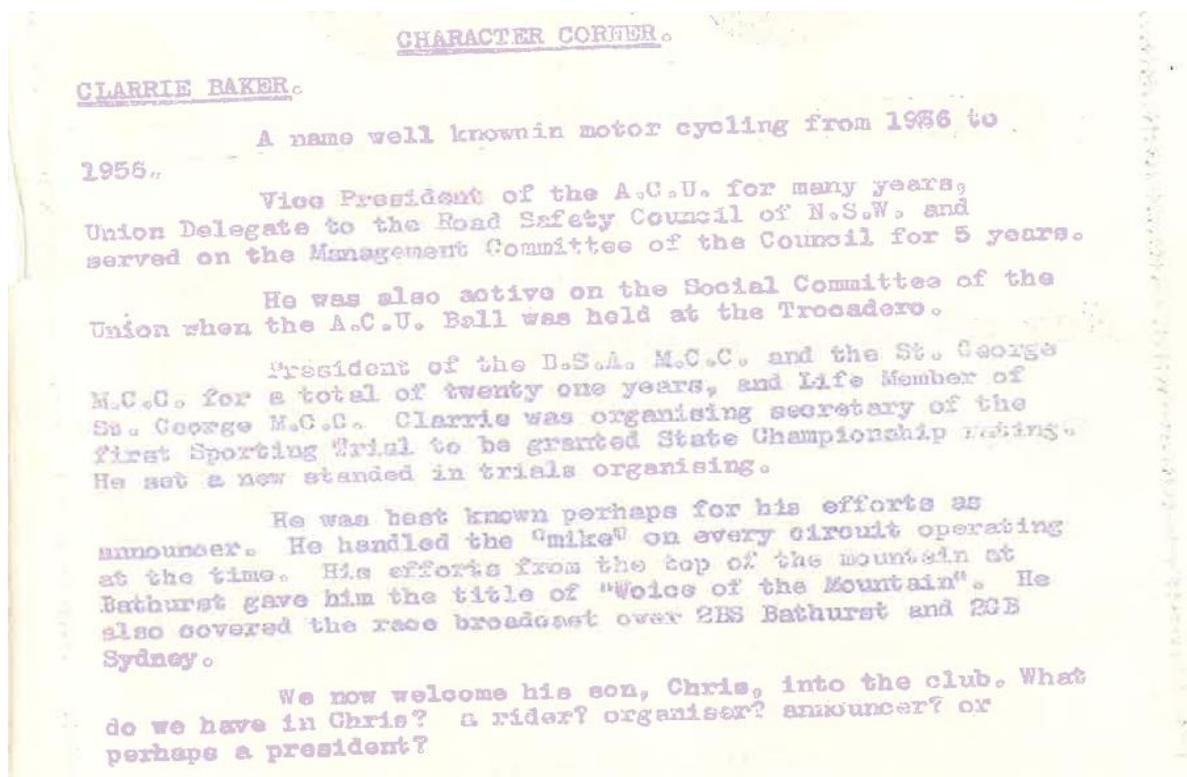
Session 2 saw Tony R a “very impressive” mid 29, obviously the Mohawk on his helmet was no hindrance, while the chest mounted GoPro was useless. Second fastest in session 2 was Steve W with a low 30 second time. Session 3 had the Michael R clan with Steph R, the only female, setting the best time of this group of 31.25. Session 4, and, as expected everyone was faster. Although Steve was on his phone organising a massage – it’s hard work!

A problem some of the drivers were having was with brake and accelerator being so close together. If you had boots on, it was difficult to operate each pedal properly. In session 5 a much “taller” Peter S (CJ) had a drive, recording a time of high 30’s. Session 6 saw a “slimmer” Michael (CJ) record a time of 29.52.

At the end of the night, Milton from Indy Karts presented awards for fastest time – Robbie S 28.14; best average time – Rob W 29.06 and most improved – Callum.

Crispy Bacon

Chris Baker – History in Motorcycling and the St George Motorcycle Club



....Spokesman August 1970

So, what do we have in Clarrie's son, Chris:

Rider – yes; Organiser – yes; Announcer – yes (most recently); and President – yes 16 terms; all of that and more: flag marshal, pit exit, grid, starter, finisher, scrutineer, seminar presenter, clerk of course, steward and author of many articles and the list goes on

Chris started road racing in 1971 on a 250 Suzuki Hustler at circuits including Surfers Paradise, Oran Park, Amaroo Park, Bathurst, Wakefield Park, Hume Weir, Winton and Sandown, where he set a new 250 Production Lap Record and collected his first prize money cheque. Other machines raced include RM125 Suzuki, IT175 Yamaha, X7 Suzuki, CX500 Honda and YZ125 Yamaha. Chris' last road race was in 1994 at Wakefield Park.

Chris officiated at the Bert Bayliss Reliability Trial from 1971. Around the same time he was also involved in the Mick Andrews Trials Menai, Pirelli Experts Trials. Chris competed in the Inter Club Drag Racing at Castlereagh, winning his class in 1972. He also won the Amaroo Park Hill Climb that same year.

In 1973, Chris & Ross Hedley headed for England and Europe where Ross was competing in the 125cc and 350cc World Championships. They were joined by Les Kenny in 1974. Chris remembers sitting under the shade of a tree near the start line at the Isle of Man in shorts, T-shirt and thongs and seeing a sign advising "Race delayed – snow on mountain".

If you get a chance to speak to Chris, ask him about his adventures while in Europe in the 70's, especially on the beach in Spain, eating in Morocco and hunting sheep on the Isle of Man! Chris returned home in 1975 and in 1976 bought an RM125 Suzuki and started a long career riding MotoX and Dirt Track. He joined the Dirt Track Committee and was elected Chairman. Raced DT from 1975 to November 2001. Throughout this period Chris competed in Club RR, DT, MX, Trials and Enduro as a sidecar passenger and solo rider, representing NSW in the 1976 Australian Sporting Trial Championships and in 1978 represented NSW in the Australian MX Championships as a sidecar passenger.

In 1977 he joined the SES with fellow St George members, Phil Rendell and Dave Hirsch. 1983-1987 – was on the Cronulla Sutherland Leagues Sports Council Committee. Also wrote articles for Sharks League Magazine. Chris also enjoyed touring with the Club, including Tasmania in 1984, South Australia – 1983, Bundaburg, Fraser Island.

Wrote for the Spokesman from 1971 to present, under different pseudonyms, the most famous Chris also rode in the St George Push bike Events on the North Circuit at Oran Park, winning 4 of the 5 races. He has even played Santa at the Club Christmas Picnic. Public Officer of St George MCC since the Club incorporated. Has served 16 years as President, 2 as Secretary, 2 as Nepean Delegate and many years as MNSW Delegate (as at 2015). 3 time winner of the Geoff Garment Memorial trophy for Dirt Track handicap.

Approx. 14 time winner of the Sandy Marshall Point Score trophy for attending club meetings. One point for attending meetings, 3 points for working at a club race meeting, one point for competing at a club race meeting. After 15 years in the Club, Chris was made a Life member of St George MCC in July 1985 and the president at the time, Arthur Blizzard said "now you've really got to start working for the club". Thirty years on and he still is!

Now for Chris' efforts for the sport in general: He was a travelling marshal at Bathurst, Eastern Creek, Oran Park and Canberra. Chris served on the MNSW Board of Management for 4 years, 3 of those years as Vice President. Clerk of Course or Steward at many NSW and Australian Championships in DT, MX and RR. FIM Clerk of Course and Sporting Steward for 9 years. MNSW Seminar presenter from 1996 to 2009 presenting: General, Refresher, Flag Marshal/Radio Communications, Clerk of Course and Stewards seminars and occasionally co-presenting for MA. One of only a handful of officials to have worked at all MotoGP's in Australia as well as in the mid 90's working at the Indonesian and Malaysian GP's.

Serves as Chairman of the Official Review Panel, Chairman of the Road Race Committee and where there was no committee, was appointed as Road Rad Administrator. Actively involved with the Motorcycle Road Race Development Association (MRRDA) since 2007.

Chris has received the following awards from MNSW:

- Award of Honour in 2002
- Award of Merit in 2006
- Service Star 2015

Some photos from the 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner.....







Life Members – St George MCC