

## MOTORCYCLE CLUB

# SPOKE

Newsletter of the Tasmanian Motorcycle Club. February 2021.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It's that time of the year again. You know, when everyone comes along to the AGM to have a say on the make up of the committee that will run the club for the next 12 months, or was I just dreaming. Seriously, the more people who attend the AGM to cast their vote and perhaps put their hand up for a committee position, the closer we will be to making decisions which most members support. SEE you there. The AGM starts at 7pm, upstairs in the Gunner's Arms, next to Mitre 10.



We also have a ride day/race day weekend coming up on Saturday and Sunday, March 20 and 21. Ride day on the Saturday and race day on the Sunday. Plenty of members have upgraded their rides and I for one am looking forward to seeing who is best able to take advantage of their increase in HP.

**Cary McMahon**  
**Honorary President**

# INTRODUCING: Stephen Oliver

## **How long have you been in the club?**

I first joined the club in about 2000 and raced for six or seven years, starting with the club five years ago.

## **What was your first road bike?**

A VTR1000, when I was 37.

## **What was your first racing bike?**

A 1995 model CBR600, that got stolen after a Symmons race day four years ago. Jason Spencer saw it advertised, called the police and it was recovered from a farm in Pyengana.



## **What would you consider your career highlight?**

I did a PB on my current Suzuki at Baskerville last year..

## **What would you still like to achieve?**

I'd love to do better times at Symmons, but I'd love to do a 56 at Baskerville.

## **If money was no object, what bike would you like to race?**

A new Panigale.

## **What's your job?**

Electrician



## LOOKING BACK: WITH KEN YOUNG

OVER the last few months, I have drifted away a little from the core value of the "Looking Back" segment with so many other things to cover. I thought it may be time to get back on track and went looking for ideas to cover. I have been "cleaning up" old photos for Tony Oliver for about the last 5 or 6 months. Yes, it is a very slow job scanning and then removing scratches, dust spots, fold marks, "rust" and brightening up faded shots. Rust is where the photo has maybe been exposed to moisture or fingerprints and it has eaten (slightly) into the photo. All done with a brilliant FREE program called Image Manipulation Process from a company called GNU. The imaginative people from GNU call it GIMP.



THE photo album contained over 450 photos going back as far as his father flying Tiger Moth planes out of Western Junction, we now call it Launceston Airport. Then on to training in New South Wales and on to flying Spitfires in England during the war. His brilliant flying logbook that goes with the photos included providing air cover over the "D" Day landing.

ROSS Oliver flew mainly Spitfires with all the 222 Squadron he mostly flew with using the "Z D" prefix and Ross preferred "S" that in his mind stood for Sylvia, his soon to be wife. Sylvia worked in a war room like we see in movies with ladies with long poles pushing markers around a big map table.



PILOT debriefing after a mission with Ross 2 from the right in the back row

That's the row with the photo of a few ladies on the notice board, with one in such a rush to get to the shoot, she didn't have time to dress.

What has this to do with us, well when he returned, he took to bike then car racing and had some great sport photos of his racing time.





THESE photos of Ross Oliver have created what should be called a segue or joining the dots. With the Back to Longford day coming up shortly and Tony being involved let's join the dots and bring more background information to previous stories.

YOU all will be at Longford on March 7<sup>th</sup> along with a display of old racing bikes of the time won't you?

WITH some mates Ross joined the TMCC and started out beach racing and time trials. The Triumph he used on the beach during the 1940's



ROSS took to car rallying and Hill Climbs, in the 19650's, on the Trevallyn course, with his brilliant Bristol shown here in the "salubrious" pits at the Trevallyn Dam Hill Climb in the early 1950's  
Rallying was big back then and many of the rallies were sponsored by The Examiner who did big promotions like this shot.



THE Oliver family, Ross, Sylvia (big sister Lynette) and Tony in an obviously posed shot for the Examiner photographer. They are supposedly studying a map of the general direction of the rally. Rallying back then, and when I was involved some years later with doing controls, was very different. It was on gravel roads and usually at night with no road closures. They were called "navigational rallies" and the person in the passenger seat was very busy not calling corner speeds etc. but working out the direction to travel.



THE navigator usually received the instruction book approx. half an hour before the team were due to leave. An easy way to describe it using main roads instead of the gravel they used would be, leaving Launceston Control and with the

first few streets named. That was to get them out of sight of the spectators in the right direction the next control would be the southern end of Longford. Easy..... BUT you must approach the control from a southerly direction and pass-through check points at the Evandale Bridge (from the east) and the Midland Highway from the North.

SO many stories from a great time, like after midnight one winter's night manning a special check control, out the back of Mathina, where the drivers were supposed to come from one direction and be waved through to the control  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile down an adjoining road. Some knew a short cut that had them arriving from the opposite direction before turning onto the correct road. But so did the course setters and when Ray "Wombat" Long arrived at the short cut to ask "What are you all doing here?" his navigator handed over the route card with our man leaning in with the retort, " More to the point Wombat, what are you doing here" and handing the card back marked "WD" Wrong Direction = loss of points.

ANOTHER trick pulled by officials was when teams were supposed to travel a certain road, the old hands knew that a bridge had been "destroyed" Only the two big beams across the creek were left. What the teams didn't know was that a big trailer load of planks had been hidden in the bush nearby. When the many cars carrying us control officials for the area were to be dropped off we first went to the bridge crossing and "built" a bridge. The unknowing B and C grade drivers crossed it and the "expert" A graders were all late to the next control having taken the long way. With the navigator spending most of his time looking down at maps, clocks and trip metres, we control officials quickly learnt when the car pulled up with us on the passenger side, if the window was being wound down, we could expect to have the route card handed to us. If the door was being opened step back as we were about to receive the navigator's last meal!

BEFORE he started Ross Oliver Real Estate, Ross was a Northern farmer who managed to find another Northern farmer to be his navigator. A man by the name of John Youl who had a farm called Symmons Plains. It didn't take long to realise that John was a pretty good driver to.

A 1962 shot from Symmons Plains, of John Youl exiting his race car with fellow driver Don Goss watching as he is being congratulated by "Electric Eric" or more accurately Labor Premier Eric Reece. You should all remember that "Electric Eric", the driving force behind the Hydro Electric Commission, was a very big supporter of motor racing with substantial Government money allocated to the TMCC as prize money for many race meetings. He attended most Longford race meetings



and many national meetings at Symmons Plains. He was also able to do such things as drive down the flying mile, at Longford, and think the road was getting a little rough so he "requested" his main road minister to have it resealed and, by the way, it could do with a little widening too.

Now let's further explain something I have mentioned before with this shot.

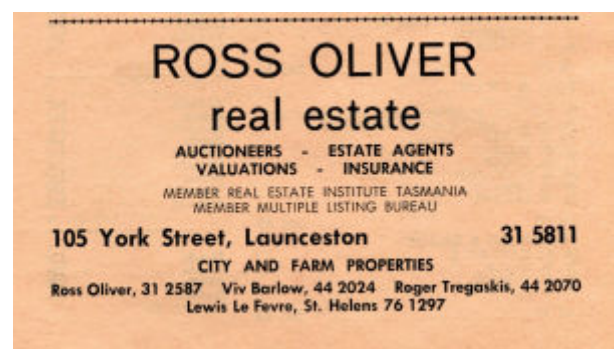
ROSS in his Riverside driveway opposite the Golf Course working on the Bristol. The photo was taken in 1956. How can I tell? Focus on the front number plate.

All Tasmanian vehicles started with the letter W and if you look above the "W" it says 19 TAS 56. The 56 is the clip-in red disc stating that the vehicle has been registered in 1956. A new disc was issued each year, with more information about the registration in the letters and numbers. The E is simple. The month that the car was registered. A then B for January C then D for February and E then F for March. The very first car registered under this system a few years before would have been WAA 001. The third letter was for when the numbers reached WAA 999 the next would have been WAB 001. That continued until WAZ 999 then became WBA 001 etc. I am not sure what year the system started but this WEC 917 rego means the Tasmanian car was the 3917th car registered in the month of March to date. That way a switched on Police Office could look at the car and its rego and sometimes gauge that it was an illegal rego on a car of that age. Ross was very important to the club as not only a rider in the early days but also with things like the first 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour race.



FROM the 1974 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  Hour program this ad, and listed in the program the entrant for up and coming "B" grade rider Barry Lack's Yamaha TZ 350 was Entrant Ross Oliver. That was because he owned the bike.

**Program Ross Allison**



IN the meantime Tony was busy scoring great results on his new toy, a Kawasaki H2 750 like here at Baskerville.

**Photo Ian Brickhill**





AT this same 1974 meeting our Tony hasn't changed much. You don't need me to point out which one is Tony and which one is Bevan Johnson the manager of Lloyd Campbell Honda Launceston.

**Photo Ian Brickhill**



**Ken Young**

## **Australian Motor Cycle News update**

JUST to clarify and keep you all up on what is going on. I have been in contact regularly with my man in South Australia, at Australian Motor Cycle News about this year's coverage of the series.

REMEMBERING that I write what he wants me to write about, as Sports Editor for the Club Sport page, the thing is that he also does not have final say in what goes in the magazine. That is the province of the Editor in Melbourne.

FROM my comments last issue in SPOKE it would appear my feelings have come true. The editor has informed Hamish in SA that they will not be running Club Lines in every issue but only when reports come in and are relevant. I would imagine that ASBK, World Supers and MotoGP coverages will determine space available. All this to me means that after the current preview (as requested) goes in I will only be sending race reports, no previews, and with no guarantee that they will be used.

I won't keep banging on about it, but I did say they, like all good businesses, are in it to turn a profit so they can continue to exist. The first concern is to print stories that motor cyclists want to read in the space available.

I will keep trying to get coverage but remember I don't control what goes in.

**Ken Young**

# Baskerville Wrap

ON the subject of race reports I may be reduced to mainly doing them for SPOKE if our illustrious editor Peter Sanders deems them acceptable. Naturally you shouldn't need expansive reports on Symmons Plains meetings as you should all be there. It really only makes it an "opinion piece" and at times I wonder if my opinion counts.

THE first road race meeting for the year was a club championship meeting at Baskerville for the SRCT and provided a great deal of interest for us all. Because I have covered that all in my report for AMCN I have to do it entirely different for you people. Also because I did not go to the meeting and am very appreciative of the report supplied to me by Barry Lack (phone) and Jason Spencer (getting me a program) and the Natsoft site I suppose I could attempt some humour and levity in the coverage.

IT would appear that "Santa" was pulling a "B" double sleigh when he passed over Tasmania last Christmas as he had a lot of new race bikes to deliver. Karen Webb finally ran the newer, bright yellow, GSX now that she, sorry Wayne McDonald, worked out the problems with it not revving out in 3<sup>rd</sup> and above. The road computer chip had a rev limiter to detune it, so a new race chip solved the problem. Even though it looks "fatter" it is actually quite a few kilo's lighter..... The bike not Karen!

LOCHIE Curtis vacates his 300 Ninja and is having a season on Craig Johnson's VFR400. He is quite happy with the new toy and after 3 sighting laps recorded a jaw dropping high 59 second lap. His only problem he said was that it took quite a bit more effort to ride and he was quite exhausted at the end of each race..... I thought professional painting would keep you fit!

ELEANOR Renton has ditched the CBR250 and climbed aboard a SV650, the same as Dad (Trevor). She too found it physically draining to ride and maybe the two of them could spend some time in the Gym together..... Shouldn't be too difficult as they spent heaps of time together!

DIDN'T last years Junior class have a great Christmas. Firstly, congratulations to Martin Long the driving force behind the introduction of the class and to Cody Travers who is in charge mentoring them all.

It's complicated but when a junior reaches a certain age he or she can race juniors AND senior races where nothing over 400cc bikes are racing. Tom Turner and Brodie Curtis, still using YZF-R15's, fall into that category with the rest having to totally leave the Junior class. Oscar O'Donovan started doing cross over late last year and now has taken on a big year with a ZX-6R in the post modern class and a CBR600RR in the Super Sports class....Big effort Oscar!



**THAT** now means all 6 juniors have new bikes with 5 for the Production Lites class. They are Chad Wyllie with a new Ninja 400, Brodie Curtis with Lochie's Ninja 300, Tom Turner on Eleanor's CBR250, and Harley Phipps on the sister Ninja 300's to Brodie's that were owned by Karen Webb. That doesn't add up to five but the 5<sup>th</sup> should have been Oliver Skinner on his new KTM RC390 but he and big sister Chloe didn't enter for some reason. Chloe hasn't raced her identical RC390 but has attended a few ride days and been very "competitive". Remember, there is no racing at ride days.

**ALL** the above mentioned juniors put in great performances at Baskie and finished mid field in a field of 22 bikes at their first outing. Bloody fantastic effort Juniors with Brodie Curtis being the best of the bunch. He won all four after Tom (needs better glasses) Turner passed Brodie under yellow in one race and scored a 10 second penalty.....Bugga!

What happened to juniors this year I hear you ask? Brodie and Tom remain for their last year in the class. They are joined by Ava Connell and David Coward on the back bone of the class, YZF-R15's. I was speaking to young Gus O'Halloran who rode a Kayo 150 at our last ride day who said he couldn't start racing until the last round just after his birthday. Cody checked the class rules and found that if Gus continued to use the "small wheel" model he could start NOW..... So he did!

**SUPER** Sport defending champion Mitch Hawksely (CBR600RR) can't use his professional riding to improve his race craft as he no longer rides a "postie special" and is now in one of those three-wheeler buzzing thingies. Maybe he might take up sidecar racing. He again won the 600 races with the usual three chasers being Jonathan Hughes (2008 Daytona), Marcus Delaney (2008 YZF-R6) and Mathew Long (2007 YZF-R6).

**AS** usual a big field contested the class with rider like David Bartels coming up from clubman and like so many recording PB times....Excellent!

Staying in the Formula Baskerville (the old Clubman class) was Spencer-Davies Racing new boy, Bradley van Zetten (CBR600RR) and still improving his times. It was great to see Emma Reader (CBR600RR) scoring 4 2nds for the day as she has battled for a few years in the Super Sport class just plugging away. Now the F Baskie class has proved the right move for her....Well done Emma.

**WHAT** positive thing can you say about our "premier" class the Tassie Superbikes. 6 starters with Brett Simmonds dominating. Life was made "slightly" easier with the two Jason's in a spirited battle behind. Spencer on the CBR1000RR and Willie on the Panigale. They did swap paint a few times as they were often actually side by side in some corners but giving each enough "racing room" to not scrape paint on the roadway. This meant they both finished. Spencer lost out this time with a 10 second penalty for a jump start in one race. He did some really big jump starts at the final round at Symmons last year, by over a bike length, fair call.

**THIS** time the other end of the scale because as he kicked it into gear at the start the front wheel inched forward..... "You're nicked son!"

**COME** on round one at Symmons on March 21<sup>st</sup>, should be some great racing....We hope!

**Ken Young**

# COMING EVENTS

- March 4** Our AGM will be held from 7pm in the upstairs meeting room of the Gunner's Arms Hotel. Lawrence St, Launceston. Come along and have your say about how you want the club to run and who should be steering it.
- March 7** **LONGFORD.** The 3 day "Back to Longford" is back but will only be on one day this for one main reason, yes ... Bloody Corona.  
**TO** spread the spectators out I believe there will be displays at 3 locations around the old circuit (what's left of) and the spectators will be bussed to each location.  
**EACH** location will have a vehicle display and someone like Barry Oliver and some bloke named Ken Young talking about the event.
- March 14** **BASKERVILLE.** The next SRCT ride day.
- March 20** **SYMMONS PLAINS.** The TMCC ride day season is well underway and March 20 will see the usual groups from learners and beginners to experienced riders and race groups. Come along and join the on-track fun.
- March 21** **SYMMONS PLAINS.** It will be the first round of the Sate Series as covered above. Like two years ago we are again inviting all "old riders" to come along and view the racing from the long room and spend some time telling each other how good we all were back then. The last time we had over 60 riders who all seemed to have a great time, so don't miss it. Also as mentioned before I will be flat out in the tower doing commentary and Barry Lack, who looked after you last time, will be flat out with his mentoring of the new generation of riders. We are still looking for a "team leader" to look after you all. I have asked one of the current riders if his wife, who took some excellent shots for me at presentation last time, to again take shots for our mug shot collection. The shots I took last time have been used on some occasions and are very useful. Also Old Bike Australasia are willing to publish a photo of the gathering.

**AS** announced above there was to be a Tassie story in an upcoming edition of Australian Motor Cycle News. Well, it came out sooner than I thought. The current copy of AMCN with a KTM Adventure bike the cover is the one. The two-page "Revolving Racer" column was written by our own Jason Spencer with photos by Ken Young. According to Jason the only disappointment is the thumbnail black and white head shot of him to lead the story.

**WELL** for your pleasure we are able to give you an enlarged COLOUR copy of the shot. That should please Jason.....not.

**AS** I keep banging on, if you don't go out and buy a copy AMCN don't see an increase in sales in Tassie so may reduce the Tassie content as no one is interested, as they see it.



Some pics from the Baskerville action in February (nicked from Brian Crowley's Facebook page).





